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De *r*-metathesis en haar gevolgen voor de fonologie en de morfologie van het Vroegmiddelnederlands¹

Summary

The metathesis of /r/ is a universally well known phenomenon, the causes of which have not yet been fully understood. This article deals with the *r*-metathesis in Dutch, which occurred at the end of the 11th century. It was provoked by a weakening in the thrilled realisation of /r/, but could only establish itself under the strict condition of creating a ‘tight’ cluster.

The metathesis of /r/ affected the quality of the neighbouring vowel, which had far-reaching consequences for the morphology and phonology of Early Middle Dutch. First, in certain dialects the crucial difference between present and past tenses of some strong verbs was obscured, which gave rise to innovated verbal paradigms. Second, the vowel affected by metathesis was subject to changes, which caused dialectal variation. This variation, however, didn’t originate contemporaneously with the *r*-metathesis around the year 1100, but developed only in the course of the 13th century. That explains why typical West Flemish outcomes of the metathesis-vowel are missing in some of the greater works of Jacob van Maerlant, who was born around 1230, but wrote these works some fifty years later.