NORDISKE STUDIER I LEKSIKOGRAFI

Titel: The description of names in the Vroegmiddelnederlands Woordenboek

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Kilde: Nordiske Studier i Leksikografi 1, 1992, s. 200-209

Rapport fra Konferanse om leksikografi i Norden, 28.-31. mai 1991

URL: http://ojs.statsbiblioteket.dk/index.php/nsil/issue/archive



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The description of names in the Vroegmiddelnederlands Woordenboek

The Vroegmiddelnederlands Woordenboek (Dictionary of Early Middle Dutch) is a perioddictionary, based on historical principles, which will describe the Dutch stock of words recorded in the 13th century. In this dictionary the onomastic material is completely incorporated into the articles. By means of various examples I will show in what way the 13th-century first names, surnames and geographical names are handled in the dictionary and what kind of information they add to it.

Introduction

At the Institute for Dutch Lexicology in Leiden a team of five editors is working on the *Vroegmiddelnederlands Woordenboek* (*Dictionary of Early Middle Dutch*, henceforth *VMNW*) since 1988. The *VMNW* is a period-dictionary, based on historical principles, which will describe the Dutch stock of words recorded in the 13th century. In that century the change from Latin to the vernacular took place in the administration and the oldest literary products in Middle Dutch date back that far too. The language area involved stretches from Holland, Utrecht and the Lower Rhine in the North to Flanders, Brabant and Limburg in the South.



The source material for the VMNW comprises all extant Middle Dutch manuscripts written in the 13th century. This means that not only the charters are included, but also the lexicographical and literary material that has survived from that period. The major part of the material is formed by the Corpus van Middelnederlandse teksten (tot en met het jaar 1300), compiled by Maurits Gysseling. This corpus, usually after its compiler called Corpus-Gysseling, consists of two sections. The first section (further referred to as Corpus I) contains almost two thousand charters and other official documents, whereas the other section (further referred to as Corpus II) contains different kinds of literary texts, varying in length from a few lines to hundreds of pages and in genre from love poems to a translation in verse of Petrus Comestor's Historia Scholastica.

The editors' original assignment was to produce a dictionary based solely on the Corpus-Gysseling. A small number of 13th-century manuscripts, however, was not included in the Corpus-Gysseling for various reasons. For the sake of completeness it has been decided to add this material too. It includes some larger documents, such as the Glossarium Bernense (a Latin - Middle Dutch wordlist), the Diatessaron Leodiense (a gospel harmony) and Het oudste goederenregister van Oudenbiezen (1280-1344) (a register of lended properties). Some other manuscripts, discovered only after publication of the Corpus-Gysseling, are an obituary list from Antwerp, some charters from Bruges and a literary fragment of the Floris.

All material has been coded with help of the computer, to facilitate description in the VMNW. The codes contain a variety of information about date, location and genre of the texts. The words were also provided with information about word class and flexion and with a modern Dutch head word, bringing inflected forms together. Subsequently all texts were put into a database, from which the editors can now retrieve their material by means of head word or code(s). The total number of words, on which the VMNW is based, outruns 1,500,000. They will be described in approximately 30,000 articles. It is, of course, a great advantage that the size of the 13th-century stock enables the editors to include all recorded words in the VMNW and no selection needs to be made. After the 13th century the number of recorded texts in the vernacular grows explosively, which makes it for practical reasons almost impossible to include all words in a dictionary describing a longer or later period. Then the problem of making a balanced selection comes up.

An important part of the database of Early Middle Dutch words is taken by the onomastic material. Some 12% of the words in the 13th-century texts are names and in articles they will take circa the same percentage. All names will be included in the VMNW, in the first place because they appear in the Corpus-Gysseling and as such have to be described according to the assignment. Secondly, it is obvious that names have their place in the Early Middle Dutch linguistic system. While studying them sufficient linguistically relevant and interesting facts come up to justify their inclusion in the dictionary. This need not be a surprise: names are linguistic signs with their intrinsic meaning. They are formed after the rules of spelling, morphology and flexion and are - moreover - interesting from a dialect-geographical point of view.

