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Incunabula in Communities of Canonesses Regular and Tertiaries Related to the *Devotio Moderna*

Toward an 'Inclusive' Approach of Late Medieval Book Ownership in the Low Countries

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Abstract

This contribution discusses the hitherto overlooked ownership of the earliest printed books (incunabula) by Netherlandish female religious communities of tertiaries and canonesses regular connected to the religious reform movement of the *Devotio moderna*. Studies of book ownership and book collections in these communities have tended to focus on manuscripts. From the last decades of the fifteenth century onwards, however, these religious women increasingly came in contact with printed books, even though the involvement of the *Devotio moderna* with the printing press was limited. The discussion focuses on the channels via which tertiaries and canonesses acquired books produced by commercially operating printers, the ways in which incunabula affected what these (semi-)religious women read, as well as the ratio between printed books in Latin and the vernacular, and their function(s) within these communities. Thus the essay intends to sketch a preliminary image of the role of incunabula in female convents, and advocates a more inclusive approach of female religious book ownership.

Keywords

incunabula – medieval book ownership – manuscript and print – female religious communities – *Devotio moderna* – Low Countries

In the last decades of the fifteenth century, the printing press, and particularly its products, increasingly reached religious communities.¹ Even though late medieval convent libraries are often viewed as collections of hand-written codices, their shelves became gradually filled with manuscripts *and* printed books alike. This essay explores the ownership of the products of the earliest presses, i.e. incunabula (books printed before 1501), in female communities in the Low Countries. In their study of Middle Dutch manuscripts from (semi-)religious communities in the Low Countries, Karl Stooker and Theo Verbeij mention the rise of the printed book: ‘already at the end of the fifteenth, but especially in the sixteenth century, printed works took up a place alongside or even at the expense of the manuscripts in many communities.’² Practical reasons, for example the lack of easily accessible inventories, however, forced Stooker and Verbeij to exclude printed books from their study and to issue a warning that their conclusions, especially with regard to the dissemination of texts, should be used cautiously.³

Our aim is to provide a preliminary survey of incunabula in communities of canonesses regular and tertiaries that pertained to, or were associated with, the *Devotio moderna*, the influential reform movement in the late medieval Low Countries.⁴ What types of works found their way into the book collections of these female religious houses in printed form? Did the introduction of the

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- 1 On (male) monastic printing shops in Europe, see F. Eisermann, ‘A Golden Age? Monastic Printing Houses in the Fifteenth Century’, in: *Print Culture and Peripheries in Early Modern Europe*, ed. B. Rial Costas (Leiden 2013), pp. 37–67. After an initial involvement of monastic workshops in the production of printed books secular workshops clearly prevailed and the Church took on the role of consumer of printed books: ‘As a consequence of the invention of printing, the majority of books no longer came from monasteries; but a considerable portion of the new books certainly found their way into the monasteries, and we should not forget that this is one of the main reasons why they still exist.’ (p. 67).
 - 2 ‘reeds op het eind van de vijftiende, maar vooral in de zestiende eeuw, veroverden de gedrukte werken in veel gemeenschappen een plaats naast of zelfs ten koste van de handschriften’, in: K. Stooker & T. Verbeij, *Collecties op orde. Middelnederlandse handschriften uit kloosters en semi-religieuze gemeenschappen in de Nederlanden* (Miscellanea Neerlandica, 15–16), 2 vols. (Leuven 1997), vol. 1, p. 3.
 - 3 Stooker & Verbeij, op. cit. (n. 2), p. 3.
 - 4 For a good, recent introduction to this reform movement, see *De Moderne Devotie. Spiritualiteit en cultuur vanaf de late Middeleeuwen*, ed. A. Dlabáčová et al. (Zwolle 2018).

printing press and the new dynamic of secular printing shops catering to a largely anonymous market affect the dissemination of texts in these communities? What can incunabula from female religious possession tell us about the channels of acquisition of the earliest printed books and about their mobility?

Although the direct involvement of the *Devotio moderna* with the printing press has not turned out to be as large as scholars expected – in the fifteenth-century Low Countries presses in Brussels (1475–87), Gouda (c. 1486–1521), and Schoonhoven (1495–1519) were run by male members of the movement (Brothers of the Common Life and canons regular) – that does not mean that incunabula produced by lay/secular printers and distributed via commercial channels passed by the houses that belonged to the circles of this influential reform movement.⁵ Ed van der Vlist recently demonstrated how printed books indeed formed an integral part of the book collections of male religious houses in the Low Countries toward the end of the fifteenth century. His survey of the library collection of the Carthusians in Amsterdam shows that at least eight incunabula owned by the monks are still extant.⁶ Thus far, however, the presence of incunabula in women's communities within the *Devotio moderna* has not received any specific attention. With this study, we carefully want to take the first steps to fill that gap. The essay intends to sketch a prelude image of the role of incunabula in female convents, and intends to induce a more 'inclusive' approach of female religious book ownership in the last decades of the fifteenth century by including printed books into the analysis, and thus diminishing the dividing line between manuscript and print.

Almost twenty-five years after the publication of Stooker and Verbeij's pioneering study on monastic book collections, detailed and systematic information about provenances and late medieval and early modern ownership of incunabula, is still lacking.⁷ Our exploration is based on our own research projects into incunabula and late medieval female book ownership, and a survey of secondary literature, and of (online) library catalogues. Therefore, the present study is by no means exhaustive, and, as the acquisition of (printed) books in the late fifteenth century itself, to a certain extent dictated by chance. It can only reveal the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Nevertheless, the survey offers some significant indications with regard to the questions posed above. In the

5 K. Goudriaan, 'The Devotio Moderna and the Printing Press (ca. 1475–1540)', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 93 (2013), pp. 578–606.

6 E. van der Vlist, 'Middelleeuwse metadata. Boeken van de Amsterdamse kartuizers', in: *Schriftgeheimen. Opstellen over schrift en schriftcultuur. Verzamelde opstellen van Nederlandse boekhistorici ter ere van Jos Biemans*, ed. M. Hogenbirk & L. Kuitert, in collaboration with P. Dijstelberge & J. Witte (Amsterdam 2017), pp. 439–40.

7 A valuable source of information is the *Material Evidence in Incunabula*-database, <https://data.cerl.org> (accessed 13 November 2020) that seeks to fill this lacuna.

future, research should seek to include data about the acquisition of printed books from archival sources, such as financial accounts from female Modern Devout communities, if at all available, and take account of book lists explicitly stating the presence of printed books in these libraries. Such an exploration, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

In the following we first aim to provide a general overview and a discussion of how individual books entered a particular convent. The second and third sections focus on the texts that were disseminated in communities of tertiaries and canonesses regular in incunabula and on the ratio between books in the Dutch vernacular and Latin respectively.

Printed Possessions

In our search for incunabula from houses of tertiaries and regular canonesses related to the *Devotio moderna* we have encountered 85 books printed in the period between 1472 and 1 January 1501. 37 of them were owned by 22 convents of canonesses regular: Amsterdam, (possibly) St Agnes (1), St Catharina (2), St Maria Magdalena op het Spui (1), and Ter Lelie (3); Beverwijk, Marienborn (1); Brussels, Onze Lieve Vrouw ter Rosen gheplant in Jericho (3); Delft, St Agnes in het dal van Josaphat (1), and St Anna (2); Deursen near Ravenstein, Soeterbeek (2); Diepenveen, St Maria and St Agnes (3); Dordrecht, St Agnes (1); Geldern, Nazareth (1); Gent, St Agnes (1); Hoorn, Bethlehem (1); Leiden, St Cecilia (1) and Rapenburg (3); Maaseik, St Agnes (1); Moerbeke near Brugge, Sarepta (1); Oegstgeest near Leiden, Mariënpoel (3); The Hague, St Agnes (2); Utrecht, Jerusalem (2); and Venray, Jerusalem (1). The Leiden sisters of St Clara 'bij het Rapenburg' were strictly speaking not canonesses regular, but so-called 'conversinnen' of St Augustine: lay sisters associated with the Chapter of Windesheim through their confessors.⁸ The following 25 communities of tertiaries owned 48 incunabula in total: (possibly) Alkmaar, Jonge Hof (1); Amersfoort, St Agnes (1); Amsterdam, St Barbara (1), St Cecilia (1), St Clara (1), St Margaretha (1), and Elfdruizend Maagden (4); Den Dungen near 's-Hertogenbosch, Eikendonk (1); Enkhuizen, St Clara (2); Haarlem, Crayenhorst (1), St Anna (2), St Catharina (2), and Maria Tenhemelopneming (2); Harderwijk, St Catharina (1); Heusden, St Catharina (4); Hoorn, St Catharina (1); (possibly) Leiden, St Barbara (1), and Roomburg (1); Muiden, St Catharina (1); Tongeren,

8 On this type of Augustinian sisters, see K. Goudriaan, 'De observantie der conversinnen van Sint-Augustinus', in: *Monastiek observantisme en Moderne Devotie in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, ed. H. van Engen & G. Verhoeven (Hilversum 2008), pp. 168–211 with an overview of the monasteries on pp. 209–11.

St Agnetenberg (2); Utrecht, St Cecilia (1), St Maria Magdalena (2), and St Nicolaas (2); and Weesp, Jonge Hof (9) and Oude Hof (3).⁹

The text that occurs most often in our list of preserved incunabula is *Dat boeck des gulden throens*, the Middle Dutch translation of *Die vierundzwanzig Alten oder der goldene Thron der minnenden Seele*, written by the Basel Franciscan Otto of Passau (d. after 1383/86). This popular text was published twice in the Netherlands: first in Utrecht by the so-called 'Printer with the Monogram' (active 1479–1480) on 30 March 1480; the second time by Jacob Bellaert (active between 1483–86) in Haarlem on 25 October 1484.¹⁰ Six houses of canonesses regular and three communities of tertiaries owned the text; both editions occur in both branches of the *Devotio moderna*.

