

Maerlant in French (almost): language, verse, and cultural traffic in late medieval Bruges

Summary / résumé

Harau Martin, the French version of Jacob van Maerlant's *Martijn* poems, was printed in Bruges around 1477. It is manifestly inadequate as a French poem: its form and language are heavily influenced by Dutch. Yet its publication reveals much about the relationship between literature and its public in the region. Its printer had a distinctive publishing strategy; its form extends the boundaries of the francophone literary system; and its language builds solidarity among its audience.

Harau Martin, traduction en français des poèmes *Martijn* de Jacques van Maerlant, fut imprimé à Bruges vers 1477. En tant que poème français, ses faiblesses sont patentées : langue et forme dépendent fortement de la source. Pourtant, sa publication en dit long sur la relation entre la littérature et son public dans la région. L'imprimeur avait sa propre stratégie ; la forme du poème élargit le champ littéraire d'expression française ; la langue en renforce la solidarité au sein du public.

In the late medieval Low Countries, translations from French into Dutch far outnumber those in the reverse direction¹. A rare example of Dutch-French translation – and the only known example of *verse* translation in this direction – is *Harau Martin*, a French version of Jacob van Maerlant's *Martijn* poems. The text survives in fragments from an edition produced in Bruges around 1477, by the francophone printer Jean Brito (USTC 71288, ISTC im00013500)². It has long been acknowledged that *Harau Martin* is not the work of a native French speaker: form and syntax are heavily influenced by Dutch³. But why would a small-

¹ On French-Dutch literary translation, see most recently A. Armstrong, “‘Half dicht, half prose gheordineert’: vers et prose de moyen français en moyen néerlandais”, *Le Moyen Français*, 76-77, 2015, p. 7-38. French versions of Dutch-language historiography include the *Chroniques et gestes des nobles seigneurs de Brederode*, based on the *Brederodekroniek* by Jan van Leyden (Johannes a Leydis); the *Chroniques des pays de Hollande, Zelande et aussy em partie de Haynnau*, based on the *Cort Chronijkje van de Graaven van Holland*; and Jean d'Enghien's *Livre des cronicques de Brabant*, based on various sources of which at least some were in Dutch. See T. Porck, “De Brederodekroniek voor Yolande van Lalaing”, *Yolande van Lalaing (1422-1497): kasteelvrouwe van Brederode*, ed. E. den Hartog and H. Wijsman, special issue of *Jaarboek van de Kastelenstichting Holland en Zeeland*, 2009, p. 37-67, at p. 40; A. Janse, “Chroniques des pays de Hollande, Zelande et aussy em partie de Haynnau” and “Cort Chronijkje van de Graaven van Holland”, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. R. G. Dunphy, Leiden, Brill, 2010, p. 388, 493; W. Keesman, *De eindeloze stad: Troje en Trojaanse oorsprongsmythen in de (laat)middeleeuwse en vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2017, p. 344-348, 356. I am grateful to Dirk Schoenaers for alerting me to these examples.

² On Brito's edition, see *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden*, Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, 1973, p. 252-253. No single modern edition of *Harau Martin* exists. Two complementary sets of fragments are diplomatically transcribed in P. Fredericq, “Het Brugsch fragment der berijmde Fransche vertaling van Maerlant's *Wapene Martijn*”, *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 4, 1884, p. 275-291; P. Fredericq, “Nieuwe fragmenten der berijmde Fransche vertaling van Maerlant's *Drie Martijns*”, *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 17, 1898, p. 33-45. See also Jacob van Maerlant, *Strophische gedichten*, ed. J. Verdam and P. Leendertz, Leiden, Sijthoff, 1918, p. xviii-xix. References to the translation are supplied in the text; the poems, which have no individual titles, are designated by sigla (*MI* etc.). Fredericq numbers stanzas (corresponding to those of the Dutch sources) but not lines; I introduce continuous line numbering, and silently correct Fredericq's occasional mistranscriptions. Orthography and punctuation in this and other diplomatic transcriptions are normalized in accordance with standard editorial practice. Translations from French, Dutch, and Latin are mine.

³ G. Huet, “La traduction française des *Martins* de Maerlant”, *Romania*, 29, 1900, p. 95-104.

scale printer bring out a Dutch literary classic in a manifestly inadequate translation? More importantly, what does this bizarre publishing venture reveal about the transcultural and cross-linguistic character of the region's literary culture?

I propose three complementary perspectives on *Harau Martin*. The first is book-historical: Brito's edition reflects a wider publishing strategy that involves seeking out unexpected new audiences, including speakers of Dutch as well as French. The second draws on translation theory: as an instance of "foreignizing translation", the French text extends the boundaries of the target literary system. The third uses recent research in sociolinguistics, to suggest that the translation is a performance of "stylized Dutch French". As well as compelling a re-evaluation of an underrated printer, these perspectives reshape our understanding of what literary translation could achieve in the Burgundian Low Countries.

Harau Martin: a failed translation?

Maerlant's *Martijn* poems, composed in the late thirteenth century, are stanzaic dialogues on ethical subjects between the eponymous Martijn and a figure named Jacob, commonly believed to represent the poet. The first dialogue, often known as *Wapene Martijn* [*Alas, Martijn!*] after its *incipit*, comprises 75 stanzas and ranges over topics from human salvation and redemption to the physical location of love. *Dander Martijn* [*The Second Martijn*] focuses solely on love in its 26 stanzas, while a commonly used title for the third poem – *Van der Drievoudecheide* [*On the Trinity*] – encapsulates the preoccupations of its 39 stanzas⁴. The stanzaic form used in all three poems was distinctive, and was closely associated thereafter with Maerlant: thirteen lines rhyming *aabaabaabb*, with four stresses in the *a*-rhymed and three in the *b*-rhymed lines. Their formal virtuosity doubtless contributed to their widespread and durable success: fourteen manuscript witnesses and two editions are known, alongside various vernacular imitations and a Latin translation by Johannes Bukelare⁵.

