'That Antwerp's golden age may return one day' Nostalgia as a rhetorical device in the schoolbooks of a sixteenth-century schoolmaster in exile

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NOSTALGIA IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

MEMORY, TEMPORALITY, AND EMOTION

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and reassuring predictability. Most often, it sustained explicitly male visions of power; but equally, these gendered assumptions could be challenged and undercut, as they were by Christine de Pisan to expose the hypocrisy of contemporary chivalry.

Precisely because nostalgia was not just a literary tool, and precisely because individuals could feel its emotive force, this was a trope which could work and be instrumentalised in many different ways. It could be used to criticise the failures of lordship, or conversely to project a vision of shepherding kingship which justified a growing burden of taxation; to lament the decline of knighthood and the growth of urban value systems, or to point rather to the hypocrisies of chivalry which had perhaps always been present and which generated profound losses for women.

Pastoral nostalgia worked so effectively because it evoked a recognisable, if idealised scene. At the same time, it drew on older and even classical genealogies to endow it with a sense of authority. It was literary and cultural, drawing on what were, by the late fourteenth century, self-consciously anachronistic literary forms. It was aesthetic, using literary techniques to evoke visions of great beauty. It worked at a collective level, by stimulating shared aspirations and complaints amongst those who were part of a shared political community. But this collective force took strength from the intensity of the emotions of individuals: nostalgia lay at the interstices between personal and collective loss.

In 1324, the Cathar Pierre Maury was being interrogated by the Inquisition in Albi. The inquisitor was keen not only to learn about the details of Pierre's beliefs, but also about the context of his life more generally. The exhausted Autier is asked about his life as a shepherd. He describes how he takes his sheep to the higher pastures in the Pyrenees in the summer, a process known as *transhumance*. In a passage of great lyrical beauty, the shepherd evokes the beauty of the mountain pastures which he will never see again. He explains how the exquisite landscape makes it very hard for him always to conform to the Cathar belief that the whole material world was created by the devil. Pierre's nostalgia is of the most personal kind, and a useful reminder of the feelings and sentiment at stake in fourteenth-century longing for the beauty of nature.[69]

[69] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294–1324* (Harmondsworth, 1990), pp. 79–80, 177. Much of this research and thinking was made possible by the generosity of a Leverhulme prize and the British Academy.

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'That Antwerp's Golden Age may return one day': Nostalgia as a Rhetorical Device in the Schoolbooks of a Sixteenth-Century Schoolmaster in Exile

Alisa van de Haar and Theo B. Lap

In 1552, schoolmaster Glaude Luython dedicated his latest French-Dutch vocabulary book to the merchants and citizens of Antwerp, praising their French language skills and how they used those skills to gain profit:

> Because I cannot find, among the cities of the Low Countries, any other where such diligence is put into teaching the youngsters and children the French language, as in this renowned and triumphant city of Antwerp. And this with great benefit, because in no other city the aforementioned language is used so commonly in the doings and dealings of commerce as in this triumphant city.[1]

Indeed, the mid-sixteenth century was a time of prosperity for language teachers in the city on the Scheldt: interregional trade was flourishing and lessons in French, the commercial *lingua franca*, were highly sought after. In scholarship, it has become customary to refer to this period as 'Antwerp's Golden Age' even though it was a period ridden with political upheavals.[2] An early reference (1576) to this notion of a 'Golden Age' is found in the works

[1] 'want ick niet en vinde onder de steden van neder duytschlandt enyge, daermen doet so grooten diligencie om wel te doen leeren de jongelinghen ende kinderen de Fransoysche sprake, als in dese vermaerde ende triumphante stat van Antwerpen. Ende dat ter goeder rekeningen, want in geene vanden anderen steden en gebruyctmen so gemeinlijc inden treyn ende handele der coopmanscapen de voorscreven tale als in dese triumphante stede.' Glaude Luython, *Dictionaire En Franchois et Flameng ou bas allemant* … (Antwerp, 1552), fos A2v–3r. All translations are our own unless otherwise indicated.

[2] See, for instance: Leon Voet, *De Gouden Eeuw van Antwerpen: Bloei en uitstraling van de metropool in de zestiende eeuw* (Antwerp, 1974); Jeroen Puttevils, *Merchants and Trading in the Sixteenth Century: The Golden Age of Antwerp* (New York, 2015); Michael Pye, *Europe's Babylon: The Rise and Fall of Antwerp's Golden Age* (New York, 2021).

of exiled schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre (du Vivier, de Vivere). This chapter demonstrates that his understanding and labelling of Antwerp's 'Golden Age' was highly fluid and more controversial than its modern usage in scholarship, based on an almost self-evident understanding of the term, suggests. De Vivre's works show a kaleidoscopic use of a nostalgic portrayal of Antwerp to respond to the sympathies of his audience rather than presenting an accurate rendition of Antwerp's history. Therefore, this chapter will argue that amidst times of crisis and exile, nostalgia could serve as a rhetorical device in written texts to engage with the nostalgic sentiments of the audiences of these texts or to cultivate those sentiments when they were absent. In fact, this early modern rhetoric of nostalgia – by De Vivre and others – seems to have been so successful that the notion of 'Antwerp's Golden Age' still thrives today.

However, the modern-day use of the term 'Golden Age' may be questioned, for there is a blemished side to this seemingly golden coin: not everyone benefited from the economic burst, of course, and conflicts with the Habsburg leadership and the persecution of religious dissidents compelled many to leave the (Southern) Low Countries. Schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre constitutes a prime example of such dissidents, fleeing from Ghent to Cologne in the early 1560s. During his exile, he voiced his lament over what he, remarkably, experienced to be the loss of Antwerp's 'golden era' in a dedication signed 1576.[3] His nostalgic reflection not only raises the pertinent question, previously articulated by Guido Marnef, of whether the 'average Antwerpener' perceived the metropolis's so-called Golden Age as such.[4] On top of that, it invites us to delve into the efficacy of the emotion of nostalgia amidst geographical displacement, acknowledging it not only as a personal emotion but also as an instrument capable of crafting and manipulating a culture's collective memory by targeting the emotion of loss across a broader range of individuals and communities.

This chapter is an attempt to provide one possible answer to both questions by approaching them not from the point of view of an Antwerpener, but of a schoolmaster from Ghent. In several French-German and French-Dutch schoolbooks De Vivre published in both Cologne and Antwerp in the decades that followed, he described his outsider's perspective on some of the most turbulent years in Antwerp's history. It will be shown here that this outsider's perspective is tinged with a nostalgic rhetoric, accommodating De Vivre's representations of Antwerp to his audience's preferences – using them to his own advantage. As a result, nostalgia's versatility is brought to the fore. Regardless of whether De Vivre himself actually experienced any form of nostalgia in response to Antwerp's demise, his writings gratefully invoke its

[3] Gerard de Vivre, *Devx livres de l'utilite du train de marchandise …* (Antwerp, 1576), fo. 38v. It was printed as part of the *Lettres missives familieres, entremeslees de certaines confabulations non moins vtiles que recreatiues. Ensemble deux liures de l'vtilité du train de Marchandise.*

[4] Guido Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis, 1550–1577* (Baltimore and London, 1996), p. 8.

affective signature in order to make his argument more persuasive for an audience that either already suffered from the pangs of loss and dislocation or would be encouraged to do so as a result of reading them.

