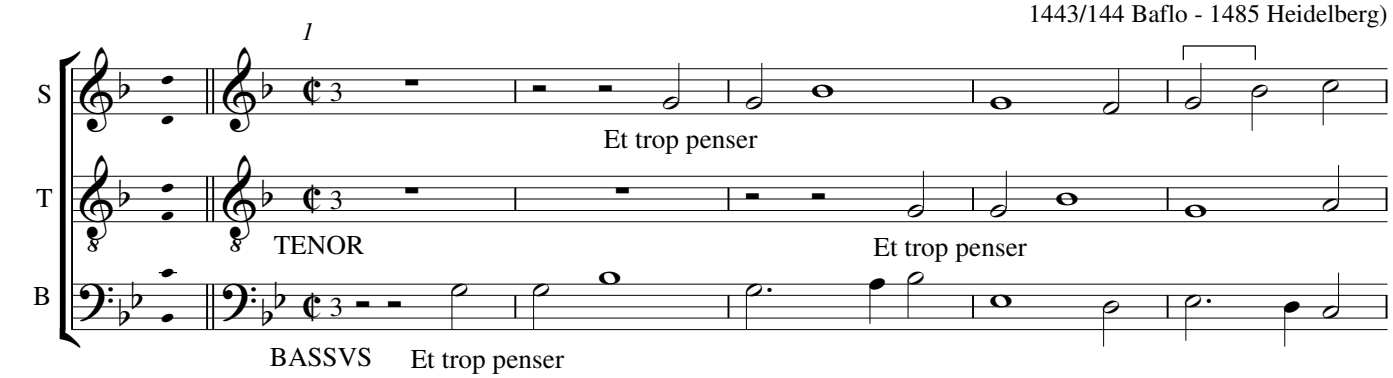
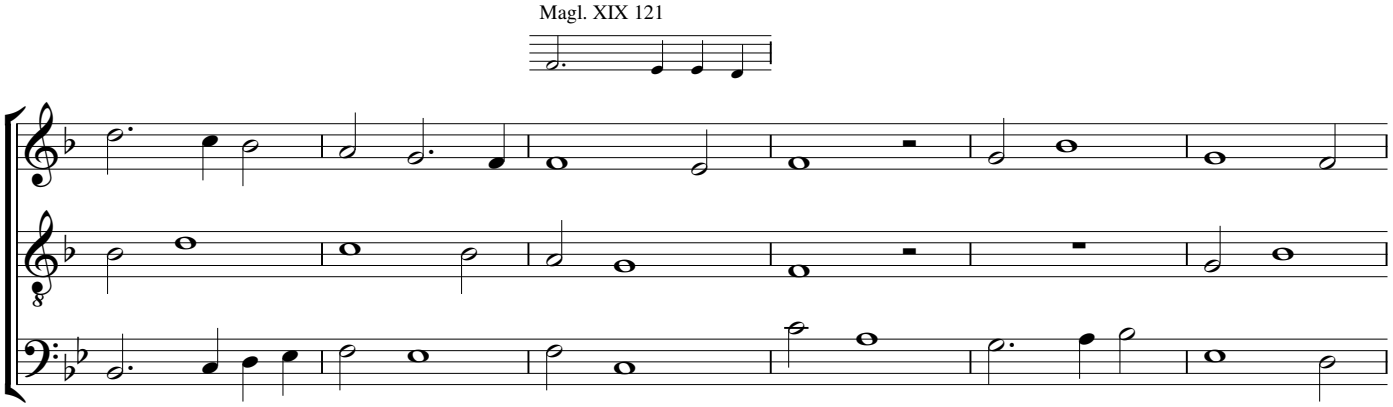
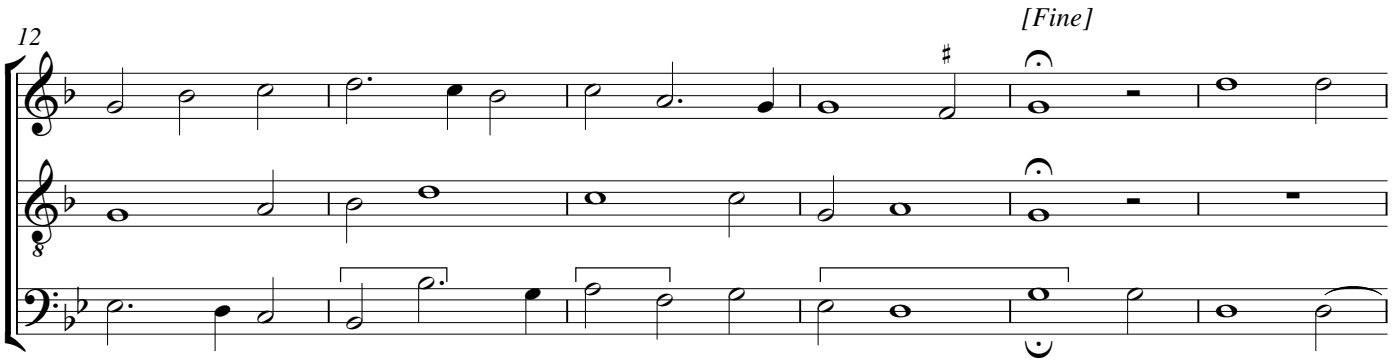
Et trop penser

