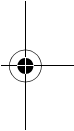
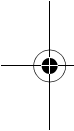


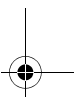
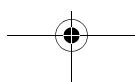
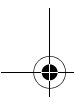
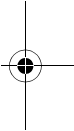
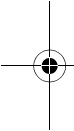
# THÉRÈSE DE HEMPTINNE

*Intuitu fidelis servitii sui.*

Diplomatics and Literacy, Gender and Politics  
in the Medieval Low Countries

Selected Essays





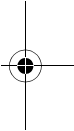
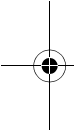


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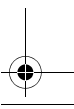
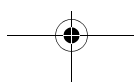
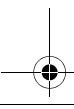
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Editors:  
Els De Paermentier  
Filip Van Tricht



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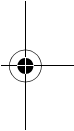
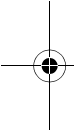




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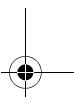
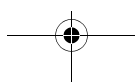
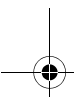


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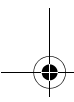
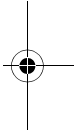
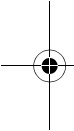
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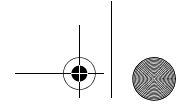




## CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	v
by Erik THOEN	
FOREWORD .....	vii
On wisdom and commitment. A portrait of Thérèse de Hemptinne by Els DE PAERMENTIER, Filip VAN TRICHT and Valeria VAN CAMP	
COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THÉRÈSE DE HEMPTINNE .....	xiii
 <b>PART 1. CHARTERS AND CHANCERIES</b>	
<hr/>	
ITINÉRAIRES DIPLOMATIQUES .....	3
Introduction by Olivier GUYOTJEANNIN	
Le chancelier de Flandre sous les comtes de la maison d'Alsace (1128-1191). (with Adriaan VERHULST)	7
Un prétendu diplôme de Charlemagne pour l'abbaye de Marchiennes .....	53
De ambtenaren van de centrale administratie van het graafschap Vlaanderen van de 12e tot de 14e eeuw (with Maurice VANDERMAESEN) .....	67
La chancellerie des comtes de Flandre (12e-14e siècles) .....	101
(with Walter PREVENIER and Maurice VANDERMAESEN)	
Les symboles graphiques dans les chartes du comté de Flandre jusqu'au début du XIIIe siècle .....	123
La chancellerie pontificale et les centres ecclésiastiques de rédaction de chartes dans les anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux du XIe au XIIIe siècle (with Walter PREVENIER) .....	143
Women's mobility in the Late Medieval Low Countries : the evidence of diplomatic documents (12 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup> century) .....	159





II CONTENTS

**PART 2. GENDER AND POLITICS**

---

MAKING SENSE OF A PARADOX: WOMEN WHO RULED IN A MAN’S WORLD . 189  
Introduction by Martha HOWELL

Aspects des relations de Philippe Auguste avec la Flandre au temps de Philippe  
d’Alsace . . . . . 197

Thierry d’Alsace, comte de Flandre: Biographie et actes . . . . . 205  
(with Michel PARISSE)

Un tarif de tonlieu inconnu, institué par le comte de Flandre Thierry d’Alsace  
(1128-1168), pour le port de *Littersuerua*, précurseur du port de Damme . . 237  
(with Adriaan VERHULST and Lieve DE MEY)

Les épouses des croisés et pèlerins flamands aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles. L’exemple  
des comtesses de Flandre Clémence et Sibylle . . . . . 267

Women as mediators between the powers of *Comitatus* and *Sacerdotium*. Two  
countesses of Flanders in the eleventh and twelfth centuries . . . . . 281

Jeanne de Castille, une reine entre folie et pouvoir (1479-1555) . . . . . 295

Marguerite de Male et les villes de Flandre. Une princesse naturelle aux prises  
avec le pouvoir des autres (1384–1405) . . . . . 309

Thérèse, Ferrand, Isabelle et leurs époux. Les alliances matrimoniales  
portugaises des comtes et comtesses de Flandre (1184-1526) . . . . . 325

La cour de Malines au bas Moyen Age (1477-1530): un laboratoire de  
recherche sur le ‘gender’? . . . . . 335

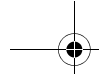
**PART 3. WOMEN AND LITERACY**

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THÉRÈSE DE HEMPTINNE: ON MEDIEVAL LITERACY AND MEDIEVAL  
WOMEN . . . . . 351  
Introduction by María Eugenia GÓNGORA

Lire et écrire, c’est prier un peu. Culture écrite et pratiques féminines de  
dévotion aux Pays-Bas à la fin du Moyen Âge . . . . . 357



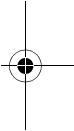
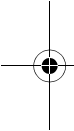


