

**THE REYEN**  
in a seventeenth-century Dutch play

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In the preface to his study of the Dutch rural economy in the Golden Age, Jan de Vries wrote "The physical unity of the region and its small size must not mislead us into believing that its economy can be quickly understood".<sup>1</sup> It is equally valid to say "the physical unity of the region and its small size must not mislead us into believing that its dance practice can be quickly understood". Elsewhere in the same book, some of which is concerned with the postulation of a specialisation model for the northern Netherlands, de Vries asked the question, "When we turn from models and theories and confront the stern matron who guards historical fact, what do we find?"<sup>2</sup> In practice, very few people have so far approached the stern matron who guards historical fact about dance practice in the northern Netherlands, and rather than formulate theories or set up models, I propose simply to make one case study.

Bredero's play "Het daghet uyt den Oosten" was printed in Amsterdam in 1638. It had been left unfinished at his death in 1618 and, as the title page indicates, it was completed by "a lover of poetry".<sup>3</sup> It is based on a then already-old ballad of the same title, whose text – all fifteen stanzas – is printed in full before the text of the play. It is a tragic tale of love, treachery and murder, in five acts. There is a considerable amount of music and the cast includes two *Reyen* [*choroi*], one of young girls (*Rey van Jufferen*) and one of nuns (*Rey van Nonnen*). A few items are unrelated to dance; for example, one solo song is set to an identified Italian melody<sup>4</sup> and a vigil over a dead body is sung offstage to the tune of Psalm 116.<sup>5</sup> All the other music is dance related and it is identifiable structurally and in social association.

The second scene of the first Act consists of a *Rey van Jufferen*. The dramatic situation is happy and the text is about the power of love. There are eight 6-line stanzas, each with two sets of three lines with four stresses in each. This 6-line structure, sung to a 3-line tune used twice for each stanza, is that of a later form of sequence, a Western Christian liturgical praise-song used on festivals and saints' days from the ninth century onwards. It was metrically formalised in the 13th century by the Breton monk, Adam de St. Victor<sup>6</sup> and it had secular prototypes and analogues.<sup>7</sup> There are a number of such songs from the 15th and 16th centuries with pious Netherlands texts. Some of these have a significant difference from the Latin sequence texts. In place of the Latin on-beat start and iambic division between stresses (as in *Stabat juxta Christi crucem / stabat videns vitae ducem / vitae vale facere*,<sup>8</sup> which in terms of foot movement implies a walking or processional progress) they often have an off-beat start and/or an implied trochaic division between stresses (as in *Fonteine moeder, maghet reine / bloem der ghenaden, edel greine / laet ons di loven talre tijt*<sup>9</sup> or *O ghi die Jesus wijngaert plant / verblijft u op dat soete lant / daer ghi sijt toe vercoren*).<sup>10</sup>

This is *giga* rhythm – a rhythm which had a long association with ring dances, particularly of young girls, with Spring, with May, with rejoicing. Some of the tunes to which some of these pious texts were sung were secular tunes for May dances. Bredero's first *Rey van Jufferen* fits a number of these 15th-century tunes; for example that of *Fonteine moeder*, a praise-song to the Virgin in regular sequence structure. The 15th-century text has both accented and unaccented beginnings to the lines; this *Rey* of young girls has unaccented beginnings all through. A ring or line with simple skipping steps fits this structure:

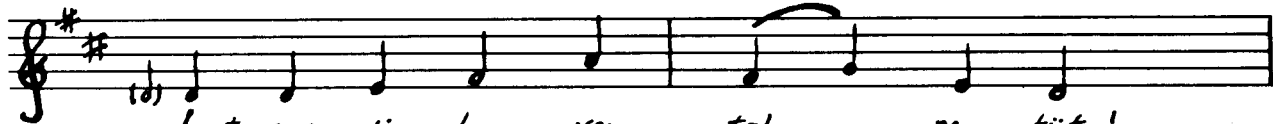
*Ia Rey van Jufferen*

♩ = 100

Fon - tei - ne, moe - der, mag - het rei - ne,  
 i Een vrucht heeft god aen u ver - co - ren,  
 De groo - te Godt die 'al be - heert voor -  
 ii Ghe - recht - ic - heydt met sta - len arm Gheeft



i Bloem der ghe - na - den, e — del grei - ne  
 Waer — der vrucht-en wert nie — ghe - bo - ren  
 ii we — tend' weet wat ons — ont - beert, Die  
 hy — den goed - en tot — haer scherm; En



i Laet ons di lo - ven tal — re tijt!  
 Noch sa - lig - her op — aert - rijc  
 ii Schenkt ons, ons be - hoe — ven:  
 tot een straf de Boe — ven.

