The lure of the dark ages : writing the Middle Ages and political rhetoric in humanist historiography from the low countries
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❧ C H A P T E R   T W O

Reading History Then and Now:
Modern Methods and Renaissance Rules of Reading

2.1 PROLEGOMENA

In the previous chapter, I have explained why it is worthwhile to investigate the ways in which the representation of the (medieval) past in humanist historiography serves political rhetoric, that is, how it contributes to the formation, evaluation, and defence of political ideas. The present chapter will elaborate on the central assumption that underlies this investigation, viz. that the representation of the past in historiography should be studied as a verbal structure that performs a rhetorical function in the communication between a historian and his audience. This elaboration will first of all serve the epistemological purpose of conceptualizing the relation between historian, historiography, audience, and their cultural context. In addition, it will attempt to achieve the practical aim of an analytical vocabulary that is in agreement with this theoretical framework.

Such a methodological digression is necessary, in my view, for two reasons. In the first place, most scholars in the field of early modern historiography have thus far paid little attention to the textual mechanisms by which political ideas are conveyed to the reader, but have been content with indicating the main political gist of historiographical works. Therefore, there exists a lacuna in scholarly literature with regard to the concepts and vocabulary that can be used to describe this rhetorical aspect of historiography. Secondly, there exists a body of studies in literary theory, especially its structuralist and post-structuralist currents, that has been highly influential in the humanities over the past few decades and that provides challenging

stimuli for the type of investigation I wish to conduct, but that has also shown itself somewhat hostile to research that is historically orientated. In Neo-Latin studies, this theoretical literature has often been neglected, however. Consequently, I think it would be sensible to take a stand in the theoretical debates that have been going on, to isolate the concepts that are useful for my investigation, and to examine critically to what extent they could be fruitful for an analysis of historical texts.

As I have indicated in the previous chapter, it is not my intention to give a complete *Forschungsüberblick* of relevant theoretical publications here. Neither do I think that the concepts that will be introduced here can simply be applied to texts in order to obtain solutions for research problems. Literary theory is not a machine that can be used to process texts in order to mechanically generate interpretations.[1] For the purposes of this book, literary theory has proven useful in the first place as a means to refine the questions that are posed, to recognize aspects of texts that were previously not recognized, and to provide a descriptive vocabulary. "Theory invites, nay, compels people ... to look at things differently, to take advantage of the most powerful and innovative thinking and writing available today."[2]

Since it is my aim to understand how historiography is involved in contemporary discussions about politics, I will have to historicize the texts I am working on. More concretely, this means that I will approach historiographical writings as part of a communicative situation: a historian describes the past for a particular audience on a particular occasion and, in all probability, for a particular purpose.[3] This situation is governed by a number of principles that make successful communication possible. Most importantly, the participants in a speech situation assume that contributions should be and usually are purposeful, unless this assumption becomes untenable. Consequently, they try to interpret contributions as coherent and relevant to the situation. For instance, this causes readers and listeners to pay attention not only to the obvious meaning of sentences, but also to retrieve the implications they might carry.[4] In studying (political) rhetoric in such a frame of thought, one should identify the message and describe the means by which it is conveyed in a persuasive manner, with special attention to the way the attempt at persuasion relies on communicative conventions in order to optimize the conditions

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[1] Cf. Culler 1994, 15. Some publications on the use of literary theory in the field of classics tend to go in this direction. This tendency is sometimes visible, for instance, in De Jong & Sullivan (edd.) 1994; Schmitz 2007.

[2] Culler 1994, 16.

[3] This definition is based on Phelan 1996, 4.

[4] These are some of the basic tenets of speech act theory. See, for instance, Searle 1969; Austin 1975[2]; Grice 1975. A brief discussion is offered by Kearns 1999, 17-22.

for success. Apart from the general principles of communication, these conventions include the rules of basic discursive modes, principles of intertextual signification, and genre conventions.

This rhetorical approach to the production of meaning from texts is compatible with most currents within post-structuralist thought, since it acknowledges that signification is always mediated by discursive frameworks. There are differences in emphasis, however. For many post-structuralist theorists, the idea of signification as mediated is primarily helpful in liberating the reader from authorial power. Since meaning is dependent on context and therefore unstable, each reader may appropriate a text in his own idiosyncratic way, and "[beat] the text into a shape which will serve his own purpose."[5] On this view, reading a text equals rewriting it; the reader thus acquires the power formerly attributed to the author.

Despite the political potential that might seem to inhere in this argument, there are serious practical, theoretical, and ethical objections to it. First, an all-too-exclusive attribution of meaning production to the reader conceives of text production and consumption as too innocent a process and reduces the writer's answerability for his output too much. Moreover, if understanding a text becomes a drastically pluriform praxis, "the birth of the reader," conceived of as the liberation of reading from all structures of power, "has to be paid for," not only "by the death of the Author," as Roland Barthes says, but also by the definitive loss of possibilities to communicate by means of writing.[6] However, this position is in blatant contradiction with the everyday experience of many people that such communication is actually not impossible at all. In addition, it is curiously hypocritical, since it denies to other texts what it does seem to claim for itself: a large degree of effectiveness in communicating ideas via written composition. This observation can be corroborated on a theoretical level. The concept of meaning as radically and inevitably unstable is misguiding in that it obscures that all reasonable interpretation is governed by principles, and that these principles are generally known and relied upon within specific environments, termed 'interpretive communities' by literary theorist Stanley Fish.[7] On this view, 'liberating meaning' implies no more than ignoring the rules of the game and creating new ones on one's own authority, thereby destroying the possibility of communication.

In this chapter, therefore, I will shift my gaze from an obsessive attention to the fundamental instability of meaning towards the discursive systems mediating the production of meaning from the 'raw' material of the text. In the first part of this

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[5] Rorty 1982, 151.

[6] Barthes 1984, 67: "la naissance du lecteur doit se payer de la mort de l'Auteur."

[7] Fish 1980.

chapter, I will explain how the structure of historical representations can be analyzed in such a way as to understand the mechanisms by which they give order and meaning to the past. To begin with, I will introduce tools from the field of narrative theory that may help to demonstrate how the conventions of the narrative mode of communication enable an author to organize historical events in such a way as to convince its readers of a particular point of view. Next, I will demonstrate the role of intertextual patterns in reinforcing or complicating these narrative strategies.

The second part of the chapter aims at refining the approach outlined above. Very often, the rhetorical interaction between an author and his audience cannot be properly understood without taking into account contemporary rules of communication such as genre conventions. What Culler observes about literature, I take to be true for historiography as well: "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a *tabula rasa* and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for."[8] Therefore, I will give an overview of early modern reflection on the rules of historiographical discourse – including the remarks of flesh-and-blood readers – in order to reconstruct the general conditions of reception within the community in which these texts were produced and first read.[9]

Finally, in the third part of the chapter, I will briefly point to comparative techniques of analysis that may differentiate the rhetoric of a particular text from those of other texts, that may locate a point of view within a broader political discussion, and that may create more insight in the transformations an author introduces in the historiographical tradition.

2.2 ANALYZING POLITICAL RHETORIC

In order to demonstrate concretely what service the various tools introduced in this section may render, I will present a passage from Reynier Snoy's history of Holland (*Historia Hollandie*, ca. 1516/1517) that will be used to show how my analytical instruments work and what kind of results they may yield. The passage recounts the inauguration of Dirk I, the first count of Holland. Snoy dated this event to the year 863.

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[8] Culler 1980, 102.

[9] The concept of reading as a rule-governed process originates from structuralist thought; see Culler 1980. It has been more fully developed in reader-response criticism. A good introduction to this field is Freund 1987. Seminal articles in which these ideas have been worked out are collected in Tompkins (ed.) 1980 and Suleiman & Crosman (edd.) 1980.

**Counts Dirk I and Dirk II, woodcut by
Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen, ca. 1518**

"Emperor Charles the Bald accompanied his nephew, count Dirk, to the province with a very select corps of soldiers in order to make sure that the inhabitants of Holland and Frisia would swear an oath to their count; if not, they would be subjected by force of arms. The inhabitants of Holland in particular offered resistance, and so did the Frisians, for both nourished an extraordinary love of freedom. The noblemen urged and persuaded the people to cast off by force of arms the yoke of slavery. If that would be admitted, there would be no more access to the path to freedom, which is desirable in itself and which is bestowed on all by nature, and which one should not refuse to die for. Therefore, they should take up arms: their performance in battle would determine their fortune. It would be fitting to go to war with the intention of returning only in case of victory, counting death a gain. If one should fall in battle, one should fall for one's country, for freedom. There exists nothing more glorious than that. If victory would be achieved and the freedom that they received from the hands of their forefathers would be restored, one should live most prosperously by the old-established laws. Their fellow-countrymen, encouraged by these words, decided to settle the matter with the sword and to protect freedom by force of arms. They gathered all troops from every quarter, in order to face the dangers of such an important battle with full force. Both armies fought with utmost spirit: one of them for freedom, the other for victory. The outcome of the battle remained undecided for some time and a huge multitude of men was slain on the spot, the bravest soldiers were massacred, and no one left the battlefield unwounded. Finally, the inhabitants of Holland and Frisia, overcome by the great number of enemies – for fresh and uninjured soldiers had marched on –, weakened by wounds more than slain, surrendered, albeit still muttering. After hostages had been given, they acknowledged the count and concluded a treaty in the following manner: ..." [10]

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[10] *HH* f. 118ᵛ-119ʳ: "Imperator Carolus Caluus nepotem suum Theodoricum comitem lectissima militum manu in prouinciam deducit, vt Hollandi Frisijque sacramentum comiti suo dicerent, sin minus armis coacturos ad subiectionem. Restitere in primis Hollandi, restitere Frisij, libertatis vtrique amantissimi. primates populum concitare ac suadere vti iugum seruitutis armis repellant, quo semel admisso haud patere amplius viam ad libertatem, que sua sponte desiderabilis ac natura omnibus data est, pro qua nec

It would be rather foolish to suggest that the political message of a text like this one could only be grasped by means of sophisticated analytical instruments. After all, a rhetoric that does not succeed in driving home its point cannot be regarded as very effective. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that even without any analysis, Kampinga was able to present the political gist of this episode. In his view, Snoy's presentation of the facts flowed out of his pen as a result of his "inclination to idolize these noble families," that is, the houses of Egmont and Wassenaer. Members of the latter are explicitly mentioned by Snoy as leaders of the revolt.[11] Kampinga, however, was interested in the political only to the extent that its presence in historical writing leads to a distortion of 'what actually happened'. Thus, he contrasted Snoy's presentation of the first count of Holland as an intruder threatening the freedom of the people – and especially of the nobility – with Cornelius Aurelius' treatment of the condition of Holland before Dirk's arrival, which is marked by "the eye of the objective spectator."[12]

