

## ***De Const van Rhetoriken, Drama and Delivery***

### **Abstract**

The *puy*s in Picardy and Normandy and the ‘chambers of rhetoric’ in Flanders, Brabant, Zeeland and Holland can be seen respectively as the southern and northern wings of the same urban literary movement, originating from Hainault and Artois. Certain distinctions may afford some contextual elucidation of differences in the theoretical treatises emanating from both sides. These differences are made particularly apparent by a comparison between *Le grand et vrai art de pleine rhétorique* by the Norman rhetorician Pierre Fabri (1521) and *De const van rhetoriken* by the Flemish rhetorician Matthijs de Castelein (1555).

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In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries so-called companies, guilds, confraternities or chambers of rhetoric (*gheselscepen, guldens, broederscepen* or *cameren* ‘*vander rhetoriken*’) were formed in several towns and even in villages of the Netherlands, most of them in Flanders, Brabant, Zeeland and Holland. These *retoriken*, as they were also briefly called, combined devotional duties with artistic activities, especially poetry and theatre. Many of them were quickly officially recognized and legalized by the urban magistrates.

The public performances of the *retorikers, retorisienen* or companions of rhetoric (*ghesellen vander retoriken*) as the chambers’ members were called<sup>1</sup> — the word *rederijker* appears only in the later sixteenth century<sup>2</sup> — brought the academic term *rhetorica* closer to the attention of a broader, urban population. For the magistrates the qualification ‘of rhetoric’ doesn’t seem to have needed much explanation; at least little reflection on the use of the term is to be found in the chambers’ statutes that have come down to us. Some explanation is given indirectly in the statutes of the chamber of Ophasselt, a seigniory in the south-east of Flanders. The Ophasselt statutes, confirmed in 1482, explain the chamber’s choice of Saint Catherine as their patron saint.<sup>3</sup> She is the most appropriate patron for all rhetoricians, they say. Reference is made to the

<sup>1</sup> In Latin *rhetorici* and *rhetores*: De Rouck 1957: 13-15 (1507, 1517); being an organizer of *refrein* contests, Aliamus de Groote, the succentor (singer) of St. Donatian’s in Bruges, was called by the chapter ‘*princeps rhetorum Flamingorum*’ (1482): Strohm 1985: 35-36, 70.

<sup>2</sup> Coigneau 1984: 38.

<sup>3</sup> Willems 1840: 418-423; for ‘Ophasselt’ (not Hasselt in Limburg), see Serrure 1855: 114-115.

legend of the saint, from which the sentence 'quia disputando vincit quinquaginta rethores' is quoted. These *rethores*, the statutes continue, were all great clerics, doctors and masters, ordained to overwhelm Catherine with their science and to draw her away from God. She, however, succeeded in converting her opponents by means of 'the great overflow of beautiful and instructing words, flowering words, which may be considered as the foundation of rhetoric'.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the chamber's existence and practice is based on the personified Rhetorica, speaking of herself: 'est michi discendi ratio cum flore loquendi'. Thus, rational argumentation together with flowers of speech constitute the artistic program of the chamber. According to the statutes, its ultimate aim was the glorification of God and the promotion of a godly life.

The chambers of rhetoric were not the only urban corporations whose aim it was to combine devotion with literature. In Ghent, for instance, there were two confraternities of Saint Barbara and a procession-guild of Saint Catherine — Catherine again — occasionally staging theatre or showing, side by side with the chambers, *tableaux vivants* in royal entries. These confraternities, however, neither called themselves, nor were they called, chambers or confraternities of rhetoric. What, then, makes the difference? The oldest known document coming forth from a chamber of rhetoric may answer the question. I am referring to the statutes of The Fountain, confirmed by the magistrate of Ghent on the 9th of December 1448.

The statutes give three reasons for the establishment of The Fountain: recreation as a weapon against melancholy, devotion and the prestige of the town. The last argument points out the shameful contrast between the non-existence of a chamber of rhetoric in Ghent and the presence of such companies in less important towns inside and outside the county. The Flemish capital could no longer stay behind! Before the institution of The Fountain there was clearly no chamber of rhetoric in Ghent. The municipal accounts, however, witness the existence of theatrical groups and companies performing lyrics (*ghesellen vanden esbattemente* and *ghesellen vander consten*), participating in processions or playing religious plays and thus combining devotion with literature before and after 1448. For the founders of The Fountain these groups apparently could not be compared with the chambers they had in mind.

In the description of the members' financial, administrative and devotional duties, the charter of The Fountain is not very different from the statutes of other guilds and confraternities. It is only in the stipulation of rules for certain literary activities that the chamber's most distinctive characteristic is apparent. These rules concern the ritual of the *refrein* contest, a poetic competition that was to be organised every three weeks. For each contest a member was appointed by lot to write a poem, a so-called *refrein*, which had to be 'imitated' by the other members. It was also the model-writer's duty to provide a prize for the

<sup>4</sup> Willems 1840: 419: 'met der groote overvloeyicheit van schoonen bloeyenden woerden, die sy uutstortte, verantwoorde, ende so instrueerde, als dat sy alle bekeert worden, ende an Gode gheloofden; dewelke bloeyende woerden wel gherekent siin moghen als fundament van Rethoriicken [...]'.  
 Rethoriicken [...].

winning poem.<sup>5</sup> So, the essential and most typical activity of The Fountain consisted in an almost uninterrupted exercise in producing variations and amplifications on given examples and themes, in front of a jury, which had to be convinced by the participants' verbal competence. This competitive demonstration of its members' poetic power in view of a jury's deliberation being the most distinctive ritual of the corporation, the name 'chamber of rhetoric' doesn't seem too far-fetched.

