



‘A Tribute to his Exceptional Merits’: Jacob Grimm’s Reputation in the Netherlands and Belgium in the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract: This paper aims to show that Jacob Grimm’s correspondence with Dutch and Belgian colleagues clearly demonstrates that Jacob Grimm and his fellow Dutch and Belgian researchers (such as H. van Wijn, H.W. Tydeman, the Society for Dutch Literature and J.F. Willems) shared an interest in specific Dutch literary works as well as in Dutch literature in general. Moreover, in his letters Jacob Grimm presents himself as an extramural pioneer of the promotion of Dutch language and literature. The correspondence can be considered both as part of a public activity and a stimulus for his Dutch and Belgian partners. The article is part of a project financed by the German Science Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*) about correspondence as part of the history of humanity in the nineteenth century. With approximately 300 letters, it reveals intense contacts between Jacob (and Wilhelm) and about forty colleagues in the Netherlands and in Belgium, but also their common goals.

Keywords: history of the humanities, transfer of knowledge, Grimm brothers, Dutch and German scientific relations in the 19th century, Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Dutch Academy of Science), Jan Frans Willems, Hendrik van Wijn, prose romance, Maatschappij der Nederlandse letterkunde (Society for Dutch Literature)

In 2013 the 200th anniversary of the publication of Grimm’s fairy tales was celebrated with many activities in Kassel, in Nordhessen, in Hameln and elsewhere in Germany (see e.g. the website <http://www.grimm2013.nordhessen.de>). In the nineteenth century the two brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were not only famous for their fairy tales, they were also acknowledged as important scholars for their research on the history of Germanic languages, on mythology and religion, and for their achievements with regard to German grammar and lexicology. In addition, Dutch and Belgian colleagues and important scientific organisations hailed their commitment to Dutch literature.

Nowadays, Jacob Grimm is predominantly regarded as a scholar who considered Dutch to be a part of German rather than an independent branch of the Germanic language family.¹ As is usual in the nineteenth century, the two terms he chooses for Dutch are ‘niederländisch’ and ‘niederdeutsch’, with both terms being used by Dutch and Flemish philologists themselves. Jan Frans Willems, for instance, calls his journal *Belgisch museum voor de Nederduitsche tael- en letterkunde en de geschiedenis des vaderlands* (1837-1846). In the first article of the journal, tellingly entitled *On the Origin, the Nature and the Natural Development of the ‘Nederduitsche’ Language*,² he argues elaborately for the use of the word *Nederduitsch*. *Nederduitsch* is for him the branch of the general German language comprising Flemish, ‘Hollandish’ or so-called Netherlandish, and the Low German of the Lower Saxony and the Rhine provinces.³ He stresses that, in his opinion, it is also possible to apply the term ‘Nederduitsch’ to the languages of Brabant and Limburg.

Jacob Grimm is also held responsible for the late establishment of Dutch philology in the German-speaking countries. With this paper I intend to add a nuance to the story. I will seek to show that Jacob Grimm’s letters clearly demonstrate his personal interest in specific Dutch literary works as well as in Dutch literature in general. Moreover, he engages publicly in the study of Dutch literature and, especially in his letters, encourages fellow Dutch and Belgian researchers to collect and edit Dutch texts. The article is part of a project, financed by the German Science Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*) on the history of science in the nineteenth century, especially the correspondence of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm with their Dutch and Belgian colleagues.⁴

In 1810, aged twenty-five, Jacob Grimm initiates contact with a Dutch scholar. He has read Hendrik van Wijn’s *Letterkundige avondstonden* (*Literary Evenings*), a work on Dutch

¹ See Ulrike Kloos, *Niederlandbild und deutsche Germanistik 1800-1930. Ein Beitrag zur komparatistischen Imagologie* (Amsterdam / Atlanta: Niemeyer, 1992), esp. pp. 26-28; Carel ter Haar, ‘Nicht nur ein Appendix - zur Relation zwischen Germanistik und Niederlandistik’, in *Zur Geschichte und Problematik der Nationalphilologien in Europa. 150 Jahre Erste Germanistenversammlung in Frankfurt am Main (1846-1996)*, ed. by Frank Fürbeth et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), pp. 697-714.

² Original title: *Over den oorsprong, den aert, en de natuerlyke vorming der Nederduitsche tael*. Translations are mine unless indicated otherwise.

³ ‘Door Nederduitsch versta ik dien byzonderen hoofdtak der algemeene duitsche tael, welke het Vlaemsch en Hollandsch, of het zoogenaemde *Nederlandsch*, midsgaders het *Platduitsch* der Nedersaksische en Rhylandsche provincien, in zich sluit’ (J.F. Willems, ‘Over den oorsprong, den aert, en de natuerlyke vorming der Nederduitsche tael’, *Belgisch museum voor de Nederduitsche tael- en letterkunde en de geschiedenis des vaderlands*, no. 1 (1837), pp. 3-20 (6)). For other examples of the use of the term, see Joep Leerssen, *De bronnen van het vaderland. Taal, literatuur en afbakening van Nederland* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2006), pp. 47-48.

⁴ In the project 297 letters have been transcribed so far (in preparation: Rita Schlusemann, *Briefwechsel der Brüder Grimm mit Niederländern und Belgiern*). See a survey of the correspondents and the number of letters in appendix b. See also Rita Schlusemann, ‘Der frühe Briefwechsel Jacob Grimms mit den Niederländern Tydeman und Bilderdijk’ in *„vorschen, denken wizzen“. Vom Wert des Genauen in den ungenauen Wissenschaften. Uwe Meves zum 14. Juni 2009*, ed. by Cord Meyer, Ralf Päsler & Matthias Janssen (Stuttgart: Hirzel 2009), pp. 233-245; Rita Schlusemann, ‘Jacob Grimm: pionier van de Neerlandistiek’ in *Neerlandistiek in Europa. Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de universitaire neerlandistiek buiten Nederland en Vlaanderen*, ed. by Matthias Hüning, Jan Konst & Tanja Holzhey (Münster: Waxmann, 2010), pp. 144-162. Some of the ideas published here have already been discussed in these articles (in German and Dutch). See also Rita Schlusemann, ‘The Relations of Jacob Grimm with the Royal Dutch Institute of Science, Literature and the Fine Arts. Old and New Documents for the History of the Humanities’, in *The Practice of Philology in the Nineteenth-Century Netherlands*, ed. by Ton van Kalmthout & Huib Zuidervaart (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015; in print).

literary history published in 1800.⁵ Van Wijn constructed it as a dialogue between Aleide, Reinout and Volkhart, the first two asking questions on Dutch literature, answered by the latter. On 23 July 1810, Jacob Grimm writes to Van Wijn:

Cum vero praesertim poesos hollandicae, quae seculo 13 et 14mo floruit, institutum omnemque pariter rationem percognoscere cuperem.⁶

As Grimm wishes to study Dutch literature that blossomed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in general, and in particular for his study of medieval language and literature, he asks Van Wijn to send him popular Dutch books intended for the general public. He promises to pay for all the costs immediately after having received the package. In his letter, Grimm lists the following ten chapbooks: 1) *Margareta van Limburgh*; 2) *de ridder med de zwaan* (*The Knight with the Swan*); 3) *Virgilius & Salomon*; 4) *seven mestere* (*Seven Masters*); 5) *Karel & Elegast*; 6) *huyghe van bordeus*; 7) *Rykaert sonder vrese* (*Fearless Rykaert*); 8) *heemskinder* (*Heym's Children*); 9) *Zegelyn van Jerusalem* (*Seghelijn of Jerusalem*) and 10) *Ulespygl* (*Owlglass*).⁷ These chapbooks mentioned were very popular at the end of the fifteenth, early sixteenth century. Some of these, like *History of the Heemskinderen*, were among the first printed versions of medieval Dutch romances.⁸ Reprints were published throughout the following centuries, especially during the eighteenth century. For example, *Margareta van Limburg* was reprinted at least twelve times from the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century (1544, 1590, 1662, 1739, 1770 (twice), 1773, ca. 1780 (twice), 1785, 1798, ca. 1805).⁹ In a later letter to Tydeman, dated 1 July 1811, Jacob Grimm suggests that he should send him recent prints of these works if they are cheaper.¹⁰ We can therefore conclude that Grimm was very familiar with the long tradition of reprints of Dutch chapbooks.

