A short introduction to Middle Dutch

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Middle Dutch is the term used for the language varieties spoken between approximately 1150 and 1500 in the territory covered nowadays by the Netherlands and Flanders, the part of modern Belgium, where Flemish — the southern variety of the Dutch spoken in the Netherlands — is spoken. At that time there was no standard variety of Dutch, 'Middle Dutch' does not, therefore, refer to one specific language: it is a collective term used to designate several dialects spoken over several centuries. This implies a huge variability in the grammatical structure, the pronunciation and the spelling of Middle Dutch. Middle Dutch thus consisted mainly of *spoken* varieties, but the surviving texts show that, during the Middle Ages, it was also increasingly used as a written language.

Contemporaries usually called their own language *Dietsch* or *Duutsch* — as in the beginning of *Van den vos Reynaerde* (4-5) — which means 'the language of the people' (*lingua theodisca*) as opposed to Latin or French, which were the dominant languages of writing, administration, the nobility, science, and the church at that time. While we have only a few text fragments in Old Dutch, a large number of Middle Dutch texts have survived. *Van den Vos Reynaerde* is an early example of a literary text in Dutch.

1   Middle Dutch diversity

We can distinguish five large dialect groups within Middel Dutch: Flemish (including Zealandic), sometimes subdivided into West and East Flemish, was spoken in the modern region of West and East Flanders (Ghent, Bruges, Courtray); Brabantian was the language of the area covered by the modern Dutch province of North Brabant and the Belgian provinces of Brabant and Antwerp; Hollandic was mainly used in the present day provinces of North and South Holland and parts of Utrecht, while the people in Limburg (now a part of the Netherlands and Belgium) communicated in the Limburgish dialect. The final dialect group — East Middle Dutch — was spoken in the area of the modern provinces of Gelderland, Overijssel, Drenthe and parts of Groningen. The last two of the Middle Dutch dialects mentioned above, Limburgish and East Middle Dutch, show features, respectively, of Middle High German and Middle Low German, since these two areas border directly onto the German language area. While East Middle Dutch consists of Low Saxon dialects, the other Middle Dutch dialect groups belong to the Franconian dialects. Finally, there is the present-day province of Friesland (cf. the white area in fig. 1) where, in the Middle Ages, Old Frisian dialects were spoken; Frisian is viewed as a separate language.

Fig. 1: The Middle Dutch dialectal groups

Identifying dialect features in a particular text starts in those texts whose place and time of origin are known. Local administrative and judicial documents are particularly suitable for this, as they are mostly written in the local dialect and because they are dated. Unfortunately not all surviving texts have a clearly identifiable place of origin. A single manuscript can often show features of several dialects. One reason for this can be that the scribe may speak a different dialect and so allows features of his own dialect to slip in as it were, or even that he is making a conscious adaptation of the text into his own dialect. A further possibility is that words are borrowed from another dialect for the sake of preserving a rhyme. Or it can simply be the influence of Flemish-Brabantian tradition — in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the cultural and literary centre of gravity lay in Flanders. Sometimes marked dialect features are consciously avoided, for example if the text is directed at a wider audience.

The date of origin of texts can also often be difficult to establish. Literary texts in particular, which are very often copies of copies of copies, show archaic characteristics alongside newer features from the same dialect; dialects too, of course, change with the passage of time.

Some features can spread to another dialect region, and there displace other characteristics which in turn sometimes even disappear completely. The responsibility for these changes is shared between increasing mobility and advancing urbanisation. As travelling became easier and towns grew, there was increasing contact with other dialects or even foreign languages. The need for a unified language arose. The invention of printing (ca. 1450) also led to an avoidance of dialect idiosyncrasies, because the texts were now addressed to a wider public. That is one of the first steps in the direction towards the development of a standard language.

1.1   Differences between dialects

Dialects can differ in several respects. On the lexical level, for example, one dialect may have a different word for the same concept, or the same word may have a different meaning in another dialect. Sometimes the texts themselves include explicit comments on differences in word usage, as Maerlant's comment (in *Der Naturen Bloeme*, around 1270) on the various names for a hedgehog shows: *Een eghel heet ment in Dietscher tale, in Vlaemsche een heertse, dat wetic wale* (= 'In (northern) Dutch it is called an *eghel*, but a *heertse* in Flemish, that I know well') from Jacob van Maerlant's *Der Naturen Bloeme* (around 1270).

On the morphological level — i.e. inflection and word formation — variations can arise in the use of different affixes. For example, for female designations the suffixes *-inne* and *-es* (*gravinne*, *abdesse* = 'countess', 'abbess') are generally used, whereas *-egge* and *-nede* (*spinnegge*, *vriendnede* = 'spinster', 'friend') are a distinctly Flemish feature. In Brabantian we can also find the suffix *-erse* (*burgersche*, *hooierse* = 'citizen', 'haymaker'). The suffix *-ster* (*melcster* = 'milkmaid') only arises north of the great rivers Rhine and Meuse. Differences at the syntactic level — i.e. word order — have, unfortunately, hardly been investigated.

