



K O N I N K L I J K E N E D E R L A N D S E  
A K A D E M I E V A N W E T E N S C H A P P E N

Tielman Susato's vaderlandsche musijcke. Music and the vernacular

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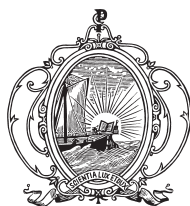
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# Understanding Art in Antwerp

## Classicising the Popular, Popularising the Classic (1540 – 1580)

EDITED BY

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PEETERS

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# TIELMAN SUSATO'S *VADERLANDSCHE MUSIJKKE*

## MUSIC AND THE VERNACULAR

Louis Peter Grijp

### *Introduction*

Musica aldersoetste const  
te recht wordt ghy verheven  
want u seer lieffelijcke jonst  
doet ons in vreughde leven.  
Als wy van herten zyn beswaert,  
druck doet ghy gantschelijck beswijcken;  
jae, midts uwen oversoeten aert,  
moet alle tweedracht wijcken.

Music, sweetest of all arts,  
rightly you are praised  
for your sweet love  
let us live in joy.  
When our hearts are mournful,  
you dispel sadness completely;  
yes, because of your over-sweet nature  
all discord has to vanish.

In this beautiful song, with music composed by the Antwerp musician Noë Faignient,<sup>1</sup> 'Musica' is said to bring us joy and relief from sadness and to drive disharmony from our lives. It is called the sweetest of all arts, probably due to these emotional forces, which were already known in Antiquity. Music is the only liberal art which was recognised as such in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, although this was more with reference to the arithmetic and proportions associated with music than to practical art and emotions. In the Renaissance, music theoreticians were fascinated with the antique

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<sup>1</sup> The piece was published in *Livre Septiesme*, p. 35. Faignient was active from c. 1560 to c. 1600 in Antwerp and at the court of Duke Erich von Braunschweig. The piece was published in 1568 with the text 'L'homme qui nest point amoureux'. Thus, the Dutch text would probably be a *contrafactum*.

modes – scales such as the Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian and other modes – and *genera* – diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic. These modes and *genera* were considered responsible for the emotional power of music, as Plato and other ancient authors had emphasised.<sup>2</sup> However, in his *Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558) the influential Italian theorist Giuseffo Zarlino acknowledged that there were essential differences between antique music, which had been monophonic, and the polyphonic music of his own time. He thought it easier to revive the ancient ‘soul moving’ powers through monophonic song accompanied by a lute or a lyre (as in the works of Ariosto) rather than using polyphony. However, he also thought it was possible to evoke emotions with polyphonic music, especially with madrigals. According to Zarlino, a pupil of the Flemish composer Adriaen Willaert, music had only recently rediscovered its original powers after a long period of decay, thanks mainly to the work of his master.

*Art, popular and folk music in the sixteenth century*

When sixteenth-century theorists speak about the contemporary art of music they mean one specific kind of music: polyphony – usually church music such as masses and motets. This implies that the performers were professionally trained musicians. However, secular polyphony – such as chansons and madrigals – also required trained performers. If they were amateurs they at least had to be able to read music because it was not easy to sing by heart. This suggests that music was an art for the elite, who could afford music lessons or had enjoyed professional training in choir schools. The necessity of a good education is also reflected in the fact that in the Low Countries most polyphonic music was sung in foreign languages: religious music in Latin, of course, and secular polyphony in French or, from the 1550s, also in Italian. Today we would call this polyphonic music classical or serious music. Songs in the vernacular can be regarded as the equivalent of modern popular music and these were sung to melodies notated monophonically (if they were notated at all). When discussing the music and vernacular of the sixteenth-century Netherlands it is important to remember this close connection with popular music.

Nevertheless, quite a repertory of Dutch-language polyphonic songs has been preserved.<sup>3</sup> They were designated simply as ‘liedekens’ (‘songs’) –

<sup>2</sup> There is a vast literature on ancient Greek music theory and music philosophy. For an introduction, see *The New Grove of Music and Musicians* (internet version: *Grove Music Online*), articles ‘Greece I. Ancient’, ‘Tonos’ (the Greek expression for ‘mode’) and ‘Genus’.