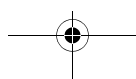
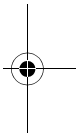
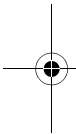
La Flandre au Moyen Âge. Un pays de trilinguisme administratif . . . . . 369  
 (with Walter PREVENIER)

Reading, Writing, and Devotional Practices: Lay and Religious Women and  
 the Written Word in the Low Countries (1350-1550). . . . . 381

*Scriveressen* en hun colofons. Op zoek naar de motivatie en  
 werkomstandigheden van vrouwelijke kopiïstes in de laatmiddeleeuwse  
 Nederlanden . . . . . 397

De doorbraak van de volkstaal als geschreven taal in de documentaire  
 bronnen. Op zoek naar verklaringen in de context van de graafschappen  
 Vlaanderen en Henegouwen in de dertiende eeuw. . . . . 417







## PREFACE

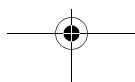
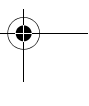
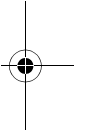
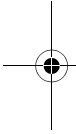
Like many colleagues of her generation, Professor Thérèse de Hemptinne had an ‘academic life cycle’ that took place at one institution. Although today such a ‘one-institution’ career has become uncommon and is sometimes considered to be unhealthy for research, the Ghent historical school has been able to maintain a very good and internationally appreciated reputation thanks to professors such as Thérèse. During all the years we had our offices within a short walking distance of each other and because we even had for a while seminars together under the leadership of ‘our’ brilliant ‘masters’, the late Adriaan Verhulst and the still very active Walter Prevenier, I got to know her and appreciate her as an excellent, but prudent and critical scholar of medieval history. The fact that she retired from the department in 2012 could not pass without a well-deserved homage.

This book edited by some of her best pupils, Els De Paermentier and Filip Van Tricht, is built around a very interesting concept. It brings together some of the most intriguing articles Thérèse wrote within the different fields she was interested in: diplomatics, medieval political history, gender studies and the history of literacy. The three chapters are introduced by friend-specialists in the material. It also contains a very readable introduction about her career as well as her complete bibliography. That way, the book is a successful combination of a number of the best essays, selected for republication, and a *liber amicorum* by friends and pupils.

A book like this is something that gives every academic scholar, who was for many years devoted and sometimes even addicted to research, a proud and happy feeling, although most of us, like Thérèse herself, have previously said that honours like this are absolutely unnecessary and even not wanted.

Anyway, I am very happy that Thérèse’s most brilliant pupils and young PhDs have produced this book for her and for all those who want to know more about her scholarly activity. And I am sure that it will make her very happy and that she will be very proud of it!

Erik Thoen,  
Chair of the History Department  
Ghent University  
January 15th, 2013



## FOREWORD

### **On wisdom and commitment. A portrait of Thérèse de Hemptinne**

Dear Thérèse,

It is our pleasure and honour to cooperate on this volume presented to you on the occasion of your retirement. We would like to take this opportunity to reflect a moment upon your academic career at Ghent University; on the things you have accomplished and devoted yourself to; on the knowledge and expertise you have acquired, extended, and transmitted to your students and colleagues; on Thérèse as a professor, a colleague, a mentor and a friend.

After a classical Greek-Latin Secondary Education, your academic journey began in 1965, when you enrolled at the State University of Ghent (*Rijksuniversiteit Gent*) in the four-year programme in History. You successfully finished your education in 1969 with a Master's thesis, written under the supervision of Walter Prevenier, on the oldest charters of the Rich Clares in Gentbrugge during the period 1254-1350. As the first laureate in an interuniversity competition, you were immediately awarded a scholarship in order to study for one year at the *Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale* in Poitiers. By the end of that same year you also obtained your Teacher's Degree, currently known as *Specifieke Lerarenopleiding*. As soon as you returned from Poitiers, you started your postgraduate career as an assistant of Walter Prevenier at the department of Medieval History in Ghent, a clear sign that your command of the historical métier for the study of the Middle Ages had not passed unnoticed. During the years that followed, you worked with great devotion on your doctoral thesis on the charters issued by and the chancery in the service of the Counts of Flanders, Thierry and Philip of Alsace (1128-1191), a diplomatic and palaeographical study which brought you to the smallest archives at home and abroad, and which was afterwards rewarded with the Provincial Prize for History. Nowadays, diplomatists still gratefully make use of the critical edition which resulted from your PhD, and which with the cooperation of late Adriaan Verhulst and Lieve De Mey was published by the Belgian Royal Commission of History in the series *Verzameling van de Akten der Belgische Vorsten*.

