Reading Middle Dutch Chivalric Romance: A Quantitative Analysis of the Reception Mode

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the intended reader of Middle Dutch chivalric romances in verse to see if the primary reception mode of these texts was individual reading or shared reading (i.e. that someone would read it out loud to an audience). Knowing how these works were intended to be read, might offer us insight on certain stylistic and structural characteristics of Middle Dutch chivalric romance. Based on Dennis Green's research on early German literature and Joyce Coleman's work on late medieval English literature, the analysis will be quantitative, focused on the words denoting reception: all forms of 'horen' (to hear/to listen) and 'lesen' (to read). Not only their frequency, but also the way these words are used and the function they fulfil will be examined. It will be argued that the use of 'horen' and 'lesen' indicates that Middle Dutch chivalric romances were in general intended to be read out loud to an audience.

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Introduction

One of my earliest memories is me reading out loud to my little sister. I was four, and it probably was less a case of reading than of remembering what the letters said. It was about a sparrow named Pim, and I still remember one of the sentences: “Pim zit op de wip”. Then there are the countless evenings when my mother read us book after book, often lying in bed. Us being able to read did not put a stop to the ritual: even though my eyes had raced to the end of the page with the voice of my mother far behind, I never once felt it was better to just read the book in silence by myself. But eventually reading aloud did stop, a few meagre attempts by high school teachers aside, until the stop-and-go reading session in my second year of university. It was part of Frank Brandsma’s course on love in medieval literature, and his theory was that romances had been read step-by-step, pausing in the middle of a dilemma so that the audience would be able to discuss the course of action to take. This was a discovery that stayed with me for quite a while. I talked about it with my classmates, and thought of modern equivalents of this way of reading (blogs? Webseries? Podcasts?). But it did not change the way I read medieval texts. I still read them in silence, sometimes on my e-reader or laptop, on the train or even on the plane.

Still, sometimes I wondered: am I missing things in the text because I am not reading them out loud, or in a group? Are certain characteristics of medieval texts maybe more suited to be read out loud than read privately? Are they there to facilitate reading out loud, or listening? How big would the difference be? Is a medieval text comparable to music notation, just incomplete without performance? And how would the experience of a text change when read in a group?

After I had decided that I would take shared reading as the focus of my Master thesis, I soon found that I had to go to a more fundamental problem. Before any of the above questions could be answered, it was necessary to know if texts were indeed most commonly read out loud and in a group. This type of research had been done before for different area’s and time periods. In *Medieval listening and reading: the primary reception of German literature, 800-1300* (1994), Dennis Green looks at the situation in of early German literature, and in *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (1996), Joyce Coleman does the same for late medieval England and France. Though their methods and viewpoints differ, both Green and Coleman use a mix of extensive quantitative and qualitative

analysis to examine the reception situation in their period. For what she calls an 'ethnography of reading' Coleman analyses the references to the reception of Chaucer's own work, focusing on the verbs 'hearing/listening' and 'reading', after which she examines non-Chaucerian English literature. She denotes first the respective frequency of the verbs (quantitative), and then examines the context of each reference (qualitative). Green takes a slightly different approach. He first establishes criteria for three modes of reception: hearing, reading and the 'intermediate mode'. These criteria are the use of certain words (in a certain context) or the use of neumes or certain sentences, like 'give the reciter a drink'. He then discusses the results of a survey of texts based on such criteria, distinguishing ten different genres.

Taking these two studies as an example, I decided to focus on Middle Dutch literature, specifically on chivalric romances. Though there had been some studies about shared reading, there had not been a systematic analysis of the reading mode of Middle Dutch texts. For this thesis, I thus worked on the reception mode of Middle Dutch chivalric romances in verse to find out how they were intended to be read, by private reading or shared reading. Though not the goal of my thesis, knowing how romances were read might give eventually us insight into structural and stylistic features of Middle Dutch chivalric literature as a whole.

In my first chapter, I will provide a brief overview on the scholarship on the history of reading, and the ideas that exist on the place of shared reading within this history. I will then narrow it down to scholarship on public reading in the medieval period, notably three studies: the afore-mentioned *Medieval listening and reading: the primary reception of German literature, 800-1300* and *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France*, and Evelyn Birge Vitz' *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* (1999).

The second chapter will discuss my corpus – chivalric romances – and my methodology, which is mostly based on Coleman's methodology. Following her and, to an extent, Green, I have chosen to approach the issue of reception mode using quantitative analysis. I will focus on the words 'horen' and 'lesen', analysing where and how they are used in order to find the intended reader or listener of the text.

Then, in chapter three, four and five I will discuss the results of this quantitative analysis, and will attempt to interpret them. Chapter three will be more general in nature, showing an overview of the results and treating different forms of 'horen' and 'lesen' that are commonly used. In chapter four, I discuss the results in more depth, focusing on certain specific texts to see how they use 'horen' and 'lesen'. Chapter five will focus on three texts

that use a specific phrase: ‘to read and/or to hear’ or ‘lesen en/of horen (lesen)’. They might be able to tell us something about the development of private reading. Then, in chapter six, I analyse two romances – *Walewein ende Keye* and *Perchevael* –, looking at the connection between the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ and structure and, moving away from ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’, their use of direct speech.

After chapter six, I will present my conclusion, as well as an analysis of the methodology I have used. Finally, there are two appendices: in “Appendix A” I give an overview of the editions of the primary texts I have used (which are all available on the *CD-Rom Middelnederlands*), and in “Appendix B” I will discuss my own reading sessions of the romance the *Borchgravinne van Vergi*.

I hope that this study may contribute to the understanding of the reception mode of Middle Dutch chivalric romances, as well as some of their stylistic and structural characteristics.

Chapter 1: Finding a Place for Shared Reading

The subject of my thesis, reading Middle Dutch chivalric romance, fits within a larger history and theory of reading. In this first chapter, I will first briefly outline this history as it has been depicted by scholars, with an emphasis on the mode of reading – out loud or silently, alone or collectively -, and then I will zoom in on three studies dealing specifically with modes of reading in the Middle Ages. These studies are Dennis Green's 1994 *Medieval listening and reading: the primary reception of German literature, 800-1300*, Joyce Coleman's *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* from 1996, and Evelyn Birge Vitz's *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* from 1999. Finally, I will discuss the place the question of reading has in the study of Middle Dutch literature.

A History of Reading

"Reading has a history. It was not always and everywhere the same" (187). These words by Robert Darnton in his essay 'First Steps Toward a History of Reading' form the basis for any inquiry into reading as a historical phenomenon. Reading, as many scholars attest, is an activity that leaves little traces. While writers leave behind their words, readers usually only appear when they, too, become writers, and make notes in the margins or write down what or how they read. In his essay "Labourers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader", Roger Chartier likens writers to labourers, creating their own, lasting worlds, while readers are voyagers, whose visits of these worlds leave little behind (133). Still, as Chartier states, it is important to attempt a reconstruction of these visits all the same, as "to reconstruct in its historical dimensions this process of the 'actualization' of texts above all requires us to realize that their meaning depends upon the forms through which they are received and appropriated by their readers (and listeners)" (134). So the way in which texts were or are read matters, as the text changes depending on how it is read. Chartier proposes three different ways to approach a history of reading: through the analysis of the structures, themes and aims of the texts themselves, through the history of books as physical objects and "through the study of practices which in various ways take hold of these objects or forms and produced usages and differentiated meanings" (134). Robert Darnton is more specific, offering five approaches:

1. Investigating the ideals and assumptions governing reading in a certain time
2. Researching the level education and literacy
3. Looking at reading habits (by reading letters and diaries to get first-hand accounts from readers)
4. Reader response theory
5. Books as physical objects

(Darnton 171-186)

That all these factors can and do differ throughout history, is clear to historians of reading. In the introduction to *A History of Reading in the West*, Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier state that "reading is not an anthropological invariant removed from history. The men and women of western Europe have not always read in the same fashion. Several models have governed their practices, and several 'revolutions in reading' have changed their actions and habits" (36). Stanley Fisher tells us in his first chapter of his *A History of Reading* that "what we judge to be 'reading' in the past is usually an arbitrary comparison based on what reading means to us today. Such a retrospective judgement is invalid, because throughout history reading has been many different things to many peoples" (12). Fisher follows the story of reading from Mesopotamia, to Egypt, to Ancient Greece and Rome to the Middle Ages, and includes a chapter on reading in the East: China, Japan, India etc. *A History of Reading in the West*, edited by Chartier and Cavallo starts with ancient Greece and traces the history of reading from there. Apart from that, their narratives correspond quite a lot in the way they depict the transition from reading out loud to silent reading.

Fisher's chapters on reading in Antiquity and the Middle Ages are respectively called 'The Papyrus Tongue' and 'The Parchment Eye'. These titles reflect the change that both Fisher and the authors of *A History of Reading in the West* describe as taking place between, on the one hand, voiced reading as the norm in Ancient Greece and Rome and, on the other, silent reading, which appeared in the Middle Ages. Although there are instances of silent reading in Ancient Greece – most notably in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, where Theseus silently reads a letter from his wife, and Aristophanes' *The Knights*, where someone not understanding silent reading is part of the joke (Svenbro, 50-51) – reading would usually mean reading out loud. This is also reflected in the definition of the Ancient Greek words for reading, which, as Svenbro says, "insist on the practice of oralized reading, however, probably because people normally read little and haltingly, but also and above all because of the enormous value given to the sounded *logos*" (44). Although voiced reading is always, in a

sense, 'public, in that anyone near is able to hear it, voiced reading does not necessarily have a social dimension. A person alone might read to themselves, simply because there is no other way of reading imaginable. Even so, 'public' or shared reading, where one person read to one or more others, was also a characteristic of reading at that time. Fisher mentions the public readings of Herodotus, who read his works at the Olympic festivals (56). Furthermore, "many Greeks (and later Romans) kept a specially trained slave or freedwoman/freedman whose sole responsibility was to read to them aloud" (57).

This is still true for reading in Ancient Rome. Public readings were the way in which authors 'published' their works (Cavallo 75). Again, instances of silent reading are attested – Caesar reading a love letter from Cato's sister in the Senate, probably a political manoeuvre, since the abnormality of the silent reading led Cato to accuse Caesar of treachery, leading to Cato's humiliation (Fisher 90) – but it seems that it wasn't the norm. Listening to texts was seen as a form of entertainment. When the Emperor Augustus could not sleep, for instance, he summoned readers or story-tellers (Fisher 45). "The heavy reliance of the Roman upper class on readers is familiar, and even for them it is clear that listening, instead of reading for oneself, always seemed necessary" (Harris 226). According to Cavallo, "silent reading was not considered to require a more advanced level of technical skill than expert reading aloud; from the evidence we have, it seems that readers chose between the two modes according to circumstance or their mood" (76).

With the Middle Ages, the first stop is the often quoted silent reading of Ambrose. Augustine says that "when he read, his eyes scanned the page and his heart sought out the meaning, but his voice was silent and his tongue was still" (*Confessions* V 12). Augustine comments on the strangeness of his practice. The transition from voiced to silent reading is described by Paul Saenger, both in his book *Space between Words: the Origins of Silent Reading* and a chapter dedicated to the topic in *A History of Reading in the West*. Saenger sees the introduction of word separation – from the first century before Christ onwards, Roman texts were written in *scriptio continua*, all words running together – as an important factor in the transition, allowing people to read without having to voice the words in order for them to make sense (120). The practice of silent reading first became commonplace in the monasteries, from where it spread to the lay world. Even so, Saenger states that "in the mid-fourteenth century, the French nobility began to accept the same practice of silent reading and composition for vernacular literary texts which had become established for the Latin literature of the universities during the previous century" (140). Earlier, shared readings were still the usual way of partaking in a book for the lay audience. According to Saenger, the transition

from shared to silent reading also had an effect on the type of texts composed: "the new vernacular texts composed for princes were almost exclusively in prose, in contrast to an earlier preference for literature in verse" (141).

Though the end of the Middle Ages seems to be considered to be the point in which the transition to silent, private reading has been completed, shared reading is still a topic in subsequent chapters of *A History of Reading in the West*. In "Reading Matter and 'Popular' Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century", Chartier quotes Margit Frenk saying that "given the continued importance of the voice in the transmission of texts, the public for written literature was not limited to its 'readers', in the modern sense of the term, but also included a large number of auditors". The subsection 'The persistence of Oral Reading' in "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers" states that the "love of the recital of familiar pieces, of the orality and music of poetry, was part of a traditional, or 'intensive', relationship between the reader/listener and the printed word. This relationship was disappearing in the nineteenth century" (Lyons 343).

Of course, shared reading has still not completely vanished. In *A History of Reading* by Alberto Manguel, he talks about the lector in Cuban and American cigarrolling factories. This was an institution that lasted until the beginning of the 20th century. Workers listened to news, novels, or philosophical works like Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* read out by a fellow worker while they were rolling cigars (110-114). Listening to books has also gotten a new dimension with the invention of audio recording. In his *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, Matthew Rubery traces this history from Edison's own recording of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' to the still growing market for audio books today. In his introduction he states that "audiobooks hardly seem unusual when we recall that people have been listening to stories for far longer than they have been reading them silently" (16).

"The reader is characteristically seen as isolated, and political questions – concerned with social relationships and intersubjective structures of power – are understood to be arbitrary interruptions of a private activity", Andrew Bennett states in his introduction to *Readers and Reading* (5). However, "reading as an isolated, silent activity can be put into historical context, and decisions about what to read, where to read, when to read, and how to read can be understood to be determined by social, religious or political restraints and codes" (5). Gaining insight into these restraints and codes can also help us understand the texts they produced. To quote Chartier: "The stakes are important because they reveal not only the remote peculiarity of traditionally shared practices, but also the specific structures of texts composed for uses that are no longer those of their readers today" (138).

Where the above-discussed works make it seem like the history of reading in the Middle Ages is a settled matter, some medievalists do not agree. It is time to take a closer look at previous scholarship on shared reading in the Middle Ages.

Medieval Shared Reading

The three studies I will focus on in this section differ widely in approach, time period and geographical area they focus on. Still, as they all specifically take shared reading as their subject, a comparison between the three will help situate my study in the field. The first, both by publication date and time-period treated, is Dennis Green's *Medieval listening and reading*: *the primary reception of German Literature, 800-1300*.

This work is mostly a response to the work of Manfred Günter Scholz, *Hören und Lesen: Studien zur primären Rezeption der Literatur im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* (1980). Scholz concluded that references to 'hören' and 'hören lesen' in connection to the audience in German literature are a result of convention rather than referring to any contemporary practice. However, Green points out that, first of all, "to establish the possibility that *hoeren* and *sagen* could be used figuratively is not the same thing as demonstrating that they must always be so used" (12) and, secondly, that Scholz uses the double formula 'hoeren und/oder lesen' (hear and/or read) "as evidence for reading, but ignores its implication that the same works could also be addressed to listeners" (12). Green's method is to examine all Old High German texts from between 800 and 1300, categorized by genre, on reception by hearing, private reading and what Green calls 'the intermediate mode'. For each of these reception modes, he first defines criteria, lexical and non-lexical. For instance, as evidence for reception by hearing, Green discusses the verb 'lesen' (to read) accompanied by a dative (e.g. I will read *you*), but also for instance musical evidence, as when the text is accompanied with neumes. He then examines all texts, distinguishing ten genres: functional literature, literature of religious worship and instruction, legal literature, historiography, biblical literature, legends, drama, heroic literature, court narrative literature and lyric poetry. The total number of texts "for which a reading reception can be made possible" that he finds, a total of 110, is considerably less than the total he finds for hearing, 270 (Green 168). The 'intermediate mode' is a mixture or interaction of the oral and the literate. One of the ways in which this is reflected in texts is by the use of the 'double formula', where the author uses "to read and/or hear" to refer to the audience reception.

Green's narrative is one of transition from orality to literacy, and he uses illiteracy as an argument to consider hearing reception as a mode, as when he says that reading reception might be "justified in view of the literacy of many noblewomen, but since these works were also received by largely illiterate knights the process of reception involved actual listeners as well as potential readers" (11). His 'intermediate mode' is also an example of this type of thinking, as it discusses "the implications when a work was intended for both modes of reception" (169), meaning that an author would have anticipated both private readers and a listening audience. Green connects this with the mental traits associated with literacy we saw earlier, as "the discrepancy [the author] faces [between different levels of audience] provides him with greater possibilities of irony, distance from court values, and questioning of convention" (172). He also discusses composition and whether this was done orally, or in writing.

Joyce Coleman's *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* was published in 1996. The first three chapters deal with theory, specifically concerning orality and literacy, in order to place the practice of public reading in a broader context. Chapter four sets forth Coleman's methodology, what she calls an 'ethnography of reading'. Chapter five then examines evidence from mostly chronicles about reading practices in late medieval England, France and Burgundy. The last two chapters investigate the references to reception in Chaucer's work (chapter six) and other literary sources (chapter seven).

What is an 'ethnography of reading'? Coleman argues that, in order to go beyond speculation and to avoid overgeneralisation, it is important to define the field of research as clearly as possible. In her own words:

> The mandate of an ethnography of reading would be to describe the interactions of authors, traditions, texts, and audiences as closely as possible within certain clearly spelled-out boundaries of time, place, language, genre, social class, and any other relevant category. (…) I would not expect the observations I derive from those data necessarily to apply to literatures in other times, places, or languages. Some may, some may not; it becomes an interesting exercise to examine such correspondences or the lack of them. (Coleman 76)

In her case, the areas are England and France (the latter being mostly used as a point of comparison with England), the time-period is the late Middle Ages and Coleman's focus is court-oriented secular literature, though she does refer to literature that falls outside this category. Although the title suggests a one-sided focus on public reading, the aim of the book is "to explore the *forms* of reading" (76, Italics my own) for the above-mentioned corpus. Crucial to Coleman's research is the idea that there is not just one mode of reading. Below I will print her schema of the forms and sub-forms she distinguishes (88):

PRAGMATIC
- Public
- Private

PROFESSIONAL
- Scholarly
    - Public
    - Private
- Literary
    - Public
    - Private

RELIGIOUS
- Clerical
    - Public
    - Private
- Lay
    - Public
    - Private

RECREATIONAL
- Public
- Private

In short, pragmatic reading is reading done with a pragmatic goal in mind, in transacting any business (administrative, legal etc.). As Michael Clanchy reminds us in *From Memory to Written Record*, public reading was not uncommon for administrative sources, though Coleman states that pragmatic reading "tended to encourage private reading over time" (89). In religious reading (the Bible, devotional treatises, books of hours etc.) "the primary intent would be to create and strengthen a sense of spiritual community" (89). Scholarly-professional reading would be done at universities for instance, while literary-professional reading is done by authors. Finally, recreational reading is "the reading of anyone outside of activities to his or her actual vocation or literary avocation" (92).

As Coleman herself admits, those categories overlap. Scholarly-professional reading can also be religious, or pragmatic. When a lay person read a saints' life, was this done for

religious purpose or also for recreational purposes? And religious reading, when done by a priest preparing for a sermon, can also be pragmatic. What is key here, though, is that we cannot think in black-and-white categories. We must not beforehand assume that a certain type of reading (say, pragmatic) would always be done in the same way (privately for instance). We could, however, if evidence would indicate this, say that one form of reading is commonly preferred to be done in a certain way. Moreover, an individual is not confined to only one category or mode.

But public reading itself is multifaceted too, employed for multiple purposes, and taking different forms, as becomes clear when Coleman investigates chronicles and autobiographical evidence in the fifth chapter, 'Aural history' (109-147). The evidence for the courts of France and Burgundy comes from the works of, amongst others, Froissart, Deschamps, Christine de Pisan and Olivier de la Marche. For England (and in one case, for Scotland) she uses, inter alia, the *Liber Niger*, the *Dethe of the Kynge of Scotis* and the 'Orders and Rules' of the household of Cecily Nevill, duchess of York (mother of Edward IV and Richard III). The overview she gives of the reading practices shows a diverse picture. There are differences between different courts as well as between the reading of different genres. Within the area of France and Burgundy, she differentiates between the reading of romance, love poetry and histories. For love poetry, private reading seems to have been almost unimaginable (113-114) – an interesting contrast with our own time. Romance reading seems to have been mostly public, and probably episodic (112). The function of the reading as an instrument of flirtation is briefly mentioned (mostly based on Froissart's autobiographical *Espinette Amours*), but is treated in more detail in Evelyn Birge Vitz's article "Erotic Reading in the Middle Ages: Performance and Re-performance of Romance", which I will discuss later. Concerning histories, it is said of both Charles V of France and Philip the Good of Burgundy that they were in the habit of reading them or hearing them read to them every day. Coleman concludes that "public reading in late medieval France and Burgundy was as complex in nature and function as any kind of reading anywhere" (126).

For England, Coleman divides the reading in secular and devotional because, according to her, this reflects the division made in the English material. This in itself reflects a difference between the three courts. Another difference is that, where Burgundian and French court reading seemed highly orchestrated, public reading at the English court was more spontaneous. Public reading of histories at the French and Burgundian courts seems to have been used for propaganda purposes, taking place "in an atmosphere of strict and benign hierarchy, dominated by the high-ranking patrons who sponsor the event" (126). In contrast,

the "the British king or other magnate as reader was not an official person; his reading not a public, official act" (142).

The last two chapters of Coleman's book look at the literary texts themselves, and their references to reception. Coleman looks specifically at the verbs 'to write', 'read' and 'hear' or 'hearken'. She is aware of the possibility that some of the uses of these verbs might be figurative, but this is why it is so important to analyse a bigger number of texts. It is also important that reception-references be looked at in context. This method leads to some interesting results. About Chaucer Coleman says for instance that "while [he] overwhelmingly addresses his own audience as hearers, 'read' predominates over 'hear' when he or one of his fictional narrators refers to other written works" (152). Audience reception is thus differentiated from authorial source-consultation.

The last work to be discussed, Evelyn Birge Vitz's *Orality in Early French Romance*, from 1999, is very different in design from Coleman's or Green's work. Vitz's main concern is to prove that early French romance (so Chrétien, Béroul etc.) were much more firmly rooted in oral culture than earlier scholarship would care to admit. Her book is divided into two sections, the first dealing with orality/oral quality in several early romances, while the second part deals with performance in the broader sense: recitation, public reading, but also the nature of performance and the dramatic quality thereof.

Vitz only looks at literary works and the hints these give about performance practices. She does not look at specific words indicating the anticipated reception like Green and Coleman do, but instead uses depictions of performance of romances within romances themselves and stylistic characteristics, such as the use of voice in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes (chapter five) and the memory-friendliness of romances (chapter seven). Vitz suggests that there is a medieval performance continuum, which ranges from 'high', festive events to 'low', ordinary moments, and that the type of performance depends on the type of event. She establishes that "in the great majority of cases, there is no reference to books or reading at great events in court – which presumably means that songs and stories were performed from memory (…) In some cases, works may well have been learned directly or indirectly from a text" (180). Public reading only comes in at the low end of the performance spectrum, informal domestic settings. In her book Vitz also points at the link between reading romance and amorous, erotic behaviour: one leading to the other. She expands on this in her article "Erotic Reading in the Middle Ages: Performance and Re-performance of Romance". She looks at passages in several romances, like *Floris et Liriopé* and *Floire et Blanchefleur*, noting that "in erotic reading, the voiced and embodied performance of the narrative text

moves the inscribed readers, who identify with the characters, to imitate immediately the lovers whose story they have just read" (73). Probably the most famous scene depicting erotic reading is Paolo and Francesca's fatal reading of the *Lancelot en prose* in Dante's *Inferno*. Their re-performance of Lancelot and Guinevere's kiss is the start of their affair, which will eventually send both of them to hell.

However, Vitz notes that "much of this public reading, especially in great courts, appears to have been of an edifying, informative or 'improving' nature: for example, from works given as providing ethical exempla or as 'historical'" (220). Eventually she looks at private or semi-private reading, of which she finds little evidence in the 12th and early 13th century. She points at the emergence of private space as making private reading possible, at manuscripts as status-symbols (so not necessarily bought or commissioned to be read), and to the negative attitude towards the handful of references to private reading that she was able to find in romances of the twelfth and thirteenth century.

