**Greek gold or gibberish? From Erasmus’ plain iambs to concrete poetry in the 16th-century Low Countries**

In this contribution, I will explore the development of a peculiar kind of New Ancient Greek poetics in the Low Countries during the 16th century, especially its final decades. There, Greek poetry had a strong performative thrust ever since the Greek output of Erasmus; it was often recited at peculiar occasions such as weddings, funerals, and graduations, or used as an instrument to get things done, for instance to grant an aura of distinction to publications. I will argue in my paper that this performative thrust entailed a development from a poetry in relatively plain and simple language, partly caused by the state of education of Greek at the beginning of the century, and discussed in my paper by means of the example of Erasmus, to an increasingly complex and learned poetry at the end of the century. The increasing complexity and learnedness of New Ancient Greek poetry is well-known, but I will zoom in on a peculiar side effect of this tendency which is lesser-known: the composition of what I suggest to call with a term from modern literary studies “concrete poetry.” In this type of poetry, the oral and visual form of a poem eclipses the actual linguistic meaning. I will discuss two striking specimens: one an anonymous poem in elegiac couplets from the Bruges Jesuit school (1570s), the other an impressive ἔπος ἐγκωμιαστικόν in 140 acrostic hexameters, published in 1592 by a young Gulielmus Coddaeus (Willem van der Codde; 1574–after 1625). This second poem served to celebrate the best students who graduated MD at Leiden university under the supervision of professor Gerardus Bontius (Geraert de Bondt; ca. 1536/39–1599), famed for his knowledge of Greek and his teaching of Hippocrates.

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