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ELISABETH DE BRUIJN*

To Content the Continent

The Dutch Narratives *Merlijn* and *Jacke* Compared to Their English Counterparts

Abstract – The early printed romances *Van den jongen geheeten Jacke* (1928) and the *Historie van Merlijn* (c. 1540) belong to the few Middle Dutch narrative texts that were translated from English sources. In this article, *Jacke* and *Merlijn* are compared to their respective English source texts: *The Frere and the Boye* (c. 1510) and *A lytel treatyse of ye byrth and prophecye of Marlyn* (earliest edition c. 1499). The (dis)similarities between the Dutch editions and their English counterparts are interpreted in view of the literary-historical context. It is shown that some of the editions' most specific characteristics can be explained from literary and poetical differences in the Dutch and English language areas.

1 Introduction

The years between c. 1500 and 1540 are considered the flourishing period of early Middle Dutch narrative literature.¹ This golden age in the production of romances was probably heralded by the well-considered move of pioneer Gheraert Leeu from the northern city of Gouda to the southern metropolis of Antwerp in 1484. In Antwerp Leeu could lay his hands on French romances that had had demonstrable international success, like *Paris et Vienne* (1487) and *Meluzine* (1491). In the following years, French literature remained the principal source of Dutch translated romances, even though narratives were also translated from other European languages, such as German, Spanish and English. When Boekenooogen (1905: 72) published an edition of *Van den jongen geheeten Jacke*, printed in Brussels in 1528 by Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, he called attention to the fact that the text was translated from an English chapbook (*The Frere and the Boye*, printed c. 1510 by Wynkyn de Worde), something he considered to be exceptional. In 1926, Wouter Nijhoff discovered fragments of the *Historie van Merlijn*, printed in Antwerp by Symon Cock around 1540 (Kronenberg 1929: 18). Pesch (1985) convincingly showed that this text was translated from the English chapbook *A lytel treatyse of ye byrth and prophecye of Marlyn* (editions by Wynkyn de Worde in c. 1499, 1510 and 1529), putting England on the map not only as the recipient, but also as the supplier of literature.

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1 See for example the following comprehensive study on Dutch printed narratives from the first decades of the printing press: Debaene 1977 [1951]: 308–318.

Several more Dutch narratives may be English in origin as well, but research into these texts is hindered by the complexity of the text transmission or by the fact that no English sources have survived. For instance, the Dutch *Helias, Ridder metter Swane* (Antwerp: Jan van Doesborch, c. 1512-1520) has variants that are found variously in the sixteenth-century French editions (*editio princeps*: Paris: Jean Petit, c. 1500) and English editions (*editio princeps* London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1512, STC 7571) of the text.² The relation between the Dutch *Robrecht de duyvel* (Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1516), the English *Lyf of Robert the devyll* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, c. 1500, STC 21070) and the French editions of *Robert le dyable* (*editio princeps* Lyon: Mareschal and Chaussard, 1496) is equally complex and deserves further investigation.³ Recently, Parsons and Jongenelen (2012) have assembled arguments to argue that *Jan van Beverley* (Brussels: Thomas van der Noot, c. 1512) is English in origin, although a source text has not survived. The narrative *Van den .X. esels* (*Antwerp: Jan van Doesborch, c. 1531) explicitly mentions an English source text, but this text, again, has not come down to us.⁴ On the other hand, various examples are known of Dutch narratives that were translated into English, the most famous of which probably being the translation of *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, translated as *Mary of Nemmeghen* (STC 17557), and the theatre play *Elckerlijc*, which was translated as *Everyman* (STC 10604). The Antwerp printer Jan van Doesborch has published more than twenty books for the English market, among which supposedly seven fictional texts (Franssen 1986: 263-271). Van Doesborch's focus on the English market, as well as the evidence suggesting that he lived in London for a few years, make it likely that Van Doesborch, in turn, was responsible for the Dutch translation of *Marlyn*, the first edition of which Franssen assumes to have been published around 1511-1515 (Franssen 1990: 60).

2 The question of the source text of *Helias* is discussed in De Bruijn 2016. A complicating factor is that Van Doesborch's edition was only fragmentarily preserved and that the comparison has to rely partly on Cornelis Dirksz. Cool's 1651 edition (which comes closest to the preserved fragments of Van Doesborch's edition, in spite of the elimination of some textual details, see Boekenooogen 1931: 143). An example of the complex relation between the editions in the three languages is the Dutch heading 'Hoe coninck Helias tslot bestormde daer Matabrune zijn grootmoeder in was, ende hoe hyse dede verbarren' (Boekenooogen 1931: 57), which corresponds to the English ('And than gaue hym leue to go take his moder Matabrune in the castell of Maubruyant; and there he brente her in a grete fyre', (Lombardo 1976: 88)) and not to the French ('Et puis luy ottroya daler prendre sa mere matabrune dedans Maubruyant' (div)). However, there are also cases where the Dutch ('Als dese befoften dus geschiet, en besworen waren aen beyde zijden, zoo bracht hy de schoone Beatris int Lillefoort om daer te houden de feest der bruyloft' (Boekenooogen 1931: 8)) clearly corresponds to the French ('Après que la promesse fut ainsi faicte et iuree entre icelles parties le roy Oriant fist incontinant conduire et amener la noble Bietris: a lislefort pour faire la feste et solennite du mariage de luy et elle' (azv)) as opposed to the English ('Whan that promesse was thus made the kyng incontynent made her to be ledde to lylefort for to mary her' (Lombardo 1976: 10)). Quotations from the English are from photos of De Worde's 1512 edition; quotations from the French are from the earliest known French prose edition of the story (which is also De Worde's source): Pierre Desrey's *La Genealogie avecques les Gestes et Nobles Faictz d'Armes du Tres Preux et Renomme Prince Godeffroy de Boulion* [...]. (Paris: Jean Petit, 1500).

3 Resoort 1980: 25; Franssen 1990: 44.

4 See for a discussion on the source text Franssen 1990: 34, 42, 86.

TABLE 1 The editions of the texts in English and Dutch

| English texts | Dutch texts |
|---|--|
| <i>Marlyn</i> | <i>Merlijn</i> |
| London: De Worde, [c. 1499] (STC 17840.7) London: De Worde, 1510 (STC 17841) London: De Worde, 1529 (STC 17841.3) | * [Antwerp: Van Doesborch, c. 1511-1515] [Antwerp: Cock, c. 1540] |
| <i>The Frere and the Boye</i> | <i>Jacke</i> |
| London: De Worde, [c. 1510] (STC 14522) | * [first edition ?] Antwerp: Van Hoochstraten, 1528 |

Fortunately, the English source texts of *Jacke* and *Merlijn* have been preserved, allowing us to compare these Dutch texts to their English counterparts. It will prove to be useful to focus on the (dis)similarities between the English and Dutch editions, as well as on the translation strategies underlying the Dutch editions, in order to gain insight into their literary and poetical differences. Both English texts were printed by Wynkyn de Worde around 1510 (although a first edition of *Marlyn* is believed to already have been published in 1499). They are, however, different when it comes to formal characteristics: *The Frere and the Boye* is a *geste*, written in stanzaic verse (six lines per stanza, rhyming aabccb), and *Marlyn* is a verse romance, presented as a *treatyse*. The Dutch texts, on the other hand, came from the presses of different printers, even though displaying a more pronounced uniformity in their formal presentation. They apply structuring elements typical of the majority of Dutch prose romances dating to the period between c. 1500-1540: *Merlijn* has verse interruptions in the prose, and both texts have speech headings such as found in printed drama. Unlike its English source, *Jacke* has a separate title page, the typography of which resembles that of other Dutch romances and thereby puts the text on equal footing with *Merlijn*. The question arises if the English source texts are adapted in such a way that they meet standards that are considered typically ‘Dutch’. Bearing in mind that Antwerp printers played an important role in supplying the English market with Latin books, and that some of them engaged in translating Dutch works into English, it may prove to be worthwhile to assess the texts that travelled in the opposite direction.⁵

2 *Marlyn* and *Merlijn*

The *Historie van Merlijn*, printed c. 1540 by Symon Cock in Antwerp, occupies a special place among the Dutch prose romances, since it is the only early printed edition in the Low Countries we know of that belongs to the genre of Arthurian literature (Janssens 1987: 296). The ‘matter of Britain’ remained popular in late medieval England, unlike the Dutch language area, as is shown by its transmission in both manuscript and print. Even new Arthurian works were written in the fifteenth century (Rogers 1999). As opposed to the flourishing English tra-

⁵ A lot has been written on the English trade in continental printed books; for an overview see Gillespie 2014: 1-9 (2 n. 4).

dition, the almost complete absence of Arthurian literature in the late-medieval Low Countries is remarkable. Herman Pleij (1992: 242) suggests that, in contrast to the surrounding countries, the Low Countries lacked a Dutch-speaking aristocratic audience that could have demanded such texts. This hypothesis implies that members of the English nobility were involved in the production and reception of Arthurian literature and that aristocratic interest would have been particularly 'Arthurian'. Although there are indeed many examples showing that the aristocracy in England can be associated with the printing press, ranging from mere dedication to financial support, it cannot be specifically connected with the printing of Arthurian material.⁶ On the contrary, William Caxton, who is known to have aimed both at a merchant-class and an aristocratic clientele, seems rather to have favored (non-Arthurian) French prose romances, because he 'preferred the Continental texts over the native ones'.⁷ And despite the fact that English royal families used the Arthurian legend to claim the throne throughout the centuries, making the king a 'desirable ancestor' (Vale 1999: 195), other texts were equally suitable for genealogical legitimization. For instance, the preface to De Worde's 1512 edition of *Helyas*, the translation of which was instigated by Edward, duke of Buckingham, presents the duke as a descendant of the Swan Knight (Edwards & Meale 1993: 98-99).⁸ This underlines the fact that 'few [social characteristics] can be isolated as exclusively "Arthurian", rather than characteristics also of the values propounded in other narrative forms, whether *chanson de geste* or other types of romance' (Vale 1999: 185).

