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Folkerts, S.; Oostindiër, A.E.

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The Position of the New Testament Translation of the Devotio Moderna among Dutch Printed Bibles

Suzan Folkerts
University of Groningen, Netherlands
s.a.folkerts@rug.nl

Arend Elias Oostindiër
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
a.e.d.oostindier@uva.nl

Abstract

The medieval Northern Dutch New Testament translation, which originated in the context of the Devotio Moderna movement, was used by printers and readers well into the sixteenth century. This contribution demonstrates that studying copies of this translation is of vital importance for understanding Bible production in print in the Low Countries in the transitional period between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. From the publication of the first Dutch Bible editions in 1477 on, printers let themselves guide by readers' preferences, which meant reading the Bible according to the liturgical calendar. These long existing reading habits continued to guide printers' choices after the introduction of new humanist and reform-minded complete Bible translations from 1522 on. In competing to publish these new and complete Dutch Bibles, printers were taking over textual and paratextual elements from existing medieval translations.

Keywords

Northern Dutch New Testament translation – Dutch printed Bibles – Jan Seversz – Jacob van Liesvelt – Adriaen van Berghen – fifteenth century – sixteenth century

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Introduction

The year 1522 seems to be a decisive year in the history of Dutch Bible translations.* In that year the first Dutch version of Erasmus's New Testament was introduced. In the years that followed, several other new Dutch Bible translations were published as well, among them the Dutch version of Luther's German Bible translation and the so-called Liesvelt Bible of 1526 and the Vorsterman Bible(s) of 1528-1531. These new editions have gained much attention from scholars, who have bookmarked the year 1522 as a year of new beginnings. The influential dissertation of August den Hollander, for example, which appeared in 1997, is entitled 'Dutch Translations of the Bible 1522-1545', and in the recently published history of Dutch Bibles, part 1 about the Middle Ages ends in 1522, and part 2 on the sixteenth century starts with the same year.[1] The existing medieval Dutch translations, although printed continuously from 1477 well into the 1530s, have not yet received full attention. This is especially true of the most successful medieval Bible translation of the Low Countries, namely the Northern Dutch translation of the New Testament, which originated in the context of the Devotio Moderna at the end of the fourteenth century. In studies on Dutch printed Bibles in the sixteenth century, these old, existing translations have been mentioned but never studied as part of a larger story. As we will argue, however, they are important to fully understand Bible production and use in the transitional period around 1522. As it turns out, continuities may be as strong as discontinuities, and 1522 may not be a decisive year after all. This becomes especially clear when we focus on individual copies and users' traces.

In the following we will present an overview of the editions of the aforementioned Northern Dutch New Testament translation, with an emphasis on editions of complete Bible books. We will discuss some copies in detail, focusing on layout, paratextualia, and users' traces. In order to show the interaction between old and new traditions, we will also compare them to some new Bible editions after 1522. Research has mainly stressed the new elements in sixteenth-century printed Bibles, such as the use of the Greek source text, new

* This contribution is a result of the NWO VENI project 'From monastery to market place. Towards a new history of New Testament translations and urban religious culture in the Low Countries (*c.*1450-1540)'. The main arguments of this article were presented at the panel 'Reading the Vernacular Bible during the Early Reformation: Continuities and Discontinuities' at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference 2016 (Bruges, 18-20 September 2016).

1 A.A. den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen 1522-1545 / Dutch Translations of the Bible 1522-1545 with 166 Illustrations* (Nieuwkoop 1997; Doctoral dissertation VU Amsterdam); *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen. Elf eeuwen van vertalen*, ed. P. Gillaerts et al. (Heerenveen 2015).

prologues, and Lutheran interpretations. Discontinuities seem to dominate, but the role that editions of old translations played in shaping these Bible editions has not yet been studied. Moreover, traces of use in existing copies, such as readers' notes and corrections, reveal continuities as well. Medieval reading habits and preferences lived on in the early sixteenth century, and must have influenced printers' choices. This brings us to our main question: How should continuities and discontinuities in the production and use of Dutch printed Bibles around 1522 be evaluated?

The Northern Dutch Translation of the New Testament

This study concentrates on the persistent influence of the Northern Dutch New Testament translation because it was the most popular and most copied translation during the late Middle Ages. This Middle Dutch translation of the New Testament was presumably—and in any case at least in part—written by John Scutken († 1423), who lived as an unprofessed clergyman in the monastery of canons regular of Windesheim in the north-eastern part of the Low Countries.[2] In a chronicle of 1464 about the members of the monastery, Johannes Busch states that Scutken wrote a translation of the Gospel readings of the liturgical year for the lay brothers. There is no proof that Scutken wrote the rest of the New Testament translation as well. Whoever the exact authors of the New Testament translation were, we can safely assume it was written in or in the milieu of Windesheim. Windesheim was a leading monastery in the religious reform movement of the Devotio Moderna. This movement was essentially a shared reform movement: the ideals of the *vita apostolica*, sobriety, and reformed piety were shared between devout clerics and laypeople, living together as Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life, and Canons and Canonesses Regular of the monastic branch. Clerics of this movement, among many other things, stimulated Bible reading by laypeople. Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, the librarian of the house of Brothers of Common Life in Deventer at the end of the fourteenth century, wrote a treatise called *De libris teutonicalibus.* This treatise is often called an apology for vernacular religious writings. One of the chapters includes the advice that laypeople should read the Gospels

2 For this translation and its uncertain authorship, see S. Folkerts, 'De Noord-Nederlandse vertaling van het Nieuwe Testament (eind veertiende eeuw)', in: Gillaerts, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 165-76.

that were going to be preached in Church at home, beforehand.[3] Another adherent of the movement, Dirc of Herxen, who was rector of the Brothers of the Common Life in Zwolle in the first half of the fifteenth century, compiled a book of collations (*Collatieboek*). Collations were gatherings of laypeople and Brothers of the Common Life on Sunday evenings, during which religious texts were discussed. Dirc collected these texts in vernacular collation books. In a chapter on the reading of Dutch books, he wrote: 'It is not only appropriate for laypeople to read the Holy Scripture, it is also blameworthy if they neglect this'.[4]

It is in this context that many translations and original vernacular works were produced, and the aforementioned treatises come to us together with the New Testament translation itself. This translation was finished before 1399, the date of the oldest dated manuscript with the complete New Testament. No less than 160 manuscripts are known, containing one part or another from the New Testament, and dating from a time span of 150 years, from the end of the fourteenth century until the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Most of the manuscripts contain only the Gospels or the other books of the New Testament, and many miscellaneous devotional manuscripts contain an excerpt from the Gospels, such as the Passion stories. Generally, of the 430 known Middle Dutch Bible manuscripts, none contain a complete Bible, and manuscripts containing a complete New Testament are rare.[5] The earliest printed Dutch Bibles show the same pattern. Although the Delft Bible consisting of the Old Testament books was printed in 1477, this edition was never reissued, and only much later, in 1523, was the first complete New Testament printed.

3 N. Staubach, 'Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen und die Laienbibel', in: *Lay Bibles in Europe 1450-1800*, ed. M. Lamberigts & A.A. den Hollander (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 198; Leuven 2006), pp. 3-26, there p. 15.

4 'Ten eersten te bewisen dattet niet allene behoerlic is, dat leke lude die Heilige Scrifte lesen, mer oec berispelic is dat si daer ynne versumelic sijn'. L. van Beek, *Leken trekken tot Gods Woord. Dirc van Herxen (1381-1457) en zijn Eerste Collatieboek* (Middeleeuwse Studies en Bronnen, 120; Hilversum 2009), p. 143.

5 For an overview and typology of Middle Dutch Bible manuscripts, see S. Folkerts, 'Reading the Bible Lessons at Home. Holy Writ and Lay Readers in the Low Countries', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 93 (2013), pp. 215-35. The indispensable catalogue of Middle Dutch Bible manuscripts is J.A.A.M. Biemans, *Middelnederlandse bijbelhandschriften / Codices manuscripti sacrae scripturae Neerlandicae* (Verzameling van Middelnederlandse bijbelteksten: Catalogus / Corpus sacrae scripturae Neerlandicae Medii Aevi: Catalogus; Leiden 1984).

