Vriendſchap
daer elcarnacabon
gynckel of geboorte / bycunde
domingus Joannes Muncetom
Frater Joannes est / tontet
Pigito Christe modo sub
Sacrificet sacrificium &
Mmſamhery
van zyn yzefet
dal daer / Vriendſchap

That's what friends are for

Amicable exchanges in Cornelis Everaert's *Play of a jubilee*

Bart Ramakers

In 1534, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his religious profession, Jan Donteclocke, a Franciscan tertiary from Bruges, threw a banquet. What we know about it comes from a so-called table or dinner play performed at the event. It is entitled *Play of a jubilee* (*Spel van eender jubile*) and was written by Donteclocke's fellow townsman Cornelis Everaert.¹ Table plays were staged at ground level, in front of or amidst the banqueters, without the use of a platform. They featured one to four characters – mainly personifications – who engaged in a witty, spirited exposition, usually in an allegorical manner, on topics ranging from eating and feasting to the various occasions for indulging in these activities, as well as the beliefs, attitudes, and values that were supposed to inspire and sustain them. In approximately half of the extant examples the discourse revolves around a gift, eventually to be presented to the person or persons by whom, or in whose honour, the banquet was hosted. The play was like an elaborate, theatrical gift-wrapping that established for everyone to see and hear the relation between gift givers, receivers, and the gift itself.

Detail fig. 1

Gifts, like props, 'encode networks of material relations that are the stuff of drama and society alike'.² They are part of what in Deleuzian terms may be called a theatrical assemblage, the 'disassemblage' of which can help us establish and interpret their agency.³ Besides the plays and the gifts, the banquets themselves 'can be understood (...) as (...) figurative and symbolic representations of culture',⁴ which may provide precious insights into human relations in the historical past.

Jan Donteclocke's jubilee banquet was very much an amicable event. It was being framed as such in that the play explicitly references the nature and conditions for festive gatherings that served to celebrate and maintain friendship. Its three characters personify aspects of the very concept: Benevolence (*Ghejonsteghe*), Affection (*Minsaemheyt*), and Friendship (*Vriendscip*) itself. The first two embody two essential conditions for the kind of meeting they have entered – that is, an 'amicable feast' (*vrienthoudeghe feesten*; l. 9).⁵ The play suggests that here had gathered a group of people whom Donteclocke considered his friends and who conversely deemed him their friend. The word 'friendship' is here to be taken in its sixteenth-century meaning, in which it refers not only to voluntary, freely chosen relationships based on individual preference, but also, and possibly even more, to familial and, as is likely in the case of a regular priest, religious attachments.⁶ Thus, this amicable gathering, besides 'real' friends, also comprised of relatives and fellow brethren from the convent.

Hfdst. 2

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This intermezzo will argue and illustrate that Everaert's play may be seen as a series of amicable exchanges, an amicability that extended into the realm of conversation among the dinner guests – their table talk – about the play and everything that happened in it. In fact, it would not be too far-fetched to claim that those attending agreed that all that was said, done, and referred to, both in the play and during the banquet at large, were things typical for friends to say, do, and refer to – things indeed that friends are for. For reasons of brevity, I will expand on one particular expression of friendship only,⁷ which no doubt stood out during the event and sparked conversation among the guests. I mean the gift presented to the jubilarian – or at least unveiled to him and his company – in the course of the play. It was a set of four Latin chronograms, probably written or painted on sheets or scrolls of paper or wooden panels.

This may be an unnecessary clarification, but chronograms are prose texts or poems in which specific letters, interpreted as Roman numerals, stand for a particular date when arranged consecutively. The word literally means 'time writing' or 'dating', as it is derived from the Greek words *chronos* (time) and *gramma* (letter).⁸ The Middle Dutch word for the genre is *carnacioen*.⁹ We find chronograms reproduced in paintings and prints where they would typically contain names, dates, and references pertaining to their creation, content, or meaning. Famous and much discussed are those applied in paintings by Jan (and Hubert) van Eyck.¹⁰ We also come across them in medieval and sixteenth-century chronicles, where they are usually interspersed throughout the historical narrative. They were meant to highlight specific events and concisely express their course and significance – obviously in addition to indicating the year in which they had occurred. Such chronograms, like epigraphy generally, 'set in stone' and thereby both authenticated and perpetuated the memory of a particular historical incident or individual, albeit in a metaphorical sense, given that they were written or printed on paper. They meant to say, this has happened, this is true, and should never be forgotten.

