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# **The *Roman van Walewein* and *Moriaen*: Travelling through Landscapes and Foreign Countries**

In the Middle Dutch *Roman van Walewein*, the hero travels all the way to Endi (India).<sup>1</sup> This is further from home than any Arthurian knight has even ventured. Gaul, Ireland, Rome, Wales, those are the foreign, or not so foreign, regions visited by Arthur and his knights (Rouse and Rushton 2009). Walewein (aka Gauvain, Gawain), however, goes to a mysterious, foreign kingdom in a faraway land. In its presentation of the Arthurian setting, the *Roman van Walewein* displays an intriguing mixture of exotic otherworldliness and generic minimalism that makes it, on the one hand, representative of how space and geography are used in Arthurian romance, whereas, on the other hand, it comes up with an exceptionally foreign, yet also familiar other world. As we follow Walewein on his journey, we will encounter first the generic use of the setting, in respect of which we will also look at a second Middle Dutch romance (*Moriaen*), and then see how the text prepares its audience for Endi and its mysteries. Finally, we will come to Endi itself.

## **1 Carlioen and Dragon Mountain: the adventure begins**

Made in Flanders around the middle of the thirteenth century, the *Roman van Walewein* is a Dutch original, to use a modern design term.<sup>2</sup> The story has no French source, even though the first author, Penninc, states in the prologue that he would have taken the story from the French, if he could have found it there (ll. 5–6). Walewein's quest, as created by Penninc and rounded off by a second

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<sup>1</sup> Penninc and Vostaert (1957, 632). All further references to the *Roman van Walewein* are to Johnson and Claassens (2012); MNW (1998 s.v. Endi); REMLT (2016, s.v. India 1); but also Van Oostrom (2006, 262).

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of recent *Walewein* research, cf. Besamusca and Brandsma (2015).

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author named Pieter Vostaert, is loosely based on an oral story (of the kind that would later be called a fairy tale) with a triple exchange structure, categorized by Aarne-Thompson under item number 550 and called “The Golden Bird” by the Grimm Brothers.<sup>3</sup> An enchanted prince turned into a speaking fox functions as the hero’s helper in both the fairy tale and in the *Roman van Walewein*. Where the young prince in “The Golden Bird” exchanges the golden bird for a golden horse and the horse for the Princess of the Golden Castle, Walewein has to find a floating chessboard. To obtain that, he has to earn the sword with the two rings, which he will only receive in exchange for the exotic princess, Ysabele. Objects, setting and ending (to be discussed later) are all Arthurian in style in Penninc and Pieter Vostaert’s text, which of course begins at Arthur’s court, at Carlioen.

From Geoffrey’s *Historia regum Britanniae* onwards, Caerleon in Wales has been one of the typical locations that Arthur as an itinerant king uses to hold court and feast with his knights and barons, waiting for an adventure to happen.<sup>4</sup> The narrator in the *Roman van Walewein* only states that King Arthur was in his hall in Carlioen (Johnson and Claassens 2012, l. 34); he does not mention the region or any specific landscape features. Like other locations in this text, and in Middle Dutch Arthurian romance in general, the court is a kind of set piece: no details about the castle, rooms or area are required to set the stage. It is Arthur’s court, and that is apparently enough for the audience. When necessary, as we will see, spatial details are provided, but only on a need-to-know and just-in-time basis.

In Carlioen, an adventure presents itself immediately as an airborne chessboard comes in through the window and settles on the floor. It is beautifully made and ready to be played. Arthur’s knights are, however, reluctant to do so. They are, somewhat fearfully, admiring the object, when it flies away again. Arthur then promises that whoever obtains the chess set for him will become his successor. Only when Arthur declares his intention to go after it himself does Walewein react. Reassured that the finder of the chessboard will indeed bear the crown, he takes on the quest.

At this point, the presentation of the setting becomes remarkable.<sup>5</sup> One would expect the chessboard to be gone, out of sight, while Walewein readies himself

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Johnson and Claassens (2012, 8–9), with reference to Draak (1975), and for a more critical view, De Blécourt (2008); for the Golden Bird, see <<http://www.verhalenbank.nl/items/show/51069>>.