Until a five-volume decimosexto Bible of 1525[6] and the Liesvelt Bible of 1526, no complete Bible was printed in the Dutch language, though the Low Rhenish version of the Middle Low German Cologne Bible of 1478-1479, which included the complete Old and New Testaments, could (or should) be regarded as such.[7] Nevertheless, this lack of complete Bibles should not be misinterpreted as equivalent to the unfulfilled desire for some forbidden fruit—that would be a projection of a 'Protestant paradigmatic view' on the medieval situation.[8] As we shall see, producers and readers did not aspire to a complete Bible until the 1520s.

The first editions of the Northern Dutch translation of the New Testament contained neither the complete New Testament, nor complete Bible books. Printers had made a remarkable choice: they printed a special redaction of the Bible text, namely a lectionary called the *Epistelen ende evangelien* [*mitten sermonen*] *vanden ghehelen jaere*, or *Epistles and Gospels*.[9] These *Epistles and Gospels* are the biblical readings or lessons from the Old and New Testament that were read in Mass during the liturgical year. The first two editions were published in 1477 by Geraert Leeu in Gouda, Holland: one contained only the Gospel readings, but with additional glosses or sermons, while the other had

6 Printed by a syndicate consisting of Hans van Ruremund, Peter Kaetz, Christoffel van Endoven, and Franz Birckman. Colin H. Jory, 'The First Printed Dutch Bible: Re-assigning the Honour', *Quaerendo*, 44 (2014), pp. 137-78. Although Jory qualifies this five-volume decimosexto Bible of 1525 as the first 'true' and 'mainstream' Dutch Bible, and by this putting into perspective what 'real' Dutch is, we would argue that his definition of what a Bible is, is just as questionable as narrowing 'Dutch' down to mainstream Dutch, and qualify the Delft Bible of 1477 and the Gospel readings by Geraert Leeu of 1477 as the first printed Dutch Bibles.

7 This Middle Low German Bible, which was published in a Low Saxon and a Low Rhenish version, is treated among Middle Dutch translations by many scholars, such as C.C. de Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers. Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen vanaf de Reformatie tot 1637*, ed. F.G.M. Broeyer (Haarlem / Brussels 1993), p. 36. It is al also considered a Dutch translation in the *Biblia Sacra* bibliography at www.bibliasacra.nl.

8 On the 'Protestant paradigm' that influenced the history of Bible research, see A.C. Gow, 'Challenging the Protestant Paradigm: Bible Reading in Lay and Urban Contexts of the Later Middle Ages', in: *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Th.J. Heffernan & Th.E. Burman (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 123; Leiden 2005), pp. 161-92; S. Corbellini et al., 'Challenging the Paradigms. Holy Writ and Lay Readers in Late Medieval Europe', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 93 (2013), pp. 171-88.

9 These *Epistles and Gospels* are treated more extensively in S. Folkerts, 'Middle Dutch *Epistles and Gospels*: The Transfer of a Medieval Bestseller into Printed Editions during the Early Reformation', in: *Vernacular Bible and Religious Reform in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era*, ed. W. François & A.A. den Hollander (BETL, 287; Leuven 2017), pp. 53-73.

both the Epistle and Gospel readings, but no sermons. The 39 editions that followed all contained the *Epistles and Gospels* with sermons. Although we do not yet know by whom and where these sermons were written or collected, considering the number of editions well into the sixteenth century, we do know that these *Epistles and Gospels* with sermons were very popular. Only in 1512, the first edition of some—but not all—complete Bible books of the Northern Middle Dutch New Testament translation would appear. Until 1524, nine editions of one or more complete Bible books of this medieval translation were printed, and we will focus on these editions because we want to study them in the broader context of the other sixteenth-century Dutch Bibles. Nine is a low number compared to the 41 editions of *Epistles and Gospels*. We will return later to the question why printers preferred to print *Epistles and Gospels* rather than complete Bible books in the first decades of the printing press.

The scheme below gives an overview of the editions of complete Bible books of the Northern Middle Dutch translation of the New Testament (and one other medieval translation, as we will explain below). Between square brackets numbers of extant copies are given, which are quite modest.

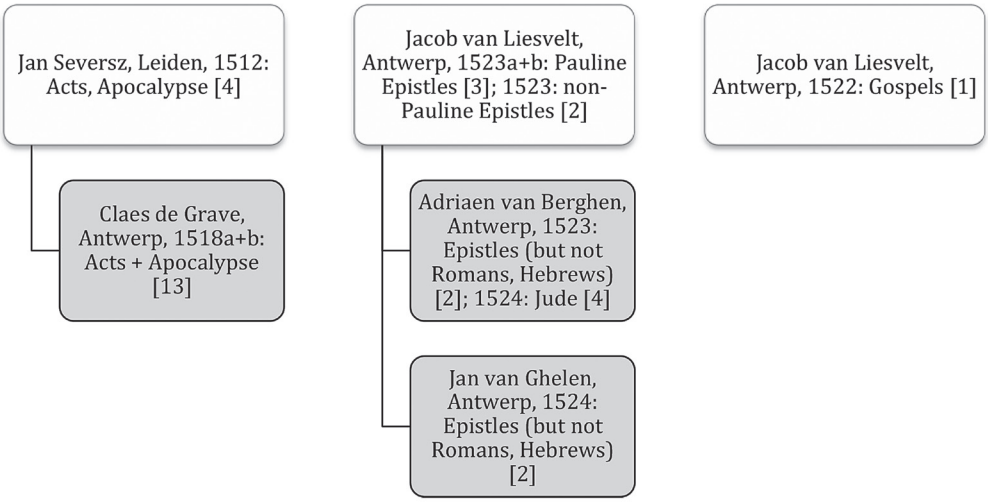


FIGURE 1 *Middle Dutch New Testament translations in print.*

In 1512 Acts and Apocalypse were printed by Jan Seversz in Leiden, Holland, and again by Claes de Grave in Antwerp in 1518 (twice) as part of a History Bible, which consisted of many books of the Old Testament taken from the

Delft Bible of 1477, mingled with other non-biblical narratives.[10] Both editions can be characterized as standing firmly within the existing medieval tradition, the History Bible being a medieval genre in the tradition of Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. Seversz's edition contains the prefaces to Acts and Apocalypse by Saint Jerome in the fourteenth-century Northern Dutch translation, as well as the glosses that were added by the translator, and some titles of Epistle readings in Acts.[11] It has no new publisher's preface or other indications of adaptation to new times. In retrospect, Seversz's choice for publishing a conservative New Testament edition and also other medieval devotional works is remarkable considering that he would go on to publish all sorts of Lutheran material in the 1520s.

Then, in the Spring of 1523, the Antwerp printer Jacob van Liesvelt published the Epistles of Paul (twice) and the Epistles of the other apostles in the Northern Dutch New Testament translation. The Middle Dutch language of the texts was a bit modernized and the prologues and glosses of the medieval translator were not included.[12] One year earlier, Van Liesvelt had published the Gospels in another medieval translation, also with a slightly adapted text.[13] This edition is included in the scheme as well. It is remarkable that the four Gospels of the Northern Middle Dutch translation were never put into print: in the manuscript tradition they were the most copied Bible books. Yet, Van Liesvelt took an even older Gospel translation from the Southern Low Countries—originating from the monastery of Rooklooster near Brussels—as his example. This edition from 1522 is known in only one copy, now in Utrecht, and includes only Mark, Luke, and John.[14] Although the title page of the Gospels appears as well, the book of Matthew does not. The copy was once bound together, however, with another edition of Matthew, published by Doen Pietersz in Amsterdam in 1522. This is the first Dutch version of Erasmus's New Testament translation,

10 For Claes de Grave's editions, see De Bruin, op. cit. (n. 7), pp. 37-8. In the *Biblia Sacra* bibliography (www.bibliasacra.nl), these editions have ID numbers 1518.Bpart.dut.CdG.a and b. Seversz's edition has ID 1512.NTpart.dut.JS.a.

