The lure of the dark ages : writing the Middle Ages and political rhetoric in humanist historiography from the low countries

Maas, C.

❧ Chapter Seven

The Specificity of Humanist Latin: The Relation Between Latin and Vernacular Historiography

In the case studies of this book, a number of textual strategies in the historiography of Reynier Snoy, Adrianus Barlandus, Petrus Divaeus, and Janus Dousa, and also the social contexts in which they make sense as political rhetoric, have been described. Many of these strategies are directly dependent on the possibilities offered by the Latin language and especially the classical literary tradition. This is most easily discerned in the use of genre conventions, rhetorical precepts, and intertextual references. On the other hand, early modern Latin historiography was by no means an isolated tradition: it has already been shown in the previous chapters, for instance, to which extent historians writing in Latin relied on vernacular source material. In view of this tension between interrelatedness and independence, it would be worthwhile to find out to which extent particular historiographical practices are confined to the Latin historiographical discourse, what kind of interaction there is with historical writing in the vernacular in this period, and whether such phenomena can be explained by contextual factors, particularly audience. Such an investigation might help to shed light on the specific literary and social position of Latin historiography and put the results of the previous four chapters in a wider cultural perspective. In addition, the issue of the relationship between Latin and vernacular historiography is thematically important because the political relevance of the vernacular in the complex of interacting factors such as patriotism, interest in (medieval) history, and formation of a collective identity strongly increased in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, especially after the beginning of the Dutch Revolt.

Despite its strong appeal, restrictions of space force me to treat this subject in a restricted manner. There exists an extensive body of scholarly literature on various cases and questions related to the subject. Moreover, the problem itself is highly complex, and a systematic discussion would lead too far afield. Therefore, I will confine myself to those aspects of the matter that have been touched upon in previous chapters. Another constraint on my approach is the amount of material that can be taken into account. The investigation of a large text corpus would be too time-consuming within the context of my project, whereas a single case study could claim too little representativeness. For that reason, I have chosen to investigate a small selection of vernacular texts in some detail, paying special attention to prefatory matter in which the choice of language is explicitly considered, and referring to other texts in more piecemeal fashion. I have singled out the following texts for examination: the *Alderexcellenste cronyke van Brabant* (1498), the so-called *Divisiekroniek* by Cornelius Aurelius (1517), the Dutch translation of Livy by Jan Gymnick (1541), the chronicle of Zeeland by Jan Reygersberch (1551), the Dutch translation of Barlandus' chronicle of Brabant (1555), the chronicle of Flanders attributed to Gerard van Salenson (1557), *Den spieghel der Nederlandscher audtheyt* by Marcus van Vaernewijck (1568), and Dousa's Dutch preface to the edition of Melis Stoke's verse chronicle by Hendrick Laurensz. Spiegel (1591). Where possible, I will make use of circumstantial evidence regarding the production and consumption of books in order to understand the general background against which claims are put forward in works like these.

Such an investigation results in a description of Latin and the vernacular as "competing options, which included not only linguistic preferences for humanist Latin or Petrarchan Italian, but also the corresponding genre systems and the different cultural modes of production,"[1] or as systems with "their own literary conventions and 'repertoire', their own mental equipment of knowledge, strategies, conventions and internalised values and interests"[2] – a description, of which the validity does not necessarily range beyond sixteenth-century historiography in the Low Countries, but which does contain material and ideas that might provide insight into other bodies of texts as well.

After briefly reviewing the development of the Dutch vernacular in the sixteenth century, I will analyze to which extent political rhetoric in historiography

[1] Marx 1998, 31: "konkurrierenden Optionen, die über die linguistischen Präferenzen für das humanistische Latein oder das petrarkische Italienisch zugleich die korrelierten literarischen Gattungssysteme und die unterschiedlichen kulturellen Produktionsweisen involvierten". Cf. Kristeller 1990², 124: "two alternative modes of literary expression".

[2] Bloemendal 2009, 277.

from this period depended on elements that were specific to the language in which a work of history was written, sketching two different paradigms of communication. It is tempting to see these paradigms as mutually exclusive, discrete categories. Such simplification or generalization is a major pitfall to be avoided here, since it might result in the reductionistic ideas about the relation between Latin and the vernaculars that are often encountered in scholarly literature, for instance that Latin works were written for an international audience whereas vernacular ones were mainly intended for the common people, that each linguistic domain had a monolithic poetics of its own, or that the 'influence' of Latin on the vernacular tradition was one-way traffic. In order to keep aloof from such simplistic views, it is important to keep in mind that "Latin and vernacular literature were seen as forming complementary parts of a continuous whole, and not as two sharply divided corpuses."[3] Consequently, there exist many texts, often written by bilingual authors, that feature forms of hybridization, for instance in their grammar, poetics, attitude towards classical and medieval traditions, or intellectual framework.

In addition, it is important to realize that the relationship between Latin and the vernacular was by no means a static one. Due to the Reformation, the Dutch Revolt, and other developments, the sixteenth century was a period in which the significance of the Dutch vernacular rapidly and radically changed in many domains of society. Moreover, mixture of paradigms also resulted from conscious attempts to modify the existing relations between Latin and the vernacular. Endeavours to increase the availability of and familiarity with the classical heritage, translations of vernacular works into Latin, intertextual allusions of Latin authors to vernacular texts, pleas that the vernacular is on a par with the classical languages are all examples of such strategic behaviour aiming to change the status quo. Therefore, an investigation of the difference between Latin and vernacular discourse must always allow for the existence of dynamic and shifting constellations of elements and reckon with multiple explanations for phenomena.

In this chapter, a number of constants and changes in the shifting relation between Latin and vernacular historiography in the Low Countries in the sixteenth century will be discussed. The emphasis will be on the conspicuous difference in intellectual orientation between both fields. While the mental world of Latin historians is generally inhabited by writers and characters from classical antiquity, vernacular writers of history are usually more interested in the Bible, theology, and the medieval historiographical tradition. This has profound consequences for the rhetorical strategies employed in their historiography, which often rely on ideas about

[3] Coroleu 1999, 129-30.

history, exemplary characters and events, text models, genre conventions, and stylistic ideals – all of them bound to particular intellectual traditions. In the second section, some of the consequences of this adherence to various traditions will be passed in review. In the third section, the changing but usually fundamental role of canons in both linguistic domains is assessed. In the fourth section, special attention will be paid to the matter of authorship and authority, since this is a key issue in rhetoric and the differences between Latin and the vernacular are most conspicuous on this point. In the last section, it will be analyzed to which extent Latin and vernacular texts situate themselves in different social contexts and how this related to the actual use of both languages in various spheres of society. But before starting this demonstration of the ways in which Latin historiography deviated from its vernacular counterpart, a brief overview of the development of the Dutch language in the sixteenth century will be given, because some of the peculiarities of Dutch historiography are better understood with view to the position of the vernacular in its larger cultural and institutional context.[4]

7.1 The Development of the Dutch Vernacular in the Sixteenth Century

Around 1500, the Dutch vernacular (*duyts*, *diets*) consisted of a variety of local dialects. In a rough classification, one could discern Western or coastal dialects – spoken in Holland, Zeeland, and Flanders – and Eastern or Low-German dialects – spoken in Limburg, Guelders, Overijssel, Drenthe, and Groningen. The dialects of Brabant and Utrecht took a middle position.[5] Both groups of dialects were not always mutually understandable. In the southern provinces of the Low Countries, such as Artois, Hainault, Namur, and Liège, French was spoken. These languages were used for purposes of daily conversation in the first place, but their application was by no means confined to these spheres. The meetings of political bodies in individual provinces and cities were held in the vernacular, and French served as a supra-provincial political language. In the Dutch languages, a vivid literary culture had developed in the chambers of rhetoric (*rederijkerskamers*) in the course of the fifteenth century, especially in the Southern Netherlands.[6]

The sixteenth century was a turbulent time for cultural life in the Low Countries, and this was clearly visible in the extended range of functions for the vernacular. Most importantly, the rise of the Reformation gave the vernacular a more

[4] The following section is based on the recent overviews in Van der Sijs & Willemyns 2009, 206-22; Van der Wal & Van Bree 2008[5], 179-99. References to more detailed literature will be given in the footnotes.
[5] Van den Toorn et al. 1997, 173-86.
[6] For the rise of the chambers of rhetoric, see Pleij 2007, 295-438.

important place in the religious sphere. Protestant services were held in the vernacular, and the Bible became more and more accessible in Dutch as the result of Bible translations. In 1477, the first translation had appeared in Delft, but only 250 copies were produced at that time. The sixteenth century witnessed the publication of several new translations, partial or integral, before the standard translation known as the *Statenvertaling* was published in 1637. The printers Jacob van Liesvelt and Willem Vorsterman issued Dutch versions of Luther's German Bible in the 1520's. A Catholic translation was produced by Nicolaus van Winghe and printed in Louvain in 1548. In 1562, the so-called 'Deux-Aes Bible' appeared, of which the New Testament was translated directly from the Greek by Johannes Dyrkinus. The dominance of the vernacular in the Protestant Church caused Latin to disappear almost completely as the language of the Church in the Northern Netherlands.[7]

Moreover, the Dutch language continued to oust French from the political domain. Dutch had been employed for official documents since the thirteenth century. The particularism that characterized politics at the provincial level in the Burgundian dominions in the late Middle Ages contributed to the tendency of using the vernaculars of the individual provinces in the political sphere. A major victory was achieved in 1477, when Mary of Burgundy acceded that all resolutions of the central government would also be published in Dutch. Charles V ordered in 1555 that all civil servants in Holland had to master the language of the province. In 1582, one year after the rebellious provinces had declared their independence from the Spanish king, the States-General of the new country decided that the minutes of their meetings would henceforth be written in Dutch.[8]

In the academy, Latin remained the main medium of communication. After the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt, its position became even more prominent when a new university was founded at Leiden in 1575. Up to this time, there had only been universities at Louvain (1425) and Douai (1559). On the other hand, the importance of Dutch as a technical language also began to increase, as professionals in many disciplines started to publish manuals in the vernacular. Some good examples are Rembertus Dodonaeus' botanical *Cruydeboeck* (1554), Simon Stevin's mathematical *Tafelen van interest* (1582), and Carolus Battus' medical *Handboec der chirurgyen* (1590).[9]

The fact that the Dutch language gained so much weight in many domains of society must have been an incentive for scholars to commence the study of it on the

[7] C.C. de Bruin 1993², 39-231; Van der Sijs 2004, 113-27; Van den Berg 2006², 15-22.
[8] Van der Wal 1994; Van den Toorn et al. 1997, 163-9; Van der Sijs 2004, 37-9.
[9] Van der Sijs 2004, 295-352.

model of Latin orthography, lexicography, and grammar. Thus, the second half of the sixteenth century witnessed a lively debate about the question how a set of usage prescriptions could be established that would turn the Dutch language into a high-quality means of expression for scholarship and literature.

A key role in this project was reserved for the famous printer Christopher Plantin from Antwerp.[10] In the first half of the sixteenth century, a small number of word lists and dictionaries, such as Antonius Schorus' *Dictionarium* (1542), Joannes Servilius' *Dictionarium triglotton* (1545), Joost Lambrecht's *Naembouck* (1546), and Johannes Berckelaer's *Dictionarium Germanico-Latinum* (1556) had been issued. But Plantin soon seized the initiative with a project of an ambitious scale: to survey the entire lexis of the Dutch language. First, he encouraged his corrector Cornelis Kiliaan to produce a polyglot lexicon, the Latin-Greek-French-Dutch *Dictionarium tetraglotton* of 1562, that would finally develop into the great *Etymologicum Teutonicae linguae* of 1599: a Dutch-Latin dictionary that consisted of about 40.000 lemmas and included information about regional differences and etymology. In the same period, Plantin also published Hadrianus Junius' *Nomenclator* (1567), which contains systematic multilingual overviews of technical vocabulary that is used in particular fields of knowledge, such as the human body, quadrupeds, food, scents, clothes, coins, and measures.[11]

In the same decades, a discussion was going on about the best way to spell Dutch words. Joos Lambrecht held a plea for a more or less phonetic orthography in his *Néderlandsche spellijnghe* (1550), and in *De orthographia linguae Belgicae* (1576) Antonius Sexagius devised an orthography in which Brabantine sounds were noted down by means of the letters that were used for these sounds in Latin. Subsequently, Plantin brought out two books that contributed to the debate. The first one was Pontus Heuterus' *Nederduitse orthographie* (1580), in which a spelling was outlined that would be ideal for a hypothetic common Dutch language that consisted of elements from the various regional dialects. Four years later, the famous dialogue *Twe-spraack vande Nederduitsche letterkunst* by the rhetorician Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel was produced by the Antwerp printer. In this book, another proposal was

[10] Plantin also published the *Origines Antwerpianae* by Johannes Goropius Becanus in 1569. In this book it is argued that Dutch is the oldest language on earth, closely related to the one that was spoken in Paradise. One of his arguments is that *duyts* ('Dutch') would be etymologically the same as *d'outs* ('the oldest').

[11] For Kiliaan and his cooperation with Plantin, see Van den Branden 1956, 93-113; Claes 1970, esp. 54-5, 146-55, 270-1. For Dutch lexicography in the sixteenth century in general, see Van Sterkenburg 1984, 29-36; Van der Sijs 2004, 356-63, 368-76.

made for Dutch orthography, which aspired to be both uniform and consistent and to follow established practices.[12]

The *Twe-spraack* is not so much renowned for the ideas about orthography it contained, but rather on account of the grammatical rules it proposed. Although some knowledge about the syntactical and morphological peculiarities of Dutch can already be discerned in the *Exercitium puerorum* (1485) that was used to teach pupils Latin, no treatise about Dutch grammar was printed before Spiegel's dialogue.[13] The *Twe-spraack* contains normative rules concerning the declension of articles, nouns, pronouns, and adjectives and the conjugation of verbs, and also a few syntactical prescriptions about agreement in gender, case, and number, the use of articles and coordinators, word order, etc.[14]

Apart from the grammatical rules, Spiegel also included a plea for the use of a pure Dutch diction, in which loanwords were avoided, and thus also gave a suggestion how one should make use of the recent lexicographical publications. The same pursuit of purity can be observed in the beginnings of Dutch philology. Justus Lipsius made transcriptions from the so-called Wachtendonck Psalms, a translation of the psalms made in the tenth century. He seemed particularly interested in words that deviated from the lexis of his own time, and published a modest glossary of them in 1602. In the same years, Vulcanius edited some Gothic texts (1597) and Merula and Castricomius made an edition of the eleventh-century vernacular paraphrase of the Song of Songs by the abbot Willeram (1598).[15] A letter from Castricomius to Merula in the latter edition argues that the availability of the text will contribute to the enrichment of the Dutch lexis, the improvement of Dutch orthography, and a better understanding of Dutch etymologies.[16]

At the same time that the institutional embedment of the Dutch language became increasingly solid and its expressive capacities were optimized by attempts to standardize its spelling, vocabulary, and grammar, new literary ideals secured a foothold in the Low Countries. Most Latin discourses had already adopted classicizing standards of writing since the late fifteenth century, but these developments had hardly filtered through to the vernacular domain. This began to change in the 1560's. In vernacular poetry, the work of Jan van der Noot from Antwerp meant a

[12] For the development of orthography, see Van der Sijs 2004, 242-57.

[13] In 1568, Johan Radermacher began a treatise on Dutch grammar, but it was not finished and remained in manuscript: Bostoen 1984. For the *Exercitium puerorum*, see Van der Wal 1993.

[14] For Spiegel's contribution to Dutch grammar, see Van den Branden 1956, 168-87; Van der Sijs 2004, 417-9.

[15] See Koppenol 1998, 177-9; Van Hal 2006.

