



'Aus äußeren Gründen nicht verfügbar'?¹ German Anthologies of Flemish Literature during the Second World War

Theresia Feldmann, KU Leuven (Brussel) & Frederike Zindler, University of Münster

Abstract. This article examines two anthologies of translated Flemish literature published in Nazi Germany during the Second World War. Through a descriptive analysis of paratexts and the publishing context of the 'Third Reich', it provides insights into the balancing act of editors and translators between their own traditions, the restrictive circumstances of the cultural field, and Nazi Germany's war interest in Belgium.

Keywords. Translation anthologies / Vertaalbundels, literary translation / literaire vertaling, Flemish literature / Vlaamse literatuur, Nazi Germany / nazi-Duitsland, censorship / censuur, Filip de Pillecyn, Karl Jacobs

¹ 'Unavailable for reasons beyond our control', K. Jacobs (ed.), *Flandern erzählt – Ein Sammelband flämischer Dichter*, transl. by K. Jacobs (München: Alber, 1943), p. 303. All translations are our own, unless otherwise specified.

Unser Bild des flämischen Schrifttums zu erweitern, die ganze Vielfalt auszubreiten und neben die bekannten und bevorzugten Meister die unbekannteren, ältere wie jüngere zu stellen, ist die Absicht dieses Sammelbandes.

[To extend our image of Flemish literature, to display its great variety and to place the known and preferred masters next to the unknown, older and younger, that is the goal of this anthology.]²

Karl Jacobs, editor of *Flandern erzählt*

Translation anthologies are an interesting field of study for anyone seeking to understand the image one culture has of another. Unlike novels or poetry collections by a single author, anthologies often serve the purpose of acquainting the reader with a (national) literature (see the quote by Karl Jacobs above). Anthologies introduce the reader to a diverse range of stories or poems and are often accompanied by an overarching pro- or epilogue that aims to justify the selection of works included. This is also the case for the two translation anthologies presented in this article.

Pioneering work in the field of research in translation anthologies was done in the 1980s when the *Sonderforschungsbereich* [special research field] 'Die literarische Übersetzung' [literary translation] was founded at the University of Göttingen. Part of this multidisciplinary project focused on translation anthologies in the German-speaking world.³ In recent years the field of translation anthologies has sparked new interest among scholars. The editors of the volume 'Translation in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th Centuries)' (2013),⁴ for instance, consider anthologies a 'conspicuous form of cultural planning and intercultural exchange processes' and 'well-known gateways for the introduction of foreign literary and non-literary texts and subjects to a target culture'.⁵ It is this aspect of cultural planning in war times that sparked our interest for the present study.

Although the Nazi regime was generally hostile towards foreign influences and therefore also translations, translated Flemish literature continued to flourish on the German book market during the Second World War. The reasons for this are amply illustrated in Ine Van linthout's contribution to this issue and can be summarized with the following statement:

² Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 302.

³ See for example H. Kittel (ed.), *International Anthologies of Literature in Translation*, Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Übersetzungsforschung (Berlin: Schmidt 1995), vol. 9.

⁴ T. Seruya et al. (eds.), *Translation in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th Centuries)* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2013).

⁵ Seruya et al., *Translation in Anthologies*, p. VII.

[A]long with the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, Flanders was judged a 'kindred' nation, in plain language: territory that Nazi leadership envisaged as a future province of the 'Great Germanic Reich'.⁶

During the Nazi-German occupation of Belgium, the German authorities continued the *Flamenpolitik* originating from the First World War, a policy that supposedly supported the kindred Flemish people in their struggle against the hegemony of the francophone elite.⁷ To create and strengthen alliances during the occupation and to further its own cause against the French *Erbfeind*, the German occupier took advantage of the ongoing internal conflicts in Belgium. To justify this approach towards the German public, it was important to construct an image of Flanders that supported this ideology, as part of the regime's cultural planning. The anthologies of Flemish literature we chose for this article were clearly intended to shape the German readership's idea of Flanders. This links them intimately with the Nazi government's foreign political interests in occupied Belgium. Obviously, translated literature had no direct impact on foreign policies, but it could be used as a means of gaining the support of the home front for the regime's actions. As a consequence, it was a valuable instrument for Nazi cultural politics.⁸ With publishing and media being *gleichgeschaltet* [brought into line] through diverse mechanisms of repression and promotion, one might assume that the Nazi regime had all the means in its hands to make use of this instrument. In reality, however, Nazi state control and censorship were surprisingly fragmented and inconsistent.⁹ While there was an official line with regard to the image of Flanders that translated Flemish fiction should convey, agents in the literary field had some room for manoeuvring. As Ine Van linthout points out, a look at the situation of translated Flemish literature in Nazi Germany 'reveals a discrepancy between official policy and the actual book production',¹⁰ which can be explained by the fact that, unlike other totalitarian regimes, the Nazi regime did not completely abandon the principles of free market economy, but tried to combine the perceived advantages of private initiative, profit-orientation and the principles of supply and demand, with the logics of totalitarian state control. For the book trade, this entailed, among others, that a large part of book production owed its existence to capitalist interests rather than ideological convictions. This was particularly true for the publishing companies that were still in private hands, which, in order to survive, had to perform a tricky balancing act between state control and free market imperatives, between propaganda and the public's taste.¹¹

While censorship and paper rationing had an economic impact on publishers, German publishers also had to watch their own economic interests in order to survive, as the literature

⁶ Van linthout, this issue, p. 11.

⁷ See for example B. Yammine, *Drang nach Westen: De fundamente van de Duitse Flamenpolitik (1870-1914)* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2011).

⁸ See I. Van linthout, *Das Buch in der nationalsozialistischen Propagandapolitik, Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 89-91.

⁹ See J.-P. Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich: Institutionen, Kompetenzen, Betätigungsfelder, Archiv für die Geschichte des Buchwesens* (München: Saur, 1993).

¹⁰ Van linthout, this issue, p. 28.

¹¹ See Van linthout, this issue, p. 28, footnote 64.

propagated by the regime did not necessarily sell well. Finally, publishing houses could also have a political agenda which ran contrary to official policy.

This makes it all the more interesting to look at how Flanders and Flemish literature are represented in anthologies published during this period. Do those anthologies serve the purpose of strengthening the regime's ideological position on Flanders or do they deviate from the 'official' narrative? We will try to answer these questions by analyzing two anthologies published in Germany during the Second World War. In line with our selection criteria, we chose two a) non-thematic anthologies of prose, because those give the most freedom to their editors, b) published between 1940 and 1945 in Germany, because this is the period of the German occupation of Belgium; and c) containing programmatic paratexts, because these inform us about the intentions behind the selection of texts and allow us to analyze the framing of Flemish literature.

While an analysis of the translations as such certainly has its merits, analysing 23 translations of short stories is beyond the scope of this article. We decided to focus primarily on the paratexts, the context in which these translations are presented and on the selection that was made. However, paratexts like prefaces or epilogues cannot be taken at face value. This is especially true in the context of totalitarian regimes.¹² The strategic use of regime-friendly buzzwords can make or break a publication and does not necessarily reflect the writer's true opinion. Often a form of self-censorship is at work, that is difficult to identify as the borders between self-censorship and active interventions are rarely clear-cut.¹³ That is why we attach importance to the history of the publishing houses involved and the social and educational background of mediators. The identification of political attitudes and social or political positions can help us understand the agent's motivations and shed light on the pro- and epilogues they produced.

Between 1939 and 1945 three non-thematic translation anthologies of Flemish prose were published in Germany – all of them in 1943.¹⁴ The first one is *Das zwiëfache Leben – flämische Novellen der Gegenwart* [The twofold life – Flemish novellas of the present], published by the Eugen Diederichs Verlag, edited by the Flemish writer Filip De Pillecyn¹⁵ and translated by Heinz Graef, who also translated the poetry of Karel Van de Woestijne into German. The second anthology is *Flandern erzählt – ein Sammelband flämischer Dichter* [Flanders narrates – a collection of Flemish poets] published by the Karl Alber Verlag and edited by the writer and translator Karl Jacobs. We decided not to include the third anthology, *Zwischen Leie und Schelde – eine Blumenlese aus der flämischen Literatur* [Between Lys and Scheldt – a selection of Flemish literature], edited by Jozef Simons and Emile Charlet and published by Westermann, because its paratexts are limited.

¹² On 'encoding resistance' through selection, prefaces etc. of translated literature, see B. J. Baer, 'Literary Translation and the Construction of a Soviet Intelligentsia', in *The Massachusetts Review* 3:47 (2006), pp. 537-60.

¹³ D. Merkle, 'Censorship', in *Handbook of Translation Studies*, ed. by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011), pp. 18-21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/hts.1.cen1>. Accessed 22 February 2019.

¹⁴ According to the Digital Library and Bibliography of Literature in Translation (<https://dlbt.univie.ac.at/>) and the Translation Database of the Dutch Foundation for Literature (<http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/translations-database>).

¹⁵ Although 'Pillecyn' is the correct spelling, it is spelled 'Pillecijn' in the anthologies discussed.

