

# **‘The Drama Texts in the Van Hulthem Manuscript’**

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## **bron**

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## *The drama texts in the Van Hulthem manuscript*

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Ten plays, preserved in one and the same manuscript: that is about all that has survived of Middle Dutch secular drama. Four of these are serious, so-called *abele spelen*,<sup>1</sup> the other six are *sotternieën* (farces).<sup>2</sup> In the manuscript they are presented in pairs; every *abel spel* is followed by a farce: *Esmoreit* and *Lippijn*, *Gloriant* and *Die buskenblaser*, *Lanseloet* and *Die hexe*, *Winter ende Somer* and *Rubben*. The two remaining farces, *Drie daghe here* and *Truwanten*, make up the fifth pair.

The contents of the four *abele spelen* may be briefly summarized as follows. In the first *Esmoreit* is crown prince of Sicily. As a baby he is abducted by his evil cousin and sold to the king of Damast. Years later he is told by the heathen princess Damiët, who has brought him up and who is in love with him, that he is a foundling. In pursuit of his parents he is recognized by his mother on Sicily. *Esmoreit* becomes king of Sicily and marries Damiët, while the treacherous cousin is hanged. The protagonist of the second *abel spel*, *Gloriant*, thinks no woman in the world to be worthy of him, but in spite of that he falls in love, after he has been shown a picture of her, with the Saracen princess Florentijn of Abelant. Having overcome many inward and outward obstacles he eventually succeeds in marrying Florentijn. In the third play *Lanseloet*, the crown prince of Denmark, falls in love with the fair Sanderijn, one of his mother's ladies-in-waiting. However, the queen is opposed to her son's making a morganatic marriage. She sees to it that for one night *Lanseloet* has Sanderijn at his disposal and that after that he repudiates her. The deceived girl sadly leaves the Danish court and in the end marries a knight in a distant country. *Lanseloet*, heartbroken, dies of grief. *Winter ende Somer*, the fourth *abel spel*, is of an allegorical nature. At the centre of this play is the age-old question of which season is more important to mankind. Finally, the subject

matter of the six *sotterniën* is typical of the farce; the majority is about the struggle between husband and wife.

It is not possible to date the plays with any precision, but the second half of the fourteenth century is certainly not too early. Consequently the four *abele spelen* in particular must be considered to make up a very special group in the history of drama. G.P.M. Knuvelde calls them ‘the oldest secular drama of a serious nature... known to West European literature’.<sup>3</sup> In this essay it is my intention to discuss the question of what it is that makes the *abele spelen* and *sotternieën* a group. Did fourteenth-century people see them as a special group or is the idea of a corpus a mere coincidence, resulting from the paucity of the material? For the plays are the only ones of their kind known to us, and have come down in the same manuscript at that. These two circumstances - the plays in the context of the history of drama and the imperfect tradition - will be considered first. After some insight has been gained in these areas an attempt will be made to characterize the corpus.

### **The Hulthem plays in the context of the history of drama**

Among the medieval plays that we have, the *abele spelen* do indeed constitute a special group. They are not part of a widely disseminated genre, nor can any development be identified from which they have resulted. And yet it is hard to believe that the plays were created *ex nihilo*. I assume that a tradition did exist, but has for the greater part been lost.

A first sign of this is the one scrap of worldly drama in Middle Dutch that remains outside the Van Hulthem manuscript. It concerns a short fragment (180 lines) of a summer-and-winter play,<sup>4</sup> written down about 1436, with the same subject as in the *abel spel* of that name. Both pieces are early, Dutch representatives of a genre mainly known from Germany, the seasonal play, the oldest versions of which go back to the fourteenth century.<sup>5</sup> On comparison the similarity of the Dutch and German texts turns out to be more than merely thematic; there are also striking parallels in the elaboration of the theme. Consequently the play of *Winter ende Somer*, as to theme and content, actually fits in a tradition, which has been preserved in other languages apart from Middle Dutch. At the same time it should be remarked that *Winter ende Somer* occupies a special position

in the tradition of the seasonal play because the well-known theme, after a conventional opening, is handled in a highly idiosyncratic manner.<sup>6</sup> For the very same reason, and because of its allegorical form, *Winter ende Somer* is the odd man out in the group of the *abele spelen*.

