

Instruments of Community: Dutch Sonnets in Alba Amicorum, 1560-1660

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Abstract

This article analyses the emergence and development of Dutch sonnets through Netherlandish alba amicorum from the period 1560 to 1660. It discusses the advent of the sonnet in the Renaissance literature of the Low Countries in the 1560s, showing how artists, scholars, and poets with connections to the Dutch refugee community in London became early adapters of this genre through their alba amicorum. We argue that this group used the sonnet as a form of exile literature, which communicated attachment to the fatherland and the righteous causes of the Dutch Revolt. Next, the essay explores the Dutch sonnets in the alba amicorum of Janus Dousa and Jan van

Hout. Instrumental in establishing Leiden University in 1575 and expanding its reputation, both Dousa and van Hout encouraged the writing of sonnets in their alba as a means to advocate the use of Dutch as a literary language. Tracing the Dutch sonnet within the alba amicorum of the Low Countries, it is clear that the Dutch sonnet should be considered as the outcome of an emancipatory effort. At a moment in time where traditional non-personal inscriptions in alba amicorum were the mode, these poets used the sonnet to distinguish themselves from other contributors in the album, while at the same time conveying a clear message. First, Dutch sonnets in alba were written to claim a specific group identity connected to a Dutch migrant community. Second, these sonnets were adopted within the friendship books of the intellectual elite in Holland in order to assert a forefront position for the vernacular language equal to that of Latin, and which supported political and linguistic emancipation. After the establishment of the Dutch Republic and the emancipation of the Dutch language were completed in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the sonnet seemed to have achieved currency in Netherlandish culture. Around the same time the number of sonnets in alba drastically dropped. The lack of exclusivity might have been the main cause of this decline.

Keywords: album amicorum, sonnet, Abraham Ortelius, Emanuel van Meteren, Jan van Hout, Netherlandish Renaissance literature

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The regular album amicorum of the early modern era is a book of friends in which friendship is expressed in a set pattern accompanied by a more or less stereotypical formulation, often in Latin.¹ Having been invited to add their name to the pages of a friend's album, someone would write for instance:

This have I, Willem Baudaert from Deinze, written with pleasure, as evidence and token of an only recently established but everlasting friendship between myself and the gentleman Daniel van Vlierden, a very learned and discerning young man. On 29 June 1593 in Leiden.²

Alongside this traditional album inscription in Latin, some early modern alba also feature declarations of friendship in the form of poems. In this article, we draw attention to the advent of one specific kind of poem in alba amicorum: the sonnet. When did the first sonnets make their appearance in alba from the Low Countries? Why was this particular form of poetry adopted for an album contribution? And why were they written in Dutch? This article will trace the introduction and development of the Dutch sonnet by following its presence in alba amicorum. It will argue that the writing of a Dutch sonnet in an album amicorum was an emancipatory act, a deliberate attempt to connect people to a shared fatherland, history, and language.

In alba amicorum of Netherlandish owners up to 1700, 129 sonnets in a vernacular language can be found: 8 in Italian, 5 in Spanish, 53 in French, and 63 in Dutch. Only four sonnets were written after 1625.³ After a general introduction on the history of the

¹ For an introduction to the album amicorum up to 1700, see Thomassen, *Alba amicorum*, 11-19; Thomassen, *Aan vrienden gewijd*, 13-69; Reinders, *De mug en de kaars*, 7-32; Klose, *Corpus alborum amicorum*, ix-xviii.

² The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek (hereafter KB), 74 G 21, Album amicorum of Daniel van Vlierden, fol. 141: 'Haec in symbolum et tesseram amicitiae inter me et D[ominum] Danielem a Vlierden iuvenem Doctissimum humanissimum recens quidem initiae, sed perpetuo duraturae libens scripsi Wilhelmus Baudartius Deinsanus, 3^o Kal[endas] Iulii, 1593. Lugduni Batavorum.' Transcription and translation are derived from Van de Venne, *Viret in arDuo Virtus*, 382-383.

³ This corpus is based on the Repertorium alborum amicorum, <https://raa.gf-franken.de/de/startseite.html> (Accessed on 17 May 2021), the database 'Alba amicorum in Nederland', <https://www.kb.nl/bronnen-zoekwijzers/databanken-mede-gemaakt-door-de-kb/alba-amicorum-in-nederland> (Accessed on 17 May 2021), and secondary literature.

sonnet, this article will first discuss the way sonnets were introduced into the literary culture of the Low Countries, following the aristocratic students who started copying Italian and French sonnets in the alba of their female friends. The article will then turn to those sonnets appearing in the alba of Abraham Ortelius, Emanuel van Meteren, and the Leiden friends Janus Dousa and Jan van Hout. Subsequently, we will explore the alba of the Leiden scholars Jacob van Heemskerck and Petrus Scriverius, compiled between 1600 and 1625, amongst others. Because the later alba, from the period 1625-1660, hardly contain any sonnets in the vernacular, this article concentrates on the first period of bloom of the Netherlandish album amicorum, and the rise of the sonnet as one of the characteristic expressions of Renaissance poets.⁴

The Sonnet and the Low Countries

Before delving deeper into the history of the sonnet in the Low Countries, it is important to define the sonnet as a literary genre. A sonnet is a fourteen-line poem, an octave consisting of two quatrains (four lines), and a sestet of twice three lines (the tercets). It follows a fixed rhyme scheme. In the Italian sonnet, the octave has two rhymes (abba-abba) and the sestet two or three (cdc-dcd or cde-cde). The French variant shows a deviation in the sestet. Here the three rhymes are arranged as follows: ccd-edc or ccd-ecd. In the seventeenth-century literature of the Low Countries the French variant with the rhyme scheme abba-abba-ccd-ecd became the most frequently used. Between the octave and sestet, a turn (*volta*) occurs. Here the perspective of the poem changes, for instance from question to answer or from description to conclusion. In the Italian sonnet the metre is the hendecasyllable, a line of poetry consisting of eleven syllables. In the French sonnet the alexandrine is applied, a line of poetry comprising six iambs. This metre was also used in the Netherlandish Renaissance sonnet.⁵ After the third metrical foot there is a pause: the *caesura*. If these characteristics feature in the form in which the poem has been written or printed, and if the poem is designated by the word 'sonnet' or variants thereof (known as *klinkdicht* or *klinck-gedicht* in Dutch – literally 'sound-poem'), then we are dealing with sonnets.⁶

The sonnet seems to have originated in Italy. As early as the thirteenth century, sonnets were written in Sicily at the court of King Frederick II. The genre was popularized by poets such as Dante Alighieri and Francesco Petrarca. Especially Petrarca with his *Canzoniere* (c. 1370), written in praise of a woman named Laura, made the sonnet widely popular. His sonnets were emulated by poets throughout Europe, in particular by French poets united in the *Pléiade* such as Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay. The sonnet became known in the Low Countries through the *Pléiade*, but also through other poets such as Clément Marot and Philippe Desportes. The works of these Italian and French sonnet

⁴ Forster, 'Iets over Nederlandse renaissancelyriek', 274-302.

⁵ For the most recent discussions on the influence of French literary culture within the sixteenth-century Low Countries, including the development of the sonnet, see Van der Haar, *The Golden Mean of Languages*.

⁶ Mönch, *Das Sonett*; Roose, 'En is 't de liefde niet'; 'Sonnet'; Strengholt, 'Sonnetten en pseudosonnetten'; Stutterheim, 'Sonnetten en pseudosonnetten'.

poets became quite popular in the middle of the sixteenth century, either in editions from Italy or France, or in editions printed by presses in the Low Countries. In 1561 the Antwerp rhetorician Willem van Haecht exclaimed that Dutch poetry was progressing at such a rate he hoped there would soon be Netherlandish poets that would be able to emulate Ronsard and Marot in France or Petrarch in Italy.⁷ By the end of the 1560s, books of 'El divino Petrarcha' were indeed circulating in the Low Countries, as for instance can be established from the 1567 inventory of the possessions of Hendrik van Brederode in the castle of Vianen.⁸

Early Poets of Sonnets in Dutch

The very first sonnet published in Dutch was written by the Ghent painter and rhetorician Lucas d'Heere (1543-1584). It appeared in the *liminaria* of a small volume of poetry by Pieter de Backere, published in Ghent in 1558 under the title *Sommighe vriendelicke ende zeer hertelicke minnebriefkens tusschen de leerende Ziele ende Alethia* ('Some friendly and very heartfelt love letters between the studious Soul and Alethia').⁹ D'Heere lived in Paris in 1559-1560 while in the service of Catharine de' Medici, certainly a reason why his 'familiarity with French literature should not amaze us'.¹⁰ The translations and emulations in his most famous work *Den Hof en Boomgaard der Poë sien* ('The Garden and Orchard of Poetry'), published in Ghent in 1565, suggest that he knew the work of Marot and Thomas Sebillet before his stay in Paris. The book contains ten Dutch sonnets by d'Heere and one Dutch sonnet written by his wife Eleonora Carboniers. She had translated one of her husband's French sonnets into Dutch for this publication, and by doing so became the first woman in the Low Countries to publish a sonnet in the vernacular.¹¹ All of these sonnets were dedicated to a specific person within d'Heere's personal network and seemed to have functioned as poetic declarations of friendship. He would not enjoy the fame of his publication for long, however. A Calvinist, d'Heere fled to England just before the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt. On 27 November 1568 he was officially declared an exile by the Council of Troubles. In London, d'Heere became an elder of the Dutch Reformed Church. It was through this position, as well as on account of his literary and artistic interests, that he acquired a large circle of acquaintances within the Dutch refugee community.¹²

Another Dutch poet living in London at that time was the Antwerp squire Jan vander Noot. Also a Calvinist on the run from the civil unrest in his motherland, vander Noot, who is canonically considered to be the first Renaissance poet in the Low Countries, published two works of Dutch poetry in London, *Het Theatre* ('The Theatre', 1568) and *Het Bosken*

7 *Spelen van sinne*, fol. B2v.