The image of Flanders that prevailed in Germany when the Nazi regime came to power, was that of a people of peasants full of *joie de vivre*, who liked to eat and drink and were somewhat removed from the struggles of modernity. It was likely influenced by the paintings of Brueghel, the parish fair-descriptions in the poetry of Émile Verhaeren and the very successful and widely circulated German translations of Felix Timmermans’ novels and stories.¹⁶ As Van linthout points out, this image of a happy and enclosed community was of little use with regard to the Nazi regime’s imperialist ambitions regarding Flanders. Accordingly, the Nazi elite had a vested interest in revising this image. As it was impossible to erase collective memory and create a more ‘appropriate’ image, the literary controlling apparatus propagated the idea of a double-faced Flanders (mit ‘zweifache[m] Gesicht’¹⁷, ‘zweierlei Flandern’¹⁸): on the one hand happy and idyllic, on the other hand struggling against French oppression and seeped in the here-and-now.¹⁹ This might explain the title of the first anthology, that at first sight conforms to the official discourse. The stress on the ‘Gegenwart’ [present] in the subtitle moreover underlines the ‘here-and-now’.

Das zwielfache Leben was published by the Eugen Diederichs Verlag, a publishing house with an eventful history. A bookseller by trade, Eugen Diederichs founded the house in 1896 in Florence, but settled in Jena in 1904.²⁰ German book historians count Eugen Diederichs, together with publishers like Samuel Fischer and Anton Kippenberg, among the so-called *Kulturverleger*, a type of publisher that was specific to the German context around the turn of the century. The publishing politics of these publishers were for a large part determined by personal preferences. The main goal was not economic success, even though they of course had to make sure they had a viable business model, but educating and guiding their readers.²¹ As Diederichs put it, the main task of the publisher was not to be a ‘Bücherfabrikant’ [producer of books], but an ‘Organisator’ [organizer].²² In the early years he focussed on publishing lavish editions of (neo)romantic poetry (Novalis, Maeterlinck), but his publication list also shows a strong focus on the *Lebensreform* movement.²³

¹⁶ Van linthout, *Das Buch*, p. 126-7.

¹⁷ Peuckert, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 1936, p. 861, quoted in Van linthout, *Das Buch*, p. 126.

¹⁸ E. Röhr, *Flämisches Volkstum* (Bonn: Scheur, 1942), p. 3, quoted in Van linthout, *Das Buch*, p. 126.

¹⁹ Van linthout, *Das Buch*, p. 126.

²⁰ U. Diederichs, *Eugen Diederichs und sein Verlag: Bibliographie und Buchgeschichte 1896 bis 1931* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), p. 17; A. Meyer, ‘Der Verlagsgründer und seine Rolle als “Kulturverleger”’, in *Versammlungsort moderner Geister: Der Eugen Diederichs Verlag. Aufbruch ins Jahrhundert der Extreme*, ed. by G. Hübinger (München: Diederichs, 1996), p. 29.

²¹ G. Hübinger, ‘Der Verlag Eugen Diederichs in Jena: Wissenschaftskritik, Lebensreform und Völkische Bewegung’, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 1:22 (1966), p. 31.

²² Eugen Diederichs, quoted in Hübinger, *Der Verlag Eugen Diederichs in Jena*, p. 31.

²³ Diederichs, *Eugen Diederichs und sein Verlag*, p. 29.

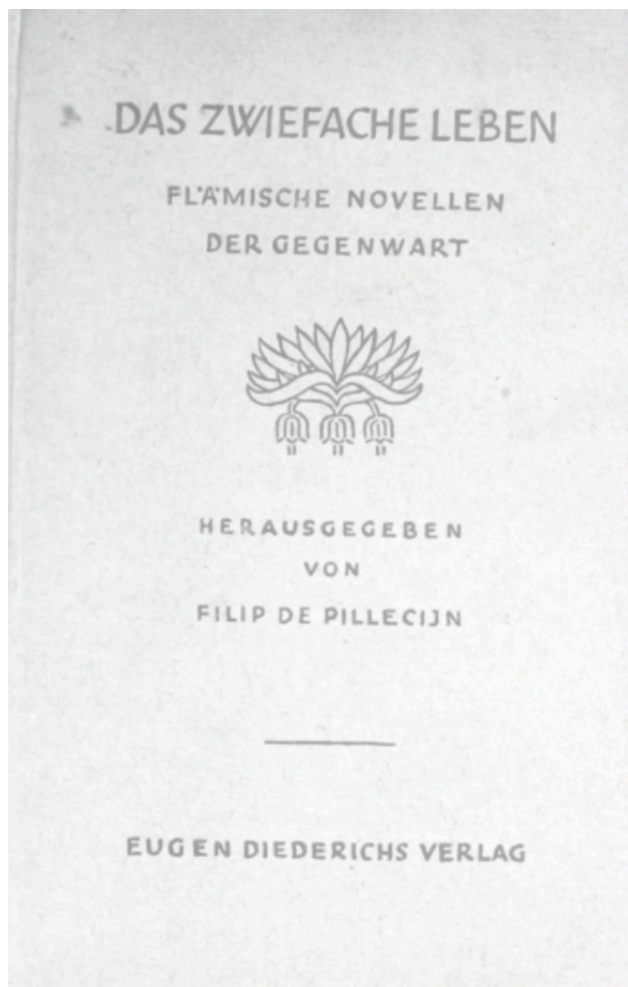


Figure 1: Das Zwiefache Leben, Cover

cinema.²⁷ The reorientation of the Diederichs Verlag must therefore also have had financial reasons. When Eugen Diederichs died in 1930 and handed the publishing house over to his two sons Niels and Peter, they enacted a more commercially-oriented policy to assure the publishing house's survival.²⁸ This new orientation was successful. As of 1931, the financial situation of the publishing house began to stabilize.²⁹

In the years leading up to the First World War, the publishing house made a turn away from aesthetics and oriented itself towards social and political sciences, however without a clear political agenda.²⁴ During the Great War, when terms like *Volk* or *Volksgemeinschaft* [racially unified society] became omnipresent, Diederichs remained wary of a chauvinist nationalism and considered the founding of the far-right *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei* a wrong step.²⁵ Nonetheless, after 1929, the magazine *Die Tat*, that had been part of the publisher's programme since 1909, turned into a vanguard publication of the anti-democratic 'conservative revolution'.²⁶ The journal was a much-needed financial success. In the mid-1920s the German book market had suffered – much like the rest of Germany – a financial crisis, generally known as the *Bücherkrise* [book crisis]. The crisis did not only result from the general economic situation, but also from the changing media landscape and the arrival of new media like radio and the

²⁴ Hübinger, *Der Verlag Eugen Diederichs*, p. 38; E. Viehöfer, *Der Verleger als Organisator. Eugen Diederichs und die bürgerliche Reformbewegung der Jahrhundertwende*, Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens (Frankfurt: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1988), p. 15; Hübinger, *Der Verlag Eugen Diederichs*, p. 41.

²⁵ Hübinger, *Der Verlag Eugen Diederichs*, p. 41.

²⁶ Hübinger, *Der Verlag Eugen Diederichs*, p. 44.

²⁷ F. Triebel, 'Krisenmanagement in der "Bücherkrise". Der Eugen Diederichs Verlag 1930-1933', in *Historische Zeitschrift*. Beihefte 42 (2006), pp. 33-4.

²⁸ Triebel, *Krisenmanagement in der 'Bücherkrise'*, p. 40.

²⁹ Triebel, *Krisenmanagement in der 'Bücherkrise'*, p. 45.

While the Eugen Diederichs Verlag remained a private publisher during the Third Reich, we can at this point count it among the very conservative publishers flirting with the extreme right. However, this does not mean that they followed the party line of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP). In 1933 their non-fiction programme, developed around the journal *Die Tat*, often showed serious ideological differences.³⁰ But in the years that followed the NSDAP's seizure of power, the publishing house like many others quickly adapted.³¹ During the Third Reich the publisher mainly concentrated on new German literature, for example of the *Blut und Boden* type.³² The publisher had good relations with the Nazi authorities and had little trouble with the rationing of paper in during the Second World War.³³ For the cultural relations between Germany and Flanders it is especially interesting to note that Peter Diederichs was stationed in the barracks of Antwerp during the war from where he maintained contact to Flemish writers. His Flemish wife Suzanne De Coninck also had a background in the Belgian publishing business. Bart Govaerts, suspects that Peter Diederichs tried to take over the role that August Kippenberg (Insel-Verlag) had played during the First World War as patron-publisher of Flemish literature, but 'op veel openlijker "politieke" manier' [in a more obvious 'political' manner],³⁴ publishing Wies Moens and Cyriel Verschaeve in his *Flämische Schriften* and with the 'steun van het Goebbels ministerie én van het militaire bestuur in Brussel' [support of the Goebbels ministry and the military government in Brussels].³⁵

Their history as a prestigious *Kulturverlag* is still apparent in the packaging of the anthology (Image 1). Layout and design of the book were executed by Max Thalmann (1890-1944) the in-house book designer of the Diederichs Verlag. He trained under the Flemish-Belgian architect and designer Henry van de Velde for whom he also worked as an assistant at Kunstgewerbeschule Weimar, which later became part of the Staatliche Bauhaus.³⁶ Van de Velde's Art Nouveau influence is visible in the design of the book cover which shows a small floral ornament and what looks like text lettered by hand. The rest of the cover is sober, set in two colours, giving it the restrained appearance of a work of highbrow literature.