<sup>3</sup> About this repertory, see Lenaerts, *Het Nederlands polifonies lied*; Schreurs, *Het Nederlandse polyfone lied*; Bonda, *De meerstemmige Nederlandse liederen*, with a

the same word used for the songs of the popular, monophonic genre. The question thus arises concerning how we situate the polyphonic 'liedekens' in relation to art and popular culture. However, before trying to answer this question it may be useful to dwell a little longer on popular music from the mid-sixteenth century.

The first title which comes to mind is the famous *Antwerp Songbook* (1544), a printed collection of over 200 secular song texts. There is no musical notation but it is generally assumed that the songs belong to the monophonic repertoire of the time. This is clear from the many connections with monophonic notation in religious songbooks such as the *Devoot ende Profityelyck Boexcken* (Antwerp, 1539) and the *Souterliedekens* (Antwerp, 1540), where the 'Antwerp songs' are mentioned as 'tunes' ('timbres'), to which the psalms should be sung. Scholars have regarded the *Antwerp Songbook* as one of the most important sources of knowledge of Dutch folk song in the late Middle Ages.

A terminological problem now arises: is this popular music or folk song? Both stand in contrast to serious music, but can they also be contrasted with each other?<sup>4</sup> The question may be problematic, because the terms did not exist in the sixteenth century and there was scarcely any theoretical discussion about these notions at the time. The word 'Volkslied' ('folk song') was coined as late as 1777 by Johann Gottfried Herder. For Herder, folk songs were old, popular (in the sense of widely known) and anonymous, and they had a direct and naive quality to their stories, which he called *Wurf*. Later theorists added oral transmission as a characteristic of folk song. As far as the Netherlands is concerned, the *Antwerp Songbook* was the favourite source of folk songs for philologists such as Hoffmann von Fallersleben. They were mainly interested in 'oude liedekens' ('old songs'), as they are called in the *Songbook*. These old songs had the necessary *Wurf* in their stories and they had clearly been transmitted orally before they were written down and printed. They were anonymous, as were nearly all of the songs in the *Antwerp Songbook*, and they were obviously old, as indicated not only in the *Songbook* but also by the fact that many can be recognised from earlier sources, whether in tune indications or in parallel versions in Low or High German. Many of the songs which were called 'old' in 1544 can as a matter of fact be traced back to the fifteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

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catalogue containing 493 compositions, pp. 544-604 (excl. the 350-odd *Souterliedekens*).

<sup>4</sup> Here linguistic confusion has to be avoided. I use 'popular music' and 'folk song' (or 'folk music') in the sense of the Dutch 'populaire muziek' and 'volkslied'.

<sup>5</sup> *Het Antwerpse liedboek*, vol. 2, pp. 13-14; Vellekoop, 'Hoe oud is "oudt"'.



What about the ‘new songs’ in the *Antwerp Songbook*, can these also be regarded as folk songs? I would say not. Although most of them are anonymous, they are certainly more recent than the old songs, being less than 30 years old. They clearly belong to a written tradition and bear scarcely any traces of oral transmission. Moreover, they do not have the naive *Wurf*. On the contrary, they clearly show the structure, verse technique and formulas of the *rederijkers* (rhetoricians) – urban, middle-class amateur poets.

All this is common knowledge amongst philologists. The difference between old and new songs has usually been defined in terms of the textual features mentioned above. However, I recently examined the melodies to which they were sung and these also appear to be different. Generally speaking, the old songs have modal, archaic melodies. They use little harmonisation, being essentially monophonic, whereas the new songs have more tonal melodies which can easily be harmonised. Apparently, these new songs were conceived in some kind of polyphonic or harmonic context, reflecting the idiom of sixteenth-century secular music such as the French polyphonic chansons.<sup>6</sup>

This means that the ‘new songs’ differ from the ‘old songs’ not only in terms of the text but also in terms of musical style. In both domains they reflect the actual, ‘modern’ taste of a mid-sixteenth-century public, which we might characterise as young and urban. This makes the new songs much more like popular music today.