[16] Merula & Castricomius (ed.) 1598, f. **3r. About this edition, see Sanders 1974, 16-9, 65-82; Gumbert 1975.

breakthrough. His first collection of poems, *Het bosken*, appeared in 1568, and had clearly been inspired by Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and the French Pléiade in its forms and themes. Van der Noot's Renaissance programme soon found acclaim in the chambers of rhetoric in the Northern Netherlands too, with poets such as Jan van Hout, Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel, and Roemer Visscher.[17] The historians Dousa and Divaeus also made their contribution: the former contributed some poems to a vernacular translation of Janus Secundus' *Basia*, the latter was one of the first to use sapphic stanzas in Dutch in a contribution to Abraham Ortelius' *album amicorum*.[18]

A similar development can be discerned in Dutch prose. Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert forged a new vernacular prose style, based both on local traditions and on the work of Cicero and Seneca the Younger. Coornhert's work was an important source of inspiration for Spiegel, for whose *Twe-spraack* he wrote a preface. Another important figure was Philips of Marnix, lord of Saint-Aldegonde, who was known not only for his metrical translation of the Psalms (1580), but perhaps even more for the *Byencorf* (1569), his prose satire on the Catholic Church. Marnix' prose style was marked by a number of Rabelaisian features.

7.2 Intellectual Orientation: Disposition, Narrative, Style, and Vocabulary

The second half of the sixteenth century witnessed a tendency that vernacular literature became increasingly directed towards classical and classicizing models. In vernacular historiography, similar trends can be observed. At the beginning of the century, however, there still is a clear divergence in intellectual orientation between Latin historians, who usually regard classical Latin literature as the definitive standard of excellence, and vernacular historians, who often do not share this ideal.

To inscribe a work in a particular intellectual tradition is a task that is often accomplished in the prefatory matter of a book. In the case of Adrianus Barlandus' *Cronica Brabantiae ducum*, for instance, the *praefatio* refers to Horace for the ideal combination of usefulness and pleasure, to Cicero for the idea that a person always remains a child without knowledge of what happened before his birth, and to Pliny the Younger for the notion that reading history is always a delight.[19] Furthermore, his allegiance to a classicizing ideal of historiography is shown by what is borrowed from

[17] About Dutch Renaissance poetry in the sixteenth century, see Ypes 1934, 29-96; Forster 1967. For the entry of humanism in vernacular literature in general, see Pleij 2007, 669-717; Porteman & Smits-Veldt 2008, 24-167.
[18] For Dousa's translation, see Stols (ed.) 1930; for Divaeus' poem, see Forster 1967, 290-1.
[19] *CBd* f. 2^{r}-3^{v}.

humanist writers like Desiderius Erasmus and Julius Pomponius Laetus.[20] The point is clear: Barlandus follows the example of classical historiography, acknowledges its canon, and wants to be regarded as part of its tradition.


Die Cronijcke
van Brabant int corte. Dats die hiſto-
rie der Hertoghen van Brabant/warachteliic-
hen int latijn beſcreuē duer den wel gheleerden
Adrianus Barlandus/ēn nu eerſt int duytſche
overgheſet ende volltterckt met ſommighe ghe-
ſciedeniſſen tot het iaer. Iv. Itē noch daer
bi die oorſaecke waerom dat het hups
van Borgoengnien bi nae altijt
oorlogh voert teghen
Vranckrijcke.
CANVGD
Ghedruct Thantwerpē op de
haerde veſte, inden witten Haſewindt/
by Jan van Ghelen.
Met Priuilegie van vier Jaren.

Barlandus, *Die cronijke van Brabant int corte* (1555), title page

However, the Dutch translation of Barlandus' work by an anonymous translator, which was published under the title *Die cronijke van Brabant int corte* ("The Chronicle of Brabant in Brief") in Antwerp in 1555, severed these ties with the classical tradition by omitting the entire preface. [21] Apart from Barlandus' work, which is mentioned on the title page, the only point of reference to be found on the first pages of the translation is a reference to a book called 'the Great Chronicle' (*de Groote Cronijcke*) – that is to be regarded, apparently, as the more extensive variant of the 'Chronicle in Brief' – for more information about the legendary figure Salvius Brabon.[22] The book referred to here must probably be identified with the *Alder excellenste cronyke*, the vernacular chronicle that had been Barlandus' main source. This is indicated, for instance, by the fact that a long sentence from the introductory geography of this work that had been replaced by Barlandus is clearly recognizable at the beginning of the translation.[23]

[20] For these derivations, see §§4.1 and 4.5. Other quotations, implicit and explicit, are drawn from classical authors such as Horace, Vergil, Cicero, Quintilian, and Pliny the Younger.

[21] Because translations can easily be compared with their original, they can give an especially clear view of the cultural differences between two linguistic domains. A good overview of some possible transformations between source and target text is given by Kästner 1998, 370-6.

[22] Barlandus 1555, f. A3^{r}.

[23] Barlandus 1555, f. Aij^{r}: "Brabant is een lantschap inde wterste delen van Germanien, hebbende den Rijn ende Vrieslandt Oostwaert, die Britaensche zee ende den Vlaemschen schoot Noortwaert, neder Gallien Westwaert ende oock Vrancrijc Zuytwaert. Seer lustich ende playsant, oueruloedich in alle

So while Barlandus had tried to rewrite the *Alder excellenste cronyke* in humanist fashion, his translator reversed the process and relodged the text in the vernacular tradition from which Barlandus had tried to distance himself. A similar difference in intellectual orientation can be observed in the Latin and vernacular works of Cornelius Aurelius (ca. 1460-1531). Aurelius was a regular canon who had studied at Louvain, Cologne, and Paris, and who lived in monasteries near Schoonhoven and Leiden. He is known as Erasmus' instructor and was part of the Gouda circle of humanists.[24] The prologue of his *Divisiekroniek*, a vernacular chronicle that was printed by Jan Seversz. in Leiden in 1517, argues that historiography is useful, because it protects the past against oblivion, gives instruction in virtue and piety, and shows how to distinguish different epochs. This argument is explicitly connected to the theological tradition: Aurelius refers to the theologian Robert Holcot (ca. 1290-1349) and the churchfather Augustine. In addition, he argues that the Holy Roman Emperor is the highest leader in worldly matters, bringing forward a verse from the Gospel of Matthew. Aurelius borrowed these views, their formulation, and the matching references from the *Philobiblon* written by Richard de Bury (ca. 1344), the medieval chronicles by the so-called 'Clerc uten laghen landen' (14th century), Johannes a Leydis (second half of the 15th century), and Jan Veldenaer (1480), and the anonymous *Cronica van der hilliger stat van Coellen* (1499).[25]

Even though the ideas brought forward by Aurelius in the *Divisiekroniek* are not very different from the ones presented in his treatises about Batavia and the letter to Gaguin that was printed in the latter's *Compendium de origine et gestis Francorum* (1495), the intellectual environment in which these Latin works locate themselves is far from similar: in these works, the reader is introduced to a classical company consisting of Cicero, Sallust, Thucydides, Tacitus, and Livy, even though there are passages where a hybrid world opens up, in which Caesar, Cicero, and the Batavians

---

vruchten der aerden ende in alle vee. In dit lant zijn veel schoone groote ende vermaerde steden, met schoone hooghe ende costelijcke timmeragien verciert." This part of the geography is heavily dependent on the geography in *AEC* 1518, f. A4r: "Brabant es die wterste provincie van Germanien, dats Almanien, ende is legghende aen Gallia belgica, dat is neder vrancrike hebbende den Rijn ende Vrieslant oostwaert. de Britaensche zee, ende den Vlaemschen schoot noortwerts, nedergallyen westwaert. ende hoechvrancrike zuytweert, hebbende veele vermeerde steden". For the geography in *AEC* and Barlandus' revision of it, see §4.2.

[24] For the life and work of Aurelius, and especially his *Divisiekroniek*, see Tilmans 1988 = Tilmans 1992. For the Gouda circle of humanists, see Goudriaan 2004.

[25] For Aurelius' prologue, see Tilmans 1988, 79-82 = Tilmans 1992, 121-6. The prologue to Jan Veldenaer 1480 is rather similar in this respect: it refers to Augustine, Jerome, and the other doctors of the Church for its ideas about history, while it mentions the Old Testament, Isidore of Seville, Orosius, Bede, Martin of Poland, and Vincent of Beauvais as its main sources.

happily coexist with Moses, Isaiah, scholastic philosophy, and the Jewish people.[26] As we have seen in Chapter Three, Aurelius' friend Reynier Snoy stuck to the classical tradition far more rigorously: in the preface to his *Historia Hollandie*, we only encounter figures like Cato the Elder, Polybius, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, Seneca the Younger, and Erasmus.[27]

During the first decades of the sixteenth century, Latin and vernacular historiographical discourses thus related differently to the classical literary heritage and the medieval theological tradition. For historiographical discourse, belonging to such a tradition was not just a means of self-positioning, however. Working within a particular tradition also had consequences for the use of paradigmatic characters and, speaking more broadly, of intertextual allusions. The writer of the *Alder excellenste cronyke*, for instance, explicitly casted his characters in the roles of biblical figures like Abraham and Sarah, Amos, David, Judas Maccabeus, John the Baptist, Judas Iscariot, and even Jesus Christ.[28] In the work of Snoy, on the other hand, tyrants and freedom fighters from classical antiquity, such as Sextus Tarquinius, Darius, Catiline, and Julius Civilis, operate as an intertextual foil for the behaviour of medieval and contemporary heroes and villains; likewise, Dousa and his son modelled many of their characters on a wide range of persons from classical historiography, such as Gaius Marius, Gnaeus Agricola, and Catiline.[29]

The presence of such paradigmatic characters is not always the result of the same textual procedures in Latin and the vernacular. In the *Alder excellenste cronyke*,

---

[26] For the letter and poem by Aurelius in Gaguin's history, see Tilmans 1988, 30-3 = Tilmans 1992, 36-42. About the merging of classical and medieval traditions in Aurelius' Latin works, see Kampinga 1917, 3. Some relevant passages are Vulcanius (ed.) 1586, 11-2, 18-9, 33. It should be noted that the work of Cicero is quoted in both Latin and vernacular historiography, medieval and early modern: see Guenée 1980, 18; Tigelaar 2006, 42. For the topics addressed in the prefatory material, see Vermeulen 1986, 240-7 who shows that the stress on brevity and truth is as firm in vernacular historiography as in its Latin counterpart.

[27] For the use of classical authors in Snoy's first preface, see §3.1. It is striking that even Petrus Divaeus, whose work does not show many traces of a taste for classicism, did embellish his dedication letter with classical phrases: he uses the adage *oleum et operam perdere* and adopts an expression from Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 1.8.1: "addidisti ergo calcaria sponte currenti". It is quite possible that both stem from a collection of classical sayings, for instance Erasmus' *Adagia* 1.4.62 and 1.2.47 (*ASD* II-1, 452-4 and 264).

[28] See for instance, *AEC* 1498, f. d6^{r} (Abraham and Sarah), f6^{v} (Amos), E5^{v} (John the Baptist), H5^{v} (Jesus Christ), I6^{v} (Judas Iscariot), K1^{v} (Judas Maccabeus, Samson, Saul, Jonathan, David, Absalom), N4^{v} (the inhabitants of Nineveh), cc6^{v} (Judas Iscariot).

[29] It might be argued that, to a lesser extent, the use of phraseology from classical texts is a feature of the Latin historiographical discourse of the Middle Ages too. Van Rij (ed.) 1980, xxxii-xxxvi shows the heavy presence of Sallust and Caesar in the work of Alpertus of Metz. In this respect, the division between Latin and the vernacular is therefore stronger than on many other points where there are similarities between medieval Latin and early modern vernacular historiography.

they appear in explicit comparisons: "Thus he had saint Lambert killed at night in Liège where he lay down in prayer, so that the latter became a holy martyr on account of his justice, just like saint John the Baptist, who reprimanded Herod and his mistress for adultery."[30] A similar procedure comparing historical characters explicitly with famous persons from classical history is also encountered in Barlandus' *Cronica Brabantiae ducum*, but it is supplemented here with a series of Vergil quotations that implicitly connect the dukes of Brabant with the Roman emperors and their mythical forefather Aeneas.[31] The effect of such implicit signs is well shown in Barlandus' commentary on his own *De Hollandiae principibus*. In this commentary, Barlandus shows that two of the phrases used to describe the life of count Floris V were actually taken from Suetonius' biography of Caesar, whose life and death showed some parallels with those of Floris.[32] Apparently, the reader is supposed to recognize these phrases and identify to some extent the medieval character with his classical *alter ego*. In the work of Snoy and Dousa, classical stories are also evoked by means of unmarked intertextual references. This difference between the use of comparison and allusion was probably caused by the fact that Latin historiography knew a well-defined canon of classical historians whose writings were widely available, had an established text, and could therefore be easily alluded to, whereas there was not even a canonical Bible translation in Dutch until 1637.

In the course of the sixteenth century, the visibility of the classical heritage in vernacular historiography increases. *Dye cronijcke van Zeelandt* by Jan Jansz. Reygersberch (ca. 1510-ca. 1590), printed in Antwerp in 1551, is a good example. Reygersberch was a pharmacist who lived at Veere since his place of birth Kortgene had been swallowed by the sea in 1532 and who was connected to the court of

---

[30] *AEC* 1498, f. E5^{v}: "so dede hy sinte Lambrechte dooden te Luydick by nachte daer hij in sinen ghebede lach. So dat hi mits der rechtverdicheit werdt een heylich maertelaer, insghelijcs als sint Jan Baptiste, die Heroden ende sijn amye berispede van overspele."

[31] At *CBd* f. g7^{v}, the lavish wedding of Charles the Bold is compared with the riches of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra and emperor Elagabalus. At *CBd* f. h5^{v}, the parliament at Malines is compared to the Areopagus. At *CBd* f. i6^{r-v}, Charles the Bold is compared with Julius Caesar, Scipio Africanus, the famous general Metellus, Alexander the Great, and Hannibal. I suppose that Barlandus refers here to Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus, rather than to the less distinguished Quintus Caecilius Metellus Creticus, as Bijsterveld & Verweij (edd.) 2004, 175 n. 119 suggest. At *CBd* f. m7^{v}, Charles of Habsburg is compared with Trajan, Antoninus Pius, and Epaminondas, but also linked with the typology of a holy king given in Deuteronomium 17:14-20. Barlandus' use of Vergil quotations has been discussed in §4.2.

[32] Barlandus 1520, f. Dij^{v}: "Annum agens septimum decimum.) Sic Suetonius, Annum agens Caesar sextum decimum patrem amisit, Florentius adhuc infans in cunis vagiebat, cum pater eius Guilielmus a Phrysijs est interemptus. ... Duobus & viginti vulneribus confoditur.) Ita Suetonius de Caesare tribus (inquit) & viginti plagis confossus est." Barlandus refers to Suetonius, *Caesar* 1 ("annum agens sextum decimum patrem amisit") and 82 ("atque ita tribus et viginti plagis confossus est uno modo ad primum ictum gemitu sine voce edito").