The greatest differences between dialects are of course to be found in the areas of spelling and pronunciation, at the phonological level. For example, a typical feature of Flemish is the unexpected presence or absence of the letter *h-* at the start of words beginning with a vowel. We frequently find this phenomenon in the Flemish manuscript *Van den vos Reynaerde* [*VdvR*], a poem also of Flemish origin, which is edited here: *hute* (1241), *haex* (701) for *ute*, *aex* (= 'out', 'axe, hatchet') and *ondert* (232), *oech* (509) for *hondert*, *hooch* (= 'hundred', 'high'). Important features of the Hollandic dialect are the relics from Old Dutch shown in the combination *-ft-* for *-cht-* (*gecoft*, *after* instead of *gekocht*, *achter* = 'bought', 'behind'), and the diminutive forms using *–gen* or *-gien* (*huysgen* = 'little house'). Limburgish and eastern dialects still preserve the combination *old* instead of *oud* (*wolde*, *solde* instead of *woude*, *soude* = 'would', 'should'), and in Brabantian texts there is often an *o* instead of *u* (*dos*, *vrocht* = 'thus', 'fruit').[1]

2   Spelling and pronunciation

The spelling of Middle Dutch texts differs greatly from Modern Dutch spelling. Since there was no spelling tradition, writers had to rely on the Latin spelling system and suit it to their own needs. Middle Dutch spelling is usually characterized as more phonetic and less systematic, compared to the Modern Dutch system.

The spelling is more phonetic because it is largely guided by the sound, i.e. the pronunciation. In Middle Dutch texts we find forms like *hant, lant, daet, hi vint* (= 'hand', 'land', 'deed', 'he finds'), all spelled with a *-t* because that is the sound one hears. In contrast, Modern Dutch spells the nouns with a *-d (hand, land, daad)* because of a principle of uniformity: singular and plural forms are spelled the same — *hand-handen, land-landen, daad-daden* — despite the difference in pronunciation.[2] Similarly, modern verb forms like *hij vindt* keep the *-d* of the verbal stem although one does not hear it. The modern spelling uses a principle of analogy in these cases: the verbal stem should remain identifiable in the different forms of a verb and the regular ending *-t* is added for the 3rd person singular (*komen/hij kom-t, vinden/hij vind-t* = 'to come/he comes, to find/he finds'). Middle Dutch, however, does not care for these analogical relations, its speakers write a *-t* whenever they hear it (*hi vint*).

Apart from these deviations with respect to modern Dutch there are also of course a great many variants within Middle Dutch itself. In the various writing centres (like scriptoria and chancelleries) the spelling conventions employed could often be quite divergent, and would also continue to change over time. An example of this can be seen in the spelling of long vowels. In very early texts these were still represented by a single letter, which can lead to confusion with the short vowels. In slightly later texts we often find *-e-* used as a sign of length, or sometimes an *-i-* : *jaer* (115) or *jair* (= 'year'). The modern habit of doubling the vowel (*jaar*) arises in the fifteenth century.

Because of the absence of a standard language, dialect differences are particularly liable to show up in texts. Even within a single text inconsistencies are common. This may not be so surprising in literary texts, since, after all, the surviving texts are mostly copies carried out in turn by a series of scribes. However, in official texts too, even though written by a single writer, we can often find different forms for the same word.

Punctuation, scarce as it is in Middle Dutch manuscripts, does not correspond with modern practice. For example, a full stop may be added at the end of a line of verse, even if the sentence runs on to the next line. If rhyming texts are written continuously (*scriptura continua*, fairly uncommon anyway), the lines of verse are separated from each other by full stops. Full stops are also used to identify Roman numerals and to distinguish them from the ordinary letters, as in *Ende gaffer mede .XL. slaghe* (1676 = 'and gave (Reynaert) forty lashes with it').[3]

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[1]   We cannot go into any details here; for a more extensive survey of dialect features see, for example, Van der Wal & Van Bree (1992: chapter 5).

[2]   Dutch (like German, but unlike English) has final devoicing: voiced occlusives like /d/ are pronounced unvoiced (as [t]) at the end of a word or syllable.

[3]   However, in this edition of *Van den vos Reynaerde* the full stops marking Roman numerals are not retained.

In Middle Dutch we may find a number of features which still occur in modern Dutch but which today are only accepted in the spoken language and not in writing. The most obvious of these are phenomena known as assimilation, reduction and clisis.[4]

Assimilation — The term assimilation means 'making the same', i.e. the adaptation of a sound to its surroundings. This occurs mainly at word boundaries or between parts of words. For example, the word *ontbieden* (= 'to summon') is often pronounced as [ombi:den]. In this case, the /n/ assimilates to the /b/ by being pronounced with both lips and therefore sounds like an /m/. However, despite this pronunciation, the spelling of *ontbieden* never changes in modern Dutch. Yet, in Middle Dutch we can often also find this word written as *ombiden* or *ombieden* (472).