11 For example, at the beginning of Acts 1 is printed: 'Op ons heren hemeluaertsdach' and at the beginning of Acts 2: 'Opten pinxter dach'. These captions were also included in De Grave's edition of 1518.

12 De Bruin, op. cit. (n. 7), pp. 73-4; *Biblia Sacra* ID 1523.NTpart.dut.JvL.a and b (Pauline Epistles) and c (non-Pauline Epistles); Den Hollander, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 268-73 (nos. 4, 5, and 6).

13 De Bruin, op. cit. (n. 7), pp. 72-3; Den Hollander, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 258-60 (no. 1).

14 Utrecht, University Library (UB), MAG: D oct 1672 B [olim 2] (Rariora).

made by Johannes Pelt.[15] These complementary copies in one cover were separated in or before 1898, as a note on one of the flyleaves of Van Liesvelt's edition says. The copies may well have functioned as one book in the sixteenth century, however, combining an old medieval translation with a new reform-minded one, of which only Matthew was as yet available. As we will see, the combined use of old and new translations occurred more frequently.

It seems that, driven by the desire to quickly publish complete Bible books instead of Epistle and Gospel readings, Van Liesvelt chose to publish existing, perhaps old-fashioned translations, while the new New Testament translations of Luther and Erasmus were still in the process of being translated into Dutch.[16] In the Winter of 1523, his fellow townsman Adriaen van Berghen printed the Epistles again, but replaced Romans and Hebrews with newly available translations: Romans in the Dutch version of Erasmus's Latin text and Hebrews in the Dutch version of Luther's translation. A Dutch Luther version of the Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypse were included as well, which made this edition the first complete New Testament in Dutch.[17] Again, the combination of all sorts of translations, old and new, can be explained as resulting from the competition to publish a complete edition. In Van Berghen's 1524 edition of the Epistles, now completely in the Dutch Luther version, he surprisingly used the Northern Dutch translation of the Epistle of Jude again, which is the reason why that edition is included in our overview.[18] Finally, Jan van Ghelen printed the Epistles once more in 1524, using Van Berghen's and Van Liesvelt's editions, respectively, which explains the same use of new translations of Romans and Hebrews.[19] The rest of this New Testament edition consists of the Dutch Luther version, for which he also relied on Van Berghen.

Printers' Choices and the Public's Demand

It seems that in the 1520s, printers were originally competing to be the first to publish the complete New Testament, and then to be the first to publish the Luther text in Dutch. There must have been a (quite sudden) demand for these editions; otherwise, printers would have avoided the commercial risk.

15 Utrecht, UB, MAG: D oct 1672 A [olim 1] (Rariora). About this Dutch translation of Matthew, see De Bruin, op. cit. (n. 7), pp. 67-72.

16 This is also suggested by De Bruin, op. cit. (n. 7), pp. 72-3.

17 *Biblia Sacra* ID 1523.NT.dut.AvB.a; Den Hollander, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 264-7 (no. 3).

18 *Biblia Sacra* ID 1524.NTpart.dut.AvB.a; Den Hollander, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 280-1 (no. 8).

19 *Biblia Sacra* ID 1524.NT.dut.JvG1.a; Den Hollander, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 285-7 (no. 10).

Yet printers took another risk by publishing the newly available Lutheran translations. As soon as Erasmus's and Luther's Bible translations and other reform-minded literature appeared, theologians and other authorities began attempting to control the printing press. Leuven theologians did not reject the new translations as such, but they rejected the 'heretical' interpretations and commentaries, which often occurred in the paratext.[20] Emperor Charles V was more oppressive: in placards of 1525 and 1526, he forbade the selling and reading of Bibles with 'Lutheran' prologues, glosses, and summaries.[21] As August den Hollander has demonstrated, these were indeed the elements inquisitors were searching for. Many Bible editions were forbidden because of the presence of 'heretical' prologues or other suspicious paratextualia—'heretical' translations as such were sometimes overlooked.[22] In the 1530s and 1540s the repression became increasingly intense. Both Jacob van Liesvelt and Adriaen van Berghen were condemned for printing or possessing heretical writings—not necessarily Bible translations, as Wim François has made clear.[23] Van Berghen, who had fled from Antwerp to Holland, was beheaded in The Hague in 1542, and Van Liesvelt was decapitated in Antwerp in 1546. Jan van Ghelen escaped that fate, although his name was mentioned in the anti-heresy placards of Charles V.

These printers must have been very dedicated to printing the new translations, but the question of where their public's demand ended and their own motivations began is difficult to answer. The fact that Van Liesvelt not only printed 'heretical' texts (i.e. controversial texts not approved by a book censor), but also Catholic works and even Charles V's anti-heresy placards of 1540 themselves, makes it even more complicated to explain his motivation.[24] François stresses that Van Liesvelt sympathized with the reform-minded, but was not an outspoken witness of the evangelical belief. He also made many of his Bible editions suitable for both the reform-minded and Catholics.[25] We see this ambiguity also in the work of Claes de Grave. He printed the condemnation of

20 W. François, 'Vernacular Bible Reading and Censorship in Early Sixteenth Century. The Position of the Louvain Theologians', in: *Lay Bibles in Europe. 1450-1800*, ed. A.A. den Hollander & M. Lamberigts (BETL, 198; Leuven 2006), pp. 69-96, there 70-1.

21 François, op. cit. (n. 20), p. 81.

22 A.A. den Hollander, *Verboden bijbels: Bijbelcensuur in de Nederlanden in de eerste helft van de zestiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 2003).

23 W. François, 'Jacob van Liesvelt, Martyr for the Evangelical Belief? in: *More than a Memory. The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*, ed. J. Leemans (Annua nuntia Lovaniensia, 51; Leuven etc. 2005), pp. 341-69, there 368.

24 François, op. cit (n. 23), pp. 347 and 355.

25 François, op. cit (n. 23), p. 356.

Lutheran writings by the Leuven theologians, but with Luther's reply facing it.[26] The story of Jan Seversz illustrates the flexibility of printers' choices as well, but in the end he seems to have chosen for an outspoken Lutheran position. In the first two decades of the sixteenth century, Seversz published, besides the Middle Dutch translation of Acts and Apocalypse, many other 'mainstream' or 'Catholic' devotional works, such as *Wandelinge der kersten menschen met Ihesu den brudegom …* ('Wanderings of the Christian people with Jesus the groom …'), the *Book of Bees* of Thomas of Cantimpré, and the work of the recluse Suster Bertken of Utrecht. In the 1520s he started printing Lutheran works, which caused trouble for him. In 1523 he published the *Summa der godlicken scrifturen oft een Duytschen theologie*, which was one of the first editions to be forbidden and publicly burnt, to the extent that no copies of the first edition of this *Summa* have survived.[27] In 1523, Seversz was summoned by the *Hof van Holland*, but he presumably fled shortly after 19 October 1523.[28] Since he did not show up on the summons of the *Hof*, on 13 July 1524 Seversz was banished for life from Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland. He had fled to Utrecht, but was expelled from that city as well on 17 June 1524, 'want hij mettet werck van lutheryen besmet is' ('because he was infected with Lutheran works').[29] According to Maria E. Kronenberg, he continued publishing Lutheran works in Antwerp anonymously.[30]

However perplexed some printers leave us regarding their motives, we can study their Bible editions, the general context in which they appeared, and the individual copies, in order to find out more about their public. The abovementioned general *mouvance* towards complete Bible editions in the 1520s has long been recognized.[31] It has been explained as resulting from Christian humanism and evangelical movements, foremost Lutheranism. Humanists, such as

26 M.E. Kronenberg, *Verboden boeken en opstandige drukkers in de Hervormingstijd* (Amsterdam 1948), p. 54.

27 Kronenberg, op. cit (n. 26), p. 18. Kronenberg had not found any in 1948, and none are mentioned in the *Universal Short Title Catalogue* either.