Maximilian II of Burgundy, lord of Veere (1540-1558).[33] The title page of his work is embellished with a woodcut featuring a classicizing iconography: it shows two women in stola with palms leaves and laurel wreaths, who hold up the imperial coat of arms with Charles V's motto and the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece. It also contains two Latin quotes, one of which is attributed to Seneca.[34] In the geography placed at the beginning of his chronicle, Reygersberch was eager to show that he knew Pliny, Caesar, and Tacitus, even if his defence of history – like that of Aurelius – still relied on Cicero, Augustine, and the *Philobiblon*. In addition, he referred to foreign Renaissance scholars like Enea Silvio Piccolomini and Albert Krantz, and local humanists like Paulus of Middelburg, Cornelius Battus, Johannes Beckerus, Hadrianus Cordatus, and Adrianus Barlandus. Nevertheless, Reygersberch's main frame of reference remains biblical morality: he describes a great number of floods "as an example for ourselves, as we read in Holy Scripture. Everything that happens to us, comes over us because of our sins, our evil and audacious life, and our evil works, since it is written: 'thou hatest all workers of iniquity'."[35]

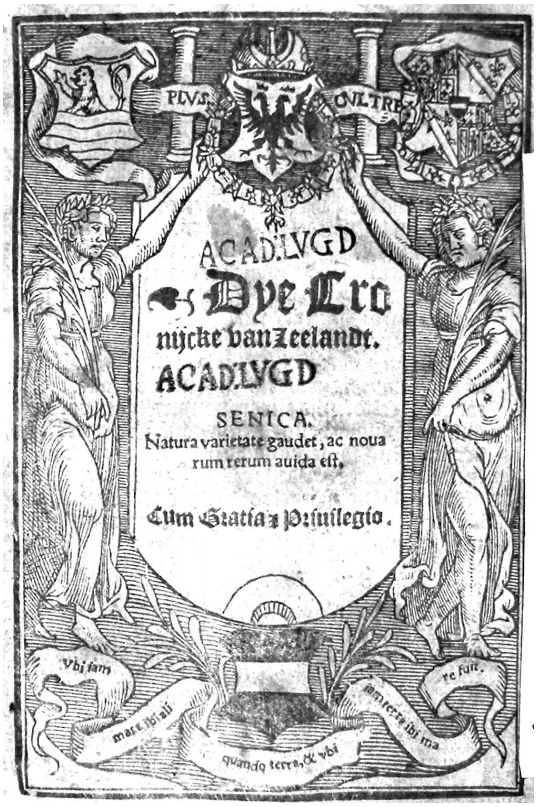
Likewise, Gerard van Salenson (1525-1568), a printer, bookseller, and editor who worked in Ghent, had a chronicle of Flanders published by his fellow printer Hendrik van den Keere the Elder, *De Cronijcke van Vlaenderen int corte* (1557), of which the prologue features the claim that it was composed "from many and diverse approved antique and modern authors." He also refers to exemplary stories about both the biblical Pharaoh, Absalom, Jonathan, David, and Bathsheba, and the classical kings of Rome, Catiline, Brutus, and Cassius.[36] Jan Gymnick (ca. 1502-1568), a printer and bookseller from Antwerp who commissioned someone to produce an integral translation of Livy's history on the basis of a German translation by Bernhard Schöfferlin, even explicitly puts the instructive stories from 'his' Livy on a par with

[33] The life and work of Reygersberch have not received much attention. For some basic information, see Van der Aa 1852-1878, vol. 16, 186-7; Kampinga 1917, 20-1, 196-8; Meertens 1943, 52-3; M.P. de Bruin & Wilderom 1961, 19-21.

[34] Reygersberch 1551, title page. The quote attributed to Seneca is: "Natura varietate gaudet, ac nouarum rerum auida est." I have not been able to trace the source of this phrase – perhaps it is a combination of Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 9.2.63 ("gaudet enim res varietate") and Livy 1.8 ("avida novarum rerum") – nor that of the other Latin sentence: "Vbi iam mare ibi aliquando terra, & vbi iam terra ibi mare fuit."

[35] Reygersberch 1551, f. Bi^{v}: "Ons tot eenen exempele ghelijc wij inder heyligher scriftueren lesen. Al dat ons ouercoemt dat coemt om onse sonden, ende om ons quaet ende vreeseloos leuen ende quade wercken wille toe, want daer staet gescreuen. Odisti omnes qui operantur iniquitatem." Reygersberch quotes Psalm 5:7 here.

[36] Van Salenson 1557, f. Aiv^{v}: "uut vele ende diuersche gheapprobeerde Antijcke ende Modern Autheurs". Also see the title page: "Uut dyuerschen gheapprobeerden Autheurs met nerstigheyt by een vergadert." For the *exempla*, see Van Salenson 1557, f. Aiij^{v}-Aiv^{r}. For the life and work of Van Salenson, see V. vander Haeghen 1913.



Reygersberch, *Dye cronijcke van Zeelandt* (1555), title page

those from the Bible: "One must bear in mind that tyrants have always experienced a bad course of their government, many harmful developments in their lands, and finally a wretched end of their life. This is demonstrated by Pharaoh who drowned in the Red Sea and the Roman kings who were expelled from Rome on account of their haughtiness and crudelity."[37]

The force of the classical tradition also made itself felt in the views of Latin historians on prose style. Most Latin historians explicitly follow the stylistic example of the classical authors. Snoy aims at 'Sallustian elegance' and 'Livian felicity'; Barlandus justifies his *brevitas* by referring to Sallust, Livy, Justin, and Suetonius; Divaeus mentions the ideal of the *Tullianus lepos* ('Ciceronian charm'); Dousa admires Sallust's "distinctly Attic kind of writing."[38] In Chapter Four, I have discussed how Barlandus resorts to classical rhetorical techniques such as tricolon crescendo, allitteration, poetic quotation, and other means of amplification in rewriting the

[37] Gymnick (ed.) 1541, f. *ij^{v}-*iij^{r}: "Desghelijcken moetmen oock voor ooghen setten, hoe dat tyrannen altoes quaden voortganck in haer regiment, vele scadelike muterien in alle haer landen, ende ten laetsten een onsalich eynde ghehadt hebben. Dit thoonen ons Pharao die inde roode zee verdroncken is, ende de Romeynsche Coninghen die om haer houaerdicheyt ende wreetheyt wt Rome ghedreuen zijn gheweest." Interestingly, the same parallel came to the mind of Van Salenson 1557, f. Aiij^{v}: "Dat Pharao om zijn tyrannye ghestraft ende vergaen is. Dat die Romeynsche Coninghen om der zeluer oorzaken zommighe vermoort ende andere verdreuen zijn gheweest." For Gymnick and his Livy translation, see Van den Branden 1956, 12-5; id. 1980; Vanderheyden 1959; De Smet 1970. Vanderheyden 1959, 35-46, 59-79 demonstrates the dependence of both the translation and Gymnick's introduction on the German edition. Gymnick's preface can also be found in Besamusca & Sonnemans (ed.) 1999, 123-9.

[38] *HH* f. 17^{v}: "Proinde facile veniam promerebor, si neque elegantia Salustiana neque felicitate Liuiana, verum mea salebrosa atque triuiali facundia historia nostra scaturiat"; *CBd* f. 3^{r-v}; Van Langendonck (ed.) 1757, 124; Vermaseren 1955, 85: "atticum plane scribendi genus".

introductory geography of the *Alder excellenste cronyke*. Barlandus thus showed what it meant to follow classical models of style.

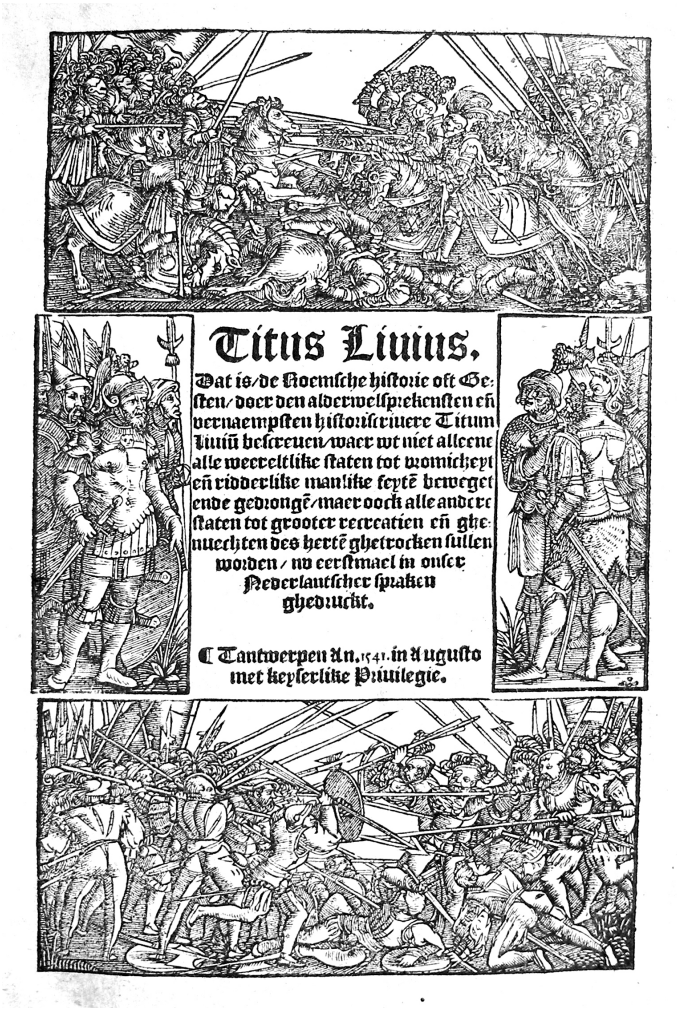
Such an omnipresent ideal seems absent from vernacular historiography. Barlandus' humanist stylization is largely undone in the translation of his work, which returns to the plain mode of presentation that characterized Barlandus' source.[39] Likewise, the frequent quotations from Vergil in Barlandus' work are either omitted or cut down by the translator.[40] Another testimony to the experience of stylistic difference between Latin and the vernacular, due to the different traditions the languages carried with them, is the fact that Janus Dousa Sr had his son translate vernacular historiography into classical Latin: "instead of a rhetorical case, I am used to give him a small part of the Batavian annals now and then to be translated from that vernacular of ours into the Roman language; so that he will not so much supply me with the marrow or the kernel, that is, the matter itself (of which the understanding does not at all fall within the power of comprehension such a young age allows for), but just with the words and expressions, cursorily drawn from Sallustian or Tacitean sources, at any rate, and arranged, as it were, under some commonplace headings as an exercise for children. In this way, it is accomplished that he finally reaps an abundant and timely harvest from his own diligence by constantly reading, studying, and practising his style."[41]

---

[39] *CBd* f. a1^{r}; Barlandus 1555, f. Aij^{r}. Barlandus' translator is unable to find a good equivalent for an alliterative tricolon crescendo like "Pecoris ferax, frumenti multo feracior, pomorum abundantissima" (which is reduced to the simple parallellism "ouervloedich in alle vruchten der aerden ende in alle vee"), for an elaborate allitteration like "aedificia publica, pariter & priuata", which is omitted, or for the quotation from Vergil, which is also left out.

[40] Barlandus 1555, f. C4^{v}: "mi grouwelt dat ickt verhale"; cf. *CBd* f. b7^{r}: "horresco referens" (Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.204). Barlandus 1555, f. C6^{r}: "allesins werter groote droefheyt, ende anders en was hier nyet te sien dan een grouwelijcke ende afgrijsselijcke ghedaente des doots"; cf. *CBd* f. b8^{r}: "crudelis ubique luctus, ubique pauor, & plurima mortis imago" (Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.368-9). Barlandus 1555, f. F1^{r}: "Want daer die goluen des waters waren so sterc dat zijt al mede sleypten daerse aen quamen"; cf. *CBd* f. e7^{r}: "Spumeus amnis exiens oppositas euicit gurgite moles, fertur in arua furens, cumulo camposque per omnes cum stabulitis armenta trahit" (Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.496-9). The list of rulers at *CBd* f. 4^{r-v}, with a quotation of Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.286-7 ("origine Caesar / imperium oceano: famam qui terminet astris") was not adopted in Barlandus 1555. The quotation of Vergil, *Georgics* 2.167 ("genus acre virum") was not taken up in the geography at Barlandus 1555, f. Aij^{r}. The quotation of Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.150 ("iamque faces et saxa volant, furor arma ministrat") on *CBd* f. r1^{r} was not translated on the corresponding page at Barlandus 1555, f. N5^{v}.

[41] Vermaseren 1955, 85: "eidem particulam interdum aliquam Batavicorum Annalium thematis loco soleo proponere, ex idiotismo hoc nostro in romanum sermonem transferundam; non quidem ut medullam aut nucleum, hoc est rem ipsam (cuius adeo intelligentia in tantulae aetatis captum haud cadit) sed ut verba solum ac voces in partem suppeditet mihi, a Sallustianis aut Cornelianis certe fontibus saltuatim petitas, velutque in locos quosdam communes puerili meditatione digestas. Qua ratione efficitur, ut et ipse assidue legendo, commentando atque excolendo stylo uberes ac tempestivos diligentiae suae fructus capiat denique". On this passage, also see §6.2.4.



Gymnick, *Titus Liuius, dat is, de Roemsche historie oft gesten* (1541), title page

One of the first signs of change in this situation is Gymnick's dedication of the Livy translation, in which he observes that "our Dutch language is regarded as so needy, unadorned, and often inadequate." This was in sharp contrast with Latin, "which has become so full, rich, and perfect through the agency of acute and ingenious men, however, that all matters cannot just be explained and expressed in a single way, but in almost countless ways." This was due, in Gymnick's view, to the use of figurative language and loanwords. Gymnick's question is: "If the Latin tongue has arrived at such perfection as a result of the skill, exercise, and acuteness of those who practiced it, why have we come to think that our Dutch tongue cannot achieve flawlessness through the exercise and treatment of those who understand it well and have practiced it for a long time?" Gymnick himself would make another substantial contribution to this project by publishing the *Dictionarium Germanico-Latinum* of 1556.[42] Many decades

[42] Gymnick (ed.) 1541, f. *ij^{r}: "onse nederlantsche taele also aerm, ongheciert, oft onbequaem ghehouden wordt ... de welcke nochtans doer scherpsinnighe ende vernufte mannen nu also vol, oueruloedich, ende volcomen is datter alle materien niet alleen op een maniere, maer bycants op ontallighe manieren souden verclaert ende wtghesproken moghen wordden. ... Ist nu dat de Latijnsche spraecke doer conste, practijcke, ende scherpsinnicheyt der gheenre diese gheoefent hebben tot alsulcker perfectien comen is, waerom hebben wy ons dan laten duncken, dat onse Nederlantsche spraecke niet en soude moghen doer

later, Dousa would also promote the project of improving vernacular prose, and recommend Aulus Gellius' and Sallust's concise manner of expression as a better example than the 'untrimmed style' (*onbesnoeide stijl*) of Martianus Capella, Apuleius, and Boccaccio.[43]

There are signs, therefore, that the programme of classicizing prose that was advocated by Coornhert, Spiegel, and Marnix, also began to find adherents in vernacular historiography in the course of the sixteenth century. However, it should be noted that some of the remarks that have just been cited are part of a rhetoric attempt to justify editions and translations and also to advertise them. In other types of discourse, such as chorographical descriptions, which aim at praising one's country, one could encounter observations of the opposite purport. In the *Rerum Flandricarum tomi X* (1531), for instance, Jacobus Meyerus proudly observed that "compared to the other Germans, we have a mother tongue that is very cultivated and by no means harsh, that abounds in proverbs, metaphors, and allegories, and that is by far most suitable for every oratorical quality."[44] This does not take away the fact that in the sixteenth century, a humanist project was carried out to further develop the vernacular; but one should beware of taking remarks such as those cited above completely at face value.

Another difference can be observed in the use of specifically political vocabulary. It has often been argued with Lorenzo Valla that the Latin language was especially suited for political arguments, because "the Roman empire (*Romanum imperium*) is wherever the Roman language holds sway."[45] Words like *imperium* and *libertas* still carried the prestige of the Roman empire, and could reinforce political rhetoric in Latin historiography much more directly than in vernacular works of history.[46] I have

---

oefeninghe ende tractatie van de ghene diese wel verstonden ende daer in langhe haer gheoefent hebben tot volmaecktheyt connen comen?" Unlike much of his dedication, the passage about the Dutch language is not translated from a German example, but composed by Gymnick himself. This attention to the Dutch language is also apparent in his edition of the *Dictionarium Germanico-Latinum*: De Smet 1970.

[43] Dousa Sr 1591, f. (:)iij^{r}: "Ick kender iae genouch, die d'onbesnoeide stijl / Van Martiaen Capel voir Crispus dunne vijl / Groot maken: iae veel meer den Eselschrijver achten / Of cluchten van Boccaes, dan al d'Attijcsche nachten / By Gellium gewaikt." I suspect that the word *eselschrijver* ('ass writer') refers to Apuleius, whose *Metamorphoses* were also known as *Asinus aureus* ('The Golden Ass').

[44] Carton (ed.) 1843, 82-3: "Inter caeteros etenim Germanos patria utimur lingua valde polita, minime aspera, plurimis scatente proverbiis, metaphoris, et allegoriis, atque ad omnem dicendi facultatem longe appositissima". In addition, Meyerus boasts that Flanders has so many and excellent poets that it measures up to the Romans.

