

Dutch Arthurian Literature

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The Early Stages

Ironically, the currently flourishing study of Arthurian literature in the Low Countries had a false start, as L.G. Visscher's 1838 publication of *Ferguut*, the thirteenth-century Middle Dutch rendition of Guillaume le Clerc's *Fergus*, was full of flaws.¹ The many inaccuracies in this first complete edition of a Middle Dutch chivalric romance not only confirmed the editor's self-characterization as an autodidact, they served unintentionally as a teething ring (to borrow Willem Kuiper's expression) for young philologists.² One of these critics, W.J.A. Jonckbloet, gave Middle Dutch literature the status of a scholarly discipline, by – among other things – writing a three-volume history of Middle Dutch literature and by publishing two groundbreaking editions of Arthurian texts.³

In 1846 there appeared the *editio princeps* of the *Roman van Walewein*, a thirteenth-century indigenous romance written by the Flemish poets Penninc and Pieter Vostaert. This volume, containing the text of the poem only, was followed in 1848 by a book-length introduction and commentary of almost 350 pages.⁴ Jonckbloet supplied his readers with a wealth of information on, for example, Walewein as a character, other romances featuring Arthur's nephew as their protagonist (for instance, *Le Chevalier à l'épée* and *Le Chevalier aux deux épées*), the estimated date and the literary merits of Penninc and Vostaert's romance. For more than a century, until G.A. van Es's 1957 edition of *Walewein* appeared, Jonckbloet's publication remained the standard edition.⁵

Like the first part of the *Walewein* edition, the first volume of Jonckbloet's monumental edition of the *Lancelot* Compilation, an early fourteenth-century Brabantine cycle of ten Middle Dutch Arthurian romances, was published in 1846. The 47,255 lines of the compilation's second book – the first book is not

¹ L.G. Visscher, ed., *Ferguut. Ridderroman uit den Fabelkring van de ronde Tafel* (Utrecht, 1838).

² Willem Kuiper, *Die riddere metten witten scilde. Oorsprong, overlevering en auteurschap van de Middelnederlandse Ferguut, gevolgd door een diplomatische editie en een diplomatisch glossarium* (Amsterdam, 1989), p. 2.

³ For the literary history, see W.J.A. Jonckbloet, *Geschiedenis der Middennederlandsche Dichtkunst*, 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1851–55).

⁴ W.J.A. Jonckbloet, ed., *Roman van Walewein door Penninc en Pieter Vostaert*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1846–48).

⁵ G.A. van Es, ed., *De jeeste van Walewein en het schaakbord van Penninc en Pieter Vostaert. Artur-epos uit het begin van de dertiende eeuw*, 2 vols (Zwolle, 1957).

extant – were preceded by an introduction in which Jonckbloet discussed the relationship between prose and verse romances, asserted that Lodewijk van Velthem was the owner of the compilation, gave a short description of the sole surviving manuscript of the compilation (The Hague, Royal Library, MS 129 A 10) and discussed a non-contemporary hand (but see below), whose additions, changes and corrections Jonckbloet refused to include in his edition. Three years later, in 1849, the 26,980 (book three) and 13,054 (book four) lines of the second volume were preceded by an extensive introduction of about 250 pages.⁶ Jonckbloet not only summarized the large part of the Old French *Lancelot propre* that corresponds with the first, and lost, book of the *Lancelot* Compilation; he also edited the section of the French romance known as the prose-*Charrette* and provided the *editio princeps* of Chrétien's *Chevalier de la charrette*. His knowledge of the French tradition enabled him to analyse the additions and omissions in the Middle Dutch cycle. By presenting the compilation as a literary work instead of a source for linguistic research and data Jonckbloet was ahead of his time.

As a result of Jonckbloet's editions the majority of the Middle Dutch Arthurian romances were available for critics by the middle of the nineteenth century. In the 1880s most of the other texts appeared in print as well. J. Verdam replaced Visscher's edition of *Ferguut* by a reliable one (1882).⁷ J. van Vloten edited Jacob van Maerlant's double romance *Historie van den Grale / Boek van Merline* and Lodewijk van Velthem's *Merlijn* Continuation, preserved almost completely in Middle Low German. Unfortunately, the editor rewrote this dialect into what he considered proper Middle Dutch.⁸ In 1881 H. Lambel edited the *Tristant* fragment.⁹ Around 1880, moreover, separate editions of romances in the *Lancelot* Compilation began to appear, like J. te Winkel's *Torec* and *Moriaen*.¹⁰

Nineteenth-century scholars were predominantly occupied by linguistic research. Critics like E. Verwijs, M. de Vries, J. Verdam and P. Leendertz used editions to study Middle Dutch as a language and to collect data for the dictionary of Middle Dutch.¹¹ The results of their work, including many proposals for emending corrupt passages, were incorporated in later twentieth-century editions of Arthurian romances.

