

**Ideas about Women in the earliest printed Dutch
vernacular Books. Saints' *Lives*, Exempla, and their
female Readers**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Catharina Theodora Hendrika van Dort

University College London, 1998

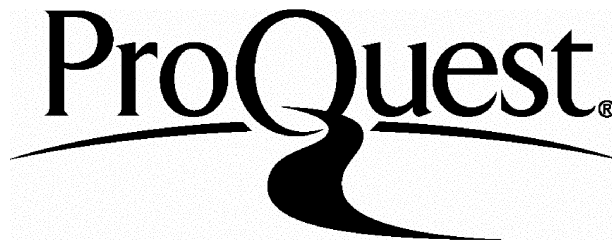
ProQuest Number: U642357

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest U642357

Published by ProQuest LLC(2015). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Abstract

In the first instance, the thesis explores ideas about women published in incunables (ca. 1450-1501) printed in the Low Countries. The sources under consideration are female saints' *Lives* and exempla printed in the Dutch vernacular. In chapter 1, each source is introduced and scrutinised for its potential contribution to this topic.

Since the sources appeared in the vernacular and published, they were available to lay readers. The second aim of the thesis is to demonstrate that women were among them. In chapter 2, various elements of women's involvement in Netherlandish book culture are examined. There is enough evidence to suggest that middle class female readers were erudite and interested enough to seek access to the incunables.

Both genres of saints' *Lives* and exempla, although diverse, contain similar ideas about women. These ideas are commonly expressed within the framework of the woman's marital state (virgin, wife or widow) or as mother or daughter. Also included are ideas on the female in spiritual roles (for instance, as bride of Christ). In chapters 3 and 4, these textual images are analysed in depth as *topoi*.

To indicate to what extent the ideas, most of which predate the fifteenth century, were still valid, a link has been established between ideas and the relevance for the female recipient. An attempt has been made to relate these ideas to aspects of social reality of late medieval laywomen. The thesis infers that many ideas about women within the family were prescriptive and intended for admiration and emulation.

The thesis contributes to many fields of historical inquiry. Although the core of the thesis is embedded in social history (which incorporates the history of ideas and attitudes), elements of the history of the book, the history of the Low Countries, and women's history are broached as well.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Table of Contents	3
Acknowledgements	6
Abbreviations	7
Notes on translation and foliation	8
1 Introduction to the sources	9
1.1 Purpose of the thesis	9
1.2 Introduction to the genre of the exemplum	11
1.2.1 The exemplum collections	17
1.2.1.1 <i>De ludo scachorum</i> [Dutch] <i>Dat scaecspel</i> , by Jacobus de Cessolis	18
1.2.1.2 <i>Kaetspel gemoraliseert</i> , by Jan van den Berghe	20
1.2.1.3 <i>Historia septem sapientium Romae</i> [Dutch] <i>Historie van die seven wise mannen van Rome</i>	22
1.2.1.4 <i>Gesta Romanorum</i> [Dutch] <i>Die geesten of geschiedenis van Rome</i>	24
1.2.1.5 <i>Aesopus, Vita et Fabulae</i> [Dutch] <i>Vita, hystorien ende fabulen</i>	26
1.2.1.6 <i>Dialogus creaturarum moralisatus</i> [Dutch] <i>Twespraec der creaturen</i>	27
1.2.1.7 <i>Speculum sapientiae</i> [Dutch] <i>Parabolen</i> , by Cyrillus	29
1.2.1.8 <i>Bonum universale de proprietatibus apum</i> [Dutch] <i>Der bienboeck</i> , by Thomas Cantipratensis	30
1.2.1.9 <i>Seelentrost</i> [Dutch] <i>Der sielentroest</i>	32
1.2.1.10 <i>Boec van der biechten</i>	34
1.2.1.11 <i>Ars moriendi "Quamvis secundum philosophum tertio Ethicorum ..."</i> [Dutch] <i>Dat sterfboeck</i>	35
1.2.1.12 <i>Miraculen Onser Liever Vrouwen</i>	38
1.2.1.13 <i>Speculum humanae salvationis</i> [Dutch] <i>Spiegel der menselijker behoudnisse</i>	40
1.2.1.14 <i>Ob einem Mann sei zu nehmen ein ehelich Weib oder nicht</i> [Dutch] <i>Van den Echten state</i> , by Albertus de Eyb	42
1.2.1.15 <i>Vitae sanctorum patrum, sive vitas patrum</i> [Dutch] <i>Van den leven der heiligen vaderen</i> , by Hieronymus	43
1.3 Introduction to the genre of female saints' Lives	44
1.3.1 The female saints' Lives	50
1.3.1.1 <i>Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia</i> [Dutch] <i>Passionael, Winter- ende Somerstuc</i> , by Jacobus de Voragine ..	50
1.3.1.2 <i>Historie, getijden en exempelen van St. Anna and Historie van St. Anna</i> , by Jan van Denemarken	53
1.3.1.3 <i>Legenda beatissimae virginis Barbarae</i> [Dutch] <i>Die Historie van Sinte Barbara met die miraculen</i>	55

1.3.1.4	<i>The legend of Bridget of Sweden. The legend of Catherine of Vadstena</i> , by Peter of Alvastra	57
1.3.1.5	<i>St. Catharina de Alexandria</i> [Dutch] <i>Sinte Katherinen legende</i> ...	59
1.3.1.6	<i>Legende en leven van Sinte Clara</i> , by Thomas de Celano.....	60
1.3.1.7	<i>Leven ende passie van St. Kunera</i>	62
1.3.1.8	<i>Leven van Liedwij, die maghet van Schiedam</i> , by Johannes Gerlach.....	65
1.4	Conclusion.....	67
2	Women and the media.....	68
2.1	Interpreting medieval ideas about women	69
2.1.1	Historiography	69
2.1.2	Medieval ideas about women	70
2.1.3	Male authors and female readers.....	74
2.2	The printing press.....	78
2.2.1	Continuation of female interest.....	78
2.2.2	The printing press as medium	83
2.2.3	Female authors in print.....	88
2.2.4	Female printers and booksellers	89
2.3	Influence of the modern devotion	92
2.4	Some medieval attitudes towards the word	99
2.5	The urban environment.....	101
2.5.1	Saints' <i>Lives</i> and exempla as urban literature	101
2.5.2	Contemporary ideas on women within the city	107
2.5.3	Literate social classes	110
2.5.4	The education system	112
2.6	The woman as reader.....	122
2.6.1	Female literacy	122
2.6.2	Attitudes towards female literacy.....	125
2.6.3	Vernacular readership	127
2.6.4	Reading habits	131
2.6.5	Access to books	137
2.6.6	Secular women owning Dutch vernacular incunables: pertinent examples	140
2.7	Conclusion.....	143
3	Ideas about women in some aspects of marriage.....	146
3.1	Trends in historiography	146
3.2	Discussion of various marriages.....	148
3.2.1	Eve and Adam.....	148
3.2.2	Mary and Joseph.....	152
3.2.3	Anne and Joachim.....	155
3.2.4	Summary	156
3.3	Virginity, marriage, widowhood.....	157
3.3.1	Virgins	158
3.3.2	Summary	168
3.4	The relevance of ideas concerning virginity to secular women.....	168
3.5	Wives.....	176

3.5.1	Summary	188
3.6	The relevance of ideas on marriage to secular women	189
3.6.1	Widows and elderly women	199
3.6.2	Summary	208
3.7	The relevance of ideas concerning widowhood to secular women	208
3.8	Conclusion	212
4	Ideas about women as mothers and as daughters	215
4.1	Historiography on women in the family	215
4.2	Women as mothers	217
4.2.1	Mary and her relatives	217
4.2.2	Fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth	222
4.2.3	Maternal responsibilities	227
4.2.3.1	Guidance for mothers	227
4.2.3.2	Practical care	229
4.2.3.3	Maternal guidance	230
4.2.3.4	Miracles	231
4.2.3.5	Maternal love	233
4.2.4	A variety of motherhoods	234
4.2.5	Bad example and influence, abandonment and infanticide	239
4.2.6	Summary	244
4.3	The relevance of ideas concerning motherhood to secular women	246
4.4	Women as daughters	258
4.4.1	Mary's childhood	259
4.4.2	Filial responsibilities	261
4.4.3	Bad treatment and matricide	265
4.4.4	Summary	268
4.5	The relevance of ideas concerning daughters to secular women	268
4.6	Fathers	275
4.7	Conclusion	276
5	Conclusion	278
	Bibliography	281

Acknowledgements

A Postgraduate Studentship in the Humanities from The British Academy was made available. The Central Research Fund (Irwin Fund) of the University of London, the Research Support Fund of the Royal Historical Society, and the Graduate School Research Fund of University College London contributed towards the cost of travelling abroad and the purchase of microfilm.

In the initial stages of research, I was fortunate to obtain valuable advice from Prof. Dr. Herman Pleij, Dr. Lotte Hellinga and Dr. Tanis Guest. Whilst working in the Royal Dutch Library at The Hague, the helpful assistance offered by Drs. Gerard van Thienen will remain in my memory forever. From the moment the idea of this thesis took shape on a stroll with Prof. David d'Avray from University College London to the British Library to the last word written down, he proved an invaluable source of knowledge and inspiration. One of his distinctive talents is to keep the student focussed.

Anyone would wish herself friends of the supportive kind of fellow students Stephen Davis, Sugiko Nishikawa, Simcha Shalom Brooks and Jane Winters.

On the home front, my family and my in-laws proved immeasurably helpful in different ways. Jef's tireless support in a wide range of matters can never be fully acknowledged, hence no attempt is undertaken. Another dimension was added to the thesis when, in the middle of writing up the chapter on mothers and daughters, our baby girl Fleur was born.

Abbreviations

B.C.	before Christ
BL	British Library
c(c).	column(s)
ca.	<i>circa</i> (about)
d.	died
ed(s).	editor(s) or edition(s)
et al.	<i>et alia</i> (and others)
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (for instance)
fn.	footnote
fol(s).	folio(s)
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (the same)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (this is)
ISTC	<i>Incunable Short Title Catalogue</i>
KB	Koninklijke Bibliotheek
n.	note
nr(s).	number(s)
n.r.	<i>nieuwe reeks</i> (new series)
n.s.	new series
OGE	<i>Ons Geestelijk Erf</i>
p(p).	page(s)
repr.	reprint(ed)
St.	Saint
trans(s).	translator(s)
v.	verso
VL	Stammler, W. et al. eds., <i>Verfasserlexikon. Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters</i> begründet von Wolfgang Stammler, fortgeführt von Karl Langosh und Kurt Ruh (9 vols., Berlin, New York, zweite völlig bearbeitete Auflage, 1978-1995-)
w.	without

Notes on translation and foliation

All female saints' names have been anglicised. As a guideline, D.H. Farmer has been used.¹

I have provided paraphrases for all foreign citations, except for the simplest of phrases. All translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

Abbreviations and ligatures have been expanded and modern punctuation and capitalisation have been freely introduced. Evident errors have been rectified silently. The usage of u, v, w, i en j has been modernised.

A preference has been given to mentioning foliation references by quire numbering rather than accumulative foliation, when the sources allowed. When mistakes occur in foliation they have been corrected tacitly. The recto side of the folio will not be mentioned. The verso side is marked by the letter v.

¹ Farmer, D.H., *The Oxford dictionary of saints* (Oxford, New York, 1978, 2nd ed., 1987).

1 Introduction to the sources

1.1 Purpose of the thesis

The principal purpose of this thesis is to explore ideas about women which were made available in the first printed books in the Dutch vernacular until 1501. This date signifies the end of the incunable era. The books are printed in the Low Countries (the current Netherlands and Belgium). The textual images presented are drawn from female saints' *Lives* and exemplum collections, all of which appeared in prose.

The roles in which females are cast in these texts are generally connected to family life. Thus, females occur as (potential) brides, wives, mothers, widows and daughters. However, they appear not only in worldly images but also in spiritual images, principally as brides of Christ. In the exemplum collections the women are mostly described in subjective and biased terms. These textual images are accompanied by recommended lifestyles and codes of conduct. In the saints' *Lives* women are usually portrayed in a more positive light: they are either good or they become so.

Since we are presented with these images revolving around family life, I decided to research the reception side of the texts. I have attempted to establish links between the text and the female consumer of the text, and I have concentrated on the 'common woman' rather than the female religious.² As Peter Biller remarks, in the histories of medieval women it is the female religious rather than the common woman who has retained predominance, but it is the latter who is as interesting in her own right.³ Key questions then will be posed on which ideas of

² See, for instance, the recently completed book on the involvement of the regular canonesses of Windesheim with literacy, Scheepsma, W., *Deemoed en devotie. De koorvrouwen van Windesheim en hun geschriften* (Amsterdam, 1997).

³ Biller P., 'The common woman in the western church in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries', *Women in the Church*, W.J. Sheils and D. Wood eds. (Studies in church history 27; Oxford, 1990), p. 130.

women were conveyed concerning women and marriage, women as mothers and daughters (including spiritual images), and attention will be devoted to the potential urban female lay public as well.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Although it can be argued that it is more logical to deal with the textual images first and aspects of reception later I have opted to reverse the process. There is a good reason for this: there is a lack of evidence of direct female interaction with the earliest printed text. To state the obvious: we are in the dark about her perception of the text. Also, not one single book within our corpus is published exclusively with a female audience in mind. And even if female ownership of a book is established it does not automatically guarantee her ever reading the book. In view of these problems, it is best to begin by seeing how much one can say about reception despite them.

In this chapter, the sources will be introduced with an eye to female interests. The second chapter deals with issues touching on the relationship between women and the media. These chapters will allow for an overall assessment of accessibility of the female to the (printed) word. In chapters 3 and 4 a selection of ideas about women is extracted from our corpus, mostly those which appear most persistently or those which are extraordinary. In chapters 3 and 4 elements of the relation between the idea and female consumer will be evaluated.

Some conscious limitations should be defined in advance. I have concentrated on the availability rather than the genesis of ideas. I have not engaged in comparative analyses between forerunners of the editions which appeared in the Dutch vernacular. I may have missed out on the subtleties resulting from studying the transmission process from the written word to the printed word, the process of dissemination from a small(er) public to a wider public (usually from an ecclesiastical audience to lay public) as changes in text go hand in hand with changes in context. Neither have I examined the contribution of the translators and editors of the Low Countries when they were translating and re-editing the texts for a Dutch vernacular speaking audience. More often than not the 'original'

texts were reshaped and redrafted when translated into Dutch. In both cases, I have relied on secondary sources when available and when pertinent to our enquiry.

In general, careful consideration and faithful translation were part and parcel of the process of transposing the *veritas latina* into the vernacular. However, learned elements were passed over or condensed (for instance, passages of a theological nature), etymologies were left out, authorities and explicit cross-references were frequently filtered out, Latin alphabetical tables were not used.⁴ Instead, practical suggestions for pious and virtuous behaviour of the laity (the so-called *Umakzentuierungen*) were inserted.⁵ Also, miracles were often added and expanded on.

To recap, I have dedicated this study to female saints' *Lives* and exempla which were at hand in print in the vernacular in a certain period of time in a certain geographical area.

1.2 Introduction to the genre of the exemplum

Before the sources are introduced separately, it is necessary to explain what use the exempla and female saints' *Lives* are to enable us to extract ideas from them.

⁴ For methodological and interdisciplinary problems associated with this process, see Wackers, P.W.M., 'Buecken die men leest in scolēn'. *Middel­nederlandse letterkunde en Latijnse traditie*, *Misselike tonghe: de Middel­nederlandse letterkunde in interdisciplinair verband*, F.P. van Oostrom en W. van Anrooij eds. (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 111-129 and Williams-Krapp, W., 'Laienbildung und volkssprachliche Hagiographie im späten Mittelalter', *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*. Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1981, L. Grenzmann und K. Stackmann eds. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände V; Stuttgart, 1984), p. 699. It should be noted that occasionally etymologies were incorporated in the vernacular translations, as is the case with *Sinte Katherinen legende* and *Die Historie van Sinte Barbara, met die miraculen*. (These sources will be introduced below.)

⁵ Mertens, V., 'Theologie der Mönche-Frömmigkeit der Laien? Beobachtungen zur Textgeschichte von Predigten des Hartwig von Erfurt', *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*. Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1981, L. Grenzmann und K. Stackmann eds. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände V; Stuttgart, 1984), p. 672.

The main issue at stake is to evaluate what the genre of exempla may reveal about women. We turn to genre of the exemplum first.

What is meant by exempla? They consist of a brief narrative with an illustrative purpose set in a specific framework, commonly a sermon.⁶ They are used to clarify and demonstrate the truth. They are not 'realistic' case studies of the kind we find in the earliest printed law codes.⁷ In the middle ages, they were used to edify theological doctrines; they served to convey the abstract into the concrete. They were intended to catch the attention of the audience, and their flexibility allowed them to be used in various settings. They appear in various guises: as short stories based on secular as well as spiritual material, dialogues, miracles (including those appended to the *vitae*), *vitae* (when they appear in exemplum collections) and visions. Among the *dramatis personae* not only human beings are paraded in front of us but a varied range such as: apparitions (as souls of the departed), saints, deities, animals, etc.

The probative value of the exemplum remained of consequence throughout history. In antiquity, the exemplum was used to demonstrate that an event in the

⁶ Bremond, C., J. Le Goff et J.-Cl. Schmitt, *L' 'exemplum'* (Typologie des sources du moyen age occidental 40; Turnhout, 1982), pp. 36-38. See also Lyons, J.D., *Exemplum. The rhetoric of example in early modern France and Italy* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1989), pp. 3-12, who argues for the exemplum to feature in its own right, instead of being relegated to a subgenre. Scanlon, L., *Narrative, authority, and power. The medieval exemplum and the Chaucerian tradition* (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 20; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), chapter 4, concentrates on late medieval usage of the sermon exemplum. Daxelmüller, C., 'Narratio, illustratio, argumentatio. Exemplum und Bildungstechnik in der frühen Neuzeit', *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*, W. Haug und B. Wachinger eds. (Fortuna vitrea 2; Tübingen, 1991), in particular pp. 80-81, discusses the exemplum's composite elements. The most elaborate survey of the usage of exempla in sermons is by Owst, G.R., *Literature and pulpit in medieval England. A neglected chapter in the history of English letters and of the English people* (Oxford, 1961), chapter 4. For the use of exempla in Middle Dutch sermons specifically, see Zieleman, G.C., *Middel nederlandse epistel- en evangeliepreken* (Leiden, 1978), pp. 258-259. On the usage of exempla as a genre of preaching aid, see d'Avray, D.L., *The preaching of the Friars. Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 64-71.

⁷ *Somme rurale [Dutch] Somme rurael*, by Jean Boutillier (Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 19 August 1483) BL shelf mark IB. 47126. See, for instance, fol. F1, under *exempel*, where it is debated whether a brother should maintain his unmarried sister after the death of their parents.

past could serve as a guideline for the future.⁸ Gradually, from the early middle ages onwards, particularly since Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540-604), the exemplum was used in tracts and sermons.⁹ Large scale usage of exempla came with the preaching of the friars.

When in the early thirteenth century Christendom was threatened by heresy and by internal spiritual decline, the Franciscans and Dominicans went out on their preaching tours. This mobile preaching force was interacting with the 'common people' particularly in an urban environment, relying for their survival on their hand-outs. Even the friars' language became 'heavily impregnated with marketplace vocabulary' and their art of persuasion was reminiscent to that used in commercial bargaining.¹⁰ However, we should not overestimate the connection between friar and town.¹¹ To communicate their message effectively they preached in the vernacular.

It stands to reason that, when applying exempla, they made use of familiar images to convey their message, and these may stem from oral traditions, from the laity. The images used may even have been extracted from the confessions they heard.¹² Most mendicants were licensed to hear the people's confessions. At the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, invoked to deal with contemporary problems,

⁸ See Bremond, Le Goff et Schmitt, *L' 'exemplum'*. A concise history of the exemplum is supplied by Oostrom, F.P. van, ed., *Voorbeeldig vertellen. Middelnederlandse exempelen* (Amsterdam, 1985), epilogue and Bachrach, A.G.H. et al. eds., *Moderne encyclopedie van de wereldliteratuur* (10 vols., Haarlem, Antwerpen, 1963-1984), III, p. 187.

⁹ Gregory the Great observed that Jesus used comparisons to bridge the gap between the familiar to the unknown. Albert the Great (1206-1280) advocated the usage of a parable in order to highlight specific virtues and to convince ordinary people. For both influential thinkers, see Wailes, S.L., 'Why did Jesus use parables? The medieval discussion', *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in medieval & renaissance culture* n.s. 13 (1985), pp. 50-52. Matuszak, J., *Das Speculum exemplorum als Quelle volkstümlicher Glaubensvorstellungen des Spätmittelalters* (Quellen und Studien zur Volkskunde 8; Siegburg, 1967), pp. 57-58 emphasises that in the exemplum the works of God, or the supernatural, were made concrete.

¹⁰ Rosenwein, R.H. and L.K. Little, 'Social meaning in the monastic and mendicant spiritualities', *Past and Present* 63 (1974), p. 23.

¹¹ See d'Avray, *Preaching*, pp. 216-237, who stresses that other imagery was used as well.

¹² Murray, A., 'Confession as a historical source in the thirteenth century', *The writing of history in the middle ages*. Essays presented to Richard William Southern, R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill eds. (Oxford, 1981), pp. 275-322.

it was decreed that everyone was to confess their sins at least once a year and to perform penance due.¹³ Soon collections were compiled consisting of a broad range of exempla to assist the preacher in his quest.¹⁴ The laity was informed with catechetical literature (such as on the seven capital sins and the Ten Commandments) about sinful behaviour, which, in the fourteenth century became increasingly available in books written in the vernacular.¹⁵ It also influenced the genre of the exemplum collection: some are specially geared to assist the individual sinner with regard to confessional practice (such as the *Boec van der biechten*, introduced below). Many collections used in this thesis result from mendicant concern.

With the aid of indexes, divided into Gospels preached on Sundays and later into rubrics or handy arrangements of topic in alphabetical order, which were appended to the exemplum collections, the priest could promptly select a topic which would be apt to serve as an illustration to the content of the planned sermon. Of course, in our sources the exempla were incorporated into vernacular collections that reached far beyond their homiletic point of origin and hence became known to a wider public in other contexts than originally intended.

Furthermore, the comical exempla, which served to generate laughter from the audience appear to have been more abundantly used. Either dwelling on the horrors of hell or attempting to amuse, they must have caught the church audience's attention.¹⁶ The exempla used brought the genre into disrepute and complaints were soon heard. Already in the thirteenth century Vincent of

¹³ Douglas, D.C. general ed., *English historical documents* (12 vols., London, 1955-1977), III, pp. 654-655, canon 21.

¹⁴ Not only were mendicants involved in the gathering and writing of exempla, but Cistercians and secular clergy as well, see Schmitt, J.-Cl., 'Recueils franciscains d'exempla' et perfectionnement des techniques intellectuelles du XIIIe au XVe siècle', *Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartes* 135 (1977), pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ Warnar, G., 'Biecht, gebod en zonde. Middelnederlandse moraaltheologie voor de wereldlijke leek', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 36-51.

Beauvais warned against copious use of Aesop's fables in sermons, which stimulated laughter rather than penitence and devotion.¹⁷ Reformers reacted against exempla particularly used in the sermons preached at Easter.¹⁸ In 1528, the Council of Sens forbade the preachers to mention old wives' tales: *aniles fabulae*.¹⁹ It is of importance to emphasise this point since the presentation of comical situations could lead to gross exaggerations.²⁰ This should be borne in mind when conclusions are drawn about the reality-factor contained within them.

It has not proved an easy task to establish a framework for female representations based on our exemplum collections. The main avenue of enquiry used by many researchers for women in exempla is closed since the vernacular exemplum collections are not furnished with indexes based on alphabetical lists, preventing searching on words such as 'woman', 'girl', 'widow', 'chastity', 'marriage', etc.²¹ This suggest *inter alia* that the earliest printed vernacular exemplum collections were not intended to be used first and foremost by preachers. As a guideline I have used De Vooys's book on exempla and legends, but unfortunately his interest in legends does not amount to much and the description of exemplum collections is rather brief and at times incomplete.²² De

¹⁶ Berlioz, J., *Le rire du prédicateur récits facétieux du Moyen Age. Textes traduits par Albert Lecoy de la Marche. Présentation, notes et annexes par Jacques Berlioz* (Turnhout, 1992), p. 6.

¹⁷ Wackers, P.W.M., *De waarheid als leugen. Een interpretatie van Reynaerts historie* (Utrecht, 1986), p. 28.

¹⁸ Although evidence mostly dates from the sixteenth century, objections must have been raised before, Fluck, H., 'Der Risus Paschalis. Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Volkskunde', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 31 (1934), p. 189.

¹⁹ Van Oostrom ed., *Vertellen*, p. 97.

²⁰ Markiewicz, H., 'On the definitions of literary parody', *To honor Roman Jakobson. Essays on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, w. ed. (3 vols., The Hague, Paris, 1966-1967), II, pp. 1264-1272.

²¹ Berlioz, J. and M.A. Polo de Beaulieu, 'Exempla: a discussion and a case study', *Medieval women and the sources of medieval history*, J.T. Rosenthal ed. (Athens, London, 1990), pp. 50-60, who could easily search by index for *mulier* and *femina* in the manuscript sources and incunable editions of the *Scala celi* of the fourteenth-century Jean Gobi. See also Ribaucourt, C., 'L'alphabet des récits: pour parler des femmes', *Prêcher d'exemples. Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Age*, J.-Cl. Schmitt ed. (Paris, 1985), pp. 107-120.

²² Vooys, C.G.N. de, *Middelnederlandse legenden en exempelen. Bijdrage tot de kennis van de prozalitteratuur en het volksgeloof der middeleeuwen* ('s-Gravenhage, 1900). For

Bruin, who has devoted one chapter of his book to legends and exempla, does not supply any useful examples since his book is based solely on manuscript material, none of which had appeared in print before 1501.²³

Scholars outside the Low Countries have not included much of our corpus either. Stith Thompson, whose aim was to supply a comprehensive register of materials of all kinds of traditional narrative, has incorporated only one exemplum collection of our corpus, i.e. the *Aesopica*.²⁴ Frederic Tubach fares a little better by incorporating more of our collections, but since many of his references are extracted from De Vooys, it becomes a circular exercise.²⁵ In order to prevent falling back on a small (and incomplete) amount of indexes, and since none of the above is written with women's history in mind, it was necessary to sift through all the exemplum collections myself in an attempt to pinpoint those in which women within the family play a key role.

That exemplum collections are a fruitful source for women's history cannot be doubted. Rudolph Schenda outlines the importance of research into exempla.²⁶ The dissemination and the way in which exempla worked, as well as the contribution to the *Geschichte des Volkslebens*, the history of the common

instance, he omitted to discuss the *Historie van die seven wise mannen van Romen*. It is still the standard work on Dutch exempla; for its value, see Van Oostrom ed., *Vertellen*, p. 97.

²³ Bruin, C.C. de, ed., *Middel Nederlands geestelijk proza* (Zutphen, 1940), chapter iv.

²⁴ Thompson, S., *Motif-index of folk-literature. A classification of narrative elements in folktales, ballads, myths, fables, mediaeval romances, exempla, fabliaux, jest-books, and local legends* (6 vols., Copenhagen, revised and enlarged ed., 1955-1958). His intention is explained on pp. 9-10, and for the sources incorporated, see pp. 15-18.

²⁵ Tubach, F.C., *Index exemplorum. A handbook of medieval religious tales* (Folklore Fellows Communications 204; Helsinki, 1969), pp. 524-528 has incorporated in his list of primary sources the *Gesta Romanorum* and *Seelentrost*. The *Historia septem sapientium Romae*, *Aesopus* and De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen* are mentioned under secondary sources. For a critical review on Tubach (whose work is described as '*controversé mais indispensable*') see, Berlioz, J., 'Introduction à la recherche dans les exempla médiévaux', *Les exempla médiévaux. Introduction à la recherche, suivie des tables critiques de l'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach*, J. Berlioz et M.A. Polo de Beaulieu eds. (Carcasconne, 1992), pp. 15-73, quotation on p. 28. The article is most useful in providing an updated bibliography (particularly for French sources). Of our selection of sources only the *Gesta romanorum* features in the book (see also below).

²⁶ Schenda, R., 'Stand und Aufgaben der Exemplaforchung', *Fabula* 10 (1969), pp. 69-85.

people can be studied. This thesis assists in these quests since it aims to offer parallels between the text and audience with reference to women. Tubach points to the psychological differentiation in medieval exempla: although woman is still portrayed as the embodiment of the evil resulting from the Fall, which reflects her image in a religious sense, she is also portrayed in marital disputes and is, as such, secularised.²⁷ Exempla show insight into the religious life and devout practices of women, and into their marital relations.²⁸ Also, their lifestyles, social ranking, kinship and family relations can be studied through them.²⁹ Furthermore, various types of women (both represented within the family or as a particular category, for instance, poor woman, ill, sinful, etc.) are placed within various spatial scenery (home, city, countryside).³⁰ Thus, women appear in a variety of settings, amongst which the city, and they appear in 'secular scenes' which may catch the interest of the lay reader.

1.2.1 The exemplum collections

Where possible I have discussed the broad context in which the exempla appear. For each book I have consistently looked at the introduction in which the potential reader is frequently addressed by the author/compiler or printer. In this way we may envisage for whom the book was intended or advertised.³¹ For each collection I have briefly evaluated the usage of female images which are shown in the exempla.

²⁷ Tubach, F. C., 'Strukturanalytische Probleme. Das mittelalterliche Exemplum', *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 59 (1968), p. 28.

²⁸ Biller, 'Woman', pp. 132-135. In his discussion on Caesarius von Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum* (1223-1224), Biller has shown that an interesting residue is left when leaving out exempla in which the religious appear.

²⁹ Berlioz and Polo de Beaulieu, 'Exempla', p. 43 and p. 53.

³⁰ Pellegrini, L., *Specchio di donna. L'immagine femminile nel XIII secolo: gli exempla di Stefano di Borbone* (Religione e società. Storia della chiesa e dei movimenti cattolici 14; Roma, 1989), p. 172.

³¹ The prologues in the earliest printed books in the vernacular often mention the reason the book was printed, see Vermeulen, Y.G., *Tot profijt en genoegen. Motiveringen voor de produktie van Nederlandstalige gedrukte teksten, 1477-1540* (Groningen, 1986), pp. 46-52. Vermeulen's first concern lies with the motivation of the printers, not with the audience.

1.2.1.1 *De ludo scachorum* [Dutch] *Dat scaecspel*, by Jacobus de Cessolis³²

Jacobus de Cessolis, a northern Italian Dominican, wrote the allegorical treatise on the Latin version in 1300, in which a tyrant features who could not bear to be criticised by his subjects.³³ The moralising work is interspersed with exempla. A master invented the game of chess to point out the duties of the king in a non-offensive manner. In it, the hierarchy of worldly seculars, represented by the chess pieces, is discussed (but the clergy is excluded). The work was very popular throughout western Europe in the mid and later middle ages.

³²

When I refer to the *editio princeps*, I mean it to be the first edition in Middle Dutch. Instead of supplying endless *compendiae*, which the interested reader can easily look up himself, for instance in *Catalogue of books printed in the XVth century now in the British Museum* (12 vols., 1908-1985, London, 1962, annotated, photo-lithographic repr., 1967), IX, *Fascicule 1 Holland, Fascicule 2 Belgium*, introduction by M.G. Painter and Thienen, G. van, ed., *Incunabula in Dutch libraries. A census of fifteenth-century printed books in Dutch public collections* (Bibliotheca bibliographica neerlandica XVII-I, XVII-II; 2 vols., Nieuwkoop, 1983), II. I think it more helpful to refer to secondary sources or modern editions which often supply short descriptions of contents. I have made extensive use of the experimental cd-rom INCIPIT version 1994-1995 which was very kindly put at my disposal both at the BL and The Hague KB. The paper copy of part of the information contained on the disk is known as the ISTC, which is also kept at both institutions. When information from INCIPIT is stated between square brackets it means that scholars are uncertain about the accuracy of the information conveyed. I have consistently used round brackets when introducing place of publication, printer and dates in the sources. In general, I have copied the entire titles which appear in INCIPIT to serve as a rapid reference for the language of the Dutch forerunner. In cases where titles are not shown in INCIPIT, I have added the information. Occasionally, I have harmonised titles. For the *Scaecspel* I have used the *editio princeps* (Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 2 October 1479) BL shelf mark IB. 47320. In total, there are three Middle Dutch editions extant. For bibliographical details, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, pp. 32-33. Information on manuscripts and editions is supplied by Jansen-Sieben, R. ed., *Repertorium van de Middelnederlandse artes-literatuur* (Utrecht, 1989), pp. 187-188.

³³

For a short description, see De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen*, pp. 351-352 and Brummel, L. en H. Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken uit de Nederlanden*. Boeken uit de collectie Arenberg thans in de verzameling Lessing J. Rosenwald. Tentoonstelling Den Haag, Meermannno-Westreenianum en Brussel, Albert I Bibliotheek (Den Haag, 1960), nr. 20. For authorities and short description per exemplum, see Schaick Avelingh, G. H. van, ed., *Dat scaecspel* (Leiden, 1912), pp. LXVIX-CXIV. Debaene, L., *De Nederlandse volksboeken. Ontstaan en geschiedenis van de Nederlandse prozaromans, gedrukt tussen 1475 en 1540* (Antwerpen, 1951, herdruk, Hulst, 1977), p. 264. Although Debaene is somewhat outdated (particularly qua bibliography) he is useful for the determination of the main characteristics for each of the sources he treats. He also supplies handy summarised descriptions.

The Middle Dutch version is different from the Latin. The vernacular text differs from the original in subdivision, contents, omissions and other exempla have been added.³⁴ In the vernacular version, the rules of the game are not mentioned or they are reduced, instead morals are expanded on. In each chapter a state of the hierarchy is addressed such as king, queen, knights, ordinary folk, merchant, innkeeper and the text outlining their duties and obligations furnished with exempla.

Herman Pleij points to the interesting fact that burgher groups have been inserted in the vernacular text, which do not appear in the Latin versions.³⁵ This is indicative of the intended audience. It is not clear whether Franco, also mentioned in the incunable, who finished working on his manuscript in 1403, has been responsible for these alterations or whether he merely copied or translated. As it stands in the vernacular, the code of conduct and the societal role of the individual is emphasised, thus providing the lay person with a pattern for a way of life.³⁶ In fact, two different versions have been printed. An adaptation of the *Scaecspel* by the Dominican court chaplain Dirk van Delft (ca. 1365-?), originally part of a larger work, appeared in print too.³⁷

According to the explicit the book seems to have been intended for a male audience, but the prologue clarifies that the book is printed for anyone (*yghelijck mensche*) whatever their status in order to conduct his life to profit his soul (in the

³⁴ Other fragments of text have been inserted in the Dutch compilation which resulted in a different composition. For changes in relation to the exempla, see Herwaarden, J. van, 'Dat Scaecspel'. Een profaan-ethische verkenning', *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, J. Reynaert et al. eds. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur IX; Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 305-306.

³⁵ Pleij, H., *Sprekend over de middeleeuwen* (Utrecht, Amsterdam, 1991), p. 42.

³⁶ Van Herwaarden, 'Scaecspel', p. 318.

³⁷ For the abridged text by Dirk van Delft I have used [Zwolle, Johannes de Vollenhoe, about 1478/79-80] BL shelf mark IA. 48112. This version will be referred to as *Scaecspel* (abridged). For bibliographical details, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 82. See Daniëls, L.M.Fr. ed., *Meester Dirc van Delft, O.P. Tafel van den kersten ghelove*, naar de handschriften uitgegeven, ingeleid en van aantekeningen voorzien (Tekstuitgaven van OGE IV-VII; 4 vols., Antwerpen, Nijmegen, Utrecht, 1937-1939), for Dirk's full version of the *Scaecspel*. It has been argued that the text has a separate identity and should not be

afterlife).³⁸ Of particular interest to our study are not only the exempla in which females feature in a wide variety of roles, but also the discussion of the role of the Queen - alternated with that of women in general -, and the information supplied about households.³⁹ On another level, women may also have been interested in the game of chess and were not excluded from playing chess. Indeed, the game was often part of the estates of late medieval burghers.⁴⁰

1.2.1.2 *Kaetspel gemoraliseert*, by Jan van den Berghe⁴¹

The author Jan van den Berghe (ca.1360-7 October 1439) was a member of the Flemish landed gentry who worked subsequently as reeve and councillor at the Council of Flanders.⁴² His decision to write the book was made at a dinner party in Bruges with the knight Jan van Uutkerke when the conversation turned to the appraisal of the *Scaecspel*.⁴³ The knight became Jan's patron and the work was finished on 23 December 1431. It is one of the few sources which has not been translated from another language into Middle Dutch.

regarded as a De Cessolis in Dutch translation, see Pleij, H., 'Dirc van Delft in Göttingen', *Literatuur* 7 (1990), pp. 325-326.

³⁸ In the explicit, he requests to be corrected with 'brotherly love' (*broederliker minnen*) by anyone discovering a flaw in his work, *Scaecspel*, fol. i5v. The prologue is found on fol. a1. The prologue was changed and simplified by the printer, see Vermeulen, *Profijt*, p. 82.

³⁹ The exempla will be discussed in the following chapters. On the Queen, see *Scaecspel*, fols. b1-b5 and on the role of the husband in the household, see fols. h1v-h5v. On the role of the husband in Dirk van Delft, see *Scaecspel* (abridged), fols. 14-15.

⁴⁰ Dubbe, B., 'Het huisraad in het Oostnederlandse burgerwoonhuis in de late middeleeuwen', *Thuis in de late middeleeuwen. Het Nederlands burgerinterieur 1400-1535*. Tentoonstelling in the Provinciaal Overijssels Museum van 5 oktober tot 31 december 1980. Catalogus door J.W.H. de Jong, w. ed. (Zwolle, 1980), p. 79, although decks of cards appear to have been used more widely.

⁴¹ There are two editions extant, I have used the second edition of the *Kaetspel* (Delft, Hendrick Eckert van Homberch, 9 January 1498) BL shelf mark IA. 47231. For bibliographical details of the second edition, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 27. There is a modern edition by Roetert Frederikse, J.A. ed., *Dat kaetspel ghemoralizeert* (Leiden, 1915), however the text is not based on the incunable. Information on manuscripts and editions is supplied by Jansen-Sieben ed., *Repertorium*, p. 188.

⁴² On Jan van den Berghe, see Bachrach et al. eds., *Encyclopedie*, I, p. 320.

⁴³ *Kaetspel*, fol. o1v. The knight is identified as Jan van Uutkerke, chamberlain of Philip the Good or Jan's son, see Roetert Frederikse ed., *Kaetspel*, pp. CX-CXI.

The intention behind this collection, which consists of about one hundred exempla, was to explain the workings of the judicial procedure of Flemish customary law in the format of a moralised ball game. The book is divided into four parts: the reason the book was written, how the game relates to justice (and judges in particular), the virtues of the judges and the conclusion. It is written in moralised prose which has been described as unappealing.⁴⁴ Jan also appears to have been forgetful: occasionally the allegorical sense of the judicial system is not used at all.

In general, the construction of the chapters is similar: a short introduction is followed by one or more exempla, after which, more often missing than present, a general statement in allegorical sense about the ball game follows. For instance, in the chapter on how the judges should conduct themselves in marriage it is explained, that the judge should not commit adultery. This is followed by five exempla and supplemented by Jan's own observation that some judges are corrupt because they love certain women.⁴⁵ These women cloud the official's judgement and they influence the duration of court cases. Presumably, these exempla are aimed at men primarily, but undoubtedly they interested women too.

There are various exempla in which women feature both from antiquity and the Old Testament, who may be held up to women. In the next chapter, a provenance shows that a secular woman owned a code of law. Women could have been interested in tracts written with a legal intention because their work (about which more in the next chapter). Also, the title may have appealed to

⁴⁴ Debaene, *Volksboeken*, p. 256 and Roetert Frederikse ed., *Kaetspel*, p. XVIII.

⁴⁵ *Kaetspel*, fols. n5-n6v. It is not made clear who these women were, perhaps they were sent by the accused to influence the judge, or they may have been the defendants themselves or perhaps they were not involved in the cases and represented the liaisons which the judge may have had outside wedlock.

women: the game was very popular in the Low Countries, indeed ball games turn up in exempla.⁴⁶

1.2.1.3 *Historia septem sapientium Romae* [Dutch] *Historie van die seven wise mannen van Romē*⁴⁷

These or similar exempla travelled to the west from the east, perhaps by visitors to the Holy Land or crusaders, and enjoyed a wide popularity throughout the middle ages.⁴⁸ Indeed, the stories were so popular that they are depicted on contemporary wall hangings.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ For ball games which feature in the exempla, see the exemplum of the dancing woman who is accidentally killed by a ball hit during a game which seems to refer to golf ('colven'), *Sterfboeck*, fols. r1-r1v; it is also mentioned in *Bienboeck*, fol. s7 (both sources will be introduced below). Another example is that of the young man, who after having accepted a ring from his girlfriend, puts it on a finger of Mary's statue for safe-keeping because he is invited to play a ball game, Van Oostrom ed., *Vertellen*, pp. 31-33. The rules of playing the medieval *kaetspel* (based on the incunable) are explained by Bondt, C. de, 'Heeft yemant lust met bal, of met reket te spelen?' *Tennis in Nederland tussen 1500 en 1800* (Hilversum, 1993), pp. 20-22. The game's popularity is witnessed by statutes limiting the places where games could be held, and by street names still extant, Roetert Frederikse ed., *Kaetspel*, p. XXI. It was also a pastime of the court of the county of Holland, Oostrom, F.P. van, *Het woord van eer. Literatuur aan het Hollandse hof omstreeks 1400* (Amsterdam, 1987), p. 28.