8 Ypes, *Petrarca*, 35, n. 2, with a reference to Laboranter, 'Inventarisatie der meubelen', 329-341.

9 D'Heere, *Den hof en boomgaard der poë sien*, xi.

10 Waterschoot, 'Marot or Ronsard', 146.

11 Waterschoot, 'Het sonnet van Eleonora Carboniers'.

12 D'Heere probably kept an album amicorum during this time. Unfortunately, its whereabouts are currently unknown: Waterschoot, 'De bijdrage van Daniel Rogers'.

(‘The Woods’, c. 1570). D’Heere must have known vander Noot well, since he wrote a laudatory ode for the preface of *Het Theatre*. Like d’Heere, vander Noot was influenced by the French poets of his day. *Het Theatre* and *Het Bosken* contain numerous sonnets, which are often translations of or feature borrowings from Petrarch and the *Pléiade* poets.¹³ In 1578 vander Noot visited Paris, where he met Ronsard and Jean Dorat.¹⁴ The influence of this visit is most noticeable in his *Poetische Werken*, a series of poems published between 1580 and 1595, several of which (including numerous sonnets) he dedicated to his maecenas. Although vander Noot did not have an album amicorum of his own, he was familiar with the genre. In 1572 he had published his own edition of a booklet containing coats of arms of various members of the Cologne cathedral chapter, titled *Stambuch*, while a contribution dated 1583 in the album amicorum of the Antwerp mayor Nicolaas Rockox is probably signed by him.¹⁵ Moreover, his *Poetische Werken* series can be regarded as a literary programme attempting to maintain a network of friends through poetic declarations of friendship in print. As such, it can be compared with alba amicorum in that it sought to achieve the same goal through a different medium.

Students Among the Nobility

Apart from their overall interest in French literature, Lucas d’Heere and Jan vander Noot derived most of their knowledge of sonnets from their visits to France. They were not the only ones. Students from the Low Countries who were able to afford a grand tour also became acquainted with Petrarch’s poetry and his emulators while studying in France and Italy. We know this through the alba amicorum of this generation of students, who often were of noble birth. For example, Carel van Arnhem, who had matriculated at Padua in 1573 as a law student, copied Petrarch’s sonnet 365 (*l’vo piangendo*) into at least two separate alba: those belonging to Walraven van Stepraedt (undated) and Rutghera van Eck (1599).¹⁶ Another student, Jacob van Duvenvoirde Obdam, wrote Petrarch’s sonnet 224 (*S’una fede amorosa*) into the album of Theodora van Wassenaer.¹⁷ When Cornelis van Beresteyn travelled through France, Switzerland, and Italy between 1608 and 1611, and studied law in Padua in 1610-1611, Camillo Cardoni, an otherwise unknown individual who was probably a fellow student, copied Petrarch’s sonnet 62 (*Padre del Ciel*) into his album amicorum as a farewell (a ‘felice

13 Vander Noot’s influence can be discerned in the undated contribution of one Adam van Heerdt in the second album amicorum of Joanna Bentinck: The Hague, Hoge Raad van Adel (hereafter HRvA), Van Spaen 87b, Album amicorum of Joanna Bentinck, fol. 120v. Van Heerdt copied two sonnets from his *Bosken*, though not entirely correctly: Reinders, *De mug en de kaars*, 313.

14 Vander Noot, *Het Bosken*; Waterschoot, *Poetische werken*, II, 11.

15 See Vander Noot, *Stambuch*; Fabri, ‘Rockox’ aha-ervaring’, 50-51. For vander Noot’s entry, see Antwerp, Rubenshuis, RH.D.O35, Album amicorum of Nicolaas Rockox, fol. 24r.

16 Arnhem, Gelders Archief, Ms. 412, Album amicorum of Walraven van Stepraedt, fol. 157v; HRvA, Collection Alexander Schimmelpenninck van der Oije 12a, Album amicorum of Rutghera van Eck, fol. 108r.

17 Oxford, Bodleian Library (hereafter Bod), Douce 221, Album amicorum of Theodora van Wassenaer, fol. 174r. See also Reinders, *De mug en de kaars*, 95, 119, 312, 461; *Petrarch’s Lyric Poems*, 381.

viagio').¹⁸ A certain Adamus Huls copied two sonnets by Philippe Desportes in the late sixteenth-century album of Clara van Beers, *Chasser de vostre cueur la dure cruauté* and *Las que me sert quand la douleur me blesse*, in all likelihood using an edition printed in Antwerp as a copy text.¹⁹

Being introduced to sonnets as a new genre of poetry in France or Italy, these students passed on their fascination with the genre in their own contributions to the alba amicorum of their personal network. Is it a coincidence that many of these Petrarchan sonnets turn up in the alba amicorum of female owners? Probably not. Alba of female owners often contain poems or songs. These men copied celebrated poets in order to make an impression on their female counterparts. In borrowed words they described the beauty of their (hypothetical) lover and their own pangs of passion, whether truly heartfelt or not.

The London Connection: Sonnets in the Alba of Van Meteren and Ortelius

During the years 1568-1573, the persecution of Protestants by the Duke of Alba precipitated an exodus of fugitives to England, especially from the southern provinces of the Low Countries. Protestants and rebels from Antwerp had a preference for settling in London, the site of a safe haven in the form of Austin Friars, the Dutch Church established by refugees.²⁰ Among the four thousand Dutch migrants who took up residence in the English Capital were – in addition to the aforementioned refugees Lucas d'Heere and Jan vander Noot – the merchant-historian Emanuel van Meteren, the merchant Johan Radermacher, and the artist Joris Hoefnagel. Together, they formed a close-knit circle of literati who all occupied themselves with writing Dutch poetry.²¹

Emanuel van Meteren is often described as being pivotal to this London circle of friends. As consul for the Dutch merchants in England as well as postmaster, he kept in contact with the Netherlandish refugees and their families in the Low Countries.²² On the title-page of his album amicorum, written in 1575, van Meteren stated that he began this album because his previous one was confiscated by the Spanish government.²³ On the following page he wrote a sonnet inviting his friends to create their 'own beautiful motto' ('eenighe schoon deuijs'), that testifies to their keen minds and clever ingenuity ('constich Ingien'):

EMANUEL VAN METEREN TO HIS FRIENDS

You lovers of virtue, knowledge, and godly life,
I invite and pray you to leave here by your own hands
A fine motto truly testifying to
Your good faculty and clever ingenuity.

18 Leerintveld, 'Het liedboek van Anna Steyn', 21; Den Tex, 'Nederlandse studenten', 122, no. 339; KB, 1900 A 151, Album amicorum of Cornelis van Beresteyn, fol. 204v; Leerintveld, 'Cornelis van Beresteyn'.

19 KB, 153 J 35, Album amicorum of Clara van Beers, fols. 114r-v, 125v. Cf. Philipe Desportes, *Les premieres œuvres*, 'Amours de Diane', Bk. II, xxiiii, fol. 47v, and Bk. I, xxi, fol. 6r, respectively.

20 Asaert, 1585, 63-70. See also Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities*; Grell, *Calvinist Exiles*.

21 Joby, *Dutch Language in Britain*, 285.

22 Harkness, *The Jewel House*, 25-25; Meganck, *Erudite Eyes*, 141.

23 Rogge, 'Het album van Emanuel van Meteren', 162. The album is kept in Bod, Douce 68. See also Bass, *Insect Artifice*, 84-85.

So that hereafter for eternity
 It may serve as a seal to this fine volume
 Of our great unity and abundant love
 It is written in this book, and also in our hearts.

And that we will ardently be urged
 By these fine and well-made tokens
 To remember our faith and laudable deeds.

And to follow those fervently and to bind them to us
 in a bond that will nevermore separate us,
 for IF GOD IS ON OUR SIDE, NOTHING CAN HARM US.²⁴

The sonnet encourages readers to imitate these tokens of friendship assiduously, because as van Meteren notes in his final line, 'If God is on our side, nothing can harm us'. He thus cleverly includes his personal motto, derived from Romans 8:31, 'Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?'.²⁵ Further on into the album, on the first numbered leaf, van Meteren sets the tone with his own contribution (fig. 1): a drawing of the nativity scene at the foot of a mountain, with a shepherd herding his cattle on its grassy slope. In the sky we see a golden sun with the word Emanuel in Hebrew and, in a banderol, van Meteren's own motto 'quis contra nos'. Underneath the drawing, van Meteren explains in a second sonnet (the first quatrain):

The happiest and most important tiding for man burdened with sin
 Was verily the name Emanuel,
 As this motto shows, as well as the Scriptures,
 Namely that God is with us and delivers us from evil.²⁶

Many friends responded to van Meteren's invitation. Between 1575 and 1609, 145 persons added their inscription to this second album as a token of their bond.²⁷ These inscriptions were inscribed in Antwerp, London, Middelburg, Delft, Nijmegen, Breda, Leiden, and The Hague. Among these friends are celebrities such as the geographer Abraham Ortelius, the painters Joris Hoefnagel, the aforementioned Lucas d'Heere, Hubertus Goltzius, and Abraham Bloemaert, the merchant Johannes Radermacher, the schoolmaster Peeter Heyns, the statesmen Philips van Marnix van St. Aldegonde and Christiaen Huygens Sr., the botanist Carolus Clusius, and the Protestant minister Johannes Wtenbogaart. All of them shared an interest in history and literature.²⁸

²⁴ Rogge, 'Het album van Emanuel van Meteren', 163. For the original Dutch text, see Appendix, sonnet 1.

