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‘So wie die leest devotelic op sijn knien’: A Study of the 15th-century Book of Hours of Aef van Bolgerien (Leiden, BPL 2747)

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‘So wie die leest devotelic op sijn knien’:
A Study of the 15th-century Book of Hours of
Aef van Bolgerien
(Leiden, BPL 2747)

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Title page image: Border decoration showing Saint Agatha. Detail of fol. 133v of Leiden, Leiden University Libraries, BPL 2747.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1: LAY BOOK USE, THE BOOK OF HOURS, AND THE DEVOTIO MODERNA	8
The Role of the Book in Lay Religious Practices	8
Books of Hours.....	10
The Devotio Moderna.....	14
Books and Book Production within the Devotio Moderna.....	17
The Translation of the Hours of Geert Grote.....	20
CHAPTER 2: THE MANUSCRIPT	26
Codicological information	26
Provenance	30
Contents	36
Decoration	42
Conclusion.....	48
CHAPTER 3: THE PRAYERS - TRANSCRIPTIONS.....	50
Editorial Justification.....	50
Overview	54
The Prayers	56
CHAPTER 4: THE PRAYERS - DISSEMINATION AND SIGNIFICANCE.....	74
Identified prayers	76
Unidentified prayers	84
Conclusion.....	86
CONCLUSION	88
BIBLIOGRAPHY	91

INTRODUCTION

Dit getijboeck hoirt toe der eerbare vrouwen Aef van bolgerien wonende In die beverwijk, Ende heeft gescreuen doer een bril broeder Gherijt van Castrinchem regulier in die beverwijk in sijn vier *ende* tsestichste iaer. Int Iaer ons heren durent vierthondert acht ende tnegentich. van *onser* vrouwen nativitas of tot die aduent toe. God si geloeft. Amen.¹

This Book of Hours belongs to the honourable woman Aef van Bolgerien, living in Beverwijk. It was written through glasses by brother Gherijt van Castrinchem, regular in Beverwijk, at sixty-four years old. In the year of our Lord thousand four hundred ninety-eight, from the Nativity of Mary up to Advent [from the 8th of September to the 2nd of December of 1498]. God be praised, Amen.

Thus states the colophon of a fifteenth-century Middle Dutch prayer book currently preserved in the library of Leiden University under the shelfmark BPL (Bibliotheca Publica Latina) 2747. The manuscript, copied in 1498 and illuminated in 1499, is a Book of Hours, a type of prayer book popular with lay audiences. The central texts in Books of Hours, the Hours, contain prayers for eight times of the day. This praying schedule is derived from the Divine Office which is recited in monasteries and allows laypeople to engage with a version of the canonical hours in a domestic setting. In addition to these, the books may contain a liturgical calendar and a variety of other prayers and accessory texts.

The manuscript examined in this study, BPL 2747, is by no means unknown, as several studies cite its colophon and its dated and signed illuminations, yet its contents are largely unexplored. The focus taken by earlier research is not without reason, as these elements allow the book to be located and dated with more precision than usually possible. It is precisely because of this, however, that the contents deserve more attention. While Books of Hours were very common in the late Middle Ages, they were often made to order and are highly customisable, meaning no two Books of Hours are the exact same. The contents of BPL 2747 offer an opportunity for gaining insights into the function of the

¹ Leiden, Leiden University Libraries, BPL 2747, f. 203v.

Book of Hours and the religious life of its owner, even more so because, through the colophon, the manuscript can be linked to a specific person, place and time.

As mentioned, this manuscript has appeared in previous studies. In most cases, however, it is merely mentioned as an example in a larger argument, or the discussion of the manuscript is limited to a brief statement of a category an element in the book belongs to. Klaas van der Hoek, for example, mentions illuminations and the location mentioned in the colophon in his search of the identity of Spierinck, the so far unidentified illuminator of this and several other manuscripts.² Anne Korteweg and Wilhelmina Wüstefeld both reference the manuscript in their footnotes as an example of the use of the geometric style of penwork.³ More such references exist, mostly to the colophon or the decoration, yet no extensive research into the book as a whole has been done. This thesis aims to change that by providing a study of the manuscript that takes into account both the elements explored in the aforementioned studies and the textual contents.

To achieve this aim, this thesis contains a partial edition of BPL 2747 that will facilitate an in-depth analysis of the manuscript's contents. The choice was made to transcribe and analyse the prayers that are not part of the Hours, as these tend to differ more between individual Books of Hours. Additionally, the Hours in this manuscript are derived from a common Middle Dutch translation, that of Geert Grote, of which editions have already been made.⁴ Thus, the prayers have been chosen as the best way of gaining insight into the specific use of this Book of Hours. In addition to the edition, the manuscript as a whole is examined. The ultimate objective of this thesis is to uncover as much as possible about the life of Aef van Bolgerien, of whom the colophon in this

² See Klaas van der Hoek, 'De Noordhollandse verluchter Spierinck, Haarlem en/of Beverwijk, circa 1485-1519', in *Middeleeuwse handschriftenkunde in de Nederlanden 1988: verslag van de Groningse codicologendagen 28-29 april 1988*, ed. by Jos. M.M. Hermans, Nijmeegse codicologische cahiers; (Grave: Alfa, 1989) pp. 163-182.

³ See Anne S. Korteweg, 'Delftse, Noordhollandse En Groningse Randjes', pp. 237-46, 553-57 and Wüstefeld, Wilhelmina C.M., *De boeken van de Grote of Sint Bavokerk: een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het middeleeuwse boek in Haarlem*, Hollandse studiën 3 (Dordrecht: Hilversum: Historische Vereniging Holland; Verloren, 1989).

⁴ See Geert Grote, *Het getijdenboek van Geert Grote*, ed. by N. van Wijk, Leidse drukken en herdrukken uitgegeven vanwege de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde te Leiden. Kleine reeks; (Leiden: Brill, 1940).

manuscript is one of the only surviving references, and about her use of the book, as an example of late medieval lay religious practice in the Low Countries.

The thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter contains the historical context surrounding the manuscript, focussing on lay religious readership, Books of Hours, and the *Devotio Moderna* movement. The second chapter is concerned with the manuscript as a material object and also touches upon the contents of the manuscript that were not chosen for the transcription. The third chapter contains an editorial justification, explaining the choices made in the process of editing, followed by the transcriptions of the prayers. Chapter four offers an analysis of the prayers, by examining their dissemination as well as their content in order to gain insight into the religious life of Aef van Bolgerien and the customisation of the Middle Dutch Book of Hours. The study concludes that, by its nature as a vernacular Book of Hours, BPL 2747 offers the lay reader a unique experience of devotion characterised by direct access to a custom religious text in accessible language, and thus offers the reader control over what and how they pray.

CHAPTER 1: LAY BOOK USE, THE BOOK OF HOURS, AND THE DEVOTIO MODERNA

In the twenty-first century, it is not hard to imagine that any household that follows a religion would have one or more books of religious texts on their bookshelves. This has, however, not always been self-evident. Leiden BPL 2747 is part of a late medieval development which saw the rise of lay participation in religion, and the book culture that supported it. This chapter traces the developments that led to the existence of the Book of Hours as found in the manuscript central to this study, by addressing the developments of lay religious reading, with particular attention to the Book of Hours as a tool for devotion, the Devotio Moderna, an important religious movement in the Low Countries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the role of the book in their religious practices.

The Role of the Book in Lay Religious Practices

The book has played an important role in Christianity since the early days of the religion. The codex was adopted more quickly than by other religions, who often considered it to be an inferior medium to the scroll that was traditionally used for religious writings. There were two main reasons for the broader adoption of the codex within Christianity. First of all, it has some practical advantages over the scroll, as it allows for random access and cross referencing, and is easy to transport. In addition, codices were a way of distinguishing Christian scripture from Jewish scripture.⁵ Reading was a valued religious activity. Through a progress of slow reading, contemplation, and memorisation a deep connection was made between the reader and the text. In the early Middle Ages, however, literacy levels were low, and many religious texts were written in Latin. Thus, only a limited amount of people had both access to texts and the ability to understand them. As a result, books became increasingly associated with the church, which was often the only access point for laypeople to religious texts.

⁵ Peter Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible', in J. Anderson and E. Sauer, *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies* (Philadelphia, 2002), p.42-43.

Change occurred in the later Middle Ages when literacy levels rose, which, together with efforts of translation into vernacular languages, opened up access to texts and access to participation in the religion to laypeople.⁶ The literate urban laity, referred to by Sabrina Corbellini as the *respublica laicorum*, formed new ‘communities of interpretation’ who, by organising cultural events and producing literary texts, contributed to ‘the cultural and religious education of the medieval laity and to a significant growth in their cultural and religious capital’ and an increase in the ‘collaboration and exchange with members of Latinate religious groups’.⁷ The shared religious culture that was created through these developments allowed for more widely spread participation in religious life without the strict rules of clergy.

Translation of religious texts for the laity occurred according to two patterns, identified by Corbellini. Firstly, some texts were translated within religious orders and were intended for use within these orders but spread to a wider audience through the above-mentioned collaboration between the *respublica laicorum* and Latinate religious groups. Secondly, some translations circulated in the opposite direction and were produced by laity and read in religious orders at a later stage.⁸ There was some initial resistance to religious texts in vernacular languages, which were by some considered to be heterodox, and discussions arose concerning what texts were appropriate for lay audiences from a religious standpoint and based on literacy levels, but acceptance of the vernacular increased in the thirteenth and fourteenth century.⁹ These discussions on acceptable readings for laypeople are evidenced by several letters in which lay women receive guidance for a pious life from their spiritual advisors. A survey of such letters by Susanne de Jong presents several European examples in which advice is given both on what texts were suitable and the manners in which they were ought to be read.¹⁰ Letters found in a manuscript dating from

⁶ Sabrina Corbellini, ‘Introduction’, in *Cultures of Religious Reading in the Late Middle Ages*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy (Brepols Publishers, 2013), xxv, p.3.

⁷ Corbellini, ‘Introduction’, p.3-4.

⁸ Sabrina Corbellini, ‘Beyond Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: A New Approach to Late Medieval Religious Reading’, in *Cultures of Religious Reading in the Late Middle Ages*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy (Brepols Publishers, 2013), xxv, p.48.

⁹ Corbellini, ‘Beyond Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy’, p.47. See also Nikolaus Staubach and Rudolf Suntrup, *Was Dürfen Laien Lesen?* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2019)

¹⁰ See Susanne de Jong, “‘Read Some Good Dutch Books’ Laypeople, Books and Religious Reading in the Late Medieval Domestic Setting”, *Journal of Medieval Literature in the Low Countries*, 25.1 (2018), pp.32-54.

1450-1470 instruct an unidentified woman from the Low Countries to read a range of texts from a Book of Hours as well as ‘some good Dutch books’ of her own choice that will ‘turn your heart to God’.¹¹ She is furthermore instructed to meditate on Christ’s Passion and death. While she is encouraged to continue to enrich her religious life by reading and meditating, there are limits to what she should aspire to, as can be seen when the sender tells her to refrain from consulting Holy Scripture, as it is beyond her understanding. Full immersion in religious life is not the recipient’s end goal, which becomes apparent when she is encouraged to find ways to combine religion with the activities of her worldly life, for example by prioritising select readings and meditations on days in which she cannot find time to complete the full schedule.

Increased domestic reading is not only addressed in private correspondence as discussed above, but also in preaching, where, through the process of domestication, the introduction of books in the home environment is encouraged.¹² In Italy, (religious) book ownership rises from the fourteenth century onwards as laypeople build private libraries both by copying texts themselves and by having them copied professionally. Within these libraries, religious texts were a common feature, appearing in almost all collections, regardless of size.¹³ Because these books were often copied by laypeople, they more frequently contained colophons than those copied by professional scribes. Some of these colophons state that books were copied not just for the first owner and their family, but also to be lend out to friends.¹⁴ Indications such as these bear witness to a shared reading culture in which religion played a central role.

Books of Hours

Books of Hours were a widely used form of late medieval devotional literature. While they were particularly popular among lay readers, they were also found in monasteries and other (semi-)religious communities. Originating in the thirteenth century, this type of prayer

¹¹ Susanne de Jong, ‘Read Some Good Dutch Books’, p.38.

¹² Corbellini, ‘Beyond Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy’, p.50.

¹³ Ibidem, p.43.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p.41.

book is the best surviving text from the late Middle Ages. Books of Hours were often specifically made for laypeople to allow them to take part in daily religious life when literacy increased. The books contained texts that were read at eight points during the day. Originally, in monastic settings, the texts of the Divine Office would have been chanted, but the shorter texts of the Hours, used in home settings, were often recited. The specific times at which the prayers took place differs between sources. Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham suggest the following division:

“The "hours" alluded to were of course the hours of the monastic Divine Office, the times of day at which monks gathered in church to pray. There were eight of these hours: matins, for which monks rose from their beds at about two a.m. and which was immediately followed by lauds; prime, marking the first hour of the day, around six a.m.; terce, sext, and none, respectively marking the third, sixth, and ninth hours (nine a.m., noon, and three p.m.); vespers, marking the onset of evening; and compline, which brought the day to a close.”¹⁵

Yet, times were followed less strictly by laypeople, who might instead delay prayers or recite them earlier to fit their daily routine. This practice is evidenced by the preface to a Book of Hours printed in the sixteenth century:

‘First rise up at six of the clock in the morning in all seasons and in your rising do as follows. Thank Our Lord of rest that he gave you that night, commend you to God, Blessed Lady Saint Mary, and to that saint which is feasted that day [...] When you have arrayed yourself in your chamber or lodging, [say] Matins, Prime, and Hours if you may. Then go to the church [...], and abide in the church the space of a low mass, while there you shall think and thank God for his benefits [...] When you are come from the church, take heed to your household or occupation till dinner time [...] Then take your refection or meal reasonably, without excess or over much [...] Rest you after dinner an hour or half an hour as you think best As touching your service, say unto Terce before dinner, and make an end of all before supper. And when you may, say Dirige [Office of the Dead] and

¹⁵ Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, ‘Books of Hours’, in *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (London, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p.208.

Commendations for all Christian souls, at the least way on the Holy Days and, if you have leisure, say them on other days, at the least with three lessons [...]’¹⁶

The central text in Books of Hours was the Hours of the Virgin which were read daily.¹⁷ Other common elements were: a calendar of religious holidays, the four Gospel Lessons, Christ’s passion, the Hours of the Cross, the Hours of the Holy Spirit, the seven Penitential psalms (which are psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 129 and 142, according to Vulgate numbering), the Office of the Dead, the litany, and the suffrages of the saints, as well as two prayers to Mary, titled in Latin *Obsecro te* (I beseech you) and *O intemerata* (O immaculate Virgin). In addition to these elements, there are several accessory texts which were commonly found, namely the Psalter of St. Jerome, and the Joys of the Virgin.¹⁸ Of these elements, the calendar is particularly useful for book historians as the saints mentioned in them allow them to be connected to regions or monasteries where these particular saints were venerated. It should be noted however, that they do not necessarily indicate the place of production of a Book of Hours, as it was not uncommon for the manuscripts to be made to order in other regions or even countries. More on the calendar and the other elements of the Book of Hours that are present in BPL 2747 can be found in Chapter 2, which discusses the contents in more depth. For now, only the Hours of the Virgin will be discussed as an example of the use of Hours, as they are found in all Books of Hours.

The Hours of the Virgin were, as the name suggests, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. An hour included a combination of versicles, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns, canticles, Old Testament readings, and prayers. The first hour of the day, the matins, was longest, while prime, terce, sext and none were the shortest, and therefore also referred to as the ‘little hours’. The latter only included a versicle, a response, three psalms with their antiphons, a reading with versicles and responses, and prayers. The text that was recited was the same every day, with the exception of the three psalms for the matins. These

¹⁶ Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, PML 19585, fols. C6r–C8r, cited in, Roger S. Wieck, ‘Prayer For The People: The Book Of Hours’, in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Roy Hammerling, Brill EBook Titles 2008 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 391.

¹⁷ Wieck, ‘Prayer For The People’: The Book Of Hours’, p. 390.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p.390, see also Clemens, Raymond, and Timothy Graham, ‘Books of Hours’, p.208.

differed based on the day of the week, with psalms 8, 18, and 23 being read on Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays, psalms 44, 45, and 86 on Tuesdays and Fridays and psalms 95, 96, and 97 on Wednesdays and Saturdays. In addition, some Books of Hours contained alternative texts for the periods of Advent and Christmas tide.

The texts in Books of Hours were often accompanied by illuminations of varying complexity. For many people, Books of Hours with illuminated pages were the most elaborate art they owned, adding to the value of the book. While no two Books of Hours were the exact same, there were standard images that would accompany the calendars (labours or zodiac signs), the Gospel Lessons (John of Patmos, Luke, Matthew and Mark) and texts of the Hours.¹⁹ Because the illuminations often depicted scenes related to the text, they did not only serve as decorations but also as visual aids for understanding the text as well as finding aids for locating sections of the book, which often did not contain foliation or page numbering. In printed Books of Hours, images had a commercial value and were an important selling point.

As previously mentioned, much of religious literature was initially written in Latin, and this was also the case for Books of Hours. While fluency in Latin among the laity was limited, proficiency was likely sufficient to understand the prayers, especially for speakers of Romance languages such as Italian. Comprehension was aided by the fact that the texts were repeated so often, as well as the fact that they were commonly part of the curriculum through which children were taught to read. While some books in England and France contained shorter prayers in the vernacular, large scale translation was unsuccessful. The Low Countries form an exception to the rule, as the Middle Dutch translation is the only one to reach the success of the Latin versions. The translation into the vernacular was in large part done by the founder of the *Devotio Moderna*, Geert Grote, after he was banned from preaching in 1383. In the two centuries after his death in 1384, his translation would become the most read text in the Northern Netherlands.

¹⁹ For an overview of common images associated with the main texts of a Book of Hours, see Wieck, 'Prayer For The People', p.394.

The Devotio Moderna²⁰

History

The roots of the Devotio Moderna (*Moderne Devotie* in Dutch, *Modern Devotion* in English) can be traced back to the 20th of September 1374, in Deventer, present day Netherlands. The Catholic deacon Geert Grote (also spelled Grootte, Latin Gerardus Magnus) opened up his house to poor and unmarried women looking to live a pious life. He himself inhabited two small rooms in the building, which came to be known as the Meester-Geertshuis. He came to this decision after realising the Catholic Church was in many cases increasingly driven by the self-interests of those involved and wished to live a more modest life, building a more personal connection to his faith. Like many early reform movements, Grote aspired for both him and the women of the house to practice a pure faith in line with the ideals as set out by the Apostles, free from the corruption of the Church.