Harau Martin seems to have been composed in the mid-fifteenth century; its edition marks the first known appearance of any Maerlant work in print, and fittingly appeared in a city where Maerlant enjoyed high cultural standing⁶. Yet its printer had no such standing in his own sphere: Jean Brito, a Breton who had previously worked as a copyist, operated on a far smaller scale than the other Bruges printers of the period, Colard Mansion and William Caxton⁷. His publications were relatively small in size (quarto), and their content was often utilitarian and/or ephemeral. The remaining fragments of *Harau Martin* comprise stanzas of the same length and rhyme scheme as their sources, corresponding to v. 1-520 of *Wapene Martijn* (40 stanzas),

⁴ Edited in *Strophische gedichten*, p. 1-85. References are supplied in the text. For a useful introduction, see J. Reynaert, "Gespreksvorm, rolverdeling en personages in de *Martijns*", *Queeste*, 3, 1996, p. 179-190.

⁵ On manuscripts, see E. A. Overgaauw, "Een nieuw fragment van Jacob van Maerlant's *Eerste Martijn* (Koblenz, Landeshauptarchiv, Best. 701: Nr. 262, fol. 173)", *Queeste*, 3, 1996, p. 191-196. On imitations, see J. van Driel, *Meesters van het woord: Middelnederlandse schrijvers en hun kunst*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2012, p. 138-139; R. Gabriël, "'Jan, leere mi so clare.' Een vergelijking van de rolverdeling in de *Disputacie* van Jan de Weert met die in de *Martijnreeks* van Jacob van Maerlant", *Spiegel der Letteren*, 49, 2007, p. 265-283. On Bukelare, see T. Haye, "Die Martin-Gedichte des Jacob van Maerlant in der lateinischen Übertragung des Jan Bukelare", *Sacris Erudiri*, 49, 2010, p. 407-438; B. Besamusca, "Jacob van Maerlant's *Martijn* poems from a multilingual perspective", forthcoming. Both editions were printed in Antwerp by Henrick Pieterszoon die Lettersnider: USTC 436450, ISTC im00013450; USTC 436451, ISTC im00013460.

⁶ There is no reason to contest the dating suggested in Huet, "La traduction française", p. 102-103. On Maerlant's affiliations with Bruges and nearby Damme, see F. van Oostrom, *Maerlants wereld*, Amsterdam, Prometheus, 1997, p. 65-80, 136-147. On his cultural authority, see also *Colard Mansion: incunabula, prints and manuscripts in medieval Bruges*, ed. E. Hauwaerts, E. de Wilde and L. Vandamme, Ghent, Snoeck, 2018, p. 159-161; Besamusca, "Jacob van Maerlant's *Martijn* poems".

⁷ See R. Adam, *Vivre et imprimer dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux (des origines à la Réforme)*, 2 vols, Turnhout, Brepols, 2018, vol. 2, p. 38-49.

v. 66-273 and 326-338 of *Dander Martijn* (17 stanzas), and v. 1-143 of *Van der Drievoudecheide* (11 stanzas)⁸.

If the translator had aimed to produce well-formed French language and verse, *Harau Martin* must be considered a failure. While its vocabulary includes no obvious Middle Dutch loans, its syntax bears obvious traces of the source language. Adjectives and participles are often not inflected when used predicatively: hence formulations such as “Au feu d’infer soient livré” [may they be consigned to the flames of hell] (*MI*, v. 130), and “Celle que j’aime, je te dis,/ Ne seroit jà par moy occis” [I assure you, the woman I love would never be slain by me] (*M2*, v. 129-130)⁹. Syllable counts are erratic, as witness the opening stanza:

“Harau, Martin! Pour Dieu, di moy
Se ce monde en tel desroy
Pourra longuement durer.
Verité, Raison, Justice et Foy
Se partent dolant; et, je croy,
Si tost ne doivent retourner.
Il n’est conte, duc ne roy
Qui ne honneure, comme je voy,
Les faulx qui les sevent flater.
On fait aux bons quiat annoy:
On les repute au banes, hors loy;
On les voit batre et fouler,
Leurs biens tolir, d’honneur priver.” (*MI*, v. 1-13)

[“Alas, Martin! Tell me, for God’s sake, if this world can long remain in such disorder. Truth, Reason, Justice, and Faith are leaving in sorrow, and I don’t think they’re likely to come back any time soon. I can see that there isn’t a count, duke, or king who doesn’t honour the hypocrites who know how to praise them. Good people suffer great wrongs; they’re considered exiles and outlaws; we see them beaten and trampled on, stripped of their wealth and dishonoured.”]

While most lines are octosyllabic, others contain seven or nine syllables (v. 2, 3, 7, 12; 4, 11). Variation is not at all consistent across stanzas: in other words, the dialogues are not composed in regular heterometric stanzas, but simply contain numerous hypo- and hypermetric lines¹⁰. Some can easily be regularized by supposing common phenomena in late medieval French verse, hiatus (“ce mondë”, “longüement”) or elision (“Verté”); inserting or removing elements where syntax permits; or simply correcting apparent typos (“ban(es)”). But such emendations are not always possible, nor easily defensible. To suppose that v. 7, 9, and 12 must read, say, “[nul] conte”, “sevent [bien]”, and “[tous] batre” may generate reassuringly familiar octosyllables, but is not at all necessary to complete the sense of those lines. In any case, to correct the obviously unacceptable “quiat” to “grant” would produce a heptasyllable in need of re-regularization. Hence there are no grounds for ascribing *Harau Martin*’s formal inconsistency, any more than its linguistic deficiencies, to poor workshop practice. Rather, the conjunction of haphazard metre and morphosyntactical confusion strongly supports the conclusion that Gédéon Huet reached in 1900: that the translator was a native speaker of Dutch, not French.

Some of Huet’s other assessments are less compelling. He dismisses the possibility that the translator adopted a stress-based approach to verse; I consider this below. He also deplors

⁸ Some surviving lines are incomplete: see especially Fredericq, “Nieuwe fragmenten”, p. 40-41.

⁹ This observation was first made by Huet, who reproduces several other examples and also notes haphazard use of flexional -s/-z: “La traduction française”, p. 99-101.