In order to come to a full understanding of De Vivre's contemporary reference to Antwerp's Golden Age, it has to be placed in the larger context of the city's tumultuous times, as well as, on a micro-level, De Vivre's own life. De Vivre ended up as a mere spectator on the events that wove together the fabric of Antwerp's presumed 'Golden Age', for his own life was marked by his religious exile in Cologne. Here, he tried to rebuild his life while at the same time maintaining his bonds to the Low Countries. It will be argued that he used his schoolbooks to broadcast a nostalgic representation of events in Antwerp that was firmly embedded in the dual context of being dislocated while maintaining his bonds to his homeland. The concept of 'restorative nostalgia', in particular, helps to interpret De Vivre's nostalgic lament on the Golden Age of Antwerp. This form of nostalgia, as described by Svetlana Boym, aims at the absolute reconstruction of an idealised lost home, blurring the lines between invention and authenticity: the restoration of the idealised past is confused with the actual past.[5] De Vivre used such restorative nostalgia as a rhetorical device, capitalising on his own dislocation in time and space to carve out an identity for himself amidst the markets of Antwerp and Cologne. As a final section will show, De Vivre was – though strikingly early – not alone in using the notion of a Golden Age to describe Antwerp's heydays; it is the shared use of a rhetoric of nostalgia that seems to have established a collective memory culture, the effects of which still resonate to the present day.

De Vivre's Nostalgia as a Rhetorical Device

The examples of De Vivre's writing in exile that follow show that we cannot lose either time or place without also losing the other. This underscores the observation, made in the Introduction to this volume, that the modern separation between nostalgia and homesickness is too narrowly focused on the distinction between a longing for time and a longing for place. Nostalgia is more than homesickness's difficulty of adjustment to a new place envisioned by medical scholars as well as Hofer himself (1688).[6] As Boym has remarked,

[5] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York, 2001), pp. xiii, 41–50; Frank Ankersmit, *De sublieme historische ervaring* (Groningen, 2007), p. 418.

[6] For the notion of homesickness as an adjustment difficulty, see Margaret Stroebe, Henk Schut and Maaike H. Nauta, 'Is Homesickness a Mini-Grief? Development of a Dual Process Model', *Clinical Psychological Science*, 4 (2016), 350. For a more comprehensive analysis of the use of nostalgia and homesickness as rhetorical devices in the premodern period, see Theo B. Lap, 'Consoling for Homesickness: The Transformation of Worldly Bonds in Three 12th-Century Monastic Letter Collections', unpublished thesis, University of Groningen (2021).

the poignancy of nostalgia's bittersweet longing must be viewed in connection with the production of collective memories: it is 'a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed'.[7] This makes it rhetorically potent in being able to communicate (in writing, music, visual media, etc.) and celebrate selective pasts and places that resonate with the affective framework of diverse ranges of audiences. The ingredients of Antwerp's greatness, alternating, as we will see, between its intellectual and mercantile cultures, shifted depending on (the preferences of) his audience. In De Vivre's late sixteenth-century writings, Antwerp is represented as not only being lost in time but also as being lost as a place.

De Vivre wields a language of 'restorative nostalgia' to present himself as an outsider to the proceedings in Antwerp. At first glance, his writing in exile reveals little about his personal situation or his mental state. Nevertheless, his outsider reflections on the proceedings in Antwerp are fashioned by the mindset of an exile. By studying the language used to represent Antwerp in his dedications to various treatises, we learn how his written evocations of Antwerp's so-called 'Golden Age' and its demise were cloaked in nostalgia. As we will argue, De Vivre's nostalgic reminiscences exceed the characteristics of Hofer's homesickness – a condition that compels its sufferer to want to return to one's native land.[8] Rather, they appear to be a variation on the theme of Boym's 'restorative nostalgia', the desire to rebuild or reclaim the (idealised) lost home rather than simply dwell on its absence.[9] In this way, De Vivre may have imbued the language of his writings with his personal sense of loss of time and space to connect with like-minded individuals who he hoped would appreciate his books. In the dedications to his books, a restorative nostalgia for Antwerp and its 'Golden Age' was contrived on the basis of De Vivre's experience and interpretation of particular historical turning points in the city's eventful history.

Antwerp: Rise and Decline?

In its turbulent sixteenth century, Antwerp went through several turning points on both a municipal and, for many inhabitants, an individual level. These socio-economic and political events were intertwined with the city's self-presentation, which knew a long tradition against which De Vivre positioned himself when discussing the metropolis. Numerous studies have shed light on the origins, character, and size of Antwerp's financial successes, which were mainly related to its central position in interregional trade from the

7 Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, p. xiii.

8 Carolyn Kiser Anspach, 'Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia by Johannes Hofer, 1688', *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, 2 (1934), 381.

9 Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, p. 41.

turn of the century onward.[10] Its municipal government and inhabitants were strongly aware of the importance of commerce for the blossoming of their city, and seem to have consciously strengthened Antwerp's reputation as a trading centre. Hubert Meeus and Ilja Van Damme have argued that the qualification of Antwerp as 'renowned trading town' ['vermaerde coopstadt'] developed into a fixed expression – perhaps even a brand – thanks to its spread via the printing press.[11] This is a direct reflection of another aspect of Antwerp's success, namely its cultural impact as a polyglot publishing metropolis.[12]

It seems that the way in which Antwerp presented itself to the outside world remained, on the whole, positive at least until 1585 – the traditional date assigned to Antwerp's decline. A case in point is the 1577 *Spieghel der werelt*, a pocket atlas by famous cartographer Abraham Ortelius, which, like its 1579 French translation, presents Antwerp in a very positive light. The author of the Dutch and French texts accompanying the maps was Peeter Heyns, a colleague and close friend of De Vivre. In 1579, he described his native Antwerp as follows: 'she surpasses not only all the cities of Germany, but of all of Europe, which is why Christopher Stella calls her the marketplace of the world'.[13] While Heyns paints a very positive image of the city and its prosperity, we shall shortly come to see that his friend De Vivre, living in exile, was already presenting a much bleaker picture instead.

It is this bleaker picture of Antwerp's decline before 1585 that matches the city's tumultuous history leading up to that point. The events that shaped Antwerp's commercial and financial outlook in the second half of the sixteenth century have been weighed on a modern scale that ranges

10 See, for example: M. Limberger, '"No Town in the World Provides More Advantages": Economies of Agglomeration and the Golden Age of Antwerp', in P. O'Brien, D. Keene, M. 't Hart and H. Van der Wee (eds), *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 39–62; Puttevils, *Merchants and Trading*.

11 Ilja Van Damme, 'Scaldis geketend: Percepties van het economische welvaren van de stad Antwerpen of de genese van een handelsideologie (zestiende–negentiende eeuw)', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 123 (2010), 486–503, esp. 494–9; Hubert Meeus, 'Printing Vernacular Translations in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp', in 'Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp', special issue of *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, ed. Christine Göttler, Joanna Woodall and Bart Ramakers (Leiden, 2014), 108–37, esp. pp. 109 and 126–7. See also A. Kint, 'The Ideology of Commerce: Antwerp in the Sixteenth Century', in P. Stabel, B. Blondé and A. Greve (eds), *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th Centuries): Merchants, Organisation, Infrastructure* (Leuven, 2000), pp. 213–22.

12 Werner Waterschoot, 'Antwerp: Books, Publishing and Cultural Production before 1585', in P. O'Brien et al. (eds), *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 233–63; Hubert Meeus, 'Wat een spraak! Vreemde talen in het Antwerpen van Cornelis Kiliaan', in Stijn Van Rossem (ed.), *Portret van een woordenaar: Cornelis Kiliaan en het woordenboek in de Nederlanden* (Antwerp, 2007), pp. 101–13; Meeus, 'Printing Vernacular Translations'.