If we regard the new songs from the *Antwerp Songbook* as popular music, this implies that the *rederijkers* produced popular culture, at least in the *liedeken* genre, because they wrote the lyrics of the new songs. In other words, these products of the *ars rethorica* were sung by ordinary people, not only by members of a cultural or social elite. This corresponds with the idea that song was the lowest genre in the *rederijker* poetical hierarchy. In their contests, the least valuable prizes were for songs and singing. Much more attention was paid to the *refrein*, a lyrical genre, which was not sung but recited. Refrains were not only rewarded more valuable prizes, but there were also more prize categories. In the course of the sixteenth century, however, the status of the *liedeken* gradually rose – an emancipation of the genre thus took place,<sup>7</sup> such that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft could mould his sophisticated petrarchan poetry into songs which were published in luxurious songbooks. Nevertheless, for others, song kept its place in the *genus humile*, apt for instructing the less educated.<sup>8</sup>

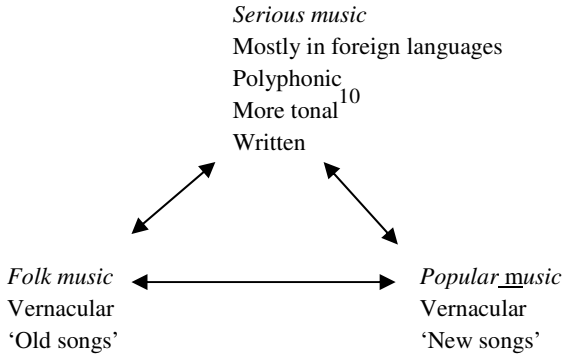
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<sup>6</sup> Grijp, ‘Alte und neue Lieder’.

<sup>7</sup> Coigneau, ‘Muziek bij de rederijkers’.

<sup>8</sup> Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, ‘Camphuysen en het genus humile’, p. 141.

To summarise, popular music can be opposed to the art of polyphonic music, but can also be divided into folk music with its oral ‘old songs’ and popular music proper, with ‘new songs’ written by the *rederijkers*. Thus, both folk and popular music are opposed to art music and also to each other, making a total of three dichotomies. This ‘trichotomy’ of sixteenth-century music can be presented in the form of a triangle:<sup>9</sup>



*Susato’s preface*

The series of eleven *Musyckboexkens* published by the Antwerp city musician, composer and music publisher Tielman Susato offers excellent material to study the interaction of the vernacular and art, popular and folk music in early modern times. The concept of the series is formulated in the *Ierste musyck boexken* (*First music book*), published by Susato in 1551. This interesting preface has often been quoted because Susato here makes the first plea in music history for the composition of Dutch-language ‘liedekens’, the setting of Dutch texts to music. This suggests that the polyphonic *liedeken* was not so common. As mentioned above, in the Low Countries of the sixteenth century, French was the dominant language for polyphonic secular music, and in Susato’s day Italian was rising as a musical language. Let me quote some lines from Susato’s preface:

<sup>9</sup> The triangular model was inspired by representations such as the ‘circular model’ in Jones and Rahn, ‘Definitions of popular music recycled’.

<sup>10</sup> That is, relatively more tonal than the modal ‘old’ melodies stemming from the fifteenth century. Strictly speaking, these ‘new’ melodies are still modal, but they are at a later stage of development, moving towards the tonal major-minor system of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Aleest so dat ick binnen corten jaren hertwarts, diversche stucken van Muyc-ken, als missen, moeteten, ende sekere menichte van walschen liedekens (...) inden druck hebbe laten utgaen, so is nochtans altoos myn sunderlinge voernemen geweest de edele hemelsche konst der musycken in onser nederlantscher moeder talen, oock int licht te brengene, gelyck de selve in de latynsche, walsche, ende italiaensche sprake, seere bekendt ende in allen landen uitgebreydt is geworden.

