

FREDERIK BUYLAERT

Free University of Brussels

JELLE HAEMERS

University of Leuven

TJAMKE SNIJDERS

Ghent University

STIJN VILLERIUS

POLITICS, SOCIAL MEMORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY FLANDERS: TOWARDS A RESEARCH AGENDA¹

The purpose of this contribution is to reflect on recent research on historiographical culture within the county of Flanders before the Dutch Revolt. It is a *Que sais-je* about a field of scholarship, whose scope and interpretative framework is now being reconsidered in light of the booming field of ‘memory studies’ and the recent advancements in the study of both the theory and practice of late medieval politics². In consequence, specific forms of pre-modern historiography are now increasingly understood as a part of a broader set of practices that allowed specific groups to construct and to propagate a particular social and political interpretation of the past and the present vis-à-vis the political community as a whole. Recent scholarship is increasingly focused on the intricate connections between late medieval chronicles and the memorial practices of specific individuals and social networks.

The starting point of this line of enquiry was the age-old observation that pre-modern chronicles were usually quite ambitious in their scope. They also intended to fixate the remembering and understanding of specific events for many generations to come. A clear-cut example of how chronicles could be used to influence the perception of both the contemporaries and future generations is provided by *Der Weisskunig* and *Theuerdank*, both commissioned by Maximilian of Austria, who ruled the Low Countries from 1482 to 1493 as regent for his

1 The authors would like to thank Jean-Marie Cauchies, Pit Péporté, Jan Dumolyn, Robert Stein, Laura Crombie and Eric Devos.

2 For two assessments of recent scholarship in those fields, see G. CUBITT, *History and memory*, Manchester, 2007; J. WATTS, *The making of polities: Europe 1300-1500*, Cambridge, 2009.

son Philip the Fair³. The production of those semi-fictitious chronicles must be understood as an attempt to shape the public image of this Habsburg prince, since Maximilian took many attempts to influence public opinion by using the printing press and visual artwork⁴. Their existence and production has also to be considered in the light of older traditions. Many European courts, noble families and dynasties used chronicles to stress their heritage, importance and history. They were not only intended for contemporaries, but also for posterity. Similar to a funerary monument, such chronicles were consciously conceived as a medium of commemoration⁵. Consider this quote from the unfinished *Der Weisskunig*, which was composed around 1514 by Marx Treitzsaurwein with information provided to him by Maximilian himself:

Who does not shape commemoration, will not leave any memory and those people are forgotten with the ringing of the bells. / *Wer ime in seinem leben kain gedachtnus macht, der hat nach seinem tod kain gedächtnus und desselben menschen wird mit dem glockendon vergessen*⁶.

Such works served to strengthen the public image of Maximilian as a just and effective ruler for generations to come. In the long run, this type of propaganda was successful; his memory certainly did not fade away with the ringing of the bells at his deathbed in 1519. In the decades after his death, Maximilian was remembered at the Habsburg court as an exemplary monarch. The success of this image was first and foremost tied to the conceptualisation of those works: *Der Weisskunig* and *Theuerdank* not only latched on to the popular genres of chronicles and chivalric romances, but also to the genre of the *specula principum* or ‘mirrors for princes’, educational treatises for the benefit of young rulers and their entourage. Even more importantly, subsequent generations soon came to consider Maximilian as

-
- 3 J.-M. CAUCHIES, *De la “régenterie” à l’autonomie. Deux ordonnances de cour et de gouvernement de Maximilien et Philippe le Beau*, in *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d’Histoire*, vol. 171, 2005, pp. 43-88.
 - 4 A.-L. VAN BRUAENE, *The Habsburg theatre state. Court, city, and the performance of identity in the early modern southern Low Countries*, in *Networks, regions and nations. Shaping identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650*, ed. R. STEIN & J. POLLMANN, Leiden, 2010, pp. 131-149.
 - 5 See P.F. AINSWORTH, *Jean Froissart and the fabric of history. Thruth, myth, and fiction in the Chroniques*, Oxford, 1990, pp. 70-73; A.-L. VAN BRUAENE, *L’écriture de la mémoire urbaine en Flandre et en Brabant (XIVe-XVIe siècle)*, in *Villes de Flandre et d’Italie (XIIIe-XVIe siècle). Les enseignements d’une comparaison*, ed. E. CROUZET-PAVAN & E. LECUPPRE-DESJARDIN, Turnhout, 2008, pp. 149-164.
 - 6 *Kaiser Maximilians I. Weißkunig*, ed. H.Th. MUSPER, Stuttgart, 1956, vol. I, p. 225 (ch. 24). He continues: *und darum so wird das gelt so ich auf die gedechtnus ausgib, nit verloren, aber das gelt, das erspart wird in meiner gedachtnus, das ist ain undertruckung meiner kunfftigen gedächtnus*. See also J.D. MÜLLER, *Zwischen Repräsentation und Regierungspraxis. Transformation des Wissens in Maximilians ‘Weiskunig’*, in *Knowledge, science, and literature in early modern Germany*, ed. G. SCHOLZ WILLIAMS and S. SCHINDLER, Chapel Hill, 1996, pp. 49-70.

a pivotal figure in the genesis of the mighty Habsburg empire of Charles V and Philip II: his marriage to Mary of Burgundy in 1477 led to the integration of the Low Countries into the Habsburg lands, and his decision to marry his son and daughter to the children of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile eventually led to the expansion of Habsburg rule over most of the Iberian peninsula. Little wonder then, that the image of Maximilian as a powerful monarch grew with the passing of the generations.

His prominent place in the Habsburg pantheon also guaranteed that Maximilian's propagandistic self-image remained viable in the very long run. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century states had a strong penchant for legitimising their own existence by presenting themselves as the continuation of older political entities, and this also left its mark on modern historiography. As Timothy Reuter remarked, historians are still very much inclined to understand medieval rulers as the drops around which the rain clouds of the modern states have formed⁷. This particular tradition ensured the vitality of the propagated image of Maximilian as an effective ruler, that is, as a 'statesman' long after the disbanding of the princely courts that constituted the chronicle's original audience. In Belgium, for example, historians have noted that this image of Maximilian of Austria as a knight in shining armour only became problematic in the twentieth century, when the concept of a 'German' national hero started to jar with the Belgian experience during the World Wars⁸. In other words, the political context in which Maximilian of Austria projected his self-image is still easily understandable to the present-day historian, precisely because modern states made a point of interpreting the princely politics of the pre-modern era as a part of their own history. In other cases, however, there was a much more pronounced break between the context of sixteenth-century chronicles and present-day culture, which makes it much harder today to understand how those works were embedded in their original social and political contexts.

An interesting case-study to understand how specific social and political concerns shaped historiographical texts is provided by the large cities of the county of Flanders, the stalwart enemies of Maximilian of Austria. After the death of Mary of Burgundy, duchess of Burgundy and countess of Flanders, in 1482, a decade-long civil war took place between the Flemish urban network and Maximilian, since both parties claimed the regency during the minority of Philip the Fair, the

7 T. REUTER, *The medieval German Sonderweg? The Empire and its rulers in the High Middle Ages*, in *Kings and kingship in medieval Europe*, ed. A. J. DUGGAN, London, 1993, p. 210.