The initial letter to Van Wijn marks the beginning of a correspondence with at least thirty-seven colleagues in Belgium and the Netherlands consisting of nearly 300 letters and continuing until June 1863 (for a survey see Appendix a).

⁵ Hendrik van Wijn, *Historische en Letterkundige Avondstonden ter opheldering van eenige zeden der Nederlanderen; byzonderlyk in derzelver daaglyksch en huislyk leeven; en van den stand der Nederduitsche dichtkunde, sedert de vroegste tyden, tot aan het begin der zestiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1800).

⁶ Karl Theodor Gaedertz, *Briefwechsel von Jacob Grimm und Hoffmann von Fallersleben mit Hendrik van Wijn* (Bremen: C. Ed. Müller, 1888), p. 5.

⁷ For a survey of the text traditions, see Luc Debaene, *De Nederlandse volksboeken. Ontstaan en geschiedenis van de Nederlandse prozaromans gedrukt tussen 1475 en 1540* (Hulst: Antiquariaat Merlijn, 1977), and Willem P. Gerritsen & Anton G. van Melle (eds.), *A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes. Characters in Medieval Narrative Traditions and their Afterlife in Literature, Theatre and the Visual Arts* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998).

⁸ *Die historie van den vier heemskinderen* was printed in Gouda around 1490, by Ghovert van Ghemen or the printer of the *Chevalier délibéré*. Only one leaflet has survived (Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 151 D 12). A survey of the Dutch and German tradition can be found in: Rita Schlusemann, 'Die vier Haimonskinder und Karl in Köln', in *Buch, Literatur und Sprache in den östlichen Niederlanden und im nordwestlichen Deutschland* (Niederdeutsches Wort 46), ed. by Jos Hermans et al. (Münster: Waxmann, 2006), pp. 221-252. For a survey of the European tradition, see Werner Wunderlich (ed.), *Johann II. von Simmern. Die Haymonskinder* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), pp. 455-515.

⁹ Rita Schlusemann, *Schoone Historien. Literarische Netzwerke in 'duytschen' Landen am Beispiel der Retextualisierung der Margriete van Limborch* (in print).

¹⁰ The correspondence with Tydeman has been edited by Alexander Reifferscheid in *Briefe von Jakob Grimm an Hendrik Willem Tydeman. Mit einem Anhang und Anmerkungen* (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1883), p. 2.

Initially, H.W. Tydeman¹¹ and Willem Bilderdijk (as secretary of the *Holland Institute of Science*¹²) are very important correspondents. Jacob Grimm exchanges thirty-three letters with Jan Frans Willems, with whom he has a very close and friendly working relationship from 1834 until Willems' death in 1846. He also exchanges many letters with the Frisian scholar J.H. Halbertsma and the lexicographer M. de Vries. The correspondence comes to an end a few months before Jacob Grimm's death on 20 September 1863.

On 18 June 1863, after a fifty years' membership, Jacob Grimm was appointed an honorary member of the Leiden-based *Society for Dutch Literature (Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde)*, founded in 1766. In the yearbook of the Society the appointment is summarized as follows: 'After the names of the newly elected members had been announced, the president proposed, on behalf of the chairs, that Jacob Grimm, who has been a member of the Society for fifty years, be elected an honorary member, as a tribute to his exceptional merits in respect of Dutch linguistics and literary studies. This proposal was widely welcomed and approved after it had unanimously been declared as urgent'.¹³

In his last letter to a Dutch colleague, Grimm expresses his thanks to W.N. du Rieu, the secretary of the Society, for having been appointed:

Hochgeachteter Herr, überrascht und vorbereitet durch ein Telegramm, konnte ich erst am
 17ten schreiben vom 21 Juni vollends gewahren, welche grosse, seltne auszeichnung
 mir zugetheilt und anvertraut worden ist. meiner herzlichsten dank bitte ich Sie
 der Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde auszusprechen. Es macht mich glücklich,
 einer Gesellschaft, die mich schon vor langer zeit der aufnahme würdig, neu
 gewürdigt zu werden, von neuem und noch öfter angehört zu werden. meine position ist
 von jeher, davon durch dringen gewiss, dass die natur und das geist deutsche
 sprache nur dann erkannt werden könne, wenn alle zweiseitig der d. mündige
 stamme mit gleichem eifer bearbeitet sind, und der niederländische zweiseitig ist eine
 der schönsten und fruchtbarsten, die diese stamme getrieben hat. aus allem fließt
 grossen vordruck, dass die früher versäumte heranziehung der quelle endlich hier
 wie dort nachgeholt worden ist und nun alle diktura-erfolge nicht steht.
 ich würde nimmer nachlassen, so lang mein leben anhält auf dem eingetragenen
 wege fortzuwandeln und fühle mich daher dem mir beehrten ehrenvollen befall
 auf das lebhafteste angefreudigt.
 Du Rieu 17 juni 1863. Jacob Grimm.

Figure 1: Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, archive *Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde*, folder 93

¹¹ Professor of law at the universities of Deventer (from 1802) and Franeker (from 1803).

¹² The name of the institution was initially *Koninklijk Instituut van Wetenschappen, Letterkunde en Schoone Kunsten* (Royal Institute of Science, Literature and Fine Arts). It was founded on 8 May 1808 by King Louis Napoléon during his rule of Holland (1806-1810). The most important goals were to make Dutch scientific achievements known to foreigners and to bring inventions and developments from other countries to the Netherlands ('to perfect the Sciences and Arts, to notify such progress to Foreigners and to introduce inventions or progress achieved elsewhere in our own country'); see: <http://www.dwc.knaw.nl/biografie/knaw-voorzitters-sinds-1855/geschiedenis-knaw/> [accessed on 9 September 2013]. In 1812, Bilderdijk wrote a letter as secretary of the *Tweede Klasse van het Hollandsche Instituut van Wetenschappen, Letterkunde en Schoone kunsten* (see Figure 3). Since 1851, it has been the *Koninklijk Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, KNAW* (Royal Dutch Academy of Science), which celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2008.

¹³ 'Nadat de namen der nieuw verkozen Leden waren bekend gemaakt, stelt de Voorzitter voor, uit naam van het Bestuur, dat JACOB GRIMM, die juist 50 jaren lid is geweest dezer Maatschappij, tot eerlid zal worden benoemd, als eene hulde aan zijne buitengewone verdiensten ook ten opzichte van de Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkunde. Dit voorstel wordt met algemeene toejuicing ontvangen en goedgekeurd, nadat het eenstemmig urgent was verklaard.' (http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_jaa002186301_01/_jaa002186301_01_0008.htm, 59 [accessed on 2 December 2014]).