A few years ago I began publishing various types of music, such as masses, motets, and certainly many French chansons (...) yet I have always had the intention of bringing to light the noble, heavenly art of music in our Netherlandish mother tongue, as is the case with music in the Latin, French, and Italian languages, which is well known and has been disseminated in all countries.<sup>11</sup>

Susato says he has brought together

de beste, de constighste uitgelesenste liedekens, by constighe meesters in onser moeder spraken gecomposeert die my mogelyck syn geweest te gecrygene.

the best, most artful, choicest songs, by artful masters, composed in our mother tongue that was possible for me to find.

He reveals that he has found enough material for two books of 'liedekens' and also announces a third book, which will be discussed below. However, Susato also wanted to continue the series and thus invites composers to send him more

liedekens, oft andere ghelycken stucken in rime, oft prose, geestelyck oft veerlycke, op onsen vors[creven] nederlandsche moeder tale (...) om de selve tot uwer eeren ende gemeynen oirbore in allen landen duer den druck uitgebreydt te wordene.

songs or other similar pieces in rhyme, or in prose, sacred or profane, in our Netherlandish mother tongue (...) so that these, for your honour and for general use, can be published and distributed in all countries.

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<sup>11</sup> Susato, *Het ierste musyck boexken*, p. 5-6, p. A1v; translation from McTaggart, *Tielman Susato*, p. xi.

In a most interesting passage, Susato reveals his motives for publishing songs in the Dutch language. When speaking about the power of music he asks:

En waeromme en soude men dat voortane niet also wel met gelycker konst ende soeticheit in onser moeder spraken connen gedoen, als men tot nu toe in latynsche, walsche ende italiaensche sprake gedaen heeft? Is de konst ende soeticheit even gelyck, waerom salmen die meer om deene dan om dander sprake wille verachten? Laet ons dan voortane alle neersticheyt doen, om onse vaderlandsche musycke, die niet van minder konst ende soeticheit en is dan andere, allomme int openbaer ende gemeyn ghebruyck te brengene.

And why should one not be able to do this henceforth with equal art and sweetness in our mother tongue, as has been done in the Latin, French, and Italian languages? If the art and sweetness are just alike, why should one want to scorn one language more than another? Let us then from now on devote all diligence to the music of our fatherland, which is no less in art and sweetness than others, to make it public and bring it to general use everywhere.

Obviously it was national pride which motivated Susato to publish the *Musyckboexkens*. There was a need to prove that Dutch music was as valuable as music in other languages, such as Latin and the modern Romance languages. This very much reflects contemporary ideas about the potential of the Dutch language in other cultural fields. The first to make a plea for the emancipation of the vernacular had been the Antwerp publisher Jan Gymnick in a translation of Titus Livius (1541). In his opinion, Latin texts should be translated into Dutch, which had to be learned thoroughly to make it apt for scholarly purposes. Around the same time Joos Lambrecht would have started work on the *Nederlandsche Spellijnghe* (*Dutch orthography*), the first publication of which appeared in 1550 in Ghent (now lost). A few years later Lambrecht published a successful *Naembouck van allen natuerlicken ende ongheschuumde vlaemsche woorden* (*Dictionary of all natural and non-foreign Flemish words*). Another purist publication was *Het Tresoor der Duytsscher talen* (*The treasure of the Dutch language*) by Jan van den Werve (Antwerp, 1553), in which the mother tongue is compared with buried gold. These and other works testify to the humanist endeavour to develop the vernacular into an instrument capable of expressing scholarly and other lofty ideas just as well as Latin; in other words, bringing it to a higher level.<sup>12</sup> Susato's plea for singing polyphonic pieces in Dutch can be regarded as a similar attempt to raise the status of the vernacular –

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<sup>12</sup> The examples have been taken from Van den Branden, *Het streven*.

although his true aim was not to promote the language itself but the music in that language.