⁴⁷ There are five incunables extant, I have mainly used the *editio princeps* (Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 25 July 1479). The incunable is kept at Göttingen, but I was fortunate to be able to consult a facsimile of it at the Documentatie Centrum Neerlandistiek at the Universiteit van Amsterdam, shelf mark F11. I have also used the second edition (Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 13 January 1483), kept at Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, shelf mark Squ 377 (3) rar. The latter edition will be referred to as *Seven mannen* (Jacobszoon van der Meer). See also Botemans, A.J. ed., *Die hystorie van die seven wijse mannen van romen* (2 vols., Haarlem, 1898), II, whose edition contains the text reprinted in newly cast letters based on the original. Another text is available in modern print, but it is written in verses, Stallaert, K. ed., *Van den VII vroeden van binnen Rome. Een dichtwerk der xiv de eeuw* (Ghent, 1889). A Dutch manuscript version and incunables have been furnished with a bibliography by Runte, H.R., J.K. Wikeley and A.J. Farrell, *The Seven Sages of Rome and The Book of Sindiband. An analytical bibliography* (Garland reference library of the humanities 387; New York, London, 1984), pp. 33-38.

⁴⁸ For descriptions of the contents, see Debaene, *Volksboeken*, pp. 198-205, Bree, F. de, 'Gheraert Leeu als drukker van Nederlands verhalend proza', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 63-69, and for the incipit, see Vermeulen, *Profijt*, p. 81. The work was printed as soon as printing was invented, Stallaert ed., *Vroeden*, p. 20. There are different exempla in various historical periods, languages and traditions, but they are constructed in a similar framework, see e.g. Gilleland, B.B. trans., *Johannes de Alta*

The exempla are set in a certain framework. After the death of the emperor's first wife he appointed seven wise men to look after his son. When his second marriage remains without issue, the son is invited back to court, but warned by the masters that he should not speak for seven days. The empress does not succeed in eliciting one word from him and she attempts to seduce him. When he does not yield to her advances she accuses him of rape, which is punishable by the death sentence. Each day one of the masters and the empress in turn tell an exemplum. On the eighth day, the son speaks for himself.

The total amounts to fifteen exempla, each exemplum is supplemented by an 'explanation'. In the exempla of the masters the empress is blackened, and *vice versa*. After each exemplum related by the empress the emperor decides to have his son killed, a sentence only to be staved off by an exemplum of a master; after each exemplum of a master the emperor decides to spare his son and do away with his wife.

The incunable in the vernacular was especially intended for lay people (*leke luden*).⁵⁰ Women are on the whole portrayed as deceiving and totally untrustworthy. The emperor's weakness and indecisiveness or the empress's cleverness in citing exempla matching both quality and quantity of those of the masters, is not brought to the explicit attention of the public. Of particular interest to us is the virulence with which women, who in the explanation are compared with the wicked empress, are described generally. Antifeminism is rife in this collection.

Silva, Dolopathos or The king and the seven wise men (Medieval and renaissance texts & studies 2; Binghampton, 1981), pp. xvi-xix.

⁴⁹ Engels, L.J., 'Zeven Wijzen van Rome', *Van Aoil tot de Zwaanridder. Personages uit de middeleeuwse verhaalkunst en hun voortleven in literatuur, theater en beeldende kunst*, W.P. Gerritsen en A.G. van Melle eds. (Nijmegen, 1993), p. 380.

⁵⁰ *Seven mannen*, fol. a2.

1.2.1.4 *Gesta Romanorum* [Dutch] *Die geesten of geschiedenis van Romen*⁵¹

This exemplum collection, perhaps drawn up by a Franciscan, saw the light of day probably either in England or Germany in the mid to late thirteenth century.⁵² The actors are, or are thought to have been, 'Romans'. In general the genre of the *Gesta* were regarded as deeds of the seculars.⁵³ Debaene suggests the *Geesten* must have been perceived by a medieval audience as an historical work rather than to be assigned to any other genre.⁵⁴ However, that proves difficult to maintain when the structure of the text is studied.

The vernacular incunable consists of about one hundred and eighty exempla,⁵⁵ each exemplum being followed by an allegorical explanation, with a specific moral tagged on at the end. Although the exemplum frequently has a secular content, the figures or actions are perceived as symbols and they are explained

⁵¹ I have used the *editio princeps* (Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 30 April 1481) The Hague KB shelf mark 170 E 24; in total three incunables are extant. There is no modern edition in Dutch; for a German edition of selected passages, see Weiske, B., *Gesta romanorum* (Fortuna vitrea 3 und 4; 2 vols., Tübingen, 1992), II. She also briefly discusses the contents of a selection of exempla, Weiske, *Gesta*, I, pp. 199- 215. For a modern Latin edition, see Oesterley, H. ed., *Gesta romanorum* (Berlin, 1872). See for (German) keywords and titles for each chapter respectively, Oesterley ed., *Gesta*, pp. V-VIII and pp. 692-697. Marchalons, S., 'Medieval symbols and the *Gesta Romanorum*', *The Chaucer review* 4 (1974), fn. 3, comments on modern editions.

⁵² For brief descriptions, see De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen*, pp. 348-349 and Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 27 (based on a Latin edition printed by Gerard Leeu). On place of origin, and on author and date, see Weiske, *Gesta*, I, p. 30 and p. 182.

⁵³ Ebels-Hoving, B., 'Nederlandse geschiedschrijving 1350-1530. Een poging tot karakterisering in Nederland', *Genoechlicke en lustige historiën. Laatmiddeleeuwse geschiedschrijving in Nederland*, B. Ebels-Hoving et al. eds. (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen IV; Hilversum, 1987), p. 219.

⁵⁴ Debaene, *Volksboeken*, p. 248.

⁵⁵ Although the table of contents counts 182 exempla, note that exemplum nr. 137 is omitted both in the table and in the book itself. The content of exemplum nr. 137 is inserted under nr. 164 in the incunable. So, as a matter of fact, the incunable contains 181 exempla only, the same as the modern editions of Oesterley ed., *Gesta*, and Gräße, J.G.Th. ed., *Das älteste Märchen- und Legendenbuch des christlichen Mittelalters oder die Gesta Romanorum* (Wiesbaden, 1847, unveränderter Neudruck, 1971). For a discussion on and comparison of various modern editions, see Velay-Vallantin, C., '*Gesta romanorum*', *Les exempla médiévaux. Introduction à la recherche, suivie des tables*

into a theological context (particularly into a salvific context) where the moral duties of the Christian are stated as well.⁵⁶ Even if an exemplum has a moral or ethical meaning the application changes its original idea.

Modern researchers are not impressed by the allegorical explanations. The transference of the figures and actions to a symbolic level is erratic, inconsistent, far-fetched or even absurd, and repeatedly the explanation exceeds in length the text of the exemplum.⁵⁷ The content of the exemplum may have been perceived as 'historical', but the reinterpretation of the figures or actions draw the *Geesten* into a homiletic sphere. The 'dear children', so often addressed in the explanation, is an indication of this. The book could easily have served as a book of meditation as well. Of course, the reader was not forced to read both parts in conjunction. The exemplum 'works' on another level than the application. It combined the action-packed stories with a more austere function. It served both to amuse and edify.

A female public was not exempted, the incunable was intended to assist in the instruction and salvation of people (*mensen*) whilst dealing with virtues and sins.⁵⁸ The *Geesten* is of importance to our study because women feature abundantly in this collection.⁵⁹

critiques de l'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach, J. Berlioz et M.A. Polo de Beaulieu eds. (Carcasconne, 1992), pp. 245-261.

⁵⁶ De Bree, 'Leeu', pp. 74-75. For elements of allegorical application and morality, see Weiske, *Gesta*, I, pp. 172-183.

⁵⁷ See Velay-Vallantin, C., 'La *Gesta romanorum*: l'encyclopédisme édifiant', *Prêcher d'exemples. Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Âge*, J.-Cl. Schmitt ed. (Paris, 1985), p. 151, 'hyperbolique, longue ou inadéquante' and Marchalons, 'Symbols', p. 313, who cites some examples.

⁵⁸ *Gesta*, fol. a2 and Vermeulen, *Profijt*, p. 84.

⁵⁹ Sprandel, R., 'Die *Gesta Romanorum* als Quelle der spätmittelalterlichen Mentalitätsgeschichte', *Saeculum* 33 (1982), pp. 316-319.

1.2.1.5 *Aesopus, Vita et Fabulae* [Dutch] *Vita, hystorien ende fabulen*⁶⁰

The book consists of several parts. The first is dedicated to Aesop's life (sixth century B.C.) and contains short stories, or 'histories', attributed to him. After this follows a large collection of fables in which chiefly animals appear as actors. The collection amounts to about hundred and eighty exempla (including the 'histories').

The *Aesop* in the incunable edition was translated into Middle Dutch using the French *Aesop* of the Augustinian doctor of theology, Julien of Lyon.⁶¹ He in his turn had adapted it from the German by the physician Heinrich Steinhöwel, whose *Aesop* was published in the 1470s. It was very popular throughout western-Europe and that is not surprising. Not only is it amusing to see animals having to cope with common situations humans may find themselves in,⁶² but it also appeals to the 'ordinary man' since it highlights typical human weaknesses in a humorous way. The witty fables are written in short sentences and are easy to comprehend. The moral is spelled out at least once, usually at the very

⁶⁰ In fact, the complete title of INCIPIT reads: *Aesopus. Vita*, after Rinucius, *et Fabulae, Lib. I-IV*, prose version of Romulus [Dutch] Add: *Fabulae extravagantes. Fabulae novae* (Transl. Rinucius). *Fabulae Aviani. Fabulae collectae* [Dutch]. No Dutch title is provided by INCIPIT, but *Catalogue British Museum* IX, pp. 27-28, refers simply to it as *Vita et fabulae*. The latter also contains bibliographical details on the edition kept at the BL. I shall refer to it as *Aesop*. There are two incunables extant. I have used the second edition (Delft, Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, 27 April 1498) BL shelf mark IB. 47233. For composition of the book, see also Blackham, H.J., *The fable as literature* (London and Dover, New Hampshire, 1985), pp. 36-40. Fortunately, the first part of the incunable, containing the witty stories of Aesop's life, is available in modern Dutch, see Kuiper, W. en R. Resoort transs., *Het ongelukkige leven van Esopus* (Amsterdam, 1990).

⁶¹ I have drawn on Schippers, A., *Middel nederlandse fabels. Studies van het genre, beschrijving van collecties, catalogus van afzonderlijke fabels* (Nijmegen, 1995), pp. 185-192, and Kuiper en Resoort transs., *Esopus*, pp. 82-108. Schippers is thorough in her research and has supplied a description of the manuscripts and prints for every collection of fables she mentions.

⁶² For an introduction to the genre of fables, see Bachrach et al. eds., *Encyclopedie*, III, p. 195, and Dekkers, M., *Bestiarium. De eenhoorn, meermin, aspidochelone, manticore, mosseleend, pegasos, sater en andere fascinerende dieren uit de middeleeuwse beestenboeken* (Amsterdam, 1977), pp. 9-12. Wackers, *Waarheid*, chapter 1 and chapter 2, points out that speaking animals transgress two boundaries: possession of reason and the ability to use language.

beginning and often a practical wisdom is added too. In this way, the story becomes immediately relevant to everyday life.

The incunable was intended for all people (*menschen*), and it served both to please and instruct.⁶³ There are many examples in which mothers (and fathers) are exhorted to educate their offspring and, on the other side of the coin, youth is warned to take heed of their parents. In the collection of fables mother animals often feature in scenes taking care of their offspring, and females also appear in scenes where their fickleness and talkativeness are criticised. Also of importance is Aesop's dealings, as a subordinate slave, in a household situation where he outwits his philosopher-master as well as the latter's wife.

1.2.1.6 *Dialogus creaturarum moralisatus* [Dutch] *Twespraec der creaturen*⁶⁴

The authorship of this fable book has been ascribed to Nicolas Pergamenus and also to the Milanese physician Mayno de Mayneri (d. 1370).⁶⁵ No manuscripts have been known to survive in Middle Dutch, which suggests that the matter of the exempla may have been relatively unknown before publication, but the familiarity of the animal stories attributed to its popularity. It was reprinted

⁶³ See Vermeulen, *Profijt*, p. 87, based on the *editio princeps* (Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, 1210/1485). The reference is also found in his second edition, *Aesop* fol. a2.

⁶⁴ There are five editions extant, of which I have used the third (Delft, [Christiaan Snellaert], 2 November 1488) BL shelf mark IB. 47162. For bibliographical details of this incunable, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 22. Unfortunately, a modern Dutch edition does not exist, except for Gerritsen, W.P. ed., *Dyalogus creaturarum, dat is Twispraec der creaturen* (typescript, Utrecht, 1982). The English edition printed dates from about 1530, see Kratzmann, G. and E. Gee eds., *The Dialogues of Creatures Moralyzed* (Medieval and renaissance texts 4; Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1988). The editors speculate that the early modern edition is probably based on the Latin edition which Gerard Leeu printed in 1491. For the Latin edition, see Gräße, J.G.Th. ed., *Die beiden ältesten lateinischen Fabelbücher des Mittelalters des Bischofs Cyrillus Speculum sapientiae und des Nicolaus Pergamenus Dialogus creaturarum* (Tübingen, 1880).

⁶⁵ See Schippers, *Fabels*, pp. 158-185 and Schippers, A., 'Dit boeck hoort toe ...': bezitters en lezers van de 'Dialogus Creaturarum' en de 'Twispraec der creaturen', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Delft, 1993), pp. 162-164, and p. 180, fn. 1 for authorship in particular. Short description of contents is supplied by De Bree, 'Leeu', p. 73, and De Vooy, *Legenden en exempelen*, p. 349.

not only in Middle Dutch but also in various European languages. The actors who occur in these fables are of all sorts: humans, animals, plants, precious stones, metals, celestial bodies, the elements, etc. The book has an encyclopaedic ring to it and it must have been of more value in relation to natural history than *Aesop*, but it is nevertheless didactic-moralising.⁶⁶

The material is arranged in one hundred and twenty two chapters, but often other exempla are interspersed (adding to the total amount of exempla) in the discussion of the moral. The moral follows after each dialogue. Theological or allegorical intermissions are lacking which makes it easy to read and understand. There is an emphasis on the narrative. The jolly woodcuts in the incunable make it a pleasure to open this book.

The prologue states that the book was deemed of profit to preachers (*predikaers*) and all good sensible folk (*goeden verstandigen menschen*).⁶⁷ The *Twespraec* is of importance to us because of its blatant antifeminism, but it is employed in a comical fashion. I cannot imagine a medieval audience keeping straight faces when hearing or reading the exempla, and therefore perhaps taking it all with a pinch of salt. Also, but this a minor detail, there is one exemplum which is explicitly directed towards women.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Debaene, *Volksboeken*, p. 245.

⁶⁷ *Twespraec*, fol. A1v. It is uncertain whether the editions in Middle Dutch were used primarily by the clergy, Schippers, 'Boeck', pp. 164-166.

⁶⁸ *Twespraec*, fol. g1, a monkey snatched the adorned hat from a lady's head, and consequently she felt shamed *en public*. '*Ende dit liet god so gescien om alle vrouwen te leren*', (God made this happen to teach all women). Tearing off a woman's hat appears to have been a standard insult, see Meyer, G.M. de, met medewerking van E.W.F. van den Elzen, *Min en onmin. Mannen en vrouwen over hun omgang aan het einde van de vijftiende eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989), p. 31. In the preceding exemplum, based on similar lines, an ugly female crow steals plumage from other birds to dress up at a wedding but, to the crow's dismay, all the feathers are reclaimed, *Twespraec*, fol. g1.

1.2.1.7 *Speculum sapientiae* [Dutch] *Parabolen*, by Cyrillus⁶⁹

The author of these ninety five fables is unknown.⁷⁰ Contenders are Cyril, archbishop of Jerusalem (ca. 315-386), Cyril of Alexandria (ca. 376-444) and Cyril of Thessalonica (827-869); the oldest known manuscript in Latin, probably written in northern Italy in the mid fourteenth century, is assigned to Friar Boniohannes de Messanensis.⁷¹ The book was predominantly popular in southern Germany, Bohemia and Austria.

It is divided into four books, each book representing a particular virtue: wisdom, humility, justice and temperance. The long dialogues, usually between the animals but also, less frequently, between the elements, celestial bodies, parts of the human body, etc., serve to exhort the reader to live a virtuous life. Many protagonists are female. The learnedness of the author radiates through the work, and the exempla leave a rather more grave and sincere impression than the witty *Aesop* and *Twespraec* fables.

The dialogue in the exemplum revolves regularly around one character having a bad intention and another character attempting to dissuade the first from his or her purpose with a long and learned speech. It stands out from the rest of the other exemplum collections discussed in this study since in general no exhortations are made with reference to the afterlife of the soul, but it states the detrimental effect(s) to the person in this life.

Lelij observes that the animals who feature in the stories are chosen at random.⁷² I feel similarly about the sex assigned to the animals, with a few exceptions. The

⁶⁹ There is one edition extant. I have used (Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 20 June 1481) The Hague KB shelf mark 169 G 51. The book is also known under the Latin title: *Quadripartitus apologeticus*. A modern edition, based on a manuscript (ca. 1475), supplemented with incunable text, is provided by Lelij, C.M. ed., *De parabolen van Cyrillus* (Amsterdam, 1930), pp. 1-129. For the Latin edition, see Gräße, *Fabelbücher*.

⁷⁰ See the introduction to Lelij ed., *Parabolen* and Schippers, *Fabels*, pp. 147-158, who concurs in general with Lelij.

⁷¹ Lelij ed., *Parabolen*, p. xix and Schippers, *Fabels*, pp. 147-154.

⁷² Lelij ed., *Parabolen*, p. XXXVII.

exceptions are found under the heading of 'temperance', highlighting the virtues of chastity, in which exempla appear featuring the serpent (in this collection the consistent embodiment of 'evil') and the she-monkey (who usually symbolises 'foolishness').⁷³ On the whole, specific virtues or vices attributable to the female as reflected in exempla from other collections are missing. The message conveyed is of more importance than the gender of the animal.

The book was originally intended for the author's 'dear son',⁷⁴ but the characters repeatedly refer to their antagonist 'brother' or 'sister'. Compared to other fable collections, relatively many animals have the female gender. Perhaps it was initially intended for a mixed monastic or semi-religious audience. However, tips on how to lead a virtuous lifestyle appealed to a lay audience too.⁷⁵

1.2.1.8 *Bonum universale de proprietatibus apum* [Dutch] *Der bienboeck*, by Thomas Cantipratensis⁷⁶

The prolific Dominican author Thomas van Cantimpré (ca. 1200-ca. 1270) was born and bred in Kamerrijk (Cambrai), and attended university at Paris.⁷⁷ A

⁷³ The exempla will be used in the following chapters. Though not all she-monkeys are foolish in Middle Dutch literature, see, for instance, the monkey Rukenau who defends her nephew Reynaert in the Middle-Dutch *Reynaerts Historie* as discussed in Wackers, *Waarheid*, p. 131 as well as Wackers, P.M.W., 'Words and deeds in the Middle Dutch Reynaert stories', *Medieval Dutch literature in its European context*, E. Kooper ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 21; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), pp. 140-141.

⁷⁴ *Parabolen*, fol. A1. If the author was a member of the clergy then a spiritual son was addressed.

⁷⁵ Schippers, A., 'Ethiek in de Middelnederlandse fabelbundel 'Parabelen van Cyrillus', *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, J. Reynaert et al. eds. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur IX; Amsterdam, 1994), p. 336.

⁷⁶ There is one known edition (Zwolle, Peter van Os, [15 January] 1488). I have used the copy kept at the BL shelf mark IB. 48134. A modern edition has recently been published, but the text is not based on the incunable; the edition also contains bibliographical details of the incunable, see Stutvoet-Joanknecht, C.M. ed., *Der byen boeck. De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Bonum universale de apibus van Thomas van Cantrimpré en hun achtergrond* (Amsterdam, 1990), pp. 95*-98*. More bibliographical information by *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 84.

⁷⁷ Information about author and his works is found in Bachrach et al. eds., *Encyclopedie*, IX, p. 278. A short description of contents is supplied by Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 69, and De Vooy, *Legenden en exempelen*, pp. 30-34. It is counted among the artes-literature by Jansen-Sieben ed., *Repertorium*, p. XIV and p. 191.

chapter from his *De natura rerum*, an encyclopaedia, served as basis for the text of the *Bienboeck*. The learned friar wrote the *Bienboeck* in Latin, and he relates the community of the bees to the community of human beings, and in particular to the monastic community. There is some truth in Van der Vet's opinion that the exemplum was deemed of more importance than the cohesion of sermon versus exemplum.⁷⁸ It was written at the behest of the *magister-generalis*, who called for anecdotes to be collected by the members of his order, and the popularity of the book spread quickly throughout western and central Europe.⁷⁹ It was Thomas's intention to show how one could live a virtuous life in order to gain a better life in the hereafter. The chastity aspect is naturally addressed frequently (in a book originally intended for the religious) and a book about bees was a good choice since bees were thought to multiply without sexual intercourse.

The book is divided into two parts, which deals with those in command (25 chapters), and those subject to it (66 chapters). Each chapter contains a sermon which is, more often than not, followed by exempla which include miracles.⁸⁰ Mary also appears often in exempla, showing Thomas's special veneration for her.

⁷⁸ Vet, W.A. van der, *Het Bienboec van Thomas van Cantimpré en zijn exempelen* ('s-Gravenhage, 1902), p. 54.

⁷⁹ See Axters, S., 'Nederlandse mystieken in het buitenland. Van Rupert van Deutz tot Ruusbroec', *Verslagen en mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor taal- en letterkunde* 6 (1965), p. 243.

⁸⁰ An extremely handy survey of short contents of exempla is supplied by Stutvoet-Joanknecht, ed., *Byen boeck*, pp. 349-373. In her survey she counts 262 exempla. In the incunable 39 exempla are left out, and one is added. The exempla omitted are those featuring Jews, visions, miracle of the Host. De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen*, p. 33, fn. 4, adds devils and heretics to this list. On the excluded exempla featuring Jews, see Stutvoet-Joanknecht, C.M., 'Een zeldzaam teken van begrip voor het jodendom in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de vijftiende eeuw', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 87-108. She mentions that offensive exempla were occluded not because there was less suspicion of Jews in the northern Low Countries (where the incunable was printed), but because of contacts between biblical Humanists and Jewish intellectuals which had led to new insights in Jewish cultural thinking. This in turn shows that in the printing process some views thought to be offensive were occasionally paid heed to (as was sometimes the case in connection with reference to women, as will be shown in the next chapter).

The prologue does not state for whom the book was intended. The book is of particular interest for our purpose since many women feature in the exempla, however in the sermons women are not addressed.⁸¹ Many exempla are drawn up from Thomas's own experiences as a confessor in the southern Low Countries, and the book adds a local flavour to our collection, albeit one of thirteenth-century life. However, it was deemed important enough to be printed in the fifteenth century, so it must have contained information which was thought appropriate and of interest. Apparently, it was read avidly by women in the vernacular within the circle of the modern devotion.⁸²

1.2.1.9 *Seelentrost* [Dutch] *Der sielentroest*⁸³

The Dutch incunable is based on the text of the German *Grosser Seelentrost* of ca. 1350.⁸⁴ The *Sielentroest* was particularly popular in north-western Germany and in the western and eastern Low Countries. The unknown author or compiler was probably a Dominican.

⁸¹ For the author's personal involvement in the exempla, see Stutvoet-Joanknecht. ed., *Byen boeck*, pp. 43*-44*. He also based the exempla on stories heard from other friars. The laity occurs in nearly half of Thomas's stories, a quarter of which are women, and of the laity about forty percent are city dwellers, see Murray, 'Confession', pp. 292-293. Thomas's exempla provide a good insight into common women's life in an urban setting.

⁸² Stutvoet-Joanknecht, C.M., 'Het Bijenboek van Thomas van Cantimpré in relatie met de Moderne Devotie', *Middeleeuwse boeken en teksten uit Oost-Nederland*, A.J. Geurts ed. (Nijmeegse codicologische cahiers 2-3; Nijmegen, Grave, 1984), p. 35.

⁸³ There are no fewer than eight editions known. I have used the second: (Utrecht, [Printer with the Monogram], 7 May 1479) The Hague KB shelf mark 168 E 31. There is no modern edition in Dutch. There is a modern edition of a German equivalent by Schmitt, M. ed., *Der Grosse Seelentrost. Ein niederdeutsches Erbauungsbuch des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Niederdeutsche Studien 5; Köln, Graz, 1959), however the arrangement of and contents of the exempla in the Dutch incunable and Schmitt's edition are frequently dissimilar.

⁸⁴ For a short description, see Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 21. De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen*, pp. 58-59, recorded it in his list of works containing few exempla. For authorship and geographical distribution area, see also Palmer, N.F., 'Seelentrost', *VL*, VIII, cc. 1030-1034 and Deschamps, J., 'De Middelnederlandse handschriften van de grote en de kleine 'Der sielen troest' ', *Handelingen Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse maatschappij voor taal- en letterkunde en geschiedenis* 17 (1963), pp. 114-115.

The *Sielentroest* is a catechetical work: the material is arranged around the Decalogue. The author 'dear father' answers questions of the 'dear child'. After each commandment is introduced the explanation follows in the form of exempla, instructive material (*leren*), prayers and questions posed to the confessor (naturally, we focus on the exempla).⁸⁵ The exempla, about two hundred, consist of short stories, drawn both from the Bible and secular histories, legends and miracles.⁸⁶ In general, the reader is not furnished with practical tips but rather overloaded with guidelines towards a moral-ethical behaviour. Strong emphasis is laid on virtuous behaviour and good intentions. Compared to most other exemplum collections much information is borrowed from biblical sources (or secondary works on biblical sources such as the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, introduced below).⁸⁷

The book was intended to be read and heard by all people (*menschen*), and, so it is stated, it was easy to comprehend.⁸⁸ It could be utilised not only as a handbook for confessors but certainly also as a guide for sensible and devout lay folk.⁸⁹ Indeed, the addition of prayers in the vernacular suggests it was primarily intended for the laity, assuming that even an uneducated priest would at least be familiar with prayers in the vernacular.

Of particular interest to us are the exempla supplied with the Third Commandment (observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy), the Fourth (honour your father and mother), and the Tenth (you shall not covet your neighbour's wife). These commandments contain respectively information about the condemnation of unmarried girls dancing on holy feast-days; relations between

⁸⁵ See the table in the *Sielentroest*, fols. 1-9.

⁸⁶ Schmidt ed., *Seelentroest*, p. 140*.

⁸⁷ It drew not only on the *Speculum* but on other works too, such as the *Legenda aurea* and the *Vitae patrum*, Deschamps, 'Sielen troest', pp. 113-114.

⁸⁸ *Sielentroest*, fol. 1.

⁸⁹ Wachinger, B., 'Der Dekalog als Ordnungsschema für Exempelsammlungen. Der 'Große Seelentroest', das 'Promptuarium exemplorum' des Andreas Hondorff und die 'Locorum communium collectanea' des Johannes Manlius', *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*, W. Haug und B. Wachinger eds. (Fortuna vitrea 2; Tübingen, 1991), p. 242.

mothers and daughters which are mostly supplied in the form of female *vitae* (treated here as exempla); and a discussion of marriages which feature in the Old Testament (David and Bathsheba, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca). The exempla which contain the female *vitae* seem to be borrowed from the *Legenda aurea*, and do not supply information on any holy woman, past or contemporary, whose fame was geographically tied to the area in which the *Sielentroest* proved popular.

1.2.1.10 Boec van der biechten⁹⁰

This anonymous work, of which there seems to have been no direct forerunner in another language than Middle Dutch, and which probably dates from the fourteenth century, seems to have acted as a sequel to the *Sielentroest*.⁹¹ The exempla consist mainly of miracles and visions.

Although it too is a catechetical work, it is differently organised. Its confessional purpose is heavily emphasised: it explains how the individual should prepare for confession, what to confess, and how to confess. Frameworks for sins to be confessed are employed, amongst which feature the seven capital sins, Decalogue, the seven works of mercy and the sins against the Trinity as well as the five senses.⁹² Almost every sin or virtue mentioned finishes with an exemplum; in total there are about thirty five exempla.

⁹⁰ Three books are extant; I have used one of the second edition (Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 30 October 1480) BL shelf mark IA. 47114.

⁹¹ A scanty summary is supplied by Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 29 and De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen*, p. 59, who points to the rarity of the exempla. For a short description of contents, see Bange, P., *Spiegels der Christenen. Zelfreflectie en ideaalbeeld in laat-middeleeuwse moralistisch-didactische traktaten* (Middeleeuwse studies Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen II; Nijmegen, 1986), pp. 86-87 (under the heading *Spiegel der biechten*) and Palmer, 'Seelentrost', c. 1038. Apparently, a modern edition is extant, but unfortunately this has not been published, and it is not based on the incunable. See Deschamps, 'Sielen troest', fn. 34, and the appended bibliography to Palmer, 'Seelentrost', cc. 1037-1039. In *Biechten*, the Decalogue is discussed as well, here we find one of the several references which mentions the *Boek van de thien gheboden* 'where you will find more [information]', *Biechten*, fol. cc9v.

⁹² *Biechten*, fols. aa6v-aa7v.

The book is written in order that 'we' may reach the city of Jerusalem (heaven).⁹³ The book could of course have been used by priests, but it was undoubtedly meant for lay folk. For instance, the lay audience is deliberately kept in the dark in the discussion on the capital sin of lust because those who 'read or hear it being read may sin worse'.⁹⁴ Also, the reader is advised to think in advance what to say to the priest and how to behave during confession. The exempla in which women feature are rather austere.⁹⁵ This gives a rather threatening message to the book: confess your sins and alter your lifestyle before it is too late. However, all is not lost, God is merciful and true contrition of sins is stressed. References to the contrite Mary Magdalene (1st century) occur more than once and one of the longest exempla in this book is reserved for the story of the remorseful Mary of Egypt (5th century).⁹⁶

1.2.1.11 *Ars moriendi "Quamvis secundum philosophum tertio Ethicorum ..."* [Dutch] *Dat sterfboeck*⁹⁷

The book attempts to show how the devil tempts those who are ill, and how Christ and his mother comfort them.⁹⁸ In the fourteenth century, Jean Gerson

⁹³ *Biechten*, fol. aa1.

⁹⁴ *Biechten*, fol. bb8.

⁹⁵ For instance, under the sense of smell features an exemplum of a woman who, throughout her life, likes to be surrounded by pleasant scents. When she falls ill and smells unpleasant, she is abandoned by her friends to die alone, *Biechten*, fols. dd1v-dd2.

⁹⁶ The exemplum is discussed under sins against the Holy Spirit (pre-meditated sins committed without necessity), *Biechten*, fols. ee3-ee5.

⁹⁷ There are three editions extant, two editions by two different printers appeared in the same year. I have used one of these first editions (Delft, Christiaen Snellaert, 1488) BL shelf mark IA. 47166. For bibliographical details, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, pp. 21-22. This incunable should not be confused with *Ars moriendi "Cum de praesentis exilii miseria mortis transitus ..."* [Dutch] *Leringe om salich te sterven*, which cannot be considered an exemplum collection. Unfortunately, only the latter incunable has appeared in Dutch in a modern edition, but the introduction preceding the edition is useful for a description of the genre, see Geus, B. de, et al. eds., *Een scone leeringe om salich te sterven. Een Middelnederlandse ars moriendi*, uitgegeven, geannoteerd en ingeleid (Publikaties van de vakgroep Nederlandse taal- & letterkunde van de Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden 12; Utrecht, 1985).

⁹⁸ *Sterfboeck*, fol. a1v. For remarks on intended audience and function of the incunable I have relied on Lips, E.J.G., 'Huden gesont, morgen doot'. Troost en dreigement in *het Sterfboek of die conste van sterven* (1488)', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien*

wrote an *ars moriendi* for his aged dying father in French (which was later translated into Latin), which was thought to have given the genre a great impetus. The genre is closely associated with a book such as *Die vier uutersten*, in which death, judgement, purgatory and hell, and heaven feature. The genre was popular throughout north-western and southern Europe. The topography in the exempla in this *ars moriendi* suggests that its focus lay in the Rhineland and Germany.

The book gives the impression that it ought to be read or heard on the deathbed. This is emphasised by the woodcuts depicting good and evil forces battling it out for the soul of the nearly departed who lies troubled in his bed. Not surprisingly for an *ars moriendi*, devils play a part in the exempla (of which there are about thirty), and their main purpose is to act as seducers and tormentors.⁹⁹ In the later middle ages demons were increasingly feared, which had its repercussions on this sort of literature.¹⁰⁰ The book may certainly have acted as a guide during lifetime. Stress is laid on good works and good intentions.

Usually, the exemplum is preceded by a text, varying in length, explaining a sin or virtue and exhorting the audience not to stray from the Christian path. The exemplum itself is introduced in frightening terms in an attempt to catch the audience's attention. After each exemplum the audience is urged to take the message to heart. The book emits a sense of desperation in its message to alter sinful lifestyles immediately. The apparent doom and gloom served as an extra incentive.

studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 65-86. A short description is found in Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 75, and a very brief one in De Vooy, *Legenden en exempelen*, p. 60.

⁹⁹ Latin: *Cordiale quator novissimorum*, which was also a popular book judging by the relatively great number of editions in the vernacular, see INCIPIT. For a description, see Bange, *Spiegels*, pp. 141-142.

¹⁰⁰ Breure, L., *Doodsbeleving en levenshouding. Een historisch-psychologische studie betreffende de Moderne Devotie in het IJsselgebied in de 14e en 15e eeuw* (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen V; Hilversum, 1987), pp. 261-263.

The book is intended for any Christian (*een ygelic kersten mensche*) preparing for the end of life.¹⁰¹ It is important to us for several reasons. Like other collections such as the *Twespraec* it contains many antifeminist exempla, but the matter featuring in the *Sterfboeck* is situated within a rather more serious context, and the exempla are not presented as amusing messages.

Women are accused of corrupting men's thoughts.¹⁰² Old women are suspected of witchcraft (*oude toeveressen*), and they are referred to as 'daughters of the devil', enticing good folk away from God and delivering them to him, their master.¹⁰³ When women appear in the exempla they are repeatedly possessed by devils, and this is written about at some length (unlike similar exempla printed in the *Bienboeck*).¹⁰⁴ There is one rarity among the exempla: in a rather lengthy dialogue the tormented soul of Prevento (*sic*) which ended up in purgatory, convinces her female friend Adoptata to change her lifestyle for the better.¹⁰⁵ The latter agrees after the torments in purgatory are expatiated on.

¹⁰¹ *Sterfboeck*, fol. a1v.

¹⁰² The statement is followed by an exemplum in which a vain lady condemns no fewer than three hundred warriors to damnation. She had served them a St. Gertrude's drink at a farewell cocktail party, but because of her vanity all the knights had died with improper thoughts, *Sterfboeck*, fols. t1-t1v.

¹⁰³ *Sterfboeck*, fol. b5v.

¹⁰⁴ See, for instance, the two women, possessed by devils, who are involved in a shouting match in church, *Sterfboeck*, fols. c6-d1v, and the knight who agrees to take a possessed maiden with him on his travels, *Sterfboeck*, fols. e5-f1.

¹⁰⁵ *Sterfboeck*, fols. k5-l3v. Palmer, N.F., 'Preventa und Adoptata'. Eine erbauliche Klosterlegende aus dem 15. Jahrhundert', *Poesie und Gebrauchsliteratur im deutschen Mittelalter*. Würzburger colloquium 1978, V. Honemann et al. eds. (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 290-303, discusses the female monastic as main recipient for this exemplum. However, the fact that the exemplum is also inserted in an *ars moriendi* for 'any Christian' shows it had gained a wider audience, perhaps under influence of the modern devotion (a movement which will be discussed in the next chapter). Purgatory was a *Straf- und Reinigungsplätze*, Dinzelbacher, P., *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1981), p. 102. In it, the sinner had to pay for trespasses committed when alive which had not been settled. The punishment seen to be meted out, was severe.

1.2.1.12 *Miraculen Onser Liever Vrouwen*¹⁰⁶

It is possible that a Latin or French forerunner of this collection, of about one hundred and fifteen exempla, was in existence.¹⁰⁷ The exempla follow each other without any comment of the compiler. They do not appear to be arranged in any particular order. Many exempla relate to scenes in which 'brothers' occur, but they are not assigned to one particular religious order.

This book containing the miracles of Mary is different from the miracle books which were kept at churches which were meant to register the miracles which were attributed to a particular saint.¹⁰⁸ Neither is this a miracle collection appended to a *vita* or related to a particular event in the life of Mary nor a sheet or booklet published to celebrate the viewing of Marian relics at a particular church on a holy day.¹⁰⁹ Commonly, when miracles are mentioned in miracle registration books they were either wrought away from the church, after someone in need of a miracle had requested the help of a particular saint and had succeeded in their quest, or the miracles occurred *in situ* at the bidding of a particular miracle-working statue of Mary at the church. These miracles were

¹⁰⁶ There is only one edition known ([Delft, Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantszoon, between 10 January 1477 and 20 November 1479]). I have used The Hague KB shelf mark 169 G 44. The order in which the exempla appear has been collated with the modern edition of the Katwijk manuscript, see Vooys, C.G.N. de ed., *Middel nederlandse Marialegenden. Onser liever vrouwen miraculen* (2 vols., Leiden, 1903), II, pp. LXVIII-LXXII and compare with volume I.

¹⁰⁷ For a short description of contents, see De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen*, pp. 62-63.
¹⁰⁸ See Verrycken, A., 'Naar een analysemodel voor middeleeuwse mirakelverhalen', *Hoofsheid en devotie in de middeleeuwse maatschappij. De Nederlanden van de 12e tot de 15e eeuw*. Handelingen van het wetenschappelijk colloquium te Brussel 21-24 oktober 1981, J.D. Janssens ed. (Brussel, 1982), p. 211. Books which were kept at sites, and which have a distinctly archival character, were used to register miracles. Verrycken has devised a method to dissect these miracles (dividing them into components such as information about illnesses, place of pilgrimage, expression of collective mentality, and external information). The miracles noted in the registers have a separate character, different from the miracles found in our corpus.

¹⁰⁹ A *Life of Mary* as such does not exist. For an early edition of a list of relics (which usually also contained a list of indulgences to be earned), see *Heilichdomme ende reliquien van O.L.V. te Wavere*, printed 1483-1484, and Liebaers, H. ed., *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden*. Tentoonstelling in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I. Catalogus (Brussel, 1973), pp. 385-387. These editions rarely survived the *ostentio*.

performed in the environment of the church and appealed usually to the devout living within the action radius of the saint. The exempla in *Miraculen* however, are not geographically restricted, as a matter of fact place-names are seldom mentioned, and as such it could appeal perhaps to a wider public than the miracles wrought at a specific location.

The book is intended for those who admire Mary and seek her help, but no specific group of people is mentioned.¹¹⁰ In general, she assists the powerless who have already shown a certain dedication to her before they requested her assistance, usually in their avid prayers or by not sinning on Saturday (dedicated to Mary). Originally, it may have been intended for the religious, but there are good reasons to suggest that some miracles had a particular appeal to women.

Many of the miracles in the incunable centre around topics of interest to women. Mary plays a role in marriage. She features in mystical marriage arrangements as the bride. She aids women whose husbands are about to harm their wives. Mary assists mothers whose children have had mishaps (being ill, missing, presumed murdered, dead, etc.). She especially helps those who are pregnant and in dire straits.

There is another reason to suppose that women were interested in Mary's miracles. Despite the divergence in genres of the *Miraculen* collection and the miracle books kept at the churches there is also some congruence. Recently, some scholars have shown that women were the predominant beneficiaries of the miracle-working statues of Mary, and their ailments were of a specific female nature (in particular those involving births).¹¹¹ Thus, a female interest in the

¹¹⁰ *Miraculen*, fol. a1.

¹¹¹ See Habermas, R., 'Weibliche Erfahrungswelten, Frauen in der Welt des Wunders', *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter. Fragen, Quellen, Antworten*, B. Lundt ed. (München, 1991), p. 71, Verhoeven, G., *Devotie en negotie. Delft als bedevaartplaats in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1992) and Hens, H. †, H. van Bavel, G.C.M. van Dijck en J.H.M. Frantzen eds., *Mirakelen van Onze Lieve Vrouw te 's-Hertogenbosch*. Transcriptie, annotatie en inleiding (Tilburg, 1978). The women originated mostly from the group of craftsmen, Leeuwen, C.G. van, 'Opvattingen omtrent ziektes en zieken in de

incunable cannot be excluded. Mary's actions in this incunable were difficult to imitate, instead her actions were to be admired.

1.2.1.13 *Speculum humanae salvationis* [Dutch] *Spiegel der menselijker behoudenis*¹¹²

This collection, which was very popular throughout Europe, was probably the work of a Dominican, who may have lived in south-western Germany and dates from the second decade of the fourteenth century.¹¹³ It is counted among the first published works in the vernacular in the Low Countries. Strictly speaking, it is not an incunable, but a block book (copied from a block and not printed with moveable type). The combination of text and picture (not unlike the editions of the *Biblia Pauperum*) may explain its popularity. The lay-out is helpful for those in need of assistance in reading the text.

The topics, which are set in a more or less chronological framework, deal with the story from the Fall, Mary's life, Christ's life and death, the day of judgement, hell and heaven. In it, the audience is told how to achieve redemption: mainly by believing in Christ and Mary. Each chapter consists of a woodcut under which a short prose text features containing an exemplum or a story, drawn from the

Nederlanden gedurende de late middeleeuwen. Een eerste aanzet', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), p. 154 and p. 157.