Not only the editors of the VMNW support this opinion. An enquiry among a number of potential Dutch and Flemish users of the VMNW made clear that a majority of those enquired supported the idea that names are linguistically interesting, and thus thought onomastic material deserved the same treatment in the VMNW as other words.

Often in lexicography names have been discriminated, because they were considered less reliable than common nouns, amongst others with regard to their spelling and meaning.

The best chance for a name to appear in a dictionary is usually either to have a lexicalised meaning or to be part of a proverb. This is, for instance, the policy of the Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal (Dictionary of the Dutch Language), which describes the Dutch language from the middle of the 16th century until the beginning of the 20th century. Dictionaries describing earlier language periods tend to be less strict at this point, probably because the later the period, the clearer the distinction between words and names. In the Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek (Middle Dutch Dictionary, henceforth MNW), for example, produced by the end of the 19th century and describing the stock of words between 1200 and 1500, names have indeed sometimes been included. This regards some (variants of) first names and some words only recorded as surnames. In even fewer cases a place name or place name element is described. It is clear that the description of onomastic material in this dictionary is in no way complete, that the selection of the names seems at will and by chance and that adequate, linguistically relevant information is often lacking. Some examples of this are shown in Schoonheim (1990: 332-333).

In this contribution I will show, by means of 13th-century Dutch examples, in what respects a systematic description of onomastic material can add information to a historical dictionary and in which way this information can be integrated in such a dictionary without loosing the distinction between names and other words.

First names

First or proper names will be extensively treated in the *VMNW*. All recorded variants of a name are entered and described in separate articles. The main emphasis lies on the description of various aspects of the name, amongst others the rise of pet names and augmentatives, Dutch sound-shifts and regional spreading. Under the etymology the original meaning of the name is provided, usually dating back to a Germanic, Greco-Roman or even Hebrew tradition. A linguistic researcher will probably be at least as interested in learning e.g., that the Middle Dutch form *liclais*, only found in the region Holland, is a variant of the name Nicolaas in which the process of distance assimilation has taken place (*n* adapted itself to *l*, so *niclais* became *liclais*), as in knowing that the name Nicolaas originates from the Greek, means 'conqueror of/with the people' and has reached the Low Countries via the Latin language.

Not every variant can for sure be attached to one name. The female first name marsoete, for example, can be a pet name to Maria as well as to Margareta. By giving every variant its own entry in the dictionary, the editors can provide information for that particular variant, e.g. about frequence, morphology and localisation. Variants may have been created in a diversity of ways, some of them even regionally bound. The name Nicolaas e.g. has fifteen variants, some of them only found in restricted areas and it is interesting to see how the variants of this name are spread over the regions. A general survey of all recorded variants is presented in what is regarded as the main article on the name. This survey gives one a clear insight into the regional spreading of variants. For the name Nicolaas, for instance, this is done at the entry nicholaus, the Middle Dutch form which is closest to the Latin name. At this entry variants as clais and claus, liclais and niclais and cole, colin and colard are mentioned and compared mutually. An example of the description of a cluster of first names in the VMNW is found in Schoonheim (1990:334-336). This method enables the editors to describe exactly what variety is found and how this variety is spread over the regions. Thus, the user can look up in the VMNW the variant he found in his text and will find the

information about this particular form. Cross-references point to the extra (mainly dialect-geographical) information in the main article in the VMNW and to other interesting articles. Suffixes of first names, such as -kin, -lin, -sin (all diminutive) or -en (augmentative) are treated in seperate entries, which enable the editors to give all detailed information there. This saves much space at the other entries and it provides a conveniently arranged survey of the suffix.

