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(1) It may be noted further that there is a little confusion about the places of the letters which bear no date, which are either not in their approximate order or relegated to the end with the miscellaneous documents. The latter are grouped accurately with the letters to which they belong (CXIII and CXIV with LXXXV; CXII with XIII; and CXI with XII).

(2) Finally, letter XXIX (f. 16), Thorpe’s special acquisition, must be supposed to have slipped out of the book in the same way as IIa, VIIa, XXVIIa, LXVIIa, LXXXVa, and Ca, and, in reaching Thorpe’s hands, only to have regained the Collection to which it had originally belonged.

IV. Conjectural Completion of the History.

The documentary evidence adduced fixes the following dates:

1650, when the two series were assembled in the hands of Constantijn Huygens;
1657, when the two series were sold at Sotheby’s;
1683, when the two series, now transformed into one collection, appear in the sale catalogue published by Thorpe.

Can the gaps be filled?

Also for two letters added from Clermont’s text (XLIIIa and Cii) which both certainly belong to the series. It can only be suggested that like Cii, which was probably lost to Huygens’ collection because it was produced before the High Court of Holland (Cl, p. 145.1. 18. 3), XLIIIa, being in effect a petition on behalf of Bunsen and Huygens, was passed on by Huygens to another quarter.

Above, pp. xxv-xxvi.

Bd

HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

(a) The gap 1650–1835.

§ 1. Constantijn Huygens lived to an advanced age and died in 1695. In his will mention is made, as we saw, of his collection of manuscripts, comprising his own works, published and unpublished, and the letters which he had received from eminent friends. These he left, with certain recommendations, to the care of his eldest son. We see reason to believe that the letters which he had received from Descartes were among those to which reference is made. We are then to assume that our Correspondence was in the possession of the Huygens family at least up to the time of Constantijn Huygens’ death in 1695. The gap is then narrowed down to the period 1678–1835. At some time between these dates was it passed into the collectors’ hands.

§ 2. Presumptive evidence might be sought from the two ends. On the one hand we know that at the close of the seventeenth century the letters were in the possession of the Huygens family; on the other that they were in the possession of the Sternevelt family at the beginning of the nineteenth. Hence it would be reasonable to seek for information concerning their history from the histories of the Huygens and Sternevelt families. Mr. Marinus de Waard, the Dutch scholar to whom all students and historians of the life of Descartes are under a profound indebtedness, very kindly undertook the necessary investigations on behalf of the inquiry. His efforts were completely successful, since he was fortunate enough to discover a point at which the histories of the two families met. A brief summary of his results, which he very generously put at my entire disposal, will suffice here.

§ 3. Constantijn Huygens the elder died in 1689, leaving his manuscripts in the care of his eldest son of the same name.

Above, p. ii.

Bd
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(Constatijn II). Constatijn II died in September 1697, and was survived by an only son, Constatijn III. This son died very shortly after, in November of the same year, leaving all his property by will to his mother, Susanna. After her death in 1713, the family papers passed to yet another Constatijn, Constatijn IV (son of Lodewijk, the third son of Constatijn the elder), as is proved by the fact that he buried himself considerably with them, making a copy in his own hand of the elder Constatijn's diary and some hundred of his Latin letters, and providing the biographical information concerning his uncle Christian van, the mathematician, for Gravendes's edition of his works (Leiden, 1724). Constatijn IV died in 1739, his wife Philippina, who succeeded to all his property, in 1746. Of their two children only one survived, a daughter, Susanna Louise, wife of Willem, Baron van Wassenaar (died 1764). Susanna Louise died without children in 1785, and with her the direct line of Constatijn Huygens the elder, whose manuscripts we are trying to trace, came to an end.

§ 5. As might have been expected, at this juncture a division took place of such of the family property as had remained intact up to this date. A copy of the relevant notary's act is still in existence at the Hague, and from it we learn that the partition was effected among fourteen persons, two of the Houffl family, three Royers, two Van der Miedens, three Gerlaeghs, and four Teding van Berkhout. Mynheer de Waard's very carefully constructed genealogical tables show clearly that these families are for the most part descendants of Constatijn Huygens the elder through his daughter Susanna. The precise lines of connexion, however, remain a matter of conjecture.

HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

need not detain us, because we have reached the central point for our immediate purpose. Jan Teding van Berkhout (1776-1806), one of the four members of the Teding van Berkhout family in whose behalf and in whose favour the partition of the Huygens family property was effected in 1786, was the husband of Elisabeth Sophia van Sypestein (1776-1800), sister of Wijgbold van Sypestein (1778-1815), the owner of the Sypestein collection.

Elisabeth Sophia van Sypestein died in 1800, and her husband in 1806. Whether papers of the Huygens family passed into the Sypestein collection by gift or purchase during the lifetime or after the death of either Elisabeth or her husband, will probably never be known. A glance, however, at the Sotheby catalogue of 1847 shows that the lots of the first five days of the sale, among which our Correspondence finds a place, include an extensive collection, comprising about 4,000 pieces, of letters addressed, or having reference, to Constatijn Huygens, and it is difficult not to suspect that these passed in some manner from Jan Teding van Berkhout, one of the heirs of the last direct descendant of Constatijn Huygens, to his brother-in-law, Wijgbold van Sypestein, whose son and heir, Cornelis Ancetus van Sypestein, was the "Gentleman of the highest consideration in Holland" who was responsible for the Sotheby sale of 1847.

§ 6. From now the history of our Correspondence is that

1. Originally founded by his father, Cornelis Ancetus van Sypestein (1735-73).

2. Not all the Huygens' manuscripts became part of the Sypestein collection. The majority, including the manuscripts of Constatijn Huygens' own unpublished works, were sold in Amsterdam on 17 February 1847 (see the Algemeen Konsil en Letterkunde for 1843, vol. II, pp. 39-40, and for 1847, vol. I, pp. 91 and 170). The sale was anonymous, but Mynheer de Waard's researches showed that the vendor was a Hooft, a member of one of the families sharing in the partition of the Huygens property in 1786.

3. The phrase of the Sotheby sale catalogue, above, p. xxxvi.

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of the Spyettein collection. Under the pressure of financial difficulties Cornelis Acconis van Spyettein determined to sell the collection, and in view of its outstanding historical importance he offered it first (for the sum of 80,000 florins) to the reigning house. Unfortunately it was a time of great general financial stringency, and the offer had reluctantly to be refused. It was then decided to sell it by auction in London, and the sale, advertised for May 19th, took place finally on June 20, 1845. Since at this sale our Correspondence, which we know to have been in the hands of Constantin Huygens in 1670, was offered among other Huygens manuscripts, we may presume that its history is throughout one with theirs, and that passing through the hands of the successive heirs of Constantin Huygens with the rest of his papers, it became, after the partition of 1786, part of the collection of the family to which one of the distant heirs was closely allied by marriage.

(8) The gap 1825-1833.

It may be asked how it came about that eight years elapsed between the purchase of the Correspondence by Thorpe at the Sotheby sale (1825) and its appearance in his sale catalogue (1833). The answer to this question is perhaps to be found in a curious detail of price. In both of the annotated copies of the Sotheby sale preserved in the British Museum, the amounts paid by Thorpe for the two lots are noted at £53 19s. and £23 3s. respectively, £76 16s. in all. The amount asked in his catalogue for the

* For further information in its regard I am indebted to the present Jte. C. A. C. H. van Spyettein, and to Mr. W. del Cour, grandson on the maternal side of the Spyettein of the sale. See also Notes and Queries, 19, S. III, pp. 341 and 439 (May 6 and 17, 1907).

* It will be remembered that our letters formed only an insignificant fragment of the whole splendid collection.

* Cf. J. de Jonge in Memoires, XVII, pp. 337-35 (Dordrecht, 1875).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>two lots together is only £1 8s. It can only be surmised that no one had been willing to offer such a price for the Correspondence as would even reimburse Thorpe for the transaction, and that the extraordinary and unusual reduction to £1 8s. was the counsel of despair.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) From 1833 to the present day.

That the Correspondence passed into the hands of Mr. Harry Wilmot Buxton is certain. What is not certain is exactly when it did so pass and whether or no by immediate purchase from Thorpe. Mr. H. W. Buxton was a barrister-at-law with both mathematical interests (he was a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society) and a love for French language and literature. Further, he seems at one time to have been specially interested in Descartes and he certainly drew up in his own hand a still extant catalogue of the Correspondence, possibly with a view to publication. Family tradition, however, inclines to the belief that it came to him through Charles Babington (1792-1871), the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, famous for the invention of the calculating machine, whose friend and biographer he was. However that may be, it was among Mr. Harry Wilmot Buxton's papers that his grandson Mr. L. H. Dudley Buxton by so happy a chance found our letters, and it is therefore to the Buxton family that their preservation is due.