*Refrein* contests were organised not only within single chambers, but also, on a higher level, among several chambers from different places. The poems then had to answer a question or they had to be written on a given verse which returned at the end of each stanza.<sup>6</sup> Within the chambers, a contest could be organized to select the poem(s) by which the corporation would be represented elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

The poetic competition as a central, obligatory activity within the framework of a confraternity, links the Dutch chambers of rhetoric with urban companies in northern France, the so-called *puy*s, which organized similar contests on the occasion of specific festivals. As a matter of fact, the chambers of Flanders, Brabant, Zeeland and Holland can be seen as the northern offshoot of a much larger movement whose southern wing expanded into Picardy and Normandy in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The original basis from which the phenomenon spread into two opposite directions may be situated in Artois, Hainault and French speaking Flanders, i.e. mainly in the towns of Arras, Valenciennes and Lille, which, together with Douai — between Arras and Valenciennes — make an isosceles triangle.<sup>8</sup> It is in Arras that the earliest bourgeois literary society can be traced (founded in the 12th, restored in the 13th century), and, more importantly, it is in the *puy* of Our Lady of Valenciennes, the capital of the county of Hainault, that the earliest institution of prizes to be gained with poems in contests can be found (first third of the 14th century).<sup>9</sup>

The French connection of the Dutch chambers of rhetoric is manifest in their use of loan-words such as *rhetorique*, *rhetoricien*, *facteur*, *ballade*, *refrein*, *amoureux*, *sot*, *prince* (*d'amour*), and so on, all of which were common terms, genres or functions in the *puy*s. In both chambers and *puy*s the *prince* was the

<sup>5</sup> Van Elslander 1948-1949: 16-17, 21; Coigneau 1993: 105-107.

<sup>6</sup> On *refrein* contests, see Van Elslander 1953: 187-230; also Coigneau 1992: 404-405 (n. 5).

<sup>7</sup> Van der Straelen 1863: 7 (xxx).

<sup>8</sup> Gros 1992: 19-20, 26, 30-31, 33-35, 37, 39-46. On the special position of the Arras *Charité Notre-Dame des Ardents*: Peters 1983: 67-77, 214-219.

<sup>9</sup> The earliest at least in *that* region. Gros doesn't exclude Valenciennes and Hainault in their turn from possible influences of the poetic contests organized by the Academy of the *Jeux Floraux* in southern Toulouse, which originated on 3rd May 1324: Gros 1992: 35-37. The poetical contests of the *Puy de la confrérie des Orfèvres* in Paris are held to have been inspired by the Hainault *puy*s: Gros 1992: 31, 37, 48. On the cultural radiating-power of fourteenth-century Hainault, see also Van der Meulen 1992. A very interesting fact in this regard seems to me the evocation by Jean de la Motte, the Hainault poet and attendant at the count's court, of a *concours de ballades* in his *Le Parfait du paon* (1340). In this poem the fictitious contest is located at the court of Alexander the Great, involving noblemen and ladies in composing variations on a theme, invented and written down by the king: Van der Meulen 1992: 107.

person who presided over contests and to whom *ballades* were dedicated (because of its *refrain* the Dutch ballad was generally called *refrein*).<sup>10</sup>

Besides parallels, there were also striking differences between the French *concours palinodiques* and the Dutch contests. Each *puy* (and town) developed its own speciality, which was to be practised in every annual competition. So Valenciennes cultivated *serventois* in honour of Our Lady's Assumption next to *sottes amoureuses*; Lille *serventois* on Assumption and Christ's passion and *chansons amoureuses*; Abbeville and Tournai each did a different kind of *amoureuses* and Béthune had its *pastourelles*. Amiens specialised in *chants royaux* on Presentation; but also Dieppe and Rouen created their distinct forms of *chant royal*, the former in honour of Our Lady's Assumption and Nativity, the latter on the Immaculate Conception.<sup>11</sup> In a recent study Gérard Gros pointed out that the expansion of the *puy*-phenomenon into Picardy and Normandy went hand in hand with a thematic concentration on Mariology.<sup>12</sup>

The Dutch chambers of rhetoric, on the contrary, did not develop any private poetic specialities, nor did they stick to one particular theme. The general form of the *refrein* was practised in all their lyrical contests and, without monopoly or patent-rights, optionally stuffed with religious or didactic matters (*in 't vroed*), amorous subjects (*in 't amoueus*) or comic matters (*in 't zot*). In the course of the sixteenth century songs were also added.<sup>13</sup> Of more importance, however, is the chambers' application of the competitive principle to dramatic genres and theatricals. In this they followed and adapted the example of theatrical contests organized by municipal governments and archers' guilds.<sup>14</sup>

The *puy*-phenomenon found a fertile ground in the Dutch speaking towns of the Netherlands. On this ground was already flourishing a rich culture of processions and theatricals. In the chambers, the cross-breeding of both phenomena resulted in the organization of greater rhetoricians' contests, rewarding not only the *refrein*, but also different kinds of theatricals. These theatricals included not only comic plays, as was usual at the contests of the archers' guilds, but also didactic plays, answering certain moral or religious questions. The two Antwerp *landjuwelen* may be considered the most impressive fruits of this unique Dutch rhetoricians' culture. The first one was held in 1496: with its 28 participating chambers it is the greatest known literary contest, but, unfortunately, the texts have not come down to us. The second Antwerp *landjuweel* was organized in 1561. Thanks to the richly illustrated edition of some of the

<sup>10</sup> Coigneau 1993: 107.

<sup>11</sup> Gros 1992: 20, 31-33, 35, 41, 44-46, 54-55, 74, 76-77, 98-99, 120, 132, 143, 147; Jardin 1910-1925, II: 54-55; Langlois 1902: VI, XXVII, XXXVIII, 21, 170, 172-173, 175, 177.

<sup>12</sup> Gros 1992: 15, 19-20, 26, 35, 44, 98, 113, 118, 249.

<sup>13</sup> Coigneau 1992: 255, 264-266.