²⁵ Van Meteren's motto is depicted in the portrait etching made by Hendrik Hondius in 1599, when he was sixty-three years old; it has been included at the beginning of his album. It has also been pasted into the album of Ernst Brinck, accompanied by a contribution written in London on 8 August 1607: KB, 133 M 86, Album amicorum of Ernst Brinck, fols. 128a v-129r.

²⁶ Rogge, 'Het album van Emanuel van Meteren', 164; Bod, Douce 68, Album amicorum of Emanuel van Meteren, fol. 1r: 'De blydste bootschap groot den mensch met sond beladen/Voorwaer wel te recht was den naem Emanuel,/So dees devyse wijst, en oock de schrift seer wel/Als dat God met ons is en ons verlost van quaden.'

²⁷ An index written at the back lists six names whose contributions have been removed from the album at a later date: the painter Franciscus Pourbus, Marcus Gerards, Paulina Ricchia, Adam Waghtendorf, Janus Dousa, and Willem Teelinck.

²⁸ Rogge, 'Het album van Emanuel van Meteren'; Klose, *Corpus alborum amicorum*, 86.

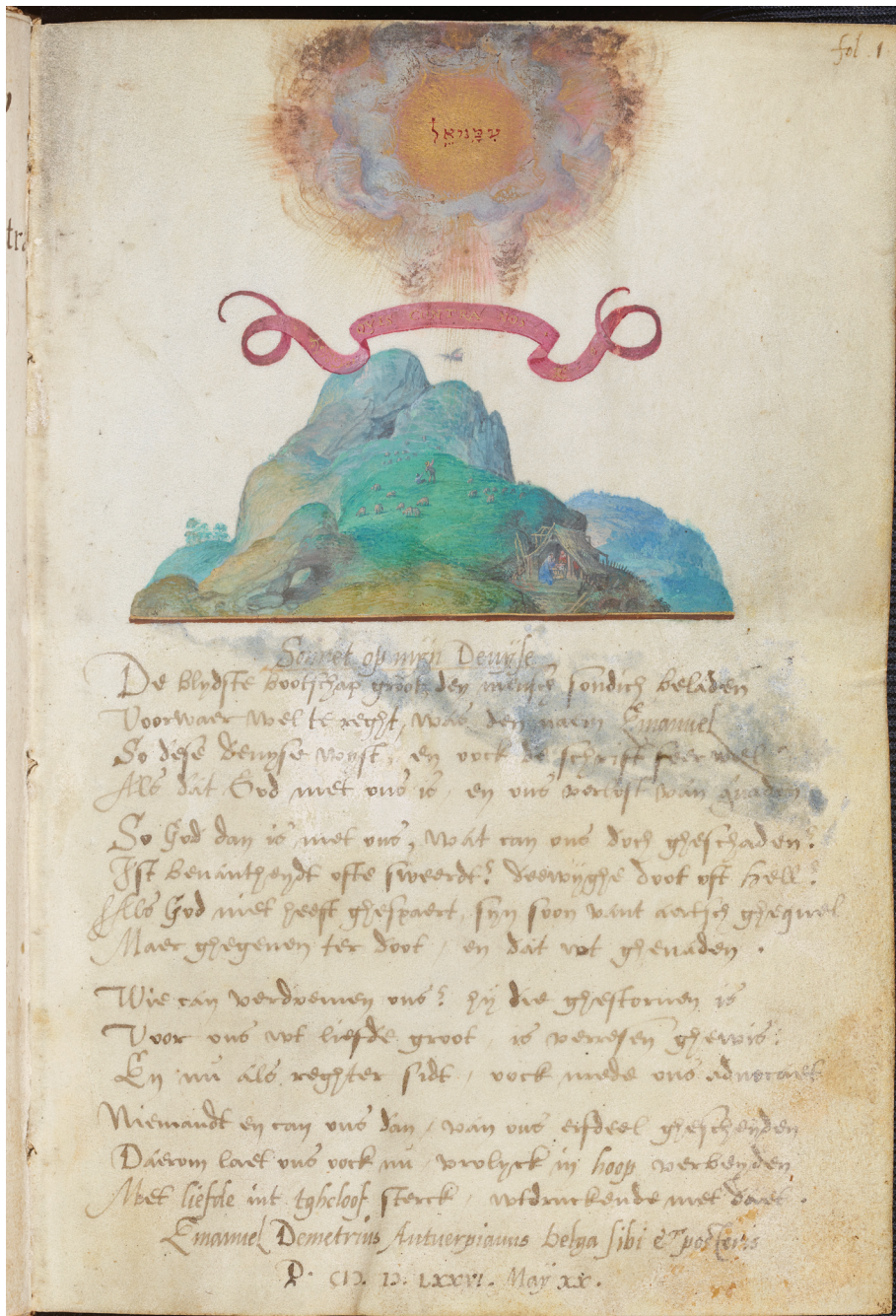


Fig. 1 Emmanuel van Meteren, Sonnet and drawing of the Nativity, in the album amicorum of Emmanuel van Meteren, pen and ink on paper, 13,6 x 19,1 cm, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Most inscriptions feature a traditional formula of friendship and are written in Latin. Lucas d'Heere, Peeter Heyns, and Abraham Bloemaert, however, responded to van Meteren's invitation by writing a Dutch sonnet of their own, as a novel alternative to the traditional classical epigram.²⁹ Peeter Heyns, who ran the *De Lauwerboom* ('The Laurel Tree'), a French school for girls in Antwerp between 1555 and 1585, was the first to do so, writing his sonnet on 21 March 1576, and accompanying it with an engraving of the nymph Daphne on the opposite page:

To be called a friend is to everyone's liking,
 But being united in friendly deeds,
 Is of short duration among so-called friends.
 When love comes to an end, friendship also perishes.

Against this Apollo made a stand.
 Although his Daphne was metamorphosed,
 He kept pursuing her at all times.
 Outward appearance will not harm true friendship.

Are there others? Yes, rest assured
 I consider van Meteren to be one of these,
 And all who hold EMANUEL dear.

Will our love for him cool down then?
 No, it will not, neither in joy or sorrow; for those who trust in God
 Thrive equally well in fortune and adversity.³⁰

In his poem, Heyns criticizes so-called friendship without love. As an example of true amity, he refers to the love Apollo cherished for Daphne even after she had been transformed into a laurel tree. Other examples are the friendships between 'Demetre' (van Meteren) and all who love Emanuel.

The sonnet is overflowing with subtle allusions. First of all, the reference to the mythological story of Apollo and Daphne was a conscious decision, since Heyns had used Daphne as his personal and professional emblem for years.³¹ By favourably comparing Apollo's friendship with that of van Meteren, Heyns emphasised their own reciprocal bond. In the last four lines of the poem, he similarly introduces a play of words on both of their personal mottos. As already mentioned, 'Emanuel' in Hebrew means 'God is with us', a reference to van Meteren's first name and the answer to his personal motto 'Quis contra nos'. The last two lines refer to Heyns's own motto: Good comes to him who trusts in God ('Well hem die Godt betrouwt').

The other two sonnets in van Meteren's album followed the example set by both himself and Heyns. Lucas d'Heere (on 5 June 1576) and Abraham Bloemaerts (undated) also made references to their personal motto or name in their poems. The five sonnets in the van Meteren album are also thematically similar, alluding as they all do to an unyielding faith in God. Although separated by distance, these Protestants from the Low Countries found in each other a shared faith and a love for new forms of poetry.

²⁹ Vermeer, 'Een veldtocht van sonnetten', 146.

³⁰ Rogge, 'Het album van Emanuel van Meteren', 170. For the original Dutch text, see Appendix, sonnet 2.

³¹ Meganck, *Erudite Eyes*, 192-193.

Another important connection for this London network of Netherlandish refugees was van Meteren's nephew, the famous Antwerp cartographer Abraham Ortelius. Although Ortelius never left Antwerp, he had dealings with all of the aforementioned intellectuals, and in 1577 he even stayed in London for a few months. His album remained in England as he gave it to his nephew and heir, the London merchant and man of letters Jacob Cool, on 1 June 1594, and it is now preserved in Pembroke College, Cambridge.³² Ortelius had begun collecting autographs, inscriptions, and sketches of his friends in the second half of 1573, and by his death in 1598 some 142 of his contemporaries – including Antwerp friends such as Peeter Heyns, the printer Arnold Mylius, and the humanists Theodorus Pulmannus and Victor Giselin – had made contributions, some of which were sent from abroad to be pasted onto its leaves.³³ Joris Hoefnagel, Carolus Clusius, Lucas d'Heere, Joannes Vivianus, and Christopher Plantin also contributed to his album. It is now considered to be 'a highly significant compendium of the scholarly, cultural and religious life of the Low Countries in the sixteenth century'.³⁴

Ortelius's album contains four sonnets in Dutch. The Antwerp patrician Michiel van der Haeghen wrote the first one, which was accompanied by six elegiac distiches in Latin and his coat of arms, encircled by a hedgerow (figs. 2-3).

