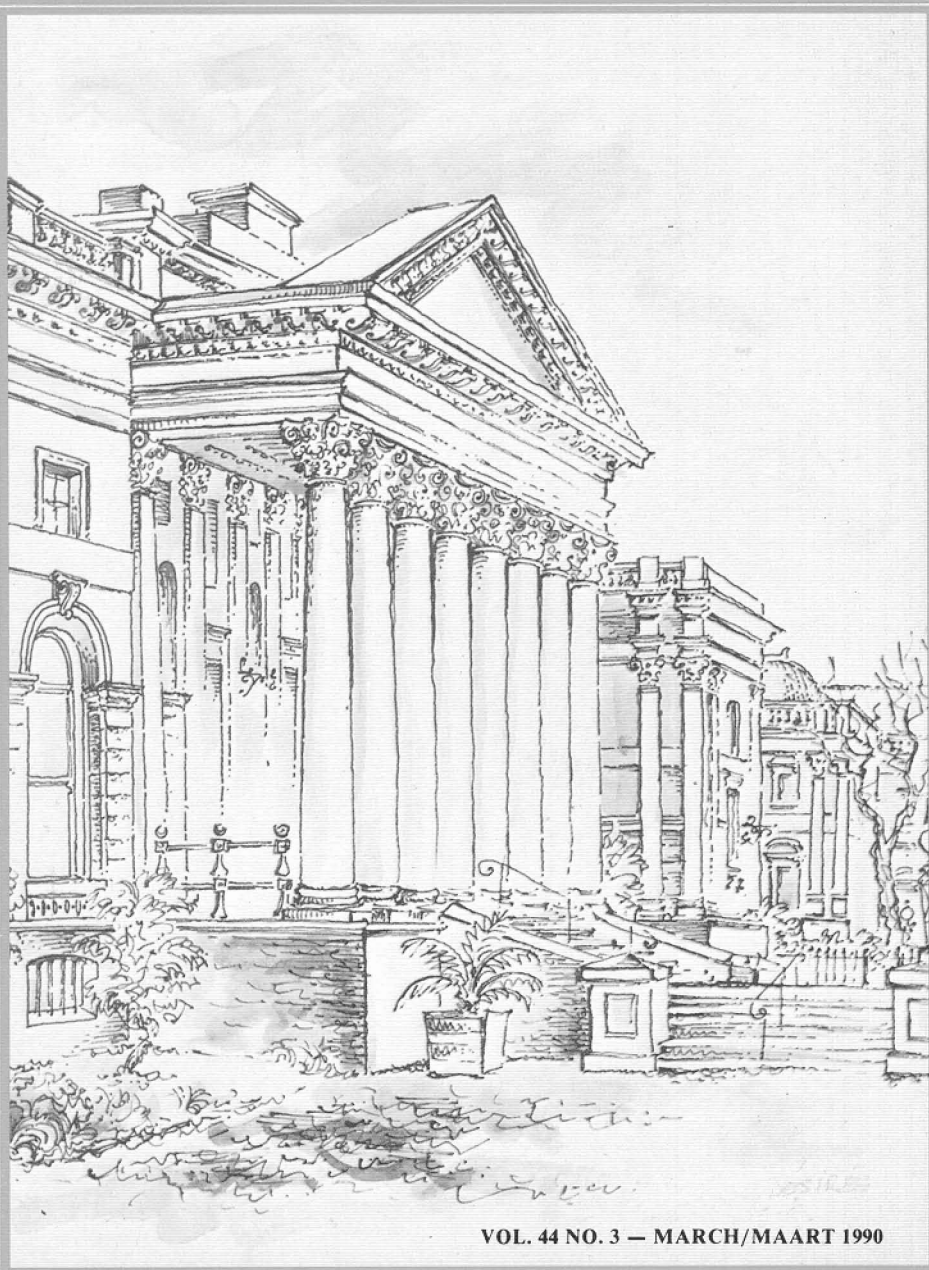


QUARTERLY BULLETIN  
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KWARTAALBLAD  
VAN DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE BIBLIOTEEK



VOL. 44 NO. 3 — MARCH/MAART 1990

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**VOL. 44 NO. 3 — MARCH/MAART 1990**

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million books per annum at an expected unit cost of US\$5 per volume. The British Library is experimenting with gamma radiation as a means to save brittle books from decay.

The processes and equipment used for mass deacidification overseas are still very expensive. The indications are, however, that techniques within our means may become available in South Africa in the near future. Until then the South African Library will continue microfilming brittle material, restoring selected valuable items, binding South African newspapers and periodicals, and, in general, through sound housekeeping practices, look after its collections as well as facilities and funds permit.