¹⁰ Huet, “La traduction française”, p. 95-96, charts the variation across the first ten stanzas of *MI*; his findings rely on Fredericq’s transcriptions.

the frequently approximate rendering of content, which clearly emerges from a comparison of the first French stanza with its source:

“Wapene, Martijn! hoe salt gaen?
Sal die werelt iet langhe staen
In dus cranken love?
So moet vrouwe ver Ere saen
Sonder twifel ende waen
Rumen heren hove.
Ic sie den valschen wel ontfaen,
Die de heren connen dwaen
Ende plucken van den stove;
Ende ic sie den rechten slaen,
Bede bespotten ende vaen
Alse die mese in de clove,
Recht offene God verscove.” (Wapene Martijn, v. 1-13)

[“Alas, Martin! What’s going to happen? Will the world remain long in such ill repute? If so, then Lady Honour must certainly leave the noble court right away. I see dishonest men, who can flatter lords and curry their favour, being warmly welcomed; and I see good people struck down, not only mocked but imprisoned like a mouse in a trap, just as if God has forsaken them¹¹.”]

For aesthetic reasons we may regret, among other things, the absence of Maerlant’s striking mousetrap simile from the French poem; but simply to deplore such losses is to misrecognize how translators handled verse in the Burgundian Low Countries¹². The sizeable corpus of Dutch verse based on French sources shows clearly that translators prioritized verse’s formal features – seeking to conserve or indeed refine them – and/or its affective and connotative value, rather than its exact content; not so much what verse *said* as what it *did*¹³. There is no reason to suppose that a translator working from Dutch to French, particularly one who was evidently much more familiar with the source language and culture, would approach the task differently.

Be that as it may, the translation would be a poor substitute for anyone who knew or could read Maerlant’s work in Dutch. Its linguistic shortcomings also limit its value for Dutch-speakers who might need to learn French¹⁴. Brito may have envisaged some potential buyers in these categories, but it is very likely that his public would mainly have been French-speaking. Precisely the public, in other words, which would immediately notice *Harau Martin*’s inadequacies. What, then, does its publication mean?

Jean Brito’s publishing strategies

A partial answer is suggested by Brito’s other printed output. His one datable publication is an anonymous work of political propaganda, normally designated *La défense de monsieur le duc et madame la duchesse d’Autriche et de Bourgogne* (USTC 70205, ISTC id00135800), and

¹¹ Like a number of manuscripts, the translator’s source seems to have read “*bescatten*” [financially exploited] rather than “*bespotten*” [mocked]: *Strophische gedichten*, p. xxxviii.

¹² Huet, “La traduction française”, p. 103-104; his views are echoed in *Strophische gedichten*, p. xxxviii-xxxix.

¹³ Armstrong, “*Half dicht, half prose gheordineert*”, p. 17, 22, 29-30.

¹⁴ Resources for such readers were hardly thin on the ground in Bruges, which had long been a centre for the production of multilingual vocabularies and phrase books. See especially *Le Livre des mestiers de Bruges et ses dérivés: quatre anciens manuels de conversation*, ed. J. Gessler, Bruges, Le Consortium des Maîtres Imprimeurs Brugeois, 1931; and, in relation to the Low Countries more generally, B. van der Have, “Taalonderwijs: vier triviumteksten”, *Een wereld van kennis: bloemlezing uit de Middelnederlandse artesliteratuur*, ed. E. Huizenga, O. S. H. Lie, and L. M. Veltman, Hilversum, Verloren, 2002, p. 37-62, at p. 48-58.

published between late August 1477 and late April 1478¹⁵. Other editions appeared within a timespan of seven years at most, between 1475 and 1481¹⁶. Two are bilingual editions of the *Disticha Catonis*, an ancient collection of sententious couplets widely used as an educational text in the Middle Ages; one edition includes both the Latin text and a Dutch translation (USTC 435332, ISTC ic00312600), while the other combines the Latin with the fourteenth-century French verse translation of Jean Le Fèvre de Ressons (USTC 71004, ISTC ic00314350). A second school text accompanied by a versified Le Fèvre translation is probably Brito's final known publication. The *Ecloga Theoduli* (not in USTC; ISTC it00153500), a tenth-century verse dialogue between a pagan shepherd representing falsehood and a Christian shepherdess representing truth, figures alongside the French text – commonly known as the *Theodelet* – in an edition whose watermarks permit dating to 1480-1481¹⁷. The only edition to survive in a complete copy, apart from the *Défense*, is the French redaction of Jean Gerson's *Opus tripartitum* (USTC 71095, ISTC ig00245100), three edifying religious texts of which Gerson composed both Latin and French versions: *Le livre des dix commandemens*, *L'Examen de conscience*, and *La science de bien morir*. Each of these editions points, however incompletely, towards particular forms of reception.

The *Défense* is a quite substantial prose work (77 quarto pages), produced in the wake of the events that followed Charles the Bold's death at Nancy in January 1477: French conquests of various Burgundian territories, and the marriage of Charles's daughter Mary of Burgundy to the Hapsburg prince Maximilian of Austria. Its author provides an overview of Franco-Burgundian relations over recent decades, refuting Louis XI's territorial claims and promoting the authority of Mary and her new husband. He also seeks to prevent defections, warning against French blandishments and justifying whatever expenditure might be needed to prepare for a resumption of hostilities. The work was evidently an official commission; its author had been granted access to various chancery documents, which he reproduces wholly or partly¹⁸. His prose is elaborate, and he quotes a number of documents in Latin. All this suggests that we might qualify the claims of Émile Picot and Henri Stein, the *Défense*'s first editors, that the edition would have been printed in large numbers for dissemination across the whole region¹⁹. Certainly print was very convenient for rapidly disseminating material of this kind in times of crisis. Yet the *Défense*'s detailed historical argument, weighty style, and untranslated Latin imply a target audience with a certain level of education and cultural experience: opinion-formers, rather than a general public.²⁰ What is more, while its political message would resonate throughout the Burgundian Low Countries, since troops and resources needed to be raised from across the region, it was most urgently needed in the most vulnerable areas: Hainaut, south-western Flanders, and those parts of Artois not already under French control. There is, then, strong justification for identifying Brito's market as comprising aristocratic and municipal élites across the region, but particularly in areas lying south of Bruges.

