The Practice of Philology in the Nineteenth-Century Netherlands

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Abstract

The professionalization of Dutch philology after 1800 coincided with the emergence of nationalist philologies all over Europe. At the same time, it was a phase in a very long history of philological research in the Low Countries, going back to the sixteenth century. This article takes both broader evolutions into account, both the early stage of modern professionalization of Dutch philology in the 1840s, and its anchoring in the earliest vernacular philology, practised at the University of Leiden around 1600. It does so by outlining a history of scholarly editions of literary texts, and by focusing in particular on several innovations within this scholarly activity introduced by Willem J.A. Jonckbloet and Matthias de Vries, editions throughout the decades of Jacob van Maerlant’s *Spiegel historiael* and a chronicle by Melis Stoke, the forged chronicle by Klaas Kolijn, and epistemological statements. Thus, the history of Dutch philology before 1860 can be placed in the broader frames of, on the one hand, the history of philological criticism and antiquarianism, as discussed by Anthony Grafton, and on the other hand, literary historicism and the national cultivation of culture, as defined by Joep Leerssen.

Introduction

Hendrik van Wijn was one of the very few people in his time who studied Dutch history and literature by profession. When he became the national archivist in 1802, he was the first ever to be appointed to this office, as it was first introduced in the Batavian Republic, the state that succeeded the renowned Dutch Republic after a revolution in 1795. Van Wijn had been engaged in literary societies before, as well as in state affairs. The revolutionary decades had aroused his scholarly interest in the Dutch literary past from the Middle Ages onwards, which found expression in his *Historische
en letterkundige avondstonden (‘Historical and literary evenings’), a series of didactical dialogues, published between 1800 and 1812. Today, it is generally considered the first – somewhat strangely conceived – literary history of the Netherlands. Van Wijn, however, remembered many predecessors in this field of study, some of whom, like him, had to face hard times. He referred in particular to the Dutch Revolt against King Philip II of Spain (1568-1648) and he saluted earlier Dutch philologists, who had saved old texts in the vernacular from being destroyed:

I thank, with all this, many of them, who, amidst this war, cultivated literature and, sometimes, alternately employed sword and pen, to avail of the Fatherland. Remember DOUSA, Father and Son! Remember others!

Van Wijn’s commemoration of Janus Dousa senior and junior, two philologists from Leiden in the second half of the sixteenth century, is a telling example of the cultivation of a scholarly past in the modern era. In what follows, it will become clear that the professionalization of Dutch philology gained momentum at intersections like this, where the tradition of humanist philology in Leiden encountered revolutionary periods, bringing about new ideas on history, language and the nation all over Europe.

Such a broad scope needs some restrictions, so I will first explain what I will not do. This paper will not account for the many links that existed between Dutch philology and the study of classical and biblical texts, of early Christian and Eastern cultures and languages. Toon Van Hal has recently investigated these links for historical and comparative linguistics of some major late humanists in the Low Countries. He points out that most of these scholars also studied the vernacular, but this field of interest had no separate research infrastructure, debates or curricula. Thus, a restriction to the study of Dutch can be seen as an anachronistic choice, and as a result this article could be considered as a teleological history of the modern discipline of Dutch ‘lang and lit’. Yet, a second restriction could legitimize such a choice. From all processes of knowledge production on Dutch language and literature, I will focus on one single phase only, i.e. the phase of editions. More specifically, I will investigate the search for old

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2 Cf. Van Hal, Moedertalen en taalmoeders.
texts in the vernacular, the act of reprinting them and adding historical, linguistic or other editorial comments to them.

Thus, this article will focus on one specific scholarly activity only. This activity preceded the philological profession, and had a broader and earlier existence than is evident from the printing dates of historical-critical editions and literary histories, to name only the most prominent products of modern and professional philology. This approach allows for a more or less separate scholarly field to come into view, contradicting any teleological conjecture: editors throughout the decades did refer to predecessors and their work on the vernacular language and culture. In this way the object of study, old texts in Dutch vernacular, delineates a field of study and can therefore legitimize the above-mentioned first, seemingly ‘anachronistic’ restriction.

Moreover, a focus on the editorial activity has other advantages. Firstly, because it is not result-oriented, the temptation to judge earlier philological ideas according to today’s standards and knowledge is minimized. An interest in the history of scholarship needs to avoid any presentism. Secondly, the focus on a concrete scholarly activity can indicate how manifold the links were with other fields of study. Some of them became separate academic disciplines in the nineteenth century, but most of them kept the activity of studying, printing and annotating old texts in common. Thirdly, one who focuses on this preliminary stage of knowledge production will be able to catch the creation of philological facts. This approach will shed a new light on the very act of philology. For among all philologists, it is the editor who separates philology from its opposite: the loss of the smallest textual fragment into oblivion. Philology indeed can be defined as the arduous activity of saving and confirming important texts for future readers, exactly as Friedrich Nietzsche suggested in ‘A remark for philologists’ in 1882:

That some books are so valuable and so royal that whole generations of scholars are well employed if their labours to preserve these books in a state that is pure and intelligible – philology exists in order to fortify this faith again and again. [...] I mean that philology presupposes a noble faith – that for the sake of a very few human beings, who always ‘will come’ but are never there, a very large amount of fastidious and even dirty work needs to be done first: all of its work is work in usum Delphinorum.3

3 Nietzsche, The gay science, 157-158.
Following Nietzsche’s definition, a history of scholarly editions is indeed at the core of a history of philology.

In what follows, a short history of Dutch literary editions will be a *pars pro toto* for the history of Dutch philology before its professionalization.\(^4\) This history will start at the end, when a few young scholars who had proven their capacities with editions established Dutch philology as an academic profession in the 1840s. From there on, links to earlier work in the field of Dutch philology will be mapped. This historical account will then be broadened with an interpretative frame: two synthetic oeuvres of scholars writing on the history of European philology. Eventually, this frame will point at a crucial continuity in philological knowledge production, throughout its professionalization in the second half of the nineteenth century.

**Editors becoming academic and national philologists: Jonckbloet and De Vries**

Although Dutch philology became an academic discipline only in the second half of the nineteenth century, Dutch scholars had already been studying and editing old texts in the vernacular for several centuries, a tradition I trace below. First, a start will be made with – in presentist terms – the scholarly triumph of some young text editors, who established an academic and national discipline of Dutch philology between 1840 and 1853.

In 1797, the study of Dutch language and literature gained a foothold in academia, when Mattheüs Siegenbeek was appointed professor in Dutch language and rhetoric at Leiden University, followed by, among others, the appointments of Barthold Hendrik Lulofs at a similar chair in Groningen in 1815 and Adam Simons in Utrecht one year later, who was succeeded in 1834 by Lodewijk Gerard Visscher. Siegenbeek’s teaching was primarily oriented to practical rhetoric in Dutch, for it was aimed at the education of future clergymen. Yet, in one generation’s time, his field of study gained academic rights, as it emancipated from these practical aims. This process was twofold: young scholars emphasized the solid level of scholarship that Dutch literary studies had to reach, taking classical philology as an example and, at the same time, they emphasized the importance of their study for the nation-state being built, after the collapse of the Dutch Republic in 1795 and the unification of the former seven sovereign provinces into the

\(^4\) The cases presented here are selected from a broader history of Dutch editions: Rock, *Papieren monumenten*. 
kingdom of the Netherlands newly established in 1813. These academic and national goals were mutually constitutive. The major agents in this twofold process were two close friends: Willem Jozef Andreas Jonckbloet (1817-1885) and Matthias de Vries (1820-1892). They got acquainted as students at Leiden University, sharing an interest in old Dutch literature, as well as the ambition to obtain an academic gown. They succeeded through seven steps of innovation in Dutch philology, numbered below: they formulated new goals for Dutch philology, they made it possible to obtain a doctoral degree on a Dutch scholarly edition, they left on literary journeys, they opened up new fields of study, they created an exclusive institution for editors, they created a methodological debate, and eventually they were appointed professors in modern philological disciplines.

