



Dirck de Bray: KortOnderweijs van het Boeckenbinden
A Short Instruction in the Binding of Books

Edited by Koert van der Horst and Clemens de Wolf

Translated by Harry Lake

Uithoorn; Atelier de Ganzenweide 2012, 6.75 x 9.5 inches, hardcover, 151 pages, ISBN 978-90-77837-11-5, Euro 39.00 in sheets, Euro 49.00 bound.

Dirck de Bray's *A Short Instruction in the Binding of Books* is the earliest known Dutch book-binding manual. Written in 1658, it was first published in 1977. This is a new edition that, as the preface explains, has been "polished up and refined", "reworked and extended" successfully, I would say.

It is an intriguing book for a binder or anyone interested in binding and the history of book-binding. There is an informative preface and the forty page introduction with notes describes the historical setting as well as the author and the subject. As a physical object, it is laid out in a way that invites you in for an investigation.

The directions given by de Bray are sometimes precise and sometimes general, but a binder could follow them and reproduce the 'spitsel' structure described. It seems very similar to other early vellum bindings except, at first glance, I would have assumed it had no boards and was limp, particularly for such a small book. I have not gone through the manual step-by-step and would love to hear from someone who really knows this style of binding and how it might differ from other Western European countries at this time. The introduction does clearly describe the original manuscript and binding in pages 34-39. This gives one another resource for following de Bray's directions.

The original manuscript consists of pages that are 3.75 x just over 3 inches. It is bound in vellum with a gold dot at each of the four corners and a single gilt decorative tool in the center of the front and back boards. This same center tool is repeated in gold on the endpapers of the bound copy of this 2012 publication that lays out the English translation, the Dutch translation, the actual text and the facsimile page. The four columns from left to right in each open spread make comparison enjoyable as well as easy. It is printed clearly in Garamond Premier Pro. on GardapatKiara 115gsm. paper which has given the facsimile pages depth without being too shiny for the rest of the text. The drawings are detailed and often colored. The accompanying English explanations point out some amusing and interesting details.

This is short notice everyone! *There will be an exhibition of bindings of this text later this year and if you hurry you could just get a binding done and in to the exhibition by November 3rd, 2012! Below is the information and I strongly suggest if you have the time to spare to enter this event. Sheets can be purchased online at:*

~~www.ganzenweide.nl~~ www.ganzenweide.nl

And here is a brief description of some of the exhibition details:

The Archive of the Dutch province of Noord Holland and the Dutch Handbookbinding Foundation will exhibit the original booklet *A short instruction in the binding of books* by Dirck de Bray (1658) from 8 December 2012 till 5 January 2013. In addition to this, other works of de Bray, such as woodblock prints en illustrations, will be exhibited. In a reconstructed 17th century bookbinder shop demonstrations will be given between Christmas and New Year.

Buyers of the signatures of the amended and updated reprint of 2012 of the book on Dirck de Bray by K. van er Horst and C. de Wolf, will be given the opportunity to exhibit their self bound

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specimen. The books will be displayed in closed glass displays. The number of books to be exhibited is limited to 56. A committee of two experienced bookbinders will make a selection in case more submissions are received. The submissions have to be at our secretariat at the very latest on 3 November 2012.

We are looking into the possibility of a small catalogue of all the submitted books, included the not exhibited books. It should contain an introduction, a general judgment of the submissions and pictures and short descriptions of the books. Contributors to the exhibition will be invited to attend the opening ceremony. A contribution will be asked to cover the expenses for shipment and for the cost of the catalogue.

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Gabrielle Fox is a bookbinder trained in England and now based in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is the author of The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books and is now writing the history of Larspur Press.