In the late sixteenth century, a reader who upheld roughly the same humanist tradition of dealing with the past as Snoy did, came to similar conclusions as Kampinga. In his prose history of Holland, Janus Dousa Sr condemned Snoy's generation of historians for making up fantastic family trees in order to please the nobility.[13] As to the story of Dirk I's inauguration as told by Snoy and other Dutch historians, Dousa warned his readership that it "was first invented in a trifling manner and committed to writing by recent and newly arrived Turpins, it was soon received heedlessly and indiscriminately by the applauders of the upper and middle benches [that is, the lower classes], and finally it was ventilated with a patrician wind

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mori recusandum. Itaque arma capesserent, quales iam in prelio forent, talem fortunam habituri. Eo animo in pugnam ire oportere, vt non nisi victores inde abscedant, pro lucro mortem habituri. Si cadendum in prelio sit, pro patria pro libertate cadendum, quo nil gloriosum magis. Si victoria contigerit asserta libertate quam a maioribus per manus acceperunt, patrijs legibus florentissime viuendum. Populares his dictis vltro accensi, rem ferro decernere ac libertatem armis tueri statuunt. Vndique omnes contrahunt copias, totis viribus tanti prelij discrimina adituri. Pugnatum est vtrinque totis animi viribus, hi pro libertate, illi pro victoria. Ancipiti aliquamdiu prelio ingens hominum multitudo in vestigio cesa, fortissimus quisque trucidatus, nec quisquam nisi vulneratus referebat pedem. Tandem Hollandi Frisijque hostium multitudine superati, quod recens ac integer miles succederet, vulnerati deficientes magis quam cadentes dediderunt sese adhuc fremebundi, datisque obsidibus comitem suscipientes fedus in hunc modum ferierunt. …"

[11] Kampinga 1917, 115: "Snoy's neiging deze adelsgeslachten te verheerlijken"; for Snoy's identification of the leaders of the revolt, see *HH*, f. 119r-v.

[12] Kampinga 1917, 112-3: "het oog van den objectieven toeschouwer".

[13] *BHA* p. 76-7; I will pay closer attention to Dousa's remarks about the partial attitude of late medieval and early humanist historiography in Chapter Six.

astern (*Patriciae aurae accessione*), as if by a fan, and it found both belief and favour, not only among the rich middle classes, but also in the very seats of the senators."[14]

Neither Kampinga nor Dousa, however, seems interested in explaining the textual mechanisms by which Snoy turns a story of resistance into support for the high nobility. Positivist approaches such as Kampinga's are usually aimed at tracing the roots of modern critical historiographical practices. Resorting to such a mode of thought, Kampinga calls Snoy's treatment of medieval history "somewhat critical towards tradition," Suzanne de Hemptinne refers to the "more or less critical manner to which [Snoy] adhered," and Karin Tilmans finds fault with him for using works by Aurelius without mentioning them.[15] Similarly, the rhetorical apparatus that was central to Dousa's understanding of texts fails to provide adequate handles for analyzing the strategies made possible by a narrative mode of presentation and the intertextual patterns that may enrich such a narrative rhetoric, as I will explain in more detail below, at the beginning of my sections on narrative theory and intertextual analysis.

Since both positivist historical scholarship and classical rhetoric seem to lack the concepts and vocabulary required to explain the devices used in early modern historiography to convey political ideas, it is desirable to find alternative techniques of analysis. The field of literary theory offers a number of such methods that I will introduce in more detail in the following sections.

2.2.1 Narrative Theory

Early modern historiography relies on narrative as its prevalent mode of presentation. In early humanist theory of history, the term *historia* is invariably defined as a true (and ornate) narration of things done. In later historical thought from Francesco Patrizi on, the emphasis shifts towards a concept of history as a form of knowledge, but still narrative is regarded as its archetypal manifestation.[16] All works in my text

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[14] *BHA* p. 187: "a nuperis primum ac nouitiis Turpinis nugatorie conficta atque in literas relata, mox a summae mediaeque Caueae plausoribus temere ac sine iudicio recepta, postremo Patriciae aurae accessione quasi flabello ventilata, non in Equestribus modo, sed vero in ipsa Orchestra fidem pariter fauentiamque inuenisse." Turpin was an archbishop and warrior who occurs in the *chansons de geste* about Charlemagne. The *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*, a chronicle from the twelfth century, was sometimes attributed to him. The theatre metaphor used in this passage refers to the *Lex Roscia theatralis*, a Roman law dated to 67 BC. It stipulated that the *orchestra* of a theatre was reserved for senators and the fourteen front benches for knights (*equites*). The expression *quasi flabello ventilata* was taken from Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 54.

[15] Kampinga 1917, 11: "eenigermate kritisch ten opzichte van de overlevering"; De Hemptinne 1989, 114: "la façon plus ou moins critique dont l'auteur s'en est inspiré"; Tilmans 1988, 149-51 = Tilmans 1992, 254-8.

[16] Landfester 1972, 83-4.

corpus belong to this narrative mainstream of humanist historiography, as opposed to antiquarian writings, source compendia, dialogues, and geographical accounts, even if later historiography tends to contain more argumentative elements than earlier.

It is of some importance to stress the intensive use of various narrative techniques in humanist historiography, because the usual historiographical practices of our days are dominated by the use of descriptive and argumentative language in order to reconstruct large political, economical, and social developments of the *longue durée*. Often, narrative devices are even regarded as incompatible with the scholarly claims of history, for instance by the French *Annalistes*. A good example would be François Furet's conception of distanced analytical history as opposed to commemorative narratives of origins, seen through the eyes of their own actors.[17] This is the background of the hearty dislike shown by positivist scholars like Fueter and Kampinga of what are precisely the hallmarks of story-telling in humanist historiography: tragic emplotment, extensive dramatic scenes, detailed character drawing, rhetorical set pieces.[18]

It might seem more natural to investigate the rhetorical effects of the historiographical modes prevalent in the early modern period with the help of ideas about narrative from the same epoch. But although the discussion of narrative in classical and early modern treatises on rhetoric – the foremost theoretical writings used in the Renaissance – offers profound insight into many aspects of story-telling, it is far from ideal as a framework to analyze historical narrative, because it is limited in a number of ways. Firstly, the advisory character of classical rhetoric prevents it from giving an exhaustive typology of possible ways to relate events. Another important limitation is its orientation towards forensic oratory. As a consequence, most ideas about narrative available within the tradition of classical rhetoric concern the attunement of the statement of facts (*narratio*) to the discussion of evidence (*confirmatio, refutatio*). Finally, classical rhetoric is not equally interested in all levels of narrative: when comparing the precepts of classical rhetoric to the more comprehensive approach of narratology, one notices that the former is generally confined to the levels of plot structure and narrative as performance, ignoring almost completely the textual surface of expression, most particularly the role of the narrator.[19]

It seems that classical treatises on rhetoric and their early modern counterparts are far more useful as a codification of Renaissance literary conventions than as a

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[17] Jaeger 2002, 245-50; Furet 1983², 18-31.
[18] Fueter 1936³, 9-11; Kampinga 1917, 23-5.
[19] Cf. Knape 2003, 98 for the limitations of classical narrative theory as compared to modern narratology.

systematic instrument to analyze the rhetorical effects of historiographical narrative. Therefore, I will turn to the theoretical system and the analytical terminology provided by modern narratology in order to develop a methodical manner to describe the formal characteristics of historical story-telling and their political implications. In the sixties and seventies, structuralist literary theorists such as Roland Barthes, Julien Algirdas Greimas, and Gérard Genette strived to map systematically the possibilities offered by the narrative mode of presentation in all its manifestations, to describe the 'grammar' of narrative – a project explicitly presented as analogous to the attempts in linguistics to provide a taxonomy of the constitutive elements of sentences.

A convenient synthesis of this tradition is offered by Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*.[20] Bal defines narrative as "a text in which an agent relates ('tells') a story ... A *story* is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner. A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors."[21] From this definition, she deduces a systematic description of all conceivable types of narrative and the elements from which they can be made up. In her discussion of the text level, Bal pays attention to the different agents ('narrators') who may act as spokespersons of or within the narrative, how their utterances relate to each other and to the narrative as a whole, and how their comments influence the interpretation of the narrative. The level of the story is about the various possibilities of shaping narratives as regards sequential ordering, rhythm, characterization, and setting. In addition, Bal points to the ways in which the selection and presentation of story elements may depend on the perception of particular narrators and characters. The level of the fabula comprises the temporal and causal connections between events.

In the last few decades after the heyday of structuralism, the field of narrative theory shifted from models of narrative that are primarily text-centered to models that are both text- and context-centered.[22] The emergence of rhetorical narratology is a clear symptom of this development.[23] Falling back on Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), this approach to narrative seeks to explain the conditions under which the devices described by structuralist narratology may have particular effects on an audience. By taking into account the basic conventions of reading narrative and the literary ideals underlying a specific work, rhetorical narratology endeavours to

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[20] Bal 1997[2].
[21] Bal 1997[2], 5 (her italics).
[22] Herman 1999, 8.
[23] For a brief introduction to rhetorical approaches to narrative, see Phelan 2005.

sketch how a narrative with a particular configuration might play with the expectations of a particular readership and what range of effects might possibly result from this interaction – without claiming the ability to predict the reactions of individual readers.[24]

Rhetorical narratology assumes that reading narrative cooperatively is a rule-governed process in which readers construe stories as coherent and relevant utterances by selecting the important elements of a story, attaching meaning to them, arranging them in patterns, and combining these patterns into coherent and meaningful wholes.[25] In part, this process is guided by genre-specific conventions – which will be discussed in the next part of this chapter – but another major role is thought to be reserved for the three basic conventions of reading narrative. The first of these rules is progression: the reader can expect a narrative to present a series of connected events that follow each other chronologically; the narrative should allow the reader to recover the fabula. The second rule is naturalization: the story constructs a hypothetical world that can be reconstructed by the reader. The third rule is authorial reading: the reader may not only immerge himself in the world of the story and the events that take place in it, but he is also supposed to think in a more detached manner about the purpose of the author in writing the narrative, for instance by identifying the main themes.[26]

Since the actual responses depend not only on the use of the narrative mode within a particular text, but also on genre conventions and the individual background of the reader, it would be naive to think that a complete taxonomy of narrative devices and their rhetorical effects could be given. Nevertheless, it may be convenient to indicate a few lines of investigation that arise from the rhetorical approach to narrative and that have proved fertile in the past.

First of all, the situation of narrative transmission merits attention.[27] What kind of narrator is staged? Is he presented as reliable and authoritative, and if so, by what means? In what ways is the narrator connected to the author? How much emotional and moral distance from the story does the narrator keep? Does the narrator give clues as to how the story is to be interpreted? To what extent is the reader's perception of the story confined to a certain point of view by means of focalization? Does the narrator present a design of an ideal reader? In what ways is the reader

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[24] Two studies in field of rhetorical narratology that I have found helpful are Phelan 1996 and especially Kearns 1999.
[25] Kearns 1999, 70-1; Rabinowitz 1987. The model offered by Kearns draws heavily on speech act theory.
[26] Kearns 1999, 47-65.
[27] Kearns 1999, 81-120. For the importance of the situation of narrative transmission in communicating value-based points of view, see Jouve 2001, 89-162.

encouraged to take a step back and reflect on the author's purposes in writing the narrative? Finally, this line of inquiry might also take into account paratexts: how is the narrative framed by title, dedication, preface, and marginal notes?

