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Heldinnenbrieven : Ovidius' Heroides in Nederland

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It was Ovid who invented the heroic epistle. Not so much by giving a theoretical definition as by composing a series of twenty-one heroic epistles in verse that have served as an example for centuries. He depicted well-known literary characters like Penelope, Medea and Dido as the authors of epistles who make all sorts of attempts to be reunited with their lost loved ones though usually in vain. If the title *Heroides* or *Epistulae heroidum* (Epistles from Heroines) suggests that only women wield the pen in Ovid's role plays, he too did already put male writers like Paris and Leander on the scene. Characteristically, we do not get to know the protagonists through the descriptions of an omniscient narrator but through their own accounts, through their 'own' eyes, in their own words put in letters that are not only the portrayals of their character but that at the same time are also love elegies and convincing argumentations. Outspoken, Ovid was happy to spotlight figures from the work of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides up to Virgil. He would lift them from their histories and reshape their character in epistles and he thus presented anew and refreshingly so the well-known stories of myth, 'translating' the frequently epic and dramatic sources into a wholly new genre.

Rebellious Readers

If we were to typify Ovid's heroic epistles as so many ingenious literary games in which the poet moulded famous figures to his own will, they would surely be games in which from the start the participants, the rules as well as the intentions could vary. This principle of variation has been frequently applied by later generations of poets, which in turn has led to a great wealth of new heroic epistles. However, the variations were not just prompted by literary fun. They were also based on ethical considerations and even moral indignation. That Ovid goes beyond certain limits in his games is not only clear from recent gender interpretations of the *Heroides* (Ovid is said to have robbed women of their identities and to have his heroines play the one-sided role of victim). As early as the Middle Ages expurgated versions of the *Heroides* were composed while notes of anger could also be dis-

cerned in the later introductions and commentaries. The early fourteenth-century *Ovide moralisé*, for instance, interpreted the rather fiery prince Paris as the prototype of the kind of people who all too easily yield to worldly temptations. The woman who is about to leave her husband for him, queen Helen, represented the kind of vanity that steals and ruins and brings shame and damnation upon the soul – created so beautiful by God. A century later the poet laureate Dirc Potter from The Hague was to distinguish good but also particularly foolish and reprehensible forms of love relationships in the *Heroides*. Some hundred years later, Erasmus warned the teachers at the Latin schools against practising epistle writing through the *Heroides* because only a handful of epistles would qualify for these purposes as being sufficiently chaste. In sixteenth-century Antwerp it was taught that through his protagonists Ovid showed the extravagant behaviour of people in love so that the readers could take warning from these examples and could thus save themselves similar miseries. Poets' circles around the young Leyden Academy would agree that Ovid's heroines sacrificed the most important thing that women possessed, sc. their honour. While seventeenth-century students at Jesuit schools were given school versions of the *Heroides* to read from which the obscenities had been expurgated, Vondel felt called upon to compose Roman-Catholic 'counterparts' to the classical heroic epistles. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Ovid was disapproved of for yet other reasons. The *Heroides* did not meet the requirements for good literature. The letters were found to be unnatural. They had too little pathos, too few heroic and vigorous protagonists and they were also lacking in historical 'reality'. Above all, the epistles were too 'clever': their beauty and sentiment were covered by a thick layer of ingenuities ('the sumptuousness of Naso's mind'; 'de weeldrigheid van Naso's geest').

In short, it is not just admiration for Ovid but rather the alleged shortcomings of his work that inspired many a later follower to carry out 'improvements'. Themes and protagonists needed replacing while the texts were to be given an ethical-didactic, a rhetorical-didactic or an edifying-religious purport in order to let them have a useful function. New heroic epistles had better disapprove of desperate passions and rather show purer feelings of love, depict the doubts upon having to choose between love or duty, recommend a life of piety, put national heroes on the scene in order to educate the youngsters, have more pathos, praise one of the Orange family or rather accuse him of tyranny. More and more often Ovid's fiction-based choice of material had to be replaced with historical reality. Ingenious arguments had to make way for more feeling. All in all, it turned out that on the basis of the *Heroides* ever-changing standards and values as well as poetical beliefs could continue to be expressed in the epistles.