However, your commitment to the Department of Medieval History encompassed more than just historical research. During your assistantship, you were regularly involved in the courses taught by your mentor Walter Prevenier, and you actively participated in inventorying and making available of a vast collection of photographs of original charters dated before 1226. Logically, these area of 'teaching' and 'academic service' were extended in the eighties, a period during which you became also responsible for the academic fields of 'auxiliary sciences' (palaeography, diplomatics, chronology) and 'the political and social history of the Middle Ages' (11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> cen-

## VIII FOREWORD

turies), first as supervisor, and from 1992 on as professor. In 1981, as the first woman appointed in the department, you became chairwoman of the Commission on Educational Affairs, a three-year responsibility that somehow found its sequel in 1992-1993, when you played the role of Secretary of the Examination board.

From the nineties onward, you gradually became more interested in a whole new approach to the sources whose dictamen, *scriptio* and *actio juridica* you previously had mostly been studying, namely the way in which they revealed both directly and indirectly aspects about the position and roles of women in medieval society. You decided to settle into the new theories of medieval feminism, at that time distinctly influenced by second-wave feminism and poststructuralism, and into the transition process from traditional women's studies to the more widely orientated discipline of gender studies. As a result, you published several studies on 'women and politics', 'women and literacy' and 'women and mobility' in the Middle Ages. Moreover, your growing concern about the lack of gender studies in the teaching programmes of Belgian universities in the field of Arts and Philosophy was one of your main motivations to develop and promote the organisation of an interuniversity Master called 'Women's Studies' (GAS: *Gediplomeerde Aanvullende Studie*) at the University of Antwerp, where you taught the module 'Women's history: Middle Ages and Early Modern Period' for more than ten years. This new and 'useful category of historical analysis', as Joan Scott had put it forward, also quickly found its way into the History teaching programme at Ghent University, where you successfully integrated gender as a methodological tool of analysis in your Master's course 'Historical Criticism'. Between 1998 and 2008, a large number of Licentiate's and Master's theses that were produced under your supervision could be categorised either as 'women' or 'gender studies'. In 2007, the moment of the implementation of the Bologna educational reform of 1999 in the Flemish universities, together with other colleagues you continued to work hard for the maintenance of gender studies as a full academic discipline. Consequently, the research seminar 'Gender Studies', in which the Middle Ages are still taught as a separate section, was included in the Master's curriculum and still attracts the attention of students from different areas within the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy. Last year, you also took the initiative to bring to Ghent the mobile exhibition of the Archive Center for Women's History (*Archiefcentrum voor Vrouwengeschiedenis*) entitled "Boys and girls... an (un)known destination? Belgium, 1830-2000?", which gave an overview of the evolution of the concepts of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' in Belgium during the past two centuries.

Your interest in and commitment to the field of medieval studies is not only reflected in your personal research and teaching duties, but can also be illustrated by your active participation in dozens of scholarly meetings (congresses, colloquia, workshops, ...) at home and abroad in the form of lectures, as a member of organising or scientific committees, or as a member of several editorial boards of scientific journals, historical societies and partnerships. Among them we count as probably the most important the distinguished *Commission Internationale de Diplomatie*, which you still serve as *La Secrétaire Générale*. But also in 2003, you founded in your own faculty

the ‘Einhard Institute for Medieval Studies’, an interdisciplinary research platform for medievalists within the faculty of Arts and Philosophy under whose auspices several academic meetings were organised, such as the 2005 exhibition *Van romantiek naar Wetenschap: een hobbelig parcours. Een eeuw mediëvisten aan de Gentse universiteit (1817-1914)*. As a consequence of your expertise and international reputation, you were also regularly asked to act as a jury member for PhDs in the fields of methodology, the social and political history of the Middle Ages, and gender studies. Moreover, four PhD’s were obtained under your supervision (Van Tricht 2003, Mazeure 2008, Van Camp 2009, De Paermentier 2010).

One of your many virtues as a professor – and as a person – is that you have always been very accessible. For your colleagues and students – especially for students preparing a Master’s or doctoral thesis – you were remarkably available. Never was it a problem to drop by with a question, to ask advice regarding some difficulty, to discuss research options and provisional hypotheses, or even to talk about more personal matters. You have a natural talent for making people feel welcome and appreciated. This was a refreshing quality in an academic environment all too often still characterized by a standoffish and elitist ivory-tower mentality. Everyone found in you a listening ear and an understanding heart. Also you invariably showed a genuine interest in people beyond the mere professional dimension. On a regular basis you sincerely inquired after one’s partner, children, parents, new job, etc. Whenever any youngsters came along visiting the offices, you took the time to have a little chat and make them feel at home. In short, your caring and affectionate nature brought warmth to the department – up to the point that you became something of a mother figure to both your students and colleagues – and this no doubt will be much missed.

