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The Golden Mean of Languages

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The Golden Mean of Languages

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Forging Dutch and French in the Early Modern Low Countries
(1540-1620)

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on the authority of the
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and in accordance with
the decision by the College of Deans.

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Contents

Note to the reader	9
Prologue	11
1. Introduction. Fascinating Multilingualism	15
1.1. Introduction	15
<i>Illustration, Purification, Construction, Standardization</i>	15
<i>Multilingual Research Axis</i>	20
<i>Debate</i>	22
<i>Language Fascination and Interconnectedness</i>	23
1.2. Scope and definitions	26
<i>Periodization</i>	27
<i>The Low Countries</i>	29
<i>Languages</i>	30
1.3. Methods and Sources	32
<i>Approaching Metalinguistic Discussions</i>	33
<i>Lieux</i>	34
<i>Sources</i>	37
1.4. Outline	39
2. The Multilingual Low Countries	43
2.1. Introduction	43
<i>Preludes to the Discussions</i>	44
<i>Context: 1540–1620</i>	47
<i>Dutch and French</i>	50
2.2. Ruling Languages	54
<i>Administration</i>	54
<i>Jurisdiction</i>	58
<i>The Court and Aristocracy</i>	61
2.3. The Languages of the Muses	64
<i>Literary languages</i>	65
<i>Music</i>	68
<i>Academia and the Artes</i>	70
2.4. International Communication	72
<i>Trade</i>	73
<i>Diplomacy and the Army</i>	77
2.5. Conclusion	79
3. Trending Topics	81

3.1. Introduction	81
<i>After Babel</i>	83
<i>Monolingual and Multilingual Solutions</i>	85
3.2. Latin and the Vernacular	90
<i>Issues with Latin</i>	90
<i>The Latin Paradigm</i>	92
3.3. Collecting, Comparing, Competing	94
<i>Collection Mania</i>	95
<i>Comparison and Genealogy</i>	98
<i>Patria and Competition</i>	100
3.4. Making the Vernacular Great Again	103
<i>Two Translation Methods</i>	103
<i>Orthographic Quarrels</i>	105
3.5. Purity and Eloquence	109
<i>French: Moderate Stances</i>	109
<i>English: Smelly Words</i>	112
<i>German: Fruit-Bearing Discussions</i>	113
<i>Escume, Schuym, Schaum, Spuma, Scum</i>	115
3.6. Conclusion.....	117
4. French Schools	119
4.1. Introduction.....	119
<i>Teaching Languages, Teaching Language Reflection</i>	121
<i>Peeter Heyns</i>	123
4.2. Defending Language Learning.....	130
<i>Valorising Plurilingualism</i>	130
<i>Defending the Patria</i>	134
4.3. Making and Teaching the Rules.....	136
<i>Traditional French Spelling</i>	137
<i>Innovating Dutch Spelling</i>	142
<i>Heyns's Exceptional Grammar</i>	147
4.4. Teaching Purity and Eloquence.....	149
<i>Trivial Loanwords</i>	150
<i>Dictionaries: Expanding and Correcting Vocabularies</i>	153
<i>Translating Style, Translation Styles</i>	158
4.5. Conclusion.....	160
5. Calvinist Churches	163
5.1. Introduction	163

<i>Cohesion across Languages</i>	165
<i>Philips of Marnix, Lord of Sainte-Aldegonde</i>	166
5.2. Translating Psalms, Building Communities.....	172
<i>Calvinism and the Psalms</i>	173
<i>Utenhove: Unifying Dutch</i>	175
<i>Datheen: Equalizing French and Dutch</i>	178
5.3. Undoing Babel in Marnix’s Psalms	183
<i>Uniting French, Dutch, and Hebrew</i>	184
<i>Stressing Word Stress</i>	194
<i>Bilingual Harmony</i>	196
5.4. Dangerous Mixtures	198
<i>Satirical Mixing in the Biënkorf and the Tableav</i>	199
<i>Slandering Catholic Language</i>	203
5.5. Conclusion.....	206
6. Printing Houses	209
6.1. Introduction	209
<i>Supplying Languages to the Market</i>	211
<i>Christophe Plantin</i>	212
6.2. Printing for the <i>Patria</i>	216
<i>Language Competition</i>	216
<i>Loanwords, Sales Strategies, and Patriotism</i>	219
6.3. Orthography: A Storm in a Teacup?	223
<i>The Non-Issue of Spelling</i>	224
<i>Plantin and the French Querelle</i>	226
6.4. Engaging the Public	231
<i>Stimulating Collecting</i>	232
<i>Enabling Observation and Reflection</i>	235
6.5. Conclusion.....	237
7. Chambers of Rhetoric.....	239
7.1. Introduction	239
<i>Multilingual Roots</i>	242
<i>Peeter Heyns</i>	245
7.2. The Perks of Plurilingualism.....	249
<i>Dutch First, Plurilingualism Second</i>	249
<i>Language Competition</i>	252
7.3. Studying the Vernacular.....	256
<i>Theory and Practice</i>	256

<i>Between Rhetoric and Language Study: Enargie</i>	261
7.4. The Rules of Dutch Poetry	263
<i>Orthographical Awareness</i>	265
<i>Critical Stances on Loanwords</i>	268
<i>Innovative Metre</i>	276
7.5. Conclusion.....	279
8. Conclusion.....	281
Samenvatting.....	289
Résumé.....	297
Appendix	305
Bibliography.....	309
Primary sources	309
Secondary sources	328
Index nominum	391
About the author.....	397

Note to the reader

All quotations from primary source material, including both manuscript and printed sources, retain the original spelling and capitalization. Place names have been anglicized. For names of persons, the custom in modern studies has been followed. Punctuation has not been regularized, with the sole exception of the virgule (/), which has been replaced by a comma. Abbreviations and contractions have been expanded, and the added letters are indicated in italics. References to folio numbers make use of the symbols used in the original source, including symbols such as ‘π’, ‘?’, ‘*’, and ‘†’. All unattributed translations are my own. Biblical citations are taken from the 1611 King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

Prologue

When Thomas More's *Utopia* was printed in 1516, the English humanist described the language situation of the fictional insular community as follows:

They study all the branches of learning in their native tongue, which is not deficient in terminology or unpleasant in sound and adapts itself as well as any to the expression of thought.¹

Disciplinas ipsorum lingua perdiscunt. Est enim neque verborum inops nex insuavis auditu nec ulla fidelior animi interpret est.²

More sketches a monolingual ideal in which all the inhabitants of the island were able to understand each other. Their language allowed them to clearly express all their thoughts and opinions, as its vocabulary was rich enough to cover any topic.

It is striking to note how different this Utopian language ideal was from the context in which More's book was printed. The first edition was published in Leuven, in the multilingual Low Countries. Whereas in the largest part of the region Dutch dialects were spoken as a first language, it also contained an area where varieties of French were the native tongue. These dialects presented significant differences, so that even within the Dutch or French language no uniformity existed. Next to these two native vernacular tongues, Latin continued to play a large role in several domains of public life. In fact, most printed books were published in Latin, even though it became increasingly possible to study 'all the branches of learning in one's native tongue'.³ This language situation came under scrutiny in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Although scholarly research has focused mainly on the defences and standardization of the Dutch language, the sixteenth-century Low Countries witnessed a much broader fascination with language and communication. Diverse answers were given to a wide range of questions: how to deal with the complex multilingual situation in the Low Countries? Was the dialectal variety a blessing or part of the Babylonian curse? Should one particular language or dialect be privileged? And how could the local French and Dutch vernaculars be improved?

The reflections on language in the Low Countries took place not just in Dutch-speaking circles, but also in French- and Latin-speaking ones. Even more importantly, the Dutch

¹ More 2002, 64.

² More 1995, 112, 154-156.

³ More 2002, 64.

language was not the only topic of debate, as interest was also shown in other languages, particularly French. This aspect has been neglected in the monolingual research tradition, even though it is a logical consequence of the fact that the context in which the discussions took place was fundamentally multilingual. French and Dutch co-existed and interacted with each other in many professional and social domains. The aristocracy, for example, was primarily French-speaking. William of Orange himself—the *pater patriae*, or father of the fatherland, who led the Dutch Revolt—spoke better French than Dutch. The culture of the Low Countries was not Dutch, but multilingual.

By studying the language debates in the early modern Low Countries from the point of view of the local multilingual situation, insight is gained into the way in which every day multilingual experiences incited a diverse range of questions and answers. In specific professional and social environments, such as printing houses, the workforce was to some degree plurilingual, and was continuously confronted with the issue of communication and language. It was often in places like these that reflections and discussions on language arose.

Four such locales will receive special attention in order to reveal how they incited individuals to discuss particular language-related topics. Among them are the above-mentioned printing houses, but also French schools, Calvinist churches, and chambers of rhetoric. In order to trace the connections between daily experiences and views on language in the Low Countries, each of these four places is approached through a particular key individual whose life and participation in the discussions on language will form the starting point for further enquiries on the reflections that took place in this environment.

The language debates in the Low Countries were rooted in the local language context, but they also formed part of a larger early modern Europe-wide fascination with language. Everywhere, specimens of historical and contemporary languages were collected, compared, studied, and discussed. Many supporters of the Dutch vernacular took up arguments and ideas from the discussions that had been going on elsewhere, all the while evaluating to what extent they were also applicable to the Dutch tongue. At the same time, a sense of competition can be discerned between the different countries of Europe, as people started to compare and evaluate the languages of the region.

Within the broad Europe-wide fascination with language in the sixteenth century, the particular multilingual situation in the Low Countries gave rise to specific questions and answers. These concerned both Dutch and French, and occasionally even other languages. Through the focus on specific multilingual places, a wide range of voices can be heard, while connections can be seen with everyday language experiences. Meanwhile, the relationship with

the discussions elsewhere in Europe will not be forgotten. New light will thus be shed on these debates in the Dutch- and French-speaking Low Countries. The discussions are treated in all their diversity, rather than as directed solely at the uniformization of Dutch.

1. Introduction. Fascinating Multilingualism

1.1. Introduction

The year 1546 constitutes a pivotal moment in the history of the Dutch language. It was in this year that Ghent schoolmaster and printer Joos Lambrecht published his *Naembouck*. Not only was this the first alphabetically ordered dictionary with a variant of Dutch as its source language, it is also considered to be the first purist dictionary of this vernacular. As such, the *Naembouck* is part of a sixteenth-century trend in the Low Countries, that focused on the rejection of foreign—usually French or Latin—loanwords. Needless to say, no historical overview of the Dutch tongue fails to mention him. However, most publications tell only half of the story, making it seem like a monolingual feat focused solely on the promotion of Dutch. In fact, the *Naembouck* was a Dutch-French dictionary designed for the instruction of the latter tongue. Moreover, Lambrecht used a new way of spelling both Dutch and French words that was strongly inspired by French orthographical treatises.

The *Naembouck* is not a product of simple veneration of Dutch, but of an inquisitive mind interested in the languages he encountered in his everyday life. The sixteenth-century Low Countries were, indeed, fundamentally multilingual. While Latin continued to be an important player in the interregional, scholarly, and religious fields, the vernacular realm saw Dutch and French dialects in constant contact. Although French was the native tongue in a smaller geographic region, it played an important role as an aristocratic, administrative, judicial, and interregional language in the Dutch-speaking areas. Lambrecht, as both a teacher of French and a printer in the city of Ghent, was confronted with this situation on a daily basis. It was in this context that he, along with many others, started thinking about the local languages of his region. From the 1540s onwards, this culminated in intense reflections on the status of Dutch and French and on the form in which they should be forged.

Illustration, Purification, Construction, Standardization

The sixteenth century was marked by the production of a large number of dictionaries, orthographical treatises, and grammars of many of the languages of Europe. Everywhere, people were fascinated with language. While many studies of classical and exotic languages, such as Persian, appeared, a great deal of work was done on the local vernaculars as well.¹

¹ The Persian language was discussed by humanists, such as Franciscus Raphelengius and Justus Lipsius. Van Hal 2011.

Because of the fragmentation of language departments at universities that has existed since the nineteenth century, those interested in this early modern language fascination have largely approached the topic from the point of view of one particular language. To this day, only one monograph, written in the 1950s, deals with the early-modern discussions about the vernacular which took place in the Low Countries: Lode Van den Branden's *Het streven naar verheerlijking, zuivering en opbouw van het Nederlands in de 16e eeuw*.²

While he deserves praise for identifying large quantities of sources dealing with the Dutch language, Van den Branden's interpretations were guided by monolingual blinders. He summarized the versatile discussions on language in the sixteenth-century Low Countries through the triptych of 'illustration, purification, and construction of Dutch' also mentioned in his title. The manifold reflections have thus been reduced to three strands which were, indeed, strongly present. The first term, 'illustration' ('verheerlijking'), receives no explanation by Van den Branden, but seems to target the same sense as Joachim Du Bellay's 1549 manifest on the French vernacular, *La deffence, et illvstration de la Langue Francoyse*.³ 'Illustration' in this context signifies rendering something—in this case, language—illustrious. 'Purification' ('zuivering') is the call for an exclusion of loanwords from other languages.⁴ 'Construction' ('opbouw'), lastly, targets the creation of a standard, regularized, and uniform language that is suitable for any speech domain, be it literary or scholarly.⁵

Van den Branden's tripartite view, which is often repeated in more recent studies, indeed represents a part of the opinions that were put forward by sixteenth-century language debaters.⁶ Many individuals praised Dutch, called for a rejection of words that had been borrowed from French and Latin, and proposed certain rules. Van den Branden neglects, however, a range of nuanced viewpoints and contradicting statements. He thus created the false appearance that the Dutch language was moving in a clear direction.

It was Van den Branden's focus on calls for purification especially that generated a distorted image of the diverse sixteenth-century discussions. He ignored those holding a different view, marking his book by a confirmation bias. This led to the common misconception among scholars after Van den Branden that the anti-loanword movement was widely supported

² *The Pursuit of Illustration, Purification, and Construction of Dutch in the 16th Century*. Van den Branden 1967. An earlier edition of this book was printed in 1956.

³ Du Bellay 1549. I am grateful to Peter Burke for this suggestion.

⁴ Van den Branden's definition of purification is a narrow one, focusing on loanwords alone and not on the exclusion of unwanted elements in general. For the different possible definitions of the term 'purism', see: Langer & Davies 2005, 3-4; Langer & Nesse 2012, 608.

⁵ Van den Branden 1967.

⁶ See, for instance: Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 186, 191, 195; Jansen 2017, 6.

and knew little resistance. Marco Prandoni, for instance, assumed that the sixteenth-century Low Countries knew an ‘obsession of purity’ or even ‘an anti-French crusade in language’.⁷ These are overstatements: most language debaters had a nuanced opinion on loanwords, accepting them under certain conditions.

Furthermore, many of those who supported borrowing explained their position with argumentations that reveal a conscious reflection on the nature of their mother tongue. These discourses were in no sense inferior to the ideas professed by opponents of loanwords. Both views could stem from a wish to construct Dutch. By failing to value defences of borrowing as attempts to support Dutch, Van den Branden ignored the fundamental contradiction in his own approach, one that equals only purification with construction.

The narrow focus on the illustration, purification, and construction of Dutch further casts aside the general fascination with language which was prevalent at that time. This fascination expressed itself in many more ways—for instance, as enquiries into the differences between languages, their particular characteristics, their histories, and so on. Notably, Van den Branden’s limited view fails to acknowledge the presence of an interest in languages other than Dutch: some inhabitants of the Low Countries, including native speakers of Dutch, also praised French and designed rules for its use.

Wishing to contextualize his findings, Van den Branden pointed out three major supposed causes of the debates: Renaissance, humanism, and patriotism.⁸ Once again, there is a grain of truth in this presentation of events, while at the same time each of the three themes is problematic in its own way.⁹ There was no rupture with medieval reflections on language, nor were these reflections confined to individuals with academic training. Toon Van Hal, a student of early modern language comparison by humanist scholars, concluded that many of them interacted with people from outside academic circles.¹⁰ The fact that we know few examples of Latin texts commenting on vernacular treatises is, perhaps, caused in part by the fact that scholarly interest in mutual Latin-vernacular exchange is a relatively recent development.¹¹

⁷ Prandoni 2014, 188, 191.

⁸ On the link between patriotism and language debates in the early modern period, see also: Chiappelli 1985; Noordegraaf 1987; Van der Wal 1994; Gosman 1996, esp. 66.

⁹ Rutten 2013.

¹⁰ Van Hal 2010a. See also: Janssens 1985; Waswo 1987, 136; Formigari 2004, 100-101; Deneire 2012; Leonhardt 2013, 194.

¹¹ See the following two projects of Jan Bloemendal: ‘Latin and Vernacular Cultures: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Netherlands, ca. 1510–1621’ (2004–2009), which resulted in a volume published in 2015, and ‘Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular’ (2010–2014), which led to the publication of a collection of articles in 2014. Bloemendal 2014; Deneire 2014a; Bloemendal 2015. See further: Bloemendal, Van Dixhoorn, & Strietman 2011.

When reading early modern reflections on language, the notion of ‘fatherland’ is indeed recurrent, as are expressions of competition with other regions and languages.¹² Van den Branden’s idea of patriotism, however, is one that rejects other languages and that is only interested in the French model in so far as it can be surpassed. This narrow conception of love for the fatherland does injustice to the open-minded and multilingual ways in which inhabitants of the Low Countries, such as Lambrecht, supported both their local languages. The debates on the French language stood in continuity with those on Dutch, as ideas and arguments circulated and were assessed critically before they were adapted and adopted.

Van den Branden’s work was continued by Geert Dobbets and Frans Claes. Dobbets extensively studied the grammar books and orthographical treatises of Dutch that were written in the sixteenth century.¹³ Claes studied dictionaries containing Dutch composed at that time and did important cross-over work in comparing them with French dictionaries, thus paving the way for multilingual approaches.¹⁴ Both Dobbets and Claes, however, were interested in the emergence of particular observations and ideas on Dutch rather than in the debate surrounding these ideas.

Over the past century, histories of Dutch have appeared at regular intervals, generally tracing the development of standard Dutch.¹⁵ This approach, applied by, among others, Guy Janssens, Ann Marynissen, Nicoline van der Sijs, and Roland Willemyns, has been very successful in appealing to members of the broader public wishing to learn the story of their mother tongue. By their very nature, however, these works have shown little interest in the fundamentally multilingual context in which the Dutch language evolved.

A study by Ulrike Vogl on the terminology used in a selection of these overview works even revealed that they harbour a negative attitude towards contact with French and Latin.¹⁶ Guy Janssens and Ann Marynissen, for instance, described French as a ‘threat’ to Dutch, and in general the term ‘Frenchification’ is often used to pejoratively describe French influence on the presumed purity and homogeneity of Dutch.¹⁷ Perhaps this negative stance towards

¹² On the historicity of the notion of national pride and its connection to one or multiple languages, see: Bell 1995; Bell 2001; Cowling 2012.

¹³ Bakker & Dobbets 1977; Dobbets 1984; Dobbets 1986; Dobbets 1992a; Dobbets 2001.

¹⁴ Claes 1970a; Claes 1975; Claes 1981; Claes 1992.

¹⁵ Van der Wal 1995a; Van der Sijs 2004; Janssens & Marynissen 2005; Van der Sijs 2006; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008; Willemyns 2013.

¹⁶ This negative modern view on language mixing neglects the fact that, at heart, no modern language ever knew a state of purity, as they are all, to some degree, derived from pre-existing ones. Langer & Nesse 2012, 609-610.

¹⁷ Vogl 2015. See also the work of Nicoline van der Sijs, for instance, who writes that ‘only at the end of the nineteenth century’ was the ideal of a legal language free of loanwords ‘finally followed’. ‘Pas eind negentiende eeuw vond de Nederlandstalige rechtstaat van De Groot dan eindelijk navolging’. Van der Sijs 2004, 329-330. Einar Haugen, Peter Burke, and David Cowling have studied the negative view on loanwords hidden in the modern

influence from other languages, in combination with the strong mark made by Van den Branden on the field, explains why historians of Dutch have had a tendency to emphasize historical calls for the rejection of loanwords.¹⁸

The fields of historical linguistics and the history of language were, until recently, marked by a preoccupation with the process of standardization.¹⁹ They thus traced the movement from a plurality of language forms to one uniform language through a series of processes identified by Einar Haugen. The four core processes of standardization are, first, the selection of a preferred language variety. Then follows the codification of this variety, being the establishment of a set of rules through grammars and dictionaries. The next step is an expansion of the function of this language form in public and private domains, resulting finally in the acceptance of the selected and codified variety by the community.²⁰

Over the past few years, historical linguists like Marijke van der Wal, who previously placed an emphasis on standardization, have come to realize that this teleological notion does an injustice to the variety of historical reality.²¹ Their research has now shifted to account for the diversity in historical language use.²² Such diversity was also present in metalinguistic discourse, that is, reflections on language, on what the rules of a language should be or in what contexts it should be used.²³

Indeed, the quadruple step-by-step process towards standardization proposed by Haugen represents, rather, a set of topics that were simultaneously under heavy debate in the sixteenth-century Low Countries and about which no consensus existed: Which language or dialect was the best? Which rules should apply to this language or dialect? And in what contexts should it be used? Research on language history needs to move away from the fiction of a unilinear story and show the early modern reflections on language in their full complexity.

A literary historical approach could help to do justice to these debates. After all, they largely played out within the literary domain and for the most part concerned questions

terminology on borrowing in general, including the terms ‘loanword’, ‘borrowing’, and ‘purification’ themselves. Haugen 1950; Burke 1998; Cowling 2014. On the term ‘Frenchification’, see: Frijhoff 1989; Frijhoff 2015.

¹⁸ Various monographs have been devoted to the issue of loanwords in European languages. See, for instance: Salverda de Grave 1920; Van der Sijs 1996; Durkin 2014.

¹⁹ See the titles of the language histories of Marijke van der Wal and Nicoline van der Sijs: *De moedertaal centraal: Standaardisatie-aspecten in de Nederlanden omstreeks 1650* (1995) and *Taal als mensenwerk: Het ontstaan van het ABN* (2004).

²⁰ On the process of standardization, see: Haugen 1966; Joseph 1987; Van der Wal 1995a; Appel & Muysken 2005, 46-55. For additions to Haugen’s four central processes, see: Milroy & Milroy 1991, 26-28.

²¹ Van der Wal 2010; Vogl 2012, 19-20; Watts 2012.

²² See, for instance: Ayres-Bennett 1996; Ayres-Bennett 2004; Van der Wal & Rutten 2013; Rutten & Van der Wal 2014. See also the project ‘Language Dynamics in the Dutch Golden Age’, which studies the variety of language forms within the works of individual authors from the seventeenth century.

²³ On the notion of metalinguistic thought, see: Auroux 1988.

regarding the language of writing. Until now, the early modern issue of language, which is an essential prerequisite for understanding the literary culture of the time, has been studied primarily by historical linguists. This book, which has been written by a literary historian, aims to look at the reflections on language from a literary historical perspective, placing them in their literary context rather than in a temporal development towards modern language forms.

Multilingual Research Axis

In the last few decades, scholars have increasingly ventured to break free from monolingual research traditions.²⁴ Historical multilingualism is now an established field of research, mapping the presence of multiple languages in specific environments, as well as the impact of that presence.²⁵ A general acceptance has emerged of Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the 'inter-animation of languages'.²⁶ With this term Bakhtin referred to the heightened awareness of and interest in language caused by the intensity of language contact in the early modern period. He stated that through the 'complex intersection of languages, dialects, idioms, and jargons the literary and linguistic consciousness of the Renaissance was formed'.²⁷

Indeed, it has become more and more clear that the large corpus of sixteenth-century European works studying and reflecting on language cannot be understood without taking into account the multilingualism that characterized this region.²⁸ For the Low Countries, this has been pointed out most importantly by Toon Van Hal, Lambert Isebaert, and Pierre Swiggers in their volume of articles on language studies in the early modern Low Countries.²⁹ Learning to speak or simply encountering another language besides one's mother tongue seems to create a certain distance with regard to the native language that allows one to question its form and nature.³⁰ Of course, language comparison is not even possible without the knowledge of at least two languages, and thus by definition is unavailable to monolinguals. In the Low Countries, the

²⁴ Braumüller & Ferraresi 2003; Burke 2004; Peersman, Rutten, & Vosters 2015. This development is also visible in recent projects such as the project 'Medieval Francophone Literary Cultures Outside France' (2011-2015), led by Simon Gaunt. Claire Kappler and Suzanne Thiolier-Méjean have even ventured to break free from the disproportionate focus on Europe in their volume on medieval multilingualism: Kappler & Thiolier-Méjean 2008.

²⁵ Forster 1970; Trotter 2000; Knauth 2007; Frijhoff 2010; Putter & Busby 2010; Pahta & Nurmi 2011; Classen 2012; Sebba 2012; Hsy 2013; Joby 2014; Classen 2016; Frijhoff 2017a; Frijhoff, Kok Escalle, & Sanchez-Summerer 2017; Pahta, Skaffari, & Wright 2017. See also the project 'Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies' (2016-2020), led by Wendy Ayres-Bennett.

²⁶ In the original Russian text, Bakhtin used the terms 'interaction' and 'interorientation' next to 'inter-animation'. Bakhtin 1984, 470-471; Burke 2007, 36.

²⁷ Bakhtin 1984, 470-471.

²⁸ Delesalle & Mazière 2003, 48-49; Law 2003, 58-60; Burke 2004, 29, 67; Maass 2005, 14-15; Van Rossem 2007, 14; Burke 2009, 31; Van Hal 2010a, 67; Ramakers 2012; Gruber 2014; Saenger 2014; Gallagher 2015, 5-22.

²⁹ Van Hal, Isebaert, & Swiggers 2013a, xii-xiii.

³⁰ Delesalle & Mazière 2003, 48-49; Law 2003, 58-60; Gallagher 2015, 22, 238. See, also: Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985, esp. 3.

multilingualism that could foster language awareness was present on all levels of society. This is no less true for the literary culture in which the language debates took place, despite the fact that the literary histories written on the Low Countries, like language histories, are primarily monolingual.

In light of this realization, there is a need to recontextualize the sixteenth-century debates on the Dutch language and consider them in the light of the existing vernacular situation, which equally included French. This consideration makes it possible—or even logical—for the author of this book, having a background in French literary history, to engage in this study on the literary culture of the Low Countries, thus strengthening the vital connection between French and Dutch literary studies. This book examines the way in which reflections on both vernacular languages of the sixteenth-century Low Countries were connected to and shaped by the local multilingual praxis. Paying attention to the multilingual reality in which these considerations emerged reveals that the sixteenth-century discussions on language in the Low Countries were not monolingual and inward-looking in nature. On the contrary, they were part of a Europe-wide fascination with language characterized by an interest in both local and foreign languages.

The central hypothesis that language encounters sparked reflection and debate in the multilingual Low Countries can be illustrated on a micro-scale by adopting a spatial approach. Zooming in on particular places where individuals dealt with different languages makes it possible to trace the connections between their experiences and the degree and form of their language awareness. A translator of songs might be expected to reflect on tonality and sound structure, while a language teacher would be more interested in pronunciation.

Four sites in particular have been chosen for case studies of how the interaction of people, languages, objects, and practices in a particular environment gave rise to certain questions in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. Each of these environments will be analysed in a separate chapter. They are: French schools, where mostly Dutch-speaking children learned French; Calvinist churches; printing houses; and chambers of rhetoric, fraternities whose members, called rhetoricians, gathered regularly to practise and discuss the art of rhetoric in the vernacular and thus produced many literary works. In all these locales, the multilingualism of the early modern Low Countries was strongly felt and experienced, while language was also a topic for discussion.

To shed light on the everyday experiences and practices within these four environments, key individuals have been chosen who were plurilingual, about whose lives and language experiences some information is known, and who played a central role in discussions on

language. These individuals are: the schoolmaster and rhetorician Peeter Heyns; the printer of French origin Christophe Plantin (Christoffel Plantijn); and the Calvinist leader and psalm translator Philips of Marnix, Lord of Sainte-Aldegonde. All three of them were strongly engaged in the literary circles and culture of their time and wrote their share of literary texts. Their works and lives function as a starting point to examine the four *lieux*. From there, the debates in the environments connected to the key individuals are traced, expanding to their friends, acquaintances, sympathizers, opponents, and predecessors, such as Joos Lambrecht. Through these steps it is shown that the sixteenth-century reflections on language in the Low Countries, which were part of a Europe-wide fascination with language, were shaped by local multilingual experiences.

Debate

Studying the language debates in the Low Countries from the starting point of the historical multilingual situation itself is a first step toward avoiding the pitfalls of teleological studies wishing to trace back the roots of one particular language. Instead of using the Whiggish notion of language progress as a framework for this study, it is the notion of debate that will be applied as a heuristic key to understand the sixteenth-century field of language reflection. This concept allows for an approach that takes into consideration all different voices and opinions, rather than the ones that came out on top. Whereas the term ‘dynamics’ has been proposed to study the interplay of different languages within the literary scene of this period, it hides the individuals behind it.³¹ The concept of debate brings them back to the stage.

Applying the notion of debate, moreover, is consistent with the observation of a culture of discussion in the more general sense in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Low Countries, where discussion was fundamental to society.³² Historians of science have further shown that in this period, knowledge was generated and spread through debate and exchange, while the social element ensured the creation of communities of learning.³³ Not all of the texts under scrutiny had explicit polemical purposes, but they all built on and added to the broader discourse on language that took shape in this period. Adopting the conceptual framework of debate allows one to relate all of these individual expressions of reflection to the shared broader context of early modern language fascination from which they originated. Some authors

³¹ Nauta 2006; Deneire 2014a, 5; Kammerer & Müller 2015, 15.

³² Frijhoff & Spies 1999, 218-224; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 30-33. See also: Conermann 2016, 335-336, 354; Schmid & Hafner 2016, 395-396.

³³ Buys 2015, 31-37. Smith & Findlen 2002, 4-7; Smith, P. H. 2004, 25, 66-67; Harkness 2007, xvii, 6.

introduced an element of play by mocking other language debaters through their rhetorically written contributions. Individuals such as Marnix thus used reflections on language to criticize others, in his case Catholics. His case further shows that the exchanges on language also harboured an ideological aspect. By pursuing the improvement of the language situation in the fatherland, they strove to benefit the common good.

This is a story of plurality and debate rather than of linear progress. It wishes to incorporate diversity, contradictory opinions, and the viewpoints of seemingly marginal figures, instead of tracing the path of the victors.³⁴ It thus also considers supporters of the other vernacular of the country, French. All those who expressed their views on language had a particular vision to improve communication, to find a golden mean among the many proposals for language change, and therefore they all deserve to be heard. These different voices came forth from diverse environments in which specific observations of language and language contact could be made. Combining the central notion of debate with a spatial approach allows the inclusion of previously forgotten and silenced individuals. This approach makes it possible to rewrite the sixteenth-century history of the languages of the Low Countries as one of diversity and multilingualism rather than of standardization and monolingualism.

Language Fascination and Interconnectedness

The sixteenth-century Europe-wide attention to language has been the object of study for an array of historians. Despite various efforts to conceptualize it, no suitable terminology has yet been developed to describe this intensifying early modern interest in all aspects of modern and ancient languages. Here, the notion of ‘fascination with language’ is proposed to describe and refer to the shifting attitude towards language in the early modern period.

Traditionally, the discussions on the form and status of the vernaculars are seen as starting with the Italian *questione della lingua* (debate on language), concerning the question of whether Latin or a vernacular dialect should be used as the language of writing.³⁵ Allegedly, this *questione* ended in the consensus that the Tuscan dialect of the *tre corone* (three crowns)—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—was to be adopted. From Italy, this debate then supposedly spread all over the continent, resulting in the *question de la langue* in France, which in its turn

³⁴ See also: Cerquiglini 2004, 31, 49; Moyer 2006, 131-135, 153.

³⁵ Van der Wal 1995a, 5; Fournel 2015, 34-35. On the *questione della lingua*, see: Migliorini & Griffith 1966, 215-224.

influenced the Dutch *taalkwestie*, the English *language question*, the German *Frage nach der Sprache*, and so forth.³⁶

However, it has become increasingly clear in recent decades that for each of these regions, starting with the Italian case, this depiction of the reflections on language is reductionist.³⁷ The discussions were not just concerned with the defence of the vernaculars against Latin and the selection of the best dialect. They were part of a much wider interest in language, which resulted in publications on the status, forms, characteristics, and histories of a range of ancient and contemporary languages. Attention was paid to the history of individual languages, as well as to the relationships between languages, and their individual structure and sounds.

Terms such as the ‘rise of the vernaculars’, the ‘vernacular revolution’, and the ‘vernacular turn’, which were proposed as equivalents for the ‘language question’, as well as the latter term itself, have all been gradually abandoned in recent decades. This rejection is linked to a growing awareness of the injustice done by such concepts to the diversity of the debates on language.³⁸ Since then, scholars have struggled to find a suitable term to refer to the complex interest in language in this period.

Peter Burke, in his seminal *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (2004), introduced the term ‘discovery of language’ to describe what happened in the domain of language in the sixteenth century.³⁹ With this term, Burke expressly does not wish to imply that in earlier ages language was in an ‘undiscovered’ state and that no one in Antiquity or the Middle Ages was studying language, but aims to accentuate the heightened interest shown in this topic in the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, that is exactly what the term itself risks suggesting. The notion of discovery will not be adopted here, for the precise reason that it cannot disentangle itself from the implication of a breach with earlier centuries.

Instead, the term ‘fascination with language’ is used to describe the changing attitudes towards language in the sixteenth century.⁴⁰ This notion indicates that something was indeed happening in the field of language study, which resulted in a proliferation of writings on the topic. A lively culture of interaction, exchange, and debate on language came into being that

³⁶ Jones 1953; Trudeau 1992, 20-23; Gosman 1996; Tavoni 1998, 14-17; Hüllen 2001a; Trabant 2003, 112-113; Sanson 2013, 245.

³⁷ Richardson 2001; Cohen 2003; Trabant 2003, 86; Burke 2005a, 28-29; Moyer 2006.

³⁸ Percival 1999; Anderson 2006.

³⁹ Burke 2004, 15-16.

⁴⁰ Toon Van Hal, Lambert Isebaert, and Pierre Swiggers used the term ‘language fascination’ (‘taalfascinatie’) in the title of the introduction to their 2013 collection of articles on the study of languages in the early modern Low Countries. However, they did not conceptualize it, using, rather, Burke’s notion of the ‘discovery’ of languages and Van den Branden’s terms ‘construction’ and ‘purification’. Van Hal, Isebaert, & Swiggers 2013a, x, xiv-xv.

was present to a much lesser degree in earlier centuries. People like Marnix started collecting and debating fragments of exotic and ancient languages, while print shops such as Plantin's met the growing demand for works displaying and commenting on languages. The diversity of languages present in the world inspired awe. All languages became objects of study, and the vernacular tongues were presented as sources of pride in a context of interregional competition. Instead of pointing out an opposition with earlier times, the notion of fascination expresses how the already existing interest in language significantly heightened and intensified in this period.

Because of the vastness of the early modern discussions on language on the European continent, students of this topic face the difficult task of clearly delineating and defining the object of their research. Focusing on only a particular part, however, necessarily maintains a level of artificiality. Past scholars chose for the most part to demarcate their topics of research by following modern-day political borders. They were led by teleological approaches and a preoccupation with the idea that rising patriotism equalled closing oneself off to foreign developments. Historians of the French language were in large part preoccupied with what happened in the present Hexagone.⁴¹ Their colleagues working on Dutch—led by the idea of one nation, one language—focused on Dutch alone, not mentioning the fact that the early modern Low Countries were multilingual.⁴² In each case, attention was only paid to foreign influence in as far as it followed the supposed chain of emulation starting with the *questione della lingua*. French emulations of Italian, and Dutch emulations of French were thus emphasized.

Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider have pointed out the pitfalls of confining historical research to the borders of (present-day) nations, terming this approach 'methodological nationalism'.⁴³ A characteristic mistake of methodological nationalism, they state, is to assume the 'collapse of social boundaries with state boundaries'.⁴⁴ For the sixteenth-century Low Countries, this assumption is certainly erroneous. Plantin was a Frenchman who settled down in Antwerp, Heyns fled from Brabant to Germany to Holland, and Marnix's diplomatic travels brought him all over Europe.

The solution to this pitfall offered by Beck and Sznaider, as well as by the founders of the scholarly fields of *Histoire croisée* and Transfer Studies, is multi-perspectivity: studying

⁴¹ See, notably: Brunot 1905; Brunot 1906.

⁴² Van der Wal 1995a; Van der Sijs 2004; Janssens & Marynissen 2005; Van der Sijs 2006; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008; Willemyns 2013.

⁴³ Beck & Sznaider 2006. See also: Marjanen 2009.

⁴⁴ Beck & Sznaider 2006, 3.

topics not only within the set confinements, but also across them, in multiple directions.⁴⁵ Rather than solely studying the influence of French thinkers in the Low Countries, the possibility of reverse influence should also be considered. In this manner, a glimpse of the interconnectedness of the European debates can be caught through a focus on this particular region.

For several decades now, scholars have sought ways to consider the early modern attention to language as a European whole and to break away from methodological nationalism. Marie-Luce Demonet, Jürgen Trabant, and Peter Burke included examples from all over Europe and beyond in their monographs on sixteenth-century language reflections.⁴⁶ More recently, the notion of a ‘Republic of Languages’ has been coined by Fabien Simon to refer to the early modern European level, parallel to the Republic of Letters, on which discussions on the perfect language took place.⁴⁷ The willingness to adopt a multilingual and multidirectional approach is certainly growing. In many cases, however, attempts to transcend the confines of national borders still take the form of a series of monolingual overviews. Addressing the Dutch, French, English, Spanish, and Italian cases consecutively, such studies confirm the importance of a multilingual outlook, but fail to take the next step and reveal the interconnectedness of these various cases.⁴⁸

Paying attention to the relations with the Europe-wide discussions is imperative but should not obscure the link with the local debates. There was a sense of competition towards other languages and cultures as much as towards local predecessors.⁴⁹ Lambrecht’s *Naembouck* built on both word lists produced in the Low Countries and French spelling debates. Competitive attitudes did not lead to a complete rejection, but to conscious reflections on how the example set by the local and European competitors could be used to benefit a particular language.

1.2. Scope and definitions

It is important to problematize some of the parameters that have been established as fixed borders in earlier research. Although something was obviously happening in the second half of the sixteenth century, the dates 1540 and especially 1620 form no absolute frontiers, nor can

⁴⁵ Beck & Sznajder 2006; Werner & Zimmermann 2006; Marjanen 2009; Deneire 2014a.

⁴⁶ Demonet 1992; Trabant 2003; Burke 2004. See also the Franco-German Eurolab project ‘Dynamique des langues vernaculaires dans l’Europe de la Renaissance : Acteurs et lieux. Dynamik der Volkssprachigkeit im Europa der Renaissance: Akteure und Orte’, led by Elsa Kammerer and Jan-Dirk Müller.

⁴⁷ Simon 2011.

⁴⁸ See, for instance: Van der Wal 1995a, 5-21; Baddeley & Voeste 2012.

⁴⁹ Rutten 2013.

any breach with previous and later ways of dealing with language be distinguished. Similar remarks can be made on geographic frontiers. The French-Dutch language border was not a clear one, making vernacular multilingualism an essential characteristic of the culture of the Low Countries.

The discussions on language were not, furthermore, confined by the political frontiers of the Low Countries, not even where it concerned Dutch. On the British Isles, too, interest was shown in the relationship between Dutch and English. In a more general sense, ideas, arguments, and theories circulated throughout Europe. Individuals who defended their mother tongue were frequently interested in the debates on other languages as well. Although some boundaries, be they artificial or otherwise, need to be set and respected in order to create a viable research topic, it is important to remain aware of their fluid, vague, and sometimes arbitrary nature.

Periodization

The particular interest in language in the sixteenth century did not arise in a vacuum. In fact, it built on discussions that dated back to ancient times, and which were maintained throughout the medieval period.⁵⁰ Discussions about loanwords, for instance, can be found in the works of both classical and medieval orators and grammarians, such as Quintilian, Priscian, and Donatus.⁵¹ Even the famous sixteenth-century expression by defender of French Joachim Du Bellay that ‘every language has I do not know what belonging only to itself’ seems to have a medieval predecessor: in a text written around the year 1282, chronicler Jehan D’Antioche stated that ‘every language has its characteristics and way of speaking’.⁵²

At the other end of the temporal scale, continuing to the present day, many of the discussions that occupied the scholarly environments of the sixteenth century are still going strong. The debate on loanwords is one of these. Just think of the French *Commission générale de terminologie et de néologie* (General Committee for Terminology and Neology), established by official decree in 1996, which holds the task of proposing French equivalents for loanwords

⁵⁰ Kaimio 1979; Burke 1987, 2; Ruijsendaal 1991; Wackers 1994; Law 2003, 112-115; Burke 2004, 15; Percival 2004, 231; Short 2007, 62-63, 72-73; Van Hal 2010a, 37-39; Harris 2013, 18-20.

⁵¹ Dull 1997, 211-212; Short 2007.

⁵² ‘chacune Langue à ie ne scay quoy propre seulement à elle’. Du Bellay 1549, fol. b2r. ‘chascune langue si a ses proprietiez et sa maniere de parler’. Jean d’Antioche quoted by: Berriot 1991, 113-114; Boucher 2005, 515-517. Jean D’Antioche made this remark, which targets the impossibility of equalling the original in a translation, in the preface to his translation of Cicero’s *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. It seems to be a very early reflection of the notion of the ‘genius’ of language, although Jean D’Antioche does not mention this term explicitly.

entering the French language.⁵³ The position of Dutch as a scientific language, also, is currently a topic for lively discussion, strongly reminiscent of engineer Simon Stevin's promotion of Dutch as a learned language in the sixteenth century.⁵⁴ How to handle the variety of languages in present-day Belgium or Europe as a whole is another question that still has no ready-made answer.⁵⁵

Despite the obvious continuity with earlier and later times, the widespread and far-reaching interest in language in the sixteenth century stands out. As remarked by Lodi Nauta: 'No subject was more central to Renaissance culture than language'.⁵⁶ Various factors contributed to this language awareness.⁵⁷ The previous century had witnessed major events, like the expanding use of the printing press. This made rapid and widespread distribution of language theories and excerpts of exotic and ancient languages possible, an opportunity that was seized by printers such as Plantin. The discovery of unknown territories across the Atlantic brought Europe in contact with new, awe-inspiring languages. Furthermore, a stream of Byzantine intellectuals came West, bringing with them their knowledge of Ancient Greek and thus access to the treatises on language philosophy it harboured. All these events and developments resulted in early modern people being confronted with little-known and unknown languages. Meanwhile, a new philological attitude towards the classical languages developed in academic environments that has often been linked to the notion of humanism.⁵⁸ Additionally, these humanist and other interregional networks progressively gave expression to interregional competition, trying to outdo others.

At the same time, Europe faced an array of conflicts, such as the Italian Wars and the Anglo-Spanish war. Particularly important for the Low Countries is, of course, the Dutch Revolt, with a rebellious faction in the Low Countries in opposition with the supporters of the Habsburg Lord of the Netherlands, the Spanish King Philip II, in the second half of the century. Besides these armed conflicts, the century was marked by religious turmoil in the form of the Reformation.⁵⁹ Attitudes towards language and translation of the sacred texts of Christianity were issues that were emphasized in the religious quarrels. Contributing to the language

⁵³ Defaux 2003, 28; *Nederlands, tenzij...* 2003, 19-21. For the text of the decree, see: <<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>>. Accessed July 2017.

⁵⁴ Koopmans 1995; *Nederlands, tenzij...* 2003; *Nederlands en/of Engels?* 2017.

⁵⁵ On the language issue in modern Belgium, see: Witte & Van Velthoven 2010; Janssens 2015; Willemyns 2015. On the language policies of the European Union, see: Vogl 2012, 1-3.

⁵⁶ Nauta 2006, ix.

⁵⁷ Auroux 1992, 24-27; Van Hal, Isebaert, & Swiggers 2013a, vii-viii; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 103-104.

⁵⁸ Nauta 2006, ix.

⁵⁹ Schmid & Hafner 2016, 382-383.

debates, nevertheless, did not depend on confessional preference: Heyns converted to Protestantism, while his close friend Plantin—at least outwardly—remained Catholic.⁶⁰

The various troubles of the early modern era are likely to have further stimulated language reflection, as several early modern individuals expressed the idea that miscommunication led to political and religious conflict.⁶¹ This feeling is voiced by a character in Théodore Agrippa d’Aubigné’s manuscript text *Confession catholique du Sieur de Sancy*, written in the first years of the seventeenth century: ‘all wars are born out of a lack of grammar’.⁶² Neither the early modern wars nor the rise of the printing press or humanism was singlehandedly responsible for the increase in interest in language. Together, nonetheless, they created the optimal conditions to precipitate a thriving debate around 1540.

The Low Countries

Although it is important to be aware of cross-European connections in the exchanges on language, it is impossible to undertake an in-depth study of the entire European language field. The chosen focus on the multilingual Low Countries comes forth from the idea that in every region, the particular local context influenced the debates to some extent.⁶³ Thus, while all the discussions are parts of a greater whole, local conditions incited an emphasis on specific elements. In the Low Countries, the language situation differed, for example, from that in France, where the language of the court had a much wider reach.⁶⁴

The particularities of the selected geographical scope deserve further explanation. The term Low Countries refers to the geographical areas that came under the reign of Philip II in 1555. However, the majority of the sources discussing languages originate from the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Flanders, and Brabant. These four provinces constituted the economic and cultural heartland of the Low Countries. In the northeastern provinces, vernacular networks of knowledge were virtually absent.⁶⁵ Moreover, in the core regions, language encounters were much more frequent than in other territories, because of a thriving international trade, the presence of important administrative institutions, and aristocratic communities. Last but

⁶⁰ There has been much debate about Plantin’s religious views. Alastair Hamilton connected him to the Family of Love, a heterodox sect. Hamilton 1981; Meskens 1998-1999.

⁶¹ Buys 2015, 15-20; Kammerer & Müller 2015, 16-17.

⁶² ‘toutes les guerres ne sont nees qu’à faute de grammaire’. Aubigné 1877, 324. See also: Lestringant 1996, 243-244; La Gorce 2004, 48.

⁶³ Kammerer & Müller 2015, 12.

⁶⁴ Armstrong 1965, 388-389; Bostoen 1987, 11; Jansen 1992.

⁶⁵ Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 36-48.

certainly not least, the language border passed right through Brabant and Flanders. Both French and Dutch furnished the sounds of everyday life there, stimulating language awareness.

Languages

The early modern Low Countries were marked by various languages: Latin, Dutch, French, and Frisian. The last of these, spoken in the Lordship of Friesland, played a minor role as a written language, and there are no traces of a lively discussion about its form and status in the sixteenth century.⁶⁶ It will therefore remain largely outside the scope of this study, which will instead focus on the principal vernaculars Dutch and French.

While some individuals called for uniform Dutch and French languages, such standard forms were not yet available in the sixteenth century. Both languages were still in a fluid state, even though language debaters tried to forge them into particular shapes. The terms ‘Dutch’ or ‘French’, when applied to this period, refer to an array of different dialects, regional varieties, and ways of spelling and pronunciation that were not a uniform entity at the time but that were, by contemporaries, considered as a group that could be distinguished from others.⁶⁷ Whenever the term ‘Dutch’ is used here, the whole of Low Germanic dialects used within the Low Countries is meant. In the fifteenth and especially the sixteenth century, an awareness was taking shape of the differences between Dutch and German, which began to differentiate particularly in their written form.⁶⁸ Attention to Low German as it was spoken in present-day Germany will therefore only be paid when it is mentioned in the source material.

The term ‘French’, similarly, refers here to all variants of French as they were spoken both within and outside the Low Countries. It is worth emphasizing that French was not, in the sixteenth century, a foreign language from the point of view of native speakers of Dutch in the Low Countries. To refer to speakers of French and to the area where French was the native language, the term ‘francophone’ is applied. It is used in clear distinction from the political notion of *Francophonie*, with a capital F, which targets the whole of countries that are currently bound by the French language.⁶⁹ The term ‘francophony’ is used here as an objective marker,

⁶⁶ For early modern literary works in Frisian, see: Spies 2000.

⁶⁷ Mireille Huchon has suggested that in the case of French, it is more suitable to speak of regional varieties than of dialects. Huchon 1988, 18.

⁶⁸ De Grauwe 2002, 104-107; De Grauwe 2003a, 473; Van der Sijs 2004, 100-101. See: Chapter 2.1.

⁶⁹ The literature on this concept is vast. For a clear overview of the possible meanings of the term ‘francophonie’, see: Farandijns 2003. Earlier students of the pre-colonial French-speaking world have also struggled with terminology. Ad Putter and Keith Busby, for instance, opted for the term ‘Medieval Francophonia’ without wishing to deny a continuity with modern times. Putter & Busby 2010, 11-12.

accounting for the existence of a French-speaking community outside of France before the age of colonialism.

Concerning the notion of dialect, it is important to mention that in the period under study, this term did not have the meaning it has today. The terms *lingua* and *dialecta* were both used to cover a wide range of frequently overlapping meanings.⁷⁰ In the now often used definition of Haugen, a language is a dialect that has been standardized.⁷¹ In the sixteenth century, Dutch and French had not gone through this process. The term ‘language’ is therefore conceived here in the definition of John Earl Joseph as ‘a system of elements and rules conceived broadly enough to admit variant ways of using it’.⁷² These variant ways are the different local dialects of the language. The term ‘vernacular’ here designates any non-classical language that was spoken as a mother tongue in early modern Europe.⁷³

While varieties of both French and Dutch acted as mother tongue to a particular part of the population, many people, such as Lambrecht, Heyns, Marnix, and Plantin, spoke both, and thus acted as go-betweens.⁷⁴ Whenever an individual is said to have been bilingual, the reader should be attentive to the fact that knowledge of non-native languages comes in different degrees and forms and can change over time.⁷⁵ Plantin only learned Dutch after settling in Antwerp in his late twenties, for instance. To give another example, if Heyns’s schoolchildren learned Latin verses by heart without having learned the language, they can hardly be said to have any competence in the language, while they did use it.⁷⁶

Finally, some remarks should be made on the terminology surrounding the coexistence of multiple languages on a societal and on an individual level. It is important to avoid false implications about connections between the two.⁷⁷ If an individual possesses knowledge of multiple languages, this does not imply that these languages are spoken widely in the society or region to which that individual belongs. Marnix was an exception in the Low Countries for

⁷⁰ Haugen 1966, 922-923; Burke 2004, 36; Metcalf 2013, 72; Cohen 2014; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 117; Van Hal & Van Rooy 2017, 98-104; Van Rooy 2017, 79-103.

⁷¹ Haugen 1966; Van der Wal 1995a, 1-2, 23-41.

⁷² Joseph 1987, 1.

⁷³ Green 1996, 76. Only the notion of vernacular language will be used, discarding the difference made in modern French between ‘*langues vulgaires*’ and ‘*langues vernaculaires*’, the first simply being a local language, while the second refers to a language that strives to become fully accepted as a unified and standardized tongue apt for written use in any domain. The English term ‘vernacular language’ is considered to comprise both meanings. Kammerer & Müller 2015, 11n1.

⁷⁴ On the notion of ‘go-between’, see: Berkvens-Stevelinck & Bots 2005; Burke 2005b; Höfele & Von Koppenfels 2005.

⁷⁵ Braunmüller & Ferraresi 2003, 3; Appel & Muysken 2005, 2-4.

⁷⁶ See, for a discussion of this question: Reinburg 2012, esp. 87-88; Adamska 2013, 335.

⁷⁷ Appel & Muysken 2005, 1-6.

knowing Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, and Italian. Vice versa, the fact that a region contains two local languages, such as French and Dutch, does not mean that every individual speaks both.

Using a clear terminology helps to separate the language situation on a societal and an individual level. To refer to the language abilities of individuals, therefore, the term ‘plurilingual’ is used, whereas the term ‘multilingual’ is applied to regions where more than one language is present.⁷⁸ Texts will be called ‘bilingual’ when they meet the definition of J. N. Adams: ‘texts written in two languages in which the two versions are physically discrete and have a content which is usually, at least in part, common to both’.⁷⁹ Whenever this is the case for more than two languages, the term ‘multilingual’ applies. The complex interplay between languages on various levels marked the early modern debates on language in the Low Countries, making them impossible to capture in a monolingual net.

1.3. Methods and Sources

The questions asked here relate to the disparate fields of historical French and Dutch literature, cultural history, and historical sociolinguistics. These questions can only be addressed by combining approaches developed within these various fields. Until recently, the subject of the early modern reflections on language was studied almost uniquely within the domains of historical linguistics and language history.⁸⁰ From the 1980s onward, historians such as Peter Burke and Roy Porter started to call for a more holistic approach to historical language, attentive to contemporary and local cultural, social, and political contexts.⁸¹ Around the same time, a number of historical linguists explored a new form of research that incorporated sociolinguistic methods, and was interested in language use rather than language structure.⁸² Since then, the field of historical sociolinguistics has greatly expanded, incorporating any type of enquiry into the way languages were used and thought of.⁸³ In the footsteps of these developments in the

⁷⁸ As pointed out by Pierre Swiggers, an additional reason to adopt this terminology is that the Council of Europe also follows it. Following this example permits speaking in equal terms of both the history and the future of the language situation in Europe. Swiggers 2017, 52n9. For more reflections on the distinction between plurilingualism and multilingualism, see: Kammerer & Müller 2015, 15n3; Frijhoff, Kok Escalle, & Sanchez-Summerer 2017, 12.

⁷⁹ Adams 2003, 30. See also: Verbeke 2013, 72.

⁸⁰ Examples of historians of the Dutch language who have studied the topic are Geert Dobbets, Nicoline van der Sijs, and Marijke van der Wal.

⁸¹ Burke & Porter 1987; Burke & Porter 1991; Burke 2004; Burke 2005a.

⁸² Romaine 1982, esp. 7; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2012, 22-24. It was also in this decade that the Henry Sweet Society for the History of Linguistic Ideas was founded.

⁸³ Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy 2012, 1.

field of historical sociolinguistics, it will be attempted to help bridge the gap which remains between historians and historical (socio)linguists by adding a literary historical perspective.⁸⁴

Approaching Metalinguistic Discussions

Any study of metalinguistic discourse from the distant past relies on written records. A particular tool set is needed to map the different attitudes towards the various languages that are expressed in these texts. The field of linguistics offers a conceptual framework that is useful for studying the historical reflections on language. Since the early modern language reflections, as they have come down to us, took the form of a discussion through texts, linguistic concepts of speech and discussion can further our understanding of them.

When dealing with a range of texts constituting a debate, the notion of discourse analysis is particularly useful.⁸⁵ The method of critical discourse analysis, developed by, among others, Norman Fairclough, proposes that every utterance should be analysed on three levels: as a text, focusing on its linguistic features; as a discursive practice, focusing on the conditions of its production and reception; and as a social practice, focusing on the people and discourses with which it enters into debate.⁸⁶ If several language utterances or, in this case, texts, react to one another, it is possible to map the so-called ‘intertextual chain’ which they form.

A particularly interesting aspect of this approach is that the text is studied as a social practice in a particular historical environment. Moreover, combining attention to the content of the text and its practical use of language makes it possible to determine whether language debaters practised what they preached.⁸⁷ Indeed, when studying the reflections on language, it is important not to focus solely on what people say about language, but also on whether they provide examples to support their view or actually undermine it in their own writing.⁸⁸

Discourse analysis also demands that attention be paid to the fact that opinions should not be treated as fixed entities, but as being prone to change according to time or context.⁸⁹ Modern scholars have often struggled to place people in well-defined boxes, while in reality their views could change and were sometimes too complex to fit within such boxes. Heyns was

⁸⁴ On this gap between the fields of historical sociolinguistics and history, see: Lusignan 2012, 41; Gallagher 2015, 13.

⁸⁵ On the use of discourse analysis for the study of literary texts, see: De Beaugrande 1993; Maingueneau 2010.

⁸⁶ Fairclough 1992, 231-238; Jørgensen & Philips 2002, 68-69.

⁸⁷ Jørgensen & Philips 2002, 103.

⁸⁸ For an example of research that combines attention to remarks on language and language practice, see: Ayres-Bennett 2004.

⁸⁹ Jørgensen & Philips 2002, 102, 112-113.

known for his pure language, for instance, but in recently discovered handwritten poems he used a plethora of loanwords.⁹⁰

Importantly, Fairclough stipulates discourse analysis cannot be considered a method on its own, but only as part of an interdisciplinary approach. It can be used to answer questions formulated by, among others, historians, and relies heavily on their way of analysing social practices, texts, and historical contexts.⁹¹ The sources used here are first and foremost historical texts produced within the literary culture of the sixteenth-century Low Countries.⁹² In this context, if an author claims to find a particular language difficult, for instance, such a statement should not be taken at face value, as it could stem from the omnipresent topos of modesty. Studying these historical, literary texts requires the long-established hermeneutic tools of literary criticism and close reading. These approaches are, however, supplemented with a particular attention to their linguistic characteristics, the process through which they came into being, and their historical, social, and textual contexts. Ultimately, combining approaches from literary history and historical linguistics will yield insights applying to both fields.

Lieux

Where earlier research focused on the standardization of one particular language, a spatial framework is used here to open up the possibility of including other languages and to avoid the pitfalls of a teleological approach. The notion chosen as organizational category for this research is that of *lieu*. This term refers to material or non-material locales, which can be professional or social environments and which are fundamentally multilingual. They form, in other words, a contact zone of different languages.⁹³

The adoption of the concept of *lieu* is in line with references by Toon Van Hal, Lambert Isebaert, and Pierre Swiggers to *loci* as places of early modern language reflection.⁹⁴ It is also closely related to the notion of the ‘linguistic laboratory’ adopted in the Franco-German project ‘Dynamique des langues vernaculaires dans l’Europe de la Renaissance : Acteurs et lieux’, which ran from 2010 to 2013. This project studied the contexts in which the different vernaculars of Europe developed in the sixteenth century. It described laboratories as ‘sites

⁹⁰ See: Chapter 4.1.

⁹¹ Fairclough 2010, 4-7, 225-226.

⁹² Paul Cohen has demonstrated that several key texts of the history of the French language have been misinterpreted by modern scholars because of a lack of attention to their literary conventions. Cohen 2012, esp. 122-125.

⁹³ Pratt 1991; Hsy 2013, 4-5.

⁹⁴ Van Hal, Isebaert, & Swiggers 2013b, 15-16.

[*lieux*] of experimentation and elaboration of the vernacular languages'.⁹⁵ Because of the undesirable connotation of a purposely created setting which is attached to the notion of the laboratory, however, only the element of *lieu* will be taken up here.⁹⁶

An intentional link is established with the theoretical notion of *lieu de savoir*, conceptualized by Christian Jacob.⁹⁷ He, too, defined *lieux* as both material and immaterial locales connected to the production, circulation, and discussion of ideas and knowledge. In these locales, encounters between people as well as encounters between individuals and their material environment and particular practices stimulate the birth of ideas.

Jacob's theoretical premises match insights yielded by historians of science stating that in the early modern period, experiment and practice became increasingly important for intellectual reflection.⁹⁸ Moreover, they emphasize the situated character of knowledge production, which is marked by its material and social environment.⁹⁹ Dutch-speaking schoolmasters teaching French had to code-switch on a daily basis to help students on all different levels of language learning and worked with schoolbooks that put forward different views on spelling and grammar. It is the growth and circulation of ideas connected to such local contexts and social networks that is targeted by the use of the notion of *lieu*.

By adopting the term *lieu* as the organizational principle of the primary source material, recent trends in historiography are followed that have been caught under the umbrella term of the 'spatial turn'. This refers to the widespread use of spatial heuristic metaphors over the last decades. Spatial concepts are now a tool that is often used to avoid a teleological approach. This has resulted in a proliferation of spatial terms referring to very divergent entities. In order to answer the call for clarity in the use of spatial metaphors made by Leif Jerram, it is important to repeat here that no specific material or geographic location is denoted by the notion of *lieu*, which falls within the reach of what Jerram calls 'places', that is, '[t]he values, beliefs, codes, and practices that surround a particular location, whether that location is real or imagined'.¹⁰⁰ The chosen *lieux* are largely congruent with particular networks of people who are all connected to each other as well as to the multilingual place and its practices. Of course, individuals are

⁹⁵ 'lieux d'expérimentation et d'élaboration des langues vernaculaires'. Kammerer & Müller 2015, 15.

⁹⁶ Adrian Johns uses the term 'domain' to refer to 'distinct social spaces generating different practices fertile of new knowledge. The knowledge fashioned in such places answers the needs of the moment, addresses the questions of the time, and satisfies the standards of local culture'. Johns 1998, 41.

⁹⁷ These is also a link with Pierre Nora's *lieu de mémoire*, which used the term *lieu* in the same manner. On this notion, see: Nora 1984-1992, especially vol. 1, 1984, vii-xiii, xv-xlii. On the connection between the term *lieu de mémoire* and language, see Marc Fumaroli's contribution to Nora's volume on the 'genius' of the French language: Fumaroli 1992. See also: Cohen 2012. For *lieu de savoir*, see: Jacob 2007; Jacob 2014.

⁹⁸ Zilsel 1942; Smith 2000; Smith, P. H. 2004, 6-7, 18-24; Harkness 2007, esp. xvii, 1-10.

⁹⁹ Ophir & Shapin 1991; Johns 1998, esp. 8, 41, 59; Shapin & Schaffer 2011, 332-337.

¹⁰⁰ Jerram 2013, 404.

not confined to specific *lieux*. This is illustrated by Joos Lambrecht, who was both a schoolmaster and a printer, and by schoolmaster-rhetorician Heyns.

The choice of the four central *lieux* is based on the outcomes of earlier research. Indeed, this book builds strongly upon the existing studies from which it aims to disengage itself. The different studies tracing the history of the Dutch language point in the direction of French schools, Calvinist churches, printing houses, and chambers of rhetoric as places where language was discussed.¹⁰¹ Individuals in these *lieux* were also identified in the contemporary debate as potentially having a large impact on language. The first printed grammar of Dutch, the 1584 *Twe-spraack (Dialogue)*, calls on ‘the court poets, clerics, printers, and schoolmasters’.¹⁰² Joos Lambrecht held exactly these people, the ‘schoolmasters, writers, and book printers’, accountable for unwanted language change.¹⁰³ Members of the four *lieux* were ‘(wo)men of words’: language was central to their profession or activities, making it a core topic of reflection.¹⁰⁴ These *lieux*, and in particular the French schools and the chambers of rhetoric, illustrate that a learned discourse around language developed not only in academic environments, but also in the middle classes.

For the chambers of rhetoric, the premise that they form a potential site of language reflection is a recent development. The chambers of rhetoric have long been considered as being conservative, and contrasting with the humanist attitude of which the early modern language fascination was one particular manifestation. Such a humanist outlook was attributed solely to later poets, who have been qualified as ‘Renaissance’ authors for their allegedly innovative interest in classical poetry and contemporary foreign developments. Studies on the culture of the rhetoricians by Bart Ramakers and Arjan van Dixhoorn have demonstrated, however, that the same can be said for a great number of rhetoricians.¹⁰⁵ Reserving the term ‘Renaissance’ for the poets who succeeded the sixteenth-century rhetoricians thus makes no sense, since the chambers also adopted humanist ideals, including an interest in language. In order to emphasize the fact that the term ‘Renaissance’ poet has been hollowed out, it is put between quotation marks. Studying the language reflections within the *lieu* of the chambers of rhetoric will provide further evidence that this term has become obsolete.

¹⁰¹ Lode Van den Branden identified printers, schoolmasters, rhetoricians, humanists, and religious men as being most influential. Geert Dibbets wrote articles about schoolmasters, printers, proofreaders, and rhetoricians. Marijke van der Wal and Nicoline van der Sijs identified the printing press, the literary culture, and religion as important fields of language change. Van den Branden 1967, 65; Van der Wal 1995a; Van der Sijs 2004. For the identification of chambers of rhetoric as *lieux de savoir*, see: Ramakers 2004, 182-183.

¹⁰² ‘de hófchryvers, stadschryvers, druckers, ende schoolmeesters’. *Twe-Spraack* 1584, 26.

¹⁰³ ‘schoolmeesters, schrívers ende boucprenters’. Lambrecht 1550, fol. A2r; Dibbets 2001, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Willemys 2013, 87.

¹⁰⁵ Ramakers 1998; Van Dixhoorn 1999; Van Dixhoorn 2009a; Van Dixhoorn, Mareel, & Ramakers 2018.

To unlock the four chosen *lieux*, three key individuals have been chosen to act as a point of anchorage for mapping the debates. All three figures had strong plurilingual abilities, which they applied in their everyday practices connected to the *lieux*. By zooming in on their lives, actions, and metalinguistic writings, these key figures shed light on the relationship between multilingual experiences and language reflection. In each case, the written oeuvre of the key individuals will mark the beginning of an investigation into the intertextual chains that form part of the discussions on language in these locales. In this way, this study will cover representative parts of the debates, while maintaining an interest in the links between practice and theory and in the voices that did not pursue the form of Dutch that later came into being.

In choosing these four *lieux*, this book first and foremost wishes to shed new light on the Dutch and French literary texts that were produced in these environments. In order to be able to understand and study the literary culture of the early modern Low Countries, it is a prerequisite that one understands the language choices that have been made, and their implications within this context of language fascination. This study gives literary historians the tools to deepen this understanding. This is particularly useful to gain a new appreciation for the literary productions of the chambers of rhetoric, now that they are no longer seen as being in contrast with humanist movements, but as interacting with them.

Moreover, the examination of source material from the four *lieux* also brings forward new insights into related fields of historical study. Consideration of the texts produced in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French schools provides new insights into the history of education. By studying the frequent references of schoolmasters to the notion of *patria* in both languages of the Low Countries it also adds to the history of nations, and the history of the Dutch Revolt. The latter fields are further enriched by an exploration of Marnix's use of the language debates and of both French and Dutch to support the Revolt, while his efforts for the Calvinist community add to religious history. The printing house, as a distribution centre of textual material, touches upon all these issues, although it holds value primarily for the history of books. Language is a key issue in virtually all aspects of historical study, and historians should always be aware of the implications and connotations of particular language choices in the material they study.

Sources

The bulk of sixteenth-century discussions on language as they have come down to us are part of the contemporary literary culture in the widest sense of the term, comprising not just *les belles lettres* (prose, verse, and drama), but also, for example, religious and educational texts

and other fields of vernacular learning.¹⁰⁶ All these texts, in their style of writing, incorporate contemporary views on the art of rhetoric, and studying them requires a certain sensibility for the literary customs and context of the time. While they say something about religious, educational, or learned language use, they are also revelatory when it comes to literary language use. Marnix's psalm translations, for instance, give insight into views on the use of the vernacular as a language of religious worship, but also on versification. The corpus of primary source material that has been identified by following the intertextual chains that start with the writings of Heyns, Marnix, and Plantin covers several different types of texts, almost all of them printed works.

It concerns firstly, and most obviously, treatises on language, such as Lambrecht's orthographical work and a French grammar by Heyns. Such texts were produced within all four of the *lieux*, although schoolmasters make up the largest percentage. Secondly, an important part of the sources concern paratexts, such as prefaces and dedications in which typically the author, the editor, or the printer of a particular text comments on the work. Frequently, the books in which such statements can be found are literary translations, multilingual texts, or other works in which language plays a particular role.¹⁰⁷ In these cases, the main text of the work often expresses as much fascination with language as the liminary texts, and can be equally revelatory of the enclosed language attitude of the author.

The special character of prefaces, liminary poems, and dedicatory epistles has become increasingly clear over the past several decades, especially since the publication of Gérard Genette's seminal work *Seuils* in 1987.¹⁰⁸ While functioning as introductory guides to the main text, paratexts simultaneously offered an opportunity for the author, editor, or printer of the text to introduce himself. It allowed him to take a stance within the literary scene, and thus also in the debates on language.¹⁰⁹ Almost everything that can be deduced about Plantin's stance on language comes from prefaces. Indeed, as Jean Balsamo affirmed, sixteenth-century paratexts could be a 'space for a real intellectual exchange'.¹¹⁰

Every choice for a particular set of primary sources also entails the casting aside of a whole range of others. One element that will not be developed fully is the female voice. Through the choice of three male key figures, male contributions to the language discussions are strongly privileged. This foregrounding of the male voice is a direct effect of the (un)availability of

¹⁰⁶ Pleij 1974, 41-42; Bostoen 1987, 29; Percival 1988, 78-79.

¹⁰⁷ Van der Wal 1995a, 52-59; Hermans 1996, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Genette 1987.

¹⁰⁹ Verbeke 2005, ii; Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 258-259; Prandoni 2014, 182-183.

¹¹⁰ 'espace d'un véritable échange intellectuel'. Balsamo 1988, 122.

source material. Unfortunately, very few traces are left of the participation of women in the debates on language of this period.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, the wide variety of sources that have been selected does occasionally provide windows on the neglected elements. In the case of women, such windows are offered by Peeter Heyns's French school for girls. It was for his female pupils that he produced several works on the French language.

A strong emphasis in the studied material lies on the written text. Spoken language is only visible through glimpses that can be caught in the mostly printed corpus. These can be found in particular in the *lieu* of the French school, where the spoken word and correct pronunciation was highly important, and in Calvinist churches, with their emphasis on psalm singing.¹¹² Similar remarks can be made on visual and gestural communication, which particularly interested the rhetoricians as possible supplements to the spoken and written word.

The relative absence of orality is, however, not so much a deficit as an inherent trait of the central questions asked here. They focus not on language use, but on literary debates about language. Of course, such subjects must surely have been discussed in oral situations as well.¹¹³ The chambers of rhetoric are an obvious example. As no records of such discussions are known to exist, the debates can only be accessed insofar as they are reflected in and played out through published material. It is important to stress that the outcomes of this research necessarily map the attitudes of only a very small portion of the population of the Low Countries at that time, being those fortunate individuals who had enough education and agency to be able to make their opinions known to a geographically and chronologically disparate audience.

1.4. Outline

The organization of this book reflects the hypothesis that language debaters in the Low Countries were inspired by their local multilingual context and the Europe-wide fascination with language. It is therefore divided into two parts. The first of these sketches the local and European context, ensuring that connections with this context can be made later. First, an overview of the multilingual landscape of the sixteenth-century Low Countries is given, filling a lacuna that has made it difficult for historians to contextualize their research on the level of language.¹¹⁴ This chapter is strongly rooted in historical sociolinguistics, as it tries to define

¹¹¹ Ayres-Bennett 1994a; Sanson 2011. For reflections on the historical role of the mother as language instructor to her children, see: Haas 2007.

¹¹² Gallagher 2015, 61-63; Wesley 2015. For studies of early modern spoken language and the relation between textuality and orality, see: Ayres-Bennett 2000; Jeanneret 2006; Van der Wal & Rutten 2013.

¹¹³ Sanson 2011, 65.

¹¹⁴ Much work has been done on the language situation concerning the Dutch language in the seventeen provinces, including studies on the dispersal of the different dialects and their particularities. See, notably: Van der Sijs 2004,

who spoke what language in what situation, and where different languages were used next to each other. In other words, it will be determined to what extent the famous quote—that Charles V spoke French to the ladies and (Low) German to his horse or his soldiers—would also have been true for his subjects in the Low Countries.¹¹⁵

From the local multilingual context, the focus will then shift towards the reflections on language. This second chapter departs from research that has already been done on the growing attention to language in sixteenth-century Europe, supplementing it with primary source material. It maps different themes that are addressed in the discussions in this region, such as the problem of language diversity in general and different solutions that were proposed. For each subject, different points of view, both from authors writing in the vernacular and from those writing in Latin, are discussed to show the pluralism of the debates. It must be noted that in this chapter, the emphasis is placed on the connections between the Dutch, French, English, and German cases, and less so on Italian, Spanish, and other languages. This is due both to the fact that the three former cases have been mapped extensively in earlier research, and to the language abilities of the author of this book. There is some irony in this constraint in a study on the communication problems caused by language diversity.

The second part consists of four analytical chapters, each based on the extensive analysis of primary source material connected to one of the four *lieux*. They link the multilingual practices of a particular *lieu* with the language discussions through the aforementioned key figures. Each chapter thus starts with a short biographical note on the key individual who has been chosen for that particular *lieu*, with a strong focus on that person's language abilities, the multilingual experiences of his daily life, and the language practices within the *lieu* in question. Subsequently, the different themes connected to the language debates that have emerged from the study of the written production of these individuals and the intertextual chains connected with them, are addressed. In this thematic treatment, references will be made to the discussions on a European level, the multilingual situation in the Low Countries as a whole, and the multilingual practices specific to the *lieu* in question.

As an important *lieu* where French and Dutch met, and also where some of the bilinguals who were active in other environments were trained, the analytical part of the present work starts with a chapter on French schools. In this *lieu*, which will be approached through the

45-46; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008; Willems 2013. Current understanding of the variants of French that were spoken in these regions is much more limited, but valuable contributions have been made by Serge Lusignan in recent years: Lusignan 2006; Lusignan 2012. See also: Francard 1993, 318-320. For the language border itself, see: Armstrong 1965, 389-392; Gysseling 1976; Milis 1983; Peersman, Rutten, & Vosters 2015.

¹¹⁵ De Grauwe 2003b; Burke 2004, 28-29.

master of the most famous girls' school of his time, Peeter Heyns, bilingualism itself was the objective of the clients. Schoolmasters were the ultimate go-betweens. Through a large corpus of educational material published in the context of these schools, schoolmasters took a stance on language that simultaneously acted as a form of self-promotion for their establishments. They displayed their knowledge of the traditional, widely accepted language forms their customers were interested in, while also suggesting improvement for both French and Dutch.

In the following chapter, addressing the *lieu* of the developing Calvinist churches through Philips of Marnix, Lord of Sainte-Aldegonde, the topic of translation is central. In these religious environments, language was not a purpose in itself, as it was in the French schools, but the medium through which the Word of God was conveyed. Moreover, the newly forming Calvinist communities were struggling to establish cohesion and solidarity through and in spite of language differences. Those who, like Marnix, translated sacred texts into Dutch had to take into account the links with the Holy Scripture, the French-speaking Calvinists, and coreligionists speaking a variety of Dutch dialects. An awareness was present, in this *lieu*, of how language could unite and divide. Marnix, going one step further, used the divisive powers of language to defame his Catholic opponents.

The third analytical chapter treats the highly multilingual *lieu* of the printing houses. Links on an interregional level are particularly strong here, as is exemplified by the central individual of this *lieu*, the native Frenchman Plantin, who went on to become an important figure in the histories of both the French and the Dutch language. Printing houses played a crucial part in the language debates by distributing texts that took part in them, feeding the demand for texts on language curiosities. As the case of Plantin shows, however, printers were not always passive mediators, as they could also take part in these exchanges themselves. Plantin took an active stance regarding the issue of spelling, which has traditionally been seen as being strongly connected to the printing houses. A closer look reveals, however, that he formed the exception rather than the rule.

The final chapter returns to the key individual Peeter Heyns. In doing so, this last analytical part establishes connections with the earlier chapters. Many of the learned men of the early modern Low Countries, including schoolmasters like Heyns, came together in the *lieu* of the chambers of rhetoric. In effect, the chambers functioned not just as literary fraternities, but also as vernacular knowledge networks, as recent developments in the research on early modern rhetoricians, and in particular studies by Arjan van Dixhoorn, have shown.¹¹⁶ Frequently,

¹¹⁶ Van Dixhoorn 2009a; Van Dixhoorn, Mareel, & Ramakers 2018.

rhetoricians reflected critically on ways to improve their language. They often concluded, however, that particular innovations that were being proposed were a step backward rather than forward.

Throughout the four analytical chapters, connections will be made with the first, contextual part. This demonstrates the strong links that existed between the discussions on language on the one hand, and the language situation in the early modern Low Countries and the Europe-wide debates on the other. A new view of the fascination with language in this period is presented by shedding light on those early modern individuals who did not strive for a standardized form of Dutch. At the same time, this work will offer new insights into the multilingual experiences of the sixteenth-century inhabitants of the Low Countries, as well as into their interest in language in general and their openness to other languages and cultures in this period that was crucial for the development of Dutch and other vernaculars.

2. The Multilingual Low Countries

2.1. Introduction

In the fourteenth century, Brabantine town clerk Jan van Boendale described how the Hundred Years' War, in which the count of Flanders initially allied with the English king in order to affront the French armies, affected his region. The war positioned 'brother against brother' and divided the region.¹ Boendale connects this division to a language divide: 'Christianity is divided in two. The Romance tongue forms one half, the other is completely Germanic'.² He lived in a region where the two great language groups met: the Low Countries. However, the language divide was never as clear as Boendale sketched it. It is unlikely that each of the two opposing armies would even have been monolingual.

In the absence of a comprehensive overview of the use of languages and language forms in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, historians have frequently adopted a monolingual approach in Boendale's binary terms, studying either French or Dutch sources. The following survey of the language situation in the Low Countries demonstrates that such a monolingual approach is fundamentally insufficient when studying any part of the history of the region. Hardly any professional, cultural, or social domain was uniquely monolingual.

Forms of French and Germanic were frequently used on both sides of the indistinct language border. Speech domains, such as administration, commerce, and jurisdiction, were characterized by bilingualism or multilingualism.³ A merchant operating at the Antwerp Bourse could find himself speaking Dutch at breakfast, French at lunch, and a mixture of the two at dinner, while hearing English, Spanish, and Italian in between. Moreover, each area within the Low Countries spoke its own dialect, further complicating the language situation. The vernacular context was not one of strict diglossia, where a high and a low (variety of a) language are used in clearly separated fields.⁴ There was a much more horizontal form of multilingualism in place, where a range of forms of French and Dutch were often used in the same domains.⁵ Moreover, the Low Countries witnessed a high level of travel within its borders and also welcomed travellers from all over Europe (and beyond). Especially in urban environments,

¹ 'brueder jegen den broeder'. Van Boendale 1983, fol. 253r/131.

² 'tkerstenheit es gedeelt in ij.en/ Die Walsche tongen die es een,/ Dandre die Dietsche algeheel'. Van Boendale 1983, fol. 253r/131; De Grauwe 2003c, 412.

³ Fishman, Cooper, & Newman 1971; Langslow 2002, 39.

⁴ For the earlier period, Remco Sleiderink has argued that a situation of diglossia was in place. He proposes this term, however, not in contrast with multilingualism, but with a division of the region into a monolingual French- and Dutch-speaking part. Sleiderink 2010, 129-131. For the notion of diglossia, see: Langslow 2002; Grévin 2005.

⁵ Burke 1991; De Smet 2001, 44; Van Hal, Isebaert, & Swiggers 2013a, xii. On the sliding scale between diglossia and bilingualism or multilingualism, see: Ferguson 1959; Fishman 1967; Langslow 2002, 26.

inhabitants of the sixteenth-century Low Countries were confronted with language variety and multilingualism on a daily basis.

In this context the fascination with language came into being. It was the constant confrontation with a broad range of language forms that sparked reflection, not clear-cut monolingualism. In order to understand the language debaters and their contributions, it is therefore crucial to take the complex language situation into consideration. As the parameters for the sixteenth-century considerations on language were set in previous centuries, a brief excursion to earlier times is justified. Events that took place parallel to the discussions, including, notably, the Dutch Revolt and the Reformation, also deserve a closer look. It is significant that the debates on the form and status of the local languages rose exactly at a time that was marked by conflict. In the face of crisis, the population turned to its language differences in search of a solution.

Preludes to the Discussions

In the preface to the *Twe-spraack* (1584), the first printed grammar of the Dutch language, philosopher Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert points to the recent political history of the Low Countries as having shaped the Dutch vernacular.⁶ He describes the ruling of ‘strange Lords and other-tongued regents’ over the Dutch-speaking parts of the Low Countries as the cause of considerable changes, among which was the adoption of a great many loanwords.⁷ As becomes clear from Coornhert’s remark, some knowledge of the historical language situation is necessary in order to understand the sixteenth-century discussions, especially since sixteenth-century debaters occasionally referred back to earlier times to support their views.⁸

Multilingualism characterized the Low Countries long before the discussions on language of the sixteenth century. From the late Middle Ages onwards, the language border between the Romance and Germanic languages remained relatively stable [Figure 2.1].⁹ Thanks to studies by Charles Armstrong, Serge Lusignan, and Roland Willems, it is possible to trace the position it took by the sixteenth century.¹⁰ The border then formed a line from Gravelines in the west, curving southeast towards Saint-Omer and from there in a more or less straight line to just outside of Aachen in the east, and south from there.¹¹ Flanders and Brabant thus

⁶ Jansen 2003, 170-172.

⁷ ‘vreemde Heren ende vreemdtongighe landvooghden’. *Twe-spraack* 1584, fol. A6r.

⁸ Apart from the *Twe-spraack* and its preface, reflections on the historical language situation can be found in: Van den Werve 1553, fol. A2r; Coornhert 1561a, fol. *6v; Numan 1590, fol. 3r-3v.

⁹ Armstrong 1965, 391.

¹⁰ Lusignan 2004, 26; Lusignan 2006, 266; Willems 2015.

¹¹ Armstrong 1965, 390-391.

harboured both a French- and a Dutch-speaking community. At no point in time did the language boundaries correspond with political ones.¹²



Figure 2.1.

Map of the sixteenth-century Low Countries with the language border indicated in red.

Based on: *De Bosatlas van de geschiedenis van Nederland*. Groningen: Noordhoff Atlasproducties, 2011.

¹² Lusignan 2004, 225. In most of Artois, French was used, but the region did contain a few Dutch-speaking villages. The same is true for Hainaut, where Dutch was spoken in Edingen and Halle. Flanders, which was for the most part Dutch-speaking, did cover a relatively large French area around Lille. Brabant harboured a considerably smaller community that spoke French in the surroundings of Nivelles. Luxemburg was split in half vertically. In the west, a French dialect was spoken, while in the east the native tongue was High German. Armstrong 1965, 387; Bostoen 1987, 9; Lusignan, 2006, 266.

Many Dutch-speaking regions have at certain times been ruled by nobles whose first language was French. Up to 1529, a large part of Flanders, which was mostly Dutch speaking, belonged to the French crown.¹³ The duchy of Brabant contained, like Flanders, a small French-speaking region. In its ruling circles, French held an important position, as stated by Adenet Le Roy, a thirteenth-century poet working at the Brabantine court: ‘all the great lords, the counts and the barons,/ surrounded themselves with French people,/ to teach French to their daughters and sons’.¹⁴ The two languages of the region continued to coexist in all the social strata of Brabant for centuries.¹⁵ In fact, the later Belgian province of Brabant would remain bilingual until 1995, when it was split into two provinces: a French-speaking one and a Dutch-speaking one. The political events of the later Middle Ages had long-lasting effects on the language situation.

Other regions in what was later the Low Countries have also known times of French-speaking rule. From 1299 to 1354, the county of Holland, and after the peace of Paris of 1323 the newly created county of Zeeland, were under dominion of the House of Avesnes, which already ruled over the francophone county of Hainaut. From this moment onward, in addition to Dutch, French became an important courtly language in Holland and Zeeland.¹⁶ In Guelders, some of the local lords married French-speaking ladies to seal feudal ties. Mary of Guelders and Catherine of Bourbon were two such ladies. They brought the French language with them to the court of Guelders in the fifteenth century, while they themselves were confronted with the fact that their subjects spoke another vernacular.¹⁷

In the fifteenth century, the political position of the French language in the Low Countries became even stronger through the expansion of the dominion of the francophone House of Burgundy.¹⁸ In 1369, the then-current duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold, married the daughter of the count of Flanders and thus united Burgundy, Flanders, and Artois. Their grandson, Philip the Good, managed to extend Burgundian authority over Holland, Zeeland, Brabant, Limburg, Hainaut, Luxemburg, and Namur.¹⁹ Brussels became an important residential city for the largely French-speaking court, while Malines housed the Great Council,

¹³ Croenen 2003, 108; Lusignan 2012, 188-189; Willemyns 2013, 61; Stein 2014, 27-28; Stein 2017, 5, 10-13, 19-22.

¹⁴ ‘tout li grant seignor li conte et li marchis/ Avoient entour aus gent françoise tousdis/ Pour aprendre françois lor filles et lor fils’. Adenet Le Roy quoted by: Schmitz 2011, 61.

¹⁵ Lusignan 2012, 188.

¹⁶ Marchello-Nizia 1997, 48-49; De Boer, Cordfunke, & Sarfatij 2000; Van Camp 2011; Willemyns 2013, 59.

¹⁷ Nijsten 2004, 135, 257-258. I am grateful to Jeroen Benders for his suggestions on the use of French at the court of Guelders in the Middle Ages.

¹⁸ Stein 2014; Lecuppre-Desjardin 2016, 322-327; Stein 2017.

¹⁹ Bostoen 1987, 13; Blockmans 2006, 72-74; Willemyns 2013, 57-58; Stein 2014, 30-40; Stein 2017, 7-14, 35-52.

the highest court of justice.²⁰ At the same time, the Dutch tongue held an equally strong position, making bilingualism a common phenomenon among higher officials.²¹

In 1477, the Burgundian territories came under the dominion of a new dynasty, that of the Habsburgs, through the marriage of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian I. Their grandson, Charles, became the official ruler of the Burgundian Netherlands in 1515. In 1519, he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. He enlarged his possessions by bringing Tournai, Friesland, Utrecht, Groningen and the Ommelanden (Surrounding Lands), and Guelders under his rule. It was decreed in 1548 that the territories of the Burgundian Circle were one undividable political unity.²² From that moment on, the so-called Seventeen Provinces were considered one multilingual whole, sharing the task of finding ways to deal with this language situation.

Context: 1540–1620

Multilingualism thus was a fundamental marker of the Low Countries from the Middle Ages onwards. The conditions that stimulated a growing language awareness in the early modern period had developed over centuries. However, it was not until the second half of the sixteenth century that vivid debates on the local languages developed. This raises the question of what happened around 1540 that might have triggered the discussions. Which events furnished the spark that ignited the highly flammable multilingual firewood?

The answer should in part be sought in the political and religious troubles of this period. In 1559, the Italian Wars, in which France fought against the territories under the reign of Charles V (and later Philip II), finally ended when the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis was signed. During the wars, the francophone territories in the Low Countries and those in France had been on opposite sides.²³ From the 1560s onwards, the Low Countries witnessed the rise of Calvinism, while the large majority of the population remained Catholic.²⁴ In the second half of the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of the region were further divided through the Dutch Revolt, which was supported by some of the Calvinists and Catholics and rejected by others.²⁵ A pursuit of multilingual communication, unity, and peace imposed itself amidst these various tensions.

²⁰ Blockmans & Prevenier 1999, 190-191; Willemyns 2013, 58.

²¹ Pleij 1982, 50; Willemyns 2013, 63-65.

²² Bostoën 1987, 13; Van der Sijs 2006, 78-79; Blockmans 2006, 91; Willemyns 2013, 59.

²³ On the shared use of the French language and literary heritage on both sides, see: Doudet 2012.

²⁴ Voet 1993, 16; Marnef 1996, 56-64; Leeuwenberg 2008, 65.

²⁵ For Catholic support of the Revolt, see: Pollmann 2011, 1-2.

In 1555, Charles V abdicated in favour of his son Philip II, who in turn appointed his half-sister Margaret of Parma to rule in his name.²⁶ When Calvinism became an issue in the Low Countries, she enforced the local legislation regarding heresy and rebellion, which was very severe in comparison to that of other countries, such as Spain.²⁷ In 1566, the Compromise of Nobles, a group of aristocrats including Philips of Marnix, requested more lenient measures. They were nicknamed beggars or ‘gueux’ in French by one of Margaret’s counsellors. Characteristic of the strong relations between French and Dutch and of the creative processes of neologization at the time, this term was then integrated in untranslated form into Dutch as ‘geuzen’. In this form it was reappropriated by the rebels to designate themselves.

In that same year, 1566, the Iconoclastic Fury raged across the Low Countries. Groups of Calvinists attacked and wrecked religious artifacts.²⁸ These events increased the tensions among the local population. Jean de Toulouse, Marnix’s brother, led a band of rebels or ‘gueux’ that was defeated in the Battle of Oosterweel in March 1567. A few months later, the duke of Alva arrived, sent by Philip II to maintain order, and Margaret of Parma resigned. Many supporters of Calvinist ideals decided to flee the Low Countries.²⁹ Schoolmaster Peeter Heyns, who would later profess clear Calvinist sentiments, apparently feared for his safety. In 1567, he left for Danzig and went on to Cologne. He only reopened his Antwerp establishment in 1570, after Alva had promulgated a general pardon.³⁰

In the early 1570s, rebels, led by William of Orange occupied parts of the Low Countries, enforcing Calvinism in certain regions.³¹ In the following decades, the advancements of the rebel and royal troops forced large numbers of individuals to flee.³² In 1579, the southern regions Artois and Hainaut, and the city of Douai concluded the Union of Arras, which pledged loyalty to Philip II in order to strive for peace.³³ This union may seem to have been a collective attempt by the French-speaking regions of the Low Countries to break with the Dutch-speaking area. However, the Low Countries continued to be considered as one whole, and the Union of Arras was not motivated by language differences.³⁴ Only in the seventeenth century did an

²⁶ Parker 1977, 44; Groenveld 2008a, 74; Woltjer 2011, 247.

²⁷ Van Dixhoorn 2012a, esp. 254-257.

²⁸ Iconoclasm was punished as an act of rebellion. See: Payen 2013, 80-108.

²⁹ Parker 1977, 70; Marnef 1996, 88-97; Groenveld 2008a, 82-85; Groenveld 2008b, 86-87; Leeuwenberg 2008, 67.

³⁰ Meskens 1998-1999, 96; Meeus 2000a, 307; Soen 2005, 337; Soen 2012, 88-91; Soen 2016, 113-117.

³¹ Voet 1993, 16; Groenveld 2008b, 93; Pollmann 2011, 94-122.

³² Janssen 2011.

³³ Geurts 1956, 7, 221; Parker 1977, 195; Arnade 2008, 295; Groenveld 2008c, 111-114; Soen 2012, 131-135.

³⁴ De Schepper 1987, 17-18.

awareness start to arise that the Low Countries might possibly be split into a northern and a southern entity, but again, not following the language border.³⁵

Meanwhile, Antwerp turned into a safe haven for Calvinists who had to leave their homes because of the victories of the king.³⁶ This did not last long, however: in 1584, Antwerp was besieged by enemy troops. That same year, William of Orange was assassinated. Antwerp surrendered in August 1585. Non-Catholic inhabitants were given the chance to convert or leave.³⁷ Many had already fled to safer places in the years leading up to the siege and surrender, but there were still great numbers of people who left after 1585. The military encounters continued in the following decades. The rebels gained ground in the northeastern regions, but did not take control of the provinces towards the south. Despite the fact that all territories now in rebel hands were Dutch-speaking ones, the Low Countries, marked by conflict on religious and political levels, remained a multilingual unity.

Throughout the second half of the century, Calvinist refugees had sought shelter in southeast England and in settlements in tolerant or Protestant locations in the western region of Germany, such as Emden, Hamburg, and Frankenthal. Some chose to go to Holland or Zeeland, such as Heyns, who after 1585 moved to Frankfurt, Stade, and Haarlem, in that order.³⁸ In the exile communities, people from different regions of the Low Countries came together.³⁹ As far as language is concerned, these settlements were very diverse. They were set in a foreign context where German or English was the local language, and they welcomed people from French-speaking and Dutch-speaking regions from all over the Low Countries.

The political, social, and religious events of the fifteenth and especially the sixteenth century thus had important consequences on the level of language. These times were marked by heightened degrees of language contact, which stimulated awareness of language differences and incited people to think about their language and dialect in relation to those of others. In the context of increasing polarization between pro- and anti-Habsburg forces and between Calvinists and Catholics, there was a wish for peace in the whole of the multilingual Low Countries. Perhaps so many intellectuals turned to the domain of language in this period because in the face of these crises, it was important to understand each other's language.

³⁵ Pollmann 2011, 4, 191; De Schepper 1995, 41.

³⁶ Marnef 1996, 70; Janssen 2011, 476.

³⁷ Soen 2005, 356-357.

³⁸ Gelderblom 2000, 21-24, 116-117; Van de Haar 2015a.

³⁹ Marnef 1996, 149-150.

Dutch and French

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Dutch formed part of the Low Germanic language continuum. The author of the *Twe-spraack* stated that his native language was spoken from Bruges to Riga and Tallinn.⁴⁰ Marnix let the language stretch less far, to Danzig.⁴¹ Nevertheless, in the course of the century, the Low Germanic dialects in the Low Countries were collectively moving in a different direction than the varieties in the German territories.⁴² In practice, most of the participants in the discussions on language only included Dutch language forms in their treatises. Joos Lambrecht, when enumerating the dialects of which his mother tongue was made up, mentioned the variants of Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Guelders, Cleves, Friesland, Limburg, and Zeeland.⁴³ All these dialects of Low Germanic were spoken in the Low Countries or slightly east of its borders.

The custom to consider the Low Germanic dialects of the Low Countries as one entity resulted in the development of a distinct terminology.⁴⁴ Whereas only the terms Walloon and French were used to refer to the language used in the Romance-speaking parts of the Low Countries—besides the occasional reference to the Picard dialect—, various terms existed to speak of the Germanic language of the region.⁴⁵ Frequently used terms were ‘Duytsch’ (‘Germanic’), which could refer to the whole Germanic language continuum or to a part of it, and ‘Nederduytsch’ (‘Low Germanic’), which was used to refer to both Low Germanic as a whole and to the Low Germanic dialects of the Low Countries. In most cases, texts use a variety of different terms. Marnix, in the 1591 edition of his psalm translation, already uses three different names in the title only: ‘Nederduytsch’ (‘Low Germanic’), ‘Neder-lantsch’ (‘belonging to the Low Countries’),⁴⁶ and ‘Duytsch’ (‘Germanic’).⁴⁷

In many cases, it is unclear to what set of dialects the author wishes to refer exactly. To speak of the Germanic language of the Low Countries as a whole, the term ‘Flemish’

⁴⁰ ‘which stretches from Bruges to Riga and Tallinn’. ‘de welcke van Brug af tot Ry ende Revel toe streckt’. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 110.

⁴¹ ‘along the Baltic sea, up to Danzig’. ‘lanx de Oostersche zee henen, tot aen Dantzijck toe’. Marnix 1580, fol. A4v.

⁴² Claes 1975, 301-302; Willemyns & Van der Horst 1997, 156-157; De Grauwe 2002, 102-103; Van der Sijs 2004, 100-101.

⁴³ Lambrecht 1550, fol. A2r.

⁴⁴ Claes 1975, 301-303.

⁴⁵ Duke 2004.

⁴⁶ The term ‘Nederlandsch’, which is the common term in modern Dutch, had already been used once in 1482, but it did not catch on immediately. It increased in popularity around the middle of the sixteenth century, probably stimulated by the unification of the territories of the Low Countries in the Burgundian Circle in 1548. It was used in the title of Lambrecht’s *Néderlandsche Spellijnghe* (1550). De Vreese 1909, 421; Claes 1970b, 293; De Grauwe 2002, 99; Van der Sijs 2004, 102; Van der Sijs 2006, 79; Van Dixhoorn 2012a, 254; Willemyns 2013, 5; Hafner 2015, 85.

⁴⁷ Marnix 1591; De Grauwe 2003b, 150-151.

(‘Vlaamsch’) was often used, while it could also designate the specific dialect of Flanders.⁴⁸ Peeter Heyns strongly opposed this use of the name of one dialect to refer to the whole of Dutch: ‘they thus make a great mistake, taking one part for the whole, because Flanders is but a part of this whole country’.⁴⁹ This metonymical use of the name of a dialect was, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, also applied to the vernacular of Holland.⁵⁰ To this day, references to the province of Holland are frequently made when the Netherlands as a whole is meant—which is still a cause of frustration for many Dutch people.

Heyns’s quote draws attention to the plurality of Dutch dialects. Rather than referring to the ‘Dutch language’, it would be more appropriate to speak of a ‘spectrum’ of Dutch variants.⁵¹ In the northeastern regions, dialects were spoken that shared many words and characteristics with High Germanic language variants.⁵² There were also quite a few differences between dialects of Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht.⁵³ In Brabant, for instance, the negative response ‘no’ was expressed by saying ‘niee’, while Hollanders said ‘neen’.⁵⁴ In Friesland, variants of Frisian were spoken, but they hardly appeared in written texts after 1550.⁵⁵ It must not be forgotten that even within the various provinces, different variants of the local dialects were used.⁵⁶ Within the French-speaking areas, dialectal variety was also present. In the West, Picard was used, with a particular variant called Rouchy used around Valenciennes, while the Walloon dialect was spoken in the east.⁵⁷

It is unclear to what extent speakers of different Low Germanic dialects were able to understand each other in conversation and written communication. Historical evidence on this topic is conflicting. Humanist physician Johannes Goropius Becanus stated that ‘there are differences, but they are not so great that someone from Danzig could not converse with

⁴⁸ De Vreese 1909, 424-425.

⁴⁹ ‘en quoy ilz commettent grand erreur, prenants vne partie pour l’entier ; car Flandres n’es qu’vne partie de tout ce païs cy’. Heyns 1579, fol. 26r.

⁵⁰ Vanderheyden 1983, 253; Van der Sijs 2004, 103; Hafner 2015, 86-87.

⁵¹ Joby 2015, 3.

⁵² Willemyns & Van der Horst 1997, 185-186; Van der Sijs 2004, 45-46.

⁵³ For an overview of the differences, see: Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 200-220. See further: Van der Wal 1995a, 30-31; Van der Wal 2002, 5; Schrijver 2014, 135-137.

⁵⁴ Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 206.

⁵⁵ Vries 1993; Van der Wal 1995a, 33-34, 85; Jonkman & Versloot 2013, 56-57.

⁵⁶ Joby 2015, 14.