<sup>14</sup> On the relation between chambers of rhetoric and archers' guilds: Strietman 1986: 78-79. The *puy*s' poetic contests could be festively closed with a theatrical performance (a mystery in Amiens, a morality play in Rouen and Dieppe), but theatricals were not involved in the competition: Gros 1992: 15, 17, 39, 48, 54 (n. 2), 137-138, 145, 163, 177-178; Hummelen 1992: 197; Petit de Julleville 1880, I: 115-123. On a theatrical contest organized in 1431 in Arras by the abbot of Liesse: Britte-Ashford 1972: 125-126, 197-198.



texts performed, and thanks to some other pictorial material, this *landjuweel* has not failed to fascinate many up to the present day.<sup>15</sup>

Vis-à-vis their southern variants, the Dutch chambers clearly widened the scope of the 'rhetorical' competition: instead of separate specialities and thematic reductions, they provided for a general integration and incorporation of different genres and themes. Even the acting of the chambers' fools became a part of the rhetoricians' contests. Being their most public and collective activity, dramatic performances became the chambers' most distinctive characteristic. By the middle of the sixteenth century, theatrical performances of chambers of rhetoric had become an iconographic theme, representing the *usus* of the *ars rhetorica*.<sup>16</sup>

There are still other differences between the *puy*s' and the chambers' practices. The invitations of the *puy*s were addressed to *rhétoriciens*, *poètes*, *facteurs* or *orateurs modernes*, inside or outside the confraternity, the outsiders being invited also as individual candidates, not as representatives or members of other *puy*s.<sup>17</sup> So the company functioned as a real *puy*, i.e. a platform<sup>18</sup>, for those that wanted to write on its theme and *refrain*. The laureates participated and received prizes in their own name and were entered as such in the *puy*'s minutes. So-called *grands rhétoriqueurs* also engaged in the contests, such as Jean Froissart, Jean Molinet, André de la Vigne, Jean d'Authon, Guillaume Cretin and Jean and Clément Marot, some of them bridging the gap between court and town.<sup>19</sup>

In the open *refrein* contests of the Dutch rhetoricians, the candidates were generally seen as representatives of their chambers. Here the individual poet could disappear completely behind his company's identity, but even when a poem was signed with the author's name or, more often, with his device, it was presented in the name of his chamber. When in the late sixteenth century, partly because of the deterioration of the chambers as a result of political disturbances, homeless rhetoricians were also invited to the contests, this 'freedom' needed ample justification and explanation.<sup>20</sup> Even then many of the private participants (so-called *particulieren*) signed with devices, anagrams or initials only.

<sup>15</sup> On the Antwerp *landjuwelen*: Van Autenboer 1978-1979; Van Autenboer 1981 and Coigneau 1994.

<sup>16</sup> On Pieter Bruegel's *Allegory of Temperance* (1560) and on the depiction of 'Rhetoric' in Frans Floris' *Seven Liberal Arts* (1555, 1565): Gibson 1981: 426-427, 444.

<sup>17</sup> Gros 1992: 149-152, 153 (v. 20-21)-154.

<sup>18</sup> Gros 1992: 25-27.

<sup>19</sup> Gros 1992: 132, 149, 151-152, 182, 204, 246-248; 32-33, 45, 99, 139-140, 152, 157-158, 205-217. On 14th February 1401 a royal *Cour amoureuse* was instituted by French and Burgundian noblemen under the patronage of king Charles VI and count Philip the Bold. According to its statutes, the Court had to organize *puy*s (ballad competitions) among its members on the first Sunday of each month. These *festes de puy royal* could be held in different cities. The drafter of the charter and the artistic leader of the association, the *prince d'amour*, was the Hainuyer (Hainault again) lord Pierre de Hauteville. The Court consisted of 24 ministers who had, everyone in his turn, to present the *refrain* for the monthly *ballade amoureuse*. Once a year however, on one of the five festivals of the Virgin, the Court had also to organize a *puy royal* for *serventois* in praise of Our Lady. On these occasions the theme was to be presented 'par les bonnes villes': Potvin 1886: 196-197, 205, 210-211; Piaget 1891: 426; Piaget 1902: 599-600; Cerquiglini 1989: 114-118.

<sup>20</sup> *Der redenrijke [...] recreatie* 1599: f. 1r, 2v.

Philip the Handsome's awarding of a solid gold ring to the Brussels rhetorician Jan van den Dale during a contest was obviously more in the French tradition.<sup>21</sup> The *puy*s, one may say, provide individuals with opportunities to get their poetic talents publicly crowned, whereas the chambers act more like teams in which the members are engaged to work and exercise together, collectively serving the art of rhetoric.

In his *Art de dictier* (1392) Eustache Deschamps, adopting an aristocratic point of view, discredited the *serventois* as a bourgeois genre that was carried to the *puy d'amours* and not practised by noblemen. Earlier in his treatise, however, when defining poetry as natural music, he seemed to adopt a more sympathetic attitude towards the *puy*s. Here he evokes a scene in which poets recite their poems by heart in front of the prince, an evocation that enabled him to stress the importance of the oral and musical character of poetry.<sup>22</sup> According to the statutes of the *puy* of Our Lady of Valenciennes (renewed in 1426), the annual *acte de rhétorique* was indeed performed by poets reciting their own work. The Amiens statutes of 1451, however, seem to reckon with a presentation in writing only, whereas in Lille (according to a report from 1479) and Rouen (according to the statutes of 1615) all competing poems were read by one person in an equal, decent and modest way. In freeing the delivery of the poems from individually distinct performances, they received a better chance to be judged on their content. In Rouen the laureate was given the opportunity to recite his work after his selection as winner.<sup>23</sup>

For the Dutch chambers of rhetoric, individual oral delivery remained a competitive element. At some contests, the invitation cards explicitly mention the decisive importance of the inventional, dispositional and elocutionary, as well as the 'actional' aspects of the theatrical performances.<sup>24</sup> The best acting in plays or the best 'pronouncing' of poems (by which is meant, of course, *pronunciatio*

<sup>21</sup> Degroote 1944: 12-13. In the *Puy of Our Lady's Conception* of Rouen a gold ring was the first prize for the rondeau; this prize was instituted in 1510: Newcomer 1916: 221, 223; Gros 1992: 133-134, 150 (v. 42-44).