The anthology itself was edited by the Flemish teacher and writer Filip De Pillecyn (1891-1962).³⁷ De Pillecyn had already gained some fame in Nazi Germany as the author of *Der Soldat Johan (De soldaat Johan)* [the soldier Johan], which was published in German translation in

³⁰ F. Achthaler, '1930-1996: Die Verlagsentwicklung nach dem Tod von Eugen Diederichs', in *Versammlungsort moderner Geister: Der Eugen Diederichs Verlag. Aufbruch ins Jahrhundert der Extreme*, ed. by G. Hübinger (München: Diederichs, 1996), p. 96.

³¹ Achthaler, *1930-1996*, p. 97.

³² Achthaler, *1930-1996*, p. 100.

³³ Achthaler, *1930-1996*, p. 107.

³⁴ B. Govaerts, 'Een Duitse paragraaf in de biografie van Gerard Walschap', in *Literatuur* 7 (1990), p. 341.

³⁵ B. Govaerts, *Een Duitse paragraaf*, p. 341.

³⁶ See V. Wahl, *Henry van de Velde in Weimar: Dokumente und Berichte zur Förderung von Kunsthandwerk und Industrie (1902 bis 1915)*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Thüringen (Köln: Böhrer, 2007).

³⁷ Speliers, *Filip de Pillecyn*, p. 47.

1941 and was propagated as a 'blood and soil' novel.³⁸ While set in the fifteenth century, the novel was inspired by De Pillecyn's experience as a volunteer in World War I. Interested in the Flemish movement since his student years, the 'humiliations' he and many other Flemish soldiers endured 'at the hands of the French-speaking Belgian army leadership'³⁹ only confirmed his belief in the Flemish cause. Over the years he became more and more radicalized, first as a Flemish nationalist, but later also in the direction of national-socialism.⁴⁰ While he fought the Germans at the front in the Great War, he collaborated actively with the German military administration of Belgium during the Second World War.⁴¹ He was a member of the DeVlag⁴² [German-Flemish Working Community] with which he travelled for example to the Flämisch-Deutsche Kulturtag [Flemish-German Days of Culture] in Münster in 1939. Further journeys as the cultural officer of DeVlag and the Vlaamse Kultuurraad [Council of Flemish Culture] followed in 1941 and 1942. In 1941, he was awarded the position of head of the Ministry Department for Secondary Education by the German military administration that sought to place pro-German people at the head of all important public institutions.⁴³ In 1947, he was sentenced to ten years in prison for his collaboration with the occupier. He was released in 1949.

What makes him interesting as an editor is the fact that he is an outsider to the German cultural field. He is a Flemish writer who, although he was familiar with the German cultural context due to his work in international associations and his collaboration with the German military government, might bring a different view to the table than someone rooted in the target culture.

For *Das zwiefache Leben. Flämische Novellen der Gegenwart*, De Pillecyn chooses – in contrast to Karl Jacobs – more recent novellas (see Table 1). The oldest one, written by Maurice Roelants, was published in 1929 while seven out of twelve were published during the ongoing war. The selected authors are also younger than those selected by Jacobs. Willem Elsschot, born in 1882, is the oldest while Piet van Aken, born in 1920, is the youngest. When the translation anthology was published in 1943, all writers were still alive. Yet, in spite of the title that refers to the '*Gegenwart*' [present], De Pillecyn admits in his epilogue that aside from Piet van Aken, young writers are missing from his collection. He argues that in recent years, 'keine nennenswerte Prosa' [no prose worth mentioning] has been written by people under the age of forty.⁴⁴

³⁸ See also H. Van Uffelen, "'Das zwiefache Leben": over de receptie van het werk van Filip De Pillecyn in het Duitse taalgebied', in *Filip De Pillecynstudies* 2 (2006), pp. 15-36.

³⁹ Elke Brems, 'A Case of "Cultural Castration"? Paul de Man's Translation of De Soldaat Johan by Filip de Pillecyn', in *Target: International Journal of Translation Studies* 2:22 (2010), p. 213.

⁴⁰ Speliers, *Filip de Pillecyn*, p. 49 and 53.

⁴¹ J. Bel, *Bloed en Rozen. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur 1900-1945*, in *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur*, ed. by A.J. Gelderblom and A.M. Musschoot (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2015), p. 947.

⁴² DeVlag was a Flemish pro-Nazi organisation that was backed by the SS during the Second World War. De Pillecyn was Head of the Culture Division (Bel, *Bloed en Rozen*, pp. 953-4).

⁴³ Bel, *Bloed en Rozen*, p. 947.

⁴⁴ F. De Pillecijn (ed.), *Das zwiefache Leben – Flämische Novellen der Gegenwart*, transl. by Heinz Graef (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1943), p. 218.

Interestingly, the anthology also contains a short biography⁴⁵ of each writer including their current position of employment. Thus we learn, for example, that Gerard Walschap ‘ist jetzt Inspektor der öffentlichen Büchereien’ [is now Executive Officer of Public Libraries], that Ernest van der Hallen is ‘Inspektor von Volksbüchereien’ [Inspector of Public Libraries], August van Cauwelaert ‘Richter in Antwerpen’ [a judge in Antwerp] and Filip De Pillecyn himself ‘Direktor im Unterrichtsministerium’ [Director in the Ministry for Education].⁴⁶ Ten out of the twelve writers featured in this book worked for the occupied Belgian state,⁴⁷ de facto under the control of the German military government and which tried to put German-friendly people in key positions.⁴⁸ This information might not seem valuable to a readership which is primarily interested in the literary work. Still, those who screen the list of writers at the end of the book might get the impression that most writers were acceptable from an ideological point of view. Given the German penchant for hierarchies and social status, the list could also have given an idea of prestige, which is not without importance for a *Kulturverlag*.

Table 1: Table of contents of *Das zwiefache Leben* (1943)

Author	Title	Original Title
Gerard Walschap (1898-1989)	Das Herrchen	’t Heerken (Novelle), first published in <i>Zo verhalen de Vlamingen</i> (DWB 1931), later reworked into <i>Celibaat</i> (novel, 1934)
Marcel Matthijs (1899-1964)	Die Todeswand	Mur Italien (1935, in <i>Vertellen</i>)
Piet van Aken (1920-1948)	Vermischte Neuigkeiten	Gemengd nieuws (1942, in <i>Westland</i>)
Sylva de Jonghe (1904-1950)	Das Todesfeuer	De schimmenkaravaan (fragment from ‘Volk aan de arbeid’, 1942, in <i>Het groene hart van Afrika</i>)
André Demedts (1906-1992)	Ein Leben	Levenslang (1941, in <i>Duizend en één avond...</i>)

⁴⁵ We do not know who wrote these biographies. The list can be found after the epilogue signed by De Pillecyn. It could have been someone involved in the production process.

⁴⁶ De Pillecyn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, pp. 222–3.

⁴⁷ Given the modest size of the Flemish book market, it is not surprising that most writers had a day job.

⁴⁸ This does not mean that all writers were sympathetic to the Germans. Some accepted positions out of opportunism or ‘om erger te voorkomen’ [to avoid worse] as Gerard Walschap (see Bel, *Bloed en rozen*, p. 948). However, the readers in the target culture were not aware of this.

Ernest van der Hallen (1898-1948)	Die Lebensversicherung	Levensassurantie (1941, in <i>De Vlag</i> ⁴⁹)
Albert van Hoogenbemt (1900-1964)	Der Mann aus Schatten und Licht	De man van schaduw en licht (1941, in <i>Duizend en één avond...</i>)
Eugen [sic⁵⁰] Bosschaerts (1901-1965)	Die Mondscheinsonate	De Mondscheinsonate (1941)
Maurice Roelants (1895-1966)	Der ewig Bestohlene	De eeuwig bestolene (1929, in <i>Twee helden</i>)
Filip De Pillecijn (1891-1962)	Das zwiefache Leben ⁵¹	De aanwezigheid (1937)
Willem Elsschot (1882-1960)	Der Löwenbändiger	De leeuwentemmer (1940)
August van Cauwelaert (1885-1945)	Und da begann der Esel	En toen begon de ezel (1935, in <i>Vertellen in toga</i>)

In his epilogue (pp. 217-9),⁵² De Pillecijn explains that his intention is not to give a comprehensive overview of Flemish fiction, but rather to introduce new translated fiction. He characterizes what has been known as Flemish literature in Germany until then as outdated ‘Schrifttum auf überwiegend folkloristischer Grundlage’⁵³ [literature on a predominantly folkloric basis]. He states that he has left out well-known writers – he does not name Timmermans, which is striking given the latter’s dominance in Germany – on purpose⁵⁴ and claims that, instead, he wants to present the reader with a more diverse overview of Flemish literature.

⁴⁹ This monthly journal was published by the SS-leaning organization with the same name.

⁵⁰ The writer’s actual first name was Eugène, which means that we are dealing with an example of Germanization.

⁵¹ The Dutch title is substantially changed in translation to make it match with the anthology’s title and to recreate the image of duality.

⁵² It is not clear whether De Pillecijn wrote this text in German or whether we are dealing with a translated text and therefore with an additional filter. De Pillecijn studied Germanic languages, so we can assume that his German was quite good.

⁵³ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 217.

