

The origins of Holtrop's pocket atlas are very complex. During the second half of the eighteenth century some very similar sets of miniature maps (about 120 x 95 mm.) were engraved for several publishers active in Amsterdam, whose imprints appear in the title cartouches. The titles and imprints are in Dutch, with the exception of five of the earliest maps which have the titles and imprints in French. There were forty-eight altogether and they are listed by Cornelis Koeman with full details of their titles, imprints and engravers' signatures: *Atlantes Neerlandici, volume vi, supplement*. 1985 (pages 12/15).



They were produced at a rate of one per year as illustrations for almanacs (*Historische, geographische, konst en reis almanach*) and Amsterdam University Library has a good collection. Five examples of them were sold at auction in Leiden in 2009 (Burgersdijk & Niermans, November 2009, lots 1027, 1028 & 1029). However, the maps are better known from some other scarce works: a geographical textbook for schoolchildren by Abraham Arent van der Meersch, various composite atlases without title-pages, and finally a titled pocket atlas issued towards the end of the century by Willem Holtrop (1751-1835), who was a major publisher in the city. The composite atlases do not appear to have the same contents. Their format varies a lot too, with some having the maps bound at the centre-fold, others bound flat in oblong and some being large paper copies with very wide margins, so their size ranges from 110 x 80 to 180 x 230 mm.

Their story would seem to start in 1747 when Christiaan A. Sepp drew, engraved, signed and dated a world map for publisher Arent van Huissteen. Subsequently four

further maps were engraved for him but by Jan van Jagen: Europe; the Low Countries; Asia; Africa (see above). Huissteen died about 1751 but Jagen continued to engrave the plates and the map of America has the imprint of his widow and son. Six more maps followed with the imprint of Gerard van Huissteen, presumably their son: Portugal (see below); Spain; France; Italy; British Isles; Germany.



The twelve Huissteen plates then passed on to the publisher Steven van Esveldt, who in 1765 issued a schoolbook which was illustrated with just eight of them: World; Europe; Asia; Africa; America; France; British Isles; Germany; plus a somewhat larger Rhineland map drawn, engraved and signed by Sepp but without any imprint. In the meantime Esveldt produced a second set of eleven maps of European countries, all with his imprint but lacking any engraver's signature, presumably because he engraved them himself: Switzerland; Savoy & Piedmont; Venice; Papal States; Naples & Sicily; Sweden; Denmark & Norway; Poland; Muscovy (see below); Hungary; Turkey in Europe.

An untitled composite atlas (120 x 80 mm.) from about 1770 is known which consists of these twenty four maps (Reiss & Sohn, October 2010, lot 3215). Plates mostly relating to the Netherlands from a similar series engraved by Jagen for Theodorus Craijenschoot's almanach (see 1790a), were also sometimes included in the untitled composite atlases. The earliest example may well be a small oblong volume of about 1771 with twenty one maps, plus thirteen of Craijenschoot's dated 1762-1770 (Bubb Kuyper, November 2010, lot 4223).

Esveldt subsequently added five Asian maps to his set: Turkey in Asia; Persia; Indochina; Mogol Empire; Indostan. Two untitled atlases (140 x 100 mm.) from about



1775 are known with all these twenty-nine maps plus others from the Craijenschoot series, but trimmed and mounted (Leiden University Library, atlas 697 & Bubb Kuyper, November 2012, lot 4971). Another four plates were the last to carry Esveldt's imprint: Siberia; China; Japan; Part of Africa adjacent to the Gulf of Guinea.



He died just prior to his daughter's wedding in 1776. His widow ran the publishing house for some time after his death. She was eventually joined by her son-in-law Willem Holtrop and after a few years he took over the business completely. Four maps have their joint imprint (*Te Amsterdam bij de Wed. van Esveldt en Holtrop*): Ceylon; Indonesia; Moluccas; South Africa (see Introduction 5), which appeared in the almanac for 1781.

Holtrop issued a new edition of Meersch's book in 1781 with nine more maps: Low Countries; Portugal; Spain; Italy; Switzerland; Sweden; Denmark & Norway; Poland; Hungary. He removed the date from the world map and replaced the Huissteen and Esveldt names with just his surname. More of Esveldt's plates received this treatment and a composite work (140 x 95 mm.) has tiny engravings from his almanachs and twenty-six maps in this second state: *Histoire Romaine* (Henri Godts, March 2014, lot 237).

Holtrop also started another set of plates with his own imprint in the title cartouches, (*Te Amsterdam bij W. Holtrop*). These were drawn, engraved, signed and dated by Hendrik Klockhoff: Guinea dated 1782; Ethiopia 1784; West Barbary 1785; East Barbary 1786; Egypt 1787; Arabia 1788; Greenland and the Kuril Islands, both dated 1789; U.S.A. 1791; Gulf of Mexico 1792; North-east part of South America 1793.

Three more untitled composite atlases apparently date from the 1780s:

- (180 x 230 mm.) 40 maps, latest dated 1785 (Leiden University Library, atlas 652);
- (140 x 100 mm.) 41 maps, last one dated 1786 (New York Public Library, KF 179);
- (200 x 140 mm.) 43 maps including Greenland dated 1789 but lacking Asia, and was broken by an American dealer (Old World Auctions, May 2003, lot 595).

About 1794 Holtrop finally published a pocket atlas with a title-page and the complete series of forty-eight maps. Variant issues are known which include extra maps and one in Leiden University Library has seventeen of the Crajenschot maps and three more plates engraved by Klockhoff but with the imprint of Arend Fokke, who had been apprenticed to Esveldt as a teenager: The Netherlands with Brabant, Flanders, etc. 1784; United Netherlands 1785; Utrecht 1787. Another variant copy, with a total of seventy-six maps was sold at auction in Brussels in 2017, with a hammer price of only €800.

Examples of these maps, atlases and books mentioned above are all hard to find but fortunately a facsimile edition of Holtrop's *Zak-atlas* has been published, with an introduction by Jan W.H. Werner and all the forty-eight maps (Weesp, Robas, 1994).

*Geographisch hand-boekje voor de jeugd.* Amsterdam, Steven van Esveldt, 1765 (Amsterdam University Library); Amsterdam, Willem Holtrop, 1781 (Amsterdam University Library & Newberry Library, Chicago).

*Zak-atlas, of leidsman des reizigers / Atlas portatif, ou Guide du voyageur.* Amsterdam, Willem Holtrop, (1794). (Amsterdam University Library, 762.G.22; British Library, Maps C.24.a.41; Leiden University Library, atlas 705; The Romantic Agony, November 2017, lot 788).