<sup>22</sup> Deschamps 1891: 281 and 271-272; Patterson 1935: 93, 96.

<sup>23</sup> Gros 1992: 43; Breuil 1854: 496, 609 (2), 611-612 (10-12: 'mettre la table pour assembler les rhétoriciens et faire racorder les balades faictes sur le refrain baillé'), 628 (1531); Rigollot 1854: 667; Lefebvre 1902: 3, 13 ('on donnoit licence aux réthoriciens des marches insulanes de venir offrir et présenter [...] ce qu'ils avoient auparavant respectivement composé en rhétorique et lors se lisoient les versets d'iceulx rhétoriciens avecq toute décente modestie [...]') and Newcomer 1916: 221, 223 ('the reader').

<sup>24</sup> Brand 1960-1961: 116 (Hulst 1483: 'speelwijs tooghen oft bewijzen de alderscoonste ende beste materie, die wel spelende [...] nyeu ghemaect, noyt ghehoort ofte ghezien, het zij bij moralisatie oft andersins, op een materie beghinnende ende op de zelve vulhendende, dit best doende'); Van Autenboer 1978-1979: 144 (Antwerp 1496: 'wat geselschappe van rethoricken d'beste t'verstandelijckste ende constichste spel spellen sal, deducerende daer mede d'oirboirelijckste ende meeste misterie oft gratie die godt tot des menschen salicheijt geordonneert ende verleent heeft ende dat bij schrifturen figuren ende naturelijcke redenen nieff dicht nieuwen sin noot gespeelt sijnde best gepronuntieert ende minst fauten'), also 145 ('loff' and 'esbattement'); *Spelen van sinne* 1562a: f. B 1r ('Devijse'; 'Esbattement': 'Wie met minst fauten speelt dbeste Ebatement, Sin, Dicht, beyde begonnen en vollent, al nieu'). The invitation card of the Rotterdam contest (1561) simply states that the actors should speak in a lifelike way: *Spelen van sinne* 1564: f. A 5r.

(or 'action') as a part of rhetoric) was often additionally honoured with special prizes. At the Antwerp contest in 1561, the actor that was most agreeable to the public by his convincing gestures and by making the fewest mistakes, was awarded a silver statuette of a dove, symbolizing nothing less than the Holy Ghost as the source of eloquence. Of similar purport was the second award, being a statuette representing a gilt tongue. On the invitation card of the Rotterdam *refrein* contest of 1598, the only classical orator referred to is Cicero, who is set as an example to be followed by those striving for the best 'pronunciation'. Also in Haarlem, in 1606, and in Leiderdorp, in 1616, the prizes for the best pronunciation were presented specifically in terms of the art of oratory.<sup>25</sup> As collective participants the chambers could combine their best powers and spread their efforts among members that were most gifted in writing poems and those that were especially talented with a good voice or other abilities in oral delivery. The distribution of tasks was, of course, a necessity for staging the plays. So the chambers' contests made the last part of rhetoric a separate speciality that was awarded and valued on its own merits. Chambers' members that had solely been actors were commemorated as witty disciples of Mercury and good rhetoricians.<sup>26</sup>

The distinctions pointed out so far between the northern and southern wings of the same urban poetical phenomenon may afford some contextual elucidation of certain differences between theoretical treatises emanating from both sides. The *Const van rhetoriken* — written in 1548 by the Flemish rhetorician Matthijs de Castelein and first published in 1555, i.e. five years after the author's death — was the only Dutch manual to emerge from a chamber's setting.<sup>27</sup> Among the seven French *arts de seconde rhétorique*, which were gathered and published in 1902 by Ernest Langlois in his *Recueil*, the second and third were most obviously inspired by the *puys* and their contests.<sup>28</sup> The anonymous *Règles de la seconde Rhétorique* and the *Doctrinal de la seconde rhétorique* by a certain Baudet Herenc, date from the first third of the fifteenth century. The latter was written in 1432 and made use of the former, which must have been composed after 1411. Both are rather short, practical manuals of versification, containing

<sup>25</sup> *Spelen van sinne* 1562a: f. B 1v, C 1r; *Der redenrijke [...] recreatie* 1599: f. 3r, x 1v; *Const-thoonende Iuweel* 1607: f. 5r-5v ('Wie d'Oratoors best volcht'; 'Orateurs best ghevolgh'); *Der redenrijcke [...] Helicon* 1617: f. A 4r ('Van buyten prononcheert naert Conste Oratoorlick'). See further: Van Autenboer 1978-1979: 144-145 ('beste personagie int wijse', 'beste vermaeckelijckste personagie'); *Spelen van sinne* 1562b: f. a 2v, a 4r; *Refereynen [...] Delft* 1581: f. B 2v, B 4r; *Den Lust-hof van Rethorica* 1596: 8, 10, 13; *Der reden-rijckers [...] tsamenkomste* 1603: f. A 4v; *Antwoort op de vraghe* 1613: f. 3v, 4v; *Const-riick beroep* 1614: f. 3r, 4v; *Der reden-rijcken springhader* 1614: f. 4v, 5r; *Der reden-rijckers [...] aenwijsinghe* 1616: f. 4r; *Vlaerdings redenrijckbergh* 1617: f. b 3r, b 4v.

<sup>26</sup> De Castelein 1555: 81; De Dene 1975: 44. In the sixties of the sixteenth century the prince of the Ghent chamber *Jesus with the balsamic flower* (Jezus met de balsembloem) Guiliam vanden Bogaerde was known as an excellent reciter, more especially praised for his eloquence and memory: Vaernewijck 1874: 273. The statutes of the chamber of St. Barbara in Aalst (1539-40) describe the company's activities as a means to improve reading, writing and *pronunciatio*: Van de Castele 1873: 412.

