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Explorations beyond the black hole

*Alba amicorum and their place in the Dutch and German song culture of the sixteenth century**

CLARA STRIJBOSCH

Song culture in the Netherlands up to 1600

*Hebban olla vogala nestas hagunnan,
hinase hic enda thu.
Wat unbidan we nu*

‘All birds have started making nests, except you and me, what are we waiting for?’¹ After this first burst of a Middle Dutch lyric upon the literary scene in the eleventh century, there was such a minimal transmission of Dutch lyrics in the following centuries that the period became known as ‘the black hole’.² Whereas in France the *Grand Chant Courtois* survived in large numbers, as did the songs in the great *Minnesang* manuscripts that were produced in the middle and southern parts of the German speaking area, in the Low Countries and adjoining German Regions (Westphalia, the Rhineland) there is little more than *Streuüberlieferung* until circa 1400. This relative paucity is in sharp contrast with the abundance of lyrics that survive from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the flood of songbooks that appeared in the seventeenth century. Being at first for the greater part of a devotional nature, after circa 1550 lyrics and songbooks mainly are worldly in character.³

The undisputed highlight of the sixteenth-century survival of worldly songs is a very small printed book, known as the *Antwerps Liedboek* (*Antwerp Song Book*), which contains no less than 217 different song texts. For 142 of these songs a melody could be reconstructed through references to tunes and to melodies from contemporary song books.⁴ Many other collections, like the *Darfeld* and *Zutphen song book*, Westphalian handwritten collections of songs, song books owned by people connected with the chambers of rhetoric in the Low Countries, and the earliest printed collections of worldly songs, published in the city of Amsterdam, also – like the *Antwerps Liedboek* – prepared the ground for the popularity of printed songbooks in the sev-

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1 Cf. Van Oostrom 2006, 93–107, 566 where these lines are discussed extensively and characterized as a ‘*liedje van verlangen*’ (song of longing) (Van Oostrom 2006, 93). It is not clear if these words were intended to be sung.

2 The phrase ‘black hole’ for the lack of transmission of lyrics in the Low Countries was coined in Willaert 1997, and continued in Tervooren 2008 and Strijbosch 2011.

3 See for a survey of the transmission of song up to 1500 Strijbosch 1997, 14–22.

4 On the reconstruction of melodies in this song book, see the edition and introduction in Van der Poel 2004, Vol. 2, 41–45.

enteenth century. The publication of these seventeenth-century books coincided with the rise of an elite of wealthy, young inhabitants, especially in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland.⁵

Unfortunately, the survival of such large collections of sixteenth-century worldly lyrics led to the relative neglect of smaller and often less accessible sources. Among the sources that were eclipsed by the bright stars of the large collections are the handwritten booklets called ‘alba amicorum’, friends books, which have so far received little scholarly attention. That is regrettable, because they shed a clear light on the contents, proliferation and function of the songs and song culture of the sixteenth century.

Alba were compiled in the Netherlands, Germany and Scandinavia between circa 1560 and 1740.⁶ About 10% of the surviving alba contain songs in the Dutch and German vernaculars; they were often in the possession of women of the rural nobility and can be considered ‘women’s manuscripts’ in the sense that women were the initiators, owners and collectors of these alba.⁷ Their contents consist of contributions by many different inscribers, male and female, usually family members, friends and acquaintances of the owners, and took the form of drawings, proverbs, initials, riddles and song texts. Some pages were obviously filled on the occasion of social gatherings.⁸ In this article the focus will be exclusively on songs in alba.

The alba-with-songs seem to have functioned as a kind of guest book and may be considered the predecessors of the ‘friends books’ that are popular with primary school children or as an early-modern equivalent of social media, in which a (usually young) community tries to establish a group identity.⁹ The alba thus reflect the literary memory and tastes of a social group, centred around the collector.¹⁰

So far research into alba has been conducted along two lines: by means of the identification of alba owners and inscribers, and by embedding the literary, musical and pictorial material of the book into the cultural context.¹¹ This resulted for the period up to 1600 in the identification of two centres where alba-with-songs flourished: one in the eastern parts of the Netherlands and adjoining West-German regions (between c. 1550–1585)¹²

5 Louis Grijp characterised the audience of early seventeenth-century song books as ‘affluent juveniles’ (Grijp 1991, 30). See for a study of these song books and their audience Grijp 1991 and Roberts 2012. Appendix 1 contains a survey of song books with worldly song material up to 1600.

6 Heesakkers 1990, 9–36.

7 See the groundbreaking article by Delen 1989, 77, 80. Reinders 2017 contains substantial information on alba owners, their circles and their networks. For a general introduction into alba with songs see Joldersma 2010 and for a survey Strijbosch 2011, 83–86 and literature given there.

8 For a partial analysis of contributions on the occasion of one such gathering in *Album Overijssel* see Strijbosch 2013 and Reinders 2016, 161.

9 Alba are compared to contemporary social media in Reinders 2016.

10 On women as the central figures of a collection and the term ‘women’s manuscripts’, see Strijbosch 2006, 412–415 and 2011, 88–89; also Reinders 2016, 171–172.

11 Delen 1989 combines both approaches; the articles Strijbosch 2006, 2011 and 2016, as well as Reinders 2016 mainly depart from the literary and pictorial material of the books; Reinders 2013 and Reinders 2017 contain much information on alba owners and their networks. For a survey of editions and research on Dutch–German song material in the period 1550–1600, see Strijbosch 2011, 83–86.