There are more indications to support the assumption that there was a tradition of Middle Dutch secular drama. From records mentioning theatrical performances it can be deduced that plays must have existed which in a number of ways resembled the *abele spelen*. It is known, for instance, that in 1444, in the east Flemish city of Deinze, *Tspel van den wijghe van Ronchevale* (*The Play of the Battle of Roncevaux*) was performed and in 1483 the *Spel van Florijse ende van Blanchefloere*.<sup>7</sup> The texts have not been preserved but the titles show that we are dealing with dramatized romances, and as regards content that is quite close to the three 'romance' *abele spelen*: *Esmoreit*, *Gloriant* and *Lanseloet*. In themselves these *abele spelen* are not dramatizations of specific romances, but in their subject matter, their themes and in the naming of the characters they certainly go back to the romance genre.<sup>8</sup> If plays of a secular, chivalric subject matter existed in the fifteenth century, they could very well have existed in the fourteenth century; in that case they could have helped in shaping a tradition of which the *abele spelen* are part as well.

And of course there are the *Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages*,<sup>9</sup> forty French miracle plays of the fourteenth century, which were performed - one at a time - during the great annual assembly of the *Confrérie* of the goldsmiths, 'Saint Eloy', in Paris.<sup>10</sup> In many cases the content of these pieces has been derived from well-known miracle texts about Mary, but also from different sources, such as saints' lives and romances. The connecting link in all plays is that a sinner is saved by the miraculous intervention of the Holy Virgin. As a result the tenor of these plays is basically religious, which makes them come under the genre of spiritual drama. And yet the content is often primarily secular. Numerous motifs correspond with motifs in the *abele spelen*: the wrongfully repudiated, but later rehabilitated, noble lady (the eponymous lady in *Gaudine*; cf. *Esmoreit*), the pressure exerted by councillors on a prince to marry (*La fille du roi de Hongrie*; cf. *Gloriant*), the young girl roaming in the woods (*Berthe*; cp. *Lanseloet*). These parallels were pointed out as early as 1903 by J.A. Worp<sup>11</sup> and they cannot be denied. Some *Miracles* are set in the same chivalric entourage as the *abele spelen*; they share countless

narrative elements because they take their subject matter from the same kind of sources: the romances. Nevertheless the differences are considerable. Most important of these, in my view, is the divergence in tenor. Mary may frequently be a somewhat implausible *dea ex machina* one could easily do without, yet time and again her appearance is the effectuation of the primary message of the *Miracles*: sincere prayer to Mary is never in vain. And even if Sanderijn experiences the truth of this when in her despair she prays to the ‘Moeder ende Maget vri, / Fonteine alder suverheit’ (Mother and noble virgin, spring of all purity; *Lanseloet*, 354-5), the tenor of the *abele spelen* is anything but spiritual.

In other words, we do have, in the history of drama, a context in which these *abele spelen* fit. But their remains and traces are partly from a later period, and continuously point to a *partial* correspondence; in no place is an exact correspondence found. Of course it is difficult to form an opinion because of the defective tradition. It is not known, for instance, if there were more *abele spelen*, and if it had any subgenres (e.g. more romance-like, or more allegorical, like *Winter ende Somer*). At any rate, from the above it appears that the *abele spelen* can be linked up with other medieval, and even Middle Dutch, drama, but that they are nevertheless unique as the sole surviving plays of their kind. That is why they are of such importance to the history of drama.

### **The Van Hulthem manuscript**

The Van Hulthem manuscript,<sup>12</sup> named after the owner who had it in his possession from 1811 to 1832, is one of the most important sources of medieval Dutch literature. It is a paper manuscript, containing 210 texts in Middle Dutch of a wide variety of genres and from many different periods,<sup>13</sup> but the ten plays at the end have from the outset drawn most of the scholars' attention. All the texts in the manuscript have been numbered and provided with a title at the beginning, while at the end of each text the number of lines is given. From this systematic arrangement information can be derived about the compilation of the texts in the codex and about the relations between the texts. That the plays were meant to be presented in pairs, for instance, is shown by the titles: *Een abel spel van Esmoreit, tconincx sone van Cecilien, ende ene sotternie daer na volghende* (*An ‘abel’ play about Esmoreit, the son of the king of Sicily, and a farce, following upon that*).