<sup>27</sup> On the *Const van rhetoriken*: Iansen 1971, Coigneau 1985 and Spies 1993.

<sup>28</sup> Langlois 1902: vi, xii, xxvii, xxxii, xxxviii, xlvii.

rhyme lists and definitions of the fixed forms of verse, illustrated with model poems, many of which are characterised by Herenc as types of lyric destined to be carried to certain *puy*s. The anonymous manual is the only one of Langlois' treatises that also contains a *poëtrie*, a succinct encyclopedic survey of biblical and mythological names and stories to be used by the poet as exemplary figures.<sup>29</sup>

Closer in time, size and spirit to De Castelein's *Const van rhetoriken* comes *Le grand et vrai art de pleine rhétorique* by the Norman rhetorician Pierre Fabri. Like De Castelein's, this was a more extensive work, likewise printed, in 1521, in a handsome way.<sup>30</sup> There are still other extrinsic parallels. Both authors were engaged in urban poetical activities: Fabri as a member of the jury in 1486 and, the next year, as prince in the *puy* of Our Lady of Rouen; De Castelein as *facteur*, i.e. the artistic leader, of the chambers Pax Vobis in Oudenaarde and The Daisy (*Kersauwe*) in the adjoining Pamele. Both authors were priests, a function mentioned on both title-pages: Fabri was parish priest of Mérey, De Castelein officiant in Pamele. Both arts of rhetoric appeared posthumously and both went through six editions: Fabri's up to 1544, De Castelein's up to 1616. Both authors have been characterised as having read widely and knowing their classics; both made use of the late fifteenth-century *Art de rhétorique vulgaire* of Jean Molinet and both distinguish their art clearly from poetry made by rural and ignorant persons and from formless lyrics heard from simple people in the street.<sup>31</sup> Finally, both link their art of second rhetoric, i.e. their art of vernacular versification, to first rhetoric, i.e. the classical, Ciceronian rhetoric. However, Fabri and De Castelein present this linkage in a different way.

Fabri's treatise is divided into two books, each containing two distinct parts. These books and parts can be associated with a distinction in the prologue between the rhetorician, the orator and the poet. The orator deals with prose, the poet with verse, but both with compositions for oral delivery. A rhetorician masters the art of both an orator and a poet, and also the correct method of composing texts that are not meant for oral delivery in public, which means in particular the writing of letters and missives. So 'rhetoric' is the all-embracing concept and Fabri's *pleine rhétorique* covers it all. The first part of the first book is a classical first rhetoric, dealing with the parts of rhetoric, the rhetorical genres, arguments and with the portions and figures of speech, all of this mainly based on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero's *De inventione*. The second part of the first book is an art of letter-writing. The first book is called 'la réthorique prosaïque', the second 'l'art de rithmer'. The second book is indeed a second rhetoric, i.e. an art of French versification, but it also contains a smaller last chapter on the grammatical and stylistic vices to be shunned by all rhetoricians, orators and poets. So Fabri gives a systematic survey of the whole field of composition in prose and verse, the latter being added to the former as

<sup>29</sup> Langlois 1902: XIX-XLII, resp. XXVI-XXVIII, 11-198; Patterson 1935: 11, 119-124, 127-128.

<sup>30</sup> Fabri 1889-1890, III: xv-xvi; Patterson 1935: 164-172, 174-175.

<sup>31</sup> On Fabri: Zschalig 1884: 20-56 (21, 49); Fabri 1889-1890, III: I-XXII, XXVI and II: 27, 96-97; Newcomer 1916: 217; Patterson 1935: 161-164; Gros 1992: 120-121, 125-126, 128. On De Castelein: De Castelein 1555: 10 (st. 29); Iansen 1970; Iansen 1971: 12-15, 506-517 and Coigneau 1985.

giving more pleasure in hearing because of its content and ‘measures’.<sup>32</sup> In his prologue Fabri wants the poet, the orator and the rhetorician to be distinguished from each other, and as a matter of fact, very few cross-references are found in the different parts of his treatise. Nevertheless, the same prologue also points out their interdependence in saying that the orator should be a poet too because rhetoric presupposes a knowledge of all other arts and especially of poetry, which contains all the flowers of elegant composition.<sup>33</sup>

Matthijs de Castelein’s *Const van rhetoriken* is a second rhetoric, an art of Dutch versification, interwoven with parts and pieces of classical rhetoric, mainly derived from Cicero’s *De oratore* and Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*. These classical passages concern the education and personality of the orator and points on elocution and pronunciation.<sup>34</sup> Poets and orators, Dutch second rhetoric and classical first rhetoric, are identified by De Castelein, because in his opinion both pursue the same ideal: ornate speech. This identification is authorised by Cicero’s saying that the poet and the orator have in common the use of many sorts of ornament. By turning a means into a final aim, De Castelein makes elocution the main part of rhetoric. Together with this identification on the basis of ornate speech as their ultimate goal, De Castelein also accepts, again on the authority of Cicero, a difference of precepts by which poets and orators should try to achieve their common object. In the passage referred to by De Castelein, Cicero points out that the poet’s precepts, in comparison with the orator’s, are more restricted as regards rhythm and freer in the choice of words.<sup>35</sup> Unlike Fabri’s *art de rithmer*, De Castelein’s *Const van rhetoriken* is not a traditional second rhetoric, formally added to a separate classical rhetoric; it is, on the contrary, an art of versification enriched and authorized by means of parts and ideas taken from classical rhetoric. This fusion is original and unique.<sup>36</sup>

But even aside from the classical rhetorical framework and content, the *Const van rhetoriken* is an original and unique art of versification, as may appear from a comparison with Fabri’s second book. For his second rhetoric Fabri borrowed from Molinet’s *Art de rhétorique vulgaire* (1493), but more important still is his application of *L’Instructif de la seconde rhétorique*, a rhymed treatise that makes part of a broader compilation called *Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rhétorique* (1501), the author (maybe Regnaud Le Queux) of which is called ‘l’Infortuné’. Fabri’s *art de rithmer* is in fact a non-critical commentary and a prose amplification of L’Infortuné’s treatise. Besides many quotations from L’Infortuné to confirm his statements, Fabri also exemplifies his theories with citations from several other poets, most of them mentioned by their names. Fabri’s second rhetoric is a rather neutral exposition, without explicit authorial intrusions. The

<sup>32</sup> Fabri 1889-1890, I: 5-193, 194-293; II: 1-111, 112-133; further: I: 11; II: 2; III: XXIV-XXV.