⁵⁴ In Flanders, too, there was an internal backlash against Timmermans during this period, as many writers felt he misrepresented the Flemish ‘essence’. When Cyriel Verschaeve, collaborator and former recipient of the Rembrandtprijs (i.e. a German cultural prize awarded to outstanding personalities of the Netherlands and Flanders) cancelled his presence at Timmermans’ award ceremony because of his health, Karl Schulte-Kemminghausen, Head of the Propagandastaffel in Antwerp, suspected that this was only an excuse. He stated: ‘man wirft timmermans vor, seine werke böten der welt ein lächerliches zerrbild des flämischen wesens. mit der ansicht dieser kreise deckt sich im großen ganzen diejenige verschaeves über timmermans. [sic]’ [One reproaches Timmermans that his works present the world with a ridiculous caricature of the Flemish character. The view of these circles coincides more or less with Verschaeve’s view on Timmermans.] (J. Zimmermann, *Die Kulturpreise der Stiftung F.V.S. 1935-1945: Darstellung und Dokumentation*

De Pillecyn starts off with a short introduction to the still young history of Flemish literature, before explaining his selection of stories as an image of the 'contemporary' and 'future' Flanders.⁵⁵ He loosely categorizes the stories under the banner of realism inspired by naturalism, nihilism/scepticism and psychological writing and points out the absence of any actual overarching literary movements.⁵⁶ This absence of coherence is not problematic for De Pillecyn, but rather something that defines Flemish literature: He stresses the tension, the seemingly contradictive currents that embody 'die Spannweite germanischen Wesens in Flandern' [the span of the Germanic nature in Flanders],⁵⁷ thus confirming the idea of the double identity of Flanders. But while the narrative frame of the double identity still accepts the idyllic, De Pillecyn disposes of it altogether, stating that with this new generation of writers, all 'das Süßliche' [sweetness] has disappeared from Flemish prose to make space for the 'Tragik und Verworfenheit' [tragedy and deprecation] of the inconspicuous lives of the villagers.⁵⁸

Yet, in his descriptions of literary movements De Pillecyn never refers to the writers included in the anthology, nor does he indicate whom he assigns to which school.⁵⁹ The reader gets the impression that the epilogue has been written independently of the selection of texts in the anthology. References to the texts themselves are rare as well. Did he recycle a text that he had written for a different occasion? Interestingly, he is not overwhelmingly positive about the literary tendencies he presents either. Much to the contrary: he describes the nihilists who believe in nothing as absolutely un-Flemish⁶⁰ and considers the dominance of nihilism and naturalist-realism as a doom scenario for Flemish literature:

Sollte eine dieser beiden, so sehr verschiedenen und letztlich doch so verwandten Strebungen [nihilism and naturalist-realism] das Feld der Dichtkunst in Flandern beherrschen, dann

(Hamburg: Alfred-Toepler-Stiftung F.V.S. Christians, 2000), p. 727.) Another example is the writer Ferdinand Vercnocke: 'Wie Vlaanderen wil leren kennen, leze geen Timmermans of Walschap. De levende Vlaming is niet de Lierse hangbuik of de zwakzinnige.' [Whoever wants to get to know Flanders should not read Timmermans or Walschap. The living Fleming is neither the slack-gutted man from Lier nor the moron.] (R. Vanlandschoot, *Kapelaan Verschaeve* (Tielt: Lannoo, Perspectief Uitgaven, 1999), p. 219, quoted in G. Durnez, *F. Timmermans. Een biografie* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2000), p. 683.)

⁵⁵ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 218.

⁵⁶ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 219.

⁵⁷ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 219.

⁵⁸ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 219.

⁵⁹ The epilogue only mentions the youngest writer and protégé of Filip De Pillecyn, Piet van Aken, by name. See G.J. van Bork, 'Aken, Piet van', in *Schrijvers en Dichters* (dbnl, 2003), http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/bork001schr01_01/bork001schr01_01_0013.php. This enhances the vagueness of the epilogue, especially for a German audience who could probably not attribute the writers to any literary movement. Adjectives like 'naturalistic' or 'psychological' reappear in the short biographies that follow the epilogue signed by De Pillecyn, but it contains no reference to the editor.

⁶⁰ 'Sie [diese Art der Literatur] entspricht weder dem flämischen Wesen noch flämischem Herkommen; sie glaubt nicht an den Menschen, sie glaubt im Grunde an nichts.' [It [this kind of literature] does neither correspond to the Flemish nature nor to the Flemish origin; it does not believe in humanity, it essentially believes in nothing]. (De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 219.)

würde dies das schlimme Zeichen des Verfalls bedeuten. Denn beide legen den Nachdruck auf die zersetzenden Elemente der völkischen Substanz [...].

[Should any of these two so very different but in the hand so similar tendencies [nihilism and naturalist realism] dominate the field of literature in Flanders, it would be a serious sign of decay. Because both emphasize the corrupting elements of the substance of the Flemish people [...].]⁶¹

There are several possible reasons why he might link nihilism and the ‘corruption’ of the Flemish nation: It can be read as a hint at the central role of religion in his definition of the Flemish identity, being a Catholic writer himself. Another reason could be that nihilists believe in nothing, so they also do not believe in the nation and therefore cannot further the Flemish cause.

It is then quite surprising that he includes these stories in an anthology that endeavours to show the audience what ‘Flemish’ literature is. However, the overall negative characterization of the works of Flemish literature presented could also be interpreted as a distancing strategy that allows for possibly controversial stories to be read as historic evidence (see framing as ‘past’) and not as appropriate, ‘good’ literature as such. On the other hand, De Pillecyn was known for his harsh literary criticism and strong opinions on what he considered ‘good’ writing.⁶²

In the argumentative structure of the epilogue, these darker tendencies in contemporary Flemish literature are presented as opposed to the traditional image of Flemish literature characterized by ‘Lebensfreude oder Hochherzigkeit’ [joie de vivre or magnanimity]⁶³ that according to him is completely absent from the stories in his selection. The plot of many stories might still be set in a rural setting, but the way it is illustrated is different and very unlike Timmermans.

All in all he presents this story collection to the reader as a sign of a nation in waiting, a nation with the potential for a great literary future, even though it might not have reached this greatness yet.⁶⁴ He does this by situating the literature presented in the anthology in the past, characterizing it as ‘das Echo einer Zeit, in der das Mannhafte und Tapfere nicht geachtet wurden’ [the echo of a time when manliness and bravery were not respected], and a time when ‘das Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl mit der Gemeinschaft den Künstler nicht ansprach’ [when the sense of belonging to a community did not appeal to the artist].⁶⁵

This paragraph also suggests that in the present comradeship, community, manliness and bravery are esteemed highly, which is certainly true for Nazi ideology. However, De Pillecyn’s focus on the youth of the Flemish nation also suggests that he sees Flanders as an autonomous

⁶¹ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 219.

⁶² See Kris Humbeeck, ‘Begoochelingen en ontgoochelingen van een Vlaamse Nationaal-Socialist – Omtrent het idealisme van de schrijver Filip de Pillecyn’, in *Zacht Lawijd* 9.4 (2010), p. 28, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2505515.2507827>. Accessed 22 February 2019.

⁶³ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 220.

⁶⁴ See his critical commentary on the tendencies as such.

⁶⁵ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 220.

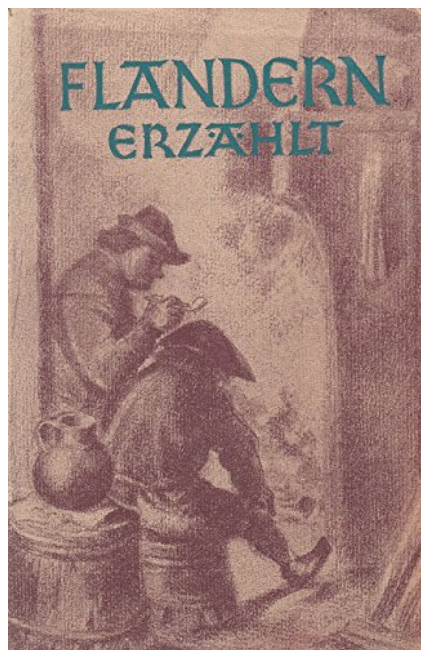


Figure 2: *Flandern Erzählt*, Cover

nation that simply needs time and space to grow.⁶⁶ For him, the literature he presents in this book, contains the diverse and fertile historic soil that guarantees the endurance of Flemish literature and creates the ‘Möglichkeit einer literarischen Tradition’ [possibility of a literary tradition]⁶⁷ as well as the signs of life of a new beginning for the Flemish people. Phrases like ‘Erneuerungskampf ihres Volkes’ [struggle of renewal of their [the writers’] people] or the ‘unfehlbare Kraft eines wiedererstehenden Volkes’ [the infallible strength of a resurgent people]⁶⁸ appear time and again in the epilogue, creating a strong link between the awakening Flemish literature and the awakening Flemish nation.⁶⁹

While *Das zwiefache Leben* was edited by a representative of the source culture, *Flandern erzählt* is an entirely German affair. The framing of Flanders already starts with the book cover (Figure 2), which shows a scene inspired by the seventeenth century Flemish painter David

Teniers:⁷⁰ two men sitting in front of a fireplace, presumably telling each other stories, both of them dressed in period clothing. It was drawn by the German artist Ludwig Maria Beck who worked as an editor, writer and publisher for the Karl Alber Verlag. Presenting nineteenth and twentieth century fiction with a cover that suggests the seventeenth century results in identifying rather contemporary Flemish literature with a past long gone. The cover gives the impression of announcing a book of fairy tales. While this antimodernist trend reappears throughout the whole anthology, the choice was certainly also influenced by marketing. Sixteenth and seventeenth century Flemish paintings have a high recognition factor, so the cover can be seen as a way of localizing the content for the target audience. The title page shows a vignette by Felix Timmermans⁷¹ depicting an older woman with a cap, reading next to a cat. The illustration evokes the traditional trope of Flanders as rural and homely; a sort of nostalgia that can also be found in the epilogue written by the editor and translator Karl Jacobs.

