

СЕРЕДНЬОВІЧНА ФІЛОСОФІЯ

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PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF HADEWIJCH'S CONCEPTION OF THE HUMAN *REDE*

Hadewijch's texts were reopened in the second part of the 20th century. Since that time there has been increased research interest in her *Minnemystik*. Though most scholars choose theological (e.g., Bernard McGinn, Rob Faesen), literary (e.g., Frank Wil-laert, Brianne Dolce), didactic (e.g., Paul Mommaers, Veerle Fraeters) or gender (e.g., Kenneth Hoyt) perspectives of her texts in their investigations, the study of the philosophical aspects of Hadewijch's conception is still undeveloped. That is why this article fills the existing gap in the philosophical investigations of Hadewijch's *Minnemystik*. Thus, it also contributes to the history of medieval philosophy. The object of the research is focused on the philosophical origin of Hadewijch's conception of the human *Rede*. It gives us a new context for examining her affective *Minnemystik* and underlines its important rational side. Furthermore, researching the philosophical roots of human *Rede*'s concept reveals the textual link between Hadewijch's *Minnemystik* of the 13th century and later speculative Flemish and German *Wesenmystik* tradition of the 14th century.

The present investigation takes into account the already existing studies on philosophical references in Hadewijch's texts (e.g., Mother Columba Hart, Cornelia Wolfskeel, Benjamin Martin Breyer). Still, the philosophical origins of Hadewijch's conception of the human *Rede* are studied for the first time.

The inquiry deals with the impact of Stoic and Neoplatonic ideas on Hadewijch's conception of the human *Rede*. The research attempts to confirm that Hadewijch was not only acquainted with the medieval tradition of Christian humanism of the 12th century but was also familiar with its ancient philosophical roots in texts by Seneca, St. Augustine, Martianus Capella, and Severinus Boethius.

Thus, this article consists of four chapters. The first chapter mentions in brief the sources, which form Hadewijch's conception of the *Minnemystik* with the leading role of the human *Rede*. It also defines Hadewijch's role as a writer in the Middle Dutch dialect and points out two 20th-century collections of her texts that have been used in this article.

The second chapter of the article examines textual parallels between Augustine's Neoplatonic tradition and Hadewijch's point of view on the practical role of Reason as a faculty of the human soul.

The third chapter is devoted to a similar presentation of Reason as an instrument of self-knowledge and subjection in Seneca's and Hadewijch's texts.

The fourth chapter reflects on the allegorical image of the Queen of Reason in Hadewijch, Martianus Capella, and Severinus Boethius's Neoplatonic tradition.

A brief introduction into the context of Hadewijch's texts study

The phenomenon of Hadewijch's *Minnemystik*¹ of the 13th century arose on the background of the flourishing of numerous female religious movements (*mulieres religiosae*) in the Low Countries,² inspired by the ideal of apostolic life. It was also influenced by the secular image of the Lady *Minne* from minnesingers (in the Middle Dutch *minstrels*) or *D'amour* from women *trouvères*³ and ideas of a leading role of the enlightened human Reason due to education, especially studying *Septem artes liberales*,⁴ by the humanists from St. Victor's School of the 12th century. Moreover, her new form of mysticism, *la mystique courtoise*, [Hoyt 2025: 99] also absorbed the *Caritas* language (in the Middle Dutch *Caritate*) of the Bridal mysticism (e.g., William of Saint-Thierry, Richard of Saint-Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, Beatrice of Nazareth) in the 12th–13th centuries.

Biographical information about Hadewijch's life is almost absent. Probably Hadewijch lived in the first part of the 13th century (c. 1240) and was a beguine⁵ from Brabant, most likely from Nivelles, not Antwerp (according to Father J. van Mierlo's hypothesis⁶). From her texts, it can be inferred that she was of noble birth,⁷ well-educated, and acquainted with French courtly *trouvères*' poetry, according to Cornelia Wolfskeel and Paul Mommaers.