Probably written large and shown high up the wall or carried inside and then unveiled, the four chronograms presented to Donteclocke contained the dates of his birth (1466), profession (1484), ordination (1490), and jubilee (1534). It is my contention that the choice of the chronogram genre as well as each specimen's theme and wording are indicative of the reverence, respect, and gratitude towards the jubilarian on the part of the person (or persons) who commissioned, designed, and executed them.

The texts of the four chronograms were copied by Everaert on the recto and verso sides of folio 382 of the autograph miscellany containing all his plays (figs. 1–4).¹¹ Below I have transcribed them and added translations and annotations between brackets. The chronographic letters I accentuated in red for easy recognition.

1

Cornelis Everaert, *Play of a jubilee*,
1534, fol. 382r, folio from the autograph
manuscript containing all of Everaert's
plays. Below are copied the first and second
chronogram, referring to Jan Donteclocke's
birth (1466) and profession (1484), Brussels,
Royal Library of Belgium, Ms. 19036 (photo:
Royal Library of Belgium)

[I]

Syn gheboorte	Dominus Joannes nunc Tonteclocke creatur. Frater Joannes est Tonteclocke renatus. Flagito: Christe modo jubila profer ei. 'Sacrificent sacrificium laudis .'	1466
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(His birth: 1466. Now Lord John Donteclocke is born./ As brother John Donteclocke he is reborn./ I pray: Christ, utter songs of joy for him./ 'Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving' [Psalm 107:22])

[II]

Tjaer van zyn profes	Ordinis hinc divi Francisci culmina suxit. Frater Joannes terni nunc ordinis extat. Sancti Francisci jubila quesous metat. 'Quem reprobaverunt edificantes hic factus est in caput anguli .'	1484
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(The year of his profession: 1484. Next he embraced the highest values of the divine order of Francis./ As brother John of the Third Order he now stands forth./ We pray that he may harvest songs of praise from Saint Francis./ 'What the builders rejected has become the cornerstone' [Psalm 118:22])

[III]

Tjaer van zyn priesterscip	Crux modo dux fuerat quo Tonteclocke sacerdos. Frater Joannes fit Tonteclocke sacerdos. Mox deus extat ei jubila salva ferens. 'A solis ortu usque ad occasum ex Sion species decoris eius .'	1490
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(The year of his priesthood: 1490. The cross was the sole force through which Donteclocke became a priest./ Brother John became minister John./ Soon God will dedicate songs of praise to him./ 'From the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth' [Psalm 50:1-2])

[IV]

Tjaer van zynder jubilee	Huic pius decimi fit cultus in ordine lustris. Frater Joannes denus stat in ordine lustris. Tonteclocke juvent jubila celigenim. 'Thronus eius sicut sol in conspectu meo et sicut luna .'	1534
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(The year of his jubilee: 1534. For him is made this pious celebration of his tenth lustrum in the order./ Brother John remained in the order for ten lustra./ May the songs of joy by the angels delight Donteclocke./ 'his throne [shall endure] as long as the sun before me and like the moon' [Psalm 89:36-37; the 'his' mentioned in Psalm 89:36 is King David])

3

Cornelis Everaert, *Play of a jubilee*,
 1534, fol. 382r (detail), first and second
 chronogram, referring to Jan Donteclocke's
 birth (1466) and profession (1484), Brussels,
 Royal Library of Belgium, Ms. 19036 (photo:
 Royal Library of Belgium)

Before delving into their theme and wording, I would like to briefly discuss the significance of Everaert's *Play of a Jubilee* and of the four chronograms presented in it for our understanding of the depth and extent of sixteenth-century conviviality, that wider cultural phenomenon of which friendship, banqueting, and, indeed, table talk were indispensable elements.

Several art historians have referred to the banquet as an interpretive context of privately owned paintings displayed in dining rooms of urban houses and country retreats in the Low Countries during this period. Well-known examples are Hieronymus van Busleyden's city palace in Mechelen, which inspired Erasmus to write his *Convivium profanum*, and Jan Noiret's Mint Master's house in Antwerp, where he kept four paintings by Pieter Bruegel. The latter's work especially is thought to have functioned as conversation pieces for their owners and their guests, inviting reflection and discussion while eating.¹² These paintings were performative in that they triggered their viewers to search for visual references. It is interesting to observe that table plays like Everaert's provide us with important evidence of a culture of spirited conversation that existed beyond the circles of learned humanists or well-to-do bourgeois. His play gives us an intimate view into the goings-on during an early modern dinner party, a view in fact much more detailed than the highly speculative, piecemeal reconstructions of what might have occurred over the course of the meals and banquets held in the residences of Van Busleyden, Noiret, and their likes.