The Sisters of the Common Life, as the women living in Grote's house became known, were considered 'semi-religious', meaning 'they lived in a community, but unlike the 'full religious' they were not bound by the three monastic vows of poverty, obedience and chastity'.²¹ This made the Devotio Moderna popular as it allowed women entrance to religious life without the commitment and restraints of becoming nuns. The original house of sixteen sisters had grown to have a hundred and fifty members by 1419. Moreover, by 1400, new houses had been established under the authority of Johannes Brinckerinck. Brinckerinck was one of several acquaintances of Grote who took over after Grote's death in 1384. In addition to the growth of the female houses, a male house was established in the house of vicar Florens Radewijns. The male members of the movement became known as the Brothers of the Common Life. The Devotio Moderna also grew significantly outside of Deventer, resulting in a total of seven male, and twenty-seven female houses around the year 1400.²²

²⁰ The following section was originally written as part of an assignment titled 'The Devotio Moderna and the Role of the Book' for the course 'The Manuscript Book in the West' (2021-2022), which is part of the Book and Digital Media Studies programme at Leiden University.

²¹ Wybren Scheepma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries: The 'Modern Devotion', the Canonesses of Windesheim, and Their Writings*, ed. by David F. (David Frame) Johnson, 2004, p.6.

²² Anna Dlabáčová, 'Het succesverhaal van de Moderne Devotie: nieuwe spiritualiteit met keuzemogelijkheden', *De Kovel. Monastiek tijdschrift voor Vlaanderen en Nederland*, 66 (2021), p.9.

Early houses had strict admission requirements for members. The women were only allowed to take residency if they were unmarried and poor. Wealthier women with an interest in the lifestyle of the *Devotio Moderna* were refused until 1400, when Johannes Brinckerinck established the Diepenveen convent. With more liberal admission rules, this house was open to the wealthier women who had previously been denied access to the Meester-Geertshuis. Diepenveen became a large success. It was admitted to the Chapter of Windesheim in 1412 and became ‘the model for the female monastic life according to the principles of the Modern Devotion’.²³ Within the Chapter of Windesheim, Diepenveen was in the minority, as only seven female monasteries were fully incorporated in the Chapter of Windesheim.²⁴

The Diepenveen house also exemplifies another development within the *Devotio Moderna*: the monasticisation of the houses. While the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life lived without a monastic rule, monasteries such as that of Diepenveen followed a rule of Augustine. As a result, the women in Diepenveen can be referred to as ‘canonesses’. The original rule of Augustine was adapted to fit the ideals the Devotion, with a focus on prayer, meditation and self-sanctification.²⁵ Scheepsma mentions three steps of monasticisation: ‘the adoption of a rule, a stricter observance of it, and ultimately the adoption of the *clausura*’.²⁶ For members, living by a monastic rule was often considered beneficial for the path to salvation. Particularly, monastic enclosure, which limited contact between the monastic community and society, gained popularity in the *Devotio Moderna*. For those in charge of the houses, the structure of monasteries and chapters allowed for easier management of the organisation. In addition to the Sisters and Brothers and the canonesses, a third group arose. Tertiaries followed the third rule of St. Francis, which was stricter than the Common Life but less strict than the rule of Augustine. Here too, the rules were applied increasingly strictly over time. The Chapter of Utrecht, to which many communities of tertiaries in the Low Countries belonged, initially only required members to follow one of the religious vows, namely chastity. By the end of the

²³ Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries*, p.12.

²⁴ Dlabáčová, ‘Het succesverhaal van de Moderne Devotie’, p.12.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p.9-10.

²⁶ Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries*, p.13-14.

fifteenth century, however, members were also subject to the other two vows, obedience and poverty.²⁷

The majority of the communities of the *Devotio Moderna* came to an end with the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, there are still religious communities in the Netherlands and Germany whose roots lie in the movement.²⁸

Customs and Beliefs

Spiritual life in communities related to the *Devotio Moderna* was in large parts based around the idea of religious purity. The dominant way of life within the movement was asceticism. Members lived a life without luxuries and shared what they did have. Their main goal in daily life was the emulating of Christ. In light of this, they were encouraged to incorporate prayer and meditation where possible. Activities undertaken by the members include spinning and weaving for the sisters and copying books for brothers. These activities had the additional benefit of bringing in funds, which was important for the houses given that, as a result of their independent status, they were not funded by the church.²⁹

Religion was practiced from a rather personal standpoint in the *Devotio Moderna*. This individual aspect was not new or unique, but the extent to which it spread was characteristic of the Modern Devotion. Self-reflection was considered important for living a 'pure' life and practiced extensively. As part of this process, members made lists of their vices and virtues to track their progress as well as lists of good intentions they aspired to live by.³⁰

Besides asceticism, mysticism, which refers to experiences of contact with God, was also part of religious practice. Mysticism was, however, viewed with suspicion by the

²⁷ Hildo van Engen, *De derde orde van Sint-Franciscus in het middeleeuwse bisdom Utrecht: een bijdrage tot de institutionele geschiedenis van de Moderne Devotie*, *Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006), p. 18-19.

²⁸ Anna Dlabáčová, 'De Kater Die Een Handschrift Ruïneerde En Andere Verhalen: De Moderne Devotie Voor Een Breed Publiek', *Leiden Medievalists Blog*, 2018.

²⁹ Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries*, p.7.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

leaders of the movement. Concerns existed over ‘the unverifiability of the mystical experience’ and were accompanied by ‘fear of the emergence of heretical ideas’.³¹ As a result, the movement distanced itself from the practice in the second half of the fifteenth century. In 1455, a prohibition was issued against writing of mystic experiences. As a consequence of this, the nun Alijt Bake was banished from her Windesheim convent the same year, showing there were limits to the freedom of individual experiences.

Books and Book Production within the Devotio Moderna³²

Books played a large role in the way in which religion was practiced within the Devotio Moderna. As mentioned above, writing was common both for personal use and in scribal functions. This custom goes back to Geert Grote who saw great potential in religious texts for aiding his inner conversion and who wrote texts himself in order to spread his beliefs. According to Wybren Scheepsma, books were ‘the only thing he spent any significant amount of money on after his conversion’.³³ Texts continued to be important in the shaping of the movement as they allowed for community building by transmitting the ideals of the founders and earlier members. Bas Diemel and Jeroen Deploige suggest that the subdivisions, based on gender and branches (Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life, monastic communities and tertiaries), can be seen as ‘textual communities’ in which textual heritage was an important part of group identity.³⁴

The Devotio Moderna followed the traditional process of the *Lectio Divina* for reaching their internal conversion: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (meditation) and *oratio* (prayer). The amount of time available for reading differed between the houses. Spiritual reading was considered important because it allowed for internalisation of the faith. As a result, the Devotio Moderna brought about a shift in emphasis which led to reading and meditation being intertwined. While reading religious texts, the men and women of the

³¹ Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries*, p.23.

³² The following section was originally written as part of an assignment titled ‘The Devotio Moderna and the Role of the Book’ for the course ‘The Manuscript Book in the West’ (2021-2022), which is part of the Book and Digital Media Studies programme at Leiden University.

³³ Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries*, p.18.

³⁴ Bas Diemel, and Jeroen Deploige, ‘United or Bound by Death?: A Case-Study on Group Identity and Textual Communities within the Devotio Moderna’, *Revue d’histoire Ecclésiastique*, 105.2 (2010), p.350.

Devotion would consider how what they read could aid them in their conversion. As listed by Scheepsma, six points were central to reading practices:

1. The goal of reading is to achieve purity of heart.
2. The texts should be read in their entirety.
3. Reading should take place at established times.
4. Certain points from the reading should be retained, so that one may return to them afterwards.
5. Reading should alternate periodically with prayer.
6. Preference should be given to books on piety and virtue.³⁵

As this list demonstrates, texts were read with a specific purpose in mind: purity of heart, or in other words, inner conversion. The systematic way of dealing with texts has been referred to as ‘pragmatic literacy’ and affected both book use and book production.³⁶ The practices were a way of showing devotion and ‘the Modern Devout created in the process a new, utilitarian religious literature, consisting of all manner of reworkings, adaptations, summaries and hybrid forms’.³⁷

As aforementioned, scribal work was also used as a way of financing the houses. Scribes worked both *pro domo* (for the house) and *pro pretio* (for a price/sale). Additionally, the copying of texts was used as a way of meditating, as the scribes contemplated on the text they were working with.³⁸ This occurred in both male and female communities. In some houses, books were not only copied but also illuminated and bound. A chronicle of a house in Gouda also describes these activities being commissioned by, among others, the city church and the city of Gouda itself.³⁹ In line with the humble nature of the movement,

³⁵ Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries*, p.86.

³⁶ For more on pragmatic literacy, see Micheal Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford [etc.]: Blackwell, 1993), Hagen Keller, Hagen, Grubmüller, and Nikolaus Staubach, ‘Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit Im Mittelalter. Erscheinungsformen Und Entwicklungsstufen - (Akten Des Internationalen Kolloquiums, 17. - 19. Mai 1989)’ (Fink, 1992) and Nikolaus Staubach, ‘Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit Im Bereich Der Devotio Moderna’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien Band 25*, (1991), pp.418–61.

³⁷ Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries*, p.19.

³⁸ Thomas Kock, *Die Buchkultur der Devotio moderna: Handschriftenproduktion, Literaturversorgung und Bibliotheksaufbau im Zeitalter des Medienwechsels, Tradition, Reform, Innovation*; Bd. 2. (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999), p.79-80.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.81-2.

most manuscripts contained no scribal information, or merely a general reference to the *Devotio Moderna*.

The *Devotio Moderna*, which coincided with a large female following, also had a large effect on the production of vernacular texts. Despite spoken vernaculars gaining ground in Church services, Latin was still the language of choice for written texts. The entrance of many women into spiritual life created a new audience for vernacular texts, as only a limited number of them had sufficient knowledge of Latin. The development towards vernacular languages was also seen in mystic literature. Both male and female authors increasingly chose to write in the vernacular to grant access to a wider (female) audience. It should be noted, however, that while the *Devotio Moderna* certainly led to new momentum for female vernacular production, the activity dates back further than the movement. Religious texts by female vernacular authors have been identified in the Southern Netherlands as early as 1250. Additionally, despite the increase in vernacular usage, Latin was still common in mystic literature and preferred in theological texts.

Nevertheless, book production was high among the members of the *Devotio Moderna*. Manuscript production reached a highpoint in the Low Countries in the fifteenth century. In particular, many manuscripts have been dated to the third quarter of this century.⁴⁰ The Low Countries stood out in comparison to other countries based on the large share of manuscripts produced in monastic settings. J.P. Gumbert suggests that sixty to seventy percent of manuscripts in the *Catalogue of Dated Manuscripts* was written in convents, as opposed to thirty to forty percent in other countries, and this development was in large part linked to the Devotion.⁴¹ It is generally understood that manuscripts in the vernacular were produced in a large scale for the sisters, canonesses and tertiaries, while production of Latin manuscripts was high for male houses. A study of incunabula held by houses of the *Devotio Moderna*, however, found 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),

⁴⁰ J.P. Gumbert, *The Dutch and Their Books in the Manuscript Age*, The Panizzi Lectures ; 1989 (London: The British Library, 1990), p.24.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p.52-54.

whereas the canonesses regular possessed 27 Middle Dutch incunabula and only 10 in Latin'.⁴² Thus, while the vernacular was well-represented in female communities of the *Devotio Moderna*, it did not completely overtake the use of Latin.

The Translation of the Hours of Geert Grote

As mentioned above, Middle Dutch was the only vernacular in which the Book of Hours matched the popularity of the Latin originals. The translation at the hand of Geert Grote became widely spread within the Low Countries and parts of present-day Germany. As many communities of the *Devotio Moderna* are semi-religious, is it not surprising that a vernacular text for domestic religious practice gained ground quickly. The translation of the Hours was used both among laypeople and by the (semi-)religious members of the reform movement. Some caution should be taken, however, when referring to 'the translation', as it remains uncertain exactly what this translation comprised. Uncertainty regarding the contents of the translation is twofold. Firstly, there is no definitive proof to say which texts were actually translated by Geert Grote himself, and which were translated by his followers. Notable contributions to the Middle Dutch translation are those of Joannes Scutken, who is thought to have completed the translation of the psalms after Grote's death, and a later revision of the Hours completed by the Windesheim chapter. Several later authors mention Grote's work as a translator, but they do not all mention him in relation to the same text.

Grote's biographers Thomas van Kempen, Petrus Horn, Rudolf Dier van Muiden and Johannes Busch, all living in the first half of the fifteenth century, state that he translated the Hours of Our Lady, Horn and Busch moreover state that he translated the Hours of the Holy Spirit. Horn, Dier van Muiden and Busch place the translation of the Vigil of the Dead and the associated seven penitential psalms in his name, to which Dier adds the translation of the Litany of All Saints. Horn alone mentions the translation of the Hours of the Cross, and Busch alone that of the Eternal Wisdom. Horn and Dier van Muiden also have the particularly relevant remark that Geert Grote also wrote 'Dietse glossen', i.e. annotations in Middle

⁴² Anna Dlabačová, and Patricia Stoop, 'Incunabula in Communities of Canonesses Regular and Tertiaries Related to the *Devotio Moderna*', *Quaerendo*, 51.3 (2021), p.236.

Dutch, for some difficult psalm locations, in order to aid the understanding of those users who had no theological education.⁴³

Direct mention of Grote as a translator is found in only one manuscript, former Münster, ms. 419, which is now lost but survives in a partial edition. The manuscript, however, only credits Grote with the translation of the Office of the Dead.⁴⁴

Secondly, the Latin sources for the translation have not all been identified. There was not one Latin version that served as an example, instead it is thought that Grote compiled the Hours himself, using several different breviaries.⁴⁵ The Office of the Dead and the Penitential Psalms, for example, are found in Latin in the Roman Breviary, while the short Hours of the Cross stem from a Latin version commonly attributed to Pope John XXII. The Latin sources for the Hours of the Holy Spirit and the long Hours of the Cross are unknown, and the Hours of the Virgin have no original source as they are believed to have been put together by Grote himself, using multiple Latin sources.⁴⁶ The autograph of Geert Grote's translation is not known, and since there is much variety in the contents of Books of Hours, finding out what was or was not part of Grote's translation efforts is challenging. The following components have been accepted as part of the text by Grote, though their order varies:

1. Calendar for the diocese of Utrecht
2. Hours:
 - a. The Hours of the Virgin
 - b. The Hours of the Holy Spirit
 - c. The short Hours of the Cross
 - d. The Hours of Eternal Wisdom
 - e. The long Hours of the Cross
3. The Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Saints

⁴³ A. G. Weiler, *Getijden van de Eeuwige Wijsheid* (Baarn: Ambo, 1984), p.26-27.

⁴⁴ Weiler, *Getijden van de Eeuwige Wijsheid*, p.28.

⁴⁵ See R. Th. M. van Dijk, 'Het Getijdenboek van Geert Grote: Terugblik En Vooruitzicht', ed. by Ruusbroec-Genootschap and Universitaire Faculteiten Sint Ignatius Antwerpen, *Ons Geestelijk Erf: Driemaandelijksch Tijdschrift Gewijd Aan de Studie Der Nederlandsche Vroomheid van Af de Bekeering Tot circa 1750*, 64 (1990), pp.456–94.

⁴⁶ Weiler, *Getijden van de Eeuwige Wijsheid*, p.27.

4. The Office of the Dead⁴⁷

The Hours of Eternal Wisdom stand out here. The text, based on the *Cursus de Aeterna Sapientia* by German Dominican friar and writer Henry Suso (1295-1366), is found in over three hundred of the eight hundred extant Books of Hours containing (part of) the Middle Dutch translation of the Hours.⁴⁸ The Hours of Eternal Wisdom differ from the other texts due to their mystical nature. Henry Suso had, upon noticing how vanity and worldly love had taken the place of devotion for many Christians, set out to renew his devoutness by courting the Eternal Wisdom. He composed the Hours as a guide for people to establish their love for the Eternal Wisdom.⁴⁹ The inclusion of this text in Grote's Hours is not surprising, given that the return to a 'purer' devotion was central to Grote's motivation for the founding of the Devotio Moderna. The fact that it is found in less than half the extant manuscripts may be explained by the increased criticism towards mysticism from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards.

In addition to the texts mentioned above, prologues to the Hours of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead have been attributed to Grote. They can, among others, be found in the 1940 edition of the manuscript KB 133 E 21, held by the National Library in the Hague, by N. van Wijk, which is generally accepted as a baseline for the translation.⁵⁰ The prologue to the Hours of the Virgin offers some insights into the choices that were made in the process of the translation. Grote states that he translated the Hours as precisely as possible, but that he sometimes opted for alternative words if they conveyed the intended meaning better or if they were more likely to be understood by the reader. As an example of this, Grote takes the sentence '*In die eere der alre salichster ioncfrouwen marien iubilere wi den here*', meaning 'In honour of the blessed Lady Mary we celebrate the Lord'. This phrasing, he states, may lead to confusion as it can be understood to mean that the Lord should be celebrated as a way of honouring Mary, rather than the intended message that by honouring Mary the Lord is celebrated. Furthermore, the word for 'to celebrate' could be directly

⁴⁷ R. Th. M. van Dijk, 'Methodologische Kanttekeningen Bij Het Onderzoek van Getijdenboeken', in *Boeken Voor de Eeuwigheid: Middelnederlands Geestelijk Proza*, Nederlandse Literatuur En Cultuur in de Middeleeuwen ; (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1993), p. 215.

⁴⁸ Weiler, *Getijden van de Eeuwige Wijsheid*, p.9.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p.15-19.