i = 15de eeuwse tekst

ii = 1638 tekst

This dance structure must have lasted to some extent into the 18th century. The *Boerenlietjes* contain an example of this form — a self-contained 3-line tune with four stresses per line in giga rhythm — as the first part of a tune titled *De Haagsche Meij* (the second part has a different structure with four lines, not three):

### 16 De Haagsche Meij



*Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlietjes en Contredansen*  
 (Amsterdam 1700-1716, herdruk 1972) nr. 187

There are two examples in the *Boerenlietjes* which are extended to double length by a second unit of identical structure. One was probably a love song; it has a smooth, flowing line and the text incipit is “Adieu, schoone liefde”:

*1c Adieu, schoone liefde*

*d. = 100*

*Boerenlietjes nr. 49*

The musical notation consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as *d. = 100*. The melody is smooth and flowing, primarily using quarter and eighth notes. The second and third staves continue the melody, with the third staff ending with a double bar line.

The other was certainly not a love song; it is a spiky instrumental tune with the text incipit “Isabelle heeft in ’t hemd gepist”:

*1d Isabelle heeft in 't hemd gepist ~*

*d. = 100*

*Boerenlietjes nr. 473*

The musical notation consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as *d. = 100*. The melody is characterized by sharp, rhythmic patterns, including many eighth and sixteenth notes, and several accented notes marked with a '+' sign. The second and third staves continue this spiky melody, with the third staff ending with a double bar line.

Near the end of the third scene, Vechthart (who later in the play commits murder) sings a text which carries the tune reference "Sal ick noch langh met heete tranen". That tune is well known from its use by Valerius in the *Nederlandsche Gedenck-Clanck*<sup>12</sup> and Bredero's text fits exactly this classical 16th-century type Galliard:

*La Gaende op de royse: Sal ick noch langh met heete tranen*  
*tekst: Bredero*  
*♩. = 42*

Laest als de Go - den banc - ke - teen - de, En lurch - ten  
 Soo s'o - ver disch juyst re - de - neer - de Van 's men - schen

van - de Nec - tar soet, d'Een sprack 't waer  
 al - der - hoogh - ste goet:

lust —, d'an - der 't is rust —, d'Een sprack 't waer

lust, doen sey - de Godt Ju - pijn. Waer toe dit

kibb' - len? Laet ons mo - lijck zijn.

This kind of Galliard was a subtle, aristocratic dance for two dancers, with a great display of leaps, cuts and caprioles by the man and a background role for the woman. Its essential rhythm is



with a strong stress on the beginning of every bar (every second bar if notated in 3/4). It is possible that this kind of Galliard was never popular in the Netherlands; there are very few tunes with this structure in the big dance collections, and in some cases where a Galliard tune was used for a pious text, it was adapted into a non-Galliard form. But the name Galliard was used in the later 17th century and the 18th century for several differently structured dances which possibly had some elements in common with the older Galliard. One of the commonest – which was not unique to the Netherlands – had this structure:

2b Galjaarde



Boerenlietjes nr. 136

There was also one adaptation that must surely have been a Netherlandish one. The original Galliard was a spectacular dance with leaps and high steps. The category of north-west European dances called *sloffen* in Dutch had, and still has, dragged or gliding steps close to the ground. But a *Gaillarde Slof*, which was still danced in the Netherlands in the 1770s, at least in the theatre, must have been a compromise between those two apparently incompatible things, possibly with a stress pattern related to the old Galliard but with gliding steps:

2c Gaillarde slof



Boerenlietjes nr. 61 en MS 1770 nr. 606

The dramatic action of Bredero's play takes place in the second, third and fourth acts and these have no music. In the fifth and last act, treachery and murder are past, the vigil is sung over the corpse and the body is buried. The third scene consists of a moralistic *Rey van Nonnen* in the same verse-structure as the vigil song, probably performed to the same psalm tune:

### 3 *Rey van Nonnen*

Handwritten musical notation for the song 'Rey van Nonnen'. It consists of four staves of music in a single system, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes.

wat is de glo - ry en der men - schen roem?

wat is het poc - chen op dit nie - tigh le - ven,

Hoe trots, hoe groots, hoe he - mel - hoogh ver - he - ven?

Och 't is niet an - ders als een schoo - ne bloem

The fourth scene is a *Rey van Jufferen*, of ten stanzas. No tune reference is given, but it is hardly necessary, for the *Rey* fits exactly the tune of the ballad from which the play takes its name. The text is a lament by the heroine for her dead love and it ends with her decision to enter a convent:

### 4 *Rey van Jufferen*

Handwritten musical notation for the song 'Rey van Jufferen'. It consists of three staves of music in a single system, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 6/4. The lyrics are written below the notes.

He - laes! ick heb ver - loo - ren, de Vorst van mijn ge -

moet, Een Rid - der hoog ge - boo - ren, van kla - ren Prins - lijk

bloet, Dus mach ick syn ver - schey - en, wel be - schrey - en.

There are two verse-structures and two tune-types associated with the ballad subject titled "Het daghet uyt [or in] den Oosten". One has 4-line stanzas (the last two being repeated, thus making 6 in all) and a non-metrical tune. The text was given in *Het Antwerps Liedboek*<sup>14</sup> and forms of the tune in the *Souterliedekens* (with the text of Psalm 4)<sup>15</sup> and in *Een devoot ende Profitelyck Boeckxen* (with another sacred text).<sup>16</sup> The other has 5-line stanzas (the fifth line being an extended form of the third line) and a tune with trochaic subdivisions, i.e. giga rhythm. This text is the *oud liedt* printed in full at the beginning of Bredero's play; the associated tune was given, with a sacred text and the tune identification "Stem: Hat daghet inden Oosten" in Stalpert van der Wiele's *Extractum Catholicum* of 1631.<sup>17</sup> Though the earliest known sources of this form of the ballad are later than those of the other, this genre was already an old one.

Though the word ballad now has two meanings, the older being a narrative song and the newer a sentimental or popular street song, in its literal and original sense, from Latin *ballare*, it meant something danced. In Scandinavia, for example, it is known that the primary function of medieval ballads was for dancing and this was possibly so in much of north-west Europe. The dance structure of danced ballads as they survived into the present century in one of the small Baltic islands and as they survive to this day in the Faroe Islands is quite precise.<sup>18</sup> These are left-turning ring dances<sup>19</sup> which can break into a chain if danced out of doors and in and out of houses, and the steps are entirely or almost entirely forms of *branle simple*. In the Faroese danced ballads, which are generally performed by men only, there is the occasional *double* step where the text structure needs it. These steps are still used in Brittany also, though not in association with ballads. They are used exclusively in some dances; *hanter dro*, for example, has only *simple* steps<sup>20</sup> while *en dro* has only *double*.<sup>21</sup> But there is also a *Ronde à deux pas combinés*, (a ring dance with two steps combined) with *simple* and *double* according to text and tune:

5<sup>a</sup>  
♩ = 88

Quand j'é-tais chez mon pè-re, Cou-pe, tail-lons la fou-gè-re

Pe-titz à la mai-son, cou-pe, cou-pe, Pe-titz à la mai-son, cou-pe donc!

5<sup>6</sup>

A simple simple simple

Un de oen i pas - sein — dré zan er hoed sa - pin, — dré zan er hoed sa - pin,

B double simple

me ran-kon-tras men dous ma-lu-ret-te, fao-te deïn hi fo-kein,

ka-ret n'ha-ni hou kar ma-lu-ret-te, kër mé n'hau ka-ran ket,

ka-ret n'ha-ni hou kar ma-lu-ret-te, kër mé n'hau ka-ran ket.

