Berry P.M. Dongelmans

Het Boek (1912-66)

‘Much to their regret the editors and publisher have to announce that with the present issue, which concludes volume 37 of Het Boek, the publication of this journal will be discontinued at the same time.’ The curtain finally came down after all. The year was 1966, but even in the previous years it must already have just barely succeeded in keeping its head above water.

Het Boek had never been profitable, but now the deficit had risen to such an extent that running the journal, even with the annual grant from NWO, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, was no longer acceptable to the firm of Martinus Nijhoff.

No doubt it would have hurt the Hague publisher-bibliographer Wouter Nijhoff (1866-1947), who as the journal’s publisher had given of his best to it from 1912 onwards, to have to see this longest running book journal of the Netherlands dying this gentle death. After all, from 1873 to 1966 – with a short interruption between 1894 and 1904 – the name of the Nijhoff firm had been attached to a Dutch journal in the field of the book, bibliography and library studies.

Precursors of Het Boek

In 1873 father Martinus had started the publication of the Bibliographische Adversaria, because, as we read in the first issue, ‘in recent years there have been signs that lead one to suspect that many people will welcome having an organ in which they can communicate their findings, comments and questions about books and manuscripts, the bearers and witnesses of human knowledge and civilization throughout the ages, the indispensable companions of anyone who makes a branch of this knowledge the object of his study.’ Besides being the publisher he was also the only editor, a fact which took its toll. After the death of Martinus Nijhoff in 1894 the journal was promptly discontinued.

It would take until 1904 before the firm attached itself again to a bibliographical journal. In that year Wouter Nijhoff incorporated into the firm’s list the Tijdschrift voor Boek- en Bibliotheekwet, which had been founded in Belgium in 1903. Together with De Nederlandsche Boekhandel (Antwerp), J.E. Buschmann (Antwerp) and Ad. Herekenrath (Ghent) respectively, he published in all nine volumes of this journal.

The editorial staff was this time a mixture of Northern and Southern Netherlands origin. For a shorter or longer time Em. de Bom, V.A. de la Montagne, Willem de Vreese, J.W. Enschedé, P.C. Molhuysen, Prosper Verheyden, C.P. Burger Jr. and Leon. Willems Az. edited the journal, all of
HET BOEK

TWEEDE REEKS
VAN HET
TIJDSCHRIFT
VOOR
BOEK-EN
BIBLIOTHEEKWEZEN

Onder Redactie van
DR. C. P. BURGER JR. EN
V. A. DELA MONTAGNE

1 K JAAR Y GANG

MARTINUS NIJHOFF
LANGE VOORHOUT 9 DEN HAAG

1912

1. First volume (photo KB The Hague)