13 'elle surpasse non seulement toutes les villes de l'Alemaigne, mais de toute l'Europe, parquoy Christofle Stella la nomme le Marché du monde'. Peeter Heyns, *Le miroir du monde* ... (Antwerp, 1579), fo. 27v.

from 'decline' and 'downfall' to 'Indian summer' and, of course, the end of its 'Golden Age'.[14] While scholars have looked into the changes as well as the continuities of Antwerp's welfare, there is no consensus on the exact demarcation of this golden period.[15] Most studies seem to reserve the term for the period 1500 to 1585.[16] The latter marks the year in which Antwerp, after years of religious conflict, surrendered to the troops of Philip II, and made a final conversion back to the Catholic faith, causing thousands of Protestants (and others, fearing economic difficulties) to leave the city. As a result, 1585 has traditionally come to be known as the year of crisis that turned the tides of Antwerp's economic and political situation.

However, researchers of Antwerp's economic and political situation have actually identified multiple turning points taking place well before the renowned date of 1585 that indicate earlier reversals of the city's fortune. The credit crisis of the late 1550s was one of the first substantial blows to Antwerp's financial situation.[17] In the meantime, religious tensions were running high. Fear of persecution is probably what led Gerard de Vivre, who seems to have upheld Protestant convictions, to leave the Low Countries in the early 1560s. A true subsequent turning point on a social, political, and economic level was the 1566 'Miracle year' ['Wonderjaar']. The Iconoclastic Fury that raged through the Low Countries in August of that year made the religious tensions clearly visible and was met with a forceful response. In 1567, the Spanish army directed by the Duke of Alva arrived to restore order, leading a considerable number of Protestants to flee – although many of them returned after a pardon was proclaimed in 1570.[18] Leon Voet and others have pointed to 1572 as another important date in Antwerp's tumultuous history.[19] As rebel troops were gaining terrain in Holland and Zeeland, the Scheldt no longer formed a safe transport route, which threatened the trade upon which Antwerp relied

[14] For 'decline' and 'downfall' see Peter Spufford, 'From Antwerp and Amsterdam to London: The Decline of Financial Centres in Europe', *The Economist*, 154 (2006), 143–75; Pye, *Europe's Babylon*. For the term 'Indian summer', see Voet, *De Gouden Eeuw*, p. 235; R. Baetens, *De nazomer van Antwerpens welvaart: De diaspora en het handelshuis De Groote tijdens de eerste helft der 17e eeuw*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1976).

[15] Many studies on Antwerp that refer to its Golden Age do not give fixed dates. For the year 1585 as the end date of Antwerp's bloom, see: Waterschoot, 'Antwerp'; Voet, *De Gouden Eeuw*, p. 244; Jessica Abigail Stevenson-Stewart, 'Rules of Engagement: Art, Commerce, and Diplomacy in Golden-Age Antwerp', unpublished thesis, University of California (Berkeley, 2015), p. 6.

[16] See, for instance: Bert Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen: Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld* (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 91–2; Van Damme, 'Scaldis geketend'; David van der Linden, 'Coping with Crisis: Career Strategies of Antwerp Painters after 1585', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 31 (2015), 18–54.

[17] Spufford, 'From Antwerp', 156.

[18] Violet Soen, 'The Beeldenstorm and the Spanish Habsburg Response (1566–1570)', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 131 (2016), 99–120.

[19] Voet, *De Gouden Eeuw*, p. 244. See also Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation*, p. 4.

so strongly. This was followed in November 1576 by the so-called 'Spanish Fury', during which mutinying Spanish soldiers sacked the city.[20] A 'French Fury' followed in 1583, when French troops led by the Duke of Anjou made a failed attempt to conquer the city, which had been a Protestant bulwark since 1581. Philip II started his siege of the city in July 1584, eventually leading to its capitulation in August 1585.

Although there are thus various dates that, to Antwerp citizens and to outsiders, could have felt like turning points, De Vivre's case demonstrates that the turning points in the lives of individuals and their experience do not necessarily have to match all of these larger events. Individuals could have suffered financial losses in the credit crisis, they may have been displaced after Alva's arrival in 1567, or they might have lost relatives in the Spanish Fury. De Vivre's decision to flee the Low Countries was in any case made before the Wonderjaar of 1566 as he probably settled in Cologne in the early 1560s. Despite not being a witness to Antwerp's subsequent fate, his writings betray an active engagement with multiple such turning points that served as the ingredients for his restorative nostalgia.

Since he fled the scene at an early stage of the city's downfall, De Vivre evidently relied on second-hand knowledge to narrate Antwerp's further adversities. He depended at least in part on a collective memory pertaining to Antwerp that had come into existence and which he gratefully borrowed from in order to subsequently make his own contributions. This reveals the complex filigree of a nostalgic 'Golden Age' at work, imposing a hegemonic collective memory that, while it may be at odds with individual experiences, postulates a historical truth that has a tendency to subordinate personal memories. Indeed, individual experiences can conflict with the collective memory culture surrounding specific events as well as a broader concept such as that of a 'Golden Age'.

Gerard de Vivre: Schoolmaster in Exile

One of the first to draw attention to the case of De Vivre, and the first to look closely into his biography, was Bert van Selm in 1977.[21] Since then, his publications have been studied more closely by German historical linguists interested in the linguistic complexion of early modern Cologne or De Vivre's contribution to the history of grammar writing.[22] Not much is known about

[20] For the Spanish Fury as marking the end of Antwerp's Golden Age, see Pye, *Europe's Babylon*.

[21] Bert van Selm, 'The Schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre: Some Bio-Bibliographical Observations, with Particular Reference to the Dialogue "Vande Druckerije"', *Quærendo*, 3 (1977), 209–42.

[22] See: Mechtild Bierbach, 'Die Anfänge des Französischunterrichts im 16. Jh. im Rheinland: Gérard de Vivre', *Romanistik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3 (1997), 27–47;

the schoolmaster before he left Ghent for Cologne, probably around 1562. The Cologne city archives show that he was allowed to open a French school in the following year.[23]

Cologne was a Catholic city where, although it was open to immigrants of different confessions, religious practices were regulated.[24] De Vivre's school was under close scrutiny, and his name is mentioned on a 1570 list of individuals suspected of expressing Protestant ideas. He was accused of not properly teaching on the Holy Sacrament, but he was later acquitted. A year later, however, his name comes up again: 'it is said, that he secretly hides Beggars [Geusen]'.[25] This rumour does not seem to have caused him too much trouble, as he became an official citizen of Cologne in 1574.[26] It is possible that the aforementioned Peeter Heyns was among the Beggars or 'Geusen' De Vivre might have taken in, as the Antwerp schoolmaster fled to Cologne in exactly this period, returning only after Alva's pardon.[27] De Vivre did not leave a written record detailing his reasons for leaving Ghent, but these accusations and the timing of his departure strongly suggest they were confessional in nature. It is unclear when De Vivre passed away, but it must have been some time before 1597 when he is mentioned in a re-edition of one of his schoolbooks as 'the late master Gerart de Vivre'.[28]

As a schoolmaster, De Vivre followed recent didactic and literary developments. His qualities as a teacher become evident from his publication record. Around three years after arriving in Cologne, he published his first known schoolbook: a French-German grammar book that is now known as the very first of its kind.[29] He also followed the humanist trend of writing school plays for his pupils to perform, training their French skills as well as public speaking.[30] His plays contain early influences from Italian Commedia

Angela Weißhaar, '"Grammatistes" ou "grammairiens"? Quelques maîtres de langue de Cologne et de Strasbourg aux XVI[e] et XVII[e] siècles', *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, 21 (1998), 181–97; Cornel Zwierlein, 'Religionskriegsmigration, Französischunterricht, Kulturtransfer und die Zeitungsproduktion im Köln des 16. Jahrhunderts', *Francia*, 37 (2010), 97–129.

23 Van Selm, 'The Schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre', 211; Zwierlein, 'Religionskriegsmigration', 109 n. 51.

24 Weißhaar, '"Grammatistes"', 184–5; Zwierlein, 'Religionskriegsmigration', 102.

25 'Wirtt ouch gesachtt, das er die Geusen heimlich by sich herbergen solte.' Cited in Zwierlein, 'Religionskriegsmigration', 110 n. 52.