J.M. Guilcher, *La Tradition Populaire de Danse en Basse-Bretagne*.

Paris - La Haye, 1963 pp. 229, 230

This principle can be applied as follows to the Netherlandish ballad "Het daghet uyt den Oosten":

6 "Het daghet uyt den Oosten"

*d.* = 112

double

Het da-ghet uyt den Oos-ten, het licht schijnt o-ver-

double

al, Hoe wey-nigh weet de lief-ste, waer dat ick hœ-nen

simple

sal. Hoe wey-nich weet de lief-ste, Ia de lief-ste.



The final scene of the play ends with two *Reyen*. The first is a *Rey van Nonnen*, with eight 6-line stanzas each consisting of a quatrain and two triolets. The text is a pious and moralistic comment on the vanity of earthly life and love, and joy at its renunciation by the heroine, Margriet. It carries the tune reference "op de stemme: 't is heden een dag van vrolijkheit". This Netherlands text is known from the 14th century and its association with that tune from the 15th century, when they were written together in a collection made for an Amsterdam convent. But the tune itself is that of a still older Latin Christmas song, *Dies es laetitiae*.<sup>22</sup> The *Rey van Nonnen* has identical structure, with iambic subdivision to which simple processional steps or *branle double* steps fit:

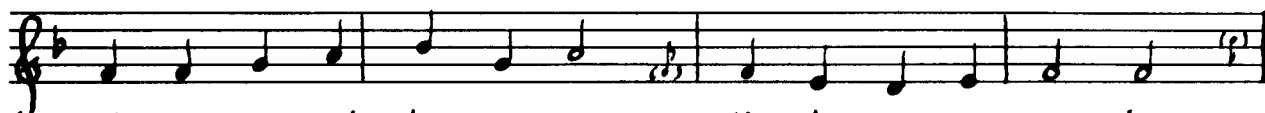
### 7a Rey van Nonnen

$\text{♩} = 112$  Op de stemme: 't Is heden een dach van vrolijkheit



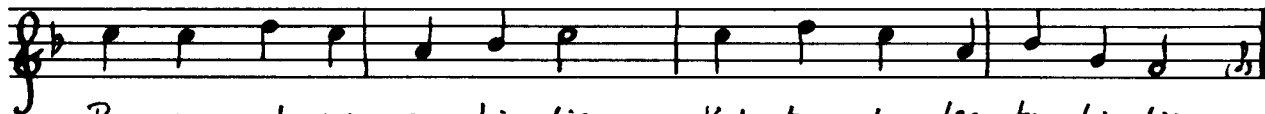
i Di - es es le - ti - ti - e, In or - tu re - ga - li.

ii Des Wer - relds al - der - hoog - ste pracht, En is nauw waert te roe - men. Van



Nam pro - ces - sit ho - di - e Ven - tre vir - gi - na - li

ko - nings schat - ten, preuts ge - slacht, Van Key - sers bloedt te roe - men; Van



Pu - er ad - mi - na - bi - lis, Vul - tu de - lec - ta - bi - lis,

kloe - cke daan, van kracht, van kunst, Van 'svolcks lof, van Prin - cen gunst, Of



In hu - ma - ni - ta - te. Qui in - aes - ti - ma - bi - lis

van aen - sien - lijck bral - len, Met Heer - schap - py van land en lien Wy



Est et in - ef - fa - bi - lis In di - vi - ni - ta - te.

ye - der een to syn ont - sien Dat is al niet met al - len.

i = Latijnse hymne tekst

ii = 1638 tekst

There is a slight trace of the survival of this structure even into the 18th-century theatre; for example, in this dance in Rigaudon rhythm, with a characteristically 18th-century kind of tune but the overall structure of the old Latin hymn:

### 7b Rigodon

$\text{♩} = 116$

*De Hollantsche Schouburgh (Amsterdam 1697-1716, herdruk in voorber.)*  
n. 237

The last *Rey*, and the end of the whole play, is another *Rey van Jufferen*. The text gives a moralistic but cheerful comment on the action. The thirteen 6-line stanzas consist of a quatrain with four stresses per line and iambic division and a couplet of seven stresses per line and trochaic division:

Den Hemel heeft dan loop der staaten  
 Beurts-wijs met voorsicht ghestelt,  
 Op dat sigs niemant souw verlaeten  
 Op't onsachelijck ghewelt,  
 Noch op sijn flooten, of bontgenooten, van nameloos ghetal.  
 Want siet hoe rijcker, hoe jammerlijcker, soo is oock haren val.