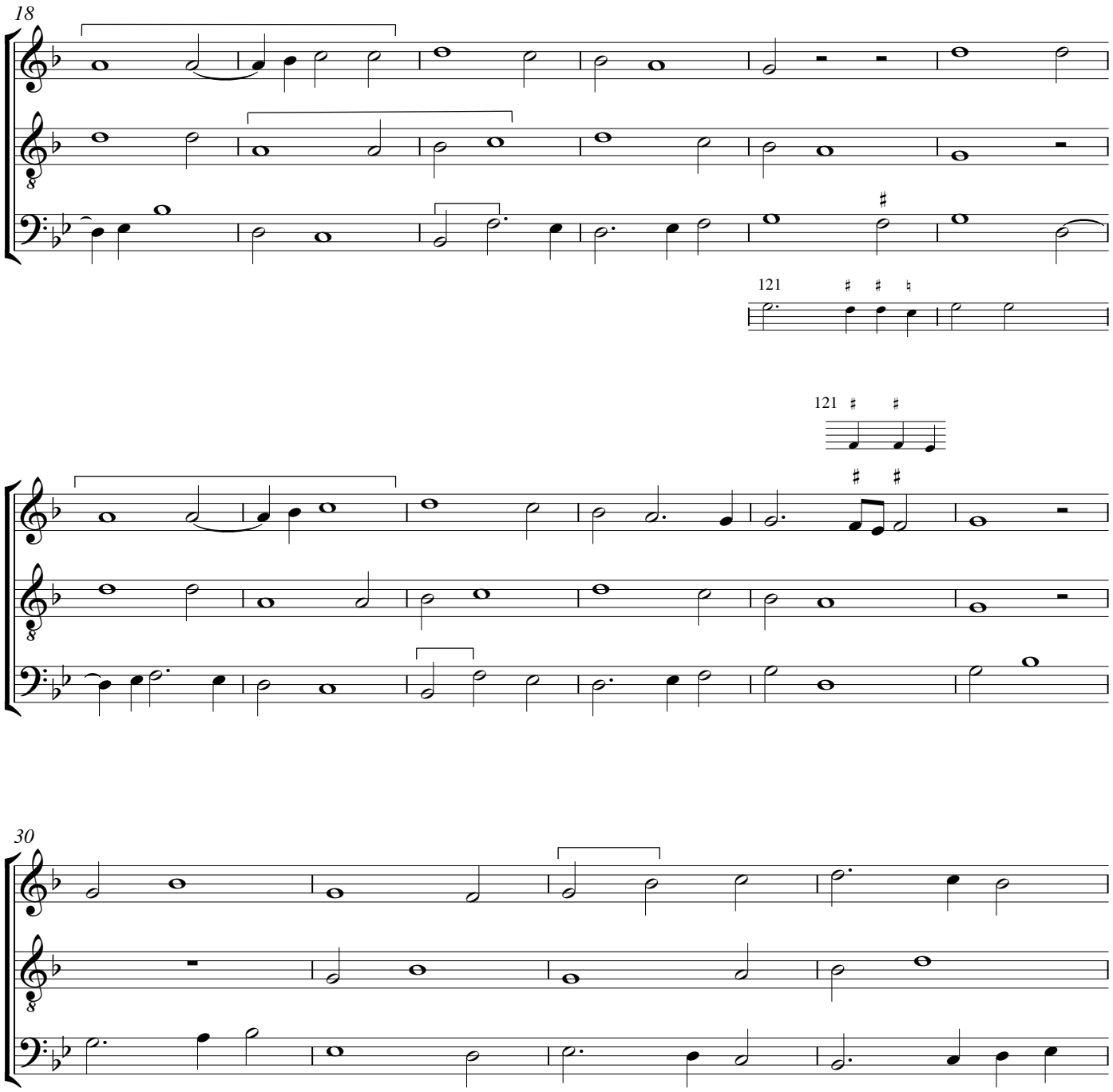
Thinking too much
according to Casanatense 2856,
with some variants from Magl. XIX 121

