

The Chambers of Rhetoric as Agents of Communication and Change in Sixteenth Century Netherlands

Gary K. Waite
(University of New Brunswick)*

The Chambers of Rhetoric

Originating in the rich cultural atmosphere of the Burgundian court of the fifteenth century, the chambers of rhetoric (*rederijkerskamer*) developed into guilds of amateur actors and authors who wrote and performed vernacular plays and other poetical literature for the enjoyment of urban Netherlanders (Strietman and Happé 2006, 1-33). These chambers were organized along the lines of other ceremonial guilds, such as the various militia guilds that trained upper class citizens in the martial arts to defend their cities; even these, however, spent as much time in banquets and celebrations as in military training. All of these civic guilds publicized their communities to the higher authorities through a variety of celebrations, such as royal entries of princes, promoted the development of a creative and innovative culture, and helped shape discourse on religion, politics, and civic affairs in the urban Low Countries.

In the fifteenth century, most of the serious plays composed and performed by the Chambers were religious in theme, supporting the activities of the cities' churches, clergy, and religious confraternities in promoting a culture of religious awareness and activity. Devotion to the Virgin Mary, instruction in the Catholic sacramental system, and the inculcation of proper religious devotion and morality, were prominent themes. They also performed a large number of comedic and satirical works that brought humour to audiences, often through the character of the devil who both frightened audiences and brought them comedic relief. Toward the end of the century, however, playwrights (the *rederijkers* called them *factors*) began focusing more on supporting the civic authorities, and in 1493 the Duke of Burgundy appointed Ghent as the official centre of rhetorician drama, hoping thereby to use their literature and performances to assist him in centralizing his Netherlandic possessions. Rhetoricians were, however, no mere mouthpieces for the higher authorities; instead, they concentrated their efforts on supporting their local urban communities. There was, for example, a significant disconnect between the Burgundian court of Brussels, which spoke French, and the rhetorician culture of the Flemish and Dutch towns, which communicated in Flemish or Dutch. As the Dukes sought to use their displays of magnificence to impress their subjects, the towns asked their rhetoricians, artists, and civic militias, to similarly impress their rulers. As Elsa Streitman and Peter Happé have noted, the civic processional culture that developed in these urban spaces "became a tool in the negotiation of a precarious balance of power between rulers and ruled" (Streitman and Happé 2006, 2). In this, the rhetoricians were invaluable.

Rhetoricians were literate artists, artisans, and merchants, citizens of the most culturally sophisticated cities in Northern Europe. Their interest in their own culture, especially

* Funding to support my research into the Chambers of Rhetoric was provided by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Standard Research Grants in 1987 and 1990, and by the University of New Brunswick. Thanks especially go to Elsa Strietman of the University of Cambridge, for her frequent and helpful advice.

literature and drama, led them to form or join the chambers of rhetoric to hone their poetical skills and provide cultural services to their community. On the strength of this sense of mission, the chambers of rhetoric became the most important performers of popular or vernacular drama in the Low Countries. The messages disseminated in the verses and plays composed and performed by rhetoricians spoke to and for their own interests, i.e., that of urban merchants and guildsmen. Not all of their compositions were intended for mass consumption, although even their in-house refrains – a genre of poetry with its own conventions as to rhyme scheme and stanza length (de Castelein 1555) – shaped the poetry of non-members as well. The serious plays, especially the *spelen van zinne*, literally “plays of the senses,” were dramatic works that had as their central or sole characters allegorical figures representing elements of human conscience or emotions, and which normally were divided equally between good and evil characteristics. Even so, these plays could range in popularity from the dense and sophisticated to the light and humorous, depending on the particular author and audience. Rhetoricians viewed themselves as more than entertainers, as teachers and promoters of good religious and civic virtues, thus their literary productions almost always had a moral or didactic edge, distinguishing them quite clearly from the purely comical entertainments of wandering troupes of players which frequently made the rounds of towns and villages. The *spelen van zinne* were the epitome of the rederijkers’ craft, always rhymed, often with double entendre, hidden messages, acrostics and the like, at times demanding a great deal of their audiences. Rhetoricians also composed and performed simpler works – dinner plays, entertainments and farces – some involving as few as two actors, and with a more comical purpose. These shorter plays were usually aimed at a less sophisticated audience, had more in the way of slapstick and fools, but still always promoted a moral of some sort. In fact, most plays of all types written and performed during the first half of the sixteenth century were simple enough to be understood by a wide audience of literate and illiterate viewers, even though many of the subtler allusions or classical and scriptural references may have been lost on some of the spectators. This situation changed after the 1550s, when rhetoricians began imitating Renaissance and classical models of drama and outdoing each other in the inclusion of complex puzzles and acrostics in their literary compositions. Their works thus became less popular stylistically, if more intellectually appealing.

