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Hanseatic merchant Heinrijc Hoep (†1466) and his precious book of sermons.

New perspectives on the provenance, production, and use of Berlin,
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SBB-PK),
Ms. germ. fol. 1612 (Nuttelijc Boec),
based on its owner's mark, language, and illuminations

by Cora Zwart

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Hanseatic merchant Heinrijc Hoep (†1466) and his precious book of sermons.

New perspectives on the provenance, production, and use of Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SBB-PK), Ms. germ. fol. 1612 (Nuttelijc Boec), based on its owner's mark, language, and illuminations

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Abstract: Die Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin, ehemalige Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Ost-Berlin, besitzt seit dem Jahr 1967 die reich illuminierte, aber bislang eher unbekannte Handschrift eines Predigtbuches (Berlin, SBB-PK, Ms. germ. fol. 1612). Vereinzelt anfängliche kunsthistorische und linguistische Untersuchungen des Manuskripts in den 1980er Jahren haben einige spezifische Eigenschaften des Bandes herausgearbeitet, jedoch nicht den Erstbesitzer oder sein ursprüngliches gesellschaftliches Umfeld ermitteln können. Mutmaßlich soll es sich um einen Einwohner von Utrecht, eine Person, die mit den Brüdern der *Devotio Moderna* in Verbindung stand oder um eine Person aus den nordöstlichen Niederlanden gehandelt haben.

Dieser Beitrag nimmt erstmals die drei distinktiven Eigenschaften des Manuskripts gemeinsam in den Blick: den Besitzvermerk, die Buchmalereien und die spezifische Sprachvariante. Dadurch gelang es, die ersten Besitzer des Bandes zu identifizieren und ihn überraschenderweise im Umfeld von Hansekaufleuten in den südlichen Niederlanden im 15. Jahrhundert zu situieren.

Introduction

In 1967, the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin* became the owner of a relatively unknown but remarkable, precious, folio-sized religious manuscript book, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SBB-PK), Ms.

germ. fol. 1612.¹ According to the medieval owner's mark, an unidentified *laken bereyder* (cloth maker) bought it in the year 1466 from the heirs of a man named Heinriyc Hoep. Further details about the provenance of the book are largely missing.² The language of the text is Middle Dutch or Middle Low German; it has been dated c.1430–1440 and contains *epistelen en evangelien met de glosa*, sermons or lessons on the Epistles and Gospels following the ecclesiastical year, preceded by prayers and followed by a few biblical episodes.³ Today, sermon books of this type are called *Een nuttelijc boec den kerstenen menschen*, a useful book for Christian people.

The Berlin manuscript stands out for several reasons. First of all, in contrast to all other known copies containing the *Nuttelijc boec*, it is extensively illuminated.⁴ It has two historiated initials, sixty-two pen-drawn column miniatures with marginal floral boundaries, and rich penwork, all apparently made by Utrecht artisans.⁵ Research on it, therefore, has primarily been art historical, focused on these illuminations and their makers. Next to the illuminations, however, the unusual language of the Berlin manuscript is striking. Some (mainly Dutch) scholars believe this is a dialect of Middle Low German origin, but other (mainly German) scholars are convinced this language is a variety of Middle Dutch.⁶ A third noteworthy element is the partly defective contemporary owner's mark just referred to, written at f.1r.

¹ Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SBB-PK), Ms. germ. fol. 1612 (Manuscripta Germanica in folio), further abbreviated as Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, in accordance with the common abbreviations at the website *Handschriftencensus. Eine Bestandsaufnahme der handschriftlichen Überlieferung deutschsprachiger Texte des Mittelalters*, <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/> (21-09-2018), which, however, does not contain this manuscript. Vellum.

² Entirely known provenance: in 1967 the *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek* acquired the manuscript from the *Zentralantiquariat Leipzig*, the biggest antiquarian bookshop of the DDR. Though in 1992, after the *Wende*, the state libraries of eastern and western Berlin were already institutionally unified, their manuscripts were only physically united in 1997, in the building at Potsdamer Straße 33. The relocation of the manuscript department to the *Haus Unter den Linden* is expected shortly, <http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/die-staatsbibliothek/geschichte/> (21-09-2018); Becker 2000, pp.15–16. For current documentation regarding the manuscript, see *Manuscripta Mediaevalia*, <http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/#|5> (21-09-2018).

³ The language will be discussed below. On the classification of Middle Dutch sermon books, see Zielemans 1978; Mertens 2013. On the name *Nuttelijc boec*, see Warnar 1988–1989. For art historical dating, see Korteweg 1989. On the content of the *Nuttelijc Boec*, see Ermens 2010.

⁴ In 15th-c. manuscripts, there are fifteen cycles of the whole year, three fragments of such cycles, three winter cycles, one summer cycle, eight separate sermons or a combination of some sermons, and one Passion story. In print, there are three cycles of the whole year, dating from 1482, 1489, and 1501. Ermens 2010, p. 266–268.

⁵ Korteweg 1989, p. 137–138.

⁶ For Middle Dutch, see Zielemans 1978, p. 60 n. 41; Lülffing 1981, p. 190; Winter 1986, p. 74; Löttsch 1988; Spreu 1990. For Middle Low German, see Korteweg 1989, p. 138.

Up until now, this beautiful manuscript has only received limited attention, and even that has been confined to separate art historical and linguistic inquiries.⁷ Of course, during the years 1967–c.1992, when it was kept in Leipzig and East Berlin, possibilities for Western research were scarce; but German research on Middle Dutch manuscripts at the Humboldt University in East Berlin was also difficult in this period.⁸ After the *Wende*, however, the manuscript still failed to attract much attention. This probably was due to the lack of popularity of the genre: a book of sermons. Not helpful either was the fact that the identity of the first owners remained unknown. The heavily damaged blind-stamped binding, possibly contemporary, has never been studied.

Today, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 is one of the principal sources in a sociohistorical project about the function of religion as a connecting force in 15th-century cities in the Low Countries.⁹ To counterbalance and add to the image of these cities as merely collections of groups, the project focuses on networks of individual inhabitants of Utrecht, Bruges and Leiden, which were important cities at the time; networks that they forged by their personal and religiously motivated actions. These actions are still discoverable through all kinds of preserved sources and archival documents, many of which these cities still keep. Examples of these are religious books (usually in the vernacular), altar pieces, liturgical objects, stained-glass windows, testaments, charitable donations, and documents regarding any of these. These 'religious sources' show the dynamics of the ties between individual citizens and religious and non-religious individuals, groups, and institutions.

The project sets out from a user's perspective and questions in what way the religious agency of an urban inhabitant, a lay person, reflected and influenced the urban network. A 'lay person' is specifically understood here as a male or female person living a (family) life at home, someone not living in a convent or a religious house, and not belonging to the professed or the clergy. To get as close as possible to the religious thinking and actions of such a person, his or her religious books form the point of entry: books that can be studied

⁷ For the most recent art historical publication including some images, see Korteweg 1989, figs. 65–67, pp. 136, 138 and pl. 40, p. 119; For a recent art historical dissertation about the ateliers of the Zweder van Culemborg illuminators, which only mentions Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, see Bloem 2015.

⁸ Holzhey 2010, 86–91. One picture of what is called here a Middle Dutch *Plenarium*, meaning Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.83r, is shown in Lülfiing 1981, p. 190. The manuscript is also briefly mentioned in a volume about the treasures of the *DeutscheStaatsbibliothek*, see Teitge 1986, p. 54, together with a picture of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, ff.144v–145r, at pl. 21, p. 74, Winter 1986.

⁹ Cora W. Zwart, University of Groningen, PhD-project *Weaving the Religious Civic Web* (working title).

today, that were personally ordered, used, and sometimes even annotated.¹⁰ Using an interdisciplinary approach, this is then followed by research into as many other ‘religious sources’ connected with these persons as possible.

In this essay about Staatsbibl., mfg 1612 and its earliest owners, the individual research perspective and the interdisciplinary approach form the starting points as well, integrating history, art history, book history, and linguistic research. The central question concerns the involvement of lay people in the making of their religious books, and Staatsbibl., mfg 1612 proves to be a remarkable example of how things were done. Though many religious books meant for lay people have been made, read, and preserved, there is meagre knowledge about this personal aspect. This essay aims to show that lay people could be closely involved in the production of religious manuscript books, while it also reveals how and where books like Staatsbibl., mfg 1612 could be transmitted. The owner’s mark, the language, and the illuminations are the crucial focal points, and closely studied in conjunction.

