The *refrein* and the Chambers of Rhetoric in the early modern Low Countries

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Abstract

While the allegorical drama of the Dutch *rederijkers* has received increasing attention from English-speaking critics, much less attention has been paid to the *refreinen* that often accompanied the plays on festival occasions. This is despite the fact that the refrains were held in high esteem by the *rederijkers* themselves, and even regarded as the greatest culmination of their literary principles. To redress this oversight, we offer fresh translations of three of these texts, taken from one of the most noted of the *rhetorijckfeesten*. This is the first time that these poems have been translated into English.

Over the past twenty years or so, English-language scholarship has gained a new appreciation of the vibrant theatrical culture of the *rederijkerskamers*. These ‘chambers of rhetoric’ – lay fraternities comprised chiefly of middle-class citizens who styled themselves *rederijkers* or ‘rhetoricians’ – proliferated across the cities of the Low Countries in the later Middle Ages. The dramas they produced for civic and religious occasions, and for the contests known as *landjuwelen* in Brabant and *rhetorijckfeesten* in Holland and Flanders, have become increasingly familiar to critics working in English. A number of studies have outlined the history and structure of these organisations, from the pioneering work of Georg Kernodle in the 1940s, to a more recent essay-collection edited by Elsa Strietman and Peter Happé.¹ The chambers’ relationship to wider movements, such as Protestantism, humanism and the *devotio moderna*, has also been closely documented.² Perhaps most importantly, a number of good translations have enabled English readers to access the *rederijker* drama directly.³

Such efforts have succeeded in bringing about a new awareness of the *rederijkers* among English critics. This can be witnessed in the tendency among some commentators to see English urban drama in the context of its Dutch counterpart, conceiving the two as ‘part of a shared culture’.⁴ The same awareness is also evident in a recent edition of *Everyman*, which directly tackles the persistent view that the play is ‘thoroughly English in spirit’, emphasising its provenance in the Flemish chambers.⁵ In short, recent scholarship has done much to overturn the older view that ‘Holland...had nothing significant’ in terms of drama.⁶ In the place of this attitude, a fuller understanding of the fertile milieu of the *rederijkers* has emerged among anglophone critics.

However, while this activity is in every respect commendable, it has tended to concentrate fairly narrowly on one aspect of the *rederijkers*’ output. It has focused almost exclusively on the *spelen*, or stage-plays, produced by the chambers. This has the inevitable but unfortunate effect of marginalising other types of performance associated with the groups. One form of that has been especially overshadowed in English scholarship is the *refrein*, a variety of rhyming declamation which attained special prominence during the sixteenth century.⁷ Only a handful of *refreinen* have

been translated into English, and the form has received comparatively little attention from English-speaking critics.⁸ This is despite the fact that the refrain occupied a central place in the *rederijkers*' practices: the chambers often promoted it as a supreme demonstration of rhetorical elegance, and their festivals generally included at least one prize for 'reciting the best refrain'.⁹ Indeed, the refrain was so fundamental to the activities of the chambers that it often impinged on their drama. For instance, an appreciation of the form is necessary for a full understanding one of the landmark plays of the *rederijkers*, *Mary of Nieumeghen* (c.1515), in which the title-character recites a full-blown refrain during the course of her adventures. Other plays also incorporate refrains, whether hagiographic, such as the *Play of Saint Trudo* (c.1550), or allegorical, such as Loris Janz's *Morality Play Concerning Grain* (1565).¹⁰ It is the purpose of the present article to offer a brief introduction to the refrain and its conventions, and to provide a few examples in a fresh English translation.

The refrain itself seems to have developed out of the French *ballade*. Several of its chief characteristics are directly imported from the earlier form. Its most conspicuous debt is its fondness for complex rhyme-schemes. Like the *ballades*, refrains tended to use highly repetitive and densely interlaced schemes. Most refrains included only a handful of line-endings, and deployed them in intricate patterns of repetition. Another feature clearly drawn from the *ballade* is the refrain's use of a formal concluding stanza. As with the envoi of the French form, this was often shorter than the preceding stanzas, and would invariably be addressed to a 'prince'. For the *rederijkers* this *Prince-strofe* proved at least as versatile as it did for French poets. The *strofe* might be dedicated to an actual political leader, to a particularly notable *rederijker*, or even to the Virgin Mary: in Eduard de Dene's 'Decorated With Five Rose-Red Wounds' (1561), for instance, the final stanza takes the form of a petition to this 'princess deserving reverence'.¹¹ The prince-stanza could also refer to the chief administrator of a particular chamber, or in some cases its patron, who would often take the ceremonial title *prins* or *keiser*.¹² Finally, the refrain also inherited the *ballade*'s inclusion of a burden-line at the end of each stanza. These recurring phrases came to be known as *stockregels* or 'stock-lines'. As Timothy McGregor notes, the *rederijkers* generally used the *stock* to fix the sense of the stanza, rather than to open out the phrase itself to new meanings: the device was usually employed 'to provide a sense of closure...more like codas than real structural repeats'.¹³

Nevertheless, in spite of its French roots, by the end of the Middle Ages the refrain had developed into a poetic form in its own right. It systematically expanded and lengthened most features of the *ballade*. Firstly, in place of the *ballade*'s three stanzas, the refrain generally employed around four or five *strofen*. Poets were free to expand on this figure, however: the anonymous 'A False Tongue' (c.1524) contains eight *strofen*, while Jan Van den Dale's 'In Praise of the Host' (c.1520) runs to eleven.¹⁴ The *strofen* themselves were also extended. Most were at least twice the size of a *ballade* stanza, containing around fourteen or fifteen lines.¹⁵ Again, there were exceptions to this: the stanzas of 'It is forbidden by Christ' (1584), for instance, are twenty-one lines in length.¹⁶ The metre of the refrain signalled a further break with its French model. Rather than using the octosyllabics of Machaut, Deschamps or Villon, refrains favoured a longer line. As is stated in the invitation *caerte* issued before the Delft *feest* of 1581, refrains of 'traditional Holland metre' should have between 'ten and...fourteen syllables'.¹⁷ Finally, these additions gave the *rederijkers* scope to create more elaborate and sustained rhyme-schemes than those of the *ballade*. In fact, the

creation of complicated patterns of sound became ‘an ever more prevalent and deliberate stage’ in the composition of refrains during their development.¹⁸

Although these departures from the *ballade* may seem slight, for *rederijkers* they were clearly more significant than the similarities. The refrain and *ballade* came to be regarded as entirely separate forms. The refrain seems to have emerged as a distinct species of poetry in the first half of the fifteenth century. The earliest surviving examples are those of the Bruges *rederijker* Anthonis de Roovere (c.1430-82), whose *Rhetorical Works* contains twenty-eight texts specifically designated refrains, dating from the 1450s onwards.¹⁹ The conventions of the form seem to be fully developed by this point: as Johan Oosterman notes, sources such as the founding charter of the Ghent chamber *De Fontaine*, dating from 1448, show that the refrain was already a well-defined type of text at this stage.²⁰ Certainly by the sixteenth century the refrain and the *ballade* were regarded as wholly discrete. This is apparent from the rhetorical handbook *On the Art of Rhetoric*, compiled by Matthijs de Castelein in c.1548.²¹ While De Castelein, a prolific member of the Oudenaarde chamber *De Kersouwe* (‘The Daisy’), acknowledges formal similarities between the *ballade* and refrain, he conceives the two as independent frameworks. His list of poetic forms treats them as separate items, citing ‘rondels, refrains, *ballades*, lyrics and plays’ as the genres available to a *dichter*.²²

The refrain reached the peak of its popularity in the sixteenth century. Throughout this period it remained the dominant poetic form of the *rederijkers*: in Reinder Meijer’s phrase, it became the ‘favourite form’ of the chambers, regarded as the consummate expression of their literary principles.²³ One measure of its importance is the chambers’ refusal to modify the form. As Werner Waterschoot notes, even when the chambers came under the influence of the Pléiade in the 1530s and 1540s, they were reluctant to bring the refrain in line with the new aesthetics: ‘rhetoricians, who in their introductory speeches proclaimed the fame of Marot and Ronsard, continued to ask for refrains in traditional Holland metre’.²⁴ In fact, some *rederijkers* actively sought to defend the refrain against neoclassical innovation. For example, De Castelein compares the eighth eclogue of Virgil to ‘the refrain that repeats the *reghele*’ in a clear effort ‘to shore up the status’ of the refrain, legitimising its status by supplying it with an ancient pedigree.²⁵ Nonetheless, the refrain began to decline at the turn of the seventeenth century. As the chambers themselves waned in both membership and influence, the refrain was increasingly seen as old-fashioned and outmoded.²⁶ In G.A. Bredero’s *The Spanish Brabanter* (c.1617), for instance, the form is treated with particular scorn. Here the refrain comes to typify the ‘extravagance’ and ‘loquacity’ of the *rederijkers*’ idiom: ‘even their smallest utterance formed an entire refrain’.²⁷