[45] Garin (ed.) 1962, vol. 1, 4: "Ibi nanque Romanum imperium est, ubicunque Romana lingua dominatur."

[46] Cf. Lindberg 2007, 40-8 who argues that political vocabulary retained its classical connotations. Lindberg focuses on the conceptual aspects of this phenomenon, explaining that it caused potentially

demonstrated how this effect was employed by Snoy in the case of the word *libertas*.[47] When Gymnick's employee translated one of the passages from Roman literature that is most replete with such language, viz. the beginning of Livy's second book, he did not invent a vernacular equivalent, but applied existing terms that already had an established meaning in his own cultural context: "they chose two men from their number and called them *consules*, that is, advisers, because they had to give advice and support. I put them on a par with the burgomasters (*burghemeesteren*) of the free cities in the Holy Roman Empire." From this point on, the translator consistently calls the consuls *burghemeesteren*, just as he translates *patres conscripti* ('senators') as *raetsheeren* ('counsellors') and *populus* ('people') as *gemeyne volck* ('common people'). Thus, he used the terminology current in the cities of the Low Countries in the sixteenth century to describe the political situation in ancient Rome. In this way, he succeeded in making the classical heritage comprehensible and relevant for the contemporary reader in the Low Countries, but did not create a new vocabulary of power in Dutch.[48]

On the level of narrative presentation, the vigor of tradition can also be discerned. Writing a narrative in the classical tradition generally leads to an abundance of speeches. This is not to say that medieval or vernacular historiography was devoid of such embedded discourse. Historiography in Holland in the sixteenth century, for instance, featured a number of historical episodes which were almost always richly supplied with exchanges of orations. Not only humanist historians writing in Latin turned the conflicts between Dirk III of Holland and Adelbold II of Utrecht or Floris V of Holland and the Kennemer people into elaborate speech battles. For instance, the dialogical representation of the former conflict started with the vernacular chronicle known as the *Oude Goutsche chronycxken*, which was first printed in 1478. Subsequently, this idea was adopted and worked out at ever increasing length in the works of Johannes a Leydis (Latin), Cornelius Aurelius (vernacular), Reynier Snoy (Latin), Janus Dousa Jr (Latin), and Matthaeus Vossius (Latin).[49] Apart from the fact that the Latin orations are generally much longer than the vernacular dialogues, the main difference between the Latin and vernacular versions of the episode is the extent to which the speeches are inscribed in a literary tradition. In the

problematic discrepancies between early modern political theory and the political reality it referred to, paying less attention to the prestige attached to classical terminology and its propagandistic value.

[47] See §3.7.

[48] Gymnick (ed.) 1541, f. xxiiij^{r}. The text of the quotation is: "ende sy vercoren onder hemluyden twee mannen, die noemdense Consules, dat is, raetgeuers. Want sy souden raetgheuen ende helpen. Die houde ick gelijc de burghemeesteren vanden vrijen steden des heylighen Roemschen rijcx." The use of this local terminology is largely an innovation of the Dutch translator: Vanderheyden 1959, 86-7.

[49] Kampinga 1917, 93-5.

case of Dousa Jr, for instance, one of Adelbold's speeches features clear references to the oration of Catiline before the final battle at Pistoria.[50] Such subtexts do not seem to be present in the vernacular versions of the story in the *Oude Goutsche chronycxken* and the *Divisiekroniek*.[51]

The literary tradition also has consequences for the selection and disposition of material in Latin and vernacular historiography. In late medieval historiography, the history of a region like Holland or Brabant was often strongly embedded in a religious framework. The creation of the world, the Deluge, or the birth of Jesus Christ were often used as the starting point of a chronicle, and sometimes early history was divided up with the help of chronological frameworks such as Daniel's Four Monarchies or Augustine's Six Ages of the World. In addition, quite some attention was paid to the lives of saints, bishops, and popes, even if the monarchs of the region concerned were at the centre of the chronicler's attention. [52] In vernacular historiography, such forms of presentation persisted in the sixteenth century: the *Alder excellenste cronyke*, Aurelius' *Divisiekroniek*, Van Salenson's *Cronijcke van Vlaenderen*, and Van Vaernewijck's *Spieghel der Nederlandscher audtheyt*, to mention just a few works, make no bones about extending their work into the very remote past and start with important events from the history of salvation, even if this means that they have to follow a muddy path of fable and legend.

In Latin historiography, there is a tendency to limit the material by means of political demarcations. Snoy still starts with Creation and employs the *sex etates mundi*-framework in the second book of the *Historia Hollandie*. In the *Cronica Brabantiae ducum*, however, Barlandus omits both the early history of Brabant from Creation until legendary offspring of Salvius Brabo as it is found in the *Alder excellenste cronyke*, and the entire first part of this work, which consists of

[50] *BHA* p. 429-31. The words "magna spes me tenet ... Animus, aetas, virtus vestra me hortantur ... forti ac parato animo proiecerimus ... memineritis vos gloriam, opes, imperium, praeterea spem futuri temporis in dextris vestris portare" refer to Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 58: "forti atque parato animo sitis ... memineritis vos divitias, decus, gloriam, praeterea libertatem atque patriam in dextris vostris portare ... magna me spes victoriae tenet. animus, aetas, virtus vostra me hortantur". In addition, this speech takes up phraseology from pseudo-Quintilian, *Declamationes minores* 255.8: "quotiens oculos circumtuli et singulas castrorum metior partes"; Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 40: "si modo viri esse voltis"; Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 20: "neque animus neque corpus a vobis aberit"; Curtius Rufus, *Historia Alexandri Magni* 4.14.13: "audete modo vincere famamque, infirmissimum adversus fortes viros telum, contemnite"; Sallust, *Historiae* fr. 55.22 Maurenbrecher: "maxumam mihi fiduciam parit victor exercitus". Note that the speech is part of a consistent depiction of Adelbold as a medieval incarnation of Catiline: see §6.2.5.

[51] Scriverius (ed.) 1663, 24-6; Aurelius 1517, f. cxvi^{v}-cxvij^{v}. Judging by the verbal similarities, one has to conclude that Aurelius used and enhanced the earlier version of the dialogue.

[52] Ebels-Hoving 1987, 227.

hagiographical accounts.[53] Instead, he starts with the first duke of Brabant, Pepin of Landen († ca. 640). Likewise, in his history of Holland, he follows Aurelius, but does not relate the early episodes: the institution of the county (dated to 863) is the point of departure here. We have seen that for Divaeus and Dousa, the demarcation of the subject was guided by the availability of what was – in their view – reliable source material, and the division of it depended on political watersheds.

7.3 The Role of Canons in Latin and Vernacular Historiography

All these differences between Latin and vernacular historiography are striking in view of the fact that the domains were by no means separated. In the previous chapters, it has been shown that Barlandus makes extensive use of the vernacular *Alder excellenste cronyke* and supplements this information from Latin sources such as Gaguin, Sabellico, or Biondo. Likewise, Snoy used both the work of Johannes a Leydis and the *Oude Goutsche chronycxken*. Divaeus and Dousa tried to confine themselves to the oldest sources, which were generally written in Latin, but did not shrink from occasionally using, for example, the vernacular verse chronicles by Melis Stoke and Jan van Boendale.[54] On the other hand, analyses of the *Alder excellenste cronyke* and the *Divisiekroniek* have shown that vernacular historiography employs Latin sources like the *Chronicon ducum Brabantiae*, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Johannes a Leydis, as much as vernacular material like the *Brabantsche Yeesten*, Jan Veldenaer, and the 'Clerc uten laghen landen.'[55]

However, despite the fact that existing works of history in both Latin and the vernacular are used indiscriminately as source material for new historiography in both languages, there is a remarkable difference between the ways in which dependence on either stock of material is expressed. We have seen that Barlandus refers to the *Alder excellenste cronyke* by means of phrases that stand out by their vagueness: "chronicles written in our vernacular" or "chronicles written in a Germanic language."[56] He sees no problem in mentioning humanist Latin writers like Gaguin, Biondo, and Sabellico

---

[53] Interestingly, the legends about the early rulers of Brabant, that is, Salvius Brabo and his descendants, which are related by *AEC* 1498, f. A3^{v}-E1^{r} and omitted by Barlandus except for a brief reference at *CBd* f. 4^{r} ("Pipinus primus, filius Carolomanni geniti ex Brabone tertio huius nominis: Tertio item principe Brabantiae, antequam haec prouintia ducatus nomen accepisset."), are taken up again in the translation: Barlandus 1555, f. Aij^{r}-Aiv^{r}. Similarly, Jacobus Meyerus had removed legendary tales from his work, but later vernacular adaptations of it by Oudegherst en Despars put them back in place: Strubbe 1954, 140.

[54] For Divaeus' use of Boendale's *Brabantsche Yeesten*, which were at that time attributed to a certain Nicolaus Clericus, see *RBL* p. 3-4.

[55] Tigelaar 2006, 39-40, 93 n. 39; Tilmans 1988, 97-118 = Tilmans 1992, 154-95.

[56] *CBd* f. 3^{r}: "Chronicis lingua nostrate conscriptis"; a6^{r}: "Chronicis germanica lingua conscriptis". Barlandus probably uses the expression "Germanic language" as a generic term for the variety of Middle Dutch dialects that existed at that time and that was often referred to as *diets* or *duyts*.

by name. Snoy denies the existence of a local tradition altogether. In his preface, he represents the situation as if he was the first to write about the history of Holland. Indigenous writers are never mentioned by name.[57] But despite his usual conciseness in referring to sources, including medieval charters and chronicles like those of Johannes de Beke and Johannes a Leydis, even a later humanist like Dousa Sr refrains from giving clear references to vernacular sources in his Latin works.[58]

The same is true of the vernacular chronicles themselves. The translation of Barlandus refers to the *Alder excellenste cronyke*, as we saw, by the rather generic phrase 'the great chronicle,' while the name of the 'very learned Adrianus Barlandus' (*den wel gheleerden Adrianus Barlandus*) features prominently on the title page. In his prologue to the *Divisiekroniek*, Aurelius drew up an overview of important historians in the Low Countries, but only Latin works of history were specified to an extent that would enable the reader to trace a copy. All the vernacular histories he consulted were subsumed under the heading "chronicles of Brabant, Flanders, Cologne, Cleves, Guelders, Jülich, and many others of which I cannot describe every single one."[59]

This silence surrounding vernacular historiography had consequences for the process of canon formation in this genre. It looks as if Aurelius' historiographical canon is an exclusively Latin one, for instance. Of course, this situation was in stark contrast with Latin historiography, where the canon of classical historians was prominently visible, even if medieval historians clearly lacked such a status, and humanists like Snoy, Barlandus, and Junius never referred to predecessors such as Johannes de Beke and Johannes a Leydis. Consequently, rhetoric in Latin historiography was often heavily based on following canonical standards of excellence and employing the canon as a source of intertextual references.

The process of canonization was linked intricately with that of edition: writings that enjoyed canonical status were more likely to be edited than those that did not, while texts that were available in print had much better chances to be widely read and become part of a standard repertoire than those remaining in manuscript. The lack of

---

[57] Tilmans 1988, 153-4 n. 34 = Tilmans 1992, 262 n. 34 thinks that Snoy uses the term *annales vulgares* to refer to the *Divisiekroniek*. However, the adjective *vulgaris* does not occur in the passages she cites and, as I have argued in Chapter Three, it seems unlikely that Snoy used the *Divisiekroniek* in view of the date of composition I assign to the *Historia Hollandie*.

[58] Another example is the preface to Meyerus' *Rerum Flandricarum tomi X* (Carton (ed.) 1843, xxviii), where he states that nothing about the past of Flanders has been written in Latin, although he acknowledges there is a native tradition ("quae a nostratibus sparsim memoriae sunt prodita", "in majorum traditionibus"): I infer that the tradition he has in mind here is a vernacular one. Petrus Divaeus is an exception, as we have seen, since he refers to Boendale by name, albeit the wrong one.

[59] Aurelius 1517, f. b^{v}: "cronyken van Brabant, Vlaenderen, Coellen, Cleve, Ghelre, Gulick ende veel meer andere, die ick nyet al ghescriven en kan".

a canon in vernacular historiography was therefore both indicated and caused by the fact that the vernacular histories that were written before the invention of printing were not edited before the end of the sixteenth century, and most of them not even before the end of the seventeenth century. In Holland, vernacular adaptations of Beke's chronicle, such as those of the 'Clerc uten laghen landen' or the 'Heraut Beyeren', were only accessible in manuscripts, and in Brabant, the same was true of Boendale's verse chronicle and later adaptations of it, such as the one by Hennen van Merchtenen. The vividness of Latin philology and the absence of a vernacular counterpart are thus to be regarded as key factors in the process of canon formation in both linguistic domains.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the development of a vernacular canon of historiography in Holland was linked with a central moment in Dutch philology: the edition of Melis Stoke's *Riim-kroniik* by Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel in 1591, one of the oldest vernacular works of history about Holland that are extant. This book was provided with a long introduction in Dutch iambic verse by none other than the historian and classical philologist Janus Dousa. This preface presents the edition unequivocally as part of Spiegel's linguistic programme, which has been referred to in the first section of this chapter. First of all, Dousa modestly argues that the foreword should have been written by Spiegel himself, or by another vernacular poet such as Roemer Visscher or Jan van Hout, thus pointing out that the edition was an initiative that could expect support from this circle of Renaissance poets. When he finally puts his mind to the task of introducing the chronicle, he praises it in terms that show its relevance for Spiegel's project. The chronicle provides fascinating content, even if it is somewhat prolix, but more importantly, it features pure language: "No bastard Dutch is sensed here, which soils our speech so seriously today, that it is ashamed of itself, even hardly recognizes itself. You will also find many old words in this book that have fallen prey to misuse or obscurity as time went by."[60]

After praising the *Riim-kroniik* itself, Dousa inscribes it in a historiographical canon.[61] This list contains the Latin humanist writers one would expect from Dousa, such as Heda, Barlandus, Meyerus, Hortensius, and Junius; Snoy and Bockenberg are censured. Interestingly, Dousa includes medieval historiography: Johannes de Beke, the annals of Egmond, and Wilhelmus Procurator with approval; Johannes a Leydis with sharp criticism. But what is even more innovative, he also includes two

[60] Dousa Sr 1591, f. (:) iij^{r}: "Gheen bastart-duyts hier speurt, / Deur welcke huydensdaechs ons spraeck zo werdt besmeurt, / Dat zy hairs selves schaemt, iae qualic kan bekinnen. / Veel oude woorden oock ghy in dit Bouck zult vinnen, / By ons in wangebruyc, of onkunt deur verloop / Des tijts, gecomen."

[61] The inscription of the *Riim-kroniik* in the historiographical canon is reinforced at *ARG* f. ***iiij^{r}, where Dousa takes almost an entire page to describe the work as a forerunner of his own poetic history.

anonymous vernacular authors by the nicknames which can be derived from their works and by which they are still known: the 'Heraut Beyeren' and the 'Clerc uten laghen landen'.[62] In addition, Jan Reygersberch is mentioned by name and censured: "there never was a worse parasite, never a more boorish fellow."[63] In this way, Dousa started the discussion which vernacular historiography was worth the trouble of reading, and proposed a tentative design for a canon.

A fascinating aspect of this move is that what we use to call the Middle Ages is here presented as a formative, relatively pure, and perhaps almost 'classical' period of vernacular literature, and this by a humanist who did not think much of medieval Latin. This view on the history of historiography is not given the form of a clear periodization, however, and certainly not a tripartite one. A term for an intermediate period in history is first attested in Dutch much later, in a letter by Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft written in 1630, where the word *middeltijdt* ('middle time') is used to refer to the time of the French crusades against the Turks and Saracens.[64]

7.4 Authorship and Authority

One might conjecture that the apparent reluctance to mention the names of vernacular historians was only a necessary consequence of the fact that these historians usually did not reveal their identity in their works. Aurelius' authorship of the *Divisiekroniek* has been demonstrated with a reasonable extent of likeliness by Robert Fruin in the nineteenth century. It is by no means certain what was the precise role of Gerard van Salenson in the chronicle of Flanders ascribed to him: he signed the dedication and may have written the work itself, but his name appears on the title page only as the person who commissioned the edition (*Voor Gheeraert van Salenson in den Bibel*).[65] We can only guess at the names of those who wrote the *Alder excellenste cronyke* and many other anonymous vernacular chronicles published in the sixteenth century.[66]

---

[62] Dousa Sr 1591, f. (:)iij^{v}: "d'onbekende Clerck / Geboren bider Zee wt onse laege Landen. / Mitsgaders den HERAVT, aen Hertochs WILLEMS handen / Toesendende zyn Bouck, oic BEIEREN genoemt."