That the connection between nobility and Arthurian texts is not absolute is also shown by the situation abroad: despite the existence of a German nobility, the German language area shows a 'great restraint' towards late Arthurian prose adaptations, especially printed ones, as has been pointed out recently by Christa Bertelsmeier-Kierst (2014: 151).⁹ The preference for Arthurian subject matter in England as opposed to the Continent could well be explained by the fact that England was, of course, the cradle of Arthurian legend. In any way, the nobility (if at all) was certainly not the exclusive audience of Arthurian texts. The fact that

6 For the contribution of English aristocracy to the printing press, see Edwards & Meale 1993: 95-124. The 'best-known of the patrons of early printing' was king Henry VII's mother Margaret Beaufort, who can be connected to the printing practice of Caxton, Pynson and the early years of De Worde (when *Marlyn* was put into print) (*Ibid.*: 99-101). However, apart from *Blanchardin and Eglantine*, Margaret is particularly associated with the printing of religious and devotional texts. Edwards and Meale note that even *Blanchardin* 'may, in some definitions, be included in such categories' (*Ibid.*: 100).

7 For the quotation see Sánchez-Martí 2009: 8, referring to Crane 1919: 3-4. For the reception of Caxton's romances see Wang 2004.

8 The reference to the duke of Buckingham is not found in the Dutch *Helias*.

9 With regard to the Low Countries, it would be interesting to assess the interest in Arthurian literature at the French-speaking Burgundian court that ruled the Low Countries from the late fourteenth until the late fifteenth centuries. Whereas (existing) Arthurian manuscripts are found among thousands of other works in the library of the dukes of Burgundy, and Arthur was exemplary as were the other eight Worthies, there are no immediate signs that the 'matter of Britain' was appreciated to the same extent as in England, especially not in the fifteenth century. For an overview of literature at the Burgundian court, see: Doutrepont 1970 [1909]: esp. 8-11, and Bousmanne, Van Hemelryck & Van Hoorebeecq e.a. 2006. Further research could assess the question to what extent existing texts were still read, or 'new' Arthurian matter was conceived in the Burgundian period.

the Arthurian verse romances were reprinted (over a certain period of time) implies a broad reception.¹⁰ This is consistent with the printing policy of the number one printer of Arthurian texts at the time, Wynkyn de Worde, who seems to have aimed at the widest possible audience.¹¹ We should not underestimate the influence of England's different literary taste, which is also reflected by the unusually large number of printed verse romances around the beginning of the sixteenth century (Sánchez-Martí 2009). On some levels, insular literary preferences seem to have been more conservative than in parts of the Continent.

Despite the lack of interest in Arthurian literature in the Low Countries, the region welcomed the edition of *Merlijn* at some point in the early sixteenth century (admittedly, as is the case in its English source, the text only covers the *pre-history* of the British king). The possibility that Symon Cock was not the first to have printed this text was suggested for the first time by Pierre Pesch (1985: 314), who points out that, for instance, Jan van Doesborch was more closely in touch with English printers than Cock. In his dissertation Piet Franssen (1990: 42-43) indeed assumes that *Merlijn* was first printed by Van Doesborch. His argument is based on Loek Geeraedts' (1986: 71-73) observation that the woodcut accompanying the second chapter of Van Doesborch's *Ulenspiegel* in fact belongs to *Merlijn*, as well as on the finding that several other woodcuts in *Merlijn* were already found in other works of Van Doesborch's stock. On the basis of the date of *Ulenspiegel* between 1511 and 1516, Franssen (1990: 60) suspects that *Merlijn* was printed around 1511-1515.

Of the Dutch *Merlijn*, printed in quarto, only quires B and D have been preserved, giving us eight leaves to examine. Their preservation is owed to the fact that they were inadvertently bound in the *Cronijcke van Vlaenderen int corte van 621-1532* (also printed by Cock, in 1539).¹² The first quire preserves text that relates how the evil Vortiger is crowned king of England, while the rightful heirs Uter and Pandragon flee the country. Vortiger successfully fights the Danish occupier king Angis, who gets permission to withdraw to Denmark. When Vortiger is threatened by rebellious noblemen, he asks for Angis' military assistance, making him an ally. After conquering the noblemen, Vortiger marries Angis' daughter. The text in quire D recounts the conviction of Merlijn's mother, who has been unknowingly made pregnant by a devil. Through intercession of the hermit Blasius she is allowed to give birth to her son and nourish him. The young child Merlijn appears to have the marvelous gift to speak immediately after being born, enabling him to exculpate his mother. After a while, he is found by some of Vortiger's men, who were sent out to bring his blood to the king. Merlijn convinces them that his blood would do the king no good and instead offers to accompany them to Vortiger. On the road, Merlijn demonstrates his powers up to three times by predicting events. That is where the fragment breaks off.

Even though only two quires were unaffected by the ravages of time, they seem to comprise one third of the text that *Merlijn* might have originally consisted of.

10 For the success of printed verse romances, among which Arthurian texts, see: Sánchez-Martí 2009: 5.

11 For De Worde's printing policy see Meale 1992: 291.

12 Shelf mark: Brussels, Royal Library, 27.526 A.

This becomes clear from a comparison with the corresponding portions of verse in its English source. The English *Marlyn* tradition covers manuscript and print, both in prose and verse. Pesch (1985) has convincingly shown that the Dutch prose *Merlijn* goes back to the rhymed tradition. This text, *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, has come down to us in an 'earlier, longer and better' version, transmitted in the Auchinleck manuscript only, and a closely related shorter version, which is preserved in several (fragments of) manuscripts (Macrae-Gibson 1979: 1).¹³ The shorter version is the starting point for the printed tradition *A lytel treatyse of ye byrth and prophecye of Marlyn*, thus adding *Marlyn* to the list of metrical romances that made it from manuscript to print in England (Sánchez-Martí 2009). This printed version is represented by three editions of Wynkyn de Worde, the oldest of which can be dated to c. 1499 (Macrae-Gibson 1980: 73-76). De Worde's edition is shown to have been the (indirect) source of the Dutch translation (Pesch 1985: 312). Due to the highly fragmentary state of the 1499 edition, only the complete copy of 1510 allows for a comparison.¹⁴

2.1 From verse to prose (to verse again)

The vast majority of changes in the Dutch translation are the result of the transposition of verse to prose. The fact that the Dutch translator was no longer restrained by rhythm or rhyme allowed him to omit redundant elements, such as line-fillers and all kinds of repetition. The line-fillers frequently occur in rhyming position; in the present fragment this is the case with, for example, *anone* (eleven times), *ywys* (eight times) and *tho* (thirteen times).¹⁵ They also involve narrator's interventions such as *that I of tolde*, *as I you say* or *now herken*, the most extreme example of which is found in the following passage, where both *Marlyn* and the narrator just do not seem to get to the point:¹⁶

Syth the tyme that ye were bore
Herde ye neuer suche a meruayle by[f]ore
I shall tell you without othe
That ye shall fynde truely sothe.
Now herken bothe yonge and olde
What was yt meruayle that marlyn tolde.

13 The edition of *Marlyn*, as transmitted in the Auchinleck manuscript, was published six years earlier (Macrae-Gibson 1973).

14 There are 'many cases in which *Marlyn I* [the 1499 edition; EdB] preserves the better reading' (Macrae-Gibson 1980: 76). However, the differences between the 1499 and 1510 edition are negligible when comparing them to Dutch *Merlijn*. The 1510 edition is completely preserved in a copy that is kept as article W 16 A (Acc. no. 21136) in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

15 See *anone* (lines 249, 352, 488, 517, 1038, 1216, 1298, 1443, 1472, 1575, 1576), *ywys* (lines 267, 394, 1181, 1182, 1274, 1277, 1392, 1589), and *tho* (lines 307, 473, 487, 514, 1084, 1131, 1140, 1167, 1288, 1374, 1433, 1517, 1559).