The mutual influence of *Auslaut* (final sound) and *Anlaut* (initial sound) in spelling can also be seen to affect consecutive words, i.e. at word boundaries. For example: *op die* (= 'on the') is often spelled as *optie*, where the voiced /d/ has lost its voicing under the influence of the unvoiced /p/.

This example also shows us that word division in Middle Dutch texts is not as fixed as in modern Dutch. Unstressed particles especially (i.e. words which primarily have a grammatical meaning, like articles, prepositions, pronouns etc.) are often written attached to the start of the following word (as in *biderschepenen wille* = 'with agreement of the jurors', *teseggene*: 'to say').

Clisis — A phenomenon which is closely related to this is known as clisis. Here, too, we are concerned with two or more words being written together, but now this involves the loss of sounds. Weakly stressed words — mostly particles — attach themselves to a strongly stressed word at the expense of part of their sound. Depending on whether the inclination (process of clisis) appears at the start or end of the word this is called proclisis and enclisis respectively. Examples of proclisis are: *darme man* < die arme man (= 'the poor man') or, from *VdvR*, *teerst dat* < te eerst dat (1431, = 'as soon as'). Examples of enclisis are: *moetti* < moet ghi (1444, = 'you must'); *sechdi* < seecht ghi (135, = 'do you say'); *dedine* < dede hi hem (144, = 'he made him')

Such enclitic forms occur very frequently in Middle Dutch texts and can sometimes be ambiguous. For example, the form *hoordi* can be from *hoort ghi* (= 'do you hear'), *hoordet ghi* ('did you hear'), *hoorde hi* (= 'did he hear'), or in exceptional cases even from *hore di* ('= (I) hear you'). The correct interpretation can only be deduced from the context.

Reduction — Another feature which we find in Middle Dutch spelling is known as reduction, which manifests itself primarily in unstressed syllables, and is closely related to assimilation. Within this term we include the disappearance of sounds and the shortening of vowels or their weakening to an unstressed /e/ - the so-called schwa [ə].

Depending from where the sound disappears, we refer to it as procope (loss at the start of the word: as in *ebben* instead of *hebben*, = 'to have'), syncope (loss in the middle of a word, as in *hooft* instead of *hovet*, = 'head'), or apocope (loss at the end of a word, as in *nach* and *vrou* instead of *nacht* (= 'night') and *vrouwe* (= 'woman')). Apocope of a final schwa (as in *vrou* < vrouwe and *ic heb* < ic hebbe = 'I have') is particularly common in Middle Dutch, and it is closely connected to the reduction of case endings and the accompanying loss of inflection.

Epenthesis — Not only do sounds disappear, sometimes an extra one creeps in. This phenomenon is called epenthesis and we find it, for example, in a word like *arm* (= 'poor') which is often pronounced as *arem*. Unlike modern Dutch where a clearly heard epenthetic sjwa [arəm] is regarded as sloppy, in Middle Dutch it is also reflected in the spelling; see, for instance, in *VdvR*, *arem* (38, 101) and *waremhede* (537, = 'warmth').

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[4]   In the Glossary, cases of assimilation, reduction and clisis are marked with (ass.), (red.) of (clis.) respectively.

No matter how varied Middle Dutch spelling might be, it is still an important means of helping us to understand the pronunciation. In general a difference in the spelling reflects a difference in the sound. Alongside this, the rhymes can sometimes be of great value in the search for the correct phonological realisation of the characters. We should bear in mind, though, that any reconstruction of the pronunciation is always speculative. Our pronunciation of Middle Dutch is certainly not 'correct' (i.e. authentic): it is very close to the current normal Dutch pronunciation and it is heavily influenced by it. To give one example: we know for certain that Middle Dutch *-ij-* was not yet a diphthong but was still a long monophthong. That is why we always give the same pronunciation to Middle Dutch *-ij-* as in *pijn*, and *-ie-* as in *sien*, viz. a long [i:]. Yet these two sounds never rhyme with each other in Middle Dutch, nor do they generally alternate in individual words. This suggests that *-ie-* must actually have represented a different pronunciation from that given by *-ij-*. There must have been a difference which we can no longer grasp.[5]

3 Grammatical structures

One of the most striking differences between Middle Dutch and Modern Dutch is the fact that Middle Dutch (like modern German) still exhibits a fully-fledged case system. Nouns, adjectives, articles, pronouns, and numerals are inflected according to their function in the sentence, in other words, they change their form to conform to the 'case' in which they are being used. This morphologically coded case system eventually got lost. A residue is found in modern Dutch idiomatic expressions like *de heer des huizes* [genitive] (= 'landlord; boss') but by and large it had disappeared in the seventeenth century.