'Dear Sir,

Albeit surprised and prepared by a telegram, I could not fully comprehend the immense and rare distinction that I have been awarded until I received your letter of 21 June. I am very moved, and I should like to ask you to express my gratitude to the Society of Dutch Literature. It makes me happy to now belong to a Society, which awarded me membership a long time ago, in a new and even closer way. My research has always been permeated by the idea that the nature and the spirit of the German tongue can only be recognised when all branches of the mighty tree are treated with the same zeal, and the Dutch branch is one of the finest and most fertile this trunk has grown. It is a great help and encouragement to all of us that formerly neglected sources have been edited in my country as well as yours, guaranteeing all future successful endeavours. For as long as I live, I will never waver on my chosen path, and I feel most invigorated by this honourable commendation. Berlin 17 June 1863 Jacob Grimm.¹⁴

In this letter, Jacob Grimm uses the term 'deutsche zunge' (German tongue), by which he means what nowadays we call Germanic. In his history of the German language, published in 1848, Grimm states very clearly: 'Es haben sich also bis heute nur fünf 5 deutsche sprachen auf dem Platz behauptet, die hochdeutsche, niederländische, englische, schwedische und dänische'.¹⁵ Again, Jacob Grimm uses the word 'deutsch' as a meta-term comprising different branches. In addition to High German, English, Swedish and Danish, he assigns a separate place to Dutch as a language of the German language tree.

Because of the letter to Van Wijn, Jacob Grimm may be called one of the first, or even the very first, extramural – which means outside the Netherlands and Belgium – pioneer collecting, promoting and studying Dutch literature. My aim, therefore, is to show the impact of Grimm's wish to deprivatise the Dutch literary past as expressed in his letters to Dutch and Belgian colleagues. The letters do not only constitute an invaluable source for the study of the relations between Jacob Grimm and Dutch and Belgian scholars, but also for the study of

¹⁴ 'Hochgeehrter Herr, überrascht und vorbereitet durch ein Telegramm, konnte ich erst aus Ihrem Schreiben vom 21. Juni vollends gewahren, welche grosze, seltne auszeichnung mir zudedacht und erwiesen worden ist. meinen gerührten dank bitte ich Sie der Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde auszudrücken. Es macht mich glücklich, eine gesellschaft, die mich schon vor langer zeit der aufnahme würdigte, nun gewissermaszen von neuem und noch enger anzugehören. meine forschung ist von jeher davon durchdrungen gewesen, dasz die natur und der geist deutscher zunge nur dann erkannt werden könne, wenn alle zweige des mächtigen stammes mit gleichem eifer bearbeitet sind, und der niederländische zweig ist einer der schönsten und fruchtbarsten, die dieser stamm getrieben hat, uns allen thut groszen vorschub, dasz die früher versäumte herausgabe der quellen endlich hier wie dort nachgeholt worden ist und nun alle weiteren erfolge sicher stellt. Ich werde nimmer nachlassen, so lang mein leben anhält, auf dem eingeschlagenen wege fortzuwandeln und fühle mich durch den mir bezeugten ehrenvollen beifall auf das lebhafteste angefrischt. / Berlin 17 juni 1863 Jacob Grimm.'

The letter can be found in the Society's archives, which are held by the Leiden University Library, in folder 93. There seems to be an inconsistency regarding the dates as, according to the dates given in the letter, Grimm would have written the letter before his actual appointment as honorary member. The telegram mentioned has not yet been found. Fifty years earlier, on 7 July 1813, Jacob Grimm had been appointed as a foreign member (see *Jaarboek der Maatschappij voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 1813, 28, http://dbnl.nl/tekst/_jaa002181301_01/index.htm [accessed on 2 December 2014]).

¹⁵ 'Until now, only five Germanic languages have maintained their position: the High German, the Dutch, the English, the Swedish and the Danish language.' Jacob Grimm, *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1848), p. 580.

Jacob¹⁶ Grimm's interest in Dutch literature. The information contained in the letters can even contribute to the history of Dutch philology itself.

In the first decades of the 19th century, in which we see the beginnings of Dutch and German philology, communicative forms based on personal relationships, letters and discussions must be regarded to be the basis of science, and especially for philology. The scholarly communication in these letters obtains the status of an institution, i.e. a separate factor in the history of science, in this case: of Dutch philology. Therefore, two areas of study come together in my paper: the personal histories of scholars and the history of Dutch philology. Grimm philology can contribute not only to the history of German philology, but to the history of Dutch philology as well.

Above all Jacob Grimm's letters reveal his considerable efforts to stimulate and prepare public access to Dutch literature. With regard to their importance for the study of Dutch literature, the letters to colleagues in the Low Countries can be divided into two groups:

1. Letters as public activities for personal purposes;
2. Letters as a general effort for the benefit of Dutch literature, a stimulation to colleagues to collect and edit texts as well as to found societies.

1. Letters as public activities for personal purposes

Jacob Grimm did not receive an answer to the letter he wrote to Hendrik van Wijn on 23 July 1810. Consequently, he decided to try a different approach in order to get hold of the desired chapbooks. He and his brother were very well acquainted with Carl Savigny, their professor of law at the University of Göttingen, who had also encouraged them to undertake comparative studies of literature. On 13 April 1811, Savigny sent a letter to Hendrik Willem Tydeman, at that time professor of law at the University of Franeker. Enclosed with this letter was a letter from Jacob Grimm to Tydeman, which unfortunately has not survived. Tydeman's answer has been lost as well, but it must have been written after 14 April and before 6 June 1811 as Wilhelm Grimm mentions it in his letter to his brother on 6 June 1811: 'from prof. Tydeman s.l. & a. but according to the postmark from Franeker. A Dutch scribbly letter ...'.¹⁷ It was also summarised by Ernst Martin in his article in the *Anzeiger für deutsches Althertum* (1884).¹⁸ Tydeman's answers to Grimm's questions are very positive. As he is very interested in Dutch chapbooks himself - he stresses that he had written a review on Görres' book on chapbooks in a journal - Tydeman offers to look for Dutch chapbooks, stating that he can pay the costs and that he will

¹⁶ Wilhelm Grimm only exchanged, as far as we can tell, about twelve letters with Dutch and Belgian colleagues.

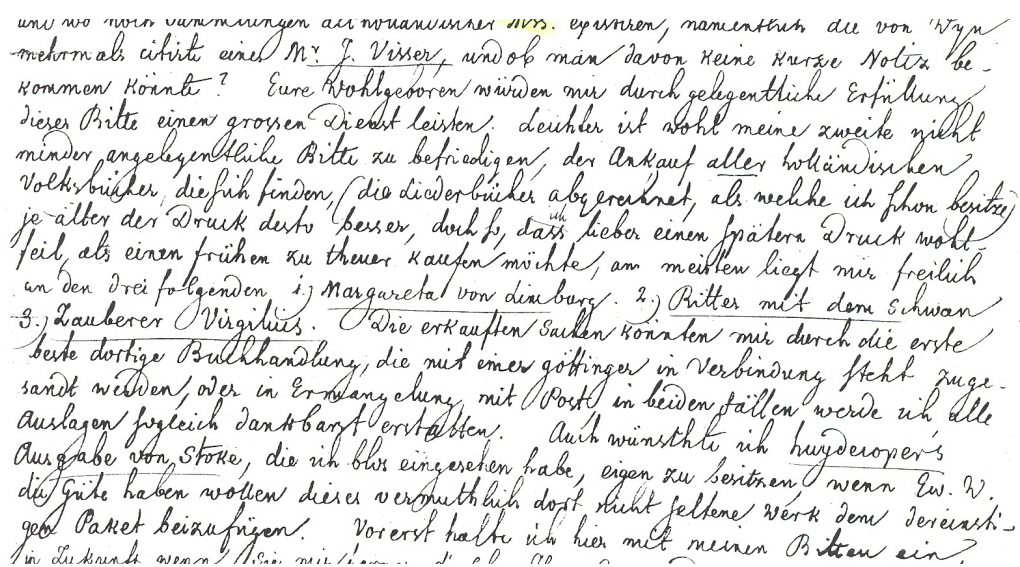
¹⁷ *Briefwechsel zwischen Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm. Herausgegeben von Heinz Rölleke* (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 2001), p. 223: 'von Prof. H.W. Tydeman s.l. & a. aber nach dem Poststempel aus Franeker. Ein holländ. kritzelicher Brief an den Wel Edelezeer geleerde Heer. Savigny habe an ihn wegen der holländ. Volksb. für dich geschrieben. die gingen ihn noch näher an als Savigny glaube, er habe auf die altholl. Literatur einige Mühe verwendet, er sey Corrospondent der zweiten Claße des holl. Instituts (für Sprache und Geschichte) und sein Vater Bibliothekar der Univ. zu Leiden. Er habe in einem Journal auf Görres Buch über die Vb. seine Landsleute aufmerksam gemacht.' See also: *Briefwechsel der Brüder Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm. Teil 3. Kommentar. Verfasst und herausgegeben von Stephan Bialas-Pophanken unter Verwendung des Kopien-Archivs der von Heinz Rölleke geleiteten Brüder-Grimm-Arbeitsstelle an der Bergischen Universität Wuppertal* (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 2013).