First a few observations will be made about lay religious reading and book production in the 15th century in the Low Countries. A short introduction to the manuscript, the text, and the research *status quaestionis* follows. Next, the three focal points are discussed. The identities of the first owners of the manuscript are revealed, and it is shown how this discovery led to new insights about the making of the book. Several connections between the first owner and people and institutions in his personal network that were somehow involved with the book are detected as well. Some spatial nodes of shared religious knowledge and literature within more than one city are identified this way.

Late medieval lay religious book use, and book production: a few remarks

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the production of religious books in the vernacular in the Low Countries boomed. Important causes for this phenomenon were the high levels of literacy and the literacy rate among the urban population, especially in the vernacular language, and its increasing wealth based on flourishing trade and high-quality craftsmanship. All kinds of luxury products, like books, carpets, and glass and copper objects, were made, sold, and collected for personal use.¹¹ Starting in the early 14th century, another development occurred as well. Lay people occupied themselves more and more with devotional reading in their intensifying pursuit of a true and Christian life. They increasingly took on

¹⁰ Books have been selected based on data in the *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta and Impressa* (BNM-I), <https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/> (21-09-2017).

¹¹ Smeyers 1999, p. 177–178; Buringh 2009.

practices and aspirations associated with the religious.¹² The combination of these two developments is visible in the appearance of many precious Books of Hours and prayer books. In contrast to the rest of Western Europe, in the Low Countries these were usually in the vernacular, or in a combination of the vernacular and Latin.¹³ For the less well-off less precious Books of Hours and prayer books were produced in great quantities as well: for domestic use, as ‘minor divine office’ prayer books, and as primers for children.

Next to these books, still other religious books in the vernacular meant for lay use at home appeared, in manuscript and in early print, such as collections of saints’ lives, religious treatises, and catechetical teachings. Texts devoted to the Decalogue, and sermon books containing Epistle and Gospel lessons became very popular.¹⁴ Historical Bibles and vernacular translations of (parts of) the Bible itself were used at home too, and read together.¹⁵

Because of these practices, the production of religious manuscript books quickly professionalized in the 14th and 15th centuries, particularly in the cities of Utrecht and Bruges. Coordinators, in Bruges called *liberarissen*, often played a significant role in the book production and trade.¹⁶ They provided writing materials, sold parts of books, or even complete books that increasingly were available off the shelf.¹⁷ They also organized the making of tailor-made books for clients who wanted to spend more money. Coordinators in Bruges, especially, were accustomed to a diverse and wealthy clientele. They often negotiated on their behalf with illuminators – illegally, as clients were obliged to do that themselves. *Liberarissen*, however, saw commercial advantage in trading illuminations made by famous Utrecht artisans. They would buy great quantities of full-page miniatures in Utrecht, either to insert in new books or to sell right away, a practice the city of Bruges tried to call a halt to.¹⁸ Though many Books of Hours and prayer books were produced in Europe, the precious Books of Hours and prayer books made in Bruges were

¹² van Engen 2008, p. 269; For introductions on lay religious reading in the late medieval Low Countries and in Europe, see e.g. Corbellini 2013a, especially Corbellini 2013b; Corbellini 2015, especially Folkerts 2015. Rudy 2016 discusses the influence of medieval readers on the making of Books of Hours, and their adaptation of these books, even over more than one generation in *Piety in Pieces. How Medieval Readers Customized their Manuscripts*.

¹³ Marrow 1989, p. 9.

¹⁴ Bigus 2017; Folkerts 2013, p. 234–237.

¹⁵ Gow 2005, p. 176–180, 190–191; Folkerts 2011; Folkerts 2013, p. 221–222; Duijn 2017, p. 134–135.

¹⁶ About late medieval book production, see Rudy 2016, p. 8, 15–57. On book production in Bruges and the *liberaris*, see Smeyers 1993, p. 80–120; van Bergen 2004, p. 12.

¹⁷ E.g. (modules for) books of hours and prayer books, see Rudy 2016, p. 15–57.

¹⁸ According to a charter forbidding these actions dated 1427. Smeyers 1993, p. 92–94.

famous. Adapted to personal tastes and needs, or adaptable later, they spread all over the continent and England.¹⁹

Staatsbibl., mgf 1612: context, content, research *status quaestionis*

Many 15th-century sermon books in the vernacular made in the Low Countries have survived. In 1978, G.C. Zieleman published a classification of the various text-groups of these sermon books that placed Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 in the ‘Copenhagen text-group’.²⁰ As one of the most complete copies, and probably the oldest one, Copenhagen, KB Thott 70 fol. (c.1400) was designated as the ‘representative copy’.²¹ Almost thirty manuscripts and three early prints still contain the text in whole or in part, most of them folio-sized.²² Manuscript copies mainly originate from the regions of Holland, Utrecht, Guelders, Flanders, and Brabant. Early printed copies were made in Cologne, Zwolle, and Den Hem (in the Utrecht region). Most copies are quite sober, all layouts differ, and the Berlin copy is by far the most extensively decorated.

G. Warnar coined the title *Een nuttelijc boec den kerstenen menschen* for the text group.²³ This refers to the heading *Een nuttelijc boec den kerstene* in the Copenhagen manuscript, words some other copies use as well, though adding the word *menschen* (people). Initially, only copies that included ‘front matter’ were called *Nuttelijc boec*. This front matter consists of the *Pater Noster*, Hail Mary, the Creed, confessions of sins, and the common confession.²⁴ Now, sermon books of this text group both with and without front matter are labelled *Nuttelijc boec*.²⁵

It is generally accepted that the text of the *Nuttelijc boec* originated at the end of the 14th century in the county of Holland, but the author and the primarily intended public are still subjects of discussion. Most scholars believe the compiler of the *Nuttelijc boec* is William the Confessor (†c.1415), Carmelite confessor of Count of Holland Duke Albrecht of Bavaria (1336–1404) and his wife Margaretha of Cleves, and probably prior of the Carmelites of Haarlem as well. Towards the end of his life he lived in Delft, and in Malines with the

¹⁹ Smeyers 1993, p. 89–90; van Bergen 2004, p. 13; Rogers 2002, p. 1170.

²⁰ Zieleman 1978; Mertens 2013. About the name *Nuttelijc boec*, see above note 2.

²¹ No edition exists. Zieleman 1978, p. 50.

²² Specifics in note 3 above. Mertens 2013, p. 45.

²³ Warnar 1988–1989.

²⁴ Ermens 2010, p. 66; ‘front matter’, so called by Zieleman 1978, p. 65.

²⁵ Ermens 2010.

Carmelites.²⁶ It is believed the illuminations of the Copenhagen manuscript also indicate a primary connection with this court, because they were made by the same Utrecht illuminator who decorated the *Tafel van den kersten ghelove*, which was written by William's successor at the court Dirck van Delf, and dedicated to Albrecht.²⁷

The contents of the *Nuttelijc boec* consist of sixty-one sermons, three treatises and a Passion story, which, as mentioned above, is sometimes preceded by 'front matter'. Though comparative studies are still lacking, it is clear that manuscripts containing this *Nuttelijc boec* can often be classified as personal miscellanies.²⁸ In addition to the choice for the front matter, commissioners picked various religious texts to include at the back of their books, based on the space left in the final quires, their personal tastes, the availability of those texts, and their financial means.²⁹ In Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, the sermons are preceded by the aforementioned front matter, and followed by short biblical episodes.³⁰

Dutch research into the *Nuttelijc boec* has focused on the composer of the text, the primary (presumably) noble intended readers, and the content of the sermons. Its source is the Copenhagen manuscript. The recent identification of several 15th-century owners of other copies of the *Nuttelijc boec* has shown, however, that some were ordered and used by wealthy citizens. These books functioned in their households as a manual of faith, and were meant for reading and studying there.³¹

People who wanted to order the *Nuttelijc boec* first needed a copy for duplication. Here, next to contacts with other lay owners, a link with the

²⁶ Or 'Willem de Biechtvader', Willem van Rotterdam, Willem van 's-Gravesande, Willem van der Sande. For discussions of 'intended readers', 'first commissioner', and 'author', see van Anrooij 1995; Warnar 1988–1989, p. 302; van Oostrom 1987; Sherwood-Smith 2009; Ermens 2010, p. 273, 280.

²⁷ *Tafel van den kersten ghelove*: 'Register of Christian faith', MS. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 171; van Oostrom 1987.

²⁸ Based on a brief comparison of the endings of Copenhagen, KB Thott 70 fol., The Hague, KB 128 D 9, Groningen, UB 218, and Staatsbibl., mgf 1612.

²⁹ BNM-I, '*Een nuttelijc boec den kerstenen menschen*'.