16 In the Dutch translation, these lines are captured in one sentence: *Ic sal v segghen dinghen die ghi warachtich vinden sult* (D4v). Other narrator's interventions in *Marlyn* are: *that I of tolde* (line 331); *as I you say* (line 1136); *as I you say* (line 1170); *as I of tolde* (line 1426); *that I of tell* (line 1503); *as I you say* (line 1511); *as I you say* (line 1513); *Now herken all to this stryfe* (line 1283); *Now herken bothe yonge and olde* (line 1595).

Than sayd Marlyn, lysten nowe
I shall tell you why I lowe. (lines 1591-1598)¹⁷

Another type of line-filler is represented by religious exclamations, like *by saynt Johan, in goddes name, by saynt Symon*.¹⁸ Whereas ejaculations concerning God and the saints are left out in the translation, the Dutch text does elaborate on actual religious references. In response to Merlin's mother's claim that she got pregnant unknowingly, the judge asks twelve married women if it is possible to become with child without a man's intervention, to which they answer: *No chylde was borne of a mayde / But Jhesu alone, they sayd, Without mannes mone for sothe* (lines 1040-1042). In the Dutch text they reply that no child *noyt gheboren noch ghewonnen was sonder mans toedoen dan alleen christus iesus die ontfanghen was vanden heylighen geest gheboren vander maghet maria* ('was either born or begotten without a man's help, except for Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary', D1r), inserting a catechetical lesson. A few lines after that the hermit convinces the judge not to put Merlin's pregnant mother to death, for *The chylde may be a full good man* (line 1069). The Dutch text emphasizes that *bi auontueren dat kint mocht een heylich man worden daer de eere gods bi mocht vermeerdert worden* ('the child might grow up to be a holy person, by whom the honor of God could be augmented', D1r). When Merlin explains how his mother has been made pregnant by a devil, the English text remarks *That all the fendes wende thorowe me / For to haue destroyed crystente* (lines 1265-1266). The translation expresses itself more graphically when stressing that *al die duuelen inder lucht hielden raet om mi ende meenden kerstenrijck te schenden* ('the devils assembled in the air to think of a way to wreck Christianity', D2r).

Devices of repetition are represented by pleonasm (*Ye be traytours wycked and stronge*, line 340 vs. *ghi verraders*, B2r), doublets (*styffe and stronge*, line 1468 vs. *vast staende*, D3v; *blythe and gladde*, line 240, vs. *seer verblijt*, B1r) and tautology (*In to a castell stronge and good / That was made stronge and well*, lines 303-304, vs. *op een sterc casteel*, B1r; *answered [...] gan to sayne*, lines 336-337 vs. *seyde*, B2r). From time to time repetitive elaborations are avoided or passages are altered to such an extent that the changes become meaningful. Up to three times, the translator replaces battle scenes by summarizing remarks on the fight, mainly leaving out formulaic expressions like *with helme on hede and baner bryght* (283) or *Swerdes were drawen & arowes shotte* (292). This applies to the depiction of Vortiger's army (lines 274-284) corresponding to *versaemde een grote heercracht* ('assembled a great army', B1r), to the extensive description of earls, knights and barons from east, west, north and south that came to fight against Vortiger (lines 364-383) that becomes *dese heren voorseyd* ('the afore-mentioned lords', B2r) and to a lengthy account of the way the barons were defeated by Vortiger (lines 414-457), that corresponds to four sentences in the Dutch text (B2v). The martial elaborations so typical of chivalric romances were clearly considered to be of less interest to the Dutch audience of *Merlijn*.

17 All quotations from *Marlyn* are from the edition Cyłkowski 1980.

18 *For the Joye that god is in* (line 512); *god wote* (line 1064); *in goddes name* (line 1125); *For so god me helpe and saynt Johan* (line 1156); *The name of god and of Marye* (line 1194); *by saynt Johan* (line 1279); *by saynt Symon* (line 1323); *by saynt Jame* (line 1325); *by goddes wyll* (line 1546); *For saynt Thomas of caunterbury* (line 1413).

Another paraphrase is found in the passage describing the queen making advances to her chamberlain, not knowing that 'he' is a woman and therefore has to refuse her. The English passages includes vulgarities like *her takyll was to shorte* (line 1616) and *For had she wylst of her tole* (line 1618), whereas the Dutch uses the veiled description *want hi haer niet helpen en mochte datse van hem begeerde* ('he could not help her by giving what she desired of him', D4v). The overall impression is that decorum is slightly more carefully observed in the Dutch text than in its English source. This applies to the villain Vortiger (exchanging courtesies like 'Vortigher thanked his lords very much for this' (*Hier af bedancte vortigher seer den heeren* (B1r)), that has no English equivalent) as well as to the positively portrayed characters (Merlijn greets the messengers 'in a courtly way with seemly words as well as he could' (*huesschelic met goeden woorden so hi wel conde*, D3v) instead of *And gret them as he well can* (line 1458); and the hermit's words are not *wyse* (line 1071) but rather *deuchdelick* (D1r)).¹⁹ As we have seen before, the Dutch text also elaborates on Christian references, while eliminating religious exclamations. The most important adjustment that helps showing Vortiger in a more favorable light seems to be, however, the result of a formal intervention: the insertion of two dramatic verse dialogues, only separated by a few prose lines, which are fitted with speech headings. Significantly, the words that make of Vortiger a king *van vromer daet* ('of brave deeds', B3v) and an *edelen deghe*n (a noble hero, B4r) in this passage often occur in rhyming position.

The insertion of verse passages in prose romances is a phenomenon common to romances printed between c. 1500–1540 in the Low Countries (Debaene 1949: 1–23; Resoort 1988: 168–179; De Bruijn 2017). Although the origins of this tradition have not been satisfactorily explained, there seems to have been a close connection to the activities of so-called Chambers of rhetoric (*rederijerskamers*): dramatic societies or guilds in which lyrics (especially the stanzaic *rederijersrefrein*) and dramatic pieces were produced and performed. For a literary culture so dominant in the southern Low Countries, its printed literary traces are paradoxically few. This is explained by the 'private' character of the Chambers: members kept their poetry indoors, copying it by hand for their descendants only, since printing was associated with the transitory nature of earthly fame (Pleij 1992: 234).²⁰ Nevertheless the literary footprints of the *rederijers* can be found in early printed romances. Parallels have been noticed between the dramatic insertions in romances like *Frederick van Jenuen*, *Floris ende Blanceflour* and *Die Borchgravinne van Vergi* and some exceptional cases of printed collections of *rederijersrefreinen* (Debaene 1949: 39, 52, 60). Archival evidence has shown that printers and *rederijers* moved in the same circles (Brinkman 2004). The Antwerp printer Jan van Doesborch seems to have been the most notable exponent of the tradition to interlard texts with dramatic verses or *rederijersrefreinen* (De Bruijn 2017). As *Merlijn* is believed to

19 There seems to be a misunderstanding of the English *be wyse* in the translation of the lines *Than answered the hie Justyce, / Hermyte, he sayd, thy wordes be wyse / After the do nowwe I wyll* (lines 1070–1072). The translator seems to have translated *be wyse* as *bewisen* (the Dutch verb for 'prove'); he may have come up with 'virtuous' himself: *Als die rechter hoorde dat zijn woorden duechdelick waren seyde hy Blasius uwe antwoorden bewisen met goeden reden dat ic na uwen wil sal doen* (D1r).

20 Dirk Coigneau (2001: 207) has indicated that the repertory of the *rederijers*' theatre plays were kept locked up, and text rolls were recollected afterwards.

have been printed by Van Doesborch first, the occurrence of a dramatic insertion makes the interference of a *rederijker* in the translation of *Marlyn* plausible.

The dramatic insertion immediately catches the eye in the otherwise quite faithful translation. The following passage, consisting of only thirteen lines in the English text, corresponds to a verse insertion that makes up three and a half pages in Cock's edition (words in italics have no equivalent in the Dutch edition).

Kynge angys *veramente*
 Hadde doughter fayre and gente
That was a bethen sarasyn
 And Uortyger for loue of hym
 Toke her anone to his wyfe
And was accorded all his lyfe.
 Soone he wedded her there
And mended theyr blode bothe in fere
So that the cure of Englonde
Was loste in the fendes honde.
 He helde no better goddes lawe
 Than dooth an hounde *and his felawe*
 Thus they lyued many a yere. (lines 458-470)

The dialogic elaboration reveals some of the character's emotions and personal motivations. In the English text, the only thing that is said about the marriage is that king Vortiger takes Angys' daughter as his spouse for the latter's own sake. The Dutch translation recounts the considerations leading to the marriage, starting with Vortiger who is told about the beauty of Angys' daughter. Vortiger then evolves from a treacherous ruler to a noble king that even has the capacity to fall in love: *Ende vortigher wert doen gheseyt hoe die coninc angis een dochter had ende van haer schoonheyt was hem woonder gheseyt so dat hi op haer verliefde* ('And Vortigher was then told that king Angis had a daughter; and he was also told about her beauty, so that he fell in love with her', B3a). A messenger is sent to settle the marriage. Angys is reluctant at first, recalling that Vortiger has slain many of his vassals and knights. The English narrator judges that *the cure of Englonde / Was loste in the fendes honde*, and the Dutch Angys notes that Vortiger *scheen bat een duuel dan een man* ('appeared to him to be a devil rather than a man', B3v). But then the tone gradually shifts. The Dutch Angys quickly becomes resigned to the loss of his vassals, remarks that his heart has softened and tells the messenger that he will discuss the proposal with his daughter, giving her a say in the matter.