¹⁸ Ernst Martin, 'H.W. Tydeman und J. Grimm', *Anzeiger für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Literatur*, no. 10 (1884), pp. 160-184 (p. 161).

collect relevant material in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leeuwarden and Groningen.¹⁹ In the letter to his brother, Wilhelm Grimm characterises the letter as 'ungemein gefällig' ('extremely obliging') and advises Jacob to send him an answer immediately and to agree to all of Tydeman's offers in order to, among other things, keep up Tydeman's zeal.²⁰

Grimm's lost letter must therefore be regarded as the real starting-point for the long and very fruitful correspondence with Tydeman, which lasted until 1834. All in all, sixty-seven letters, thirty-six by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and thirty-one by Tydeman, were exchanged between 1811 and 1834. In the first four very intensive years of correspondence, they wrote thirty-three letters to each other (see Appendix b). In response to Tydeman's first letter on 1 July 1811, Jacob Grimm expresses his gratefulness and asks for the following:²¹

1. The first volume in five parts of Van Wijn's *Huiszittend leeven*, a book with information on Dutch literature and history, published in 1807;²²
2. Information about collections of Dutch manuscripts;
3. All Dutch chapbooks, especially 1) *Margareta von Limburg*, 2) *Ritter mit dem Schwan* (*Knight with the Swan*), 3) *Zauberer Virgilius* (*Magician Virgilius*);
4. Huydecoper's edition of Melis Stoke's chronicle²³.



und wo von sammlungen an manuskripten usw. erfahren, namentlich du von Wijn
mehr als acht eine M. J. Visser, und ob man davon keine kurze Notiz be-
kommen könnte? Eure Wohlgeboren würden mir durch gelegentliche Erfüllung
dieser Bitte einen grossen Dienst leisten. Deutlich ist wohl meine zweite nicht
minder angelegentliche Bitte zu befriedigen, der Ankauf aller holländischen
Volksbücher, die ich finden, (die Liederbücher abgerechnet, als welche ich schon besitzt)
je älter der Druck desto besser, doch so, dass ich lieber einen spätern Druck woll-
te, als einen frühern zu theuer kaufen möchte, am meisten liegt mir freilich
an den drei folgenden: 1) Margareta von Limburg. 2) Ritter mit dem Schwan
3) Zauberer Virgilius. Die erkaufften Sachen könnten mir durch die erste
beste dortige Buchhandlung, die mit einer göttinger in Verbindung steht zuge-
sandt werden, oder in Erwägung mit Post, in beiden Fällen werde ich alle
Auslagen freylich dankbarst erstatten. Auch wünschte ich Huydecoper's
Ausgabe von Stoke, die ich blos eingesehen habe, eigen zu besitzen, wenn Eu. W.
die Güte haben wollen dieser verhältnissmässig doch nicht feltene Werk dem Verzeich-
geb. Parquet beizufügen. Vorerst halte ich hier mit meinen Bitten ein.
In Leiden den 1. Juli 1811. J. G. Grimm

Figure 2: Leiden, UB, Ltk. 1003, letter 1, p. 2

¹⁹ Rölleke, p. 223.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Reifferscheid, pp. 1-3.

²² Hendrik van Wijn, *Huiszittend leeven. Bevattende eenige mengelstoffen over afzonderlijke en, voorheen, weinig of niet bewerkte onderwerpen, betreklijk tot de letter-, historie en oudheidkunde van Nederland*, 5 vols (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1807), I.

²³ *Rijmkronijk van Melis Stoke, met historie-, oudheid- en taalkundige aanmerkingen door Balthazar Huydecoper*, 3 vols (Leiden: Johannes le Mair, 1772). On Huydecoper see Robert Stein, 'De heer Huydecoper bezit ze; maar wie meer? Balthazar Huydecoper (1695-1778)', in *Der vaderen boek*, ed. by Wim van Anrooij, Dini Hogenelst & Geert Warnar (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), pp. 11-22.

Only a few weeks later, on 12 August 1811, Tydeman sends Grimm useful and detailed information, considering several possibilities of acquiring manuscripts and prints.²⁴ He names libraries in Utrecht, Leiden and The Hague, whilst rejecting libraries in Groningen, Franeker and Harderwijk. He also mentions different institutions such as the *Society of Dutch Literature* in Leiden and the Groningen society 'pro excolendo jure patrio' ('for the improvement of national law'). Thirdly, he considers possible private collectors, e. g.:

- a) Willem van Westreenen (Den Haag, 1783-1848), second registrar of the Kingdom of Holland since 1807;
- b) Jacob Arnold Clignett (Den Haag, 1756-1827), at the High Court of Justice at The Hague from 1813, and Jan Steenwinckel (Harderwijk, 1754-1812), a judge in Harderwijk since 1795, who had published three parts of Maerlant's *Spiegel historiael*, two parts together with Clignett and the third part with Bilderdijk;²⁵
- c) Willem Anne van Spaen la Lecq (Cleves, 1750-1817), advisor to King Louis Napoléon (1806-1810) in the Kingdom of Holland.²⁶

Furthermore, Tydeman sends Grimm twenty-two chapbooks which he bought from the bookseller and printer Koene in Amsterdam: 4^o: *Virgilius, Leven en dood; Vier Heemskinderen; Ridder met de zwaan; Ourson and Valentyn; Kon. Jan van Parys; Helena van Constantinopel; Margareta van Limburg; Vrouwe Griseldis; Floris ende Blanche fleur; Mandevilles Reizen*; 8^o: *De zeven wysen van Rome; Klein Kobisje of Koning zonder Onderzaten; Reneke de vos; Duyfke en Willemyntje; Snakeryen van Clement; Marot; Jonge Uylenspiegel; Slenderhenke of Westfaalsche Mof; Land- en Zeehelden* 4^o: *De historie van Doctor Johannes Faustus; Destructie en Ondergang der Stad Jerusalem*; 8^o: *Thyl Uyenspiegel; de Historie van den wandelenden Jood*.²⁷ Tydeman admits that the blue booklets (as he calls them because of their blue cover) are late reprints. He thinks, however, that this is not a major problem as Koene has assured him that they would not differ from the early prints. Later Tydeman notices that he sent all those books without having copies himself. Thereupon Jacob Grimm offers to send back all the books Tydeman would like to have.²⁸

In this first phase of correspondence, we thus see a very friendly cooperative relationship with Tydeman going to great lengths to support Grimm. Grimm acknowledges Tydeman's exceptional efforts in the following way: 'I have never been supported by anyone to the same extent and in such a friendly way (except by Dassdorf in Dresden)'.²⁹

In his letter of 12 August 1811, Tydeman suggests another idea. In his opinion, an announcement in the journal *Algemene Konst- en letterbode (General Herald for Art and*

²⁴ Martin, pp. 161-163.