New Directions

The Liège fragments of *Perchevael*, discovered by J.H. Bormans around the middle of the nineteenth century and found c. 1890 in a book from his library, turned out to be of prime importance for our knowledge of the *Lancelot* Compilation. In his seminal 1891 article J. te Winkel showed that the 736 lines were the

⁶ W.J.A. Jonckbloet, ed., *Roman van Lancelot (XIIIe eeuw)*, 2 vols ('s-Gravenhage, 1846–49).

⁷ J. Verdam, ed., *Ferguut* (Groningen, 1882).

⁸ J. van Vloten, ed., *Jacob van Maerlants Merlijn* (Leiden, 1880).

⁹ H. Lambel, 'Fragment einer Tristandichtung', *Germania*, 26 (1881), 356–64.

¹⁰ J. te Winkel, ed., *Jacob van Maerlants Roman van Torec* (Leiden, 1875); J. te Winkel, ed., *Roman van Moriaen* (Groningen, 1878).

¹¹ E. Verwijs and J. Verdam, eds, *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek*, 11 vols ('s-Gravenhage, 1885–1952).

remnants of a Middle Dutch translation of Chrétien's *Perceval* and, moreover, that it was not the French original but this translation that was adapted for incorporation in the compilation.¹² The compiler's preference for Middle Dutch sources was confirmed in later publications. The discovery of fragments of the *Wrake van Ragisel* and the *Ridder metter mouwen* enabled critics to demonstrate that the compilation versions of these texts were based on Middle Dutch originals as well.¹³

In 1936 Maartje Draak published one of her three groundbreaking studies to be discussed in this chapter. In her dissertation she showed that the underlying structure of Penninc and Vostaert's *Walewein* was derived from a folk tale, which must have been a variant of Aarne-Thompson 550.¹⁴ The tale was refashioned as an Arthurian romance by providing it with a knightly and courtly setting. Draak clarified the remarkable structural concept by separating the folk-tale parts (dealing with Walewein's threefold quest) from the interpolated chivalric episodes (taken from the Arthurian tradition). Furthermore, she contended that *Walewein* as a whole (11,198 lines), had been devised by Penninc, whose work had been continued by Pieter Vostaert (from line 7844 onwards). In Draak's convincing view Penninc did not translate a now lost Old French source, but was the author of an indigenous romance. To this day Draak's 1936 dissertation has set the direction for all Dutch *Walewein* research.

In 1954 Draak turned Dutch scholarly attention towards the Prose *Lancelot* tradition. She made an impressive plea for a renewed study of the three extant Middle Dutch renditions of the Old French cycle and, moreover, provided in cooperation with W. Gs Hellinga a concise codicological description of MS 129 A 10.¹⁵ Inspired by Draak's appeal *Lancelot* research boomed in the decades to follow. In addition to stimulating publications like W.P. Gerritsen's 1963 study of the *Wrake van Ragisel* and F.P. van Oostrom's 1981 study of *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte*, both to be discussed below, editions of the Middle Dutch texts appeared. Orlanda Lie provided in her 1979 dissertation (published 1987) an analysis of the manuscript tradition, proving that the three Middle Dutch versions were written independently, and an edition of the Middle Dutch Prose *Lancelot*.¹⁶ In 1987 W.P. Gerritsen published the *editio princeps* of *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte*. In this splendid edition the 6,073 surviving Middle Dutch lines are accompanied by paleographical notes, explanations and translations of words

¹² J. te Winkel, 'De Perchevaël en het Haagsche Lancelot-handschrift', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkunde*, 10 (1891), 161–74; repr. in F.P. van Oostrom, ed., *Arturistiek in artikelen. Een bundel fotomechanisch herdrukte studies over Middelnederlandse Arturromans* (Utrecht, 1978), pp. 223–36.

¹³ Cf. W.P. Gerritsen, *Die Wrake van Ragisel: Onderzoekingen over de Middelnederlandse bewerkingen van de Vengeance Raguidel, gevolgd door een uitgave van de Wrake-teksten*, 2 vols (Assen, 1963); J. Deschamps, 'Een fragment van de onverkorte versie van *Die riddere metter mouwen*', *Liber alumnorum prof. dr. E. Rombauts* (Louvain, 1968), pp. 61–78.