In the case of the copy owned by the canonesses of the Brussels convent of Jericho, it is clear how and when the copy (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), D-2797 (2)) found its way into the convent. In the period between 15 June 1482 and the same date of the following year, Prioress Elisabeth van Poylc (d. 1499) registered that Sister Anne Jordaens (d. 1495) purchased Otto of Passau's text (in the first edition from 1480) from her brother Adam (1449–94), a canon regular in St Maartensdal in Louvain, for the price of ten *schellingen*: 'Item for a Middle Dutch book called the golden throne which Sister Anna Jordaens bought from her brother Adam who lived in Louvain 10 shillings'.¹¹ Not much later, in the period between 15 June and All Saints 1483, the prioress purchased a 'studeerboeck' ('study book') for Anne's sister Griete

9 For a list of what each institution owned, see Appendix 1.

10 For the transmission of this text in the Low Countries, in both manuscript and early print, see A. Bouwman, 'Prozaproductie in twee kolommen. De Middelnederlandse bronnen van Otto von Passaus *Die 24 Alten*', in: *Manuscripten en miniaturen. Studies aangeboden aan Anne S. Korteweg bij haar afscheid van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, ed. J. Biemans et al. (Zutphen 2007), pp. 47–58; G.J. Jaspers, 'Otto von Passau in den Niederlanden', *Neophilologus*, 69 (1985), pp. 90–100, esp. pp. 96–7; G.J. Jaspers, 'Otto von Passau in Nederlandse handschriften', *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 60 (1986), pp. 302–48; and G. Jaspers, *Een Amsterdams Marialeven in 25 legenden uit handschrift 846 van Museum Amstelkring* (Middelieuwe Studies en Bronnen, 79) (Hilversum 2003), pp. 56–62. According to Jaspers (2003), copies of the Utrecht 1480 edition have also been preserved from *Diepenveen* (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek) and *Maria Magdalena op het Spui* (Louvain, Maurits Sabbebibliothek, fonds Berchmanianum). Unfortunately, he nor the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* mention the signatures.

11 'Item voir een dietsch boeck geheeten den guldenen throen dat suster Anna Yordaens aen haeren broeder Adam cochte te Loven woenende x schellingen', Rijksarchief te Brussel, Kerkarchief/Archives ecclésiastiques du Brabant, 12.784, f. 8v. On Anne and Griete Jordaens, see P. Stoop, *Schrijven in commissie. De zusters uit het Brusselse klooster Jericho en de preken van hun biechtvaders (ca. 1456–1510)* (Middelieuwe Studies en Bronnen, 127) (Hilversum 2013), pp. 107–10.

(d. 1519), also from their brother Adam: 'Item for a study book which I bought for Sister Griete Jordaens from her brother Adam, 4 shillings 3 pennies'.¹² In all probability, Elisabeth referred to the *Wech der sielen salicheit* (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 1480) that nowadays is bound together with *Dat boeck des gulden throens* (Paris, BnF, D-2797 (1)). Both early printed books contain comparable rubrication, which seems to have been added already in Utrecht (the penwork in *Dat boeck des gulden throens* certainly stems from that region). The folio with the printer's mark in *Dat boeck des gulden throens* contains the following ownership inscription: 'This book belongs to the convent of Jericho and was left to us by the sisters Jordaens. Pray for them for God's [sake]' (f. cxcvij verso).¹³ This ownership inscription, mentioning the plural *ghesusteren*, seems to imply that both books, which entered the convent separately, were bound together before they were passed on to the convent, possibly after the death of Griete in 1519.¹⁴ The explicit inclusion of the purchase of incunabula in the accounts of the convent of Jericho and the survival of the very books mentioned seems to be unique. Adam Jordaens's role in procuring these incunabula is intriguing. He seems to have acted as a kind of intermediary. Unfortunately, it is unclear how he had obtained the books, but it is not unconceivable that there was a connection to a book seller in Louvain.

Other copies of *Dat boeck des gulden throens* were donated to convents by lay people. The canonesses regular of Jerusalem in Utrecht received their book (again a copy of the first edition) from a woman and her son: 'This book belongs to the convent of nuns in Jerusalem and came from our mother Truide and Tyman her son. Pray for them for God's sake' (Utrecht, University Library

12 'Item om een studeerboeck dat ic zuster Grietken Jordaens cochte aen haren brueder Adam iiii schellingen iii denieren', Rijksarchief te Brussel, Kerkarchief/Archives ecclésiastiques du Brabant, 12.784, f. 17r.

13 'Dit boeck hoert toe den cloester van Jhericho ende is ons bleven vanden ghesusteren Joerdaens. Bidt voer hen om gode'. See also: *Corpus catalogorum Belgii. The Medieval Booklists of the Southern Low Countries*, ed. A. Derolez, V. Benjamin, and W. Bracke, 7 vols. (Brussel 1994–2009), vol. 7, no. 626.

14 Given that Elisabeth van Poyle mentions two separate payments over the course of eighteen months, it is unlikely that *Dat boeck des gulden throens* was bound together with the *Wech der sielen salicheit* at the time that it entered Jericho. A copy of an earlier edition of the *Wech der sielen salicheit* (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, before 5 May 1479) was owned by the tertiaries of St Barberadaal in Den Dungen near 's-Hertogenbosch: 'Dit boeck hoert toe ten susteren te sinte Barbarendale buyten Tsertogenbosch op die Eykendonck' ['This book belongs to the sisters of St Barberadaal outside 's-Hertogenbosch at the Eikendonck'] (The Hague, KB, KW 168 E 32, flyleaf at the front).

Den vierentwintichste ouden

francisco en alle heiligen ende
 enghelen die my al sterkeliken
 dar toe gheholpe hebbe: want
 sonder god en mach nyemant
 niet goets volbrengen Als on-
 se heer ihesus xpistus ghespro-
 ke heeft inden ewangelio. Daer
 na so bidde ick mit alle neerste
 en begheerten ende mit alle mi-
 nen crachte dat ghi mynende
 stel en alle gods vrienden ghe-
 stelic of werelick edel en onedel
 vrouwen ende mannen waer se
 sijn die hem der lere des boecks
 ghebeteren moghen uerichlike
 en neerstelike god voer mi bid-
 de willen. ick bin lewendich of
 doot voer ene broeder offen va-
 passau van sunte franciscus oer-
 den Die dit boeck vandē begin-
 ne totten eynde mit groter vlyt
 ernst en arbeit van stuc te stuc
 en van syne te synen alte sa-
 me ghemaect en volbrocht heb-
 be: opter heiliger hemelcher vor-
 stinne auont marien te lichemil-
 se Dat iaer doemē screef vā ihe-
 sus xpūs gheboert. Dulent drie
 hondert en ses en tachtich iaer.
 God si ons allen ghenadich.
 .A M & J.

Item dese voetscreuen broeder
 offen van passau was een ghe-
 leert man en was wel eer leers-
 meyster tot basel

Bider gratie gods so is die
 boec gheprint en gheynt in die
 stat vā utrecht **I**n iær ons
 heren. **M. CCCC.** en lxxx op
 den viften donredach dē xxxijē
 dach in die meert.



Deo gratias



Dit boeck hoert toe den cloester
 van herito en is ons bliuen
 vandē ghesusterē joerdaens.
 bdy voer, **1533** god.

FIGURE 1 Ownership inscription of Anne and Griete Jordaens in *Dat boeck des gulden throens* (Paris, BnF, D-2797 (2), f. cxcvj verso)

(UB), E fol. 153 (1), flyleaf at the front).¹⁵ The ‘onse moeder’ seems to imply that the woman who donated the book was not only a lay woman (she has a son), but also that she was the mother of a nun or nuns in the convent. As in the example from Jericho, this book entered the monastic institution via family relations, although in this case as a gift rather than as an acquisition the sisters paid for.¹⁶

It seems that Truide and Tyman did not only give the canonesses *Dat boeck des gulden throens*. This is bound together with the *Wech der sielen salicheit* (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 1480; Utrecht, UB, E fol. 153 (2)), creating the exact same combination as in the composite volume owned by the canonesses of Jericho, but in reverse order. The Brothers of the Common Life of St Hieronymus in Utrecht, who owned a large collection of incunabula themselves, bound both books, which have the same rubrication and penwork initials in a Utrecht style, in one binding.¹⁷