8 Henri Pirenne's changing point of view on German history, for instance, is revealing. After his imprisonment in Germany during World War I, the leading Belgian historian wrote in pejorative terms on German princes, while in the preceding years, he had lauded them. See W. PREVENIER, "Ceci n'est pas un historien." *Construction and deconstruction of Henri Pirenne*, in *Revue belge d'Histoire Contemporaine*, vol. 41, 2011, pp. 553-573.

son and heir of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian⁹. The historiographical genre of the so-called ‘books of memory’ (*memorieboeken*) was specific to Flemish cities and provided them with a history. This genre had humble beginnings: it originated from the lists of aldermen, in which brief references to important events were included. In time, those lists had evolved into extensive chronicles that described the history of the urban community through the lens of the political community¹⁰.

The recent discovery of a partially preserved chronicle in the Austrian State Archives in Vienna shows that the ‘books of memory’ were not only written and read in the exclusive network of families that dominated the bench of aldermen, but also among the urban middle groups. A small booklet written by one Jan de Rouck is of particular interest. De Rouck belonged to the milieu of the Ghent craft guilds and who participated in a short-lived revolt against Emperor Charles V in 1539, the successor to Burgundian rule in the Low Countries. In this booklet, he copied fragments from a chronicle left to him by his father, also named Jan, in 1477¹¹. Jan the Elder had written a chronicle in the format of the ‘books of memory’ in which he provided – amongst other things – a report of his participation in the Ghent uprising of 1477 against the Burgundian dynasty, which had led to the restoration of the suppressed corporative privileges. The demands of the craft guilds, the subsequent revolt and its outcome were described from a markedly urban perspective, which was followed by a detailed list of newly appointed aldermen. This narrative of the 1477 revolt was particularly interesting to Jan de Rouck the Younger when the old antagonism between the Ghent craft guilds and princely government resurfaced again in 1539. While the booklet of the De Rouck family is a uniquely informative document, it clearly indicates that the conscious purpose of the ‘memory books’ was to endow the following generations with a ‘social memory’, in the sense of a specific interpretation of the past by a particular social group. Both the uprisings of 1477 and 1539 were part of an Flemish urban ‘tradition of revolt’ that stretched back to the late thirteenth century. In that socio-political setting, a set of cultural practices seems to have bloomed in the Flemish cities, practices that actively propagated the ideological programme of the craft guilds. A wide range of stories, songs and texts commemorated the victories and defeats of the urban craft guilds in their struggle for autonomy against the princely government. This tradition provided the urban middle groups with a way to set contemporary politics into a long context, as well as with the scripts to organise a

9 J.-M. CAUCHIES, *Philippe le Beau. Le dernier duc de Bourgogne*, Turnhout, 2003; J. HAEMERS, *For the Common Good. State power and urban revolts in the reign of Mary of Burgundy*, Turnhout, 2009.

10 See in particular A.-L. VAN BRUAENE, *De Gentse memorieboeken als spiegel van stedelijk historisch bewustzijn (14^{de} tot 16^{de} eeuw)*, Ghent, 1998.

11 The text of Jan De Rouck has been edited by J. HAEMERS, *Geletterd verzet. Diplomatiek, politiek en herinneringscultuur van opstandelingen in de laatmiddeleeuwse en vroegmoderne stad (casus: Brugge en Gent)*, in *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d’Histoire*, vol. 176, 2010, pp. 5-54.

new revolt if action was deemed necessary¹². The interpretation of historical events was not only influenced by the individual memories of father and son De Rouck, but also by the social structures that surrounded them, as well as the very identity of the social group to which they belonged¹³. This particular historiographical tradition was likely spread among the urban middle groups by very diverse means: children were probably read stories and chronicles about revolts, and craftsmen undoubtedly told each other anecdotes about earlier uprisings on the shop floor. It is through such “mnemonic socialisation”, as Zerubavel has dubbed this process, that collective memories were transferred from one generation to the next¹⁴.

The observation that historical sources are shaped by the milieu from which they originated is of course not new. Yet, what does deserve more attention in current research on the historiography of the Low Countries is that chronicles could also be shaped quite directly by the social status of the author. For various regions of Western Europe, studies have shown that nobles and urban rulers reinterpreted the history of their city so as to glorify their families’ lineage¹⁵. Yet, for Flanders, evidence of similar practices has only been unearthed recently. A re-evaluation of well-known historiographical texts and the analysis of a hitherto unknown text make clear that at least some chronicles were suffused with a desire to propagate one’s social and political prominence. Sixteenth-century Flemish elites seem to have developed commemorative traditions of their own that entwined strands from traditional court historiography with the consciously urban perspective that underpinned the ‘books of memory’. This phenomenon is reflected by the well-known chronicle that was composed between 1562 and 1592 by Nicholas Despars, a prominent member of the Bruges elite¹⁶. The author did not intend to write a new chronicle, but aimed at inscribing himself in a particular historiographical tradition known as the *Chronicle of the county of Flanders* (the original of which is

12 J. HAEMERS, *Social memory and rebellion in fifteenth-century Ghent*, in *Social History*, vol. 37, 2011, pp. 443-463.

13 J. FENTRESS and C. WICKHAM, *Social Memory*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 87-143.

14 E. ZERUBAVEL, *Social mindscapes. An invitation to cognitive sociology*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 87. See also M. BAMBERG, A. DE FINA and D. SCHIFFRIN, ed., *Selves and identities in narrative and discourse*, Philadelphia, 2007.

15 G. CIAPELLI and P. RUBIN, ed., *Art, memory, and family in Renaissance Florence*, Cambridge, 2000; H. BRAND, P. MONNET and M. STAUB, ed., *Memoria, communitas, civitas. Mémoire et conscience urbaines en Occident à la fin du Moyen Age*, Ostfildern, 2003; B. STUDDT, ed., *Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Köln, 2007.

16 An outdated edition is available: N. DESPARS, *Chronycke van der lande ende graefschape van Vlaenderen (405-1492)*, ed. J. DE JONGHE, Bruges, 1840-1842. For what follows, see in particular F. BUYLAERT, *Memory, social mobility and historiography. Shaping noble identity in the Bruges chronicle of Nicholas Despars († 1597)*, in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, vol. 88, 2010, pp. 377-408 and J. HAEMERS, *Un miroir à double face: les chroniques de Jean Molinet et de Nicolas Despars. La lutte discursive entre centralisme et constitutionnalisme dans le cadre de la révolte brugeoise de 1488*, in *Le Moyen Age*, vol. 117, 2011, in press.

known as the *Flandria Generosa*, the Dutch translation as *Excellente Cronike van Vlaenderen*). This tradition dates back to the twelfth century, when the genealogy of the counts of Flanders was used as the framework to describe the history of the county. The various copies of this text always identify the mythical hero Liederic de Buc as the founder of the county of Flanders, and with the passing of time, those genealogies were expanded to cover the reigns of more recent rulers. Nicholas Despars took up his pen in 1562 with the principle aim of writing a Dutch translation of the *Annales Flandriae*, which had been published a year earlier by the Bruges humanist Jacobus Meyerus. The text published by Meyerus only covered the period until the death of Duke Charles the Bold (d. 1477), and Despars complemented this with the work of two fifteenth-century writers, Anthonis de Roovere and Rombout de Doppere, both of whom had also worked in Bruges¹⁷. They had continued the tradition of adding new information to the *Chronicle of the county of Flanders*, some of which was based on personal experience or eyewitness accounts, while they also looked for inspiration in other books and sources¹⁸. De Roovere and De Doppere left an extensive description of the reigns of Charles the Bold, Mary of Burgundy and Philip the Fair up to 1492.