¹⁴ A.M.E. Draak, *Onderzoekingen over de Roman van Walewein* (Haarlem, 1936; repr. Groningen, 1975); includes a supplementary chapter on *Walewein* research between 1936 and 1975.

¹⁵ Maartje Draak, *De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van de Proza-Lancelot* (Amsterdam, 1954; repr. 1977).

¹⁶ Orlanda S.H. Lie, *The Middle Dutch Prose Lancelot: A Study of the Rotterdam Fragments and their Place in the French, German, and Dutch Lancelot en prose Tradition. With an Edition of the Text* (Amsterdam, 1987).

and comments on literary aspects.¹⁷ As the third rendition of the Old French Prose *Lancelot* forms the tripartite core of the *Lancelot* Compilation, *Lanceloet-Queeste vanden Grale-Arturs doet*, it was edited by W.J.A. Jonckbloet. Since 1991 a new edition is in preparation; so far almost 27,000 lines of *Lanceloet* have been edited.¹⁸

A Wrong Track

Nineteenth-century critics like Jonckbloet and Te Winkel saw the majority of the Middle Dutch chivalric romances as translations of French texts and dated them mainly in the first part of the thirteenth century. This opinion was attacked by the Flemish scholar J. van Mierlo, whose nationalistic point of view made him claim the existence of an early Middle Dutch (more precisely a Flemish) literature that did not depend on the French one. Arthurian romances like *Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet* and *Moriaen* were supposed to be indigenous, twelfth-century texts. In the case of *Walewein* he argued that Penninc wrote around 1180, whereas Vostaert finished the romance before 1220.¹⁹ Other scholars have shown the untenability of van Mierlo's hypothesis. It is certainly true that more indigenous Middle Dutch romances have been written than was supposed by our nineteenth-century colleagues. However, it is highly unlikely that they date from the twelfth century.²⁰ Currently critics agree that most Middle Dutch chivalric romances, including almost all Arthurian ones, are thirteenth-century texts. Many of them were indeed written by Flemish authors, but, contrary to van Mierlo's view, it is assumed nowadays that the roots of Dutch literature lay east of Flanders, in the Rhine–Meuse area.²¹

The Structural Approach

In the 1960s scholars started to study Arthurian romances as literary products whose structure and meaning required detailed examination. The immanent interpretation of *Ferguut*, for example, led to an interesting discussion on the structure of the romance. In 1964 Hanneke Paardekooper-van Buuren claimed that the hero's adventures formed two groups of three encounters, which mirror

¹⁷ W.P. Gerritsen, ed., with A. Berteloot et al., *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte. Fragmenten van een Middelnederlandse bewerking van de Lancelot en prose* (Amsterdam, 1987).

¹⁸ Bart Besamusca, Frank Brandsma and Ada Postma, eds, *Lanceloet. De Middelnederlandse vertaling van de Lancelot en prose overgeleverd in de Lancelotcompilatie*, vols 1–4 (ll. 1–26,636) (Assen/Hilversum, 1991–98).

¹⁹ J. van Mierlo, 'Ter datering van den Roman van Walewein', *Verslagen en Mededelingen van de Vlaamse Akademie* (1953), pp. 711–37; J. van Mierlo, 'Oorspronkelijk Dietse Arthur-literatuur in de twaalfde eeuw ook voorbeeld van Franse', *Verslagen en Mededelingen van de Vlaamse Akademie* (1956), pp. 177–212 (repr. in Van Oostrom, *Arturistiek in artikelen*, pp. 13–48).

²⁰ Cf., for example, Draak, *Onderzoekingen* (repr. 1975), pp. 228–31, 236–9.

²¹ Cf. Evert van den Berg, 'Genre en gewest: de geografische spreiding van de ridderepiek', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 103 (1987), 1–36; J. Goossens, 'Op zoek naar lijnen in de ontluikende Middelnederlandse letterkunde', in Frits van Oostrom et al., *Grote lijnen. Synthesen over Middelnederlandse letterkunde* (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 27–46, 176–9.

each other.²² Ten years later, K.R. de Graaf rejected this point of view, arguing that the triangular relationship among Ferguut, his beloved Galiene and King Arthur determined the romance's structure.²³