<sup>4</sup> Lacy and Ashe (1997, 291 and frontispiece).

<sup>5</sup> The analysis of this episode has benefited from discussions with Wim Gerritsen in the 1980s, on the basis of his as yet unpublished work on this scene. Cf. also Winkelman (1986), especially for the use of focalization (22–29) and Summerfield (1999, 119–120) for the use of “sight lines”.

and his special horse, Gringolet, and takes leave of the king and queen, yet the strange object seems to be waiting to be followed. Sir Keye (Kay) has moved to the window and obviously still sees the chessboard hovering nearby, since he taunts Walewein, yelling:

“Here Walewein, maerct ende verstaet:

Haddi ghenomen enen draet

Ende hadde den ant scaec ghestrect,

So mochtijt nu hebben ghetrect

Dat u niet ne ware ontvaren.” (ll. 175–179)

[“Sir Walewein, take note and listen: if you had taken a cord and had tied it to the chessboard, you might now be able to reel it in so that it would not have escaped you.”]

Keye is asked to desist from this taunting, but he does have a point: the chessboard is still close by and seems easy to take. As Walewein rides off, the king and queen move from the hall to the battlements to see him go, whereas the other courtiers watch from the windows. Walewein sees the chessboard flying just in front of him:

Ende hadt wel metter hant ghevaen,

Maer hi liet dor der gore tale

Die boven laghen in die zale:

Hadsine sien daer achter vaen

Endt hem danne ware ontgaen,

Si mochter mede hare sceren maken. (ll. 218–223)

[and he could have caught it in his hand, but he let it go on account of the gossip going on up in the hall: if they were to see him capture it and if it were then to escape him, they would make a mockery of him.]

It is as if Walewein’s body and hands are in the field, close to the chessboard, while his ears and mind are still in the hall with the gazing and gossiping courtiers. The narrator gives us Walewein’s thoughts, explaining why he does not grab the flying object. When Walewein rides into a valley, the narration returns to the court and king for a moment, and Arthur states that his eyes must now say goodbye to his knight (ll. 230–231).

Spatially, and with a strong focus on vision, the narration foregrounds the growing distance between quester and court. On the one hand, there are the king, queen and courtiers watching Walewein ride after the tantalizingly close chessboard; on the other hand, there is the hero, realizing he is still visible and deciding not to take the risk of making a fool of himself. There is a long line of sight from the castle’s battlements to the empty fields. Only when he goes down into a valley is Walewein lost from the king’s eyes and on his own. At this low point in

the landscape, he is immediately confronted with a high mountain and the first test of his courage.

This set-up demonstrates beautifully Auerbach's assessment of the Arthurian setting (in Chrétien's *Yvain*):

Die Welt der ritterlichen Bewährung ist eine Welt der Abenteuer; sie enthält nicht nur eine fast ununterbrochene Reihe von Abenteuern, sie enthält auch vor allem nichts anderes als das, was zum Abenteuer gehört; nichts was, was nicht Schauplatz oder Vorbereitung eines solchem wäre, wird in ihr angetroffen; es ist eine eigens für die Bewährung des Ritters geschaffene und präparierte Welt. (Auerbach 1988, 132)

[The world of knightly proving is a world of adventure. It not only contains a practically uninterrupted series of adventures; more specifically, it contains nothing but the requisites of adventure. Nothing is found in it which is not either accessory or preparatory to an adventure. It is a world specifically created and designed to give the knight opportunity to prove himself. (Auerbach 1957, 119)]

The nameless mountain is only there for the adventure; it even opens in a mysterious way to let the chessboard and Walewein through. When it closes again, our hero is in the dark, unable to follow his target. Desperate, yet mindful of Keye's scorn should he return chessboard-less to court (ll. 280–282), Walewein prays and presses on. Just when he sees a light in the distance, he ends up in a dragon's nest with four young dragons, already standing on their feet and moving about. At this point, the narrator addresses the audience: "Wat radi Waleweine, den milden,/ Te doene, na dat es comen?" (ll. 322–323) [What would you suggest Walewein the Mild should do, when faced with this situation?] No answers from the implied listeners are recorded in the text, but Walewein takes his sword to the serpents. Although they fight him fiercely and inflict serious wounds, he manages to kill all four monsters. He finds a way out of the mountain and sees daylight, when the narrator mentions that this is the route the mother dragon uses to go to the nest.