Hadewijch is mentioned in a couple of treatises, several German manuscripts, and a catalogue of manuscripts from the 14th century. However, these sources provide only a portion of her life. But in one of them, *De zeven tekens uit de zodiac* which is written by a lay Augustinian brother Jan van Leeuwen, Hadewijch is mentioned as "an authority on *Minne*." [Fraeters 2014: 49-73]

¹ The *Minnemystik* is a new form of *Unio mystica*, which at first flourished in the female Cistercian circles on the territory of Flanders (*Minnemystik*) and south France (*Mystique cortoise*) in the 13th century. Notion *Minnemystik* consists of two parts: *Minne*—love and *mystik*—a person that has an experience of union with the divine/God or fruition of love, that in the Middle Dutch language resounded like "*ghebruken der Minne*." *Minnemystik* has spread beyond the female Cistercian circles and received development in the works of beguines, which combined the monastic bridal language of the Song (*Brautmystik*) with the secular minnesingers' language of *fin'amor* or *hohe Minne*.

² Present-day Belgium, Northern France, Western Germany, Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

³ For a detailed study of women *trouvères*, see [Dolce 2020].

⁴ Humanism in the 12th century was characterised by a "[...] great concentration on man and on the human experience as a means of knowing God." [Southern 1970: 33]

⁵ "[...] beguines constituted a strange transitional form between the ecclesiastical order of the day, never belonging to the monastic community of *religiosi*, since it was not an approved order." [Grundmann 1995: 140] Thus, beguines themselves created a new social structure where women joined for a common semireligious life in apostolic poverty. At that time, it was a revolutionary idea—to have a religious life within the society, not in the monastery's walls as nuns did. Beguines were teachers for young girls and taught Latin, music, reading the Bible, and also helped in leproseries.

⁶ The most implausible hypothesis is that the name "Hadewijch" was secretly used by Geert Grote, a *Devotio moderna* religious movement mastermind in the 14th century.

⁷ "Hadewych seems to have been of noble birth. She knew noble men and women in the Low Countries and abroad (*Vis. I*)." [Wolfskeel 1989: 141-165] "From the careful education and aristocratic mentality that show in her work one may conclude that the historical Hadewijch probably belong to the nobility of a city in Brabant." [Mommaers 2004: 10]

Hadewijch wrote didactic texts in the Diets—Middle Dutch dialect. Consequently, she was a brilliant writer, who “[...] undoubtedly shaped medieval Dutch into a more cultivated form and made it more suitable to express a world of philosophical thinking, for which Latin had been the appropriate language.” [Wolfskeel 1989: 144] Moreover, she was a spiritual teacher (“*magistra in the school of minne*”) [Faesen: 67]⁸ for one of the beguine groups of the 13th century. Her writings “were not widely known.” [McGinn 1998: 200] and published until the 14th century. Her texts also influenced the community of “God’s friends” in Groenendael (Brabant) of the 14th century, headed by Jan van Ruusbroec.⁹

The oldest German manuscripts,¹⁰ which contain copies of Hadewijch’s texts, date from the 14th century and include: 31 Letters (*Brieven*)—didactic instructions for beguines; 45 Poems in stanzas (*Strophische Gedichten*) and 16 Poems in couplets (*Mengeldichten*)—mystical love lyrics; 14 Visions (*Visioenenboek*)—description of the mystical union with God (*Minne*)—*Mynnemystik*. These texts in original language were collected into one edition by Jozef van Mierlo in the 1920 year. The complete English translation of these works has been made and published in the collection of the Classic of Western spirituality in the 1980 year by Columba Hart.

The Concept of Hadewijch’s *Mynnemystik* is built around the polysemic notion *Minne*, the main meanings of which are Christ (*Beminde, Lief*), Divine Love, and transformative power in the human soul that prepares ground for the union with God. It is also “the highest and noblest form of relationship [...]” with God. [Faesen 2023: 69] Hadewijch does not only describe the character of *Minne* (Love), but she also gives the spiritual “route” of how to achieve *Minne*. In this way of unity with God, the human Reason plays a significant role: “[...] reason opens [...] eyes to Love And shows them their great good, Which Love is by nature [...]” [Hadewijch 1980: 201]

The representation of the image of the Trinity. The practical role of Reason as a faculty of the human soul (Augustine’s Neoplatonic tradition)

In the work *A history of women philosophy*, chapter 7, *Hadewych of Antwerp*, Cornelia Wolfskeel points out, that since the 12th century pious people in the Low Countries were interested in Plato and Neoplatonism both in convents and religious groups such as beguines. They used Neoplatonic language to express their mystical theology and Hadewijch was one of them. “Neoplatonic concepts were frequently used by pious and religious people in the Low Countries in the 13th century, for describing mystical experiences. It was Hadewych who found the Dutch translation of the Latin translation of these concepts. Literate people used the Latin language to express themselves in spiritual matters before Hadewych made the Dutch language appropriate for this purpose. Hadewych made the Dutch people acquainted with Platonic and Neoplatonic concepts. People could recognize these concepts, when they found them in the writings of St. Augustine, Dionysius Areopagite and Gregory of Nyssa. Thanks to Hadewych they became at least conscious of the origin of these

⁸ For Hadewijch’s role as the teacher, see more [Faesen R. 2023: 60-79].