This first pair, numbered 169 and 170, is on fols. 170-80. They are followed by thirty-four on the whole very short texts, after which, on fols. 213-23, we find the second pair, *Gloriant* and *Die buskenblaser*, together under one number, 205. On fols. 223-30 it is immediately followed by the next pair, *Lanseloet* and *Die hexe*, also under one number, 206. On fols. 231-5 we find the two *sotternieën Drie daghe here* and *Truwanten*, numbered 209 and 210, in turn followed, on fols. 235-41, by *Winter ende Somer* and *Rubben*, under number 211. As it appears, the ten pieces do not make up an uninterrupted series. The first break, as we saw, is quite long; the second, after *Lanseloet* and *Die hexe*, is short and contains only two texts. One of these is clearly related to the drama texts. It is a so-called *passe-partout* monologue (fifty-two lines) with the title *Een beginsel van alle spelen* (*An Opening for All Plays*).<sup>14</sup> As a prologue it fits any drama text because the contents are quite general, but it might also have been said as an extra opening before the specific prologue of another play. This *Beginsel* makes the eleventh drama text in the Van Hulthem manuscript.

Of all drama texts, with the exception of *Lanseloet*,<sup>15</sup> the Van Hulthem manuscript is the only source. Consequently this manuscript is the starting-point of all research into the plays. The water-marks show that it was written in the first decade of the fifteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The dialect of a number of the texts, as well as some internal evidence, indicate that this could have been done in Brabant (possibly in Brussels).<sup>17</sup> Who might have compiled this enormous collection of texts, of such divergent origin, and to what end? The codex has been produced in a neat but modest fashion. Because of this, but especially because of the presence of the drama texts, it was at first thought that an itinerant company of actors might have commissioned it, or an individual *sprookspreker* (teller of tales), or an early chamber of rhetoric.<sup>18</sup> In all these hypotheses the contents of the entire codex are seen as the repertoire of storytellers and actors, and this, considering the nature of many of the texts, seems highly implausible. A more recent hypothesis concerning the function of the manuscript is based on the specification of the number of lines at the end of every text.<sup>19</sup> The explanation of that could be that the manuscript was compiled as the standard collection of a scriptorium. The line totals would then help to calculate quickly the size of a text and the costs of copying it.

If the drama texts are considered in the light of this hypothesis,<sup>20</sup> one cannot but notice that irregularities occur exactly where, at the

end of the plays, the line totals are given. For instance, at the end of *Die buskenblaser* the total is found after the last cue. By all appearances the farce would seem to be finished, but then a four-line epilogue follows:

Ghi goede liede, dit spel es ghedaen  
 Ghi mocht wel alle thuus weert gaen  
 Ende lopen alle den graet neder.  
 Ghenoeghet u, comt alle weder.  
 (205-8)

(Dear people, this play is finished; you may all go home and all go down the stairs. If you like it, come back all.)

This short text is of a general nature; in no way does it refer to the contents of the farce and as such it resembles the *Beginsel van alle spelen*, found in the manuscript as an independent item (a *passe-partout* prologue). This isolated epilogue looks like an afterthought, added for the purpose of a specific presentation. Similar additions can be found at other places in the plays, always as a prologue or as an epilogue, or at the links between the *abele spelen* and the farces. In all these places the audience is addressed directly, and the interpolations are without exception connected with the staging of the plays. It seems unlikely that the copyist or the compiler are responsible for these alterations; they rather appear to be the work of someone involved with the production: an adapter-director. Hence the origin of the interpolations should be looked for in the textual history of the plays *before* they were included in the Van Hulthem manuscript. In my opinion they may have been used by the director of a company of actors and at that stage been revised. If this assumption is correct the texts are indeed connected with a company's repertoire, though not in the sense that the Van Hulthem manuscript itself was used during the production of the plays.

On the basis of the above the proposition can safely be advanced that a number of the most conspicuous parallels between the plays, viz. those concerning the prologues, the epilogues and the links, are of a secondary nature. Although it is true that these parallels in particular add greatly to the impression that the plays are a coherent group, from what follows it will appear that the parallels are not restricted to these secondary passages.

Now that such external factors as the chance preservation and the history of the texts have been discussed, attention can be paid to the

original, internal parallels. I will first consider six aspects which together largely determine our idea of the drama in the Van Hulthem manuscript.

