

## INTRODUCTION

### *Carmina Scholastica in Amsterdam in the sixteenth century*

By far the most important investigation in the field of 16th century Latin school songs in the Netherlands, and in particular in Amsterdam, was carried out by the then librarian of the University of Amsterdam, Dr. C. P. Burger Jr. From 1912 onward he issued reports of his research in the periodical *Het Boek*; these reports<sup>1</sup> began with "The last of the Catholic rectors of Amsterdam and their carmina", viz. Apherdianus and the Sovvius brothers, and via other articles he worked back to the first half of the 16th century until he finally ended with Bartholomaeus Coloniensis, rector at Alkmaar in the years 1511-1513. In spite of the back-to-front chronology and in spite of the fact that some carmina such as the two by Nemius from the Royal Library in The Hague remained unknown to Burger, the articles give a well-integrated overall picture of the history of this phenomenon, especially with regard to Amsterdam.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not as a consequence of these articles, others have also contributed material but this remains of minor importance. A summary of this may be found in the most recent extensive contribution to this subject from the pen of A. M. M. Dekker, in 1974.<sup>3</sup> Without Burger's publications our edition would have been considerably more difficult, if not impossible.

The oldest evidence of the use of the school song on Dutch soil Burger found in Alkmaar. The rectors of Alkmaar, Bartholomaeus Coloniensis and his successor Joannes Murellius (rector 1513-1517), are of German extraction and there is a school song by Murellius preserved from the period when he was still working in Germany (Münster).<sup>4</sup> Did these two German schoolmasters bring the custom with them from their fatherland? Whatever the case may be their Dutch successor, Kempo van Tessel, took over the custom with undated school songs of a more moralizing tone than the panegyrics by his predecessors on the city patron saints, Matthias and Laurentius.<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not from Alkmaar the custom quickly spread to other cities. One published in 1517 on Liguina, the patron saint of Schiedam, and discovered and re-issued by Miss M. E. Kronenberg<sup>6</sup> in 1933, is rightly considered a school song by Dekker. In Utrecht payments for school songs have been traced as far back as 1519. Other places where the custom has been verified are Amersfoort, Arnhem, 's-Hertogenbosch and Wesel. In Utrecht the custom continued, more or less unbroken, until 1604.

The oldest evidence for the custom in Amsterdam is constituted by the poem published by Alardus late in 1531 which he had presumably written shortly before, with the title *Natalitium carmen, in pacis Encomium, studiosae apud Aemsterdamum iuuentuti ex tempore dictatum, ad eademque sub natalem domini ibidem cantatum*. This title informs us that it is a Christmas Hymn and that it was written especially to be sung by the school-going youth of Amsterdam and, indeed, on Christmas Eve. The Amsterdam school songs are thus Christmas songs. Other

school songs confirm this, such as that of 1560 by Duetus and that of 1576 by Simon Sovvius. Also, records from the archives concerning the remuneration to the authors mention Christmas songs (“Korscanteleenen”).<sup>7</sup>

In the time of Barth. Coloniensis and Murmellius, Alardus was employed for a time at the Latin school of Alkmaar.<sup>8</sup> He may, therefore, have been witness to the performance of school songs there. In Amsterdam Alardus, who was later to publish two more similar songs, was not connected with one of the Latin schools. However, he had his Christmas songs published in a collection that received the title of *Epistola Cornelii Croci*. This same Cornelius Crocus had then already been employed as a teacher since the early 1520s and was probably rector from 1531 of the Latin school on the Oude Zijde.<sup>9</sup> Crocus is the second humanist from Amsterdam of whom a school song has been preserved and he leads the line of rectors of both Latin schools whose school songs have been preserved or for whose songs there is at least evidence. In this connection Crocus intimates that with his ode of 1544 he is following an established tradition. Other rectors also speak of an established custom.<sup>10</sup>

In the 16th century Amsterdam possessed two Latin schools, one on the Oude Zijde, i.e. for the part of the town east of the Amstel, and one on the Nieuwe Zijde. Between 1556 and 1562 (and again between 1586 and 1593) the two schools were combined. With some reservation as to the precision of the dating,<sup>11</sup> the rectors on the Oude Zijde prior to 1578 were the following:

1531-1537	Cornelius Crocus
1537-1539	Jan van Bolle, or van Leuven
1539-1544	Willem Gherijt Pancaesz.
1544-1548	Cornelius Crocus
1549	Godefridus Berganus
1550-1556	Joannes Nivenius
1556-1559	Joannes Nemius (rector of the combined Latin schools)
1559-1562	Antonius Duetus (rector of the combined Latin schools)
1562-1567	Petrus Apherdianus
1567-1572	Bartholomaeus Sovvius
1572-1578	Simon Sovvius.