<sup>33</sup> Fabri 1889-1890, I: 11-12.

<sup>34</sup> Iansen 1971: 263-272; Spies 1991: 228-230; Spies 1993: 78-79.

<sup>35</sup> De Castelein 1555: 12 (st. 34); Iansen 1971: 167; Coigneau 1985: 454 (n. 12); Cicero 1959-1960, I: 51 (I: 70). In pointing out the resemblance between the poet and the orator, A. Sebillet (1548) and J. du Bellay (1549) rely also on Cicero I: 70. Peletier 1930: 83 (n. 16).

<sup>36</sup> Spies 1993: 81.



only more personal accents are to be found in the book's dedication to the members, princes and poets of the *puy* of Our Lady in Rouen and in its relative elaborate and detailed treatment of the chant royal, the favourite speciality of the Norman *puy*s.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike Fabri, De Castelein apparently could not rely on an earlier vernacular tradition of second rhetoric.<sup>38</sup> One of the practical reasons of existence of the French arts of second rhetoric was, according to Langlois, their informative value to people who wanted to enter the *puy*s' contests with their specific genres and rules.<sup>39</sup> The chambers' contests with their more general poetical forms and their more collective and anonymous participants do not seem to have exerted the same stimulus. De Castelein describes rhetoricians who have mastered their art as people who keep their work locked up (unpublished), being rather disinclined to spread their knowledge.<sup>40</sup> This self-protective reticence of or within the chambers may be connected with certain precepts in the chambers' statutes, obliging all members to be secret about their preparations and exercises for contests.<sup>41</sup> Unlike Fabri and his predecessors, De Castelein even felt the necessity to justify his enterprise and to defend himself against a possible reproach with personal ambition.<sup>42</sup>

I think the above provides sufficient indication that the general atmosphere among Dutch chambers was not very favourable to the redaction and publication of second rhetorics. Consequently, the light for De Castelein had to come from Valenciennes (again). As a leading example he used the *Art de rhétorique vulgaire* of the Valenciennes canon Jean Molinet, of course not without amplifying, adapting and correcting the French treatise, largely after the Flemish habits and practice.<sup>43</sup> Molinet exemplified the technique of rhyme and rhythm with poems of his own. This example was most eagerly followed by De Castelein, so much so that about three-quarters of the book can be regarded as an anthology of his poetic work.<sup>44</sup> Moreover De Castelein refers the reader to four of his other publications. He also explicitly points out his own merits and the bulk of his dramatic works. He doesn't forget to throw light upon himself as the first author to write a Dutch art of rhetoric and at every turn he expresses his per-

<sup>37</sup> Zschalig 1884: 30-54; Fabri 1889-1890, II: 1-2, 97-108; III: XXV-XXVI (read 'Molinet' instead of 'Henri de Croy'); Patterson 1935: 161-162, 166, 171-172, 175.

<sup>38</sup> De Castelein 1555: 50 (st. 149), 249 (st. 236); Coigneau 1985: 470 (n. 73).

<sup>39</sup> Langlois 1902: VI, XII.

<sup>40</sup> De Castelein 1555: 101 (st. 193); Coigneau 1985: 469-470 (n. 71).

<sup>41</sup> See, among many other statutes, the rules of *The modest hearts* (Sebaer herten) of Roeselare in which the prohibition to show or tell outsiders something about the chamber's exercises is put in terms of a protection against stealing the art ('om dat ghij de conste laet stelen'): Lawet 1941: 78 (st. 11).

<sup>42</sup> De Castelein justifies his enterprise, among other things, by means of a fictitious command by Mercury: De Castelein 1555: 3-8; Iansen 1971: 58-84; Coigneau 1985: 468-469. No personal ambition: De Castelein 1555: 50 (st. 149); reference is made to this statement in Heinric van den Keere's introductory poem (De Castelein 1555: 3v; Coigneau 1985: 471, n. 76), which is in fact an adaptation of Thomas Sebillet's poem 'A l'envieux' in his *Art poétique Français* (1548): Sebillet 1932: 5.

<sup>43</sup> Iansen 1971: 85-161; Coigneau 1985: 465.

<sup>44</sup> Spies 1993: 78.



sonal opinion or his preference in matters of poetic technique. The emphatic omnipresence of its author's personality is indeed a very distinctive mark of this art of second rhetoric.<sup>45</sup>

The above may seem to contradict the more anonymous and collective appearance of chambers' members I mentioned earlier. Both statements are not incompatible, however. De Castelein's extraordinary self-confidence may be considered necessary to break through the conventional reticence.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the messenger's self-assurance was harnessed with the importance of his message, as it was based on an fully original view of the relation between the poetry of Dutch rhetoricians and that of the classical poets. Indeed, De Castelein's introduction to the poetic genres as practised by the rhetoricians is very different from the way they are presented in the French treatises. Just as De Castelein connected, on a more general level, second with classical rhetoric, he links the poetical genres practised by Dutch rhetoricians to genres and even individual poems of classical authors. De Castelein explains, for instance, how, in his view, the *refrein* proceeded from Virgil's 8th eclogue and the ballad from Martial's epigrams; among other things he also points out that the rhetoricians' theatre emanated from classical tragedy and comedy. So, De Castelein provided the poetics of the rhetoricians with a classical rhetorical and poetical nimbus, which chambers of rhetoric, worthy of their name, could not easily dismiss.<sup>47</sup>