Karl Jacobs (1906-1977) was born in Essen, Germany, at the beginning of the twentieth century and grew up Catholic. His father was born in Kleve, a town close to the Dutch border. He

⁶⁶ This frame of thinking might have been familiar to German readers considering the belatedness and youth of the German nation itself and remind them of Germany’s struggles.

⁶⁷ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 220.

⁶⁸ De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 218.

⁶⁹ Even though he admits that many writers were not part of the Flemish movement as such. De Pillecijn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 218.

⁷⁰ Whether the inspiration derived from the elder or the younger is not specified in the paratext; both lived in the seventeenth century.

⁷¹ This is not surprising because Jacobs and Timmermans were good friends.

still had family there, which might explain his interest in Dutch.⁷² He studied French, German and Theatre Studies and later worked as a teacher in Essen.⁷³ He published a few original works in the 1920s, but he is best known for his work as cultural mediator between Flanders and Germany, and as a translator of Dutch literature, a role he assumed due to his friendship with the Flemish writer Felix Timmermans. He was introduced to Timmermans, of whom he had been a fan ever since he read *Pallieter*, by Flemish students he had met at a gathering of a Catholic and pacifist youth movement in France.⁷⁴ During his first meeting with Timmermans in 1927, he convinced the latter to go on a reading tour through Germany which Jacobs organized.⁷⁵ Timmermans' reading tours became an accelerator of his immense success in Germany.

Jacobs' autobiographic writings (published in 1949) give us an idea of his view on Flanders – albeit in retrospect – and explain certain choices made in the anthology. Here he explains that, during his first trip to Flanders, he soon learned that his preconceived image of Flanders and the Flemish people (that he had so far conflated with Timmermans' *Pallieter*) was not entirely accurate. He nevertheless propagates an anti-modern image of a Flanders that is – unlike Germany – still true to itself and its traditions.⁷⁶ He describes that he feels at home in Flanders – not as a German, but as someone from the Lower Rhine Region, an area close to Flanders and the Netherlands. Jacobs grew up in the Low German language, a variant of German that closely resembles Dutch, at least in the borderland that is the Lower Rhine Region. That he feels kinship with Flanders on this regional and not national level also becomes clear when he mentions his first visit to Timmermans. Both men talked about their shared love for the Low German poetry of the Westphalian writer Augustin Wibbelt, which most Germans could not understand. In a way, Flemish literature becomes a place of yearning (*Sehnsuchtsort*) for Jacobs just like the 'untainted' folk tales collected by the likes of the brothers Grimm were for the Romantics.⁷⁷

During the Second World War, Jacobs worked for the military administration of Belgium and Northern France as an interpreter for English, French and Dutch.⁷⁸ During this period, he did not only work on the publication of the anthology in question, but also published a guide to the North of France, Flanders and Artois and a collection of Flemish droll stories via the publishing house responsible for the book trade at the war front.⁷⁹ These retellings of Flemish stories intended for German soldiers stationed in Belgium was probably also part of what Van linthout

⁷² In this area people mostly spoke *Plattdeutsch* [Low German], a language closely related to Dutch, instead of standard German. Jacobs mentions this in his memories of the friendship with Timmermans as an argument why he had some good foundations for learning Dutch. K. Jacobs, *Felix Timmermans – Lebenstage und Wesenszüge eines Dichters* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1949), p. 183.

⁷³ G. Durnez, 'Karl Jacobs, de goede vriend', in *Jaarboek 1998 van het Felix Timmermans-Genootschap*, p. 71.

⁷⁴ Durnez, 'Karl Jacobs, de goede vriend', p. 71.

⁷⁵ This tour through Germany would be the first of many more to follow that would cement the success of Felix Timmermans in Germany.

⁷⁶ Jacobs, *Felix Timmermans*, p. 176.

⁷⁷ This comparison is also drawn in the anthology's epilogue.

⁷⁸ Durnez, 'Karl Jacobs, de goede vriend', p. 71.

⁷⁹ K. Jacobs, *Lachendes Flandern: Flämische Volksschwänke* (Brüssel: Verlag der Zentrale der Frontbuchhandlungen, 1941).

describes as the 'bildlenkende Arbeit im Hinblick auf Flandern' [image-steering work with regard to Flanders].⁸⁰

From the documents available it is difficult to paint a clear picture of Karl Jacobs' political convictions, but even though he worked for the military administration, he is not described as a zealous National Socialist. Before the war, he was involved in the Catholic movement; after the war, during the re-education effort of the Allied Forces, he returned to his job as a teacher and worked as the head of a girl's school in Essen. For Christa Lenze, he got this job because of his democratic spirit.⁸¹ However, due to the lack of qualified people, the denazification in the immediate aftermath of the war was not what it should have been, which makes it impossible to infer a political attitude from this employment.

Catholicism is a background he shares with the publishing house behind *Flandern erzählt*. When the Karl Alber Verlag was founded in 1910 in Ravensburg, its publication portfolio consisted mainly of postcards, art prints and etchings. It only started publishing literature in 1939 when – after Karl Alber's death – the Catholic Herder Verlag bought the shell company.⁸² In this year the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* [Reich Chamber of Literature] ordered publishers to choose between exclusively publishing denominational books or giving those up completely in order to contain the power of denominational publishers.⁸³ By buying the Karl Alber Verlag, Herder found a workaround and started publishing literature under this name. Herbert van Uffelen even suspects that publishing Flemish literature was a workaround in itself. He supposes that Catholic publishers took advantage of the National Socialists' 'dependence' on literature from Flanders and the Netherlands and tried to compensate for the 'lack of good (Catholic) literature during the National Socialist regime' by promoting Flemish literature.⁸⁴ Heinz Graef, devout Catholic⁸⁵ and the translator of *Das zwiefache Leben*, confirms this. He had already published several translations of Karel van de Woestijne's poems with Karl Alber Verlag.⁸⁶

The National Socialists had long perceived of Catholicism as one of their main internal enemies, resulting in many laws, regulations and interventions aimed at weakening its influence.⁸⁷ Press activities were the most powerful tool of the Catholic movement in Germany, which also had a powerful distribution system of pamphlets and other miscellanies in its church buildings. It is therefore not surprising that denominational publishing houses, print shops and libraries were regularly raided for forbidden books.⁸⁸ In 1937, twelve print shops were closed by

⁸⁰ Van linthout, *Das Buch*, p. 125.

⁸¹ C. Lenze, 'Karl Jacobs, Übersetzer, Mitarbeiter und Freund', in *Jahrbuch der Felix-Timmermans-Gesellschaft* 6 (1995), p. 51.

⁸² Karl Alber Verlag, *Über den Verlag*, http://www.verlag-alber.de/verlag/index_html. Accessed 22 August 2017.

⁸³ Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich*, pp. 251–2.

⁸⁴ H. van Uffelen, *Moderne niederländische Literatur im deutschen Sprachraum 1830-1990* (Münster: Lit, 1993), p. 260. A similar thesis can be found in Speliers, *Filip de Pillecyn*, p. 50.

⁸⁵ J. Soenen, 'Heinz Graef, Karel van de Woestijne vertaler, weldra 70 jaar', in *Ons Erfdeel* 2:14 (1970), pp. 161-2.

⁸⁶ See van Uffelen, *Moderne niederländische Literatur*, p. 261.

⁸⁷ Reinhard Wittmann, 'Der gerade Weg: Katholische Verlage der NS-Zeit', in *Communicatio Socialis* 1:44 (2011), p. 47.

