

WILLELMUS PROCURATOR AND HIS *CHRONICON*

I. Author and *Chronicon* ¹

The historiography of Holland, the western part of the Netherlands, before the middle of the 14th century, depends mostly on the sources from the monastery of Egmond. There are three works : the *Annals*, the *Chronicon Egmundense*, the *Chronicon* of Willelmus Procurator.

The *Annals* give the history of this part of the world until 1205; the *Chronicon Egmundense* (describing the same period) has been understood as the *Annals* adapted for publication, as the text is very similar (1122-1168) or identical (1168-1205) with the text of the *Annals*. The relation between these works however, has to be reconsidered.

The third work is the *Chronicon* of Willelmus Procurator. He regards his work as a continuation of the *Annals* from 1168. The first part is in fact a third version of the same text, but he has incorporated data from other sources. ² Of this *Chronicon* there is but one manuscript : Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hist. 17. ³

1. This article is a slightly adapted version of a paper read at a conference about compilation in historical authors of the Middle Ages, in Groningen (the Netherlands), december 1997.

2. There is of this part of the work no edition, because it was considered only another version of the *Chronicon Egmundense*, but interpolated, and thus less interesting.

3. Of the part of the work from 1205 there is an edition : C. PIJNACKER HORDIJK, *Willelmi capellani in Brederode postea monachi et procuratoris Egmundensis chronicon*, Werken Historisch Genootschap, 3e serie, 20, Amsterdam 1904. As this paper is about the relation of the text and the manuscript, all references to the text are to the ff. of the manuscript. In the new edition I am preparing (1999), the foliation of the manuscript will be clearly visible.

What we know about the author is what he tells us himself :
 — he went to school in Spaarnwoude (f. 73 the story of the giant of Spaarnwoude),
 — he was a chaplain in Brederode, in or about the year 1321 (f. 60v),
 — in that time he became gravely ill, was miraculously healed by a visiting baptised Jew through the intermediary of Saint Adalbert, and withdrew from the world to the monastery of Egmond. This he tells in detail in the *Miracula Adalberti* which he wrote, not before 1332 (as is demonstrated by the fact that one of the miracles told here is written quite at the end of the chronicle for the year 1332). The author was identified and the text edited by W. Levison.⁴
 — in Egmond he became a monk from 1324 (f. 81v),
 — and procurator or dispensator in that monastery in 1329 and 1330 (f. 127v and f. 132).

If he was a chaplain in 1321, he cannot have been born much later than ca. 1295. If he is to be identified with Willelmus Jacobi,⁵ then he died in 1335, on the 18th of April.⁶ To recapitulate the reasons why this should be true: in the *Proeliarius* of the 16th century author Paulus Rodolphi de Rixtel⁷ there is to be found a transcription of part of the chronicles of Willelmus Procurator, and there the name of the author is given as **Willelmus Jacobi**.⁸

Literary historians of the 17th century speak of an author in Egmond ('Guilielmus Iacobi Egmondanus in Hollandia monachus Benedictinus') who wrote histories in *versibus* and a *Chronica*

4 W. LEVISON, 'Wilhelm Procurator von Egmond und seine Miracula Adalberti', in *Neues Archiv* 40, 1916 p. 798-804.

5. M. CARASSO-KOK, 'Willelmus fecit, Wilhelmus Jacobi over Friesland en de identiteit van Willelmus Procurator', in *Ad Fontes, opstellen aangeboden aan prof. dr. C. van de Kieft ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid als hoogleraar in de middeleeuwse geschiedenis aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1984, p. 319 sqq.

6. *Necrologium Egmundense*, ed. H. van Wijn, *Huiszittend leven* II, 1 (1812) p. 107.

7. Paulus Rodolphi de Rixtel came to the monastery of Egmond in the year 1514; he died there in 1553. He wrote a history of the Frisian troubles of the years 1494-1517.

8. We are also looking forward to the promised article on Willelmus Procurator by E.C. Dijkhof, who has found this author under the name of **Willem Coppenzoon**, a chaplain of the Lord of Brederode, in two charters of the *Commanderij of saint-John in Haarlem*.

*Martiniana*⁹. This forms a strong indication indeed that he should be identified as this Willelmus Jacobi, our Willelmus Procurator, for he did add to his material by inserting excerpts from Martinus of Troppau, and there are many — for a large part obscure — verses. There is just a possibility that the verses in the *Chronicon* are the remnants of a larger ‘history in verse’.