³⁰ Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, content: f. 1r, owner's mark; ff. 1v–2v, lined pages, no text; ff. 3r–298v, *Een Nuttelijc Boec den Kerstenen Menschen*; ff. 299–300v, sermon for All Saints' Day (November 1, text from the Apocalypse, about the 144,000 chosen ones); ff. 300r–307r, sermon on the Beatitudes (usually read on All Saints' Day as well); ff. 307r–309v, sermon about the parable of the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish (about being prepared for the coming of the Lord, an eschatological theme, usually read in the week starting on the 6th of November); ff. 309v–325v, Bible lessons and sermons to be read at the feast of the Annunciation (25th of March).

³¹ Warnar 1993, p. 36–37; Sherwood-Smith 2009, p. 94; Ermens 2010; Zwart 2015.

Carmelites should be considered. Based on data of preserved copies present in the *BNM-I*, contacts regarding this sermon book most likely took place in the rather restricted area around Brielle, Antwerp, Utrecht, Nijmegen, and Wesel (Nether Rhine).³² With the exception of Wesel, these towns are not far from the places where William the Confessor lived and died. Furthermore, in the copy of the sermon book (1469) ordered by the Utrecht mayor Dirck Borre van Amerongen, a sermon of Goswinus Hex, Carmelite doctor and suffragan bishop of Utrecht (installed in that same year, 1469), follows the *Nuttelijc boec*.³³

Research into Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 mainly dates from the 1980s. As was practice then, this was conducted from strictly separate disciplinary perspectives. G. Löttsch and A. Spreu both discussed the language of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612.³⁴ Löttsch concluded in her thesis that the manuscript was written in the north-eastern part of the Low Countries, but thought that much of the vocabulary was still very unusual for that region. Spreu agreed on the deviating words, but was convinced of an environment of origin in the Rhine region, within the setting of the Brethren of the Modern Devotion. Considering the dissemination of other preserved copies of the *Nuttelijc boec*, not known to Löttsch, a north-eastern provenance is questionable. The remarks of Löttsch and Spreu about the deviating words, however, are of great importance.

In contrast to the linguists, art historians believed that the first owner and commissioner must have been an Utrecht citizen named Heinrije Hoep, the name mentioned in the contemporary owner's mark. They based this on the fact that the illuminations were made by Utrecht artisans, and saw confirmation of this view in the owner's mark mentioning the *langenstrate*, the long new street, as there is a street by that name in Utrecht.³⁵ This issue will be discussed below. Unfortunately, no information on Hoep or the cloth maker was ever found. The language was not discussed by the art historians; it only seemed 'Germanish' to them.³⁶

Considering these opposing views, it is obvious that separate art historical and linguistic approaches in this case do not suffice. Combining results from these approaches, however, and studying them again, now from an individual perspective while focusing on the owner's mark, language, and illuminations of the book, offers new possibilities for progress.

³² BNM-I, 'Een nuttelijc boec den kerstenen menschen'.

³³ Zwart 2015, pp. 107, 116 n.1.

³⁴ Löttsch 1988; Spreu 1990.

³⁵ E.g. Korteweg 1989, and Bloem 2015, see note 6 above.

³⁶ Korteweg 1989, p. 138.

A closer look at the owner's mark

Preceded by an 'item'-mark, the text says (fig. 1): *Int Jair dusent vierhondert sessensesstich ende ien Inne Junio xxx dagen Soe hebbic (...) laken bereyder wonende Inde langenustrate Desen boeck gekocht ende wail betaelt den Erfgenamen van heinrijc hoep* (Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.1r), 'In the year thousand four hundred and sixty-six and in (?) in June thirty days, I (...), cloth maker living in the long new street, bought this book from the heirs of Heinrijc Hoep and paid for it as agreed'.³⁷

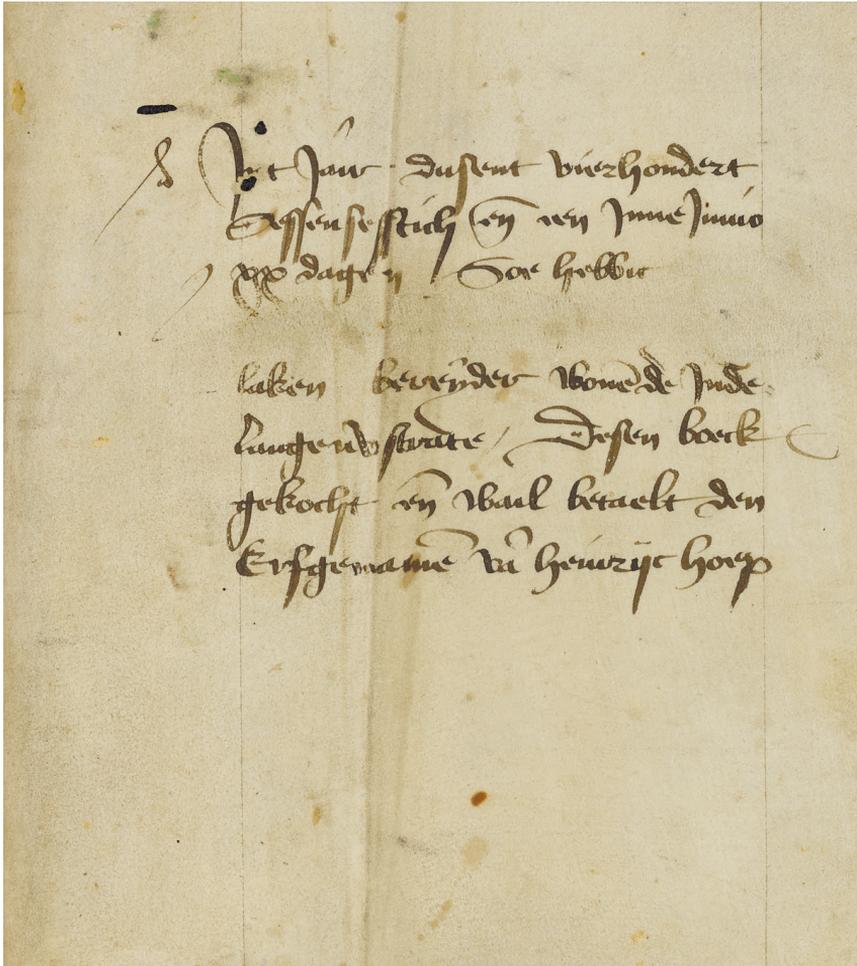


Fig. 1: Owner's mark, Berlin, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.1r (Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

³⁷ F. 1r., my translation (CZ); *ien*, 'in' (?) is unclear; (...) the name has been erased.

Close observation of this owner's mark reveals:

- The 'item'-mark indicates administrative processing of some kind.
- The handwriting is contemporary with the date.
- The date is 30 June 1466; Heinrijc Hoep must have died some time before.
- The word *ien* is unclear. Perhaps the writer made a mistake, as the word *Inne* also appears. This does not seem to influence the meaning of the text as a whole.
- The name of the *laken bereyder* has been erased at some point, and cannot be read. The term *laken bereyder* is not very common for Utrecht in this period. Usually these people were referred to in Utrecht as *lakenmaker* or *droogscheerder*, but not many of them lived there until about a hundred years later; then they were called *lakenbereider* as well. In the 1460s, *laken bereyder* or *laken gereyder* was primarily a southern Middle Dutch term. Many, often wealthy, *laken bereyders* were living in Antwerp. Trade in general was booming in this period in the Southern Low Countries, though the Hanseatic trade was increasingly shifting from Bruges to Antwerp.³⁸
- The unknown buyer says he lives in the *langenstrate*, the 'Long New Street'. The *Langhe Nye Straet* can be found in Utrecht, but this was not the case in the 15th century. It only appeared after the demolition of St. Pauls Abbey in c.1619–1622, and the construction of the Short New Street at its previous location as an extension of the existent New Street. The original New Street was only from then on called the Long New Street. There is one Long New Street that has thus far been identified in the Low Countries in the 1460s, and that one is in Antwerp. This Long New Street already existed in the 14th century, and its name used to be written just like the one in this owner's mark: *langenstrate*. It was a prominent street that housed many merchants and cloth makers. Town houses of the wealthy and important hotels stood there from the very beginning, as well as several convents and churches.³⁹

³⁸ Kypka 2016; this transition is still subject to debate. For further introduction to the Hanse, the terminology, the literature, and discussions about central questions such as the nature of this transition, see e.g. Stabel 2000; Paravicini 1992–2011; Wubs-Mrozewicz 2013; Hammel-Kiesow 2016; Blockmans 2017; for older literature about Antwerp and the Hanseatic trade, see Prims 1934, 131–142; Prims 1937, 98–145.