The only tune of this structure which I have so far discovered in a Netherlandish source is from considerably later; it is in a short ballet on a rustic subject from the first decade of the 18th century. There are differences of detail; trochaic subdivision throughout, not iambic in the quatrain (as in the *Rey* text), and a rhythmic-melodic structure of 3+4 instead of 4+3 in the first line of the couplet. These, however, do not imply fundamental differences of steps and a *Ronde à deux pas combines* fits exactly:

8 *Van de rijs komtze Thuys* ~

*d. = 88*

\* origineel heeft:

### *De Hollantsche Schouburgh nr. 286*

To sum up briefly, the dance elements in the play: the first *Rey van Jufferen* is a simple old giga, its dramatic significance being innocence and joy. The aristocratic Galliard sung by Vechthart signifies human arrogance and pride. The first *Rey van Nonnen*, to the Psalm tune, is a godly and sombre comment on the action, while the *Rey van Jufferen* which follows it goes to the old ballad tune and gives a passionate, personal comment. There is a similar relationship between the last two *Reyen*. The *Rey van Nonnen* to the tune of *Dies es laetitiae* is moralistic and lofty, but cheerful; the final *Rey van Jufferen* is also moralistic but human and personal. Both the *Reyen van Nonnen* have iambic stress division; two of the *Reyen van Jufferen* have trochaic stress division while their final *Rey* has both.

It is obvious that the forms and social associations of these dances were completely familiar to Bredero and the *Liefhebber der Poesye* who completed the play. Some of them were still known to theatrical dancers and composers of theatre music in the 18th century, even if only as a means of presenting rustic characters. Some did not survive so long. There is no written source of danced ballads in the Netherlands and the re-assembly of the ballad "Het daghet uyt den Oosten" was based on other kinds of evidence. The aristocratic Galliard was changed, adapted, "democratised" in the Netherlands during the 17th century and ultimately disappeared, though the name *galjardje* was still used for a young people's party with songs and dances as late as the mid-19th century in West Friesland,<sup>23</sup> just as the name *zarabanda* is still used in some communities in northern Guatemala for certain dance gatherings.<sup>24</sup>

24 The original Dutch form of this paper was presented during *Volkskundedag* in Utrecht on 20th October 1979; the *Reyen* were sung and danced by Frans and Joke Tromp, Jeroen and Jacomien Hupkes, Kees Notenboom and Ingrid Swakman and the instrumental items were played by Jos Koning. It appears in *Neerlands Volksleven* (jaargang 30, 1980, nr 1/2), published by the *Nederlands Volkskundig Genootschap*, to whom I am most grateful for permission to publish this English form.