⁵⁷ Armstrong 1965, 388-389; Bostoen 1987, 11.

someone from Antwerp or Brussels'.⁵⁸ Indeed, the language continuum along the North Sea coast made oral communication possible, even though the differences were considerable.⁵⁹

Because of the surmountable dialectal differences, printed texts could be distributed far beyond the borders of the province in which they had been printed. Nevertheless, it must often have been quite clear for the audience where the book they were reading had been produced. This led one author in 1564 to warn his public: 'Know, dear reader, that this book contains many Brabantine words that are badly understood in Flanders'.⁶⁰ As an example, he explains that the Brabantine word for 'lover' is 'vrijer', while it is 'minnaer' in Flemish. This quote illustrates the awareness of the differences between various dialects. In the text in question, however, the Brabantine terms had been maintained, and were thus not considered to be too problematic. Perhaps the warning in the prologue even functioned simultaneously as an implicit invitation to the readers to discover the dialectal particularities for themselves. In the context of a growing fascination with language diversity, this is certainly not unthinkable.

The dialectal variety of French, too, was considerable in this period, both within and beyond the French borders.⁶¹ In the French-speaking parts of the Low Countries, the dialect of Paris and the Île de France, or the 'langue du Roi' ('language of the king'), had had some influence through its use by the dukes of Burgundy. Considerable differences persisted in writing, but in the sixteenth century spelling in the Picard and Walloon regions did conform itself slowly to the Parisian usage.⁶² The Picard use of 'ch' instead of 's' has been attested in printed texts from Antwerp ('chinq' instead of 'cinq', meaning 'five'), as well as the use of 'w' where it would not be used in the French of Île de France ('eauwe' instead of 'eau', meaning 'water').⁶³

Several authors who were active in the Low Countries, both native and non-native speakers, apologized for the fact that their French differed from the 'langue du Roi'. Hainaut playwright Philippe Bosquier wrote a poem in which he addressed his book, warning it against French criticism: 'Visit France as little as you can,/ fearing that, because you do not have their

⁵⁸ 'eo quòd, licet diuersitate quadam dissideant, sic tamen non dissideant, vt Gedanicus non possit cum Antwerpiano aut Bruxellensi fabulari'. Becanus 1580, *Hermathena* I, 4; Becanus 2014, 334. In the *Twe-spraak*, too, it is stated that a speaker from Bruges and one from Riga or Tallinn would 'differ somewhat in pronunciation, but not so much that they cannot understand one another very well'. 'wel iet wat inde uyt spraack verschelende, maar zó niet óf elck verstaat ander zeer wel'. *Twe-spraak* 1584, 110.

⁵⁹ Heerma van Voss 1996, 25-28.

⁶⁰ 'Weet goede Leser, dat in dit Boecxken veel Brabantsche woorden sijn diemen in Vlaenderen luttel verstaet'. Marius Laurier quoted by: Hermans 1996, 51.

⁶¹ Clerico 1999, 160-169; Cohen 2016, 918.

⁶² Rickard 1968, 21; Francard 1993, 318-319.

⁶³ Baddeley 1993, 82-83.

sweet-sounding voice,/ you would be mocked more than an old guitar'.⁶⁴ Obviously, this statement incorporates the topos of modesty and the early modern custom to defend one's writing against any critique it might receive. Nevertheless, there was a consciousness of dialectal differences within French as much as in Dutch.

It has been suggested in the past that a command of both vernaculars of the region, French and Dutch, was a rarity, limited to the highest circles of government and the most successful international businessmen.⁶⁵ However, this image is based on a narrow interpretation of the notion of bilingualism. Knowledge of a second language comes in different shapes and sizes. In a multilingual environment like the Low Countries, many people naturally learn some basics of the other language of the country, even if it concerns only passive language skills.⁶⁶ Travelling across the language border was not exceptional. There must have been a large group of people with a considerable command of a second language who are invisible to modern historians because of a lack of sources, causing an underestimation of the importance of plurilingualism on an individual level.

The Dutch-speaking inhabitants of the Low Countries were renowned in the early modern period for their knowledge of multiple languages, and of French in particular.⁶⁷ Even Luther praised the Dutch for their knowledge of foreign languages in his *Tischreden* (1566). According to the compilers of these table talks, Luther had referred to a proverb saying that '[even] if you carry a Flemish person through Italy and France in a bag, [...] he will soon learn the language'.⁶⁸ This plurilingual reputation was also often mentioned in treatises written by natives of the region themselves, such as humanists Johannes Goropius Becanus and Abraham Mylius, who referred to it in their contributions to the language debates.⁶⁹

For native speakers of Dutch, French was, through language manuals, schools, and in some cases daily contact, highly accessible. Eduard Mellema, master of a French school, claimed that French was used all over the Low Countries: 'at markets, at fairs, at court, by

⁶⁴ 'Et le moins que tu peus, voisine le françois/ Craignant que, pour n'auoir leur doux-sonnante vois,/ Tu ne sois plus raillé qu'vne vieille guiterre'. Bosquier 1589, fol. A3r.

⁶⁵ Bostoën 1987, 9-11.

⁶⁶ Van der Sijs 2004, 50; Schmitz 2011, 62-63. Margriet Hoogvliet has found evidence that inhabitants of the francophone regions of the Low Countries sometimes possessed some knowledge of Dutch. Hoogvliet 2016.

⁶⁷ Caravolas 1994, 247; Dursteler 2012, 51.

⁶⁸ 'wenn man einen Fleming in einem Sacke durch Italiam oder Franckreich fuehrete, spricht man, so lernet er bald die Sprache'. Luther 1568, fol. 424v; Caravolas 1994, 247.

⁶⁹ See: Chapter 3.1. Mylius compared his fellow countrymen with sponges: 'I would almost say that my Belgian compatriot is a language sponge; in the way that a sponge perfectly absorbs all liquids, so does he absorb languages'. 'Dixerim fere Belgam meum spongiam linguarum, ut ista perfecte humores omnes, sic ille linguas recipit'. Mylius 1612, 69-70. See also: Becanus 1580, *Hermathena* II, 26-27; Van Hal 2010a, 464; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 130.

farmers in quite large numbers, by most villagers and merchants, by noblemen: in short, the parliaments and secretaries, the clergy and the students'.⁷⁰ Mellema indicates important places where the French and Dutch languages were used alongside each other: in mercantile environments; in large cities; in aristocratic circles; in the higher levels of administration; and by students and the clergy. In the remainder of this chapter, the validity of Mellema's claims will be put to the test.

2.2. Ruling Languages

The fact that parts of the Low Countries were occasionally ruled by 'other-tongued regents', as remarked by Coornhert, had an impact on the professional domains that had an intermediary role between the higher authorities and the local population.⁷¹ In the fields of administration and jurisdiction, interaction with various social groups could give rise to situations where knowledge of both French and Dutch was a prerequisite. Simultaneously, these multilingual fields were marked by the development of a specialized jargon that could hamper communication with uninitiated interlocutors. In this way, the conditions developed for a perfect language storm.

Indeed, these environments marked by multilingualism and jargon incited various professionals to reflect and express their opinion on the language situation, such as Antwerp alderman Jan van den Werve in the field of justice, and Leiden city secretary Jan van Hout regarding administration. They were not only interested in the developments within their field of employment, but also about the possible consequences of this situation on the speech of common men and women. In the meantime, it was feared that because of the prestige of court culture, the language of the aristocracy was influencing the language use of the people. These cases show that it was in contexts of language encounter that debate was sparked, namely encounters between French and Dutch, between the language of those within and those outside a profession, or those within and those outside a prestigious environment.

Administration

It may come as a surprise that the oldest known charters in Old French, which date from the end of the twelfth century, were not written within the present borders of France but in the

⁷⁰ 'és marchés, és foires, és Cours, les paysans en assez grand nombre, les Citoyens & les Marchands pour la plus part, les Gentils hommes : brief, les Parlements & Secretairies, le Clergé avec les Estudiens'. Mellema 1591, fol. A4r.

⁷¹ 'vreemdtongighe landvooghden'. *Twe-spraack* 1584, fol. A6r.

provinces of Hainaut and Flanders.⁷² These are also the first administrative texts written in the vernacular in what would later become the whole of the Low Countries, where the use of French thus preceded that of Dutch. The oldest surviving Dutch charter was also produced in Flanders, in 1249.⁷³ Research that limits itself to the present borders of France or to the Dutch-speaking region alone risks ignoring this chronology, as well as the fact that multilingualism would continue to characterize the domain of administration in the Low Countries until well into the sixteenth century.

From the thirteenth century onward, the vernaculars started to be used next to Latin in administration, and French in particular became a prominent administrative language.⁷⁴ It was often used in some, albeit not all cities in Dutch-speaking regions.⁷⁵ When Charles V became Lord of the Netherlands, the central administration remained multilingual.⁷⁶ Higher officials and, depending on the circumstances, lower-placed employees, required a working knowledge of the three languages of the region: Latin, French, and Dutch.⁷⁷ The importance of plurilingualism for those fulfilling a position in the local administration becomes clear from certain cases in which local authorities struggled because of the absence of qualified plurilingual individuals. In 1530, the city of Ieper had to pay a large sum to have a charter translated from French.⁷⁸

Historians have pointed to various official resolutions to defend the paradigm linking early modern support for the Dutch vernacular with a general rejection of foreign influence.⁷⁹ An example of this is the Great Privilege that Mary of Burgundy was forced to sign in 1477, stating that all official decrees had to be communicated in the language that was spoken in the region to which they applied.⁸⁰ In recent years, the notion that the Privilege constituted a crucial turning point in the history of the Dutch language has been debunked, as Wim Blockmans has shown that language formed only a marginal element of the text. Moreover, the document did

⁷² One of the earliest texts is the Charter of Chièvres in Hainaut from 1194, of which a sixteenth-century copy has been preserved in the national archives in Brussels. The Charter is discussed in: Arnould 1965. Other early French documents have been edited in: Gysseling 1949. See also: Ruelle 1984; Francard 1993, 318; Kruisheer 1998; Croenen 2003, 108; Lusignan 2004, 47; Van Camp 2011, 124.

⁷³ It is possible that an earlier Dutch text was drawn up in Zeeland, but if it existed, it is no longer extant. Croenen 2003, 108-109.

⁷⁴ De Meyer 1974, 2-3; Burgers 1996; De Hemptinne 2000; De Hemptinne & Prevenier 2003; Croenen 2003, 108.

⁷⁵ De Meyer 1974, 9; Burgers 1996; De Ridder 2003.

⁷⁶ Bostoen 1987, 10-11; Francard 1993, 319.

⁷⁷ Bostoen 1987, 9-11; De Hemptinne & Prevenier 2003; Lusignan 2012, 198; Willemyns 2013, 63-64.

⁷⁸ Van der Wal 1994, 115.

⁷⁹ Similar meanings were attributed, for instance, to the French ordonnance of Villers-Cotterêts, which prescribes the use of French in legal documents. It has been seen as a first expression of French as a national language, until this image was revealed to be greatly exaggerated. See: Clerico 1999, 149-152; Cohen 2003.

⁸⁰ Blockmans & Prevenier 1999, 197-198.

not simply defend speakers of Dutch in their competition with speakers of French; it was also designed to protect, for instance, natives from Holland and Zeeland from competition from the (Dutch-speaking) Flemish.⁸¹

A second example used by supporters of the old paradigm concerns the language of the States-General. Ever since they had been joined together by political bonds, representatives of the French- and Dutch-speaking regions of the Low Countries convened in this assembly. Traditionally, the notes and decrees of this bilingual body were written in French.⁸² However, after the French-speaking regions had reconciled with Philip II and thus no longer took part in the meetings, some changes were made.⁸³ In 1580, the first writings in Dutch were produced. Not surprisingly, it did not take long before the council completely switched to Dutch in its written documents. On 7 March 1582 it was officially concluded: ‘On this day, the gentlemen of the States-General have decided that from now on it will continue the resolutions of the States-General in the Dutch language’.⁸⁴

The decision of the States-General to opt for Dutch as its first language is a pragmatic rather than an emotional one, even though it has been linked to contemporary defences of the Dutch vernacular and a ‘national consciousness’.⁸⁵ As has been shown by Marijke van der Wal and Jan Berns, in practice, documents continued to be written in French, especially in cases of correspondence with speakers of that language.⁸⁶ Moreover, in their Dutch writings the States-General did not strive for a uniform or standardized language. The documents were written in the dialect of the scribe in question and contained many loanwords.⁸⁷ This example demonstrates the importance of studying actual language use in order to avoid teleological conclusions on the development of the language in question.

The Dutch language as it was used in administrative texts contained many loanwords from French and Latin, and thus was a source of irritation for those, such as Coornhert, who rejected language mixing. In 1561, Coornhert complained about the supposedly difficult language that was used to announce royal decrees: ‘how can a Dutchman, who does not know

⁸¹ Blockmans 1985, 486, 492; Boone 2009, 31-33.

⁸² Van der Wal 1994, 112; Van der Wal 1995a, 38.

⁸³ Berns 2004, 60.

⁸⁴ ‘Op huyden hebben myne heeren de Generaele Staeten geresolveert, dat men nu voortaeen de resolutiën van de Generaliteyt in de Nederlansche taele sal continueren’. Quoted by: Japikse 1918, 320.

⁸⁵ For this outdated view, see: Briels 1985, 23. See also: Frijhoff & Spies 1999, 228-229. Frijhoff and Spies describe the developments in the States-General as an example that the Dutch language had become accepted as ‘national language of unity’ by 1650.

⁸⁶ Van der Wal 1994, 114; Berns 2004, 60.

⁸⁷ Van der Sijs 2004, 38.

French or Latin, understand the meaning of these and similar words?’⁸⁸ Coornhert witnessed a contradiction between the wide, public announcement of these decrees, and their vocabulary, which was, according to him, too complex.

Indeed, extant ordonnances and decrees from this period abound with borrowed terms, as can be illustrated by a random, but representative, example. After a failed attempt to assassinate William of Orange in 1582, twenty years after Coornhert’s complaint was printed, the following statement was issued in Antwerp: His ‘Excellentie’ (‘excellence’) had been in great ‘dangier’ (‘danger’), but it was hoped that God’s ‘gratie’ (‘grace’) might ‘preserveren’ (‘save’) him if the entire city would ‘celebreren’ (‘celebrate’) an ‘extraordinarissen’ (‘extraordinary’) day of prayer.⁸⁹ It seems that Coornhert nevertheless exaggerated the difficulty of these terms for native speakers of Dutch, since many loanwords had been in use for a long time. Terms such as ‘Excellentie’ (‘excellence’) and ‘gratie’ (‘grace’) were so common they would certainly have been understood by monolingual speakers of Dutch.

The widespread use of borrowed terms in administrative contexts did not diminish when Coornhert and others started to reject them around the middle of the sixteenth century, as they were strongly embedded in professional traditions. In 1592, Leiden town clerk Jan van Hout stipulated that it was important for city officials to ‘use correct spelling’ and ‘avoid bastard and scummed words as much as possible’.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, loanwords continued to be used under his supervision.⁹¹ The likely author of the *Twe-spraack*, merchant Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel, similarly succumbed to custom in his exchanges with local authorities, despite the *Twe-spraack*’s fierce criticism of loanwords.⁹² A letter from 1589 to the States of Holland in his hand is full of borrowings, such as ‘satisfactye’ (‘approval’), ‘gheinfringeert’ (‘infringed’), and ‘restaureren’ (‘to restore’).⁹³ In order to be able to be successful in a professional context,

⁸⁸ ‘hoe sal een nederlander, sonder walsch oft Latijn te connen, verstaen moghen den sinne van dese ende deser ghelijcke woorden’. Coornhert 1561a, fols. *6v-*7r.

⁸⁹ ‘Alsoo op ghisteren naerder noenen sijn Excellentie seer verraderlyck in zijn hooft is gheschoten ende gewont niet sonder dangier van zijnen lijue, ten waere God almachtich door sijne Goddelijcke gratie hem ghelieue te preserueren ende vande voorseyde wonde te genesen: Soo eest, dat [...] wordt gheordonneert eenen yegelycken op ouermorgen te houden ende celebreren eenen vasten-dach ende extraordinarissen bid-dach’. Felixarchief, Antwerp, *Stadsplakkaten 1564-1705 gedrukt bij Plantin-Moretus*, 19 March 1582, number 54. All six terms, except for ‘dangier’, are listed in Jan van den Werve’s purist dictionary from 1553 (see *infra*: ‘Jurisdiction’). Van den Werve 1553.

⁹⁰ ‘behoorlicker spellen’. ‘verbasterde of geschuynde vvoorden zo vermijndende, als mogelicken is’. *Ordonnantie ende onderrichtinge* 1592, fols. F4v, G1v; Koppenol 1998, 176, 393-394.

⁹¹ Van den Branden 1967, 124.

⁹² On the authorship of the *Twe-spraack*, see; Dibbets 1985, 23-26.

⁹³ ‘de satisfactye door de ghemeente gheinfringeert zynde ende dattet de ghesteltenisse des Lands niet mede bracht de zelfde weder to restaureren’. Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel quoted by: Verwey 1919, 64; Van den Branden 1967, 181. All three loanwords are mentioned in the Jan van den Werve’s purist dictionary from 1553 (see *infra*: ‘Jurisdiction’). Van den Werve 1553.

Spiegel could not escape the customs that had become the standard in written communication in his field, regardless of his personal views.

Theory and practice were definitely two different levels in the discussions on language, and therefore they need to be compared in order to draw sound conclusions. No matter how strongly Van Hout and Spiegel wished to defend their mother tongue from the use of foreign terms, rejecting them completely would marginalize them professionally.

Jurisdiction

In legal contexts, tension existed between the specialist jargon of professionals and the need for clear communication with non-experts involved in court cases.⁹⁴ On the one hand, precise terminology was needed by jurists for internal communication. On the other, everyone involved needed to understand what was being said and written by the other parties so they could defend their case. Moreover, comprehension was crucial in order to set an example for the witnessing public.⁹⁵ Intellectuals like Coornhert, who firmly opposed loanwords, attacked the jargon of legal administration on the grounds that it had been borrowed from French and Latin and was thus incomprehensible to a Dutch-speaking audience. Historians of the Dutch language have probably been too gullible in taking these complaints literally.

Sixteenth-century law administration was a largely vernacular matter. Local jurisprudence was the responsibility of the bailiff and aldermen, who usually spoke the language of the local population.⁹⁶ Notaries were not required to learn Latin, but they did need to fully grasp the complex terminology of the field.⁹⁷ The importance of mastering the correct jargon in this environment is illustrated by the fact that lawyers were called ‘language men’ (‘taalmannen’).⁹⁸ At the same time, however, Marco Mostert has convincingly argued that the formulaic character of the language of courts and the ceremonial actions that accompanied it

⁹⁴ On the notion of jargon in the early modern period, see: Burke 1995.

⁹⁵ On the importance of the public aspect of the legal process, see: Mostert 2011a; Mostert 2011b.

⁹⁶ Coornhert 1985, 22-23; De Schepper & Cauchies 1993, 143-149. According to Antonius Sexagius (Van 't Sestich), a jurist from Brabant, the importance of multilingualism in juridical circles had affected the Dutch language. He criticized the pronunciation of words by law experts: ‘The pronunciation in Flanders has been for a great part corrupted by the jurists, particularly those from France’ (‘Flandrorum pronuntiationem magna ex parte corruptam fuisse per pragmaticos, quos ex Gallijs’). Sexagius thus claims that native speakers of French, who needed to learn Dutch so they could take part in cases that concerned Dutch people, had such a large impact on the local population that it influenced their pronunciation. Sexagius 1576, fol. C6r. See also: Goemans 1946; Van der Have 2002, 42; Seldeslachts 2013, 291. For the use of local dialects in legal settings in early modern France, see: Cohen 2016.

⁹⁷ Van der Sijs 2004, 375-376.

⁹⁸ See, for an example of the use of this term: *Twe-spraak* 1584, fol. A7r. See also: Mostert 2011b, 290n10.

facilitated understanding for an uninitiated audience.⁹⁹ In practice, the field had thus probably found a balance between precise jargon and general comprehension for a lay audience.

Throughout the sixteenth century, nevertheless, remarks were made that the language of law administration was too complex. In 1503, a Dutch translation of a French treatise on law was published in Antwerp. This *Somme ruyrael* was originally written by Jean Boutillier (Bottelgier). The translation starts with a long list of ‘foreign or French terms’ that would be difficult to understand for the wider public, such as ‘Committimus’ (Latin for ‘we command’) and ‘Turpitude’ (‘turpitude’).¹⁰⁰ Terms like these have a distinct meaning in the context of jurisdiction, and translating them would possibly damage their domain-specific definition. The editors of the *Somme ruyrael* decided to maintain the loanwords in the main text, complying with judicial traditions, and offer an explanatory word list as a solution.¹⁰¹ The problem was thus under control.

In 1553, in his *Het tresoor der Duytsscher talen*, jurist Jan van den Werve again fed the idea that legal language was too difficult.¹⁰² He claimed that non-professionals who were confronted with the loanwords used in this domain were left ‘startled and as if they had received a blow to the head’.¹⁰³ Van den Werve’s vocabulary provides Dutch translations of loanwords that were frequently used in legal contexts and elsewhere in order to provide the ‘victims’ with a tool that could undo their paralyzing state of confusion. Nevertheless, he recognized the fact that certain words had become so common in Dutch that it would be impossible to replace them, putting the difficulty of loanwords into perspective.¹⁰⁴

Contrary to what one might think when reading modern overviews of early modern complaints about loanwords, absolutely no consensus existed on the topic.¹⁰⁵ According to the *Twe-spraak*, Van den Werve had been the subject of ‘everyone’s mockery’.¹⁰⁶ Coornhert had

⁹⁹ Mostert 2011a. For further discussions on this topic, see Chapter 4 of Frans Camphuijsen’s doctoral thesis: Camphuijsen 2017.

¹⁰⁰ ‘vreemde oft walsche termen’. Boutillier 1503, fol. 1r. For the list, see: fols. 1r-3v. See also: Van den Branden 1967, 25-26; Van der Sijs 2006, 72.

¹⁰¹ In 1585, a notarial treatise appeared in which a list of difficult terms, among which were loanwords from French and Latin, was included. It was written by Jacques Thuys. He, too, decided to insert a word list to explain difficult terms to his readers while maintaining borrowed terms. Pitlo 1948, 25-32; Van den Branden 1967, 146-147; Van der Sijs 2006, 91.

¹⁰² The full title is *Het Tresoor der Duytsscher talen: Een seer profijtelijsch boeck voor alle de ghene: die de Latijnsche sprake ende meer andere niet en connen, ende bysondere die het Recht hanteeren*. The title points to the value of the work for judicial environments: *The treasure of the Dutch language; A very profitable book for all those who do not know the Latin language and others, and especially those who practise law*.

¹⁰³ ‘als verbaest ende voor thoof tgheslaghen’. Van den Werve 1553, fol. A2r.

¹⁰⁴ Van den Werve 1553, fol. A2v.

¹⁰⁵ Examples of such overviews of complaints about loanwords are: Van den Branden 1967, 20-26, 71-72; Van der Wal 1995a, 28-30; Van der Sijs 2004; 323-331, 368-373; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 195-198.

¹⁰⁶ ‘allemans spót’. *Twe-spraak* 1584, 6.

been an exception to the widespread derision of Van der Werve's attack on a straw man. Eight years after the publication of the *Tresoor*, he made the improbable claim that people had no clue whether they were winning their case or not because of the difficult legal terminology. Coornhert then hyperbolically praised Van den Werve as 'a lone Hercules [who] stood up to fight this three-headed Cerberus for the first time'.¹⁰⁷ References to Hercules's works were commonplace in sixteenth-century lexicography all over Europe.¹⁰⁸ In combination with Coornhert's exaggerated claims about the incomprehensibility of the language of law, however, the comparison between Van den Werve and the heroic half-god Hercules slaying the monster that defended the entrance to the underworld is excessive. Coornhert's strong hyperbolic style creates an almost comical effect. Rather than a serious complaint about the issue of loanwords, which is how Van den Branden interpreted Coornhert's work, this seems to be a humorous, satirical text on the topic.¹⁰⁹

In fact, Coornhert's rejection of borrowing is not as Herculean and strict as one might suspect when reading these remarks. In the same preface praising Van den Werve, he shows himself to be a pragmatist by accepting loanwords that had become customary. In a different context, Coornhert even completely gave in to the customs of the legal domain. In 1567, he wrote a short text on his view on the punishment of criminals. It was published in 1587 under the title *Boeven-tucht*. Probably led by his wish to reach an expert audience of lawmakers, Coornhert used ample borrowed legal terms: 'bannissementen' ('banishments'), 'executien' ('punishments'), 'justitien' ('justice'), and so on.¹¹⁰ Even Coornhert could not avoid the hellhound if he wished to achieve his goals. The pragmatism with regard to loanwords which is present in the works of Coornhert seems typical of the legal domain.

The sixteenth century did not witness the end of attacks on the complex terminology of law administration, which continued to be topical in the following centuries. Poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel still ridiculed the language of lawyers in a poem printed in 1622: 'Speak in such a way when you plead that a farmer knows/ How his case goes, do not borrow foreign matter'.¹¹¹ Vondel suggests that the common people still could not understand what was said in court. Well into the seventeenth century, Cerberus had not yet been defeated.

¹⁰⁷ 'als een eenige Hercules desen driehoofdighen Cerberum eerst te bestrijden'. Coornhert 1561a, fol. *7v.

¹⁰⁸ Erasmus of Rotterdam used a reference to Hercules's works to characterize his efforts for his *Adagiorum collectanea* (1500), while Henri II Estienne described his 1557 *Ciceronianvm Lexicon Græcolatinum* (1557) in this way. See: Considine 2008, 1, 23.

¹⁰⁹ Van den Branden 1967, 71-72. Van den Branden's interpretation is followed by: Van der Wal 1995a, 29; Van der Sijs 2004, 372.

¹¹⁰ Van den Branden 1967, 74; Coornhert 1985.

¹¹¹ 'Spreekt soo wanneer ghy dingt, soo sal een Landman weten/ Hoe 't met sijn saken staet, ontleent geen vreemde stof'. Van den Vondel 1889, 48; Van der Sijs 2004, 589.

Like the mythical hellhound, the problem of loanwords had various heads: on the one hand, there was a need for precise professional terminology that was filled by loanwords; on the other, professionals had to be able to communicate with an uninitiated audience. Because of this dilemma, the discussions on loanwords in this domain did not result in any form of consensus, and Latinisms and Gallicisms continued to be used. In their demonization of borrowing, twentieth-century scholars have overlooked the positive sides of loanwords and exaggerated the problems caused by their use. Like Coornhert and Van den Werve, they continued to attack the straw hellhound, blowing the issue out of proportions.

The Court and Aristocracy

In 1551, French author Guillaume Des Autels described the French court as ‘a monster with multiple heads and consequently multiple tongues, and multiple voices’.¹¹² Again, a language issue is compared to a multi-headed monster, but in this case it does not specifically concern the hellhound Cerberus. Generally speaking, European courts had, ever since the Middle Ages, been marked by complexity on the level of language.¹¹³ Many families of noble birth made political marriages in order to ensure continuity and to get a stronger grip on their power. Through these marriages, women in particular were forced to move to foreign countries and learn the local language.¹¹⁴ Examples of such noble ladies coming to Dutch-speaking regions included the francophone women Mary of Guelders (née d’Harcourt) and Catherine of Bourbon.¹¹⁵

In the Low Countries, French had been the most important language at court since Burgundian times, and it remained so under Habsburg rule. Charles V corresponded with his high officials in the Low Countries in French. The multilingual character of his court and duties required him to become plurilingual himself.¹¹⁶ Besides French, Charles knew Dutch and some Spanish, Italian, and Latin.¹¹⁷ Although according to a famous saying he spoke German with his horse or his soldiers, it was probably Dutch, as he knew very little (High) German.¹¹⁸ Charles’s successor, Philip II, was a native speaker of Spanish who had enjoyed a thorough

¹¹² ‘vn Monstre de plusieurs testes, & consequemment de plusieurs langues, & plusieurs voix’. Des Autels 1551, 22. See also: Huchon 1988, 30.

¹¹³ Classen 2012, 142; Kammerer & Müller 2015, 18; Balsamo & Bleuler 2016.

¹¹⁴ Knauth 2007, 152.

¹¹⁵ Nijsten 2004, 258.

¹¹⁶ Balsamo & Bleuler 2016, 12-13.

¹¹⁷ De Grauwe 2003b, 149.

¹¹⁸ De Grauwe 2003b, 162; Burke 2004, 28.

instruction in Latin but not in French.¹¹⁹ After 1559, he mostly resided in Madrid, where he held a Spanish-speaking court. Spanish did not become a prominent language in the Low Countries after Philip's accession to the throne.¹²⁰ The court in Brussels continued to cultivate French as its primary language.¹²¹ It is no coincidence that the petition offered by the Compromise of Nobles, a group of aristocrats, to Margaret of Parma in 1566, was initially drawn up in French.¹²²

The Dutch Revolt in general was no monolingual Dutch affair. The court of the rebellious stadholder, William of Orange, was mostly French-speaking.¹²³ The prince of Orange, a small principality in the south of France, was born in Germany and received an education at the Brussels court. German and French were his two mother tongues.¹²⁴ Besides Dutch, he also learned Latin, Italian, and Spanish.¹²⁵ Dutch was important to him, but probably not the language most frequently used by the 'father' of this bilingual 'fatherland'.¹²⁶ French remained the official language of the later royal court of the House of Orange for centuries.¹²⁷ This only came to an end in the final years of the nineteenth century, when Queen Wilhelmina started using Dutch instead of French as the language of the court.¹²⁸ Language traditions that had been shaped in the sixteenth century and even before had a long afterlife in certain domains.

In the Burgundian era, the French language had obtained a high level of prestige. As demonstrated by Willem Frijhoff, this status solidified in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹²⁹ Despite the fact that other languages, such as Latin, continued to be used at

¹¹⁹ Indeed, Philip, who had been raised in Spain, spoke Spanish and had received a thorough education in Latin. He knew some Portuguese, Italian, and French, but he had not received a formal education in these modern languages and allegedly never became a fluent speaker. A Venetian ambassador wrote in an account made in 1557 that Philip 'as prince, speaks the Latin language very well; he understands Italian and some French' ('la latina, come principe, la parla molto bene; intende la italiana e un poco la francese'). In 1576, Philip confessed to one of his ministers: 'I do not understand French very well'. Nevertheless, parts of his written correspondence were in this language. Philip II quoted by: Parker 2014, 18. See further: Badoero 1853, 236; Parker 2014, 17-18, 46; Kelsey 2012, 26.

¹²⁰ In 1555, a grammar of Spanish was printed in Leuven. In a preface, it argued that it was important to learn Spanish because of the Spanish connections of the new ruler over the Low Countries, Philip II. This preface itself was written, tellingly, in French. The dominant position of French was not undermined by Spanish. *Vtil, y breve institvion* 1555, fol. A2r.

¹²¹ Smits-Veldt & Abrahamse 1992, 233.

¹²² Geurts 1956, 4-5.

¹²³ Van der Wal 1995a, 38; Delen 2002, 43; Frijhoff 2015, 116.

¹²⁴ William's French-German bilingualism is illustrated by the languages in which he corresponded with his four wives. With the first, Anna van Buren, William wrote in French. With Anna of Saxony he exchanged German letters. To his third wife, Charlotte of Bourbon, and the fourth, Louise de Coligny, he wrote in French. Van Roosbroeck 1974, 11; Delen 2002, 137-138.

¹²⁵ Van Roosbroeck 1974, 55; Delen 2002, 137.

¹²⁶ For the reputation of William of Orange as 'father of the fatherland', see: Arnade 2008, 262-263, 279-280; Bloemendal 2011.

¹²⁷ Van der Sijs 1996, 139-140; Van der Sijs 2004, 37.

¹²⁸ Van Ditzhuyzen 2004; Koopmans 2012.

¹²⁹ Frijhoff 2010, 21-22, 38; Frijhoff 2015, 129.

different courts, French was a fashionable aristocratic language all over early modern Europe.¹³⁰ Indeed, as is stated in a poem in one of Peeter Heyns's educational works: 'At court, the best courtier,/ is esteemed no more than an artisan,/ if he is not equipped with the French language'.¹³¹

French became a tool for climbing the social ladder, heading towards the lesser nobility and higher layers of the bourgeoisie.¹³² In practice, bilingualism was probably quite frequent in these circles.¹³³ Philips of Marnix, for instance, was born into a francophone aristocratic family in Brussels, which explains why his first language was French, while he also learned the local Dutch tongue. In the sixteenth century, the cultural radiance of Italy led some aristocrats to learn the Italian language or to undertake educational travels to the Italian peninsula.¹³⁴

Much less is known about the situation concerning women of noble birth. It is clear that they normally did not frequent Latin schools, although Latin was not completely off limits for them.¹³⁵ In the higher circles they learned French as a first language, while girls in Dutch-speaking areas might also have picked up the local language. Girls from the lower nobility, who did not learn French as a mother tongue, were probably homeschooled in the language by parents or private tutors.¹³⁶ Some noble girls were sent to French schools. Heyns, for instance, taught Françoise and Odilia of Merode, the daughters of nobleman Jean of Merode of Pietersheim.¹³⁷ Girls may also have used French-language manuals designed for homeschooling, such as—but not limited to—the books designed for girls that came onto the market in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹³⁸ Sophie Reinders's research on women's *alba amicorum* from the northeastern regions, however, suggests that in those areas noble women might have had a primarily passive knowledge of French.¹³⁹ For Dutch-speaking girls

¹³⁰ Frijhoff 1991; Putter & Busby 2010, 3; Burke 2014; J.-D. Müller 2016.

¹³¹ 'En vne court le meilleur courtisan,/ N'est estimé non plus qu'un artisan,/ S'il n'est muni de la langue Françoise'. Heyns 1605, fol. A3v.

¹³² Van der Sijts 1996, 139; Frijhoff 1989, 595; Frijhoff & Spies 1999, 234-235; Frijhoff 2006, 247; Frijhoff 2015, 129. See also: Briels 1985.

¹³³ Frijhoff 1991, 204-206.

¹³⁴ De Ridder-Symoens 1980, 417-429; Frijhoff 1989, 603; Smits-Veldt & Abrahamse 1992, 233; Arblaster 2014, 31; Terrenato 2014, 195.

¹³⁵ A Latin school for girls existed in Brussels in 1320 and individual cases of girls attending Latin schools are known. De Ridder-Symoens 1995, 10. A few women in England received Latin training as well. See: Salmon 1994, 96-105.

¹³⁶ The practice of private tuition did not restrict itself to the nobility. Christophe Plantin hired a tutor, Antoine Tiron, for the instruction of his daughters, even though the school of his close friend Peeter Heyns was only a few streets away. On the schooling of Plantin's daughters, see: Denucé 1916, 68n2; Meeus 2000a, 304. See further: De Clercq 1997, 34. For English examples, see: Salmon 1994, 102-106. On French in *alba*, see: Frijhoff 2010, 24-25.

¹³⁷ Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, M394, *Rekenboeck Van allen de Scholieren die ick Peeter Heyns gheleert hebbe*, fols. VIIIr, XVr; Sabbe 1929, 18-20.

¹³⁸ For example: Meurier 1573; Meurier 1580a; Meurier 1580b; Valery 1599.

¹³⁹ Reinders 2017a, 148-162; Reinders 2017b.

from the higher layers of society, French could function as a form of ‘women’s Latin’.¹⁴⁰ It allowed them to look beyond literature written in their native language, and perceive their mother tongue in a different light by obtaining the possibility of comparison.

Historical (socio)linguists are generally interested in courtly language because of the role it can play in the standardization process of languages as conceived by Einar Haugen.¹⁴¹ The language of the court can have a strong influence on the standard language due to its social and political prestige.¹⁴² This was hardly the case in the Low Countries, where those who used French looked up to the language as it was spoken at the French court rather than their own, while speakers of Dutch could find no suitable example whatsoever at court. Models were sought, therefore, among the bourgeoisie.¹⁴³

Opponents of loanwords, who saw the nobility as a source of borrowings, even accused the court of affecting the Dutch language in a bad way.¹⁴⁴ In Italy, where the *questione della lingua* became a popular topic for aristocratic conversation, similar debates also reached the upper classes.¹⁴⁵ It is certainly not impossible that women also took part in these discussions.¹⁴⁶ As the reflections on language in the Low Countries started to concern the language of the nobility, it is likely that nobles in this region talked about these topics themselves as well. Marnix, for one, certainly did.

2.3. The Languages of the Muses

The sixteenth century is generally known as the time in which cultural productions in Dutch suddenly grew in prestige and became able to compete with those in Latin and French. As the authors of this period frequently stated themselves, finally the Muses had learned the Dutch tongue, and they had moved from their divine mountain in Greece to a Parnassus in the Low Countries.¹⁴⁷ The strong focus of modern scholars on the idea of an emancipation of Dutch, however, has led attention away from its ongoing complex relationships with other languages in the cultural and scholarly domain.

¹⁴⁰ For the role of French as a language for women in England, see: Kibbee 1991, 104.

¹⁴¹ Haugen 1966, 932.

¹⁴² In France, the language of the court was defended, for instance, by Louis Meigret. Trudeau 1992, 45-68; Van der Wal 1995a, 20.

¹⁴³ Jansen 1992; Burke 2004, 108; Jansen 2003, 169; Frijhoff 2010, 7.

¹⁴⁴ *Twe-spraack* 1584, fol. A2v, fol. A6r-A6v, 6; *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 3-4. See further: Jansen 1992, 91-92; Jansen 2003.

¹⁴⁵ Migliorini & Griffith 1966, 217-218; Sanson 2011, 65-71.

¹⁴⁶ Ayres-Bennett 1994b; Sanson 2011, 65.

¹⁴⁷ See, for instance: *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610. Thijs 2004, 9-11; Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 17-18, *passim*.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary historians tended to categorize authors as belonging to the literary canon of a particular vernacular language. This led to problematic situations in the case of the literary culture of the Low Countries, which was, like the region itself, fundamentally multilingual. Aristocrat-poet Jan van der Noot, for instance, produced several bilingual works in French and Dutch that cannot be understood from a monolingual perspective.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, literary historians are reluctant to let go of their monolingual blinders and adopt a truly multilingual perspective. This is illustrated by the recent overview of Dutch literary history, the *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur*, which has a monolingual approach.¹⁴⁹

This literary overview further appropriates Van der Noot as an early figure of the supposed Dutch literary ‘Renaissance’, contrary to contemporary rhetoricians who can be connected to classical and French sources just as strongly. Its authors, Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, seem to reserve the qualification ‘Renaissance poet’ mostly for late sixteenth-century authors from Holland, despite the fact that earlier authors from Brabant and Flanders show a similar humanist attitude.

Especially in the intersections of literary and musical culture, multilingualism was an important factor, and this was aided by the fact that music itself is not language bound. Through encounters with productions in other languages, composer Tielman Susato started to wonder why the Dutch language was not used for musical productions as much as other languages were. Competition stimulates reflection and comparison rather than enforcing an inward-looking mindset. Similar processes can be distinguished in various domains of learning. Universities and vernacular knowledge communities were not monolingual, and the contact with other languages spurred contemplation.

Literary languages

In the preface to his comedy *Moortje* (1617), dramatist Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero characterized himself as ‘a mere Amsterdammer who knows no more than some schoolchild’s French’.¹⁵⁰ He nevertheless depended on a Dutch and a French translation of Terence’s *Eunuchus* for the creation of his own piece: ‘I only spoke to him [Terence] through a French

¹⁴⁸ Waterschoot 1971-1972; Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 45-48.

¹⁴⁹ Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008. Only the volume on the eighteenth-century literature of Flanders, *De weg naar het binnenland* (2017), explicitly addresses the issue of multilingualism.

¹⁵⁰ ‘een slechte Amstelredammer (die maar een weynich kints-School-frans in ’t hooft rammelde)’. Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero quoted by: Hermans 1996, 89.

interpreter'.¹⁵¹ The Dutch version was made by rhetorician Cornelis van Ghistele, who, contrary to Bredero, had an excellent understanding of the Latin text.¹⁵² The interpreter of the French text was Jean Bourlier, who published books for French-language education in Antwerp.¹⁵³ French often took an intermediary position between the classical languages—or modern vernaculars, such as Spanish and Italian—and Dutch in the early modern period.¹⁵⁴ They offered a solution for those who, like Bredero, were interested in the literary culture of these tongues but who could not read them.¹⁵⁵ Translations in general were omnipresent in sixteenth-century literary culture.¹⁵⁶ The literary culture of the Low Countries was marked by encounters between different languages, forcing poets to rethink the literary qualities of the language in which they wrote.

Since the publication of a series of articles written by J. D. P. Warners in the 1950s, it has become customary for historians of Dutch literature to mention the triad of *translatio*, *imitatio*, and *aemulatio* to describe how early modern authors approached classical writings and exemplary works in other vernaculars.¹⁵⁷ In order to hone their poetic skill, they allegedly started by translating particular models. This first phase of *translatio* would then be followed by one of *imitatio*, in which the author would imitate rather than translate master pieces. This supposedly led to the final phase, during which the accomplished poet could emulate and surpass his models.

In practice, poets rarely followed the seemingly clarifying order of Warners's triad. Some only translated texts, and some started with imitations in the language of their model rather than in their own vernacular. When, under the influence of literary developments in France, Dutch-speaking poets started writing sonnets, several of them, such as Lucas d'Heere, first practised the new poetic form in French before trying to apply its rules in a Dutch poem.¹⁵⁸ Instead of following the order *translatio*, *imitatio*, *aemulatio*, they started with *imitatio* in French. Furthermore, Jeroen Jansen has shown that it is often difficult to determine the boundaries between *translatio*, *imitatio*, and *aemulatio*.¹⁵⁹ The triad hides the complex

¹⁵¹ 'ick sprack hem niet dan door een Fransche tolck'. Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero quoted by: Hermans 1996, 89.

¹⁵² Ramakers 1998, 62-63; Hemelaar 2008.

¹⁵³ Hermans 1996, 89.

¹⁵⁴ Hermans 1991, 165; Frijhoff 2012, 3012-3013; Prandoni 2014, 146; Terrenato 2014, 195-196.

¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, Latin and French could act as an intermediary between authors whose mother tongue was Dutch and an audience that could not read their native language. Deneire 2012, 6; Ford 2013, 16.

¹⁵⁶ Burke 2007; Coldiron 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Warners 1956-1957.

¹⁵⁸ Waterschoot 1994, 10; Prandoni 2014, 188-189; D'Heere 2016, 99.

¹⁵⁹ For more critical notes on the *translatio*, *imitatio*, *aemulatio* triad, see: Jansen 2005; Jansen 2008, 52-53, 370-373; Deneire 2014b.

processes through which poets studied and used sources in other languages. Nevertheless, it has been useful in stressing that the literary development of authors writing in Dutch usually had a multilingual character.

As becomes clear from the example of the sonnet, it was not only Latin and Greek models that were appreciated in the early modern Low Countries, French ones were appreciated as well.¹⁶⁰ The reflections of French poets on possible ways of making the French language a more suitable medium for literature stimulated similar interests among poets in the Low Countries, such as Lucas d'Heere and Jan van der Noot.¹⁶¹ There was, however, no simple culture of imitation of French examples. Poets were conscious of the differences between the French and Dutch languages.¹⁶² This shows that reflection on language could be sparked by contact with other authors who discussed the topic, as well as by contact with multiple languages, thus demonstrating the importance of the European character of the debates.

In this multilingual literary culture, it is not surprising that many poets produced texts in multiple languages. This fits, moreover, in the context of the discussions on and fascination with language that marked both poets and their audiences. The literary multilingualism in the Low Countries took many different shapes, forms, and degrees.¹⁶³ Some authors, such as Marnix and Heyns, wrote texts in French, Dutch, and sometimes Latin, the three languages of the region. Indeed, the research of Jan Bloemendal, Tom Deneire, and others makes clear that the Latin side of the literary culture of the Low Countries should not be forgotten.

An example that demonstrates the extent to which both French and Dutch were considered to be the local vernaculars of the Low Countries is the work of Van der Noot. In 1580, he wrote an elegy on the province of Brabant 'in the two languages that are naturally spoken in Brabant'.¹⁶⁴ He conceived of a bilingual work to praise his province in its two languages, allowing both its francophone and its Dutch-speaking inhabitants to read the text and to compare the two languages of their region.¹⁶⁵ Van der Noot's work makes clear that the literary culture of his region was fundamentally multilingual, making it impossible to understand and do justice to it from a monolingual perspective.

¹⁶⁰ Charlier 1940, 211-212; Smith 2011. For the reception of French authors in the Low Countries, see also: De Grève 1982, 185-204.

¹⁶¹ The proposals of the French poets forming the Pléiade group will be discussed in Chapter 3. D'Heere 1565a; D'Heere 1969; Waterschoot 1971-1972; Waterschoot 1995; Smith 2010; Prandoni 2014.

¹⁶² Mareel 2011; Ramakers 2012.

¹⁶³ For an overview of different types of multilingual texts produced in the Low Countries, see: Verbeke 2013.

¹⁶⁴ 'In de tvvee talen die in Brabant natuerlick ghesproken vvorden'. Van der Noot 1580, fol. 3v.

¹⁶⁵ Van der Noot's *Lofsang* is not the only extant example of an elegy of a province written in two languages. In 1595, a certain Cornielie Brandt wrote a *Himne oft lofsanck van Hollandt in Dvytsch ende Franchoys* to praise Holland in both languages. Smith 2015a, 277-278.

Music

The role of language within the field of music is layered. Music in itself can be understood and appreciated by anyone who originates from roughly the same sphere of cultural influence, regardless of the languages he or she commands.¹⁶⁶ The texts that often accompany the music, however, are to some extent bound within language borders. Even so, it is not absolutely necessary to understand the words of a song in order to sing it. In this domain, degrees of language competence can vary greatly. For many native speakers of Dutch, songs were an important way through which they came into contact with and even practised some French. The multilingual character of the musical domain also paved the way for comparison and competition with musical cultures in other languages.

French worldly songs, especially polyphonic ones but also more popularizing monophonic songs, were much appreciated in the early modern Low Countries. Throughout the fifteenth century, most polyphonic music in the Low Countries was in French rather than Dutch. At the turn of the century, French *chansons* increased in popularity and Italian madrigals started to make their way into the Low Countries.¹⁶⁷ Between roughly 1550 and 1575, several songbooks in Dutch were produced as well.¹⁶⁸ This came to an end in the 1580s, when they were eclipsed by French productions.¹⁶⁹

As the studies of Jan Willem Bonda and Louis Peter Grijp have shown, the connections between songs with French texts and songs with Dutch texts were so strong in the early modern period that it is virtually impossible to study them as separate entities.¹⁷⁰ There was a lively culture of creating new songs based on well-known French tunes, a culture in which rhetoricians like Eduard de Dene from Bruges participated.¹⁷¹ This was far from an easy task, as French and Dutch have very different sound structures.¹⁷² The difficulties of composing and singing such songs incited further reflection on the form of the languages involved.

French songs stimulated passive oral understanding of the language among native speakers of Dutch and were even used in schools with the specific goal of teaching French as a second language. Especially in French schools for girls, music and singing were important tools

¹⁶⁶ Bonda 1996, 157; Rasch 2008, 227.

¹⁶⁷ Lenaerts 1933, 160; Bonda 1996, 23-24; Grijp 2011, 262.

¹⁶⁸ See, for instance, works by Tielman Susato: *Het ierste musyck boexken* (1551), *Het tweetste musyck boexken* (1551), and *Het derde musyck boexken* (1551). Lenaerts 1933, 160; Bonda 1996, 23-24, 135-136.

¹⁶⁹ Bonda 1996, 148-150, 434.

¹⁷⁰ Bonda 1996, 437-438; Grijp 2011, 268.

¹⁷¹ Examples of De Dene's songs can be found in his *Testament rhetoricael* (1562). Van de Haar 2018.

¹⁷² The differences between the sound structures of French and Dutch will be further discussed in relation to psalm translations in Chapter 5.

to teach them to entertain guests while simultaneously improving language skills.¹⁷³ It became a fashionable practice in the middle of the sixteenth century to collect songs in a personal songbook, which usually contained songs in French, Dutch, German, and sometimes Italian.¹⁷⁴ Many printed collections of French songs were produced in the Low Countries by printers such as Christophe Plantin.¹⁷⁵

One particular composer and editor of songbooks deserves special mention here. Tielman Susato, who was mainly active in Antwerp in the sixteenth century, explicitly linked the domain of music to the discussions on language. In a music book published in 1551, he called for the production of songs in his mother tongue.¹⁷⁶ Susato stated that Dutch was just as apt as French, Italian, and Latin to produce the positive effects of music: ‘And why should it be impossible to do this henceforth with equal art and sweetness in our mother tongue, as has been done in the Latin, French, and Italian languages?’¹⁷⁷ By referring to the notion of ‘sweetness’ to describe the Dutch language, Susato demonstrates his awareness of the Europe-wide fascination with language. In discussions on the French vernacular in particular, the notion of ‘douceur’ or ‘sweetness’ was often used to describe the sound structure of the language.¹⁷⁸ In this quotation, the composer claims that the Germanic Dutch tongue was just as sweet sounding as the Romance languages.

The quoted passage shows the strong interregional connections of the language debates, as well as the importance of comparison and competition. While Susato’s case has been amply discussed by historians of the Dutch language, their preoccupation with Dutch has made them underestimate Susato’s outward-looking perspective.¹⁷⁹ The musician produced three different

¹⁷³ For references to singing in sixteenth-century schoolbooks, see: Meurier 1573, fols. 10r-13r, 17v; Meurier 1580a, fol. 54r; Heyns 1595, fol. E4r-E4v; Valery 1599, fols. B4r-B5r. For more information on singing in a school setting, see: Resoort 1989, 54, 85-86; Vanhulst 2005, 93-94; Vanhulst 2008; Van de Haar 2017, 150-151.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, the songbook collected by the Bruges merchant Zeghere van Male in 1542. It contains mostly French songs, but also many Latin pieces and a few Dutch and Italian ones. Bonda 1996, 131-132; Oosterman 2008, 210-211; Gabriëls 2010; Veldhorst 2009, 60-63; Grijp 2011, 270.

¹⁷⁵ Plantin thus printed works by composers Claude Le Jeune and Séverin Cornet, both natives of Hainaut who mainly produced music in French. Most of the worldly collections of songs printed in the sixteenth-century Low Countries were in French, followed by Italian. Many of these might have been destined for the international market, but this does not take away from their popularity in the Low Countries. Lenaerts 1933, 160; Veldhorst 2009, 15.

¹⁷⁶ Van den Branden 1967, 19-20; Van der Sijs 2004, 331-332; Grijp 2011, 265-269; Meeus 2011, 296-297.

¹⁷⁷ ‘En waeromme en soudemen dat voortane niet also wel met gelycker konst ende soetichheit in onser moederspraken connen gedoen, als men tot nu toe in latynsche, walsche ende italiaensche sprake gedaen heeft?’ Tielman Susato quoted by: Van Riemsdijk 1888, 65-66. Translated by: Grijp 2011, 267.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, the quote by Philippe Bosquier discussed in paragraph 2.1, and chapter nine of Joachim du Bellay’s *Deffence* (1549). Du Bellay 1549, fols. B6r-B7v; Terreaux 1990, 643-646; Huchon 2003. I am grateful to Estelle Doudet for this reference.

¹⁷⁹ See: Van den Branden 1967, 18-20, 65; Van der Sijs 2004, 331-332. This Dutch-centred narrative has also influenced musical historians: Grijp 2011.

collections in Dutch, but then stopped.¹⁸⁰ The third one, containing instrumental music for dancing, even contains various French dances, such as *bergerettes*, despite the fact that Susato announced it as a songbook in Dutch.¹⁸¹ For Susato, defending the ability of his native tongue to be set to music did not imply abandoning music in other languages. In fact, he produced a range of songbooks in Latin and French as well.

Academia and the Artes

The domain of academic education and research was largely dominated by Latin throughout the early modern period. Still, people in academic environments did not live in a monolingual Latin bubble. Traditionally, many students engaged in a *peregrinatio academica*, attending different universities abroad and thus coming into contact with the local languages.¹⁸² Through such a stay abroad, students could improve their knowledge of vernaculars like French and Italian.¹⁸³ Some wrote accounts of their travels in the languages they encountered.¹⁸⁴ Michel de Montaigne, when travelling to Italy in 1580 and 1581, thus kept a journal in Italian.¹⁸⁵ There were two popular itineraries for students from the Low Countries: the *iter gallicum* to France and the *iter italicum* to Italy.¹⁸⁶ Marnix combined the two and visited both France and Italy.¹⁸⁷

In the sixteenth century, French was slowly starting to gain ground as a language of correspondence between academic scholars, and at the University of Douai some classes were even taught in French.¹⁸⁸ French also played a role at the University of Leiden, which was founded in 1575. Within the first two decades of its existence, seven Frenchmen were appointed as professors, including Joseph Justus Scaliger.¹⁸⁹ For several decades, the only modern language that could be found in the library of the university was French.¹⁹⁰ Although it did not possess any French literary works, several professors and employees, such as Bonaventura Vulcanius, Janus Dousa, and Justus Lipsius were strongly interested in French literary

¹⁸⁰ The works are titled *Het ierste musyck boexken* (1551), *Het tweetste musyck boexken* (1551), and *Het derde musyck boexken* (1551).

¹⁸¹ Bonda 1996, 24-25; Grijp 2011, 269-272.

¹⁸² Riemens 1919, 6-7.

¹⁸³ De Ridder-Symoens 1980, 417-418 ; Smith, P. J. 2004, 39.

¹⁸⁴ Gallagher 2017, 91.

¹⁸⁵ Montaigne 1992; Rigolot 2007, 229-231; Gallagher 2017, 91.

¹⁸⁶ Dibon 1963, 8-17; De Ridder-Symoens 1996, 417-419; Tervoort 2005.

¹⁸⁷ Sterck 1952, 1415; Govaert 1953, 9-10; Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 27-28.

¹⁸⁸ Bernard 1997, 242; Frijhoff 2010, 27-30; Schmitz 2011, 67-68; Metcalf 2013, 22.

¹⁸⁹ In comparison, very few German scholars were appointed. Before 1650, there had been only two. Woltjer 1975, 461-462.

¹⁹⁰ Among the French books mentioned in the university catalogue from 1595 are a work on astronomy by Jacques Bassantin, a treatise on surgery by Jacques Guillemeau, and André Thevet's *Cosmographie* (1575) and *Les vrais Povrtraits et vies des hommes illvstres* (1584). Hulshoff Pol 1975, 406.

culture.¹⁹¹ In 1581, the floor of the academy building was even decorated with the Latin device of French poet Joachim Du Bellay: ‘musa cœlo beat’ (‘the muse rejoices the heavens’).¹⁹²

The multilingual environment of the university at Leiden harboured many participants in the debates on language, studying not only classical and exotic languages, but also vernacular ones.¹⁹³ Daniel Heinsius, professor and librarian at Leiden, was interested in French literature and had read Du Bellay’s *La deffence, et illvstration de la langue Francoyse* (1549).¹⁹⁴ Heinsius took part in the exchanges on the Dutch language by stating that this vernacular could function as a literary language. He engaged with several points made by Du Bellay in his defence of French, illustrating the European character of the discussions.¹⁹⁵

Studies in the liberal arts were not confined to the walls of early modern universities. Within chambers of rhetoric, the art of rhetoric as well as other domains of learning were studied and discussed in the vernacular.¹⁹⁶ In the 1580s, members of the Amsterdam chamber of rhetoric *De Eglentier* (*The Eglantine Rose*) urged the university of Leiden to adopt Dutch as its language of instruction, too, so that everyone ‘without the hard work of learning languages, and with enjoyment can become wise in all arts’.¹⁹⁷ Throughout the sixteenth century, similar remarks were made about the inefficiency of using Latin as the language of science, forcing students to learn Latin before being able to study any subject.¹⁹⁸ As academic scholars were trained in Latin, however, Françoise Waquet proposed that it might have been much harder for them to write on their field of expertise in their mother tongue than in Latin, in which they grasped the correct terminology.¹⁹⁹

Seven years after *De Eglentier* made its plea, the university did start to hold some disputations in Dutch in order to practise the language and ‘purify it of all foreign, bastard, and

¹⁹¹ Dousa, for instance, translated poems by Philippe Desportes. His *album amicorum* contains inscriptions by Jean Dorat, Jean-Antoine de Baïf, and Guillaume Des Autels. Heesakkers & Gerritsen 2000, fols. 4r, 5r, 27r; Smith 2008a, 338-342; Smith 2008b, 46-47; Smith 2010. For the interest in French literature at the University of Leiden, see further: Smith 1997, 801-802. The first chairs in modern languages were not established until the nineteenth century. The first Dutch university to appoint professors in these fields was the University of Groningen, with German in 1881, French in 1884, and English in 1885. Kok-Escalante & Van Strien-Chardonneau 2005, 4.

¹⁹² Smith 2010, 300.

¹⁹³ Smith 2010; Meerhoff 2014.

¹⁹⁴ Du Bellay 1549; Smith 2010, 301.

¹⁹⁵ Smith 2010, 301.

¹⁹⁶ See: Chapter 7. Van Dixhoorn 2002, 20-21; Van Dixhoorn & Roberts 2003; Van Dixhoorn 2004; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 129-160.

¹⁹⁷ ‘zonder moejelycke arbejd int leeren der talen, met lust alle kunsten dies zullen moghen wys werden’. *Ruygh-bewerf* 1585, 6-7; Dibbets 1985, 10-11.

¹⁹⁸ See, for instance: *Ruygh-bewerf* 1585, 5; Grotius 1802, 68-70. Comments on this topic by Hugo Grotius are discussed by Marijke van der Wal in: Van der Wal 1997, 20-21; Van der Wal 1999, 145. Schooling in a language that is not the children’s mother tongue is still an issue in many countries today. See: Appel & Muysken 2005, 59-71.

¹⁹⁹ Waquet 1998, 111-114.

scummed words'.²⁰⁰ Moreover, in 1600, stadtholder Maurits of Orange ordered Simon Stevin to establish a new institution for the education of engineers, the Dutch Mathematical School, in Leiden.²⁰¹ Stevin himself wrote several treatises on the liberal arts in the Dutch language.²⁰² He has become known for his active stance within the discussions on language in the sixteenth century, pleading for the use of Dutch as the language of learning.²⁰³ Stevin developed a new mathematical terminology in Dutch in order to replace the existing loanwords. Examples of this are 'omtreck' ('circumference'), which replaced 'periphēria', and 'evenredenheit' ('proportionality') instead of 'proportio'.²⁰⁴ It is rarely mentioned that Stevin also published in Latin and even produced a work on arithmetic in French, which was printed by Plantin.²⁰⁵ The monolingual narrative of historians of the Dutch vernacular has led to a neglect of the plurilingual and European side of debaters like Stevin.

2.4. International Communication

In the streets of various cities in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, and Antwerp in particular, a broad variety of languages could be heard alongside the local variants of Dutch and French. These languages were spoken by Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, English, Hanseatic, and Jewish merchants who frequented the various trading centres. The cacophony of languages in which their presence resulted undoubtedly partly explains why a high number of contributors to the debates on language, such as Heyns and Plantin, were active in the Antwerp metropolis.²⁰⁶

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Antwerp's inhabitants were confronted with not just merchants speaking languages other than French and Dutch. As the Dutch Revolt progressed, multilingual garrisons of soldiers, generally including mercenaries with various native tongues, marched through the city. While the Revolt has been linked by modern scholars to a heightened attention to the Dutch mother tongue, it forced many inhabitants to look beyond their native language.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁰ 'van alle uytheemsche, bastaerde ende geschuymde woorden te zuyveren'. Ordinance by the board of the University of Leiden, 5 September 1592, quoted by: Dibbets 1985, 11.

²⁰¹ Van der Wal 1995a, 81; Van Miert 2010, 14.

²⁰² Such treatises were not unique: in the Middle Ages, a range of texts on the liberal arts had already been written in the vernacular. For an overview, see: Ruijsendaal 1991, 254-256; Huizenga, Lie, & Veltman 2002.

²⁰³ Brink 1989; Van der Wal 2004, 174; Van Hal 2013a, 28; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 187-188.

²⁰⁴ Van der Wal 2004, 176.

²⁰⁵ Stevin 1585a.

²⁰⁶ See also: Roose 1975, 339-340; Cummings 2007, 41.

²⁰⁷ Van den Branden 1967, 4, 296; Briels 1985. For a more nuanced view, see: Van der Wal 1994.

Trade

In 1596, seafaring merchants Willem Barentsz., Jacob van Heemskerck, and their crew set out for the Far East. They were stranded on the island of Nova Zembla in the winter of 1596. During an expedition in the late nineteenth century, the books the crew was forced to leave behind on Nova Zembla were discovered, preserved by the cold conditions on the island. Besides various treatises on seafaring, one language manual was recovered: a Dutch-French dictionary written by Frisian schoolmaster Eduard Mellema.²⁰⁸ This find illustrates the fact that since the Middle Ages, French had been increasingly used as the language of interregional trade, next to Latin.

Nowhere was learning French more important than in the Low Countries, which contained a French-speaking region itself and maintained strong trade relations with France. It is certainly no coincidence that the first manuals for learning a second vernacular language in Europe appeared in this region and concerned Dutch and French.²⁰⁹ The *Livre des mestiers* (c. 1349), a book designed for the instruction of French to a Dutch-speaking audience, was produced in Bruges as early as the fourteenth century.²¹⁰

In the course of the sixteenth century, Antwerp evolved into one of the most important trading centres in northern Europe.²¹¹ The city attracted many merchants from all over the continent. Estimates are that by the middle of the century, Hanseatic, English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and French merchants, together with their families, made up around five per cent of the city's population.²¹² The diversity of the city has been poignantly depicted by Becanus: 'When I consider our prosperous Antwerp, it seems as if I behold an overview of the entire world'.²¹³

While the international population of early modern Antwerp has been described by Joanna Woodall as a 'society that had begun to recognise that money talks a universal language', in practice it was usually French.²¹⁴ It is for this reason that, as the city developed

²⁰⁸ Heijting 1997.

²⁰⁹ Bischoff 1961, 211-212; Bierbach 2002, 143-144; Sumillera 2014, 62-63.

²¹⁰ Gessler 1931, 15-16; Kibbee 2010, 74; Swiggers 2013a, 50-52.

²¹¹ De Nave 1993; Meeus 2000b, 228-230; Gelderblom 2013, 28-33; Meeus 2014.

²¹² Van der Wee & Materné 1993, 24; Voet 1993, 1; Marnef 1996, 6; Gelderblom 2013, 32-33.

²¹³ 'Equidem cum Antwerpiam florentem considero, totius orbis compendium mihi videor intueri'. Becanus 1569, *Ad senatvm popvlvmque Antvverpiensem*, fol. D1r.

²¹⁴ Woodall 2011, 6. Throughout the sixteenth century, high-ranking Hanseatic representatives and English merchants corresponded with the city council of Antwerp in French rather than in German. In 1552, schoolmaster Glaude Luython claimed that he had moved to Antwerp because 'in no other city, the mentioned language is used so commonly in the practice of trade and commerce as in this triumphant city' ('in geene vanden anderen steden en gebruyctmen so gemeinlijc inden treyn ende handele der coopmanscapen de voorscreven tale als in dese triumphant stede'). The 1552 edition of the dictionary in which Luython wrote these words has been reported as lost by Frans Claes. However, during the research for this book, a copy of this edition was discovered in the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp, where it is categorized under number 8619. Luython 1552, fols. A2v-A3r. See further: Prims 1939, 178; Claes 2000, 221; De Clercq 2003, 278.

into a centre for trade, the number of French schools increased. There, both boys and girls were taught the basics of mercantile skills, such as the French language and bookkeeping.²¹⁵ In 1576, Antwerp housed 127 men and women who gave French lessons.²¹⁶ The remarks made by early modern individuals about the astonishing language abilities of men and women in Antwerp are legion. Becanus, for instance, praised the alleged ability of his fellow Antwerpians to speak ‘three, four, five, or sometimes even more languages’.²¹⁷

Looking at the schoolbooks that were produced for the French schools and for private use, it becomes clear how strongly French-language instruction and commerce were connected. A whole range of bilingual schoolbooks existed containing dialogues and example letters in French and Dutch dealing with the buying, selling, and negotiating of different products.²¹⁸ These books give expression to a mercantile mentality in which language skills, that is, the ability to understand trading partners and perhaps even out-talk them, could have financial value.²¹⁹ This does not mean that all merchants in the Low Countries fluently spoke the dialect of Île-de-France. Most traders probably mastered a basic set of phrases and terms they needed on a regular basis—in other words, a ‘commercial type of French’.²²⁰

Schoolmasters also provided the international community in Antwerp with tools to learn French, dedicating schoolbooks for French-language instruction to English and German merchants.²²¹ Several merchants from Hanseatic as well as southern European cities sent their daughters to the school of Peeter Heyns to learn the language.²²² For international merchants, it was also useful to know some basic sentences in languages other than French.²²³ This is why,

²¹⁵ Noël 1983, 137-140; Boekholt & De Booy 1987, 8-12; Dodde & Esseboom 2000, 41. On French schools for girls, see: Van de Haar 2015b.

²¹⁶ Bourland 1951, 62.

²¹⁷ ‘tres, quator, quinque, & plures etiam diuersas linguas’. Becanus 1569, fol. D1v. See also: Meurier 1558, fols. A2r-A3r. See further remarks on the topic made by Italian merchant-historian Lodovico Guicciardini, who resided in Antwerp for many years, the German merchant Samuel Kiechel, and the Jesuit Carolus Scribani. Guicciardini 1567, 27, 110; Meeus 2007, 102; Esser 2012, 180; Swiggers 2017, 65-66.

²¹⁸ Meurier 1564; De Vivere 1573; Bourlier 1576.

²¹⁹ Gallagher 2015, 113-114.

²²⁰ Dodde & Esseboom 2000, 57.

²²¹ Meurier 1557a; Meurier 1557b; Meurier 1563a; Meurier 1563b; Meurier 2005; Meeus 2007, 108-109.

²²² Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, M394, *Rekenboeck Van allen de Scholieren die ick Peeter Heyns gheleert hebbe*; Sabbe 1929, 22.

²²³ It is likely that a minority of French merchants learned some Dutch. Various bilingual language manuals in French and Dutch explicitly state that they could be used both to learn French, and to learn Dutch. Gabriel Meurier’s *Colloques* (1557) states on its title page that it can be used to ‘learn French and Flemish’ (‘facilement apprendre François et Flameng’). His *Vocabulaire* (1557) is destined ‘for all those who wish to obtain knowledge of the French and Flemish language’ (‘povr tovs ceux qui veulent auoir la cognoissance du Langage François & Flameng’). The administration of Meurier’s printer, Plantin, reveals that nine copies of the latter work were, indeed, sent to a bookseller in France. Moreover, in the 1550s, printer Jean de Tournes published a Dutch translation of the *Figures de la Bible* in Lyon, suggesting that there was a market for Dutch material there. Meurier 1557a; Meurier 1557c; Saunders 2003, 1005; Kammerer 2013, 235-238; Kammerer 2015.

over the course of the sixteenth century, polyglot pocket-sized books were developed, which usually contained a section devoted entirely to the jargon of commerce. One of the most frequently reprinted polyglot conversation books of this time was, hardly coincidentally, based on an originally bilingual Dutch-French manual. It had been written by Antwerp schoolmaster Noël de Berlaimont.²²⁴

In the debates regarding the Dutch language, merchants who learned French were sometimes accused of using too many loanwords. Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero, for example, in the preface to his already mentioned play *Moortje*, addresses merchants directly. He accusingly states they ‘impoverish and violate their own language, and would rather show off in a patched-up fool’s cap, than shine in an unaltered plain-coloured cloak’.²²⁵ Bredero suggests here that merchants used foreign languages not only for practical, commercial purposes, but also as a way to impress others. By comparing the use of loanwords to wearing a fool’s cap rather than a simple cloak, Bredero alludes to the custom of comparing languages to pieces of clothing that was frequent in the discussions on language throughout Europe, showing his awareness of these debates.²²⁶ Simultaneously, the reference to the fool’s cap explicitly ridicules the borrowers.

Although French became the most important language of international trade in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, the use of Latin, local languages, and hybrid language forms should not be ignored.²²⁷ For trade in the Mediterranean basin, a form of Italian was often used.²²⁸ In encounters between tradesmen from the British Isles and the Low Countries, a mixture of English and Dutch could be used instead of French.²²⁹ An anonymous English poem from the early fifteenth century quotes the mixed language used by Flemish merchants: ‘Mastar,

²²⁴ Berlaimont 1631. See further: Colombo Timelli 1992; Aubert 1993; Claes 2000, 217-219; Van der Sijs 2000, 13-24; Hooek 2012, 277-280.

²²⁵ ‘haar eyghen spraack verarmen en gewelt doen, en liever met een ghelapte gecks-kap brallen, dan dat sy willen gaan blincken in een onbesproken effene Mantel’. Bredero 1984, 116; Hermans 1996, 90.

²²⁶ Another Dutch example can be found in: Coornhert 1561a, fol. 7r-7v. See also: Jansen 2017, 13-14. Henri II Estienne made use of metaphors of clothing to describe the French language in his *Traicte de la conformité du langage François avec le Grec* (1565): Cowling 2007, 169-169. For English examples by, for instance, Richard Mulcaster, see: Jones 1953, 19-20; Considine 2008, 14n40; Rubright 2014, 60-61.

²²⁷ When merchants from the Low Countries started using the trading routes in Southeast Asia that would later become crucial for the Dutch East India Company, they mostly had to rely on Portuguese and Malay. Van der Sijs 2000; Maier & Van der Putten 2002, 102-106; Van Goor 2004, 62-66.

²²⁸ In sixteenth-century Antwerp, Italian schools existed where children from trading families could learn the language, and some trade firms wrote some of their correspondence and even accounts in Italian. This did not happen, however, on the same scale as the use of French. Next to the 127 teachers of French who were active in Antwerp in 1576, there were only 16 who gave Italian-language instruction. Bischoff 1961, 211; Bourland 1951, 62; Van der Bruijn-Van der Helm 1999, 3-4; Dursteler 2012, 47; Van der Helm 2013; Sumillera 2014, 62.

²²⁹ Burke 2004, 115; Rubright 2014, 44-45; Gallagher 2015, 29. For information on English-language learning in the early modern Low Countries, see: Loonen 1991.

what will ye copen or by—/ Fine felt hatts, spectacles for to rede?’²³⁰ Next to the English verb ‘to buy’, the poem contains its Dutch equivalent ‘copen’.

In the sixteenth century, cities like Bruges, Groningen, and Deventer were part of the Hanseatic League. In its glory days in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this trade network connected merchants along the coasts of the North and Baltic Seas.²³¹ It made use of the Low Germanic language continuum. Communication relied on avoiding dialectal extremes and, as stated by humanist Conrad Gessner, engaging in gestural communication:²³² ‘We read that in some regions in the far North, merchants make their exchanges by using movements of the head and gestures’.²³³ A form of interregional Germanic continued to be used in commercial contexts in this area throughout the sixteenth century and in later times, when the importance of the Hanseatic League was waning.²³⁴

Merchants were confronted with various languages on a daily basis, whether they engaged in trade in cities such as Antwerp, or went abroad. Such multilingual confrontations led one merchant to reflect on the nature of the Dutch language. Johan Radermacher the Elder was a tradesman, Calvinist, and humanist. The *mercator sapiens* made his fortune in Antwerp, and in 1567, he went to England as a business representative. In the following year, he started writing what is now known as the oldest draft of a grammar of the Dutch language.²³⁵ While he compares Dutch with several vernaculars, Radermacher mainly contrasts Dutch and English in this text, which suggests that he was struck by his new multilingual environment.²³⁶ In this commercial centre, it was not just material goods that were exchanged. The multilingual confrontations stimulated discussions on language and incited curiosity about other languages as well as one’s mother tongue.

²³⁰ Hsy 2013, 2-3.

²³¹ Gloning & Young 2004, 174.

²³² De Meyer 1974, 10; Heerma van Voss 1996, 25-28; Gloning & Young 2004, 174-175; Nedkvitne 2014.

²³³ ‘In remotissimis quibusdam ad Septentrionem regionibus mercatores rerum commutationes nutibus & gestibus facere legimus’. Gessner 2009, 102.

²³⁴ Gloning & Young 2004, 175.

²³⁵ Bostoen 1985; Hoock 2012.

²³⁶ Radermacher’s fascination with language also becomes apparent from the *Album Joannis Rotarii*. This manuscript, which brings together contributions by Radermacher’s friends and personal notes, contains entries in a variety of different tongues, some of which are indicative of Radermacher’s broad interest in language. There is an entry that discusses an old inscription found in Seville, as well as many poetic word games. Radermacher’s library, which was sold after his death, also reveals his interests. He possessed dictionaries, grammars, and treatises discussing a variety of modern and classical languages. *Catalogvs miscellanevs* 1634; Bostoen 1985, 9; Binnerts-Kluyver & Bostoen 1999; Radermacher 2002, fols. 78r, 86v, 143r, 156r; Simoni 2007.

Diplomacy and the Army

Trade was, of course, only possible in a favourable political climate. In sixteenth-century Europe, French developed into an important diplomatic language, too.²³⁷ Eduard Mellema confirmed this when he described French as a language ‘through which negotiation with various kingdoms can take place’.²³⁸ As a result of the importance of French in diplomatic contexts, this was a domain in which many French loanwords were introduced into the Dutch language.²³⁹ The borrowed term ‘ambassadeur’ (‘ambassador’), for instance, was first used in Dutch in the fifteenth century.²⁴⁰

Marnix’s personal correspondence is revealing of the traditions regarding language in the circles in which he moved. As shown by Rudolf De Smet, the letters Marnix exchanged with academic scholars, such as Bonaventura Vulcanius and Justus Lipsius, were for the most part written in Latin.²⁴¹ His diplomatic correspondence was, as one might expect, dominated by French. Even Marnix’s correspondence with Queen Elizabeth I herself was in the new language of diplomacy.²⁴²

In cases where diplomacy failed and ended in military confrontations, this could in turn lead to undesirable multilingual experiences for a greater number of people. Early modern armies were polyglot entities.²⁴³ During various stages of the Dutch Revolt, the inhabitants of the Low Countries came into contact with soldiers speaking an array of languages. There was no simple opposition between a Spanish-speaking army that supported King Philip II and a bilingual French- and Dutch-speaking military force on the side of the rebels. On both sides, mercenaries from all over Europe were employed, including Italians, Germans, Englishmen, Irishmen, people from the Balkans, and Scots.²⁴⁴ In higher ranks, plurilingualism could

²³⁷ The Leiden professor Joseph Justus Scaliger equally corresponded with Dutch-speaking diplomats in French, and the multilingual Constantijn Huygens usually opted for French in diplomatic contexts. Van Miert 2010, 21; Joby 2014, 310.

²³⁸ ‘by de vvelcke de negotiatie met verscheyden Konincrijcken kan gheschieden’. Mellema 1618, fol. 2v.

²³⁹ Van der Sijs 1996, 154; Joby 2015, 235-236, 249-250.

²⁴⁰ Van der Sijs 2010, ‘ambassadeur’.

²⁴¹ De Smet 2001, 47.

²⁴² De Smet 2001, 48. Italian was sometimes used in diplomatic contexts, usually when it concerned areas in the Mediterranean or in the Levant. De Smet 1998, 54; De Smet 2001, 48; Dursteler 2012, 72

²⁴³ Fontaine & Fournel 2015.

²⁴⁴ Burke 2004, 129-130; Meeus 2007, 106.

therefore be a crucial criterion.²⁴⁵ Sometimes, the same languages were even spoken on both sides of the battle line.²⁴⁶

In the early modern era, it was not uncommon for soldiers to be billeted with civilians, forcing them to find a way to overcome language differences as they lived under the same roof.²⁴⁷ Polyglot manuals like those from the popular Berlaimont series were probably used by soldiers as well, helping them to communicate with locals and perhaps brothers in arms speaking other languages.²⁴⁸ Such a use was foreseen by the producers of these manuals, as the often reprinted preface of the Berlaimont books states (in this case in an octolingual edition): ‘fer whether that any man doo merchandise, or that hee folowe the warres or that hee bea travailing man, hy should neede to have an interpretour, for som of theese eight speaches’.²⁴⁹ Anyone who was involved in any of the many wars that were troubling Europe in this period would need to be able to communicate with the many speech communities involved in them.

One of the languages the inhabitants of the Low Countries were faced with because of the war was English. Between five thousand and six thousand English soldiers came to the Low Countries in the late sixteenth century, sent by Elizabeth I to provide support to the rebels.²⁵⁰ It was on the battlefield of Zutphen that English poet Sir Philip Sidney, a defender of loanwords, died in 1586.²⁵¹ Communication between the English troops and the local population did not always go smoothly. This is explained by Thomas Basson, the author of the first English-Dutch grammar. In the preface to this work, which was published in 1586, Basson claims that there had been troubles between the English forces and the locals, ‘by reason that the one can not vnderstande the other’.²⁵² Of course, Basson might have exaggerated the situation in order to

²⁴⁵ In 1555, Mary of Hungary, then governor of the Low Countries, rejected a nominee for the position of lieutenant because the person in question did not speak both the local languages of the region. She deemed this an essential requirement, as a lieutenant would have to communicate with speakers of both Dutch and French. Martens 2015, 108.

²⁴⁶ Schulten 1966, 8; Cohen 2015. This contrasts with earlier battles, about which stories concerning the use of shibboleths were written down. Shibboleths are words that can be used to identify a person as belonging to a particular group by the way they pronounce them. Poet Lodewijk van Velthem described how French- and Dutch-speaking soldiers faced each other in the so-called Battle of the Golden Spurs, which took place in Courtrai in 1302. The francophones allegedly started using the Flemish battle cry ‘Flanders and lion’ (‘Vlaendren ende Leu’) when the Flemish were starting to gain the upper hand, but in vain. Similarly, in 1381, Flemish soldiers lost their lives during the Peasants’ Revolt because they ‘koude nat say Breede and Chese, But Case and Brode’, ‘Case’ and ‘Brode’ being Dutch words. This anecdote comes from a London chronicle, quoted by: Green 1996, 105. For the battle of Courtrai, see: Van Velthem 1979, 100-101; Croenen 2003, 115.

²⁴⁷ Burke 2004, 129; Groenveld 2008b, 86; Woltjer 2011, 404-405.

²⁴⁸ Sumillera 2014, 63, 77n10.

²⁴⁹ Berlaimont 1631, fols. A5v-A6r.

²⁵⁰ Hoftijzer 2012, 210-211.

²⁵¹ Saenger 2013, 2.

²⁵² Basson & Meurier 1586, 5; Osselton 1973, 6; Hoftijzer 2012, 211.

sell his grammar. After all, there was a tradition of communicating through a mixture of English and Dutch in mercantile contexts.²⁵³

Most of the military terms in the Dutch language had been created under Burgundian rule, and were often based on French loanwords which themselves frequently had Italian origins, such as ‘citadel’ (‘citadel’).²⁵⁴ In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the face of warfare changed swiftly. Several new weapons were invented, which called for the invention of new terms in the vernacular languages.²⁵⁵ This led to the introduction of French borrowings, such as ‘mijn’ (‘mine’), ‘mortier’ (‘mortar’), and ‘munitie’ (‘munition’). The early modern period also witnessed changes in military hierarchy. To fill the new gaps in the Dutch vocabulary, recourse was again sought in the use of French loanwords: the Dutch terms ‘cavalerie’ (‘cavalry’), ‘garnizoen’ (‘garrison’), ‘korporaal’ (‘corporal’), and ‘luitenant’ (‘lieutenant’) all date from this period.²⁵⁶ Although the Dutch Revolt has been interpreted as a political act of the Dutch-speaking population of the Low Countries, affirming the position of Dutch, the everyday reality of the war was fundamentally multilingual.

2.5. Conclusion

Jan van Boendale, cited at the beginning of this chapter, described the battles of the fourteenth century as opposing ‘brother against brother’ and placing persons speaking the French language in confrontation with those speaking Dutch.²⁵⁷ The religious and political troubles of the sixteenth-century Low Countries once more placed neighbours and family members in opposition to each other. In these quarrels, however, all sides were marked by variants of the local French and Dutch vernaculars. In this period, a multiplicity of language forms coincided with times of severe crisis. These experiences are likely to have incited a heightened interest in both the history of the local languages and their then-current form and status. The Dutch Revolt and the consequences of the Reformation caused a larger part of the population than before to come in contact with a variety of languages and dialects through, for instance, migratory movements. In such situations of close contact between people from remote areas, the

²⁵³ Osselton 1973, 6. Also in 1586, a bilingual treatise on proper behaviour for soldiers was published in English and Dutch by George Whetstone, titled *The honovrable repvtation of a sovldier*. The bilingualism of the work is praised in a laudatory poem for making possible that ‘either lande, eche others tonge may learne’. Whetstone 1586, 7. See also: Verbeke 2013, 75-76.

²⁵⁴ Martens 2015.

²⁵⁵ Kammerer & Müller 2015, 17.

²⁵⁶ Schulten 1966; Van der Sijs 1996, 149; Van der Sijs 2010, ‘cavalerie’, ‘garnizoen’, ‘korporaal’, & ‘luitenant’; Martens 2015.

²⁵⁷ ‘brueder jegen den broeder’. Van Boendale 1983, fol. 253r/131.

differences between their language variants became prominent, stimulating a heightened level of reflection on dialectal and language variety.

The increased language encounters caused by political and religious events came on top of a pre-existing situation of multilingualism. In large cities such as Antwerp and Ghent, Dutch, French, and often several other languages could be heard in the streets by the local men, women, and children going about their daily business. Many native speakers of Dutch must have obtained some passive knowledge of French through their daily contact with the language. This enabled them to look at their mother tongue in a different light and allowed for comparison. Moreover, various professional, cultural, and social environments were, to various degrees and in different forms, plurilingual, leading individuals such as Radermacher and Stevin to reflect on their mother tongue as well as on other languages. Both the multilingual background of the sixteenth-century discussions on language in the Low Countries and their incorporation of languages other than Dutch have until now been left aside in historical research. The narrative of the debates becomes much more inclusive rather than inward-looking when these monolingual blinders are removed.

The Latin and French impact on the fields of administration, diplomacy, and jurisdiction led to a vast specialized terminology in these languages that was in many cases borrowed into Dutch. Even the Dutch language that was used in these environments was thus, to a certain extent, hybrid. This, in turn, incited various reactions from sixteenth-century language debaters who opposed loanwords, including, most prominently, Coornhert. Nevertheless, the traditional practices and specialist needs of these environments eclipsed the wish expressed by some individuals for Dutch terms that might be understandable to a broad audience. This demonstrates how professional practices and experiences shaped the discussions on language, and that they cannot be understood as a purely theoretical enterprise. Finally, it shows the power of tradition, which has been ignored and silenced within the modern search for standardization.

3. Trending Topics

3.1. Introduction

In 1561, philosopher and artist Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert published his Dutch translation of Cicero's *De officiis*. In the liminary texts, Coornhert called for the improvement of his mother tongue, claiming that it lagged behind German, and lamenting: 'How much diligence, effort, labour, and expense is being done by the High Germans to improve their language'.¹ Coornhert's views on his mother tongue have been amply studied, but always from a monolingual perspective that has hidden the context and underlying tensions in his remark.² Only when studied in light of the Europe-wide fascination with language, one can start to ask to what German efforts he even refers here.

Coornhert's statement serves as a reminder that the connections between debates on language in the Low Countries and Germany should not be ignored. As he points out, there had been learned men who discussed the use of loanwords in German in the sixteenth century, notably Martin Luther. In general, however, historians of German focus on discussions on borrowing and the construction of the German vernacular in the mid-seventeenth century. At that time, the tables were somewhat turned, as German authors applauded the discussions on the Dutch language and poetry in addition to those on French and particularly Italian.³

The aforementioned remark is thus not only relevant for the debates in the Low Countries. In order to avoid methodological nationalism and the monolingual paradigm, the contributions that were made in the Low Countries need to be considered in their European framework. Before moving on to the reflections on language in French schools, Calvinist churches, printing houses, and chambers of rhetoric in the Low Countries, it is therefore necessary to reflect on the trending topics of conversation on a European level to which the debaters in the Low Countries contributed. To map out the key themes that were discussed across Europe, this chapter makes use of the valuable work of earlier students of the reflections on language, each of whom treated a particular vernacular. By transcending these cumulative monolingual approaches, the emphases that different regions and languages employed, as well as their transregional interconnectedness, will be sketched.

Coornhert, for one, demonstrates his awareness of the Europe-wide fascination with language in his Cicero translation in an exemplary way, addressing one by one the major points

¹ 'Hoe groote naersticheit, moeyte, arbeydt ende coste byden hoochduytschen gedaen wert, vriendelike Leser, om henlyyder tale te verbeteren'. Coornhert 1561a, fol. *6r.

² See: Van den Branden 1967, 68-92, esp. 17; Peeters 1990a; Mooij-Valk & Mooij-Valk 2009, 162-164.

³ Van Ingen 1981; Frijhoff & Spies 1999, 151-152; Jones 1999, 20-31, 80; Deneire 2013; Yüksel 2014.

that occupied language debaters. He thus tackles the topic of loanwords, rejecting the adoption of French and Latin elements into Dutch and stating that out of such borrowing ‘necessarily a mixture of languages and a true Babylonian confusion was born’.⁴ For many debaters, Coornhert’s accusation would have hit close to home. The Biblical episode of the Babylonian confusion of tongues symbolized the origins of language diversity and the impossibility to understand each other across language boundaries. Babel’s meaning and the possibility of solving the problems it had caused were discussed as much as the issue of loanwords.

Coornhert goes on to emphasize the genealogical ties between Dutch and High German, using this relationship as an argument against the borrowing of terms from Latin and French, which belonged to a different language family: ‘This has, over the past forty years, wronged and tortured our Dutch tongue so much, that she now has more in common with Latin and French, than with High German, from which she originates’.⁵ The change of individual languages over time as well as the genealogical ties between different languages and language families were studied and debated on European and local levels, in Latin and vernacular contributions.

These various forms of language studies fostered and were stimulated by the expanding competition between languages and regions. Coornhert’s remark embodies this rivalry. It sheds light on the multilingual outlook of the reflections on language, as he places Dutch in relation to French, Latin, and German, in the framework of a text that was translated from Latin into Dutch. Competition, comparison, and thus multilingual study were key practices for those who were fascinated by language.

But it was not only the languages themselves that were compared and examined. A lively culture of interaction between the discussions on the different languages of Europe came into being. Proposals for the change, regularization, or construction of a particular language were taken up and adapted to fit other languages. Arguments to support the qualities or defects of certain tongues were transported and transformed for use in debates on other languages. Even specific metaphors, like that of ‘scum’, and precise terminology circulated, as becomes apparent when Coornhert’s case is further contextualized.

⁴ ‘nootsakelijck een mengsel van spraken ende een rechte Babilonische verwerringe wt geboren werdt’. Coornhert 1561a, fol. *6v.

⁵ ‘Dit heeft onse nederlantsche sprake binnen veertich iaren herwaerts alsoo verkeert ende ghaetbraect: dat sy meer gemeenschappe heeft metten Latijnen ende Franschoysen, dan metten hoochduytschen, daer sy wt ghesproten is’. Coornhert 1561a, fol. *6v.

After Babel

Coornhert's reference to the etiological, biblical story of the Tower of Babel is just one of many allusions to this episode that can be found in early modern discussions on language.⁶ According to Genesis 11, mankind was once united under 'one language, and of one speech'.⁷ Taking advantage of the ability to work together, the human race challenged God by building a tower to reach the heavens. His punishment for man's *hubris* was severe: He confounded the people's language, impeding their communication. In biblical terms, Babel was the cause of man's inability to understand others, and thus to live in peace.⁸ In the world 'after Babel', to refer to the title of George Steiner's influential book, mankind depends on translation for mutual understanding.⁹

Of course, the myth of the Tower of Babel had received attention from scholars and in popular culture long before the sixteenth century;¹⁰ for instance, Florentine humanist Brunetto Latini in the thirteenth century and Giovanni Boccaccio in the fourteenth century referred to it in their writings.¹¹ In the sixteenth century, however, as the amount of attention paid to language in general was increasing, references to the confusion of tongues became legion.¹² The creation of the tower and its fall were a popular theme not only in textual productions, but also in the visual arts. Pieter Bruegel the Elder made at least three representations of the Tower of Babel, of which the two extant works were made around 1563.¹³ Other artists from the Low Countries, such as Maarten van Heemskerck, a close colleague of Coornhert, and Philips Galle, who worked with Peeter Heyns and Christophe Plantin, equally bought into the fashionable topic of Babel in the second half of the sixteenth century [Figure 3.1].¹⁴ There is no possible doubt regarding the heightened interest in Babel in this particular period.

⁶ For an overview of the importance of the Babel theme and other stories about the origins of language and linguistic diversity up to the nineteenth century, see: Borst 1957-1963.

⁷ *King James Bible*. Genesis 11: 1-7.

⁸ Coudert 1999, 10-11; Trabant 2003, 21; Van der Sijs 2004, 61-62.

⁹ Steiner 1975.

¹⁰ Borst 1959, Vol. 2.2, 617-730; Zumthor 1997, 85-89; Harris 2013, 11-15.

¹¹ Latini writes about the Tower in his *Li livres dou tresor* (c. 1266), Boccaccio alludes to it in *De casibus virorum illustrium* (c. 1355). Zumthor 1997, 86.

¹² Borst 1960, Vol. 3.1, 1048-1261; Wegener 1995, esp. 40.

¹³ It has been suggested that Bruegel's Babel painting now in possession of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna might represent the polyglot city of Antwerp. The cacophony of languages that could be heard in Antwerp might certainly have been reminiscent of Babel. Mansbach 1982; Wegener 1995, 15-39; Demonet 1999; Morra 2007; Frijhoff 2010, 8-9; Simon 2011, 16-17; Woodall 2011, 1-2.

¹⁴ For other examples, including works by Jan van Scorel, Marten I van Valckenborch, Lucas van Valckenborch, and Cornelis Anthonisz., see: Iconclass entry 71B42, 'The Tower of Babel'.



Figure 3.1.

Philips Galle, after design by Maarten van Heemskerck. *The Tower of Babel*. Engraving, 142 mm × 202 mm. Haarlem, 1569. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Marie-Luce Demonet considers many references to the Babylonian confusion of tongues in the early modern context as nothing more than an empty but obligatory metaphor for language diversity.¹⁵ In cases such as that of Coornhert, indeed, little reflection accompanies the references to this story. In many others, nevertheless, links are explicitly established between the Tower of Babel, language diversity as a punishment, miscommunication and misunderstanding, and conflict and war.¹⁶ Because the Babel story gave a possible cause of the language diversity, it might also hold the key to solving the issue. It provided a tool to reflect on the importance of language for mutual comprehension and on how to overcome language

¹⁵ ‘Abandoned as a useless ruin, then levelled, it [the Tower of Babel] is no more than a metaphor for the natural diversity, an obligatory reference, a commonplace, a hieroglyph’. ‘Désaffectée comme une ruine inutile, puis rasée, elle [la Tour de Babel] n’est plus que la métaphore de la diversité naturelle, une référence obligée, un lieu commun, un hiéroglyphe’. Demonet 1992, 469-470. For the idea that references to Babel had become void of meaning, see also: Simon 2011, 15.

¹⁶ See, for example, the work of Guillaume Postel. He titled one of his books *De orbis terræ Concordia* (1544) and explicitly uttered the wish that his language studies would contribute to world peace. See further: Céard 1980, 577-578; Eco 1993, 76; Coudert 1999, 16; Simon 2011, 11; Erben 2012, 17. For a recent study on the role of misunderstanding in premodern peace negotiations, see: Espenhorst 2013.

differences in order to rule unitedly over God's creation, as Adam and Eve had done in paradise. Moreover, the story of the Tower added a temporal framework to reflections on language birth and change, indicating the age of most earthly languages.

Babel was not the only biblical episode that offered heuristic tools to early modern students and debaters of language. The book of Revelation predicts that when God's Kingdom is re-established on earth, mankind will again be of one language.¹⁷ Such a reinstallation of monolingualism had already occurred on a small scale in the miracle of the Pentecost. God then endowed the apostles, as perfect Christians, with language abilities that allowed them to converse with all the peoples of the earth, thus anticipating the monolingualism in the final Kingdom.¹⁸ This revealed that the confusion of tongues could be undone, either by divine intervention and good and faithful worship or, on a smaller scale, through language learning.¹⁹ These biblical texts established parameters that stimulated studies and reflections on the relationship between languages and communities, without necessarily confining them. References to these biblical passages were generally more than empty metaphors.²⁰ In many cases, they were the starting point for language reflection.

Monolingual and Multilingual Solutions

The events at Babel were considered as having laid the basis for the language situation in early modern Europe, but thoughts on how to deal with the result differed greatly. Language diversity could be perceived as a problem, causing difficulties in communication, or as a form of rich and abundant variety, or as a combination of the two.²¹ Jean Calvin, for instance, considered the confusion of tongues as much a punishment as a miracle: 'amidst these difficulties, there is a marvellous goodness of God, hidden in the fact that people communicate among themselves through a variety of languages'.²² The ability to learn more than one language was, according to him, a beautiful thing.

According to others, it was God's will to confuse the tongues of mankind, and some saw no other option than to subject themselves to it until the Apocalypse would restore monolingualism. One of these thinkers was the French philosopher and mathematician Charles de Bovelles, who in his 1533 *Liber de differentia vlgarium linguarum, & Gallici sermonis*

¹⁷ King James Bible, Rev. 13:7. Dubois 1970, 37; Law 2003, 105; Frijhoff 2017a, 44-45.

¹⁸ King James Bible, Acts 2:4-6.

¹⁹ Peeters 1990a, 59; Trabant 2003, 21-23.

²⁰ For the idea that Babel was more than an empty metaphor, see also: Formigari 2004, 87.

²¹ Dubois 1970, 27; Céard 1980, 581; Van Hal 2010a, 71-72, 434-435; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 123.

²² 'au milieu de ceste peine [...], il y a vne bonté de Dieu merueilleuse, qui reluit en ce que les gens communiquent entre eux d'vne part & d'autre, par diuers langages'. Calvin 1554, 136. See also: Dubois 1970, 27.

varietate argued that the human race had to simply face the consequences of Babel until the Last Judgment.²³ While Bovelles claims that mankind could only patiently wait, others actively searched to restore universal monolingualism, or tried to improve the qualities of individual languages.

One seventeenth-century language debater in the Low Countries suggested that the ways in which languages could be adapted were also determined by the Babelian punishment. In the 1640s, Protestant preacher Petrus Leupenius got involved in an argument with poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel.²⁴ Vondel promoted the use of single letters ('vader') rather than double ones ('vaader') for the vowels in open syllables, following the example of Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish, French, and German. Leupenius strongly criticized Vondel's proposal. He called the poet out as a 'malicious earthworm' and hinted at Vondel's controversial conversion to Catholicism by pointing out the heresy concealed in the wish to 'mix again the languages that have been separated by God'.²⁵ Changing the spelling of Dutch to follow the orthography of other languages would be to unite the languages and thus disrespect God's wish expressed at Babel. Almost a century after Joos Lambrecht had published the first treatise on Dutch spelling (1550), debate rather than standardization was still the key word.

The different approaches to solving the issue of communication after Babel can be divided roughly into two groups. The first aimed towards the implementation of one, universal world language, while the second embraced linguistic diversity and looked for answers in foreign language teaching and plurilingualism.²⁶ The case of schoolmaster Peeter Heyns, however, makes clear that the two approaches were not mutually exclusive. While he supported Dutch as a potential unifying world language, he taught the girls in his school to speak French, allowing them to communicate with francophone locals and foreigners.

The high level of interest in multilingualism in the early modern period is illustrated by the rising popularity of stories about famous polyglots. One of these is the ancient Mithridates the Great, King of Pontus, who could supposedly speak the languages of all the twenty-two communities over which he ruled.²⁷ Students of early modern polyglot texts such as John Considine have rightfully argued that these works gave expression to ideas of multilingual

²³ Trudeau 1992, 39-40.

²⁴ Leupenius 1958, xxv-xxvii; Van der Wal 1995a, 69-70.

²⁵ 'snoode Aerdworm'. 'de Taalen, die God gescheiden heeft, wederom te vermengen'. Leupenius 1958, 63, 65-66; Frijhoff & Spies 1999, 230.

²⁶ Simon 2011, 26-31.

²⁷ A Berlaimont edition published in 1579, for instance, refers to Mithridates to promote language learning. Johannes Goropius Becanus mentions Mithridates in his posthumous *Opera*. Berlaimont 1576; Becanus 1580, *Hermathena* I, 4. See further: Cave 1979, 157; Céard 1980, 589-590; Trabant 2003, 117; Gessner 2009, 23.

unity, and in some cases even irenicism.²⁸ By showing translations of words and texts in multiple languages, polyglot texts demonstrate that all languages share the same concepts, ultimately paving the way for mutual understanding.²⁹ Swiss humanist and zoologist Conrad Gessner, for example, collected the *Pater Noster* in more than twenty different languages and dialects in his 1555 treatise on language diversity, fittingly titled *Mithridates*. This multilingual work tentatively showed that behind linguistic diversity was one common faith.³⁰

For those who strove for worldwide monolingualism, the principal challenge lay in determining which language should become the new world language. This question was addressed locally, but first and foremost on a European level and through Latin contributions. The answer seemed simple: it should be the Adamic language, through which Adam and Eve had communicated with God in paradise.³¹ But how could this language be traced back through Babel and the Flood? Did the Adamic language stay intact, or did it splinter into different languages?