Like much of the *rederijkers*’ poetry, refrains fell into three major categories. The first of these was the ‘refrain of wisdom’, variously known as the *refereyn int vroede* or *refereyn int wijs*. Most *rederijkers* understood ‘wisdom’ in fairly narrow terms, conceiving it as Christian moral knowledge: accordingly, such pieces were often overtly didactic in intent. The bulk of refrains were composed under this heading. *Refereynen int vroede* were in fact so pervasive that even when the chambers began their decline in the seventeenth century, the form continued to be a viable method of discussing religious issues.²⁸ The prevalence of this type is not surprising, given the largely devotional character of the chambers themselves. The groups seem to have developed out of lay brotherhoods organised under direct supervision of the clergy:

even when they became more independent, and more fully comprised of laymen, they did not lose this basic religious design.²⁹ This can be clearly witnessed in the chambers' iconography, especially their frequent allusions to the Holy Spirit. Several *kamers* took the name *De Heilige Geest*, including those at Bruges, Ypres and Oudenburg: others, such as the chamber at Rotterdam, depicted Pentecost in their insignia, accompanied by such mottoes as *Met minnem versaemt* ('Gathered with love'). As Nelleke Moser notes, the implication seems to be that the chambers own meetings served to impart divine insight to their members.³⁰ The refrain of wisdom was therefore part of a strong spiritual element in the chambers' outlook, reflecting their predominantly religious purpose.

The second classification of refrain was the *refereyn int amoureuze*, or 'refrain of love'. As might be expected, this form echoed several of the standard conceits of troubadour and *Minnesänger* poetry. In his monograph on the refrain, Antonin Van Elsander terms *refereynen int amoureuze* 'late heirs of the so-called courtly tradition in the medieval love-lyric', noting that many features of *fin amour* make their way into such pieces: for instance, they often present love as a 'duty' or a 'humiliation', to which the narrator 'meekly submits', forcing him to praise his mistress lavishly for 'the smallest proof of affection, a soft word, a token'.³¹ However, the *rederijkers* also modified the notions they inherited, blending them with a strong religious sensibility. Refrains of love were often given clear moral overtones. One such text is Jan van den Berghe's 'If I could speak to her, I would be appeased' (c.1539). This is studded with biblical allusions throughout, and ends on an emphatically pious note, as its prince-stanza makes a direct appeal to *God glorieus*.³² Often these devotional sentiments directly opposed the form's romantic aspects. Rather than merging spiritual and sensual love in the manner of other European lyric traditions, the refrains tended to place them in conflict.³³ For instance, the author of 'I carry love to the chambermaids of Venus' (c.1524) permits his narrator to abandon the goddess altogether at the end of the poem, and turn instead to the Christian God.³⁴

A third category of refrain was *int zotte*, 'of foolery'. These encompassed a broad variety of comic modes. Surviving examples range from the playful scatology of De Roovere's 'The place where they sow luck', to the harsh misogyny of 'God made women to talk, shout, and nag'.³⁵ Their potential for satire occasionally drew them into the religious controversies of the Reformation era.³⁶ In 1539 the chamber of *Sint Barbara* at Kortrijk produced a number of refrains which viciously attacked the Catholic church, while the refrains of Anna Bijns (1493-1575) satirised Luther and the Reformers, branding them 'the cause of all misery, social and moral'.³⁷ In general, however, refrains of foolery were more playful than polemic, drawing on the fruitful tradition of fool-literature in the Netherlands.³⁸ It seems likely that *refereynen int zotte* would in fact be recited by a fool. Most chambers appear to have had a resident clown, since the *landjuwelen* and *rhetorijckfeesten* routinely offered prizes to the 'best fool'.³⁹ Several of these refrains were also composed for an avowedly 'foolish' speaker, such as 'I will drink until morning comes', which is narrated by a self-professed 'drunkard, with a straw-stuffed head'.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the texts often deliberately situate themselves in the tradition of fooling. For instance, the example printed below contains mock-tributes to 'Carebus' and 'Tiribus': according to Wim Hüsken, these are conventional names for 'a type of fool who is better off than many serious-minded men', which can be traced back to Dirc Potter's farce *The Magnifying glass* (c.1412).⁴¹

It is important to stress that all three kinds of refrain were designed to be recited before an audience. Despite the fact that they often circulated in textual form, such as the anthologies printed by Jan Van Doesborch in c.1524 and Jasper Troyen in 1592, refrains were principally intended for performance.⁴² As Herman Pleij states, recitation was always the ‘final destination’ of the poems: ‘it was important for texts to be read or recited to show the clever interweaving of end rhymes and internal rhymes...refrains are the preeminent example of the art of declamation’.⁴³ Accordingly, they became a staple entertainment of the chambers’ gatherings.⁴⁴ They were not only read during special occasions, such as the election of a new prince, but also during the chambers’ regular meetings, which often featured a refrain competition between the members.⁴⁵

However, by far the most significant platform for the refrain was the *refereinfeest*. This was a contest between the chambers of a particular region which focused exclusively on the form. Like the better-known dramatic *landjuwelen* and *rhetorijckfeesten*, *refereinfeesten* required each competing chamber to submit and perform a stipulated number of refrains. Examples include the festivals hosted at Antwerp in 1509, Berchem in 1556, Delft in 1581, Rotterdam in 1598, Leiden in 1604, and Haarlem in 1613. These events closely resembled the *landjuwelen*. Like the *spelen* entered into such contests, the refrains were composed as responses to a set question or *vraag*, issued to the chambers before the meeting. For instance, in the Ghent *refereinfeest* of April 1539, the refrains of wisdom were required to answer the query ‘Which animal in world can overcome the greatest strength?’, while the refrains of foolishness replied to ‘Which people in the world show most stupidity?’⁴⁶ On these occasions, the *vraag* was often incorporated into the refrain itself as the *stockregel*. Prizes were awarded to the best refrain in each category. During the Rotterdam *feest* of 1561, the best refrain of wisdom was awarded three wine jars, the best refrain of love received six tin jugs, and the best refrain of foolery earned an amphora.⁴⁷ These trophies, evidently intended for use during the chambers’ own feasts, had symbolic rather than monetary value. At least this is the impression given by Richard Clough, an English visitor who witnessed the Antwerp *landjuweel* of 1561. Clough marvelled at the apparent meagreness of the prizes in comparison to the extravagance of the event itself: ‘thys was the strangest matter that ever I sawe...they shall wyn no more with all but a skalle [drinking bowl] of syllyver weying 6 ownsys’.⁴⁸ Refrains were also often performed during dramatic festivals. Sometimes a *refereinfeest* and *rhetorijckfeest* would be held as parallel but separate events. At Ghent in 1539 the two events were hosted in the same city a month apart. In other cases, refrains were simply recited amongst the plays, as at Brussels in 1562.⁴⁹ The presence of refrains at these festivals again underscores the importance of performance for these texts, their essentially dramatic nature.

How the refrains were performed is, however, something of an enigma. They do not appear to have been sung. According to Jan Bonda, the refrain’s rise in popularity coincided with a general decline in music among the chambers.⁵⁰ Moreover, the *rhetorijckfeesten* clearly distinguished refrains from songs, usually holding separate contests for each.⁵¹ There were also functional differences between the two forms. As Van Elslander points out, refrains were held to inspire ‘reasoned thought’ and good conduct, whereas songs could only ‘arouse, please, or stir’ the emotions.⁵² But despite these considerations, it is equally evident that the refrain was not completely distinct

from the song. On this basis Marijke Spies chooses to describe the refrain as ‘a semi-lyrical form’.⁵³ The formal aspects refrains drew from the *ballade*, such as the strong use of repetition and the presence of the *stockregel*, are at least reminiscent of song. Owing to this, it seems likely that refrains were delivered in a strongly accented, even rhythmic manner, perhaps as something like a chant.⁵⁴ It also appears that refrains were delivered by a single narrator. Evidence of this is provided by the miracle play *Mary of Nieuwmegehen*. When Mary performs a refrain for the patrons of a tavern, with the *stock* ‘artlessness makes art grow forlorn’, the recital clearly involves her alone, since no parts are allocated to other speakers.⁵⁵ It would seem that other refrains were staged in a similar fashion, as rhyming declamations, performed by a single orator. However, it is also possible that the audience recited the *stockregel* along with the performer. Since this would be based on the prescribed *vraag*, the stock would be partly known to the spectators, which might enable their participation.