The tenth and last chapter of *L'Instructif*, L'Infortuné's art of rhetoric in *Le jardin de plaisance et fleur de rhétorique* (1501), deals separately with moralities, farces and mysteries. In giving special attention to these dramatic genres, L'Infortuné is unique among the French arts of second rhetoric.<sup>48</sup> It is typical that Fabri, taking almost everything from *L'Instructif*, leaves aside its information on drama. Considerations on drama were apparently wasted on the Rouen *puy* of Our Lady. For De Castelein, the situation is very different. In chambers' contests the highest prizes were given to theatrical performances. L'Infortuné deals with the dramatic genre in a final chapter, but he does not express the idea that drama is at the top of the poetic program. This, in fact, is what De Castelein explicitly does. Twice he sets up a hierarchy in which the composition of such lyrical genres as rondels, songs and ballads is distinguished as the easier, preparatory exercise from the writing of plays, which are the true task of the rhetorician. Within the dramatic genre De Castelein considers the so-called *tafelspelen* (a genre to be performed at private parties) as the least difficult type of play. These *tafelspelen* never formed part of theatrical contests, unlike farces,

<sup>45</sup> Coigneau 1985: 468-472. Comparing his work with the horse of Troy because of the many disciples it will produce, De Castelein identifies himself in fact with Isocrates, 'the Master of all rhetoricians': see De Castelein 1555: 248 (st. 233); the stanza relies on Cicero's *De oratore* II. 94 (Cicero 1959-1960, I: 268-269) and can be added to the collection of borrowings from Cicero in Iansen 1971: 265 (also 503).

<sup>46</sup> Unlike Fabri who presented the Rouen Puy of Our Lady with his second rhetoric, the *Const van rhetoriken* was not dedicated to any chamber: Coigneau 1985: 468 (n. 64), 471.

<sup>47</sup> Coigneau 1985: 466-467; Spies 1993: 80.

<sup>48</sup> *Jardin* 1910-1925, I: c 1v-c 2v; Patterson 1935: 153-157, 161, 174. See also Langlois 1902: xiii-xv.

which come next in De Castelein's hierarchy, followed by, last and highest, morality plays.<sup>49</sup>

In drawing the above lines and distinctions, the *Const van rhetoriken* points out the limits of the traditional second rhetoric and, being such a rhetoric, also its own limits. De Castelein's views were not consequentially worked out into a full-fledged dramatic theory, but the few ideas on the composition of drama expressed in it sufficiently demonstrate that such a theory would lead far beyond the simple techniques of rhyme and rhythm presented here.

In a passage relying on Horace's directions for dramatists in his *Ars poetica*, De Castelein deals more generally with decorum, harmonious structure and the avoidance of offence, questions indeed applicable, although not exclusively so, to drama.<sup>50</sup> Apart from this, there are two stanzas in the *Const van rhetoriken* where the composition of drama is specifically discussed. First of all De Castelein proclaims the dramatist's freedom of choice in rhyming, a statement, in fact, by which the very rationale of the art of versification as a prescriptive treatise on the use of rhythms and rhymes is transgressed. De Castelein's teachings concerning playwriting further consist of the advice to pay careful attention to the invention of characters and their disposition in view of a deeply laid conclusion. The author warns that all of this — the play's conclusion as well as the clear and rational distinction and interdependence of the characters, the former founding the latter — needs much reflection and diligence.<sup>51</sup> De Castelein's far-reaching advice is given neither further elucidation nor concrete form. Still, he does not leave his readers without any model to follow: a prologue, an epilogue and a parodied sermon are furnished as examples, but no real dialogues or scenes.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, De Castelein doesn't display the whole of rhetoricians' art; he doesn't even show the highest and most important part of it.<sup>53</sup> Classical rhetoric being fused with second rhetoric, the former is drawn within the traditional boundaries of the latter. Still, the importance of the Dutch rhetoricians' theatre opened a further perspective, although unfortunately the path of invention and disposition it reveals is not really trodden. Otherwise, it would have created a first rhetoric applied on drama, together with the second rhetoric which it is now.

<sup>49</sup> De Castelein 1555: 14 (st. 40), 52 (st. 154-155).

<sup>50</sup> Iansen 1971: 264 (De Castelein's stanzas 70-71, 74-76; Iansen 1971: 196-206). In my opinion De Castelein, thinking of theatre, borrowed from Horace also in stanzas 61 and 77: cp. De Castelein 1555: 21 and 26 with Horace's *Ars poetica* 128-133 and 180-184 (Horatius 1980: 32-35, 36-37); however, see Iansen 1971: 190-191 and 206. The avoidance of offence, as stipulated in stanza 77, was always explicitly mentioned in rhetoricians' invitation cards for theatrical contests.

<sup>51</sup> De Castelein 1555: 58 (st. 172-173). De Castelein's instructions may be most closely compared with L'Infortuné's remarks on the morality plays: *Jardin* 1910-1925, I: c 2r; Patterson 1935: 153-154. Just like De Castelein, L'Infortuné stresses the importance of the characters and their names in connection with the exposition of the 'matter'.

<sup>52</sup> De Castelein 1555: 231-232, 242-246.

<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, De Castelein's remarks in stanza 173 on dramatic structure are particularly connected with the *tafelspel*, the genre that is considered as the easiest kind of drama. This restriction to the lowest genre may be related to his statement that the pupils he has in mind were not masters, but young and simple beginners: De Castelein 1555: 70 (st. 186-187).