Susato's preface is even more interesting in expressing, for the first time in the history of music in the Netherlands, an emotional engagement with the 'music of our fatherland', a national music of the Netherlands (or rather the Dutch-speaking part of the Netherlands, the cultural centre of which was Brabant and Flanders in Susato's time). Such a patriotic commitment had surfaced many times through the ages, even until the present day, and language choice plays an important role in this: music in the vernacular is often regarded as the truest national music. However, history teaches us that it was always a minority of Dutch composers and musicians who preferred their mother tongue to foreign languages, and for a variety of reasons, such as the commercial hope to reach a wider audience or the artistic wish to participate in international schools or genres. For Dutch composers and singers, choosing the vernacular was often an act of resistance.<sup>13</sup> In the sixteenth century, most of the music that Antwerp music lovers heard and sang themselves must have been in Latin, French and Italian – with considerably less in Dutch.

Nevertheless, secular polyphony in Dutch was known long before Susato's *Musyckboexkens*. Composers such as Jacob Obrecht, Alexander Agricola and many others had written beautiful 'liedekens' in the period around 1500. However, most of this repertoire existed only in manuscripts. Apart from the language, the Dutch 'liedekens' were similar in style to the French chansons and they may have been regarded as belonging to the same musical genre. For example, in a collection of compositions by Noë Faignient from 1568, the Dutch 'liedekens' were placed in the category *Chansons* together with pieces in the French language.<sup>14</sup> We could say that the Dutch *liedeken* was a kind of parallel genre, or a variant of the French chanson, a 'translation' with few musical consequences. Susato's merit as a music printer was to take the genre seriously. After many successful publications of French chansons and Latin masses and motets he must have decided that publishing pieces in the vernacular was also possible.<sup>15</sup>

It is remarkable that Susato expressed the expectation that the Dutch 'liedekens' could be sold abroad. This seems a little optimistic. Throughout history the Dutch language has been a serious obstacle to the exportation of Dutch music, as becomes clear from a collection of essays devoted to the

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<sup>13</sup> Grijp, *Zingen in een kleine taal*.

<sup>14</sup> Faignient, *Chansons*. The other categories were madrigals and motets.

<sup>15</sup> However, Susato was not the first to publish polyphonic 'liedekens'. Around 1540, Jan Petersz. in Kampen published partbooks of polyphonic songs in Dutch, of which only fragments have been preserved. See 'Kamper liedboek' in [www.liederenbank.nl](http://www.liederenbank.nl).

'problem' of singing in Dutch.<sup>16</sup> It was even a problem in the heyday of Flemish polyphony when music from the Low Countries was much desired in countries such as Italy. For instance, most of Jacob Obrecht's brilliant polyphonic 'liedekens' are only known from Spanish or Italian sources without text, or with such heavily corrupted texts that no singer could have understood them. In other words, the original Dutch texts were neglected or rejected because of the unintelligible language. This example may reveal a general problem: in foreign countries Dutch seems to have been regarded as something unintelligible – and especially unsingable. However, Susato apparently had great confidence in the quality of the music of his compatriots.

*The first two Musyckboexkens*

Susato's first two *Musyckboexkens* are completely devoted to four-part Dutch 'liedekens' written by Josquin Baston, Carolus Souliaert, Lupus Hellinck, Jheronimus Vinders, Tielman Susato himself and several other minor composers.<sup>17</sup> Most of the 55 pieces belong to the categories of amorous songs or 'zotte liedekens' ('foolish songs') and do not include folk ballads such as the 'old songs' found in the *Antwerp Songbook*. The amorous songs are very much like the 'new songs' of the *Antwerp Songbook*, in the manner of the *rederijkers*. As a matter of fact some of the texts in the *Musyck-boexkens* can also be found in popular songbooks, for example the songs 'Ghepeys, ghepeys vol van envye' ('Thoughts, thoughts full of envy'), 'Schoen lief wat macht u baten' ('Pretty darling, what use is it to you') and 'Ick ginck ghisteravent/ so heymelyck eenen ganc' ('I went out last night / So secretly down the path') are printed as 'nyeu liedekens' ('new songs') in the *Antwerp Songbook*,<sup>18</sup> where they are printed in full, while in the *Musyckboexkens* only the first stanza is provided.

What do these concordances mean? In most cases, a monophonic song would be arranged into a polyphonic piece. However, sometimes a polyphonic piece would be turned into a monophonic song by taking over the main voice and leaving out the others.<sup>19</sup> In any case, there is an overlap be-

<sup>16</sup> Grijp, *Zingen in een kleine taal*.

