

Une étude approfondie des manuscrits de la périphérie orientale de la Francophonie médiévale ferait également mention de la traduction de la *Rhetorica ad Herennium* et du *De inventione* de Cicéron faite par Jean d'Antioche pour Guillaume de Saint-Étienne, avocat et hospitalier, en 1282 (Chantilly, Musée Condé 433 [590], enluminé par le Maître Paris-Acre)⁶⁰; de la traduction de Végèce dans le manuscrit Cambridge (Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay Add. 1); des manuscrits de textes juridiques, surtout ceux du *Livre des assises* de Jean d'Ibelin, comte de Jaffa (fr1266), un texte court dans un autre sens et qui témoigne de liens étroits avec le Chypre⁶¹; la transmission manuscrite des diverses chroniques éditées en 1887 par Gaston Raynaud sous le titre *Les Gestes des chiprois* (Philippe de Novarre, le Templeier de Tyr, etc.)⁶²; les livres mentionnés dans les inventaires et dans les testaments de ceux décédés dans la région ou qui y ont résidé⁶³ et, enfin, le témoignage des fêtes arthurienne en Chypre (1223) et à Acre (1286)⁶⁴.



Dès l'arrivée des premiers Normands en Irlande en 1169 jusqu'à la chute d'Acre en 1291, le littoral occidental et oriental de la Francophonie médievale connaissait, *mutatis mutandis*, les mêmes sortes d'activité codicologique si fréquentes dans les autres domaines d'oïl. Mouvement et coexistence de langues; mouvement d'auteurs, de copistes, d'enlumineurs et d'autres artisans du livre; mouvement de rois, d'aristocrates, d'ecclésiastiques et de croisés; achat et vente; va-et-vient. Le voyage, même celui de la vie à la mort, prête un visage humain et contextuel à la mouvance et à la variance de nos textes, nous rappelant que la vie de maint livre courtois (au sens le plus large) ne se définit que par le mouvement. Manuscrits en mouvement, *manuscripts in motion*, *Handschriften in Bewegung*.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 412-416 (CD-ROM, images 286-294).

61. Voir Peter Ebbury et Jaroslav Tolda, «Two Thirteenth-Century Manuscripts of Crusader Legal Texts from Saint-Jean d'Acre», *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 57, 1994, p. 243-254; John of Ibelin, *Le Livre des assises*, éd. Peter Ebbury, Leiden, Brill, 2003.

62. *Les Gestes des chiprois, recueil de chroniques françaises écrites en Orient aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*, éd. Gaston Raynaud, Genève, Jules-Guillaume Fick, 1887; Filippo di Novara, *Guerra di Federico II in Oriente* (1223-1242), éd. Silvio Melani, Napoli, Liguori, 1994; *Cronaca del Templare di Tyro* (1243-1314), éd. Laura Minerinni, Napoli, Liguori, 2000.

63. Voir David Jacoby, «Knighthly Values and Class-Consciousness in the Crusader States of the Eastern Mediterranean», *Mediterranean Historical Review*, vol. 1, 1986, p. 158-186, surtout le cas d'Éudes de Nevers (1266 à Acre) qui laissa un «romanz de la terre d'ouïre mer» et un «romanz des loberenz» qu'il avait sans doute apportés avec lui de la France (p. 165-166); Leonardo da Veroli, pendant 17 ans Chancelier de la Morée (1281) possédait 14 romans français (p. 166).

64. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

The Manuscript Contexts of Short Tales: The Example of the Middle Dutch *Chastelaine de Vergi**

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Over the last decade or so, medievalists have become aware of a phenomenon that we call the dynamics of the codex. This concerns the reconstitution and interaction of texts in medieval miscellanies, which can be observed in particular in text collections featuring short verse narratives, like lays, *fabliaux*, fables and Saints' lives. A case in point is the Old French *Chastelaine de Vergi*. The subject of this short narrative of around 950 lines is the tragic love affair of a young knight and the châteline of Vergi, which ends in the death of the lovers as the inevitable consequence of the knight's failure to keep their love secret.¹ Written around the middle of the thirteenth century, this tale has come down to us in no less than twenty manuscripts, dating from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries.² Most of these codices are miscellanies, including manuscript Hamilton 257 kept at Berlin's Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz.³ In this codex, the

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1. See *La Châteline de Vergi. Édition bilingue*, ed. and transl. Jean Dufournet and Liliane Dulac, Paris, Gallimard, "Folio", 1994.