⁵⁰ See van Wijk, *Het getijdenboek van Geert Grote*.

translated as *iubiliere*, but instead, Grote opted for *uolhertelike bliscap*, because the word *iubiliere* would not be known to most readers.⁵¹ The consideration of word use shows that the translation was made with a lay and perhaps less educated audience in mind. Initially, the translation was likely produced for the women who had taken up residency in Grote's house ten years prior, to allow them to better understand the texts they were praying. From here on, however, the text spread to all branches of the movement. Evidence of the use of Grote's translation is found in documentation of both male and female communities of the Common Life, of canons and canonesses regular, and of Tertiaries. As such, the translation can be placed in the first category of vernacular translations as identified by Corbellini (see page 9). While Geert Grote was not a layman, the initial intended audience of the translation was non-religious, and it was only over time that the text was read by (semi-)religious communities. The dissemination among laypeople is not well documented, yet the existence of more elaborately decorated manuscripts, which do not fit in the lifestyle of stricter devout life, suggests laypeople were plenty among owners of Middle Dutch Books of Hours.⁵²

Grote's translation of the Hours was read throughout the Middle Dutch linguistic area, and also inspired several German translations. Its dissemination corresponds, to a large extent, with the reach of the *Devotio Moderna*.⁵³ However, due to the high levels of customisation, as well as the large body of texts that has not survived, caution should be taken in speaking of the dissemination of 'the' Hours of Geert Grote as there is great variety

⁵¹ *Dese ghetijde onser vrouwen sijn in duytsche ghesat van woerden te woerden als hi naest konde die si ouersatte beholden heelheit ende verstandelheit ende waerheit des sinnes. Want die woerde sijn ende dienen om die sinne ende die sinne niet om die woerde. Daer om heeft hi in sulken steden daer die slechte duytsche woerde niet proper en stonden na den sinne of den sin verdonckerden. daer heeft hi ghesat die naeste duytsche woerde. die / den rechten ende den opensten sin gheuen. Waer om bidt hi dat hem gheen eenuoldich mensche daer an en stote. Want also ist noet ende alsoe doet die heilighe lerers in ouersettene. Neemt exempel int beghin. nae slechtheit der duytscher woerde wten latine solde men segghen. In die eere der alre salichster ioncfrouwen marien iubiliere wi den here. Want men dat uerstaen mochte dat men den here iubilieren solde . om ende tot eren onser vrouwen dat en waer niet recht . mer die sin is. In der eerlicheit die marien toe behoert ende die wi van haer spreken dat ny / daer of iubilieren den here. Ende oec want die ghemeynt nyet en weet wat iubilieren is. soe heeft hi daer uoer ghesat uolhertelike bliscap Want iubilieren anders niet en is dan uolhertelike bliscap die men niet gbewoerden en kan. Van Wijk, *Het getijdenboek van Geert Grote*, p.36.*

⁵² For more on the dissemination of the Hours in the translation of Geert Grote, see Youri Desplenter, *Al aertrijc segt lofsanc: Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Latijnse hymnen en sequensen. Bd. I: Studie.*, Studies op het gebied van de oudere Nederlandse letterkunde ; nr. 3. (Gent: Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, 2008), pp. 165-212.

⁵³ Weiler, *Getijden van de Eeuwige Wijsheid*, p.37.

between copies. In the remainder of this thesis, the manuscript currently preserved as Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747 is taken as a case study into the customisation and use of a Middle Dutch Book of Hours, in order to examine the reception of the text and gain insight into the lay reading practices surrounding it.

CHAPTER 2: THE MANUSCRIPT

The central text for this study is Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, a Middle Dutch Book of Hours dated to 1498/1499. It was copied in Beverwijk for its first owner Aef van Bolgerien. In this chapter, the paratextual elements, such as the colophon, the calendar, and the decorations, as well as material aspects, such as the binding and the writing surface, and the textual contents of the manuscript are explored. In doing so, the groundwork is laid for understanding how the book came to be and what it may have meant for the reader.

Codicological information

Date and localisation

There is not much question about the date and place of origin of this manuscript. The colophon states not only the year, but also the dates between which the book was copied, namely the 8th of September (the Nativity of Mary) and the 2nd of December (Advent) 1498. The illuminations, which were signed with a name, Spierinck, and a year, 1499, tell us that a year after it was copied, the book was decorated further with decorated initials and border decorations. The colophon tells us furthermore that both the first owner and the scribe are from (or at least, resided in) Beverwijk, a town in the west of the Northern Low Countries (Fig.1, see also the transcription on page 4). The fact that the scribe was a canon regular also tells us that the book must have been produced at the Sion monastery, given this was the only male monastery active in Beverwijk in the late fifteenth century.

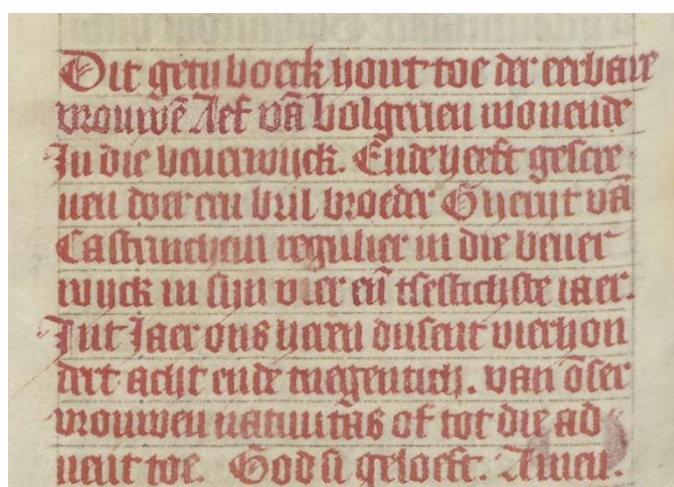


Figure 1: Colophon, Leiden, University Libraries, BPL 2747, fol.203v.

Script and writing surface

The writing surface used in this Book of Hours is parchment. The parchment is of good quality, showing very little difference between the hair and flesh side and showing no holes or signs of repair. Small stains on the edges, however, suggest water damage, but not to an extent where it affects the readability of the text. The two hundred and three folios, divided into twenty-four quires,⁵⁴ measure 172 by 118 millimetres, while the text block measures 98 by 65 millimetres. The text is written in one column of 20 lines on lead-ruled pages. The script is a *littera gothica textualis*, also known as gothic textura or bookhand, which can be recognised by the use of an ‘a’ with two compartments, an ‘f’ and a long ‘s’ that start on the baseline (instead of below it) and the lack of loops on the ascenders of the letters ‘b’, ‘h’, ‘k’ and ‘l’. Furthermore, this script makes frequent use of biting, in which letters are fused together allowing the scribe to save space and time (Fig. 2).⁵⁵ The main text blocks have been written in black ink, while red is used in the rubrications and red and blue are alternately used for initials.



Figure 2: Script sample showing characteristics of the gothic textualis script, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, f. 201r.

⁵⁴ The current binding prevents me from properly seeing the quire structure. The number mentioned above is based on quire signatures found in the left bottom corner of the start of every quire. As these are roman numerals however, and seemingly written in pencil, they are likely a modern addition and do not necessarily reflect the original or intended structure.

⁵⁵ 'littera textualis', *Algemeen Letterkundig Lexicon*. (DBNL, National Library of the Netherlands, 2012). <https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/dela012alge01_01/dela012alge01_01_01321.php> [accessed 26 May 2022].

Binding

At present, the manuscript is bound in brown leather with wooden boards and can be closed with two metal clasps. The leather is tooled, but the binding is otherwise rather modest (Fig. 3). This binding is, however, not the original binding. The book was rebound after it was acquired by Leiden University Libraries in 1967. An older binding is still kept in the library and can be requested under the shelfmark BPL 2747bis. This binding also has wooden boards but instead of the brown leather on the more recent binding the leather is a dark blue, and instead of two clasps the binding has one more decorative clasp that is attached to metal ornaments with the same heart and cross pattern as the clasp itself (Fig. 4). Though faded, golden tooled details on the spine and around the edge of the binding are visible. The binding also shows small strips of parchment and pieces of string which were used to support the binding.



Figure 3: Current binding of the manuscript, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.



Figure 4: Older (18th c.?) binding of the manuscript, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747bis, photo by author.

This is, however, not the original binding of the book, despite being listed in the MMDC (Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections) and BNM-I (Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta & Impressa) as ‘medieval’.⁵⁶ The materials and appearance of the binding suggest the book was rebound at least once before coming into the Leiden University Library collections. For example, the flyleaves found with the binding are made out of paper, a material not found elsewhere in the manuscript. Furthermore, the spine contains the words *oud getyboek*, ‘old Book of Hours’, which one would not expect to find on a newly copied book. The raised cords, gold tooling and mention of a title in the second compartment of the spine suggest the binding may be from the eighteenth century.⁵⁷ It could also be contemporary with the owner inscription on one of the flyleaves preserved with the binding, which states the date of the 1st of October 1882. Yet, this is not likely

⁵⁶ See EBNM+, ‘Leiden, UB: BPL 2747’ <<https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/tekstdragers/TDRA000000002004>> [accessed 5 June 2022] and MMDC, ‘Leiden, UB : ms. BPL 2747’, <mmdc.nl> (search for BPL 2747).

⁵⁷ For more on 18th century Dutch bookbinding, see Jan Storm van Leeuwen, *Dutch Decorated Bookbinding in the Eighteenth Century. Vol. I: General Historical Introduction: Noord Holland*, ed. by Nancy Forest-Flier (’t Goy-Houten: Hes & De Graaf, 2006).

given the text on the binding is Dutch, while the inscription is in German and refers to Cologne as the place it was written in (more on the inscription in the section ‘Provenance’ below). What the original binding did look like remains unclear, though an indication is offered by Prosper Verheyden, who identified a bookbinder working in the Sion Monastery around the time this book was produced. His work is characterised by the use of floral, starshaped stamps which are found in groups on different parts of the bindings.⁵⁸ Whether or not BPL 2747 was indeed bound at the monastery remains unclear.

Provenance

There are five names associated with this manuscript, namely those of Aef van Bolgerien, the first owner of the book mentioned in the colophon, Gherijt van Castrinchem, the scribe according to the same colophon, Spierinck, the illuminator who signed several of the folios he worked on, Cornelisge Claes, a later owner who left his name on one of the flyleaves, and Theodor Wiskott, another owner whose name is not found in the book in its current state but who is mentioned on a flyleaf of the previously discussed earlier binding. In this section, I will focus on the owners and the scribe. The identity and work of Spierinck is addressed in the ‘Illuminations’ section below.

Aef van Bolgerien

The first name, and perhaps the most important one, is that of Aef van Bolgerien. Unfortunately, not much about this woman or her family is known. The colophon states that she lived in Beverwijk, but unlike the scribe’s age, her age is not mentioned.⁵⁹ The fact that there is no mention of a relation to a monastery or a religious community suggests she is a laywoman, as is common for owners of Books of Hours. Furthermore, the fact that the manuscript was decorated with illuminations suggests she did not follow a strong religious lifestyle, given the importance of modesty and poverty in many religious houses.

⁵⁸ P. Verheyden, ‘Noord-Hollandse boekbanden – Haarlemse banden’, in *Het Boek* 31, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952/1954), p.204.

⁵⁹ Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, fol. 203v.

She was likely wealthy as she was able to afford the production of a handwritten and illuminated book, especially considering that the printed book, a more affordable alternative, was already available and printed Books of Hours were also produced.⁶⁰ Her last name may be a reference to Bolgerijen, a polder near the city of Vianen, offering the possibility she was born there.

The coat of arms found in the illuminations of folio 113v (Fig. 5) might be a family coat of arms of the Bolgerien family, though it has not been identified as such. Notably, small areas of red can be found along the edges of the shield, suggesting it may originally have been a different colour that was covered at a later stage. This theory is supported by the fact that the coat of arms is the only section of the border decoration of which the ink has stained and bled through to not one but several of the following pages. In fact, it is the only place this happened in the entire manuscript, with the exception of a line of dots around the edge of a coat of arms featuring Arma Christi on a different folio.⁶¹ Other documentation of Aef van Bolgerien is scarce, in part because civil documentation at the time was less extensive and may have been lost, but also because of the lack of consistency in the spelling of names in the Middle Ages. This can be seen, for example in the only other known reference to van Bolgerien. The transport registers of Haarlem mention ‘Aef van Bulgrijen vuyt Beverwijck’ and ‘Aef van Bolgrijen’ in May and July of 1499 respectively in relation to debts she had.⁶² As suggested by Klaas van der Hoek, these debts may be related to the production of the manuscript, which was illuminated in the same year.⁶³

⁶⁰ For example, in 1486, an edition of the ‘Devote ghetiden vanden leven ende passie Jhesu Christi’ (Devout Hours on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ) was printed in the nearby Haarlem, see Anna Dlabačová, ‘Religious Practice and Experimental Book Production. Text and Image in an Alternative Layman’s “Book of Hours” in Print and Manuscript’, *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, 2017, p.2.

⁶¹ Leiden, BPL 2747, fol. 52r.

⁶² Haarlem, Municipal Archive, transport register R.A. 76.7 nr. 70, fol. 41v and nr. 86, fol. 51v, cited in Klaas van der Hoek, ‘De Noordhollandse verluchter Spierinck’, p. 170.

⁶³ Van der Hoek, ‘De Noordhollandse verluchter Spierinck’, p. 170.



Figure 5: Coat of arms, possibly of the Van Bolgerien family (fol. 113v) and a mark left by the ink on the other side of the opening (fol. 114r). Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.

Gherijt van Castrinchem

Of the second person whose name is mentioned in the colophon, Gherijt van Castrinchem, a bit more details are known. First of all, he was a canon regular in Beverwijk. As suggested by his last name, he may originally be from Castricum, a town roughly ten kilometres north of Beverwijk. Additionally, the scribe's age is mentioned. He was 64 years old at the time the manuscript was produced, meaning he must have been born in either 1433 or 1434, depending on his exact date of birth. The last detail known about van Castrinchem is that he wore glasses while copying the text.⁶⁴

The mention of van Castrinchem as a canon regular in Beverwijk is the most revealing clue. The only male monastery active in Beverwijk in the late fifteenth century was the monastery of Sion (full name: Beata Maria Virgo in Sion), founded in 1429, which followed the Rule of St. Augustine and was part of the chapter of Windesheim. A female monastery, known originally under the name Hermon, and later as Nazareth, was present in the same town. As it was the only male monastery, van Castrinchem must have been active at Sion, though his name is not found in surviving documentation. The first surviving mention of the convent is from 1430, though the date of its foundation is unknown.

⁶⁴ Leiden, BPL 2747, fol. 203v.

Claudine Lemaire notes that canons regular did not frequently work as scribes as a source of income, but that the Sion monastery may have had to make an exception after having been plundered in 1492.⁶⁵ Other sources, however, suggest that book production was in fact an important source of income for the monastery. Unfortunately, not many of the records of Sion survive, as much of the archive of the monastery was lost in 1577 when, in the Eighty Years War, the town of Beverwijk was nearly completely destroyed, an event which also led to the permanent closing of both of the town's monasteries.

Some documentation, however, survives in other archival sources.⁶⁶ From a collection of letters previously held by a monastery in Leuven and partially published in Leiden in 1721, it is known that the Sion monastery was involved in parchment production and the copying and decorating of books. The parchment that was produced was both sold and used for their own book production. Canons regular were expected to spend around four hours each day on the copying and decorating of books.⁶⁷ Colophons from manuscripts produced at the monastery suggest book production was done both on commission and for in-house use.⁶⁸ Some books were also purchased, as can be seen from a list of expenditures which lists choir books, missals and 'reading books' for the use of the church of the monastery.⁶⁹ Yet, sources also list these texts as being copied, bound and decorated in-house.⁷⁰ Likely, both occurred depending on demand and availability of funds, though no detailed records of the book production exist.

The nature of typical book production at Sion is unknown. When the monastery was destroyed in 1577, a large part of the books held there were lost and there are no surviving catalogues or inventory lists which indicate the size and contents of their library.

⁶⁵ Claudine Lemaire, *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden: catalogus*, ed. by Claudine Lemaire, *Catalogi van tentoonstellingen georganiseerd in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I* (Brussel: Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, 1973), p.54.

⁶⁶ For an overview of locations of surviving documentation, see Anton G. Weiler and Noël Geirnaert, *Monasticon Windeshemense. Tl. 3: Niederlande*, ed. by W. Kohl, E. Persoons, A.G. Weiler, and N. Geirnaert, *Numéro spécial* (Brüssel: Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, 1980), pp. 159-174.

⁶⁷ H.J. Scholtens, 'Het voormalige Regulierenklooster te Beverwijk', *Haarlemsche bijdragen: bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis van het bisdom Haarlem.*, 60 (1948), p.118.

⁶⁸ Weiler and Geirnaert, *Monasticon Windeshemense. Tl. 3*, p.163.

⁶⁹ Hugo Franciscus van Heussen, and Hendrik van Rijn, *Oudbeden En Gestichten van Kennemerland, Amstelland, Noordholland, En Westvriesland, Behelzende de Oudbeden, Opkomste En Benaminge Der Steden ... Met de Omleggende Dorpen ... Abdyen ... Geleerde Mannen, Privilegien, Enz* (Leiden: Christiaan Vermey, 1721), p.354.

⁷⁰ Scholtens, 'Het voormalige Regulierenklooster te Beverwijk', p.121.

Thus, the knowledge of the library of Sion is based on the few surviving texts, even though it is likely the library was much larger. While, unsurprisingly, the extant books are religious in theme, there is no indication of whether Book of Hours were common at the monastery. In total, seven extant books from the Sion monastery are mentioned in a study by H.J. Scholtens. Three of which are manuscripts, and four of which are incunables. As there is no evidence of a printing press ever having been used at Sion, it is likely that the incunables were purchased from elsewhere. Of the manuscripts, one is a commentary on the psalms by St. Augustine, one is a quarto with a variety of contents, and the last is an edition of the *Collectorium Rationalis Guilelmi Durandi* by Harmannus Galigaen. The former two were copied in the monastery itself in 1477 and 1537 respectively, while the latter was copied in Den Hout in 1407.⁷¹ Weiler and Geirnaert add four manuscripts to this list, the *Bedudinghe op Cantica Canticorum* by Gregory, a partial psalm translation, both held in Amsterdam, a book on St. Augustine, currently held in Cologne, and lastly, BPL 2747.⁷²

An additional manuscript, which is not mentioned in either study but does contain a note stating it was owned by the monastery, is a Book of Hours from the mid fifteenth century, currently held in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.⁷³ Unlike BPL 2747, the manuscript is in Latin, yet penwork initials show significant similarity. Thus, while because only so few manuscripts copied in the monastery have survived it cannot be said with certainty whether BPL 2747 fits in with the usual production of Sion, the Bodleian Library manuscript suggests the Book of Hours was at least a familiar text at the monastery.

Later ownership

Finally, the manuscript has been marked by its later owners. In fact, when opening the manuscript the first writing one sees is a series of owner inscriptions of later hand. On folio 1r we find two hands in ink, as well as a pencil transcript of the lines, which read ‘Dit boeck hoort toe Cornelisge Claes’ and ‘Die dit boek vint macht om goodtswil weder brengen int hem belieft’. Who this ‘Cornelisge Claes’ is, is unknown. Unfortunately, this

⁷¹ Scholtens, ‘Het voormalige Regulierenklooster te Beverwijk’, p.133.

⁷² Weiler and Geirnaert, *Monasticon Windeshemese. Tl. 3*, p. 163-4.

⁷³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 57, see <<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/d6dc8dd5-c299-4fe4-b20d-2bc8c4eb1468/>>.

will likely remain the case given that the name is rather common and there is no indication when or where this particular person lived or what his profession is. On the opposite opening, three lines of text have been made illegible (Fig. 6). A third ownership note can be found on a flyleaf preserved with the older binding. It reads ‘Meinem lieben Schwieger sohne Theodor Wiskott zur freundlichen Erinnerung’ and links the book to an owner in Cologne, Germany on the 1st of October 1882 (Fig. 7). The note is signed ‘Horst’, who is likely the father-in-law of Wiskott and gave the manuscript as a gift, though the occasion is unknown. Eighty-five years later, on the 28th of November 1967, the manuscript was bought at auction in Marburg, Germany and became part of the Bibliotheca Publica Latina collection of Leiden University Libraries.