The temporal structure of narrative is a second aspect of story-telling that lends itself to rhetorical purposes.[28] The most important factor is narrative rhythm: which events are told at great length, and which are almost passed over in silence, and why? Another issue is frequency: which events are referred to more than once? Which types of events are more frequent than others? The order in which events are presented, finally, is perhaps less important for the analysis of historiography, since historical narrative is almost always arranged chronologically.

A third obvious focus of rhetorical narratology is the use of embedded speech.[29] Who is allowed to speak and on what occasion? Who is denied speech? What degree of directness is involved in the representation of speech? To what extent does embedded speech contribute to a reality effect (*effet de réel*)? What is the attitude towards the world of the story implied by the speaker's words? How do the speaker's views relate to those of the narrator and the other characters? Are they in some way or another privileged? What is the thematic function of the speech?

The text by Snoy is a suitable object to demonstrate how the theoretical concepts and idiom outlined above can be used to describe the narrative construction of political ideas. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the passage is the representation of the ideas espoused by the nobility of Holland. To put this in narratological terms, the episode is focalized primarily through the noblemen, that is, the perspective of this group determines to a large extent the way the events are described. The actors and the outcome of the story are plainly mentioned by the narrator. By saying that the inhabitants of Holland and Frisia "both nourished an extraordinary love of freedom," he also implies that this is what they are aiming at. But for the confirmation of this inference and for our knowledge of the receiver, we are dependent on information given by the noblemen. To this extent, their view on matters determines the political tenor of the text.

The representation of their speech and thought reveals a value system by its choice of themes, its evaluative phrases, and its way of arguing. The installation of the count, for instance, is presented as an infringement on the traditional freedom (*libertas*) of the inhabitants of Holland and Frisia. The right to liberty is claimed on the basis of

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[28] Kearns 1999, 140-52.
[29] Kearns 1999, 152-61. The representation of speech and thought in narrative and its relevance for the construction of worldviews within the texts is discussed in Uspensky 1973, 8-16; Jouve 2001, 35-66.

natural law: it is 'bestowed on all by nature' (*natura omnibus data*).[30] The speech of the noblemen thus conveys an interpretation of the events in distinctly political terms. The subject-bound nature of this presentation of the facts can be inferred from an earlier passage. "When Charles, called the Bald, King of the Franks and Holy Roman Emperor … received the message of the disaster in Holland, which the incursion and tyranny of the Danes had almost reduced to a waste and shaggy place, donated Holland and a large part of Frisia to Dirk, a man of particularly eminent military experience, … on that condition that he would throw out the Danes and Normans, chase them away, and force them to leave the province."[31] The donation implies that Charles considers himself entitled to enfeoff Dirk with the province. Moreover, he seems convinced that he does so precisely for the sake of the people's freedom, for Dirk is licensed to govern the province only on the condition that he liberate it from the tyranny (*tyrannis*) of the Normans.

Thus the analysis of the words and deeds described in Snoy's narrative leads to the identification of two subject positions embodying two opposed political stances. The mere events, however, do not give a definitive answer to the question whether either of them should be taken as privileged: the strong presence of the noblemen is not a matter of their dominance as actors on the level of the fabula. Instead, the uncertainty is resolved by the narrator's attempts to regulate the interpretation of the text by establishing authority and centrality. These attempts involve procedures such as selecting or suppressing subject centres to be worked out in detail, reducing other persons to sheer objects, attuning the different story elements that act on each other indirectly, explicitly evaluating characters' deeds and discourse, privileging the voice of one or more characters as the narrator's spokesperson(s), and inserting intertextual and paratextual indications. In the episode about the revolt against Dirk, the narrator refrains from giving any explicit appraisal of the various characters and their actions, but the text seems to favour the point of view of the noblemen, because it is their view that is brought out in full daylight, while Charles' opinion can only be inferred from an earlier remark of the narrator.

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[30] The phrase is probably modelled on Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.17: "libertatem natura etiam mutis animalibus datam". For a further discussion of how the concept of liberty is used in Snoy's *Historia Hollandie*, see §3.7.

[31] *HH* f. 116r-v: "Carolus cui Caluo cognomen rex Francorum ac Romanorum Imperator … accepto Hollandice cladis nuncio que per incursionem et Dacorum tyrannidem ferme in solitudinem vastitatemque abierat, donauit Theodorico viro in primis rei militaris experientissimo Hollandiam cum magna parte Frisie … ea lege vt Dacos et Normannos eijceret, exterminaret atque prouincia cedere cogeret." The Leiden manuscript erroneously reads *Hollandie* instead of *Hollandice* and *qua* instead of *que*. Similarly, Snoy described Dirk's action as the elimination of Norman slavery in book four of the *Historia Hollandie*: *HH* f. 110r-v. During the Middle Ages, Denmark was often referred to as *Dacia*.

2.2.2 Intertextual Analysis

In humanist cultural practices, reading and writing were inextricably intertwined. Imitation of the classical authors was one of the central principles of composition. In their commonplace-books, humanists gathered striking ideas and expressions they encountered while reading, so that they could later incorporate them into their own writings, lending these compositions a copious style and content. This unity of reading and writing was expressed in visual representations of humanists sitting behind their desks and writing in one book, while at the same time reading another.[32]

There exists an extensive corpus of works reflecting on these practices. Many treatises on rhetoric contain sections about the ends and means of imitation; scholars like Pietro Bembo, Estienne Dolet, Jacobus Omphalius, Johannes Sambucus, and Sebastián Fox Morcillo even wrote separate expositions about imitation. Many humanists who had an interest in pedagogy advised their pupils particular ways of keeping and using commonplace-books.[33] Instructive as these writings may be about early modern cultural practices, they are not very informative as to the consequences of such practices for the reception of texts. In many cases, imitation is first of all described as a means of text production. Following Quintilian, early modern theorists imputed to imitation a beneficial effect in mastering the craft of writing and speaking well. It was supposed to contribute especially to a rich vocabulary (*verborum copia*), a varied use of tropes (*varietas figurarum*), and effective methods of composition (*componendi ratio*).[34] This relation between an author and his model(s) was captured in metaphors like bearing a family resemblance to an ancestor, drinking from a spring, culling honey from various flowers, blending different wines, digesting food, bringing together a polyvocal choir, succumbing to a spell, or being impregnated. These metaphors emphasize the invisible character of the subtext(s) rather than its role in the production of meaning.[35]

However, there is also a class of so-called 'eristic' metaphors, which describe imitation as a way to optimize one's literary craftmanship by means of competition with a classical model. This sheds further light on the ways in which the presence of

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[32] For early modern theory and practice as regards commonplace-books, see Moss 1996; for the iconography of the humanist reading and writing simultaneously, see Enenkel 2006, 6-9.

[33] For early modern practice and theory of literary imitation, see Pigman 1980; Greene 1982; Moss 1999; Jansen 2008.

[34] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 10.2.1-2.

[35] Greene 1982, 54-80 has a good overview of these metaphors as they occur in antiquity. Most of them can be found in Seneca the Younger, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* 84. Von Stackelberg 1956 has described how the metaphor of honey production has been used as an image for imitation in antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the modern era. Also see Pigman 1980, who makes the distinction between transformative, dissimulative, and eristic metaphors.

one text in another might enrich the latter text's meaning or reinforce its rhetorical strategies. The eristic metaphors imply that "a reader can feel justified in expecting a text to assert its difference from its model and to make use of that difference." In addition, "the continual insistence on conflict suggests that a text may criticize, correct, or revise its model."[36] Indeed, many humanist writings contain series of unmistakable allusions that an educated reader steeped in classical literature cannot fail to perceive and construe as meaningful sequences.

As an analytical framework that can be used to describe the particular effects of imitative devices, however, the metaphors are rather unprecise. Therefore, it will be profitable to supplement the loose vocabulary offered by classical and early modern literary theory with a modern approach to intertextuality.[37] The foundations of most modern notions of intertextuality were laid in the sixties by Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes. Their aim in developing a concept of intertextuality was to guide the reader towards a liberation from the constraints of traditional interpretation: because a particular text may evoke an infinite number of associations in the mind of an individual reader, the meaning of a text is in principle always ambivalent and unstable. In order to make sense of a text, therefore, the reader has to reorganize the text, rewrite it in his mind on the basis of the subtexts he recognizes. Reading intertextually is thus regarded as a means to stand up to the discursive exercise of power.

This notion of intertextuality describes the text as a site of struggle and places great emphasis on readerly resistance. If such animosity does indeed arise – something which is certainly not always the case, fortunately – the reader is not fighting a sham battle, however: the author has entered the lists against him: opposition is only necessary because a rhetorical assault can be made on the reader in the text. If one is interested in such mechanisms of persuasion at work in – for instance – historical narrative, a model of intertextuality is required that pays more attention to the ways in which different modes of intertextual relations are likely to affect the reader. This model has to explain how the intertextual dimensions of texts may not only destabilize and liberate the production of meaning, but also steer and constrain it: the intertextual domain not only as the reader's sphere of influence, but also as a place to establish authorial control.

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[36] Pigman 1980, 27.

[37] For good introductions to modern approaches to intertextuality, see Allen 2000 and Schahadat 1995.

Important steps towards the development of such a model have been taken by Gérard Genette and Laurent Jenny.[38] In his *Palimpsestes* (1982), Genette coined the term hypertextuality to denote a relation between two texts – a transtextual relation – in which a text has been derived from a previous text through transformation.[39] It must be acknowledged that such a relation is potentially disruptive, since it may destroy the linearity of the text by opening up meaningful sidetracks, by "studding the text with bifurcations that gradually expand its semantic space."[40] Nevertheless, Jenny warns us, the destructive aspects of intertextuality should not be overemphasized: "we must avoid viewing it as no more than a factor for disorganizing discourse – an antirhetoric bomb with effects that are more or less disastrous according to the boldness of the user." Instead, many intertextually coloured utterances are processed in such a way as to normalize them, to facilitate their insertion into a new textual whole.[41]

This normalization can be analyzed as a two-tiered process. First, the text to be incorporated in the target text must be reduced to what Genette calls a matrix of imitation. In imitating a previous text, an author defines what are for him the central characteristics of this text, such as stylistic peculiarities, a particular complex of themes, or a specific type of textual organization. Thus, the author of an imitative text is at the same time the interpreter of another text. Something similar holds for simpler allusions: the imitator selects a number of words that form the core of the passage alluded to. The recurrence in the target text of the elements selected has a double function: on the one hand, they alert the reader to the intertextual process at work and trigger the retrieval of the subtext; on the other, they convey an interpretation of the text that is imitated.[42]

The second phase might be described as transformation and montage. The elements that make up the matrix of imitation are integrated into and subordinated to different structural patterns in the target text: syntactic cohesion, narrative progression, metatextual discourse. Often, this procedure involves a transformation of

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[38] Jenny 1982 and Genette 1982. Allen 2000, 114 suggests that Jenny's article can be viewed as complementary to Genette's work.