2. *La Chastelaine de Vergi. Édition critique du ms. B.N./Jf. 375 avec introduction, notes, glossaire et index, suivie de l'édition diplomatique de tous les manuscrits connus du XIII^e et du XIV^e siècle*, ed. R.E.V. Stulp, La Haye, Mouton, 1970; and *La Chastelaine de Vergi. A New Critical Edition of the Text with Introduction, Notes and an English Paraphrase*, ed. Leigh Adelaide Arraahoon, Diss. Princeton University, 1975.

3. See Stulp, *op. cit.*, p. 34-47.

Chastelaine de Vergi is part of a sequence of eight tales, covering folios 30 to 45, that has been characterized as “an extended study of different types of woman.”⁴ In a number of other codices, like Brussels, Royal Library 9574-9575, and Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale 243, the *Chastelaine de Vergi* accompanies a single text, that is to say the *Roman de la Rose*.⁵

The *Chastelaine de Vergi* has been rendered into Middle Dutch twice, and both texts have come down to us as part of a miscellany. These manuscript contexts are the subject of this article. I shall show that the two text collections in which the Middle Dutch versions of the *Chastelaine de Vergi* are contained differ remarkably from each other, and I shall try to understand the reasons behind the inclusion of the two stories in these miscellanies.

Two Middle Dutch Vergi texts

An unnamed Flemish author completed the first translation of the *Chastelaine de Vergi* somewhere between ca. 1250 (the assumed date of the French source) and ca. 1350 (the assigned date of the extant manuscript fragments).⁶ This translation has not come down to us entirely; what remains of it is about half of the original text (501 lines).⁷ The second Middle Dutch rendition of the French tale was completed in 1315. The anonymous Brabantine author mentions this date in his epilogue:

Dese rime, wet sonder waen,
Was gheendt sonder saghe,
In mey XXIV daghe,
Doen men screef ons heren jaer
MCCC, wet voer waer,
Ende XV daer toe mede. (ll. 1119-1124)

(This poem was finished, it is true, on the 24th of May in the year of Our Lord thirteen hundred and fifteen.)

4. For Hamilton 257, see Keith Busby, *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, Rodopi, “Faux Titre,” 221-222, 2002, p. 448-451, here p. 451.

5. See Stuij, *op. cit.*, p. 44-47. I leave it to Karen Pratt and her research group to analyse the implications of the frequent co-presence of these two texts. See www.dynamisohflemme-derevalmanuscript.eu

6. For the date of the manuscript fragments, see Jos A.A.M. Biemans, *Onsen Spiegelie Ystoriale in Vlaemsche, Codicologisch onderzoek naar de overlevering van de “Spiegel historie” van Jacob van Maerlant, Philip Utenbroeke en Lodewijk van Vellhem, met een beschrijving van de handschriften en fragmenten*, 2 vols., Schrift en Schriftdragers in de Nederlanden in de Middeleeuwen, 2, Leuven, Peeters, 1997, p. 446, and Ria Jansen-Sieben (ed.), *5 Levensjehelheid in één band. Handschrift: Van Halthem*, Brussels, Centrum voor de Bibliografie van de Neerlandistiek, 1999a, p. 92.

7. See Ria Jansen-Sieben (ed.), *De borchgravinne van Vergi*, 3rd ed., with an essay by F.P. van Oostrum, Utrecht, HES Uitgevers, 1985, p. 64-83.

The Brabantine text, which has survived intact, is an adaptation of the Old French tale, consisting of 1127 lines.⁸

I would like to demonstrate the differences between the Flemish translation and the Brabantine adaptation by discussing a single passage.⁹ This is the reaction of the French duke when his wife has falsely accused the young knight of asking her for her love:

Li dus, a cui samble mout griel,
Li dist: “J’en vendrai bien a chief,
Et mout par tens, si com je curt.”
A malaise fu cele nuit
Li dus, n’ongques dormir ne pot
Por le chevalier qu’il amot
Qu’il croit que il eüst mestant;
Par droit que s’amor perdue ait,
Et por ce toute nuit veilla.
Lendemain par matin leva,
Et fist celui a soi venir
Que sa fame li fet hair
Sanz ce que de rien ait mespris. (ll. 141-53)

(The duke, who felt very embarrassed, said to her: “I’ll sort this out and very soon, I think!” That night the duke was not at ease and could not sleep a wink on account of the knight whom he loved and who, he thought, had deceived him: it was right that he had lost his love. And this kept him awake the whole night long. Early in the morning, he arose and sent for him whom his wife now caused him to despise, although he had done wrong nothing.)¹⁰

In the Flemish translation the passage reads as follows:

Die heretoge, wient niet mochte becomen,
Seide: “Ic sals wel te hovede comen
Ende ten minen, ic hebbs geacht.”
Tongemake was hi al de nacht,
So datti slapen niene mochte.
Wonder hadde hi in sijn gedochte,
Dattie rudder, dien hi so minde
Ende over so goet ende so noyaal kinde,
So zere tegen hem hadde mesdaen,
Dat sine vrienescap moeste te gaen.