In 1958 P. Minderaa analysed the structure of *Walewein*, claiming that the romance consisted of a well-considered composition of major and minor episodes, conceived by Penninc and somewhat disrupted by Vostaert.²⁴ In her 1983 reaction to this article Toos Verhage-van den Berg stressed the importance of the minor (or secondary) episodes. These parts of the romance, she argues, show how the hero develops from a courtly knight into a courtly lover.²⁵ In 1995 Walter Haug presented a different opinion on the secondary episodes. In his view *Walewein* is a postclassical Arthurian romance in which the hero does not pass through a crisis, but remains blameless, contrary to the failing folk-tale hero, throughout his adventures. This loss of drama, Haug argues, was balanced by the insertion of secondary episodes taken from the Arthurian tradition.²⁶

In 1993 J.H. Winkelman contested Draak's idea that *Walewein*'s plot structure was based on a folk tale. He stated that the Flemish authors combined the folk-tale structure with a mythical narrative concept, in which a lost game of chess forces the protagonist to set out on a journey in order to find a bride in the Other World and to return with her. The fact that both models involved a bride quest allowed for the fusion of the two concepts. In Winkelman's opinion the contaminated narrative structures are the cause of *Walewein*'s interpretive problems, such as the opening scene at Arthur's court.²⁷

In addition to the immanent interpretations of *Ferguut* and *Walewein* other Middle Dutch Arthurian romances were studied from this point of view as well. In the case of the *Ridder metter mouwen*, for example, Simon Smith has argued that the romance is made up of two distinct parts, which partially mirror each other.²⁸ Frank Brandsma studied interlace as a narrative technique and as a thematic device in *Lanceloet*. He demonstrated, moreover, how the compiler of

²² Hanneke Paardekooper-van Buuren, 'Struktuur en zin van de Ferguut', *De nieuwe taalgids*, 57 (1964), 148–56 (repr. in van Oostrom, *Arturistiek in artikelen*, pp. 105–13).

²³ K.R. de Graaf, 'Ferguut, Artur en Galiene', *De nieuwe taalgids*, 67 (1974), 379–91 (repr. in van Oostrom, *Arturistiek in artikelen*, pp. 115–27).

²⁴ P. Minderaa, 'De compositie van de Walewein', in *Opstellen door vrienden en collega's aangeboden aan F.K.H. Kossman* ('s-Gravenhage, 1958), pp. 155–66 (repr. in van Oostrom, *Arturistiek in artikelen*, pp. 77–88).

²⁵ Toos Verhage-van den Berg, 'Het onderschatte belang van de neven-episoden in de Walewein', *De nieuwe taalgids*, 76 (1983), 225–44.

²⁶ Walter Haug, 'Kombinatorik und Originalität. Der Roman van Walewein als nachklassisches literarisches Experiment', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 111 (1995), 195–205; English translation in *Arthurian Literature XVII: Originality and Tradition in the Middle Dutch Roman van Walewein*, ed. Bart Besamusca and Erik Kooper (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 17–28.

²⁷ J.H. Winkelman, 'Gecontamineerde vertelstructuren in de Middelnederlandse Roman van Walewein', *Spiegel der Letteren*, 35 (1993), 109–28. See also his 'Der Ritter, das Schachspiel und die Braut. Ein Beitrag zur Interpretation des mittelniederländischen Roman van Walewein', in *Festschrift Walter Haug und Burghart Wachinger*, ed. J. Janota et al. (Tübingen, 1992), pp. 317–25.

²⁸ Simon Smith, 'Van koning tot kroonprins. Over de structuur van de Roman van den riddere metter mouwen', in *'In onse scole'. Opstellen over Middeleeuwse letterkunde voor Prof. Dr. Margaretha H. Schenkeveld*, ed. Fred de Bree and Roel Zemel (Amsterdam, 1989), pp. 109–41.

the *Lancelot* Compilation made use of interlace to assemble and unify his collection of Arthurian romances.²⁹

The Study of Translations and Adaptations

Faithful Middle Dutch translations of Old French texts did exist, as is shown by *Perchevael*, the rendition of Chrétien's *Perceval*, and *Lanceloet*, the verse translation of the Prose *Lancelot* in the *Lancelot* Compilation.³⁰ Usually, however, Middle Dutch translators broke new ground. The poet of the *Wrake van Ragisel*, for instance, tried to surpass his original, the *Vengeance Raguidel*, by increasing suspense in certain situations, by amplifying descriptions of the topoi of Arthurian literature (like festive meals) and by portraying the romance's hero as a courtly lover. His adaptation technique was analysed by W.P. Gerritsen in his 1963 study of the *Wrake van Ragisel*.³¹ This groundbreaking publication has proven to be indispensable for later Dutch research. Studying the adaptation technique of other Middle Dutch authors would have been unthinkable without Gerritsen's book.

