



Universiteit  
Leiden

*‘Pour aprendre romain’*

**Learning French Outside of France, 1250–1600**

**Applicants**

Supervisor Name	Discipline
Dr. Krista Murchison	Medieval English Literature
Dr. Alisa van de Haar	Early Modern French Literature

**Project description**

In the medieval and early modern periods, the French language was used far beyond the borders of present-day France. In England, French was introduced as a language of the elite with the Norman Conquest in 1066, while large parts of the Dutch-speaking Low Countries were ruled by Francophone aristocrats throughout the Middle Ages. But despite the elite origins of French in these areas, separate investigations conducted by the proposed project’s supervisors have revealed that French came to be perceived in these areas not merely as a foreign language imposed from the top down, but as an important language for personal and domestic communications within a broadly multilingual society. This project will build upon these findings to explore to what extent and for which purposes French was used in the private homes of England and the Low Countries, by looking for signs of ‘household French’ in medieval and early modern language manuals. A diachronic approach will be applied to identify changes in the use of French as an intimate language over time.

With the goal of achieving breadth without sacrificing focus, the project is centred on ten French learning manuals produced in England and the Low Countries between 1250 and 1600 [see Appendix]. While disciplinary boundaries tend to create artificial barriers between works in manuscript and those in print, and between those in English and those in Dutch, this project aims to transcend these barriers by drawing on the distinctive multilingualism of Leiden’s French and English programmes. Comparison will revolve around three axes: language (Dutch versus English), time period (medieval versus early modern), and format (manuscript versus print). Each manual will be analysed for indications of how its readers might have used French in the comfort of their own homes, discussing private topics in this language that was no longer foreign.

**Research Trainee Profile**

We are looking for students with the following profiles:

Research Trainee 1

- Knowledge of (Old and/or Middle) French, Dutch, and English
- Affinity for, and experience reading, medieval literature
- Some experience with medieval palaeography is an asset

- 3<sup>rd</sup> year Ba, Ma or ResMa

#### Research Trainee 2

- Knowledge of (Middle) French, Dutch, and English
- Affinity for, and experience reading, early modern literature
- Knowledge of early modern print culture
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year Ba, Ma or ResMa

The research trainees can be students from the English, French, or Dutch Language and Culture Ba's or from the (Res)Ma Literary Studies. They should have a distinct interest in medieval and early modern languages and literature. The trainees will study French language manuals produced in England and the Low Countries, performing a comparative analysis of medieval and early modern works, in manuscript and print. They will explore evidence that suggests that the French language was used in private spheres both more commonly, and for a longer period of time, than is typically believed in existing research.

Both trainees need a working knowledge of French, Dutch and English so each can read source texts from England and the Low Countries as well as secondary literature in all three languages. Trainee 1, focusing on medieval literature, and Trainee 2, who works on the early modern period, will work together to compare their findings regarding their two respective periods. Since Trainee 1 will mainly study medieval texts in manuscript, some experience with palaeographical knowledge will be an asset. Ideally, Trainee 2 has some knowledge of early print.

During this project, the trainees will learn to work together with a specialist from another field to conduct an interdisciplinary study. The trilingual aspect of the project will help prepare the students for the complex multilingual experiences of academic life. They will also gain more experience in working with medieval and early modern primary sources, both digitally and, where relevant, physically at Leiden University Library or the Royal Library in The Hague.

The results of the research project will be communicated through a conference presentation, an academic article, and an exhibition in collaboration with the Taalmuseum. By presenting their research at an academic conference, the trainees will gain first-hand experience of the functioning and character of the academic community and will be able to build their network. The feedback they obtain at this conference will help them improve their final article. Submitting the article to a peer-reviewed journal will provide insight into the practices of academic quality control, improving not only the trainees' writing skills, but also their ability to critically assess secondary literature for themselves. Organizing the exhibition for the Taalmuseum, finally, will bring the students into contact with the heritage sector, and will constitute an example of how academic research can be communicated to a broader audience. The supervisors will provide guidance while the trainees take their first steps in the academic world. If the students wish to apply for a PhD position during or after this project, the supervisors will support them in the application process.