SONNET

Just as the green hedge that is lovely entwined into unity
Endures by a harmonious bond, and nicely grows
So what has been tied together also is long-lasting,
For discord destroys the great, [and] unity makes small things grow.

Ah, how many a divided empire has disappeared!
Ah, how many a city has changed into a heap of stones
By rift and strife! This is where the devil goes.
Ah, how many a household wastes away to the bone!

Unity gives strength and power. So stay together,
Stuck to one another, and dispel rifts,
The origin of all evil, of ruin, and of plagues

That has destroyed the erstwhile lovely Netherlands
And daily still destroys the noble woman's crown.
Thus his device rightly is DO NOT PART FROM HEDGES.³⁵

Through his personal motto 'Scheydt niet vander Hagen' ('Do not part from hedges' – *hagen* in Dutch, thus alluding to his name), Michael van der Haeghen calls for unity. A hedge, after all, also consists of branches knotted together. Discord tears up everything

³² Cambridge, Pembroke College Library (hereafter Pembroke), Ms. LC.2.113, Album amicorum of Abraham Ortelius. The album is available on-line via <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-LC-00002-00113/8>. See also *Album amicorum Abraham Ortelius*; Van Dorsten, *Het terugvinden*.

³³ Harris, 'Het Album amicorum van Abraham Ortelius'; Harris, 'The Practice of Community'.

³⁴ Patricia Aske in the foreword to the album's digital edition: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-LC-00002-00113/8> (Accessed on 10 April 2020).

³⁵ Pembroke, Ms. LC.2.113, Album amicorum of Abraham Ortelius, fol. 21v. For a transcription of the original Dutch text, see Appendix, sonnet 3. See also Forster, 'Iets over Nederlandse renaissanceyriek', 287-288, although with some transcription errors.



Fig. 2 Michiel van der Haeghen, Coat of arms, pen and ink on paper, 11 x 16 cm, in the album amicorum of Abraham Ortelius, Cambridge, Pembroke College Library.

that grows too big and brings nothing but misery. It is the origin of all evil that has wreaked havoc on the once so beautiful Low Countries and daily destroys its crown, the city of Antwerp. The sonnet is undated, but considering its contents must have been written in or shortly after 1576, when Spanish soldiers plundered Antwerp in what is now known as the Spanish Fury. The neo-Latin poet van der Haeghen was a wealthy man and maintained friendly relations with humanists of his day, such as Justus Lipsius, Jean Dorat, Janus Gruterus, and Ortelius. Jan vander Noot was also on friendly terms with him. In the latter's *Poetische Werken* they both testify to their mutual friendship in sonnets written in Dutch. By composing sonnets in the vernacular, van der Haeghen demonstrated his poetic skills and claimed his place within the network of learning that included Ortelius and vander Noot.³⁶

The second Dutch sonnet in the album of Ortelius was written by Jan van Hout, a local rhetorician and the town secretary of Leiden. It was dated in Leiden on 25 October 1579:

To Abraham Ortelius (C.M.),
Earth-describer his friend

Sonnet

A simple DRY TWIG, cold of spirit and of sap,
You have desired, here in the orchard of your friends,
To graft onto a trunk, alongside many famous ones,
Whose murmuring foliage rustles against the blue arc of heaven.

What will one say, if one sees the gosling here?
Grubby-feathered, (never having shown any artistry)
Among white and snowy swans? 'Shoo! Goose, clear off you traveller!'
But since you desired it, so be it; receive here as a token of his friendship

This little blunt verse from your wooden friend [van Hout].
Blunt indeed, for it was nursed by Holland,
Where the spiritually DRY land bears no fruit, because of old manure

It now lacks manure and also the fruits of the mind.
Thus, we will always remain blunt. Just believe the old saying
That our Dutch spirit has not sprouted from any fertile earth.³⁷

Underneath the sonnet van Hout wrote: 'As a token of assured and unfeigned friendship with the said far-famed and highly learned gentleman Ortelius, within this city of Leiden in Holland some time ago begun and completed, the Dutch verses written above have been inscribed here, this 25th day of the month of slaughter [November] 1579, by Jan van Hout, obedient servant of his and all lovers of knowledge'.³⁸

³⁶ Waterschoot, *Poetische werken*, II, 373. For a biographical sketch: III, 173.

³⁷ Pembroke, Ms. LC.2.113, Album amicorum of Abraham Ortelius, fol. 113v. For a transcription of the original Dutch text, see Appendix, sonnet 4. See also Forster, 'Tets over Nederlandse renaissancecyriek', 292-293.

³⁸ Pembroke, Ms. LC.2.113, Album amicorum of Abraham Ortelius, fol. 113v: 'Tot een merc-teyken van gewisse ende unbevaysde vruntschappe mitten, genumden wijt-vermaerden ende hoochgeleerden Heere Ortelio binnen dezer stad Leyden in Holland zeeckeren tyt geleden begonst ende vulmaect syn de bovengeschreven nederlandsche verskens hier gestelt desen xxv^{en} slachmaent des Jaers xvllxxix by zynen ende aller cunst-liefhebberen Dienstwilliger Jan van Hout.'

In the poem, van Hout explains he was pressed by Ortelius to put down this sonnet in the Dutch language for Ortelius's orchard full of friends ('vrunden gaerde'). It is a dry twig ('dOR TELichsken'), compared to the prominent branches that reach for the heavens. What would people say if they saw this ugly gosling, which has never amounted to anything before, among all these beautiful white swans?³⁹ Van Hout considers his sonnet mere blunt verses, nursed by dry and uncivilised Holland ('dORTE Land'). 'Thus, we will certainly remain blunt', van Hout concludes, 'by itself our Dutch spirit has not sprouted from fertile earth'.

In previous research, Leonard Forster was of the opinion that van Hout considers his Dutch verses inferior to the Dutch poems that emanated from Ortelius's Antwerp circle. Holland lacks the 'manure' to make the land fertile for poetry. However, similarly to van der Haeghen, van Hout is making a play on words, alluding to Ortelius's name as dry ('dOR TELichsken' and 'dORTE Land') and his own surname, which in Dutch means wooden ('van Hout'). Van Hout thus compares his Dutch poem with the Latin poems in Ortelius's album. Moreover, his reference to the bluntness of the Hollander alludes to Erasmus's adage 'Auris Batava', where Erasmus famously praises the history and scholarly feats of his Dutch countrymen. Van Hout's sonnet must therefore be interpreted as a witty attempt at Erasmian irony. Van Hout was proud of his command of the Dutch language and his knowledge of the classics, and his poem bears testament to these skills.⁴⁰

Another inhabitant of Leiden, Cornelis Claesz. van Aecken, wrote the third sonnet in the Ortelius album, on 5 January 1580. His contribution consists of a hand-coloured engraved portrait, a laudatory poem in Latin, and a Dutch sonnet. Van Aecken, a professional goldsmith and an antiquarian in his own right, praises Ortelius's mapmaking talents in both poems. In his sonnet he gleefully imagines how he will now be able 'to travel on roads unpaved and wild oceans' without fear.⁴¹ After all, Ortelius's atlas, published in 1570, would allow him to travel the world without ever having to leave his house.⁴²

The last Dutch-language sonnet in Ortelius's album also alludes to his atlas, claiming that it 'offers ownership of the WORLD and makes us its Lord'.⁴³ It was written by the later librarian of the Bibliotheca Palatina, Janus Gruterus, or Jan de Gruytere, on 1 August 1582 while visiting Antwerp. Little is known of Gruterus's Dutch poems. According to his first biographer, Gruterus may have written some five hundred Dutch sonnets during his student days in Leiden from 1580 to 1584. Marnix van Sint Aldegonde, Janus Dousa, and Jan van Hout admired them. Only ten of his sonnets have survived, however, and he wrote one of these in his own album.⁴⁴

³⁹ The swan is the poets' symbol. We suspect that in this line Van Hout remembers the praise given to him by his friend Dousa, who noted that he could bestow the ravens the sound of a swan (see below).

⁴⁰ Forster, 'Tets over Nederlandse renaissancelyriek', 292-293. Cf. Van Stipriaan, *Lof der botheid*, 16-17.

⁴¹ Pembroke, Ms. LC.2.113, Album amicorum of Abraham Ortelius, fol. 99r: 'duer d'ongebaende wegen des woesten Oceans'. See also Forster, 'Tets over Nederlandse renaissancelyriek', 297-298; Waterschoot, *Poetische werken* III, 131.

⁴² Woodall, 'For love and money', 684-687.

⁴³ Pembroke, Ms. LC.2.113, Album amicorum of Abraham Ortelius, fol. 54v: 'hij geeft de WERELT in besit en maect ons Heer daer van'.

⁴⁴ Forster, 'Tets over Nederlandse renaissancelyriek', 295; Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 455-457; Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, 145. On 28 February 1585, Gruterus wrote a sonnet in Dutch in the album amicorum of Homme van

Odysseus's men who lacked nothing in wisdom,
 Sailed quickly by without injury of reproach.
 He who follows the path of the flesh, although it seems pleasing,
 Goes wrong in the end: since God takes vengeance upon him.