Another important detail is the fact that refrains were generally performed within the *rethorijckerscamer* itself, the hall in which each chamber held its meetings. This sets the refrains apart from the other productions of the *rederijkers*, such as their plays and *tableaux vivants*. These types of performance were open and public in nature: as is clear from pictorial sources, they were usually performed on mounted scaffolds in market squares or other common spaces.⁵⁶ Accordingly, they were written to be accessible to a wide audience: as Gary Waite comments, ‘the plays were composed as services to their urban community, within which the rhetoricians lived and worked’.⁵⁷ In contrast, the refrains belonged to much more exclusive venues. The chamber halls were emphatically enclosed and private. In fact, each chamber possessed its own ceremonial *cnape* or ‘doorman’, whose chief duty was to restrict access to the hall by non-members.⁵⁸ The fact that halls were the proper forum for refrains suggests that they were deemed a specialist type of performance, which could only be fully appreciated by those within the circle of the rhetoricians. They were, as Van Elstrand states, ‘for a more limited public with more refined literary tastes’, not a form suitable for ordinary, untrained observers.⁵⁹ It should be noted that some refrains did eventually find a more popular audience: a 1565 municipal decree from Antwerp mentions ‘heretical’ refrains being ‘carried in pockets, stockings or hats’ by the general ‘citizenry’.⁶⁰ Yet in spite of this, refrains do seem to have been primarily written and performed for a select few alone. They were usually reserved for those fully inducted into ‘the mysteries of rhetoric’, taking place behind the closed doors of the *camer* itself.⁶¹

The texts and translation

The refrains we present here have not been selected because they possess any qualities which modern readers are likely to find remarkable, whether as works of art or as historical documents. On the contrary, they are intended to stand as specimens which typify the forms of the refrain. The texts are taken from a festival held at Rotterdam on 20 June 1561, each being the winning refrain in its particular category. This *feest*, which included plays and other contests as well as refrains, is one of the best documented of the mid-sixteenth century. The pieces performed, as well as the invitation *caerte* and a list of prizes awarded, have all survived in a printed edition, published in 1562 by the Antwerp printer Willem Silvius.⁶² This in turn has been recently reissued in a modern edition, edited by Henk Hollaar.⁶³

The Rotterdam *rhetorijckfeest* drew together chambers from across the countship of Holland.⁶⁴ Those known to have taken part include companies from Amsterdam and Gouda in the north, and Rijnsburg, Schiedam, Noordwijk, Leiden and Delft in the south. These were joined by the two chambers of Haarlem, *De Pelicaen* and *De Wyngaertrancken* ('The Plants of the Vineyard'), respectively designated the 'old and young chambers'. The festival was hosted by the chamber *De Blauwe Acoleyen*, or 'Blue Columbine'.⁶⁵ Throughout its two-hundred year history, *De Blauwe Acoleyen* was one of the most energetic and productive chambers in Holland. The *Acoleyen* had existed since at least 1484, when the *burgomeestren* of Leiden record sending wine to 'the rhetoricians of Rotterdam' for some unspecified service.⁶⁶ The chamber is also known to have taken part in numerous *feesten* throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including those held at Noordwijk in 1562, Heenvliet in 1580, Delft in 1581, and Kethel in 1615: it is last mentioned at the festival of Bleiswijk in 1684. The chamber also frequently hosted its own *feesten*, holding four such events between 1545 and 1598. Aside from these occasions, the *Acoleyen* was responsible for much of the civic pageantry staged at Rotterdam. In 1497 it took charge of the celebrations used to mark Phillip the Handsome's *blijde inkomst*, or official entry into the city.⁶⁷ The chamber performed a similar function when Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I of England, visited Holland in 1642.⁶⁸

The Rotterdam *feest* exemplifies the range of contests staged during the *rederijkers'* festivals. Alongside the prizes for poetry and plays, other trophies were awarded for 'the best parade in the city', 'the best firework', and 'the best bonfire in front of a tavern'.⁶⁹ The chambers also competed to see which could stage the 'best formal presentation' of their *blazoen*, the emblem by which the chamber was known.⁷⁰ A prize was even awarded to the chamber which had travelled furthest: in this case the 'victor' was *De Eglentier* ('The Sweet Briar') of Amsterdam, which had covered a distance of some 55 km. However since this prize consisted of a monetary sum rather than the usual drinking vessel, it may have been intended as a travel subsidy rather than an accolade in the strictest sense.⁷¹ Nonetheless, despite these other rituals and competitions, the refrains seem to have been the main focus of the event. Participating chambers were required to compose three refrains each: separate prizes were awarded to the best 'refrain of wisdom', 'refrain of love' and 'refrain of foolery'. By contrast, the chambers were asked to perform only one play apiece. The *feest*'s single dramatic contest focused on *spelen van zinne* or 'morality plays'. No mention is made of other types of play being performed, such as the *esbattement* or 'farce', despite the popularity of such genres among the *rederijkers*.⁷²

A further point of interest is the *Acoleyen*'s express desire to avoid any religious irregularity or controversy during the event. Their invitation *caerte* stresses that participants must 'shun all heresy and mockery, in all of their forms', especially in the refrains.⁷³ This is not mere over-sensitivity on the part of *De Blauwe Acoleyen*: there were good grounds for taking these measures. In its recent past the *Acoleyen* had attracted the suspicion of the authorities, and even received direct censure. Following a 1529 decree by the court of Holland, which forbade treating religious topics in *spelen* and *dichten*, the chamber's work was routinely submitted for official inspection. In 1545 a further edict was issued, strongly condemning 'all the rhetoricians of Rotterdam' for their opinions, and even naming a few particular individuals.⁷⁴ It would seem that the *Acoleyen* was keen to avoid further reprimands

in the 1561 festival: hence it instructed its guests not to use the occasion ‘to provide an outlet for criticism of orthodox religion’.⁷⁵

Regarding the three winning refrains themselves, it is difficult to establish exactly why each took first prize in its particular category. Silvius’ volume gives no indication of the criteria used in judging the pieces, and does not single out any of their features as especially praiseworthy. Moreover, it is impossible as a modern reader to detect any great difference in quality between, say, the winning *refereyn int vroe* by the Leiden chamber *De Witte Ackoleyn* (‘The White Columbine’), and the second-place refrain by the *Wyngaertrancken* of Haarlem. Nonetheless, a few clues are provided by the winning *spel van zinne*. In this case the first prize was presented to the Schiedam chamber *De Roo Roosen* (‘The Red Rose’). When compared to the plays staged by the other chambers, the Schiedam piece does stand apart in one key respect: it is notable for the ingenuity with which it responds to the prescribed *vraag*. The plays were composed in answer to the question ‘What brings most comfort to those who seem lost?’⁷⁶ Most contributors used this prompt to produce a meditation on salvation: for example, the Rijnsburgh entry stresses the importance of adhering to traditional doctrine, and features such figures as *De Stemme des Vaders* (‘The Voice of the Fathers’) and *Gods Ordinatie* (‘God’s Commands’).⁷⁷ The Schiedam play, on the other hand, takes its lead from Erasmus’ *Adagium Sileni Alcibiadis* (1515). Noting the *vraag*’s emphasis on ‘seeming’ rather than being, its narrative explores the difference between inner and outer reality.⁷⁸ Since the play is unique in its reading of the theme, such inventiveness may have earned it first place: no doubt its Erasmian allusion also found favour, owing to Rotterdam’s close links with the scholar. Owing to this, it seems at least possible that the winning refrains were singled out for their novel engagement with the *vraag*. In every other respect they seem unexceptional, following the conventions of the refrain closely and without obvious innovation.