[1] – They started by clearing the forum and the debate on vernacular philology in the Netherlands by putting forward new goals for philological scholarship. Jonckbloet was especially influential, as he published brochures and journal articles full of comments and corrections, as eloquent as severe, on the work by some older philologists. Already in 1838, when he was only 21 years old and a student of medicine, he published anonymously *Iets over Ferguut* (‘Something about Ferguut’), a pamphlet criticizing the work of Lodewijk Gerard Visscher.\(^5\) Two years earlier Visscher, *professor ordinarius* in Dutch philology and history in Utrecht, had published an edition of the *Roman van Ferguut* (‘Romance of Fergus’), a thirteenth-century Arthurian romance.\(^6\) According to Jonckbloet, Visscher’s latest product represented the lethargic state into which philology in the Netherlands had fallen. This became clear when one contrasted Visscher’s edition to the work practiced abroad, especially in the German countries and in Belgium, the new kingdom in the south that had separated itself from the Netherlands only eight years earlier. Jonckbloet lamented over the state of philology at home by pointing to Visscher’s failures. He criticized the lack of variants in the edition, which would have been useful for drawing up a grammar of medieval Dutch in the future. He also disapproved of the glossary, its imperfect alphabetical order, its lacunae, and its errors. Lastly, Jonckbloet argued ‘that, as it occurs to me, a Romance like this one, which is also a primary source for the way of life etc. in the Middle Ages, would have been highly worthy of being elucidated here and there with some archaeological

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5 Jonckbloet, *Iets over Ferguut*.
6 Visscher, *Ferguut*. 
As an example for such future depictions of medieval life, Jonckbloet mentioned the *Mémoires sur l’ancienne chevalerie* (‘Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry’, 1781) by Jean-Baptiste de La Curne de Sainte-Palaye. This French historian had collected medieval manuscripts and was a member of the Paris Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles-Lettres. He had drawn up his *Mémoires* using chronicles and juridical documents, and indeed romances too, thus contributing to what Jonckbloet called ‘medieval archaeology’. In short, Jonckbloet demanded an impeccable apparatus with textual variants, lexicographical elucidations, and historical notes; and not only German and Belgian, but apparently also French philologists could teach lazy Dutch professors how to treat their medieval literature.

Though Jonckbloet published this brochure anonymously, it was the starting point of myriads of critical reviews he would publish later on. In this way, he instigated a scholarly pillar which in his eyes Dutch philology lacked, namely that of ‘the candour of critique’ – as the Belgian philologist Jan-Hendrik Bormans would remember it. Jonckbloet, and later De Vries too, would indeed practise a public and critical, sometimes even vehement, form of philological debate. But the brochure’s content can also be considered as a starting point for later developments, instigated by Jonckbloet and De Vries. The scheme of complaining about Dutch lethargy and seeking inspiration from abroad can be found in almost all of Jonckbloet’s texts, and it was adopted by De Vries. The threefold deficiency of Visscher’s editions would serve as a threefold goal for Dutch philology, which Jonckbloet and De Vries partially realized during their philological careers: (a) both made editions with a critical apparatus, which included variants or collations and sometimes even met the new German historical-critical standards; (b) De Vries started the production of major Dutch dictionaries successfully, and (c) Jonckbloet practised the history of national literature and mentalities from the era of chivalric literature onwards. In short, Jonckbloet’s critical review of *Ferguut* is not only evidence of his youthful impatient personality, but it was also an innovation in itself, as he turned the philological debate in a new direction, and it was a programmatic exposition.

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7 ‘dat, naar mij voorkomt, een Roman als deze, die mede eene eerste bron is voor de levenswijze enz. der middeneeuwen, wel waardig was geweest om hier en daar met eenige oudheidkundige aantekeningen opgehelderd te worden’. (Jonckbloet, *Iets over Ferguut*, p. 4).
9 ‘de vrijmoedigheid van de critiek’ (Bormans, cited in Moltzer’s ‘Levensbericht Jonckbloet’, p. 13).
Jonckbloet was the first to attain a doctoral degree on a Dutch scholarly edition: in 1840, he published Lodewijk van Veltham's continuation of the *Spiegel historiael* (‘Mirror of History’), a history of the world and the Low Countries initiated by Jacob van Maerlant around 1300. Jonckbloet defended this *Specimen e literis Neerlandicis* (‘Proof from Dutch literature’) publicly before a jury presided by Siegenbeek.10

Jonckbloet almost literally chased the foreign examples with which he had criticized Visscher: in 1842 he embarked on a literary journey through the German countries. ‘Hopefully I left the fatherland’, he reported in the cultural journal *De Gids* (‘The Guide’), ‘and I returned more than satisfied’.11 The immediate cause for his trip was the edition of some fragments of the *Brabantse Yeesten* (‘History of Brabant’), a medieval chronicle of the dukes of Brabant, of which fragments were published in 1841 in the *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum* (‘Journal of German Antiquity’) by Theodor von Karajan, a Macedonian philosopher who worked as a philologist at the Imperial and Royal Court Library in Vienna. Jonckbloet visited this Viennese collection, as well as many others: in the Prussian capital Berlin; in university cities like Jena, Göttingen, Gressen, and Kassel; in other major cities like Dresden, München, and Frankfurt. In all of these places, he undertook a personal investigation in loco into old Dutch literature (e.g. he consulted the Comburg manuscript in Stuttgart). Further, he

fiery wished to establish personal relations with the men from Germany, whose genius and unwearied zeal were capable of raising that Learning, the study of which is dignified above all to me, – and, could it be, remains the purpose of my life, – to an equal level with the one classical Literature is on.12

Indeed, he met famous scholars like Eduard Kausler and Franz Josef Mone, and he received some communications from August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Jacob Grimm. This literary journey confirmed Jonckbloet’s admiration for the philological practice in the German countries, not only because of the Dutch literary fragments which he found accessible, but also

10 Jonckbloet, *Specimen e literis Neerlandicis*.
12 ‘wenschte ik vurig de persoonlijke kennis aan te knoopen met de mannen van Duitschland, wier genie en onvermoeide ijver die Wetenschap, wier studie mij boven alles waardig is, – en, kan het zijn, het doel mijns levens blijft, – vermogen op te voeren tot eene hoogte, gelijk aan die, waarop de klassieke Letterkunde staat’. (Ibidem, p. 574).
because the helpfulness of German scholars. All of that contrasted with the situation in the Netherlands – at least, Jonckbloet founded his rhetorical scheme in this way. In 1852, De Vries, too, undertook a trip to Germany, in his case to consult Grimm on his plans for a general dictionary, after they had met in 1846 at the famous Congress in Frankfurt.\textsuperscript{13} Both De Vries and Jonckbloet learned from the German philologists with regard to the organization of philological research in accessible libraries and ambitious lexicographical projects.