## Rhyme and versification

The rhyme structure of the *abele spelen* and farces is extremely simple. There are no complex rhyme schemes or verse forms, and even dialogues with rapid alternations between the actors do not occur. All the plays are entirely in rhymed couplets, and all the cues consist of complete lines. The ‘quiet’ impression this makes is reinforced by the virtual absence of iambs. The versification is rather ‘static’, that is, syntactic structure and poetic structure usually coincide.<sup>21</sup>

The cues are linked by means of rhyming couplets; in other words, the last line of a cue rhymes with the first line of the next. The concatenation of the cues prevents the dialogue becoming too stiff and formal and in addition functions as a prompt for the actors. Consequently the link would be superfluous when the stage is empty for a moment or the dialogue is interrupted for silent action.<sup>22</sup> At these places in the text there is an intentional break in the chain of rhyming cues. An example from *Die buskenblaser*: when the poor duffer's wife and neighbour tell him that after his rejuvenation cure he is not young and handsome but old and dirty, he asks for a mirror:

Latet mi doch sien in enen spiegel claer,  
Dat ic mi selven mach anesien.

***Sijn wijf***

En trouwen, dat sal u ghescien.

***Die ierste man, haer man***

Hulpe, hulpe, goede lie!  
Des wonders ghelijc en sach ic nie  
(134-8)

(‘Let me see it in a clear mirror, so that I can look at myself’. *His wife*: ‘Certainly, I’ll do that for you’. *First man, her husband*: ‘Help, help, dear people! I’ve never seen anything as strange as this before.’)

After line 136 the woman goes to fetch a mirror and shows it to her husband, which in this context provides ample opportunity for silent action. At this point in the text the rhyme connection is interrupted; the effect of the rhyme words would be nil here. Breaks of this kind occur in all of the *abele spelen*, and in most of the farces as well.

## Monologues

G. Stuiveling deserves the credit for having pointed out a prominent function of some of the monologues in the three romance plays.<sup>23</sup> These *autonomous* monologues, as he has called them, mark a transition in the action and contain a prayer in the middle. A good example is Sanderijn's monologue, spoken immediately after the lovesick Lanseloet has repudiated her (322-65). She begins by complaining about Lanseloet's behaviour and about the mean trick his mother played on her. She resolutely decides to leave the Danish court: 'Lanseloet, ghi en siet mi nemmermee: / Ic wille gaen dolen in dit foreest' ('Lanseloet, you'll never see me again; I'll roam about in this forest'; *Lanseloet*, 346-7). After that she prays for help (348-59), to Mary in particular, the 'Fonteine alder suverheit' (Fountain of purity), and then she sees a brooklet (*fonteine*) in the scenery around her (360-5). From what follows it appears that during her monologue she has travelled from Denmark to the far-off land where the foreign knight will find her a little later. Thus the monologue signifies a change in place, time and action. Apart from in the three romance plays, such transitional monologues occur in *Winter ende Somer* (408-37) and even in the *sotternieën*, though they are there on a much smaller scale, while the prayer has been reduced to a minimum or disappeared completely. In the transitional monologue of the maidservant in *Truwanten* it has become an exclamation: 'Nu hulpt, God, diet al verleent!' ('Help, God, who gives it all!'; 127).

## The scene of the action

The transitional monologues are closely connected to the scene of the action. The plays in the Van Hulthem manuscript show a marked preference for only two localities: Sesiliën and Damast in *Esmoreit*, Bruuyswije and Abelant in *Gloriant*, Denmark and the 'far-off country' in *Lanseloet*. In these three plays the action alternates between the two places, and that alternation is so regular that Stuiveling could base an analysis of the structures of the three romance plays on it.<sup>24</sup> In most of the farces, too, there are only two scenes of action, which may be characterized as 'at home' and 'conventional' versus 'outside' and 'unconventional'. The *buskenblaser* meets the quack somewhere out of doors and then, in a very funny transitional monologue (97-103), hurries home, where he

shows his wife the results of his rejuvenation cure. In *Lippijn* the scene is laid at Lippijn's house and at a place outside, where his wife meets her lover. *Die hexe* is enacted at Machtelt's house and the witch Juliane's inn. In *Winter ende Somer* there is not so much a dichotomy of place; it is rather in the opposition between the two protagonists, Winter and Summer.

Practically all of the plays, then, show a notable dichotomy, usually in the shape of two scenes of action. To establish contact between the various places the characters travel. In quite a few instances the shift is signalled by means of transitional monologues, but occasionally the action changes without any verbal indication. These highly uncomplicated structural techniques confirm the impression obtained from the discussion of the rhymes and the versification: the plays have been put together with a very modest set of means, which, moreover, are the same for all the plays.