Roelkin (corrected from Bosfrin)
=? Rudolphus Agricola,
1443/144 Baflo - 1485 Heidelberg)





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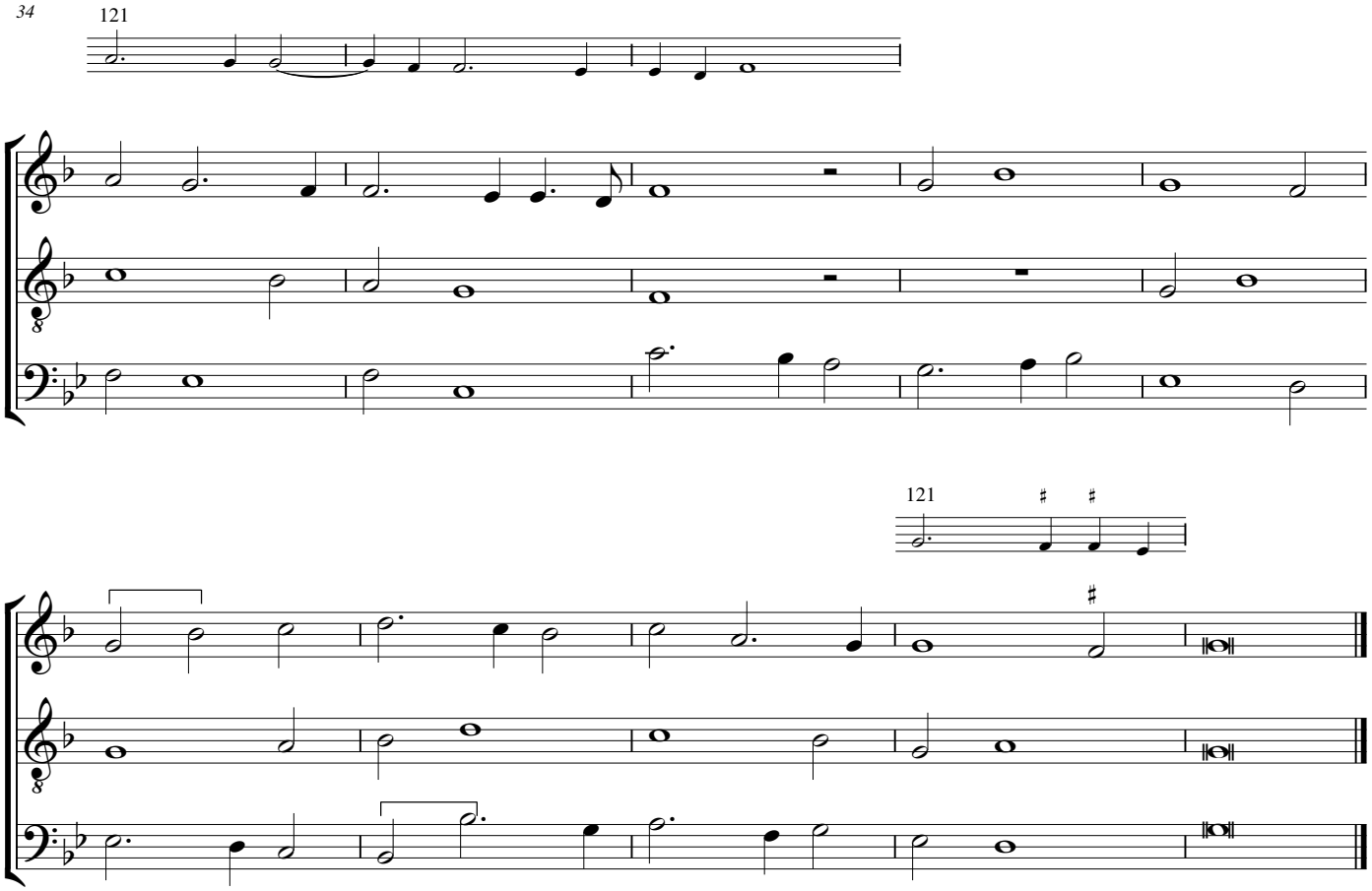


Play bars 1-43 up to three times and then repeat the refrain 1-16.