[39] Genette 1982, 14; cf. Jenny 1982, 40: "we propose to speak of intertextuality only when there can be found in a text elements exhibiting a structure created previous to the text, above the level of the lexeme, of course, but independently of the level of that structure."

[40] Jenny 1982, 44-5.

[41] Jenny 1982, 50. For the distinction – as made or rejected by various theorists – between intended and unintended intertextual connections and their capacity to constrain or expand the possible meanings of a text, also see Pfister 1985, 20-4.

[42] Genette 1982, 88-92. Similarly, Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 10.2.14-8 suggested that the imitation of a particular author's style begins with the isolation of the stylistic qualities peculiar to this author.

the element to be incorporated. For example, it might be (subtly) rephrased, truncated, amplified, exaggerated, (partly) inverted, or taken over to another level of meaning.[43] Genette offers a systematic catalogue of the ways such transformations shape the relation between the original text and the target text: he distinguishes six main types of hypertextual relations (parody, travesty, transposition, pastiche, caricature, forgery) and gives a detailed account of the forms of transformation by which they can be established.[44] It goes without saying that the rhetorical effectiveness of intertextuality depends on the reader's recognition of the subtext; for this reason, and also because their authority makes them liable to parasitic practices, canonical writings are the most suitable objects of imitation.

The recognizable organization of one text along the lines of a previous one may serve many different rhetorical goals. At the end of his essay, Jenny briefly reviews a limited number of possibilities. For instance, an author who wishes to resist a dominant discourse that cannot be obliterated may instead transform it and incorporate it in his work, and in doing so modify or subvert its message. Alternatively, intertextuality may play a role in the constitution of the subject of discourse, the identity of its speaker: by telling a story that is enhanced by intertextual backgrounds a narrator may give a rich and complex image of himself.[45] Jenny's overview is far from exhaustive, but it explores a promising line of thought and invites further reflection about the ways intertextual relations may be instrumental in achieving rhetorical effects. The case studies that I will conduct in this book will certainly exemplify some alternative persuasive uses of intertextuality.

At this point, it seems convenient to illustrate my approach on the basis of the passage from Snoy's work I discussed above. At the most general level, Snoy imitates the Roman historian Livy. The arrangement of Snoy's work in books (*libri*), which are preceded by a separate preface (*prefatio*), creates a link between the works of Livy and Snoy. The opening sentence of the preface, the first half of which is directly taken from the beginning of Livy's *Ab urbe condita* (*Facturus ne opere pretium sim si …*), expands the Livian matrix of imitation. Another point of contact is the frequent use of fictitious orations in the work of both Livy and Snoy.[46] The most obvious transformation is the temporal and geographic displacement of the model: whereas

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[43] Jenny 1982, 50-9 offers a rough typology of ways to transform subtexts and integrate them into new textual structures. The cinematographic metaphor 'montage' is used by Jenny 1982, 53 and also employed effectively by Enenkel 2003.

[44] The typology is introduced in Genette 1982, 33-40; in the remainder of the book, it is developed in more detail.

[45] Jenny 1982, 59-61.

[46] These connections between both works have been observed before by Kampinga 1917, 2 and IJsewijn 1993, 155-6.

the work of Livy related the history of the Roman Empire in the last eight centuries BC, Snoy describes the history of the county of Holland – including its Batavian prehistory – in the first fifteen centuries AD.

In Jacob Burckhardt's view, the tendency in early modern historiography to follow the model of Livy – "that Procrustean bed of so many writers" – impeded the coming about of authentic and colourful local histories.[47] This positivistic outlook on the intertextual ties between early modern and classical historians is somewhat beside the point and ignores their rhetorical significance. The transposition of the Livian model to the history of Holland does not so much destroy authenticity as play a more positive role by adding a deeper layer of meaning: it suggests, for instance, that the history of Holland has to be regarded as the counterpiece of Roman history, that Snoy is a second Livy, and that the glory bequeathed to Rome by Livy is on a par with that bestowed on Holland by Snoy.

The rhetorical effect of intertextual presences can also be noticed in the design of separate episodes. Let me take the revolt against Dirk I as an example again. On the surface level, the narrator seems to convey an interpretation of the event as a struggle for freedom. The main device to suggest this reading is the centering of focalization on the rebellious noblemen. The intertextual signs contained in the story somewhat contravene such a view of the story, however. Two sentences from the passage are strongly reminiscent of Sallust's description of the last speech of Catiline and his final battle against the troops of the Roman consuls:

"pro patria, pro libertate cadendum, quo nil gloriosum magis"	Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 58: "nos pro patria, pro libertate, pro vita certamus"
"fortissimus quisque trucidatus, nec quisquam nisi vulneratus referebat pedem"	Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 61: "strenuissumus quisque aut occiderat in proelio aut graviter volneratus discesserat"

In addition, a number of ideas from Catiline's oration recur in the noblemen's adhortation to their fellow countrymen: one should either vanquish the opponent or perish in battle, victory will bring freedom, defeat its loss, the outcome will depend on a brave attitude.[48] Thus, while describing the revolt as a fight for liberty, Snoy invokes a grim parallel. Like Dirk's opponents, Catiline seemed a nobleman who

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[47] Burckhardt 1860, 240: "das Procrustesbett so mancher Autoren" (transl. S.G.C. Middlemore).
[48] Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 58.

claimed to be fighting for freedom.[49] Sallust points out, however, that he was actually a shelved aristocrat staging an ultimately unsuccessful coup in order to restore his own wealth and power. This subtext causes the reader of the story about Dirk to rethink the meaning of this specific episode and to reflect on the more general problems of what liberty is and under which conditions it can exist. In this way, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, the story with its intertextual undercurrents contributes to the political rhetoric of Snoy's *Historia Hollandie*, which leans heavily on the concept of liberty as a means to show Charles of Habsburg what his princely duties are.

2.3 REFINING THE ANALYSIS: EARLY MODERN RULES OF READING

In the previous sections I have explained how the use of particular narrative patterns and intertextual backgrounds may play an instrumental role in constructing historical representations in such a way as to convey particular political messages in a persuasive manner. This analysis reaches only a rudimentary level of understanding narrative rhetoric: it explains rhetorical effects in terms of basic communicative competencies on the part of the author and the reader, namely a command of the discursive mode of narrative and a certain sensitivity to the fact that the memory of canonical texts may enrich the meaning of texts which have been derived from them. A more precise comprehension of the rhetorical exchange between a humanist historian and his contemporary audience would require that the ways in which the reader's expectations and responses are organized by the specific conventions of early modern historiography are taken into account.[50] Conversely, investigating humanist works of history without attending to such rules of reading entails the risk of anachronisms.

The use of embedded speech – for instance in Snoy's text about the installation of Dirk I – is a case in point. Like the description of letters, diplomatic meetings, and thoughts, the insertion of orations, both in direct (*oratio recta*) and reported speech (*oratio obliqua*), occurs frequently in early modern historiography. In humanist theory

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[49] For references to liberty by Catiline and his general Manlius, see Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 20: "cum considero, quae condicio vitae futura sit, nisi nosmet ipsi vindicamus in libertatem ... en illa, illa, quam saepe optastis, libertas"; 33: "at nos non imperium neque divitias petimus, quarum rerum causa bella atque certamina omnia inter mortalis sunt, sed libertatem, quam nemo bonus nisi cum anima simul amittit"; 58: "memineritis vos divitias, decus, gloriam, praeterea libertatem atque patriam in dextris vostris portare ... praeterea, milites, non eadem nobis et illis necessitudo inpendet: nos pro patria, pro libertate, pro vita certamus, illis supervacaneum est pugnare pro potentia paucorum".

[50] For the importance of epoch- and genre-specific conventions for the investigation of narrative rhetoric, see Kearns 1999, 70-2; Bal 1997², 82, 95, 124. Schahadat 1995, 375 points to the fact that every literary movement integrates allusions and quotations into the text in a way that complies with its poetics.

of historiography, it is regarded as a means to complete the reader's picture of the characters' motives and to enliven the story.[51] Therefore, whereas the use of fictitious elements in modern historiography would be exceptional, the presence of orations in Snoy's work is by no means marked as a deviation from the norm. It even seems natural to argue that the speeches in Snoy's *Historiae Hollandie* should occupy a central place in my interpretation of this work, because theorists of historiography such as Juan Luis Vives suggested that the insertion of orations into the text must be restricted to the most significant moments in the course of events.[52]

This brief analysis suggests that in order to reconstruct accurately the conditions that governed the structure of narrative transmission in early modern historiographical discourse, in order to understand properly which elements of the story are experienced as marked or unmarked, how audience expectations are played with, and which criteria of judgement are generally adopted, one has to take into account the generic conventions of early modern historical writing as a norm against which deviations can be recognized. In early modern Latin discourses, a significant part of the conventions for textual consumption (and production) is embodied in treatises on rhetoric and poetics. In the words of Ann Moss, "[t]he complementary procedures of analysis and genesis, which are crucial to the humanists' approach to rhetoric, are the progenitors of critically sophisticated readers and of highly self-conscious writers."[53]

In the case of humanist historiography, it is not hard to trace the general rules governing the process of reading – they are the clichés repeated over and over again in prefaces, manuals for the reading of history, and pedagogical programmes.[54] The genre of theoretical writings on historiography known as *ars historica* will prove particularly instructive in this respect. Building on the existing rhetorical system, the writings of this genre elaborated on the conditions for perfect historiography, giving definitions and classifications of history and historiography, distinguishing different types of

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[51] For the humanist theoretical idea that speeches should be used to construe a coherent historiographical narrative, see Grafton 2007, 34-49.

[52] *JLV* vol. 2, 209. For a brief overview of Vives' ideas on historiography, see IJsewijn 1998. For a biography of Vives, see Fantazzi (ed.) 2008. The passage about speeches is treated at greater length in §3.5.

[53] Moss 1999, 108; cf. Moss 2003, 223. The same effect is observed by Hampton 1990, 3 with regard to the use of *exampla*: "in the representation of exemplary figures the *hermeneutic procedures* through which Renaissance culture has appropriated the texts and actors of the past interface with the *rhetorical procedures* through which Renaissance texts fashion the responses of their own readers."