This last view was supported in the early seventeenth century by humanists Philippus Cluverius, born in Poland and later active at the University of Leiden, and Abraham Mylius (van der Mijl), who originated from 's Heerenberg and studied at Heidelberg. According to Cluverius, the Adamic language itself had been lost in the process of splitting it up into a variety of languages.³² Multiple stories circulated in early modern times relating how kings had allegedly tried to discover the original language of man through experiments with children raised in language-free environments.³³ No consensus on the language of paradise was reached, and the discussions remained vivacious throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

A widely accepted view was that the Adamic language had not survived, but that Hebrew was, among the post-Babel languages, the oldest and most sacred. As stated by French poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas in his *Seconde sepmaine* (1584), Hebrew had the 'sacred

²⁸ Considine 2008; Erben 2012.

²⁹ Demonet 1992, 190-191, 318, 342-343, 580-581; Considine 2008, 91, 289; Van der Woude forthcoming.

³⁰ Demonet 1992, 342; Gessner 2009, 59-60.

³¹ Katz 1981, 132-133; Law 2003, 101; Schmidt-Riese 2003, 56; Trabandt 2003, 23; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 115-116.

³² Van Hal 2010a, 287-288. See also: Katz 1981, 132-134; Olender 1997, 56; Considine 2008, 107-108; Erben 2012, 28; Metcalf 2013, 89, 108.

³³ The ancient historian Herodotus recounts a story about children who were raised among goats. They allegedly started repeating the word 'bec'. It was suggested that the children spoke Phrygian, in which 'bekos' was the word for bread. Some claimed, nevertheless, that the children simply imitated the bleating of goats. Among sixteenth-century language debaters who mentioned this anecdote are Erasmus of Rotterdam, Johannes Goropius Becanus, and François Rabelais in Chapter 19 of his *Tiers Livre*. There are stories about similar experiments that would have been conducted by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II and James IV of Scotland. Screech 1979, 415-419; [Demonet-]Launay 1980; Katz 1981, 134-135; Lusignan 1987, 60; Rabelais 1994, 408-411; Demonet 1998, 204-205, 404; Metcalf 2013, 87; Becanus 2014, 37-38, 327.

majorat'.³⁴ Supporting this claim was the fact that the sacred texts of Christianity had been transmitted in this language. They held the qualification of *Hebraica veritas*, expressing the idea that the Hebrew version and its Latin translation by Church Father Jerome represented the truest text.³⁵ Nevertheless, starting with Jerome, a tradition of reflection on the shortcomings of Hebrew developed, a tradition which became quite widespread from the 1520s onwards.³⁶ Hebrew was described as an unclear, ambiguous language.³⁷

For sixteenth-century French orientalist Guillaume Postel, Hebrew was the language that had survived the confusion.³⁸ Several sixteenth-century debaters refuted this idea and attempted to demonstrate that firstly, the Adamic language had not disappeared, and secondly, that it was not Hebrew. They pointed out the possibility that specific peoples had been absent during the construction of the Tower of Babel and had thus escaped the punishment. According to two Latin treatises by physician Johannes Goropius Becanus, published in 1569 and posthumously in 1580, Dutch had survived the confusion. In the first half of the seventeenth century, humanist Gerard Vossius claimed the same for Chinese. A few decades later, his view was supported and commented on by English architect and sinologue John Webb.³⁹ Also in the second half of the seventeenth century, Uppsala professor Olaus Rudbeck argued that Swedish was the oldest.⁴⁰

Becanus argued that the oldest language in the world was also the most perfect one. He collected ample evidence to demonstrate that the language in question was the Germanic tongue spoken in the region of Antwerp. His studies deserve to be seen not as a ludicrous excess of patriotism, but as a serious, learned enterprise, as the recent biography by Toon Van Hal and anthology by Nico de Glas have valuably shown.⁴¹ A sign of perfection was, to Becanus, clarity and thus the absence of polysemy and ambiguity.⁴² Moreover, he pointed to the presence of many monosyllabic words in Dutch, as Alsacian humanist Beatus Rhenanus had already done for German in 1531.⁴³ Becanus considered monosyllabism a sign of both old age and perfection,

³⁴ 'le sacré droict d'aisnesse'. Du Bartas 1584, fol. 72r; Du Bartas 1992, 340.

³⁵ Demonet 1992, 32; Wursten 2010, 123-127; Dunkelgrün 2012, 11.

³⁶ Demonet 1992, 15-20; Van der Sijs 2004, 76-79; Hassler & Neis 2009, 498-500.

³⁷ For examples of sixteenth-century humanists criticizing the qualities of Hebrew, such as Laurentius Frisius, see: Demonet 1992, 19-23.

³⁸ Schmidt-Riese 2003, 62-64; Simon 2011, 26-27.

³⁹ Katz 1981, 137-138; Simon 2011, 26-27; Weststeijn 2011, 250-253.

⁴⁰ A compatriot and contemporary of Rudbeck's, Andreas Kempe, similarly proposed that Swedish was the language of paradise. While he was sincere in his view on Swedish, he jokingly ridiculed the French language, by suggesting that this Romance tongue was only spoken by the serpent. Van der Wal 1995b, 94n1; Burke 2004, 21; Hassler & Neis 2009, 500-502; Simon 2011, 26-27.

⁴¹ Becanus 2014; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015.

⁴² Becanus 1580, *Hermathena* II, 24.

⁴³ Van der Wal 1995a, 16; Van der Horst 2008, 36.

as it allowed speakers to efficiently speak their minds. Neologisms could be created out of these monosyllabic words through the method of compounding, joining two words together to create a new one.⁴⁴

Becanus argued that Dutch did not contain any extremes. According to him, it had a moderate pronunciation without any exaggerated sounds. Dutch thus stood ‘in the centre of all languages’.⁴⁵ Becanus explained that this vernacular, because of its intermediary form, allowed its native speakers to learn other languages swiftly: ‘after all, it is easier to reach the extremes from a position in the middle’.⁴⁶ To paraphrase Becanus: Dutch represented the golden mean of languages. It took up, in his view, a central position in between all the other tongues and was thus the most perfect language.

Becanus’s ideas had an impact on the debates on language both in the Low Countries and elsewhere. He had supporters, such as mathematician Simon Stevin, cartographer Abraham Ortelius, and Peeter Heyns, in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁴⁷ Others, such as Abraham Mylius in the first decades of the seventeenth century, accepted his evidence of the perfection and old age of Dutch, but did not renounce the idea that Hebrew was an older language.⁴⁸ Attacks in the European field were formulated by, among others, French Hebraïst Isaac Casaubon, satirical author Johann Fischart in Germany, and English-born antiquarians William Camden and Richard Verstegan (Rowlands).⁴⁹

Notwithstanding the fact that many disagreed with Becanus’s conclusion, the wide variety of arguments he used to support his view furnished influential ways of studying and judging languages. Becanus’s impact beyond the Low Countries and after the sixteenth century is illustrated anecdotally by the existence of the French term ‘goropiser’. This word, coined by German scholar Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in his French *Nouveaux Essais* (1704), means to make up false etymologies to substantiate one’s claims.⁵⁰

The fact that Becanus defended the Dutch language in a Latin treatise illustrates that the line between those who supported multilingualism and those who supported monolingualism

⁴⁴ Van der Wal 1995b; Van Hal 2013a, 28; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 187-188.

⁴⁵ ‘*mediam quondam omnium*’. Becanus 1569, 565.

⁴⁶ ‘*quòd videlicet ex ipsa mediocritate facilis sit ad quæuis extrema declinatio*’. Becanus 1580, *Hermathena* II, 26; Becanus 2014, 373. See also: Chapter 2.1.

⁴⁷ Heyns 1598, fol. 66v; Droixhe 1978, 57; Brink 1989; Van der Wal 2004, 174; Van Hal 2010a, 129, 133-134; Van Hal 2013a, 28; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 187-188.

⁴⁸ Mylius argued that Hebrew had been the point of departure of the Babylonian confusion of tongues, and that all other languages were actually dialects created out of Hebrew. Mylius 1612, esp. 196-198, 204 *et seq.* For this idea, see also: Gessner 2009, 23, 103. Katz 1981, 139; Van Hal 2010a, 218-223; Metcalf 2013, 78, 93-95.

⁴⁹ Katz 1981, 135-136; Van Hal 2010a, 135-137.

⁵⁰ It is mentioned in Book III, Chapter 2 of Leibniz’s *Nouveaux essais*. Hassler & Neis 2009, 500; Becanus 2014, 11n4; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 203.

was not always clear. Becanus proposed that everyone speak Dutch, but he realized that in order to make his ideas known, he had to use the transregional language of learning—Latin. Pragmatism and idealism often came into conflict.

3.2. Latin and the Vernacular

The early modern period is still often considered to be the time in which the vernaculars rose to break down the hegemony of Latin. As Peter Burke's trailblazing *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (2004) has shown, such metaphors of vernaculars rising at the expense of Latin shelter teleological premises.⁵¹ They downplay the continuing importance of Latin and the widespread use of the vernaculars in earlier times, as well as the interplay among the vernaculars themselves.⁵² While changes in the demographics of Latin indeed occurred, it would be a mistake to interpret the discussions on the vernacular tongues as standing in firm opposition to Latin. Therefore, this paragraph has consciously been titled 'Latin and the Vernacular' rather than 'Latin versus the Vernacular'. The strong interaction or 'dynamics' on various levels between Latin and the vernaculars was a vital force in the debates on both classical and vernacular languages.⁵³

The presence of Latin as much as that of other vernaculars offered the possibility of comparison and of looking at one's mother tongue from an outside perspective.⁵⁴ The rich history of studies on the form of Latin stimulated inquiries into the structures of the vernaculars and offered the required methods and terminology. At the same time, the form of Latin itself was closely scrutinized, for instance by Erasmus of Rotterdam and French humanist Petrus Ramus. These considerations equally provided leads and avenues for thinking about the vernaculars, as the learned individuals who debated the form and history of Latin were often engaged in discussions on the vernacular, too.⁵⁵ Studying these discussions is impossible without considering the Latin case.

Issues with Latin

Scholars such as Françoise Waquet and Jan Bloemendal have made it unmistakably clear that the early modern period did not mark the end of Latin.⁵⁶ It continued to flourish alongside the

⁵¹ Burke 2004, 61-65.

⁵² For this critique, see also: Adamska 2013.

⁵³ See the volume *The Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer* (2014). Deneire 2014a.

⁵⁴ Law 2003, 58-60.

⁵⁵ See: Meerhoff 1986; Van Hal 2010a; Meerhoff 2017.

⁵⁶ Waquet 1998; Leonhardt 2013; Bloemendal 2014; Bloemendal 2015.

vernaculars. Like them, however, Latin faced a number of issues. The debates on these matters influenced the discussions on the vernaculars, and vice versa, despite the fact that the vernacular reflections' impact on exchanges on Latin has yet to be explored satisfyingly.

In the early modern period, written Latin continued to connect the learned circles across Europe, but spoken Latin was a different story. Waquet has argued that pronunciation differed so considerably from one region to another that speakers of Latin with a different mother tongue often had some difficulty understanding each other.⁵⁷ In his 1528 treatise *De recta Latini Graeciqve sermonis pronuntiatione*, Erasmus humorously described a Latin conversation between a Dane and an inhabitant of Zeeland, claiming that neither seemed to speak Latin at all.⁵⁸ Just like the vernaculars were marked by different dialects, Latin was characterized by pluriformity. These divergences provoked language debaters, including Erasmus himself, to compose treatises regarding the correct pronunciation of Latin.⁵⁹

Another debate on Latin that took shape in the fifteenth century, but which was rooted in classical discussions on the Latin language, was the quarrel on Ciceronianism.⁶⁰ It concerned the question of which form(s) of Latin should be used as language of writing: Ciceronian Latin, that is, following the single rhetorical model of orator Marcus Tullius Cicero;⁶¹ or a position that was defended by Erasmus, a critical combination of appreciated models that allowed for stylistic variety and change.⁶² Throughout the sixteenth century the debate on the topic continued, and it was strongly related to the discussions on the use of rhetoric in the vernaculars. Frequently, they involved the same people, such as French humanists Étienne Dolet and Petrus Ramus.⁶³

The Ciceronian quarrel incited reflection on the advantages and downsides of language change, on variety in terms of language and style, and on individualized and regularized language forms. Research on Ciceronianism in the Low Countries has hardly moved beyond the contributions made by Erasmus in the first half of the sixteenth century and Justus Lipsius in the second half. Lipsius initially tended towards Ciceronianism but later firmly dismissed

⁵⁷ Waquet 1998, 183-205; Defaux 2003, 25; Leonhardt 2013, 154, 185.

⁵⁸ 'you would have sworn neither of them spoke Latin'. 'deierasses neutrum loqui Latine'. Erasmus 1528, 136. See also: Waquet 1998, 192. Lipsius later replied that this diversity in pronunciations was already a hallmark of Latin at the time of the Roman Empire. Lipsius 2007, 24-37.

⁵⁹ Percival 1983, 320-321; Huchon 1988, 20-21; Waquet 1998, 196-197; Furno 2013.

⁶⁰ Dellaneva 2007, xiii-xv; Mack 2011, 13-32, 169.

⁶¹ Leonhardt 2013, 188.

⁶² Mack 2011, 96-98, 166-169, 293-296. For some of the Italian exchanges on the topic, see: Dellaneva 2007.

⁶³ Kees Meerhoff has shown that the debates on the French language were strongly marked by the Ciceronian quarrel. Meerhoff 1986. See also: Jansen 2008, 82-92. On Ramus, see: Meerhoff 2011. On Dolet, see: Meerhoff 2017, 335-338.

it.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Cicero's works are also frequently mentioned in vernacular texts from this region dealing with rhetoric and eloquence, such as language manuals for learning French or Dutch.⁶⁵ Cicero himself defended and enriched his own vernacular, so using the example set by this orator for the cultivation of French and Dutch was only logical.⁶⁶ The Ciceronian case not only shows the connections between debates on Latin and the vernaculars, it also reveals that early modern discussions on language were fundamentally intertwined with the practice and study of the art of rhetoric.

The heightened attention for Ciceronian Latin stimulated another discussion, namely that of loanwords. Cicero himself had been a firm opponent of such words, while others, such as Horace, defended them as a useful way to achieve the same richness of vocabulary as the praised Greek tongue.⁶⁷ It is perhaps not by chance that Coornhert discussed the topic of loanwords in his preface to a Cicero translation.⁶⁸ The metaphors of metal purity in coins and the adornment of plain clothes, used in classical texts, were taken up in early modern discussions on the use of new or borrowed terms in Latin and the vernaculars.⁶⁹ Indeed, both Cicero and Coornhert used metaphors of unnecessary decorative clothing to describe loanwords.⁷⁰ As the case of Horace shows, moreover, early modern defenders of loanwords were backed by classical poets just as firmly as opponents were.

The Latin Paradigm

The early modern debates on the vernaculars relied heavily on Latin in an additional number of ways, rather than constituting a supposed emancipation from it.⁷¹ Latin played a particularly important role in the European character of the discussions because of its continued use as an interregional language.⁷² Becanus's theories on the history of Dutch would not have received responses from French, English, and German language debaters if it had been written in Dutch,

⁶⁴ On Lipsius and Ciceronianism, see: Heesakkers 1993; Jansen 1995, 150; Lipsius 2007.

⁶⁵ Some examples of the many vernacular texts referring to Cicero as a rhetorical model are: Van Mussem 1553; Tiron 1563; Bourlier 1566; Stevin 1585b.

⁶⁶ Meerhoff 2017, 329-331.

⁶⁷ Short 2007, 62-69.

⁶⁸ Coornhert 1561a, fol. *6r-*8r.

⁶⁹ Short 2007, 3, 20, 69, 72-76, 92, 105-108, 152, 164.

⁷⁰ Coornhert thus described the act of using loanwords as 'patching such strange rags [...] on the cloak of our language'. 'sulcdanighe vreemde lappen [...] opten mantel onser spraken brodden'. *Coornhert* 1561a, fol. *7v. For Cicero's reference to loanwords as clothing, see: Short 2007, 73. Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero also described the Dutch language as a patched-up cloak. See: Chapter 2.2.

⁷¹ Burke 2004, 61-65.

⁷² Law 2003, 19; Maass 2005, 8-9; Meeus 2007, 108; Verbeke 2015, 27.

despite the fact that the authors of the *Twe-spraak* regretted Becanus's choice of language.⁷³ Petrus Ramus, in a similar vein, defended French in his Latin *Ciceronianus* (1557).⁷⁴ However, Latin did not just furnish a platform for the exchanges, it also provided the shared terminology that was needed as a common ground for a fruitful discussion.

Latin constituted a framework for thinking about language, especially when it concerned the qualities of individual languages. The terminology and method of studying and describing language were embedded in the Latin rhetorical and grammatical tradition.⁷⁵ Examples of the jargon of the language debates are the rhetorical notions of *eloquentia* (eloquence), *varietas* (variety), *brevitas* (conciseness), and *copia* (abundance).⁷⁶ Latin was, in this respect, a metalanguage, allowing both speaking about and reflection on language.⁷⁷ The tradition of applying classical, rhetorical terms to the vernacular languages can already be witnessed in Dante's Latin treatise *De vulgari eloquentia* (c. 1305). This title literally means 'On eloquence in the vernacular'.

Nonetheless, Latin did not always succeed in providing the required terminology. All over Europe, debaters struggled to define what made one language different from another. They had recourse to rhetorical notions, such as grace, naiveté, spirit, and genius to positively describe the whole of features that ensured the special, undefinable nature of a language.⁷⁸ French poet Joachim Du Bellay thus stated in 1549 that 'every language has I do not know what belonging only to itself'.⁷⁹ He tried to further explain this undefinable something or 'je-ne-sais-quoy' as 'I do not know what spirit, that is in their writings, and that the Romans called *genius*'.⁸⁰ In the second quote, Du Bellay adds the terms 'spirit' and 'genius' in an attempt to counteract the semantic emptiness of his words. The failure to find a word to describe this

⁷³ 'if only God would have given that he [Becanus] had lived longer or would have worked a bit more to establish our language than to prove its old magnificence'. 'ghave Gód dat hy langher gheleeft ófte wat meer in het te recht brenghen onzes taals, als int bewyzen des zelfs oude heerlyckheyd ghearbeyd had'. *Twe-spraak* 1584, fol. A2v. See also: Van Hal 2013a, 35.

⁷⁴ Meerhoff 1986, 34-40; Meerhoff 2011, 146-148.

⁷⁵ Jones 1953, 6, 29, 199; Tavoni 1982; Tavoni 1984; Padley 1988, 8-9; Auroux 1992, 18-19. This Latin idiom was itself based largely on the Greek tradition. Desbordes 2007, 107-119, 217-250.

⁷⁶ For the use of the notion of *brevitas* to describe the Dutch language, see: Jansen 1995, 288-310. On the importance of *eloquentia*, see: Fumaroli 1980, esp. 20-23, 647-660. For *varietas*, see: Courcelles 2001.

⁷⁷ Gessner 2009, 39.

⁷⁸ Fumaroli 1992; Hüllen 2001b, 242; On 'grace', see: Cummings 2002, 48-53. On 'naiveté', see: Trudeau 1992, 64. On 'genius', see: Van Hal 2013b; Perras 2015; Schlaps 2004.

⁷⁹ 'chacune Langue à ie ne scay quoy propre seulement à elle'. Du Bellay 1549, fol. b2r; Du Bellay 2007, 88. See further: Scholar 2005, 34-35; Burke 2007, 25.

⁸⁰ 'ne scay quel Esprit, qui est en leurs Ecriz, que les Latins appelloient Genius'. Du Bellay 1549, fol. b3r; Du Bellay 2003, 381-382; Du Bellay 2007, 90.

special element in every language is epitomic: the study of language had to take place in and through language.⁸¹

As the grammatical tradition, like the art of rhetoric, was strongly intertwined with the Latin language, the first grammars of the vernaculars drew their inspiration from the ways in which the nature and structure of Latin had been described.⁸² Not all languages functioned in exactly the same way as Latin, however, leading to further reflections on how to study and define languages and on language comparison.⁸³ The widespread use of the traditional Latin terminology, moreover, supported the discussions on different languages by providing a shared conceptual basis.⁸⁴ Rather than hinder reflection on the vernaculars, attention to Latin stimulated and shaped it.

3.3. Collecting, Comparing, Competing

To counter the monolingual paradigm into which the language debates have so often been forced, a triptych of notions that help one to grasp their fundamental openness, European character, and multilingualism can be proposed: collecting, comparing, and competing. These manifestations of the fascination with language do not represent any chronological order, nor are they dependant on each other. They are conceptual tools that help to move beyond the narrow view of the discussions as centred around monolingualism, purification, and uniformization, showing their broad scope.

The notion of collecting allows an appreciation of the practical forms that the Europe-wide fascination with language in the sixteenth century could take. This heightened interest is reflected in the multilingual dictionaries, conversation manuals, and poetry collections printed by publishing houses such as Plantin's that flooded the European book markets between roughly 1540 and 1630. There was a demand for overview works and a fashion for individually establishing collections that demonstrated the great variety of languages and of language phenomena that marked the post-Babel world.

Through comparison, the differences between languages and their individual characteristics could become apparent. Moreover, observations on similarities enabled people like Becanus and Marnix to reflect on the relationships between different languages, such as the relationships between Dutch and English, and on their histories. Finally, a sense of

⁸¹ Scholar 2005, 43-45.

⁸² Percival 1975, 247-248; Bostoen 1985, 6; Padley 1988, 1; Ruijsendaal 1991; Delesalle & Mazière 2003, 47.

⁸³ Cummings 2007, 24.

⁸⁴ Auroux 1992, 24-31, 39.

competition between the different languages and their defenders was clearly present.⁸⁵ This element has been emphasized in studies that considered the debates as being inward-looking, as it was interpreted as a form of rejecting the ‘foreign’.⁸⁶ This rivalry, however, was both sparked by interaction and discussion across Europe, and in turn encouraged it. Competition is not possible in an environment that is closed in on itself.

Collection Mania

The early modern fascination with language went far beyond discussions on possible rules for the vernacular languages and should not be reduced to those debates alone. There was a much broader interest in the form, history, and richness of languages that also expressed itself through the pastime of collecting language specimens. Some people collected examples of particular phenomena, such as proverbs.⁸⁷ Becanus made a list of monosyllabic Dutch words, for instance. This activity was, like the reflections on language in general, not restricted to one’s mother tongue, as it was often the variety of languages that inspired awe. The clearest illustration of this trend can be found in the albums of a diplomat based in Guelders, Ernst Brinck. During his travels through Europe and the Near East in the early seventeenth century, Brinck collected specimens of more than 220 different languages, including many exotic and historical languages, such as Etruscan [Figure 3.2].⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Van Hal 2010a, 408; Kammerer & Müller 2015, 12.

⁸⁶ Jones 1953; Van den Branden 1967.

⁸⁷ See, for instance: Goedthals 1568. Meadow 2002, 64.

⁸⁸ Royal Library The Hague, 135 K 4; 133 M 86; 130 E 32. Van Rappard 1868; Van der Waals 1991, 137-138; Jorink 2010, 289-295; Van Hal 2010a, 191-192; Swan 2012.

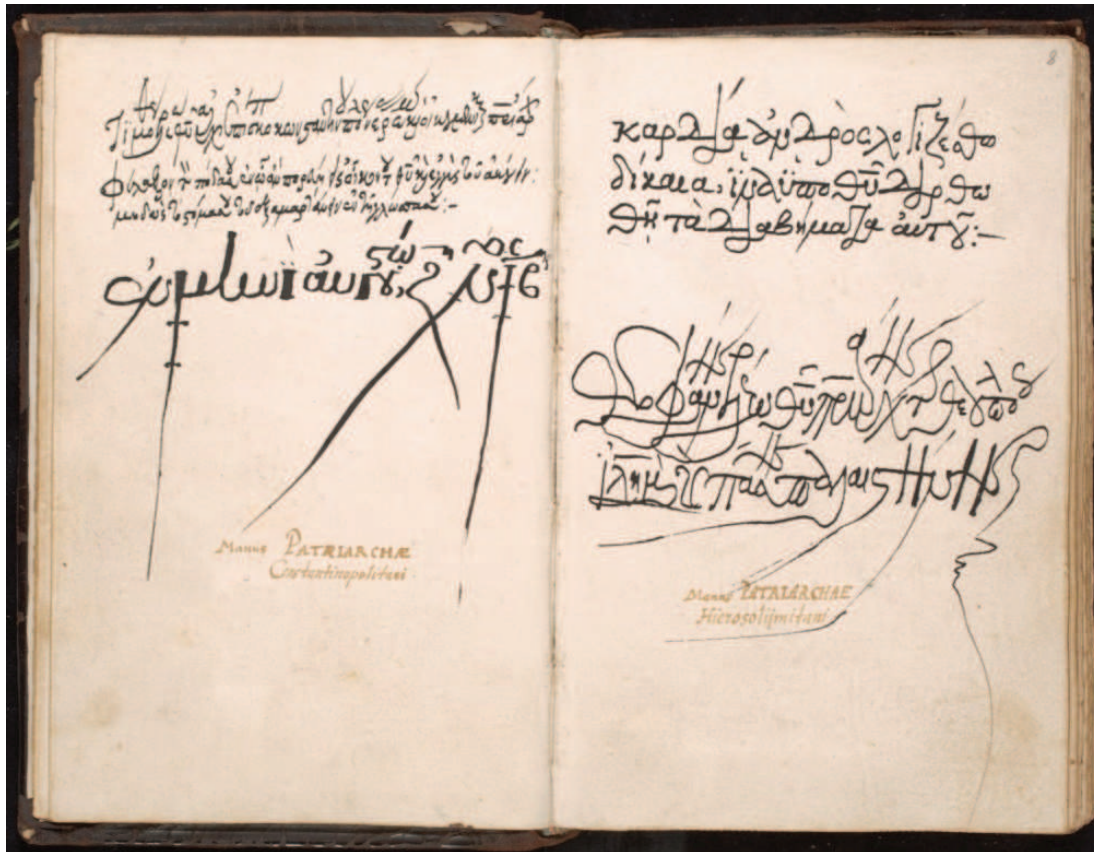


Figure 3.2.

Second album of Ernst Brinck. The Hague, Royal Library, 135 K 4, fol. 7v-8r.

Printers quickly realized there was a market for remarkable language fragments and started publishing examples of historical writing and exotic languages in addition to the many polyglot texts they produced.⁸⁹ Plantin, for instance, printed a work containing information on the alphabet of the Goths and the letters written by Flemish diplomat Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq.⁹⁰ In the 1550s and 1560s, Busbecq went on missions to the Ottoman court. He wrote about the Crimean Gothic he had heard in Constantinople.

In this context, in which remarkable language had commercial value, it was also appreciated as a gift.⁹¹ Several *alba amicorum* and commonplace books, belonging to members of the intellectual republic of letters of this time, contain a variety of languages. A notebook belonging to merchant-grammarian Johannes Radermacher, the *Album Joannis Rotarii*, thus

⁸⁹ Vanderheyden 1965, 12.

⁹⁰ Magnus 1561, 18; Busbecq 1582, 26.

⁹¹ Harris 2005, 318; Harris 2015; Reinders 2017a, 160-161.

contains examples of various modern and classical languages, word games, and examples of historical language.⁹²

The early modern fascination with language was not an isolated cultural phenomenon. It was closely related to the interest in the richness of God's creation in general, and the more widespread early modern culture of collecting.⁹³ The sixteenth century witnessed the rise of cabinets of curiosities where the wonders of the earth were brought together. They were expressions of the wish to gain knowledge and understanding of the world. Their owners also used them as conversation pieces, facilitating conversation by entertaining guests and by providing numerous topics for discussion.⁹⁴ These cabinets typically harboured remarkable natural and historical objects, as well as interesting pieces of writing. Indeed, cabinets often reserved a specific space for manuscripts or printed material containing, for instance, historical forms of language or exotic scripts [Figure 3.3].⁹⁵



Figure 3.3.

F. Imperato. *Dell'istoria natvrale di Ferrante Imperato napolitano libri XXVIII*. Naples: Constantino Vitale, 1599, fol. A3v-A4r. The Hague, Royal Library, KW 758 A 15.

⁹² Binnerts-Kluyver & Bostoën 1999; Radermacher 2002.

⁹³ Smith & Findlen 2002, 3; Jorink 2010, esp. 7; Considine 2017, 27-29.

⁹⁴ Johns 1998, 16; Benéteau Péan 2013; Quiccheberg 2013, 6, 74. On the concept of the conversation piece, see: Meadow 2002, 153-154.

⁹⁵ Quiccheberg 2013, 26 table 4, 71.

In 1565, Antwerp-born librarian Samuel Quiccheberg wrote a treatise on how cabinets of curiosities should be ordered.⁹⁶ He advised painting and inscribing proverbs and maxims on boards, cabinets, and walls in order to incite further reflection and stimulate conversation.⁹⁷ It is likely that many collections of language specimens acted as conversation pieces in a fashion similar to that of the cabinets of curiosities.

Comparison and Genealogy

Collecting was not necessarily an end in itself. Collections of specimens of different languages enabled comparison and study. Such comparisons gave the discussions on language their multilingual and European character. They made it possible to reflect on useful characteristics of individual languages, the relationship between particular languages, and their histories.⁹⁸ Etymological studies and theories formed the core of reflections on language change.⁹⁹

At the end of the sixteenth century an interest rose in the connections between English and the Germanic languages, especially Dutch, among intellectuals in England and the Low Countries.¹⁰⁰ Emmanuel van Meteren, a friend of Peeter Heyns's, stated that English was actually 'broken Dutch, estranged and mixed up with French and Breton phrases and words and pronunciations of which it has also obtained a lighter pronunciation'.¹⁰¹ Among students of the theory that English was related to Dutch were historian William Camden, humanist Franciscus Junius the Younger, and Richard Verstegan, editor and engraver and the grandson of a migrant from the Low Countries.¹⁰² Verstegan moved from England to Antwerp, where he changed his name from Rowlands to Verstegan and spent most of his life. In the metropolis, he had the opportunity to speak with people who had been close to Becanus, such as cartographer Abraham

⁹⁶ For a modern edition of the Latin text and a translation in German, see: Quiccheberg 2000. For an English translation, see: Quiccheberg 2013.

⁹⁷ Quiccheberg 2013, 22, 70, 88-89.

⁹⁸ Van Hal, Isebaert, & Swiggers 2013a, xvi-xvii.

⁹⁹ On the study of etymology, see: Swiggers 1996, 352-359; Swiggers 1997, 217-223; Hassler & Neis 2009, 645-647.

¹⁰⁰ Dekker 1996; Cohen 2005, 46-50; Considine 2008, 188-194; Rubright 2014, 56-88.

¹⁰¹ 'ghebroken Duyts, vervreemt ende vermengt met Fransche *ende* Brittoensche termen ende woorden, *ende* pronuntiatien van de welcke sy ooc verkregen hebben een lichter prononciatie'. Van Meteren 1614, fol. 262r; Rubright 2014, 86-87. On the friendship between Van Meteren and Heyns, see the letters edited in: Hessels 1887, 161-163. See further: Meeus 2009, 33.

¹⁰² Dekker 1996, 517-519; Hamilton 1999; Van Romburgh 2001; Cohen 2005, 33; Considine 2008, 188-194; Rubright 2014, 66-67. For information on Verstegan's life, see: Arblaster 2004. For other and later students of the link between English and Dutch, such as the director of the Dutch West India Company Johannes de Laet, see: Dekker 1996; Considine 2008, 191-202; Van Hal 2010a, 317-333.

Ortelius, about his theories. He explained his views on the relation between Dutch and English language in his *A restitvion of decayed intelligence* (1605).¹⁰³

The Anglo-Dutch connection was not the only theory on genealogical relations that involved Dutch. When diplomat Busbecq encountered speakers of Crimean Gothic during his travels in the 1550s and 1560s, he was struck by the language's similarities with Dutch.¹⁰⁴ The word lists he established received a lot of attention in the Low Countries.¹⁰⁵ Around the same time, scholars frequenting Plantin's printing house and the University of Leiden started studying and discussing the similarities between the Germanic languages and Persian.

Toon Van Hal, who studied the emergence of this 'Persian-German theory', has demonstrated that Justus Lipsius, Franciscus Raphelengius, Plantin's son-in-law, and humanist jurist Hugo Grotius were among the debaters, as was Marnix.¹⁰⁶ Lipsius, for example, noted the following similarities between Dutch and Persian: 'phristar' and the Dutch term 'vrijster' ('spinster'), 'dochtar' and the Dutch 'dochter' ('daughter').¹⁰⁷ The discussions were soon picked up in the rest of Europe as well, and led to vivid international exchange.¹⁰⁸

In the search for the histories of peoples and their languages, frequent use was made of etymological studies and of old fragments of the various languages of Europe.¹⁰⁹ Language debaters interested in the Dutch tongue, such as Marnix, his secretary Bonaventura Vulcanius, and Franciscus Junius the Younger, engaged in spirited discussions about the old Germanic and Gothic sources that were rediscovered in this period.¹¹⁰ Examples of these are the fourth-century *Codex Argenteus*, containing an old form of Gothic, and the *Wachtendonck Psalms*, containing tenth-century Franconian.¹¹¹

Comparisons between these or other historic forms of language and the contemporary vernaculars could lead to views of growth or decay of the language, such as that expressed by Coornhert quoted at the beginning of this chapter.¹¹² His lament that the Dutch tongue had

¹⁰³ Verstegan 1605, esp. 190. For Verstegan's views on the connection between English and Dutch, see also: Verstegan 1613, 21-35.

¹⁰⁴ Three centuries earlier, the similarities between Crimean Gothic and Dutch had already been noticed by the Brabantine Franciscan monk and diplomat Willem van Rubroeck. Busbecq's remarks, however, received much more attention. Droixhe 1978, 53-54.

¹⁰⁵ Janssens 1985, 71-75; Considine 2008, 138-141; Van Hal 2010b, 387, 394. For more information about Busbecq, see: Von Martels 1993.

¹⁰⁶ Van Hal 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Van Hal 2011, 153n16.

¹⁰⁸ Van der Wal 1997, 28-31; Van der Wal 1999, 148-150; Van Hal 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Eco 1993, 80-85; Considine 2001, 204; Fournel 2015, 36.

¹¹⁰ Janssens 1985; Dekker 1999, 9-57; Van Hal 2010a, 68-69, 173-176; Van Hal 2010b.

¹¹¹ Van de Velde 1966; Droixhe 1978, 54; Heesakkers 1997; Koppenol 1998, 177-179; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 112.

¹¹² There was a traditional, classical view on languages as going through a natural life cycle, as sixteenth-century French scholar Louis Le Roy described: 'Languages have, like all human beings, beginning, development,

changed swiftly over the course of the preceding forty years gives expression to a widespread fear that language change equalled instability and the inability to communicate across time. In general, Latin was considered to be more stable than the vernaculars, and thus better equipped to store information for future use. Abraham Mylius, on the contrary, claimed that Dutch had not changed significantly over a long period of time, so that his fellow countrymen spoke the same language as their ancestors.¹¹³ Contemporary studies into historic forms of Latin had shown that this classical language, too, was not immune to change. This observation of the historicity and changeability of Latin formed the foundation of humanist studies of language.

Patria and Competition

In the preface discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Coornhert expressed a sense of competition with regard to speakers of High German, who according to him had already adorned their language, while Dutch was lagging behind. Such competition between different language groups or countries marked the European cultural and intellectual field, especially in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹¹⁴ The intense contact between the languages and the cultural and intellectual actors of early modern Europe led to a growing awareness of the particularities of each individual tongue.¹¹⁵ A central question was: How does our language differ from others, and what are the borders of our speech community? Defining one's community also meant defining other communities and coming to an understanding of one's position in relation to others.¹¹⁶

Across Europe, intellectuals reflected on notions of community.¹¹⁷ Particularly influential were the theories of classical orators and politicians, such as Sallust and, notably, Cicero. Cicero emphasized the notion of *patria* or fatherland as a cohesive imagined community bound to a certain territory, for which its members could feel solidarity, allegiance, and a sense of duty.¹¹⁸ Influenced by these writings, early modern scholars developed ideas on civic virtue and the importance of supporting one's *patria* and the common good (*res publica*). One way to serve the *patria* was by defending its language(s) and cultures. It is not by coincidence that

perfection, corruption, ending'. 'Or ont les langues comme toutes choses humaines commencement, progresz, perfection, corruption, fin'. Le Roy 1575, fol. 22r. On early modern descriptions of the life cycle of languages, see also: Demonet 1992, 105; Burke 2004, 22-23.

¹¹³ Mylius 1612, 146-147; Metcalf 2013, 92.

¹¹⁴ See also: Enenkel & Ottenheim 2017, 23-29.

¹¹⁵ Bostoen 1991, 146-149; Frijhoff 1989, 609; Van Hal 2010a, 47; Ramakers 2011, xxii; Ramakers 2012.

¹¹⁶ Burke 1993.

¹¹⁷ For contributions to these debates from all over Europe, such as those on republicanism in Italy, see: Viroli 1995, 26-42; Von Friedeburg 2005; Von Friedeburg 2006.

¹¹⁸ Van Gelderen 1992, 135, 154-156, 199, 264; Viroli 1995, 18-26; Tilmans 1999, 51; Tilmans 2002; Vroomen 2012, 17. For the term 'imagined community', see: Anderson 2006.

Coornhert's competitive claims and his views on the history and future of his Dutch mother tongue are expressed in the preface to his translation of Cicero's *De officiis*. This text in particular explained the views of the Roman statesman on civic duties and *patria*, containing phrases such as: 'we [...] are not just born for ourselves, our fatherland also has right to a part of us'.¹¹⁹

Already under Burgundian reign, social unity and cohesion had grown considerably among the inhabitants of the Low Countries that were politically united.¹²⁰ By the second half of the sixteenth century, references to the notion of *patria* became legion.¹²¹ The term was used increasingly often to refer to the Low Countries as a whole, although sometimes also to express local allegiances. The two were not mutually exclusive, since feelings of loyalty, solidarity, and emotional rootedness could exist on multiple levels.¹²² The rhetoric of the Dutch Revolt in particular relied heavily on notions of civic virtue, fraternity, and serving a common fatherland.¹²³

Currently, there is a debate among historians as to whether nationalism was born in the eighteenth century, or whether it was the result of processes that started earlier.¹²⁴ The omnipresence of references to the fatherland in sixteenth-century reflections on the Revolt and on language demonstrates that patriotism, as a more general term referring to love for the fatherland, long predated the French Revolution. As Joep Leerssen has argued, language awareness and defences of the mother tongue are ancient, and should not be confused with nationalism, nor with xenophobia.¹²⁵

In the past, the increasing use of the notion of *patria* in sixteenth-century texts in Dutch has been interpreted as focused exclusively on the Dutch-speaking community, falsely justifying monolingual research on the Low Countries alone. Such an approach neglects and obscures the European side of the discussions on *patria* and community. The fact that the Low Countries formed a bilingual *patria* complicates the issue further. It was in the sixteenth century that the term 'patriot' ('patriot') was first used in Dutch. It is, tellingly, a French loanword—that is, it is borrowed from the other local language of the bilingual *patria* that was the Low

¹¹⁹ 'vvy [...] niet alleen voor ons seluen geboren en vverden, maer ons vaderlant een deel rechts tot ons heeft'. Coornhert 1561a, fol. 8v.

¹²⁰ D'Arcy, Boulton, & Veenstra 2006; Stein 2014; De Schepper 2014, 53-55; Stein 2017.

¹²¹ Duke 2010.

¹²² De Schepper 1987, 5-6; Van Sas 1992, 19; Groenveld 1999, 60, 68; Vroomen 2012, 12-18; De Schepper 2014, 66.

¹²³ Arnade 2008, 170, 291.

¹²⁴ Hobsbawm 1990; Bell 2001; Van Sas 2004, 69-82; Vroomen 2012, 1-2; Jensen 2016.

¹²⁵ Leerssen 2006.

Countries.¹²⁶ The term was thus used both in the Dutch and in the French version of the 1581 *Apologie* for William of Orange.¹²⁷

In their wish to serve the common good, individuals looked beyond the borders of their country in order to establish a good reputation for their *patria* in the European field.¹²⁸ Competing meant discussing with others. It also meant learning from examples set by others, critically selecting and implementing them in one's own language so that language would gain the ability to compete with the esteemed models.¹²⁹ Expressions of competition and defences of the languages of the *patria* did not necessarily take place in the native languages of that imagined community, as Becanus's Latin example shows.¹³⁰ Patriotism and an open mindset marked by interest in other languages and communities were, in other words, two sides of the same coin.

An important practice in this competitive environment was the hierarchization of languages and entire language families.¹³¹ Within language families or even languages, different varieties, too, were put in hierarchical order by sixteenth-century language debaters. Mylius considered English, Scottish, and the Scandinavian languages as less pure forms of Germanic than Dutch and German, and thus lower in rank.¹³² Gessner saw Dutch as being corrupted by French loanwords, and therefore privileged German.¹³³ Of all the varieties of Dutch spoken around the Rhine, however, he labelled the form used in Brabant as the most elegant. For High German, he considered the dialect of Meissen the best.¹³⁴

Other languages, too, had a particular dialect that was widely known as the purest or otherwise best form. This was an important topic of the Italian *questione della lingua*. Eventually, most opted for fourteenth-century Florentine Tuscan, which was used by the *tre corone* (three crowns): Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.¹³⁵ The best French was allegedly

¹²⁶ Rey 1998, 'patriote'; *Geïntegreerde Taalbank*, 'patriot'. Accessed April 2016. Arnade 2008, 170, 333; Duke 2010, esp. 237; Vroomen 2012, 18.

¹²⁷ 'As if the Prince of Parma were a great patriot, who was not born in this country'. 'Euen als of de Prince van Parma een treffelick groot patriot ware, die in desen landen niet en is gheboren'. *Apologie, ofte Verantwoordinghe* 1581, 38. 'Comme si le Prince de Parme estoit vn grand patriot qui n'est point nai en ce païs'. *Apologie ov defense* 1581, 39.

¹²⁸ Simon Groenveld has witnessed this dual inward- and outward-looking movement. He links it to the notion of ethnocentrism, which he defines as using the self as the norm and qualifying others as inferior and deficient. The sources related to the discussions on language reveal an entirely opposing picture. Quite to the contrary of what Groenveld claims, the outward-looking aspect entailed feelings of competition and thus respect, as well as an eagerness to learn from others. Groenveld 1999, 67-68. See also: Burke 2004, 65-71.

¹²⁹ Prandoni 2014.

¹³⁰ See also: Cowling 2012.

¹³¹ Frijhoff 2004, 15-16.

¹³² Van der Wal 1995a, 44; Metcalf 2013, 99-100.

¹³³ Gessner 2009, 191.

¹³⁴ Gessner 2009, 34.

¹³⁵ Migliorini & Griffith 1966, 204-230; Percival 1975, 248-249; Padley 1988, 22, 48; Moyer 2006.

spoken between the Seine and the Loire, attracting students to Blois and Orléans.¹³⁶ For English, the preferred variant could be found in the vicinities of London, within the circle formed by Cambridge, Canterbury, and Oxford.¹³⁷ Comparing and establishing hierarchies for languages and language variants is a crucial step in defining positive and negative characteristics, and thus in improving languages. Environments where multiple languages or language variants could be heard or read side by side were particularly suited to sparking such comparisons.

3.4. Making the Vernacular Great Again

When Coornhert complained about the state of his Dutch mother tongue, he did so in the preface to a work that had been translated from Latin. The act of translation was generally considered to be a fruitful way to support the target language and improve its position in competition with others. Translations were the ultimate demonstration of the importance of multilingualism and an open outlook for discussions on language and attempts to improve the vernaculars. They forced their creators to reflect on language differences and on ways to overcome these.

Another way to support a language was to establish certain rules. These efforts have been emphasized by language historians adopting a focus on standardization, of which codification is one of the main pillars. However, it is impossible to determine a direct movement towards regularized unification. In France, the debates on orthography were particularly fierce, heavily marking intellectuals reflecting on the forms of both French and Dutch in the Low Countries. Therefore, before zooming in on the Low Countries in the following chapters, the European, and especially the French context deserves to be sketched.

Two Translation Methods

A practical method to support both one's mother tongue and the common good of the *patria* was translation or readaptation of pre-existing texts from other languages. This idea, often expressed in prefaces to translations, was usually substantiated with the argument that translators enabled their fellow countrymen to access otherwise unreadable texts.¹³⁸ Translations also added to the prestige of the target language and its literature. Femke Hemelaar has demonstrated that Antwerp rhetorician Cornelis van Ghistele, a prolific translator from Latin into Dutch, understood this all too well.¹³⁹ By producing his own translations, he tried to

¹³⁶ Kibbee 1991, 124; Trudeau 1992, 109; Gallagher 2015, 229-233. See also: Van Rooy 2017, 89-90.

¹³⁷ Van der Wal 1995a, 15.

¹³⁸ See, for instance: Everaerts 1566, fol. A2r; Gillis & Sambucus 1566, 3. Baddeley 1993, 51; Hermans 1996, 12-14.

¹³⁹ Hemelaar 2011.

convince his fellow rhetoricians to follow the model of classical literature in the vernacular. Van Ghistele pointed out that translating from Latin strengthened the position of Dutch: ‘And also, as can be seen, most of that which has been written in Latin is translated daily by the Italians, Germans, French, and Spanish into their own language. Should we then not follow their example?’¹⁴⁰ Expressing sentiments of competition, Van Ghistele points out in his 1555 translation of Terence quoted here that Dutch should follow the lead of other vernacular languages.

It is important to study translations because they offer a glimpse into the practical side of the language debates. In translations, the multilingual aspect of the discussions on language is inevitable and unmistakable. The act of translating forces the translator, who is in a position between the source and target languages, to reflect on the relation between these languages.¹⁴¹ Translations form a pretext for the study of languages, both for the translator and for readers.¹⁴² Theories on translation are closely linked to views on the form and qualities of individual languages and on the relationship between languages in general. Every translation inherently shows that the translator deemed the target language apt enough to communicate the content.

Roughly, two major translation methods can be distinguished in the early modern period, and there was discussion about their respective usefulness. One was verbatim translation, that is, translating literally, word for word. The other was a looser form of translation, directed at communicating the same ideas and content but in a wording that could differ from the source text. This second method has been termed poetic translation or translating sense for sense.¹⁴³

The same discussion took place with regard to sacred texts. Verbatim translation was considered by some to be the most faithful form of translating, and thus most suitable for rendering the Word of God.¹⁴⁴ This difference in approach towards sacred and non-sacred texts is illustrated by the fact that for the Dutch *States translation* of the Bible (1637), it was decided that the apocryphal books should be translated in a less literal way, as they had less sacred

¹⁴⁰ ‘Ende noch ooc, meest al dwelck men int Latijn bescreuen vint, de Italianen, Ouerlanders, Franchoysen, ende de Spaensce natie elck in zijn tale daghelijcx (soe men siet) ouersettende zijn. Sullen wy dan haerlieden oock niet moghen nae volgen’. Van Ghistele 1555, fol. +5r. See also: Vinck-Van Caeckenberghe 1996, 356-357.

¹⁴¹ For the translator as a ‘go-between’, see: Burke 2005b.

¹⁴² Hermans 1991, 151; Van der Wal 1995a, 52-59; Hermans 1996, 9.

¹⁴³ This tradition of reflection on how to translate God’s message goes back to Jerome’s Vulgate translation of the Bible. The Church Father distinguished between biblical translation and other forms of translation. For the Bible, he used the verbatim method, while for other texts, ‘I render not word for word, but sense for sense’. ‘non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu’. Jerome, *Epistola 57 ad Pammachium*, quoted and translated by: Newman & Tylus 2015, 3. See further: Norton 1984, 186; Hermans 1991; Hemelaar 2008, 130-131; Ford 2013, 25.

¹⁴⁴ Rössing-Hager 1992, 367; Hermans 1996, 20; Wursten 2010, 107-109.

value.¹⁴⁵ Others refuted the idea that sacred texts required verbatim translation; the most significant of these thinkers is Martin Luther in his *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* (1530).¹⁴⁶

In France, poetic paraphrasing was supported by humanist Étienne Dolet, who wrote a treatise on translation titled *La maniere de bien traduire d'une langue en avltre* (1540). Dolet repeats all the commonplace arguments for translating into the mother tongue: it is a way to glorify and support the vernacular; the Greeks and Romans also wrote in their native tongues; and the Romans also translated from Greek in order to adorn their language and literature.¹⁴⁷ Dolet rejects verbatim translation, because those who translate word for word 'fail to express the grace and perfection of either language'.¹⁴⁸

The notion of 'grace', mentioned by Dolet, is important in the discussions on translation. The term was used to refer to the good style of a text, which gave it the appearance of having been written effortlessly in the type of studied carelessness also covered by the term *sprezzatura*.¹⁴⁹ Dolet argues that through rhetorical translation, the grace of the source language can be recreated in the target language. Others, however, were of the opinion that the grace of the original text would necessarily be lost in translation.¹⁵⁰ Dolet's compatriot Joachim Du Bellay expressed the proverbial view that translators are always traitors, because they could never transfer the qualities of one language into another and are thus unfaithful to the source text.¹⁵¹

Orthographic Quarrels

Between 1530 and 1560, France set the scene of what has later been called the 'quarrel on orthography' ('querelle de l'orthographe').¹⁵² Roughly, this debate on spelling has been interpreted as an opposition of two central views by historians of the French language Nina Catach and Susan Baddeley.¹⁵³ They recognize, however, that some individuals switched sides, and that others supported some of the ideas of the opposing party. The studies by Catach and Baddeley provide a fruitful model of research that appreciates the complexity of the early

¹⁴⁵ Hermans 1991, 163.

¹⁴⁶ Luther 2003.

¹⁴⁷ Dolet 1540, 3-4.

¹⁴⁸ 'n'exprimant la grace, & perfection de l'une, & l'autre langue'. Dolet 1540, 13.

¹⁴⁹ Sumillera 2014, 70-71.

¹⁵⁰ Sumillera 2014, 70.

¹⁵¹ 'mieux dignes d'estre appellés Traditeurs, que Traducteurs'. Du Bellay 1549, fol. b3r; Du Bellay 2003, 29, 379; Du Bellay 2007, 89; Ford 2013, 25-27.

¹⁵² Nina Catach, in a posthumous work printed in 2001, even uses the term 'spelling battle'. 'La "bataille" de l'orthographe'. Catach 2001, 116.

¹⁵³ Catach 1968; Baddeley 1993.

modern language debates rather than reducing and restricting them to particular camps. Moreover, Catach ventured beyond the French borders by including texts printed in the Low Countries and England into her research.¹⁵⁴ She has thus taken an important first step towards an inclusive rather than exclusive approach.

The first view promoted in the *querelle* was a defence of traditional or etymological spelling. Early modern French orthography was marked by the presence of letters that were no longer pronounced, such as the ‘l’ in ‘aultre’ (‘other’), the ‘p’ in ‘escripre’ (‘to write’) and the ‘b’ in ‘debvoir’ (‘to have to’). According to supporters of this traditional spelling, such letters were needed to make the etymology of words apparent.¹⁵⁵ Among them were the Estienne printing family, satirical author François Rabelais, Joachim Du Bellay, and Calvinist theologian and humanist Theodorus Beza.¹⁵⁶

The opposite view, promoted primarily by grammarian Louis Meigret, was in favour of extensive reform.¹⁵⁷ This idea was based on the observation that the divergence between spelling and pronunciation had become a major cause of confusion. According to Meigret, foreigners faced great difficulties when learning French because of its seemingly arbitrary spelling. He therefore suggested that orthography become phonemic, linking sounds and signs. He experimented, for instance, with differentiating the letters ‘i’ and ‘j’. Each of the two was traditionally used to represent both the consonant and the vowel. It was possible to write ‘jaloux’ as well as ‘ialoux’ (‘jealous’). Meigret considered this confusing.¹⁵⁸ He was supported in his view that letters and sounds should become more closely connected by Petrus Ramus, Pléiade poet Jacques Peletier du Mans, and, initially, prince of poets Pierre de Ronsard.¹⁵⁹

The consensus, however, stops there. The reformers could not agree on the signs that should replace the system in place. Meigret demonstrated his view in his 1550 *Le tretté de la*

¹⁵⁴ Catach 1968, 37-38, 231-245; Catach & Golfand 1973. See also: Baddeley 1993, 352-379. Susan Baddeley later teamed up with Anja Voeste for an edited volume uniting studies on the spelling debates in multiple early modern European languages. While this multilingual approach is applaudable, it lacks attention to the circulation of ideas. The introduction only indicates very general similarities, such as the importance of printers, rather than pointing out exchanged arguments. Baddeley & Voeste 2012.

¹⁵⁵ Traditionalists sometimes called for a reintroduction of etymological letters that had been lost. This could, however, lead to the creation of so-called false etymologies, when faulty letters were added to words based on wrong assumptions about their history. The verb ‘savoir’ (‘to know’), for instance, was mistakenly thought to have been derived from Latin ‘scire’. Therefore, a ‘c’ was added to the French verb (‘sçavoir’), which actually came from ‘sapere’. Baddeley 1993, 102.

¹⁵⁶ On the Estienne family, see: Catach 1968, 211-214; Baddeley 1993, 129-136. For Rabelais, see: Catach 1968, 153-154; Huchon 1981, 5-16, 491-492. Concerning Du Bellay, see: Catach 1968, 161-163. For the orthographical choices of Beza, see: Baddeley 1993, 245.

¹⁵⁷ Demonet 1992, 409; Szabari 2003, 186.

¹⁵⁸ Baddeley 1993, 35-36.

¹⁵⁹ On Ramus, see: Catach 1968, 128-133; Baddeley 1993, 405-412. Peletier is discussed in: Baddeley 1993, 383-387. For Ronsard, see: Catach 1968, 108-127; Baddeley 1993, 401-404.

grammere françoëze, fçt par Louís Meigret Líonçs.¹⁶⁰ As is visible in the title, Meigret proposed the use of ‘é’ and ‘ç’. That same year, Peletier published his *Dialoguè Dè l’Ortografè e Prononciation Françoësç, departi an deus liurès*, which made use of different signs, revealing the lack of agreement between the two debaters.¹⁶¹

The etymologists argued that the changes proposed by Meigret, Peletier, and others would lead to confusion among speakers of French. A direct relation between pronunciation and spelling was impossible, as argued by Beza, since not everyone pronounced words in the same way.¹⁶² Meigret’s spelling system was, indeed, accused of being influenced by his Lyonnais accent.¹⁶³ Furthermore, eliminating etymological letters might cause ambiguity, as formulated by printer Henri II Estienne: ‘they are not unuseful, but indicate the origins of words, and sometimes help to prevent ambiguity’.¹⁶⁴ It is true that, in the phonemic spelling of Meigret, many words have the same spelling. The words ‘sait’ (‘knows’) and ‘sept’ (‘seven’) are, for example, both written as ‘set’ in the following phrase: ‘Alexandre set ses set ars liberaos’ (‘Alexander knows his seven liberal arts’).¹⁶⁵

By the late 1550s, the debates between the etymologists and the supporters of phonemic spelling became less spirited. Although the discussions continued, in practice the traditional, etymological camp had won the battle (but not the war, as Chapters 4 and 6 will make clear).¹⁶⁶ Meigret disappeared from the scene, and Pierre de Ronsard, who had been favourable to a reformed spelling, started publishing in the traditional fashion again.¹⁶⁷

Native speakers of other European tongues had also started to discuss the written form of their language, often influenced by as well as influencing the developments in France. On the Italian peninsula, attention to etymology and the differences between pronunciation and spelling had started even earlier. Already in the fourth decade of the fifteenth century, grammarian and artist Leon Battista Alberti had designed accents to indicate the pronunciation

¹⁶⁰ This grammar was the first text actually using the spelling proposed by Meigret. The treatise in which he explained his proposals, titled *Traite touchant le commun vsage de l’escrivre françoise* (1542), was printed in traditional characters. It is likely that this choice can be explained by the reluctance of Meigret’s printer to adopt such far-reaching reforms. Baddeley 1997, 27.

¹⁶¹ Peletier 1550.

¹⁶² Baddeley 1993, 245; Baddeley 1997, 29.

¹⁶³ Peletier du Mans attacked Meigret’s use of ‘ao’ where ‘au’ would commonly be written, which corresponded with the pronunciation in Lyon at the time. Baddeley 1997, 28; Clerico 1999, 187-188.

¹⁶⁴ ‘non inutiles tamen, sed originis vocabulorum indices, aliquando ad tollendam ambiguitatem adjutrices’. Henri II Estienne quoted by: Demonet 1992, 411n70. On the practical value of etymological letters, see: Baddeley 1993, 21-26.

¹⁶⁵ Meigret 1550, fol. 4v.

¹⁶⁶ Cerquiglini 2004, 31, 49.

¹⁶⁷ Catach 1968, 108-127, 232-233; Baddeley 1993, 19, 417. However, as late as 1578, schoolmaster Honorat Rambaud proposed a completely new writing system, based on fifty-two new characters. Like Meigret, Rambaud wished to facilitate French-language learning for children with his new system. Rambaud 1578; Szabari 2003.

of vowels, such as ‘é’ and ‘ó’.¹⁶⁸ In the sixteenth century, printer Aldus Manutius took part in the debates, printing works in the spelling of the fourteenth-century Tuscan ‘crowns’ Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—spelling that was increasingly accepted as the norm.¹⁶⁹ In Spain and Portugal, too, phonemic and etymological spelling were debated.¹⁷⁰

In German print, the *Umlaut* was introduced in the sixteenth century (the ‘ä’ in ‘Blätter’, meaning ‘leaves’). It was discussed whether or not certain consonants, particularly ‘n’, could be doubled or not (‘unnd’ or ‘und’, meaning ‘and’) to aid text alignment. Discussions on the written form of German were, like the Romance vernaculars, marked by reflections on the link between pronunciation and spelling. This period thus witnessed experiments with the use of ‘h’ to indicate that the preceding vowel is long (‘mehr’, meaning ‘more’) and with the doubling of long vowels (‘Meer’, meaning ‘sea’).¹⁷¹

For English, too, phonemic spelling had supporters, and the phonology of the language was closely studied.¹⁷² Even Queen Elizabeth I was personally interested in the topic: she experimented with reformed spelling. One of her ladies gifted her with a literary excerpt in a recently invented script, the publication of which had been dedicated to the queen.¹⁷³

As in France, facilitating the learnability of English was often mentioned as a reason for reform.¹⁷⁴ Many orthographers were teachers themselves, of English but also of French. To aid his pupils, Claudius Hollyband (Desainliens), a Huguenot refugee who became a language teacher in England, experimented with the use of small crosses underneath letters that were not pronounced in French.¹⁷⁵ John Palsgrave, a French tutor at the court of Henri VIII, used phonetic transcripts of French sentences, based on the phonetics of English, as an instructional tool.¹⁷⁶ He thus gives an example of a verse by Alain Chartier: ‘Et les dangiers quay iusques cy passez’, which is pronounced according to him as ‘Eledavngier kayievkesy passéz’.¹⁷⁷ Jacques Bellot, who taught English to French immigrants, did the same for English, entitling his book:

¹⁶⁸ Migliorini & Griffith 1966, 228-229; Michel 2012, esp. 66-67.

¹⁶⁹ Michel 2012.

¹⁷⁰ Tavoni 1998, 23-26; Llamas Pombo 2012; Sanson 2013, 252.

¹⁷¹ Voeste 2012; Voeste 2015.

¹⁷² Nevalainen 2012, 151-156; Jones 1953, 158.

¹⁷³ It concerns the script described in Timothy Bright’s *Characterie* (1588). Salmon 1994, 110.

¹⁷⁴ Wesley 2015, 1270.

¹⁷⁵ See, for example, Hollyband’s *The French Littleton* (1576). In the preface to his text, Hollyband states that he has implemented the signs underneath unpronounced letters to please both sides of the orthographic quarrel in France. The preface has been reprinted in: Kibbee 1991, 212-213.

¹⁷⁶ Baddeley 1997, 25; Gallagher 2015, 66.

¹⁷⁷ Palsgrave 1972, fol. xxiii r.

*Familier deialogs for dé Instruction of dem, dat by desireus tou lerne, tou spék English, and perfectlé tou pronónce dé sem.*¹⁷⁸

Both in Romance and in Germanic vernaculars, the opposition between phonemic and traditional spelling played a role. People like Palsgrave and Bellot show how interconnected the debates on the different languages could be, and that the spelling of French was not discussed solely in France. As the *lieu* of French schools in the Low Countries will show, their interests in phonemic spelling in light of teaching were not isolated cases.

3.5. Purity and Eloquence

In studies on the early modern quarrel on loanwords, disproportional attention has been paid to the contributions of critics such as Coornhert, who have been pushed forward as prophets of a new language standard. In doing so, historians of Dutch, led by Lode Van den Branden, have not only silenced language debaters expressing a different opinion. They have also undervalued the continuing omnipresence of loanwords in contemporary writing, as well as the nuance in the views of opponents of borrowing themselves. The stances taken within the discussions on loanwords were complex and manifold, revolving around the notions of purity and eloquence.

The topic of loanwords is one that seems to return in discussions on languages all over Europe. As they are traditionally studied monolingually, however, the connections between these debates have remained largely in the dark. The discussions in France preceded those in the Low Countries by a few decades and had an important influence on them. Arguments and even metaphors from the French discussions, such as the term ‘scum’, resurfaced in the discussions on the Dutch vernacular. Nevertheless, the French example was not followed in an uncritical manner. Ideas and arguments were taken up, rephrased, reframed, and adapted to support a particular view on Dutch. Conceptions of borrowing similarly circulated between England, Germany, and the Low Countries.

French: Moderate Stances

Historians of the French language have, more so than historians of Dutch, engaged in non-teleological approaches to the language debates. The differences are considerable in the research on loanwords. In the French case, much more attention has been paid to the actual use of such borrowed terms in relation to the sixteenth-century discussions on the topic.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Bellot 1586, fol. 1r.

¹⁷⁹ See, in particular: Hope 1971. Nicoline van der Sijs’s *Leenwoordenboek* gives an overview of loanwords in modern Dutch, but it does not study how frequently these words were used in historical texts. Van der Sijs 1996.

Moreover, scholars have incorporated rather than silenced moderate early modern views on loanwords, as becomes clear when reading studies on figures such as the Pléiade poets, Louis Meigret, and humanist printer Henri II Estienne.

The stances taken by members of the Pléiade cannot be and have not been simply characterized as pro or anti loanwords. Pierre de Ronsard was in favour of Latin loanwords, but he pointed out that they should be used within measure.¹⁸⁰ In 1549, Pléiade member Joachim Du Bellay, inspired by the *Dialogo delle lingue* (1542), in which Sperone Speroni defended the vernacular, published his manifesto on the French language, the *Deffence*.¹⁸¹ Du Bellay described the adoption of loanwords from Latin and Greek as a possible way to enrich French in a way equally critical as that of Ronsard: ‘And certainly, it is not a vicious, but a very laudable thing to borrow from a foreign language sayings, and words, and to adapt them to one’s own’.¹⁸² Du Bellay’s emphasis on adaptation is relevant. He argues that borrowings should be made to comply with French phonetics. Like the Romans had done with Greek names by changing Herakles into Hercules, for example, the French should make words and names their own.¹⁸³ The poet thus differentiates between critical, adaptive borrowing, and words that are introduced into the French language without any respect for its phonetic rules.

Grammarian Louis Meigret, around the same time, argued that foreign words should be treated like guests who wish to integrate into French culture. They needed to change their appearance and learn the local language so they would be ‘considered to be French’.¹⁸⁴ Meigret explains that loanwords can be adapted to French by endowing them with a French affix and by changing their pronunciation. In this way, the ‘naïve French grace’ is maintained and the word can become an accepted member of the French vocabulary.¹⁸⁵

The general focus around 1550 was thus on a critical, careful way of borrowing. This view can still be witnessed in 1578, when Henri II Estienne published his *Deux dialogues Du nouveau langage François italianizé*. In it, he criticized and parodied the Italianizing movement

¹⁸⁰ Rickard 1968, 18-19; Padley 1988, 327.

¹⁸¹ Du Bellay 1549. For modern editions, see: Du Bellay 2001; Du Bellay 2003; Du Bellay 2007. In the 2001 edition by Jean-Charles Monferran, both Du Bellay’s *Deffence* and Speroni’s *Dialogo* are presented. On the link between Speroni and Du Bellay, see further: Meerhoff 1986, 108-134.

¹⁸² ‘Et certes, comme ce n’est point chose vicieuse, mais grandement louable emprunter d’une Langue estrangere les Sentences, & les motz, & les approprier à la sienne’. Du Bellay 1549, fol. b5v. See further: Clerico 1999, 205-208.

¹⁸³ Du Bellay 1549, fols. d7r- d8r. For various aspects of borrowing and neologizing in works by members of the Pléiade, see: Legrand & Cameron 2013.

¹⁸⁴ ‘tenu pour François’. Meigret 1550, fol. 25r; Kibbee 2003, 71-73.

¹⁸⁵ ‘nayue grâce Françoisze’. Meigret 1550, fol. 25r; Kibbee 2003, 72.

he witnessed in courtly circles.¹⁸⁶ He did not completely oppose loanwords, however. His comments on the upsides of borrowing have also generated interest. The printer contended that the influence of Greek morphology on French had been a positive development. Moreover, he considered particular types of borrowing as useful, but only if they were undertaken by learned individuals. According to Estienne, they required a thorough understanding of both the source and target languages, and should take the existing vocabulary of French into account before adding to it.¹⁸⁷

In 1971, T. E. Hope published a study on the frequency and extent of the use of Italian loanwords in French. It sparked a scholarly debate on the validity of Estienne's claims about the allegedly high level of borrowing by the aristocracy.¹⁸⁸ Such critical and relativizing perspectives are also needed in the Dutch context, in order to test the validity of the complaints about loanwords made by individuals such as Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert and Simon Stevin.

In French, as in Dutch, the quarrel over loanwords never came to an end. The continuity from the early modern discussions to the present is even embodied in a particular French institution. In 1635, Cardinal Richelieu ordered the foundation of the *Académie française* (*French Academy*), a council of forty members called the 'immortals' holding authority over the French language.¹⁸⁹ To this day, the *Académie* strives to promote 'French' terms over loanwords, demonstrating the continuing relevance of the sixteenth-century debates.¹⁹⁰

Key notions, such as measure, adaptation, and a learned approach, played an important role in the discussions before and after the inception of the *Académie* and should not be excluded a priori by adopting a paradigm that discards them. Research on the French case provides a useful contrast that shows the deficit of prejudiced studies on borrowing in Dutch. The field is slow, however, to adopt a multilingual outlook. It remains largely preoccupied with the territory of present-day France and the relations between French and Latin on the one hand, and between French and Italian on the other.¹⁹¹ Exchanges with Dutch are still too low on the research agenda.

¹⁸⁶ Estienne 1980; Cohen 2005, 44. Court poet from Hainaut Jean Lemaire de Belges had already given expression to the rivalry between French and Tuscan in his *Concorde des deux langages* (after 1510) early in the century. Rickard 1968, 15-16; Huchon 1988, 26-27.

¹⁸⁷ Trudeau 1992, 120-122; Cowling 2009.

¹⁸⁸ Hope 1971, esp. 231n1; Hornsby 1998, 342-343; Cowling 2007.

¹⁸⁹ For more information on the early days of the *Académie française*, see: Yates 1947, 275-316; Considine 2014, 28-72.

¹⁹⁰ The website of the *Académie* holds a statement on its view on loanwords: *Académie française*. 'Terminologie et néologie'. <<http://www.academie-francaise.fr/la-langue-francaise/terminologie-et-neologie>>. Accessed March 2017.

¹⁹¹ Even Latin writings supporting the French language are not always taken into account in studies on the French language, as shown in: Cowling 2012.

English: Smelly Words

For twenty-first-century readers, who are used to the omnipresence of English in international, academic, and other professional contexts, it can be hard to imagine that the English language enjoyed little prestige in early modern times.¹⁹² Speakers of this hybrid language, too, were debating possible ways to turn it into a full-fledged rhetorical tool. One of the options for enrichment of the vocabulary of English was the adoption of loanwords. Not everyone approved of this method, however, resulting in the ‘inkhorn controversy’ in the second half of the sixteenth century.

The metaphor of the inkhorn was frequently used by the early modern English-language debaters themselves.¹⁹³ It was based on the assumption that original English words were, like Becanus had argued for Dutch, mostly monosyllabic, or in any case short. For writing in ‘pure’ English, little ink was thus supposedly needed.¹⁹⁴ If someone used terms borrowed from less compact languages, such as French and Latin, he or she would allegedly spill much more ink. This in turn made his or her writings malodorous, as explained by poet and courtier George Gascoigne in 1575: ‘the most auncient English wordes are of one sillable, so that the more monasyllables [sic] that you vse the truer Englishman you shall seeme, and the lesse you shall smell of the Inkehorne’.¹⁹⁵

The most comprehensive albeit thoroughly outdated survey of the inkhorn controversy remains Richard Foster Jones’s 1953 *The Triumph of the English Language*.¹⁹⁶ This study does not hide its teleological approach. It overtly links rejections of loanwords to ‘the nationalistic spirit, with its pride in things native’.¹⁹⁷ A new study of the topic with more respect for the historical context is long overdue. In a 2010 doctoral thesis written by Brian Ballentine on the early modern discussions on loanwords, still the connection between nationalism and the rejection of borrowings is not questioned.¹⁹⁸

Another flaw of Jones’s argumentation is the dualist division of the debaters into two opposing camps: a purist camp that pursued uniformity and simplicity and which, according to Jones, had the upper hand; and a camp that strove for eloquence and *copia* and thus approved

¹⁹² Saenger 2013, 2-3; Gallagher 2015, 1; Wesley 2015.

¹⁹³ Rubright 2014, 59.

¹⁹⁴ Haynes 2003, 65-72.

¹⁹⁵ Gascoigne 1575, fol. T4r. See also: Jones 1953, 115; Ballentine 2010, 195.

¹⁹⁶ Jones 1953.

¹⁹⁷ Jones 1953, 68.

¹⁹⁸ Rather than emphasizing the aspect of competition, Ballentine’s work makes use of the notion of nationalism, which he sees as inward-looking. See, for instance: ‘For Du Bellay, the project of improving the French language was overtly nationalistic, even militant’. Ballentine 2010, 19.

of loanwords.¹⁹⁹ Many of Jones's own examples show that this binary view is reductionist and does not account for the large grey space that lies between defending and rejecting borrowing. English schoolmaster John Hart, in a 1570 manual teaching people how to read, explained that borrowers often made mistakes: 'as to say for temperate, temporall: for surrender, sullender: for stature, statute: for abiect, obiect: for heare, heier: certisfied, for both certified, and satisfied'.²⁰⁰ Like Henri II Estienne, Hart gives a nuanced view on loanwords that highlights the importance of a critical and conscious borrowing method. Jones, nevertheless, without further reflection places him in the anti-borrowing camp.

Throughout the sixteenth century, a more positive attitude towards English was developing, one that considered hybridity as a necessity and one of the language's best qualities.²⁰¹ Court poet Sir Philip Sidney ventilated this idea in his *Defence of Poesy* (1595): 'I knowe some will say it is a mingled language: And why not, so much the better, taking the best of both the other?'²⁰² English, in other words, could incorporate the best of different languages and thus become superior to all of them. Playwright George Chapman equally upheld this view. In his translation of Homer printed in 1598, he pointed out that other tongues, too, such as Latin, had been enriched through loanwords. In a way similar to that of Hart, Chapman argued that borrowing should be done within reason and with an awareness of the target language.²⁰³ It seems that the grey area, which is ignored in the traditional black-and-white view, harboured more people than either camp defined by Jones.

German: Fruit-Bearing Discussions

As mentioned by Coornhert, sixteenth-century Germany housed opponents of the use of loanwords in German, such as printer Friedrich Riederer and grammarian Valentin Ickelsamer. In her studies of modern debates on loanwords in German, Ingrid Gogolin, making a spirited allusion to purity regulations in Germany's beer industry, has called the rejection of influence from other languages a 'sprachliches Reinheitsgebot' ('language purity law').²⁰⁴ Luther, for instance, opposed the use of foreign words and wished 'to translate in a pure and clear

¹⁹⁹ Jones 1953. This binary view has also been put forward by: Bailey 1992; Rubright 2014, 59.

²⁰⁰ Hart 1570, fol. A3r. See also: Jones 1953, 107; Gotti 1997, 483.

²⁰¹ In the first half of the century, the use of loanwords was fiercely defended by humanist-diplomat Sir Thomas Elyot, who enjoyed considerable support. Jones 1953, 76-93. See further: Burke 2004, 68-69.

²⁰² Sidney 1595, fol. I4v. See also: Saenger 2013, 2.

²⁰³ 'All tongues haue inricht themselues from their originall (onely the Hebrew & Greeke which are not spoken amongst vs) with good neighbourly borrowing'. Chapman 1598, fol. B2r. See also: Jones 1953, 208-209.

²⁰⁴ Gogolin 2003, 59. The term 'Reinheitsgebot' refers to a regulation that limits the ingredients allowed for use in the beer making process. This law was, interestingly, designed in the early sixteenth century, the era in which language purity became debated all over Europe, frequently using the term 'scum'.

German'.²⁰⁵ Coornhert's praise of German language developments calls for a closer look into the earlier period. Scholars studying this issue, however, have looked mostly at the period between 1617 and 1670.²⁰⁶

In the wake of the Thirty Years' War, literary societies were founded in Germany that discussed the use of loanwords in the local vernacular.²⁰⁷ The first and most influential of these societies, founded in 1617 and thus well before the *Académie française*, was the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* (*Fruit-Bearing Society*).²⁰⁸ It had been inspired by the Florentine *Accademia della Crusca* (*Academy of the Bran*), a society that studied and debated the form of the Italian language.²⁰⁹ One of the aims of the *Gesellschaft*, which first and foremost targeted the common good by educating and unifying the people, was to cultivate the German vernacular and to support it through the production of dictionaries and grammars.²¹⁰ From the 1630s onwards, *Gesellschaft* members, such as grammarian Justus Georg Schottelius, who explicitly rejected borrowing, became actively engaged in discussions about the use of loanwords in German.²¹¹

Individual *Gesellschaft* members were aware of the quarrels on purism in the Low Countries and were inspired by them.²¹² Schottelius thus referred to the efforts of, among others, Stevin and Becanus.²¹³ Indeed, the debates on Dutch had been much more vivid than those on German. This was in spite of the complaints uttered in 1561 by Coornhert who, besides, is not mentioned by Schottelius for his work on language, even though the German scholar was familiar with Coornhert's philosophical work.²¹⁴ The links between the *Gesellschaft* and Dutch, Italian, and also French poets demonstrate that interactions between the discussions on the various vernaculars of Europe were multidirectional, and that studying them requires a methodology that appreciates those exchanges.

²⁰⁵ 'das ich rein und klar deutsch geben möchte'. Translation and original quoted from: Luther 2003.

²⁰⁶ Rössing-Hager 1992, 364-368; Jones 1999, 26, 31-34.

²⁰⁷ Gloning & Young 2004, 162-163, 217.

²⁰⁸ Watanabe-O'Kelly 1997, 120. On early modern academies in general, see: Considine 2014.

²⁰⁹ Ball 2008, 399-401; Conermann 2016.

²¹⁰ Watanabe-O'Kelly 1997, 120; Jones 1999, 34-49; Gloning & Young 2004, 217; Ball 2008, 289-299; Considine 2014, 73-120; Conermann 2016, 336-339.

²¹¹ Pointing out the multilingual character of the *Gesellschaft*, Klaus Conermann has downplayed the—according to him—disproportional attention given by modern scholars to its supposed primary purist goal. As shown by Conermann, not all poets related to the *Gesellschaft* rejected loanwords. Conermann 2016. See further: Jones 1999.

²¹² Jones 1999, 31.

²¹³ He also mentions humanists Justus Lipsius, Abraham Mylius, Philippus Cluverius, and Adrianus Schrieckius. Schottelius 1641, 56-60, 76-88, 159-160, 170, 218. For more information on these language debaters, see: Van Hal 2010a, 193-298.

²¹⁴ Kiedroń 1993; Van Gemert 1996, 87-89.

Escume, Schuym, Schaum, Spuma, Scum

The unavoidable interregional, European character of the discussions on the various vernacular languages reflects itself most tangibly in the recurrence of metaphors, which frequently crossed language boundaries. David Cowling has taken an important first step in studying the metaphors that were used in sixteenth-century France to describe language, such as images of clothing, economic terms, and botanical and culinary metaphors.²¹⁵ A much-needed next step would be to map the distribution of such metaphors in the reflections on language all over Europe. Indeed, virtually all categories distinguished by Cowling are also present in contributions to the debates in the Low Countries. One image that was particularly frequent and that can be used to illustrate the European connections is the negative designation of language as ‘scum’ (Latin ‘spuma’; French ‘escume’; Dutch ‘schuym’; German ‘Schaum’), meaning foam, spume, or froth.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the term ‘scum’ or ‘scummed words’ was often used in Dutch as an equivalent for ‘loanwords’. Coornhert, in his Cicero translation, criticized ‘scumming’, that is, to take the scum off something, used as the equivalent of borrowing words.²¹⁶ Already in 1546, Lambrecht presented his Dutch-French vocabulary as containing ‘unscummed Flemish words’ (meaning it was loanword-free).²¹⁷ This implies that the term was widely known by then.

The etymology of the Dutch term ‘schuym’ is unclear, but it was most likely considered a culinary metaphor by sixteenth-century language debaters.²¹⁸ In Lambrecht’s vocabulary, readers are redirected from the word ‘schume’ (‘scum’) to the word ‘broemsel’ (‘froth’), which is then translated into French as ‘escume’ (‘scum’). ‘Broemsel’ is the froth that rises to the surface of beer or boiled soup.²¹⁹ According to Lambrecht, the notion of ‘scum’ was thus a cooking term.²²⁰ Another possibility, however, is the meaning ‘pirate’, or ‘scummer of the

²¹⁵ Cowling 2004; Cowling 2007; Cowling 2009. For English metaphors of coinage in the debates on loanwords, see the unpublished dissertation of Brian Ballentine: Ballentine 2010, 27-52. For German metaphors in the seventeenth century, see: Jones 1999, 59-83.

²¹⁶ ‘afschuymen’. Coornhert 1561a, fol. *6r. See also, for example: De Castelein 1555, 37; Verstegan 1617, fol. A3v-A4r. The *Twe-spraack* describes French, Italian, and Spanish as ‘scum languages’, that is, corrupted versions of Latin. ‘schuymtalen’. *Twe-spraack* 1584, fol. A2v.

²¹⁷ ‘ongheschuymden vlaemschen woirden’. Lambrecht 1546, fol. A1r.

²¹⁸ The *Geïntegreerde Taalbank* suggests that the use of the term ‘scum’ to designate impure language was derived from metallurgy. In a contemporary Dutch-Latin dictionary from Plantin’s printing house, however, ‘metallic scum’ is not translated as ‘spuma’, which was the Latin equivalent of the Dutch term ‘schuym’ and the French word ‘escume’ in relation to language. *Geïntegreerde Taalbank*, ‘schuim’, last accessed March 2016; Kiliaan 1972, ‘schuym van metael’.

²¹⁹ *Geïntegreerde Taalbank*, ‘brom’. Accessed March 2016.

²²⁰ Richard Verstegan, too, interpreted the term as a culinary metaphor, as becomes apparent from the reference to kitchen utensils, namely pots, in the following passage: ‘But why have the Hollanders not scummed their own pots’. ‘Maer waerom en hebben de Hollanders van hunne eyghen potten niet gheschuymt’. Verstegan 1617, fol. A3v.

seas'.²²¹ A 1599 French-Dutch dictionary made by schoolmaster Eduard Mellema contains the entry 'escumeur de mer' ('scummer of the sea'), which is translated as 'zeeroover' ('pirate').²²²

Ironically, it seems that the Dutch use of the term 'scum' to refer to loanwords from French and Latin in a pejorative way was actually imported from French itself. Pursuing this line of thought further, it can be argued that when Coornhert praised the German example of rejecting French loanwords, he used a term that stemmed precisely from French and the French debates on language.

In French texts, the term 'escume' and its derivations were used decades before 'schuym' became popular in Dutch, and even before 'spuma' became used to refer to language in Latin.²²³ Indeed, this seems to be a case where the vernacular discussions influenced Latin terminology. From the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, the term 'escume' can be attested in comical French play texts ridiculing Latin loanwords.²²⁴ A *sottie* performed in 1488 thus contains a character named 'the scummer of Latin'.²²⁵ His speeches abound with loanwords from Latin, inciting another character to exclaim: 'What Vaspasian is this?'²²⁶

Jelle Koopmans, in his studies of these plays, has suggested that the term might have been coined as a pun on the Latin preposition 'cum'. Latinisers allegedly adorned their speech with so many Latin words and interjections such as 'cum', that the word 'es-cum-er' was used to describe it.²²⁷ Even though this is certainly a possibility, there is no evidence to support it. In any case, the pun would have been lost in Dutch and other tongues.

The term can first be attested outside of a theatrical context in a text on rhetoric by Pierre Fabri (Le Febvre), which was printed in Rouen in 1521.²²⁸ Some years later, Geoffroy Tory used the term 'scummers of Latin' in his treatise on the French language titled *Champ fleury*

²²¹ Van der Sijs 2006, 77.

²²² Mellema 1599, 'Escumeur', 'Escumeur de mer'.

²²³ The Flemish humanist Jacob Meyerus used the word 'spuma' when talking about the French language in his *Commentarii Siue Annales rerum Flandricarum*. Meyerus 1561, fol. 188v; Armstrong 1965, 407. William Jervis Jones and Toon Van Hal give two other examples of the use of 'spuma', but they both date from the seventeenth century: the German scholar Andreas Helvigijs used the term 'spuma' in his 1611 *Etymologiae*. Poet Justus Georg Schottelius, who wrote on German grammar, used it in his 1641 *Teutsche Sprachkunst*. Geoffroy Tory, in his 1529 *Champ fleury*, uses the verb 'despumate' ('despumons'), a loanword based on the Latin verb 'despumare', to refer to the act of borrowing from Latin. In François Rabelais's *Pantagruel*, a student whose phrases are full of Latinisms describes his daily activities at the university by virtually copying Tory and thus by using the same verb. Tory 1529, fol. A8r; Rabelais 1533, fol. B8v; Rabelais 1994, 233, 1258. For Meyerus, Helvigijs, and Schottelius, see: Jones 1999, 176; Van Hal 2013a, 32.

²²⁴ In the *Farce de maître Pathelin*, the title character fakes an illness by speaking in different languages. When he starts in Latin, his wife exclaims, in the first known edition, printed around 1485: 'How he scums!' 'Comment il escume !' Tissier 1993, 278. See also: *Maistre pierre pathelin* 1953, fol. D1r.

²²⁵ 'l'escumeur de latin'. Droz 1974, 150; Dull 1997, 207.

²²⁶ 'Quel Vaspasien esse cy ?' Droz 1974, 175.

²²⁷ Koopmans 1988, 417n6.

²²⁸ 'terms that are too scabrous or that have been scummed from Latin'. 'Do not scum Latin words'. 'termes trop scabreux et escumez du latin'. 'Nescumez point vocabules latines'. Fabri 1521, vol. 1, fol. 71r, vol. 2, fol. 42r.

(1529), describing these ‘scummers’ as ‘jokers and jargonners’, and as ‘forgers of new words’.²²⁹ From these French writings, the term appears to have spread towards other European languages, generating attestations in Dutch, in English with the seemingly lone example of Richard Verstegan, in German in the surroundings of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, and in Latin where it was used by humanists from the Low Countries and Germany.²³⁰

It is not unlikely that the use of the term in English, German, and possibly even Latin was inspired by the use of the term in Dutch discussions or by a combination of the French and Dutch debates rather than by French models alone. The Dutch reflections on language were influential both in England, in light of studies of the Anglo-Dutch connection, and in the *Gesellschaft*. Further research with a multilingual outlook is needed to shed light on these and other metaphors that circulated throughout language-fascinated Europe.

3.6. Conclusion

The complex trajectory from France, to the Low Countries, to Germany, and to England covered by the metaphor of ‘scum’ is emblematic for the circulation of concepts, ideas, and arguments regarding language throughout Europe. Rather than always being on the receiving end of influences from elsewhere, the Low Countries took up a central position in these debates. Exchanges with discussions in languages other than Dutch, and in regions other than the Dutch-speaking Low Countries can only be studied through a multilingual perspective that does not confine itself to political or language borders. It is necessary to move beyond comparison and trace the interactions between texts and individuals working in different regions and languages. This is especially true for authors like Becanus and Ramus, who wrote in one language (Latin) to comment on another (Dutch and French, respectively).

The term ‘influence’ is not well equipped to describe the circulation of ideas and arguments, since it suggests a passive form of reception. Rather, ideas were actively and critically adapted and recontextualized to fit the language in question and the defended view. This is how conceptions of the high level of monosyllabic words in Germanic languages were first used by German humanist Beatus Rhenanus to describe German, then by Becanus to

²²⁹ ‘Escumeurs de Latin, Plaisanteurs, & Iargonneurs’. ‘Forgeurs de motz nouueaulx’. Tory 1529, fol. A8r-A8v.

²³⁰ For Verstegan’s use of the word ‘scum’ in an English treatise on language, see: Verstegan 1605, 204. In German, the terms ‘Schaum’ and ‘Schaumwörter’ have been attested in seventeenth-century writings by poets connected to the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*. William Jervis Jones gives three examples. The first is taken from the *Teutsche Sprachkunst* (1641) by poet and *Gesellschaft* member Justus Georg Schottelius. The second came from Karl Gustav von Hillen’s *Die Teutsche Palmbaum* (1647), which praises the *Gesellschaft*. The last came from the pen of poet Philipp von Zesen. Jones 1999, 62, 79, 176. For Latin examples, including, again, Schottelius, see: *supra*, note 221.

applaud Dutch, and finally by contributors to the inkhorn controversy in England to reject loanwords.

The wish to learn from examples set by other languages was profoundly connected to patriotism. Competition and interregional exchange were inseparable. In the same vein, discussions on and studies of Latin were crucial to reflections on the vernacular, and probably vice versa, even though this requires more research. Students of the early modern debates on language and of early modern literary culture in general need to be aware of this. Expressions of love for the *patria* are no pretext for rejecting other languages, especially in a historical reality as multilingual as that of the Low Countries.

The orthographic quarrel concerning French and the debates on loanwords all over northwest Europe show the absence of unilinear movements towards standardization. Even among contributors who have traditionally been placed in the same camp, like orthographers Meigret and Peletier, nuance, contradiction, and discussion prevailed.

4. French Schools

4.1. Introduction

In 1531, humanist pedagogue Juan Luis Vives, originally from Spain but at that time active in the Low Countries, wanted schoolmasters to act as ‘Prefect[s] of the treasury of [their] language’.¹ The perception of teachers as protectors and distributors of language norms explains why, in the sixteenth century, various language debaters called for their aid in disseminating ideas and proposals. Joos Lambrecht, a schoolmaster himself, thus expressed the hope that with the help of his book on Dutch spelling, ‘from now on, the same will be presented and taught to youngsters in all Dutch schools’.²

In line with these remarks, scholars have studied and interpreted the role of teachers in the discussions on Dutch mostly in terms of the distribution and mediation of rules.³ The conclusions of these studies were critical: schoolmasters did not succeed in imposing rules, and teachers of French might have been a source of French loanwords in Dutch.⁴ The disproportionate amount of research on standardization and the emphasis on the rejection of borrowing have thus created a negative image of the role of schoolteachers. By studying their contributions to the language debates from a non-teleological point of view that respects diversity, a different image emerges that places schoolmasters at the cutting edge of language reflection and innovation. These teachers show that middle-class individuals who had not necessarily enjoyed an academic education also contributed to the learned discourse on language.

In 1610, rhetorician Jasper Bernaerds wrote a Dutch poem for a volume titled *Den Nederduytschen Helicon*. The poem praised individuals who had taken the first steps in the construction of the ‘pure mother tongue’.⁵ Strikingly, many names of schoolmasters feature in this list of language defenders. Bernaerds, who was a teacher himself, mentions, to name but a few, ‘the clever Peeter Heyns’, and Heyns’s colleagues and friends Jan Borrekens and Gabriel

¹ Juan Luis Vives, translated by F. Watson: Vives 1931, 103.

² ‘van nu voord an, tzelfdē in alle schólen van Néderlandscher spráke, den ionghers zoude móghen voorghehauden endē onderwézen werden’. Lambrecht 1550, fol. A2v.

³ See, notably, Marijke van der Wal’s study on the extent to which first language education stimulated the dissemination of newly formed rules for the Dutch language: Van der Wal 2002.

⁴ Van der Wal 2002, 15-16; Van der Sijs 2004, 583.

⁵ ‘reyne Moeders tael’. In his poem, Bernaerds praises a Dutch language free of loanwords. His definition of a ‘pure’ language does not necessarily have to confine itself to being ‘loanword-free’, however. It could also refer to other qualities of the language. *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 73-74.

Meurier.⁶ Meurier was from Hainaut and was not even a native speaker of Dutch, but apparently this did not hamper his ability to aid the Dutch tongue.⁷

Indeed, French schools provided the optimal conditions for awakening language awareness, reflection, and debate, and thus also for supporting Dutch. Each schoolmaster had to decide which rules for vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation he or she wished to teach.⁸ In other words, teaching demands defining and reflecting. Moreover, the classroom was an ideal observatory for the process of language learning. Schoolmasters witnessed on a daily basis which parts of the language caused children to struggle and how their abilities evolved. Teaching thus at the same time allowed the study of language development. This everyday work environment incited teachers to compare Dutch and French and to reflect on the qualities of both languages in French schools.

In the French schools, a predilection for certain topics can be discerned that show the link with the daily language practices in these establishments. It concerns the importance of both first and second language learning as well as normative issues, notably orthography. In an age in which knowledge of the art of rhetoric was deemed crucial for one's social and professional standing, teachers also had to reflect on the topic of eloquence and on how this could be achieved through monolingual or bilingual education. Strikingly absent in the sources related to the educational scene is the topic of loanwords.

For various reasons, the life and works of Peeter Heyns are particularly illuminating with regard to these processes. They are extraordinarily well documented: part of the administration of his school has been preserved, and he was a prolific author of schoolbooks and literary works that shed light on his life as a schoolmaster and his views on language. Heyns was involved in a broad array of topics related to the language debates, and he was connected through friendships and professional and familial ties with many other schoolmasters who expressed their opinions on the vernacular, such as Gabriel Meurier. Heyns's case therefore forms an excellent starting point to trace the extensive discussions that took place in the surroundings of French schools.

⁶ 'Den kloecken Pieter Heyns'. *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 74. Other schoolmasters who are mentioned are Eduard Mellema from Leeuwarden and Felix van Sambix, a calligrapher and teacher of French active in Delft. A certain 'De Vyver' also figures in the list. Boukje Thijs, in her dissertation on *Den Nederduytschen Helicon*, has suggested this might refer to Jacobus Viverius, but schoolmaster Gerard de Vivere seems a more likely possibility. Contrary to Viverius, De Vivere was a contemporary of the persons mentioned in the surrounding lines. A similar remark can be made on the name 'Coster', for whom Thijs proposes the names of Abraham Coster and Jan de Coster. An option she did not mention is Wouter de Coster, a prominent Antwerp schoolmaster and contemporary of Heyns, Meurier, and Borrekens. Thijs 2004, 175-190.

⁷ On Meurier's life, see: De Clercq 1997, 29-30.

⁸ Kibbee 2010, 72.

Teaching Languages, Teaching Language Reflection

Daily life in the French schools was marked by bilingualism and comparison, two key stimulators of language reflection. The type of instruction offered in these institutions depended on the gender and age of the students. In general, they prepared children between the ages of seven and fifteen for a life in a trading centre, such as Antwerp.⁹ They trained children in their formative years to move between languages and reflect on their differences, creating a large community of non-academically educated men and women sensitive to the key themes of the discussions on language and ready to take part in them.

Early modern education was set up in a gradual manner, despite the fact that children rarely spent more than a few months consecutively at school. It started with the alphabet and spelling, then reading, followed by writing. Pupils were given lessons in counting, arithmetic, and often bookkeeping and other topics that are useful for the sharpening of the mind, such as rhetoric, history, and geography.¹⁰ In the French schools, after learning how to read Dutch, students were taught the differences between Dutch and French pronunciation and learned how to read French texts out loud.¹¹ They then received writing lessons in French and Dutch and were trained in translating from one language into the other. Comparing languages and switching from one language to another characterized these institutions, where the language of instruction was, if possible, French.¹² Comparison and reflection on language differences, which were key practices in the early modern language debates, became second nature to children trained in these schools.

It is important to remark that in many French schools, pupils also learned to expand and employ their knowledge of Dutch, which most of them had as their native tongue. This is illustrated by a record in the municipal archive of Leiden, relating that teacher Magdalena Valery, herself a former pupil of Peeter Heyns, requested permission to set up a school. Her goal was to teach girls the ‘French language as well as teaching them to write Dutch perfectly’.¹³ Even in educational practices, attention to one language did not exclude the other, as the two vernaculars were taught in symbiosis, supporting the thesis that this was also the case in the discussions on language.

⁹ Dodde & Esseboom 2000, 40; Heyning 2017, 54. For a dated though still useful overview on the development of French schools in the Low Countries, see: Riemens 1919.

¹⁰ Peeters 1990a, 61; Van der Wal 2002, 11-13; Frijhoff 2017b.

¹¹ Dodde & Esseboom 2000, 47.

¹² Frijhoff 2015, 120; Uil 2015, 549.

¹³ ‘fransche spraecke mitsgaders de zelve oock de nederduijtsche perfectelic te leeren schrijven’. Municipal Archives Leiden, *Secretarie-archief 1575-1851*, nr. 9253, fol. 64r-64v; Van Selm 1987, 314n281; Van de Haar 2015a.

Both men and women, such as Heyns's wife, Anna, and his former student Magdalena Valery (Valerius), could fulfil the role of teacher in a French school.¹⁴ A few women like Magdalena also wrote and published schoolbooks containing both French and Dutch, but the rare extant works contain very little reflection on the language debates.¹⁵ Among the schoolmasters were both native speakers of a Dutch dialect, such as Heyns and Anna, and native speakers of French who generally originated from francophone areas in the Low Countries, such as Gabriel Meurier.¹⁶

Manuals existed to aid with each aspect of the programme. As books describing, comparing, and codifying languages, they were central to the discussions on language. For the initial stages of reading and writing, model books were used that gathered examples of different types of handwriting that the children could imitate. Heyns produced such an abecedarium. He made both a Dutch and a French version, printed by Plantin, so children could train in both languages.¹⁷ Students used grammar books, such as a French grammar written by Heyns, to understand the structure of the language. Dictionaries and vocabulary books, ordered alphabetically or, in the case of the latter, often thematically, helped to enlarge their lexical stock. So did conversation manuals, books that contained examples of questions and answers on useful topics.¹⁸ For the practice of written communication, books containing examples of letters were published.¹⁹

Edifying and moralizing literature and biblical texts were used to practise reading French and for translation exercises.²⁰ Popular in educational settings were collections of proverbs and sayings, such as the famous distichs of Cato and the proverbs of Salomon.²¹ These collections were used to train translation, and they also improved students' eloquence by providing them with sayings that they could use to adorn a text or support an argument.²² Finally, Heyns and some of his colleagues used theatre plays in French or Dutch that allowed the students to practise public speaking in their first or second language.²³

¹⁴ Van de Haar 2015a.

¹⁵ See the multilingual works of Maria Strick and Magdalena Valery, who was probably a sister of Adriaen Valerius, the author of the *Neder-landtsche gedenck-clanck* (1626): Valery 1599; Strick 1607; Strick 1618; Van de Haar 2015a.

¹⁶ For an overview of the possible places of origin of Antwerp schoolmasters in general (not just those related to French schools) see: De Groot 1967, 191-193.

¹⁷ Heyns 1568a; Heyns 1568b.

¹⁸ Examples of conversation manuals are: Meurier 1563b; De Vivere 1574. See further: Ruijsendaal 2002.

¹⁹ Meurier 1573; Bourlier 1576; De Vivere 1576.

²⁰ See, for instance: *De historie vanden ouden Tobias* 1557. Van Selm 1987, 239; Van de Haar 2017.

²¹ Meurier 1578; Bosquet 1581.

²² Meadow 2002, 69.

²³ De Vivere 1578; Heyns 1595; Heyns 1596; Heyns 1597.

Contributions to the debates on language can be found especially in the prefaces and dedications of vocabularies, dictionaries, and conversation manuals. It is not unlikely that this use of schoolbooks as a platform for language discussions was partially due to commercial reasons: as people who made a living ‘selling’ language skills, schoolmasters could not stay silent. They had to demonstrate their expertise and skill and defend the languages that provided their bread and butter. Fittingly, John Gallagher has proposed the term ‘language merchant’ to frame the work of early modern schoolmasters.²⁴

Marijke van der Wal has expressed doubts as to whether schoolbooks containing language reflection were actually used by students, who by reading them, might have come into contact with the discussions.²⁵ Indeed, some of the grammars and orthographical treatises written by schoolmasters target an audience of colleagues and other interested intellectuals rather than students, as they lack extensive explanations.²⁶ Historian of book ownership Rob Resoort further claimed that even in cases where students used these books, only the teacher possessed a printed copy, which would then be copied in writing by students.²⁷

This is contradicted, however, by Heyns’s extant administration, which confirms that he regularly purchased books for his students, including school plays, catechisms, and primers, but also dictionaries, conversation manuals, and even his own French grammar.²⁸ Heyns’s colleague Anthoni Smyters provides another example. After his death in 1625 or 1626, Smyters’s books were sold. The extant auction catalogue shows that he owned 48 copies of his own *Epitheta* (1620), a dictionary of Dutch epithets in which he also reflects on the form and status of Dutch. It is likely that Smyters had hoped to sell these copies to his own students.²⁹ Pupils in a school like Heyns’s or Smyters’s would thus certainly have had the opportunity to learn about these discussions, which were not necessarily reserved for their teachers alone. The *lieu* of the French school, which reached a broad group of middle-class youngsters, provides a firm reminder that the reach of the language debates should not be underestimated.