These books and their different methods all underscore the need to be careful when talking about the reception of medieval literature. Where Coleman talks about the fallacy of equating a reference to 'reading' automatically to private reading, Green is very cautious with any reference to reception, whether it refers to hearing or reading. Vitz, then, goes in a different direction by placing public reading in contrast to 'pure' orality, where texts were learned by heart and performed without reference to a book. However, notwithstanding their different approaches, Coleman, Green and Vitz all provide abundant evidence for the practice of public reading, and prove that it is a rich topic to explore.

This is of course what I plan to do in my thesis for one specific group of texts: Middle Dutch chivalric romance.

The Discussion in Middle Dutch

Though, as said, there has not yet been a systematic analysis of the reception mode of Middle Dutch chivalric romance, this does not mean that the topic has not been touched upon by several scholars. In his introduction to *Op Avontuur. Middeleeuwse epiek in de Lage Landen*, Jozef D. Janssens, the reception of Middle Dutch literature by a listening audience seems to be foregone conclusion. Janssens discusses intertextuality, and treats shared reading as a given:

> Konden middeleeuwse toehoorders op grond van een eenmalige voordracht subtiele verwijzingen naar andere werken wel snappen? (…) Waren de concrete receptie-omstandigheden wel van die aard om allerlei hints van de dichter te kunnen vatten: was het publiek na feestelijke eetmalen en dito drinkgelagen nog wel in staat om iets meer dan de grote verhaallijnen in een werk te volgen? En stond een wisselende samenstelling van het hofpubliek een gemeenschappelijke voorkennis niet in de weg? (Janssens 23)

[Were medieval listeners able to understand subtle references to other works on the basis of a one-time recitation? Were the concrete circumstanstances of reception even of the kind to enable hints made by the poet: was the audience even able to follow more than just the major storylines in a work after festive meals and heavy drinking? And did a variable make-up of the courtaudience not hinder a common foreknowledge?]

If this seems like a settled matter, other scholars do not agree. The question of reception mode returns again and again in scholarship on Middle Dutch literature, for instance in Geert Sonnemans' *Functionele aspecten van Middelnederlandse versprologen*, in which he calls the reception of medieval literature "een bijzonder intrigerende kwestie" [an especially intriguing question] (137) and quotes Green. However, Sonnemans calls "de bijdrage die de door mij onderzochte prologen aan deze discussie kunnen leveren (…) niet bepaald groot" [the contribution which the prologues I investigated can make to the discussion not very substantial] (137), and he only devotes one-and-a-half page to the issue. Some scholars that address the issue – usually in the context of other research – are Joost van Driel in *Prikkeling der zinnen* (see chapter 8 in his book), a work on stylistic characteristics of Middle Dutch literature, and Mike van Kestemont in "Een 'Assonantic Revival'? Een kwantitatief diachroon onderzoek naar de assonantie in de Middelnederlandse ridderepiek, met bijzondere aandacht voor de veertiende eeuw" (279-283), which deals with assonance.

One text of which it the reception mode is established in scholarship, is the *Lanceloet*, a translation of the Old French *Lancelot en prose* which is part of the *Lancelot* Compilation. In the introductury chapters of Pars 2 of the modern edition of the text, Bart Besamusca discusses the manner in which the text would have been read (112-120). He concludes that:

> uit enkele afwijkingen die deze vertaling vertoont ten opzichte van het Oudfranse origineel kan worden afgeleid dat zij werd geschreven voor toehoorders, hetgeen in overeenstemming is met de algemene opinie dat de

> Middelnederlandse epiek in de dertiende en veertiende eeuw bestemd was voor een luisterend publiek. (115)

[from certain deviations that this translation shows with respect to the Old French original, it is possible to deduce that it was written for listeners, which is in agreement with the general opinion that the Middle Dutch narrative poetry in the thirteenth and fourteenth century was meant for a listening audience]

Frank Brandsma has studied the way in which the *Lanceloet* and other chivalric romances presents direct speech, and relates this to oral delivery of the text.[1] In "De presentatie van het gesproken woord in Middelnederlandse epische teksten. Een steeksproefgewijze verkenning" he states that "het is waarschijnlijk – maar niet zeker – dat de betrokken teksten inderdaad zo hun publiek bereikten en het komt het inzicht in de functie van de verschillende componenten van de presentatie ten goede indien van auditieve receptie wordt uitgegaan" [it is probable – but not certain – that the texts concerned did indeed reach their audience in that way (i.e. by being read out to them) and it is beneficial to our insight in the function of the different components of the presentation if we assume reception by hearing] (227).

Where Frank Brandsma tentatively favours a reception by hearing, other scholars give preference to reception by individual reading. An example of the last would be Erwin Mantingh's book *Een monnik met een rol: Willem van Affligem, het Kopenhaagse Leven van Lutgart en de fictie van een meerdaagse voorlezing*, in which he argues that the references to public reading sessions in one version of *Het leven van Sinte Lutgart* are part of a fictional framework for the benefit of private readers, and not evidence of actual shared reading sessions.

Even so, the general opinion seems to be that a reception by shared reading was likely for thirteenth and fourteenth century Middle Dutch texts. This is, however, something that is hard to prove. There are very few depictions of romance reading in chronicles or literature altogether, whether private or shared. My research might be used as the testing of a hypothesis that many scholars subscribe to – that Middle Dutch chivalric romances were read out loud –, as well as provide a method with which other genres could be examined. It might also serve as a jumping-off point, so to speak, to contrast and compare other genres with.

Corpus and Methodology

[1] See for instance "Medieval Equivalents of 'quote-unquote': the Presentation of Spoken Words in Courtly Romance" in *The Court and Cultural Diversity* (ed. Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson and "Doing dialogue. The Middle Dutch *Lancelot* translators and correctors at work" in *De l'oral à l'écrit. Le dialogue à travers les genres romanesque et théâtral* (ed. Corinne Denoyelle).

For this thesis I will follow the principles of an ethnography of reading as set forth by Coleman as closely as possible, that is to say "to describe the interactions of authors, traditions, texts, and audiences as closely as possible within certain clearly spelled-out boundaries of time, place, language, genre, social class, and any other relevant category" (76). This is how I chose my corpus: Middle Dutch narrative literary texts from between 1250-1500. More specifically, I will be looking at those texts that are available on the *CD-Rom Middelnederlands*. This CD contains the complete *Corpus Middelnederlands*, a collection of 336 Middle Dutch literary texts from the period between 1250 and 1500 as well as the *Corpus Gijsseling*, the collection of all 13th century texts that were used as sources for the dictionary of Early Middle Dutch and the ten volumes of the 'Middelnederlands woordenboek' (dictionary of Middle Dutch, 13th-16th century). The Corpus Gijsseling consists of both literary and administrative texts, of which I will only be using the first category. The choice for this corpus has been partly dictated by accessibility: the software of the CD allows me to search the texts for certain words or word clusters, which means that it is relatively easy to find and chart the references to reception present in these texts. I am aware that using the CD-Rom means that there will be a bias towards those texts that have been transcribed, which excludes many religious texts. On the other hand, there is quite a variety in genre and time-period, which is advantageous for comparison. A more extensive discussion of the corpus and the search engine will follow in chapter two.

As for my methodology, I will slightly mix the approaches of Green and Coleman. The principle part of my research will look at lexical evidence referring to reception mode. I will specifically look at 'horen' and 'lesen', the Middle Dutch equivalents of 'to hear/listen' and 'to read' which indicate a certain reception mode. This list, and the considerations in the creation of it, will, again, be discussed in the following chapter. The results of a first quantitative search might indicate certain patterns along generic or chronological lines. However, it is crucial that any reference to reception be looked at in context to assure ourselves of the exact meaning of a certain word. This goes for both direct context, the surrounding lines, and the context of the whole work, which includes any relevant scholarship done. Because time is limited, I will not specifically search for chronicle evidence of reading practices. However, there are several chronicles included in the CD-Rom, like for instance Melis Stoke's *Rijmkroniek*. If these do depict reading events, a search on certain words will definitely bring these depictions to the surface.

Coleman does not consider stylistic traits, saying that "more note needs to be taken of the varieties of orality, aurality and dividuality before firm equations should be made between modality and style" (149).[2] Green names a couple of stylistic features, such as the formula 'tu autem, miserere domini', as a criterion for, in this case, reception by hearing. A stylistic analysis of Middle Dutch texts is not the main focus of this thesis, and stylistic traits will certainly not be used as 'evidence' for a particular mode of reading. However, on the basis of the results that the above-mentioned analysis will yield, it might be possible to make a start with a stylistic and structural analysis of one or several Middle Dutch text for which the primary reception mode has been established in the inquiry. I will make use of previous work on oral delivery of medieval texts, including the work of Evelyn Birge Vitz, as well as insights from performance and theatre studies where this is applicable. The analysis will be exploratory and in no way exhaustive.

Some Final Remarks

Of course every text can be read aloud, and any text written to be read aloud can also be read in silence. Moreover, it is impossible to determine the actual reception-mode of any given text. We cannot go back in time and see for ourselves how reading took place. What we have are the texts themselves and, perhaps, some evidence from chronicles. So, I must follow Green in focusing on primary reception, "the manner in which medieval authors anticipated the reception of their works by the audience they were addressing" (17). As Coleman, Green and Vitz have shown, however, these sources can in fact tell us something about reading practice, even if we should always approach them with care, even suspicion.

[2] 'Dividuality' is Coleman's term for the practice of "reading books alone" (41).

Chapter 2: Corpus and Methodology

Description of Corpus

The research by Coleman and Green has shown how important the role of genre is when talking about the reading mode. Green distinguishes 10 different types of texts in his study, from functional to lyric poetry, and shows they differ in the way they were commonly read. Coleman shows how there are differences between the reading of love poetry, chronicles and romance, and even between different geographical areas, as between France and England. Moreover, her etymology of reading calls for the description of reading practice within "certain clearly spelled-out boundaries of time, place, language, genre, social class, and any other relevant category" (76). Determining the corpus is, then, an important part of my research. As I started in Chapter 1, I have decided to focus on what in Dutch are called 'ridderromans', chivalric romances. In this section I will expand on what this definition entails, what works fall under this term, and the chronological and geographical origin of the works that are indicated by this term.

'Ridderroman' is a generally accepted term among scholars of Middle Dutch. In the online *Algemeen Letterkundig Lexicon* (from 2012-2016) it is called the "algemene genrebenaming voor de middeleeuwse, meestal berijmde verhalen over een geïdealiseerde ridderwereld uit het verleden" [the general genre name for the medieval, usually rhyming stories about an idealised world of knights from the past] (Van Bork e.a.). 'Ridderromans' are stories about knights then, who are often gathered around a legendary king, such as Arthur or Charlemagne. Though set in the past, they are what we would call 'fiction', dealing with either people or events that never existed or happened in that way, though medieval romance often does claim they did. The fact that they do, can sometime create a problem for modern scholars. Should we consider it a historical text or a literary? As with most genre names used for medieval texts, the term 'ridderroman' is a modern construct. So there will be texts that do not fit easily within the genre boundaries. In "Subtiel vertellen", the introduction to *Op Avontuur. Epiek in de Lage Landen*, Jozef Janssens raises precisely this point, when he says that "genre-classificatie vooral een moderne behoefte is en dat het resultaat ervan (…) hooguit een spectrum met vloeiende overgangen zal opleveren, géén waterdicht systeem van duidelijk te omschrijven vakjes" [classifying genre is mostly a modern need, and its result will (…) at

the most produce a spectrum with fluent boundaries, not a watertight system of clearly distinguishable boxes] (15). According to Paul Wackers, "medieval terms for or definitions of a genre are never precise or really distinctive" (245). He states that "in the practice of finding and classifying a large body of historical texts, the modern, more precise, criteria give an easier and perhaps a more satisfying result" (247).

There are reasons, moreover, to treat the texts categorized as 'ridderromans' as a group. The first of these is, as stated above, subject matter. Though Alexander, Arthur and Charlemagne romances might differ in important aspects, their focus on (idealized) knight- and kingship connects them.

In the Low Countries – modern-day Flanders and the Netherlands – 'ridderromans' also form a group because of their chronological and geographical distribution. Bram Caers published an article in 2011 giving an overview of the origin in time and place for the Middle Dutch chivalric romances, both texts and manuscripts. This article, "Een *buchelin inn flemische*. Over ontstaan en verspreiding van de ridderepiek in de Nederlanden" brings together all earlier data from secondary literature. Looking at the estimated dates of the texts, it is clear that most of them originate in the 13th and 14th centuries – the one exception being *Floyris ende Blantseflur*, which has been dated to 1170 (see the table on pages 225-226). The place of origin for most romances – of which this could indeed be determined – is Flanders (37/57). The next most common place of origin is Brabant (12 texts). Then there are three texts, the three oldest in fact, which originate from the Rijn- and Maasland. Five texts, of which four are written by Jacob van Maerlant, are attributed to Holland-Zeeland. However, though Jacob van Maerlant did indeed write for noblemen from that area, he himself was from Flanders. That these romances were produced relatively close together, both chronologically and geographically, helps meet the requirement of Coleman's etymology of reading that the reading situation should be described within clear boundaries of time and place.

The Middle Dutch 'ridderromans' or chivalric romances, around 70 in total, are a mix of translations from, generally, Old French and, occasionally, Latin (e.g. *Alexanders geesten*), and original compositions. However, it has been pointed out before that Middle Dutch authors did not deliver what we would nowadays call faithful translations. For instance, the translator of *Ferguut* started out with quite a faithful rendering of the French *Fergus* in Middle Dutch. However, from the fourth episode, in which Ferguut starts looking for his love interest, "begint de Dietse bewerker zo langzamerhand en, naarmate het verhaal vordert meer en meer, zijn eigen weg te gaan" [the Middle Dutch adaptor starts to gradually, and, as the story progresses increasingly, go his own way] (Rombauts e.a., 25).

For some texts, the translation necessarily deviated from the original, because the translation is from prose to verse. An example are two of the three translations of the *Lancelot en prose*: the *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte* and the *Roman van Lancelot*. That there has been no transition from verse to prose in Middle Dutch, barring one exception,[3] is interesting in an international perspective. So is the fact that the verse romances are all in the same form, namely couplets. Mike Kestemont addresses this in his article on assonance "Een 'Assonantic Revival'?", when he says that "de Middelnederlandse ridderepiek wordt zowel in de dertiende als veertiende eeuw (zeker) wat de rijmvorm betreft, gekarakteriseerd door een formele uniformiteit of een stilistische schraalheid" [the Middle Dutch chivalric texts are characterised by a formal uniformity or a stylistic poverty (certainly) when it comes to verse, both in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries] (260). However, there has not yet been a definitive explanation for the phenomenon. Later, some of the verse romances were adapted to prose. Given that prose and verse are often seen as presenting different reading modes, with prose meant for individual reading and verse more indicative of shared reading, it would have been interesting to see if there were any differences between the prose and verse texts. However, it proved too big of a task for the time I had.

Another still debated issue is the question of audience. Were the romances meant for the nobility? The problem with this, is that the high nobility of Flanders, the count and his court, was French-speaking. In fact, one of the first romances to be written, Chrétien de Troyes' Old French *Perceval ou le Conte du Graal*, was dedicated to Philip of Flanders. Of the Middle Dutch texts, only a few contain dedications (Jacob van Maerlant dedicated some of his works to nobility from Holland-Zeeland), making it difficult to determine exactly who the texts were meant for. Some scholars have suggested that the intended audience were the rich townspeople. This is what Evert van den Berg, for instance, proposes in his article "Stedelijke ridderepiek?"

Of the around 70 texts in Caers' overview, most have only survived as fragments. Many have been found in the bindings of other manuscripts. For the purpose of this study, I will only examine fragments that number more than 1000 verses. The nature of the research, which looks at when and how certain words are used, means that there is no way of knowing if an occurrence of either verb within a fragment is representative or not. Fewer lines might give an occurrence of either verb a weight that it does not deserve. When a complete romance numbered less than 1000 lines, I did take it into consideration.

[3] The third translation of the *Lancelot en prose*, the *Proza-Lancelot*. This is the only Middle Dutch prose translation of the text we have.

My reasons for choosing chivalric romances to focus on were mostly practical. Apart from the clear boundaries of time and place that connect them, it was a genre I myself am most familiar with. It is not too extensive – I looked at 25 texts in total –, but not too specific either. It also falls quite well into Coleman's category of secular courtly literature, so comparisons with her study can easily be made. Moreover, most texts were available on the *CD-Rom Middelnederlands*, which made them easily accessible digitally. A complete overview of all the texts I have examined will be given in chapter three.

Methodology

For my methodology, I mostly lean on Coleman. In the previous chapter, I introduced her idea of an ethnography of reading, which strives "to describe the interactions of authors, traditions, texts, and audiences as closely as possible" within the boundaries of genre, time period etc. (76). Contextualisation is key to this. It is not enough to look at isolated instances – just two scenes from two different texts for instance –, but instead it is important to "that all texts be viewed and evaluated in context" (78). This also goes for the references to reading or hearing within one text, to see how they "functioned together within the immediate textual and the larger literary environment" (78). Coleman describes her methodology in the following words:

> My procedure with Chaucer and other writers through into the late fifteenth century has been to read everything they wrote (…), looking for dramatizations of, invocations of, or references to modes of experiencing literature. Analysis of the chronological distribution of reception statements, phrases, and verbs has engendered a variety of conclusions about how authors conceived of their relationship to their sources and their audiences, and about changes in reading patterns over the last century or so of the Middle Ages in England. (79)

More specifically, Coleman looks at the verbs 'to hear/hearken' and 'to read' in Chaucer and his contemporaries. These words clearly refer to reception. She denotes first the respective frequency of the verbs, and then examines the context of each reference. In her chapter on Chaucer, she concludes that "throughout his writings, Chaucer accepts without concern their

probable oral delivery; he invokes such events in his reception phrases and he depicts them in his fictions" (178).

Going beyond just Chaucer's writings, Coleman notes that there is a "characteristically medieval, patterned, and persistent interaction of textual 'reads' and 'hears'" (78), which she describes in what she calls the aural-narrative constellation. Looking at the way in which the verbs 'write', 'read' and 'hear/hearken' behave, Coleman links them to specific parts of the transmission of texts. In short, sources 'write', authors 'read' and 'write', and the audience 'hears' or 'read' or 'read and/or hear'. Certain verbs are thus associated with certain aspects of the transmission process. For research regarding the reception mode, an important observation is that "the association of authors with the reception-verb 'read' and of audiences with 'hear' is one of the strongest and most consistent aspects of the aural-narrative constellation" (102). In other words, this shows how the author and the audience are associated with two different ways of reading: the author reads in a literary-professional private manner, the audience in a recreational, public way.[4] That the sources 'write' shows the "textuality of the transmission end" of the constellation (99).

In this thesis, I choose to follow Coleman to a certain extent by focusing on the Middle Dutch forms of 'to read' and 'to hear': 'lesen' and 'horen'. As said before, the texts of my corpus are digitally available, on the *CD-Rom Middelnederlands*. The software from the CD makes it possible to search for specific words or combinations of words within the different corpora/dictionaries. It is also possible to look for parts of words by using * (so looking for all variations on 'hooren' is possible by looking for 'hoor*'). This allows me to search for forms of 'horen' and 'lesen' without having to read the entire texts.

I will thus be using a form of quantitative analysis, as I will be amassing data from all texts in my corpus concerning their reception. However, like Coleman I will try to always look at the results of my search in context, both the textual context and the context of other texts. The focus on lexical evidence, and specifically on 'horen' and 'lesen' is limiting in some ways. Though Green's methodology is similar to Coleman's, in that he looks at the Old and Middle High German forms of 'to read' and 'to hear': 'lesen' and 'hoeren', he also takes other words into account, such as 'sagen' (to say) and 'singen' (to sing). He also considers non-lexical evidence, such as illustration, acrostics or anagrams and recommendations to correct the text. These are harder to look for using a search engine, and time- and scale

[4] See the schema on page 14 of this thesis.

constraints make it impossible to find all occurrences. This is why I decided to focus on 'horen' and 'lesen' only.

Moreover, I will be working with the edited texts, not with the manuscripts, so that any manuscripts characteristics can not be taken into consideration. Manuscripts are an interesting avenue of research. The reasons I will not engage with them are, first of all, that I simply do not have enough time, and, secondly, that the intended audience of the text and of the manuscript are not necessarily the same.

"Can the texts be believed?" Coleman asks after explaining her method. "Many aspects of medieval literature were purely conventional and cannot necessarily be taken at face value" (79). She herself gives the answer that they can when it comes down to references to reception, saying that "a distinction can be made (…) between the author's various self-dramatizations and his comments on more practical issues, such as scribal error, translation processes, and expected reception formats" (79). Touching upon the problem of convention, is the idea of 'fictive orality', treated briefly by Coleman, which is the idea that references to a reception by hearing are a fiction, meant to give the private reader (who is actually the intended audience) the nostalgic feeling of being part of a listening audience. Green addresses this argument of fictive orality as well when he discusses the earlier work by Manfred Scholz to which his study is a reaction. Scholz uses the 'Hörerfiktion' (fictive orality), together with the claim that references to hearing could also be figurative, to dismiss all references to shared reading as not referring to reality. Green states that "Scholz nowhere enlightens us on the function of such a fiction or why we must accept its presence" (12). This is not to say that it cannot exist, but rather that it would be premature to accept the argument of fictive orality for any reference to audience or hearing reception. Coleman describes how for the work of Chaucer, for instance, "the fictive orality argument has become almost an accepted 'fact'" (58), and points to the circularity of the reasoning: "if all evidence of orality (or, more precise, aurality) is fictive, and any evidence for reading is not only factual but co-opted to dividuality [private reading], how can we recoup any space for the read-aloud book?" (59). Moreover, after she has presented her results, which show many different writers addressing listeners and referring to hearing books, she states that

> it might be multiplying entities beyond reason (…) to maintain that a consistent assumption of aurality (…) by a variety of writers in a variety of genres over a hundred and fifty years before, during, and after Chaucer

> derives from the somehow universal desire to give private readers the thrill of pretending to be hearers. (179)

As such, I will indeed 'believe' my texts. This is not to say that I will assume in advance that every text was meant to be read by shared reading, but it does mean that I will not *automatically* discount every reference to 'hearing' or 'listening' as part of a fictional framework.

Lesen (leesen/lezen)

"The verb lesen is essentially ambiguous: it could mean 'to recite to others', but it can also be used of the individual reading to himself" (Green 135). The Middle Dutch word 'lesen' has many different meanings. The Middle Dutch Dictionary gives 7 main definitions, only two of which have anything to do with 'to read' in the modern sense. 'Lesen' can first of all mean 'to gather' (verzamelen), 'to choose' (uitkiezen) and 'to arrange neatly' (in orde brengen) or 'to fold' (vouwen). So one could use it in the sense of gathering flowers, 'bloemen lesen' (*Beatrijs*, vs. 343), choosing the good from the bad, 'die goede uten quaden lesen' (*Der leken spieghel* IV, 11, 13), or folding fabric, 'men las op damlaken' (*Floris ende Blancefloer*, vs. 2257). These results should thus not be taken into account. This requires me to look at every search result and see if I can determine what the meaning of that occurrence of 'lesen' is. Luckily, it is quite easy to distinguish these meanings by looking at the context. As I will always take the complete sentence into account, there will not be instances in which 'bloemen lesen' is interpreted as an occurrence of 'reading'.

Much more problematic however, is the fact that 'lesen' can mean both 'reading out loud' (to others) and 'reading' in the modern sense of individual reading. Apart from that, it can also take the meaning of simply 'to tell' (vertellen) or 'to declare' (verklaren), as well as 'to teach' (onderwijzen), 'to pray' (bidden) and 'to study' (leren/studeren). Then there are some subcategories, like 'lesen' in combination with the word 'ane', which means 'to join' (for instance a group). It is clear, then, that 'lesen' by itself cannot be taken as evidence of either mode of reading, or even reading at all.