Your enthusiasm as a teacher is also to be remembered and praised. During palaeography classes you went to great lengths, year after year, to help students trying their best to transcribe passages in for example the dreaded *bastarda* script, or in many variants of the gothic minuscule or the *humanistica*. You never stopped looking for new ways and techniques to explain and clarify each script’s characteristics and singularities, or to provide opportunities for students to exercise and perfect their newly acquired skills. You always remained patient with struggling – sometimes nervous – students, provided that you were under the impression that they themselves also took pains to learn these ancient – or more recent – scripts. You indeed expected students to work and to work hard. Infinite idleness and lazing about were not to be tolerated and you did not refrain from telling people so if need be. In spite of all your warm-heartedness you could be firm too, not to be toyed with. In the more intimate setting of inter alia the diplomatics course your qualities as a teacher really shone through. You managed to present the subject with flair and humor. Your personal passion for diplomatics and specifically your desire to interest others in it truly brought the fascinating world of diplomatics – sometimes under threat of becoming somewhat dull and boring when treated by the wrong hands – to life with numerous anecdotes and by making us touch and feel the historical documents themselves.

## X FOREWORD

For students preparing a Master's or doctoral thesis under your supervision you were an inspiring mentor and a generous one too. You did not expect them to follow in your footsteps, but allowed them great freedom in carving out a research domain for themselves, in formulating their own research questions and in working out their own methodological apparatus. You acted as the perfect sounding board at the different stages along the way, with a fundamentally supportive attitude, investing much more than the necessary time in consulting with one another, in discussing hypotheses and options, in proofreading, in practical matters, etc. You were really there for us and had no problem with defending your students – and their choices – vis-à-vis critical remarks of other involved parties. Your own critical remarks, always brought up in the most constructive fashion, served to make our work better. You strove to get the best out of everyone and knew how to achieve this. When morale was low you did not try to pressure people into fulfilling their duties, giving them a hard time or preaching them. Rather in a more subtle – and certainly effective – way you gently kept reminding people of the work that still needed to be finished, by for example forwarding with your best regards interesting book reviews, invitations to colloquia, etc. You showed understanding when confronted with any personal or motivational troubles, but at the same time persuasively worked towards redirecting focus and attention to the task at hand.

'L'art pour l'art' was an adagium you at one time used to describe and define our work as historians: the study of history for its own sake; the knowledge of human history in its many aspects as most valuable, rich and beautiful in itself. This rather daring admission, softly spoken as a casual confession, was an eye-opener at a time when many others were mainly striving to stress or prove the usefulness and serviceability of history to other scientific or social domains (politics, economics, sociology, anthropology, etc.). Against this instrumental, even servile view of history you posited the autonomy of our discipline. In the wake of this you discouraged students from trying to look for far-fetched and superficial links between medieval research subjects and for example current international politics. It was as if you felt that this kind of approach rather strained than helped the progress of historical research. This of course is not to say that you felt that contemporary society and other social sciences had nothing to contribute to history and vice versa. On the contrary, your own work clearly testifies to this with its attention to multidisciplinary (e.g. your interest in linguistics) and to newish research fields (e.g. your gender approach). Beyond this you have always been a socially concerned person. Without proclaiming any big theories or delivering ideological manifestos you endeavored to make our world a little better by personal action (e.g. your commitment to good causes such as Amnesty International), with mutual respect and care for one another serving as your basic premise.

This volume gathers together a selection of your most important academic articles, book chapters and other contributions that were published during your career. They all found international response, and testify to a gradual expanding focus from the traditional and rather 'technical' auxiliary sciences of diplomatics and palaeography,

of which the edition of the charters of the counts of Alsace without any doubt can be considered your 'pièce de résistance', to a more gender-based approach to the discourse of medieval sources related to political, social and cultural history. With regard to the last research domain, you became particularly interested in aspects of medieval literacy. Because of the intrinsic consistency of these publications, a three-fold focus on 'Diplomatics', 'Politics' and 'Literacy', with special attention to the meaning and role of women within a medieval man's world, soon became obvious. In the chapters that follow, each of these three themes is introduced by an international expert who was, however, not randomly selected. With each you have built up and maintained a close relationship, based either on professional and intellectual contact, on personal and friendly contact, or on both. Professor Olivier Guyotjeannin is an internationally renowned expert in medieval diplomatics. Currently he lectures at the *École nationale des chartes* in Paris and since 2010 holds the position of 'Président de la Commission Internationale de Diplomatique'. Martha Howell, who is the Marion Champion Professor of History at Columbia University in New York, is an internationally well-known specialist in social, economic, legal, and women's history in northern Europe during the late medieval and early modern centuries, with a focus on the Burgundian Netherlands, northern France, and Germany. In 2007, she was awarded a doctorate of humane letters, *honoris causa*, from Ghent University. Professor María Góngora Díaz, who is Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities at the University of Chili in Santiago, enjoys an international reputation as a philologist specialising in medieval and modern French and Spanish literature.

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