In 1981 F.P. van Oostrom published his dissertation, supervised by Gerritsen, on the adaptation technique employed in *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte*.³² This study is a milestone in the field as well. Van Oostrom showed that the Middle Dutch translator disregarded the well-defined geographical and chronological framework of his original, the Old French Prose *Lancelot*. Furthermore, the poet eliminated badly motivated elements, gave new motivations for the behaviour of his characters and, above all, tried to make their manners, speech, valour and self-control meet the standards of perfect courtly behaviour. Van Oostrom suggests that the tendency towards idealisation reveals that *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte* was meant as a mirror of courtly behaviour for a court that was not yet familiar with courtly ideals. Whereas Gerritsen claimed that the guidelines of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century *artes poeticae*, taught at school, accounted for the adaptation technique of the *Wrake* poet, van Oostrom interpreted the changes in *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte* as interventions caused by the socio-historical background. In later years this cultural-historical point of view was applied to Middle Dutch literature in general in a large research programme, Dutch Literature and Culture in the Middle Ages, under van Oostrom's direction.

Inspired by Gerritsen and van Oostrom, critics paid attention to other Middle

²⁹ Brandsma, *Lanceloet*, Part 3, pp. 1–204.

³⁰ Cf. Johan H. Winkelman, 'Chrétien de Troyes, Perceval und die Niederlande. Adaptation als didaktisches Verfahren', in *Kultureller Austausch und Literaturgeschichte im Mittelalter*, ed. Ingrid Kasten, Werner Paravicini and René Pérennec (Sigmaringen, 1998), pp. 245–58; Besamusca, *Lanceloet*, Part 2, pp. 7–124. A new edition of *Perchevael* was published recently: Soetje Ida Oppenhuis de Jong, ed., *De Middelnederlandse 'Perceval'-traditie. De bewaarde fragmenten van een Middelnederlandse vertaling van de 'Perceval' of 'Conte du Graal' van Chrétien de Troyes, en de 'Perchevael' in de 'Lancelotcompilatie'* (Hilversum, 2003).

³¹ Gerritsen, *Die Wrake van Ragisel* (Assen, 1963).

³² F.P. van Oostrom, *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte. Onderzoekingen over een Middelnederlandse bewerking van de Lancelot en prose* (Amsterdam, 1981).

Dutch translations and adaptations as well. Roel Zemel, for example, studied the first part of *Ferguut*, which is a translation of *Fergus* (the second part of the Middle Dutch romance shows much greater independence). He points out that the Middle Dutch translator abridged his source, which resulted in a different type of romance. In *Ferguut* there is a much stronger emphasis on the narrative course of events than in the Old French text. In comparison to the sophisticated *Fergus*, *Ferguut* is a simplification, a straightforward action-packed narrative.³³

Intertextuality

In the 1980s J.D. Janssens was the first to demonstrate the usefulness of the intertextual approach for Middle Dutch chivalric romances. In addition to a series of articles, his research resulted in an inspiring book that shows how Middle Dutch poets used passages from other texts for the context of their own stories and transformed them, under the principle of analogy, into the basis of similar or contrasting passages in a new romance.³⁴

Studies on intertextuality in Middle Dutch literature tend to focus on the four thirteenth-century indigenous Arthurian romances. Simon Smith, for example, showed in his 1991 article that in the opening scene of the *Ridder metter mouwen* the poet underlines his hero's chivalric qualities by inviting a comparison with Perceval.³⁵ In my 1993 study on *Walewein*, *Moriaen* and the *Ridder metter mouwen* the close connections between these three Flemish romances were shown. *Walewein* was meant, it was argued, as an antidote to the Prose *Lancelot*. In the Middle Dutch romance the negative influence of religious chivalry on the Arthurian world is resented; secular chivalry, personified by *Walewein*, is restored to its old glory. The poet of *Moriaen* knew *Walewein* and reacted to it, stressing, among other things, the abuse of feudal power. The author of the *Ridder metter mouwen* was acquainted with both *Walewein* and *Moriaen*, using these romances to present his hero as a superior knight.³⁶

In his 1996 article Roel Zemel studied the link between *Moriaen* and Chrétien's *Perceval*. He argued that the Middle Dutch romance was meant to be a literary reaction to the religious orientation of the Old French text. In *Moriaen* the successful son (the courtly knight *Moriaen*) of the unsuccessful Grail seeker (*Perceval*) demonstrates that the ideals of secular knighthood are not outmoded.³⁷ In *Walewein ende Keye*, the fourth indigenous Middle Dutch Arthurian romance, another of Chrétien's romances is used. As Marjolein Hogenbirk has shown, *Walewein*'s adventure with the two giants is reminiscent of the *Pesme*

³³ R.M.T. Zemel, *Op zoek naar Galiene. Over de Oudfranse Fergus en de Middelnederlandse Ferguut* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 203–340.