²⁵ Clignett and Steenwinckel had already published an edition of Maerlant's *Spiegel historiael* in 1784-1785: *Spiegel Historiael of Rijkronijk van Jacob van Maerlant. Met aantekeningen*, ed. by Jacob A. Clignett and J. Steenwinckel (Leiden: Frans de Does, 1784 and 1785 (the first and second part of the Spiegel)).

²⁶ In 1810, Holland became a French province until the French retreated in November 1813.

²⁷ Martin, pp. 163-164.

²⁸ 'Doch tröste ich mich damit, dass Sie auch eine eigene Sammlung anlegen wollen, sollte Ihnen aber eines der mir verschafften Stücke wider Verhoffen nicht mehr zu finden seyn, so versteht es sich, dass ich Ihnen das zu früh empfangene Exemplar zurückschicke' (29 August 1811). See Reifferscheid, p. 5.

²⁹ Reifferscheid, p. 21 (letter to Tydeman on 9 March 1812).

Literature)³⁰ could be fruitful. Furthermore, he offers to translate into Dutch a German announcement written by Grimm. Grimm's reaction in his very long reply is extremely positive, and he attaches a text for a piece to be published in the *General Herald*. It is then translated by Tydeman and published on 22 November 1811.

In this announcement, Grimm starts by briefly outlining his plan to write a history of German literature. He argues that Dutch literature was closely related to German literature in former times, thus repeating the argument he had used in his first letter to Tydeman: 'just like the Old Dutch language the Old Dutch literature and poetry is closely related and connected to the German one'.³¹ Regarding the Middle Ages, he regards the Dutch and German languages and literatures as two branches of the same tree.

According to Jacob Grimm, popular literature in particular - such as chapbooks, songs and ballads - had intentionally been neglected for a long time. He praises work done by Huydecoper and Van Wijn as they provide access to these valuable sources. But at the same time, Grimm stresses that it is necessary to continue, imitate and expand their work.³² There was no immediate reaction to this piece in the *Algemene Letterbode*³³ as far as we know, but it did have some implications. In December 1811, Tydeman promises to send the appeal to the *Society of Dutch Literature (Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde)* in Leiden and to the *Second Class of the Holland Institute of Science, Literature and Fine Arts* in Amsterdam.³⁴

In first instance Jacob Grimm's motives are predominantly self-serving. For his purpose of collecting as much material as possible, he seeks a correspondent in the Low Countries and finds the willing H.W. Tydeman, who had already written a short review on Görres' chapbooks.³⁵ Not only does Tydeman do all he can to fulfil Jacob Grimm's wishes, but he also offers other approaches like the announcement, which Grimm gratefully accepts.

In this way, the letters, which were private at first, achieve a status of direct sources for public information. In addition, they form an appeal to his Dutch and Belgian colleagues in their search for Dutch popular literature and in their efforts to make the material of former times survive.

2. Letters as a general effort for the benefit of Dutch literature

With his letters to Dutch and Belgian scholars, Grimm does not only try to acquire material for his own purposes. The letters also reveal his general commitment to Dutch literature and even Dutch philology in general, especially his interest in making Dutch medieval literature accessible to the public.

³⁰ Published once a fortnight with news of literary developments and projects, discoveries of manuscripts, etc.

³¹ On 1 July 1811 in a letter to H.W. Tydeman: 'wie die altholländische Sprache, so ist auch die ganze altvaterländische Literatur und Poesie mit der deutschen eng verbunden und zusammenhängend' (Reifferscheid, p. 1).

³² Reifferscheid, p. 15.

³³ Leerssen, p. 25.

³⁴ Tydeman mentions this in his letter written between 1 and 12 December 1811 (Martin, p. 166).

³⁵ Joseph Görres, *Die teutschen Volksbücher. Nähere Würdigung der schönen Historien-, Wetter- und Arzneibüchlein, welche theils innerer Werth, theils Zufall, Jahrhunderte hindurch bis auf unsere Zeit erhalten hat* (Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer, 1807). Tydeman's review intended for the journal *Schouwburg van Letter- en huishoudkunde* was never published as the journal folded before the review could appear. Moreover, the manuscript of the review has disappeared (Martin, p. 161).

After receiving the package of chapbooks, Jacob Grimm proposes in his letter of 29 August 1811 a far-reaching idea: 'The best would be if a group of Dutch scholars came together in order to print all important remaining old poetry, language and history in a separate journal in a casual order, without any notes, just the material itself. Such material would be sold in Germany, too. Would that be at all possible?'³⁶ Tydeman reacts very enthusiastically to Grimm's 'magnificent plan'³⁷, but he also fears that this plan might not come to anything as texts have to pass a double censorship barrier in both Paris and Amsterdam. Furthermore, he claims that only 100 copies would be sold in the Netherlands.

In a letter dated 9 December 1811, crossing Tydeman's letter, Jacob Grimm informs Tydeman about 'important news for Old Dutch Literature', i.e. the discovery of a manuscript of Dutch literature.³⁸ The manuscript, written between 1380 and 1425, had been found in the small town of Comburg near Stuttgart.³⁹ In his letter, Grimm emphasises the importance of the manuscript by stating the number of pages (346) and the language (only Dutch), and by supplying the titles of some of the exceptional texts.⁴⁰ Today, the manuscript is one of the two most famous manuscripts of Dutch medieval literature - the other is the Hulthem manuscript - with more than 50 texts, among others the verse epic *Reynard the Fox* (*Van den vos Reynaerde*, the so-called first *Reynaert* text),⁴¹ Jacob of Maerlant's *The Best of Nature* (*Der Naturen Bloeme*), an encyclopaedia of nature, Jacob of Maerlant's *Secrecy of Secrecy* (*Heimelijkheid der heimelikheden*), and the *Romance of the Rose*, a Dutch version of the original French allegorical dream vision in verse. Tydeman then announces the discovery in the *Algemene Letterbode* on 17 January 1812 (no. 3).

Only a few weeks later, Jacob Grimm gratefully acknowledges his debt to Tydeman's readiness to help him (letter of 9 March 1812).⁴² Besides, he assures that he intends to do everything to help deal with the reservations of Dutch scholars with regard to their common subject: 'I will certainly do everything to overcome the reservations of Dutch scholars in our field by granting favours in advance'.⁴³

First of all, he never tires of encouraging his correspondents to edit Dutch medieval manuscripts. Unlike Germany, where an important proportion of medieval literature had been

³⁶ 'Das allerbeste wäre freilich, wenn sich eine Gesellschaft holländischer Gelehrten vereinigte, alle etwas bedeutende Überbleibsel alter Poesie, Sprache und Geschichte mittelst eines eigenen Journals in ungezwungener Form und Folge, ohne alle Noten vorerst als bloßes Material drucken zu lassen. Dergleichen würde jetzt auch in Deutschland abgesetzt werden. Ist aber irgend Rechnung zu machen, dass es geschehe?' (Reifferscheid, p. 8).

³⁷ Letter of 1 to 12 December 1811 (see Reifferscheid, pp. 167-168).

³⁸ Reifferscheid, p. 19.

³⁹ Herman Brinkman & Janny Schenkel (eds.), *Het Comburgse handschrift* (Hs. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek cod. poet. et phil. 20 22) (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997).

⁴⁰ Grimm mentions: a prayer to the virgin Mary, book of manners, Cato's lessons, legend of Brandan (Reifferscheid 1883, p. 20). These are: *O intemerata* (prayer, fol. 101v-102v), *Bouc van seden* (fol. 102v-110r), *Dietsche Catoen* (fol. 110r-112r), *Van Sente Brandane* (f. 179-192v), ed. by Brinkman & Schenkel 1997.