³⁹ The Hof van Immerseel (no. 31), the hotels du Bois (no's. 20–24) and du Bois de Vroylande (no. 94), Our lady of Loretto, Saint-Barbara and Saint-Nicholas. Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed 2016: *Lange Nieuwstraat*. In: *Inventaris Onroerend Erfgoed*, <https://id.erfgoed.net/erfgoedobjecten/112919> (21-09-2016).

- The mark says: *wail betaelt*. The words *wail betaelt* or *wale/wael/wel betaelt* are mainly found in a formal setting, often charters, indicating an agreed payment of a debt.⁴⁰
- Heinrijc Hoep was the previous owner and, as will be shown below, the first owner and commissioner of the book. His family name could not be found in the Utrecht Archives, despite their extensive sources from this period. Research into contemporary persons named Heinrijc Hoep outside of Utrecht led solely to a Hanseatic merchant and prominent member of the Lübeck-part (*Drittel*) of the German Hanse in Bruges. He lived there at least between c.1409 and 1425.⁴¹ In this period business connections between Bruges and Antwerp were close.
- The unknown *laken bereyder* mentions the *Erfgenamen*, the heirs of Heinrijc Hoep. There were clearly negotiations between him and these heirs. He knew at least one of them well enough to have knowledge of this book, or perhaps he knew Heinrijc Hoep himself. Usually, religious books were kept in the family. The heirs might have sold this book because they needed the money, or because they were not interested in it.
- Thus far, it can be concluded from the owner's mark that Heinrijc Hoep and the yet unknown *laken bereyder* could not have been citizens of Utrecht. They most likely lived in Bruges and Antwerp.

In April 2017 the manuscript was consulted in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, on which occasion ultraviolet light revealed the erased text (fig. 2): *Jan Clap diemen hiet Jan luycx, 'Jan Clap also called Jan Luycx'*.⁴² Hereafter, his name was found in the aldermen's register of Antwerp (fig. 3). This will be discussed below. So the complete text of the owner's mark turns out to be: *Int Jair dusent vierhondert sessensesstich ende ien Inne Junio xxx dagen Soe hebbic Jan Clap diemen hiet Jan luycx laken bereyder wonende Inde langenustrate Desen boeck gekocht ende wail betaelt den Erfgenamen van heinrijc hoep*.⁴³ In the lower margins of folios 15v and 151r, traces of (probably) contemporary erased pencil notes were also found, which unfortunately were not legible. They are too faint, but future research might uncover their content as well. Hopefully they will eventually reveal more details of the personal book use of the first owner(s).

⁴⁰ E.g. van Mieris 1755, pp. 468, 472, 474; Peeters 1992, p. 133.

⁴¹ According to the Veckinchusen documents, see below.

⁴² With much gratitude to Dr. Eef Overgaauw, Head of the Manuscript Department of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴³ About the persons involved, see below.

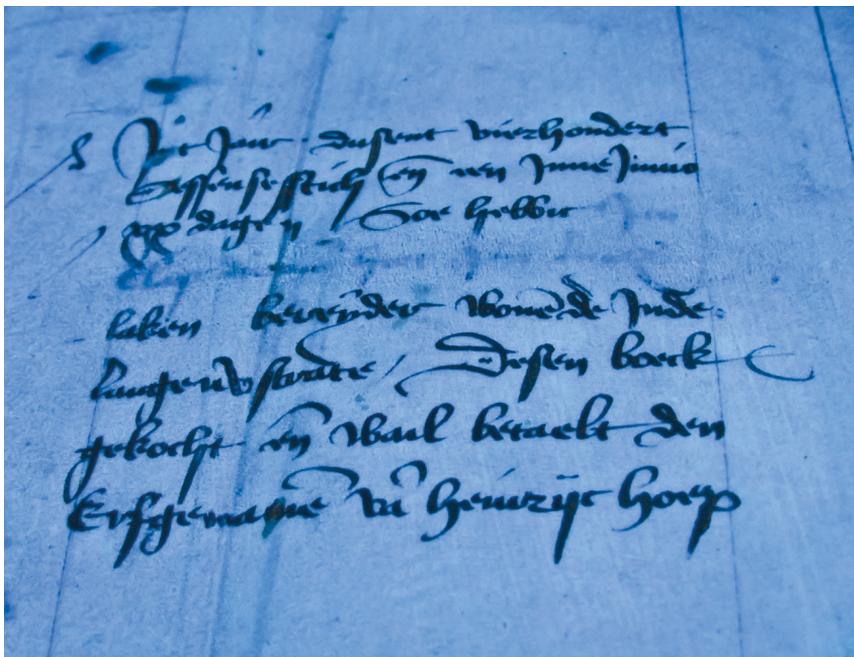


Fig. 2: Owner's mark in UV-light, Berlin, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.1r (Photo: Peter Flach, Cora Zwart).

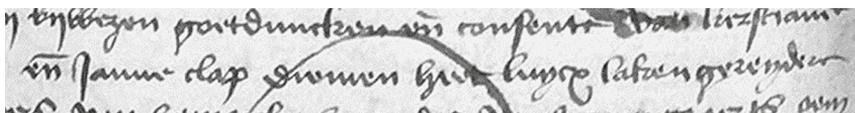


Fig. 3: “Janne clap diemen hiet luyce lakengereyder”, detail of fig.11, Archive of Antwerp (SAA), SR#70, 041°v, Schepenregister 30 June 1466 (Photo: SAA).

The language of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612

The preserved copies of the *Nuttelijc boec* are all in Middle Dutch, though copied in different language varieties.⁴⁴ It has not yet been established in what vernacular language or variety Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 is written. As mentioned above, some scholars consider it a variety of Middle Dutch, others believe it is a variety of Middle Low German, but in both cases, words remain that do not seem to ‘fit’.

From a user's perspective, however, the language of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 completely makes sense. To understand this, it is important to let go of strict

⁴⁴ Briefly comparing Copenhagen, KB Thott 70 fol., Copenhagen, KB Thott 71 fol. (winter part), The Hague, KB 128 D 9, Groningen, UB 218, Berlin, SBB-PK, Ms. germ. quart. 1089 (winter part), Staatsbibl., mgf 1612.

geographical linguistic perspectives, and pay attention to the existence of contact languages: languages used by people who travelled a lot or who lived abroad, such as Hanseatic merchants in Bruges and Antwerp.⁴⁵ As H.J. Leloux already discussed in his thesis (1971) about the correspondence language of Hanseatic merchants in Bruges, the situation of close contact of languages affected the common user language heavily.⁴⁶ For the last two decades, mixed languages and contact languages have been subjects of growing interest in the field of linguistic research: “(...) they are new languages that usually emerged within one or two generations, and they contain major structural components that can be traced back to more than one single ancestor language.”⁴⁷ Hanseatic contact languages in the Kontors of Bergen and Novgorod have already been the subject of research. The Hanseatic language in Bruges, Antwerp, or elsewhere in the Low Countries, has not gotten much attention yet, apart from Leloux’s publications in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁸ It is very plausible that Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 is written in a Hanseatic contact language. Spreu already pointed to this: “Die Handschrift repräsentiert einen Schriftsprachentypus, der ein mischsprachliches Übergangsgebiet als Grundlage hat; in ihm sind Elemente aus dem Westen, aus dem Süden und vor allem aus dem Osten vertreten”, with the west being Holland, south being Brabant and Flanders, and east being Groningen, Drente, and Limburg, where an eastern variety of Middle Dutch was used, which was closely connected with the German language.⁴⁹

To assess the language of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 from the perspective of its commissioner and first user, knowledge of this person’s place in society is important.⁵⁰ Assuming for now that Heinrijc Hoep is this commissioner and first owner, it is known that he lived amidst the citizens of Bruges, surrounded by people speaking a language that was foreign, but very familiar.⁵¹ He also belonged to the closely connected but extended group of Hanseatic merchants that lived and worked within the cities of Flanders and Brabant, and their

⁴⁵ Hanseatic merchants often lived in the midst of the local population in the cities of Brabant and Flanders and are well known as house owners. Rößner 2001, pp. 109–118, 120.

⁴⁶ Leloux 1971; Leloux 1987; Rößner 2001, p. 133. For recent linguistic research about contact languages and mixed languages, see Matras 2013.

⁴⁷ Bakker 2013, p. 1–2.

⁴⁸ Nesse 2017. The existence of this mixed language in the Low Countries (in poetry) in c. 1400 due to the presence of German merchants is briefly mentioned in Willaert 1992, p. 17.

⁴⁹ Spreu 1990, p. 427–428.

⁵⁰ The study of historical sociolinguistics focuses on language variation and change, but looks for the explanation of these phenomena outside the linguistic system, in the speaker and his place in society. Nesse 2017, p. 87.