Evidence from the *Chronicon* makes clear that he was working on the text in 1322 (f. 37), where he says that in this year (*hactenus*) the castle Teylingen is still in the possession of the widow of Albert van Voorne (who was indeed a kinsman of the Brederodes). This is on an inserted leaf.

Other evidence is less direct: on another small leaf, inserted between f. 38 and 39, is the story of how the pope calls down a curse upon William of Nogaret and the French king until the ninth generation, because they dared to raise their hands against him. And ‘we see this coming to pass in our time, now that we have the fourth French king in eight years’. This can only have been written in the years 1322-1328: Philip the Fair †1314, Louis X †1316, Philip the Long †1322, Charles IV †1328. But there is also a verse about this subject on f. 61v-62r, immediately before the author speaks about the year 1321 as if he is going to end his history at this year.¹⁰ The last of the four French kings, Charles, succeeded in 1322, but all the same he figures in the verse (*puer ultimus assit/ nunc dicti regno, Karoli quem nomine signo*). In this place there is no interpolation in the manuscript visible; the text was written continuously. It is not unlikely that the author gave up the earlier intention to end his history at the year 1321 and incorporated the events of 1322 without deleting the concluding verse about 1321. In tune with his first plan we find on f. 57 the intimation that the succession after the death of the emperor Henry VII is not yet settled. Two kings have been regularly elected; and ‘their dissension is not yet brought to a solution, and we have not heard that either of them went to Rome to get the the imperial crown, **now, as we end our story.**’ Louis of Bavaria took a victory over his rival in 1322 and went to Rome for the imperial crown in 1327.

9. See the article by Carasso-Kok (note 5), p. 331.

10. See under, end of part B.

Still more circumstantial is the mention of 'nostri monachi' in the year 1323 (f. 71), from which can be concluded that the author was at that time part of the monastery. There is only one earlier reference to 'monasterium nostrum' : on f. 26, but that is in a passage which he transcribed literally from the manuscript of the *Egmond Annals*, and so cannot be used as evidence about the course of his career.

The current view that Willelmus Procurator wrote the *Chronicon* partly as a chaplain in Brederode and finished it afterwards as a monk in Egmond is confirmed by the evidence of the manuscript.

II. Manuscript and text

We have of the *Chronicon* but one manuscript, from the middle of the 14th century. It has 133 folia (f. 3-136, old foliation, put in after the manuscript got its present form). It is written in one hand, but not continuously; there are many changes of aspect. Especially in the last part the aspect of the writing shows how it is written in bits and pieces.

In the first part of the manuscript (f. 3-72) the quires are very irregular: there are 4 *seniones*, quires of twelve leaves, and 2 *terniones*, quires of six leaves, but apart from the first quire, there are folia interpolated, there are pieces erased, there is annotation in the margins, etc.

The second part (f. 73-136) consists of (practically) regular *quaterniones*, quires of eight leaves. The few irregularities do not correspond to irregularities in the text.

It is, however, not the case that this caesura in the manuscript corresponds with a real caesura in the text. It is possible to defend the proposition that a junction has been made: there is on f. 72 (that is on the last leaf before the caesura) a story of a giant woman in Zeeland who rouses much admiration at a coronation-feast in Paris in 1323. After the caesura, on f. 73, to establish a connection, Willelmus Procurator resumes his work with the story of a giant in Augustine, and then with the story of the Giant of Spaarnwoude, a story about his schooldays, not much later than about 1300 as we have seen before.

The character of the manuscript, which is written in one hand but with many differences in aspect, evidently because it was written not

continuously but intermittently, and which contains pieces of text interpolated by various means, makes it impossible not to see the manuscript as an autograph.

The text can also be divided into various sections. They present quite a different character:

A. f. 3-19 : a copy of the last part of the *Egmond Annals* (starting from the part where this manuscript becomes untidy); the text is the same as in the *Chronicon Egmundanum*, but there are substantial differences.¹¹ The subject matter here is the war with the Frisians and the *Loonse oorlog*, the war at the succession of count Dirk VII of Holland in 1203. It ends with ... *alterius execucioni committimus*. Immediately follows

B. f. 19-62: Continuation of the *Chronicon* from the year 1206 up to the year 1321, concluded with verses: *Anno milleno ter centum bis quoque deno/ uno clauduntur humili que scripta leguntur*.