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- 15 ‘Dit boeck hoert den convent der nonnen in Jherusalem ende is ghecomen van onse moeder Truiden ende Tyman haer soen. Daer biddet voer om gods wil’, <http://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/index.php?obj=1874-312354&lan=en> | “page//15/74/28/157428390405038333425609122564797707023.jpg (accessed 13 November 2020). The online catalogue of the University Library of Utrecht mentions that the incunable stems from the convent of Jerusalem in Venray. As the binding most likely was produced by the Brothers of the Common Life of St Hieronymus in Utrecht (see below), and the sisters in Venray always mentioned the location of their convent explicitly in their manuscripts (for example ‘Dit boeck hoert toe den susteren van Jherusalem te Venray’ [‘This book belongs to the sisters of Jerusalem in Venray’] (The Hague, KB, 133 F 22), we assume that this copy of *Dat boeck des gulden throens* belongs to the sisters in Utrecht, who moved to the Kromme Nieuwe Gracht within the city walls of Utrecht in 1483. See also G. Gerritsen-Geywitz, *Het Utrechtse draakje en zijn entourage. Vijftien penwerkstijlen in Utrechtse handschriften en gedrukte boeken uit de tweede helft van de vijftiende eeuw* (Middelieuwe Studies en Bronnen, 168) (Hilversum 2017), pp. 88–9.
- 16 Manuscripts also often came into the possession of convents via family ties. See, for example, Th. de Hemptinne, ‘Reading, Writing, and Devotional Practices. Lay and Religious Women and the Written Word in the Low Countries (1350–1550)’, in: *The Voice of Silence. Women’s Literacy in a Men’s Church*, ed. Th de Hemptinne & M.E. Góngora (Medieval Church Studies, 9) (Turnhout 2004), pp. 122–6; and P. Stoop, ‘The Brussels Convent of Jericho and its Literary Network / El convent do Jericó en Bruselas y su red literaria’, *Anuario de estudios medievales*, 44.1 (2014), pp. 381–412.
- 17 <http://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/index.php?obj=1874312830&lan=en#page//12/57/78/125778831804862253842131851549309775386.jpg/mode/iup> and <https://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/index.php?obj=1874-312354&lan=en#page//16/26/48/162648632823087661061024182333764817819.jpg/mode/iup> (accessed 13 November 2020). For the style dominant in the *Boeck des gulden throens*, Gisela Gerritsen-Geywitz has coined the term ‘Thick nose’-style. See Gerritsen-Geywitz, op. cit. (n. 15), pp. 88–9. The University Library of Utrecht still owns twenty-seven incunabula from the Brothers’ library. See: K. van

Another male bookbinder from an unidentified religious community was responsible for binding a copy of the second, Haarlem edition of *Dat boeck des gulden throens*, owned by the canonesses regular of St Anna in Delft (Wolfenbüttel, HAB, A: 523.1 Theol. 2^o (2)). It was bound together with a copy of *Der sielen troest*, published by Jacob Bellaert less than three months before *Dat boeck des gulden throens*, on 9 August 1484. The note beneath the printer's mark at the end of *Dat boeck des gulden throens* (f. r9v) states that the book was bound by 'brother Dirck van Alcmaer'.¹⁸

The tertiaries of the convent of Maria Tenhemelopneming in Haarlem inherited their copy of *Dat boeck des gulden throens*, in the second edition printed by Jacob Bellaert, from Pieternel Direcksdochter and Marytgen Maertensdochter: 'Sisters of the convent of St Maria within Haarlem in St Jansstraat. Pieternel Direcksdochter and Marytgen Maertensdochter have given it to our sisters by way of testament' (Oxford, Bodleian Library (BodL), Auct. 6Q 5.23, f. r9r).¹⁹ Moreover, Pieternel and Marytgen also bestowed a copy of the first edition of the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* (Antwerp: Gerard Leeu, 1487), a dialogic recension in Middle Dutch of the *Vita Christi* by Ludolph of Saxony, to their convent's library: 'This book belongs to the sisters of the convent of St Maria in Haarlem in St Jansstraat [different hand] and has been given by Pieternel Dirckdochter and Marytgen Maertensdochter to our sisters by way of testament' (The Hague, Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum (MMW), 001 B 002,

der Horst et al., *Handschriften en Oude Drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek* (Utrecht 1984), p. 99.

- 18 'Dit boeck hoort tot die regulierissen van sinte Annen cloester' ['This book belongs to the canonesses regular of St Anna's cloister] (flyleaf at the front); 'Item Broer Dirck van Alcmaer heeft myn ghebonden' ['Item Brother Dirck van Alkmaar has bound me'].
- 19 'Susteren van sinte Marien convent binnen Haerlem in sinte Jans straet ende heeft ghegeven Pieternel Direcksdochter ende Marytgen Maertensdochter onse susteren tot een testament'. Although Pieternel and Marytgen cannot be identified, it is altogether possible that they were inhabitants of Maria Tenhemelopneming. The digital *Monasticon Trajectense* strikingly shows that the last names of the tertiaries in the Haarlem convent end in all cases but one with the suffix -dochter (-daughter) (see <https://www2.fgw.vu.nl/oz/monasticon/detail.php?ID=080> [accessed 13 November 2020]). As this apparently was a conscious choice – women's last names more often ended at this suffix, but seldom as systematically as in this house – it seems possible that we should read the 'our sisters' (in this ownership inscription as well as in the next one) as 'sisters of our community' and that they bequeathed the Otto of Passau's book to the convent in which they spent their lives. In that case, this ownership inscription should be translated as 'Sisters of the convent of St Maria within Haarlem in Sint-Jansstraat. Pieternel Direcksdochter and Marytgen Maertensdochter, our sisters, have given it by way of testament'.

f. 006r).²⁰ The change in hands seems to indicate that the book was indeed already in common use in the convent before the sisters' demise. A sixteenth-century note beneath the colophon of another copy of the same edition indicates that the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* was also in common use in the Brussels convent of Anne and Griete Jordaens: 'This book belongs to the monastery of Jericho at Brussels in the common library' (Paris, BnF, D-672, f. 006r).²¹ It is unclear how the book made its way into the library, but before it was placed there, the sisters inserted a penwork initial on folio a6r in a style typical of the Jericho convent, which can also be found in the manuscripts produced by the women. By adding the initial the sisters incorporated the book printed by a commercially operating lay printer in Antwerp into their own manuscript/book collection.

An unknown benefactor gave the sister of an unidentified female convent, Berbele Sthonts, a copy of the same edition of the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* for shared use by the sisters of her convent (Mettingen, Draifflessen Collection, Liberna Inc 22). The intended use could not have been clearer: Berbele requested that the book should be always kept in the convent's church for sisters with a devotion to Christ's life to read on Sundays and Holy days:

I, Sister Berbele Sthonts, have received this book for our sisters in common. Begging our reverend mother that it may always lie in the church so that on Sundays and Holy Days the sisters, who have love and devotion to the precious life of our dear Lord may read from it. Pray for me (f. 006r).²²

Other incunabula were also offered by individual canonesses and tertiaries for communal use: Sister Delyaen Pauwen, for example, gave a copy of the Psalter in Dutch (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), KW 151 D 13), printed in Delft in 1498, for collective use in her tertiary community of St Cecilia in Utrecht.²³

20 'Dit boec hoert toe den susteren van sinte Marien convent binnen Haerlem in sinte Jansstraet [different hand] ende heeft ghegeven Pietermel Dirckdochter ende Marytgen Maertensdochter onse susteren tot een testament'. See also A. Dlabáčová, 'Drukken en publieksgroepen. Productie en receptie van gedrukte Middelnederlandse meditatieve Levens van Jezus (ca. 1479–1540)', *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 79 (2008), p. 342.

21 'Desen boeck hoert toe den closter van Jhericho tot Brussel in die ghemeyn liberye'.

22 'Ic, suster Berbele Sthonts, hebbe desen boeck ghecreghen voer ons susteren int ghemeyne. Biddende onser eerweerdegher mater dat hi altoes inder kercken mach ligghen op dat die susteren des sondaechs ende des heylichs daeghs moeghen uut lesen die minne ende devocie hebben tot dat werdich leven ons liefs heren. Bidt voer mi'.

23 'Item desen souter geeft suster Delyaen Pauwen int gemeen' ['Item this psalter has given Sister Delyaen Pauwen for common use']. Next line: 'tUtrecht sinte Cecilien convent' ['In Utrecht in St Cecilia's convent'].

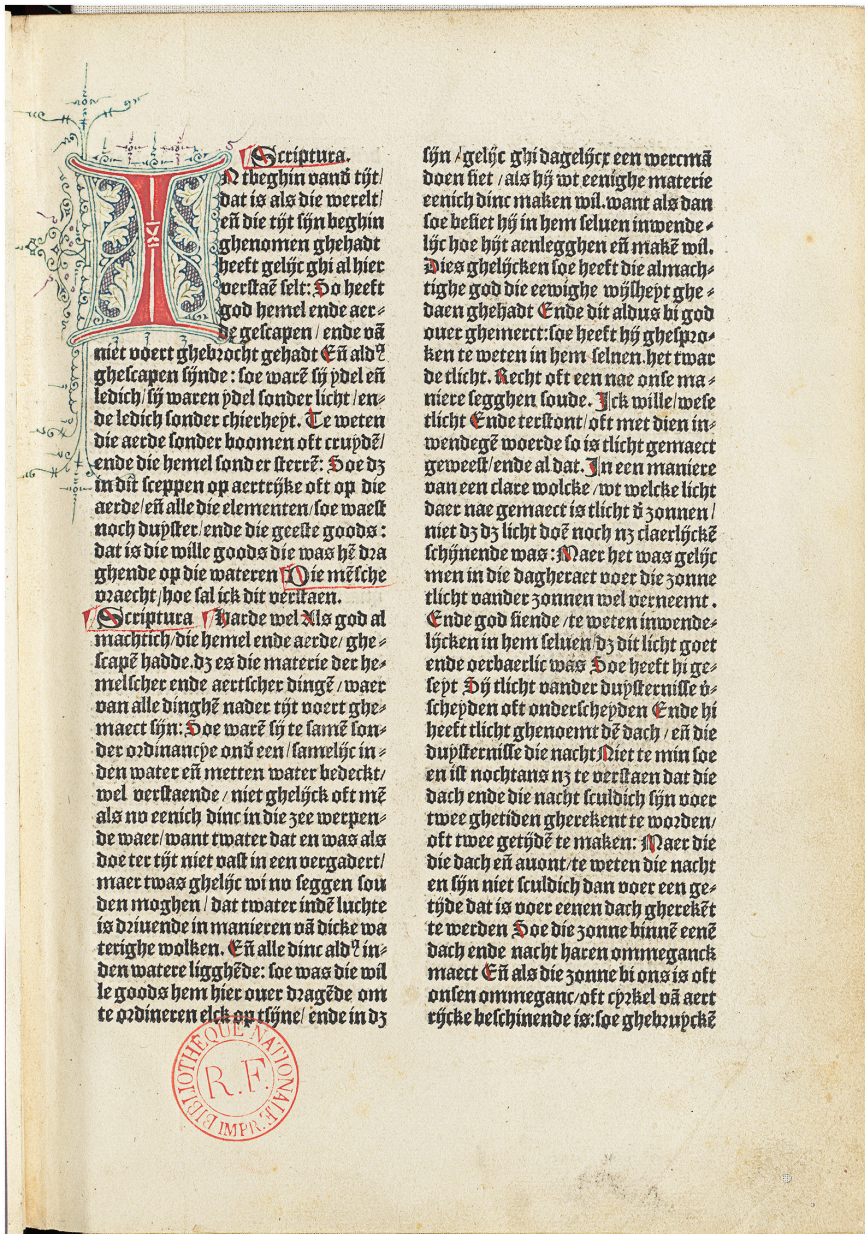


FIGURE 2 Penwork initial added to the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* by the sisters at Jericho in Brussels (Paris, BnF, D-672, f. a6r)