⁵¹ Greve 2011, 65–106. The Hanse never had a privileged territory in Flanders, in contrast to London, Bergen, and Novgorod. Stabel 2018, p. 114.

German ‘hometowns’. Though living abroad, sometimes for life, and even being married to local women, Hanseatic merchants usually kept their original citizenship, and often visited their towns of origin on business.

One may assume that the commissioner of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 would prefer a familiar language for the copy of the *Nuttelijc boec* he intended to use himself. It would not have been difficult to find a copyist to do the job. The well-organized administration of the Hanseatic merchants in Bruges employed full-time scribes. As they often were highly educated clerics, one of them would be able to copy a huge religious text like this, even from the Middle Dutch into the mixed language.⁵² A *liberaris* most likely took care of the making of the book. This person definitely selected a professional copyist for copying Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, as can be seen in the mastery of several types of writing, a *littera textualis*, a *littera hybrid*, and a *cursiva*. Furthermore, at the start of the manuscript, the copyist wrote a line that copyists often included at the start of a long or difficult task: *Assit ad inceptu[m] sancta maria meum* (f.3r), ‘saint Mary be with my beginning’, meaning at the start of the work of copying. He put *custodes* or catchwords at each final verso page of a quire, small black texts at the very inner and outer edges of the pages where rubrics were to be inserted later on, and the words ‘*Deo gratias*’ (f.325v) in black and in red ink at the end of the manuscript. As a professional copyist, he does not ask the reader to pray for him or her, in contrast to many religious copyists living in convents.

The findings of Spreu and Löttsch concerning the multiple deviations from the expected language strongly indicate a contact language or mixed language. Fresh linguistic research into Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 and other ‘Germanish’ documents and manuscripts from the Low Countries, however, would be most welcome.⁵³ This might reveal many more manuscripts and documents originating from a still unrecognized Hanseatic social environment.

The illuminations of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612

In medieval manuscripts the text is always written continuously, without blank lines, indentation, or bold headings.⁵⁴ In order to be able to find your way as a

⁵² Rößner 2001, p. 132–134; Graßmann 2009b, p. 115; Callewier 2014, p. 349–350.

⁵³ For instance, Copenhagen KB, Ms. GkS 79, *De Spiegel der minschliken zalicheid*, c.1420, a heavily illuminated vernacular copy of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Bruges, Goudranken-workshop), of which the language has also not been determined with certainty (Middle Low German or Middle Dutch). A Hanseatic merchant was probably the commissioner of this book, Kramer 2013, pp. 45–47, 242–423.

⁵⁴ About the structuring aspects of penwork and painted decorations, see Gerritsen 2009, p. 18.

reader, initials, rubrics, paragraph signs, and other reading signs are added.⁵⁵ The size of the initials depends on the hierarchy of the text that follows: a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter, or a part of a book. In this hierarchy, painted decorations play an important role as well, from the simple initial painted in blue and red, to the flowery borders, and on up to the full-page miniatures. The study of penwork initials and penwork in manuscripts of the Northern Low Countries only started in the 1970s. A. S. Korteweg, G. Gerritsen-Geywitz, and others developed a systematic overview of the border decorations, initials, and penwork. This showed their importance for reading uses, as well as what information they conveyed for dating and locating a manuscript.⁵⁶ Based on the dating of the decorations and illuminations following their views, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 most likely was finished in *c.*1425–1430.

The decorations and illuminations of this manuscript can be divided into five groups. The first one consists of only two painted historiated initials, made by an illuminator belonging to the ‘Zwolle-masters’, a subgroup of illuminators belonging to the ‘Zweder van Culemborg-masters’.⁵⁷ Illuminations made by these masters date between 1415 and 1440 (fig. 4, fig. 5).

The second group is much bigger. It consists of sixty-two column miniatures, drawings in grisaille and gold, of which three are partly hand colored as well. They appear consistently between the Gospel lesson and the sermon, and always refer to the lesson. These miniatures are made by an artist now called the ‘Alexander Master (draughtsman)’. Abundantly and in the same style, this artist also decorated large parts of the two-volume History Bible (dating *c.*1430) that is kept in The Hague: The Hague, KB, 78 D 38 I and The Hague, KB, 78 D 38 II.⁵⁸ The eponym ‘Alexander Master (draughtsman)’ refers to the phenomenal miniatures of his hand in the story part about Alexander the Great in this History Bible; ‘draughtsman’ has been added to discern him from the ‘Alexander Master (painter)’ (fig. 6, fig. 7).⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Korteweg 1992b, p. 11.

⁵⁶ Korteweg 1992a; Gerritsen 2009.

⁵⁷ On Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, see Bloem 2015, pp. 68, 73–75, 315–320.

⁵⁸ Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts, Royal Library (KB), The Hague: <http://manuscripts.kb.nl/>, <http://manuscripts.kb.nl/show/manuscript/78+D+38+I>, <http://manuscripts.kb.nl/search/manuscripts/extended/shelfmark/78%20D%2038%20II>, (both 21-09-2018).

⁵⁹ Korteweg 1989, p. 137–138. Other illuminations by his hand have been preserved in a Bible volume in Nuremberg Stadtbibliothek, Ms. Solger 8, and two leaves of a Gospel Harmony in Wolfenbüttel Herzog August Bibliothek, Ms. 404.10[5a]novi. The column miniatures of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 and the miniatures in the History Bible of The Hague still need to be compared. A brief look at them, however, reveals no duplicates.



Fig. 4: Historiated initial with first owner of the manuscript Heinrije Hoep, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.3r (Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).



Fig. 5: Historiated initial with St. Paul handing over a letter to a messenger, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.9r (Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).



Fig. 6: Annunciation, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.15v (Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).



Fig. 7: Jesus and the disciples at sea, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.83r (Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

The third group consists of four so-called 'champie initials'. These are golden initials painted on a red and blue painted 'field', a 'champ pie'. The 'champies' here are typical for the 15th century, and need hierarchically be placed between the painted historiated initials and ink initials. The next group consists of painted border decorations, which appear on the two pages with the historiated initials, and throughout the manuscript next to the champie initials and the column miniatures (fig.8). The border decoration on the pages with the historiated initials is made in a typical Utrecht 'bonte-stijl', colorful style (dating c.1425–1430). The champies and the column miniatures are accompanied by elegant branches with golden dots sprouting hairs of ink, and leaves of green. The combination of these styles is no exception in this period.⁶⁰

The final group is formed by red and blue initials and penwork decorations in ink. Consultation of the manuscript revealed the presence of three so-called 'Utrechtse draakjes', Utrecht little dragons, inside these red and blue initials, solid proof of the Utrecht provenance for the penwork.⁶¹ Dragons and penwork of this type date to about 1425–1450, and are made in the so-called 'Bulten-en-lange-lijnen-stijl', Humps-and-long-lines-style (fig.9, fig.10).⁶²

The first historiated initial reveals much about the first owner of the book (fig.4). This blue letter 'h', in a golden setting and background, is the first letter of the first word of the *Pater Noster* 'in dutsche', in Dutch, 'Here god onser alre vader de bist inden hemel (...)'. It shows the owner of the book kneeling before God, pictured as Christ *Salvator Mundi*, sitting on a red throne, wearing priestly dress including a plain blue cope, holding the globe that shows the three known parts of the world, and blessing the man in front of him. The man himself looks like a typical merchant, with a short black coat, red *brailles* (trousers with socks), and a bollock dagger in a sheath on his belt.⁶³ His hands show that he is praying to God, and what he is praying is written in the banderole: *Miserere mei deus*, God have mercy on me. In the Middle Ages as well as today, these words are well known as the first words of Psalm 50 (Vulgate version), the most important of the seven penitential psalms. Because of their major penitential aspect, and as

⁶⁰ Exactly like Utrecht, UB, 41 (4.F.5), f. 1r, Proske-van Heerdt 1992, pp. 40–41, cat. no. 7.

⁶¹ Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, one at ff. 78v, two at f. 84v.

⁶² Gerritsen 2009, pp. 315–320.

⁶³ Up until now it was believed to be a purse, Korteweg 1989, p. 138; "In the fourteenth century, the bollock dagger was originally used as a weapon by the knightly classes, being a symbolic and significant object for its male owners. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, townsfolk and peasants began to use the dagger as a knife and as a means of defense", Mertens 2011, <http://collectie.boijmans.nl/en/research/alma-en/the-peddler-by-hieronymus-bosch-about-ladles-and-bollock-daggers> (20-09-2018).



