

A MANUSCRIPT OF PETRUS DORLANDUS OF DIEST'S  
*VIOLA ANIMAE*

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This paper examines a manuscript of Petrus Dorlandus of Diest's *Viola animae* in Durham University Library. I was formerly its keeper, and had drafted the description incorporated by Neil Ker, after editing it to his practices, in *MMBL*, II, 520–21. Petrus Dorlandus, Peter Dorlant, as Dr Albert Ampe has argued, was probably born at Waalhoven, rather than Walcourt, both near Liège, in 1454, entered the University of Louvain in 1472 and about 1475 the charterhouse of Zeelhem at Diest in Brabant, where he died in 1507. He is best known as the putative author of *Elckerlijck*, first printed in 1495, the Dutch original of the English morality play *Everyman*, although both attributions in the past have been much disputed.<sup>1</sup>

In 1499 was first printed in quarto at Cologne by Quentell the *Viola anime per modum dialogi inter Raymondum Sebondium [. . .] et dominum Dominicum Seminiverbium de hominis natura [. . .] Ad cognoscendum se. deum. et hominem*; 'viola' here is probably a diminutive of 'via', a small path, not the small flower or the musical instrument.<sup>2</sup> The work was reprinted at Toledo, significantly as we will see, by a German, Hagembach in 1500, at Cologne again in 1501, and in

<sup>1</sup> T. Ausems, 'Elckerliic's auteur', in *Dr. L. Reyens-Album*, ed. by A. Ampe (Antwerp: Ruusbroec Genootschap, 1964), pp. 37–56; Gruys, *Cartusiana*, I, 77–79; L. Moereels, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, III, 1646–51; S. Lindenbaum in *Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, v, ed. by A. E. Hartung (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975), pp. 1374–77, 1613–18.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Maigne d'Arnis, *Lexicon Manuale ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis* (Paris: M. l'abbé Migne, 1890), col. 2305.

smaller formats at Milan 1517, Antwerp 1533 and later.<sup>3</sup> It was only in this last edition that it was expressly ascribed to Dorlandus (by his fellow-Carthusian, Willem van Brantighem), although his surname is in the commendatory verses I shall mention. Raymondus Sebondius was the early-fifteenth-century Spanish author (possibly best known from Montaigne's *Apologie de Raymond Sebond*), whose *Theologia Naturalis* was printed first at Deventer, not after 1485, and in 1496 at Strassburg and Lyon.<sup>4</sup> The interlocutor in Dorlandus's dialogues, Dominicus Seminiverbius, Dr Ampe has argued was a Dominican friar of Aachen (from 1475), Dominic van Gelre, whose Christian name occurs in other writings of Dorlandus and his circle, once with the expanded sobriquet *Seminator Verbi Divini*.<sup>5</sup>

There are seven dialogues in the printed *Viola Anime*, but only the first six are based on Raymondus de Sabunde, the seventh being on the mysteries of the Passion of Our Lord, between Our Lady and Dominic Seminiverbius.<sup>6</sup> The manuscript of the work at Durham contains only the first six, and whereas the first edition of 1499 has other preliminary pieces found in the manuscript, it does not have the opening 'Prologus in subscriptum opus', a prefatory letter from Petrus Dorlandus to John, a monk of the church of St Laurence, Liège, saying that the prior of St James has reported that he wants to know if Raymondus is to be judged a Catholic teacher or a heretic. It occupies a whole page of twenty-nine lines and ends with a greeting from the charterhouse of Zeelhem, dated ambiguously, either 19 October or 28 December 1497. That would be either nineteen or seventeen months before the date (29 May 1499) of the first edition.<sup>7</sup> At the end of the manuscript's ninety-nine pages, instead of a

<sup>3</sup> *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, ed. by Deutschen Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 11 vols (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1925–2003), VIII, 9046–47 (hereafter *GKW*); W. Nijhoff and M. E. Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliografie van 1500 tot 1540, I* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923), no.735.

<sup>4</sup> F. R. Goff, *Incunabula in American Libraries: a Third Census* (Millwood: Kraus Reprint, 1973), R32–34.

<sup>5</sup> A. Ampe, 'Petrus Dorlandus O. Carth. en Dominicus van Gelre O. P.', in *Hellinga Festschrift / Feestbundel / Mélanges*, ed. by A. R. A. Croiset van Uchelen (Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1980), pp. 29–42.