26 Günther Holtus, 'Gérard Du Vivier: Grammaire Françoise (1566)', in Jan De Clercq, Nico Lioce and Pierre Swiggers (eds), *Grammaire et enseignement du français, 1500–1700* (Leuven, 2000), pp. 401–24, esp. p. 401.

27 Hubert Meeus, 'Peeter Heyns, a "French Schoolmaster"', in De Clercq et al. (eds), *Grammaire et enseignement du français, 1500–1700*, pp. 301–16, esp. p. 306.

28 'feu Maistre Gerart de Vivre'. Cited in Van Selm, 'The Schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre', 215.

29 Gerard de Vivre, *Grammaire Françoise* ... (Cologne, 1566).

30 Gerard de Vivre, *Trois comedies francoises* (Antwerp, 1589).

dell'Arte,[31] but also poems by famous French authors Clément Marot and Pierre de Ronsard, set to music.[32] De Vivre published a whole series of language manuals of all sorts: besides grammar books and school plays, he also wrote a book of synonyms, bilingual conversation manuals containing sample dialogues, and model letters.[33] Several of these saw multiple reissues, but De Vivre suffered from censorship. His school plays were on the list of forbidden works of the Antwerp schoolmasters' guild.[34] Indeed, even in exile, he did not fully escape repression, but he did maintain his contacts with his homeland.

Between Ghent, Cologne, and Antwerp

Through his schoolbooks, De Vivre consciously positioned himself in a triangle constituted by his home town Ghent, his new place of residence Cologne, and Antwerp, for a long time an important printing centre for educational material and the bulwark of the Revolt. Most of De Vivre's works contain explicit references to his native Ghent; their title pages present him as 'Gerard de Vivre, from Ghent', a formula that he generally uses to sign his dedications and prefaces as well.[35] No publications by his hand are known from his Ghent days, however. Despite the various turning points marking his own life as well as the disorder of Antwerp's contemporary history, De Vivre actively maintained various professional and personal bonds to Antwerp while writing in and from Cologne. In fact, it seems that he first started publishing his work in Cologne, where Maternus Cholinus printed his *Grammaire françoise* in 1566. For his second known work, the *Briefve Institution* from 1568, he worked together with Heinrich von Aich, with whom he would later collaborate again for the *Synonymes* (1569) and *Les fondaments de la langue francoise* (1574).[36] Von Aich was, apparently, an important figure for the Netherlandish community in Cologne, as he would also publish nobleman-poet Jan van der Noot's *Das Buch Extasis* in 1576.[37]

31 Donald Perret, *Old Comedy in the French Renaissance: 1576–1620* (Geneva, 1992), pp. 63–81.

32 Alisa van de Haar, 'Ronsard at School: French Poetry as Educational Tool in the Early Modern Low Countries', in Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou and Paul J. Smith (eds), *Ronsard and Du Bartas in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston, 2021), pp. 229–54, esp. pp. 248–9.

33 Gerard de Vivre, *Synonymes* ... (Cologne, 1569); Gerard de Vivre, *Dialogues francois-flamengs* ... (Antwerp, 1573); Gerard de Vivre, *Lettres missives familieres* ... (Antwerp, 1576).

34 Van Selm, 'The Schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre', 212 n. 12.

35 'Gerard de Vivre, Gantois'. See, for example, De Vivre, *Grammaire Françoise*, fos 1r and 2r–v.

36 Gerard de Vivre, *Briefve Institution* ... (Cologne, 1568); De Vivre, *Synonymes*; Gerard de Vivre, *Les fondaments de la langue francoise* (Cologne, 1574).

37 Jan van der Noot, *Das Buch Extasis* ... (Cologne, 1576).

From the start, De Vivre made sure to present himself in a favourable light to the municipal authorities in Cologne through his publications. He dedicated his 1566 grammar to the 'very noble and very ingenious adolescent Sir Arnoldt de Segen', who, according to the dedication, took French lessons with De Vivre.[38] This probably refers to Arnold von Siegen, a member of the prominent Von Siegen family, who would later become mayor of Cologne, just like his grandfather before him.[39] De Vivre thus used his personal connection with this young man in order to reach the higher echelons of Cologne's society. Two years later, in the *Briefve Institution*, De Vivre addressed the city council directly, dedicating it to 'my sirs, misters the mayors, counsellors, and bourgeois of the city of Cologne'.[40] He boasts that he was the first teacher to successfully open a French school in the city, and he asks the municipality for protection. In return, he wishes their 'very flourishing Republic, perpetual augmentation of peace, prosperity and goods'.[41] Apparently, the city council appreciated this dedication, as they offered him financial compensation for it.[42]

It is clear that these dedicatory epistles do not necessarily address the schoolchildren who were the primary target audience for such schoolbooks. This is no exception to the customs of the time: most schoolbooks contain a dedication to a high-placed individual that might simultaneously have been meant for parents' eyes. The preface, on the other hand, was generally reserved for the children themselves. This does not mean, of course, that children did not read the dedications in the textbooks they used intensively: although certain diplomatic subtleties would have been too complex for them to grasp, it would make them aware of certain underlying social relations. Moreover, it could offer them a way into shared memory cultures, such as De Vivre's portrayal of Antwerp. Through one book, De Vivre could hit several birds with one stone: the individuals explicitly addressed in the dedication, schoolchildren, and their parents would be exposed to his call for Antwerp's restoration, either tapping into pre-existing nostalgic sentiments

[38] 'tresnoble et tresingenieux adolescent Seigneur Arnoldt de Segen'. De Vivre, *Grammaire Françoise*, fo. 2r.

[39] Father Arnold von Siegen II and his son Arnold III are depicted on a panel painted by Bartel Bruyn the Younger between 1565 and 1570, so around the same time De Vivre dedicated his 1566 grammar book to the young boy. Bartel Bruyn the Younger, *Arnold von Siegen II, with His Son Arnold III and Saint Peter*, oil on panel, 76.2 x 52.1 cm, c. 1565–70, Philadelphia Museum of Art, cat. 747. Brigitte Hébert, in her 2006 edition of the *Grammaire*, points in a different direction. She suggests that this Arnold might have been related to the merchant Johann van Segen. Gerard de Vivre, *Grammaire Françoise (1566) Suivie de Briefve Institution de la langue françoise expliquée en aleman (1568)*, ed. Brigitte Hébert (Paris, 2006), p. 11.

[40] 'meseigneurs messieurs les bourgmaistres conseillers et bourgeois de la ville de coulogne'. De Vivre, *Grammaire françoise (1566)*, p. 83.

[41] 'très fleurissante Republique, perpetuelle augmentation de paix, heur et biens'. De Vivre, *Grammaire françoise (1566)*, p. 85.

[42] Zwierlein, 'Religionskriegsmigration', 111.

(and increasing his marketability) or nourishing a longing for an idealised yet lost home among the young who, like De Vivre himself, may not have consciously lived through the city's fall.

Once De Vivre had reached a certain status in Cologne, around six years after opening his school there, he started using this position to raise awareness of the situation in his native Low Countries. Reaching even higher than the city council of Cologne, he dedicated his *Synonymes*, printed in 1569, to Charles, the eldest son of the Duke of Julich-Cleves-Berg. He starts the dedication with a lament on the deplorable state of the Low Countries, since so many had seen themselves forced to leave with the arrival of the Duke of Alva:

> the desolation of the Low Countries, which has virtually cleared out and thrown out all that it had in terms of learning, goodness, and subtlety, so that only a small further fall is needed to ruin it completely.[43]

Here De Vivre is basically referring to what is now called a 'brain drain', in which the intellectual elite of the Low Countries moved away, taking its knowledge and wealth elsewhere. He had left several years previously himself, but although he was far from the only one to do so at the time, the arrival of Alva in 1567 had initiated a much larger exodus. De Vivre seems to suggest that it is the forced departure of these individuals, among whom Peeter Heyns and De Vivre himself, that is leading to the downfall of his homeland. It is unclear to what extent De Vivre's lament reflects emotions that he truly experienced, and to what extent he is consciously and strategically constructing an emotional plea through rhetorical devices for his own gain. Of course, the two are not mutually exclusive: it is possible to experience emotions and to convey them in a strategic way in order to pursue certain goals.