This section contains a continuation of the *Chronicon* from the year 1206 ; it consists of historical information mostly about the counts of Holland, suppleted for foreign affairs and ecclesiastical history (popes) with extracts of the *Chronicon* of Martinus of Troppau. It is arranged in the way of annals. Some small notices taken directly from the manuscript of the *Egmond Annals* are incorporated in the appropriate places. Relatively much attention is given to the Brederode family.

In a later stage a number of tales were inserted by physical intervention in the manuscript. There are various means: putting in a new leaf, or perhaps two or more; substituting two leaves for one; putting in an extra small leaf (not afterwards foliated); marginal annotation (often quite extensive). It does even look once as if he left a piece unwritten, wrote the story in afterwards, and as the space was not enough, put in an extra leaf : 54v-56.

As we have seen before, one of these interpolated leaves (f. 37) contains a date: 1322 (*sicut ... hactenus possidetur, scilicet anno M^oCCC^oXXII^o*).

11. The problem of this *Chronicon Egmundanum* is very complex and has to be dealt with together with the *Egmond Annals* at a later time.

C. f. 62-81v : 1322 and 1323. Within this section we find the only real caesura of the **manuscript** : f. 72v ends with a filling out of the last line, f. 73 has evident change of aspect of the writing and a different type of quire (right until the end of the manuscript). Before f. 73 the manuscript has the character of part B., with interpolated tales, after f. 73 the character of part D.

D. f. 81v-136v : 1324-1332. This section begins with the intimation that the author, now a monk in Egmond, continues the *Chronicon: Egmondensis utnunc monacus quondam in Brederode capellanus presentem cronicam a tumultu comitis de Lone Christi gratia prosecutus, eandem eiusdem ad presens gratia ... prosequitur*. The running history and the tales are written year by year in an orderly way, without interpolation. The very last part of this section of the manuscript looks like it was written down in bits and pieces, as things happened.

Looking at the history of the text, we can see a distinct caesura in the year 1321 (f. 62), but this in no way corresponds to a caesura in the manuscript; we have seen, moreover, how directly before this caesura we find an allusion to a later year (1322).

It is also evident that for the first parts (A and B) the author must have had access to the library of the monastery of Egmond, because A is directly transcribed from the manuscript of the *Egmond Annals*¹² and in part B some shorter notices, which are also from this manuscript, are incorporated here at the appropriate time.

At least one of the later additions to the text dates from 1322. The only real caesura of the manuscript (f. 72-73) is right in the middle of the year 1323.

This information leads to a hypothesis :

Willelmus Procurator, a man with a more than usual interest in history, became a chaplain with the Brederodes and may have found

12. This manuscript was not used or known outside the monastery. It was a year by year history of the monastery for the use of the institution only. The fact that part A is directly transcribed from this manuscript, from where it becomes untidy, is an argument for the thesis that the work was meant to form a continuation of and to stand beside the *Egmond Annals*, because there could otherwise be no reason to start the work in the middle of a sentence (*de latibulis egressi*).

there a copy of the *Chronicon Egmundanum*. Of this text there was a number of copies in circulation.¹³ In the years of his chaplainship he composed a continuation of this text, or maybe he just collected notes for a continuation. His attention was naturally focused on his employer and family. He wrote an ending to his text in 1321.

Afterwards, when he came to Egmond, renouncing the world after an illness, and was accepted there as a novice, — it is not unlikely that this was in the year 1322 — he found there the manuscript of the *Annals*. He started his historical labour in Egmond with the transcription of the part of this manuscript that was untidy, in the middle of the history of the war with the Frisians (*de latibulis egressi ...*). Thereafter he wrote down his earlier continuation of the *Chronicon* again (or worked up his notes), in the same way, and inserted extracts of the chronicles of Martinus of Troppau.¹⁴ In the procedure he incorporated notes on events, which he found in the manuscript of the *Annals*, in their right place.