<sup>6</sup> L. Moereels, 'De sevende dialoog van Peter Dorlant's *Viola Animae*', *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 27 (1953), 259–76.

<sup>7</sup> At the end of the letter 'altera luce evangeliste' could be 'the morrow after St Luke' or, from the full 'altera lux', after St John the Evangelist, paralleling the words 'Baptiste nomine insignita'. Both the Durham manuscript (fol. 2') and the editions do have another

list of chapter headings (which comes on folios 2–4 of the edition) there is a shorter list simply of the six dialogues present, and in red 'hic codex fuit scriptus in augusto anno 1497', both by the same hand as the letter (Fig. 2). Prima facie we have a pre-publication text of the work with an unpublished apologia. It is addressed to a monk of one of the two large Benedictine monasteries of Liège, in response to his doubts, passed on by the prior of the other, about the orthodoxy of Raymondus de Sabunde, a suspicion which in the later sixteenth century led to the prologue only of his *Theologia Naturalis* being placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* after the Council of Trent.<sup>8</sup>

Dorlandus, however, is far from sharing such doubts. He is astounded by Dom John's scruples, who only needs to read, read for himself that Raymundus is not only a catholic but a leader of catholics, in disturbing, exploding and eliminating heresies. If it is true that he is a follower of Ramon Lull (the early-fourteenth-century Catalan author, subject of like suspicions) he isn't therefore a heretic. Will Dorlandus be thought a pagan if he imitates Virgil in composing sacred poetry? Or to be a follower of Cicero's idolatry because he admires his writings? Cicero's style gives very strong and scholarly rules to guide preachers and writers. Dorlandus doesn't approve all Lull's ideas but takes some 'religiose', and so did Raymundus very wisely. He was a most Christian Spaniard, a pious and religious doctor of arts, of medicine and of theology, who taught them publicly with great credit in the University of Toulouse, of admirable life and so esteemed by bishops and other eminent persons. And his chief intention was to convert Mahommedans, of whom there is a multitude in Spain.

You can read some of him here, which I have put into dialogue form, not to spread heresy, which is not there, but to make the hearer a sensitive lover of sacred things. And as his style is somewhat uncultivated and rustic and has many superfluous epilogues that may be tedious to learned men, therefore, being strongly pressed to cut out the tedium, I have put it into a somewhat happier style, aiming at nothing except the honour of god and help of neighbour. So I beg you to run through the whole book from top to tail and I know you will say you have never read anything more useful. (See Latin text appended.)

*Prologus in dyalogos sequentes* 'Huc queso lector' occupying a page, following the commendatory verses.

<sup>8</sup> For example *Index Librorum Prohibitorum cum Regulis Confectis per Patres a Tridentina Synodo* (Milan: Autonium Antonianum, 1564), p. 14.