Research Question and Answers

This study first set out to trace what heroic epistles in verse have been written in the Dutch-language area, whether in the vernacular or in Latin. Next, this corpus was gone through in search of the variations on the game and of the imitatio techniques applied by the followers on the basis of which it was possible to reconstruct their views on the genre. The questions were, among others: what new participants and themes did the Dutch poets put on the scene after Penelope and Dido? What variations in the rhetorical rules of the game did they make and what changes did they apply in their use of literary motifs, of structure and stylistic means? And what were their intentions: with what didactic, moral or political intentions did they vie with Ovid?

Dirc Potter (chapter 2) imitated Ovid in Dutch verse (1412). The familiar character Hero is writing her Leander using a traditional opening, followed by well-known anxiety motifs and the invitation to the love-play, culminating in a plea for a speedy reply that Leander is to bring himself. However, it is with respect to character depiction that a great contrast to Ovid is to be observed. The new Hero is not the distraught woman of *Heroides* 19 but an example of loyalty and constancy. She defines the love she and Leander have for each other as 'lasting' ('ghedurich') and 'unfeigned' ('ongheveynsd'). Potter thus saw his opportunity to not only distinguish himself from Ovid but also from earlier medieval poets who had carried out far more radical expurgations of the *Heroides*, or from others who had given allegorical-moralistic interpretations. Potter interpreted the *Heroides* along the lines of the *Accessus* that introduced the manuscripts of Ovid's works: the letters describe commendable as well as reprehensible types of love and in order to clarify these moral categories had to be introduced. Emphasizing fidelity above all, his Hero epistle appears to perfectly fit the category of 'good love' (*goede minne*). Using the same female protagonist and the same rules Potter, then, introduced a contrast to Ovid through his intentions.

The Antwerp rhetorician Cornelis van Ghistele (chapter 3) made variations on Ovid's *Heroides* by translating them 'rhetorically' ('Rhetorijckelijck') into Dutch ('Duytsche') epistles that he adapted for a wide audience, 'to educate the common man' ('tot onderwijs vanden gemeynen man'). He abandoned complex mythological details, used general phrases and sayings, highlighted their plaintive character and thus changed the rules when compared with Ovid. In the dedicatory poems these new epistles (1553) are commended for being exemplary: they held a mirror up to the readers with their instructive illustrations of, on the one hand, 'wretched' ('onsalighe') ends of life and, on the other hand, 'honourable constant' ('eerbare ghestadige') love. Less ambiguous were the letters in reply to the *Heroides* (1559) that Van Ghistele further made up in imitation of Aulus Sabinus, an Italian Humanist. In their replies Aeneas, Phaon and the other lovers advise the lady writers to

curb their lusts and to restrain their ‘mad’ (‘rasende’) love as soon as possible, ‘noble princess use your brains’ (‘edel princersse gebruyckt u verstant’). A similar didactic purport also characterizes the pair of letters from 1570 that has no earlier example from the classics: from Troy Helen offers her apologies to her husband Menelaus who has been left behind and who, in his reply, indignantly sums up the prevailing morality on women who allow themselves to be carried away by their passions. All in all, the purport of Van Ghistele’s growing collection of *Clachtige Sendtbrieven* (Plaintive Letters) turns out to have become increasingly didactic and moralistic. This process would continue as of the ’80s when more and more variations were tried out on the basis of the letters of Van Ghistele. In addition, heroic epistles were composed that like songs pointing a more or less strict moral could be sung by men and women taking turns.

Between c. 1586-1603 the poets around the young Leyden Academy (chapter 4) played the game in Latin. Probably the boys had already learnt the art of composing letters in verse in their schooldays from the examples from Ovid; this was what Erasmus at any rate had recommended with respect to a limited number of pure samples of the *Heroides*. Once they were students the Leiden poets varied on Ovid’s rules in their more or less academic letters of reply as they, for example, quoted lines of poetry from the *Heroides* and combined these anew. More experienced poets would work at a higher level. Daniel Heinsius made variations on Ovid using learned figures of style and adding some eroticism (passages on the love-play, in particular in the Andromache letter). Johannes Meursius had his six heroines produce serious and learned writing containing ingenious figures of speech on the inner struggle between duty and love, and on the preservation of one’s reputation and honour. At the same time, new kinds of epistle writer were born with Janus Douza and Hugo de Groot (1602), who may have been inspired by the example of Janus Secundus (1533). These new participants in the game were historical figures, Jacoba and Jan van Beieren, who are waging a political debate full of references to the *Heroides* on the legitimate succession in the counties of Holland and Zeeland. Love didacticism, then, is no longer the intention behind this pair of epistles that could be said to be breaking new ground. Around 1602 what was important in Leiden was the republican tradition of Holland and the sovereignty of the States General.