Peeter Heyns

While Heyns’s name is rarely lacking in studies on early modern education, his value for the literary culture of the Low Countries has only become acknowledged slowly. Important for this

²⁴ Gallagher 2015, 189-195.

²⁵ Van der Wal 2002.

²⁶ For the difference between scholarly treatises and works with a pedagogical aim, see: Baddeley 1993, 354.

²⁷ Resoort 1989, 41-42.

²⁸ The grammar book, titled *Cort ondervvijs*, is mentioned in: Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, M240, fol. 3r; Sabbe 1929, 63-118. See also: Heyning 2017, 53, 56-57, 62-63.

²⁹ Van Selm 1987, 348, 363n61; Smith 2015, 227.

development was the publication of several articles by Hubert Meeus that focused on the political and religious topicality of Heyns's writings.³⁰ A large part of Heyns's persona still remains understudied: his bilingual authorship in French and Dutch, from which follows his ability to compare and study these vernaculars and connect the discussions on both tongues. As to Heyns's contributions to the language debates, historians of the Dutch language Lode Van den Branden and Geert Dobbets have only singled out those works that fit their paradigm focused on standardization and purification.³¹ They thus failed to notice how broad Heyns's language reflections were and how central his position in the discussions was.

Born in or around 1537, Peeter Heyns's active life as author and teacher coincided with the heyday of the discussions on language.³² From 1555 to 1585, he and his wife, Anna Smits, ran a successful French school for girls in Antwerp, named the *Lauwerboom* (*Laurel Tree*).³³ When the metropolis was retaken by royal forces in 1585, they fled to Frankfurt am Main, Stade, and finally Haarlem, where Heyns died in 1598.³⁴ He described his professional activities as 'teaching and receiving at my table some fifty young girls from respectable parentage'.³⁵ Indeed, the extant administration of his school confirms that he instructed around fifty girls per year in reading and writing in Dutch and French, preparing them for a life as a merchant's wife.³⁶ The *Lauwerboom* grew into a famous centre for female education, attracting girls from the well-off echelons of society.³⁷ The daughter of the mayor of Brussels and several noble girls are mentioned in his accounts, alongside daughters of foreign merchants, bakers, butchers, and brewers.³⁸ Heyns welcomed both externals, who left after class, and girls who lived at the *Lauwerboom* for a period of time.

³⁰ Meeus 2000a; Meeus 2003.

³¹ Van den Branden 1967, 48-50; Dobbets 2000.

³² In his account books, Heyns states he was 18 years old in 1555, when he opened his school, and he ends the dedication of one of his books with 'From Haarlem, this first of August, 1597. The sixtieth year of the birth of [...] Peeter Heyns'. 'De Harlem, ce premier d'Aoust, 1597. L'An 60. de la nativité de [...] Pierre Heyns'. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, M394, fol. 1v; Heyns 1597, fol. A2r; Meeus 2000a, 302-303; Van de Haar 2015a, 13.

³³ Burger 1929, 92; Meeus 2000a, 302.

³⁴ After a visit to a whale that had washed ashore in early 1598, Heyns fell ill. He died in February of that year. Heyns 1598, fol. 2r; Guicciardini & Kiliaan 1612, 91; Dobbets 1994, 4; Van de Haar 2015b.

³⁵ 'enseigner et entretenir à ma table vne cinquantaine de ieunes filles de bonne maison'. Heyns 1579, fol. †3v.

³⁶ Two account books of the *Lauwerboom* are kept at the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp. They contain Heyns's administration for the years 1576 to 1584, presenting overviews of the names of the students and their outstanding fees. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, M240 & M394.

³⁷ The administrative sources show that Heyns taught pupils from Brabant, Flanders, and Limburg, but also from Amsterdam, Middelburg, Deventer, and Zierikzee. An initial survey of these sources, which deserves to be expanded, can be found in: Sabbe 1929, 21-22.

³⁸ There were Portuguese girls among his ranks, as well as German girls from Frankfurt and Hamburg, and even a girl from Danzig. Sabbe 1929, 21-23; Dobbets 1994, 5-6.

It is unclear what education Heyns himself had received.³⁹ In any case, he knew Latin, as he translated several works from Latin into French.⁴⁰ He was interested in classical philosophy and literature and followed recent trends in Latin education.⁴¹ He wrote vernacular school plays, for instance, in the style of the plays performed at Latin schools.⁴² In the last few decades, various studies by historians such as Hilde De Ridder-Symoens have demonstrated that schoolmasters—not just those in Latin schools but those in vernacular institutions as well—were often part of the intellectual elite.⁴³ Heyns and many of his colleagues, such as Jacob van der Schuere and Anthoni Smyters, were members of chambers of rhetoric and acted as editors, translators, or authors of language manuals and poetry outside of school hours.⁴⁴

Heyns formed a node in the network of schoolmasters participating in the language debates. He was a prominent figure in the educational scene, as he was a dean of the Antwerp schoolmasters' guild for several years.⁴⁵ The various texts dedicated to him by colleagues demonstrate that he had created an extensive network of fellow schoolmasters who were equally interested in language, including Van der Schuere and Smyters.⁴⁶

Heyns's school was only a few streets away from the *officina* of his good friend Christophe Plantin. Inquisitive as he was, he must have paid regular visits to the printing house to discuss matters of language and other shared interests with the learned men from all over Europe who frequented the printing workshop, among whom were Justus Lipsius and Johannes Goropius Becanus. It is worth noting that the daughters of Becanus as well as those of merchant-

³⁹ No specific vocational training existed for the profession of schoolmaster. According to a laudatory poem in one of his schoolbooks, Heyns 'never saw France', so he did not travel to France to perfect his language skills. This does not exclude the possibility of a visit to a French-speaking area in the Low Countries. 'Vranckrijc noyt en sach'. Heyns 1605, fol. A3r. In archival sources, Heyns is referred to as 'Mr' multiple times, which might indicate that he attended university. The abbreviation 'Mr' does not seem to indicate his position as a teacher, as he is sometimes called 'Mr Peeter Heyns Schoolmr'. See, for example, Felixarchieff, Antwerp, R2209, fol. 49r-49v; Felixarchieff, Antwerp, R2225, fol. 13v.

⁴⁰ It concerns the *Divinarvm nvptiarvm conventa et acta* (1573) and *Christi Jesu Vitae Admirabiliumque Actionum Speculum* (1573), written originally in Latin by Benito Arias Montano, and the preface to Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570). For this preface, see: Waterschoot 1979.

⁴¹ Marcus Antonius Gillis dedicated his translation of a Stoic work by Epictetus to Heyns because of the interest the schoolteacher had shown in the project. Similarly, Gerard de Vivere, a fellow schoolmaster, dedicated a school play to him because of his love of classical literature. Gillis 1564, 6; De Vivere 1578, fol. 2r; Buys 2015, 108; Van de Haar 2016, 263.

⁴² Van de Haar 2016.

⁴³ Briels 1972, 122; Frijhoff 2010, 41-42; Sullivan 2010, 5; De Ridder-Symoens 2011, 199.

⁴⁴ For the role of schoolmaster in the chambers of rhetoric, see: Van Dixhoorn 2004, 213; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 104, 113-114; Van Dixhoorn 2009b. Examples of teachers who were also active in the world of book production are—besides the aforementioned Peeter Heyns and Joos Lambrecht—Étienne de Walcourt and Antoine Tiron, who worked for Christophe Plantin's *Officina Plantiniana* as editors and correctors.

⁴⁵ It concerns the years 1574 to 1575, 1579 to 1580, and 1584 to 1585. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, M394, fol. Iv; De Groote 1967, 220-222, 266.

⁴⁶ See, for instance: De Vivere 1578; *Recveil et eslite* 1576; Meurier 1580a.

grammarian Johannes Radermacher were sent to Heyns's school.⁴⁷ It is unknown whether Becanus, the great defender of Dutch, had indeed wanted his daughters to learn French, as the administrative sources only shed light on the period after his death. Nevertheless, it is telling that in the circles of these language-savvy men, Heyns's language and teaching skills were esteemed so highly that he was entrusted with the education of their daughters.

Heyns probably knew Becanus personally, and he fiercely supported his ideas. This becomes most clear from texts written by Heyns for various editions of a pocket-sized atlas based on the works of royal cartographer Abraham Ortelius, the Dutch *Spieghel der werelt* (1577) and the French *Miroir du Monde* (1579). Heyns wrote descriptions of the regions shown on the maps in the atlas [Figure 4.1]. The 1577 and 1579 texts describing Germany both mention Becanus and his *Hermathena*, which was posthumously printed in 1580, and thus after the publication of the atlases.⁴⁸ Plantin, who conveniently printed both the pocket atlases and the *Hermathena*, might have allowed Heyns to consult the manuscripts.⁴⁹ It is also conceivable that the schoolmaster had discussed them with Becanus himself before the death of the latter.

⁴⁷ Lynken and Beelken Becanus are mentioned in Heyns's administration for the year 1576; Maeyken Radermacher is listed in 1581. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, M394, fol. 1r, fol. 105v; Dibbets 1994, 5-6; Dibbets 2000, 290; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 62.

⁴⁸ Heyns 1577, fol. 18v; Heyns 1579, fol. 20r.

⁴⁹ It is possible that commercial reasons were at the basis of Heyns's mention of Becanus's text. In fact, in the 1579 French *Miroir du monde*, his abundant appraisal of the forthcoming work indeed seems to have an ulterior motive: 'his written *Hermathena*, that surpasses by far and cannot be compared with the already printed *Becceslanes*, as do his *Hieroglyphiques* and his commentaries on the *Vertumnus* of Propertius, all forthcoming'. Nevertheless, the positive description of Becanus's theories was maintained in an updated form in the 1598 edition of the *Miroir*, which was not printed by the *officina Plantiniana* but by Heyns's son Zacharias. 'son *Hermathena* escrite (qui surpasse de beaucoup & sans comparaison les *Becceslanes*, ià mises en lumiere, comme aussi font ses *Hieroglyphiques* & ses *Commentaires* sur le *Vertumnus* de Properce, toutes encores à imprimer)'. Heyns 1579, fol. 20r; Heyns 1598, fol. 66v. See also: Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 81.

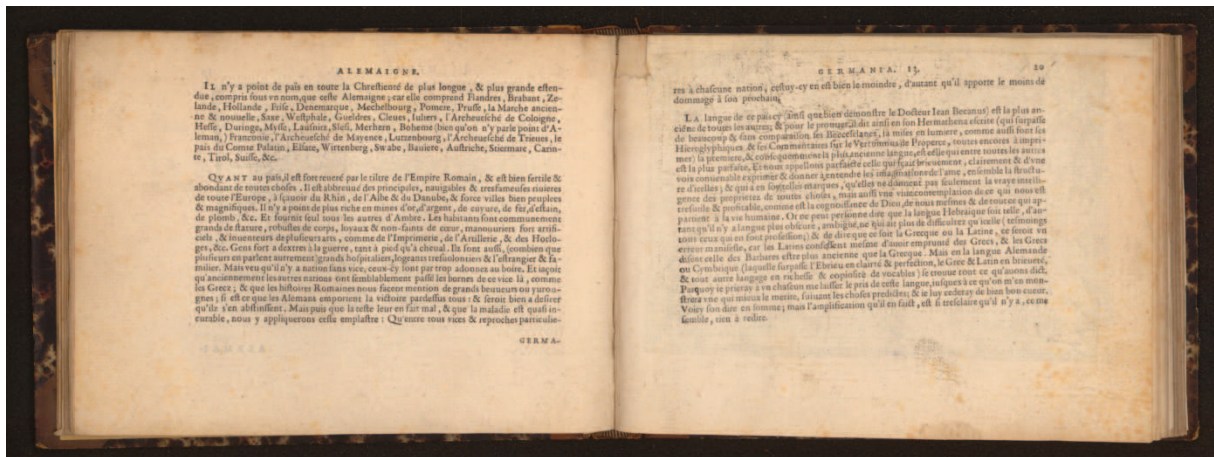


Figure 4.1.

P. Heyns. *Le miroir du monde, redvict premierement en rithme Brabançonne par M. P. Heyns ; Et maintenant tourné en prose Françoisé [...]*. Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1579, fol. 19v-20v. Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience, Antwerp, collection Stad Antwerpen, K 10122.

In wording that is strongly reminiscent of Becanus's treatises, Heyns's 1579 atlas affirms that '[t]he first and consequently the oldest language, is that which amongst all others is the most perfect'.⁵⁰ Heyns goes on to explain the signs of linguistic perfection:

And we call perfect that [language] which can concisely, clearly, and in a pleasing tone express and make understandable the imaginations of the mind, and their whole structure [...].

Et nous appellons parfaicte celle qui sçait brièvement, clairement & d'une voix convenable exprimer & donner à entendre les imaginations de l'ame, ensemble la structure d'icelles [...].⁵¹

Heyns thus produced an almost literal translation of Becanus's Latin manuscript, which in the 1580 printed version says:

The most perfect [language] is that which in the most clear and concise way, and in sounds that are most convenient, makes the images of the mind and their composition understandable [...].

Perfectissimam autem eam dicimus quæ quàm apertissimè, & quàm brevissimè, vna cum sono convenientissimo, imagines animi, & earum compositionem dat intelligendas [...].⁵²

Becanus's Latin and Heyns's French coincide in their choice of words ('brevisimè'/'brièvement', 'sono convenientissimo'/'voix convenable') and even in their grammatical structure ('dicimus'/'nous appellons'). These statements on language are not present in the original atlas texts by Ortelius, himself a supporter of Becanus, and must thus have been added by Heyns.

In his French atlas, Heyns goes on to explain Becanus's theory on monosyllabic words. He shares Becanus's rejection of Hebrew as an old or perfect language, claiming it was ambiguous and unclear.⁵³ Heyns can only conclude that the Dutch language 'surpasses Hebrew in clarity and perfection, Greek and Latin in brevity, and any other language in its richness and

⁵⁰ 'la premiere, & consequemment la plus ancienne langue, est celle qui entre toutes les autres est la plus parfaite'. Heyns 1579, fol. 20r.

⁵¹ Heyns 1579, fol. 20r.

⁵² Becanus 1580, *Hermathena* II, 24.

⁵³ 'there is no tongue more obscure, ambiguous, and containing more difficulties than that one (witness all those who read it)'. 'il n'y a langue plus obscure, ambigue, ne qui ait plus de difficultez qu'icelle (tesmoins tous ceux qui en font profession)'. Heyns 1579, fol. 20r.

copiousness of vocables'.⁵⁴ Showing himself to be aware of the rhetorical notions that were used to describe languages in the Europe-wide debates, such as *brevitas* and *copia*, Heyns endorses the thesis that Dutch is the pre-Babel language. Therefore, he claims, he is right to choose the Dutch language for his writings, however paradoxical it may seem to make such a statement in a French text by a schoolmaster instructing French.

Heyns's statements in the 1577 and 1579 pocket atlases matter because in multiple respects they put the traditional view on the early modern reflections on language into perspective. They show that support of one's mother tongue—in this case Dutch—did not necessarily lead to a complete rejection of another language—in this case French. The French language could be used to promote views on Dutch and inform a francophone audience of said views, showing the multilingual character of the debates. Ideas circulated between texts in Latin, French, and Dutch, in manuscript and print. Through his atlases, Heyns made Becanus's theories available to an audience that did not read Latin. Moreover, his case shows that discussions on Hebrew were not confined to the academic circles in which this language was studied. Finally, these atlases illustrate the potentially broad audience of the debates, as geographical works like these were used in the classroom, thus reaching an audience of young boys and girls.⁵⁵

This link between the schoolmaster and the humanist physician has been overshadowed in modern studies by Heyns's notoriety as an advocate of purification. Although no treatises written by Heyns on loanwords are known to exist, he built a reputation as a loanword critic that extended far enough to reach the ears of Italian merchant-historian Lodovico Guicciardini, who lived in Antwerp for decades. In the 1581 Italian reedition of his *Descrittione di tvtti i Paesi Bassi*, Guicciardini describes Heyns as a great poet in both French and Dutch, who 'in his poems avoids all foreign words'.⁵⁶ Guicciardini considered Heyns's rejection of loanwords in Dutch and French important enough to mention in his Italian description of the Low Countries. Lode Van den Branden has used this reference as a pretext for reducing Heyns's contributions to the language debates to his apparent opposition to borrowing, perfectly suiting Van den Branden's quest for the roots of purification in Dutch. Geert Dobbets has added to this view by drawing attention to a French grammar written by Heyns, titled *Cort ondervvijs Van de acht deelen der Fransoischer talen* (1571).⁵⁷ Symptomatically, rather than studying its

⁵⁴ 'surpasse l'Ebrieu en clairté & perfection, le Grec & Latin en briueté, & tout autre langage en richesse et copiosité de vocables'. Heyns 1579, fol. 20r.

⁵⁵ Van Selm 1987, 239.

⁵⁶ 'ne suoi poemi di sfuggire tutte le parole forestiere'. Guicciardini 1581, 167.

⁵⁷ Dobbets 1983; Van der Sijs 2004, 413; Heyns 2006.

importance for French, Dibbets has linked this grammar, which will be studied in detail below, to the history of Dutch.⁵⁸

From these first glimpses of Heyns's participation in the sixteenth-century discussions on language, an image emerges of a schoolmaster-poet who was marked by his daily contact with both French and Dutch, as well as by his interest in Latin writings. All three topics of this chapter are united in this schoolmaster: he defended his mother tongue as well as second-language learning, and he debated notions of eloquence and purity concerning not just the vernaculars but also Hebrew. Heyns is the key figure in whom virtually all the important topics come together, but who also, through his extensive network, creates a link between the many schoolmasters debating these issues.

4.2. Defending Language Learning

In the context of the sixteenth-century debates on language, in which divergent attitudes towards specific languages existed, it was relevant for schoolmasters to make explicit why the language they taught deserved instruction. They made use of existing feelings of pride in one's native language and competition with other vernaculars. References to ongoing reflections on creating a well-functioning community through civic virtue and even direct quotes from Cicero are not rare. At the same time, teachers demonstrated an awareness that these trends did not exclude attention to other languages and a cosmopolitan mindset. In their language manuals, schoolmasters like Heyns, who backed Dutch while publishing in both French and Dutch, responded to this complexity. The notion of the language teacher as a defender of the *patria* was widespread in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, with Heyns as the ultimate example.

Valorising Plurilingualism

'Who ever obtained the friendship of foreign nations with one language? How many have become rich without the knowledge of many languages?'⁵⁹ These rhetorical questions were reprinted over and over in the prefaces of vocabulary books in the Berlaimont tradition. They point to the importance of language learning for maintaining good relations with speakers of other tongues. But there were other benefits to plurilingualism. Looking at other languages could help, for instance, to strengthen the mother tongue. Moreover, as the Low Countries were

⁵⁸ See: Chapter 4.3.

⁵⁹ 'Vwie heeft er oyt met een sprake die vrientschap der vreemder natien vercreghen? Hoe vele isser rijk gheworden sonder kennisse van menigherhande spraken?' Berlaimont 1565, fol. A2v.

marked by two vernacular languages, learning French as a second-language benefitted internal cohesion as much as external competition.

A single publication by the key figure Peeter Heyns allows for the demonstration of these multidirectional movements and shows how emotionally and politically charged learning both French and Dutch was in the framework of the bilingual Low Countries. The posthumous 1605 edition of his French grammar book contains laudatory poems by Heyns's friends Christophe Plantin and Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel, presenting complementary views on the value of learning French in a Dutch-speaking context.

Plantin, who probably wrote his poem for the 1581 edition of the grammar which has not been preserved, showed himself to be fully aware of the value of Dutch-French bilingualism in a country marked by both languages.⁶⁰ He praised Heyns for allowing his students 'to learn and marry/ The French language, and the Cimbrian Flemish/ Like the Celtic and Belgian nation,/ Under the single name of Gaul is united'.⁶¹ Plantin employs a metaphor of marriage in order to emphasize the unity and internal cohesion that language learning could foster.⁶² He treats schoolmasters as bilingual intermediaries or go-betweens that could keep this country, divided by different languages and political and religious views, together. By mentioning the term 'Cimbrian Flemish', the printer places his contribution in the context of the language debates, referring to Becanus's theory on the Pre-Babel Cimbrian past of the Dutch language, of which Heyns was a proponent.

Spiegel equally approves of French-Dutch bilingualism. Using a military metaphor, he describes Heyns as soldier defending both languages of his country

The best teachers are those who cultivate the knowledge themselves,
From Brutus, one learns virtue, from Caesar war,
Rhetoric from Cicero, Grammar from Priscian.
You, my friend Heyns, rightfully exert this profession.
This is why you were called from the Scheldt, to the Main, then to the Elbe,
and now to the Spaarne,
To teach and instruct the best's most precious treasure,

⁶⁰ Els Ruijsendaal has shown, based on the administration of Plantin's *officina*, that the text was reprinted in 1581, 1597, and 1601. Plantin's poem was not present in the first half of the 1571 edition, which has only partially survived. Since he died in 1589, it can be assumed Plantin wrote his poem in 1581. Heyns 2006, 14.

⁶¹ 'd'apprendre & marier/ Le langage François, & le Flamand cymbrique/ Comme la nation & Celtique & Belgique,/ Sous le seul nom de Gaule on void s'apparier'. Heyns 1605, fol. A3v.

⁶² The idea of marrying two different languages through a language manual was also used by John Palsgrave in the preface to *Lesclaircissement de la langue françoise* (1530): 'so to marry our tonge & the french togider'. The preface has been reprinted in Kibbee 1991, 204-207, esp. 205. For a modern edition of the full text, see: Palsgrave 2003.

In good Dutch and good French, like a double soldier.
It is not fitting for a halberdier to raise the banner of the art.
But you please here, through two languages, two peoples.
He who only speaks one language, speaks none well.

TLeeraren voeght hem best, die self de leer hanteren,
Van Brutus, salmen deghd: van Caesar t'oorlogh leren,
Cier-spraak van Cicero: Taal-schick van Prisciaan
Diens ampt, voegd u vriend Heyns: te recht hebdijs bestaan
Daerom riep u van't Scheld de Mein: doe d'Elf: nu t Sparen
Der besten beste Schat, te tuchten, en leeraren.
Goed duyts en goed Fransois, als dubbel Soudenier,
Ten past gheen hake-schut te voeren s'kunsts banier.
Maar ghy vernoecht alhier, door twee talen, twee volcken,
Die maar een taal wel kan, kan gheen taal wel vertolken.⁶³

Rather than focusing on internal cohesion, like Plantin did, Spiegel places Heyns within the imagery of the schoolmaster as the guardian of good language. Spiegel, who, as the likely author of the *Twe-spraak* has been highly praised for his importance for Dutch, here displays an interest in French, too.

In fact, the *Twe-spraak* does not at all object to teaching French to children. One of the interlocutors of this dialogue is even a French schoolmaster.⁶⁴ This grammar of Dutch does, however, express the wish that students acquire a solid basis in their native vernacular before they commence their study of a second language, to prevent confusion and mixing.⁶⁵ Rather than dismissing French, Spiegel wishes to safeguard the quality of both Dutch and French.⁶⁶

In his laudatory poem for Heyns, Spiegel even goes one step further in his appreciation of second-language learning with the final key verse: 'He who only speaks one language, speaks none well'.⁶⁷ Spiegel seems to express the idea that plurilinguists are more eloquent in their native tongue than monolinguals. This could be explained by the fact that by learning another

⁶³ Heyns 1605, fol. A3r.

⁶⁴ Dibbets 1985, 15.

⁶⁵ *Twe-spraak* 1584, 5-6.

⁶⁶ Spiegel's concerns for the other vernacular language of the Low Countries have been overlooked by *Twe-spraak* specialist Geert Dibbets. See: Dibbets 1985.

⁶⁷ Die maar een taal wel kan, kan gheen taal wel vertolken'. The verb 'vertolken' literally means 'to translate'. However, it can also mean 'to express' or 'to speak'. In the context of this poem, the latter meaning is more fitting, as monolinguals, by definition, cannot translate. Heyns 1605, fol. A3r; *Geïntegreerde Taalbank*, 'vertolken' <<http://gtb.inl.nl/>>. Accessed May 2016.

language, one comes into contact with new figures of speech, metaphors, and proverbs. Plurilinguals can use these new insights to adorn their mother tongue. Moreover, and here Spiegel's poem closely touches upon one of the major arguments of this book, learning another language allows one to take a certain distance from one's native vernacular, to compare it to other tongues and to reflect upon it. Comparison is by definition impossible for monolinguals. Spiegel, who has been treated as a symbol of the defence of Dutch and rejection of other tongues, openly admitted that speaking proper Dutch was impossible without learning another language.

Heyns shared Spiegel's opinion on the importance of teaching good-quality language. In 1580, he wrote in a laudatory poem for his colleague Gabriel Meurier: 'Good to him who teaches French correctly'.⁶⁸ Meurier himself stands out because of his cosmopolitan ideas on language. He was born in French-speaking Hainaut but moved to Antwerp to become a French teacher.⁶⁹ Initially a close colleague and friend of Heyns's, they got into an argument around the time that Heyns wrote his poem. During the quarrel, which concerned payments to the schoolmasters' guild of Saint Ambrose, Meurier allegedly called Heyns a 'big ass'.⁷⁰ In part because of this incident, Meurier is known as a hot-headed individual. The views on language expressed in his schoolbooks were, on the contrary, overtly pacifistic.⁷¹

In a French-English manual designed for English traders and printed in Antwerp in 1563, Meurier explains his view on the notions of foreigners and foreign languages. He defends the topical view that all men are equally foreign. As they are all banished strangers in the earthly vale of tears, they are brothers in their shared human condition regardless of origins or language. He condemns those who 'think they owe nothing and are not in any way related to anyone who does not speak their mother tongue'.⁷² He thus explicitly attacks those who only paid attention to speakers of their own first language.

In the margins of Meurier's call to love across language borders, Latin phrases have been added. The second sentence is particularly relevant: 'If I spoke the languages of the angels

⁶⁸ 'Wel hem diet Françoys recht leert'. This verse alludes to Heyns's personal device 'Good to him who trusts in God' ('Wel hem die Godt betrou't'/ 'Bienheureux qui en Dieu se fie'). Meurier 1580a, fol. A2r.

⁶⁹ For more biographical information on Meurier, see: De Clercq 1997; Kaltz 2000, 277-278; Meurier 2005, 9-16.

⁷⁰ At the time, Heyns, together with Aernout Gillis, acted as dean of the guild. In their report on the matter, Heyns and Gillis wrote down that Meurier had called them 'scummers, scoundrels, and beggars' ('schuymers, rabauwen, ende bedelaers'), as well as 'big asses' ('groote esels'). The term 'scummer' is here used in its meaning of pirate or scrounger, not related to the language debates. See the administration of the guild of Saint Ambrose for the year 1579, edited by: Serrure 1859-1860, 356-357. See also: De Clercq 1997, 29-30.

⁷¹ For descriptions of Meurier's character, see: De Clercq 1997, 29-30; Meurier 2005, 11.

⁷² 'n'estiment rien debuoir & nullement estre attenus à celuy qui n'a l'usage de son maternel langage'. Meurier 1563b, fol. A2r.

but did not have love, I would be nothing'.⁷³ This quotation, a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13:1, refers to the belief that angels are panglot and thus speak all the languages of the earth. Through this and other Latin references in the margins, Meurier demonstrates his awareness of theological discussions on language variety, placing himself among those who saw plurilingualism as the way out of the post-Babel chaos.

Meurier's case matters for three reasons: firstly, this French-English language manual printed in Antwerp confirms that a scholarly focus on Dutch alone, even when studying a Dutch-speaking region, is insufficient; secondly, Meurier demonstrates how interrelated vernacular and Latin reflections on the language debates were; and thirdly, he exhibits a sense of cosmopolitanism that has so far been ignored by historians who were preoccupied with the search for traces of monolingual patriotism. Meurier aimed for a world in which everyone would speak each other's language. Trying to be the change he wanted to see, the schoolmaster attempted, through his many language manuals, to enhance mutual understanding among speakers of French, Dutch, and English.

Defending the Patria

In his description of Heyns as a 'double soldier', Spiegel emphasized the value of language teaching. Just like soldiers fought for the fatherland, language teachers fought for the quality of the languages of the *patria*. For the Low Countries, this concerned French as much as Dutch. Authors of language manuals frequently claimed their productions served the common good, tying in with the growing interest in good citizenship. Their view of serving the *patria* was not only concerned with improving the form of French and Dutch. It equally targeted the possibility of communicating with communities outside the Low Countries in order to promote exchange and competition.

Traditionally, historians of the Dutch language have connected the increasing number of references to the *patria* in early modern treatises and manuals on language to a supposed focus on Dutch alone. They linked attention for the fatherland and the common good to a rejection of the 'foreign', in which they even included the local French language.⁷⁴ A text that, at first glance, seems to support this view was written by Anthoni Smyters, a close friend of Heyns's who, like Spiegel and Plantin wrote a laudatory poem for his grammar.⁷⁵ In 1620,

⁷³ 'Si linguas Angelorum loquar & charitas non habet nihil sum'. Meurier 1563b, fol. A2r.

⁷⁴ See: Van den Branden 1967, 4; Van der Sijs 2004, 31, 357.

⁷⁵ Heyns 1605, fol. A3r. For more information on the friendship between Heyns and Smyters, whose children even got married, see: Smyters 1999, 9-10.

Smyters published his *Epitheta*, an extended translation of a French compilation of epithets by Maurice de La Porte.⁷⁶ La Porte's 1571 *Les epithetes* promises on its title page that it is useful 'to adorn every other French composition'.⁷⁷

Nicoline van der Sijs, in the introduction to her modern edition of Smyters's work, places it fully in a context of refusing 'foreign' influence and a growing national consciousness.⁷⁸ This assertion is based on the fact that the purpose of the *Epitheta* was, according to its author, to awaken an interest in the Dutch language among the young. In doing so, Smyters claimed to be doing 'our countrymen a service'.⁷⁹ He explains that he wishes to improve the Dutch tongue so it can become a 'perfected language', just as praiseworthy and useful as a literary language as the vernacular of 'any other Nation'.⁸⁰ Smyters clearly engages in a rhetoric of competition here, wishing to support his own fatherland and fellow countrymen by raising their language to the level of others.

Nevertheless, Smyters did not close himself off from other languages. First of all, he made these remarks in the preface to a Dutch translation of a French text that itself served to adorn French.⁸¹ He thus used his knowledge of French as a springboard to further the Dutch language and his nation. Moreover, he wished for his students to do the same. By 'reading, writing, and practising French and Dutch poetry', he hoped they would become 'more inclined to train themselves in their mother tongue'.⁸² Smyters argues that reading French can actually stimulate interest in one's mother tongue. Like Spiegel, Smyters claimed for his pupils what can be claimed for the sixteenth-century language debaters in general: bilingualism and interest in languages other than the mother tongue stimulate language awareness and discussion rather than obstruct it. Even in this case, in which the author's main purpose is the construction of Dutch for the good of the fatherland, multilingualism is an integral part of the story.

It is important to emphasize that French not only served as a model for the construction of Dutch. In the bilingual Low Countries, supporting French was just as patriotic as supporting

⁷⁶ Smyters 1620. For a translation in modern Dutch, see: Smyters 1999.

⁷⁷ 'pour illustrer toute autre composition Française'. La Porte 1571, fol. a1r. See also: Pouey-Mounou 2003.

⁷⁸ In the paragraph introducing Smyters's views on 'Constructing and purifying languages', Van der Sijs does not refer once to the French language. She only refers to a growing 'national consciousness', leading to the idea that Dutch 'had to be purified of any foreign influence'. 'het nationale bewustzijn', 'gezuiverd moest worden van vreemde invloed'. Smyters 1999, 20.

⁷⁹ 'vvaer door (als ghezeght is) onse Landtslieden dienst gheschiedt'. Smyters 1620, fol. ?6v. Smyters, who like Heyns fled from Antwerp to Holland, felt it was his 'owing duty' to serve his new host community by teaching. 'schuldigen plicht'. Smyters 1661, fol. A2r.

⁸⁰ 'als eenighe andere Natien met de hare'. 'volkomen Tale'. Smyters 1620, fol. ?3r, ?6r.

⁸¹ For the way in which Smyters treated his French source, see: Smith 2015b.

⁸² 'lesende, schrijvende ende practiserende de Fransche ende Duytsche Poëten [...] hun meer gheneghen maect, hun in hunne Moeders Tale t'oeffenen'. Smyters 1620, fol. ?6v.

Dutch. Gabriel Meurier thus legitimized a French-Dutch vocabulary from 1557 by referring to Cicero's notion of civic virtue and the idea that citizens have a certain duty to fulfil towards the fatherland.⁸³ The booklet contains a laudatory poem by Plantin, who printed it, indeed praising Meurier for 'enriching the common good' because of his French teaching.⁸⁴ Jean Bosquet, a teacher from Mons, claimed similar virtues for himself in a French grammar printed in 1586.⁸⁵ He wished his treatise to 'be of use, both to you [his students], and to my country, and Republic'.⁸⁶ Referring to the same passage in Cicero's *De officiis* that was targeted by Meurier, Bosquet then states that everyone lives not just for themselves, but for their parents, fatherland, and friends.⁸⁷ Through his French grammar he served his partially francophone *patria*. While the references to the *patria* in the discussions on language have often been interpreted as supporting the Dutch mother tongue and rejecting other languages, the frequent use of the notion of fatherland by schoolmasters reveals a different image. Studying these schoolbooks thus not only yields new insights into the early modern fascination with language, but also into the history of the notions of fatherland and nation.

4.3. Making and Teaching the Rules

In historical linguistics, the pedagogical language manuals that schoolmasters created in order to benefit the common good are set apart from theoretical, learned treatises on language.⁸⁸ Whereas didactic texts are generally considered useful sources for the study of actual language use, only scholarly works, such as the 1581 treatise on Dutch orthography by humanist theologian Pontus de Heuter, are seen as potentially innovative.⁸⁹ The extant pedagogical grammar books on French indeed add little to the debates, with the exception of Heyns's *Cort ondervvijs* (1571). Studies of individual texts on Dutch spelling, however, have revealed that the educational manuals of Joos Lambrecht (1550), Jacob vander Schuere (1612), and Anthoni

⁸³ 'Cicero [...] says that we are not just born for ourselves [...] but also in part for our relatives, friends, and even our compatriots'. 'Ciceron [...] dit : *que* nous ne sommes pas seulement naiz pour nous, mais que noz parens, amis, voire ceux de nostre pays [...] s'en peuuent à bon droict attribuer chacun leur part'. Meurier 1557c, fol. 2r. In a 1574 publication, Meurier used a reference to Plato to stipulate the importance of being of use for one's city. Meurier 1574, fol. A2r-A2v.

⁸⁴ 'enrichir le commun bien'. Meurier 1557c, fol. 5v.

⁸⁵ Bosquet 1586. For a modern edition, see: Bosquet 2005.

⁸⁶ 'n'estre trouué inutile au corps de la Republique'. 'faire prouffit, ensemble tant à vous, comme à mon Païs, et Republique'. Bosquet 1586, fol. *2r, fol. *4v.

⁸⁷ 'following what Cicero writes in his *De officiis*: that we are not born only for ourselves, but partially for our parents, partially for our country, and partially for our friends'. 'suyuant que recite Ciceron en ses Offices, où il escrit. Que nous, pour nous-mêmes ne sommes pas nez tant seulement : mais en partie pour noz parens, en partie pour nostre Pays, & en partie pour noz amis'. Bosquet 1586, fol. *4v.

⁸⁸ Swiggers 1992; Van der Wal 2002, 14-15; Colombat 2003, 77. See also: Dahmen 2001.

⁸⁹ De Heuter 1581.

Smyters (1613) did position themselves within ongoing discussions on the topic.⁹⁰ Considering these texts together brings to light the pivotal role that schoolmasters played in the debates on Dutch orthography, and that their prime contribution lay in introducing French developments to their audience in the Low Countries.

Inversely, teachers in this region also took part in the French *querelle de l'orthographe*. So far, only one of them, Gabriel Meurier, has been studied in this context.⁹¹ The overt statements by his fellow schoolmasters Peter Haschaert (1544) and Jean Bosquet (1586) have failed to generate attention from modern scholars. Even the publication of a modern edition of Bosquet's text in 2005 did not succeed in sparking scholarly interest in the schoolmaster from Mons. These texts show the transregional side of the French orthographical quarrels and have repercussions on its chronology. Much alike the English case, where manuals for French language instruction became important for discussions on that vernacular, schoolbooks on Dutch or French from the Low Countries engaged in and shaped the debates on both languages.

Traditional French Spelling

While the French quarrel on spelling was still at its height, a schoolmaster from the Low Countries, Peter Haschaert (Pierre Hassard), produced an educational text on French orthography.⁹² Haschaert taught French in Lille for some time, and he later attended university and became a physician and astronomer.⁹³ He wrote a treatise on French abbreviations and spelling for 'studious schoolchildren'.⁹⁴ It was printed in 1544 by his colleague Joos Lambrecht, who six years later published a work on Dutch spelling himself. Haschaert explicitly presented himself as taking part in the debates on French spelling. The structure of research on language histories, however, has caused his contribution and that of his colleague Jean Bosquet to fall between two stools: that of discussions on French within France, and that of discussions on Dutch in the Low Countries.⁹⁵

Haschaert favours traditional, etymological spelling.⁹⁶ He rejects, for instance, the use of the 'k' in cases where the 'c' was pronounced as /k/, such as in 'comment' ('how'), and he

⁹⁰ Van der Schuere 1957, 53-84; Dibbets 1986; Dibbets 2001.

⁹¹ Catach 1968, 233-234.

⁹² For the French *querelle de l'orthographe*, see: Chapter 3.4.

⁹³ On Haschaert, see: Delva 1990; Vanden Broecke 2017, 12-14.

⁹⁴ 'studieux Escoliers'. Haschaert 1544, fol. A1r.

⁹⁵ Haschaert is not mentioned in the seminal works on French orthography by Nina Catach and Susan Baddeley. Overviews of the history of Dutch spelling do not refer to his work either: Catach 1968; Dibbets 1986; Baddeley 1993.

⁹⁶ See: Chapter 3.4.

maintains the unpronounced letters ‘s’ and ‘p’ in ‘escripre’ (‘to write’).⁹⁷ The schoolmaster from Lille was aware of the fact that the etymological French spelling posed problems for native speakers of Dutch trying to learn French, ‘who often create three or four syllables when pronouncing our said letters’.⁹⁸ He clearly acknowledges this problem, which was pointed out by supporters of reformed spelling, but he does not propose a solution.

Indeed, Haschaert was reluctant to change the spelling. Referring to French printer Geoffroy Tory’s remarks on this topic in the *Champ fleury* (1529), Haschaert expresses the fear that without fixed rules, the spelling and vocabulary of the vernacular would swiftly change over time.⁹⁹ This changeability might cause great problems: ‘That would be a great confusion for all literature and science, which God would not want’.¹⁰⁰ It would imply that future readers could not benefit from the writings of their predecessors because their language would have changed too much. Haschaert thus shows himself as being aware of the debates on the idea that the vernacular languages changed more quickly than Latin and might therefore be less stable.

Moreover, five years before Du Bellay’s famous *La deffence, et illvstration de la Langue Francoyse* was published, Haschaert had already stated in the preface for his pupils that he wished to ‘illustrate our mentioned noble and excellent language’.¹⁰¹ Using the buzzword ‘illustrate’, that is, to render illustrious, Haschaert shows that his is alert to the language discussions in France and Italy.¹⁰² He further mentions works on the topic by French authors Estienne Dolet and Clément Marot, designating them in the margins as ‘Modern authors, illustrators of our language’.¹⁰³ The schoolmaster from Lille placed his own work within the French discussions. The text ought to be studied as an integral part of those debates, despite the fact that Haschaert was active outside of French territory. He wrote in French, about French, when the quarrels in France were still vivid, leaving no reason to marginalize him.

The only schoolmaster in the Low Countries discussing French spelling who has been studied by *querelle de l’orthographe* specialist Nina Catach is Gabriel Meurier. He became sympathetic to the debates in the 1550s, when interest in them in France was dwindling. Catach’s studies of the spelling of Meurier’s books printed by Plantin have revealed that he

⁹⁷ Haschaert 1544, fols. B7v-B8r.

⁹⁸ ‘Je me tais encoire des Flamengs quy font bien souuent 3. ou 4. sillabes en prononçant noz dictes lettres’. Haschaert 1544, fol. B2v.

⁹⁹ Tory 1529, fols. 3v-10r.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Quy seroit vne grosse confusion pour toutes bones lettres & sciences: ce que Dieu ne vœulle’. Haschaert 1544, fol. B2r.

¹⁰¹ ‘illustrer nostre dict noble & excellent langaige’. Haschaert 1544, fol. A1v.

¹⁰² Dante had already used the term in his *De vulgari eloquentia* (c. 1305). See: Book I, Chapter XVIII. Dante 1996, 42-43.

¹⁰³ ‘Auteurs modernes illustreurs de nostre langue’. Haschaert 1544, fol. A2r.

made a relatively extensive use of accents in order to aid his students with pronunciation.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, he did support, albeit moderately, etymological spelling.¹⁰⁵

In 1584, Meurier expressed himself very clearly in favour of this traditional spelling. When he reissued a dictionary in that year, he added a preface that acts as a manifesto for the traditional orthography, maintaining unpronounced etymological letters. According to him, anyone who wishes to ‘remove and bastardize French from Latin’ in order to facilitate pronunciation is a ‘presumptuous idiot’.¹⁰⁶ To him, the Latin origins of French were a source of prestige and quality, and breaking those ties would be foolish. Meurier’s preface is a reply to ‘dozens of schoolmasters’ who opposed the etymological letters that bugged their students.¹⁰⁷ Apparently, the discussions were far from over in the Low Countries.

Being a schoolmaster himself, Meurier could not deny the difficulty of French pronunciation. Echoing Du Bellay’s famous words, Meurier states that every language has ‘I do not know what something special, peculiar, different from one to another’.¹⁰⁸ As children are used to the pronunciation of their mother tongue, foreign languages often cause problems. For this reason, Meurier explains, he decided to add an accent to the ‘s’ in cases where it should not be pronounced, such as ‘chaâteau’ (‘castle’). After his death, one of Meurier’s conversation manuals was reedited by Heyns’s son-in-law Christiaan Offermans. As the title page of this 1628 edition indicates: ‘To the benefit of the students, the letters that should barely or not be pronounced in the French language have been underscored’ [Figure 4.2].¹⁰⁹ Perhaps following the model of French manuals created by teachers in England earlier in the sixteenth century, these schoolbooks attempted to clarify the complex pronunciation of the language by adding signs.¹¹⁰ They thus reached a middle ground between the complaints of supporters of etymological and phonemic spelling, and between Meurier’s personal views on spelling and his duties as a teacher.

¹⁰⁴ Catach & Golfand 1973, 34. This is also reflected in his titles. Two works printed in 1557 indicate on their title pages that the author ‘observed the punctuation, accents, interrogations, and annotations necessary for the said language’ and added the ‘accents of each word’. ‘obserué les punctuations, Accens, Interrogations, & Annotations proprement requises audict Langage’. Meurier 1557a, fol. A1r. ‘Accens de chacun mot’. Meurier 1557c, fol. 1r. W. de Jonge has argued that Meurier knew Étienne Dolet’s treatise on punctuation. De Jonge 1965, 87.

¹⁰⁵ De Clercq 2000, 242-249.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Et sy quelque presumptueux Cocard pretend de reculer & abastardir le Francois du Latin, pensant d’aiser la prononciation, & non ayant esgard à l’origine ou source des vocables, c’est à luy que ma plume en a, & s’adresse’. Meurier 1584, fol. *4v.

¹⁰⁷ ‘maistres à la dousaine’. Meurier 1584, fol. *4r.

¹⁰⁸ ‘je ne sçay quoy, de peculier, & different de l’vne à l’autre’. Meurier 1557c, fol. 3v.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Tot behulp der Leerlinghen, zijn de letters, diemen inde Fransoysche Tale weynich of niet prononceren en moet, onderteeckent’. Meurier & Offermans 1628, fol. A1r. The same was done in a 1636 Dutch-French and French-Dutch dictionary by Frisian schoolmaster Eduard Mellema, which contains partial crosses underneath or above unpronounced letters. Mellema 1636.

¹¹⁰ See: Chapter 3.4.

Epitome des Conjugaisons			87
Nous avonſ	vous avez	ils ont	à ceſſe heure
Nous ſommꝰs	vous eſtes	ils ſont	
Nous mangeonſ	vous mangez	ils mangent	tantost
Nous venonſ	vous venez	ils viennent	
ſçavonſ	ſçavez	ſçavent	hier matin
faïſonſ	faitez	font	
Nous avionſ	vous aviez	ils avoient	demain
Nouſ eſtionſ	vous eſtiez	ils eſtoient	
Nouſ mangionſ	vous mangiez	ils mangoient	maintenant
Nouſ venionſ	vous veniez	ils venoient	
ſçavionſ	ſçaviez	ſçavoient	volontiers
faïſionſ	faïſiez	faïſoient	
Nouſ euſmes	vous euſtes	ils eurent	
Nouſ fuſmes	vous fuſtes	ils furent	
Nouſ mangeaſmes	vous mangeaſtes	ſmangereſt	
Nouſ vinſmes	vous vinſtes	ils vindrent	
ſçeuſmes	ſçeuſtes	ſçeurent	
ſçeiſmes	ſçeiſtes	ſçeirent	
Nouſ auronſ	vous aurez	ils auront	
Nouſ feronſ	vous ferez	ils feront	
Nouſ mangeronſ	vous mangerez	ſmangeront	
Nouſ viendronſ	vous viendrez	ils viendront	
ſçauronſ	ſçauront	ſçauront	
feronſ	feront	feront	
Ayonſ	ayez	qu'ils ayent	
Soyonſ	foyez	qu'ils ſoyent	
mangeonſ	mangez	qu'ils mangent	
venonſ	venez	qu'ils viennent	
ſçavonſ	ſçavez	ſçavent	
faïſonſ	faitez	font	
Nouſ mangerionſ	vous mangeriez	ſmageroient	
Nouſ viendrionſ	vous viendriez	ſviendroient	
ſçaurionſ	ſçauriez	ſcauroyent	
ferionſ	feriez	feroyent	

Figure 4.2.

G. Meurier & C. Offermans. *Dialogue, contenant les conivgaisons flamen-francois, par forme de demandes & responses*. Rotterdam: Isaac van Waesberghe, 1628, 87.

Based on her study of Meurier, Nina Catach asserted that the quarrels on French spelling had a much longer afterlife outside of France.¹¹¹ This hypothesis can be confirmed by considering another schoolmaster from the Low Countries, Jean Bosquet, whose case reveals that Meurier was not a lone wolf. Bosquet's French grammar was probably published for the first time in 1568, even though only the 1586 edition survives.¹¹² Its modern editor Colette Demaizière described this grammar book as 'the work of a practitioner rather than a theorist', as it was primarily meant as a pedagogical tool.¹¹³ Nonetheless, Bosquet shows himself to be a spelling debater in the very first pages of the text. He claims that he was willing to 'spend

¹¹¹ Catach 1968, 234-235.

¹¹² Bosquet 2005, 12.

¹¹³ 'plus un ouvrage de praticien que de théoricien'. Bosquet 2005, 17.

several hours to read [the] controversies' and to react to them, thus keeping the discussion alive.¹¹⁴

In the preface to his grammar, addressed to his pupils, Bosquet tries to convince his clientele that he taught them a 'decent and not corrupted spelling'.¹¹⁵ This decent spelling, to him, was the traditional, moderately etymological orthography: 'more common and simple spelling, and that, which we hold from our fathers since ancient times'.¹¹⁶ Bosquet, who made a living teaching French, seems to want to make clear that the language as he instructed it was commonly used in France. This spelling thus perfectly suited people who relied on that language for commercial purposes and needed to present themselves as respectable and knowledgeable to their French contacts. Moreover, by referring to the francophone forefathers of the region of Hainaut, he appealed to emotions surrounding the concept of the fatherland. At the same time, this reference to an era long gone undermines complaints about the swiftly changing nature of the vernaculars.

Bosquet repeatedly criticizes the proliferation of different views on French spelling, but he assures his pupils that he is aware of all of them, so he can teach them the very best rules. He spends a large part of his preface on this point, suggesting that he expected his customers to be aware of the existence of the debates. Indeed, Bosquet added an overview of frequently asked questions regarding French spelling to his treatise. It discusses several rules that were contested during the quarrels, such as the spelling of the verb 'savoir' ('to know') as either 'sapvoir' or 'sçavoir'.¹¹⁷ Bosquet also mentions French poet Pierre de Ronsard's preference for 'k' instead of 'c' ('komment' rather than 'comment', meaning 'how'). The schoolmaster explains that 'k' was used widely in Dutch and German, but he does not support its use in French.¹¹⁸

Bosquet both demonstrates his knowledge of the French debates and links it to other languages through comparison, showing the importance of multilingualism. Haschaert's, Bosquet's, and Meurier's orthographical works also matter because they make clear that the issues concerning French were discussed outside France, and in the latter two cases even after

¹¹⁴ 'employer quelques heures, à lire leurs controuerses'. Bosquet 1586, fol. *5r.

¹¹⁵ 'orthographie decente, & non corrompue'. Bosquet 1586, fol. *5r.

¹¹⁶ 'orthographe plus commune, & simple, & telle, que nous tenons de noz peres de toute ancienneté'. Bosquet 1586, fol. *5r.

¹¹⁷ Etymologists did not agree whether this word had been derived from the Latin word 'sapere' or from 'scire'. Bosquet argues that the 'scire' supporters are right and thus proposes 'sçavoir' rather than 'sapvoir' as the correct spelling. Historical linguists later determined the verb had been derived from 'sapere'. Baddeley 1993, 102.

¹¹⁸ Bosquet 1586, 28-29.

the time limit that is traditionally set for those debates. The orthographical quarrel regarding French was not confined to narrow geographical and temporal borders.

Innovating Dutch Spelling

Arguments that had been put forward in the *querelle* on French spelling were also adapted to the Dutch case. The debates on Dutch orthography were marked by comparison between French and Dutch, and conscious deliberation on what might or might not be useful for the Dutch language. Not surprisingly, most of the early orthographers of Dutch were schoolmasters, and several among them were teachers of French who could read the French material and were trained in comparing the two languages.¹¹⁹

It was a schoolmaster, Christiaen van Varenbraken, who in the 1530s had already written what is now known as the oldest treatise on the spelling of the Dutch language.¹²⁰ It is part of a manuscript on the liberal arts. Nevertheless, Van Varenbraken's text does not tie in with the quarrels in France that started around the same time, and it does not seem to have sparked a lively discussion itself. By the middle of the century, the growing fascination with language created the right conditions for debate. In 1550, schoolmaster-printer Joos Lambrecht published his *Néderlandsche Spellijnghe*, strongly inspired by the ideal of a reformed, phonemic writing that was at that time still defended in France. Lambrecht's innovative proposals for Dutch spelling were sure to trigger a response.

Lambrecht wished to propose a new orthographic system for Dutch, in which every sound could be represented by only one sign, and vice versa. He thus, in a way, attempted to formulate universal rules for the spelling of Dutch.¹²¹ In practice, however, Lambrecht realized that every speaker of the language pronounced specific sounds differently. He proposed that everyone should write as they spoke:

Not that it is my opinion or insight, that Hollanders or Brabanters should change their own pronunciation into the Flemish way, or the Flemish and Frisians change theirs into the Brabantine or Hollandic pronunciation. Rather, that everyone may write those vocables or syllables, as he uses in his mother tongue, with the necessary letters.

¹¹⁹ Geert Dibbets has established a list of known orthographical works written before 1613. Six of the eleven treatises he mentions were written by schoolmasters: Joos Lambrecht, Anthoni Smyters, David Mostart, Jacob van der Schuere, Pieter de Berd, and Adriaen vander Gucht. Dibbets 1986. See also: Dibbets 1992a, 46.

¹²⁰ Braekman 1978.

¹²¹ For a discussion of Lambrecht's proposals, see: Taeldeman 1985; Dibbets 2001, 15-19.

Niet dat mijn meanijnghe of verstand zy, dat de Hollanders, of Brábanter haer eighen manieren van uutsprake, op de Vlaamsche wíze, of de Vlámijnghen ende Vriezen haer pronunciacie, op de Brábantsche, of Hollandsche uutsprake veranderen zullen: maar dat elc in tsine zulke termen of silleben van spráken, als hy in zijnder moeder tálen ghebruukt, de zelue déghelic, ende met zulken letters als ser toe dienen, spellen magh.¹²²

Lambrecht does not aim to dissolve dialectal variation. He wants to preserve it both in speech and in writing, but with the help of clear rules about the link between sound and sign.

As becomes clear in this passage, Lambrecht expanded the existing set of letters and signs. While he does not refer to his French sources of inspiration explicitly, his use of the ‘*ç*’ to represent the *schwa* or *e muet* is a clear indication that he must have known the work of Peletier du Mans. In 1928 Paul de Keyser had already studied Lambrecht’s sources and listed Peletier. Nevertheless, De Keyser and the later students of Lambrecht, J. Taeldeman and Geert Dibbets, did not reflect on the interesting chronology present in this seemingly straightforward case of influence. Although Peletier’s *Dialoguë Dê l’Ortografê* contains a privilege for the year 1547, it was not printed until 1550, the same year in which Lambrecht printed his *Néderlandsche Spellijnghe*.¹²³ Somehow, Lambrecht had learned about the contents of the *Dialoguë* immediately after or even before their publication. This suggests that he followed the *querelle* closely and might have read the *Dialoguë* in manuscript form or conversed with either Peletier himself or someone familiar with his work.

Lambrecht’s elaborate use of the *accent grave* and *accent aigu* and the fact that he proposes the sign ‘*ç*’ with cedilla for ‘*ae*’ might indicate that he also knew Meigret’s *Trehtë de la grammere françoëze*, which also saw the light of day in 1550, or one of Tory’s or Meigret’s earlier texts on accents (1529 and 1542).¹²⁴ Lambrecht was not behind on the French debates; he was right on top of them. The quarrels on French and Dutch spelling were so closely related for this schoolmaster-printer that it is virtually impossible to separate them.

For the parts on punctuation, Lambrecht used Étienne Dolet’s 1540 treatise on translation and punctuation marks.¹²⁵ Lambrecht follows the exact order in which Dolet discusses the different punctuation marks. Moreover, the *Néderlandsche Spellijnghe* gives almost literal translations of certain passages.¹²⁶ While Lambrecht adapted and improved the

¹²² Lambrecht 1550, fol. A2v.

¹²³ De Keyser mentions these dates in a footnote but does not reflect on them further. De Keyser 1928, 1355n3.

¹²⁴ Lambrecht 1550, fols. A7r-A8r, B3v; De Keyser 1928, 1354.

¹²⁵ Dolet 1540.

¹²⁶ De Keyser 1928.

French proposals for letters and accents thoroughly for the Dutch case, for punctuation such changes were apparently not essential.

Finally, it is relevant to remark that Lambrecht, like his colleague Tory in France in the 1530s, was aware of the difficulties posed by the use of ‘i’ and ‘j’, and ‘u’ and ‘v’.¹²⁷ In his spelling treatise Lambrecht introduced a dot underneath ‘i’ and ‘u’ when they are used as consonants [Figure 4.3].¹²⁸ His *Naembouck*, published four years earlier, in 1546, seems to be the first printed book in Dutch which distinguishes ‘u’ and ‘v’.¹²⁹ This distinction is also maintained in the French words in the dictionary, through which Lambrecht simultaneously placed himself within the debates on French orthography.

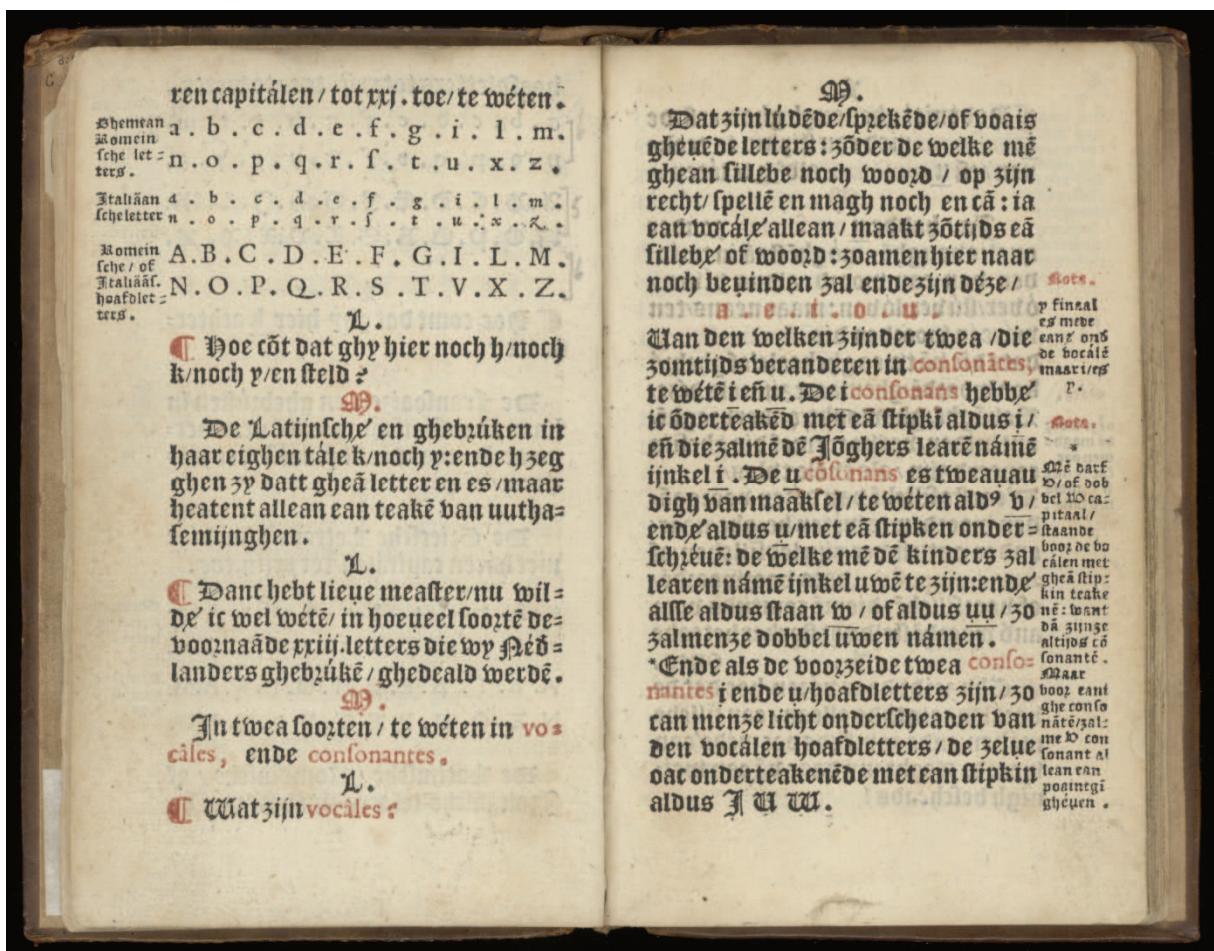


Figure 4.3.

J. Lambrecht. *Nederlandsche Spellinghe, uutghesteld by vrãghẽ endẽ andwoorde*. Ghent: [Joos Lambrecht], 1550, fol. A6r. Ghent University, BIB.G.000196.

¹²⁷ Baddeley 1993, 36.

¹²⁸ Lambrecht 1550, fol. A6r.

¹²⁹ Lambrecht 1546, fol. A2v; Van der Sijs 2006, 77.

After Lambrecht's treatise, no French schoolmasters published on Dutch spelling for over half a century, but in the second decade of the seventeenth century there was a sudden surge in interest in the topic. In 1612, Jacob van der Schuere issued his treatise on Dutch orthography. Like Lambrecht, whose work he surely must have known—although he does not mention him—Van der Schuere proposed a reformed spelling of Dutch that was inspired by French defences of phonemic spelling. He does not follow all of Lambrecht's proposals, however. Van der Schuere supports a uniform spelling, regardless of one's dialect.¹³⁰ Importantly, the only spelling debater explicitly mentioned by Van der Schuere is Pléiade poet Pierre de Ronsard. Rather than referring to a source on Dutch spelling, he alludes to the French discussions through this poet. Ronsard is usually seen, by students of the French *querelle*, as a disciple of Meigret, who himself is not mentioned by Van der Schuere.¹³¹

In the preface to his treatise, Van der Schuere quotes a passage from Ronsard's *Abbrege de l'art poétique François* (1565) that summarizes the poet's main viewpoints on spelling. The most important element is that all superfluous letters should be avoided. Van der Schuere explains that speakers of Dutch are quick to criticize unpronounced letters in French writing, which suggests that French spelling was widely discussed by speakers of Dutch. They fail, however, to see the log in their own eye, that is, the superfluous letters in Dutch.¹³² This line of thought incites Van der Schuere to apply reformed spelling in Dutch.

Van der Schuere is particularly determined to reject all redundant letters, such as the combinations 'ck' and 'gh', which should be replaced by 'k' and 'g'.¹³³ Following Ronsard's use of the *accent aigu*, Van der Schuere distinguishes 'e' from 'ee' and 'é'.¹³⁴ Like Ronsard, who followed Meigret in this respect, Van der Schuere uses 'v' and 'j' for the consonants and 'i' and 'u' for the vowels.¹³⁵ Although no direct links can be found between Van der Schuere's treatise and Meigret, it is possible that the schoolmaster knew his works as well as Ronsard's.¹³⁶

In the year following Van der Schuere's publication, another teacher of French, Anthoni Smyters, felt obliged to react to the proposals concerning his native tongue. His reason for this was that 'they create such confusion for the instructors of the youth, that we could not [...]

¹³⁰ Dibbets 1986, 107.

¹³¹ Catach 1968; Baddeley 1993.

¹³² Van der Schuere 1957, 4.

¹³³ The 'h' had probably been added to the 'g' in early Dutch writings in order to distinguish the Dutch letter 'g', pronounced [ɣ], from the French 'g', pronounced [ʒ]. Willemyns 2013, 71.

¹³⁴ Van der Schuere 1957, 5-6, 33.

¹³⁵ Van der Schuere 1957, 22-23, 29.

¹³⁶ Van der Schuere 1957, xiv; Dibbets 1992a, 40-41.

refrain from speaking our thoughts about this'.¹³⁷ The phonemic ideal is, according to Smyters, unreachable because of the dialectal variety within the Dutch speech community. Smyters's reference to other schoolmasters suggests once again that these issues were discussed much more widely than the written and printed traces reveal, especially in educational circles.

Smyters called on his fellow debaters to make use of the example of the French discussions, where after years of experiments with phonemic spelling, the traditional orthography had been restored. According to Smyters this had so much impact 'that now in all of France, one uniform orthography is used'.¹³⁸ He calls on debaters of Dutch to benefit from the French case and not to try to reinvent this wheel, which would not even work anyway.

To support his call for a traditional spelling, Smyters uses arguments that are similar to those used by the defenders of such orthography for French. Like Haschaert decades earlier, he points out the importance of stability, and thus of maintaining the existing rules rather than changing them.¹³⁹ He refutes, furthermore, the argument of learnability: 'this innovation does not benefit us, our neighbours, or strangers who wish to learn the Dutch tongue'.¹⁴⁰ Whereas the supporters of phonemic spelling claimed that it was easier to learn the rules of writing if sound and sign were connected, Smyters claimed that there were no good reasons to adopt the phonemic style, 'as is demonstrated by the fact that the new French orthographic treatises died before their authors'.¹⁴¹

Smyters clearly wishes to incorporate the experiences and arguments from the French debates into the discussions on the Dutch language, using them as a springboard to further discussions on his mother tongue. He also adopts the French language as a medium for reflecting on Dutch and for disambiguation. The following example serves to illustrate this: 'with the word *Goudt*, whether *de l'or* [gold] is meant, or *bon* [good]'.¹⁴² This passage comments on the letter combination 'ou', which could be pronounced in two ways. French becomes the new metalanguage, allowing Smyters to speak about Dutch.

¹³⁷ 'daer mede (de instrueerders der Ioncheyt) sulcken vverringe toebrengen, dat vvy niet nalaten en connen [...] ons gevoelen daer van te seggen'. Smyters 1613, 4. The confusion mentioned by Smyters becomes particularly clear in dictionaries of the time, which were often made and used by schoolmasters. Many of them felt the need to warn readers about spelling or to redirect them in cases where words could be spelled differently, such as words starting with 'ph' or 'f'. See, for example: Sasbout 1583; Mellema 1591; Smyters 1620, fol. ?8r.

¹³⁸ 'dat men nu gheheel Vrancrijck door, eene eenparighe Orthographie siet ghebruycken'. Smyters 1613, 9.

¹³⁹ Smyters 1613, 7.

¹⁴⁰ 'soo men met de nieuwicheydt gheen voordeel en doet, voor ons selfs, voor onse nabueren ende voor de vremdelinghen, die de Nederduytsche sprake begeiren te leeren'. Smyters 1613, 9-10.

¹⁴¹ 'ghelijck de hervarentheydt ghetuyght, dat der nieuver Franse Orthographie Boecken, voor hare Autheuren ghestorven zijn'. Smyters 1613, 10.

¹⁴² 'met het vvoordeken *Goudt*, oftmen *de l'or*, ofte *bon* meyndt'. Smyters 1613, 5.

Clearly, the role played by schoolmasters in the discussions on Dutch spelling cannot be ignored. These orthoepists kept the legacies of French spelling debaters alive through the adaptation of their ideas to the Dutch cause. They were not simply influenced and inspired by the French quarrels, they actively reflected on ways to apply carefully selected elements to Dutch. This active stance has now become clear because of a focus on exchange rather than influence, and on multilingualism rather than monolingualism.

A final remarkable element that has remained ignored until now concerns the frequent references of Dutch authors to Ronsard instead of to Louis Meigret, who is now considered to have been the most prominent spelling debater. Could it be that schoolmasters preferred to mention him rather than Meigret because of the literary prestige of his poetry, or was it because of a possible negative reputation of Meigret as having lost the discussion? The visibility of Ronsard within the Dutch spelling debates demands a reconsideration of the French source material that is generally seen as centralizing around Meigret. This conclusion demonstrates the value of a multilingual approach that appreciates interconnectedness rather than unidirectional influence: studying discussions on Dutch spelling can reveal new information about the French quarrels, not just the other way around.

Heyns's Exceptional Grammar

Various masters of French schools, such as Meurier and De Vivere, published grammars of the French language. They contain little explicit reflection on the structure of the language.¹⁴³ They have been studied by historians of French grammaticography, who situated them among other grammars of French and who thus took an important step by incorporating texts from within and outside France in their studies.¹⁴⁴ The value of these school grammars lies in the fact that they adopted elements from texts produced in France and introduced them in the Low Countries. This is also true for Peeter Heyns's *Cort ondervvijs* (1571), which presents the French grammar in eight different parts. However, Geert Dibbets showed the importance of this text in the history of Dutch, after which it received ample attention from historians of that language, such as Els Ruijsendaal and Nicoline van der Sijs, who further contextualized the *Cort ondervvijs*.

¹⁴³ In Meurier's case, this apparent lack of reflection is perhaps caused by the fact that the only known surviving copy of his grammar misses two crucial pages from the dedication. Pierre Swiggers observed that the number of second-language grammars printed in the sixteenth-century Low Countries was remarkably low compared to the number of dictionaries. Meurier 1557b; De Vivere 1566; De Vivere 2006; Meurier 2005; Swiggers 2017, 58-59. See also: Swiggers 2013.

¹⁴⁴ De Clercq 2000; Holtus 2000; Swiggers 2014. See also: Swiggers & De Clercq 1995.

Ruijsendaal has described the *Cort ondervvijs* as an integrated grammar book, referring to the fact that it illustrates the rules it proposes with examples of sentences.¹⁴⁵ Dibbets has shown how every rule Heyns has formulated and illustrated for French is also demonstrated for Dutch, as the schoolmaster provides translations of his examples.¹⁴⁶ In the following citation, Heyns thus gives the nominative, genitive, and dative forms of the name Jacob in both French and Dutch:

Nomi.	Iaques.	Jacob.
Geni.	De Iaques.	Jacobs.
Datif.	A Iaques.	Jacoben. ¹⁴⁷

The format of explained grammatical rules illustrated by Dutch examples makes this French-language grammar book simultaneously a description of the Dutch vernacular. Nicoline van der Sijs has called the first edition of 1571 the oldest printed grammar book of the Dutch language, although not in intention.¹⁴⁸ Heyns himself does not even reflect on the fact that no grammar had been written for Dutch.

Geert Dibbets has traced the main concepts and ideas on which Heyns based his grammar back to treatises on the French language by Louis Meigret, Robert Estienne, and Jean Garnier. Its division into eight parts, for example, was also adopted by Meigret and Garnier in their grammars.¹⁴⁹ Through his integrated grammar, Heyns introduced some of these French grammarians' ideas into the Low Countries. He thus repeats Garnier's reflections on words that only exist in singular form, such as 'la chair' ('the flesh').¹⁵⁰ He later added ideas of authors from the Low Countries. Several reeditions of the *Cort ondervvijs* must have been printed after 1571, but only a version from 1605 survives. Dibbets has demonstrated that this later edition was inspired by the *Twe-spraack*, while maintaining the earlier French influences.¹⁵¹

Vice versa, the author(s) of the *Twe-spraack* must have known the contents of the *Cort ondervvijs*, as the former work quotes several verse lines from a laudatory poem inserted into Heyns's grammar.¹⁵² Heyns certainly did not operate in a vacuum in the Low Countries. His

¹⁴⁵ Ruijsendaal 1999, 26; Van der Sijs 2004, 413.

¹⁴⁶ Dibbets 1983; Dibbets 2000.

¹⁴⁷ Heyns 1605, fol. B5v.

¹⁴⁸ Van der Sijs 2004, 413; Van der Sijs 2006, 87.

¹⁴⁹ Dibbets 1983, 89-90.

¹⁵⁰ Heyns 1605, fol. B1v.

¹⁵¹ Dibbets 1983, 97-99.

¹⁵² Indeed, Spiegel himself wrote a poem for one of the editions of the *Cort ondervvijs*. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 103; Dibbets 1985, 341; Dibbets 1994, 12-13.

work has been shown to have influenced publications on the Dutch vernacular by later language debaters Anthonis de Hubert, Christiaan van Heule, Samuel Ampzing, and Petrus Montanus. Traces have also been found in schoolmaster Jacob van der Schuere's treatise on orthography.¹⁵³

Whether Heyns also influenced later French grammars has not yet been studied. Geert Dibbets and Els Ruijsendaal have solely been interested in French and Dutch influences on the text, and in the way the grammar itself influenced other Dutch texts.¹⁵⁴ By trying to trace unidirectional influences, the notion of exchange between French and Dutch has been ignored. This is even more remarkable considering the fact that the *Cort ondervvijs* is first and foremost a grammar of French. Heyns's grammar is only one in an array of sources that concern the French tongue but have been produced outside of France, and that deserve to be studied by historical linguists in that context, too.

4.4. Teaching Purity and Eloquence

Many schoolmasters' contributions to the early modern reflections on French and Dutch have been unjustly neglected by historians of both languages. One aspect, on the contrary, has been exaggerated. Lode van den Branden claimed that French schools were important sources of French loanwords entering the Dutch tongue.¹⁵⁵ In his narrow search for signs of rejection of foreign influence, he has established a distorted image of the contemporary debates about borrowing and of the role of teachers that has marked how the topic is now commonly regarded.

Rather than defending themselves against supposed accusations concerning their use of loanwords, schoolmasters used eloquence and richness of vocabulary as their selling points. In this *lieu* in which good-quality language was for sale, purity was not what won the hearts of the customers. Eloquence did. Otherwise, an opportunist like Peeter Heyns would certainly have used his reputation as an infrequent user of loanwords to promote his schoolbooks and his school, which saw various periods of financial hardship.¹⁵⁶

The established methods for training the skill of eloquence were, in the spirit of the time, multilingual. Through often bilingual dictionaries and other collections of language phenomena, students compared languages and style figures to broaden their vocabulary. They further practised their skills through translation, the number one tool for language learning in

¹⁵³ Dibbets 1983, 103-105; Ruijsendaal 1999, 27.

¹⁵⁴ Dibbets 2000; Heyns 2006.

¹⁵⁵ Van den Branden 1967, 11. See also: Van der Sijs 2004, 583.

¹⁵⁶ On the ways in which Heyns presented himself and his school in his publications in order to establish a good reputation, see: Van de Haar 2015b.

early modern Europe. In dictionaries and translation manuals, schoolmasters could really promote their language materials, using the marketing catchphrases *copia* and *varietas* rather than *puritas*.

Trivial Loanwords

Heyns's *Cort ondervvijs* has received attention from historians of the Dutch language not only for its importance for Dutch grammar, but also for matters of vocabulary. Heyns created translations for most of the French and Latin grammatical terms he used in the 1571 edition, and even more in the 1605 version. Indeed, in the latter edition almost all French terminology is provided with a Dutch translation, such as 'Voor-setsel' for 'Preposition' ('preposition') and 'inworp' for 'interjection' ('interjection').¹⁵⁷ Heyns was among the first to introduce these learned neologisms in his mother tongue.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he does not exploit this feature in the liminary texts. The only time he explicitly writes about loanwords in the whole of his extant oeuvre is in the 1605 edition of his *Cort ondervvijs*. In the preface, he states without further comment that he had decided to 'take up the pen once more [...] to translate the learned terms more clearly into Dutch'.¹⁵⁹

In general, references to loanwords and purity are remarkably rare in sixteenth-century schoolbooks for French and Dutch language instruction, and most remarks that are made on the topic are superficial. The only teacher who devoted an entire poem to the topic of purity in a schoolbook is Anthoni Smyters, in a 1595 Dutch translation of a French fable book to which Heyns had contributed. However, this poem was dedicated not to colleagues or to his clientele of students, but to 'the lovers of rhetoric', that is, the fellow rhetoricians of this schoolmaster-poet.¹⁶⁰ In his *Epitheta*, too, Smyters only mentions linguistic purity when he describes the efforts that 'our Dutch rhetoricians' have done for the construction of the Dutch tongue.¹⁶¹

Gabriel Meurier, not dissimilarly to Heyns, never claimed to avoid borrowings in his schoolbooks. It was not until after he died that his colleague Christiaan Offermans stated in a reedition of one of his books that the work was useful to 'teach pure French to the youth'.¹⁶² And even here, it is important to place a critical note. Offermans does not explicitly refer to

¹⁵⁷ Heyns 1605, fol. G4v.

¹⁵⁸ De Clercq 1997, 37; Ruijsendaal 1999, 26-27.

¹⁵⁹ 'noch een mael de penne in de handt nemen, [...] om de Const-woorden wat duydelijcker te verduytschen'. Heyns 1605, fol. A2v.

¹⁶⁰ 'de liefhebbers der Rhetorijke'. Smyters 1604, fol. A1v. This work is a translation of: *Les fables d'Esopé* 1595. Smith 2006, 37-38; Smith 2007, 154-158.

¹⁶¹ 'onse Nederlandtsche Redenrijckers'. Smyters 1620, fol. ?2v.

¹⁶² 'd'enseigner purement le François à la Jeunesse'. Meurier & Offermans 1628, fol. A2r.

loanwords, and it cannot uncritically be assumed that his use of the term ‘pure’ indeed refers to borrowing. In this context, it might just as well mean ‘proper’ French in a more general sense.

Showing himself to be aware of the language debates, Offermans goes on to discuss the Amsterdam chamber of rhetoric *De Eglentier*, as well as Marnix, who is described as ‘one of the first among the excellent thinkers in his knowledge of multiple languages’.¹⁶³ They are applauded for their attempts ‘to bring Dutch back to its ancient perfection’.¹⁶⁴ This nostalgic description of the Dutch language strongly suggests an allusion to Becanus, with whose works Offermans, as Heyns’s son-in-law and successor, would certainly have been familiar.

Both Marnix and *De Eglentier* are symbols of the pursuit of a pure Dutch language. Nevertheless, Offermans’s elaborate reference to their works does not serve a discussion on loanwords. They concern a different matter, namely the use of ‘du’ rather than ‘ghy’ to refer to the second-person singular, which was defended by both Marnix and *De Eglentier*.¹⁶⁵ This passage is relevant because it shows how well informed Offermans was of the debates on language. Offermans even claims, in the preface, that he discussed the matter regarding ‘du’ with Heyns.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, Offermans’s allusions to *De Eglentier* and Marnix show that their reputations as language debaters reached far beyond their opinion on loanwords.

Two more points deserve to be mentioned with regard to the discussions on loanwords in educational environments. It must be emphasized that pursuit of a rich vocabulary and pursuit of purity are not mutually exclusive. Voices and opinions can be nuanced and complex and should not be reduced to black-and-white thinking. Moreover, discussions on loanwords in the Low Countries and by native speakers of Dutch did not necessarily concern Dutch alone, but can also pertain to the other vernacular of the region, French, or indeed another language altogether.

These two points are illustrated by Gerard de Vivere, a friend and colleague of Heyns’s who fled from Ghent to Cologne in the early 1560s.¹⁶⁷ There, he wrote several French manuals for native speakers of German and Dutch, published in Cologne, Antwerp, and Paris, in which he frequently laments the state of his war-torn fatherland.¹⁶⁸ Like Heyns, De Vivere’s case

¹⁶³ ‘l’un des premiers entre les excellents en l’intelligence de plusieurs langues’. Meurier & Offermans 1628, fol. A2r.

¹⁶⁴ ‘de ramener le Thyois à son ancienne perfection’. Meurier & Offermans 1628, fol. A2r.

¹⁶⁵ Marnix 1580, A4v-A5r; *Twe-spraack* 1584, 85-86; Dibbets 1985, 462; Van der Sijs 2004, 468-469.

¹⁶⁶ ‘as I have heard multiple times from my father-in-law Peeter Heyns’. ‘selon que i’ay plusieurs fois entendu de mon beau pere M. P. Heyns’. Meurier & Offermans 1628, fol. A2r.

¹⁶⁷ De Vivere dedicated a school play to Heyns because of his love for classical literature. De Vivere 1578, fol. 2r.

¹⁶⁸ De Vivere 1569, fol. A1v-A3r; De Vivere 1576, 38v.

defies all modern research marked by monolingualism or methodological nationalism by his travels and use of various languages.

In a 1569 book titled *Synonymes*, De Vivere explained his wish ‘to demonstrate the richness of the French language’.¹⁶⁹ By providing lists of synonyms for a great number of words, De Vivere shows the extensiveness of the French vocabulary. He hoped this would aid his teaching, as he complained in another schoolbook that no one had more difficulty learning French than the Germans, who apparently were not as famous as speakers of Dutch for their language skills.¹⁷⁰ In the Dutch-French conversation manual in question, De Vivere explained his wish to ‘purify and facilitate’ the French language for his students.¹⁷¹ It thus seems that this schoolmaster combines an attention to eloquence with a rejection of loanwords. Here, too, however, it is not wholly certain that ‘purify’ actually refers to borrowing, as it might also be interpreted as ‘to simplify’ or ‘to improve’.

One last example suffices to prove that the use of loanwords in French was unquestionably discussed in educational circles in the Low Countries. One year before De Vivere’s *Synonymes*, a quadrilingual edition of Berlaimont’s multilingual manual was printed in Antwerp that took part in the debates on French more directly. It states on its final page that ‘scummers’ are increasingly using Italianizing superlatives in French, such as ‘benissime’ (‘very good’) and ‘lourdissime’ (‘very heavy’).¹⁷² Through its use of the metaphor of scum and the reference to borrowing from Italian, this Antwerp manual displays a familiarity with the discussions on loanwords related to French. Henri II Estienne’s famous dialogue criticizing Italian loanwords was not published until a decade later, in 1578, which illustrates the timeliness of the remark in the Berlaimont book.

In the extant language manuals, teachers of French did not feel the need to defend foreign language learning against people who feared that bilingualism might cause language mixing, because individuals with those beliefs seem to have simply been quite rare.¹⁷³ If they rejected loanwords in French or Dutch, it was not because this was appreciated by their clientele

¹⁶⁹ ‘pour monstrier la richesse de la langue Françoise’. De Vivere 1569, fol. 1r.

¹⁷⁰ De Vivere 1574, fol. A2r. On the other hand, the impenetrability of the German language itself was proverbial. Middle French knew the saying ‘only hearing German’, meaning not understanding anything. It was recorded by François Rabelais. ‘n’y entendre que le hault Alemant’. Smith 2017, 611.

¹⁷¹ ‘purifier & faciliter’. De Vivere 1574, fol. A2r.

¹⁷² ‘ecumeurs’. Berlaimont 1568, fol. Hh3v.

¹⁷³ One schoolmaster, Jean Bosquet, a native speaker of French from Hainaut, did address a fear of contamination, but it concerned not lexical mixing but influence on pronunciation, and not the connection between French and Dutch, but between French and Latin. According to Bosquet, two supporters of Latin had claimed that teaching French might impair the way in which children pronounced that classical language. Bosquet replied that his own pupils had no problems with their Latin pronunciation. Bosquet 1586, fols. *2r-*3r.

but because of their own views on language. The wider audience continued to value eloquence and *copia*.

Dictionaries: Expanding and Correcting Vocabularies

Interactive teaching methods existed to train transferable skills and improve students' vocabulary and their knowledge of style figures and sayings that could render their speech more copious and eloquent. In the words of schoolmaster Jan van den Velde, sayings added 'grace' to one's language, resonating with the Europe-wide fashionability of this term.¹⁷⁴ In a bilingual conversation manual written by Meurier and dedicated to Heyns, one of the girls proposes to practise eloquence: 'Let everyone recite their proverb'. A classmate zealously replies: 'Who does not deliver some saying shall not eat'.¹⁷⁵ Directly after dinner, the girls in Meurier's dialogues test each other's French skills through a competition. The winner, speaking most elegantly, receives a beautiful wreath, while the loser is forced to wear a fool's cap. The girls challenge each other to find translations and synonyms for Dutch and French words, ending in word games and even the discussion of a French rebus.¹⁷⁶ Through play and competition, children expanded their vocabulary and stock of useful phrases.

Teachers made their pupils collect proverbs and maxims in order to construct a ready corpus of sayings from which they could delve to embellish their texts and speech.¹⁷⁷ This educational tool of the commonplace book has strong ties with the fashion of collecting language specimens.¹⁷⁸ Schoolbooks that were frequently used for eloquence exercises meant to enhance the spoken and written eloquence of children were the alphabetically ordered dictionary or the thematically ordered vocabulary book. These books were used as manuals, studied by pupils to learn new words.¹⁷⁹ It is thus no coincidence that in such lexicographical texts, reflections on eloquence and loanwords are frequent.

¹⁷⁴ 'considering the grace and great ornament that the encounter of such short and sententious sayings brings to the language'. 'veu la grace & grand ornement qu'apporte au langage la rencontre de telles dictions tant briefes & sententieuses'. Van den Velde 1613, fol. *6r.

¹⁷⁵ 'M. Dat een yghelijc haer spreekwoort segghe. R. Wie niet en seyt eenige spreuke, die en sal niet eten'. 'M. Que chacune recite son prouerbe. R. Qui ne recitera quelque sentence, ne mangera pas'. Meurier 1580a, fol. 39r.

¹⁷⁶ Meurier discusses the French rebus 'G a', that is 'G grand, a petit' ('big G, small a'), meaning 'J'ai grand appétit' ('I am very hungry'). This rebus was also mentioned by Geoffroy Tory in his *Champ fleury*. Tory 1529, fol. 42r; Meurier 1580a, fol. 43r.

¹⁷⁷ Schoolmaster and calligrapher Jan van den Velde, for instance, explains in a collection of maxims that he tasked his students with bringing a new saying to school every day. Van den Velde 1613, fols. *3v-*4r. See further: Meadow 2002, 56-57.

¹⁷⁸ For more information on the commonplace book as educational tool, see: Blair 2010.

¹⁷⁹ Bierbach 2002, 141; McConchie 2012, xvi.

Thanks to the precious work of Frans Claes, the contours of the vast corpus of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual word lists that were published in the Low Countries have been mapped.¹⁸⁰ The same is true for the ways in which they were influenced by dictionaries printed in France, such as those by the Estienne family, which was central to Claes's research. However, he did not go so far as to study the conception of language and the boundaries and rules of vocabulary that it conveyed.

The recent work of John Considine has given an important stimulus to research on early modern dictionaries, showing how they gave expression to the shared language heritage of European speech communities.¹⁸¹ At the same time, Considine argues that the multilingual character of most dictionaries was essential for thinking about community building across language boundaries by providing the possibility of discerning a shared corpus of concepts.¹⁸² He thus demonstrates both the inward-looking and outward-looking movements present in discussions on language, focusing on both the mother tongue and other languages. Studying the prefaces of early modern dictionaries in the Low Countries confirms this two-directional process proposed by Considine. They express a sense of pride in Dutch or French while showing an interest in links with other languages. Rejections of loanwords, moreover, are the exception rather than the rule, which was formed by appraisals of eloquence.

The educational genre of the dictionary got involved in the debates when Joos Lambrecht published his *Naembouck* in 1546.¹⁸³ This text has been strongly connected to reflections on purity, as its title announces it to contain a list of 'unscummed Flemish words'.¹⁸⁴ Strangely enough, besides this term in the title, the book does not give any reflections on borrowing. The preface even contains several loanwords, such as 'distincciën' ('differences') and 'affeccie' ('affection').¹⁸⁵ The use of the metaphor of scum reveals that Lambrecht was familiar with the debates on loanwords, but his own view was seemingly moderate. Since René Verdeyen's 1945 edition of the *Naembouck*, Lambrecht has too easily been placed among opponents of loanwords, despite the fact that his own practice shows a less clear picture.¹⁸⁶

While dictionaries by sixteenth-century schoolmasters rarely promote themselves on their title page as rejecting loanwords, references to richness and *copia* are commonplace. The

¹⁸⁰ See, for instance: Claes 1970a; Claes 1977; Claes 1981; Claes 1992; Claes 2000. See further: Swiggers & Zimont 2015.

¹⁸¹ See: Considine 2008; Considine 2014.

¹⁸² Considine 2008, 288-313.

¹⁸³ On the structure of this text and its qualification as dictionary, see: Swiggers 2007.

¹⁸⁴ Van den Branden 1967, 17.

¹⁸⁵ Lambrecht 1546, fol. A1v.

¹⁸⁶ For studies describing Lambrecht as negative towards loanwords, see: Verdeyen 1945, cxi; Van den Branden 1967, 17; Van der Sijs 2004, 358-359.

tandem ‘very rich and copious’ is repeated over and over.¹⁸⁷ Through these allusions to rhetorical notions, these dictionaries immediately appeal to the discussions on the question whether the vocabulary of the vernaculars was rich enough to communicate religious, scientific, or literary matters. They promise to allow their speakers to cultivate the rhetorical ideal of *elegantia*, writing in a pleasing and ornate style.¹⁸⁸

Dictionaries were also used as platforms to take part in the Europe-wide debates on the hierarchy and genealogy of language. This is illustrated by the works of the highly productive lexicographer Eduard Mellema, who was born in Leeuwarden and later taught French in Antwerp, Haarlem, and Leiden in the final decades of the sixteenth century. Mellema produced various bilingual dictionaries containing French and Dutch. Contrary to Heyns, who was a fervent supporter of Dutch, in a 1591 Dutch-French dictionary Mellema defended French as being the best vernacular:

[T]he very noble and very perfect French language, which has great affinity with Greek, but especially with Latin, and which according to me reigns and is used as the most common, the easiest, and even the most accomplished of all those in the Christian world, after the three mentioned languages [Hebrew, Latin, and Greek] (despite what Italian may think).

[L]a tresnoble & tresparfaite langue Françoise, laquelle di-je apres les trois susdictes (maugré que m’en sçaura l’Italienne :) regne & s’vse pour la plus commune, la plus facile, voire la plus accomplie de toutes autres en la Chrestienté, laquelle a grande affinité avec la Grecque, mais surtout avec la Latine.¹⁸⁹

This citation shows that, rather than defending his Dutch or possibly Frisian mother tongue, Mellema praises French, while respecting the authority of the *tres linguae sacrae*, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Mellema’s voice has been silenced because it does not fit within teleological standardization research or studies marked by methodological nationalism that link the early modern attention to Dutch with a supposed growing rejection of other tongues and speech

¹⁸⁷ ‘tres ample et copieux’. These words are mentioned on the title pages of: Sasbout 1576; Sasbout 1579; Verniers 1580; Mellema 1591; Mellema 1599.

¹⁸⁸ Mathias Sasbout, for instance, promises that his dictionary teaches ‘multiple very elegant ways of speaking’. ‘plusieurs formes & manieres de parler tres-elegantes’. Sasbout 1579, fol. *1r. See also the title page of: Sasbout 1576; Mellema 1592.

¹⁸⁹ Mellema 1591, fols. A3v-A4r.

communities. This schoolmaster is the ultimate proof that within the debates on language, the native tongue of the contributors did not necessarily eclipse their attention for other tongues.

It is clear that Mellema was not some unlearned French enthusiast. In the style of Becanus, with whose work it is very well possible he was familiar, he points out the learnability and low degree of difficulty of a language as a marker of its perfection. He further displays an awareness of the discussions on language in France, as he recognizes competition existed with Italian, which had a stronger claim on the languages' shared Latin heritage because it had remained closer to it in form. Moreover, by pointing out the 'great affinity' between Greek and French, the schoolmaster shows himself conscious of treatises by Henri II Estienne and others on the great similarities between the two tongues and the possible genealogical ties between them.¹⁹⁰ Elsewhere, Mellema comments on the 'fruitful richness' and 'rich structure' of French, which 'guides the secrets of human reason'.¹⁹¹ To Mellema, the essential point seems to be the richness of the French language, which makes it suitable to act as a medium for all aspects of 'human reason', be they scholarly, religious, or other.

Mellema's case can also be used to shed light on the loanword question. In 1599, his printer Jan II van Waesberghe reissued his French-Dutch dictionary. A passage had been added to it about loanwords, probably by either Mellema or Van Waesberghe, warning that students should be aware that words borrowed from Latin and Italian were maintained in French. Rather than giving a value judgment on the practice of borrowing, the unknown author explains that most of these words are no longer in use. They have not been removed from the dictionary for a very practical reason: 'so that the youth is not left in suspense when they read somewhere these rare and unknown words and cannot find their meaning in their dictionary'.¹⁹² The treatment of loanwords in this dictionary displays a pragmatism that was omnipresent in the discussions on borrowing, like in Coornhert's use of loanwords in cases where it suited him.¹⁹³ This case also matters for showing that the discussions on loanwords in the Low Countries concerned not only Dutch but also French as a target language.

¹⁹⁰ Around 1565, Henri II Estienne published his *Traicte de la conformité du langage François avec le Grec*, in which he pointed out to what extent French resembled Greek in both structure and vocabulary. While Estienne commented on the similarities and influence of Greek on French, others before and after him argued, on the basis of the resemblances between the two languages, that there was a familial tie. The political and economic philosopher Jean Bodin and the humanist monk Joachim Périon, for example, tried to demonstrate that French had evolved out of Greek. For more information on early modern interest in the links between French and Greek, see: Trudeau 1992, 116-117; Cohen 2005, 31; Metcalf 2013, 119n22.

¹⁹¹ 'la faconde richesse'. 'sa riche structure'. 'guidant les secrets de la raison humaine'. Mellema 1592, fol. ?1v.

¹⁹² 'pour ne laisser la ieunesse en suspens, quand lisant quelque part ces mots rares & incogneus n'en trouve pas l'interpretation en son Dictionnaire'. Mellema 1599, fol. A3r-A3v.

¹⁹³ See: Chapter 2.2.

In an earlier example, loanwords were explicitly presented as a source of eloquence. The 1583 edition of a French-Dutch dictionary by Mathias Sasbout, who worked as a corrector for Plantin around that time, explains in a postscript that a preceding edition of the text had generated some complaints regarding loanwords. The topic was, evidently, discussed in educational circles. Regardless of the criticism, in the new edition loanwords were maintained. Instead of giving the loanword's translation, the dictionary redirects the reader to its unborrowed French equivalent. The entry 'Consul' ('consul') thus tells the reader to look under 'Dictateur' ('dictator').¹⁹⁴ The reason for this decision is that 'while searching from one entry to another, one learns to use different names for one and the same thing, which can be greatly useful when translating or writing some text'.¹⁹⁵ Children using this dictionary thus automatically expanded their French vocabulary as they were redirected from one word to another. Because of this method, their speech and writing could become marked by *varietas* and truly become 'ample and copious'. Loanwords—again concerning the French language—were not dismissed by Sasbout, they were welcomed.

It is thus clear that loanwords were not generally rejected. However, it is important not to fall into the same pitfall of generalization that marked previous research by falsely pretending that loanwords were commonly approved. There was debate and disagreement, as well as nuance and pragmatism. An anonymous 1595 trilingual dictionary provides a counterexample to the above approvals of borrowing that should not be silenced. The preface explicitly disapproves of 'scummed words' in Dutch.¹⁹⁶ It does list words that are borrowed from French and Latin but, like Sasbout's dictionary, they redirect the reader to the approved Dutch form of the word in question. The entry 'Abandonneren', for example, sends its readers to 'Verlaten' ('to abandon').¹⁹⁷ The preface presents this as a corrective method, stimulating children to replace the loanwords with the promoted Dutch terms.

Dictionaries made by teachers of French correct the image that loanwords were generally rejected, and that they were only discussed with regard to Dutch. They showcase the appreciation of eloquence and *copia* as well as the attention given to French by native speakers of Dutch, like Mellema. The lexical heritage of both Dutch and French was appreciated, but this did not necessarily mean that influence from other languages was feared.

¹⁹⁴ Sasbout 1583, fol. F5r.

¹⁹⁵ 'en cherchant [sic] d'une diction à l'autre, on apprenne à nommer vne mesme chose en plusieurs sortes : ce qui peut grandement servir pour traduire ou composer quelque escrit'. Sasbout 1583, fol. Gg1r.

¹⁹⁶ 'gheschuymden woorden'. *Trium linguarum dictionarivm* 1595, fol. *2v.

¹⁹⁷ *Trium linguarum dictionarivm* 1595, fol. *2v.

Translating Style, Translation Styles

Another method that was adopted by schoolmasters to train the rhetorical and lexical skills of their pupils was translation.¹⁹⁸ By translating from one language into another and back again, children could expand their vocabulary and learn useful sentence structures. This practice supports Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel's claim that, 'He who only speaks one language, speaks none well'.¹⁹⁹ Various bilingual schoolbooks in French and Dutch were published in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, enabling the students to verify their translations.²⁰⁰ Translations allowed students to improve their eloquence and second-language competence while stimulating language comparison. Moreover, the discussions on translation reached educational circles, as teachers debated the question of which method best suited books designed for school use: literal, word-for-word translation, or a more free sense-for-sense translation.

A 1565 quadrilingual Berlaimont edition promotes itself by announcing on the title page that it has been 'structured exactly so that the four languages coincide line per line'.²⁰¹ The parallel layout enabled the users of the book to easily recognize the equivalent of each word in the other language. This method was also adopted by Glaude Luython, a schoolmaster from Valenciennes who taught French in Antwerp until his death in 1568.²⁰² Luython created a bilingual edition of the life of Aesop, in which each page contains two columns: French on the left and Dutch on the right [Figure 4.4]. As the schoolmaster explains in the preface, he has taken much care to make the two languages correspond horizontally 'so that every word and sentence, from one to another, always corresponds and synchronizes between two points'.²⁰³ By using this perfectly equilibrated bilingual book, the students could make their Dutch and

¹⁹⁸ For a discussion on the place of rhetoric in the early modern classroom, see: Wesley 2015. On translation, see: Kibbee 1991, 184; Pérez Fernández & Wilson-Lee 2014, 14; Sumillera 2014, 67; Coldiron 2015, 260; Gallagher 2015, 58-59, 238.

¹⁹⁹ 'Die maar een taal wel kan, kan gheen taal wel vertolken'. Heyns 1605, fol. A3r.

²⁰⁰ Examples of bilingual vocabulary books are: De Vivere 1574; Meurier 1580a. Bilingual prose texts are: Luython 1548; *Dbeghintsele der Wijsheyt* 1552; *De historie vanden ouden Tobias* 1557; Florianus & Plantin 1566.

²⁰¹ 'tellement mis en ordre, que lon peut accorder les quatre langues de reigle à reigle'. Berlaimont 1565, fol. 1r.

²⁰² Claes 1981, 97.

²⁰³ 'ordonnee tellement, que chascun mot et sentence lune a lautre, tousiours entre deux pointz respondt et accorde/ gheordineert also, dat elck woort ende sentencie deene op dandere, altijs tusschen twee puncten respondeert ende accordeert'. Luython 1548, fol. A2r.

French speech ‘well styled’.²⁰⁴ Ultimately, one-on-one translation would thus benefit one’s style of speaking, according to Luython.