It stands to reason that the Library will also print its own publications on permanent paper as soon as this becomes possible.

### **The provenance of Levaillant's watercolours preserved in the Library of Parliament, Cape Town**

In 1963 the Library of Parliament obtained a collection of 165 watercolours connected with the eighteenth-century travels of François Levaillant (1753-1824) in the South African interior. These drawings were reproduced in colour in two volumes edited by Quinton et al.,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by some revealing articles on different aspects of Levaillant's life and work. In one of those essays Bokhorst traced the history of the portfolio. Its earliest documented owner was L.V. Ledebor in Rotterdam. The collection is listed in the catalogue of his library<sup>2</sup> and again in the later sales catalogue.<sup>3</sup> Bokhorst did not find proof of the earlier owner, but suggested that it might have been Joan Raye, Seigneur de Breukelerwaard (1737-1823), of Amsterdam, who had been on friendly terms with Levaillant.

This suggestion by Bokhorst can now be corroborated. The zoological cabinet assembled by Joan Raye was sold in 1827, as mentioned by Bokhorst. His library, however, had been auctioned earlier, on 28 March 1825. A sales catalogue was issued, of which copies, annotated with prices but without names of buyers, are preserved in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, and the Vereeniging voor de Belangen van de Boekhandel (part of the Amsterdam University Library). In the first section of the booklet containing the folio volumes, the collection of watercolours is described as follows: '70. Collection de CLXI [161] dessins de vues de peuples et d'animaux, des voyages dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique, par le Cap de Bonne Espérance, dans les années 1780-1785, par le Vaillant, contenant 5 vol. en dem. rel. Les gravures sont supérieurement dessinées en couleurs, sous la direction de l'auteur, avec l'inscription de chaque dessin en manuscrit; exemplaire unique et très intéressant.'<sup>4</sup>

It was bought for 430 guilders, which may be compared with Hfl.400,

paid for a copy of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* in 39 volumes with coloured plates. There is a difference between the number of drawings in the catalogue (161) and those actually present (165). This is difficult to explain, but might be the result of simple miscounting. It may be noted that at this time the collection was bound in five folio volumes, which was later changed. It is not known how Raye obtained the collection, but it is not unlikely to assume that he received it directly from Levailant. — *L.C. Rookmaaker*

### Notes

1. J.C. Quinton and A.M. Lewin Robinson, *François le Vaillant, traveller in South Africa, and his collection of 165 water-colour paintings, 1781-1784* (Cape Town: Library of Parliament, 1973), 2v.
2. W. Ledeboer, *Catalogue raisonné de la bibliothèque de M. Lambertus Vincentius Ledeboer Bzn* (Rotterdam: Van Hangel & Eeltjes, 1878), p296.
3. —, *Catalogue de livres précieux aux beaux-arts composant la bibliothèque de feu M. L.V. Ledeboer Bzn de Rotterdam, vente mercredi, 4 novembre 1891* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1891), p114.
4. *Catalogue des livres précieux et d'une condition unique délaissés par feu Monsieur Joan Raye, seigneur de Breukelerwaard à Amsterdam (. . .)* (La Haye: s.n., 1825), p12.

### A note on auctions and vendus at the Cape

We have little idea of how auctions influenced, or were influenced by, the Cape economy — indeed, we know virtually nothing of the economic history of the Cape during the period of the second British occupation. The historical literature of an analogous colonial situation — colonial and nineteenth-century America, specifically New York — helps provide a perspective.<sup>1</sup> There, according to Ray Bert Westerfield, auctions had profound causes and consequences. So many of his conclusions mirror Hudson's remarks<sup>2</sup> and, moreover, provide an analytical framework for the larger economic network in which colonial auctions were imbedded that it is best, at the outset, to summarise Westerfield's main arguments.

Auctions flourished in the colonial arena, because they benefited three sectorial interests: (1) The manufacturer-exporter in the mother country. Metropolitan groups could 'dump' surplus wares on the colonial consumer when they had overestimated their own domestic market. (2) The colonial consumer, because he obtained goods below the market value of competitive colonial products. (3) The colonial administration, since it benefited from a centralised and easily controlled source of revenue. Only when the colonial administration was a representative body of all colonial interests would these elements change. All these sectorial interests, in turn, stifled colonial mercantile and industrial initiative. This had been the case under the Dutch East India Company and continued into the second British occupation.