## NOTES

1. J. de Vries, 'The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age', New Haven and London 1974, p.xiv.
2. De Vries (see note 1) p.166.
3. 'De Werken van G.A. Bredero' Ed. J ten Brink, H.E. Moltzer, G.Kalf, R.A. Kollewijn, J.H.W. Onger and J. te Winkel, Amsterdam 1890 part III, pp.3-7. B.C. Damsteegt, 'G.A. Bredero's Het Daghet uyt den Oosten', Culemborg 1976, pp.7-8.
4. Act I, scene 2, 'Si tanto gratiola'.
5. Geneva Psalter (1562).
6. 'Les Proses d'Adam de St.Victor', Ed. E. Misset and P. Aubrey, Paris 1901.
7. P. Dronke, 'The beginnings of the sequence' in 'Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur 87' (1965).
8. G.M. Dreves, 'Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi viii, pp.55-56, and F.L. Harrison, 'Medieval English Songs', London 1979, pp.146-147.
9. 15th cent. Utrecht MS, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MG 8<sup>o</sup> 190 No.11, and 'Een dovoot ende Profitelyck Boecxken, inhoudende veel gheestelijke Liedekens ende Leysenen...' Antwerpen 1539, no.230. Ook J.J. Mak, 'Middeleeuwse Kerstliederen', Utrecht-Brussel 1958 no.LVIII, p.197 and 'Monumenta Musica Neerlandica' 7 (MMN), 'Het Geestlijk Lied Noord\*Nederland in de 15de eeuw', Ed. E. Bruning, M. Veldhuyzen and H. Wagenaar-Nolthenius, Amsterdam 1963, no.56, p.180, for slightly differing transcriptions of texts and tunes.
10. (see note 9) no.91, p.263.
11. For example, one of the 15th-century tunes associated with the pious text "O ghi die Jesus wijngaert plant" carries the identification "Die meie wil ons mit ghelen bloemen schenken des vervouwen": *MMN* 7 (see note 9), no.9, pp.26-27. This tune is in giga rhythm but not in the 'regular' sequence structure of the text, which is stretched to fit it. As with other sacred texts, forms of this were sung also to non-dance-rhythm tunes; some were derived from plainsong while others had Latin hymn elements. See F. van Duyse, 'Het oude Nederlandsche lied' ('s Gravenhage and Antwerp, 1903, reprint Hilversum, 1965), III, pp.2264-2278. The religious, social and musical associations which underlay the inter-relationships between sacred and secular texts and various types of tune constitute a large and complex subject which lies outside the scope of this article.
12. Adrianus Valerius, 'Neder-Landsche Gedenck-Clank', Haarlem 1626, facsimile reprint Amsterdam 1968, p.16, with incorrect time signature (C) and barring. F. van Duyse (see note 11), p.1608, and K.P. Bernet-Kempers, 'De Lieder en uit Valerius' Nederlandsche Gedenck-Clank' Rotterdam, 1941, p.2 and 'Nederlandsche Gedenck-Clank' Ed. P.J. Meertens, N.B. Tenhaeff, A. Komter-Kuipers, Amsterdam, 1943, p.33, with incorrect time signature.
13. Van Duyse (see note 11), pp.1610-1611.
14. 'Schoon Liedekens-Boeck II' (Antwerpen, 1544). See 'Het Antwerps Liedboek' Ed. K. Vellekoop, H. Wagenaar-Nolthenius, W.P. Gerritsen, A.C. Hemmes\*Hoogstadt, Amsterdam 1972, 1975, No.LXXIII, p.108.
15. First Edition: Antwerpen 1540. See D.F. Scheurleer, 'De Souterliedekens', Amsterdam 1898, reprint Utrecht, 1977, with details of succeeding editions.
16. Het Antwerps Liedboek (see note 14), p.49.
17. Van Duyse (see note 11), pp.119-130.
18. E. Bakka, 'The Faroese Dance' in *Faroese Isles Review*, Vol.2, No.2 (1977), pp.26-27. I am indebted to Kees Notenboom for this reference.
19. Other ring dances with these steps may go to the right; for example, that performed by members of the Turkish community in Zutphen, which was shown on Dutch T.V. on 9th October, 1979.
20. J.-M. Guilcher, 'La Tradition Populaire de Danse en Basse-Bretagne' Paris 1963, p.324. Very few tunes of *branle simple* structure have survived in the Netherlands. One example is 'Al mijn eentjes...' See J. Rimmer, 'Two Dance Collections from Friesland and their Scottish, English and Continental connections, Groningen, 1978, pp.39,69,147.
21. Guilcher (see note 20), p.298.
22. Van Duyse (see note 11) III, pp.1837-1847.
23. Cited in B.Veurman and D.Bax, 'Lieder en Dansen uit West-Friesland', 's Gravenhage 1944, pp.20-21.
24. Recordings made by the present writer and her husband, Frank Harrison, on 28th June, 1969, at San Pedro Jocopilas, during the patronal fiesta.