³⁴ Jozef D. Janssens, *Dichter en publiek in creatief samenspel. Over interpretatie van Middelnederlandse ridderromans* (Leuven, 1987).

³⁵ Simon Smith, 'Dat begin van den Riddere metter mouwen', *Voortgang*, 12 (1991), 151–79.

³⁶ Bart Besamusca, *Walewein, Moriaen en de Ridder metter mouwen. Intertekstualiteit in drie Middelnederlandse Arturromans* (Hilversum, 1993).

³⁷ Roel Zemel, 'Moriaen en Perceval in "Waste Land"', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 112 (1996), 297–319.

Aventure episode in *Yvain*.³⁸ She has pointed out, moreover, that other Arthurian romances, like the *Vengeance Raguidel*, are brought to mind in *Walewein ende Keye* as well.³⁹

Manuscript Studies

When one is seeking information on the manuscripts of Middle Dutch chivalric literature, the book to consult is Hans Kienhorst's 1988 repertory, a much-appreciated reference work.⁴⁰ In addition, the codicologist and palaeographer Jan Willem Klein studied the dating of the 150-odd manuscripts and fragments. His re-evaluation resulted in new and more precise dates. The new chronology, published in 1995, suggests a change in literary taste in the Low Countries around 1350: before that date romances were predominantly Arthurian, after the middle of the fourteenth century Charlemagne romances were favoured.⁴¹

The Leyden manuscript Ltk 191 is a convolute, comprising among other texts *Ferguut*. In the *Ferguut* codex, made between 1325 and 1350 in western Brabant, a contemporary hand made almost 250 corrections. As the unknown corrector stated in his colophon, he paid special attention to the formal aspect of the text, like impure rhymes. In his 1989 edition of *Ferguut* Willem Kuiper indicated these corrections.⁴²

One of the many fascinating peculiarities of the *Lancelot* Compilation codex is the presence of a hand that revised and edited large parts of the MS 129 A 10. W.P. Gerritsen, in his groundbreaking 1976 article, and later critics like Frank Brandsma (2000) have argued that this so-called corrector added marginal signs and words to facilitate the text's oral delivery.⁴³ Whereas Jonckbloet saw the corrector as a non-contemporary of the scribes, as noted above, more recent research has shown that he was involved in the original production of the manuscript. The foundation of this point of view was laid by Maartje Draak in 1985, when she described her discovery of a leaf in the manuscript on which lines of *Perchevael* had been erased and replaced by *Lanceloet* verses, implying

³⁸ Marjolein Hogenbirk, '“Die coenste die ie werd geboren”. Over *Walewein ende Keye*', *De nieuwe taalgids*, 87 (1994), 57–75.

³⁹ Marjolein Hogenbirk, 'Gauvain, the Lady, and her Lover: the Middle Dutch *Walewein ende Keye* and Old French Romance', *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society*, 48 (1996), 257–70. See also Marjolein Hogenbirk, *Avontuur en Anti-avontuur. Een onderzoek naar 'Walewein ende Keye', een Arturroman uit de 'Lancelotcompilatie'* (Amsterdam, 2004).

⁴⁰ Hans Kienhorst, *De handschriften van de Middelnederlandse ridderepiek. Een codicologische beschrijving*, 2 vols (Deventer, 1988).

⁴¹ Jan Willem Klein, '“Het getal zijner jaren is onnaspeurlijk”. Een herijking van de dateringen van de handschriften en fragmenten met Middelnederlandse ridderepiek', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 111 (1995), 1–23.

⁴² Kuiper, *Die riddere metten witten scilde*.