⁴¹ The discovery was so important to Grimm because it proved his hypothesis that there existed a Dutch verse text of the *Reynard* that had been the source for the Low German *Reynke de vos*.

⁴² Reifferscheid 1883, pp. 21-32.

⁴³ 'ich werde gewisslich alles thun, um durch Gegengefälligkeiten im Voraus die Zurückhaltung holländ. Gelehrten unseres Faches zu besiegen' (Reifferscheid 1883, p. 21).

edited or where editions were planned,⁴⁴ only a few works of Dutch medieval literature had been edited in the Low Countries up to the first decade of the nineteenth century:

1. *Rijmkronijk van Melis Stoke met historie-, oudheid- en taalkundige aanmerkingen*, ed. by Balthazar Huydecoper (Leiden: Johannes le Mair, 1772);⁴⁵

2. *Spiegel Historiaal, of Rym-Spiegel; zynde de Nederlandsche Rym-Chronyk, van Lodewyk van Velthem, voor ruym 400 Jaaren in Dichtmaat gebracht (...)*, ed. by Isaac Le Long (Amsterdam: Hendrik van Eyl, 1727);

3. *Chronyk van Holland, van den Klerk uit de laage landen by der zee: nooit voorheen gedrukt. (and Kort chronykje van Holland, 977-1466). Met eenige aanteekeningen zoo van Pieter Scriverius als van den uitgever*, ed. by Frans Mieris (Leiden: Pieter vander Eyk, 1740);

4. Klaas Kolyn, *Geschied-historiaal rym, of Rymchronyk ... beginnende met den Simberschen vloed, en eyndigende met de dood van Graaf Dirk, vader van Florents den III. Graaf van Holland. In't jaar elfhonderdzesenvyftig voorgevallen: Zynde voords nog met de noodige zoo Taal- als historikundige aantekeningen opgehelderd, en met eenen bladwyzer der Oude Nederduytsche woorden verrykt door Gerard van Loon* ('s Gravenhage: Pieter de Hondt, 1745);⁴⁶

5. *Spiegel Historiael of Rijmkronijk van Jacob van Maerlant. Met aanteekeningen*, ed. by Jacob A. Clignett & Jan Steenwinckel (Leiden: Frans de Does, 1784 and 1785).

It is remarkable that all these are chronicles and no literary works. Jacob Grimm obviously feels the need to collect and edit the texts himself, or of encouraging others to do so, as he fears the texts may otherwise disappear within a few decades. In one of his first letters to Tydeman, dated 29 August 1811, he encourages him to stimulate others to edit Dutch manuscripts:

⁴⁴ Up to 1800, about 70 editions/projects were carried out or planned (see Bernd Neumann, 'Die verhinderte Wissenschaft. Zur Erforschung Altdeutscher Sprache und Literatur in der 'vorwissenschaftlichen Phase'', in *Mittelalter-Rezeption. Ein Symposium*, ed. by Peter Wapnewski (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1886), pp. 105-118.

⁴⁵ Huydecoper's edition (3 vols) was the fourth edition. The previous editions were:

1. An edition with a preface by Janus Douza in 1591 (see P.J. Buijnsters, 'Kenniss van en waardering voor Middelnederlandse literatuur in de 18de eeuw', *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw*, no. 16 (1984), 39-58, http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/buij001kenn01_01/colofon.htm [accessed on 2 December 2014]).

2. *Hollandtsche rym-kronik inhoudende de gheschiedenissen der graven van Hollandt tot het jaer M. CCC. V.* (Den Haag: Hillebrant Jacobsz., 1620), for the title page see <http://webdoc.uibn.kun.nl/old-and-rare/titlepage/933/19331612.gif> [accessed on 2 December 2014].

3. Alkemade, Cornelis (ed.), *Hollandse jaar-boeken of Rijm-kronijk van Melis Stoke Behelsende de Geschiedenissen des Lands, onder de Princen van het eerste Huis, tot den jare 1305. Met de Afbeeldingen van alle de Hollandse graven, geschetst naar de Aaloude Schilderyen der Karmeliten te Haarlem. Nevens verscheide egte bylagen, betreffende de ware toestand der geschillen, tussen Graaf Floris de V, en de Hollandse edelen. Mitsgaders de beeldenisse van Heer Gerard van Velsen; en andre Oude Frayigheden, noit te voren in't licht gebragt. Alles met noodige Uitleggingen opgehelderd* (Leiden: Johannes du Vivie & Isaak Severinus, 1699). See also Buijnsters, p. 41.

⁴⁶ A literary fraud: Huydecoper was the first to prove that Kolijn never existed.

I hope that Van Wyn's plan to edit Ferguut and Esopet and other poetic monuments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has become reality! Or is there any hope? If it were otherwise: would a correct and precise copy of Ferguut, which interests me most, be difficult and expensive? There is no hurry at all. In addition, Diederic of Assenede's *Floris & Blanchefleur* and *Karel & Elegast* deserve to be edited; Van Wyn presented part of the latter text but he overlooked the literary connections I recently demonstrated in the second volume of the 'altdeutschen Museum', Berlin, 1811, p. 226-36.⁴⁷

He also mentions Maerlant's poems *Wapen Martijn*,⁴⁸ *Verkeerde Martijn* and *Naturen bloeme* among the texts to be edited. In the following decades, several of the texts he suggests will be edited; in actual fact, two of them by the German August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben:

Bijdragen tot de oude Nederlandsche Letterkunde, ed. by Jacob A. Clignett ('s-Gravenhage: Erve J. Thierrij & C. Mensing, 1819);⁴⁹

Floris ende Blancefloer door Diederic van Assenede, ed. by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1836);

Caerl ende Elegast, ed. by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1836);⁵⁰

Ferguut, Ridderroman uit den Fabelkring van de Ronde Tafel, ed. by L.G. Visscher (Utrecht: Robert Nathan, 1838).

Despite the apparent lack of interest in Grimm's work following the announcement in the *Algemene Letterbode*, the news about the discovery of the Comburg manuscript is not without consequences.

On 6 February 1812, only a few weeks after the publication of the announcement and of the information about the discovery of the manuscript in the *Algemene Letterbode*, the *Second Class of the Holland Institute of Science* reacts, through its secretary, Willem Bilderdijk. Bilderdijk writes to Jacob Grimm:

⁴⁷ 'möchte doch aus v. Wyns Vorhaben, (Avondstond. 2. 174. 75.) den *Ferguut* und *Esopet*, nebst andern poetischen Denkmälern des 14 u. 15. Jh. zu ediren, etwas geworden seyn! oder ist dazu noch Hoffnung vorhanden? im gegentheiligen Fall: würde eine correcte und genaue Abschrift des *Ferguut*, der mich am meisten interessirt, schwierig und kostspielig seyn? Eile hat es auf keinen Fall damit. Ausserdem verdienen noch Dirks von Assenede *Floris & Blanchefleur* und der so seltene Druck von *Karel end Elegast* einen Abdruck, von letzterem gibt van Wyn 1. 308-12 einen Auszug, hat aber die literarischen Beziehungen übersehen, welche ich neulich im zweiten Band des altdeutschen Museum, Berlin b. Unger 1811 p. 226-36 nachgewiesen habe' (Reifferscheid, p. 7).

⁴⁸ The first of these texts is also to be found in the Comburg manuscript: *Wapen Martijn* (fol. 112r-119r), ed. by Brinkman & Schenkel 1997; this text and *Verkeerde Martijn* were edited for the first time in 1857: *Jacob van Maerlant's Wapene Martijn, met de vervolgen*, ed. by Eelco Verwijs (Deventer: D.J. Witterdink, 1857).