Hi scheen bat een duuel dan een man
 Hoe soude ick hem mijn dochter ghegheuen
 Die mijn vrienden heeft ghenomen dleuen.
 Maer tis gheschiet bi appollijn
 In feyten van wapenen / dus salt zijn
 Ende mijn herte is eens deels te sochtere
 Ende ick sal spreken met mijnder dochtere (B3v)²¹

21 All translations from the Dutch editions are my own; all quotations from *Merlijn* are from Kronenberg 1929.

(‘He appeared to be a devil rather than a man, how could I give my daughter to him, who took the life of my friends? But it is done, by Apollo, by feat of arms, and so will it be. And my heart has somewhat softened, and I will talk to my daughter’)

Angys’ daughter obediently agrees to marry Vortiger, since it pleases her father. In the English text, she remains nameless, whereas in Arthurian tradition she is known as ‘Rowena’ from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* onwards. The Dutch text calls her Sarasine, most likely as the result of a misreading of the noun *hethen* in *That was a hethen sarasyn* (line 460), which could have easily been considered the perfect tense of the Dutch verb *beten*: ‘to name’. The English passage ends with the remark that Vortiger did not obey Christian law any better than a dog and his fellow would do. In the Dutch text it is said that Vortiger may not have lived by the commandments, but that he lived better than a dog. We cannot be certain if this is another misreading or a way to tone down the wickedness of his character.

2.2 *The paratext*

Wynkyn de Worde’s *Marlyn* edition of 1510 is in quarto, runs to 44 leaves and has an irregular quire structure: A8 B4 C8 D4 E8 F4 G8. The lower margins of the first four leaves of each quire preserve, apart from the quire numbering, the designation ‘Marlyn’.²² The only illustration used in the edition is found on the title page. It depicts a bearded old man (referred to in the banderole as *Marlyn*) who, judging by his raised index finger, appears to speak to the two crowned brothers Uther and Pendragon, who are also labelled in the scroll.

Wynkyn de Worde frequently used woodcuts to adorn his texts: half of his editions, numbering close to one thousand, contain some sort of decoration (Driver 1996: 400).²³ He and Richard Pynson ‘used banderoles on their title pages as labels, often surrounded by metal ornaments of various kinds’ (Driver 2014: 106). Indeed we also find fleurons surrounding the opening woodcut, which were used to ‘decorate the page and appeal to potential buyers’ (Driver 2014: 110). The fact that the fleurons are cut off and the woodblock featuring *Marlyn* seems to overlap the other woodblock indicates that De Worde used a composite picture. He seems to have combined this method with the technique of factotum printing: ‘inserting metal type into a space left in a woodblock’, enabling him to add text to the banderoles (Driver 1996: 373). The result gives us the impression of a patchwork, and given that it is the only woodcut, the edition appears to be somewhat cheap looking. The two quires of the Dutch *Merlijn* alone preserve four illustrations, although they were not cut for the edition either, as has been described in detail by Pesch (1985). Yet Symon Cock – or more probably Jan van Doesborch – bothered to enliven the leaves by woodcuts, probably because they give a welcome relief from the dense prose text. In the Dutch *Helias* the woodcuts are on an equal footing with

²² We do not find this singularity in the 1499 edition, but it is attested in, for instance, De Worde’s 1517 edition of *Frederyke of Jennen*.

²³ For De Worde’s metrical romances containing woodcuts, see: Sánchez-Martí (2001, especially 101, n. 43, where *Marlyn* is mentioned).

Ill. 1 Title page of *Marlyn* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1510), New York: The Morgan Library & Museum, PML 21136, fol. A1r.



the dramatic insertions and the chapter headings that will be discussed further on: they provided printers with a pool of possibilities to adorn and structure the text.

As for the rest of the lay-out of *Marlyn*, the first letter of each line is printed in capital; in the 1499 print there is even a section mark at the beginning of every verse line. Besides the opening initial, initials of two lines high can be found in ten places; the first five of which are preceded by a blank line.²⁴ The initials are found whenever there is a narrative break in time (*Mery tyme it is in apryll*, line 224; *Mery tyme it is in may*, line 2045), space (*It befell in Denmarke*, line 2647; *A ryche man there was in Englonde*, line 719) or character (*Nowe late these clarkes bene*, line 630; *Now late we his moder be*, line 1421). These breaks involve narrator's comments and a direct address of the audience, often accompanied by the adverbs *now* and *how* (or a variant: 'in what manner').²⁵ A first glance at *Merlijn* tells us

²⁴ One of these initials is also found in the fragment of the 1499 edition, but is not preceded by a blank line there.

²⁵ *Mery tyme it is in apryll ... So in that tyme as ye may here* (A4v, line 224 and 230); *Nowe late these clarkes bene / And his messengers all by dene / That wente to seke the chylde so yonge / And ye shall here a wonder thyng* (B3r, lines 630- 633); *For I shall tell you how it was / ye may here a wonder case* (B4v, lines 716-717); *And brought her in shame & sorowe I fere / And I shall you tell in what manere* (C3r, lines 897-898); *Now herken all to this stryfe / How Marlyn saued his moders lyfe*

that the structuring of the Dutch translation is much more elaborate, despite the fact that the continuous prose causes the type page to look somewhat dense. The edition contains chapter headings, preceded by section marks. The two surviving quires furthermore have three woodcuts that illustrate the tenor of the accompanying chapter heading. Finally, there is the previously discussed dramatic insertion that has speech headings as visual markers.

What interests us here, is whether the translator was guided by his source in structuring the Dutch edition. Four out of the ten initials in *Marlyn* have counterparts in the surviving Dutch fragments. In two cases, the initials correspond to chapter headings in the Dutch translation, the first of which follows the marriage of Vortiger and king Angys's daughter. The English text concludes *Thus they lyued many a yere* (line 470), after which the time is bridged by the narrator's comment *So on a tyme syr Uortyger / Bythought him on ye chyldren two / That out of englonde were fled tho* (*Marlyn*, 8Av, lines 471-473) marked by an initial of two lines high. The Dutch *Merlijn* captures the events in a chapter heading: § Hoe Vortigher dede maken een sterck casteel opt pleyen van Salsburch ('How Vortigher had a strong castle built on the square of Salisbury', B4v). The subsequent running text adds both introductory and summarizing material: *Als alle tweedracht ghedaen was ende dlant in goeden peyse stont* ('When all strife was over, and the country was at peace', B4v), before continuing the translation: *so wert coninck Vortigher denckende op die .ij. hinder [sic] die noch waren buten lants* ('then Vortiger started thinking of the two children that were still abroad', B4v). The addition in the Dutch text follows the dramatic insertion on the marriage between Vortiger and king Angys's daughter, and probably intends to recapture the preceding events. The fact that this addition relates to the 'discord' of several folios back – and the text thus simply continues where it was interrupted – adds to the isolated character of the dramatic interpolation.

The other passage starts with a switch of character, shifting the focus from Marlyn's mother to the messengers that were sent to find Marlyn.

Now late we his moder be
And to our tale tourne we
And tell we of the messengers
That went fro syr Uortygeres
For to seke Marlyn the bolde
For to haue his blode as I of tolde. (lines 1421-1426)

§ Hoe merlijn dat kint gheuonden wert.
om weder te comen tot onser materien so sullen wij swighen vander moeder ende scriuen vanden boden dye wt ghesonden waren vanden coninc om te soecken merlijn om te hebben zijn bloet. (D3v)

('How the child Merlijn was found. In order to return to our matter, we will let the mother be and write about the messengers that were sent by the king to find Merlijn to have his blood')

(D1r, lines 1283-1284); *Now late we his moder be / And to our tale tourne we* (D3v, lines 1421-1422); *I shall tell you in what manere / Herken nowe and ye may here* (F1r, lines 2043-2044) and an almost identical one: *I wyll you tell in what manere / Herken it now and ye shall here* (G6v, lines 2645-2646).