8. See Jansen-Sieben, *op. cit.* (1985), p. 25-63; *De burggravin van Vergi. Een middellevensnovelle*, ed. Ria Jansen-Sieben and transl. Willem Wilminck, introduced by W.P. Gerritsen, Amsterdam, Prometheus, 1997. For an English translation by Steve Judd, see Steve Judd and T.M. Guest, “Two Short Pieces from Middle Dutch: *The Countess of Vergi* and *Gloriant*,” *Dutch Crossing*, 43, 1991, p. 52-93.

9. For a characterization of the differences, see Stuij, *op. cit.*, p. 24-30.

10. I quote the English translation in Arratkhooon, *op. cit.*, p. 157-172, with changes. For a French translation, see *La Chastelaine de Vergi*, ed. and transl. R.F.V. Stuij, Paris, Union générale d’éditions, “101/8,” 1985, p. 48-68.

Ende pensder omme al dure die nacht
Tote nuhtens datti was bedacht.
Doe deide hi den rudder voor hem alen,
Die hem sijn wijf met valscher talen,
Sonder begerde, deide haten. (ll. 27-41)

(The duke, who did not like it [= what he heard], said: "I will sort it out and soon, that is what I intend to do." All night he felt discomfited, so that he was unable to sleep. It amazed him that the knight whom he loved so much and who, as he thought, was good and loyal, had deceived him in such a way that he would lose his friendship. And he thought about this all night long, until he had come to a decision in the morning. Then he sent for the knight, whom his wife as a result of her treacherous words caused him to despise against his [= the duke's] will.)

The Flemish translator needed fifteen Middle Dutch lines to give a faithful rendition of thirteen Old French verses. In the Brabantine adaptation, the passage reads as follows:

Die herzoghe seide: "Vrouwe, laet bliuen.
Ic salne alte male verdriven."
Die herzoghe, die dese claghe
Hadde ghehoort, lach toten daghe;
Gheslapien dat hi niet en can,
Want hi minde den jonghen man,
Ende sinen wive ghehoefdi mede,
Als noch es der sotter seide.
Ende doen hi was op ghestaen,
Ontboet hi den ridder saen. (ll. 237-246)

(The duke said: "Lady, let the matter rest. I will banish him for ever." The duke, who had heard this [= his wife's] complaint, lay awake until the morning. He could not sleep, because he loved the young man, but he also believed his wife, as still is a fool's habit. And when he had arisen, he sent for the knight right away.)

In spite of the scholarly tradition to refer with a single title, that is *Borchgravinne van Yvergi*, to both texts, it is clear that the Flemish translation and the Brabantine adaptation tell the same story in quite a different way. Overall the adaptation (1127 lines) is a little bit longer than its French source (ca. 950 lines), but in this passage the Brabantine author used only ten lines to present the same sequence of events. What comes to the fore in his adaptation is the straightforward wording, which makes the duke's dilemma more explicit, and the comment by the narrator, who states that only fools believe that their wives are telling the truth. I will return to this remark at the end of this contribution.

The manuscript context of the Flemish *Yvergi*

As stated earlier, both Middle Dutch *Yvergi* texts have come down to us in miscellanies, like the *Chastelaine de Yvergi*. The Flemish translation was part of a text collection which has been preserved incompletely. The poor remnants of the codex, kept in Ghent's University Library (MS 1590) and in Strasbourg's Bibliothèque Municipale (MS 1550), consist, unfortunately, of just two partial folia and one damaged bifolium. These parchment fragments are written in one hand and come from a mid-fourteenth century manuscript.¹¹ The format of the codex was large, since its height was approximately 340 mm and its width almost 260 mm. The text was copied in three columns of 50 lines per page in Textualis. The decoration consists of two-line red initials and one three-line blue initial, marking the beginning of a new text. In the middle of the top margin of each recto a medieval Roman numeral foliation appears. The numbers 87 and 88, written on the Ghent fragments, are still visible.

Owing to this foliation, the exact position of the Flemish *Yvergi* in the original codex can be reconstructed quite well. We find the beginning of the remaining lines on the partial folium which is numbered 87. The story relates at that point how the duke disagrees with his wife, who has told him that there is a traitor at court; this corresponds to line 120 of the French text.¹² After two columns of 50 lines the Middle Dutch text breaks off when the duke is talking to the knight, stating that he will not believe the young man who is denying that he has made dishonourable advances to the duchess, which is line 206 of the French source.¹³ Whereas here 100 Dutch lines correspond to 86 French verses, elsewhere the Flemish author, as we will see, uses almost the same number of lines or slightly fewer than his French colleague. It seems, therefore, sensible to assume that overall the two stories run parallel. This implies that the Flemish *Yvergi* began on the verso of folium 86, presumably on the first column of that page.