While the bulk of Despars's chronicle is a synthetic translation and adaptation of pre-existing offshoots of the *Flandria Generosa* tradition we should not underestimate its importance as a source for the study of the Dutch Revolt of the late sixteenth century. Despars himself refrained from continuing his chronicle up to his own day, but we should note that he interpolated his translation of the older chronicles with his own paragraphs, and often rewrote older texts to voice his own opinions. Processes of rewriting were to a certain extent inherent to the development of late medieval and early modern historiography¹⁹. If nothing else, the translations from Latin to Dutch involved a large-scale formal rewrite, and the inevitable process of copying the manuscripts in the pre-print era made sure that small changes would occur. Also, since the Dutch texts were often read out loud to an audience, it was desirable to restructure and/or reformulate parts of the exemplar. Yet, the various exponents of this particular strand of Flemish historiography were also consciously rewritten on a conceptual level by authors with a specific framework and agenda. First and foremost, Nicholas Despars's version had a decidedly urban twist: within this general history of the county of

17 V. FRIS, *La Cronyke van den lande ende graefscpe van Vlaenderen de Nicolas Despars*, in *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire*, vol. 70, 1901, pp. 545-565.

18 J. OOSTERMAN, *De Excellente cronike van Vlaenderen en Anthonis de Roovere*, in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde*, vol. 118, 2002, pp. 22-37; A. KELDERS, *De geschiedenis van Vlaenderen herzien en aangevuld. Recyclage en tekstuele innovatie in de laatmiddeleeuwse Flandria Generosa-kronieken*, in *Millennium*, vol. 19, 2005, pp. 157-160.

19 See G. GENETTE, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*, Paris, 1982; M. GOULLET, *Vers une typologie des réécritures hagiographiques, à partir de quelques exemples du Nord-Est de la France*, in *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval. Transformations formelles et idéologiques*, ed. M. GOULLET and M. HEINZELMANN, Ostfildern, 2003, pp. 109-144.

Flanders, a special place of honour was given to the city of Bruges, the hometown of Despars. He interpolated his text with detailed information about Bruges, dwelling extensively on the Bruges jousting confraternity and its activities, for example²⁰. In doing so, he followed the lead of other fifteenth-century authors, such as Anthonis de Roovere and Rombout de Doppere, who had already developed a version of the chronicle tradition with a marked 'Brugeois' perspective. In addition, Despars used his chronicle to voice his political opinion about the key political debate of his age, namely the balance of power between the prince and his subjects. He focused his rewrite on Maximilian of Austria, who is not shown in a favourable light. Despars blames Maximilian for his continuous insistence to rule the county as the regent of his son, against the wishes of the Flemish subjects. He painted other high-handed rulers of the late fifteenth century, such as Louis XI, with the same brush. Louis is described as an aggressive despot who ruled

without respecting the precious advice of his nobles on any subject, in such a manner that he always sought to subdue them and to force them into servility; and to impose his own will on the community and to rule the country as a sole monarch, he kept various duchies, counties and other lordships for himself by force, against all justice and reason. / *zonder tgoet advijs van zijne edelen yewers inne meer te respecterene, in zulcker wijs dat hy ze zelve in alder maniere zochte, deene voren ende dandere naer, alsints te suppediterene ende serf te maken, omme voorts te bet zijnen wille metten ghemeente te doene ende als een monarck alleene al tlant duere te dominerene, tal welcken fine hy van als nu diversche hertochdommen, graefscepen ende andere heerlicheden gheweldichlick themwaerts bleef houdende, jehghens alle rechten ende redenen*²¹.

Strikingly, Nicholas Despars couched his critique of autocratic princes in a rhetoric vein that is clearly indebted to the humanist ideology of 'civic' republicanism. The revolt of the French nobility against Louis XI in the 1460s, for example, is bluntly described as a valiant action "for the protection and the common good of the French republic" (*ter conservatie ende ghemeener welvaert van der franscher republicque*). It is important to note that this particular insistence on the '*res publicae*' was rooted in fertile ground in the county of Flanders. Previous scholarship has shown that the concept of the commonweal (the '*bien public*', '*utilitas communis*', or the '*ghemeene welvaert van den lande*') in French and Middle Dutch was firmly entrenched in the political vocabulary by the late thirteenth century. Ruling elites, as well as those who challenged them, justified their hold on power by claiming that it was necessary to protect the interests of the

20 About the confraternities: A. BROWN, *Civic ceremony and religion in medieval Bruges, c. 1300-1520*, Cambridge, 2011, pp. 168-190; L. CROMBIE, *Honour, community and hierarchy in the feasts of the archery and crossbow guilds of Bruges, 1445-81*, in *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 37, 2011, pp. 102-113.

21 N. DESPARS, *Cronyke op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 564-565.

urban community²². Therefore, Despars's discourse must have struck a note even with those who had not enjoyed a humanist education.

In vilifying Maximilian of Austria and Louis XI, Nicholas Despars provided his audience with a barely veiled commentary on contemporary politics. As a leading member of the Bruges political elite in the second half of the sixteenth century, Despars had played an important role during the Dutch Revolt against Philip II of Spain and – despite being Catholic – supported William of Orange, who led the resistance against the repressive religious policy of Philip II in the Low Countries. When William of Orange assumed control over the city of Bruges in March 1578, Despars became the leader of the so-called Council of Eighteen, the interim government that allowed protestant worship in Bruges²³. Nicholas also married the daughter of a secretary to William of Orange. Yet, the political situation in Bruges changed at the end of 1579, when government shifted from Despars's alliance of moderate Catholics and Protestants to a group of radical Protestants. Nicholas refrained from participating in urban politics until 1584, when Spanish troops reclaimed the city for the king. While the chronicler remained a Catholic and hoped for a rapprochement between Bruges and the princely government in the long run, it is also clear that he was critical of Habsburg policy. With the increasingly aggressive restoration of Habsburg power in Bruges after 1584, Despars must have thought it imprudent to describe the events of his own lifetime. Instead, he opted to finish his history of Flanders with a description of the reign of Maximilian, which was meant as a parable of the failure of the Dutch Revolt in the Southern Low Countries.