Gerson's *Opus tripartitum* also leads us south (or more precisely south-west) of Bruges, albeit for a very different reason. Gerson had significant associations with Bruges: he became

¹⁵ Brito's edition bears no title. See *De vijfhonderdste verjaring*, p. 249-250; *Recueil de pièces historiques imprimées sous le règne de Louis XI*, ed. É. Picot and H. Stein, Paris, Société des Bibliophiles Français, 1923, vol. 1, p. 213-262 (introduction and edition); vol. 2, p. 141-181 (facsimile); *Colard Mansion*, ed. Hauwaerts, de Wilde and Vandamme, p. 59.

¹⁶ Adam, *Vivre et imprimer*, vol. 2, p. 47-48. It is of course possible – indeed likely, in view of his publishing choices – that Brito printed other books of which no trace remains.

¹⁷ See the entries for "Brito" on the website *Watermarks in incunabula printed in the Low Countries*.

¹⁸ *Recueil de pièces historiques*, vol. 1, p. 214.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Simultaneous manuscript dissemination is also likely. Brito's own manuscript source was not a low-status production: it included instructions for illustrators, which were erroneously retained in his edition (*Recueil de pièces historiques*, vol. 1, p. 217-218).

dean of St Donatian's in 1393, though he spent little time in the city and was eventually stripped of his benefice in 1411²¹. It therefore makes sense for a local printer to publish a relatively mass-market work by a figure of such high ecclesiastical standing. In fact two local printers had the same idea: Colard Mansion brought out his own edition of the *Opus tripartitum* (USTC 71096, ISTC ig00245150) between 1477 and 1484²². The two Bruges editions are independent of each other: their readings are quite different, and Mansion's includes two further works²³. Both printers advertise Gerson's name; Mansion on the final page in an *explicit*, and Brito on the first page in a heading that introduces the *Livre des dix commandemens*. But Brito's heading, visually emphasized by display type and red ink, contains much more information than this:

C'est cy la coppie des deux grans tableaux esquelx tout le contenu de ce livre est en escript, qui sont atachiez au dehors du cœur de l'église Nostre Dame de Terewane, au costé devers midi, pour l'instruction et doctrine de tous chrestiens et chrestiennes de quelconque estat qu'ilz soient. La quelle doctrine et instruction fut composée en l'universite de Paris, par très saige et très discret homme et maistre en divinité maistre Jehan Jarson, chancelier de Nostre Dame de Paris; et ce à la requeste et priere de nostre reverend père en Dieu monseigneur l'évesque de Terewane, nommé maistre Mahieu Regnault, dont nostre seigneur Jhesucrist veulle avoir l'ame. (USTC 71095, fol. [a]1^r)

[This is the copy of the two great panels on which the entire contents of this book are written, which hang on the south side of the chancel of Notre-Dame in Thérouanne to instruct and educate all Christian men and women of whatever condition. These lessons and teaching were composed in the University of Paris by Master Jean Gerson, Chancellor of Notre-Dame in Paris²⁴, a man of great wisdom and prudence, and a Master of Theology. He was asked and entreated to do so by our Reverend Father the Bishop of Thérouanne, whose name was Master Mathieu Regnault; may God rest his soul.]

Readers' attention is immediately drawn to a regional landmark, where either the *Livre des dix commandemens* or the whole *Opus tripartitum* is claimed to be on public display²⁵. Details cannot be verified, not least because in 1533 the whole city of Thérouanne, including its cathedral, was literally razed to the ground on the orders of Charles V²⁶. Yet the heading's

²¹ A. Brown, *Civic ceremony and religion in medieval Bruges c.1300-1520*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 114.

²² Dating, on the basis of the type used, is from the ISTC entry. Mansion also printed the *Donat esprituel*, his own translation of Gerson's *Donatus moralizatus*, between 1476 and 1484 (USTC 71090, ISTC ig00225200). On these translations, see Colard Mansion, ed. Hauwaerts, de Wilde and Vandamme, p. 25, 85. On the fortunes of the *Opus tripartitum* in the region more generally, see K. Schepers, "Het *Opus tripartitum* van Jean Gerson in het Middelnederlands", *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 79, 2008, p. 146-188. D. Hobbins, *Authorship and publicity before print: Jean Gerson and the transformation of late medieval learning*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 148, 196, notes the *Opus tripartitum*'s very extensive distribution and orientation towards ordinary lay readers, and adduces evidence for its distribution at the Council of Constance.

²³ When the two texts are compared with Gilbert Ouy's edition, which is based on various manuscripts, their variants prove to have little in common. See *Gerson bilingue: Les deux redactions, latine et française, de quelques œuvres du chancelier parisien*, ed. G. Ouy, Paris, Champion, 1998, p. 2-51, 64-93. In Mansion's edition the *Opus tripartitum* is followed first by an anonymous *Forme de confession*, then by the second redaction of an anonymous work often ascribed to Gerson, *Exhortation à la communion et absoute générale pour le jour de Pâques*. See G. Hasenohr, *Textes de dévotion et lectures spirituelles en langue romane (France, XII^e-XVI^e siècle)*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2015, p. 92-93.

²⁴ Gerson was in fact Chancellor of the University of Paris, and a canon of Notre-Dame.

²⁵ On the heading's implications, see also Schepers, "Het *Opus tripartitum*", p. 159-161; E. Vansteenbergh, "Le Doctrinal de Gerson à la cathédrale de Thérouanne", *Bulletin de la Société des antiquaires de la Morinie*, 15, 1929-1937, p. 467-474.