Probably due to the knife of someone who destroyed the codex around 1530, the right-hand side of the folium is lost, which means that two columns – recto c and verso a – are missing. After this gap of 100 lines, the Flemish text resumes the story with the heavily damaged last verses of a poem, ascribed in the French text to the Castellan of Couci and quoted by the narrator to illustrate the young knight's sorrow at the moment that he is forced to make a choice between revealing his love affair or leaving the

11. For a codicological description, see Biemans, *op. cit.*, p. 445-448 (MS 60).

12. Corresponding to line 216 of the Brabantine *Yvergi*.

13. Corresponding to line 283 of the Brabantine *Yvergi*.

country (line 300).¹⁴ Starting with verso column b, we see the scribe copying the *Vergi* on the remaining two columns of the verso and on the six columns of folium 88. This leaf is part of a bifolium, which was not the quire's central bifolium, because the *Vergi* text breaks off at the end of folium 88; on the next page of the bifolium a different text is copied (see below).

The 400 Dutch lines written down on these eight columns correspond to 419 French verses, because the final Dutch line, which tells us that the ladies at court heard the duchess refer to a little dog, corresponds to line 719 of the French text.¹⁵ Since the *Chastelaine de Vergi* ends at around 950/952 lines, the Flemish text's conclusion lacks about 230 lines. The scribe needed five more columns for this part, which means that he finished his copy of the Dutch tale on folium 89 verso. My reconstruction allows us, therefore, to maintain that the Flemish *Vergi* was written down on seven pages, starting on folium 86 verso and ending on folium 89 verso.

The second leaf of the bifolium, which has no foliation as a result of damage, contains two incomplete texts which were located in the vicinity of the Flemish *Vergi*, as they were copied in the same quire. On the first half of recto column a we find the last lines of an intriguing text, consisting of five four-line stanzas, each of them linked by one rhyme.¹⁶ In the unique version that has come down to us, this poem does not make much sense. In the first stanza, the people who caused Christ's five wounds are advised to drink His blood in abundance in order to be together with Jesus in eternity. The second stanza expresses the wish that the daughters of Sion should be sad. The third stanza seems to refer to the suffering Jesus. The fourth stanza states that the Jews crucified "den zone mijn" ("my son"), who "van den water maecte wijn" ("made wine from water") at the marriage in Cana. The concluding stanza prays for the salvation of the poem's author. Although the connections between the stanzas remain obscure, it is evident that we are dealing with a thoroughly religious text.

14. Unfortunately, in the edition of the Flemish text (Jansen-Sieben, *op. cit.* [1985], p. 64-83), the gap is not indicated by the line numbering (the last line of recto b is line 102, the first line of verso b – erroneously identified as verso a – is line 103). Due to this confusion, the Flemish author has been held responsible for the missing lines (see Theo Meder, "De causality in *De borchtgravinne van Vergi*. Over de ooplosbaarheid van een hoofds dilemma," *Millennium*, 3, 1989, p. 51-74, here p. 59, note 22; see for this mistake F.J. Lodder, "Spreekten of zwiigen? Over schuld en dilemma's in *De borchtgravinne van Vergi*," *Quaestio*, 5, 1998, p. 15-31, here p. 21). Line 106 of the Flemish *Vergi* corresponds to line 393 of the Brabantine *Vergi*.

15. Corresponding to line 852 of the Brabantine *Vergi*.

16. For an edition of stanzas 1-4, see J. Verdam, "Nieuwe aanwinsten voor de kennis van het Middelnederlandsch," *Verlagen en mededeelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde*, 3rd series, 8, 1892, p. 14-28, here p. 24. Stanza 5 is edited in J.J. Lambin, "Van der ziele ende van den lechame, een oud gedicht, en Bedenkingen daerop," *Belgisch Museum*, 2, 1838, p. 57-77, here p. 59.