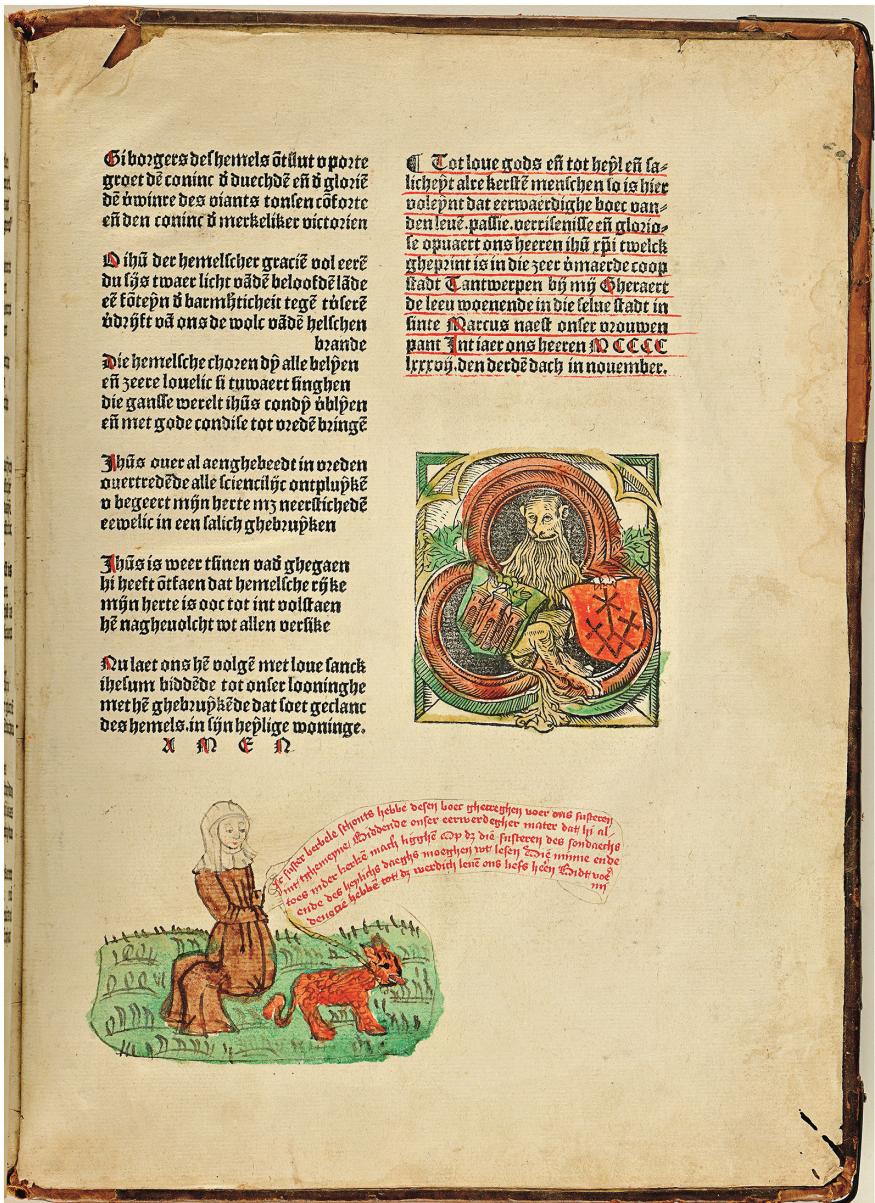


FIGURE 3 Ownership inscription and portrait of Berbele Sthonts, from Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Tboek vanden leven ons heeren Jhesu Christi* (Antwerp: Gerard Leeu, 03.11.1487)
© DRAIFLESSEN COLLECTION (LIBERNA), METTINGEN INC 22, F. 006R (PHOTO: STEPHAN KUBE, GREVEN).

Dierck Gherijtsdochter's copy of the *Tafelboec* – an extract from the *Tafel van den kersten ghelove* by Dirc van Delf (c. 1365–1404) turned into a weekly exercise and published in Utrecht by the Printer with the Monogram around 1479/80 – was placed in the common library of her convent of St Anna in Haarlem.²⁴ Beatrix Catrin Dirxdochter enriched the library of the canonesse regular of St Catharina in Amsterdam with a copy of the *Legenda aurea (Passionael)*, issued by Gerard Leeu in 1478 (Paris, BnF, RES-H-271).²⁵ The Haarlem tertiaries of St Anna who owned the *Tafelboec* also had a *Passionael* at their disposal, but their copy was of Leeu's second, 1480 edition (Oxford, BodL, Auct. III.Q.V.29). This book does not seem to have entered the convent through a specific sister.²⁶ The ownership inscription does not specify how the book was acquired, which is actually the case in the majority of incunabula in the possession of canonesse regular and tertiaries.

How Berbele, Delyaen, Dierck, and Beatrix acquired the incunabula that they donated for common use is unclear. A family member might well have given these books to them. Apart from parents – see the case of mother Truide and her son Tyman above – godmothers and uncles also bequeathed printed books to tertiaries. The Amsterdam tertiaries of Elfduizend Maagden, who owned a copy of the Haarlem edition of Otto of Passau's work, received a copy of the *Van den leven der heiligen vaderen (Dat vader boeck)*, the Middle Dutch translation of the *Vitas patrum*, published by Gerard Leeu in 1480, from Sister Dieue Aelberts' godmother. According to the ownerships inscription, she passed away in 1530 on the day after the feast the beheading of St John the Baptist (25 June). The different hands in, and alterations to, the note, suggest that the annotation was altered after Dieue's godmother died.²⁷ This may have

24 Haarlem, SB, 56 D 19, ff. 1r and 19v: 'Item dit boeck hoert Dierck Gherijtsdochter toe, een zuster tot Sinte Anna conventh ende is gheordineert in die ghemiene boecken des [convenths]' ['Item this book belongs to Dierck Gherijtsdochter, a sister in the convent of Sint-Anna, and is arranged between the convent's common books'].

25 'Item dit boec hoert totten bescloten nonnen en ende [!] regulierissen van sancta Katerina binnen Amstelredam. Dit boec is ghecomen van Becatrix [Beatrix] Cktrin [Catrin] Drixdr [!], onse stuster [!]' ['Item this book belongs to the enclosed nuns and the canonesse regular of St Catharina in Amsterdam. This book has come from Beatrix Catrin Dirxdochter, our sister']. See also L. Hellinga, 'De betekenis van Gheraert Leeu', in: K. Goudriaan et al., *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477–1484* (Delft 1993), p. 28.

26 The note in this copy simply reads 'Dit boec hoert tot den susteren van Sinte Annen convent binnen Haerlem' ['This book belongs to the sisters of the convent of St Anna in Haarlem'] (fol A1v). See <https://data.cerl.org/mei/00206998> (accessed 13 November 2020).

27 'Dit boeck hoert toe [change of hand] den susteren van den xidusent machden binnen Amstelredam ende is ghecomen van Dieue Aelberts petemoey die ghestorven is int jaer ons heren dusent vijfhondert ende xxx daechs na sancte Jans onthoudinghes dach' ['This book belongs to the sisters of Elfduizend Maagden in Amsterdam, and has come from

happened by way of commemoration, but it is also possible that the book only entered the Amsterdam community after the godmother's demise, after which her note was changed by the tertiaries. The same binding, contemporary to the books but with a restored spine, also holds a copy of the Dutch translation of the *Dialogus creaturarum*, the *Twispraec der creaturen* (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 1481).

The great uncle of Katrijn Claes Vranckendochter, inhabitant of the Leiden tertiary convent of Roomburg, was Jan Philipszoon, city clerk in the same city and compiler of a varied collection of versified texts in manuscript (between 1472 and 1481).²⁸ Around the time of his death in 1509, he donated a copy of the same edition of the Dutch version of the *Vitas patrum* owned by Elfduizend maagden in Amsterdam. Similarly to the canonesses regular of Jerusalem in Utrecht, who denoted Trude as 'our mother', the note by the Leiden tertiaries indicates Jan Philipszoon as 'our uncle': 'This book belongs to Johannes Philipzsoon our uncle, secretary of the city of Leiden, and has given it by way of testament to the sisters of St Margareta on Roomburg' (Paris, Fondation Custodia, OB-0.11.6).²⁹ Some incunabula thus only reached tertiaries and regular canonesses after they had lived a life in the hands of lay readers.³⁰

Dieue Aelberts' godmother who passed away in 1530 on the day after St John's beheading'] (The Hague, KB, KW 170 E 26:1, flyleaf at the front). See <https://archive.org/details/ned-kbn-all-00001917-001/page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed 13 November 2020).