28 Kronenberg, op. cit (n. 26), p. 87; J.D. Bangs, 'Further Adventures of Jan Zevertsz., Bookprinter and Parchmentmaker of Leiden', *Quaerendo*, 7 (1977), pp. 128-43, there 130.

29 Kronenberg, op. cit (n. 26), p. 84.

30 Kronenberg, op. cit (n. 26), pp. 55-9.

31 See A. den Hollander, '*Dat oude ende dat Nieuwe Testament*. Jacob van Liesvelt en de nieuwe markt voor bijbels in de zestiende eeuw', *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse Boekgeschiedenis*, 6 (1999), pp. 105-21, there 110-12; P. Arblaster, '"Totius Mundi Emporium": Antwerp as a Centre for Vernacular Bible Translations 1523-1545', in: *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs,* ed. A.-J. Gelderblom, J.L. de Jong & M. van Vaeck (Intersections 3; Leiden & Boston 2004) pp. 9-32, there 12-14.

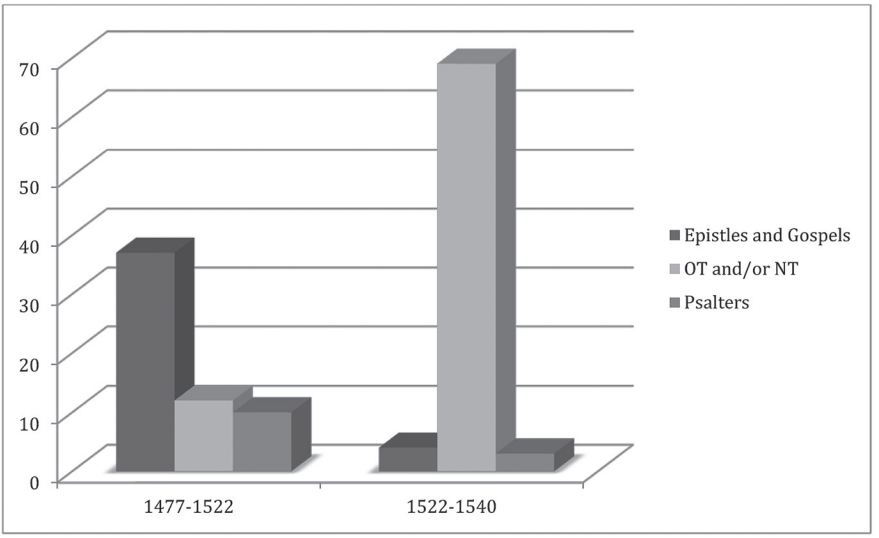


FIGURE 2 *Figures of Dutch Bible editions 1477-1540.*

Erasmus, and the reform-minded were no longer satisfied with Vulgate-based translations; they preferred translations based on the Hebrew and Greek source texts. Besides, they wanted to read the complete Bible text, not just the Epistle and Gospel readings. This may have been a result of the discussion about the correct interpretation of the Bible that Luther had instigated; readers now wanted to study the complete text themselves.[32] Figures of actual editions support this supposed tendency. Figure 2 shows the total production of Dutch Bibles, including all translations into Dutch (based on the *Biblia Sacra* bibliography). Before 1522, almost all Dutch Bible editions concern Epistle and Gospel readings. After that year, not only the total production increased dramatically, but we see the shift towards complete New Testaments or complete Bibles as well.

Alastair Duke correctly wrote that in the Middle Ages, the Bible was understood differently than in the sixteenth century, and that reading the Bible fragmentarily was valued.[33] But he also suggested that the complete Bible was not available and not made available in the vernacular. However, in manuscripts, complete Bible books had long been available. Duke (among others) only looked at printed editions. There, the remarkable shift towards complete Bibles is indeed visible. Taking into account the manuscript tradition as well,

32 We thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion.

33 A. Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London 2003), pp. 10-11.

however, we see a shift first in 1477 towards editions of Epistle and Gospel readings, and then, in the 1520s, back to complete Bible books.

Why, then, did printers in the first decades of the printing press choose to publish Epistle and Gospel readings? On the basis of the analysis of hundreds of manuscripts containing Middle Dutch Bible translations we concluded in earlier studies that medieval people could read the complete Bible, but did not *want* to: they preferred to read liturgical lessons.[34] In the manuscript tradition of the Northern Middle Dutch New Testament, almost all copies contain reading schedules with the Epistle and Gospel readings and rubrics indicating the beginnings and endings of these readings in the Bible text. Many of these New Testament manuscripts contain the Old Testament Epistle readings as well. Moreover, readers added many corrections and new feast days to these lists, which indicates they actually used the New Testament manuscripts as lectionaries. This is why the printers' choice for editions of Epistle and Gospel readings should no longer be seen as surprising: they were acting on demand. As the number of 41 editions suggests, it was a smart commercial decision for Geraert Leeu, Johan Veldener, and those who followed to edit the existing Middle Dutch New Testament translation as *Epistles and Gospels* with sermons. Just like in the Bible manuscripts, in the printed copies of *Epistles and Gospels* users made corrections and additions to the reading schedule and titles of readings.[35] They sometimes even included handwritten Epistle and Gospel readings in order to complete their collections.[36] We may conclude, then, that readers in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries preferred to read the Bible according to the liturgical reading schedule, and that is the reason they were printed that way from 1477 on.

34 Folkerts, op. cit (n. 5).

35 Folkerts, op. cit (n. 9), pp. 63-6.

36 We see this, for example, in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, B-1642, a copy of the *Epistles and Gospels* printed by Johannes Jacobus van der Meer in Delft, in 1486, and in Cambridge, University Library, Inc. 4.F.6.5 (3443), printed by Govaert Bac in Antwerp in 1496. The latter copy contains a complete inserted manuscript with additional Epistle and Gospel readings and Passion narratives from the four Gospels. On this copy, see S. Folkerts, 'Appropriating the Passion: On the Uses of Middle Dutch Gospels in Manuscript and Print', in: *The Same and Different: Strategies of Retelling the Bible within the "New Communities of Interpretation"*, ed. L. Doležalová & G. Veysseyre (*1350-1570*) (New Communities of Interpretation, Turnhout forthcoming).

What Individual Copies Reveal

This leaves us with an unanswered question: What can be said about the public's demand, when printers in the 1520s turned to printing complete Bibles and complete New Testaments? Did readers want complete Bibles because of humanist or evangelical aspirations? Who were these readers, actually? How did they use their copies? Did they perhaps read them during collations or conventicles—gatherings outside the Mass where people discussed the Holy Writ? Some answers to these questions can be found in the individual copies.

We start our tour with a copy of the 1512 edition of Acts and Apocalypse printed by Jan Seversz. As we mentioned above, Seversz provided the reader with the 'old' paratextual elements, made available by the translator of the Northern Dutch New Testament: prefaces of Saint Jerome, some inserted titles of Epistle readings in Acts, and glosses. The copy, now in Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, is bound together with printed copies of Dutch *Lives* of Saint Catherine of Siena and the Holy Virgin Liduina of Schiedam, and a Dutch translation of Jean Gerson's *Opus tripartitum* on the Ten Commandments, the confession, and the *ars moriendi*.[37] The *Life* of Saint Catherine was printed in 15[09] by Seversz as well, the *Life* of Liduina in 1505 by Otgier Pietersz Nachtegael, priest in Schiedam, and the *Opus tripartitum* in 1512 by Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten in Antwerp.[38] The four editions have been bound together since the sixteenth century. The book contains many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century handwritten annotations on several empty leaves, with the oldest, on the first flyleaf, saying: 'dit hoert toe gherit rutgher' and 'dyt boeck hoert toe gheryt ruytghert soeyn Geldesuyer voenende ter ghou in synte lysbetten [struck through: suyster huyes] ghasthuys'. The book thus belonged to Gert Rutger and to his son, who lived in Saint Elisabeth's hospital. It was used by laypeople from one or more families over the course of at least two centuries.