Not everything is lost, however, for there is in the *Const* a part of rhetoric that does pay more detailed attention to theatre. As a matter of fact, the main theoretical exposition in the *Const van rhetoriken* is concluded by seven stanzas on pronunciation or action, i.e. the use of voice and gestures. The first three stanzas rely on Cicero's *De oratore*, the last four primarily use Horace's *Ars poetica*.<sup>54</sup> In their chapters on pronunciation, classical rhetoricians regularly related the orator's delivery with actor's performances, often distinguishing both ways of delivery from each other, and warning the rhetorician not to turn his oration into theatre.<sup>55</sup> De Castelein omits these distinctions and draws Cicero's ideas on the use of voice, eyes, arm and foot into a purely theatrical setting. He even turns the orator Gracchus into an actor on stage.<sup>56</sup> The same holds for De Castelein's borrowings from Horace: here directions on the decorous creation of characters are turned into directions on apt impersonation.<sup>57</sup> The seven stanzas on delivery and acting make the *Const van rhetoriken* truly unique. Unique, as a second rhetoric containing a chapter on pronunciation, not merely in a phonological or rhythmical sense, but as 'action', and, as far as I know, unique also as a first, though concise guide on acting.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of De Castelein's application of the classics to enrich, elucidate and expand his Dutch second rhetoric, the *Const van rhetoriken* did not become and clearly did not wish to be a full-grown classical, Ciceronian rhetoric.<sup>59</sup> Why not? I think because a first rhetoric in Dutch was not the first thing rhetoricians needed. Not because first rhetoric would be irrelevant to those who were primarily engaged with rhythms and rhymes, as it may seem.<sup>60</sup> Other opinions are heard from the rhetoricians themselves: e.g. in an anonymous rhetoricians' play in defence of rhetoric, written before 1553, rhyming without knowledge of first rhetoric is explicitly repudiated and considered unworthy to be called rhetoric;<sup>61</sup> the same distinction is made in the first Ciceronian rhetoric published in Dutch in 1553, entitled *Rhetorica dye edele Const van welsegghene*, composed by Jan van Mussem, a priest (again) and a member of the chamber The Communicants in Wormhout (Flanders, now France).<sup>62</sup> The play praises rhetoric above music and shows how an interested young man is freed by

<sup>54</sup> De Castelein 1555: 59-61 (st. 175-181); Iansen 1971: 245-251, 265; Coigneau 1985-1986: 12.

<sup>55</sup> For instance in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III. 24. 26 (Cicero 1968, XIX: 199, 201-202; this *Rhetorica* was not used by De Castelein: Iansen 1971: 164, n. 1) and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* XI. 57, 88-89, 103, 123, 125, 178-184 (Quintilianus 1963-1968, IV: 274-275, 290-291, 298-299, 308-311, 346-349). See also next footnote. On theatricality and classical rhetorical practices: esp. Enders 1992.

<sup>56</sup> Cp. De Castelein 1555: 59, st. 175 and 177 (Iansen 1971, 246-247) with Cicero, *De oratore* III. 214 and 220-221 (Cicero 1959-1960, II: 171, 177).

<sup>57</sup> Cp. De Castelein 1555: 60 (st. 178) with Horace, *Ars poetica* 114-118 (Horatius 1980: 32-33).

<sup>58</sup> The Bruges rhetorician Eduard de Dene made use of De Castelein's stanzas on delivery in his pieces of advice to actors, which can be found in his *Testament Rhetoricael* (1561), fol. 176v: De Dene 1976-1977: 49-50.

<sup>59</sup> Spies 1991: 229-230; Spies 1993: 79.

<sup>60</sup> Spies 1991: 241, n. 14; Coigneau 1987-1988: 58-60; on rhetoricians' moralities and scholastic disputation: Spies 1990: 146-147.

<sup>61</sup> The play exists in two redactions: Hummelen 1968: 32 (I D 7) and 106 (I P 2); ed. Denooze 1960; see also Coigneau 1984: 39.

<sup>62</sup> On Van Mussem: Vanderheyden 1952 and 1975; Spies 1993: 75-76 and Decavele 1975, I: 107-108, 219-220.

Rhetorica's daughters, called 'Rational conduct' ('Wijse beleijdinge') and 'Speech full of sweetness' ('Soetgrondige taele'), from the prejudice that acting rhetoric would merely consist in rhyming and in producing fixed forms of verse. Both daughters, on the contrary, display the whole program of first rhetoric, including the art of letter-writing. Finally they present their disciple with a handbook on this type of rhetoric. Such a handbook was also presented by Van Mussem. The public he intended embraced all kinds of writers and speakers, among whom poets that were called rhetoricians. In Van Mussem's view, however, this name is unsuitable for unlearned poets who sin against the rules of eloquence.<sup>63</sup>

Van Mussem's book was published two years before De Castelein's, but I think the latter filled a greater need. In the play referred to above, the excerpted terminology suggests that the book of rhetoric that was handed out was in Latin. Van Mussem's was in Dutch, at last. The better rhetorician however, knowing Latin as De Castelein stated,<sup>64</sup> had never been devoid of the art of finding arguments and figures of speech. All these he could study in Latin books. Dutch versification, on the other hand, could not be learnt from Latin manuals, not only, of course, because there weren't any, but because it wouldn't make sense methodically. So, inspired by the French treatise of Molinet, De Castelein finally provided also the Dutch rhetoricians with a vernacular second rhetoric, adapted to their theatrical biases and honouring them with the idea that in imitating the poems and forms presented, they would be the heirs of the classical orators and poets.

Ultimately by 1555, with Van Mussem's *Rhetorica*, published in 1553, and De Castelein's *Const van rhetoriken*, the Dutch rhetoricians had received their own *pleine rhétorique*, their Dutch 'Fabri'. Both books together may have helped Rhetorica to become still more widespread, fashioning those that until then had been destined to remain 'unlearned' poets into 'rhetoricians' worthy of their name.

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<sup>63</sup> Van Mussem 1553: f. A 2v, A 7v-8r, C 6r-6v, G 2r-2v; Vanderheyden 1952: 292 (n. 1), 294-296, 300, 923, 927; Vanderheyden 1975: 38 (n. 89), 183.

<sup>64</sup> De Castelein 1555: 33 (st. 98).

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