- 28 See H. Brinkman, *Het handschrift-Jan Phillipsz. Hs. Berlijn, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Germ. Qu. 557* (Middelleeuwse Verzamelhandschriften uit de Nederlanden, 2) (Hilversum 1995); H. Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde. Literatuur in Leiden aan het einde van de middeleeuwen* (Middelleeuwse Studies en Bronnen, 53) (Hilversum 1997). On Roomburg, see M. van Luijk, 'De tweede religieuze vrouwenbeweging te Leiden. Het convent van Sint-Margaretha of Roomburg', *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 74 (2000), 50–67.
- 29 'Dit boeck hoort toe Johannes Philipszoon onse oem, secretarius der steden van Leyden, ende heefttet ghegeven tot enen testament den susteren sancta Margrieten op Rodenburch'. This copy is excellently introduced by H. van der Linden, 'A Little Known Copy of *Vanden leven der heiligher vaderen* (Gouda: Leeu, 1480) with Early Dutch Provenances', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 92 (2017), pp. 53–63.
- 30 It is not clear in all cases whether these lay readers had family ties to the religious communities to which they donated books. Aef Jan Hannesdochter left her copy of *Der bien boeck* by Thomas of Cantimpré (1201–c. 1272) after her death to the tertiaries of St Catharina in Hoorn (New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Library, Beinecke 1973+12); it is only known from a seventeenth-century note that she came from a wealthy family in Wijdenes, a small village located some nine kilometers east of Hoorn. See J.M.M. Hermans, *Zwolve boeken voor een markt zonder grenzen 1477–1523* ('t Goy–Houten 2005), p. 151. Copies of *Der bien boeck* also have been preserved from a convent of St Maria in Nazareth (possibly Jonge Hof in Alkmaar) and from the tertiaries of St Clara in Enkhuizen. This latter copy is bound together with the Haarlem 1484 edition of *Dat boeck des gulden throens* (Louvain, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Fonds Berchmanianum, 6000 A 27 (1–2)).

Manuscript, Print, and the Dissemination of Texts

Jan Philipszoon did not only give an incunabula to his niece's tertiary convent. He also left the women a manuscript, written c. 1465, with the Pseudo-Eusebian *Epistola de morte Hieronymi* and the Pseudo-Augustinian *Epistola de magnificentiis beati Hieronymi* in Middle Dutch (the so-called *Sinte Jheronimus sterfboeck*; Leiden, UB, BPL 2260, f. 1v).³¹ The manuscript was given to his niece, Katrijn Claes Vranckendochter, as is clear from her ownership inscription on f. 2v: 'This book belongs to Katrijn Claes Vranckendochter in Roomburg'.³² Another manuscript (Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent (MCC), BMH h94) owned by the Roomburg tertiaries, and more specifically Katrijn Claes Vranckendochter, is thought to have been used to correct the copy for the edition of the *Vertroostinghe der gelatenre menschen*, published by the local printer Hugo Janszoon van Woerden in 1502.³³ The book collection of the Roomburg tertiaries, and Katrijn in particular, is a telling example of how manuscripts and printed books were used alongside one another, how book culture in the early sixteenth century diversified, and how both media influenced one another. That raises the question how printed books affected the presence of books *and* texts in communities of regular canonses and tertiaries. What was the ratio between manuscripts and printed books? Did incunabula bring new texts to existing libraries?

While some incunabula were incorporated into substantial manuscript libraries – for example of the regular canonses in Jericho (30 manuscripts from before 1510), Diepenveen (32), St Agnes in Maaseik (84), and Nazareth in Geldern (40) –³⁴ the introduction of others significantly increased the number of books available in a convent. In some communities, such as the tertiaries of

31 Another niece, Margriete Claesdochter, a lay woman, received a handwritten Book of Hours (c. 1481) from her uncle (Leiden, UB, BPL 2782).

32 'Dit boeck behoert tot Katrijn Claes Vranckendochter op Roemburch'.

33 See B.J.M. de Bont, 'Een handschrift uit het klooster Roemburch bij Leiden. "Die troestinghe der ghelatenre menschen"', *Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis van het Bisdom Haarlem*, 27 (1903), p. 266; *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden*, ed. Claudine Lemaire et al. (Brussel 1973), pp. 11–12 (cat. no. 7); *Stad van boeken. Handschrift en druk in Leiden, 1260–2000*, ed. A. Bouwman (Leiden 2008), p. 92; Th. Mertens, 'De invloed van de werken van Hendrik Mandé', in: *Moderne devotie, figuren en facetten. Tentoonstelling ter herdenking van het sterfjaar van Geert Grote, 1384–1984. Catalogus*, ed. A.J. Geurts (Nijmegen 1984), p. 196. See also Van der Linden, op. cit. (n. 29), p. 58.

34 For the book collection from Jericho, see Stoop, op. cit. (n. 11), pp. 371–419. The other numbers are taken from the online *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta*, <https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/> (accessed 13 November 2020).

Maria Tenhemelopneming (2),³⁵ and St Anna in Haarlem (2), and the canonesses regular of Jerusalem in Utrecht (1) the number of extant books is doubled by the incunabula that we were able to trace. In some cases, incunabula are even the only kind of extant book(s) with religious works from a convent (for example the tertiaries of St Nicolaas in Utrecht).³⁶ The ‘impact’ of incunabula in this sense, with regard to the numbers of books owned alone and based on the material presented in this article, seems to have been largest in communities of tertiaries. In general, they owned fewer manuscripts and in their acquisition of printed books they seem to surpass the canonesses regular.

Nevertheless, even incunabula that entered into a larger collection could have a significant impact on the dissemination and availability of texts. Texts such as Otto of Passau’s *Boeck des gulden throens* and the *Wech der sielen salicheit* were already available in manuscript in the Low Countries, but their dissemination was rather limited: (parts of) the latter text are contained in seven extant manuscripts and three manuscripts (of which the oldest dates to 1448) contain the full text of the *Boeck des gulden throens* independent of the printed editions.³⁷ At least five manuscripts of the *Boeck des gulden throens*, however, are in fact copies from the incunabula editions.³⁸ Other texts, such as the dialogue between Man and Lady Scripture in the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* or the Dutch recension of the *Dialogus creaturarum*, did apparently not circulate at all in manuscript before they were published in print.³⁹ The relatively recent translation of Thomas of Cantimpré’s *Bonum universale de apibus* (1451), on the other hand, seems to have already been popular in handwritten form amongst religious females in the Northern Low Countries and tertiaries

35 The name Maria Tenhemelopneming is taken from the online ‘Kloosterlijst’, <https://www2.fgw.vu.nl/oz/kloosterlijst/kdetails.php?ID=H22> (accessed 13 November 2020). In the scholarly literature the convent is often mentioned as Maria Visitatie. In the online *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta* it is simply mentioned as St Maria, <https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/lexicontermen/LEXI00000004917> (accessed 13 November 2020).

36 The convent owned the *Spiegel des kersten gheloefs* and the *Tafel des Kersteliken levens*, both printed by Gerard Leeu in Gouda in 1478. Furthermore, only a convent chronicle in manuscript can be linked to the sisters of St Nicolaas: see Van der Horst, op. cit. (n. 17), p. 109.

37 The numbers of the *Wech der sielen salicheit* are taken from the *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta*, <https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/> (accessed 13 November 2020). On the *Wech der sielen salicheit*, see G. Warnar, ‘Wech der sielen salicheit’, *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 16 (1994), col. 1338 and K. Pansters, *De kardinale deugden in de Lage Landen, 1200–1500* (Hilversum 2007), pp. 96–8.

38 Bouwman, op. cit. (n. 10), pp. 49–50.

39 Other ‘new’ texts include the *Spiegel des kersten gheloefs* and the *Tafel des Kersteliken levens* owned by the Utrecht tertiaries of St Nicolaas.

in particular. The surviving copies of the 1488 edition by Peter van Os suggest a continuation of this trend.⁴⁰

Even works that were well-known and represented in ample numbers among fifteenth-century manuscripts owned by various communities of canonesses regular and tertiaries, were still in demand in print, even if the printed books did not immediately replace older manuscripts. The Dutch translation of Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, the so-called *Passionael*, is a good example. Our investigation yielded four copies of three different editions owned by canonesses regular and tertiaries. In a copy of the second edition of the *Passionael* (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 1480), nowadays in the national library of France in Paris, about ten Saints such as Odilia, Victoria, Basiulius, and Concordius are added to the table of contents (written in the margin). Below the table of contents, the same person added the following instruction: 'The [ones] that are written here, search in the old passionael' (Paris, BnF, RES-H-172).⁴¹ The 'old passionael' was likely a manuscript of the Dutch translation of Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, which implies that this book was added to a (convent) library, and that (older) manuscript copies remained in use once printed recensions started to become available. Unfortunately, the copy has no ownership inscription, but the handwritten reading instructions in the Dutch vernacular, and clearly directed at a fellow user of the book collection, suggest that the book was owned by a (female) religious community. The penwork initials have been added in a style typical of Haarlem, which might point to reception in that city.