Just like the printed edition of Acts and Apocalypse by Jan Seversz with its medieval glosses and titles of liturgical Epistle readings is characterized as a 'traditional' medieval Bible edition, the complete collection in this binding can

37 Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, BMH Warm pi1259B5.

38 Full titles: *Hier beghint die legende van Sinte Katherina vander seyn mit veel schone ghebeden ende mirakelen ghetranslateert vutten latijn in duytsche* (W. Nijhoff & M.E. Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540*, 3 vols. ('s-Gravenhage 1923-1971) = NK 1338); *Hier beghint dat leuen ende hystorie der saligher maghet liedwy van schiedam ende van haer wonderlike gheboerte* (NK 981); *Opus tripartitum. Een boecxken dat men heet in drien ghedeilt. vanden geboden gods. vander Biechten. ende vander konsten om wel ende salichlijc te sterven voer alle simple ende slechte kerstenen menschen* (NK 994).

be characterized as a devotional collection in the spirit of the Devotio Moderna. Saint Catherine of Siena and Liduina of Schiedam were both 'new' saints, representing the late medieval devotion to the suffering Christ and the development of lay spirituality. They were highly esteemed in the Devotio Moderna movement, and their *Lives*, as well as the works of Jean Gerson, were widely read in that context.[39] The collection has nothing to do with Lutheranism, but its contents supported laypeople in developing their inner piety.

We then arrive at the pivotal years when the production, demand, and use of the New Testament are supposed to have changed. The National Library of the Netherlands in The Hague owns two copies with both the Pauline and non-Pauline Epistles printed by Jacob van Liesvelt in 1523. A third copy contains only the Pauline Epistles (The Hague, KB, KW 230 G 29). The first of these that we studied, The Hague, KB, KW 230 G 30, is decorated with marginal flowers, which brought to mind a decorated Bible manuscript from 1519, also in the National Library of the Netherlands (compare figures 3 and 4).[40] The latter contains the Passion narratives from the Four Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypse—exactly the New Testament books that complement the printed copy of the Epistles. Unfortunately, both the manuscript and the printed copy do not bear contemporary owners' inscriptions, but our hypothesis is that both books were decorated at the same place (a convent?) in the 1520s and possibly belonged to the same owner as early as that. This place of production and/or owner may have been the convent of Tertiaries of Galilea in The Hague, since another manuscript, a lay breviary written in 1522 by the same scribe, was owned by Maritgen Heynricxdochter of this convent, according to a note in the same hand as the text.[41] A third manuscript, a Middle Dutch prayer book includ-

39 For the *Life* of Liduina and the Devotio Moderna, see K. Goudriaan, 'Het *Leven van Liduina* en de Moderne Devotie', *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 6 (2003), pp. 161-236.

40 The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands (KB), KW 133 D 28. See Biemans, op. cit (n. 5), p. 201, no. 185. A note on f. 200r says: 'Dit boec is gescreuen ende voleynt jnt jaer ons heren m vijf C ende xix Op onser vrouwen auont presentasie'. The manuscript contains some other texts as well (a letter of Saint Jerome to Principia about Psalm 44, Cicero's treatise on friendship, and Albertanus de Brescia's treatise on the art of speaking and silence). The manuscript ends with an *exemplum* about Liduina, whom me met above in the Utrecht collection.

41 The Hague, KB, KW 79 K 4, f. 1r: 'Dit boeck hoert totten besloten susteren tot S. Marien in Galyleen inden Hage Maritgen Heynricx dochter' ('This book belongs to the enclosed sisters of St Mary in Galilea in The Hague. Mary Henry's daughter') and f. 233v: 'Dit boec is voleynt te scryuen int jaer ons Heren M vijf C ende XXII op Sinte Lebuwijns dach te midsomer' ('This book was finished in the year of Our Lord 1522 on St Lebuin's day in Summer').

ing, again, the four Passion narratives, was partly written by the same scribe as both the 1519 and 1522 manuscripts, and has the same type of decoration as the 1519 Bible manuscript.[42] These findings suggest that the printed copy of Van Liesvelt, usually linked to a 'new era' of Bible editions, is associated with one or two manuscripts of the 'old' medieval tradition through its decoration and/or its owners. It also demonstrates, again, that complete Bible books were available and copied.

Neither Van Liesvelt's nor Seversz's editions include the tables of liturgical readings that we come across so often, presumably because they contain only a few Bible books. Moreover, none of the Van Liesvelt's editions include the titles of the readings within the Bible text, which made the reading of these editions according to the liturgical reading schedule impossible. Some users came up with their own reading schedules, however, as individual copies demonstrate. The second extant copy of the 1523 editions of the Epistles by Van Liesvelt is The Hague, KB, KW 230 G 31. In red ink, a reader added some titles of liturgical readings. At the beginning of Romans 1, for example, he or she added 'opten kersauent' ('On Christmas Eve'), and at the beginning of I Corinthians 1 'opten xviij sonnendach nae pijnxten' ('On the 18th Sunday after Pentecost') (see figure 5). This user was not—or at least not solely—interested in the new humanist trend of reading the complete Bible, but preferred to continue reading the Bible as Epistle and Gospel readings.

We noticed the same phenomenon in the Middle Low German Cologne Bible of 1478-1479, the earliest edition of an Old and New Testament in a Dutch language. The printer of this Bible did not provide a table of readings, so the owner or reader of a copy that is now in Amsterdam just made his or her own. At the back of this copy, a sixteenth-century handwritten list of readings is included. The caption reads: 'A table, made in order to easily find the Epistles and Gospels of the whole year, which are being used in church'.[43] Another copy of this Cologne Bible also has some marginal additions indicating liturgical readings, such as the addition of the title 'sonnendach 8 dagen voor vastelauont'

42 The Hague, KB, KW 71 H 57. Ff. 1-158 were written by the hand that wrote KW 133 D 28 as well. Biemans, op. cit (n. 5), pp. 191-2, no. 170. The connection between the three manuscripts was made in the online catalogue of the National Library of the Netherlands. This copy bears an owner's inscription dating from 1579, much later than the 1520s: 'Dijt boeck hoert toe neeltgen iacops dochter [some word struck through] 13[sic]79 den 10 desember' (f. VIIv, final flyleaf).

43 Amsterdam, University Library, Inc. 117: 'Een tafel ghemaect om lichtelijck te vinden die epistelen ende evangelien vant ghansche jaer […]'.