The following translation of the three refrains – which is, to our knowledge, the first in English – is based on the 2006 edition of Henk Hollaar. The original Dutch text has been reproduced by kind permission of the editor. Our translation has endeavoured to remain as faithful as possible to the literal meaning of the original poems. Owing to this, some formal aspects of the texts may not be clear from our rendering. For example, a central feature in each of the texts is its elaborate and highly repetitive rhyme-scheme, which is, as mentioned above, a hallmark of *rederijker* verse in general. Likewise, the refrains do sometimes introduce lines which break with their regular metre, to call attention to a particular line or underscore a key idea. Since our priority has been to recreate the sense of these pieces as closely and readably as we can, it has not been possible to preserve these features. Hopefully the inclusion of the original Dutch text will enable readers to identify these characteristics for themselves.

Refereyn van Leyden.*(De Rotterdamse spelen, pp.293-4)*

- Godt heeft de aerde in den beghinne gheschepen
 en maeckte den mensch na sijn welbehaghen,
 met alle ghedierte dat daer is inne begrepen,
 die groene cruiden – hoort mijn ghewaghen.
- 5 Lichten veur den nacht ende oock veur de daghen.
 Alle ghedierte ghaf Hij den menschen in sijn ghewelt
 om daerover te heerschappijen. Sonder versaghen
 heeft Hij den mensch in den paradijs ghestelt
 en ghaf hem een ghebodt, soo die Schriftuer vermelt:
- 10 van alle vruchten des hoofs te eten
 behalven van den boom des levens – 't wort u vertelt –:
 den boom der kennissen 'goet en quaet' gheheten.
 Maar de mensch heeft 's Heeren ghebodt haest vergeten,
 deur 's vijandts ingheven die de waarheijt is teghen,
- 15 en heeft deur 's vleijchs lust in den appel ghebeten,
 waerdeur hij worde uutten paradijs ghesmeten.
 's Vleijchs lust meest gheacht is en 't loon schadelijcxst vercreghen.
- 's Vleijchs lust, dat is noch voort ghebleken
 doen die kinderen der werelt begonnen te vermeren,
- 20 waerdeur sij worden van Godt versteken,
 omdat sij hittich ghinghen boeleren
 met 's menschen dochteren, na haer selfs begheren.
 Daerom 't Godt beroude dat Hij se oijt had ghemaect,
 en liet over haer comen drucx verseren:
- 25 deur 't waters turbacie hebben zij de doot ghesmaect.
 Sodoma is vergaen – Gods straf heeft haer gheraect –
 deur 's vleijchs lust en onnomelijcke oncuysheijt.
 's Vleijch lust heeft Israël seer na ghehaect
 in de woestenije, soo die Schriftuer verbreijt,
- 30 waerom over haer vergramde 's Heeren majesteijt,
 en strafte se seer tot haerder onseghen.
 Deur haer eigghen lust waren sij verleijt.
 Dus verhael ick noch, soo ick hebbe gheseijt:
 's vleijchs lust meest gheacht is en 't loon schadelijcxst vercreghen.
- 35 Dese lust is noch in de werelt ghebleven
 soo men daghelijcx wel mach sien veur oghen.
 Meest elck heeft hem tot boosheijt gegheven
 in alderleij quaet dat men versieren soude moghen:
 in overspel, in oncuyscheijt, 't is ongheloghen.
- 40 Haet ende nijdt en blijft oock niet absent.
 Hoverdije, ghiericheijt, wilt hierna poghen,
 en quade begheerte, 'twelck afgoderije is verblent.
 Toornicheijt, vijantschap is nu wel bekent,
 dronckeschap en overtallighe brasserijen,
- 45 tweedracht, eigghenwijsheijt, seckten, broeders jent:

‘twelck al uut ’s vleijchs lust comt sonder vermijen.
 En seer weijnich siet me’ ‘rteghen strijen
 die ’t vleisch wederstaet en met berou is beweghen,
 omdat hierna volcht ’t eeuwich vermaledijen.
 50 Dit doet mij segghen tot deser tijen:
 ’s vleijchs lust meest gheacht is en ’t loon schadelijcxst vercreghen.

PRINCE
 ’t Loon is schadelijcxst en ’t eeuwich bederven.
 De Schriftuer ghetuijcht – smaect wel den keest -:
 die na ’s vleijs lust leeft, dat die moet sterven
 55 omdat het vleisch ghelust contrarie den gheest,
 en den gheest contrarie ’t vleijs onbevreesst.
 Want die vleischelijck sijn moghen Godt behaghen niet
 omdat zij niet ghehoorsaem en sijn ’t minst noch t’ meest
 van Gods wetten en cueren – vaet mijn bediet -,
 60 en die Gods gheest niet en heeft, comt in ’t verdriet.
 Die en hoort Godt niet toe. Dit is warachtich.
 Maer wandelt ghij in den gheest, naer Paulus onthiet,
 soo en suldijs ’s vleijs lusten niet sijn ghedachtich
 noch ’t loon daervan niet sijnde verwachtich.
 65 Want het vleisch altijt tot sonde is gheneghen
 en de sonde die baert die doot onsachtich.
 Dus concludeer ick, broeders eendrachtich:
 ’s vleijchs lust meest gheacht is en ’t loon schadelijcxst vercreghen.

Refrein of wisdom

Submitted by the chamber *De Witte Ackoleyen* ('The White Columbine') of Leiden, the refrain was composed in answer to the question, 'What is most valued, but brings most ruin?' (*Wat meest gheacht, en schadelijcst vercreghen is*).

- God in the beginning gave shape to the earth,
 And then made man as it best pleased Him,
 With all the creatures there are to be known,
 And the green plants – listen to my speech.
 5 Lights for the night and also for the day.
 All creatures He gave to man in His scheme
 To have lordship over. Without pause
 He then installed man in paradise
 And gave him a command, as Scripture reports:
 10 From all these fruits you are free to eat
 Except the tree of life – that is denied to you –
 The tree of knowledge called 'good and evil'.
 But man soon forgot all the Lord commanded,
 At the advice of the foe who is opposed to truth,
 15 And for lust of the flesh he bit the apple,
 For which he was cast out of paradise.
 Lust of the flesh is most valued, but the reward gained is ruinous.
- The lust of the flesh, that can be seen everywhere
 Brought more and more children into the world,
 20 And they the word of God forsook,
 For they were engaged in fervid liaisons
 With daughters of men, spawning more like themselves.
 Then God regretted he had made them,
 And let harsh pains overcome them:
 25 Turbulent waters made them taste death.
 Sodom was destroyed – God's punishment struck it –
 For lust of the flesh and unbridled lewdness.
 The lust of the flesh had great sway over Israel
 In the wilderness, as the Scripture states,
 30 Hence the Lordly majesty grew enraged,
 And he punished them with onerous curses.
 By their own lust were they seduced.
 Thus what I said before, I still now maintain:
 Lust of the flesh is most valued, but the reward gained is ruinous.
- 35 This lust now in the world still remains,
 As you can see with your own two eyes.
 More than any other thing it stirs up fury
 And all the other evils that men can perform:
 In adultery, in immodesty, this is undeniable,
 40 In hate and in jealousy it is always present.
 Hubris, avarice, as you hear it from me,
 And filthy desire, which leads to idolatry.
 Wrath, conflict, as we well know,

Drunkenness and useless dissipation,
 45 Rivalry, stubbornness, schism, betraying a brother:
 All come out of the lust of the flesh with no hesitation.
 And very rarely do I see people resist
 Withstanding the flesh and remaining penitent,
 Eternal weeping follows after this lust.
 50 This do I say of the present age:
 Lust of the flesh is most valued, but the reward gained is ruinous.

PRINCE

The reward is ruinous as you rot forever.
 The Scripture states – be sure to remember:
 He that lives in lust of the flesh, he must die,
 55 For the lustful flesh is contrary to the spirit,
 And the fearless spirit is contrary to the flesh.
 They that are fleshly cannot please the Lord
 For they do not obey and do not follow in the least
 God's orders and edicts – hear my testimony –
 60 He that lacks God's spirit will come to grief.
 He does not belong with God. This is true.
 When you walk in the spirit, as Paul proved,
 Then you will not have the flesh's lust in mind
 And no reward will you deserve in the future.
 65 Since the flesh will always veer towards sin,
 And sin gives birth to arduous death.
 Thus I conclude, assembled brothers:
 Lust of the flesh is most valued, but the reward gained is ruinous.