This is where Green can help, as he runs into a similar problem with the word 'lesen' in Old and Middle High German as we do in Middle Dutch. Like Middle Dutch 'lesen', 'lesen' in Old and High Middle German can mean both reading out loud to others and reading by oneself. One of the ways in which Green deals with this, is to first look at "those cases

where its function is indicated by its conjunction with another pointer" (85). Most of his pointers are more suitable for recognizing descriptions of a certain reception mode, like 'lesen' in combination with 'selve' (by themselves). An example is the *Roman van Lancelot*, when the queen reads a letter from Lancelot. It says that "die letteren las selve di vrowe vri" [the noble lady read the letter herself] (vs. 19632). The fact that this needs to be specified, seems to point to a conventional practice of reading (letters) out loud before company. The opposite is the case with the combination of 'lesen' with a causative verb. This refers to instances in which someone makes someone else read. In Middle Dutch this usually means a form of the verb 'to do', 'doen'. In, again, the *Roman van Lancelot*, King Arthur tells Lancelot 'doet lesen den brief nu' [make the letter be read now] (vs. 31518).

However, these pointers will serve to identify depictions of shared reading rather than the envisioned reception of the text in which it appears, and do not help us determine how we should interpret 'lesen' as a reception-verb. One pointer that Green offers is the combination of 'lesen' with the dative. This means phrases like 'as I read (to) you', or 'he read to him'. Examples are "daer ic iu hier te voren af las" (*Merlijn* vs. 20653), "Al lasic u al desen dach" (*Roman van Limborch* Book XII, 1332) and "Nu latic hier bliven van desen/Ende sal u vord van Ydire lesen" (*Wrake van Ragisel* vs. 14135-14136). Green points to a parallel with Latin, where "private reading is defined as *lego librum*, but reading out to others (as with the teacher in the classroom to his pupils) as *lego librum illi*" (85). He takes the Middle High German phrase as evidence of shared reading. A combination of 'lesen' with a dative makes a more convincing case that the verb should be interpreted to mean 'reading out to others'.

Bearing in mind the fact that 'lesen' can also mean 'to tell' or 'to pray', it is also important to look at pointers that indicate that a text is involved.

In conclusion, the word 'lesen' can never be taken as evidence of either mode of reading by itself. When it appears without any pointers, it must be interpreted by looking at the direct context (the passage in which it is used), and the context of the whole work, to see if there are other verbs referring to reception, like 'horen'.

Horen (hoeren/hooren/hoiren)

The word 'horen', 'to hear', is less ambiguous than 'lesen'. Although the word 'horen' and its variant spellings can also mean other things, it is quite easy to distinguish between different meanings by looking at the context (for instance, it can mean the same as the English word 'horn'). Here, however, we will have to deal with the 'Hörerfiktion', the idea that references

to acoustic reception are part of a construct by the author to let the reader imagine an oral setting, as well as conventional use, the fact that certain phrases might just be used by an author because it is the usual way to say it (similarly to the modern-day use of ‘discuss’ in written texts, which does not mean to actually sit down and discuss something with someone).

Horen lesen

The combination of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ seems to make things clearer. For if you hear something being read, the text needs to be read out loud to you. Green accepts this as proof, but adds a condition, stating that “when *hoeren lesen* is used in conjunction with a term meaning book, this suggests not simply that in one meaning of lesen, the reciter ‘tells’ or 'narrates' to the listeners, but that he reads out to them from a written text” (92). A reference to a text is thus needed in order to accept ‘horen lesen’ as denoting ‘reading out loud’.

Lesen en/of horen

Green discusses this phrase, which he calls the ‘double formula’, three times: as a criterion of both reception by hearing and reception by reading, as well as evidence for the intermediate mode. The fact that two reception modes are specified makes the meaning of both of them less ambiguous. There are three possible interpretations of the phrase, two of which Green disputes in favour of his own, third explanation. The first, advocated by Scholz, sees ‘horen’ or ‘horen lesen’ as part of the ‘Hörersfiktion’ and only accepts ‘lesen’ in this phrase as being meant literally. The other, attributed to Kartschoke by Green, takes ‘lesen’ as referring to the prelector, the one reading out loud to other (173). However, Green sees the phrase as evidence of the ‘intermediate mode’, where the author anticipates two modes of reception, that can exist next to each other. “It is necessary to stress this conjunction of hearing with reading against attempts to depict them as mutually exclusive” (169). Works using the double formula will be analysed separately in chapter 5.

Now that I have explained my choice of corpus and method, it is time to see what happens when we put them together. In the next four chapters, I will discuss the results of my search queries and analyse these results, first broadly, then by focusing on specific texts. In the next chapter, I will present an overview of all texts I have used and will look for patterns in the way they use ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ based on genre, authorship, place of origin or date of origin.

Chapter 3: An Overview of the Data

In this chapter I will give an overview of the results of my search for ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’. The table below shows all texts I looked at in chronological order (based on Caers) with the amount of times ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ appear. These are only the occurrences of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in the narrator’s text. When either verb was used by characters in direct speech, I did not include it. Because the texts vary in length, I also calculated the frequency with which ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ appear for each text by dividing the times either verb appears by the total word count of the text and multiplying it by 100, which gives us the word frequency in percentages. This allows us to compare the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen in longer and shorter texts. For reference, I have included the number of lines in the table, so that it is clear which texts are longer and which are shorter. I have also included a separate count for ‘horen lesen’, since Green distinguishes from simply ‘horen’ as more clearly referring to reading out loud as opposed to simply ‘telling’ or ‘narrating’.

The first step of analysing this data will then be to determine if any patterns show themselves based on place of origin, dating, authorship, genre and any peculiarity suggested by the numbers generated. Is there a development through time perhaps? After having discussed this, I will introduce the forms ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ take and – to a certain extent – how they are used. As I wrote in chapter two, it is not just about the amount of times either verb appears, it is important to see what ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ refer to: to the audience or to the author. This will help us determine the aural-narrative constellation. I will first show some of the ways in which ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ are used by looking at one text, the *Roman van Lancelot,* for reasons discussed below.

The following table is ordered chronologically, based on the dating given by Bram Caers. The Arabic numerals 1 and 2 are used to denote the first half or second half of a century, while the lower case letters a, b, c and d denote first, second, third or fourth quarter of the century. The lower case letter ‘m’ is used for the middle of the century. Any question-marks are taken from Caers’ article.

Title	Dating	Lesen	Lesen - frequency	Horen	Horen-frequency	Horen lesen	Horen lesen – frequency	Length
Aiol (Vlaams)	XIII-b	2	0,0306%	7	0,1071%	0	0%	1200 verses
Karel ende Elegast	XIII-I(b/m)	0	0%	5	0,0656%	0	0%	1364 verses
Ferguut	XIII-1/b-c)	0	0%	4	0,0120%	1	0,0030%	5604 verses
Lantsloot vander Haghedochte	XIII-m	2	0,0057%	30	0,0861%	0	0%	6073 verses
Parthonopeus van Bloys	XIII-c	1	0,0020%	7	0,0140%	0	0%	8406 verses
Alexanders geesten	1257-1266?	48	0,0610%	44	0,0559%	0	0%	14300 verses
Historie van Troyen	1257-1266?	70	0,0292%	192	0,0796%	1	0,0004%	40881 verses
Merlijn	1257-1266/1327	47	0,0208%	46	0,0204%	2	0,0009%	36218 verses
Floris ende Blancefloer	ca. 1260	3	0,0116%	16	0,0620%	0	0%	3973 verses
Flandrijs	XIII-2/ca.1300	0	0%	4	0,0370%	0	0%	1794 verses
Roman van Walewein	ca. 1260	8	0,0121%	22	0,0334%	2	0,0030%	11202 verses
Roman van Cassamus	late XIV-a	1	0,0089%	1	0,0089%	0	0%	1890 verses
*Wrake van Ragisel (LC)**	late XIV-a (XIII-a)	13	0,0640%	6	0,0295%	0	0%	3420 verses
Roman van Perchevael (LC)	late XIV-a (XIIIb)	10	0,0304%	13	0,0395%	0	0%	5596 verses
Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet (LC)	late XIV-a (XIII-I/b)	2	0,0403%	8	0,1613%	0	0%	856 verses
Walewein ende Keye (LC)	late XIV-a (XIII-m?)	8	0,0370%	8	0,0370%	0	0%	3668 verses
Roman van Torec (LC)	late XIV-a (1257-1266?)	0	0%	8	0,0346%	0	0%	3854 verses
Roman van Moriaen (LC)	late XIV-a (XIII-2/XIII-d)	2	0,0074%	9	0,0333%	2	0,0074%	4716 verses
Roman van Lancelot (LC)	laat in XIV-a (ca. 1280)	63	0,0285%	60	0,0271%	2	0,0009%	36947 verses

Queeste vanden Grale (LC)	laat in XIV-a (ca. 1280)	22	0,0334%	20	0,0304%	2	0,0030%	11160 verses
Arturs doet (LC)	laat in XIV-a (ca. 1280)	36	0,0465%	21	0,0271%	1	0,0013%	13054 verses
Roman van den riddere metter mouwen (LC)	late XIV-a (XIIId/ca. 1300)	3	0,0125%	5	0,0208%	0	0%	4022 verses
Borchgrave van Couchi (HS1, Arras en Leiden)	XIV-1	2	0,0118%	6	0,0352%	0	0%	3694 verses
Roman van Limborch	XIII-XIV/XVI-a	41	0,0334%	31	0,0253%	2	0,0016%	21844 verses
Segheliin van Jerusalem	XIV-m	8	0,0124%	49	0,0757%	0	0%	11524 verses

Figure 1. 'Horen' and 'lesen' in chivalric romances, chronologically

*Texts indicated with (LC) are part of the *Lancelot* Compilation.

Before I start discussing the results, a quick note about the chronology. The tables above shows when the texts were originally translated or written, according to estimations by scholars. However, many texts survive in manuscripts from a later time. To give an example, *Karel ende Elegast* is dated to the beginning or middle of the thirteenth century in the overview given by Caers, but the full text only survives in an incunable from around 1480. There are manuscript fragments from the end of the fourteenth century that show that the text in the incunable has probably changed only little (*CD-Rom Middelnederlands*), but we need to keep in mind that the text we have might not have had the same intended audience as the original text.

A special case is presented by the chronology of the texts that survive in the *Lancelot* Compilation. We know that many of these have been heavily edited upon inclusion into the compilation and differ significantly from the 'original' text. So, the text of the *Wrake van Ragisel* as it originated in the beginning of the 13th century would have differed from the one I looked at (something we know from surviving fragments of the earlier versions). Of none of the earlier versions of the texts included in the *Lancelot* Compilation more than 1000 verses survive. This is why I am only looking at the versions that survive in the compilation, and why I used the dating of the compilation for the table. However, I have included the dating of the 'original' texts as well, and used these to determine the order in which I displayed the texts. Seeing that there are significant differences between the texts in the compilation, I did choose to look at them individually, which is why I did not display the *Lancelot* Compilation as a whole in the table.

Lastly, there are three texts that use the formula of 'horen' and/or 'lesen'. According to Green, this is the clearest sign of both a reception by hearing and a reception by listening. The three texts are *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte,* the *Roman van Limborch* and *Segheliin van Jerusalem*. I will discuss these in chapter four, so that it is possible to compare them with the other texts.

Some general observations about the results

Firstly, I have calculated the averages, based on the complete corpus:

Average				
Lesen	Lesen – frequency	Horen	Horen – frequency	Length
15,68	0,02158%	24,84	0,04635%	9911,12 verses

Figure 2. The average amount of 'lesen' and 'horen' and word frequency in Middle Dutch chivalric romances

From the average, it is clear is that most texts have a higher amount of 'horen' than of 'lesen'. In fact, of the twenty-six texts in total that I have examined, seventeen make more use of 'horen' than of 'lesen'. The reverse is true for only seven texts. Two texts, the *Roman van Cassamus* and *Walewein ende Keye*, have an equal amount of 'lesen' and 'horen'.

Going back to the first table, there does not seem to be a pattern concerning which texts use 'lesen' more and which 'horen'. The texts that have a higher count of 'lesen' date from both the thirteenth and fourteenth century (so there seems to be no separation between 'early' and 'late' chivalric romances). There is seemingly no development from, for instance, more counts of 'horen' to more counts of 'lesen' or vice versa. Indeed, the youngest text, *Segheliin van Jerusalem*, uses 'horen' more than five times as often as it does 'lesen', 0,07573% versus 0,01237%.

There does not seem to be a connection based on genre either. Although five of the seven texts with more 'lesen' are Arthurian texts, there are also many Arthurian texts which show the opposite pattern. Apart from this, we must not forget that three of these five texts are the *Lancelot, Queeste* and *Arturs doet,* which originated at the same time and could be argued to constitute a unity. Moreover, they were included in the *Lancelot* Compilation together with texts that do feature 'horen' more heavily than 'lesen', including one text, *Lanceloet en het hert metten witte voet*, that does not use 'lesen' at all.

The case of the *Lancelot, Queeste* and *Arturs doet* brings me to the question of authorship. Is it possible to say something about differences in the use of 'horen' and 'lesen' by author? Would the same author use 'horen' and 'lesen' in a similar way in multiple texts? Unfortunately, many of the chivalric romances are anonymous and if we do know the name of the writer(s) or translator(s), we might not always have more than one work attributed by them (an example is the *Roman van Walewein*). One author with multiple works attributed to him is the earlier mentioned Jacob van Maerlant. However, although three of his works are among the seven 'lesen'-texts, two parts of the *Merlijn* and *Alexanders geesten,* another one

of his texts, the *Historie van Troyen*, uses 'horen' more often.[5] Maerlant's case is complicated because he also wrote texts that do not fall under chivalric romances, making it impossible to draw definitive conclusions on his use of 'horen' and lesen' based solely on these three texts. According to Mike Kestemont's stylometric research, another group of texts with the same author is *Karel ende Elegast*, the *Roman van Moriaen* and *Lantsloot vanden Haghedochte*. It is striking that these all have a very low word frequency of 'lesen' (less than 0,01%). *Karel ende Elegast* and *Lantsloot* also have a quite high frequency of 'horen', respectively 0,06557% and 0,08613%. The *Moriaen* does not show the same high frequency. However, again we must be watchful concerning texts belonging to the *Lancelot* Compilation, as *Moriaen* does. It is also good in to keep in mind that the *Lantsloot* does not survive in its entirety, which might skew the results.

That texts written by the same author show the same frequency of 'horen' and 'lesen' seems quite logical, either because it is a question of style, or because a certain author can be thought to usually write for a similar audience. The data, however, do not allow us to draw any such conclusion. Moreover, the issue is (again) complicated by the matter of translations and adaptation. Where the *Moriaen* and *Karel ende Elegast* are generally believed to be original Middle Dutch compositions, the *Lantsloot* is a translation from Old French. Jacob van Maerlant generally used multiple sources for his texts, which could be French, Latin or even Middle Dutch themselves, as with the *Historie van Troyen*, in which he incorporated Segher Diengotgaf's *Tprieel van Troyen*. Medieval translations were most of the time not as loyal to their source as literary translations today, but it is still possible that the way 'horen' and 'lesen' are used is influenced by the source-text.

An interesting question would be to see if translated texts differ from what are thought to be original Middle Dutch romances in the way they use 'horen' and 'lesen'. However, there does not seem to be a clear division based on the amounts and word-frequency. Of the seven 'lesen'-texts, six are indeed 'translations' (*Alexanders geesten, Merlijn,* the *Wrake van Ragisel, Roman van Lancelot, Queeste vanden grale* and *Arturs doet*), but there is also the *Roman van Limborch,* which is considered an original composition. On the other hand, there are enough translations that have a higher frequency of 'horen' than 'lesen', among which the *Lantsloot* (a translation of the same source-text as the *Lancelot*), the *Historie van Troyen, Floris ende Blancefloer* and the *Borchgrave van Couchi*. In any case, it is impossible to say

[5] The *Roman van Torec* has also been attributed to Maerlant, but as it is part of the *Lancelot* Compilation and it is unclear to what extent it has been changed, I will not use it as a representative of Maerlant's work.

anything about this with certainty without looking at the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in the source-texts themselves.

What about length? It is striking that six of the seven ‘lesen’-texts are over 10.000 lines, the exception being the *Wrake van Ragisel*, which counts 3420 lines. True, there are some (complete) texts of more than 10.000 lines in the ‘horen’ category as well: the *Historie van Troyen* (40.881 lines), the *Roman van Walewein* (11.202 lines) and *Segheliin van Jerusalem* (11.524 lines). However, this means that the vast majority of the ‘horen’-texts are shorter than 10.000 lines. Before making any rash statements on the basis of this fact, a more in-depth look is needed, but it is good to keep this in mind.

There were a few texts which used ‘horen lesen’. It only appears 15 times in total in the corpus, in nine texts. The frequency with which the phrase is used, however, makes it unsuitable for the purposes of comparison. This does not mean that we should not take it into account when looking at specific texts, but that it is not possible to draw conclusions about any patterns. That being said, it is interesting that seven out of the nine texts using the phrase are Arthurian romances. However, the use of ‘horen lesen’ needs to be considered in the context of the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ before we draw any conclusions about this observation.

Having looked at general patterns, it is now time to turn to one specific text. Just knowing how many times a certain word is used does not tell us much. We must look at the context of these references. It is, first of all, important to look at the form the verb takes, to see to whom it actually relates: the audience or the narrator. The next step is to look at which words surround and modify the verbs, like adverbs or auxiliary verbs. Eventually we need to place the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in the larger context of the passage and the complete text, looking at the function it has in the whole.

In order to show what different forms ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ take, which words are found in their vicinity and what function they fulfil in the text, I will discuss one text: the *Roman van Lancelot.* Focusing on one text only allows me to go into considerable detail. However, many of the observances made will also be relevant to the other texts, of which I will discuss many in chapter 4. I have chosen to use a specific text instead of compiling a general list, because the context is so important to determining the function of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’. Of course parallels with how ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ are used in other texts can (and will) be drawn, but before using a bird eye’s view, it is better to first become better acquainted with one text’s

use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen. In this way, it becomes clear how ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ can function within a specific narrative.

My choice for the *Roman van Lancelot* is not random. The *Lancelot* is one of the longer texts, and contains both ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in many different variations. Being part of the *Lancelot* Compilation, which consists of ten texts in total, means that it represents quite a substantial part of the corpus. Moreover, the way in which ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ is used is quite typical for Middle Dutch chivalric romances, as you will see in chapter 4. It thus offers a good representation of the corpus. The *Lancelot* is atypical in that it uses ‘lesen’ more often than ‘horen’, but it does contain ‘horen lesen’, giving us the chance to see how this phrase is used in comparison to the other verbs. Of course, the *Lancelot* belongs to the subgenre of Arthurian romance, but in chapter 4 texts from other subgenres will be analysed as well.

Horen en lesen in the Roman van Lancelot

Together with the *Queeste vanden Grale* and *Arturs doet*, the *Roman van Lancelot* is a translation of a part of the Old French *Lancelot-Grail cycle*. The three texts originate at the same time and were probably translated by the same author. Moreover, they survive (slightly adapted) in the same manuscript. I will use the other two texts for comparison at the end.

First, let us look again at the amounts and frequency of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in the *Lancelot*:

Title	Lesen	Lesen – frequency	Horen	Horen – frequency	Verses
Roman van Lancelot	63	0,0284 %	60	0,0271%	36947 verses

Figure 3. ‘Horen’ and ‘lesen’ in the Roman van Lancelot

The average frequencies in the data-set were 0,0216% for ‘lesen’ and 0,0464% for ‘horen’. Though the word frequency of ‘lesen’ for the *Lancelot* is a bit higher than average, the frequency for ‘horen’ is quite a bit lower. But what about the forms these verbs take? Below follows a table in which the conjugations that ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ take in the *Roman van Lancelot* are displayed, including the percentage of one form of the verb in relation to the total occurrences of that verb:

Roman van Lancelot				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative (hoort/leest)	0	0%	7	11,67%
First person sg. (ic)	36	57%	4	6,67%
First person pl. (wi)	7	11%	0	0%
Second person sg. & pl. (ghi & di)	4	6%	47	78%
Third person sg. (men)	16	25%	2	3%

Figure 4. Conjugations of 'horen' and 'lesen' in the Roman van Lancelot

Although the amount of times 'horen' and 'lesen' are used in the *Roman van Lancelot* does not differ much, with 60 cases of 'horen' and 63 of 'lesen', the table above shows that there are clear differences in the ways 'lesen' and 'horen' are used. Let us first look at 'lesen'.

The largest amount of uses of 'lesen' is of the first person singular, 36 in total, which comes down to more than 50%. An example of this phrase being used is line 11890, "Omtrent Sinte Jhans messe, als ict las" [Around St. John's mass, as I read it]. There are many more occurrences of this exact phrase, 'als ict las', 30 in total. Of the remaining 6, 4 are almost the same, but with the addition of an adverb denoting time: "als ic voren las" (vs. 18 and 1430), 'alsict vore las" (vs. 18135) and "als ic eer las" (vs. 5522). All mean 'as I read before'. 'Als ict las' in its simplest form is clearly a recurring formula, used mostly for the purpose of rhyming and metre. Whether it serves as a reference to the reading of the translator of the French text, or the telling or reading of the narrator/prelector to the audience or reader is impossible to say. However, seeing that in none of these occurrences mention is made of a specific text, it seems not to function as a reference to reading of a source.

Where a temporal adverb is used, it usually means a reference to a character, object or event that was introduced earlier in the story is made. So, for instance, lines 1429-1430: "Doe Lanceloet gesceden was/Van Griffone, als ic voren las" [When Lancelot separated/from Griffone, as I read (told) before]. Here the reference is clearly not to the translator's reading of the source, but to the narrator telling or reading to an audience or reader. Of course, this phrase too can still (and often seems to) function as an easy way to fill the line and make it easier to rhyme with.

Also using a temporal adverb is the phrase in lines 36703-36704 "Nu salic swigen van desen/Ende van Lancelote vort lesen" [Now I will be silent about this/And shall read forth of Lancelot]. This sentence (with some variations) actually seems to be a common way of denoting a transition from one episode to the other, as the *Queeste vanden Grale* and *Arturs doet* also employ it in this way.

The last case of ‘lesen’ in the first person singular is an interesting one from the perspective of the ‘pointers’ discerned by Dennis Green, because it employs a dative. The whole sentence in lines 18114-18115 goes: “Dit was die joncfrouwe, dine genas/Vanden venine, alsict u las” [This was the damsel, who healed [him?]/from poison, as I read (to) you;]. Green saw the combination of a form of to read with a dative as one criteria for shared reading (see Chapter 2).

The next big group of forms of ‘lesen’ in the *Roman van Lancelot* is the third person singular or, more specifically, ‘men’. This word, not directly translatable into English, can be rendered by ‘they’ or ‘people’ used in a general sense, or by ‘one’ (for example ‘as one reads in books’). The majority of this group consists of ‘alsmen las’ [as one read] in combination with a temporal adverb. Examples are “daermen hier te voren af las” [of which one read about here before] (vs. 16889 and 32551), “alsmen vore las” (vs. 34462), and “daermen eer af las” (vs. 22395) or “alsmen eer las” [as one read before] (vs. 21001). They all translate roughly to ‘as one read before’. Again one could argue that these work as formulas to fill out a line. ‘Men’ clearly does not refer to the narrator or author, so we must take it to refer to the audience or reader. That an impersonal pronoun is used for this purpose is however significant.

‘Men’ in combination with ‘lesen’ also appears on its own. An example are lines 19375-19381:

19375 Ende reden soe verre dar naer,
Datsi te tide ten castele quamen
Vander Chareitten, dar si vernamen
Dat op dien dach soude wesen
Die brullocht, **alsmen mach lesen,**[6]
19380 Van der vrowen broder van Forestan
Ende van thertogen dochter van Roechedan;

[And (they) rode so far afterwards/that they came to the castle at that time/of the Chareitten, where they learned/that on that day would be/the wedding, as one may read,/Of the brother of the wife of Forestan/And the daughter of the duke of Roechedan]

[66] In longer quotes, I have marked the phrase which contains ‘horen’ of ‘lesen’ in bold, so that it is easier to find. Anytime words are marked in bold in such a quote, it is my own emphasis unless specifically stated otherwise.

In places like this, the phrase seems to be purely line-filling, providing the easy rhyme ‘esen’. Even so, I would argue again that the choice of ‘men’ here is significant.

There is one case of ‘men las’ in combination with a locative adverb that needs to be discussed:

Daerna quam hi tere steden
2700 Opten .ix. den dach gereden,
Daer Dodineel gevallen was
Int water, **alsmen hier boven las**.

[Afterwards he came riding to that place/On the ninth day/where Dodineel had fallen/into the water, as one read here above.]