The translation adds the concise heading 'How the child Merlijn was found.' The subsequent narrator's comment in the Dutch text reproduces the tenor of the corresponding English lines. Interestingly however, the English *tale* is replaced by *materien* ('subject matter'), and the comment *tell we of the messengers* is replaced by *so sullen wij [...scriuen vanden boden* ('so shall we write of the messengers'). Whereas no conclusions whatsoever can be drawn from the verb 'to tell' with regard to the reception of the English text, the verb 'to write' in the Dutch text seems aimed at readers rather than at listeners: it would, after all, sound a bit alienating in a recital.

In the two remaining passages, the initial in *Marlyn* has no equivalent (para)textual marker in the translation. The second case can easily be explained. The appeal *Now herken all to this stryfe / How Marlyn saued his moders life* (D1r, lines 1283-1286) marked with capital 'n', is centered in a passage dealing with Marlyn's miraculous rescue of his mother. A similar announcement can be found in the corresponding Dutch text, but at the beginning of the corresponding section, where it is accompanied by a woodcut: § Hoe merlijns moeder voor *tgherechte quam daer dat ionghe kint haer sone haar verantwoorde* ('How Merlijn's mother was brought to justice, where the young child, her son, defended her', D2r). The structuring simply seems to have shifted.

The other initial without Dutch equivalent (*All the werkemen wente tho / Fyue thousande and well mo, / The[y] hewe wood and carued stone*, B1r, lines 514-516) requires another explanation. In the Dutch parallel there is no visual marking; this would simply make the page poorly organized, since the inserted verse passage on the marriage of Vortiger has ended some lines earlier. There is, in other words, no visual necessity in the Dutch edition to enliven the text with the help of a chapter heading. There is also no need with respect to the content. The initial in the English text separates the lines where Vortiger commissions the building of a castle from the lines where the workmen actually start to build it. Yet in the English text there is an explanation for the occurrence of the initial. The lines preceding *All the werkemen wente tho* end as follows:

That castell ye shall make mery
 Upon the playne of salysbury
 And there y shall it founde
 Moche large and wyde on grounde
 And do it as I you tell
 That it be made trusty and well
 And ye shall haue for your hyer
 As moche as ye wyll desyre.
 For the Joye that god is in
 Fyll the cuppe and lete vs begyn. (lines 504-513)

The lines 512-513 contain the drinking request *For the Joye that god is in / Fyll the cuppe and lete vs begyn* for which it is unclear if Vortiger or the narrator (or both) can be held accountable. The request, which appears to be extremely liberally translated as *maer sonder langher verbeyden wil ict beghinnen om dat te fonderen* (B4v), marks either a 'pause' in the narration or – in case if it is a narrator's intervention – a paratext. In both cases a visual demarcation would not be

unusual. Nonetheless it rather seems to be a narrator's comment, for the simple reason that some thousand lines further down a similar drinking request is found (lines 1413-1414). This interruption, which was not translated, marks the end of the passage in which Marlyn saves his mother from the judge who wants to condemn her to death:

And all quyte lete them go fre
 Byfore the folke of that coundre
 And sayd he wolde neuer after than
 Juge to dethe no woman.
 Now let we be all this stryfe
 Thus saued Marlyn his moders lyfe.
 For saynt Thomas of caunterbury
 Gyue vs drynke and make vs mery! (lines 1407-1414)

The first drinking request is also found in the fragmentary 1499 edition, but both requests seem to be completely absent in the manuscript tradition.²⁶ If only because of this, the often-repeated premise that drinking requests in general are relics of an older, oral tradition, is unlikely. On the contrary, it is remarkable that such requests precisely show up in the most recent – sometimes even exclusively in the printed – witnesses of secular narrative texts, as I have demonstrated in an article on a collection of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Middle Dutch, Middle Low German and Middle High German drinking requests (De Bruijn 2012). In my view, the insertion of such narrator's interruptions was a literary convention in the late Middle Ages, irrespective of the actual reception anticipated. It is accordingly interesting that performative clues are found in both *Marlyn* and *Merlijn*, albeit that they manifest themselves in completely different ways (drinking requests vs. dramatic insertions). Both texts nonetheless offered the possibility to interrupt the story and play with conventional features of performativity.

3 The Frere and the Boye and Jacke

In 1528 Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten printed *Vanden Jongen geheeten Jacke: die sijns Vaders beesten wachte int velt, ende vanden brueder dye daer quam om Jacke te castien*. It recounts the burlesque adventure of the young Jacke, who is mistreated and malnourished by his evil stepmother. When Jacke gives away his humble meal to an old man, he is granted three wishes. The boy asks only for a

²⁶ The drinking request is found neither in the Auchinleck manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1) of c. 1330, nor in London, Lincoln's Inn Library, MS 150 from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The request is also absent in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 236 from the late fifteenth century (the text that would correspond to the place where Wynkyn's print has the second request has not been preserved). Each of the other manuscripts in which *Of Arthour and of Merlin* was transmitted, can be dated after Wynkyn's printed edition. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 124 is a transcription of Auchinleck of c. 1800. Of London, British Library, MS Harley 6223 of c. 1560 only some lines of the beginning of the text were transmitted, making a comparison with the passages that contain both requests impossible. Finally, the requests are not found in the 'Percy Folio', London, British Library, MS Additional 27879, from the middle of the seventeenth century.

bow (which appears to never miss the target) and a pipe (that turns out to have the ability to make people dance uncontrollably). When the old man learns about the stepmother, he makes sure that, thirdly, she passes wind every time she scolds him or gives him a crushing look. When the stepmother is humiliated in this way, she sends a monk to punish Jacke. The boy, however, makes the monk dance among the thorns. Both the stepmother and the monk then summon him to court, where he demonstrates the pipe's ability by making the whole town dance. He does not stop until the judge and the people assure him that he will be released.

Although Van Hoochstraten's *Jacke* is the oldest Dutch edition we know of, some missing rhyming lines as well as words that have been left out indicate that it was probably not the first (Boekenooogen 1905: 62-63). The text bears strong resemblances to a popular English story known as the *Fryer and the boy* or *Jack and his stepdame*, which was transmitted both in manuscripts and printed texts.²⁷ It is unlikely that a manuscript was the source of the translation. Boekenooogen (1905: 71) pointed out that some of the Dutch phrases have almost verbatim equivalents in the English printed edition, whereas the written tradition is different.²⁸ More importantly, a line by line comparison shows that there are no examples where *Jacke* agrees with the English manuscripts rather than with the printed editions. Boekenooogen (1905: 71) therefore seems to be right in assuming that *Jacke* is a translation of the English chapbook *A mery geste of the frere and the boye*, the oldest edition of which was published by Wynkyn de Worde between 1510 and 1513 (STC 14522). It is uncertain if De Worde's edition was the basis for Van Hoochstraten's *Jacke*. Boekenooogen (1905: 72) suggests the existence of an older English edition that could have been the model of the hypothetical first Dutch translation. Judging by the similarities between the oldest known edition by De Worde (c. 1510-1513) and the more recent English editions, we may suspect the printed tradition to have been quite consistent. And the differences we do find indicate that De Worde's edition indeed comes closest to the Dutch *Jacke*.²⁹ In what

27 For an overview of the English tradition, including a list of manuscripts and printed editions, see the *Introduction to Jack and His Stepdame* in: Furrow 2013 (accessed February 24, 2016). This edition is based on manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.86 (MS Bodley 11951).

28 For instance, the line where the Dutch Jacke happily *seyde heydo* (*Jacke*, A2v) is a translation of the line where the English boy joyfully *sange hey howe* (*Frere*, A1v), using an expression found in a famous English song. None of the manuscripts contains the expression 'hey howe', according to Boekenooogen (1905: 71), who also points out that the late sixteenth-century edition of *Jacke* printed in Amsterdam by Hermen Jansz. Muller has *sanck*, just like in the English text, instead of *seyde*. Another example are the lines *Dies verblijt was die oude man / En Iacke trac wt sijn eten dan* ('The old man was glad thereof / and Jacke then took out his meal', A2v), which are more close to the lines of De Worde's printed edition *Therof the old man was gladde / The boye drewe forth suche as he had* (A2r) than to those in the manuscript: *The lytill boye gaffe hym suche as he had / And bad him ete and be glad*. (Furrow 2013: lines 73-74).

29 For example, the Dutch *stiefmoeder* (A3v) is closer to *stepmoders* in De Worde's edition (A3v) than to *Dames* in the later English editions (Hazlitt 1866: 68). Wynkyn de Worde's version has *laugh* in the lines *All that euer it may here / Shall not themselfe stere / But laugh on a rowe* (*Frere*, A3r). In the more recent editions the people *dans* on a row: *All that euer it may here / Shall not themselfe stere, / But dans on a rowe* (Hazlitt 1866: 66). The Dutch edition is clearly inspired by the English, but the phrase with *laugh* (*lachen*) is altered in such a way that the people cannot control themselves from laughing: *Ende al diet horen sullen hem verfiere / Ende van lachen hem niet connen bestieren* ('And all that will hear this will become raucous / and will not be able to control themselves from laughing', A3v).

follows, the Dutch *Jacke* will be compared to De Worde's edition, which we find – in accordance with chronology – to be (closest to) the original source.