Despars's decision to coat his translation of Meyerus's *Annales Flandriae* with a specific political message was not unusual. Given the fact that the history of Flanders was largely dominated by recurrent confrontations between the principal cities and the counts, various versions of the *Chronicles of Flanders* were often suffused with a highly politicised interpretation of the narrated events, and Despars was clearly not an exception. What deserves special interest, however, is that Nicholas Despars has also integrated his own family history within this broader historical framework. This practice of commemorating one's ancestors within the framework of urban chronicles was common in contemporary southern German towns. As the descendants of urban leaders, these authors conceived the history of

-
- 22 W. PREVENIER, *Utilitas communis in the Low Countries (13th-15th centuries): from social mobilisation to legitimisation of power*, in *De Bono Communi. The discourse and practice of the common good in the European city, 13th-16th centuries*, ed. E. LECUPPRE-DESJARDIN and A.-L. VAN BRUAENE, Turnhout, 2010, pp. 205-216.
 - 23 J. DECAVELE, *Het herstel van het calvinisme in Vlaanderen in de eerste jaren na de pacificatie van Gent (1577-1578)*, in *Brugge in de Geuzentijd. Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de Hervorming te Brugge en in het Brugse Vrije tijdens de 16^{de} eeuw*, ed. D. VAN DER BAUWHEDDE and M. GOETINCK, Bruges, 1982, p. 12.

their hometown also as a history of their family²⁴. This was not different for the Despars family, whose members regularly sat on the Bruges bench of aldermen from the late fifteenth century onwards. Despars's work also shows a particular concern to impress his audience with the prominent social status of himself and his house. Despars was not only a leading urban citizen, but also a nobleman: his family had made its fortune in the long-distance trade, and in the first decades of the sixteenth century, members of the Despars lineage increasingly profiled themselves as noblemen. As his epitaph shows, Nicholas himself was not an exception:

*Hic iacet nobilis vir Nicolaus Despars
Filius Cornely literis et armis*

Here lies the nobleman Nicolas Despars,
son of Cornelis; illustrious with sword
and pen;

*Clarus rei publicae Brugensis strenuus
Fautor iustitiae et aequitatis observator
Nec non antiquitatis indefessus*

vigorous dispenser of justice
and equity in the republic of Bruges;
indefatigable investigator of the past;
tutor of this almshouse;

*Indagator pariterque huius
Xenodochii curator qui obiit*

who died on the 20th day of November
in the year of Our Lord 1597

*Anno A Nativitate Domini M.D.XCVII
Die XX mensis novembris*

This epitaph was very likely composed by Despars himself, and the neo-classical choice of words provides a telling testimony of the entrenchment of humanism at the top social layers of late sixteenth-century Bruges. Tombstones were commonly used to propagate the noble status of a deceased person and his lineage, but Despars also prided himself on his activities as an urban politician and chronicler²⁵. Inversely, his chronicle was also suffused with this desire to propagate the social and political prominence of the Despars family in Bruges. He entwined his account, for example, with a highly fictitious narrative about his own lineage. He depicted his forebears as important noble courtiers of the Burgundian dukes in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century, while in fact his ancestors were wealthy spice merchants; the family had only attained noble status shortly before Nicholas's birth in 1522. He constructed a similar narrative for his first wife,

24 P. MONNET, *Ville réelle et ville idéale à la fin du Moyen Age: une géographie au prisme des témoignages autobiographiques allemands*, in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 56, 2001, pp. 591-621; T. ZOTZ, *Der Stadtadel im spätmittelalterlichen Deutschland und seine Erinnerungskultur*, in *Adelige und bürgerliche Erinnerungskulturen des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. W. RÖSENER, Göttingen, 2000, pp. 145-161; C. KUHN, *Generation als Grundbegriff einer historischen Geschichtskultur. Die Nürnberger Tucher im langen 16. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, 2010.

25 See J. DUMOLYN and K. MOERMANS, *Distinctie en memorie. Symbolische investeringen in de eeuwigheid door laatmiddeleeuwse hoge ambtenaren in het graafschap Vlaanderen*, in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, vol. 116, 2003, pp. 332-349; C. LIDDY (with C. STEER), *John Lord Lumley and the creation and commemoration of lineage in early modern England*, in *The Archaeological Journal*, vol. 167, 2010, pp. 197-227.

Avezoete Claissone, who was the mother of his two sons and to whom he had dedicated his chronicle. He made her descend from an illegitimate son of Louis of Male, the last count to rule the county of Flanders before it passed to the Valois dukes of Burgundy in 1384. It gave his two sons, Cornelis and Jacob, a claim to princely blood. Instead of confirming the Despars family as recently ennobled members of the Bruges elite, the chronicle presents them as a long-established noble house that could trace its descent to the high nobility of fourteenth-century Europe. From this perspective, Despars used the historiographical tradition of the *Flandria Generosa* as a backdrop to connect his own family with that of the old princely dynasties. In doing so, Nicholas seems to have continued something of a family tradition. By the middle of the sixteenth century – well before Nicholas started his chronicle – Corneille Gailliard (d. 1563), a herald of Emperor Charles V, who spent the last years of his life in Bruges, complained that members of the Despars family were falsely boasting that they could retrace their ancestry to the extinct princely dynasties of Burgundy and Brittany²⁶.

The case of the Despars chronicle suggests that the writing and rewriting of the protean histories of the county of Flanders was to a certain extent tied to the collective identity of specific social networks, similar to the previously discussed case of the ‘books of memory’, which seem to have been entrenched in the historical consciousness of the urban craft guilds. A decidedly urban interpretation of the *Chronicle of Flanders* – as opposed to versions of the chronicle with a strict courtly perspective – must have appealed to nobles and patricians, who mediated between the local community and the principality’s government. This interpretation is strengthened by a newly discovered historiographical text, of which we provide the first critical edition in the appendix. It is an undated document from a private collection, which seems to date from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. It is a short text of barely 3,000 words, which is clearly based on the *Flandria Generosa* tradition. The text starts in a traditional manner with a description of Liederic de Buc, the mythical founding father of the county of Flanders. The purpose of the text is to legitimise the eminent position of the De Baenst family, another prominent noble family in Bruges²⁷. It describes how the De Baenst family stemmed from the noble house of Cadzand, which appears in sources up to the end of the fourteenth century. The Cadsant family, in turn, was supposedly descendant from an old royal family from the British Isles. Those pagan Britons apparently settled on the island of Cadzand (in the Scheldt estuary in Flanders) in the seventh century and converted to Christianity due to their close friendship

26 P. DONCHE, *Opmerkelijk commentaar van wapenheraut Cornelius Gailliard op het familiewapen Despars anno 1555*, in *Vlaamse Stam*, vol. 45, 2009, pp. 481-494.

27 F. BUYLAERT, *Sociale mobiliteit bij stedelijke elites in laatmiddeleeuws Vlaanderen. Een gevalstudie over de Vlaamse familie De Baenst*, in *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis*, vol. 8, 2005, pp. 201-251.

with Liederic, the first ruler of Flanders²⁸. The style, discourse and topoi of the De Baenst myth are strikingly similar to that of the *Chronicle of Flanders*. This similarity was intentional and was meant to underline the historical importance of the house of De Baenst. There is evidence that the De Baensts managed to spread the myth of their origins: the seventeenth-century humanist writer Mattheus Smallegange discusses the mythical English origins of the De Baenst family in his *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland*, which he had copied from what he described as “a very old and respectable genealogical book”, itself probably composed in the late sixteenth century²⁹. The De Baenst myth proves that Despars was not unique in establishing the nobility of his house by entwining its history with that of the princely dynasty of Flanders. Even more importantly, it shows that this strategy was not only deployed by recently ennobled families, since the De Baenst family had belonged to the nobility since the late fourteenth century³⁰.