¹¹² There are three editions surviving. I have used the *editio princeps* ([The Netherlands, prototypography, about 1474-75]) BL IB. 47000 and another, more complete, third edition (Johann Veldener, Culemborg, 27 September 1483) BL IA. 48302. I shall refer to the latter as *Spiegel* (1483). For bibliographical details, see respectively *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 2 and p. 95. The latter contains three additional chapters (nr. 25, nr. 28 and nr. 29). A modern edition is available but it is based on an early fifteenth-century manuscript composed in verses, Daniëls, L.M.Fr. ed., *De spiegel der menschelijker behoudenis. De Middelnederlandse vertaling van het Speculum humanae salvationis*. Naar het handschrift uitgegeven, ingeleid en toegelicht (Studiën en tekstuutgaven van OGE IX; Tiel, 1949).

¹¹³ For a short description, see Bange, *Spiegels*, pp. 83-85 (her information is based on the verse *Speculum*) and Daniëls ed., *Spiegel*, pp. LVIII-LIX.

Bible, the Apocrypha or profane history.¹¹⁴ The exemplum is set in a typological framework; in general, the facts or actions mentioned in the Old Testament prefigure those of the New Testament.¹¹⁵ Tips are given on how to conduct a true Christian life based on the discussion of some of the sacraments and Ten Commandments in order to be saved in the future. This setting ties together past, present and future and emphasises men's position in the grand scheme.

The book was published to teach the unlearned (*tot leringhe der onghelerder*), to aid clerics (*clercken*) and the laity (*leken*).¹¹⁶ Of importance is Mary's role based on the Apocrypha, in particular her adolescent activities when she resided in the temple before she married Joseph (her lifestyle was held up as beneficial example to young women, as will see in chapter 4). Her married life to the ancient Joseph is also spun out. The discussion of the sacrament of marriage, and married couples are furnished with mainly biblical examples. The relation between Adam and Eve in connection with apportioning blame of the Fall is mentioned too.

¹¹⁴ The non-biblical motives have been listed by Daniëls ed., *Spiegel*, pp. XVIII-XIX. Many deal with aspects of Mary's life.

¹¹⁵ A concise account is supplied by Hollander, R., 'Typology and secular literature: some medieval problems and examples', *Literary uses of typology from the late middle ages to the present*, E. Miner ed. (Princeton, 1977), pp. 3-19. Although he does not discuss typology used in exempla and saints' legends, his comments are nevertheless valid. The matter of typology may seem difficult to comprehend and far-fetched but, as Hollander explains, it is really a natural form of human thought and we all live with some kind of awareness of recurrence.

¹¹⁶ *Spiegel*, fol. 1v.

1.2.1.14 Ob einem Mann sei zu nehmen ein ehelich Weib oder nicht

[Dutch] Van den Echten state, by Albertus de Eyb¹¹⁷

With this interesting collection of exempla we have arrived at an author with a humanist background: the German lawyer Albertus de Eyb (1420-1475).¹¹⁸ During his studies at the Italian universities of Pavia and Bologna he became interested in Roman culture and humanism. In this didactic work, also known as the *Ehebüchlein*, he weighs the advantages of marriage against the disadvantages. He uses clear and concise sentences, and the contents cannot have been too difficult to comprehend. He knits his exempla together with short introductions and comments.

The book consists of three main parts in which these questions are addressed: whether a man should take a wife or not, how and why the world and people have been created, and how to celebrate a wedding. The majority of the short exempla occur in the first part, those which are longer occur in the second part. It is sometimes a laborious task to extract the exempla from the prose where many sayings and pieces of wisdom (almost all perfectly furnished with their sources) are on offer.

It may be deduced from the question addressed in part I that the book was intended solely for men contemplating marriage. However, the introduction makes it implicitly clear that women are not to be excluded: it states that

¹¹⁷ I have used the only edition known: ([Deventer, Richard Pafraet, between 1493 and 6 June 1500]) BL shelf mark IA. 47670. For bibliographical details, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 56. There is no modern edition in Dutch, but there is an edition based on the German version: Hermann, M. ed., *Deutsche Schriften des Albrecht von Eyb. Das Ehebüchlein* (Schriften zur Germanischen Philologie I-4; Berlin, 1890). The arrangement of the paragraphs of parts I and II of the modern edition is slightly different from that featuring in the incunable.

¹¹⁸ For De Eyb, see Klecha, G., 'Albrecht von Eyb', *VL*, I, I, cc. 180-1860 and for the role of lawyers (and for De Eyb in particular) in humanism, see Spitz, L.W., 'The course of German humanism', *Itinerarium Italicum. The profile of the Italian renaissance in the mirror of its European transformations*, H.A. Oberman and T.A. Bradley eds. (Studies in medieval and reformation thought 14; Leiden, 1975), p. 395. The *Ehebüchlein* is discussed by Hiller, J.A., *Albrecht von Eyb, a medieval moralist* (The Catholic University of America studies in German 13; Washington D.C., 1939), pp. 112-156.

everyone (*men*) shall be taught how to conduct oneself within the marital state.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, the question whether a man should marry is answered in the positive and De Eyb paints an ideal picture for us: a marriage based on love and friendship resulting in a family of contented children devoted to their loving parents.

Before he arrives at this conclusion the audience must face some of the most antifeminist exempla drawn from depths of classical scholarship. However, he also adds positive ideas about women. In his balancing act on the pros and cons of the marital state De Eyb also devotes a chapter to the praise of women. In it, he mentions many women from antiquity. Although the chapter does not contain any exempla he refers in it to a contemporary female, Barbara of Brandenburg, who was married to Marquis Louis III of Mantua, to whom we will return in the next chapter.¹²⁰ Most importantly, De Eyb addresses issues of late medieval and early modern family life within a humanist framework.

1.2.1.15 *Vitae sanctorum patrum, sive vitas patrum* [Dutch] *Van den leven der heiligen vaderen*, by Hieronymus¹²¹

The biographies of the anchorites who lived in the Egyptian desert in the fourth century, leading their ascetic life in solitude, are the subjects of this book. Although Saint Jerome (ca. 341-420) made only a small contribution to the collection of biographies, which was later appended to other works, it is his famous name which remained associated with the *Vitae patrum* throughout the centuries.

¹¹⁹ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. a2.

¹²⁰ Barbara is mentioned rather late in the incunable, *Ehebüchlein*, fol. h3.

¹²¹ There are three editions known, but the versions differ. For an accurate description of the contents of the two different versions, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 34 (Leeu) and p. 85 (Van Os), and also Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 9 (Latin edition), and nr. 80 and nr. 87, and De Vooys, *Legenden en exempelen*, pp. 13-18. I have used the *editio princeps* ([Zwolle], Peter van Os, 01041490) BL shelf mark IB. 48140. There is no modern Dutch edition in existence.

In principle, I have excluded all exempla which are appended to or included in the *vitae* of holy males. However, in the third part of the edition by Peter van Os it is clearly stated that a separate collection of exempla and sayings from the Desert Fathers is recorded, and as such it ought to be included in our discussion.¹²² Although the table of contents lists about sixty exempla in the third part, there are about twice as many gathered in it. The exempla, mostly rather brief and to the point, follow each other without any text connecting them.

The third part of the *Vitae patrum* is intended for 'any good Christian' (*yghelic goet kersten mensche*).¹²³ Indeed, the virtues mentioned are not only important for the religious but also for the laity. In general, a deep-seated fear of the female sexuality permeates the book. In the majority of the exempla women are depicted as temptresses of the brothers. Women feature in lead roles and they are virtuous religious or they become so and female penitents are also mentioned. Exempla in which women occur are the transvestite Marina (no date) who followed her father into his monastery, the holy harlot Thaïs (no date) who became a bride of Christ, and a southern Low Countries flavour is added by Beatrix, the runaway nun from Brabant, who lived a sinful life before returning to the convent.¹²⁴

1.3 Introduction to the genre of female saints' Lives

Historical interest in female saints' *Lives* which have appeared in the Middle Dutch vernacular is fortunately picking up.¹²⁵ At first sight, the genre is not very

¹²² The exempla without the *Lives* circulated in southern Germany and Austria, see Klein, K., 'Frühchristliche Eremiten im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit. Zur Überlieferung und Rezeption der deutschen >Vitaspatrum<-Prosa', *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*. Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1981, L. Grenzmann und K. Stackmann eds. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände V; Stuttgart, 1984), p. 687.

¹²³ *Vaderen*, fol. A1.

¹²⁴ *Vaderen*, Marina's legend features on fols. C5v-C6v, Thaïs on fols. D2-D2v and Beatrix on fols. D2v-D3.

¹²⁵ See Carasso-Kok, M. ed., *Repertorium van verhalende historische bronnen uit de middeleeuwen. Heiligenlevens, annalen, kronieken en andere in Nederland geschreven verhalende bronnen* (Bibliografische reeks van het Nederlands historisch genootschap 2;

inspiring. The female saints' *Lives* are highly stereotyped and thematic and contain worn-out patterns.¹²⁶ Although every saint could serve a specific and usually different purpose (alleviate one certain kind of pain, assist in one specific task for which they were renowned, etc.), a common archetype was followed. The veracity of the *Lives* is generally low, particularly that of the early saints' *Lives*, which were often written centuries after the events occurred or supposed to have occurred. Therefore, emphasis should not be given to the saint as historical person, but rather what one believed or was invited to believe about her, or to study the function of the saint and her life at a certain place in a certain time.¹²⁷ A saint could be venerated during her life, but was also beneficial when dead. Upon her birthday in heaven, the day of her death, she would acquire access to Jesus, usually as his bride, to intervene with Jesus on the sinner's behalf.

Traditionally venerated saints were allotted different characteristics and other types of saint appear to suit changing and changed tastes of church and society.¹²⁸ Once Christianity took hold and the virgin martyrs no longer died for the faith, contemporary saints became venerated too. The personality of the

's-Gravenhage, 1981), who includes narrative sources which were written in the Netherlands (i.e. the northern Low Countries). Hugenholtz, F.W.N., 'Het vertekend beeld. Bij wijze van nabeschouwing', *Gewone mensen in de middeleeuwen*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan F.W.N. Hugenholtz ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 7; Utrecht, 1987), p. 319, points to the importance of the *Repertorium*, where medieval saints' legends in the Dutch vernacular as sources useful to historians are evaluated. Despite the *Repertorium's* usefulness in general, unfortunately it only lists manuscript sources and printed editions are not incorporated. References to books and articles which show a relatively recent interest in Middle Dutch female saints' *Lives* will be mentioned throughout the thesis.

¹²⁶ Stereotyping is already prevalent in the legends of the early saints, Carlé, B., 'Structural patterns in the legends of the holy women of christianity', *Aspects of female existence*. Proceedings from The St. Gertrud Symposium 'Women in the Middle Ages'. Copenhagen, 1978, B. Carlé et al. eds. (Copenhagen, 1980), pp. 79-86.

¹²⁷ Hugenholtz, F.W.N., 'Historici over heiligen', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van wetenschappen, afdeling Letterkunde*, n.r. 50, 5 (1987), p. 168.

¹²⁸ Grijns, F.J.A. de, 'Heiligen, wat zijn dat eigenlijk?', *Andere structuren, andere heiligen. Het veranderende beeld van de heilige in de middeleeuwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 2; Utrecht, 1983), pp. 13-32 and Tibbetts Schulenburg, J., 'Sexism and the celestial gynaeceum – from 500 to 1200', *Journal of medieval history* 4 (1978), pp. 117-133.

newly venerated saint became increasingly important, and with it the description of the way she lived her life. Gradually during the later middle ages married and widowed saints appear, but they remain a small faction only. These married or widowed saints commonly lived their lives outside the cloister walls and they are often associated with the mendicant orders to whom they turn for guidance.

The legend of the saint was only part of the process of official recognition by the papacy. In Vauchez' scholarly masterpiece, with its emphasis on papal canonisation procedures, the procedure is outlined.¹²⁹ Officially, a new prospective saint needed a following who would hand in a *petitio* accompanied by a *vita et miracula*, an *informatio* (an investigative document by pope or legate) and a *publicatio* which coincided with a *translatio*: the raising of the saintly body to another, often more visible, place.¹³⁰ However, not all the saints in our survey are saints in the true sense of the word, i.e. not all were recognised by the Holy See. Suffice it to say that this may have been of secondary importance to a medieval lay audience, which was interested in the saint's efficacy rather than in her official recognition. Occasionally, the saint had been venerated locally only and had not received a saintly or beatified status.

Nevertheless, many saints (official or not) were supplied with a *Life*. A neat summary of the various components which may be included in the *vita* has been provided: the origins of the saint, birth (occasionally accompanied by a celestial sign, as Jesus' birth was), childhood, education, piety, martyrdom (usually in graphic detail), *inventio* (discovery of the relics or body, rise to miracles), *translatio* (as seen above), and the miracles (often stereotyped).¹³¹ Many *Lives*

¹²⁹ Vauchez, A., *Sainthood in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1997), J. Birrell trans. Contrast Kleinberg, A.M., *Prophets in their own country. Living saints and the making of sainthood in the later middle ages* (Chicago, London, 1992), chapter 2, who points out that the papacy was not much involved in the majority of cases of saint-making.

¹³⁰ De Grijns, 'Heiligen', pp. 18-19.

¹³¹ Boyer, R., 'An attempt to define the typology of medieval hagiography', *Hagiography and medieval literature*. Proceedings of the fifth international symposium organised by the centre for the study of vernacular literature in the middle ages. Held at Odense University on 17-18 November 1980, Odense, H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. eds. (Odense, 1981), p. 32.

are imbued with aspects of the *imitatio Christi*. All these literary elements are useful. Martyrdom is of interest because the virgin saint, more often than not, died as a bride of Christ.

Missing in this summary is the component of marriage. In many female saints' *Lives* this issue was accompanied by highly dramatic scenes, either when the saint was supposed to marry or supposed to engage in marital relations with her newly-wedded husband. Marriage and the assumption of marital relations were regarded as incompatible with saintly virginal life, and with the preferred state of religious life.

The grand scheme of the *Lives* survived unchanged, but the details are more variable. The legends are rich sources for conveying details on family life as they contain ideas on marriage, sexual practices, infertility, childbirth, care of infants, relationships between mother and daughter and domestic roles.¹³² Virtues and good qualities are outlined. Life within the family relies on 'biblical models', the one most frequently based on that of the Holy Family consisting of Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus.¹³³ Sometimes, the extended family of Christ, through St. Anne (1st century), known as the Holy Kindred, was used to show the importance of familial relationships.¹³⁴ The elements making up the life of the young female

¹³² See Opitz, C., *Frauenalltag im Mittelalter. Biographien des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Ergebnisse der Frauenforschung 5; Weinheim, Basel, 1985, 1987) whose informative study on women's ordinary lives contains mainly information of women within the family and see also Tibbetts Schulenburg, J., 'Saints' Lives as a source for the history of women, 500-1100', *Medieval women and the sources of medieval history*, J.T. Rosenthal ed. (Athens, London, 1990), p. 304.

¹³³ Scherf, Y., 'Zij was mooi en goed en zij hield van Christus. Onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van heiligenlevens als bron voor de geschiedenis van vrouwen van de zesde tot de twaalfde eeuw', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), p. 273.

¹³⁴ Brandenburg, T., *Heilig familieleven. Verspreiding en waardering van de Historie van Sint-Anna in de stedelijke cultuur in de Nederlanden en het Rijnland aan het begin van de moderne tijd (15e/16e eeuw)*, (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 138-140.

child and adolescent are also mentioned, and although highly thematic as well,¹³⁵ they contain models of imitation for medieval girls.

Weinstein and Bell point out various aspects in the legends of women as opposed to those of men.¹³⁶ Since women could not pursue clerical careers or engage in active missionary work in the field or in preaching, most women saints fall outside these scopes. Women are portrayed in acts of extreme asceticism, and extreme penance, and often experience supernatural powers. Women are frequently perceived as healer and helper saints. Sometimes, saintly women had married Christ who had appealed to them as bridegroom.

Despite their legends appearing in print in the Low Countries, the vast majority of the female saints does not originate from the Low Countries but belongs to an 'international' corpus of saints. Nor are any of the saints contemporaries of the second half of the fifteenth century. Thus, the *Lives* cannot be used to study attitudes towards contemporary female saints,¹³⁷ nevertheless patterns of veneration do emerge. However, not all saints whose *Lives* have appeared in print could have claimed equal attention and demanded similar devotion. Occasionally, their *Life* in print consists of a very short text.¹³⁸ The fact that they appeared in print, particularly as part of a large corpus of 'international' saints, does not guarantee that they were indeed venerated or popular in the Low Countries. It could even be argued that they are not worthy of much attention as

¹³⁵ In spite of the authors' insistence that 'variety, not uniformity, characterised the childhood of saints', it appears in their book that set patterns and topoi were used in the legends; see Weinstein D. and R.M. Bell, *Saints and society: the two worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700* (Chicago, London, 1982), p. 19 for citation, pp. 19-47 for children, and pp. 48-72 for adolescents. Indeed, the period of youth belongs to the most stereotyped and succinct part of the *vitae*, Jong, M. de, 'Merovingische en vroeg-Karolingische heiligenlevens als spiegel van kindertijd en jeugd', *De heiligenverering in de eerste eeuwen van het christendom*, A. Hilhorst ed. (Nijmegen, 1988), p. 42. Although De Jong writes about legends in which boys feature, her observation also rings true for girls.

¹³⁶ Weinstein and Bell, *Saints*, chapter 8.

¹³⁷ In contrast to the subjects of the studies of Kieckhefer, R., *Unquiet Souls. Fourteenth-century saints and their religious milieu* (Chicago, London, 1984) and Kleinberg, *Prophets*.

models for emulation. Also, not all the *Lives* of venerated saints appeared in print,¹³⁹ and not all those whose *Lives* were in existence in manuscript made it to the printing press.¹⁴⁰

To obtain a flavour of aspects which may have interested a fifteenth-century vernacular reading female lay audience, we should highlight the elements of the incunables which have been published in separate editions. These sources are introduced below in some detail, with the exception of the incunable dealing with St. Dymphna van Geel, whose vernacular *Life* has unfortunately not withstood the ravages of time.¹⁴¹

-
- ¹³⁸ See, for instance, the five-odd sentences which form Praxedes's legend (1st-2nd century), *Passionael* (to be introduced below), *somerstuc, praxedis*, fol. n6.
- ¹³⁹ One way of studying the disparagement is to look at depictions in art from the second half of the fifteenth century, at the time that the first printing presses were active. One example should suffice. St. Wilgefortis, alias St. Ontcommer, grew a beard spontaneously to escape marriage. Her legend did not appear in print but she was clearly venerated in the third part of the fifteenth century, as witnessed by a contemporary wall painting of her at the Buurkerk at Utrecht, Deijk, A. van, *Middeleeuwse kerken in Utrecht* (Clavis kunsthistorische monografieën V; Zutphen, 1988), p. 27, and Goosen, L., *Van Afra tot de Zevenlappers. Heiligen in religie en kunsten* (Nijmegen, 1992), pp. 268-270.
- ¹⁴⁰ Despite the availability of some *vitae* of twelfth- and thirteenth-century locally venerated female saints from the southern Low Countries, (see the various entries in McDonnell, E.W., *Beguines and beghards in medieval culture, with special reference on the Belgian scene* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1954), pp. 575-585 particularly under 'Jacques de Vitry' and 'Thomas of Cantimpré'). Yet their legends did not appear in print. We can only surmise the reasons for their not having appeared in print. Up to a certain point, it seems quite arbitrary what was printed. Also, literary tastes may have changed. Some manuscripts must simply have escaped the printer's eye. External pressures should not be excluded. Beguines, for instance, may have feared being charged with non-conformity after the Council of Vienne (1311-1312). (We will return to the Council in the next chapter.) This may explain why the fourteenth-century Delft beguines deliberately remained silent about beguine Gertrui's stigmata and lactation, although a *vita* was in existence, see Bredero, A.H., 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten (ca. 1320-1358) en haar niet-erkende heiligheid', *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, D.E.H. de Boer en J.W. Marsilje eds. (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 90-91.
- ¹⁴¹ For *Legenda S. Dymphna* in Dutch ([Antwerp], G[ovaert] B[ac, not before 21 September 1500]), see Goosen, *Afra*, pp. 127-128 and Koyen, M.H., 'Krankzinnigenzorg. St. Dimpna en Geel', *Spiegel Historiae* 9 (1974), pp. 514-521. For her legend in Latin by Peter Cameracensis, a canon of Saint-Aubert at Cambrai, see Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 85. It was based on popular tradition. The saint was reputed to have been a daughter of a heathen Irish or British king. After the death of his wife, he was advised by his courtiers to remarry, but he would only wed someone who resembled his wife. Dymphna alone met this condition, but she refused him and fled with her confessor to Antwerp and Geel. Her father followed her and beheaded her in a fit of insanity, possessed by the devil. St. Dymphna was called on in cases when possession by the devil was feared and in cases of insanity. Medieval sufferers were boarded out with local

1.3.1 The female saints' *Lives*

In this section only those saints who have been deemed worthy to appear in a separate incunable edition will be discussed. The majority of saints, whose *Lives* have appeared in the *Legenda aurea*, will be introduced in the following chapters when their legend conveys useful aspects, but it pays to devote some attention to the *Legenda aurea* itself as a collection.

1.3.1.1 *Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia* [Dutch] *Passionael, Winter- ende Somerstuc*, by Jacobus de Voragine¹⁴²

The Dominican Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1228-14 July 1298) compiled a collection of about one hundred and eighty saints, and he added moveable feasts.¹⁴³ His sources were various: the Latin and Greek Fathers, the apocrypha,

families in Geel, sometimes for the rest of their life. In the second half of the fifteenth century a small hospital, with only one room in it, was built to accommodate some of them. Perhaps in order to promote the cult site printed editions of her legend, both in Latin and the vernacular, were warranted.

¹⁴² There are eight surviving editions. I have used the *editio princeps* (Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 1478) BL shelf mark IB. 47306 and IB. 47407; and Leeu's second (enlarged) edition (Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 1480) The Hague KB shelf mark 171 D 37 and 171 D 38. For bibliographical details of the first edition, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 31. I have also used another edition (Utrecht, Johann Veldener, 12 September 1480) The Hague KB shelf mark 168 E 30, which contains an additional selection of legends. Henceforth the edition of Leeu of 1478 will be referred to as *Passionael*, his edition of 1480 as *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), and Veldener's edition as *Passionael* (Veldener). A translation of the majority of female *Lives* has appeared in modern English, Granger Ryan, W. trans., *Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend* (2 vols., Princeton, 1993). Another useful survey (for collections of legends rather than monographs) is by Williams-Krapp, W., 'German and Dutch legendaries of the middle ages: a survey', *Hagiography and medieval literature*. Proceedings of the fifth international symposium organised by the centre for the study of vernacular literature in the middle ages. Held at Odense University on 17-18 November 1980, Odense, H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. eds. (Odense, 1981), pp. 66-75. See Williams-Krapp, W., *Die deutschen und niederländischen Legendare des Mittelalters. Studien zur ihrer Überlieferungs-, Text- und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Tübingen, 1986), p. 53, fn. 1, for snippets of saints' *Lives* which have appeared in Dutch in modern editions. The bibliography appended to the thesis will refer the reader to additions to these. It would have been very constructive if all saints' legends had been published in editions such as that by Lagerwey, E. en B. Kruitwagen eds., *Legende van Sinte Willebroert. Gereproduceerd uit het Passionael Winterstuc gebruikt door Gheraert Leeu ter Gouda, 31 juli 1478* (Maastricht, 1940) or Jongen, L., 'Heerlijk-helder-heilig. Een kort, Middelnederlands leven van de Heilige Clara', *Madoc* 8 (1994), pp. 149-158.

¹⁴³ This paragraph is based on the introduction to Granger Ryan trans., *Legend*, I. On the author's life in his order, see Fleith, B., *Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der*

and oral sources (particularly used in the miracles). Only about one fifth of the legends are dedicated to female saints. The collection was translated into Dutch probably by a Carthusian from Herne between 1358 and 1388.¹⁴⁴

The first edition in the vernacular, printed in 1478 by Gerard Leeu, shows a division of the corpus in a 'winterpart' and a 'summerpart'. The first starts off with All Saints, the latter with Easter. In the edition some female saints are added to Jacobus's original *Normalcorpus* (as detailed by Barbara Fleith).¹⁴⁵ Female saints' *Lives* which were appended to Leeu's next edition (1480) are St. Anne, St. Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) and Eutropia (5th century), who features in a supportive role in the legend of her brother Nicasius of Reims. It is interesting to note that both Anne and Clare were honoured with separate editions before 1501. This suggests, from a reception point of view, that the twosome were in vogue in the fifteenth century.

Veldener's edition of 1480 was embellished with Usuard's *Martyrologium*, mentioning the names of many female saints, but only a few saints' *Lives* were added from this calendar.¹⁴⁶ It appears that Veldener, from Würzburg, introduced some of traditionally venerated saints in Germany rather than the Low

lateinischen Legenda aurea (Subsidia hagiographica 72; Bruxelles, 1991), pp. 9-11. Jacobus not only selected but apparently interpreted and remodelled the legends. He also added a topic of new religious interest: the emphasis on purgatory. For this purpose he added exempla himself, Boureau, A., 'Jacques de Voragine: les âmes du purgatoire', *Prêcher d'exemples. Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Âge*, J.-Cl. Schmitt ed. (Paris, 1985), pp. 93-94.

¹⁴⁴ Williams-Krapp, *Legendare*, p. 54.

¹⁴⁵ For her list, see Fleith, *Studien*, pp. 432-433. Female saints' *Lives* and feast-days added are: Apollonia, Barbara, Bridget of Sweden, the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dorothy, Gertrude of Nivelles, Prisca and Scholastica. An extant Latin edition of the *Legenda aurea*, which was complemented with a written recluse's necrology shortly after her death in 1514, Horst, K. van der, et al. eds., *Handschriften en oude drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*. Catalogus bij de tentoonstelling in het Centraal Museum te Utrecht ter gelegenheid van het 400-jarig bestaan van de bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit 1584-1984 (Utrecht, 1984), pp. 75-76. In this way, a biography was added of a recently departed locally known holy woman Sister Bertken of Utrecht.

¹⁴⁶ Usuard, the ninth-century monk of Saint-Germain-des Prés, compiled a *Martyrologium* containing names of saints who had died during the first centuries of Christianity

Countries.¹⁴⁷ His 'winterpart' starts with 1st of January, the 'summerpart' with 1st of July, arranged according to the calendar. Among the female saints' *Lives* added features St. Kunera (4th century). She too was attributed a separate, more elaborate edition.

Leeu's prologue mentions that any one (*elc mensche*) who reads it shall receive great contentment.¹⁴⁸ Fleith mentions that the Latin legends were used by preachers for their sermons, by the religious and in schools, whilst the early translations were received by the laity, who must have read it in private too.¹⁴⁹ It was extremely popular in the Low Countries in the vernacular, and the urban laity were among the recipients.¹⁵⁰ Artists were directly inspired by the legends.¹⁵¹

(including corrupted names and insignificant legends), see Dubois, J., *Martyrologes d'Usuard au martyrologe romain* (Abbeville, 1990), p. 212.

¹⁴⁷ Female saints' *Lives* added are: Afra of Augsburg, Brigid of Ireland, Euphrosyne, Eugenia, Kunera, Sophia and her three daughters, Thecla of Iconium and Walburga, abbess of Heidenheim. Many had a long tradition of veneration in Germany, see (under the entries of their name) Goosen, *Afra*. However, the saints belonged to a European corps. Walburga, for instance, was also venerated locally at Tiel and Zutphen, Post, R.R., *Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland in de middeleeuwen* (2 vols., Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1957), II, p. 238. The first records referring to the church of St. Walburga at Zutphen date back to the mid eleventh century, Bastemeijer, A., 'De zesde kerk van bisschop Bernold van Utrecht. Oorsprong en betekenis van de St. Walburgskerk te Zutphen', *Madoc* 9 (1995), pp. 8-22. Kunera will be discussed below.

¹⁴⁸ *Passionael, somerstuc*, fol. a2v.

¹⁴⁹ Fleith, *Studien*, pp. 37-42.

¹⁵⁰ '... the *Legenda aurea* was translated into no vernacular more often than into German and Dutch...', Williams-Krapp, W., 'German and Dutch translations of the *Legenda aurea*', *Legenda aurea: sept siècles de diffusion*. Actes du colloque international sur la *Legenda aurea*. Texte latin et branches vernaculaires à l'Université du Québec à Montréal 11-12 mai 1983, B. Dunn-Lardeau ed. (Cahiers d'études médiévales, cahier spécial 2; Montréal, Paris, 1986), p. 227 and p. 230 for the recipients.

¹⁵¹ See Dael, P. van, 'De *Legenda aurea* en de beeldende kunst', *Gouden Legendes. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 89-108, for specific examples from the Low Countries.

1.3.1.2 *Historie, getijden en exempelen van St. Anna*¹⁵² and *Historie van St. Anna*,¹⁵³ by Jan van Denemarken

Fortunately, we can share the fruits of Ton Brandenburg's studies on the cult of St. Anne, who has counted these incunables among his sources.¹⁵⁴ The *Historie, getijden en exempelen van St. Anna* and the *Historie van St. Anna*, both written in Latin by the priest Jan van Denemarken and apparently both translated by Wouter Bor, a Carthusian at Arnhem.¹⁵⁵

The Dutch priest Jan van Denemarken (d. ca. 1454) from the northern Low Countries started writing the *Historie, getijden en exempelen* in 1486 to actively promote her cult to devout people, expressing his wish for all to know that Anne helps the needy.¹⁵⁶ The first book consists of three parts: her legend, a book of hours, and seven miracles. The second book contains the penitential life of Anne, that of her parents, nearly twenty miracles and a few prayers. A revelation attributed to St. Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) is also included in which Anne is recommended as special patron to married people.

In the later middle ages, the stories about Anne were separated from those on the Virgin Mary. From the thirteenth century onwards, visual images came into

¹⁵² There are five editions known, I have used the first edition (Antwerp, Gerard Leeu [between 9 February 1491 and 1492]). INCIPIT does not mention the author of this incunable. I have consulted a facsimile of the original kept at Darmstadt (in the Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek) at the Instituut voor Neerlandistiek, Universiteit van Amsterdam, shelf mark H24-H25.

¹⁵³ There are two editions extant of *Historie anna*, I have used the first edition ([Zwolle], Peter van Os, 7 September 1499) kept at Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, shelf mark Res. 457. There are no modern editions of either book.

¹⁵⁴ The contents of *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna* are discussed in an English summary see Brandenburg, *Familieleven*, pp.10-11. The contents of the *Historie van Sinte Anna* by the Carthusian Pieter Dorlant (1454-1507) printed in 1501 (this date falls outside our chronological parameter) are neatly summarised by Brandenburg, T., 'St.-Anna en haar familie', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 111-112. The composition of no fewer than three separate legends during the second half of the fifteenth century shows that Anne was a tremendously popular saint.

¹⁵⁵ Brandenburg, 'Anna en familie', p. 105.

¹⁵⁶ *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fol. a2v and fol. a7v.

existence of three generations of mother Anne, daughter Mary and grandchild Jesus. A continuous stress was laid on Anne's maternal and grandmotherly roles as well as her widowhood. Many women can identify with her as spouse, mother, grandmother, educator and widow.

The importance of an elaborate ancestry is to trace Christ through the female line because Christ had no biological father on earth. In this way, Christ's maternal ancestry is traced further down and Anne's mother Emerentiana makes her appearance as well.¹⁵⁷ The Carmelite friars were quick to 'adopt' Emerentiana who was said to have joined the Carmelite order when they were still stationed at the Holy Land. In the first half of the thirteenth century they had obtained a foothold in Valenciennes, near the southern Low Countries. The Carmelites were successful preachers in the Low Countries.

In the fifteenth century, Anne's family became increasingly extended in literature, by virtue of her three marriages. Van Denemarken defends Anne's *trinubium* (after Joachim's death she remarried twice), by stating that she was still fertile. Together with her children and through her sister Hysmeria, Anne was related to many apostles and saints, among whom the bishop of Maastricht, St. Servatius (4th century). The devotee was presented with a Holy Kindred in which Christ's immediate family was modelled on that of the worldly family. The devotee and her family could identify with this family. Indeed, Mary and Jesus could be reached through Anne, according a little rhyme added at the very end of the incunable.¹⁵⁸

Anne is of particular importance to the Low Countries since many narratives about her spread from these regions.¹⁵⁹ Of significance to us is that the

¹⁵⁷ *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fols. b3v-b4.

¹⁵⁸ 'Wilde wesen marien vrient, So siet dat ghi haer moeder dient, Diendi haer met goeden betrouwen, Jesus ende maria en latens niet onvergouwen' which translates: 'To become a friend of Mary, serve her mother, if you serve her well, Jesus and Mary will reward you', *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fol. 14v.

¹⁵⁹ Early cult sites are situated in Limburg, Dresen-Coenders, L., 'Machtige grootmoeder, duivelse heks. Speurtocht naar de samenhang tussen heksenvervolging en de verering

incunables stress Anne's exemplary life and convey information about familial responsibilities. In the miracles she is portrayed as a compassionate intercessor, assisting in matrimonial and fertility matters and she comes to the rescue of unfortunate widows. Topics of interest are obviously those which concern the late medieval family life such as Anne and Joachim as an infertile couple, Anne as wife, grandmother and widow. She serves as a positive example for secular women in all states of life.

The *Historie, getijden en exempelen* of St. Anne is intended for all folk (*alle menschen*).¹⁶⁰ The *Historie van St. Anna* does not refer to any specific audience, but the majority of the exempla feature secular folk, which is of course a strong indication that it was intended for the laity.

1.3.1.3 *Legenda beatissimae virginis Barbarae* [Dutch] *Die Historie van Sinte Barbara met die miraculen*¹⁶¹

This incunable contains the *Life* of Barbara (d. ca. 303), her *Passion* as well as eighteen appended miracles.¹⁶² Its author is the Augustinian hermit Jan van Wackerzeele (near Louvain).¹⁶³ His version of the legend is a late fourteenth-century compilation of various sources. In 1392, he had visited Piacenza in Italy, where Barbara's relics were situated, for research. In the second half of the fifteenth century more additions were made to the legend.

In the legend, the young heathen Barbara dedicated herself to her study, pondered about the existence of the pagan gods, wrote to Origen (4th century)

van de grote moeder Anna op de drempel van de nieuwe tijd', *Vrouw man kind. Lijnen van vroeger naar nu*, K. Bertels et al. eds. (Baarn, 1978), p. 60.

¹⁶⁰ *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fol. a2.

¹⁶¹ There are two editions extant, I have used the *editio princeps* (Delft, [Christiaan Snellaert or Hendrik Eckert van Homberch] 1497) The Hague KB shelf mark 169 G 60.

¹⁶² *Passionael, winterstuc, barbara*, fols. k4-m4; the miracles are found on fols. m4-m4v. The *Passionael* contains eight miracles only, which overlap with those mentioned in the incunable.

¹⁶³ See Gaiffier, B. de, 'La légende latine de Sainte Barbe par Jean de Wackerzeele', *Analecta Bollandiana* lxxvii (1959), pp. 5-41. Note that he discusses the Latin version solely.

and subsequently converted to Christianity in secrecy.¹⁶⁴ In a vision, she was baptised by John the Baptist. Her father built a tower for her to live in after she had declined to marry, but when he learned she had become a Christian he delivered her up to the magistrate, had her tortured, and finally beheaded her. He was struck by lightning and died a sudden death.

Aspects which are of interest are the saint's studiousness and auto-didactic approach and her relation to Jesus as his bride. Her prayer before she joined her bridegroom Jesus in the afterlife, near the time of her execution, made her a patroness of the dead, particularly those who had experienced a sudden death (as was the case with her father) and had departed without having confessed.¹⁶⁵ In the *Sielentroest*, Jesus even guarantees the effectiveness of the saint's last prayer: all sinners who contemplate Barbara's martyrdom will be forgiven.¹⁶⁶

Legends of St. Barbara have recently been viewed with a monastic audience in mind.¹⁶⁷ Within these communities, particularly in the southern Low Countries, her legend spread fast and was often copied. Certain female communities sought a firmer measure of *clausura*, principally to devote themselves to study.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, elements from Barbara's *Life* could be used to promote such study. Although in the incunable it is not mentioned who the intended audience was (and this may have consisted of female communities) the personages which appear in the

¹⁶⁴ For a description, see Brummel en Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken*, nr. 86, and Goosen, *Afra*, pp. 54-56.

¹⁶⁵ Although the beneficiaries were usually dead there is an exemplum of a person kept alive. See the miracle which had befallen a servant maid who lay buried under the rubble of a collapsed tower, *Barbara*, fols. g6v-h1. She survived long enough, by the grace of Barbara, to confess and take the sacrament after which she died.

¹⁶⁶ *Sielentroest*, fol. 89.

¹⁶⁷ Dijk, M. van, 'Hagiografie van de heilige Barbara in Brabantse vrouwengemeenschappen. Waarheid, ideologie en fantasie', *Genoechlicke en lustige historiën. Laatmiddeleeuwse geschiedschrijving in Nederland*, B. Ebels-Hoving et al. eds. (Middeleeuwse bronnen en studies iv; Hilversum, 1987), pp. 141-155.

¹⁶⁸ Prims, F., *De kloosterslot-beweging in Brabant in de xvde eeuw* (Mededeelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor wetenschappen letteren en schoone kunsten van België klasse der letteren jaargang VI, 1; Antwerpen, Utrecht, 1944), demonstrates that, on the one hand, Carthusian ideals were strived after and, on the other hand, the spiritual appeal of the mendicant orders was felt to be in decline.

miracles consist of lay folk, and this is a strong indicator that they must be counted among the legend's readership.¹⁶⁹

1.3.1.4 The legend of Bridget of Sweden. The legend of Catherine of Vadstena, by Peter of Alvastra¹⁷⁰

The incunable contains a compilation of St. Bridget of Sweden's *Revelations* (which she received principally from Christ and Mary); a tripartite division of the canonisation bull of pope Boniface IX followed by a brief *Life* of Bridget (but not marked as such at the beginning of the legend), which in turn is followed by a confirmation of the canonisation bull by Pope Martin V; a comprehensive legend of Bridget's daughter Catherine of Vadstena (d. 1381), the *Leven Katarinen*, follows.¹⁷¹ Our interest lies with both lady saints.

Bridget's *Life* will be discussed first. The compiler distinctly views the information as a legend of Bridget. He refers to it as such in the introduction of the incunable, as well as at the end of the tripartite system.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Recipients of her assistance as mentioned in *Barbara* are merchants (fols. f6-f6v and h2v-h3), urban dwellers (fols. g1-g3 and g6-g6v) and the servant maid (fols. g6v-h1). None of the recipients of Barbara's miracles mentioned female monastics. Barbara was also extremely popular in Germany, judging by the manuscripts and early printed editions, Reuter, E., 'Barbara', *VL*, I, cc. 601-603.

¹⁷⁰ *Opusculum vitae et passionis Christi eiusque genitricis Mariae ex Revelationibus* [Dutch] *Leven en passie van Christus en zijn moeder, getrokken uit de Revelacien van S. Birgitten*. Add: Bonifacius IX: *Bulle der canonizacien van S. Birgitten*; Petrus Olavi: *Leven Katarinen* (Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, 4 June 1491; 21 June 1491), The Hague Museum Meermannno-Westreenianum shelf mark 1 F11. There is only one known edition. For a more elaborate version of Bridget's *Life* translated into modern English, see Tjader Harris, M. ed., *Birgitta of Sweden. Life and selected revelations* (New York, Mahwah, 1990), A. Ryle Kezel trans., pp. 69-98. There is no modern Dutch edition of either Bridget's or Catherine's legends. For a survey of Bridget's work, see Montag, U., 'Birgitta von Schweden', *VL*, I, cc. 867-869.

¹⁷¹ For the importance of Bridget's visionary activities as a female and lay person, see Obrist, B., 'The Swedish visionary: Saint Bridget', *Medieval women writers*, K.M. Wilson ed. (Manchester, 1984), pp. 233-236. Wolfskeel, C., 'Birgitta of Sweden', *A history of women philosophers*, M.E. Waithé ed. (4 vols., Dordrecht, Boston, London, 1989), II, pp. 172-176, provides a good overview of Bridget's literary efforts.

¹⁷² *Birgitten*, fol. a1v and fol. A1. It is worth making this point since INCIPIT omits to mention the inclusion of the saint's legend.

In the incunabula Bridget's concentrated *Life* appears to be included. It was composed by her two confessors, the Cistercian Prior Peter Olavsson, also known as Peter of Alvastra, and Augustinian Master Peter Olavsson, also known as Peter of Skänninge, a musician and theologian.¹⁷³ Apparently, they put it hastily together as they prepared to leave Rome to accompany the saint's remains to Sweden. The brief legend may in turn have been revised by Alphonsus Pecha, bishop of Jaen, who had also guided Bridget's spiritual development and had edited part of her *Revelations*. The latter did so with her canonisation in mind.

Based on hagiographic schemes, Bridget's legend starts with her parents expecting her birth, and ends with Bridget's posthumous miracles.¹⁷⁴ The legend informs us about her childhood, her married life and the death of her husband, her visionary activities, pious lifestyle, charitable works, her stay at Rome, the work involved with founding her order and her death. She founded the Brigettine Order based on her idea of the early Christian community consisting of nuns and priests and lay brothers. The priests were to be scholars and preach to the laity and nuns alike.

Bridget's legend is followed by that of her daughter St. Catherine. The text earmarks Peter of Alvastra as author.¹⁷⁵ The legend contains many details: it tells of her married life, and the time spent with Bridget in Rome, and her involvement in the process of her mother's canonisation. Catherine became the first abbess of the small community of Vadstena. The mother and daughter relationship comes particularly to the fore in Catherine's *Life*.

¹⁷³ The authorship question is discussed by Tjader Harris ed., *Birgitta*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁷⁴ *Birgitten*, fols. A5 to B7v. For a concentrated but full overview of Bridget's life, see Nyberg, T.S., 'Birgitta von Schweden', *Mein Herz schmilzt wie Eis am Feuer. Die religiöse Frauenbewegung des Mittelalters in Porträts*, J. Thiele ed. (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 225-236.