By the early sixteenth century there were chambers established in the Dutch-speaking provinces of Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, and every town and even many villages had one or more chambers, while some of the French-speaking towns had their versions in the provinces of Artois, Tournai, and Hainault, although the bulk of rederijker activity was in Flemish or Dutch (van Deursen 1991, 150). In the sixteenth century these developed a series of dramatic and poetical competitions that brought several chambers together in one city as they vied for the prize of best productions on a specific topic. Such events helped spread rederijker culture and also new ideas across the Low Countries. The chambers continued to be vibrant cultural and pedagogical agents even after the Burgundian throne fell into the possession of the Habsburg prince Charles, who inherited the Burgundian Netherlands in 1515, then the kingdoms of Aragon and Castille in 1516 (as King Charles I), and was then elected Holy Roman Empire in 1519, as Charles V. Suddenly the provinces of the Low Countries were part of a much larger, global empire, and their cities expected to pay even more for their overlord’s ambitions. They were also expected to be loyal subjects and good Catholics; this would prove a difficulty.

Reformers on Stage

This problem was the focus of my *Reformers on Stage: Popular Drama and Religious Propaganda in the Low Countries of Charles V, 1515-1556*, published in 2000 (Waite 2000). As incubators for the development and exchange of ideas, the chambers could not help but quickly become major disseminators of the new religious reformation captivating residents of the Low Countries. But they did so in ways that reflected the priorities of their prosperous and sophisticated urban communities. They reflected popular attitudes, but also reshaped them, disposing Netherlanders toward religious reform but in ways that were compromising and eclectic. A native of Ghent, Charles V was an ardent Catholic and an opponent of the Protestant Reformation convulsing the German Empire. When reform ideas began penetrating into his Netherlandic possessions, he naturally sought ways to oppose them, but without deeply offending his subjects. The Chambers were thus able to get away with expressing a certain measure of reform sentiment but in highly nuanced forms that often used humour and satire to avoid significant censure.

My book was framed as a study of the propagandistic function of drama in the Habsburg Low Countries, focusing on the theme of reform, religious and otherwise. It contributed to recent scholarship on how people communicated their ideas and how they adapted the reform messages to suit their own perspectives and needs. How did urbanites, who belonged to both popular and élite worlds, adapt religious reform ideas of Martin Luther, John Calvin, or even the Anabaptists? (Drewes 1978-1979; also Scribner 1987, 49-69). The rederijker plays also served celebratory and humorous functions, and through comedic turns, they could grab the attention of audiences far more effectively than through sermon or pamphlet.

Reformers on Stage was restricted to the early reformation in the Low Countries during Charles V's rule, roughly 1519 to 1555, and compared developments between Antwerp and Amsterdam, the two most important cities in the Southern and Northern Netherlands respectively at the start of the Reformation. It then examined more comprehensively most of the surviving plays known to date to the era of Charles V. Based on the surviving plays, a large number of rhetoricians took it upon themselves to promote a wide range of reform perspectives on the stages of the Low Countries. Until 1539 these were dominated by Lutheran or "Lutheran-minded" outlooks, although Anabaptist, spiritualistic and other forms were also present to a lesser degree. However, rhetoricians were not simply reflectors of the learned reform proposals of Luther. Instead, they reshaped the reform messages, generally with the hope of bringing in religious reform without unduly disturbing the peace and unity of their communities. The two goals were not always compatible, and in the struggle to resolve the conflict between their economic and social interests and their religious aspirations, rhetoricians often revised or toned down the religious reform rhetoric, aspiring to appeal to as wide an audience as possible without overly alienating their authorities, all with the hope of keeping the peace. The later period (after 1539) witnessed both an attempted suppression of anticlerical drama and an increasing sophistication in how rhetoricians presented reform on stage. It also saw the rise both of Calvinist influence and of spiritualism. In both periods orthodox Catholic playwrights continued to write works supportive of the old faith, but these were only rarely polemical.