That both new and old nobility felt entitled to entrench its past in a general history of the county of Flanders had probably much to do with the very nature of nobility. It differed from other forms of social distinction (e.g. being rich or a burgher) because it was part and parcel of the political framework of the principality. Nobility was closely tied to lordship, that is, the legitimate and public right to dispense justice within a local community. In marked contrast to a modern state, the prince was not the sole fount of authority in late medieval society: in order to rule his territory, he relied on the cooperation of noble lords and the clergy, who all had power of their own. Flanders was no exception³¹. Since noblemen were by definition public figures, it is quite understandable that Flemish noble families, such as the Despars and the De Baenst, played a pivotal role in the continuation and reception of the *Chronicles of Flanders*. Since these texts sketched a political history of the county, they focused on the ruling class, namely nobles and urban patricians. The conceptualisation of the nobility as a political community also helps us to understand why noblemen such as Nicholas Despars used his own adaptation of the *Chronicle of Flanders* to formulate a veiled critique

28 This also seems to be the document that is partially quoted without a source reference in J.-J. GAILLIARD, *Bruges et le Franc, ou leur magistrature et leur noblesse avec des données historiques et généalogiques sur chaque famille*, Bruges, 1857, vol. I, p. 22. The document was known to nineteenth-century scholars as indicated by the reference to ‘N. De Pauw’ on the back of the document. Napoléon De Pauw (d. 1922) was a highly respected historian of medieval Flanders, see G. BAERT, *Pauw, baron Napoléon de*, in *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, vol. 9, 1981, cc. 594-602.

29 “een seer oud en aensienlijk geslachtboek my daer van ter hand gekomen zijnde.” M. SMALLEGANGE, *Nieuwe Cronyk van Zeeland*, Middelburg, 1696, p. 401.

30 F. BUYLAERT, *Repertorium van de Vlaamse adel (ca. 1350 – ca. 1500)*, Ghent, 2011, pp. 35-40.

31 F. BUYLAERT, W. DE CLERCQ and J. DUMOLYN, *Sumptuary legislation, material culture and the semiotics of “vivre noblement” in the county of Flanders (14th-16th centuries)*, in *Social History*, vol. 36, 2011, pp. 393-417.

of the Habsburg dynasty³². In Flanders, as in other parts of north-western Europe, the nobility believed that the prince was obliged to follow their advice. They were entitled to their own views on policy-making, and failure of the prince to heed their advice made him a bad ruler³³. This attitude was also held by the De Baenst lineage as reflected by another literary text from the civil war of the 1480s³⁴. Owned by two family members in Ghent, it addresses the dangers of an estrangement between a ruler and his most powerful subjects. All in all, it is understandable that both the De Baenst and the Despars decided to inscribe their own family history in the general history of the county: their noble status legitimised their membership of the exclusive networks that monopolised political communications between the centre and the localities, and it simultaneously stressed their right to voice their opinion about princely policies.

Conclusions

It is clear that fifteenth- and sixteenth century Flanders witnessed a flowering of various secular historiographical traditions. As we have seen, the age-old tradition of the *Chronicle of Flanders* adhered to a format that focused on the succession of Flemish counts, whereas the large Flemish cities developed alternative versions of those chronicles that combined the county-wide perspective with a decidedly urban focus. Yet, this overview indicates that both historiographical traditions were similar in that they were tied closely to the social network from which they originated. Within the craft guilds, the tradition of ‘books of memory’ was used by the middle groups to voice their interests and preoccupations. Similarly, the surviving texts of the Despars and De Baenst lineages hint at the existence of specific ‘textual communities’ of highly literate urban nobles and politicians who were actively committed to the history of the county. They wrote these historical narratives because they legitimised their claim to rule jointly with the prince³⁵. The surviving historiographical texts were both a product and a constituent of the ‘social memories’ of this social group. The texts discussed in this contribution all

32 Compare with C. GIVEN-WILSON, *The English nobility in the late Middle Ages. The fourteenth-century political community*, London and New York, 1987.

33 See also the observations in Y. HARARI, *Renaissance military memoirs. War, history and identity, 1450-1600*, Woodbridge, 2004, pp. 182-184.

34 F. BUYLAERT, *Sociale mobiliteit op. cit.*, pp. 224-225. See also C. VAN HOOREBEECK, *La ville, le prince et leurs officiers en Flandre à la fin du Moyen Age: livres et lectures de la famille de Baenst*, in *Le Moyen Age*, vol. 113, 2007, pp. 45-67. The text in question is a translation into middle Dutch of the (Latin) narrative of Galbert of Bruges, which describes the fight for urban autonomy of Bruges against the Flemish count in the 1120s. J. RIDER, *Galbert of Bruges' Journal: from medieval flop to modern bestseller*, in *Verhalende bronnen. Repertoriëring, editie en commercialisering*, ed. L. MILIS, V. LAMBERT and A. KELDERS, Ghent, 1996, pp. 77-81.

35 We follow the definition of B. STOCK, *The implications of literacy: written language and models of interpretation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries*, Princeton, 1983, p. 522.

fulfilled a similar function: they contributed to the reification of specific social groups, because they provided that particular group with a shared history. Hence, the integrated study of historiography, social history, and the construction of social memories is confirmed as a fruitful perspective for future research.

Yet, several issues deserve special attention within this particular line of enquiry. Urban craftsmen seem to have developed an interpretation of the ‘memory books’ that reflected the political traditions and aspirations of the urban middle groups; nobles constructed their own historiographies, using the *Chronicle of Flanders* as a point of departure. This raises the question of the nature of boundaries between these textual communities, as the audiences of the various historiographical genres would not have fallen into neatly distinguishable social groups. While the available evidence suggests that the *Chronicle of Flanders* was a genre that had a particular appeal to writers with noble aspirations, it is equally clear that there was no strict separation between ‘noble’, county-oriented chronicles and ‘middle-class’, urban-oriented ‘memory books’. The literary practices of the craft guilds and the urban elite cannot be strictly separated, because the two groups were connected by social mobility. One copy of the ‘memory books’ from Ghent, for example, was preserved in the writings of a member of the noble De Baenst lineage, who had taken up residence there in the 1450s³⁶.

A second question concerns the development of the ‘noble chronicles’ and the textual communities that surrounded them. Obviously, the intermingling of broader historical narratives with the purely local concerns of a single institution – be it a monastery or a city – had become a venerable historiographical tradition by the sixteenth century. Yet, it is unclear whether the appropriation of this literary technique by individual families was a new phenomenon or not. At this stage, we do not know any texts that predate the middle of the sixteenth century and in which the history of the county of Flanders and its rulers is fused with that of a specific noble lineage. Perhaps this practice was not so much the continuation of a late medieval tradition, but something that emerged in the wake of the printing of the *Excellente Cronike van Vlaenderen* (1531) by the Antwerp printer Willem Vorsterman (d. 1543). With the printing, standardisation, and relatively cheap distribution of the *Chronicle of Flanders*, even larger parts of Flemish society gained knowledge of this historiographical tradition. It is possible that the attempts of prominent noble lineages to anchor their public image in the best-known text on the history of Flanders originated from the growing availability of exemplars of this particular historiographical tradition.

The question how those chronicles were continued in the age of print is also tied to the debate on the changing nature of political thought in the sixteenth century. The flowering of humanism in the large cities of sixteenth-century Flanders was

36 A.-L. VAN BRUAENE, *De Gentse memorieboeken op. cit.*

obviously a highly complex phenomenon. It transcended a growing appreciation and emulation of classical writings as it tried to exploit its discourse. Humanist writers, such as Nicholas Despars, redeployed an age-old historiographical tradition by fusing it with the increasingly popular vocabulary of classical republicanism and more traditional ideas, such as the urban insistence on the 'common good' and the interpretation of seigniorial lordship as a legitimate constituent of the polity. Nicholas Despars's reworking of the *Chronicle of Flanders* shows that this affinity with humanism could combine a decidedly aristocratic conception of princely government with the political vocabulary of neo-classicist scholarship. These historiographical experiments mirror the ways in which the Dutch Revolt was breaking new ground, while being much indebted to the urban and noble resistance against the growth of princely authority in the Middle Ages.

