

Georges Declercq, “Rijmkroniek van Vlaanderen”,
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Rijmkroniek van Vlaanderen

13th–14th centuries. Low Countries. A 10571-line verse chronicle containing a dynastic history of the county of Flanders, from the legendary Liederik of Harelbeke (792) until the beginning of the reign of John the Fearless (1405). Written in all probability by three anonymous poets (rather than six as PIRENNE assumed).

The work of the first author, which can be dated to the second half of the 13th century (probably ca 1260–80), covers the period until the reign of Philip of Alsace, ca 1180 (v. 1–550 and 999–4761). It is essentially a somewhat shortened rendering in vernacular verse of a French prose translation of the B-version of the → *Flandria generosa* (*Ancienne chronique de Flandre*, version of the Paris manuscript, see → *Flandria generosa*, French), to which the author added, as he himself notes, some passages translated from the Latin version of the same text. In the additions to his main source, he also uses archival sources from Bruges and Damme, and seems therefore to have been working somewhere in that region. This original version of the chronicle was used by → Jean de Langhe for his *Chronica sancti Bertini* and apparently also by → Jacob van Maerlant for his *Spiegel historiael*.

In the course of the 14th century a second author inserted a long interpolation about Count

Baldwin V (v. 551–998). A third author, who lived and worked in Ghent shortly after 1415 (or 1419) is responsible for the remaining text (v. 4762–10571). For the period ca 1180–1347, his text is based successively on two Latin sources (the two continuations of Clairmarais to the *Flandria generosa*) and a French chronicle (the continuation of the so-called → *Chronique dite de Baudouin d’Avesnes*). From 1347 (v. 8840) onwards the work of this poet is independent of any known source and from ca 1380 he is an eyewitness of the events he describes. Although this third poet appears to have been an inhabitant of Ghent, he shows himself very critical of the leaders of the Ghent revolt of 1379–85 and was clearly a partisan of the Burgundian duke Philip the Bold.

The chronicle survives in a single manuscript from the first quarter of the 15th century, the so-called “Comburgse handschrift”, famous for its middle Dutch literary contents (Stuttgart, LB, cod. poet. et phil. 2° 22).

Bibliography

Text: H. BRINKMAN & J. SCHENKEL, *Het Comburgse handschrift*, 1997, II, 1229–1492.

Literature: H. PIRENNE, “La Rijmkronijk van Vlaanderen et ses sources”, *BCRH*, 57 (1888), 346–64. *Narrative Sources* R078. *RepFont* 10, 133f.

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