12 Strijbosch 2011 discusses this region and adjoining western German areas for an early period (ca. 1550 to 1580). Reinders 2013, 201–202 traces a circle of alba owners from eastern Dutch regions about and shortly after 1600, which consists of younger family members of earlier alba owners. A third circle of Frisian nobility, mainly of members of the Van Harinxma thoe Slooten family (see Reinders 2016, n. 20) functioned after 1600.

and one situated around the court of William of Orange in Antwerp (about 1580).¹³

Alba were privately owned handwritten books and the material has a private character – the main theme is love. Because of this lack of concern with ‘public affairs’, they failed to be studied as media contributing to social debate.¹⁴ However, love and marriage will have been major issues in the lives of sixteenth-century women and men. A marriage meant a real *caesura*, especially in the lives of women; at the very least it brought about a change of status and a change of residence. Even though they do not deal with politics or religion, but ‘only’ with ‘private matters’, the songs, texts and pictures in alba will have been of great importance to the persons concerned and their circles. For the sixteenth-century aristocracy, men as well as women, reconciling their private wishes in matters of love and marriage with the interests of their families was a major concern. Love was not forbidden and it was commonly accepted that mutual affection would be likely to greatly enhance the harmony in a marriage, but personal preferences should not outweigh dynastic, political and financial strategies. As one of the consequences of marriage tactics, young noble adults had a relatively limited choice; if they married, they married within a small circle of people of the same social status, wealth and reputation.¹⁵ Alba probably formed part of the playground in which participants could explore and test their expectations of love and marriage; they may have been used as a weapon in the combat for the best candidate. Songs in alba will have been deployed to socialize, to share feelings, to give expression to fears or wishes or to attract the attention of the prospective marriage candidate.¹⁶

This article researches the links between songs in alba originating from the Low Countries and adjoining German Regions, from the first alba of about 1550 up to 1600. The focus will be on the character of the song material and its position in the sociocultural landscape of the second half of the sixteenth century. Our knowledge of cultural phenomena in this first phase of the transition from the manuscript-dominated Middle Ages to the print-dominated Early Modern period is limited.¹⁷ The handwritten alba offer us a chance of greatly enhancing our insights into the reception, use and spread of song material and associated sociocultural ideas and forms.

It should be noted that this kind of research would have been impossible without the existence of the Dutch Song Database (DSB): via www.liederenbank.nl it is possible to identify songs by their incipits and/or other criteria and to find concordant songs in other sources. Also, for determining the chronology and dating of song books DSB is an invaluable starting point.

13 Delen 1989, 83–87 and literature mentioned in Reinders 2016, 158 n. 19. Alba from the circle around William of Orange in Antwerp contain mainly French songs, and for that reason play no role in this article. However, this circle has connections with the important album owned by Joanna Bentinck, one of the most extensive sources of Dutch song material in alba.

14 E.g. in the recent publication Bloemendal e.a. 2016 on the intellectual history of the Netherlands. See for an example of the silence on ‘public affairs’ in an album Strijbosch 2008, 273–274.

15 See on the marriage concerns of the nobility in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Gietman 2010, 148–170, especially p. 160.

16 See for these strategic ways of using songs in alba Van der Poel 2016, Reinders 2016, Strijbosch 2016.

17 For a first outline of the position of alba between ‘old’ and ‘new’ cultural phenomena see Strijbosch 2016, 196–202.

Preliminary remark

For this article a list has been established of all (c. 500) Middle Dutch/German songs in alba up to 1600. Their textual concordances have also been inventoried and counted. Appendix 1 presents an extract from this list, limited to alba with at least three Dutch or Dutch/German songs and at least one concordance with another album. In addition this list presents those contemporaneous song books in the Dutch or German vernacular, in written or printed form, that have concordances with alba. The upper limit of 1600 has not been taken too strictly: an album dated 1600–1602 has also been included, as well as three books printed in Amsterdam between 1605 and 1613 (or even later). These early seventeenth-century Amsterdam books are dependent on the first song book that was printed in Amsterdam, the *Aemstredams Amoreus Lietboeck* (abbreviated *Aalb*) of 1589. The last one that is taken into account, *Amoureuse Liedekens* (1613 or later) probably was an anthology of old songs – and therefore a useful source of comparison with earlier alba.

The list features among the contemporary song books such well-known collections as the *Antwerp* and the *Zutphen Song Book*, the song books *Berlin752* and *Berlin612*, the series of printed Amsterdam song books mentioned above and its followers, but also some lesser-known sources that were written in circles associated with chambers of rhetoric (i.e. the song books of Butevest, Razet and Verhee). Missing for technical research reasons are German song books which originated further east from the Dutch border; they may be important sources of concordances, but as they have not been incorporated in the Dutch Song Database, it proved too complicated to include them. Conspicuously absent in the lists are sources of religious song, e.g. the manuscripts Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz 185 and 190 and important sixteenth-century collections like the *Devoot ende profitelijck boecxken* of 1539, the *Suwerlijck Boecxken* of 1540, and similar collections of religious songs. This lacuna reveals one of the specific characteristics of songs in alba: the great majority consists of secular love songs, with a disproportionately large emphasis on love complaints. Religious songs are rare.

Basic problems: dating and localisation

Alba containing songs are difficult sources for traditional literary history, because basic labels like ‘main author’ or time and place of origin are hard to attach. In these alba there are many contributors and many contributions, most dates in alba can only be linked to a limited part of the material, and places of origin are rarely mentioned.¹⁸ Before any material from these books can be compared, a preliminary overview of owners, dates and localisation is needed.

¹⁸ On the difficulties to give alba their place in literary history see Strijbosch 2006, 401–404, on the problem of retrieving reliable information on writers and owners Strijbosch 2016, 182–184.

Of most alba the owners can be traced by combining information on covers, inscriptions on first pages, notes by the owner and acrostics; the latter are not unequivocal, however, as they may indicate the owner, the writer or the dedicatee of the contribution. Other information on owners and contributors has to be scraped together from editions, archives and from the often barely legible scribbles in the manuscripts.¹⁹ A table below presents sixteen alba up to 1600 containing at least three songs in the Dutch/German vernacular in chronological order, with information on their dates of composition and localisation.

Establishing the chronology of alba-with-songs is a problem, not because of a lack but because of an abundance of dates; however, not all dates are of equal importance. Some alba contain songs only in a particular section which has a different date from the rest of the album. In that case the 'song date' has been taken to date the album. Most alba show a peak of activity in certain years, sometimes centred around a year with festive gatherings during which many people contributed to the album.²⁰ For that reason, an average of the dates of the first and last inscriptions would not do justice to the reality of the dates of inscription; the chronology should ideally be based on the average number of the years that a song or series of songs continued to be inscribed, combined with the peak time. The chronology in the table below has been based on peak times, and in the case of equal peak times the date of the earliest inscription has been taken as the point of reference; atypical later additions (as, for instance, the eighteenth-century insertions in *Album Pieck*) have been ignored.