* Many of Thorpe's purchases of the Huygens collection from the Sothby sale appear in his Catalogue for 1845 and 1850. It may be remarked, however, that Thorpe was in grave financial difficulties in 1846, and began offering his remarkably extensive and varied stock at extremely reduced prices.

* The Correspondence does not seem to appear again in Thorpe's catalogues of manuscripts, e.g. for 1873, nor in the catalogue of the sale of his stock by Messrs. Patrick and Simpson in November 1873. It would seem therefore to have been disposed of in 1873 or 1874.

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V. The History Summarized.

The links in the history of our Collection may now therefore be summarized.

1. The series from Huygens to Descartes, originally in the possession of Descartes and deposited by him with Van Hoghelande in 1640, was returned to Constantijn Huygens after Descartes’ death in 1650, and left by him with the rest of the family manuscripts to his heirs, the direct line of whom can be traced till 1749. At some time between 1714, the date of the partition of the property of the last surviving heir, and 1823, the date when the Sypesteyn collection was first offered for sale (probably, however, before 1806, the date of the deaths of both Jan Teding van Berkhout and his brother-in-law Wijggoed van Sypesteyn), it was added, together with other of the Huygens manuscripts, to the Sypesteyn collection. Sold among that collection at Sotheby’s in 1823, it was purchased by the bookseller Thorpe, and joined by him to the second series.

2. The series from Descartes to Huygens. This, originally in the possession of Huygens, was bound up by him into a volume in order to ensure its preservation, and, with the exception of a few letters which became detached from the binding, remained intact among others of the Huygens manuscripts until finally dismembered by Thorpe after the Sotheby sale.

3. The two series together, now made into one collection, passed into the possession, possibly through Babbbage, of the Buxton family, and were lost sight of until rediscovered by the son of the present owner, Dr. Dudley Buxton, among a number of books and family papers which formerly belonged to his grandfather.

VI. Bibliography.

It remains to add that the entries in the Sotheby catalogue did not remain unremarked. About sixty years after the sale attention was drawn to them by a librarian at Amsterdam, and researches among the Huygens manuscripts there preserved revealed the existence of copies of seventeen letters which had passed from Huygens to Descartes. As some fifteen letters purporting to be from Descartes to Huygens had been published by the various editors, material, however scanty, was available for the reconstruction of the whole correspondence. This was attempted by a Dutch scholar, D. J. Korteweg, and appeared as a paper contributed to the Archives néerlandaises for 1881 under the title ‘Notes sur Constantijn Huygens considéré comme amateur des sciences ‘corrantes, et sur ses relations avec Descartes’. The seventeen letters were published in their entirety a few years later by M. Adam, then engaged in assembling material for the great tercentenary edition of the works of Descartes, and a full account was given by him of the Sotheby sale in the hope that the Correspondence might thereby come to the light (‘Lettres de Constantijn Huygens à Descartes’, Études de la Revue bourgeoise de l’Académie dutchante, 1887). A report on the actual find from the present editor was presented to the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques in June 1894 (‘Correspondance de Descartes et Huygens. Séances et Travaux de l’Académie des Sciences morales et politiques, LXXXIV’, 1904, pp. 411-15).

* The communication was very kindly read by M. Louis Lévy-Bruhl.
Aim and Character of the Edition

(c) a short palaeographical description;
(d) whenever already printed elsewhere, a note of place and source of publication;
and (e) in italics, a statement of connexion with the preceding, or any other relevant information.

(iv) In the printing of the letters great care has been taken to ensure as exact a reproduction of the original written text as possible. Peculiarities of spellings have in every case been retained, and, so far as possible (e.g. by the reproduction of i and e for Descartes, and a for Huygens), even the differing idiosyncrasies of the two handwritings. The following exceptions, however, have been made:
(a) contractions have been resolved;
(b) words written together have been divided;
(c) punctuation, and the use of capital and small letters, have been modified, and accents added, whenever the original might cause difficulty to the reader.

(v) In cases where the letter or document has appeared elsewhere, as noted in the prolegomena, the manuscript text here printed has been carefully collated with the other, and all differences between them, except differences of spelling, have been registered at the foot of the page.