Just like the other members of the Germanic language family, Dutch has the accent on the first main syllable. The final syllables which become weakened as a consequence of this are often reduced, or lost entirely. This can also be observed in Middle Dutch. The loss of case endings during the three centuries covered by Middle Dutch meant that the function of the constituents had to be rendered in a different way. A more fixed word order and the use of prepositions slowly took over this task. For example, a construction with the preposition *van* replaced the earlier genitive ending (as in *des vaders huis > het huis van de vader* = 'the father's house, the house of the father'). Of course the change took place gradually, and the two alternatives were used alongside each other for a long time.

3.1 Morphology

3.1.1 Declension — The case system of Middle Dutch comprises four cases. The first case (nominative) can be used for the subject, the nominal part of the predicate or an addressed person. The second case (genitive) expresses a possessive relationship. The function as indirect object is indicated by a form in the third case (dative), whereas a direct object takes the fourth case (accusative). Verbs, adjectives and prepositions are often bound to a particular case. So, for example, the verb *pleghen* governs a noun in the genitive, as in *pleghen der eeren* (35, = 'to practise honour — to act honourably'), as does the adjective *werdich* (as in *werdich enechs prijs* = 'worthy of some praise'). The dative is used, for example, with the verb *slachten*, as, for example, in *slachten si den raven* (18, = 'they resemble the raven') or with the preposition *met* (as in *met luder sprake* = 'with a loud voice').

The four cases are morphologically coded, i.e. they are marked by case endings on nouns and adjectives. Middle Dutch nouns can be subdivided into two large groups: the strong nouns and the weak nouns. Nouns ending in *-e* in the nominative singular usually belong to the group with the weak inflection; a consonantal ending in this case indicates strong inflection for the word (but there are exceptions to this general rule). Just like the nouns, personal names are also inflected: male names can follow the strong or the weak inflection, whereas female names

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[5] It is, of course, beyond the scope of this introduction to give a survey of the different spelling variations and the corresponding sound values. For more details see Van Loey (1976) (in Dutch). Van Kerckvoorde (1993) provides an introduction to the phonetic system of Middle Dutch.

usually change form in line with the weak inflection. Compare for instance *Reynaert sprac* (2650, = 'R. spoke'; nominative) with *Also was Reynaerde ghesciet* (54, = 'this had happened to R.'; dative). Furthermore, the inflection is determined by the gender of the noun, where we need to distinguish between masculine, feminine and neuter words. The first two have merged in modern Dutch to form a single group, the so-called '*de*-words'. Dictionaries of Middle Dutch often mention two genders for a noun, which usually reflects regional and/or temporal variation. Finally, the number of the noun is important in determining the correct inflectional form. We distinguish between singular and plural.

To illustrate the (early) Middle Dutch case system, we present the declension patterns of the nouns *gast* (= 'guest'), *mensche* (= 'human'), *hof* (= 'court'), *herte* (= 'heart'), *daet* (= 'deed'), and *siele* (= 'soul'), listed here side by side with the definite article — which emerged from the demonstrative pronoun — and the adjective *goet* (= 'good').

Masculine		strong	weak
Sg. Nom.	die goede	gast	mensche
Gen.	des goets/goeden	gast(e)s	menschen
Dat.	dien goeden	gaste	mensche
Acc.	dien goeden	gast	mensche
Pl. Nom.	die goede	gaste	menschen
Gen.	der goeder	gaste	menschen
Dat.	dien goeden	gasten	menschen
Acc.	die goede	gaste	menschen
Neuter		**strong**	**weak**
Sg. Nom.	dat goede	hof	herte
Gen.	des goets/goeden	hoves	herten
Dat.	dien goeden	hove	herte
Acc.	dat goede	hof	herte
Pl. Nom.	die goede	hove	herten
Gen.	der goeder	hove	herten
Dat.	dien goeden	hoven	herten
Acc.	die goede	hove	herten
Feminine		**strong**	**weak**
Sg. Nom.	die goede	daet	siele
Gen.	der goeter	daet / dade	siele(n)
Dat.	der goeder	daet / dade	siele(n)
Acc.	die goede	daet	siele
Pl. Nom.	die goede	dade	sielen
Gen.	der goeder	dade	sielen
Dat.	dien goeden	daden	sielen
Acc.	die goede	dade	sielen

Table 1: Declension patterns in Middle Dutch[6]

The case, gender and number of the article, demonstrative pronoun and adjective depend on the noun with which they form a syntactic constituent. In some circumstances, however, the adjective is uninflected. Just as in modern Dutch, the adjective used predicatively is used in its basic form, a in *die ridder es goet* (= 'the knight is good'), as opposed to its attributive use in *die goede ridder* ('the good knight'). In the typical Middle Dutch feature of post-positioning, where the adjective immediately follows the noun, it does not change form, as in *die ridder goet* (= 'the knight good'), *die vrouwe vroet* (= 'the woman wise') . Adjectives used independently are treated either as nouns or as adjectives, and can accordingly also be inflected in either way.