Refereyn van Amstelredam*(De Rotterdamse spelen, pp.300-1)*

- Menich amoreus herte schept troost en vreucht
als 't wesen mach in zijns liefs presentie,
daerdeur sijnde van binnen in den gheest verheucht,
maeckende van gheen swaricheijt mentie.
- 5 In troostlijcke wordekens vol eloquentie
schept menich amoreus hert troost, t' zijnre verblijen,
luijsterende neerstich met diligentie
na haer wordekens die alle druck afsnijen.
Een vriendelijck ghesicht tot diversche tijen
- 10 vervreucht menich amoreus herte triumphant.
Nochtans al desen – moet ick belijen –
gheven gheen volmaeckten troost, na mijn verstant.
Maer een amoreus hert schept den meesten troost playsant
(soo 't ghebleken is aen menich man ende vrouwe)
- 15 in 't ghebruijck zijns liefs, hem ghejont op trouwe.
- Dit bleeck aen Jacob, die een amoreus hert droech
tot Rachel, die men hem seer sach beminnen.
Schoone woorden, 't ghesicht, bijwesen: 't was niet genoegh,
't ghaf gheen volmaeckten troost zijn amoreuse sinnen.
- 20 Veerthien jaer diende hij om te ghewinnen
desen troost, en heeft groot verdriet gheleden:
's nachts bitter coude, 's daechs sware hitte van binnen.
Al werdt hem Lea ghegheven, soet van seden,
noch was sijn herte in hem niet tevreden
- 25 veurdat hij 't ghebruijck vercreech van sijn lief excellent,
hem op trouwe ghejont tot allen steden.
Doen quam hem eerst volmaeckten troost ontrent.
Hieruut blijckt dat een amoreus herte verblent
zijnen meesten troost schept, na dat ick ontvouwe,
- 30 in 't ghebruijck zijns liefs, hem ghejont op trouwe.
- Alle vreucht die op aerden veur werdt ghenomen
van amoreusen, 'tzij dansen, spelen oft singhen,
't is al om tot dit ghebruijck te comen,
dit werdt ghe-estimeert boven alle dinghen.
- 35 Zij haecken wel met seer vierich verlinghen
na een vriendelijck ghesicht van 's liefs bruijn oghen,
maer 't en can gheenen perfecten troost bijbringhen:
zij sorghen al om te werden bedroghen.
's Liefs presentie heeft oock dicwils deurvloghen
- 40 menich amoreus herte, waerin hij alleen
grooten troost schiep, maer wert hem noch onttoghen
van een ander, dies hij bleef in swaer gheween.
Dus schept een amoreus herte in 't ghemeen
zijn meesten troost (soet als een hemelschen douwe)
- 45 in 't ghebruijck zijns liefs, hem ghejont op trouwe.

PRINCE

Al werdt ghejont menich amoreus herte
 't ghebruijck zijns liefs, als 't niet en gheschiet ter eren,
 't en sal niet verdrijven sijn inwendighe smerte,
 maer noch blijft sijnen gheest altijd in 't verseren,
 50 sorghende dat sij sulcx mee sal consenteren
 een ander. Dus schept hij daerin den meesten troost niet.
 Maer siele en lichaem sal verjubileren
 als 't ghebruijck in deuchden en in eeren gheschiet.
 't Ander baerdt noch al een heijmelijck verdriet,
 55 als jalosije somtijts aen comt ghestreken.
 Maer een amoreus herte, alsoo men siet,
 dat deur Cupido's strael vierich is ontsteken,
 schept sijn meesten troost ('t is dickwils ghebleken)
 aen dien, die daerdeur ghecomen zijn uut rouwe
 60 in 't ghebruijck zijns liefs, hem ghejont op trouwe.

Refrein of love

Submitted by the chamber *De Eglentier* ('The Sweet Briar') of Amsterdam, the refrain was composed in answer to the question, 'Where does an amorous heart find the most comfort?' (*Waer een amoureuus hert den meesten troost in scheidt*).

- Many an amorous heart finds comfort and joy
 When it so happens that love is present,
 Because of that delight within the mind
 No mention can be made of heaviness.
- 5 In comforting words full of eloquence,
 Many an amorous heart finds comfort, cheering itself,
 Listening carefully with diligence
 To the words that cut away all dread.
 An affectionate glance every time
- 10 Will cheer an amorous heart triumphant.
 Nonetheless all these things – I must admit –
 Do not give complete comfort, to my knowledge.
 But an amorous heart finds the most pleasant comfort
 (As is upheld by many men and women)
- 15 In enjoying its love, when it is sworn to be faithful.
- This happened to Jacob, he bore an amorous heart
 For Rachel, who loved him a great deal.
 Sweet words, glances, her company: that was not enough,
 It did not bring complete comfort to his amorous senses.
- 20 For fourteen years he strove to win
 This comfort, and was led to great sorrow:
 By night bitter cold, by day cruel heat from within.
 Even when he was given Lea, sweet of habits,
 Still his heart within him was not satisfied
- 25 Until he could freely enjoy his exquisite love,
 Which was sworn to be faithful in every town.
 Then for the first time he knew complete comfort.
 It is clear that an amorous blinded heart
 Finds its greatest comfort, as I have told you,
- 30 In enjoying its love, when it is sworn to be faithful.
- All the joy that may on earth be known
 By the amorous, whether they dance, play or sing,
 It is all done to reach this enjoyment,
 Which is esteemed above all other things.
- 35 They strongly wish for and with fiery pain desire
 An affectionate glance from their love's brown eyes,
 But even this will not bring complete comfort:
 They dread that they will be deceived.
 His love's presence has also passed though
- 40 Many amorous hearts, in it he alone
 Took great comfort, but he is robbed
 By another, and so left to weep heavily.
 Thus in general an amorous heart finds

45 Its greatest comfort (sweet as heavenly dew)
In enjoying its love, when it is sworn to be faithful.

PRINCE

Although many an amorous heart is delighted
By enjoyment of its love, if it is not done with honour,
It shall not drive away his inward pain,
But in his mind there will always be stirring,
50 He thinks about that which he cannot defeat:
Another. He will not find greatest comfort there.
But soul and body will celebrate
When enjoyment is had in virtue and honour.
The other carries always a secret sorrow,
55 As jealousy certainly strikes at the heart.
But an amorous heart, as can be seen,
That Cupid's fiery dart has pierced,
Finds its greatest comfort (it is frequently proved)
To those who are led out of sorrow by this,
60 In enjoying its love, when it is sworn to be faithful.

Refereyn van Leyden*(De Rotterdamse spelen, pp.319-20)*

- Haest u, ghij sotten, wilt u niet verblooden.
 Maeckt u al ghereet, 't is nu van nooden.
 Ghij moet nu verschijnen om te verwachten u lot.
 Tot Rotterdam daer zijt ontbooden.
- 5 Ghij en dorft niet sorghen; men sal der u niet dooden,
 maer elck moet daer verthoonen sijn gheesten in 't sot.
 Vergheet niet u vespercleet, brengt mede u marot,
 want sonder datselve men soud 'er u niet kennen.
 Comt op u stadichste, obediert dit ghebot
- 10 en helpt daer tesamen Carebus' waghen mennen.
 Tirebus' paerden sullen veur den waghen rennen
 om die te helpen schutten. Wilt niet achterblijven.
 Comt, sotten, helpt haestelijck sotheijt bedrijven.
- Om tot Rotterdam te comen wilt u rassen,
 15 want men sal daer nu op veel sotten passen
 die daer in seshien jaren niet en hebben gheweest.
 Beij *met minnen versaemt* suldijs lekker brassen.
 Daer suldijs die blaeuwe Acoleye sien wassen
 die u sullen verheughen minst ende meest.
- 20 Comt daer op u sotste en vermeert haer feest.
 Om sotheijt te bedrijven treck elck sijn lijne.
 Verdrijft daerdeur den swaermoedighen gheest.
 Daer thoone elck sot sottelijck 't sijne.
 Ghij sijt daerom ontboden, gheseijt ten fijne.
- 25 Dus thoont elck sotheijt om in vreucht te beclijven.
 Comt, sotten, helpt sottelijck sotheijt bedrijven.
- Tot Rotterdam comende wilt sotheijt hanteeren,
 want zij daer van u sotten sotheijt begheeren
 bedreven te hebben in 't openbaer.
- 30 Dus wilt u daer sottelijck met sotheijt verweeren
 ende deur u sotheijt alle vreucht vermeeren,
 verdrijvende duer dien melancolije swaer.
 Om u sotheijt te baren ontbieden zij u daer.
 Dus en wilt niet dan sottelijck sotheijt beghinnen
- 35 daer ghij alleen sijt of bij malcander tegaer,
 dat men elcx u sotheijt mach bekinnen.
 Daerdeur suldijs alle druck doen drijven,
 daer ghij ontboden sijt tot vreuchts verstijven.
 Comt, sotten, helpt sottelijck sotheijt bedrijven.
- PRINCE
- 40 Ghij princelijcke sotten, wilt u niet verschoonen,
 maer wilt u elck sottelijck als sotten verthonen,
 sulcx een ijghelijck gheest daertoe is ghestelt.
 Elck voech hem als die sotste van Malburchs sonen

- hier in dese feeste. Men sal elck lonen
45 met die prijzen die veur u sotten sijn opghestelt.
Dus om prijs te winnen comt elck sottelijck in 't velt.
Reijnst, onbeveijnst, thoont u sotheijt sulcks dat betaemt.
Elck in haer feeste, sulxs de caerte vermelt
u ghesonden bij ons broeders *met minnen versaemt*.
50 Om sotheijt van u te sien, hoe ghij sijt ghenaeamt,
zij rhetorijckelijck aen u allen schrijven:
Comt, sotten, helpt sottelijck sotheijt bedrijven.