Fig. 8: 'Champie' initials, border decoration with branches, golden dots sprouting hairs of ink, and green leaves, and penwork, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.144v
(Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

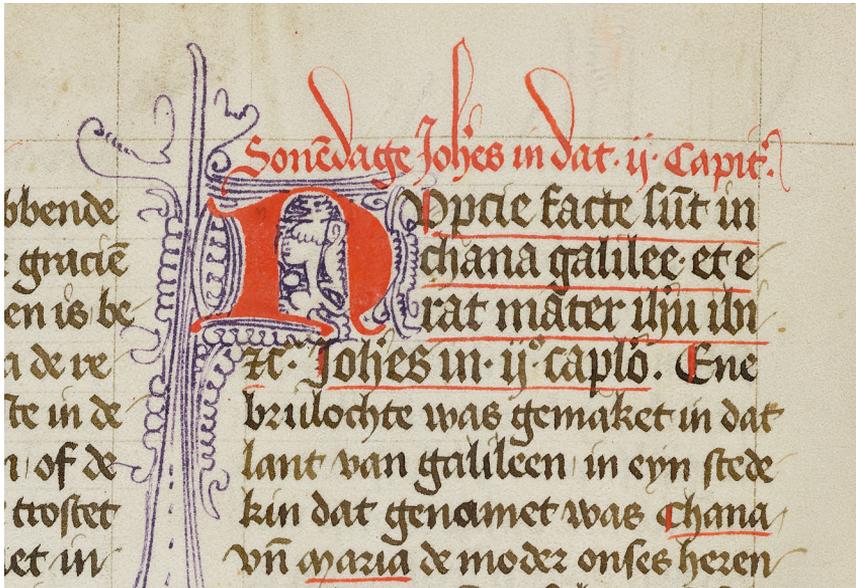


Fig. 9. 'Utrechts draakje' in initial, penwork, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.78v

(Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

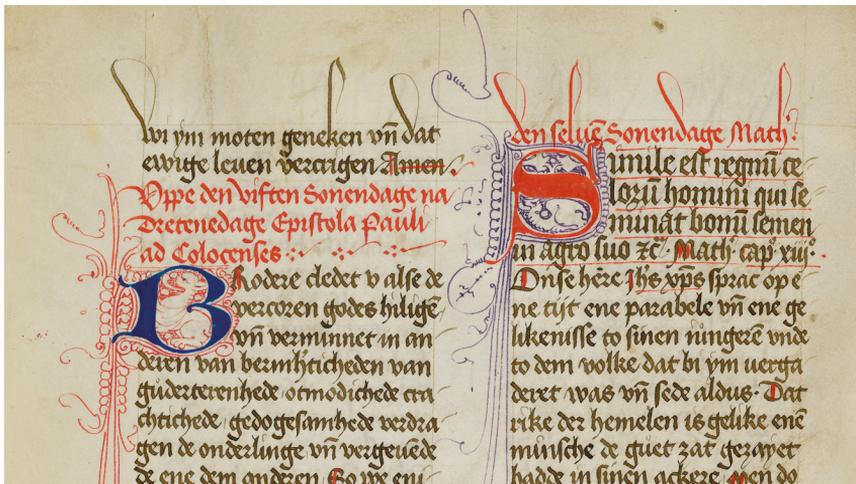


Fig. 10. 'Utrechts draakje' in two initials, penwork, Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, f.84v

(Photo: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

a defense against the seven deadly sins, these psalms were always included in Books of Hours.⁶⁴

In a manuscript as costly as Staatsbibl., mgf 1612, illuminations were included at the request of the commissioner. For a start, it was not very common to be portrayed in an historiated initial in a repentant way while praying the *Miserere*. The initial connects God and the penitent commissioner closely within the setting of the most important prayer of all, the *Pater Noster*.⁶⁵ The commissioner also chose to include a large number of precious column miniatures, beautiful Utrecht decorations, and nice penwork. By incorporating this number and these types of illuminations, his book was well-suited to reading and contemplating at home, and at the same time a treasure to show to his friends. Every time he opened it, the commissioner would see himself as a penitent merchant before God, rich but humble, willing to do penance, and asking for mercy. Though he might have owned other religious books we are unaware of, perhaps even a Bible, he clearly wanted this book of sermons and prayers to be his beautiful, practical, and personal guide in merchant life.

Administrative sources about Heinrijc Hoep and Jan Clap, Bruges and Antwerp

Heinrijc Hoep

The account books and personal correspondence of the Hanseatic merchant Hildebrand Veckinchusen mention Heinrijc Hoep on several occasions, in all of the varieties of his name: Hinric, Hinrich, Heinric, Heinrich, Heinrijc, Hoep, Hoop, Hop, Hope, Hoyp, Hoyp, Hup.⁶⁶ Veckinchusen belonged to a well-known and wealthy merchant family from Lübeck, with trade

⁶⁴ Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142, Wieck 1988, p. 99. See also the discussion about the well-known poem of that time *Miserere mei deus* in Oosterman 1992, p. 198. A beautifully illuminated Book of Hours in Middle Dutch-Middle Low German and Latin, made in Bruges in the 1420s, contains this *Miserere* psalm as well: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. M.76. It is assumed that the unknown owner was a German merchant living in Bruges, in which case it undoubtedly was someone Hoep knew.

⁶⁵ “By constructing a pleading monologue with God, Jesus, Mary, or a saint, individual piety helped to build protection for the votary’s afterlife through correctly uttered words, in the presence of appropriate images, performed with sufficient gravitas”, Rudy 2017, p. ix, in her book about the ‘performance of prayer’ as the practice of individual piety.

⁶⁶ Written between 1395 and 1424; Stieda 1921; Lesnikov 1973; Lesnikov 2013. For editions of Hanseatic sources and literature about the Hanse: website of the Hansischer Geschichtsverein, <https://www.hansischer-geschichtsverein.de/> (21-09-2018). The original correspondence and account books are currently kept in the Tallinn City Archives, Lesnikov 2013, pp. vii-xi, see also below n. 72.

contacts all over the Hanseatic world.⁶⁷ Between c.1390 and 1425, Hildebrand himself mainly lived and worked in Bruges, Antwerp, and Lübeck.⁶⁸ His documents show actions, transactions, and problems that are exemplary for many Hanseatic merchants at the time. They also reveal that religion was always present in the life of a Hanseatic merchant.⁶⁹ Almost every letter in the correspondence mentions the importance of God and His help, and often senders ask receivers to pray for them. Once Hildebrand records the purchase of two prayer books and a psalm book for the son of his brother, who came to live and work with him in Bruges as an apprentice.⁷⁰ Inside the back cover of one of the account books, Hildebrand wrote a personal prayer to the Virgin Mary.⁷¹

Veckinchusen's documents first mention Heinrijc Hoep in Bruges on 20 June 1409, as a cousin and apprentice of merchant Werner Hoep. Werner, an influential merchant of Lübeck, was one of Veckinchusen's trade contacts, who also took care of the interests of the merchants in Ghent, Antwerp, and Bruges.⁷² Heinrijc did well: in the year 1421 he had become one of the two aldermen of the Lübeck *Drittlet* of the Hanseatic merchants in Bruges, together with Bernt Pleskouwen.⁷³ Personal letters, exchanged between Heinrijc and Hildebrand from 25 July 1421 to 13 March 1425, testify to a dramatic period of their commercial contact, due to the major financial problems encountered by Veckinchusen.⁷⁴

Being the representatives of the Kontor, the Hanseatic aldermen in Bruges, later called secretaries, were responsible for all legal and political issues, the care for the estates of deceased merchants and memorial issues.⁷⁵ Late medieval Kontor secretaries are known to have been very literate and interested in religious literature.⁷⁶ Veckinchusen and his financial problems were of

⁶⁷ Asmussen 1999, pp. 791–810. On Veckinchusen, see Seifert 2000; Lorenz 2014.

⁶⁸ Asmussen 1999, p. 803.

⁶⁹ On Hanseatic merchants and religion, see Graßmann 2009a.

⁷⁰ Lesnikov 1973, p. 253: Af 1, f. 144v.

⁷¹ Book Af 13, next to f.100v at the back cover, Lesnikov 2013, p. 443.

⁷² Lesnikov 1973, p. 297: Af 6, f. 31r, 25–28r. In about 1385: HR 1.3 1875, no. 349, p. 358. For Werner Hoep as an authorized representative, see e.g. 21 June 1393: Kunze 1899, p. 59, no. 104; 29 September 1393: Kunze 1899, p. 74, no. 126.

⁷³ Lesnikov 2013, p. 421: Af, f. 39r, r.1–20; Tallinn Archives, TLA.230.1.Bh81/I-i-00485.