[4] – Germany did not only supply examples for a better scholarly organization, but also for a new field of study. This was another innovation that Jonckbloet already had announced in his brochure of 1838. During his German trip of 1842, he was confirmed in his opinion that the most interesting part of literary history was that of chivalry. Romances had to be studied and not only chronicles of medieval principalities (like the Brabantsche Yeesten and Melis Stoke’s chronicle on the county of Holland), or didactic poems (like those by Maerlant). The German philologists had not only resuscitated their Dutch confrères, but, according to Jonckbloet’s account of his journey, they had also broadened their historical horizon:

So, presently a great revolution took place in the consideration of our Historia Litteraria. For previously, MAERLANT was for each and all the father of the Dutch poets, in the strictest sense of the word; and who would have dared to claim that if anything, the decline of our Literature dates from him? At present, it is certain that our Literature was already blossoming in a high degree long before his didactical School, and that the time has arrived to trace the remnants of the Poems from that age, when romanticism still exclusively held sway over the knightly era, of which it was the characteristic expression; when the third estate, gradually rising in its esteem, had not yet exercised that influence on Literature, which indeed gave it a more practical direction, but also clipped the Singers’ poetical wick.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Van Driel & Noordegraaf, De Vries en Te Winkel, pp. 60, 97-98.
\textsuperscript{14} ‘Weldra had er dan ook eene groote omwenteling plaats in de beschouwing van onze Historia Litteraria. Vroeger immers was MAERLANT voor eene iegelijk de vader der dietscer dichter, in den strengsten zin des woords; en wie had toen durven beweren, dat van hem in tegendeel het verval onzer Letterkunde dagteekent? Thans staat het vast, dat lang vóór zijne didactische School, onze Letterkunde eenen hoogten trap van bloei bereikt had, en dat de tijd geboren is, om de overblijfsels op te sporen der Gedichten van dat tijdperk, toen het romantisme nog bij uitsluiting den schepter zwaaide over der ridderlijke eeuw, waarvan het de karakteristieke uitdrukking was; toen de langzamerhand in aanzien toenemende derde stand nog niet dien
In no uncertain terms, Jonckbloet betrayed Maerlant. Maerlant had written his didactic works for a new bourgeois audience in the blossoming mercantile towns in the late twelfth century, and it was there, in Jonckbloet’s view, that the decay of Dutch literature had started. Real poetic genius could only be found in older epic poems, in which suits of armour and liege lords figured, together with noble kings.

[5] – A year after Jonckbloet’s literary journey, the innovations in philological debate, organization, and subject of study gave shape to an institution hitherto unknown. In 1843, an exclusive society for editors of old vernacular texts was founded: the ‘Vereeniging ter bevordering der oude Nederlandsche letterkunde’. The Vereeniging was small. Apart from Jonckbloet, already holding the title of doctor, its members were a preacher and three students in classical philology in Utrecht and Leiden (among them De Vries). All were born between 1817 and 1821. Only P.J. Vermeulen, one of the initiators and an employee of the Utrecht provincial archive, was some ten years older. This generation, inspired by the ‘Literarischer Verein zur Herausgabe älterer Druck- und Handschriften’ in Stuttgart, created their own formalized international forum for Dutch philology. Their aims were realized in the first place in a journal, Verslagen en berigten (‘Reports and communications’), which was published from 1844 onwards. There, they discussed their own and others’ publications, and newly discovered literary fragments, which – of course – were often found in Dutch private collections, but also in German libraries, the British Museum in London or the Bodleian Library in Oxford. As proof of the progress made, some of these fragments were edited or collated in the journal. The Verslagen en berigten had a truly international reach: the list of subscribers not only mentions Dutch prominent men, students and institutions, but also libraries in Brussels, Berlin, Göttingen, and Tübingen. Other subscribers were the Institut française in Paris, and Belgian and German philologists, such as Jan Frans Willems, Jan Hendrik Bormans, Jan Baptist David, Julius Zacher, and Jacob Grimm. Next to their journal, the members of the Vereeniging set up a series of publications of their own, resulting in six editions published in seventeen volumes over four years. Each of these editions included, in addition to a diplomatic copy of the text, an introduction, a list...
of variants, and a glossary – exactly as Jonckbloet had required in 1838. So, the Vereeniging realized more than one of Jonckbloet’s ideals: it can be seen as an international research community, which succeeded in producing new philological knowledge, and debating it publically.

[6] – A sixth and last innovation was one pursued by Jonckbloet alone: editing literature on chivalry. In the first year of the Vereeniging’s existence Jonckbloet published a manuscript he had found in Giessen during his German journey, containing the Roman der Lorreinen from the romance cycle of Charlemagne;17 and later he edited the Roman van Walewein (‘Romance of Gawain’), from the Arthurian cycle.18 At the same time, when he edited a medieval collection of aphorisms by Cato, Jonckbloet was the only one to attempt a critical method, according to German practices. He compared two copies of the text, one from the Comburg manuscript and a fifteenth-century printed version, found both ‘highly defective and incomplete’,19 relinquished a diplomatic edition, and chose a critical method instead, attempting to reconstruct the original, yet unknown version of the text. He rearranged the aphorisms and introduced ‘grammatical and rhythmical improvements’, which interventions he accounted for in the footnotes.20 Jonckbloet was convinced of the usefulness of this method for Dutch philology, given the corpus of medieval literature that now was accessible and readable. He thought it would constitute a new school in Dutch philology, relegating diplomatic editions to the past:

I took a step beyond the old school with this proof of criticism: I actively tried to demonstrate that it is also possible for us and not as dangerous as purported. May I thus have broken the ice, and may it soon be generally acknowledged that what is possible, becomes a holy duty as well.21

Though Jonckbloet coupled his methodological innovation with a distinct moral appeal, he did not convince his fellow members of the Vereeniging. His critical edition was not included in its series, and Jonckbloet started to publish outside the Vereeniging’s channels. These and other methodological

17 Jonckbloet, Roman van Karel den Grooten.
18 Jonckbloet, Roman van Walewein.
19 ‘hoogstgebrekkig en onvolledig’. (Jonckbloet, Die Dietsce Catoen, p. ix).
20 ‘grammatische en rhytmische verbeteringen’ (Ibidem, p. x).
21 ‘ik heb een stap buiten de oude school gedaan met deze proeve van kritiek: ik heb getracht metterdaad te bewijzen, dat het ook bij ons mogelijk is en niet zoo gevaarlijk als men voorgeeft. Mogt ik daarmede het ijs gebroken hebben, en mogt men weldra algemeen inzien dat hetgeen mogelijk is, een heilige pligt wordt’. (Ibidem, xiv).
and intrinsic controversies, spiced with some envy, lead to the Vereeniging’s dissolution in 1848.²²

Throughout the rise and fall of this society however, major novelties in Dutch philology were established: it now was part of an international scholarly community, which had its own research objects, was accessible in institutions, and had an adopted methodology, with scholarly debates within its own channels. Indeed, even divergent opinions meant a step towards the creation of an autonomous academic discipline.