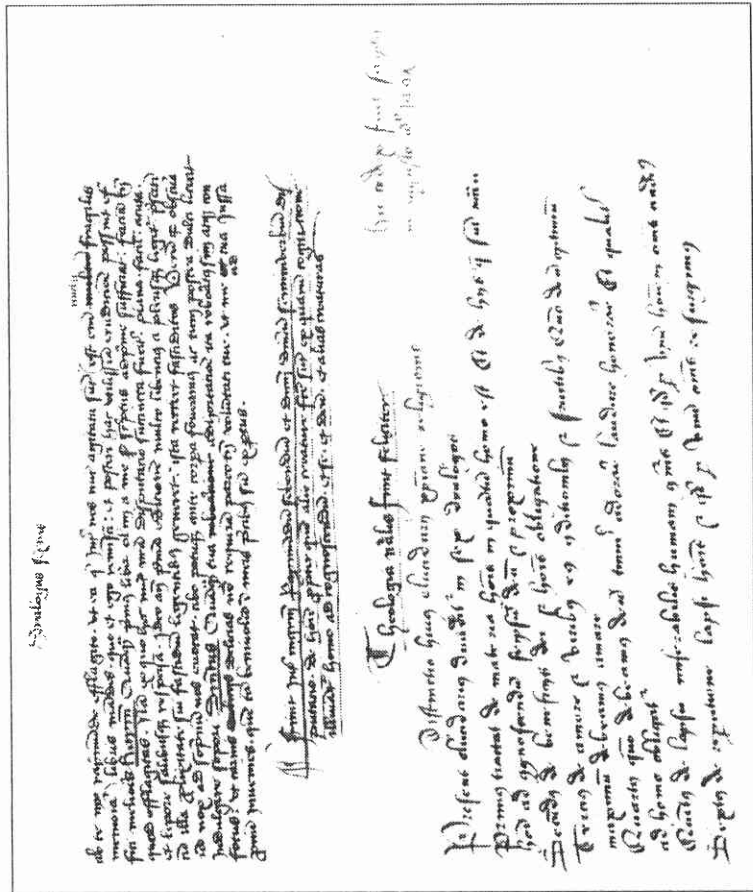


Figure 2: Durham University Library S.R.3.A.4/2, fol. 49r (top half). Reproduced with permission.

From this summary it may be seen how Dorlandus combines theological and humanist concerns, reflecting the educational developments of the Low Countries in his era, and he reveals a perhaps surprising knowledge of the connection from Lull to Sabunde, possibly as a result of his university training.

On the back of this page is an 'Epygramma in laudem Elucidarij christiane religionis' (seemingly the original title for the *Viola*, as it also occurs in the final list) of accomplished Latin verse, addressed by Matheus Herbenus to the reader, as at the beginning of the editions. Herbenus was Rector of the grammar school at Maastricht, not very far from Liège, an author of other Latin compositions which he dedicated to potential patrons or learned friends.<sup>9</sup> The stylish handwriting of his poem here is by the first of probably nine different scribes who share the other preliminaries and the text of the *Viola*, changing within pages or by leaves or by bifolia or by quires of varying length. The character and quality of their hands also varies considerably, from good Cursiva to poor Hybridica, and in size, the number of lines per page (within only frame ruling) ranging from thirty-eight to sixty-three, two pages being left part empty with notes 'hic nichil deficit', there's nothing missing here, where that scribal stint did not reach the beginning of the next; so it seems that copying was being done collaboratively, in batches from a broken-up exemplar. This procedure, and the disregard of the disconformities, suggest that it was being done in haste, by a group of variously trained amanuenses. Furthermore, some names of speakers, headings, marginal notes and chapter-numbers in red, are by the same hand as the author's letter, the list of dialogues and the concluding date of writing, August 1497. But why is this specially added, and why was the copying rushed, yet the prefatory letter delayed, since it is dated (as already indicated) either two or four months later? The first recto page of the first quire must have been left blank to accommodate it. Everything suggests we have a copy of the work made under the author's direction, probably for the Liège monk to whom the Prologue is addressed. And it is therefore possible that the hand of the Prologue, the added apparatus, the dialogue-list, and both dates is that of the author himself.<sup>10</sup> In contrast with what is said in the letter, and the use of 'feliciter' by

<sup>9</sup> U. Chevalier, *Répertoire des Sources Historiques du Moyen Age: Bio-bibliographie*, nouvelle éd., 2 vols (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1905-07), 1, 2109-10.

<sup>10</sup> Published scholarship on Dorlandus does not identify autographs, though it is possible they survive. At the foot of fol. 2r, after the prologue to the general reader, written by the same hand as the commendatory verses on fol. 1r, the heading to the first dialogue is completed by the hand of the prefatory epistle etc., concluding 'incipit feliciter'.

this hand and by another in the colophon, however, neither, nor those of the other copyists show any humanistic features and their spelling is wholly medieval.

That the Durham manuscript did go to Liège is proved by the fact that it is bound with the first edition of the *Opera* of Denys the Areopagite in Latin by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Paris 1498)<sup>11</sup> with a contemporary inscription at the beginning 'Liber monasterii sancti Iacobi leodiensis' and at the end 'Hic liber comparatus est per fratrem iohannem diestemium blaerum priorem huius loci in anno millesimo quingentesimo in ianuario', that is probably 1501 by our reckoning. John Blaer of Diest, monk of St James, Liège, is well recorded, as buying and writing books there from 1482 on, as prior from 1484 till 1506 at least, dedicating a small work on the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi (for which Liège had been the centre) to Dorlandus in 1496, copying other pieces by him, including advice on monastic discipline.<sup>12</sup> Mattheus Herbenus was in correspondence with Blaer too. Blaer was the friend who communicated Dom John of St Laurence's doubts about Sabunde. It is possible our manuscript of the *Viola* never belonged to St Laurence's but was only lent there for Dom John to read and copy. It could even be that Dorlandus let one of the two monasteries have instalments of his original to be copied there into what we have. But copying in or near his own charterhouse (which was about forty miles away) seems most likely. Neither Benedictines nor Carthusians by this time commonly had uniform house-styles of writing, Carthusians particularly having been more often drawn from mature vocations with academic, not monastic, schooling. None of the hands here use the *punctus flexus*, which was favoured, though not universally or exclusively, by the Carthusians. Nor are there obvious compositors' markings, and clearly this manuscript was not one used by a printer, since it has the additional prologue which is not in any of the editions and it lacks the final dialogue which is in them all.