In the library at Egmond he found (it may safely be assumed) more books than at the Brederodes, and as in the course of time he got more information (documents and letters), and other sources, he started to incorporate this knowledge into the already written text (ca. 1322), and also to continue the history of his own times in the way of the *Annals* and of the first part of the *Chronicon*: facts interwoven with tales and stories, year by year in an orderly fashion. In 1324 he became a monk and in 1329 dispenser in Egmond. As he became older and got a higher position, he gained more insight in the relevant documents, even, although we do not yet fully understand the way of it, in the chancery of the count himself. There is no internal evidence that he formed part of this chancery, although he was found in documents in the time of his chaplainship in Brederode.¹⁵ In the last part of the manuscript we see him writing down the events as they occur.

13. Still extant today are two manuscripts of the *Chronicon* from the (early) 14th century: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek SPK Phil. 1891, and Leiden, UB, BPL 2429 (this is the former Breslau R 183).

14. There is no evidence either way for his having inserted Martinus of Troppau before coming to Egmond. This text was very popular, and may have been at the Brederodes also.

15. See note 8.

It is to be noted that this hypothesis really has only one foundation in the text, f. 81v: *Egmondensis utnunc monachus quondam in Brederode capellanus presentem cronicam a tumultu comitis de Lone Christi gratia prosecutus, eandem eiusdem ad presens gratia ... prosequitur*. Translated: 'Now monk in Egmond, in former times a chaplain in Brederode with the help of Christ having continued this chronicle from the troubles of the count of Loon ..., he continues this same chronicle with help of the same.'

From this can be understood that he had formerly in Brederode made a continuation of a chronicle after the war of Loon, which he now, as a monk in Egmond, will again continue.¹⁶

III. Form and contents of the text

Willelmus Procurator's chronicle is before all a vivid story. He puts down facts, comments on them, illustrates them with tales, hearsay, prophecy etc. He is a real storyteller, and defends this inclination on f. 53v (as he sets out to give a very circumstantial account of the murder of the German emperor Henry VII): 'Modern man delights in short information, and prolixity is said to be the stepmother of the reader's favour, but in chronicles prolixity is not to be despised, as long as the subject-matter is enlarged with sweet fruit'. This he proceeds to do with abandon.

He has, however, fallen victim to the inclination to compose his chronicle in the most intricate way. He uses everywhere a very tortuous rhyming prose, which may be ignored, as it is but a mannerism, and one gets used to it soon enough, but on the other hand he has produced quite a number of verses: some ten pages of it, if put together. These verses serve to summarize the matter put in prose beforehand, or to comment upon it. It is generally extremely difficult, or even downright impossible, to understand or to translate them. Even verses about the weather are difficult to understand.

16. This is not absolute proof for his having actually composed a continuation of the chronicle in Brederode. The passage may be read in another way. The interpretation given here rests on the punctuation of the (autograph) manuscript: there is no punctuation after 'capellanus' but after 'prosecutus' there is. It is to be remarked that the punctuation usually is sound and helpful in the understanding of the text.

This artificiality is very detrimental to the liveliness of his storytelling, but if one succeeds in disregarding the style, one finds a true journalist, with a remarkably curious nature and not without healthy doubt and sound criticism.

As regards the contents :

In the first place Willelmus Procurator continues, as he says himself, the *Egmond Annals* (f. 81), and gives them a wider scope by incorporating the chronicles of Martinus of Troppau (until 1277, the end of these chronicles; maybe he used a *Continuatio* for the years following; there was quite a number of them about). Wherever possible he provides his history with motives, causes or consequences by means of tales. He feels free to comment on the historical events themselves and also on the *dramatis personae*.

We have already seen, how the author about the year 1322 is busy supplementing and embellishing his work as it then is. In the course of the text the tales become less in number, as other information increases enormously ; but this more factual information is also full of the marvellous and the unusual. Later on we find transcripts of letters and documents of the count of Holland to and from Louis of Bavaria, and also of the pope, that we can find again in modern charterbooks. Willelmus Procurator must have had access to the count's chancery, otherwise how would this be possible for a monk in a monastery rather far in the north of Holland ?