Sometimes first names come up from unexpected corners. While describing the words vlaminc and hollander, which refer to ethnic origin, neither of these words turned out to have been recorded as a common noun, and both appear only in onomastic contexts. Their use as a surname was to be expected, but it was discovered that they have also been used as first names, Hollander was found four times as first name, for instance: hollandre van Reimarswale (Corpus I, page 1454, line 7; Sealand 1290) and boudine van jiersike hollanders broder (Corpus I, page 1699, line 1-2; Holland, the count's chancellery 1291). The name vlaminc was found three times, twice accompanied by a surname: Vlaming cortals (Corpus I, page 71, line 45; Grauw 1260) and vlaminc vter haghe (Corpus I, page 2262, line 17; Boechoute 1296), and once in a list of the first names of the magistrates of Boechouterambacht: jacob. pieter, willem, vlaminc. (Corpus I, page 2262, line 34; Boechoute 1296). Although similar names such as François and Scott are still in use, vlaming and hollander are no longer used in the Dutch language area as first names. On enquiry at the Registry Office it turned out that they are not even allowed as first names nowaday. However, the Woordenboek van voornamen (Dictionary of first names) by Van der Schaar mentions that the name vlaminc is still in use in Denmark and Sweden, although slightly changed to Flemming, due to i-umlaut (Van der Schaar (1984), p. 173) and this 'Scandinavian' name may be given to a child in The Netherlands. Unfortunately, I have found no signs of the use of the word hollander as first name after the 13th century.

In the VMNW the definition of hollander is split in two; under 1 the use as a surname is presented, mainly in the collocation die hollander or (with proclitic article) dollander. After the references the use as a first name is described under 1.1. Here cross-reference to vlaminc is made. It is important to realise that both vlaminc and hollander are found in onomastic contexts only. If the VMNW did not include names, these words would not be described at all, whereas the occurrence as a name logically leads to the conclusion that they must have existed as common nouns too.

The entry hollander in the VMNW:

HOLLANDER znw.m.

Hollander [11]

0/11/0 Dordrecht 1284. hollander, dollander (met proclitisch lidwoord); ns -; gs -s. Van het znw. hollant met het suffix -er.

I 1. Hollander, iemand uit Holland.

In de verbinding die hollander. Ook met proclitisch lidwoord: dollander. De Hollander, toenaam van verschillende personen. || hughe die hollander in monster enen smaltiende. van viif entventich scillinghen. Corpus I, p.500, r.21-22 (Holland, graf.kans. 1280-1287). hier over waren yroepen late vanden brieven van aertrike dese dinc te orcondene. bi namen (...) jan

dollandere. hughe dollandere. Ende wouter dollandere. Corpus I, p.1701, r.44 - p.1702, r.02 (Brugge 1292).

1.1. Hollander, mannelijke persoonsnaam. Zie ook vlaminc. || Wi Jan van Rinesse. (...) pieter pieters zone. (...) Jan van scenghe. hollandre van Reimarswale. Colin van staple. (...) & andre die van onsen acorde sijn. doen te wetene (...). Corpus I p.1453, r.45 - p.1454, r.09 (Zeeland 1290). (In een rekening:) Jtem ver. yden hollanders moye .x. sol van haren huse te brekene et xx \(\bar{s}\), Corpus I p.784, r.12-13 (Dordrecht 1284).

Surnames

A large part of the onomastic material consists of surnames. I here define a surname as any further identification of a person following his first name. Many surnames are place names or patronymics to indicate the roots of the person mentioned. Most surnames, however, are common nouns. Some of these are recorded both in 'normal' use and as a surname. In the description of these words there has been distinguished between the function of the word in ordinary contexts and the function of the word as name. It is not always clear if someone's surname refers to his profession, although mainly this seems to be the case. For the entry grauwerkere, for example, the main definition is: 'Fur worker, someone who prepares fur, in particular fur of the Russian squirrel'. (N.B. The first reference mentions someone called scoreel' squirrel', so the man seems to be named after the material he prepares). With regard to the use of grauwerkere as a surname, the definition under 1.1 reads: 'Grauwwerker, surname of various persons, in which the distinction between surname and profession name is not always obvious from the context'. Although most persons mentioned under 1.1 may have been fur workers, this is not certain and it is therefore better to keep them apart. The emphasis under 1.1 lies in the fact that their name is 'Grauwwerker', rather than their profession.