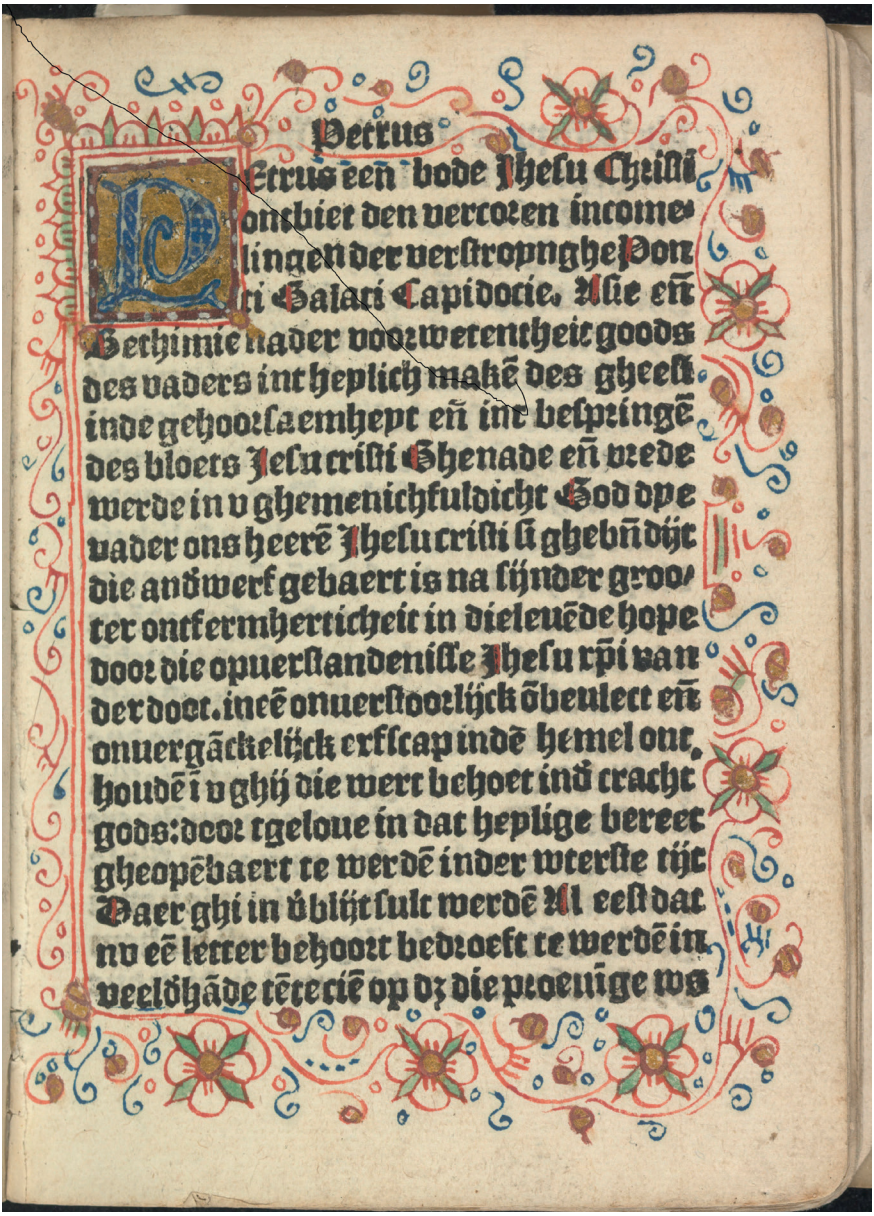
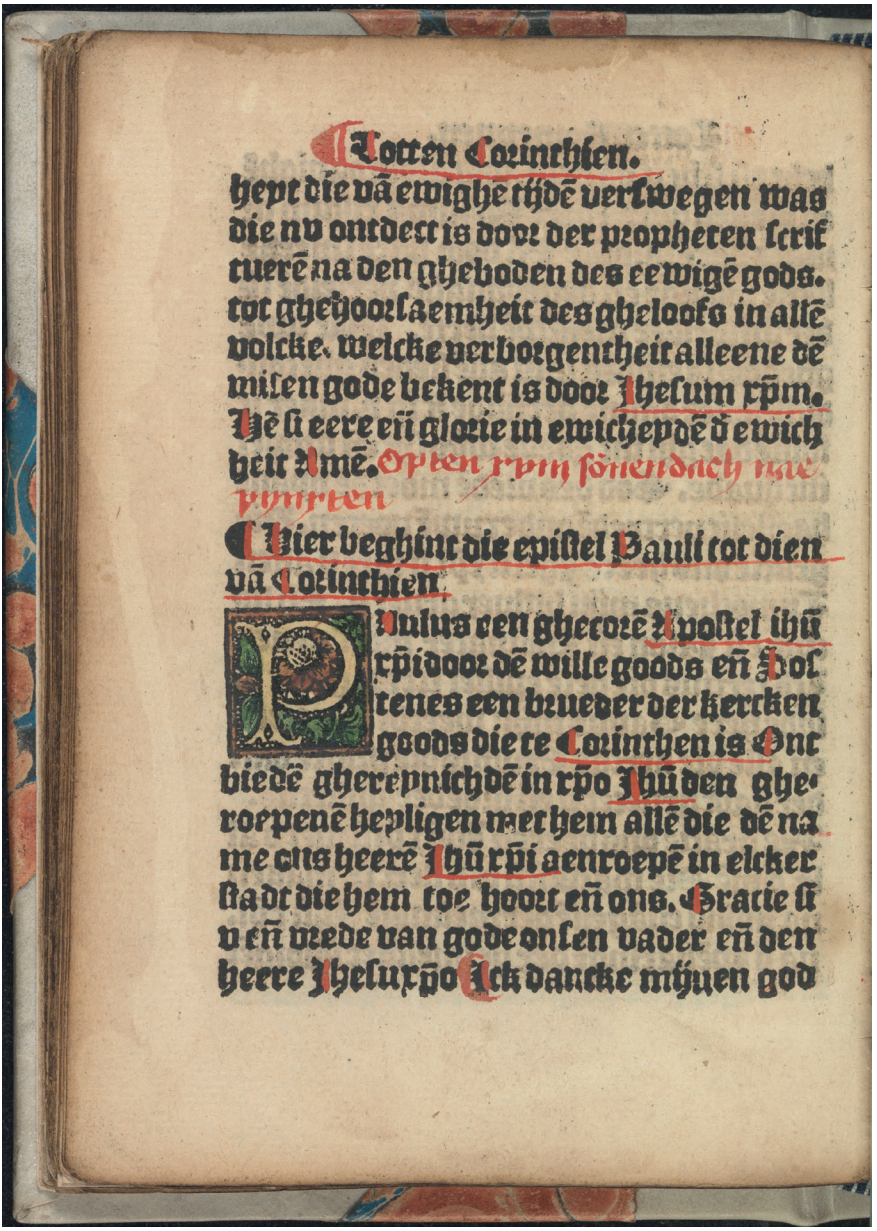


FIGURE 3 *The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, KW 230 G 30, vol. 2, f. B2r (1 Peter).*

FIGURE 4 *The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 133 D 28, f. 9r (Passion narrative from Marc).*



Totten Corinthien.
hept die vā ewighe thdē verlwegen was
die nv ontdect is doot der propheten scrif
tuerē na den gheboden des ee wigē gods.
tot ghehoorlaemheit des ghelooks in allē
volcke. welcke verborgentheit alleene dē
wisen gode bekent is doot Jhesum rpm.
Hē sī eere eñ glorie in ewichepdē d ewich
heit Amē. Opten rpm sōnendach nae
pynxten

Hier beghint die epistel Pauli tot dien
vā Corinthien.

Paulus een ghecorē Apostel ihū
rpi doot dē wille goods eñ Sos
tenes een bruedet der kercken
goods die te Corinthen is Onc
biedē gherepnichdē in rpo Jhū den gher
roepenē hepligen met hem allē die dē na
me ons heerē Jhū rpi aenroepē in elcker
stadt die hem toe hoort eñ ons. Gracie sī
v eñ vrede van gode onsen vader eñ den
heere Jhesu rpo Ick dancke mīnen god

FIGURE 5 *The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, KW 230 G 31, vol. 1, f. D7v (1 Corinthians).*

('Sunday, 8 days before Lent') to Luke 8.[44] Although the Cologne Bible was a continuous and complete Bible, in at least two copies it was adapted, although very minimally, to the fragmentary reading of the Bible that was so common.

Returning to our study of individual copies of editions of the Northern Dutch New Testament translation, we arrive at the edition of the New Testament by Adriaen van Berghen of 1523. It contains mainly Bible books in the Dutch Luther version, but it has the Northern Middle Dutch translation of the Epistles (excluding Romans and Hebrews). As we mentioned above, this choice for a mixed edition was probably made for the sake of competition: he wanted to be the first to put a complete New Testament on the market. Less than a year later he replaced the Epistles in the old translation with the new Luther version in a subsequent edition of the New Testament. But already in some copies of the 1523 edition, the volume with the medieval Northern Dutch translation of the Epistles was replaced with another edition; actually, the Northern Dutch translation only appears in one copy.[45] This copy, now in London, was owned by a woman named Janken Zeijers, and later by a woman named [A?]entgen Gerrits (see figure 6).[46]

However new the translation was, Van Berghen provided the users with the possibility of reading the traditional liturgical readings: he included a table, not with folio numbers, but with a system of cross-references with capitals and other symbols. With this system of cross-references he did not need to print the titles of the readings themselves within the Bible text. In the aforementioned 1522 edition of the Southern Middle Dutch Gospels translation, Van Liesvelt also inserted letters and symbols in the text that indicate the readings, but a matching table is absent. Moreover, a reader of the 1522 Matthew edition that was once bound together with these Gospels also wrote some letters in the margin (although here they could have simply served to divide the chapters into sections).[47] This reference system with letters was not completely new, but we have seen this in only two Middle Dutch Bible manuscripts.[48] To the readers of this particular copy this system with letters was not satisfying;

44 Groningen, University Library, Inc. 46.

45 This is London, British Library, C.36.b.27. The 1523 edition consists of three volumes (vol. 1: the Gospels; vol. 2: Acts and Apocalypse; vol. 3: the Epistles), so a volume could easily circulate apart from the others.