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6   Cf. Van der Wal & Van Bree (1992: 135).

The infinitive form of the verb too gets the dative *-e* ending if it is preceded by the particle *te*, as in *te sprekene* (= 'to speak'), *te segghene* (= 'to say').

Personal pronouns in modern Dutch show different forms for the use as subject and as object (like *wij* vs. *ons* (= 'we' vs. 'us'). In Middle Dutch they still have a full inflectional paradigm.

	1st person		2nd person	
	sg.	**pl.**	**sg.**	**pl.**
Nom.	ic	wi	du	ghi
Gen.	mijns	onser	dijn	uwer, uw(es)
Dat.	mi	ons	di	u
Acc.	mi	ons	di	u

	3rd person			
	masc. sg.	**fem. sg.**	**neut. sg.**	**pl.**
Nom.	hi, *-i*	si, *-se*	het, *-(e)t*	si, *-se*
Gen.	sijns, *-(e)s*	haer, *-ere, -er, -re*	*-(e)s*	haer, *-ere, -er, -re*
Dat.	hem, *-em, -en*	haer, *-ere, -er, -re*	hem, *-em*	hem, hen, *-en*
Acc.	hem, *-ene, -ne, -en*	haer, *-se*	het, *-(e)t*	hem, hen, *-se*

Table 2: Personal pronouns in Middle Dutch[7]

In the second person the plural forms of the personal pronoun can also be used for singular referents. The use of the plural form then signals politeness. The pronoun *ghi* (= 'you'), for example, can indicate the plural as well as the singular. However, for the singular there is also the pronoun *du* (= 'thou'), which is only used occasionally and even then is often not used consistently, as, for example, in *Du oude geck, God moet bederven u lijf* (= 'Thou old fool, God rot your body'). This pronoun is mostly a sign of intimacy — cf. *Reynaert, wat haetstu* (562, = 'R., what did you eat?') — or a lower social level for the person addressed. It also often occurs in situations of contempt or anger, as in *Vermalendijt , Lamfroyt, moet dijn herte sijn! Du best dulre dan een zwijn* (916-18, = Damned, L., you deserve to be! You have less sense than a pig').

Enclisis is very common with personal pronouns. The third person forms in particular have several enclitic variants (printed in italics in table 2), which are used very frequently; see, for example, *doe dedine [< deed hi hem] sitten gaen* (144, = 'then he made him sit').

Middle Dutch lacks special forms for the reflexive pronoun, the personal pronouns are used to express reflexivity, as in *Brune liet hem verdoren* (677, = 'Bruun allowed himself to be fooled'). The reflexive third person pronoun *sich/sick* is first found in the eastern dialects in the fourteenth century, from which it later spread to other dialects.

3.1.2 Plural formation — The most common plural endings in Middle Dutch are: *-e* for nouns which use the strong declension, *-n* for those with the weak declension, and *-s* for many words ending in *-el, -en* and *-er* (as in *duvels, tekens, cloosters* = 'devils', 'signs', 'monasteries'), for loan words (*pelgrims*) and for some monosyllables (as in *wijfs, mans* = 'women, men'). A limited number of words can form their plural with *-er* (as in *kint - kinder, ei — eier* = 'children', 'eggs'). There is also the possibility of the singular and plural forms being identical for some neuter monosyllabic words with a long stem syllable, for example when a word with either a long vowel or a short vowel is followed by two consonants (as in *dat been — die been, dat dinc — die dinc* = 'leg(s)', thing(s)'). However, these words are also found with a plural ending *-e*.

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7   Cf. Van der Wal & Van Bree (1992: 140).

A separate category is formed by the cumulative plurals which we can find in nouns with a 'normal' -er plural. In addition to -er, there is another common plural morpheme attached to these words (as in kint — kind-er / kind-er-e / kind-er-en / kind-er-s — the same phenomenon as in English 'children'). Cumulative plurals are sometimes the result of a morphological reinterpretation, when a plural form is interpreted as a singular. This is most likely to happen with words which generally refer to plurals, for example, scoe (= 'shoe' sg.) — scoen (pl.) > scoen (sg.) — scoene / scoenen / scoens (pl.). This phenomenon can also occur in the other direction, if a word in the singular is interpreted as a plural form and loses its ending. This occurs mostly with words ending in -en in the singular, as in raven ('raven' sg.] — ravens (pl.) > raaf (sg.) — raven (pl.).

3.1.3 Conjugation — There are, just as in Modern Dutch, three different types of verbs in Middle Dutch: strong, weak, and irregular verbs. The strong verbs change the vowel in the verb stem to form their preterite and past participle, as the forms in the Glossary clearly show. This phenomenon — indicated by the German term *Ablaut* — follows a fixed pattern. This means that we can divide the strong verbs into seven classes.

