



Early European Books

Collection 25: History Chronicles

Collection 25 partners with four prestigious libraries – Denmark's *Kongelige Bibliotek*, the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* of The Netherlands, Italy's *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*, and the Wellcome Library in London.

The collection contains a survey of historical works and documents that chart both significant events and everyday details from the early modern period. At the same time, these items pinpoint important advances in the story of historical thinking itself.

Classical Foundations & Medieval Influences

The collection features influential works by classical historians such as Tacitus, Pliny, and Sallust, alongside medieval chronicles and Byzantine summaries. These texts reveal the historical models early modern historians relied on and show how they began to challenge and diverge from these ideas. A key innovator in this regard is Guido Panciroli's *Rerum Memorabilium*, which broke from the tradition of viewing Europe as in decline after the classical era. Panciroli argued that the wisdom of the ancients could not only be rediscovered but improved upon, sparking new interest in the history of science and technology.

The Rise of Antiquarianism

The collection also highlights the rise of antiquarianism—the study of ancient monuments, artifacts, and coins. Often seen as a pastime for the wealthy, antiquarianism actually enriched historical research by introducing cultural and ethnographic perspectives, paving the way for the modern discipline of archaeology.

Reflecting Early Modern Conflicts and Identity

Key works in this collection document the military and social upheavals that defined the early modern period, including the Dutch Revolt, the Thirty Years' War, and the English Civil War. These conflicts also fueled the rise of nationhood and cultural identity, as seen in Tamayo de Vargas's history of Spain and Pierre Matthieu's history of France.

New Frontiers of Discovery

The collection mirrors Europe's expanding horizons, with works on mercantile and colonial ventures. Juan González de Mendoza's history of China and Robertus Comtaeus's study on the origins of the Americas offer insights into the period's global curiosity. Also featured are Olfert Dapper's detailed compendiums on Asia, which broaden the scope of geographic and cultural knowledge, all compiled from the comfort of Dapper's home in the Netherlands.

For scholars, Early European Books Collection 25 offers a deep exploration of both the intellectual shifts and the pivotal events that shaped the early modern world. It provides a comprehensive overview of history writing and recording from classical antiquity to the 17th century, showcasing the development of historical thought alongside the key conflicts, discoveries, and social changes that defined the period.

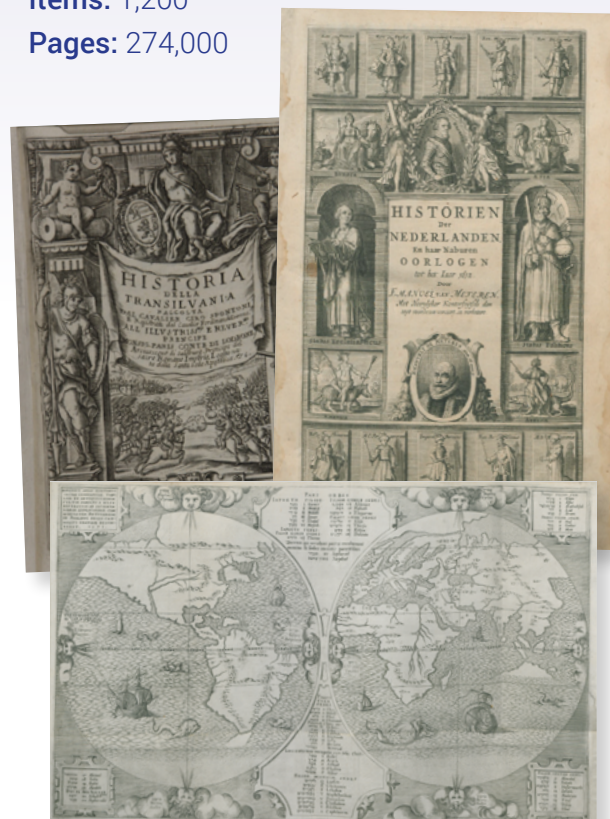
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Sources:

- *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze* – The National Central Library of Florence (BNCF)
- *Det Kongelige Bibliotek* – The Royal Library, Copenhagen (KBDK)
- *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* – The Royal Library of the Netherlands in The Hague (KBNL)
- Wellcome Library – London

Items: 1,200

Pages: 274,000



Historia della Transilvania, Ciro Spontone, 1610.

Historien der Nederlanden, Emanuel van Meteren, 1647.

Antiquitatum Iudaicarum libri IX, Benedictus Arias Montanus, 1593.



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- Law
- Contemporary Documents
- Newsbooks
- Encyclopaedias and Dictionaries
- Geography, Travel and Maps
- Natural History

Highlights include:

• *Nouvelle histoire d'Abissine, ou d'Ethiopie* (Paris, 1684)

This French edition of the *Historia aethiopica* originally published in 1681 was written by the eminent German orientalist, Hiob Ludolf (d.1704). Ludolf was thought to be conversant in twenty-five languages and, in addition to this history of Ethiopia, he also published a Latin-Ethiopian lexicon and an Ethiopian grammar. The author was hugely assisted in his research and understanding of the country through his friendship with the Ethiopian scholar, Abba Gorgoryos (d.1658), whom Ludolf first encountered in Rome.

• *Historia della Transilvania* (Venice, 1638)

As well as featuring works relating to conflicts in northern Europe, Collection 25 also provides a range of items dealing with the ongoing struggles with the Ottoman Empire and its incursions into the east of the continent. This history of Transylvania, chiefly penned by the Italian diplomat and author Ciro Spontoni (d.1612), recounts the campaigns of his compatriot General Giorgio Basta, who commanded Habsburg forces during what's known as the Long Turkish War of 1591-1606. Because of its geographical location, the Principality of Transylvania became something of a battleground during the early modern period, for a time sharing an uneasy dual suzerainty divided between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburgs. Spontoni's history later became valued by Romanian nationalists for the details it gives of Michael the Brave, the first native nobleman ever to rule over all three of Romania's principalities, including Transylvania.

Miscellanea eruditae antiquitatis: in quibus,
Jacob Spon, 1685.

• *Comentari della Moscouia et parimente della Russia* (Venice, 1550)

This is a beautifully presented Venetian edition of the *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii* by Sigmund von Herberstein (d.1566), first published in Latin in 1549. The book remained for a long time the primary source of knowledge about Russia across Western Europe. Originally from Vipava, the author was appointed ambassador to Russia by the Holy Roman Empire. His knowledge of Slovene aided him in his efforts to familiarise himself with the history and customs of what was at the time for Europeans a largely mysterious country.

• *Sendt-brief van doctor Delord, professor inde vermaerde universiteyt van Montpellier, aen mijn heere, mijn heere De Monrabbe, eerste president in 't parlement van Tholouse* (The Hague, 1637)

This pamphlet item is a Dutch translation of documents pertaining to a 1637 Grenoble court case previously published in Paris the same year. Unlike other items highlighted here, it provides not an insight into any grand historical narrative but a fascinating glimpse into an everyday domestic dispute and its unexpected outcome. The case concerned a woman accused of adultery after having given birth to a child while her husband had been away in Germany for the past four years. The accused, Magdeleine d'Auvermont, insisted she had been chaste throughout the time of her husband's absence and that she fell pregnant after she one night dreamed of sleeping with him. Remarkably, and following consultation with physicians and theologians, the court ruled in Magdeleine's favour and she won the case. Later the same year, however, the Parliament of Paris tried to dismiss the story as a joke and sought to ban further publication of its details. Instead, the case became for a time famous across Europe, as is confirmed by this Dutch version.



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