[63] Dousa Sr 1591, f. (:)iij^{v}: "Jan Janszen van Cortgene. / Noyt meerder Gnatonist, noyt onbeschofter bloet". Gnatho was a parasite in Terence's *Eunuchus*. In v. 264 of this comedy, the word *Gnathonici* is derived from his name to refer to parasites in general. In the sixteenth century, the word *bloed* could still mean "bloke, fellow, man": see *WNT* s.v. 'bloed II'.

[64] Van Tricht et al. (edd.) 1976-1979, vol. 2, 26: "daer de Franchojzen ouwlinx veele plaetsen van Grieken, Italien, ende Asien hebben afgeloopen, ende in den middeltijdt, Turken ende Saracenen in 't Ujterste Oosten bestookt, Constantinopelen, Jerusalem, Cypers verovert, ende veele jaeren bezeeten".

[65] For the authorship of the *Divisiekroniek*, see Tilmans 1988, 11, 53-4 = Tilmans 1992, 3-4, 77-81. The authorship of Salenson's chronicle is discussed by Lamont 2005, 119-21.

[66] The complexity of such guesswork is well illustrated by such an attempt to identify the author of the *Alder excellenste cronyke*: Tigelaar 2006, 153-64.

This argument is not entirely satisfying, however, because even an anonymous chronicle could be referred to with some creativity, as we have seen in Dousa's preface to the *Riim-kroniik*. Therefore, I would suggest that the omission of names and the absence of references have a common cause, viz. that early sixteenth-century vernacular historical discourse had a regime of authorship that differed strongly from that of its Latin counterpart. As has been argued by Michel Foucault, the way in which and the extent to which the function of authorship is realized in a particular discourse is historically variable and plays an important role in defining the discourse. For Foucault, the author-function is a convention peculiar to certain discourses, a construct on the verge of the text and the discourse it belongs to, that allows the writer of a text to assume a limited, even if never permanently settled, range of pre-established roles, and the reader to interpret a work as a self-consistent unity. In this theory, the importance that is attached to the name of the author as the signifier of an extratextual source of literary quality and conceptual coherence is regarded as an indication that a discourse has a strong author-function.[67]

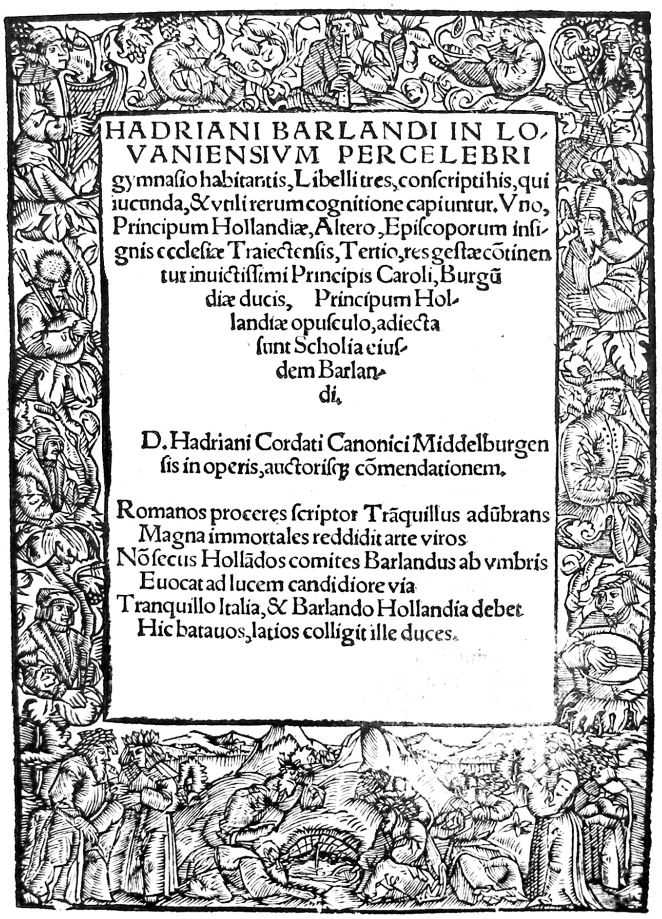
In Foucault's terms, the difference between Latin and vernacular historiography might well be described as one between discourses with and without an author function: the vernacular chronicles I have until now referred to lack this function, since the author does not appear as a well-defined figure with a name who constrains the interpretation of his oeuvre. That does not mean, however, that the person who wrote the chronicle did not represent himself in his work. To the contrary, in fact, this person often makes himself visible enough and plays a considerable role in the rhetoric of the work in question by doing so.

The presence of the writer in Latin historiography has been a major theme in this book. I have demonstrated that the historian's career is regarded as a precondition for optimal historiographical results. Thus, Snoy shows emphatically that he has participated in international diplomatic missions; Divaeus explains that his activity as clerk at the financial administration office at Louvain gave him access to a large stock of documents; Dousa points out, among other things, that he was in charge of the archives and that he led the military defence during the siege of Leiden. In addition, both Snoy and Barlandus present themselves as eye-witnesses for contemporary events such as Floris of IJsselstein's military campaigns or the festivities surrounding the birth of Charles V. Both strategies of presentation use the person of the author as a guarantee for the reliability or even the truth of the narrative. In the same vein, some authors present themselves as relatively independent from their sources. In the case of Snoy, this even goes so far that he

[67] Foucault 1979, esp. p. 145-53.

claims to be the first to write about the history of Holland. Finally, Latin historians often try to enhance the prestige of their person by connecting it to one or more classical authors.

An outstanding example of such authorial self-presentation is the *Libelli tres*, published by Barlandus in 1520 and consisting of brief historiographical works about the counts of Holland, the bishops of Utrecht, and the life of Charles the Bold. Barlandus' self-establishment as an *auctor* in the classical tradition is brought about in several steps. On the title page, which is embellished with a beautiful decorative border, Barlandus' name is emphatically present (*Hadriani Barlandi in Lovaniensium percelebri gymnasio habitantis Libelli tres* ...). In addition, he is presented as a peer to the classical authors in an epigram by his friend Johannes Borsalus: "The writer Suetonius sketched the silhouettes of prominent Romans and made men immortal by his great skill. Likewise, Barlandus recalled the counts of Holland from the shadows into the light along a more shining path. Italy is indebted to Suetonius, Holland to Barlandus: the latter puts together the Batavian leaders, the former the Italian ones." [68] The booklet opens with a two-page


HADRIANI BARLANDI IN LO-
VANIENSIVM PERCELEBRI
gymnasio habitantis, Libelli tres, conscripti his, qui
iucunda, & vtili rerum cognitione capiuntur. Vno,
Principum Hollandiæ, Altero, Episcoporum insi-
gnis ecclesiæ Traiectensis, Tertio, res gestæ cõtinen
tur inuictissimi Principis Caroli, Burgũ
diæ ducis, Principum Hol-
landiæ opusculo, adiecta
sunt Scholia eius-
dem Barlan-
di.

D. Hadriani Cordati Canonici Middelburgen
sis in operis, auctorisq; cõmendationem.

Romanos proceres scriptor Trãquillus adũbrans
Magna immortales reddidit arte viros
Nõ secus Hollãdos comites Barlandus ab vmbris
Euocat ad lucem candidiore via
Tranquillo Italia, & Barlando Hollandia debet
Hic batauos, latios colligit ille duces.

Barlandus, *Libelli tres* (1520), title page

[68] Barlandus 1520, title page: "Romanos proceres scriptor Tranquillus adumbrans / Magna immortales reddidit arte viros / Non secus Hollandos comites Barlandus ab vmbris / Euocat ad lucem candidiore via / Tranquillo Italia, & Barlando Hollandia debet / Hic batauos, latios colligit ille duces." In the commentary included in this booklet, Barlandus attributes the poem to Hadrianus Cordatus: Barlandus 1520, f. Civ^{r}. About the *Libelli tres* in general, see Daxhelet 1938, 98-106.

autobiographical letter by Barlandus to Borsalus, in which he describes himself as an avid student of classical literature, a passionate teacher, and the author of various books. He also vouches for the reliability of what he tells about the counts of Holland, without referring to any predecessor: "in commemorating their extraordinary deeds, I have applied myself to the maintenance of credibility with such anxiety, that I was not content with one book, but visited many and various libraries, where some bit of information about these events was extant."[69] Subsequently, Barlandus dedicates his book to three prominent pupils from the Egmont family, thus establishing his position in the world of Habsburg-Burgundian politics.[70] Moreover, the booklet also contains a letter of recommendation by Alardus of Amsterdam, and a number of laudative poems by Cornelius Psychroecclesius.[71]

The crowning touch of Barlandus' self-presentation is the commentary on his own history of Holland. The very presence of such an appendix can be regarded as an attempt to bring the work on equal footing with classical literature. Moreover, the commentary is also explicitly involved in matters of self-presentation, since Barlandus discusses the issue why and by whom the epithet *facundissimus* ('most eloquent') was added to his name on the title page of the 1519 edition of his *De Hollandiae principibus*: "This label is not mine; so far am I from appropriating the designation of 'most eloquent', which is granted to so little people appropriately, that I would already be content with the name of 'student'. Some friends of mine, who are all too well-disposed towards my renown, have added this title – by which I certainly do not flatter myself – in my absence, when the booklet was printed in Antwerp." What Barlandus does here is to reinforce the epithet, which in fact did not even figure in the 1520 edition. This is made clear especially by the fact that many notes show Barlandus precisely as a man deeply concerned with good Latin usage, and encourage the reader to digest the text with a view to its Latinity, which is demonstrated to be modelled on classical authors and Italian humanists such as Lorenzo Valla and Marcantonio Sabellico.[72]

---

[69] Barlandus 1520, f. Aiv-Aijr. The quotation is at f. Aijr: "in quorum egregijs facinoribus commemorandis, fidei seruandae tam anxie studui, vt non vno libro contentus, multas, ac varias etiam bibliothecas adierim, vbi de hisce rebus aliquid extaret." It does not seem very likely that Barlandus actually did so much research on the counts of Holland, since it has been demonstrated that he generally relied on the *Divisiekroniek* for his information: Ward 2006, 80-4; also cf. Chapter Four about his method in the *Cronica Brabantiae ducum* and Wesseling 2000 about the *Opusculum de insignibus oppidis Germaniae Inferioris*. This seems to justify the conclusion that the statement primarily serves to underpin Barlandus' claim to reliability, his self-presentation as surety for truth.

[70] Barlandus 1520, f. Aijv.

[71] The letter by Alardus: Barlandus 1520, f. Divv-Eijr; the poems by Psychroecclesius: f. Ciijv, Eijr, Hiijv.

[72] Barlandus 1520, f. Civr-Divr. The quotation is from f. Civr: "Hadrianus Barlandus facundissimus historicus.) Hic titulus non est meus, tantum abest, vt mihi summam facundissimi appellationem

Barlandus' extrovert self-positioning stands in marked contrast to what is observed in vernacular chronicles. I have already pointed out that chroniclers often do not mention their name. This does not mean that they do not use the first person singular or that the narrators in their work are invisible: in fact, they often refer to themselves as directors of the story, source critics, and moral authorities.[73] It cannot be said, however, that the narrators are very talkative about their lifes and institutional positions.[74] It is telling that the anonymous translator of Barlandus' *Cronica ducum Brabantiae* heavily reduces Barlandus' authorial presence by removing the preface – which can be regarded as a personal statement of objective and justification – and by omitting some passages in which Barlandus figures prominently either as eyewitness or as commentator: the praise of Maximilian of Burgundy, the birth of Charles V, the apostrophe to Luther, and the necrology for Dorpius; the apostrophe to Charles of Guelders is abridged.[75] Similarly, the *compositoer* of the *Alder excellenste cronyke* maintains a deep silence about his own identity, and refers to himself in the third person in the prologue and epilogue.[76]

The "systematic deficiency of any form of sign referring to the sender of the historical message" is usually associated with modern historical writing. According to Roland Barthes, it is characteristic of such discourse, to which he attributes a particular type of deceptive rhetoric: "objectivity – or the deficiency of signs of the utterer – thus appears as a particular form of imaginary projection, the product of what might be called the referential illusion, since in this case the historian is claiming to allow the referent to speak all on its own."[77]

This strategy of self-effacement is combined with a different attitude towards the historiographical tradition than is found in Latin works of history. Whereas Latin historians present themselves as autonomous and original writers, many chroniclers

---

<rogem>, quae tam paucis mortalibus iure tribuitur, vt etiam abunde sim contentus studiosi nomine, Amici quidam mei nimium fauentes gloriae meae, cum libellus Antuerpiae excuderetur, me absente hanc inscriptionem (qua certe mihi non placeo) adiecerunt."

[73] See, for instance, Tilmans 1988, 73-9 = Tilmans 1992, 111-21; Tigelaar 2006, 119, 121, 125, 153-4.

[74] This feature might be an inheritance from the medieval historiographical tradition. Damian-Grint 1999, 86-7 states that medieval historians "by and large appear to be extremely unwilling to give personal information." I do not agree, however, with his explanation of this characteristic as a form of adherence to classical literary etiquette, as I will argue below. See Damian-Grint 1999, 143-71 for a characterization of authorial presence in medieval historiography.

[75] The passages can be found at *CBd* f. l7^{r}, l7^{v}, m8^{v}, r3^{r}, r3^{r-v}, but not in Barlandus 1555, except for the abridged apostrophe to Charles of Guelders at f. Mij^{v}.

[76] See Tigelaar 2006, 153-4.

[77] Barthes 1967, 68-9: "carence systématique de tout signe renvoyant à l'émetteur du message historique … l'objectivité – ou carence des signes de l'énonçant – apparaît ainsi comme une forme particulière d'imaginaire, le produit de ce que l'on pourrait appeler l'illusion referentielle, puisqu'ici l'historien prétend laisser le référent parler tout seul." (transl. S. Bann)

explicitly deny such independence. They present themselves as compilers, and the reliability of their work is underscored by extensive overviews of consulted sources. In the prologue to the *Divisiekroniek*, Aurelius introduces such a list by the following words: "Lest anyone should question the truth of the events, deeds, and writings that are described hereafter in this chronicle, one should know that this book has been copied, drawn, and gathered from truthful and authentic (*autentyk*) chronicles and historians, as they are hereafter mentioned by name (*mit namen*)."[78] A similar claim to truthfulness in the *Alder excellenste cronyke* is supported by the assurance that the *compositoer* "put nothing of himself in it."[79] Apparently, the compiling chronicler relies on the proven reliability of the *auctores* rather than on his own authorial personality for his rhetoric of authority.

Another difference between the position of the author can be discerned in the use of dedications. Latin humanist historians often positioned themselves in the political arena by dedicating their work to a powerful patron. Barlandus, for instance, dedicated works of history to three young members of the Egmont family, Adolph of Burgundy, Adrian of Blehen, and even to the united Burgundian nobility.[80] Works of history are thus openly used as instruments for network building, and consequently present the author as a member of certain social circles. Such a phenomenon is much less frequent in early vernacular chronicles, which sometimes contain a prologue, but hardly ever a dedication. The *Oude Goutsche chronycxken*, the *Alder excellenste cronyke*, and the *Divisiekroniek* all lack a dedication, a feature that might be connected with their anonymity: after all, a dedication is a personal gesture of one individual to another. When the speaker of a prologue consigns himself to anyone, he usually turns to divine powers. Aurelius, for instance, wishes to spend his precious time in a useful and honourable way, "in honour of God, His sweet blessed mother Mary, and the holy bishop and patron of Christianity at Utrecht, Saint Martin."[81]

---

[78] Aurelius 1517, f. b^{v}: "Ende opdat nyemant en twifele an der waerheit der geschienissen, gesten ende scriften die in deser cronyke hierna bescreven worden, so is te weten, dat dit boeck uut warachtighen ende autentyken cronyken ende historyscrivers ghecopuleert, ghetogen ende vergadert is, als si mit namen hier na ghenoemt worden".