Unlike dates, the localities where inscriptions were made are rarely mentioned in the alba-with-songs. For many alba a localisation has to be inferred from archival information on the alba owner's residence. Unlike their male family members who usually filled an album in the course of the journeys that were part of their education, female album owners did not travel extensively and usually their action radius seems to have been limited to the distance between their parental home and the house where they spent their married life.²¹ However, the move from the parental to the new, marital abode, possibly far removed, was a major change. The newly-weds probably took their alba and their song knowledge with them to their new home, and in this way song material seems to have been disseminated to different regions.²² It is likely that the place where someone added something to an album was rarely mentioned because it was obvious: it was done in the album owner's house.

¹⁹ Reinders 2017 contains ample information on alba owners and their circles. For a summary of literature on earlier research containing information on owners, location and data for separate alba and song books see Strijbosch 2011, 83–86.

²⁰ An example of a page representing a festive gathering is to be found in *Album Overijssel*, f. 183v (see Strijbosch 2013, 28–31); Delen 1989, 86 speaks of *Benützerfrequenz* (literally 'user frequency') as a useful term to get a starting point for dating an album.

²¹ Some noble women will have been staying with relatives or at a court as part of their education (Gietman 2010, 138–139); this was the case with e.g. Aleyd van Arnhem, who started her Album at the Antwerp court of William of Orange and later obviously moved back to Guelders (Delen 1989, 86).

²² For some alba this means that two locations have been mentioned, one of the probable parental home, one of the house the owners lived in after their marriage (Bentinck) or of the house of mother and daughter (Overijssel). Because of lack of places mentioned in the alba, many of the localisations mentioned here are conjectures.

Table 1 List of Alba containing songs ordered chronologically, with dates and places of origin (in bold 'short titles')

1. Album Overijssel	1551-1590, peak 1564-1577	Guelders – Overijssel (Diepenbroek near Barlo-Vollenhove)
2. Album Johan van Lynden	1556-1578, peak 1564-1565	Lower Rhine Area – Guelders (Cologne – Nijmegen)
3. Album Joanna Bentinck (abc)	a: 1575-1598 b: 1583-1587 c: 1590-1609	Overijssel – Guelders (a: Zwolle – b: Zalk (near Zwolle) – c: Warnsveld (near Zutphen))
4. Album Sophia van Rensse van der Aa	1576/1577-1608, peak 1577-1588	Utrecht
5. Album Habel Wiglesdr van Herema	1578-1587	Frisia
6. Album Aleyd van Arnhem	1578-1593; peak 1579-1592	Brabant (Antwerp) / Guelders
7. Album Theodora van Wassenaer en Duvenvoerden	1577-1639, peak 1585-1596	Holland
8. Album Margriet van Mathenesse	1580-1639, peak 1591-1599	Guelders
9. Album Clara de Beers	1582-1602, peak 1588-1602	Brabant (Beers, near Nijmegen?)
10. Album Pieck	1585-1596, some 18th c.	Utrecht
11. Album Herbert Baumont	1592-1606, peak c. 1593	Holland (Dordrecht)
12. Album Maria van Besten	1593-1600	Den Ham (Overijssel) / Bentheim (Westphalia)
13. Album Aefgen Claesdochter van Giblant	1598-1601, peak 1598-99	Holland (Dordrecht)
14. Album Walraven van Stepraedt	1598-1633 (songs 1598-1600)	Guelders (Doddendael)
15. Album Styntgen Jacopsdr	1562-1599 (songs: 1599)	Eastern Flanders (Ghent)
16. Album Ariaenke de Gyselaer	1600-1602	Holland (Dordrecht)

When the places of origin of alba-with-songs and of song books showing concordances with these alba (see Appendix 1) are positioned on maps of the Netherlands and adjoining German areas, combined with a rude chronological division, the following images appear:

It is clear that finds of alba and of song books predominate in the eastern Dutch provinces of Overijssel and Guelders and the northern part of the German Low-



Fig. 1 Map with alba/song books and places where they originated (bold = place; italics = album or song book; underlined: album or song book written down before 1585).

er Rhine Area; in Holland alba and song books mainly appeared around Dordrecht, whereas Amsterdam was the centre of a series of printed song books. The earlier song books and alba are from the eastern parts of the Netherlands and adjoining German areas. Most of the books that were written after 1585 originate from western regions (mainly Holland). In other words: in the sixteenth century early alba are from the East, later alba from the West.²³

There are some interesting exceptions to this general rule: the western Antwerp Song Book, which is relatively early, and the eastern Venlo Song Book, which is relatively late, are rare appearances in their areas and time. Exceptional in more than one aspect is *Manuscript Tirs*, which was put together circa 1588 close to German Münster, as the only religious song book that has concordances with several alba. This might in-

²³ These findings should be reconciled with the presence of two circles of alba owners in different regions, shortly after 1600. Between 1600–1620 two circles existed, one around the Frisian family of Van Harinxma thoe Slooten, and one around Henrica van Arnhem in eastern parts of the Netherlands. The latter circle has connections with *Album Bentinck* and clearly consisted of younger family members of the earlier eastern Dutch / western German circle (Reinders 2013, 199–202, Reinders 2016, 158).

dicating connections between the owners of these alba and Catherina Tirs or her circle.

The general movement of alba and song books in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century from east to west repeats and completes within the space of sixty years a movement which in earlier centuries seems to have taken place in the development of courtly lyrics. Courtly lyrics moved from southern Germany to the North and West, with an important role for the northern Rhine region as a major transit area. Between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, (western) Flemish and (eastern) Lotharingian literature apparently were two separate systems, with Flemish epic literature exported to the east, but not the other way round. The northern Rhine area was a centre for lyrics during these centuries, but obviously, 'the West' barely opened up to Lotharingian literature. This phenomenon of closure to eastern material might explain the 'black hole'. At the same time it is clear that the northern Rhine area was for centuries an important song area, where especially small dance forms seem to have been popular and from where they were exported in all directions.²⁴ The quantity of songs in alba from the sixteenth century seems to illustrate the final east-to-west movement of songs²⁵; also in the sixteenth century Flanders kept its borders closed to eastern literary influences, as is underlined by the fact that most Flemish song books contain French songs, not Dutch or German ones.