But he who avoids the bad, and follows closely after virtue,
 Enjoys the rewards of the right sort of happiness and rejoices,
 Even if he suffers blows along the way:

Thus thou who comes to know the servitude of sins,
 The ways they inflict deadly wounds on body and soul,
 HARM TEACHES THEE to become wise over time.⁴⁶

In exile, d'Heere lived by his motto 'Harm teaches you' ('SCHADELEERV'), an anagram of his name. He divulged that trust in God and lessons learned during difficult times bring happiness in both the poem he gave to Ortelius and the sonnets for the alba of van Meteren and Hoefnagel. Abraham and the men of Odysseus were examples worth following.

Curiously, in 1576, when Philips of Marnix, Lord of Saint-Aldegonde visited London on a diplomatic mission for the Dutch rebels, he gave Lucas d'Heere two sonnets, together with a silver cup and Dutch translations of four psalms. In all likelihood, the sonnets were intended for d'Heere's album, now lost. However, Johan Radermacher, a Dutch merchant in London who was also an elder of the Dutch Reformed Church in London, was so charmed by the sonnets that he copied them into his personal notebook.⁴⁷ The poems praise d'Heere's devotion to God and the Protestant cause.⁴⁸

Anecdotes such as this show that writing sonnets that functioned as literary gifts for friends was indeed common practice within a transregional network of Dutch poets and intellectuals. The alba of van Meteren and Ortelius were part of an attempt to recreate this community on paper.⁴⁹ Their circle of friends, who were mostly located in London (d'Heere, van Meteren, Radermacher, and Hoefnagel), Antwerp (Ortelius, van der Haeghen, Heyns, and Marnix of Saint-Aldegonde), and Leiden (van Hout, Gruterus, and van Aecken), bridged the distance between them by exchanging sonnets in their native tongue.⁵⁰ These poems allowed them to express their heartfelt solidarity and reciprocal friendship in a way which was both unique and deeply personal. The sonnets touched upon their own inventiveness and personal piety while at the same time connecting them to a learned network that shared their love for language and scholarship.

⁴⁶ Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-T-1911-83, Sonnet by Lucas d'Heere for Joris Hoefnagel, 1576. See for the original Dutch text the Appendix, sonnet 5. The translation (though slightly improved) is taken from Bass, *Insect Artifice*, 99-101, 262, n. 102 and n. 109.

⁴⁷ Ghent, University Library, BHSL.HS.2465, Album Amicorum of Joannes Rotarius. The manuscript may be consulted on-line via <https://lib.ugent.be/catalog/rug01:000773420>. See also Bostoën and Binnerts-Kluyver, *Het album J. Rotarii*.

⁴⁸ Joby, *Dutch Language in Britain*, 285-287; Bostoën, 'Marnix en d'Heere in tegenspoed'.

⁴⁹ Woodall, 'For love and money', 651.

⁵⁰ The use of the vernacular might have provided some of the Dutch migrants in London with 'a certain level of agency', as recently suggested by Alisa van der Haar, 'Linguistic Coping Strategies', 194.

Sonnets at Leiden University: The Alba of Janus Dousa and Jan van Hout

From 1575 onwards, Dutch sonnets were written in the alba amicorum of both van Meteren and Ortelius. However, this practice was not exclusive to their network of friends. Around the same time, sonnets started to appear in the alba of Jan van der Does, Lord of Noordwijk, and Jan van Hout in Leiden. Jan van der Does was the first librarian of Leiden University, who, under his Latinized name Janus Dousa, became a famous neo-Latin poet and philologist: he translated, for instance, both Petrarch and Desportes into Latin. Like Jan vander Noot and Lucas d'Heere, he first came into contact with French poetry – and that of the *Pléiade* in particular – during his years as a student in France. He began his studies in Louvain, and then travelled to Douai, where he started an album amicorum in 1563. While living in Douai and later Paris, several writers and philologists added inscriptions to his album.⁵¹ For example, the Greek scholar and *Pléiade* poet Jean Dorat entered a Greek inscription into the album when Dousa stayed with him. Another member of the *Pléiade*, Jean Antoine de Baïf, also contributed an entry in Greek on 22 January 1566. On 12 June 1566, Jean Morel, who kept a literary salon in Paris that was also frequented by the *Pléiade* poets, and his daughters Camila, Lucretia, and Diana wrote an inscription in Dousa's album.⁵² It is during his time in Paris, in April 1565, that Dousa's album also received its first French sonnet as a contribution, written by Johannes Le Roy Singhinen.⁵³ Back in Holland, however, Dousa quickly became entangled in the Dutch Revolt. In 1573 he was requested to organize the defence of Leiden against the Spanish army. After the city's relief in 1574 he played an important role in the founding of Leiden University, in 1575. Dousa would keep his album amicorum within arm's reach during the rest of his life, asking new acquaintances for contributions any chance he got.⁵⁴ The album thus contains no fewer than 138 contributions, in many forms and languages. Of the six contributions in Dutch, four are in sonnet form: two by van Leeuwen and one by vander Kammen and Gruterus.

On 24 August 1578 Dirk van Leeuwen wrote a Latin ode and two sonnets in Dousa's album.⁵⁵ Van Leeuwen was the first student to enrol at Leiden University. He studied law and lodged with Jan van Hout. On good terms with both Dousa and van Hout, he soon became part of their network of friends.⁵⁶ In his first sonnet, van Leeuwen declares himself unworthy to write in Dousa's album: 'My tongue is fat and coarse, my mind is cold as ice.'⁵⁷ However, after realising that Dousa has always been willing to listen to his 'unskilled poetry', van Leeuwen decides to write this sonnet as a 'token of their friendship'.⁵⁸ In his second sonnet, van Leeuwen's focus is on Dousa's own poetic skill, as he praises his friend's

51 Heesakkers, 'Een zestiende-eeuwse verzamelaar'; Heesakkers and Reinders, *Genoeglijk bovenal*; Heesakkers, *Netwerk*.

52 Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 25; Ypes, *Petrarca*, 91-94.

53 Leiden, University Library (hereafter UBL), BPL 1406, Album amicorum of Janus Dousa, fols. 74v-75r.

54 Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 19.

55 UBL, BPL 1406, Album amicorum of Janus Dousa, fols. 44r-v.

56 Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, 134-138.

57 UBL, BPL 1406, Album amicorum of Janus Dousa, fol. 44r: 'Mijn tonge es dick en grof, tverstant es ijsch kout.'

58 UBL, BPL 1406, Album amicorum of Janus Dousa, fol. 44r: 'mijn gedicht onkonstich'; 'vrundscapspandt'.

command of the mother tongue and thanks Dousa for his contribution of a sonnet written in both Latin and Dutch to his own album:

Your poetic song, which in both languages,
 Dutch and Latin, you have composed most ingeniously,
 And which has so brightly illuminated my unworthy book
 Has pleased me, Dousa.⁵⁹

Although the whereabouts of van Leeuwen's album are currently unknown, it probably contained more than this single, bilingual sonnet.⁶⁰ Exchanging sonnets with friends seemed to have been van Leeuwen's hallmark. He would contribute two more sonnets to alba amicorum other than Dousa's: one for the album of Jan van Hout (17 February 1578) and one for the album of his fellow lodger Albertus van Loo (26 September 1579).⁶¹

A third Dutch sonnet in Dousa's album was written by Franciscus vander Kammen. Also a neo-Latin poet, he wrote his Dutch sonnet together with a lengthy Latin dedication to Dousa in Leiden on All Saints' Day 1578. In the poem he praises Dousa for his heroic conduct during the siege of Leiden, comparing him to Achilles. Vander Kammen thinks that Dousa should be allowed to sing his own praises as a second Homer.⁶² Somewhere between 1583 and 1585, Janus Gruterus entered the fourth sonnet in Dousa's album amicorum. It follows a Latin poem and praises Dousa's poetic prowess. Although he describes his own skills as weak, Gruterus hopes that through the sonnet he is able to convey his heartfelt and genuine friendship. His sonnet ends with the statement in *Latin* that he has not written this bilingual product because of his own self-confidence. On the contrary, he was persuaded by the 'lures of your kindness', as a sign of gratitude for Dousa's friendship.⁶³

The two other Dutch contributions in the album must not go unmentioned. One is an undated short poem by the Amsterdam ship-owner and poet Roemer Visscher noting that he finds Dousa's first name quite appropriate. Just like the Roman god Janus, Dousa is looking two ways: backwards to the ancient poetry in Latin and forwards to the new poetry in Dutch.⁶⁴ The second is the by now famous contribution written by the Leiden town secretary and fellow administrator Jan van Hout on 2 December 1575. His contribution contains a drawing of a cartouche with an ornamental border containing the Dutch rebel flag, weaponry, and mangled bodies, undoubtedly representing the brutalities that occurred during the second siege of Leiden in 1574. In the upper border scene two friends greet each other, in all probability a representation of Dousa and van Hout. In the text, van Hout sings the praise of friendship which under the pressure of war has only grown stronger.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ UBL, BPL 1406, Album amicorum of Janus Dousa, fol. 44v: 'U poetycks gesanck, dat ghij in beyde taelen/In duijts ende in latijn, seer constich hebt gedicht,/En myn onwaerdich boeck soe helder heeft verlicht/Heeft, Douza mij verblijt. See also Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 223-224.

⁶⁰ Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 287-288.

⁶¹ KB, 424 B 11/A, Album amicorum of Albertus van Loo, fol. 11r.