⁹ “[...] the middle Dutch mystic writer Jan van Ruusbroec was prior (→ warnar), declares her to be a holy woman, a true teacher, whose books are truly begotten of god and whose teachings are as true as the teachings of saint Paul (→ appendix 3b, p. 65).” [Fraeters 2014: 50]

¹⁰ Brussels, the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR), 2879-2880 (ms. A) and Brussels, KBR, 2877-2878 (ms. B). About Hadewijch’s manuscripts see [Haverals, Kestemont 2023].

Platonic and Neoplatonic concepts in the writings of the Church Fathers they read.” [Wolfskeel1989: 142]

At the beginning of the 22nd Letter, Hadewijch quotes Augustine: “He who knows little can say little.” [Hadewijch 1980: 94] She explains that our Reason can know God, but a little as the Trinity, because the structure of our soul (Reason (*Rede*), Memory (*Memorie*), Will (*Wille*)) is the image of the Trinity (*imago Trinitatis*). “He gave us his Nature in the soul, with three powers whereby to love his Three Persons: with enlightened reason [*Rede – I.S.*], the Father [*Vater – I.S.*]; with the memory [*Memorie – I.S.*], the wise Son [*Sone – I.S.*] of God; and with the high flaming will [*berrenden Wille – I.S.*], the Holy Spirit [*Gheest – I.S.*] This was the gift that his Nature gave ours to love him with.” [ibid.: 97]

As Rob Faesen notes in *Teaching and Traditio in the Work of Hadewijch and John of Ruusbroec*: “what Hadewijch says is not new, but part of a long Christian tradition. It is an elaboration of the Christian understanding of God as a Trinitarian God.” [Faesen 2023: 69] In such a way, we clarify, Hadewijch follows the Christian Neoplatonic tradition of Augustine, which also adhered to Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Saint-Thierry. According to Augustine’s Neoplatonic doctrine of the exemplarism and inner man as a true core of the human being, the soul faculty *Memoria* is the image of Father, *Charitas (Voluntas)*—Holy Spirit, *Intelligentia*—Son (*De Trinitate* XV, XXIII-43).¹¹

In the treatise *On the Trinity* Augustine writes: “Let us, therefore, seek for some image of the Trinity in that which is decaying, insofar as we can, and even if this is not a clearer image, it may perhaps be easier to discern, for if it did not bear some resemblance to the inner man, there is no reason why it should even be called man.” [Augustine 2002: 86]

Hadewijch, following Augustine, stresses, that the inner man has a remaining God’s image in the memory that could be renewed, partially by the human *vita activa* (practice of the virtues) and totally by the God’s Grace, which enlightens Reason. Thus, enlightened Reason is an important instrument that paves the road to recognizing *Minne* through the epistemic virtues.

According to Augustine’s interpretation, human Reason, as an instrument of knowledge, has two functions: *ratio*—recognizes temporal things; *inchoata contemplatio*—recognizes eternal. Bernard of Clairvaux, continuing Augustine’s tradition, claims *intelligentia* discovers lower things of the world; *sapientia* discovers the higher (God). Hadewijch clarifies these both theories of knowledge and constructs her mystical conception of the allegorical “seven trees” or seven perfect epistemic virtues (*boom*) that describes the process of recognition from self-knowing to knowing of the *Minne*,¹² where the *Minne* is the higher reality inside us to which human’s virtues lead, activated and directed by the *Rede*. This recognition is the Neoplatonic “look inward”—interiorization or immersion into the depths of our self.

¹¹ “Although the memory of man, and particularly that which beasts do not have, namely, that in which intelligible things are so contained that they do not come into it through the senses of the body, has, in proportion to its own small measure in this image of the Trinity, a likeness, incomparably unequal, of course, but yet a likeness of whatever kind it may be to the Father; and similarly, although the understanding of man, which is formed from the memory by the attention of thought, when that which is known is spoken—it is a word of the heart and belongs to no language—has in its great unlikeness some likeness to the Son; and although the love of man which proceeds from knowledge and combines the memory and the understanding, as though common to the parent and the offspring—whence it is understood to be neither the parent nor the offspring— has in this image some likeness, although very unequal, to the Holy Spirit [...]” [Augustine 2002: 213]

¹² Cf. [Beatrijs 2016].