[7] – Eventually, not long after the Vereeniging’s split, Jonckbloet and De Vries entered academia, to gain the disciplinary trophy. From 1848 onwards, they obtained different university chairs, enabling the first to further put his philological ideals into practice, and the latter to build up a modern Dutch lexicography. In 1848, Jonckbloet was appointed professor in Deventer, one year later De Vries became the successor of Lulofs in Groningen. In 1853, De Vries moved back to Leiden, to succeed Siegenbeek and to make place for Jonckbloet.

It was in Leiden that De Vries made major progress. Between 1858 and 1864, he edited the full Spiegel historiael, not only the parts by Van Velthem as Jonckbloet had done in his dissertation. He did so together with Eelco Verwijs, one of his first pupils. Besides that, De Vries made a start with a lexicographical production, again together with Verwijs and with Jakob Verdam. In 1864, the first issues of both his Middelnederlandsch woordenboek (‘Middle Dutch dictionary’) and the Algemeen Nederlandsch woordenboek (‘General Dutch dictionary’, later to be called Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal, ‘Dictionary of the Dutch language’) appeared, though the first plans for both dated back to before 1850. The Middelnederlandsch woordenboek was in the most literal sense a work of philology following the editorial phase. De Vries used the glossary of his own edition of Der leeken spiegel (‘The Layman’s Mirror’, published during the years 1844-1848 as part of the Vereeniging’s series) as a base and completed it using the glossaries of other editions. De Vries only did so after critical linguistic study, on which he reported from 1856 onwards in his Proeve van Middelnederlandsche taalzuivering (‘Proof of Middle Dutch purism’).²³ Whereas this dictionary was aimed mainly at a scholarly public, the Algemeen Nederlandsch woordenboek explicitly intended to serve the people and its language – in short: the nation. De Vries planned to make lemmas for all Dutch words that had existed since 1637, the year of the first issue of the Dutch ‘Staten Bijbel’.

²² Mathijsen, ‘Stages in the development of Dutch literary historicism’.
He arranged these lemmas etymologically and added exemplary sentences from the most acclaimed literary authors, both classical and modern. This historical-lexicographical plan had an unmistakable nationalistic aim: De Vries wanted to present the Dutch language at its best, and hoped by doing so, to improve the use of the language in his own days. The scholarly product had to be a source ‘from which the whole nation can refresh itself at the living stream of language’. The Dutch language was, as De Vries formulated it in his inaugural address of 1853, the ‘reflection of our native character, the identifying mark of our existence as a people, the bond and pledge of our nationality’. This national idea legitimizing lexicographical work was formulated even more emphatically in the dictionary’s maxim, citing the Frisian philologist J.H. Halbertsma: ‘The language is the soul of the nation, it is the nation itself’.

Jonckbloet, for his part, stayed on the path he had indicated in 1838. Shortly after his first appointment, he published an extended study on Middle Dutch prosodies, being at the same time a critique of Bormans, his Liège colleague. After that he worked on two major Dutch literary histories: from 1851 onwards, he published a study of medieval Dutch literature (of course focusing on the chivalry period), and from 1868 onwards, he issued a general Dutch literary history. In both works he described the evolution of a Dutch national soul, as it expressed itself primarily in its literary products. Jonckbloet’s subject of study was not intrinsically literary, but primarily national. In the meantime, he kept making notes for a history of daily life of the Dutch nation in the Middle Ages. But on this topic he never published anything; this part of his programme remained unfulfilled for the rest of his life. When in 1860, De Vries’s chair in Leiden was split up between Dutch literature and national history, it was not Jonckbloet who was appointed, but Robert Fruin. The latter introduced a positivistic research programme, and did not participate in Jonckbloet’s scholarly search for a national soul.
De Vries kept the literary half of his chair, and the lexicographic ‘school’ he had established would be regarded highly for a long time afterwards.\textsuperscript{31}

Notwithstanding these partial results, it is evident that Jonckbloet and De Vries introduced more than one novelty in Dutch philology, even to the extent that they can be seen as the instigators of new disciplines, in which academic and national goals were combined. Jonckbloet saw his appointment in 1848 indeed as the beginning of real academic scholarship, separating the future from the work done before by ‘dilettanti’.\textsuperscript{32} In a similar way, De Vries exposed in his inaugural address in 1856, his historical-lexicographic views as distinct from earlier work on rhetoric, carried out by his teacher Siegenbeek. Of course, there had been philological professors before them, mainly in the fields of Dutch rhetoric and history, but they were the first to attain a doctoral degree on a scholarly edition of a text in the vernacular (Jonckbloet), or to occupy a chair for Dutch literature, separated from national history (De Vries). Jonckbloet and De Vries supplemented these formal academic innovations with an organization (the Vereeniging), fields of study (the literature on chivalry and lexicography), and methods (the critical edition and standardized lexicography) of their own – or not really of their own, as they were inspired by developments abroad, in the first place in the German countries.

**Philological traditions in the Netherlands: a. The Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde and the Koninklijk Instituut**

The mere fact that it was possible for Jonckbloet to base his philological views on criticized practices, proves that neither he, nor De Vries, invented Dutch philology. There was no \textit{creatio ex nihilo}. An important philological tradition already existed, with innovations of its own, and even with later highly acclaimed contacts abroad.

Already about seventy years before Jonckbloet’s first critical brochure, a society was founded in Leiden to practise history, linguistics, and literature: the ‘Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde’. In 1766, it emanated from an informal student club at the city’s university. Although the Maatschappij saw many difficulties in the first period of its existence, this society was the most important philological forum before 1780. The Maatschappij held annual meetings and although they were increasingly...
well attended, the proceedings were published, together with a series of philological treatises. Furthermore, in 1769, the Maatschappij made innovative plans for an explanatory dictionary of the Dutch language. This became its main objective for decades and many members contributed to this project, by sending in definitions on standardized file cards.\textsuperscript{33} The dictionary as such was never published, nevertheless the collaborative work served others well. Nicolaas Hinlópen based his own dictionary on it, and the file cards were also put at the disposal of Jacob Arnout Clignett and Jan Steenwinkel, two members of the Maatschappij who worked on an edition of Maerlant’s \textit{Spiegel historiael}. A first volume of this edition was published in 1784.\textsuperscript{34}