## The characters

An inventory of the characters in the ten plays brings to light a clear division between the serious and the comical plays.<sup>25</sup> The *abele spelen* are set in the highest circles of the nobility, at the courts of princes. Also *Winter ende Somer*, in which the scene of action is not mentioned explicitly, consists in an altercation between 'tween heren hoghe geboren' (two high-born gentlemen; 441). By way of exception two non-noble characters appear: Venus, who is to pass judgement in the dispute between the two seasons and on that account has to be above party, and the *cockijn* (tramp), to whom it is made quite clear that he has no business with the powerful; as a comical counterpart of Venus he is *under* the parties. Apart from these two there is one more exception to the noble status of the characters in the *abele spelen*: the *warande huedere* (gardener) in *Lanseloet*. Just like the *cockijn* the *warande huedere* takes care of a comical intermezzo in the predominantly serious action. In this kind of drama 'common' people are ridiculous.

This is all the more true for the farces, in which exclusively 'common' people make their appearance. The viragoes and duffers, with their uncivilized behaviour, not only form a social contrast to the world of chivalry in the *abele spelen*, they also constitute a deterrent to the audience. Whoever behaves like that will fare badly and is ridiculous in the eyes of the powerful.

The dichotomy principle, pointed out in relation to the structure of the plays, also causes a division between the characters of each play - as was mentioned above with regard to *Winter ende Somer*. In this play the characters are grouped as vassals around the two contending princes/seasons. Venus and the *cockijn* fall outside this bipartite structure, but, considering the contents of the play, that is a functional device.

In the romance plays the dichotomy of the characters corresponds to the two scenes of the action. In *Esmoreit* the court of Sesiliën accommodates a king, a queen, a royal child (Esmoreit) and a courtier (Robberecht), that of Damast a king, a royal child (Damiët) and a courtier (Platus). Similar, more or less balanced, dichotomies can be perceived in the characters of *Gloriant* and *Lanseloet*. In this connection the contents of the plays may be seen as attempts to 'bridge' the distance between the two scenes of the action. Esmoreit, when he discovers in Damast that he is a foundling, must find his parents, and with that his identity, in Sesiliën; Gloriant must collect Florentijn in Abelant, and Lanseloet desperately and in vain tries to make Sanderijn return from the far-off country.

A review of the social positions of the characters reveals identical milieux for, on the one hand, the *abele spelen* (practically all noble) and, on the other, the farces (entirely common). Also the inter-relationships within each *abel spel* strongly resemble each other. They always fall into two groups, which, moreover, in the romance plays coincide with the two scenes of action.

## Subject matter

Beyond any doubt the most important thematic parallel shared by the *abele spelen* is that of love. In this respect also *Winter ende Somer* stands out from the others because the love theme is only of minor importance here. After all, in relation to the issue that is at stake - which season is the more important - love is just another criterion. It should be added that it turns out to be the decisive one (which is the reason why the goddess Venus is invited to settle the dispute), but in spite of that it remains a subsidiary element in a play that is really about something else.

In the three romance plays love does make the central theme; they are always about a couple: Esmoreit and Damiët, Gloriant and

Florentijn, Lanseloet and Sanderijn. A striking feature is that all the men are heirs to the throne in a Christian country and the three women live far away. Besides, love is in all cases tied up with the theme of the endangered dynasty. In *Esmoreit* it is threatened by the treason of Robberecht; this leads to the sale of the baby Esmoreit and eventually to love. In *Gloriant* the danger is in Gloriant's pride, which makes him think that no woman is good enough for him. In *Lanseloet* the dynasty is endangered by Lanseloet's wish to marry beneath his situation. Esmoreit and Gloriant succeed in obtaining both their kingdom and their love; Lanseloet dies because he cannot get Sanderijn, and because of this the kingdom loses its heir.

The thematic parallel between the *abele spelen*, and between the romance plays in particular, contributes greatly to the uniform character of the pieces. A similar parallel is shared by the farces. They are all, except for *Die hexe*, about dominance in marriage and thus fit into an age-old literary tradition of viragoes lording it over their doltish husbands.

## Staging

It is not known how the *abele spelen* and farces were produced. There are very few stage directions in the manuscript and that means that the practice of staging can only be reconstructed by combining internal data from the texts with external information about medieval theatrical performances. Where there is so much uncertainty one has to be extremely careful about pronouncing on matters of staging. I will restrict myself to some noticeable parallels.