⁸⁸ 'Bereits im Laufe der dreißiger Jahre wurden wiederholt im Auftrag der RSK [Reichsschrifttumskammer] oder der PPK [Parteiamtliche Prüfungskommission zum Schutze des nationalsozialistischen Schrifttums] konfessionelle Verlage, Druckereien und Büchereien von den Polizeibehörden auf "schädliches und unerwünschtes Schrifttum" hin durchsucht.'

the Gestapo and their owners dispossessed after the publication of a papal encyclical condemning the Nazi ideology.⁸⁹ During the 1930s the Propaganda Ministry limited the paper supplies of Catholic publishers and cut them off completely after 1938. Public printing jobs were retracted. Their publication catalogues were partially or completely forbidden and their printing plants drained of workers by strategic drafting during the *Auskämmungsaktionen*.⁹⁰ The Herder Verlag with its long tradition as a mouthpiece of political Catholicism received special attention of the regime.⁹¹ According to Reinhard Wittmann, the publishing house was nevertheless useful for the NS administration as it had world-wide connections and brought in foreign money. Its continued existence also served ‘als Beweis für die Liberalität des Systems’ [as evidence of the liberality of the regime] for the distrustful eyes of foreign countries.⁹²

In *Flandern erzählt. Ein Sammelband flämischer Dichter* Karl Jacobs presents novellas that were published in Flanders between 1907 and 1942. Cyriel Buysse, the oldest writer in the collection, had already been dead for ten years when Jacobs’ anthology was published (1859-1932). The youngest writer, André Demedts, was born in 1906. Scanning the table of contents (see table 2) of the anthology, one might be surprised to find the French-speaking Flemish writer Marie Gevers⁹³ on the list. At first sight this seems to contradict the idea of an opposition between Germanic Flanders and the Romance south. Language, however, was less of an issue for Nazi translation policy, as Ine Van linthout points out that the label ‘Flemish fiction’ did, at the time, not only apply to literature written in Flemish, but could also subsume Francophone literature if its author and content were judged ‘truly Flemish’ within a geopolitical, racialized framework.⁹⁴

In the epilogue Karl Jacobs takes a similar approach describing Gevers’ characters, vision and sensation as ‘quintessentially Flemish’.⁹⁵ It thus becomes clear that Jacob’s concept of Flemishness has little to do with language, an aspect that was of crucial importance for the Flemish movement, but that it is rather in keeping with the ‘geopolitical, racialized framework’ mentioned above. This recognition of francophone writers as part of Flemish literature is consistent in the epilogue, for example when he compares Maurice Maeterlinck (Nobel Prize for Literature 1911) and Émile Verhaeren, both French-speaking Flemish writers of international renown, to Karel van de Woestijne.⁹⁶ While he does not state this explicitly, the text implies that Verhaeren and Maeterlinck are indeed part of Flemish literature. Here he differs from the official

[Already in the course of the 1930’s, confessional publishing houses, printshops and libraries have been raided by the police looking for ‘harmful and undesired literature’ by order of the RSK or the PPK.] (Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich*, p. 250.)

⁸⁹ Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich*, p. 250.

⁹⁰ Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich*, p. 253; Wittmann, *Der gerade Weg*, p. 50.

⁹¹ Wittmann, *Der gerade Weg*, p. 48.

⁹² Wittmann, *Der gerade Weg*, p. 48.

⁹³ See the article by Julie Crombois in this issue.

⁹⁴ Van linthout in this issue, p. 22.

⁹⁵ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 308.

⁹⁶ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 302.

assessment of Nazi journals, that labelled both as ‘francophile defectors’ and thus, unlike Gevers and de Coster, not quintessentially Flemish.⁹⁷

As Jacob held a degree in French literature his affinity with francophone literature does not come as a surprise. He translated from both French and Dutch and had therefore no practical reason to leave Gevers out of the anthology.

Table 2: Table of contents of *Flandern erzählt* (1943)

Author	Title	Original Title
Karel van de Woestijne (1878-1929)	Der Bauer stirbt	De boer die sterft (1918, in <i>De bestendige aanwezigheid</i>)
August van Cauwelaert (1885-1945)	Das Mädchen Roberta	Robbetje (1935, in <i>Vertellen in toga</i>)
Cyriel Buysse (1859-1932)	Theum rechnet ab	Restitutie (excerpt from ‘Obsessies’, 1907 in <i>Lente</i>)
Frans Verschoren (1874-1951)	Es spukt in Lier	Het graf van Sint-Gommarus (1923, in <i>Vlaamsche humor</i>)
Felix Timmermans (1886-1947)	Die unsichtbare Hand	De bende van de Onzichtbare hand (1942, in <i>Vertelsels</i>)
Ernest Claes (1885-1968)	Stegger	Stegger (1921, in <i>Zichemse verhalen</i>)
Lode Baekelmans (1879-1965)	Spinnekopke	Spinnekopke (1939, in <i>Pleisteren</i>)
Marie Gevers (1883-1975)	Margarita	Margarita (1935, in <i>Revue Belge</i>)
Willem Putman (1900-1954)	Mein Gefangener	Mijn gevangene (1937, in <i>Vertellen</i>)
Marcel Matthijs (1899-1864)	Mur Italien	Mur Italien (1935, in <i>Vertellen</i>)
André Demedts (1906-1992)	Herr Erik und ich	Zijn kleine waan (1939, in <i>Elsevier</i>)

⁹⁷ Van linthout, this issue, p. 22.

Karl Jacob begins his epilogue with a recollection of the German translation culture of the nineteenth century, when Germany built the idea of its nation out of its openness towards other nations' ideas, as put forward in romantic nationalism⁹⁸. As the German nationalism of the 19th century derived its national identity from an opposition to France, it makes double sense to mention this here in a context where Germanic Flanders is politically opposed to the francophone south. He states that:

Es kann niemals deutsche Art sein, in sich verkapselt dahinzuleben. Wo immer der Geist wirkt, wo Völker ihre Stimme in Liedern erheben, könnten sie unseres Hinhorchens und unserer achtungsvollen Aufnahme gewiss sein.

[It can never be in the German nature to live encapsulated in itself. Wherever the spirit is at work, where people raise their voice in song, they will be sure that we are listening closely and sure of respectful reception.]⁹⁹

Despite the self-aggrandising tone, this quote seems innocent and somehow internationalist. However, Jacobs immediately relativizes the German openness and respect for other cultures writing that in recent years this readiness to listen (and thus the usual translation output that significantly decreased during the Nazi era) has been made difficult by other nation's 'bösem Willen' [bad faith].¹⁰⁰ As Kate Sturge points out, 'there is scarcely a field of NS ideology which does not rely on the paranoid language of the German Volk as victim of conspiracy and impending destruction'.¹⁰¹ We are thus clearly in Nazi propaganda territory.

According to Jacobs the Flemish, however, never participated in the denunciation of Germany. He refers to a 'mental bridge'¹⁰² between Germany and Flanders built in the First World War. He nevertheless points out the unequal balance of this relationship, claiming that Flanders would be nothing without the consecration of the German '*Mutterland*' [motherland]:¹⁰³ Only when Flemish literature is translated into German is it able to reach an international audience and be translated and read in other languages.¹⁰⁴ Obviously, he addresses

⁹⁸ As the German nation took its form during the nineteenth century, Romanticism is a recurring reference point for Nazi ideas. In Bernhard Payr's Nazi literary essay *Dichtung als Brücke zwischen den Völkern Europas* in the Party journal *Bücherkunde* of April 1939, Romanticism is presented as 'the pinnacle of European art, freeing Europe from rigid French dominion, exemplifying cross-national creative impulses, and inspired and driven by Germany' (K. Sturge, *The Alien within: Translation into German during the Nazi Regime* (University of London, 1999), p. 98).

⁹⁹ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 299.

¹⁰⁰ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 299.

¹⁰¹ K. Sturge, 'Comment on Translation in the Nazi Literary Journal', in *Translation and the (Re)Location of Meaning – Selected Papers of the CETRA Research Seminars in Translation Studies 1994-1996*, ed. by J. Vandaele (Leuven: CETRA, 1999), p. 123.

¹⁰² Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 299.

¹⁰³ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 300.

¹⁰⁴ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 300. There is some truth in this statement as Germany has been and continues to be an important first step in the international circulation of Dutch literature, see J. Heilbron and N. van Es. 'In de wereldrepubliek der letteren', in *Nederlandse Kunst in de Wereld – literatuur, architectuur en beeldende kunst 1980-2013*, ed. by T. Bevers, B. Colenbrander, J. Heilbron, and N. Wilterdink (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2015), pp. 20-54.

his afterword to a German audience, possibly trying to flatter their zeitgeisty self-image of grandeur and he might not have taken such a self-aggrandizing stance had he dealt with a Flemish audience. The characterization of Germany as the motherland, making the supposed kinship very tangible, certainly reflects the Great Germanic ideology and supported the Nazi view of Flanders as one of the future Germanic provinces.

His enthusiasm for Flemish literature, however, is also real. He stresses the singularity of Flemish literature (‘Wo gab es damals derartiges bei uns?’ [Where did something similar exist over here at that time?]¹⁰⁵), or at least the singularity of Timmermans and Streuvels. For Jacobs this singularity consists exactly in the characteristics referred to in the traditional discourse:

In einer Zeit größter Verwirrung, als bei uns Asphaltliteratur und kühle Gehirnakrobatik über das Lebendige und Echte triumphierten, richteten begnadete Dichter, die aus dem fruchtbaren, unverdorbenen Mutterboden des verwandten flämischen Volkes wuchsen, mit ihrer nationalen Erzählkunst ein Beispiel auf. Lebenskraft und -fülle, ein tiefer volkhafte Humor, urwüchsige Empfindung und eine aus dem Herzen quellende Sprache, fern blasser, überzüchteter Gedanklichkeit – das waren die Wertmarken, die diese Schöpfungen auszeichneten.