¹⁷⁵ It is not the only biography in existence, see Montag, U., 'Katharina von Schweden', *VL*, IV, cc. 1075-1076, who mentions Ulf Birgersson from Vadstena as compiler of another legend (written 1426-1427).

Thus, both legends tell of the saints' childhood, their marriage and subsequent widowhood. It is not exactly stated for whom the legends were intended. The humanist Jacob Canter, compiled a Latin edition of the *Revelations* for the printer Gerard Leeu, on which the Dutch incunable appears to have been based.¹⁷⁶ In the introduction, it is mentioned that the *Revelations* are intended to stir the hearts of Christian folk (*kerstene menschen*).¹⁷⁷ In the section introducing the canonisation and legend of Bridget she is referred to as 'our worthy patroness', suggesting the compilation was intended in the first instance for use within the Brigettine Order.¹⁷⁸ In Catherine's legend recipients are not mentioned.

1.3.1.5 St. Catharina de Alexandria [Dutch] Sinte Katherinen legende¹⁷⁹

Catherine of Alexandria (4th century) was an immensely popular saint in the middle ages.¹⁸⁰ The legend tells the story of the young royal virgin saint who despised marriage, because she was a bride of Christ, and who refused to honour pagan gods. She managed to persuade fifty philosophers to convert to the Christian faith and was subsequently condemned to die on a wheel.

The *Sinte Katerinen legende* printed by Bac, relies in part on the *Passionael*, but also contains the story of the saint's birth and her life until the death of her father (King Costus of Cyprus) and this part is attributed to the Dutch Carthusian author Pieter Dorlant (1454-1507).¹⁸¹ In the incunable version the circumstances

¹⁷⁶ Canter's sister was a Brigettine nun. He probably travelled to the Brigettine nuns at the Mariatroon convent at Dendermonde to view their hand-copied version of the *Revelations*, see Liebaers ed., *Verjaring*, p. 48 and Vermeulen, *Profijt*, p. 92.

¹⁷⁷ *Opusculum*, fol. a2.

¹⁷⁸ *Birgitten*, fol. A1.

¹⁷⁹ There are two editions extant, I have used the dated edition: (Antwerp, Govaert Bac, not before 3 July 1496) BL shelf mark IA. 49965. For bibliographical details, see *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. 203.

¹⁸⁰ It was thought that anyone who turned to her for help would never do so in vain, Goosen, *Afra*, p. 92. In chapter 2, the appeal of Catherine's intellectual side will be highlighted and, in chapter 3 her closeness as a bride to the bridegroom Jesus.

¹⁸¹ Knust, H., *Geschichte der Legenden der h. Katharina von Alexandrien und der h. Maria Aegyptiaca nebst unedirten Texten* (Halle a. S., 1890), pp. 121-122 also mentions the *Nova_Historia* as one of the sources of this particular incunable. For Pieter's work on the

surrounding her conception, birth and youth in the royal household, the death of her father, her eremitical education, and her mystical marriage with Jesus in a series of visions are dealt with. These details are missing in the legend of the *Passionael*, which starts at the moment she hears the Christians, who are about to be martyred, sing which led to her conversion. In both versions, the dispute with the fifty philosophers and her *Passion* are treated. Her intercession with Christ for the sinner was thought to be very effective since she had successfully argued with the philosophers and also by virtue of her being his bride. Although the incunable is not addressed to anyone, she would undoubtedly help anyone. Her body was supposed to have been transported by angels to Mount Sinai where many pilgrims visited her tomb.¹⁸²

1.3.1.6 *Legende en leven van Sinte Clara*, by Thomas de Celano¹⁸³

The incunable edition of the legend of St. Clare is based on the Latin legend attributed to the Franciscan Thomas de Celano (ca. 1200-ca. 1260).¹⁸⁴ After St. Clare (1194-1253) had heard St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) preach she became imbued with his ideas. The main part of her legend tells of her struggle and efforts to establish the second order of St. Francis, also known as the Minoresses or Poor Clares. No posthumous miracles are appended.

saint see also Collinson, W.E., *Die Katharinenlegende der hs. II, 143 der KGL. Bibliothek zu Brüssel* (Heidelberg, 1915), p. 72.

¹⁸² Among them was a certain Thietmar, perhaps a Friesian, who wrote his itinerary in Latin, probably in the thirteenth century. This account was soon translated into the vernacular, Groot, J. de, en G.S. Overdiep eds., *Een pelgrimage naar den Sinai anno 1217* (Rotterdam, 1936), p. 19.

¹⁸³ There is one edition extant (Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, 28 June 1491) The Hague KB shelf mark 150 F 17. It is bound with a *Life of St. Francis*, attributed to St. Bonaventure (and the incunable is mentioned by the latter's title in INCIPIT). See Schoutens, S. ed., *Legende der glorioser maghet Sinte Clara* (Hoogstraten, 1904), who has used a manuscript and an incunable edition in synopsis. For a translation of the Latin legend in English, see Grau, E., *The legend and writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*. Translation by P. Robinson of *Legenda sanctae Clarae* virginis by Thomas of Celano, and of St. Clare's own writings. Introduction by E. Grau (New York, 1953), pp. 19-61.

¹⁸⁴ On Thomas de Celano, see Bachrach et al. eds., *Encyclopedie*, IX, p. 278. On St. Clare, see Ruh, K., 'Klara von Assisi', *VL*, IV, cc. 1175-1178.

The legend shows the saint's life of extreme poverty and devotion to the religious life. The poverty factor is important and could be regarded as a reaction to pecuniary advantages that life in the cities brought to enterprising business people and their families. In a reaction against the new riches obtained in the prosperous cities, the religious poverty movement was embraced by those from upper layers of the cities. In this respect the urban environment of the thirteenth-century Low Countries was similar to that of northern Italy. Ermentrudis of Bruges corresponded with St. Clare in order to establish a convent based on Clare's ideals.¹⁸⁵ But Clare's influence continued to be important in the later middle ages. Contemplation, study and interest to follow the evangelical life are key factors in the northern part of the Low Countries of the second half of the fifteenth century.¹⁸⁶ Clare's legend must have appealed to seculars as well as the religious.

Although the *Life* is not dedicated to any specific audience there are certain elements in it which could appeal to secular women. The legend tells of her birth and youth at the family home, and of the struggle in her flight from home as well as that of her sister Agnes. Her devotion to the Eucharist and the Holy Cross fits into the devotional practices of the mid and late middle ages, which may also have stimulated female piety at home.

¹⁸⁵ The pope allowed Ermentrudis of Bruges to establish no fewer than eleven convents, Roggen, H., 'Het Brabantse Umbrië. Volgelingen van Clara van Assisi in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden,' *Clara in de Nederlanden 1193-1253*. Museum voor Religieuze Kunst Uden 24 april - 26 juni 1994, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen en W. Prins eds. (Uden, 1994), pp. 44-46. In chapter 3 we shall return to the religious poverty movement in which urban women were involved.

¹⁸⁶ Reijssbergen, R., 'De clarissen in de Noordelijke Nederlanden', *Clara in de Nederlanden 1193-1253*. Museum voor Religieuze Kunst Uden 24 april - 26 juni 1994, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen en W. Prins eds. (Uden, 1994), p. 55.

1.3.1.7 *Leven ende passie van St. Kunera*¹⁸⁷

St. Kunera (4th century) is known in the medieval diocese of Utrecht, but not so much outside the Low Countries.¹⁸⁸ She was one of the eleven thousand virgins who supposedly went with the British St. Ursula (4th century) to Rome on a pilgrimage. (However, in the legend of Ursula in the *Passionael*, Kunera is not mentioned.) When, on their return, the virgins were ambushed and killed by the Huns at Cologne, Kunera escaped martyrdom and was saved by Radboud, King of the Rhine. He took her to his palace at Rhenen where she lived such a virtuous life that he handed her the keys 'of all his things'. The Queen became jealous and together with her maiden murdered Kunera with a scarf and they buried her in the stables. Upon his return home from a hunting party the king's horses refused to go in the stables. A dramatic woodcut portrays both the murder and the unwilling horses.¹⁸⁹ After a miracle with burning candles indicating the place where her body lay buried, she was duly discovered. The Queen was driven mad by her husband and committed suicide. He converted his palace into a church dedicated to the virgin. Her relics, among which the scarf, stayed in the church at Rhenen until the early seventeenth century.

¹⁸⁷ In fact, this incunable contains the prologue as well. There is one edition extant, which I have used ([Leiden, Govert van Ghemen, between 1496 and 1504]). The incunable is in possession of the Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek in Darmstadt. I have consulted the microfilm made available to me at The Hague KB shelf mark OD 445. The version in the *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc, kunera*, fols. NN6-NN7v is rather brief compared to this incunable. For bibliographical details and description of the book, see Kronenberg, M.E., 'Een onbekende 15e eeuwse druk van Sinte Kunera's Leven en Passie', *Het boek* 20 (1931), pp. 331-344, and for main characteristics, see Debaene, *Volksboeken*, p. 257. There is a facsimile of a later edition (ca. 1515): *Dat leven ende die passie ende verheffinghe vander heiligher maget sinte Kunera*, zonder plaats en jaar (c. 1515), w. ed. ('s-Gravenhage, 1902). The incunable on which the latter edition is based has been transcribed by Combrink, J. ed., *Dat leven van Kunera*. Getranscribeerd, van annotaties en een inleiding voorzien (Historische heuvelrug-reeks I; Rhenen, 1988).

¹⁸⁸ Buuren, F. van, 'Sint Cunera van Rhenen, een legende', *Gouden Legendes. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 109-125. For an outdated but still informative article with an emphasis on retracing Kunera's movements, see Kist, N.C., 'De Reenensche Kunera-Legende, in betrekking tot die van Sinte Ursula en de Elfduizend maagden', *Kerkhistorisch Archief* 2 (1859), pp. 1-48.

Kunera's cult may have had an impetus after the discovery of a churchyard in Cologne in the mid-twelfth century which allegedly contained the remains of the virgin martyrs and their retinue and which stimulated devotion towards these martyrs. Kunera was of course not among them, but she appears to have been venerated in the Low Countries and the Rhineland before the fifteenth century.¹⁹⁰ To add to Kunera's *Life* a semblance of truth and extra holiness is the fact that the trustworthy St. Willibrord (658-739) makes an appearance. He is actively involved in her *translatio*, by personally taking spade in hand, digging up her remains and the scarf she was strangled with.¹⁹¹ Radboud (690-719) has been identified as a King of the Frisians who had a residence near Rhenen.¹⁹² The legend has composite elements from various centuries.

It is not clear who wrote the *Life* and *Passion*, but there was a Latin precursor. The dates which are cited in the miracles range from 1380 to 1446. At Rhenen a guild was established in her name in 1392. The brothers and sisters bound themselves to sing vespers and follow a mass on set times of the week, to bury their members and pray for the souls of the departed.¹⁹³ Papal legate Nicolas of Cusa, sent to the Netherlands to deliver papal indulgences in the aftermath of the Holy Year 1450, left a licence to the church to parcel out indulgences to those

¹⁸⁹ Kunera, fol. a1v. The same woodcut was later used in a book on horses, showing Kunera but with the scarf etched out, Kronenberg, M.E., 'Later gebruik van een der Kunera-houtneden', *Het boek* 21 (1933), pp. 287-290.

¹⁹⁰ Apparently, the place of her cult attracted many pilgrims at the end of the early middle ages, see Berbée, P.A.J.S., 'Bedevaart' en 'pelgrimstocht' in Nederland. Over oude temen en nieuwe methoden in bedevaartonderzoek', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), p. 175. However, as witnessed by the late medieval miracles wrought by the saint, it appears that she was venerated in the fifteenth century too.

¹⁹¹ Kunera, fol. b5v.

¹⁹² Haakman, G.C., *Rhenen en omstreken* (Amersfoort, 1847), p. 108.

¹⁹³ The text of the formation act is transcribed by Iterson, W. van, 'De stichtingsbrieven van het St. Cuneragilde te Rhenen en het ellendige gilde te Eembrug', *Rechtshistorische opstellen aangeboden aan A.S. de Blécourt*, J.B. Wolters ed. (Groningen, Batavia, 1939), pp. 41-53. About forty female members appear to have signed their names on the parchment when they were included in the guild.

who assisted in the upkeep to the church.¹⁹⁴ The church had sufficient funds to start building a tower in 1492. The cult of Kunera flourished from the third part of the fourteenth at least until the end of the fifteenth century.

The twenty seven miracles which accompany the *Life and Passion* are mostly situated in the Betuwe and the bishopric of Utrecht. Of importance to us are not those in which Kunera was thought to have performed miracles with an equestrian background, but those in which she is called upon as a comforter of people in fear and despair.¹⁹⁵ Also, historical persons are mentioned, including Eleanor, daughter of Edward III of England, married to Rainald II (1326-1343), Duke of Guelders and the Augustinian hermit Nicolaas van Dordrecht. The latter appears in three miracles and he is actively promoting the saint to a heavily pregnant woman experiencing a difficult labour.¹⁹⁶

Significant topics are Kunera's virtuous life as a virgin saint which earned her the love and protection of her protector and the miracles. It is not mentioned for whom the incunabulum was intended but it served to better its audience.¹⁹⁷ The laity feature predominantly in the miracles, and this suggests that the legend was intended for them.

¹⁹⁴ A transcription and a Dutch translation are appended by Haakman, *Rhenen*, pp. 300-301. The church appears to have received funds from pilgrims.

¹⁹⁵ *Kunera*, fol. a2.

¹⁹⁶ *Kunera*, Eleanor appears on fols. c1-c1v; Nicolaas and the pregnant woman on fols. d3-d3v, Nicolaas and the parents who save their blaspheming insane son by displaying devotion to Kunera on fols. c5v-c6; Nicolaas and the parents who save their blind child by having it put into contact with the saint's scarf on fols. d1-d1v. The Augustinian hermits offered spiritual care to craftsmen in particular, Axters, S., *Geschiedenis van de vroomheid in de Nederlanden* (4 vols., Antwerpen, 1956), III, pp. 350-356. The Augustinian hermits from Dordrecht were active in Utrecht, Rhenen and Zaltbommel, Henderikx, P.A., *De oudste bedelordekloosters in het graafschap Holland en Zeeland. Het ontstaan van bedelordekloosters voor ca. 1310 te Dordrecht, Middelburg, Zierikzee en Haarlem, alsmede enige aspecten van de plaats van deze kloosters in het stedelijk leven en daarbuiten gedurende de middeleeuwen* (Hollandse studiën 10; Dordrecht, 1977), p. 47. It enabled them to promote local saints to local people.

¹⁹⁷ *Kunera*, fol. a2.

1.3.1.8 *Leven van Liedwij, die maghet van Schiedam*, by Johannes Gerlach¹⁹⁸

The fifteen-year old Liedwij van Schiedam (1380-ca. 1432) was the unfortunate victim of a skating accident.¹⁹⁹ She became partially paralysed, prone to many horrible diseases, and was bed-ridden until her death. Her Middle Dutch legend, written before 1436, contains the story of her suffering and spiritual consolation and ascent.²⁰⁰ It is quite exceptional to find a local saint venerated in the fifteenth century Low Countries to such an extent as Liedwij was.

Although the Middle Dutch version is attributed to Jan (abbreviation of Johannes) Gerlach, who was her kinsman, its authorship is contested.²⁰¹ It is unknown who commissioned her legend. It may have been the church masters of Schiedam, who may have kept a version of it at the chapel where Liedwij was buried where she wrought miracles and where a miracle recording book was kept. Perhaps the tertiaries of the local St. Ursula convent commissioned her *Life*; Liedwij was after

¹⁹⁸ There are three editions in existence. I have used the *editio princeps* (Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer or Christiaan Snellaert], 03 March 1487) The Hague KB shelf mark 169 G 62. The medieval *Life* has been edited with parallel translation in modern Dutch by Jongen, L. en C. Schotel eds., *Het leven van Liedewij, de maagd van Schiedam. De Middelnederlandse tekst naar de bewaarde bronnen uitgegeven, vertaald en van commentaar voorzien* (Middelnederlandse tekstedities 2; Hilversum, 1989, 1994). Three Latin legends have appeared as well. They were written by Hugo regular canon of the St. Elizabeth monastery at Rugge near Den Briel, Thomas a Kempis and friar-preacher Jan Brugman, see Jongen en Schotel eds., *Liedewij*, pp. 16-17 and pp. 109-110. For Thomas a Kempis's version of the *Life*, see Mercator, J. trans. en ed., *Het Leven van de Heilige Lidwina van Schiedam door Thomas van Kempen. In het Hollandsch overgezet* (Amersfoort, 1924). For aspects of Jan Brugman's *Life* of the saint, see Dijk, A. van, *Jan Brugman als biograaf van de heilige Lidwina* (Universitas catholica lovaniensis tomus xv, 7; Rijswijk, 1948). These men obviously attempted to promote her cult to a wider (international, Latin reading) public.

¹⁹⁹ For a short description of her legend, see Goosen, Afra, pp. 232-233.

²⁰⁰ For her visions in particular, see Oerle, H. van, 'Liedwy von Schiedam: mystica oder hysterica?', *Religiöse Frauenbewegung und mystische Frömmigkeit im Mittelalter*, P. Dinzelbacher und D.R. Bauer eds. (Beiheft zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 28; Köln, Wien, 1988), pp. 395-404.

²⁰¹ Both Hugo's Latin *Life* and the Middle Dutch *Life* have sources in common. It seems that Liedwij's confessor, Jan Woutersz., has had a hand in the compilation of the Middle Dutch text, on which Hugo's *Life* relies too. Jan Gerlach was just one of the sources used by Hugo, Jongen en Schotel eds., *Liedewij*, pp. 110-113. In all, it is not known who authored her Middle Dutch legend.

all buried in one of their robes. The incunable does not reveal for whom the book was intended or printed. Recommended meditative practices (to contemplate on the passion of Christ in order to forget her own suffering) point to the influence of the modern devotion. Her Middle Dutch *Life* does not contain any posthumous miracles.

Aspects of importance are the circumstances surrounding her birth and a short description of her youth spent in the town of Schiedam as a member of impoverished nobility. The legend also describes in some detail the relationship with her mother. Also, she was a charitable person who supplied food and money to the poor. Jesus appears to her as a crucified child who changes into a bleeding host,²⁰² and she lactates. The legend contains some traceable historical events.²⁰³

Of all the saints mentioned in this thesis, Liedwij died nearest to the time of the invention of the printing press and her *Life* viewed in relation to the printing press reveals something special.²⁰⁴ Apparently, the church masters of the church of John the Baptist, where she was interred, decided to print books (not only those of her *Life*) to defray the cost which a canonisation process would entail. The priest Otgier Nachtegael, working at Schiedam, was prepared to put the Latin *Life of Liedwij* of friar Jan Brugman (ca. 1400-1473) on a newly established printing press. This was also advantageous since it would promote her cult to a wider public. However, her cult was only officially recognised as late as 1890.

²⁰² For aspects of her legend in relation to the host, Walker Bynum, C., *Holy feast and holy fast. The religious significance of food to medieval women* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987), pp. 124-129. Walker Bynum has relied on the Latin *Lives* rather than the vernacular version.

²⁰³ Jongen, L. en C. Schotel, 'Waarheid of fictie? Over de bruikbaarheid van het Middelnederlandse Leven van Liedewij, de maagd van Schiedam als historische bron', *OGE* 65 (1991), pp. 39-51.

²⁰⁴ Liebaers ed., *Verjaring*, pp. 518-519.

1.4 Conclusion

Both the exemplum collections and the female saints' *Lives* are rich sources for ideas about women. Both genres contain many ideas about women modelled on images of women in the family. The exemplum collections appear in various frameworks and settings, which may influence the choice of ideas used and affect the messages conveyed within them. The *Lives* follow the same well-trodden path of hagiography. They show the effectiveness of the female saint, sometimes by virtue of her marriage to the bridegroom Christ. In the later middle ages, the saint's intercessory role is increasingly emphasised. The legends which appear in separate editions are of relatively new saints or of older saints fitted in a new jacket, or those whose cults have been recently (re)established. Although it is impossible to base any firm conclusions on this small sample, in general, some saints' *Lives* hold up aspects of life for admiration and emulation, and stress the help supplied by the female saint to the devotee, or contain role models for secular women. From a reader's point of view, there are topics which a female lay reader can identify with. Women are never excluded from prologues in or introductions to the incunables. However, was the common woman erudite and interested enough to access the books? This will be discussed in the next chapter.

2 Women and the media

In the previous chapter individual editions of female saints' *Lives* and exempla which appeared in the vernacular were discussed. Both genres have been considered for their inclusion of ideas about women. The incunables have been evaluated to assess the context in which ideas about women were pronounced as well as the audience they intended to reach. Secular women belonged to this audience. It was concluded that the involvement of the common woman in book culture needed attention.

This chapter addresses issues involved with access of secular women to the book. The process of conveying ideas about women revolves around certain basic questions: how should ideas about women be interpreted, what was printed, what was read, who could read, who owned books and in what environment? The questions posed in this chapter are set within the wider context of late medieval Low Countries' book culture in its colourful diversity. For this reason, some examples involve manuscript books (so not solely incunables), and other female reader groups (so not only lay women). Occasionally, when evidence is scarce for the Low Countries, a glance will be cast across its boundaries.

Although the following discussion concentrates on the secular female in an urban environment our sources ought not to be viewed within too narrow confines. Reception of the genres was not restricted to an urban environment or a particular reader's group. There is an overlap between secular and religious tastes inherent to the genres. There is also common ground of noble female interest and what the 'common woman' was presented with. And, of course, the messages conveyed are of interest to male readers.

2.1 *Interpreting medieval ideas about women*

In a discussion about ideas which appear in the legends and exempla some attention must be devoted to ideas about women in the period more generally. The two following paragraphs deal with interpretation of modern historiographers and with medieval ideas. Later on in this chapter, when we discuss the urban environment, a paragraph will deal with ideas about women within the city specifically. The picture which emerges is crude and painted with only a few strokes of the brush. It only serves to establish a flavour of ideas surrounding females, and it will serve as a springboard for ideas elaborated on in chapters 3 and 4.

2.1.1 **Historiography**

Contemporary interpretation of medieval ideas about women has overwhelmingly concentrated on the medieval idea of the inequality of the sexes. In modern historiography when discussing ideas about medieval women, many construct arguments around the dichotomies between female and male.²⁰⁵ Whether adding a modern dimension to the medieval tripartite system of warriors, worshippers, workers, namely that of women (Shahar); or emphasising women's literary efforts (Waithe, Wilson); or determining her legal rights (Gunning); or studying her everyday life (Duby and Perrot, Gies, Opitz, Labarge), as well as women's work (Howell), the theme of the inequality of the sexes is always with us.²⁰⁶ Although

²⁰⁵ See, for example, Anderson, B.S. and J.P. Zinsser, *A history of their own. Women in Europe from prehistory to the present* (Harmondsworth, 1988), Bloch, R., *Medieval misogyny and the invention of western romantic love* (Chicago, London, 1991), Bot, P., *Tussen verering en verachting. De rol van de vrouw in de middeleeuwse samenleving 500-1500* (Kampen, Kapellen, 1990) and Williams, M. and A. Echols, *Between pit and pedestal. Women in the middle ages* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 239-240.

²⁰⁶ Shahar, S., *The fourth estate. A history of women in the middle ages* (London, New York, 1983, 1985), C. Galai trans.; Waithe, M.E. ed., *A history of women philosophers* (4 vols., Dordrecht, Boston, London, 1989), and Wilson, K. M. ed., *Medieval women writers* (Manchester, 1984); Gunning, M.J., *Gewaande rechten. Het denken over vrouwen en gelijkheid van Thomas van Aquino tot de Bataafsche Constitutie* (Zwolle, 1991); Duby, G. en M. Perrot general eds., *Geschiedenis van de vrouw* (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1991-1992), H. Beneden et al. transs., see volume II for the middle ages, Gies, F. and J., *Women in*

we are warned not to discuss women's history in polarities and dichotomies,²⁰⁷ power relationships are part and parcel of women's history. Indeed, it is an integral part of the socio-historical construction of gender.²⁰⁸ Inequality was a fact of medieval life.

2.1.2 Medieval ideas about women

Medical and scientific views of women deriving from ancient and medieval science show that women's biology and pathology were considered different from that of men's.²⁰⁹ The elements of earth, water, air and fire were related to primary qualities of hot, cold, moist and dry. These in turn were connected with four bodily juices: phlegm, blood, black bile and yellow bile. The relative proportions of each of these to the other (and also in combination) were thought to have influenced the physical, morphological and psychological constitution of the human being to which astrology also contributed. The woman's disposition was thought to have been cold and wet.

The woman's moist body longed for contact with male dryness, hence women could behave wantonly. In an exemplum, Aronis, who fears his wife Marina will resort to an extra-marital relationship while he is away on business, explains that

the middle ages (New York, 1978), Opitz, *Frauenalltag*, Labarge, M.W., *Women in medieval life. A small sound of the trumpet* (London, 1986), and Howell, M.C., *Women, production, and patriarchy in late medieval cities* (Chicago, London, 1986).

²⁰⁷ Rosenthal, J.T., 'Introduction', *Medieval women and the sources of medieval history*, J.T. Rosenthal ed. (Athens, London, 1990), p. x.

²⁰⁸ '... gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power',. Scott, J., 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American historical review* 91 (1986), c. 1067.

²⁰⁹ The ideas presented here are of a compilation of a few medieval thinkers only. See Jansen-Sieben, R., 'De vrouw in de medische literatuur', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 4; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), II, pp. 160-178, who supplies valuable quotations from texts circulating in the medieval Low Countries; Bullough, V.L., 'Medieval medical and scientific views of women', *Viator* 4 (1973), pp. 485-501, Cadden, J., *Meanings of sex difference in the middle ages. Medicine, science, and culture* (Cambridge, 1993), chapter 3, and Thomasset, Cl., 'De vrouwelijke natuur', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 45-69.

it is the temperature of his wife's blood which may make her unchaste.²¹⁰ Food could remain undigested because of the female's coldness. The womb was thought to lead a life of its own: it could wander around in the female body when menstruation did not occur, when it was sexually not satisfied or not reproductive.²¹¹ The wandering womb could lead to hysteria, which particularly affected virgins and widows. Frequently, women were thought to have been sexually insatiable, particularly when already introduced to the dry male body. Unruly and disorderly behaviour could result. The majority of exempla deal with unruly (usually unchaste) female behaviour.

Within the church and theological thought a complementary picture emerged.²¹² St. Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225-1274), for instance, following Galen and Aristotle, perceived woman as a deficient man. Although her spiritual and ethical equality was stressed, the man was viewed as an active force and the woman as passive force. Man was created in the image of God, but she was modelled from Adam's rib. While man represented the higher authority, the 'brains', woman represented the 'flesh'. He was superior, she was inferior. The male is associated with the higher rational soul, woman is identified with the *anima*, the lower sensible soul. It is her nature, her physical beauty that lures men away from the proper realm of thought to her realm of matter.

²¹⁰ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. g2v. A novella was also printed in Middle Dutch, Pennink, R. ed., *Twee uit het Latijn vertaalde Middelnederlandse novellen. 1. Pseudo-Petrarca, Teghen die straet der minnen. 2. Petrarca, Hystorie van Griseldis met Latijnse teksten* (Zwollese drukken en herdrukken voor de Maatschappij der Nederlandse letterkunde te Leiden 43; Zwolle, 1965).

²¹¹ Dixon, L.S., 'The curse of chastity: the marginalization of women in medieval art and medicine', *Matrons and marginal women in medieval society*, R.R. Edwards and V. Ziegler eds. (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 49-74.

²¹² Caron, M., 'Goede en slechte vrouwen in de kerkelijke traditie', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), pp. 6-20, Dalarun, J., 'De vrouw in de ogen der geestelijken', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 19-44, Bot, *Verering en verachting*, chapter 2, Ferrante, J. M., *Women as image in medieval literature from the twelfth century to Dante* (New York, London, 1975), pp. 17-45 and Orbàn, A.P., 'Het middeleeuwse antifeminisme', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 4; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), II, pp. 121-133.

Eve was the great wrongdoer: she had ruined paradise for all mankind. Mary was the exact opposite, she made it possible for mankind to be saved. She was impossible to imitate: she remained a virgin after giving birth. In complex imagery she became mother of the church and Christ's bride.

Sexual feelings needed to be combated by the clergy. Not only monks tucked away behind monastery walls but also secular clergy were in danger of unchaste feelings. The latter were in close contact with female parishioners or housekeepers. The housekeeper and lover of a secular cleric is transported to hell, with the authorial comment that the woman will be punished but the priest more so.²¹³ Regular clergy were tormented by seductresses: an old hag, for instance, offering the services of a young woman, tempts St. Anthony in the desert; a motif which occurred increasingly in late medieval art.²¹⁴

The picture above tells only half the story. Not all medieval thinkers thought alike, and some valued women positively.²¹⁵ For instance, women were preferred 'in material' because Adam was created from mere dust and Eve from bone (Adam's

²¹³ *Sterfboeck*, fols. t2v-t4.

²¹⁴ Anthony and the women were also depicted on a painting featuring a married burgher couple in the early sixteenth century. In this setting, Anthony probably symbolises the steadiness of their marriage, Ettes, B.J.C., 'De 'vleescelike becoringhe' van Antonius de Kluizenaar', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), p. 37.

²¹⁵ Blamires, A. et al. eds., *Woman defamed and woman defended. An anthology of medieval texts* (Oxford, 1992), chapter 8, cites authorities with a chronological range from the eleventh into the fifteenth century, and examples by Bot, *Verering en verachting*, pp. 66-77. Utley, F.L., *The crooked rib. An analytical index to the argument about women in English and Scots literature to the end of the year 1568* (Contributions in languages and literature 10; Columbus, 1944) lists authorities for the sixteenth century as well. See also the recent positive re-evaluation of Thomas Aquinas by Gunning, *Rechten*, chapter 1, in which she emphasises that Thomas viewed the female as inferior to the male but nevertheless as an individual with a *ratio* and the freedom to make her own choices. But contrast Bußmann, M., 'Die Frau - Gehilfin des Mannes oder eine Zufallerscheinung der Natur? Was die Theologen Augustinus und Thomas von Aquin über Frauen gedacht haben', *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter. Fragen, Quellen, Antworten*, B. Lundt ed. (München, 1991), p. 126, who discusses Thomas's *biogenetische Vorstellungen*. She stresses that there was a great difference between the active male and the passive female in Thomas's thinking; a view copied indiscriminately from his teacher Albert the Great.

rib); and 'in place' because he was created outside paradise and she within.²¹⁶ Christ chose a woman, soon to be married, to become his mother.²¹⁷ Only a wife was able to persuade her husband to better his behaviour.²¹⁸

Also, other images appear more frequently than those which were held up before. The emphasis shifted to the portrayal of sinner-saints whose life provided a model for the female secular sinner. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in 1215 everyone was to confess his sins at least once a year and to perform the penance imposed. The increased emphasis attached to the role of the secular female sinner in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is striking.²¹⁹ The example of the repentant sinner saint may have helped the laity to act less sinfully, but in particular its purpose was to show that God was a forgiving God. Another image that had changed was that of the Virgin Mary. She was no longer seen as the inimitable but she was portrayed as the loving mother of Jesus, a protector and mediator of all. In chapter 4, she proves a prominent figure in assisting mothers who experienced trouble with their children.

²¹⁶ Pratt, K., 'Analogy or logic: authority or experience? Rhetorical strategies for and against women', *Literary aspects of courtly culture*. Selected papers from the seventh triennial congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, 27 July-1 August 1992, D. Maddox and S. Sturm-Maddox eds. (Cambridge, 1994), p. 62, and Power, E., *Medieval women* (Cambridge, etc., 1975, 1976), M.M. Postan ed., p. 14. The compiler or author is not mentioned by Power.

²¹⁷ *Spiegel*, fol. 15v.

²¹⁸ Farmer, S., 'Persuasive voices. Clerical images of medieval wives', *Speculum* 61 (1986), pp. 517-543. I have not encountered any exempla which deal with a woman persuading her avaricious and usurious husband (an image which would fit well into an urban environment) to change his ways.

²¹⁹ Jansen, K.L., 'Mary Magdalen and the mendicants: the preaching of penance in the late middle ages', *Journal of medieval history* 21 (1995), pp. 1-25 and Haverkamp, A., 'Maria Magdalena: een voorbeeldige heilige', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), pp. 65-72. In fact, already in the thirteenth century her image as tearful holy sinner appears to have been well established, Bériou, N., 'La Madeleine dans les sermons Parisiens du XIII^e siècle', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 323-399.

2.1.3 Male authors and female readers

Undoubtedly, there is a fair degree of gender-marked writing in our sources (and it is of importance to recognise this, if only for the figure of the widow or old woman whose role appears to have developed into that of the early modern witch),²²⁰ however, it should not be blown out of proportion.

Although it is impossible to test the 'female experience' straight from the female herself,²²¹ the ideas from the sources were held up as imitable or admirable examples for all. In dealing with male-authored texts, we would be hard-pressed to discover the 'historical existence of real women and their experience of selfhood',²²² but equally we would be in trouble attempting to find anything like that about men. More important perhaps is to concentrate on the sources in an historical era. Some legends or part of legends are particularly pertinent since they were written in the later middle ages (for instance, *Historie van Sinte Barbara*, *Leven van Liedwijn*, and the editions solely based on St. Anne), and reflect ideas and images about women which were prevalent at the time of writing. The saints' *Lives* and *exempla* reflect the importance of what must have been of interest to the late medieval public consisting of men and women.

Another obstacle to gender-marked writing may result from the absence of female authors, to which we return below. Orality, the pre-eminent medieval mode of female expression, is treated less favourably in a society which uses writing to convey its ideas. Orality is of the utmost importance for women's history, because it reflects the women's shaping of their own culture.

²²⁰ Pleij, H., 'Wie wordt er bang voor het boze wijf? Vrouwenhaat in de middeleeuwen', *Revisor* 6 (1977), p. 42.

²²¹ Brüggmann, M., 'Re-searching the literary presentation of the 'female'', *Historiography of women's cultural traditions*, M. Meijer en J. Schaap eds. (Women's studies 3; Dordrecht, 1987), p. 136.

²²² See Fisher, S. and J.E. Halley, 'The lady vanishes: the problem of women's absence in late medieval and renaissance texts', *Seeking the woman in late medieval and renaissance writings. Essays in feminist contextual criticism*, S. Fisher and J.E. Halley eds. (Knoxville, 1989), p. 6, who suggest male authors ignore these issues.

As Ria Lemaire emphasises, medieval women took part in their own culture, for instance composing songs which often accompanied their communal work (such as washing, drawing water, etc.). In their work they create their very own 'positive' female role models; models which are missing in the sources written by males.²²³ Women had different views from men too, and the men's view is represented as the view of mankind.²²⁴ She also points out that ever since the invention of printing, with its roots in a male dominated written culture, the male's idea of womanhood as expressed in popular books spread faster than ever before, and women remained excluded.²²⁵ The written sources themselves are also seen as a display of an exclusively male interest. Women were deliberately excluded from written sources. However, it does not matter here whether we agree or differ on the impact of the mode of *female expression* oral or otherwise. What we must take on board is that males did have a hand in our saints' *Lives* and exempla, but we are not presented with a one-sided predominantly negative view of womanhood.²²⁶

Ideas about women are varied in our sources. De Eyb's *Ehebüchlein* is a good example, where the question posed in the book (shall a man marry or not) leads to a substructure contrasting women's strong points with bad habits. Most importantly, he concludes that marriage is the preferred state for human kind (which implies that women were not that bad). Another example is found in

²²³ Lemaire, R., 'Inleiding', *Ik zing mijn lied voor al wie met mij gaat. Vrouwen in de volksliteratuur*, R. Lemaire ed. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 9-41. However, someone must have put pen to paper at some stage otherwise we would not have known about these ideas. See also Bolton Holloway, J. et al., 'Introduction: the body and the book', *Equally in God's image. Women in the middle ages*, J. Bolton Holloway et al. eds. (New York, San Francisco, etc., 1990), pp. 1-23, that women avoided male models and preferred to chose female identities.

²²⁴ Lemaire, R., 'Vrouwen in de lyriek', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 3; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), I, pp. 111-126.

²²⁵ Lemaire, R., 'Rethinking literary history', *Historiography of women's cultural traditions*, M. Meijer en J. Schaap eds. (Women's studies 3; Dordrecht, 1987), pp. 190-191.

²²⁶ See Schmitz, P., 'De mannentaal van Emma Bovary', *Vrouwen in taal en literatuur*, K. Korevaart ed. (Amersfoort, Leuven, 1988), p. 144, who argues that the image of women is a myth created by men and that the male's view of womankind is negative, one-sided, and dangerous since it is presented as the norm.

Aesop where his master, the philosopher, as well as his wife are ridiculed.²²⁷ For instance, Aesop loathes his philosopher-master's disconsolate attitude after his wife has left him. The woman had returned to her parents as a result of one of Aesop's practical jokes. Aesop manages to persuade her that the master is about to marry another woman. She turns straight home to prevent it from happening. The inconsolable master and his quickly forgiving wife are both ridiculed.

Furthermore, as Julia Boffey points out, male and female authors wrote about similar topics, particularly when writing edifying literature. Both genders were influenced by 'a kind of androgynous inspiration'.²²⁸ Beatrice Gottlieb wonders whether if it could be shown that contemporary female authors had written for women the effect would have been dissimilar to that written by men for women.²²⁹ Furthermore, in principle, if an author's name is not mentioned it is impossible to conclude which sex composed or compiled or translated.

Of course, women may have interpreted texts differently: for Boccaccio (1313-1375) Leontium was a brilliant philosopher but became a courtesan who threw away womanly shame; to his contemporary Jean de Montreuil she was a Greek prostitute who dared to criticise the great philosopher Theophrastus; to the fourteenth-century author Christine de Pizan, she was a great philosopher who was quite famous in her time.²³⁰ Not everything was clear-cut either; the interpretation of the story of patient Griselda serves as an example.²³¹ Medieval

²²⁷ Aesop, fol. b5.

²²⁸ Boffey, J., 'Women authors and women's literacy in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England', *Women and literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, C.M. Meale ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 17; Cambridge, 1993), p. 166. But contrast Wiesner, M.E., *Women and gender in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 165, who states that early modern female authors generally included moral advice more often. Since both men and women wrote on similar topics it remains a problem to trace an anonymous author's sex based on their work.

²²⁹ Gottlieb, B., 'The problems of feminism in the fifteenth century', *Women of the medieval world*, J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple eds. (Oxford, New York, 1985), p. 358. The author decides that it is hard to answer this question since records are scarce.

²³⁰ Schibanoff, S., 'Taking the gold out of Egypt. The art of reading as a woman', *Gender and reading. Essays on readers, texts, and contexts*, E.A. Flynn and P.P. Schweickart eds. (Baltimore, London, 1986), p. 99.

²³¹ *Kaetspel*, fols. f6-g6v. A novella was also printed in Middle Dutch, Pennink ed., *Novellen*.

folk had difficulty interpreting the story.²³² Was Griselda's patience and obedience meant to be emulated by women and to what extent or was the message intended for all? Also, it cannot be ruled out that women identified with male literary figures,²³³ and *vice versa*.

Although a few examples are known of disgruntled well-read ladies and males' awareness of them, the less sophisticated common woman could very well have been in agreement with certain ideas expounded on her. On top of this, women may have helped to disseminate these ideas. Women were involved on various levels with book culture in the late medieval Low Countries and as such contributed to the continuation and perpetuation of some of the attitudes they were presented with.

There is no question that certain male authors, translators, compilers and also printers were aware of female's objections. Whilst defending themselves it is occasionally stated by male translators or compilers that they were duty bound to reflect the contents of their sources as truthfully as possible.²³⁴

An example of this awareness is that of Jan van Boendale (1282-1350), who changed his view. In one of his works dedicated to Agnes van Cleve, wife of the viscount of Brussels, he elaborated on his remark, made in the past, that all women were equally bad. He had meant only common women and not noble

²³² See Tuttle Hansen, E., 'The powers of silence: the case of the Clerk's Griselda', *Women and power in the middle ages*, M. Erler and M. Kowalski eds. (Athens, London, 1988), pp. 230-249 and Morse, C.C., 'The exemplary Griselda', *Studies in the age of Chaucer* 7 (1985), pp. 51-86. Compilers emphasised different elements of the Griselda story, Williamson, J.B., 'Philippe de Mézières Book for Married Ladies: a book from the entourage of the court of Charles VI', *The spirit of the court*. Selected proceedings of the fourth congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, G.S. Burgess and R.A. Taylor eds. (Toronto, 1985), pp. 400-401.

²³³ Burnier, A., 'Het beeld van de vrouw in de literatuur', *Poëzie, jongens en het gezelschap van geleerde vrouwen*, w. ed. (Amsterdam, 1974), p. 116.

²³⁴ Specific examples mentioned by Mann, J., *Apologies to women*. Inaugural lecture delivered 20th November 1990 (Cambridge, New York, etc., 1991), pp. 1-30.

ladies.²³⁵ Another striking example is that of Caxton.²³⁶ When a French version of the *Dictes and Sayengs of the Philosophers* was translated into English by Earl Rivers, he had omitted 'certayn and diuerse conclusions towchyng women' (a set of antifeminist proverbs and exempla attributed to Socrates). Caxton enquired whether 'some fair lady' had persuaded Rivers not to include the passage. Caxton subsequently restored the passage and printed it so that it could be removed 'wyth a penne race [scratch] it out or ellys rente [tear] the leef oute of the booke'. Caxton had thus made a detachable appendix.