²⁶ See P. Martens, "La destruction de Thérouanne et d'Hesdin par Charles Quint en 1553", *La forteresse à l'épreuve du temps: destruction, dissolution, dénaturaion, XI^e-XX^e siècle*, ed. G. Blicke, P. Contamine, C. Corvisier, N. Faucherre, and J. Mesqui, Paris, Éditions du CTHS, 2007, p. 63-117; O. Blamangin, L. Dalmau, and J. Maniez, "Il commanda qu'elle fust rasée et démolie jusques aux fondemens": la destruction de la ville et

effect is clear: it not only emphasizes Gerson's authority, but also promotes a major cathedral in the region. It may, indeed, have encouraged pious readers to pay a visit, though this would have been no small enterprise if the starting point were Bruges: Thérouanne was some three days' ride away, and lay in hostile territory after its capture by French forces in March 1477²⁷. In any case, the heading strongly suggests that the edition was aimed at a wide regional market, notably the large diocese of Thérouanne and perhaps neighbouring areas.

Standard school texts, such as the *Disticha Catonis* and *Ecloga Theoduli*, could in principle be disseminated very widely; though in practice they would most likely be printed to meet local demand²⁸. The inclusion of vernacular translations makes Brito's editions particularly suitable for those learning basic Latin, which was the primary though not the sole educational purpose of both books (and there is definite evidence that various schools in late medieval Bruges used both Dutch- and French-language materials)²⁹. But the translations also mean that these editions could be used by readers who already knew Latin and sought to develop their competence in the other vernacular, either within or outside a formal educational context³⁰. For this purpose the Latin/French *Disticha* and *Ecloga* would be more useful to Dutch-speaking learners of French than *Harau Martin*, an approximate translation into poor French not physically accompanied by the original. Brito's editions adopt an alternating layout, which had already become common in manuscripts of Le Fèvre's translations: in the *Disticha* each Latin distich is followed by a corresponding vernacular quatrain, while in the *Ecloga* one or more lines of Latin are followed by one or two quatrains of the *Theodelet*³¹.

The Dutch translation of the *Disticha* is attested nowhere else³². By contrast, Le Fèvre's version was widely disseminated, and Colard Mansion printed his own bilingual edition around 1476 (USTC 71003, ISTC ic00314300). The two Bruges texts resemble each other quite closely, though the Brito fragments are too small to provide clear evidence of any filiation

de la cathédrale de Thérouanne (Pas-de-Calais) en 1553", *Archéopages*, 39, octobre 2013 – janvier 2014, p. 22-31.

²⁷ See D. Potter, *War and government in the French provinces: Picardy 1470-1560*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 37, 40.

²⁸ P. F. J. Obbema, "Johannes Brito alias Brulelou", *Hellinga Festschrift: forty-three studies in bibliography presented to Prof. Dr. Wytze Hellinga on the occasion of his retirement from the Chair of Neophilology in the University of Amsterdam at the end of the year 1978*, Amsterdam, Nico Israel, 1980, p. 357-362, discusses partial manuscript evidence for Brito's production and sale of the *Disticha*.

²⁹ On the educational use of the Latin works, see especially F. Vielliard, "La traduction des *Disticha Catonis* par Jean Le Fèvre: perspectives codicologiques", *Approches du bilinguisme latin-français au Moyen Âge: linguistique, codicologie, esthétique*, ed. S. Le Briz and G. Veysseyre, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, p. 206-238, at p. 208-209; G. L. Hamilton, "Theodulus: a medieval textbook", *Modern Philology*, 7, 1909, p. 1-17; *Den duytschen Cathoen*, ed. A. M. J. van Buuren, Hilversum, Verloren, 1998, p. 12-16. The *Disticha*'s ethical purport is considered in R. Hazelton, "The Christianization of 'Cato': the *Disticha Catonis* in the light of late medieval commentaries", *Medieval Studies*, 19, 1957, p. 157-173; A. M. J. van Buuren, "'Der clerken boec moeten si lesen': de *Disticha Catonis* en het *Boec van Catoene*", *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, ed. J. Reynaert, Amsterdam, Prometheus, 1994, p. 70-85 and 373-380, at p. 71-74. R. R. Post, *Scholen en onderwijs in Nederland gedurende de middeleeuwen*, Utrecht, Spectrum, 1954, p. 139-152, considers Latin teaching in the Low Countries more generally. On education in Bruges, particularly the presence of different languages, see A. Dewitte, "Scholen en onderwijs te Brugge gedurende de middeleeuwen", *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis*, 109, 1972, p. 145-217, at p. 156-169.

³⁰ The *Boec van Catoene*, an earlier Dutch translation of the *Disticha*, is similarly likely to have been used in both schools and households: Van Buuren, "'Der clerken boec'", p. 79-84.

³¹ Vielliard, "La traduction", p. 218-220, 225.

³² Transcribed in W. L. De Vreese, "Fragment eener vertaling der *Disticha Catonis* gedrukt door Jan Brito", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche taal- en letterkunde*, 19, 1901, p. 275-283. Further references are provided in the text. Van Buuren, "'Der clerken boec'", p. 375-376, n. 33 identifies five other attested or possible translations besides the *Boec van Catoene*; see also A. M. J. van Buuren, *Levenslessen van Cato: het verhaal van een schoolboek*, Amsterdam, De Buitenkant, 1994, p. 10-26.

between the two³³. What *can* be established with some certainty is a direct relationship, not identified in previous research, between the French and Dutch translations. The evidence lies in a rare and idiosyncratic mistranslation by Le Fèvre:

*Quod potes id tempta: nam litus carpere remis
tutius est multo quam velum tendere in altum*³⁴.

[Attempt only what you can do; for it is much safer to row close to the shore than to spread sail on the high seas.]

Tempte sanz plus ce que tu pourras faire.
Se tu sens que ta nef a vent contraire,
Plus sœur vas par aviron sanz voile
Que ne atendre en hault tes corde[s] ne ta toile. (v. 631-634)

[Attempt what you will be able to do, and no more. If you realize that your ship is heading into the wind, you'll travel more safely by furling your sails and rowing than by stretching your rigging and your canvas up high.]