De Vivre goes on to explain that the events in the Low Countries are part of a cycle of rise and decline that has been going on since the beginning of the world, when Babylon's fall led to the rise of Persia, after which the Greeks and then the Romans took over. In this cyclical vision of history, it is only natural that, after a period of bloom, the Low Countries should decline in favour of other regions:

> Without a doubt, the aforesaid decline of my fatherland and others has caused various other peoples, nations, and cities to participate in the good sciences, arts, and commerce, that they had never known or understood before, and some of them have even enriched themselves through its remains.[44]

[43] 'la desolation des Pays Bas, lequel a quasi dégorgé & vuydé hors tout ce qu'il auoit de scauant, de bon & de subtil, si que ne luy reste que bien petite cheute, pour ester ruiné du fond en comble'. De Vivre, *Synonymes*, fo. 1v.

[44] 'Sans point de doubte, le degast susdit de ma Patrie et aultres, a causé, que plusieurs aultres Peuples, Nations et villes, ont esté faites participantes, des bonnes sciences, arts, et

Cologne is, according to De Vivre, on the receiving end of this development, as the brain drain is moving in its direction. The downfall of the Low Countries led to the rise of the Rhineland. De Vivre is aware of his own role in this shift, as he brought knowledge of the French language from Ghent to the inhabitants of Cologne. As Bert van Selm has shown, this self-appraisal was true to some extent, as the city had indeed not known a long-term French school before his arrival.[45]

By firmly situating the heyday of the Low Countries in the past, De Vivre's nostalgia serves as a rhetorical device that attempts to invigorate the intellectual renewal of Cologne instead. De Vivre deconstructs what made the Low Countries into a pleasant place by highlighting the categories of sciences, arts, and commerce. He foregrounds the intellectual pursuits of the Netherlanders as constituting the quintessential character of the country's peak in the historical cycle of rise and decline. Beyond spelling its decline, the loss of its intellectual prowess led to new opportunities for other places. By zooming in on a glorious past and by literally mobilising the essence of this past, De Vivre appeals to the reader's emotion of nostalgia and redirects it to the future greatness of Cologne instead. By grafting himself onto the legacy of Netherlandish learning he contributes to Cologne's potential transformation as a place of intellectual flourishing. It appears that his purpose is not just to lament the fall of the Low Countries but to market himself and his peers as being instrumental to Cologne's rise by using this form of restorative nostalgia as a rhetorical instrument.

At the same time, De Vivre's opportunistic publication strategy is underscored by the fact that he maintained his bonds to his professional network in Antwerp over distance. Many of those who left the Low Countries after the 'Wonderjaar' (1566) and the arrival of the Spanish troops (1567) returned after Alva proclaimed a pardon (1570). Heyns, for instance, reopened his French school for girls in Antwerp in March 1570.[46] De Vivre stayed in Cologne, but he did start publishing his schoolbooks in Antwerp in 1573. Various researchers have addressed the question of how he managed to establish contacts with publishers in the metropolis. Answers to this question range from his bonds to other refugees, most notably Heyns (who had returned to Antwerp), to professional relationships with booksellers from the Low Countries who frequented book fairs in German cities.[47] In any case, De Vivre managed to maintain some of his bonds with his fatherland, whether he had solidified these bonds before his departure from Ghent, or after.

trafiques, que paravant onques n'avoient cogneues ni entendues, et mesmement aucunes d'icelles se sont faites riches des despouilles d'iceluy.' De Vivre, *Synonymes*, fo. 2r.

45 Van Selm, 'The Schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre', 212–13; Zwierlein, 'Religionskriegsmigration', 105.

46 Meeus, 'Peeter Heyns', p. 307.

47 Van Selm, 'The Schoolmaster Gerard de Vivre', 213–14; Zwierlein, 'Religionskriegsmigration', 109 n. 50.

De Vivre's bonds with Antwerp were multiple. His works were first printed in the metropolis by Jan van Waesberghe, known for his educational output, and later by printers Henry Hendrickx and Gheleyn Janssens. The *Lettres missives* (1576) contain a laudatory poem by Étienne de Walcourt, a French teacher active in Antwerp who frequently collaborated with Christophe Plantin.[48] De Vivre dedicated one of his school plays to Heyns, who later published a series of plays for his female pupils himself.[49] The dedication refers to Heyns's own hardships that he probably suffered when he fled to Cologne: 'remembering the suffering and afflictions of the past'.[50] The two schoolmasters must have stayed in touch for years after Heyns's return, since the dedication was signed seven years later. De Vivre's plays were later reissued collectively in Antwerp, in an edition that had, according to the title page, been 'revised and corrected' by Antoine Tiron, a French teacher who occasionally worked for Plantin.[51] It is not clear, however, whether Tiron and De Vivre were actually in touch with each other to discuss this new edition.

On the whole, De Vivre did not seem to have much difficulty maintaining his bonds with Antwerp, and he even anticipated reactions on his publications in a clever twist on the topical reference to the critical Zoilus:

> Zoilus, Zoilus, I already see you completely ready, grinding your teeth to bite me. But I don't fear your bites at all, even if you had long teeth, reaching all the way from Antwerp to Cologne.[52]

Despite the fact that this period was marked by troubles that must have frequently hampered interregional communication, De Vivre pursued his

48 De Vivre, *Deux livres*, fo. 8v. On De Walcourt, see: Paul J. Smith, 'Plurilinguisme et stratégie éditoriale à Anvers : le cas de la fable emblématique', in R. Béhar, M. Blanco and J. Hafner (eds), *Villes à la croisée des langues (XVIe–XVIIe siècles) : Anvers, Hambourg, Milan, Naples et Palerme. Städte im Schnittpunkt der Sprachen (16.–17. Jh.): Antwerpen, Hamburg, Mailand, Neapel und Palermo* (Geneva, 2018), pp. 777–90, esp. p. 786; Van de Haar, 'Ronsard at School', p. 242.

49 Hubert Meeus, 'Peeter Heyns' "Le miroir des vefves", meer dan schooltoneel?', in A. Vanneste (ed.), *Memoire en temps advenir : Hommage à Theo Venckeleer* (Leuven, 2003), pp. 115–34; Alisa van de Haar, 'Both One and the Other: The Educational Value of Personification in the Female Humanist Theatre of Peeter Heyns (1537–1598)', in Walter S. Melion and Bart Ramakers (eds), *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion* (Leiden and Boston, 2016), pp. 256–83.

50 'la souvenance des maux et des afflictions passés'. Gerard de Vivre, *Comedie des amours de Theseus et Dianira* (Paris, 1578).

51 'revue et corrige'. De Vivre, *Trois comedies francoises*, p. 1. On Tiron see Nerina Clerici Balmas et al. (eds), *Théâtre français de la Renaissance*, vol. 8, *Le théâtre à l'époque d'Henri II et de Charles IX* (Florence, 1996), pp. 3–11.