2.2 The printing press

2.2.1 Continuation of female interest

Though our emphasis is on the 'common woman' as literary recipient rather than the female religious or noble woman, it must be noted that there is an overlap in common themes in female literary interest before the advent of the printing press and afterwards.

Herbert Grundmann shows the importance of a female audience in connection with the rise in (German) vernacular literature.²³⁷ Biblical, spiritual and saintly themes were in apparent demand.²³⁸ Female patronesses, usually noble ladies,

²³⁵ Hogenelst, D. en S. de Vries, 'Die scone die mi peisen doet ...'. De vrouw als opdrachtgeefster van middeleeuwse literatuur', *Tijdschrift voor vrouwenstudies* 3 (1982), p. 333.

²³⁶ Cited by Schibanoff, 'Taking', pp. 83-85.

²³⁷ Grundmann, H., 'Die Frauen und die Literatur im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Entstehung des Schrifttums in der Volkssprache', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 26 (1936), pp. 129-161.

²³⁸ Marie of Champagne, Eleanor of Aquitaine's daughter, commissioned a French translation of Genesis. In 1382, on her marriage to Richard II of England, Anne of Bohemia brought with her a New Testament written in Latin, Czech and German. Maud, first wife of Henry I of England, commissioned an Anglo-Norman translation of St. Brendan's voyage which was also to be used by her ladies and maidens. Margaret of Provence ordered Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale* to be translated as soon as her husband had commissioned the Latin composition of it. In the fourteenth century, Mahout, countess of Artois, owned a *Legenda aurea*, a Bible in the French vernacular, and the *Lives of the Church Fathers*. Cecily, Duchess of York, mother of Edward IV, had, during dinner time, read out to her parts of the *Legenda aurea* and the writings of female visionaries such as Bridget of Sweden. She would repeat them and discuss them with her

possessed the resources to request works to be composed or translated.

Traditionally, noble lay women were involved in the shaping of literature in the vernacular, in particular of edifying texts.²³⁹ However, whenever names of patronesses are mentioned it should be treated with caution.²⁴⁰

Fortunately, a small list has been compiled of female patronesses residing in the Low Countries who, until the beginning of the fifteenth century, were apparently involved in commissioning translations into or compositions in Dutch vernacular literature.²⁴¹ Saints' *Lives*, edifying literature, but also secular works (such as *Vanden Vos Reynaerde*) are on the list. In general, noble females are shown to have commissioned male authors and evidence from the Low Countries is consistent with that of Europe. Women from other walks of life were involved in the creation of Dutch literature. In the Low Countries, some authors served patrons who are mentioned as their lady-loves, or a devout virgin, or (noble) religious.

Female patronesses remained important in relation to the printing press. In his *Ehebüchlein*, De Eyb profusely praises Barbara of Brandenburg.²⁴² Heinrich Steinhöwel's translation of *Aesop* in German (on which the Dutch edition is

female entourage. Examples supplied by Groag Bell, S., 'Medieval women book owners: arbiters of lay piety and ambassadors of culture', *Sisters and workers in the middle ages*, J.M. Bennett et al. eds. (Chicago, London, 1976, 1989), pp. 152-153 and Riddy, F., 'Women talking about the things of God': a late medieval sub-culture', *Women and literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, C.M. Meale ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 17; Cambridge, 1993), p. 110. More examples of noble women commissioning books are cited by Holzknecht, K.J., *Literary patronage in the middle ages* (Philadelphia, 1923), p. 91 and pp. 100-105 and Lucas, A.M., *Women in the middle ages. Religion, marriage and letters* (Brighton, 1983), pp. 170-179.

²³⁹ Grundmann, 'Frauen', pp. 129-161 and Green, D.H., *Medieval listening and reading. The primary reception of German literature 800-1300* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), p. 290.

²⁴⁰ People in high positions were mentioned as well in the hope of attracting their patronage, see Holzknecht, *Patronage*, p. 155.

²⁴¹ For the list, see Hogenelst en De Vries, 'Scone', pp. 345-346. Other examples are found in Van Oostrom, *Woord*, pp. 296-297.

²⁴² At least, he praises her profusely for her linguistic knowledge of German, -referred to as *duytsch*-, French, Latin, and Greek, as well as literature: poets and the '*natuerlicken meesteren*', *Ehebüchlein*, fol. h3.

indirectly based) was dedicated to Eleanor, wife of Duke Sigismund of Tyrol.²⁴³ Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, encouraged Caxton to complete the translation of Raoul Lefèvre's *Le Recueil des histoires de Troyes* into English. A copper engraving shows Caxton offering a book to Margaret.²⁴⁴ Caxton printed it (perhaps as early as 1473) and it was the first printed book to appear in the English language.²⁴⁵

There is also a convergence regarding visual images in manuscript books and incunables. The manuscript books of hours are 'tailor-made' to reflect the image of the patron,²⁴⁶ but not surprisingly, no such personalised pictures are printed in incunables. None of our incunables was printed with only one particular female reader in mind. The best that can be said is that the earliest printers attempted to continue certain themes already known, which may originate from a female side.²⁴⁷ In the *Hours of Catherine of Cleves* the birth of Eve from Adam's rib is depicted, and a woodcut in the *Spiegel* shows a similar scene.²⁴⁸ Also, women's responsibility for children's education is featured: in the *Hours of Catherine of*

²⁴³ Spitz, 'Course', p. 395.

²⁴⁴ Hellinga-Querido, L., *William Caxton. Englands eerste drukker en de Nederlanden* ('s-Gravenhage, 1976), pp. 9-12.

²⁴⁵ Caxton is thought to have printed it at Bruges, see INCIPIT.

²⁴⁶ In the *Hours of Mary of Guelders*, the childless Duchess is shown standing in a walled garden reading a book. It has been suggested that she is identified with the Virgin Annunciate, Harthan, J., *Books of Hours and their owners* (Milan, 1977), p. 78 and p. 80, but this is no longer the case, see Marrow, J.H. et al., *The golden age of Dutch manuscript painting* (New York, 1990), p. 69. In the *Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, the Duchess is sitting in an open casement window which looks directly into the choir of a Gothic church. She is probably reading the *Obsecro te* (I beseech thee), since the letter 'O' is clearly shown. She gazes down at the scene in the church, see Harthan, *Books*, p. 110. Catherine of Cleves is depicted kneeling in front of the Virgin, see Marrow, *Golden*, p. 148 and Liebaers, H., *Noordnederlandse miniaturen. De gouden eeuw der boekverluchting in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albrecht I, 18 september-16 oktober 1971. Tentoonstelling door A. Brounts samengesteld, door H. Liebaers ingeleid (Brussel, 1971), nr. 27.

²⁴⁷ Adamson, J.W., 'The extent of literacy in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: notes and conjectures', *The Library* 10 (1930), p. 188: 'The smaller works printed by Caxton and his immediate successors seem to appeal to the habits and tastes of women rather than those of men; either way, they were not peculiarly men's books'. Unfortunately, the author does not supply any evidence to support his view.

²⁴⁸ This scene has been interpreted as depicting Eve's subordinate status as described by Groag Bell, 'Book owners', p. 147, but, as we have seen, the scene can be interpreted in several ways.

Cleves an illustration shows a schoolmaster with his pupils (in the case of Catherine it meant she had to find a teacher for young sons). Similar scenes are found in woodcuts, for instance, a woodcut shows Mary working at her loom in the living room with the child Jesus sitting next to her with an open book on his lap.²⁴⁹ This also shows the responsibility of the woman in the education of her children (unless it is intended here to show that Jesus was actually teaching Mary).

A reading Virgin Mary also features strongly, both in the personalised Hours and the incunables. The *Hours of Katharina van Lochorst* (member of a fifteenth-century patrician family in Utrecht) and the book of hours by the Masters of the Delft Half-Length Figures, show Mary reading at the annunciation scene.²⁵⁰ Some examples which appear in the incunables of Mary reading will be discussed below.

How can it be determined that women were interested in certain books? Some inventive scholars have speculated on secular women's tastes. Susanne Hull's discussion is based on books whose titles were meant to attract women, or which were dedicated to them, or whose subjects dealt with those within a woman's provenance (e.g. cookery, needlework), or those which contained separate sections on women's duties or roles, or contained histories or biographies of famous women (but she has not included those of a hagiographic nature).²⁵¹

Diane Bornstein's choice of collection concentrates on medieval courtesy books: books dealing with etiquette and instruction intended for secular readership by

²⁴⁹ Marrow, *Golden*, p. 163. I have selected at random a prayer book containing some woodcuts from the vast collection of prayer books: *Dat leven ons heren Jhesu Christi*, (Delft, Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, 1498), shelf mark IA. 47235, fol. h4v. On Eckert's woodcuts see also Kok, C.H.C.M., *De houtsneden in de incunabelen van de Lage Landen, 1475-1500. Inventarisatie en bibliografische analyse* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1994), I, pp. 179-198.

²⁵⁰ On Lochorst, see Liebaers, *Miniaturen*, nr. 28 and Marrow, *Golden*, p. 159. On the other manuscript book, see Marrow, *Golden*, p. 194.

²⁵¹ Hull, S.W., *Chaste, silent and obedient: English books for women 1475-1640* (San Marino, 1982), pp. ix-x.

women as well as men.²⁵² Cornelia Niekus Moore discusses various genres of literature which may have been read in a secular environment.²⁵³ Among literature for secular women she counts catechisms, Bible and Bible excerpts, prayer books, female saints' *Lives* and books which deal with the married state (although De Eyb's *Ehebüchlein* is not cited amongst them). She also mentions the books of virtuous example, among which rank the German *Seelentrost* and fables. In short, our corpus fits in neatly in this company.

In the past, literature has often been studied taking as point of reference text analysis and intentions of the author.²⁵⁴ Other solutions are needed to determine female interest. Since there are only a few references of female ownership of Dutch vernacular incunables and readers' reactions are lacking, to approach the text from a readers' point of view proves a good solution.

Hans Robert Jauss identifies literary genre or text group as an expression of art which can be discussed in terms of aesthetic experience. The concept of genre is evaluated into the aesthetic realm. The reader's Horizon of Expectations is taken as point of reference. The degree of literary aesthetic sophistication of the reader determines her interpretation: the higher the reader's experience, the shorter the distance between her Horizon of Expectations and the text within a text group.²⁵⁵ But it is not even necessary to read the text in order to determine the text group of the earliest printed sources. As Vermeulen points out in relation to the presentation of the book, for instance by studying the title page, the printer tempts the customer with his motives (in the form of possibly recommending the

²⁵² However, she also broadly defines them as 'didactic literature meant to serve as a guide for secular life', Bornstein, D., *The lady in the tower. Medieval courtesy literature for women* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1983), p. 11.

²⁵³ Genres cited by Niekus Moore, C., *The maiden's mirror. Reading material for German girls in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 36; Wiesbaden, 1987), chapter 4. Since her book deals with sixteenth-century Germany, many of her ideas on women's reading are based on reformation and counter-reformation ideals.

²⁵⁴ Vervliet, R., 'Literatuur en lezerspubliek. Receptiesociologie als bijdrage tot de sociale geschiedenis', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 35 (1984), pp. 315-316.

brevity, novelty, entertainment value or usefulness of the book).²⁵⁶ This helped the reader quickly to evaluate what the book was about and to which text group the book belonged, before it was actually read. A few significant words, frequently accompanied by a woodcut, assisted the reader in determining the genre.

By concentrating on what the text says to and about the reader, Jauss defines questions and answers in the communicative sphere and he relates them to the place in life of the individual.²⁵⁷ We can pose questions to our saints' *Lives* and exempla: how can virtue become visible in (wo)man, what does the past teach me about the future, what am I getting into when I take on this role? The sources supply admirable and imitable behaviour, and lead to self-recognition. These observations ought to be borne in mind in the following chapters.

2.2.2 The printing press as medium

Although generally the invention of the printing process has been regarded as a new discovery, Michael Clanchy rightly describes the process as a 'culmination of a millennium' of literary culture.²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the effects the printing press brought about as medium of mass communication were unparalleled, both in conveying similar unadulterated information and in its rapid circulation.²⁵⁹ The appearance of the printed vernacular book in turn became known to an ever growing lay public which increasingly demanded information in their own language, in easily comprehensible prose.²⁶⁰ Books could be sold and a profit

²⁵⁵ See Jauss, H.R., *Toward an aesthetic of reception* (Theory and history of literature 2; Brighton, 1982), T. Bahti trans., in particular chapter 3.

²⁵⁶ Vermeulen, *Profijt*, p. 266 and also pp. 188-193.

²⁵⁷ Jauss, H.R., 'The alterity and modernity of medieval literature', *New literary history* 10 (1979), especially the overview on pp. 228-229.

²⁵⁸ Clanchy, M., 'Looking back from the invention of printing', *Literacy in historical perspective*, D.P. Resnick ed. (Washington, 1983), p. 8.

²⁵⁹ Eisenstein, E.L., *The printing press as an agent of change. Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe* (2 vols., Cambridge, etc., 1979), II, has researched the influence of the printed book on scholarship.

²⁶⁰ Prose was thought to convey the truth and was valued for its directness; the usage of prose (as opposed to rhyme) also signifies the transition from listening to reading,

could be made, and it can even be said that the town dwellers had established a new relation (*neuartiges Verhältnis*) with the book.²⁶¹ Also, inhibiting effects of restriction on circulation of the Bible for instance, had yielded to the commercial world.²⁶²

Books printed in the vernacular *en masse* (for a large reading public) and on paper instead of expensive parchment must have been cheaper than individually commissioned manuscript books.²⁶³ The latter were painstakingly copied out and embellished with painted miniatures or pen flourishing. The printed books were cheaper but still remained luxury items. The main problems for the researcher are that prices of incunables are shrouded in mystery and disposable income of common women in the later medieval period is not well known either.²⁶⁴

Franssen, P.J.A., 'Gerard Leeu voltooit te Gouda het drukken van Die hystorie van Reynaert die vos', *Nederlandse literatuur, een geschiedenis*, M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen ed. (Groningen, 1993), p. 110.

²⁶¹ Sprandel, R., *Gesellschaft und Literatur im Mittelalter* (Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich, 1982), p. 202.

²⁶² Secrecy surrounding sacred texts in particular had restricted their distribution to a wider public, see Goody, J., 'Introduction', *Literacy in traditional societies*, J. Goody ed. (Cambridge, 1968), p. 11.

²⁶³ A concise overview on printers is supplied by Clair, C., *A history of European printing* (London, New York, San Francisco, 1976), pp. 73-77. A chronological overview of the lettertypes used by the incunable printers in the Low Countries and reproductions and tables useful for identifying various presses have been supplied by Hellinga, W. and L., *The fifteenth-century printing types of the Low Countries* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1966), D.A.S. Reid trans. Volume 1 contains an introduction to the presses.

²⁶⁴ To start with the costs faced by the printer concerning his equipment (press, type, and good quality paper or parchment and thick ink) are not well known, Febvre, L. and H.-J., Martin, *The coming of the book. The impact of printing 1450-1800* (London, 1976), D. Gerard trans., pp. 109-115. Pettas, W., 'The cost of printing a Florentine incunable', *La bibliofila* 75 (1973), pp. 67-85, supplies a few examples of these costs and adds the factors of composition of the book, salaries of workmen and distribution. See also Hirsch, R., *Printing, selling and reading 1450-1550* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 27-40. Edler de Roover, F., 'New facets on the financing and marketing of early printed books', *Bulletin of the business historical society* 27 (1953), pp. 222-230, stresses the role of merchants in the instigating, financing and marketing of books. Geldner, F., 'Bücherfestpreise in der Wiegendruckzeit?', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 15 (1975), cc. 1289-1292, points out that the buyer sometimes paid extra for the book to be bound and embellished (for instance by rubricating). It is impossible to estimate the buying power of women when it comes to the acquisition of books. For income of medieval women, see Williams and Echols, *Pit and pedestal*, pp. 239-240. The authors state that in addition to the little information known about the income of urban women, monetary values fluctuated which makes it difficult to estimate their disposable income in real terms. For general information on salaries, in particular in the county of Holland, see Noordegraaf, L.,

Although it has been contended that written texts are static, stable, and less flexible than oral literature, in other words that the message became more autonomous and more definite,²⁶⁵ it must be pointed out that part of our corpus was disseminated in the vernacular by word of mouth (of the preacher) who relied on written (or printed) versions.²⁶⁶ In his sermon, he could throw in exempla to his heart's content, or use a saint's *Life* on her particular feast-day.

What then was printed? About three-quarters of incunables from the Low Countries were printed in Latin, but increasingly printing in the vernacular gained ground not only in the Low Countries, but everywhere in Europe.²⁶⁷ Based on extant titles it is apparent that in the Low Countries classics, grammars, and texts dealing with philosophy and texts of a scientific nature appeared in Latin. About one half of all the incunables printed in the vernacular is involved with these topics as well. And 'religious texts' account for nearly the other half printed in the vernacular. Of the latter those of a devotional nature took up half of that total:

Hollands welvaren? Levensstandaard in Holland 1450-1650 (Bergen NH, 1985), pp. 187-188. The standard of living was low in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

Noordegraaf pleads for increasing archival research to establish earnings. When this is performed our insight into female income will be greatly enhanced.

²⁶⁵ Ong, W.J., *Orality and literacy: the technologizing of the word* (London, New York, 1982), chapter 3.

²⁶⁶ Although most (thirteenth-century) sermons survive in Latin, they could be translated in any vernacular, d'Avray, *Preaching*, pp. 90-95. Zielemann, G.C., 'Preken als litteraire documenten', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens ed. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 70-86, has also discovered hybrid forms of sermons (Latin and the vernacular), and asserts that although sermons were composed to be read aloud, the preacher could take the liberty of making oral *ad hoc* alterations.

²⁶⁷ Steinberg, S.H., *Five hundred years of printing* (1955, revised ed., London, 1996), pp. 54-58.

featuring religious fiction, religious biography and moral theology (among which I count our sources).²⁶⁸

The production side as well as the consumption side are intricately interwoven in the printing process. Printers must have published with the intention of selling many copies to a large public which had apparent need for books. But, of course they did not always succeed. Also, the main problem with determining the popularity of books manufactured by the printing presses is that we deal with extant copies only and we cannot measure the number of books printed in any one edition. The evidence is ragged, an 'average' edition could have ranged from two hundred to a thousand copies.²⁶⁹ A reprint of a text therefore does not always indicate that a text was very successful since the edition may have been small in the first place. On the other hand, it has recently been reconfirmed that whole editions have disappeared.²⁷⁰

Whereas it has been contended that the earliest centres of printing were not established in university towns frequented by the impecunious students, but in cities involved in commerce and trade since 'learning and diligence is no

²⁶⁸ *Catalogue British Museum* IX, p. ix and pp. xv-xvi. The general survey, based on extant titles, is still very useful for an overall impression. The main problem is that titles used for specification are not mentioned in the genre survey. More recently, emphasis is laid on the usage of bibliometrical methods (counting printed words in editions) as the availability of titles and genres does not give insight into the quantity of printed words. Using this method, the relative importance of the printer can be estimated, see Vervliet, H.D.L., 'Humanisme en typografie: de introductie van de romein en cursief in de Nederlanden (1483-ca.1540)', *Boek, bibliotheek en geesteswetenschappen*. Opstellen door vrienden en collega's van dr. C. Reedijk geschreven ter gelegenheid van zijn aftreden als bibliothecaris van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te 's-Gravenhage, W.R.H. Koops et al. eds. (Hilversum, 1986), in particular p. 320, and Heijting, W., 'Succes becijferd. Een bibliometrische analyse van het fonds van Geraert Leeu', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige Kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 204-223 and the latter's bibliography. A good overview of fifteenth-century Dutch (predominantly) vernacular literature printed is summarised by Kruitwagen, B., 'Wat men in de Nederlanden las in de 15e eeuw', *Bibliotheekleven* 10 (1925), pp. 41-58, pp. 51-58, pp. 87-95 and pp. 102-111.

²⁶⁹ Eisenstein, *Press*, I, p. 11.

²⁷⁰ Kok, *Houtsneden*, I, pp. 21-22, who has described the wear and tear of the wood blocks in subsequent editions and studied the journey of the blocks from one printer to the next.

substitute for ready cash',²⁷¹ in the northern Low Countries books were printed in cities which hosted institutions with scientific or learned interests and monastic centres. These presses disseminated books in Latin but also in the Dutch vernacular: such as at Den Hem, Deventer, Utrecht, Culemborg, Nijmegen, 's-Hertogenbosch and Zwolle. Also, the fledgling towns of Delft, Gouda, Haarlem and Leiden maintained presses in the Dutch vernacular. In the southern Low Countries only relatively few books in the vernacular were published, such as at Antwerp, Audenaarde, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, and Hasselt.²⁷²

The vernacular press was relatively absent in the southern Low Countries. In the south, a more sophisticated and spoilt public may have preferred luxurious manuscript books to the simple standardised printed books. The abundance of scriptoria in Brussels, for instance, may count for the fact that there was only one press established here,²⁷³ though it may not have been uncommon to print *de luxe* versions for noble patrons.²⁷⁴ Another explanation is that the southern Low Countries concentrated on printing in Latin and other languages, as Gerard Leeu did when he moved from Gouda to Antwerp. The books printed here were probably sold on foreign markets as well.

²⁷¹ Steinberg, *Printing*, p. 18.

²⁷² The interested reader can easily look up the various titles which appeared in the towns mentioned with INCIPIT.

²⁷³ See Pleij, H., *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511. Literatuur en stadscultuur tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd* (Amsterdam, Leuven, 1988), pp. 192-193, and the press was established relatively late (from 1507 onward), and Pleij, H., 'De betekenis van de beginnende drukpers voor de ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse literatuur in Noord en Zuid', *Spektator* 21 (1992), pp. 227-263. Contrast the scepticism of Goudriaan, K., 'Inleiding', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), p. 5, who does not support the hypothesis that the culture of the public in northern Low Countries differed to a great extent from that of the southern Low Countries.

²⁷⁴ Printed on *vellum* instead of paper and sumptuously decorated, Pickford, C.E., 'Fiction and the reading public in the fifteenth century', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 45 (1963), pp. 431-432.

2.2.3 Female authors in print

No identified medieval female author from the Low Countries appeared in print before 1501.²⁷⁵ Women who can be identified and whose work was printed before 1501 are few and far between.²⁷⁶ A compilation of Bridget of Sweden's *Revelations* was printed in the Dutch vernacular. Bridget's literary activities were extremely popular in Europe.²⁷⁷ Female authors in print are in short supply – like female authors generally. There is a definite lack of female authors in print, resulting from the lack of female authors in general.

In our incunables occasionally female 'authors' are referred to. Mercella, servant of St. Martha of Bethany (1st century), was supposed to have written Martha's legend.²⁷⁸ 'Authorities' from a higher level make their appearance as well. One of the eleven thousand martyred virgins assists St. Joseph-Herman in composing a 'history' or song in honour of Ursula.²⁷⁹ She changes into a dove (image of divine inspiration) who conveys the words into his ears. Other virgins sing words for him to note down. Although St. Perpetua (d. 203) has left an autobiographical narrative, the version of her legend in the *Passionael* is narrated in the third person singular.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁵ See Basse, M., *Het aandeel der vrouw in de Nederlandsche letterkunde* (2 vols., Gent, 1920-1921), I, pp. 9-46. There had been exceptional authors about, see Vanderauwera, R., 'The Brabant mystic: Hadewijch', *Medieval women writers*, K.M. Wilson ed. (Manchester, 1984), pp. 186-203. See also the new edition of Thiébaux, M. ed., *The writings of medieval women. An anthology* (Garland library of medieval literature 100, series B; New York, 1987, revised ed., 1994), which does not contain any authors printed in the Dutch vernacular before 1501, with the exception of Bridget of Sweden.

²⁷⁶ The literary fruits of Christine de Pizan's pen were in print in Europe. *The Book of Hawking, Hunting, and Heraldry*, also known as *The boke of St. Albans*, commonly attributed to Dame Juliana Berners was printed in English. Berners's name is missing in INCIPIT On Berners's activities, see Lone, E.M., 'Some bookwomen of the fifteenth century', *The colophon* 11 (1932), (p. 5). In Latin appeared an oration of the fifteenth-century Cassandra Fidelis, as well as the fourth-century female author Proba Falconia (whose work is praised by De Eyb, *Ehebüchlein*, fol. h2v).

²⁷⁷ INCIPIT lists over 40 different editions of Bridget's works in Latin, German, Italian and English.

²⁷⁸ *Passionael, somerstuc, martha*, fol. p1v.

²⁷⁹ *Miraculen*, fols. 69v-70v.

²⁸⁰ For a description of Perpetua's biography, see Shaw, B.D., 'The Passion of Perpetua', *Past and present* 139 (1993), pp. 3-45, and Petroff, E.A., *Medieval women's visionary*

It may not have been uncommon for women to have been engaged in activities as translators. The fifteenth-century English aristocratic laywoman Dame Eleanor Hull translated psalms, prayers and meditations from French into English.²⁸¹

2.2.4 Female printers and booksellers

It was my intention when I first looked at the subject of female printers to discover whether their printed corpus differed from that of their male colleagues. Perhaps women printers would be more likely to publish female authors than their male colleagues? Unfortunately, there are too few female printers for inferences of this kind. Since evidence from the Low Countries is scarce, we look abroad to put the region in context.²⁸²

As in all medieval professions, wives of artisans would have assisted their menfolk in the workplace. It is not certain whether women were actively involved in the physical preparation of books, although there is evidence that a woman was involved in typesetting together with a male.²⁸³ Possibly the women assisted in translating or checking the typesetting or rubricating. Some must have had an in-depth knowledge of the business since they were able to carry on the publishing business in the absence of their husbands. Some printers' wives originated from publishing milieux.²⁸⁴ Wives became increasingly involved in the

literature (New York, Oxford, 1986), pp. 60-64, who has incorporated a printed version of her diary (translated by H.R. Musurillo) on pp. 70-77.

281 Barratt, A., 'Dame Eleanor Hull, a fifteenth-century translator', *The medieval translator. The theory and practice of translation in the middle ages*. Papers read at a conference held 20-23 August 1987 at the University of Wales Conference Centre, Grenynog Hall, R. Ellis ed. (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 87-101.

282 A good starting point is offered by Meiner, A., 'Die Frau im Druckgewerbe. Aus Notizen zu einer Geschichte der Frau im Buchgewerbe', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1933), pp. 333-343.

283 Lone, 'Bookwomen', (pp. 1-5).

284 See Cockx-Indestege, E., *Mathias van der Goes en het Boexken van der officien ofte dienst der missen van Simon van Verlo* (Antwerpen, 1985), pp. 7-8, who speculates that Mathias van der Goes's wife was related to Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and, when widowed, she married Govaert Bac. Guyone de Viart successively married three printers; her first husband was Johann Higman, of Dutch origin, who printed in Paris in the 1490s, see Lenkey, S.V., 'Printers' wives in the age of humanism', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1975), pp. 332-334.

publishing business if their husbands were no longer able to carry on, either temporarily, for instance when he was incarcerated,²⁸⁵ or more typically, on a more permanent basis, as widow.²⁸⁶ There is no evidence to suggest that women established themselves as printers, probably because it was a rather expensive business to start up. Evidence is scarce and vague.

More is known about nuns involved with printing. This activity is an extension of their illuminating and writing activities, but sometimes with a commercial rather than devotional flair added to it. For instance, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (of all books!) in Italian and grammars to be used at schools were printed by Dominican nuns at Florence.²⁸⁷ Father Confessor acted as treasurer and overseer of the presses. But, nuns more commonly printed devotional woodcuts, paralleling motifs which also occur in printed books, particularly in the saints' *Lives*. However, it is not known whether the nuns would design, and physically print, colour and cut themselves,²⁸⁸ but some must have been actively involved.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Lone, 'Bookwomen', (p. 2), as did the wife of Erwin vom Stege, who printed or may have caused to have printed her husband's *Dialogus super libertate Ecclesiastica*, whilst he was imprisoned by the city council of Cologne for writing it. But see also INCIPIT (using the title *Oliverium super libertate ecclesiastica*) where the printer is stated as unknown.

²⁸⁶ I have checked INCIPIT's printer's and publisher's category for 'widow', but most examples supplied post-date the incunable period, and I have only included those which do not. Examples of books printed by or caused to have been printed by widows before 1501 are *La règle des marchands*, printed at the instigation of Jaquette Lebée, widow of Jean Héault at Provins in 1496. Roland van den Dorpe's widow may have printed *Van Nyeuvont, Loosheit ende Practike, hoe sij Vrouw Lortse verheffen* at Antwerp between 1496 and 1501. See Lone, 'Bookwomen', (p. 3), for Beatrice van Orroir, widow of Arend de Keysere, who is supposed to have printed a peace treaty.

²⁸⁷ Lone, 'Bookwomen', (p. 4). INCIPIT gives the information on the printer as *Apud Sanctum Jacobum de Ripoli* and places it between brackets indicating the information ought to be treated with caution.

²⁸⁸ Schraut, E., 'Kunst im Frauenkloster. Überlegungen zu den Möglichkeiten der Frauen im mittelalterlichen Kunstbetrieb am Beispiel Nürnberg', *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter. Fragen, Quellen, Antworten*, B. Lundt ed. (München, 1991), p. 103.

²⁸⁹ In 1466, the canonesses of St. Augustine at Mechlin were presented with a press by a laywoman joining the convent (*unum instrumentum ad imprimendas scripturas et ymagines*), see Meyer, M. de, *Volksprenten in de Nederlanden 1400-1900. Religieuze, allegorische, satirische en verhalende prenten. Speelkaarten, Ganzen-en Uilenborden, Driekoningenbriefjes, Nieuwjaarsprenten* (Amsterdam, Antwerpen, 1970), p. 13.

The simple woodcuts without any substantial length of text added to them would usually portray scenes which involved Christ's life, Mary's life, and saints.²⁹⁰ Of the so-called *papirren hilgen* (paper saints), the Brigettine nuns in the Low Countries promoted 'their' saints St. Bridget and St. Catherine of Vadstena in particular.²⁹¹ These sort of prints, not solely manufactured by nuns,²⁹² were prized for their protective value. They were used as amulets worn on the body, and displayed in living rooms, pasted on trunks, walls and chimney breasts. The laity could obtain the *bildekens* (small illustrations) on pilgrimages as souvenirs or simply buy them at home. These prints would stimulate the laity to pray and ponder about sinful behaviour and death.²⁹³ a similar result as with books.

Women were also active in bookmaking crafts: they were bookbinders, illuminators and booksellers, often combining these jobs. To mention only a few examples from the Low Countries from the fifteenth century which represent the various levels of female involvement in producing and selling books: in 1478, the St. Bavo church at Haarlem acquired a book from Cijl, daughter of Jacob van Schoten, which may have been expensive since it was paid for in three instalments.²⁹⁴ Between 1476 and 1489 two women ran a bookstore in Bruges; they sold finished manuscripts, and produced books on commission.²⁹⁵ In the

²⁹⁰ See De Meyer, *Volksprenten*, pp. 12-13, Heel, D. van, *De Goudse drukkers en hun uitgaven* (12 vols., Gouda, 1951-1953), II.

²⁹¹ See the many prints made by the nuns, Kreek, M.L. de, 'Geprent te Mariënwater'. Onderzoek naar - en voorlopige inventarisatie van - mogelijke 'Mariënwater-prentjes', *Birgitta van Zweden 1303-1373. 600 jaar kunst en cultuur van haar kloosterorde*. Tentoonstelling Museum voor religieuze kunst Uden, 22 maart t/m 25 mei 1986, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen ed. (Uden, 1986), pp. 17-30.

²⁹² Dubbe, B., 'Voorwerpen betrekking hebbend op de godsdienst, sieraden en diversen', *Thuis in de late middeleeuwen. Het Nederlands burgerinterieur 1400-1535*. Tentoonstelling in the Provinciaal Overijssels Museum van 5 oktober tot 31 december 1980. Catalogus door J.W.H. de Jong, w. ed. (Zwolle, 1980), p. 77. Among the stamps depicting saints featured Barbara. The stamps were part of the inventory of a pedlar who died in the mid-fifteenth century.

²⁹³ De Kreek, 'Mariënwater', p. 17.

²⁹⁴ Wüstefeld, W.C.M., 'Haarlemse kerkmeesters als bestellers van boeken', *Middeleeuwse handschriftenkunde in de Nederlanden*. Verslag van de Groningse codicologendagen 28-29 april 1988, J.M.M. Hermans ed. (Grave, 1989), p. 296. It is not clear whether she had actually been involved with producing the book or whether she was just selling it.

²⁹⁵ Williams and Echols, *Pit and pedestal*, p. 56.

university town of Louvain, a certain Metta auctioned an entire library of *Magister Jan van Groenbeke*.²⁹⁶

2.3 *Influence of the modern devotion*

In the northern Low Countries, a movement of clerics and laymen attempted to live an active religious life. This movement tried to imitate the ancient spirit of devotion, and relied on the examples set by the first Christians, apostles and the Desert Fathers.²⁹⁷ The modern devotionalists expressed themselves in some, for our purpose, interesting aspects. They promoted the reading of certain books in the vernacular and advocated certain reading habits. Their type of devotion was suitable for anyone.²⁹⁸

Although the paragraph heading optimistically refers to the influence of the modern devotion as common denominator of the influence we are attempting to map out below, this movement is to be viewed as a continuous part of historical processes. No historical process or trend is created in a void. In particular, the mendicant influence should not be relegated to the side lines. It is after all the mendicants who wrote or compiled many of our sources long before the fifteenth century and, of course, they continued to preach in the fifteenth century.

Geert Groote of Deventer (1340-1384), the main protagonist of the modern devotion, was a trained university scholar. He stayed with the Carthusians at Monnikshuizen near Arnhem for some years after 1374. He was impressed by their lifestyle revolving around solitude, poverty, prayer, spiritual exercises and manual work. Among this work ranked the copying of books, which were

²⁹⁶ Belle, A. van, 'Het boekenwezen aan de Leuvense universiteit in de xvde eeuw', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), p. 546. Though the university of Louvain was established in 1425 it did not possess a library until after 1627. Scholars probably owned books themselves. Metta may have auctioned a substantial library.

²⁹⁷ Mertens, Th., 'The Modern Devotion and innovation in Middle Dutch literature', *Medieval Dutch literature in its European context*, E. Kooper ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 21; Cambridge, New York, etc., 1994), pp. 231-232.

occasionally sold to the laity.²⁹⁹ When Groote preached he carried his chest of books with him. Should the laity not believe his word, he could show them the books of the Church Fathers as irrefutable truth.³⁰⁰ His books brought him into contact with the first Christian communities of the apostles and the Desert Fathers.

Groote then transposed some ideals of the first Christian communities to the groups that he and his followers established.³⁰¹ The female communities would typically consist of semi-religious women living in especially adapted houses. The Sisters of the Common Life, although living a religious life in a community, participated in secular society, they depended on their work for maintenance and had to buy provisions.³⁰² The Sisters also wrote tracts, but most works which originated (such as their *vitae sororum*) within their own circle were principally intended for use there.³⁰³

The Brethren in particular copied edifying literature but also translated it into the vernacular. They wrote to support themselves, and would sell their copies to the laity.³⁰⁴ Groote translated the monastic *Devote Getijden* into the vernacular. It

²⁹⁸ Weiler, A.G., 'Over de geestelijke praktijk van de Moderne Devotie', *De doorwerking van de Moderne Devotie*. Voordrachten gehouden tijdens het Windesheim Symposium Zwolle/Windesheim 15-17 oktober 1987, P. Bange et al. eds. (Hilversum, 1988), p. 37.

²⁹⁹ For involvement of Carthusians with books, see Gumbert, J.P., 'Over Kartuizerbibliotheken in de Nederlanden', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 159-186.

³⁰⁰ Pegel, R.H., 'Heer ghy neemt uselven bij der noes'. Prediking voor leken in de stad Utrecht in de vijftiende eeuw', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* w. nr. (1992), p. 84.

³⁰¹ Aspects of the ideal of seclusion and religious atmosphere are discussed by Lourdaux, J., 'Kartuizers - Moderne Devoten. Een probleem van afhankelijkheid', *OGE* 37 (1963), pp. 402-218.

³⁰² Koorn, F.W.J., 'Women without vows. The case of the beguines and the sisters of the Common Life in the Northern Netherlands', *Women and men in spiritual culture, xiv - xvii centuries. A meeting of south and north*, E. Schulte van Kessel ed. (The Hague, 1986), pp. 139-140.

³⁰³ Scheepsma, W., 'For hereby I hope to rouse some to piety': books of sisters from convents and sister-houses associated with the *Devotio Moderna* in the Low Countries', *Women, the book and the godly*. Selected proceedings of the St Hilda's conference, 1993, L. Smith and J.H.M. Taylor eds. (Cambridge, 1995), p. 38.

³⁰⁴ Of course, other contemporary ideas towards copying books remained in use as well. The Franciscan approach towards copying books for the laity, for instance, was different: they were not allowed to accept rewards for it because of the poverty ideal. The copies

was his intention that the laity could assist towards their own salvation, that they would help themselves by following the guide lines set out in it for their spiritual welfare.³⁰⁵ God had, after all, also called the simple laity to him, according to Johannes Pupper van Goch (d. 1475), rector of the convent Thabor near Mechlin.³⁰⁶

The influence of the modern devotion on the laity and lay book culture still awaits a rigorous and coherent examination,³⁰⁷ but some relevant observations can be made. The Brethren lent books to the laity, educated (male) youngsters, and discussed simple religious topics with the laity on Sundays and holy days.³⁰⁸ Sisters were recruited from the burgher population and they stayed within the city.³⁰⁹ Although there were many opportunities for contact between the modern devotionalists and the laity it is not clear to what extent there was contact between Sisters and Brethren on the one hand and burghers on the other.³¹⁰

were intended for the benefit of the Franciscan community, see Ooms, H., 'Boek en boekenbezit bij de Minderbroeders in de Nederlanden tijdens de middeleeuwen', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), p. 382.

305 Herwaarden, J. van, 'Gemeenschappen en kloosters van de Moderne Devotie', *Geert Grote en de Moderne Devotie*. Tentoonstellingscatalogus Athenaeumbibliotheek, Museum de Waag Deventer, Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht, M. van Bussel-Eijlander ed. (Utrecht, 1984), p. 12.

306 Naber, J.W.A., *Vrouwenleven in prae-Reformatietijd, bezegeld door den marteldood van Wendelmoet Claesdochter* ('s-Gravenhage, 1927), p. 77.

307 Research centres predominantly on contents rather than patronage and recipients of the texts, Obbema, P.F.J., *Grenzen verleggen. Nijmeegs onderzoek naar de handschriften van de Moderne Devotie*. Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van buitengewoon hoogleraar in de hulpwetenschappen der geschiedenis aan de Katholieke Universiteit te Nijmegen (Leiden, 1987), p. 7.

308 Lourdaux, W., 'Het boekenbezit en het boekengebruik bij de Moderne Devoten', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), p. 249, p. 274 and p. 277 and Bange, P. ed., *Moderne devotie, figuren en facetten*. Catalogus bij de tentoonstelling ter herdenking van het sterfjaar van Geert Grote (1384-1984), (Nijmegen, 1984), p. 22. It is of course questionable whether laywomen would have had a say in these meetings.

309 See, for instance, Rehm G., *Die Schwestern vom gemeinsamen Leben im nordwestlichen Deutschland. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Devotio moderna und des weiblichen Religiosentums* (Berliner historische Studien II, Ordensstudien V; Berlin, 1985), chapter 9.

310 Mertens, Th., 'Geert Grote schrijft aan Ruusbroec dat hij als een vrek op boeken aast', *Nederlandse literatuur, een geschiedenis*, M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen ed. (Groningen, 1993), p. 76.

In connection with our corpus, the printers followed the path also trodden by the modern devotionalists by supplying moralising and didactic works. The printers published books such as *Twespraec der creaturen*, Cyrillus's *Parabolen* and *Aesop*. Related to these texts are the exemplum collections with moralised contents such as the *Scaecspel*, *Kaetspel*, *Historie van die seven wise mannen van Romen* and the *Sielentroost*.³¹¹ Occasionally, a particular saint was promoted such as Pelagia (no date), the penitent saint, whose legend was disseminated by the modern devotionalists.³¹²

That laywomen were recommended to read saints' *Lives* and books dealing with vices and virtues is shown by a story of Johannes Busch, brother of the Windesheim congregation.³¹³ When a Dominican lector publicly preached that lay people ought not to have books in the vernacular, Busch tackled the lector's prior. Between them they agreed that simple lay people, 'men and women', ought not to have access to the Sentences 'and the like', but that they should read 'moral books of vices and virtues, of the incarnation, life and passion of our Lord, of the life and holy conversation and martyrdom of the apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins, and homilies and sermons of the saints ...'. The laity should read devotional works and also the Scriptures, according to Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen, Brother of the Common Life.³¹⁴ Also, Gerard considered it imperative that lay folk were informed about capital sins and the Ten

³¹¹ Pleij, 'Betekenis', p. 240.

³¹² Noble, P., 'La légende de Pélagie en moyen-néerlandais', *Pélagie la pénitente. Métamorphoses d'une légende*, P. Petitmengin et al. eds. (2 vols., Paris, 1984), II, p. 340 and p. 365.

³¹³ Deanesly, M., *The Lollard Bible and other medieval biblical versions* (Cambridge, New York, etc., 1920), pp. 100-102.

³¹⁴ Although Gerard's corpus was traditional and orthodox, some nineteenth-century Protestant historians argued that by promoting reading in the vernacular Gerard contributed to making the peoples from Europe inwardly free, which in turn facilitated the break with Rome, Gerrits, G.H., *Inter timorem et spem. A study in the theological thought of Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen (1367-1398)*, (Studies in medieval and renaissance thought xxxvii; Leiden, 1986), pp. 3-5. See also Bruin, C.C. de, 'De moderne devotie en de verspreiding van de volkstaalbijbel', *OGE* 59 (1985), p. 349. The earliest printed Bible in the Dutch vernacular consisted of the Old Testament only, the Psalms and New Testament were excluded. Apparently, printing a Bible in the vernacular meant a high investment and time.