Methodology represents the last and most important challenge for scholars who are concerned with understanding historiographical texts as essential to social identity formation. As Wulf Kansteiner has argued, 'social memories' should not be reduced to the sum of individual commemorative practices. While collective memories are anchored in individuals, their logic cannot be reduced to the agency of individual authors whose texts or images are functional to the experience of belonging to a group, such as the Bruges nobility or the milieu of the Ghent craft guilds. Unfortunately, it is not easy to trace how social memories emerge from individual constructs: even for modern times, it is hard to trace how individual authors were received by their audience³⁷. For sixteenth-century Flanders, this is even more daunting a challenge. Yet, the mutterings of Corneille Gailliard about the pretensions of the Despars family or the notes of Jan de Rouck on his father's chronicle indicate how highly individual interpretations of historical events were perceived by others. In this context, the historiographical tradition of the *Chronicle of Flanders* may provide an excellent case-study for a broad reassessment: the recently started in-depth comparison between the various versions of the *Chronicle of Flanders* is likely to provide a clearer perspective on how one of the key narratives for identity building was received and rewritten to fit the changing needs of the day³⁸. The practices of the Despars and the De Baenst lineage suggest that the constant rewriting of those chronicles is not only relevant for processes of regional identity formation, but also for the position of specific social groups within Flemish society.

37 W. KANSTEINER, *Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies*, in *History and Theory*, vol. 41, 2002, p. 192.

38 Stijn Villerius analyses this in more detail in his doctoral research project (2011-2015) based at Ghent University and the Radboud University Nijmegen under the supervision of Jan Dumolyn and Johan Oosterman.

Appendix

A ORIGINAL - Private collection of Eric Devos (Dienst Erfgoed Ronse)³⁹

The text is written on one side of a roll that consists of five sheets of parchment. The roll is 2,64 metres and 28 centimetres wide. The date of production and authorship are unknown. On palaeographical grounds, it can be situated in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century⁴⁰. The spaces intended for heraldic illustrations were left blank. Little is known about the history of the document, except that it at some point it was in the private ownership of the historian Napoléon De Pauw (d. 1922), whose name is added on the back of the roll.

Int jaer ons Heeren, als men schreef zeshondert ende twaelve, binnen des keyzers Eraclius tijden, als doen in Vrancryck rengneerde die groote conync Lotharius; zoo was doen Liederic de Buck een foreestier int landt van Neder Gallia, ghezeyt Belgica, een vroom man van wapenen, den zoone van Salva van Rossellion, in Vrancreryck ghelegen.

Desen Liederick was die eerste foreestier van Vlaenderen, die naermaels tot eenen wyfve hadde des conyncx dochter van Vrancrerycke, alwaer bij hij hadde diveersche kynderen, zoo conyncquen belyden. In dien tyt zoo wasser eenen conync van den den van Hybernia, Hyerlant ghenaeemt, welcke conync was ghenaeemt Bagos van Hyerlant, die afgheedaelt was van den ouden Troijaenen. Welcke Bagos hadde vele groote oorloghen jeghenen die conynghen van Groot Brytaingnen, aldus Ynghelant ghenaeemt. Ende tot dier tyt waeren in Brytaingnen vijf conynghen die dat lant begheerden, ende dat totter tyt van hertoghe Willem van Normandyen die overquam in Ynghelant, ende verdreef dese vijf conynghen, ende stelde in huerlieder plaetsen hertoghen ende graven, alzoو noch ten daghe van hedent es. Zoo de conyncque van Ynghelant zeyt van hertoghe Willem van Normandyen, zullen wij nu spreken van den conync van Hyerlant, als dat hij oorloghe voerde jeghens den conynck van Brytaingnen, dat was ter causen van een heylant dat hem onthouden was bij foortsen, dat zijn voorzaten hadde toebehoort, ghenaeemt zijnde Waterpoort, welcke lant es gheleghen tusschen Hyerlant ende Schotlandt, an den kant van Albanyen ofte Noordhumerlant. Den welcken conynck Bagos niet wederstaen en conste zynen vianden, zoo es hij bedocht ende te raede ghegaen metten zynen ende zynder vrouwen, als dat zy namen al zynen ghereeden schadt van goudt ende van baghen, ende hem ghestelt in een schip wel ghevictailliert, van dies hem van noode zoude zyn. Ende heeft zyn lant ghelaten ende ter zee inneghezeylt naer den noorden, ende es ghecommen ten laetste an tlant van Batavia ghenaeemt,

39 The authors are very much indebted to Eric Devos, who informed them of the existence of this text.

40 Compare with the documents of that time span in C. DEKKER, R. BAETENS and S. MAARSCHALKERWEERD-DECHAMPS, ed., *Album Palaeographicum XVII Provinciarum*, Turnhout, 1992, nrs. 154-256.

dwelcke nu Hollandt es. Ende zij hadden wel willen arriveeren te lande. Dit ziende die inwoonders slants, die hieten die Wilde Slaven, die welcke waeren moordadich ende die daerteghen stonden, als dat Bagos moeste comen in huerlieder havene van Stavenburgh ghenaept, dwelcke es een stede in Hollant van den eersten beghinne, ende heet Vleerdingshen, upden stroom van den Rhy; ende valt in de Noorde zee, ende trect voor Roomenburgh en Bryte, dwelcke waeren twee groote vermaerde casteelen, die welcke waeren ghemaect van den Romeynen, langhe te vooren eer Julius Cesar quam hier in dese Nederlanden. Zoo eyst ghebuert als dat zy ghekeert zijn ten westen, naer dat groote wilde landt van Gallia oft Belgica Belgica (sic) ghelegghen, nu Vlaenderen ghenaept. Ende quamen in die poort ofte havene van Belgica, ghelegghen tusschen den turre ofte stercheyt van Roodenburch ende anden burght ende Lammensvliet, dat nu Sluus heet. Ziende datter lach een groote bosschaige ende broucachtich landt, zoo hebben zy daerin ghevaeren, ende hemlieden te lande ghestelt om hemlieden te vermaeckene, want zy langhe ter zee hadden ghelegghen. Ende hebben inghenomen van dies hemlieden ghebrac, ten besten dat zy consten van de inwoonders des foreests ende hemlieden ghevraecht wat lant dattet was, naer huerlieder heere ofte voocht. Andwoordende ten besten dat zy conden, van eenen Liederick De Buck, den upmeten zoo quam Ter hoore van den natien die daer ghearriveert waeren, ende ooc huerlieder munte van ghelde dat zy ghezien hadde van den lieden die hemlieden bezurghde, van dies zy van noode hadden. Ende daarnaer heeft conync Bagos ghezonden twee edelen van zyne huuse an Liederic De Buc, hem biddende up alle edelheyt, dat hem zoude willen ghelieven dat hy zoude moghen ghebruuc hebben (⁴) om zyn goet te verteeren ende ghemac te neemen. De twee edelen voorenzeyt ende verhaelt die cause van conync Bagos, huerlieder heere, alsvooren verhaelt. Als Liederic verhoorde dat hy was een edelman ende conync, zoo es Liederic in persooone reverentie doende, hem ende zynder huusvrauwe hem vriendelic ontfanghende, tot zynen hove ghebrocht. Dwelck hof stont van Liederic, dat was die burcht met vele vertrecken ende huusingen ghemaect van temmerhout, dat men zeyt dat nu te Brugghe es, want daertevooren haddet eenen anderen name. Zoo heeft dan die conync hem daer onderhouden langhentyt. Ende Liederic heeft conync Bagos ghesconcken een vermaerde plaetse van ghelande, streckende lancxt den zeeant, te weten theylant van der havene van Belgica, dwelcke als doen groot was, ter zeewaert ingaende, alsnu ghenaept Cadsandt, streckende neffens der bosschaige van Roodenburgh, nu ghenaept Ardenburgh. Bagos ziende de jonste van Liederic, heeft daer doen maecken een stercheyt van eenen slote groot en sterc, ter bede van zynder frauwe om thebbene een plaetse van rusten want zoo bevrucht was met kynde ende daer af ghelach in Cadsant. Den vader gaf hem den name Canwerans, ende dat naer eenen afgodt die de Hyersche zeere beminden. Maer Liederic dede zoo vele, dat hy kersten wert ghemact, ende ghenaept Fredericus van Cadsant, omdat hy in Cadsant ghebooren was. Maer zyn vadere bleef in doolinghe van den gheloove. Item, naer die doot van conync Bagos, zoo es blyven bezitten de jonghe Fredericus, met zynder moeder, het heylandt van Cadsandt, wiens moedere van Fredericus was een dochter van den prinche van Waterpoort. Beede huerlieder waepenen volghen hiernaer in figueren ghestelt:

[blank]

Desen jonghen prinche Fredericus was bemindt van den jonghen forestier Anthuenis ghenaeamt, Liederix zoone was, want zy tsamen upghegroeyt waeren. Fredericus hadde te wyfve by toedoene van Anthuenis de forestier, een dochter van den prinche van Duringhen, in Lothryck gheleghen. Hadden tsamen eenen zoone ende twee dochteren, welcke alle waeren vermoort ende doot gheslegghen. Maer die prinche van Cadsant was ghevanghen ghenomen ende zynen schat beroeft ende wech ghevoert van Rollo, capiteyn van der Wilden Hunen ende Wandaelen, een volck quaet van levne ende bloetgierich. Ende zy beroofden gheheel Vlaenderen ende beroofden al dat zy consten ende mochten.

[blank]

Ende by toedoene van desen Rollo, zoo bleef Vlaenderen bet dan hondert jaeren verloost ende ter ruine. Ende Rollo quam naer die stadt van Riemen in Vranckrycke, aldaer hy zeere bestreden was ende ghevanghen. Maer Rollo badt om up thouden den jonghen prinche van Cadsant; ooc dede Rollo belofte van kersten te werden den conync mette zynen. Daerup gaf hem die conync te huwelicke zijn dochter Ghyva ghenaeamt, ende tlant van Nufram, als nu tlant van Normandyen ghenaeamt. Ende dat capiteyn Rollo ter cause van dien, die wilde Normans haghende slaven, daerof dat hy eenen prinche was van dien. Ende Rollo gaf over al dat hij berooft hadde van den jonghen prinche van Cadsant, Artus ghenaeamt. Verhoort hebbende die conync van zijnder afcompste, die bemint was van Ghyva, twyf van Rollo, zoo was hem toegheleyt de zuster van de grave van Suffooc in Ynghelant, dat hy niet geerne en dede, om dies wille dat hy ghedachte van zynen voorvaders, die de Ynghelschen verdreven hadden. Maer om die baete ende ter begheerte van Ghyva heeft hy ghedaen. Ende van dit huwelic zoo quam eenen zoone, ghenaeamt Anthuenis van Cadsant. Dit zyn de wapenen hiernaer volghende:

[blank]

Hiernaer volghet van Anthuenis van Cadsant ghecommen uut Ynghelant vander moederlicke zyde, die hem ghehouden hadde te Can in Normandyen. Naer toverlyden van zynder moedere zoo trac hy in Ynghelant ende bezat die heerlicheyt ende tgoet van zynder moedere. Ende nam aldaer een vrouwe van edeldomme daerby dat hy creegh zoonen en dochteren. Den welcken zoone hiet heer Ollivier van Cadsant, die wert een zeer vermaert coopman ende hilt schepen ter zee vaeren in diverse landen van coopmanschap. In dien tyt zoo was in Vlaenderen eenen grave Aernout grave van Vlaenderen, zoone van Boudewyn. By hem ende zijnen Raedt van den Edelen van Vlaenderen, zoo dede hy uitlegghen ende zandt uutboden in allen landen. Zoo wat coopmanschap dat wilde incommen in Vlaenderen, zoo te lande oft ter zee, dat zy vercoopen zouden al dat zy brochten te Vlaenderen waert. Dit verhoorende myn heere Ollivier van Cadsant, ende overdacht dat hy wel zoude willen zien die plaetse van zynen voorhouders, die zy hem in Vlaenderen

onthouden hadden. Zoo heeft heeft hy doen laden zyn schepen van coopmanschap ende es ghecommen naer Vlaenderen, in die havene van Lammensvliet, als nu Sluus ghenaempt. Dit hoorende, grave Aernout was verblyt van die nieuware. Aernout heeft hem doen ontbieden, dat hy zoude willen bij hem commen te Brugghe, aldaer hy lach om hem te feestierne, want hy hadde verstaen van zyne costelike schepen, van banieren ende wapenen daerup ghestaen, als dat een edelman was van gheboorten. By hem hem commende, heeft hem vriendelic ontfanghen ende heeft hem beschoncken grave Aernout. Ende die facteurs hebben tgoet vercocht ende die penninghen ontfien. Ende hy bescanc grave Aernout met schoone ghiften, als dat hy hem zoude adverteeren van zynen voorvaders alsvooren verhaelt. Twelcke dat grave Aernout dede, ende macte hem kennelick van den lande van Cadsandt, ende gaf them in handen alzoot zyn voorvaders hadden ghehad van Liederick De Buck van Vlaenderen. Ende dede weder up maecken dat ter ruyne was, ende stelde daerin zyn oudste zoone, joncheer Jan van Cadsant ghenaempt. Ende bleef huusghezin ende edelman van grave Aernout ende wert een man van wapenen, naer der edelheits manieren. Ende grave Aernout gaf hem zyns wyfs nichte, die met haer ghecommen was uut Ytaillien, want grave Aernouts wyf was een dochter van den conynck van Lombardien. Binnen deser tyt quam binnen Lammensvliet een schip, gheladen met Hiersche hondekens, dwelcke noynt tevooren hier in tlant en waeren, dwelcke de lieden van Brugghe in cleenicheden namen. Die maere quam te hove van grave Aernout, ende den jonghen heere van Cadsandt. Ende dede upcoopen alle die hondekens, omdat se quamen uut Yerland, daer zyn voorvaders uut ghespruit waeren, ende ooc duer tpublieren van grave Aernout; ende waeren ghecocht ende betaelt. Schynkende elcken die se begheerde.

[blank]

Dit zyn de wapenen van joncheer Ollivier van Cadsandt ende zynder vrouwe.