52 'Zoyle, Zoyle, je te voy des-ja tout prest, en grinçant les dents pour me mordre, mais je ne crain point tes morsures, encore que tu eusses les dents longues, comme de puis Anvers jusques à Coloigne.' Gerard de Vivre, *Douze dialogues et colloques* … (Antwerpen, 1574), fo. A2v.

contacts with Antwerp – perhaps even building new ones – and was expecting to receive feedback on the works he published there. Through these contacts, he remained up to date on the situation in the metropolis, and he was able to present an outside perspective on what he would later call its 'Golden Age'. While these contacts and De Vivre's prolonged engagement with them might imply a personal nostalgia for the city of Antwerp, they signal an even stronger desire to maintain his professional identity within the city's intellectual networks of the time. This reinforces the view that although De Vivre may have suffered from the geographical displacement from his homeland, his writings chiefly testify to the proclamation of a restorative nostalgia (as a rhetorical device) in order to further his own professional development.

Antwerp's Golden Age: A Matter of Perspective

In his first work published in Antwerp, the 1573 *Dialogues francois-flamengs*, De Vivre paints a laudatory picture of the metropolis. Most of the intellectual refugees he had previously described to the Prince of Julich-Cleves-Berg (as a form of brain drain) had now returned home, and, as a result, the city had seemingly restored itself. De Vivre dedicated the *Dialogues* to Wouter de Coster, then dean of the Antwerp schoolmasters' guild of Saint Ambrose, and referred to the works of Gabriel Meurier, another teacher of French active in Antwerp at the time of whose voluminous output De Vivre was apparently aware.[53] De Vivre follows the traditional discursive practice of the time in praising the metropolis as the 'renowned city of Antwerp' ['renommée ville d'Anvers'].[54] More detailed praise follows in the final dialogue of the booklet:

> The city of Antwerp has this convenience above all other cities of these Low Countries: that one can generally find here post riders, messengers, on horse and on foot, waggoners and boatsmen, from almost all other places in the world, both from England, France, Spain, the Indies, Italy, Germany, and from Denmark, the Levant, and various other kingdoms and provinces.[55]

In 1573, De Vivre thus stresses the international character of Antwerp, adding to its reputation as a renowned trading city with a 'global' outreach in terms of travel and communication. This dialogue, which is not part of a dedication but part of the core of the textbook, was meant for young students

[53] On Meurier, see Jan De Clercq, 'Gabriel Meurier, een XVI[e]-eeuws pedagoog en grammaticus in Antwerpen', *Meesterwerk*, 10 (1997), 29–46.

[54] De Vivre, *Dialogues francois-flamengs*, fo. A2r.

[55] 'La ville d'Anvers à [sic] ceste commodité par dessus toutes autres villes de ce Païs-bas, que lon y trouve ordinairement Postes, Messagers, à cheval et à pied, chartiers et mariniers, quasi de tous autres endroicts du monde, tant d'Angleterre, de France, d'Espaigne, des Indes, de l'Italie, de l'Alemaigne, comme de Denemarc, du païs de Levant, et de plusieurs autres Royaumes et Provinces.' De Vivre, *Dialogues francois-flamengs*, fo. 120.

learning French. It includes these youngsters – whether they belonged to German or Netherlandish families – in the nostalgic memory culture that De Vivre constructs around Antwerp. Even if they had never visited Antwerp, these students were instructed and encouraged to share and indulge in the imagery of its Golden Age.

In the three years that follow, however, De Vivre seems to discern a swift change in fortune for the city on the Scheldt – or at least that is how he presents it in his educational output. In 1576, De Vivre had his *Devx livres de l'utilite du train de marchandise* (a work intended for future or present merchants) printed by Van Waesberghe. The title page announces that the work is dedicated to the senate and people of Antwerp by 'Gerard de Vivre, from Ghent, schoolmaster in Cologne'.[56] He thus presents himself as a double outsider: he is not from Antwerp, nor is he currently living in the Low Countries. De Vivre starts his dedication by praising the city as 'the most mercantile of all Europe', stating that she has rightfully acquired 'the name of very famous trading city'.[57] It turns out, however, that he refers not to her current state, but to her past days of glory. In recent times, the renowned city has fallen into decline:

> Since some time, by God's will and the malice of men, we have seen that she, who little time before flourished and abounded in all riches, has been reduced to a rather poor state, in which she can be seen at present.[58]

De Vivre does not indicate the cause or the nature of this decline. The dedication is dated 1 October 1576, so it was written before the Spanish Fury ravaged the city in November that year. In light of the historical turning points listed in the above, it seems that the schoolmaster refers to the commercial difficulties Antwerp faced because of the troubles in Holland and Zeeland that started around 1572, and that made the Scheldt a dangerous trading route, causing many merchants to choose other ports.

It is this difficult time that brings De Vivre to his nostalgic plea, in which he includes a remarkably early reference to the idea of Antwerp's Golden Age: 'But I hope and wish with all my heart that the Golden Age (as is commonly said) will return one day, and that this city of Antwerp will flourish even more than she has ever done.'[59] It appears that, for this schoolmaster working in Cologne, the period prior to 1572 could be qualified as

[56] 'Gerard de vivre, de Gand, Maistre d'Escole à Cologne'. De Vivre, *Devx livres*, fo. 1r.

[57] 'la plus marchande, de toute l'Europe'. 'le nom de Tresfameuse ville marchande'. De Vivre, *Devx livres*, fo. 38r.

[58] 'durant quelque temps, par le vouloir de Dieu, et la malice des hommes on a veu, que celle qui peu de tems auparavant florissoit et abandoit en toutes richesses, a esté reduite en un assez povre estat, auquel on la voit pour le présent'. De Vivre, *Devx livres*, fo. 38r-v.

[59] 'Mais j'espere et souhaite de tout mon cœur, que l'aage doré (comme on dit communement) retournera quelque jour, et que ceste ville d'Anvers florira encore plus que jamais elle n'a faict.' De Vivre, *Devx livres*, fo. 38v.

Antwerp's Golden Age, with its blooming interregional trade. In 1576, he observes that those days are over.

As with his *Synonymes*, written seven years earlier and praising Cologne's prospects of becoming the new Antwerp, De Vivre uses the dedication to one of his books to comment on Antwerp's has-been status. This time, however, he emphasises the decline of the city's commercial status in the wake of its commercial difficulties since 1572. Here we are able to discern yet another display of his creative and, above all, clever appeal to his audience's sense of nostalgia by tailoring his representation of Antwerp to the perception of his intended audience. In his *Synonymes*, De Vivre employed a form of restorative nostalgia to pitch his own intellectual acuity to the Prince of Julich-Cleves-Berg, stressing the waning intellectual status of the Low Countries. Now, the dedication to his *Devx livres de l'utilite du train de marchandise*, an educational treatise for merchants, focuses on Antwerp's decline as a merchant capital and the hope for its restoration. Saturating his words with nostalgia, De Vivre refers back to the days when the city was frequented by 'such a multitude of rich merchants, righteous men, from various nations'.[60] In voicing the potentially nostalgic sentiments of his merchant-class audience, De Vivre may have attempted to put himself on the radar of potential buyers for his books.

De Vivre's outsider use of restorative nostalgia starkly contrasts with Heyns's more positive approach to the representation of Antwerp in the 1577 and 1579 pocket atlas produced in Antwerp itself. In the text accompanying this *Spieghel der werelt*, Heyns still depicts Antwerp as the 'marketplace of the world' (see above). The pocket atlas was an Antwerp production, and its producers benefited from the reputation of the city as a 'renowned trading city' that they were perhaps hoping to maintain.[61] At this stage, it is not possible to fully determine whether these men actually perceived the situation in the city differently, or whether they simply chose to present it differently. Nevertheless, De Vivre's strategic use of a nostalgic language to solidify his position on Antwerp's book market as an outsider may explain his choice of a more negative representation of the city over Heyns's more positive approach. Certainly, as an outsider and a refugee, De Vivre's nostalgic tone of voice, centring on the hopes of restoring Antwerp's lost mercantile grandeur, may have resonated more resplendently among the various communities of refugees both inside and outside of Antwerp. He may have hoped for some success in using his linguistic capital to market himself as a diasporic polyglot

[60] 'telle multitude de riches marchands, gents de bien, de plusieurs nations'. De Vivre, *Devx livres*, fo. 38r.