#### **Collaboration**

While there has been a growing interest in the historical role of French beyond present-day French borders, most studies of the subject have been limited to one particular area. This region-based approach is understandable given the disciplinary boundaries that structure the relevant fields of study. However, preliminary comparisons between the roles of French in the Low Countries and in England have revealed significant similarities between these two linguistic situations and have pointed to the benefit of more cross-disciplinary collaboration.

This project therefore seeks to productively transcend traditional linguistic and temporal boundaries through the supervision of staff with different, but complimentary, areas of expertise. Alisa van de Haar will lend the project experience with publishing on the development of French education in the late medieval and

Early modern Low Countries, including a recent monograph on the topic. The other geographic and temporal axes of the project will be supported by Krista Murchison's experience researching and publishing on the development of French in medieval England, including a Europeana-funded study on the topic.

Aside from this interdisciplinary approach, the co-supervisors also bring to the project experience with supervision and project management. The exhibit component of the project, which has been planned in development with the Taalmuseum, will be supported by Murchison's experience working in a historical museum and by Van de Haar's experience with exhibit design and management in her former position as curator of the University of Groningen's Special Collections. Given the project's focus on language education, it will also benefit from a supervisory team knowledgeable of the modern and pre-modern languages used in the project, including Middle Dutch, Middle English, Old French, Anglo-Norman and Latin. These, and other complimentary areas of expertise (including in book history), will support the project's unique interdisciplinary approach to multilingual language education in the pre-modern world.

## **Deliverables**

The project findings will be shared in both academic and popular venues in order to advance discussions within the fields of language and literary studies and in order to give the trainees experience with various forms of research communication. In keeping with traditional scholarly output, the project results will be shared in an **academic conference presentation**, to be delivered at Leeds IMC—the largest scholarly meeting for medievalists this side of the Atlantic. The research trainees will receive support and training in preparation for this presentation from the project supervisors. Feedback from this presentation and from supervisors will support students in writing a **collaborative academic article** for the peer-reviewed journal *Queeste*.

The results of the investigation will also be shared with the broader public through an **exhibit**. Planning for this exhibit is already underway; the Taalmuseum has expressed an interest in this collaboration, with an exhibit provisionally planned for early autumn 2020. This exhibit will feature photographs and excerpts of the language guides under exploration aimed at immersing the viewer in the diverse and multivalent pre-modern contexts in which French was learned as a second language.

## **Planning**

*Phase 1: February-March 2020. Starting up and selecting.*

- Reading and assessing relevant secondary literature.
- Selection of primary sources to be analysed in the conference paper and the article.
- Selection of primary sources for the exhibition.
- If the students require further training in a specific skill such as palaeography or Middle French, they will be given the opportunity to work on this.

*Phase 2: April-May 2020. Analysis and comparison.*

- Analysis of the chosen primary sources.
- Comparison of the findings of the two research trainees.

*Phase 3: June-August 2020. Producing deliverables.*

- The trainees collaborate with the Taalmuseum to organize the exhibition.
- Preparing and giving the conference presentation. The trainees present the first version of the article and use the received feedback to improve the final version of the text.
- Writing, revising, and submitting the article.