3.1 From stanzas to verse lines

The differences between *The Frere and the Boye* and *Jacke* are a consequence of a difference in rhyme scheme rather than of deliberate changes to the content. Since both the source and its translation are rhymed throughout, the translator was facing a bigger challenge to remain close to his source than, for instance, the translator of *Merlijn*, which was turned from verse into prose. In the translation, some line-fillers disappear; others are introduced or freely translated to retain rhyme and metre. For instance, whereas the old man asks for something to eat in the *Frere* (*The olde man sayd I am an hongred sore / Hast thou ony mete in store*, A2r), in the translation he adds *Tsi van vleesch, kees, oft van broot* ('It can be either meat, cheese or bread', A2v).³⁰ The translator seems to rather paraphrase his source than translate it literally, although there are cases in which he is clearly inspired by the English lexicon, for instance: *The wyfe was afrayed of another cracke / That no worde more she spacke* (A8r) compared to *Maer si sorchde voor een ander crac / Dies si een woort niet meer en sprack* (B3v).

The changes in the translation do not lead to any new interpretation of the text. It does happen, however, that some passages are given relatively more weight. For example, whereas the English boy asks for food after keeping the cattle, the Dutch *Jacke* says he is almost dying from hunger.³¹ These creative elaborations generally result in a more negative image of the stepmother, who does not just stare, but stares with an 'angry face', who is not just ashamed, but also enraged, and who is not just a 'shrew', but 'cruel and vicious as the devil from hell'.³² The translator shows his creative side especially in passages that lend themselves to humorous, graphic descriptions, making them even more obscene or violent than in the original. When people laugh about the stepmother passing wind, he remarks that it was because of what came flying from her 'gate'; when the people dance uncontrollably on their hands, he adds that they have their ass in the air, and when the crowd sees the bedraggled monk, he notes that he looked like someone full of hop (beer).³³ In the Dutch text, the monk, in turn, promises to punish the boy in such

30 All quotations are from the edition by Boekenoogen (1905). In two more cases, the translator inserts enumerations with three elements: *Tsi van craien, musschen of vincken* ('It can either be crows, sparrows or finches', A3r) instead of *whan thou good thynke* (A2v), *In bosschen, in velden, ende in broecken* ('In woods, in fields and in swamps', A4v) without English equivalent, and *En ghinghen dansen, lopen en tieren* ('And started dancing, walking and raving', B2v) instead of *Began to daunce and lepe* (A6v).

31 See *Fader I haue kepte your nete / I praye you gyue me some mete* (A3v) and its translation *sey gheeft mi teten ic ben nalixc vermacht / Van hongher: ic hebbe die beesten ghewacht* ('say, give me something to eat, I am almost dying from hunger / I have kept your cattle', A3v).

32 *She stared hym in the face* (A3v) versus *Si sach op Iacke met fellen ghelate* ('she stared at Jacke with an angry face', A4r); *He dooth me moche shame* (A4r) versus *Hi doet mi veel scaemten hi maect mi gram* ('He embarrasses me, he makes me angry', A4v) and *I haue a stepdame at home / She is a shrewe to me* (A2v) versus *Ic heb een stiefmoeder vaet mijn vertellen / Fel en quaet als die duvel vander hellen* ('I have a stepmother – hear what I say – / cruel and vicious as the devil from hell', A3v).

33 *All they laughed and had good game* (A3v) versus *Soe dat si loughen al die daer waren / Om dat wt haer poorte sulc een quam ghevaren* ('So that everyone there laughed / because one of those came

a manner that he will not know if he stands on his feet or his head; and the step-mother asks him to beat him so that his loins will crack.³⁴

The translator seems to enjoy the verse-writing and the play with vulgar expressions. These liven up the text and stress the comic aspects of the already carnivalesque text. These strategies contrast sharply with the much more religious and moralizing prologue that is found in *Jacke*. Whereas the English text opens with a rather formulaic stanza of six lines, the Dutch prologue elaborates on earthly life and the hereafter as well as on the sacrificial death of Christ, in sixteen lines. Perhaps the prologue was added to compensate for (and thereby justify) the rest of the narrative.

3.2 *The paratext*

At first sight, *The Frere* and *Jacke* do not seem to differ much with respect to their lay-out. Both books consist of eight leaves (*Jacke*: A+B⁺, *Frere*: A⁸), they make a sober impression and they have the same woodcut at the beginning of the text. Yet the English edition is typeset as continuous text, whereas the Dutch edition incorporates paratextual elements like indentations, section marks and speech headings (both centered above the character's lines or at the end of this line, preceded by indentations). A curious feature of *Jacke* is that the characters' words are provided with speech headings without turning the narrative into a theatrical text: in many cases the lines following the speech headings still feature a narrator, preserving the narrative character. For example:

Doude man
God loon u sey *die oude man*
Ende scheyde vanden ionghen Iacke dan (A3v)

(‘The old man: “May God reward you,” the old man sayd. And then departed from the boy Jacke’)

Following Kalff (1903: 320), Boekenoogen (1905: 73) thinks that the explanation for this phenomenon could be that the text was used for a puppet play, since only one of the characters is referred to as the *actor*. We find the same interpretation with Pleij (2007: 173), who is eager to virtually stage several other early printed texts (*Jan van Beverley*, *Verloren sone* and *Mariken van Nieumeghen*) in the puppet theatre as well. However, Pleij (2007: 173) also points out that we frequently

flying from her gate’, A4r); *But yet ywys they daunced to / On handes and on fete* (A7r) versus *Die quamen ooc dansen sonder ducht / Op handen op voeten den eers inde lucht* (‘They also came dancing without fear / on hands, on feat, their ass in the air’, B3r) and *They wende he had ben wode* (A5v) versus *En quam ghelopen als een die dul was / Oft als een die van hoppen vul was* (‘He came walking like a fool, or someone full of hop’, B1v).

34 *I shall hym teche yf I may* (A4r) versus *Ic sal hem eer den dach van morgen / Ten avont sal comen nae mijn vermeten / So castien dat hi naw en sal weten / Op sijn voeten ofte hoot te staen* (‘Before tomorrow evening, I plan to punish him in such a manner that he will not know if he stands on his feet or his head’, A4v); *I trowe the boye be some wytche* (A4r) versus *Mi dunct dat hi can toveren / Daer omme al is hi buyten onder die loveren / Met een eycken stoc wilt hem dan raken / Dat hem die lenden moghen craecken* (‘It seems to me that he can do magic / therefore, when he is out in the green / hit him with an oak stick / so that his loins will crack’, A4v).

encounter this *actor* in late-fifteenth-century literature of the *rederijkers*. Even though the phenomenon seems to occur in sixteenth-century rather than in fifteenth-century texts (De Bruijn 2017), this is indeed the pivot point. As we have seen in the case of *Merlijn*, there is no immediate need to think of an actual staging whatsoever: the performance may just have been realized in the mind of the reader. There is just one contradiction: we do not find any other contemporary narratives containing speech headings that are followed by narrator's text. The other unique aspect to *Jacke* is that the running text surrounding its dramatic insertions is in verse. In other romances containing dramatic insertions, the characters' lines, equally redundant, tend to be announced in the preceding prose text. Yet this situation differs from that in *Jacke*, where the narrator's voice manifests itself in the lines of the character.

This phenomenon seems to be unique in the corpus of printed narratives, but we find something similar in a manuscript text. The famous Gruuthuse-manuscript, written in Bruges around 1400, contains several allegories, the second of which features a conversation between a first person-narrator and a hermit. The names of the characters are written above their lines, but the alternations between speeches are embedded in the narrative by formulas like *seide hi*. Joris Reynaert (2010: 155) points out that the Gruuthuse allegory additionally makes use of the mnemonic technique of 'rijmbreking' that we often encounter in late Middle Dutch theatre, where the first line of an actor rhymes with the last line of the previous actor. There are twenty occasions where another character takes over in the allegory. Except for one explicable case, we find this technique used with all character switches. The same applies to the part without speech headings, where the technique is used in 105 of the 111 switches (the remaining six can also be explained). Bearing in mind that the technique is typical of theatre texts, Reynaert (2010: 156, n. 9) considers the allegory as a transitional form between epic and drama, both with respect to genre and chronology. With regard to *Jacke*, it appears that only four of the nineteen character changes that are indicated by speech headings, make use of this technique, and only five of the sixteen remaining character switches.³⁵ This is another reason for not seeking an explanation in the context of a performance.