Commandments. Readers could read whatever they wished with a devotional content as far as the choice of texts matched the reader's competence.³¹⁵

However, it was not necessary to burden them with more difficult material (*hoegher materien*).³¹⁶ He discouraged the reading of secular works such as the *History of Troy* because it would not lead to salvation.³¹⁷

Text comprehension was high on the agenda. Of course, the importance of understanding texts had been advocated long before the modern devotion was ever heard of, because understanding the meaning of a text was thought to lead to higher levels of contemplation,³¹⁸ and in the end salvation. The vernacular was regarded as a step in the right direction for a better understanding which brought the reader closer to God.

Also, and here an element of Carthusian spirituality shines through, the ideal of humility and simplicity was combined with language. The mother tongue is the language of humility, of the innocent child, whereas Latin can be regarded as *Vatersprache* (literally: father speech).³¹⁹ The vernacular language became a mode in which the individual approached God and the saints, and the mode in which they communicated with the individual. An early example is that of the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux (ca. 1090-1153) who had been greeted *in Gallico aperte* by the statue of Mary whilst the *Salve Regina* was being sung.³²⁰

³¹⁵ Mertens, Th., 'Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Ter inleiding', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 24-25.

³¹⁶ Deschamps, J., 'Middelnederlandse vertalingen van *Super modo vivendi* (7de hoofdstuk) en *De libris teutonicalibus* van Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen', *Handelingen Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse maatschappij voor taal- en letterkunde en geschiedenis* 15 (1961), p. 189.

³¹⁷ Obbema, P.F.J., 'De overlevering van de middeleeuwse letterkunde', *Literatuur en samenleving in de middeleeuwen*, A. Demyttenaere et al. eds. (Wassenaar, 1976), p. 111.

³¹⁸ See, for instance, the Rule of St. Benedict, Clanchy, 'Looking', pp. 14-15.

³¹⁹ Orbán, A.P., 'De invloed van het ascetisch ideaal der kartuizers op hun oraal en schriftelijk gebruik van het Latijn', *Oraliteit en schriftcultuur*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 12; Hilversum, 1993), p. 116.

³²⁰ Orbán, 'Invloed', p.110.

Of particular importance in the modern devotion were textual passages dealing with the trials and tribulations of Christ's life and death, which was believed to lead to moral self-renewal. It is not surprising that there is a causal relation between the stimulus of the modern devotion and passion iconography.³²¹ Although these texts are a large part and parcel of the entire corpus of Dutch incunables,³²² they are not included in our corpus. Nevertheless, it is useful to emphasise this aspect since it shows the devotional reading practices of women.³²³

Also, references which appear in some of our female saints' *Lives* contain spiritual bridal imagery. It will be easier to comprehend the imagery when regarded as part of the magnitude attached to texts dealing with Christ. After death, the (semi-)religious would approach Christ's bedroom where the heavenly groom waited. In life, the bridal mystique was facilitated through the written text: the way to the bridegroom Christ was through repeated pious reflections on his life, assisted by short prayers and examination of their individual conscience.³²⁴ However, it was not always necessary to ponder over texts, Christ's image was used as well. His bearded handsome face was well known.³²⁵ Of utmost

³²¹ See Marrow, J.H., *Passion iconography in Northern European art of the late middle ages and early renaissance. A study of the transformation of sacred metaphor into descriptive narrative* (Kortrijk, 1979), pp. 20-27.

³²² The remarkably high number of incunable editions of the *Epistelen en Evangelien* and stories on Christ suggests that an appetite for them must have been built up before they were put on the printing presses, Moolenbroek, J.J. van, ' 'Dat liden ende die passie ons Heren Jhesu Cristi' een bestseller uit het fonds van Gheraert Leeu in vijftiende-eeuwse context', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige Kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 81-110.

³²³ Women feature predominantly as readers of prayer cycles based on the life of Christ, see Webber, Ph. E., 'Varieties of popular piety suggested by Netherlandic *Vita Christi* prayer cycles', *OGE* 64 (1990), pp. 205-207.

³²⁴ Post, R.R., *The Modern Devotion. Confrontation with reformation and humanism* (Studies in medieval and reformation thought 3; Leiden, 1968), p. 499.

³²⁵ Caron, M., 'Het beeld van Christus in de vrouwenkloosters en bij de zusters van het Gemene Leven', *OGE* 59 (1985), pp. 464-466, who points to the letter of Lentulus (a third-century Roman consul) in which Christ is described. Christ is depicted on fifteenth-century paintings, among which a diptych showing Christ on one panel and a copy of the letter on the other panel. Women prayed in front of the paintings.

importance is the suggestion that imagery used by religious women was on similar lines to that of secular women.³²⁶

Not only was certain material used, but special reading customs were advocated too. Books, including saints' legends, were used by the individual to meditate on her lifestyle and alter it for the better (*correctio vitae*) using polarisation schemes.³²⁷ However, the specific notion of meditation seems not to have been used,³²⁸ rather the reader had to 'eat the text again' (*ruminare*).³²⁹ The individual approach was lauded: reading was advocated as a solitary pursuit. As Thomas a Kempis would have it: '*in angello (sic) cum libello*'.³³⁰ These reflections could easily be combined with household chores, as is shown in the events which occurred in daily life in the religious houses of the modern devotion. For instance, the cook of the Florenshouse talked to himself about Christ's life and passion above his cooking pot, and he sometimes stirred his pot in a kneeling position. A Sister of the Common Life imagined that her washing house was the stable at Bethlehem and the stone tub was the crib in which the Christ child lay.³³¹ They put to use devotional material combining it with their imaginative powers whilst performing their chores.

³²⁶ Vandenbroeck, P., 'Vrouwenhiaat, mannenpraat', *Stad in Vlaanderen. Cultuur en maatschappij 1477-1787*, J. van der Stock ed. (Brussel, 1991), p. 124 and p. 126, n. 35. Bridal imagery is a part of this process. As he explains, more research is needed to illuminate the aspect of imagery of the lay woman.

³²⁷ Weiler, 'Praktijk', pp. 34-37. The method of self-examination consisted of meditating on binary schemes. One such scheme is virtues and vices, and saints' *Lives* were of course pre-eminently useful.

³²⁸ Woerkum, S.C.J., 'Enige opmerkingen aangaande de methodische meditatie bij de moderne devotie', *OGE* 29 (1955), pp. 222-227.

³²⁹ See the conversation between the ruminating ox and the inquisitive pig in *Parabolen*, fols. b3v-b4. The ox explains that ruminated food makes the soul pure. It is concluded that a wise man ruminates (*wedercauwen*) his knowledge or the acts he performs in daily life.

³³⁰ Hellinga, W., *Kopij en druk in de Nederlanden. Atlas bij de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse typografie met twee inleidende studies van H. de la Fontaine Verwey en G.W. Ovink* (Amsterdam, 1962), p. 7.

³³¹ Both examples by Caron, M., *Ansien doet gedencken. De religieuze voorstellingwereld van de moderne devotie*, *Geert Grote en de Moderne Devotie. Tentoonstellingscatalogus Athenaeumbibliotheek, Museum de Waag Deventer, Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht*, M. van Bussel-Eijlander ed. (Utrecht, 1984), p. 29 and p. 32.

The process of reading and reflecting was not restricted to the modern devotion, it was also recommended by the Dominican Alanus de Rupe (1428-1475). Using exempla, miracles and legends, it was his intention to promote praying techniques for ordinary folk.³³² This stimulated the upsurge of the rosary in the late medieval Low Countries and the Rhineland, in which St. Anne played such an important role.³³³ The reader was exhorted to pray the rosary daily.³³⁴ The usage of books was concomitant, which is clear when it is remarked that those who cannot read are advised to pray an *Ave Maria* for each picture in the book and then to reflect on the life and passion of Christ.³³⁵

2.4 Some medieval attitudes towards the word

Sometimes books were regarded as magical and protective objects by women (not dissimilar to the protective value attributed to (printed) illustrations, as already seen). Contact with a saint could be made through the physical appearance of a book. Simply having a book on the Virgin Mary at home was thought to have been a guarantee for safe childbirth and it was claimed that those who read about St. Margaret of Antioch's (no date) martyrdom had an easier childbirth whenever it was read especially in her honour.³³⁶ Indeed, copied parts of her legend seem to have been presented to pregnant women in the form of amulets.³³⁷

The protective value of 'sacred words' is demonstrated by the practice of the priest writing down a prayer on parchment, then rinsing the ink off with holy water

³³² Boer, B. de, 'De souter van Alanus de Rupe', *OGE* 29 (1955), p. 376.

³³³ Brandenburg, *Familieleven*, pp. 102-103.

³³⁴ Boer, B. de, 'De souter van Alanus de Rupe', *OGE* 30 (1956), p. 157. It doubtful whether the laity could spend time praying three times fifty Ave Maria's every day.

³³⁵ Boer, B. de, 'De souter van Alanus de Rupe', *OGE* 33 (1959), p. 153, cited from the so-called *Exempelboek*.

³³⁶ Green, *Listening and reading*, p. 159.

³³⁷ Millett, B. and J. Wogan-Browne eds., *Medieval English prose for women. Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford, 1990), p. xxii.

and serving it up to the woman in childbed to ease her labour.³³⁸ A woman plagued by a devil is rid of the culprit by writing the names of Mary and Christ on a rod.³³⁹ A more mundane example of the book as protective object is the commemorative message contained in it in remembrance to the donatrix.

Busch learnt about a friar who in his sermon had expressed disapproval of certain women. They surreptitiously hide books in the vernacular beneath the altar cloth, in order for mass to be said over them. Afterwards they remove the writings and 'make with other people many incantations, divinations and auguries'.³⁴⁰ A similar anxiety is voiced by the *Sterfboeck* where the First Commandment (you shall have no other god to set against me) is breached by all who believe that certain texts (*scrijften ofte ... brieven*) protect against water or fire.³⁴¹

In spite of these examples of illicit usage of books, the written word was viewed as possessing a definitive authority. Indeed, the illicit practices may be a symptom of this attitude. In a society living in fear of sudden death without having been confessed, the day of judgement was feared. On this day, the scroll would be read in heaven (Revelation 5:1), to determine those who would be saved. The power of the written word and sins are mentioned in the sources. A devil noted down the gossip of people in church during mass, but since they were so verbose he quickly ran out of parchment.³⁴² In a vision, Liedwij diddled a devil out of a letter which contained a sin a woman had committed. The possession of the letter ensured the woman's fate was in the devil's hands, as the devil explained. But the woman had already confessed and penance had been done, therefore

³³⁸ Naaktgeboren, C., 'Wonder en realiteit in het verleden en heden; een verkenning van de gedachten over zwangerschap en baring bij onze voorouders', *Een kind onder het hart. Verloskunde, volksgeloof, gezin, seksualiteit en moraal vroeger en nu*, R. Kistemaker ed. (Amsterdam, 1987), p. 80. The prayers copied were *Miserere mei Deus* and *Domine labia mea aperies*.

³³⁹ *Sielentroest*, fols. 37v-38.

³⁴⁰ Deanesly, *Bible*, p. 102.

³⁴¹ *Sterfboeck*, fol. b5.

³⁴² *Sielentroest*, fols. 66v-67. Another version circulating in the Low Countries features two talkative women, Van Oostrom ed., *Vertellen*, pp. 28-29.

the devil had no claim to the letter.³⁴³ A sinner who writes down his sins finds them wiped out after placing it on an altar dedicated to Mary Magdalene.³⁴⁴

Occasionally, references to letters written to heavenly dignitaries occur. In 1456, the fraternity of Our Lady at 's-Hertogenbosch buried one of their members with a letter addressed to St. Peter, with the advice that the member deserved to go straight to heaven.³⁴⁵ The Utrecht recluse Sister Bertken (d. 1514) was buried with a Latin letter detailing her good works and her exemplary way of life, duly witnessed by ecclesiastical dignitaries.³⁴⁶ The letter was also probably intended to be read in the next world.

2.5 The urban environment

2.5.1 Saints' *Lives* and exempla as urban literature

The question of the existence of urban literature as such has been addressed by various scholars. Ursula Peters, who examined literature in western and middle Europe emphasised that literature in the city did not originate there, but that fact does not stand in the way of reception of these texts within the urban environment.³⁴⁷ The same seems to ring true for the printed exemplum collections and female saints' *Lives*, none of which seems to have been written up by seculars within secular society. That is not to say that these genres originally intended for religious instruction are not of interest to a lay audience. The basic

³⁴³ *Liedwij*, fols. c8v-d1.

³⁴⁴ *Passionael, somerstuc, maria magdalena*, fol. n5v.

³⁴⁵ Post, *Kerkgeschiedenis*, II, p. 246, fn. 1.

³⁴⁶ Anonymous, 'Brief die in Suster Barte dootkist geleyt is', *Tijdschrift van geschiedenis, oudheden en statistiek van Utrecht* 9 (1839), p. 289.

³⁴⁷ Peters, U., *Literatur in der Stadt. Studien zu den sozialen Voraussetzungen und kulturellen Organisationsformen städtischer Literatur im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Literatur und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur 7; Tübingen, 1983), pp. 33-36 and p. 292.

ethics expounded in these genres become the ideological platform for Christian lay-ethics.³⁴⁸

Herman Pleij, however, has shown that literature was produced as well as received in the city and by burghers of the southern Low Countries, even before 1400 (the *ante quem* of Peters).³⁴⁹ An urban reading public was in place before the advent of the printing press (the social classes for whom literacy played a role will be discussed below), producing and reading their own literature. He also stresses that literature circulating in the late medieval Low Countries played a dynamic role in the fostering of middle class values of practicality and utilitarianism.³⁵⁰ But as J. Reynaert points out, the reception of the texts with so-called burgher values could occur outside the burgher circles, notably among aristocrats.³⁵¹ In general, our sources probably originated in a non-urban environment, but the ideas pronounced in them could easily be transferred to an urban environment to be read by lay readers.

Although a corner of the veil has been raised in the first chapter by showing that the laity (which must have included women) were addressed in our corpus, it has been contested for whom the earliest vernacular printed books (particularly those of an edifying nature, among which I count female saints' *Lives* and the exemplum collections) were actually intended. Pleij suggests that parish priests and the laity were the primary audience of the earliest printed books,³⁵² whereas Mertens, reacting to Pleij's ideas, supposes that monasteries and the semi-

³⁴⁸ Reynaert, J., 'Leken, ethiek en moralistisch-didactische literatuur. Ter inleiding', *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, J. Reynaert et al. eds. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur IX; Amsterdam, 1994), p. 27.

³⁴⁹ Pleij, H., 'Literatuur en stad in de middeleeuwen', *Literatuur* 4 (1987), pp. 116-123 and Pleij, *Sneeuwpoppen*, p. 151, and Pleij, H., 'Inleiding: Op belofte van profijt', *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, H. Pleij ed. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen IV; Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 8-51.

³⁵⁰ Pleij, H., 'The rise of urban literature in the Low Countries', *Medieval Dutch literature in its European context*, E. Kooper ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 21; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), p. 63 and more specifically Pleij, *Sneeuwpoppen*, pp. 337-339.

³⁵¹ Reynaert, 'Leken', pp. 18-19.

religious were the main recipients,³⁵³ since most manuscripts containing similar material have been found in possession of monastic and semi-religious audiences. Also, he suggests that monastic themes would not have caught on with a lay public, which was more interested in topics involved with family life such as marriage, adultery, raising children, etc.

Against this, it may be said that books in lay bourgeois hands would certainly have a much smaller chance of ultimate survival. In (semi-)religious circles, books were looked after by the individual sister or safely tucked away in libraries with especially appointed custodians to take care of them.³⁵⁴

Despite the care of the custodians however, many book lists have not survived the ravages of time, as medieval monastic catalogues were often fixed to walls,³⁵⁵ and many books of monasteries perished in disasters such as the first years of the Spanish occupation, pillages, zealous Protestant reformers who sold 'popish books' by the pound weight,³⁵⁶ and the French occupation in the late eighteenth

³⁵² Pleij, 'Betekenis', p. 243.

³⁵³ Mertens, Th., 'Lezen met de pen. Ontwikkelingen in het laatmiddeleeuws geestelijk proza', *De studie van de Middelnederlandse letterkunde. Stand en toekomst*. Symposium Antwerpen 22-24 september 1988, F.P. van Oostrom en F. Willaert eds. (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen XIV; Hilversum, 1989), pp. 187-200 and Mertens, 'Boeken', pp. 8-35.

³⁵⁴ Moll, W., *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-klooster te Delft, in de tweede helft der vijftiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1857), p. 6; Dijk, R.Th.M. van, *De constituties der Windesheimse vrouwenkloosters vóór 1559. Bijdrage tot de institutionele geschiedenis van het kapittel van Windesheim* (Middeleeuwse studies Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen III-1 en III-2; 2 vols., Nijmegen, 1986), I, p. 366 and Van Dijk, *Constituties*, II, pp. 773-774, and Lingier, C., 'Boekengebruik in vrouwenkloosters onder de invloed van de moderne devotie', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens ed. (Amsterdam, 1993), p. 287. Even a convent of reformed prostitutes, such as the convent dedicated to Mary Magdalene at Hoorn, possessed some sort of library for which the sextoness and the mater were responsible, see Meinsma, K.O., *Middeleeuwse bibliotheken* (Zutphen, 1903), pp. 110-111. For rules and regulations of libraries in detail, see Christ, K., 'Mittelalterliche Bibliotheksordnungen für Frauenklöster', *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 59 (1942), pp. 1-29. In general, the tasks of the woman librarian were: to keep a list, lend books to the sisters (whilst taking into account the competence and spiritual needs of the individual), check books for damage, examine manuscripts for errors made in the sisters' copying, to acquire more books, and regulate the borrowing of books to outsiders. She must have been fully literate.

³⁵⁵ Gumbert, J.P., *The Dutch and their books in the manuscript age* (London, 1990), p. 56.

³⁵⁶ Meinsma, *Bibliotheken*, p. 197.

century (especially in the southern Low Countries),³⁵⁷ which makes it virtually impossible to reconstitute the contents of a particular library. But there is much useful information left (to which we return later).

It is not necessary to exclude a potential interest of the laity in our corpus. After all, burghers were part of the sacral community, religious and urban life are intricately interwoven. We can view ordinary citizens in the background of paintings in which Mary and Joseph feature.³⁵⁸ Relics of female saints were kept in city churches and processions were arranged in their honour, which was attended by the laity. Religious feast-days, which included saints' days, regulated working life.³⁵⁹ Work stopped to allow citizens to participate in communal processions (frequently accompanied by carrying around relics in the city). The day was considered a Sunday on which laymen should rest from labour and attend mass. In the late middle ages, emphasis was laid on Mary, Christ, and saints who were in close contact with them (such as Christ's bride St. Catherine of Alexandria). Those who continued to work risked a fine from an ecclesiastical court.³⁶⁰ The laity attended churches dedicated to a saint. Saints also gave their names to guilds and confraternities.³⁶¹

Many female saints whose legends feature in the *Passionael* have urban roots or grow up in the city, though many belong to the city patriciate or nobility (and are

³⁵⁷ Thomas, A.H., 'Boekenbezit en boekengebruik bij de Dominikanen in de Nederlanden vóór ca. 1550', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), p. 436.

³⁵⁸ Klamt, J.-C., 'Gewone mensen op grote pleinen', *Gewone mensen in de middeleeuwen*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan F.W.N. Hugenholtz ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 7; Utrecht, 1987), pp. 219-253, who gives examples and concludes that by including ordinary citizens in works of art they became important members of a worldly 'Heavenly Jerusalem'.

³⁵⁹ Smeyers, M., 'Bidden en pronken. Devotie en beeldgebruik 15de-16de eeuw', *Stad in Vlaanderen. Cultuur en maatschappij 1477-1787*, J. van der Stock ed. (Brussel, 1991), pp. 220-221.

³⁶⁰ Certain church courts were vigilant since the fines proved to be a money spinner, Verhoeven, G., 'Kerkelijke feestdagen in de late middeleeuwen. Utrechtse en Delftse kalenders', *Historisch tijdschrift Holland* 25 (1993), p. 160.

³⁶¹ Trio, P., *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving. De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen* (Leuven, 1993), p. 164, see, for instance, table 1.

as such not 'common women').³⁶² Husbands and fathers find their wives and daughters parcelling out their inheritance or riches to the urban subclasses.³⁶³ Not all saints are rich. Liedwij's father, Pieter, for instance, belongs to the impoverished nobility and is forced to work as a night watchman in Schiedam.³⁶⁴ Occasionally, a female saint protects the city.³⁶⁵

Secular urban women readers could easily identify with female saints or place the events that occurred in the stories within the surroundings of the city. As Green has shown legends were part of the life of the urban laity.³⁶⁶ Many exempla are set within the context of the city. The dangers of the city for women are outlined in the sources: the city offers occasions for meeting men from all walks of life. Women on windowsills bordering the street are in particular danger. The window reflects the boundary between private, sheltered life and public life.³⁶⁷ St. Thecla of Iconium (1st century) refuses to leave her window for three days.³⁶⁸ She is seduced by St. Paul's preaching in the house opposite, and now refuses to engage in marriage. A young woman trapped in a marriage with an old husband finds herself in need of diversion, sitting in a window and singing into the street, attracting a young man who promptly falls in love with her.³⁶⁹ In another exemplum, the young wife attracts no fewer than three suitors.³⁷⁰ The street is a meeting place: an amorous young man seizes his chance to kiss boldly the Duchess of Athens' daughter while she takes a stroll with her mother in

³⁶² Some saints of whom it is mentioned in the *Passionael* that they were raised in a city are Agatha, Agnes, Dorothy, Justina, Margaret and Prisca.

³⁶³ Clare donates her inheritance to the poor, *Clara*, fol. bb2v. The Roman Anastasia gives away riches of her husband to prisoners, *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *anastasia*, fol. o4v.

³⁶⁴ *Liedwij*, fol. a2.

³⁶⁵ ~~CLARA~~repelled two attacks on Assisi, *Clara*, fols. cc1-cc2. On one occasion she took the container with the host (symbol of Christ) out of the church.

³⁶⁶ Green, *Listening and reading*, pp. 103-105 and p. 220.

³⁶⁷ Hallissy, M., *Clean maids, true wives, steadfast widows. Chaucer's women and the medieval codes of conduct* (Contributions in women's studies 130; Westport, Connecticut, London, 1993), chapter 7, discusses the importance of architectural spaces for women. Particular apertures, such as windows, were considered a risk to a woman's virtue.

³⁶⁸ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc*, *tecla*, fols. OO6v-OO7.

³⁶⁹ *Geesten*, fol. v1.

³⁷⁰ *Seven mannen*, fols. g4-g4v.

the city.³⁷¹ There are many messengers around who can quickly convey messages from eager lovers.³⁷²

The sources mention female sinful behaviour, such as showing off sumptuous gowns to as many people in the city as possible, and they mention that prostitution was frequently committed within the city walls.³⁷³ Also, female earners are punished, usually for their greed (one of seven capital sins). A female usurer, for instance, who had died becomes possessed by a devil who makes her hands move as if she is counting money; she was excluded from the Christian community by being buried outside the churchyard.³⁷⁴ Even a woman of good repute (who had accumulated her fortune by honest means and not, say, by usury or prostitution) who has her earnings buried with her cannot rest in her grave and keeps the parishioners awake with her screams because she is being burnt in the afterlife.³⁷⁵

Equally, in the cities repentance was shown. The holy prostitute St. Thaïs, who had made her fortune inside the city, burns, converted to a better life, her sumptuous goods in a symbolic act for all to see in a public place.³⁷⁶ Late medieval 'ordinary women' could sympathise: they burned their decks of cards and perhaps also other games (such as chessboards) in the market place after attending penitential sermons.³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ *Kaetspel*, fols. k2v-k3. The Duchess is angry and asks for the young man's life but her husband places it in perspective: the youngster is motivated by love. If we are to kill those who love us, what are we to do with our enemies?

³⁷² See, for instance, the old woman in the *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *theodora*, fol. l6v.

³⁷³ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *affra*, fol. N7; *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *pelagia*, fol. r5v; *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *maria van egypten*, fol. a6v, and *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *maria magdalena*, fol. m10v (whose sinful life is filled with sensuous pleasures).

³⁷⁴ *Sterfboeck*, fols. h5v-i1.

³⁷⁵ *Scaecspel*, fol. f8.

³⁷⁶ *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *tays*, fol. r8 and *Vaderen*, fol. D2.

³⁷⁷ Some preachers connected the playing of card games with the sin of unchaste female behaviour, Reimöller, H., 'Die zwei Gesichter der *femina ludens*. Bemerkungen zur Kartenspielerin im spätmittelalterlichen Diskurs', *Von Aufbruch und Utopie. Perspektiven einer neuen Gesellschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters*. Für und mit Ferdinand Seibt aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages, B. Lundt und H. Reimöller eds. (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1992), p. 315. Playing cards lowered morality particularly when gambling was involved as well.

2.5.2 Contemporary ideas on women within the city

At this point, we will return to the topic of medieval ideas about women, but in this section we deal specifically with ideas within an urban setting. This section serves mainly to show that images of women other than those occurring in books were current in the city. Women could mirror themselves in these too.

We only have to look at the statues and stained glass in medieval churches, paintings and the patron saints of guilds.³⁷⁸ While churches were adorned with heavy wooden and stone statues, late medieval burgher homes contained cheap clay statues of saints and their attributes, such as St. Catherine with her sword (with which she was beheaded) and wheel and St. Barbara with her tower (in which her father kept her locked up).

Furniture like tables could be adorned with biblical scenes. One table, which is unfortunately damaged, shows medallions which are connected with text on banderolles displaying a scene with the wedding at Cana (John 2:2), and which probably would have shown a medallion featuring Mary and Martha of Bethany (Luke 10:38-39).³⁷⁹ The wedding at Cana was visited by Christ, and it was used by preachers to point out the goodness of marriage and to promote marital love.³⁸⁰ Martha and Mary exemplify the active and the contemplative (about which more below). A chandelier depicting the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus in her arms could adorn the living room,³⁸¹ cleverly emphasising the idea that Mary

³⁷⁸ For patron saints, see the excellent encyclopaedia by Jöckle, C., *Encyclopedia of saints* (London, 1995), German Translation Centre trans.

³⁷⁹ Dubbe, B., 'Meubilair', *Thuis in de late middeleeuwen. Het Nederlands burgerinterieur 1400-1535*. Tentoonstelling in the Provinciaal Overijssels Museum van 5 oktober tot 31 december 1980. Catalogus door J.W.H. de Jong, w. ed. (Zwolle, 1980), p. 25.

³⁸⁰ d'Avray, D.L., 'The gospel of the marriage feast of Cana and marriage preaching in France', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 135-153. It was probably not preached at wedding ceremonies, but on a particular Sunday in the church calendar.

³⁸¹ Dubbe, 'Huisraad', p. 20.

brought light into the world. A chaste Susanna was portrayed on pottery, hearth stones and cupboard panels.³⁸²

Paintings were probably too expensive for middle class burghers. Woodcuts with pious depictions, as already seen, and also prints with a more mundane flavour, circulated in urban society in the Low Countries and Germany around 1500 as well. They too promoted marital love.³⁸³ They warn against blind love of men for their womenfolk, such as that of Adam who was betrayed by Eve and Solomon's love for his concubines which led him to worship their pagan idols. Venus is shown instigating the wrong kind of love. Aristotle, was humiliated by Phyllis, and the amorous Virgil, was left dangling in a basket underneath the window by his would-be girlfriend, for the entire city to see.

Cultural expressions too inform us about ideas on women. In 1511, after heavy snowfall, snowmen were modelled by the citizens of Brussels. They included David spying on a naked Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:2), (a love which ended in the death of her husband Uriah), a mermaid (regarded as a lustful creature who lured men to their deaths), a unicorn resting its head in a virgin's lap (symbolising the unique goodness of virginity), a centaur (a lustful creature - partly human, partly animal -) and the repentant sinner saint Mary Magdalene.³⁸⁴ City accounts from the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries show that among the two thousand plays researched, nearly all of a religious nature, the marriage of Mary, the annunciation, the birth of Christ and the adoration of the Magi featured.³⁸⁵ All these topics occur in our saints' *Lives* and exempla.

³⁸² Caron, 'Vrouwen', p. 7.

³⁸³ Vignau Wilberg-Schuurman, T., met medewerking van R. Pigeaud, *Hoofse minne en burgerlijke liefde in de prentkunst rond 1500* (Leiden, 1983), p. 6 and pp. 44-50.

³⁸⁴ We know about this festival from a lexical source: the rhymed text by Jan Smecken of Brussels, see Pleij, *Sneeuwpoppen*, p. 370.

³⁸⁵ Axters, *Vroomheid*, III, pp. 392-393. More examples by Kuiper, J., *Geschiedenis van het godsdienstig en kerkelijk leven van het Nederlandsche volk (100 voor Chr. - 1903) aan ons volk verhaald* (Nijkerk, 1900, 1903), pp. 35-36.

Shrove Tuesday feasts (carnival) were held everywhere in the Low Countries. The Shrove Tuesday revellers at Schiedam kept Liedwij awake with their horse play (*wildelic spelen*), as 'they are wont to do'.³⁸⁶ In Brussels, women (and also men) portraying behaviour *not* befitting urban morals were invited to join the fictitious Guild of the Blue Boat (*Gilde van de Blauwe Schuit*). They were invited to board a boat on wheels which would ferry them to damnation. Taking a ride were spinsters unable to attract husbands, young wives married to aged husbands, and women who displayed an erotic interest in men, as well as servant girls who would rather feast than work.³⁸⁷ In this world-turned-upside-down the theme 'women-on-top', an inversion of sex roles, was one of the most popular.³⁸⁸ Using bawdy humour questioning social and moral values was not restricted to the Low Countries.³⁸⁹ The images of women and ideas about them show what kind of female image amused medieval urban society.³⁹⁰ The entertainment may also have served to let off steam and ward off fears.³⁹¹ The ideas we are presented with in our sources, in particular in the exempla, are received within an environment which will have interpreted them as inversions, as grossly exaggerated ideas about women highlighting improper behaviour.

Everyday urban life however, politically, socially and economically benefited from regulated behaviour (we will return to this in chapters 3 and 4). Both city councils and guilds were involved, for instance, with sexual morality. Unchaste sexual behaviour was condemned. This became more clearly defined in the fifteenth

³⁸⁶ Liedwij, fol. a7v.

³⁸⁷ Pleij, H., *Het gilde van de Blauwe Schuit. Literatuur, volksfeest en burgermoraal in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1979), p. 8 and pp. 210-214; the text dates from 1413. Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De omgekeerde wereld: tot lering en vermaak', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur (1400-1600)*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), pp. 73-84, emphasises that ideas in relation to the 'forbidden' are better committed to the mind.

³⁸⁸ Zemon Davis, N., *Society and culture in early modern France. Eight essays* (Palo Alto, California, 1965, Oxford, 1987).

³⁸⁹ See also Muir, L.R., *Literature and society in medieval France. The mirror and the image, 1100-1500* (London, 1985), chapter 4.

³⁹⁰ Shahar, *Estate*, pp. 218-219.

³⁹¹ Pleij, H., *Het literaire leven in de middeleeuwen* (Leiden, 1984, 1988), pp. 78-81.

century.³⁹² Only people of impeccable behaviour were allowed to become members of guilds (which also included women). It was recognised that good behaviour inside the city led to peace and prosperity. Not only were city council and guild concerned with public decency but also with decent 'civilised' behaviour of the individual. What benefited the individual benefited the community. Good behaviour was rewarded in heaven, which shows yet again that religion and secular life were intertwined.

To recap, from the fourteenth century on there was a recognisable urban literature reflecting its own values which also presupposes that there was a lay public predating the incunable period. Printed saints' *Lives* and exempla as urban literature for women have not received much attention from modern scholars. They contain many elements which urban laywomen could recognise. Ideas about and images of women were matched by cultural and religious expressions, but also by items and utensils used in the home. All media underline behaviour befitting a good Christian life.

2.5.3 Literate social classes

One of the artificial boundaries of this thesis is that it excludes residents of a religious or semi-religious association, such as beguines or Sisters of the Common Life, as readers. Instead, we concentrate on the secular woman who was part of secular society and of a secular household, either as wife, mother, sister and daughter. Since ideas about women within the family are stated in the books under consideration it is rather evident to suppose that these women must have been part of the intended audience for the passages about them (even though some exempla appear originally directed to warn monks about female nature).

³⁹²

Pigeaud, R., 'De vrouw als verleidster. De stedelijke moraal in de 15de eeuw', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 39-42.

To which class belonged this common woman? It is not easy to define middle class readers.³⁹³ It is also notoriously difficult to measure the ability to read and write and it has even been contended that the 'actual level of literacy that is measured is relatively unimportant compared with the suitability of that level as a comparative measure'.³⁹⁴ A uniform and standard measure appears to be the ability to sign one's name. This activity involves both the ability to read as well as write. But it has its drawbacks, for instance, the signatory may have learned to write her name as if it were a drawing, and was not necessarily able to read or write. Also, women stood a greater chance of having been excluded from this particular activity since they were less likely to sign contracts, notarial acts etc. as men.

Zemon Davis has investigated signatures on notarial acts of sixteenth-century Lyon.³⁹⁵ Apparently, a very high percentage of members of the medical profession and printers were able to sign, the percentage was high among artists, taverners and metal workers. The percentages trail off: about half of those engaged in the clothes trade and a low to very low percentage in the lower menial jobs such as gardening and construction workers were able to sign. The marriage registers of Amsterdam (from 1578 to 1800) show that the majority of women and men were able to sign their name, which suggests that many social classes had by now acquired this skill.³⁹⁶ It also shows a gender division: twice as many men than women could sign.

In the late medieval Low Countries civil servants, schoolmasters, guild administrators, and some merchants, considered to be 'half-intellectuals', should

³⁹³ Coleman, J., *English literature in history 1350-1400. Medieval readers and writers* (London, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg, 1981), p. 17 and p. 43, has looked at the interests a middle class audience may have had in topics such as piety and concern for social order.

³⁹⁴ Schofield, R.S., 'The measurement of literacy in pre-industrial England', *Literacy in traditional societies*, J. Goody ed. (Cambridge, 1968), p. 318.

³⁹⁵ Zemon Davis, *Society*, pp. 209-210. Her research is based on signatures of masters and journeymen in Lyon in the 1550s and 1560s.

³⁹⁶ Woude, A.M. van der, 'De alfabetisering', *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, w. ed. (15 vols., Haarlem, 1980-1982), VII, pp. 261-264.

be reckoned among those who could read and write at least in the vernacular. They also considered it advantageous to have their children educated.³⁹⁷ But artisans should not be forgotten. Turning to England for instance, records for the period 1467-1476 show also that competence at least in the basics of literacy were found in the group of tradesmen and superior artisans: fishmongers, grocers, haberdashers, barbers, tailors, and joiners.³⁹⁸

But the reading of female saints' *Lives* of the laity is ridiculed as well. In a satirical play (printed as an incunable), *Vrou Lortse* is made a saint. It is suggested by the swindlers who promote her newly established cult, that a little book was to be printed with her picture in it to stimulate devotion. Those in particular need of salvation are mentioned in it too, among them middle class people, such as merchants, artisans, financiers, and lease holders.³⁹⁹

2.5.4 The education system

The first recourse of the child for education was to its mother. Examples of this in our corpus are highlighted in chapter 4. In general, the examples may have served as positive guidelines for mothers at the time the books were printed. The tasks of the medieval educator are outlined by Shahar.⁴⁰⁰ First of all, the child was to be raised as a Christian human being according to Christian morals. Secondly, the child was to develop a certain ability in preparation for the future role. Also, the child was to accept the social order, and reflect on God's will. These values were taught both at home and at school.

³⁹⁷ For the Low Countries, see Pleij, 'Betekenis', pp. 227-263; for the necessity of sons' education in these socio-economic classes, see Sprandel, *Gesellschaft*, pp. 192-194.

³⁹⁸ Clanchy, 'Looking', p. 17.

³⁹⁹ Neurdenberg E. ed., *Van Nyeuvont, Loosheit ende Practike: hoe sij Vrou Lortse verheffen* (Utrecht, 1910), p. 15 and p. 78.

⁴⁰⁰ Shahar, S., *Childhood in the middle ages* (London, New York, 1990), C. Galai trans., pp. 166-167.

In this paragraph, we are mainly concerned with institutional education available within the cities for the children of burghers.⁴⁰¹ The three main school types under investigation here are elementary education in the vernacular, Latin schools and universities, and they are discussed by Post.⁴⁰² This will allow us to assess to what degree girls were educated. The result can then be related to their being able to read the incunables.

In the 1970s, Nauwelaerts emphasised the need for a history of education of girls.⁴⁰³ Unfortunately, modern research into medieval education in the Low Countries is lacking, according to Boekholt.⁴⁰⁴ Both statements remain true up to this date. Post's book, used frequently by scholars, is particularly useful for his map marking the cities and towns where schools were situated, but many of these schools could not be visited by girls since they were Latin schools.

Research into education segregating the sexes is not easy. The term 'children', as found, for instance, in archival sources, may lead to confusion. It was self-evident that pupils who attended the modern devotionalists' school at Deventer, were exclusively boys, but they are called 'children'.⁴⁰⁵ A distinction between the sexes would have been superfluous in medieval eyes. That is not to say that medieval educators were not concerned with girls.

In the later middle ages, cities and their inhabitants became increasingly concerned with education. The city needed a *corps* literate in the vernacular to assist with the administration of the city. Burghers needed a literate layer for trade and commerce. Although the initiative to educate the laity in great numbers

⁴⁰¹ This paragraph is an abstract of a chapter I wrote on the education system but which could not be included because of the regulations concerning the word limit.
⁴⁰² Post, R.R., *Scholen en onderwijs in Nederland gedurende de middeleeuwen* (Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1954). All further reference to these three types of education are found in his book.
⁴⁰³ Nauwelaerts, M.A., *Latijnse school en onderwijs te 's-Hertogenbosch tot 1629* (Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het zuiden van Nederland 30; Tilburg, 1974), p. 68.
⁴⁰⁴ Boekholt, P.Th.M., *Onderwijsgeschiedenis* (Zutphen, 1991), pp. 9-10.
⁴⁰⁵ Bot, P.N.M., *Humanisme en onderwijs in Nederland* (Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1940), chapter 1.

can be laid at the door of the Holy See in 1215,⁴⁰⁶ and in each parish a school was established (in theory), it appears that in the late middle ages private initiatives were numerous and many schools became privately-run.

A type of very elementary education is the Sunday school, where religious instruction was provided. Fenna Bickes (d. 1458), a female teacher of the convent of Rijnsburg taught daughters of farmers to read and religious instruction on Sundays and feast-days.⁴⁰⁷ In Gouda, the chapels of St. Barbara and of Our Blessed Lady were used for education on these days to teach 'poor little daughters'. In the sixteenth century teaching continued here with reading, spelling, religious instruction and prayers.⁴⁰⁸ In sixteenth-century Delft, anyone inclined could teach maid servants reading and writing in the vernacular on these days.⁴⁰⁹ Teaching the underprivileged was considered a charitable act.

Occasionally, female religious offered instruction to girls. Nunnery schools educated them simultaneously with their novices. For instance, in the St. Elizabeth's convent in Rugge a separate building seems to have been set aside as *schola*, and until the very end of the middle ages similar references occur.⁴¹⁰ In general, at these convents the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) was taught as was music and some medical care. The *curriculum* did not change a great deal from earlier middle ages.⁴¹¹

Semi-religious women taught girls as well. In the thirteenth century, the seven year old Beatrice of Nazareth visited the beguine school at Léau (Zouteleeuw) to be initiated in the liberal arts.⁴¹² In fifteenth-century Breda and early sixteenth-

⁴⁰⁶ Douglas general ed., *Documents*, III, p. 651, canon 11.

⁴⁰⁷ Wouters, D. en W.J. Visser, *Geschiedenis van de opvoeding en het onderwijs, vooral in Nederland* (Groningen, 1926), p. 51.

⁴⁰⁸ Post, *Scholen*, p. 116.

⁴⁰⁹ Post, *Scholen*, p. 117.

⁴¹⁰ Post, *Scholen*, p. 164.

⁴¹¹ Ferrante, J.M., 'The education of women in the middle ages in theory, fact, and fantasy', *Beyond their sex. Learned women of the European past*, P.H. Labalme ed. (New York, London, 1980), p. 17.

⁴¹² McDonnell, *Beguines*, p. 272.

century Mechlin a large number of young girls attended the school at the local beguinages.⁴¹³ In the counties of Holland and Zeeland, beguine schools existed in the late fifteenth century.⁴¹⁴ In Groningen, daughters of the well-to-do were placed for a few years with 'den jufferen up Broderkerckhoff'.⁴¹⁵ Here girls were taught embroidery, needlework, spinning and good manners. Apparently, beguines could live out as well. In fourteenth-century Paris, beguine Dame Agnes taught household economics to the young wife of the *Ménagier de Paris*, and chaperoned her as well.⁴¹⁶

The '*schrijfschool*' or '*Duytsche school*' (the term *Duyts* refers to the Dutch language and not to the German language), catered for pupils aged from about seven to ten. At this school, where instruction took place in the vernacular, reading, writing and counting was taught. In 1480, at Leiden writing and *clergie* (probably meaning prayers) were on the curriculum.⁴¹⁷ Reading in *cleyne boecxkens* and learning the alphabet was not uncommon. A small ABC book (*abecedarium*) could contain the alphabet and prayers to be said in the vernacular on set hours throughout the day. Learning to read was less expensive than learning to write.⁴¹⁸ In general, parents of girls were charged less than boys, which is a clear indication that girls were taught the former skill rather than the latter. Pupils of this type of school came from the middle classes, children of craftsmen, merchants, well-off farmers and schooled workmen.⁴¹⁹ They are from the same social classes which Pleij tends to associate with the reading public of the incunables.⁴²⁰

⁴¹³ '... de jonghe maegdekens die daer in groot getal ter schole lagen', Nauwelaerts, *School*, p. 69.

