Emanuel van Meteren's Commentariën and STC

In an earlier study I had occasion to remark on the somewhat unsatisfactory way in which Emanuel van Meteren's Commentariën of 1609-10 had been introduced into the record of New STC (items 17845.3, 17845.7). The present essay will go into these matters somewhat more fully and will show that, if the rules demand (as they do) that this work, printed in Holland for distribution in Holland, is to be included, more should be there: not just copies, but editions as well. However, the problems of these Dutch editions, though tackled up to a point on various occasions, are still sufficiently complex to merit treatment in their own right as well. If not all outstanding problems can be solved, at least they can be placed in better focus.

1599

Before its first publication in Dutch, in 1599, the work had already led an existence in some form in German and Latin. And that the first Dutch edition initially had a somewhat checkered career is by now a commonplace. Comprising nineteen books, it exists with no fewer than three title-pages, and its printer, Vennecool, capitalized on its succès de scandale by immediately laying on a second edition. The make up of the prelims in the original edition seems a sham-bles, and, quite apart from corrections at the proof stage, even before it was issued a number of changes were made in it. A variety of historians have commented on and tried to account for these facts, but to my knowledge no proper bibliographical analysis of the volume has so far appeared. Yet even if this should make no appreciable difference to historical interpretation, without it no certainty could exist that the views so far presented reflected truth.

In what follows, an attempt at such an analysis will be made, though again not an exhaustive one. For that to be done it would be necessary to confront most if not all of the extant copies with each other, and that is now almost impossible. The means exist, but hardly the facilities. For the present study, use

2 The latest discussion, in L. Brummel's Twee Ballingen 's Lands of 1972, though coming from a librarian, falls as short on this point as all the others. Its author was a historian, not a bibliographer, and an attempt made at the time to interest him in this side of the investigation unfortunately (if understandably) proved unsuccessful. All the same his study remains important and contains the first presentation of a number of relevant facts, besides reproducing the relevant title-pages. The present study has gratefully taken cognizance of these, though not without verification at source. For an account in English of the background facts and a first discussion of
has therefore been made of a complete list of signature positions for the whole volume in both versions, against which each copy used has been checked. So far as feasible, further checks have been made with the help of a copy of the first edition kindly lent to the writer by Mr K. van der Horst.3

The book is a pot folio (ca. 27 × 18 cm). A superficial collation of the original printing as it normally appears goes f°: **χ**^2 A° B° C-4C° 4D°. That of the second goes f°: ^6 χ^2 A^6 B^6 C-4B^6 4C^6 4D^6. The two editions mostly run together page ending for page ending in such a way that it would be possible to use sheets of the one in the other, but so far only one copy has been cited where this has been done at all extensively. For the second edition no variant formes have been recorded, and since it seems to have played no part in the events that led to the command of the States General that the copies of the first edition must only be sold abroad, checking has been confined to signature positions, which have turned up no variation.

For the first edition, however, this is a very different story, affecting even the collation. The prelims have already been mentioned, and will be discussed presently. Variation has also been observed in quires B and 2N, as well as at the end of the volume. Quire B, on proper analysis, proves to be not so much B° as B° (so an originally regular quire), but the formula should then continue with (-B4,6, B3+2, B5+2) making the eight-leaf quire we now superficially have, but actually with two cancel doubletons accounting for the duplication of folio numbers 10 and 12. The cancellation of folio 12 has long been noted, some copies having cancellandum 12 uncancelled, and that at the Royal Library at The Hague having both cancellans and cancellandum, but cancellandum folio 10 has not so far been met in any copy, and the make-up here (as a result?) never noted. Different binders, besides, have found different solutions for incorporating these cancel doubletons. It should therefore follow that not only the original folio 12, but also the original folio 10 must have contained matter that somehow could not pass muster in its original form.

A case where this has long been well known occurs right at the end of the text. As Brummel discovered, a copy in the Royal Library at Brussels has cancelled leaf 4C6, the last full leaf of text, as well as leaf 4Di, containing the end of the text and the beginning of the Register. They are replaced by two doubletons see the same writer's essay in Studia Bibliographica in Honorem Herman de la Fontaine Verwey (Amsterdam 1966 [= 1968]), pp. 26-33. 3 Cf. below, 3611.

4 The second quire, γ, an unsigned map, has letterpress on its verso and should accordingly be included in the collation. Its place varies between copies, but that here given is the one most commonly met. Though its presence is required by the title, there are no catchwords, and no binder's instructions, to locate it.

5 Royal Library The Hague, shelf-mark 1701.B.16 (olim 3190.C.21, 268.A.6, IX.E.7). See Brummel, Ballingen, p. 111 and note 108; he also cites one quire and one sheet in a Utrecht copy (S.fo.492), but these are actually a matter of press correction within a single printing. He also quotes fos.