[79] *AEC* 1498, f. a3^{r}: "niet van den sinen daer in gheset en heeft". Likewise, in a discussion about the early legends about Holland, Aurelius says that "ick (als dye minste ghesien ende gehoert hebbe) op mij selven niet staen en wil, alst behoert ende betaemlick is" (Aurelius 1517, f. 15^{r}).

[80] It must be admitted, however, that especially in the early sixteenth century the absence of a dedication in Latin works of history is not anomalous. This can be seen in Snoy's *Historia Hollandie* and Barlandus' *Cronica Brabantiae ducum*, although in the former work the possibility exists that Snoy did have the intention to dedicate the work. See §3.10.

[81] Aurelius 1517, f. a^{v}: "totter eren Goeds, Sijnre gebenedider liever Moeder Mariën ende des heiligen bisscop ende patroens des Crisdoms van Wtrecht, Sinte Martijn". Saint Martin of Tours (316-397) was the patron saint of Utrecht. As a monk, Aurelius fell under the diocese of Utrecht.

In her book on Cornelius Aurelius, Karin Tilmans compares the position of the historian in the *Divisiekroniek* and the letter to Robert Gaguin. "For the author of the *Divisiekroniek*, usefulness and truth were interdependent. However, in contrast to what Aurelius had written in the introduction to the *Compendium*, here it was not only the morally upright and objective historian who arrived at the truth by making a proper selection of the facts, but the accuracy of the factual material was also already partially guaranteed by the historian's use of the 'truest and most authentic chronicles and historians'."[82] In addition, it is remarkable that the *Divisiekroniek* was published anonymously, while the letter to Gaguin and his treatises about Batavia, which were addressed to Snoy, clearly bore Aurelius' name, and also presented him as a member of a scholarly network. In fact, while Aurelius contented himself with mentioning only his sources 'by name' in the *Divisiekroniek*, he wrote to Gaguin that his work "would give him an immortal name with posterity" (*apud posteros immortalitatis nomen afferat*).[83]

All these examples serve to demonstrate that the rhetorical function of the author is generally not the same in Latin and vernacular historiography. The difference can be captured in oppositions like independent vs. dependent attitude towards the sources, self-definition vs. self-effacement, authors with names vs. anonymity. In different ways, both types of self-presentation are employed to secure the acceptance of the message: both the impression of a self-conscious author who looms large and presents himself emphatically as competent, and that of an invisible writer who hides himself behind the text and assumes an objective pose may contribute to the persuasion of the reader. However, the function of the author in a particular discourse is not an invariable, ahistorical given. Especially in vernacular chronicles, considerable changes took place.

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, at least three experiments with authorship can be seen in vernacular historiography. The first of these is Reygersberch's *Cronijcke van Zeelandt*. We have seen that Reygersberch shares with the Latin historians an interest in the classical heritage, even if this is not the defining characteristic of his intellectual orientation. His self-presentation also shows that he has been in contact with Latin humanism. His name features in the imperial privilege and in the dedication to Maximilian II of Burgundy, who is described as a classical patron: "a good Maecenas ... with whom we can take shelter, for one encounters many

[82] Tilmans 1988, 80 = Tilmans 1992, 122.

[83] Gaguin 1500, f. Fiii^{v}: "quod vt tibi non immerito apud posteros immortalitatis nomen afferat". The letter is reproduced at Tilmans 1988, 32 = Tilmans 1992, 41-2.

scoffers and mockers nowadays who ridicule everything."[84] Nevertheless, the presence of Reygersberch's person is not nearly as pervasive as that of the Latin writers. Even when he describes the twofold inundation of his place of birth and residence Kortgene in 1530 and 1532, which caused the ruin of the town and made the historian move to Veere, he remains completely silent about the impact of these events on himself, and just retains the moral perspective set forth in the preface: "The inhabitants of Zeeland should heed the aforementioned grief and misery caused by these high floods, for the man who takes example from another, looks at himself well."[85]

Another interesting occurrance of a dedication is encountered in *De Cronijcke van Vlaenderen int corte*. This book was printed in 1557, and provided with a dedication to Adolph of Wakken, high bailiff of Ghent, written by Gerard van Salenson, who might also have been the writer of the chronicle.[86] With apparent wonder, Van Salenson notes that "every day we see among the majority of all modern authors that when they have composed, translated, or compiled some of their works, they publish it, addressing and dedicating it to some good lord or friend for whom they feel most sympathy and affection."[87] There is good reason for this practice, Van Salenson notes, for the publication of a book is like the transplantation of a young tree. "Likewise, when a work – even a literary one – is displaced and transplanted from its author – who has not yet made a name for himself – it becomes much more pleasing and acknowledged as a result of its presentation and dedication to a well-known noble, wise, or virtuous person, who deems it worthy to receive. And its fruits (if there grow any) have better chances of being picked up and found, because such a person of repute and honour adds lustre to the work that is presented to him, and honours it

[84] Reygersberch 1551, f. Aiij^{r}: "eenen goeden Mecenas ... daer wij onder schuylen mochten, want men hedensdaechs veel schimpers ende spotters vindt dye alle dinghen begheckende zijn".

[85] The passages about the ruin of Noord-Beveland are found at Reygersberch 1551, f. Hi^{r}, Hiv^{v}-Ii^{v}. The quotation is at f. Ii^{v}: "Dit voorscreuen verdriet ende iammer van dese hooge vloeden behooren die Zeelanders wel ter herten te nemen, want hi spiegelt hem wel die hem aen een ander spieghelt." The last part of this quotation is a fine expression of how exemplarity was often seen in the sixteenth century, and was probably a proverb: Stoett 1923-1925^{4}, vol. 2, 292-3 (n^{o} 2119). That Reygersberch came from Kortgene can be gathered from the fact that he calls himself "Jan Reygersberch van Cortgene" and from the town's coat of arms at Reygersberch 1551, f. Giv^{r}, which bears the inscription: "Huius cronici divulgator de hoc utcumque fortunato nuper oppidulo natus Veria domicilium iam tenet".

[86] For the discussion about the authorship of this work, see F. van der Haeghen et al. (edd.) 1964-1975, vol. 5, 6-7. The most important argument for Van Salenson's authorship is that he refers to the chronicle as "desen mynen aerbeyt" at Van Salenson 1557, f. Aij^{v}.

[87] Van Salenson 1557, f. Aij^{r}: "wy zien daghelics onder den meerderen deel van allen modern Autheurs, dat zo wanneer sy eenigh haerlieder werc ghedicht, gheverteert, oft vergadert hebben, dat sy dan tzelue ghemeenlic laten uutgaen, anschryuen ende dediceren eenighen goeden heeren oft vrienden daer sy meerst ionsten ende affectien toe draghen".

with his honour."[88] A dedication may thus enhance the authority of a book, and give the author a chance to make a name for himself. Van Salenson's elaborate explanation of this principle shows, however, that he did not regard as self-evident and he felt the need to justify his use of a dedication.

When Marcus van Vaernewijck (1518-1569), who stemmed from a family of regents in Ghent, published *Den spieghel der Nederlandscher audtheyt* in 1568, the presence of an *epistel dedicatoire* to the government of Ghent did not seem to require such an apology anymore.[89] The interesting aspect about Vaernewijck's self-presentation is that he relies on the poetic tradition of the rhetoricians' chambers, which did not encourage to highlight the name of the author too much, because this would smack of status seeking and vainglory, but found some ways to present it in a less conspicuous manner.[90] In a gesture of modesty, Vaernewijck claims to be an 'artless man' who "only masters his mother tongue," and he confesses "that I never went to school for more than a month to learn to read and write." Nevertheless, he shows himself convinced that diligence can overcome such obstacles, as has been demonstrated by the poetesses Anna Bijns in Antwerp and Rosiana Coleners in Dendermonde.[91] The reference of these particular examples presents him as a rhetorician: and indeed, he was the primary writer (*factor*) of the chamber called *Marien t'eeren* ('To the honour of Mary') in Ghent. In a fashion that is characteristic of the elaborate rhetoricians' poetry, Vaernewijck does not identify himself on the title page, but puts his signature on *Den spieghel der Nederlandscher audtheyt* in the form of an acrostic that reveals his name, and with a kind of rebus

Rebus expressing Vaernewijck's motto

[88] Van Salenson 1557, f. Aij[r]: "Desghelijcs, zo wert ooc een werck (tselfs van litteraturen) verstelt ende verplantt zijnde uut zinen Autheur (die noch van gheenen grooten name en is) duer presentatie ende toeschriuijnghe an eenen Edelen, wysen oft dueghdelicken persoon van famen, diet ghewerdighde voor zijn tontfane, naermaels uut dien van allen anderen veel tanghenamer ende gheapprobeerdere: ende de vruchten van dien (ist datter eenighe wassen) veel te bet opgheraept ende beter ghevonden: midts dat alzulcken persoon van name ende van Eeren den wercke, hem ghepresenteert, eenen luuster gheeft, ende met zijnder eeren vereert".

[89] For Van Vaernewijck's life and work, see Van Nuffel 1966; id. 1979; Lamont 2005.

[90] Pleij 1992, 235.

[91] Van Vaernewijck 1568, f. ♣iiij[r]: "een onconstich man ... Die niet dan zijns moeders tale en can"; f. ♣viij[r]: "dat ick noyt niet meer dan een maent, om lesen ofte schryuen te leeren scholen en ghijnck". Bijns and Coleners are mentioned as examples on the latter page. Lamont 2005, 52 rightly notes that Vaernewijck's remarks must be seen as a *captatio benevolentiae*, since it is highly unlikely that he did not have a good passive knowledge of a few languages.

that represents his motto.[92]

The genesis of authorship in vernacular historiography cannot be described, therefore, as a process that is entirely dependent on the ideals of the humanists, and their Latin historiography in particular. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the Latin language plays a major role in the authorization of vernacular literature. Thanks to its established canon and conventions of authorship, it was ideally suited for creating an aura of authority around a text. This often happened in the form of occasional poetry.[93] We have seen that this means was used by Barlandus in his *Libelli tres*, but some vernacular authors also resorted to the device. Reygersberch's chronicle, for instance, features a Latin epigram written by the doctor Jason a Pratis. This poem uses rhetorical terminology to authorize *Dye cronijcke van Zeelandt* as a book written according to the classical rules of writing: it attributes the virtue of brevity of Reygersberch's narration, and explains that it succeeds in performing the three rhetorical functions of teaching, delighting, and moving.[94]

In many cases, authorization in such poems heavily relies on intertextual references. A good example is the epitaph for Aurelius written by Alardus of Amsterdam in 1531. Alardus praises his friend on account of the fact that "he has written an elegant and polished volume, that surpasses the Iliad (*grandius Iliade*), the deeds and history of the Batavians." Aurelius' work – quite possibly the *Divisiekroniek* – is not only compared to the work of Homer, but also linked to Vergil's epic, because the phrase *grandius Iliade* is strongly reminiscent of the words *maius Iliade* used by Propertius to describe the *Aeneid*.[95] In a rather similar way, Dousa wrote an epigram for Pieter Christiaensz. Bor's history of the Dutch Revolt, which opens with the statement "If he would never have endured the hostility of the Spaniards, the 'Dutchman' would be happy, but without praise." The distich is closely modelled on verses from Ovid's *Tristia*, in which it is said that Penelope could only become famous as a result of the hostilities faced by Odysseus.[96] Again, the role

---

[92] Van Vaernewijck 1568, f. ♣ij^{v} (rebus) and ♣viij^{v} (acrostic). Vaernewijck's motto was "Laet vaeren niit", which means "put aside any malice". The word *vaeren* is not only verb, however, but also a noun meaning 'fern'. Therefore, this word is signified in the rebus by a depiction of this plant.

[93] A similar argument is presented by Marx 1998, 47-9 about Bernardo Bembo's homage to Dante.

[94] Reygersberch 1551, f. Aiv^{r}:"En breuibus complexa tomis narratio ... Sunt tamen in tractu tantillo plurima, quae te / delectent, miris adficiantque modis ... Si cupis ingenium gentis nouisse, docebit / Multa hic collectus sedulitate liber". I regard the use of *affectare* as a reference to the usual *movere*.

[95] The poem by Alardus is found at Crocus 1531, f. G1^{r}: "Grandius Iliade nitidum cultumque volumen, / Acta Batavorum scribit et historias." About the subject of these lines, see Tilmans 1988, 53 = Tilmans 1992, 77. Alardus refers to Propertius, *Elegiae* 2.34.66: "nescioquid maius nascitur Iliade".

[96] The poem can be found at Bor 1621-1634, vol. 1, f. (:)5^{r}: "Infestos sibi si nunquam sensisset Iberos; / Belga quidem foelix, sed sine laude foret." The book also contains a Dutch sonnet by Dousa in which such subtexts are lacking: Bor 1621-1634, vol. 1, f. (:)5^{v}. An earlier edition contained other, but similar

of the classical epic poet is claimed for the vernacular historian, and thus his authorship is enhanced.

The fact that authorship in sixteenth-century vernacular historiography was still at such an experimental stage and often relied on Latin authorization demonstrates that the two paradigms of authorship persisted thoughout the entire century. In a famous essay on the 'death of the author', Roland Barthes suggested that the Latin type of authorial self-presentation, which often creates a vivid impression of the author as a person, was a product of the Renaissance: "The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the 'human person'."[97] If Barthes meant to say here that the figure of the author could only appear when men did no longer regard themselves primarily as members of social networks and as part of institutional systems and a religious universe, I am not quite sure that his analysis is pertinent: the author-function is precisely an (often predefined) social and institutional role available to the writing subject. And neither had religion (not even Protestant Christianity, for that matter) ceased to define people as part of a collective in the sixteenth century.

In the end, the difference is primarily one of intellectual orientation. Early sixteenth-century vernacular historiography is mostly continuous with the late medieval tradition, and conforms to its morals and poetics. The fact that the linguistic subject position is not dressed up with a mask that creates the impression of a real person is first of all a literary convention that is part of an established form of communication. It finds explanation and justification in the moral universe of medieval theology – to which chroniclers often refer – in which emphatic self-presentation could be regarded as arrogance (*superbia*), self-love (*philautia*), or vanity (*vanitas*), and therefore as unacceptable disregard for the humility that marks a good Christian.[98]

Latin poetry in praise of the author by Dousa, Rycxius, Merula, Grotius, Swanenburgius, and Heinsius: Bor 1603, f. *4r-**3r. Dousa refers to Ovid, *Tristia* 5.5.50-1: "si nihil infesti durus vidisset Ulixes, / Penelope felix, sed sine laude foret." It is interesting to see that Dousa and his son carried out a similar project for vernacular poetry, writing Latin poetry in praise of the Dutch Renaissance poets Roemer Visscher and Jan van Hout: Dousa Sr 1586, 35-40; Rabus (ed.) 1704, 122-3.

[97] Barthes 1984, 61-2: "L'*auteur* est un personnage moderne, produit sans doute par notre société dans la mesure où, au sortir du Moyen Age, avec l'empirisme anglais, le rationalisme français, et la foi personnelle de la Réforme, elle a découvert le prestige de l'individu, ou, comme on dit plus noblement, de la 'personne humaine'." (transl. S. Heath) The italics are Barthes'.

[98] Cf. Enenkel 2008, 10-1. For the sensitivity surrounding the appropriation of a work in the Middle Ages, see Van Rij (ed.) 1980, 4 where Alpertus of Metz asks his dedicatee to write his name on the work only if he approves of it, which indeed happens (p. 6).