Walewein quickly moves to the side of the entrance and pierces the dragon with his lance as she tries to enter and fry him with her flames. The lance breaks off in her body. As she fights her way in, the swipes of the dragon's tail enlarge the opening. Notwithstanding his dire position, this pleases Walewein:

Deer Walewein stont ende louch  
Ende seide: "Dits wel mijn ghevoech,  
Tserpent heift mi die porte ondaen." (ll. 433–435)

[Sir Walewein stood there and laughed, saying: "This suits me well, the dragon has opened the door for me!"]

The fight is far from over, however, and the dragon is winning: Walewein drops his sword, and the dragon manages to incapacitate him by grasping him with

her enormous tail. She drags the exhausted hero into the mountain towards her nest. At this point, a remarkable and new situational detail is provided by the narrator: the dragon can no longer move through its usual passageway, because she is skewered by Walewein's lance. She gets stuck in what is now revealed to be a rather narrow tunnel. Walewein regroups somewhat, prays to the Lord to help him, finds his dagger and manages to stab the dragon through her navel into her heart, only to find himself stuck beneath her huge dead body in danger of being cooked in her hot blood. Finally, he is able to cut himself free. He escapes with fifteen wounds, his lance broken, his sword lost, horse missing, and no idea where the chessboard has gone. On his way out, he recovers his sword, and finds his horse standing near the exit, which turns out to be more suited to dragons than knights since it lies high above a river, with no way down.

As Thea Summerfield has shown, sending a copy of the *Walewein* translation to filmmakers like Steven Spielberg or Peter Jackson would not be out of the way, since the dragon episode is particularly reminiscent of an Indiana Jones-style movie, with lots of special effects, as used in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*.<sup>6</sup> Penninc, in other words, knows how to write a fast-moving action scene and uses the topical setting to great effect. As in the court scene, additional information is provided when necessary, like the narrowness of the passageway, which becomes evident only when the dragon gets stuck. The mountain and its inhabitants are made for the adventure, allowing the hero to be tested and to prove his prowess.

Even Walewein's horse is given the opportunity to prove itself. When Walewein and Gringolet find themselves on the high ledge above the river, the narrator again addresses the audience, foregrounding the horse: "Hoe sal hi neder comen up daerde/Met Gringolette sinen paerde?" (ll. 663–664) [How is Walewein to reach the valley with his horse Gringolet?]<sup>7</sup> Walewein does not know what to do. He would rather die in a fight than jump to his death, yet staying on the ledge means starving. Gringolet then takes the decision out of his hands and makes the jump, with Walewein hanging on, wishing he had stayed in Carlioen. They survive the splash and Gringolet swims to the shore where they are able to rest and recover. There is also an additional detail: as horse and rider lie exhausted on the water's edge, Walewein first rubs his horse dry until it stands on its legs again, before he takes stock of his own situation (ll. 744–752). It is now a little after noon (l. 718), on the day after Walewein's departure.

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<sup>6</sup> Summerfield (1999); cf. also Van Oostrom (2006, 266) for a comparison of Walewein with James Bond.

<sup>7</sup> For the special relationship between Walewein and Gringolet, see Hogenbirk (2000).

This brief summary of the first two episodes shows how situational the narration is, not so much with regard to elaborate topographical detail, but in respect of the manipulation of the setting to make it serve the adventure (cf. Ferlampin-Acher, *supra*). Court, mountain and river only have those features that help shape the adventure; there is little or no superfluous information and the map seems empty apart from the adventurous, generic locations. After the river, Walewein's journey is uneventful until he arrives at the court of King Wonder, where he finds the chessboard. Although Penninc does not mention this explicitly, Walewein has crossed the frontier between Arthur's kingdom and Wonder's realm. Before returning to our hero and another special river, we will consider the border of Arthur's realm in a related text, the *Roman van Moriaen*. This text demonstrates how, in texts with more than one protagonist, geographical features like the border may be used as meeting points and narrative devices.