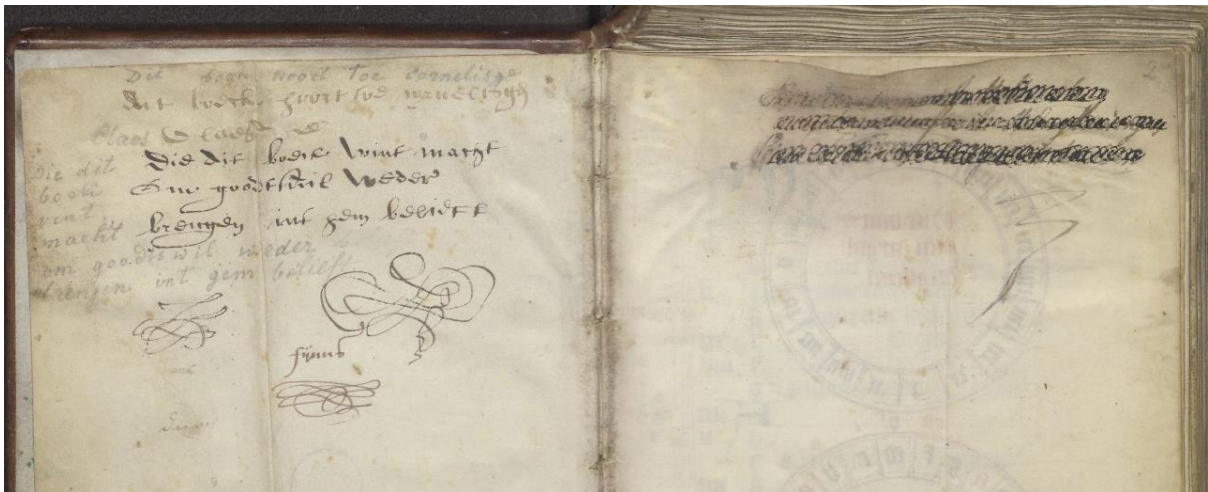


Figure 6: Ownership inscriptions, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, fols. 1v-2r.

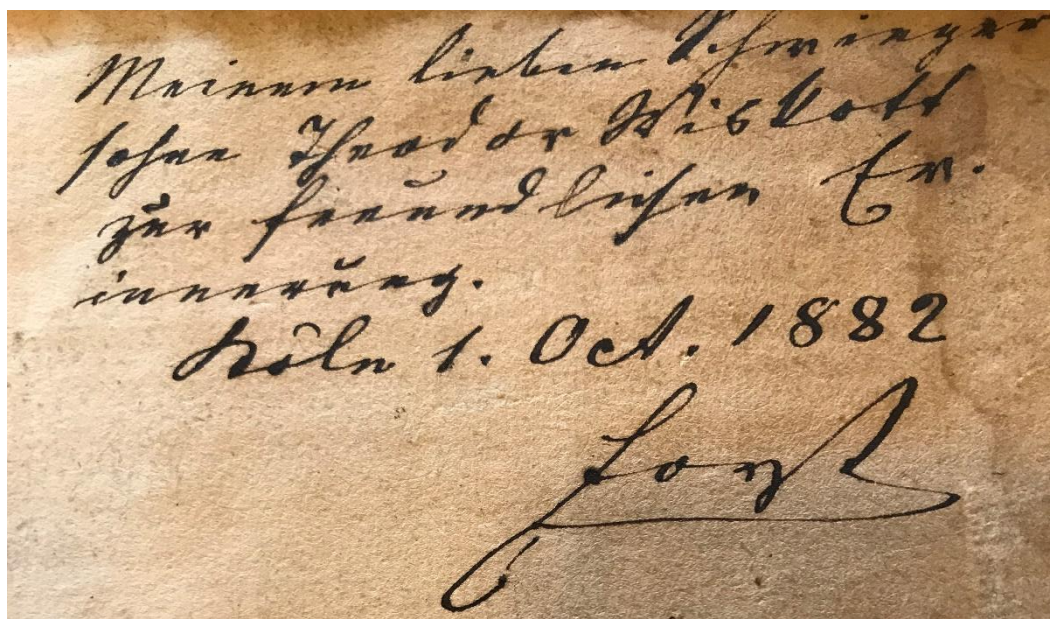


Figure 7: Owner inscription by Horst, mentioning Theodor Wiskott, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747bis, photo by author.

Contents

This section focusses on the textual contents of BPL 2747. An overview of the contents of the manuscript can be found below, making use of the modern pencil foliation. The prayers will be further addressed in Chapters 3 and 4, which concern the transcriptions and the analysis respectively. The other elements, namely the calendar, the Hours, the Litany, and the Office of the Dead, are addressed in this section.

1r	Flyleaf
1v-2r	Owner inscriptions
2v	Calendrical devices
3r-12v	Calendar
13r	Calendrical table
13v	blank
14r-15r	Prayer and suffrage
15v	blank
16r-51r	The Hours of the Virgin, ‘Die vrouwe getijde’
51v	blank
52r-73v	The Long Hours of the Cross, ‘Die lange cruus getide’
74r-93v	Hours of Eternal Wisdom, ‘Getijden der eeuwige wijsheid’ ⁷⁴
94r-118v	Hours of the Holy Spirit, ‘Die heilighe geest getide’
118v-140r	Hours of All Saints ‘Alre heiligen getiden’ ⁷⁵
140v	blank
141r-149r	The Penitential Psalms, ‘Die seven psalmen’
149r-157r	Litany ‘Letanien’
157v	blank
158r-192r	Office of the Dead ‘Die vighelie’
192r-203v	Prayers
203v-203v	Colophon

⁷⁴ The folio on which these Hours start have been cut out. This identification was found in the BNM+, and confirmed with a comparison of the Invitatorium, the first element of text present on the first folio, in the edition by Van Wijk. The pencil folio numbering does not take the missing folio into account.

⁷⁵ The incipit is found on both fol. 118v and fol. 119r.

Calendar

On the verso of the second folio, the original contents of the manuscript start with two circular diagrams, one concerning dominical letters and one concerning golden numbers. Dominical letters were used to indicate the day of the week a certain date fell on. This was valuable information because the calendars in Books of Hours are not specific to any year, and thus do not have weekdays next to the days of the month. Golden numbers were used to indicate the phases of the moon. They were based on a nineteen-year moon cycle, which, at the time, was the most accurate method available. Together, the dominical letters and golden numbers could be used to calculate the date for Easter and with that, all other moveable feasts. These numbers and letters are found again in the calendar itself, on the left side of the entries (Fig. 8).

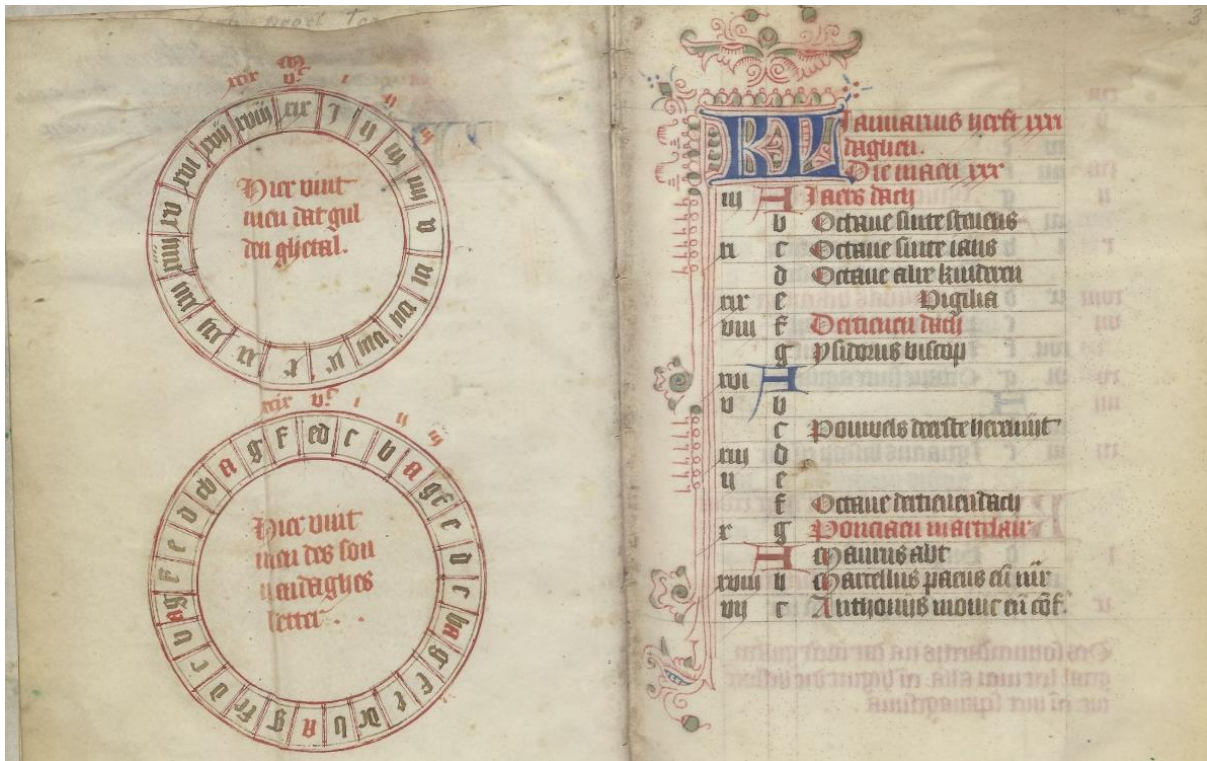


Figure 8: Calendrical diagrams for golden numbers and dominical letters (fol. 2v) and the start of the calendar for January (fol. 3r), Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.

As is common, each month in the calendar begins with a statement of the number of days and moons in that month. Below that, feasts and events are entered on the days on which they take place, with feasts of particular importance added in red. In this calendar, the feasts in red are the following (an asterisk has been placed in front of feasts that are not commonly rubricated in calendars of the diocese of Utrecht):

January

1 – New Year's Day
6 – Epiphany
14 – St. Pontianus of
Spoleto
21 – St Agnes of Rome
25 - Conversion of St. Paul
the Apostle

April

July

2 – Visitation of the
Blessed Virgin Mary
4 – Translation of St.
Martin
22 – St. Mary Magdalene
25 – The Apostle St. Jacob

October

1 – Translation of St.
Remigius
10 – St. Gereon of
Cologne and St. Viktor of
Xanten and other martyrs
28 – The Apostles St.
Simon and St. Jude

February

2 – Candlemas
*5 – St. Agatha of Sicily
22 – Feast of the Chair of
Saint Peter
24 – St Matthias the
Apostle

May

1 – The Apostles St.
Phillip and St. James
3 – Day of the Cross
12 – St Pancras of Rome
13 – St Servatius of
Tongeren

August

1 – St Peter in Chains
10 – St Lawrence
15 – Assumption of Mary
*17 – Jeroen van
Noordwijk
24 – Bartholomew the
Apostle
29 – The Passion of St.
John

November

1 – All Saints Day
2 – All Souls Day
7 – St. Willibrord
11 – St. Martin
12 – St. Lebuin of
Deventer
25 – St. Catherine
30 – The Apostle St.
Andrew

March

25 – Annunciation

June

5 – St Boniface
24 – Nativity of John the
Baptist
25 – St. Lebuinus
(confessor) and St
Adalbert of Egmond
29 – The Apostels St. Peter
and St. Paul

September

8 – Nativity of Mary
14 – Feast of the Cross
17 – St. Lambert of
Maastricht
21 – St. Matthew the
Apostle
22 – St. Maurice
29 – Michealmas

December

6 – St. Nicholas
8 – The Immaculate
Conception
21 – The Apostle St.
Thomas
25 – The Birth of Jesus
26 – St. Stephen
27 – The Apostle St. John
28 – Holy Innocents Day

The calendar is followed by a table which, making use of the dominical letters and golden numbers again, allows the reader to calculate the weeks and days from Christmas day up to Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday.

As can be seen above, only two feasts are rubricated in the calendar that are not commonly so in calendars for the diocese of Utrecht, namely the feasts of St. Agatha of Sicily and St. Jeroen of Noordwijk.

St. Jeroen of Noordwijk lived in the late eighth and early ninth century. Originally from Scotland, he came to the Low Countries as a priest and missionary and settled in Noordwijk (at the time known as Northgo). Not much about his life is certain, as the only extant sources about him were written several centuries after his passing. According to the legends, he was decapitated on the 17th of August 856 for refusing to venerate the gods of the Vikings who had come to Noordwijk earlier in the same year. The first church in his honour was built over a hundred years later, in 980, when a local farmer, Northbodo, found St. Jeroen's grave after Jeroen appeared to him in his dreams three times. In the mid fourteenth century St. Jeroen's skull was found and Noordwijk became a pilgrimage site.⁷⁶ St. Jeroen is venerated on the 17th of August, and is the patron saint of Noordwijk and Egmond, as well as of lost objects. The latter is related to the fact that, in addition to helping Northbodo find his grave, St. Jeroen is also said to have led him to horses that had gone missing.

St. Agatha of Sicily is a virgin martyr who lived in Sicily, Italy in the third century. Having dedicated her life to God at a young age, she rejected the advances of Quintianus, a Roman prefect. In attempts to force Agatha to marry him, Quintianus sent her to a brothel and imprisoned her, subjecting her to repeated torture, yet she was not willing to give up her faith. The best-known example of what she underwent is that her breasts were taken off with pincers, which is often reflected in her iconography which shows her with her breasts on a plate or in pincers (see for example, the border decoration of fol.133v of BPL 2747, Fig. 9, also featured on the front page of this thesis). St. Agatha was eventually sentenced to be burnt at the stake, though this was interrupted by an earthquake. She was

⁷⁶ Meertens Institute, 'Noordwijk-Binnen, H. Jeroen' <<https://www.meertens.knaw.nl/bedevaart/bol/plaats/553>> [accessed 12 June 2022].

returned to her cell where she passed away. St. Agatha is venerated on the 5th of February, which is thought to be the day of her passing. She is the patron saint of, among others, breast cancer, rape and sexual assault victims, bellfounders, nurses, and natural disasters.

Both these saints can be related to the localisation of the manuscript. While St. Jeroen of Noordwijk is venerated in particular in Noordwijk and the nearby Egmond, his presence in the calendar is not exclusive to those cities. As stated by Anne S. Korteweg, the mention of Jeroen van Noordwijk is an indicator that the manuscript has ties to Holland.⁷⁷ The appearance and rubrication of St. Agatha allow for the manuscript to be



Figure 9: Saint Agatha, holding a book in her right hand and her attribute, pincers with her breast in her left hand, fol. 133v, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.

associated with Beverwijk in particular, given the strong ties of St. Agatha to the origins of the town. In the ninth century, St. Agatha is said to have appeared to save a virgin from the hands of a Viking leader. A small church was built in the location this took place, and a small town formed around it. This town, Agathenkerk, was located about 500 meters from where, several centuries later, Beverwijk was founded. As Beverwijk grew, it grew around Agathenkerk and the church, later known as the ‘Grote Kerk’, became part of the town.⁷⁸ As a result of this history, St. Agatha became the patron saint of Beverwijk. Thus, the calendar points to Beverwijk as the place of intended use, which is corroborated by the colophon which states that Beverwijk is the place of residence of both Aef van Bolgerien and Gherijt van Castrinchem.

⁷⁷ Anne S. Korteweg, ‘Randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw’, in *Kriezels, aubergines en takkenbossen : randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw*, ed. by A.S. Korteweg (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1992), p. 23.

⁷⁸ Noord Hollands Archief, ‘Beverwijk’ <<https://noord-hollandsarchief.nl/partners/beverwijk>> [accessed 12 June 2022].

Hours, Litany and Office of the Dead

As noted above, BPL 2747 contains the following hours (in order of appearance): the Hours of the Virgin, the Long Hours of the Cross, the Hours of Eternal Wisdom, the Hours of the Holy Spirit and the Hours of All Saints, followed by the Penitential Psalms, the Litany and the Office of the Dead. This collection of texts is close to the collection identified as part of the translation of Geert Grote, namely:

1. Calendar for the diocese of Utrecht
2. Hours:
 - a. The Hours of the Virgin
 - b. The Hours of the Holy Spirit
 - c. The short Hours of the Cross
 - d. The Hours of Eternal Wisdom
 - e. The long Hours of the Cross
3. The Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Saints
4. The Office of the Dead⁷⁹

It differs only in the inclusion of the Hours of All Saints and the omission of the short Hours of the Cross. Though, with regards to the latter, it is not uncommon for a Book of Hours to contain only the short or the long version of this text.⁸⁰ The inclusion of the Hours of All Saints, on the other hand, is rarer. In an examination of 129 Middle Dutch Books of Hours containing the translations attributed to Geert Grote, R. Th M. van Dijk found the text in only 14 manuscripts. Due to their limited occurrences, it is likely that the Hours of All Saints were not part of the translation by Geert Grote.⁸¹ This raises the question of how and why the decision was made to include these Hours. Comparing the manuscript to the contents of a now lost manuscript which has a similar date and location of origin, but which does not contain the Hours of All Saints, suggests it was not a regional practice.⁸² In fact, of the seventeen manuscripts localised to ‘North Holland, probably Haarlem or Beverwijk’ in the BNM-I, none list them in their contents. Yet, it should be

⁷⁹ van Dijk, ‘Methodologische Kanttekeningen Bij Het Onderzoek van Getijdenboeken’ p. 215.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, p.227.

⁸¹ Ibidem. p.227-8.

⁸² ‘Olim AMSTERDAM, MA : z.n’ <bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/tekstdragers/TDRA000000005596>.

noted that not all content lists in the BNM-I are complete. Alternatively, the inclusion of the text could be a decision by either the scribe, Gherijt van Castrinchem, or by Aef herself, who may have had particular interest in these Hours. The main focus of the text is Jerusalem, the city of heaven, and the transition of the reader to the afterlife.⁸³ While the text may not be common in Books of Hours, it does fit in with the medieval mindset focussing on the eternal life after death.

Another thing to note about the Hours in BPL 2747 is the start of the Hours of Eternal Wisdom. A rubric for this text is not found, neither is there a decorated initial to signal the start of the text, instead, a small strip of parchment can be seen between these Hours and the end of long Hours of the Cross. A comparison with the van Wijk edition of the Hours confirms that also the first section of the text is missing. The most likely explanation here is that someone was particularly interested on the illuminations on the page and therefore cut it out of the book.