There are a number of themes on which he often dwells: the relation between Louis of Bavaria and the pope John XXII, the Flemish wars and troubles, the continuing quarrels of the Lord of Valkenburg and the Duke of Brabant, the English court and the troubles there. His way of looking at history as a history of more or less noble persons does give him difficulty in understanding the Flemish civil strife ; it is an unheard-of thing in his opinion, that these artisans 'without leader' start to fight each other and the French (and often with no small success). He is not different from his contemporaries in his dislike or distrust of Jews. He dislikes sects. He is full of admiration for count William III and superhero John of Beaumont, but neither is he sparing in his criticism. Properly speaking the only person exempt from his criticism is the countess of Holland Jeanne de Valois ; she appears in the text as devoted to her children and to her husband (we see her collecting funds for an expedition of his, which

he himself was refused). By and large Willelmus Procurator tells us a lot of her feelings, of her movements through Europe, and of her efforts to help her husband and children.

We find too an account of the weather, crops, inundation, carefully noted every year. These accounts are correct, when compared to other information about the weather etc. (and occasionally better).¹⁷

Only sparingly Willelmus Procurator gives particulars about the economy : f. 132 he speaks about gold coin ; silver money is difficult to get. This happens in the years that Willelmus Jacobi was himself a dispenser in his convent. Maybe the note that the confirmation of the abbot Werner was a very costly affair, which was a heavy burden for the convent during many years (f. 47 addition in the margin) may also be understood in this context. Otherwise he will speak from time to time about a bad harvest of grapes, periods of hunger, high prices of corn and other food, but then always as a consequence of the bad weather.

The text of the chronicle of Willelmus Procurator always has attracted historians. They have demonstrated extensively how this part of the text is truthful and another maybe less so. They have assessed the value of this text as a source, and praised or criticised his points of view. In the context of this paper it is not useful to repeat all this again. I have tried to find evidence of his character and I am at this moment more interested in his ways than in the truth of his facts, although I should dearly love to know more about how he got them.

We can recognize a number of Themes.

1. Cause and effect

Willelmus Procurator is writing down history as he sees it: mainly the history of men (and women), that is to say : highborn men and women. The count of Holland is the center of his universe, and the relations (often family relations) of the count to the rest of the world (this also means the nobility, of course) colour his view of what happens or has happened in the world.

17. This is easily seen by comparing data from the *Chronicon* with those in: J. BUISMAN, *Duizend jaar weer, wind en water in de Lage Landen*, 1995.

He gives a detailed description of wars and conflicts, and he feels a need to provide these troubles with a cause ; he cannot stop asking : why ? and answers his own questions by way of telling a tale, a novella.

So he tries to give an answer to the question : Why did count Florence IV and Henry duke of Brabant have to go and fight the Stedingi in 1234 ?

Now we know that the expedition was because this group of people, descendants of Dutchmen who early in the twelfth century had made possible the habitation of these very wet lands on the western bank of the river Weser, refused to be subordinate to the bishop of Bremen. As he couldn't keep this population of farmers under his authority, the church, that is the pope, preached a crusade¹⁸ against them and they were finally overwhelmingly defeated at Altenesch in 1234.

Willelmus Procurator tells the following story about it (f. 22) : The wife of a knight was very badly treated by a local priest; because he was not satisfied with her financial contribution at the feast of Easter, he gave her at the Communion, instead of the host, her own shilling in the mouth. The woman was of course unhappy and afraid, but her husband became enraged and throttled the priest, which led to his excommunication. He ignored this sentence during a year, until the pope interfered: a crusade was preached against the country, and noblemen from abroad destroyed people and country.

Willelmus Procurator's point of view is remarkable. He uses the words 'ignominia crucis', 'an infamous crusade'; the priest's behaviour is wrong, the knight's understandable, the crusade is therefore infamous, but still the Stedingi got the worst of it.

The next interpolated tale (f. 24) relates to the causes of the quarrelling of the peoples of Holland and of Flanders. These lie in the conduct of the Flemish countess ('Black Margaret') who — and Willelmus Procurator suggests strongly that this was wrong — appointed as her successor the son from her second marriage with a Dampierre. Her first husband, a member of the Avesnes family, was

18. Crusades to the heathen peoples of Prussia and the Baltic area had taken place from the 12th century on, and became very popular in the 14th century. See W. PARAVICINI, *Die Preussenreisen des Europäischen Adels*, I, 1989 (Beihefte der Francia 17/1).

a subdeacon and therefore not allowed to marry; eventually he went to Rome to ask for dispensation, returned after having got it, but too late: he had already been replaced. The son from this first marriage was supported by the count of Holland, William II, and that was why the peoples of Holland and of Flanders are enemies.