Referring to the text in spatial terms seems to point to a situation with an individual reader, seeing that only a reader who had the book in his or her hand would think of something written earlier as ‘above’. Green does discusses the MHG term ‘obene’ (above) in his criteria of reception of reading, listing it under ‘ambiguous criteria’. Though he calls it a ‘bookish’ phrase, the examples he discusses are indeed ambiguous, using ‘obene’ in combination with forms of ‘to say’ or ‘to write’. Of these, Green says that “a pronouncedly bookish phrase like ‘saying something above’ makes better sense in the context of literacy than of orality, but as long as the phrase concerns what the author said above (...) we are in the context of literate composition” (121). In other words, it does not tell us anything about reception. In another passage Green discusses, ‘obene’ is used in a work he marks as meant for a twofold reception, in which case “a reference to an earlier passage intended for the reader (…) must have passed over the heads of those who could only listen”. According to Green “these cases suggest an audience which in educational and literary terms was far from homogeneous: some were left behind while others enjoyed a more advantageous position” (123). However, he does not deal with a combination of ‘above’ with a form of ‘to read’. Here it is clear that we are not dealing with a reference to the composition of a written text, but to reception by audience or reader. Even so, the fact that ‘men’ is used instead of ‘gi’ must give us pause. In any case a single use of this phrase cannot serve as evidence for the primary reception mode. If any definitive conclusion is possible, we can only attempt to draw one in relation to the rest of the uses of ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’.

‘Wi lesen’, the first person plural, is related to ‘men leest’, in that it uses a more impersonal pronoun. Green treats them together in his “Criteria for a reception by reading”, but argues that “these phrases generally suggest an acoustic reception by the majority (the

work was read out to them). They belong more to *lesen* to imply recital aloud to others" (117). The examples discussed by Green deal with a slightly different context, namely where the MHG forms of 'men leest' and 'wi lesen' are used in combination with a reference to certain texts, like the scripture. In the *Roman van Lancelot,* this does not appear. In three instances 'wi lesen' is used in combination with 'sullen' (shall), denoting future tense. An example are lines 16259-16260, "Ende wi sullen nu lesen/Wat minen here Yweine gevel" [and we shall read now/what happened to my lord Yweine]. It is not entirely clear if 'wi' here refers to a group reading together (so one who reads and the rest listens) or if it is used to refer to the narrator, in the same way academic writing nowadays might use 'we'. If the latter is the case, 'lesen' might here also take the meaning of 'to tell'.

Frank Brandsma discusses the use of 'wi' in the *Roman van Lancelot* in "Conte and Avonture. Narration and Communication with the Audience in the French, Dutch, and German >Lancelot< Texts". As is made clear by the title, it is a comparative analysis, focussing on the way the Dutch and German translation deal with the narrative agent in the Old French *prose Lancelot,* especially in transition formula. Where the latter uses the impersonal 'li contes' – the story – the Dutch and German texts often opt for 'we' or 'I'. About the German use of 'wir', Brandsma says that "the impression the formula (…) gives is that of a careful guide, leading his party his party along a treacherous path, and speaking for the group" (130). He refers to this as the 'pluralis societatis', which creates a sense of togetherness of the narrator and the audience. This would thus be an argument for a reception by hearing. Although I agree with him for the cases he mentions, I do feel that there is a difference between the above example of 'wi sullen nu lesen' and the more frequently used 'alse wi lesen' (or its variants 'want wi lesen' and 'dar wi af lesen'). Although these could still be interpreted as a 'pluralis societatis', the similarity to 'alsict las' to me suggests that 'wi' refers to the narrator here. The impression is very much that of the 'we' in an academic paper. The reason 'wi' has been chosen instead of 'ic' could simply be due to the rhyme, as all these phrases appear at the end of the line.

There is one more category of 'lesen' that need to be addressed: the use of 'lesen' in the second person. This is an interesting one, as it could potentially point to a reading reception. There are 4 instances in which this appears. An example is line 19595, "nu seldi van Lancelote lesen" [now you shall read of Lancelot]. Can we be certain that this refers to an intended reader instead of an intended audience? As mentioned in the previous chapter, 'lesen' is a problematic word, which can mean different things depending on the situation. Green does not say anything specifically about the combination of 'you' with 'lesen' but

Coleman gives an example from *Troilus and Criseyde* in which Criseyde uses ‘we rede’ to refer her listening to a book being read. “This romaunce is of Thebes that we rede; And we han herd how that kyng Layes deyde” (Book II, ll. 100-101, cited in Coleman, 164). If she can use ‘to read’ to refer to her act of listening, a narrator might also use ‘you read’ for the audience that is only listening. Of course we should be careful not to fall into a kind of ‘reverse Hörerfiktion’, but in the larger context of the text and the way it employs ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’, it would premature to treat these three instances as absolute proof for a reading reception. This is made clear when looking at the fourth occurrence of the second person form of ‘lesen’.

This fourth instance appears in the prologue of the *Lancelot*. I am mentioning it only now because it does not fall into the same pattern as the other three, and because of its position in the text: a prologue is meant to prepare a reader or audience for the reception of the text, and references to the reception mode therefore carry more weight than one appearing in a random part of the text. ‘Lesen’ appears in line 10: “mar wildi vort mit lesen duren./Ghi sult hier horen scone die ieesten” [but if you would continue reading/you will hear here beautiful stories]. Here, the combination of ‘lesen’ with ‘di’ is immediately connected to ‘horen’, showing that the combination of ‘you’ with ‘to read’ does not necessarily refer to reading by yourself. The way in which ‘lesen’ is used here moreover, ‘wildi vort mit lesen duren’, makes it likely that ‘lesen’ does indeed mean ‘to read’, and not just ‘to tell’. This is an indication that the text was read out loud from the manuscript and not memorised and recited, even if a reception by hearing was intended.

Now that we have discussed the different forms of ‘lesen’ in the *Lancelot*, it is time to turn to ‘horen’.

The two biggest groups of conjugations of ‘horen’ are the imperative and the second person, so where the audience or reader is directly addressed. A typical example of the imperative is line 17311 “Nu hort van minen here Yweine” [Now hear of my lord Yweine]. ‘Nu’ is often used in combination with the imperative, and the phrase often denotes a transition from one narrative thread to the other. Examples that make this even more explicit are for instance lines 18071-18073, “Nu swiget daventure van desen,/Ende sal spreken van Waleweine vort,/Maer des sal luttel sijn: nu hort” [Now the adventure is silent about this/And shall speak forth of Walewein/But this will be short: now hear], and lines 4811-4812, “Davonture swiget van hem. Nu hort/Van minen here Yweine vort” [The adventure is silent about him. Now hear/Forth of my lord Yweine].

However, the largest group is not the imperative, but the second person. Like ‘alsict las’, most of these references fall into the same pattern, in this case ‘als gi mocht horen’ [as you could hear], with minor variations like “daer gi af moget horen” [of which you could hear of] (vs. 21062) or “alse gi hebt gehort” [as you have heard] (vs. 31979). In combination with a temporal adverb, this becomes ‘alse gi voren mocht horen’ [as you might/could hear before], which also appears very frequently. Apart from, again, working as an aid for rhyming, these phrases also seem fulfil a certain mnemonic function, the same that ‘alsict las’ and ‘men las’ in combination with a temporal adverb fulfilled, as the narrator reminds the reader or audience about something that happened earlier in the story. In vs. 31979, for instance, the reference is to a knight named Brinol van Pleiche, “dien hadde Bohort/Verwonnen, alse gi hebt gehort,/Ter brucgen van Corbe” [who had defeated Bohort, as you have heard at the bridge of Corbe] (vs. 31978-31980).

As a character or object previously encountered is reintroduced after having been gone from the narrative for quite some time (which in a shared reading experience would translate to real time: days, weeks or even months in between the first and second encounter with said character and object), the audience is explicitly told that they have heard about this before and their memory is triggered. If we imagine episodic reading as Joyce Coleman and Erwin Mantingh assume was common for romance reading, these references would also help audience members who missed the reading event before by quickly recapping who or what the character or object actually is (Coleman 112). It would, of course, work much the same for a private reader, but it is telling that the same effect – referencing something mentioned earlier in the text – is achieved differently by ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’, the first using second person, the other first person. It is impossible to say if ‘lesen’ in these references refers to actual ‘reading’ (and thus reading out loud) or simply telling. ‘Horen’ is less ambiguous, and the use of ‘horen’ in combination with a reference to what happened earlier in the story does heavily imply an acoustic reception.

References to things to come also use ‘horen’ in the second person, although less frequently than references backwards. In its most basic form this translates to ‘gi sult horen’ (you shall hear), as in vs. 4261-4262: “Mar gi sult horen hoe Hestoer/Lanceloete soeken voer” [But you shall hear how Hestoer/Went to seek Lancelot]. This also appears in combination with a temporal adverb, as in line 18994 “alse gi hir na selt horen” [as you shall hear afterwards] or lines 21314-21315: “Alse gi horen selt hier naer,/Dar die boec af sprect al clear” [As you shall hear afterwards,/Of which the book speaks clearly]. The latter is

interesting because the book is mentioned. Hearing and a book are not in contradiction with each other, but are instead presented as belonging together.

'Men' in combination with 'horen' only appears twice, both times in combination with a temporal adverb. The first time, in line 8723, "alsmen hier te voren horen mochte", [as one might hear here before], it refers back to an earlier story-event again. The second time, in lines 15225-15226, it instead refers forward: "alsmen sal horen wale/In die queste vanden grale"[as one will well hear/in the quest of the grail]. There are four instances of 'ic' in combination with 'horen', all of which are a form of 'hordic tellen' [I heard tell], the one variant being 'alsict hore tellen' [as I hear it tell]. None of these seem to directly refer to the reception of a written work, instead seeming to indicate a 'word-of-mouth' situation.

From 'horen', we go to 'horen lesen'. About the Old German equivalent 'hoeren lesen', Green says that where "[it] is used in conjunction with a term meaning book, this suggests not simply that, in one meaning of lesen, the reciter 'tells' or 'narrates' to the listeners, but that he reads out to them from a written text" (92). 'Horen lesen' is used twice in the *Roman van Lancelot*. The two occurrences are almost identical to one another:

Roman van Lancelot, vs. 9717-9719	Si vertellet hem, dat hi Wiste hoe di saken hadden gewesen, Also **alse gi voren horet lesen.** [She told him, so that he Knew how the things had been, As you have heard read before]
Roman van Lancelot, vs. 20383-20386	Die joncfrouwe seide daer nare, Die Lanceloete hadde genesen Van venine, **alse gi hebt horen lesen,** Toter coninginne [The damsel said after that, Who had cured Lancelot Of poison, as you have heard read, To the queen]

Figure 5. Occurrences of 'horen lesen' in the Roman van Lancelot

As you can see, there are no references to a book or other text. It is thus impossible to say if ‘lesen’ in these references refers to actual ‘reading’ (and thus reading out loud) or simply telling. Again though, we see a reference to an event which happened earlier in the story-world. Whether reading refers to actual reading, the ‘horen’ in combination with a reference to an event which happened earlier in the story-world is again an argument for a reception by hearing.

All in all, it seems that the aural-narrative constellation that we encounter is consistent with the aural-narrative constellation that Coleman describes. Where ‘horen’ is most often associated with an addressee – by taking either the second person or the imperative –, ‘lesen’ is instead associated with the ‘I’ of the narrator/author (I prefer narrator) or an impersonal or general subject, like ‘wi’ or ‘men’. Although we are often dealing with formulas, it is significant that ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ take such different forms, especially since words like ‘ic’ and ‘gi’ could in theory be switched out without damaging the metre or the rhyme. Instead, we see that ‘lesen’ almost never takes the second person form. It also never takes the imperative. Meanwhile ‘horen’ is almost always associated with the second person, the next big group being the imperative. ‘Men’ and ‘wi’, which are more associated with ‘lesen’, are pronouns that do not necessarily specify who is doing the reading and how it is done.

All this seems to point in the direction of a primary reception by shared reading. There are only three exceptions, where ‘gi’ is used in combination with ‘lesen’. As they were somewhat ambiguous, and in light of the rest of the data, we should not give them too much weight.

Another argument for a reception by hearing is the connection of these forms of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ with the structure of the text, as they are used to draw attention to the references to earlier and later events. Both verbs are used in this context, but, again, with ‘horen’ the audience is directly addressed, while with ‘lesen’ either ‘men’ or ‘ic’ is used. The places in which ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ are used in this capacity are not random. They usually appear when a character or event is re-introduced after having been absent from the story for awhile. Of course, there is a certain formulaic quality to these phrases. This does however not mean that they do not still have a function. This function seems to be to draw the attention of the audience where it is needed, namely when something or someone who might have already been forgotten is re-introduced. An actual listening audience makes sense here, as a reader who does not understand who a character is might simply go through the book to look it up.

The connection of specifically these forms of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ with story-structure is in my opinion another argument for a primary reception by listening.

Finally, there is another difference between the use of ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’. If you look at the position within the line that forms of either verb occupy, it becomes clear that of the 63 times ‘lesen’ is used, it is used at the end of the line 61 times, and only 2 times in a different position. On the other hand, 26 of the 60 occurrences of ‘horen’, a form of ‘horen’ appears in a different position – somewhere in the beginning or middle of the line. This means that ‘lesen’ usually stands in rhyming position. The chances of it being a ‘stopgap’, a line-filler, are thus much greater than for ‘horen’, though of course a majority of ‘horen’ also appears in rhyming position. The position at the end of the line does of course not say everything, and does not mean that a certain word cannot also fulfil another function (as we saw with ‘alsict voren las’ and its variants). Still, in the case of the *Lancelot*, ‘alsict las’ seems to have been used as a stopgap. Joost van Driel writes about this in his book about the stylistic features of Middle Dutch epic poetry (epic meaning ‘narrative’ here), *Prikkeling der zinnen. De stilistische diversiteit van de Middelnederlandse epische poëzie*. According to him, the *Roman van Lancelot* uses a large amount of stopgaps, because the translator was adapting a prose work (namely, the Old French *Lancelot en prose*). In a sense, the translator split the prose text up in very short verses, and added words at the end of the line to make everything rhyme. “De dichter van *Lanceloet* stopt als het ware met vertellen een woord of twee voor de eigenlijke versgrens, de overige ruimte vullend met rijmtechnische specie” [The poet of *Lancelot* stops as it were with narrating (the story) a couple of words before the actual end of the verse, filling the rest of the space with rhyme-technical mortar] (Van Driel, 27). Forms of ‘lesen’ seem to have been quite convenient for this purpose.

I will now briefly compare the data from the *Lancelot* with ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in the *Queeste vanden Grale* and *Arturs doet*. As you can see, the search results largely correspond to those in the *Roman van Lancelot*:

Queeste vanden Grale				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative (hoort)	0	0%	2	10%
First person sg. (ic)	12	54,5 %	3	15%
First person pl. (wi)	4	18%	0	0%
Second person sg. & pl. (ghi & di)	1	4,5%	15	75%
Third person sg. (men)	5	22,7%	0	0%
Total	22	100%	20	100%

Figure 6. Conjugations of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in the Queeste vanden Grale

Arturs doet				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative	0	0%	3	14,29%
First person sg. (ic)	30	83,33%	2	9,52%
First person pl. (wi)	5	13,89%	2	9,52%
Second person pl. & sg. (ghi & di)	1	2,78%	13	61,90%
Third person sg.(men)	0	0%	1	4,76%
Total	36	100%	21	100%

Figure 7. Conjugations of 'horen' and 'lesen' in Arturs doet

There are some differences. For instance, the amount of 'lesen' in the first person singular is much higher in *Arturs doet* than in either of the other texts. However, the biggest groups in the *Roman van Lancelot* (the first person singular for 'lesen', second person for 'horen') are the biggest groups in the other two texts as well.

I will not go into too much detail here, and only briefly discuss a variant that has not been mentioned above: the first person plural of 'horen', seen in *Arturs doet*. It appears twice, in line 2356 in the combination "als wijt horen" (as we hear) and in line 9914, "horewi tellen" (we hear tell). Both are used at the end of the lines, so in the rhyming position. The phrasing is reminiscent of 'alsewi lesen' and 'horict tellen'. Both these do not seem to have much to do with intended reception, and act as stopgaps.

For 'horen lesen', again the situation is not so different from the *Lancelot*.

Queeste vanden Grale, vs. 1188-1191	Hier omme en salic niet te snel Dese aventure te tellen wesen; Bedie ic hebbe dicke horen lesen: Quade haeste es dicke onspoet. [And this is why I will not too quickly Tell this adventure; I have often heard read: Great haste often leads to delays]
Queeste vanden Grale, vs. 10222-10226	Ende hi brachte vor die goene Dat gebroken swaerd, daer gi Hier vore af horet lesen mi, [And he brought before that one

	The broken sword, of which you Heard me read before]
Arturs doet, vs. 323-32	Lanceloet, alse gi mocht horen Lesen inden boec hier voren, In die queste vanden grale [Lancelot, as you might hear Read in the book here before In the Quest of the Grail]

Figure 8. 'Horen lesen' in the Queeste vanden Grale *and* Arturs doet

The basic formula is again 'as you have heard read' ('alse gi hebt horen lesen'). In the *Queeste vanden Grale* 'mi' is added, and in *Arturs doet,* significantly, the book is mentioned from which the audience have heard it read (namely, the *Queeste vanden Grale*). With that, the reference in *Arturs doet* meets Green's criterion which requires that 'horen lesen' is used in combination with a reference to a book. We can say thus say that in *Arturs doet*, 'lesen' definitely means 'to read'. This also makes it more plausible that it has the same meaning in the *Queeste* and the *Lancelot*. In the case of the first person use of 'horen lesen', in l. 1190 of the *Queeste*, it is instead quite likely that 'lesen' refers to 'to tell'. 'Quade haeste es dicke onspoet' is a proverb. Of course, it is possible that this is read to someone, but 'horen lesen' in this instance seems rather to mean 'to hear it said'.

To conclude, in this chapter we have seen that there are no clear patterns to be discerned within the data. Or, at least, not when you only look at the amount of times 'horen' and 'lesen' appear. However, focusing on only one or a few texts does produce some interesting results. We have encountered different uses of 'horen' and 'lesen' in the *Roman van Lancelot* and seen how they are connected to the story-structure. The way 'horen' and 'lesen' are used in the *Queeste* and *Arturs doet* do not contradict the findings in the *Roman van Lancelot*.

In the next chapter I will look at more texts in order to see to what extent they are similar to the *Lancelot* in the way they employ 'horen' and 'lesen'.

Chapter 4: A Closer Look

In this chapter, I will focus on texts that deviate from the average frequency of 'horen' and 'lesen'. I have chosen a percentage of 0,03% as a margin, so I will focus on those texts in which the frequency is either 0,03% higher or lower than the average.

For 'lesen', the average frequency is 0,0216%. There are however some texts that do not use 'lesen' at all (*Karel ende Elegast*, *Ferguut* and *Torec*), and others that use it less than 0,01% (*Parthonopeus van Bloys*, *Lantsloot*, *Roman van Cassamus*). Then there are those texts that have not yet been discussed in the previous chapter that feature 'lesen' more frequently than 'horen'. These are *Alexanders geesten*, the *Merlijn*, the *Wrake van Ragisel* and the *Roman van Limborch*. *Alexanders geesten* and the *Wrake van Ragisel* are also the only texts that have a frequency of 'lesen' higher than 0,05%. As the *Roman van Limborch* is one of the texts that contains the formula 'horen en/of lesen', I will not discuss it here, but in chapter 5.

The average frequency of 'horen' is 0,0463%. There are no texts in which 'horen' does not appear at all, but there are three texts in which the frequency is lower than 0,02%: the *Ferguut* again, *Parthonopeus van Bloys* and the *Roman van Cassamus*. I will also look at texts in which 'horen' makes up more than 0,07%, such as the *Historie van Troyen*. Then there are a two texts in which the word-frequency of 'horen' is above 0,1%, namely *Lanceloet en het hert metten witte voet* and *Aiol*. These also warrant a look.

Outliers in the use of 'lesen'

Let us first take a look at those texts that do not feature 'lesen' at all: *Ferguut*, *Karel ende Elegast* and *Torec*. The *Ferguut* is the longest of the three, with 5604 verses, while the *Torec* has 3854 verses and *Karel ende Elegast* only 1364 verses. *Torec*, like *Ferguut*, is an Arthurian romance. It is part of the *Lancelot* Compilation. *Karel ende Elegast* and *Ferguut* are both dated to the first half of the thirteenth century, while the 'original' *Torec*, if indeed written by Jacob van Maerlant, is dated between 1257 and 1266. All three are thus 'early' chivalric romances. *Torec* and *Ferguut* are translations from the French, while *Karel ende Elegast* is generally believed to be an original composition, but one coming from an extensive oral tradition. Of *Torec*, we do not have the original French source, so it is impossible to say how much freedom the translator took with the source material. The *Torec* is however part of the

Lancelot Compilation, and has been edited to fit within the larger cycle. The *Ferguut* is a Middle Dutch translation of the Old French *Fergus* by one Guillaume le clerc. However, the translator took quite some freedom with the 'translation' and changed quite a lot.[7]

As all three texts are not only quite short, but also contain very few occurrences of 'horen', I am able to analyse their use of the verb in quite some detail. The *Ferguut* will be analysed first, and in most depth, and then I will compare the *Torec* and *Karel ende Elegast*. I will especially focus on the connection between the use of 'horen' and the story-structure.

Though the *Ferguut* does not use 'lesen' by itself, it is one of the few texts that contains 'horen lesen'. It appears at the end of the text, in a note by the corrector:

<Ende alle diet hebben horen lesen>;
<Moeten met gode vercoren wesen>;
5595 <Ende hemelrike verlene hi mede>;
<Hem die dit screef ende scriuen dede amen>;[8]

In this instance, it is quite clear that 'horen lesen' does in fact refer to 'to hear read', because where the first sentence translates to 'And all that have heard it read', the last sentence clarifies that 'it' refers to the written text, not just the story: 'him who wrote this and caused this to be written amen'. A problem here is that this note has been written by the corrector, and is as such not part of the 'original' text. However, given the problematic nature of the idea of an original in a culture of 'mouvance',[9] this is not a reason to discard it altogether. If not evidence of an envisioned primary reception of the text, the note does give us evidence of the practice of shared reading for at least one Middle Dutch text.

I will now take a look at the use of 'horen' the *Ferguut*. There are only four instances of 'horen', amounting to a frequency of 0,0120%. As there are only four instances of 'horen', I have reproduced them all below. Because the concern is for story-structure, I have quoted more than just the lines in which 'horen' appears, so that it is clear what function 'horen' fulfils:

[7] The introduction to the 1975 edition of *Ferguut* by Rombauts, De Paepe and De Haan gives an overview of all the changes the translator makes.
[8] The <> are added in the edition to make clear that this text has been added by the scribe, and is not part of the original text.
[9] 'Mouvance' is a concept formulated by Paul Zumthor which denotes the idea that medieval vernacular texts were not seen as fixed works by a single author, but were reworked and rewritten without this being an issue.

Lines	Context in which 'horen' occurs	Translation
9-14	Bedi alsic hebbe horen saghen Ende dauonturen onder vragen Daer was mijn here gawein Ende sijn geselle mijn her ywein	Because as I have heard say And asked the adventure about There was my lord Gawein And his companion my lord Ywein
1166-1170	Noit man sach sulke figure Hen sal v lieden niet vernoien Die niet wille horen lope met coyen Ic wille v seggen die waerheit Vander joncfrouwen scoenheit	Never man saw such a figure It will not bore you people Who does not want to hear, walk with cows! I want to tell you the truth Of the damsel's beauty
2793-2799	Nv swiget ende waent mi horen Dauonture van hier te voren Hoe dane wijs die ridder swart Also saen alse hi genesen wart Van sinen wonden ende hem dochte Dat hi te houe varen mochte Sine wapine hiesch hi altemale	Now be quite and would you hear/listen to me (as I tell)[10] The adventure from before In what way the black knight As soon as he was healed Of his wound and he thought to himself That he would go to the court His weapons he took up again

[10] This addition is proposed by the 1975 edition of the *Ferguut*, by Rombauts e.a.