The same is true for the ensuing text copied on the bifolium's second leaf. Like the preceding text, it consists of stanzas of four rhyming lines. Following a one-line rubric that indicates the text's title, that is *Van der ziele ende van den lechame* ("Of the soul and of the body"), 278 lines of a Middle Dutch version of the *Visio Philiberti* were copied.¹⁷ Since a complete copy of this text, containing 344 lines, is extant, we know that around 66 lines of the Ghent text are missing.¹⁸ In the remaining verses an "I" relates how he witnessed in his sleep a debate between a departed soul and the dead man's body. The soul destined to go to Hell due to her many sins, reproaches the body, who was wealthy and powerful in life, for her terrible final destination. The body, however, argues that it was not the only one to blame, since the world and the devil had contributed to the soul's unhappy fate, too. In addition, the body states that the soul has failed in forcing it, her subordinate, to live an honest life. At the point where the text breaks off, two devils are introduced, who drag the soul to Hell, where she is tortured. Then the visionary awakes and decides to escape from the world and avoid sin.

In addition to the religious poem and the vision of the Other World, there is one more text that was definitely part of the miscellany that contained the Flemish *Vergi*. The fragment that is kept in Strasbourg's Bibliothèque Municipale preserves passages from Jacob van Maerlant's *Spiegel historiaal*.¹⁹ These lines deal with Seneca's wisdom and proverbs, which the Flemish poet translated from his Latin source, that is Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*, supplemented by Martinus of Braga's *Formula vitae honestae*.²⁰ It has been suggested that the miscellany contained an extensive Seneca florilegium taken from the *Spiegel historiaal*, as is the case in another Middle Dutch text collection, the so-called Heber-Serrure manuscript (Ghent, UL, MS 1374).²¹ Since the foliation of the Strasbourg fragment

17. For an edition of the text, see Lambin, *op. cit.*

18. Cf. Dini Hogeneel, *Spoken en sprekers. Inleiding op en repertorium van de Middelnederlandse sproke*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, Promethheus, 1997, vol. 2, p. 91-92 (nr. 19). See also J. Deschamps, *Middelnederlandse handschriften uit Europa en Amerikaanse bibliotheken*, 2nd ed., Leiden, Brill, 1972, p. 55, and Nigel F. Palmer, "Visio Thugadilf: The German and Dutch Translations and their Circulation in the Later Middle Ages," Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 76, München and Zürich, Artemis, 1982, p. 417-418.

19. Cf. Biemanns, *op. cit.*, p. 447; *Spiegel historiaal*, Part I, Book 8, chapters 37, 1, 39, 44, 1, 14, including gaps (edition: M. de Vries and E. Verwijs [ed.], *Jacob van Maerlant's Spiegel historiaal, met de fragmenten der later toegevoegde gedeelten, bewerkt door Philip Utenbroeck en Lodewijck van Velthem*, 4 vols., Leiden, Brill, 1861-1879 [reprint Utrecht, HES, 1982], vol. 1, p. 419-424).

20. Cf. Petra Berendrecht, *Proeven van bekwaamheid. Jacob van Maerlant en de omgang met zijn Latijnse bronnen*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen, 14, Amsterdam, Prometheus, 1996, p. 242.

21. Part I, Book 8, Chapters 32-75 (De Vries and Verwijs, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 411-53). Cf. Biemanns, *op. cit.*, p. 101, 110-116, 445.

is lost, we do not know whether the supposed collection of Seneca excerpts preceded or followed the Flemish *Vergil*.

It is, of course, very difficult to analyze a miscellany that has come down to us so incompletely. The fragmentary state of the collection will almost inevitably lead to over-interpretation. Nevertheless, I would like to take this risk with regard to the Flemish *Vergil*, because we know for certain that this text was copied together with a religious poem and a version of the *Visio Philiberti* in one and the same quire. This remarkable co-presence of a secular narrative and two pious texts strongly suggests that the Flemish *Vergil* was reinterpreted in this miscellany. In the new contextualisation, the story was no longer an "example" to demonstrate the necessity of keeping a love affair secret, as was the case in the French *Chastelaine de Vergil*, according to its epilogue (ll. 951-955). From a religious point of view, the story illustrates a Christian sin, as is stressed in the printed version of the Middle Dutch *Vergil*. The prologue of this sixteenth-century prose text states that the story is concerned with "die sonde vanden overspele," the sin of adultery.²² It seems likely that this was also the interpretation of the Flemish *Vergil* imposed on it by its miscellany context. The story shows the terrible consequences of the chateleine's unfaithfulness.²³