	Infinitive	Preterite sgl.	Preterite pl.	Past participle
1.	*biten* (= 'to bite')	beet	beten	gebeten
2a.	*bedriegen* (= 'to betray')	bedroog	bedrogen	bedrogen
2b.	*crupen* (= 'to crawl')	croop	cropen	gecropen
3a.	*vinden* (= 'to find')	vant	vonden	gevonden
3b.	*werpen* (= 'to throw')	warp	worpen	geworpen
4.	*nemen* (= 'to take')	nam	namen	genomen
5.	*geven* (= 'to give)	gaf	gaven	gegeven
6.	*varen* (= 'to go')	voer	voeren	gevaren
7.	*laten* (= 'to let')	liet	lieten	gelaten

Table 3: Division of strong verbs into seven classes

Weak verbs form the past participle and the preterite by adding a dental suffix to the verbal stem, -d(e) or -t(e). The third group, the irregular verbs, comprises verbs which change the vowel in the present tense (*ic can - wi connen* ='I can, we can; I am/we are able'), or weak verbs with a divergent preterite (*denken — dacht; brengen — bracht* = 'to think — thought; to bring — brought').

In the following table we present the paradigm for the indicative forms of a weak verb (*keren* = 'to turn') and a strong verb (*nemen* = 'to take'). The infinitive form is in both cases marked by the ending -en, the past participles are formed by adding a prefix *ghe-* and a suffix: -t for the weak verbs, -en for the strong verbs: *ghekeert* and *ghenomen*. The forms of the present participle are *kerende* and *nemende*. There are different forms for the singular and the plural imperative: sg. *keer/kere* and *neem/neme*, pl. *keert/keret* and *neemt/nemet*.

	Weak verb: *keren*		Strong verb: *nemen*	
	Present	Preterite	Present	Preterite
1sg	ic kere	ic keerde	ic neme	ic nam
2sg	du keers	du keerdes	du neems	du naems
3sg	hi keert	hi keerde	hi neemt	hi nam
1pl	wi keren	wi keerden	wi nemen	wi namen
2pl	ghi keert	ghi keerdet	ghi neemt	ghi naemt
3pl	si keren	si keerden	si nemen	si namen

Table 4: Conjugation: indicative forms of a weak and a strong verb in Middle Dutch

Middle Dutch uses the subjunctive in indirect speech or to express, for example, a wish or a supposition. The only differences in verb endings between indicative and subjunctive are found in the 3rd person singular present tense (subjunctive: *hi kere, hi neme*), and, for strong verbs, also in the 1st and 3rd person singular preterite (*ic name, hi name*). In all other instances the subjunctive forms are identical to the indicative.

3.2   Syntax

At the syntactic level the differences between the Middle Dutch dialects are smaller than, for example, in vocabulary or phonology. We will present some general aspects of Middle Dutch syntax.

3.2.1   Middle Dutch word order — The positioning of the finite verb plays an important role in the description of primary and subordinate clauses. Main clauses in Middle Dutch use the same word order as modern Dutch (or English): mostly SVO, i.e. Subject - (finite) Verb — Object, as in *Hi stal tgroete* (2105, = 'He stole the big ones'). In declarative sentences the finite verb usually takes the second position, preceded by the subject in the first position. The fact that main clauses have the verb in the second position leads to inversion whenever the first position is taken, not by the subject but by another element: the subject then follows the finite verb. This may, for example, occur in questions where the first position is filled with an interrogative pronoun: *Wat sechdi van* [...] (135, = 'What do you say of [...]?'), or when the first position is taken by an object or an adverbial: *Doe leide men Coppen in dat graf* (451, = '[Then] they laid C. in the grave'). The translation of the last example shows that English differs from (Middle) Dutch in that it allows two syntactic units ('Then' and 'they') to precede the finite verb, whereas in Dutch the subject needs to be moved in such cases: 'men leide' > 'Doe leide men'.

In subordinate clauses, word order is not as fixed as in modern Dutch (where we usually find SOV). In Middle Dutch subordinate clauses the finite verb can take almost every position, except the first one which is normally reserved for the subject.

The following example shows the normal word order for main clause and subordinate clause: *Hi hadde te hove so vele mesdaen, dat hire niet dorste gaen* (51-52, = 'He had behaved so badly at court, that he did not dare go'). In the main clause the finite verb (*hadde*) takes the second position and the subject is found in the first position, while in the subordinate clause the finite verb *dorste* together with the infinitive *gaen* appears in the final position. Compare this with the sentence where the finite verb takes the second position in the subordinate clause (which would not be possible in modern Dutch): *Alse die coninc dit versach, Dat hi hadde dat hoege verloren* (1324-25, ='When the king noticed that he had lost an eye'].

The word order in the nominal group shows some peculiarities when compared to modern Dutch (or English). Usually we find a pattern such as 'article/demonstrative pronoun — adjective — noun'. However, in Middle Dutch the adjective can also follow the noun (= *die ridder goet*: 'the good knight'), and a possessive pronoun, too, is sometimes found after the noun it belongs to (*die boeke sijn* = 'his books'). In this case adjective and pronoun remain uninflected.