⁶² UBL, BPL 1406, Album amicorum of Janus Dousa, fol. 67v.

⁶³ Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 455; UBL, BPL 1406, Album amicorum of Janus Dousa, fol. 119r.

⁶⁴ Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 338-341.

⁶⁵ Heesakkers, *Netwerk*, II, 391; Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 82-84.

After having written this inscription, and possibly inspired by Dousa's album, Jan van Hout began an album of his own, giving it the title *Vrüntbuuc* ('Book of friends').⁶⁶ The first entry was made on 10 February 1578 with an autograph prosopopoeic sonnet in which the booklet itself is speaking. It requests the Muses and Apollo to permit Jan van Hout a modest place amongst their followers. The booklet then declares that it is only open to poets who have been baptised in the springs of the muses, but will remain closed for those who are disdainful of the arts. Within a period of two years, twenty-six inscribers had complied with this restriction. Many of them also contributed to Dousa's album. Their names can be found among the members of the so-called *Gezelschap*, a literary circle formed around van Hout, Dousa, and Justus Lipsius, which was devoted to the art of poetry.⁶⁷ Thus, his album amicorum did not become a collection of declarations of friendship gathered at more or less chance meetings, but rather a 'manifestation of the poetical élan' which inspired van Hout in 1578.⁶⁸

Most contributions in the album are in Dutch and praise van Hout as a great champion of the Dutch language. The *Vrüntbuuc* contains seven sonnets in Dutch and one sonnet in French. Aside from his own opening sonnet we find the contributions of his aforementioned tenant Dirk van Leeuwen, the painter Dirc van der Laen, Jan de Groot, Gislenus Zoete, Dirck Volckertzoon Coornhert, and a fine sonnet by Janus Dousa.⁶⁹ Franciscus Modius contributed a sonnet in French (fig. 5).

Who once has tasted the nectar of your artistry,
 Van Hout, not the fear of all the Louvain garrottes,
 Nor the raging of mad John, full of his bastard's revenge,
 Can tear them away from you. Awakened by your spirit

One will see, where Valdez cracked his horns,
 A new poet crowning his head with myrtle
 Not in Latin or in French, but in our mother tongue.
 Am I dreaming? Or have I too been drenched in this sap?

Oh you, who made the Ausonian lute first sound in Dutch
 Oh you, who can present the ravens also with the song of a swan,
 Through you I have something in common with Phoebus,

Through you I ventured to translate Desportes,
 From you I have my poetic skill on loan,
 Thanks to you I dare to write my name into your booklet.⁷⁰

Dousa here praises his friend who, in spite of the danger presented by Catholic Louvain and the Spanish governor Don Juan, succeeded in binding people to him as a new poet in the mother tongue by means of his poetry. Because of van Hout, who was the first to make

⁶⁶ Leiden, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal (hereafter Lakenhal), Ms. 3385, Album amicorum of Jan van Hout; Heesakkers (ed.), *Het Vruntbuuc*; Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 71-81.

⁶⁷ Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, 139-148; Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 76.

⁶⁸ Fleurkens, 'Ekster onder de pauwen', 23.

⁶⁹ Fleurkens, 'Ekster onder de pauwen', 23.

⁷⁰ Heesakkers (ed.), *Vruntbuuc*, 126-134; Lakenhal, Ms. 3385, Album amicorum of Jan van Hout, fol. 9v. See for the original Dutch sonnet: Appendix, sonnet 6.

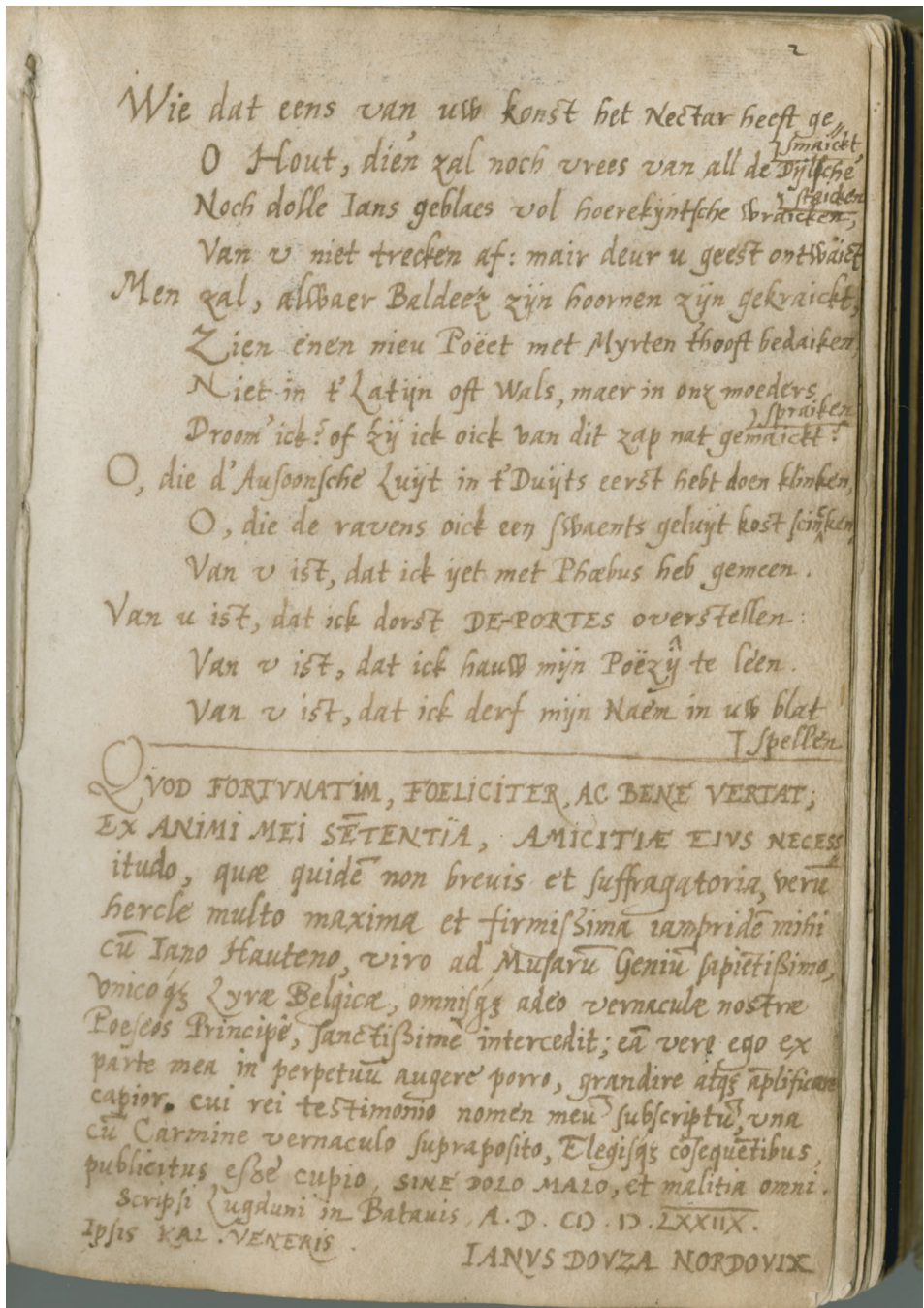


Fig. 5 Jan Dousa, Sonnet, 1 April 1578, pen on paper, in the album amicorum of Jan van Hout, Leiden, Museum De Lakenhal.

Latin resonate in Dutch, Dousa was able to write poetry and to translate Desportes. and it is van Hout who encourages him to write in his album.

The two Leiden alba show that Dousa and van Hout, two of the most important pioneers of the Netherlandish art of poetry in Holland, actively adopted sonnets to the Dutch language and introduced them to their university friends as a worthy alternative to Latin. Writing a Dutch sonnet in the alba of Janus Dousa or Jan van Hout was a statement, a testimonial to a shared interest in writing vernacular poetry in new ways. Under the impulse of Dousa, van Hout, and their adherents, the Dutch sonnet rose in popularity and became fashionable in the newly formed Dutch Republic.

Dutch Poetry in Alba, 1600-1660

Dousa died in 1604; his friend van Hout five years later. Both put a significant stamp on the emancipation of the Dutch language. In Leiden they were responsible for promoting a climate in which others, often students at Leiden university such as Daniel Heinsius and Petrus Scriverius, started to employ Dutch aside from the more dominant Latin. Dousa and Heinsius, for instance, greatly admired each other – or so it appears from the exchange of reciprocal laudatory poems in Dutch from 1601. These poems first circulated in manuscript form, but were later included in the printed Dutch poetry book *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* (Haarlem 1610).⁷¹

Heinsius, who was already making a name for himself as a Latin poet and philologist, was experimenting with Dutch poetry modelled after the Ancients. His attempts were later published as *Nederduytsche poemata* (Amsterdam 1616), including a programmatic introduction by his hand. The classical scholar and historian Petrus Scriverius enabled the publication. In his dedicatory poem at the beginning of the work, Scriverius equates the Dutch language with Greek and Latin and he calls upon Poetry to spread her wings in Dutch: ‘Netherlandish poetry, not being inferior to the Greek/and ancient Rome, now safely spread your wings,/as our Heinsius taught you to do.’⁷² According to Scriverius, this volume of poetry would ‘completely change the character of Dutch literature’. It was a ‘demonstrative application of the new standards of the scholarly art of poetry’ in Dutch.⁷³

Although Scriverius and Heinsius entered inscriptions into the alba of many domestic and foreign students visiting Leiden University, they never did so in Dutch, nor did they attempt to write a contribution in the form of a sonnet. They always employed the fixed traditional form discussed at the beginning of this article.⁷⁴ No album amicorum

71 These two poems have, for instance, been added by hand at the back of a copy of the songbook *Den nieuwen verbeterden lusthof* of 1607: Vermeer, ‘Een “Brief” wisseling’, 161-189.