⁴³ W.P. Gerritsen, 'Corrections and Indications for Oral Delivery in the Middle Dutch *Lancelot* Manuscript The Hague K.B. 129 A 10', in *Neerlandica Manuscripta: Essays Presented to G.I. Liefstinck* 3, ed. J.P. Gumbert and M.J.M. de Haan (Amsterdam, 1976), pp. 39–59; Frank Brandsma, 'A Voice in the Margin: The Corrector of the *Lancelot* Compilation', in *King Arthur in the Medieval Low Countries*, ed. Geert H.M. Claassens and David F. Johnson (Louvain, 2000), pp. 69–86.

that the compilation had a phased genesis.⁴⁴ Subsequently, Jan Willem Klein (1990) proved that the corrector's activities were limited to the first phase, which made the conclusion inevitable that he participated in the contemporary realisation of the compilation.⁴⁵ These findings made it clear that Draak and Hellinga's 1954 concise codicological description of MS 129 A 10 (see above) was outdated. In 1997 Jan Willem Klein published an extensive and authoritative description of the codex.⁴⁶

Internationalization

Netherlandists have always been eager to incorporate international approaches and insights into their own study of medieval Dutch literature. They have, however, for a long time failed to make Middle Dutch literature accessible to the international community and to contribute to international discussions. A regrettable case in point is Hendricus Sparnaay's chapter on the Dutch Arthurian romances in Loomis's *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*.⁴⁷ Obviously, as a germanist he was not thoroughly acquainted with the Dutch tradition, which resulted in a great number of mistakes and inaccuracies, as Maartje Draak has shown in the chapter that was added to the 1975 reprint of her 1936 dissertation.⁴⁸

Basically, W.P. Gerritsen was the Dutch scholar who provided his international colleagues with information on Middle Dutch Arthurian literature in the 1970s and 1980s. His international prestige enabled him to use the genre of the *Festschrift* as his platform. In 1970, for example, his article on *Arturs doet* was published in a volume of essays in honour of Jean Frappier.⁴⁹ In cooperation with F.P. van Oostrom, Gerritsen discussed the Middle Dutch renditions of the Prose *Lancelot* in the *Festschrift* for Charles Foulon (1980).⁵⁰ His article on Jacob van Maerlant's attitude toward the *matière de Bretagne* appeared in a volume of essays in memory of Lewis Thorpe.⁵¹ Like Gerritsen, J.D. Janssens was well aware of the necessity to address scholars other than netherlandists. In 1988, for

⁴⁴ Maartje Draak, 'Enkele raadsels opgelost van "fo. 99" in de Lancelotcompilatie ('s-Gravenhage, K.B., 129 A 10)', in *Tussentijds. Bundel studies aangeboden aan W.P. Gerritsen ter gelegenheid van zijn vijftigste verjaardag*, ed. A.M.J. van Buuren et al. (Utrecht, 1985), pp. 71–81, 335.

⁴⁵ Jan Willem Klein, 'Codicologie en de Lancelotcompilatie: de invoeging van de *Perchevael* en de *Moriaen*', *De nieuwe taalgids*, 83 (1990), 526–39.

⁴⁶ Chap. 2 (pp. 51–110) of the introduction in Besamusca and Postma, *Lancelot*, Part 1.

⁴⁷ Hendricus Sparnaay, 'The Dutch Romances', in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford, 1959), pp. 443–61.

⁴⁸ Draak, *Onderzoekingen* (repr. 1975), pp. 231–6.

⁴⁹ W.P. Gerritsen, 'L'Episode de la guerre contre les Romains dans *La Mort Artu* néerlandaise', in *Mélanges de langue et de littérature du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance offerts à Jean Frappier*, 2 vols (Geneva, 1970), I, pp. 337–49 (repr. in van Oostrom, *Arturistiek in artikelen*, pp. 359–71).

⁵⁰ W.P. Gerritsen and F.P. van Oostrom, 'Les Adapteurs néerlandais du "Lancelot(-Gaal)" aus prises avec le procédé narratif des romans arthuriens en prose', in *Mélanges de langue et littérature françaises du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance offerts à Charles Foulon*, 2 vols (Rennes, 1980), II, pp. 105–14.

⁵¹ W.P. Gerritsen, 'Jacob van Maerlant and Geoffrey of Monmouth', in *An Arthurian Tapestry. Essays in Memory of Lewis Thorpe*, ed. Kenneth Varty (Glasgow, 1981), pp. 368–88.

instance, he discussed the influence of Chrétien de Troyes on Middle Dutch Arthurian romances in *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes*.⁵²

In the 1990s internationalization was booming. No fewer than five essays in the proceedings of the fifteenth triennial congress of the International Arthurian Society (Louvain, 1987), published in 1991, were devoted to Middle Dutch Arthurian literature.⁵³ In 1994 Erik Kooper served the international scholarly community well by editing an unsurpassed collection of essays on Middle Dutch literature, including two articles on Arthuriana (*Arturs doet* and *Walewein*).⁵⁴ In the same year the proceedings of the Amsterdam colloquium on the development of narrative cycles in the *chansons de geste* and the Arthurian romances appeared.⁵⁵ In an often-quoted essay Frank Brandsma and I studied the first-person narrator in *Lanceloet*.⁵⁶ Norris Lacy's 1996 guide to recent research on medieval Arthurian literature contained a chapter on the Low Countries as well.⁵⁷ In 1999 an issue of *Arthurian Literature* was devoted to *Walewein*. Eleven contributors read and commented on Penninc and Vostaert's romance from their own specialist perspective.⁵⁸