Genitives, too, can appear before or after the noun. This sometimes leads to very complicated structures as in the following phrase: *sijn neve Jan, sGraven zone van Henegouwen* (= 'his nephew Jan, the son of the Count of Henegouwen'). This kind of extrapositioning is no longer possible in modern Dutch because of the absence of case endings.

3.2.2   Passive voice and impersonal constructions — A passive construction is used to accentuate the role of some participant other than the agent in an event. While in the active voice the agent usually is syntactically realised as subject (as in *ic screef desen brief* = 'I wrote this letter'), the passive voice shifts the focus of attention to the object or person undergoing the action by making it the subject of the sentence, or it emphasizes the action itself (*desen brief wart gescreven bi mi* = 'this letter was written by me'). Passive constructions in Middle Dutch are expressed analytically by an auxiliary (*sijn* or *werden*) and the past participle of the main

verb. The agent of the action can be expressed by using the prepositions *van* or *bi*.[8] The passive voice is also used in *VdvR*, for example in *hi seide dat desen brief bi hem alleene ware ghescreven* (3287-88, = 'he had to say (lit.: said) that this letter had been written by himself alone').

Impersonal constructions, hardly ever found in Modern Dutch, are relatively frequent in Middle Dutch. They are characterised by the absence of a nominative subject. A number of verbs occur in both personal and impersonal constructions. Originally the impersonal construction consisted of a verb form in the 3rd person singular, a dative element and a genitive element: *mi lanct waters* (= 'I long for water'], where the personal pronoun *mi* is a dative form and *waters* is a genitive. Later on, the genitive object could be replaced by a prepositional phrase (*mi lanct na di* = 'I long for you'), an infinitive (*mi lanct te comene* = 'I long to come'), or a *dat*-clause (*mi lanct dat ghi comt* = 'I long for you to come']).[9]

3.2.3 Negation — The most common negation in Middle Dutch consists of the elements *en* or *ne* and another negating word such as *niet, niemant* and *geen* ['not, nobody, none'], with the first element always immediately preceding the finite verb form. Two examples: *Dat ics vergheten niet ne mach* (2666: 'That I cannot forget it'); *Doe ne conste Reynaert niet bejaghen* (3351, = 'Then Reynaert was unable to find anything'). However, it is also possible for a sentence to be negated with just one of these elements: *Dinen aerbeit wert niet cleene* (2871, = '((lit:) Your work is not light). Negation with just the single particle *en* or *ne* before the finite verb occurs in Middle Dutch only in specific circumstances but is actually the more original form, and was the major option in Old Dutch. However, this negating particle gradually lost its force and acquired an accompanying negative adverb or noun to reinforce itself, which subsequently took over the negative function entirely. A similar development can, in fact, also be seen in other Indogermanic languages. We can sum up the development of negation in Dutch as follows:

Old Dutch	*en / ne*
Middle Dutch	*en / ne + niet, geen, niemand, ...*
Modern Dutch	*niet, geen, niemand, ...*

Note that many negative adverbs and pronouns which are used in Dutch to express negation, arose through a proclitic binding with the negating word *ne* (*ne + iet > niet, ne + ooit > nooit*).

In addition to clearly negative words like *niet* or *geen*, other words such as *maer* (= 'only'), *cume* and *nauwe* (both mean 'scarcely') also have a negative value. These can also occur in connection with *en* or *ne* (*Die ne had mer één coe* = 'Who only had one cow'). Moreover, a negating word can also appear in subordinate clauses beginning with *eer* (*Eer ic noit dit werc bestont* = 'before I (n)ever started this work'), clauses which are dependent on a comparative or superlative (as in *Die scoonste die nie men sach* = 'The finest that was (n)ever seen'), or in sentences which have a negative implication (as in *Hoe dul es hi ende wel sot die mannen geloeft nembermere*, where the negative implication is 'you must never believe men').

To avoid confusion with negation using two elements it seems sensible to reserve the term double negation for sentences in which two or more negative adverbs or pronouns are used alongside each other, as in *Daerne quam oec nie geen man, ...* or *dan [< dat en] was niewerinc noit vernomen ...* which mean literally 'there came also never no man' and 'that was seen nowhere never'. Against the rules of logic these negative elements do not cancel each other out but reinforce each other. Unlike modern Dutch, where such constructions are only tolerated in the spoken language, this double negation also occurs in the written forms of Middle Dutch dialects.

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[8]   The preposition *door*, which is the standard means of introducing the agent in passive sentences in modern Dutch, only arises after the Middle Ages.

[9]   Examples are taken from Van der Wal & Quak (1994: 84).

Further reading

The chapter 'Middle Dutch — A short introduction' (see above pp. 000) is mainly based upon the online publication *Geschiedenis van het Nederlands / History of the Dutch language* (Hüning a.o. 1999).[10] The online text has been modified and updated to fit the context of this edition.