[61] Peeter Heyns would strategically present the city of Antwerp in his later publications as well, after he was forced to flee following the 1585 capitulation: Alisa van de Haar, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Exile Publications of the Antwerp Schoolmaster Peeter Heyns (1537–1598)', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 31 (2015), 327–43.

towards a community of merchants and migrants who aspired to profit from the same multilingual virtues as his own.

Moreover, De Vivre's opportunistic, nostalgic approach to self-representation in his books comes to the fore on yet another occasion, namely in the 1591 edition of the aforementioned *Devx livres de l'utilite du train de marchandise*, reprinted in Cologne by Gerhard Grevenbruch. It is unknown whether the printer collaborated with the schoolmaster on this reissue. The dedication to the city of Antwerp was, surprisingly, maintained, with the exception of one meaningful detail: the date was changed from 1 October 1576 to 1 October 1588.[62] This gave the reader the false impression that the nostalgic dedication on Antwerp's lost Golden Age had been written after the city capitulated to the Spanish troops in 1585, when thousands were forced to leave the city.

In other words, De Vivre's interpretation of Antwerp's 'Golden Age' strongly depended on the audience of his publications and their perspective. By 1588, the events of 1572 had been, if not forgotten, at least surpassed by another turning point, the consequences of which were widely felt across Antwerp's population and by the outside world. For an inhabitant of Cologne reading this dedication in 1591, the year 1585 was a clear marker in Antwerp's history that would have spelt its international demise. This time around, De Vivre's outsider perspective on Antwerp's affairs may have catered to an even wider community of like-minded individuals who had been forced to relocate themselves elsewhere after the events of 1585. Yet again, this case shows how nostalgia, as a rhetorical device, could appeal to an audience's emotions. Texts using such instruments could easily adapt to the needs of their audiences to establish an empathic link between the author and the readers.

De Vivre's Golden Age Contextualised

In his nostalgic reference to Antwerp's past 'Golden Age', De Vivre added that this term was 'commonly' used. Some contextualisation is required to be able to determine whether he referred to the notion of a golden era in general, or whether he spoke of the term specifically in relation to Antwerp. The first option certainly holds true, as the term 'Golden Age' had been well known and used since antiquity. Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, describes the Golden Age as the best of five ages, as it is followed by a Silver, Bronze, Heroic, and (the present) Iron Age in a spiral of decline. These and other classical references to the notion of a lost Golden Age, such as those by Virgil, Horace and Ovid, offered starting points for societal criticism that juxtaposed a lost peaceful state of being in a pleasant place (*locus amoenus*) with the adverse realities of

[62] De Vivre, *Devx livres*, fo. 39r; Gerard de Vivre, *Deux livres de l'utilite du train de marchandise* … (Cologne, 1591), fo. 39r.

present-day life.[63] After being assimilated into medieval Christianity, which stressed the harmonious condition of Paradise (in which humanity lived in a state before sin), notions of a Golden Age were still widely known and used in the early modern period.[64] By referring to the end of Antwerp's Golden Age as being the result of 'God's will and the malice of men', De Vivre positions the history of Antwerp, as a *locus amoenus* of harmonious commerce from all over the known world, within Christianity's providential history of sin. De Vivre indeed appears to turn his nostalgic image of Antwerp's decline into a religious statement, implying that the demise of its harmony was the result of humanity's sin, which we may perhaps take to refer to the period's religious discord.

As for a Golden Age of Antwerp, it actually seems that De Vivre is one of the first to use this term retrospectively to refer to the mid-sixteenth century.[65] Stijn Bussels and Jessica Abigail Stevenson-Stewart have studied a sixteenth-century description of a joyous entry in which the term Golden Age is applied to Antwerp.[66] In 1549, it played a central role in the festivities surrounding the entry of Philip II into the city, designed by Cornelis Grapheus. He developed a *tableau vivant* that expressed the hope of a Golden Age in Antwerp's future, that was surely to arrive now the great prince had ascended to the throne (Figure 2.1). The figures that were part of this scene were dressed in gold, and it included a large golden globe.[67] Grapheus explained the symbolic meaning of the *tableau* as follows: 'under the greatness of this Prince, all things will be golden, the whole world will have a golden aspect … there will be golden times, the iron age will perish'.[68] Grapheus, referring to Hesiod's notion of the Iron and Golden Age, presents a cyclical view of time.

[63] František Graus, 'Goldenes Zeitalter, Zeitschelte und Lob der guten alten Zeit: Zu nostalgischen Strömungen im Spätmittelalter', in Gerd Wolfgang Weber (ed.), *Idee, Gestalt, Geschichte: Festschrift Klaus von See. Studien zur Europäischen Kulturtradition* (Odense, 1988), p. 204.

[64] Sarah Edwards, 'Mapping the Golden Age: Nostalgic Haven or Fundamentalist Ideology?', in Elizabeth Rogers (ed.), *The Golden Age: Nostalgia in Word and Image* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016), pp. ix–xxii, esp. pp. x–xi; Paola Schulze-Belli, 'From the Garden of Eden to the *locus amoenus* of Medieval Visionaries', in Sieglinde Hartmann (ed.), *Fauna and Flora in the Middle Ages: Studies of the Medieval Environment and Its Impact on the Human Mind* (Frankfurt am Main, 2007), pp. 211–17.

[65] For the so-called Dutch Golden Age, referring to the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, the earliest known reference dates from 1719. De Vivre's use of the term Golden Age in relation to Antwerp succeeds the period to which it refers much faster. Helmer Helmers, 'Introduction: Understanding the Dutch Golden Age', in Helmer Helmers and Geert H. Janssen (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 1–12, esp. p. 8.

[66] Stijn Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power: The Triumphal Entry of Prince Philip of Spain into Antwerp* (Amsterdam, 2012), p. 198; Stevenson-Stewart, 'Rules of Engagement', pp. 31–58.

[67] Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, p. 198.

[68] 'onder de grootheyt van desen Prince, alle dingen sullen gulden sijn, de geheele werelt sal een gulden aenscouwen hebben … het sullen gulden tijden wordden, de