The Maatschappij was also important because of its library, which grew – thanks to donations, legacies and purchase – into one of the main book collections and a workshop for philologists.\textsuperscript{35} The collection bequeathed by Zacharias Hendrik Alewijn, one of the Maatschappij’s founders, was of major importance, since it made one manuscript in particular accessible to scholars, containing the text of \textit{Esopet}, \textit{Ferguut}, and the \textit{Roman van Walewein}.\textsuperscript{36} These three texts played the primary role in the development of Dutch philology in the nineteenth century, firstly because in 1819 \textit{Esopet}, a medieval adaptation of Aesop’s fables, would be the first piece of medieval fiction in Dutch to be edited (by Clignett) for scholarly purposes and in a separate volume, instead of only in a journal article or in a chapbook as a popular tale. Secondly, Visscher’s 1838-edition of \textit{Ferguut} provoked Jonckbloet to herald a new era in Dutch philology, and thirdly \textit{Walewein} would be one of the romances Jonckbloet himself would edit. Even before that, the Maatschappij’s library was consulted by Hoffmann von Fallersleben.\textsuperscript{37} Such international visitors in its library, and the fact that manuscripts left private circuits for (semi-)publicly accessible deposits, as well as the collective work on a dictionary; all proves that major innovations were already made before the generation of Jonckbloet and De Vries.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{34} Clignett & Steenwinkel, \textit{Spiegel historiael}, vol. 1, p. lxxi.
\textsuperscript{35} Bisschop, ‘Korte geschiedenis der bibliotheek’; Rijnbach, ‘De bibliotheek van de Maatschappij’; De Groot, ‘De bibliotheek van de Maatschappij’ (1966a&b); Van Gent, ‘Daer gestaâg bijkomt, en niet afgaat’.
\textsuperscript{36} Bouwman, ‘Het legaat-Alewijn’.
\textsuperscript{37} Brinkman, ‘Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Dutch Medieval Folksong’.
\textsuperscript{38} cf. Rock, ‘Gewonnen perkament, gewaarborgde kennis’.
While during the revolutionary era around 1800 the Maatschappij had to cope with hard times, similar philological activities were undertaken in another scholarly institution, the ‘Hollandsch Instituut’ (later ‘Koninklijk Instituut’). It was founded in 1808 by Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland from 1806 to 1810, and it survived the restoration of the Oranges in 1813. A major player in this institute’s philological ‘Second Class’, at least until 1816, was Willem Bilderdijk (1756-1831), its president and secretary. Relentlessly, Bilderdijk presented to his fellow members new philological plans, which reflected the collective character of the projects undertaken earlier by the Leiden Maatschappij. The subjects were similar too: Bilderdijk proposed to work on a general Dutch dictionary, on studies of the state of Dutch theatre, the history of the Dutch language, and on orthography. Although little of these plans was actually realized, some derivate products were published, such as explanatory dictionaries on individual authors. Bilderdijk’s own edition of P.C. Hooft’s poems, for example, was accompanied by an explanatory dictionary, published by the Second Class. Besides its plans and publications, the Institute’s library – this too comparable to those of the Maatschappij’s – benefitted greatly from Bilderdijk’s untamed activity. He succeeded in acquiring several medieval manuscripts, sometimes with texts by Maerlant. Through the mediation of Hendrik Willem Tydeman, Bilderdijk also obtained information on the Comburg manuscript by Jacob Grimm. All these achievements enabled Bilderdijk (in the name of the Koninklijk Instituut) to hijack the Maatschappij’s most successful project: the edition of Maerlant’s *Spiegel historiael*, of which still only the first two volumes were published. Steenwinkel, one of the initial editors, had continued to work without Clignett after the political revolutions, and when he died, the manuscript and his notes were acquired by Bilderdijk for the Institute’s library. Together with David Jacob van Lennep and with a grant from the King, Bilderdijk published a third volume of the *Spiegel historiael* in 1813.

So, several of the innovations that Jonckbloet and De Vries initiated, were already more or less tested by the Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde in Leiden and the Koninklijk Instituut in Amsterdam. Both learned societies worked on Maerlant’s *Spiegel historiael*; both explored institutional and methodological innovations, like standardized collaborative

40 Ibidem, pp. 143-145; Van Berkel, *De stem van de wetenschap*, pp. 67, 82-83.
43 Steenwinkel, *Spiegel historiael of Rijmkronijk*. 
work on a dictionary or editions; they made old texts accessible in their libraries; and had contacts abroad, for instance with Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Grimm. Bilderdijk even edited a piece of chivalric literature, a fragment of *The Four Sons of Aymon*.44 The Maatschappij and the Instituut are two examples of the institutionalized scholarly societies that came into being in the Netherlands from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards. Like other societies, they combined scholarship and science with concern about a supposed decay of the Dutch Republic.45

### Philological traditions in the Netherlands: b. Antiquarian philology in Leiden from 1591 onwards

As I have shown, the national and academic Dutch philology established in the 1840s was preceded by plans and publications from philologists at the Maatschappij and the Koninklijk Instituut. But, as can be expected, these philologists had their predecessors too.

To trace an apparently even older philological tradition back, I will discuss the subsequent editions of one text in particular. Whereas editions of the *Spiegel historiael* were indicative for the philological work after 1766, editions of a chronicle by Melis Stoke do the same for the earlier period. Stoke was a thirteenth-century monk of the monastery in Egmond and recorded the illustrious achievements of the counts of Holland. His chronicle was the oldest source for students of the Dutch language in its oldest-known form, and for students of the history of Holland, who had special interest in episodes like the feudal founding of the county, or the assault on count Floris V, partially because of the constitutional implications for the later Dutch Republic.

The chronicle was printed for the first time in 1591 by Barent Adriaensz in Amsterdam. It was edited by Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel, a merchant and poet from the same city. This is the very first edition of a Dutch narrative text, and thus the starting point of Dutch philology. It was initiated by the owner of the manuscript, Janus Dousa (1545-1626), who played a central role in both the political and scholarly history of the Dutch Republic. Dousa was a nobleman, engaged in diplomatic missions during the Dutch Revolt, and one of the envoys offering queen Elisabeth of England the sovereignty over

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44 Bilderdijk, ‘Fragmenten’.

45 Van Berkel, *De stem van de wetenschap*; Johannes, *De lof der aalbessen*; Mijnhardt, *Tot heil van ’t menschdom*. 
the Dutch provinces. He also was a military leader during the occupation of Leiden by Spanish troops. As a reward for this, he became one of the curators of the newly established Leiden University in 1575. After that, he started practising philology: he made editions of and commented on works by Sallustius, Horatius, and other classical authors. From 1585 on, he was the university’s first librarian and the official historiographer of the provincial states of Holland and Zeeland. In Leiden, Dousa formed a Collegium poeticum, a circle of friends that discussed Latin and Dutch poetry and that included also the classical philologist Justus Lipsius and Jan van Hout (also known as Janus Hautenus), the city secretary and a poet renowned for his use of the Dutch language.46

In 1591, Dousa instigated the edition of Stoke’s chronicle. By doing so, he not only introduced the scholarly genre of the edition in Dutch philology, but also the editor as a scholarly agent. He did so explicitly, and in rhyme, in a panegyric introduction to Spiegel’s work. He praised the editor and the benefaction he had conferred to Stoke’s chronicle by printing it, ‘not without pain and costs’.47 The benefactions of the printing press mattered greatly for this chronicle of a then anonymous monk:

> Until now with no hope of having been printed,  
> If it were without you, who now has raised him first  
> From night and sleep, and makes [him] see the light of heaven,  
> Not without costs and troubles.48

Dousa once more stressed the editor’s financial and intellectual efforts, but also the high reward: Spiegel saved the author from night and sleep and brought him to light. Already in the first edition, the philologist’s work was discussed in metaphorical terms of night and day, later on to be intensified in many editions to metaphors of death, dust and oblivion versus light, life, and revival. Thus, Dousa created the editor, both in practice and in discourse, as an agent in the tradition of Dutch texts. This was undeniably a fundamental innovation in Dutch philology.