[54] Grafton 2007, 30-2 shows the "strange repetition compulsion" displayed by *ars historica* treatises and the "essential resemblances" among them; on p. 61 he speaks of their "strange apparent continuity in form and content." Landfester 1972, 7 refers to the "zumindest relative innere Homogenität und Statik dieser Überlieferung" and proposes to point to the "zeitkonstanten Elemente".

historiographical narrative, establishing its ideal characteristics, offering reflection on the approach to sources and the organization of the material, demonstrating how history could arrive at its double aim of pleasure and instruction, and making demands upon the historian's person.[55]

However, a number of caveats should be voiced about the conventions of reading and writing as they have been codified in the early modern period. In the first place, while the description of discursive rules in theoretical treatises can be rather sophisticated, the use of this information does raise the problem of the relation between theory and practice. I am aware of the fact that the treatises are not simply a reflection of actual modes of writing and reading, but also contain – possibly idiosyncratic – ideas on how these processes *should* take place.[56] Especially in the second half of the sixteenth century, the theoretical spectrum became quite varied. In my analysis, therefore, I will try to distinguish between precepts peculiar to specific theorists and rules that could count on a degree of consensus in the discourse of historical theory: the former may suggest a reason for the choice of a deviant mode of presentation, while the latter may also provide insight into audience expectations. In addition, historical theory proper will be supplemented by and checked against two more pervasively present types of writing: prefaces of concrete works of history and pedagogical programmes. Although the exposition of discursive rules in the latter writings may be less refined than in *ars historica*, they have the advantage of being connected far more directly to the actual praxis of writing.

Moreover, reflection on cultural codes such as genre conventions is not an activity confined to theoretical treatises. Practitioners of historiography too may well combine the attitudes of being in culture and looking at culture, to borrow a famous phrase coined by anthropologist James Clifford.[57] There are quite some historians, for instance, who try to re-establish explicitly or implicitly the generic code readers are likely to apply. A good example would be the genre experiments carried out by Dousa in both his works of history.[58] In such cases, the attentive reader will adapt his frame of reference. For my analysis, the consequence is that the new set of rules should be made explicit.

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[55] For humanist theoretical treatises on history, see Cotroneo 1971; Kessler 1971; Landfester 1972; Grafton 2007. A good introduction is provided by Kelley 1988.

[56] Also see Cotroneo 1971, 18-28, although I would not go so far as to say that *ars historica* is an "una discussione autonoma, con una sua interna problematica" (p. 23). Grafton 2007 touches on the problem a number of times (p. 30-1, 33, 49, 61), but never treats it at length.

[57] Clifford 1988, 9: "a state of being in culture while looking at culture".

[58] See Chapter Six.

There is a further problem related to the role of the written conventions in the process of writing: the set of codified historiographical principles cannot be regarded as a complete description of all the rules governing the interaction between author and audience. A substantial part of these rules remained unstated and should be regarded as implicit poetics.[59] To a certain extent, this is the case for the signification processes that result from intertextual relations: although Renaissance theory of imitation does not provides much clarity on the consequences of intertextual reminiscences for the interpretation of a text, humanist texts actually contain striking intertextual patterns that evoke a series of meaningfully connected subtexts.[60] I will reserve for my analytical chapters the demonstration of such patterns that bear testimony to implicit poetics.

As to the readerly side of communication, it should be observed that even the remarkably uniform body of rules that was the product of early modern reflections on reading history could by no means determine contemporary readerly practices. Recent studies on the material traces left in books by early modern readers tend to emphasize that the process of reading was goal-oriented and its specific interpretive outcomes depended on individual readers' aims and political and intellectual backgrounds.[61] Thus, the work of Livy or Tacitus could give rise to various analyses when read by different readers, on different moments, for different purposes, and in conjunction with different texts.[62]

I do not pretend, however, that my analyses can reconstruct the behaviour of individual readers; my only claim is that I can sketch the rough outlines of contemporary audience response by pointing to some key factors that are likely to have shaped a text's reception by an educated sixteenth-century readership.[63] Since the texts I will be investigating were intended for dissemination among a large number of recipients, it seems to me that this is in fact the appropriate level of generality to study the role of these texts in a rhetorical interaction between author and audience.

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[59] A brief outline of this poetics can be found in Enenkel 2008, 8-10.

[60] Moss 1999, 112 claims that the status of textual recall in humanist treatises on imitation is entirely unclear. This idea is only justified as regards signification processes; the question of the aesthetical success or failure of literary rivalry is actually raised often enough. To give only one example: the fifth book of J.C. Scaliger's *Poetics* is burdened with examples of it.

[61] For the practices of early modern readers of historiography, see Grafton & Jardine 1990; Sherman 1995, 72-3, 77-8, 90-5; Grafton 1997, 204-8; Woolf 2000, 79-131; Sharpe 2000, 84, 95-101, 196-7, 215-7, 318-20.

[62] In fact, even the differences between single readers are partly prescribed by such treatises: they encourage authors and readers to exercise personal judgement (*iudicium*) with regard to the truthfulness and morality of historiography: for authors, see Landfester 1972, 104-5; a good example can be found in Vives' *De ratione dicendi*: *JLV* vol. 2, 209-10; for readers, see Grafton 2007, 214-6.

[63] Cf. Kearns 1999, 44, 80, 90, 99, 124.

On this level of general conditions for reception, it is enough to notice that while studies of actual readers' behaviour have mainly focused on the differences between readers, it can also be easily deduced from their collections of data that there is a striking degree of homogeneity in early modern readings of historiography that points towards a cultural substrate. While the particular – usually political and moral – advices derived from works of history could be widely divergent, the approach to the text is often more or less the same: keen as they are on exemplary narratives, shrewd observations, and elegant expressions, readers closely examine selected passages, jotting down the lessons they learn in the margins of the book or in commonplace books.

As I will set forth below, this is precisely the way of reading advocated by theoretical and pedagogical treatises. In order to illustrate this observation, I have gathered reactions of flesh-and-blood readers to the work of Snoy – especially the colourful remarks of Janus Dousa Sr and of Snoy's editor and great-nephew Jacobus Brassica. Unfortunately, the readers I have traced are few in number and it is likely that they do not form a representative sample from the total community of readers, even if only because they are all historians in their own right. Still, I am convinced that the comments of Dousa and others provide unique insight into the practices of reading and writing history shared by the members of the Latin-speaking international republic of letters (*respublica litterarum*) of the sixteenth century, since both Snoy and his readers belonged to this speech community.

2.3.1 Rules of Thumb: Prudence and Pleasure

The most important conventions of reading that can be deduced from the *ars historica* and other sources can be summed up in Horace's *utile dulci*: (a) history should teach prudence in order to be useful; (b) history is supposed to entertain the reader in order to be pleasant. In the remainder of this section I will explain in more detail the background of these rules and their coherence.

Generally speaking, the most important characteristic of reading history in the Renaissance – as of any reading in this period – is its orientation towards goals beyond the accumulation of information: "Renaissance readers (and annotators) persistently envisage action as the *outcome* of reading – not simply reading as active, but reading as trigger for action."[64] Theoretical treatises on historiography stated that reading historiography was useful (*utilis*) because it furthered the acquisition of prudence (*prudentia*), the intermediary converting the energies unleashed in the process of

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[64] Grafton & Jardine 1990, 40 (their italics).

reading into actual behaviour.[65] Jacobus Brassica might well have had this type of utility in mind when he exclaimed to the reader in his edition of Snoy: "Gods above, how unfamiliar, how useful to know, how beautiful is the understanding [Snoy] displays!"[66] Many a preface to a work of history warmly recommended that the reader be attentive to the examples of good behaviour to be imitated, and of bad actions to be eschewed.[67]

In this train of thought, exemplarity was regarded as a central characteristic of historiography. Whereas philosophy provided universal prescriptions, history was able to communicate the message more effectively, since it was able to demonstrate moral principles in a more convincing manner. This effect could be achieved by telling remarkable episodes that taught a particular lesson. Such *exempla* were regarded as the means par excellence to teach prudence, since scholars imputed to them a special capacity of inciting people to virtuous action. This was well expressed by Petrarch, who declared that "there is nothing that inspires me as much as the examples of famous men." The effect of *exempla* is based on application: the reader seeks from a narrative about the past what can be applied to his own life. As Timothy Hampton put it, "[t]his application is made possible through a process of appropriation, through which a contingent past activity is raised to a momentary universality that makes discernible its value for the present."[68]

This appropriation process depends to a large extent on the needs of the reader, who may select his *exempla* and who may draw various lessons from a narrative. Like the meaning of language in general, the implications of an example are in principle unstable. For an author who desires to make use of exemplarity this means that "some sort of filtering or censoring gesture must be imposed," to quote Hampton again, especially when the *exemplum* is evoked by very limited means such as the name of a historical person. "If the humanist text is to carry the rhetorical burden of moving the reader to virtuous action, the reader must draw forth from the name [of the exemplary character] an exhortative ethical message devoid of irony or contradiction."[69]

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[65] Landfester 1972, 132-42. For similar views in pedagogical programmes, see Kallendorf (ed.) 2002, 108-9, 224-5; *JLV* vol. 6, 386-92.

[66] Brassica (ed.) 1620, f. †6ʳ: "Di superi quam obscuras scituque vtiles & pulchras intelligentias explicat." Dousa seems to doubt the utility of Snoy's work: *BHA* p. 77.

[67] For instance, Barlandus: *CBd* p. 108; Daxhelet 1938, 271, 276, 279, 282; Dousa: *ARG* p. f. *2ᵛ.

[68] For the exemplarity of historiography, see Kessler 1971, 40-3; Landfester 1972, 57-9; Von Moos 1988; Hampton 1990. For the quote from Petrarch, see Rossi (ed.) 1933-1942, vol. 2, 78 (*Epistole familiares* 6.4.3): "Me quidem nichil est quod moveat quantum exempla clarorum hominum." The other quote is from Hampton 1990, 11.

[69] Hampton 1990, 27.

At school, pupils were trained in the moral approach to history, and particularly the processing of *exempla*. Among the authors to be studied, the classical historians occupied an important place. Together with the scrutiny of these writers as models for style, the organization of examples of laudable and reprehensible conduct in commonplace books under different headings (*tituli*) constituted the quintessential means of putting historiography to good use.[70] In the Brussels manuscript of Snoy's history, one reader wrote the words *amor libertatis* ('love of freedom') in the margin next to the story about the revolt against Dirk I.[71] These words well capture the tenor and exemplary significance of the episode, and might have been capable of serving as a *titulus* in a commonplace notebook.

For an adequate processing of moral examples into persuasive (historical) narratives, classical rhetoric offered two criteria: truth or plausibility of the story and emotional involvement of the reader. These were the main terms under which the transmission of moral values from author to reader was negotiated; as such they were essential conditions for a successful reception of its content.