In the discussion of the manuscript it was pointed out that the texts as we have them contain secondary elements betraying the hand of an adapter-director. Through his adaptations the plays were adjusted for performance in pairs in the order *abel spel* - farce, an order known from other sources as well. But from the circumstance that the plays were linked only in the process of adaptation it follows that at an earlier stage they probably existed, and were performed, independently of each other.

Modern productions of the *abele spelen* are usually realized on a stage divided into two by an imaginary line and a few prominent props. Such a division nicely matches the structure of the play with its conspicuous dichotomy; in addition to that it links up with the medieval tradition of simultaneous drama, known from the French

and Dutch mystery plays. But certainty in this is lacking. The same goes for practically all other aspects of staging. If one were to say, 'In the fourteenth century the *abele spelen* and farces were as a rule performed outside, and at times perhaps inside, by more or less professional actors before an urban audience', such a statement, though indicating the direction in which many contemporary scholars are moving, would still have to be proved.<sup>26</sup> However, it is highly plausible that the staging of the plays as we have them was to a large degree identical.

## Conclusion

Can the plays in the Van Hulthem manuscript rightly be considered as a group? To this question a balanced but affirmative answer may be given. In the first place they are of course a group because they are the only drama in the manuscript. It is probable that, before they were included in the manuscript, they were on the repertoire of a fourteenth-century company of actors in Brabant, possibly professional, by whom they were staged in pairs.

From the discussion of a number of internal characteristics it also appears that they have much in common. The idiosyncrasies of rhyme and versification, the monologues, the scenes of action, the characters, the themes and the way in which they were staged, all these together constitute a network of correspondences, a dramatic register, which must have made these plays, in the eyes of a contemporary audience, a coherent group.

Naturally the possibility cannot be excluded that more of this kind of drama existed. For the farces this is almost certainly the case, for the *abele spelen* it is less likely. Still, there is some evidence for the existence of secular medieval drama which shows comparable features, but we never find exactly the same. However, even if more *abele spelen* should have existed, we shall have to make do with the representatives in the Van Hulthem manuscript. And this conclusion once more confirms the conspicuous position of these plays in the history of west European drama.

TRANSLATED BY ERIK KOOPER

## Eindnoten:

- 1 An excellent survey of the state of research is Elsa Strietman, 'The Low Countries', in E. Simon, ed., *The Theatre of Medieval Europe. New Research in early Drama* (Cambridge: University Press, 1991), pp. 225-52.

The meaning of the word *abele*, related to Latin *habile* and French *abile*, is contested. It is used in the phrase *abel spel* in the titles written over the plays in the manuscripts, e.g. *Een abel spel vanden Winter ende vanden Somer. Ende ene sotternie na volghende* (An 'abel spel' of the Winter and the Summer; with a farce following). It has been suggested that *abel* here be interpreted as 'serious', in contrast with the comical farce, but this can be defended neither