Refrein of foolery

Also entered by the Leiden chamber *De Witte Ackoleyen*. The *caerte* did not issue a formal question for the *refeyen int zotte*, only instructing ‘everyone to make the best possible lines’ (*Int sot elck na den besten Reghele stelt*).

- Make haste, you fools, you must not shirk.
 Make yourselves ready, for you are now needed.
 You must now come here to accept your lot.
 To Rotterdam you have been summoned.
- 5 But you need not worry; the men there won't kill you,
 For everyone there must in his thoughts show folly.
 Do not forget your costume, bring your *marot*,⁷⁹
 For without those things men will not know you.
 Come all you faithful, obey this command
- 10 And help the others to man Carebus' wagon.
 Tirebus' horses shall before that wagon run⁸⁰
 To help it on its way. You must not despair.
 Come, fools, and hastily help folly thrive.⁸¹
- When to Rotterdam you come you must rush,
 15 Since the men there shall host many fools
 Who have not been there for over sixteen years.⁸²
 At *gathered with love* you will dine well.⁸³
 There you will see the Blue Columbine grow
 From the least to the most they will make you cheer.
- 20 Go there most foolishly and make the feast spread.
 To make folly thrive all must do their best.
 Drive away the heavy moods of the spirit.
 In his own way each fool shows foolishness.
 They summoned you for this, to speak plainly.
- 25 Thus all must show folly so joy may continue.
 Come, fools, and foolishly help folly thrive.
- Once you arrive at Rotterdam use your folly,
 There they demand foolishness from you fools
 That must be carried out in the open air.
- 30 Thus go there and foolishly bring forth folly
 And let your foolery spread joy to all,
 Banishing through you heavy melancholy.
 To bring forth folly they have summoned you.
 Thus you must do nothing but start foolish folly
- 35 Whether you are alone or grouped all together,
 So that men may your foolishness witness.
 Therefore you should work to drive out anguish,
 You are summoned there to preserve joyfulness.
 Come, fools, and foolishly help folly thrive.

PRINCE

- 40 You princely fools, you must not retreat,
 But must be shown to be as foolish as fools,

- Just as each of you is accustomed to be.
 Each must be foolish as a son of Wrongton⁸⁴
 Here in this feast. Each man will be rewarded
 45 With prizes which are set aside for you fools.
 To win a prize the foolish must enter the field.
 Come forth, unafraid, show your usual folly.
 All shall feast here, as the charter states
 Sent to you by our brothers, *gathered with love*.
 50 To show foolishness, and show your name,
 In a rhetorical style they wrote to you all:
 Come, fools, and foolishly help folly thrive.

¹ Georg R. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre: Form and Convention in the Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1944); James A. Parente, *Religious Drama and the Humanist Tradition: Christian Theater in Germany and the Netherlands* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987); Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1996), pp.159-88; Heinrich F. Plett, *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); *Urban Theatre in the Low Countries 1400-1625*, ed by Elsa Strietman and Peter Happé (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

² Leonard Verduin, 'The Chambers of Rhetoric and Anabaptist Origins in the Low Countries', *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 34 (1960), pp.192-96; Gary K. Waite, *Reformers on Stage: popular drama and religious propaganda in the low countries of Charles V, 1515-1556* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) and Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation And The Culture Of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.76-101; Herman Pleij, 'The Rise of Urban Literature in the Low Countries', in *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context*, ed. by Erik Kooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.62-80.

³ See for instance 'Plaijerwater: A Sixteenth-century farce with an English Translation', trans. by Hans van Dijk, Jane Fenoulhet, Tanis Guest, Theo Hermans, Elsa Streitman and Paul Vincent, *Dutch Crossing* 24 (1984), pp.32-70; Jan Van den Berghe, 'The Voluptuous Man', trans. by Peter King, *Dutch Crossing* 28 (1986), pp.53-108; *Een Esbattement van sMenschen Sin en Verganckelijcke Schoonheit: Man's Desire and Fleeting Beauty*, trans. and ed. by Elsa Strietman and Robert Potter (Leeds: Centre for Medieval Studies, 1994); *Mariken van Nieumeghen: A Bilingual Edition*, trans. and ed. by Therese Decker and Martin W. Walsh (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1994); *Medieval Dutch Drama: Four Secular Plays and Four Farces from the Van Hulthem Manuscript*, trans. and ed. by Johanna C. Prins, *Early European Drama in Translation* 4 (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 2000); *For Pleasure and Profit. Six Dutch Rhetoricians Plays*, trans. and ed. by Elsa Strietman and Peter Happé, 2 vols. (Lancaster: Medieval English Theatre, 2006), I: *Three Biblical Plays*, II: *Three Classical Plays*, volume one also published as *Medieval English Theatre* 26 (2004). For a fuller list, see the 'bibliography of translations' given in Kooper's *Medieval Dutch Literature*, pp.297-304.

⁴ Claire Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods and Theatricality in Late Medieval England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997), p.96. See also Leonard Forster, 'Literary relations between the Low Countries, England and

Germany', *Dutch Crossing* 24 (1984), pp.16-31; Alexandra F. Johnston, 'Traders and Playmakers: English Guildsmen and the Low Countries', *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Caroline M. Barron and Nigel Saul (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp.99-114; Alexandra F. Johnston, 'The Continental Connection: A Reconsideration', in *The Stage as a Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by A.E. Knight (London: Brewer, 1997), pp.7-24.

⁵ Joseph Quincy Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas: A Selection of Plays Illustrating the History of the English from its origin down to Shakespeare* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), p.288; *Everyman and Its Dutch Original, Elckerlijc*, ed. by Clifford Davidson, Martin W. Walsh and Ton J. Broos, TEAMS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007).

⁶ Hardin Craig, *English religious drama in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), p.352.

⁷ The modern Dutch spelling 'refrein' has been used throughout, despite the tendency of some English commentators to adopt the formation 'refrain'. 'Refrein' is preferred here to avoid the unhelpful connotations of 'refrain', since the repetition of a burden is only one feature of the refrein.

⁸ One notable exception is the work of the female *rederijker* Anna Bijns, which has received some coverage in anthologies of women's writing: see Anna Bijns, 'Refereynen XXVII: Het waer goet houwen, maer tsorgen es de plage (Marriage would be fine if it weren't plagued with worry)', in *Dutch and Flemish feminist poems from the Middle Ages to the present: a bilingual anthology*, trans. and ed. by Maaïke Meijer, Erica Eijssker, Ankie Peypers and Yopie Prins (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1998), pp.46-50; and the eight refreins included in Kristiaan P.G. Aercke, 'Germanic Sappho: Anna Bijns', in *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. by Katerina M. Wilson (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987), pp.365-97.

⁹ Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, "'A wonderfull tryumfe, for the wynnyng of a pryse": guilds, ritual, theater, and the urban network in the Southern Low Countries, ca. 1450-1650', *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006), p.393.

¹⁰ *Het spel van Sint Trudo*, ed. by Rik Delpoort (Kortrijk: Vermaut, 1930); *Een spel van sinnen beroerende Het Cooren (1565) van Lauris Jansz*, ed. by W.M.H. Hummelen and G.W.R. Dibbets (Zutphen: Thieme, 1985).

¹¹ 'Princesse ontfanct met Reuerentien': Eduard de Dene, 'Verchiert met vyfwondeghe Roosen Roodt', in *Testament rhetoricael*, ed. by W. Waterschoot and D. Coigneau, 3 vols., Jaarboek De Fonteyne 26, 28 and 30 (Ghent: Seminarie voor Nederlandse Literatuurstudie, 1976-80), II (1978), pp.269-70.