2. Right and wrong

Moral lessons are also taught by the interpolated tales. There is to be found many a story to illustrate the victory of goodness and righteousness ('iustitia, quam cunctis prefero') and the punishment of the wrong. There are e.g. the examples of the righteousness of the bishop of Munster, who immediately punishes bad behaviour (such as not giving back money put in trust) atrociously — Willelmus Procurator is on the whole not happy telling tales of horrible events; now and then they occur, but he does not give the impression that he enjoys them —, and another German novella about the cupidity of a knight, who wanted to possess the vineyard of a neighbour by all possible and impossible means (f. 78). Very colourful also is the story of nine ¹⁹ young men of Cologne, who coveted the goods of a rich man and tried to get them by intimidating a serving maid; she tricked them nicely, and they were found out and punished. Here also in a horrible way: in the dark they were all without respect of person put into sacks and so into the river Rhine, so that they all died. This was because otherwise one or the other might have been known to the judges ...

The interpolated leaves f. 48 and 49 contain the story — maybe originally French — about the novice in the time of king Philip the Fair, who desired to be revenged for his brother, who had been killed by a member of a very high family. Willelmus Procurator puts on record that rich people, however unfair their doings, mostly can do as they like, and that poor people are always being put upon, however just their cause. This seems to be in contradiction with what I said before, that Willelmus Procurator sees history as the history of highly born people. But when we read this story carefully we find

19. Nine is a very significant number always : nine young men, nine best heroes, nine Jews.

that here the meaning of the word 'poor' only is 'less highly placed', because the novice in question is still a member of a noble family, as certified by his wish: to leave the monastery before definite entrance to slay the murderer of his brother in a tournament. He did succeed of course, against all odds, and the novice reentered his convent, even though he could have taken a high place in the world, being so chivalrous a knight.

A most important episode for Willelmus Procurator, who does not mention a source for his information, is the death of the German emperor Henry VII. He died of malaria in 1314, but there have always been strong and persistent rumours that he was in fact poisoned. Willelmus Procurator must have had a source for this story and tells insistently how the emperor was poisoned by his own confessor, a priest of the Dominican Order, on the instigation of a number of kings and princes. Tales of how this emperor escaped poisoning a number of times are written in the margins of f. 54. It is to be noted that the whole story is in the wrong place altogether, namely in the year 1308. Willelmus Procurator got into trouble with the dating of the German emperors. He mentions the death of Henry VII in the place of the death of his predecessor Albrecht of Habsburg. He may have made a mistake in the actual interpolation of these stories; it is one of the more intricate quires. Also the story has two versions: a short one on f. 53v, a much longer one on f. 56v ; both versions end with practically the same formula.

The evil here is found not only with the Dominican Order (of which the poisoner is a member), but also with the powerful (here this is the king of France), who follow their ambition without consideration for others. The good emperor Henry is painted as a pious and willing victim. He refuses for instance to throw up the poison again, because it is given him in the sacramental wine. He lets the murderer go to safety willingly, in short: he is too good for this world. But evil shall be punished. Not only is brother Bernhard brought forth from his hiding place and executed (f. 69), but it goes deeper: on a small leaf between f. 58 and 59 there is a tale of a case of black magic: king Philip IV appears from hell, where he is, among other things, because of his part in murdering Henry VII.²⁰

20. See Appendix.

3. Black magic

Practices of black magic are among the most loved topics of Willelmus Procurator. He describes in a very lively way how the French king Philip V tries to find out, with the help of a master-magician, what is the condition of his deceased father, Philip IV. The ritual to raise the ghost of the king is set out in much detail and circumstance, with the conversation of the frightened Philip V and his father's ghost. From the text it appears that Willelmus Procurator has read this story somewhere ('legitur'), and also that he does not precisely know how to estimate the truthfulness of it ('quid credendum sit non didici'); but Philip V, having touched the ghost of his father — who came out of hell; it is interesting to note they didn't try to find him in heaven — 'was burned by a fire until his death'.

The inserted leaf f. 64 contains the tale of the heretic who could not (at first) be burned at the stake: three times he descended unharmed from the pile. At last the devil, who of course was behind this occurrence, was defeated by the holy host, and then the accused 'burned as an ashtree smeared with pitch'.