The entry grauwerkere in the VMNW:

GRAUWERKERE

znw.m.

grauwwerker

[11]

0/11/0 Gent 1270. graeuwerkere, gra(u)werkere, grauuerkre, grauwarkere, ns -; gs -s; ds -. Uit het znw. grauw 'grijs bont' en het znw. werkere 'bewerker'.

- I 1. Bontwerker, bewerker van grijs bont, met name dat van de Russische eekhoorn. II ian scoreel graeuwerkere. Corpus I p.169, r.37 (Gent 1270-1290) N.B. De toenaam scoreel betekent 'eekhoorn', het materiaal dat de persoon in kwestie bewerkt, vgl. Ofra. escurel. Jtem ele grauwerkere sal gheuen van sinen grauwerke (...) van der .marc. viii. Ö. Corpus I p.1337, r.4-6 (Gent 1288-1301).
- 1.1. Grauwwerker, toenaam van verschillende personen, waarbij het onderscheid tussen beroepsnaam en toenaam niet altijd even duidelijk

uit de context blijkt. || (Op een dodenlijst:) Jacop. clais Grauwerkers soene | mhieil (l. mihiel) grauwerkre, Corpus I p.172, r.20-21 (Gent 1270-1290). Ook in de verbinding die grauwerkere. || (Op een lijst van leden van het St.-Jakobsgilde te Gent:) Niclaus de grauwerkere. Corpus I p.169, r.5 (Gent 1270). (In een rekening:) vanden her rasen den grauwarkere .vii to & viii s & viii o, Corpus I p.532, r.15 (Gent 1280).

Sometimes a word is recorded in onomastic material only, which implies the meaning has to be given with some reserves. A name can be meant ironically or figuratively; someone who is called *die langhe* ('the tall one') may very well have been rather small. According to the *MNW*, bouden diserine ('Baldwin the Iron'), mentioned in three different charters, was given his name because he always rode in harnass through the city. However, this surname can as well express a figurative meaning: 'strong as iron; cruel, harsh'. In the case of clais de iserine (Corpus I page 178, line 36; Gent 1270-1291) we have no idea whether to take the surname literally or figuratively.

A noun only recorded as a surname is *crudepenninc*. This word has only been found in Oudenaarde (East-Flanders) and probably referred to one specific family. It is not entered in the *MNW*, but various compounds ending in —penninc have been recorded, in which this last part means 'tax on (the earnings from the sale of) ...'. The first part of the compound specifies the subject of the tax, for example *swijnpenninc* 'tax on (the earnings of the sale of) pigs'. It is not unlikely that *crudepenninc* has a similar meaning, like 'tax on (the earnings of the sale of) various herbs'. How a word with such a meaning can become a surname is not quite clear; maybe the tax called *crudepenninc* was collected by this family. Anyway, the fact that *crudepenninc* is only recorded in onomastic contexts does not make it a less interesting word for the dictionary. Although the exact meaning cannot be derived from the word in its own context, it is possible to give a definition with the help of comparable words, so this name, which also as a common noun obviously had a meaning and a function in 13th-century Middle Dutch society, gets its own place in the *VMNW*.

The entry crudepenninc in the VMNW:

CRUDEPENNINC

znw.m.

Crudepenninc

[9]

0/9/0 Oudenaarde 1272. crudepenninc, crupenninc. ns -; gs -s, crudepenninx. Uit het znw. cruut 'kruiden' en het znw. penninc 'belasting'.

I 1. Crudepenninc, belasting op (de inkomsten op de verkoop van) verschillende kruiden. Alleen als toenaam van verschillende personen te Oudenaarde aangetroffen. ∥ iohannis dicti crudepenninx. Corpus I p.214, r.28 (Oudenaarde 1272). Bachten ser arnouds crudepenninx .i. bunre. ende xxxv. roeden. (land), Corpus I p.1036, r.14 (Oudenaarde 1285). Ende op dat selue erue (...) .vi. s siaers die ghelt gillis crudepenninc, Corpus I p.1584, r.2-3 (Oudenaarde 1291).