When the *Rede* starts to know human nature, it begins with the lower part of the soul:

1. **knowledge of the self** (*die kinnesse ons selfs*) [Hadewijch 1924: 12], that opens a weak human nature with the eternal soul and God's shape in it;
2. **humility** (*puer oetmoet*) [Hadewijch 1924: 13]; "[...] that had recognized God's greatness and its own unworthiness, and now with wise fear hid all the virtues by which it was truly adorned, because it felt and knew that it lacked fruition of its Beloved, and that it did not know how to remedy this lack." [Hadewijch 1980: 264]
3. **perfect Will** (*Wille*), it "conquered the powerful and strong God." [ibid.: 264];
4. **discernment/understanding** (*onderscedechheit*) [Hadewijch 1924: 14] is a basis for perfect Will's doing. "I am discernment: *without me you can do nothing*' (John 15:5)." [Hadewijch 1980: 264]

The next stages of the recognition are related to God's reality ("higher part of the soul") and His nature as a *Minne*:

5. **wisdom** (*wijsheit*) [Hadewijch 1924: 17] includes chastity "of body, in deportment, in words, and in deeds" and "always to be wholly with Love" [Hadewijch 1980: 265-266];
6. **knowledge of God** (*bekinnessen gods*) [Hadewijch 1924: 21] as a Father, that begins with **faith** (*gheloeue*), **hope** (*hope*), "[...] and ends with love [*Minne*]" [Hadewijch 1980: 266];
7. **knowledge of Love** (*bekinnesse der minnen*) [Hadewijch 1924: 33], knowing God's Spirit and feeling Love (to have fruition).

Thus, these seven steps present the leading role of human Reason in knowing God through the epistemic virtues of the soul.

Bernard McGinn in work *The flowering of mysticism: A men and women in the new mysticism (1200–1350)* points out that Hadewijch was "familiar with Augustine, Richard of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, and especially William of St. Thierry." [McGinn 1998: 200] Jozef van Mierlo, in its turn, in his work *Inleiding tot de Brieven van Hadewych* (1948) stresses that the texts of William of Saint-Thierry introduced Augustine's ideas to Hadewijch.¹³ Nevertheless, as suggested by Cornelia Wolfskeel, Hadewijch as a well-educated woman, knew Latin, which makes it highly probable that she had read the original Augustine's texts herself.¹⁴ According to the research on the status of languages (Old French, Middle Dutch, Latin) on the territory of Dukes of Brabant in the 13th century, Latin remained the status of the ducal charters (official language for most documents) during the 13th–14th centuries¹⁵ and it was the inescapable part of noble education.

Benjamin Martin Breyer in his dissertation "In that Instant I Saw Myself": Affective Response in the Writings of Hadewijch of Brabant," argues that Hadewijch knew Latin. First, Breyer, following Paul Mommaers [Mommaers: 2004: 25], based on passages 99, 24th Letter ("And give entrance into your heart to all the words you hear from him in the Scriptures, whether you read them yourself, or I, or some one else repeats them to you in

¹³ About the creative dialogue between Hadewijch's and William's of Saint-Thierry texts see [Faesen 2024: 175-191].

¹⁴ See more [Wolfskeel 1989: 159].

¹⁵ See [Croenen 2003: 107-125].

Dutch or Latin.”) concluded: “Hadewijch distinguishes between hearing Latin read aloud and reading the text oneself; [...]” [Breyer 2015: 25] Also, Bernard McGinn conceals that Scripture “was an essential resource” [McGinn 1998: 203] for Hadewijch’s mystical theology.

It suggests that she didn’t only use the phrases “from what she had repeatedly heard read aloud in Church”, but she could also read original Latin texts. Secondly, Hadewijch could know Latin, because she indirectly quoted a New Testament, probably from the Latin Vulgate, in her Letters (e.g., 26th Letter) and Visions (e.g., 4th Vision, 12th Vision). As far as we are aware today, the first complete and not-rhymed¹⁶ translations of the Bible in the Middle Dutch originated in the second part of the 14th century. There are *Herne Bible* by an anonymous author, a New Testament by Johan Scutken, and later the *New Testament of the Devotio Moderna*. [François 2018: 38]¹⁷ The last translation became popular among the beguines and laity who wanted to study the Bible for the next centuries.