The song material

Of the ca. 500 separate songs in the 16 alba mentioned earlier, incipit, genre, subscript and concordances have been established. For reasons of space lists of songs made elsewhere will not be published here. They can be consulted at <http://dx.doi.org/10.17026/dans-xf7-zwyn>. These lists clearly show that the overwhelming majority of songs in alba amicorum are secular love songs, specifically love complaints in which a lover expresses his longing or despair because of the absence of his beloved. The astonishing number of 84% of songs in Dutch/German alba of the second half of the sixteenth century consists of love complaints.²⁶ These were written by all kinds of contributors, not only by marriage candidates but also by relatives and acquaintances, or even by the owner of the alba herself, which indicates that love complaints were the standard type of contribution to alba amicorum.

If a top three of songs in alba is drawn up, the following list results:²⁷

- *aenhoert geclach o bloeyende jeugt* (listen to complaints o blossoming youth), a *memento mori* song, in four alba and in four Dutch song books of the sixteenth century; it also appears in several seventeenth-century Dutch song books.
- *Trueren soe moet ick dach ende nacht* (weep I must day and night), a love complaint which appears in three alba, five Dutch or German song books, and as a religious contrafact in several song books.

²⁴ See Willaert 2010, 28–30 (and literature given there) and Caers 2011.

²⁵ These songs were not courtly lyrics but their late-medieval offspring.

²⁶ Percentages for the different alba with songs based on these lists are given in Strijbosch 2016, Appendix 2, p. 204.

²⁷ For details see separate lists (link in note 19), and www.liederenbank.nl at the first line of the song mentioned.

- the love complaint *Fortune helas bedroefft ben ick* (Fortune alas, distressed am I), in three alba and five Dutch song books of the sixteenth century; it also circulated in the sixteenth century in the Netherlands in a French version.

The two love complaints are representative of the contents of alba, but the *memento mori* song is atypical: religious or meditative songs only appear in a minority of the alba. The *alba Arnhem*, *Bentinck* and *Gyselaer* are of a remarkably serious character in this respect. Otherwise these three alba do not show any interdependence, so an explanation of their character should be sought in the identity and/or religious denomination of the owner and of the circle around her. They may reveal proximity to (obviously protestant) groups.

A small group of alba-songs contains so-called prince-stanzas, a final stanza addressed to the principal of a chamber of rhetoric, ‘the prince’ (or, sometimes, to ‘the princess’, the beloved): this is the case in the *alba Beaumont*, *Giblant*, *Jacopsdr* and *Here-ma*, from Holland, Holland, Flanders and Frisia. These alba also contain devices of particular chambers of rhetoric and may have been compiled in close connection with one of these chambers.²⁸

These first outlines of close connections between groups of alba may be extended and completed by establishing concordances, as concordances give an indication of the song material that has been used and reveal the proximity of the material which the inscribers and owners of alba had at their disposal.

Concordances

Before concordances can be established, it should be clear what is understood by a concordance. In principle two songs are concordant if they share the same text with the same music. For this article it is not the music, but the text that has been the starting point. This is mainly due to the character of the songs in pre-1600 alba-with-songs: these alba do not contain a single musical note.²⁹ They never have musical notation and references to melodies are scarce, whereas in the sixteenth century this had become usual in Dutch song books. Songs in alba seem to be ‘textual’.³⁰ There are interesting exceptions to this rule: *Album Giblant* refers to the melody of nearly all of its sixty-nine songs, and this also applies to the smaller *Album Gyselaers*; it would seem that Aefgen Giblant and Gyselaers circulated in environments where melodies and the possibility to sing song-texts were considered more important than usually was the case.

As the starting point for the establishment of concordances the lists of concordant songs in the DSB were used, the similarity of first lines offering an important indication. However, the textual similarity of songs is not easily established: in alba, variety is the rule; there are spelling and dialect varieties, changes in the order of words, in lines and

²⁸ See for details Strijbosch 2016, 197–198.

²⁹ As far as is now known, only the *Album Rademaker*, which was not included in the lists used for this article because it has no concordances with other alba, has musical notation with a single song.

³⁰ On melody references in the sixteenth century see Grijp 1991, 48; on the absence of melody references in alba Strijbosch 2006, 411–412.

stanzas and even in the presence or absence of complete stanzas. Some writers do not seem to have been primarily interested in writing down a correct or even a coherent version.³¹ Variation is often caused by the adaptation to regional (or even individual) writing conventions, misunderstandings and lapses of memory due to oral transmission; but there are also deliberate changes. One example of the varieties in a sixteenth-century song is the one with the incipit 'I have dared it with fresh [=youthful, lively] courage', which appears in *Album Bentinck* (f. 31r) as *Ich hebt gewaecht fris onverschot*, in *Album Overijssel* (f. 95r) as *Ich habss gewagt fryss unvertzaget*, in the *Darfeld Song Book* (f. 89r) as *Ich haefs gewacht fryss unfersacht*, and in the Berlin752 manuscript (f. 11v and 12v) as *Frisch unverzagtt / hab ichts gewagtt* (f. 11v), respectively *Ich habss gewagtt / frisch unverzagtt* (f. 12v); despite differences in spelling and word order these have been considered concordant songs. A difficulty is presented by songs where the order of the stanzas has been changed; usually these songs partially change the contents as well as the stanzaic order. The lower margin of concordance has been set at circa 70%: if a song shares less than two thirds of its contents with another song, it has not been counted as concordant. An example of a song which is similar but too different to be called a concordance is *Ach/Help godt wy we(e) doet scheidenn* (Oh/Help Lord how painful parting is), which appears twice, nearly the same, in *Album Overijssel* (f. 82r and f. 160r) but is rather different in the *Darfeld Song Book* in the song with the incipit *Ich had myr eyn gerdellyn gebowedt* (I had planted myself a little garden, f. 67r), which, in its turn, contains part of the song with the incipit *Rijck God, hoe is mijn boelken dus wilt* (Mighty Lord, why is my beloved so restless (or: light-hearted)) in the *Antwerp Song Book*, and in some German song books. No doubt there is a connection between these songs, but for this article the differences have been considered too substantial to regard them as concordant.