Both play and chronograms fitted very well within a convivial event like Donteclocke's jubilee banquet. To discuss just the chronograms, these can be categorised among a group of short-form genres whose playful,

riddle-like character made them ideal vehicles of humanist wit and ingenuity – like anagrams, abecedaria, and acrostics.¹³ They were practiced by both Latin and vernacular poets. Among the latter were many Netherlandish rhetoricians. So, although chronograms were usually written in Latin, many appear in the vernacular and comprise rhyming verses.¹⁴ Thus, we find chronograms in both languages in the paintings by the Van Eyck brothers referred to above. While the one in the *Ghent altarpiece* is in Latin (the fourth line of a quatrain in Leonine hexameters, the medieval meter traditionally used in Latin chronograms), those in the *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw* are in Dutch (as part of a four-line verse with rhyme scheme *aabb*).¹⁵ Several of the vernacular chronicles referred to above were written by authors who were vernacular poets and known members of chambers of rhetoric.

Chronograms should be analysed not only as textual objects, but also as visual objects. One had to not just *read* them, but also *see* them. They were material as well, substantiating themselves in their surface matter, their writing or painting fluids, and their types of scripts. Those presented to Donteclocke would also be *touched*. They were brought in, handled, and displayed. Because of lack of evidence, we can only speculate about their material features, but they in all likelihood possessed some degree of solidity (in order for them to be properly exhibited), were of substantial size (in order for them to be perceivable and readable), and probably contained some ornamental features (in order for them to be considered festive and congratulatory).

Assuming that they were to be seen by all guests, they must have been written fairly large and shown high up the wall, or carried inside and then revealed. Their base material, therefore, as likely as not, was sheets or

4

Cornelis Everaert, *Play of a jubilee*, 1534, fol. 382v (detail), third and fourth chronogram, referring to Jan Donteclocke's ordination (1490) and jubilee (1534), Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, Ms. 19036 (photo: Royal Library of Belgium)

scrolls of paper, or maybe wooden panels or canvas. In order for them to be identified as such and to be subsequently interpreted, the chronographic letters needed to be accentuated, either through rubrication or by using differently shaped or sized letters (in printed chronograms the latter would usually be achieved by using uppercase font). Since the original versions have not come down to us, we need to refer to contemporary specimens in more stable media, such as oil paint or stone. From these representations, it is likely that the inscriptions were framed by a cartouche-like ornament, which would have been drawn or painted on the aforementioned surface materials. If cartouches were indeed applied, they would have enhanced the chronograms' monumentality and commemorative effect.¹⁶

I would like to offer some remarks on the manner in which Everaert represented the chronograms in his manuscript and how this documentation may have related to the actual painted set (figs. 3, 4). In compliance with the genre rules, he set each chronographic letter apart (at least he tried to do so, albeit in a rather clumsy manner) and rubricated it. But the indication of the events and the dates in the margins differed from the way the chronograms would have been presented in the play, where the solution to the puzzle would, of course, not have been disclosed. Neither would the originals have contained the lines Everaert drew from the text lines to the years in the right margin, thus indicating the calculating principle that lay at the basis of all four chronograms. The genre lived by this element of riddle and intrigue. The year hidden in the text had to be decrypted without visual clues other than the accentuated chronogrammatic letters. In his manuscript, however, the annotations enabled Everaert and any future reader to more easily decipher them, since all four chronograms were complicated and generated the years hidden in them in three different ways. Whereas the Roman numerals in the first and fourth lines of each chronogram added up to the indicated years individually, the second and third lines did so conjointly.¹⁷

This brings us to the manner in which the four chronograms generated activity on the part of the banqueters once they had been unveiled for everyone to see and read. They must have elicited feelings of pleasure and excitement in the banqueters, not least in Donteclocke, to whom they refer. Presumably, these feelings were initially linked to the deciphering process, which many of the guests would have embarked on once they realised that the texts indeed were chronograms. Of course, they would also try to read the whole text with the numerals hidden in it, and weigh its meaning and significance in relation to the events they referred to. The verses from the Vulgate quoted in the fourth line of each chronogram will have elicited more profound emotions, both in the jubilarian and the company at large, since they were of a laudatory kind, expressing appreciation for Donteclocke's life. All four chronograms in their first and second lines succinctly capture the events they intend to recall, after which the third and fourth lines give Everaert accolades by calling him worthy of celestial praise by Christ, St Francis, God, and the angels, respectively.