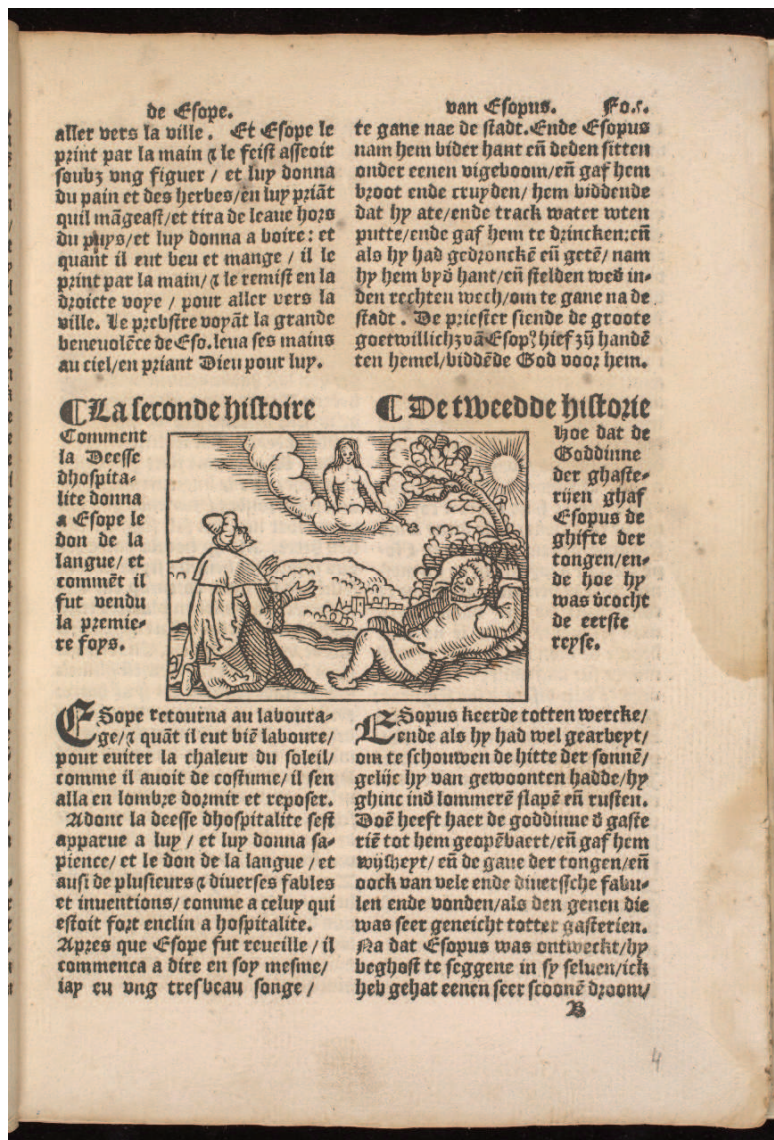


Figure 4.4.

G. Luython. *La merueilleuse et ioyeuse vie de Esope [...]. Dat wonderlijck ende genuechlijck leuen van Esopus [...].* Antwerp: Gregorius de Bonte, 1548, fol. 5r. The Hague, Royal Library, KW 1702 C 1.

Several years later, in 1566, Christophe Plantin teamed up with a Latin schoolmaster from Antwerp, Johannes Florianus, to make a bilingual edition of the story of Reynard the Fox in French and Dutch. They, too, decided to place the languages in separate columns next to each other. Contrary to Luython, however, they did not opt for a literal translation: ‘One will not find everything word for word, because that was impossible, as we wished to maintain the nature

²⁰⁴ ‘bien stilez’, ‘wel gestyleert’. Luython 1548, fol. A2r.

and individuality of the two languages'.²⁰⁵ Plantin and Florianus thus support a sense-for-sense translation method. Using the same argument as Étienne Dolet in his 1540 treatise on translation, they argue that it is impossible to respect the unique character and style of each language in literal translation.²⁰⁶ Ironically, Florianus dedicated the text to the very Glaude Luython who had propagated literal translation as the best tool for bilingual stylistic training.

These schoolbooks, like Dolet's treatise, took centre stage in the debates on language. Through their prefaces, even their young users could come into contact with the reflections on language and think about them in their formative years, sparking new generations of language thinkers. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the discussions lasted so long, never reaching a final consensus.

4.5. Conclusion

Heyns and the network of friends and colleagues related to him demonstrate the close connections that existed between the debates on the Dutch language and those on the French language. Through publications like Heyns's French grammar and the orthographical treatises of Lambrecht and Van der Schuere, these schoolmasters took on the role of intermediaries, fostering exchange between contributions in and on French, Dutch, and Latin. At the same time, rather than acting as marginal figures, they positioned themselves firmly within the discussions on French as well as Dutch.

Teachers in French schools were so on top of the debates on French and Dutch that multiple cases have come to light in which they were aware of the content of particular works before or immediately after they were published: Heyns knew the unprinted work of Becanus, and Lambrecht was familiar with a Peletier text that came out in the same year as his. Through his schoolbooks, Heyns made francophone and Dutch-speaking audiences aware of the content of Becanus's Latin treatise on Dutch. Schoolmasters were essential plurilingual go-betweens, allowing the debates to become as well informed and transregional as they did. Because of their work, defenders of Dutch could use the arguments that had been used in the French discussions as stepping stones to solidify their own case.

It has become unquestionable that pedagogical language manuals were just as important for the debates on the form of French and Dutch as treatises on language designed for study.

²⁰⁵ 'Niet datmen allesins woort tegen woort vinden sal (want ten was niet wel mogelijk, alsoo verre men de nature *ende* proprieteyt wilde houden van beyde de talen/ Non pas qu'on le trouue par tout rendu mot pour mot (car il n'estoit pas *bien* possible, pourueu qu'on vousist garder la nature & propriété des deux langues'. Florianus & Plantin 1566, fol. A5r. For a modern edition of the text, see: Rijns & Wackers 2007.

²⁰⁶ See: Chapter 3.4.

Moreover, the exchanges on language have been attached too narrowly to academically trained communities. Middle-class teenagers in their formative years, boys as well as girls, came into contact with the discussions on language through their schoolbooks and received the ideal training to reflect on and take part in the discussions themselves.

The contributions of schoolmasters to the debates on French and Dutch were marked by their professional use of both languages, showing that context is key when studying language discussions. Their manifest interest in the quarrels on the spelling of French and Dutch are surely related to their daily encounters with the topic in the classroom, as is supported by the fact that learnability was their go-to argument. It would be a mistake to interpret the fact that schoolmasters in the Low Countries continued to reflect on French orthography long after the *querelle* in France had come to a standstill as them simply lagging behind. The issue itself had not been resolved, and therefore the discussions lost none of their topicality.

The defences of language learning are indissolubly linked to the fact that this constituted the income source of the schoolmasters, as well as to the growing interest in civic virtue. Especially in the context of the Low Countries, where bilinguals could bridge the gap between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking parts of the population, language teaching was a form of serving the *patria*. Teaching both languages in a good and sound manner is what earned Heyns the title of ‘double soldier’ in a time when the local population had witnessed all too many real soldiers fighting for what they deemed right for the fatherland.²⁰⁷

The issue of loanwords is put into perspective when considered in light of the French schools. Schoolmasters apparently did not face anxieties that bilingualism would lead to language contamination, as they did not defend themselves against such fears, nor did they promote themselves as opponents of borrowing. In rare cases where the purity of language was discussed, it concerned French at least as often as Dutch, which has been overlooked thus far. For these language instructors, eloquence, not purity, was the primary selling point. They tackled concerns that the vernaculars might not possess the lexical richness to act as scientific, religious, or literary languages, and branded themselves as ‘Prefect[s] of the treasury of [their] language’, to repeat the words of Vives quoted at the beginning of this chapter.²⁰⁸ By training the language users and debaters of tomorrow, schoolmasters claimed their role as defenders of the fatherland.

²⁰⁷ ‘dubbel Soudenier’. Heyns 1605, fol. A3r

²⁰⁸ Juan Luis Vives, translated by F. Watson: Vives 1931, 103.

5. Calvinist Churches

5.1. Introduction

In the second half of the sixteenth century, a new *lieu* of language reflection developed in the Low Countries in the form of the Calvinist church. From the 1540s onwards, Calvinist thought reached the region, first the francophone and later the Dutch-speaking area, from its intellectual centre in Geneva.¹ After the Iconoclastic Fury had raged through the region in 1566, Calvinists started to worship out in the open and built their own communities of worship in the Low Countries.² Language played a twofold role in these developing congregations. On the one hand, decisions had to be made about the language in which the sacred texts of Christianity would be read and on the translation strategies through which they would be made available. On the other hand, the Calvinist community of the Low Countries had to deal with the fact that the vernacular language of Calvinism was French, while a large portion of Calvinists in the region spoke Dutch. The first Calvinist texts that became available in the Low Countries were in French and Latin, and not in Dutch.³ This made Calvinism in the region a multilingual affair. A key question was how to ensure a sense of cohesion between the francophone and Dutch-speaking Calvinists in the face of the struggle against the Church of Rome. A focus on the forming Calvinist congregations allows one to study a language policy in the making.

One influential individual who strove to defend the Calvinist cause and who acted as an intermediary between French- and Dutch-speaking Calvinism was Philips of Marnix, Lord of Sainte-Aldegonde. Marnix was a diplomat and statesman who around 1570 became the right-hand man to William of Orange. He was perfectly bilingual in French and Dutch and used his language abilities to write anti-Catholic pamphlets in both languages and to create a Dutch translation of the French Calvinist psalter.

The interplay between the French and Dutch texts in Marnix's oeuvre has not yet been studied because of the monolingual focus of literary historians. Letting go of this approach reveals that Marnix developed a conscious language strategy that fostered unity among French- and Dutch-speaking Calvinists. He used his language awareness, moreover, to attack the Catholic Church. Until now, Marnix has been linked to the debates on language because he was

¹ Marnef 1996, 63-64.

² See: Chapter 2.1.

³ The official confession of faith (*Confession de Foy*) of the Calvinist churches of the Low Countries by Guy de Bray (Guido de Brès) was first written and published in French, in 1561. In 1562, it was translated into Dutch as *Belydenisse des gheloofs*. Knetsch 1991, 150-151; Leeuwenberg 2008, 65-66; Marnef 2012.

a firm critic of loanwords in Dutch.⁴ However, a multilingual reframing of his writings shows that his engagement with the discussions on language went far beyond the topic of borrowing and beyond the Dutch tongue alone.

Marnix's 1580 psalm translation built upon the work of two earlier Dutch versions of the French psalter: those by Jan Utenhove (1566) and Petrus Datheen (Daeten, Daets, Dathenus, 1566). Utenhove tried to create unity among Dutch-speaking Calvinists by attempting to write in a universal, regularized form of Dutch. Datheen focused, rather, on following the formal features of the French Calvinist psalm book, the so-called Genevan psalter, to ensure that Dutch Calvinists could unite in singing with their francophone coreligionists. A study of Marnix's psalms in light of these two philosophies on the community-forming abilities of language demonstrates that he took both Utenhove's and Datheen's vision further to aid the multilingual Calvinist community of the Low Countries.

Two of Marnix's propaganda texts, titled the *Biënkorf der H. Roomsche Kercke* (1569) and *Tableav des differens de la religion* (1599), serve to illustrate how he used the debates on language to depict Catholicism in a negative way. Marnix consciously created an image of Catholics as lacking knowledge of the *tres linguae sacrae* Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and as rejecting the vernacular as a language of worship and religious reading. New attention for the individual who is directly attacked by the *Biënkorf* and *Tableav* reveals that this image is unjustified. Marnix can therefore be exposed as one of the minds behind what Andrew Gow has called the Protestant paradigm.⁵ This paradigm represents the idea that the Catholic Church rejected religious reading in the vernacular. While in recent years this idea has been amply proven to be false, Marnix's case helps us to understand how it came into being in the first place, revealing the effective Protestant slander strategy.⁶ Marnix used his extraordinary language skills and language awareness to connect the language debates to the religious debates. He supported the Calvinist cause through language by fostering internal cohesion and defaming the Catholic Church.

⁴ Lode Van den Branden only paid attention to Marnix's opinion on loanwords and the use of the vernacular. Nicoline van der Sijs treated Marnix in an enumeration of early modern versions of the psalms and the Bible in Dutch, mentioning his rejection of borrowed terms and his proposals concerning personal pronouns. Van den Branden 1967, 126-135; Van der Sijs 2004, 126-127.

⁵ Gow 2005; Van Duijn 2017, 22-24.

⁶ Studies debunking the Protestant paradigm are: Gow 2005; Folkerts 2011; Corbellini et al. 2013; Corbellini & Hoogvliet 2015; Van Duijn 2017.

Cohesion across Languages

Calvinism was a transnational, multilingual movement that relied on plurilinguals like Marnix for the essential communication across languages and political borders.⁷ As Guido Marnef has shown, Antwerp was the principal node in this network within the Low Countries.⁸ The new Calvinist community that formed there was marked by its confrontation with the multilingualism of the region. Calvin disseminated his views in Latin and French, which gave the latter language a privileged position with regard to Dutch.⁹ Calvinists who did not read French or Latin depended on translations. As a result of these circumstances, a suitable policy on language was needed for this to become a sustainable multilingual religious community.

In the 1560s, support for Calvinism grew in the Low Countries. It became marked by an organization into congregations, groups of believers constituting communities of worship led by church councils. Representatives of these congregations united in provincial and national synods. These were assemblies where decisions were taken about doctrine and the structure of the church.¹⁰ When Calvinists were forced to flee the Low Countries because of their beliefs, they largely united themselves in exile communities or ‘stranger churches’ in England and Germany. The works of historians such as Andrew Spicer and Raingard Esser have confirmed that the stranger churches roughly followed the same organizational structure as the churches in the Low Countries with which they remained in close contact.¹¹ There were French- and Dutch-speaking stranger churches next to Italian and Spanish ones.

The Dutch and French congregations in England met once every month.¹² Despite these regular assemblies, it was not long before the first indications of alienation between the francophone and Dutch-speaking believers from the Low Countries started to emerge. In 1571, Marnix wrote a letter to the exile communities in London in which he expressed his concerns about this issue.¹³ According to Marnix, cohesion and structure within the Dutch-speaking groups and across the language divide were lacking.¹⁴ In his letter, he recommends regular meetings between the different congregations in order ‘to maintain a good, solid, and fixed

⁷ For the notion of confessional solidarity within ‘international Calvinism’, see: Prestwich 1985, 2-5. See further: Marnef 2000, 347-348; Pettegree 2005a.

⁸ Marnef 1996, 63-70, 141-152.

⁹ For Calvin’s use of the vernacular, see: Gilmont 1997, 155-165.

¹⁰ Duke 1985, 121-122; Spaans 2004, 122; Leeuwenberg 2008, 66. The acts of the national synods held before 1577 were in French. Representatives of Dutch- and French-speaking congregations were present. Marnef 2012, 249-250.

¹¹ Boersma 1994; Esser 1996, 52-84; Spicer 2005; Spicer 2012.

¹² Boersma 1994, 22-25.

¹³ The letter has been edited by: Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 173-174.

¹⁴ Indeed, the conflicts within the Dutch church in London had become so heated that many refugees joined the French or even the Italian church instead. Boersma 1994, 26.

concord among each other, not just in the chapters of the pure doctrine, but also in the manners, ceremonies, and government of the church'.¹⁵ He proposes that representatives of the two language groups take part in the first official synod of the Calvinist communities from the Low Countries, to be held in Emden later on in 1571. Marnix thus played a mediating role between Dutch-speaking and francophone Calvinist refugees.

The need for such mediation illustrates the fact that in the exile communities in England and Germany, the whole language diversity of the Low Countries was present on a microscale. Although encounters between these different languages were frequent in the Low Countries in general because of widespread travel and interregional trade, the refugee communities experienced a situation of intensified contact. Furthermore, the exiles were also confronted with the local German or English tongue. Both languages had, of course, strong ties with Dutch, stimulating reflection on the relations between these vernaculars. It is no coincidence that Richard Verstegan, a descendant of Dutch immigrants who himself had to flee from England to the Low Countries, wrote a treatise on the genealogical connection between Dutch and English.¹⁶

Among the people who went into exile are various individuals who engaged in the language debates: Peeter Heyns, Johannes Radermacher, Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert, and, of course, Marnix himself. Students of the exile experiences of Calvinists and Catholics during the Dutch Revolt, such as Judith Pollmann, Geert Janssen, and Johannes Müller, have paid little attention to the element of language. Marnix's case, however, allows one to argue that the multilingual refugee experience had a catalytic impact on language reflection.¹⁷ Marnix realized the importance of a language strategy for his dispersed multilingual religious community. The Calvinists of the Low Countries needed to find ways to deal with the language barrier in order to create a sustainable community. Marnix personally provided a tool for this in the form of a psalm translation.

Philips of Marnix, Lord of Sainte-Aldegonde

Born in 1540 into a noble family, Marnix would grow up to play an important role in the history of the Low Countries as a prominent Calvinist, diplomat, and language debater. Through his

¹⁵ 'eene goede, vaste en onbewegelicke ouereenkominge onder elcander te houden, niet alleen inde hoofstucken der reyner leere, maer oock inde wysen, ceremonien ende regeringhe der kercke'. Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 173.

¹⁶ Considine 2008, 188-190; Rubright 2014, 69. See also the case of Sir Simonds d'Ewes, another Englishman of Dutch ancestry who studied the historical relationship between Dutch and English in first half of the seventeenth century. Considine 2008, 193-197.

¹⁷ Pollmann 2011, 131-142; Janssen 2014; Van de Haar 2015b; J. Müller 2016.

mother, Marnix inherited the small lordship of Mont-Sainte-Aldegonde in Hainaut.¹⁸ He was raised in Brussels, and although his first language was French, it is likely that he learned the local Dutch tongue from an early age as well.¹⁹ When Marnix was around the age of thirteen, he and his elder brother Jean, known as Jean de Toulouse, registered themselves at the University of Leuven, where Marnix studied theology.²⁰

Leuven was only the first stop in Marnix's academic *peregrinatio* around Europe. The two brothers subsequently visited Dôle, possibly the Parisian Sorbonne, and various cities in Italy, such as Bologna, Venice, Padua, and Rome.²¹ While providing Marnix with an academic education, these travels simultaneously enabled him to learn an array of languages and follow the latest developments in discussions on religion and language. Around 1560, the brothers reached Geneva. They frequented Calvinist circles and became acquainted with Theodorus Beza, a close follower of Calvin. As argued by Rudolf De Smet, who edited and studied Marnix's correspondence, it is likely that the brothers converted to Protestantism during their stay in this city that was the heart of Calvinist activity.²²

In the early 1560s, Marnix and his brother returned to the Low Countries.²³ In the following years, Jean de Toulouse co-authored the petition which was presented by the Compromise of Nobles to Margaret of Parma in 1566 to call for a moderation of the punishment of Protestants.²⁴ Marnix, too, supported the petition and joined the Compromise. Following the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566, Marnix published an apology justifying the riots by attacking the political and religious status quo, titled *Vraye narration et apologie des choses passées au Pays-bas* (1567).²⁵ His brother Jean died in 1567 in a military encounter with royal troops at Oosterweel.²⁶ That year, Marnix was forced to flee the Low Countries and to take refuge in Emden, in northeast Germany.²⁷ It was during his period in exile that Marnix wrote and published the *Biënkorf der H. Roomsche Kercke* (1569).²⁸ This satirical and parodic text, presenting the Church of Rome as a beehive ('Biënkorf'), was published anonymously in Emden.

¹⁸ Sterck 1952, 13; La Gorce 2004, 10-11.

¹⁹ Prims 1938; Van Roey 1998, 15.

²⁰ Govaert 1953, 9-10; La Gorce 2004, 11.

²¹ Sterck 1952, 14-15; Govaert 1953, 10; Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 27-28.

²² Like Calvin, Beza was interested in debates on both religion and language. See: Chapter 3.4. Van Schelven 1939, 7; Govaert 1953, 11; De Smet 2001, 30; La Gorce 2004, 11.

²³ See: Chapter 2.1.

²⁴ Van Gelderen 1992, 110-111; De Smet 1998, 30; La Gorce 2004, 11-12.

²⁵ Marnix 1567; Van Deursen 2001, 25-26; De Smet 1998, 30-31; Arnade 2008, 100, 122.

²⁶ Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 176; De Smet 1998, 31.

²⁷ Sterck 1952, 18; Govaert 1953, 12; Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 45; Van Stipriaan 2007, 344-345.

²⁸ Marnix 1569.

The outspoken Calvinist started working for William of Orange in late 1570.²⁹ Marnix became responsible for the communication with the Reformed Church and for foreign affairs. His diplomatic travels brought him to Germany, Poland, England, and France.³⁰ Marnix became the foremost author of propaganda texts in Dutch, French, and Latin, supporting Calvinism, Orange, and the Revolt.³¹ In 1583, Marnix was appointed ‘buitenburgemeester’ of Antwerp, a specific type of burgomaster responsible for political, military, and provincial affairs.³² The following year brought him a series of devastating events. In 1584, the city of Antwerp came under siege by Philip II’s troops, and William of Orange was gunned down in Delft. In August 1585, Marnix and his fellow leaders, including humanist merchant-grammarian Johannes Radermacher the Elder, surrendered Antwerp to the royal forces.³³ Marnix then retired to his residence in Souburg, in Zeeland. He passed away in Leiden in 1598.

Marnix was active in more than just the political field. From the beginning of the 1570s, he had been working on a Dutch psalm translation. A first edition appeared in 1580, a second, improved edition was published in 1591.³⁴ The high quality of Marnix’s translation and of his written Dutch was recognized by the States-General. In 1594, this body therefore commissioned him to create a translation of the Bible that could become the official Dutch version.³⁵ Marnix was unable to finish his important assignment. When he died, he had only finished his translation of the book of Genesis.

His contemporaries esteemed Marnix for his extraordinary language skills.³⁶ After his death, a certain Marcus Zuerius wrote a lamentation praising his plurilingualism.³⁷ The poem lists all the languages spoken by Marnix. Besides French and Dutch, he was skilled in Latin, Hebrew, classical Greek, Italian, and Spanish, and possessed knowledge of German, English,

²⁹ Sterck 1952, 18.

³⁰ De Smet 1998; Van Stripriaan 2007. On Marnix’s propaganda activities directed against Philip II and the Spanish in general, see: Martínez Luna forthcoming.

³¹ See, for instance: Marnix 1577a; Marnix 1577b; Marnix 1578a; Marnix 1578b. Marnix was long thought to have been the author of the propaganda song justifying the Revolt known as the *Wilhelmus*, which is currently the national hymn of the Netherlands. His alleged authorship has been convincingly debunked by several studies showing that the writing style of the *Wilhelmus* deviates from the rest of Marnix’s oeuvre. Moreover, contextual evidence points in a different direction. See: Van Stripriaan 2007; Kestemont et al. 2017.

³² Marnef 2001; Marnef 2010, 29.

³³ Bostoën 1998, 24.

³⁴ Marnix 1580; Marnix 1591; Govaert 1953, 12-13.

³⁵ Marnix had already been asked to take up this task in 1586, but then refused. Berns 2004, 60; Van der Sijs 2004, 134.

³⁶ Marnix was praised by Theodorus Beza for his knowledge of German. Even Marnix’s detractors extolled his language abilities. Paolo Rinaldi, a court official of Alexander Farnese, commented on Marnix’s polyglot faculties in a letter, listing all the modern languages he could speak. Dufour, Chimelli, & Nicollier 1983, 76-77; Govaert 1953, 19; De Smet 2001, 37. See also: Meurier & Offermans 1628, fol. A2r.

³⁷ Zuerius 1600. It does not concern Marcus Zuerius Boxhorn, who was born in 1612, over a decade after the publication of the poem.

and even Polish. His written French and Dutch are of a high quality, and it can be argued that both these vernaculars were his mother tongues.³⁸

Marnix provides an exemplary case of a plurilingual who expressed interest in several languages at the same time. The breadth of his curiosity can be made clear through several examples that showcase his inquisitive stance towards various vernacular, exotic, and classical tongues. Marnix's wide fascination with language is reflected, firstly, in his library.³⁹ It contained a striking number of dictionaries of various languages as well as numerous treatises on language, such as those by his secretary Bonaventura Vulcanius and by Becanus.⁴⁰ Research by Toon Van Hal on the humanists surrounding Marnix has recently revealed that Marnix also participated in the historical language reflections of his friends.⁴¹ He copied a fragment from a fourth-century Gothic Bible translation preserved in the so-called *Codex Argenteus*.⁴² Various humanists, including Vulcanius, studied this manuscript to learn more about the Gothic history of the Germanic languages.⁴³ It is probable that Marnix took part in these reflections, too.⁴⁴

Marnix was also interested in the Persian-German theory that was vividly discussed by Vulcanius, Lipsius, and Becanus.⁴⁵ Based on the observation that the vocabularies of Persian and the Germanic tongues presented striking similarities, they constructed a theory about a possible genealogical relationship between the languages. Marnix seems to have defended this theory. He wrote at least one letter about it that, unfortunately, has not survived.⁴⁶ Apparently, he even composed a treatise in which he addressed the issue, which Abraham Mylius claimed

³⁸ It is unclear which language Marnix spoke in his household. His first wife, Philipotte de Bailleul, was an aristocrat from Bruges. Orange once wrote her a letter in French, which was most likely her language of preference. After she died, Marnix married Catharyne van Eeckeren, a native speaker of Dutch. After being widowed again, he finally married Josine de Lannoy, who corresponded in French and whose knowledge of French was good enough to write sonnets in it. Probably, Marnix spoke both French and Dutch at home, depending on the situation. Marnix 1878, 122; Bakhuizen van den Brink 1938, 330; Ornée & Strengholt 1975, 7; Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 211.

³⁹ After his death, Marnix's widow sold his books in a public auction. The catalogue of this auction was printed, providing valuable information on the books he possessed. In total, the catalogue mentions 1737 printed books and manuscripts. It has to be noted that the catalogue in question gives a distorted image of Marnix's reading habits. His personal library had been confiscated by royal forces when he fled to Germany in the 1560s. Orange had gifted Marnix the library of a jurist in 1573. In the 1599 catalogue, legal books are missing because this part of the library had already been sold before the auction. Moreover, particular works might have been given to friends and family or might have been withheld from auction because they were considered inappropriate. *Catalogvs* 1599; Van Selm 1987, 20-22; De Smet 2002, 214; Corbellini & Verhoeven 2004; Smith 2011, 157. For a modern edition of the catalogue, see: Brouwer 1964.

⁴⁰ *Catalogvs* 1599, fol. D2v, fol. E1v.

⁴¹ Van Hal 2010a, 180-181; Van Hal 2011. In his letters, Marnix frequently discusses the etymology of particular words, especially of Latin and Greek terms that have a specific religious meaning, such as 'οὐσίαν' ('essence'). See, for example, one of Marnix's letters to Bernhard zum Boeme (Boemius): Gerlo & De Smet 1990, 90-108.

⁴² See: Chapter 3.3. Dekker 2010, 422-423.

⁴³ Janssens 1985, 68-70; Van Hal 2010a, 68, 176; Frederickx & Van Hal 2015, 112

⁴⁴ Dekker 2010, 423.

⁴⁵ See: Chapter 3.3. Van Hal 2011.

⁴⁶ The receiver of the letter, Sibrandus Lubbertus, mentioned the correspondence in his own writings. Van Hal 2011, 154n18.

to have read. This *Enchiridion* or *Adversaria*, which, too, has been lost, allegedly mentioned various similarities in the vocabularies of Persian and the Germanic tongues.⁴⁷

Marnix cared for language history, but also for the future. He wrote a treatise on the instruction of youth in which language takes centre stage. Drawn up around 1583 at the request of John of Nassau, William of Orange's brother, it deals with the education of noble children in particular.⁴⁸ Nassau founded a school in the following year, which probably explains why he asked for Marnix's help. The treatise was published posthumously in 1615 by a professor of the University of Franeker who had previously been a private teacher for the Nassau family.⁴⁹ This pedagogical text has received some attention from modern scholars, including, most recently, Willem Frijhoff. They have pointed out the similarities between Marnix's pedagogical views and those of his contemporaries, such as Petrus Ramus and Michel de Montaigne.⁵⁰

In his treatise, Marnix underlines the importance of plurilingualism for children. While in the Latin schools the emphasis was on the acquisition of Latin, Marnix stresses that young people should also be trained to use a flawless form of their native language and another modern vernacular. Learning other languages and speaking the native vernacular correctly are not mutually exclusive goals, according to Marnix: 'our children [...] should learn the Latin tongue, so that they learn to perfectly embellish the language of their own fatherland with her flowers and ornaments and her richness and seriousness'.⁵¹ By learning various languages, children could enlarge their knowledge of tropes and rhetorical devices and use that knowledge to improve their eloquence in all of their tongues.

The methods of language teaching that Marnix proposes are translation and comparing different languages, which suggests that he wished to awake a reflective attitude towards language.⁵² Marnix actually seems to appreciate Greek more than Latin, but he recognizes the practical value that the latter language still had in the sixteenth century.⁵³ While he praises Cicero as a model for children, he ridicules adults who take his style to the extreme, and thus

⁴⁷ Van Hal 2010a, 180-181; Van Hal 2011, 154-155.

⁴⁸ Frijhoff 2001, 63.

⁴⁹ Marnix 1615. The original Latin text has been reproduced in: Marnix 1959a. For a French translation, see: Marnix 1959b. For a Dutch translation, see: Marnix 1992. On the dating of the manuscript, see: Frijhoff 2001, 69-70.

⁵⁰ Van Kalken & Jonckheere 1952, 84-88; Frijhoff 2001, 70-74. Marnix was familiar with Montaigne's writings. See: Kramer 1971, 40-46

⁵¹ 'Ita planè nostris adolescentibus ac præsertim nobilibus addiscenda est lingua latina, ut ejus floribus atque emblematis ejusque copia & gravitate patriam suam linguam discant perfectè exornare'. Marnix 1615, 8; Marnix 1959a, 41.

⁵² Marnix 1615, 6-8; Marnix 1959a, 37-41,

⁵³ Marnix 1615, 9; Marnix 1959a, 43; Frijhoff 2001, 74.

takes a more intermediate stance in the discussions on Ciceronian Latin.⁵⁴ For Marnix, defending French and Dutch does not lead to excluding the classical tongues, but to gaining perceptivity for the ways in which these venerated models could serve the modern languages in their development. It is thus not surprising that, when a Calvinist school was established where children could learn the basics of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, Marnix's own son was the first student to be registered.⁵⁵

Finally, Marnix realized that individual languages have particular connotations, inciting him to exploit his plurilingualism in the political and diplomatic field. Rudolf De Smet studied the languages Marnix used in his extant correspondence, showing that he sometimes consciously chose a particular language to please his addressee. To Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, he wrote in Italian, as he was aware of Leicester's Italianophilia.⁵⁶ Marnix's language qualities also served the Revolt in a very different way. Marnix had developed dexterity in deciphering coded messages and was asked multiple times to decrypt intercepted letters of the opposing party.⁵⁷

A curious anecdote exists about Marnix's clever use of his language skills.⁵⁸ In 1580, William of Orange sought the help of Francis, duke of Anjou and brother of the French king. Marnix led the negotiations regarding Anjou's exact position in the Low Countries.⁵⁹ In a report about the negotiations, perhaps drawn up by Marnix himself, it is stated that Anjou expressed the wish to become 'sovereign' of the Low Countries rather than 'prince and lord'.⁶⁰ The report recounts that Marnix, or in any case the delegation under his direction, replied that this was impossible, claiming that no such term existed in Dutch:

We replied that it was not the custom of the Low Countries to use this term with regard to their princes, particularly when all the contracting parties used the Dutch language, in which the word *souverain* could not be properly expressed. Instead, it was customary to use the words *genadighe here* [Gracious Lord] or *geduchte heere* [Revered Lord].⁶¹

⁵⁴ Marnix 1615, 11; Marnix 1959a, 45-47.

⁵⁵ Voet 1969, 387.

⁵⁶ De Smet 2001, 48.

⁵⁷ Van Schelven 1939, 109-110, 186-187, 206; Kahn 1996, 120-123; Akkerman 2016, 71.

⁵⁸ Griffiths 1970, 72-74; Van Gelderen 2003, 84.

⁵⁹ Van Schelven 1939, 146-149.

⁶⁰ 'sovereign'. 'prince et seigneur'. Gachard 1854, 436-437.

⁶¹ Translated by: Griffiths 1970, 73.

[...] nostre réplique, que fut que ce n'estoit la coustume du Pays-Bas d'user de ce terme allendroit de leurs princes, mesmes d'autant que tous les contractans usoient de la langue thioise, en laquelle on ne pouvoit proprement exprimer ce mot de *souverain*, ains l'on estoit accoustumé d'user des motz ou *genadighe heere* ou *geduchte heere* [...].⁶²

Of course, Dutch equivalents to the words 'king' or 'sovereign' did exist ('coninc' or the loanword 'soverein'), and Marnix, of all people, would have been aware of this. He appears to have overwhelmed the opposing party with a flood of Dutch—and thus to them incomprehensible—words.

The report claims that the deceitful strategy was successful and that Anjou accepted dropping the term 'sovereign' in favour of 'prince and lord'. As this story is recounted in an official report of the negotiations destined for Orange and the States-General, there is no reason to question its validity. It shows that Marnix was highly conscious of all aspects of his two native tongues and of opportunities to use these languages to support the Calvinist and Rebel causes. Marnix's persona—and more specifically a case study of his psalm translation and *Biënkorf*—allow for the exploration of the conjunction of language awareness and the practical use of multilingualism in the early modern Low Countries.

5.2. Translating Psalms, Building Communities

Singing psalms in the vernacular developed into a confessional marker of Calvinism.⁶³ The creational process of these psalms in French and Dutch epitomizes the attitude of the bilingual Calvinist congregation of the Low Countries towards language. In the translation of a religious text the stakes of every language-related decision are high, as it brings one either one step closer to or one step further away from the divine Word of God. Psalm translations intensify this issue. Not only is there the original Latin, Greek, or Hebrew text that needs to be respected, there is also the problem of the verses themselves. It is extremely difficult to translate a text while having to take into account a specific tune, which contains a particular alternation of long and short notes.⁶⁴

⁶² Gachard 1854, 437. The italics are present in Gachard's edition.

⁶³ Pettegree 2005b, 40-75; Havsteen 2011.

⁶⁴ A combination of the respectable religious content of the psalms and the high level of difficulty of psalm translations made this genre a highly respectable one among poets from all over Europe. In 1616, poet Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, then member of *De Eglentier*, even challenged his fellow rhetoricians to translate a psalm in the French fashion. Besides Marnix, various poets, such as Lucas d'Heere and Jan van der Noot, made psalm translations. D'Heere 1565b; Van der Noot 1953, fol. 17r; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen 2004, 456; Meeus 2011, 294-295; Van der Woude 2011, 116-117; Prandoni 2012, 166.

These issues already posed problems for the creators of the French, Genevan psalter which became one of the core texts of Calvinism. When Jan Utenhove, Petrus Datheen, and Marnix individually decided to translate the Genevan psalter into Dutch, they had an additional language, and thus an additional challenge, to take into consideration, namely French. The diverging sound structures of Dutch and French complicated matters further.⁶⁵ Each of these psalm translations is an exponent of how the issues of multilingualism and translation were addressed within Calvinism. Tracing the creation of the Genevan psalter and those by Utenhove and Datheen reveals how each of their approaches to language and translation was designed to foster community building.

Calvinism and the Psalms

In the early sixteenth century, psalm singing was not connected to Protestant circles in any special way. Andrew Pettegree has shown that from the 1520s and 1530s onwards, when both Luther and Calvin promoted this practice and Protestants began to sing psalms during meetings of a sometimes provocative and polemical nature, it slowly became a manifestly Protestant act.⁶⁶ It could be a symbol of protest against the Church of Rome, but also of internal cohesion.⁶⁷ In prefaces to edited songs, Calvin expressed his views on the usefulness of psalm singing in the vernacular.⁶⁸ These views were strongly connected to his take on language and influenced the ways in which his followers in the Low Countries perceived language. Calvin set the tone for the ways in which the Calvinist community in the Low Countries would deal with its plurality of languages.

Calvin promoted the use of songs in the liturgical programme in order to enhance the level of active participation of the religious community during services.⁶⁹ In doing so, he hoped to return to the manner in which the earliest Christians, not yet divided, professed their faith.⁷⁰ Calvin was convinced that by singing, the content of the text in question would be easier to memorize.⁷¹ He further suggested that musical harmony could strengthen feelings of devotion.⁷² He thus expressed an interest in the effects of orality on the mind of the performer.

⁶⁵ Bonda 1996, 391; Rasch 2008, 230-233.

⁶⁶ Luth 1991; Pettegree 2005b, 40-75; Pollmann 2006; Havsteen 2011.

⁶⁷ Pettegree 2005b, 61-62.

⁶⁸ Pettegree 2005b, 43-45; Wursten 2010, 371-392; Havsteen 2011.

⁶⁹ Lenselink 1959, 159.

⁷⁰ Lenselink 1959, 25-30, 159; Havsteen 2011, 58; Wursten 2010, 374; Luth 2011, 275.

⁷¹ Havsteen 2011, 57-61; Luth 2011, 276.

⁷² Lenselink 1959, 160; Havsteen 2011, 62; Higman 2000, 499; Wursten 2010, 375.

The Calvinist psalms were rooted in France, where poet Clément Marot, at that point not yet connected to Calvin, started his French verse translation of the biblical book of psalms in the 1530s. Marot's psalms appeared in several editions, some of which presented the psalms as translated 'according to the Hebrew truth'.⁷³ The poet thus seemed to attach great importance to the idea of *Hebraica veritas*, according to which the Hebrew version of the Bible was the one true version.⁷⁴ However, comparative research has shown that the primary sources used by Marot were Latin and French translations.⁷⁵ The Hebrew truth was respected, but mostly through intermediaries.⁷⁶

Around 1540, Marot started cooperating with Calvin, who wrote prefaces for editions of the psalms.⁷⁷ In the following years, Marot produced additional psalm translations. Upon his death in 1544, Theodorus Beza took over. Like Marot, Beza used a French Bible translation as his main source, rather than the Hebrew text.⁷⁸ The fact that both Beza and Marot used an intermediary translation corresponded with Calvin's emphasis on the power of translation. According to Calvin, there was one divine meaning which could be rendered in all different languages.⁷⁹ Beza's work led to the publication of the first complete edition of all 150 psalms in French in 1562. The melodies for this version of the psalter had been newly composed by Genevan church musicians.⁸⁰ The result would become known as the Genevan psalter.

Two years after the Genevan psalter was first published, it appeared in Antwerp, reprinted by Christophe Plantin.⁸¹ He received permission for both a French version and a Dutch translation, although the Dutch text, apparently, never saw the light of day.⁸² In the 1560s, French psalms from the Genevan psalter were sung in the Low Countries.⁸³ They are reported to have been chanted outside the homes of clergymen and in front of prisons where Protestants were held captive.⁸⁴ The psalms swiftly obtained an unorthodox connotation, and prohibitions on the public singing of psalms were instituted in the 1560s.⁸⁵ Psalm translations reveal the

⁷³ The 1541 edition of Marot's psalms claims to have been translated 'selon la verite Hebraicque'; the same is true for a 1548 publication. Marot 1541, fol. 6r; Marot 1548, fol. 1r; Ahmed 2005, 63.

⁷⁴ See: Chapter 3.1. Wursten 2010, 123-139.

⁷⁵ Lenselink 1959, 137-140; Roussel 1997; Beza & Marot 2008, 7-8; Wursten 2010, 136-157.

⁷⁶ This respect for the *Hebraica veritas* while using a French go-between was not contradictory, as the truth of the Hebrew original could be transmitted in other languages, too, according to adherents of the notion of *Hebraica veritas*. For a more profound explanation, see: Wursten 2010, 123-139.

⁷⁷ Millet 1997, 465-468; Higman 2000, 497-499; Wursten 2010, 54-55, 74-79, 371-392.

⁷⁸ Lenselink 1959, 151; Beza & Marot 2008, 7-8.

⁷⁹ Cummings 2007, 249-250.

⁸⁰ Luth 2011, 276-277.

⁸¹ Beza & Marot 1564.

⁸² Slenk 1965, 44, 248-249; Slenk 1969, 161-162; Slenk 1975, 514-515.

⁸³ Lenselink 1959, 449.

⁸⁴ Slenk 1965, 203, 207; Spaans 2004, 123.

⁸⁵ Slenk 1965, 203; Luth 1986, 43; Pettegree 2005b, 69-70.

links between the debates on the use of the vernacular in religious contexts, discussions on translation, and the relationship between language and community building as well as protest.

Utenhove: Unifying Dutch

In 1566, the first complete Dutch version of the psalms was printed. Its author was Jan Utenhove, an exiled Protestant.⁸⁶ His text, however, did not meet with a uniformly positive response from the Dutch-speaking Calvinist community. Utenhove's approach was marked by its attention to the existence of various dialects in Dutch, which the translator tried to melt together into one hybrid whole in his psalter in order to ensure cohesion and unity. With this translation, he took part both in the debates on religion, and in those on language.

Utenhove, a native of Ghent, had to flee the Low Countries because of his religious views as early as 1544. As he travelled across Europe, he worked on his editions of religious texts, such as psalms, a Bible translation, and a catechism for children.⁸⁷ In the early 1550s, Utenhove published the songbook *25. Psalmen end andere ghesanghen*.⁸⁸ Five of the twenty-five psalms in this work were modelled after texts by Marot.⁸⁹ Throughout his career as a wandering leader of the Dutch-speaking Calvinist community in exile, Utenhove continued to work on his psalm translations. They appeared in various editions in refugee communities in London and Emden and were used by congregations both in the Low Countries and in the exile communities.⁹⁰

With every new edition of his works, Utenhove's psalms became more similar to the Genevan psalter.⁹¹ He increasingly used the tunes of the French psalm book. In 1565, Utenhove died after finishing his long-term project on psalm translations. In the following year, the end product was posthumously printed by Godfried van Wingen in London.⁹² Of the 150 psalms, 93 were set to Genevan tunes.⁹³

Utenhove's psalter makes use of a carefully designed form of Dutch. He had developed this special Dutch for his translation of the Greek New Testament, which had appeared in 1556 in Emden.⁹⁴ Utenhove used a regularized version of Dutch that combined elements of all its

⁸⁶ Utenhove 1566. Already in 1565, the painter-poet Lucas d'Heere, who was an admirer of the poetic works of Marot, had published a partial Dutch translation of the Genevan psalter. D'Heere 1565b.

⁸⁷ For an overview of Utenhove's life, see the dated but still unrivalled biography by Frederik Pijper: Pijper 1883.

⁸⁸ Beelen 2004, 413-414.

⁸⁹ Lenselink 1959, 250-309; Slenk 1969, 158-159.

⁹⁰ Slenk 1969, 156; Luth 1986, 20-22; Grijp & Langendijk 2001, 170.

⁹¹ Slenk 1965, 66; De Gier 1987, 109; Knetsch 1991, 150-151; Beelen 2004, 416.

⁹² Slenk 1969, 156-157.

⁹³ Lenselink 1959, 430-431; De Gier 1987, 109.

⁹⁴ Utenhove 1556.

different dialects so that every speaker of the Low German language could understand it. He attempted to find a golden mean in the dialectal diversity of Dutch: ‘we have moderated our writing so, that it may be of use and service for all of the Low Countries’.⁹⁵ He created this inclusive language in the context of the refugee communities. It is likely that the cacophony of different dialects that Utenhove heard in these settlements motivated him to undertake this enormous task.⁹⁶

Utenhove tried to improve his Dutch on the levels of vocabulary, syntax, and morphology. He adopted a mixed vocabulary, combining elements from different dialects. A natural consequence of this choice was that, while there were familiar elements for everyone, there were also unfamiliar words for each reader. This forced Utenhove to add an explanatory word list to his translation, containing Dutch words ‘which are not in all parts of the Low Countries equally understood by the common people’.⁹⁷ The list contains, for instance, words from the eastern dialects and German which were unknown to speakers of Dutch from the south and west, such as ‘zamt’ (‘together with’).⁹⁸

To improve the clarity of his written Dutch, Utenhove further imposed a transparent system of grammatical cases: ‘to distinguish gender, number, case, tense, and similar things, the neglect of which often brings about great misunderstandings and dangers in Scripture’.⁹⁹ By following the example of German and distinguishing between, for example, various forms of the article ‘den’ (‘the’), such as the dative form ‘dem’ (‘to the’) and the genitive ‘der’ (‘of the’), Utenhove wished to disambiguate his language. As he explained, ambiguous translations could be religiously dangerous, as they obstruct the true meaning of the sacred text.

Another method chosen by Utenhove to foster clarity was the adoption of the archaic form ‘du’ as the second-person singular pronoun, rather than the more common ‘ghy’, which originally designated the second-person plural but had become increasingly used for the second-person singular, too.¹⁰⁰ For clarity in his spelling, he sought recourse in the orthographical proposals made by printer-schoolmaster Joos Lambrecht.¹⁰¹ He thus used Lambrecht’s ‘ę’ with cedilla, as in ‘meęst’ (‘most’).

⁹⁵ ‘zo hebben wy onze schrijuen alzo ghematight, dat het allen den Nederlanderen zal moghen nut end dienstigh zijn’. Utenhove 1556, fol. π5r-π5v.

⁹⁶ Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 55; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 202.

⁹⁷ ‘die niet an allen oorden des Nederlands euen ghelijck van dem ghemeynen manne verstaen werden’. Utenhove 1556, fol. Hh8r.

⁹⁸ Utenhove 1556, fol. Hh8r-Hh8v.

⁹⁹ ‘om genus a genere, numerum a numero, casum a casu, tempora a temporibus, end der ghelijcke dinghen te onderscheyden: Welcker onachtzaemheyte menighmael groot mißuerstand end vaerlickheyte in der Schrift is medebringhende’. Utenhove 1556, fol. π5r.

¹⁰⁰ Luth 1986, 24; De Gier 1987, 108.

¹⁰¹ Van der Sijs 2006, 81. See: Chapter 4.3.

Finally, Utenhove's language programme entailed the rejection of loanwords and the promotion 'of the necessary purity of the Dutch tongue'.¹⁰² He wished to restore the Dutch lexicon to her former state:

Concerning the language that we have used here, we have, following the advice of some learned Dutchmen, done a great effort to return it to her proper form (from which she has fallen without any doubt because of strange and foreign languages, also in people's minds) as much as possible, so that the meaning of the Holy Ghost would not be obscured by negligent writing, and so no one would be estranged from reading our work.

Angaende auer der sprake die wy hier ghebruyckt hebben, daerin hebben wy, na zommigher gheleerder Nederlanderen raad, grooten arbeyd anghewendt, op dat wy de zelue in hoeren rechten zwangk (waervan zy buyten allem twijfel door vrémde end wtländische spraken, oock binnen manns ghedencken zeer veruallen is) zo verr ymmers als het ons moghelick ware, wederbrochten: Op dat door het onachtzaam schrijuen de meyning des heylighen Gheestes niet verduystert wurde, end dat niemand van dem lezen onzes arbeyds verurémmt wurde.¹⁰³

Similar to Coornhert in his 1561 Cicero translation, Utenhove complains in this 1556 Bible translation that the Dutch vernacular has changed over the preceding decades, that is, that it has adopted loanwords from other languages.¹⁰⁴ As Utenhove explains here, loanwords cannot be understood by all and therefore discriminate between the readers of a text. As he wishes to make the Scripture comprehensible to all speakers of Dutch, he avoids borrowed terms. To him, borrowings are dangerous for one's religious welfare, as they hamper access to the Word of God.

In the sixteenth century, Utenhove's translation of the New Testament was already being strongly criticized for its *bricolage*-like Dutch language. His printer, Godfried van Wingen, sent him an overview of the complaints in a letter: 'The language that has been constructed can be used by no one. It is a patchwork: the Testament is [a mixture of] all languages'.¹⁰⁵ The critique is harsh: in his wish to make his text intelligible to everyone, Utenhove was allegedly

¹⁰² 'der noodwendigher reynigheyt der Nederlandscher spraken'. Utenhove 1556, fol. π5r.

¹⁰³ Utenhove 1556, fols. π4v-π5r.

¹⁰⁴ For Coornhert, see: Chapter 3.1.

¹⁰⁵ 'Confecta lingua quę neminj vsuj esse potest, Centones sunt; Testamentum est omnium linguarum'. Godfried van Wingen cited by: Pijper 1883, 133.

understood by no one. The limited success of the New Testament translation did not, however, discourage Utenhove from using his method again in his psalm translations. The final complete edition still uses eastern and German words, such as ‘auer’ (‘however’).¹⁰⁶ The criticism of Utenhove’s translation shows that, in the sixteenth century, not only was the influence of Romance languages, such as French and Latin, on Dutch being criticized, but so was the influence of German. Language debaters, such as Utenhove and Coornhert, supported the adoption of German elements in their mother tongue, but clearly there was no consensus on this topic.

Utenhove’s psalm translation was used for some time in Calvinist communities in the Low Countries and elsewhere, but it was soon replaced by the more successful work of Petrus Datheen. Utenhove did, nevertheless, set the tone for a language-conscious approach to psalm translations. He was aware of the religious dangers of ambiguity, and he realized the importance of textual and linguistic unity for the sustainability of the Dutch-speaking Calvinist congregation. His carefully designed language strategy was incited by the religious and social issues he faced and deserves to be the object of more serious study than it has been so far.¹⁰⁷

Datheen: Equalizing French and Dutch

In 1566, the year that Utenhove’s final text appeared, exiled Calvinist front-rank man Petrus Datheen published his translation of the psalms. He was a native of Mont-Cassel, in the south of Flanders, where at that time Dutch was still the native language.¹⁰⁸ Datheen’s psalter was printed in various places, including Heidelberg and Ghent. It was based on the Genevan psalter, of which Datheen’s text was a rather literal translation. He made a conscious decision to translate from French, which has everything to do with his approach to the bilingualism of the Calvinist community of the Low Countries.

From the year 1550 onwards, Datheen, originally a Carmelite monk, was forced to live in exile because of his religious dissidence. He lived in the refugee community in London for some time, where he worked as a typesetter.¹⁰⁹ Later, he fled to settlements in Emden, Frankfurt,

¹⁰⁶ Utenhove explains the meaning of ‘auer’ by referring to both German and eastern dialects: ‘in High German “Aber”, in eastern dialect “Averst”’. ‘op hooghduydsch Aber, op Oostersch Auerst’. Utenhove 1556, fol. Hh8r. De Gier 1987, 110; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 202.

¹⁰⁷ Overview works of translations of sacred texts into Dutch compliantly devote several pages to Utenhove, but he rarely constitutes the topic of an entire study. The only biography of this key figure in the history of Calvinism and the Dutch language dates from 1883. See: Pijper 1883; Slenk 1969. For overview works mentioning him, see: Overdiep 1944; Lenselink 1959; De Gier 1987, 106-111; Van der Sijs 2004, 120-123.

¹⁰⁸ Overdiep 1944, 194; Lenselink 1959, 494.

¹⁰⁹ Lenselink 1959, 494; De Gier 1987, 111; Joby 2015, 117.

and finally Frankenthal.¹¹⁰ In this context of exile, he embarked on his psalm translation. He managed to complete it within a year and a half, a remarkably short span of time.¹¹¹ The similarities between Datheen's psalm translation and the Genevan psalter are substantial. Contrary to Utenhove, Datheen used all the melodies of the French work. He chose to write the same number of stanzas for each psalm as had been composed by Beza and Marot.¹¹² He followed the rhyme scheme of the French original, even adopting the same alternation of feminine and masculine rhyme.

Nevertheless, the strong natural word stress in Dutch caused many problems when singing Datheen's texts. As the translator did not systematically place the stressed syllables on the long, stressed notes, the rhythm of the words and that of the melody sometimes failed to correspond.¹¹³ This had not been the case in the French version by Marot and Beza, in which text and music aligned. An example of the problems with Datheen's Dutch version can be found in the first couplet of psalm 119, which reads as follows [Figure 5.1]:

Blissful is the man who lives,
 In a character that has been judged sincere,
 Who completely follows God's laws,
 Good to him who is always diligent,
 To keep God's commandments sweet,
 And to scrutinize his knowledge with zeal.

Ghelucksaligh is die mensche die leeft,
 In een gemoet dat oprecht is beuonden,
 Die hem gheheel tot Gods wetten begeeft,
 Wel hem die neerstigh is tot allen stonden,
 Om te houden Gods gheboden seer soet,
 En sijn kennisse met vliet te doorgronden.¹¹⁴

In the fifth and sixth lines, the melody and the text clash.¹¹⁵ According to the musical notation for line five, which can be seen in Figure 5.1, the word 'houden' is sung with a short first and a long second syllable. The natural word stress actually falls on the first syllable, which makes

¹¹⁰ Lenselink 1959, 494.

¹¹¹ De Gier 1987, 112.

¹¹² Knetsch 1991, 150-151.

¹¹³ De Gier 1987, 117-118; Luth 1986, 48; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen 2004, 452.

¹¹⁴ Datheen 1566, fol. T2r-T2v.

¹¹⁵ De Gier 1987, 117-118.

the way the word is sung awkward. A similar problem occurs in line six, where ‘kennisse’ (‘knowledge’), with a natural stress on the first syllable, has to be sung using first a short note and then two long ones. This means that the stressed syllable is the only one with a short note, doing injustice to the natural melody of the word. These conflicts between the rhythm of the text and the rhythm of the music, which are frequent in Datheen’s work, make his psalms difficult to sing. The pronunciation of the words in question is counterintuitive due to the fact that the natural word stress is misplaced.



Figure 5.1.

P. Datheen. *Alle de Psalmen Davids. Ende andere Lofsanghen wt den Fransoyschen dichte int Nederduytsch ouerghesett.* Ghent: Ghileyn Manilius, 1566, fol. T1v-T2r. Ghent University, BHSL.RES.0520/1.

Another problem with Datheen’s psalter is that he needs many line fillers to complete his verses and solve problems with the rhyme.¹¹⁶ A striking 13 out of a total of 150 psalms thus contain a line ending in the words ‘so/also men siet’ (‘as can be seen’). They add no significant content to the psalm but do offer a convenient rhyme.¹¹⁷ Contemporary poets, such as Marnix, as well as modern scholars have condemned the psalter for these interjections and the issues with their sound structure.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ De Gier 1987, 116; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen 2004, 452.

¹¹⁷ Psalms 5, 19, 21, 39, 41, 42, 44, 47, 55, 75, 107, 119, and 126. Datheen 1566.

¹¹⁸ Luth 1986, 51; De Gier 1987, 121.

Besides the Genevan psalter, Datheen consulted the so-called *Deux Aes* Bible, a Dutch Bible translation.¹¹⁹ He thus did not use a text in one of the *tres linguae sacrae*—Greek, Latin, and Hebrew—as his basis, for which he was criticized by Marnix.¹²⁰ The former monk also used the translation of his precursor Utenhove as a model for his translation of the French texts, copying particular words and phrasings, for instance.¹²¹ He adopted a much more informal Dutch language than Utenhove, however, going so far as to even include vulgar words like ‘drek’ (‘shit’).¹²²

The reason that Datheen gave for his hard work reveals an attitude towards language that surpasses a respect for his mother tongue:

[A]s we are united with the evangelical church in France in dogmas and ceremonies, I wished with all my heart that we may also be equal in the singing of the psalms, which have in that language [French] been translated very charmingly and clearly. I have followed those as much as possible, and as much as our language could allow.

[D]ewyle dat wi met den Euangelischen kercken in Vrancrijcke, inder leere, ende ceremonien eendrachtich sijn, so hebbe ic van herten begheert, dat wi inden sang der Psalmen, hen ooc mochten ghelijck syn, die in die sprake seer lieflic ende claer ouerghesettet zyn, de welcke ic so naghevolght hebbe, alst my moghelic gheweest is, ende onse spraecke heeft connen lyden.¹²³

Datheen thus explains his translation strategy in this fragment. Concluding that the Dutch-speaking Calvinist community shared its main doctrines, beliefs, and practices with the francophone congregations, Datheen argues that they should also be able to share a corpus of texts, and thus psalms. By following the Genevan psalter down to the smallest details, he enabled Dutch-speaking Calvinists to use his psalter alongside their francophone coreligionists.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Lenselink 1959, 561; De Gier 1987, 113-114.

¹²⁰ Lenselink 1959, 519-520; Meijer 2004, 437; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen 2004, 449.

¹²¹ Lenselink 1959, 560-561; Meijer 2004, 447.

¹²² Datheen 1566, fol. N10r, fol. S6r (psalms 83 and 113); De Gier 1987, 112-113; Meijer 2004, 437-438; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen 2004, 452.

¹²³ Datheen 1566, fol. *5v.

¹²⁴ Overdiep 1944, 195; De Gier 1987, 113.

Datheen's choices concerning translation were a statement furthering multilingual unity in a new religious community that struggled to create cohesiveness.¹²⁵ Because of Datheen, Dutch-speaking Calvinists could now sing what their fellow believers from France, Switzerland, and the francophone Low Countries sung. Furthermore, Datheen made simultaneous, multilingual chant possible. Such a bilingual use of the Genevan psalter and Datheen's psalms was further stimulated by—or perhaps mirrored in—the existence of bilingual editions that present the two versions in a parallel way, counter-paging the French and Dutch texts [Figure 5.2].¹²⁶ Additional research is required into the extent to which such bilingual books were printed and used. Most importantly, Datheen's psalter provided a textual basis that was shared by Calvinists across the language divide.



Figure 5.2.

T. Beza, P. Datheen, & C. Marot. *Les pseavmes de David, mis en rime francoise par Cl. Marot, & Th. de Beze. Psalmen Davids, Wt den Fransoyschen dichte in Nederlantschen overgeset. Door Petrvm Dathenvm.* Franeker: Gillis van den Rade for Jean Commelin, 1594, fol. A2v-A3r. University Library Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, OTM: OK 62-9738.

¹²⁵ On the importance of shared texts for the cohesiveness of the Calvinist community, see: Marnef 1996, 71-72; Marnef 2000, 348; Marnef 2012.

¹²⁶ See, for example: Beza, Datheen, & Marot 1594; Beza, Datheen, & Marot 1635.

The value of Datheen's translation was immediately recognized by the higher circles of the Calvinist community. In 1568, during the Convent of Wesel, it was accepted as the official psalter for the Dutch-speaking members of the community, a decision that was endorsed during the national synod of Dordrecht in 1578.¹²⁷ The francophone Calvinists would use the Genevan psalter. In 1571, the Dutch church in London also adopted Datheen's psalms rather than Utenhove's, because they 'correspond in tune with the French psalms'.¹²⁸ The parallel between Datheen's Dutch version and the Genevan psalter was thus appreciated.

Both Datheen and Utenhove were aware of the interplay between the religious quarrels and the language debates. Both explored a multilingual approach in order to foster the growth of a unified Calvinist community in the Low Countries and in exile settlements. Utenhove focused on the relationship between the Dutch and German tongues in order to improve the Dutch vernacular and thus build internal cohesion among Dutch-speaking Calvinists. Datheen emphasized the need for a Dutch translation that remained close to French in order to create a bilingual community that could shelter all the inhabitants of the Low Countries.

5.3. Undoing Babel in Marnix's Psalms

Marnix took his treatment of language to an even higher level than Datheen and Utenhove in his psalter. The complex and intricate approach to language in this work has not yet been revealed in its totality. A focus on the language choices he made will demonstrate that Marnix combined the ideas of his two predecessors to create a psalm translation that respected its Hebrew and French source languages as much as its Dutch target language. Marnix thus confirms that taking an interest in the Dutch language excludes neither attention to French or other languages, nor concern for interlingual communication.

Marnix was looking for a language approach that could foster a sense of social unity and cohesion across language borders. As he concluded in his letter to the refugee communities in London, such internal unity was lacking. To solve this issue, he advised the use of shared texts and practices.¹²⁹ His psalm translation provided the bilingual community with a psalter in two languages, indeed providing a shared textual basis. In order to prevent friction in singing

¹²⁷ Slenk 1965, 225; Luth 1986, 55-56; Knetsch 1991, 152-153; Meijer 2004, 437. Datheen's work remained the official psalm book of the Dutch-speaking Calvinist church until 1773, when it was replaced by a new, improved text. The replacement of Datheen's psalter met with resistance, which inspired Maarten 't Hart's novel *Het psalmenoproer* (2006). However, in several religious communities in the Netherlands, such as congregations in Ederveen and Rhenen, his psalter is still actively used. De Gier 1987, 120; Meijer 2004, 435; Van der Sijs 2006, 84, 152.

¹²⁸ 'accorderen in de wijze mette Fransche Psalmen'. Cited by: Luth 1986, 23.

¹²⁹ See: Chapter 5.1.

or interpretation, the text needed to be translated very carefully and appreciate the different sound structures of French and Dutch.

Uniting French, Dutch, and Hebrew

Like Calvin, Marnix argued that psalms could stimulate devotional sentiments and positively influence one's state of mind, stating that these texts 'will freely revive your heart,/ and heal at once your pain and sorrow'.¹³⁰ In order to have such a positive effect, however, he considered it of the utmost importance that the believers actually understood what they were singing and thus that they used their native vernacular: 'we follow the explicit order of the Holy Ghost, that the prayers should be done in the common language of the land, that the people can understand'.¹³¹ As a justification for his use of the vernacular, Marnix adopts the argument that Jesus did not choose learned men as his disciples, but unlearned fishermen, who initially only spoke their own mother tongue.¹³² On the importance of the vernacular, Datheen, Utenhove, and Marnix all agreed. On the exact language strategy that should be followed when translating into the vernacular, their opinions differed yet overlapped. Here, ideas on language, religion, and community intersected.

The prefaces of Marnix's 1580 and 1591 psalm editions strongly suggest that the popularity of Datheen's translations instigated the diplomat to make his own version. Despite repeatedly stipulating that he does not wish to 'rob him of his glory and honour', Marnix points out the problems of Datheen's text.¹³³ Most importantly, he denounces the naïvely literal way in which Datheen had translated the French text of the Genevan psalter into Dutch. Datheen had, according to Marnix, done great injustice to the *Hebraica veritas*. Marnix rejects his psalter for lacking philological precision, as it was based on a French intermediary rather than the Hebrew original.¹³⁴

In the 1591 edition of his translation, Marnix explains that the reasons for the shortcomings of Datheen's psalter are twofold: firstly, he mentions Datheen's deficient language skills, his 'inexperience with the Hebrew language';¹³⁵ secondly, Marnix calls out the short time span in which Datheen created his text. In order to attack Datheen's brisk pace of

¹³⁰ 'sal u vry verquicken uwe herten,/ End heyln t'eenemael u zeeren ende smerten'. Marnix 1591, fol. †4v.

¹³¹ 'wy hebben het uytdruckelijck bevel des heyligen geestes, dat de ghebeden behooren ghedaen te werden in ghemeyne Landttaele die t'volck verstaen kan'. Marnix 1580, fol. A6v. On the notion of 'common language' in the sixteenth century, see: Van Rooy 2017, 88-89.

¹³² Marnix 1591, fol. †5v.

¹³³ 'hem van syne eere ende loff beroouen'. Marnix 1580, fol. A4r.

¹³⁴ Burke 2005b, 25.

¹³⁵ 'de onervarentheyt vande Hebreisscher sprake'. Marnix 1591, fol. †7r.

translating such complex and sacred material, Marnix adopts the strong metaphor of the prematurely born child: ‘he himself [Datheen], during his lifetime, has confessed more than once that his [translation] had been taken from him almost as in a premature birth, so that he had not corrected it well in many places’.¹³⁶ By using the emotionally burdened metaphor of the frail, premature baby and by placing his own critique into Datheen’s mouth, Marnix tries to convince his readers of the flaws of the popular psalter.

Around 1570, Marnix commenced work on his own psalm translation.¹³⁷ The first complete edition followed in 1580, fourteen years after Datheen’s translation had been published. Marnix’s work was titled *Het Boeck der psalmen Davids*. Its title page emphasizes that the work is based on both the Genevan psalter and the Hebrew Book of Psalms.¹³⁸ Marnix balanced his respect for the *Hebraica veritas* and his wish to maintain the melodies of his French model.¹³⁹ He explains his translation method in the preface of the 1580 edition, stating that he tried to follow ‘so closely the truth of the Hebrew text, that one can easily notice the difference with other translations’.¹⁴⁰ By mentioning the great differences between his text and unnamed other translations, he takes a clear swipe at Datheen’s method.

It is remarkable that Marnix, who was so adamant about the importance of the Hebrew source text for the Dutch psalm translation, does not criticize the Genevan psalter, which was, like Datheen’s text, based on intermediary translations. It is unlikely that he had no opinion about that translation. Possibly, he did not want to offend his friend Theodorus Beza, or he deemed the status of the Genevan text simply too high to tamper with.

Marnix took his translation method and respect for his Hebrew source seriously, as can be deduced from two folios kept at the Royal Library of Belgium. These folios contain Dutch prose translations of psalms 82, 83, and 84, translated directly from Hebrew [Figure 5.3].¹⁴¹ The prose texts are accompanied by their equivalents in verse. The folios are important for confirming that Marnix’s respect for the *Hebraica veritas* was not empty rhetoric, but that he actually translated the Hebrew into prose before attempting to create a versed text.

¹³⁶ ‘hy selue in zijn leuen meer dan eenmael bekent heeft, dat de sijne hem schier als een ontijdige geboorte waren afgedrongen geweest, soo dat hyse in vele plaetsen niet wel ouersien en hadde’. Marnix 1591, fol. †7r.

¹³⁷ Bostoen 1988a, 13.

¹³⁸ Marnix 1580; Todd 1992, 30.

¹³⁹ In the preface to an earlier Dutch psalm translation, made by the painter-rhetorician Lucas d’Heere and published in 1565, printer Ghileyn Manilius complained overtly about the ambiguous phrasing of the Hebrew psalms. D’Heere 1565b, 4.

¹⁴⁰ ‘alsoo naewe nae der waerheyt des Hebreischen textes, ghedaen te hebben, datmen het onderscheyt van andere ouersettingen wel lichtelijk sal konnen gewaer werden’. Marnix 1580, fol. A5r.

¹⁴¹ Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, ms. 21637.

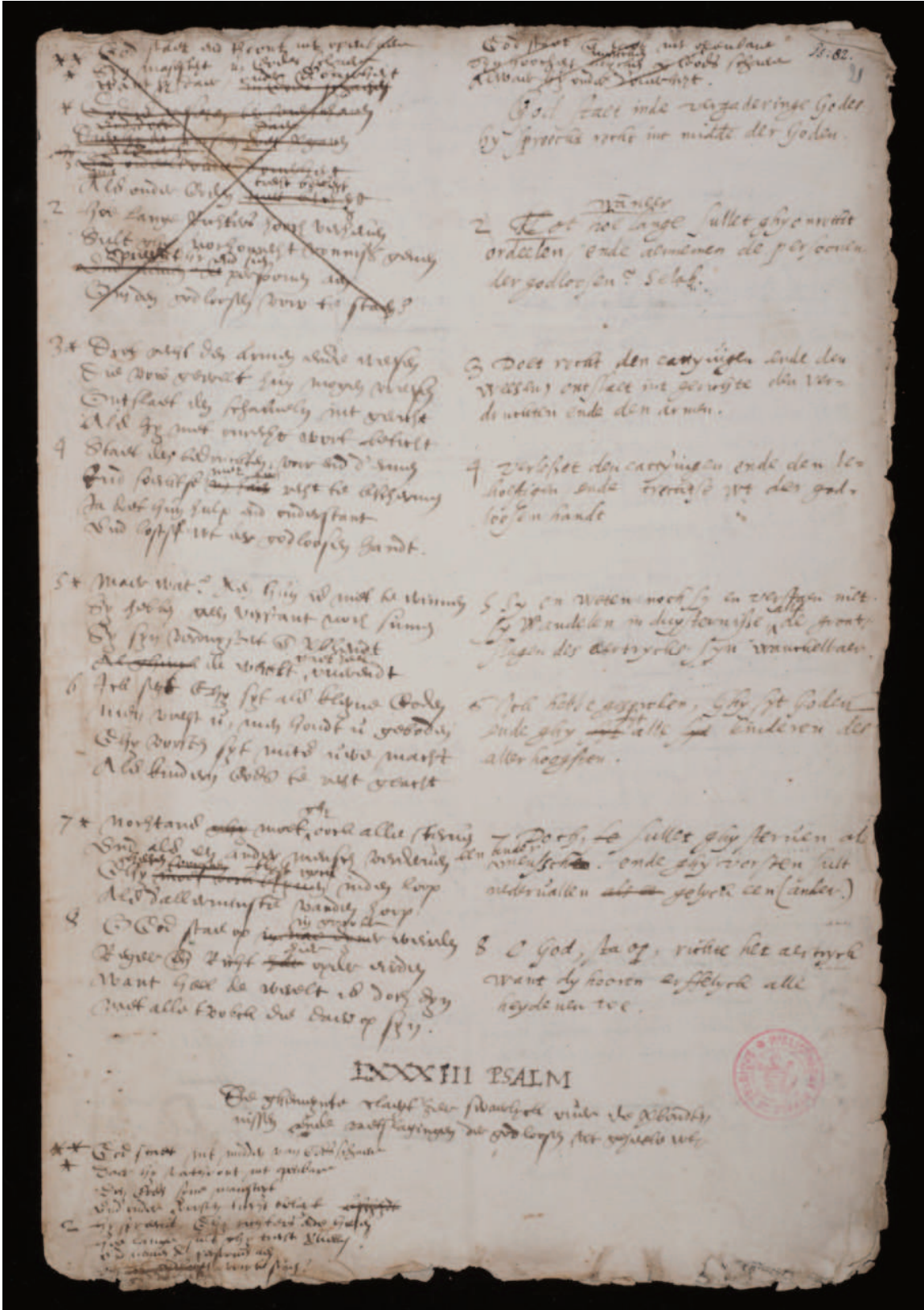


Figure 5.3.
 P. of Marnix of Sainte-Aldegonde. Royal Library of Belgium, ms. 21637, fol. 1r.

The manuscript is mentioned in studies by Alfons Dewitte, Marten Rudelsheim, and A. A. van Schelven, but none of them studied its contents.¹⁴² It contains corrections of and improvements on the text that was printed in the 1580 edition. It can thus safely be assumed that the manuscript dates from the 1580s. The third verse in the seventh stanza of psalm 82, for example, was printed in 1580 as: ‘Ghy moet oock blyuen inden loop’ (‘You also have to stay on course’).¹⁴³ In the manuscript text, ‘moet oock blyuen’ has been crossed through, and in superscript the words ‘heeren’ and ‘blyft oock’ have been added. The second printed edition of the psalms, issued in 1591, indeed contains this improved version, as: ‘Ghy Heeren, blijft oock inden loop’ (‘You, gentlemen, stay on course as well’).¹⁴⁴

A comparison of the original Hebrew text and the prose translation of psalm 82 that can be found in the Brussels manuscript brings Marnix’s competence in Hebrew to light. His translation is, indeed, very faithful, although it does contain a few problematic elements.¹⁴⁵ The seventh stanza, in particular, is awkward. Marnix has translated it as ‘However, you will die like another man, and you, lords, will fall like (another)’.¹⁴⁶ Marnix seemingly struggled to translate the phrase, feeling the need to add the word ‘another’ in parentheses in these written notes. Rather than ‘like another’, the Hebrew text gives ‘like a man’, or ‘as a man’, which makes the addition in parentheses unnecessary. The other verses have, nevertheless, been translated skilfully.

Although the prose translation was made carefully, the verse texts are necessarily very different. By deciding to adopt the tunes of the Genevan psalter, Marnix committed himself, for instance, to following its use of eight quatrains for psalm 82, which in Hebrew contains only eight verses in total. Consequently, each individual Hebrew verse needed to be stretched out and expanded to cover four lines in the Dutch translation. The third couplet of psalm 82 is thus translated in prose as follows: ‘Do justice to the miserable and the orphans, deliver the

¹⁴² Rudelsheim 1898, 114; Van Schelven 1939, 72-73; Dewitte 2010, 250-252, 256-259. In a 2010 article, Alfons Dewitte claimed that the versification of the psalms, both in the printed 1580 edition and in the manuscript version, was made by Bonaventura Vulcanius, and that Marnix was only responsible for the prose translation out of Hebrew. According to him, the preface to the readers in the 1580 edition was written by Vulcanius, seemingly ignoring the fact that it is signed with Marnix’s name. To further support this claim, Dewitte quotes a letter written by Vulcanius. Upon close inspection, this letter does not give any indications about the authorship of the psalms either. As neither of the two texts mentioned by Dewitte to support his claim about Vulcanius’s possible authorship provides conclusive evidence, it is not followed here. Marnix’s authorship is considered indisputable, although it has to be admitted that Vulcanius might have had a considerable influence on the content of the psalter, as he was closely involved in its creation and publication. Dewitte 2010.

¹⁴³ Marnix 1580, fol. O8v.

¹⁴⁴ Marnix 1591, fol. N6r.

¹⁴⁵ I am grateful to Wout van Bekkum for his comments on Marnix’s psalm translation. The Hebrew text that was used for the comparison was taken from Plantin’s polyglot *Biblia sacra*. *Biblia sacra* 1568-1573, vol. 3, 428-430.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Doch, sullet ghy steruen als een ander mensch, ende ghy vorsten sult nederuallen gelyck een (ander)’. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, ms. 21637, fol. 1.

oppressed and the poor'.¹⁴⁷ It contains two central clauses. Each of these has to be doubled in length in the verse translation to span four lines: 'Do justice to the poor and the orphans/ Who have to fear violence/ Deliver the miserable/ When he is threatened by injustice'.¹⁴⁸ The second and fourth lines of the verse translation are redundant additions. Despite Marnix's claims that he valued the Hebrew source text highly, his respect for the Genevan model forces him to move beyond that source and allow extrapolation, and therefore interpretation of the sacred text.

In order to illustrate his argument that his own translation method based on the use of the Hebrew text is superior, Marnix allows his readers to compare the respective qualities of his own and Datheen's translations. In the back of the work, Marnix inserted his translation of the Ten Commandments, based on the original Hebrew text.¹⁴⁹ It is immediately followed by Datheen's version of the Commandments, 'translated from French, following the old common way of P. Datheen'.¹⁵⁰ By printing these two texts together, Marnix clearly invited his readers to compare both translations and see for themselves the consequences of choosing a source text that is itself a translation of the original.

A comparison of the translations of the Ten Commandments by Datheen and Marnix indeed confirms that the differences between the two versions are considerable. Datheen's Dutch translation of the second commandment is, for example, much shorter than Marnix's version. While Datheen only explains that it is forbidden to honour any visual representations of earthly things, Marnix's version goes into more detail as to what kinds of veneration are forbidden, mentioning offerings and kneeling, as indicated in the Hebrew text of Exodus 20:5.¹⁵¹ Datheen's version of the fourth commandment, treating the Sabbath, fails to mention that this sacred day of rest should be respected even by servants and beasts of burden.¹⁵² These two groups are, indeed, mentioned in Exodus 20:10 and in Marnix's translation from Hebrew.¹⁵³ For Marnix's readers, Datheen's omission of all these elements in his translation could be an indication of its deficiency, as it does not render the complete content of the Word of God.

Datheen is not the only psalm translator whose method is criticized. Marnix also reprints the Dutch translation of the *Pater Noster* and the seven Articles of Faith by Utenhove next to

¹⁴⁷ 'Doet recht den catuyigen ende den weesen, ontslaet int gerichte den verdruckten ende den armen'. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, ms. 21637, fol. 1.

¹⁴⁸ 'Doet recht den armen ende weesen/ Die voir gewelt hun mogen vreesen/ Ontslaet den schamelen int gericht/ Als hy met onrecht wort beticht'. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, ms. 21637, fol. 1.

¹⁴⁹ Marnix 1580, fol. BB6v-BB7v.

¹⁵⁰ 'na de oude gewoonlijcke wyse van P. Datheno uyt den Franchoyse ouer ghesett'. Marnix 1580, fol. BB7v-BB8r.

¹⁵¹ *Biblia sacra* 1568-1573, vol. 1, 252-253.

¹⁵² Marnix 1591, fol. Bb8r.

¹⁵³ *Biblia sacra* 1568-1573, vol. 1, 252-253.

his own version. Utenhove had used the Greek edition of the Bible as his primary source. While Marnix based his psalms on the Hebrew text, he claims to have translated his *Pater Noster* from Greek, thus adopting the same parameters as Utenhove. This time, rather than the choice of source text, Marnix seems to target the manner of translation applied by Utenhove, whose translation is much longer than Marnix's own. As explained in Chapter 3, vivid discussions took place at this time about the choice between literal translation and translating the meaning of the text in a less strict way.¹⁵⁴ By contrasting the two *Pater Noster* versions, Marnix appears to display the importance of staying relatively close to the source text when dealing with sacred material. He seems to be blind, though, to the imperfections of his own method, as his psalm translations are very loose reworkings of his own prose translations from Hebrew.

Nevertheless, the methods chosen by Marnix and Utenhove present great similarities. Both men performed a great philological task in returning to the sacred sources of the psalms to come up with a correct translation. Moreover, Marnix adopted a language strategy similar to Utenhove's by pursuing a form of Dutch that was both understandable to a wide range of native speakers and free of loanwords:

We, wherever it was possible, have followed the common and ordinary way of speaking, except for the fact that we, as much as possible, have avoided all scummed and strange words from other languages, as well as filler words that are often used in poetry in order to find a rhyme.

Dat wy alomme daer het ons mogelijkck is geweest de ghemeyne ende gebruyckelijcke wijze van spreken ghevolget hebben, behaluen dat wy soo vele doenlijck is, alle geschuynde ende vreemde woirden uyt andere talen ontleent, hebben gemijdet, Mitzgaders oock alle stopwoirden diemen inden dichte om den rijm te vinden, dickwils plach te gebruycken.¹⁵⁵

Like Utenhove, Marnix claims to strive to use the language of the people. The reference to filler words is another example in which he lashes out at Datheen for his inferior translation.

One of the central aspects of Marnix's language strategy was avoiding the use of loanwords, which he, following the discussions on the topic, calls 'scummed' words in the given citation. He decided, for the sake of the purity and clarity of the language, to reinstall a few archaic stylistic aspects, 'to bring back into use the old Dutch vernacular mother tongue in

¹⁵⁴ Gillaerts et al. 2015, 29-30.

¹⁵⁵ Marnix 1591, fol. †7v.

order to make use of clear words'.¹⁵⁶ In this passage, Marnix refers to the idea, also mentioned by Utenhove, that the Dutch tongue has deteriorated over time and that its former glory should be restored.

The most prominent archaic feature of Marnix's language in his psalm translations is the use of the pronoun 'du' rather than 'ghy' for the second-person singular. This choice is remarkable, as Utenhove's text had been criticized earlier for the exact same reason. Why would Marnix risk the same outcome? In the high Middle Ages, the form 'du' was used for the second-person singular, and 'ghy' for the second-person plural. From the thirteenth century onwards, the plural form 'ghy' started to replace 'du' to express politeness and formality, perhaps under the influence of the use of 'vous' in French. Using the common 'ghy' form to address God would show respect, whereas the old-fashioned 'du' implied a more intimate relation with God. At the same time, using 'ghy' for both the second-person singular and plural could cause ambiguity, like 'you' in modern English.¹⁵⁷

Marnix was aware that he might receive a negative reaction to his archaic choice of 'du' and therefore warned his readers in the 1580 and 1591 editions that he had used 'the old and uncommon words "du" and "dy"'.¹⁵⁸ He defended himself by explaining that using 'ghy' for both the second-person singular and the second-person plural would be confusing. Clarity is crucial in this religious text, Marnix explains, since addressing God in the singular or the plural has theological consequences. The choice might imply a conception of God as a single or plural entity.¹⁵⁹

In the 1580 text, Marnix added authority to his choice of 'du' by referring to German, Italian, and French, in which the singular form was used to speak to God.¹⁶⁰ He thus applied the argument that the good examples set by other languages should be followed. In 1591, he took this idea even further by expanding his enumeration: 'the High Germans, French, Italians, Spaniards, English, Scots, Polish, and others [...] whenever they address God or pray, never use any other form than the singular'.¹⁶¹ Marnix tries to convince his readers by flaunting his polyglot knowledge and by tapping into the rivalry with other languages. As almost all

¹⁵⁶ 'oude duytsche landt ende moeder spraecke wederomme int ghebruyck te brenghen om sick te behelpen met duydelijcke woorden'. Marnix 1580, fol. A4v.

¹⁵⁷ Van den Toorn 1977; Vermaas 2002, 34-41; Van der Sijs 2004, 468-469; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 138-141.

¹⁵⁸ 'de oude ende ongewoonlijcke woorden van (du ende (dy.)'. Marnix 1580, fol. A4r.

¹⁵⁹ Marnix 1591, fol. †7v.

¹⁶⁰ Marnix 1580, A4v-A5r.

¹⁶¹ 'Hoochduytschen, Francoysen, Italianen, Spaegnaerden, Engelschen, Schotten, Polaken, ende andere meer, [...] als sy God aenspreken ofte bidden, sy nimmermeer anders en gebruycken dan het getal van eenen alleene'. Marnix 1591, fol. †8v.

European languages used their respective second-person singular pronouns to address God, Dutch could not lag behind, especially since the ‘du’ form had been used in Dutch in the past. Marnix then amply illustrates this last argument by mentioning authoritative manuscripts and printed books that use ‘du’.¹⁶²

Marnix’s decision triggered a discussion on the pronoun ‘du’ that would continue well into the seventeenth century.¹⁶³ As mentioned in the previous chapter, schoolmaster Christiaan Offermans still applauded Marnix’s use of this word in a schoolbook from 1628.¹⁶⁴ He was not alone. In the 1620s and 1630s, various language debaters expressed their support for the use of ‘du’. Among them were grammarian Christiaan van Heule and mathematician Jacob Willemsz. Verroten.¹⁶⁵ Poet Jacob Cats, too, used ‘du’ a few times to address God in his writings.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the translators of the authoritative and influential 1637 *States translation*, after deliberation, opted for ‘ghy’.¹⁶⁷ The published acts of their meetings indicate that they discussed whether ‘du’ was the best choice, ‘following the example of other nations’, but in the end the majority voted for the more commonly used ‘ghy’.¹⁶⁸

Marnix and his secretary, Bonaventura Vulcanius, strove to obtain official acceptance of his psalter from Calvinist officials. At the provincial synod of South-Holland held in the spring of 1581, it was discussed for the first time whether Marnix’s psalter might replace Datheen’s. The synod declared that the language of Marnix’s psalms was unfit for congregational use because ‘the psalm books of the Lord of Aldegonde contain many elisions and strange or unfamiliar words, unknown to the common man’.¹⁶⁹

Marnix had thus, like Utenhove, failed in his goal to make a translation that was comprehensible to all. His psalms indeed contain an array of archaic terms. Contrary to Utenhove in his New Testament, Marnix did not add an explanatory word list to give the meaning of uncommon words, such as ‘bestranghen’ (‘to oppress’).¹⁷⁰ The synod was also

¹⁶² L. Peeters suggested that Marnix, in this passage, argues that the printing press had favoured the use of ‘ghy’ rather than ‘du’. This idea was later taken up by Peter Burke. However, Marnix nowhere mentions that the change in usage was caused by printers or the printing press in general. He simply indicates that in many older books dating from the fifteenth century or the first decades of the sixteenth century, both manuscripts and printed texts, ‘du’ was still used, while in his time, ‘ghy’ became more popular. Marnix 1591, fol. †8r; Peeters 1990a, 76; Burke 2005a, 17.

¹⁶³ Van der Wal 1995a, 62-63.

¹⁶⁴ See: Chapter 4.4. Meurier & Offermans 1628, fol. A2r-A2v.

¹⁶⁵ Van der Wal 1995a, 59-65; Van der Wal 2002, 7.

¹⁶⁶ Muller 1926, 104; Van der Wal 2002, 7.

¹⁶⁷ On the impact of the *States translation* on common usage, see: Van den Toorn 1977, 523; Van der Sijs 2005, 47.

¹⁶⁸ ‘naert exemple van anderen natien’. *Acta* 1621, 27.

¹⁶⁹ ‘des heeren Aldegondii psalmboecken veel elisiones ende vreemde oft onbekende woorden, den gemeynen man onverstandich’. Rudelsheim 1898, 134.

¹⁷⁰ Marnix 1580, fol. X5v.

correct in ascertaining that Marnix's psalms contain many elisions. In the fourth stanza of psalm 82 alone, nine instances of elision occur, such as 'end' d'ermen' instead of 'ende de ermen' ('and the poor') and 'losts'' instead of '[ver]lost se' ('release them').¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, Marnix did not agree with the harsh verdict. He wrote to Vulcanius that sung texts always elide letters.¹⁷²

Never satisfied with his own work, Marnix continued to improve his psalms, as can be witnessed in the manuscript containing psalms 82 to 84, in which numerous words are crossed out or added. Some of these corrections reappeared in the second 1591 edition. In this version, Marnix's prose translation of the Hebrew psalms was printed next to his own metrical rhymed translations, emphasizing his philological enterprise [Figure 5.4].¹⁷³ The prose translations of psalms 82 to 84 in the 1591 printed text are very similar to those in the Brussels manuscript which preceded it.¹⁷⁴ Slight differences, however, suggest that Marnix continued to improve not only his verse translation, but also the prose text.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Marnix 1580, fol. O8v.

¹⁷² Gerlo & De Smet 1996, 222-223.

¹⁷³ De Gier 1987, 122.

¹⁷⁴ The fourth couplet of psalm 82 in the 1591 version is given as: 'Verlosset den cattijvigen *ende* den behoeftigen: ende helptse uyt der godloosen handt'. Except for the spelling, the only difference with the manuscript version is the use of 'helptse' instead of 'trecktse'. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, ms. 21637, fol. 1; Marnix 1591, fol. N6r.

¹⁷⁵ In the manuscript translation of the second verse of psalm 82, for example, Marnix has underlined 'Tot *wanneer*' ('until when'), replacing it with 'hoe lange' ('how long'). The 1591 text contains 'Hoe lange'. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, ms. 21637, fol. 1; Marnix 1591, fol. N6r.

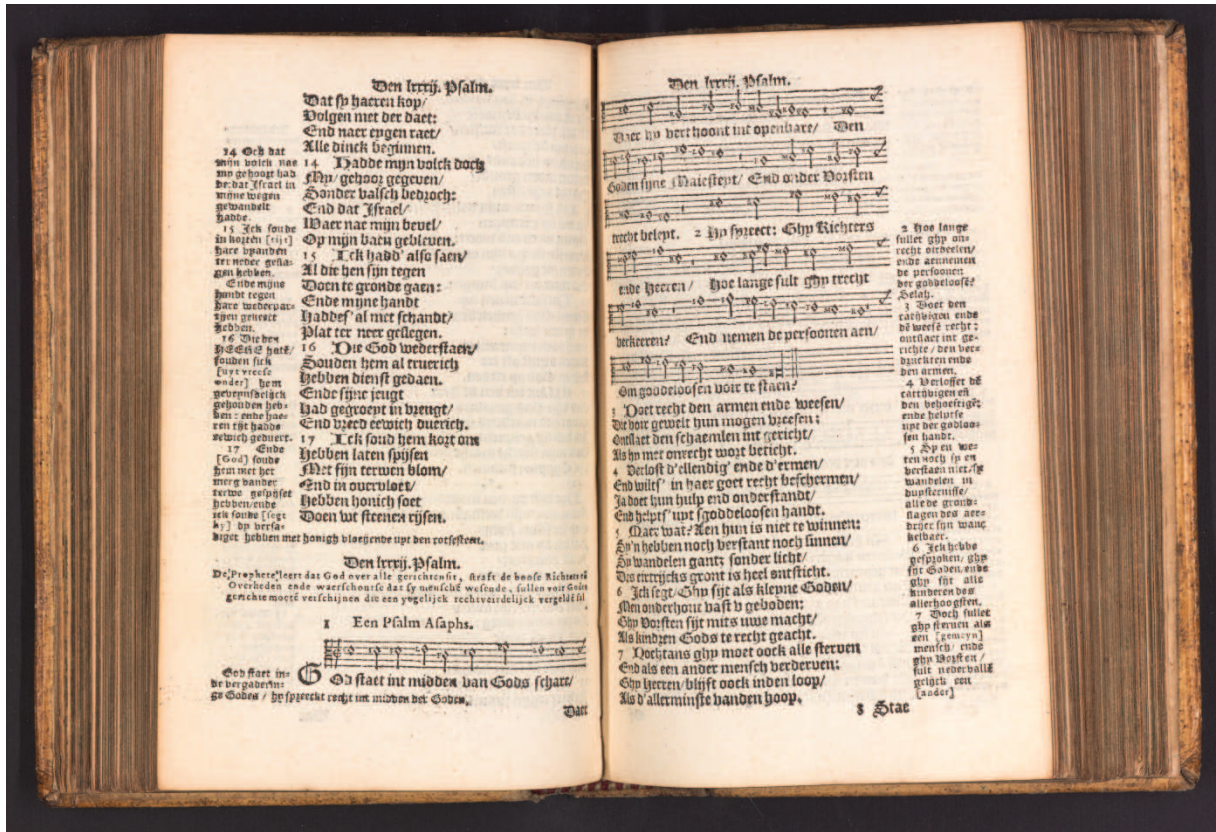


Figure 5.4.

P. of Marnix of Sainte-Aldegonde. *Het boeck der Psalmen*. Middelburg: Richard Schilders, 1591, fol. N5v-N6r. University Library Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, OTM: OK 64-938.

The publication of the 1591 edition again provoked debate on the use of Marnix's psalms.¹⁷⁶ As no official synod openly supported Marnix, Datheen's psalter maintained its official position. This did not end the discussions completely, however, as is illustrated by the fact that in 1617, an edition containing both Marnix's and Datheen's versions of the psalms was published 'in order to compare the two writings, and sing either one or the other'.¹⁷⁷ On its title page, this edition announces that it contains a new version of Marnix's psalms, 'reviewed by himself before his death, and improved in numerous places'.¹⁷⁸ Apparently, Marnix, continuously striving for perfection, did not stop correcting his psalms after 1591, as the 1617 text indeed contains some changes.

¹⁷⁶ Luth 1986, 65-67.

¹⁷⁷ 'om beyde de dichten te mogen vergelijken, ende singen het een of het ander'. Datheen & Marnix 1617, fol. 1r.

¹⁷⁸ 'voor zijn doot van hem selven overgesien, ende op ontallicke plaetsen verbeterd'. Datheen & Marnix 1617, fol. 1r.

Marnix's psalm translations built upon Utenhove's treatment of Dutch, while simultaneously showing the multilingual difficulties that the young Calvinist community faced: he struck a balance between a form of Dutch that was understandable and unambiguous, respect for the content of the Hebrew original, and the form of the French Genevan psalter. His accomplishment can only be valued when considered in light of his personal plurilingual abilities and the multilingual character of Calvinism in the Low Countries. Marnix's psalter also matters because it shows that in cases where an individual attempted to impose an ideal regularized language, this could spark debate but not necessarily resulted in changes in everyday language use.

Stressing Word Stress

The main pillars of Marnix's translation were respect for the source text and for the clarity and perfection of his target language. There is one more language aspect to which he paid attention: the singability of his psalms. While Datheen failed to place stressed syllables on whole notes in the music created for the French psalms, Marnix did take this element into account when translating the texts. He realized, first in his poetry and later in his psalms, that French and Dutch had different sound structures and therefore required different treatments.¹⁷⁹ In order to trace the development of his awareness, a brief excursion to Marnix's poetic exercises is first required.

Only two Dutch sonnets by the diplomat's hand are currently known, dating from the 1570s.¹⁸⁰ They demonstrate that Marnix was familiar with the rules of the French sonnet, which had risen in popularity due to the impact of the French Pléiade group. He was also aware, however, that these rules could not simply be applied to Dutch.¹⁸¹ The French alexandrine verse form is isosyllabic, which means that each verse has an equal number of syllables, namely twelve. It usually has a caesura after the sixth syllable, dividing the verse into two *hémistiches*. The sixth and the twelfth syllables are stressed. In each *hémistiche*, one other syllable is stressed, but its position is not fixed. This structure works well in French, which because of its soft word stress allows such a relatively free rhythm. Dutch, however, has a stronger natural

¹⁷⁹ Ad den Besten has even suggested that Marnix had been inspired by the many issues concerning rhythm in Datheen's psalms to introduce iambic metre in Dutch sonnets. Den Besten 1983, 75-78.

¹⁸⁰ In an article from 2001, Ton van Strien argued that Marnix was not an author of literary works and that his writings should not be considered as such. Van Strien's statement is problematic for two reasons. First, he downplays Marnix's poetic skill, which is visible not only in the two extant sonnets but also in his psalm translations. Second, Van Strien seems to overlook the fact that literary culture was a broad concept in the early modern world and encompassed scholarly and religious writings, too. Marnix's *Biënkorf*, while definitely a religious, satirical pamphlet, is simultaneously a literary work. Van Strien 2001.

¹⁸¹ Forster 1967, 295; Den Besten 1983, 71; Bostoen 1988a, 12; Bostoen 2010, 20-21.

word stress. Therefore, in Dutch poetry, like in English, traditionally the number of accented syllables in a line, rather than the total number of syllables in that line, was counted.¹⁸²

Marnix introduced an additional element for the Dutch alexandrin: the iambic metre, alternating stressed and unstressed syllables, creating a rhythmical verse line. One of Marnix's sonnets, which he wrote for poet Lucas d'Heere, thus contains the line: 'De Psalmen zijn Gods Woord, zij leren Zijne paden' ('The psalms are God's Word, they teach His ways').¹⁸³ This line perfectly alternates unstressed ('De') and stressed ('Psal-') syllables. Marnix was, together with aristocrat-poet Jan van der Noot, the first to use this iambic method in Dutch.¹⁸⁴

Marnix's innovative approach to the natural word stress in Dutch procured him fame in literary circles.¹⁸⁵ In later explanations and defences of the alternating verse form, Marnix's name was sometimes mentioned explicitly, although in modern overview works he is often eclipsed by Jan van der Noot and Lucas d'Heere.¹⁸⁶ Franciscus Raphelengius the Younger, a grandson of Plantin, even used the term 'Aldegondian measure' to indicate which verse form he meant.¹⁸⁷ Marnix's adapted use of the French verse style in Dutch demonstrates a critical stance towards the French influence on Dutch.

The reaction of a later poet to the innovative iambic further undermines the idea that the influence of French poetry on Dutch literary culture was a one-way street. Jacob (Jacques) Ymmeloot, a native of Ieper, was a fierce supporter of the combination of the French rules and the iambic style. In a French treatise on poetry that he published in 1626, Ymmeloot wished to inform his francophone readership of the development of the iambic style in Dutch poetry, which he considered a novelty.¹⁸⁸

Ymmeloot's quest, however, was doomed to fail: as Marnix demonstrated, the iambic metre was much more suitable for Dutch, with its strong word stresses, than for French.¹⁸⁹ What is striking about this case is that Ymmeloot felt the need to inform francophone readers about the debates on poetry and language that were taking place in Dutch. He wanted poets active in the two languages to learn from each other, and therefore stepped forward as a go-between. Oscar Dambre claimed in an article that the poet's attempt to improve French poetry came from

¹⁸² Forster, 1967, 274-275; Vermeer 1979, 85-87; Den Besten 1983, 74-75; Waterschoot 1995; Gasparov 1996, 192-193; Kazartsev 2010.

¹⁸³ Marnix cited by: Bostoën 1988a, 12.

¹⁸⁴ Den Besten 1983, 74-75; Kazartsev 2010.

¹⁸⁵ Van der Valk 1914; Van der Elst 1920, 105; Forster 1967, 295

¹⁸⁶ Bostoën 1981, 150-153; Den Besten 1983, 104n40. In his seminal article on the impact of the 'new French poetics' in the sixteenth century, Werner Waterschoot does not even mention Marnix. Waterschoot 1995.

¹⁸⁷ 'mensurae Aldegondinae'. Franciscus Raphelengius cited by: Forster 1967, 289.

¹⁸⁸ Ymmeloot 1626, 9, 67-69; Dambre 1928; Rombauts & Van Es 1952, 396.

¹⁸⁹ Dambre 1928.

an illusory sense of feudal debt towards France, and stated that this ‘is the mistake for which he is to blame’.¹⁹⁰ It is telling that in the only study devoted to Ymmeloot to date, the author argues that there is a contrast between supporting the Dutch tongue and improving French poetry. Ymmeloot’s work, like that of Marnix, expresses no such contrast: all he aims for is to foster discussion and exchange across language borders.

Returning now to Marnix’s psalm translations, these works further demonstrate his awareness of the deviant sound structures of French and Dutch. A simple comparison between Datheen’s version of psalm 119 and Marnix’s text demonstrates the different approaches of the two men. Datheen’s text contains various conflicts between word stress and music. In Marnix’s psalm 119, on the contrary, accented syllables are not placed on half notes unless the other syllables of the word are too. The fifth and sixth verses of the first stanza make the difference blatantly clear. Datheen’s lines, discussed above, contained multiple conflicts. Marnix’s contain none: ‘Sijn tuygh’nis claer, ghesproten uyt Gods mondt: End’ gheene moeyt’ om hem te soecken sparen’ (‘His clear testimony, which sprouted from God’s mouth: And who spare no effort to seek him’).¹⁹¹ While Marnix’s psalms are not perfect, they contain far fewer conflicts than Datheen’s songs.¹⁹² His awareness of the different sound structures of French and Dutch aided him in his poetry and his psalm translations.

Bilingual Harmony

By using the same tunes and formal structure as the Genevan psalter, Marnix’s psalm book, like Datheen’s, fostered bilingual unity among the Dutch- and French-speaking Calvinists of the Low Countries. The translation theory that is implicitly embodied by Marnix’s psalter can be summarized as follows: if every language had a clear and unambiguous translation that did justice to the *Hebraica veritas*, the peoples of the earth would be able to share the same religious textual foundation, each in their own language. This could then foster the creation of a translangual community of worship. First, however, each individual language needed to be made perfectly clear in order to allow for a usable translation. This is what Utenhove and Marnix attempted for Dutch. The role of music in this process could be interpreted as a universal

¹⁹⁰ ‘Dat de dubbelslachtige Jonkheer zich uit een soort vassaliteitsgevoel tegenover een Parnassiaanse en aloude politieke suzerain van een ingebeelde leenplicht op die wijze dacht te moeten kwijten, is de fout die we hem te verwijten hebben’. Dambre 1928, 192.

¹⁹¹ Marnix of Saint-Aldegonde 1580, fol. X1v.