<sup>17</sup> Modern scholarly editions: Susato, *Het ierste musyck boexken* (one by Van Duyse, one by Schreurs and Sanders); Susato, *Het tweetste musyck boexken* (by Schreurs); McTaggart, *Tielman Susato*. An overview of the content and many of the texts can be found at [www.liederenbank.nl](http://www.liederenbank.nl).

<sup>18</sup> Susato, *Het ierste musyck boexken*, no. 24; Susato, *Het tweetste musyck boexken*, nos. 13, 25; *Het Antwerpse liedboek*, nos. 49, 206, 94. In total, a dozen of Susato's pieces appear to have parallels in the popular repertoire.

<sup>19</sup> More about this problem can be found in Bonda, *De meerstemmige Nederlandse liederen*, p. 256ff.

tween Susato's art music and the monophonic repertory as we know it from the *Antwerp Songbook* and other popular songbooks. This means that some tunes sung in the streets and pubs were also performed as polyphonic pieces in the houses of wealthy merchants, and vice versa.

This is not very surprising. We know that monophonic popular songs were sung in middle-class and even court circles, especially by young women and their lovers. This is evident from handwritten songbooks owned by noble ladies, such as the *alba amicorum* of Maria van Besten, Theodora van Wassenaer en Duvendoerden, Sophia van Renesse van der Aa and Johanna Bentinck.<sup>20</sup> As in many other cases, 'popular culture' here means the 'culture of everyone', which means not only that of the poor or uneducated but also the higher strata of society, as Peter Burke made clear long ago. This is also true for the chambers of rhetoric, where polyphonic music was practised.<sup>21</sup> In fact, we suspect that we will find the authors of Susato's 'liedeken' texts in these chambers. At least two of the songs from the *Musyckboexkens* are known to have definitely been written by *rederijkers*: 'Ghepeys, ghepeys vol van envy' ('Thoughts, thoughts full of envy') by Matthijs de Castelein from Oudenaerde and 'Ghelijc den mej met vulder vruecht' ('Just as May in full flower') by Eduard de Dene from Bruges.<sup>22</sup> In the chambers of rhetoric or private houses one could choose between polyphony, which required some organisation and the availability of trained singers or instrumentalists, and monophony, which one could spontaneously sing alone or with which anyone could join in.

The 'zotte liedekens' or 'foolish songs' would also have been the work of *rederijkers*. They are conspicuously numerous in Susato's publications, making up almost half of the songs. Most of these songs are about prostitutes or other frivolous women and their male partners, called 'gildekens', good-for-nothings who seem to spend all their time in inns and bordellos, until they run out of money. Although they tell us a lot about Flemish folklore, these songs are not folk songs. Undoubtedly, cultural historians such as Herman Pleij and Paul Vandenbroeck were right: we have to interpret such songs (as well as farces and paintings, etc.) as ironic praise of extreme forms of loose living, in which normal moral standards are turned upside down. Such songs showed decent citizens 'the other' and hinted that they should dissociate themselves from such uncivilised folk.<sup>23</sup> However, the same citizens would have enjoyed the caricatures of folk culture, which refer to traditions such as Shrovetide and Holy Innocent's Day. Similar texts

<sup>20</sup> Strijbosch, 'Vrou maan', app. 1, offers a survey of such manuscripts.

<sup>21</sup> Grijp, 'Van Druyven-Tros tot Gedenck-clanck'.

<sup>22</sup> See [www.liederenbank.nl](http://www.liederenbank.nl) for sources and concordances.

<sup>23</sup> Pleij, *Het gilde van de blauwe schuit*; Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere*.

are found in popular songbooks<sup>24</sup> and we cannot exclude the possibility that in the end the 'zotte liedekens' were sung in the inns and bordellos by the people they had originally mocked.