⁴⁹ Contents: *Esopet; De oude Hollandse dronk*; Willem van Hildegaersberch, Van Sinte Gheertruden min.

⁵⁰ Hoffmann von Fallersleben also edited the Dutch *Lantsloot ende die scone Sandrijn. Renout van Montalbaen* (Breslau: Georg Philipp Aderholz, 1837) and *Altniederländische Schaubühne. Abele spelen* (Breslau: Georg Philipp Aderholz, 1838). He had already edited Dutch songs in 1833: *Holländische Volkslieder. Mit einer Musikbeilage*, gesammelt und erläutert von A.H. Hoffmann von Fallersleben (Breslau: Grass, Barth & Comp, 1833).

Grimm-Schrank 807
Bilderdijk

Amsterdam den 6^{ten} van Sprakkelmaand 1812. ^{1 (3)}

De Secretaris der Tweede Klasse van het Hollandsche
Instituut van Wetenschappen, Letterkunde, en Schoone kunsten,
Aan
Den Hooggeleerden Heer Grimm, Koninklijken
Bibliothekaris te Kassel, &c. &c.

Mijn Heer,

Hoe zeer de Tweede Klasse van het Hollandsche Instituut, uit hoofde
der geringe uitgebreidheid onzer taal, zich ten regel stelt, aan Buitenlandsche geleerden,
Den, in het fransk (als thands algemeen en heerschend) te schrijven, geloof ik echter

of. Bilderdijk en Jacob Grimm
8. Juni 1812.

Figure 3: Letter from Willem Bilderdijk, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Nachlass Grimm 807, 1

Sir,

Although it is the rule of the Second Class of the Holland Institute, on account of the limited spread of our language, to write to foreign scholars in French (the current prevalent language), I believe that, in this instance, I should change this habit as it is my honour to address someone whose knowledge and passion encompass Dutch Old Literature in its broadest sense, and whose established fame in this field of study I would seem to distrust if I intended to depart from the language of our nation. ... [The Class] could not be indifferent regarding your announcement of this (for us) very important discovery of the Old Dutch pieces that were found thanks to the diligence of Mr Gräter in Komburg, Swabia, and about which Mr Tydeman sent information to the Dutch journal [= Algemene Letterbode, R.S.]. The Class has noted that Mr Gräter will edit the first of the manuscripts (a still unknown Reynard the fox); but the Class cannot deny a similar interest in the other manuscripts. Amongst these, Maerlant and The Rose in particular stand out.⁵¹

⁵¹ 'Mijn Heer, Hoe zeer de Tweede Klasse van het Hollandsche Instituut, uit hoofde der geringe uitgebreidheid onzer taal, zich ten regel stelt, aan Buitenlandsche geleerden, in het fransk (als thands algemeen en heerschend) te schrijven, geloof ik echter voor ditmaal, van dit haar gebruik te moeten afgaan, daar ik de eer heb my tot iemand te wenden wiens kundigheden en liefhebbery de Nederlandsche Letteroudheden in den ruimsten omvang bevatten; en wiens gevestigden roem in dit vak ik zou schijnen te wantrouwen, met ten zijnen opzichte van den tongval onzes Vaderlands aftegaan. Ontvang dus, Hooggeleerde Heer, dit mijn schrijven in de Hollandsche spraak, als eene hulde die U toekomt, en vergun my, U de gevoelens der Klasse, uit wier naam en last ik de pen voere, onvertolkt te mogen overbrengen.

Zy heeft, Hooggeleerde Heer, niet onverschillig kunnen zijn by de mededeeling door U gedaan van eene zoo belangrijke ontdekking voor ons, als die van de Oud-nederduitsche stukken die de vlijt van den Heer Gräter te Komburg in Zwaben heeft opgespoord, en waarvan door den Heer Tydeman aan het Hollandsch algemeen een bericht is gegeven, voor't welke wy aan U gehouden zijn. Zy heeft met genoegen ontwaard, dat het eerste dier Handschriften (een nog onbekend Reintje de Vos) door den Heer Gräter staat uitgegeven te worden; maar zy kan niet afzijn, een even groot belang in de overige te stellen. Inzonderheid zijn het de Maerlant en De rose, die, onder deze, hare aandacht hoofdzakelijk tot zich trekken.'

Bilderdijk asks Jacob Grimm to act as an intermediary for the Institute to obtain these two texts, Maerlant's *Secrecy of Secrecy* [*Heimelijkheid der heimelijkheden*] and the *Rose*, or at least a copy of these. Bilderdijk argues that the Institute has carried out a substantial amount of work on Dutch literature since its foundation [in 1808], especially with regard to making Dutch texts accessible to the public. He mentions his own recent work on Maerlant, i.e. his edition of the third part of Maerlant's *Spiegel historiael*, which he edited together with Jan Steenwinkel in 1812.⁵²

As a result of Grimm's letter to Tydeman, the Low Countries are informed about the Comburg manuscript, which opens up more possibilities to institutions such as the *Second Class of the Holland Institute of Science* to make famous Dutch texts accessible to the public. Whether or not Jacob Grimm intended Tydeman to make the news public and to mention his name when doing so, we do not know. But, as a consequence, all of a sudden Dutch institutions dealing with the literary past show interest in Jacob Grimm. He is elected a member of the Institute at its next meeting on 27 February 1812.

The following year, Jacob Grimm is elected a member of the *Society of Dutch Literature* in Leiden. By letter dated 13 July 1813, the secretary J.C. Kneppelhout communicates the news of the election.⁵³ Within a very short time, Jacob Grimm's position has changed, from being virtually ignored by van Wijn through his professional correspondence with Tydeman to becoming a person of public interest by virtue of his association with the *Holland Institute* and the *Society of Dutch Literature*. By 1813, he has become the most important foreign scholar involved in research on Dutch literature.

More than twenty years later, Jacob Grimm starts a very intensive correspondence with the leader of the Flemish Movement, Jan Frans Willems (1793-1846). In a letter to Jan Frans Willems written on 15 April 1835, Jacob Grimm reiterates the need for editing Maerlant's works: An edition of Maerlant in Belgium would be very welcome; in Holland there is little prospect for it. First of all, the texts which have not yet appeared in Holland should be printed: *The Best of Nature*, *Rhymed Bible* etc. but the best manuscripts seem to be in Holland.⁵⁴ It will take twenty-four years for Maerlant's *Rhymed Bible* to be edited, and another twenty years for *The Best of Nature* to be edited for the first time.

Rymbybel van Jacob van Maerlant, met voorrede, varianten van hss., aanteekeningen en glossarium, op last van het Gouvernement en in naem der Koninklyke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Letteren en Fraeije Kunsten voor de eerste mael uitgegeven door J. David (Brussel: M. Hayez, printer of the Royal Academy, 1858-59), 3 vols.

Jacob van Maerlant's Naturen bloeme, ed. by Eelco Verwijs (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1878).

⁵² *Spiegel historiael of Rijkronijk van Jacob van Maerlant*, part 3, with annotations by Jan Steenwinkel, with a preface and annotations by Willem Bilderdijk (Amsterdam: M.F. Pieper & comp., 1812), published on behalf of the *Second Class of the Holland Institute*.

⁵³ See the edition of the letter in Schlusemann, 'Jacob Grimm: pionier van de Neerlandistiek'.