An extra complication when counting concordances has been the doubling of songs in alba: they may appear two, three or even four times (in *Album Bentinck*) in the same book. Songs found twice in a manuscript have been counted as a concordance each, which on rare occasions has led to the situation that one song in one album has four hits.³²

The information on concordances of the circa 500 songs in pre-1600 alba as presented in separate lists elsewhere³³ has been collated into a combined list, in order to retrieve relations between the song material in particular alba. This combined list sums up the numbers of textual concordances of songs in alba amicorum before 1600 (Appendix 2). As it is difficult to read this list and to draw conclusions from the data, they have been converted into two visualizations: Figure 2 shows concordances between alba, Figure 3 shows concordances between alba and other song books.³⁴

³¹ See e.g. Strijbosch 2008, 276–288 for a comparison of two songs from *Album Besten* with concordant songs in other song books.

³² E.g. in *Album Overijssel* song 25 and 50 are the same (incipit *Ach godt wy we doet scheidenn*), and this song also appears twice in the *Darfeld Song Book* (as a result it has four hits in the concordance lists); Song 23 in *Album Overijssel* (nr 23, 'Synghē ych nycht wall') appears only once in *Overijssel, Bentinck* and *Berlin752* and twice in *Darfeld*, which gives 5 hits.

³³ <http://dx.doi.org/10.17026/dans-xf7-zwyn>.

³⁴ Visualisations were made by musicologist and data-specialist Marnix van Berchum, who is preparing a dissertation on the application of network theories to extant sixteenth-century music.

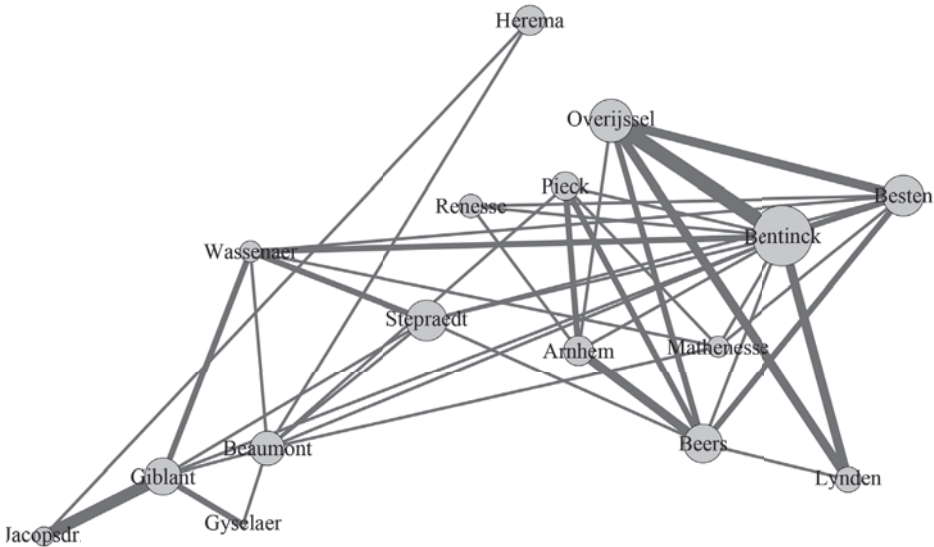


Fig. 2 Concordances between alba containing songs up to 1600. The larger the circle, the more concordances an album has with other alba. The thicker the line between alba, the more concordances they share. Data from the map presented in Figure 1 and information on concordances have been combined in the sense that the alba in Figure 2 have been presented (as far as possible) from east to west (= i.e. right to left).³⁵

Conclusion

Both visualisations (Figures 2 and 3) clearly show that *Album Bentinck* occupies a central place. This does not mean that other collections derived their songs from *Bentinck*, only that the majority of the songs in *Album Bentinck* have concordances with songs in other collections; moreover, it has songs that appear in a broad range of alba. *Bentinck* seems to have been the collection point for sixteenth-century alba song repertoire. As the thick lines show, most connections are to be found between *Album Bentinck* and *Overijssel*, and on the other side between *Giblant* and *Jacopsdr*. The latter, which has only nine songs, shares four songs with *album Giblant*. It is likely that their owners, Aefgen Giblant and Styntgen Jacopsdr, knew each other or, at the very least, their albums.

Alba are mainly found clustered in two regions: in the east, (clustering around *Bentinck*, with some offshoots to central regions around Utrecht) and in the west (clustering around *Giblant*) – a fact which underlines the division between east and

³⁵ This organisation of alba from west to east (from left to right) is sketchy rather than based on accurate detail – as a detailed geographical organisation clashes with a clear presentation of connections. However, books on the left appeared in Holland – except for Herema which came into being in Frisia – books in the middle appeared in western Guelders or Utrecht, books on the right are from eastern parts of the Netherlands, sometimes partly in the border region with Germany (Overijssel, Besten).

