

National Background: Netherlands 2015

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The Koninklijke Bibliotheek provides a survey of libraries and related organizations in the Netherlands on its website. Note that not all mentioned libraries hold manuscripts or even special collections.

A useful guide on special collections in Dutch research libraries is J. Mateboer (ed.), *Repertorium bijzondere collecties. Historische en moderne verzamelingen in universiteitsbibliotheken, de Koninklijke Bibliotheek, de bibliotheek van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen en de bibliotheken met wetenschappelijke steunfunctie*. Den Haag 1997. A digital version of this guide is part of the Bibliopolis website, chapter Collections (use “handschriften” or “archieven” as search terms)

The best guide in English is M.L. Brogan (ed.), *Research Guide to libraries and archives in the Low Countries*. New York [etc] 1990. Please note that information about addresses, opening times, etc. in these tools may be outdated.

The largest manuscript collections are held by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and the university libraries of Leiden and Amsterdam. Other institutions with substantial historical collections (estimations of medieval codices between brackets): Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht (650), Universiteitsbibliotheek Groningen (350) Atheneumbibliotheek Deventer (120), libraries of Museum Meermanno, The Hague (200) and Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht (300).

Content: Libraries, Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam (UBA); Other university libraries with manuscript holdings; Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis/International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (NIOD), Amsterdam; Historisch Documentatiecentrum voor het Nederlands Protestantisme, Bibliotheek van de Vrije Universiteit, Archifenet / Archieven Netherlands (Archival institutions) Amsterdam, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag (KB); Koninklijk huisarchief, Den Haag; Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie (CBG) , Den Haag; Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD), Den Haag; Letterkundig Museum, Den Haag ; Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden (UBL); other libraries with manuscript holdings; Katholiek Documentatiecentrum, Rodboud Universiteit, Nijmegen ; Utrechts Archief ; UBL (Archives Wallonnes) and UBA (Church History Collections), Utrecht

Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam (UBA)

<http://uba.uva.nl/en/home>

Established in 1578 (as municipal library), 1632 (as library of the Athenaeum Illustre), 1877 (as university library). Its Special Collections are housed in a separate location.

Major collections:

- Manuscripts, letters and archives: over 200 medieval manuscripts; literary manuscripts and papers (P.C. Hooft, Multatuli, Frederik van Eeden, Albert Verwey) and papers from Amsterdam scholars, including 500,000 letters

- Church history collections (including manuscripts), related to theology and church history in general, and to the history of Dutch protestantism and the Radical Reformation in particular
- Over 1,000 Hebrew manuscripts in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana
- Book history collections; includes numerous archives of Dutch publishing houses and the booktrade.

Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis/International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam

<http://socialhistory.org/en>

International Institute of Social History

Major holdings:

- over 2,700 archival collections in the field of social history, in particular of the history of the labour movement)

Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (NIOD), Amsterdam

<http://www.niod.nl/en/collections>

Major Holdings:

- Archives and documentation on the history of World War II in the Netherlands and its colonies

Historisch Documentatiecentrum voor het Nederlands Protestantisme, Bibliotheek van de Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

<http://www.hdc.vu.nl/nl/>

Archifenet / Archieven Netherlands (Archival institutions)

<http://www.archiefnet.nl/index.asp?taal=en> / <http://www.archieven.nl/en?milang=en>

Dutch administration has a national, provincial and local level; this triple structure was reflected in the institutions responsible for the keeping of public records: the Algemeen Rijksarchief, twelve Provincial Archives and numerous municipal archives. Recent years, however, saw a clustering of municipal archives into regional archives (e.g. Regionaal archief Leiden) and of provincial and municipal archives (e.g. Zeeuws Archief, Utrechts Archief, Noord-Hollands Archief). In 2002 the Rijksarchief in Zuid-Holland and the Algemeen Rijksarchief merged into the Nationaal Archief. Most of these institutions also hold private archives and manuscripts. To search the Dutch archives one may use two websites:

- [Archiefnet](http://www.archiefnet.nl) – Dutch archives listed and linked by provinces and by towns (A-Z)
- [Archieven.nl](http://www.archieven.nl) – accesses over 14,000 inventories of some 30 archival institutions

Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag (KB)

<http://www.kb.nl/en>

Established in 1798, incorporating the former library of the stadholders of the House of Orange-Nassau and of several governmental institutions. An important part of the collection is constituted by the loan from the Royal Academy of Sciences (1937). After 1945 the KB developed into the National Library of the Netherlands, with a coordinating and facilitating role for Dutch research libraries.