The manuscript context of the Brabantine *Vergil*

The Brabantine adaptation of the *Chastelaine de Vergil* is part of one of the most important Middle Dutch text collections, preserved in the so-called Van Hulthem manuscript. No less than 214 texts, all numbered by the scribe, who also wrote the rubrics, are copied in this voluminous codex, named after its last private owner and now kept in Brussels's Royal Library (MS 15589-623).²⁴ It is a paper manuscript, consisting of 241 folia (originally at least 278), and dating from the period 1405-1408. The format of the codex was considerable, as its height was approximately 260 mm and its width

almost 200 mm. The text was copied in a cursive hand by one scribe in two columns of 45 or 46 lines per page. The decoration consists of one- to five-line red initials and red paragraph signs.²⁵ It has been suggested that the text collection, which consists of an enormous variety of prose and verse texts, including songs, prayers, plays, long narratives, short tales and excerpts, came into being around 1400 in a cultural milieu associated with the nobleman Willem van den Heertvelde, Lord of Koekelberg, and with the church of Saint John the Baptist at Molenbeek, which was a village near Brussels.²⁶

Scholars agree that the famous miscellany shows clear signs of the clustering of texts.²⁷ A well-known example concerns the theatrical texts in the manuscript. Numbered 169-170, 205-207 and 209-211, they usually involve a pair of plays, that is: a secular drama is followed by a farce.²⁸ Other examples of clustering include the juxtaposition of two texts, called "dyads" by Sarah Westphal, like two prayers to the Virgin Mary numbered 38 and 39, and a sequence of three fables, numbered 185, 186 and 187.²⁹ This clustering of texts throughout the manuscript may be the accidental result of the availability of exemplars at the time the scribe was at work. One could also argue, as Westphal has done, that the clustering indicates a deliberate juxtaposition of texts.³⁰

The Brabantine *Vergil* is number 162 of the text collection. A rubric, indicating the text's number and title, is placed at the bottom of folio 157 verso and followed by a copy of the tale, written on folios 158 recto to 164 recto. One may wonder if it is possible to distinguish a cluster which includes the Brabantine *Vergil* in the miscellany. A closer look at the manuscript's contents makes it abundantly clear, first of all, that in the vicinity of the *Vergil* a number of clusters can be identified without any doubt. Under

22. Cf. Rob J. Resoorl, *Een schoone historie vander boerchgravinne van Vergil. Onderzoek naar de intentie en gebruiksfysier van een zestiende-eeuwse prozaroman*, Hilversum, Verloren, 1988, p. 253.

23. The Seneca florilegium may also be connected to a Christian context, since it was assumed in the Middle Ages that the philosopher knew St. Paul. Cf., for example, Maerlant's remark about this relationship: "Deze Seneca was bekenet / Met sente Pauwelse ende heet gesent / Hem een bouc, dat men prijst wale, / Vanden III dogden cardinale" ("This Seneca was acquainted with St. Paul and had sent him a much-praised book about the four cardinal virtues"), De Vries and Verwijs, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 411; *Spiegel historiel*, Part I, Book 8, Chapter 32, l. 13-16.

24. For an edition of the whole text collection, see Herman Brinkman and Janny Schenkel (eds.), *Het handschrift-Van Hulthem. His Brussel. Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België*, 15589-623, 2 vols., Middelouwe Verzamelhandschriften uit de Nederlanden, 7, Hilversum, Verloren, 1999. For a codicological description, see p. 33-77 of the introduction.

25. For a facsimile of the manuscript, see Ria Jansen-Sieben (ed.), *Handschrift-Van Hulthem (KBR, 15589-623). Facsimile*, Brussels, Centrum voor de Bibliografie van de Nederlandse taal, 1999b.

26. See Herman Brinkman, "Het wonder van Molenbeek. De herkomst van de tekavert-zameling in het handschrift-Van Hulthem," *Nederlandse Letterkunde*, 5, 2000, p. 21-46.

27. Cf. Brinkman and Schenkel, *op. cit.*, p. 29-30.

28. See Hans van Dijk, "The Drama Texts in the Van Hulthem Manuscript," in Erik Kooper (ed.), *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1994, p. 283-296.

29. Cf. W. van Anrooij and A.M.J. van Buren, "s. Levens telheid in één banet. het handschrift-Van Hulthem," Herman Pleij *et al.*, *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen, 4, Amsterdam, Prometheus, 1991, p. 184-199, 385-391 (here p. 198-199), and Sarah Westphal, "The Van Hulthem MS and the Compilation of Medieval German Books," in Ria Jansen-Sieben and Hans van Dijk (eds.), *Codices Miscellanarum. Bransis Van Hulthem Colloquium 1999*, Brussels, Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique, 1999, p. 71-89, here p. 79-80.