46 London, BL, C.36.b.27, vol. 3, f. A1r: 'dit boec hoert toe ianken zeijers' and '[A?]entgen gerrits'.

47 An image of this can be viewed on www.bibliasacra.nl, *Biblia Sacra* ID 1522.Mat.dut.DP.a, reproduction #13 (Utrecht UB D.oct.1672^1 Rariora, 1, A7r).

48 S. Folkerts, 'The Cloister or the City? The Appropriation of the New Testament by Lay Readers in an Urban Setting', in: *Instructing the Soul, Feeding the Spirit and Awakening the*

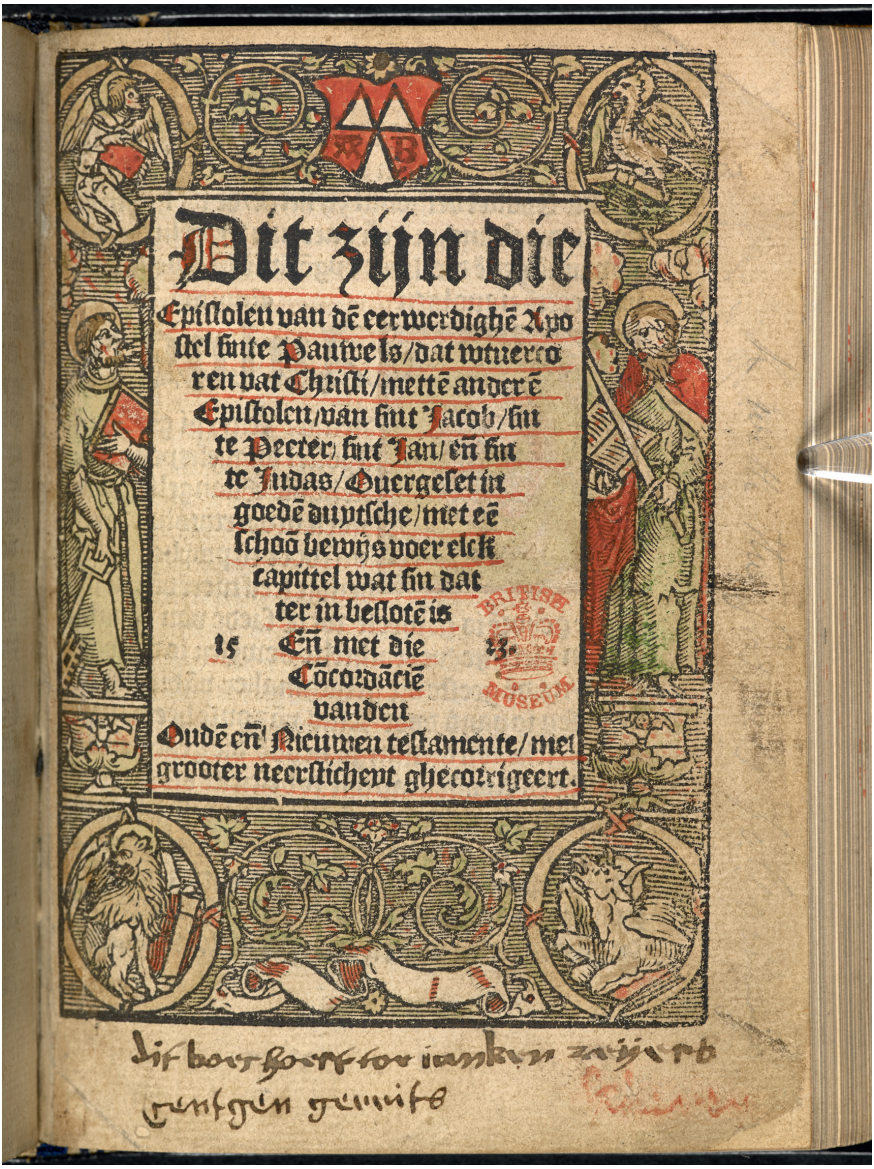


FIGURE 6 *London, British Library, C.36.b.27, vol. 3, f. Air* (*Epistles*).
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at least three different hands added the titles of the Epistle and Gospel readings in the margins (see figure 7). The first hand systematically added all titles across the text in red ink. The second hand made some additions and corrections to the first in another colour of red ink, and put letters in the margins as well. Writing in brown ink, the third hand made further additions and corrections to the titles, in the text and in the table of readings. Finally, another hand underlined some passages and wrote 'Nota bene' and other comments in the margins in brown ink. So, this copy demonstrates again that readers were able and willing to read the New Testament lesson by lesson.

The choice of printers of complete Bibles to include 'Catholic' reading tables in new translations was likely dictated by readers' preferences for reading the Bible in the 'old-fashioned', medieval manner. Examples of other new Bible editions support our view. The first is the 1524 edition of the Dutch version of the New Testament translation of Erasmus by Cornelis Lettersnyder, which was definitely one of the new humanist complete Bibles.[49] And yet, again, a complete table of liturgical readings was included, in order, as the title page says: 'to find all the Epistles and Gospels from the New Testament, which are being read daily in the Mass'.[50] As our second example serve the Dutch editions of Luther's New Testament translation by Albert Pafraet in Deventer, Hiero Fuchs in Cologne, and Hans van Ruremund in Antwerp, all published in 1525 and all containing liturgical calendars and tables of readings.[51] Our final example is the complete Bible printed by Van Liesvelt in 1526, which was suitable for both 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' readers.[52] Van Liesvelt published a Dutch Luther version, but changed some passages according to the Vulgate. Moreover, he excluded Lutheran prologues and reform-minded commentaries and included the reading schedule for the Epistle and Gospel lessons that were read during Mass on Sundays and Saints' feast days. Although in later editions of 1532, 1534, and 1535, the Bible text was increasingly adapted to the Luther text and interpretations, the 'Catholic' reading schedule remained. Even Liesvelt's Bible edition of 1542 still included the readings for the feast days of the Saints.[53]

Passion. Cultures of Religious Reading in the Late Middle Ages, ed. S. Corbellini (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 25; Turnhout 2013), pp. 175-99, there 185.

49 *Biblia Sacra* ID 1524.NT.dut.CHL.a; Den Hollander, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 289-91 (no. 11).

50 F. nir: 'Hier is oec by gheset een perfecte tafel, om te vinden, alle die Euangelien, ende dye Epistelen, die wt den niewen Testament, int Ambacht der Missen daghelijck ghelesen worden'.

51 *Biblia Sacra* ID 1525.NT.dut.AP.a, 1525.NT.dut.HF.a, and 1525.NT.dut.HvR1.a. For these editions we relied on the bibliographic information in *Biblia Sacra*.