Young P.C. Hooft from Amsterdam (chapter 5) varied on the structures of argumentation as they were found in Ovid’s pair of epistles *Heroides* 16-17 and he thereby changed the rhetorical rules of the game. He broke with the tradition by giving a man, Menelaus, a love plaint and by having him make every effort to win back his wife Helen (c. 1602). What is impressive here is the great scheme of contrasts between, on the one hand, Menelaus himself as the loving husband and the worthy king of Sparta and, on the other hand, his rival, the frivolous prince Paris of profligate Troy. Helen’s heart had to be won on the strength

of the right arguments. In this manner Hooft made a convincing case for a new love morality and this made him fit in with the rhetorical-didactic poetics of his fellow rhetoricians of the Amsterdam chamber de Eglentier.

From Leiden, Caspar Barlaeus (chapter 6) introduced historical current affairs into the genre, that is to say, insofar as he could make use of this reality when depicting the character of his protagonist (1629). His fictitious Amalia is writing about her fears for the life of her reckless husband Frederick Henry at the siege of 's Hertogenbosch, while at the same time the 'real' princess Amalia of Solms was also experiencing similar anxieties. The details of the siege that Barlaeus put in also agree with contemporary historical sources ('reality'). Further, the epistle is also a game that has not only new participants but has also been given new rules as well as new intentions. The obvious references to *Heroides* 13 made a quasi-Greek heroine out of the character of Amalia, but the extensive attention paid to the deeds of the stadtholder reveals that her epistle was in line with the prevailing contemporary laudatory topoi in praise of Frederick Henry, which turned him into a hero on a level with the greatest among the Greek and Roman generals. During the remarkable flurry of activities that ensued concerning the translation, imitation and answering of Barlaeus's letter the aspect of the flattering eulogy to the prince of Orange has been kept throughout the new heroic epistles. Translator Petrus Scriverius, finally, provided the Amalia epistle with some general statements about love.

Joost van den Vondel (chapter 7) applied Ovid's examples to his city of Amsterdam. Especially in those times around 1642, a large part of the population had fallen under the spell of the Roman-Catholic church despite the repressive measures of the Reformed city fathers. Readers must have recognized the new participants Vondel introduced into the game at once from devout prints and paintings: the twelve women are all holy martyrs from the age of Christian persecution, from Agatha to Pelagia, gathered together round Mary, the Queen of Heaven. A number of motifs in these epistles have been borrowed from the *Heroides* in order to keep Ovid's 'witty verve' ('geestige zwier'), but the rules of the game have changed. The saints do not write complaints but comfort their readers and urge them to keep up the true faith. The readers will find good examples in the debates that these writers have held with pagan rulers and relatives. There, they triumphantly showed that the Greek-Roman world picture (that the *Heroides* are also based on) with its 'idolatry' ('afgodery') and 'temple splendour' ('tempelpracht') can be wholly replaced with a Christian style of life. This new intention is then what Vondel brought to the genre. In their debates and letters the martyrs show the Christian faith at work while they themselves are living proof that the true faith can effect women becoming capable of defending themselves mentally and their relinquishing all worldly and physical things like pain or sex. Some fifty years after Vondel, the pious exempla returned in Govert Bidloo's variations on

Vondel and his epistles of the twelve apostles (1675, 1712). Also, a number of Dutch-language adaptations of Ovid's *Heroides* made variations on Ovid's rules during the '50-'80s. Poets ranging from Jacob Westerbaen to Abraham Valentyn each in their very own fashion took part in this 'translation game'; Jonas Cabeljau, for one, meant to explicate to a wide audience 'the burning passions' ('de brandende hertstochten') as well as the many life histories and strange names in the *Heroides*, while Lodowyck Broomans was intent, rather, on expurgating or 'tempering' ('maetighen') the *Heroides* since Ovid had after all been a pagan who 'neither knew God nor his commandments' ('die noch van Godt, noch van zijn ghebodt en wiste').