4891-4898	Nv swiget alle hier seldi horen Een lettelkijn van hier te voren Die rouere van der hoger zee Die sine lede hadde gehadt ontwee Het was tijt hine wilde nemmer miden Te houe wart so ginc hi riden	Now be quiet, all, here you will hear [about what happened] a little while before The pirate (lit. robber) from the high sea Who had been heavily wounded It was time, he did not want to avoid it anymore Towards the court he started to ride	

Figure 1. Occurrences of 'horen' in Ferguut

The first use of ‘horen’ is less relevant. ‘Bedi alsic hebbe horen sagen’ (Because as I have heard said) seems to have little to do with the reception mode of a written text. The context in which it occurs is the naming of some of the knights that are present at Arthur’s court, a common motif in Arthurian romance where the narrator often invokes hearsay. The next sentence, ‘ende davonturen onder vragen’ [and asked the adventure (about)], does seem to be about the relation between author and source, but it is unclear how this source has been read (if it was indeed read and not recited somewhere). ‘Onder vragen’ might also be interpreted as ‘questioning’, in which case it is possible to interpret it as a form of close reading. Of course, if imagining the context of a recital, asking a question can also be interpreted literally.

The two occurrences of ‘horen’ are in lines 2793 and 2794 are quite alike. The sentences start with ‘nu swiget’ (now be quiet) and ‘horen’ rhymes with ‘hier te voren’ (lit. here before). In both cases, the phrase introduces a transition, and has an analeptic function. The first re-introduces the black knight, who disappeared from the story in line 1964, when he promised Ferguut to go to Arthur’s court and tell about his defeat by Ferguut as soon as he has been healed from his wounds. The story then tells about Ferguut for more than 800 lines, in which Ferguut has many unrelated adventures, until it comes back to the black knight. His story-line is picked up at the moment he has been healed from his wounds and decides to go to Arthur’s court. So not only is the character re-introduced, but the first things that are said about him, “Hoe dane wijs die ridder swart/Also saen alse hi genesen wart/Van sinen wonden ende hem dochte/Dat hi te houe varen mochte” (in what way the knight black/as soon as he had been healed/of his wounds and he thought/he would go to the court) are an echo of the last things said about him, “ende [Ferguut] bat den ridder, so hi eerst mochte/genesen, dat hi den coninc sochte” (and [Ferguut] asked the knight, as soon as he might/be healed, that he would seek the king), lines 1963-1964. The same is true for the second occurrence of ‘horen’. This time the character re-introduced is a pirate, last seen in line 3271. Also defeated, he too must go to Arthur’s court to be imprisoned there. This time, there are more than 1500 lines in between, which would translate to at least 50 minutes of reading out loud.[11]

The rhyme ‘horen’ and ‘voren’ is, of course, very convenient for a transition phrase. However, there are also other transition phrases, such as “nu willic u tellen vort” [now I want to tell you further], line 3018, and “nu keric weder te Galienen” [now I return to Galiene], line 4979. There are other times when the narrative jumps between story-lines. However, the combination of ‘to be quiet’, the transitional and backwards-referring function of both phrases

[11] This estimate is based on my personal experience with reading the *Borchgravinne van Vergi* out loud, see Appendix B.

and the use of ‘alle’ (all) does make a shared reading reception plausible. The reason ‘horen’ has been used less often, and ‘lesen’ not at all, might have to do with the fact that the *Ferguut* is not only a relatively short text, but also deals with few interrupting storylines. Where many longer texts – such as the *Lancelot*, but also the *Roman van Limborch* or the *Historie van Troyen* – use a lot of intertwining story-threads,[12] here Ferguut is the focus and the narrative does not often leave him. The one other character that is focused on, Ferguut’s love Galiene, does not need to be re-introduced all the time, because of her overall importance, and the many references that are made to her even when Ferguut is involved in other adventures.

The last occurrence of ‘horen’ that I have not yet dealt with appears in line 1168 and is different from the others. The sentence, “Die niet wille horen lope met coyen” ([Those] who don’t want to hear, [may he] walk with cows). Less literally, the narrator is saying that the one who does not want to hear the description of Galiene, would be better off herding cows for his part (or, in other words, is not courteous enough to hear it). A remark like this very much creates a community by excluding a certain group of people. Although not appearing in the prologue, it is reminiscent of remarks discussed by Gerard Sonnemans in his book *Functionele aspecten van Middelnederlandse versprologen*. In chapter 5, about the audience, he distinguishes between prologues that mention a specific person as their audience, and those that mention an ‘abstract’ audience. In the last case, the audience is either defined positively, by something they all have in common, for instance if text is specifically addressed to lay people, or negatively. In the last case, a certain type of audience is excluded from reception. An example is the prologue of *Floris ende Blancefloer*, which is not for “dorperen no den doren” [vileins (uncouth, uncourteous villagers) nor stupid people] (l. 3). According to Sonnemans, this functions “veeleer als versterking van de positieve publiekskeuze. (…) Het herinnert de toehoorders er alleen maar aan, dat men zich in een veilige, elitaire omgeving bevindt” [rather to reinforce the positive choice of audience. It only serves to remind the listeners that they are in a safe, elitists environment] (153). It thus creates a feeling of a shared community. Of course, such a community can also be an abstract community of readers, but the presence of ‘horen’ suggests that in this instance it points to a shared reception and an actual audience.

‘Horen’ is used in three ways in *Karel ende Elegast*: in the imperative, the first person singular and in second person. The *Roman van Torec* also makes use of these forms of ‘horen’, as well as the first person plural:

[12] This is called ‘entrelacement’. A good example is the Old French *Lancelot-Grail cycle*, in which we follow the stories of many knights as they go on adventures, meet each other and separate again.

Karel ende Elegast		
Conjugation	Amount	Percentage
Imperative	2	40%
First person sg.	1	20%
Second person sg. and pl.	2	40%
Roman van Torec		
Imperative	3	37,5%
First person sg.	1	12,5%
First person pl.	1	12,5%
Second person sg. and pl.	3	37,5%

Figure 2. Conjugations of 'horen' in Karel ende Elegast *and* Torec.

The first person singular is used in *Karel ende Elegast* to denote hearsay (line 22428, although it might also be a reference to the oral tradition), while in *Torec* the narrator says he heard it "int romans", 'in French' (line 25502), a reference to a French source-text. If so, the line is not a result of the adaptation by the compiler of the *Lancelot* Compilation, but must be left from the 'original'. It is interesting that the narrator of the *Torec* says that he heard it in French. We can speculate as to whether this refers to a truly 'oral' (a performance without a text, from someone who either memorised the text verbatim or uses formula's to create the story as he goes) or rather an 'aural' (reading from a text) .

There are not many surprises among the search results. We see that both texts use an equal amount of the imperative and the second person form of 'horen'. In *Karel ende Elegast*, the first imperative appears in the second line of the poem: "Fraeye historie ende al waer/Mach ic v tellen hoort near" [A nice history and all true/I would tell you, listen to it]. The other imperative also appears quite early, in line 8, and indicates the moment when something marvellous happens in the story, as an angel tells Charlemagne to go out to steal. The second person in line 691 is not quite a transitional phrase, but does indicate the moment Charlemagne and Elegast arrive at a different location, while "nu moechdi horen sine tale" [now you may hear his tale] in line 1173 is followed by a speech by Elegast in which he accuses the traitor Eggeric in front of the king. 'Horen' thus always introduces moments important for the story, which, if missed, would make the story hard to follow.

Karel ende Elegast is an interesting case, because the complete text – and the one used for the analysis – is taken from an incunable. If we look at indications about reception mode, do these tell us something about the way texts were read at the time of composition or the time of printing? The printed text is very close to the manuscript fragments, so assuming the former would be safer. The question remains, however, whether printers would not have changed certain words if a reception by hearing would have been completely alien to their intended buyers. Although only anecdotal evidence, I would like to refer to the introduction of another incunable, William Caxton's *Morte Dartur*. Here, Caxton directs his book to "all noble princes, lords and ladies, gentlemen or gentlewomen, that desire to read or hear read" the history of Arthur (xvii). A reception by hearing should thus not be ruled out for a printed text, or for a later period.

Karel ende Elegast differs from *Ferguut* in that there are not really different story-lines between which the narrative alternates. *Torec* however does have multiple storylines and indeed uses 'horen' in the transition from one to the other. After an introduction about a king marrying a damsel with a beautiful diadem, the 'nu hort' in line 23197 is the start of a description of three sisters that is seemingly unrelated to what happened before, until one of the sisters asks her lover to get her the diadem. The imperative is also used in line 24817, when information about a 'dwerch' (literally 'dwarf', but it seems to indicate a type of monster here) is divulged. The monster was introduced earlier, when he kidnapped a damsel in front of Torec's eyes, and then the narrator promised to tell more about him later (lines 24430-24432): "hierna salict u bedieden al/Van den dwerge groet ende smal;/Ic moet nu van Torecke scriven", [after this I will tell you all/About the monster, big and small;/I must write about Torec now]. The 'nu hort' does not denote the reintroduction of a character, as the knights are already in its lair, but indicates the fulfilment of the earlier promise as the narrator finally talks about the monster's habits.

In Chapter 3, I offered the hypothesis that the use of 'horen' and 'lesen' had something to do with the length of the texts, as most of the texts using more 'lesen' than 'horen' are over 10.000 lines, while most of the texts featuring more 'horen' are shorter. Of course, we have not looked at texts that feature more 'lesen' yet. For these short texts, however, at least we can say that 'horen' is clearly connected to their structure. In the *Ferguut* it was used twice as a transitional phrase from the main story to narrative threads featuring side-characters that had appeared only once or twice before. Another time it was used to create a community of readers by negatively defining those that would not be suitable to read the romance. Both uses

point towards a reception by listening. In *Torec*, 'horen' was also used in a transition to another story-thread, when the audience would need to pay attention. It was later used when information that was promised earlier was finally delivered. *Karel ende Elegast* used 'horen' at the very beginning of the text in a call for attention, which seems a clear sign of intended reception mode. Other times it was used at points in the story where something important would happen. Using 'horen' at these points where the story gets less straightforward, moves in a different direction or has arrived at an important plot-point seems significant.

It will be interesting to see if other texts – both short and longer – use 'horen' in a similar way, so to denote a transition between story-lines or to indicate that something important will happen in the story. However, this does not answer the question why 'lesen' is not used at all. This also depends on what function 'lesen' usually fulfils.

Texts that have a word frequency of 'lesen' lower than 0,01 are *Parthonopeus van Bloys* and the (short version of the) *Roman van Cassamus*. They both use 'lesen' only one time. *Cassamus* is a special case, because 'horen' is also used only once. The phrase in which 'lesen' appears in *Cassamus* is in no way remarkable: "alsic in dien Walsce las" (as I read in French). The text will be discussed in more depth below. The text of *Parthonopeus* is not complete. The edition available on the *CD-Rom* is from 1871, edited by J.H. Bormans. He used fragments from different manuscripts and presented them in their right order. Where fragments overlap, he reproduced the text of only one of them. Although I will discuss the text and its use of 'horen' and 'lesen' briefly, we must keep in mind that we do not have the whole text, which is why I will not spend too much time on it.

Parthonopeus van Bloys				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
First person sg.	0	0%	1	14,29%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	6	85,71%
Third person sg.	1	100%	0	0%

Figure 3. Conjugations of 'horen' and 'lesen in Parthonopeus van Bloys

The only time 'lesen' occurs is in the third person singular. This is in lines 2824-2825, "Dat mach men soeken in Nasone,/Ende in anderen boeke[n] lesen" [One may search that in Nasone,/and read it in other books]. 'Dat' (that) refers to what comes after, namely "dat vrouwe in gheere wijs mach we[sen]/Sonder minne, die scone es" ([hat a woman can in no way be/without love, (if she) is beautiful]. In other words, here a reference to other books is

made to verify what is supposed to be a general truth. The forms ‘horen’ takes are not that different from those we have seen before: ‘nu moghedi horen’ (ll. 1968, 2430 and 2600), its variant ‘nu suldi horen’ (l. 5638) and ‘(als) ghi moget horen’ (ll. 4663 and 5529). The one first person singular of ‘horen’ appears in line 3156. It is not clear if it refers to hearsay or to the reception of a text by reading or reciting.

Until now, we have looked at texts with a lower than average amount of ‘lesen’. On the other side of the spectrum, we have texts with a relatively high frequency of ‘lesen’. I discussed the *Lancelot, Queeste* and *Arturs doet* in the previous chapter. The four texts we have not yet looked at are the *Wrake van Ragisel*, *Alexanders geesten*, the *Merlijn* and the *Roman van Limborch*. As I said earlier, the *Roman van Limborch* will be discussed in chapter 5, with the other texts that contain the double formula. The *Merlijn* is a special case, that warrants some extra attention, because it actually consists of three texts: Jacob van Maerlant’s *Historie vanden grale* (1926 verses) and *Merline* (8472 verses) and Lodewijk van Velthem’s *Merlijn-continuatie* (25819 verses).

Let us first start with the total amount of times ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ occur in the *Merlijn*. One category of ‘lesen’ (appearing a total of 6 times) has not been taken into account, namely where the subject is ‘dit boec’ (this book) or ‘daventure’ (the adventure). A typical construct would be lines 12505-12506: “Maer dit boeck zwiget van al desen,/Ende zal voert van den tornoye lesen” [But this book is silent of all this/And shall read forth of the tournament]. Here I would translate ‘read’ as ‘tell’, seeing that it would make little sense for a book to read of something. In any case ‘read’ does not refer to the reception of either the author or the audience here.

Merlijn			
Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
47	0,02082%	46	0,02038%

Figure 4. ‘Lesen’ and ‘horen’ in the Merlijn

Much like the *Lancelot*, the amount of ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ are practically the same in the *Merlijn*. When we look at the conjugations ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ take, the ratio between different forms of the verbs seems very much in agreement with the *Lancelot* too, as well as with the *Queeste* and *Doet*:

Merlijn				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative	0	0%	8	17,4%
First person sg. (ic)	33	70,2%	0	0%
First person pl. (wi)	9	19,2%	7	15,2%
Second person pl & sg. (gi & di)	0	0%	29	63,0%
Third person sg. (men)	5	10,6%	0	0%
Third person pl. (allen)	0	0%	2	4,4%

Figure 5. Conjugations of 'lesen' and 'horen' in the Merlijn

Again we see that the majority of uses of 'lesen' take the first person singular, while the majority of 'horen' takes the second person, followed by the imperative. Looking at 'lesen', we see that there is no there is no second person form in the *Merlijn*. The first person plural is the second biggest in the *Merlijn*, similarly to *Arturs doet*. 'Men' plus a form of 'lesen' is the smallest group, unlike the *Lancelot-Queeste-Arturs doet* combined. However, 'wi' and 'men' having switched does not seem very significant per se. 'Horen' seems often to take the first person plural. This is not attested in the *Lancelot* or the *Queeste*, but does appear in *Arturs doet*. We also see an extra category, the third person plural (specifically 'allen', all) of 'horen'. This appears in the prologue, which will be discussed more extensively below.

However, the *Merlijn* is not a unity like the *Lancelot-Queeste-Arturs doet*. It consists of three texts, the *Historie vanden Grale* and the *Boec van Merline* written by Jacob van Maerlant between 1257 and 1266 (Caers 225), the *Merlijn-continuatie* finished around 1327 (Caers 226) by Lodewijk van Velthem. Jacob van Maerlant translated a prose version of Robert de Boron's Old French *Joseph d'Arimathie* (also called *Le Roman de l'Estoire dou Graal*), while Velthem translated the, also Old French, *Suite-Vulgate du Merlin*. The *Continuatie* is more than twice as long as the *Historie vanden Grale* and the *Merline* combined: where the latter two count 10,398 lines together, the *Continuatie* has 25819 verses.

These texts have been preserved in the same manuscript (Burgsteinfurt, Fürst zu Bentheimsche Schlossbibliothek, B 37), and Velthem amended the last line of the *Merline* to make the transition to his continuation smoother (where it first read that Arthur held the land of Logres in peace, Velthem changed 'vreden' to 'onvreden', so that peace became war (Oostrom 129), but although they might have been viewed as a unity, their different writers and dates of origin ask that we take a closer look.

Total amount of 'lesen' and 'horen' in the parts by Jacob van Maerlant and Lodewijk van

Velthem			
Lesen in *Historie vanden Grale* and the *Merline*	Lesen in the *Continuatie*	Horen in *Historie vanden Grale* and the *Merline*	Horen in the *Continuatie*
12 (0,01941%)	35 (0,02135%)	12 (0,01941%)	34 (0,02074%)

Figure 6. 'Lesen' and 'horen' in the Historie vanden Grale, Merline *and* Continuatie

We see that the *Continuatie* makes more use of forms of 'horen' and 'lesen' than the other two texts, although the difference is not very great, considering the differences between for instance the *Lancelot* and *Arturs doet*. When we start looking at the forms used, however, we do see quite some differences between the texts.

Conjugation	Lesen in *Historie vanden Grale* and the *Merline*	Lesen in the *Continuatie*	Horen in *Historie vanden Grale* and the *Merline*	Horen in the *Continuatie*
Imperative	0	0	6 (50,0%)	2 (5,9%)
First person sg. (ic)	3 (25%)	30 (85,7%)	0	0
First person pl. (wi)	5 (41,7%)	4 (11,4%)	0	7 (20,6%)
Second person pl & sg. (gi & di)	0	0	4 (33,3%)	25 (73,5%)
Third person sg. (men)	4 (33,3%)	1 (2,9%)	0	0
Third person pl. (allen)	0	0	2 (16,7%)	0

Figure 7. Forms of 'horen' and 'lesen' in the different parts of the Merlijn

Now we can see that where the *Continuatie* shows a similar pattern to the *Lancelot-Queeste-Arturs doet*, the *Historie van den grale* and *Merline* deviate from this significantly. Of course we are working with quite small numbers here, but this warrants taking a closer look.

One of the first things that stands out, is the use of the first person singular for 'lesen'. Of the 33 cases of 'lesen' in the first person singular in the whole of the *Merlijn*, 30 are used in the *Merlijn-continuatie*. Moreover, where the majority in the *Continuatie* are the familiar 'alsict las' (22 in total, including combinations with a temporal adverb), 'alsict las' does not appear in the *Historie vanden grale* and the *Merline* at all. 'Ic' is instead used in the construction "ick nye las" (I never read, 161) or the variation 'nie en las ick' (l. 7066) and line 163, "Die waerste die ick daeraf lese" (the truth that I read from this). The first 'ick nye las' and 'die waerste die ick daeraf lese' appear in the same passage, about Joseph of Arimathea. The narrator attests that Joseph was a knight in the household of Pilate, according to the French text ("eest alst in den Walsche staet" [if it is as it says in French], l. 155). However, the narrator seems slightly doubtful.

160 Maer dat hi zijn ridder iet was
En zegge ick niet dat ick nye las
In ander historien dan in dese;
Die waerste die ick daeraf lese
Seghet, dat Pilatus was heidijn,
165 Ende oeck alle die ridder zijn,
Die doe waren van ziner meisenieden
Waren onbesnedene liede.

[But that he ever was his knight/I say I never read it/in any other history than this one;/the (seeming?) truth that I read thereof/says, that Pilate was a heathen,/And also all those that were knights/then in his household/were not circumcised]

Here the act of reading of the 'I' is very clearly connected with a source and the verification of the information given. The same goes, though to lesser extent, for 'nie en las ick' in line 7066. Starting from line 7065, the full sentence reads:

7065 Den zege tellet ons die ieeste,
Nie en las ick, no en vreeste,
Dat der Heidene ienich ontstoet,
Si en mosten alle bliven doet.

[Of the victory the story tells us/Not did I read, nor did I fear/That of the heathens any escaped/They had to die all of them]

The *Merlijn-continuatie* does not use 'alsict las' in the same way, instead using it much like it was used in the *Roman van Lancelot*, simply as a line-filler, or in combination with a temporal adverb to refer to things occurring earlier in the narrative. In three instances, the dative is used (l. 15396, "alsict u te voren las", 20653 and 25222). Though tempting to interpret these as indications of reading out loud, as Green does with Middle High German, 'lesen' can easily be interpreted as 'to tell' here.

It is interesting that simply looking at two words often used in stopgaps already shows us the difference between two authors. What makes this more interesting is the prevalence of

'alsict las' in Lodewijk van Velthem's part (as opposed to none in Jacob van Maerlant's text), seeing that this combination is so often used in the *Lancelot-Compilatie,* about which it is speculated that Lodewijk van Velthem could be the compiler or the main scribe.[13]

The uses of 'horen lesen', which only appears twice in the *Merlijn*, also support this connection, since they only appear in the *Continuatie,* and are used in similar phrases to the ones in the *Lancelot, Queeste* and *Doet*:

Merlijn, vs. 31878-31884 (from the *Merlijn-continuatie*)	Ende opten selven dach, hebbic vereest, Dat die ses ridder voeren in den foreest Ombe aventure, als **gy mochtet horen** **In den boec lesen hiervoren.** [And on the same day, I have heard (lit. learned by asking questions) That the six knights rode into the forest For adventure, as you could hear Read in the book before]
Merlijn, vs. 33603-33608 (from the *Merlijn-continuatie*)	Doe die koninck Ban entie koninck Bohoert **Van hem scieden, als gy gehoert** **Hebbet hiervoer wel horen lesen,** [When king Ban and king Bohoert Separated from him, as you have heard Read before]

Figure 8. 'Horen lesen' in the Merlijn

The identity of scribe B and the compiler of the *Lancelot* Compilation is however not an issue that I am able to go into right now. Further research could tell us if the use of certain forms of 'lesen' do indeed appear more often in parts written by scribe B. What is important for my research here is that despite the different uses of 'horen' and 'lesen', both texts point into the direction of a reception by hearing.

[13] See for instance the introduction to *Jeesten van rouwen ende van feesten*, edited by Bart Besamusca, for a discussion of different possibilities concerning scribe B, or, for a more extensive discussion, Bart Besamusca's introduction to 'Pars 2' of the edition of the *Lanceloet.*

Now that we have looked at the *Merlijn*, it is time to look at the other two texts that use ‘lesen’ more often than ‘horen’: Jacob van Maerlant’s *Alexanders geesten* and another text that is part of the *Lancelot* Compilation, the *Wrake van Ragisel*.

Alexanders geesten				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative	0	0%	22	50%
First person sg.	8	16,67%	4	9,09%
First person pl.	4	8,33%	0	0%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	13	29,55%
Third person sg.	33	68,75%	2	4,55%
Third person pl.	1	2,08%	2	4,55%
Other	2	4,17%	1	2,27%
Wrake van Ragisel				
Imperative	0	0%	5	83,33%
First person sg.	10	76,92%	0	0%
First person pl.	2	15,38%	0	0%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	1	16,67%
Third person sg.	1	7,69%	0	0%

Figure 9. Conjugations of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in Alexanders geesten *and the* Wrake van Ragisel

A closer look reveals that most of the first person singular forms of ‘lesen’ in the *Wrake van Ragisel* are part of a transition formula that appears with only little variation. An example are lines 13051-13052: “Nu salic swigen hier van desen/Ende sal vord vanden campe lesen” (now I will be silent about this here/And shall read forth of the battle). If anything, this points to a reception by hearing rather than a reception by reading, especially when ‘u’ is added, as in line 11233 “ende sal u vord van Artur lesen” (and will read you forth of Arthur). It is also very well possible that ‘lesen’ is to be translated to ‘to tell’ here.

The form most used in *Alexanders geesten* is the third person singular. *Alexanders geesten* is another work by Jacob van Maerlant, but at first glance there is little similarity with the *Historie vanden grale* and the *Merline*. The different source-texts might have something to do with this (*Alexanders geesten* is a translation of the Latin *Alexandreis*). The combination ‘men’ and a form of ‘lesen’ is mostly used to refer to other texts, as in lines 14-15 of Book 4: “Van desen prince mach men lesen/In Daniels prophecije” (Of this prince one may read/In Daniel’s prophecies). Sometimes the reference is to a specific text, as in the example, in other cases no text is mentioned. The remainder, six in total, of the third person singular of ‘lesen’ is the already familiar ‘alsmen hier te voren las’ or a variant thereof.