Based on a misunderstanding of the nautical term “*in altum*”, the confused rendering is not preserved in the Latin/French Brito fragment³⁵. However, the corresponding passage does figure in the Latin/Dutch fragment; it contains exactly the same misreading, some obvious French/Dutch cognates, and a very similar structure:

*Tempteir niet meer danstu muechs herden.
Wil wijnt dijn scepe contrarie warden,
Maer biden lande zulstu bet[er varen]
Dan hooghe dijn coorde ghetrocken warden. (p. 279, v. 16-19)*

[Attempt no more than what you can sustain. If the wind wishes to blow against your ship, you'll have a smoother journey by simply staying close to the shore than if your ropes were pulled up high.]

Clearly the Dutch *Disticha* is based not (or not solely) on the Latin source, but rather on Le Fèvre's translation³⁶. It seems overwhelmingly likely that the Dutch version was produced especially for Brito's edition, on the basis of his French text³⁷.

These fragments are hugely important for our understanding of Brito's activity. In the first place, and as previous studies have been peculiarly reluctant to mention, the Dutch *Disticha* is the only book containing Dutch text that is known to have been printed in Bruges before the second decade of the sixteenth century. This in itself makes Brito unique: a printer with a monopoly, however limited and temporary, on local readers who spoke no vernacular language other than Dutch. In the second place, the relationship between the Dutch and the French *Disticha* reminds us that in the relatively polyglot environment of Bruges, an interplay of

³³ The Brito fragment is edited with reproductions in J. Nève, *Catonis Disticha: facsimilés, notes, liste des éditions du XV^e siècle*, Liège, Vaillant-Carmanne, 1926, p. 39-43. On Mansion's edition, see Colard Mansion, ed. Hauwaerts, de Wilde and Vandamme, p. 157. Le Fèvre's translation is edited in J. Ulrich, “Der Cato Jean Lefevre's nach der Turiner Handschrift I. III. 14 zum erstenmal herausgegeben”, *Romanische Forschungen*, 15, 1904, p. 70-106. Further references are provided in the text. On Le Fèvre's sources and approach, see E. Ruhe, *Untersuchungen zu den altfranzösischen Übersetzungen des “Disticha Catonis”*, Munich, Hueber, 1968, p. 211-232.

³⁴ *Disticha Catonis*, ed. M. Boas and H. J. Botschuyver, Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1952, IV.33.

³⁵ Ruhe, *Untersuchungen*, p. 226 identifies and explains Le Fèvre's misinterpretation.

³⁶ Influence from the *Boec van Catoene*, the only earlier Dutch translation, can be ruled out. The equivalent stanza appears in three manuscripts of the *Boec*; it is very different, and lacks the nautical image entirely. See *Den duytschen Cathoen*, ed. Van Buuren, p. 132, 140, 174.

³⁷ Linguistic evidence is, indeed, consistent with an origin in Bruges: De Vreese, “Fragment eener vertaling”, p. 281.

vernaculars was a daily reality and a vital resource for many cultural agents: scribes, printers, and indeed teachers, as well as authors and translators. Brito's Dutch *Disticha* is on a continuum with Caxton's translations from French, and indeed with his own *Harau Martin*. In the third place, the existence of a pair of vernacular editions, doubtless printed in quick succession with the Latin type left standing, is a very early example of a tendency that developed in sixteenth-century Antwerp: the simultaneous publication of parallel Dutch and French versions, particularly of ephemeral works³⁸. In this sense Brito was something of a pioneer.

It is also worth noting that when Brito and Mansion print the same text, the physical presentation of Brito's editions is rather more sophisticated than that of Mansion's. The better-known printer uses neither red ink nor display type for his *Opus tripartitum*; Brito systematically employs textura for headings and other display purposes, while the body of the text is printed in his standard bastard type. Both editions contain a table of contents for the *Livre des dix commandemens*, but only Brito's table includes folio references. Mansion's Latin/French *Disticha* again uses a single typeface throughout, while Brito distinguishes between Latin and vernacular in his editions by printing the former in textura and the latter in bastard³⁹. Brito's editions may have been smaller than those of his local rivals – Mansion's Bruges editions were almost exclusively, and Caxton's primarily, folio volumes – but in some respects at least he offered readers a richer visual experience.

Brito's commercial orientation, towards new or otherwise overlooked audiences that might extend some way beyond Bruges, enables us to make more sense of *Harau Martin*'s publication. To geographically diffuse but predominantly southern élites, devout readers in the hinterland of Thérouanne, and formal or informal learners and teachers of both Latin and vernacular languages, we may add a French-speaking literary public with a taste for more novelty than other publishers could provide, willing to discover classic local poetry that they could not read in its original language.

Foreignizing Maerlant

The question of novelty, indeed, underpins my second perspective on *Harau Martin*. Recent theories of translation have increasingly reflected on the ways in which translations intervene in the target literary culture, to endorse or challenge its values and assumptions. Lawrence Venuti's distinction between "domestication" and "foreignization" has proved especially productive. Domesticating translations minimize the alterity of their source texts, assimilating them to target cultural norms, while foreignizing translations challenge readers' cultural assumptions by resisting easy processing, particularly though not exclusively by retaining discursively unfamiliar aspects of their source texts⁴⁰. By introducing new forms of expression in this way, foreignizing translations can enrich the literary system of the target culture. As a translation whose language and form are clearly at variance with accepted target cultural practice, *Harau Martin* is an obvious result of foreignization, whether or not that process was deliberate. However, morphosyntax is more appropriately considered from my

³⁸ See M. Walsby, "Printing in French in the Low Countries in the early sixteenth century: patterns and networks", *The multilingual muse: transcultural poetics in the Burgundian Netherlands*, ed. A. Armstrong and E. Strietman, Cambridge, Legenda, 2017, p. 54-70, at p. 63-67.

³⁹ Similar practices are evident in various manuscripts of Le Fèvre's translation: Vielliard, "La traduction", p. 226-227. In the *Theodulus*, Brito uses textura for headings that indicate speakers, but not for Latin text. Similarly, in the *Défense* textura is used for the opening word/s in each paragraph, but not for Latin quotations. Brito's typefaces were designed by Johan Veldener: *Colard Mansion*, ed. Hauwaerts, de Wilde and Vandamme, p. 66, 79.