## 2 The frontier – the “wegescede” in *Moriaen*

Like the *Roman van Walewein*, *Moriaen* is an indigenous romance. It was also created in the second half of the thirteenth century in Flanders, and Bart Besamusca (1993, 23–39) has shown that there are strong intertextual links between the two romances (cf. also Van Oostrom 2006, 274–279). Of the original version, only small fragments remain, but we do have a complete, rewritten version in the *Lancelot Compilation* (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 129 A 10; see Besamusca 1993, 24, n. 28; Besamusca and Brandsma 2015, 7–9).<sup>8</sup>

*Moriaen* also begins at Arthur's court (Finet-Van der Schaaf 2009, l. 31 “in Bertangen” [in Britain]),<sup>9</sup> where the arrival of a wounded knight leads into a quest for Perchevael in which Lancelot and Walewein meet a Moor, the young knight Moriaen, who has come from faraway Moriane to find his father. He joins the quest, since his father Acglovael seems to be with Perchevael, who is his brother.

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<sup>8</sup> There is no modern English translation of *Moriaen*; the most recent edition gives the Middle Dutch text with a modern French translation (Finet-van der Schaaf 2009). There is a 1901, rather free and now archaic, translation by Jessie Weston, but this does not always do justice to the Middle Dutch text. The translations in what follows are my own. An important change in the compilation version is that Perchevael's role as Moriaen's father is transferred to his brother, Acglovael. The reason for this lies in the new context for the *Moriaen* in the compilation: Perchevael dies a virgin in the next text in the *Compilation*, the *Queeste van den Grale* [the Quest of the Holy Grail], which precludes fatherhood in an earlier text in the series (cf. Oppenhuis de Jong 2000) and Hogenbirk (*supra*).

<sup>9</sup> All references to *Moriaen* are to Finet-Van der Schaaf (2009).

The three knights then come to the border of Arthur's kingdom, where they find a four-way crossroads ("wegescede", l. 940) marked with a beautiful, inscribed cross. Walewein is well-educated and reads the inscription: the cross marks the frontier of Arthur's land, and whoever goes beyond it will soon find terrible adventures. Close by, the three companions find a hermitage and its inhabitant, who has seen two knights who looked like brothers pass by. They came down the road from Britain, and stopped at the cross to pray. Unfortunately, the hermit did not see which road they took, as he was himself praying in his hut. The three knights then decide to each take one of the three roads leading away from the cross, giving the story a larger geographical area to cover. Two of the three regions (the Land of Great Unreason, visited by Walewein who will be captured and almost executed; The Wild Land, inhabited by a monster, which Lancelot will slay) have little or no special spatial features. The third road, which *Moriaen* takes, however, leads to the sea. The cross and hermitage are to function as a meeting and information point in the rest of the story which, as usual in interlaced narratives, now diverges into three strands that will eventually converge again (cf. Brandsma 2010, 34–37, 92–111). Crosses, usually provided with a specific (hi)story, often play this role, especially in the Prose *Lancelot* and its translations.<sup>10</sup>

*Moriaen* travels to the seaside. Exceptionally, it is the real environment, rather than the generic topography that seems to have inspired the description of the landscape. He follows the hoof prints of two horses until he comes to the sea where one may take a boat to Ireland. The area is described: "Het was al heide ende sant:/ Hine vant daer anders geen lant;/ Daer nie wies gers no coren." (ll. 2389–2391) [There was only heather and sand, no arable land at all; no grass or corn grew there.] This is the somewhat desolate beach- and dune-cape that the *Moriaen* poet may well have been familiar with in Flanders, even though the closeness to Ireland suggests that it lies somewhere on the west side of England or Wales. Unable to find a ferryman (everyone thinks the Black Knight is the devil and flees), *Moriaen* returns to the cross, just in time to save Walewein who is to be executed right there. They are joined by Walewein's brother, Gariët, who then accompanies *Moriaen* in a second attempt to cross to Ireland. Using a modern