According to the above, Hadewijch’s conception of the human *Rede* as the soul faculty with the inner image of the Trinity, probably, originates from Augustine’s texts, which were the prime source of the Neoplatonic ideas for Hadewijch.

The subjection to the Rede. Reason as an instrument of self-knowledge (Seneca’s tradition)

When Hadewijch presents her point of view on the importance of the *Rede* (Reason) in self-knowing, she also carries on the Stoic tradition, especially Seneca’s ideas from *Epistulae morales*.

Since the 4th century, Seneca has been considered a proto-Christian.¹⁸ Moreover, his *Epistulae morales* was a popular work, particularly, in the Cistercians circles of the 12th–13th centuries. [Colish 1990: 19] As Leighton Durham Reynolds in his research of *The medieval tradition of Seneca’s Letters* explains: “In the twelfth century the reading and coping of Seneca’s works reached its peak; the many extant manuscripts, the frequent mention of the *Letters* in the catalogues of the monastic, the cathedral, and, later, the university libraries, the interest shown in Seneca by the prominent writers of the period, all testify to the tremendous popularity he enjoyed.” [Reynolds 1965: 104]

Probably, Hadewijch absorbed Seneca’s ideas from the texts of Cistercian William of Saint-Thierry, who did not mention Seneca in his works, but took “a large amount of material from the *Letters* and rethinking it in Christian terms [...]” [Colish 1985: 115] A clear example of using Seneca’s text is William’s *The Golden Epistle*.¹⁹

It should be also pointed out that copies of Seneca’s *Letters* “created a large and rich tradition which soon carried them to all parts of western Europe.” [Reynolds, Marshall 1983: 374] Moreover, according to the research on the transmission of Seneca’s Latin texts in the late Middle Ages, *Letters* 1-88 were more widespread, than other Letters, particularly in northern France and in the German-speaking area. [ibid.: 374]

¹⁶ A layman poet Jacob van Maerlant wrote a “Rijmbijbel”—the first whole adopted translation of the Bible in the Middle Dutch. See [Gow 2012: 198-217].

¹⁷ See also [Folkerts 2011: 156].

¹⁸ Seneca has been regarded as the proto-Christian in the Middle Ages because of the text of a correspondence with St Paul, which appeared in the 4th century. [Buys 2015: 65]

¹⁹ For the influence of Seneca on William of Saint-Thierry, see [Ryan 1974: 25-32].

Thus, Seneca in his *Ad Lucium epistulae morales* (XXXVII.4) writes about Reason as a rule of our soul: “[...] if you wish to make all things subject to you, make yourself subject to reason. Once reason is your ruler, you will be ruler of many.” [Seneca 2015: 117]²⁰ The same paraphrases occur in Hadewijch’s 13th Letter, where she writes: “He who wishes all things to be subject to him must himself be subject to his reason, above whatever he wills or whatever anyone else wills of him. For no one can become perfect in Love unless he is subject to his reason.” [Hadewijch 1980: 75]

All these give ground to assume Hadewijch could be familiar with the book of Seneca’s *Moral Letters to Lucilius*. Moreover, Benjamin Martin Breyer also notices the similar paraenetic manner of Seneca’s *Epistulae morales* and Hadewijch’s *Letters*: “I believe that the compiler intended the book of letters to function as a source of doctrinal knowledge and as an exemplar based on Hadewijch’s life and teaching in a manner similar to Seneca’s *Epistulae morales*. The educative model, that of a master instructing in matters pertaining to inner experience and morals, is the same.” [Breyer 2015: 36]

In her doctrine of spiritual perfection, Hadewijch stresses, that Reason (*Rede*) is the main faculty of the human soul, which directs all our desires and aspirations. However, to obey your Reason, you must know yourself—it is the Delphic phrase “*ἴνωθι σεαυτόν*”, which was made popular by Socrates and was repeated by Seneca as “[...] ‘know thyself!’.” [Seneca 1925: 30]²¹

The Stoic texts were one of the sources with the help of which the Platonic idea of self-knowing was incorporated into the texts of medieval humanists of Saint-Victor school in the 12th century, which were the treasure trove of inspiration of philosophical ideas from late Antiquity during the further centuries. For humanists, as pointed out by Paul Mommaers, self-knowing is the “first step in the rehabilitation of man.” [Mommaers 2004: 59] Thus, Richard of Saint-Victor in his *Benjamin minor* wrote: “Let a person first learn to know his own invisible things before he presumes that he is able to grasp at invisible divine things. You must know the invisible things of your own spirit before you can be capable of knowing the invisible things of God.” [Richard of St. Victor 1979: 129]

Besides the philosophical ideas of Antiquity, Richard also used the “analytical introspective method” or “look inward.” [Mommaers 2004: 59] The founder of this method in the Middle Ages can be called Anselm of Canterbury (the 11th century). In the 12th century, this method gained popularity due to Richard and Hugo of Saint Victor and Cistercian St. Bernard.