⁷⁴ They are still kept in the archives of Tallinn (Reval), www.ra.ee (21-09-2018), Kaufmännische Briefe; TLA.230.1.Bh81/I; 1398–1428; Kaufmännische Briefe; TLA.230.1.Bh81/II; 1405–1429.

⁷⁵ Rößner 2001, pp. 125–132.

⁷⁶ Leloux 1973b, pp. 18–33.

great concern for the whole trading community, so Hoep and Pleskouwen needed to take action. On 15 September 1421, after many problems and conflicts, Hoep finally signed Veckinchusen's acknowledgment of debt and promise of payment to the merchants, at the inn at the *Corenmarkt* in Antwerp called *De Gans*, the Goose.⁷⁷ The contract guaranteed nobody would harm Veckinchusen on his return to Bruges, but soon after his arrival there, his creditors nevertheless took him captive. After being a prisoner in the *Steen* for three years, during which time he and Hoep still corresponded, Veckinchusen returned to Lübeck, and died.

Already in the 14th century the Hoep family belonged to the ruling elite of Hamburg.⁷⁸ In the 15th century they became prominent merchants, forming a family-run business network in several 'Hanseatic cities' such as Bruges, London, some Baltic cities, and probably Bergen (the name Hinrik tor Hope might point to this).⁷⁹ Some family members moved to Lübeck, like Werner Hoep, and connected religiously with merchants from Lübeck, Hamburg, and foreign merchants in one or more of the many religious fraternities in Lübeck and Hamburg.

At locations 'abroad', Hanseatic merchants connected religiously with each other and with the locals by participating in their churches and fraternities, and by founding merchant fraternities themselves. Documents about Hanseatic altar foundations in Antwerp, Bruges, and many other European towns illustrate this, as do numerous charity donations and donations of stained glass windows to convents and parish churches.⁸⁰ During their life abroad, these merchants did not often seem to participate religiously at the same level in their 'hometowns'.⁸¹ Perhaps this depended on them being married 'at home', like Veckinchusen, or being married abroad.

As both a group and individually Hanseatic merchants were very visible in the churches and convents of Bruges. From the 13th century on, the Carmelite convent specifically functioned as their gathering place and administrative centre. Many merchants were buried here. It had some Hanseatic stained-glass

⁷⁷ Sometimes Hoep (Hinric vamme Hopen) is thought to be the *clerck* because of this. That, however, cannot be the case. Veckinchusen mentions '*mester Gossewin des Koopmans clerck*' on 24 June 1419 and 11 September 1420, and Pleskow and Hoep as aldermen on 9 January 1420. Lesnikov 2013, p. 415: Af 13, f. 37v, r.12–31; Af 13, f. 100v, r.17–25.

⁷⁸ About burgomaster Hinrik Hoep of Hamburg and Werner Hoep, see Asmussen 1999, pp. 96, 168–169 n. 561, 402–413.

⁷⁹ The Hoep family is often represented in the wills from Lübeck dating between 1400 and 1449. Meyer 2010. Heinrijs Hoep is mentioned only once, in 1406.

⁸⁰ Rößner 2001, pp. 76–93, 203–226; Rößner 2000, pp. 27–44; Leloux 1973b, pp. 21–39.

⁸¹ An exception is Johan Cavolts' testament of 5 July 1434, which bequeaths money to churches and convents in Bruges as well as in Riga. Rößner 2001, pp. 456–457.

windows, which represented the merchants and their home region before God and the Carmelite community, and underlined the mutual ties within this community. The Carmelite community was very mixed and ‘international’; it included the Scots, English, and Spanish, local guilds and confraternities, and noble people visiting Bruges.⁸² Probably from 1426 on the convent was the gathering place of the chamber of rhetoric *De Heilige Geest*, the Holy Spirit, as well. They met in the Holy Spirit chapel with its Trinity altar, belonging to Lodewijk van Gruuthuse.⁸³ Hoep must have frequently visited this buzzing convent, and it was here that he probably heard about the *Nuttelijc boec*. Unfortunately, nothing has thus far been found about his domicile in Bruges, his friends, or his membership in a confraternity.⁸⁴

After the discovery of the name of Jan Clap in the Antwerp aldermen’s registers, which is discussed below, information about Heinrijc Hoep in Antwerp could be traced however, including the names of some family members in Antwerp and Lübeck. It appears that between 1425 and 1439 he moved to Antwerp. Due to commercial problems resulting from the ‘Bruges revolt’ against the duke (1436–1438), but especially after the murder of more than a hundred Hanseatic merchants in Sluis (next to Bruges) in June 1436, many merchants decided to do the same.⁸⁵ Starting in 1439, Heinrijc Hoep bought several houses and parts of houses at the *Grote Markt* in Antwerp, the main place of residence as well as the gathering place of local craftsmen and cloth merchants.⁸⁶ These properties were big; they were meant for living, working, and stocking merchandise. At Hoep’s death in 1466, they were left to his heirs, one of which, a silversmith by the name of Mengiaert Hoep, also lived in Antwerp.⁸⁷ For the formal settlement of the inheritance, Mengiaert represented the heirs in front of the Antwerp aldermen.⁸⁸ On this occasion all of their names appeared: Mengiaert Hoep or Janssone (Antwerp), silversmith;

⁸² Windows with the double-headed imperial eagle, or the heraldry of the prince elector. Only in 1478 did the merchants get a guild house, the *Oosterlingenhuis*. Murray 2013.

⁸³ Oosterman 1999–2000, pp. 23–24.

⁸⁴ Greve 2011; Rößner 2001, pp. 109–111. Most of his contacts, and perhaps his own place as well, were probably located in the administrative district *Officium Vlamingorum*, or the Carmers Zestendeel of Bruges (the section of the Carmelites). Dumolyn 2018, p. 157–158.

⁸⁵ The period between the end of Veckinchusen’s documents and the first report about the purchase of a house in Antwerp. For the debate and extensive literature on what causes this shift from Bruges to Antwerp, see e.g. Murray 2013; Prims 1937, pp. 105–108. *Die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen* mentions the murders; see the florilegium of Haan 1996, p. 21; Dumolyn 1997; Poeck 2000, pp. 49–50.

⁸⁶ Asaert 2005, pp. 18, 38.

⁸⁷ Asaert 2005, pp. 35–46.

⁸⁸ Asaert 2005, pp. 38, 40–42.

Henric van Brakele (Lübeck), silversmith, son of Aert Hoep; Andries Wobbe alias Hoep (Hamburg), brother of the deceased Heinrijc; Claus Wobbe alias Hoep, brother of the deceased Heinrijc, living in the *Oostland* (meaning somewhere in the Baltic); and Henric Nyeman (Lübeck), brother-in-law of Mengiaert. Though in a bad state now, the houses still exist. At the time they were called *De Cleyne Wolf* or *De Cleyne Mortier* (currently no. 52), *De Wolf* (currently no. 50), and *De Wolvinne* (currently no. 48).⁸⁹

Jan Clap

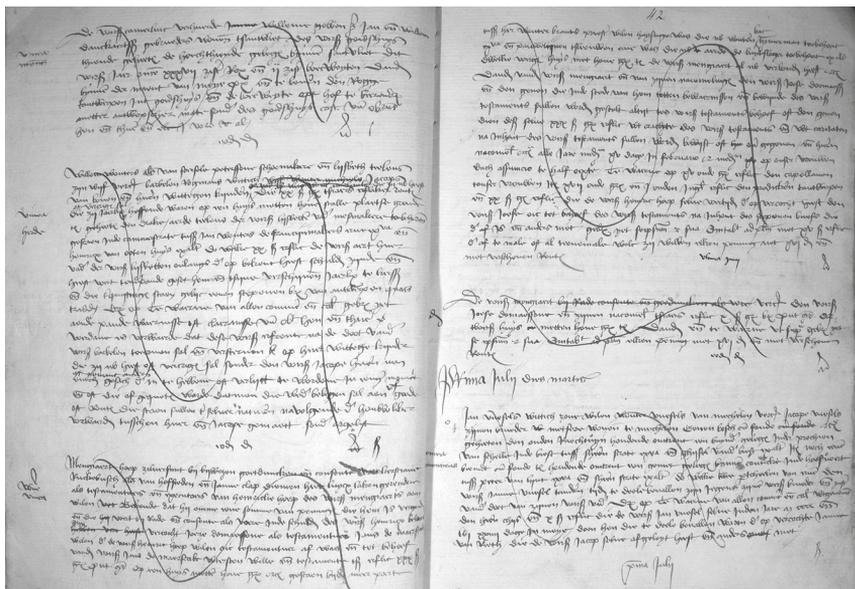


Fig. 11: Aldermen's registers of Antwerp, entry 30 June 1466, Archive of Antwerp (SAA), SR#70, 041°v-42°r, Schepenregister 30 June 1466 (Photo: SAA).