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<sup>10</sup> As a pseudo-chronicle, the Prose *Lancelot* has a precise chronological set-up, with a day-to-day narration of a knight's adventures within the interlaced narrative strands; geographically, things are less precise, but there are specific locations (e.g. a powerful opponent's dungeon, where a number of Arthur's knights end up) and meeting points, which help the audience to envisage the whereabouts of the different knights during a quest (cf. Ruberg 1963, 139). The role of the Black Cross in the great Lancelot quest in Part 3 (Préparation à la Queste/Agravain; Micha 1978–1983, vol. IV, LX, 3–LXI, 35; LXIV, 9) is quite similar to that of the border cross and hermitage in *Moriaen*. Cf. Brandsma (2010, xx, 92–111, 244 (diagram)).

hitchhiker's trick (Moriaen stays out of sight until Gariët has hired a ferryman), they come to Ireland and find Acglovael and Perchevael. Father and son are reunited, and it is decided that they will travel together to faraway Moriane and Moriaen's mother. They pick up Lancelot and Walewein at the crossroads, set free King Arthur, who has been kidnapped by the Irish King, and travel to Moriane.<sup>11</sup>

One would expect this mysterious land and its seductive princess to elicit elaborate descriptions, but the opposite is the case. The *Compilation* version wraps up the tale in less than one hundred lines: Moriaen leads the way to Moriane, where the knights display their prowess in such a way that Moriaen's mother is restored to her former position as the king's daughter. She is happily married to Acglovael, who stays in Moriane with wife and son, while the others return to Arthur's court in Karmeloet (l. 4689), where Galaat will soon arrive and the Grail quest is about to begin. It may have been different in the original Flemish *Moriaen*, but in the *Compilation* version there is nothing special or exotic about Moriane. Its inhabitants are black like Moriaen, but this detail has been divulged long before, when Moriaen first encountered Walewein and Lancelot (ll. 765–771), and is not even repeated in this final episode.

In comparison to the *Walewein* romance, to which we now return, *Moriaen* shows how an interlaced narrative uses the cross and hermitage on the border as a meeting and information point. Apart from the seaside details, the topography is as sparse, generic and adventure-driven as it was in the *Roman van Walewein*, even with regard to an intriguing and "other" land like Moriane. In Penninc's tale, this is about to change, as Endi comes into play and turns out to have paradise-like features.

### 3 Endi and the River of Purgatory

The generic scenery and geography in the *Roman van Walewein* (and *Moriaen*) gives way to a different kind of setting in the later sections of Penninc's romance and its conclusion by Pieter Vostaert. The shift into a more visionary, symbolic landscape does not coincide with the moment Vostaert takes over, at around l. 7780 of the 11,198 lines.<sup>12</sup> Well before that point, Penninc begins to provide more

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<sup>11</sup> Acglovael is seriously wounded when Moriaen finds him, and stays behind to recover. The knights return to Ireland by way of the cross to pick up Acglovael, before they set out for Moriane (ll. 4555–4599).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Van Dalen and Van Zundert (2007; 2008); Van Dalen (2007). See also, for a new perspective on the point where Vostaert takes over, Huguen and Warnar, forthcoming.



topographical details, especially in the description of Ravenstene Castle and in what might be called the “Rough Guide to Endi” given by King Amoraen.

Walewein has crossed the border and visited King Wonder, who owns the chess set but is willing to exchange it for the special sword with the two rings, which is in the possession of King Amoraen. So, Walewein’s quest continues. He travels through forests and heaths, across mountains and through valleys (ll. 2848–2853), until he comes to the sea and sees a castle on a high rock. There seems to be no entrance and Walewein is puzzled until, like Moriaen, he discovers hoof prints in the sand (ll. 2898–2900). The road to the castle is submerged when the tide is in, and becomes passable at ebb. As in *Moriaen*, the scenery seems inspired by reality, and in this case is reminiscent of the monastery on the medieval Mont St Michel. Riding from the beach upwards through a tunnel, Walewein comes into the castle (ll. 2955–2957). It is called Ravenstene, and its ruler, King Amoraen, provides the famous knight, Walewein, with a warm welcome. The challenge of the sword with the two rings proves to be somewhat risky: if drawn by the wrong person, it will attack (ll. 3238–3373). Walewein turns out to be the sword’s chosen wielder, and Amoraen is prepared to let him use the sword during his search for the third exchange element, the beautiful princess, Ysabele.