Geographical names

An important task of a historical dictionary being to explain words, it goes without saying that a good understanding of historical texts sometimes also requires knowledge of the geography of the time. In the legend of Saint Servatius, dating from circa 1200, a shipping route from Soissons in France to Denmark (Middle Dutch denemarken) and Norway (Middle Dutch noorweghen), running via Maastricht in Limburg is mentioned. In the charters the name denemarken is found three times, twice as a surname and once in a feudal register of count Florens V of Holland, where a man gives his land situated jn denemarken to the count and gets it back from him in feudal benefice (Corpus I, page 496, line 12; Holland 1285). It is not probable that here a property in Denmark is meant, nonetheless because the remainder of the estates is situated in the diocese of Utrecht.

Further research has solved this problem. Since the 12th century, much land in the diocese of Utrecht had been cultivated on instigation of the bishop. It appears that a number of these cultivations have been named after foreign localities. In the neighbourhood of the cultivation denemarken, nowadays called Demmerik, cultivations have been found named after Britain, Bulgaria, Spain and even Cockaigne. It remains vague, however, how this trend to name cultivations after foreign localities came into being (Rentenaar (1984), pp. 81, 108).

Another question, which - at any rate until now - remains unanswered, is whether Willem van denemarken (Corpus I, page 181, line 5), mentioned in 1270 in Ghent, and Simon van denemaerke (Corpus I, page 2882, line 16), found in Bruges by the end of the 13th century, came from Denmark or from Demmerik. The second possibility, however, seems the more probable, because Demmerik is much nearer to Ghent and Bruges than Denmark.

The word form denemarken is split into two articles for the VMNW. The first article (denemarken (I)) treats the country name Denmark with reference to the legend of Saint Servatius. The second one (denemarken (II)) presents the place name Denmerik, named after the country Denmark, and, under a nuance in meaning, the use of the place name as a surname. The choice to mention the surnames under denemarken (II) is explained at the end of the article.

The entries denemarken (I) and denemarken (II) in the VMNW:

DENEMARKEN (I)

znw.

Denemarken

[1]

0/0/1 Limburg 1200. denemarken, ds.

I 1. Denemarken, land in Noord-Europa. || [ende] also gelike. uan sassen te francrike. Ende bit scheppe di des plegen. te denemarken ende te norwegen. Corpus II (Servas) p.292, r.12-15 (Limburg 1200).

Demmerik [3]

0/3/0 Gent 1270. denemaerke, denemarken, ds. Afgeleid van de landnaam Denemarken.

I 1. Demmerik, plaats in de huidige provincie Utrecht. II gherard van der a. anderhalve hoeve jn denemarken. Corpus I p.496, r.12 (Holland 1285). 1.1. Ook in de verbinding van denemarken. Uit Demmerik afkomstig, toenaam van verschillende personen. II Willem van denemarken Corpus I p.181, r.05 (Gent 1270). Simon van denemaerke Corpus I p.2881, r.16 (Brugge 1291-1300).

Op grond van de vorm van de toenaam kan niet worden uitgemaakt of de bovengenoemde personen hun naam aan de plaats Demmerik dan wel aan het land Denemarken ontleend hebben. Vanwege het feit dat Denemarken veel verder van Brugge en Gent ligt dan Demmerik, is de verbinding onder dit laatste lemma opgenomen.

Many places came into being and have been given a name (much) earlier than the 13th century. The description of these place names in the VMNW aims more at identification than at disentanglement of the original word meaning. There are, however, places originating from the 12th and 13th century, of which the original meaning of the names is, of course, of outstanding interest for the dictionary. After all, it is obvious that the words used to name places must have had some meaning to the people that used them. This may be shown by the next example.