52 François, op. cit. (n. 23), pp. 348-50.

53 François, op. cit. (n. 23), p. 350.

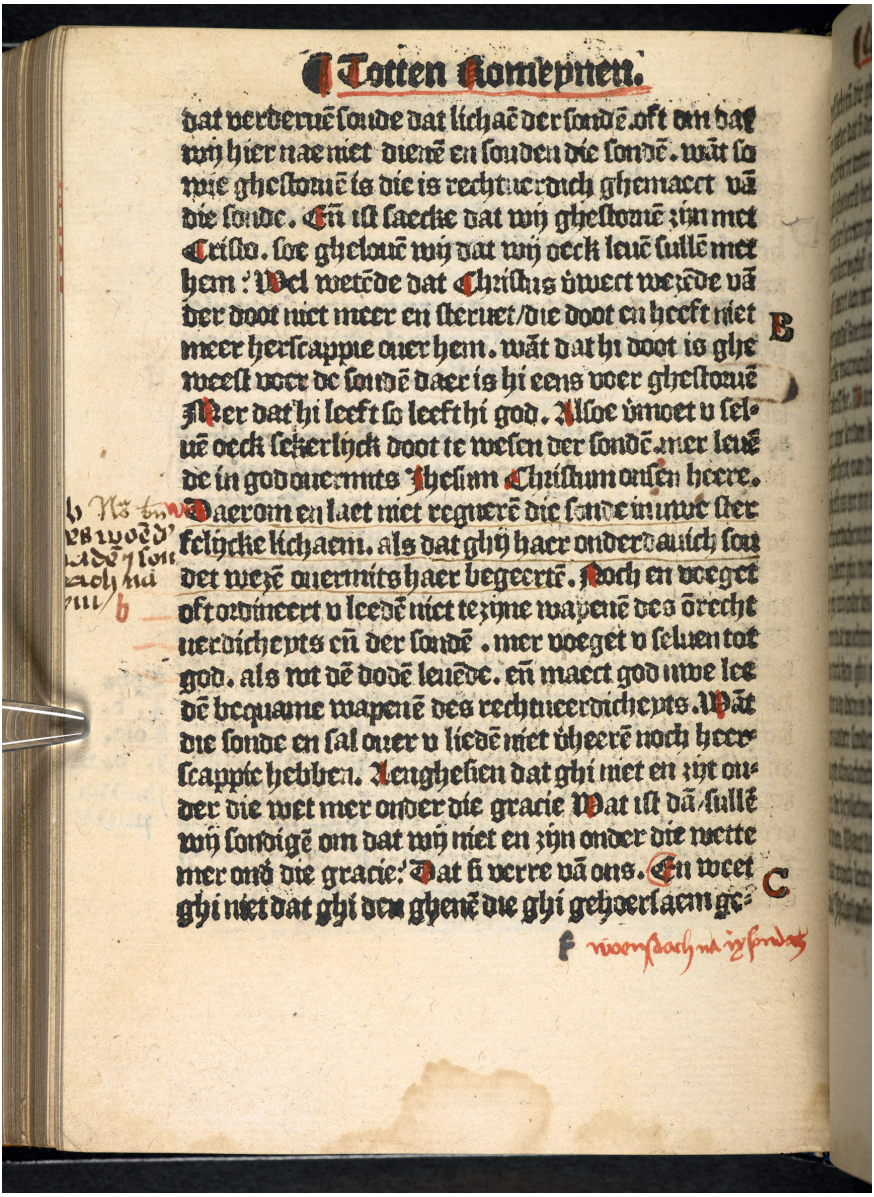

FIGURE 7 *London, British Library, C.36.b.27, vol. 3, f. B3v (Romans).*
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Other sources than the Bible copies themselves also demonstrate the practice of Bible reading according to the liturgical scheme. Book lists (in estate descriptions, wills, and inventories) and juridical sources provide additional information. According to a testimony from 3 September 1535, a churchgoer in Dikkelvenne (Flanders) in the 1530s heard the Gospel lesson of that specific day being preached, opened his book and said to his companions: 'see, it is there and it is true'.[54] This book could have been a New Testament edition of one of the new translations with a reading schedule, but it is just as likely that he owned a copy of the (Middle Dutch) *Epistles and Gospels*. Another person who owned *Epistles and Gospels* was Elisabeth de Grutere, widow of Simon Borluut. Both belonged to rich patrician families in Ghent. Elisabeth bequeathed no less than seventy books to the beguines of Our-Lady Ter Hooyen in Ghent. In a preserved booklet from around 1500 these books are listed with accompanying instructions for the new owners: the books were given to the beguines, but Elisabeth and Simon's friends could also borrow them.[55] Among the seventy devotional books we find a copy of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, the *Epistles and Gospels* with sermons, and a copy of the Epistle readings and readings for the Ember Days.[56] The list provides no information on whether the books were manuscript or printed copies, but the title *Epistelen ende ewangelie metten sermoenen van den gheheelen jare* probably refers to one of the many printed editions.

54 J. Decavele, *De dageraad van de reformatie te Vlaanderen (1520-1565)*, vol. 1 (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Letteren, jaargang 37, nr. 76; Brussels 1975), p. 268, n. 171: 'hoorde preken 't evangelye vanden daghe, dede open zynen boucke ende zeyde totten ghonen daer neffens hem zaten: "ziet daer staedt ghescreven ende 't es zo"'.

55 C. Zwart, *Lezen 'tot salicheit der sielen'. De betekenis en invloed van de nalatenschap van Elisabeth De Grutere († 03-08-1500) van zeventig religieuze volkstalige boeken aan het begijnhof Onze Lieve Vrouw Ter Hooie te Gent* (unpublished Master's thesis; University of Groningen, 2013), p. 43.

56 Ghent, Bisschoppelijk Archief, Archief Begijnhof Onze-Lieve-Vrouw Ter Hoyen, s.n., p. [16]: 'Item een bouc van dat sente pauwels screef tot den ephecien. xxxvi^{sten}.' (Ephesians); p. 7: 'Item eenen bouc vander epistelen ende de lessen diemen in de Quatertemperen haut, sinct ende leest binnen den jare. Ten eersten van den Advent. ix^{sten}.' (Epistle readings and readings for Ember days); pp. 23-4: 'Item eenen bouc van epistelen ende ewangelie metten sermoenen vanden gheheelen jare. lxi^{sten}.' (Epistles and Gospels with sermons of the whole year). Images are provided in Zwart, op. cit. (n. 55).

Conclusions

We started by noting that 1522 is traditionally seen as the year in which the landscape of Dutch Bible translations considerably changed. Regarding the introduction of new humanist and Lutheran complete translations, their Greek and Hebrew sources, and printers' choices for including Lutheran paratextualia, this may be true. However, looking at other traditional paratextual elements and users' reading habits, this traditional view should be partly reconsidered. There may have been a general tendency, especially among the reform-minded, towards reading the complete Bible without the interference of Church authorities, but people did not shed old habits easily. During the long century before 1522, laypeople introduced the liturgical reading schedule of the Church into their homes, even when complete Bibles or New Testaments were available. They were encouraged by some clerics of the Devotio Moderna to read the Bible lessons at home, but they also *wanted* to do so, as many notes, additions, and corrections in manuscript and printed copies demonstrate. The very successful collections of *Epistles and Gospels*, printed from 1477 onwards, also demonstrate this. Moreover, after the introduction of new and complete Dutch New Testament translations in the 1520s, printers still included the traditional 'Catholic' reading schedules.

What then, finally, should we consider the role of the medieval Northern Dutch translation of the New Testament in the 1520s—the decade of new translations? This medieval translation set the standard in many ways. For 150 years it had been the most copied and read New Testament text in Dutch. The layout and paratextual elements of the manuscript copies guided printers when they began producing printed versions of this translation. First they made the very lucrative decision to turn the complete New Testament text into Epistle and Gospel collections. When in the 1510s and 1520s a demand for complete New Testaments arose, they fell back on the medieval translation again, in order to quickly serve the market. Jan Seversz still printed a traditional version, but Adriaen van Berghen put the Northern Dutch New Testament translation into the framework of a new complete New Testament edition. A detailed study has yet to be undertaken, but this medieval translation influenced not only layout and paratextualia, but also the language of the new Dutch translations. According to C.C. de Bruin, the text of the *Epistles and Gospels* had burrowed itself in the minds of people in such a way that it even infiltrated the Luther version of the New Testament.[57]

57 De Bruin, op. cit. (n. 7), pp. 77-8; W. François, 'Erasmus's Revision of the New Testament and Its Influence on Dutch Bible Translations: The Dossier Revisited', *The Bible Translator,* 67 (2016), pp. 69-100, there 72-3.