It should be added that the attempt has been made throughout to harmonize with the model edition of Descartes’s Correspondence published by M. Adam.

1 The size designated for the pages varies slightly from 35.00–35.5 cm x 20.74–21.5 cm. Generally the paper used by Descartes is the wider. The large and definitely marked margin on the left-hand side of the page used by both correspondents is of 6–7 cm.

2 Descartes’ orthography, which displays many variations as well as pecuilarities, has been dealt with exhaustively in the introduction to M. Adam’s edition. That of Huygens is singularly regular and modern. His use of a full stop after numerals (cf. below, e.g. II, p. 4, i. 41; XCVIII, p. 103, i. 147) and his spelling errors, call perhaps for special comment.

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D. HISTORICAL NOTE.

I. Résumé of the early life of Descartes and of Constantijn Huygens.

RÉNE DESCARTES was born 31 March 1596 at La Haye in Touraine and was educated at the Jesuit college at La Flèche. After a certain time at Paris, he joined the army and served in Holland (1618-19); spent about six years in travel (1618-24); and after a few years in France again, settled in Holland (autumn, 1624). In the spring of 1629 he was at Franeker, from the end of that year till 1631 at Amsterdam. In 1632 he stayed for a time at Deventer near his friend and disciple Reneri, but was back in Amsterdam in 1634. 1637 saw him at Utrecht, whence the first of our letters was written.

CONSTANTIJN HUYGENS, linguist, poet, athlete, musician, and statesman, son of Christian Huygens the elder (1571-1638), himself secretary to the Council of State, was born 4 September 1596 at the Hague. After a year at the University of Leiden (1616), he visited England in the suite of Sir Dudley Carleton (1618) and studied for a short time at Oxford and Cambridge. He then embarked upon a diplomatic career, representing his country at Venice (1619) and London (1622-3). Here he was knighted by James I (1623), and became a great friend and admirer of Dr. John Donne, whose poems he afterwards translated into Dutch. In June 1625 he received the appointment of private secretary to the then Stadtholder, which office he retained under his two successors as well. He married in 1629 and had four sons, the second of whom was the celebrated mathematician, and one daughter. He lived in great honour, amid prodigious literary and political activity, till the age of ninety-one.

II. Conspectus of passages in the published correspondence of Descartes relating to Huygens, and of Huygens relating to Descartes, previous to the opening of this Correspondence.

(1) HUYGENS TO GOLIUS.

7 April 1632.


Ex quo potestum a te ali, vir doctissime arque amicissime, scito me image es mirabilis Galli, amici non extra inviam meam tu, etsi in magna urbe paulatim subisse dissimulat erat vita tua. Iam precibus, quam de refraicti radix demonstrat, tamen de eo levai ac perpetua, semper febris, nuncupastis duxi. Quod vero, dum per huius diem frater tui est, effo hic, quod fuit temper, quoddammodo et mutu quoque, et illud age ferio, ne ab his regiminctis, quod minitueris, deedit vir paciantissimus, nihil locis inhabitum liberum, quo quidem debeat certare in universum noster potest, quod ferevis in hoc filo solo mecum indigens invivere nulla ratio primit. Amicitiam vtrum, non tam inquietus mel alienator fum, ut adhibere gethias, nec versus fabeam esse quaedam latera, quod poeteriter magis illustrauerit. Sed quando contintis frise nobis, quod te dicere mentiri, parum liquet, est aliqui superflue effe posse, itemque te regum, curre falsus ut vella, ne te nunc tuis fecisse invideat, aut hoc felicitati nostrae deesse velix, quod ferius esse non cuperimus, aut causas vivere, qui problem num fuisse, et ad gloriem nostram periclinere dicimus, quod rege eft illustratus cum nobissimo planeta, qui inter nobilissimum sidere sebendi, ut immittere cetera, fors tamem fuitrica, confidium experti...
INTRODUCTION

(2)

GOLIUS TO HUYGENS.
26 April 1631.


In reply to the preceding.

Gracior M.io, et ingeniosi disciplinis, vide nobisnilione arque amplitudine, te illis faustum officiisse, qui eas et ingenio suo, et

Historical Note

Lucernar mi potero. Si experientia opinioni votoque meo conveniant, primus ego fulfillam manus, et ilia laudor videar parum

Historical Note

55. May 1633.

Corresp. XLI, vol. 1, p. 175, l. 11 f.