30. Westphal, *loc. cit.*

the numbers 143-147; for example, we find an author- and/or work-centred cluster, consisting of five excerpts from Jacob van Maerlant's *History van Troyen*. The texts numbered 160 and 161 are songs (to which I shall return below). Under the numbers 169 and 170, a drama cluster is distinguishable, consisting of the play *Esmeroit* and the farce *Lippijn*. However, other texts in the immediate vicinity of the *Vergi* cannot be grouped so easily. There are, for example, two collections of maxims and aphorisms, numbered 148 and 157, but they are separated by some other texts.³¹

Number 158 is a Middle Dutch version of the *Visio Philiberti*. Surprisingly enough, this is a copy of the same version of *Vander sielen ende vanden lichame* that we find in the miscellany that features the Flemish *Vergi*.³² In the case of the Van Hulthem miscellany, however, it is not easy to explain the position of the *Visio Philiberti* version in the text collection. My tentative suggestion is that the story is related to the three texts which precede it, because the numbers 155 to 158 have a shared theme. While number 155, *Van enen scutter* ("Of a shooter") warns against boasting, number 156, *Dijs van den anxt* ("This is about fear") argues that fear prevents people from committing sins. The birds in number 157, entitled *Dit sijn voghel sproekene* ("These are birds' sayings"), all give advice on good behaviour by means of maxims. As we have seen, *Vander sielen ende vanden lichame* is a warning against sinning. These four texts, therefore, contain admonitions and try to persuade their readers and listeners to live honourably, in accordance with high moral standards.

When discussing the manuscript context of the Middle Dutch *fabliaux* elsewhere, I have argued that the texts numbered 159 to 168 form a cluster which is concerned with secular love. The sequence shows a contrast between two forms of love, that is: idealized (courtly) love and unrestrained lust.³³ In this context, the position of the Brabantine *Vergi* is a very interesting one, because it is surrounded by two groups of texts which, I would like to suggest, emphasize different aspects of the story.

The *Vergi* is preceded by the numbers 159 to 161. Text number 159, *Van tween kinderen die droeghen ene starcke minne* ("Of two children who were deeply in love"), relates the well-known love affair of Pyramus and Thisbe. As a result of a series of misunderstandings, they kill themselves out of love.

31. For this type of text in the Van Hulthem manuscript, see Wim van Anrooij, *Literaire Kleinformaten im Spiegel mittelniederländischer Sammelhandschriften*, Freiburger mediativistische Vorträge, 2, Basel, Schwabe Verlag, 2009.

32. Cf. Robrecht Lievens, "Een derde Middelnederlandse vertaling van de *Visio Philiberti*", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde*, 113, 1997, p. 336-348.

33. Bart Besamusca, "The Manuscript Context of the Middle Dutch *Fabliaux*," in Catherine Jones et al. (eds.), *Li premerains vers: Essays in Honor of Keith Busby*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2010, p. 39-46.

The narrator concludes that the souls of the two lovers will stay forever in the realm of love, where everyone whose love is sincere will arrive. Texts 160 and 161 are two lyrical pieces called *Een liedeken* ("a song") and *Noch een liedeken* ("another song"). Their correspondence, as already indicated by their titles, includes their language, because their vocabulary shows German-looking forms.³⁴ The songs have, moreover, a common theme. In *Een liedeken*, an "I" urges his sad heart to be merry. He states that he intends to say goodbye to melancholy and to embrace cheerfulness, as advised by a lady. The "I" asks the woman he loves to allow him to long for her, as this would really cheer him up. In the second song, *Noch een liedeken*, an "I" expresses his love for a woman, whose beauty he praises. He compares himself to a "kersoude," a daisy. Just as this pure, unequalled flower follows the course of the sun, the "I" follows his beloved. He begs her to reward him for this dedication. It is clear that in the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe and in the two songs an exalted view of love is expressed. The children are devoted lovers and the same is true for the two men, in spite of their lady loves' unyielding attitude.

The *Vergi* and *Van tween kinderen die droeghen ene starcke minne* evidently share the theme of death resulting from love. Thinking that a wild animal has killed Thisbe, Pyramus throws himself onto his sword (ll. 215-217).³⁵ When the girl finds her dying lover, she performs the same act (l. 277). In the *Vergi*, the chatelaine's heart literally breaks (ll. 958-961) when she concludes that her lover has given away their secret. The young knight, confronted with the chatelaine's body, grabs a sword from the wall and kills himself by sticking the weapon into his heart (ll. 1046-1050). Both couples die tragically.

The rubric indicating the *Vergi*'s number and title is written on the same page as the second song, at the bottom of folio 157 verso. This position suggests a close connection between the tale and the songs that is easy to confirm. After all, the theme of an ideal courtly love between the chatelaine and the young knight figures prominently in the story. It is, moreover, telling that the *Vergi* features two courtly songs. As is the case in the French story, a song ascribed to the "castelain van Coetsi," the Castellan of Couci (l. 379), is quoted at the moment that the young knight is forced to make a choice between revealing his love affair or leaving the country. It is an eight-line strophe (ll. 385-392) expressing the castellan's sorrow "doen hi van lieve moeste scheiden" ("when he had to part from his beloved,"

34. Cf. Corrie de Haan, *Dichten in stijl. Duitse klaring in Middelnederlandse teksten*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen, 20, Amsterdam, Prometheus, 1999, p. 140.