The volume containing both the printed Denys of 1498 and the manuscript Dorlandus of 1497 remained in the library of St James, with the post-medieval

<sup>11</sup> *GKW*, vii, 8409, itself a landmark of Christian humanism.

<sup>12</sup> *Monasticon Belgicum II:1: Province de Liège*, ed. by U. Berliere (Maredsous: Abbaye de Maredsous, 1924) p. 24 n.2; S. Balau, 'La bibliothèque de l'abbaye de St Jacques à Liège', *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire de Belgique*, 71 (1902), 28–33, where the inscription in the Durham volume is quoted, as B38 in the manuscript catalogue by Bouxhon (now Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 13993); after 1667, which R. Adam has kindly confirmed.

number B38 which appears on it, superseded by D56, until its suppression and the following auction of its books in 1788.<sup>13</sup> Its present binding is of the eighteenth century, perhaps after the sale, repaired in 2004, and differs from others of the same library now at Maynooth University College, Ireland, being catalogued by Professor Peter and Mrs Angela Lucas.<sup>14</sup> It was bought by Dr M. J. Routh of Magdalen College, Oxford, probably from an English auction or bookseller sometime before his death in 1854, and bequeathed with his large collection of printed books to Durham University Library; not, alas, his smaller group of manuscripts, most of which were afterwards bought at auction by Sir Thomas Phillipps.<sup>15</sup> There is one other manuscript bound with an incunable in the Routh library at Durham, from a German monastery, for which also see Neil Ker's *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*.<sup>16</sup>

There is much other evidence that Dorlandus was one of a strongly orthodox humanist circle of the Low Countries and beyond (Germany and France) in the generation before the outbreak of Lutheranism. It is not so apparent amongst the English Carthusians of the time, yet some of them came from a similar academic background (notably Cambridge) and were in touch with the lay and clerical leaders of the movement in England, such as Thomas More and John Colet, each of whom spent some time respectively in the charterhouses of London and Sheen.

<sup>13</sup> Though I did not find it amongst other manuscripts of Blaer and Dorlandus listed in the *Catalogue des Livres de la Bibliothèque de la célèbre ex-Abbaye[ . . . ] dont la vente se fera [ . . . ] le 3 mars 1788, & jours suivans[ . . . ]* (attributed to J. N. Paquot), OBL, Mus.Bib.III.8°.556.

<sup>14</sup> Described and illustrated in a lecture to the Early Book Society's conference in Durham, July 2003.

<sup>15</sup> A. I. Doyle, 'Martin Joseph Routh and his books in Durham University Library', *Durham University Journal*, 48 (1956), 100–07; A. N. L. Munby, *The Formation of the Phillipps Library from 1841 to 1872*, Phillipps Studies, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 77–78. The front pastedown has an ink stamped press-mark GGg?499 and in pencil 'RC Dionysii 858', English notes on the contents (apart from those in Routh's ink) and booksellers' ciphers.

<sup>16</sup> *MMBL*, II, 517–20: S.R.2.B.3, *Sermones* etc., 1480, from Huysburg, OSB, bound with Boethius, *De Consolatione* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1486) (*GKW*, IV, 4537), in 1488.

*Appendix: Edited Transcription of Prefatory Letter in Durham University Library S.R.3.A.4/2 (Routh II.C.12/2) fol. 1<sup>r</sup>.*

Some capitalization and punctuation has been added to this transcription.