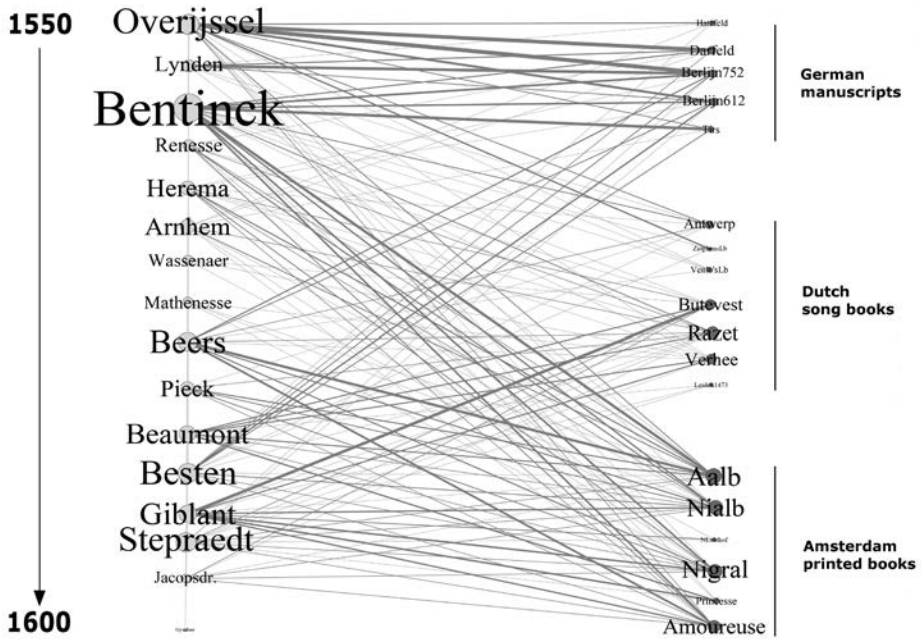


Fig. 3 Concordances between alba and contemporary song books up to 1600 (on the left alba, in chronological order; on the right song books, in three clusters: German manuscripts, Dutch song books, Amsterdam printed works). The larger the font, the more concordances an album shares with other song books.

west for song repertoire mentioned earlier. In the middle years there are some alba which originate from central parts of the Netherlands: *Alba Pieck* and *Renesse*. The relatively late *Album Stepraedt* has connections with later eastern and western repertoire: it obviously not only originated in the middle of the Netherlands, but also occupies the middle ground as regards its song material.

As is visible from the lack of connections between the clusters *Bentinck* and *Giblant*, alba owners from eastern and western parts had different songs at their disposal and had few connections beyond their own small circle in space or time: they did not venture outside their own region and obviously did not share material with earlier generations.

This outcome can be connected with the patterns which appear from the second visualisation (Figure 3). Here the connections between alba (left) and other sixteenth-century song books have been indicated by lines: the thicker the line, the more connections. On the right-hand side appear song books in the three clusters found earlier: German manuscripts, Dutch song books (first the non-specified manuscripts, then those connected with rhetoricians) and finally the Amsterdam printed song books. Within the clusters the books have been organised chronologically. Between the clusters there is also a chronological line: the German manuscripts are the earliest, most Dutch rhetoricians' manuscripts and the Amsterdam printed books date from

1589 or later.³⁶ In general the older alba (up to *Album Beers*) share concordances with German manuscripts, the later ones (from *Pieck* onwards) have many concordances with the Amsterdam printed books.

Combining these patterns of chronology, geography and the connection with German or western books, once more *Album Bentinck* occupies a central place: it has concordances with nearly all song books, German manuscripts as well as Amsterdam printed books. It was compiled in several places in Overijssel and Guelders, more towards the middle than to the east of this area, and it spans the long time from 1575 to 1609, with a peak in the years that saw an upsurge in the production of alba songs, 1583–1587. *Bentinck* was not the source of everything, but obviously many songs have been gathered in *Bentinck* which also appear in other alba and song books. Next there is *Album Overijssel*, which shares many songs with *Bentinck* and with German manuscripts; compared to *Bentinck* *Overijssel* is more orientated towards eastern regions. Also the related eastern *Album Lynden* contains mostly eastern and German material. An anomaly is the eastern *Album Besten*, which has a connection with German manuscripts. It was written as late as the last decade of the sixteenth century, when alba and related song books no longer appeared in eastern Dutch regions.

Clearly based in Holland are the *Alba Beaumont*, *Giblant* and *Gyselaer* – the related *Album Jacopsdr* is eastern Flemish. These alba share many concordances; the remarkably thick line between *Giblant* and *Jacopsdr* (Figure 2) might indicate a closer connection between the owners of these alba. *Alba Giblant* and *Beaumont* contain many songs, which are also present in the Holland-based song manuscripts of people connected with chambers of rhetoric: manuscripts *Butevest*, *Razet*, *Verhee* and *Leiden1473* (Figure 3). The relatively early Utrecht *Album Renesse* and late Frisian *Album Herema* appear ‘out of place and time’ and show only a few concordances with other alba. In general, western alba rarely show concordances with German material. Another remarkable outcome that is yielded by this comparison of concordances is the relatively modest place of the *Antwerp Song Book*: it is considered one of the most important collections of secular songs of the Dutch Middle Ages, but for alba the *Antwerp Song Book* seems to have been of minor importance.

These findings become even more interesting when connected to chronological information. Up to 1600, songs in alba seem to have been a lively phenomenon, albeit within a limited range; they were not exported far beyond the own region or generation. All books around *Bentinck*, which came into being in Overijssel and Guelders, originate in the same region (Overijssel and Guelders) up to 1585; all books around *Giblant* are from Holland, and are of later date. Songs in alba seem to flourished first in the Netherlands along the German border regions about 1550, and blossomed up to 1585 in the eastern and central parts of the Netherlands. After 1585, the interest in songs seems to have shifted to more western parts of the Netherlands; they became integrated with the work of rhetoricians and found their place in the earliest wave of

³⁶ It is perhaps telling that the Dutch song books (the *Antwerp Song Book*, the *Zutphen Song Book*, both 1537–1543 and the *Venlo Song Book*) disturb the chronological line: the first are relatively early, the latter has to be dated later than the latest Amsterdam printed version. This may indicate that these song books had a very limited influence. This is the more remarkable because the *Antwerp Song Book* was a printed book that was reprinted several times.

Amsterdam printed song books. In the early seventeenth century a whole new song repertoire came into being.³⁷ Probably songs in *alba amicorum* illustrate the last phase of the traditional late-medieval love song, showing a clear shift from eastern Dutch and northern German areas to Holland, the region which was to become predominant in the Dutch ‘Golden Age’. They are valuable witnesses of what has so far been a poorly documented earliest phase of the shift from a medieval to a renaissance song culture in the Netherlands.