⁴¹⁴ Both examples from Koorn, F.W.J., *Begijnhoven in Holland en Zeeland gedurende de middeleeuwen* (Assen, 1981), p. 98.

⁴¹⁵ Post, *Scholen*, p. 164.

⁴¹⁶ Power, E., *Medieval people* (London, New York, 1924, 10th ed., 1963), pp. 107-108.

⁴¹⁷ Post, *Scholen*, p. 83.

⁴¹⁸ Booy, E.P. de, 'Volksonderwijs in de noordelijke Nederlanden', *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, w. ed. (15 vols., Haarlem, 1980-1982), VII, p. 265.

⁴¹⁹ Dodde, N.L., ... *tot der kinderen selfs proffijt. Een geschiedenis van het onderwijs te Rotterdam* ('s-Gravenhage, 1991), p. 66.

⁴²⁰ Pleij, 'Betekenis', p. 243.

Mercantile schools or French schools were geared towards educating a resource pool for commercial purposes of the city.⁴²¹ The '*Fransche school*', where pupils aged roughly ten to fifteen attended, subjects were taught geared towards business education. French, reckoning with Arabic numbers, calculating using coins 'in the way merchants normally do' and business correspondence in Dutch and French were on the educational agenda. A hesitant beginning was made in the late middle ages but these schools flourished in the sixteenth century. The earliest example dates from 1482, when in Bergen op Zoom (in the current province of Brabant) Christoffel Du Fresne set up school.⁴²² Boys as well as girls had access to these schools.

Many cities boasted a Latin school which provided an education for boys, aged from about seven to seventeen.⁴²³ They were taught Latin grammar, were required to speak Latin and sing in the church choir. Classes were conducted in the Latin language for advanced pupils. Generally, girls were not allowed in these schools. They would not require to learn Latin since they were not destined to take on office at church, or follow a further education at university. Some fifteenth-century female religious displayed an intricate knowledge of Latin, which they had acquired before joining the convent.⁴²⁴ Perhaps they had attended a Latin school after all, or they may have been educated privately at home. Whether they gained their knowledge at school or at home these examples show that women were not totally cut-off from an education in Latin.

The method of learning by rote remained the prevalent method,⁴²⁵ even far into the early modern period, despite the increased availability of (cheaper) books.

⁴²¹ See Dodde, *Kinderen*, pp. 67-69, Post, *Scholen* and Loonen, P.L.M., 'For to learne to buye and sell'. *Learning English in the Low Dutch area between 1500 and 1800. A critical survey* (Studies of the Pierre Bayle Institute 22; Amsterdam, Maarssen, 1990, revised ed., 1991), pp. 44-46.

⁴²² Post, *Scholen*, p. 76.

⁴²³ Nauwelaerts, *School*, pp. 35-37.

⁴²⁴ Lingier, 'Boekengebruik', p. 285.

⁴²⁵ Booy, E.P. de, *De weldaet der scholen. Het plattelandsonderwijs in de provincie Utrecht van 1580 tot het begin der 19e eeuw* (Utrecht, 1977), p. 37.

First, the alphabet was learned by heart as a sequential whole, followed by recognising individual letters.⁴²⁶ Syllables were next in turn, then whole words and phrases. The pupil was required to name single letters, to spell, to pronounce and read aloud. Thus, decipherment rather than understanding was important. Text comprehension was achieved after years of exercise. Since boys remained longer in the educational process, their reading skills must have been more profound. For girls, elementary education would usually signify the end of the road of formal institutionalised education.

From 1425, boys could attend the university of Louvain to receive training as canon lawyers and civil lawyers, theologians, philosophers and medical doctors. This avenue was closed to women. Nevertheless, women could legally be university members. Wives of professors, (serving) maids, cooks in colleges and student houses, errand-girls and so forth were marked as associates, as were scribes, paper- and parchment makers, apothecaries and book-printers.⁴²⁷

In 'real life' girls may have gone to great lengths to gain admittance to university. Martin of Leibitz (d. 1464) added in his autobiography a story of a virgin who attended university for two years at Kraków in male attire. Although the story is shaped to fit into a monastic mould (the learned young woman was made an abbess) there may be some truth in it.⁴²⁸

Christine de Pizan mentions a tale of a professor at an Italian university whose daughter was occasionally sent by her father to deliver lectures in his stead. She was so beautiful that a little veil had to be hung before her face in order not to

⁴²⁶ Houston, R.A., *Literacy in early modern Europe. Culture and education 1500-1800* (London, New York, 1988), p. 58.

⁴²⁷ Schwinges, R.C., 'Student education, student life', *A history of the university in Europe*, H. de Ridder-Symoens ed. (2 vols., Cambridge, 1992-1996), II, p. 202.

⁴²⁸ Shank, M.H., 'A female university student in late medieval Kraków', *Sisters and workers in the middle ages*, J.M. Bennett et al. eds. (Chicago, London, 1976, 1989), pp. 190-197. After having been found out she was made abbess. Presumably, the girl had come into an inheritance and, as Shank suggests, since she originated from a prosperous family she may even have attended a coeducational grammar school before going to university.

distract the students from learning.⁴²⁹ She may have been related to the fourteenth-century canon lawyer Johannes Andreae, who records a similar story about his daughter.⁴³⁰ Some Italian and Spanish examples show that a handful of women may actually have taught at fifteenth-century universities.⁴³¹ It was very exceptional to find any female at university level.

Juxtaposed to medieval ideas about women as outlined above, there is no lack of positive models of female erudition and intelligence. The idea of woman as an intellectual, personified by Catherine of Alexandria, must have been familiar since it was conveyed (by word of mouth) on Catherine's feast-day, which was a holiday (at which lay people were at leisure to attend a sermon).⁴³² The erudite Catherine disputed with the emperor as well as with his fifty pagan philosophers. She manages to convert all fifty sages. The emperor questions 'the wonder of her wisdom'.⁴³³ St. Catherine was also acclaimed patron saint of the medieval faculty of arts.

Another example is St. Barbara, who, being sent to school by her father, learned the seven arts.⁴³⁴ This led to her questioning the worship of idols and paved the way for her conversion. St. Eugenia is learned in the arts, she understands Latin, Greek, she knows the philosophers, possesses an excellent memory and is intelligent.⁴³⁵ St. Sophia, otherwise known as Sapientia (Wisdom), has her daughters educated to the highest standard. The girls had memorised parts of

⁴²⁹ Power, *Women*, p. 85.

⁴³⁰ Schulte, J.F. von, *Die Geschichte der Quellen und Literatur des canonischen Rechts von Gratian bis auf die Gegenwart* (3 vols., Stuttgart, 1875-1880), II, p. 211.

⁴³¹ Evans, R.G., *A turning point in the education of women in western Europe, with special reference to mathematics. A social-historical study of the medieval/renaissance period (1400 to 1600)* (unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of London, 1991), pp. 171-172.

⁴³² d'Avray, D.L., 'Katharine of Alexandria and mass communication in Germany: woman as intellectual', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 401-408.

⁴³³ *Passionael, winterstuc, katherina*, fols. e1v-e2v.

⁴³⁴ *Passionael, winterstuc, barbara*, fols. k5-k5v.

⁴³⁵ *Passionael (Veldener), somerstuc, eugenia*, fol. PP3v.

the Bible, and could live up to their knowledge.⁴³⁶ An extremely original exemplum is that in which a learned female spider occurs who is referred to as female doctor (*doctorisse*).⁴³⁷ This is positive imagery of a woman. Wisdom, it appears, is a sign of God's favour and an element of female sanctity in these examples.

The bulk of religious and moral education (Christian duties, spiritual obligations, Ten Commandments, etc.) was available to both boys and girls at home and in the school. It was undoubtedly conveyed through oral instruction, but some reading may have been involved too, particularly for the advanced students and higher up in society. The Psalter occupies a special place. Not only was it used to learn liturgy it was also regarded as compendium of all sacred knowledge, history, ethics, cosmology and eschatology.⁴³⁸ Other books used for edification consisted of catechism, Bible excerpts, prayer books, books with virtuous examples (such as the *Sielentroost*), saint's *Lives*, fables, etc.⁴³⁹ In short, genres which were available in print. In some schools, girls read saints' legends and *Lives* of the Desert Fathers of Egypt.⁴⁴⁰

Some printed matter in the Dutch vernacular appears to be tailored towards usage at medieval school. Aesop's fables, for instance, were still widely used by children in the eighteenth century.⁴⁴¹ The woodcut, which accompanies every fable, serves as a visual aid. Each fable is introduced in a few words which contain the animals or persons who play a role. After this follows an incipit with the moral, a middle part which usually contains a dialogue, and an epilogue in which the moral is repeated. However, because of its lay-out this product cannot

⁴³⁶ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *sophie*, fols. M3-M3v.

⁴³⁷ *Parabolen*, fol. a6v.

⁴³⁸ Oostrom, F.P. van, 'Lezen, leren en luisteren in klooster, stad en hof. Kinderboeken in de middeleeuwen?', *De hele Biblebontse berg. De geschiedenis van het kinderboek in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, H. Bekkering et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1989, 1990), p. 17.

⁴³⁹ Niekus Moore, *Mirror*, chapter 4.

⁴⁴⁰ Evidence from sixteenth-century Italy, Grendler, P.F., 'What Zuanne read in school: vernacular texts in sixteenth-century Venetian schools', *The sixteenth-century journal* 13 (1982), p. 47.

have been cheap. Also, many incunables are large folios which are cumbersome to be handled by children. It is questionable whether children read incunables at school,⁴⁴² even though a Latin version of *Aesop* was traditionally used at school and as mentioned in chapter 1, so was the *Legenda aurea*.⁴⁴³

In general then, in 1500 there was ample opportunity to follow elementary education, even for those from lower down the social scale. Even when girls remained in education for a shorter period than boys, and even when only taught to read they must have been able to comprehend at least the basics of a text. Despite the fact that a woman was not able to display her erudition and learning in the public realm in such a way that ~~man~~[✶] could, education was highly esteemed.

A sensible mother and cultivated wife were regarded as a blessing. A woman could become a better Christian through learning. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Bible reading was promoted on a larger scale than ever before, women were stimulated to be able to read and understand the word of God and teach her children.

However, literacy also served a more secular purpose. Educated wives and daughters could help with the management of landed property, business and the household accounts. An educated female was able to negotiate and converse at the highest level, to find commercial partners, keep the business afloat in her husband's absence, was indispensable. Travelling husbands could be in contact

⁴⁴¹ Augustin, P. et al. eds., *Kinderen lezen, kinderen lezen*. Catalogus [van de tentoonstelling gehouden in het] Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam van 31 oktober 1958 - 7 januari 1959 (Catalogus Stedelijk Museum 195; Amsterdam, 1958), p. 22.

⁴⁴² For usage of books by medieval children, see Van Oostrom, 'Lezen', pp. 20-21 (for school books) and Resoort, R.J., 'Een proper profitelijc boec. Eind vijftiende en zestiende eeuw', *De hele Biblebontse berg. De geschiedenis van het kinderboek in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, H. Bekkering et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1989, 1990), pp. 43-56. Among the books probably read by children are mentioned the legend of Liedwij van Schiedam and the *Sielentroest*.

⁴⁴³ Kuiper en Resoort transs., *Esopus*, p. 88.

with their wives by letter, as witnessed, for instance, by the fourteenth-century Francesco Datini.

Examples of working wives are painted by the fifteenth-century artist Marinus van Reymerwaele.⁴⁴⁴ In *The Tax Collector* the collector is counting coins, his female companion is occupied with the accounts. The account book is situated on her side of the table and her hand rests on a page, while she is waiting until the collector has finished counting. In another of his paintings, *Bankers*, the male has finished counting the silver while his female companion is fully occupied with noting down the amount in the cash register.

For an unmarried woman education provided means of self reliance and survival. There was an ample resource pool of female teachers, lay and religious. Female traders often feature on their own, as money changers, money lenders, innkeepers, drapers, bakers and brewers. In fifteenth-century Germany, some women are mentioned as clerks at court, assessors of pledges, assets, fines, and as middle men and brokers.⁴⁴⁵ These are women I tend to associate with an incunable-reading public: affluent enough to acquire them and erudite and interested enough to understand the basics. When reading and education became increasingly important for participation in cultural activities, it is the vernacular which triumphs, and this cannot be separated from a triumph for women.

Foreigners, comparing the literate population of the Low Countries with that of their own country, notice a high degree of female literacy. The Florentine Ludovico Guicciardini, who had lived in Antwerp for some years and who had travelled extensively in the Low Countries, mentioned in 1567 that there was a large number of cultivated folk and that almost anyone in the countryside was

⁴⁴⁴ Braunstein, Ph., 'Towards intimacy: the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', *A history of private life*, Ph. Ariès and G. Duby general eds. (3 vols., Cambridge, MA, London, 1988-1989), II, p. 563 and p. 550, respectively.

⁴⁴⁵ Uitz, E., *Women in the medieval town* (London, 1990), S. Marnie trans., pp. 198-199.

able to read and write.⁴⁴⁶ The French humanist Joseph Scaliger who lectured at the university of Leiden in the 1590s remarked that the Dutch were admirably literate, and that even the servant girls were able to read.⁴⁴⁷ In 1673, the English Bathsue Makin recorded 'one great reason why our neighbours the Dutch have thriven to admiration is the great care they take in the education of their women, from whence they are to be accounted more vertuous, and to be sure more useful than any women in the world.'⁴⁴⁸ A foundation for these statements must have been laid in the fifteenth century.

2.6 *The woman as reader*

2.6.1 Female literacy

Various levels of readership are discernible. At the lowest level of reading ability the woodcuts could be looked at. In particular the so-called block books, such as the *Spiegel der menselijker behoudenis*, contain a high proportion of visual images. It has even been asserted that the purpose of block books had nothing to do with dissemination of literacy and were merely there to provide the illiterate with visual concepts of religion.⁴⁴⁹

At a second level there is aural reading: the 'reader' is a listener. Chaucer's fictitious well-known Wife of Bath is a good example of an aural reader. Her fifth husband, once an Oxford scholar, made her listen to stories from Roman history, proverbs from *Ecclesiasticus* and a book which seems to have been a compilation and contained, amongst others, *Parables of Solomon* and Ovid's *Art of Love*. Jankin repeated the antifeminist passages time and again which made her angry, she tore out some pages and threw them in the fire, only to receive a

⁴⁴⁶ Van der Woude, 'Alfabetisering', p. 257.

⁴⁴⁷ Grafton, A., *Joseph Scaliger. A study in the history of classical scholarship* (2 vols., Oxford, 1983-1993), II, pp. 374-375.

⁴⁴⁸ Wiesner, *Women*, pp. 135-136.

⁴⁴⁹ Clair, *Printing*, p. 3.

box on her ear.⁴⁵⁰ The aural reader, voluntarily or not, was dependent on the reader.

Reading aloud continued. For instance, Kunera's legend is meant to edify all who 'read' it or 'hear it being read'.⁴⁵¹ Zemon Davis surmises whether women gathered during long winter evenings, the *veillée*'s, may have lent their ear to the new medium of the printed books.⁴⁵² The gathering of women in the evening at homes and in barns to spin and chatter was not uncommon in the early modern Low Countries.⁴⁵³ Books could have been used for diversion.

Memory remained important to retain texts not only because the written or printed word remained expensive, but also, as Carruthers has discussed, within the literate community there was room for recitals from memory and it was handy to have access to the text without the need to consult the book.⁴⁵⁴ Indeed, texts were accompanied by pictures prompting the reader to recall and to memorise a text. Govaert Bac who published the *Sinte Katherinen legende* used the image of a bird's cage as a printer's mark, meaning that the information should be preserved in the reader's 'memorial storehouse'.⁴⁵⁵ The dissemination of literate

⁴⁵⁰ Robinson, F.N. ed., *The riverside Chaucer* (Oxford, etc., 1987, 1992), The Wife of Bath's Prologue, pp. 113-116, lines 628-825. See also Pratt, R.A., 'Jankyn's Book of Wikked Wyves: medieval antimatrimonial propaganda in the universities', *Annuaire medievale* 3 (1962) and Wilson, K.M. and E.M. Makowski, *Wykked wyves and the woes of marriage. Misogamous literature from Juvenal to Chaucer* (New York, 1990), p. 158 for the contents of Jankin's manuscript book.

⁴⁵¹ *Kunera*, fol. a2.

⁴⁵² Zemon Davis, *Society*, p. 213.

⁴⁵³ Dresen-Coenders, L. en J. van Haaren, 'Ontmoetingsplaatsen van vrijers en vrijsters', *Kent, en versint Eer datje mint. Vrijen en trouwen 1500-1800*, P. van Boheemen et al. eds. (Zwolle, 1989), pp. 69-70. Löwensteyn, M., 'Toveren en spinnen. De evangeliën van de spinrokken in beeld gebracht', *Nederland betoverd. Toverij en hekserij van de veertiende tot in de twintigste eeuw*, M. Gijswijt-Hofstra en W. Frijhoff eds. (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 133-147, discusses the ironical *Évangiles des quenouilles*. A Dutch translation appeared as a post incunable in the Low Countries. It supposedly contains stories of old women who noted down the women's version of the gospels.

⁴⁵⁴ Carruthers, M., *The book of memory. A study of memory in medieval culture* (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 10; Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh, 1990, 1993).

⁴⁵⁵ See Carruthers, *Book*, p. 246 for the usage of metaphors which signify that the memories like birds could be cooped up in a cage. The printer's mark is found in *Katherinen*, fol. f6v. *t' Vogelhuys* was also the name of the house that the printer's wife owned.

culture, or more precisely defined, the dissemination of texts (or variants of them), is therefore not necessarily restricted to books.

Some people have a phenomenal capacity for memorising texts, particularly those which were popular and therefore often repeated.⁴⁵⁶ Late medieval female Lollards from Britain, for instance, learnt Scriptures by heart.⁴⁵⁷ This means that women who had memorised texts had access to them at their own leisure and by reciting them *en public* they widened the audience of the 'texts' as well. The dissemination of 'texts' is not restricted to the literate or those who possess books. A mixture of textuality and orality remained when printed books appeared and, arguably, ever since writing became more commonly used.⁴⁵⁸

The 'reader proper', who read and understood the texts presented, belongs to a more advanced level. Between this category and the levels outlined above all shades of reading ability may be found. An exceptional example of a reader proper is the fourteenth-century Christine de Pizan who was an author as well.⁴⁵⁹ In her criticism on the *Roman de la Rose*, Christine complained about antifeminist attitudes displayed in the work. She was charged that she read like a woman, that envy, pride or foolishness led her to misunderstand the work. She

⁴⁵⁶ See, for instance, McDonnell, *Beguines*, p. 374.

⁴⁵⁷ They may have done so because they were illiterate or they may have feared to be found with incriminatory books. Cross, C., 'Great reasoners in Scripture'. The activities of women Lollards 1380-1530', *Medieval women*, D. Baker ed. (Studies in church history, subsidia 1; Oxford, 1978), pp. 359-380.

⁴⁵⁸ It is not necessary within the context of this thesis to discuss more fully the relationship between orality and literacy. Even in an increasingly literate world, reading aloud and memory remained important. See, for instance, the works of Green, *Listening and reading*, Carruthers, *Book*, Clanchy, M., *From memory to written record. England 1066-1307* (Oxford, Cambridge USA, 1979, 1993). Scribner, R., 'Oral culture and the diffusion of reformation ideas', *History of European ideas* 5 (1984), pp. 237-256 emphasises the point that oral communication (preaching in the vernacular, reading aloud and discussing books) remained of the utmost importance even when the printed work became more commonly used. For a concise and intelligent analysis of various strands of thought concerning orality-literacy, see Jong, M. de, 'Geletterd en ongeletterd: zin en onzin van een tegenstelling', *Oraliteit en schriftcultuur*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 12; Hilversum, 1993), pp. 9-31. She concludes that literacy (as equated with modernity) versus orality (as equated with tradition) is no longer tenable. However, the antithesis remains of importance to medievalists, since the literate community consists of dominant social groups.

showed her assertiveness by stating that she was not reading *like* a woman but *as* a woman. Christine then read, understood and interpreted texts. She was fully literate to boot, producing a counterattack in writing. She is very exceptional though, both in her literate sophistication and the fact that her case is so well-documented. She cannot be cited as a 'typical' secular female reader.

2.6.2 Attitudes towards female literacy

In the female saint's *Lives* and exempla female reading is sometimes viewed with suspicion, for instance when married wives are being sent love letters by young men.⁴⁶⁰ It is also associated with pious acts. As a toddler, St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) mimics the ability of reading the Psalter in church, but she is too young to be able to read.⁴⁶¹ Reading becomes a source of play: the apostles' names are written on lots which were drawn in order to pray to the apostle whose name features on it. Whilst consulting the Gospels, St. Theodora of Alexandria (no date) took a decision what to do after her act of adultery.⁴⁶² St. Paula (d. 404), prone to shedding tears even over her venial sins, is urged to spare her eyes to enable her to read the Gospels.⁴⁶³ Every day St. Eugenia is moved to tears whilst reading about Thecla's conversion and she finds inspiration in the legend.⁴⁶⁴ Another form of positive imagery is that in later editions of the *Passionael* many female saints are portrayed with a book in the woodcuts.⁴⁶⁵ Sometimes, the attribute of the book makes sense according to the legend. For

⁴⁵⁹ On Christine's literate abilities, see Schibanoff, 'Taking', pp. 93-101.

⁴⁶⁰ *Geesten*, one woman is home alone, fol. f2, the other is married to an old husband. fol. v1.

⁴⁶¹ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *elyzabeth*, fol. b8.

⁴⁶² *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *theodora*, fol. l6v.

⁴⁶³ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *paula*, fol. t4.

⁴⁶⁴ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc*, *eugenia* fol. PP3v.

⁴⁶⁵ For the introduction of woodcuts in the *Passionael*, see Goudraan, K., 'Het Passionael op de drukpers', *Gouden Legenden. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 82-84. I have consulted *Passionael*, (Delft, Hendrick Eckert van Homberch, 1499-1500), KB The Hague shelf mark 170 E 15, which also features woodcuts on the title pages of *winterstuc* and *somerstuc* respectively depicting a nun reading in a library being visited by Christ, and Mary with a book surrounded by the apostles.

instance, in the case of St. Scholastica (d. ca. 543), the first Benedictine nun, it was a reference to the *Rule* her brother Benedict of Nursia had written.⁴⁶⁶ In some instances, a saint's learnedness or book usage is not mentioned in the source, but the saint is depicted with one nevertheless.⁴⁶⁷

When looking for attitudes towards women's writing when they appear in the exemplum collections and female saints' *Lives* it becomes obvious that they are ambiguous too. God inspired the divinely written word. God was not only creator of everything but also author of the Scriptures and made the human writer his tool.⁴⁶⁸ In the book which contains her *Revelations*, as well as her ^{LEGEND} and her daughter Catherine's legend, St. Bridget of Sweden is depicted filled with heavenly inspiration; she is flanked by heavenly worthies, and inspired by the Holy Spirit - as a dove - while an angel looks over her shoulder, dictating the text into her ear.⁴⁶⁹

Influenced in all likelihood by Giovanni Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*, De Eyb also lists famous women from antiquity in his book.⁴⁷⁰ In his chapter *On the praise of women* in which he also refers to Barbara of Brandenburg, he mentions women's influence in the arts and literature. He lists Isis, Nicostrata, Sappho, Cornelia, Aspasia, and Proba, all of whom he commends for their interest in the letters respectively for discovering the first letters (*boechstaven*); discovering Latin letters and syllables; composing poetry; writing of Latin letters; learning and eloquence; re-styling the Old and New Testament in verses reminiscent of Virgil.

Isis also features in Aesop enhancing his skills. She bestows the power of speech on him and the wisdom and knowledge to invent fables and explain

⁴⁶⁶ *Passionael*, (Delft, Hendrick Eckert van Homberch, 1499-1500), *winterstuc, scolastica*, fol. e2v. For her attributes, see Goosen, *Afra*, p. 66 and p. 68.

⁴⁶⁷ See, for instance, the legends of Anastasia, Lucy, Samina and Thaïs.

⁴⁶⁸ Demyttenaere, A., 'De auteur en zijn publiek in de middeleeuwen', *Literatuur en samenleving in de middeleeuwen*, A. Demyttenaere et al. eds. (Wassenaar, 1976), p. 14.

⁴⁶⁹ *Opusculum*, fol. a1. It is probably a reference to the *sermo angelicus*.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. h2-h3v.

them.⁴⁷¹ Empowered by these gifts he is capable of competing with the wisest of the philosophers. In the incunables, Isis is promoted to and singled out as goddess of communication on the oral as well as the written level.

It must have been far from obvious to the medieval reader who these ancient ladies mentioned were and exactly why they should be hailed as examples. Grafton and Jardine, when they came across similar lists in their research on women humanists of fifteenth-century Italy who were applauded by their male contemporaries in similar fashion, mention that learned women were routinely praised in this manner.⁴⁷²

There are many instances of female writing associated with negative ideas. It circumvented any involvement (and control) of others. Unbeknown to her doting father Tancredus, Sigismunda writes a letter to Swyfcardus arranging a secret meeting which she inserted into a length of reed.⁴⁷³ Under the motto to pray with concentration, a she-monkey features who copies books but since she is always eavesdropping or gossiping, her books remain unsold and she dies in poverty.⁴⁷⁴ Occasionally, God's hand is seen at work. For instance, Zosimas finds instructions for Mary of Egypt's funeral written in the desert sand near her corpse while she could neither read nor write.⁴⁷⁵ It is clear that there is a bivalent attitude towards female literacy.

2.6.3 Vernacular readership

Before the fifteenth century lay reading in the vernacular had evoked responses from the side of the established church. Although literacy in itself did not imply an

⁴⁷¹ Aesop, fol. a3.

⁴⁷² Grafton, A. and L. Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities. Education and the liberal arts in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe* (London, 1986), p. 36.

⁴⁷³ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. f4.

⁴⁷⁴ *Twespraec*, fol. l5v.

⁴⁷⁵ *Biechten*, fol. ee4v and *Passionael, somerstuc, maria van egypten*, fol. a7v and Kersten, H., 'Van een monnik en een hoer. De legende van Maria Aegyptiaca in de Middelnederlandse verhaaltraditie', *Literatuur* 9 (1992), p. 195.

inclination to heresy,⁴⁷⁶ it is the type of book that the laity used in the vernacular that alarmed the church. In the high middle ages, even possession of biblical translations could bring about suspicions of heresy. Also, unsupervised reading of the Bible appears to have coincided with discussions outside the church and sometimes even lay preaching, as witnessed by the practices of the late twelfth and early thirteenth-century Waldensians.⁴⁷⁷ The preacher Guibert of Tournai (ca. 1205-1284) resented women speaking in public about their religious beliefs and the Scriptures.⁴⁷⁸ In 1317, the Council of Vienne's decrees were published; beguines were prohibited from discussing and preaching religious matters (*Cum de quibusdam mulieribus*).⁴⁷⁹ Women, of course, suffered from the additional problem that they were discouraged to speak out publicly (1 Corinthians 14:34).

The attitude of the church did not change during the middle ages in general, but a milder attitude was advocated of reading Scriptures (and edifying material) in the vernacular,⁴⁸⁰ as advocated by the modern devotionalists. The church's concerned attitude about the interpretation by the laity of books was not unfounded. Carlo Ginzburg's work on the uncanny interpretations which the sixteenth-century miller from Friuli based on his books, is telling.⁴⁸¹ Even within the modern devotion it was not readily advocated that women had access to the vernacular Scriptures. For instance, when in the fifteenth century Jacob Huginck

⁴⁷⁶ Even when evidence in some cases suggests that the connection was presupposed by contemporaries, Swanson, R.N., 'Literacy, heresy, history, and orthodoxy: perspectives and permutations for the later middle ages', *Heresy and literacy, 1000-1530*, P. Biller and A. Hudson eds. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 23; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), p. 290.

⁴⁷⁷ Blamires, S., 'The limits of Bible study for medieval women', *Women, the book and the godly*. Selected proceedings of the St Hilda's conference, 1993, L. Smith and J.H.M. Taylor eds. (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1-12, points to the activities of the Waldensians in and around Metz in the 1190s. Laymen and women circulated biblical translations amongst themselves and discussed them.

⁴⁷⁸ Dalarun, 'Vrouw', p. 40.

⁴⁷⁹ Koorn, *Begijnhoven*, p. 16.

⁴⁸⁰ As long as vernacular writings did not contain heresy, dealt with simple subjects, dealt with subjects in a direct and not figurative way, were written in similar style to that of the doctors of the church, and that the meaning matched the books of saints, there were no objections raised in the Low Countries, Deanesly, *Bible*, p. 94.

⁴⁸¹ Ginzburg, C., *The cheese and the worms. The cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller* (London, Henley, 1980), J. and A. Tedeschi transs.

left a New Testament and part of the Old Testament to the Sisters of the Common Life in the Adamanshouse at Zutphen, it was stipulated that it was to be used by their priest only.⁴⁸² In 1486, the archbishop of Mainz resented books which appeared in translation, such as the books of divine office and missals, as well as the fact that they were multiplied by the printing press. He thought that books which were handled by the common people led to the degradation of religion, 'For who would enable simple and uneducated men, and even women ... to pick out the true meaning?'.⁴⁸³

The Low Countries never experienced the extraordinary measures that the English monarch saw fit to impose in 1543 when English women were prohibited by the crown from reading the Bible with the exception of women from the upper echelons of society. However, even they were not allowed to read it to others.⁴⁸⁴ This shows the underlying fear that 'ordinary' women who were less educated and less sophisticated were thought to have been in peril of making mistakes in their interpretation of - in this case - the sacred word. Objections were not raised when they read other books in the vernacular such as saints' legends.⁴⁸⁵

Clergy and laity were evaluated in terms of being literate, and to be more precise, of being literate in Latin. Not only was Latin the language used at university but it was also a sacred language, the language of the church. However, it was not necessarily available to the female religious.⁴⁸⁶ In general, *literati* were able to

⁴⁸² Meinsma, *Bibliotheken*, p. 288.

⁴⁸³ Deanesly, *Bible*, p. 125.

⁴⁸⁴ Wiesner, *Women*, pp. 125-126.

⁴⁸⁵ See the wide variety of books mentioned by Ridzy, 'Women', pp. 108-109.

⁴⁸⁶ Many monastic libraries as well as certain beguines possessed books in Middle Dutch and Latin, see, for instance, the examples supplied by Machiels, J. en P. van Peteghem, 'Incunabelbezit in Zuidnederlandse kloosterbibliotheken. Kan men het incunabelbezit in Zuidnederlandse kloosterbibliotheken tot rond 1500 samenstellen op grond van de herkomstvermelding?', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 327-366. Meinsma, *Bibliotheken*, p. 196, surmises that Latin books in convents were intended to be used by priest, rector and chaplain. Late medieval attitudes towards religious women reading in the vernacular are ambivalent: in the fifteenth century, Poor Clares were advised *not* to read books in the Dutch vernacular, see Reijdsbergen, 'Clarissen', p. 59. In 1441, the Chapter of Utrecht forbade tertiaries to read any Latin works, Axters, *Vroomheid*, III, p. 238.

read and write in Latin, and usually consisted of the higher clergy. All non-clerics are *illiterati* and the laity is only able to communicate in the mother tongue.⁴⁸⁷ Although the difference and importance between literate and illiterate became progressively less clear,⁴⁸⁸ secular women who, on the whole, had no access to Latin (and who, of course, were also barred from priesthood) ranked in principle among the *illiterati* in the medieval sense, which by no means meant that they were unlettered.

As readership widened over western Europe on religious as well as social, political and cultural levels larger numbers of people were literate in the vernacular.⁴⁸⁹ Readers of Germanic languages may well have had a greater need for translations in the vernacular than those for whom Latin was easier to comprehend such as speakers of the Romance languages. For the latter, in particular Italian, Latin differed less from their vernacular language.

In a few cases, vernacular and Latin texts travelled together. The laywoman Heylwich possessed a (manuscript) book of hours (dated 1457) which contained Latin texts as well as Middle Dutch.⁴⁹⁰ The provenance in a printed Latin sermon collection mentions ownership of Alfert Syl, his wife Lyesbet and their progeny.⁴⁹¹ A rare example of women being assisted in the pursuit of the Latin language is found in the gynaecological treatise *Den rosenghaert vanden bevruchten vrouwen* printed by Thomas vander Noot in 1516 (a post incunable). This book, written by Eucharius Rösslin, was intended for pregnant women and midwives,

⁴⁸⁷ Obbema, P.F.J., *Boeken in Nederland* (w. place, 1979).

⁴⁸⁸ Steer, G., 'Die Laie als Anreger und Adressat deutscher Prosaliteratur im 14. Jahrhundert', *Zur deutschen Literatur und Sprache des 14. Jahrhunderts*. Dubliner Colloquium 1981, W. Haug et al. eds. (Heidelberg, 1983), pp. 355-356.

⁴⁸⁹ This process predates the fifteenth century, see Price, B.B., *Medieval thought. An introduction* (Oxford, Cambridge USA, 1992), chapter 5.

⁴⁹⁰ Gumbert, J.P. et G.I. Lieftinck eds., *Manuscripts datés conservés dans le Pays-Bas* (2 vols., Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1964-1988), II, nr. 607.

⁴⁹¹ Kronenberg, M.E., *Catalogus van de incunabelen in de Athenaeum-Bibliotheek te Deventer* (Deventer, 1917), nr. 27.

and it contained a list of Latin words with their translations in the Dutch vernacular.⁴⁹²

Books may also have been useful tools for women in need of learning a different language in case they married outside their own language boundaries. There are some examples of high ranking ladies: Jan van Heelu's *Rymkroniek van Woeringen* (1291-1294) was either commissioned for or by Margaret of England, to be married into the Brabantine ducal family.⁴⁹³ Mary, the French princess who became Duchess of Guelders, possessed a book of hours in Dutch. Jacoba of Bavaria, granddaughter of Duke Albrecht, ruler of the county of Holland, and wife of Humphrey of Gloucester, possessed books written in English.⁴⁹⁴ There are other examples from Europe. Anne of Bohemia owned the four Gospels in English.⁴⁹⁵ And Chaucer may have written his *Legend of Good Women* especially for her.⁴⁹⁶

2.6.4 Reading habits

The simultaneous action of reading, praying and contemplation was practised at home.⁴⁹⁷ However, the practice of women reading at home was, of course, not restricted to the Low Countries nor to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Mary is often depicted reading within a domestic setting and this was particular to

⁴⁹² Vermeulen, *Profijt*, p. 120. According to its prologue the book was solely sold in his printing shop to prevent 'vileynen' from acquiring it.

⁴⁹³ Hogenelst en De Vries, 'Scone', p. 336 and Berg, E. van den, 'De Karelepiek. Van voorgedragen naar individueel gelezen literatuur', *Tussentijds*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan W.P. Gerritsen ter gelegenheid van zijn vijftigste verjaardag, A.M.J. van Buuren et al. eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 5; Utrecht, 1985), p. 19.

⁴⁹⁴ Van Oostrom, *Woord*, p. 35. After her death at the castle of Teylingen her English books were sold to an English merchant, presumably because nobody had any use for them in the Low Countries.

⁴⁹⁵ Coleman, *Literature*, p. 20.

⁴⁹⁶ Delany, S., *The naked text. Chaucer's Legend of Good Women* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1994), pp. 236-237.

⁴⁹⁷ I have drawn on two articles in particular: Carey, H.M., 'Devout literate laypeople and the pursuit of the mixed life in later medieval England', *The journal of religious history* 14 (1986) and Webb, D.M., 'Women and home: the domestic setting of late medieval spirituality', *Women in the church*, W.J. Sheils and D. Wood eds. (Studies in church history 27; Oxford, 1990), pp. 159-173.

Flanders.⁴⁹⁸ Prayers were often written down and read either at home or in the church.⁴⁹⁹ In one (manuscript) prayer book the reader is advised to read the book every day on bent knees.⁵⁰⁰ Late medieval secular art must have drawn on realistic and everyday detail. Upper-class women modelled for and on the pious Virgin.

In the incunables, women are presented with similar images.⁵⁰¹ In other forms of art, Mary is also depicted reading. For instance, in a diptych showing the annunciation scene by an anonymous master (dated 1499), Mary's book is placed on a ledge of a screen, while she kneels on a pillow with her shoes cast off, or sometimes she is depicted reading on a prie-dieu.⁵⁰² Mary's case is of course special, since her presence in a particular spatial setting is tied in with medieval symbolism.⁵⁰³

Mary's reading habits also reflect her special place and purpose in history. For instance, in the annunciation scene she usually reads Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).⁵⁰⁴ Indeed, in an exemplum, Mary explains that she picked up the *boec* because reading the prophecy of the virgin birth filled her with

⁴⁹⁸ See Webb, 'Women', pp. 159-173. In Italy, she was usually depicted in a portica and in France within an ecclesiastical setting.

⁴⁹⁹ Oosterman, J., 'Heiligen, gebeden en heiligengebeden', *Gouden Legendes. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 151-163, who refers to the importance of the *Passionael* as a source for the written prayers.

⁵⁰⁰ Flou, K. de, en E. Gailliard, 'Beschrijving van Middelnederlandsche handschriften die in Engeland bewaard worden', *Verslagen en mededeelingen der Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor taal-en letterkunde* 3 (1895), p. 84, nr. 19, *Sincte Bernardus comtemplacie vanden zueten name Ihesus*.

⁵⁰¹ See for instance, *Dat leven ons heren Jhesu Christi*, fol. c1. Other examples are by Kok, *Houtsneden*.

⁵⁰² *Gent, duizend jaar kunst en cultuur*. Tentoonstellingen ingericht door de stad Gent. Museum voor Schone Kunsten 19 april – 29 juni 1975. Ingeleid door R. Vandewege (Gent, 1975), nr. 22 and nr. 24.

⁵⁰³ Mary as *Ecclesia*, as virgin in the *hortus conclusus* (Song of Songs 4:12), as Christ's bride in a room with a bed as *thalamus virginis*; the bedroom also symbolises Mary's womb, see Falkenburg, R.L., 'Het huishouden van de ziel: burgerlijk decor in het Mérode-altaarstuk', *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, H. Pleij ed. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen IV; Amsterdam, 1991), n. 22.

such a profound ardour that she intended to remain chaste in honour of the virgin mentioned in it.⁵⁰⁵

Mary was also the recipient of reading and contemplative exercises. For instance, the *Obsecro te* (I beseech thee) in which Mary is addressed as *mediatrix*, often occurs in books of hours dedicated to the Virgin and was an extremely popular prayer in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵⁰⁶ Reading it daily would earn the reader no fewer than hundred days dispensation, with the added bonus that it would be revealed to the reader when the hour of death would strike.⁵⁰⁷ (The reader could then prepare herself beforehand and make amends for sinful behaviour and so be more certain that she would go to heaven.) Of course, these books are prayer books, but saints' legends and moralising exempla may have been approached in a similar frame of mind.

Small portable books, such as the books of hours, used for religious exercises at home could be carried to church. They contained prayers to be read (or said) during morning and evening and they could be dedicated to the veneration of particular saints.⁵⁰⁸ A secular woman from Zierikzee wrote a message in her book of hours urging those who would find it to return it to her for a reward (which shows that she probably carried it around outside her house).⁵⁰⁹

504 In fact, Isaiah mentions a young woman, but in Matthew's version, referring to Isaiah, it is mentioned that a 'virgin will conceive' (Matthew 1:23).

505 *Miraculen*, fol. 94.

506 Rezéau, P., 'Les livres d'heures', *Prier au Moyen Age. Pratiques et expériences (ve - xve siècles)*, N. Bériou et al. eds. (Turnhout, 1991), p. 36.

507 Oosterman, J.B., 'Om de grote kracht der woorden. Middelnederlandse gebeden en rubrieken in het Brugge van de vroege vijftiende eeuw', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 234-235.

508 Dijk, R.Th.M. van, 'Methodologische kanttekeningen bij het onderzoek van getijdenboeken', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 210-229.

509 Wittek, M. et al. eds., *Manuscrits datés conservés en Belgique. Bibliothèque Royale Albert I, Bruxelles* (5 vols., Bruxelles, 1968-1987), V, nr. 754: 'Mariken ...huijsvrou' at Zierikzee, the reference dates from 1523.

It was recognised that reading and spiritual exercises could be time-consuming for the secular readers. They simply did not have as much time on their hands as monks had. Gerard Leeu printed an abbreviated version of the seven long canonical hours to accommodate the religious practices of the laity who, by lack of time, could pray the 'short hours'.⁵¹⁰ In the *Reghel der kersten ghelove*, part of a printed corpus of guidelines advocating a good Christian lifestyle, it was recommended that the laity read a chapter from the Bible every night, time allowing.⁵¹¹ In this *Reghel*, inspired by the modern devotion, reading was regarded as a virtue. And if the laity did not have time to attend mass, five paternosters would do, and after that they should return to their work.

The practice of supplying the laity with simple instructions, set out on a practical and realistic level was not particular to the Low Countries.⁵¹² In the fifteenth-century *Opera a ben vivere* (Works for Good Living), the wife is advised to retreat to the bedroom after her evening meal for silent reading, praying or meditating. In the late medieval *Decor puellarum* (Maidenly Decorum) the reader is advised to read a few pages of a pious book for the benefit of the soul.⁵¹³

Medieval books provide a key for our understanding of medieval domestic and personal devotion.⁵¹⁴ The sacred was combined with the profane, religion was combined with utilitarianism. Secular activity was complemented with pious

⁵¹⁰ Hellinga-Querido, L., 'De betekenis van Geraert Leeu', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige Kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), ad fn. 124.