Prologus in subscriptum opus

**Petrus Dorlandus carthusiensis** Dilecto fratri domino Johanni ecclesie beati Laurentij Leodiensis monacho S P d Dixit dominus prior sancti Jacobi cupis te scire / Raymundus doctor catholicus censensus sit an hereticus. Stupeo nimis dilectissime scrupulos tuos. Quare rogo non magis credis industrie tue quam assertioni mee? Lege hominem atque iterum lege et non modo catholicum sed catholicorum unum principem luce clarius deprehendes. Adeo enim nostre fidei fidelissimus assertor est & demonstrator ut universas hereses potenter exturbet explodat eliminat. Quod tu quoque facile perspicies. Verum esto quod Lullianus sit. numquid ideo hereticus. Numquid quia artem Lulli secutus acutissime scribit ideo ne aspernandus erit. cum de libris eius non insaniam trahat sed industriam? Ero ne ideo et gentilium & erraticus si Virgilij a[utem?] oram stilum imitatus carmina tamen sancta componam? Aut ideo Marci Tullij idolatriam sequor quia eius me scripta delectant. Hec ars tulliana doctissimas & fortissimas regulas. que et sermocinatori & scriptori admodum conducunt. Ego tamen omnes Lulli adventiones non approbo sed quasdam religiose suscipio quibus & hic Raymundus sapientissime usus est. Et ut noveris virum: Fuit enim Raymundus meus natione Hispanus religione christianissimus. vir omnium sui temporis doctissimus pius religiosus doctor artium doctor medicinarum doctor theologorum qui publice suas artes cum maximo omni plausu in gymnasio explicuit Tholosano. Fuit preterea tam frugaliter & castigatissime vite ut ab episcopis & sublimibus summo habebatur honore. Pecuniarum quoque et laudum suarum optimus aspernator. Cuius omnia scripta ad sui contemptum ad dei & proximi amorem impellunt hominem & perficiunt. quod tu quoque palam aspicias. Omnis eius intentio in hic versatur ut suis scriptis Machometistarum quorum in Hispanie finibus maxima multitudo est ad lucem duceret veritatis. Verum quia illi de sacris libris quos non recipiunt instrui non possunt: idcirco naturali quodam via progreditur & talibus armis depungnat que ipsi suis telis nequeant penetrare. Ecce habes quid de Raymundo, in reliquum sentire debeas. Quem idcirco ad dyalogos traxi non ut heresim spargerem que illic nullo est sed ut lugentem sacrarum rerum auditorem facerem et amatorem. Est namque stilus eius admodum incultus et rusticus et tot superfluos habet epilogos ut doctis viris plerumque fastidius sit. Hinc ego ab cunctis enixissime deprecatus pro amputando tedio ad stilum illum traduxi paulo iocundiores nichil preter dei honorem & proximi utilitatem mea ambiens defatigatione. Oro te ut a capite usque ad calces totum librum percurras scio dicturum te numquam utilius aliquid lectitasse. Vale Ex domo nostra (que est divi Baptiste nomine insignita) altera luce evangeliste anno 1497.

SECRET ROOMS: PRIVATE SPACES FOR PRIVATE PRAYER IN LATE-MEDIEVAL BURGUNDY AND THE NETHERLANDS

Ezekiel Lotz

In 1377, Geert Groote, soon to become the founder and guiding force of the *Devotio moderna* movement, left the charterhouse at Monnikhuizen near Arnhem after completing a three-year period of intensive spiritual retreat. When he departed, he took with him much more than the support of the Carthusian monks with whom he had assiduously maintained the strict monastic regimen of the order.<sup>1</sup> Groote's adherence to the customs and practices of the Carthusians had left a permanent imprint on the manner in which this orphaned son of bourgeois parents would conduct the rest of his life. It also influenced the way in which he would direct and influence the inhabitants of the common houses and monastic cloisters of the Modern Devotion in the late-medieval Netherlands. Not least among Groote's interests in the performance of the well-ordered Christian life was the appropriation and arrangement of private space for the practice of private prayer and devotion.

<sup>1</sup> For the life and work of Geert Groote including the influence of the Carthusian order on his spirituality see Theodore van Zijl, 'Geert Groote, Ascetic and Reformer (1340-1384)' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington, Catholic University of America, 1963). For a more recent consideration of Groote's life and his role in the formation of the *Devotio Moderna* movement see Georgette Epiney-Burgard, *Géard Grote (1340-1384) et les débuts de la dévotion moderne* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1970). For an article-length treatment of the influence of the Carthusians on the material as well as the spiritual culture of Groote and his followers see Otto Gründler, 'Devotio Moderna atque antiqua: The Modern Devotion and Carthusian Spirituality', in *The Roots of the Modern Spirituality of Western Christendom*, II, ed. by Rozanne Elder (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984), pp. 27-45.