72 Heinsius, *Nederduytsche Poemata*, 11: ‘Neerlandsche Poësy, niet minder als de Griecken,/En ’t oude Romen was: roert nu vry uwe wiecken,/Van onsen Heyns geleert.’ See also Becker-Cantarino, *Daniel Heinsius*, 23-54.

73 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, 183-185.

74 Sixty-eight inscriptions by Heinsius have been traced: Leerintveld, *Een heiligdom*, 45, n. 45. Forty-five contributions by Scriverius have been listed in Roscam Abbing and Tuynman, *Petrus Scriverius*, 218-222.

connected to Heinsius himself is known (although there is evidence he kept one).⁷⁵ Scriverius did have an album, however, into which four Leiden students would write Dutch sonnets or so-called *klinck-dichten*: George Rataller Doubleth, Johan van Heemskerck, Daniël Mostart, and the Frisian poet Jan Starter. Van Heemskerck wrote this sonnet on 13 May 1621:

Sound-poem

It is an incompetent hand that here, besides these Heroes
(whose half-deified names, known to everyone,
in Fame's fast chariot hurry through the universe),
dares to spell the name you never mentioned in our simple Dutch.

Don't you fear that you will be rightly called
arrogant, and someone who hardly knows himself?
Or do you think you will get out of here unscathed,
Because he invited you, who enforced his laws onto the book?

Do not elevate yourself, but reply to Envy
That he has made you worthy, for something you are unworthy of
And that you will therefore remain bonded to him;

Until your blunt pen, sharpened by practice
Will find itself competent, to follow in these heroes' footsteps
In describing the praises of the never enough praised WRITER.⁷⁶

Underneath his contribution van Heemskerck notes that he wrote the sonnet *patrio idiomate* ('in the language of his fatherland') at the invitation of Scriverius. He was clearly proud of his effort. Van Heemskerck's own album also includes two sonnets in Dutch, one by Jacob van der Burgh, the other by George Rataller Doubleth.⁷⁷ Another Leiden album, that of the famous Leiden fencing master Gerard Thibault, contains six sonnets in Dutch.⁷⁸

The sonnet was not only gaining popularity in the academic environment. Between 1587 and 1620, Dutch sonnets also started to appear in the alba of several women. In Zeeland, the late sixteenth-century album amicorum of Cornelia van der Hooghe van Borsele contains two Dutch sonnets (fig. 6).⁷⁹ The album of her niece Anna van Ceters, which covers the period 1610-1621, even has seven sonnets written in Dutch.⁸⁰ In Amster-

75 See for example the copy of Hugo Grotius's contribution in Heinsius' album in Heinsius, *Auriacus*, 127-128.

76 KB, 133 M 5, Album amicorum of Petrus Scriverius, fol. 164r. For the original Dutch text, see Appendix, sonnet 7. For an inventory of all contributions to the album, see Roscam Abbing and Tuynman, *Petrus Scriverius*, 214-217. Van Heemskerck's poem is also discussed in Leerintveld, *Een heiligdom*, 25-53.

77 KB, 131 H 7, Album amicorum of Johan van Heemskerck, fols. 98v-99r, 110v-111r. See also Leerintveld, *Een heiligdom*, 31, 34-36.

78 KB, 133 L 4, Album amicorum of George Rataller Doubleth. Three sonnets were by the artist Adriaen van Nieulandt, the playwright Theodore Rodenburg, and the poet Anna Roemers Visscher, respectively. The remaining sonnets were penned by the otherwise unknown contributors Jan Ysbrantsz. Kieft, Lambertus van den Bogaardt, and Lambertus van Someren. All sonnets were written between 1615 and 1623. This album also includes one sonnet in French and four sonnets in Spanish, possibly collected when Thibault was employed as a fencing master in Spain.

79 Amsterdam, Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap (hereafter KOG), Ms. 82, Album amicorum of Cornelia van der Hooghe, unfoliated.

80 KOG, Ms. 80, Album amicorum of Anna van Ceters, unfoliated.



Fig. 6 Anonymus, *Sonnet*, pen and ink on paper, undated, in the *album amicorum* of Cornelia van der Hooghe, Amsterdam, Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap.

dam, the *album amicorum* of Elizabeth Buycken, which was begun around 1587, includes six Dutch sonnets.⁸¹ Most of these sonnets were anonymous, but some were written by men who had studied at Leiden University, such as Gerard Sandelyn and Simon Walraven, both of whom matriculated in 1592. The sonnet had clearly become integrated into Dutch literature by the beginning of the seventeenth century. In their overview of Dutch literature between 1560 and 1700, Porteman and Smits-Veldt note the ‘increasing familiarity with the new genres – especially the sonnet’.⁸² During the first quarter of the seventeenth century Dutch culture was replete with sonnets in its own vernacular. Sonnets no longer served to merely strengthen the mutual bonds of a transregional network of Dutch poets and intellectuals, nor were they used as a demonstration of the modernity of the Dutch language. They occur in printed pamphlets, emblem books, printed songbooks, and in the preliminaries of volumes of prose and poetry.⁸³

Over the course of the seventeenth century, the number of early modern Netherlandish alba decreased sharply. For the first decade Thomassen counted seventy alba, whereas for the last decade he counted only eleven.⁸⁴ As a result, it is not very surprising that hardly any alba compiled after 1625 and including have come down to us. The most famous *album amicorum* of the seventeenth century, the one circulated among friends and acquaintances of the Amsterdam schoolmaster and poet Jacob Heyblocq between 1645 and 1678,

81 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Smith-Lesouëf 85, *Album amicorum* of Elizabeth Buycken, fols. 16v, 66v, 67r, 103v, 104v.

82 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, 58.

83 See Vrieler, *Het poëtisch accent*, 53-107 for sonnets in pamphlets. Concerning emblem books, the most famous example is Hooft, *Emblemata amatoria*, which at the end contains a section titled ‘Sommighe nieuwe Ghesanghen, Liedekens en Sonnetten’ (‘Some new Hymns, Songs, and Sonnets’). The publisher of the songbook *Den bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche Ieught*, Dirck Pietersz. Pers, advertises for the sonnet on its title-page: the garden has been ‘beplant met uijtgelesene elegien, sonnetten, epithalamien ende gesangen etc.’ (‘planted with excellent elegies, sonnets, wedding poems and songs, etc’). It contains twenty-one sonnets. Another well-known songbook is *Apollo of Ghesangh der Musen*, including the ‘Sonnetten van de schoonheid’, whose authorship is disputed. See also Leerintveld, ‘Constantijn Huygens niet de dichter’, 62-72. See for some dedicatory poetry (*drempeldichten*) in the form of sonnets: Duits, Gelderblom, and Smits-Veld (eds.), *Klinkend boeket*.

84 Thomassen, *Alba amicorum*, 11.

contains only one sonnet in Dutch. It was written in the album on 10 February 1660 by Herman Frederik Waterloos, the precentor in the Nieuwe Kerk of Amsterdam.⁸⁵

Conclusion

Surveying the alba amicorum discussed in this essay, we can conclude that both the compiler of an album, and those who contributed to it, were convinced that their declarations of friendship would have an afterlife.⁸⁶ If a 'bland' formal acknowledgement profession of friendship, as was mentioned at the beginning of this process, gave way to a literary form such as the sonnet, then we might suppose that there was a reason. In the Low Countries, the first sonnets appear in the second half of the sixteenth century, featuring mostly in the alba amicorum of Dutch noblewomen. These first sonnets were taken from the work of Petrarch and his French imitators. In all likelihood, the aristocratic inscribers decided to borrow words from 'genuine poets' to convey their feelings of friendship and love to their chosen ladies. The first time we encounter original sonnets in the Dutch language is in alba of university-educated merchants, humanists, artists, and rhetoricians from the Southern Netherlands. Some of these intellectuals had fled the turmoil of the Dutch Revolt, often for the sake of their Protestant faith, and settled as exiles in London or later in the Dutch Republic. The creation of their alba amicorum can be seen 'as an act of resistance to the external forces of iconoclasm, inquisition and spiritual disunity, of which the ongoing revolt was a constant reminder', as Marissa Anne Bass has noted in her ground-breaking study on Joris Hoefnagel.⁸⁷ Within these circles, highly personal sonnets were produced that echo the righteous frustration and personal agony caused by the political situation in the Low Countries. Michiel van der Haeghen called for concord in his contribution to Abraham Ortelius's album. In his album's invitation, Emanuel van Meteren points out the need to preserve unity and to trust in God. The Dutch language functioned as a unifying agent. For instance, from Heyns's reaction to van Meteren's invitation it is evident that they are conscious of the fact that their alba would also be read and seen by others.⁸⁸ Their poetic inscriptions can therefore be seen as an attempt to bridge the enforced and undesired distance between them through their shared interest in language and poetry.