Another singularity of *Jacke* is that the speech headings that occur frequently at the beginning of the text become less prominent further on and even disappear in the second half. Boekennoogen (1905: 73) attributes the absence of the headings to the inaccuracy of the printer, but this is unlikely for several reasons. First, later printers have preserved the speech headings without supplementing or eliminating them.³⁶ Second, some changes have been made in the late sixteenth-century adaptation of the text, including the replacement of the heading *Die brueder* by *Die cluyssenaer*.³⁷ Third, the sixteenth-century edition has a continuation that makes the

35 There are 31 character switches whose technique of 'rijmbreking' is not easy to assess, since the switches are preceded or followed by narrator's comments.

36 Boekennoogen (1905: 74) also ascribes this to casualness, which is unlikely, since in eighteenth-century editions the headings are placed in roman type, while the rest of the texts is printed in gothic type.

37 The 1528 edition and its reprint by Hermen Jansz. Muller (Amsterdam, end of the sixteenth century) are both edited by Boekennoogen (1905). The headings can be found on p. 9 (*Die brueder*) and on p. 27 (*Die cluyssenaer*) respectively.

story almost twice as long. It is unlikely that the adaptor would take the trouble to amplify the texts, but leave the speech headings untouched. Finally, two speech headings are found in the late sixteenth-century continuation.³⁸ Although the text does not show any system in the use of speech headings, there can hardly be any doubt *that* they served a purpose. The materiality of the book may be revealing in this respect. It turns out that the speech headings only occur in the first quire, not in the second. An explanation relating to a performance of any kind is therefore unlikely. On the contrary, the fact that the headings are evidently connected to a material aspect (the end of the quire), indicates that it must have been the compositor who decided to only apply them in the first quire, a boundary that seems to have been easily manageable. Thus, rather than being remnants of some kind of real or virtual stage directions, they likely provided simply a visual support to structure the text. They appear to be a reading aid, which naturally could have been inspired by the dramatic (prose) texts from the beginning of the sixteenth century.

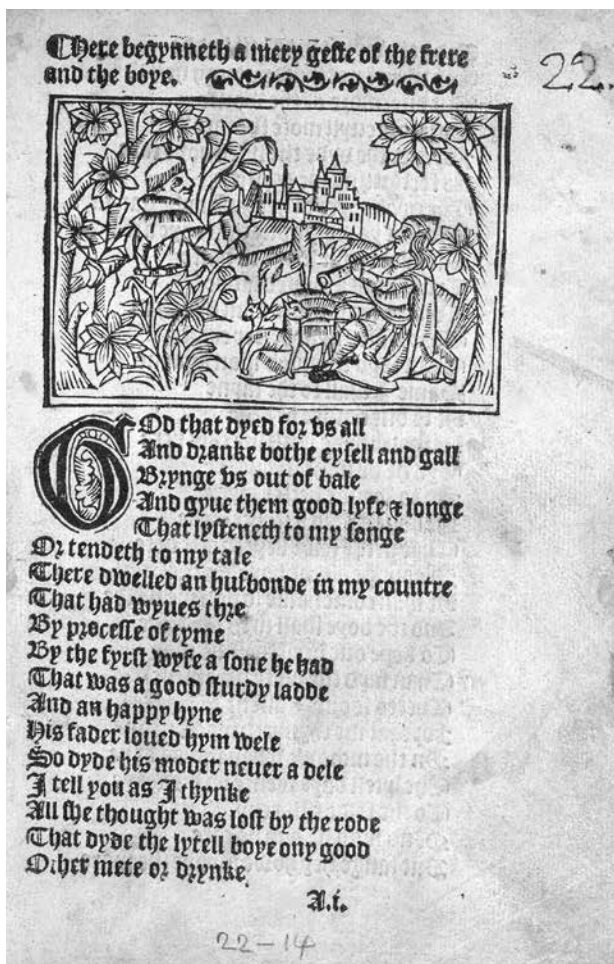
A final aspect of both the *Frere* and *Jacke* that is of interest here is the beginning of the text. The only woodcut in Van Hoochstraten's edition is clearly copied from the example of the unique woodcut in Wynkyn's edition. In the English edition, this woodcut is placed on fol. A 1r between the incipit-like title *Here begynneth a mery geste of the frere and the boye* and the beginning of the text. The Dutch edition has a separate title page with a xylographic title and subtitle, supplying details about Jacke tending his father's cattle and introducing the monk that was sent to punish him: *Vanden Jongen geheeten Jacke: die sijns Vaders beesten wachte int velt ende vanden brueder dye daer quam om Jacke te castien*.

The design of the title pages, related to the information on the history of transmission of the *Frere* and *Jacke*, may help us understand the reception. Both De Worde's edition of the *Frere* and Van Hoochstraten's *Jacke* have been transmitted in just one copy.³⁹ Naturally, we should always be cautious about making deductions about transmission history from the evidence of unique copies. On the other hand, if this history reflects a current use of both editions, it may offer valuable insight into their reception. In relation to Wynkyn de Worde's edition of *The Frere and the boy*, Melissa Furrow notes that its only surviving exemplar was part of a collection of 26 chapbooks that were, except for one edition by Pynson, all printed by De Worde.⁴⁰ The more recent editions by Edward Alde

³⁸ The first, the *Stiefmoeder*, appears in the middle of the lines of the stepmother, shortly before introducing a new character in the second heading: *Die bailiou* (the bailiff). Although the headings do help to understand who is speaking, there are various other places where this could have been clarified as well.

³⁹ De Worde's *Frere* is preserved in Cambridge University Library under shelf mark Sel.5.21. The Dutch *Jacke* is kept as article II 54.939 A (RP) in the Royal Library in Brussels.

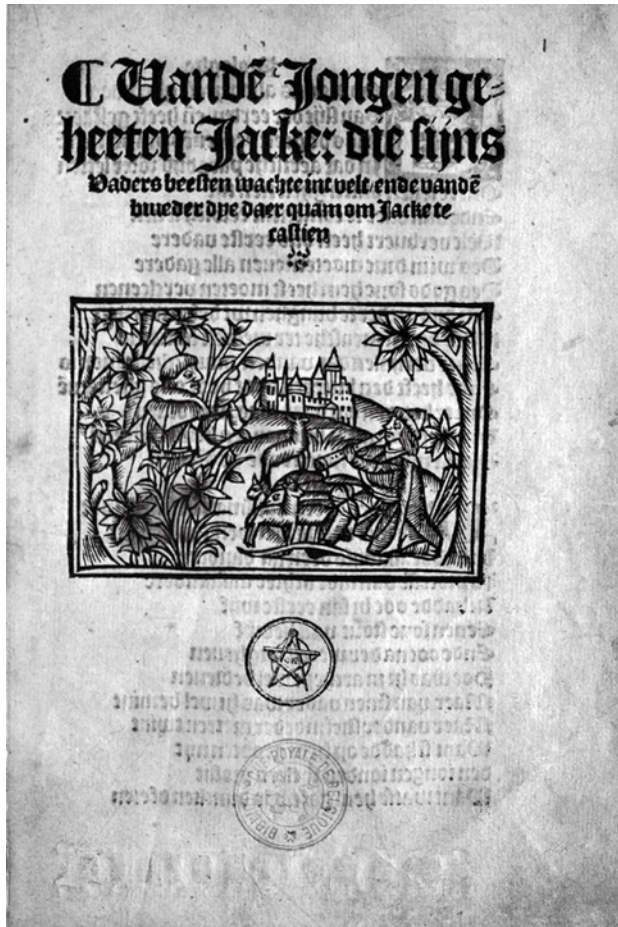
⁴⁰ See the *Introduction* to *Jack and His Stepdame* in Furrow 2013. Since the titles of the printed books could not be found in the catalogue of the Cambridge University Library, the curator of the Rare Books department provided me with a list of the 26 works, for which I am thankful: 1. *Nycho-demus gospell*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, 23 Mar. 1509 (STC 18566); 2. Gringore, Pierre. *The castell of laboure*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1506 (STC 12381); 3. Lichfield, William. *The remors of consyence*. [London: Wynkyn de Worde, ca. 1510] (STC 20881.3); 4. *Abbaye of the Holy Ghost*. Westminster: Wynken de Worde, [ca. 1497] (STC 13609); 5. *The lamentacyon of our lady*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1509-1510?] (STC 17537); 6. Betson, Thomas. *Treatise to dispose men to be virtuously occupied*. [Westminster]: Wynkyn de Worde, [ca. 1500] (STC 1978); 7. *Ars moryendi*. London: Wynkyn de



Ill. 2 Title page *The Frere and the Boye* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, c. 1510), Cambridge University Library, Sel.5.21, fol. A1r.