In the *Historie vanden grale* and *Merline* one noteworthy characteristic was the use of the first person singular, in that 'alsict las' did not appear once (a very clear difference from the Lodewijk van Velthem's *Continuatie*). This turns out to be true for *Alexanders geesten* as well. There are some variants, like "daer ic af las" (Book 9, l. 802), "alse ic hier te voren las" (Book 6, l. 130) and "also alsic bescreven las" (Book 4, l. 665). We also find 'daer ic noit ave las' (Book 4, l. 922 & Book 8, l. 126). Like in the *Historie vanden Grale* and the *Merline* the overall percentage of the first person singular form of 'lesen' is quite low (especially compared to for instance the *Lancelot-Compilatie*).

Why do these two texts have an above average frequency of 'lesen'? In the case of the *Wrake van Ragisel*, it seems to be due mostly to the one transition-formula, which is used many times. Without it, the frequency would be only a little above average. Even compared to other texts in the *Lancelot-Compilatie*, the phrase is used frequently. The *Lancelot*, *Queeste* and *Doet* each use it or a variant only once, the *Moriaen*, *Lanceloet* and *Torec* do not use it at all. The *Perchevael*, *Roman vanden riddere metter mouwen* and *Walewein ende Keye* do use it, though with not as great a frequency as the *Wrake*. The discrepancy between texts might mean that the use of 'lesen' (and horen?) has been carried over from the 'original' texts, or it might tell us that different texts have been adapted in different ways. The most frequent use of 'lesen' in the *Alexander* has nothing to do with a transition from one story-line to the other, instead referencing other texts. This could have something to do with the source, a Latin, scholarly text, and with the author. *Alexanders geesten* "zit met al zijn vezels vast aan de cultuur waarin de schrijver is gevormd: de Latijnse middeleeuwse school" [is connected to the culture in which the writer is formed with all its fibers: the medieval Latin school], Frits van Oostrom writes in his book on Maerlant's work, *Maerlant's Wereld* (19). Not only did Maerlant include much information from glosses on the *Alexandreis* in the *Alexander*, he also uses other sources to supplement his narrative. In Oostrom's words, to Maerlant *Alexanders geesten* was "ook een middel (…) tot feitelijke kennisoverdracht" [also a means to transfer factual knowledge] (24). The way 'lesen' is used bears witness to this.

There is one thing the higher frequency of 'lesen' does not do, however, which is give evidence of a reception by private reading. This is, of course, not to say that these texts were not read privately, but it becomes more and more plausible that most of the texts under consideration were, in fact, intended to be heard. That being said, we will need to look at the outliers in the use of 'horen' as well.

Outliers in the use of 'horen'

With 'horen', we have the opposite situation as with 'lesen'. Where there were a few texts in which 'lesen' did not appear at all, here we are confronted with two texts that have a frequency of 'horen' higher than 0,1%, which is more than twice as high as average.

Aiol				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative	0	0%	6	85,71%
First person sg.	1	50%	0	0%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	1	14,29%
Third person sg.	1	50%	0	0%
Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet				
Imperative	0	0%	5	62,5%
First person sg.	1	50%	2	25%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	1	12,5%
Other	1	50%	0	0%

Figure 10. 'Horen' and 'lesen' in Aiol *and* Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet

The *Aiol* is not complete. Only three fragments remain, together counting 1200 verses. Of another translation, also called the Limburgse Aiol (because it originated in Limburg), only 780 verses remain. It is very well possible that the fragment we have is not a perfect representation of the full text in its frequent use of 'horen', which is why I will not remark on it too much. The use of 'horen', most frequently in the imperative and once in the second person, is in any case not remarkable.

Lanceloet is the shortest text in the corpus, only 856 verses long. Because it is complete, and because we can look at it in the context of the *Lancelot* Compilation, I choose to make an exception to the 1000 verse minimum rule. Though there are several story-lines, 'horen' or 'lesen' is not used for transitions. The short length of the text and the fact that the storylines do not so much interlace as follow one another might have something to do with that, although transition-phrases without 'horen' or 'lesen' do appear. The imperative of 'horen' is instead used to introduce an action or direct speech from a character (l. 22458, 22512, 22592, 22796 and 22997). The first person instances all denote hearsay. The only second person form of 'horen' appears in line 22459 and is connected to the imperative in l. 22458: "Hord, ic mach u secgen hoe,/Wildi die redene daer af horen:" (Listen, I can tell you how,/if you would hear the reason thereof). The one first person form of 'lesen' is the familiar "daer ic hier vore nu af las" (l. 22274). The 'other' category gives us a passive form of

'lesen', when the narrator comments on the deed of a traitor that "eer die rime werd gelesen/Soe sal hi ondervinden wel/Oft hem iet beteren sal sijn spel" (l. 22574-22576), [before the poem has been read/he will surely find out/whether his game will do him any good].[14] Both uses of 'lesen' thus seem to indicate a reception by hearing.

Why the high frequency of 'horen'? In an article by G.H.M. Claassens, 'The narrator as a character in *Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet*', Claassens notes that the narrator intervenes more in the *Lanceloet* than in any other part of the *Compilatie*. He argues that this is the result of the process with which an earlier version of the text was adapted to fit into the larger narrative of the *Compilatie* (184). It is very likely that the earlier version had Lancelot marrying the damsel for whom he undertakes a quest, but that would have been incongruent with Lancelot's role in *Arturs doet,* which follows quite soon after *Lanceloet*. The "overall effect [of the narrator's interventions] is to make acceptable the gaps that have of necessity been covered up clumsily" (Claassens 184). One of his tactics is to hide behind hearsay, which accounts for the first person form of 'horen'. It only stands to reason that if there are more interventions by the narrator, this will have an effect on the amounts of times 'horen' and 'lesen' used. To conclude, in the article Claassens makes a remark about the imperative form of 'horen' that is in line with some of my own ideas about the way especially 'horen' is used in the texts of the corpus. Claassens calls these "a fine example of a call for attention which at the same time functions as a signal towards structuring the narrative" (179). The connection between the use of 'horen' and 'lesen' and the structure of the text is, in my opinion, an extra argument for a probable reception by hearing (depending, of course, on the forms used). Reception by hearing makes having a clear structure of greater necessity; missing a change of scene or a pivotal moment is easier to deal with when reading privately, where you can read at your own pace and go back a few lines or pages without difficulty. That important moments are often accompanied by signal words like 'nu', and by 'horen' in forms that directly address the audience, points strongly to an intended reception by hearing. Still, we must not discount the possibility that this way of using 'horen' and 'lesen' had at some point become convention rather than a conscious choice of the author.

There are other texts with an above average frequency of 'horen', although not as high as the two discussed above. *Segheliin van Jerusalem, Lantsloot vander Haghedochte* and the *Historie van Troyen* all have a 'horen'-frequency above 0,07%. The first two will be dealt with in the chapter 5, as they contain the double formula of 'horen en/of lesen'. Here I will

[14] This translation has been taken from 'The Narrator as a Character in Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet' by G.H.M. Claassens.

look at the *Historie van Troyen,* another work by Maerlant. This is also one of the few works which contains 'horen lesen'. This is used only once, in line 7757-7758: "Ende allet dat yser soud wesen/Was guldyn, dus hoer ic lesen" [And all that should be iron/was gold, that is how I hear it read]. This would be an interesting reference to the reception of the source text by the author, but 'lesen' here could also mean 'to tell', which seems slightly more likely.

Looking at 'horen' and 'lesen' by themselves, is interesting to see how Maerlant's texts differ so much from each other in their use and frequency of the two verbs. A possible explanation could be that Maerlant to a certain extent adopts the style of his source-texts. Looking at the table, we can see that the biggest group of 'horen' consists of the imperative, followed by the second person:

Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative	0	0%	82	42,93%
First person sg. (ic)	30	42,86%	21	10,99%
First person pl. (wi)	13	18,57%	11	5,76%
Second person sg. & pl. (gi & di)	0	0%	62	32,46%
Third person sg. (men)	25	35,71	5	2,62%
Third person pl. (allen)	1	1,43%	1	0,52%
Other	1	1,43%	9	4,71%

Figure 11. Conjugations of 'horen' and 'lesen' in the Historie van Troyen

This is very much in line with other texts we have looked at before, like the *Roman van Limborch, Segheliin van Jerusalem*, but also *Alexanders geesten*. The *Historie van Troyen* is a special case, moreover, seeing that it is not just a translation of a French text (in this case Benoit de St. Maure's *Roman de Troie*), but it also incorporates a Middle Dutch text by Segher Diengotgaf, *Tprieel van Troyen*. So not all of the text is Maerlant's.

Interestingly enough, a look at the instances where the imperative and second person of 'horen' are used, shows that many of them, 36 in total, appear in the first 650 verses. This accounts for 18,85% of the total of 'horen', so a little less than one fifth. The last of these appears in line 644. After that the imperative or second person form of 'horen' used by the narrator does not appear until line 832. This is due to the 'content table' with which the *Historie* begins. After the prologue, this is announced with the use of the first imperative of 'horen', "Hoert hier (…)/waeraf dit boeck al is ghedicht" [Listen here (…)/what this book has been written about] (l. 61-62). Then different parts of the story are briefly described. This is where 'horen' is frequently used, especially the second person. An example is line 151-152, "so suldy horen altesamen/Hoe die heren van Griecken quamen" [in that way you shall hear

altogether/How the lords came from Greece]. Most other second person forms of ‘horen’ use the same formula, with more or less variation. It is clear that it is a kind of stopgap, very helpful to denote the transition from one description to the other, as well as to break up the long list of events. That ‘horen’ is used here seems to me to be a clear sign of an intended reception by hearing. ‘Horen’ is not used to rhyme with, and could easily be replaced with ‘lesen’, as this would not harm the meter. Moreover, a content table in narrative form also points to a reception by hearing. A regular content table, giving only the titles of chapters, would be hard to sit through and to remember. By describing what happens in rhyme, both of these disadvantages would be overcome somewhat.

Cassamus and *Ferguut* are the only two texts that have a word frequency of ‘horen’ lower than 0,02%. *Ferguut* has already been discussed. *Cassamus* has been named already, as it is also one of the texts with a very low percentage of ‘lesen’. ‘Horen’ and ‘lesen’ both appear only once in the text. The forms are not remarkable: “alsic in dien Walsce las” (l. 442) and “alse gi selt horen” (l. 1683). The *Roman van Cassamus*, a Middle Dutch version of (part of) the Old French *Voeux du Paon*, is described by Anne Reynders as a very literal translation, in which “de belangrijkste afwijkingen op weglatingen neerkomen”, [the most important deviations come down to omissions] (95). The use of ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ could thus be a reflection of the French text, or they might be owed to the many omissions. According to Reynders, most cuts have been made in fight scenes, creating more emphasis on courtly conversations and amusement (95). Whether the way ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ are used has something to do with story-matter would be an interesting question to look at. However, it is not one I now have time to attempt to answer.

To conclude, the results from this chapter’s analysis are in line with the observances made about the *Lancelot* in chapter 3. The other texts of this corpus use the same forms of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’: mostly imperative and second person for ‘horen’, mostly the first person or third person for ‘lesen’. There is no text that reverses this, or that has a high percentage of the second person form of ‘lesen’, if it is used at all. Though it was not so pronounced in the *Lancelot*, in this chapter we have seen how ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ differ significantly in the way they are used. A form of ‘lesen’ is more often used as a stopgap, or to refer to other texts. ‘Horen’ is much more clearly connected with the story-structure, as it appears in transitions between one story-thread to another and other significant moments. The earlier mentioned discrepancy between texts that use ‘lesen’ more often than ‘horen’ and texts of which the

reverse is true, is thus probably due to stylistic differences and the nature of the text. Of the first explanation, a good example is the *Lancelot*, which has a specific rhyme-technique which relies heavily on stopgaps, probably due to it being a translation from prose. *Alexanders geesten* is an example of a text which uses 'lesen' because it comes from a scholarly tradition, and clearly seeks to reinforce this connection. That the 'lesen'-texts are usually longer might be a coincidence, or a consequence of the fact that many of these texts share authors: the *Lancelot-Queeste-Arthur* could be considered a unity, and the *Alexanders geesten* en the *Merlijn* are (at least partly) Jacob van Maerlant's work. In any case, 'lesen' is not as clearly connected to structure, being often used for other functions. This is why there are texts that do not use 'lesen' even if they do use 'horen', but not vice-versa. At least we can say with certainty that the texts that employ 'lesen' more often than 'horen' are not more likely to have been read privately.

In chapter 3, I said that there did not seem to be a development from one intended reception mode to another, at least based on the overview in the table. This is still the case if we look at the way in which 'horen' and 'lesen' are used. However, there are three texts that use the 'double formula', 'horen en/of lesen'. Green uses this as an indication for the intermediate mode, where a text is addressed to both a listening audience and an individual reader. The double formula could indeed constitute the first real evidence – apart from the ambiguous second person form of 'lesen' in the *Lancelot* – of a private reading reception. I will focus on the three texts that use this formula in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: The Double Formula

In this chapter, I will focus on the texts that contain the double formula of 'horen en/of lesen'. In chapter 2 we saw that Green calls the double formula, where 'horen' and 'lesen' are both used, the surest evidence for either type of reading, shared or private, as they are clearly distinguished from each other by the text itself. Because of the double nature of the formula however, we cannot consider a work using it to be exclusively meant to for shared reading or private reading. Instead "this formula, long at home in Latin as a pointer to two modes of receiving literature and finding its way into German only at a particular point in time, is the clearest indicator that an author reckoned with his work being received in two ways" (Green 172). Green sees this as a stage in the development from an entirely oral situation, where there is no material text at all, to the stage – or end-point – where texts are read privately and in silence. The double formula, "the explicit indication of a new state of affairs, entered the vernacular long after it had been at home in Latin, so did suggestions of a twofold reception first occur in German monastic literature and only later in lay literature" (Green 302). Green points at the years 1187-1210 "as the limits for the first indications of a twofold reception of a vernacular literature for laymen" (302). The works that give these first indications all come from court literature (which consists partly of romances) (302).

There are only three instances where a variant of 'horen (lesen) en/of lesen' appears in the corpus. This is in *Lantsloot vanden Haghedochte*, another translation of the *Lancelot-Grail cycle*, dated to the middle of the thirteenth century, the *Roman van Limborch*, an original Middle Dutch composition dating from the thirteenth or first half of the fourteenth century, and in *Segheliin van Jherusalem*, an original Middle Dutch composition as well, dated to the middle of the fourteenth century (Caers 226).

It is telling that Green counts ten instances of the double formula in court literature before 1300 (209-210). This is very different from the situation of Middle Dutch. Granted, court literature might be a bit broader than only 'ridderromans', but we can say that the uses of the double formula are isolated occurrences. Moreover, two of the three texts are (probably) from after 1300. That the *Limborch* and *Segheliin* are original compositions, and that *Lantsloot van der Haghedochte* is a rather free adaptation of the Old French, does make it easier to accept that the texts are referring to the reception mode of the Middle Dutch audience, not the French audience.

The *Lantsloot vanden Haghedochte* only survives in fragments. 6073 verses from a single codex have been found which are kept in four different libraries. It is a translation of one part of the early-thirteenth century Old French *Lancelot-Grail* cycle, dated to around 1260. Because we are dealing with a translation, we should always be aware that the use of 'horen' and 'lesen' might reflect the intended reception of the original French text rather than that of the Middle Dutch text. Unfortunately, I did not have the time to compare the Middle Dutch to the Old French.

The formula appears in lines 5926-5927 of the text. The whole passage goes as follows:

Nv suldi horen op dese vre
Van her waleweins auenture

5925 Nv gaet hier echt ene redene in
Daer gi of horen moghet begin
Ende lesen ende tellen
Doe walewein voer van sinen ghesellen
Die hem spreiden hare entare
5930 Om te vereischene niemare

[Now you will hear in this hour/Of lord Walewein's adventure/Now here truly a story begins/Of which you may hear the beginning/and read and tell/When Walewein rode away from his companions/Who went in all directions/To investigate (if there was) news]

In the *Roman van Limborch*, the phrase 'lesen of horen lesen' appears in the prologue of Book XI. The narrator asks 'all who read or hear it read' to praise god and to say amen together:

Nu biddic hem allen sonder waen
Diet lesen of lesen hoeren,
Dat si gode loven te voren
25 Van al den goede sekerlike
Dat hi mi op erterike
Ghedaen heeft ende doen sal,

Ende oec, dat ic boven al
Beghere, dat euwelike leven
Na mine doet hier boven gheven
Ende ons allen met te samen,
In gods name, nu segt amen. Amen.

[Now I pray all without /Who read (this) or hear read,/That they will praise God beforehand/Because of all the good truly/that he for me in the earthly realm/had done and will do,/And also, which I above all/Desire, that eternal life,/After my death, (that God) may give it (to me) on high/And all of us together/In God's name, say 'amen' now. Amen.]

In *Segheliin van Jherusalem*, the phrase also appears in the prologue, this time the prologue of the whole work.

Vrouwe ghi moet mi gracie gheuen
Ende uwen soen die ghi droecht
Bidt hem vrouwe dat hi v voecht
Minen sin ende ghesterke
Ten beghin van desen werke
Toten einde van minen liue
Dat ic moet behouden bliuen
Ende dat ick te dichten begheer
Dies moet bliuen in miin eer
Sonder scande ende lachter
Van hem diet sullen lesen hier achter
Ende hoeren sullen siint leec of clerc

[Lady, you must give me grace/And your son that you carried/Pray to him, lady, that he sends you/For my (good) sense and strength/From the beginning of this work/Till the end of my life/That I might be kept save/And that I desire to write poetry/That this should be for my honour/Without shame or slander/Of those who will read it after this/And will hear, be they lay or cleric]

Though all texts use the double formula, there are some differences between them. First of all, only the *Roman van Limborch* uses 'or'. This variant of the double formula is the surest indication of both modes of reading. Green concedes that if 'and' is used, there is a chance that it refers to someone reading out loud to themselves (226). Another explanation for the formula is that 'lesen' refers to the person reading out loud, and not to a separate situation where an individual is reading by themselves. Green calls this implausible (173), but it shows that the formula is not completely unambiguous. Still, Green states that it is most often used to suggest a "twofold reception" (26).

Another difference between the texts is the place in which the formula is used. In the *Segheliin* and *Limborch,* the formula appears in a prologue. Seeing that this is the place where the audience is being prepared for reception, references to reception mode are given extra weight. For the *Lantsloot* we sadly do not have a prologue, so there is no knowing if the double formula was used there. In case of the *Limborch* though, it is quite interesting that the double formula is only used in the prologue of Book XI. The texts consists of a total of twelve books in all, and none of the other prologues use the double formula. In fact, only three prologues refer to reception mode at all. The prologues of Book X and XII use 'horen' by itself, and the prologue of Book XII also uses 'horen lesen'. The prologue of Book II uses 'daer ic af las' [of which I read] (l. 26), but if anything this could be interpreted as a reference to a reception by hearing. Why does it appear specifically in Book XI?

In both the *Segheliin* and the *Limborch*, the formula is connected to a prayer. The author of the *Limborch* speaks directly to the audience, addressing 'diet lesen of lesen hoeren' and asking hem to pray for him. The call to say amen together, in combination with the temporal adverb 'nu' (now), seems more suited to a reception context in which multiple people are gathered to listen to a story being read out loud, but the plea is not necessarily wasted on an individual reader. The phrasing in *Segheliin* is less direct. The narrator is talking to Mary, and mentions his audience, 'hem diet sullen lesen hier achter/Ende hoeren sullen', in the third person. He asks Mary to make sure that that these people do not disgrace him. Of course, this is an indirect way of asking his audience not to slander him.

The *Segheliin* is furthermore interesting because it specifies the 'leec' or 'clerc' audience. The difference between lay and cleric literacy and reception is not something I have gone into yet in this thesis. 'Ridderromans' are secular works in Middle Dutch, which presumably makes the intended audience lay. However, the worlds of cleric and layman were not completely separated. There were clerics in each court, and many came from an aristocratic background. Being a cleric presupposes literacy – of whatever level – and this is

why many writers from the Middle Ages were clerics (in the Netherlands for instance Jacob van Maerlant and Lodewijk van Velthem). Green sees clerics as the people who would read the texts out. In that case, the 'clerc' could simply refer not to the individual reader, but to the one reading to an audience. The reference to 'clerc' could, however, also have to do with the nature of the text. The *Segheliin* shows, to quote Geert H.M. Claassen, "een overdonderende mixtuur van hagiografisch en profaan material" [an overwhelming mixture of hagiographical and secular material] (197). Though *Segheliin* is a knight, his story focuses on the finding of the relics of Christ. The text is called a 'hybrid' by An Faems and Marjolein Hogenbirk in their introduction to *Ene andre tale. Tendensen in de middelnederlandse late ridderepiek*, and a good example of the mixture of genres (20). A double audience, of lay people and of clerics, is thus quite in line with the contents of the text.

The *Lantsloot* connects another action to listening and reading, namely telling. This is quite interesting, as it gives us a glimpse of the transmission of texts. If we can interpret this as the narrator inviting the audience (reader or listener) to tell the story to others after they have heard or read it, this shows how easily stories can slip from writing into orality (and presumably back again). However, 'tellen' is also a convenient rhyme word for 'ghesellen'. This shows that we should not get too far ahead of ourselves in interpreting the phrase.

Though the double formula is not used in a prologue, it is used in the now familiar transition from one story-thread to the other. Why here is not clear. The reference to reception a few lines before only uses 'horen'. The line 'ende lesen ende tellen' almost seems shoe-horned in, maybe just for the purpose of rhyme. Still, it must make some sort of sense to the audience and the author if it is added to the text.

If we are to go by the use of 'lesen en/of horen (lesen)', *Lantsloot vander Haghedochte*, the *Roman van Limborch* and *Segheliin van Jerusalem* would have been envisioned for two modes of reception: to be read privately, and to be read publicly. It will be interesting to see how 'horen' and 'lesen' are used in the text, and if this differs in any way from texts that do not specify a reading and hearing reception.

The total amounts of 'horen' and 'lesen' can be seen in this table:

Title	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage	Verses
Lantsloot vander Haghedochte	1	0,00287%	30	0,08613%	6073 verses
Roman van Limborch	41	0,03343%	31	0,02527%	21844 verses
Segheliin van Jerusalem	7	0,01082%	49	0,07573%	11524 verses

Figure 1. 'Horen' and 'lesen in Lantsloot vander Haghedochte, *the* Roman van Limborch *and* Segheliin van Jherusalem

Although the *Roman van Limborch* shows a similar pattern to the texts discussed above – more 'lesen' than 'horen', similar percentages – the *Lantsloot* and *Segheliin* present a very different image. Contrary to what one might expect from a text using 'lesen en/of horen', they use 'horen' in a far greater quantity than 'lesen'. Moreover, *Lantsloot* uses 'lesen' only once.

As with the other texts, it is important to look at the conjugations these verbs take:

Lantsloot vander Haghedochte				
Conjugation	Lesen	Percentage	Horen	Percentage
Imperative	0	0%	7	23,33%
First person pl.	1	100%	1	3,33%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	19	63,33%
Third person sg.	0	0%	3	10%
Roman van Limborch				
Imperative	0	0%	20	64,52%
First person sg.	40	97,56%	4	12,9%
First person pl.	1	2,44%	0	0%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	5	16,13%
Third person pl.	0	0%	1	3,23%
Other	0	0%	1	3,23%
Segheliin van Jherusalem				
Imperative	0	0%	38	77,55%
First person sg.	5	71,43%	1	2,04%
Second person sg. & pl.	0	0%	5	10,20%
Third person sg.	2	28,57%	2	4,08%
Third person pl.	0	0%	1	2,04%
Other	0	0%	2	4,08%

Figure 2. Conjugations of 'horen' and 'lesen' in the Lantsloot vander Haghedochte, *the* Roman van Limborch *and* Segheliin van Jherusalem

If these texts have been written for an intermediary reception, this does not show in their use of 'horen' and 'lesen'. None of the texts uses a second person form of 'lesen'. For *Limborch* and *Segheliin* the first person singular is the biggest group in the 'lesen' category, and the imperative the most used form of 'horen'. Although there are differences with the other texts I have looked at, none of these differences indicate a different intended reception. Without the use of 'lesen en/of horen', there would be no reason to suspect an intermediary reception at all.