The holy host is for Willelmus Procurator an object to be given a practically superstitious respect. Malicious persons, often Jews, try their best to injure it, but to no avail: the host is victorious in all ways.

See e.g. the case of the host in Remagen (f. 76) : A woman was bribed by nine Jews, by means of beautiful clothes and a lot of money, to procure them a holy host. They started to try and damage the Body of Christ by pricking it with stiluses and things like that, but didn't succeed. Then they took a large knife to try to kill it, but a voice as of a crying child was heard. Christians forced their way in and overcame the nine Jews, but the host had vanished. A tenth Jew who was present but who came from abroad so that nobody knew him, went to the church and took baptism, 'and he let me read the miracle in authentic writings', says Willelmus Procurator.

Really the most colourful of the tales of black magic is the case of the black cat, buried by monks on a crossroads (f. 73) : some monks and an abbot had baptised and afterwards buried a black cat on a crossroads; with it some hosts as food, above which were hung some

toads dripping poison. The purpose was that the cat would eat of these poisoned hosts and so be poisoned itself; on the ninth day it would be skinned and the skin would be divided into small pieces, because whoever kept such a piece of skin would be unpunishable before any court of law. Willelmus Procurator describes this case 'about monks for monks, so that they may abstain from such practices'. He heard this story, so he says, from some noblemen who came from Paris where they attended a coronation-feast; count William III and his countess were also at this company, which happened in 1323.

4. Sects

Very severe is his attitude to sects: e.g. Begardi and Lollardi (f. 91), who are busy organising orgies in bizarre ways under the cloak of piety.

There came to light, so Willelmus Procurator tells, in this year in Cologne a sect, which had built a subterranean shelter called the 'paradise'. A husband of a deluded matron attended surreptitiously a meeting of the group, and he saw a leader preach the heresy (a so-called Jesus and Maria were also present). He was naked and incited the others to throw off their clothes in order to return to a state of innocence. This of course led to not so innocent carnal lust. Under cover of darkness the husband marked his wife, and the next morning all was revealed, all were killed, 'but what the husband said to his wife in the presence of their friends, we will not tell' (*breviatur*).

5. Praise and criticism

Count William III is the object of Willelmus Procurator's boundless admiration. Without tiring he travels around to keep and to procure peace everywhere. But also his high position by family ties, by marriage of his children to various royal and princely houses, feeds this admiration. Still, even William III is not sacred from criticism (f. 75) : he really should spend more of his time in Holland ! And elsewhere (f. 87v) : Count William, who takes upon himself almost all other people's affairs and meddles needlessly with many things, should strive to leave clerics in peace, if he wants to avoid everlasting scandal.

In other respects too he seems not to spare his criticism, even with people he otherwise much admires. An example is the tournament of knights, which is strongly disapproved of, and more than once spoken of as ‘stultitia’, ‘stupidity’ (f. 75, f. 83), although it is a knightly business, and although knightly virtues are praiseworthy, as is clear from his admiration for John of Beaumont, brother to the count. He even proposes to add John of Beaumont as the ‘tenth best’ to the number of the ‘nine best’ (f. 95).²¹

IV. The technique of compilation

It is clear that the second part of the chronicle, with as subject-matter the years of Willelmus Procurator’s own working life, has a character quite different from the first part. In this second part we see a concatenation of information of different kinds, written down in an orderly way, year by year, and within the year month by month, etc., but joined together without a special interconnection. Willelmus Procurator gathers his facts and puts them down in order. This is also quite distinctly seen in the manuscript: regular, ordered quires, written straightforwardly, and without problems. Just in one place, right at the end of the manuscript, he wrote three lines with additional information to an item in the middle of the next paragraph, but extensively provided with reference-marks. Another time he signifies that an item he gave before (the alleged death of the counterpope Nicolaus V) was not true: he only resigned. There is no example of something like it in the first part, but it is possible that there he would have erased the erroneous item, and overwritten it by the true version.

In the first part of the chronicle, however, we may see Willelmus Procurator busy completing the already existing work with new and wider information. In this first part he gives, as demonstrated before, causes for the described events. He incorporates a source about the murder of Henry VII, and he collects all kinds of the miraculous and the scandalous from various informants (‘relatione’) or about

21. See W. VAN ANROOY, *Helden van weleer, De Negen Besten in de Nederlanden (1300-1700)*, Amsterdam 1997.

which he read somewhere ('legitur'). Black magic and miracles of the host (there may have been a book or a booklet about them within his reach) are especially important to him, and he puts them in wherever possible.