⁴⁰ J. Munday, *Introducing translation studies: theories and applications*, 3rd ed., London, Routledge, 2012, p. 218-221 is a useful introduction to these concepts. See also Venuti's own retrospective account: L Venuti, *Translation changes everything: theory and practice*, London, Routledge, 2013, p. 2-3.

third perspective, for reasons that will become apparent. My treatment of foreignization focuses instead on two formal features: stanzaic form and metre.

For Middle French poets, innovative stanzas and rhyme schemes were a way of developing and exhibiting technical mastery, often in competition with predecessors and contemporaries. The same tendency is apparent in several Dutch translations of Middle French verse, which adopt more complex stanzas than their models, as well as in the form of the original *Martijn* poems: Maerlant's stanza is unusually elaborate in the context of his work as a whole, and Joost van Driel has suggested that it is a competitive response to contemporary Flemish narrative poetry⁴¹. *Harau Martin* reproduces the source poems' form, though not Maerlant's alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, which the translator may not have noticed or may have considered too difficult to incorporate. In any case, the form has no precedent in Middle French, and therefore makes an innovative intervention into the target poetic field⁴². Paradoxically, of course, by adopting a foreignizing form the translator is adhering to target cultural poetic norms, which value innovation; however, this innovation is demonstrably connected to the source culture, which leaves an obvious mark on the poems' metre and language.

Harau Martin's metre is more radically foreignizing than its other formal features. As noted above, syllable counts are inconsistent in ways that no well-informed literary public would consider acceptable. Gédéon Huet considers whether the translator had tried to reproduce Maerlant's stress-based verse; he rejects the notion on the grounds that too many lines bear either too many or too few stresses⁴³. However, if *Harau Martin* is re-examined on the basis of more recent and linguistically informed findings on accent and metre in French, its stresses correlate much more closely with the pattern of the source poems. The most useful model for this purpose has been developed by Roger Pensom, who identifies "structured alternation of accent" as a transhistorical linguistic phenomenon in French, and proposes a model for establishing accent-distribution in verse:

- MARK 1. group accent (obligatory lengthening) at obvious syntactical junctures (traditionally cesura and line end);
2. intra-phrasal word accent (obligatory rise in pitch) on (in order of priority) (a) polysyllables, oxytonic or paroxytonic *and* diacritical accent on monosyllables of relatively low frequency of occurrence [in practice this includes semantically determined accents (*accent d'insistance*) on higher-frequency monosyllables]; (b) accent on the counter-tonic(s) of oxytones of more than two syllables and paroxytones of more than three.
- DELETE any *intra-phrasal* accent juxtaposed to any other in accord with the above priorities⁴⁴.

⁴¹ On Dutch translations, see Armstrong, "Half dicht, half prose gheordineert". On Maerlant's stanza, see J. van Driel, "Jacob van Maerlant's strophic poems and Flemish literature", *Formes strophiques simples – Simple strophic patterns*, ed. L. Selaf, P. Noel Aziz Hanna, and J. van Driel, Budapest, Akademiai, 2010, p. 109-127.

⁴² Nor are there any subsequent attestations. Key studies and sources of Middle French verse note various examples of *treizains* on two rhymes, but none rhyming *aabaabaabaabb*. See H. Chatelain, *Recherches sur le vers français au XV^e siècle: rimes, mètres et strophes*, Paris, Champion, 1907, p. 162-164; Arnoul Gréban, *Le mystère de la Passion*, ed. O. Jodogne, Brussels, Académie royale de Belgique, 1965-1983, vol. 2, p. 134-135; Jean Michel, *Le mystère de la Passion (Angers, 1486)*, ed. O. Jodogne, Gembloux, Duculot, 1959, p. cviii; C. Thiry, "Prospections et prospectives sur la rhétorique seconde", *Le Moyen Français*, 46-47, 2000, p. 541-562.

⁴³ Huet, "La traduction française", p. 97-98.

⁴⁴ R. Pensom, "Accent and metre in French", *French Language Studies*, 3, 1993, p. 19-37, at p. 35, 36. See also R. Pensom, *Accent and metre in French: a theory of the relation between linguistic accent and metrical practice 1100-1900*, Berne, Peter Lang, 1997; *Le sens de la métrique chez François Villon: "Le Testament"*, Berne, Peter Lang, 2004; *Accent, rhythm and meaning in French verse*, Cambridge, Legenda, 2018. For applications to the poetry of Jean Molinet (1435-1507), see A. Armstrong, "Pattern and disruption in formalist poetry: the example of Jean Molinet", *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 98, 1997, p. 209-216; "Printing and metrical naturalisation: Jean Molinet's *Neuf preux de gourmandise*", *Essays in late medieval French literature: the legacy of Jane Taylor*, ed. R. Dixon, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010, p. 143-159, at p. 156-158.

Applying this model to *Harau Martin*'s opening stanza yields the following results, with stresses marked by 1 and unstressed syllables by 0:

“Harau, Martin! Pour Dieu, di moy	01010111 (<i>accent d’insistance on Dieu and di</i>)
Se ce monde en tel desroy	0110101 (<i>accent d’insistance on ce</i>)
Pourra longuement durer.	0100101
Verité, Raison, Justice et Foy	101010101
Se partent dolant; et, je croy,	01001101 (<i>accent d’insistance on et</i>)
Si tost ne doivent retourner.	01010101 (<i>si tost construed as a single lexeme</i> ⁴⁵)
Il n’est conte, duc ne roy	0110101 (<i>accent d’insistance on n’est</i>)
Qui ne honneure, comme je voy,	00101001
Les faulx qui les sevent flater.	01001001
On fait aux bons quiat annoy:	01010101
On les repute au banes, hors loy;	000101011 ⁴⁶
On les voit batre et fouler,	0011001
Leurs biens tolir, d’honneur priver.”	01010101

Seven of the eight *a*-rhymed lines bear four or even more accents, while three of the five *b*-rhymed lines bear three. As in other stanzas, various lines cannot be assimilated to the source poems’ prosody without emendation; nevertheless, a clear overall pattern emerges. The *a*-rhymed lines consistently bear more accents than the *b*-rhymed lines, so much so as to compel the conclusion that the translator recognized and sought to replicate Maerlant’s use of stresses⁴⁷. Unlike the poem’s stanzaic form, this can hardly be accepted as good poetic practice in the target culture. Yet a hybrid product of this kind is just what we might expect to find in a “contact zone” where new forms arise from interactions between different cultures⁴⁸. The use of accentual rather than syllabic metre, indeed, had been typical in another contact zone where poetry was composed in a variety of French: the Anglo-Norman culture of post-Conquest England⁴⁹.