In order to deal fairly with all of the major issues relating to rhetorician reform drama,

Reformers on Stage is divided into three parts. Part I introduced readers to society and religion in the Low Countries, especially focussing on the cities of Antwerp and Amsterdam, along with a brief survey of the history of the early Reformation in the Low Countries. The second chapter provides a general introduction to the chambers of rhetoric. Part II, also consisting of two chapters, turns to a more detailed analysis of rhetorician activity and religious reform within the specific urban contexts of Antwerp (chapter three) and Amsterdam (chapter four). Awareness of the specific urban context is essential in properly appraising the reform perspective of rhetorician drama. For example, in Antwerp, the city's aristocratic magistrates publicly encouraged and financially supported their city's rederijkers. Even though they also adopted stringent measures against heresy in their city, especially that communicated through preaching and the printing press, their rhetoricians were able to use the stage to propagate reformation ideas, in large measure because they advocated moderation in the debate over religious reform and publicly denounced extreme reform proposals. They continued generously to support their chambers, only reluctantly taking action against one or two heretical actors. Through the first half of the sixteenth century, Antwerp's regents held their dramatic guilds in high esteem. The city's rhetoricians continued to be useful in promoting the honour of their city and denouncing the dangerous ideas of more radical reformers. The moderate reform proposals of many of its rhetoricians could therefore be tolerated.

This was not the case in Amsterdam. In this smaller northern city, some rhetoricians became vigorous proponents of religious reform, much to the chagrin of the authorities. In the early stages of the Reformation, Amsterdam's magistrates were much more tolerant of the spread of reform propaganda than were their Antwerp equals. Yet they apparently did not encourage their rhetoricians. Perhaps one reason for this lack of support is that Amsterdam's merchant patriciate not only sought to avoid frivolous expenditures, but also distrusted popular culture. What city fathers perhaps feared most was the possibility that the rhetoricians would use the stage to garner popular support in their conflict over political and economic power in the city, a battle which pitted the entrenched patriciate on the one side against the city's guilds, guard, and rhetoricians on the other. Even though rhetoricians normally communicated on behalf of their own semi-élite cohort or specialized tradition of literate males, there was a danger that advocacy of even moderate demands for reform, religious and otherwise, could be interpreted by less sophisticated folk as an implicit criticism of patrician policies or even a call to arms. Some of the leaders of these militia guilds and literary societies were often as prosperous and politically ambitious as their patrician fellows, but lacked easy access to political power. The patricians, therefore, could not allow this conflict to be presented to the general citizenry on stage, for the people were already in a restless mood, to say the least. Suppression of rhetorician drama may therefore have been one means by which Amsterdam's regents sought to control unfavourable propaganda. The period during which it seems Amsterdam's regents did not support their rhetoricians dated from the 1520s to the 1550s, coinciding both with the city's internal political struggle and the early Reformation and Anabaptist movements. The religious and social satire of the chambers of rhetoric was evidently perceived by those in power as a dangerous tool in the hands of disgruntled guildsmen or merchants ostracized from the decision making process.

In turn, because they were excluded from the explicit support of city fathers, Amsterdam's rhetoricians were more likely to turn for support to other disenfranchised groups, such as the socially respectable marksmen or artisanal guilds, or even to the revolutionary

Anabaptists. Only after two decades of relatively politically innocuous drama did Amsterdam's city fathers see fit to renew support for their chambers of rhetoric. Even then this positive evaluation of vernacular drama did not last; in the next century, new laws were introduced restricting chamber performances which competed with divine services (now Calvinist). What really bothered the Catholic and later Protestant clergy was the rederijkers' presumption as laymen to engage in the controversial debate over religious reform. They took their religious mission seriously, and their satirical asides were intended to drive home the importance of the need for improvement in spiritual life. Even so, it seems that the distaste for such forms of popular entertainment on the part of Amsterdam's regency had not only hindered rhetoricians of the sixteenth century, but continued into the Golden Age.