In such songs the use of the vernacular gains a special meaning, quite different from that associated with the intended raising of the Dutch language to a higher status by singing it in polyphony. Here, the vernacular made the *zotte* texts more convincing and realistic. However, the limits of decency could easily be overstepped. Susato was aware of this, as is apparent from his above-quoted preface. In his call for new compositions in Dutch he added a condition:

mits scouwende alle oneerlycke ende ombetamelycke woorden, daer duere dese edele hemelsche konst veroneert ende jonge geesten bevleekt ende verargert mochten worden (...).

but please avoid dishonourable and improper words which might disgrace this noble, heavenly art, and which might debase and corrupt young souls (...).<sup>25</sup>

When preparing the first two books Susato had already omitted some songs 'that through dishonourable words may encourage mischief'.<sup>26</sup> This remark is slightly surprising when we look at the 'zotte liedekens' which were included in his first two *Musyckboexkens*. In his ground-breaking book on Dutch polyphonic 'liedekens' (1933) the Leuven scholar René Lenaerts considered that for all but one of Susato's 'zotte liedekens' 'the rudeness of the contents did not lend itself to publication'.<sup>27</sup> Genuinely 'dishonourable and improper words' may be scarce – one may find some in 'Dese coxkens en aerdighe moxkens' ('These whores and nice prostitutes'), in 'Mijn boel heet mij cleker bille' ('My love calls me wiggle-butt'), and in 'Comt, ketelt mij nu, 'K ben niet schu, Maer en schuert mijn hemdeken niet' ('Come tickle me now, I am not shy, but don't tear my chemise')<sup>28</sup> – however, there are also many allusions to copulation, such as girls 'spinning' and 'sowing', or a sexton 'playing bim bam' on his 'clocks'.<sup>29</sup> Such erotic ambiguities could

<sup>24</sup> 'Het was my van te voren gheseyt' (Susato, *Het ierste musyck boekxen*, no. 22), a song about a woman in a bad marriage, can also be found in the *Antwerp Songbook* (*Het Antwerpse liedboek*, no. 26).

<sup>25</sup> Translation from McTaggart, *Tielman Susato*.

<sup>26</sup> 'achterlatende die duer oneerlycke woerden tot onduedgen verwecken mogen'.

<sup>27</sup> Lenaerts, *Het Nederlands polifonies lied*, p. 35. See also McTaggart, *Tielman Susato*, note 40.

<sup>28</sup> Susato, *Het ierste musyck boexken*, nos. 2, 8 (the same as Susato, *Het tweetste musyck boexken*, no. 9); Susato, *Het tweetste musyck boexken*, no. 5.

<sup>29</sup> 'Spinning' and 'sowing' in 'Mijn boel heet mij cleker bille' (Susato, *Het ierste*



not have been misunderstood. Again, one asks oneself what songs Susato left out of his *Musyckboexkens*.

*The third Musyckboexken*

We now move on to Susato's third *Musyckboexken*, which he also published in 1551. Surprisingly, it only contains music for dance, arranged in four parts, to be played on all kinds of instruments such as recorders and viols. We assume this was the kind of music used at bourgeois weddings and dances. However, the book comprises many dances which were originally folk dances, such as *bergerettes*, *rondes* and *branles*, mainly from the French countryside. These peasant dances had become popular in the cities and in bourgeois circles, and we find them in publications of French collections for instrumental ensemble and in tablatures for lute, keyboard and cittern. Of course, at peasant feasts the dances were not performed by a four-part ensemble of recorders or viols, but by bagpipes, fiddles and similarly loud instruments, as we can see in paintings by Bruegel and others. Susato's arrangements can be regarded as an adaption or 'translation' of this kind of peasant music for amateur bourgeois circles.

One might ask why this instrumental music is part of Susato's series of *Musyckboexkens*, which was supposedly devoted to vocal music in Dutch. Thus far no satisfactory answer has been given. Perhaps Susato just wanted to publish a dance volume, like those published shortly before in France by Jacques Moderne and Claude Gervaise, and so he looked for a fitting place in his collection. He might have thought of the link with folk culture, as in the vocal *Musyckboexkens*. Some local dances in the third book may support this idea, for example the 'Hoboeken dans', apparently from the kermis (fair) in the village of Hoboken near Antwerp, and a dance called 'De Post'.