As part of the multi-volume revision of *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, W.H. Jackson and S.A. Ranawake edited *The Arthur of the Germans* in 2000. An extensive chapter in this book deals with the medieval Dutch Arthurian material.⁵⁹ In the same year Geert Claassens and David Johnson edited *King Arthur in the Medieval Low Countries*, a collection of twelve papers on Middle Dutch Arthurian literature, preceded by a lengthy introduction, which had their origins in sessions at the 1996 and 1997 meetings of the International Congress of Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.⁶⁰ Frank Brandsma discussed the Middle Dutch translations of the Prose *Lancelot* in *A Companion to the 'Lancelot-Grail Cycle'*.⁶¹ The first book-length study of the *Lancelot* Compilation, including a comparison with French, English and German narrative cycles,

⁵² J.D. Janssens, 'The Influence of Chrétien de Troyes on Middle Dutch Arthurian Romances: A New Approach', in *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly and Keith Busby, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1988), II, pp. 285–306.

⁵³ Willy van Hoecke, Gilbert Tournoy and Werner Verbeke, eds, *Arturus Rex: Volumen II, Acta Conventus Lovaniensis 1987* (Louvain, 1991).

⁵⁴ Erik Kooper, ed., *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context* (Cambridge, 1994). *Arturs doet*: pp. 96–112; *Walewein*: pp. 113–28.

⁵⁵ Bart Besamusca et al., eds, *Cyclification. The Development of Narrative Cycles in the Chansons de geste and the Arthurian Romances* (Amsterdam, 1994).

⁵⁶ Bart Besamusca and Frank Brandsma, 'Between Audience and Source: The First-Person Narrator in the Middle Dutch *Lanceloet*', in *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honor of Douglas Kelly*, ed. Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 15–29.

⁵⁷ Norris J. Lacy, ed., *Medieval Arthurian Literature. A Guide to Recent Research* (New York, 1996). Low Countries: pp. 211–37.

⁵⁸ Bart Besamusca and Erik Kooper, eds, *Arthurian Literature XVII: Originality and Tradition in the Middle Dutch Roman van Walewein* (Cambridge, 1999).

⁵⁹ Bart Besamusca, 'The Medieval Dutch Arthurian Material', in *The Arthur of the Germans. The Arthurian Legend in Medieval German and Dutch Literature*, ed. W.H. Jackson and S.A. Ranawake (Cardiff, 2000), pp. 187–228.

⁶⁰ Geert H.M. Claassens and David F. Johnson, eds, *King Arthur in the Medieval Low Countries* (Louvain, 2000).

⁶¹ Frank Brandsma, 'The Lancelots of the Lowlands', in *A Companion to the 'Lancelot-Grail Cycle'*, ed. Carol Dover (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 205–18.

has recently appeared.⁶² The Arthurian Archive series is devoting six volumes to Middle Dutch Arthurian romances; three of the volumes have appeared to date: *Walewein*, *Ferguut* and five romances from the *Lancelot Compilation* (*Wrake van Ragisel*, *Ridder metter mouwen*, *Walewein ende Keye*, *Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet*, *Torec*).⁶³ In short, as was stated in this chapter's first sentence: the study of Arthurian literature in the Low Countries is currently flourishing.

⁶² Bart Besamusca, *The Book of Lancelot. The Middle Dutch Lancelot Compilation and the Medieval Tradition of Narrative Cycles* (Cambridge, 2003).

⁶³ *Dutch Romances I: Roman van Walewein*, ed. David F. Johnson and Geert H.M. Claassens (Cambridge, 2000; rev. edn of Penninc and Pieter Vostaert, *Roman van Walewein*, ed. and trans. David F. Johnson [New York, 1992]); *Dutch Romances II: Ferguut*, ed. and trans. David F. Johnson and Geert H.M. Claassens (Cambridge, 2000); *Dutch Romances III: Five Interpolated Romances from the 'Lancelot Compilation'*, ed. and trans. David F. Johnson and Geert H.M. Claassens with the assistance of Katty De Bundel and Geert Pallemans (Cambridge, 2003).