In 1663, a single page of the same chronicle was printed, revealing the author’s name. It supplemented another Holland chronicle, edited by Petrus

46 Heesakkers, ‘Twee Leidse boezemvrienden’.  
48 ‘[..] Tot noch toe sonder hoop in druck te syn gebracht, // Twair sonder u geweest, die hem nu van der nacht // En slaep eerst hebt ontweckt, en s’hemels licht doen scouwen, // Niet sonder cost en moeyt. [..]’ Ibidem, fol. iij/3v.
Scriverius, a late humanist philologist studying the history of Holland at Leiden University.49 He did so by using methods from classical philology, after being educated in this discipline by the renowned Josephus Justus Scaliger. Scriverius was familiar with Roman inscriptions, and started later in life with reading old Dutch chronicles.50 In 1699, the chronicle of Melis Stoke was published again, this time by the antiquarian Cornelis van Alkemade (1654-1737). He compared three versions of the chronicle, added an introduction to discuss questions such as the tradition of the text, its sources and its authorship, and he included some complementary chronicles, legal documents and historical songs regarding the episode of the murder of count Floris V. In all this, Van Alkemade's edition met many of the standards that Jonckbloet would later impose. For instance the engravings that Van Alkemade included, depicting the subsequent counts after paintings in the Harlem town hall, are remarkable witnesses of non-textual historical artefacts.51

In the philological practice of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century learned societies and academia, however, Stoke’s text was best known in the edition made in 1772 by Balthasar Huydecoper (1695-1778). He published it at the end of his life, and added many, mainly linguistic notes to the text.52 Huydecoper had practised philology for a long time, apart from being a classicistic theatre author and a regent on the isle of Texel. He edited the correspondence of Hooft and a book of edicts from the history of his island.53 Most influential however was his Proeve van taal- en dichtkunde (‘Proof of Linguistics and Poetics’), which was published in 1730 and was reprinted several times.54 In this linguistic treatise Huydecoper discussed the language of the seventeenth-century Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel, especially his translation of Ovid’s Metamorphoses (‘Transformations’). In his commentaries, Huydecoper made Vondel into an example for his own time, as many Dutch linguists did during the eighteenth century.55 Huydecoper however broadened his view throughout his life, and in later editions of his Proeve he included some medieval texts. He came to

49 Scriverius, Het oude Goutsche chronycxken, pp. 251-252.
51 Van Alkemade, Hollandse jaar-boeken of rijm-kronijk van Melis Stoke.
52 Huydecoper, Rijmkronijk van Melis Stoke.
53 Huydecoper, Brieven van Hooft; idem, Privilegien en handvesten der stede en des eilands van Texel.
54 Huydecoper, Proeve van taal- en dichtkunde; Huydecoper, Proeve van taal- en dichtkunde (2nd ed.).
55 Rutten, ‘Vondels “volkomen voorbeeldt”’. 
appreciate not only Vondel, but also authors from a more remote past, especially because of the – in his eyes – unspoiled character of their language. This resulted eventually in his edition of Melis Stoke, which was, according to Burgers (a present-day editor of Stoke), ‘the first modern scholarly edition of a Middle Dutch text’ and ‘the foundation of Dutch philology’.

The sequence of editions of Stoke’s chronicle, however, demonstrates that the very idea of a Dutch edition, as well as the editor himself, and in a way Dutch vernacular philology (following Nietzsche’s definition), were brought forth in Leiden academic circles already in 1591; in the convergence of war, politics, classical scholarship and vernacular poetry, personified by Dousa, Lipsius and Van Hout. Every time this convergence occurred afterwards, editions of old texts were produced, until the nationalist and academic times of Jonckbloet and De Vries.

Forgeries, philological criticism, and material proof

To the creation of philological knowledge, from Dousa till Jonckbloet and De Vries, there was of course a drawback: editors could publish forged texts and philological criticism could fail. The game of forgeries and philological criticism became most acute in an episode in which the mentioned Van Alkemade played a major role. Throughout the eighteenth century a forged chronicle of the history of Holland, attributed to a monk called Klaas Kolijn, was studied by Dutch philologists. It was Van Alkemade who around 1700 received a copy of this manuscript. Many scholars were interested and several copies circulated, since this text was complementary to Stoke’s. The text was cited in several historical and linguistic works, and was edited by Gerard van Loon in 1745. However, some scholars started to doubt its antiquity. It took about three quarters of a century for such criticism to be heard, when Huydecoper and Jan Wagenaar, both early members of the Maatschappij, expressed their objections. The first voiced linguistic criticism of Kolijn in his 1772 edition of Stoke; the latter added the disclosure of anachronisms and other historical impossibilities. He did so in 1777, in

56 Buijnsters, ‘Kennis van en waardering voor Middelnederlandse literatuur’; Miltenburg, Naar de gesteldheid dier tyden.
58 Van Loon, Rymchronyk.
a treatise that was published by the Maatschappij. In his final argument, Wagenaar lay bare the ultimate base for certain knowledge in philology:

One now has to add to this, finally, that it was not found that anyone ever declared to have seen an old Manuscript of Kolijn’s *Rymchronyke*. By an old Manuscript I do not understand a manuscript from the twelfth century, the time in which Kolijn would have written; but, at least, a Manuscript from the fifteenth, or sixteenth, or even from the beginning of the seventeenth century. And it is not known to me that anyone ever said to have seen such a manuscript.\(^59\)

Besides linguistic and historical arguments, the mere presence of an old manuscript, in order to attest the antiquity of the text it contained, appears to be a valuable epistemological requirement at the end of the eighteenth century. Wagenaar restated an early, antiquarian longing for hard to forge and tangible signs of antiquity.\(^60\)

This antiquarian longing lived on throughout the philological societies in the Netherlands and the nineteenth-century establishment of national and academic Dutch philology. The libraries of both the Maatschappij in Leiden and the Koninklijk Instituut in Amsterdam were at times considered as deposits for parchment evidence. This was for example the argument for Joannes Clarrise in 1818, when he bequeathed some fragments of Maerlant’s *Spiegel historiael* to the Maatschappij, in order to make his collation of the fragments verifiable:

The readers can safely rely on the faithfulness of the comparison, and if need be assure themselves of it, as the above-mentioned Maatschappij has done me the honour of accepting and depositing the *Fragments* for safekeeping with its books.\(^61\)

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\(^{59}\) ‘Men voege hier nu nog, eindelyk, by, dat niet blykt, dat iemant ooit verklaard heeft een oud Handschrift van Kolyns Rymchronyke gezien te hebben. Door een oud Handschrift, versta ik geen handschrift van de twaalfde eeuwe, den tyd, waarin Kolyn zou geschreven hebben; maar, ten minsten, een Handschrift van de vyftiende, of zestiende, of zelfs van ’t begin der zeventiende eeuwe. En my is niet bekend, dat iemant ooit gezeid heeft, zulk een handschrift te hebben gezien’. (Wagenaar, ‘Toets van de egtheid der rymchronyke’, p. 230).

\(^{60}\) More elaborate and with further bibliographical references, in Rock, ‘De ezel’.