¹⁹² There still was criticism on the singability of Marnix’s psalms, however. Isaac Beeckman, natural philosopher and master of a Latin school, kept a commonplace book in which he wrote about his preference for the traditional Dutch verse style. In an entry from 1622, he argues that the French rules which had been adopted by, among others, Marnix, made the songs more difficult to sing. He refers to a problematic passage in Marnix’s psalms to prove his point. Beeckman 1942, 208-209; Bostoen 1981, 149-152; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 11-12; Van Berkel 2013, 54.

element that was equally understood by everyone, forming the final link to unite the speakers of the various languages.¹⁹³

Sometimes, psalms were sung simultaneously in various languages in the early modern period. Records exist of such so-called polyglot harmony in transatlantic colonies, where settlers from various places in Europe sang together, sometimes alongside converted natives.¹⁹⁴ Because of the work done by Datheen and Marnix, Dutch-speaking Calvinists could unite in confessional practice with both the Huguenots from France and Geneva, and with their francophone compatriots. Gerard Brom has even suggested that Marnix might have chosen to use ‘du’ rather than ‘ghy’ in order to approach the sound of French more closely, in which ‘tu’ was used to address God.¹⁹⁵ This is, nevertheless, improbable, as neither Marnix, nor his contemporaries referred to this possibility in their discussions on the personal pronoun.

The psalm translations by Marnix and Datheen stand within the strong sixteenth-century tradition that tried to overcome the problems caused by the existence of multiple languages through translation and multilingualism.¹⁹⁶ Much alike the polyglot dictionaries of that time, these psalters represent the idea that meaning can be transferred from one language into another, and thus that communication across languages is possible.¹⁹⁷ The psalm translations embraced the multilingual character of the Christian faith.

The same can be said of Plantin’s Polyglot Bible, of which Marnix possessed a copy.¹⁹⁸ The Plantin Polyglot, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, was a feat of humanist, Catholic scholarship, created under the patronage of Philip II. It is a Bible edition in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Chaldaic. This Bible demonstrates that an attention to multilingualism and the humanist study of languages was not restricted to Protestant circles. It is possible that Marnix used the Polyglot for his psalm translations, as it probably contained the most recently published version of the Hebrew psalms that he owned, and was based on sound philological studies and textual criticism.¹⁹⁹ In any case, Marnix was, together with many other

¹⁹³ For early modern views on the relationship between musical harmony, societal harmony, and cosmic order, see: Prins 2014.

¹⁹⁴ Erben 2012, 303-312; Van der Woude forthcoming.

¹⁹⁵ Brom 1955, 11.

¹⁹⁶ See: Chapter 3.1.

¹⁹⁷ Demonet 1992, 170-171; Considine 2001; Erben 2012, 10-20.

¹⁹⁸ *Catalogvs* 1599, fol. A2r.

¹⁹⁹ The auction catalogue of Marnix’s library, dressed up after his death, further mentions a Hebrew-Latin Bible from 1546. This is in all probability a copy of the Sebastian Münster Bible, printed in Basel. The catalogue also lists a quadrilingual psalter in Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Chaldean from 1516, which was possibly printed in Geneva. However, the auction catalogue is not a reliable source to determine which books Marnix owned, let alone for the books he actually read. For a discussion of this catalogue, see: *supra*, note 27. *Catalogvs* 1599, fol. A2r. On the quality of the Hebrew text in the Plantin Polyglot, see: Dunkelgrün 2012, 185-218.

Protestants, highly reliant on the scholarship of Catholic scholars for his own writings and theories. Despite the confessional differences, learned men on both sides of the divide depended on the same set of scholarly sources and methods.

Marnix's psalms demonstrate how he tried to undo the multilingual chaos caused by the events at Babel. At the same time, his translation, which closely followed the French psalms as well as the Hebrew original, was a demonstration of the qualities of Dutch and a confirmation of its prestige.²⁰⁰ This vernacular language could equal Hebrew in its communication of the divine message, and French in its melodious character.

5.4. Dangerous Mixtures²⁰¹

Within Marnix's broad reflections on the ideal Dutch and French tongues, the notion of language mixing held a particular place. In the prefaces to his psalters, he argued that borrowed words undermine religious clarity and intelligibility. In the *Biënkorf der H. Roomsche Kercke* (1569) and its French counterpart, the *Tableav des differens de la religion* (1599), the diplomat used a much more playful approach to get his message on loanwords across.²⁰² By using an eclectic language, mixing different registers but also tongues, the *Biënkorf* and *Tableav* demonstrate the religious dangers of loanwords rather than solely theorizing on them.

Marnix's works are polemical and parodic reactions to a concise publication which appeared both in French and in a Dutch translation in 1561 and which had been written by Gentian Hervet, a prolific Catholic author. In an epistle divided into six points addressed to the leaders of the Reformed church, Hervet attacks the main arguments of Protestantism.²⁰³ In the *Biënkorf* and *Tableav*, Marnix adopts the strategy of parody, following the structure of its model and radicalizing its content to obtain a comical effect. The texts pretend to have been written from a Catholic point of view, and claim that they 'broadly explain' Hervet's criticisms.²⁰⁴ Marnix's Dutch and French works indeed take Hervet's arguments further. They comment on

²⁰⁰ Demonet 1992, 173.

²⁰¹ This paragraph revisits some findings that will also be published in a forthcoming article: Van de Haar forthcoming.

²⁰² Marnix 1569; Marnix 1599; Marnix 1605.

²⁰³ The texts discuss why Protestants call themselves faithful if they do not believe anything, why they only trust in the Holy Scripture, the sacrament of penance, why they call Catholics idolators, why they consider themselves more virtuous, and finally why they consider their own preachers to be more learned. The French version of 1561 that was used for this study is made up of twenty-three folios. This is probably not the version used by Marnix, as he refers to the title of another 1561 edition. Of this edition, only one copy, kept in the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal in Paris, is currently known. The Dutch edition of 1567, probably used by Marnix, contains seventeen folios. Hervet 1561; Hervet 1567. For reflections on the editions of the texts used by Marnix, see: Bakhuizen van den Brink 1968.

²⁰⁴ 'in 't breede verklaren'. Marnix 1858, vol. 1, 7.

each of his six theses, which Hervet discussed in the span of just a few pages, in a separate chapter of several dozen pages. Marnix polarizes the six points to the extreme so that they eventually ridicule themselves. However, it is not just the content of the French and Dutch texts that forms a satirical comment on the dogmas of the Church of Rome, but also their language. Marnix's mixed writing style in these texts is an exaggerated illustration of the way in which the Church, in his eyes, treated language.

The *Biënkorf* and *Tableav* are not direct translations of each other. In fact, the French text is much longer. The Dutch *Biënkorf* was printed thirty years before the *Tableav*, but the histories of their composition are both complex and intertwined.²⁰⁵ Until now, it has gone unnoticed that the French and Dutch texts differ in their treatment of language mixing. Through their diverging choice of loanwords, both address the discussions on their respective language. They thus take part in two debates that marked the sixteenth century: those on the Christian faith and those on language.

Satirical Mixing in the Biënkorf and the Tableav

Both the *Biënkorf* and the *Tableav* illustrate Marnix's stance within the language debates as well as his firm grasp of both his native tongues. Their language is dense with constructions that Marnix himself rejected, establishing his authority as a learned language artist who knows his subject to the core. This is illustrated by a passage taken from the discussion of Hervet's first point in the *Biënkorf*, complaining mockingly that it would be greatly scandalous if the riches of the Church of Rome were taken away:

[B]ut may always his sweet Mother be unrestrained and unhampered, and have free permission, to be able to *dispense, ordinate, sententiate, dispose*, and *reserve* of all the *decretes, canons*, writings, and *ordonnances*, and, *in summa*, to bind the devil onto the pillow [...]. [italics added]

[M]aer late altijd zijn lieve Moeder onbedwonghen ende onverhindert blijven, ende vrijen oorlof hebben, om van alle *decreten*, canones, schriften ende *ordonnantien*, te moghen *dispenseren, ordonneren, sententieren, disposereren*

²⁰⁵ In 1567, Marnix published a French *Commentaire* under the pseudonym Nicolas Jomlaila, which has since been lost. Marcel Govaert suggested that this *Commentaire* contained the foundations of the Dutch *Biënkorf*, which was published two years later, and the French *Tableav* of 1599. Students of Marnix's work, such as Govaert and J. Sterck, have demonstrated that the *Biënkorf* was written in parallel with the *Tableav*, as it contains obvious translations from French, but the exact order in which they were created is unknown. Verdeyen 1940; Valkhoff 1943, 41-42; Sterck 1952; Govaert 1953, 12-26.

ende *reserveren*, ende in summa, den duyvel op een kussen binden [...].²⁰⁶
[italics added]

The ‘sweet Mother’ refers to the Church, which Protestants wish to undo of her wealth and power. In his satirical defence, Marnix brings together a dazzling and comical string of loanwords, a code switch (shift to another language) to Latin, and a popular saying.²⁰⁷ The richness of the Church under discussion is reflected in the lexical richness of this citation, which was equally contested. By including two forms of language mixing to which Marnix strongly opposed, he shows that his objections do not come forth from ignorance. He was perfectly capable of applying borrowing and code switching, but rejected them because of his language ideology.

In the given citation, the adorned and formal loanwords and code switch are ridiculed by their juxtaposition with an informal proverb. The clash of different languages and registers creates a farcical effect. As the fragment states, the proverb sums up what the complex series of loanwords tries to communicate but fails to do. The enumeration of borrowed terms makes the sentence incomprehensible, showcasing Marnix’s opinion that loanwords obstruct intelligibility.²⁰⁸

The strategy followed in the French *Tableav* is very similar. Here, too, languages and registers are mixed to provoke laughter and reveal the absurdity of the situation. This is demonstrated in the following quotation, taken from a chapter dealing with a possible restriction of the powers of the Church:

And to make things worse, they would maintain that all preachers, monks, canons, cagots, and cockroaches, and in general all those who are straight and shaved, are by decree excommunicated [...] and that all cardinals, bishops, and even popes have really done wrong, and *ipso facto* their offices, benefits, and prebends serving the canon *si quis. distinct.* 86. canon *nullus*, canon *baptizando, causa 1. quaest. 1.*

²⁰⁶ Marnix 1858, vol. 1, 90. The words ‘dispenseren’, ‘ordonneren’, ‘sententieren’, ‘disposeren’, ‘reserveren’, ‘decreten’, ‘ordonnantien’, ‘devotie’, and ‘intentie’ are alle listed in Jan van den Werve’s 1553 dictionary of loanwords, the *Tresoor* (see: Chapter 2.2). The word ‘profijt’ is not mentioned by Van den Werve, perhaps because it had become so familiar in Dutch that it was no longer considered a foreign term. Van den Werve 1553; Van de Haar forthcoming.

²⁰⁷ On code switching, see: Appel & Muysken, 2005, 117-128.

²⁰⁸ By contrasting the words ‘dispenseren’ (‘dispense’) and ‘disposeren’ (‘dispose’), the language skills of even the most learned readers are put to the test. This word pair is reminiscent of John Hart’s list of similar loanwords that were difficult to distinguish in English, such as ‘abject’ and ‘object’. See: Chapter 3.5.

Et pour comble de malheur, ils maintiendroient que tous Prestres, Moines, Chanoines, cagots et caffards, et en general tous rais et tondus, sont par les Decrets excommuniez [...] que tous Cardinaux, Evesques et Papes mesmes ont forfait reëllement, et *ipso facto* leurs offices, benefices et prebendes en vertu du canon *si quis. distinct.* 86. canon *nullus*, canon *baptizando*, *causa* 1. *quaest.* 1.²⁰⁹

Once more, vulgar words, such as ‘caffards’ (‘cockroaches’) are placed next to pretentious code switches to Latin, ridiculing their pompous nature.

Moreover, the blatant clarity of the crude terms in this quotation forms a stark contrast with the complete obscurity created by the Latin words, which is reinforced by the fact that several of them have been abbreviated. Marnix has taken on the persona of a Catholic who tries to present himself as learned by using a strange mixture of Latin and French, ridiculing the language skills of Catholics in general. In doing so, Marnix ties in with other Protestant writing in which language mixing is used to mock Catholics, such as Theodorus Beza’s *Passavant* (1553).²¹⁰

The Catholic impersonated by Marnix also struggles with the use of correct French, in sentences such as: ‘Ne serions nous pas bien alors decrottez et canonnez de par la triplicité tyaresque Romaine?’ (‘Would it therefore not be good if we were de-shitted and cannoned by the Roman tiariesque triplicity?’). The term ‘canonnez’ (‘cannonned’) plays with the small but significant difference between ‘canonner’ and ‘canoniser’, the former meaning ‘to cannon’ and the latter ‘to canonize’. The term ‘canonnez’ thus comically illustrates the problems that can occur when someone is unaware of the correct affixes needed to build new words. Marnix implicitly warns here—like language debaters in France and England, such as Henri II Estienne and John Hart—about the dangers that arise when unlearned individuals attempt to create neologisms.²¹¹

Another remarkable affix present in the quoted sentence reveals an important difference between the *Tableav* and the *Biënkorf*. The adjective ‘tyaresque’ (‘tiariesque’) is based on the French noun ‘tiare’ (‘tiara’) and the suffix ‘-esque’, derived from the Italian ‘-esca’. As remarked by Martin Govaert, Marnix made such a broad use of words ending in the Italianizing ‘-esque’ and ‘-issime’ in the *Tableav* that it has been described as a tic of his.²¹² However, a

²⁰⁹ Marnix 1857, vol. 2, 313.

²¹⁰ Beza 2004, esp. 52-59.

²¹¹ See: Chapter 3.5.

²¹² Govaert 1953, 93.

deeper meaning seems to lie behind this habit, which comes to the fore when the French text is compared with its Dutch counterpart.

The *Biënkorf* contains very few Italianisms, while the *Tableav* is brimming with them, as well as with Latinisms and Latin code switches. In the *Biënkorf*, Latin loanwords are flanked mostly by borrowings from French.²¹³ This difference can be explained by connecting each of the texts with the discussions which were held on the language in which they were written, respectively. While the use of loanwords from Italian and Latin was contested in the French case, debaters on the Dutch language mostly addressed borrowings from French and Latin.²¹⁴ With his comical mixed language in the *Biënkorf* and *Tableav*, Marnix illustrates his negative stance on loanwords in each of these language discussions.

This double positioning has remained unobserved until now because the *Tableav* and *Biënkorf* have rarely been compared with each other and have not yet been connected to the discussions on language. This lacuna is emblematic of the study of Marnix's oeuvre, as virtually all of his modern students have analysed either his French or his Dutch works.²¹⁵ René Verdeyen fully underestimated the satirical force of the language of the *Biënkorf* by suggesting that Marnix might have used so many loanwords in order to appeal to his audience, who would appreciate these borrowings.²¹⁶

In other analyses of Marnix's rich language, his satirical texts have been connected to those of François Rabelais.²¹⁷ Marnix, like Rabelais, adopted a rich language that experimented with language mixing and neologizing. The studies positioning Marnix as an imitator of Rabelais have failed to notice, however, the underlying subversive meaning of these experiments. Through loanwords and code-switching, Marnix created the perfect antonym of his own ideal language in order to criticize it. This approach was also adopted by Rabelais, who, for instance, portrayed a student using a highly Latinized language in his *Pantagruel*, mocking the mixing of Latin and the vernaculars.²¹⁸ Marnix indeed followed the example set by Rabelais, but this influence went one step further than scholars previously thought.

²¹³ Van de Haar forthcoming.

²¹⁴ See: Chapter 3.5.

²¹⁵ Marnix's works have frequently been appropriated for either the French or the Dutch literary canon. See, for example: Werveke & De Keyser 1939, 15; Charlier 1940, 205-206; Van Roey 1998, 15.

²¹⁶ Verdeyen 1940, 192-193.

²¹⁷ Sainéan 1930; Thijssen-Schoute 1938; Bongers-van der Borch van Verwolde 1940; Charlier 1940; Thijssen-Schoute 1967.

²¹⁸ For the way in which Rabelais uses particular language forms, such as loanwords, in his satirical writings in order to mock them, see: Huchon 1981; Huchon 2009.

Slandering Catholic Language

In a doctoral dissertation from 2004, Mathieu de La Gorce performed a pioneering in-depth study of the link between Marnix's style of writing in the *Tableav* and the religious critique that the text harbours.²¹⁹ He concluded that Marnix's mixed language was meant to symbolize the way in which the clergy had made the language of faith incomprehensible to ordinary believers by using Latin or a mixed language.²²⁰ This thesis of how Marnix mocked Catholics also applies to the *Biënkorf*. In fact, Marnix's critique on the treatment of language by the Church goes even deeper than La Gorce showed. The Catholic voice in the *Tableav* and *Biënkorf* not only uses an unclear language, as La Gorce argued. It also lacks the ability to write Latin, one of the *tres linguae sacrae*. Marnix's attack on Catholic language is not just about deliberate obscurity, but primarily about incapacity. Marnix thus shows that Catholics are, on the level of language, not competent and not conscientious enough to hold religious authority. A closer look at the subject of his attack reveals that rather than tackling a serious problem, Marnix generated a deceitful image of the language attitude of Catholics.

Satirically assuming the voice of a faithful Catholic, the *Tableav* demonstrates what the Church supposedly considered a good attitude towards language. It recounts a humoristic anecdote about a Catalan in Brussels to argue that the Catholic Church wanted its flock to have no command of Latin whatsoever. The Catalan was, allegedly, asked to recite his *Pater Noster*, after which he 'formed his lips to mutter the syllables "bsi bsi bsis"'. The totally ignorant Catalan was then, according to the *Tableav*, labelled a good and zealous Catholic.²²¹ According to Marnix's satirical text, the Church thus deemed the best believers the ones whose grasp of the Latin language was so poor that they could not even distinguish individual words. It has to be noted that in the context of the Dutch Revolt against Philip II it is hardly accidental that Marnix claims that the ignorant and thus devout Catholic is from the Iberian Peninsula.

Marnix suggests in his propaganda texts that the Church of Rome did not want the common people to reflect on the meaning of Latin or, by extension, to discuss the topic of language in general. If ordinary believers gained insight into Latin, they might reveal that the clergymen themselves did not speak it, as indicated in the *Biënkorf*: 'Yes, they also have a special Latin up their sleeves, which learned men cannot understand. It is called monk's Latin or kitchen Latin'.²²² Marnix explains that this 'monk's Latin' is a mixture of some basic Latin

²¹⁹ La Gorce 2004.

²²⁰ La Gorce 2004, 478-499; La Gorce 2012.

²²¹ 'forma de ses levres en barbottant ces sillabes bsi bsi bsis'. Marnix 1857, vol. 3, 50.

²²² 'Jae sy hebben oock een bysonder latijn op haer eyghen handt, dat de gheleerde selve niet en connen verstaen, ende wordt ghenoeemt Monicks-latijn, oft keucken latijn'. Marnix 1858, vol. 2, 101-102.

words and the vernacular. The *Biënkorf* claims that even the clergymen themselves struggle to understand these language concoctions of their colleagues: ‘not just the common people, but also the Papists and the Bishops cannot understand it’.²²³

According to the accusations of the *Tableav* and *Biënkorf*, the Church leaders had created a situation in which they held the power over the true meaning of the Word of God, without actually understanding it. This ignorance then supposedly led to an abuse of authority: ‘From this, it necessarily follows that the Church has full power over the Word expressed by God’.²²⁴ As no one understood the sacred texts, the Church could create its own scriptural truth by changing the meaning of theological notions. According to Marnix’s texts, Catholics discarded the ‘Hebrew and Greek texts, of which they could not stand the sight’.²²⁵ These passages parodically and comically expose, from a Protestant point of view, the presumed Catholic disrespect of the principle of *sola scriptura*, which identifies the Bible as the primary normative authority rather than the Church. As so often in satirical texts using mixed language, the impure language that is put into the mouths of the clergy in the *Tableav* and *Biënkorf* is also used as a symbol for their impure morals, or, as in this case, religious values.²²⁶

As ignorance was the cause of all the language problems of the Church identified by Marnix, the proposed solution lay in learning languages. Between the lines, one can read that people like Marnix himself, who understood Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, should become the new guardians of the true meaning of the Word of God in the original sacred languages. The ultimate goal is a complete use of the vernacular in religious contexts.²²⁷ This would ensure that the content of the religious texts would no longer be secret. This is exactly what Marnix was trying to achieve with his Psalm translations, practising what he satirically preached in the *Biënkorf* and *Tableav*.

So, was Marnix’s critique of the language attitude of Catholics in general justified? In recent decades research has shown that the Roman Church was not by definition opposed to religious reading in the vernacular.²²⁸ An examination of the immediate target of Marnix’s satire, Gentian Hervet, reveals that in this case, the attack was even more misplaced. Hervet’s

²²³ ‘niet alleenlijk het ghemeyn volck, maer oock de Papen selve ende de Bisschoppen niet en verstaen’. Marnix 1858, vol. 1, 36.

²²⁴ ‘Hier volcht dan nootsakelijck uyt, dat de Kercke een volle macht heeft boven het uytghedruckte woordt Gods’. Marnix 1858, vol. 1, 36.

²²⁵ ‘Hebreeusche ende Griecsche texten, die sy doch niet en connen luchten’. Marnix 1858, vol. 1, 76.

²²⁶ Marnix can thus be connected with Geoffroy Tory and Theodorus Beza, who considered language mixing to be an outward sign of internal, moral corruption. Tory 1529, fol. A8r; Beza 2004, 57-58. See further: Trudeau 1992, 134-136; Jones 1999, 30; Coldiron 2015, 255-256.

²²⁷ La Gorce 2004, 499.

²²⁸ Gow 2005; Corbellini & Hoogvliet 2015; François 2015.

own works prove that he was actually keen to promote vernacular religious reading and that Marnix, rather than addressing a genuine problem, was building a distorted image of his opponent in order to generate a myth claiming an opposition between Catholicism and the vernacular.

Gentian Hervet, who worked as a tutor and later as a secretary and a priest, had received an academic education in Oxford and was skilled in at least Latin and Greek. This competence enabled him to translate several theological treatises and classical texts into the vernacular.²²⁹ In 1526, he published an English translation of Erasmus's *De immensa dei Misericordia*, and in 1570 he created a French translation of Augustine's *De civitate dei*. The English text even contains a list of difficult words 'for them that shal rede this sermon and vnderstande nat Latin and frenche termes vsed in englisshe'.²³⁰ Although it is unclear whether Hervet added this word list himself, and despite the fact that Hervet's French and Dutch 1561 epistles contain some loanwords, it is obvious that Marnix drew a greatly exaggerated picture of the Catholic attitude towards language in his satirical propaganda texts.²³¹ Hervet himself, as a learned humanist, disproved Marnix's complaints by translating religious Latin texts into the vernacular, revealing the strong hyperbolic character of Marnix's parodic texts.

In the 1561 epistle targeted by the 1569 *Biënkorf* and 1599 *Tableav*, Hervet is not inattentive to matters of language either. In fact, he addresses previous criticism by Protestants that Catholics were preoccupied with the Latin tongue, which they allegedly did not even master well. He admits that the knowledge of Latin among the clergy is far from perfect, but retorts that many Protestants hardly knew any Latin either: 'Isn't it true that several among them know no more than three words in Latin, others none at all?'²³² Hervet claims that the shortcomings in the field of language are shared by both sides. His complaint about Protestants is remarkably similar to the image that Marnix later sketches of Catholics in the *Biënkorf* and *Tableav*. This accusation of a lack of Latin language skills clearly went back and forth between the Catholic and Protestant camps.

Marnix claimed that only Protestants were concerned about a clear and understandable language, but he was, to a large extent, attacking straw men. Attention to the vernacular

²²⁹ Bakhuizen van den Brink 1968, 204-206.

²³⁰ Hervet 1526, fol. M6r.

²³¹ In the French text, certain Latin phrases are not translated, and the text contains a few Latin loanwords, such as 'propitiatoire' ('the cover of the Ark of the Covenant') and 'irrision' ('irrision'). The Dutch translation by an unknown author does translate all Latin expressions but contains many French loanwords, like 'persisteren' ('persist'). For the Latin phrases, see: Hervet 1561, fol. 17v, 19r. For 'irrision', see: Hervet 1561, fol. 14r. For 'propitiatoire', see: Hervet 1561, fol. 15v. For the translations from Latin, see: Hervet 1567, fol. C4v-D1r, D2r. For 'persisteren', see: Hervet 1567, fol. A2r-A2v.

²³² 'y a il pas quelques vns qui ne sçauent que trois mots de Latin, les autres pas vn'. Hervet 1561, fol. 20r.

languages and a humanist interest in writings in Latin and Greek were not characteristic of Protestant circles alone, even though that is the image that Marnix was trying to get across. While it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the image that Church of Rome rejected vernacular religious reading was a hoax, Marnix's case is important for shedding light on the strategy behind the creation of this Protestant paradigm.

5.5. Conclusion

Jasper Bernaerds, in his poem for the 1610 collection *Den Nederduytschen Helicon*, listing the names of those who have helped to improve and support the Dutch vernacular, praises Jan Utenhove and Petrus Datheen as well as Marnix for their efforts.²³³ Indeed, all three psalm translators thought consciously about their strategies towards language, which turned each of their psalters into a statement in the context of the debates on language and the consolidation of the new Calvinist community. Notwithstanding their importance for Dutch, the attention for language expressed by Utenhove, Datheen, and Marnix went beyond this language alone.

Marnix's balancing act between Dutch, French, and Hebrew in his psalm translations displays both the multilingual character of the sixteenth-century discussions and the broad range of language-related topics they covered. As a language-conscious plurilingual, Marnix was interested in the written, spoken, and even sung form and structure of the various individual languages involved, as well as in the genealogical ties between languages and in language history. His case is relevant for showing that there was much more at stake than uniformization and loanwords, to which modern studies of the topic have often limited themselves. Within the religious domain, the most pregnant language-related issues were the respective levels of authority of the various languages, translation methods, and the importance of absolute clarity.

Marnix's *Biënkorf* and *Tableav* illustrate how strongly the discussions on language intertwined with their social, religious, and political context. These exchanges were not simply an innocent intellectual pastime; they played a key role in the religious turmoil of the era. Marnix's parodic texts form a strong reminder that the language debates should not be studied as an isolated phenomenon. The *Biënkorf* and *Tableav* helped to construct a powerful yet, as Hervet's case has shown, false image of the Church of Rome as rejecting the vernacular.

While the language debates could be used to distance oneself from other parties, Marnix's efforts for the dispersed Calvinist community of the Low Countries also show how particular approaches to language could stimulate internal solidarity. Marnix consciously

²³³ See: Chapter 4.1. *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 73-74.

created an approach to Dutch and French that might foster unity and cohesion among the bilingual community of the Low Countries across the language divide. In the face of language diversity, Marnix realized that a focus on one's mother tongue alone was not the solution needed to help the multilingual Calvinist community of the Low Countries.

6. Printing Houses

6.1. Introduction

Histories of the Dutch language customarily mention the printing press as an agent of language change.¹ As the primary focus of historians of language was, until recently, the teleological search for standardization, they were especially interested in a supposed correlation between the expansion of print and the regularization of orthography. They were supported in their search for this link by mid-twentieth-century scholars of book history and media studies, such as Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin in their 1958 *L'apparition du livre* and Marshall McLuhan in his 1962 *The Gutenberg Galaxy*.² McLuhan ushered in the idea that the printing press fostered the growth of patriotism and competition with other languages, a notion which was later endorsed by Benedict Anderson's seminal *Imagined Communities* (1983).³ In general, research on the vernacular and print culture has been marked by a focus on one language, standardization, and nation-building.

A recent Franco-German project led by Elsa Kammerer and Jan-Dirk Müller on the relation between early modern printers and language change took an important step in disengaging itself from the heavily biased research tradition.⁴ It shook off the yokes of monolingualism, teleological thinking, and methodological nationalism, which is the confinement to present-day borders, by focusing on the works of individual printers with regard to a variety of languages.

Applying the approach established by Kammerer and Müller to the vernaculars of the Low Countries allows the construction of a new view on the importance of printers for the language situation in this area. The teleological focus on standardization is avoided by studying the debates on French and Dutch, simultaneously following a call from Peter Burke to examine printers themselves rather than their presses as agents of change.⁵ Prefaces written by printers make it possible to determine their part in the discussions on the form and status of the two local languages of the Low Countries. To avoid the confirmation bias, statements made in such preliminary texts need to be contrasted with practical language use. Moreover, giving attention

¹ Van der Wal 1995a, 19; Willemys & Van der Horst 1997, 186-187; Van der Sijs 2004, 34; Burke 2005a, 16; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 198-199. For the notion of the printing press as an 'agent of change', see: Eisenstein 1979.

² Febvre & Martin 1958, 465-480; McLuhan 1962, 233-239.

³ McLuhan 1962, 199-200, 235-238; Anderson 2006, 44-45. For a discussion of the connection Anderson established between print language and nationalism, see: Smith 1998, 107-115.

⁴ It concerns the project 'Dynamique des langues vernaculaires dans l'Europe de la Renaissance : Acteurs et lieux'. Kammerer & Müller 2015.

⁵ Burke 2005a, 17.

to texts in the various languages that were printed in the region sheds light on the interplay between multilingualism and patriotism, which was a prominent topic in this *lieu*.

In order to unlock the vibrant and multifaceted *lieu* of the sixteenth-century print workshops of the Low Countries, it is useful to start this examination with a key representative: Christophe Plantin. All relevant elements for this investigation are present in Plantin's case: he took part in the debates on language himself, as did his employees; he printed works that contributed to the discussions; he gathered a network of debaters around him; and he stood in close connection to many other printers. The multilingual character of Plantin's own life and of the business of this born Frenchman enforces the need for a multilingual outlook.

Plantin's case illuminates the tension in current research between two different conceptions of early modern printers. The first sees them as driven primarily by financial motives. According to the second, some printers combined mercantile and intellectual motives, complying with the ideal of the scholar-printer.⁶ Studying Plantin's involvement in the language debates confirms the second hypothesis. His most explicit contribution was the spelling programme he developed for French. Plantin forms an exception in this respect. His colleagues revealed very little about their views on spelling. The idea that printers were generally striving for orthographical uniformization thus has to be altered.

Concentrating on Plantin's *officina* further unearths one aspect of the language debates that has remained in the dark until now. The dictionaries produced in his workshop not only took part in the discussions on language themselves through their prefaces, they also actively encouraged their readers to study languages and cultivate a reflective attitude. Perhaps the fact that Plantin's *officina* enabled the general public to study their mother tongue explains why rhetorician Jasper Bernaerds praises him in his poem on the state of the Dutch language for *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* (1610). Plantin was not the only printer of value to the Dutch vernacular, however, as Bernaerds also mentions his Antwerp colleague Willem Silvius.⁷ Plantin, who unites all the elements of the language debates in the Low Countries, is a representative starting point to study the role of printers in these exchanges.

⁶ For the idea that printers were mainly driven by financial considerations, see: Brengelman 1980; Meeus 2014. For the notion of the scholar-printer, see: Eisenstein 1979, 446; Lowry 1979, 7-71; Pleij 1982; Van Netten 2014, 213-220.

⁷ Besides 'Plant-in', Bernaerds also lists a certain 'Silvius'. Boukje Thijs, in her study on the *Helicon*, argues that Bernaerds referred to Cornelius, Franciscus, or Johannes Silvius. The first is known for a treatise on philosophy in Latin, the second for his theological works, and the third for creating an almanac. Thus, none of these seem to have supported the Dutch tongue as much as Willem Silvius, making him the most likely candidate. *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 73-74; Thijs 2004, 187.

Supplying Languages to the Market

Early modern printing houses in general were pre-eminent *lieux* of language awareness. Language was everywhere in this professional environment, stimulating reflection and discussion. Moreover, printers had to be aware of the language debates for commercial reasons. As rightfully pointed out by Elizabeth Eisenstein, printers needed to be up to date on ongoing trends and the changing wishes of the market in order to deliver products that would sell.⁸ This included the widespread fascination with language. One topic in the language debates that directly concerned printing houses was orthography, or, more precisely, typography.⁹ When individuals such as Lambrecht proposed new characters, such as the ‘*ç*’, it was up to other printers to decide whether they wished to follow this trend.

Such considerations necessitated the employment of correctors who possessed a good command of the languages printed by the *officina* in question.¹⁰ This need is reflected in a set of guidelines for correctors, drawn up by Plantin’s successor Jan I Moretus in 1608: ‘That they take care to possess a knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages; that they study the vernacular tongues in order to respect the spelling of each’.¹¹ Orthography is, indeed, a key topic for printing houses. Nevertheless, striving to eliminate spelling errors does not necessarily imply that printers actively pursued regularization and uniformization.

A second language-related topic that was strongly intertwined with printing houses is translation. Printers had considerable agency in determining which books would be translated in which language.¹² They thus had to be sensitive to the opinions of their customers on the need and appropriateness of printing certain texts, such as religious or scholarly works, in particular languages. Plantin and his colleagues, including Willem Silvius, occasionally translated texts themselves, but in most cases they paid freelance translators. Plantin and Jan I van Waesberghe, an Antwerp printer specializing in educational books, often employed teachers, such as Peeter Heyns, Étienne de Walcourt, and Antoine Tiron, for translation jobs.¹³

While printers thus had to take the changing attitudes towards language into account when deciding on their output, the makeup of their own workshops also stimulated reflection.

⁸ Eisenstein 1979, 446. See also: Richardson 1999, 152.

⁹ Vanderheyden 1965, 18.

¹⁰ Thomas Basson, who was originally from England but active as a printer in Leiden from the 1580s onwards and who worked closely with Plantin, denounced printers who produced English texts without understanding the language, leading to many mistakes. He, ‘out of loue which j beare to my natiue contrie men’, had taken on the task of correcting the texts of these printers. Basson & Meurier 1586, 6; Smith 2015a, 276.

¹¹ ‘Vtriusque linguae tam latinae quam graece cognitionem ut habeant aduigilant, ac in vulgaribus linguis se exercent ut orthographiae rationem melius in vnaquaque observare queant’. Jan I Moretus quoted by: Vervliet 1959, 100. Translated by: Voet 1969, 184.

¹² Pleij 1982, 25-29; Burke 2007, 16; Meeus 2014, 108.

¹³ Voet 1972, 175.

In a sixteenth-century multilingual printing house such as the *Officina Plantiniana*, languages were everywhere, in all their possible forms: as written and printed texts; as texts that were read out loud by proofreaders; as words uttered by a workforce that was partly local but also often partly came from elsewhere; and in the form of the lead letters in Roman, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic alphabets used for the actual printing itself, in various typefaces that were often, to a certain degree, language specific.¹⁴ The owners of printing houses themselves were often marked by an international and thus multilingual trajectory, learning the trade in flourishing printing centres abroad before setting up their own shops.¹⁵ Printers and their employees needed to cultivate a certain level of language awareness to meet the demands of the market, and they worked in an environment that was perfectly suited to inspire such attention.

Christophe Plantin

Christophe Plantin lived a life marked by his French mother tongue, the Dutch language of his adoptive city of Antwerp, and the many classical and vernacular languages in which his *officina* issued books. His role in the language debates was as diverse as his publishing activities. Despite the fact that Plantin's business and life have been studied in detail by scholars such as Colin Clair, Leon Voet, Karen L. Bowen, and Dirk Imhof, and recently by biographer Sandra Langereis, the element of language has not yet been adequately covered.¹⁶ In order to fully understand Plantin's contributions to the discussions on language and contextualize them, it is necessary to start by tracing his own professional and personal experiences with language.

Plantin was born in the environs of Tours around 1520.¹⁷ He did not receive academic training, which he strongly regretted.¹⁸ He moved to Antwerp in 1548. In 1555, he established his print shop in the metropolis, later naming the business the *Gulden Passer* (*Golden Compasses*).¹⁹ Although he experienced several periods of financial trouble, Plantin's *officina* grew into a business with multiple printing presses and a large staff. The first book that came off its presses was a bilingual, Italian-French treatise on the education of girls, immediately setting the tone for the polyglot future of the printing house.²⁰ The *Gulden Passer* eventually issued works in Latin, Greek, Dutch, German, Spanish, English, French, Italian, Syriac,

¹⁴ For more information on the connections between certain languages and typefaces, see: Waterschoot 1975, 64-65; Van Selm 1987, 88-89; Flood 1996; Delsaerd 2011; Jimenes 2011; Kammerer 2015, 192.

¹⁵ Armstrong 2005.

¹⁶ Clair 1960; Voet 1969; Voet 1972; Bowen & Imhof 2008; Langereis 2014.

¹⁷ Voet 1969, 3-7; Langereis 2014, 13-14.

¹⁸ Van Netten 2014, 220.

¹⁹ Claes 1970c, 38; Pavord 2008, 313; Dunkelgrün 2012, 57.

²⁰ Bruto 1555; Voet 1975, 239; Pavord 2008, 313.

Chaldean, and Hebrew.²¹ Plantin was known for the quality of his work and even became royal typographer in the service of Philip II.²²

The most impressive achievement of Plantin's printing house with regard to language—and perhaps in general—was the creation of the Polyglot Bible, a project initiated by the printer that was supported by Philip II. This multilingual Bible edition brought together the sacred texts of Christianity in their original languages: Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Aramaic, and Syriac. The different versions are presented in a parallel fashion next to one another, followed by dictionaries of the languages concerned. Theologians and language experts employed by Plantin worked on the project for years. In 1573, it was completed, comprising eight volumes.²³

For its multilingual and scholarly output, the *Gulden Passer* relied on a team of learned employees, some of whom, such as Cornelis Kiliaan, and Franciscus Raphelengius, became involved in the language debates themselves. Raphelengius, Plantin's son-in-law and corrector, for instance, was an orientalist skilled in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, Persian, and Arabic.²⁴ He was involved in the creation of the Polyglot Bible. Raphelengius later worked as a printer for the University of Leiden, where he eventually became professor of Hebrew.²⁵ He created a dictionary of Arabic and undertook comparative studies of Hebrew and Arabic. It is more than likely that he already maintained an interest in language while he was still working in the workshop of his father-in-law.

Raphelengius would have encountered enough interesting scholars to discuss language matters with, as the *Officina Plantiniana* formed an outlet and meeting point for intellectuals. Several of the learned men frequenting the *Gulden Passer* were involved in the language debates.²⁶ The Antwerp workshop can be termed, in the words of Elizabeth Eisenstein, an 'international house', being a 'meeting place, message center, sanctuary and cultural center all in one'.²⁷ It is not difficult to imagine people such as Simon Stevin and Joseph Justus Scaliger discussing the topic of language during meetings in Plantin's gardens. Moreover, works that

²¹ Nauwelaerts 1978, 275.

²² An anecdote by Dirk Volckertsz. Coornhert confirms Plantin's good reputation. After one of his texts had been the subject of 'bad misprinting' ('lelyck verdrucken') by another printer, Coornhert decided to ask Plantin to issue a new edition. By relying on the Antwerp printer, he would 'be well assured that I would not make the mistake of having this book misprinted again' ('wel verzekert zoude zyn, van met dit zelve boexken, my niet weder te stóten aanden voorghaanden steen van mesdrucken'). Coornhert gladly concluded that Plantin had done his job well, so that the first, faulty text and the second, improved version were no more alike than 'a cat [and] a duck' ('een Kat een Entvoghel'). Coornhert 1585, 5.

²³ Voet 1973; Wilkinson 2007; Dunkelgrün 2012.

²⁴ Clair 1960, 159-160; Van Hal 2010a, 129-130.

²⁵ Van Hal 2010a, 129-131.

²⁶ Rekers 1961, 146; Bostoen 1991, 157, 169.

²⁷ Eisenstein 1979, 139.

contributed to the debates, such as Pontus de Heuter's 1581 Dutch spelling treatise, were issued by this printing house. Plantin was also responsible for the printing of the *Twe-spraack*. It was issued in Leiden, where Plantin worked for the university from 1583 to 1585, when he returned to Antwerp after the city had been retaken by Philip II.²⁸ Plantin thus played a pivotal intermediary role in the literary culture of his time by publishing his fair share of key texts. It is worth mentioning that he also contributed to it personally through the creation of various French, Latin, and Dutch poems.²⁹

The question remains as to what Plantin's own language attitude was. Besides his native French, the printer learned the local language of Antwerp with the help of a language instructor.³⁰ According to Sandra Langereis, who was the first to examine Plantin's language abilities, his efforts did not pay off. She proposes three main arguments to claim that Plantin never learned to use Dutch properly: firstly, she did not find any letters in his hand written in the language; secondly, Plantin stated in one of his letters that he did not speak Dutch fluently enough; and finally, the printer allegedly admitted in a French dedication of a Dutch book that he could only write this short text in his native tongue.³¹ Upon closer inspection, however, it can be affirmed that Langereis has overinterpreted the latter two findings. It is relevant to discuss this issue in detail in order to avoid future confusion about Plantin's language skills.

In fact, the letter in which Plantin allegedly confessed the shortcomings of his Dutch holds a deeper truth, which is revealed when taking its context into consideration. The printer, indeed, mentions that he 'could not speak the language as well as he should'.³² The letter explains, however, that he only used this claim to try to weasel his way out of an assignment bestowed on him as royal typographer. His argument that his Dutch was not good enough did not convince his superiors, nevertheless, as Plantin was eventually ordered to do his duty.³³

Langereis's third point concerns a book titled *Anatomie* (1568) that was printed by Plantin. In a French epistle, the printer dedicated the work to Gerard Grammay, 'Lord of 's-Gravenwezel, Treasurer of the States concerning the Wars'.³⁴ Plantin explicitly mentions his language choice:

²⁸ Bostoen 1988b; Breugelmans 1989.

²⁹ Meurier 1557c, fol. 5v; Heyns 1568a, fol. A2r; Heyns 1605, fol. A3v; Rooses 1890; Sabbe 1920; Vertessen 1958; Coppens 2007.

³⁰ *Thesavrvs Thevtonicæ lingvæ* 1573, fol. §2r; Claes 1970c, 147; Van Rossem 2007, 14-15.

³¹ Langereis 2014, 67.

³² 'n'en scavois pas parler le langage comme il appartenoit'. Rooses 1911, 138.

³³ 'in spite of which I could not avoid having to receive the prototypographical letters'. 'nonobstant quoy je ne peu éviter que je ne deusse recevoir les lectres de Prototypographe'. Rooses 1911, 138.

³⁴ 'Gerard Grammay, Seigneur de Sgreuenwezel, Thresorier des Estats pour le fait des Guerres'. Valverde de Hamusco 1568, fol. *2r.

For which reason I have dared, relying on your accustomed benevolence, to be so bold as to present to you and dedicate to you in my native language, this new edition, which I have ordered to be made in the language of this country, to benefit those who do not understand Latin but who do want to use it, and will now be able to.

Parquoy me fiant en vostre humanité accoustumee, i'ay bien osé prendre la hardiesse de vous presenter, & dedier en mon langage maternel ceste autre nouvelle edition, que i'ay fait faire au langage de ce pais, en la faueur de ceux qui n'entendent le Latin, & s'en pourront & voudront seruir.³⁵

Plantin's boldness, rather than referring to his choice of language as assumed by Langereis, concerns the fact that he dedicated this work to the addressee in the first place. It is an often used topos of modesty in early modern dedications to humbly ask the dedicatee for permission to devote the work to him or her. Grammay himself would have had no problem reading French, and in all likelihood even appreciated the use of this aristocratic prestige language. Furthermore, directly following the French dedication, a Dutch preface signed by Plantin himself is printed. Seemingly written by the printer, this preface annuls Langereis's argument.³⁶ Even more, Plantin uses the *Anatomie* to showcase himself as a supporter of the Dutch tongue, implicitly considering it advanced enough to act as language of learning next to Latin.

Besides Dutch and French, Plantin was skilled in Latin, Spanish, and Italian. He translated texts by Benito Arias Montano and Justus Lipsius from Latin into French.³⁷ Like Marnix, he seemed to consider plurilingualism useful for children. In any case, he claimed in a letter that his four daughters were taught a variety of languages from around the age of four onwards, so they could help out in the *officina*.³⁸ Personal and professional motives interfered here in his dealings with language.

³⁵ Valverda de Hamusco 1568, fol. *4r.

³⁶ 'Christofel Plantiin, wenscht den lief-hebbers vande conste der Medicinne, gheluck ende ghesondtheyt'. Valverda de Hamusco 1568, fol. *4v.

³⁷ Plantin translated the liminary texts of Lipsius's *De constantia libri duo* from Latin into French for an edition that appeared in 1584. He similarly translated Montano's *Dictatum christianum*, although this text remained unpublished. Lipsius 1584; Rekers 1961, 152; Voet 1969, 132.

³⁸ However, the writings of daughter Martine seem to indicate that she was not taught how to write Dutch. In notes she made in account books, her spelling of Dutch personal and street names seems to be a mixture of phonetic script and common usage in French spelling, of which attest examples such as 'Lisque in stratthen sonder aint' ('Liesken in the street without end') and 'Gritthen oup de Mairebrughe' ('Grietjen on the Meir bridge'). Martine's uncommon spelling does not conflict with Plantin's statement, which claims that the girls were primarily tasked with reading proofs out loud, so that the actual corrector could compare the read lines with the text he needed to correct. For the letter in question, see: Rooses 1885, 172-173; Risselin-Steenebrugen 1961, esp. 82-85; Langereis 2014, 87-88. For more information on the process of proofreading and correction, see: Grafton 2011, 63n171.

This brief excursion into the languages of Plantin's business and private life makes clear that the printer possessed all the qualities necessary to leave a mark on the discussions on language in the Low Countries and elsewhere. He had the necessary multilingual background, a network of language debaters, polyglot and learned employees with an interest in language, and customer insight.

6.2. Printing for the *Patria*

In the preface to the the aforementioned 1568 Dutch *Anatomie*, Plantin placed himself within a tradition of printers' defences of the Dutch vernacular that started with Jan Gymnick in the 1540s.³⁹ Assessing these defences reveals that notions of competition and the common good were prevalent. While at first glance these results seem to support the dated view that the sixteenth-century language debates in the Low Countries were inward-looking and focused on Dutch alone, contextualizing them reveals a different picture. These printers emphasized the importance of translation and expressed the wish to learn from other languages rather than ignoring or rejecting them.

Earlier research on the role of printers in the sixteenth-century language debates has been useful for positioning printers at the leading edge of the quarrels on loanwords. However, in this matter, too, only half of the story has been told. Because of the preoccupation of historians of language with early modern rejections of loanwords, it has gone unnoticed that there was genuine debate on this topic. Printers such as Jan Gymnick, who supported loanwords, have been silenced, thus creating a distorted image of the issue. By refusing the teleological focus on lexical purity, the discussions can be shown in their full length and breadth.

Language Competition

Plantin's preface for the *Anatomie* contains the three key arguments that were used to defend printing in Dutch: the equalling of Dutch with Latin or other languages through the act of publishing a translation; the argument of accessibility, enlarging the possible audience of a text by printing in the vernacular; and the emphasis on patriotism and serving the common good by helping those who do not read Latin to understand the text.⁴⁰ This triptych showcases the

³⁹ See also the reflections on the choice of language in other sixteenth-century vernacular scholarly works, such as Robert Dodoens's *Crujdeboeck* (1554) and the vernacular productions of Conrad Gessner. Egmond 2012; Fournel 2015, 38-39.

⁴⁰ In his prefaces, Plantin placed an emphasis on the notion of civic virtue. In 1566, he ordered and claimed to have personally funded, for instance, the translation of a Latin emblem book by Johannes Sambucus 'so that the common

interplay between patriotism and competition towards other languages, and the wish to learn from other languages and the texts that were produced in them. Defending and improving Dutch could only be done by paying attention to other languages. The cases of printers Jan Gymnick, Hendrik van den Keere, and Willem Silvius further showcase the extent to which printers' defences of Dutch depended on exchanges with French, Latin, and German.

The first printer to write a preface defending the use of Dutch for a translation of a classical text is Jan Gymnick, who was active in Antwerp. In 1541, Gymnick issued a Dutch translation of Livy's history of the Roman people. It contains a dedicatory epistle in which the printer praises the Dutch tongue as a suitable medium for learned texts. Gymnick laments that while translations of the classics have recently become available in Italian, Spanish, German, and French, the Dutch tongue is lagging behind: 'I cannot understand why our Dutch tongue is considered to be so poor, unadorned, or incapable that we have not dared to translate any text in which a liberal art or old history is discussed into it'.⁴¹ Gymnick's outcry is overwrought, as texts on the liberal arts were written in and translated into the vernacular from the Middle Ages onwards.⁴² Rather than referring to this local tradition, Gymnick responds to the growing rivalry between languages by mentioning the precedent set by other vernaculars.

Gymnick's dependence on foreign examples goes much further than meets the eye in this preface. The full extent of his reliance on other languages was uncovered in 1959 by Jan Vanderheyden, who concluded that the Livy translation was not based on the original Latin text, but on a German translation that functioned as an intermediary. While the use of a go-between translation is not exceptional, Vanderheyden also pointed out that part of the dedication had also been translated. This matters, because it shows how interrelated the discussions on the vernaculars were. Even texts supporting a particular vernacular and particular *patria* could be adapted and transposed to defend another language and country. The German translation had been printed 'to the use of the German nation', but Gymnick used his version to support his Dutch 'mother tongue'.⁴³

In line with the monolingual tradition of studying on the early modern language debates, Vanderheyden called Gymnick's remarks meaningless, as they lacked originality.⁴⁴ A decade

man of this country might find as much pleasure in it, as the learned Latinists have found until now by reading it'. 'op dat de gemeyne man van desen lande alsulcken genoechte daer vvt oock soude mogen rapen, als de gheleerde Latinisten tot noch toe door het lesen van dien gheniet hebben'. Gillis & Sambucus 1566, 3.

⁴¹ 'so en can ick niet beuinden hoe dathet comen mach, dat onse nederlantsche taele also aerm, ongheciert, oft onbequaem ghehouden wort, dat wy iet waer in eenighe liberael consten oft oude historien begrepen worden daer met hebben dorren ouersetten'. Livy 1541, fol. *2r.

⁴² Huizenga, Lie, & Veltman 2002.

⁴³ 'Teütscher Nation, zû nutze'. Livy 1538, fol. 2v. 'moederlike sprake'. Livy 1541, fol. *3v.

⁴⁴ Vanderheyden 1959.

later, G. De Smet came to Gymnick's defence by correctly arguing that the lines praising the Dutch tongue were Gymnick's own creation.⁴⁵ In fact, Gymnick's preface both followed its German example and demonstrated an innovative view on Dutch. It shows that the sixteenth-century discourse on the value and form of the vernacular came into existence in a multilingual setting that was marked by competition and exchange.

Later printers, too, made use of the developing competition with other languages to promote their publications. In 1557, Ghent printer Hendrik van den Keere issued *Tvoyage van, Mher Joos van Ghistele*. This work is an account of the travels of nobleman Joos van Ghistele to the Holy Land and the Middle East in the 1480s, which was drawn up by a certain Ambrosius Zeebout later in the fifteenth century.⁴⁶ In the preface, Van den Keere shows himself to be up to date on developments in other languages by explaining that the French and Germans had already printed their travel stories in the vernacular, while Van Ghistele's adventures could only be read in manuscript.⁴⁷ The 'Flemish, yes all of the Dutchmen' too, he argues, deserve to flaunt and 'triumph' with this work in print.⁴⁸ Van den Keere thus sees printing as adding prestige to a language, and through his publication of this manuscript, he supports Dutch in its competition with French and German.

Van den Keere's ambitions for the Dutch language stood in close relation to his awareness of trends in German and French. Supporting Dutch was not a monolingual enterprise. Furthermore, his appeal to competitive feelings is tightly linked to the upcoming notion of civic virtue and a growing sense of patriotism.⁴⁹ Indeed, Van den Keere claims to have 'been moved by true interest in and love for our country to bring to light a Flemish traveller'.⁵⁰

The connection between civic virtue, competition, and language is a strong feature in printers' contributions to the language debates, confirming that interest in these topics was growing among the broader public to which they sold their wares. The triptych returns in a Dutch translation of Claude Paradin's *Devises heroïques* (1551), published in 1563 by Antwerp printer Willem Silvius. In the dedication, Silvius refers to the example set by the French, Italians, Spaniards, and Germans who have written and translated 'learned and useful books'

⁴⁵ De Smet 1970.

⁴⁶ Zeebout 1998, xii-lij.

⁴⁷ Van den Keere explicitly mentions the travel accounts of Bernhard von Breidenbach, Pierre Belon, André Thevet, and Guillaume Postel. Zeebout 1557, fol. C5r.

⁴⁸ 'ende en hebben wy Ghenteners ende alle Vlamiynghen, ia, alle Nederlanders niet min causen om met desen te triumpheren, dan de Duudschen ende Fransoysen met den hueren en hebben ghedaen ende noch daghelics doen'. Zeebout 1557, fol. C5r.

⁴⁹ For the notion of patriotism, see: Chapter 3.3.

⁵⁰ 'uut rechter ialousien ende liefden ons lands ghemoueed gheweest eenen vlaemschen Voyagier in tlicht te brijnghen'. Zeebout 1557, fol. C5r.

into their mother tongues.⁵¹ Writing two decades after Gymnick, Silvius blatantly ignores a plethora of Dutch examples that had already seen the light of day, probably in order to profit from the selling point of competition. He directly links this to the concept of the common good, claiming that he translated the work himself ‘in service of our fatherland’.⁵²

Gymnick, Van den Keere, and Silvius give insight into the tension and interplay between the wish to follow the example of other languages, growing competition with those languages, and the notion of civic virtue. In order to meet the developing interest in these topics expressed by their potential customers, printers stressed the element of competition by downplaying previous achievements in and of the Dutch language. The language debates were looking both inward and outward, and in this case the outward movement even outshined the recognition of local predecessors.

Loanwords, Sales Strategies, and Patriotism

In his search for the intersection between patriotism and the language debates, Lode Van den Branden has highlighted sixteenth-century oppositions to loanwords. In his theoretical framework, marked by monolingualism and methodological nationalism, rejecting foreign lexical elements equalled supporting the mother tongue and thus the fatherland. He exploited various cases of printers who opposed borrowing to some extent, such as Joos Lambrecht and Hans de Laet, to suggest that the printing community was fighting lexical impurity.⁵³

In doing so, Van den Branden has created a distorted yet persistent image of the discussion on loanwords in printers’ circles. He has silenced the various printers who supported borrowing. As a consequence of this, his influential monograph gives the erroneous impression that the debate was short-lived and was successful in banning loanwords.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Van den Branden has overlooked the fact that all possible stances on the loanword issue could be connected to the wish to support the fatherland, as each individual proposed what he or she thought best for the improvement of the mother tongue. And finally, he falsely assumed that rejecting loanwords necessarily implied opposition to all things foreign, which conflicts with the observation that this standpoint was often expressed in a multilingual context. Revisiting

⁵¹ ‘vele diuerse geleerde dienstelike boeken’. Paradin 1563, fol. A3r.

⁵² ‘tot dienst ons vaderlants’. Paradin 1563, fol. A3r. In a similar fashion, Silvius claimed to have printed a Dutch translation of the travel text of Nicolas de Nicolay ‘to support our fatherland’. ‘tot meerdere vervveckinghe van onsen Vader-lande’. De Nicolay & Silvius 1577, fol. *2r.

⁵³ Van den Branden 1967, 16-18, 22-24.

⁵⁴ Marijke van der Wal, who gives an overview of the process of standardization of Dutch around 1650, devotes one paragraph to the topic of borrowing. She only gives examples from the second half of the sixteenth century, while the debates continued well into the seventeenth century. Van der Wal 1995a, 28-29. Nicoline van der Sijs does include later purist dictionaries in her overview. Van der Sijs 2004, 377-391.

the printers discussed by Van den Branden and those he ignored because they did not fit his search for purification allows one to expose these various pitfalls.

Already in the first pages of his study, it becomes clear that Van den Branden's method is marked by a confirmation bias, including only those cases that support his view. His book opens with a eulogy of Jan Gymnick for his defence of Dutch in the 1541 Livy translation.⁵⁵ There is not a single mention, however, of the fact that Gymnick also engaged in the debate on loanwords.⁵⁶ This side of Gymnick—who was, in fact, a fervent supporter of loanwords—did not earn a place in Van den Branden's one-sided view. Referring to the often-repeated argument that Latin had incorporated foreign elements itself, the printer argued that Dutch could become just as rich if it followed this classical example.⁵⁷ Gymnick's case is valuable in showing that defending Dutch did not hamper supporting loanwords and displaying an interest in trends in other languages.

It has to be noted that Van den Branden's focus on lexical purists did make an exception for those who welcomed borrowing from German. He devotes several pages to Hans de Laet, who printed Jan van den Werve's dictionary of Dutch judicial terms that had been borrowed from French and Latin in 1553.⁵⁸ In the dedication, De Laet criticized these loanwords but approved of German ones because of the genealogical ties between Dutch and German.⁵⁹ The fact that Van den Branden discusses this element implies that he agreed with the sixteenth-century printer, as his monograph provides as much insight into his own views on language as into those of the early modern authors and printers he studies.

Moving away from the printers that are central to Van den Branden's study allows one to demonstrate the multilingual aspect and lengthy duration of the debates on borrowing. The first element can be illustrated by Plantin's case, which serves as a reminder that Dutch was not the only local language of the Low Countries that was under discussion.⁶⁰ When printing a French translation of Juan Luis Vives's *De institutione feminae christianae* (1524) in 1579, Plantin dedicated the text to schoolmaster Peeter Heyns and his colleague Sebastiaan Cuypers.

⁵⁵ Van den Branden 1967, 12-15.

⁵⁶ Vanderheyden discussed Gymnick's view on loanwords in passing in an article about translation and style: Vanderheyden 1985, 322-323.

⁵⁷ 'Moreover, they [the Romans] have been so clever as to adopt foreign words and use them where they had none of their own. Because if one would take the rhetorical figures and the embellished words from that language [Latin], one would see how naked, imperfect, and poor the tongue would be'. 'Bouen dien hebben sy oock cloeck geweest in vreemde woerden aen te nemene ende die te gebruycken waer sy egheene eyghene en hadden, want waert datmen de Figuratas ende de verbloemde woerden wt dier taelen name, so soudemen wel sien hoe naeckt onuolmaeckt ende aerm dat haer spraecke zijn soude'. Livy 1541, fol. *2r.

⁵⁸ See: Chapter 2.2.

⁵⁹ Van den Werve 1553, fol. A3r-A3v.

⁶⁰ See further: Bostoen 1991; Van der Wal 1995a, 29.

In the dedication, the printer claimed to feel so strongly about language mixing that he decided to personally replace the loanwords he found in the text:

[...] when I promised, as I mentioned, to print it, I thought that all I had to do was to follow the copy that has already been printed so many times. However, when I read a few pages in this book, I was amazed to find an infinity of strange and difficult words and ways of speaking that were almost impossible to understand without an average knowledge of Latin. For this reason, I decided to spend a few hours, employing my limited capabilities, to solve this issue [...].

[...] je ne pensay oncques ; promettant (comme dict est) de l'imprimer ; que je deusse faire autre labeur, que de suivre la copie tant de fois imprimee : mais lisant quelques premieres pages dudict livre je me trovay fort esbahi, d'y rencontrer une infinité de mots & manieres de parler estranges & difficiles ; voire presque impossibles à entendre, à qui n'entend moyennement le langage Latin. Parquoy m'estant deliberé d'employer, selon ma petite capacité, quelques heures pour y remedier [...].⁶¹

Plantin's proclaimed agency in freeing this text of loanwords is striking. The fact that he dedicated it to Heyns, who was renowned for having a language free of loanwords, might have been conceived as guaranteeing the lexical quality of the translation. While Heyns did not use this reputation to sell his own works, it seems that Plantin did. The printer uses the claim that this version contains few borrowings as a selling point, contrasting his improved version with other editions of this text that 'has already been printed so many times'. Apparently, he expected that promises of lexical purism would appeal to his francophone clientele, stretching these debates beyond the borders of Dutch.

The discussions on loanwords did not confine themselves to one language, or to one century. Despite what Van den Branden's work on the sixteenth century suggests, defenders and opponents of loanwords continued to debate the issue well into the seventeenth century. In order to illustrate this, it is useful to mention printer Rutger Velpius. In 1609, he published a Dutch translation of Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas's *La sepmaine* (1578) by Theodoor van Liefvelt.⁶² Velpius foresaw, a decade after the chronological end point of Van den Branden's

⁶¹ Tiron & Vives 1579, 5-6.

⁶² On this translation, see: Smith 2005.

study, that such a translation from French would be suspected of containing many loanwords. In a preface dated 1608, he explained that these fears were unjustified:

In the entire translation, not a single word can be found that is not proper Dutch, except for names of persons, animals, or terms of art which cannot be translated. All this labour has been undertaken by the translator solely out of love for his fatherland, as he wishes to prove that the Dutch language is perfect in itself, so that she does not need foreign tongues. The honoured reader will be able to witness this, when comparing this Dutch book with the French original [...].

Ende dat in de gantsche vertaelinghe niet een woordt en is ghestelt dat gheen oprecht neerduyts en is, ten waer in eenighe eyghen naemen van menschen, dieren, oft konst-alem, die niet en kunnen vertaelt worden. Alle welcken bedwongen aerbeydt d'Overstelder heeft aengegrepen alleen door een liefde zijns Vaderlandts, willende daer mede betuygen, dat de Nederlandtsche taele is in haer seluen geheel volmaect, soo dat zy geen wlandtsche taele van doen en heeft: D'welck V.L. wel sal kunnen doorgronden, als zy de dichten van dit iegenwoordigh Neerduyts Boeck medt het François sal vergelijken [...].⁶³

It is relevant to point out Velpius's statement on a comparison between the French original and the Dutch translation. It demonstrates that rejecting loanwords did not stand in the way of an interest in language comparison.

Velpius claims that the translator, Van Liefvelt, dismissed loanwords out of patriotism, as it enabled him to demonstrate the richness of his mother tongue. In 1608, the notion of fatherland was a key term in the Low Countries, troubled by the Dutch Revolt (but soon to be temporarily relieved by the Twelve Years' Truce that was concluded in the following year). The southern Low Countries, including Brussels, where this translation was printed, were under Habsburg rule, while the North was in a state of revolt. As the official printer to the Habsburg court, Velpius was politically engaged in the conflict, and he published his fair share of polemic pamphlets.⁶⁴ The Du Bartas translation thus demonstrates that the claim to defence of Dutch in relation to patriotism was not reserved uniquely for those who supported the Revolt.

While Velpius shows that avoiding loanwords in Dutch could be an act of patriotism, Gymnick did the same for including them. Any reflection on the form of the mother tongues of

⁶³ Du Bartas & Van Liefvelt 1609, fol. **2r.

⁶⁴ Arblaster 2014, 25, 54. See also: Vanhoutven 2014, *passim*.

one's fatherland, be it Dutch or, like in Plantin's case, French, was seen as benefitting the common good. It seems that precisely because an array of nuanced views was possible, the debates did not reach a natural end point.

6.3. Orthography: A Storm in a Teacup?

Since Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin devoted a chapter of their book to the relation between the advent of print and language change, it has virtually gone without question that the printing press incited uniform spelling.⁶⁵ Febvre and Martin argued that printers, in order to enlarge their possible area of distribution, avoided dialectal variation in spelling and vocabulary, and thus stimulated the regularization of the vernacular.⁶⁶ This theory was later supported by media theorists and historians Marshall McLuhan, Jan Vanderheyden, and Elizabeth Eisenstein.⁶⁷ It has become so widely accepted that Peter Burke called this link 'the logic of print'.⁶⁸ This acceptance also characterizes histories of Dutch.⁶⁹

But was the connection between print and the uniformization of orthography really logical for the people engaged in printing houses in the early modern Low Countries? Reading the rare explicit statements of printers and their employees on the topic reveals that sixteenth-century printers rarely expressed any fears over orthographical variation. The idea that printers collectively and consciously pursued standardized orthography can thus be exposed as a myth, at least for this region.

Plantin and schoolmaster-printer Lambrecht form the exceptions that confirm the rule.⁷⁰ Nina Catach had already revealed in the 1960s that Plantin implemented a regularized spelling for French.⁷¹ However, Catach's innovative research barely resonated in later studies. Probably because her results did not concern Dutch and were not published in Dutch, they failed to generate interest from Dutch-language historians and Plantin scholars.⁷²

⁶⁵ Febvre & Martin 1958.

⁶⁶ Febvre & Martin 1958, 465-480.

⁶⁷ McLuhan 1962, 239; Vanderheyden 1965, 25-27; Eisenstein 1979. See also the exchange of articles between Elizabeth Eisenstein and Adrian Johns in the *American Historical Review* in 2002: Eisenstein 2002a, esp. 92-96; Eisenstein 2002b, esp. 127; Johns 2002, 119-122.

⁶⁸ Burke 2005a, 17. See also: Van der Wal 1995a, 19; Van der Sijs 2004, 34.

⁶⁹ Nicoline van der Sijs, for example, titled the section on orthography in her overview of the history of the Dutch language 'Regularizing spelling: from diversity to unity' ('Beregeling van de spelling: van verscheidenheid naar eenheid'). This is indicative of the strong focus on standardization of the book. For the alleged influence of the printing press on the standardization of Dutch, see: Van der Wal 1995a, 19; Van der Sijs 2004, 34; Janssens & Marynissen 2005, 87-88.

⁷⁰ For Lambrecht, see: Chapter 4.3.

⁷¹ Catach 1968.

⁷² Leon Voet makes no mention of the matter in his two volumes on Plantin's printing activities. Karel Bostoen's article discussing the publications on language issued in the circle around Plantin only deals with treatises on the Dutch tongue. The recent popularizing Plantin biography by Sandra Langereis does not refer to spelling issues,

Catach's findings deserve closer attention because of their potential to reveal which orthographical strategies Plantin implemented in his two main vernaculars, French and Dutch. This comparative approach has not been explored in Catach's monolingual research. As will be shown, such an approach holds value for demonstrating that individuals' language strategies could differ from one language to another and that a person with a progressive view regarding one language cannot simply be categorized as being progressive towards languages in general. Attitudes towards language could be nuanced, susceptible to change, or seemingly contradictory and should not be approached in black-and-white terms.

The Non-Issue of Spelling

An overview of some of the rare statements on spelling written by sixteenth-century printers from the Low Countries, which was lacking until now, makes clear how narrow the support base for standardized spelling was among their ranks. While printers frequently added prefaces to their publications to promote or defend the text in question and the form in which they had printed it, remarks on spelling are uncommon. This finding contradicts the general assumption that printers actively sought and promoted standardized orthography.

An early comment on French spelling was made in 1529 in a New Testament published by Antwerp Bible printer Willem Vorsterman. In the colophon, Vorsterman claims to have removed 'all superfluous spelling' from the French text.⁷³ It is tempting to interpret this statement as somehow supporting phonemic orthography, which rejected unpronounced etymological letters. In 1529, however, the quarrel on French orthography which opposed supporters of traditional, etymological spelling and those of reformed, phonemic spelling had not yet gained momentum.⁷⁴ Moreover, Vorsterman's Bible itself makes ample use of etymological, unpronounced letters, such as the 's' and 'p' in 'escripture' ('scripture'). It is more likely that the printer targeted genuine orthographical errors, guaranteeing the correctness of this edition of the sacred text. Nevertheless, it is significant that two decades before Lambrecht published his treatise on Dutch orthography, awareness of French spelling was growing not just in France, but in the Low Countries, too.

A first, brief statement about Dutch spelling was made by Ghent printer Jan Cauweel in 1555, when he issued *De const van rhetoriken*, a treatise on Dutch poetics by rhetorician

and articles by Alison Saunders and Malcolm Walsby on Plantin's publishing relations with France, finally, also fail to mention the matter. Voet 1969; Voet 1972; Bostoen 1991; Saunders 2003; Langereis 2014; Walsby 2016.

⁷³ 'En Anuers Recongneu & diligemment purge de toutes fautes & incorrections : & aussy de toutes superfluites de lorthographe'. *Le nouveau Testament* 1529, fol. BBB6v. I am grateful to Adrian Armstrong for this reference.

⁷⁴ See: Chapter 3.4.

Matthijs de Castelein. Cauweel, in the preface, stipulates the necessity of ‘being able to spell and read one’s mother tongue correctly, following its nature and etymology’.⁷⁵ The explicit reference to etymology is relevant, as it indicates that Cauweel was probably aware of the ongoing quarrels on French spelling, and notably the defences of etymological spelling. However, as De Castelein, the author of the treatise, was particularly interested in these debates, it is likely that Cauweel had found his inspiration in the work itself.⁷⁶

Vorsterman and Cauweel’s remarks on orthography remain superficial and do not harbour a desire for standardized spelling. One other text stemming from a printer’s environment actually actively attacked the orthographical discussions. While Plantin was heavily engaged in discussions on French spelling, after his death his corrector Cornelis Kiliaan published a Latin poem denouncing the quarrel over orthography. He added it to a dictionary, which was—perhaps saliently—printed in the workshop of his former employer in 1599. Kiliaan’s writing expresses fatigue with the debates: ‘I beseech and pray all orthographers/ to prefer peace over war’.⁷⁷ According to him, the discussions on spelling are a waste of time.⁷⁸ Variation is no bad thing, he argues, as long as the text in question remains readable. Rather than indicating that Kiliaan was not interested in the study of language, this poem shows that orthographical diversity was not necessarily looked upon in a negative light.

Finally, there are examples of printers who made no explicit comments on spelling, but whose *officina* did make orthographical changes. René Verdeyen has studied various editions of the vocabulary book of Noël de Berlaimont. His research revealed that the spelling of the vocabulary book changed multiple times as it was issued by different printing houses, but he did not discern a unilinear movement in the direction of a standard form of Dutch.⁷⁹

It seems that a degree of uniformization was sought after when in 1562, Antwerp printer Jan van Ghelen published works of Bruges rhetorician Anthonis de Roovere.⁸⁰ Comparison with manuscript versions of the texts by Roland Willemyns illustrated that Van Ghelen’s

⁷⁵ ‘moeders tale te rechte connen spellen ende lezen, near den aerd ende Etimologie van diere’. De Castelein 1555, fol. *3r.

⁷⁶ See: Chapter 7.4.

⁷⁷ ‘Orthographos omnes obtestor & obsecro, pacem/ Anteferant bello’. Kiliaan 1972, 765. For a Dutch translation, see: Sacré 2007, 91.

⁷⁸ Kiliaan’s view was later shared by schoolmaster Anthoni Smyters, who stated that it was a waste of time to debate orthography, since the traditional spelling would come out on top anyway, as it had done in France. See: Chapter 4.3.

⁷⁹ In certain editions, for example, Dutch words ending in ‘-c’ were rewritten with ‘-ck’, and words containing ‘sc’ were respelled as ‘sch’. French words ending in ‘-aige’, for instance, were transformed into ‘-age’. Verdeyen 1926, xviii-xxv, xlix.

⁸⁰ De Roovere 1562.

printing house removed West Flemish dialect forms.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the fact that neither Van Ghelen nor the printers of the Berlaimont texts explicitly commented on the decision to adapt the spelling suggests that it concerns a pragmatic rather than an ideological decision.

This synopsis of reflections on and approaches towards spelling demonstrates that while printers and their presses might have distributed particular forms of spelling, printers in general stayed remarkably quiet in the vivid orthographical debates in the Low Countries. It seems that Kiliaan's disillusioned poem represents a widely held disinterest in tackling variation. Indeed, it is only in retrospect that diversity in spelling seems to be truly problematic. As long as everyone understood each other, most early moderns saw no urgent need for regularization.

Plantin and the French Querelle

Plantin did not share the view of his employee Kiliaan on the irrelevance of spelling debates, at least where French was concerned. Through a brief examination of the results of Nina Catach's research on Plantin's French spelling ideals, his relationship with ongoing discussions in France can be demonstrated. This provides proof of the transregional character of the *querelle*. A striking factor of Plantin's orthographical activity is that it was related for the most part to French-language manuals for Dutch children. This multilingual aspect raises the question of how far and in what ways Plantin was related to the discussions on Dutch as well.

Already in his first publication, a bilingual Italian-French edition of Giovanni Michele Bruto's treatise on girls' education issued in 1555, Plantin adopted non-traditional typographical elements, such as the use of the *accent aigu* on the 'é' ('beauté', meaning 'beauty').⁸² It seems that his interest in the matter grew further when, two years later, he started cooperating with schoolmaster Gabriel Meurier, himself an advocate of the use of accents and other ways to aid students struggling with the discrepancies between pronunciation and spelling.⁸³ Particularly in schoolbooks designed to teach the French language to children whose native tongue was Dutch, Plantin reflected on spelling. The printer's involvement in the French language expressed itself at the crossroads of French and Dutch.

In 1560, Plantin printed a schoolbook containing French model letters related to the popular fictional knight Amadis de Gaule, titled *Le tresor des Amadis*. Plantin chose this schoolbook to present, for the first time, his take on French orthography:

⁸¹ Willemys 1967; Willemys 2013, 87.

⁸² Bruto 1555; Catach 1968, 230; Catach & Golfand 1973, 30. For an overview of the spelling rules adopted by Plantin in several of his French works, see: Catach 1968, 390-395; Catach & Golfand 1973, 49-57.

⁸³ See also: Chapter 4.3. Catach 1968, 134; Baddeley 1993, 356-357.

And as many find the pronunciation of French difficult because of the redundant letters that are usually written without being pronounced, we have (following the advice or even order of persons with great authority) adopted a manner of spelling that, among the new fashions, is at present the best received [...].

Et pourtant que plusieurs se trouent empêchés de la pronontiation Françoisé, à cause des lettres superflues acoutumees d'écrire sans qu'on les doieue prononcer, nous auons ici (par le conseil, & quasi commandement de personnages de grande autorité) vsé de la maniere d'orthographe, qui, entre les nouuelles, êt de present la mieus recuë [...].⁸⁴

Spanning three pages in total, Plantin's preface gives an elaborate overview of his opinion on French spelling. His claim that he followed the suggestions of 'persons with great authority' was no exaggeration, as the text makes clear that he was, indeed, fully aware of the *querelle de l'orthographe* as it had taken place in France. As the above citation demonstrates, he was informed of the argument used by supporters of phonemic spelling that the differences between writing and pronunciation caused difficulties for those learning the language. Plantin, therefore, supported moderate reform.

The spelling programme Plantin proposes in the preface to the *Tresor* is close to Pléiade poet Pierre de Ronsard's view.⁸⁵ His case thus joins that of the French schoolmasters in demonstrating that, of all the French spelling debaters, Ronsard had the most impact in the Low Countries. In line with the prince of poets, Plantin proposes the use of the *accent circonflexe* when the 's' following a vowel is not pronounced, writing 'prêt' ('ready') and 'tôt' ('early') rather than 'prest' and 'tost'. He also uses the *accent aigu* ('autorité', meaning 'authority') and omits unpronounced etymological letters, such as the 'l' in 'aultre' ('other').⁸⁶

Plantin mentions that Petrus Ramus's treatise on French grammar inspired him to differentiate between 'i' and 'j' ('jusques' instead of 'iusques', meaning 'until').⁸⁷ However, Ramus's *Gramere* was not printed until 1562, two years later than the *Tresor*. This implies that

⁸⁴ *Le tresor des Amadis* 1560, fol. ¶1v.

⁸⁵ Catach 1968, 231; Catach & Golfand 1973, 26, 30.

⁸⁶ *Le tresor des Amadis* 1560, fols. ¶1v-¶2v.

⁸⁷ '[S]ince a long time, I have [distinguished between] "j" and "i" where it is a consonant, and I plan to do this even more consistently, following the authority of the very learned Petrus Ramus in his French grammar'. '[C]omme j'ai fait, paßé long tems, de tel, j, & i, où elles sont consones, & que je me suis proposé de faire doresenauant plus hardiment, suiuant l'autorité de tré-sauant homme Pierre de la Ramee en sa Grammaire Françoisé'. *Le tresor des Amadis* 1560, fol. ¶2v.

Plantin had heard about Ramus's work, or that he had read it in manuscript.⁸⁸ This, like Lambrecht's case, illustrates both the transregionality of the debates and the fact that only a small part of the actual discussions have reached modern times through surviving prints and manuscripts.⁸⁹

In the following year, 1561, Plantin worked together with his Antwerp colleague Jan I van Waesberghe to publish a series of *Amadis de Gaule* books. To the first volume, the printers added a preface that, concerning spelling, promises to use 'the easiest, in my opinion, for foreign nations'.⁹⁰ Again, the contact between mother tongue speakers of other languages and French is paramount for the decision to adopt a certain spelling. The books indeed contain several of the spelling reforms advocated by Plantin, such as the use of the *accent circonflexe* and *accent aigu* and the general omission of unpronounced letters. Moreover, 'i' and 'j' are distinguished.⁹¹

Plantin continued to use a moderately reformed spelling in most of his French works for several more years. In 1567, he printed a French-Dutch conversation manual for which he wrote the dedication, preface, and postface, and which also contains a dialogue about spelling and accents.⁹² It is likely that the printer himself had a hand in this dialogue.⁹³ A certain Antoine/Anthonis, Pierre/Peeter, and Iaques/Jacob discuss their language lessons, comparing Pierre's French material with Iaques's Latin assignment.⁹⁴ This incites the boys to consider the differences between the languages, perhaps stimulating, on a metalevel, the users of the French-Dutch schoolbook to do the same for those tongues.⁹⁵ Eventually, the boys use their observations to engage in a conversation on French orthography that thus has a comparative, multilingual character. They echo all of Plantin's own ideas on spelling, including his opinion on redundant letters and the *accent circonflexe*.⁹⁶ It is striking how strongly his reflections on

⁸⁸ Catach 1968, 232-233.

⁸⁹ For Lambrecht, who was familiar with the work of Peletier du Mans before it had been published, see: Chapter 4.3.

⁹⁰ 'la plus facile, à mon auis, pour les nations étrangères'. Herberay des Essarts 1561, fol. A2v.

⁹¹ Catach & Golfand 1973, 33-34.

⁹² *La premiere, et la seconde partie des dialogves françois* 1567.

⁹³ Catach 1968, 232-233; Baddeley 1993, 357-360.

⁹⁴ Ray Nash proposed, in a modern edition of part of the *Dialogues*, that Pierre/Peeter might be Pierre Hamon, author of a treatise on calligraphy, a topic which is also discussed in the conversation manual. Nevertheless, it is more likely that the name refers to Plantin's friend Peeter Heyns, who was skilled in calligraphy himself and was interested in the language discussions of the time. This idea is supported by the fact that the character in question utters the phrase 'Happy is he who gladly serves God' ('Bien heureux est quiconques/ Sert à Dieu volontiers'). This sentence is remarkably similar to Heyns's personal device 'Happy is he who trusts in God' ('Bienheureux qui en Dieu se fie'). *La premiere, et la seconde partie des dialogves françois* 1567, 150; Morison & Nash 1940, vi-vii.

⁹⁵ *La premiere, et la seconde partie des dialogves françois* 1567, 154-155.

⁹⁶ Remarkably, the orthographical proposals discussed in the dialogue are not applied consistently in the remainder of the manual. This contrast could simply be the result of different authorship. It might also be explained, however,

orthography are connected to texts in which bilingualism in Dutch and French and language learning play a role. Language encounters, indeed, prompt reflection, and even make it necessary.

Plantin's case further demonstrates how in printing houses, language ideals had to face material and financial limitations. Before Plantin could implement the use of different accents, he needed to obtain additional type pieces. In 1563, he created a type foundry where he, for instance, had more 'â', 'ë', and 'ê' characters made.⁹⁷ Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin have suggested that it was another constraint—namely his staff's limited knowledge of French—that urged Plantin to simplify spelling, as it would make the job of his typesetters easier.⁹⁸ As one of the strongest features of the *Officina Plantiniana* was the employment of qualified employees, it seems that Plantin's personal interests in language learning furnish a more likely explanation.

In the 1570s, when the French *querelle* had come to a definite standstill, Plantin slowly but surely gave up on his orthographical ideals and printed increasingly fewer works that followed the rules he had advocated earlier.⁹⁹ However, Nina Catach has convincingly argued that elements of the spelling that he developed together with Meurier and Van Waesberghe would have a long afterlife, especially the distinction between 'i' and 'j', the use of accents, and the rejection of the unpronounced 's'.¹⁰⁰ After Plantin and Van Waesberghe had cooperated on the *Amadis* texts and various works by Meurier, Van Waesberghe adopted elements from Plantin's orthographical views in some of his productions. The educational printer moved to Holland in 1589.¹⁰¹ There, Van Waesberghe's sons continued to print schoolbooks until well into the seventeenth century.¹⁰²

While in France traditional etymological spelling had re-established its hegemony long before, elements of reformed, phonemic French spelling continued to be used in the Low Countries by the Van Waesberghe family, eventually influencing the Elzevier printing house as well.¹⁰³ Illustratively, in 1663 Pierre Corneille expressed his approval of the orthography

by the already mentioned tension between the wish to simplify spelling for children learning the language, and the wish to teach them a form of spelling that is more generally accepted. See: Chapter 4.3.

⁹⁷ Catach & Golfand 1973, 29.

⁹⁸ Febvre & Martin 1958, vol. 1, 475-476.

⁹⁹ Catach 1968, 233.

¹⁰⁰ Catach 1968, 236-237; Catach & Golfand 1973; Catach 2001, 136; Cerquiglini 2004, 124.

¹⁰¹ For more information on Jan I van Waesberghe and his successors, see: Ledebøer 1869.

¹⁰² Catach 1968, 236; Catach & Golfand 1973, 21.

¹⁰³ Catach & Golfand 1973, 40-44.

used by the ‘Hollanders’, and asked his own printers to use it, too.¹⁰⁴ This example demonstrates both the long afterlife and the complex European dimension of the sixteenth-century discussions on language. Ideas on spelling spread from French debaters to Plantin and Van Waesberghe in the Low Countries, and then through various printers in the Republic back to France.

Catach had to admit, in a 1973 article, that she did not know whether Plantin perhaps also had specific views on Dutch spelling.¹⁰⁵ Since then, the issue has not been revisited. A first conclusion that can be drawn from studying the Dutch material printed by Plantin is that he did not write explicitly on the topic in prefaces to printed editions, as he had done for French. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the Dutch spelling practices in his *officina*, a survey has been undertaken with the help of the Universal Short Title Catalogue [see Appendix]. For each year, two to three Dutch publications, including ordonances and literary works but excluding treatises on spelling, have been studied (if possible practically and logistically). Following the topics discussed by orthographers such as Lambrecht and his fellow schoolmasters, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the following letters have been studied: the spelling of the Dutch [χ] at the beginning of a word (the ‘g’ in ‘gaan’, meaning ‘to go’); the [a] (the open ‘a’ in ‘gaan’); the [k] at the end of a word (the ‘k’ in ‘boek’, meaning ‘book’); and the differentiations of ‘i’ and ‘j’, and ‘u’ and ‘v’.

From this survey, it becomes clear that the *Officina Plantiniana* used a relatively stable spelling. Words ending in [k] are virtually always spelled ‘ck’, and the open [a] is almost consistently spelled ‘ae’. For [χ], ‘gh’ and ‘g’ are both used, although there seems to be a preference for ‘gh’. The ‘u’ and ‘v’, and ‘i’ and ‘j’ are not distinguished. This is remarkable, as Plantin advocated the disambiguation of ‘i’ and ‘j’ in French from his earliest prints onwards. Overall, these spelling choices follow common practice in Dutch printing of the time. As such, they represent a low level of financial risk, which is perhaps the reason for their adoption in Plantin’s printing house. In this case, the fact that Plantin was not a native speaker of the language may have kept him from making any innovations.

The *Officina Plantiniana* agreed, however, to adapt to the orthographical wishes of some of its authors. Pontus de Heuter’s 1581 treatise on Dutch spelling and the 1584 *Twe-*

¹⁰⁴ ‘Les Hollandois m’ont frayé le chemin, & donné ouverture à y mettre distinction par de differents Caracteres, que jusqu’icy nos Imprimeurs ont employé indifféremment. Ils ont separé les *i* & les *u* consones d’avec les *i* & les *u* voyelles’. Corneille 1663, 3; Catach 1968, 173; Catach 1997, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Catach & Golfand 1973, 19.

spraack were each printed in the spelling they promoted.¹⁰⁶ For De Heuter, this meant that many [χ]s were spelled as ‘h’ (‘twintih’ instead of ‘twintig’, meaning ‘twenty’).¹⁰⁷ The *Twe-spraack* uses ‘aa’ rather than ‘ae’, and distinguishes ‘v’ and ‘u’.¹⁰⁸ The Dutch spelling of Plantin’s printing house can thus be characterized as following the generally accepted models while being receptive to the wishes of individual authors.

Although Plantin’s *Gulden Passer* played an important role as distributor of Dutch spelling ideals developed by others, the printer did not take part in the Dutch debates as he did for French. Nevertheless, Plantin’s orthographical view for French developed in his multilingual surroundings and was broadcast through language manuals with a French-Dutch background. He shows that being a plurilingual impacted his view on language, while he could nevertheless take different stances towards different languages.

6.4. Engaging the Public

As shown by David Considine and John Gallagher, the number of dictionaries and multilingual works printers brought onto the market in the second half of the sixteenth century was remarkably high.¹⁰⁹ This surge in the printing of polyglot texts suggests that printers were well aware that a general fascination with language was on the rise.¹¹⁰ Plantin’s *officina*, too, responded to this trend with its many dictionaries and collections of proverbs. This raises the question of what practical role these works played in the language debates. Frans Claes has extensively studied the coming into being and sources of the Plantinian dictionaries.¹¹¹ By contrast, not much is known about their intended use and reception.

A survey of the prefaces of the dictionaries and other collections of language specimens by Plantin’s printing house reveals that the intended purpose of these works was threefold. First and foremost, dictionaries allowed, naturally, consultation on the meaning of specific words. Plantin’s fund reveals, moreover, that they were designed for study and reflection on language. Readers are explicitly invited to add missing words to them. Going one step further, Plantin’s corrector Kiliaan even stimulated his readers to compare the different languages in his

¹⁰⁶ De Heuter 1581; *Twe-spraack* 1584. Coornhert, who ordered Plantin to reprint his Boethius translation in 1584, after it had been misprinted, apparently asked the printer to adopt the spelling of the *Twe-spraack*. In the dedication to the rhetoricians of *De Eglentier*, Coornhert writes that he wants to follow their example in the ‘improvement and enrichment of our mother tongue’ (‘voorderinge ende verryckinge van onze moeders taal’). Coornhert 1585, 3.

¹⁰⁷ De Heuter 1581. For ‘kraht’ and ‘twintih’, see: page 36.

¹⁰⁸ *Twe-spraack* 1584.

¹⁰⁹ Considine 2008, 288-313; Gallagher 2015, 27-44; Considine 2017, 21.

¹¹⁰ It was common for printers to order the creation of dictionaries: Brockstieger 2015, 371.

¹¹¹ Claes 1970c; Claes 1985.

dictionary, engaging in a truly scholarly enterprise. A picture thus emerges of well-known language debaters, such as Kiliaan and Plantin, trying to create a ripple effect, encouraging the broader public to reflect on and investigate the general topics of the Europe-wide fascination with language for themselves.

Stimulating Collecting

A central theme in Plantin's dictionaries is that of active readership. Ideally, according to their prefaces, the public does not consult the work in question passively, but tries to add to it and reflect on it. Such an active stance transforms dictionaries into tools that could be used by any reader, humanist or not, to become part of the community of language debaters, language defenders, and language improvers.

Plantin himself asserted in the preface to a 1573 trilingual Dutch-French-Latin dictionary, the *Thesavrvs Thevtonicæ lingvæ*, that he had adopted an active attitude towards word lists when he first arrived in the Low Countries. Trying to learn Dutch as fast as possible, he allegedly started to 'collect, regroup, and order alphabetically the words that I encountered for the first time or that came out of my pen'.¹¹² With the help of his employees, he explains, his efforts eventually led to the creation of a Latin-Greek-French-Dutch dictionary, the *Dictionarivm tetraglotton*, in 1562, and the 1573 *Thesavrvs Thevtonicæ lingvæ* from which the quote is taken.¹¹³

In the *Thesavrvs*, Plantin demanded an outlook from his readers that was as active as his own by calling on the help of the schoolmasters who might use the dictionary. He realized that, in its current state, the dictionary still did not reflect the full richness of the Dutch tongue. Dedicating the work to the members of the schoolmasters' guild of Saint Ambrose in Antwerp, he asked them to fill the lexical lacunae:

[...] Gentlemen, who with your knowledge and experience, obtained by teaching the youth and through the dexterity of your mind, and with the observations that you have made during your studies, will be able to help me, each in his own way, to [...] advance in the extension, ornamentation, and (if it is even possible) completion or perfection of this model [...].

¹¹² 'mettre la main à ramasser, & mettre comme en certains monceaux & ordres des lettres, les mots que premierement i'en rencontrois, ou qui se presentoyent soubs ma plume'. *Thesavrvs Thevtonicæ lingvæ* 1573, fol. §2r.

¹¹³ The actual role of Plantin's notes in the creation of these dictionaries is unclear. Claes 1970c.

[...] Messieurs ; qui, par vostre sçauoir & experience acquise en instruisant la ieunesse, & par la dexterité de voz esprits, & obseruations faictes en voz estudes, pouuez [...] m'aider & faire prouffit, chascun en son endroict, à l'augmentation, aornement, & (si iamais faire se peut) accomplissement ou perfection de ce modelle [...].¹¹⁴

The printer acknowledges the authority that schoolmasters had over the Dutch language at this time. Seemingly realizing the immensity of the task of mapping the Dutch language in full and the need for a learned community to complete it, he asks them for their help.

While emphasizing the imperfections of a publication was part of the rhetorical topos of modesty, Plantin's request appears to be genuine. His *officina*, in fact, continued to print improved editions of dictionaries. Calls for help from readers and networks of intellectuals were not uncommon in early modern learned circles.¹¹⁵ The atlases by royal cartographer Abraham Ortelius that were printed by the *Gulden Passer*, for instance, also demanded that their readers send corrections, maps, and additional information to the author. The later editions indeed appear to have profited from such input, as they grew to vast proportions.¹¹⁶

One side note concerning Plantin's dictionaries that deserves to be made is that the printer promoted these multilingual works as patriotic statements. In publishing them, Plantin wished to follow 'the example of other nations', raising the status of the Dutch language so that it could equal that of, for example, French and Italian, which already possessed scholarly dictionaries.¹¹⁷ Moreover, in the 1562 *Dictionarivm tetraglotton*, Plantin addresses the presence of the language border within the Low Countries. He states that he published the text 'so that the whole youth of the [Low Countries] shall share a dictionary in their mother tongue'.¹¹⁸ By bringing Dutch and French together to translate words from Latin and Greek, Plantin wished to bring the people of the Low Countries together in a communal lexicographical experience. This was indeed possible, as French and Dutch held an equal function in the dictionary as target languages [Figure 6.1]. In these dictionaries, again, the notion of patriotism through

¹¹⁴ *Thesavrvs Thevtonicæ lingvæ* 1573, fol. §3r-§3v.

¹¹⁵ Eisenstein 2002a, 95.

¹¹⁶ Harris 2010, 76-77.

¹¹⁷ 'à l'imitation des autres Nations'. *Thesavrvs Thevtonicæ lingvæ* 1573, fol. §2r; Claes 1985; Van Rossem 2007, 14-15. Interestingly, this work is also the first dictionary in which earlier studies have attested the word 'fatherland' ('vaderland') as a listed lemma. Muller 1928, 53; Tilmans 1999, 12.

¹¹⁸ 'vt totius Galliaë Belgicæ pubes commune habeat vernaculo idioma Dictionarium'. *Dictionarivm tetraglotton* 1562, fol. 2r-2v. Translated by: Considine 2008, 146.

multilingualism is emphasized. What is new is the attempt to create a community of language debaters by inviting readers to take an active stance and give feedback to the authors.¹¹⁹



Figure 6.1.

Dictionarium tetraglotton sev voces Latinae omnes, et Graecae eis respondentes, cum Gallica & Teutonica (quam passim Flandricam vocant) earum interpretatione. Christophe Plantin, 1562, fol. A1r. University Library Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, OTM: O 60-1085.

¹¹⁹ There were more early modern authors who attempted to create knowledge communities through their books, asking an active attitude from their readers. See: Van Dixhoorn 2017.

Enabling Observation and Reflection

Establishing word lists was only the first step on the way to reflection on the form of individual languages and language comparison, and, in other words, becoming a full-fledged participant in the early modern discussions on language. Such a reflective attitude, too, was asked of the readers of the dictionaries produced by the *Officina Plantiniana*. Readers were pushed to become language debaters. The call for conscious rumination came from Plantin's corrector and lexicographer Cornelis Kiliaan.

In 1574, Plantin printed a *Dictionarivm Tevtonico-Latinvm* which explicitly mentions Kiliaan as the author.¹²⁰ This Dutch-Latin dictionary gives an overview of words from the Brabantine dialect. It is innovative for its etymological study of Dutch, occasionally adding the abbreviations 'gal.' and 'ger.' to point out French or German origins, respectively.¹²¹ In the preface, Kiliaan explains his reasons for undertaking this feat of scholarship:

Anyone should be at liberty to search for the closer derivation of our words from Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and other ancient ones, and to discuss the whole Babylonian confusion [...].¹²²

Cuivis tamen liberum esto nostratium Dictionum propinquiorem originem a Graecis, Arabibus, Hebraeis, & alijs antiquis petere, atque Babylonicum omne chaos discutere [...].¹²³

The lexicographer shows himself to be aware of the debates about the history of the Dutch language and the Europe-wide discussions on what exactly happened when the Tower of Babel fell. Through his dictionary, he wishes to enable his readers to study these questions for themselves, comparing Dutch and Latin and reflecting on the etymological background, and thus the history, of the vernacular.

Kiliaan's call could be extrapolated to any dictionary or vocabulary book, even fully vernacular ones. To illustrate how this would work it is helpful to look at another, earlier production from the Plantin presses. In 1568, Plantin printed a bilingual work by François Goedthals, gathering Dutch proverbs accompanied by their French equivalents.¹²⁴ Plantin wrote a dedication for Goedthals's text, in which he praises the author for his efforts to collect these

¹²⁰ Kiliaan 1574.

¹²¹ Claes 1975, 310.

¹²² Translated by: Considine 2008, 148.

¹²³ Kiliaan 1574, fol. A3v.

¹²⁴ Goedthals 1568.

sayings. He argues that this book benefits the diachronic study of the vernacular languages involved:

It is a work which, in itself, does not seem that great, but which I consider interesting for those who enjoy the naïveté of the sententious ways of speaking of the ancients.

Oeuure qui de soy ne semble pas grande : mais que i'estime deuoir estre agreable à tous ceux qui se delectent de la naïfueté des sententieuses manieres de parler des anciens.¹²⁵

With the term 'ancients' ('anciens'), Plantin systematically refers to the francophone and Dutch-speaking communities of the past rather than to the ancient Romans or Greeks. The word 'naïveté' ('naïfveté') was a trending term that was used, for instance by Louis Meigret, to refer to an older or more natural state of the French tongue, showing again that Plantin was up to date on the international terminology of the debates.¹²⁶ Key in this citation is the idea that studying Goedthals's proverbs could provide insight into the history of the vernacular. No knowledge of the classical languages was needed for this type of enquiry, making it available to anyone who could read French or Dutch.

For bilingual readers, this collection of proverbs also provided readers with the possibility to compare the French and Dutch languages. In the preliminary texts, both Plantin and Goedthals comment on the translation of sayings.¹²⁷ Both defend the view that every proverb in the collection has an equivalent in the other language, although they are not always literal translations of each other. Plantin thus refers to 'the true ancient proverbs that are customary in Flemish, and of which the French have similar ones. Even if the meaning of the words is not always the same, at least the implied essence is'.¹²⁸ The printer defends the sense-for-sense translation also used in his Reynard edition rather than word-for-word translation.¹²⁹

Goedthals agrees, explaining that he translated 'some [proverbs] only in content or meaning, as every language has its grace and particular pleasing way of expressing

¹²⁵ Goedthals 1568, 5.

¹²⁶ Du Bellay mentioned the 'naïve state' ('Naïf') of languages. Meigret wrote about the 'naïve French grace' ('nayue grace Françoisze') in his 1550 French grammar. Orthographer Honorat Rambaud later used the term 'naïvely' ('naïvement') in the title of his work on spelling. Du Bellay 1549, fol. b2r; Meigret 1550, fol. 25r; Rambaud 1578. See also: Chapter 3.2.

¹²⁷ On this widely debated topic, see: Rössing-Hager 1992, 362; Sumillera 2014, 71.

¹²⁸ 'les vrais proverbes anciens accoustumés en Flameng; & dont les François ont le semblable, si non tousiours en correspondance de la signification des mots, au moins en substance de la sentence'. Goedthals 1568, 4-5.

¹²⁹ See: Chapter 4.4. Florianus & Plantin 1566, fol. A5v.

something'.¹³⁰ Goethals thus affirms that the particular individual character of each language, described by Du Bellay as an 'I do not know what' ('je-ne-sais-quoy'), cannot be expressed in verbatim translation. It is interesting to note that Goedthals uses the term 'grace' here, which was, perhaps even more than the notion of 'naïveté', a key term in the European discussions on language of the sixteenth century.¹³¹ Through the proverb collection, readers could assess for themselves whether they could find this 'grace' in French and Dutch, and define their own opinion on the language-bound character of sayings.

The comparative, reflective attitude awakened in Kiliaan's dictionary and Goedthals's proverb collection could, in theory, even be applied to any multilingual text or overview of language specimens.¹³² The ultimate example of a multilingual work that invited such observation and study is Plantin's Polyglot Bible.¹³³ Its learned readers could compare the different versions of the sacred texts of Christianity in its various tongues, stimulating not only philological consideration but also reflection on the different languages themselves.

