

Towards a digital edition of the Vierde Partie of the ‘Spiegel Historiae’: Preliminary theoretical and technical considerations

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The ‘Spiegel Historiae’, the Middle Dutch adaptation of the voluminous scholarly world chronicle ‘Speculum Historiale’ (Vincentius of Beauvais, † 1264), consists of five parts (‘Partieën’). The five parts were written by Jacob van Maerlant († c. 1300, 1st part, 3rd part, beginning of 4th part), Philip van Utenbroeke († 14th c., 2nd part), and Lodewijk van Velthem († after 1327, rest of 4th part, 5th part). Only few Middle Dutch verses are transmitted of Lodewijk van Velthem’s partial translation of the Vierde Partie (4th part), but it is possible to get a glimpse at Velthem’s literary debut via a Middle High German prose translation (c. 2nd half of 14th c.). Comparison of the surviving Middle Dutch transmission with the German transmission indicates that the latter offers a good impression of the lost Middle Dutch text. Unfortunately, no edition or otherwise easily accessible digitalization of the original sources of the German transmission exists yet. Textual witnesses of the High German translation are (in chronological order): 1) fragment Gotha, Handschriftenarchiv der Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Memb. I 172 (c. 1350-75); 2) ms. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, ms. germ. quart. 2018 (ca. 1430-1452); 3) ms. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, CPV 2902 (ca. 1438). To make these valuable historical and literary sources available to research, I have developed a modular concept for an Open Access digital edition of the German transmission with accompanying materials (Wuttke 2013: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2329548>). Its main objective is to make the High German transmission of the Vierde Partie available to a wider audience encoded and marked up in TEI XML.

I have recently transcribed and partially encoded parts of the High German Vierde Partie as contained in Berlin State Library, ms. germ. 2018, which contains the better reading of the text. The presentation will focus on preliminary editorial choices for the edition of the base manuscript, especially on the choice to encode this manuscript (as well as the two other textual witnesses at a later stage of the project) as documentary digital editions, and the ensuing technical issues. A documentary digital edition steers the reception of the reader the least while it allows all kinds of future adaptations (preparation of a critical text, a reading text, collation, etc.). However, the editorial choice for a documentary digital edition has serious implications on the TEI XML-encoding and the digital presentation of special characters and abbreviations, as there are at the moment no straightforward solutions for all medieval special characters and abbreviations signs, though Unicode and the Medieval Unicode Font Initiative provide already a great range of solutions that will be considered from case to case. Also theoretical and technical issues concerning the encoding of layout features of the manuscript and marginalia will be considered and put up for discussion.