The second half of the eighteenth century is not only characterized by the greatest production but also by the greatest possible variation of Ovid imitations (chapter 8). The '50-'70s saw the rise of two movements. The first rejected the example of the *Heroides* as being too stilted. In imitation of the epistle 'Eloisa to Abelard' (1718) by the English poet Alexander Pope heroic epistles ought rather to follow human nature and the 'sweet movements and emotions' ('zoete bewegingen en gevoelens') of the heart, and should in particular depict how people in love may be torn apart by inner conflicts. The second movement rejected the *Heroides* because no 'weighty' ('gewichtige') matters were portrayed in them. In imitation of the Amsterdam poetess Lucretia van Merken (1762) a new intention was introduced into the game emphasizing the educational and edifying power of heroic epistles. By means of heroic characters from national and West European history important virtues like parental love, patriotism and piety were to be portrayed, albeit with emotion and conviction. This conflict could still be observed in the years to come. From 1778 heroic epistles played an important part in the life of two literary societies. The members and governors of the The Hague society *Kunstliefde spaart geen vlijt* (*Art of love spares no effort*) on the whole favoured heroics and history. For their annual collections the editors demanded epistles by heroes and heroines that were well-founded and whose underlying historical facts could, if need be, be substantiated through footnotes. In the Leiden *Kunst wordt door arbeid verkregen* (*Art is gained through labour*) the emphasis was primarily on the emotional lives of the fictitious protagonists who were taken, for instance, from sentimental stories in the *spectators* [moral-didactic weeklies]. French examples likewise played an important role during this period. For one thing, French epistles were translated; for another, during the '80s political conflict between the Orangeists and the patriots, the statement 'You should read Ovid, not imitate him' (*Il faut le lire, & non l'imiter*) seems to have been a recommendation. Not seldom were the fictitious writers either supporters or opponents of the Orangeist administration who in writing argued passionately in favour of true liberty.

Attempts at restoring the genre during the '90s eventually failed. For all the Neo-Latin poets' attempts to use news items from the *spectators* [moral-didactic weeklies] when com-

posing variations on Ovid and to thus bridge the time gap, their writing in Latin kept them firmly within the framework of learned poetry. In the *Almanak van vrouwen door vrouwen* (*Almanac for women by women*) female poets like Maria van Zuylekom tried several times to depict women's true love or true nature in heroic epistles. Finally, Willem Bilderdijk was one of the last to intensely try his hand at composing variations on Ovid, which ranged from translations of the *Heroides* to epistles by Biblical characters. He finished with a mock-reply to Hooft's Menelaus epistle (1823) and count Floris V's romantic love for Agnes van der Sluis (1824), which was eventually answered by J.J.L. ten Kate (c. 1836). Subsequently, other genres, in particular that of the historical novel, supplanted the heroic epistle. In short, the heroic epistle went through a 400-year process of development whereby its practitioners, with the exception of a few, came to depart more and more from the example of Ovid. The game could be played on its own, with new participants, rules as well as new intentions.

Initiators

The heroic epistle has not always been popular within the Dutch-language area. Within the corpus it is possible to discern initiators who served as an example to poets in their environment. The Antwerp poet Cornelis van Ghistele, for one, was a major pioneer with respect to the heroic epistle in Dutch. His texts (1553-1570) served for as many as fifty years as the basis for compilations by rhetoricians as well as for numerous epistles that could be sung as songs; for a century, even, his translation would remain the only one in its kind. In Leiden it was probably Janus Dousa (1602) who stimulated students and professors alike, while he in turn may have been inspired by Janus Secundus. For a long time, the Menelaus epistle (c. 1602) of P.C. Hooft from Amsterdam presented epistle writers in the North with a challenge to write replies – at least up to the times of the Leiden rector Hendrik Snakenburg, around the middle of the eighteenth century. The Amalia epistle of the Leiden poet Caspar Barlaeus (1629) proved a direct and great influence on the eulogists writing in praise of Frederick Henry. From the South, some Jesuit poets with their neo-Latin saints' epistles prompted Joost van den Vondel to react in Dutch (1642). It is more difficult to pinpoint the influence Vondel may have had, and this is also true of his translations of the *Heroides* that appeared in 1716; his martyrs must have been a source of inspiration for eighteen-century authors of devout letters besides Govert Bidloo, while others, in contrast, opposed his example. Both Alexander Pope (1718) and Lucretia van Merken (1762) have served as a model for dozens of poets of the second half of the eighteenth century. Besides, French poets of heroic epistles like Claude Joseph Dorat (collection 1769)