... Le ne sçay que respondeur à la courtoisie de Monsieur Huygens,

Historical Note

4 June 1633.


... Nu ne eam [occasionem] ualbis percommodant muli judicium

Historical Note

19 September 1632.


... Perpetuum salutem et infinitum, quod ad D. Descartes

Historical Note

1. i.e. the arrival of a letter of Descartes. The letter in question is not a letter from Descartes to Huygens, but that from Descartes to De Wilhem of May 31 of which an extract is given above (5). See Introduction, above, p. xxxii.


Historical Note

principiis, derivant. At si eventores et generalis animae ob facilitatem et necessitatem rerum ordinem multum magis perfectum
aque reflexionem hominum Consilium potestatem et intellectum, ac
sinister atque amabilem per se maxime pulchritudinem. Iam de se
defecerat nobis ingle philosophus, cujus dulcissima consilio facilis
mehi licuit per haece nostrum; ingenuus fovere, quoniam magis traher
atque cognoscere, tanto magis nimirum et amo. Neque enim in eo
minus esset anima bonitas probabilius vixer, quam ingerit felicitas
e docilitate praelaturn. Opus autem, quod editum, ad humanae
animae, cuius originem ad Deum petit, philosophiam nunc percutit
extremum expectat manum, eis autem haec et praeolum, ut se
attentionem et in philosophiae diligentiam majorem excitter. Ipse
nunc Divinitatem fecit, ut ex turbae et complutumsem existat et
plebe facere solitum omnino secret. Prima occidit data
illius illi nunculae mea maiesta, quam fuisse illi gratissimum frue, et
utique velut amicitiam mutua, si unum versus concludent
	

Description of Huygens

23 December 1652


... in vasa familias quod ulla non quaeram qui se
particulas var. et excellentes qualitates qui sunt particularmente
admiratas de noua b Monseur de Zullicum vel describes


Rereri ad Huygens

24 April 1657


... Monseur Descartes a pais ebe advenit par moy de ces
lettres, mais je vous diray bien en un mot, qu'il vous
admettre en tant des belles et vars parties qu'il trouve en vous...

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Introduction

Discours to Goleux.
16 April 1655.


... Je vous avy très grande obligation du fait que vous ayez eu de me faire sentir la connaissance du monde dont vous m'écrits, & je m'en manquerez pas de l'aller voir en cette ville à la première commodité. Mais ce qui vaut mieux que tous les tournois du monde, c'est que Monsieur de Zullicom, que j'ay eu l'honneur de voir ces jours à Amsterdam, après avoir eu la patience d'avoir arresté une partie de ma disputation, s'est offert d'en faire faire luy même quelque épître; ce qui me met entièrement hors de peine de ce sort, car si n'auriez que, l'ay ay pu lire, il s'est offert que la chose rentrât, il en trouvera les expédients plustôt que pellice. Veritablement c'est vn homme qui est au delà de toute l'élite qu'on en conçois faire, & encore que je l'ayse ouy luier à l'extrême par beaucoup de personnes dignes de foy, il est de que je n'ay nullement pu me persuader qu'en même efprit il fust occuper à tant de choses & l'accomplir fût bien de toutes, ny demeurant li net & li profond permis voir si grande diversité de perficets, & avec cela retenir une francesse il peu corrompue pour les contraintes de la cour. Il y a des qualités qui font qu'on élit ceux qu'ils ont fait faire pour cela qu'en les aymes, & d'autres qui font qu'on les aymes faiu qu'en les en esté beaucoup daountage; mais il est qu'il polde en perfection celles qui font enseuille l'eu & l'autre. Et il ne est pas peu de vaudité de ce que le ne luy aye plus d'aucme chose qu'il ne comprit qu'il ay voulu en l'acquérir. Car il le muespécifie & la remecence de Sacré que sont lain, cela me fera croyer que bon assis a été aussi mis dans le cours d'un homme, qui auroit les mene sages que j'ai maintenain; & je prins de la occasion d'oger que mes opinions ne fent point trop efféminées de ce que dite le bon fere, polis que en luy sont ensuy la possible, comme il est, elles ne laissent pas de luy etre fi familiers. Et il vous avy voulu écrire ceci tout au long afin que vous fachiez combien il vous aye d'obligation de l'honneur de fa connaissance, car il fay que c'est principalement à vous que le doy...