Hadewijch joins this tradition and describes the importance of the process of self-knowledge: “If you wish to experience this perfection, you must first of all learn to know yourselves: in all your conduct, in your attraction or aversion, in your behaviour, in love, in hate, in fidelity, in mistrust, and in all things that befall you. You must examine yourselves as to how you can endure everything disagreeable that happens to you, and how you can bear the loss of what gives you pleasure; for to be robbed of what it gladly receives is indeed the greatest sorrow a young heart can bear. And in everything pleasant that happens to you, examine yourselves as to how you make use of it, and how wise and how moderate you are with regard to it. In all that befalls you, preserve your equanimity in repose or in pain.” [Hadewijch 1980: 76-77]

²⁰ “[...] si vis omnia tibi subicere, te subice rationi; multos reges si ratio te rexerit.” [Seneca. *Epistles* XXXVII.4]

²¹ “[...] ‘te nosce’.” [Seneca. *Epistles* XCIV.28]

Therefore, knowing yourself helps to keep yourself under the control of the Reason that in consequence will bring equanimity—a kind of soul perfection on the road to *Minne*. Hence, Hadewijch's conception of the human *Rede* was influenced not only by Neoplatonic ideas but also has Stoic roots. The sources of these roots, first of all, probably, were the works of Seneca, then William of Saint-Thierry and Richard of Saint-Victor.

The subjection of the Rede. The allegorical image of the Queen of Reason (Martianus Capella's and Severinus Boethius's Neoplatonic tradition)

The Reason is the guide and rule on the road to the *Minne*. It sets the stage for the fruition of *Minne*, but the fruition itself or union with God is happening beyond the Reason. Therefore, Reason leads in cognition up to a certain limit, beyond which the Love itself enters into authority. To clarify this idea, Hadewijch uses the image of the Queen in 9th Vision. This image has much in common with the literary traditions of late Antiquity, particularly with the allegorical image of the Reason as a grand Lady, which has been restored in the Neoplatonic texts *De nuptiis philologiae et Mercurii* by Martianus Capella in 5th century and *Consolatio Philosophiae* by Severinus Boethius in 6th century.

Capella and Boethius were well-known authors in the Middle Ages. Their texts were the sources of the spread of a variety of philosophical conceptions of early and late Antiquity, not only the Neoplatonic ideas. During the 9th–13th centuries, a tradition of commentary, copies, and translation on the *De nuptiis* and *Consolatio* flourished particularly in France and Germany. Numerous copies of the *De nuptiis* were written in “a corrupted vulgate”, which was the language that met the needs of students and teachers of liberal arts. [Reynolds, Marshall 1983: 245] In addition, *Consolatio* was a part of medieval education in grammar school and notably university education until the 14th century in France and Italy. [Peter 2007: 2] It has been translated into medieval folk languages and became an important part of vernacular literature. Thus, Jacob van Maerlant translated some fragments of *Consolatio* into the Middle Dutch in the early 13th century.²²

Taking into account the popularity of Boethius's *Consolatio* and Capella's *De nuptiis* as well as the circulation of their copies and translations during the late Middle Ages, it can be suggested, that Hadewijch was acquainted with these works as a part of medieval education of a noble girl.²³ Moreover, Columba Hart—a translator of Hadewijch's texts—outlined the textual links between *Consolatio* and Hadewijch's 9th Vision. [Hart 1980: 374] To go even further in this topic, it should be highlighted that there are textual parallels between Boethius's portrayal of the Lady Philosophy in *Consolatio*, Capella's image of the Lady Dialectic in *De nuptiis* and Hadewijch's image of the Queen of Reason.