Worde, 1506 (STC 788); 8. *The meditations of Saint Bernard*. Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, 9 Mar. 1496 [i.e. 1498-99] (STC 1917); 9. Skelton, John. *Bowge of court*. Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, [ca. 1510] (STC 22597.5); 10. *The parlyament of devylles*. [London]: Wynkyn de Worde, 1509 (STC 19305); 11. *Treatyse agaynst pestelence and of [th]e infirmits*. [London]: Wynkyn de Worde, [1509?] (STC 4592); 12. Lydgate, John. *Stans puer ad mensam*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1510?] (STC 17030.5); 13. Henley, Walter de. *Boke of husbandry* [London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1508?] (STC 25007); 14. *The lyf of the moste myschevoust Robert the devyll*. [London]: Wynkyn de Worde, [1500?] (STC 21070); 15. *Thystorye of Jacob and his twelve sones*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1510?] (STC 14323.3); 16. Lydgate, John. *The proverbes of Lydgate*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1510] (STC 17026); 17. *The dystruccyon of Jherusalem by Vaspazyan and Tytus*. London: Richarde Pynson, [1513?] (STC 14517); 18. *Lytell geste of Robyn Hode*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1506] (STC 13689); 19. *A lytyll treatyse named The assemble of goddes*. [Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, ca. 1499-1500] (STC 17006); 20. *The boke of kervynge*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1508 (STC 3289); 21. *The demaundes joyous*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1511 (STC 6573); 22. *A mery geste of the frere and the boye*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [between 1510 and 1513] (STC 14522); 23. *A lytell geste how the plowman learned his pater noster*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1510] (STC 20034); 24. Lydgate, John. *The chorle and the byrde*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1510?] (STC 17012); 25. Lydgate, John. *A lytell treatyse of the horse, the sheep, and the ghooes*. [Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, ca. 1494] (STC 17020); 26. *A lytell treatyse called the governall of helthe*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1506?] (STC 12139).

Ill. 3 Title page Jacke
(Brussels: Michiel Hillen
van Hoochstraten, 1528),
Brussels: Royal Library,
II 54.939 A, fol. A1r.



from c. 1584-1589 and from c. 1617 also belonged to a collection of twenty-six and twelve works respectively.⁴¹ It is likely that De Worde's *Frere* was bound with the twenty-five other texts already in the sixteenth century, since they were all printed by De Worde around the first decade of this century.⁴² The binding together of early printed books can be seen as a continuation of the common practice to collect manuscripts in one binding, its financial advantage obviously being to save expenses for labor and materials (Needham 1986: 17).⁴³

And just like manuscript anthologies, printed collections have organizing principles: 'Books bound together, called *Sammelbände*, are (usually) thematically

⁴¹ Edward Alde's edition of c. 1584-1589 is preserved in the Bodleian Library, S.Seld.d.45. The shelf mark of his c. 1617 edition is Bodleian Library, Arch.A.F.83.

⁴² This is also the view of the curator of the Rare Books department. It is certain that the printed texts were already bound in one volume in 1715, when it came into possession of Cambridge University Library. In the nineteenth century, the books were separated and – unfortunately – independently catalogued.

⁴³ For (the reconstruction of) *Sammelbände* in England see Gillespie 2004.

related texts' that may 'represent late-medieval and early modern ideas about anthologies' (Driver 2014: 112). It is not easy to find a thematic common denominator in the collection of texts of which the *Frere* was the twenty-second item. Yet the longer, more serious works appear to be at the beginning of the volume, whereas the short texts, some of which have a more secular tenor, are at the end. Some of them also seem to cluster thematically, or to make up dyads, as was probably the case with the satirical *How the plowman lerned his pater noster* that follows the burlesque tale of the *Frere*. There are four texts in the volume that do not have a separate title page and the *Frere* is one of them. This leads one to suspect that the text was conceived to be part of a collection of texts. In any event, the incipit-like presentation of the text with *Here begynneth a mery geste of the frere and the boye* is much closer to the way works were introduced in medieval manuscript anthologies than the more evolved title page of *Jacke*.

The transmission history of *Jacke* is less clear. The earliest record of the edition is from an auction catalogue of the Utrecht art collector Christiaan Kramm (1875: 113). *Jacke* is mentioned as the first of a collection that includes three other texts: the well-known Charlemagne romance *Karel ende Elegast* ([Antwerp: Adriaen van Berghen, Jan van Doesborch or J. Berntsz., c. 1530]), the miracle *Van Arent Bosman* (Antwerp: Henrick Eckert van Homberch, 1520) and the satirical *Broeder Russche* (Antwerp: Adriaen van Berghen, c. 1520).⁴⁴ The fact that the texts are enumerated, separated by a hyphen, and only referred to at the very end of the record as '1 vol. 4to', suggest that they had one binding until at least 1875.⁴⁵ It is unclear whether this was already the case in the sixteenth century, but this certainly is probable since they all stem from the third quarter of that century. The books have in common that they are all relatively 'short' texts that might have served not only religious-moralizing, but also entertaining purposes. *Karel ende Elegast* and *Van Arent Bosman* were popular in the incunabula period, *Jacke* and *Broeder Russche* were translated from neighbouring languages in the early sixteenth century. All texts have miraculous elements, two of them feature the devil (*Van Arent Bosman* and *Broeder Russche*), and two mock the clergy (*Jacke* and *Broeder Russche*). With respect to *Jacke*'s reception it may be significant that the edition, just like *Karel ende Elegast* and *Van Arent Bosman*, has a separate title page, which gives it a more independent status than its English source.

4 In conclusion

In the early sixteenth century England was an important customer for the import of continental texts, including Dutch narratives, whereas there is only little surviving evidence of narratives translated from English into Dutch. This phenomenon might have been as much as a coincidence as the choice of the texts. To look

⁴⁴ Like *Jacke*, these texts are still preserved in the Royal Library in Brussels, under different shelf marks: *Van Arent Bosman* (INC A 1.568), *Broeder Russche* (INC A 1.528) and *Karel ende Elegast* (1154.948 A).

⁴⁵ The four texts were purchased by the Royal Library in Brussels in 1889. At the time, they were already provided with separate bindings by Laurent Claessens [e-mail message to author by Karin Pairon of the Royal Library in Brussels, November 13, 2015].

for a common denominator between *Merlijn* and *Jacke* may seem far-fetched, but it might help us sharpen the understanding of the literary interests in England and the Low Countries in the early sixteenth century.

Both texts feature youthful protagonists who, with the help of magic, outsmart malicious adults: Jacke's evil stepmother who wants to have the boy assaulted and evil king Vortiger who wishes to have Merlijn killed. *Merlijn* specifically makes reference to a miraculous birth, while both texts have magical elements. It may therefore not come as surprise that research literature on *Marlyn* and *The Frere and the Boye* suggests that the narratives were intended for a youthful audience. Although it has repeatedly been shown that 'there was no clear dividing line in the Middle Ages between adult and children's literature', making the latter a somewhat anachronistic category, the arguments are strong enough in both cases to allow for an acceptable *communis opinio* (Cunningham 2006: 57). *The Frere and the boy* had a *Nachleben* as a children's novel from the late sixteenth to the nineteenth century (Hahn 2015: 213–214). And in the case of *Marlyn* there is in fact a fourteenth-century manuscript copy that has a prologue in which the benefit of children's books is expounded on to an adult audience (Clifton 2003: 14). There can hardly be any doubt that *Marlyn* and *The Frere and the boy* appealed to a youthful readership. And it is equally conceivable that the Dutch editor-translators had an audience in mind that included children.⁴⁶ Especially in the case of *Jacke* this could be an interesting thought. I suggested earlier that the speech headings that disappear in the course of the narrative create the impression of being a reading aid. These headings could of course have been especially helpful to a more inexperienced readership.⁴⁷

The English printed editions of *Marlyn* and *The Frere and the Boye* do not fundamentally differ from the manuscripts in which these texts were also transmitted. It has been indicated before that in sixteenth-century England verse romances were still highly appreciated, whereas only a small number of verse romances was put to print in the Low Countries (with a clear emphasis in the years before 1500) (Resoort 1998: 330). England seems to have been more conservative than the Low Countries with regard to new literary forms and possibilities. To a far greater extent than English texts, Dutch romances developed new conventions, the most obvious example being the interpolated verses. Considering their arbitrary use and re-use, inserted dramatic verse passages and speech headings seem to behave like woodcuts, both visually and with respect to the content. They had the capacity to adorn the edition and highlight themes that were considered important or appealing. Moreover, the interpolations were able to emphasize the performative aspects of the narratives, possibly to counterbalance the rise of silent reading. In any event, the interpolations contribute to a more uniform presentation – and

⁴⁶ Another explanation for the interest in narratives like *Jacke* and *Merlijn*, suggested to me by one of the anonymous reviewers of this article, is the use of magic and the protagonist's tense relationship with authority, something we also find in other picaresque fiction like *Virgilius*, *Eulenspiegel*, *Marcolphus* and *Bruder Rausch* (of course, this is also something that can be connected to the youthfulness of the protagonists and possibly the readership). See for these and comparable picaresque narratives Franssen 2010, esp. 31–33.

⁴⁷ Whether or not this is the case with *Marlyn* as well cannot be determined. The *refreinen* may have appealed to an audience that valued the artistic creations of the *rederijkers*.

possibly a more uniform reception – of the Dutch narratives as compared to their English counterparts.

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