Latin versus Middle Dutch

The incunabula owned by women's institutions linked to the *Devotio moderna* also shed light on another aspect of the medieval library collections from convents of tertiaries and canonesses regular that has been understudied thus far: the share of Latin books in them. As a result of the focus of previous research on the Middle Dutch manuscripts from religious institutions in the Low Countries, it is unclear to what extent religious women had access to devotional texts in the language that is mostly considered to be reserved for men. Of the 32 manuscripts from Diepenveen, for example, at least five are written

40 Stooker & Verbeij, op. cit. (n. 2), p. 221, p. 276, p. 302. C.M. Stutvoet-Joanknecht, *Der byen boeck. De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Bonum universale de apibus van Thomas van Cantimpré en hun achtergrond* (Amsterdam 1990), p. 130.

41 'Dese die hier gheteikent sijn soect int oude passionael'.

(or contain texts) in Latin. Our list of 85 incunabula shows that the share of Latin volumes in female houses was fairly substantial: no fewer than 32 (38%) were printed in that language. Interestingly, the tertiaries owned almost as many Latin (22) as Middle Dutch books (26), whereas the canonesses regular possessed 27 Middle Dutch incunabula and only 10 in Latin.

Obviously, the books in Middle Dutch were all published in the important printing centres in the Low Countries: Antwerp (Claes Leeu and Geraert Leeu), Delft (Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer, and Christiaen Snellaert), Gouda (Geraert Leeu), Haarlem (Jacob Bellaert), Leiden (Hugo Janszoon van Woerden), Utrecht (Printer with the Monogram), and Zwolle (Peter van Os). Ten of the Latin incunabula were printed in the Netherlands as well. In a number of cases, these books were related to the liturgy of the Chapter of Windesheim, such as the *Breviarium Windeshemense* that belonged to the canonesses regular of Ter Lelie in Amsterdam (The Hague, KB, KW 234 F 26); and the *Breviarium Windeshemense* and the Book of Hours that were owned by the canonesses of Soeterbeek (Nijmegen, UB, IV 51 and IV 136). The *Breviarium Trajectense* that belonged to the tertiaries of St Catharina in Harderwijk (The Hague, KB, KW 150 E 29) followed the liturgy of the Chapter of Utrecht. Others, such as the *Consolatio Philosophiae*, printed in Ghent in 1485 by Arend de Keysere (d. 1490), or *Liber bibliae moralis* and the *Quadragesimale: sertum fidea* by the Dominican preacher Leonardo Mattei da Udine (c. 1399–1469), printed respectively in 1477 and 1479–80 by Richardus Pafraet (c. 1455–1512) in Deventer, could be distributed to a larger, European market.

Conversely, it is not unexpected that books that were printed in other regions in Europe found their way to the Low Countries. With six incunabula from the period between 1472 and 1484, the prolific and nearby printing centre of Cologne is best represented in our list; other books came from Strassburg (3), Nuremberg (2), Basel (3), and Venice (1). Interestingly, the Latin books in our corpus show a vast diversity: all of them are single copies of different texts. The printed books in Dutch owned by tertiaries and canonesses regular, on the other hand, are often copies of the same text: sometimes of one edition, for example Thomas of Cantimpré's *Bien boec* (3 copies); more often, however, they occurred in two or three editions. Cases in point are the already extensively mentioned *Boeck des gulden throens* (10 copies of two editions), the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi*, printed on 3 November 1487 by Gerard Leeu in Antwerp and a year later, on 20 November 1488, by his brother Claes (4 copies), and *Die duytsche Souter*, which was printed in 1480, 1487, and 1498 in Delft, by Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and/or Christiaen Snellaert (3 copies). Some of these texts clearly found their way to several religious communities and can be considered best-sellers.

Although our list reveals that some of the convents possessed incunabula in the vernacular only and others only Latin ones – the role of coincidence should not be underestimated here – the surviving books of the canoneses regular of Ter Lelie, the tertiaries of Elfduizend Maagden in Amsterdam, and the canoneses regular of Diepenveen show that both languages functioned alongside one another within female communities. The extant books from the last convent seem to indicate, however, that language had consequences for who would use the books. The *Liber Bibliae moralis* by the Benedictine author Petrus Berchorius (c. 1290–1362), printed by Richard Pafraet in Deventer in 1477, according to its ownership inscription belonged to the Diepenveen community in general: ‘This book belongs to Diepenveen’ (Deventer, Athenaeumbibliotheek (AB), 2000 E 53 KL, first flyleaf at the front).⁴² The same applies to the post-incunable that contains the *Rosetum exercitiorum spiritualium* by Jan Mombaer (1460–1501) that was printed in Paris by Jean Petit and Jean Scabelerius on 13 August 1510: ‘In Diepenveen near Deventer in the order of Augustinian canoneses regular’ (Deventer, AB, 113 B 8 KL, second parchment flyleaf at the front).⁴³ The ownership inscriptions of the two incunabula with Middle Dutch translations of Jacob of Voragine’s *Sermonen op die evangelien van de zondagen door dat gehele jaer* and Otto of Passau’s *Boeck des gulden throens*, however, specifically mention that the books belonged to the ‘external sisters’ or ‘the sisters outside the enclosure’, i.e. the lay sisters.⁴⁴ Thus, the extant printed books brought together in the present study indicate that the reading of Latin was reserved for the professed canoneses and that there was a difference in the level of literacy between groups in the community, which also may reflect differences in social class between the sisters.

42 ‘Pertinet in Dyepeveen’. According to two other ownership inscriptions at the same flyleaf, the book at some point in time also belonged to the Crosiers in Emmerich. A third note mentions ‘Yserloe’, which is the name of a small hamlet in the Achterhoek in Gelderland. Whether this is also the name of a person, or refers to the court of the Lords of Anholt is unclear. See Suzan Folkerts, ‘Een derde exemplaar van Deventers eersteling in de Athenaeumbibliotheek. De verspreiding van de Liber Bibliae moralis, gedrukt in 1477 door Richard Pafraet’, in: *Oude boeken, nieuwe podia. Liber amicorum voor Marieke van Delft / Old Books New Platforms: Liber amicorum for Marieke van Delft*, ed. Jan Bos et al., (Den Haag 2021), pp 116–22.

43 ‘In Diepenveen prope Daventriam ordinis regularissarum augustini’.

44 ‘buten susteren’; ‘den susteren buten dat besloot’. See, respectively, the note glued onto the verso side of the title page of Deventer, AB, 113 B 7 KL (Jacobus of Voragine): ‘Dyt boeck hoert toe den buten buten [!] susteren van Diepenven’ [‘This book belongs to the external sisters of Diepenveen’] and the flyleaf at the front of Deventer, AB, 113 B 6 KL (Otto of Passau): ‘Item dit boeck hoert int cloester to Diepenveen. Welck ghegeven is den susteren buten dat besloot van bruder Willem dat sy god voer hem bidden sullen’ [‘Item this book belongs tot he convent of Diepenveen. It is given to the sisters outside the enclosure by brother Willem so that they will pray for him to God’] (flyleaf at the front).

Other indications about who was using Latin books can be found in the incunabula from the Jonge Hof in Weesp. Quite exceptionally we know of nine extant books from this convent of tertiaries, all of them printed in Latin. Six of them have ownership inscriptions that very generally point to the convent: 'Book of the convent of St Maria in Weesp' (for example, The Hague, KB, KW 168 B 33) or 'Book of the convent of the young sisters of St Maria in Weesp' (The Hague, KB, KW 169 B 25).⁴⁵ In two books, one with the *Glossa magistralis Psalterii* by Peter Lombard (c. 1100–1160) (The Hague, KB, KW 169 A 13), and one with the second part of the *Summa theologiae* by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) (The Hague, KB, KW 170 A 10), the ownership inscription mentions that they were 'for the use of the confessor'.⁴⁶ Thus the books were clearly used for the spiritual care of the women in the community. The same applied to the composite volume with Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and *De trinitate* (Basel: Johann Amerbach, 1490), which was used by Simon Wilhelm Castricum, priest and confessor in the convent of canonesses regular of St Agnes in The Hague, in 1521 (Haarlem, Stadsbibliotheek (SB), 183 C 9 (1–2)).⁴⁷ At first glance it seems that the confessors possessed theological treatises or glossaries in Latin that could help them to explain Scripture, whereas professed women had access to Latin texts with a more devotional and didactic character that facilitated individual study and meditation. Further research, however, is needed to get firmer ideas of what types of books – manuscripts as well as early printed books – were intended for which groups within female monastic houses.

45 'Liber conventus sancte Marie in Weesp'; 'Liber conventus iuniorum sororum beate sancte Marie in Weesp'. The ownership inscriptions in The Hague, KB, KW 169 A 24 f. V10v, interestingly tells us that the *Summa de casibus conscientiae* by the Franciscan canon lawyer and theologian Astesanus of Asti (d. c. 1330) (Strassburg: Printer of Henricus Ariminensis (Georg Reyser?), not after 9 May 1474) was bound by Gerard van Buren, carthusian in St Salvator/Nieuwlicht in Utrecht and that it should stay forever in the use of the tertiaries of Jonge Hof: 'Venerabilis dominus Gherardus de Buren, canonicus sancti Salvatoris in Trajecto, legavit librum istum domui seu conventui sancte Marie in Weesp. Salvo que non alienetur [ab] illa domo sed sit imperpetuum usum pri(...s ibidem in tempo' ['The venerable lord Gerard van Buren, canon of St Salvator in Utrecht, has bound this book for the house or convent of St Mary in Weesp. Store it so that it will not be stolen from this house but may it be for the infinite use of the same [...] over time'].

46 'ad usum confessoris'.