The order the texts are in fits in with other Books of Hours from the Low Countries. In the same study as mentioned above, van Dijk found there is no strict order in the hours. The only order to be consistent across the vast majority of the manuscripts is that of the Hours of the Virgin, the Litany and the Office of the Dead, which almost always occur in this order, though other texts may be found in between them in different quantities and orders.

Decoration

The manuscript has two main forms of decoration, namely the illuminations and the penwork. I will start by discussing the penwork as it is likely that this was the first addition to the text, possibly at the hand of the scribe, Gherijt van Castrinchem, or a fellow regular from the monastery.⁸⁴

⁸³ For more, see the introduction, edition and modern Dutch translation of the Hours of All Saints by F. van der Pol: 'De Getijden van Alle Heiligen Uit Het Getijdenboek van de Zusters van Sint Agnes', in *De Susteren van Sanct-Agnetenhuus* (Kampen: Ijsselacademie, 1997), pp. 111–80.

⁸⁴ Pieter F.J. Obbema, 'De vijftiende eeuw. Van schrijven naar drukken', *Boeken in Nederland. Vijfhonderd jaar schrijven, drukken en uitgeven*. (Amsterdam: Grafisch Nederland, 1979), p. 25.

Penwork

Penwork decoration consists of thin lines in red or blue ink (or both) often starting from an initial. In its simplest form it can consist of smaller edges around coloured initials, as is the case for the initials of the list of saints (Fig. 10). More elaborate penwork extends to the left margin, and in some cases the top, bottom and right margins. The size and detail of the penwork reflects the importance of the passage it accompanies. More important passages have more elaborate penwork (compare Figs. 10 and 11). Together with the size and detail of the initials themselves, it brings order to the text allowing the reader to find important passages more quickly.⁸⁵

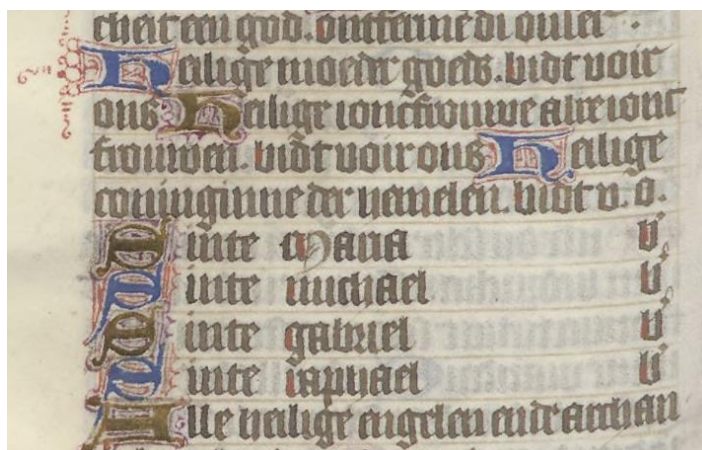


Figure 10: Penwork initials in the list of saints, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, fol. 149v.

While penwork was produced throughout Europe, in the fifteenth century it was most elaborate and had most variety in the Northern Low Countries.⁸⁶ Most penwork from the North of Holland belongs to a group referred to as the 'bonte basis groep', the colourful basis group. Anne S. Korteweg characterises this group as follows:

In its simplest form, which we call the 'colourful basis', it contains fairly small-scale penwork, which has a somewhat stiff appearance and is usually applied in a narrow strip next to the text. The base colour is usually red, with yellow and green accents added with the paintbrush. In some manuscripts, details have also been drawn in with a blue pen. The basic form of the penwork consists of a number of vertical

⁸⁵ For more on the function of penwork, see Anne S. Korteweg, 'Randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw', pp. 9–32.

⁸⁶ Gumbert, *The Dutch and Their Books in the Manuscript Age*, p.32.

lines, which, starting from an initial, are drawn along the left-hand side of the text block. The outer line forms a series of loops, protruding corners and leaf shapes; here and there, series of perpendicular lines have been placed on the lines. The bottom of the loops is often filled with yellow or green 'sediment', which sometimes ends with a slightly curved line. In many cases, the penwork barely exceeds the height of the text block.⁸⁷

Within this group, two subgroups have been identified, the 'maskergroep', the maskgroup, and the 'geometrische groep', the geometrical group. The penwork in BPL 2747 belongs to this latter group, which is characterised by 'a strong stylisation of the drawing style and by the strictly geometrical execution of the decoration'.⁸⁸ Features of this style that can be found in BPL 2747 are, among others, the 'trumpet flowers', 'pearl frames', 'pearl edges' and 'consoles'(Fig.11).⁸⁹

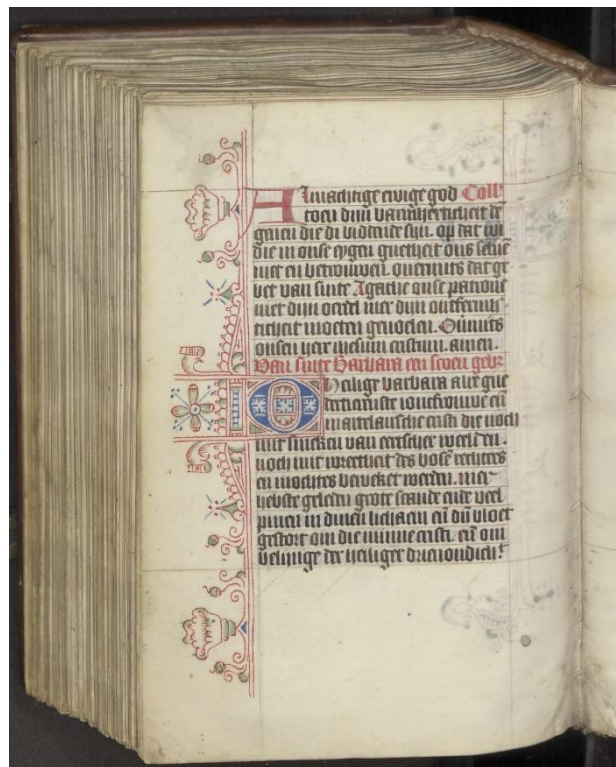
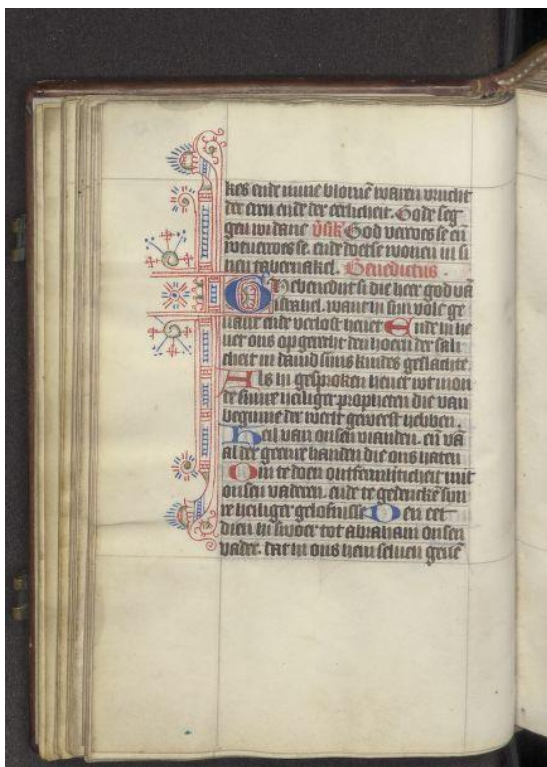


Figure 11: North Holland penwork in BPL 2747, Leiden, UBL, fol. 29v and fol. 201v.

⁸⁷ Korteweg, 'Delftse, Noordhollandse En Groningse Randjes', p.241, translated by the author of this thesis.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, p.242, translated by the author of this thesis.

⁸⁹ For a discussion of the geometrical style and the features 'trumpet flowers' (trompetbloemen) and 'pearl frames' (parellijsten), see p. 92 and for 'pearl edges' (parelranden) and 'consoles', see page 88 in Hülsmann, Margriet, and Rineke Nieuwstraten, 'Haarlem en Noord-Holland', in *Kriezels, aubergines en takkenbossen: randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw*, ed. by A.S. Korteweg (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1992).

Nevertheless, there is overlap between the styles, and many features are found in multiple styles. For example, the ‘pearls’, circular shapes with small spikes lining the outer edge of the penwork, and floral motifs are also often found in the maskgroup.

Illuminations

The second, more elaborate form of decoration, the illuminations, occurs on fewer pages, mainly on those containing the start of new a text or a new section. They take the form of both illuminated initials and borders in one or more of the margins. A strip of parchment between folios 15v and 16r suggests there was once a full-page miniature before the start of the Hours of the Virgin, which was later cut out. A small cut can be seen in 15v, which, I suggest, is the result of the person responsible for taking out the miniature cutting too deeply through to the next page. In style, the border illuminations correspond with the ‘kriezelgroep’, a type of border decorations associated with the city of Delft which is known for the use of squiggly black lines and golden dots in its background as well as the use of acanthus leaves and animal and human figures (Fig. 12, see also Fig. 13).⁹⁰



Figure 12: Illuminations for the start of Vespers of the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 42r, left) and the start of the Long Hours of the Cross (fol. 52r, right), Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.

⁹⁰ Korteweg, ‘Delftse, Noordhollandse En Groningse Randjes’, p. 239.

In some cases, the images in the borders and initials reflect the text on the page, as is the case for, for example, the Long Hours of the Cross in Figure 12 (right). Others, such as the unicorn on folio 42v (Fig. 12, left), do not directly relate to the text. Yet, they may still have had more function than just as decorations. In a book without page numbers or running titles (the pencil foliation is a later addition), recognisable images could function as a finding aid for certain texts or sections. Additionally, in a study of Books of Hours from Ghent and Bruges, Anne Margreet As-Vijvers found that the flowers in border decorations, a feature also found in many of the borders of BPL 2747, can have symbolic meaning in addition to their decorative value. Interpretation of this is however complicated as one flower may have several, sometimes contradictory meanings and the animals found between them can add additional layers of meaning to the pattern.⁹¹

Several of the illuminations, as previously mentioned, have been signed and dated as ‘Spierinck, 1499’ (Fig 13).⁹² The exact identity of Spierinck is uncertain, though his signature is extant in at least sixteen manuscripts, for one of which he is also noted as the scribe of the work.⁹³ The most extensive research into the work and identity of Spierinck has been done by Klaas van der Hoek. He found that, in addition to the signed works, one work without signature can be attributed to Spierinck.⁹⁴ In a time where scribal and illuminator’s work was often anonymous, the connection to this number of manuscripts is rather unique. The fifteen dated manuscripts among the total of seventeen suggest Spierinck was active at least from 1486 to 1519. The majority of the works in his oeuvre, fourteen to be exact, are Books of Hours. The quality of the work of Spierinck is not exceptional. Wilhelmina C.M. Wüstefeld states that, while ‘his border decoration [...] is of good quality’, the miniatures show he was ‘not the most gifted of artists’.⁹⁵ Van der Hoek furthermore states that Spierinck’s work displays only limited ‘technical virtuosity,

⁹¹ Anne Margreet W. As-Vijvers, ‘More than Marginal Meaning? The Interpretation of Ghent-Bruges Border Decoration’, *Oud-Holland*, 116.1 (2003), pp.10-17.

⁹² The illuminations are dated on fols. 14r, 31r, 42r, 52r, 58r, 94r, 119r(twice), 135r, 138r, 141r, 158r and 163r. They are signed Spierinck (abbreviated to ‘spin’) on fols. 14r, 31r, 42r, 58r, 119r, 135r, 138r, 158r and 163r.

⁹³ Utrecht, UB, ms, 1040, fol. 95r, see van der Hoek, ‘De Noordhollandse verluchter Spierinck’, p. 163.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p.164.

⁹⁵ Wilhelmina C.M. Wüstefeld, ‘Haarlem Masters. ca. 1445-1520’ in *The Golden Age of Dutch Manuscript Painting*, ed. by J.H. Marrow, H.L.M. Defoer and A.S. Korteweg and Wilhelmina C.M. Wüstefeld (Stuttgart: Belser Verlag, 1989), p.234.

psychological expression and artistic originality⁹⁶, and additionally, that the quality of the work diminished after 1502/1503.⁹⁷



Figure 13: Detail of the start of the Hours of All Saints, showing the year 1499 in the border beneath the text, and the year and abbreviation for Spierinck underneath the border on the right side, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.

Multiple attempts have been made at identifying Spierinck, though none have been confirmed. Miniaturist Claes Spierinc and his son Jan Spierinc, active around the same time in the Southern Low Countries, were suggested as possible candidates, but this identification was refuted in 1969.⁹⁸ A more likely localisation is that of Beverwijk, the residence of Aef van Bolgerien, the nearby Haarlem or possibly both. Van der Hoek examines several clues towards this localisation, the majority of which are related to the place of residence/location of the commissioners of the manuscripts and of the makers of other decorations. This localisation is supported by evidence from the calendars in many of the Books of Hours, as well as the style of penwork related to this area of the Northern Low Countries. Van der Hoek concludes that the illuminator could be Sybrant Spierink, who, between 1511 and 1515 was a prior in the Sion monastery in Beverwijk. This identification is supported in particular by the fact that the Sion monastery is the same monastery in which Gherijt van Castrinchem copied BPL 2747, and the fact that the bindings on four other books with work by Spierinck are likely to be from this monastery.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Van der Hoek, 'De Noordhollandse verluchter Spierinck', p.166, translated by author.

⁹⁷ Ibidem, p.167.

⁹⁸ Ibidem, p.167.

⁹⁹ Based on similarities with bindings from manuscripts containing and ex-libris referring to the Sion monastery, see Van der Hoek, 'De Noordhollandse verluchter Spierinck', p.177-179, and P. Verheyden, 'Noord-Hollandse boekbanden', p.204.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to gain insight in BPL 2747's production and use. As stated in the colophon, the text was copied in Beverwijk in 1498. While parchment was also produced at the Sion monastery, it is not known whether their own materials were used for this book. Regardless, the expense that likely went into the manuscript, based on the quality of the parchment and the illuminations in the text, was significant, supporting the idea that the book was produced for lay use. Furthermore, the owner inscriptions allow us to trace the journey of the book through multiple centuries and across borders. Unfortunately, not much detailed information is known about either Aef van Bolgerien or the later owners Cornelisge Claes and Theodor Wiskott, yet their continued use of the book as well as the efforts that were put into rebinding it at least once before it came to Leiden University Libraries are a testament to the value it had for its readers. At the same time, evidence was found of two pages being cut out, one in between the suffrage to St. Jacob and the Hours of the Virgin, and one at the start of the long Hours of the Cross, indicating that some users were more interested in the book's monetary or aesthetic value, as opposed to the devotional context.

Furthermore, there are several instances of customisation seen in the contents of the manuscript. Firstly, there are the rubricated Saints in the calendar, St. Jeroen of Noordwijk and St. Agatha of Sicily, which are indicators for locating the book in North Holland and Beverwijk respectively. Secondly, the inclusion of the Hours of All Saints is a notable choice given its relative rarity. While the reasons behind this decision are unknown, it may have been a choice by Aef van Bolgerien, by the scribe, or it may be a local custom, it stands out nonetheless and suggests a particular interest in the theme of the Hours, in this case heaven and the passage to the afterlife. In the next chapter, the prayers separate from the Hours are transcribed to allow for a closer inspection of their contents, and to see how they reflect the interests of the reader.

CHAPTER 3: THE PRAYERS - TRANSCRIPTIONS

Editorial Justification

This edition contains a selection of the contents of the Book of Hours with shelfmark BPL 2747. The choice was made to edit the prayers that are separate from the Hours because these vary more widely between manuscripts and therefore offer a more unique body of texts than the Middle Dutch Hours, which stem from the Geert Grote translation that has already been edited and published by N. van Wijk.¹⁰⁰ While BPL 2747 is part of a widespread culture of the use and production of prayer books, it is the unique details of this Book of Hours that make it relevant as a witness to lay religious practice and the religious life of its first owner, Aef van Bolgerien.

This edition was created for an intended audience of students and scholars with an interest in book history and/or religious history. For this reason, the edition aims to reflect the manuscript as closely as possible, in line with the practice of documentary editing. Documentary editing is concerned with the preparation of ‘modern editions from source materials that can themselves be described as documents—artifacts inscribed on paper or a similar medium [...] whose unique physical characteristics and original nature give them special evidentiary value’.¹⁰¹ This is contrary to critical editing, which aims to restore a text to its original form, usually through the comparison of different editions and/or copies.

Spelling

In order to facilitate the reading of the text, there are a few things that may be considered. Firstly, spelling was not yet standardised in the Middle Ages. Because spelling was more phonetic than it is now, local accents or dialects influenced the spelling of certain words. In this manuscript, for example, an ‘i’ is frequently used to indicate longer vowels, as opposed to the more common ‘e’ (dair as opposed to daer, Modern Dutch ‘daar’, English

¹⁰⁰ N. van Wijk, ed., *Het getijdenboek van Geert Grote*.

¹⁰¹ M. Kline and S. Holbrook Perdue, *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), p.3-4.

‘there’, and voir, Modern Dutch ‘voor’, English ‘for’).¹⁰² In addition to regional variation, there can be inconsistency within texts, of which several examples can be found in this manuscript. The ‘g’ sound followed by an ‘e’ in words such as the Modern Dutch ‘gebed’ (prayer) is often spelled ‘ghe’, as in ‘ghebet’. In BPL 2747, the ‘h’ is often omitted, but on some occasions it is included (see Figure 14 for both spellings). Other spelling inconsistencies include ‘hemelrijc’/‘hemelrike’, Modern Dutch ‘hemelrijk’, English ‘heaven’ and ‘heilige’/‘heilich’/ ‘heilichste’, Modern Dutch ‘heilig(e)/heiligste’, English ‘holy/holiest’. The latter example, however, does show consistency across different variations of the word, suggesting this is a difference in spelling may represent an audible difference, but one that is no longer recognisable in Modern Dutch.