Bilderdijk attributed a similar function to the library of his Instituut, and considered literary fragments that were not available there, or in another Dutch library, as invaluable for Dutch philological knowledge production, even when its existence was attested by the most prominent philologists abroad. Concerning a fragment of a Dutch translation of the *Roman de la rose* (‘Romance of the Rose’), he wrote to Jan Frans Willems that ‘the fragment, [though] available in the collection of the Brothers Grimm from Kassel, has to be considered lost for the Dutch language and our country’.62

In their Vereeniging, the young philologists invariably feared forgeries. In their first publication in 1844, they defended the choice for editions as their main activity. They claimed that only good editions would lead to ascertained knowledge:

> How could one ever reach a right appreciation of our present-day language and linguistic conceptions, if we do not know the ground on which both are built, and it therefore becomes easy for every impudent or audacious person to blind the mob with the appearances of scholarly pieces? The eighteenth century with the monster of the pseudo-KOLIJN can attest to that.63

Even so, in the full edition of the *Spiegel historiael* – the main product of young academic philology – De Vries and Verwijs referred to philological forgery. For them, it was the reason not yet to pass onto the German critical method for editions, which prescribed that a text should be normalized in spelling, grammar and prosody. De Vries and Verwijs doubted that Dutch philology had developed enough in order to do so. Normalization according to a system drawn up by a modern philologist would therefore always contain some ‘arbitrariness’, and ‘moreover, the uniformity obtained in that way, systematic and seemingly strictly scientific as it may be, is always to a certain extent a bare fiction’.64 This fear of arbitrariness and fiction in

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64 ‘willekeur’, ‘[d]e eenparigheid daarenboven, op die wijze kunstmatig verkregen, hoe systematisch ook en schijnbaar streng wetenschappelijk, is altijd tot eene zekere hoogte eene bloote fictie’. (De Vries & Verwijs, *Van Maerlant’s Spiegel historiael*, xciii).
critical editions lasted until the 1880s, when the historical-critical method developed by the German Karl Lachmann was adopted for the first time in Dutch philology.65

Literary historicism and the history of philology in Europe and the Netherlands

What does this short history of Dutch philology from the beginnings until ca. 1860 mean? Why is it useful to trace the nationalist and academic growth of the discipline from around 1800 onwards back to longer traditions? Both faces of the history of Dutch philology are part of larger, European evolutions. How they fit in has been explained by two authors in particular: the Amsterdam comparatist Joep Leerssen and the Anglo-Saxon historian of scholarship Anthony Grafton. Their work will be discussed here shortly in order to give the above historical sketch more depth.

Firstly, it is evident that the philological work done at the Maatschappij, the Koninklijk Instituut and by Jonckbloet, De Vries, and their contemporaries fits neatly in what Leerssen has called ‘literary historicism’ and ‘the cultivation of culture’.66 These two closely related ways of thinking about past culture and modern nations, occurred all over Europe from 1760 onwards. ‘Literary historicism’ refers to a previously not existing interest in the eldest stages of vernacular culture, especially epic literature, which was forgotten since ‘the Republic of Letters suffered from wholesale amnesia as regards any vernacular, non-classical texts predating Dante’.67 Dante was only one of the authors in a universal canon in vigour, together with Homer, Voltaire, and others. The new interest in vernacular epic literature first took shape in the recreation of epic poetry, in the wake of Thomas Macpherson’s publication of the supposedly ancient Scottish poetry by Ossian, starting in 1760.68 Doubts about its authenticity soon gave a boost to different philologies of European vernaculars.

Leerssen does recognize the older roots of such philology, like seventeenth-century anthropology, eighteenth-century patriotism or the work by Giambattista Vico, all of which contributed in the understanding of Europe

66 Leerssen, ‘Literary Historicism’; Leerssen, ‘Nationalism and the cultivation of culture’.
68 Ibidem.
in terms of differences between regions and countries, as expressed by the people in their own culture.\textsuperscript{69} Yet, he stresses a determining new set of ideas that was introduced in about 1805-1815 by the Bökendorfer Kring, consisting of the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Friedrich Carl von Savigny, and Clemens Brentano, among others.\textsuperscript{70} These men for the first time studied European cultural diversity through its earliest manifestations in language and literature, and in terms of historical evolution and changeability. They thus gave a scholarly interpretation of the ideas of Johann Gottfried von Herder, who considered the people as the collective creative force behind national cultures. On the other hand, this new philology was practised on an equally new, growing factual base: a search for forgotten folk tales and other remains of national literature was undertaken in libraries and in open air, thus establishing new empirical standards for cultural scholarship. The result of these new ideas on ancient culture, the people, the nation, and scholarship was a splitting up of the universal and timeless canon, into different literatures for each nation, with each its own history. Thinking about literature now became manifold, national, and historical all over Europe. In Leerssen's own words: a 'national-historical diversification of the concept of literature' occurred, which was the core innovation of literary historicism.\textsuperscript{71} However, there was one cenacle in Böckendorf at the centre of a Europe-wide network of like-minded vernacular philologists. Their ideas about vernacular culture and its history were similar, and although personal contacts between them can be traced, this new literary historicism resulted in scholarly and cultural rivalry among the now literary and historically differing nations. At times this rivalry was used even in political and military confrontations.\textsuperscript{72}

While Leerssen's work can serve to frame the nationalist and scholarly evolutions of Dutch philology, Grafton's study of the history of scholarship helps to contextualize the discipline's longer traditions. His work was initially focused on the French humanist scholar Josephus Justus Scaliger (1540-1609), of whom Grafton published an intellectual biography and a bibliography.\textsuperscript{73} Scaliger became his guide through the history of humanist scholarship and of the humanities in general, studying both still existing disciplines, such as architectural theory or historiography, and forgotten

\textsuperscript{69} Leerssen, \textit{National thought in Europe}, pp. 25-92.
\textsuperscript{70} Leerssen, 'The rise of philology', 27-30.
\textsuperscript{71} Leerssen, 'Ossian and the rise of literary historicism', p. 125.
\textsuperscript{72} e.g. Leerssen, \textit{Bronnen van het vaderland}.
\textsuperscript{73} Grafton, \textit{Joseph Scaliger}.
ones, like astrology and chronology. In all these cases, Grafton focuses on historical continuities in concrete phenomena which establish knowledge in the humanities, or – on the contrary – cause scholarly doubt. He has written, for example, on the history of the footnote, the unmasking of forged texts or the continued validity of textual knowledge after the discovery of the New World.

A returning decisive moment in many of Grafton’s accounts of the history of the humanities is Scaliger’s stay in Leiden from 1593 onwards. Firstly, Scaliger himself was important, because of his criticism of Giovanni Nanni, a fifteenth-century monk from Viterbo, whose history of Western civilization, how well documented it might have appeared, he unmasked as a partial forgery. Scaliger distinguished authentic from forged elements within this text, proving that it is possible for a text to be partially true and partially false, and that even forged texts could contain authentic elements. He thus instigated textual criticism as a core philological activity. Secondly, as a location of scholarly encounters Leiden was important too. There, Scaliger was appointed professor almost simultaneously with Jacobus Perizonius, who came from Franeker University. Through him, he got to know the works of Frisian scholars Ubbo Emmius and Suffridus Petrus. These scholars were involved in a debate on the authenticity of Frisian foundational epics, tracing the people to displaced Trojans. Emmius distrusted these myths because he could not find any sources to support them, while Petrus tried, like Scaliger did for Nanni, to distinguish between authentic oral traditions and later frills. On the opposite side, Perizonius negated the mere possibility of historical and textual knowledge.