47 The incunabula in Haarlem, Stadsbibliotheek mentioned in this article have been catalogued by G.J. Jaspers, *De blokboeken en incunabulen in Haarlems Libry* (Haarlem 1988). The idea that Latin incunabula were used by the confessors in the *cura monialium* of women religious is also apparent from the extant collection from the poor clares of Bethlehem in Brussels, who fall outside the scope of this article. Nineteen out of twenty-three incunabula that are preserved from this house, were according to their ownership inscriptions part of the library of the confessors (*Bibliotheca confessorii*).

Conclusion

The exploration of incunabula owned by tertiaries and canonesses regular in the Low Countries indicates that the earliest printed books affected book ownership and access to texts significantly. We were able to trace no fewer than 82 incunabula from these two types of female houses only (for full details, see Appendix 1). Especially in communities of tertiaries, the incunabula traced in this article often represent a substantial increase in book ownership. The texts contained in these books were important additions to the women's library collections: some editions introduced 'new' texts (or at least new recensions of texts, such as the dialogic *Boeck van den leven Jhesu Christi*), while others provided texts that had already gained (some) popularity among these groups of women in manuscript form (for example Thomas of Cantimpré's *Bien boec*). Printing, of course, eliminates the actual practice of copying of a text, which is how fifteenth-century (semi-)religious women often acquired manuscripts: they wrote their own books. Incunabula were either donated or bought, and this happened often through familial connections.

Geographically, the reception of incunabula seems to concentrate in the Northern Netherlands, but this is also the region with the highest number of the type of communities under discussion here. Incunabula, and thus the texts contained in them – travelled interregionally: books produced in Utrecht were read in Brussels, and others produced in Zwolle found their way to communities in Amsterdam, Alkmaar, and Hoorn. The market in Latin incunabula was truly international, and the Latin books that found their way to tertiaries and canonesses regular in the Low Countries were probably acquired via agents (book sellers) and through confessors, as seems to have been the case in Weesp.

Our preliminary study clearly indicates that incunabula were fully integrated into the existing book collections and reading practices rather than taking a place in the communities and their libraries at the expense of manuscripts. They were used alongside manuscripts, decorated as manuscripts, and they even influenced manuscript culture in the sense that they served as copy for manuscripts (*Boeck des gulden throens*). Studies into late medieval book ownership among (semi-)religious women will undoubtedly benefit from likewise integrating printed books into research, giving them the place they deserve, and allowing manuscript studies to become – at least to a certain extent – influenced by our increasing knowledge about incunabula. More data about the ownership of incunabula will help book, literary, and art historians answer questions concerning the (changing) acquisition policy of books by convent sisters after the introduction of the printing press. Thus, we can come to a more complete understanding of how communities of religious women

enjoyed intimate and dynamic connections to the (secular) world around them, not only via familial ties, but also via active intellectual interest and cultural exchange.

Appendix 1: List of Incunabula in Convents of Canonesses Regular and Tertiaries

(After each first entry of a text or an edition thereof the ISTC-number will be mentioned).

Canonesses regular	Edition	Repository
Amsterdam, St Agnes?	<i>Die duytsche Souter</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 24 March 1491) (ISTC ip01071000)	London, British Library (BL), A.48145
Amsterdam, St Catharina	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Legenda aurea / Passio nael (Winter- ende Somerstuc)</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 1478) (ISTC ij00139000)	Paris, BnF, RES-H-271
	Bernardus of Clairvaux, <i>Sermonen (Winter- ende somerstuck)</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 27 May 1495) (ISTC ib00435000)	London, BL, IB.48163
Amsterdam, St Maria Magdalena op het Spui	Otto of Passau, <i>Dat boeck des gulden throens</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 30 March 1480) (ISTC io00124000)	Louvain, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, fonds Berchmanianum (shelfmark unknown)
Amsterdam, Ter Lelie	Johannes Gerlach, <i>Leven van Liedwij, die maghet van Schiedam</i> (Delft: Christiaen Snellaert, 11 June 1490) (ISTC ig00182550)	The Hague, KB, KW 169 G 85
	Jerome, <i>Van den leven der heiligen vaderen</i> (Delft: Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, before 5 April 1498) (ISTC ih00212000)	The Hague, KB, KW 170 E 13

(cont.)

Canonesses regular	Edition	Repository
	<i>Breviarium Windeshemense</i> (Schoonhoven: Canonici Regulares apud S. Michaellem in Den Hem, c. 1 February 1499) (ISTC ib01144500)	The Hague, KB, KW 234 F 26
Beverwijk, Marienborn	Gotschalchus Hollen, <i>Praeceptorium divinae legis</i> (Köln: Johann Guldenschaff, 1484) (ISTC ih00294000)	Haarlem, SB, 183 B 9
Brussels, Onze Lieve Vrouw ter Rosen gheplant in Jericho	<i>Wech der sielen salicheit</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 13 January 1480) (ISTC iw00010750)	Paris, BnF, D-2797 (1)
	Otto of Passau, <i>Dat boeck des gulden throens</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 30 March 1480)	Paris, BnF, D-2797 (2)
	Ludolph of Saxony, <i>Boeck van- den leven ons Heeren Jesu Christi</i> (Antwerp: Geraert Leeu, 1487) (ISTC il00353000)	Paris, BnF, D-672
Delft, St Agnes in het dal van Josaphat	Nicholas of Lyra, <i>Postilla super totam Bibliam</i> (Strassburg: Johann Mentelin, not after 1472) (ISTC in00133000)	The Hague, KB, KW 169 A 3 (1-2)
Delft, St Anna	<i>Der sielen troest</i> (Haarlem: Jacob Bellaert, 9 August 1484) (ISTC is00361000)	Wolfenbüttel, HAB, A: 523.1 Theol. 2° (1)
	Otto of Passau, <i>Dat boeck des gulden throens</i> (Haarlem: Jacob Bellaert, 25 October 1484) (ISTC io00125000)	Wolfenbüttel, HAB, A: 523.1 Theol. 2° (2)
Deursen near Ravenstein, Soeterbeeck	<i>Breviarium Windeshemense</i> (Delft: Henricus Eckert van Homberch, August 1499) (ISTC ib01144550)	Nijmegen, UB, IV 51
	Book of hours <i>ad usum</i> Windesheim (Schoonhoven: Canonici Regulares apud S. Michaellem in Den Hem, date unknown)	Nijmegen, UB, IV 136

(cont.)

Canonesses regular	Edition	Repository
Diepenveen, St Maria and St Agnes	Petrus Berchorius, <i>Liber bibliae moralis</i> (Deventer: Pafraet, 1477) (ISTC ib00338000)	Deventer, AB, 2000 E 53 KL
	Otto of Passau, <i>Boeck des gulden throens</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 30 March 1480)	Deventer, AB, 113 B 6 KL
	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Sermonen op die evangelien van de zondagen door dat gehele jaer</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 6 November 1489) (ISTC ij00197400)	Deventer, AB, 113 B 7 KL
Dordrecht, St Agnes	Ludolph of Saxony, <i>Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi</i> (Antwerp: Claes Leeu, 20 November 1488) (ISTC il00355000)	Haarlem, SB, 56 E 2
Geldern, Nazareth	Ludolph of Saxony, <i>Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi</i> (Antwerp: Geraert Leeu, 3 November 1487)	Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Inc. fol.10048-1 and Inc.fol.10048-2
Gent, St Agnes	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Legenda aurea / Passionael</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 18 November 1490 (1) and 1 September 1490 (2))	Hiersemann 562 (March 1926)
Hoorn, Bethlehem	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Legenda aurea / Passionael</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 18 November 1490) (ISTC ij00142000)	The Hague, KB, KW 171 E 28
Leiden, St Cecilia	<i>Biblia: Vetus Testamentum</i> [Dutch]. Without the Psalms, but including the Apocrypha (Delft: Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantszoon, 10 January 1477) (ISTC ib00648000)	Cambridge, UL, Inc.3.E.2.1[2809]
Leiden, Rapenburg	<i>Die duytsche souter</i> (Delft: Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer, 12 February 1480) (ISTC ip01070000)	The Hague, MMW, 001 F 013

(cont.)

Canonesses regular	Edition	Repository
	Otto of Passau, <i>Dat boeck des gulden throens</i> (Haarlem: Jacob Bellaert, 25 October 1484)	Leiden, UB, 1498 B 2
	<i>Die duytsche souter</i> (Delft: Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer or Christiaen Snellaert, 1487) (ISTC ip01070500)	Cambridge, University Library (UL), Inc.6.E.2.2[2833]
Maaseik, St Agnes	Guilielmus Paraldus, <i>Summa de virtutibus et vitiis</i> (Köln: Heinrich Quentell, 1479) (ISTC ip00084000)	Oxford, BodL, Auct. 1Q 3.30
Moerkerke near Bruges, Sarepta	Hugo de Prato Florido, <i>Sermones dominicales super evangelia et epistolas</i> (Zwolle: Johannes de Vollenhoe, before 20 June 1480)	London, BL, IB.48108
Oegstgeest near Leiden, Marienpoel	<i>Biblia: Vetus Testamentum</i> [Dutch]. Without the Psalms, but including the Apocrypha (Delft: Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantszoon, 10 January 1477) (ISTC ib00648000)	Utrecht, UB, D fol 420 (Rariora)
	Jerome, <i>Van den leven der heiligen vaderen</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 3 December 1480) (ISTC ih00210000)	Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I (KBR), B 1449
	Bernardus of Clairvaux, <i>Sermonen (Winter- ende somerstuck)</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 24 December 1484 (1) and 30 April 1485 (2)) (ISTC ib00434000)	Utrecht, UB, S MAG, Rariora qu 19
The Hague, St Agnes	Augustine, <i>De civitate Dei</i> (Basel: Johann Amerbach, 13 February 1490) (ISTC ia01244000)	Haarlem, SB, 183 C 9 (1)
	Augustine, <i>De trinitate</i> (Basel: Johann Amerbach, 1490) (ISTC ia01345000)	Haarlem, SB, 183 C 9 (2)
Utrecht, Jerusalem	Otto of Passau, <i>Boeck des gulden throens</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 30 March 1480)	Utrecht, UB, E fol. 153 (1)

(cont.)