were eagerly translated and their examples of melodramatic, heroic and historical epistles may well have had a stimulating effect. Thomas van Limburg from The Hague, for instance, was the ‘Naso of our times’ while Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1774), finally, induced Rhynvis Feith to write a Werther epistle. The genre’s development can thus, in short, be described as a number of variations on Ovid by initiators together with other authors’ reactions, which in retrospect may be termed a ‘series’. The question whether the poets at the time actually thought of a Low Countries tradition that had started in the fifteenth century or even as late as the sixteenth century, can only in some cases be answered in the affirmative. Thus, Willem Bilderdijk (1822) discovered Dirc Potter’s Hero epistle, while Samuel Wiselius (1818) followed Daniel Heinsius’s Deidamia epistle and Elisabeth Bekker mentioned Janus Dousa’s epistle (which she did not possess in translation) as being the example for her 1773 Jacoba epistle; also, the Leiden rector Snakenburg (1753) undoubtedly discussed Hooft’s Menelaus epistle with his students before he composed variations on it in verse himself. But it was only the societies’ men and women of letters and a few literati around 1830 who forged the variations on Ovid into a genre that from that time onwards has for once and for all been known under a name of its own.

Definition and corpus

The choice of defining the heroic letter as was done in the introduction of this study has clearly had its consequences for the entire corpus. The fact is that it was a rather general definition that not only comprised mythological and historical, as well as female and male writers but also other themes besides just those of the pangs of love. At the same time, the definition has commanded restrictions with respect to form: ‘A heroic epistle is a fictive letter either in Latin or in the vernacular, with the characteristics of an elegy, composed in verse, from the perspective of a well-known literary or historical character (f/m) who, during a critical moment of his/her life, addresses a loved or trusted one in order to persuade him or her of something. The origins of the genre go back to Ovid’s *Heroides*.’ Having come to the end of this study it is only right to ask of what value the definition of choice has actually been.

The characteristics of letter form, elegy, character description and convincing argumentation are the main underlying and shared points of resemblance. They refer to Ovid and are inextricably bound up with the genre. It will be obvious that complaints or speeches (‘Kenau addressing the women of Haarlem’) do not come under the heroic epistle and therefore do not belong with the corpus. The same goes for character descriptions like ‘Wilhelmus van Nassouwe ben ick van Duytschen bloet’ (‘William of Nassouwe, am I of

Dutch blood'), personifications ('Holland to Belgium'; 'Holland aan België') or political arguments ('Open letter to Ayaan Hirsi Ali'; 'Open brief aan Ayaan Hirsi Ali'). The four characteristics must all be present at the same time. The fictitious authors are free to make endless variations but they cannot change the fact that this is a game with well-known characters; in other words, Speenhoff's plaintive 'Letter from an old mother' ('My dear son, your mother will have you know as that she cannot forget you'; 'Brief van een ouwe moeder': 'Mijn lieve zoon, je moeder laat je weten, als dat ze jou geheel niet kan vergeten') describes a type of human being rather than a mythological, historical or contemporary figure and can therefore not be termed a heroic epistle. The fact that Ovid's female writers find themselves in dire circumstances – frequently on the brink of death – because of an unhappy love-affair has resulted in the variations on his work likewise starting out from emergency situations. The definition rather broadly describes this as 'during a critical moment in life' because the new writers of heroic epistles did not restrict themselves to the pangs of love. They depict just as well the misery of prisoners, parents, freedom fighters or saints without departing from the important characteristics of the genre. Thus, it was perfectly all right for Oldenbarnevelt behind the bars of the Gatehouse to direct a political plea to his children that took the form of a heroic epistle. Conversely, the pangs of love could also be expressed through characters from the Old Testament, for example; while imprisoned at Pharaoh's court Sara discovers a beautiful eighteenth-century kindred spirit in Abraham. In other words, it is not so much the nature of the dire circumstances as the intense experiencing them that formed the starting point of the heroic epistle.