In order to communicate morality effectively, it was regarded a *conditio sine qua non* to in the first place grip and hold the reader's attention. The aesthetic branch of humanist historiography's double aim of *utile dulci*, its striving for delightfulness, was the device that could accomplish this. In his preface to his *Gesta Ferdinandi regis Aragonum* (1445/1446), Lorenzo Valla explicitly linked historiography's potential for diversion to the wish to convey a moral message: "For the will to give precepts to others is quite odious, because it smells of arrogance and swollen-headedness. The fact is, just like our lofty and proud mind scorns to accept good advice from, as it were, someone who is wiser, it also acquiesces to the same person when he proceeds in a roundabout way via examples and in an enticing manner, particularly when, metaphorically speaking, that painting of characters instils hope in the soul and inspires it with incentives for emulation."[72]

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[70] For the role of historiography in education, see Landfester 1972, 54-78. For commonplace notebooks, see Grafton 2007, 207-29. Lipsius' ideas about such notebooks are discussed by Laureys 2006. The use of commonplace books in reading history is extensively discussed by Bodin 1566, 24-40. In their pedagogical works, many humanists drew up lists of historians to be read by students with an explanation how they should be approached, usually emphasizing style and exemplary stories: Moss 1996, 125, 153-4, 276; *JLV* vol. 6, 392-401; Daxhelet 1938, 303-4; Kallendorf (ed.) 2002, 98, 108, 224; *ASD* IV-1, 180.
[71] KBR ms. 13912, f. 64r.
[72] Besomi (ed.) 1973, 4: "Nam precipere aliis velle fere odiosum est, quia arrogantiam et tumorem animi olet. Mens enim nostra sublimis ac superba ut rectam preceptionem tanquam a sapientiore dedignatur accipere, sic eidem oblique per exempla et blande subeunti acquiescit, cum presertim illa velut pictura personarum et spem inducat animo et stimulos emulationis incutiat." Cf. Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares* 5.12.5 for the pleasure afforded by works of history.

The case of Snoy exemplifies the significance of the issue of pleasantness. Snoy himself had severe doubts about the literary attractiveness of his work. In a letter to Erasmus, he stated his intention to postpone the publication of his work, confessing that he knew "how slender is my plenishing, alike of words and style" and that he was aware of his own ignorance.[73] In a pamphlet published in support of Dousa printed in 1602, an anonymous epigrammatist agreed wholeheartedly. "The elegance of Latium is absent," he declared. Wholly in line with this view, he gave the following advice to Brassica: "Of what use is it that you restore to light the fancies of Snoy, which have been hidden in the underworld for some sixty years already? How much better it would be to hand over the Snoyan monstrosities to the limping god [to give them to Vulcan, that is, to burn them], so that you would clear away the entire problem by this single erasure!"[74] Apparently, Brassica recognized the weight of this allegation and tried to save his great-uncle's reputation for literary quality: "my relative is a very worthy author indeed, who, even if he did not fully polish up his work by means of a pure Latin vocabulary, still adorned it (*ornavit*) in a splendid way by bringing out its variety of places and events."[75]

2.3.2 Criteria of Judgement: Truth, Ethos, Vividness, Emulation

For Renaissance authors and readers, history was a teacher of virtue (*historia magistra vitae*), and a good one if it was engaging too. As a consequence, humanist views on historiography involved a well-defined set of literary devices enabling historians to construct an enjoyable narrative, expressive of moral wisdom. Conversely, knowledge of these historiographical techniques shaped the expectations of readers and supplied them with the means to judge the story and to retrieve the wisdom 'hidden' in it. In this section, an outline will be given of the most important of these formal characteristics of historiographical discourse; in addition, I will sketch the conditions

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[73] *OEDE* vol. 2, 332 (n⁰ 458): "gnarus <sum> quam sit mihi curta tum verborum tum orationum supellex, propriae inscitiae mihi conscius" (transl. R.A.B. Mynors & D.F.S. Thomson). This doubt is frequently expressed in Snoy's prefaces as well: *HH* f. 17ʳ-18ᵛ, 114ᵛ-116ʳ, 363ʳ-364ʳ.

[74] Philodusus 1602, f. C2ʳ: "At decor his Latialis abest, (quod & ipse fateris) / Scalpello quereris hinc opus esse tuo. / Quid prope Bissenis Erebo iam condita Lustris / Reddere te luci Somnia SNOIA iuvat? / Quam satius, vitium ut purges una omne litura, / SNOIA Tardipedi te dare Monstra Deo!" Note that this poem refers to Catullus 36.7: "scripta tardipedi deo daturam". Another scathing remark about Snoy's style can be found on Dousa Sr 1591, f. (:)iiiijʳ.

[75] Brassica 1603, 17: "Dignissimus nae hic noster, qui etsi verborum latinitate non perpolivit opus, praeclare tamen ornavit, locorum rerumque varietate." In Brassica (ed.) 1620, f. †3ʳ, he tried to excuse Snoy by presenting him as a medieval chronicler: his style may be "trivial" (*triuiali stylo*) and suffer from "the barbarism of those days" (*diei illius barbarie*), but – as Brassica states on f. †6ʳ – "Norimus eloquentiae laudem minus fuisse illi seculo: id metiri velis? Quin satis est, omni doctrina optimarum artium fuisse instructum, & res, quas deleuerat obliuio, indagasse, patefecisse, protulisse."

under which the information conveyed with the help of these forms could be accepted as truthful, and the extent to which the forms were supposed to contribute to the enjoyment of the narrative.

Truth was the main standard by which the acceptance of historical narratives was settled. Cicero's famous laws of history – not to utter any falsehood, not to omit anything true, to forestall any suspicion of partiality – found acceptance with historians and historical theorists alike.[76] The truth (*veritas*) of exemplary narrative was regarded as an indispensable surety for the reliability of the moral that was taught.[77] In the words of Guarino da Verona's epistolary treatise on the nature of historical writing (1446), "the first purpose of history and its only design is utility, namely that which is drawn from the expression of truth itself (*veritatis professio*), from which – as a result of its knowledge of past events – the mind becomes more competent to act, more motivated to strive for virtue and glory by imitation, and more things like these."[78]

Therefore, when Cornelius Aurelius takes off his hat to his friend and fellow historian Snoy because of his "incredible and so careful investigation of the historical truth (*historica veritas*)," this has to be understood as one of the highest praises possible for a writer of history.[79] Dousa's judgement of Snoy, on the other hand, also revolves around truthfulness as the key criterion, but the result of the assessment is quite the opposite of Aurelius' appraisal. When reading the passage about Dirk's entry into Holland, Dousa wrote in the margin: "Here our lover of plays talks confidently about a matter entirely made up (*omnino conficta*)."[80] As to the account of Dirk I's reign in general as given by Snoy and the rest of "Hunibald's offspring," Dousa is hardly less negative: "We should not be surprised that this kind of frauds does not at all shrink from fabricating (*confingere*) such stories; it is rather more

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[76] Cicero, *De oratore* 2.62: "Nam quis nescit primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat? Deinde ne quid veri non audeat? Ne quae suspicio gratiae sit in scribendo? Ne quae simultatis?"

[77] Landfester 1972, 95.

[78] Sabbadini (ed.) 1915-1919, vol. 2, 462 (n° 796): "Primus nanque historiae finis et unica est intentio utilitas, scilicet quae ex ipsius veritatis professione colligitur, unde animus ex praeteritorum notitia scientior fiat ad agendum et ad virtutem gloriamque imitatione consequendam inflammatior aliaque huiuscemodi".

[79] Vulcanius (ed.) 1586, 51-2: "hanc incredibilem atque adeo accuratam historicae veritatis indaginem". Cf. the judgement of Gerard Geldenhouwer, who gives the advice to his readers that "Qui vero accuratius et cumulatius aliquid de Bathavorum gestis legere cupit Renati Snoii Goudani, insignis medici, *Historiam Hollandicam* legat." This remark can be found at Bejczy & Stegeman (edd.) 1998, 44.

[80] UBU ms. 772, f. 105ʳ: "Fabulatur hic Suauiludius confidenter in re omnino conficta." In the margins of f. 103ʳ⁻ᵛ of the same manuscript, Arnoldus Buchelius wrote similar remarks: "non factum", "nuga<e>".

staggering that it never occurred to them to lie in a likely way (*verisimiliter*), at least."[81]

This last comment marks a sore point in humanist thought about historiography: although the importance of truthfulness might seem obvious, it was not very easy to develop safeguards of truth. As propositions about history cannot be checked against the contemporary external world, historiography is bound to use documentary evidence. Because of the lack of eyewitnesses, this is especially true for humanist works about medieval history. As sceptics like Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim and Francesco Patrizi da Cherso were eager to point out, the frequent occurrence of conflict between these sources badly hindered the historian's access to the truth.[82]

The methods of the courtroom offered a way out of this difficulty. As Hadrianus Junius put it, "on uncertain, obscure, or contested issues, the historian must be like a judge (*iudex*), so that he makes an inquiry into the truth by means of a skilful investigation."[83] The historian was supposed to assess the reliability (*fides*) of his sources as if they were witnesses giving testimonies (*testimonia*).[84] Rhetorical rules for the invention and disposition of a probable judicial narrative offered workable criteria by which historians could both judge their sources and be judged by their own readership. Quintilian, for instance, advised to pay attention to the logical coherence of the events on the one hand and the characters' motives, dispositions, and previous deeds on the other.[85] Such rhetorical standards for a plausible narrative structure were adopted in humanist historical theory as a model for reflection on the historian's practice, *in casu* source selection, source criticism, and causality.[86]

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[81] *BHA* p. 189: "Hunnibaldinae Prosapiae nepotibus", "minus mirandum, hoc tenebrionum genus talia nihil veritos confingere; admirabilius illud, ne verisimiliter quidem vt mentirentur eos in animum induxisse." Cf. *ARG* p. 21. The chronicle of Hunibald was a forgery from the pen of Johannes Trithemius.

[82] Agrippa 1531, f. 21ᵛ-24ʳ; Kessler 1971, 22-5. Brassica 1603, 19 downplays the problem: "Iam si quis in tanta discrepantia atque dissensione opinionum, illam amplectitur, quam post forte non probat aliquis, falsis illum scriptis imbuere mentes mortalium vociferabitur? nulla dabitur scriptori libertas?"

[83] Junius 1588, 169: "in rebus indefinitis, obscuris, controuersis ... vt iudex esse debet historicus, quo verum artificiosa indagine exquirat". For the parallel between the historian and the judge in the work of Junius, also see Kampinga 1917, 34.

[84] Franklin 1963, 127-30 for a similar parallellism of witnesses in court and sources in historiography in the work of François Baudouin. Brassica 1603, 15-6 presents his quarrel with Dousa about the work of Snoy as a lawsuit in which the States of Holland and the magistrate of Gouda will give a fair verdict. Also see §6.1.3 for the analogy between the historian and the judge.

[85] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 4.2.52-60.

[86] Kessler 1971, 31-6; Landfester 1972, 80-94; Kessler 1982, 69-80. Although focusing mainly on the problem of truthfulness in fictional texts, Moss 2003, 191-223 has a very interesting discussion of the way humanists established truth conditions for narrative; historical truth is treated only obliquely.