Together, Scaliger and the Frisians marked the two camps a philologist could belong to for two centuries: either pyrrhonism, or antiquarianism. The first position was hypercritical and lead Jean Hardouin in the 1690s to state that all sources from Antiquity, including Homer, were invented by a few medieval forgers. The latter position led to a blossoming of critical scholarship, focusing on hard to forge inscriptions and on the most important juridical documents. Handbooks, such as Jean de Mabillon’s De

74 Grafton & Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities*; Grafton, *What was history?*
76 Grafton, *Forgers and critics*.
77 Grafton, *Bring out your dead*, pp. 118-137.
78 Waterbolk, *Twee eeuwen Friese geschiedschrijving*; idem, ‘Reacties op het historisch Pyrrhonisme’.
79 Grafton, *Bring out your dead*, pp. 185-191.
re diplomatica ('On Diplomatics', 1681) and different artes historicae, and institutions like the Paris Académie des Inscriptions (1663) and the London Society of Antiquaries (1751) turned this critical position into philological fields of study, already before 1700.

So, next to Leerssen’s political and ideological frame in which vernacular philology appeared as an exponent of international literary historicism, there is Grafton’s more epistemological frame that points at continuities in the history of philology that can be traced back to Leiden’s late humanist scholarship on classical history and literature.

Conclusion: The long history of Dutch philology

A history of Dutch philology should take into account both the rise of vernacular philology all over Europe after 1760 and the tradition of classical philology in the Republic of Letters, including Leiden, from around 1580 onwards. Indeed, different episodes from the above history of Dutch philology indicate that both frames never excluded each other, and even were intertwined.

On the one hand, the Netherlands was only one of the many loci of the rise of literary historicism. Leerssen, for instance, has studied the international philological rivalry that arose between France and Germany, but also in the Netherlands and Belgium, around medieval texts like the *Ludwigslied* (‘Song of Ludwig’), or *Reinaert de Vos* (‘Reynard the Fox’), a text studied and nationally appropriated by Jonckbloet and Bilderdijk, as well as by Grimm and the French medievalist Paulin Paris. Such rivalry did not exclude an international exchange of ideas, as noted above for Jonckbloet, De Vries, Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Grimm. They mutually discussed lexicographical ideas and methods of editing texts. But the international connection existed well before the young academics appeared on the scene: Bilderdijk received Hoffmann von Fallersleben at home, and got letters and medieval fragments from Grimm for his Koninklijk Instituut. Clignett edited *Esopet*, with which he granted Dutch literary history a place of its own between, on the one hand, the supposedly German *Reineke Fuchs*,

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80 Grafton, *What was history?*
81 Leerssen, ‘Bomen hebben wortels’.
82 Leerssen, *Bronnen van het vaderland*.
84 Leerssen, *Bronnen van het vaderland*, p. 29.
recently revaluated by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe with his 1794 adapta-
tion, and, on the other hand, the classical tradition of satirical fables which
La Fontaine and Aesopus figured together.\(^{85}\)

Even earlier, literary historicist ideas can be traced in the Maatschappij
in Leiden, where Rijklof Michael van Goens promoted the study of authors
from the past, especially from the seventeenth century, as an example for
his own time.\(^{86}\) The same idea led Clignett and Steenwinkel to edit the
medieval *Spiegel historiael*: they did so because they were convinced that
the only means for learning ‘pure Dutch’ is ‘the knowledge of the old Dutch
language’.\(^{87}\) They published Maerlant’s chronicle as an example of a histori-
cal, therefore simple, use of the Dutch language, from a time when it was
‘not yet spoiled’ by a surplus of rules in poetry and language. An edition was
the best instrument to make the public read the poetry of old times, as they
had witnessed in Germany and France.\(^{88}\) So, the aim of editing a medieval
text was to serve the reader in the editors’ own time, in the hope that ‘he
could read such works with the same pleasure as the present-day French
t heir *Roman de la Rose*’ – or the Scots their Ossian, one could add.\(^{89}\) Such
legitimating for scholarly editions of texts from the literary past, together
with the international contacts, prove that literary historicism rose in Dutch
and foreign minds alike.

On the other hand, these Dutch minds had local examples too, since
Scaliger, one of the protagonists in the antiquarianism quest against pyr-
 rhonism, was active in Leiden, together with Perizonius and Scriverius.\(^{90}\)
They stand at the beginning of a long period of detailed philological study,
in the Netherlands too, in which the epistemological challenge of forged
sources remained valid. That becomes not only clear by the edition of Stoke
by Van Alkemade, who supported Stoke’s written account of the history
of Holland by evidence outside the text, namely the series of portraits of
the counts of Holland. Editions and forgery, scholarship and fiction: an
opposition from the very beginnings of classical philology remained valid,
even in vernacular philology’s national and academic attire.

\(^{85}\) Ibidem, p. 21.
\(^{86}\) Johannes, *De lof der aalbessen*, pp. 16-17; Van den Berg, ‘7 september 1765’.
\(^{87}\) ‘dat de kennis der oude Nederduitsche Tale, het eenig hulpmiddel is, om goed en zuiver
\(^{88}\) Ibidem, p. iv.
\(^{89}\) ‘hy zulke werken met hetzelfde vermaak, als de hedendaagsche Franschen hunnen *Roman
\(^{90}\) Langereis, *Geschiedenis als ambacht*. 
From the case history presented here, it is evident that professional Dutch philology, as it was established in the second half of the nineteenth century, is a product of both European literary historicism and the Leiden tradition of antiquarian philology of the classics and the history of Holland. Both broader evolutions intertwined in the Netherlands: they are not only compatible, but reinforced each other. Inspiration was not only synchronically exchanged between philologists from different European countries – as is made clear by the study of Reinaert de Vos91 – also diachronically between different generations within the Netherlands – as is indicated by the subsequent editions of Melis Stoke’s chronicle and Jacob van Maerlant’s Spiegel historiael.

Only when both literary historicism and philological traditions are taken into account, can a complex relation such as the one between the old and ailing Bilderdijk and German philologists become understandable. Bilderdijk’s aversion to everything German was well-known and after 1820, he even came to distrust the scholarly qualities of German philologists, denying them access to his notes.92 He frequently expressed his pride of the Leiden philological tradition, and already since his youth, he had nourished a fierce adoration of Janus Dousa senior.93 Bilderdijk’s personal attachment to the Dutch philological tradition is in fact his own realization of international literary historicism, despite his Dutch protectionism, even in scholarly matters. In a similar way, Van Wijn’s 1800 commemoration of Dousa, father and son, quoted above, connects both frames. It shows once more how the philological tradition of the Netherlands, starting with Dousa in 1591, was incorporated in Dutch culture and was cultivated by literary historicists from the 1780s onwards.

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93 Van Eijnatten, Hogere sferen pp. 30, 34.


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