In Latin historiography, humanism obtained a firm footing and directed its view towards classical models and poetics. The classical historians had not hesitated to create an impression of themselves in their works. Caesar and Xenophon were of course the most extreme examples, but writers like Sallust, Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Thucydides also presented overviews of their careers or eyewitness accounts.[99] From the viewpoint of classical rhetoric, this choice was natural. The concept of ethos turned the speaker's personality into a core means of persuasion. From this point of departure, one is easily led to a discussion of one's own life and career in order to establish one's credentials: since the very beginning of historical theory in the works of Polybius and Cicero, the idea is present that the historian ought to have first-hand knowledge at least of the principles of warfare and politics, and preferably of the events themselves too.[100]

7.5 Social Differentiation and Audience

In the previous sections, I have discussed a number of differences between Latin and vernacular discourses. One obvious explanation for these differences, which is indeed encountered in modern scholarly literature, is that Latin and vernacular literature were written for socially distinct audiences. In this section, I will further explore this idea for sixteenth-century historiography in the Low Countries, in an attempt to show how early modern authors thought about this issue and to find out how their views relate to some basic facts about literacy, book production and consumption, and knowledge of languages in various social spheres.

Broadly speaking, one might distinguish two oppositions that modern scholars have used to map the social difference between Latin and vernacular discourse. Firstly, Latin works are thought to have addressed an international audience, whereas vernacular writing is considered to be regionally based. The underlying idea is that vernacular languages – and sometimes also their dialects – were often not well understood outside the region where they were spoken, while Latin was a cultural medium that was shared by educated people all across Europe, and also knew an age-old tradition of literature and scholarship, and therefore was the most natural *lingua franca* for scholarship, science, and the liberal arts.[101] Secondly, it is often stated that

[99] Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 3-4, *Bellum Iugurthinum* 4; Velleius Paterculus, *Historia Romana* 2.101, 111, 121; Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* 14.9.1, 14.11.5, 15.5.22-31, 16.10.21, 18.4.7-19.8.12, 23.5.7-25.10.1, 26.10.19, 29.1.24, 29.2.4; Thucydides, *Historiae* 1.1, 2.48, 4.104-7, 5.26. For some recent literature about these passages, see Marincola 1997, 128-216; Damon 2003, 80-1; Sailor 2008, 150-4; Kelly 2008, 31-103.

[100] Landfester 1972, 94-108. Also see §2.3.2.

[101] See, for instance, Waquet 1998, 303-10; Powell 1998, 292; Andermann 1998, 340-3; Tjoelker 2010, 111-2.

reading and writing in Latin enjoyed a much higher social prestige than doing so in the vernacular, because knowledge of Latin was reserved to a small elite that could afford to attend a Latin school or even to go to university. Latin thus became a means of social distinction, serving, for instance, as a starting permit for a prominent career or a key to empowering knowledge.[102]

Both ideas have their roots in the writings of sixteenth-century authors themselves. Somewhat vaguely, Snoy had stated that he did not care about the evaluation of his work, "as long as the past of my country, which lay almost buried in darkness, would be delivered into the light and the memory of men, so that the great and magnificent deeds of the Batavians are not bereft of their glory, nor are they forgotten forever."[103] Standing up for this contribution of Snoy to the glory of Holland, Brassica explained in more detail what might be understood by delivering the past into the 'memory of men' and what role the Latin language played in this process. If anyone, even if his Latin style was unexceptional, would spend time on writing a history of Holland, Brassica argued, "he would give rise to a considerable increase in the glory of our province. For when it easily controls on its own the aggression of all its enemies as a warrior nation, which commands an admirable esteem among foreigners (*exteri*), how far shall we think that he, who has rendered the memorable deeds of the magnanimous counts in a widely accessible and transparent Latin diction (*communem phrasim latinam & perspicuam*), will spread its name?"[104] Aurelius, on the other hand, explicitly linked his use of the vernacular with a local audience. Since there were few chronicles about Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland, written in Dutch, he said, "I want to write this book in the Dutch language. For due to his natural inclination, every human being is more strongly disposed and inclined towards his own country and what concerns it, and in particular he rather hears about the place where he was born and raised, the honest and manly deeds, works, and stories of his forefathers, than about those of strangers."[105]

---

[102] See, for example, Wilson & Moss 1984, 167-8; Ribhegge 1998, 155-61; Andermann 1998, 322-5, 340-3. Waquet 1998, 246-72 describes Latin as a means of social distinction, but generally limits her examples to the modern period.

[103] *HH* f. 17r: "modo nostratia in tenebris prope sepulta in lucem atque hominum memoriam vendicentur, ne ingentia atque preclara Bathauorum facinora aut fraudentur gloria sua, aut euo obliterentur".

[104] Brassica 1603, 16-7. The quote is on p. 17: "Provinciae nostrae, famae haud contemnendum augmentum adferret. Nam cum bellatrix sola facile omnium hostium suorum vim sustinet, quod admirabilem dignitatem habet apud exteros, quam late existimabimus, pervulgaturum, eius nomen, qui memoranda magnanimorum Comitum facta, in communem phrasim latinam & perspicuam traduxerit?"

[105] Aurelius 1517, f. br: "daerom wil ic dit boeck scriven in Duytsscher spraken. Want een ygelic mensch, na sijnder natuerlicker geneychtheit, is hi meer inclineert ende gheneyghet tot sine eygen lantscap ende dat angaende, ende sonderlinge hoert hi liever van daer hi gheboren ende op ghevoedet is, sijnre voervaderen eerlicke manlicke feyten wercken ende gheschienissen, dan van den vreemden." In the

Likewise, early modern authors had ideas of their own about the social standing of Latin and the vernacular. In his introduction to the New Testament known as the *Paraclesis* (1516), Erasmus showed himself an advocate of vernacular Bible translations. "I strongly disagree with those, who do not want that the divine scriptures, transferred into the language of the common people (*vulgi lingua*), are read by uneducated people, as if Christ had taught such obscure things, that they could only be understood with difficulty by a small number of theologians, or as if the protection of the Christian religion is secured by the fact that it is not known." In what follows, he points out that he identifies the audience of vernacular translation with the undistinguished or even low ranks of society: "I would wish that all girls (*mulierculae*) would read the Gospel, would read the Pauline epistles. ... Would that the farmer (*agricola*) would sing something from it at his plough, that the weaver (*textor*) would set something from it to music to accompany the movement of his shuttles, that the traveller (*viator*) would relieve the dullness of his journey with such stories."[106] Similarly, Justus Lipsius praised Jan van Hout as the "Prince of the Belgian lyre" (*Belgicae Princeps lyrae*), but refused the challenge to write Dutch poetry himself, since he did not want to be read by lowly men himself: "That is your merit: what could I achieve in this field, except that I become the laughingstock of sailors (*nautae*) and innkeepers (*caupones*)?"[107]

In the vernacular, the idea could be encountered that books in Dutch were read by the 'common man'. Thus, in his introduction to the Dutch Bible translation that appeared in Louvain in 1548, translator Nicolaus van Winghe said: "I am also aware that here and elsewhere there have been and still are many learned and qualified men who utterly disapprove of the fact that the bare text of Holy Scripture is placed in the hands of the common people (*ghemeynen menschen*), who are generally not capable of understanding it on their own."[108] In a similar vein, Jan Gymnick argued that by

---

sixteenth century, the word *duytsch* referred to the various Dutch dialects, especially the non-Flemish ones. See *WNT* s.v. 'Duitsch I'.

[106] Clericus (ed.) 1703-1706, vol. 5, 140: "Vehementer enim ab istis dissentio, qui nolint ab idiotis legi Divinas litteras, in vulgi linguam transfusas, sive quasi Christus tam involuta docuerit, ut vix a pauculis Theologis possint intelligi, sive quasi Religionis Christianae praesidium in hoc situm sit, si nesciatur. ... Optarem ut omnes mulierculae legant Euangelium, legant Paulinas Epistolas. ... Utinam hinc ad stivam aliquid decantet agricola, hinc nonnihil ad radios suos moduletur textor, hujusmodi fabulis itineris taedium levet viator." For Erasmus' attitude towards the vernacular, see Kooiman 1922; Ribhegge 1998, 155-61; François 2008. For an example of early modern attitudes towards weavers, see §§5.4 and 5.5.

[107] Sweertius (ed.) 1610, 45: "Tua, o tua istaec laus: ego quid nisi iocum / Risumque nautis debeam & cauponibus?" The poem is also found in Van Dorsten 1962, 205. For views about the vernacular in Lipsius' circles, see Sué 1979, 266, 280-1, 286-7; Heesakkers 1997; Koppenol 1998, 244-8.

[108] Van Winghe (ed.) 1548, f. *iij^{r}: "Oock weet ick wel datter vele gheleerde ende experte gheweest hebben, ende al noch sijn, hier ende elders, diet grootelijck misprijsen datmen den blooten text der heyligher scriftueren den ghemeynen menschen in die handen gheeft, die welcke meestendeel niet bequaem en sijn

failing to provide a translation of Livy for a long time, "we have held back, or rather stolen, such precious and profitable treasures from the common man (*ghemeynen man*)."[109]

Audiences are also differentiated by early modern authors according to their level of education. Thus, one reason adduced by Aurelius for writing in the vernacular is that "although many Latin chronicles have been written for Latin and learned men, one also finds some keen and ingenious laymen (*leke luyden*) who do not understand Latin, but who read about such deeds as gladly as the learned (*gheleerden*), and sometimes it happens that on some occasion, they need to know them."[110] The same view seems to lay behind the views expressed by Petrus Nannius in his oration about historiography, published in 1541: "History encompasses all professions, as long as this is not overdone and they do not speak in such a way as to make no one understand them except fellow professionals. For history has the people as its audience, and accommodates its subject matter to the masses' power of comprehension. I am not speaking about an audience of uneducated men, but one of some kind of experts."[111] If Nannius thinks specifically of Latin historiography here – which is not unlikely because he writes in Latin himself and refers exclusively to classical historians in his oration – he seems to suggest that Latin history is closely intertwined with the various professions (*artes*) and therefore addresses an audience of skilled men (*periti*), aiming perhaps at those who had an academic degree. Following this train of thought, one might conclude that vernacular historiography is directed at the laymen (*idiotae*) who do not read Latin.

The social and geographical relationships between both languages also seem to be reflected in the names given to the vernacular in Latin. It has been observed that in Italy the word *lingua vulgaris*, with its unfavourable social and literary connotations (the language of the *vulgus*, the masses), is slowly replaced by the more neutral term *vernaculus* ('indigenous language') in the course of the fifteenth

om dien te verstaen by hen seluen". Kästner 1998, 351 explains the notion 'common man' as the large group of people characterized by their unprivileged status in society, and especially their lack of learned education.

[109] Gymnick (ed.) 1541, f. *ij^{r}: "wy ... so costelijcke ende profitelijcke scatten onderghehouden, ia den ghemeynen man ontstolen hebben".

[110] Aurelius 1517, f. b^{r}: "Ende al ist datter vele Latijnssche croniken gescreven sijn voer den Latijnsscen ende geleerden mannen, soe vint men oec enige cloecke ende vernuftige leke luyden, die geen Latijn en verstaen, ende lesen also gaern van sulcken gesten als die gheleerden, ende ghevalt bi wilen, dattet hen van node si na gheleghentheit der saken die te weten."

[111] Nannius 1541, f. Eiv^{v}-Fi^{r}: "Capax est enim historia omnium artium, modo id non fiat affectate, modo ne ita loquantur, vt nemo eos intelligat praeter coartifices. Historia enim plebem auditorem habet, & ad captum vulgi sua attemperat. Loquor non de plebe idiotarum, sed vtcunque peritorum."

century.[112] In the Low Countries, the pattern seems different. During the Middle Ages, derivatives from *vulgus*, such as *vulgo*, *vulgariter*, and *vulgari lingua*, are used most frequently to introduce vernacular words in Latin texts, but alongside expressions that stress membership of a group of native speakers (*apud nos*, *lingua nostra*, *lingua eorum*) or geographical origin (*Theutonica lingua*, *theutonice*).[113] In the first half of the sixteenth century, these forms persist, but their respective frequency seems to have changed. We have seen that Erasmus used *vulgi lingua*, but Snoy seems to prefer neutral terms like *Teutonice*, *Teutonica lingua*, and *nostra lingua* over *vulgo*. Barlandus' *Cronica Brabantiae ducum* only features *nostra lingua*, *lingua nostras*, and *Germanica lingua*.[114] In the later sixteenth century, alternative terms become more visible. Divaeus, for instance, refers to Boendale's verse chronicle as *rythmi vernaculi*.[115] Dousa also uses *vernaculus*, but he has a predilection for the somewhat unusual term *idiotismus*, which he probably borrowed from classical rhetoric, in which it describes the use of colloquial or homely speech to achieve an expressive and casual diction.[116] Thus even if socially neutral terms seem to be preferred, generally, it cannot be ignored that one often encounters a sense of superiority among Latin writers.

---

[112] This is the thesis of Ramminger 2010. I am not entirely sure, however, to which extent the word *vernaculus* still evoked the association of its etymological roots in the word *verna* ('homeborn slave'). In classical Latin, the word could mean 'low-bred, proletarian' as well as 'native, domestic, indigenous'. The former meaning is encountered, for instance, in Tacitus, *Historiae* 2.88: *vernacula urbanitate* ('vulgar wit', viz. of soldiers). For more examples, see *OLD* s.v. 'uernaculus'. Ramminger 2010, 11-2, 13 gives examples that show that humanists like Valla and Perotti were perfectly aware of the possible negative connotations of *vernaculus*. On the other hand, there exists the possibility that the use of *vernaculus* for a language primarily called to mind the context of classical grammar and rhetoric, as in the phrases *vocabula vernacula* (Varro, *De lingua Latina* 5.12.77) and *sapor vernaculus* (Cicero, *Brutus* 172). Ramminger 2010, 4-7 discusses these passages, but does not describe *vernaculus* as belonging to a technical vocabulary. See Schad 2007, 419 (s.v. 'vernaculus') for the grammatical sense of the word. In the first case, *vernaculus* would still have negative social connotations; in the second one, such undertones would be absent.

[113] Slicher van Bath 1949.

[114] *HH* f. 116^{r}, 130^{v}, 197^{r} (*Teutonice*, *Teutonica lingua*), 121^{v}, 122^{r} (*nostra lingua*), 194^{r} (*vulgo*); *CBd* f. 3^{r} (*lingua nostras*), a4^{r} (*nostra lingua*), a6^{r} (*Germanica lingua*).

[115] *RBL* p. 3; cf. p. 28, 129 (*vernacule*), 81 (*vernacula lingua*). At *RBL* p. 17 the phrase *vulgares Annales* is used. Divaeus 1566, 58-62 discusses the language originally spoken in Gallia Belgica, which is referred to by terms such as *Belgarum lingua*, *idioma Belgicum*, *vernacule*. This is distinguished from the Germanic and Romance languages (*Germanica lingua*, *Romana lingua*) that were later introduced. Apparently, Divaeus assumes an antique perspective here.

[116] See, for instance, *BHA* p. 174 (*chronicis vernaculis*), f. *4^{v}, p. 77, 186 (*idiotismus*). At *ARG* f. ***iiij^{r}, Dousa uses *rithmi vernaculi*, *idiotismus noster*, and *lingua patria*. The rhetorical notion *idiotismus* is discussed in Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* 7.praefatio.5-6; pseudo-Longinus, *De sublimitate* 31. In Dousa's work, the rhetorical flavour of the term is especially apparent in the phrase "tam illustri omnibusque Idiotismi coloribus decorato narrationis quasi praeludio" at *BHA* p. 186, because it is used in combination with the rhetorical terms *color* and *narratio*. However, like *vernaculus*, the word *idiotismus*

Nevertheless, for a number of reasons one ought to deal cautiously with the texts cited above. Most importantly, even if the authors had a sound grasp of how their (possible) readerships were composed, they might have had good reasons to misrepresent the situation. The texts they were writing were of an advertising or apologetic nature. There is reason to suspect, therefore, that Brassica exaggerates the range of dissemination for Snoy's history to demonstrate the importance of his great-uncle's work, or that Lipsius presents a satirical view of vernacular audiences in order to enhance the prestige of his own Latin writings. The evangelical programme of Erasmus and Van Winghe's reaction to it, on the other hand, may well have induced them to give a rosy picture of how many people would actually have access to Bible translations at that time. Finally, it has been argued by Jan Vanderheyden that the bookseller Gymnick used his preface first and foremost to address as many prospective buyers as possible.[117] This might have caused him to define his audience as somewhat larger than would have been realistic.