Critical comment to Roelkin (Bosfrin) Et trop penser

I copied this work from the ms. Biblioteca Casanatense Roma, 2856, fol. 110v-111, available on the website of the library, according to DIAMM written in Italy by Alessandro Signorello in 1479-1481. I was helped by an internet edition by Clemens Goldberg, at http://www.goldbergstiftung.org/file/casanatensegesamtalt.pdf and by Jankees Braaksma for the text. In my comparative edition I compared the score with two other manuscripts, Florence Biblioteca Nazionale Zentrale Magliabacchi XIX 121, fol. 30v-31, made in Florence ca 1500, from the website of the Biblioteca, and, the same library XIX 178, fol. 66v -67 from a microfilm in the Utrecht University Library, originating in France, 1492-1494. A microfilm of a fourth manuscript from Florence, Banco Rari 229 fol. 212v-213 in the Utrecht Library was not available to me, and so I had to rely on another internet edition by Clemens Goldberg, http://www.goldbergstiftung.org/file/florenz229gesamtalt.pdf . (If you change the letters in both URL-s “alt” to “neu” you will get the same piece with modern clefs). Goldberg comments that he had applied corrections, without specifying them in detail.
In the version with halve note values I added the text according to Paris, BN 12744 fol 22v, as supplied by Jankees Braaksma, and incompletely by E.R. Lerner, Henrici Isaac (ca 1540-1517) Opera omnia CMM65 vol. 6, Appendix, p. 186-188, 1984. This volume also contains a mass based on this song. I positioned the text.

As you may see in the comparative edition of the four manuscripts I only included the differences between the mss, as the Casanatense provides the best version. I give the following types of difference: clefs, ligatures, black (colorated) note groups, key signatures in the bass staves, differences as to the melodies and the text incipits. I did not include the differences in the representation of the note values of the brevis and semibrevis caused by mensural notation. The time signature ₵3 in all four manuscripts means that a longa has a value of 2 breves and a brevis normally has a value of 3 semibreves, which may be changed to 2 by colorating a brevis or adding a punctus divisionis or perfectionis, differing from “normal” dots by its context only. The punctus divisionis may also lengthen a semibrevis to its double value. As the use of coloration and punctus divisionis is not always consistent, I did not include these differences between the mss. Most other differences are in the cadences, the only important variant reading is in Magl. XIX 121 bars 34-36.
The original clefs are C1, C4 and F3. A signum congruentiae or fermate above the g’s of bar 16, necessary for the last repeat of the refrain, is lacking in Casan. 2856, but fermate’s do occur in Magl. XIX 121 and 178.

Professional details on mensural notation may be found at http://www.cmme.org/misc/refsheet.pdf (by Ted Dimitrescu, 2004, downloaded Jan. 2015).
The time signature indicates that the piece should be performed at rather high speed.

Casan. 2856 and B.R. 229 may have been copied from the same source, and Magl. XIX 121 and 178 too. None of them seems to be a copy of one of the others. The Tenor of Magl. XIX 121 gives a lacunal text of the refrain and the first stanza, written by an Italian scribe on hearing spoken or sung French and losing the middle part and the last words: E tro panser me fet amor dormir ne puys. Se gie nai mes amors tuta la not Come parlores a vos mon ami douls Vo vendies a la fenstra la minot Co mom per sont oh voier ionamt luy.
The complete text is as follows:

(Refrain):
Et trop penser me font amours: dormir ne puis
si je voy mes amours toutes les nuytz .
1.“Comment parleray je a vous, fin franc cueur doulx?”
“Vous y parlerez asses mon amy doulx,
vous viendrez a la fenestre a la minuyt,
quant mon père dormira jouvriray l’huys.”
(R)
2. Le gallant n’oblia pas ce qu’on luy dist,
de venir à la fenestre à la minuyt.
La fille ne dormoit pas, tantost l’oyst,
toute nuyt en sa chemise elle luy ouvrit.
(R)
3. “Mon amy, la nuyt s’en va et le jour vient,
despartir des noz amours il nous convient.
Baisons-nous, acollons nous, mon amy gent,
comme font vrays amoureux secrètement.
(R)

Translation:
(R) My love makes me think too much; I cannot sleep, when I do not see my love every night;
1.“How can I talk to you, my frank gentle heart?” “You will talk enough, my gentle friend; you will come to the window at midnight; when my father will be asleep I will open the door”.
2.The gentleman did not forget what she said to him, to come to the window at midnight. The girl did not sleep, as soon as she heard him, the whole night in her undershirt she opened to him.
3. “My friend, the night is gone and the day arrives, to leave our love will be right. Let us kiss and embrace, my gentle friend, like real lovers secretly do.

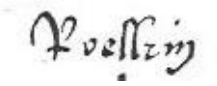
Though Casan. 2856 gives the initium Et trop penser at all voices, it is impossible to position the words under the bass part in a reasonable way; the bass part should be presumably played on a plucked instrument.

As to the identity of the composer I have the following remarks.