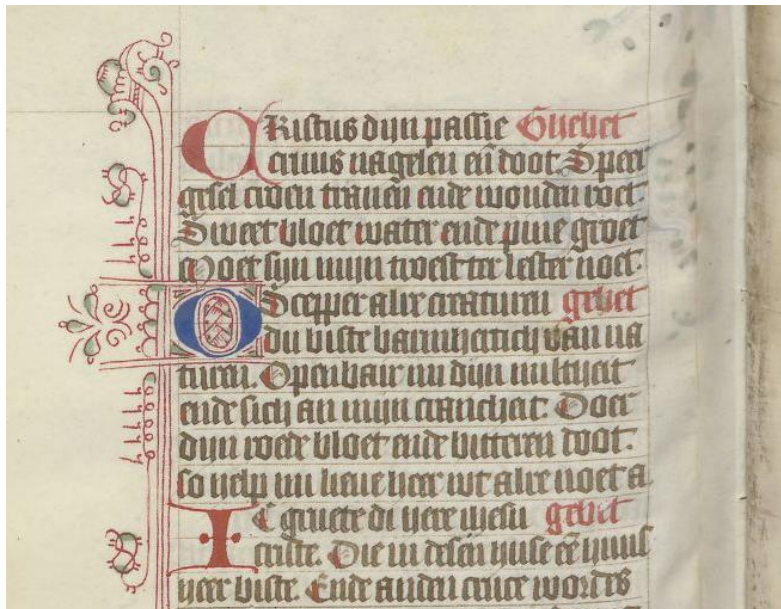


Figure 14: Multiple spellings of the word 'gebet/ghebet' (in red), f.198v, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.

Another issue a one may face is that some letters were used in Middle Dutch to represent different sounds from what they represent in modern spelling.¹⁰³ Examples of this include:

¹⁰² M.A. Mooijaart, *Nederlands van Middeleeuwen tot Gouden Eeuw: cursus Middelnederlands en Vroegnieuw-nederlands*, ed. by Marijke J. van der Wal (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2008), p.28.

¹⁰³ See Mooijaart, *Nederlands van Middeleeuwen tot Gouden Eeuw*, p.24-25 for an overview of spelling and sound varieties.

Middle Dutch	Modern Dutch	'Example' (Mod. Dutch, English)
u	v	'geuet' (geeft, gives)
f	s	'miffē' (mis, mass)
w	u	'wt' (uit, out)
i/j	j	'iaer' (jaar, year)
y	i	'ynnich' (innig, profound)
c	k	'ic' (ik, I)

With the exception of f/s, the original spelling has been kept in this edition.

Abbreviations

It is not uncommon for scribes to use abbreviations for frequently used words or word endings. In this manuscript, abbreviations were mostly used in titles and other rubricated elements. The following abbreviations were used in the prayers:

Abbreviation	Meaning	Example
ē	-n or -m sound	heiligē → heiligen
eñ	-de	eñ → ende
v̄	-er	v̄drijf → verdrijf
ch ⁺	-eit	reinich ⁺ → reinicheit
Ihũ xp̄i	Jesus Christ	Ihesu cristi

Solved abbreviations are indicated in the text in italics (eg *verdrijf*).

Ambiguity and illegible text

Fortunately, most of the text in the manuscript could be transcribed without issue. In some cases, however uncertainties persist with regards to the spelling of a word or the meaning of an abbreviation. For instances of uncertainty, a most likely transcription has been placed between brackets.

Page layout

In order to reflect the original manuscript as closely as possible, line breaks have been kept as they are found in the text. As opposed to modern texts, hyphens are not frequently used to indicate when a word continues beyond the end of a line. As a result, some words are broken off without clear signal, meaning caution should be taken to consult the following or preceding line to see if a word may continue. Breaks between pages are indicated by the folio numbers in the left margin, which appear next to the first line of the text on that folio. The rubrication has been kept in line with the manuscript, both to highlight the start of new sections, and to clarify which words are part of which prayer. The latter is necessary because final words in are in some cases found on the same lines as the start of a new prayer or section, with ink colour as the only separating factor (see Figure 15).



Figure 15: Rubrication used to indicate the flow of text at the start of a new section, 14v, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747.

Overview

This edition contains the following prayers:

Folios	Rubric	English translation	Standardised title ¹⁰⁴
14r-14v	Van den heiligen apostel <i>sint</i> Jacob een gebet	A prayer of the holy apostle saint Jacob	Middle Dutch Prayer to Saint Jacob
14v-15r	Item een suffragiu van sinte Jacob	Also a suffrage of Saint Jacob	Middle Dutch Suffrage of Saint Jacob
192r- 196v	Sinte Ambrosius gebet vanden wairden heiligen sacramente. O su'	Saint Ambrose prayer of the esteemed sacrament. O su'	Middle Dutch translation of <i>Summe sacerdos et vere pontifex</i> by Jean de Fécamp
196v- 197v	Hier volgen seuen devote gebeden vander passien ons heren. so wie die leest devotelic op sijn knien mit seuen pater noster ende seuen aue maria. staende inder staet der gracien dat is buten doot <i>sonden</i> . in tegenwoirdicheit der wapenen ons heren viertich dusent iaer. <i>ende</i> acht ende twintich iaer. mit acht ende viertich dagen warachtichs oflaets. Dat eerste gebet.	Here follow seven devout prayers of the passion of our lord. Whoever reads these devoutly on their knees with seven pater nosters and seven ave maria's, standing in the state of grace that is without deadly sins, in the presence of the weapons of our lord: forty thousand and twenty-eight years with eighty-four days truly of indulgence. The first prayer.	Prayers to the Mass of St. Gregory
198r- 199r	Sint Jorijs gebet <i>van</i> den heiligen cruce	Saint George prayer of the holy cross	Prayers in verse

¹⁰⁴ The standardised titles are the titles as they are found in the BNM-I when available and translated to English where necessary. If the prayer was not found in the BNM-I, a standardised title was made based on what is known about the origins of the prayer. Asterisks indicate texts of which no other examples were found.

199r- 199r	Sinte bernardus gebet tot onser vrouwen	Saint Bernard prayer to our lady	‘O vrouwe der glorien, coninginne der bliscappen’
199r- 200v	Drie gebeden der heiligen nonnen mechteldis tot <i>onser lieuer vrouwen</i>	Three prayers of the holy nun Mechteldis to our dear lady	Middle Dutch prayer based on ‘De tribus 'Ave Maria' dicendis’ by Mechtild van Hackeborn, Liber specialis gratiae, 1, 47
200v- 200v	Des paeus sixtus die iiiii. gebeden tot <i>onser vrouwen</i>	Of Pope Sixtus the fourth, prayers to our Lady	Middle Dutch translation of ‘Ave sanctissima maria mater dei regina celi porta paradisi domina mundi pura singularis tu es virgo’
201r- 201v	Van onse patrona sinte Agatha	Of our patron Saint Agatha	* Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Agatha
201v- 202v	Van sinte Barbara een scoen gebet	Of Saint Barbara a lovely prayer	* Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Barbara
202v- 203v	Van der heiliger vrouwen sinte anna een guet gebet	Of the holy Saint Anne a good prayer	* Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Anne

The Prayers

14r

Van den heili
gen apostel *sint*
Jacob een *gebet*

O Heilige apos
tel sinte Jacob
ons lieues he
ren ihesu cristi
moyen soen.

een broeder des heiligen apostels ende
ewanglistes sinte iohannes. Ick
bidde u minnentliken wten gronde
mijns herten om die of sindinghe
dijns duerbaren hoestes blide
liken ledes om die minne ons heren
dattu mi arme sondige mensche om
dijn gloriose verdienste ende mar
telie dattu mi wilste verlossen van
alle tegenwoirdige ende toecomen
de geselinge die ic arme sondige *men*
sche wel verdient heb. Ende dattu

14v

vanden toecomende toirne des heren
mi genadeliken wilste vrien. Ende
gelikerwijs ic di versocht heb te com
postelle in galissen, dattu also in die
stonde mijns doots mi wilste verso
ken ende mi bi wesen. Ende als een
patroen mijn siel wilste *ontvange*
ende bescermen van die macht der
vianden, ende hair leiden ten ewige*n*

leuen amen. **Item een suffragiu**
O Sinte **van sinte Jacob**
Jacob die den viant onder
die voete tredes mit crach
ten ende mit teikenen. O ihesu cris
te make ons wairdich dijnre gracie
ouermits die verdienten des geens
die sijn bloet voir di gestort heuet
ende regniert mitti. **versikel** in allen
landen is hoir geluut wt ghegaen
Ende hoir wairden sijn wt gegaen

15r inden einden des *omnegancs vander werlt*
Heer wes dinen **collect.**
volke een heilichmaker ende
een bewarer. op dattet ouermits die
bescermenisse dijns heiligen apostels
Sinte Jacob in der wanderinge di be
haghe. ende di dienen mit sekeren ge
dachten. Ouermits onse here ihe
sum cristum. Amen. **Amen**

192r **Sinte Ambrosius gebet vanden**
wairden heiligen sacramento. O su'
O Ouerste priester ende ge
wair biscop here ihesu
criste die di seluen offer
deste gode dinen vader
een rein ende een onbeulecte offerhande
opten outaer des heiligen cruces om

ons arme sondaren. Ende ons gege
uen hebste dijn heilige vleische te eten
ende dijn heilige bloet te drincken
Ende insettete dit sacrament in die
cracht des heiligen geestes. in gehoech
nisse dijnre martelien ende passien.
seggende tot dinen iongeren. Alsoe
dicke als ghi dit doet. so suldijt doen
in gehoechnisse mijnre passien. Ic
bidde di om die gehoechnisse dijnre
passien ende om dijn duerbair bloet
dair al onse salicheit an leit. Ick

192v

bidde di oec om die wonderlike minne
dair du ons so seer mede minmedeste dat
tu ons wasschen woudes can onsen
sonden in dinen duerbaren bloede dat
tu mi arme sondiche mensche dien du
so lange verdragen heues inden sonden
niet om mine verdienste mer om di
ne grote ontfermherticheit leren wil
ste mitter genaden des heiligen geestes
dijn heilige lichaem te ontfanghen
mit also groten anxte. mit also gro
ter minnen. ende wairdicheit. als ic
sculdich bin te doen ende di wel beta
met. Gif mi, here ihesu criste ouermits
dijnre grachien dat heilige sacrament
vastelike te gelouen ende te verstaen.
ende te dencken ende te spreken dattet
di behaechlic si ende mijnre siele oer

bairlic. O here ihesu criste sende *in* mi
dinen heiligen geest die mi doe ver

193r

staen die wairdicheit des heiligen
sacramentes. Wantet onbegripelic
is ende diep te verstaen ende gaet bo
uen alle natuerlike reden. Ay lieue
here om dine grote ontfermherticheit
ende om dijnre lieuer moeder marien
ende alre heiligen verdiensten verleen
mi arme sondige mensche in allen
tiden dat mijn herte van allen on
nutten gepensen ende begeringe rein
moet sijn ende vri. O lieue here ihesu
criste sende mi dinen heiligen enghel
die mi behoede ende beware van alle
aenvechtinge des viants. Verdrijf
van mi den quaden geest der ghiericheit
des haets des nijts ende der onsuuver
heit ende alrehande ongeloue. Dat
ic mine vianden verweren moet die
mi stadeliken nacht ende dach aen
uechten. O coninc der ioncfrouwen

193v

Ende minre der reinicheit lessche *in* mijn
herte ende in mijn lichaem der viant
der onsuuerheit mitten douwe dijnre
hemelscher minnen. Verdrijf van mi
alle quade becoringe mijns vleisches
dat ic behouden moet ewige reinicheit
van herten ende van lichaem. dat ic

altoes wairdich moet sijn dijn heili
ge lichaem te onstaen mit reinen
herten ende mit kuyschen lichaem.
O mit hoe groten rouwen. O mit
hoe groten tranen. O mit hoe gro
ter ynnicheit. O mit hoe groten wair
dicheit. ende mit hoe groter kuysc
heit salmen billics o here ihesu criste
di in dit heilige sacrament ontfaen
dair men warachteliken dijn vleisch
etet en dijn bloet drinket. Dair
dat hoechste mitten nederste verga
dert. Dair die engelen tegenwoirdich

194r

sijn. Daer du selue o here ihesu criste
ouerste priester biste tegenwoirdich
wonderlike ende onsprekelijke. Hoe
mochte dat ummermeer mensche
wairdeliken onstfaen du en maect
sten alleen wairdich. Ic moet dat
wairliken wel ende oec geue ics mi
sculdich dijnre guedertierenhei dat
ic iet wairdich en bin tot dinen ou
taer te gaen ende dijn heilige lichaem
daer te onfaen. Want ic mi mit me
nichuoudigen sonden beulect weet.
Mer ic weet dat wel ende wairlike
geloue ic van al mijnre herten dat
tu die almachtige god biste. Ende mijn
sceppep ende mijn behouder biste, ende
mi onwairdige mensche mogeste

maken waerdich ende van alle mi
nen sonden rein ende vri. die van niet
makeste hemelrijc ende eertrijc, ende

194v

vanden sondaren makestu heilige
mensen alle dage. Dair om dattu
alleen alle dinc vermoeges so bidde
ic di datti mi geues dat hemelsche
broet te onfaen mit anxte ende mit
rouwe van minen sonden ende mit
ynniger herten ende mitter fonteine
der tranen. Vervolle mijn herte mit
geesteliker bliscap also dat ic gewair
moet werden dattu mit dinen heili
gen engelen hier tegenwoirdich bis
te. Ic bidde di oech here ihesu cristi om
die waerdicheit dijns vleisches ende
dijns dueren bloets dair mi dagelics
mede gespijst werden ende gelauet in
der heiliger kercken, ende dair wi dij
godheit mede deelachtich werden ver
drijf van mi alle saken die mi scenden
mogen van di, ende gif mi na dine
wille te leuen ende na dine geboden

195r

dat dijn heilige lichaem mi werden
moet tot salicheit beide aen siele ende
aen (liue). Want du sprakes selve tot
ten apostolen aldus. Dat broet dat
ic sal geuen dat is mijn vleisch ente
mijn bloet ende sal wesen een leuen

alder werelt. Ende die geen die mi e
eten sullen leuen eweliken want si
wonden in me ende ic in hem. Ic bin
dat leuende broet dat vanden hemel
gecomen is. Ay hemelsche broet du
biste een spise der engelen die mij*n* siel
leuendich maken moechste. Ay soete
broet. minnentlike broet. scone broet.
gif me dat ic geen dinc buten di min
nen en moet. noch geen scoenheit bu
ten di begeren en moet. Com in mij*n*
herte ende behoet mi binnen ander
sielen ende buten anden lichaem. Ver
drijf van mi alle mine viand*n*. dat

195v

ic vrilic tottu comen moge sonder e
nich lettenisse ende ewelike bi di bli
uen. Dair ic di mach sien clairlike
van oge tot ogen. Dair seltu mi al
so droncken ende verweent maken.
mitter soeticheit ende mitter claer
heit dijns liefliken aenschijns dat ic
hongers ende dorstes al vergeten sal.
Dair helpe mi toe die gene die sonder
beginne is ende ewelike sel bliuwen son
der einde ihesus cristus amen. **Alstu
geaste totten outair so segghe.**
O here ihesu criste Ic en bin des
niet wairdich dattu coemste
in mijn arme sondige lichaem. mer
sprec alleen mitten woirde ende mijn

siel sel gesont werden. **Alstu dat heilige sacrament ontfangen**

O here ihesu **hebste so segge**
criste hoe sel ic arme son

196r

dige mensche die niet en bin *dan* een
aes des wormen di ummermeer te
vollen dancken mogen. *vanden* duer
vaer gaue die di *min* huden gegeuen
hebste. dattu mi gegeuen hebste dijn
gebendide lichaem in een spise ende
dijn duerbair bloet in een dranc *ende*
in troest mijnre sondiger sielen. Wel
come heue here ihesu criste leuende
goeds soen. salicheit alder werlt hei
lige offerhande. dare fonteine der
mildicheit. Welcome guedertieren
here ihesu criste glorie der engelen.
warachtige mensche. rose blome.
vrucht der maget marien. Welco
me ouerscoen ende ouersoete ihesu
blischap des herten. wairde soete he
melsche manna. leuende briet *ende*
reine vat vol mildichheten. Welco
me licht van hemelrijc. onse ewe

196v

like loen *ende* *ende* ouersoete (wijranc).
rechte wairheit *ende* grote blijscap.
Du biste die hoechste caritate. fon
teine der *minnen* ewige ruste. Kint
van bethleem. kint van nazareth.

du vloieste van minnen. Ay soete here
ihesu criste laet di ontfaimen mijn
wenen ende mijn karmen. ende na
desen leuen laet mi varen ten ewigen
leuen. Amen. Hier volgen seuen
devote gebeden vander passien ons
heren. so wie die leest devotelic op
sijn knien mit seuen pater noster
ende seuen aue maria. staende inder
staet der gracien dat is buten doot son
den. in tegenwoirdicheit der wapenen
ons heren viertich dusedent iaer. ende
acht ende twintich iaer. mit acht
ende viertich dagen warachtichs
oflaets. Dat eerste gebet.

197r

O here ihesu criste ic aen
bede di inden cruce han
gende ende een doernen
croen in dijn hovet
dragende. Ic bidde di dat dijn cruus
mi moet verlossen vanden enghel
die slaende is amen. *pater noster aue maria*
O here ihesu criste ic aenbede
di inden cruce gewont. mit
galle end emit edic gelauet. Ic bid
de di dat dine wonden moeten sijn
een medicijn mijnre sielen amen.
O here ihesu *pater noster aue maria.*
criste Ic aenbede di inden gra
ue geleit. mit mire ende welruken

de costelike salve gesalvet. Ic bidde
di dat dijn doot moet sijn mijn le
uen amen. *pater noster aue maria.*
O here ihesu criste Ic aenbede
Di nederlstigende ter hellen ende die

197v

geuangen dair verlossende. Ic bidde
de en laet mi dair niet comen amen.
O Here ihesu criste *pater noster aue maria.*
Ic aenbede di op verrisende van
der doot. op climmende ten hemel. ende
sittende ter rechterhant dijns vaders.
Ic bidde di ontferme di mijre amen
O Here ihesu criste *pater noster aue maria.*
guede harder behoede die recht
uairdigen. maec rechtuairdich die
sondaren. ende mi arme sondige
sche genadich amen. *pater noster aue maria.*
O Here ihesu criste ic bidde di o
uermits die bitterheit dijnre
passien die di leedste inden cruce. ende
alder meest doe dijn alre edelste siele ver
sceide van dinen lichaem. wes mijnre
sielen genadich in hair versceidinge
Amen. *pater noster. aue maria.*

198r

Sint Jorijs gebet vanden heiligen cruce
HEilich wairde cruus heilich
teiken scherm salt
so moetstu sijn mi te be
hoeden ende te bewairn van allen qua

den dat mi geen quaet en moet scaden
ouermits dat wairde heilige lichaem
goeds dat aen di warachteliken (henc)
ende starf den bitteren doot om onsen
wille. ende sijn heilige duerbair bloet
oueruloedelic om ons an di gestort
heuet. O heilige salt van groter
macht bescerme mi mit dijⁿre cracht.
huden op desen dach voir alle quade
auentuer ende werderstoet der vianden.
ende vanden gaedoot ende ouuersien
den doot. Ende en laet mi niet gebre
ken. ic en moet warachtige biechte
spreken. Des moet mi gonnen die
vader die soen die heilige geest. amen.