Jan Clap, the *laken bereyder* living in *de langenustrate*, appears in the aldermen's registers (*Schepenregister*) of Antwerp, in the record of 30 June 1466, the same date as mentioned in the owner's mark of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 (fig. 11). This record confirms that Clap indeed lived in Antwerp. It is unclear why only his name has been erased from the Berlin manuscript, and not his profession and address. Perhaps one of Clap's heirs wanted to keep only these notes as a permanent record of the purchase of the book?

⁸⁹ Asaert 2005, pp. 35–46. About the current state of these houses, and problems considering their poor restoration, see Maclot 2008.

The question remains to be answered: how and why did Jan Clap himself get the manuscript Staatsbibl., mfg 1612? To this, the aldermen's registers of Antwerp hold the answer as well. Under the entry for 30 June 1466, the report mentions the visit Mengiaert Hoep made to Jan Clap and Kerstiane Ruckebusch, the executors *testamentarius* of Heinrijs Hoep's will.⁹⁰ As the representative of the heirs, Mengiaert Hoep was seeking permission of the executors to sell a house of the late Heinrijs Hoep to pay off debts. These debts were probably so high that the heirs needed to sell the precious religious manuscript right away as well.

This report reveals that Heinrijs Hoep and Jan Clap knew each other well, because testators appointed the executors of their wills themselves. Usually they were family members or good friends, and in the case of merchants abroad, as is known from Bruges, innkeepers.⁹¹ Though it is not known whether they knew each other from a confraternity or some other religious group, it is certain that Hoep and Clap at least knew each other professionally. A charter of 27 January 1454 already mentions Jan Clap as middleman, a broker, for German merchants in Antwerp.⁹² He cooperated often with Clause Rockoch (Rockox), the innkeeper of the *Rooden Schilt*, an important inn close to *De Gans* and *De Cluyse* at the *Oude Corenmarkt*, at the Antwerp centre of Hanseatic trade. Additional information about Jan Clap in a database of 15th-century houses, their owners, and tenants in Antwerp shows that Jan Clap was a wealthy cloth maker and prominent citizen of Antwerp, who rented and owned several houses with cloth-dyeing places close to his family.⁹³ One of these, a house in the *langenstrate*, he bought in the year 1446. This is probably the same house he referred to in the owner's mark, twenty years later. A personal relationship between a Hanseatic merchant and an important citizen of Antwerp, indicated by Hoep having appointed Jan Clap as executor of his will, is a remarkable find.

⁹⁰ Archief Antwerpen (SAA), SR#70, 041°v-42°r, *Schepenregister* 30 June 1466.

⁹¹ Greve 2011, pp. 177–179.

⁹² SAA, SR 48, f° 132 v°, 27 January 1454, *Andries Zadelere coopman van constens mechtich-de Clause Rockoch sinen weert inden Rooden Schilt ende Janne Clap alias luycx ende elken bisunderlyck, omme van sinen wegghen te vervolgene metter minnen of metten recht alsulken scult ende gebreke als hy met synen geselscape tachter ende in gebreke is, aen Vrancken Scoede borger van coelne...*; Greve 2011; *Antwerpiensia*, <http://users.skynet.be/antwerpiensia/OudeKoornmarkt3840Gans.htm>, <http://users.skynet.be/antwerpiensia/OudeKoornmarkt14-16Roodeschild.htm#RS1420>, <http://users.skynet.be/antwerpiensia/OudeKoornmarkt26Cluyse.htm> (all 21-09-2018). On the Antwerp brokers, see also Prims 1935, pp. 25–26.

⁹³ *Antwerpiensia*, page 'Antwerpen rond 1450: een proeve van topografische reconstructie: lopend onderzoek', database: <http://users.skynet.be/antwerpiensia/> (21-09-2018).

Being one of the executors *testamentarius*, Clap knew exactly the property comprising the estate. He must have loved the religious manuscript, and recognized its value. Therefore he decided to buy it himself the moment Mengiaert showed up. The mixed language was familiar to him, as he was an experienced middleman; it is therefore quite possible he bought it for his personal use and not only as an investment. And, to make it clear that he did not take the book out of the estate in an improper way, Clap wrote the proof of proper purchase on its first page, probably in the presence of Mengiaert, while handing over the money.

Concluding remarks

The high standard of living and the religious engagement of the urban population of the Low Countries in the 15th century set the scene for the making and use of religious books like manuscript Staatsbibl., mfg 1612. After initially trying to identify the persons mentioned in the owner's mark as Utrecht individuals and book owners, a close study of this mark, the language, and illuminations of the book unexpectedly pointed in a completely different direction. Following small leads, the integrated multidisciplinary approach finally revealed its unknown provenance and fascinating context.

The owner's mark shows that the first owners of the manuscript, Heinrijc Hoep and a *laken bereyder*, originated from Bruges and Antwerp; two cities which were, at the time, closely connected by trade. According to the correspondence of Hanseatic merchant Hildebrand Veckinchusen, Hoep lived in Bruges as a merchant and alderman of the Kontor. Art historical dating of the illuminations and the interpretation of the first initial clearly point to this wealthy merchant Hoep as the commissioner and first owner of Staatsbibl., mfg 1612, who ordered this book while still living in Bruges. His Hanseatic background explains its unusual language, a mix of southern Middle Dutch and Middle Low German that was known in Bruges as well as Antwerp. Not much of Hoep's personal life in Bruges is known yet.

The recovery of the name of Jan Clap in the owner's mark and the discovery of his name in the aldermen's registers of Antwerp confirmed the assumption that the *langenustrate* was in Antwerp. This find led to information about the 'Antwerp part' of Hoep's life, and the nature of his relationship with Clap. On the same day as the date mentioned in the owner's mark, the report mentions the request of Mengiaert Hoep, heir of his late uncle Heinrijc, to the executors of the will, of which Clap was one, for permission to sell a house from the inheritance to pay debts. On this occasion the book was sold to Clap as well. Further research into secondary literature and databases even identified streets and houses in the centre of Antwerp where Hoep and Clap lived, and people they knew.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, Bruges book sellers and Utrecht illuminators were closely connected. *Liberarissen* sold books, and organized the making of books for wealthy customers according to their wishes. Being a prominent member of the Hanseatic merchants, Hoep could afford such a book. His choice of Utrecht illuminations shows his wish to own a book that confirmed his social position. At the same time, his opting for this specific book of sermons reveals his connectedness with a typical Low Countries' way of contemplating and studying Bible texts. The choices for the specific content, and for the familiar mixed language, clearly show that he believed this sermon book would be the most important guide in his life. The illuminations were not only expensive and beautiful, but also the perfect tool for him, as a reader, to find his way in the text and to contemplate its content. Illustrative is the first historiated initial that shows him as a repentant sinner kneeling before God, praying the *Miserere*. Every time Hoep opened his book, he would first see the *Pater Noster* 'in dutche', and himself in it, connected with God.

The actions of Hoep and Clap were typical for the complicated economic and political situation at the time, which can now be seen from an individual perspective. The move of many Hanseatic merchants to Antwerp after the political troubles and the killings in Sluis, the increasing numbers of middlemen and *laken bereyders* in the Hanseatic trade in Antwerp, and the economic decline of Bruges are reflected in the findings of this essay. Very surprising is the discovery of a close personal relationship between two members of rather different groups within Antwerp, a Hanseatic merchant and a prominent citizen.

Expanding our glance, new elements about 15th-century users of the *Nuttelijc boec* come to light. The language of Staatsbibl., mgf 1612 was chosen by the commissioner, a fact already assumed for other copies, but clearly shown in this case. The varying number and quality of the illuminations appearing in preserved copies indicate the strong personal influence of commissioners as well, but can now be connected with a specific person: the Hanseatic merchant Heinrijc Hoep who, though a lay person, possibly learned about this religious book of sermons in the Carmelite convent. Based on the social position of other commissioners, the view that early copies of the *Nuttelijc boec* were primarily owned by the nobility, or were essentially produced for the nobility, now needs to be reconsidered.

Though many things remain unknown, a fascinating part of an individual network, based on actions concerning this religious manuscript, has become visible. It shows close connections between urban citizens, foreign merchants, and a religious community, groups that often are believed to have lived rather separately. The nodes of transmission of this religious text and book were quite likely to have been a convent in Bruges, a *liberaris* in Bruges and his professional contacts, and an aldermen's desk in Antwerp. It is shown here

that contacts connected with this religious book existed over great distances, binding together people and institutions from Lübeck, Hamburg, Bruges, Utrecht, and Antwerp.

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