Dousa's unflinching rejection of Snoy's story about Dirk I nicely illustrates how readers might apply the truth principle to works of history. First of all, he observes that the account lacks reliable sources. In the form cast by Snoy, it cannot be found in the oldest chronicles and annals. "Their silence," Dousa infers, "attests to the fact that there is not a grain of truth (*nihil veri*) in [the new version of the story]."[87] But the presentation of the facts is also improbable in itself: how likely is it that a people worn out by gory raids will revolt against its liberator?[88] Thus Dousa's complaint that "it never occurred to them to lie in a likely way" can be regarded as resulting from the application of the rhetorical rules requiring consistency of act, motives, and external circumstances.[89]

The reliability of a work of history was not supposed to depend on the documentary foundation and the internal consistency of the narrative alone. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the emphasis on verisimilar causal patterns is part of the concept of narrative ἦθος. Aristotle states that in order to be convincing, narration should depict character, both of the narrator and of the story characters. Besides the possibility of generating credibility by showing causal relations, the principal way to attain this goal is the indication of moral purpose.[90]

Thus, the trustworthiness of historical narratives was connected with both the object and the subject of story-telling. Consequently, the narrator's self-presentation became a factor of vital importance in establishing the authority of the narrative. Barthes referred to this aspect of historical narrative as "all the discursive elements through which the historian – as the empty subject of the uttering – replenishes himself little by little with a variety of predicates which are destined to constitute him as a *person*, endowed with a psychological plenitude, or again (the word has a precious figurative sense) to give him *countenance*."[91] In the classical rhetoric of Aristotle, the

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[87] *BHA* p. 187-9; the quote is on p. 188: "nihil in his veri esse, silentio suo palam attestantibus".

[88] *BHA* p. 189-192.

[89] Cf. Dousa's analysis of the continuation of the story about Dirk's installation (the punishment of the noblemen) at *BHA* p. 207: "eo Lucumonum genere, qui in Rhapsodiis suis nec locorum vspiam, nec temporum discrimen facere; neque personarum rationem habere vnquam didicere". Also see §§6.1.3 and 6.2.1 for Dousa's views on this point. Brassica 1603, 18 makes the general statement that "Quae ordine & ratione vacant, multorum ea iudicio mentita, & falsa, plenaque erroris sunt: quae vero non solum ordine, sed & momento ac iudicio disposita, esse vera comprobamus."

[90] Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 3.16 (1416b-1417b): "ἠθικὴν δὲ χρὴ τὴν διήγησιν εἶναι· ἔσται δὲ τοῦτο, ἂν εἰδῶμεν τί ἦθος ποιεῖ. ἐν μὲν δὴ τὸ προαίρεσιν δηλοῦν, ποιὸν δὲ τὸ ἦθος τῷ ποιὰν ταύτην, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις ποιὰ τῷ τέλει ... ἂν δ' ἄπιστον ᾖ, τότε τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπιλέγειν". For similar but less coherent remarks, see Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 4.2.125 and Cicero, *Partitiones oratoriae* 9.31, who state that narration can generate a credible and authoritative character for an orator. For a more extensive discussion of historiographical ἦθος, see Sabbah 1978, 520-5.

[91] Barthes 1967, 68: "tous les fragments de discours où l'historien, sujet vide de l'énonciation, se remplit peu à peu de prédicats variés destinés à le fonder comme une *personne*, pourvue d'une plénitude

countenance of an effective narratorial persona should be marked by laudable morals. For historians, explicitly stating one's dedication to the pursuit of veracity was a fine way of gaining such authenticity. Indeed, as we have seen, such statements are absent in few humanist works of history. In addition, the idea that a writer of history should be an expert on the issues about which he wrote was widespread.[92]

The connection between the moral qualities of the historian and his scholarly credibility is nicely illustrated by Brassica's defence of Snoy. For Brassica, Dousa's critique of Snoy was unjustified, because the latter deserves credence and respect because of his civil merits and integrity: "But if it is taken for benevolence, whenever someone provides the fatherland to which he is obliged with some benefit, would it not be disgraceful, then, to say or do something unjust like that? If [Snoy] would have been hired on too high a salary to devote his efforts to historiography, he would have shown that he was interested in making money as long as that was opportune, and we would say that he deserved less well of the state. But if no one commissioned him with his task and he himself was not consumed with greed for money, why will he be suspected to have lied in order to gain benefits and influence, or will he make the testimony of a most honest man less credible?"[93]

While as a guarantee of utility, truthfulness carried a lot of weight with Renaissance readers of history, other criteria were needed to meet the demand of pleasantness. Classical rhetoric's store of techniques suggested at least two devices to achieve enthralling story-telling: *evidentia* and peripety. *Evidentia* – ἐνάργεια in Greek – involves the presentation of an event or object in such a lively way that the audience can almost see it. Therefore, it is also known as *ante oculos demonstratio*. This engrossing stimulation of the imagination is best brought about by a number of well-chosen evocative details (σαφήνεια), such as conversations or thoughts of characters or visually suggestive particulars. [94] Peripety (περιπέτεια), a term borrowed from

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psychologique, ou encore (le mot est précieusement imagé) d'une *contenance*." (transl. S. Bann) The italics are Barthes'. For the type of scholarly argumentation in which the (early modern) author shows himself to be in charge and for the presence of the author as director, see Taavitsainen 2002, 214-8.

[92] Landfester 1972, 96-104.

[93] Brassica 1603, 17: "Quod si pro benevolentia est habendum, quoties quis, cui est obstrictus, patriam qualicunque emolumento ditaverit, an non turpe est, eiusmodi aut dicere, aut facere iniuriam? Si nimium magno conductus operam in historia collocasset, ostenderet, dum esset commodum, se pecuniam facere voluisse, minusque de Republica promeritum diceremus: at si laborem hunc illi nemo imperavit. nec ipse tum amore pecuniae fuerit captus, cur beneficij gratiaeque causa suspicabitur mentitum, aut minus viri integerrimi testimonio dabit fidem?" Note that Brassica creates an implicit contrast between Snoy, who did not work for an employer, and Dousa, whose work was commissioned by the university library of Leiden (see the first paragraphs of Chapter Six). This was a point of some importance in Bockenberg polemic: see Maas 2011b, 25 for another example.

[94] For *evidentia*, its means, and its effects in classical rhetoric, see Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 4.2.61-4, 4.2.123-4, 6.2.29-32, 9.2.40-4. For a careful discussion of *evidentia* in Livy, see Burck 1934, 197-209.

Aristotle's theory of drama, is a sudden reversal of the story. The gradual build-up of the story to this moment may involve a certain amount of suspense. The turn of events itself will lead to an effect of surprise or consternation (ἔκπληξις).[95]

Both *evidentia* and peripety afford pleasure by achieving emotional involvement in the audience. The key to understanding their effectiveness is the identification of the reader with one or more characters in the story, which leads to shared anxieties and a desire to know how the story continues. As a result, the reader will take interest in the story. As I explained above, capturing the audience was seen as a prior condition for the transmission of any message: the involvement of the reader was supposed to reinforce the internalization of *exempla* and to enhance the credibility of the story.

In an epoch that esteemed antiquity so highly, emulating a classical predecessor's style and method made up another powerful way to secure the audience's attention. The humanist historian, typically, was well aware of his stance towards his craft's tradition. He skillfully passed the threads of his historical material between the clearly identifiable warps of his historiographical model. Above this basic linguistic level, he could also find inspiration in its narrative techniques and its organization of the material too, especially its way of handling sources and construing causal connections, its choice of themes, and its use of historical exemplarity.[96]

It has been explained above that Renaissance treatises on the imitation of authors (*imitatio auctorum*) mainly tend to describe this procedure in terms of a competition with a classical author, which serves as an opportunity to enhance the literary quality of a work. Well-educated readers probably often recognized this technique. In his commentary on his own *De Hollandiae principibus*, for instance, Barlandus gives as a comment to a particular phrase about the life of count William II: "This is emulation of Livy."[97] However, readers generally do not comment on the

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[95] Aristotle, *Poëtica* 11 (1452a22). For ἔκπληξις in Livy, Burck 1934, 210-26.

[96] Fueter 1936³, 9-11; Kampinga 1917, 23-4; Osmond & Pade 1999, 157-9. In *De studiis et litteris*, Leonardo Bruni suggests that the classical historians are particularly worthy models of style: Kallendorf (ed.) 2002, 108-9. To some extent, this attitude towards the historiographical tradition was prefigured by the classical historians. In recent scholarly literature, it has been demonstrated that the work of authors like Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus features many intertextual connections, especially with previous historiography: see, for instance, O'Gorman 2009, Levene 2010, and Marincola 2010. Some obvious examples are Tacitus, *Annales* 1.1 ("urbem Romam a principio reges habuere"), which refers to Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 6 ("urbem Romam, sicuti ego accepi, condidere atque habuere initio Troiani"); Cicero, *In Catilinam oratio prima* 1 ("quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?"), which recurs in Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 20 ("quae quousque tandem patiemini, o fortissumi viri?") and Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 6.18 ("quousque tandem ignorabitis vires vestras, quas natura ne beluas quidem ignorare voluit?").

[97] Barlandus 1520, f. Dij^r: "Ad puberem aetatem incolumis mansit.) Liuiana est aemulatio, subiecissem Liuij verba, si libri copia fuisset id temporis, cum haec celeritate multa commentarer." He refers to Livy,

precise consequences of intertextual reminiscences for the interpretation of a text, as I stated above. Dousa's reaction to Snoy's account of the second revolt against Dirk I is typical for this approach. To Dousa's taste, the resemblance of this story to Livy's account of Sextus Tarquinius' tough measures against the city of Gabii was rather too close. His opinion materialized in the margins of the manuscript he was using: "Here a floret from Livy has been twisted into this garland."[98] In his works of history, he formulated this observation in a slightly different way: "The pleasantness of this narration has been forged on the basis of [Livy]."[99] Apparently, Dousa had a keen eye for the presence of classical models, although he blames Snoy for practising inadequate *imitatio*: using a model in order to embellish works of history with invented stories endangers their reliability. Hence, echoing Livy in this particular manner spoils rather than improves the historian's craftmanship, since the latter is judged by the truthfulness of the narrations it produces.

2.4 ASSESSING SPECIFICITY: COMPARATIVE CRITICISM

After my description of how particular narrative and intertextual structures mediate the transmission of political messages via a particular work of history and of which role early modern historiographical conventions play in this process, the final step in my exposition will be to assess the specificity of my results. To this end, I will use a number of techniques to link and compare texts that can be grouped under the heading 'comparative criticism.'