Finally, the definition rather neutrally refers to Ovid's *Heroides* as being an example rather than as a literary standard or something like that. The extent to which a text leans on Ovid has not been a reason for including it in or barring it from the genre. Texts that include the classical participants and rules belong just as much with the corpus as do texts that vary on all these aspects. One of the consequences of this is that translations of the *Heroides* – whether as edited texts in the vernacular or adaptations to a different target group and culture – have also been considered to be heroic epistles. This also goes for epistles that are replies to the Ovidian heroines and for all variations, including the warnings from the Aztec king Montezuma to Cortez, the Spanish conquistador. This study does not make a fundamental difference between translations, adaptations, variations and imitations. They merely involve various gradations of the same process. In fact, what this investigation has found is that Ovid was time and again 'improved upon' in innumerable ways, in moral, didactic, poetical or edifying respect because he was time and again, and in numerous different ways, read by rebellious readers.

Research methods: reflection

Looking back on the investigation has resulted in the following reflections on the research methods that have been used. The aim of tracing the developments within the tradition of the heroic epistle has been achieved by investigating groups of poets and texts that try out new variations. It was possible to reconstruct the literary views on the genre by uncovering the imitatio techniques. For this purpose, the points of agreement with and departure from literary examples were studied. This has resulted in valuable analyses of contrasts that made it possible to trace both the old and the new: both references to the tradition (through well-known opening motifs, for example) and reactions to it (new participants and rules, didactics or morality). Barlaeus's *Amalia* epistle (1629) thus turned out to contain passages that allude to Vondel, Heinsius and Ovid, which strongly colours the depiction of the fictitious writer as an anxiety-ridden wife and quasi-Greek heroine. However, what prevailed were the points of departure vis-à-vis the tradition: large parts of the epistle are devoted to the battle and the siege of 's Hertogenbosch, which makes the writer into the mouthpiece for the poet's eulogies directed at the prince who has succeeded in conquering the city.

It has proved necessary to carry out rhetorical analyses, sometimes very detailed ones, to understand the heroic epistle's new and changing purposes. Such analyses have repeatedly turned out to be worth their while. Analysing Hooft's *Menelaus* epistle (c. 1602) thus revealed how the king responds to each of Paris's arguments with counter arguments that taken together form a whole new morality of love. And to give another example from Vondel (1642), it appeared that his argumentation does not so much hinge on the suffering of the martyrs as on the verbal triumphs they enjoy in their debates with opponents to Christianity.

In short, analyses as to contrast and rhetoric have yielded insight into the imitatio techniques and could subsequently be used as the basis for reconstructing the various views on the genre.

The heroic epistle within a European context

The genre of the heroic epistle turns out to be much more comprehensive than had been assumed until recently. While this study did not also include the question as to the size of the genre and its West European context, some progress has yet been made in this respect. On the basis of the large amount of new material that was discovered the picture insofar as it existed of the heroic epistle in the Netherlands has been thoroughly changed. The

corpus of texts proves to be many times larger than Dörrie had estimated it to be in his pioneer bibliography *Der heroische Brief*. This sheds new light on his views that the genre was late in developing in the Dutch-language area (the Netherlands were actually quite early, given that in 1412 the first signs of the genre can be detected), that the genre was primarily formed by the works of Neo-Latin authors (while it was instead the poets using the vernacular who carried the genre) and that there appeared hardly any Dutch-language epistles after Vondel (in fact, epistles in the vernacular would continue to be written for over a hundred and fifty years). Dörrie had taken a far too early closing date – 1658 – for the active period of the heroic epistle as written in the Dutch-language area. What this study has yielded, then, involves the early beginnings of the genre as well as the contributions from the rhetorical societies and other seventeenth and early eighteenth-century epistles in the vernacular, and especially societal life during the second half of the eighteenth century, when the genre of the heroic epistle went through an impressive period of growth and in fact outdid the genre in France in productivity. Hundreds of epistles from the fifteenth until the twentieth century being newly retrieved, the ratio with respect to the surrounding countries – insofar as information is available on this account – has considerably changed: the Dutch were extraordinarily active practitioners of the heroic epistle, and for centuries they have expressed their literary aspirations, their views on love, fidelity, femininity and masculinity, their faith and their patriotism through them. It is hoped that this study has returned home a small but very special kind of genre and that it has now made it available for further study: the heroic epistle in the Netherlands.¹

¹ Translated by dr. Eli ten Lohuis.