The rectors of the Latin school on the Nieuwe Zijde were the following:

1535-1544	Jacob Joosten
1545-1552	Petrus Vlotinus
1553-1555	Cornelius Haecmundanus
1556-1559	Joannes Nemius (rector of the combined Latin schools)
1559-1562	Antonius Duetus (rector of the combined Latin schools)
1562-1566	Antonius Duetus
1567-1578	Petrus Apherdianus.

In May 1578 the so-called “Alteratie” occurred in Amsterdam. The Catholic City Government was removed from office and replaced by a Calvinist magistrate.

Also the Catholic clergy were turned out of the city. The two rectors were relieved of their office too and replaced by persons favourably disposed towards the Reformation. Apherdianus was replaced by Peter Vekemans and Simon Sovvius was succeeded by Eilardus Augustini. With the "Alteratie" there came an essential change in public church life and there was no longer a liturgical context within which the traditional school songs could fit. Nevertheless Apherdianus in 1580 still published, albeit under his initials, another poem, that continued in the old tradition.

It is not the case that school songs have been handed down by all rectors and even less from all years. However, it is likely that under normal circumstances such school songs were composed and also published annually. For almost all years there are entries of payment.<sup>12</sup> The fact that in nearly every case of the preserved carmina which were published separately as a booklet only one copy has been preserved supports the supposition that there had been others of which not even one copy has been preserved.

Because the Amsterdam school song was a Christmas song the events surrounding Christmas and the associated theme of peace played an important part in it. This last led several poets to make allusions to contemporary political and military events, in particular the threat posed by the Turks to Christendom and the wars that the ruler of the country had to wage, especially the wars with France. Alardus' *Pacis Encomium* even calls directly for war against the Turks. Apherdianus devotes a poem to the sufferings of the Church caused by the Turks and the heretics (1569). Vlotinus finds it reprehensible that Francis I of France seeks support from the Turks in his war against the Emperor. The Emperor's victories to which Crocus refers were won by the Emperor over France and her allies in 1544.

However, references to such historical data are few and also of little importance. Similarly, the references to what, after all, is by far the most radical event of the 16th century, the Reformation, remain in essence vague and marginal. Even Apherdianus' poem of 1580 ignores the "Alteratie", though it had cost him his position as school rector. The only exception to this is the poem by Joannes Nivenius which is totally devoted to a historical, in this case a religious event, namely the notorious "Wederdopersoproer" in Amsterdam of 1535. The poem by Nivenius which probably dates from 1552 is an epic rendition of a part of the historical account of the early Anabaptist movement by the Naarden rector Lambertus Hortensius, dated 1548. The rendition remains faithful to the original as to content and contains no new historical data.

In the school songs, certainly in those which could be entitled protrepticus, we should be able to expect a wealth of extra material on the nature and content of the education in the Latin school. However, here also the harvest is meagre. In some we vaguely hear something about the ideal behaviour and the ideal order-of-the-day of the pupil and we perceive a fairly disapproving attitude towards the antique poetry of the Roman lyrics and even of Terence. The *Paraenesis* by Duetus of 1560 and especially the *Apologia* by Nemius of 1566 which, what is more, is remarkable because of its very extensive and extremely precise acknowledgement of sources, constitute welcome exceptions in this regard.

For the remainder, the content of the poems is usually devoted to the arousal

of belief and piety. This is true especially of the poems in the style of the Late-Latin and Mediaeval Christian hymns such as Apherdianus' *Paraclesis* from 1569.

As we have already seen, the Amsterdam school songs were composed to be sung on Christmas Eve and apparently in church.<sup>13</sup> In some cases musical directions have accordingly been preserved.<sup>14</sup> Further, the wording of the poem sometimes strongly indicates that it is intended to be recited, such as the initial stanza of *Crocus*. Finally a *versus intercalaris* is usually present, mostly in Dutch and, according to *Crocus*, meant to be sung by the choir.<sup>15</sup> In Nivenius' booklet the *versus intercalaris* does not follow immediately upon the epos but on an *Eucharisticon* in four line stanzas after the epos which presumably lent itself better to recital than the far too long epos. The still more extensive *Paraenesis* by Duetus of 1560 is followed by a short *Hymnus* to be sung by a "chorus puerorum" and by a *versus intercalaris*. The initial verses of the *Paraenesis* seem, for that matter, to suggest that a *carmen* with a more sacred character has preceded them. Does the booklet derive from this its now somewhat inapplicable title "*carmen natalitium*"?