Canonesses regular	Edition	Repository
Venray, Jerusalem	<i>Wech der sielen salicheit</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, 1480)	Utrecht, UB, E fol. 153 (2)
	Ludolph of Saxony, <i>Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi</i> (Zwolle, Peter van Os, 15 March 1499) (ISTC il00357000)	Utrecht, MCC, ABM I 13
Tertiaries	Edition	Repository
Alkmaar, Jonge Hof (?)	Thomas of Cantimpré, <i>Der bien boeck</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 15 January 1488) (ISTC it00348000)	Brussels, KBR, Inc. B 1575
Amersfoort, St Agnes	Bernardus of Clairvaux, <i>Sermonen (Winter- ende somerstuck)</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 27 May 1495)	Groningen, UB, Inc. 40
Amsterdam, St Barbara	Ludolph of Saxony, <i>Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 15 March 1499)	Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Inc 2780
Amsterdam, St Cecilia	Jerome, <i>Van den leven der heiligen vaderen</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 3 December 1480)	The Hague, MMW, II 110
Amsterdam, St Clara	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Sermonen op die evangelien van de zondagen door dat gehele jaer</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 6 November 1489)	Oxford, BodL, Ashmole 1768
Amsterdam, St Margaretha	Souter O.L.V. (Leiden: Hugo Janszoon van Woerden, after 25 May 1498) (ISTC ib00425600)	The Hague, KB, KW 228 G 6 (2) (bound with Bonaventure, <i>Boeck vanden vier oefeningen</i> (Leiden: Jan Severszoon, c. 1510))

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Tertiaries	Edition	Repository
Amsterdam, Elfduizend Maagden	Jerome, <i>Van den leven der heiligen vaders</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 3 December 1480)	The Hague, KB, KW 170 E 26 (1)
	<i>Twespraec der creaturen</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 4 April 1481) (ISTC id00159550)	The Hague, KB, KW 170 E 26 (2)
	Otto of Passau, <i>Dat boeck des gulden throens</i> (Haarlem: Jacob Bellaert, 25 October 1484) <i>Biblia Latina</i> with Nicolas of Lyra, Postillae (Nürnberg: Anton Koberger, c. 1492)	Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Inc. Haun. 2975 Haarlem, SB, 168 A 2–3
Den Dungen near 's-Hertogenbosch, Eikendonk	<i>Wech der sielen salicheit</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, before 5 May 1479)	The Hague, KB, KW 168 E 32
Enkhuizen, St Clara	Otto of Passau, <i>Dat boeck des gulden throens</i> (Haarlem: Jacob Bellaert, 25 October 1484)	Louvain, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Fonds Berchmanianum, 6000 A 27 (1)
	Thomas of Cantimpré, <i>Der bien boeck</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 15 January 1488)	Louvain, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Fonds Berchmanianum, 6000 A 27 (2)
Haarlem, Crayenhorst	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Legenda aurea / Passionael</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 1480)	Manchester, John Rylands Library, 19570.2
Haarlem, St Anna	<i>Tafelboec</i> (Utrecht: Printer with the Monogram, before 5 May 1479)	Haarlem, SB, 56 D 19
	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Legenda aurea / Passionael</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 1480)	Oxford, BodL, Auct. III.Q.V.29
Haarlem, St Catharina	Boethius, <i>De consolatione philosophiae</i> (Gent: Arend de Keysere, 3 May 1485) (ISTC ib00812000)	Utrecht, MCC, BMH Warm 1263H8

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Tertiaries	Edition	Repository
Haarlem, Maria Tenhemelopneming	Meffret, <i>Sermones de tempore et de sanctis</i> (Basel: Nikolaus Kessler, 20 January 1487) (ISTC im00442000)	Utrecht, MCC, BMH Warm i1263F5
	Otto of Passau, <i>Dat boeck des gulden throens</i> (Haarlem: Jacob Bellaert, 25 October 1484)	Oxford, BodL, Auct. 6Q 5.23
Harderwijk, St Catharina	Ludolph of Saxony, <i>Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi</i> (Antwerp: Geraert Leeu, 3 November 1487)	The Hague, MMW, 1.B.2
	<i>Breviarium Traiectense</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 13 December 1483)	The Hague, KB, KW 150 E 29
Heusden, St Catharina	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Legenda aurea</i> (Köln: Conrad Winters von Homberch, 8 November 1476) (ISTC ij00086000)	Cambridge, UL, Inc.3.A.4.15[566]
Hoorn, St Catharina	Johannes Herolt, <i>Sermones Discipuli de tempore et de sanctis</i> (Köln: Ulrich Zel, 8 May 1478) (ISTC ih00100000) <i>Sermones sensati</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 20 February 1482) (ISTC is00472500)	The Hague, MMW, 003 B 008 (01-03)
	Jacobus of Voragine, <i>Sermonen op die evangelien van de zondagen door dat gehele jaer</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 6 November 1489)	Cambridge, UL, Inc.3.E.3.1[2870]
	Thomas of Cantimpré, <i>Der bien boeck</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 15 January 1488)	Halle, Franckesche Stiftungen, 5 C 14
Leiden, St Barbara (?)	Bernardus of Clairvaux, <i>Sermonen (Winter- ende somerstuck)</i> (Zwolle: Peter van Os, 27 May 1495)	New Haven, Conneticut, Yale University Library, Beinecke 1973+12
Leiden, Roomburg	Jerome, <i>Van den leven der heiligen vaderen</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 3 December 1480)	Cambridge (Mass), Harvard College Library, Typ Inc 9145
		Paris, Fondation Custodia, OB-0.11.6

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Tertiaries	Edition	Repository
Muiden, St Catharina	(Pseudo-)Bonaventure, <i>Sermones de tempore et de sanctis</i> (Zwolle: Johannes de Vollenhoe, 1479)	Cambridge, UL, Inc.3.E.7.1.[3057]
Tongeren, St Agnetenberg	Antonius Rampigollis and Bindo de Senis, <i>Aurea Biblia, sive Repertorium aureum Bibliorum</i> (Köln: Johann Guldenschaff, about 1478) (ISTC ir00015000)	The Hague, KB, KW 168 C 18
	Leonardo Mattei da Udine, <i>Quadragesimale: Sertum fidei</i> (Deventer: Richardus Pafraet, 1479–80) (ISTC il00141000)	The Hague, KB, KW 171 D 27
Utrecht, St Cecilia	<i>Die duytsche Souter</i> (Delft: Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, 1498) (ISTC ip01072000)	The Hague, KB, KW 151 D 13
Utrecht, St Nicolaas	<i>Tafel des Kersteliken levens</i> (with Antonius de Rovere: <i>Lof van den heiligen sacrament</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 20 August 1478) (ISTC it00010800)	The Hague, MMW, 001 E 049 (1)
	<i>Spiegel des kersten gheloefts</i> (Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 1 September 1478) (ISTC is00672000)	The Hague, MMW, 001 E 049 (2)
Weesp, Jonge Hof	Aelius Donatus, <i>Ars minor</i> (The Netherlands: Prototypography, about 1465–80) (ISTC id00326900)	The Hague, KB, KW 150 C 66
	Robertus Caracciolus, <i>Sermones quadragesimales de poenitentia</i> (Köln: Ulrich Zel, 17 January 1473) (ISTC ic00171000)	The Hague, KB, KW 169 B 25
	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae: secunda pars</i> (Basel: Berthold Ruppel, not after 1474) (ISTC it00214000)	The Hague, KB, KW 170 A 10
	Astesanus of Asti, <i>Summa de casibus conscientia</i> (Strassburg: Printer of Henricus Ariminensis (Georg Reyser?), not after 9 May 1474) (ISTC ia01163000)	The Hague, KB, KW 169 A 24

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Tertiaries	Edition	Repository
	Peter Lombard, <i>Glossa magistralis Psalterii</i> (Nuremberg: Johann Sensenschmidt and Andreas Frisner, 12 February 1478) (ISTC ip00477000)	The Hague, KB, KW 169 A 13
	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Opuscula</i> (Southern Netherlands?: Printer of Augustinus, <i>Explanatio psalmorum</i> , about 1488) (ISTC it00258500)	The Hague, KB, KW 171 D 36
	Gratianus, <i>Decretum</i> (Basel: Johann Froben, 13 June 1493) (ISTC ig00384000)	The Hague, KB, KW 170 F 8
	Antoninus Florentius, <i>Summa theologica</i> (Strassburg: Johann Grüninger, 1496) (ISTC ia00878000)	The Hague, KB, KW 168 B 33
	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Super quarto libro Sententiarum Petri Lombardi</i> (Venice: Bonetus Locatellus, for Octavianus Scotus, 23 May 1497) (ISTC it00172000)	The Hague, KB, KW 151 E 6
Weesp, Oude Hof	Aelius Donatus, <i>Ars minor</i> (The Netherlands: Prototypography, about 1465–80) (ISTC id00320660)	The Hague, KB, KW 150 C 52 (1)
	Aelius Donatus, <i>Ars minor</i> (The Netherlands: Prototypography, about 1465–80)	The Hague, KB, KW 150 C 52 (2)
	Johannes Gallensis, <i>Summa collationum</i> (Köln: Ulrich Zel, about 1472) (ISTC ij00328000)	The Hague, KB, KW 168 F 52