There are several ways to interpret these findings. It could show that the use of 'horen' and 'lesen' is so much the result of convention that it has little to do with the way the author thought his text would be received. We have already seen that 'horen' and 'lesen' do often appear in fixed formula and are used as stopgaps. Alternatively, the formula 'horen en/of (horen) lesen' might be interpreted as being used conventionally, seeing that it is used only once in *Lantsloot* and *Segheliin* and twice in the *Roman van Limborch*. This is less plausible, because it is only used thrice in the whole corpus. A third explanation is that a reception by hearing was still more dominant, even though reading by oneself was done occasionally. The prologue might make allowance for two types of readers, but seeing that most people would hear the text, the rest of 'horen' and 'lesen' were aimed at this larger listening group. It is good to remember that one interpretation of the double formula, though rejected by Green, was that 'lesen' referred to the one reading out loud. In that case, there is no contradiction between the use of the double formula and the results of the search as displayed in the table above. As said, the phrase 'leec of clerc' in *Segheliin* could possibly also be interpreted in that light. In that case, there would be no contradiction, and there would only be a reception by hearing.

Personally, I feel most for the explanation that reception by hearing was a more dominant mode of reading, and that 'lesen' by oneself was a possibility, but that texts were not specifically written for that reception – a bit like nowadays books are usually written to be read, even if it is possible that an audiobook will be made, or someone will read it out loud. True, 'horen' and 'lesen' appear in fixed formula a lot, but there is enough variation between texts to reject the idea that they were only used in texts because of convention.

Of course, I was not able to look at other indications of reception mode than 'horen' and 'lesen'. These texts would be interesting to explore in more depth, looking at verbs like 'to see', and the discourse within the texts concerning the audience, books, and, maybe, reading. It would be interesting to take into account the manuscript context as well, to see if there are any visual signs that indicate the way they might have been read.

The important question here is if these uses of the double formula indicate a development. Even if the texts seem predominantly catered to a listening audience, the double formula cannot be dismissed. If we accept its credibility, it shows us that the possibility of reading by oneself was acknowledged by authors, even if they might not have changed the way they wrote their texts. In light of a development, both *Segheliin* and the *Limborch* are late chivalric romances, from the fourteenth century (or the end of the thirteenth century in case of the *Limborch*). However, the *Lantsloot* is dated to around 1260. It is tempting to think of a

slow change in reading practice, as more and more people become literate, that eventually becomes big enough for authors to take notice of and adapt to. However, a sample of three is hardly convincing as definitive evidence. Moreover, the texts are not just separated in time, but also in space, as the *Lantsloot* and *Segheliin* originated in Flanders, while the *Limborch* originated in Brabant. All in all, it seems to me that we have reached the limits of what we can find with this corpus and methodology. A look at different texts, later texts, or using a different approach might help us put these three isolated texts in a broader context.

In the next chapter, I will start moving away from 'horen' and 'lesen'. I will focus on two romances, the *Roman van Perchevael* and *Walewein ende Keye*. Though I will look at their use of 'horen' and 'lesen', I will focus on the connection with the story-structure. Then I will finally abandon 'horen' and 'lesen' altogether and look at the role of direct speech within the romances as a first exploit of different approaches to the question of reception mode.

Chapter 6: Moving beyond ‘Horen’ and ‘Lesen’

In chapter 3 and 4 I have given a general overview of the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ in Middle Dutch chivalric romances. We have seen that different texts employ different phrases and use them differently and that there can be a marked difference between authors. Unfortunately it was not possible to discern any chronological or generic patterns in the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’. The overall picture is pretty cohesive: going on the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’, Middle Dutch chivalric romances in verse are inscribed with a listening intended audience. The relation between the use of ‘lesen’ and ‘horen’ with the structure of the text has been touched upon. A form of ‘horen’ or ‘lesen’ is often used in a transition phrase, or combined with a reference backward or forward. In chapter 5 I have examined three texts that are atypical in the sense that they employ the double formula. In this chapter, I would like to take a more in-depth look at the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ and the functions they fulfil, focusing on only two romances. Then, I will move away from the lexical evidence and briefly discuss some structural and stylistic characteristics that might be related to a reception by hearing, specifically the role of direct speech.

Until now, I have paid most attention to outliers in the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’. In this chapter however, I will examine the romances of which the use of ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’ comes closest to average: the *Perchevael* and *Walewein ende Keye*. These are both Arthurian romances, and they are both included in the *Lancelot* Compilation. We have seen, however, that texts within the *Lancelot* Compilation do differ from each other in the way they employ ‘horen’ and ‘lesen’. A comparison with other genres and texts would of course be interesting at a later stage, but this chapter is exploratory in nature.

The *Perchevael* in the *Lancelot* Compilation is an adaptation of an earlier translation of the Old French *Perceval* by Chrétien de Troyes (though one of the continuations is also used). However, in order to make it fit within the larger narrative of the *Compilatie*, it has been greatly changed. So much so, in fact, that it is more a romance about Walewein than about Perchevael. Where *Perceval* was about the making of a knight and the quest for the Grail, *Perchevael* is about the adventures of multiple knights, of which Walewein is the most important. *Walewein ende Keye*, on the other hand, is considered an original Middle Dutch composition. The story begins with Keye telling a lie about Walewein to the king, which

causes Walewein, dishonoured, to leave the court. He encounters many adventures, while Keye, who also sets out, proves his discourteous nature in encounters with better knights.

First, I would like to look at the way these two romances use 'horen' and 'lesen', paying attention to the context in which these words appear. Neither of the two romances has a prologue, seeing that they appear in the middle of the *Lancelot* Compilation, and there are no references to reception in the opening of these specific sections of the compilation.

In *Perchevael*, the first use of 'horen' comes after a little bit more than 100 lines, in line 37063:

Ende al die heren. **als gi moget horen,**
Daer ic af seide hier te voren,
37065 Die wilden soeken die aventuren,
Gereiden hen te dire uren
Ende reden met Waleweine uut.

[And all the gentlemen, as you have heard/that I told of here before/that wanted to seek the adventures/made themselves ready at that hour/and rode out with Walewein]

In chapter 4, we saw with the *Ferguut* how a form of 'horen' coupled with an reference to an earlier character was used after more than 800 lines of verse had passed since the character to which it referred was first introduced. In *Perchevael*, the story has only just begun, and not much time – not story-time, but real time – would have passed in between the moment when the knights announced their intentions and the moment they set off.[15] However, I do believe that 'horen' here is connected to a 'significant' moment as I would like to call it, i.e. a moment in the story that is important for the listener to grasp and remember in order not to get lost in the story. The conventional opening of an Arthurian romance, the thing the audience would have expected, was for someone to arrive at the court with an incentive to go on an adventure, and of a knight (or multiple) to heed the call and set out. Until Ginganbrisil arrives, this is exactly what happens: the ugly damsel arrives, tells of adventures, and knights promise to set out. But then the story begins anew in a sense, when someone arrives at the court with an adventure for Walewein and Walewein prepares to set off. This might have confused the audience, so the narrator reminds them that other knights are also setting off. The first call to adventure still stands, even if a second one announced itself.

[15] Reading the lines out loud, it took me one and a half minute from the line after Perchevael stopped speaking till the line containing 'horen'.

Let us see if the other forms of ‘horen’ are also tied to any significant moments. The next two references to ‘horen’ appear quite quickly after one another, in line 37586 and 37592.

Nu latic heren Walewein varen
37585 Ende sal u van Acgraveine tellen vort
Ende van Keyen, **als gi gehort**
Hebt hier vore, die wilden varen
Ten Doloreusen castele twaren.
Daventure seget ons al plein,
37590 Dat her Keye ende Acgravein
Ter wegescede daer si scieden,
Alse gi hier vore horet bediden,
Voren dien dach al dorenture
Sonder te vindene aventure
37595 Die te vertellen werdech es.

[Now I will leave off Sir Walewein,/And will tell you forth of Agravein/And of Keye, as you have heard/here before, that wanted to go/in the direction of Castle Doloreus./The adventure tells us all clearly/That Sir Keye and Agravein/after the crossroads where they had all separated/as you have heard tell before/rode the whole day/without finding adventure/that is worth telling.]

We see a conventional transition phrase, “nu latic van Walewein varen”, as the narrative jumps from one narrative thread to the other. Then we are reminded of two other knights, and what their goal was, with the help of ‘horen’. Just a few lines later, the verb pops up again, this time reminding us where we last saw Keye and Agravein. Why ‘horen’? There are many such transitions, and ‘horen’ is not always used. And why twice? An explanation could be that this is, in fact, the first time in the romance that such a transition happens. After the knights split up, we follow Walewein for 480 lines. With so many knights all going to different places (which are all only mentioned twice, once by the damsel, once by the knights themselves), it would make sense to repeat the information.

In the manuscript The Hague, Royal Library, 129 A 10 there is, moreover, a clear separation between lines 37588 and 37589, as the first letter of the latter line is capitalised,

indicating visually that a transition to a new episode occurs. We can imagine a reader pausing there, to read on at another time. This explains the use of 'horen' twice in a row, as they both occur in different episodes. Of course, we cannot be certain of the way the text has been read, whatever the intentions of the author and the scribe.

After the episode with Keye and Agravein (who get captured and then rescued by Perchevael), we get an adventure of Ywein and Gariët, who get captured too, and Mordret and Griflet, who also end up in captivity. At the end of the last episode, 'horen' is used:

Nu latic dese twee aldaer,
Ende sal u vort secgen hier naer
38135 Van Perchevale ende sinen gesellen,
Daer gi hier vore af horet tellen,
Die den Doloreusen casteel wan.

[Now I will leave these two there/and shall tell you forth after this/of Perchevael and his companions,/Of which you heard tell here before/Who won Castle Doloreus]

Many things happen in between Perchevael winning the castle and him and his companions going to save Ywein and Gariët. A reminder as to what had happened before is thus needed. Of course, the narrator does not only use forms of 'horen' to address his audience directly. The transition phrases we saw used the construction 'now I will leave … /and tell you of…'. This, one could say, is also a significant moment, as missing a transition from one episode to another, would make the story hard to follow. 'Horen' is however the only verb used that connotes an action of the audience themselves, instead of an action by the narrator (or reader speaking his words). When used in a transition, it feels like extra emphasis is added to the detail to which it is attached, a demand to the audience to pay extra attention to this particular information.

This seems particularly true of the next use of 'horen', in line 38448, when Ginganbrisil suddenly appears in the story again for the first time since his introduction in the opening. "Nu hort van Ginganbriselen" [now hear of Ginganbrisil], the narrator says. At that time, Walewein is under siege in a tower by townspeople, because he killed their lord. Ginganbrisil now takes a very different role, however, as he is the one who helps Walewein by getting the king of the land to talk to the townspeople. The call for attention is thus warranted, because a character is re-introduced and because his actions might be considered

confusing for someone not paying enough attention. In fact, the whole following sequence of events would make no sense if the crucial moment in which Ginganbrisil was re-introduced was missed.

I will not treat all occurrences of 'horen' in as much depth. Most of them appear near a transition, and have an analeptic function. One exception, however, is line 38970. Walewein has rescued Mordret and Griflet and defeated the tyrant who took them prisoner. Now he is rushed by all the tyrant's men, who are shouting to kill him or imprison him and hang him later. The "nu hord, wat hi heeft gedaen", [now hear, what he has done] comes right after, and is followed by an explanation of how Walewein defends himself. Eventually, Perchevael and his companions will arrive in time to help Walewein, Mordret and Griflet, but the narrator needs to offer an explanation as to how they withstand the attack until then. Moreover, it highlights Walewein's prudent behaviour: he finds an easily defendable spot and tells Mordret and Griflet to defend themselves.

A similar use of 'horen' can be seen in lines 41898 and 42260. After all his adventures, Walewein finally arrives at the location where he is to fight with Giganbrisil. The king of that land confirms that the fight should take place. However, at that moment another knight, whom Walewein promised battle to, appears and demands that it happens now. After he states his rights, the text says: "nu hort oec van Ginganbrisilen" [now hear of Ginganbrisil as well] and repeats that Ginganbrisil wants the battle to take place right now. The signal of 'horen' thus plays the same role as in the opening, as a conventional sequence of events is interrupted, in this case challenge-battle. Moreover, the solution is that Walewein will fight both of them at the same time. So after Dyandras, the other knight, enters, the audience must pay attention in order not to miss the conundrum – which promise should Walewein honour? – and the solution. Line 42260, "nu mogedi horen wat hi dede", is in the middle of the battle, right at the turning-point in the battle, when Walewein's strength increases and he gains the advantage.

So we see that 'horen' in the *Roman van Perchevael* appears at significant moments. The role of 'lesen' is slightly different. In the *Perchevael*, 'lesen', like 'horen', is often used for transitions: "nu salic hier swigen van desen/ende sal van Waleweine lesen" (l. 38229-38230). However, there are some situations where the form of 'lesen' does not seem to fulfil any function at all, except to fill a line. This is the case with 'alsict las', prevalent throughout the *Lancelot* Compilation, and 'lesewijt' (as we read). The transitions themselves are not directly addressed to the audience, instead using the first person. There is thus less of a signal-

function, although these transition phrases of course do help the listener to find their way through the text.

It is interesting that *Walewein ende Keye*, in many ways similar to the *Perchevael*, never uses 'horen' near a transition. Five imperatives are used and three variants on 'as you have heard before', but they all appear in the middle of an episode. One example of the imperative is seen in line 18624, near the beginning of the story, when Keye's evil plan is introduced. This plan, where he tells Arthur a lie about what Walewein has said, takes the place of the conventional challenge to the court from outside. The information about the plan is preceded by a "hord wat hi dochte" [hear what he did] (l. 18624). Most other instances of the imperative of 'horen' appear when something strange will be described: a visionary dream that Walewein has (l. 18670), the demand of a damsel to receive Walewein's head in a box from her lover (l. 19211), or the entrance of a castle guarded by lions (l. 21203). The last time the imperative is used is in line 22102. While the first imperative indicated the start of the adventure, this one indicates the end: after "nu hort wat Artur die coninc seide" [now hear what Arthur the king said], the king speaks words that indicate that Walewein has regained his place at the court. The three instances of 'horen' that do not take the imperative, take the form of second person, and are all references to what came before.

Walewein ende Keye is in a way a less complex story than *Perchevael*. Where *Perchevael* has a multitude of story-lines that intertwine, *Walewein ende Keye* only has two major story-threads, of which the one about Walewein is much more extensive than the other about Keye. In the transition from one story-thread to another, the listener to *Walewein ende Keye* thus needed less help, as there would not be many possibilities: if we switch from Walewein's story, we are switching to Keye's story and vice versa.

What this evidence tells us, is that in these two romances, 'horen' is not just used as a line-filler and its placement in the text is not arbitrary. It does not appear at all transitions, or after certain intervals. Instead, it is closely connected to the structure and meaning of the text – highlighting moments that need more attention. Of course, a private reader would also benefit from these moments, but the fact that 'horen' is used at these critical points makes a strong case for an intended reception by hearing. In later research, with other genres, this fact could be taken into account. 'Lesen' does not fulfil this role to the same extent, as it usually does not directly refer to the audience and it is often used at the end of a line in a formula like 'alsict las' (at least in these two romances).

With this evidence in mind, it is time to leave 'horen' and 'lesen' and move to other characteristics of the texts. We have already noted the episodic structure of the romances, a feature that Coleman connects with reading out loud (112). However, I would like to pay some attention to the role of dialogue and the dramatic potential of these texts. In *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance*, Evelyn Birge Vitz dedicates a chapter to 'voice', the voice of characters and of the narrator. She compares these romances to scripts of audio-plays and argues that "early verse narratives (…) tend to use voice, speaking characters, and dramatic dialogue in ways very close to those which characterize theatre" (142). Her focus is on the work of Chrétien de Troyes, whose romances are "in fact deeply theatrical, demonstrating an engagement in and invitation to live performance" (28). Direct speech in Middle Dutch romances has been studied too, but in a more formal way, focusing less on the role of direct speech within the narrative. Marcel Bax has looked at the conventional structure of conversation of knights before they engage in battle. In his book on style in Middle Dutch epic texts, *Prikkeling der zinnen*, Joost van Driel treats conversation from a stylistic perspective. Frank Brandsma has published a number of articles discussing text elements used to indicate transition from narratorial to character text, the speaker and changes between speakers. I will use Vitz as guidance, to see if *Walewein ende Keye* and *Perchevael* use voice in a similar 'theatrical' way as Chrétien does. With the *Perchevael* being an adaptation of one of Chrétien's works, most attention will be paid to *Walewein ende Keye*.

The first point that Vitz makes is that Chrétien uses the way characters speak as a means of characterisation and that he "gives us (…) many *kinds* of voices", meaning that "a high level of dramatic art is called for in the vocalization of Chrétien's romances" (146). Male, female, old, young, or even not human: Chrétien lets them all speak, and their way of speaking is distinct, whereas their descriptions are more or less 'stock'. *Perchevael* is indebted to Chrétien: characters like the damsel-with-the-short-sleeves or the girl who throws chess-pieces at the angry mob are mentioned by Vitz when discussing the *Perceval*. This does not change the effect that having so many kinds of voices make. *Walewein ende Keye* also offers some variation: apart from Walewein and Keye themselves, we have other knights, damsels, an old poor man, a young boy. Not all of them seem to have as much personality, however, whether by voice or by description. The poor old man that hosts Walewein seems to be only there to dispense information. He tells the facts, nothing more, nothing less. Many of the knights speak in a similar way, just before they will fight Walewein. This ties into Bax's analysis that there is a structure to the way conversations lead to fights, as the first knight usually makes free use of the imperative, and the other refuses to heed the commands. This

does not mean that there are no distinct voices at all in *Walewein ende Keye*. The best examples are in fact the two title-characters. You would probably be able to recognize their speeches even if there were no markers to indicate who speaks. Where Keye is direct and blunt, Walewein has a tendency to speak very carefully, using an abundance oaths and titles. Let us compare the words they say to the king:

Here, nu hevet gedaen
Walewein u neve grote overmodecheit:
Hi hevet sulke dinc geseit,
Dies si hen alle mogen scamen
Die inden hove sijn te samen.

[Lord, now Walewein your nephew has done great folly: he has said such things that all who are here in the court might be ashamed of it]

Keye gets right to the point. He does not waste time with flattery, or introducing the subject. This is contrasted by the king telling Walewein:

Neve, hoe es dit comen?
Ene dinc hebbic van u vernomen
Dies gi waerd harde ongewone,
Want gine plages noit te done.
Keye seget, die hier steet,
Dat gi u vermaet gereet,
(Oec sijn hier sulke dies met hem gien)
Dat u souden meer gescien
In enen jare aventuren
Dan alden genen nu ter uren
Die behoren ten hove mijn.
Eest waer of saelt logene sijn?

[Nephew, how did this happen?/I have heard something about you/that is very unusual for you/for you never ues to do it/Keye, who is standing here, says/that you are telling without doubt/(Also there are those here that go with him)/That you would see

more/adventures, in one year,/than any other/that belongs to my court./Is this true or are these lies?]

Arthur does not immediately come out and say it. He uses seven lines before getting to the point, even adding an extra guarantee of what he has heard – Keye's men, who also swear they heard Walewein say it – before uttering the accusation. Walewein then responds:

Here, her coninc,
Van algader derre dinc
Benic onsculdech, ende oec der daet
Die Keye op mi seget, die quaet.
Here, ic bekinne dat herde wale,
Dat hier menech es in die zale,
Die beter es, here, dan ic ben,
Ende hoverscher oec in sinen sen,
Ende bat volcomen tallen spele
Van ridderscepe herde vele.
Ic ben een onvolcomen man
Wies soudec mi beromen dan?

[Lord, lord King,/Of all those things/I am innocent, and also the deed/that Keye tells about me, that evil one./Sir, I do confess/That there are many here in this hall,/That is better, lord, than I am/And more courtly too/And better to succeed in games/Of knighthood./I am an imperfect man/Why would I praise myself then?]

Walewein's humility shines through many times in the story, in words, not deeds. Here, we also see it in the way he addresses the king. He uses 'lord' three times in his speech, and his opening line adds 'lord King' (my lord the king) right after 'lord'. Though Walewein is not always this careful and polite in his speech – before or during combat he usually comes to the point – it is a very distinct way of speaking that is consistently used by him. Meanwhile Keye is consistently blunt, even when he addresses someone as 'friend' (l. 19731). Moreover, his address changes immediately to "quade besceten horstront", 'evil shitty whorechild', (l. 19744) the moment the squire does not do what Keye wants.

The voices of Keye and Walewein are also an example of how distinctive voices are played off against each other (Vitz 146). They only appear together in one scene, but as their conduct is contrasted throughout the text, so are their voices. Another scene that has two distinctive voices playing off against each other, is where the son of a count asks permission of his father to be Walewein's guarantee for a fight. The boy speaks with all the rashness and conviction of youth, while the father is more careful and tries to reason with him.

Regardless of how the characters are speaking, what they are saying guides the story in important ways. Characters always make their intentions known by speaking about them, and much information is given by characters in direct speech. There is no question of Walewein going into the waste land and discovering the dragon there for himself; he has to be told by someone what is going on, and we get to listen to the old man explaining it with Walewein. We also get certain information twice: once told by the narrator, once by characters. An example is the good seneschal that saves Walewein after his fight with the dragon. We know what happened, and we know that Walewein is still alive, but we get the whole conversation between the seneschal and the king in which this is repeated. This is a reversion of the trope of the false dragonslayer, that would have been familiar to the audience (also seen in *Moriaen* and *Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet*) and as such the attention paid to the conversation makes sense. However, we see a similar repetition of information the audience already knows with Sir Brandesion, who tells Arthur about what Keye has done, and with the people who warn Walewein's host that Walewein killed his nephews and wounded his brother. Both these conversations are plot-points, but they could have also been summarized by the narrator. Direct speech, however, heightens both the dramatic and the emotional impact.

Vitz talks about something she calls 'auditory showing', in which the author uses "voices of characters – characters' individual speech and their verbal interaction – to provide exposition, and even to tell the story for him; this is precisely what playwright's do" (160). Though she is talking about Chrétien, I do think this is true of *Walewein ende Keye* as well. Like *Perchevael*, a third of the romance is, in fact, direct speech. A number which according to Van Driel is conventional for Middle Dutch chivalric romances as a whole (79). This alone shows the importance of dialogue.

Moreover, *Walewein ende Keye* at least is a romance in which speech is very important. Keye's words are what set the story in motion. The damsel that Walewein finds in a well has been put there by her lover because she said that Walewein was a better knight. When a duke boasts he is the best knight, Walewein's disagreement makes a fight inevitable. That words in chivalric romances often translate to acts is also shown in Bax's analysis. An

order by an unknown knight cannot go unanswered, and usually leads to a fight as surely as a straight attack would have done.

Of course, part of this can be explained through culture. Reputation is very important for a knight and people speaking about you in a certain way affects this. But Vitz also draws attention to dialogue as a "significant cultural force" and to "the centrality of dialogue and debate" within the genre of romance: "it allowed for a wide array of feelings, opinions, and frames of reference to be expressed, explored, juxtaposed" (155).

I mentioned Vitz' term 'auditory showing'. This is located between 'showing' and 'telling', the classic poles of narrative. With Vitz, however, I would like to emphasize that 'showing' is not to be taken literally in texts: "in narrative – as opposed to reality, and to drama – we don't actually see people do things, or even see actors pretend to carry out the actions. 'Showing' in in narrative is generally something of a metaphor" (159).

If actions are described in detail in a text, we might 'see' them in our mind, but it is still the narrator telling us about them. I would argue then that for a romance that was read out loud, 'showing' and 'telling' trade places in a way. When the texts 'shows' an action – a fight, for instance –, this would come down to telling, as the reader would read the actions out. On the other hand, 'telling', if the narrator would directly address the audience, or if a character tells another character something, would actually become showing, as the reader embodies the characters, speaking with their voices, or becoming the narrator's 'I'. In other words, a narrator can become a character if he speaks with his or her voice. This would be akin to an actor 'becoming' a character on stage. It is clear when watching a play, for instance *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that there are no real elves on the stage, but still, the spirit Puck is present because there is an actor embodying Puck, uttering the words Puck says. Because of this, for the duration of the play the audience accepts that the actor is Puck. In the same way, the audience listening to a reading can see the reader embodying Lancelot, for instance. Direct speech in the text becomes actual direct speech as the reader speaks to the audience. On the other hand, if the reader reads about a fight, it is clear that that is not really taking place. It remains a description, and even if the reader would use gestures to evoke the action.