²² The complete translation of Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae* into Middle Dutch was in the second half of the 15th century by Jacob Vilt from Bruges. Until this time there was a popular translation of the early 13th century by Jacob van Maerlant, the well-known author of the *Rijmbijbel*. Maerlant's work in Middle Dutch *Spiegel historiael* is the comprehensive chronicle of Dutch history, which adopted *Speculum Historiale*—the great work by the French scholar and encyclopaedist Vincent de Beauvais. The Latin *Speculum Historiale* contains some parts of Boethius's *Consolatio* that have been translated by Maerlant into the Middle Dutch. “Maerlant translates in total only 24 fragments from the *Consolatio*: five from Book I, fifteen from Book II, three from Book III, and one from Book V, all rendered into verse and reduced to the aphoristic conclusions of Boethius's meticulous dialogues.” [Taylor 2009: 39]

²³ About the education of nobles see the dissertation by [Jacobs-Pollez 2012].

Thus, Martianus Capella depicts Lady Dialectic as a faculty of Discernment that forces one to accept her point of view on truth and false: “She was wearing the dress and cloak of Athens. [...] In her left hand she held a snake twined in immense coils. [...] If no one wanted to take any of the patterns, Dialectic confronted them with some questions or secretly stirred the snake to creep up on them until its tight embrace strangled those who were caught and compelled them to accept the will of their interrogator. [...] She claimed also that she alone discerned what was true from what was false.” [Martianus Capella 1977: 107-108]

Severinus Boethius, in his turn, influenced by Capella’s text, depicts Philosophy (Reason) as a Lady who, with the severity and balance of her mind, gives comfort in distress and points the way to the top of the human spiritual homeland. Philosophy had been portrayed as a venerable woman: “[...] I saw a woman above my head, having a grave countenance, glistening clear eye, and of quicker sight that commonly Nature doth afford; her colour fresh and bespeaking unabated vigour, and yet discovering so many years, that she could not at all be thought to belong to our times [...]” [Boethius 1973: 131]

According to the text, Lady Philosophy asked: “Dost thou not know me? Why dost thou not speak? Is it shamefastness or insensibleness that makes thee silent? [...], she laid her hand upon my breast [...]” [ibid.: 136-137]

Hadewijch uses the same literary technique and represents Reason as a Queen with three maidens: “The queen approached me dreadfully fast and set her foot on my throat, and cried with a more terrible voice, and said: ‘Do you know who I am?’ And I said: ‘Yes, indeed! Long enough have you caused me woe and pain! You are my soul’s faculty of Reason, [...]’” [Hadewijch 1980: 285] Instead of Boethius, who is depressed, that is why keeps silent and doesn’t know what to say, Hadewijch, who is enlightened by divine truth in the state of spiritual vision,²⁴ answers.

According to Hadewijch’s *Vision*, the Queen was wearing a golden dress painted with symbols of eyes²⁵: “[...] all the eyes were completely transparent, like fiery flames, and nevertheless like crystal. And the crown she wore on her head had as many crowns one above another as there were eyes on her dress.” [ibid.: 285] Hadewijch’s symbol of the eye as an “indwelling power in the soul and the instrument whereby each of us apprehends” (*The Republic 518c*) [Plato 1942: 135] is Plato’s allegory, which has been used also by William of Saint-Thierry. He writes in his work *Exposition on the Song of Songs* that the Reason (*Ratio*) accompanies love in union with God: “Contemplation has two eyes, reason and love [...]. [...] when they are illuminated by grace, they are of great mutual assistance, because love gives life to reason and reason gives light to love; [...]” [William of St. Thierry 2010: 74]

²⁴ “In the Middle Ages a vision “in the spirit” [*visio spiritualis*], was considered to have little value in itself: it could be inspired by demons or be pure fantasies. What mattered were not the images seen, but the divine message understood. The point of vision was not sight, but insight. Its function was the revelation of divine truth divulged through images.” [Fraeters 2009: 159-160]

²⁵ Hadewijch’s symbols of eyes and Queen Reason show a remarkable similarity to the work by Jacob van Maerlant *Wapene Martijn*, which was also inspired by the images of Boethius’s *Consolatio* and was a well-known text among the Middle Dutch speakers in the 13th century. This work is a series of dialogues between two friends Jacob and Martijn, one of which is discussed a little battle between the heart (*therte*) and the eye (*oghen*). The heart is the symbol of our emotions and the eye is the metaphor of senses, “which unlock the outside world for us.” [Buys 2015: 62] The Queen Reason (*coninghinne Rede*) has been portrayed as the adviser that resolves conflict (Maerlant, *Wapene Martijn*, Stanza 57, I). See more [Van Maerlant, Biesheuvel 1998: 299].