Part III of my monograph discusses all of the serious plays known to have been composed during the era of Charles V. It does so by organizing these plays chronologically into three unequal periods, the first (chapter five) covering the early period of the Reformation, from the first penetrations of Lutheran ideas in the Low Countries c.1519, to the eve of the most famous rhetorician event of the first half of the century, the Ghent competition of 1539. Anticlericalism is a dominant theme in this period, even for Catholic playwrights, arguing that the clerical estate and the ecclesiastical hierarchy needed to be transformed or eradicated. Also prevalent is the assumption that rhetoricians were at the very least the equals of the clergy, certainly in terms of literacy and knowledge of the Bible. Rhetoricians saw it as their duty to use the rhetorical arts to provide religious instruction to their audiences, much to the chagrin of the clerical estate. During the first twenty years of the Reformation in the Low Countries the majority of rhetoricians fought on behalf of a religion no longer dominated by a special caste of priests. Instead, they were inspired by a vision of a church in which laymen played leading roles – much as they did on the rhetorician stage – and whose minds and talents were fully exploited.

This theme is pursued further in chapter six which deals in a detailed fashion with the Ghent competition of 1539, which awarded the prize for the best *spelen van zinne* on the question “what is the dying man's greatest consolation,” a subject that could not help but raise the issue of religious reform. The notoriety which this competition, along with the published editions of its plays (Erné and van Dis 1982), gained for its quite remarkably open advocacy of religious reform ideas led to closer scrutiny of the activities of rederijker chambers on the part of the imperial government. Moreover, the timing of the competition was crucial in shaping imperial response to further rhetorician performances. Held during the summer of 1539, the dramatic festivities ended just weeks before Ghent's guilds and labourers overthrew the city government in protest against payment of an imperial tax. With an imposing armed force an angry Charles V arrived in Ghent in February 1540 to declare an end to most of the city's privileges and freedom. Although it cannot be said that the rederijker plays contributed directly to the revolt, the competition certainly inflamed enthusiasm for change and helped shake devotion to the traditional authorities. Although formally approved and arranged by the city's élite, the rederijker contest of 1539, performed as it was in the midst of social and political turmoil, ecclesiastical dissatisfaction, ritualistic satire and inversion, and theological confusion, could only have contributed to the events of the late summer and fall. Even if this contribution was only one of providing an example of lay folk opposing traditional religious norms, it would have been enough to warrant the imperial government's attempts to censor further rhetorician performances. Having witnessed on stage a variety of theological and reform options, the population of Ghent could very well have

thought that the old notion of a clerical stranglehold over theological orthodoxy was passé. It is not inconceivable that the Ghent performances assisted some of the populace to reconsider the role of the secular authorities as well.

In chapter seven the study turns to the plays composed during the last fifteen or so years of Emperor Charles V's reign, to see how rhetoricians changed their religious messages and how they presented these after the attempted suppression of rhetorician drama by the imperial government. Here is witnessed the changing face of the Reformation in the Low Countries, as Calvinism makes its initial penetrations after the apparent failure of the earlier Lutheran and Anabaptist forms. In other words, we see in this and other reformed plays from mid-century the ideological elements which came together to form the rationalization for the Dutch Revolt, beginning with the iconoclastic storms of 1566: an assertive Calvinism, an increasingly open condemnation of the Habsburg's religious placards, and a strong iconoclastic and anticlerical sentiment. Certainly the number of blatantly Calvinistic plays continued to increase, especially once the battle against Spain had begun c.1568. Throughout the period of the early Reformation in the Low Countries, apocalyptic denunciation remained a popular tool of propaganda, and it seems that the failed Anabaptist experiments with establishing the eschatological kingdom did not deter later reformists from likewise appealing to the fear of apocalyptic judgement. It should be obvious, therefore, that the rhetoricians of the Netherlands of Charles V played major roles in the spread of discontent and of a nascent revolutionary ideology which only lacked the heavy-handed policies of Charles' son Philip II to become a justification for actual revolt. Alongside this increased emphasis on Reformed theology are plays that promote a less aggressive reform stance by reducing emphasis on religious externals and dogma in favour of an "inner religion" and religious compromise – the spiritualist option.