Amoraen has long been in love with this girl and knows a lot about her: he gives a long description (ll. 3410–3450) of her beauty, compares her, even though he has never met her, to other famous women, and explains that she will be hard to get, since her father King Assentijn keeps her in an impregnable castle in faraway Endi (l. 3457). The castle has twelve walls, separated by moats. Each wall has eighty towers and the gates in each of the twelve walls are guarded by eighty men. Within the walls, Ysabele has pleasant orchards and gardens in *locus amoenus* style, with all kinds of herbs, flowers and fruits, and even a golden tree, with golden birds making lovely music, powered by eight air bellows which are in turn operated by sixteen men (ll. 3503–3549). Under an olive tree, there is a fountain which finds its source in paradise (l. 3554): if a five-hundred-year-old man were to drink but a drop from its water, he would become as young and strong as when he was thirty (ll. 3586–3592).

The king’s detailed description of Ysabele and the castle, tree and source in Endi runs to almost two hundred lines. This is in line with the attention to detail Penninc demonstrated when it came to objects like the chessboard and the sword, but this is the first time the setting is given the same attention. It prepares the audience for the enormous challenge Walewein will face in the final phase of his quest, even though not all of the details will prove relevant: the tree and source will only be mentioned once in the Endi episode. The whole description shows influence of the medieval imagery of the Otherworld, as Ad Putter (1999) has demonstrated. The twelve walls are a topical feature of the heavenly Jeru-

salem; the idea of coming to Paradise is also found in the Alexander romances; the tree and source come from the description of the land of Prester John (Putter 1999, 98).<sup>13</sup>

The thematic strand of the Otherworld, Paradise and the hereafter comes to prominence in the text from this point onwards. In a most remarkable episode *en route* to Endi (ll. 3676–4915), Walewein plays the role of lay confessor to an evil Red Knight he has defeated, and even wards off with sword and prayer the devils that come to take the knight’s soul to hell (Jongen 2000; Zemel 2010, 3–4). He organizes the knight’s burial and serves as acolyte at the requiem. The Red Knight’s grateful ghost will have a role to play later on. To come to Endi, Walewein again travels through many forests and wastelands, suffering hardships which the narrator chooses not to recount (l. 4937), until he comes to the River of Purgatory. He sees a beautiful castle on the other side, yet is unable to cross: the only bridge consists of a sharp sword (ll. 4952–4975) and Walewein does not take up this intertextual challenge, which may have reminded the audience of the prose *Charrette* or Chrétien’s *Lancelot* (Gerritsen, 1996).<sup>14</sup> Looking for an alternative route, Walewein sticks his lance into the water, whereupon it bursts into flames (l. 4988). Even prayer does not provide a solution here, since a little further down the river, the lance burns once more, before it even touches the water. Our hero is stuck. He retires to a nearby bower, where the fox, Roges, comes to his rescue. Since his own disenchantment relies on seeing Walewein and Ysabele together with King Wonder and his son, the fox-prince helps Walewein in many ways. Roges explains that the river cleanses souls. He shows Walewein how black soul birds dive into the water to wash away their sins and emerge as snow white birds flying off to heaven (ll. 5836–5855). The river comes straight out of hell and empties out into the “Lever zee” (l. 5955) [Liver Sea].<sup>15</sup> There is no way around it, but the fox knows a shortcut: he leads Walewein to a dark tunnel under the river. Finally, he has arrived in Endi.

King Assentijn’s twelve-wall castle is the ultimate test for Walewein’s prowess that Penninc’s setting provides.<sup>16</sup> Even when the hero kills so many defenders that Walewein scholars interpret the whole scene as ironic, there are shortcuts,

<sup>13</sup> For the mechanical tree and its musical birds, see Okken (1987).