[In times of utmost confusion, when asphalt literature and cold mental acrobatics triumphed over the vital and authentic in our country, gifted writers that grew from the fertile, unspoiled soil of the kindred Flemish people established an example with their national art of storytelling. Vitality and abundance of life, a deep folkish humour, original sensation and a language that billows from the heart, far from pale overbred intellectualism – these were the tokens that distinguished these creations.]¹⁰⁶

The vocabulary used here is once again prototypical Nazi speak. Jacobs opposes ‘authentic’, ‘vital’ Flemish literature that is rooted in ‘fertile, unspoiled Flemish soil’ (thus alluding to the blood-and-soil frame of Nazi ideology) to modern, expressionist¹⁰⁷ German *Asphaltliteratur*. *Asphaltliteratur* is a loaded term. In the 1936 edition of the nazified *Meyers Lexikon*, it was defined as ‘Bezeichnung für Werke wurzelloser Großstadtliteraten, vor 1933 Mode- und Verfallserscheinung zum Teil artfremder Herkunft’ [a term for works of rootless urban writers, before 1933 a temporary fashion and sign of deterioration partly of foreign origin].¹⁰⁸ *Asphaltliteratur* thus implies the absence of a connection to the fatherland and the German soil, decay and un-German influences. Three characteristics were used to describe everything the Nazis were opposed to. Jacobs creates this opposition of good and evil to point out that Flemish literature is on the side of the good. This metaphorical opposition of vitality and death is continued throughout the whole paragraph: The Flemish literature included in this anthology is associated with words like ‘urwüchsig’ [original], ‘Lebenskraft’ [vitality], ‘volkhafte’, leaving

¹⁰⁵ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 300.

¹⁰⁶ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 301.

¹⁰⁷ In fine arts, expressionist paintings were seen as ‘entartete Kunst’ [degenerate art] and therefore forbidden. Expressionist literature was seen in the same negative way.

¹⁰⁸ C. Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), p. 72.

behind the undesirables of modern German literature (or rather: never having arrived at them considering that Jacobs is motivated by a nostalgic longing for purer and more innocent times), opposed to the 'blasse[r], überzüchtete[r] Gedanklichkeit' [pale overbred intellectualism] represented by German literature during the Weimar Republic. The Nazi regime considered intellectualism as harmful.¹⁰⁹ Hence, presenting Flemish literature as its opposite can only be considered positive according to the 1943 zeitgeist, although it is also plausible that Catholic conservatism and national socialism were brothers in arms in their disapproval of modernist literature, be it for different reasons. Even though Karl Jacobs clearly frames his contemplation of Flemish literature within the language of the Nazi regime, he does not deviate from the traditional discourse on Flanders. He reinforces the image of a people that is content on its own, an image that, as we illustrated above, did not serve Nazi interests. He is however aware of the one-sided view on Flemish literature that is prevalent in Germany and states that the Flemish are 'right when they say that we see them one-sidedly'¹¹⁰, but that they also truly are a 'Bauernvolk' [a people of peasants]. He confirms what De Pillecyn stated in his own epilogue, by affirming that there is more to Flemish literature than Timmermans and Claes, but unlike De Pillecyn he does not exclude them. He does however leave out Streuvels who was promoted by the 'literary offices to push the dominant Timmermans to the background'¹¹¹. As a friend of the latter, Jacobs can of course not support this agenda and comes to Timmermans' aid:

Viele Flamen sind ihm wegen seines Erfolges gram; sie sagen, ihr Volk bestehe nicht nur aus Käuzen, es schaffe und ringe mit vielen Problemen, und Timmermans verfälsche das Bild. Die Meinung unserer Leser ist so unberechtigt wie die Vorwürfe seiner Landsleute. Timmermans hat niemals den Anspruch erhoben, der Schilderer seines Volkes zu sein. [...] Timmermans, Streuvels, Buysse und alle anderen zusammen ergeben erst das ganze Flandern.

[Many Flemish people have a grievance against him; they claim that their people does not only consist of odd characters, that it creates and struggles with many problems, and that Timmermans distorts the picture. The opinion of our readers is as unsubstantiated as the reproaches of his fellow countrymen. Timmermans never claimed to be the storyteller of his people. [...] Only Timmermans, Streuvels, Buysse and all others together create the totality of Flanders.]¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ In June 1935, Goebbels stated the following: 'Wir haben sehr recht, wenn wir sagen: Wir wollen keine Intellektuellen sein. Wir haben die ungeheuren Schäden, die der Asphalt-Intellektualismus in den vergangenen 15 Jahren in Deutschland angerichtet hat, sehr wohl erkannt und haben seine übelsten Folgen auch rigoros und brutal aus dem öffentlichen Leben in Deutschland beseitigt. Es ist aber ein Unterschied, ob einer intellektuell oder intelligent ist.' [We are very right when we say: We do not want to be intellectuals. We have recognized the immense damage that asphalt intellectualism has done in Germany in the past 15 years and have removed its worst consequences rigorously and brutally from public life in Germany. But it is a difference if someone is an intellectual or intelligent.] Goebbels, in: Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten, 21.06.1935, quoted in Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus*, p. 71.

¹¹⁰ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 302.

¹¹¹ Van linthout, this issue, p. 24.

¹¹² Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, pp. 306-7.

Yet, he does not draw the obvious conclusions for his selection of stories. He mentions that the young generation of writers tries to distance itself from the village idyllic,¹¹³ but the younger generation does not appear in the selection. Jacobs rather focuses on the ‘older generation’¹¹⁴ of writers that have been overlooked by German critics: Cyriel Buysse, Karel van de Woestijne and Frans Verschoren.¹¹⁵

It is, of course, difficult to say for certain whether this epilogue is a reliable representation of Karl Jacob’s views, bearing in mind that the literary offices were especially vigilant when it came to Catholic publishing houses. Paragraphs of the afterword like the following cast some doubt on his ‘freedom to choose’:

Der Kenner wird den einen oder anderen Namen wie Stijn Streuvels, Gerard Walschap und Philip [sic!] De Pillecyn nicht finden, der ihm gerade wertvoll erscheint, und dafür anderen begegnen, die ihm weniger wesentlich vorkommen. Darüber werden die Meinungen immer auseinandergehen. Ihm sei aber auch gesagt, dass einiges, was vorgesehen war, aus äußeren Gründen nicht verfügbar war.

[The expert will not find some writers like Stijn Streuvels, Gerard Walschap and Philip [sic!] De Pillecyn that he might consider worthwhile. Instead he will encounter others he might consider less essential. Opinions will always differ. Let it be said, however, that several stories we envisaged were unavailable for reasons beyond our control.]¹¹⁶

Is he anticipating criticism of his selection, because he himself is not entirely happy with it and wants the readers to know this? What were these ‘reasons out of [his] control’ that prevented him from presenting the selection he wanted to make? Licensing issues¹¹⁷ or involvement of the censoring state authorities? Archival documents regarding the publication process not being at our disposal, this study can unfortunately not provide answers.

In conclusion, we can say that both anthologies divert from the official discourse in one way or the other. Both editors depart from the doxa that the presentation of Flemish literature in Germany has so far been one-sided. While they claim to address this in their epilogues, the selection they make is predictable and continues the traditional line of Catholic writers whose stories are set in a rural context. Authors promoted by the regime, such as Cyriel Verschaeve,

¹¹³ ‘In den jüngeren Dichtern schwingt diese Zeit gewaltig. Sie streben aus der Enge des Nur-Bäuerlichen, Nur-Idyllischen hinaus und drängen mit dem den Flamen eigentümlichen Wirklichkeitssinn zu neuen Stoffkreisen hin. Sie suchen das arbeitende Flandern und seine völkischen, sozialen, technischen und psychologischen Fragen gültig zu gestalten.’ [This time resonates immensely in the younger poets. They try to escape from the narrowness of the exclusively rural, idyllic and push themselves towards new materials with the peculiar sense for reality that is characteristic of the Flemish. Their aim is to deal with working Flanders and its folk-specific, social, technological and psychological questions.] (Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 302.)

¹¹⁴ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 302.

¹¹⁵ Frans Verschoren seems an odd choice next to canonized writers like Van de Woestijne and Buysse. He presumably appears for personal reasons as he was Felix Timmermans’ teacher and ‘nicht ohne Einfluß auf Timmermans’ (Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 306).

¹¹⁶ Jacobs, *Flandern erzählt*, p. 303.

¹¹⁷ This seems plausible considering that the three anthologies of Flemish prose were published in the same year. On the other hand, he could have selected different stories and provided the writers with some additional income.

Jozef Simons or Jef Hinderdael,¹¹⁸ do not appear in any of the anthologies. Simons' absence might be explained by the fact that he edited his own anthology of Flemish short fiction published in the same year (see above). Filip De Pillecyn, on the other hand, avoids writers who represent idyllic literature, such as Felix Timmermans and Ernest Claes. This conscious absence of Timmermans and the apology of Felix Timmermans in Jacob's anthology stress the important position Felix Timmermans still held in the discourse on Flemish literature. He was at the time the linchpin of Flemish literature in Germany – flouted by some readers, loved by many others. It is here that the 'discrepancy between official policy and the actual book production' becomes clear: 'The dominant presence of idyllic writers like Felix Timmermans and Ernest Claes demonstrates a failure of literary offices to effectuate their intended canon revision and change the prevailing image of Flanders into a more combative one.'¹¹⁹ Even though Timmermans did not represent the officially promoted type of literature, the dynamics of a book market that still possessed a considerable amount of economic freedom meant that his literary success prevailed even in a publishing system marked by censorship.