Ende dese twee woonden in Cadsandt met haeren huusghezinne. Ende zoo ghelach van eenen zoone die hiet Jan van Cadsant, de welcke upgroeyende metten jonghen Boudewyn La Barbe, grave van Vlaenderen. Want zy bestonden van den moederlicke zyde, als dat hy naer der hand ridder gheslaghen werdt van grave Boudewyn van Vlaenderen, want hy die eerste was die ridderschap ordonierde in Vlaenderen. Dese myn heere Jan van Cadsant ridder zynde, die hadde een wyf van den huuse ende gheslachte van Boloengnen ofte Buenen, byden zeecant gheleghe. Ende zy hadden tsamen zoonen en dochteren, onder al eenen zoone, Anthuenis van Cadsant ghenaempt.

[blank]

Dit zijn de wapenen van Jan van Cadsant ende zynder huusvrouwe.

Desen heer Anthuenis van Cadsandt, by der tyt van grave Robrecht De Vriese grave van Vlaenderen, ende track met hem in Terra Sancta tot menigher plaetsen,

daer zyn verdreven ende dootsloughen donghelooveghe. Ende graef Robrecht macte hem een capiteyn van zynen armeye, ende halt winnen Thunis ende Massore ende Dacques in Affricque. Desen Anthuenis van Cadsant slouch af eenen grooten heydenschen heere, ghenaeempt Edras van Agrimonien, die welcke wapene zeere blyncde van zelver ende ghesteenten daerinne ghestaen. Daeromme die heydenen waeren bedrouft. Dit ziende graef Robrecht van Vlaenderen, zoo badt hy Anthuenis van Cadsant, dat hy wilde laeten te voeren de wapenen van zynen voorvaders van Hyerlant, ende anveerden die wapenen van zynen verwonnen vyant, dat hij die voeren zoude in ghedynckenesse van den victorien die zy daer behaelden. Wiens begheerte hy heeft ghedaen. Welcke wapene was: een sabel velt, met drye merletten d'argent d'argent, met een faessche duergaende int velt van sabel. De welcke hij bleef voerende die daghen syns levens. Ende was daer ridder gheslegghen present de kerstenen heeren, int velt. Naer dier tyt keerdy wederen met graeve Robrecht naer Vlaenderen, ende huwede Anthonie van Varmandoys. Daer af dat quamen zoonen en dochteren.

[blank]

Dit zyn de wapenen van Anthuenis ende zynder vrouwe.

[blank]

Desen joncheer Roelandt van Cadsant was jonck als zyn vader starf. Dese quam up ende werdt een man van wapenen, achtervolghende zyne voorvaders, ende trac metten jonghen Vriesen grave van Vlaenderen int Helich Landt. Wederomme commende naer der handt in Vlaenderen zoo was hij ghemact een toeziendere ofte ammerael van Vlaenderen. Zoo ghebuerde vele groote schade van der zee, want tlandt van Cadsant dreef meest gheheel wech ende bedraf tlandt van Zombeke, Bres ende tlandt van Oostburgh. Tusschen Wacken en Vlaenderen daer verdroncken vele schoone heerlicheden ende ghestichten dat claghelic was, want goede lieden van eeren moesten van aermoede doolen. Dese joncheer Roelant nam een vrouwe uut Hollant, van den gheslachte van die van Catwyt, aldaer by dat hy hadde eenen zoone, ghenaeempt Guydo.

[blank]

Dus Guydo, zoone van Roelandt van Cadsant. Desen Guydo van Cadsant die was met keyser Boudewyn van Constantinoplen over ten Helighen Lande, met zynen joncxten broedere, de welcken starf up de reyse, ende leyt begraven in Hontpamagossin int conynckrycke van Cypres. Desen Guydo van Cadsant was capiteyn van den stat van Biervliet ende den ghelande dontrent. Ende als graef Boudewyn van Vlaenderen assault dede up Constantinoplen ende lach upt heylant van Sinte Pieters by der stat ghelegghen, zoo quam joncheer Guydo met zyne schepen ende seyde af de kethenen van den havene van Constantinoplen, trac met zynen ruuters in die stadt up eenen hoogen torre, ende stac uut de vlag van

Vlaenderen. Daeromme die kerstenen blyde waeren, ende die keyser Boudewyn die slouch hem riddere, ende die van Biervliet was toegeheleyt die wapenen te voeren van Constantinoplen ende Vlaenderen. Desen Guydo leefde vele jaeren ghehuwet an een huusvrauwe van den gheslachte van Lyndale, ende hadden tsamen vele zoonen en dochteren die alle ghealligiert waeren in huusen van edeldomme, onder al in Brabant an een gheslachte gheheeten van Castolome, die voeren die wapenen van Cadsant. Daeromme dat ic zelve hebbe gheweest uut laste van Anthuenis De Baenst om te ziene oft alleens es.

[blank]

Dit zyn de wapenen van Guydo ende zynder vrouwen.

[blank]

Men mach weten dat van desen voorgheslachten ende naercommelynghen waeren zeer sterc van die van Cadsandt ofte de Baenstinghen, zoomense nu heet. Al by der tyt van grave Lodewyck van Vlaenderen, als dat zy vermochten munte ende ghelt te doen slaene binnen haeren palen van Cadsandt, ende de Baenstinghen noch onderhouden hebben van die zelve munte. Ende hebben zeere groot gheweest te Brugghe, Sluus ende ontrent den zeecant. Daer plach te staene een zeer groot dorp, ghenampt Zombeke, met een casteel zeer ryckelic om zien; daer woonde een heer Adam De Baenst. Byder tyt van den ouden hertoghe Phelips van Bourgoengnen waeren vier ghebroeders, te weten Jan, Guydo, Anthuenis ende Rochus De Baenst die hem hilden int quartier van Brugghe ende daerontrent. Noch eenen Guydo De Baenst, ridder des Helichs Graefs. Noch eenen Jan De Baenst, ridder des Helichs Graefs. Noch eenen Jan De Baenst, heere was van Tillegghem, van Beernem ende Sint Joost Ten Destele. Zoo, datmen te vele diverse sche plaetsen, ghestichten ende schoone sepultueren vyndt van den Baenstinghen, zoo tot Ysendycke, Biervliet, daer heeft gheweest in Hertinghen in 't verdroncken lant van den zee, alsvooren voornoemt. Ick bevynde datter heeft gheweest een joncvrau Cathelyne van Cadsant, die ghetraut hadde Phelips Van Lompeert, raedt camerlinck ons geduchs heeren, zynde hoochbailliu van Berghen Berghambacht. Hiernaer volghen huer wapenen.

[blank]

Hiernaer volghen die Baenstinghen die ter Sluus ligghen begraven in de hoochkercke van der stede, met haerlieder huusvrouwen, wesende Onser Vrouwenkercke.

Hier light begraven Lodewyck De Baenst, zoone van Anthuenis De Baenst, die overleet int jaer duust IIII^C LXXVII debet esse LXXII ligghende achter den epistelaere in den hooghen choir.

Hier light begraven joncvrauwe Margriete van Vlaenderen, Lodewyckx dochter, huusvrauwe van eenen Lodewyck De Baenst, ligghende achter den epistelaere in den hooghen choir.

Noch een sepulture van Anthuenis De Baenst [...] ^(b) De Baenst [...] ^(c) was heere van Santevelde, die starf anno XV^C ende zesse, in een [...] ^(d) ter slyncker zyde van den hooghen outaer.

^(a) Superscript: 'in zyn palen.'

^(b) Erased.

^(c) Erased.

^(d) Illegible.