

The beginnings of modern  
Flemish literature

# The Lion of Flanders

HENDRIK CONSCIENCE

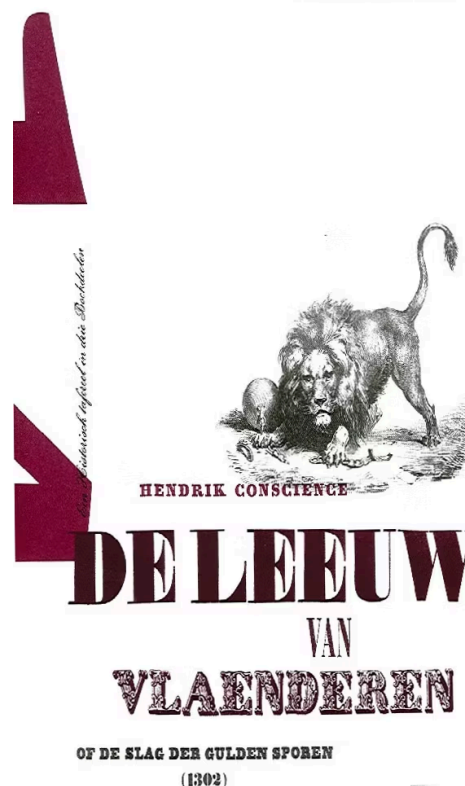
Hendrik Conscience wrote 'The Lion of Flanders' in the mould of the Scottish writer Walter Scott's historical novels. The book tells the tale of the conflict between the cities and the lawful French monarch in the County of Flanders during the Middle Ages, culminating in the victory of a Flemish peasant militia over the French knights at the 1302 Battle of the Golden Spurs. Conscience gives a detailed account of the facts, but also enriches events with a great deal of imagination, and so his account morphs into a heroic, superhuman struggle with a timeless and symbolic significance.

Conscience is a Flemish icon, his writing renowned and devoured within his lifetime, even outside of the borders of the newly-independent Belgium

COBRA

'The Lion of Flanders' is the first Flemish chivalric romance, and forms the beginnings of modern Flemish literature. The book became incredibly popular, not least because the Flemish were able to take heart from it in an increasingly Frenchified Belgium. After all, the national spirit is the true central theme around which the rest of the story's elements revolve.

For the young author, 'The Lion' signified the start of a glorious career. Conscience went down in history as 'the man who taught his people to read'. To this day, more than 70 different editions of this thrilling, historical novel have been published in Dutch. In addition, 'The Lion' has been adapted for the stage and screen numerous times, and has also appeared in comic book form.



## AUTHOR



**Hendrik Conscience** (1812-1883)

**ORIGINAL TITLE** De Leeuw van Vlaenderen of de Slag der Gulden Sporen (1838, eigen uitgave, 190 pp.)

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