Appendix 1 Alba with Dutch/German songs 1540–1600, in alphabetical order³⁸

- Arnhem** Album Aleyd van Arnhem (Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS BPL 2267)
Beaumont Song Book/Album Herbert Beaumont (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 76 H 10)
Beers Album Clara de Beers (The Hague, KB, MS 135 J 53)
Bentinck [in three parts, indicated as abc] Album Joanna Bentinck (The Hague, Hoge Raad van Adel, MS Coll. Van Spaen 87abc)
Besten Album Maria van Besten (Zwolle, Stedelijk Museum, MS 773)
Giblant Album Aefgen Claesdochter van Giblant (The Hague, KB, MS 135 K 36)
Gyselaer Album Ariaenke de Gyselaer (Rotterdam, Bibliotheek Rotterdam [olim Gemeentebibliotheek], MS 96 E 13)
Herema Album Habel Wiglesdr van Herema (The Hague, KB, MS 74 J 58)
Jacopsdr Album Styntgen Jacopsdr (Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.6.49)
Lynden Album Johan van Lynden (Arnhem, Gelders Archief, Familie Batenburg/Van Basten Batenburg, 3067 eb 28)
Mathenesse Album Margriet van Mathenesse (Arnhem, Gelders Archief, Huizen Waardenburg en Neerijnen, 0439db nr. 2118)
Overijssel Album Overijssel (Leiden, UB, MS BPL 2912)
Pieck Album Pieck (Private possession)
Renesse Album Sophia van Renesse van der Aa (MS Delden; Delden, Huisarchief Twickel, inv. nr. 897)
Stepraedt Album Walraven van Stepraedt (Arnhem, Gelders Archief, coll. mss 412)
Wassenaer Album Theodora van Wassenaer en Duvenvoerden (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 221)

German song books up to 1600, in chronological order

- Hatzfeld:** Song Book of Kathryn van Hatzfeld (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS mgq 1480), 1530–1540/1560
Darfeld: Album Kathryn von Bronchorst und Batenborch (Schloss Darfeld, Archiv der Domherren Droste, C hss. 1) = *Darfeld Song Book*, 1546–1586, peak time 1546–1565
Berlin752: MS Berlin (Berlin, SBB-PK, MS mgf 752), 1568
Berlin612: Lower Rhine Song Book (Berlin, SBB-PK, MS mgq 612), 1574[–1591]
Tirs: Song Book Catherina Tirs (lost), c. 1588

³⁷ Roberts 2012, 196–202; Houtsma 2009, 25.

³⁸ If available, information from the Dutch Song Database (DSB) has been taken as a starting point, additions and corrections to this information follows between square brackets.

Dutch song books up to 1600, in chronological order

- Antwerp** Antwerp Song Book (only complete version Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS 236.5 Poetica), 1537–1543
- Zutphen** Zutphen Song Book (Weimar, Thüringische Landesbibliothek, MS Oct. 146), 1537–1543
- Venlo** Venlo (also called: Venlo-Guelders) Song Book (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS II 144), 16th–17th. c.
- Butevest** Song Book of Antonis van Butevest (Leiden, Stadsarchief, Gildenarchief nr. 1474), c. 1590 or after 1594
- Razet** Song Book J[acob] Razet, (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 10 B 13), ca. 1600
- Verhee** Manuscript Wouter Verhee (Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, MS Cod.germ. 36), written 1608/1609 or some years earlier
- Leiden1473:** Manuscript ‘Liefd’ es t fundament’ (Leiden, Stadsarchief, Gildenarchief nr. 1473), 1620–1625 (containing songs dated 1533–1622)

Amsterdam printed song books, in chronological order

- Aalb** Aemstelredams Amoreus lietboeck (only copy Gdansk, Polish Academy of Sciences, Dg. 432) printed Amsterdam, Harmen Jansz. Muller, 1589
- Nialb** Nieu Amstelredams Lied-Boeck, 1591 (only copy Ghent, University Library, BL 7099 (2)), printed Amsterdam, Barendt Adriaenz., 1591
- NLusthof** Den niewwen Lust-Hof (4 copies: Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 976 C 11, The Hague, KB, 1 B 19, The Hague, KB, 392 K 14; Leiden, UB, 1498 E 20), printed Amsterdam, Herman de Buck, 1602
- Nigral** Nieu groot Amstelredams Liedt-boeck (copy The Hague, KB, 5 E 1:2), printed Amsterdam, Hendrick Barentsz., 1605
- Princesse** Princesse Liet-boec (copy The Hague, KB, 5 E 1; an incomplete copy in Leiden, UB, 1497 G 18)), printed Amsterdam, Hendrick Barentsz., 1605
- Amoureuse** Amoureuse Liedekens (copy Amsterdam, UB, Tk 213 A 17), title page missing, dating 1613 or later

Appendix 2 Compilation list of concordances

The first row states the name of the album (in chronological order from left to right), the total number of Middle Dutch/German songs, the number of doubles (D) and, where applicable, the number of songs which do not have any concordances with other alba or song books (number noC). Doubles have been counted twice; partial concordances have not been counted.

The starting point for this table has been the mutual comparison of alba. Next alba have also been compared to the other song books, but not the other way around – which means that Table 2 has to be read from left to right and up and down, while Table 3 has to be read up and down only.

Table 2

Alba	Overijssel 65 (2D)	Lynden 21 (1D)	Bentinck 72 (1D+4D)	Renesse 17	Herema 15 (9 noC)	Arnhem 9	Wassenaer 14 (9 noC)	Mathenesse 8 (6 noC)
Overijssel		3	6			1		
Lynden	3		3					
Bentinck	5	3		1		1	2	1
Renesse			1			1		
Herema								
Arnhem	1		1	1				
Wassenaer			2					1
Mathenesse			1				1	
Beers	2	1	1			3		
Pieck			1			2		1
Beaumont			1		1		1	1
Besten	3		2	1			1	1
Giblant			1				2	
Stepraedt			1				2	
Jacopsdr.					1			
Gyselaer								