Middle Dutch is, of course, also treated in textbooks on the history of the Dutch language, like De Vries a.o. (1995), Van den Toorn a.o. (1997) or Van der Sijs (2005). Janssens & Marynissen (2005) focus on the external history of Dutch, while Van der Wal & Van Bree (1992) present a very good overview of the linguistic structure of Middle Dutch (especially in the chapters 5 and 6). Van der Wal & Van Bree (1992) has been used extensively when preparing the chapter in this volume; many of its examples and especially the tables are based on the rich material in this book. A textbook (with text fragments and exercises) dedicated solely to Middle Dutch is Hogenhout-Mulder (1985). Mooijaart & Van der Wal (2008) presents a course in Middle Dutch and Early Modern Dutch (also with text fragments and exercises). All these textbooks are written in Dutch. An overview of the history of Dutch in German is presented by Vekeman & Ecke (1992).

For English-language readers a number of texts are available. Wim Daniëls (2005) presents a (very) short history of the Dutch language. Earlier, Colette van Kerckvoorde wrote an excellent introduction to Middle Dutch (1993). It is much more detailed than the chapter in this edition can be, and it contains many text fragments, used mainly for illustration purposes. An introduction to the structure of Middle Dutch can also be found in Van der Wal & Quak (1994), embedded in a broader overview of Old and Middle Continental West Germanic.

Middle Dutch syntax is the subject of several studies, such as Duinhoven (1988 and 1997), Van Gestel a.o. (1992), or Burridge (1993). An old standard work on this topic is Stoett (1923). A short, but informative, overview of Middle Dutch syntax can be found in Van der Horst (1984). Van der Horst (2008), a new two-volume history of Dutch syntax, devotes several hundreds of pages to Middle Dutch. Van Loey's studies (1970, 1976 and 1980) are standard reference works on Middle Dutch phonology and morphology. Although not very easily readable, they contain a great deal of information, also on dialect diversity. An overview of Old Dutch can be found in Quak & Van der Horst (2002).

The most comprehensive dictionary of Middle Dutch is the *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* (MNW), a dictionary with illustrative citations and references for the different meanings of a word. Derived from this dictionary is a concise dictionary, the *Middelnederlandsch handwoordenboek* (MNHW), which contains the same entries, with equivalents and paraphrases for the different meanings in modern Dutch. It formed the basis of the *Retrograad woordenboek van het Middelnederlands*, the retrograde dictionary of Middle Dutch (Van den Berg 1972). A supplement to the MNHW became available in 1983 (Van der Voort van der Kleij 1983). Another concise dictionary was published by Pijnenburg & Schoonheim (1997). While the MNW is a result of the philological tradition of the nineteenth century, we have a very modern lexicographical product for Early Middle Dutch (13th century), the *Vroegmiddelnederlands Woordenboek* (VMNW), compiled by the Institute for Dutch Lexicology, Leiden. It is this institute that has recently begun to make the historical dictionaries of Dutch available online (cf. http://gtb.inl.nl/).

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[10]   The Dutch version has been translated into English by Dr John Gledhill, who kindly gave permission to use his translation.

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After a short introduction to the sermon collections and a positioning of the book in the (inter)national context of modern sermon research in the first chapter, the second chapter focuses on the historical context of the sermon collections. It provides an extensive description of the medieval history of the monastery, and of the tasks of the office holders. The final chapters analyse the Middle Dutch convent sermons from Jericho and the manuscripts in which they have been preserved. They demonstrate how the Jericho sister scribes handled the sermons they heard their confessors preach in order to preserve them, and how they thereby designed a creative and collective â€˜authorshipâ€™ for themselves that was unusual for the Middle Ages. Are you search An Introduction To Middle Dutch pdf? Then you come right place to get the An Introduction To Middle Dutch pdf. Read any ebook online with simple steps. But if you want to save it to your computer, you can download much of ebooks now. Right now this 21,32MB file of An Introduction To Middle Dutch Ebook were still prevail and ready to download. But both of us were knowvery well that file would not outlast for long. It will be annihilated at any time. So i will ask youover and over, how bad do you want this An Introduction To Middle Dutch Ebook. You should get the file at onceHere is the working pdf download link for An Introduction To Middle Dutch Ebook. Home - Sitemap. Resistencia Un Ao En El Espacio BEST SELLER. 2009. Middle Dutch - A short introduction. In André Bouwman &. Bart Besamusca (eds.), Of Reynaert the Fox: Text and Facing Translation of the Middle Dutch. Beast Epic Van den vos Reynaerde, 257â€"271. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. A short introduction to Middle Dutch. Matthias Hüning & Ulrike Vogl. Middle Dutch is the term used for the language varieties spoken between approximately 1150. and 1500 in the territory covered nowadays by the Netherlands and Flanders, the part of modern. Belgium, where Flemish â€" the southern variety of the Dutch spoken in the Netherlands â€" is. spoken. At tha