Each time, this praise is expressed in quotations taken from the Psalms. It must have presented a true challenge to find thematically fitting Psalm verses containing the exact type and number of chronogrammatic

letters to generate the intended year, sometimes by omitting a few words but without impeding the text's semantic coherence. The author of the chronograms proved himself to be very competent in this respect. He may have been from the circle of Donteclocke's clerical friends, supposedly one of his fellow brethren, and probably was among the banqueters. He was a Latinist no doubt, and a skilled and learned one at that. Also, Donteclocke must have known enough Latin in order for the chronograms not to be lost on him. He and other ecclesiastics among the banqueters (and maybe some lay guests as well) would have been familiar with the Psalms through the daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. Psalm 118 (quoted in the second chronogram) was one of the most frequently recited and was quoted in several liturgical prayers. Seeing a famous verse from such a well-known Psalm applied to himself would have filled the jubilant with a sense of modest gratitude. All Psalm quotations in a sense elevated Donteclocke to the level of the sacred and divine and were meant to praise him unequivocally.

Both the chronograms' *mise-en-page* in the manuscript and the play's dialogue indicate that the characters did not recite the chronograms, because Everaert clearly set the chronograms apart from the dialogue by indenting them. Thus, he treated them as separate documents that he annotated for clarification. That he did not consider the chronograms part of the spoken text also follows from the fact that the single lines of verse in Middle Dutch that we find interspersed among the chronograms in the manuscript are connected by rhyme. The likely scenario is that they were spoken by the characters uninterruptedly while they pointed at the chronograms displayed on the wall (or otherwise). This all makes perfect sense. In order to be identified as chronograms and be consequently deciphered, they had only to be read and seen. Hearing them would have been to no avail.

The play text provides ample reference for such a procedure of 'show and tell'. At some point, Affection inquires after Donteclocke's age. Friendship does not answer him forthrightly, but probably points to the first chronogram and says: 'Behold, there is the chronogram/ of his birth, [containing] its time and year' (*Siet daer, et carnacioen/ van zynder gheboorte, tyt ende jaer*; ll. 125-126). Next, Affection inquires after the year of Donteclocke's profession. Friendship complies, saying: 'Behold' (*Siet dat daer*; l. 132), pointing at the second chronogram. Immediately after, Benevolence points to the third and says: 'This is the year of his priesthood' (*Dits tjaer zyns priesterscip*; l. 136). The fourth chronogram is not specified by naming the event it refers to. After Benevolence has identified the third chronogram, the three again point to and identify the chronograms, this time characterising them as consecutive stages of Donteclocke's life. Affection points to the first chronogram and says: 'That's his beginning' (*Dats zyn beghin*; l. 141), meaning his birth. Then Friendship says: 'And this his middle' (*Ende sit zyn middele*; l. 141), probably pointing to the second and third chronogram, meaning his profession and ordination. Finally, Benevolence points to the fourth chronogram and says: 'And this [stands] for his end' (*Ende dit voor zyn hende*; l. 146), meaning Donteclocke's death.¹⁸

Nowhere do the characters identify the four devices as chronograms – apparently they trusted the audience to recognise them as such. By only

naming the events and life stages to which the chronograms refer and of which they contain the dates, the characters provided the audience with just enough information to spark their curiosity and entice them to decipher the hidden dates and grasp the meaning of the chronograms' texts in their totality, establishing the manner in which they refer to Donteclocke's life and appreciating their laudatory effect.

Although the chronograms made for Donteclocke were in Latin, it seems likely that the non-Latinists among the banqueters were familiar with the genre through vernacular examples. It seems equally likely that they assigned the same status and connotation to these Latin chronograms as they did to vernacular chronograms and to specimens of other short-form poetry in their mother tongue referred to above. Apart from their playful, riddle-like character, these genres shared a varying level of material visuality. Contemporary audiences therefore would have been equally familiar with the rubricated, boldfaced, or capitalised Roman numerals neatly calligraphed in a vernacular chronogram as they were with the figurative, sometimes historicised capitals skilfully painted at the beginning of each line of a vernacular abecedarium, like those in a London manuscript of poems by the Antwerp rhetorician Cornelis Crul.¹⁹ In these and comparable genres, 'writing was a visible object, meant to be spectacularly displayed'.²⁰

Deciphering the years was equally as difficult (or easy) in Latin chronograms as it was in vernacular chronograms, since both were written in Roman letters. One only had to know which letters also functioned as numerals. Even though they were accentuated for easy recognition, the chronogrammatic letters constituted an enigmatic element. They were like a riddle to be solved, a code to be cracked. When undertaken cooperatively, their reading and interpretation may well have taken on a game-like, competitive character – who recognises the dates first? – which would have significantly heightened the convivial atmosphere. Of course, the complete texts of the chronograms may have been more difficult to grasp, certainly for those unable to read Latin. Those who could, though, may have translated them for those who couldn't, thus providing an opportunity for further conversation.