Major collections:

- Medieval manuscripts (1,500), including 450 illuminated manuscripts, also substantial numbers of liturgical manuscripts and manuscripts in Middle Dutch
- Post-medieval manuscripts (5,000), including over 500 alba amicorum, 130,000 letters and personal collections.
- The collection post-medieval manuscripts also incorporates more or less significant separate documents concerning Dutch history (national, regional or local), literature and law

Koninklijk huisarchief, Den Haag

<http://www.koninklijkhuis.nl/encyclopedie/organisatie/koninklijk-huisarchief/>

Major holdings:

- Royal archives, comprising the Oranges' personal archives as well as their library, photographic archives and art collection

Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie (CBG), Den Haag

<http://www.cbg.nl/index.php/EN?taal=EN>

Major holdings:

- genealogical and heraldic collections and documentation

Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD), Den Haag

<https://rkd.nl/en/>

Major holdings:

- archives and documentation pertaining to Dutch art

Letterkundig Museum, Den Haag

<http://www.letterkundigmuseum.nl/>

Major holdings:

- literary archives
- manuscripts (including over 1,000,000 letters)
- other materials (e.g. photographs, paintings, paper cuttings, objects, audiovisual recordings) of over 6,000 authors from 1750 onwards

Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden (UBL)

<http://www.library.leiden.edu/>

Established in 1587. Acquired a large part of its manuscripts through private collectors, mostly scholars, whose libraries were bought or received as a gift. The Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde (founded 1766) deposited its library in UBL in 1876, which includes an important collection of Dutch manuscripts and papers.

Major collections:

- Western manuscripts: medieval codices (2,000, fragments excluded), comprising over 100 dating from the 9th century and 500 in Middle Dutch; modern manuscripts, including papers of Leiden scholars, lecture notes and alba amicorum of students, literary papers, extensive letter collections
- Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta: database with descriptions of over 11,000 Middle Dutch manuscript kept all over the world
- Oriental manuscripts in more than 100 languages, mostly originating from the Middle East and South East Asia
- University archives (16th-20th century)
- Archives from the Walloon Churches in the Netherlands (16th-20th century), Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde (18th-20th century) and from the publishing houses Bohn and Sijthoff (19th-20th century)

Item and collection can be accessed via our Catalogue (Tab Special Collections)

Other university libraries with manuscript holdings

- [Universiteitsbibliotheek Vrije Universiteit](#), Amsterdam (UBVU)
- [Universiteitsbibliotheek Groningen](#) (UBG)
- [Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht](#) (UBU)

Katholiek Documentatiecentrum, Rodboud Universiteit, Nijmegen

<http://www.ru.nl/kdc-english/>

Major holdings:

- archives and documentation pertaining the Roman Catholic institutions and persons since 1800

Utrechts Archief

<http://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl/english>

Major holdings:

- nearly 26 kilometers of archival documents
- governmental records of the city and province of Utrecht and private archives
- records of national religious institutes and the Dutch Railways
- nearly 500.000 maps, drawings, prints and photographs

<http://www.hdc.vu.nl/>

UBL (Archives Wallonnes) and UBA (Church History Collections), Utrecht
<https://www.catharijneconvent.nl/>

Major holdings:

- medieval religious manuscripts formerly collected by the Bisschoppelijk Museum Haarlem, Seminarie Warmond, Aartsbisschoppelijk Museum and Oud-Katholiek Museum in Utrecht