The *carmina scholastica* appear also to have enjoyed a certain popularity outside the school. Burger quotes an interesting passage from a letter written by Vladeracus that refers to the situation in Amersfoort. There, according to Vladeracus, the school songs were sung long after the official performance, not only by pupils but also by young girls and older domestic servants whilst engaged in all manner of domestic work. Nemius confirms something similar in respect to Amsterdam in the dedication to his *Portus Nepotum*.<sup>16</sup>

All in all, the *carmina scholastica* are not great literature. The rectors certainly know their Latin. They also know the rules of Latin prosody. Further, they are certainly suffused with enthusiasm for their subject, whether it concerns piety and trust in God or the scholarly education of their pupils. But this does not make them great poets.

The value of the *carmina* is mainly historic and documentary. In spite of their relative generality and their lack of detail they give an insight into the school life of Amsterdam in the 16th century. They are examples which speak well for the practice of Latin letters in out-of-the-way Holland. The rectors are modest representatives of early Dutch humanism. In religious matters they are conservative, but at the same time they are the educators of the generation which will soon form the buttresses of a political and religious revolt and will usher in a new flowering of culture and scholarship. William Silvius who printed the *carmina* of 1570 had printed a year earlier in the same letter type the poetic debut of a young scholar, Janus Dousa, who would to a great degree determine the character of the first Dutch university from the time of its foundation in 1575. Among other things he provided the university with its own printer, the very same William Silvius. Apherdianus and Simon Sovvius were still in office when Dousa was able to attract Justus Lipsius as well as Bonaventura Vulcanius to his young university: the name of the latter is found on the title page of one of Duetus' school songs (1561). With such scholars Dutch humanism took the lead in learned and lettered Europe, that same Dutch humanism which the Amsterdam rectors had so modestly and faithfully served.

Among the above-mentioned rectorors there are those of whom only one carmen has been preserved. From others, on the other hand, more have been preserved, from Apherdianus indeed not less than thirteen. The limitations that the format of this book brought with it, compelled selection. We have proceeded from the principle that all rectorors of whom carmina have been preserved should be represented. This entailed that of each of them only one carmen could be included. Where several carmina were available we have selected that carmen which by its content or form enables this anthology to offer as great a variety as possible. In this way we hoped to limit as far as possible the risk of a certain monotony in poems which are to such an extent tied to a defined traditional content.

Except in the case of Alardus the poems have all appeared as separate publications. Locations of publication are Amsterdam, Leiden, 's-Hertogenbosch and Antwerp. In the case of virtually all publications only one copy is known to us. Usually the actual carmen scholasticum is framed by a dedication, a liminary poem, a closing hymn in a different metre and a versus intercalaris, usually in Dutch, which probably served as a refrain.<sup>17</sup> Our edition gives only the text of the actual carmen and the versus intercalaris that summarises the content of the tenor of the carmen. The contents of each booklet are given in a separate Introductory note.

In principle the text of the original editions is reproduced as faithfully as possible. Only the form of the letters, the ligatures and abbreviation marks which today are not available to us have been modified. Accent marks which are no longer in use have been omitted and words abbreviated in the original have been printed in full. Punctuation in the original which sometimes hinders more than it helps has been adapted to current usage. Obvious printing errors in the text have been corrected but have been registered as such in the annotations. Only the rather frequently forgotten closing brackets of Nemius have been added without being noted. The marginal clarifications have been included in the annotation, except in the case of the carmen by Apherdianus where these are largely illegible due to damage. The inserted clarifications on the text by Nemius have also been included in the annotation.

We have prefaced each carmen with a short introductory note. This contains some brief biographical material about the author and some comments on the poem and the way it was published. If literature exists it is also referred to.

Because a complete translation of the carmina in the chosen format did not prove possible, and also because it was not really necessary as the Latin is not too difficult, that idea was abandoned. We trust the lack of a translation as an aid to understanding the text will be somewhat alleviated by the summaries which precede the poems.

The annotation has, in principle, been kept very concise. Historical allusions are noted and, if possible, cursorily explained. Besides this, special attention is paid to the relation of the Latin used to classical texts. Especially in the case of Nivenius, whose imitation of Virgil is so deliberate, a systematic notation of quotations and reminiscences seemed required. However quotations and reminiscences of Roman writers have also been pointed out in the other carmina. We are nevertheless aware that these indications are by no means complete.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For the references, see below, Works consulted.