Thus, the chronograms elicited play and became performative in themselves, extending their entertaining function beyond the table play in which they were presented. They may have stimulated conversation on a range of topics in addition to the hidden dates and to their overall meaning. One topic could have been their ingenious composition, particularly the quotations from the Vulgate, their meaning and applicability to the events of Donteclocke's life, another the skill of the scribe or painter who had copied the chronograms on paper or panel.

Judging from Everaert's play, Jan Donteclocke's jubilee banquet offered its middle-class participants entertainment of an intellectual level that, I dare assert, was no less aspiring than the kind of entertainment presumably offered to the guests of Van Busleyden or Noiret at their respective residences. The conviviality exerted by the play, especially the chronograms offered to the jubilarian, extended beyond mere friendliness or hospitality. Theirs was a conviviality inspired by and truly felt as friendship, one based

on long-term bonds of an intimate – personal, familial, confraternal – kind, which expressed itself through mutual benevolence and affection, two of friendship's constituent aspects that, as we have seen, were personified by two of the play's characters, as was friendship itself. Undoubtedly, Donteclocke would have felt genuine gratitude for the play's performance and for the chronograms presented in it. One can imagine him thanking his guests for these profound demonstrations of benevolence and affection, and of learning, for that matter. They would probably have replied in so many words that that's what friends are for.

Notes

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- 1 On Everaert, his table plays, and rhetoricians' life in Bruges generally, see Ramakers 2015 and Mareel 2017. For an edition of the *Play of a jubilee*, see Hüskens 2005, vol. 1, 971-987.
- 2 Harris & Korda 2002, 1.
- 3 Worrall 2013, 10-12; Harris 2014, 77. Also see the essays in Jurkowlanec *et al.* 2018.
- 4 Tomasik & Vitullo 2007, 11.
- 5 The banquet is called a 'gathering of friendship' (*tverghaeren es vrientscepe*; l. 29). The three characters engage in a short exchange in which the word 'friendship' (*Vriend(t)scip*; ll. 31, 33, 36, 37) is repeatedly used. The union of benevolence and affection is called indispensable for friendship; in one speech friendship is described as vital to all men, great and small. Characteristically, the framing process initiated at the beginning of the play is repeated at the end, when the characters bid farewell to both Donteclocke and his guests. The three characters again allude to the central theme of friendship and its constituent parts. They express the hope that Donteclocke and his 'friends' (*vrienden*; l. 214), may accept the play with thanks. Their attendance, they say, was instigated by 'benevolent affection' (*ghejonsteghe minsamheyt*; l. 236) and had the explicit intention 'to 'nourish friendship' (*om vrientscip te voedene*; l. 237).
- 6 On the classical and medieval idea of friendship generally, see Oschema 2006. On its identification with kinship, see Hoppenbrouwers 1985, 71-72, and Kooijmans 1997, 14-16. On friendship in monastic culture, see Oschema 2006, 139-140, and Hill 2015, 568-571.
- 7 There are three more expressions of friendship. First, the characters recount

four anecdotes about Donteclocke that reveal the guests' appreciation of his habits, traits, and qualities – in short, his personality. The stories were apparently communicated to Everaert by persons close to the jubilarian, who would in all likelihood have been among the invitees. Given their intimate character, the anecdotes were more suited for recounting amidst a circle of friends than within a group of more distant contacts. Second, towards the end of the play, Friendship reveals that the jubilarian intends the banquet to be an occasion for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation between himself and those closest to him, in accordance with the meaning of the Old Testament jubilee. At the time, friendship also stood for (the restoration of) consensus, peace, and solidarity (Kooijmans 1997, 14; Oschema 2006, 145). The play explicitly links Donteclocke's 50th anniversary of his religious life to his impending death, in preparation for which such forgiveness and reconciliation were required, certainly among ecclesiastics. Finally, we may consider the play's commissioning, composition, and performance to be an expression of friendship in and of itself. One or more persons close to Donteclocke had decided to honour him with a piece of theatre.