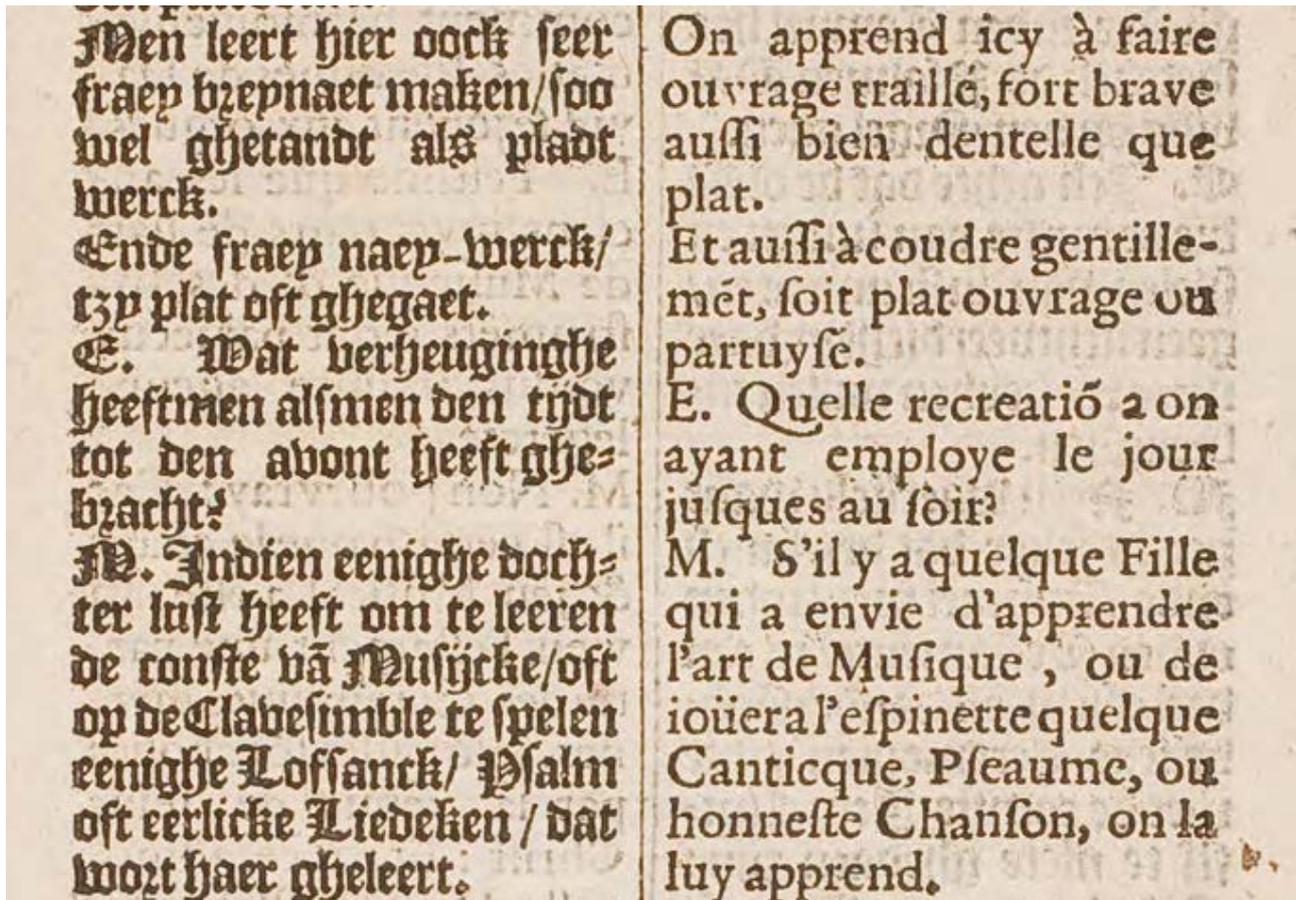
## **Student Application**

Students can apply by sending a CV and motivation letter in English or French to both supervisors:

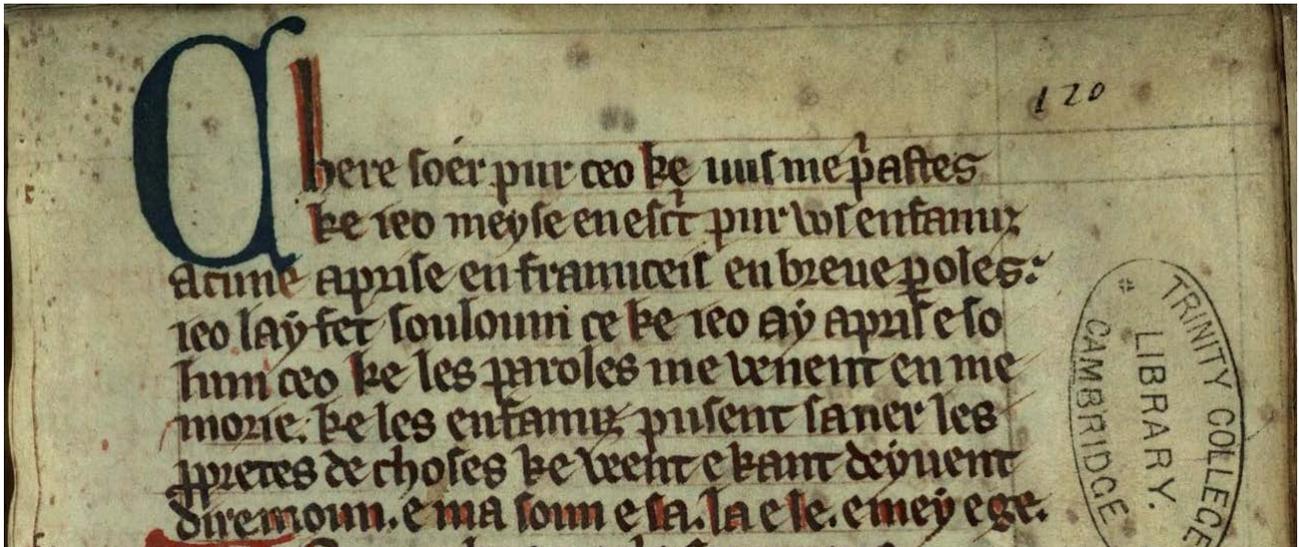
Dr. Krista Murchison: [k.a.murchison@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:k.a.murchison@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Dr. Alisa van de Haar: [a.d.m.van.de.haar@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:a.d.m.van.de.haar@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

## Appendix

Household and musical French in Magdalena Valéry's *La montaigne des pucelles*, Leiden 1599, sig. B4r.*Dutch-French language manuals in chronological order*

- *Le livre des mestiers*, Bruges, original c. 1349 lost, transcript second half of the fourteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Colbert 1593; modern edition by Jan Gessler, 1931.
- *Gesprächsbuchlein romanisch & flämisch*, original c. 1360-1370 lost, transcript c. 1420. Historischen Archiv Köln; modern edition by Jan Gessler, 1931.
- Noël de Berlaimont, *Vocabulare van nieus ge-ordineert. Vocabulaire de nouveau donne et de rechief recorrige*, Antwerp: printed by Jacob van Liesveldt, 1527. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4o L g sept 31; USTC 78045.
- Gabriel Meurier, *La guirlande des jeunes filles contenat [sic] une singularité de menus propos quotidiens par le moyen, des-quels elles pourront facilement apprendre François & Flamen*, Antwerp: printed by Jan van Waesberghe, 1564. St Gallen, Kantonsbibliothek Vadiana ; USTC 78237.
- Magdalena Valery, *La montaigne des pvcelles, en nevf dialogves, svr les noms des neuf Muses, contenant diverses belles & vertueuses Doctrines, à l'instruction de la jeunesse. Den Maeghden-Bergh, in negen t'samen-spraken, op de namen vande neghen Musen, inhoudende verscheyd*, Leiden: printed by Jan Paedts Jacobsz, 1599. Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, P. 2138 Helmst 8°; USTC 80745.



Walter de Bibbesworth's thirteenth-century *Tretiz*, Trinity College Cambridge MS O.2.21, fol. 120r

*English-French language manuals in chronological order*

- Walter de Bibbesworth *Le tretiz*, (Dean no. 285), original c. 1250, manuscripts ranging for 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> c, including London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian MS A VI; modern edition by William Rothwell, 1990.
- *Maniere de language* (Dean no. 281), original late 14<sup>th</sup> c, manuscripts include Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.12.23 (15<sup>th</sup> century); modern edition by M. Kristol, 1995.
- Untitled Anglo-Norman dialogues (Dean no. 282), Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.6.17 (late 15<sup>th</sup> c); modern edition by Östen Södergård, 1953.
- Giles Duwes, *An Introductorie for to learne to rede, to prononce, and to speke French trewly, compyled for the right high excellent and most vertuous Lady Mary of Englande*, 1534.
- *A plaine pathway to the French tongue: Very profitable for Marchants, and also all other, which desire this same*, London, 1575; STC 11376; USTC 78310.