<sup>2</sup> Burger (1920, p. 42 sqq.) gives some titles of carmina of which no copies are known. He overlooks two titles found in Lecouvet's biographical survey of Duetus from 1859. See introd. to Duetus.

<sup>3</sup> A. M. M. Dekker, "Three unknown 'Cantilenae Martinianae' by Georgius Macropedius: a contribution to the study of the Utrecht Carmina scholastica", in: *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 23 (1974), p. 188-227; p. 188, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Burger 1921, p. 45 and 57.

<sup>5</sup> These carmina were already known to the historian of the Alkmaar Latin school, H. A. E. van Gelder, *Geschiedenis der Latijnsche school te Alkmaar*, Alkmaar 1905, p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> M. E. Kronenberg, "Een onbekend Latijnsch gedicht op S. Lidwina van Schiedam door Ger. Hagius (1517)", in: *Het Boek* 21 (1932-1933), p. 273-287. Cf. Dekker, a.c., p. 188 n.l.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the titles, below, p. XIX, XXIII. Most explicit is Apherdianus in the dedicatory letter of Nov. 10 (pridie D. Martini) to his poem of 1569: cum officij ratio exigat, vt carmen more institutoque maiorum in Seruatoris nostri natalitij ferijs iuuentuti decantandum in lucem edatur. This seems to imply that the poems were not only written, but also printed before the performance. This may explain why the dedicatory letters are almost always written in November or early December. It should be remarked that Macropedius in Utrecht sometimes also chose the Christmas theme as an argument for his school song, which however were performed at St. Martin's Eve (10 Nov.); see Dekker, a.c., p. 192-193, and his supplementary note, *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 30 (1981), p. 239. For the rewards of the "korscanteleenen", cf. Burger 1919, p. 282 sqq.

<sup>8</sup> In about 1513 Alardus wrote a poem Ad studiosam iuuentutem Alcmarianam; cf. Kölker, p. 271 (A.L. 1) and p. 16 sq.

<sup>9</sup> For Crocus as a teacher, cf. Kölker, p. 176 sqq.

<sup>10</sup> "ex more scripta"; see the title of Crocus' poem, below p. XVII; cf. also the quotation from Apherdianus' letter, above, n. 7, and B. Sovvius' dedicatory letter to his *Carmen hexametrum* of 1570 (title below, p. XXI); Quapropter, cum pro recepta hic consuetudine, aliquod carminis argumentum excogitandum esset ..., and Nemius, quoted below, n. 12.

<sup>11</sup> See Burger 1920, p. 42-44. The rectores indicate themselves as formator (Crocus, Vlotinus, Haecmundanus), moderator (Vlotinus, Nivenius, B. and S. Sovvius, Apherdianus), institutor (Haecmundanus), archididascalus (Nemius, S. Sovvius) and gymnasiarcha (Nemius, Duetus).

<sup>12</sup> See Burger 1919, p. 282 sqq.; 1920, p. 42-44. Cf. Nemius in the dedicatory letter to his *Portus nepotum*: Nosti enim Gymnasiarchis negocij datum esse, vt stultitiae studiosis cantilenam quotannis sub natalem Dominicum depromant, quam occinunt in diuorum templis, ac deinde in prophanum vulgus eliminant.

<sup>13</sup> in diuorum templis, cf. preceding note; Burger 1919, p. 283, concerning the award for Vlotinus.

<sup>14</sup> Burger 1920, p. 148-150, concerning the music to Haecmundanus' versus intercalaris; cf. Dekker, a.c., p. 191.

<sup>15</sup> "a choro recinendus". Burger 1925, p. 87, seems to suppose that Alardus' *De singulari vini* contains the first Dutch versus intercalaris (in fact four lines Dutch-Latin-Dutch-Latin). But the Schiedam poem, mentioned above, n. 6, already has a Dutch versus intercalaris. It is dated 1517.

<sup>16</sup> Burger 1920, p. 141-142. Nemius, dedicatory letter to his *Portus nepotum*: ... deinde in prophanum vulgus eliminant. Siquidem hanc recinunt pueri puellaeque quoties sinapium, oleum, sulphur, candelas, liba, Britannicam ceruisiam, vinum, castaneas nuces, atque alia id genus in Cimmerijs tenebris iubentur commercari.

<sup>17</sup> Repetitio is the word in many Utrecht school songs; cf. Burger 1920, p. 143 sqq.