Queen's maidens in Hadewijch's text are the shining symbol of the Holy Fear, Discernment and Wisdom are epistemic virtues that draw the human soul closer to *Minne* (Love): "[...] Then Reason became subject to me, and I left her. But Love came and embraced me; and I came out of the spirit and remained lying until late in the day, inebriated with unspeakable wonders." [Hadewijch 1980: 286]

The subjection to the *Rede* (Reason) and living according to the virtues is the first step on the road to union with *Minne*. Hadewijch applies the allegorical language of *Visions* to express the idea that the mystical experience of union is the authority of holy *Minne* (Love) which limits the leading role of the Queen Reason. In this point, Hadewijch's conception of *Minnemystik* belongs to the tradition of Augustine and William of Saint-Thierry. As far as the allegorical image of a Queen is concerned, it is the literary and philosophical tradition of Capella's *De nuptiis* and Boethius's *Consolatio*, with which she was well acquainted.

Conclusion

Hadewijch's conception of the human *Rede* is an important part of her *Minnemystik* that flourished on the background of the Beguinal vernacular theology of the 13th century. It also absorbed the ideas of the monastic tradition of Saint Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, William of Saint-Thierry, and Richard of Saint Victor and combined them with the secular tradition of minnesingers and *trobairitz*.

Hadewijch created its religious concept of holy *Minne* in which the human *Rede* (Reason) plays a leading role. Comparative study of Hadewijch's *Letters* and *Visions* allowed us to identify the textual parallels with the works of Seneca, St. Augustine, William of St. Thierry, Marcianus Capella, and Severinus Boethius, which points to the philosophical genesis of her concept of *Rede*.

Rede has been presented in Hadewijch's texts as the soul faculty with the image of the Trinity and as the instrument of self-knowing that plays the leading role and directs all human acts on the road to the *Minne*. It is allegorically portrayed as the Queen that was finally subjected to the *Minne* too.

Rede as the image of the Trinity in the human soul is Augustine's Neoplatonic conception where the enlightened by God's grace Reason activates virtues in the human soul and prepares it for mystical union with God. *Rede* as the instrument of the self-knowing that organizes and takes under control all human acts is the Stoic conception of Seneca. Hadewijch's presentation of *Rede* as a Queen, which subjects the Memory and the Will comes from the Martianus Capella's and Severinus Boethius's Neoplatonic traditions of the late Antiquity. Taking into account the dissemination of Augustine, William of Saint-Thierry, Capella, and Boethius's texts in the 13th century we can sum up that Hadewijch was acquainted with and used philosophical ideas of the Late Antiquity in her conception of the *Minnemystik*.

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The Philosophical Roots of Hadewijch's Conception of the Human *Rede*

Studies of the heritage of Hadewijch from Brabant mostly focus on the theological sources of her Love mystic (*Minnemystik*), disregarding the philosophical genesis of her ideas. In this article, I provide arguments in favour of the hypothesis of the philosophical roots of several Hadewijch's concepts. It is about the parallels among the conception of (1) *Rede* (Reason) as an image of the Trinity in the human soul and Augustine's Neoplatonic tradition; (2) life under the guidance of *Rede* as the way of recognition and self-control and Seneca's stoicism; (3) *Rede* in the image of the queen as the factor of growing of the epistemic virtues which prepare the human soul to the unity with God (*Minne*) and images of the Lady Dialectic by Martianus Capella, and Lady Philosophy by Boethius.

Інна Савинська

Філософське коріння концепції Хадевех про людську *Rede*

Дослідження доробку Хадевех Брабантської здебільшого фокусуються на теологічних джерелах її містики любові (*Minnemystik*), лишаючи поза увагою філософську генезу її ідей. Я наводжу аргументи на користь гіпотези про філософські джерела кількох концепцій Хадевех. Ідеться, зокрема, про паралелі між концепціями: (1) *Rede* (Розуму) як образу Трійці в душі людини і неоплатонізмом Августина; (2) життя під керівництвом *Rede* як шляху пізнання та самоопанування і стоїцизмом Сенеки; (3) *Rede* (в образі Королеви) як чинника зрощення епістемічних чеснот, що готують душу до єднання з Богом (*Minne*) і образами дами Діалектики в Марціана Капелли та дами Філософії в Боеція.

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