Our analysis also revealed that both anthologies were marketed differently. De Pillecyn's anthology was targeted at a more intellectual audience, in keeping with the publishing house's tradition. This can be derived from the upmarket packaging of the book, but also from the style of De Pillecyn's introduction. While it coincides with many aspects of the Nazi regime's communication desiderables (the image of a twofold Flanders in the title,¹²⁰ the focus on non-idyllic literature and writers other than Timmermans), the text shows more nuance (see 'nation in waiting') and does – unlike Jacob's afterword – not sound like a pure propaganda piece. De Pillecyn's position as an outsider to the German literary field and an insider to the source culture led him to promote Flanders as an independent nation and not as 'a future province of the "Great Germanic Reich"' (see above). In the first instance, his epilogue supports the agenda of Flemish nationalism. The opinions on Flemish literature voiced in De Pillecyn's text are relatively reserved while Jacob's text is marked by an honest enthusiasm. The latter, however, clings to the traditional image of Flanders and a traditional selection of Flemish literature that could be explained by his Catholicism and his friendship with Timmermans. The traditional image is also reflected in the book's cover illustration that refers to a Flanders that is even older than the literature presented in the book. The direct use of Nazi buzzwords and typical Nazi metaphors for writing about literature indicate that the target audience for this anthology was less intellectual than De Pillecyn's, which is plausible given the position of the Alber Verlag in the German book market. Yet, the fact that his language unambiguously integrates Nazi discourse could also be due to the precarious position of Catholic publishers. Given the privileged status of the regime-friendly Eugen Diederichs Verlag, it is possible that the authorities granted it more liberties than the Catholic Karl Alber Verlag. While De Pillecyn attempts to position his anthology in the official discourse, he is aware of the shortcomings of his own selection, hence the all in all negative framing of the texts he chose. Unlike Jacob's ideas on Flemish literature, however, which dwell in the past and carry the patina of nostalgia, De Pillecyn's view on Flemish literature is directed at the future; the future of a sovereign Flanders (independent from or within the German

¹¹⁸ Van linthout, this issue, p. 29

¹¹⁹ Van linthout, this issue, p. 28.

¹²⁰ This could have been the publisher's choice instead of De Pillecyn's.

Reich is a question we cannot answer conclusively). Even if his text selection does not show a combative Flanders, the text of his epilogue is interspersed with references to the struggle for renewal and his hopes for ‘ein neues Schrifttum’ [a new literature].¹²¹

Bibliography

- Achthaler, F., ‘1930-1996: Die Verlagsentwicklung nach dem Tod von Eugen Diederichs’, in G. Hübinger (ed.), *Versammlungsort moderner Geister: Der Eugen Diederichs Verlag. Aufbruch ins Jahrhundert der Extreme* (München: Diederichs, 1996), pp. 90-127.
- Baer, B. J., ‘Literary Translation and the Construction of a Soviet Intelligentsia’, in *The Massachusetts Review* 47 (2006), pp. 537-60.
- Barbian, J.-P., *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich: Institutionen, Kompetenzen, Betätigungsfelder*, Archiv für die Geschichte des Buchwesens (München: Saur, 1993).
- Bel, J., *Bloed en Rozen – Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur 1900-1945*, in *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur*, ed. A.J. Gelderblom and A.M. Musschoot (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2015).
- Brems, E., ‘A Case of “Cultural Castration”? Paul de Man’s Translation of De Soldaat Johan by Filip de Pillecyn’, in *Target: International Journal of Translation Studies* 22 (2010), pp. 212–36.
- Diederichs, U., *Eugen Diederichs und sein Verlag: Bibliographie und Buchgeschichte 1896 bis 1931* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014).
- Durnez, G., ‘Karl Jacobs, de goede vriend’, in *Jaarboek 1998 van het Felix Timmermans-Genootschap*, pp. 70–9.
- Heilbron, J. and N. van Es, ‘In de wereldrepubliek der letteren’, in *Nederlandse kunst in de wereld – Literatuur, architectuur en beeldende kunst 1980-2013*, ed. by T. Bevers, B. Colenbrander, J. Heilbron, and N. Wilterdink (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2015), pp. 20-54.
- Hübinger, G., ‘Der Verlag Eugen Diederichs in Jena: Wissenschaftskritik, Lebensreform und Völkische Bewegung’, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 22 (1966), pp. 31-45.
- Humbecq, K., ‘Begoochelingen en ontgoochelingen van een Vlaamse Nationaal-Socialist – Omtrent het idealisme van de schrijver Filip de Pillecyn’, in *Zacht Lawijd* 9 (2010), pp. 23-65.
- Jacobs, K., *Felix Timmermans – Lebenstage und Wesenszüge eines Dichters* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1949).
- Jacobs, K. (ed.), *Flandern erzählt – Ein Sammelband flämischer Dichter*, trans. by Karl Jacobs (München: Alber, 1943).
- Jacobs, K., *Lachendes Flandern – Flämische Volksschwänke* (Brüssel: Verlag der Zentrale der Frontbuchhandlungen, 1941).

¹²¹ De Pillecyn, *Das zwiefache Leben*, p. 220.

- Karl Alber Verlag, *Über den Verlag*, http://www.verlag-alber.de/verlag/index_html. Accessed 22 August 2017.
- Kittel, H. (ed.), *International Anthologies of Literature in Translation, Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Übersetzungsforschung* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1995), vol. 9.
- Lenze, C., 'Karl Jacobs, Übersetzer, Mitarbeiter und Freund', in *Jahrbuch Der Felix-Timmermans-Gesellschaft* 6 (1995), 46-52.
- Van linthout, I., *Das Buch in der Nationalsozialistischen Propagandapolitik*, Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).
- Merkle, D., 'Censorship', *Handbook of Translation Studies* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins), pp. 18-21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/hts.1.cen1>. Accessed 22 February 2019.
- De Pillecijn, F. (ed.), *Das zwiefache Leben – Flämische Novellen der Gegenwart*, trans. Heinz Graef (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1943).
- Schmitz-Berning, C., *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).
- Seruya, T, L. D'hulst, A. Assis Rosa, and M. Lin Moniz (eds.), *Translation in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th Centuries)*, Benjamins Translation Library (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2013).
- Speliers, H., Filip de Pillecyn en de Duitse connecties – Een interpretatie, in *Zacht Lawijd* 7 (2007), pp. 44–67.
- Soenen, J., 'Heinz Graef, Karel van de Woestijne vertaler, weldra 70 jaar', in *Ons Erfdeel* 14 (1970), pp. 161–3.
- Sturge, K., 'Comment on Translation in the Nazi Literary Journal *Bücherkunde*', in *Translation and the (Re)Location of Meaning – Selected Papers of the CETRA Research Seminars in Translation Studies 1994-1996*, ed. by J. Vandaele (Leuven: CETRA, 1999), pp. 117-31.
- Sturge, K., *'The Alien within': Translation into German during the Nazi Regime* (University of London, 1999).
- Triebel, F., 'Krisenmanagement in der "Bücherkrise". Der Eugen Diederichs Verlag 1930-1933', in *Historische Zeitschrift. Beihefte* 42 (2006), pp. 33-49.
- van Uffelen, H. (ed.), *Digital Library and Bibliography for Literature in Translation* (Vienna: Universität Wien, 2017), <https://dlbt.univie.ac.at/>. Accessed 3 March 2019.
- van Uffelen, H., *Moderne niederländische Literatur im Deutschen Sprachraum 1830-1990* (Münster: Lit, 1993).
- Van Uffelen, H., "'Das zwiefache Leben": over de receptie van het werk van Filip De Pillecyn in het Duitse taalgebied', in *Filip De Pillecyn studies* 2 (2006), pp. 15-36.
- Vanlandschoot, R., *Kapelaan Verschaeve* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1999).
- Van linthout, I., *Das Buch in der Nationalsozialistischen Propagandapolitik* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).
- Viehöfer, E., *Der Verleger als Organisator. Eugen Diederichs und die bürgerlichen Reformbewegungen der Jahrhundertwende*, Archiv für die Geschichte des Buchwesens (Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1988).

- Wahl, V., *Henry van de Velde in Weimar: Dokumente und Berichte zur Förderung von Kunsthandwerk und Industrie (1902 bis 1915)*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Thüringen (Köln: Böhrer, 2007).
- Wittmann, R., ‘Der gerade Weg: Katholische Verlage Der NS-Zeit’, in *Communicatio Socialis* 44 (2011), pp. 47–57.
- Yammine, B., *Drang nach Westen: De fundamente van de Duitse Flamenpolitik (1870-1914)* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2011).
- Zimmermann, J., *Die Kulturpreise der Stiftung F.V.S. 1935-1945: Darstellung und Dokumentation* (Hamburg: Alfred-Toepfer-Stiftung F.V.S. Christians, 2000).

About the authors:

Theresia Feldmann (KU Leuven) studied German, French and English literature at the universities of Brussels (VUB) and Nantes. Before joining the Centre for Translation Studies (CETRA) at KU Leuven, she worked in Brussels i.a. for the Goethe-Institut. She is currently writing a PhD as part of the project “Eastbound: the circulation and reception of translations and adaptations of Dutch-language literature, 1850-1990”. This joint project of KU Leuven and the Huygens Institute for Dutch history in Amsterdam forms part of the overarching initiative Circulation of Dutch Literature (CODL). The focus of her research is on the international cultural networks which brought Dutch-language literature to the German-language area, and the reception of that literature in the German-speaking world.

Frederike Zindler studied Dutch and French language and culture with a focus on Dutch-German cultural transfer. She wrote her PhD on the cultural mediator H. Wielek, a Jewish immigrant who observed the cultural and political evolution of Germany in the twentieth century from Amsterdam. She works currently for a Dutch-German publisher and as a freelance translator.