<sup>14</sup> Besamusca (1993, 61–66) discusses the work of Maartje Draak, Jef Janssens, Toos Verhage-Van den Berg and Johan Winkelman on this episode.

<sup>15</sup> Zemel (2010, 18–21) analyses this episode, and Strijbosch (2000, 64–67) explores the Liver Sea in the Middle Dutch *Reis van Sint Brandaan* [The Voyage of Saint Brendan], a text about the hereafter that seems to resonate with much of Penninc’s imagery of the river and Endi. Winkelman (2006) also discusses Purgatory, Paradise and the souls in this text.

<sup>16</sup> Uyttersprot (2005) describes the narrative strategies employed in the Endi episode.

comparable to Roges' tunnel under the river.<sup>17</sup> Right at the first impregnable wall, Roges points Walewein to a small side gate (l. 6121), left open by servants, and thus he enters the castle. He then fights his way up to the fourth gate, where he manages to slip into the next circle with the fleeing defenders. After gate five, he finds a place to rest and sleeps until daybreak, eats a hearty breakfast and goes out to fight some more. When at gate number ten his super sword slips out of his hand (ll. 7260–7261), he is finally captured (l. 7327). The description of Walewein's individual achievements in Endi is "over the top": at one point, he is standing up to his ankles in blood (l. 6528), and afterwards dead defenders are taken away by the cart-full (twenty carts are needed in all; ll. 7662–7669) and he sustains no serious injuries, until bad luck leads to his capture.<sup>18</sup>

Now the lovely Ysabele comes into play. While Walewein is still in full fight, the tale switches to Ysabele, who asks her father for a "don contraignant" [an unconditional gift], without specifying what she will ask.<sup>19</sup> She has seen a handsome knight in a dream vision, and this is why she asks for the gift. At this point, it remains unclear what will happen with the gift. When Walewein has been taken, Ysabele watches him from inside the castle, as her father brings him in. Assentijn tells her that this must be the knight she dreamt about. She claims her gift now: she wishes to torment and punish the knight for a full night. Ysabele has, however, fallen madly in love with Walewein the moment she laid eyes on him (ll. 7386–7389). Her love grows when, in the dungeon, she overhears him lamenting his fate and declaring his love for the princess. When he is taken to her and sees her for the first time, he is also smitten (ll. 7761–7769), even though he fears she may torment him cruelly. She, however, is looking forward to making love to him, which will give her more joy than her beautiful orchard with the musical birds' tree and the fountain. In her private domain, she takes him to a lovely room, decorated with images from the stories of Troy and Alexander (ll. 7894–7906). It even has a secret hideaway, built by a craftsman killed for his efforts, in order to keep it secret (ll. 7912–7926). Like the "don contraignant", this is another example of how

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<sup>17</sup> See especially Uyttersprot (2004, 77–164) and Zemel (2010, 7–9).

<sup>18</sup> Zemel (2005) compares Walewein's prowess in Endi to the feats of arms of knight in the *chansons de geste*, demonstrating that this genre influenced Penninc's narrative. The same goes for the love relationship and the presentation of Ysabele, which may have been inspired by the *chanson de geste*, *La Prise d'Orange* (cf. Zemel 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Zemel (2008). Although the romance generally follows just one narrative strand, there are interlace sections with the alternation of two narrative strands, and this is one of those sections. Lines 7100–7210 describe the conversation of daughter and father and the granting of the "don".

Ysabele's actions are presented as premeditated.<sup>20</sup> Penninc prepares well for the crucial scenes in his narrative, and Pieter Vostaert uses this to his advantage.<sup>21</sup> We are now in the part of the text he wrote, without any directly notable or signposted transition (Hugen and Warnar, forthcoming).

The narrator refrains from describing in detail what Ysabele and Walewein do in the room: "Dan canic ju gheseggen niet wel" (l. 7946) [[This] I am not well able to tell you]. They are, however, observed by a spy, who reveals to the King what his daughter is up to. The lovers are besieged, and Ysabele urges Walewein to use the secret passageway. The courtly hero refuses to leave her (ll. 8111–8121) and fights bare-fisted until he is overcome and, like the princess, thrown into a dirty and cold dungeon. With his characters in these dire straits, Vostaert calls in a narrative option provided by Penninc: the ghost of the Red Knight, whose soul Walewein saved, appears and breaks Walewein's fetters. Ysabele is also freed, and they escape Endi by way of the tunnel under the river (ll. 8284–8451) to the bower where the fox is waiting with Gringolet. The narrator freely admits that he forgot to mention that Walewein even picked up his special sword on the way out (ll. 8429–8437).