35. Brinkman and Schenkel, *op. cit.*, p. 820-829.

l. 384).³⁶ The second song, *not* present in the French source, is a four-line strophe sung by the chataleine when her lover is leaving her at the break of day (ll. 566-569).³⁷ Like the first song, the second one emphasizes the sorrow that accompanies the parting of two lovers. These feelings resemble the distress of the lovers in the two songs which precede the *Vergi*, since their beloved ones are beyond reach. The second *Vergi* song has been ascribed to the author of the Brabantine adaptation.³⁸ However, we should not exclude the possibility that it was the compiler of the Van Hulthem text collection who, incited by the lyrical pieces 160 and 161, was the poet of the inserted strophe.

The *Vergi* is followed by three texts which share a theme as well. Number 163 is a Middle Dutch *fabliau* entitled *Van Lacarijse den keitijf die een pape sach bruden sijn wijf* ("Of the foolish Lacaris, who saw a priest screwing his wife"). The simple man in this tale is fooled by his lustful wife, who makes love to a priest in the very presence of her husband, whom she has convinced that he cannot protest against her transgression because he is lying dead on the floor. Number 164 is a song, *Dits vanden tanden* ("Of the tooth"). The "I," taking a horse ride outside Brussels, catches a lollard in the act with a beguine. According to the lover, the noise they are making is no reason for indignation, since he is only extracting a tooth from the woman beneath him. Number 165, *Vanden stocvisch* ("Of the stockfish"), is a diatribe against wicked women. The first-person narrator praises the stockfish as a tool to bar a door and, above all, to beat dogs and bad women. He enjoys it that he is able to arouse a wicked woman's anger by informing her about the advantages of a stockfish. I agree with Ria Jansen-Sieben that these three tales can be seen as a group. They focus on the supposed vices of women.³⁹

The three tales which follow the Brabantine *Vergi* highlight a different aspect of the tale than the three preceding texts. The *fabliau*, the erotic song and the diatribe emphasize the role of the duchess. Being lustful, deceitful and revengeful, she is portrayed as a wicked wife. In this context, it should be noted that two passages which are, once again, *not* present in the French source are of a misogynistic character.⁴⁰ I have quoted the first one earlier in this article. When the duke believes his wife, the narrator remarks that this is the behaviour of a fool (l. 244). The second inserted passage occurs

at the moment when the duchess is determined to know what the duke is hiding from her. The narrator remarks that as a result of their persistence, women will always succeed in satisfying their curiosity (ll. 670-675). Since these statements of the narrator do not only stress the bad character of the duchess, but also match the views on women expressed in the three texts following the *Vergi*, one could ascribe these insertions both to the Brabantine author of the tale as well as to the compiler of the Van Hulthem collection. Be that as it may, it seems plausible that the *Vergi* and the three texts share womanly vices as a theme.⁴¹

My conclusion can be brief. It is likely that in the two miscellanies discussed in this article, the meaning of the two Middle Dutch renditions of the French *Chastelaine de Vergi* has changed as a result of a new contextualisation. It could well be that the Flemish *Vergi* was reinterpreted as a story illustrating the sin of adultery. The Brabantine *Vergi* is presented both as a courtly love story par excellence, and as a tale illustrating the misdeeds of a wicked wife. These examples of the reconstitution and interaction of tales in medieval miscellanies make it abundantly clear that studying the manuscript contexts of narratives is a rewarding enterprise. The dynamics of the medieval manuscript have much to tell us about the reception of medieval literature.

36. Cf. DuJournal and Dulac, *op. cit.*, l. 295-302.

37. For the absent song, cf. Sluip, *op. cit.* (1970), p. 25.

38. See Wilminck and Jansen-Sieben, *op. cit.*, p. 17 (by W.P. Gerritsen).

39. Jansen-Sieben, *op. cit.* (1999a), p. 79. It has also been suggested that the *Vergi* and *Van Lacarijse* form a dyad. See W.P. Gerritsen, "Het verzamelhandschrift in de literatuurgeschiedenis," *Questia*, 5, 1998, p. 182-188, here p. 187, n. 14.

40. Cf. Jansen-Sieben, *op. cit.* (1985), p. 92-93 (by F.P. van Oostrum).

41. Cf. also Jansen-Sieben, *op. cit.* (1999a), p. 79.

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