*The Souterliedekens*

After a flying start, the *Musyckboexkens* project was silent for four years before Susato continued the series with the *Souterliedekens* arranged by the famous composer Jacobus Clemens non Papa (1556-1557). It took four *boexkens* to publish about 150 psalms and canticles, books four to seven in the series.<sup>30</sup> Here again the popular dimension is present. The *Souterliedekens*

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*musyck boexken*, no. 8) and in 'Naelde, naelde, goe fijne naelden' (Susato, *Het tweetste musyck boexken*, no. 3); 'playing bim bam' in 'Een costerken op sijn clocken clanc' (Susato, *Het tweetste musyck boexken*, no. 20).

<sup>30</sup> Ten of the *Souterliedekens* were not set by Clemens but by Susato. Modern

were published for the first time in 1540, also in Antwerp, as a book of psalms rhymed to monophonic tunes. This was quite unique, not only because it was the first complete Psalter translated into any European vernacular, but also because of its music. The poet had collected more than 150 popular tunes, all of them different and all set in musical notation. The tunes covered the whole range of the monophonic repertoire, including both old and new 'liedekens'. It is a tremendous source, especially for the old melodies from the oral tradition. The *Souterliedekens* must have been quite a challenge for Clemens non Papa because of the great number of pieces. He arranged the tunes for three parts, in most cases with the melody in the middle part, the tenor. This work is regarded as unique in the history of Renaissance music.

Another four years later, Susato's *Musyckboexken* series was continued with a second cycle of *Souterliedekens*, this time by Clemens's pupil Gherardus Mes (1561). He arranged the psalms for four voices, of which unfortunately the bass part has been lost. However, while there is no complete edition available, it is evident that Mes did not always use the original *Souterliedekens* melodies. In particular, he seems to have rejected the melodies of the old 'liedekens' and supplanted them with other melodies or with free compositions. His four-part settings sound more modern than Clemens's three-part settings, and more like the typical domestic music from the mid-sixteenth century. This can be explained precisely because of his rejection of the old, modal melodies which had given Clemens's settings an archaic character.<sup>31</sup>

### Conclusion

We have seen that Susato published his series of eleven *Musyckboexkens* to promote Netherlandish music in the vernacular language, driven by national pride in the music by his compatriots and in 'our Netherlandish mother tongue' (which is an interesting expression for a citizen of Antwerp who was born in Soest in Germany). In the case of the *Souterliedekens* there is also a religious motive possible, although we have no definite knowledge of Susato's attitude towards the Reformation. Apart from these noble motives, Susato undoubtedly also had a commercial goal, and one may ask how successful his project was from this point of view. There are no reprints known of any of the eleven books, and the number of copies that have been preserved are minimal. The bass part of the last four *boexkens* is even missing.

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edition in Clemens non Papa, *Souterliedekens*. See also the introduction by Bossuyt in his facsimile edition of Clemens non Papa, *Het seventste musyck boexken*.

<sup>31</sup>Grijp, 'The Souterliedekens by Gherardus Mes (1561)'.

Although this may be a coincidence, it seems a little poor when compared with the many copies of the chanson volumes published earlier by Susato and which have been preserved.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, Susato's work inspired others, such as the Maastricht city printer Jacob Baethen, who published a collection entitled *Nieuwe Duytsche Liedekens* (*New Dutch Songs*) three years after Susato's first books and based on exactly the same idea. In 1572 Petrus Phalesius published another collection of Dutch polyphonic 'liedekens'. Clemens's and Mes's *Souterliedekens* were followed by a set of 50 four-part *Souterliedekens* by the Delft organist Cornelis Boscoop, published in Düsseldorf in 1568, probably again by Jacob Baethen.

From these imitations we may conclude that Susato's initiative was successful to some extent, if not commercially then at least ideologically. The patriotic ambition behind his *Musyckboexkens* was primarily articulated by his choice of language, but – I hope to have made clear – also by the popular and folk dimensions of *musica*, the sweetest of all arts.

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<sup>32</sup> Forney, *Chansons*, p. xvi.