The book concludes with chapter eight's detailing of the rhetoricians' concerns relating to the frequent warfare and attendant economic and social disruption. The strength of their pleas for peace, economic stability and social harmony, provide clear evidence of the sincere hope on the part of literate urbanites such as the rhetoricians to be able to combine their desire for change in their society without major upheaval. At times these goals were incompatible, leading to conflict with both secular and religious leaders. At the end of the day, most rhetoricians continued to support their authorities, but the stress of religious conflict and economic hardship had very clearly taken their toll not only on the emperor, who abdicated to his son Philip II in 1555, but also on the people of the Low Countries. The inability to find the balance between their desire to implement the correct form of religious faith and practice and their wish to see the end to needless warfare and economic hardship helped develop, by Charles' abdication, an embryonic resistance to Habsburg overlordship and to subservient patrician governance.

New Scholarship

The publication of *Reformers on Stage* in 2000 seems to have appeared on the crest of a wave of new scholarship on the subject of the rhetoricians. In 2001 scholars of the Free University of Amsterdam and the University of Ghent organized a major conference in Middelburg on the subject of rederijkers as "conformists and rebels," including contributions ranging chronologically from 1400 to 1650. It also included performances of rederijker music. The collection of essays, edited by Bart Ramakers, appeared in 2003 (Ramakers

2003), and included a CD of the music performed by the period music ensemble *Camerata Trajectina*. The result was a tour de force on the social, religious, and political impact on the chambers of rhetoric, as well as on their transformations.

Greatly assisting the scholarly analysis of the chambers have been recent efforts to find and publish archival sources and manuscript plays. By the time of the publication of my own monograph, two scholars, F.C. Boheemen and Th. C.J. van der Heijden, had just produced two volumes: one a collection of all known archival references to the rederijkers of the province of Holland (Boheemen and van der Heijden 1999a) and the other a detailed history of the chambers of the region (Boheemen and van der Heijden 1999b). Three other specialists, W.N.M. Hüsken, B.A.M. Ramakers and F.A.M. Schaars have also performed a tremendous scholarly service by reproducing and transcribing the incredible collection of manuscript plays held by the Haarlem ‘Trou Moet Blijcken’ rederijker society. This eight volume series (Hüsken, Ramakers, and Schaars 1992-1998) is now accessible on the Digitale bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse letteren website (DBNL 1999). Other plays have since been translated into English, a very difficult task given the need to present as close as possible the original meaning of these literary works while maintaining some elements of their poetical style and structure; one recent success story is the collection of comic drama edited and translated by Ben Parsons and Bas Jongenelen (Parsons and Jongenelen 2012).

Current Trends

Current trends in research on the chambers of rhetoric is taking the subject in new and exciting directions. In 2006 I reflected further on my earlier study of the religious reform activity of the rederijkers and argued that the rederijkers’ response to governmental suppression of explicit reform ideas in the 1540s and early 1550s caused most playwrights to become far more subtle in presenting reform ideas, using their great facility for hidden or double meanings to great effect. I suggested, in fact, that they were following the approach to religion that has come to be known as Nicodemism, of hiding one’s real beliefs under an appearance of orthodoxy or conformity, which became extremely popular in the Netherlands during these decades. In the 1550s, compelled by Calvin’s challenge for the true believers once again to take a public stand despite the dangers, many rhetoricians began presenting biblical drama that, given the scriptural clues provided, was as open a defence of Protestant beliefs as possible. Even so, some playwrights followed a spiritualistic approach that spurned theological disputations, confessional distinctions, and religious conflict of the Reformation in favour of an emphasis on inner sanctity and love of one’s neighbour. These latter were, after all, major priorities in the maintenance of civic cohesion. This tendency can be seen, for example, in at least three of the Ghent 1539 plays: the dramas of Kortrijk, Menen, and Oudenaarde developed this preoccupation with personal sanctity and love of neighbour, underpinned by a strong anti-materialism. All three emphasized the Holy Spirit as the dying person’s best consolation, for it is the personal assurance of the Spirit, not Luther’s doctrine of justification nor the traditional Catholic means of grace, which provided certitude of salvation (Waite 2006, 90-92).