- etymologically nor lexically. That is why most modern editors prefer the more neutral translation *schoon* (beautiful, excellent).
- 2 The Standard edition still is P. Leendertz, *Middelnederlandsche dramatische poëzie* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1899-1907). See also L. van Kammen, ed., *De abele spelen* (Amsterdam: Atheneum-Polak en Van Genneep, 1968). For a number of these plays English translations are available; see the Appendix.
  - 3 G.P.M. Knuvelder, *Handboek tot de geschiedenis der Nederlandse letterkunde*, 5th edn, 4 vols. ('s-Hertogenbosch: Malmberg, 1970-6), vol. 1, p. 294.
  - 4 *Tspel van den Somer ende van den Winter* (*The Play of the Summer and of the Winter*), in Leendertz, *Middelnederlandsche dramatische poëzie*, pp. 436-41.
  - 5 W. Liungman, *Der Kampf zwischen Sommer und Winter* (Helsinki: Academia scientiarum Fennica, 1941).
  - 6 Cf. H. van Dijk, 'Als ons die astrominen lesen. Over het abel spel Vanden Winter ende vanden Somer', in A.M.J. van Buuren, H. van Dijk, O.S.H. Lie and F.P. van Oostrom, eds., *Tussentijds. Bundel studies aangeboden aan W.P. Gerritsen ter gelegenheid van zijn vijftigste verjaardag* (Utrecht: HES, 1985), pp. 56-70.
  - 7 A.L. de Vlaminck, *Jaerboeken der aloude Kamer van Rhetorika, Het Roosjen, onder kenspreuk: Ghebloeyt int wilde, te Thielt* (Ghent: H. Hoste, 1862), p. 15.
  - 8 Leendertz, *Middelnederlandsche dramatische poëzie*, pp. cxliv-vi.
  - 9 G. Paris and U. Robert, eds., *Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages*, 7 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1876-83 (vol. VIII: F. Bonnardot, 'Glossaire et Tables', 1893)).
  - 10 M. Olsen, 'Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages', in Fleming G. Andersen, Julia McGrew, Tom Pettitt and Reinhold Schröder, eds., *Popular Drama in Northern Europe in the Later Middle Ages* (Odense University Press, 1988), pp. 41-63.
  - 11 J.A. Worp, *Geschiedenis van het drama en van het tooneel in Nederland*. 2 vols. (Groningen: Wolters, 1904-8), vol. i, pp. 75-80.
  - 12 Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 15.589-623. A codicological description of this 'Night Watch of Dutch literature' remains to be written. For the information provided in the text, see J. Deschamps, *Middelnederlandse handschriften uit Europese en Amerikaanse bibliotheken. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1970), no. 43, pp. 131-6. See also W. van Anrooij and A.M.J. van Buuren, 's-Levens felheid in één band: het handschrift-Van Hulthem', in H. Pleij *et al.*, *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1991), pp. 184-99, 385-91.
  - 13 For a survey of its contents, see C.P. Serrure, 'Het groot-Hulthemsch handschrift', *Vaderlandsch museum voor Nederduitsche letterkunde, oudheid en geschiedenis* 3 (1859-60), 139-64. See also the Introduction of H. van Dijk, W.P. Gerritsen, Orlanda S.H. Lie and Dieuwke E. van der Poel, eds., *Klein kapitaal uit het handschrift-Van Hulthem* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1992), pp. 9-20.
  - 14 P. Leendertz, *Middelnederlandsche dramatische poëzie*, pp. 442-3.
  - 15 There is a considerable number of early printed editions of *Lanseloet*; see R. Roemans and H. van Assche, eds., *Een abel spel van Lanseloet* (Antwerp: De Nederlandse boekhandel, 1982). Moreover, from the former archive of the chamber of rhetoric 'De Fiolieren' at the village of 's-Gravenpolder two rolls with drama texts have emerged; see W.H.M. Hüsken and F.A.M. Schaars, eds., *Sandrijn en Lanslot* (Nijmegen and Grave: Alfa, 1985).
  - 16 P. Tack, 'Onderzoek naar den ouderdom van het Hulthemse handschrift', *Het boek* 2 (1913), 81-91.
  - 17 Van Anrooij and Van Buuren, 's-Levens felheid', pp. 190-2.
  - 18 A. de Maeyer and R. Roemans, eds., *Esmoreit. Eerste integrale reproductie van het handschrift* (Antwerp: De Vlijt, 1948), p. 16.
  - 19 *Van Sente Brandane* (Catalogue of an exhibition) (Utrecht: Instituut De Vooy, 1968), p. 26.
  - 20 For what follows, see more extensively H. van Dijk, 'Als ons die astrominen lesen', pp. 58-60.
  - 21 The terms 'quiet' and 'static' have been taken from E. van den Berg, *Middelnederlandse versbouw en syntaxis* (Utrecht: HES, 1983), pp. 118-23.
  - 22 G. Stuiveling, 'De structuur van de abele spelen', in *Vakwerk. Twaalf studies in literatuur* (Zwolle: Tjeenk willink, 1967), pp. 1-43.
  - 23 Ibid.
  - 24 Ibid.

- 25 For an inventory of the personal names in the plays, see A. Dabrowka, *Untersuchungen über die mittelniederländischen Abele Spelen (Herkunft-Stil-Motive)* (Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1987), pp. 316-28.
- 26 The most important contribution on the staging of the *abele spelen* is that of W.M.H. Hummelen, 'Tekst en toneelinrichting in de abele spelen', *De nieuwe taalgids* 70 (1977), 229-42. For the intended audience, see the article by Herman Pleij in this volume and also Orlanda S.H. Lie, 'Het abel spel van Lanseloet van Denemerken in het handschrift-Van Hulthem: hoofse tekst of stadsliteratuur?', in H. Pleij *et al.*, *Op belofte van profijt*, pp. 200-16.