After Endi, the story returns to more generic scenes (they are once again captured, and then escape; Ysabele is abducted and rescued) and scenery, even when Walewein and Ysabele take the faster option of a sailing voyage to Ravenstene (ll. 9496–9507). Once there, they discover that Amoraen has died and hopefully is now in Paradise (ll. 9527–9528), which saves Walewein from having to give up his lover. Finally, it takes just three hundred lines to wrap up the exchange narrative. They come to King Wonder and his son, which results in the undoing of Roges' enchantment. Walewein receives the chessboard in exchange for the wondrous sword, and returns with it and Ysabele to Arthur's court. The narrator leaves open whether he marries the princess, but there certainly is a happy end to the *Walewein*.

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**20** Ysabele's actions have been the subject of much debate among Walewein scholars; cf. especially Zemel (2008; 2010).

**21** Cf. n. 13. A detailed analysis of the similarities and differences between the two authors with regard to the setting and topography is beyond the scope of this chapter. There certainly are characteristic differences in narrative technique, like the fact that Vostaert's narrator addresses his audience as "ju" [you] (e.g. ll. 7942, 7946, 8365, 8532, 9511, 9828, 10871, 10943, 10948, 11057, 11085, 11150, 11189, and even 11200 where the scribe of the Leiden manuscript (Leiden, UB, Ltk. 195) speaks), and rarely uses the more formal variants of "you": "ghi" (l. 8365), and "u" (l. 10833). For Vostaert's part, reference is made repeatedly to a source (e.g. ll. 9933, 10097, 10313, 10533, 10870, 11165) and, in contrast to the prologue, even to a French source (l. 11141).

## 4 Conclusion

In many ways, the Endi episode is strange. The association with India would lead one to expect exotic wonders, strange people with a foreign language and customs, perhaps even of the Muslim faith. Yet, Endi provides no such “otherness”, nor does the story problematize or create any kind of difference from the generic Arthurian setting. Ysabele and Walewein fall in love without any hesitation, Ysabele resides in a precious *locus amoenus* and knows how to use the courtly “don contraignant”, and there is nothing extraordinary about the fighting or weapons, even when Walewein’s prowess is over the top. Endi does lie far away, but it is more Otherworld, and even Paradise-like, than exotic. The River of Purgatory and the story of saving the Red Knight’s soul seem to relate to contemporary ideas of the hereafter and the world of the souls, and provide the tale with an unexpected spiritual layer, which disappears again as the narration returns to the triple exchange and quest scenario.<sup>22</sup>

When it comes to the presentation of the Arthurian world and its geography, both *Walewein* and *Moriaen* corroborate Auerbach’s observation that these texts in general provide information about the setting on a what-is-needed-for-the-adventure basis, rather than describe topographical details as “couleur locale” [local colour] for their own sake, even when there are some minor, often sea- and beach-related, “realistic” descriptions that form minor exceptions to this rule. It is in the Endi episode that Penninc deviates quite drastically from this format, creating an intriguing yet puzzling Otherworld of soul birds, ghosts and burning water. Like the Sword Bridge, Walewein avoids the confrontation with this Otherworld, however, and Penninc provides him with a shortcut to the castle and the more “normal” world of defenders to fight, as well as a beautiful princess to fall in love with. Although the ghost is rather useful in Vostaert’s part of the story, Vostaert does not otherwise take up Penninc’s Otherworld elements; he brings the story to its conclusion in a generic way, with more fights to show off Walewein’s heroic status and a rather *deus ex machina*-like solution to keep Walewein and Ysabele together and provide a happy end.

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<sup>22</sup> For the spiritual aspects, which are beyond the scope of this chapter see, for instance, Winkelman (2006).

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