Spiritualism was not the exclusive domain of the so-called spiritualists and ‘libertines’ such as David Joris (c.1501-1556), Hendrik Niclaes (c.1501-c.1580), or Dirck Volckhertsz Coornhert (1522-1590), himself a writer of plays and poetry, to name only a few, but became an increasingly popular approach after the middle of the century. The vicious religious

conflict and persecution of the 1520s and 1530s helped more and more reform-minded Netherlanders to turn to spiritualism to assist them in presenting reform ideas. Several of the plays from the 1540s and 1550s can be interpreted as spiritualistic at their core (Waite 2006, 92-99). There was also a strong tendency to eclecticism, by selecting reform ideas or interpretations from a variety of sources to fit into the local religious culture and to fashion possible compromises between Lutheran reform and the Catholic status quo (see also Ramakers 1996, 443). Since spiritualism emphasized the inner significance of religious beliefs and practices, it could find an outward home in either Catholicism or Protestantism. If precise dogma was inconsequential for salvation and if the true church was spiritual, not physical, then a playwright could advocate a path to salvation that shunned the divisiveness and damage of doctrinal disputes or arguments over specific cultic practices. In spiritualism, then, many playwrights believed they had found a means to ending the religious impasse and ensuring peace and tranquillity for their communities and businesses, while at the same time pushing for a renewal of spiritual life and a greater participation in it on the part of lay people. The popularity of this approach is also attested by the developments in the intellectual and religious life of the Netherlands later in the sixteenth century and in the next, such as the rise of the Collegiant movement (Fix 1991). In the course of the next several decades, as the Netherlands embarked on its fateful wars against Spain, rhetoricians continued to compose plays from this perspective, although whether spiritualism contributed to or blunted criticism against the policies of the higher rulers remains to be seen.

Throughout the sixteenth century, the predominant form of serious rhetorician drama (and many of its comedic genres as well) became almost overwhelmingly that of the *spel van sinnen*. Instead of performing roles of real or biblical personages, the actors played the parts of inner thoughts or inclinations within every person. The battle between the Vices and Virtues was therefore one that was fought, or believed to be so, within the minds of everyone in the audience. The devil, for example, was transformed from an independent, frightening (or humorous, depending on the moment,) creature external to humanity, to a force of evil within each human, where blame for sin was now believed to reside (Ficheroux 1999). For his part Joris after 1538 became deeply disillusioned with the literal fulfilment of prophecies, turning the apocalyptical antichrist and the devil into internalized vices of individuals (Waite 1995). Joris's controversial demonology was finalized while he lived in Antwerp (1539 to 1544), and as a highly skilled artist, he moved in the same circles as the rederijkers, and his father may have performed in rederijker dramas; Joris himself was certainly skilled in the composition of rederijker refrains (Waite 1992). It is my belief that Joris was encouraged in his internalizing of the devil by rhetorician presentations of the *sinnekens* (Waite 1991).

Another recent trend in rederijker scholarship is to evaluate them in the context of urban cultural studies and the creation of knowledge. Two leaders in this field are Arjan van Dixhoorn and Ruben Buys whose recent studies are revealing how the rederijkers were major players in the creation of knowledge in the Low Countries. Van Dixhoorn's *Lustige geesten* reveals that rederijkers were critical agents in shaping the cultural and intellectual life of the Low Countries (Van Dixhoorn 2009), while he is currently exploring how theatrical means of communication were part of the broader creation of knowledge by citizens in Antwerp and Zeeland that also included other cultural sub-groups such as the militia guilds, religious confraternities, and artisanal and merchant guilds. Similarly, Buys is exploring how the rederijkers and other civic groups, along with the writing of spiritualistic nonconformists like Coornhert, helped shape discussions on the meaning and use of reason, helping lay the

groundwork for new understandings of religion, science, or philosophy (Buys 2015). This new work is breaking the myth that until the eighteenth century Enlightenment salons literate urbanites, such as the rederijkers, were mere purveyors of propaganda rather than creators of their own forms of knowledge. Instead, we are now appreciating just how much these cultural sub-groups reshaped ideas to better suit their urban environments, both during and after the Reformation. Among other things, they helped to instil an independence of thought into their audiences that became a prominent feature of Dutch culture in the Golden Age, even though some of this activity was subsequently taken over by other groups, such as various religious nonconformists and the Collegiants (Waite 2014). While much more research into the poetry and drama of the rederijkers remains to be done, there is no longer any doubt as to their cultural, religious, and intellectual importance for the early-modern Low Countries.