Stylized Dutch French

Like its metre, *Harau Martin*'s morphosyntax conveys traces of Dutch which, in a culture where speakers of different vernaculars interacted frequently if not always with significant interlingual competence, would doubtless be recognizable as such. This suggests a third perspective on the translation, informed by the recent sociolinguistic work of Gaëlle Planchenault on what happens when a given language is staged (literally or in writing) through the medium of another language⁵⁰. The dialogue of French-speaking characters in anglophone

⁴⁵ This was extremely common in Middle French. See the entry for “tôt” in the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, which can be accessed via the ATILF website.

⁴⁶ If three successive unaccented syllables are considered inadmissible, as in some versions of Pensom’s model, *les* would also bear an accent.

⁴⁷ Inconsistencies may of course reflect the translator’s imperfect French. R. Dixon, “The blind leading the blind? Choreographing the transcultural in Pierre Michault’s *La Dance aux aveugles* and Gheraert Leeu’s *Van den drie blinde danssen*”, *The multilingual muse*, ed. Armstrong and Strietman, p. 149-161, discusses the reverse process: a French-Dutch translation where significant variations in the source’s syllabic metres are either conveyed through stress patterns in the Dutch version or compensated through other formal refinements.

⁴⁸ M. L. Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone”, *Profession*, 1991, p. 33-40, formulates the notion of the contact zone. For an application to the Low Countries, see A. Armstrong, ““Imprimé en la ville marchande et renommée d’Anvers”: Antwerp editions of Jean Molinet’s poetry”, *Queeste*, 23, 2016, p. 123-137, at p. 134.

⁴⁹ See especially R. C. Johnston, “Some notes on Jordan Fantosme’s *Chronicle*”, *Studies in medieval French language and literature presented to Brian Woledge in honour of his 80th birthday*, ed. S. Burch North, Geneva, Droz, 1987, p. 87-101, at p. 87-96.

⁵⁰ G. Planchenault, *Voices in the media: performing French linguistic otherness*, London, Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 125-138.

films and TV shows, for instance, typically displays a stylized alterity based on “favoured linguistic tokens”, such as untranslated lexemes or syntactic structures that are ostensibly characteristic of French. These tokens appeal to monolingual audiences’ assumptions about how bilinguals speak⁵¹.

For *Harau Martin*’s French-speaking readers, the numerous uninflected predicative adjectives and participles surely worked in this way, conveying a flavour of Dutchness to those largely unfamiliar with the language, just as Hercule Poirot’s expression conveys Frenchness in British TV dramas. Planchenault refers to Poirot’s dialogue as “stylized French English”; we might therefore describe *Harau Martin*’s language, irrespective of the intention behind it, as “stylized Dutch French”⁵². It is much less conventional than most medieval literary stagings of foreign languages, where the tokens are typically lexemes and/or graphic representations of mispronunciation⁵³. Nevertheless, it remains a case of stylization: a single syntactic feature synecdochically represents Dutchness to the audience. As with any such stylization, however, what is really at stake is the target audience’s own norms. In recognizing deviations from these norms, viewers or readers are reassured about their linguistic and cultural competence. Stylized performances, then, ultimately reinforce stereotypes, and thereby also the audience’s collective solidarity⁵⁴. Hence *Harau Martin*’s Bruges readers, even as they gain access to an alternative local literary heritage, simultaneously gain security in their existing values.

Conclusion

What, then, does *Harau Martin* reveal? It enables us, firstly, to develop a much fuller and clearer picture of Jean Brito’s activity. He emerges as an innovative and enterprising publisher, who acts as a mediator in various ways: between Dutch literary culture and French-speaking audiences, between Latin and local vernaculars, between the ducal régime and the regional élites on whose support it depended, between different locations associated with Gerson. Further, *Harau Martin* demonstrates that in the Burgundian Low Countries, verse is just as capable of crossing borders between vernaculars as prose; but that the mobility of verse need not entail its assimilation to target cultural norms. Foreignizing translations do exist at this time, and can be a provocation to target cultural aesthetics, notwithstanding the reassurance vouchsafed by their linguistic stylization. Most importantly, perhaps, the *Harau Martin* reminds us that no translation can ever be fully domesticating or foreignizing; and in doing so, it prompts us to reconsider our views of other vernacular translations in the region. These have often been considered essentially domesticating, since they are apt to reshape ideological motifs from courtly to bourgeois contexts⁵⁵. Yet they contain foreignizing elements too – often including non-linguistic source cultural features, such as versification or material presentation – which analysis has often dismissed, tried to explain away, or simply ignored. We could usefully stop looking *past* these elements, and start looking *at* them.

⁵¹ Planchenault, *Voices in the media*, p. 125.

⁵² Planchenault, *Voices in the media*, p. 127.

⁵³ See especially A. Butterfield, *The familiar enemy: Chaucer, language and nation in the Hundred Years War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 66-101. On lexical borrowings and switches between French and Dutch in literary contexts, see C. Emerson, “‘Gescryfte met letteren na elcx geval gegraueert en oic dyveerssche ymagyen’: uses of code-switching in Dutch and French”, *The multilingual muse*, ed. Armstrong and Strietman, p. 42-53.

⁵⁴ Planchenault, *Voices in the media*, p. 126-127, 137-138.

⁵⁵ See, for example, S. Raue, “Een nauwsluitend keurs: aard en betekenis van *Den triumphe ende ’t palleersel van den vrouwen* (1514)”, PhD thesis, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1996, p. 103-122.