It was already known that Plantin's *officina* brought texts onto the market that participated in the debates on the form, history, and status of languages, such as the *Twe-spraack*. This close examination of the prefaces of the dictionaries issued by the Antwerp-based printing house has revealed that these works also encouraged readers to reflect on the central themes of the discussions for themselves and to take part in them. This suggests that Plantin and his employees witnessed a demand for a type of self-help book for the study of language. As Goedthals's proverbs show, this printing strategy did not necessarily target a scholarly audience familiar with Latin and Greek. Through dictionaries, collections of language specimens, and multilingual works, learned and unlearned men and women could take part in the language debates, even though their contributions have since become invisible.

6.5. Conclusion

Plantin and his colleagues Jan Gymnick, Joos Lambrecht, Hendrik van den Keere, Willem Silvius, and Jan I van Waesberghe were certainly agents in the sixteenth-century exchanges on the Dutch and French languages. They combined practical labour in the workshop with reflections on the vernacular, qualifying them as scholar-printers. Whether their views and

¹³⁰ 'sommighe alleenelick in sententie ofte ghelijcken sin, naer dat elcke tale heeft huere gracie ende sonderlicke beuallicheyt van wtsegghen'. Goedthals 1568, 7.

¹³¹ See: Chapter 3.2 and 3.3. The term 'grace' was also used by Étienne Dolet, Joachim du Bellay, and Marcus Antonius Gillis. Dolet 1540, 13; Du Bellay 1549, fol. b2r; Gillis & Sambucus 1566, 7.

¹³² For an elaboration of this idea in light of the multilingual emblem book, which rose in popularity at the end of the sixteenth century, see: Van de Haar 2015c.

¹³³ *Biblia sacra* 1568-1573.

actions resulted in actual language change remains questionable, however. In any case, to these printers, improving and supporting a language did not necessarily mean standardizing and purifying it, nor did it imply ignoring other languages.

The diversity in attitudes towards the topic of loanwords in this *lieu* has now revealed itself for the first time. Not everyone opposed borrowed terms. Nevertheless, those who, like Gymnick, did not fit the constructed narrative of rising purification were silenced. The fact that references to the quarrels on borrowing were still made in the first decades of the seventeenth century is another indication that no simple consensus could be reached.

The printers discussed here acted as mediators on multiple levels. They transferred ideas and notions from elsewhere in Europe to the Low Countries, such as the concepts of ‘naiveté’ and ‘grace’. They also offered language debaters a platform to spread their opinions to a wider audience. Moreover, it has now become clear that printing houses brought forth a range of books that allowed readers to reflect on language issues for themselves and form a well-founded opinion on the topics concerned.

An unexpected void in the role of printers in the discussions on language is formed by the absence of overt interest in Dutch spelling. This suggests that in the sixteenth century, orthographical variety, richness, and flexibility were generally accepted by speakers of Dutch, while promoters of uniformity, such as Lambrecht and Plantin, formed the exceptions. This conclusion asks for a reconsideration of the quarrels in France, where traditionally the role played by printers such as Geoffroy Tory and Louis Meigret has been emphasized, to see to what extent uniformization really was their goal. The efforts by Plantin and Van Waesberghe, who did try to implement certain rules for French spelling, have received little attention from standardization scholars because of the preoccupation of historians of the Low Countries with Dutch. This demonstrates the extent to which the biased character of modern research into the sixteenth-century debates on language has limited our understanding of the topic.

7. Chambers of Rhetoric

7.1. Introduction

The chambers of rhetoric in the Dutch-speaking Low Countries were centred on the practice of the art of rhetoric in the vernacular. Thus, they already constituted communities that experimented with vernacular language before the debates on the form and status of the vernaculars burst forth in this region. Accomplished members informed and trained fellow members in the rhetorical use of Dutch. They represented their chamber in interurban tournaments, which added a competitive element while creating a strong transregional network. The written and rarely printed output of the rhetoricians consists mostly of lyrical and theatrical works in particular preferred genres, marked by an attention to moral issues and lexical richness.

It is especially their attempts to enrich the vocabulary of Dutch through loanwords that have attracted the attention of modern scholars, leading to the reputation of sixteenth-century rhetoricians as being generally conservative.¹ This perception developed both within literary history and within the history of the Dutch language, two areas of study that overlap in their study of the chambers. Scholars in both fields have placed rhetoricians in opposition to a new, ‘Renaissance’ type of poetry and way of dealing with the Dutch language that allegedly emerged around 1560 and flourished from 1580 onwards.²

Historians of language have followed Lode Van den Branden’s dichotomy of an old and a new, ‘Renaissance’ attitude towards Dutch, defined as a rejection of loanwords and a pursuit of uniformization.³ Rhetoricians, characterized as fervent advocates of loanwords, represented the old language attitude.⁴ Literary historians, such as Johan Koppenol and Marijke Spies, in a similar vein, saw rhetoricians as focused on local Dutch traditions alone. The rhetoricians’ use of loanwords has been used as an argument to describe them as bad poets. They have been contrasted with ‘Renaissance’ poets, who were supposedly innovative, learned individuals, *poeta docti*, who integrated classical and foreign elements into Dutch poetry while rejecting loanwords.⁵

¹ From the perspective of medievalists, fifteenth-century rhetoricians were, on the contrary, innovative. Van Dixhoorn 1999, 388-389.

² The idea that a change occurred from 1560 onwards is reflected in the choice to start the second volume of the most recent overview of Dutch literary history with the year 1560. Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008.

³ Van den Branden 1967, 1-4; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008, 183-184. See also the use of the term ‘Renaissance’ in: Van der Sijs 2004, 30-73.

⁴ Van den Branden 1967, 74, 119-120; Van der Wal 1995a, 28-29; Van der Sijs 2004, 583.

⁵ Waterschoot 1971-1972; Koppenol 1991; Spies 1993a; Waterschoot 1995; Koppenol 1998, 111-118, 144-183; Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 263-267.

Indeed, these observations on the practices of the rhetoricians hold a grain of truth. Most rhetoricians did support loanwords and continued to practise traditional Dutch poetry while new literary forms were rising in popularity in the second half of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the idea of a breach between rhetoricians and ‘Renaissance’ poets in the history of Dutch literature has been rightfully criticized since the late 1990s by, among others, Arjan van Dixhoorn and Bart Ramakers.⁶ They have shown that rhetoricians who used supposedly archaic elements, such as the traditional Dutch metre and loanwords, were just as interested in the classics and in foreign developments as those who dismissed borrowings and used the new French metre.⁷ Furthermore, using loanwords was not necessarily a mark of bad poetry or an uncritical attitude towards language: just like in classical times, the early modern period was marked by a debate on this topic in which multiple attitudes were possible.⁸

Ramakers has described the idea that a ‘Renaissance’ or humanist attitude towards literature arrived only after the era of the rhetoricians, and was therefore behind on similar innovations in the visual arts, as ‘the myth of the large delay’.⁹ Now that the conceptual framework of a rupture between the rhetoricians and ‘Renaissance’ poets has been proven to be untenable, it is slowly being replaced by an idea of continuity and a gradual but non-linear change in which rhetoricians equally took part. The notion that ‘Renaissance’ poets were fundamentally different from the rhetoricians is therefore rejected here.

A similar conceptual shift is required for the history of the Dutch language, so that the chambers of rhetoric can reveal themselves as the innovative centres of language experiment, reflection, and discussion they actually were. One needs to realize that uniformization and the rejection of loanwords were not necessarily seen as forms of language progress in the sixteenth century. From the 1540s onwards—and thus earlier than previously thought—rhetoricians already were increasingly thinking about the improvement of Dutch. Through experiment, proposals for language developments were formulated, in which disapprovals and approvals of loanwords were two sides of the same coin. Reflections on and experiments with the rules of Dutch literary language in the chambers, including the issues of spelling, loanwords, and versification, were also innovative when they did not end in a defined set of rules that would later become the standard. The ideas on the form of Dutch that swiftly spread in the 1540s did

⁶ Ramakers 1998; Van Dixhoorn 1999; Van Dixhoorn 2009a.

⁷ Ramakers 2004; Van Dixhoorn 2004; Ramakers 2006; Hemelaar 2011; Mareel 2011; Ramakers 2012.

⁸ Van de Haar 2018.

⁹ Ramakers 1998.

not position themselves in opposition to the practices in the chambers. Rather, they stemmed in part from them.

The study of the contributions of the rhetoricians to these language debates must also avoid the pitfall of confounding defences of the Dutch language and Dutch literary traditions with a rejection of other languages. It was in the sixteenth-century context of Europe-wide competition between languages that rhetoricians promoted and defended the Dutch tongue. They used their knowledge of multiple languages and of discussions on language elsewhere to strengthen the position of Dutch within this atmosphere of rivalry. The chambers of rhetoric were not monolingual, and their contributions to the debates on the Dutch vernacular depended on their open mindset.

These organizations thus have their multilingual character in common with the other *lieux* studied in this book. A characteristic that sets them apart is that in this community, people from different professions came together to practise rhetoric in the vernacular. Among them were schoolmasters, such as Peeter Heyns and Jacob van der Schuere, clergymen, such as Matthijs de Castelein and Jan van Mussem, and city officials, such as Eduard de Dene. In order to emphasize that members of chambers of rhetoric were at the same time professionally involved elsewhere, this *lieu* will again be approached through Peeter Heyns, who was an active member of a chamber from Berchem, near Antwerp. In his productions for this chamber, his outlook on language as a schoolmaster still shines through. Such intersections between professional and rhetoricians' activities shape the position of the chambers of rhetoric within the language debates.

Heyns was a leading figure who belonged to the select circle of rhetoricians whose written productions, including his comments on language, stood the test of time.¹⁰ This does not mean that such language reflections were exceptional. On the contrary, experimenting with the rhetorical qualities of Dutch was a core business in the chambers. Especially in the sixteenth-century context in which hands-on, practice-based knowledge production was increasingly valued, such experiments with language were a form of language study. Heyns himself is mainly known for using French verse forms in Dutch and French and for his loanword-free language. Taking a closer look into Heyns's life as a rhetorician reveals, firstly, that his language choices were not necessarily considered forms of progress, and, secondly, the importance of multilingualism in the chambers. The interplay between French and Dutch

¹⁰ On the hierarchy and networks within the chambers, see: Van Dixhoorn 2008.

marked not just Heyns's writings, but the practices and history of the chambers of rhetoric in general.

Multilingual Roots

The Dutch-speaking chambers of rhetoric developed in a context of close exchange with francophone cultural phenomena. The translingual origins of the chambers would continue to mark them in later times, as the interest for French literary works flourished in the Low Countries. Within the sixteenth-century debates on language, rhetoricians first and foremost promoted and attempted to improve the Dutch language. They relied heavily, nevertheless, on their awareness of developments in France and the francophone parts of the Low Countries, in which they had continued to display an interest throughout the existence of the chambers.

By the fifteenth century, confraternities of the *Puys* and *compagnies joyeuses* from the southern Low Countries and northern France—relatively loose-knit societies which engaged in lyrical and theatrical activities, respectively—inspired the creation of chambers of rhetoric in Flemish and Brabantine cities.¹¹ Later, such chambers, which were more institutionalized than the *Puys* and *compagnies* and depended greatly on local performative traditions, were also founded in Holland, Zeeland, and other Dutch-speaking areas.¹²

The practices of the chambers in Brabant, Flanders, Zeeland, and Holland formed a continuity, especially when the latter two provinces welcomed many individuals who, like Heyns, fled north during the Revolt.¹³ Their shared practices developed through the circulation of individuals and texts, and certainly through the regular meetings of chambers from different cities and regions during competitions and festivals. It has been argued that the broad geographical reach of the network of individuals, chambers, and texts, also resulted in a shared form of transregional Dutch within the chambers, marked by particular forms of speech such as loanwords.¹⁴ Whether the exchanges of the rhetoricians across the heartlands of the Low Countries really resulted in such a Dutch *koinè* can only be determined through a quantitative, digital analysis of a large corpus of texts. The hypothesis deserves testing, since it seems likely that the intense contacts within the network of chambers caused particular figures of speech, syntactical structures, or neologisms to rise in popularity relatively swiftly.

¹¹ For the complex genesis of the chambers of rhetoric in Dutch-speaking environments, see: Coigneau, Cockx-Indestege, Waterschoot, & De Schepper 1994, 13-15; Van Bruaene 2008, 27-51; Van Dixhoorn 2008, 123-124. For the francophone rhetorical traditions, see: Koopmans 2001; Muir 2006; Lavéant 2008; Lavéant 2011.

¹² For the local precursors that shaped the development of the chambers, see: Ramakers 1996, 95-96; Van Bruaene 2008, 27-51. For the establishment of chambers in the northern Low Countries, see: Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 35-40.

¹³ Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 35-55.

¹⁴ Janssens & Marynissen 2005, 87-88; Van Dixhoorn 2015, 55.

One of the things the chambers shared was their terminology, in which the influence of French models on the Dutch-speaking culture of the rhetoricians is reflected. In calling themselves practitioners of the art of ‘rhetorijcke’ (‘rhetoric’) or ‘rhetorisiens’ (‘rhetoricians’), for instance, they adopted the French terms ‘rhétorique’ and ‘rhétoricien’.¹⁵ These terms were rooted in the *seconde rhétorique*, the French, vernacular counterpart of the classical, Latin art of rhetoric in which rhetoricians were also interested.¹⁶ Despite the use of these and other borrowed terms and the existence of some similarities in literary style with French *rhétoriciens*, such as a predilection for intricate rhyme schemes and neologisms, the earliest Dutch-speaking rhetoricians did not slavishly copy French models.¹⁷ They adopted specific elements and blended them with their own insights, which often originated from classical treatises, to create a system and style of their own for the Dutch tongue.

Contact and exchange did not cease after the initial foundational stages of the chambers. Johan Oosterman, Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, and Katell Lavéant have studied various fifteenth-century examples of literary competitions to which both French-speaking and Dutch-speaking poets were invited.¹⁸ Such bilingual competitions seem to have come to a standstill before the turn of the century, with a few exceptions. For a festival organized in Ghent in 1539, invitations were sent to francophone cities, and in 1565 a French-speaking chamber from Nivelles entered a competition in Brussels.¹⁹

In spite of these examples of continued contact, Anne-Laure Van Bruaene argued that in the 1550s, the culture of the Dutch-speaking chambers of rhetoric became ‘a virtually exclusively monolingual affair’.²⁰ She connected the alleged absence of attention to other languages in the chambers to what she called the contemporary ‘humanist pursuit of a standardized spelling and grammar for the vernacular’.²¹ Certainly, attention for the spelling and grammar of the vernacular increased from the 1540s onwards, but it is anachronistic to term it ‘standardization’, and it was not limited to humanist environments. In fact, rhetoricians were among the main participants in the debates about the vernacular. As Van Bruaene correctly observed, their emphasis on the qualities of Dutch grew stronger in this period. This did not

¹⁵ Van Bruaene 2008, 42, 48-49; Van Dixhoorn 2008, 123-124; Van Dixhoorn 2015, 56. For the French notions, see: Lavéant 2011, 79-81. The term ‘rhétoriqueur’ was also used in French, but it had a pejorative meaning and was not used by the individuals to whom it referred. Lavéant 2011, 79-80.

¹⁶ Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 138; Ramakers 2012, 141-142; Van Dixhoorn 2015, 54.

¹⁷ Ramakers 1996, 95-96; Oosterman 1999, esp. 17; Van Bruaene 2008, 49-50; Van Dixhoorn 2008, 124.

¹⁸ Oosterman 1999, 24-25; Van Bruaene 2008, 47; Lavéant 2011, 86, 166-169. See also: Koopmans 2001, 88-90.

¹⁹ Van Bruaene 2000, 266; Van Bruaene 2008, 95-96; Lavéant 2011, 168.

²⁰ ‘een bijna uitsluitend eentalige aangelegenheid’. Van Bruaene 2008, 95-96.

²¹ ‘het humanistische streven naar een gestandaardiseerde spelling en grammatica voor de volkstaal’. Van Bruaene 2008, 96.

come forth from a lack of attention given to other languages, however, but from the participants' openness, which made them aware of the Europe-wide rivalry and sparked the wish to compete with other languages.

Indeed, plenty of members kept track of literary developments in other countries. The diverging backgrounds of the members of the chambers ensured the presence of individuals who knew French. Teachers of French, such as Heyns and Jacob van der Schuere, merchants like Roemer Visscher, and highly placed officials were well versed in it. Figures such as Heyns played a mediating role, informing their fellow members of rhetorical debates and creations in French.²² This was all the more the case because sharing knowledge with peers was a core practice in the chambers, as one of their key objectives was to train their members in the liberal arts.²³ These, as well as religious, social, and political issues, passed in review in this *lieu*.²⁴

Rhetoricians trained their fellow members in public speaking. During public events, they applied the art of rhetoric to convince their audience of their standpoint.²⁵ They were, as Nelleke Moser pointed out, particularly interested in the story of the Pentecost, or Whitsun, when the Apostles learned to speak all the languages of the world to reach everyone with their sacred message.²⁶ In the plays written for a competition in Ghent in 1539, she attested various references to this story. Matthijs de Castelein, member of a chamber from Oudenaarde, for instance, wrote on how 'the Holy Ghost works in us'.²⁷ Moser argued that rhetoricians were so interested in the events of the Pentecost because they showed the potentially divine character of the art of rhetoric. At its core, however, it is not only a story about rhetoric, but also about plurilingualism. Both topics were key to the rhetoricians, despite the fact that many of them were monolingual. Through go-betweens like Peeter Heyns, all members could remain up to date on developments in French literary culture and support Dutch in its competition with French.

²² An official who immediately comes to mind is Jan van Hout, whose membership of a chamber can, however, not be proven with certainty. Van Hout was town clerk in Leiden. He played a clear mediating role by translating a part of Montaigne's *Essais* into Dutch. Koppenol 2001; Van Dixhoorn 2015, 71. On the networks of exchange in the chambers of rhetoric in general, see: Van Dixhoorn 2009b.

²³ Pleij 1995; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 170-177, 209-226.

²⁴ Ramakers 1997, 93-103; Ramakers 2001; Ramakers 2004, 181-182; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 165-167; Van Dixhoorn 2014; Buys 2015, 85-88, 111-138.

²⁵ Moser 2001, 168-182.

²⁶ Moser 2001, 78-85.

²⁷ 'De helyghe gheest waerct in ons'. Erné & Van Dis 1982, vol. 1, 501. For more references to the Pentecostal events in rhetoricians' texts, see: Moser 2001, 79.

Peeter Heyns

Outside of school hours, Peeter Heyns was an active member of one of the many chambers of rhetoric in the Low Countries. Literary historians have singled him out as an exceptional rhetorician for two main reasons: his reputation as an author of loanword-free texts, and his use of a new verse style in Dutch. Both practices are generally seen as belonging to innovative ‘Renaissance’ poets. However, Heyns’s approach to both issues was dynamic, undermining the idea of a linear development towards a rejection of loanwords and the adoption of the new verse forms. Heyns shows that there was no clear separation between rhetoricians and ‘Renaissance’ poets, since he himself could be seen as both.

Heyns’s first activities as a rhetorician date from around the same time that he opened his school for girls, in 1555. Heyns, then in his late teens, was an active member of *Den Bloeyenden Wyngaert* (*The Flowering Vineyard*) of Berchem, a suburb of Antwerp.²⁸ In 1556, a poetry competition was organized there, perhaps by *Den Bloeyenden Wyngaert* itself.²⁹ Between 1579 and 1583, a certain Jan de Bruyne collected twenty-five poems that had been composed for this competition in manuscript.³⁰ They all contained one of the two following ‘stokregels’, which were repeated in the final line of each stanza: ‘the appearance of the world is like quicksand: not without God’, and ‘that is how my triumphant love [Christ] found my life here’.³¹

Heyns, who perhaps by this time was already the *factor*, the artistic leader of *Den Bloeyenden Wyngaert*, represented his chamber with two poems. These very first known lyrical works he created already tie in with the growing Europe-wide interest in the story of Babel and the Adamic language. Both of them refer, in fact, to the Tower of Babel episode. In the poem with the first ‘stokregel’, the schoolmaster-rhetorician commemorates ‘Adam’s strong children,/ who with their pure language’ tried to ‘erect, relying on their own strength,/ the Tower of Babylon’.³² In the second poem, Heyns thanks God for having ‘as superior clerk,/ taken me

²⁸ Anne-Laure Van Bruaene has suggested that the chamber was established in Berchem because of restrictive measures limiting the number of chambers within Antwerp itself. Heyns and some of his fellow members did not live in Berchem, which led to complaints from other chambers during a competition in 1561. Van Bruaene 2008, 109-110. For more information on *Den Bloeyenden Wyngaert*, see: Van Bruaene 2004, ‘De Bloeiende Wijngaard’; Ryckaert 2011, 1288.

²⁹ Van Elslander 1946, 135-136; Van Bruaene 2004, ‘De Bloeiende Wijngaard’.

³⁰ The manuscript is kept at the Royal Library in Brussels, ms. II 1695. For a printed edition, see: De Bruyne 1879. See also: Marnef 2003, 178-181.

³¹ ‘sweirels samblant is als dryffsant: niet sonder Godt’. ‘aldus vant triomphant dit lieff myn leven hier’. De Bruyne 1879, 97-100, 117-120.

³² ‘Adams kinderen stuere,/ die duer haer sprake puere, waren in tweedracht,/ doen sy wilden stichten, duer hun eygen macht,/ den toren van Babilonien snel’. De Bruyne 1879, 98.

with force out of Babylon's Tower'.³³ Although the exact meaning of the latter verse is not clear, both poems indicate that Heyns, at an early age, displayed an interest in the Babel episode that caused the confusion of tongues. His description of the Adamic language as 'pure' is remarkable in light of the debates about the purity of the vernaculars, as it suggests that Heyns considered, at this time, post-Babel languages as impure.

The 1556 poems follow the customs of the poetry of the rhetoricians. They contain loanwords, such as 'gedestruweert' ('destroyed'), and verse lines of unequal length, containing between ten and fourteen syllables.³⁴ This Dutch verse of the rhetoricians was generally tonic, having a fixed number of stressed syllables per verse.³⁵ It differed from traditional French verse, which is isosyllabic and thus contains a fixed total number of syllables per line. In the 1560s, Heyns participated in several other competitions with writings in the customary Dutch style. In 1561, he competed in a Brabantine tournament for villages that was organized in Antwerp on the occasion of a larger competition for cities, titled the *Landjuweel* (*Land Jewel*). For this event, Heyns wrote two plays as factor of *Den Bloeyenden Wyngaert*, both containing traditional Dutch verse.³⁶

Then, from the later 1560s onwards, the schoolmaster-rhetorician began to experiment with French verse in his literary writings. Rhetoricians are generally seen by historians of Dutch verse as opposing the 'progressive', innovative French style, as becomes clear from this remark by Werner Waterschoot: 'in spite of the attacks by these progressive individuals, many chambers of rhetoric remained as impregnable in their conservatism as bastions'.³⁷ Certainly, some chambers decided to maintain things as they were. Heyns's case shows, however, the presence of conscious reflection in the chambers on the value of the French and Dutch verse styles, and that rhetoricians were not interested solely in keeping everything as it was.

In 1568, Heyns published his first Dutch poem in which each verse contained an equal number of syllables. He did so in a Dutch abecedarium, a schoolbook providing writing exercises.³⁸ For each letter of the alphabet, it gives a poem that the student could copy. Heyns, always active at the intersection between Dutch and French, also published a French version of

³³ 'als opperste clerck/ my gehael met crachte wt Babilons toren'. De Bruyne 1879, 118.

³⁴ De Bruyne 1879, 97-100, 117-120.

³⁵ Some limitations were imposed, however. In Brabant, chambers had restricted the number of syllables per line to a minimum of ten and a maximum of twelve in order to enforce some regularization. Kossmann 1922, 29-31; Waterschoot 1971-1972, 53-54.

³⁶ Ryckaert 2011, 1296-1343. For more information on the 1561 *Landjuweel*, see: Ryckaert 2011; Vandommele 2011.

³⁷ Waterschoot 1995, 154. See also: Kossmann 1922; Forster 1967, 274-275, 287-299; Vermeer 1979, 85-87.

³⁸ Heyns 1568a.

this booklet.³⁹ Crossing the boundaries between his life as a schoolmaster and his life as a rhetorician, he dedicated the poem on verse styles in the Dutch schoolbook ‘to all the wise Brabantine rhetoricians’.⁴⁰ Heyns explains that he had wished to follow the ‘French secrets’ of versification, ‘leaving the good for a better’ verse form and asking for the opinion of his fellow rhetoricians.⁴¹ Although this text itself indeed contains solely verses of eleven syllables in the French style, the poems in the remainder of the abecedarium do not follow the rules it proposes and are in the Dutch style. Nevertheless, in other publications in the following years, Heyns kept using the French verse form proposed by the opening poem of the abecedarium, when writing in Dutch as well as in French.⁴²

Heyns seemed to have given up Dutch tonic verse in favour of French isosyllabism, but then changed his mind. In 1577, Heyns wrote the texts of the *Spieghel der werelt*, a Dutch pocket atlas based on Abraham Ortelius’s larger work in which small maps are accompanied by poems on the regions they display.⁴³ He grasped this opportunity to explain that his view on metre had changed a second time. Heyns added a liminary poem in which he now once more defended the ‘Brabantine manner’, that is, traditional Dutch verse with a restriction to a verse length of between ten and twelve syllables, which was customary in Brabant.⁴⁴

Heyns’s choice to return to the Dutch style was based on conscious reflection, since he did adopt particular elements from French versification in the poem for the *Spieghel der werelt*: He wrote his plea in a French sonnet form of fourteen lines. The lines are not isosyllabic, but contain ten, eleven, or twelve syllables, which follows the Brabantine tonic style. Heyns thus created a poem that combined French and Dutch rules. He also explicitly defends the ‘Malines-style vowel-melting’, that is, the elision of a vowel when it is followed by another vowel, such as the elided ‘-e’ of ‘de’ in ‘d’ander’ (‘the other’).⁴⁵ Although Heyns attributes this elision to now unknown poets from Malines, it was especially common in French poetry. He carefully adopted those characteristics of French poetry which he deemed to be apt for Dutch.

In a reedition of the *Spieghel der werelt* in 1583, Heyns added a Dutch sonnet in which he defends his choice for the Dutch style against critics. Waterschoot all too easily assumed that these critics of Heyns’s traditional metre could not have been rhetoricians. Heyns’s own

³⁹ Heyns 1568b.

⁴⁰ ‘Tot alle verstandighe brabantische rhetorisiēnen’. Heyns 1568a, fol. A2v. See also: Kossmann 1922, 31-32; Waterschoot 1995, 147.

⁴¹ ‘Françoischer secreten’. ‘tgoet om een beter late’. Heyns 1568a, fol. A2v.

⁴² Heyns 1574, 51; De Nicolay & Silvius 1577, fols. *3r-*4v; Waterschoot 1979, 63-65.

⁴³ See: Chapter 4.1.

⁴⁴ ‘Brabantsche wyse’. Heyns 1577, fol. Y3v; Kossmann 1922, 29-31; Waterschoot 1971-1972, 53-54; Waterschoot 1995, 149.

⁴⁵ ‘Mechelsche vocael-smiltingh’. Heyns 1577, fol. Y3v.

case shows, after all, that the issue was debated in this environment. Heyns justifies his choice in the following terms: ‘Every language has its laws, every country has its customs’.⁴⁶ His Brabantine language thus required the Brabantine metre, and French the French metre.⁴⁷

Heyns was one of the front runners of poetic innovation, both in his initial move from Dutch to French verse, and in his final decision to return to the traditional Dutch style. His case illustrates that the adoption of the French isosyllabic verse form, which is now generally considered a sign of progress by historians of Dutch literature, was not always perceived as such at the time. Moreover, Heyns shows that opinions do not simply move along a set path, but are susceptible to change due to experiment and reflection.

Another literary practice for which modern scholars have set Heyns apart from his allegedly conservative fellow rhetoricians is the use of loanwords. Among his contemporaries, Heyns enjoyed a reputation as a poet who used few borrowed terms.⁴⁸ Poet and Leiden town clerk Jan van Hout thus praised Heyns’s rejection of borrowing in his poem *Tot Cuenraet de Rechtere*, written around 1578.⁴⁹ In this poem, Dutch Language, a female allegorical figure who feels offended because her speakers use many loanwords, says: ‘The (alas) now violated Antwerp virgin/ Supports me with her Heyns and Haecht’.⁵⁰ Heyns’s supposed rejection of loanwords was the hallmark of his reputation.

In contrast with his contemporary and modern reputation, recently poems by Heyns’s hand have surfaced that are full of French loanwords. A manuscript previously owned by his fellow schoolmaster Wouter de Coster contains several texts Heyns wrote for the occasion of William of Orange entering Antwerp in 1577.⁵¹ These poems show a different picture of Heyns’s use of borrowing:

The trade now stands in wisdom, honourable Lord
And in unity, without suspicion or fraud
Never did he, who trusts in God, become confused [...].

⁴⁶ ‘Elcke tael’ heeft sijn wet, elck landt heeft sijn ghespan’. Heyns 1583, fol. 2v; Kossmann 1922, 34; Waterschoot 1995, 149.

⁴⁷ Heyns used French isosyllabic sonnets for a set of French fable poems published in 1578. *Esbatement moral, des animavx* 1578. On the authorship of this book, see: Smith 2006, 27-32; Smith 2007, 154-158.

⁴⁸ *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 73-74.

⁴⁹ For the dating of this poem, see: Schoonheim 1990.

⁵⁰ ‘Dantwerpsche (eylas) nu geschoffierde maecht/ my bystant duet mit haren Heyns ende Haecht’. Van Hout, cited by: Kapteijn 1903, 543; Schoonheim 1990, 282n8. ‘Haecht’ refers to Willem van Haecht, an Antwerp rhetorician who played a prominent role in the 1561 *Landjuweel*.

⁵¹ Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience B11285 [C2-520C]. Arjan van Dixhoorn has pointed out that Heyns contributed to this chronicle. Van Dixhoorn 2013, 102n79.

In wijsheyt Edel heere, den handel nu staet
En In d'vniteyt, zonder argh oft froude
Noijt en wert hij *confuys*, die In God betroude [...].⁵²

The words 'uniteyt' ('unity'), 'fraude' ('fraud') and 'confuys' ('confused'), all bear French origins and are considered foreign in contemporary word lists.⁵³ It is not clear how Heyns's use of Gallicisms should be explained. Is it a reference to William's principedom over the principality of Orange, or to the hope that was invested in France as an ally against Philip II? Another possibility is that Heyns simply followed the traditional language of literary works written on the occasion of festive entries. The main lesson these texts teach is that tension exists between Heyns's reputation as a language purist and his authorial practice.

With his changing opinions and attention to both French and Dutch in his literary activities, Heyns is representative of the complexity of the views on language in the chambers of rhetoric. Rhetoricians did not collectively oppose innovation altogether, but some critically judged new forms. As Heyns shows, using loanwords and the Dutch verse style could be the result of a conscious choice for a language form that was, in a particular context, deemed more appropriate. What in retrospect looks like a step forward does not necessarily coincide with perceptions of progress that existed at that time.

7.2. The Perks of Plurilingualism

Heyns was able to experiment with new verse forms in Dutch because of his awareness of developments in French literary culture. In general, rhetoricians show that an interest in other languages was not contradictory to an interest in the mother tongue: it was a tool for supporting one's native language. Scholarly attention to the openness and plurilingualism of rhetoricians has been eclipsed by a focus on their pursuit of promoting the Dutch vernacular, but the two actually reinforced each other.

Dutch First, Plurilingualism Second

An array of translations attest to the openness of rhetoricians towards other languages. Cornelis van Ghistele's Dutch versions of various classical texts and Heyns's bilingual oeuvre are only a few examples of well-known authors. Translation from Latin and French was used to train

⁵² Heyns's authorship of these poems is confirmed by a comparison of the handwriting and by the final line, referring to his personal device 'Good to him who trusts in God' ('Wel hem die Godt betrou't'/'Bienheureux qui en Dieu se fie'). Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience B11285 [C2-520C], fol. 49v.

⁵³ The mentioned words, or the words from which they have been derived, are listed in the Jan van den Werve's purist dictionary from 1553. Van den Werve 1553. See: Chapter 2.2.

poetic skills.⁵⁴ By translating masterpieces into Dutch, the poet could learn about commonplaces and tropes and develop a mature style while enriching Dutch literary culture. Language learning was an important prerequisite for this practice.

The value of plurilingualism for the rhetoricians was much broader, however, despite the fact that the culture of the rhetoricians has been seen by modern scholars as increasingly monolingual.⁵⁵ The need to correct this narrow view can be made insightful through two cases in which rhetoricians Matthijs de Castelein and Jan van Mussem expressed their appreciation of plurilingualism. Both of them were religious men, implying they were aware of the interplay between Latin and the vernaculars. Van Mussem praised but also warned of the dangers of language learning. Rather than a rejection of foreign languages, however, his warning was meant to inspire a careful approach to all languages, including the mother tongue.

Matthijs de Castelein, clergyman and rhetorician in Oudenaarde, wrote a treatise on the art of rhetoric in Dutch in 1548. It was published posthumously in 1555 as *De const van rhetoriken*. In this text, he applauds plurilinguals:

But anyone who masters Latin and other languages,
Has fifteen fires in every situation,
And will obtain from them
The finest Etymology [...]
Ignoring it causes many ruins [...].

Maer die wel Latijn ende ander talen can
Heeft vijftien vueren in elck ghespan,
Ende sal obtineren vanden sinen:
De ethymologie niet om verfinen [...]
Ignorantie van dien maeckt veel ruinen [...].⁵⁶

De Castelein states that knowing several languages is beneficial, as it helps the poet to grasp the etymological background of the words he uses. The ‘ruins’ of which he warns should probably be interpreted as mistakes regarding the precise meaning of words. De Castelein’s use of the term ‘etymology’ is relevant in light of the contemporary debates on language. As etymological studies were the primary tool for determining genealogical ties between languages, interest in this method peaked.

⁵⁴ Ramakers 2004, 181. See also: Chapter 2.3.

⁵⁵ Van den Branden 1967, 34-35; Van Bruaene 2008, 95-96.

⁵⁶ De Castelein 1555, 33 (stanza 98).

Around the same time as De Castelein, Jan van Mussem, chaplain and member of a chamber of rhetoric in the Flemish village of Wormhout, equally praised plurilingualism, but he added a critical note. In 1553, he published his *Rhetorica*, a Dutch treatise on the art of rhetoric. In the preface, he warns that learning other languages should not lead to a neglect of the mother tongue:

And this is also true for our Flemish tongues, which are capable of speaking various languages. Because of this, they are often corrupted by foreign languages when we try to learn and speak two, three, or more of them.

Also is oock van onse Vlaemsche tonghe, want si tot alderhande spraken wel bequaem is, daerom wort si ooc vanden wtlantsche spraken menichfuldelijck ghecorrumpeert als wij twee, drie, oft meer talen leeren ende spreken willen.⁵⁷

Van Mussem argues that if one is not careful when learning various languages, one's mother tongue might be affected negatively. He goes on to explain that to prevent such disintegration of the native language, it should be studied carefully before venturing into other tongues. What needs to be tackled, according to the *Rhetorica*, is not plurilingualism, but 'the crude ignorance of our grammar'.⁵⁸ Van Mussem's reasoning is similar to that of the *Twe-spraack*, a grammar of Dutch published three decades later by Amsterdam chamber *De Eglentier*. This book, too, argues that attention to the mother tongue ought to precede rather than hinder second-language learning.⁵⁹

Van Mussem claims that Dutch is particularly prone to change by plurilinguals because of the large numbers of speakers of Dutch who learn other languages. In the quoted passage, he touches upon the widespread belief that native speakers of Dutch could learn other languages very easily, on which he elaborates later in the same preface: 'Furthermore, the Flemish have a remarkable grace of tongue, more than many other nations, to speak all languages beautifully'.⁶⁰ This same idea was later discussed by humanists Johannes Goropius Becanus and Abraham Mylius, who tried to find reasons for this presumed ability of speakers of Dutch.⁶¹ Before being

⁵⁷ Van Mussem 1553, fol. A2v.

⁵⁸ 'die groue ignorancie van ons grammatica'. Van Mussem 1553, fol. A2v.

⁵⁹ 'I wanted to send my nephew to you to learn French, but it is better to have you first teach him Dutch well'. 'als die ghezint was myn Neefken by u te besteden om Fransoys te leren, dat ick hem best eerst ghoed Duits by u leren dede'. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 6. See: Chapter 4.2.

⁶⁰ 'Bouen dien hoe die vlaminghen een sonderlinghe gratie hebben vander tonghen, bouen vele andere natien om alle talen fraylijc te moghen spreken'. Van Mussem 1553, fol. A2r.

⁶¹ See: Chapter 3.3.

studied in humanist environments, this idea thus already circulated in the context of the chambers.

Van Mussem's use of the term 'grace' further suggests that he was well aware of the discussions on language in the Low Countries and elsewhere in Europe, where this buzzword was often used.⁶² In his remark, competitive feelings towards other 'nations' shine through. He clearly considered the plurilingual reputation of native speakers of Dutch as enhancing the position of this speech community within the Europe-wide competition. Van Mussem shows that the plurilingualism of inhabitants of the Low Countries was something in which one could take pride, while simultaneously taking pride in one's native language.

Language Competition

Knowledge of multiple languages and an open mindset actually aided the rhetoricians in their defence of Dutch. It allowed them to learn from other languages in order to improve the competitive position of their own vernacular in the European field.⁶³ An example of this is Van Mussem using the widely trending term 'grace' to glorify Dutch. Inspired by feelings of competition with other languages, one of the most important reasons rhetoricians gave to defend the use of Dutch as a literary language is the precedent set by neighbouring languages and the fear of falling behind. From Cornelis van Ghistele's translations out of Latin in the 1550s onwards, the example provided by French, Italian, German, and Spanish—in varying combinations—was mentioned to defend the choice to write in the Dutch vernacular.⁶⁴ The anonymous preface in the edition of the texts written for the Antwerp *Landjuweel* of 1561, for instance, called on talented poets to have their Dutch creations printed by referring to the most prestigious models in French and Italian: 'like Italy does with her Petrarch and Ariosto and France with Clément Marot and Ronsard, in order to honour the noble art of rhetoric and embellish our Dutch tongue'.⁶⁵ Dutch was used by enough poets who would be able to compete with Petrarch, Marot, and Ronsard, and they just had to show themselves to the public,

⁶² See: Chapter 3.2.

⁶³ Prandoni 2014.

⁶⁴ 'And also, most of what can be found written in Latin is being translated daily, as can be seen, by the Italians, Germans, French, and Spanish nations into their respective languages. Should we not follow their example'. 'Ende noch ooc, meest al dwelck men int Latijn bescreuen vint, de Italianen, Ouerlanders, Franchoysen, ende de Spaensce natie elck in zijn tale daghelijcx (soe men siet) ouersetende zijn. Sullen wy dan haerlieden oock niet moghen nae volgen'. Van Ghistele 1555, fol. +5r. See: Chapter 3.4.

⁶⁵ 'ghelijck Italien met haren Petrarcha ende Ariosto. Vranckrijck met Cl. Marot Ronssard, &c. tot vereeringhe der edeler Consten Retorica ende vercieringhe van onse Nederlantsche tale'. *Spelen van sinne* 1562, fol. B2v.

according to the preface.⁶⁶ In turn, the Dutch language would be embellished and its status improved.

The extent to which rhetoricians looked at other languages as examples of how to promote Dutch is illustrated by the case of Justus de Harduwijn, member of a chamber in Aalst. In a poetry collection published in 1613, he claimed that Dutch was no less capable than French, Italian, or Spanish of becoming a suitable medium for writing.⁶⁷ This volume, titled *De vveerliicke liefden tot Roose-mond*, contains a dedication to the members of De Harduwijn's chamber that repeats ideas from Du Bellay's French *Deffence* in order defend Dutch.⁶⁸

De Harduwijn's dedicatory epistle opens with a direct translation from the first lines of the *Deffence*, which, after having referred to the events at Babel, explains that all languages are equal, as they are made by man. Du Bellay, in the *Deffence*, argues that French is thus just as apt to be used as a learned language as Greek and Latin, in the following words:

Concerning this, I cannot disapprove enough of the ludicrous arrogance and foolhardiness of some in our nation, who, being no Greeks and Romans themselves, despise and reject all things written in French with a more than Stoic face [...].

A ce propos, je ne puis assez blamer la sottise arrogance, & temerité d'aucuns de notre nation, qui n'etans riens moins que Grecz, ou Latins, deprisent, & reietent d'vn sourcil plus que Stoïque, toutes choses ecrites en Francois [...].⁶⁹

De Harduwijn has adapted this complaint by the Pléiade poet to the Dutch case:

Which is why I cannot reprimand enough the superficial judgment, the arrogant attitude, and the wayward tenacity of some of our fellow countrymen who (being no better skilled in Greek or Latin) despise and reject as unworthy all things written in our country's language on a daily basis [...].

Waer door ick dien volghens niet te vollen en kan berispen het lichtstrijckende oordeel, het waen-wijs voorstaan, ende die krille krijghelheydt eenigher onser Inlandsche (wesende nievers min dan in't Griexsche ofte

⁶⁶ Van Dixhoorn 2012b, 26-27.

⁶⁷ De Harduwijn 1613, 5-6.

⁶⁸ Rombauts & Van Es 1952, 394; De Harduwijn 1978, *passim*.

⁶⁹ Du Bellay 1549, fol. a4v.

t'Latijnsche bedreven) die daeghelijcx daer verfoeyen, ende als onweerdigh
verworpen alle saecken in onse Vaderlandsche taele geschreven [...].⁷⁰

The rhetorician reuses Du Bellay's argument that all languages are equal, but that some have been developed more than others. By following the example of the *Deffence*, De Harduwijn aligns Dutch with Latin, Greek, and also, implicitly, French.

In his reworking of the French text, however, De Harduwijn has inserted several inventions of his own that suggest that Dutch even surpasses French. The use of the words 'licht-strijckende' ('superficial'), 'waen-wijs' ('arrogant'), and 'krille krijghelheydt' ('wayward tenacity') emulates the source text. These creations demonstrate the richness of the Dutch tongue, its ability to form new words through compounding, and its literary qualities allowing alliteration. By adding compounds, De Harduwijn might allude to the argument formulated by Becanus that this type of word formation was evidence of the inherent qualities of Dutch.⁷¹

De Harduwijn's case demonstrates how reusing texts in other languages can help to support Dutch. Another way to aid the mother tongue was by comparing it to other languages. This can be made insightful by focusing on the case of Simon Stevin.⁷² Best known as an engineer, Stevin was probably a member of a chamber in Bruges in his twenties.⁷³ He endorsed Becanus's theories on the Dutch language, including the thesis that the ability of the Dutch tongue to create new words through compounding was one of its strongest assets.

In his own investigations on monosyllabism, Stevin relied on his studies of other tongues to defend the superiority of Dutch. He constantly compared Dutch with other languages, such as French, Greek, and Latin, discussing their numbers of monosyllabic words, for instance, to determine their relative quality.⁷⁴ He further attempted to demonstrate that the French language was lexically greatly indebted to Dutch by arguing that the French letter combination 'gu' revealed a connection with Dutch words starting with 'w': 'Guespe' ('wasp') would be a derivation from the Dutch word 'Wesp'.⁷⁵ Through his primary attention to Dutch,

⁷⁰ De Harduwijn 1613, 5.

⁷¹ The former rhetorician Simon Stevin made use of the same argument for using Dutch as a language of learning in his *Wisconstighe Ghedachtenissen* (1608): Stevin 1608, 'Tvveede deel des Weereltschrifts, vant Eertclootschrift', 24.

⁷² Stevin 1586, 28; Van der Wal 2004, 173.

⁷³ Van Dixhoorn 2004, 210.

⁷⁴ Stevin 1586, ix-xxv.

⁷⁵ Stevin 1586, x.

Stevin thus also reflected on the contested history of the French language, which was argued by Henri II Estienne and Jean Bodin to have links with Greek.⁷⁶

Stevin even went one step further and overtly debunked pro-French arguments. French, as a Romance language, was generally considered more prestigious than vernaculars that had not evolved from Latin. Stevin sees an inconsistency in the prestige of the supposed Latin roots of French and its preferred pronunciation:

Saying that the *cha* from Orléans, as in *chandelle*, *chanter*, *chaleur*, sounds much nicer than the Picardian *ca*, as in *candelle*, *canter*, *caleur*, is unfounded. It contradicts with saying that you like the sound of *ca* in the Latin words *candela*, *cantare*, and *calor*, as these are the origins of French [...].

Te segghen dattet Orliensche *cha*, alsvan *chandelle*, *chanter*, *chaleur*, veel hubscher gheluyt is dan het Picartsche *ca*, van *candelle*, *canter*, *caleur*, ten heeft gheen gront, want ghy spreeckt u selven teghen als ghy int Latijn, t'welck haer oirspronck is, seght u wel te bevallen t'gheluyt van *ca* in *candela*, *cantare*, *calor* [...].⁷⁷

Stevin is aware of the fact that the accent of the region of Orléans was generally said to be the best, and points out that the pronunciation of this region was further from that of Latin than Picardian French was. If French wished to stay close to its roots, it should pronounce the 'c' in originally Latin words as a [k] ('candelle') rather than [ʃ] ('chandelle'). The Picard accent indeed knew this pronunciation and was praised for it by, among others, Geoffroy Tory.⁷⁸

Rhetoricians are commonly seen as the prime agents behind the so-called emancipation of Dutch with regard to Latin and French. Rather than turning their backs on other languages, however, they sought support in them to defend Dutch and present it as a worthy competitor in the European language field.

⁷⁶ See Estienne's 1565 *Traicte de la conformité du language François avec le Grec*. Trudeau 1992, 116-117; Cohen 2005, 31; Metcalf 2013, 119n22.

⁷⁷ Stevin 1608, 'Tvveede deel des Weereltschrifts, vant Eertclootschrift', 23.

⁷⁸ 'Among all the French people, those from Picardy pronounce the 'c' the best'. 'Entre toutes les nations de France, le Picard prononce tres bien le C'. Tory 1529, fol. 37r. Pierre de Ronsard, too, praised the Picard dialect as expressing a 'natural state' ('naïf') of the French language. Pierre de Ronsard quoted by: Huchon 1988, 18. See also: Baddeley 1993, 64.

7.3. Studying the Vernacular

In order to be able to compete with other languages, rhetoricians realized they had to practise as well as study the vernacular. Dutch had to become, in other words, an object of both *ingenium* and *ars*. Whereas the rhetorical notion of *ingenium* represents innate talent—or, when applied to language, the mother tongue—*ars* concerns skill that is obtained through practice and learning, such as knowledge of Latin.⁷⁹ Bart Ramakers has revealed that rhetoricians, alongside the Pléiade poets in France, elevated their native language from an object of *ingenium* to one of both *ingenium* and *ars*, of practice, observation, and study.⁸⁰

Whereas some, like Heyns, engaged in theoretical reflection on the history and form of the vernacular, others, like Eduard de Dene from Bruges, used the traditional way in which rhetoricians explored and expanded their native tongue: through lyrical experiments. In order to communicate their findings to others, a shared terminology was needed. Matthijs de Castelein's *Const* provides an example of how rhetoricians built on the conceptual framework of the art of rhetoric with which they were familiar to create a Dutch terminology for language study.

Theory and Practice

In modern times, rhetoricians became known primarily for their intricate rhyme schemes and difficult language. This reputation does not conform to early modern descriptions of what a rhetorician should be. In his 1553 *Rhetorica*, Jan van Mussem denounced 'unlearned poets [...] who think that rhetoric is unintellectual rhyming, or an art of speaking much rather than speaking well'.⁸¹ Van Mussem, who himself was a member of a chamber and wrote his treatise to help 'all the young rhetoricians', did not condemn rhetoricians in general.⁸² He differentiated, rather, between 'noble rhetoric' and 'unlearned rhetoric', and attacked only those poets who practised the latter.⁸³

Some twenty-five years later, around 1578, Jan van Hout distinguished between true and false rhetoricians in a very similar fashion in a hand-written dedication of a lost translation of a text by George Buchanan. As explained by the editors of the text, Karel Bostoen and

⁷⁹ Ramakers 2012, 135-136.

⁸⁰ Castor 1964, 37-50; Cornilliat 1990; Ramakers 2012, 135-138.

⁸¹ 'ongeleerde dichters [...] meynende Rhetorijcke te wesene een onuerstandele rijminghe, oft een const van veel segghene, ende nyet van wel segghene'. Van Mussem 1553, fol. A2v; Van de Haar 2018.

⁸² 'alle ionge Rhetorisieneren'. Van Mussem 1553, fol. A1r. See also: Vanderheyden 1975, 289-291.

⁸³ 'edele Rhetorijcke'. 'ongheleerde Rhetorijcke'. Van Mussem 1553, fol. A2v.

Susanne Gabriëls, Van Hout criticized only the faulty rhetoricians, not all of them.⁸⁴ He reprimanded those who deemed ‘the art of poetry and the art of rhetoric to be one’, or in other words, that versifying and eloquence were the same thing.⁸⁵ The impostors, Van Hout stated, simply rhymed without having mastered the art of rhetoric in the vernacular: ‘they do not know, and do not wish to learn’.⁸⁶ Van Mussem and Van Hout both implied that a true rhetorician was a *poeta doctus*, a learned poet who actively studied his mother tongue and the art of rhetoric.⁸⁷

One of the arguments used in modern studies to separate rhetoricians from ‘Renaissance’ poets was exactly the supposition that the latter were *poetae docti* and that the former were not.⁸⁸ In recent years, however, studies of various rhetoricians and chambers have revealed their learned character.⁸⁹ The continuity between the rhetoricians and those who have long been considered ‘Renaissance poets’, such as Van Hout himself, was in part established by the shared interest in the vernacular as object of study.

Van Hout, who by his foremost student Johan Koppenol has been described as a ‘Renaissance author’, was certainly a strong representative of the *poeta doctus*.⁹⁰ He was interested in historical forms of language and procured an edition of an Old Frankish text which he also partially translated. Old Germanic had his particular attention, and he corresponded with Justus Lipsius about the *Wachtendonck Psalms*, which contain elements of Old Dutch.⁹¹ The Leiden town clerk was a serious student of the Dutch vernacular in both its contemporary and historical forms. Van Mussem was no less zealous in his studies of the mother tongue. A brief examination of his *Rhetorica* suffices to argue that he, too, merits the qualification *poeta doctus*.

More than three decades before the first treatise on Dutch grammar would be published by Amsterdam chamber *De Eglentier*, Van Mussem reflected on the syntactic rules of his mother tongue:

Example: ‘We goes, he walk.’ ‘It is good that we are remain unmarried’, ‘like Paul is rightly write’, etc. You should say ‘remaining’ and ‘writing’.

⁸⁴ Van Hout 1993, 13-15, 53, 57. This nuance has been overlooked in Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt’s survey of Dutch literary history. Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 126. For a further discussion of the general distinction between true rhetoricians and simple rhymers, see: Pleij 1974; Pleij 1995. Perhaps this distinction was also targeted by Janus Douza when he criticized ignorant poets who wrongly called themselves ‘rhetoricians’ (‘rhetoras’), in a Latin poem addressed to Roemer Visscher, himself a member of a chamber. See: Meerhoff 2014, 84, 106-107.

⁸⁵ ‘de consten van Poëzie ende Rethorycke eene tewezen’. Van Hout 1993, 45.

⁸⁶ ‘die niet en weten, noch niet en begeren te leeren’. Van Hout 1993, 60.

⁸⁷ This opinion was also expressed by Cornelis van Ghistele. Hemelaar 2011.

⁸⁸ Bostoen 1981, 152-153; Peeters 1990b, 143.

⁸⁹ Ramakers 2004, 181-193; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, esp. 136; Van Dixhoorn 2009b.

⁹⁰ ‘Renaissance-autheur’. Koppenol 1998, 170.

⁹¹ Koppenol 1998, 177-179.

Exempel. Wij gaet, hy loopen. Tes goet dat wij ongehuwet zijn blijuen also ons Paulus wel es beschrijuen, &c. Men moet seggen blijuende, beschrijuende.⁹²

In this passage, the rhetorician warns against frequently made mistakes in the conjugation of verbs in Dutch. The verbs ‘going’ and ‘walking’ in the first sentence have been set in the wrong person, while the second phrase contains infinitive verbs instead of the correct conjugated form.⁹³ The rhetorician’s interest in his mother tongue stretched even beyond its grammar. Jan Vanderheyden already pointed out several decades ago that the *Rhetorica* discusses the phenomenon of onomatopoeia in Dutch, as well as proverbs.⁹⁴

Not many rhetoricians wrote treatises on the Dutch language in the way Van Mussem did. However, that does not mean that none of them undertook studies of the vernacular. Research and analysis do not necessarily take the form of theoretical reflection. Especially by the later sixteenth century, hands-on experimentation and playful exploration became increasingly valued as a method for scholarly inquiry and generating knowledge.⁹⁵ Language could also be approached in such a practical, inquisitive manner, that is, through poetic experiments.

An example of such an explorative way of writing poetry that results in a deeper understanding of the Dutch language can be found in the *Testament rhetoricael* (1562), a poetic testament by Eduard de Dene that remained in manuscript.⁹⁶ In order to obtain a lexically rich literary language, the rhetorician from Bruges experimented with various ways of creating new words.⁹⁷ One of these ways is suffixation, where a suffix is added to an existing word to give it a new meaning or change its lexical category. The rhetorician thus created ‘troostbaereghe’ (‘comforting’) out of ‘troostbaer’ and the suffix ‘-eghe’, and ‘Sacramentlick’ (‘sacramently’) out of ‘sacrament’ and ‘-lick’.⁹⁸ By doing this, he expressed his understanding of the morphological processes of Dutch. De Dene also applied the method of compounding, joining two existing words to create a new one. The *Testament* even contains examples where both compounding and suffixation were combined. De Dene’s neologism ‘godsvruchtvoysich’ (‘piety-voiced’), for instance, contains three elements: ‘godsvrucht’ (‘piety’), itself originally a compound of ‘gods’ (‘of God’) and ‘vrucht’ (‘fear’ or ‘awe’); ‘voys’ (‘voice’); and ‘-ich’

⁹² Van Mussem 1553, fol. G1r.

⁹³ Van de Haar 2018.

⁹⁴ Van Mussem 1553, fols. H2v, H4r; Vanderheyden 1977, 60-65, 67n58-67. See also: Van de Haar 2018.

⁹⁵ Van Dixhoorn 2014.

⁹⁶ Another example is Jan van den Dale’s *Uure van den doot* (c. 1516). His exploration of the possibilities of the Dutch language has been discussed in: Van Dixhoorn 2015.

⁹⁷ Van de Haar 2018.

⁹⁸ De Dene 1976, 100-101.

(adverbial suffix).⁹⁹ By creating words like this, De Dene simultaneously displays his poetic virtuosity and tests the possibilities of the Dutch language.

A later text sheds light on the connection between the practice of neologizing in De Dene's *Testament* and more theoretical ways of language study. In 1584, members of Amsterdam chamber *De Eglentier* published the first printed grammar book of Dutch, the *Twe-spraack vande Nederduitsche Letterkunst*. In it, they described how they collectively trained their lexical skills in the mother tongue, and it is strikingly similar to what De Dene does in his *Testament*:

[...] 'word-carving', 'rhetorizing', 'reason-debating', or 'word-compiling', which we use (in the chamber) when we practise with synonyms instead of rhyme.

[...] wóórdhouwen, rederycken, redenkavelen, wóórdstapelen, dat wy ghebruyken (op de kamer) zó wanneer by ons mede plaats vant rym spreken Synonimia gheoeffent word.¹⁰⁰

Using the method of compounding, the members of the Amsterdam chamber created terms such as 'wóórdhouwen' ('word-carving').¹⁰¹ Reflecting on the fact that it was possible to create new words in Dutch in this way, they stated that Dutch was similar to Greek in this respect, and richer than Latin.¹⁰² The members of *De Eglentier* thus trained their own poetic abilities and reflected on and enriched the mother tongue, which is exactly what De Dene did. The only difference is that *De Eglentier* left traces of its language experiments in a theoretical printed treatise, while the rhetorician from Bruges only did so in a manuscript poetry collection.¹⁰³

One final example of a rhetorician-*poeta doctus* demonstrates the extent to which rhetoricians could be aware of humanist studies on the Dutch language. Govert van der Eemdb, a member of chamber of rhetoric *De Wijngaertrancken* (*The Vine Tendrils*) in Haarlem, was mainly known for his translations from French. In a preface to a play, published in 1621, he discusses the ideal form of Dutch. Without mentioning any names, he then alludes to research on the Persian-German theory, which was discussed by Philips of Marnix of Sainte-Aldegonde,

⁹⁹ De Dene 1976, 59.

¹⁰⁰ *Twe-spraack* 1584, 92.

¹⁰¹ See also: Brink 1989, 141-142; Jansen 2017, 10-12.

¹⁰² *Twe-spraack* 1584, 92.

¹⁰³ Van de Haar 2018.

Justus Lipsius, and Hugo Grotius.¹⁰⁴ These learned men suggested that there was a link between the vocabularies of Persian and the Germanic languages.

Van der Eembd explains that the similarities between these languages do not necessarily imply that Persian influenced the Germanic tongues:

[...] that the similarity with Hebrew or Persian words does not prove that we borrowed those from them, because that would mean that either we obtained them in their countries, or they brought them to our homes, about which no certainty exists.

[...] dat de gelyckheyd der Hebreuser ofte Persiser woorden niet en bewijst dat wy die van haer ontleent hebben: Want dan moeste volgen, dat, of why in haer Land die gehaelt, of sy ons die alhier t'huys ghebracht hadden: waer af geen sekerheyd is.¹⁰⁵

Van der Eembd's remark is strikingly similar to what Grotius had written about the topic in a Latin manuscript from around 1602.¹⁰⁶ This text reads as follows:

There is so much affinity between the Persian and German languages that this could never have occurred without a mingling of the two peoples. Therefore, one of two things is necessarily the case: either the Persians once conquered Germania, or our ancestors conquered Persia.

Persicæ vero linguæ & Germanicæ tanta est affinitas, quanta sine gentium permistione contingere nunquam potuit. Quamobrem alterutrum necesse est, aut Persas Germaniam olim occupasse, aut Majores nostros Persiam.¹⁰⁷

Van der Eembd and Grotius mention the same explanations for how the languages came into contact. Although the statements by the rhetorician and the humanist are different in wording, their content is so alike that there must be a connection. And in this case the chronology of the works leaves no doubt as to who influenced who. As Grotius's manuscript was not published

¹⁰⁴ See: Chapter 3.3, 5.1. Van Hal 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Van der Eembd 1621, fol. *3r.

¹⁰⁶ The *Parallelon rerum publicarum* is in the possession of the Museum Meermanno, The Hague, where it is catalogued as manuscript 10E25. For more information on this treatise, see: Van der Wal 1997; Van der Wal 1999; Van Hal 2011, 154.

¹⁰⁷ Grotius 1802, 62.

until the nineteenth century, Van der Eembd must have read the original or a copy somewhere or spoken to someone about it.

On the one hand, Van der Eembd's case proves once more that published works are only a fragment of how debates in general unfold. On the other, it helps to break down the strict division between humanists and rhetoricians, as they were all learned men who interested themselves mostly in the same topics. In a similar vein, the artificial demarcation between 'Renaissance authors' and rhetoricians has crumbled further. Van Mussem, De Dene, the authors of the *Twe-spraack*, Van Hout, Stevin, and Van der Eembd were true *poetae docti* in the sense that they treated the vernacular as an object of reflection and observation. To value them all as learned men requires a reinterpretation of the notion of language study to incorporate both theoretical and practical experiments with language.

Between Rhetoric and Language Study: Enargie

To describe his examples of grammatical errors, Van Mussem adopted the term 'Solecismus' ('solecism') from the Latin art of *grammatica*.¹⁰⁸ As no terminology in Dutch existed to speak about languages, he needed to apply the terms he knew from the Latin liberal arts. When the vernaculars were increasingly studied, notions from not only the classical art of *grammatica*, but also from *rhetorica* were used as conceptual framework.¹⁰⁹ As practitioners of the liberal art of rhetoric, various rhetoricians were aware of classical treatises on the topic by Cicero and Quintilian—who were both mentioned on Van Mussem's title page—and Horace.¹¹⁰ Zooming in on one of them, Matthijs de Castelein, makes it possible to identify these learned rhetoricians as intermediaries between the classical art of rhetoric and language study. Rather than simply copying terms from classical rhetoric, however, De Castelein adapted the art in an innovative manner.

The way in which De Castelein used classical rhetorical concepts in his discussion of the Dutch language is illustrated by his notion of 'enargië'.¹¹¹ In a particular section of the *Const*, he discusses the use of vowels in Dutch poetry. He argues that verses should not contain 'too many vowels piled together', because they 'make one gape wide'.¹¹² De Castelein then explains that the rules he proposes cannot simply be applied to French: 'This art does not

¹⁰⁸ Van Mussem 1553, fol. G1r.

¹⁰⁹ See: Chapter 3.2.

¹¹⁰ Van Mussem 1553, fol. A1r; Iansen 1971, 343-517; Coigneau 1985, 465-466; Ramakers 2004, 187; Ramakers 2012, 141-142.

¹¹¹ Van de Haar 2018.

¹¹² 'Te vele vocalen ouer een hoop'. 'want zij wijd doen gapen'. De Castelein 1555, 36 (stanza 106).

comply with the French,/ Because every language has its enargië'.¹¹³ The rhetorician thus concludes that because French and Dutch have a different 'enargië', their poetry does not have the same rules. He then goes on to explain the French custom to alternate feminine and masculine rhyme, adding: 'I cannot see the Flemish observe this rule,/ Every country will keep its old style'.¹¹⁴

The term 'enargië' would have reminded the learned contemporary reader of the classical rhetorical concept of *enargeia*, or vividness. Heinrich Plett defines the classical notion of *enargeia* as 'the realistic effect which makes an abstract and absent state of affairs concrete and "manifest" in the present of the recipient'.¹¹⁵ This classical concept was used to describe particularly vivid renderings of situations. This meaning is, as Sara Iansen and Bart Ramakers previously remarked, incompatible with the fact that De Castelein qualifies the term 'enargië' as a quality of an entire language.¹¹⁶ The rhetorician seems to refer, rather, to a particular characteristic that makes each language unique. The term 'enargië' appears to be connected not to the concept of *enargeia* but to *energeia*, meaning 'force' or 'action'. The two were often confused or equalled in early modern texts.¹¹⁷

This interpretation of De Castelein's notion of 'enargië' as designating a quality of a language, and not that of a poetic utterance, is supported by studying a contemporary case in which the concept was adopted. Joachim Du Bellay used the same term in his *Deffence*, writing about 'that Energie and I don't know what spirit that can be found in their writings, and which the Latins called genius', and that cannot be translated from one language into another.¹¹⁸ The Pléiade poet juxtaposes the terms 'Energie' and 'spirit', which is related to the notion of *ingenium*, as well as the term 'genius'.¹¹⁹ Like De Castelein's term 'enargië', Du Bellay's 'Energie' applies to entire languages and refers to that undefinable aspect that makes each language unique.¹²⁰ Du Bellay's *Deffence* was published in 1549, while De Castelein's *Const*

¹¹³ 'Dees const accordeert qualick metten wale,/ Vvant elke tale heeft huer enargië'. De Castelein 1555, 37 (stanza 109).

¹¹⁴ 'Ic en siedt den vlamijnghen niet obserueren:/ Elck land zal bij zijn haude stilen blyuen'. De Castelein 1555, 37 (stanza 110).

¹¹⁵ Plett 2012, 13.

¹¹⁶ Iansen 1971, 118-119; Ramakers 2012, 143.

¹¹⁷ Plett 2012, 20.

¹¹⁸ 'ceste Energie, & ne scay quel Esprit, qui est en leurs Ecriz, que les Latins appelloient Genius'. Du Bellay 1549, fol. b3r.

¹¹⁹ Ramakers 2012, 154-155.

¹²⁰ Jean-Charles Monferran, one of Du Bellay's modern editors, has interpreted 'Energie' as referring to the rhetorical term *enargeia*. Francis Goyet and Olivier Millet do connect it to the notion of *energeia*. Du Bellay 2003, 381-382n3; Du Bellay 2007, 90n62.

was written in 1548 and printed in 1555.¹²¹ It seems most likely that the two poets delved into a common source for their use of this term. It probably concerns Erasmus's *Ciceronianvs* (1528), which contains the phrase 'that mind that still breathes through his writings, that genius endowed with its own mysterious energy [energiam]'.¹²² Erasmus, like Du Bellay, connects *energeia* to 'genius', but the vernacular authors, Du Bellay and De Castelein, go further than Erasmus by applying the notion to entire languages.

According to De Castelein, differences in 'enargië' constitute the reason that each language has its own rhetorical rules. This idea—that the differences between languages called for different approaches in writing—seems to have been widespread among rhetoricians. When in 1567, Eduard de Dene translated a set of French fables by Parisian bookseller-poet Gilles Corrozet, he decided not to adopt the isosyllabic verse form of his model. Instead, he chose to use the tonic form that was generally used in Dutch. His reason for this choice was that 'every country uses Rhetoric following its tongue'.¹²³ De Dene uses the term 'Rhetoric' in the more strict sense of poetic rules, here. He justifies his choice for the Dutch verse style by pointing out that French and Dutch have different rules for their poetry.¹²⁴ This remark is very similar to Heyns's statement that every language has its own laws, which he made when defending his choice of metre.

Discussions on the art of rhetoric, the rules of poetry, and the nature and rules of particular languages were strongly intertwined, as can be deduced from the writings of De Castelein, De Dene, and Heyns. This does not imply that rhetoricians were uninterested in other languages or their rhetorical and poetic developments. It simply means that they consciously considered what specific elements from successful foreign examples might be adopted in Dutch.¹²⁵ Only those practices that agreed with the 'enargië' of the Dutch vernacular were selected.

7.4. The Rules of Dutch Poetry

In studies of the history of the Dutch language, one chamber of rhetoric has systematically been set apart from the others: the Amsterdam chamber *De Eglentier*. Scholars described the attitude

¹²¹ The first edition of the *Const* contains a page that states that De Castelein wrote it in 1548. De Castelein 1555, fol. *2v.

¹²² 'ubi mens illa spirans etiamnum in scriptis, ubi genius ille peculiarem & arcanam adferens energiam'. Erasmus 1528, 185. Translated by Betty I. Knott: Erasmus 1986, 376.

¹²³ 'elck Landt (naer zijn tonghe) ghebruuct Rhetorijcke'. De Dene 1567, 218. See also: Ramakers 2006, 71-72.

¹²⁴ Van de Haar 2018.

¹²⁵ Mareel 2011; Ramakers 2012.

this chamber professed towards Dutch from the 1580s onwards as being unique.¹²⁶ In 1584, *De Eglentier*, with the help of printer Christophe Plantin, issued the *Twe-spraak*, the first printed grammar of Dutch.¹²⁷ It formed part of a complete *trivium*, also including works on the use of rhetoric and dialectic in Dutch.¹²⁸ This triptych set out a language programme rejecting loanwords and proposing a uniform spelling.

The *Twe-spraak*, in particular, has become a symbol of standardization and purification. As such, modern studies characterize it as breaking with the traditional practice of Dutch of the rhetoricians.¹²⁹ Gijsbert Rutten has demonstrated that this idea of a rupture with pre-existing local practices is falsely suggested in the grammar book itself, which primarily refers to French and Latin examples, such as Petrus Ramus's French *trivium*.¹³⁰ According to Rutten, the *Twe-spraak* had, nevertheless, been inspired by ongoing reflections by rhetoricians on the art of rhetoric in Dutch. He only considers *De Eglentier* to be innovative in that its members thought for the first time about the art of grammar in Dutch. On pre-*Twe-spraak* rhetoricians, Rutten writes: 'Apparently, they did not see the need for grammatical language reflection'.¹³¹

While Rutten is right in pointing out the importance of the tradition of writing about the Dutch tongue which had, in fact, developed in the chambers since the 1540s onwards, he is wrong in stating that this tradition did not contain any reflections on *grammatica*. Van Mussem's comments on syntactical errors have already shown that these considerations were present, but less visible to modern scholars because they are not preserved in overtly grammatical treatises like the *Twe-spraak*. In its establishment of rules on spelling, one of the aspects of the art of *grammatica*, *De Eglentier* could build on decades of orthographical awareness. The same is true for the issue of loanwords. Even though rhetoricians such as De Castelein approved of borrowing, they already adopted a critical stance on which *De Eglentier* could build.

In one aspect, the *Twe-spraak* did not adopt a supposedly 'Renaissance' attitude: the grammar book proposed the use of the traditional Dutch metre rather than the French metre. However, *De Eglentier* displayed a reflective attitude towards versification, studying the different sound structures of languages to determine the appropriate verse style. On the topic of

¹²⁶ Mak 1944, 138; Van den Branden 1967, 91.

¹²⁷ *Twe-spraak* 1584.

¹²⁸ *Ruygh-bewerp* 1585; *Rederijck-kunst* 1587. For more information on *trivium* texts in Dutch, see: Van der Have 2002.

¹²⁹ Van den Branden 1967, 168-184; Dibbets 1985, 30-32; Spies 1993b.

¹³⁰ *Ruygh-bewerp* 1585, 6-7.

¹³¹ 'Kennelijk vonden ze grammaticale taalbeschouwing niet nodig'. Rutten 2013, 261.

metre, reflections on poetry intersected with language studies. This made the choices of critical rhetoricians like De Castelein, Heyns, and the members of the Amsterdam chambers innovative, despite the fact that the Dutch style would later fall into disuse.

Orthographical Awareness

According to Jan van Mussem in his 1553 *Rhetorica*, knowledge of orthography was an integral part of the skill set required by the rhetoricians:

[...] the art of being able to spell and write, read, speak, and understand well and perfectly a good, pure language, either Flemish or another, without which no one can be accomplished in the noble art of rhetoric.

[...] die const van een goede suyuer tale, tsi vlaemsche oft andere, wel ende perfectelijc te kunnen spellen scrijuen, lesen, spreken ende verstaen, sonder twelcke tot die edele Rhetorijcke nyemant bequame wesen en mach.¹³²

Van Mussem explains that in order to be a good practitioner of the art of rhetoric, one needs an understanding of proper spelling. Van Mussem was not alone in emphasizing this: throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, rhetoricians stressed the importance of correct orthography in their writings.¹³³

This tradition of orthographical awareness is reflected in the fact that, when Joos Lambrecht printed his treatise on Dutch spelling in 1550, the work was immediately presented as being useful for rhetoricians. Lambrecht's fellow printer Hendrik van den Keere wrote a laudatory poem in which he explicitly exhorted rhetoricians to adopt the proposed rules. He addressed his contribution to 'noble artists with Mercurial senses/ who love poetry, or compose something occasionally'.¹³⁴ This is a clear reference to the rhetoricians, the followers of Mercury, god of the liberal arts and of rhetoric in particular.¹³⁵ Van den Keere then refers to the competitive aspect of the chambers, advising the rhetoricians that if they want to win poetic matches, they need to respect the rules of orthography: 'If you wish to win the prize, praise, and honour,/ and obtain victory, you have to spell correctly'.¹³⁶ Orthography, indeed, became a part of the competitive culture of the rhetoricians. In 1577, Jan van Hout organized a competition

¹³² Van Mussem 1553, fol. A2v. See also: fols. G3r, K4r.

¹³³ For several examples, see: Vandommele 2011, 215-216.

¹³⁴ 'Edel artisten, Mercuriiaal zinnen/ Die tdicht beminnen, of zontijd wat stellen'. Lambrecht 1550, fol. A3v.

¹³⁵ See also: Dibbets 2001, 16.

¹³⁶ 'Zoudt ghy prijs, lof, famø, ende eare ghewinnen,/ V victorien dinnen, zo moett ghy wel spellen'. Lambrecht 1550, fol. A3v.

focusing on refrains, where a prize for best spelling was awarded: ‘and who writes and spells the best/ will be honoured with two beautiful shields.’¹³⁷

One of the first chambers that actually mentioned the importance of orthography in its official regulations was *De Kersouwe (The Daisy)*, a chamber of rhetoric at Oudenaarde.¹³⁸ Matthijs de Castelein was factor of this chamber for some time. His posthumous 1555 *Const* gives similar warnings about spelling. The text denounces ‘bad spelling’ and praises the ‘good orthographer’.¹³⁹ It even warns against homographs, words that are spelled the same but are pronounced differently, demonstrating a conscious attitude towards the connections between orthography and pronunciation.¹⁴⁰ Because of De Castelein’s stress on this topic, it is remarkable that it has gone unnoticed that the *Const* itself makes use of a very progressive spelling. It uses, for instance, the *accent aigu* on the ‘é’ and dieresis on the ‘ë’, as well as the ‘w’ as a single letter rather than as ‘vv’, five years after Joos Lambrecht had first introduced these characters in Dutch printing [Figure 7.1].¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ ‘en die best scrijft en spelt/ Zal, mit twee schalen schoon, ter eren zyn verzelt’. Van Hout 2016; Koppenol 1998, 110.

¹³⁸ Ramakers 1996, 119. See also the statutes of the chamber of Saint Barbara in Aalst (1539/1540), which stress the need for proper writing and pronunciation. Van Dixhoorn 2008, 133n35.

¹³⁹ ‘Qualick spellen’. ‘goed orthographiste’. De Castelein 1555, 40 (stanza 119), 42 (stanza 125); Vandommele 2011, 215-216.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Even though they are spelled the same, the rhetoric is bad’. ‘Als speld ghyse ghelijc, de rethorike es quaed’. De Castelein 1555, 43 (stanza 127). See also: De Castelein 1555, 30 (stanza 90).

¹⁴¹ It is unclear, however, whether these novelties were added at the instigation of De Castelein himself or of his printer Jan Cauweel. Cauweel did refer to the importance of ‘being able to spell the mother tongue correctly’ in his preface to the text. ‘haerlieder moeders tale te rechte connen spellen’. De Castelein 1555, fol. +3r. See: Chapter 6.3.

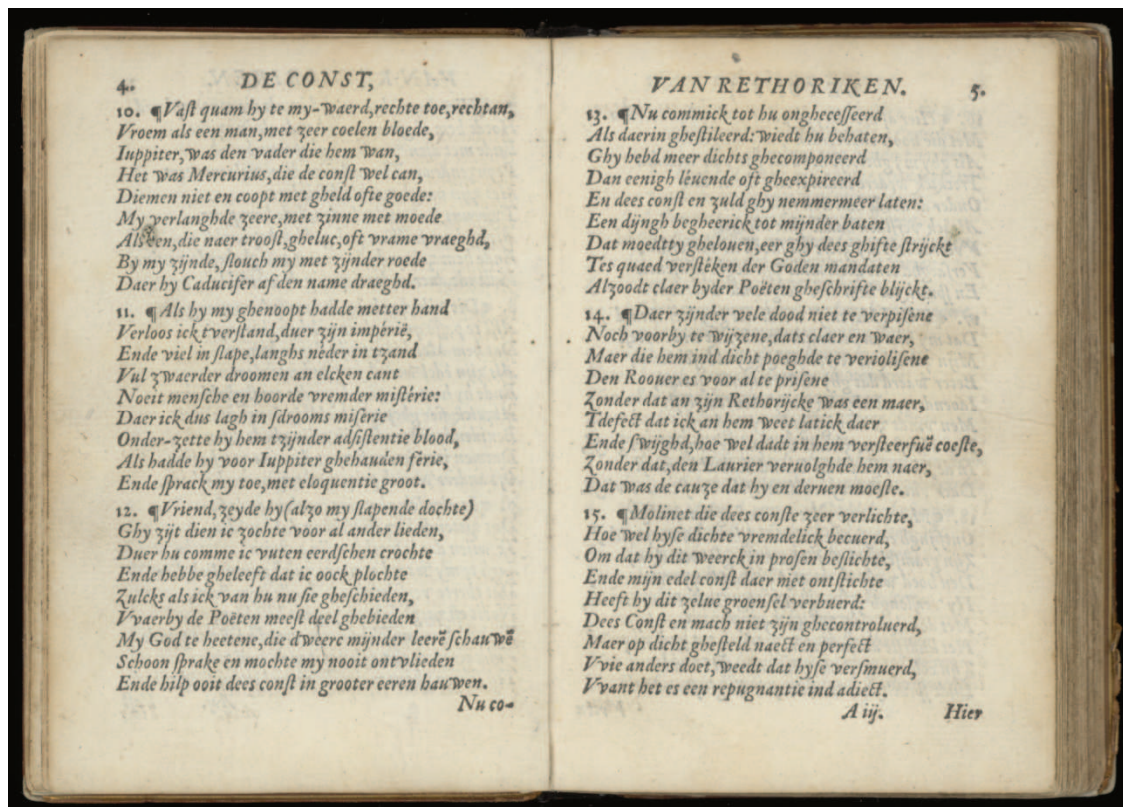


Figure 7.1.

M. de Castelein. *De const van rhetoriken*. Ghent: Jan Cauweel, 1555, 4-5. Ghent University, BIB.G.000235.

De Castelein was no exception. As shown by Jeroen Vandommele, the topic of *grammatica* was also addressed multiple times during the 1561 Antwerp *Landjuweel*.¹⁴² This conception of grammar refers to the art of reading and writing in a particular language, and thus also comprises orthography.¹⁴³ A contribution by *De Christus Ooghen* (*Christ's Eyes*) from Diest phrases the importance of proper spelling in the most direct way:

Grammar is the beginning
 Of all arts. It is an art of
 Speaking and spelling well
 [...] Because without orthography and writing well,
 God's Word would eventually remain in the dark [...].

Grammatica wesende dbeghinsel dan

¹⁴² Dibbets 1992b, 52-63; Vandommele 2011, 215-220.

¹⁴³ See, for example, the contribution of *Tgoutbloemken* (*The Marigold*) from Vilvoorde: 'Spelling and writing correctly is her [*Grammatica*'s] lesson'. 'Van spellen oft schrijuen net is haer lesse'. *Spelen van sinne* 1562, fol. Qq3v.

Van alle consten, welcke is een conste van
Wel te spreken, en te Orthographieren
[...] Want, sonder Orthographie, en wel schrijuen
Soude Gods woordt ten eynde verdonckert blijuen [...].¹⁴⁴

Correct spelling, in other words, is important for mutual understanding in all fields of learning. *De Christus Ooghen* warns what might happen without it: if the Word of God is spelled incorrectly, the sacred Scripture becomes unintelligible. Ultimately, that could endanger man's salvation. It seems that the same fear that drove Jan Utenhove and Marnix to reject loanwords incited this chamber of rhetoric to call for correct spelling.¹⁴⁵ Possibly, the fact that *De Christus Ooghen* reflected so overtly on spelling in its contribution might in part be explained by the fact that its *factor*, Jan Boomgart, was a schoolmaster, a profession that has already been associated with a heightened awareness of spelling.¹⁴⁶

Although reflections on orthography are not omnipresent in extant texts written by rhetoricians, the 1584 *Twe-spraack* was certainly not unique in addressing the issue. Its value lies in offering a rare glimpse into the rules designed by particular rhetoricians, as it remains unclear what their peers understood exactly by correct spelling. Only in 1612 did Jacob van der Schuere, member of the Flemish-Haarlem chamber *De Witte Angieren* (*The White Carnations*), and like Boomgart a schoolmaster, publish another orthographical treatise.¹⁴⁷ The emphasis on spelling in the chambers supports the hypothesis that they attempted to create a unified form of Dutch within their ranks, even though the exact rules of this language remain unclear outside of the proposals of the *Twe-spraack* and Van der Schuere.

Critical Stances on Loanwords

As in the case of spelling, scholars have failed to recognize the extent to which *De Eglentier* and other rhetoricians who opposed borrowings built on statements by earlier rhetoricians with regard to the careful use of loanwords. Despite the fact that the topic of borrowing has long been seen as fundamentally connected to the chambers of rhetoric, the complexity and multifaceted views they harboured have been overlooked. It was a highly debated topic, and notwithstanding the seemingly clear-cut view displayed in the *Twe-spraack*, even within the Amsterdam chamber no consensus was reached.

¹⁴⁴ *Spelen van sinne* 1562, fol. Yy2v-Yy3r.

¹⁴⁵ See: Chapter 5.2, 5.3.

¹⁴⁶ Vandommele 2011, 40. See: Chapter 4.3.

¹⁴⁷ See: Chapter 4.3.

An awareness of the complexity of borrowing is already present in Matthijs de Castelein's *Const*, written in 1548 and published seven years later. This model book for rhetoricians' poetry supports the use of loanwords and is therefore often used as an example of the pre-1580s or pre-*Eglentier* attitude towards the topic. De Castelein was informed about the issue, and he defends borrowing:

You may use [scum], whoever disapproves,
For it concerns an already long-existing custom.
As the sun illustrates a fine day,
And the moon illuminates the night,
Thus [scum] lights a fine poem.¹⁴⁸

Schuum mueghd ghy wel stellen wiedt reprobeerd,
Vvant het es ghevseerd ouer langhe spacie:
Ghelijc de Zonne den schoonen dagh illustreerd,
Ende de Mane den nacht, illumineerd,
Alzo verlichtt schuum een schoone oratie.¹⁴⁹

Long before *De Eglentier* published its *trivium*, borrowing was thus discussed in the context of the chambers, as De Castelein enters into a debate with critics. He adopts the term that was used most often in Dutch to pejoratively refer to loanwords, namely that of 'scum'.¹⁵⁰ He uses it, however, not necessarily as a negative concept, but as a positive one.¹⁵¹ For this rhetorician, loanwords are no filthy scum, but the cream on top of the literary text.¹⁵²

De Castelein reacts to discussions on 'scum' in the vernacular, but as a learned individual he was also aware of classical statements on lexical change. He uses a reference to Horace, for instance, to defend his introduction of new loanwords in Dutch.¹⁵³ The classical author had claimed in his *Ars poetica* that, like trees, which drop old leaves and grow new ones, languages should divest themselves of old words and adopt neologisms.¹⁵⁴ Accepting the

¹⁴⁸ Translated by: Ramakers 2012, 147. Ramakers translated 'schuum' as 'loan words'. As the notion of 'schuum' itself is relevant in the context of the debates on borrowing, the translation 'scum' has been used here.

¹⁴⁹ De Castelein 1555, 37 (stanza 111).

¹⁵⁰ See: Chapter 3.5.

¹⁵¹ In the alphabetical index of the *Const*, the issue of loanwords is even categorized under the term 'schuum'. De Castelein 1555, fol. +8v.

¹⁵² Brom 1955, 8.

¹⁵³ De Castelein 1555, 38 (stanza 113).

¹⁵⁴ Horace 1978, 454-455 (lines 60-62).

creation of new words, this metaphor affirms that languages, including the classical ones, are not stable entities.

At the same time, De Castelein showed a concern for the differences between Dutch and the source languages of loanwords. He warned his readers regarding elements that ‘are bad Flemish and will ruin the poem’.¹⁵⁵ De Castelein seems to call for careful borrowing, adapting new words to the rules and structure of the Dutch tongue in order to avoid conflicts. The *Const* reveals that its author was trying to improve his mother tongue just as much as later rhetoricians, through his broad knowledge of classical and contemporary discussions on language and interest in languages other than Dutch.

The notion of borrowing carefully and consciously to which De Castelein seems to refer was a topos in the French debates on loanwords, and the same is true for Dutch.¹⁵⁶ Jan van Mussem, in his 1553 *Rhetorica*, too, complains about unlearned poets who simply ‘embellish new ones [words] following their own fantasy’, resulting in a language that cannot be understood by anyone but themselves.¹⁵⁷ His *Rhetorica* therefore contains a list of accepted loanwords with their meaning, designed to prevent the incorrect use of borrowed terms ‘in places where their meaning is wrong’.¹⁵⁸ Van Mussem stresses that users of loanwords need to have a thorough understanding of their correct spelling, pronunciation, and meaning. Rather than rejecting loanwords, which are numerous in the *Rhetorica*, he rejects their use by unlearned rhetoricians.¹⁵⁹ According to Van den Branden and Vanderheyden, Van Mussem’s critical stance was inspired by his humanist outlook.¹⁶⁰ As the cases of De Castelein and others demonstrate, however, a critical and scholarly stance towards language was just as much a part of rhetoricians’ culture as it was of humanist culture, the two being, evidently, closely connected.

In light of the warnings about loanwords by De Castelein and Van Mussem, the attitude towards loanwords professed by *De Eglentier* was not revolutionary, despite the way the chamber presented its *trivium*. *De Eglentier* distanced itself from earlier rhetoricians by avoiding references to their texts and by criticizing them in order to give an impression of

¹⁵⁵ ‘quaed vlaemsch zijn en bederfuen tdicht’. De Castelein 1555, 40 (stanza 118).

¹⁵⁶ See: Chapter 3.5.

¹⁵⁷ ‘nae huer eyghen fantasie nyeuwe versieren’. Van Mussem 1553, fols. K3v, C6r.

¹⁵⁸ ‘in plaetsen daer si gheen goede beteekenesse en hebben’. Van Mussem 1553, fol. K4r.

¹⁵⁹ Van Mussem even used so many loanwords that when printer Jacob Migoen wanted to reissue his text in 1607, he decided to edit it, replacing the borrowed terms. Migoen also removed the list of loanwords that Van Mussem had inserted at the end of his text. Van Mussem 1607, 5-6; Vanderheyden 1984.

¹⁶⁰ Vanderheyden 1952, 304-305; Van den Branden 1967, 30-31.

novelty.¹⁶¹ In a satirical poem in the chamber's grammar book, the final stanza ('princestrofe') assumes the voice of a borrowing rhetorician in order to ridicule it, just like Marnix ridiculed the mixed language of the clergy:¹⁶²

We, rhymers, who, by God's will, are called *rhetoricians*
Use for expressiveness such *eloquence* [...]
We speak of *composition* and of *invention*
Of *elocution*, *terms*, *solutions*, and *disputation* [...].

Wy Rymers die Ghód wouts *Retorykers* ghe-naamt zyn
Ghebruiken mede voor welsprekentheid zulck *eloquentie* [...]
Wy spreken van *Compositie* en van *inventie*
Van *elocutie*, *termen*, *soluti* en *disputatie* [...].¹⁶³

The whole stanza brims with loanwords referring to the culture of the rhetoricians. These words, such as 'eloquentie' ('eloquence'), 'Compositie' ('composition'), and 'inventie' ('invention'), are stacked up to ridicule them, and gain additional emphasis because they have been put in italics.¹⁶⁴

By means of this satirical poem, the *Twe-spraack* exaggerates and attacks the use of loanwords of other rhetoricians without entering into a debate with the various nuanced opinions that had been expressed on the matter. The *Twe-spraack* only explicitly refers to the theories of Becanus, considering the Germanic languages to be older than French. French, the grammar book argues, borrowed many words from the Germanic tongues long ago, and borrowing them back is, of course, useless.¹⁶⁵ The reflections on loanwords intersect here with broader theories on the history and genealogy of languages.

While the *Twe-spraack* strongly rejected loanwords, it is a mistake to assume that this publication announced a complete shift in the writings of the members of *De Eglentier*. Even the other two parts of the *trivium* by the Amsterdam chamber show a remarkably more lenient attitude towards loanwords. Both the *Ruygh-bewerp van de Redenkaveling* (1585) on dialectic

¹⁶¹ Rutten 2013. For the ways in which other rhetoricians, too, tried to establish themselves as poets by criticizing earlier poetry, see: Van Dixhoorn forthcoming.

¹⁶² See: Chapter 5.4. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 9.

¹⁶³ *Twe-spraack* 1584, 9.

¹⁶⁴ *Twe-spraack* 1584, 9.

¹⁶⁵ 'I conclude that all words of which it can be proven that they derive from words that originally stem from our language are good Germanic, even if they are used by the French or other peoples as much as or even more than by us'. 'Besluitende houde ick dat alle wóórden diemen bewyzen kan, hare betekenis uyt grondwóórden van onze taal te spruyten, ghoed Duits zyn, al zynse byden Fransóysen óf andere vólkeren, zó wel óf meer int ghebruyck als by ons'. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 5.

and the *Rederijck-kunst* (1587) on the art of rhetoric make use of Latin terms in the margins, probably to aid readers who did not understand the newly created translations [Figure 7.2]. It seems that *De Eglentier* either succumbed to pragmatism or dealt with a lack of consensus among the authors of the *trivium*.¹⁶⁶

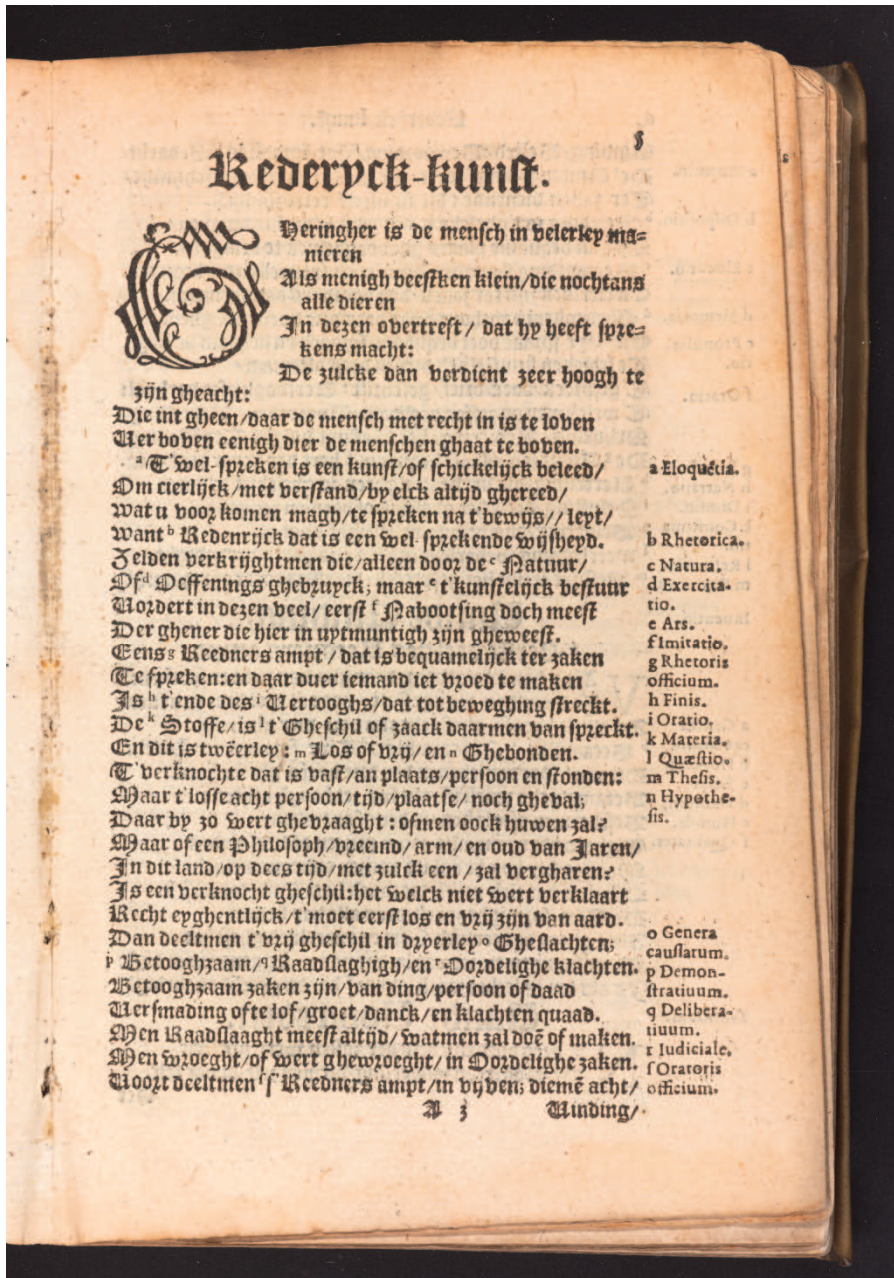


Figure 7.2.

Rederijck-kunst, in *Rijm opt kortst verrat*. Hier by ghevoeght de redenkaveling ende letter-kunsts grondvesten. Amsterdam: Franciscus Raphelengius, 1587, 5. Special Collections, University of Amsterdam, OTM: OK 80-379 (1).

¹⁶⁶ On the authorship of the *trivium*, see: Dibbets 1985, 23-26, 29-30.

Later events further illustrate that the *Twe-spraak* did not mark a clear-cut transition from a pro-borrowing to an anti-borrowing period within the Amsterdam chamber, and that the topic lost none of its heatedness. Around 1611, Gerbrand Adriaenz. Bredero delivered a speech to the chamber in which he pleaded for the rejection of loanwords.¹⁶⁷ This strongly suggests that the members of the chamber had not completely banned them. The matter continued to smoulder within *De Eglentier*, and was in all likelihood one of the stakes in a fiery dispute that would eventually tear the chamber in two.

This dispute erupted in the second decade of the seventeenth century, when a combination of various disagreements and personal differences incited a number of *Eglentier* members to leave and found their own chamber.¹⁶⁸ Led by Samuel Coster, Gerbrand Adriaenz. Bredero, and Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, they established the *Eerste Nederduytsche Academie* (*First Dutch Academy*) in 1617. Theodore Rodenburgh took up control of *De Eglentier*.¹⁶⁹ One of the main goals of the *Nederduytsche Academie* was to emphasize the educational objectives of the chambers of rhetoric by creating a Dutch counterpart to the Latin-speaking university at Leiden.¹⁷⁰

Although Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, who studied the *Nederduytsche Academie* extensively, singled out different views on education as the main cause of the rupture, a difference in opinion concerning the use of loanwords also played a role in the break.¹⁷¹ This comes forth from a letter written in 1618, one year after the schism, by a poet using the device ‘*Vincit qui patitur*’ (‘He who endures conquers’).¹⁷² In an attempt to put an end to the conflict, he asks his fellow poets to search for a golden mean. When listing the problematic issues, he also discusses the element of purification and loanwords:

This one does not even reflect on the fact that he corrupts it [the Dutch language] with foreign words, and the other side is looking for its purity too stubbornly, taking offence at as little as a straw [...].

¹⁶⁷ For a modern edition of the text, see: Bredero 1970, 112-113.

¹⁶⁸ Smits-Veldt 1993; Smits-Veldt 1996, 858.

¹⁶⁹ For more information on Rodenburgh, a polyglot poet, see: Smits-Veldt & Abrahamse 1992.

¹⁷⁰ Smits-Veldt 1996, 861; Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 235-237.

¹⁷¹ Studies focusing on the educational aspect are: Gielen 1935; Smits-Veldt 1993; Smits-Veldt 1996.

¹⁷² Arjan van Dixhoorn has suggested it might concern Willem Bicker, who used the device ‘*Vincit qui patitur*’. Earlier, Jos Gielen mentioned it might have been Johan ten Grotenhuys, because of his connections to the chamber and its leading figures. Gielen 1935, 233-238; Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 348n91.

D'Eene denckt niet eens daerom, dat hy de selve met eenighe uytheemsche woorden besmet: En d'andere zyde soeckt der selver suyverheyt al te stijfkoppich, sich aen een stroo storende [...].¹⁷³

The author confirms that one side wanted to purify the Dutch language, while the other continued to use borrowings. Indeed, Samuel Coster is known to have criticized the language of Theodore Rodenburgh, who did not reject loanwords fully.¹⁷⁴ Even within a single chamber, no easy solution to end the fiery discussions on loanwords could be found.

Another contribution to the loanword debate by a group of rhetoricians deserves a closer look because it illuminates the multilingual side of the discussions. The 1610 *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* is a collection of poems created by rhetoricians active in Holland that presents itself as a model of 'pure Dutch language'.¹⁷⁵ The epilogue invites the readers of the volume to 'correct it by using better material' in case any loanwords were still remaining in the text.¹⁷⁶ The work thus tries, like the dictionaries published by the *Officina Plantiniana*, to actively engage the audience to reflect on language. One of the sources mentioned in *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* is Becanus, which demonstrates that the contributors were aware of local discussions on the vernacular.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, Paul J. Smith has argued that the book, which contains various translations of French poems, implicitly engages with Du Bellay's *Deffence*.¹⁷⁸ Even though the volume presents itself as a model of Dutch free of foreign influences, it was the result of an openness towards developments in the field of poetics and language in France as well as in the Low Countries.

¹⁷³ 'Vincit qui patitur' quoted by: Gielen 1935, 236-237.

¹⁷⁴ Coster, in the preface to his play *Isabella* (1619), criticizes 'those who are ignorant in the art of playwriting' ('de onvvetende in't maken van Treur-spelen'). In doing so, he calls out Rodenburgh without, however, explicitly mentioning his name. One of Coster's main contentions is that it is important that 'each speaks common language, without dishonouring the Holland tongue by borrowing foreign terms' ('elck spreect gangbare tale, sonder dat de Hollantsche met het lenen van vvreemdsche vvoorden onteert vvort'). Coster thus finds fault with Rodenburgh's use of loanwords. The first part of Rodenburgh's *Melibea* (1618), for instance, contains loanwords such as 'Paragonne' ('Paragon') and 'glorieust' ('glorious things') in the prologue of the play. This criticism on borrowing is not mentioned by Mieke B. Smits-Veldt in her studies on the polemic between Coster and Rodenburgh. Rodenburgh 1618; Coster 1619, fol. (. .)2r-(. .)2v; Smits-Veldt 1991, 79-80; Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 240.

¹⁷⁵ 'in suyver Nederduytsche sprake'. *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 1. First Karel van Mander, and after his death in 1606 schoolmaster-rhetorician Jacob van der Schuere, assembled 89 contributions of rhetoricians that belonged to different chambers, but most of whom originated from Flanders. For more information about the creation of *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* and the poets who wrote the contributions, see: Thijs 2004.

¹⁷⁶ 'met beter stoffe noch te verbeteren'. *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 331.

¹⁷⁷ The strongest example can be found in: *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 62. Thijs 2004, 52, 94-95, 113.