Works Cited

- Boheemen, F.C. and Th. C.J. van der Heijden, eds. *Retoricaal Memoriaal: Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Hollandse redeerijkerskamers van de middeleeuwen tot het begin van de achttiende eeuw*. Delft: Eburon, 1999a.
- Boheemen, F.C. and Th. C.J. van der Heijden, *Met minnen versaemt. De Hollandse rederijkers vanaf de middeleeuwen tot het begin van de achttiende eeuw: Bronnen en bronnenstudies*. Delft: Eburon, 1999b.
- Buys, Ruben. *Sparks of Reason: Vernacular Rationalism in the Low Countries, 1550-1670*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2015.
- Castelein, Matthijs de. *De Const van Rhetoriken*. Ghent: Jan Cauweel, 1555.
DBNL 1999:
<http://www.dbnl.org/organisaties/rederijkerskamers/rederijkerskamer.php?id=haar1001pell01>
- Deursen, Arie van. *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Dixhoorn, Arjan van. *Lustige geesten. Rederijkers in de Noordelijke Nederlanden (1480-1650)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009.
- Dixhoorn Arjan van and Susie Speakman Sutch, eds. *The Reach of the Republic of Letters: Literary and Learned Societies in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Drewes, J.B. "Het interpreteren van godsdienstige spelen van zinne." *Jaarboek de Fonteyne* 29 (1978-1979): 5-124.
- Erné, B.H., and L.M. van Dis, eds. *De Gentse spelen van 1539*, 2 vols. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982.
- Ficheroux, Marcel. "Van helse intrigant tot toneelfiguur: De duivel op het toneel in de late Middeleeuwen (1400-1600)," *Trajecta*, 8 (1999): 3-30.
- Fix, Andrew C. *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Hummelen, W.M.H. *De sinnekens in het rederijkersdrama*. Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1958.
- Hüsken, W.N.M., B.A.M. Ramakers and F.A.M. Schaars, eds. *Trou Moet Blijcken. Bronnenuitgave van de boeken der Haarlemse rederijkerskamer "de Pellicanisten,"* 8 volumes. Assen: Uitgeverij Quarto, 1992-1998.
- Parsons, Ben and Bas Jongenelen, eds, trans. *Comic Drama in the Low Countries c.1450-1560: A Critical Anthology*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012.
- Ramakers, Bart. *Conformisten en rebellen: Rederijkerscultuur in de Nederlanden (1400-1650)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003.
- Ramakers, Bart. *Spelen en figuren. Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996.
- Scribner, Robert W. "Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas." in Robert W. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*. London and Ronceverte: A&C Black, 1987. 49-69.
- Strietman, Elsa and Peter Happé, eds. *Urban Theatre in the Low Countries, 1400-1625*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- Waite, Gary K. "A Reappraisal of the Contribution of Anabaptists to the Religious Culture and Intellectual Climate of the Dutch Republic," in *Religious Minorities and Cultural*

- Diversity in the Dutch Republic: Studies Presented to Piet Visser on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, edited by August den Hollander, Alex Noord, Mirjam van Veen, and Anna Voolstra. Leiden: Brill, 2014. 6-28.
- . *Reformers on Stage: Popular Drama and Religious Propaganda in the Low Countries of Charles V, 1515-1556*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- . "“Man is a Devil to Himself”: David Joris and the Rise of a Sceptical Tradition towards the Devil in the Early Modern Netherlands, 1540-1600,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis / Dutch Review of Church History*, 75 (1995): 1-30.
- . "The Holy Spirit Speaks Dutch: David Joris and the Promotion of the Dutch Language, 1539-1545.” *Church History*, 61 (1992): 47-59.
- . "Popular Drama and Radical Religion: The Chambers of Rhetoric and Anabaptism in the Netherlands.” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 65 (1991): 227-55.
- . *David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism, 1524-1543*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990.