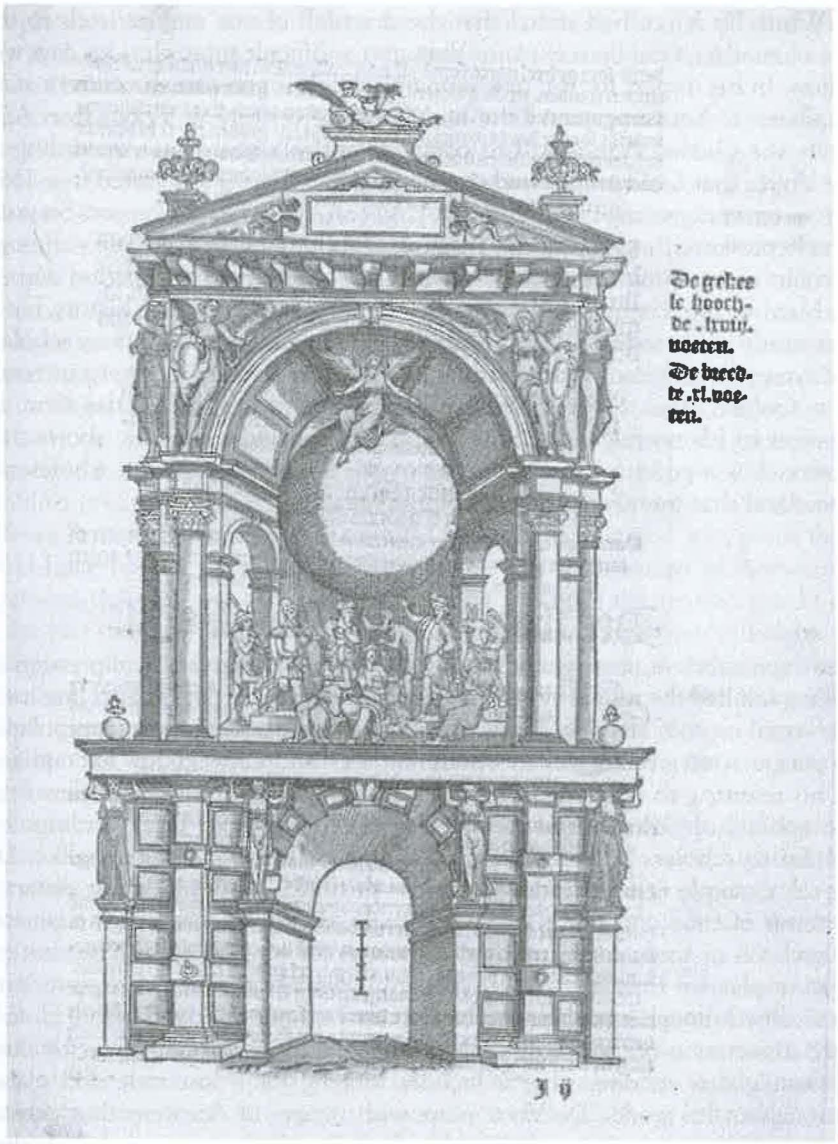

Figure 2.1. The *tableau vivant* representing the Golden Age of Antwerp in the 1549 joyous entry. Cornelis Grapheus, *De seer wonderlijcke, schooner, Triumphelijcke Incompst…* (Antwerp: Gillis Coppens van Diest, 1550), fol. I2r. Ghent University Library, BHSL.RES.1191.

While De Vivre had stated that the downfall of one empire leads to the rise of another, Grapheus explains that after a difficult time, glorious days will follow. In his display for the new monarch, he thus presents the current state of affairs in Antwerp around the middle of the century as a poor Iron Age, while the Golden Age is still to come. Twenty-six years later, according to De Vivre, that Golden Age had come and gone. This is confirmed in a 1594 joyous entry organized in the city that has been studied by Stevenson-Stewart, which presents the heyday of Antwerp as belonging to the past – though without mentioning the term 'Golden Age'.[69] Writers in this period desperately strove to recognise this vaunted Golden Age in Antwerp's history, but it constantly seems to have slipped through their fingers. Contemporary scholars are sympathetic to an understanding of sixteenth-century Antwerp in terms of a 'Golden Age'. Nevertheless, De Vivre's ambiguous use of the term, in relation to his nostalgic discourse tailored to specific audiences, shows that it served as a powerful instrument to evoke the sentiment of a wholesome homeland that was always just out of one's reach.

Conclusion

The expressions of nostalgia in De Vivre's schoolbooks give the impression of having fulfilled the role of a rhetorical instrument to cement his own linguistic and social capital. His case shows that the written word could be manipulated to pursue strategic motives in different times and contexts, as exemplified by his referring to different turning points for specific groups of readers (e.g. the nobility of Cologne and the merchants of Antwerp). These findings are helpful to scholars of nostalgia and scholars of historical studies alike. De Vivre's example first reminds scholars of (historical) nostalgia that distance in terms of time and place, caused by exile, displacement, and the general progression of time, constitutes valid grounds for longing for the restoration of a lost place or time in the early modern imagination. The desire to reclaim an idealised though lost place can be encountered not only well before Hofer's 1688 dissertation on nostalgia; it also matches our present-day understanding of nostalgia as encompassing a broader longing for a lost time and place. Throughout his works, De Vivre plays with images of Antwerp that extend to its overall glorious past as a 'Golden Age' as well as a place that embodies the virtuous qualities of learning and goodness among its inhabitants and a physical cosmopolitan meeting place for those involved in commerce. Time and place converge in the lamenting language he uses to describe the sudden decline of his fatherland in recent memory, juxtaposing an idealised past with

ijseren werelt sal van selfs vergaen'. Cornelis Grapheus, *De seer wonderlijcke, schooner, Triumphelijcke Incompst...* (Antwerp, 1550), fo. 12v. Translation by Stevenson-Stewart, 'Rules of Engagement', p. 58.

69 Stevenson-Stewart, 'Rules of Engagement', p. 41.

a deplorable present in relation to an uncertain future. Studies of nostalgia may thus take into account that the emotion of nostalgia was known well before Hofer's discussion of it.

Secondly, De Vivre's example showcases the vigorous potential of nostalgia as a marketing instrument to connect with an audience's feelings, thereby allowing for the differentiation between genuine, experienced, emotion and rhetoric. By analysing the essence of De Vivre's nostalgic representation in the context of his works and their intended audiences, we have uncovered the paths trodden by a religious refugee living in Cologne who likely cherished the wish to carve out a new existence for himself on the basis of his homeland's legacy. Despite being from Ghent, De Vivre actively identifies himself with Antwerp and its, from his point of view, mythological past. His case is illustrative of the important realisation that nostalgia can be deployed not only by 'insiders' who lived the past that is lamented, but by 'outsiders' as well, and, moreover, that nostalgia can be applied as a rhetorical device to establish profitable bonds in the present. Although De Vivre may well have suffered from feelings of nostalgia amidst his exile in Cologne, and while this could have fuelled his nostalgic discourse for the reclamation of Antwerp's greatness, this is not necessarily the case. The power of the written word lies in the fact that De Vivre's suggestion of nostalgia may have been sufficient to stir up actual feelings in his audience, revealing vital glimpses of the historical potential of nostalgia in forms of commercial marketing (rather than this simply being a contemporary development). This historical case therefore suggests that the emotion and the rhetoric of nostalgia are not competing entities; they could in fact complement each other.

For it is striking that De Vivre's aforementioned idealisations of Antwerp varied together with his audience. On the one hand, De Vivre highlighted the greatness of the Low Countries to emphasise Cologne's opportunities to take over the former's baton (with the aid of his own intellectual prowess as a schoolmaster). On the other hand, he desired to maintain his bonds to Antwerp where his books were printed and disseminated for commercial ends. In both cases, De Vivre strove to reclaim the ingredients of what had made Antwerp great, hence the manifestation of a restorative nostalgia. His case thereby sheds new light on the latter notion, in that the wish to restore a past situation to its full potential need not necessarily apply to the same geographic location: Cologne, where he lived at the time, also suited him well as long as he could profit from its Antwerpian aspirations.

Although some inhabitants of Antwerp, such as Peeter Heyns, wished to continue its positive presentation as a 'renowned trading city' to the outside world, De Vivre's outsider perspective was a lot gloomier in repeatedly emphasising Antwerp's demise – regardless of whether that was located in 1572, 1576, or 1585. He may have resorted to this chameleonic strategy of restorative nostalgia in order to actively maintain his bonds to the city of Antwerp and its intellectual networks, networks of education, and networks

of commerce by assuming a kaleidoscopic publishing strategy. That is to say, he used the language of nostalgia as a rhetorical device, to tailor his dedications to an audience confronted with the rapidly changing situation in Antwerp. By doing so, De Vivre marketed and identified himself as a dislocated refugee who sympathised with those groups who suffered the most from Antwerp's political and religious upheavals. This offers valuable insight into the historical manifestation of nostalgia as an emotion (in De Vivre's target audience) as well as its potential to be harnessed by the written word to serve as a rhetorical device.[70]

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Figures of Nostalgia