198v

Cristus dijn passie **Ghebet**
cruus nagelen *ende* doot. Speer
gesel croen tranen ende wonden roet.
Sweet bloet water ende pine groet
Moet zijn mijn troest ter mester noet.
O Scepper alre creaturen **gebet**
du biste barmhertich van na
turen. Openbair mi dijn miltheit.
ende sich an mijn crancheit. Doer
dijn roede bloet ende bitteren doot.
so help mi lieue heer wt alre noet a
Ic gruete di here ihesu **gebet**
criste. Die in desen huse *ene* huus
heer biste. Ende anden crucen wordes
geslagen. veel iammerliker dan ic

mach clagen. Gif mi van sonden rouwe. op dat ic di bescouwe. Hier bouen in hemelrike . mit di te leuen ewelike. amen. Ic gruette di hemelsche coninginne. Ende alle godes gesinne

199r

Ende bidde u dat ghi biddet voir mi. dat mi god genadich si. amen. **Sin te bernardus gebet tot onser vrouwen**
O vrouwe der glorien. Coninginne der bliscappen. O fonteine der guedertierenheit ende der ontfermheiticheit. O schijnsel des hemels. Soeticheit des paradises. vrolicheit goeds. vrouwe der engelen. bliscap der heiligen. Cierheit ende paerle der maechden. O gloriose vrouwe di beuele ic huden ende in alle tiden mijn siel ende mijn lichaem ende al mijn leuen. mijn doot ende mijn verisenisse. Du die gebenedijt bliueste inder ewicheit mit ihesu cristo dinen soen onsen heer. Die mit gode ten vader ende den heiligen geest leuet ende regniert god ewelike sonder einde amen. **Drie gebeden der heiliger non**

199v

nen mechteldis tot onser lieuer vrouwen
O Gloriose moeder ende maget maria coninginne der hemelen ende der eerden. ge

likerwijs als god die vader na groet
heit seine almachticheit dijn siel *ver*
heuen heuet bi hem in sijn hoge troen
so dattu naest hem die alre machtich
ste biste in hemelrijc ende in eertrijc.
Alsoe bidde ic di dattu bi mi wilste
wesen in die vre mijns doots om mi
te sterken ende van mi te verdriuen
alle mogenheit des viants amen
O maria sterre des *ae maria*
meers licht deser werelt. Ghe
likerwijs die soen goeds na sijnre on
begripeliker wijsheit dijn siel *verciert*
heuet consteliken mit wetenheit *ende*
mit verstandnisse so dattu bouen
alle heiligen mit meerre bekennisse

200r

gebrukeste der heiliger drieuoudicheit
Ende heuet di verlicht mit so groter
clairheit dattu als een blenkende son
ne alle die hemelen verlichtes. Also
bidde ic di dattu bi mi wilste wesen *in*
die vre mijns doots. ende mijn siel *ver*
lichten mitten lichte des geloues ende
der bekennisse. op dat mijn geloeue
niet becoirt en werde mit onbekent
heit of mit enigerdwalinge of mit
mistroest. amen. *Aue maria.*
O Maria moeder der weesen.
troestersche der ellendigher.
Ghelikerwijs als die heilge geest

di volcomelic ingestort heuet die
soeticheit sijnre minnen. so dattu
die alre soestste ende goedertierenste
biste naest gode. Also bidde ic di dat
tu bi mi wilste wesen in die vre mijns
doots. ende mijnre sielen instorten die

200v

soeticheit sijnre godliker minnen
die also crachtich si in mi dat alle
pijn ende bitterheit des doots wt
dier minnen ende ouermits dijne
soete tegenwoirdicheit mi soet
moet werden. amen. *aeue maria.*
Des paeus sixtus iiii. gebeden tot onser vrouwen.
Wes gegruet alre heilichste
maria moeder goeds. een
coninginne des hemels. een poirte
des paradises. ende een vrouwe der
werlt. Du biste eensonderlinge pu
re maget. Du ontfengeste ihesum
sonder sonde. Du hebtse gebairt den
scepper ende gesontmaker der werlt
inden welken ic niet en twiuel. Bid
de voir mi ihesum dijn geminde soen
Ende verlosse mi van allen quaden,
amen. *Dit voirscreven gebet leest voir
dat beelt onser vrouwen in die sonne xi^m*

201r

van onse partrona sinte Agatha
O heilige patrona sinte
Aechte du gincste blidelic

totten karker echt als
een die totten werscap genoet is. *ende*
beuaelste den ere dijn einde mit ge
beden. *ende* seideste totten rechter. on
genadich wrede tyran. en scaemste di
niet in een vrouwen persoen of te snid
den dattu selue an dijn moeder gesoken
hebste. Ende doe du inden karker
quaemste doe opboerdste dine han
den tot dinen here dinen god *ende* spra
keste. O here du die tormenten *ende*
pijnlicheit des vleischs houwers ge
biede mi tot dine barmherticheit to
comen. *versikel*. Bidt voir ons heili
ge patrona sinte Aechte. Dat wij
wairdich moeten *werden* der beloften *cristi*

201v

Almachtige ewige god *Collect*
Toen dijn barmherticheit *den*
genen die di biddende sijn. op dat wi
die onse eygen guetheit ons selue
niet en betrouwen. ouermits dat ge
bet van sinte Agathe onse patrone
niet dijn oerdel nier dijn ontfermher
ticheit moeten geuoelen. Ouermits
onsen here ihesum cristum. amen.

Van sinte Barbara een scoen gebet

O heilige barbara alre gue
dertierenste ioncfrouwe *ende*
martelairsche cristi die noch
mit sineken van eertscher weelden.

noch mit wreetheit des bosen rechters
en mochtet beweket werden. mer
hebste geleden grote scande ende veel
pinen in dinen lichaem ende dijn bloet
gestort om die minne cristi. ende om
belijnghe der heiliger drieuoudicheit.

202r

Ic bidde di innichliken dattu dinen
brudegom onsen here ihesum cristum
voir mi bidden wilste dat hi mi wil
behoeden voir scande deser werelt. ende
druc ende liden mijns siels ende mijns
lichaems. Ende dattu mi wilste ver
weruen bekeringe ende betering mijns
leuens ende vreden mijns herten. mit
enen voirsienigen doot ende einde mijns
leuens. mit warachtige berouwe ende
gehele biechte mijnre sonden. Ende dat
ic dat heilige sacrament deuotelic
begeerlic ende wairdelic moet ont
fangen voir mijn doot. Dat mi gon
ne doir dine bede ende verdienste die va
der die soen die heilige geest. amen. *versi.*
Mit dijnre gedaenten ende mit dijnre
scoenten. sie toe vromelike gae voirt
ende regiere. *Collect. Deus*
God dijn alre salichster ionc

202v

frouwen barbaren om die belijnghe
der heiliger drieuoudicheit gegeuen
hebste an te gaen die martelien. ende

hair gecroent heues mitter stolen det
onsterflicheit gif ons dat wi ouer
mits haren gebeden vanden geselcap
dijnre heiligen nymmermeer en *wer*
den versceiden. Ouermits onsen here
ihesum cristum. amen. van der heilger
vrouwen sinte anna een guet gebet

O heilige vrouwe ende moe
der sinte wt den edelen
stamme van yesse gespro
ten. ende van des conincs dauids ghe
slachte geboren. O heilige anna die
nye mit dootsonden beplect en hebste
geweest. du hebste ons of geleit alle
rouwe ende hebste verdient te baren
die daar blenkende sterre maria die
vrucht onser salicheit. wt welken

203r

voirt gegaen is dat ewige licht ende
die sonne der gerechticheit cristus on
se gesontmaker. Ghebenedijt bistu
o heilige vrouwe sinte anna. ende
gebenedijt is die vrucht dijns lich
aems maria die coninginne der he
melen ende vrouwe der engelen *versikel*
Bidt voir ons heilige vrouwe ende
moeder sinte anna mit dijn heilige
geslachte. Dat wi wairdich moeten
werden der beloften cristi. *Collect.*
God die gegeuen hebste sinte
anna dat si verdiende te we

sen een moeder der moeder goeds ma
ria verleen ons guedertierlic dat wi
ouermits hairre beider beden *ende* ver
diensten vercrigen moeten die hemel
sche riken. Ouermits onsen here
ihesum cristum. Amen. *pater noster*
ae maria. Mer des dinghestages

203v

drie pater noster ende drie ae maria.

CHAPTER 4: THE PRAYERS - DISSEMINATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

This chapter offers a more detailed examination of the prayers transcribed in Chapter 3. The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it aims to establish how this Book of Hours compares to other (Middle Dutch) Books of Hours, by looking at where the prayers come from and how commonly they are found. Secondly, it aims to obtain information relating to the production or first owner of the manuscript.

For each of the prayers an attempt was made to identify the prayer by a standardised title and to locate it in other manuscripts, in order to gain insight into the popularity and dissemination of the prayers themselves, as well as to position BPL 2747 in the landscape of (Middle Dutch) Books of Hours. Not all prayers have successfully been identified and some, such as the suffrage to St. Jacob, were found in other manuscripts but could not successfully be linked to a common identifier or standardised title. In the following section, I will first discuss the identified prayers, and then touch upon the remaining texts. First, I again present the overview of the prayers in this manuscript. Unidentified prayers are indicated with an asterisk at the start of their standardised title.

Folios	Rubric	English translation	Standardised title ¹⁰⁵
14r- 14v	Van den heiligen apostel <i>sint Jacob een gebet</i>	A prayer of the holy apostle saint Jacob	* Middle Dutch Prayer to Saint Jacob
14v- 15r	Item een suffragiu van sinte Jacob	Also a suffrage of Saint Jacob	Middle Dutch Suffrage of Saint Jacob
192r- 196v	Sinte Ambrosius gebet vanden wairden heiligen sacramente. O su'	Saint Ambrose prayer of the esteemed sacrament. O su'	Middle Dutch translation of <i>Summe sacerdos et vere pontifex</i> by Jean de Fécamp
196v- 197v	Hier volgen seuen devote gebeden vander passien ons heren. so wie die	Here follow seven devout prayers of the passion of our lord. Whoever reads	Prayers to the Mass of St. Gregory

¹⁰⁵ The standardised titles are the titles as they are found in the BNM-I when available and translated to English where necessary. If the prayer was not found in the BNM-I, a standardised title was made based on what is known about the origins of the prayer.

	leest devotelic op sijn knien mit seuen pater noster ende seuen aue maria. staende inder staet der graciën dat is buten doot <i>sonden</i> . in tegenwoirdicheit der wapenen ons heren viertich dusent iaer. <i>ende</i> acht ende twintich iaer. mit acht ende viertich dagen warachtichs oflaets. Dat eerste gebet.	these devoutly on their knees with seven pater nosters and seven ave maria's, standing in the state of grace that is without deadly sins, in the presence of the weapons of our lord: forty thousand and twenty-eight years with eighty-four days truly of indulgence. The first prayer.	
198r-199r	Sint Jorijs gebet <i>van</i> den heiligen cruce	Saint George prayer of the holy cross	Prayers in verse
199r-199r	Sinte bernardus gebet tot onser vrouwen	Saint Bernard prayer to our lady	'O vrouwe der glorien, coninginne der bliscappen'
199r-200v	Drie gebeden der heiligen nonnen mechteldis tot <i>onser lieuer vrouwen</i>	Three prayers of the holy nun Mechteldis to our dear lady	Middle Dutch prayer based on 'De tribus 'Ave Maria' dicendis' by Mechtild van Hackeborn, Liber specialis gratiae, 1, 47
200v-200v	Des paeus sixtus die iiii. <i>gebeden</i> tot <i>onser vrouwen</i>	Of Pope Sixtus the fourth, prayers to our Lady	Middle Dutch translation of 'Ave sanctissima maria mater dei regina celi porta paradisi domina mundi pura singularis tu es virgo'
201r-201v	Van onse patrona sinte Agatha	Of our patron Saint Agatha	* Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Agatha
201v-202v	Van sinte Barbara een scoen <i>gebet</i>	Of Saint Barbara a lovely prayer	* Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Barbara
202v-203v	Van der heiliger vrouwen sinte anna een guet gebet	Of the holy Saint Anne a good prayer	* Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Anne

Identified prayers

Suffrage of Saint Jacob

Incipit: O Sinte Jacob die den viant onder die voete tredes mit crachten ende mit teikenen.

Origins: unknown

Length: 20 lines¹⁰⁶

Other occurrences: Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen, msc 0070, fols. 86v-87v

The first identified text is a suffrage to one of Aef van Bolgerien's patron saints, Saint Jacob. The suffrage was only identified in one other manuscript, a fifteenth century Middle Dutch Book of Hours currently held in the University Library of Bremen under the shelfmark msc 0070.¹⁰⁷ This does, however not mean that there are no other extant versions of the text, just that they were not found within the scope of this research. The Bremen manuscript has been localised to the Low Countries, but no further details on its production are known. Slight differences in spelling, however, suggest that the manuscript was written in a different dialect. Within the manuscript, the prayer is found towards the middle of the book among other short prayers, in contrast to the position it holds towards the beginning in BPL 2747. The unusual positioning before the Hours of the Virgin suggests specific importance of the text. This is corroborated by the unidentified prayer to Jacob it accompanies, which refers to Jacob as a patron (see also the discussion of said prayer on page 84-5)

¹⁰⁶ Number of lines includes the rubric.

¹⁰⁷ Irene Stahl, *Katalog der mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen*, Die Handschriften der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), pp. 279-284.

Middle Dutch translation of *Summe sacerdos et vere pontifex* by Jean de Fécamp

Incipit: O Ouerste priester ende gewair biscop

Other identifiers: G16 in ‘Inventaris van de Middelnederlandse handschriften van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België’, from here on IMKBB¹⁰⁸

Origins: France, 11th century

Length: 188 lines

Other occurrences: 162 mentions in the BNM-I, 23 mentions in the IMKBB

This text is more well-known, as is apparent from the larger number of extant copies. It is a translation of the Latin original *Summe sacerdos et vere pontifex*. The prayer has been attributed to Jean the Fécamp (or John of Fécamp) only in the last few centuries, as much of the work of the Italian writer and abbot initially circulated under pseudonyms. *Summe sacerdos*, in fact, circulated under the name of the earlier writer Ambrose, which can still be seen in the rubric of the prayer in many books, among which BPL 2747. As research in the twentieth century was able to link more texts to de Fécamp, it became apparent that he had been one of the most read Christian writers up until the fifteenth century when *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis gained popularity.¹⁰⁹

The prayer was intended to be recited by the priest before Mass and contains sections to be used when going to the altar and for receiving the sacrament.¹¹⁰ As the prayer is quite lengthy, some versions are split up into seven sections, one for each day of the week.¹¹¹ BPL 2747, however, shows no signs of this division.

¹⁰⁸ See Jan Deschamps and Herman Mulder, *Inventaris van de Middelnederlandse Handschriften van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België / Afl. 10* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België (KBR), 2008), p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* (London: Sheed and Ward Limited, 1985), p. 87.

¹¹⁰ See the rubrics on fol. 195v, Leiden, BPL 2747.

¹¹¹ Denise P. Gallo, ‘The Kerver Missale Romanum’ <<https://www.loc.gov/collections/moldenhauer-archives/articles-and-essays/guide-to-archives/missale-romanum/>> [accessed 12 June 2022].

Prayers to the Mass of St. Gregory

Incipit: O here ihesu criste ic aenbede di inden cruce hangende ende een doernen croen in dijn hovet dragende.

Other identifiers: G4 in IMKBB¹¹²

Origins: Unknown, separate for different verses

Length: 51 lines

Other occurrences: 191 mentions in the BNM-I, 31 mentions in the IMKBB

This set of prayers is recited in honour of St. Gregory, a Pope in the late sixth century. Multiple stories circulate of the event which inspired them, the Mass, or Vision, of St. Gregory. In an early version of the story, St. Gregory's prayers turn bread into a finger, and later back into bread, after a woman questions whether God is present in the bread.¹¹³ In later versions, Christ appears to St. Gregory as a 'Man of Sorrow' at the altar below the Arma Christi. The latter story is most often reflected in iconography. This is also the case for BPL 2747, as the first initial of the text depicts the Man of Sorrows, and the shield below depicts the Arma Christi (Fig. 16). The verses are addressed to Jesus and address different parts of the Passion. They were, however, not written by Saint Gregory himself. Accounts differ, and different authors were responsible for the different verses. Early versions contained five verses, but this was later expanded to seven, and finally to nine or ten. In some cases, the rubrics of extended versions referenced who was responsible for the added verses, though these claims of authorship have not been confirmed.¹¹⁴

Not only the prayers were expanded on, the rubrics also exist in many versions. As mentioned, they could include references to the authors, but they also contained other important elements. From early versions onwards, indulgences were attached to the prayers, and reciting the additional verses meant that the reader could earn more, or even

¹¹² Deschamps and Mulder, *Inventaris van de Middelnederlandse Handschriften van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België*, p. 76.

¹¹³ Kathryn M. Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in Late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts*, Library of the Written Word - the Manuscript World ; 55, 2016, p.101.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p.110.

double the indulgences.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the rubric indicates a specific manner of praying in order to receive the indulgences, namely ‘in the presence of the weapons of our lord’.¹¹⁶ This line testifies to the use of ceremonial objects in praying practices. The version of the prayer in BPL 2747 contains seven verses and is worth, according to the rubric, 40.028 years and 48 days of indulgences. Yet, while the rubric is significantly longer for this prayer than for others in the manuscript, it does not acknowledge the different versions, possible authors, or differences in indulgences.

The prayer was a popular text and can therefore be found in a large range of manuscripts, as can be seen from the numbers of mentions stated above.



Figure 16: Start of the Prayers to the Arma Christi in name of Gregory, fols. 96v-97r. Leiden, Leiden University Libraries, BPL 2747.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, *ibidem*, p. 109.

¹¹⁶ ‘in tegenwoordicheit der wapenen ons heren’, Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, fol. 196v.