To conclude : We cannot say that this chronicle is a wonder of advanced compilation-technique. It is an accumulation of facts, things worth knowing, comment, arranged by year. It gives a lot of information, not only about real historical facts and events — the value or the truth of the information is left here deliberately out of consideration —, sometimes provided of proof in the form of transcriptions of letters and documents, but meticulous reading also gives insight into the character of the author, who drew so lively a sketch of his own times and the century before that.

Schematic presentation

<i>Manuscript</i>	<i>Text</i>			
senio, regular	f. 3-14	A. f. 3-19	1168-1205	Annals + Martinus
senions with insertions	f. 15-57	B. f. 19-33	1206-1277	Holland, Martinus, snippets of Annals + insertions
		f. 34-62	1282-1321	wider scope + insertions

ternions with insertions	f. 58-72	-----		
		C. f. 62-72	1322-1323	dito + insertions
quaternions	f. 73-136	f. 73-81	1323	dito (no insertions)
		D. f. 81-136	1324-1332	'utnunc monacus'

Appendix

f. 59r¹

Eodem tempore huius Ludovici regis predicti coniugi regine videlicet Francie adulterii crimen imponitur. Cuius causa duobus vivis militibus tamquam adulteris pellis detrahitur, qui sic inaudito necnon tormentorum maximo moriuntur.

Iste Ludovicus puerili ludo calefactus frigido vino tantum suscipit quod febribus tangitur et in proximo mortis venabulo declinatur. Post quem filio mortuo Philippus frater eius regno suscipitur et more debito Remensi presule consecratur.

*² Iste Philippus nigromanticum invenisse dicitur patrisque ab eo statum pro tempore quesivisse qui obmissis celestibus ad infernorum tormenta coniurationibus dirigitur, quorum uno spirituum relatione facte³ questionis miserimus invenitur, quo comperto circulus quidam incantationibus ut mos est construitur, cuius medio solus magister cum principe reclinatur, ubi eodem magistro studente orationumque suarum vocabula proferente statim in specie nuntiorum regalium visi sunt demones quorum quidam tapetas alii sedem auream in circuli confinio posuerunt. Istos ianitorum turba consequitur quibus tam famulorum quam militum societas combinatur, tota itaque quasi familia precedente dominique adventum variis ex utroque stationibus nuntiante ecce quo queritur omni ornatu et habitu quo dum viveret affuit qui sede prius posita se recepit cuius aspectu filius ista procurans non modicum confunditur, qui per magistrum ne membrum aliquid extra circulum porrigat informatur, cui pater post horam locutus fuisse dicitur, et quare nichil ab eo quereret intimasse, qui tandem sopito timore de statu patris questionem subicit, quem alter fore pessimum iam respondit, cui filius equitatem iusta quoque eius iudicia proposuisse legitur, et adhuc pro statu eius et cur sibi pessimus quesivisse, ad quem pater, filii tria mihi abiectis ceteris fuerunt crimina dum viverem videlicet pape infestatio cesaris traditio et destructio templariorum, quorum solo totus mundus iusto Dei iudicio deficeret, et in perpetuum apud inferos resideret. Varia insuper habita inter eos collatione pater a filio manum petit porrigi quod sibi cernitur denegari. Unde velut iratus pallium in faciem filii cum impetu sustulit, cuius aspersione ipsum ut dicitur inflammavit, quo facto omnes maligni nituntur fugere suisque tormentis miserum reportare. Quid autem in hac materia mera veritate credendum sit non didici, scio tamen regem istum usque ad mortem igne quodam absque remedio devorari.**

Versus

Morte famis cocto fuit .M. ter .C. que bis octo.

Cum reliquis binis : doluit pecorum nece finis.

Constantin Huygens Institut Pays-Bas

M. GUMBERT-HEPP

1. The text is given here as in the manuscript : with the original punctuation. Only at the beginning of a sentence and with proper names capitals have been added if necessary.

2*.-**. Interpolated story on a small leaf facing f. 59 r ; the verso (in fact the recto) of this small leaf is empty.

3. Ms. face.