¹⁷⁸ *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 72; Smith 2010, 300.

Den Nederduytschen Helicon was dedicated to Simon Stevin.¹⁷⁹ The engineer, who has become a symbol for the promotion of Dutch terms instead of borrowed ones, did, nonetheless, use loanwords. In his treatise on dialectics in the Dutch vernacular titled *Dialectike ofte bewijskonst* (1585), which was published in the same year as *De Eglentier*'s text on the topic, Stevin addressed the loanword issue. He explains that he gives way to custom, as the popularity of some loanwords made their original Dutch counterparts unknown and obsolete: 'Yes, it is because of the common usage that we cannot understand some foreign words in their Dutch form, while this Dutch form does exist'.¹⁸⁰ His case once again demonstrates that even the most ardent opponents of borrowing were often open to nuance and pragmatism.

Lode Van den Branden assumed a difference between rhetoricians in Holland, such as the contributors of *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* and the *Twe-spraack*, and those in Flanders and Brabant.¹⁸¹ He saw the former as breaking with the tradition of the rhetoricians by generally rejecting loanwords, thus becoming 'Renaissance' poets, and the latter as continuing to support borrowing. This generalizing view has already been proven false by the disclosure of the conflicting views within *De Eglentier*.¹⁸² Nevertheless, Van den Branden's hypothesis is supported by an early modern account. In 1617, the Catholic polemicist Richard Verstegan, the son of Flemish immigrants to the British Isles, published his *Neder-dvytsche epigrammen*, which confirmed the anti-loanword reputation of the Hollanders.¹⁸³

Verstegan, who might have participated in a competition organized by a chamber in Malines in 1620, used many loanwords in his poetry collection.¹⁸⁴ He explained in his preface that he expected criticism on this point from poets in Holland:

Some poets from Holland will possibly say that there are too many scummed words in it because it is not written in blunt Hollandic dialect. But why have the Hollanders not scummed the words Reformation, Predestination, Consistory, General, and Excellence, etc. from their own pots?

¹⁷⁹ *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* 1610, 3.

¹⁸⁰ 'Ja de gebruyck heeft het daer toe ghebrocht, dat wy sommige vreemde woorden diemen wel Verduytschen can, nochtans Verduytscht niet en verstaen'. Stevin 1585b, fol. *7r-*7v.

¹⁸¹ Van den Branden 1967, 12.

¹⁸² See also the case of Govert van der Eemdb. In a preface to a play printed in 1621, Van der Eemdb shows a pragmatic attitude towards loanwords. To justify the use of loanwords that had integrated fully into the Dutch language, he referred to the example set by the Romans, who had borrowed words from Greek. Van der Eemdb 1621, fol. *3r.

¹⁸³ See: Chapter 3.3.

¹⁸⁴ On Verstegan's possible participation in the 1620 competition, see: Arblaster 2004, 128-137.

Eenighe van de Hollantsche dichters sullen mogelijk segghen datter veel gheschuynde woorden in sijn, om datse niet in heel bot plat hollandts en sijn gheschreuen. Maer waerom en hebben de Hollanders van hunne eyghen potten niet gheschuymt, Reformatie, Predestinatie, Consistorie, Generael ende Excellentie, &c.¹⁸⁵

Verstegan objects that the Hollanders used many borrowings themselves, too. Upon closer inspection, however, his examples point to a political rather than literary motive. All the loanwords that he accuses the Hollanders of using are related either to Calvinism or to the political side of the Revolt. Verstegan was a Catholic who supported the Habsburg rule over the Low Countries.¹⁸⁶ Under the cover of the debates on loanwords, he satirically attacks the religious and political allegiance of his fellow poets.

Verstegan had a very different view on the use of loanwords in Dutch and in English. In the English inkhorn controversy, he was on the side of those rejecting borrowings.¹⁸⁷ Like Christophe Plantin, he treated his two vernacular languages differently.¹⁸⁸ Personal opinions are not predictable. Heyns's case already showed that individuals could change their minds, or differ in what they practised and what they preached. It is impossible to generalize when it comes to views on borrowing. Rhetoricians, too, took part in the ongoing debates on loanwords that did not reach a consensus. Those who supported borrowing were attempting to construct the Dutch vernacular as much as those who rejected it.

Innovative Metre

The cases of Jan van Hout and Jan van Mussem have revealed that what they considered to be 'good poets' were not necessarily the poets who opted for the newest fashions, but those who studied the vernacular. This is what makes Heyns's final decision to continue to use the Dutch metre rather than the French style fashion forward. Archaic poets were those who did not reflect on possible changes or traditional forms at all.

No rhetorician illustrates this adapted conception of the notion of innovation better than Matthijs de Castelein. Already in the 1555 *Const*, he reflected on the Dutch verse style by comparing it to French and Latin poetry. When dealing with the topic of rhyme, he explains that in Dutch, two words only rhyme correctly if the stress falls on the same syllable (such as

¹⁸⁵ Verstegan 1617, fol. A3v.

¹⁸⁶ Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 284-286.

¹⁸⁷ For Verstegan's rejection of loanwords in English, see: Verstegan 1605, 239-240; Rombauts 1934.

¹⁸⁸ See: Chapter 6.3.

in ‘maken’ and ‘spraken’, where the stress is on the first syllables). De Castelein remarks, however, that this rule does not apply to French:

[...] the French,
who have to rely on their sweet accent in order to make good poetry.
In most of their rhetoric they would fail,
if it were not that the “enargie” of their language,
allows this, more than ours does [...].

[...] de walen
Die tgoed dicht moeten halen an daccent zeer zoet,
In meest deel haer rethorike soen sy falen
Ten ware dat de enargie van haerlieder talen
Dit excuseerde, meer dant onslien doet [...].¹⁸⁹

Again using the notion of ‘enargie’, De Castelein explains that the word stress in French is weaker than in Dutch. He describes it as ‘sweeter’, to be exact, alluding to the widespread conception of the French language as sweet-sounding.¹⁹⁰ Because the word stress is so much stronger in Dutch, he seems to imply, it takes more effort to find correct rhyme pairs.

The differences between the strength of the natural word stress in French and Dutch indeed caused great difficulties for those who wished to apply the French rules to Dutch. A solution would be found later in the sixteenth century in the adoption of syllabo-tonic verse, in which stressed and unstressed syllables were alternated in an iambic, isosyllabic structure. This invention has been connected to Jan van der Noot, Marnix, and late sixteenth-century humanist environments.¹⁹¹

De Castelein further experimented with applying different forms of Latin metre in Dutch in various poems.¹⁹² He thus describes the following distich as an iambic trimetre:

Every man awaits God’s benign grace,
And approaches the highest jubilation, nothing else.

¹⁸⁹ De Castelein 1555, 45 (stanza 133).

¹⁹⁰ Terreaux 1990, 643-646; Huchon 2003. See also: Chapter 2.3.

¹⁹¹ For the attribution of reflections on the differences in sound structure and metre to humanist environments, see: Forster 1967, 287; Waterschoot 1995, 152; Kazartsev 2010.

¹⁹² De Castelein 1555, 226-227.

Elc meinsche verwacht Gods benigne gratie,
Anders niet, en naeckt de hoogste iubiliatie.¹⁹³

As Sara Iansen, who analysed all of De Castelein's experiments with Latin verse, observed, it is unclear how the rhetorician saw this as an iambic trimetre.¹⁹⁴ Latin verse is fundamentally different from traditional Dutch verse because it is quantitative, that is, it is based on the length of syllables, which can be short or long, rather than on word stress. The Dutch language lacks the distinction between long and short syllables and could therefore not simply adopt Latin versification.¹⁹⁵ De Castelein does not explicitly comment on his experiments and thus provides no clues for the way in which he tried to implement Latin verse in Dutch. It is clear that he did not replace what were long syllables in Latin by stressed syllables in Dutch. Nevertheless, the fact that he conducted them in the first place demonstrates his interest in Latin poetry and language comparison, while again showing that poetic practice can be a form of language study.

De Castelein's treatment of the issue of versification is not far from that of the *Twe-spraack*. Just like De Castelein, the *Twe-spraack* deals with the possibility of applying the rules of Latin poetry to Dutch.¹⁹⁶ It comes to the conclusion that Dutch, because of its many monosyllabic words, is marked by 'a great many long syllables'.¹⁹⁷ This is a clear reference to Becanus's theories, making the link between the reflections on poetry and those on language tangible. Because of the differences with Latin, quantitative verse is therefore rejected in Dutch, and the grammar proposes that a more appropriate verse form be chosen, 'following the nature of our tongue'.¹⁹⁸ The *Twe-spraack* ends up promoting a variant of the Dutch verse style, with a minimum of ten and a maximum of fourteen syllables.¹⁹⁹

The discussion about the sound structure of Dutch and its versification persisted into the following century. One of the seventeenth-century debaters of the issue was Isaac Beeckman, who shows that the topic awakened the interest of learned individuals who did not inevitably argue in favour of the French metre. Beeckman was a natural philosopher who went on to become a Latin schoolmaster.²⁰⁰ In 1618, he frequented a chamber of rhetoric in Breda, and

¹⁹³ De Castelein 1555, 227.

¹⁹⁴ Iansen 1971, 274.

¹⁹⁵ The same is true for French: Meerhoff 1986, 4-14.

¹⁹⁶ See also the case of Coornhert, who referred to Latin metre to defend varying verse length in Dutch. He attacked the restrictions of a maximum and minimum number of syllables per verse in the Dutch style, and pointed at examples in Latin poetry of verse lines of more than sixteen syllables. Coornhert 1561b, fols. *7v-*8r.

¹⁹⁷ 'zeer veel langhe silben'. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 57.

¹⁹⁸ 'na den aard van onze spraack'. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 56.

¹⁹⁹ 'ghelyck luydende reghels'. *Twe-spraack* 1584, 57.

²⁰⁰ Van Dixhoorn 2009a, 11-12; Van Berkel 2013.

around that same time he met and befriended René Descartes.²⁰¹ Beeckman kept a commonplace book in Latin, French, and Dutch in which he kept a record of his broad reflections on various fields of learning. In 1630, he wrote on the metrical issue, supporting the Dutch metre: ‘if made well, the refrains by the rhetoricians sound better than those by our new poets such as Cats, Heinsius, and Aldegonde’.²⁰² The verses of Jacob Cats, Daniel Heinsius, and Marnix mentioned here alternated stressed and unstressed syllables to adapt the French isosyllabic verse to the Dutch sound structure. Beeckman concluded that this practice was not in line with common speech, thus preferring the Dutch verse style.²⁰³

The true rhetorician in Van Hout’s and Van Mussem’s terms was one who studied and carefully reflected on Dutch. De Castelein, the *Twe-spraack*, and Beeckman all did that, reaching a different conclusion, nevertheless, than Van Hout, by choosing the Dutch metre. They make clear that the debates on poetry styles depended on the growing fascination with the varying nature of languages.

7.5. Conclusion

Literary and language historians were right in pointing out the second half of the sixteenth century as a time of change, even though this change started two decades earlier than previously thought. From the 1540s onwards, the literary culture of the Low Countries was marked by the growing fascination with language and intensifying competition between speech communities and countries. In light of these developments, diverse and often conflicting attempts were made to improve the Dutch vernacular and Dutch poetry in order to strengthen the language’s competitive position. Those who were in favour of or against loanwords and the French verse style were all aiming for the same end goal: a strong Dutch literature based on a strong Dutch vernacular.

In this context of open competition with other languages, defenders of Dutch looked at developments elsewhere in Europe, especially France, in order to copy relevant elements. These models were not followed slavishly, however: the particular nature of Dutch was taken into account. Rhetoricians did not hinder this swiftly expanding language attitude. On the contrary, individuals like De Castelein, Van Mussem, Heyns, and the members of *De Eglentier* were driving forces behind it, alongside poets like Jan van Hout. Their critical stance towards

²⁰¹ Van Berkel 2013, 23-27.

²⁰² ‘de refereynen, die van de rhetorykers gemaect worden, beter luyden, also goet syn, dan van onse nieuwe dichters als Cats, Heynsius, Aldegonde’. Beeckman 1945, 173. See also: Bostoen 1981, 149-152; Van Berkel 2013, 54.

²⁰³ Beeckman 1945, 173.

elements that, according to them, did not agree with the ‘enargië’ of Dutch, to use De Castelein’s term, was a marker of innovation in the fast-spreading movement of language reflection, rather than a marker of conservatism. The *Twe-spraack* stands firmly within this movement, even though the disproportionate attention it has received from modern scholars made it seem unique. Regularizing Dutch was simply not a priority in the sixteenth-century language debates, although there certainly was some interest in spelling among rhetoricians.

Of course, not all rhetoricians were equally involved in the programme to improve and defend Dutch, nor were they all as up to date on developments in French poetry as Heyns and De Castelein. The educational ideals of the chambers of rhetoric, however, expected key figures like Heyns to share their knowledge with their fellow members. Moreover, all members, to a certain degree, experimented with Dutch in their poetry exercises. Such exercises were, as De Dene’s case demonstrates, practical forms of language study. The core practices in the chambers of rhetoric were thus instigators of language awareness.

The emphasis on exercise, experiment, and critical thinking in the chambers is also the likely reason for the high level of nuance that can be found in the contributions of individual rhetoricians to the debates on language. An example of this is Jan van Mussem, who did not renounce loanwords, only using them carelessly. Van Mussem thus embodied his own and Van Hout’s definition of the true rhetorician as having a thorough understanding of the structure and functioning of the Dutch vernacular. The true rhetorician combined language practice with language reflection.

8. Conclusion

‘Who only speaks one language, speaks none well’.¹ These words, written by Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel in honour of Peeter Heyns, could have been the motto of the fascination with language in the Low Countries. The multilingual situation that marked the area and its literary culture imbued and shaped thinking about its two local languages, Dutch and French. Both Spiegel and Heyns were key representatives of this multilingual character of the reflections and discussions on the Dutch vernacular: Spiegel as the likely author of the *Twe-spraack*, of which the revolutionary and monolingual reputation has been put into perspective and contextualized, and Heyns as a bilingual schoolmaster-rhetorician who, being a critical go-between, determined which French elements were suitable for adaptation in the Dutch language.

The ascertainment that the sixteenth-century discussions on language were shaped by the multilingual character of daily life in the Low Countries has strong implications. Studies on the history of the Dutch and French languages and their respective literatures fail to do justice to the multilingual contemporary reality when an attempt is made to catch them within a monolingual framework or within the geographical boundaries imposed by modern-day state borders. Narrow overviews of the history of the French language risk overlooking, for instance, the role played by Christophe Plantin and foreign schoolmasters in the history of French spelling. A treatise on French orthography written by one such schoolmaster, Peter Haschaert, slipped through the net of historians of the French tongue who refused to look beyond France’s current frontiers. Equally unremarked upon was the extent to which the writings of Ronsard influenced orthographical discussions in the Low Countries. The prince of poets has revealed himself to be the primary ambassador of French spelling. Just as striking is the case of Leeuwarden schoolmaster Eduard Mellema, who glorified and promoted neither Frisian nor Dutch, but French. Mellema shows that language defence was not confined to one’s native vernacular—even in Friesland.

The fact that the multilingual language debates touch the core of the literary histories of both languages is made apparent by Heyns’s innovative opinion on versification. It evolved through the experimentation and comparison of French and Dutch poetic forms. Moreover, comparative analysis of Philips of Marnix of Sainte-Aldegonde’s *Biënkorf* and *Tableav* has shown how crucial aspects of these texts have systematically escaped the attention of modern scholars who were either focused on Marnix’s oeuvre in Dutch or on in his works in French.

¹ ‘Die maar een taal wel kan, kan gheen taal wel vertolken’. Heyns 1605, fol. A3r.

This study of the early modern language debates has thus shown that, because of the multilingualism and openness of the Low Countries, a historical literary overview of this region that comprises only literature in Dutch will always be doomed to fall short. Moreover, the choice for a particular language and for a specific language form in a literary text—including loanwords or not, adopting a certain spelling or not, and so on—can hold much information for literary historians, as the various texts studied here have demonstrated. Taking the chosen language for granted means disregarding a wealth of information.

Attention to other languages and literatures was stimulated by the growing competition between countries and languages. As demonstrated by remarks by the likes of Cornelis van Ghistele and Willem Silvius, a sense of rivalry was particularly felt towards the other language of the Low Countries, French. These texts also mention the native tongue of their contested sovereign, Spanish, as well as Italian and the neighbouring (High) German. Because of its close genealogical relation to Dutch, some language debaters, such as printer Hans de Laet, proposed German as a potential donor of loanwords. Both De Laet and Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert saw German as being superior to and more developed than Dutch. These statements strongly suggest that by the second half of the sixteenth century, Dutch and German had grown into two separate languages in the minds of their speakers. The anxiety of deficit with regard to German is remarkable in light of later remarks by members of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*. They held quite the opposite view, namely that Dutch literature surpassed that of German. Feelings of competition were thus not necessarily unidirectional.

Competition and comparison of different languages allowed insight into what was special and unique about the mother tongue and its literature. In the case of Dutch, for instance, it was the high number of monosyllabic words that stood out, as proposed by Johannes Goropius Becanus and his followers Heyns and Simon Stevin. Becanus further argued that the pronunciation of Dutch contained no extremes, making this vernacular the embodiment of the golden mean of languages. Moreover, comparison revealed positive elements in other languages that might be adopted in order to improve the native vernacular—for example, when Jacob van der Schuere proposed that Dutch follow Ronsard's advice for French spelling. The open attitude towards other languages, finally, also offered the possibility of finding inspiration in defences of other languages. Various arguments and concepts that marked the debates on French and Dutch in the Low Countries circulated throughout Europe at that time, such as the terms 'illustration', 'grace', 'energie'/'enargie', and, of course, 'scum'. In these cases, it is not always clear who scummed whose terminology, and Dutch does not seem to have been solely on the receiving end.

In light of the growing competition with other languages and the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt, the many instances where schoolmasters and printers supported their view on Dutch and French by referring to the notion of fatherland obtain added significance. References to notions such as the greater good were not reserved solely for cases where the Dutch language alone was used and defended. Whenever French, the other language of the region, was involved, similar claims could be made, inspiring Spiegel to praise Heyns as a soldier defending both tongues of the Low Countries. Moreover, language learning in general enjoyed a certain esteem, since it was seen as benefitting the *patria*.

Through their connection with the common good, the discussions on language frequently extended beyond the literary domain into the political and social field, connecting language history and literary history to political and religious history. Richard Verstegan demonstrated how, by denouncing the language use of the opposing party, these debates could be used for political purposes in the context of the Dutch Revolt. A similar method was applied on a larger scale by Marnix in the religious domain. By falsely accusing his Catholic opponents of having a defective grasp of and view on language, he made the discussions on language religiously relevant. Contrary to what Marnix suggested, religious preference had no defining effect on one's opinion on language, one's ability to speak multiple languages, or one's ability to participate in the language debates: Spiegel was a Catholic, while Heyns became a Calvinist.

As Marnix's wide language interests amply show, the discussions were more multifaceted than the sole topics of purification and uniformization to which they have been often reduced since Lode Van den Branden's monograph on the topic. The general fascination with language also dealt with, for instance, the histories of various languages and their genealogical relations, which were studied by Marnix, and the sound structures of different tongues examined by the rhetoricians.

Furthermore, the teleological focus on standardization and the wish to paint the language debates in black-and-white terms do injustice to the variety of opinions on the improvement of Dutch and French that were expressed by members of all the *lieux* studied here. Everyone was trying to find a golden mean, but there was no consensus about what these perfect middle forms of Dutch and of French, respectively, were. The defence and rejection of loanwords were supported with equally valid arguments; as a result, the topic continued to be discussed until well into the seventeenth century. This period was marked by an appreciation of or at least neutral stance towards variety, an appreciation that shaped opinions on dialectal and orthographic diversity. A few exceptional individuals proposed regularization of spelling, but none of their proposals were widely adopted. These early modern source texts show the

pertinence of the current trend in historical linguistics to deconstruct the paradigm of standardization. The anachronistic concept of standardization is, together with Van den Branden's triad of illustration, purification, and construction, inadequate to describe the sixteenth-century language debates: these notions hide the diversity of the attempts to improve and defend the Dutch language, let alone French.

The broad scope of the discussions on language is reflected in the source texts used for this book. They cover a diverse set of genres, including schoolbooks, dictionaries, psalters, satirical writings, poetry, and scholarly treatises on language as well as on seemingly unrelated topics, like anatomy and weight measurement.² The people behind them are equally diverse and certainly not restricted to academic environments either. Indeed, theories on the nature and history of the local tongue that had been developed in academic circles or had been published in Latin did not fail to reach vernacular circles. The Persian-Germanic thesis, designed by humanists such as Justus Lipsius and Joseph Justus Scaliger, became known to Marnix as well as to rhetorician Govert van der Eemdb. The ideas of Johannes Goropius Becanus gained a wide reception in Dutch- and French-speaking environments, leaving traces in the works of Heyns and *Den Nederduytschen Helicon*.

Studying the classical languages was not limited to academic environments either. Both Matthijs de Castelein and the authors of the *Twe-spraak* were interested in the sound structure of Latin in comparison to Dutch. This example further illustrates the continuum existing between rhetoricians like De Castelein and those responsible for the *Twe-spraak*, where earlier scholars supposed a breach. Both were interested in classical and foreign examples. Both, furthermore, actively reflected on the question of which of those models could be followed to forge the Dutch language into a perfect shape while respecting the form and structure of that vernacular.

This study has further altered the general chronology of the discussions as perceived since Lode van den Branden's monograph on the topic. The starting point of the intensification of language reflection in the Low Countries has been advanced to the 1540s. According to Van den Branden, Jan Gymnick's Livy translation of 1541 was an early anomaly.³ However, several other important texts reflecting on language were created in this decade: Haschaert's work on French spelling of 1544; Lambrecht's 1546 *Naembouck*; and De Castelein's *De const van rhetoriken*, which was written in 1548. Van den Branden cast Haschaert aside as a supporter of French, and De Castelein as a rhetorician, making him blind to their contributions and the

² On anatomy, see: Valverde de Hamusco 1568. On weight measurement, see: Stevin 1586.

³ Van den Branden 1967, 16.

continuity in language reflection that existed in the Low Countries from Gymnick onwards.⁴ The discussions on loanwords, orthography, and versification all persisted into the seventeenth century in the Low Countries, without reaching a consensus.

While the first printed contributions to the language debates date from the 1540s, the topic was by then probably discussed widely. Oral discussions must have played a much greater part in the distribution of concepts and arguments than can now be determined. In addition, there are important clues that reveal that treatises on language circulated in manuscript form before being printed, both within and outside the region in which the language they targeted was spoken. How else could Plantin have been aware of Petrus Ramus's work, or Lambrecht of that of Jacques Peletier du Mans, or Heyns of that of Becanus, or Van der Eembd of that of Grotius, before any of the four latter texts were printed?

The printed texts in question in all likelihood only reveal the tip of the iceberg that constitutes the discussions on the vernaculars in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, especially since various texts encouraged their readers to join their community of knowledge and debate. The dictionaries published by Plantin's *officina* are good illustrations of this principle. These texts fostered the early modern culture of knowledge production in vernacular, non-academic environments. More extensive analysis of surviving copies of texts like these is necessary in order to be able to determine to what extent readers actually obeyed these calls and engaged in studies of language by adding to dictionaries, grammars, orthographical treatises, and so on.

The main conclusions of this book are not only relevant in case of Dutch, but also with regard to studies on the early modern debates on language in other European regions. The discussions on French, English, German, and so on have been studied largely from a monolingual perspective. The observation that the debates in the Low Countries involved both French and Dutch and were mainly played out by plurilinguists in texts with a multilingual background gives reason to reevaluate the monolingual approach that has been applied to other regions. The debates on the form of the English language, for instance, need to be reconsidered in relation to French as well as Dutch. Ultimately, it would take the challenging task of writing an overview work with a truly pluridirectional, multilingual scope to reveal the full interconnectedness of the discussions on all these languages.

⁴ The first, 1546 edition of Lambrecht's *Naembouck*, currently preserved at Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, was only rediscovered after Van den Branden's monograph was published. He knew the 1562 text on which he based his research was the second edition, but he assumed its predecessor had been printed between 1550 and 1553, as had been suggested by Lambrecht's modern editor René Verdeyen. Verdeyen 1945, xvii; Van den Branden 1967, 17; Cockx-Indestege 1971.

To avoid the pitfalls of monolingual blinders, this book adopted a spatial approach. Four *lieux* form its pillars: French schools, Calvinist churches, printing houses, and chambers of rhetoric. While this spatial approach allowed the transcendence of linguistic confines, it also enabled a certain level of perceptivity towards the ways in which a particular professional, social, cultural, and even material context shaped the early modern reflections on language. Indeed, it has become apparent that each of the four *lieux* was marked by a focus on particular elements.

Masters of French schools supported, from a professional standpoint, the traditional French spelling that allowed them to attract pupils to their schools. Nevertheless, they had much more innovative views on Dutch orthography, such as in the case of Jacob van der Schuere, who wanted to rid this vernacular of all superfluous letters. This insight is relevant for historians of education, who tend to describe schoolmasters as implementing rather than creating new ideas on language. Individuals like Van der Schuere and Heyns played an important intermediary role between discussions in France and those in the Low Countries by including the ideas of French debaters in their French and Dutch publications. Whereas spelling was thus an important issue in educational circles, loanwords were not. Schoolmasters responded to the language interests of their clientele by using eloquence rather than purity as a selling point for their teaching activities.

In the newly forming Calvinist communities, the confrontations between different dialects and vernacular languages that intensified because of large-scale refugee movements stimulated attention to the ability of language to foster or hinder internal cohesion. The safe haven in London, where Marnix oversaw the creation of a bilingual community, provides an example of this growing awareness. Within the Calvinist community, juggling its different languages, translation strategies were an important topic. The Calvinist psalm translations by Jan Utenhove, Petrus Datheen, and Marnix himself exposed and attempted to offer solutions to the religious consequences of language diversity. Language was thus used to foster internal unity, but also to attack outsiders: in his *Biënkorf* and *Tableav*, Marnix falsely accused Catholics of having a faulty attitude towards language, helping to create a distorted image of the clergy that would have long-lasting effects.

Printing houses were crucial nodes in the network of distribution on which the language debates depended. Plantin offered the public not only theoretical contributions to the discussions, but also tools that allowed them to take an active, inquisitive stance themselves, such as polyglot dictionaries that could be used for comparative studies of the lexicon. It is remarkable that, with the exception of Plantin, so little attention was paid in these environments

to orthographical uniformization, a topic with which this *lieu* has traditionally been connected by book historians and historians of language. It thus illustrates the deficiencies of the scholarly paradigm that disproportionately studies standardization. To sell their works, printers responded to the increasing competition with other languages instead.

Having passed from the classroom to the church and the corrector's room, the final visit to the chamber of rhetoric allowed this book to come full circle. In the chambers, individuals connected to the three previous *lieux* came together to practice rhetoric—people such as the schoolmasters Heyns, Van der Schuere, and Jan Boomgart, and the religious men Matthijs de Castelein and Jan van Mussem. They demonstrate how strongly all these environments were connected. As places where individuals with an interest in the liberal arts convened to practise the art of rhetoric in Dutch, it is not surprising that virtually all topics of the language debates were on the agenda. However, rhetoricians were not interested uniquely in Dutch. From their earliest onsets onwards, the chambers were marked by an open mindset towards other languages and literatures, particularly French.

Approaching the sixteenth-century literary culture of the Low Countries through the spatial parameters of *lieux* has proven to be a successful way to avoid the pitfalls imposed by modern national languages and borders. Nevertheless, it has its downsides; it forces other individuals to the margins. Even though the focus of this book is led by its four central *lieux*, it has therefore allowed space for short excursions to visit relevant individuals in the nearby surroundings. Without mentioning Tielman Susato and Johan Radermacher, for instance, this book on the sixteenth-century language debates would be incomplete.

An element that connects all four *lieux* is their geographical distribution. In each case, the balance of the geographical placement of the actors involved tilts towards the southern Low Countries, with Antwerp being the radiant centre of most language-related activity. While historians of Dutch language and literature have had a primarily hollandocentric focus on, for instance, the *Twe-spraack* and *Den Nederduytschen Helicon*, they neglected people such as Heyns. This focus on Holland and the so-called 'Renaissance' poets who allegedly arose around the time of publication of *De Eglentier's trivium* is not supported by the extant sources. Antwerp rhetorician Heyns and Amsterdam *Eglentier* member Spiegel personify, through their personal relationship, the continuity that existed between the southern and northern regions of what essentially constitutes the cultural heartland of the Low Countries. In this central area, all the ingredients were present to set the language debates in motion, most importantly an intense interplay between French and Dutch.

The observation that multilingualism and an open mindset towards other languages and cultures marked the ways in which the inhabitants of this region perceived their languages and community has consequences for modern considerations of Dutch and Flemish culture. It is impossible to approach either as monolingual entities at any point in time. These strongly related cultures have both been shaped by a willingness to learn other languages, to interact and compete with other cultures, and to build on their example. To extrapolate Spiegel's statement: he who only speaks Dutch, does not speak it well. Multilingualism was and is a cornerstone of Dutch and Flemish culture.

Samenvatting. De gulden middenweg der talen: Het smeden van het Nederlands en Frans in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden (1540-1620)

Zestiende-eeuws Europa was gefascineerd door taal. Zowel de intellectuele elite als de middenklasse reflecteerde op de geschiedenis en toekomst van de lokale volkstalen, de klassieke talen en exotische talen uit het westen en oosten. Ook in de Nederlanden nam men volop deel aan deze debatten. De zestiende eeuw zag de productie van de eerste grammatica's en spellingstraktaten van het Nederlands. Dit was echter niet de enige lokale taal waar men zich mee bezighield: een belangrijk deel van de Nederlanden was immers Franstalig. Dit boek onderzoekt in hoeverre en op welke manieren de meertalige situatie in de Nederlanden van invloed was op de debatten over de beide volkstalen in de literaire cultuur van de regio.

Om de hoofdvraag te beantwoorden hanteert deze studie een spatiale aanpak: de literaire taaldebatten gekoppeld aan vier centrale *lieux* zijn in kaart gebracht. *Lieux* worden, in navolging van de term *lieu de savoir*, gedefinieerd als omgevingen waar verschillende talen samenkwamen in de dagelijkse praktijk. Door te werken vanuit plaatsen en debatten wordt inzicht verkregen in de diversiteit aan visies op de volkstalen, evenals de plaatsgebondenheid van die debatten in bepaalde talige omgevingen.

De vier onderzochte *lieux*, aan elk waarvan een hoofdstuk is gewijd, zijn: Franse scholen, waar voornamelijk Nederlandssprekende kinderen Frans leerden, calvinistische gemeenten, drukkerijen en rederijderskamers, broederschappen waarbinnen men gezamenlijk de kunst van de retorica beoefende. Iedere *lieu* wordt benaderd via een representatieve kernfiguur die als startpunt dient voor het ontrafelen van de discussies in die specifieke omgeving. Literaire teksten, in de breedste zin van de term, uit deze *lieux* worden bestudeerd middels discoursanalyse om de bijdragen aan de debatten in hun talige, historische, en sociale context te plaatsen.

Om de analyses van de taaldebatten in de vier *lieux* het licht van de lokale en Europese taalsituatie te kunnen bezien opent het boek met twee inleidende hoofdstukken. In de eerste hiervan wordt de meertalige situatie in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden geschetst. Daarbij wordt een korte historische aanloop genomen om aan te tonen dat de regio reeds voor de zestiende eeuw te maken had met de Frans-Nederlandse taalgrens en met heersers die vaak een andere taal spraken dan de bevolking.

Daarna passeren de voornaamste domeinen van het publieke leven de revue, waarbij steeds de vraag wordt gesteld welke rol aan welke taal was toebedeeld. Voor elk van deze domeinen, van administratie, rechtspraak en het hof tot de kunsten, wetenschap, handel en

diplomatie, geldt dat het Nederlands, Frans en vaak ook Latijn naast elkaar bewogen. Hierbij vond het gebruik van het Frans en Latijn vaak een neerslag in het Nederlandse lexicon, waarin specialistisch jargon uit deze talen werd opgenomen. Hoewel individuen als Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert zich over deze ontwikkeling beklagden blijkt dat in de praktijk een werkbare balans was gevonden tussen algemeen begrijpelijke en specialistische, geleende taal. De leenwoordendiscussie verdient dus enige relativering.

In het hoofdstuk ‘Trending Topics’ wordt uitgezoomd van de Nederlanden op de taaldebatten zoals die in heel zestiende-eeuws Europa plaatsvonden. De belangrijkste thema’s, vraagstukken en argumenten worden belicht zodat in de hoofdstukken over de vier Nederlandse *lieux* connecties met debatten elders kunnen worden aangetoond. De centrale vraag van de discussies over taal was hoe om te gaan met de veelheid aan talen waarmee God de bouwers van de Toren van Babel had gestraft. De antwoorden liepen uiteen van het op individueel niveau leren van een veelheid aan talen tot het streven naar wijdverbreide eentaligheid. Deze laatste optie werd onder andere verdedigd door Johannes Goropius Becanus, die het Nederlands naar voren schoof als oudste en meest volmaakte taal ter wereld en daarmee als beste kandidaat om de nieuwe wereldtaal te worden.

Hoewel de aandacht voor de volkstalen groeide bleef het Latijn een dominante rol spelen. De terminologie en uitgangspunten van de klassieke grammatica en retorica werden aangewend om de aard en het functioneren van de volkstalen inzichtelijk te maken, waardoor de Latijnse taal een stempel drukte op reflecties op de volkstalen. Er werd verder bediscussieerd of en hoe klassieke teksten vertaald dienden te worden: ofwel letterlijk, woord voor woord, ofwel inhoudelijk, daarbij de betekenis centraal stellend.

Men deed pogingen om regels te formuleren voor de spelling en het lexicon. Orthografische kwesties waren met name in Frankrijk onderwerp van vurig debat. Voorstanders van traditionele spelling, die etymologische onuitgesproken letters behield, stonden tegenover vernieuwers, die onder leiding van Louis Meigret opriepen tot een vorm van spelling waarbij slechts de uitgesproken klanken weergegeven werden. Op het lexicon, en dan met name het al dan niet toelaten van leenwoorden uit andere talen, werd in heel Noordwest-Europa gereflecteerd. Debat, een kritische houding en nuance voerden hierbij de boventoon. Men maakte veelvuldig gebruik van de metafoor van ‘schuim’ om leenwoorden aan te duiden en het is zeer aannemelijk dat het Nederlands een centrale rol had in de verspreiding van dit beeld in Duitse en Engelse debatten.

In meer algemene zin was heel Europa gegrepen door de vroegmoderne fascinatie met taal, die zich niet alleen uitte in gedachtewisselingen over de beste vorm van individuele talen,

maar ook in het verzamelen en vergelijken van talen. Hun geschiedenis werd onderzocht, ze werden in families gegroepeerd en gerangschikt op grond van kwaliteit. Het Nederlands werd niet alleen genealogisch gekoppeld aan het Duits, maar ook aan het Engels en zelfs Perzisch. In deze vergelijkende studies en debatten speelden competitie en het in populariteit toenemende begrip *patria* een belangrijke rol. Dit zorgde er niet voor dat men zich afkeerde van andere talen dan de moedertaal. Integendeel, het stimuleerde juist aandacht voor andere talen en discussies elders, die gebruikt werden om de talige positie van het vaderland te versterken.

Na de twee context schetsende hoofdstukken opent het analytische deel van dit boek met het in kaart brengen van de taaldiscussies in de omgeving van de Franse scholen. In deze scholen konden zowel jongens als meisjes de Franse taal leren. Deze *lieu* wordt ontsloten via de Antwerpse Peeter Heyns, die aan het hoofd stond van een van de meest bekende meisjesscholen van zijn tijd en optrad als spil in het netwerk van zestiende-eeuwse schoolmeesters. Zij leunden allen zwaar op de vaderlandretoriek om hun talige diensten aan te prijzen. Heyns zelf werd gelauwerd als ‘soldaat’ omdat hij zijn vaderland steunde door kinderen de twee talen van de Nederlanden te onderwijzen. Typerend voor de taalfascinatie in deze periode is dat talenkennis, en zeker niet alleen van de moedertaal, gezien werd als bijdragend aan het algemeen belang.

Wat de beregeling van taal betreft blijkt dat schoolmeesters zich vooral hebben beziggehouden met spelling en nauwelijks met grammatica. Heyns is hierbij een uitzondering, omdat hij juist een Franse grammatica schreef en zich niet uitliet over orthografische discussies. Schoolmeesters uit de Nederlanden publiceerden zowel over Franse als over Nederlandse spelling, waarbij twee verschillende tendensen te ontwaren zijn.

Wat het Frans betreft liep de tot nu toe nauwelijks bestudeerde Peter Haschaert voorop. Haschaert en de schoolmeesters die na hem over het Frans schreven waren op de hoogte van de Franse debatten en volgden voornamelijk de traditionele, algemeen geaccepteerde spelling. Dit heeft waarschijnlijk te maken met de wensen van hun Nederlandse clientèle, die nauwelijks gebaat was bij een vernieuwende Franse spelling. Voor het Nederlands, daarentegen, werden juist wel allerlei innovaties voorgesteld, vaak voortbordurend op de discussies in Frankrijk. Daarbij speelde de dichter Pierre de Ronsard opvallend genoeg een grotere rol dan Louis Meigret. Over vernieuwingen van de Nederlandse spelling was men het echter niet eens: de schoolmeester Anthoni Smyters riep uiteindelijk zijn collega's op om alles bij het oude te laten, omdat in Frankrijk al was gebleken dat vernieuwing gedoemd was te mislukken.

Meesters en meesteressen van Franse scholen zijn in het recente verleden verbonden aan de toenemende opname van Franse leenwoorden in het Nederlands in de vroegmoderne

tijd. In de zestiende eeuw zelf werd aan deze vermeende intermediaire lexicale rol van schoolmeesters juist nauwelijks aandacht besteed. Heyns zelf stond te boek als schrijver van leenwoordvrije teksten maar maakte desondanks geen gebruik van deze reputatie, waar overigens ook kanttekeningen bij geplaatst dienen te worden. Het vermijden van leenwoorden werd zelden als promotiemiddel gebruikt. Beloftes van welbespraaktheid en eloquentie daarentegen, waren alomtegenwoordig in de pogingen van schoolmeesters om klanten aan te trekken. Hun pupillen zelf werden, via hun leermeesters en schoolboeken, van jongs af aan ingewijd in de centrale thema's van de taaldebatten zodat nieuwe generaties taaldenkers konden opstaan.

In hoofdstuk 5 staan de zich ontwikkelende calvinistische gemeenschappen van de Nederlanden centraal. Daar was een plan van aanpak nodig voor de omgang met het Latijn, de traditionele taal van het christendom, evenals met de overige klassieke talen waarin het Woord van God was overgeleverd. De verhouding tussen deze talen en de volkstalen diende te worden vastgelegd. Daarnaast werd de jonge calvinistische gemeente van de Nederlanden geconfronteerd met haar eigen gespleten volkstalige karakter en het feit dat het calvinisme vanuit haar bolwerk in Genève grotendeels via het Frans en Latijn werd verspreid. In deze geloofsgemeenschap op zoek naar een talige balans was een belangrijke rol weggelegd voor Filips van Marnix, heer van Sint-Aldegonde. Deze polyglot-diplomaat werkte zich op tot rechterhand van Willem van Oranje en zette zijn kennis van taal in om zowel de Nederlandse Opstand als de calvinistische kwestie te dienen.

Dit laatste deed hij enerzijds door het vervaardigen van een Nederlandse psalmvertaling en anderzijds door het schrijven van propagandateksten. Marnix' psalter baseerde zich op de vertaalstrategieën van twee geloofsgenoten die hem waren voorgedaan: Jan Utenhove en Petrus Datheen. Van Utenhove nam Marnix de zorgvuldige omgang met het Nederlands over die ervoor moest zorgen dat alle sprekers van het Nederlands, ongeacht dialect, de tekst konden begrijpen. Het psalter van Datheen, dat Marnix aanviel om de gebrekkige omgang met de Hebreeuwse brontekst, volgde hij in zoverre dat beide vertalers zich baseerden op het Geneefse psalter dat in Franstalige calvinistische kringen werd gebruikt. Marnix vervaardigde taalbewust een tekst die zowel de Nederlands- als Franssprekende calvinisten kon verenigen.

Met zijn psalmvertaling trachtte Marnix cohesie binnen de calvinistische gemeenschap te bevorderen. Met zijn propagandateksten verdedigde hij het bestaansrecht van die gemeenschap door de Kerk van Rome aan te vallen. Marnix' satirische *Biënkorf* en diens Franstalige tegenhanger, het *Tableav des differens de la religion*, tonen hoe Marnix taal en de taaldebatten gebruikte om de katholieke tegenpartij aan te vallen. Beide teksten parodiëren een

anti-protestants pamflet van de jezuïet Gentian Hervet en vergroten diens argumenten uit tot belachelijke proporties zodat hun geloofwaardigheid afbrokkelt.

Hierbij nemen de *Biënkorf* en *Tableav* ook katholiek taalgebruik op de hak door een mengvorm van respectievelijk Nederlands, Frans en Latijn, en Frans, Italiaans en Latijn in te zetten. Marnix, zelf een tegenstander van taalvermenging en leenwoorden, neemt hiermee positie in binnen de leenwoordkwesties betreffende het Nederlands, waar Frans en Latijn de belangrijkste bron van leenwoorden waren, en Frans, waarin juist het Italiaans en Latijn centraal stonden. Het onzuivere taalgebruik dat hij aan katholieken toeschrijft verwordt tot een weerspiegeling van hun vermeende onzuivere religieuze moraal.

Marnix verwijt de clerus een gebrek aan kennis van de heilige talen van het christendom, waarbij hij suggereert dat de Kerk de volkstalen afwees om zelf de regie over de interpretatie van de christelijke kernteksten te kunnen behouden. Een blik op Hervets talige activiteiten maakt duidelijk dat Marnix' aanval onterecht was. Hij droeg hiermee bij aan de creatie van het zogenaamde protestantse paradigma, de valse suggestie dat de Kerk van Rome de volkstalen afwees. Marnix toont aan hoe de taaldebatten het intellectuele milieu overstegen en ingezet werden om religieuze en politieke doeleinden te verwezenlijken.

De derde *lieu* die wordt geanalyseerd is de drukkerij. De hoge mate waarin mensen en handelswaar uit dit milieu door heel Europa circuleerden wordt belichaamd door de Fransman Christoffel Plantijn die in Antwerpen zijn beroemde *Gulden Passer* opende. Plantijn laat verder het samenspel en de balans zien tussen de intellectuele agenda's van drukkers en hun wens om boeken aan te prijzen middels de taaldebatten. Een duidelijke talige verkoopstrategie was het inspelen op gevoelens van vaderlandsliefde en competitie met andere talen dan de moedertaal. Zelfs toen het drukken van geleerde en literaire teksten in de volkstaal allang geen bijzonderheid meer was prezen drukkers hun Nederlandstalige waar nog steeds aan als revolutionair. Het onderwerp leenwoorden werd op een minder rechtlijnige manier ingezet: Plantijn lijkt beloftes van leenwoordvrije teksten te hebben gebruikt voor marketingdoeleinden, terwijl zijn voorganger Jan Gymnick leenwoorden juist aanprees.

Hoewel de drukpers bekend staat als een bron van standaardisatie op het gebied van spelling laat een overzicht van uitlatingen over dit onderwerp door drukkers zelf zien dat er juist weinig aandacht voor was in de werkplaats. Plantijn vormt hierop een uitzondering: hij zette zich actief in voor de progressieve Franse spelling die door Meigret en met name Ronsard werd verdedigd. Drukkers zoals Plantijn traden op als bemiddelaars tussen taaldebatten elders en die in hun eigen omgeving.

Plantijn's orthografische regels bleven na zijn dood in gebruik in de Nederlanden en beïnvloedden een eeuw later de Franse spelling in Frankrijk. Dit is een exemplarisch geval van uitwisseling over landsgrenzen heen. Hoewel Plantijn een sterke mening had over Franse spelling deed hij geen aanpassingen aan de algemeen gebruikte spellingswijzen van het Nederlands. Zijn casus bewijst dat de taaldebaters vanwege hun nuance en de diversiteit en veranderlijkheid van hun zienswijzen niet in zwart-wit termen kunnen worden benaderd.

Door bijdragen aan de taaldebatten in druk te distribueren speelden drukkers in op de groeiende taalfascinatie. Plantijn en zijn corrector Cornelis Kiliaan voorzagen op een nog hoger niveau in de behoefte aan teksten over taal. Zij nodigden hun lezers uit om een actieve houding aan te nemen bij het bestuderen van woordenlijsten. Aan de hand van hun woordenboeken en andere talige verzamelingen stimuleerden ze de creatie van een geleerde—maar niet per se academische—gemeenschap die zelf reflecteerde op de hoofdvragen van de taaldebatten.

Het laatste analytische hoofdstuk richt zich op de veelzijdige *lieu* van de rederijkerskamer, waar voornamelijk mannen met diverse professionele achtergronden samenkwamen om de kunst van de retorica in brede zin te beoefenen in de volkstaal. Om de hechte relaties tussen de rederijkerskamers en andere *lieux* van taalreflectie te benadrukken staat de schoolmeester-rederijker Peeter Heyns opnieuw centraal in dit hoofdstuk. Het blijkt onterecht te zijn om de rederijkerskamers te benaderen als een eentalig fenomeen. Er was een bewustzijn in dit milieu dat een brede talenkennis de moedertaal ten goede kon komen. Er werd verwezen naar precedenten elders en gebruikgemaakt van argumenten die in eerste instantie voor andere talen waren geformuleerd, om de positie van het Nederlands te verdedigen.

Rederijkers schreven niet alleen in de volkstaal, ze bestudeerden haar ook. Denkers als Matthijs de Castelein pasten de terminologie van de klassieke, Latijnse retorica aan om daarmee de volkstalen te kunnen beschrijven. In sommige gevallen rapporteerden rederijkers over hun observaties in theoretische traktaten, zoals de *Twe-spraack* (1584). Dit is de eerste gedrukte grammatica van het Nederlands, verschenen bij Plantijn en geschreven door leden van de Amsterdamse kamer *De Eglentier*. In andere gevallen vond studie plaats via de beoefening van de poëzie. Door de dichterlijke taal te buigen en te vervormen zochten rederijkers de grenzen van de Nederlandse taal op. Dichten kon zo als een vorm van taalobservatie en studie dienen.

De *Twe-spraack* leek, tot nu, een uitzondering als rederijkerstekst waarin wordt gereflecteerd op de beregeling van de spelling van het Nederlands, en waarin het gebruik van leenwoorden wordt afgewezen. Rederijkers staan immers te boek als gebruikers van archaïsche en gemengde taal. Reeds lang voor de publicatie van deze grammatica, echter, werd er in kamercontext gereflecteerd op beide onderwerpen. Rederijkers hechtten traditioneel waarde

aan een verzorgde spelling. De *Twe-spraack* is slechts vernieuwend in het daadwerkelijk vastleggen van bepaalde regels.

De Eglentier had evenmin een primeur wat het bekritisieren van leenwoorden betreft. De Castelein en anderen reflecteerden decennia eerder al op de gevaren van taalvermenging en geschikte manieren om deze vorm van taalverrijking toe te passen. Dit zou men ook in *De Eglentier* blijven doen: de publicatie van de *Twe-spraack* betekende niet het einde van de leenwoordendiscussie binnen de kamer, die uiteindelijk zelfs een van de aanleidingen voor een interne breuk zou zijn. De Amsterdamse kamer plaatste zich met haar grammatica niet radicaal buiten de rederijkerstraditie, maar er middenin.

Zowel wat de Nederlandse taal zelf als wat haar poëtica betreft zijn rederijkers onterecht bestempeld als conservatief. Ze worden nog altijd tegenover zogenaamde ‘Renaissance-dichters’ geplaatst, die wel vooruitstrevend zouden zijn door het gebruik van het Franse in plaats van het ouderwets geachte Nederlandse metrum. De Franse versstijl wordt gekenmerkt door isosyllabisme, dat wil zeggen verzen met elk een gelijk aantal lettergrepen. Het Nederlandse vers daarentegen telt het aantal heffingen, beklemtoonde syllaben.

Heyns, die als een van de eersten experimenteerde met isosyllabisme in zijn Nederlandse dichtwerk, koos uiteindelijk toch voor het Nederlandse heffingsvers. Zijn casus illustreert hoe een keuze die vanuit hedendaags perspectief een stap terug lijkt, in de tijd zelf gezien innovatief kon zijn. Heyns reflecteerde, net als eerder De Castelein en later Marnix, op de verschillende klankstructuren van het Nederlands en Frans en kwam op die wijze tot zijn weloverwogen besluit. Heyns was in zijn keuze niet minder taalbewust of progressief dan dichters die wel voor isosyllabisme opteerden.

In alle vier de *lieux* kwam een veelheid en diversiteit aan deelnemers aan de discussies over taal naar voren. Taalreflectie was niet uitsluitend gebonden aan academische milieus, er vond juist uitwisseling plaats tussen volkstalige en Latijnstalige bijdragen aan de debatten. De deelnemers aan de discussies waren even divers als de meningen die zij verdedigden. In deze debatten is geen eenduidige lijn in de richting van een gestandaardiseerde taal of een eentalige natie te ontdekken. Diversiteit werd lang niet altijd negatief gezien en velen zagen het nut van bijvoorbeeld spellingsregels niet in. Ook over onderwerpen als leenwoorden was geen consensus. Een dergelijke consensus zou, net als een volledig eentalige samenleving, nooit bereikt worden.

De centrale hypothese dat de taaldiscussies in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden werden gekenmerkt door de meertalige context in de regio en de directe omgeving waarin men werkzaam was is bevestigd. De taaldebaters spraken zelf in vrijwel alle gevallen meerdere talen,

en de teksten waarmee zij deelnamen aan de discussies hadden steeds een meertalige achtergrond. Naast het Nederlands werd ook het Frans bediscussieerd, buiten de grenzen van vroegmodern Frankrijk. De taaldebatten in de Nederlanden stonden in voortdurende wisselwerking en continuïteit met debatten elders. Een openheid en interesse in andere talen en discussies daarover stonden ten dienste van verdedigingen van het Nederlands en Frans in de Lage Landen. Om deze taaldiscussies, maar ook de literaire cultuur van de Nederlanden in het algemeen, te kunnen vatten is een meertalige aanpak een absolute vereiste. Meertaligheid was en is onlosmakelijk verbonden met de cultuur van de Lage Landen.

Résumé. Le juste milieu des langues : la construction du néerlandais et du français aux Pays-Bas au seuil de la modernité (1540-1620)

L'Europe du seizième siècle était fascinée par les langues. Les élites intellectuelles aussi bien que les classes moyennes réfléchissaient sur l'histoire et l'avenir des langues vernaculaires locales, les langues classiques et les langues exotiques d'Occident et d'Orient. Les Pays-Bas participaient également à ces débats. Le seizième siècle a vu la production des premières grammaires et traités d'orthographe du néerlandais. Celui-ci n'était pas la seule langue locale qui intéressait la population de cette région, cependant : une grande partie des Pays-Bas était francophone. Ce livre étudie jusqu'à quel degré et comment la situation multilingue des Pays-Bas a influencé les débats littéraires concernant les deux langues vulgaires de cette région.

Afin de pouvoir répondre à cette question centrale, cette étude adopte une approche spatiale : elle retrace les débats littéraires à l'intérieur de quatre *lieux* centraux. En relation avec la notion de *lieu de savoir*, la notion de *lieu* est ici définie comme un environnement où plusieurs langues se rencontrent dans les pratiques quotidiennes. En se concentrant sur des *lieux* et sur des débats, cette étude mettra en lumière la diversité des points de vue qui existaient sur les langues vernaculaires et sur les liens entre ces débats et des environnements linguistiques particuliers.

Les quatre *lieux* qui ont été étudiés, chacun dans un chapitre spécifique, sont les écoles françaises où des enfants majoritairement néerlandophones apprenaient le français, les communautés calvinistes, les imprimeries et les chambres de rhétorique, des fraternités à l'intérieur desquelles les membres pratiquaient l'art de rhétorique. Chaque *lieu* est abordé à travers un individu représentatif, qui fournit un point de départ pour l'étude des discussions dans cet environnement spécifique. À l'aide de l'analyse du discours, des textes littéraires dans le sens large du terme sont examinés afin de contextualiser les contributions aux débats de ces individus sur le plan linguistique, historique et social.

L'étude commence par deux chapitres qui ont pour objectif de situer les débats sur la langue dans les quatre *lieux* centraux choisis et de préciser le contexte de la situation linguistique locale dans l'espace européen. Le premier donne un aperçu de la situation multilingue des Pays-Bas au seizième siècle. Il retrace les origines de cette spécificité afin de montrer que, bien avant le seizième siècle, la région a été caractérisée par la présence de la zone de contact linguistique franco-néerlandaise et par celle d'élites qui ne parlaient pas la langue du peuple.

Ce premier chapitre propose un panorama des principaux domaines de la vie publique dans cette région, en précisant les rôles spécifiques qu'y jouaient les différentes langues. De l'administration au monde juridique, de la cour aux milieux artistiques et scientifiques, des commerçants aux diplomates, le néerlandais, le français et le latin coexistaient. L'usage du français et du latin avait souvent des répercussions sur le lexique néerlandais, qui adoptait leur vocabulaire spécialisé. Bien que des individus comme Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert se soient plaints de ces développements, il s'avère que, dans la pratique, un équilibre fonctionnel s'était établi entre un vocabulaire commun d'un côté et des idiolectes fondés sur l'emprunt de l'autre. Le phénomène de l'emprunt lexical mérite donc d'être mis dans une perspective plus large.

C'est la raison pour laquelle le deuxième chapitre tourne son attention vers les débats concernant les langues dans l'espace européen de cette époque. Il en rappelle les thèmes, questions et arguments principaux, ce qui permet de mettre en relation les quatre *lieux* étudiés aux Pays-Bas et les discussions qui étaient menées ailleurs. La question centrale des discussions linguistiques était de savoir comment la race humaine pouvait affronter la diversité des langues que Dieu avait instaurée pour punir les constructeurs de la Tour de Babel. Les réponses variaient de l'apprentissage individuel d'une multiplicité de langues à la poursuite d'un monolinguisme universel. Cette dernière possibilité a été proposée, entre autres, par Johannes Goropius Becanus, qui a soutenu que le néerlandais était la langue la plus ancienne et la plus parfaite du monde, ce qui la rendait la meilleure candidate pour devenir la nouvelle langue universelle.

Mais si l'attention pour les langues vernaculaires n'a pas cessé de s'affirmer à cette période, le latin continuait à jouer un rôle dominant. La terminologie et les axiomes fondamentaux de la grammaire et de la rhétorique classique étaient utilisés pour la description et l'étude des langues vulgaires, laissant une marque latine sur les réflexions sur les vernaculaires. Une autre question en débat était de savoir si et comment les textes classiques devaient être traduits : littéralement, mot pour mot, ou sens pour sens, en mettant l'accent sur le contenu.

Ces études liminaires rappellent enfin que le seizième siècle a vu plusieurs tentatives d'établir des règles d'orthographe et de lexique. En France particulièrement, l'orthographe était vivement discutée. Les défenseurs des graphies communes et du maintien des lettres étymologiques quiescentes s'opposaient à un groupe d'innovateurs dirigé entre autres par Louis Meigret, qui proposait une orthographe phonétique. Partout en Europe occidentale, on réfléchissait aussi sur le lexique, notamment sur l'adoption ou non de mots empruntés à d'autres langues. Le débat et les attitudes critiques nuancées dominaient partout. Une métaphore spécifique qui circulait à travers l'Europe et qui était utilisée fréquemment pour indiquer les

mots d'emprunt était celle d'« écume » ou « schuim » en néerlandais. Il est très probable que les débats néerlandais ont occupé une place centrale dans la diffusion de cette notion dans les débats allemands et anglais.

De façon générale, aux débuts de l'ère moderne, toute l'Europe était fascinée par la question du langage. Cette fascination s'exprimait non seulement dans les échanges sur l'amélioration de chaque langue, mais aussi dans les comparaisons des différentes langues. On étudiait leurs histoires, les catégorisait en familles et les rangeait hiérarchiquement selon leurs qualités respectives. Généalogiquement, le néerlandais était ainsi mis en rapport avec l'allemand, mais aussi avec l'anglais et même avec la langue persane. La compétition interrégionale et la notion de « patrie », dont la popularité était croissante à cette époque, étaient fondamentales pour ces études comparatives. Elles n'incitaient pas néanmoins au rejet d'autres langues. Par contre, elles stimulaient l'attention pour ces langues et pour les discussions menées ailleurs, qui étaient utilisées pour affirmer la position linguistique de la patrie.

Cette contextualisation d'ensemble précède la partie analytique de l'ouvrage, consacrée aux quatre *lieux de savoir* où ont été discutées les pratiques linguistiques des Pays-Bas. Le premier, étudié dans le chapitre 3, est le milieu des écoles françaises, destinées à des garçons aussi bien qu'à des filles. Ce *lieu* est abordé à travers le cas de l'Anversois Peeter Heyns, à la tête d'une des écoles de filles les plus renommées de son époque et figure centrale des réseaux éducatifs au seizième siècle. Il est d'abord montré que les enseignants qui participaient à ces réseaux faisaient référence à la « patrie » afin de valoriser leurs travaux linguistiques. Heyns, par exemple, a été loué comme « soldat » pour avoir soutenu son pays grâce à son enseignement des deux langues des Pays-Bas. Il est caractéristique de la fascination linguistique à période que la connaissance de plusieurs langues, et pas uniquement de la langue maternelle, ait été considérée comme une contribution au bien commun.

Néanmoins, en ce qui concerne la régularisation de la langue, il s'avère que les maîtres d'écoles se sont surtout préoccupés de l'orthographe, et plus rarement de la grammaire. Heyns constitue une exception à cet égard, ayant écrit une grammaire française sans trancher sur l'orthographe. Les enseignants des Pays-Bas ont publié des textes et des traités sur l'orthographe française aussi bien que néerlandaise, mais leur traitement des deux langues a différencié considérablement.

Peter Haschaert, une figure peu étudiée jusqu'ici, a été un précurseur important en ce qui concerne le français. Haschaert et les maîtres d'école plus tardifs ayant écrit sur l'orthographe française étaient au courant des débats menés dans le royaume mais suivaient pour la plupart l'orthographe traditionnelle. Ce choix est sans doute lié aux souhaits de leur

clientèle néerlandaise, qui n'aurait guère bénéficié d'une orthographe française rénovée. Pour le néerlandais au contraire, ils ont proposé toutes sortes de changements, souvent inspirés des débats en France. Finalement, il n'y eut pas de consensus sur le renouvellement de l'orthographe néerlandaise : le maître d'école Anthoni Smyters finit par appeler ses collègues à conserver les formes anciennes, puisque l'exemple français avait déjà montré que l'innovation était vouée à l'échec.

Les historiens ont souvent insisté sur le rôle des maîtres et des maîtresses des écoles françaises aux Pays-Bas dans l'adoption croissante en néerlandais de mots empruntés au français au seuil de l'époque moderne. Toutefois, les sources écrites du seizième siècle contiennent très peu de références à cette médiation supposée des enseignants. Heyns lui-même était connu pour son style dans lequel les mots d'emprunt étaient rares, mais il ne s'est guère servi de cette réputation, qui, d'ailleurs, mérite d'être relativisée. De façon générale, les maîtres d'école ne promettaient que très rarement une langue dépourvue d'emprunts pour promouvoir leurs livres scolaires. Les promesses d'éloquence au contraire étaient omniprésentes dans les efforts des enseignants pour attirer des élèves. Ils initiaient leurs disciples dès le plus jeune âge aux discussions linguistiques, formant de nouvelles générations d'intellectuels intéressés par l'usage des langues.

Un deuxième *lieu de savoir*, examiné dans le cinquième chapitre de la thèse, met en lumière les communautés calvinistes néerlandaises alors en développement. Ces communautés ont eu besoin de penser les manières dont devait être traité le latin, la langue traditionnelle du christianisme, et les autres langues antiques transmettant la Parole de Dieu. Il fallait donc redéfinir la relation entre ces langues sacrées et les langues vernaculaires. De plus, la congrégation calviniste des Pays-Bas a été confrontée à la multiplicité des langues vulgaires utilisées dans le pays ainsi qu'au fait que le calvinisme s'était répandu essentiellement en français et en latin à partir de sa capitale, Genève. Au sein de cette communauté religieuse à la recherche de son identité linguistique, Philippe de Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde a joué un rôle primordial. Ce diplomate polyglotte, bras droit de Guillaume d'Orange, a mis ses connaissances linguistiques au service de la Révolte des Pays-Bas autant qu'à celui de la cause calviniste.

Pour soutenir cette dernière, Marnix a produit une traduction néerlandaise des psaumes et plusieurs textes de propagande. Le psautier de Marnix se fonde sur les stratégies de traduction de deux coreligionnaires qui l'ont précédé, Jan Utenhove et Petrus Datheen. Marnix a suivi les psaumes d'Utenhove dans leur utilisation d'un néerlandais uniformisé, censé être compréhensible pour tous ses locuteurs malgré leur dialecte particulier. Il a aussi suivi le psautier de Datheen, tout en le critiquant pour son manque de respect envers la source

hébraïque, en se fondant, comme lui, sur le psautier français utilisé dans les cercles calvinistes francophones. Marnix, toujours attentif aux questions de langue, a ainsi produit un texte qui pourrait unifier les calvinistes de langue néerlandaise et française.

Marnix a également tenté de renforcer la cohésion de la communauté calviniste en attaquant l'Église de Rome. Le *Biënkorf* et son homologue français, le *Tableav des differens de la religion*, montrent la manière dont Marnix utilisait les débats linguistiques contemporains pour renforcer ses assauts contre le catholicisme. Chacun des deux textes parodie un pamphlet antiprotestant du Jésuite Gentian Hervet, amplifiant ses arguments jusqu'à des proportions ridicules et détruisant sa crédibilité.

Le *Biënkorf* et le *Tableav* traitent également le langage catholique de façon satirique en mélangeant, pour le premier, le néerlandais, le français et le latin, pour le second le français, l'italien et le latin. Par le biais de ces textes, Marnix, s'opposant fortement à la fusion de plusieurs langues, prend position dans les débats néerlandais sur les emprunts lexicaux au français et au latin, mais aussi dans les débats français sur l'emprunt à l'italien et au latin. Le langage impur attribué par Marnix aux Catholiques se fait alors le miroir de leur immoralité supposée.

Marnix reproche enfin au clergé son manque de connaissances des langues sacrées du christianisme, suggérant que l'Église a rejeté les vernaculaires afin de sauvegarder sa domination sur l'interprétation des textes fondateurs. Si l'on regarde de plus près les activités linguistiques de Gentian Hervet cependant, il apparaît que les dénonciations de Marnix n'étaient pas justifiées et que ce dernier a ainsi sciemment contribué à la construction de l'idéologie linguistique protestante, c'est-à-dire à la supposition erronée d'un rejet des langues vulgaires par l'Église de Rome. Le cas de Marnix montre que les débats sur les langues ont transcendé l'érudition et ont été revêtus d'enjeux religieux et politiques majeurs.

Le troisième lieu analysé est celui de l'imprimerie. Dans ce chapitre, le cas du Français Christophe Plantin, fondateur du fameux *Compas d'Or* à Anvers, permet de démontrer le degré élevé de circulation interrégionale des personnes et des marchandises qu'ont favorisé les mondes professionnels du livre. En outre, Plantin illustre l'interaction entre les objectifs intellectuels des imprimeurs et leurs efforts commerciaux, ainsi que les relations entre ces deux buts et les débats contemporains sur les langues. Les imprimeurs ont souvent développé des stratégies commerciales répondant à des sentiments de patriotisme et à une volonté de compétition envers d'autres langues que la langue maternelle. Même à l'époque où la publication d'un texte savant dans une langue vulgaire n'était plus une exception, beaucoup d'entre eux continuaient à présenter ces publications comme étant révolutionnaires. La question

des mots d'emprunt a aussi été mobilisée par ce milieu mais de façon moins cohérente : Plantin semble avoir décrit ses textes comme étant exempts de mots d'emprunt à des fins de commercialisation, tandis que son prédécesseur Jan Gymnick louait justement le lexique emprunté à d'autres langues.

Bien que l'imprimerie soit aujourd'hui considérée comme une source de standardisation orthographique, l'analyse des paratextes écrits par les imprimeurs des Pays-Bas eux-mêmes montre qu'ils portaient en fait peu d'attention à ce sujet. Plantin constitue l'exception qui confirme la règle : il se présentait comme un défenseur ardent de l'orthographe française progressive. Plantin et ses collègues agissaient dans de tels cas comme des médiateurs mettant en rapport les débats linguistiques menés ailleurs et leur propre environnement. Mais cette médiation n'est pas à sens unique.

Les règles d'orthographe du français soutenues et appliquées par Plantin ont continué à être utilisées aux Pays-Bas, influençant à leur tour un siècle plus tard l'orthographe française en France. Il s'agit d'un cas exemplaire d'échange international. Or, quoique Plantin se soit positionné de façon très forte sur l'orthographe du français, il n'a pas modifié l'orthographe courante du néerlandais. Son cas démontre que les individus engagés dans les discussions linguistiques échappent aux catégorisations à cause de la nature diverse et changeante de leurs opinions.

Les imprimeurs de la première modernité ont répondu à la fascination des langues croissante de leur époque par publication de contributions explicites aux débats en cours. Plantin et son correcteur Cornelis Kiliaan ont anticipé la demande d'un autre type de textes et ont invité leurs lecteurs à adopter une attitude active grâce à des listes de mots multilingues. À l'aide de leurs dictionnaires et autres collections linguistiques, ils ont stimulé le développement d'une communauté savante – mais pas nécessairement académique – qui a contribué à développer la réflexion proprement linguistique.

Un dernier chapitre analytique se concentre sur le *lieu* particulièrement dynamique qu'a été la chambre de rhétorique, dans laquelle des hommes de professions diverses se réunissaient pour pratiquer les arts de l'éloquence. Mettant l'accent sur l'existence de relations étroites entre les chambres de rhétorique et les autres *lieux* de la réflexion linguistique, l'étude donne à nouveau une place centrale au cas exemplaire de l'enseignant-rhétoricien Peeter Heyns. Il en ressort qu'il est injustifié d'approcher les chambres de rhétorique comme un milieu monolingue. Leurs participants étaient conscients qu'une connaissance linguistique élargie pouvait bénéficier à la pratique de la langue maternelle. Pour défendre la position du

néerlandais, les rhétoriciens se sont fondés sur des arguments formulés ailleurs en faveur d'autres langues.

Les rhétoriciens n'écrivaient pas seulement la langue vulgaire, ils l'étudiaient également. Des savants comme Matthijs de Castelein ont adopté la terminologie de la rhétorique latine classique afin de décrire les langues vernaculaires. Dans de rares cas, ces observations linguistiques ont donné lieu à la publication de traités théoriques, comme le *Twe-spraak* (1584). Il s'agit de la première grammaire imprimée du néerlandais, parue chez Plantin et écrite par des membres de la chambre de rhétorique amstellodamoise *De Eglantier*. La plupart du temps, les expérimentations des rhétoriciens prenaient une forme poétique. En pliant et en modifiant la langue de la poésie, ces rhétoriciens ont exploré la richesse et les difficultés de la langue néerlandaise.

Jusqu'ici, le *Twe-spraak* semblait être une exception, étant un texte de rhétoricien réfléchissant sur la réglementation du néerlandais et rejetant l'usage des mots d'emprunt. Les rhétoriciens sont en effet connus pour leur langage archaïque et hybride, riche de nombreux mots étrangers. Toutefois, il est apparu que bien avant la publication de cette première grammaire, on discutait des règles du néerlandais et de l'emprunt au sein des chambres, les rhétoriciens attachant traditionnellement beaucoup d'importance à une orthographe soignée. L'analyse a permis de montrer que le *Twe-spraak* était innovant surtout parce qu'il a fixé certaines règles.

De Eglantier n'est pas non plus la première chambre à avoir critiqué les mots d'emprunt. Des décennies plus tôt, De Castelein et d'autres ont réfléchi sur les dangers du mélange linguistique et sur les façons appropriées de mettre en œuvre cette forme d'enrichissement lexicale. Ces réflexions ont continué à exister à l'intérieur de *De Eglantier* et la publication du *Twe-spraak* n'a pas marqué la fin de la discussion à ce sujet. Ce débat a même fini par être l'une des causes de dissensions internes à la chambre. Avec sa grammaire, la chambre d'Amsterdam ne se plaçait donc pas en dehors de la tradition des rhétoriciens : elle y participait.

Dans beaucoup d'études modernes, les rhétoriciens, jugés conservateurs dans leurs usages linguistiques et leurs pratiques poétiques, servent encore de contrepoints aux poètes dits « renaissants », supposés progressistes. Ces derniers ont en effet préféré la métrique française à une métrique néerlandaise considérée comme désuète : le style français est caractérisé par l'isosyllabisme, chaque vers comptant le même nombre de syllabes, alors que le vers néerlandais est rythmé par un certain nombre de syllabes toniques et accentuées. Or Heyns, l'un des premiers à avoir expérimenté la forme isosyllabique dans la poésie néerlandaise, a aussi pratiqué le vers tonique néerlandais. Ce choix était bien innovant à l'époque, même s'il semble

être rétrospectivement un pas en arrière. Mais comme De Castelein et comme Marnix plus tard, Heyns réfléchissait aux structures sonores différentes du néerlandais et du français. Son choix montre qu'il n'était ni moins conscient de la langue ni moins progressiste que les poètes qui ont opté pour le vers isosyllabique.

Dans chacun des quatre *lieux* étudiés, une grande diversité de personnes a ainsi participé aux discussions sur la langue. La réflexion linguistique n'a pas été réservée exclusivement aux milieux académiques ; bien au contraire, ont eu lieu d'importants échanges entre ces divers réseaux. Les opinions défendues ayant été presque aussi nombreuses que les participants aux débats, ce foisonnement de discussions ne révèle pas un mouvement clair dans la direction d'une langue standardisée ni ne démontre l'émergence d'une communauté monolingue, comme on l'a parfois pensé. On ne se prononçait pas nécessairement de façon négative sur la diversité linguistique, et l'utilité d'une orthographe normée était loin de faire l'unanimité. Il n'y avait pas de consensus non plus au sujet de l'emprunt lexical. Un tel consensus, tout comme l'idéal d'une langue universelle, ne sera d'ailleurs jamais atteint.

L'hypothèse centrale de cette étude, selon laquelle les débats sur les langues dans les Pays-Bas du seizième siècle ont été modelés par la situation multilingue propre à cette région et par la polyglossie régulière des locuteurs, a donc été confirmée. Les acteurs des débats linguistiques parlaient eux-mêmes presque toujours plusieurs langues, et leurs textes avaient souvent des origines multiples. Cela explique qu'on n'a pas discuté seulement du néerlandais aux Pays-Bas mais aussi du français et que les réseaux de débatteurs étaient en interaction continue dans de nombreuses régions européennes. Certes, cette attitude ouverte était au service de la défense des deux vernaculaires des Pays-Bas, le néerlandais et le français. Une approche globale de la diversité linguistique s'est donc révélée essentielle afin d'être en mesure de comprendre ces réflexions sur la mise en pratique d'un juste milieu et pour remettre plus généralement en perspective l'histoire culturelle d'une région caractérisée jusqu'à nos jours par le multilinguisme.

Appendix

Book	Spelling [χ] at the beginning of a word	Spelling [a]	Spelling [k] at the end of a word	Differentiation 'u' and 'v'?	Differentiation 'i' and 'j'?
G. Ruscelli. <i>Die secreten [...] Inhoudende seer excellente ende wel gheapprobeerde remedien, teghen veelderhande crancheden, wonden, ende andere accidenten: Met die maniere van te distilleren, perfumeren, confituren maken, te verwen, coleuren, ende gieten. VVt den Françoysse ouergheset.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1558.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
C. de Guise. <i>Die oratie vanden doorluchtichsten ende eervveerdichsten Heere mijn Heere die Cardinael van Lorreyne. Ghedaen inde vergaderinghe van Poyssi daer die Coninck teghenwoordich was op den seshiensten dach van September, int iaer M. CCCCC. Ende LXI.</i> [Antwerp]: Christophe Plantin, 1562.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
C. Estienne. <i>De Landtvinninge ende Hoeue.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1566.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
G. Della Porta. <i>Magia, oft de vvonderlicke vvercken der naturen: Bescreuen in vier Boecken.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1566.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Ordinancie, edict, ende gebot ons s-Heeren des Coninx, op tstück vande criminele Iusticie in dese zyne Nederlanden.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1570.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Ordinancie, statvyt ende policie gemaect by den Coninck onsen aldergenadichsten Heere, op tfeyt vande contracten vande assurencien ende versekeringen in dese Nederlanden.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1570.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Placcaet ende ordinancie Onssheeren des Coninx aengaende die collectactie ende opheue vanden tvvintichsten penninck opde vercoopinge vande onruerende goeden.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1571.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
J. F. Lumnius. <i>Van dleven der christeliicker maechden, vier Dialogi, dat is tsamenspreekinghen van tvvee personen [...]. Noch een boecxken vanden H. Doctoer Ambrosius Bisschop tot Melanen, ghescreuen aen een maget die tot val ghecomen was, door den seluen nu eerst in duytsch ouerghesedt.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1571.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Het Nievve Testament ons heeren Iesv Christi. Met ghetalen aen de canten ghestelt, vvaer doer de veersen bescheeden vvorden, tot de aenvvijsinghe der Heyligher Schrifturen dienende.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1571.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Ordinancie ende edict onssheeren des Coninx op t'stuck van creatie van renten in graene, ende diergelijcke contracten.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1572.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Placcaet, ende ordinancie Onsheeren des Coninx, aengaende die collectatie ende opheue van den XXen penninck opde vercoopinge vande onruerende goeden.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1572.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no

<i>Placcaet ende ordinantie onssheeren des Conincx, aengaende t' vernieuwen vanden Datum des iaers, t'welckmen voirtaen altijts doen sal op den eersten dach van Januario.</i> Antwerpen, Christophe Plantin, 1575.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>John of Austria. Eeuwich Edict ende gebodt opt accord gedaen, tusschen Heeren Johan van Oostenrijck, ridder vander Orden vanden gulden Vlyese, in naem ende van wegen des Catholijcxschen Conincx van Spaengnyen, etc. ter eenre, Ende de generale Staten van dese Landen van herwertsouere ter andere zijden, Om die troublen inde selue Landen byde vuytheemsche crijchsluyden gesusciteert neder te leggen ende appeyseren.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1577.	g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>A. Ortelius. Spieghel der werelt, ghestelt in ryme door M. Peeter Heyns.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1577.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Het nievvve testament ons heeren Iesv Christi.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1577.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>John of Austria. Antwoorde Op een cleyn boecxken onlancx wt ghegheven, ghenoeft de Declaratie vande meyninge van Heer Don Ian van Oostenrijck.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1578.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Listen vande generale middelen gheresolueert by zijn Alteze, mijn heere den Prince van Orangnien, den Raedt van State, ende de generale Staten.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1578.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>J. de Marconville. Der vrouwen lof ende lasteringe: begriipende alle de goetheyt, deucht, ende weerdicheyt der goeder: ende wederom alle de quaetheyt, gebrec, ende valscheyt der quader vrouwen.</i> Antwerp: Franciscus Raphelengius for Christophe Plantin, 1578.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>P. de Commynes & C. Kiliaan. Historie van Coninck Lodouick van Vranck-rijck den elfsten, dies naems: ende van Hertogh Carle van Borgondien.</i> Antwerp: Raphelengius for Christophe Plantin, 1578.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Nieuwe ordonnantie op tstück vande nauigatie ende toerustinghe van de schepen.</i> Antwerpen: Christophe Plantin, 1579.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>J. B. Houwaert. Declaratie van die triumphante Incompst vanden Doorluchtighen ende Hooggheboren Prince van Oraingnien, binnen die Princelijcke Stadt van Brusselle.</i> Antwerpen: Christophe Plantin, 1579.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Aende Heeren ende goede mannen vanden Breeden Raedt der stadt van Antwerpen.</i> [Antwerp: Christophe Plantin], 1579.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Nieuwe moderatie, ende Ordonnantie, opt stück vande Collectatie van seker generale middelen, op d'incomende ende wtgaende coopmanschappen oft conuoye-ghelde van dese Nederlanden.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1580.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>M. Aegyptius. L. homilien oft Verclaringhen Van de oprechticheydt die den Christenen menschen betaemt, ende daer in sy hen behooren te oeffenen.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1580.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Nieuwe Ordonnantie ende Ghebodt, aengaende den reghel vande Crijchsluyden, ende dien aengaende.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1580.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no

M. de Lobel. <i>Kruydtboeck oft beschrijvinghe Van allerleye Ghewassen, Kruyderen, Hesteren, ende Gheboomten</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1581.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Ordonnantie opten Brande, hoemen hem sal reguleren ten tijde vanden Brande</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1581.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Corte verklaringe van de rechtveerdighe oorsaecken ende redenen, de welcke den Deurluchtigen ende machtigen Prince Dom Anthoine Coninck van Portugael, van Algarbesm etc. beweeght hebben ende bewegen, d'orloghe te voeren ende te volherden soo wel ter zee als te lande, teghen den Coninck van Castilien, ende teghen alle de gene die hem hulpe oft bystandt doen, oft doen sullen in wat manieren dat soude moghen wesen</i> . [Antwerp: Christophe Plantin], 1582.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
J. B. Houwaert. <i>Pegasides pleyn, Ende den lvtst-hof der maeghden</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1582.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Verhael op de Quetsure van Mijn heer den Prince van Oragnien</i> . [Antwerp: Christophe Plantin], 1582.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
S. Stevin. <i>Tafelen van interest, Midtsgaders De Constructie der seluer</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1582.	gh	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Corte verclaringe, ghedaen by Borgemeesteren, Schepenen ende Raedt der stadt van Antwerpen, nopende den aenslach teghen de selue stadt aengericht den XVII. deser maent Ianuarij. M.D.LXXXIII. stylo nouo</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1583.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
J. B. Houwaert. <i>De vier wterste, Van de doot, Van het oordeel, Van d'eevwich leven, Van de pyne der hellen</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1583.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Instructie Opt heffen vanden Jmpost vande vier stuyuers op elcke Ame biers</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1583.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Copie des Sendtbriefs van mijnen Heeren Borghemeesteren ende Schepenen der stadt Antwerpen aenden Hooch-bailliu, Voorschepenen, Schepenen van beyde de Bancken ende Raedt der Stadt van Gendt: Nopende de verhandelinghe van Peyse by hen met de Malcontenten voorghenomen</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1584.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Ordonnantie Van mijne Heeren de Ghedeputeerde vanden Staten van Brabant, opde bevrydinghe ende veylinghe vande riuere ende nauigatie</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1584.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
J. Lipsius. <i>Twee boecken vande stantvasticheyt</i> . Antwerp (=Leiden): Christophe Plantin, 1584.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
D. V. Coornhert. <i>Vande Vertróosting der wysheyd</i> . Leiden: Christophe Plantin, 1585.	gh & g	aa	ck	yes	yes
S. Stevin. <i>De beghinselen des waterwichts</i> . Leiden: Franciscus I Raphelengius for Christophe Plantin, 1586.	gh	ae	ck	no	no
F. Costerus. <i>Vyftich meditatie Van de gantsche historie der Passie ende des lijdens ons Heeren Jesu Christi</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1587.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Ordonnantie opt stuck vande Bieren, Bier-accyse, ende t'gene des aengaet, ende daer af dependeert</i> . Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1587.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no

<i>Edict ende ordinantie Onses ghenadichs Heere des Conincks, Op de betalinghe, quictantie, moderatie, ende atterminatie vande cheynsen, grondt, ende heerlijcke cheynsen, ende andere renten, beset oft onbeset, ende ghelijcke schulden verschenen ende alsnoch te verschijnen ghedurende dese troublen: ende op sommige andere puncten, concernerende ende rakende dese materie.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1587.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Luis de Granada. Den Leydtsman der Sondaeren. Waer in gheleert wordt alle t'gene dat een Kersten mensch schuldich is te doen, van t'beghinsel sijnder bekeeringhe tot het eynde van sijnder volmaecktheydt.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1588.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Willem van der Lindt. Christelicke maniere Om de Sondaeghsche misse salighlijck te hooren, ende Godt den Heere danckbaerlijck daer mede te dienen.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1588.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no
<i>Ordonnantie ende Gheboden, Ghemaect ende gestatueert by mijnen Heeren, Schouteth, Borgermeesteren, Schepenen, ende Raedt der stadt van Antwerpen, op de Dach-hueren ende arbeyts loonen: in conformiteyt vande opene brieuen van Placcate van sijne Maiesteyt.</i> Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1588.	gh & g	ae	ck	no	no

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Index nominum

- Aesop, 150, 158, 159
Alberti, Leon Battista, 107
Alva, Fernando Álvarez de Toledo Duke of, 48
Ampzing, Samuel, 149
Anjou, Francis Duke of, 171, 172
Anthonisz., Cornelis, 83
Ariosto, Ludovico, 252
Aubigné, Théodore Agrippa d', 29
Barentsz., Willem, 73
Bassantin, Jacques, 70
Basson, Thomas, 78, 211
Becanus, Beelken, 126
Becanus, Johannes Goropius, 51, 52, 53, 73, 74, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 98, 102, 112, 114, 117, 125, 126, 128, 129, 131, 151, 156, 160, 169, 251, 254, 271, 274, 278, 282, 284, 285
Becanus, Lynken, 126
Beeckman, Isaac, 196, 278, 279
Bellot, Jacques, 108, 109
Belon, Pierre, 218
Berlaimont, Noël de, 75, 78, 86, 130, 152, 158, 225, 226
Bernaerds, Jasper, 119, 206, 210
Beza, Theodorus, 106, 107, 167, 168, 174, 179, 182, 185, 201, 204
Bicker, Willem, 273
Boccaccio, Giovanni, 23, 83, 102, 108
Bodin, Jean, 156, 255
Boemius, Bernhard. *See* zum Boeme, Bernhard
Boethius, 231
Boomgart, Jan, 268, 287
Borrekens, Jan, 119, 120
Bosquet, Jean, 122, 136, 137, 140, 141, 152
Bosquier, Philippe, 52, 53, 69
Bottelgier, Jan. *See* Boutillier, Jean
Bourbon, Catherine of, 46, 61
Bourbon, Charlotte of, 62
Bourlier, Jean, 66, 74, 92, 122
Boutillier, Jean, 59
Bovelles, Charles de, 85, 86
Boxhorn, Marcus Zuerius, 168
Brandt, Cornielie, 67
Bredero, Gerbrand Adriaenz., 65, 66, 75, 92, 273
Breidenbach, Bernhard von, 218
Bright, Timothy, 108
Brinck, Ernst, 95, 96
Bruegel the Elder, Pieter, 83
Bruto, Giovanni Michele, 212, 226
Brutus the Younger, Marcus Junius, 131, 132
Buchanan, George, 256
Burgundy, Mary of, 47, 55
Busbecq, Ogier Ghislain de, 96, 99
Caesar, Gaius Julius, 131, 132
Calvin, Jean, 85, 165, 167, 173, 174, 184
Camden, William, 89, 98
Casaubon, Isaac, 89
Cato, 122
Cats, Jacob, 191, 279
Cauweel, Jan, 224, 225, 266, 267
Chapman, George, 113
Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, 40, 47, 48, 55, 61
Chartier, Alain, 108
Cicero, Marcus Tullius, 27, 81, 91, 92, 100, 101, 115, 130, 131, 132, 136, 170, 177, 261
Cluverius, Philippus, 87, 114
Coornhert, Dirck Volkertsz., 44, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 75, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 92, 99, 100, 101, 103, 109, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 156, 166, 177, 178, 213, 231, 278, 282
Corneille, Pierre, 229, 230
Cornet, Séverin, 69
Corrozet, Gilles, 263
Coster, Abraham, 120
Coster, Samuel, 273, 274
Cuypers, Sebastiaan, 220
d'Ewes, Sir Simonds, 166
d'Heere, Lucas, 66, 67, 172, 175, 185, 195
Dante Alighieri, 23, 93, 102, 108, 138
Datheen, Petrus, 164, 173, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 188, 189, 191, 193, 194, 196, 197, 206, 286
Dathenus, Petrus. *See* Datheen, Petrus de Baïf, Jean-Antoine, 71

de Bailleul, Philipotte, 169
 de Berd, Pieter, 142
 de Bray, Guy, 163
 de Brès, Guido. *See* de Bray, Guy
 de Bruyne, Jan, 245
 de Castelein, Matthijs, 115, 225, 241, 244,
 250, 256, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266,
 267, 269, 270, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280,
 284, 287
 de Coligny, Louise, 62
 de Coster, Jan, 120
 de Coster, Wouter, 120, 248
 de Dene, Eduard, 68, 241, 258, 259, 261,
 263, 280
 de Gaule, Amadis, 226, 228, 229
 de Harduwijn, Justus, 253, 254
 de Heuter, Pontus, 136, 214, 230, 231
 de Hubert, Anthonis, 149
 de Laet, Hans, 219
 de Laet, Johannes, 98
 de Lannoy, Josine, 169
 de Roovere, Anthonis, 225
 de Toulouse, Jean, 48, 167
 de Vivere, Gerard, 74, 120, 122, 125, 147,
 151, 152, 158
 de Walcourt, Étienne, 125, 211
 Des Autels, Guillaume, 61, 71
 Desainliens, Claude. *See* Hollyband,
 Claudius
 Descartes, René, 278
 Desportes, Philippe, 71
 Dolet, Étienne, 91, 105, 138, 139, 143, 160,
 237
 Donatus, 27
 Dorat, Jean, 71
 Dousa, Janus, 70, 71, 257
 Du Bartas, Guillaume de Salluste, 87, 88,
 221, 222
 Du Bellay, Joachim, 16, 27, 69, 71, 93, 105,
 106, 110, 112, 138, 139, 236, 237, 253,
 254, 262, 263, 274
 Dudley, Robert, 171
 Elizabeth I, Queen of England, 77, 78, 108
 Elyot, Sir Thomas, 113
 Epictetus, 125
 Erasmus of Rotterdam, Desiderius, 60, 87,
 90, 91, 205, 263
 Estienne, Henri II, 60, 75, 106, 107, 110,
 111, 113, 152, 154, 156, 201, 255
 Estienne, Robert, 106, 148, 154
 Fabri, Pierre, 116
 Farnese, Alexander, 102, 168
 Fischart, Johann, 89
 Florianus, Johannes, 158, 159, 160, 236
 Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, 87
 Frisius, Laurentius, 88
 Galle, Philips, 83, 84
 Garnier, Jean, 148
 Gascoigne, George, 112
 Gessner, Conrad, 76, 86, 87, 89, 93, 102,
 216
 Gillis, Aernout, 133
 Gillis, Marcus Antonius, 125, 217, 237
 Goedthals, François, 95, 235, 236, 237
 Grammay, Gerard, 214, 215
 Grotius, Hugo, 71, 99, 260, 285
 Guelders, Mary of, 46, 61
 Guicciardini, Lodovico, 74, 124, 129
 Guillemeau, Jacques, 70
 Gymnick, Jan, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 222,
 237, 238, 284, 285
 Hamon, Pierre, 228
 Hart, John, 113, 200, 201
 Haschaert, Peter, 137, 138, 141, 146, 281,
 284
 Hassard, Pierre. *See* Haschaert, Peter
 Heinsius, Daniel, 71, 279
 Helvigius, Andreas, 116
 Hercules, 60, 110
 Herodotus, 87
 Hervet, Gentian, 198, 199, 204, 205, 206
 Heyns, Peeter, 22, 25, 29, 31, 33, 36, 38, 39,
 41, 48, 49, 51, 63, 67, 69, 72, 74, 83, 86,
 89, 98, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125,
 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133,
 134, 135, 136, 139, 147, 148, 149, 150,
 151, 153, 155, 158, 160, 161, 166, 211,
 220, 221, 228, 241, 242, 244, 245, 246,
 247, 248, 249, 256, 263, 276, 278, 279,
 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287
 Hollyband, Claudius, 108
 Hooft, Pieter Cornelisz., 172, 273
 Horace, 92, 261, 269
 Huygens, Constantijn, 77
 Ickelsamer, Valentin, 113
 Imperato, Ferrante, 97
 James IV, King of Scotland, 87
 Jean D'Antioche, 27
 Jerome, 88, 104
 Junius the Younger, Franciscus, 98, 99

Kempe, Andreas, 88
 Kiechel, Samuel, 74
 Kiliaan, Cornelis, 115, 124, 213, 225, 226, 231, 232, 235, 237
 La Porte, Maurice de, 135
 Lambrecht, Joos, 15, 18, 22, 26, 31, 36, 38, 50, 86, 115, 119, 125, 136, 137, 142, 143, 144, 145, 154, 160, 176, 211, 219, 223, 224, 228, 230, 237, 238, 265, 266, 285
 Latini, Brunetto, 83
 Laurier, Marius, 52
 Le Febvre, Pierre. *See* Fabri, Pierre
 Le Jeune, Claude, 69
 Le Roy, Adenet, 46
 Le Roy, Louis, 99
 Leibniz, Wilhelm, 89
 Lemaire de Belges, Jean, 111
 Leupenius, Petrus, 86
 Lipsius, Justus, 15, 70, 77, 91, 92, 99, 114, 125, 169, 215, 257, 260, 284
 Livy, 217, 220, 284
 Lubbertus, Sibrandus, 169
 Luther, Martin, 53, 81, 105, 113, 114, 173
 Luython, Glaude, 73, 158, 159, 160
 Manilius, Ghileyn, 180, 185
 Manutius, Aldus, 108
 Marnix of Sainte-Aldegonde, Philips of, 22, 23, 25, 31, 37, 38, 41, 48, 50, 63, 64, 67, 70, 77, 94, 99, 151, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 180, 181, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 215, 259, 268, 271, 277, 279, 281, 283, 284, 286
 Marnix, Jean of. *See* de Toulouse, Jean, *See* de Toulouse, Jean
 Marot, Clément, 138, 174, 175, 179, 182, 252
 Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor, 47
 Meigret, Louis, 64, 106, 107, 110, 118, 143, 145, 147, 148, 236, 238
 Mellema, Elcie Eduard Leon, 53, 54, 73, 77, 116, 120, 139, 146, 155, 156, 157, 281
 Merode, Françoise of, 63
 Merode, Jean of, 63
 Merode, Odilia of, 63
 Meurier, Gabriel, 63, 69, 74, 78, 120, 122, 125, 133, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 147, 150, 151, 153, 158, 168, 191, 211, 226, 229
 Meyerus, Jacob, 116
 Migoen, Jacob, 270
 Mithridates VI, King of Pontus, 86, 87
 Montaigne, Michel de, 70, 170, 244
 Montano, Benito Arias, 125, 215
 Montanus, Petrus, 149
 More, Thomas, 11
 Moretus, Jan I, 211
 Mostart, David, 142
 Mulcaster, Richard, 75
 Münster, Sebastian, 197
 Mylius, Abraham, 53, 87, 89, 100, 102, 114, 169, 251
 Nassau, John of, 170
 Offermans, Christiaan, 139, 140, 150, 151, 168, 191
 Orange, Maurits of, 72
 Orange, William of, 12, 48, 49, 57, 62, 102, 163, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 248, 249
 Ortelius, Abraham, 89, 99, 125, 126, 128, 233, 247
 Palsgrave, John, 108, 109, 131
 Paradin, Claude, 218, 219
 Parma, Margaret of, 48, 62, 167
 Peletier du Mans, Jacques, 106, 107, 118, 143, 160, 228
 Périon, Joachim, 156
 Petrarch, 23, 102, 108, 252
 Philip II, King of Spain, 28, 29, 47, 48, 56, 61, 62, 77, 168, 197, 203, 213, 214, 249, 282
 Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, 46
 Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, 46
 Plantin, Christophe, 22, 25, 28, 29, 31, 38, 41, 57, 63, 69, 72, 73, 74, 83, 94, 96, 99, 115, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 131, 132, 134, 136, 138, 157, 158, 159, 160, 174, 187, 195, 197, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 220, 221, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 264, 276, 281, 285, 286
 Plantin, Martine, 215
 Plato, 136
 Postel, Guillaume, 84, 88, 218
 Priscian, 27, 131, 132
 Propertius, 126
 Quiccheberg, Samuel, 97, 98

Quintilian, 27, 261
 Rabelais, François, 87, 106, 116, 152, 202
 Radermacher the Elder, Johan, 76, 80, 96, 97, 126, 166, 168, 287
 Radermacher, Maeyken, 126
 Rambaud, Honorat, 107, 236
 Ramus, Petrus, 90, 91, 93, 106, 117, 170, 227, 228, 264, 285
 Raphelengius the Younger, Franciscus, 195
 Raphelengius, Franciscus, 15, 99, 195, 213, 272
 Rhenanus, Beatus, 88, 117
 Richelieu, Cardinal Armand Jean du Plessis, Duke of, 111
 Riederer, Friedrich, 113
 Rinaldi, Paolo, 168
 Rodenburgh, Theodore, 273, 274
 Ronsard, Pierre de, 106, 107, 110, 141, 145, 147, 227, 252, 255, 281, 282
 Rowlands, Richard. *See* Verstegan, Richard
 Rudbeck, Olaus, 88
 Sallust, 100
 Salomon, 122
 Sambix, Felix van, 120
 Sambucus, Johannes, 103, 216, 217, 237
 Sasbout, Mathias, 146, 155, 157
 Saxony, Anna of, 62
 Scaliger, Joseph Justus, 70, 77, 213, 284
 Schottelius, Justus Georg, 114, 116, 117
 Schrieckius, Adrianus, 114
 Scribani, Carolus, 74
 Sexagius, Antonius, 58
 Sidney, Sir Philip, 78, 113
 Silvius, Cornelius, 210
 Silvius, Franciscus, 210
 Silvius, Johannes, 210
 Silvius, Willem, 210, 211, 217, 218, 219, 237, 282
 Smits, Anna, 122, 124
 Smyters, Anthoni, 123, 125, 134, 135, 137, 142, 145, 146, 150, 225
 Speroni, Sperone, 110
 Spiegel, Hendrik Laurensz., 57, 58, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 148, 158, 281, 283, 287, 288
 Stevin, Simon, 28, 72, 80, 89, 92, 111, 114, 213, 254, 255, 261, 275, 282, 284
 Strick, Maria, 122
 Susato, Tielman, 65, 68, 69, 70, 287
 ten Grotenhuys, Johan, 273
 Terence, 65, 104
 Thevet, André, 70, 218
 Thuys, Jacques, 59
 Tiron, Antoine, 63, 92, 125, 211, 221
 Tory, Geoffroy, 116, 117, 138, 143, 144, 153, 204, 238, 255
 Utenhove, Jan, 164, 173, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 181, 183, 184, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 196, 206, 268, 286
 Valerius, Adriaen, 122
 Valerius, Magdalena. *See* Valery, Magdalena
 Valery, Magdalena, 63, 69, 121, 122
 Van 't Sestich, Antoon. *See* Sexagius, Antonius
 van Boendale, Jan, 43, 79
 van Buren, Anna, 62
 van den Dale, Jan, 258
 van den Keere, Hendrik, 217, 218, 219, 237, 265
 van den Velde, Jan, 153
 van der Eembd, Govert, 259, 260, 261, 275, 284, 285
 van der Mijl, Abraham. *See* Mylius, Abraham
 van der Noot, Jan, 65, 67, 172, 195, 277
 van der Schuere, Jacob, 125, 142, 145, 149, 160, 241, 244, 268, 274, 282, 286, 287
 van Eeckeren, Catharyne, 169
 van Ghelen, Jan, 225, 226
 van Ghistele, Cornelis, 66, 103, 104, 218, 249, 252, 257, 282
 van Haecht, Willem, 248
 van Heemskerck, Jacob, 73
 van Heemskerck, Maarten, 83, 84
 van Heule, Christiaan, 149, 191
 van Hout, Jan, 54, 57, 58, 244, 248, 256, 257, 261, 265, 266, 276, 279, 280
 van Liefvelt, Theodoor, 221, 222
 van Male, Zeghere, 69
 van Mander, Karel, 274
 van Meteren, Emmanuel, 98
 van Mussem, Jan, 241, 250, 251, 252, 256, 257, 258, 261, 265, 270, 276, 279, 280, 287
 van Rubroeck, Willem, 99
 van Scorel, Jan, 83
 van Valckenborch, Lucas, 83
 van Valckenborch, Marten I, 83
 van Varenbraken, Christiaan, 142

van Velthem, Lodewijk, 78
van Waesberghe, Jan I, 211, 228, 229, 230,
237, 238
van Waesberghe, Jan II, 156
van Wingen, Godfried, 175, 177
vander Gucht, Adriaen, 142
vander Schuere, Jacob, 136
Vaspasian, 116
Velpius, Rutger, 221, 222
Verroten, Jacob Willemsz., 191
Verstegan, Richard, 89, 98, 99, 115, 117,
166, 275, 276, 283
Visscher, Roemer, 244, 257
Viverius, Jacobus, 120
Vives, Juan Luis, 119, 161, 220, 221
von Hillen, Karl Gustav, 117

von Zesen, Philipp, 117
Vondel, Joost van den, 60, 86
Vorsterman, Willem, 224, 225
Vossius, Gerard, 88
Vulcanius, Bonaventura, 70, 77, 99, 169,
187, 191, 192
Webb, John, 88
Werve, Jan van den, 44, 54, 57, 59, 60, 61,
200, 220, 249
Whetstone, George, 79
Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands, 62
Ymmeloot, Jacob, 195, 196
Zeebout, Ambrosius, 218
Zuerius, Marcus, 168
zum Boeme, Bernhard, 169

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