In the 12th and 13th century a lot of land in Utrecht and Holland was brought under cultivation. In this newly cultivated land various places came into being and got names. Apart from such places as Demmerik, which got named after a foreign location, there are also a lot of places with a name ending in -wijc. Blok (1957), p. 23 even speaks of a wijc-trend. In Utrecht we find, for example, place names as hanewijc, honswijc and scalcwijc, in Holland place names as blesewijc, poedelwijc, reewijc, rijtwijc and schelwijc. With regard to the origin of the word wijc opinions vary. The most widely accepted theory is that Middle Dutch wijc in most cases is borrowed from Latin vicus with a general meaning 'settlement' and spread through the trade up and down the rivers from the south all over the Low Countries (Blok/Koch (1964), p. 50). This is also the etymology of the word in the MNW. Another theory is that the word came to the Low Countries with the Vikings and may thus be of Scandinavian origin (e.g. Fockema Andrea (1954), pp. 81-87). Scandinavian influences on Dutch place naming have, however, convincingly been rejected by Schönfeld (1959) and Blok (1978) and, with regard to Flanders, by Roelandts (1989). Schütte (1976) suggests as origin Germanic wik, originally meaning 'fence', which in the course of time develops to 'settlement (of any size)'. In origin it is the same word as the fourth possibility, Germanic wik 'bay' (from which Scandinavian vik also originates), which gets a special meaning 'wide ditch, canal' in the cultivations in Groningen and Drente. Significant distinction between the cultivations in Holland and Utrecht and those in the north (which are of a later date) is that in the north wijc indeed has been recorded as a water name, while in Holland and Utrecht no sign of that has been found.

The possibility that wijc in the place names in the 12th and 13th-century cultivations is borrowed from Latin vicus 'settlement' is the most common theory and looks very probable at first sight. But there appears to be one problem: two of the place names ending in -wijc in these cultivations are recorded preceded by a female article, namely die schelwijc (accusative singular; Corpus I, page 508, line 43; Holland, the count's chancellery 1280-1287) and van der poedelwike (dative singular; Corpus I, page 2442, line 29; Koningsveld 1297). A second look makes clear that the others, according to their flexion, can be male as well as female. Latin vicus is a male word and the dictionaries give for Middle Dutch wijc 'settlement' a male gender too, so the above-mentioned place names may have had another origin. The Germanic words wik have a female gender, and especially the one with the meaning 'settlement (of any size)' seems to the point for the cultivations, which can vary in size from one farm to a complete village. However, Germanic wik 'bay' might also be a possible origin. Under the influence of Latin vicus the meaning of this word may have developed from 'bay' via 'settlement near a bay' to 'settlement (in general)'.

For the 12th and 13th-century place names ending in -wijc in the cultivations in Holland and Utrecht the origin thus could very well be Germanic wik meaning 'settlement'. This, however, does not mean that all place names ending in -wijc share this origin. Some of them are evidently borrowed from Latin vicus, as is the case for wijc near Maastricht and wijc near Tongeren, both in Limburg. The Middle Dutch word wijc therefore is a clear example of the fact that (the etymology of) place names can be very interesting for a dictionary. Should the VMNW not include names, the existence of a female word wijc (< Germanic wik) and that of the much more known male word wijc (< Latin vicus) would have remained unmentioned, because neither of them has been recorded outside onomastic contexts in 13th-century texts.

Conclusion

On basis of this small selection of examples from the *VMNW* I hope to have shown how valuable onomastic material can be in the description of an earlier language period. Many words have only been recorded as names. The nouns *vlaminc* and *hollander* appeared not only as surnames, but also as first names; to the noun *crudepenninc* a meaning can be added, with the help of other nouns ending in *-penninc*, although the exact relation between the word and the use as a surname remains vague. Research and explanation of place names can clarify earlier texts. The naming of the place Demmerik after the country Denmark is an example of this phenomenon. The etymology of place name elements such as *-wijc* undoubtedly deserves a place in a historical dictionary.

In my opinion a dictionary, based on historical principles, needs to include onomastic material, but I also think it important to distinguish between names and other words, because names have a special function of identification in language, which may cause (slight) differences. By describing a language period in a dictionary on basis of *all* the recorded material - though for practical reasons it may be necessary to restrict the scientific work to a balanced selection - I think linguistic research will gain very much.

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