The foundation of Leiden University in 1575 is the symbol of the by then hard-won unity of the provinces revolting against Spain, and a sign of true freedom for the practice of science and religion. Janus Dousa and Jan van Hout were fundamental for the creation of this 'bastion of freedom'. Dousa in particular contributed significantly to the promotion

⁸⁵ KB, 131 H 26, Album amicorum of Jacob Heyblocq, 87. See also Thomassen and Gruys (eds.), *The album amicorum of Jacob Heyblocq*, 81.

⁸⁶ See Cazes, 'Afterlife by Networking?', 28: 'A register and book for gathering public declarations of friendship, the *Album Amicorum* functions as a collection of future recollections. Asking contributors for their name, the date and place of inscription and a "token" of loyalty, the album is the most public document of the personal networks.'

⁸⁷ Bass, *Insect Artifice*, 84.

⁸⁸ Wilson, 'Social Networking'; Harris, 'The Practice of Community'.

of the modern poetry he had come to know as a student. Together with his friend Jan van Hout he ensured that at the end of the sixteenth century this new poetry also caught on in the Dutch language at Leiden University. Thus, we also find sonnets in Dutch in their *alba amicorum*. In addition, Dousa also stimulated students of a younger generation, such as Daniel Heinsius, to write poetry in Dutch. From contributions in the *alba amicorum* of Petrus Scriverius, Gerard Thibault, and Johan van Heemskerck, amongst others, it is apparent that Dutch had become equal to Latin, and that sonnets had served as a means to propagate this development. Around the same period, Dutch sonnets start to appear in *alba amicorum* of female owners. Writing sonnets in the vernacular was no longer restricted to the scholarly circles of Ortelius, van Meteren, or Dousa, but became an accepted genre within Dutch poetry. The second decade of the seventeenth century saw the flowering of the sonnet. Major poets such as Hooft and Bredero wrote flawless sonnets which were initially printed in more or less anonymous songbooks, but would later on reach the public under their own names. After this period, however, sonnets are seldom to be found in *alba*, as the novelty had worn off.

In the early modern period, then, the *album amicorum* proved to be a pivotal medium in the rise of the Dutch sonnet. In these little booklets, sonnets declared love and friendship in words borrowed from admired poets, they strengthened the mutual bond between intellectuals separated from each other through foul war, and manifested the belief that Dutch was a fully-fledged literary language. On the crossroads between the public and the private sphere, the *album amicorum* thus became a sanctuary, where literary experiment went hand in hand with the formation of group identity, and with Dutch political and linguistic emancipation.

Appendix: Dutch Sonnets in Alba Amicorum

1. Sonnet by Emanuel van Meteren in his *album amicorum*

EMANUEL DEMETRIUS TOT ZIJN VRIENDEN

Ghy liefhebbers der Deught, const, end' Godsalich leven,
 Ick nood'end' bidde u hier te maken met u hant
 Eenighe schoon devijs, die van U goet verstant
 Ende constich Ingien, rechte getuych mach gheven,

Op dat het zelfde zy voor eewich hier beneven
 Als een vast seghel merck van desen schoonen bandt
 Onser groote eenicheit ende liefde abundant
 In dit bouck, alsoo oock in ons herten gheschreven.

Ende dat ons gheslacht zij vierich veroorsaect
 Duer dees teekenen hier zoo schoon en wel ghemaect
 Te dencken op haere leere en lofvelicke daden.

Die vierich volghen naer en binden haer in een
 Met ons door desen bant die nemermeer zal scheen
 Want, GOD ZIJNDE MET ONS NIET EN MACH ONS SCHADEN.

2. Sonnet by Peeter Heyns in Van Meteren's album amicorum

Vriendt te heetene elcken seer wel aenstaet,
 Maer vereent syn in vriendelycke cueren,
 Siet men in naem-vrienden onlanghe dueren;
 Als tbeminde ophoudt vriendschap oock vergaet.

Hier teghen was Apollo metter daet,
 Al werdt syn Dasphne anders van figueren,
 Hy bleef thaerwaerts dat hy was tallen ueren;
 Tfatsoen en doet rechte vriendschap gheen quaet.

Synder oock meer? Jaet, daer men op mach bouwen,
 Demetre ick voor een van sulcke moet houwen,
 Ende al die beminnen EMANUEL.

Sal dan onse liefde themwaerts cercouwen?
 Neense, om lief noch leet; want die Godt betrouwen
 Doen in weelde en teghenspoet evenwel.

3. Sonnet by Michiel van der Haeghen in Abraham Ortelius's album amicorum

Sonet

Ghelyck de haghe groen wel doorvlochten in eene
 Doer eendrachtighen bandt beclyft en fray oploopt
 Soo blyft lanckduerich oock, dat tsamen is geknoopt
 Want tweedracht tgroot vernielt, eendracht doet groeyen t'cleene.
 Hoe menich ryck gedeylt is gecomen te gheene!
 Hoe mennich stadt verkeert in steenen opgehoopt
 Doer scheuringh, ende twist! Daer den duyvel naer loopt.
 Hoe mennich huys-gesin verteert al totter beene!
 Eendracht gheeft cracht en macht. Dus voor by een blijven.
 Aen malcander geclist, en scheuringhen verdryfven.
 Oorspronck van alle quaet, van verderf ende plaghen.
 Die t'onder heeft gebracht neerlandt eertyts zoo schoon
 En dagelycx verwoust der edelfrouwen croon
 Soo heeft dan syn Devys recht SCHEYDT NIET VANDER HAGEN.

4. Sonnet by Jan van Hout in Abraham Ortelius's album amicorum

Tot Abrahamum Ortelium C.M.,
 Aerd-scriver zinen vrund
 Sonet

Een slecht dOR TELichsken, van geest en sap vercout;
 Hebt gi begeert, um hier in diner vrunden gaerde
 Te'ingriffelen, de stam, benefens veel vermaerde,
 Wiens bladerich geruisch slaet aen de blaeuwe vout.
 Wat zalmen zeggen, als-men tgeusken hier anschout,
 Mit tgraeu-geveerde-vel, (dat noit geen cunst en baerde)
 Bi Zwanen wit besneeut? Gus geus, wech diner vaerde!
 Tgeliefde'u doch; tzi zo; te pande dan behout,
 Van uwen vrund van Hout, dees versken but van geest.
 Mit recht, want tbutte Holland zijn zochamme'es geweest
 Daer Geest dORTE Land is vruchtloos dan deur verjaerden mis
 De mis nu missende, mist ooc der geesten vrucht
 Dus bliven wi vast but gelooft nu tou gerucht
 Dat unze hollandsche geest van geender gueder aerd en is.

5. Sonnet by Lucas d'Heere sent to Joris Hoefnagel

SONNET

Dit selsaem dier, daer Homerus af spreeckt
 Half vrouw', half visch, in het ghelaet minsame,
 Trect ende loct met syn spel aenghename
 Man ende schip dat aen de clippen steect.
 Ulisses volck, twelck gheen wijsheyt ombreect
 Vaert snel voor by sonder schade ofte blame.
 Die twerck des vleesch volghdt, al schijnet bequame
 Neemt quaden eyndt: want God sick aen hem wreect.
 Maer die het schuwte, en volghdt vast na de deuchdt,
 Geniett den loon dat's rechte weeld'en vreuchdt
 Al lede hy hier onder-weghe wat strijts:
 Dus ghy die weett watt is den dienst der sonden,
 Hoe hy de ziel end'tlichaem gheeft dood'-wonden
 SCHADE LEER V, wijs te werden in tijts.

6. Sonnet by Janus Dousa in Jan van Hout's album amicorum

Wie dat eens van uw konst het Nectar heeft gesmaickt,
 O Hout, dien' zal noch vrees van all de Dijlsche staicken
 Noch dolle Ians geblaes vol hoerekijntsche wraicken,
 Van v niet trecken af: maer deur u geest ontwaickt
 Men zal, alwaer Baldeez zijn hoornen zijn gekraickt,
 Zien enen nieu Poëet met Myrten t'hoofd bedaiken,
 Niet in t'Latijn oft Wals, maer in onz moeders spraiken
 Droom' ick? of zij ick oick van dit zap nat gemaickt?
 O, die d'Ausoonsche Luijt in t'Duijts eerst hebt doen klinken,
 O, die de ravens oick een swaents geluijt kost scinken,
 Van v ist, dat ick ijete met Phoebus heb gemeen.

Van u ist, dat ick dorst de-portes overstellen:

Van v ist, dat ick hauw mijn Poëzij te leen.

Van v ist, dat ick derf mijn Naem in uw blat spellen.

7. Sonnet by Johan van Heemskerck in Petrus Scriverius's album amicorum

Klinck –dicht

On-kunde hand die hier, beneven dese Helden,

(wiens halff-vergoode naem, bij yder een bekent,

op Faems geswinde koets dit groote rondt door-rent)

u noijt genoemde naem in ons slecht Duijts derft spelden:

Vreest ghij niet, dat men u met recht sal mooghen schelden

voor waen-wijs, en voor een die naeuw sich selven kent:

off meent ghij, dat u dit kan houden ongeschent,

dat hij u heeft genoodt, die 't boeck sijn wetten stelde?

verheff u daerom niet, maer antwoord aende Nijt,

dat hij u waerdich maeckt 't geen ghij onwaerdich sijt,

en dat ghij hem daer voor sult als verbonden blijven;

tot dat u stompe pen door oefeningh besne'en,

haer machtich vinden sal, dees'helden nae te tre'en,

In't noijt-vol-loofde loff van SCHRIJVER te beschrijven.

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