Casan. 2856 is the only ms. to give the composers name: Bosfrin, in beautiful humanist handwriting:

Boſfrin.

There should be absolutely no doubt that the scribe misread a variant of:



which is: Roelkin, as written in the ms. from Segovia Cathedral, s.d. 202v. The 15th- century scribe interpreted the Dutch R as a B, sloping to the left. The l was read as the s in ligature, and the k as two characters f and r. The modern editor of the Segovia manuscript, R. Perales de la Cal, Cancionero de la Catedral de Segovia, edición facsimilar del Códice de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de Segovia, Segovia 1977, made nearly the same mistake as his predecessor in 1490, in reading the Dutch k as two characters: llr or llv, likewise splitting it up and giving birth to Roellrin, occurring in ignorant and not always corrected literature since. In this combination the use of the character e is not consistent in Middle Dutch. Both Roloff and Roelof occur as Dutch forms of Rudolph, shortened to Rolf and Roelf, and losing the f in the diminutive form -ken or -kin.

The Segovia manuscript contains three pieces by this composer Roelkin, Dutch for Little Rudolph. Except the titles no text has been transmitted. But the composer's name and the words in two of the three titles, Zart Reyne Vrucht (Pure tender joy) and Vrucht ende moet is (in T and B: es) gar da hin (Joy and emotion are all gone) point to a region in the border between Western and Eastern Middle Dutch.
All words are included in the standard dictionary of Middle Dutch, J. Verdam, Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek, Den Haag 1932. One of them is characterised as Eastern middle Dutch (*saert, tsaert, tzart*), and the online edition of the dictionary at http://gtb.inl.nl/ even gives the phrase "*Eyn Jonckfrou reyn, kuesch ende zart*", a lady pure, chaste and tender . Other words occur in various spellings: the forms *da* and *hin*, for resp. *daar* and *heen* or *henen*; *gar* is evidently one of the variants of *gaer*. For *da* and *gar* German influence is mentioned, and *Eyn* is Eastern Dutch for *een*. *Roelkin*, *vru(e)cht*, *ende*, *es/is* and *moet* cannot be German at all, and *reyn* and *zart* (and *eyn*) are both (Middle) Dutch and German.

So I agree with the hypothetical ascription by J.W. Bonda: *De meerstemmige Nederlandse liederen van de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw* (Hilversum, 1996), 45-46, 112–15. He identified Roelkin as the Groningen humanist Rudolphus Agricola or Roelof Huusman (Baflo 1443 or 1444 – Heidelberg 1485), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodolphus_Agricola. Baflo and Groningen spoke Eastern Middle Dutch, with an increasing influence from Western forms, particularly in urban Groningen. Agricola studied at several Italian universities from about 1465 on, he was in Ferrara from 1475-1479, where he was an organist at the ducal court.

From 1479-1484 he was the city secretary of Groningen and so engaged in the building of the famous organ of Groningen's St. Martin's church. He played many other instruments as well. A century after his death his songs were yet well known in the city.

The unique presence in the Segovia manuscript of another composer from the Northern Netherlands, Petrus Elinc or Pieter Edelinck, fl. Delft ca. 1504-1506, may be one argument more for this identification. No works of this composer occur in other manuscripts.

The other three pieces by Roelkin do not occur frequently elsewhere: this piece is found in Casan. 2856 and three other manuscripts as mentioned above, De tous biens playne in a manuscript in Perugia (Bibl. Comm. Aug. 1013) and one in Warschau (University Library 2016), and Vrugt ende moet (with hybrid spelling Freud und moett) in Ulm (Germany), S 237 (partbooks), fo 17/15/16. In all these cases no composer's name has been mentioned.

There are three other compositions by a composer Raulin in another Florentine manuscript (Magl. XIX 176, late 1470's copied in Florence). Bonda, cited above, has proposed the identification of Roelkin and Raulin. I think an Italian on hearing "Roelkin" would have written: Rol(e)cchino and a Frenchman Raul(e)quin, so the missing -k should be explained. According to Fallows, New Grove Online s.v., this Raulin is probably not Raulequin (misread: Ranlequin) de Mol, another 15-th century Dutch composer, of whom one motet is known from a Leipzig manuscript 1494, fol 112v – 113, Ave decus virginum, in four voices. But Mol is situated in the part of Brabant, which is now Belgium, and not in the Northern part of the Netherlands, and: Agricola Frisius.

I do however not agree as to the identification of these names as belonging to one composer, but for stylistic reasons. I think there are three composers, Roelkin (Agricola), Raulin and Raulequin de Mol, and as I publish all works of all the three, everybody may judge whether I am right.

Arnold den Teuling, Assen (Netherlands) January/March 2015.