Apart from any function dialogues might have, there are also formal characteristics that plead for a reception by hearing. Frank Brandsma has dedicated many articles to the way in which oral delivery of direct speech is facilitated by the use of inquit-formula's, mentioning of the speaker and addressee and words like 'doe' (then) and 'ende' (and). These usually follow a similar pattern in verse romance, in the words of Brandsma in his article "Medieval Equivalents of 'Quote-Unquote'": "the name of the speaker, an equivalent of the word 'said'

and the actual speech" (290). With these markers, both the reader and the audience would have an easier time reading and listening.

I cannot now dedicate much time to these aspects of *Walewein ende Keye* or *Perchevael,* though at least the first one seems to accommodate the reader by using inquit-formula's, naming the speaker and, especially, mentioning the addressee in the speech. The role of dialogue in chivalric romances as a whole and its connection to reception mode deserves to be looked at in more depth. Other stylistic and structural characteristics as well would be interesting to study in connection with reception mode. Part of this work has already been done: Van Driel discusses the potential role of the audience and the reader in his chapter about conversations as well as in a separate chapter in his book, "Tradities en receptie" for instance. In "Een 'Assonantic Revival'? Een kwantitatief diachroon onderzoek naar de assonantie in de Middelnederlandse ridderepiek, met bijzondere aandacht voor de veertiende eeuw" Mike Kestemont has raised the question if assonance or 'true' rhyme would be more or less suited for reading out loud or reading privately.

Conclusion

In the previous chapters I presented the results of the quantitative analysis. It seems clear from the results that all texts I have examined point in the direction of an intended listening *audience*. While 'horen' is more likely to be associated with an addressee, 'lesen' is more often associated with either the person of the narrator or author, or with an impersonal or general subject, such as 'wi' or 'men'. We have also seen that 'horen' and 'lesen' fulfil different functions in the text. 'Horen' is mostly used at 'problem points' in the text, where the audience will need to pay attention in order to be able to follow the story, or where audience activity (interpretation) is needed. 'Lesen' on the other hand is often used as a stopgap, or to refer to other texts or sources. The close connection of 'horen' with the structure of the text is also an argument in favour of an intended listener as opposed to an intended reader. There is a stronger connection between 'horen' and the story-structure than between story-structure and 'lesen'. As we have seen, there are several texts that do feature 'horen', but not 'lesen'. The reverse is not true. Other characteristics, such as repetitions and the amount of direct speech might also be interpreted as pointing towards an intended audience of listeners. The differences between texts – not in the general use of 'horen' and 'lesen', but in the phrasing as well as the specific situations in which they are used – show that they are not simply following convention. A 'Hörerfiktion' thus seems unlikely.

Overall, my conclusions line up with Coleman's and Green's. The aural-narrative constellation that Coleman describes in Chaucer and his contemporary authors is similar to the one I discovered in the Middle Dutch chivalric romances. Unlike in Green's *Medieval listening and reading* there is no real indication of a development in the reading mode of Middle Dutch chivalric romances in verse in the 13th and 14th centuries from which they date. The three romances that use a variant 'horen en/of lesen' date from both the 13th and 14th centuries, and are exceptions that cannot in themselves be used as confirmation of a chronological trend.

There are many possibilities for further research. First of all, the analysis of words indicating reception could be extended to other words than 'horen' and 'lesen', like 'to say' or 'to see', as Dennis Green does in his study. The relation between those words and the structure and meaning of the texts, as well as the effects the author is trying to create by using them in a specific way are also topics warranting a more in-depth analysis.

My focus on verse chivalric romance, though needed for the scale of this thesis, can of course not tell us all there is to know about reading Middle Dutch texts. A similar analysis of other genres – such as chronicles, or other informative texts – would allow us to see if there are any differences in reading mode between different types of texts, as the research of Coleman and Green suggests. The same goes for an analysis of prose texts. A good starting point here might be those romances of which we have prose adaptations, usually from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. If there would have been changes in the way texts were usually read, this might be reflected in the use of reception words. In order to see if there has been a development, more texts from later centuries should be looked at.

Moving away from quantitative analysis, research could focus on the stylistic and structural side of the texts. Frank Brandsma has done research on the helpful (for listeners) way direct speech has been represented in chivalric romance.[16] Green moreover suggests that formal characteristics like anagrams might point us in the direction of the reading mode (in this case silent reading). The risk here is however that certain characteristics are first labelled as a consequence of a certain mode of reading – like repetition for instance – and are then used as evidence for the existence of this mode of reading.

Another way of inquiry lies in the lay-out of manuscripts. This would offer an interesting perspective, as the intended audience or reader of the text does not necessarily match the intended audience or reader of the manuscript. Investigating manuscripts moves us a bit closer towards the actual reader, as opposed to the intended reader. Of course, the same care needs to be taken that characteristics do not simultaneously serve as a consequence and evidence.

Concerning the actual reader, a lot of questions still remain that might never be answered satisfactorily. Chronicles might still give us some answers, as might depictions in literary texts that have not yet been studied for this purpose. The issues here are class and gender – both often debated within Middle Dutch scholarship – but also the way of reading beyond the simple opposition between reading by sight and reading by ear. We might recall Joyce Coleman's comparison between England and France, where English reading was less a public act for the king or high nobleman, while French reading was more official and used for propaganda reasons. There is also the difference between genres, as love poetry was read differently and for a different purpose than chronicles. She also advances the hypothesis that

[16] See for instance "De presentatie van het gesproken woord in Middelnederlandse epische teksten; een steeksproefsgewijze verkenning" in *Op Avontuur* (ed. Jozef D. Jannsens) or "Doing dialogue. The Middle Dutch *Lancelot* translators and correctors at work" in *De l'oral à l'écrit: Le dialogue à travers les genres romanesque et théâtral* (ed. Corinne Denoyelle).

especially the genre of the speculum principis would be suited for "group reading and discussion" (97). Vitz moreover mentions erotic reading in both her book and the essay "Erotic Reading in the Middle Ages: Performance and Re-performance of Romance" in *Performing Medieval Narrative*. This is reading as an instrument of flirtation, where the book is treated as an example to follow for the two readers. In 'De X-factor van de Arturroman', finally, Frank Brandsma draws attention to questions in *Walewein*, hypothesizing that these might have served to get the audience engaged (and maybe start discussion?). This might also be an interesting line of inquiry.

There was also an unexpected result of my inquiries, which I was not able to pursue further, because it did not lie in the scope of my research. I am referring to the clear difference in the *Merlijn* between the parts written by Jacob van Maerlant and Lodewijk van Velthem, and especially the way in which the latter used 'alsict las'. The abundant use of 'alsict las' in the *Lancelot* Compilation might help support the hypothesis that Lodewijk van Velthem is indeed scribe B, the main scribe of the *Lancelot* Compilation. However, research is needed to see if 'alsict las' is indeed more common in parts attributed to scribe B.

There is one romance that I did not touch upon in my thesis so far, because it does not use 'horen' or 'lesen' at all. This is the *Borchgravinne van Vergi*. There might be more texts like it, since they would not have shown up in my search results. Coincidentally, this is the text that I have read out loud in front of an audience, something I will discuss in more depth in Appendix B. I have found it to be an extremely suitable text to read out loud, even though we cannot say anything about the intended reception mode using the method I used throughout this thesis. This confronts us with the limits of my methodology. I would like to take this chance to further reflect upon quantitative analysis in general, and my methodology specifically.

Reflection: An Analysis of Quantitative Analysis

Digital humanities, the systematic use of digital resources in the humanities, is a still developing, relatively young field. It is seen as a new form of research that allows scholars to ask and answer different questions. It is seen as important for the future of the humanities in general. The university of Utrecht has made Digital Humanities a special focus. In 'De computationele omslag', a report by the advice committee Digital Humanities from June 2017, the advice is that "alle bachelor opleidingen eindtermen t.a.v. digitale competenties formuleren" [all bachelor programmes formulate end terms regarding digital skills] (11), thus

demonstrating the importance the university attaches to these skills. The report distinguishes seven aspect of Digital Humanities: “digitale ontsluiting van wetenschappelijke publicaties”, “ontsluiting en gebruik van digitale bronnen”, “aanleg en ontwikkeling van eigen digitale gegevensverzamelingen”, “bewerking van en/of selectie uit bronmateriaal”, “analyse van gegevens, via computationele en/of statistische technieken”, “passende presentatie van data en resultaten, in visuele en/of digitale vorm” and “reflectie op maatschappelijke en wetenschappelijke impact van dataficering” [providing digital access to publications, providing access to and using digital sources, setting up and developing our own digital collections of data, the adaptation or selection from source material, the analysis of data, with computational and/or statistical techniques, the fitting presentation of data and results in visual and/or digital form and the reflection on societal and scholarly impact of datafication] (8). My research, as it makes use of the computer to process a large amount of texts is an example of Digital Humanities. I would like to take the opportunity in this conclusion to reflect upon my method, as during my research I have come upon some issues that I think warrant some thought, especially seeing the importance attributed to the further implementation of Digital Humanities.

For Middle Dutch literature, scholars like Mike Kestemont, Karina van Dalen-Oskam, Joris van Zundert and Frank Brandsma have been analysing texts using digital tools. One big theme is author recognition using stylometry. This type of research generally uses algorithms to determine if certain texts share the same author or if parts of a text might be from a different author. An example is Kestemont’s article ‘Auteursherkenning met rijmwoorden in de Middelnederlandse Artur- en Karelepiek. Eerherstel voor Icarus?’, in which he used stylometric tools to confirm an old hypothesis that *Moriaen*, *Karel ende Elegast* and *Lantsloot vanden Haghedochte* share the same author. Using algorithms means that the text does not need to be read by the researchers. Instead, the text is analysed on the occurrence of certain words, generating numbers that (in this case) indicate to what extent the results of one texts correspond with others.

In this sense, my research is a bit more traditional. Word research – counting the times certain words appear in relation to other words – is something that happened before the digital era as well. However, the digitisation of the texts and the search function of the *CD-Rom Middelnederlands*, as well as the possibility to create a database that makes it easier to organize and analyse the data. This all saves time, as it is not necessary to read the complete texts.

However, if the gathering of data is made relatively easier, this does not mean that there is less work processing the results. The interpretation of data might even be complicated by the sheer amount of it. This makes it harder to determine what to focus on, and to see lines within the results. It is easy to focus on very small details, or the one anomaly, which might be irrelevant in a bigger context. It is also easy to lose sight of the direct context of the narrative. Though the search function makes it easier to find the locations where a certain word appears, not reading the complete story means you might miss certain characteristics of a text that might help you interpret why it appears in that location.

Moreover, as we have seen in the previous chapters, numbers by themselves do not tell us much. The use of 'hard' numbers might fool us into thinking that the results are somehow more 'empirical', but we need to remember that the interpretation of the data is still the work of humans. I am aware that the data I have gathered could be interpreted differently. Furthermore, formulating the question and choosing the methodology is of course also the work of the scholar. Research using computers is no less the work of humans than more traditional research, like close reading. Computers are a useful tool, but – for now – they are just that: tools.

On a deeper level, there is the question how much quantitative research of this kind can actually tell us. Can it be used for all types of questions? I personally do not think so. My question was of a very general nature. How people read is something that you can – or even, have to – approach from a broader perspective, because you are trying to find a pattern, rather than something that is specific to one text. It is also something that lends itself to quantitative research based on the use of specific words, as shown by Green and Coleman. As said above, though, further research should turn back to the text and use close-reading in order to support or check the results found in this study. Backing distant reading up with close reading is, to my mind, crucial. And some questions will not be able to be answered with quantitative research.

One other issue that I struggled with, which might be specific to my study, is that the data all show a similar pattern. There were differences between texts, but none that contradict the case for an intended listening audience. Interpreting this can go two ways: either you accept it as overwhelming evidence for a mode of reading that was apparently the most common, or you reject it on the basis that it is a convention that authors adopt because earlier text had used it, and that it did – at a certain point – not refer to reality. I have chosen to interpret it in the first way, in light of Coleman and Green's research and because the texts that I did close read, show a calculated use of (especially) 'horen', that I think shows that

authors did not use the words without thought. However, to support this interpretation, it is important to look at other genres, time periods and chronicle evidence – all the options for further research that I have offered before.

Lastly, even in the gathering of data there is still a lot of work involved. Seeing that the spelling and meaning of the words I focused on could differ, I had to check every search result manually. Before setting up research of this kind, the amount of work needs to be weighed against the questions raised above.

Some Last Thoughts

In the first chapter, we saw that scholars of Middle Dutch literature have often engaged with the idea that the texts they study were meant to be read or performed aloud. However, there is always a sense of having to be careful, and a reception by hearing as the most common way of reading remains an assumption, a hypothesis. The results of my research are not ground-breaking. What they might instead provide, is a stronger basis for other scholars to stand on in their own research. I think that research such as this, systematic and engaging with many texts, is important for long-standing issues in a field, such as the mode of reading. Using different or new forms of research to engage with an old question might give us a new perspective, or help us substantiate certain earlier hypotheses. I hope that my study will make a small contribution to the history of reading and the place of reading in the study of Middle Dutch literature.

Appendix A: Editions of the Primary Texts Used

The *CD-Rom Middelnederlands* contains the complete *Corpus Middelnederlands*, a collection of 336 Middle Dutch literary texts from the period between 1250 and 1500 as well as the *Corpus Gijsseling*, the collection of all 13th century texts that were used as sources for the dictionary of Early Middle Dutch and the ten volumes of the*Middelnederlands woordenboek* (dictionary of Middle Dutch, 13th-16th century). The production of the actual CD has been discontinued (so it is not possible to get a physical copy), but the software and all the contents are freely available for download. Below you will find a list of all editions of the 'ridderromans' in my corpus that are available on the *CD-Rom*.

Title	**Author**	**Edition**	**Editor**
Aiol (Vlaams)	Anonymous	"Nieuwe Aiol-fragmenten". In: *TNTL* 2 (1882), 209-255 (213-255)	J. Verdam
Alexanders geesten	Anonymous	*Alexanders geesten, van Jacob van Maerlant.* Groningen: 1882.	Johannes Franck
Arturs doet	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven.* 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 2, 187-275.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Borchgrave van Couchi (HS1, Arras en Leiden)	Anonymous	Afschrift J. Tersteeg	J. Tersteeg
Ferguut	Anonymous	*Die riddere metten witten scilde. Oorsprong, overlevering en auteurschap van de Middelnederlandse Ferguut, gevolgd door een diplomatische editie en een*	Willem Kuiper

		diplomatisch glossarium. Amsterdam: 1989. Diss. Amsterdam, 309-419.	
Flandrijs	Anonymous	Afschrift J. Tersteeg	J. Tersteeg
Floris ende Blancefloer	Diederic van Assenede	*Diederic van Assenede: Floris ende Blancefloer. Uitgegeven met inleiding en aantekeningen.* 3e dr. Culemborg: 1970. (Klassieken uit de Nederlandse Letterkunde).	J.J. Mak
Historie van Troyen	Jacob van Maerlant	*Dit is die istory van Troyen van Jacob van Maerlant, naar het vijftiendeëeuwsche handschrift van Wessel van de Loe met al de Middelnederlandsche fragmenten.* 4 dln. Gent (dl. 1-3): 1889-1891, (dl. 4) 1892.	N. De Pauw en E. Gaillard
Karel ende Elegast	Anonymous	*Karel ende Elegast. Diplomatische uitgave van de Middelnederlandse teksten en de tekst uit de Karlmeinet-compilatie.* Dl. 1. Zwolle: 1969. (Zwolse drukken en herdrukken voor de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde te Leiden, nr. 62), 16-70.	A.M. Duinhoven
Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven.* 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 2, 151-157.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Lantsloot vander Haghedochte	Anonymous	*Lantsloot vander Haghedochte. Fragmenten van een Middelnederlandse bewerking van de "Lancelot en prose". Uitgegeven met inleiding en commentaar*. Amsterdam	W.P. Gerritsen, m.m.v. A. Berteloot, F.P. van Oostrom en P.G.J. van

		[etc.]: 1987.	Sterkenburg
Merlijn	Jacob van Maerlant, Lodewijk van Velthem	*Jacob van Maerlant: Merlijn. Naar het enig bekende Steinforter handschrift uitgegeven.* Leiden: 1880, 1-19.	J. van Vloten
Parthonopeus van Bloys	Anonymous	"Mittelniederländisches ParthonopeusFragment". In: *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 11 (1885), 170-171.	W. Seelmann
Queeste vanden Grale	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven.* 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 2, 1-76.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Roman van Cassamus (verkorte versie)	Anonymous	*Roman van Cassamus.* (Fragment). Groningen: 1869 (1-71).	E. Verwijs
Roman van den riddere metter mouwen (verkorte versie)	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven*. 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 2, 99-126.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Roman van Lancelot	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven*. 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 1, 1-247.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Roman van Limborch	Heinriic, Hein van Aken	*Roman van Heinric en Margriete van Limborch, gedicht door Heinric*. Leiden: 1846-1847. 2 dln.	L.P.C. van den Bergh
Roman van Moriaen	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag*	W.J.A. Jonckbloet

		van het gouvernement uitgegeven. 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 1, 284-316.	
Roman van Perchevael	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven.* 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 1, 247-284.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Roman van Torec	Jacob van Maerlant	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven.* 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 2, 157-183.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Roman van Walewein	Penninc en Pieter Vostaert	*De jeeste van Walewein en het schaakbord van Penninc en Pieter Vostaert. Artur-epos uit het begin van de 13e eeuw. Uitgegeven, verklaard en ingeleid.* Zwolle: 1957. 2 dln.	G.A. van Es
Segheliin van Jerusalem	Loy Latewaert	*Segheliin. Codicologische, bibliografische en tekstkritische studie en editie.* Leuven: 1983. 2 dln. Diss. Leuven.	Ingrid van de Wijer
Walewein ende Keye	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven.* 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 2, 126-151.	W.J.A. Jonckbloet
Wrake van Ragisel (verkorte versie)	Anonymous	*Roman van Lancelot, (XIIIe eeuw). Naar het (eenig-bekende) handschrift der Koninklijke Bibliotheek, op gezag*	W.J.A. Jonckbloet

		van het gouvernement uitgegeven. 's-Gravenhage: 1846-1849. dl. 2, 76-99.	

Appendix B: My own reading of *De burggravin van Vergi*

Because I wanted to experience what reading out loud could be like, I organised two reading out loud sessions (the third is in the making). I read a modern Dutch translation in rhyme of the *Borchgravinne van Vergi*, the Middle Dutch translation or adaptation from 1315 of Old French *La Chatelaine de Vergi*. The text is in verse, using rhymed couplets (AA BB etc.), like like all Middle Dutch chivalric romances in couplets. The translation to modern Dutch by Willem Wilmink retains this form. The *Borchgravinne van Vergi* does not use 'horen' or 'lesen' actually, but, it turned out to work extremely well as a work to read out loud. In this appendix, I would like to give a report on my experiences, and the conclusion I have reached on the basis of these.

I will shortly summarize the story for clarity. The *Borchgravinne van Vergi* deals with the love between the viscountess of Vergi and a knight at the court of the duke of Burgundy. However, the duchess is in love with the knight, and is furious when he rejects her. She tells her husband the duke that the knight tried to rape her. When the duke confronts the knight, the knight tells him the secret of him and the viscountess to clear his name. Though the duke promises not to tell anyone, his wife cleverly manages to pry it out of him. She then uses this information to confront the viscountess. The viscountess, believing that the knight has betrayed her – for he would never tell their secret unless he had an affair with the duchess, she believes – dies. The knight, finding her and hearing what happened from a bystander, kills himself. The duke then kills his wife, and so the story ends.

It is a short romance, only 1127 lines, and it deals with themes typical to chivalric romance: conflicts between love and loyalty to someone's lord, jealousy and betrayal, and fatal misunderstandings. Apart from the violence at the end, all conflict happens within dialogues between the characters, in which they are confronted with dilemmas and have to make a decision.

The romance was very easy to read and to follow for the audience. I feel that this has to do with the way the text was written. The short sentences help with breath control, and though a sentence can go on for many lines, verse divisions follow natural breaks in sentences, something we nowadays sometimes achieve with comma's and other forms of punctuation.

The story did not need much help from me in making clear what was going on. Even though there was not a single medievalist or literary scholar present at the first reading session, the audience could follow without any problem. Apart from the length and construction of the sentences, this is due to the structure of the story being very clear. The rhyme, which you might expect to be distracting, actually faded to the background, though it still contributed to the sound of the story.

I feel the dialogue really helped bring the story alive. The romance really felt 'theatrical' in the way it was set up, consisting of multiple scenes with – most of the time – only two characters interacting. It was always quite clear where one character's speech ended and another one's begun, though this might have been partly due to the modern punctuation that had been added to the edition I read. The characters were characterized through the dialogues (as their descriptions, if there were any, were rather bland). Dialogues were where conflicts were fought out and where most of the dramatic tension was located. Still, the story felt different from a play, because the descriptions of the narrator were necessary to follow the story. Moreover, the narrator was very present, giving advice in the prologue and commenting on the events in the story. Speaking directly to the audience, he – or she – was another character, one in dialogue with the audience.

Another thing I noticed, was that preparation and performance can really make a difference. I first read the *Borchgravinne* to a friend, in order to see if it was suitable for reading out loud. I had not read the romance for myself before that. Although that first reading went very well, and was made quite easy by the characteristics discussed above, I prepared myself thoroughly before reading it to an audience. I marked ends of sentences or thought-units whenever I felt it was necessary[17], and annotated parts with the emotions or atmosphere I wanted to convey. As I have experience in acting, I drew on this to make the reading a real performance. I gave the different characters distinctive voices and my body language automatically followed. The duchess for instance tended to lean forward, creating a sense of (false) intimacy with the character she was talking to. The duke on the other hand sat up very straight.

Though a less 'dramatic' reading was a possibility, the performance added something extra, and made the story come alive. The audience responded very well. Of course, we will probably never know how a reader in the Middle Ages would have performed the romance, but I think it shows that interpretation by a reader does indeed transform the text to some

[17] This is similar to the corrections in the *Lancelot* Compilation, which are also thought to have been made in order to facilitate reading the text out loud.

extent. It might also show that when we are silently reading a medieval romance by ourselves, we might not be seeing the full dramatic potential a text has.

Audience response does not just depend on the performer though. The two sessions that I did were very different from one another. For the session that took place on the 23rd of April in Schouwerzijl, I was on a stage, wearing a microphone, and being lighted with theatre lights so that the audience – of which I knew only a few people – was barely visible to me. The other time I was in my living room, looking at around 7 of my friends and family.

The first time the audience was very concentrated throughout the text. The death of the lovers that the *Borchgravinne* culminates in had a very solemn and sad feel to it. The audience was completely quiet, and this silence continued for some time. In fact, the four musicians who had provided flute music at the beginning and in the middle of the performance decided not to perform at the end, because they felt it would disrupt the solemn atmosphere.

When I performed the story in front of my friends and family, on the 11th of May, the melodrama became clear, and the deaths resulted in laughter rather than a melancholy feel. Of course, once someone has laughed, it was hard for me to retain a straight face as I finished. This shows the difference setting and the formality of the occasion can make, as well as the dynamic of the group.

Most importantly though, shared reading is fun. I mainly wanted to try and read before an audience because I wanted to know if it would actually be fun as a social activity, and if I could understand why someone who might be able to read themselves would be willing to participate into shared reading. Now, I do understand. I think reading romances out loud is therefore also a great way for introducing the general public to medieval literature.

I would like to continue reading out loud medieval texts. This would also tie in to further research on stylistics and structure, as I feel that certain characteristics of the text are specifically geared towards making reading out loud and listening easier. In "*The Weddynge of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell*: Performance in Middle English Popular Romance", Linda Marie Zaerr says that "actual performance by a particular voice and body for a physically present audience can provide information that validates and redirects theoretical understanding of textual variation" (193). From my own experience, I can only agree.

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Unless otherwise stated, the edition from the *CD-Rom Middelnederlands* has been used. A full list of the text-editions used can be found in Appendix A. The *CD-Rom Middelnederlands* is available for download on the website of the 'Instituut voor Nederlandse Taal', under 'Taalmaterialen': http://www.inl.nl/taalmaterialen.

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