¹² On the hierarchy of the chambers, see Herman Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord – Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1400-1650* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2007), p.299; Susie Speakman Sutch, 'Dichters van de stad – De Brusselse rederijkers en hun verhouding tot de Franstalige hofliteratuur en het geleerde humanisme (1475-1522)', in *Literatuur in Brussel van de 14de tot de 18de eeuw*, ed. by Jozef Janssens and Remco Sleiderink (Leuven: Uitgeverij Davidsfonds, 2003), pp.141-59.

¹³ Tielman Susato, *Musyck boexken: Dutch Songs for Four Voices*, ed. by Timothy McTaggart, Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance 108 (Madison: A-R Editions, 1997), p.xvi.

¹⁴ 'Een valsche tonghe', in *Jan van Stijevoorts Refereinenbundel anno 1524*, ed. by Frederik Lyna and Willem van Eeghem, 2 vols. (Antwerp: De Sikkels, 1930), II,

pp.136-9; Jan van den Dale, 'Lof Hostie', *Gekende werken*, ed. by Gilbert Degroote (Antwerp: De Nederlandsche boekhandel, 1944), pp.133-43.

¹⁵ See Dirk Coigneau, 'Rederijkersliteratuur', in *Historische letterkunde. Facetten van vakbeoefening*, ed. by Marijke Spies (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1984), pp.36-7.

¹⁶ 'Het es Christus vermaen', in *Politieke balladen, refereinen, liederen en spotdichten der XVIe eeuw*, ed. by Ph. Blommaert (Ghent: Maetschappy der Vlaemsche Bibliophilen, 1847), pp.295-8.

¹⁷ Werner Waterschoot, 'Marot or Ronsard? New French Poetics among Dutch Rhetoricians in the Second Half of the 16th Century', in *Rhetoric-Rhetoriques-Rederijkers*, ed. by Jelle Koopmans, Mark A. Meadow, Kees Meerhoff and Marijke Spies (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1995), p.150.

¹⁸ Ethan Matt Kavaler, 'Renaissance Gothic in the Netherlands: The Uses of Ornament', *Art Bulletin* 82 (2000), p.11.

¹⁹ See for instance 'Refereyn constich gheestelijck' ('Skilful spiritual refrain') and 'Refereyn van berouwe' ('Refrain of repentance'): *De gedichten van Anthonis de Roovere* ed. by J.J. Mak (Zwolle: Uitgeversmaatschappij Tjeenk Willink, 1955), pp.218-9, 224-5. Although the *Rhetorical Werken* was not published until 1562, some eighty years after its author's death, the titles do seem to be De Roovere's: see Dirk Coigneau, *Refreinen in het zotte bij de rederijkers*, 3 vols. (Ghent: Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, 1980-1983), III (1983), pp.568-75.

²⁰ J.B. Oosterman, 'Tussen twee wateren zwem ik. Anthonis de Roovere tussen rederijkers en rhétoriques', *Jaarboek De Fonteyne* 49-50 (1999-2000), pp.11-29.

²¹ See Bart Ramakers, 'Between Aea and Golgotha: the education and scholarship of Matthijs de Castelein', in *Education and Learning in the Netherlands, 1400-1600: essays in honour of Hilde de Ridder-Symoens*, ed. by K. Goudriaan and others (Leiden, 2004), pp.179-200.

²² Matthijs de Castelein, *De const van rhetoriken* (Oudenaarde: Theater Pax Vobis, 1986), pp.52, 30.

²³ Reinder P. Meijer, *Literature of the Low Countries* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p.52.

²⁴ Waterschoot, 'Marot or Ronsard?', p.154.

²⁵ 'De refereinen dats tsreghels repetitie/ Rijst ons ter monitie van Maro zo ic meene./ In zijn achste eglogue': Castelein, *De const van rhetoriken*, p.55; Spies, *Rhetoric, Rhetoricians and Poets*, p.44.

²⁶ Joost Kloek and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *1800: Blueprints for a National Community, Dutch Culture in a European Perspective II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.96.

²⁷ 'Dat waaren liens vol perfeccy, en van devine eloquency...Het minste datse sproocken dat was een reffiereyn, en dat so exstruvagant': Gerbrand Adriaensz Bredero, *Spaanschen Brabander*, ed. by C.F.P. Stutterheim (Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink-Noorduijn, 1974), p.167.

²⁸ For seventeenth-century examples, see Pieter Visser, *Broeders in de geest: de doopsgezinde bijdragen van Dierick en Jan Philipsz. Schabaelje tot de Nederlandse stichtelijke literatuur in de zeventiende eeuw* (Deventer: Uitgeverij Sub Rosa, 1988).

²⁹ See Wim Hüskén, 'Civic Patronage in Early Fifteenth-Century Religious Drama in the Low Countries', in *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. by Alexandra F. Johnston and Wim N.M. Hüskén (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), pp.107-24; E. Ellerbroek-Fortuin, *Amsterdamse rederijkersspelen in de zestiende eeuw* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1937), p.23.

³⁰ Nelleke Moser, *De strijd voor rhetorica* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), pp.78-85.

³¹ 'Late erfgenamen van de zogenaamde hoofse traditie in de Middeleeuwse Minnellyriek...De geringste blijk van genegenheid te zijnen opzichte – een 'vriendelic' of 'troostelic' woord, een blik': A. van Elslander, *Het refrein in de Nederlanden tot 1600* (Ghent: Erasmus, 1953), pp.121-6.

³² Jan van den Berghe, 'Hantwaerpen int amorueze: Och, mocht ic se spreken, ic ware ghepaeyt', in *Dichten en spelen*, ed. by C. Kruyskamp (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), pp.52-4.

³³ See R.T. Davies, *Medieval English Lyrics: a critical anthology* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), pp.44-5.

³⁴ 'Refereijn X: Ic draghe liefde op venus camerierkens', in *Jan van Stijevoorts Refereinenbundel*, I, 27-8.

³⁵ De Roovere, 'Refereyn int sotte: Staet betacht men saeydter gheluck', *De Gedichten*, pp.404-5; 'Refereijne XVII: Spreke screyen nayen heeft god den vrouwen berayen', in *Van Stijevoorts Refereinenbundel*, pp.39-40;

³⁶ See H. A. Enno van Gelder, *Erasmus, schilders en rederijkers: de religieuze crisis der 16e eeuw* (Groningen: P. Noordhoff, 1959), p.83.

³⁷ 'De oudste twee bevatten aangrijpende klachten over...Luther en de zijnen, die de oorzaak zijn van alle ellende in maatschappelijk en zedelijk opzicht': *De Nederlandse en Vlaamse auteurs van middeleeuwen tot heden met inbegrip van de Friese auteurs*, ed. by G.J. van Bork and P.J. Verkruijsse (The Hague: Weesp, 1985), p.125; Benjamin Ern, 'Cortrijcke', in *De Gentse Spelen van 1539*, ed. by B.H. Ern and L.M. van Dis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p.541. See also Anna Bijns, *Schoon ende suverlijc boecxken inhoudende veel constige refereinen (Refereinen 1528)*, ed. by Lode Roose (Louvain: Uitgeverij Acco, 1987), especially pp.37-41, 103-45 and 150-66; A. C. Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: Hambledon Press, 1990), p.37.

³⁸ See Wim Hsken, *Noyt meerder vreucht – compositie en structuur van het komisch toneel in de Nederlanden voor de Renaissance* (Deventer: Sub Rosa, 1987), pp.100-5; *Veelderhande geneuchlijcke dichten, tafelspelen ende refereynen*, ed. by E.J. Brill (Leiden: Brill, 1899); Herman Pleij, *Van schelmen en schavuiten* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1985); *Een nyeuwe clucht boeck*, ed. by Herman Pleij (Muiderburg: Dick Coutinho, 1983).

³⁹ *Spelen van Sinne vol schoone allegatien, drijderley referyenen – De Rotterdamse spelen van 1561*, ed. by Henk J. Hollaar (Delft: Eburon, 2006), p.14; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, p.181.

⁴⁰ 'Dronckaert, dul van hoye': 'Refreyn XLIV: By wylen drinck ick tot tsmorghens dat daecht', in E. Soens, 'Onuitgegeven Gedichten van Anna Bijns', *Leuvensche Bijdragen* 6 (1900), pp.354-5.