- 8 The only in-depth study of the genre to date is Marschall 1997.
- 9 *Carnacioen* refers to Christ's birth or incarnation and, by extension, came to mean year or date.
- 10 See, for example, Hudson 2003, Van der Velden 2011, and Heyder 2015-2016.
- 11 The manuscript is kept in the Royal Library in Brussels (KBR Ms. 19036).
- 12 Monographs on the subject are Sullivan 1994, Richardson 2011, and Goldstein 2013. Of these, only Goldstein 2013, 75-84, includes table plays in her argument. For a recent article, see Timmermans 2019.
- 13 See, for example, Grümmer 1988.
- 14 Van der Velden 2011, 9, 14-18, *passim*; Hudson 2003, 97-98.
- 15 That is the reason I surmise that Everaert did not author the chronograms himself. If he had, he would have written them

in Dutch, as did, for example, Eduard de Dene, his fellow poet and contemporary from Bruges, who was a prolific author of short-form vernacular poetry, including chronograms. On the chronograms and other short-form poems in his *Testament rhetoricael* (Rhetorical testament), see Mareel 2012, 1023-1024, and Buskirk & Mareel 2016, 3. Also see Geirnaert 2011 on De Dene's four-line chronogram inscribed in a cartouche-shaped memorial stone above the entrance of the Bruges Beghards school.

- 16 Basically, a cartouche was a stone-cut ornament consisting of a three-dimensional oval surrounded by scrolls – though besides ovals, flat rectangular surfaces also occur. One would characteristically find them on façades, especially over entrances. Though the central plane need not necessarily be inscribed, it often was. Among these inscriptions, chronograms were particularly popular, since they offered an opportunity to mark – or better, to set in stone and thus to perpetuate the memory of – the date of the edifice's construction as well as a text, be it a motto, quotation, or any other succinct piece of information, expressing its origin, purpose, and use. On the cartouche and other forms of 16th-century ornamental forms, see Kavalier 2019, 1286, *passim*.
- 17 The basic rule of the genre was that all Roman numerals had to be included in the sum (or in this case, sums, given the calculating principle described). Everaert succeeded fairly well in his endeavour, but not completely, as it seems. In order to prevent exceeding the indicated year, two Roman numerals in the second chronogram had to be excluded from the count and therefore were not accentuated. In the first line of the first chronogram, the *i* in *Dominus* is not accentuated. In the manuscript the word seems to be abbreviated, the *i* being part of the abbreviation. Muller and Scharpé in their edition read or represent the abbreviation as a *p* (*Dompnus*). Muller & Scharpé 1920, 527. In the second chronogram, the sum of all Roman numerals in the second and

third lines and in the fourth line is 1489 and 1485, respectively. In the third line we find the word *quesous*, which seems an abbreviation of *quaesumus*, meaning 'we pray' or 'we beseech', but spelled this way does not make sense semantically. Maybe Everaert in his exemplar (probably a sheet of paper containing the four chronograms given to him by their author) had come across a correct abbreviation of *quaesumus* but had misread it. Probably the reason for inserting an abbreviation had been the fact that the unabbreviated form *quaesumus* contained too many Roman numerals – three *u*'s (5) and one *m* (1000) – where only one *u* was needed in order for the sum of all Roman numerals

in the second and third lines to amount to 1484. The form *quesous*, though, still contained one *u* too many. Therefore, Everaert accentuated only the first one. In the fourth line he did not highlight the *i* (1) in *hic*, since in this line there was one *i* too many. Muller & Scharpé 1920, 527, instead of *quesous*, read *queso* here. In the fourth chronogram, the sum of all Roman numerals in the first line is 1433. To get to 1534, Muller & Scharpé insert the word *Hinc* (Hence) at the start of the line, adding 101 (*i* and *c*) to the sum.

18 See note 7.

19 Moser 2016.

20 Rigolot 1989, 131. We may expand the scope of figural vernacular poetry to in-

clude prayers in the genre of the *referein* (refrain), calligraphed or painted and often framed, which were hung on walls of private houses, chapels, and churches. Their texts were read or prayed, but they also came to function as visual reminders or icons of the devotional content they conveyed or referred to. They may be called figural in the sense that their material appearance was comparable to real devotional images, evoking the mental representations their viewers knew they described or referred to. Viewing these textual images from afar and thus being reminded of their content was enough to provoke this effect. On this phenomenon, see Mareel 2013.

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