⁵⁴ 'willkommen wäre eine in Belgien erscheinende ausgabe von Maerlant; in Holland ist jetzt geringe aussicht dazu. Vorerst aber müste man drucken, was in Holland noch nicht erschien: Naturen bloeme, rimbibel & c aber die besten hss. werden freilich in Holland liegen' (see *Gent, UB, G. 15769*⁵⁷, and see *De Vreese 1973*, p. 267)

The correspondence between Jacob Grimm and J.F. Willems continues for more than thirteen years, ending with Willems' death. Altogether thirty-three letters were written. With regard to the number of letters exchanged, their correspondence is second only to Grimm's correspondence with Tydeman (sixty-seven letters). But the correspondence with Willems is the most fruitful exchange of letters with a correspondent from the Low Countries. J.F. Willems' romantic notions resemble Grimm's ideas quite closely. In his first letter to Willems, Grimm does not hesitate to stress that the Belgians have neglected Maerlant's works for centuries:

My remark in my preface [to his *Reinhart Fuchs*, 1834] on neglecting the mother tongue in Flanders you will find crude but true. It [the remark, R.S.] is justified by the fact that, whereas all neighbouring countries remember their past, in Belgium Maerlant's works have been left lying in the dust for centuries. (Letter of 14 December 1834)

The remark in the preface referred to reads as follows:

However, this old poem is Belgium's prime concern, but who has shown devotion and concern for their mother tongue? Inner self-abandon takes its toll everywhere: from this beautiful region, where poetry lived in the Middle Ages, it has moved and vanished for a long time.⁵⁵

In his letter, Grimm continues: 'Perhaps it is not too late to turn back, and you have to be credited for having stimulated interest and sentiment for the mother tongue anew'. In a second letter to Willems, Grimm confesses that Belgium is a region he has always been attracted to in his scholarly work. New poems are, in his opinion, a means of stimulating patriotism, but he reminds Willems that scholarly historical studies need to be undertaken as well. Apart from editions of Maerlant's works, he suggests linguistic studies such as a complete Flemish dictionary.

Willems' answer is lost, but fortunately Professor Andreas Heusler of the University of Basel in Switzerland copied it, as well as two other letters now held by the Basel University Library, which have never been published. The first of these, dated 17 November 1836, begins with Willems saying that he has sent a volume of his *Reynard* edition to Jacob Grimm.⁵⁶ He informs Grimm that in several places societies for the Flemish language have been founded. In his reply, dated 29 December 1836, Grimm praises Willems' book, which has caused 'most lively pleasure'. He also pays homage to Willems' endeavours to secure a

⁵⁵ Jacob Grimm, *Reinhart Fuchs* (Berlin: Reimer, 1834). In 1834, Willems published a retelling of the so-called first *Reynaert* (*Vanden vos Reynaerde*) entitled: *Reinaert de Vos, naer de oudste beryming* door J.F. Willems (Eecloo: Drukkery van A.B. van Han en Zoon, 1834). Two years later, Willems published an edition of the first *Reynaert*, followed by an edition of the second part of Reynaerts historie: *Reinaert de Vos. Episch fabeldicht van de twaalfde en dertiende eeuw met aenmerkingen en ophelderingen* door J.F. Willems (Gent: F. en E. Gyselynck, 1836).

⁵⁶ These letters are in Basel, UB, *Nachlass Andreas Heusler II 90g* (see Deprez & De Smedt 1990, pp. 67-69).

manuscript of *Reynaerts historie*.⁵⁷ After the English book collector Richard Heber acquired the only complete manuscript of the text, Willems advises the Belgian government to buy the manuscript. As a result, it has belonged to the state of Belgium since 1836.

To sum up:

Nineteenth-century letters are very important to the history of the humanities. The letters written by Jacob Grimm to Dutch and Belgian scholars first of all inform us about his personal interest in popular Dutch literature such as chapbooks and songs. They reveal a self-interested attitude, but they also show that the study of medieval Dutch literature in general is close to his heart. Jacob Grimm never ceases to highlight to his colleagues in Holland the need to collect and edit Dutch medieval literature and, as this effort has not been very fruitful, he does the same to a Belgian colleague. Therefore we must change our view of Jacob Grimm: he did not neglect Dutch language and literature, nor did he see it as a minor part of German culture. In his letters, he encouraged his colleagues to be active in the field of Dutch philology. We may credit these letters with having advanced Dutch philology quite considerably.

⁵⁷ In 1825, the English book collector Richard Heber acquired manuscript B of *Reynaerts historie*, the only complete manuscript of this text. Acting on J.F. Willems' advice, the Belgian government bought the manuscript in February 1836. See J.F. Willems in his preface to his second *Reynard* book, p. vii, dated 20 August 1836.

Appendix a:

Chronological survey of the letters exchanged between Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and Dutch and Belgian colleagues (as of 1 May 2014)

	time	by the Grimms	to the Grimms
van Wijn, Hendrik	1810-1812	3	1
Stratenus, Adam Anthony	1811	–	1
Tydeman, Hendrik Willem	1811-1834	36	31
Hollands Instituut van Wetenschappen	1812-1855	13	18
Scheltema, Jacobus	1813-1834	8	12
Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde	1813-1863	4	7
ten Broecke Hoekstra, Albert	1815	4	4
Reuvens, Caspar Jacob Christian	1815	–	3
Bilderdijk, Willem	1817-1821	4	4
Westendorp, Nicolaas	1822	–	1
Geel, Jacob	1826	–	1
Halbertsma, Joost Hiddes	1830-1856	13	17
Genootschap, Provinciaal Friesch	1832	–	1
Buddingh, Derk	1834-1846	2	2
Willems, Jan Frans	1834-1846	17	16
Bolhuis, Joan Hugo	1836	–	1
van Westreenen van Tiellandt, Willem H.J.	1836-1837	1	3
Hofstede de Groot, Petrus	1838	–	1
De Reiffenberg, Frédéric-Auguste	1839-1843	2	2
Bormans, Jan Hendrik	1841-1857	2	2
Blommaert, Philip	1842	–	1
Jonckbloet, Willem J.A.	1842-1856	4	8
van den Bergh, Laurens Ph.C.	1846	1	2
Noordewier, Michiel Jan	1848-1853	2	2
Grandgagnage, Charles	1850	1	–
David, Johan Baptist	1851	–	1
Genootschap Belgicum (Backer, G.H.)	1852	1	1
de Vries, Matthias	1852-1863	9	15
Comité Flamand de France	1853-1856	1	3
van Duyse, Prudens	1853-1856	1	2

van Reenen, Gerlach C.J., Minister			
van Binnenlandse Zaken	1853	1	–
Zwitsers, August E.	1857	1	1

	total	131	166

Appendix b:

The correspondence between Jacob or Wilhelm Grimm (WG) and Hendrik Willem Tydeman between 1811 and 1815

1	G > T	before 13 April 1811
2		T > G before 1 July 1811
3	G > T	1 July 1811
4		T > G 12 August 1811
5	G > T	29 August 1811
6		T > G 1 to 12 December 1811
7	G > T	9 December 1811
8		T > G 30 January 1812
9		T > G 20 February 1812
10	G > T	9 and 10 March 1812
11	G > T	25 May 1812
12	G > T	20 August 1812
13		T > G 13 to 23 October 1812
14		T > G 30 October 1812
15	G > T	8 December 1812
16		T > G 31 January 1813
17		T > G 2 to 13 February 1813
18	G > T	28 February and 3 March 1813
19		T > G 5 April 1813
20	G > T	22 April 1813
21	G > T	31 July 1813
22		T > G August/September 1813
23	G > T	26 December 1813
24		T > G 12 January 1814
25		T > WG 13 January 1814
26	G > T	18 May 1814
27		T > WG 21 December 1814
28		T > G 24 December [1814]
29		T > G [29 December 1814]
30	WG > T	21 January 1815
31		T > WG 28 March to 4 April 1815
32	G > T	5 May 1815
33		T > G 1 July 1815

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