Table 3

	Overijssel 65 (2D)	Lynden 21 (1D)	Bentinck 72 (1D+4D)	Renesse 17	Herema 15 (9 noC)	Arnhem 9	Wassenaer 14 (9 noC)	Mathenesse 8 (6 noC)
German songbook								
Hatzfeld	4	1				1		
Darfeld	13	4	4	1		1		
Berlin752	14	10	7		1			
Berlin612	8	3	6		1			
Tirs	3		10			1		
Dutch songbook								
Antwerp	3	1	3		1			
Zutphen	5		1					
Venlo	1	1	1					
Butevest		0	1	1	2		1	
Razet			3	2	1	2		
Verhee	1		1		1		1	1
Leiden1473								
Amsterdam printed songbook								
Aalb	3	1	9	2	4	3		1
Nialb	1		5	4	2	1		1
NLusthof							1	
Nigral	1		6	1	3	1		1
Princesse	1		1				1	
Amoureuse	2		6	3	2	1		

Beers 28	Pieck 14 (9 noC)	Beaumont 60 (1D) (44 noC)	Besten 25 (1D)	Giblant 69 (39 noC)	Stepraedt 16 (10 noC)	Jacopsdr 9	Gyselaer 20 (16 noC)
2			3				
1							
1	1	1	2	1	1		
			1				
		1				1	
3	2						
		1	1	2	2		
	1	1	1				
	2		2		1		
2		1					
	1			1	1		1
2					1		
		1			1	4	2
1		1	1	1			
				4			
		1		2			

Beers 28	Pieck 14 (9 noC)	Beaumont 60 (1D) (44 noC)	Besten 25 (1D)	Giblant 69 (39 noC)	Stepraedt 16 (10 noC)	Jacopsdr 9	Gyselaer 20 (16 noC)
			1				
			2				
4			3		1		
3			5		1		
			3				
2	1		1				
			1				
1							
		4		10	2	2	
2	2	4	1	1	1	1	
1		4		4	1		
		1		1	1		
9	4	4	1	1	2	1	
4	3	2	3	5	2	2	
				3	1		
4	3	2	2	6	2	2	1
	1	5		6	1		
7	2		2	5	2	2	

Zusammenfassung

Alba amicorum (Freundschaftsalben) waren seit der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts in den Niederlanden und Deutschland sehr verbreitet. Der Artikel fokussiert einen spezifischen Typus in einem ausgewählten Korpus von Alben: In fast zehn Prozent der Alben tauchen Beiträge mit vulgärsprachlichen Liedern aus den Niederlanden und Deutschland auf; diese zehn Prozent sind meistens ‚Frauenhandschriften‘, d.h. sie wurden von Frauen des niederen Landadels in den Niederlanden und in Regionen des westlichen deutschen Sprachraums gesammelt. Sie sind nie ediert worden und enthalten insgesamt ungefähr 500 volkssprachliche Liedtexte. Im Artikel werden Textübereinstimmungen gezählt und visualisiert, um deutlich zu machen, welches Liedmaterial Sammlern oder Sammlerinnen zur Verfügung stand, wo sie ihr Quellenmaterial vorfanden und wie Verbindungen zwischen Albenbesitzern oder -besitzerinnen etabliert werden können. Um die Übereinstimmungen zu ordnen, werden sie nach Region und Entstehungszeit gegliedert. Die Konkordanzan machen Gruppierungen sichtbar, die vermuten lassen, dass Albenbesitzer(innen) aus den Westlichen Niederlanden und der niederländisch-deutschen Grenzregion unterschiedliche Lieder benutzt haben. Offensichtlich haben sie, abgesehen von einigen wichtigen Vermittlerinnen, nicht weit über ihren kleinen Kreis hinausgeschaut, weder zeitlich noch geografisch. In der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts wird eine Bewegung von Liedgut aus der niederländisch-deutschen Grenzregionen nach Holland sichtbar, in die Provinz, die im 17. Jahrhundert das kulturelle Leben dominierte.

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Queeste. Tijdschrift over middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden

Queeste is een internationaal en meertalig tijdschrift op het gebied van de middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden (tot 1600). Het wil recht doen aan de meertaligheid van deze regio door niet enkel aandacht te besteden aan Nederlandstalige literatuur, maar ook ruimte te bieden voor de bestudering van teksten in het Frans, Duits, Engels of Latijn. Ook teksten die niet tot de literaire canon worden gerekend, kunnen in het tijdschrift aan bod komen. De beoordeling van de inzendingen gebeurt via *double-blind peer review*.

Queeste. Journal of Medieval Literature in the Low Countries

Queeste is an international, multi-lingual, peer-reviewed journal in the area of medieval literature in the Low Countries (to 1600). The journal reflects the multi-lingual nature of this region by providing a forum for research results on literature in Dutch as well as in a variety of other languages, such as French, German, English and Latin. The journal's definition of 'literature' is inclusive rather than exclusive and studies on non-canonical texts are welcome.

Queeste. Revue de la littérature médiévale dans les anciens Pays-Bas

Queeste est une revue internationale multilingue consacrée à l'étude de la littérature médiévale dans les anciens Pays-Bas (jusqu'en 1600). Pour refléter la situation multilingue de ces régions, *Queeste* accueille aussi bien les contributions qui étudient la littérature en langue néerlandaise que les études de la littérature française, allemande, anglaise ou latine. La revue réserve également une place à l'étude de textes qui n'appartiennent pas au canon de la littérature médiévale. Tout article est soumis à l'avis de lecteurs (*double-blind peer review*).

Queeste. Zeitschrift für die Literatur des Mittelalters in den Niederlanden

Queeste ist eine internationale und mehrsprachige Zeitschrift für den Bereich der niederländischen Literatur des Mittelalters (bis etwa 1600). Sie möchte der Mehrsprachigkeit dieses Gebietes gerecht werden, indem nicht nur die Erforschung niederländischsprachiger Werke berücksichtigt werden soll, sondern auch Studien zur französischen, deutschen, englischen oder lateinischen Literatur Platz geboten wird. Auch Texte, die nicht zum literarischen Kanon gezählt werden, können in der Zeitschrift beleuchtet werden. Die Beurteilung der eingesandten Beiträge geschieht durch einen *double-blind peer review*.

→ www.queeste.verloren.nl

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