It is perhaps not very surprising, then, that there are clear indications that the situation is much more complex than such remarks suggest. First of all, it is not very likely that vernacular historiography was read primarily by people from the lower strata of society, while Latin was the privileged means of communication for an elite international audience. It is true that in the Low Countries in the years 1550-1650, substantial knowledge of Latin was probably confined to the 5-7.5% of the youth that visited a Latin school and that was destined to become an upper class of noblemen, regents, rich merchants, professionals with an academic degree, and government officials, and only 1.25% of the youth went to university or an illustrious school.[118] A much larger part of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, however, could read well enough to understand a chronicle: the very scarce data available in the marriage registers of Amsterdam suggest that in the period 1585-1600, roughly 55% of the men and 35% of the women was capable of some writing; slightly more people were perhaps able to read.[119] Foreigners who visited the Low Countries were impressed by

---

might have carried the unfavourable connotations of its root ἰδιώτης ('private person, individual; common man, plebeian; one who has no professional knowledge, layman').

[117] Vanderheyden 1959, 25-33.

[118] For the knowledge of Latin in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, see Van den Toorn et al. 1997, 257-62, 267. De Ridder-Symoens 1995, 16 estimates that in the Middle Ages, at least 2% of the population in the Low Countries attended a university. Juan Christóbal Calvete de Estrella observed that in Louvain, which was of course a university town, many people were able to speak Latin, including craftsmen and some women: "Por toda la villa se habla mucho latín, aun en las casas de los officiales, de manera que ellos y algunas muxeres lo entienden" (Cuenca (ed.) 2001, 168).

[119] For literacy in Amsterdam in the period 1585-1600, see Kuijpers 1997, 500-1, 507. For the early sixteenth century, reliable statistics about literacy are not available. De Ridder-Symoens 1995, 7 speaks about a "high degree of literacy" and concludes that "during the Burgundian period large groups within

the literacy of the inhabitants. After a journey through many of the provinces, Lodovico Guicciardini somewhat hyperbolically remarked in 1567 that "the majority of them has a basic understanding of grammar; at least almost all of them, including the peasants, are able to read and write."[120]

These numbers indeed suggest that the size of the potential audience for vernacular works of history amply exceeded that of their Latin counterparts. However, voluminous and richly illustrated chronicles in large formats such as the *Alder excellenste cronyke* or the *Divisiekroniek* were not printed in vast quantities and must have been very expensive books that were purchased almost exclusively by well-to-do citizens.[121] The views expressed by the *compositoer* of the *Alder excellenste cronyke* are not at all implausible, therefore, when he says the book was written "as a blessed example and for the edification of all lords and noblemen (*heeren ende edelen personen*), and generally for all those who enjoy to read or hear virtuous stories," thus clearly singling out the prominent members of society as his target, and showing the awareness that many people would be unable to read the book themselves.[122] It also seems highly unlikely, therefore, that a weighty tome full of woodcuts like Gymnick's Livy translation was actually read by the 'common man'.

The idea that Latin was an international medium should be treated with circumspection as well. Of course, works in Latin gave foreigners better access to information about the history of the Low Countries than vernacular writings did. Thus, Barlandus' historiography could be a convenient source for men from all over Europe who were interested in Brabant, such as Juan Cristóbal Calvete de Estrella,

---

the society of the Netherlands could read and probably write as well." For a description of the social function of Latin, also see Maas 2011a, 42-6.

[120] Guicciardini 1567, 27: "& poi la maggior' parte d'essi, hanno qualche principio di Grammatica, almeno sanno quasi tutti, insino alli contadini & leggere & scriuere". Also see Vicente Álvarez's remark about the women in the Low Countries in his account of Philip II's journey through the Low Countries in 1548: "Las mugeres criadas en buenos pueblos saben leer o a lo menos contar con gitones" (Cuenca (ed.) 2001, 666).

[121] Tilmans 1988, 167-70 = Tilmans 1992, 289-96 collects some relevant data for the *Divisiekroniek* and concludes that the first edition probably did not comprise more than 150 copies, and that it was meant for "een zeer kleine, welvarende en geletterde bovenlaag van de Hollandse maatschappij, … stedelijke bestuurders en aristocraten". The inventory of Tigelaar 2006, 174-8 makes clear that the number of surviving copies of the 1498 edition of the *Alder excellenste cronyke* is more than two times as small as that of the *Divisiekroniek*, which suggests that it might have been intended for an even more select audience. Ebels-Hoving 1987, 241 suggests that the educated bourgeoisie was the audience of early printed vernacular chronicles like the *Divisiekroniek*.

[122] *AEC* 1498, f. a3^{r}: "tot salighen exemple ende stichticheyt van allen heeren ende edelen personen, ende generalijc voor alle die ghene die gherne duechdelijcke hystoriën lesen oft hooren".

Lodovico Guicciardini, and François de Rosières.[123] But as I have argued in previous chapters, it happens often enough that historians take a position on political issues that are only of regional or national importance. If a statement is made, directly or indirectly, about the theological debates in Louvain by Barlandus, about the cities' financial contribution to warfare by Snoy, or about the importance of the Brabantine privileges by Divaeus, the author probably did not primarily intend to address a broad international audience. Moreover, references to vernacular words sometimes seem to suggest that these authors wrote in the first place for a readership that understood Dutch as well as Latin.[124]

In view of these difficulties, one might suggest that more justice is done to the situation when one keeps in mind the somewhat obvious point that books were implements that were used in specific professional settings and cultural practices. As has been explained in the first section of this chapter, such settings and practices often showed an established preference for a particular language. The academy, for instance, had Latin as its official language. It was the most important medium for the education of students and the publication of academic research. Consequently, Latin also played a key role in professional groups that demanded an academic degree from their practitioners, such as doctors, priests, lawyers, and judges. Moreover, Latin was the language of the Catholic clergy, and was used – among other things – for the liturgy and for theological debates. In some cases, Latin was also used for diplomatic ends.[125] The vernacular, on the other hand, was used for everyday communication. But there were also more specific domains where it had a function. The meetings of political bodies, such as the Estates of the individual provinces and the town *vroedschappen*, were held in the vernacular. Another example is the realm of personal devotion: sermons, songs, prayers, meditation books, and basic rules for a Christian life were widely available in the vernacular.[126] As a result of such linguistic preferences, the choice of language for books that were printed for use in particular settings or

[123] Cuenca (ed.) 2001, 15; Guicciardini 1567, 147, 278; De Rosières 1580, f. *viii^{r}, 203^{v}, 257^{v}. Also see Heesakkers 1985a, 397-8 who observes that Dousa's metrical *Annales* were discussed by the Frenchman Joseph Scaliger in a Latin letter to his compatriot Jacques-Auguste de Thou.

[124] See, for instance, *CBd* f. a3^{v}-a4^{r}: "Carolus hic Martellus, robusta fuit, & ferrea natura (unde cognomen accepit. Martel enim lingua nostrate, hamer sonat)". Barlandus thus translates a French word into Dutch, without giving a Latin equivalent. This seems useful only for native speakers of Dutch. Cf. Sidwell 2010, who demonstrates that the *Ormonius*, a Latin epic from Ireland, features allusions to the etymology of toponyms that must have been hard to understand for those who were not familiar with Gaelic languages.

[125] For Latin as the language of the school, see Waquet 1998, 31-9; as the language of the Catholic Church, Waquet 1998, 56-66; as the language of scholarship, Waquet 1998, 101-23.

[126] For the use of the vernacular in the sphere of personal devotion, see Smolinsky 1998, 187-90. For the large amount of vernacular books containing spiritual self-help that were printed in the early decades of printing, see Pleij 1992, 236-7.

practices was often natural, even if not entirely predetermined: minutes of political meetings and prayer books in the vernacular, medical handbooks and theological treatises in Latin.

For sixteenth-century historiography and some other genres like drama, there is no such clear relationship with a single social domain or practice. Consequently, the hypothesis might be advanced that there is often a connection between the language in which a work of history is written, the historian's line of approach, and the social sphere to which the former two elements belong. Historiography thus often brushed against other genres. For instance, a work like the *Alder excellenste cronyke*, with its heavy emphasis on hagiography and piety, seems to be related to religious discourses of edification.[127] The legendary stories that are often encountered in vernacular historiography might be connected with popular books such as the ones about Ulenspieghel. The Latin work of Barlandus is demonstrably embedded in the humanist educational tradition, even though this is perhaps less evident for the *Cronica Brabantiae ducum* than for the *Libelli tres*. The prose histories of Dousa and Divaeus seem to participate first of all in academic debates; but they have a lot in common with juridical writing too. In this way, there emerges a system of family resemblances that cut across particular genres, but are clearly related to the social background of the writings.

In the sixteenth century, the Latin contexts of the university and the professions that required an academic degree must have seemed the most fertile soil for historiography. The *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland* by Eco Haitsma Mulier and Anton van der Lem lists 126 works of history that were printed in the period 1500-1599. 74 of these works were written in Latin (58.7%), 33 in Dutch (26.2%), and 19 in other languages (15.1%).[128] Those historians who published several different works in the course of the sixteenth century, all wrote in Latin: Barlandus, Geldenhouwer, Hortensius, Bockenberg, and Lipsius.

---

[127] For the emphasis of *AEC* on hagiography and holiness, see Tigelaar 2006, 57-81. For the importance of hagiography for purposes of edification, especially during the late Middle Ages, see Mulder-Bakker 1987, 138-9; Gurevich 1988, 17-21.

[128] Haitsma Mulier & Van der Lem 1990: nº 3a, 5a-b, 6a-b, 17a, 18a, 20b, 27a-e, 49a-b, 63a-e, 70a, 83a, 91a, 98a, 143a, 146a=263a, 146c, 156a, 168a, 174a, 177a, 179a-g, 186a, 195a, 200a, 205a, 223a-b, 241a-c, 258a-b, 267a, 307a-g, 322a-b, 333c, 337a-b, 339a-b, 346a, 364a, 383a, 388a, 423a, 437a-b, 448a, 456a, 530a (Latin); nº 20a, 22a, 27e, 62a, 75a, 113a, 118a, 119a, 121a, 124a, 131a, 132a, 142a, 146b, 160a, 173a, 177a, 237a, 260a, 333d, 397a, 407a, 415a-b, 477a-b, 479a, 483a-d, 518a, 524a (Dutch); nº 6a, 195a-b, 241c, 258b, 333a-c (German); nº 177a, 195b, 365a, 407a, 458a, 518a (French); nº 195a-b, 437b (Italian); nº 195b, 407a (English).

7.6 Political Rhetoric in Latin and Vernacular Historiography

In view of my main hypothesis, the focus of this chapter should center on the question how Latin and vernacular historiography relate to the domain of politics. By way of epilogue, therefore, I will finish the chapter by pulling together the various strands of my argument around the issue of politics.

Proceeding from my conclusions about the social embedment of Latin and vernacular writing, it might seem that the vernacular was in a more advantageous position, because it was the dominant means of communication in regional politics and could therefore tie in more easily with the discourses relevant to this field.[129] Thus we see that Dousa's scholarly correspondence is conducted in Latin, administrative questions are dealt with in Dutch.[130] It is not surprising, therefore, that vernacular historiography has direct access to the contemporary political domain. This is perhaps clearest in the use of vocabulary, as we have seen in the use of current terminology in the Livy translation commissioned by Jan Gymnick. To give another example, Aurelius introduced the second part of his *Divisiekroniek*, which dealt with the early history of Holland from the institution of the county until the accession of Philip the Good in 1433, with a substantial essay about the superiority of monarchy as a form of government, building on knightly ideals and philosophical concepts from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Philip of Leiden, both of which did already have a history of reception in the vernacular.[131] Thus, even if it is hard to maintain that vernacular chronicles were written for the 'common man,' their language does seem an instrument that was quite suited to convey political messages.

Nevertheless, Latin also had a number of convenient assets that might well have induced the historian to write in this language. I have argued, for instance, that it had

---

[129] For international diplomacy the situation was slightly different, and humanists like Snoy and Dousa often participated in missions precisely because of their skills in Latin, but even in this profession, the importance of the French language steadily increased at the expense of Latin.

[130] For the letters in Latin: Dousa's correspondence with Victor Giselinus has been edited in Heesakkers 1976, 31-111; some letters exchanged with Janus Lernutius are found in Van Crombruggen 1955, 101-12; a large number of letters to and from Lipsius can be found in *ILE* vols. 1, 2, 3, and 13; a few letters about historical scholarship have been edited by Vermaseren 1955, 69-107. For the letters in Dutch: Dousa's correspondence with William of Orange can be found at http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/WVO [last consulted on 14 August 2011]; two letters have been edited in Visscher 1846a; some Dutch and French letters about the siege of Leiden can be found in Orlers 1614, 381-2, 395, 398-9; the letters concerning the embassy to England can be found in Van Deventer (ed.) 1860-1865, vol. 1, 86-7, 97-8, 102-11. Part of the correspondence about the administration of Leiden university is also in Dutch: Molhuysen (ed.) 1913-1924, vol. 1, *Bijlagen*, 18*, 25*, 136*-137*, 294*-296*, 299*-300*. Cf. Ribhegge 1998, 161-71 who notes that Luther conducted correspondence with scholars in Latin, with political dignitaries in German.

[131] Aurelius 1517, f. xciij^{r}-xcv^{v}. On the sources of this passage, see Tilmans 1988, 157-8 = Tilmans 1992, 268-72.

better chances of reception in foreign countries, and that it reached some professional groups like lawyers and priests more easily, especially if it shared the worldview and methodology of such a group. But on the other hand, vernacular historiography might have addressed other groups, such as government officials, and it might have been subject to a slightly wider dissemination in Dutch-speaking regions. But on the whole, it must be recognized that even if the vernacular was often associated with uneducated and undistinguished readers, both Latin and vernacular historiography must have targeted a social elite that was largely capable of reading Latin.

In addition, the fact that Latin discourse offered a more direct access to the cultural heritage of antiquity must have been a distinct advantage for those who wished to voice a political message in historiography. One example is that in imitation of annalistic or dynastic historiography from classical antiquity, Latin historiography featured periodizations guided by political landmarks, rather than by the history of salvation. Furthermore, Latin historiography could more easily draw on the paradigmatic characters and political vocabulary that were part of the prestigious classical heritage. This was made possible by the presence of an established canon of classical historiography. In the vernacular domain, the formation of a similar canon only started towards the end of the sixteenth century, when Stoke's *Riim-kroniik* was published, and even then the Latin tradition played a major role in the process of canonization.

A special characteristic of Latin historiographical discourse that might have contributed to its suitability for political rhetoric was the type of author-function that came along with it. The anonymous and objectivist author of vernacular historiography was probably an effective tool for persuasion, but the self-conscious Latin author might have been better equipped to convey political messages. Because he could present himself as performing political functions, identify himself with a classical author of a particular affiliation, and position himself explicitly in relation to a mighty patron, he could manoeuvre in the political arena more visibly.

However, one should always remain careful with such distinctions between Latin and vernacular historiography, and beware of all-too-rigid categories. First of all, there exist many borderline cases, such as Aurelius' *Divisiekroniek*, which is a vernacular work by a humanist author who was noticeably familiar with classical literature, or the work of Divaeus, who was trained as a humanist and wrote in Latin, but did not seem very concerned with classical literature. Furthermore, the difference between both discourses was by no means a historical given. The introduction of Renaissance ideals of writing in the vernacular is easily discernible, and it might also be argued that Latin historiography tends towards professionalization in the second

half of the sixteenth century. The tendencies described in this chapter are therefore not much more than an attempt to catch the vague contours of two very large and strongly intertwined groups of texts in a set of clear-cut oppositions, but they nevertheless give a first impression of the relationship between both discourses, and consequently of the specificity of Latin historiography in the Low Countries in the sixteenth century, on the basis of the available evidence.