Prayers in verse

Incipits: Heilich wairde cruus heilich teiken (198r) - Cristus dijn passie cruus nagelen ende doot (198v) - O Scepper alre creaturen (198v) – Ic gruete di here Ihesu Criste (198v) - Ic gruete di hemelsche coninginne (198v-199r)

Other identifiers: 301 in Oosterman¹¹⁷ (O Scepper alre creaturen)

Origins: unknown

Length: 42 lines (19 – 5 – 6 – 8 – 4)

Other occurrences: Olim AMSTERDAM, Museum Amstelkring (no shelfmark)¹¹⁸ (partial), The Hague, KB, 135 G 10, f.34r-v (partial), Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 5.2.12, f. 71v-72r, Groningen, University Library, Add. 181, f.86v (partial), Utrecht, Rijksmuseum het Catharijneconvent, BHM 101, f. 205v (partial)¹¹⁹

The section under ‘Sinte Jorijs gebet van den heiligen cruce’ does not consist of one, but in fact of five prayers. The prayers are relatively short and are set in verse. The prayers in this section are the only ones in the manuscript of that kind. In order, the prayers are dedicated to the cross, Christ, God, Christ and Mary, the latter two being greetings. The prayers did not circulate in a set order, and some are more frequent than others. Of the prayers in this section, only one has been included in the most elaborate study of rhymed Middle Dutch prayers, *De gratie van het gebed* by Johan Oosterman, namely the third, ‘O Scepper alre creaturen’. The others are harder to locate, due to the fact that they are often not catalogued individually, or under general titles such as ‘prayer’ or ‘a greeting’, as is the case for a manuscript previously held in the Amstelkring Museum in Amsterdam. While ‘O Scepper alre creaturen’ is mentioned under its incipit and ‘Heilich wairde cruus heilich teiken’ is mentioned under the same rubric as the text in this manuscript, all three other prayers are also present in the manuscript, yet they cannot easily be recognised through their titles. The manuscript in question, may in fact have more in common with BPL 2747.

¹¹⁷ See J.B. Oosterman, *De gratie van het gebed: Overlevering en functie van Middelnederlandse berijmde gebeden*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de Middeleeuwen, (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1995), p.306.

¹¹⁸ As this manuscript was stolen in 1967, its current whereabouts are unknown and it has no current shelfmark. For more see: <<https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/tekstdragers/TDRA000000005596>>.

¹¹⁹ Oosterman, *De gratie van het gebed*, p. 306.

As stated in the BNM-I, it also contains signed illuminations by Spierinck (dated to 1491), furthermore, similarities in the incipits suggests they were produced in a linguistically similar setting. Unfortunately, as the manuscript was stolen in 1967 and no facsimile exists, further comparison is not possible.

‘O vrouwe der glorien, coninginne der bliscappen’

Incipit: O vrouwe der glorien, coninginne der bliscappen

Other identifiers: G96 in IMKBB¹²⁰

Origins: France, 12th century

Length: 19 lines

Other occurrences: 12 mentions in the BNM-I, 8 mentions in IMKBB, one edition

The next prayer in the book is one addressed to Mary. It is often attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, a French abbot from the late eleventh and early twelfth century, and sometimes to St. Augustine, a philosopher living in the fourth and fifth centuries. Both of these are, however, likely to be pseudonyms. In the case of BPL 2747, Bernard is mentioned in the rubric.

The prayer is not among the most common texts, though it can be found in several manuscripts. As noted by Deschamps and Mulder, there are strong variations in the length of the prayer.¹²¹ A version of the prayer in a Limburg dialect was included in an edition of a Book of Hours made by Floris Prims in 1926.¹²² Despite some differences in phrasing, the length of the prayer in the Prims edition is very close to that of the prayer in BPL 2747.

¹²⁰ Deschamps and Mulder, *Inventaris van de Middelnederlandse Handschriften van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België*, p. 96.

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, p.96.

¹²² Floris Prims, *Een Limburgsch gebedenboek uit de XVde eeuw*, ed. by Floris Prims, Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde. Reeks VIII, Uitgave van het Salsmans-Fonds; Nr. 2 (Dendermonde: Bracke-Van Geert, 1926), p. 190-191.

Middle Dutch prayer based on 'De tribus 'Ave Maria' dicendis' by Mechtild van Hackeborn, Liber specialis gratiae, 1, 47

Incipit: O Gloriose moeder ende maget maria coninginne der hemelen

Other identifiers: G228 in IMKBB¹²³

Origins: Germany, 13th century

Length: 47 lines

Other occurrences: 3 mentions in IMKBB

This prayer came to be in several stages. The initial text related to the prayer is the 'Liber specialis gratiae' (the Book of special grace), by Mechtild von Hackeborn, a nun in Germany in the thirteenth century who wrote about her mystic experiences. Her text was the basis for the Latin version of the poem, with the incipit 'O Maria, virgo, mater Christi, regina celi, domina mundi, imperatrix inferni, sicut deus pater animam tuam in throno secum honore dignissimo sublimavit'.¹²⁴ Finally, then, BPL 2747 contains a Middle Dutch translation of this text.

The prayer is, again, addressed to Mary. In this case, it deals specifically with the death of the reader, as Mary is asked for guidance in a good death. While the text of Mechtild von Hackeborn was well read in the Middle Ages, the prayer is found in relatively few manuscripts, with three mentions in the IMKBB. The BNM-I contains 141 prayers labeled as 'Mnl. vertalingen van Mechtild van Hackeborn: Liber specialis gratiae', however, these are not all the same prayer. The BNM-I does not in all cases specify the text a translation was based on, making it difficult to estimate how many prayers are in fact the same as the one in BPL 2747.

¹²³ Deschamps and Mulder, *Inventaris van de Middelnederlandse Handschriften van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België*, p. 120.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

Middle Dutch translation of ‘Ave sanctissima maria mater dei regina celi porta paradisi
domina mundi pura singularis tu es virgo’

Incipit: Wes gegruet alre heilichste maria moeder goeds. een coninginne des hemels

Other identifiers: G105 in the IMKBB¹²⁵

Origins: 15th century

Length: 14 lines

Other occurrences: 9 mentions in the IMKBB, 3 editions

The next prayer has been attributed to Pope Sixtus IV (1414-1484). The prayer, which is addressed to Mary and asks that she prays to Christ to relieve the reader of evil, is to be read in front of a statue of Mary in the sun and can earn the reader 11.000 years of indulgences. Like the earlier mentioned prayer to the Arma Christi, the rubric testifies to the use of ceremonial objects, in this case the statue of Mary. Extended versions of the prayer that grant additional indulgences exist,¹²⁶ though BPL 2747 does not contain this extension.

Three editions of the text are mentioned in the IMKBB. The first is part of an edition of a fifteenth century Book of Hours from the Southern Low Countries by Luc Indestege.¹²⁷ Some differences between this version and BPL 2747 occur, but they can be ascribed to the difference in dialect. There are no passages added or taken out between the two versions. The same can be said of the second edition, which is found in an edition of a Book of Hours from Münster from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century edited by Stanisław Prędoła,¹²⁸ as well as the third, found in an edition of an early sixteenth century

¹²⁵ Deschamps and Mulder, *Inventaris van de Middelnederlandse Handschriften van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België*, p.98.

¹²⁶ Ibidem, p.98.

¹²⁷ Luc Indestege, Luc, *Een Diets gebedenboek uit het begin der zestiende eeuw : herkomstig uit het voormalig klooster Sint-Hieronymusdal te Sint-Truiden*, ed. by Luc Indestege, Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde. Reeks III, Middelnederlandse uitgaven ; nr. 37. (Gent: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor taal- en letterkunde ; Secretariaat der Academie, 1961) p.190.

¹²⁸ Stanisław Prędoła, *Een laatmiddeleeuws gebedenboek uit de kring van de Moderne Devotie : hs. Wrocław, Biblioteka Kapitulna 716*, ed. by Stanisław Prędoła, M.A. Mooijaart, and P.G.J. van Sterkenburg, Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis ; no. 1994. (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1998), p.85.

manuscript from Holland, currently held in Bruges, by R.A. Parmentier.¹²⁹ While the contents of the prayers themselves is, besides linguistic differences, identical, there are differences in the rubrics of the texts. The prayer in BPL 2747 is preceded by a rubric stating the relation to Pope Sixtus IV, and followed by a rubric instructing the reader to read the prayer in front of the statue of Our Lady in the Sun, and stating the indulgence of 11.000 years to be received.¹³⁰ The versions in the editions only have a rubric at the beginning of the prayer, though it includes all the same information, with two exceptions. Firstly, that the manuscript in the edition by Pređota only mentions Pope Sixtus, leaving out the number IV. Secondly, the rubric in the edition by Parmentier mentions a second pope who doubled the indulgences connected to the prayer. The second pope mentioned, Julius the Second, was pope from 1503 to 1513, dating this edition later than the others. Despite the added indulgences, however, there are no additions to the text of the prayer itself.

Unidentified prayers

The following prayers could not be linked to any identifiers or texts in other manuscripts. While there is a chance that they are completely unique, this can also simply mean that they have not been documented, or that matching them was complicated by large differences in spelling or phrasing.

Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Jacob

Incipit: O Heilige apostel sinte Jacob ons lieues heren ihesu cristi moyen soen.

Length: 30 lines

This prayer is addressed to Saint Jacob and asks for salvation, protection, and for St. Jacob to accompany the reader at their time of death. The prayer and the previously mentioned suffrage are uniquely situated before the Hours of the Virgin, while all other prayers are

¹²⁹ R. A. Parmentier, 'Een Verlucht Hollands Getijden- En Gebedenboek Uit de Aanvang van de 16e Eeuw', *Sacris Erudiri*, IV (1952), pp.293–338.

¹³⁰ 'Des paeus sixtus iiiii. gebeden tot onser vrouwen.' and 'Dit voirscreven gebet leest voir dat beelt onser vrouwen in die *sonne xi^m*', Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, fol. 200v, also page 69 of this thesis.

found at the end of the book. In fact, the prayer may have been added separately altogether, as a strip of parchment visible between folios 15v and 16r could mean they were added as an incomplete quire. Alternatively, as discussed in Chapter 2, the strip of parchment may indicate a missing page that contained a full-page miniature. This explanation seems more likely given that the illuminations in this section are stylistically consistent with the rest of the manuscript, so the prayers must have been planned at least before the manuscript was illuminated in 1499. The position of the prayer is likely due to the fact that St. Jacob is one of the patron Saints of Aef van Bolgerien (the other being St. Agatha) and thus held a special place in her devotion.

A noteworthy line in the prayer is ‘gelikerwijs ic di versocht heb te compostelle in galissen’¹³¹ (As I requested from you in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia), as it suggests Aef van Bolgerien undertook a pilgrimage to Spain. As this line is specific to an experience, it may also explain why the prayer is not that common.

Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Agatha

Incipit: O heilige patrona sinte Aechte du gincste blidelic toten karker.

Length: 29 lines

The next prayer is addressed to Aef van Bolgerien’s other patron saint, Saint Agatha of Sicily. The first part of the prayer tells the story of St. Agatha’s martyrdom, while the versicle asks the saint to pray for the reader and the collect addresses God to show mercy to those who pray to Him. St. Agatha’s position as a patron saint is highlighted by the fact that it is not only mentioned in the rubric, but also three times in the text of the prayer. The mention of Agatha as a patron saint specifically may also have contributed to the relative rarity of the prayer, yet it cannot be said with certainty that versions of the prayer that omit the word ‘patron’ but that are otherwise the same do not exist.

¹³¹ Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747, fol.14v, also page 56 of this thesis.

Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Barbara

Incipit: O heilige Barbara alre guedertierenste ioncvrouwe ende mairtelairsche

Length: 40 lines

Saint Barbara was a martyr who lived in Phoenecia in the third century. Like St. Agatha, she dedicated her life to God at a young age and refused to marry. She too was tortured and eventually sentenced to death, though her torture took place by order of her father.

This prayer follows a similar structure to that of Saint Agatha, containing an introductory paragraph, a versicle and a collect. It addresses St. Barbara to ask her to pray for the reader and for a good and devout life and death.

Middle Dutch prayer to Saint Anne

Incipit: O heilige vrouwe ende moeder sinte anna

Length: 33 lines

St. Anne is the mother of Mary, and the grandmother of Jesus. The prayer praises St. Anne and asks her to pray for Christ's promises to come true. At the end of the prayer, the reader is instructed to say extra *pater noster's* and *ave maria's* on Tuesday, showing variation in the praying schedule.¹³² The specific significance of Tuesday is however not known.

Conclusion

The prayers explored above offer several insights into Aef van Bolgerien's life, such as the fact that she undertook a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, as well as more generally what her religious interests were, for example through the mention of her patron saints, and in the case of the prayer and suffrage to St. Jacob, through the special position of the text at the beginning of the manuscript. The rubrics of the prayers to the Mass of St.

¹³² 'pater *noster* aue maria. Mer des dinghestages drie pater *noster* ende drie aue maria.' Leiden, UBL, BPL 2747 fols. 203r-v, also page 73 of this thesis.

Gregory and to the statue of Mary in the sun suggest that she made use of ceremonial objects in her devotion, and that she either owned them or that she regularly visited a church or religious site to pray to them. Additionally, the prayers to the Mass of St. Gregory and the prayer of Mechtild of Hackeborn are mystic in nature. As the Book of Hours also includes the Hours of Eternal Wisdom, it can be said that Aef likely had an interest in mysticism, or at least, that she supported the practice.

The book has a combination of well-known and lesser-known prayers. Some, such as the Middle Dutch translation of *Summe sacerdos et vere pontifex*, are extant in a large number of copies and therefore more likely to be standard texts. Others, however, such as the prayers to St. Barbara and St. Anne are less common and signal customisation. They can therefore be taken as a better reflection of the interests of the commissioner. In the case of the first two prayers listed under the unidentified texts, those to St. Jacob and St. Agatha, the choice for the inclusion of the prayer can be easily explained, as the saints in question are patron saints to Aef van Bolgerien and were therefore likely prayed to often. The other uncommon prayers in the manuscript are those to St. Barbara and St. Anne, the prayer based on ‘De tribus ‘Ave Maria’ dicendis’ by Mechtild van Hackeborn, the translation of ‘Ave sanctissima maria mater dei regina celi porta paradisi domina mundi pura singularis tu es virgo’ and the suffrage to St. Jacob. For the latter, the same can be said as for the prayer to the same saint. As for the others, multiple explanations exist. As was the case for the inclusion of the Hours of All Saints, it could be a choice by Aef, by the scribe, or it could be the result of a local custom. The latter is at least likely for the prayer to St. Agatha, due to the connection of the saint to the town of Beverwijk, though no manuscripts were found to confirm this. The prayer related to Mechtild van Hackeborn can, again, be taken as an indicator of an interest in mysticism. With regard to the prayers to St. Barbara and St. Anne, nothing was found to indicate a particular connection between Aef and the prayers. Among the prayers overall, prayers to Maria are most common. However, due to her position in Christianity, this is not particularly telling.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to provide a comprehensive study of the fifteenth century Middle Dutch Book of Hours currently held at Leiden University Libraries under the shelfmark BPL 2747, with the intention of gaining insight into the function of the book in the religious life of Aef van Bolgerien. The book had previously received some attention due to the colophon and the decoration found in it, both of which offer a chance for a particularly detailed dating and localisation of the manuscript, but further studies into the manuscript as a whole had not been undertaken. This project changed that in four steps.

The first chapter examined context in which Books of Hours were produced and used, both in the wider late Middle Ages and in the Low Countries specifically. The fact that the Book of Hours is the most surviving book type of the Middle Ages speaks to its importance in the religious practices of the time. In the strongly religious society of the late Middle Ages, it is not surprising for an increase in domestic reading to go hand in hand with a rise of popularity in prayer books for the laity. In the Low Countries, another development occurs, the foundation of the *Devotio Moderna*. Members of this religious movement aspired to practice their devotion in the style of the Apostles and turned to books as an important medium. A result of these two developments is the Middle Dutch translation the Hours by Geert Grote, the founder of the *Devotio Moderna*. This translation, the only vernacular adaption to gain significant popularity, offered speakers of Middle Dutch a unique experience of reading the Hours and praying in the language most of them were most familiar with, as opposed to the Latin Books of Hours that still dominated in other countries.

The second chapter explored paratextual elements such as the materiality of the book, previous ownership and decoration. As before mentioned, BPL 2747 is in the rather unique position to contain a colophon that states not only the first owner and the scribe by name and location, but also the scribes age and an indication of the length of time it took for the manuscript to be copied. This is supplemented by the illuminations, of which several are both signed and dated. The journey of the manuscript continues with the ownership inscriptions on the flyleaves. Particularly interesting is the note on the flyleaves preserved with the older binding, which had not been mentioned in previous

bibliographical entries and which take the life of the manuscript into the nineteenth century and across the border from the Low Countries to Germany.

The third chapter concerned the textual contents of the manuscript, in particular the prayers that included separately from the Hours. Due to their more individual nature, they play a significant role in the identity of BPL 2747. The transcriptions of these prayers offer a searchable alternative to the physical book and the digitisation. The fourth chapter explored the prayers in more detail, touching on the dissemination of the prayers, as well as what they might reveal about the first owner.

Then, what can be concluded about Aef van Bolgerien? Aef was a lay woman living in Beverwijk, but possibly originally from Vianen. She was wealthy, as she was able to afford a manuscript with good quality materials and with illuminations, yet her wealth had limits as she took on debts in 1499, which may or may not have been related to the production of the manuscript. Central to Aef's devotion were two patron saints, St. Jacob and St. Agatha, who are both featured in the prayers as well as in the illuminations, and one of which, St. Jacob, she visited on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Numerous texts point to an interest in mysticism, an interest which stands out as, as seen in Chapter 1, the writing of texts about mystic experiences had been banned in the Modern Devotion since 1455, nearly half a century before the production of BPL 2747. During prayer, devotional objects were used, namely the statue Mary in the sun and a representation of the Arma Christi, adding another dimension to the act of prayer.

More broadly, BPL 2747 can be placed in the context of lay religious reading in the late Middle Ages and within the *Devotio Moderna* specifically. The manuscript exemplifies the increase in lay participation in religious practice for the simple reason that it is a religious text made available to a layperson for use in a domestic setting. Within the *Devotio Moderna* reform movement, which aimed at a personal and 'pure' devotion, the Middle Dutch Book of Hours, with its high levels of customisation and as a direct way of accessing devotional texts in the vernacular, ties in well. BPL 2747 is an example of how, in her own language, a lay woman could use texts to reflect on her relationship with God, and how her devotion could be customised to her own interests through the variety of prayers she had at her disposal.

Further research could extend on this study by including archival research that was not possible within the scope of this project. For example, research in the archives of Haarlem (which includes documents on Beverwijk) and Cologne could shed new light on the contributors to and previous owners of the manuscript by linking their names to more detailed personal histories. Furthermore, spectral imaging techniques could be used in an attempt to make the inscription on fol. 2r legible once again, and also for recovering the original coat of arms on fol. 113v. In addition to the archival research, on site examination of a larger corpus of Books of Hours could offer a more complete overview of the dissemination of the prayers and thus offer more options for comparison between manuscripts.

Despite the limitations in scope, this thesis has been the first step to a more complete understanding of Leiden, BPL 2747 in particular, and a case study to illustrate the possible customisations of Middle Dutch Books of Hours in general. In the future, it may, in combination with similar studies on other Books of Hours, be of use in creating a better understanding of devotion and textuality in the medieval Low Countries.

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