These techniques can be roughly divided in two groups: comparison with parallel texts and comparison with source texts. To compare a text with all kinds of texts from its cultural environment – even if direct connections seem absent – is an important way to situate the former in its literary, intellectual, and political context. For instance, one could compare Snoy's *Historia Hollandie* to the archetype of humanist historical writing, Leonardo Bruni's history of Florence, in order to find out to which extent his style diverges from the humanist ideal as exemplified by Bruni, to which extent the Livian matrix of imitation constituted is particular to Snoy, and whether the organization of the material and the narrative strategies employed by

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Ab urbe condita 1.3: "nondum maturus imperio Ascanius Aeneae filius erat; tamen id imperium ei ad puberem aetatem incolume mansit".

[98] UBU ms. 772, f. 107ʳ: "Flosculus hic ex Livio adsutus huic coronae." The story about Gabii can be found in Livy 1.54.

[99] *ARG* p. 19: "Atque inde tota narrationis hujus festivitas adumbrata." Cf. *BHA* p. 184. At *ARG* p. 19-20, Dousa adds an additional layer of irony to his critique by means of intertextual allusions to Ovid's account of the same event in his *Fasti*, which was the principal model for Dousa's *ARG*: "Fraenandi Populum quod sibi monstret iter" refers to Ovid, *Fasti* 2.702: "perdendi Gabios quod sibi monstret iter"; "Romulei agnosco Iussa Parentis, ait" refers to Ovid, *Fasti* 2.708: "filius agnosco iussa parentis ait".

Snoy is marked as deviating from the norm. Alternatively, one might juxtapose Snoy's work with political treatises, such as Erasmus' *Institutio principis Christiani*. Such a comparison might point to peculiarities in the ways Snoy uses concepts such as 'liberty' and 'monarchy.' In all the cases mentioned in this paragraph, comparative criticism is a tool to determine the markedness of particular textual traits.

To illustrate this approach, one might compare Snoy's treatment of the story about Dirk I with the way Barlandus told the same episode in his *De Hollandiae principibus*, which was first printed in 1519. The fact that Snoy's interpretation of the event as a praiseworthy struggle for liberty is not self-evident is easily demonstrated by such a comparison, since Barlandus' use of the story is quite different. In Barlandus' account, the inhabitants of Holland rebelled because "they began to begrudge the peace of Dirk with their neighbours that was so durable." The count did not have any sympathy for such considerations and did not hesitate to inflict capital punishment on the initiators of the conspiracy (*autores coniurationis*). It does not seem that Barlandus had any objections against the authoritarian behaviour of the count, or that he perceived any threat to the inhabitants' liberty.[100] As will be shown in Chapter Four, this fits in very well with Barlandus' loyal attitude towards the Habsburg government of his time.

In the case of comparison with a source text, the ties between the texts are a little closer and this offers additional possibilities for analysis. Since medievalist historiography always had to resort to written sources for its supply of historical data – there were no eyewitnesses anymore – it is almost always possible to compare its products with their sources. In fact, Renaissance historians were often very much conscious of this fact and tried to establish their authority by emphasizing their recourse to sources that were perceived as reliable, thereby making a virtue of necessity. As Snoy put it: "I do not promise embellishment or elegance, but uncorrupted reliability, relating true events rather than showy stories ... leaving aside matters uninvestigated, for what is said without reliable authority or good reason is refuted as easily as it is brought forward."[101]

The documentary material was subjected to critical examination, selection, and procedures of rewriting, a process which resulted in a stylistic, structural, and political

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[100] Barlandus 1520, f. Aiij^r: "Deinde cum inuidere coepissent ij populi tam longam Theodorico cum finitimis pacem, eum prouincia eiecerunt, eiectus, confugit ad vnicum, & promptissimum subsidium Carolum Caluum Imperatorem, cuius iterum opera non ita multo post in Hollandiam reductus, de ijs qui coniurationis autores fuerant, supplicium sumere non distulit." Also see Kampinga 1917, 112-5 about the different interpretations of the revolt by various early humanist historians.

[101] *HH* f. 19^v: "neque ornatum neque elegantiam sed incorruptam rerum fidem profitemur, vera potius quam dictu speciosa enarrando ... incomperta in medium relinquendo, quum quod absque certo auctore aut ratione dicitur, eadem facilitate contempnitur qua profertur."

shift from source to target text. Therefore, not only the individuality of a work of history, but also the activity of the author as a reader and writer can very well be illustrated by means of a meticulous analysis of omissions and additions, of subtle rephrasings of the source material. Thus regarded, *Quellenforschung* is also a means of verifying the results of rhetorical, narratological, and intertextual analysis and a way of estimating their significance.[102] It also follows from this definition of my objectives in conducting source criticism, that I will not try to track down the origin of each and every bit of information that is communicated in the works of history of my corpus; I will only dig into the sources if this seems fruitful for the interpretation of the passages that will be discussed.[103]

A brief analysis of Snoy's narrative about the installation of Dirk I will illustrate my points about source criticism. The source underlying this account is Johannes Gerbrandsz. a Leydis' *Chronicon comitum Hollandie et episcoporum Vltraiectensium*, the first version of which was written around 1468.[104] The most noticeable difference between the texts of A Leydis and Snoy is undoubtedly the contrasting aesthetical ideals they are striving for. While the former's language is characterized by repetition of words, frequent use of post-classical grammatical constructions such as the ablative of the gerund instead of the present participle, the commonness of referential terms such as 'aforementioned' (*prefatus, iam dictus*), and the employment of Biblical phrases such as "behold, this day was a day of wrath" (*ecce dies illa dies ire*), the latter clings to a humanist ideal of Latinity, using the tropes of rhetoric and a classicizing vocabulary and syntax. The comparative analysis thus contributes to a clear description of the stylistic ideal that was supposed to fulfil the

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[102] An illustration of this method is Black 1985, 298-317.

[103] Chapter Four about the *Cronica Brabantiae ducum* by Adrianus Barlandus is an exception: at this point source criticism becomes my central focus in order to demonstrate in detail the procedures of rewriting involved in writing a compendium.

[104] About A Leydis and his work, see Ebels-Hoving 1985. The passage concerned can be found in UBL ms. BPL 127d, f. 36ʳ⁻ᵛ: "Karolus Caluus rex Francie cum Theoderico nepote suo ob hoc properauit cum magno exercitu applicaturus ad terram prefatam, vt Theodericum principem armata manu introduceret in possessionem iam dicte prouincie. Quod cum notificatum siue intimatum fuisset, borchgrauio opidi Leydensis ac domino de Valkenborch qui nolebant Theodericum principem prefatum pro eorum domino acceptare, sed volebant cum Frisonibus sub libertate regis ac imperatoris permanere. Ex tymplo predictus borchgravius cum domino de Valkenborch conspiracionem faciens congregando Hollandros in vnum collegerunt exercitum validum cum quo resistere possent regi Francie. Quibus sic gestis, Karolus Caluus rex Francie cum Theoderico comite cognato suo ad Hollandiam descendit, et commissum est bellum. Et ecce dies illa dies ire, quoniam electi pugiles ab vtraque parte ceciderunt. Deinde post longum conflictum victorialis laus attributa est Karolo regi Francie ac Theoderico principi, quoniam corruerunt occisi in eodem duro certamine borchgrauius Leydensis ac dominus de Valkenborch, et ex tunc omnis populus submiserunt colla mandato Caroli regis Francie et inclinauerunt ceruices suas domino Theoderico principi, ipsum pro comite & vero domino Hollandie accipiendo."

demand of pleasantness. An understanding of stylistic procedures of rewriting are relevant for my investigation, because style itself may operate as a rhetorical device supporting the authorization of the text as part of the classical tradition and the author's self-presentation as a humanist.

The divergence between medieval and Renaissance ideals of historiography is also visible in the narrative patterns featuring in both texts. Most importantly, comparison affirms the importance of *evidentia* in general and speech in particular for a complete understanding of Snoy's work. Whereas A Leydis is very sparing in his use of orations and dialogues, they are rather frequent in Snoy, and usually long and rhetorically elaborated at that.[105] In addition, the fact that A Leydis' chronicle generally lacks the dramatic aspects so abundantly at hand in Snoy's history can be connected with another peculiarity of humanist historiography: its strong and self-conscious dependence on literary models from antiquity. Whereas Snoy seeks alliance with Livy as regards the presentation of history and includes implicit references to Sallust in his narrative, no such attempt seems to be made by A Leydis. Neither did Snoy get his fondness for classical quotations from A Leydis.

This comparison of both texts brings out more clearly the specificity of the humanist mode of historical representation preferred by Snoy and of the political views disseminated. As in the comparison with Barlandus' history, it helps me to delineate more sharply the way political views are transmitted, *in casu* the role of speech in the formation of political viewpoints in the text and the importance of classical models for the acquisition of authority. In addition, the comparison also helps to clarify the nature of Snoy's contribution as regards political content. The hostility towards the count of Holland and the sympathy for the noblemen which make up a prominent aspect of Snoy's story, are not very conspicuous in A Leydis' version. While the latter does mention the word 'freedom' (*libertas*) once, he does not dwell on it like Snoy does, nor is the 'fatherland' (*patria*) present at all. Like Barlandus, A Leydis uses the term 'conspiracy' (*conspiracio*) for the activity of the nobility of Holland, a word with rather negative undertones. All these slight changes together testify to a political transformation from source to target text.

Let me conclude this section by briefly pointing out the distinction between intertextual and comparative techniques of analysis. Although both achieve their results by linking the text that is investigated to other texts from its cultural

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[105] A good example is the speech exchange between Dirk III of Holland and Adelbold II of Utrecht: in A Leydis this discussion is very concise: UBL ms. BPL 127d, f. 42^v-43^v; Sweertius (ed.) 1620, 118-9. Snoy, on the other hand, gives ample space and rhetorical display to the dialogue: *HH* f. 134^{r-v}. Also see Kampinga 1917, 93-5 about this episode in humanist historiography.

environment, there are important differences between both methods as regards the communicative status of the relations between texts they demonstrate and, consequently, the purpose they serve in my analysis. As to the first point, I define an intertextual relation as determinate: the subtext can be identified unmistakenly; therefore, its presence may contribute to the rhetoric of a work of history. [106] Consequently, the likeliness of recognition by a competent reader is the central criterion to decide whether the rhetoric of a particular work or passage relies on intertextuality. The texts used in comparative analyses do not necessarily play such a well-defined role in the communication between author and audience: texts suitable for comparison might be treatises or pamphlets that use a particular political concept, historical sources, or historiographical writings exhibiting (dis)similar strategies of presentation; in any case, the validness of a comparative analysis does not depend on the recognition by the reader of the texts used in the comparison. For this reason – and this is the second point of difference between both approaches – I will use comparative criticism to assess the specificity of a concept or a representational mode within its cultural context, whereas my intertextual analyses aim at identifying rhetorical strategies.

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[106] Cf. Seneca the Elder's remark about emulation in his *Suasoriae* 3.7: "itaque fecisse illum, quod in multis aliis versibus Vergilii fecerat, non subripiendi causa sed palam mutuandi, hoc animo ut vellet agnosci".