⁴¹ 'De namen Tiribus en Corebus...dat van de zot die ondanks of misschien wel dank zij zijn malle streken beter terechtkomt dan menig serieus mens voor zichzelf zou kunnen wensen': W.N.M. Hsken, '1 augustus 1541: De klucht "Tielebuys" van Willem Vrancx wordt als welkomstspel gespeeld op het landjuweel van Diest. De kluchtentraditie in de Nederlanden', in *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden. Tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, ed. by R.L. Erenstein (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), p.108.

⁴² See *De refreinenbundel van Jan van Doesborch*, ed. by C. Kruyskamp (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1940); C.G.N. De Vooy, 'De Dordtse bundel met *Christelijcke en*

schriftuerlijke refereynen’, *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 21 (new series) (1928), pp.273-96.

⁴³ Herman Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne*, trans. by Diane Webb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.60.

⁴⁴ See Reinhard Strom, ‘Music In Current Feasts of Bruges’, *Actes du XIIIe Congrès de la Société Internationale de Musicologie, Strasbourg, 29 août - 3 septembre 1982: La musique et le rite sacré et profane*, ed. by Marc Honegger, Christian Meyer and Paul Prévost, 2 vols. (Strasbourg: Association des Publications près les Universités de Strasbourg, 1986), II, 424-33.

⁴⁵ A three-weekly *refreinritueel*, in which ‘every member was expected to contribute’, is best documented for the Ghent chamber *De Fonteine*: see Dirk Coigneau, ‘Bedongen creativiteit. Over retorische productieregeling’, in *Medioneerlandistiek. Een inleiding tot de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, ed. by Ria Jansen-Sieben, Jozef Janssens and Frank Willaert (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000), pp.133-4.

⁴⁶ ‘Wat dier ter waerelt meest fortse verwint?...Wat volc ter werelt meest sotheyt toocht?’: A. Van Elslander, ‘Het Refreinfest te Gent in 1539’, *Jaarboek van De Fonteine* 2 (1944), pp.38-56.

⁴⁷ *Spelen van Sinne vol schoone allegatien*, p.14.

⁴⁸ John William Burgon, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham*, 2 vols. (London: Robert Jennings, 1839), I, 388. Clough’s ‘skalle’ is most likely an anglicised version of the Dutch *schaal*, ‘bowl’.

⁴⁹ See E.G.A. Galama, ‘Inleiding’, in *Twee Zestiende-Eeuwse Spelen Van de Verlooren Zoone door Robert Lawet*, ed. by E.G.A. Galama (Utrecht: Dekker and Van de Vegt, 1941), pp.6-14.

⁵⁰ ‘Rond 1500 was het gesproken refrein de belangrijkste lyrische vorm van de rederijders geworden. Het is wellicht het verdwijnen van de band met de muziek geweest’: Jan Willem Bonda, *De Meerstemmige Nederlandse Lieder van de Vijftiende En Zestiende Eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996), p.429.

⁵¹ *Spelen van Sinne vol schoone allegatien*, p.14.

⁵² ‘Het referein kon redeneeren, overtuigen; het lied kon slechts opwekken, ontroeren, aangrijpen’: Elslander, *Het refrein*, p.9.

⁵³ Marijke Spies, *Rhetoric, Rhetoricians and Poets: Studies in Renaissance Poetry and Poetics* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), p.97.

⁵⁴ G. Kalff, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in de 16de eeuw*, 7 vols. (Leiden: J.B. Wolters, 1906-12), I (1906), p.313.

⁵⁵ ‘Doer donconstighe gaet die conste verloren’: *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, ed. by Dirk Coigneau (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1996), pp.96-7.

⁵⁶ See W.M.H. Hummelen, ‘Types and Methods of the Dutch Rhetoricians’ Theatre’, trans. by H.S. Lake, in *The Third Globe: Symposium for the Reconstruction of the Globe Playhouse*, ed. by C. Walter Hodges, S. Schoenbaum and Leonard Leone (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), pp.164-89.

⁵⁷ Waite, *Reformers on Stage*, p.29.

⁵⁸ See Prudens van Duyse, *De rederijkkamers in Nederland, hun invloed op letterkundig, politiek en zedelijk gebied* (Ghent: A. Siffer, 1900-02), I (1900), p.42.

⁵⁹ ‘Voor een beperkter publiek met meer uitgesproken literaire pretenties’: Van Elsland, *Het refrein*, p.187.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Maria A. Schenkeveld, *Dutch literature in the age of Rembrandt* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1991), pp.69-70. Similar edicts were made in Holland

in 1587 and 1618: Craig E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1987), p.122.

⁶¹ Donald Leeman Clarke, *Rhetoric and poetry in the Renaissance* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), p.29.

⁶² On Silvius, see Colin Clair, 'Willem Silvius', *The Library* XIV (1959), pp.192-205.

⁶³ *De Rotterdamse spelen van 1561*, ed. by Henk Hollaar (Delft: Eburon Uitgeverij, 2006).

⁶⁴ In the same year, festivals at Antwerp and Brussels were held for the chambers of Brabant and Flanders respectively: see Van Elslander, *Het Refrein*, p.216.

⁶⁵ On the significance of this name, and its relevance to the Virgin Mary, see Robert A. Koch, 'Flower Symbolism in the Portinari Altar', *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964), pp.70-7, especially p.74. The name was a popular one among the *rederijkers*, adopted by at least four other chambers: see P.J. Meertens, *Letterkundig leven in Zeeland in de zestiende en de eerste helft der zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandische Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1943), pp.71-130.

⁶⁶ *Retoricaal Memoriaal: Bronnen Voor de Geschiedenis Van de Hollandse rederijkerskamers van de middeleeuwen tot het begin van de achttiende eeuw*, ed by F.C. van Boheemen and Th. C. J. van der Heijden (Delft: Eburon, 1999), p.752.

⁶⁷ Herman Brinkman, *Dichten Uit Liefde: Literatuur in Leiden aan het Einde van de Middeleeuwen* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), p.82.

⁶⁸ On Henrietta Maria's journey to Holland, see Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), p.381.

⁶⁹ *Spelen van Sinne vol schoone allegatien*, p.14.

⁷⁰ See Gerardus J. Steenbergen, *Het landjuweel van de rederijkers* (Louvain: Davidsfonds, 1951), p.222.

⁷¹ *Retoricaal Memioraal*, p.48.

⁷² See *Vier excellente chuchten*, ed. by J.J. Mak, Klassieke Galerij 46 (Antwerp: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1950); Herman Pleij, *De eeuw van de zotheid – over de nar als maatschappelijk houvast in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2007).

⁷³ 'Schout heresie, schimp, met alder maniere': quoted in K. ter Laan, *Letterkundig woordenboek voor Noord en Zuid* (The Hague: G.B. van Goor Zonen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1952), p.291.

⁷⁴ 'Alle rethoresynen tot Rotterdam': *Retoricaal Memoriaal*, p.753.

⁷⁵ Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, p.94.

⁷⁶ 'Wie den meesten troost oyt quam te baten?': Henk Hollaar, *De Rotterdamse spelen van 1561 – Een Hollandse toneelcompetitie met politieke lading* (Delft: Eburon, 2006), pp.49-50.

⁷⁷ See W.M.H. Hummelen, *Repertorium Van Het Rederijkersdrama, 1500–ca.1620* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1968), under entries 3D 1-9.

⁷⁸ See Bart Ramakers, 'Tonen en betogen. De dramaturgie van de Rotterdamse Spelen van 1561', *Spiegel der Letteren* 43 (2001), pp.176-204.

⁷⁹ The 'bauble' or carved wooden stick traditionally carried by fools.

⁸⁰ For Carebus and Tiribus, see n.40.

⁸¹ Hollaar suggests that 'hastily' (*haestelijck*) should in fact read 'foolishly' (*sottelijck*), as in the later *stockregelen*. It is certainly unusual to vary the *stock* in a refrain, although not completely unprecedented: see for instance De Roovere's 'Daer

lief daer ooghe/ daer handt daer seer' (Where the lover there an eye, where a hand there the pain), in *De Gedichten*, p.395.

⁸² Rotterdam had indeed last hosted a *rederijkerfeest* in 1545: see *Retoricaal Memoriaal*, p.753.

⁸³ The motto of the *Blauwe Acoleyen*, here used to designate the chamber hall itself.

⁸⁴ *Malburchs zonen* seems to have been a proverbial expression, perhaps suggested by Malbork in modern-day Poland. See Kalff, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde*, III (1907), pp.174-5.