⁵¹¹ Bange, P., 'De Spieghel ofte Reghel der kersten ghelove ofte der kersten eewe: een leefregel voor een vijftiende eeuwse Christen', *OGE* 56 (1982), pp. 160-162.

⁵¹² Hutchison, A.M., 'Devotional reading in the monastery and in the late medieval household'. *De cella in seculum. Religious and secular life and devotion in late medieval England*. An interdisciplinary conference 20-22 July, 1986, M.G. Sargent ed. (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 215-227. The article sheds more light on reading in a monastic environment than in the household.

⁵¹³ Both examples are cited by Régner-Bohler, D., 'Imagining the self', *A history of private life*, Ph. Ariès and G. Duby general eds. (3 vols., Cambridge, MA, London, 1988-1989), II, pp. 357-358.

⁵¹⁴ Carey, 'Laypeople', p. 379.

acts.⁵¹⁵ Already in the thirteenth century, friar Guibert of Tournai presented married women with the picture of Judith meditating on divine truths having withdrawn into her room.⁵¹⁶ In one of the late medieval miracles appended to St. Barbara's legend, a burgher wife at Nijmegen is praying with such intensity and devotion on her knees at home that she does not notice that her deranged husband appropriates a knife with which he attempts to commit suicide.⁵¹⁷

Secular women were domestic caretakers, they kept the fire going, cooked, and cleaned.⁵¹⁸ A cleansing metaphor, undoubtedly recognisable for housewives, is inserted in the *Boec van der biechten*.⁵¹⁹ A parallel is drawn between cleaning the soul and the home. Every corner of the home was to be rid of dirt and as dirt was gathered into a heap, so too sins had to be gathered and then confessed. Secular women as well, whilst cooking or washing clothes may have reflected on exempla and female saints' *Lives* and edifying texts.

Working too was valued for its own sake. The saints provided role models for housewives. Although the idea of Martha and Mary representing respectively the active and contemplative life had its value for (semi-)religious communities,⁵²⁰ it

⁵¹⁵ See, for instance, Deanesly, M., 'Vernacular books in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', *Modern language review* 15 (1920), pp. 349-358 and Herwaarden, J. van, en R. de Keyser, 'Het gelovige volk in de late middeleeuwen', *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, w. ed. (15 vols., Haarlem, 1980-1982), IV, in particular, pp. 405-420.

⁵¹⁶ Hasenohr, G., 'La vie quotidienne de la femme vue par l'église. L'enseignement des 'journées chrétiennes' de la fin du moyen âge', *Frau und spätmittelalterlicher Alltag*. Internationaler Kongress Krems an der Donau 2. bis 5. Oktober 1984, w. ed. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 473; Wien, 1986), p. 37.

⁵¹⁷ *Barbara*, fol. g1v.

⁵¹⁸ Piponnier, F., 'Het domein van de vrouw: ruimten en voorwerpen', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 335-338.

⁵¹⁹ *Biechten*, fol. aa1v.

⁵²⁰ Martha of Bethany was held in high esteem by the semi-religious beguines who were wage earners, see Wehrl-Johns, M., 'Maria und Martha in der religiösen Frauenbewegung', *Abendländische Mystik im Mittelalter*. Symposium Kloster Engelberg 1984, K. Ruh ed. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände 7; Stuttgart, 1985), p. 359.

could easily serve as a model for secular women.⁵²¹ St. Anne and St. Martha were both venerated as patron saints of housewives.⁵²² The Virgin Mary is seen to perform housewifely duties.⁵²³ Indeed, domestic duties even became valued in the spiritual sense, the most important example being the servant-saints such as the thirteenth-century Margaret of Louvain, or St. Zita of Lucca (who was venerated in Italy).⁵²⁴ Secular readers could dwell on the exemplum of the smith in the *Scaecspel* which is introduced by the quote: 'holy are those who live by working with their hands'.⁵²⁵ In an exemplum, a widow, who insisted on being buried in a shroud which she made with her very own hands, is praised and it is concluded that working in moderation benefits both body and soul.⁵²⁶ The books reflected ideas and ideals in which secular women could mirror themselves.

We would miss an important point when discussing the reading habits of the laity if we viewed them solely in relation with religion and religious exercises. Olsen has quite clearly shown that reading was deemed of importance to medieval people for several reasons, among which he lists pleasure, 'hygienic justification' (the 'medical' view that reading heightens the emotional state of the audience) and for recreational purposes as well as for solace.⁵²⁷

The mode of reading silently instead of aloud, may have served the laity as well. Individual reading was swifter and internalisation quicker if the eyes only were used without forming words on the lips. The availability of cheaper books would

⁵²¹ Martha is explicitly called *waerdinne* in the title of her legend, meaning 'hostess' or 'woman of the house'; she served Christ, *Passionael, somerstuc, martha*, fol. o9v. Martha is represented as a housewife, Tigcheler, J., 'Martha en Maria', *Speling* 35 (1983), p. 91.

⁵²² Jöckle, *Encyclopedia*, p. 35 and p. 293.

⁵²³ Bruin, C.C. de, ed., *Tleven Ons Heren Ihesu Cristi. Het pseudo-bonaventura-ludolfiaanse Leven van Jesus Christus* (Verzameling van Middelnederlandse bijbelteksten Miscellanea II; Leiden, 1980). In Egypt, Mary spun and worked with the needle. She took care of Christ's needs.

⁵²⁴ Goodich, M., 'Ancilla Dei: the servant as saint in the late middle ages', *Women of the medieval world*, J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple eds. (Oxford, New York, 1985), pp. 126-130.

⁵²⁵ *Scaecspel*, fol. f4.

⁵²⁶ *Twespraec*, fol. i2.

⁵²⁷ Olson, G., *Literature as recreation in the later middle ages* (Ithaca, London, 1982), chapters 1-4.

have assisted this process. Reading in private may have become more common in the early modern period, although sometimes women reading on their own ran the risk of being suspected of idleness and seeking sensual pleasure.⁵²⁸

2.6.5 Access to books

That late medieval secular women owned (manuscript) books cannot be doubted. As Susan Groag Bell has shown for the fifteenth century, all over Europe the number of book owning laywomen went up as well as their possessions.⁵²⁹ Systematic research concerning possession of books in the late medieval Low Countries is sadly lacking, but a case can be built up by a quick glance in manuscript catalogues and some secondary literature. Although most references that follow involve religious females' possession of books we have only extracted information which shows involvement of laywomen. The following paragraphs are intended to show that laywomen were involved in one way or another with Low Countries book culture.

Some secular women donated books to religious houses as a pious deed. Since most did so after the death of the owner it also suggests, *inter alia*, that they possessed and used them during their lifetime. Tine van Grolle, for instance, left a *Maecheden Spiegel* to the Adamanshouse in Zutphen. The tertiaries of St. Mary's at Haarlem possessed the Gospels in Dutch, donated by a mother of one of the sisters.⁵³⁰ Frequently, the owner requested to benefit from this pious book donation. In 1453, Alyt Lauwers left an expensive Dutch Bible to a convent of canonesses of St. Agnes near Nijmegen in memory of her parents and her husband.⁵³¹ A Dutch breviary was donated to the convent of Bethlehem near

⁵²⁸ Krol, T., 'Vrouwen en retorica', *Vrouwen in taal en literatuur*, K. Korevaart ed. (Amersfoort, Leuven, 1988), p. 31.

⁵²⁹ Groag Bell, 'Book owners', table 1.

⁵³⁰ Gumbert, *The Dutch*, pp. 59-60.

⁵³¹ Boeren, P.C. ed., *Catalogus handschriften van het Rijksmuseum Meermanno-Westreenianum* ('s-Gravenhage, 1979), p. 22. This *Historiebijbel* is an edition based on the translation of the so-called Bible translator of 1360 and the *Historia scholastica* by Peter Comestor (d. 1178).

Utrecht by Johanna, wife of Jan van Walincoerd, with the express wish that the tertiaries prayed for her family.⁵³² But also, religious houses benefited from secular women's book possession. When entering convents, novices or new sisters could bring books to the community which they had previously used at home.⁵³³

But the reverse happened as well. For instance, daughters residing in convents could copy books for use at their parental home, such as the book of hours that the Benedictine nun Alheydt van Limberghen finished in 1491 for her mother Liesbeth who lived at Deventer.⁵³⁴ The nun Janneke Pinnox from the St. Elizabeth convent copied St. Barbara's miracles for her parents. She warned them not to lend it to anyone rashly, however for the love of Barbara they should not refuse anyone access to it, but Janneke was willing to make another copy.⁵³⁵ Some books appear to have been intended for usage of both the female religious and the female secular. In a fifteenth-century vernacular manuscript in praise of the religious life and proper comportment, with a heavy emphasis on chastity, not only was the 'holy virgin' addressed but her (presumably secular and widowed) mother was admonished to read it too.⁵³⁶

Buying books may not have been uncommon. There is evidence that secular middle class women commissioned manuscript books. For example, widow Gheertruit Scaden had commissioned a Dutch book with a religious content to be

⁵³² Gumbert et Lieftinck eds., *Manuscripts*, II, nr. 727. Other laywomen leaving books to religious establishments are mentioned in Gumbert et Lieftinck eds., *Manuscripts*, II, nr. 385 and 427.

⁵³³ Magry, P.J., 'Het Katharijneconvent te Heusden. Een onderzoek naar het boekenbezit en boekengebruik van een tertiariissenklooster in de late middeleeuwen', *OGE* 60 (1986), p. 188, who cites examples from Nuremberg.

⁵³⁴ Hermans, J.M.M., 'Laatmiddeleeuwse boekcultuur in het Noorden: zoeken en vinden', *Boeken in de late middeleeuwen*. Verslag van de Groningse codicologendagen 1992, J.M.M. Hermans en K. van der Hoek eds. (Groningen, 1994), p. 223.

⁵³⁵ Lockwood, W.B., 'Mirakelen van Sinte Barbara in Middelnederlandse handschriften', *OGE* 30 (1957), p. 368.

⁵³⁶ Bergkvist, E. ed., *Dat boec van der ioncfrouscap (sprachlich untersucht und lokalisiert)*, (Göteborg, 1925), p. 66, strophe 262, lines 8-11.

copied for her, which she donated in 1442 to a convent at Utrecht.⁵³⁷ In 1498, Gerrit a brother regular from Beverwijk, aged sixty-four and using spectacles, had copied a book of hours for Aef van Bolgerien.⁵³⁸

A chance remark made by confessor Nicolaas Christi to certain beguines casually advising them to *buy* new *Evangelie boeckskens*,⁵³⁹ may be indicative of a common practice of purchasing books (rather than borrowing them). But even though incunables must have been relatively cheap compared to manuscript books they could still be expensive. However, books did not need to be brand new: second-hand books were in circulation as well. The vernacular manuscript books in possession of the bookseller Wolter de Hoge are thought to have been second-hand, and must have been relatively cheap.⁵⁴⁰

Women bequeath books to other women. Women left books in a commemorative capacity and this is referred to as early as in the thirteenth-century *Sachsenspiegel*, where books are listed among household items to be passed down. Following this tradition, one Dutch book of hours contained the names of six generations of women.⁵⁴¹

Alternatively, women may have borrowed from each other or from convents. Statutes of monasteries and semi-religious houses refer to lending to 'strangers' outside the convent. Frequently, they were to leave a written pledge or a security. A manuscript version of the *Life of St. Agnes*, for instance, was in apparent demand. A Charterhouse nun noted that she had already copied it for the brothers and 'for people from outside who sometimes ask for it and to whom one cannot well give the church lectionary.' In a volume of devout texts in Dutch written by a priest in 1428, it is stated that because the material is weak (probably

⁵³⁷ Wittek, et al. eds., *Manuscripts*, III, nr. 232. The book contains mainly sermons.
⁵³⁸ Obbema, P.F.J., *De middeleeuwen in handen. Over de boekcultuur in de late middeleeuwen* (Hilversum, 1996), p. 31.

⁵³⁹ Naber, *Vrouwenleven*, pp. 78-79. The beguines were advised that if they would buy, read and study them as well as reflect on their sins, they would be saved.

⁵⁴⁰ Gumbert, *The Dutch*, p. 73.

⁵⁴¹ Groag Bell, 'Book owners', p. 142.

paper) '... it should not lightly be given out of the house and lent to worldly people, for they are wont to keep books badly'.⁵⁴² The manuscript book containing sermons commissioned by Claes van Dorssen and his wife Yde was bequeathed to Bridgettine nuns at Gouda on the condition that it would only leave the convent for two to three days at any one time.⁵⁴³ And a sixteenth-century message written by sister Duufgen Jansdochter to return the *Leven van Liedwij* to her at the convent of the sisters St. Dyonisius (regulars at Amsterdam), also points towards the fact that people may have borrowed it from her.⁵⁴⁴

Churches possessed books as well. These books could be kept in the church itself, presumably for general use by the public, such as the books chained to the choir in the Buurkerk at Utrecht in the 1440s, but more usually the valuable books were safely stored in a less accessible separate church library.⁵⁴⁵ It is of course questionable whether and to what extent women would have had direct recourse to them.

2.6.6 Secular women owning Dutch vernacular incunables: pertinent examples

The most effective method to demonstrate that someone owned a book is to study the messages of ownership written by the owner. Of course, a provenance is only an indication of possession, not of actual readership.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴² These two examples are by Gumbert, *The Dutch*, p. 75.

⁵⁴³ Gumbert et Lieftinck eds., *Manuscripts*, II, nr. 570.

⁵⁴⁴ Jongen en Schotel eds., *Liedewij*, p. 131. She may, of course, have taken it out of the convent herself. I would like to thank Mrs. H. F. Peeters of KB The Hague for dating the handwriting at my request.

⁵⁴⁵ For examples of church libraries, see Meinsma, *Bibliotheken*, pp. 91-99; also Wüstefeld, W.C.M., *De boeken van de Grote of Sint Bavokerk. Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het middeleeuwse boek in Haarlem* (Hollandse studiën 24; Hilversum, 1989).

⁵⁴⁶ See examples of some illiterate female book owners who possessed or were bequeathed books, Meale, C.M., '... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englich, and frensch': laywomen and their books in late medieval England', *Women and literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, C.M. Meale ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 17; Cambridge, 1993), p. 133.

Although evidence of book ownership amongst women from the urban middle classes is not easily found,⁵⁴⁷ there are some examples of women who owned Dutch vernacular incunables. Lotte Hellinga points out that among the readers of books printed by Gerard Leeu were remarkably many women.⁵⁴⁸ Also incorporated in this section are provenances which date from the sixteenth century; these are frequently based on dating of the handwriting of the owner (and handwriting did of course not change at the turn of a century).

A copy of the *Epistelen ende Evangelien* was in possession of 'Joffrou Marie Aelbert van Leeuwens huysvrou'; it had previously been owned by her father.⁵⁴⁹ The family is part of the upper echelons of society of Utrecht. Another copy of the same as well as a *Kalendarium* were owned by Agnyes Jaecop Raewen daughter. Otto von Passau's *Boec des gulden throens of der 24 ouden* was in possession of 'juffrouw Augustina van Holland' before she left it at her death to the Convent of Nazareth. The Dutch translation of the *Somme rurale*, a code of law, by Jean Boutillier, was in the possession of Jozyne Triest, widow of Willem van Stapelen.⁵⁵⁰ *TLeven ons liefs heren Jesu Christi* belonged to the sixteenth-century Jenniken Art Visser 'in den Türksen Keijser' (perhaps a public house).⁵⁵¹ Extracts from the Middle Dutch *De bello Judaico*, and perhaps the *Historie van die seven wise mannen van Romen* and a Middle Dutch tract by Jean Gerson, were owned by the widow 'Joeffrou Floris van Jutphaes'.⁵⁵²

Female owners of the female saints' *Lives* and exempla follow. A *Twespraec* (bound with Gerard Leeu's edition of the *Leven der heiligen vaderen*) which had

⁵⁴⁷ There is not much evidence; most derives from testaments of widows, Meale, 'Bokes', p. 132. There is also much work involved in the treatment of the provenances; the most time-consuming element is perhaps to retrace the families from which the women originate in order to define their social stratum.

⁵⁴⁸ Hellinga-Querido, 'Betekenis', p. 20.

⁵⁴⁹ Hellinga-Querido, 'Betekenis', p. 20.

⁵⁵⁰ Clark, L.G., *Collectors and owners of incunabula in the British Museum. Index of provenances for books printed in France, Holland and Belgium* (Bath, 1962), p. 60.

⁵⁵¹ Clark, *Collectors*, p. 60.

been presented before 1530 by Diuwer Albertsdochter's godmother to the Convent of the Eleven Thousand Virgins at Amsterdam.⁵⁵³ A *Twespraec* bound with *Der bienboeck* had been left by Beert van Mouswijck in her and her parents' commemoration.⁵⁵⁴ A complete *Passionael* was owned in the sixteenth century by Maeiken, daughter of Wyllem Bouvens and widow of Wyllem Jan Reyersz.⁵⁵⁵ Her family was involved in the legal business at Maastricht. A sole *winterstuc* belonged to a certain Margriete Bock, and another copy of it by 'Aecht Jacop Tymansz wijf te Harlem by dat oude gasthuus' (near the old hospital).⁵⁵⁶ Her husband Jacob was the church warden of the St. Bavo church.⁵⁵⁷ In the sixteenth century, 'Juffrou Barbara Schroot' owned a *Leven van Liedwij*.⁵⁵⁸ Similar sorts of books, in particular saint's legends and books of vices and virtues, which secular women owned, are found in female religious establishments.⁵⁵⁹ Secular and religious tastes were alike.

⁵⁵² Someren, J.F. van, ed., *Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht. Incunabelen beschreven door Dr. J. Alblas en uitgegeven met toelichtende aantekeningen, platen en facsimiles* (Utrecht, 1922), nr. 220. The books are bound together.

⁵⁵³ Schippers, 'Boeck', pp. 169-170.

⁵⁵⁴ Schippers, 'Boeck', p. 172.

⁵⁵⁵ Hellinga-Querido, 'Betekenis', p. 20. Clark, *Collectors*, p. 58, reads 'Maerken'.

⁵⁵⁶ Hellinga-Querido, 'Betekenis', p. 20.

⁵⁵⁷ Wüstefeld, *Boeken*, p. 105 and p. 113.

⁵⁵⁸ Jongen en Schotel eds., *Liedewij*, p. 129.

⁵⁵⁹ Compare the list compiled by Deanesly, *Bible*, pp. 110-115. Some examples from convents will elaborate the point. In doing so, it ought to be borne in mind that it is not spelt out by the librarians drawing up lists whether they dealt with manuscripts or incunables. Since we look at book culture in general, it does not matter here which medium was used. All titles refer to books in Middle Dutch. Specified as books kept in the library (as opposed to those kept in the sacristy) and marked as 'books of study', were, amongst others, part of the *Vitae patrum*, *Legenda aurea*, *Lives* of Anne, Agnes (including miracles), Barbara (including passion), Clare, Elizabeth of Hungary, Liedwij, Ursula and also the story of Griselda (!), a book on the miracles of Our Lady and the *Bienboeck*, see Moll, *Boekerij*, pp. 11-14. The Sisters of the Common Life in the Adamanshouse were given a *Sielentroest* and possessed a legend of Catherine, Doornink-Hoogenraad, M.M., *Adamanshuis een zusterhuis van de moderne devotie in Zutphen* (Zutphen, 1983). See Mulder-Bakker, A.B., 'Heilige maagden aan de Maas', *Genoechlicke en lustige historiën. Laatmiddeleeuwse geschiedschrijving in Nederland*, B. Ebels-Hoving et al. eds. (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen IV; Hilversum, 1987), pp. 124-125, for the many female saints' *Lives* in possession of the Augustinian canonesses at the convent of Maaseik. The tertiaries of St. Catharinaberg Oisterwijk possessed a *Life* of Catherine, Basse, *Aandeel*, nrs. I.3, I.26. The Brigittines at Mariënwater/Maria-Refugie possessed many books among which Bridget's *Revelations*, as well as the legends of Barbara and Catherine of Alexandria, Kreek, M.L. de, 'De bibliotheek van 'Mariënwater/Maria-Refugie' ', *Birgitta van Zweden 1303-1373. 600 jaar kunst en cultuur*

2.7 Conclusion

Medieval interpretations of ideas about women in female saints' *Lives* and exempla ought to be set within a wider framework of contemporary medical, scientific, and philosophical thought. A bivalent attitude towards women existed. It was claimed that women were inferior, misled, not as clever or intelligent as men, lascivious and so on, but other ideas about women circulated as well. It would seem that for every claim there was a counterclaim. Although the roles in which females are cast are varied, the inequality of the sexes found in medieval sources in general has influenced modern scholars' interpretation of ideas about women to a large extent. It is however questionable to what extent the medieval common woman objected to the thoughts and ideas she was presented with, especially since she was not invariably portrayed in a bad light.

The printing press was a new medium, churning out books for a vernacular reading public. The manuscript books and the earliest printed books have certain themes in common. The genres which interested noble and rich patronesses before and during the advent of the presses - usually manufactured in sumptuous individualised manuscript books - are repeated by the printing press. The same appetite for saints' *Lives* and edifying literature is classed prominently among them.

Evidence from women's active involvement with the printing presses is scanty: there were a small number of female publishers printing texts, some women were active in printing devotional images, and only a few female authors appeared in print.

Books could be more rapidly and widely distributed than ever before since they were easily copied and must have been relatively inexpensive. They were published with the intention of being sold to men and women who could afford

van haar kloosterorde. Tentoonstelling Museum voor religieuze kunst Uden, 22 maart t/m 25 mei 1986, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen ed. (Uden, 1986), pp. 52-53.

them, who would buy them with the intention of reading them. The study of incunables in the vernacular is important because these books allow us an insight into the taste of readers who were untutored in Latin but wealthy enough to buy books. They provide us with a yardstick of literary culture.

The main contribution of the modern devotion in all its diversity to lay book culture is promotion of the vernacular. Also, the reader was encouraged to understand the text which brought her closer to God and salvation. The individual was to assist in the working out of her own salvation, using books of an edifying nature and suitable methods of interiorizing knowledge. A lay appetite was wetted for these books in the vernacular. With the invention of the printing press it was possible, to an extent larger than ever before, for the laity to have individual access to books. Inner piety, practical charity, and self-questioning, were elements which remained in use well into the sixteenth century.⁵⁶⁰

The common woman as literary recipient is to be found among the middle and upper middle classes of urban society. Ideas about women expounded on in the books were not created in a vacuum. Similar ideas and images of women to those found in literature are mirrored in late medieval urban society. The middle classes are engaged in artisan, administrative and commercial activities. Despite being categorised as *illiterati* and being presented with divergent attitudes towards female literate abilities, middle class girls appear to have had access to training in literacy. Vernacular readership was not always favoured by the established church, particularly if it concerned biblical excerpts. However, legends and exempla promoted Christian values and they were advocated under the influence of the modern devotion. The reading of books was promoted in the home environment and it could be considered part of domestic spirituality. There is an overlap between religious and secular female reading. Access to books was

⁵⁶⁰

Bange, P., 'Laat-middeleeuwse moralistisch-didactische traktaten in de zestiende eeuw: invloeden van de Moderne Devotie?', *De doorwerking van de Moderne Devotie. Voordrachten gehouden tijdens het Windesheim Symposium Zwolle/ Windesheim 15-17 oktober 1987*, P. Bange et al. eds. (Hilversum, 1988), p. 234.

not too difficult and certain women can even be identified as owners of books in the Dutch vernacular. To the books we now turn.

3 Ideas about women in some aspects of marriage

Gradually, in the early middle ages, the Christian church obtained a hold over marriage issues to such an extent that in Europe households became commensurable units.⁵⁶¹ Based on similar Christian morals and regulations, households shared a uniformity based on the unit of husband, wife and children. This chapter deals with the basic unit consisting of husband and wife, the next chapter deals with women in other family settings.

What ideas were a fifteenth century reading public presented with concerning women and marriage? They fall into a few categories which are best discussed firstly by highlighting three conjugal relationships: Eve and Adam, Mary and Joseph, and Anne and Joachim. This allows us to establish a common framework of themes which were considered noteworthy for a medieval audience. Secondly, since medieval women were defined in terms of their marital state it is necessary in order to validate the prevalent ideas surrounding women inside wedlock to discuss other categories as well: those of unmarried women, the virgins, and women who had been married, the widows.

The goals we have set ourselves are to explore ideas about women and to find echoes of textual presentations of women in social practice. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to relate some views of marriage which appear in the sources to aspects of the social reality of the readers. This process is made difficult since 'evidence' of direct female interaction with the text is lacking. Furthermore, stereotypical ideas are difficult to relate to social experience.

3.1 Trends in historiography

A more pressing problem is that there is a chronic shortage of scholarship concerning 'real life' issues of women in the late medieval Low Countries, and in

⁵⁶¹ Herlihy, D., *Medieval households* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1985), p. 78.

particular those viewed from a female's point of view.⁵⁶² It is relatively recently that Dutch historiography turned to these aspects of social history, influenced as it had previously been more by German scholarship.⁵⁶³ And it is just the attitudes towards women and also female mentalities that we are interested in.

Although Martha Howell's overview of historiographical trends is informative she does not mention this fairly recent interest in her overview on Low Countries in her discussion on 'Germanic historiography' (of which she considers Dutch and Belgian historiography to be a part).⁵⁶⁴ This should not be reckoned too heavily against her since the most comprehensive and best bibliographies on women's history in the Low Countries post-date her article.⁵⁶⁵ However, despite recent interest in attitudes we are still not well-informed about female experience. Nevertheless, an attempt is made here to relate the text to the consumer.

⁵⁶² See Willeumier-Schalij, J.M., 'Bronnen voor de kennis van het middeleeuws gezinsleven en hun problematische waarde', *Paedagogische studiën* 40 (1963), pp. 348-350, who laments the absence of private correspondence. Hugenholtz, F.W.N., 'Middeleeuwers over vrouwen: de historische bronnen', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 4; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), II, p. 18, points to indirect ways of gathering information about women, such as contrasting male and female personal pronouns in legislative tracts.

⁵⁶³ Miltenburg, A.P.J., 'Leven en streven. De gewone mens in de mediëvistiek ca. 1850-1960', *Gewone mensen in de middeleeuwen*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan F.W.N. Hugenholtz ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 7; Utrecht, 1987), pp. 31-32.

⁵⁶⁴ Howell, M.C., with the collaboration of S. Wemple and D. Kaiser, 'A documented presence: medieval women in Germanic historiography', *Women in medieval history and historiography*, S. Mosher Stuard ed. (Philadelphia, 1987), pp. 101-131. Although some material was available at the time of writing, Haan, F. de, 'Na vijftien jaren. Vrouwengeschiedenis in Nederland, 1976-1991', *In haar verleden ingewijd. De ontwikkeling van vrouwengeschiedenis in Nederland*, S. Dumont et al. eds. Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis 11 (Amsterdam, 1991), p. 16.

⁵⁶⁵ See Mostert, M., 'Literatuurwijzer vrouwen in de Middeleeuwen', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), pp. 319-340 and Dekker, R., 'Vrouwen in middeleeuws en vroeg-modern Nederland', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), III, pp. 415-443. I would like to thank Dr. Dekker for drawing my attention to his article which appears exclusively in the Dutch edition of the translated *Storia delle donne in occidente: Dal Rinascimento all'età moderna*.

3.2 Discussion of various marriages

3.2.1 Eve and Adam

The marriage of Eve and Adam is a good starting point for a discussion on women in connection with marriage. It was the first marriage ever to be instituted by God and the couple made such a mess of things that they were cast from paradise. Medieval people felt they were still living with the consequences of the actions of the first pair. Paradise was lost. People were weak and prone to sinning. It was the task of the church to guide men on the correct path. In our sources, the biblical story is never retold in much detail, it is rather superficially interpreted and frequently in a gender-specific way. This suggests that it was well and widely known.

Since our sources only refer superficially to the paradise story, I have used the first printed Dutch edition of the Bible as a reminder.⁵⁶⁶ It tells us Adam was created from dust, Eve was created from Adam's rib. They were to be fruitful and multiply. Eve listened to the serpent instead of the Lord and she ate from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, simply translated as *hout*, and she gave Adam also the fruit. When they were aware they were naked they covered themselves. Eve was punished by God to give birth with pain and she was placed under man's command (*heerscapie*). Adam, because he had listened to his wife, had to work for their keep by the sweat of his brow and henceforth all people were condemned to mortality. Thus, the myth serves to explain the trials and tribulations of daily life. It also explains the lost state of immortality (ability not to die) and impassability (ability not to suffer).

⁵⁶⁶

Genesis 2 and 3 are printed in the vernacular *Biblia* (Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantszoon, 10 January 1477) BL shelf mark I.8.47101 and I.8.47102, fol. 3v.

Many medieval theologians and moralists devoted attention to aspects of the relationship of Eve and Adam, both inside and outside paradise.⁵⁶⁷ The first couple were thought to have experienced the perfect relationship inside: innocent and free from concupiscence. St. Augustine (354-430) commented on the first marriage and his ideas proved influential. In short, he thought that there was a perfect harmony between both in paradise, free of lust and controlled by reason. It was reason which ruled over the sexual organs. Through disobedience and original sin, paradise was lost. In the post-lapsarian world, God had punished people by taking away the control over their will and henceforth desire could reign supreme. Augustine incorporated advice that St. Paul had supplied to the first Christian communities. Through grace that appertains to people through the sacramental value of marriage unchaste feelings could be combated. The sacramental aspect value can be traced back to Paul who had stated that man shall be joined to his wife; which he had called a sacrament (Ephesians 5:32).

Although, according to St. Augustine, no sexual act could take place without unchaste feelings the act was without sin if it occurred solely for the reason given by God: procreation. Indeed, *proles* was one of the threefold good a marriage would bring (the other two are: *fides* and *sacramentum*). Also, within a conjugal relationship one had to fulfil the marital debt, to avoid the partner from falling into sin with another. St. Paul had stated that husband and wife must give to each other what is due to them (1 Corinthians 7:3-4). The argument that marriage is good for *fides*, *proles* and *sacramentum* is partially repeated by the learned De Eyb. He introduced the passage on Eve and Adam showing that marriage is good because it was instituted in paradise, children resulted from it, it was a

⁵⁶⁷

The most elaborate discussion of a variety of aspects by many medieval thinkers is by Müller, M., *Die Lehre von der Paradiesesehe des hl. Augustinus und ihre Auswirkung in der Sexualethik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts bis Thomas von Aquin* (Regensburg, 1954), in particular pp. 275-318. Payer, P.J., *The bridling of desire. Views of sex in the later middle ages* (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1993), introduction and chapters 1 and 2 incorporates decretists' ideas. A summary of views is compiled by Lucas, *Women*, pp. 3-18.

remedy against sin and he recognises the holiness of marriage (although he does not call marriage a sacrament, but holy matrimony: *heilighen echtschap*).⁵⁶⁸

What then are we told about the relationship of Eve and Adam and the apportioning of blame for eating from the Tree of Knowledge? Sometimes Eve and Adam were equally blamed: they both broke God's commandment.⁵⁶⁹ De Eyb does not apportion blame but simply mentions that in a pre-lapsarian world Adam was created in God's image, and Eve in man's image, and that they were to people the world and enjoy immortality.⁵⁷⁰ In an exemplum, Adam alone is blamed for people losing their freedom.⁵⁷¹ In it, the fox usually teases the naked she-monkey. He now finds the silly monkey fully dressed but tied with a rope, and he is quick to draw a parallel between Adam's nakedness and freedom in paradise, and his being dressed and having lost his freedom outside it.

In the *Spiegel*, Eve was given to Adam as a companion (*mede ghesellinne*).⁵⁷² *Ghesellinne* is also used in the first printed edition of the Bible.⁵⁷³ In the *Spiegel*, Adam ate from the Tree because he loved Eve and did not want to disappoint her; he yielded to her wish to eat, albeit with some reservation (*onwillichlic*).⁵⁷⁴ The serpent found the wife 'less cautious' and Adam 'smarter and cleverer' (more intelligent as we would phrase it today).⁵⁷⁵

The idea that Eve was not created from Adam's head or feet but rather from his rib, which meant that she was not to be his head nor his slave, but his equal, is echoed in the *Scaecspel*, in a discussion on the moves that the chess player is

⁵⁶⁸ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. h1-h1v.

⁵⁶⁹ *Sielentroest*, fol. 12.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. e3v. In the Dutch incunable, De Eyb does not appear to be particularly positive on Adam or Eve, as is argued by Johnson, S.M., 'Luther's Reformation and (un)holy matrimony', *Journal of family history* 17 (1992), p. 277, concerning the German version. De Eyb praises marriage because it is instigated in paradise, *Ehebüchlein*, fol. e6v.

⁵⁷¹ *Parabolen*, fols. i8-k1v.

⁵⁷² *Spiegel*, fol. 5v.

⁵⁷³ *Biblia*, fol. 3b.

⁵⁷⁴ *Spiegel*, fol. 5v.

⁵⁷⁵ *Spiegel*, fol. 6.

advised to make on the board using the Queen.⁵⁷⁶ We are told that women should wear a head-dress in church,⁵⁷⁷ and Adam should wear trousers not only to cover his nakedness, but as a sign that he should remain faithful to his wife. The passage is followed by a short prescribed conduct of matrimonial life. Husband and wife should live together with respect for each other and they are responsible to God as well as to society, to all good folk. Although the man is superior by nature and wiser, his wife may be better than he supposes. Should a good wife perchance be cleverer and wiser than her unintelligent (*dwaes*) husband than she is to rule him. If they are both of the same disposition by nature, they are to be faithful to each other and support each other in harmony.

In the introduction to exempla dealing with men's resistance to female beauty it is explained that Adam, the *burger* of paradise, was cast from it because of his wife.⁵⁷⁸ Here it is meant that Eve was so beautiful that Adam could not resist Eve's temptation to eat from the Tree. Because of women, the text continues, sin began and men must die. Even men as strong as Samson, wise as Solomon and holy as David have fallen victim. The exempla mention other men bravely resisting female beauty: Alexander who returns a beautiful maiden (who was part of his spoils of war), when he learnt she was engaged, and in similar fashion Scipio sends back a Carthaginian virgin complete with her ransom which she is allowed to use for her marriage and the philosopher Xenocrates proves his resolve by not allowing himself to be seduced by a beautiful prostitute.⁵⁷⁹

The King of the Bees, Thomas van Cantimpré tells us, rules an obedient people. It was this obedience that Eve and Adam did not keep in paradise and therefore

⁵⁷⁶ *Scaecspel*, fol. b4v. See for this view also Müller, *Lehre*, p. 315 and Ferrante, *Women*, pp. 32-35. It is in alignment with the positive ideas on Eve as discussed in chapter 2.

⁵⁷⁷ See Demyttenaere, A., 'De God van Augustinus en het geheim van de gesluerde vrouw. Enkele passages in een tractaat over de Drieëenheid', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), pp. 195-234. According to St. Paul, the man need not cover his head because he is created in the image of God, whilst woman reflects the glory of man and needs to wear a sign of authority (based on 1 Corinthians 11: 7-10).

⁵⁷⁸ *Twespraec*, fol. o6v.

⁵⁷⁹ *Twespraec*, fol. o6v. For Scipio see also *Kaetspel*, fols. n6-n6v.

they were cast out.⁵⁸⁰ Thomas, elaborating on lechery and discussing the vice of evil advice, points to Eve as the main culprit: she seduces Adam 'who was perfect in wisdom and beauty'.⁵⁸¹

Thus, the apportioning of blame is less often equally shared, and sometimes Eve solely is blamed and sometimes Adam. There is not just one or even one consistently persistent interpretation of the nature of the marriage in paradise, but rather there are several variants.⁵⁸² Therefore, it is difficult to defend the position that all women were thought to have been equally responsible for Eve's role in the Fall.⁵⁸³ It is also difficult to observe rising trends on a chronological time scale in that medieval society increasingly apportioned blame to Eve or thinking that her character traits changed for the worse.⁵⁸⁴

3.2.2 Mary and Joseph

Two facets of Mary's conjugal life with Joseph are of particular importance. Her relationship to Joseph changed in late medieval hagiography, indicative of the fact that other models were required for veneration. Also, Mary and Joseph brought the church into some difficulties because, as seen, the sexual act within marriage was considered good because of procreative purposes, but how could the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity be reconciled with this idea? In *consensus-copula* debate of the mid-twelfth century some argued that a true marriage was valid by consent only, whilst others pronounced ideas that consent and coitus made marriage.⁵⁸⁵ The latter theory is summarised by the decretist Gratian who combined the consensual with the coital theory in his influential

⁵⁸⁰ *Bienboeck*, fol. d2.

⁵⁸¹ *Bienboeck*, fol. p1.

⁵⁸² Müller, *Lehre*.

⁵⁸³ Dresen, G., 'Het verloren paradijs en wat vrouwen daar verloren. Notities over ethiek en seksepolitiek aan de hand van de paradijsmythe', *Vrouwen in opspraak. Vrouwenstudies als cultuurkritiek*, M. Brüggemann ed. (Nijmegen, 1987), p. 34.

⁵⁸⁴ This trend is mentioned by Pleij, *Sneeuwpoppen*, pp. 262-265. However, if nothing else, the sources are too scarce to indicate rising trends.

Concordia discordantium canonum (ca. 1140).⁵⁸⁶ But, though not completely, the consensualists triumphed: words in the present tense brought about a valid marriage. The relationship of Mary and Joseph was based on emotional rather than the sexual ties.⁵⁸⁷

Sections featuring in the *Passionael* on Mary's marriage are based on second-century Apocrypha, where Anne and Joachim, Mary's parents, dedicated her to the temple until she became of age.⁵⁸⁸ When she was fourteen she was to be married. But, as she explains, she was incapable because she had vowed to remain a virgin. It was decided to leave a decision to the Lord, and that a husband should be chosen from those who brought a branch to the altar and on which the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove would perch. And only the man whose branch bloomed was to become her husband. At first Joseph considered it improper that he, as an old man, should marry a young woman and he refused to place his branch on the altar, but when he finally did the flower appeared. Prompted by this sign he went ahead with the wedding.

Mary's reasons for marrying are spelt out as well. In the *Spiegel*, it was God (in this sense Jesus) who preferred his mother married.⁵⁸⁹ Had she not married she would have been accused that she was lascivious which had resulted in her pregnancy. Also, she could also use a man's help; this reads like a role reversal of Eve's role in paradise. Also, Christ required a human form. Mary needed a witness in Joseph of her chastity. It is argued that marriage is sacred and, yet again to allow for the unconsummated marriage, it is stated that it is allowed to

⁵⁸⁵ For this debate, see Gold, P.S., 'The marriage of Mary and Joseph in the twelfth-century ideology of marriage', *Sexual practices and the medieval church*, J.A. Brundage and V.L. Bullough eds. (Buffalo, New York, 1982), pp. 102-117.

⁵⁸⁶ See Brundage, J.A., *Law, sex, and Christian society in medieval Europe* (Chicago, London, 1987), pp. 235-242.

⁵⁸⁷ Brundage, *Law*, p. 274.

⁵⁸⁸ Elliot, J.K., trans. and ed., *The apocryphal New Testament. A collection of apocryphal Christian literature in an English translation* (Oxford, 1993), Protevangelium of James, 7.2-10.2. This paragraph is based on *Passionael, somerstuc, onser vrouwen gheboert*, fols. u1-u2. A similar version is found in *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), *somerstuc, anna*, fol. C2.

preserve chastity within marriage. Also, it is mentioned, those who are married should not despair of their salvation, because it is proven that marriage is sacred and good. Thus, the marriage of Mary and Joseph is here related to the final argument that marriage is good. In the description of the annunciation scene in the *Passionael* similar arguments are voiced.⁵⁹⁰

When Mary's cult reached its height between the twelfth and fourteenth century and the human form of Jesus was stressed, Joseph's virginity came under scrutiny. Joseph is described as a senile man, whose desire for coupling had withered.⁵⁹¹ The simplicity and humility of Joseph had resulted in his becoming a figure of ridicule, a henpecked elderly husband who prepares porridge for the child and washes the dishes. The special attention devoted to Joseph's consideration whether it was proper to marry such a young woman as Mary may point to the fact that disparagement of age between marriage partners was not commended by a late medieval reading public.⁵⁹² This is supported by the exempla in which disparagement in relation to age plays a role, to which we shall return below.

However, in the fifteenth century, the image of Joseph altered considerably. Joseph shed his image of old man. A young man emerged who played the role of caring husband and took responsibility for his share in raising the Christ child. St. Anne rejoices in Mary's choice and emphasises Joseph's strong points: he is chaste, god-fearing, and righteous and she knows him well having shared many meals with each other and enjoyed each other's company as if he were her own son.⁵⁹³ Joseph has come into his own. Already in the fourteenth century his feast appeared in the missals of Liège, Louvain and Utrecht, and Jan van Denemarken, wrote not only on St. Anne but he also authored legends of Joseph

⁵⁸⁹ *Spiegel*, fol. 15v.

⁵⁹⁰ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *onser vrouwen annunciacio*, fol. g3.

⁵⁹¹ He is an old man in *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *onser vrouwen gheboert*, fol. u1v.

⁵⁹² Brandenburg, *Familieleven*, p. 188.

⁵⁹³ *Historie anna*, fols. g8-g8v. In this incunable, Anne's husband Cleophas is identified as Joseph's brother.

and Joachim.⁵⁹⁴ The cult of St. Joseph as caring husband was promoted in conjunction with his exemplary role as father.

Jean Gerson and cardinal Pierre d'Ailly worked for Joseph's rehabilitation.⁵⁹⁵ The active promotion of his cult may have been a deliberate attempt to stem the tide of feminisation of sainthood,⁵⁹⁶ by creating new strong male models as a counterpart for new female saints. David Herlihy links the cult of Joseph to the increasing significance of the family within urban society.⁵⁹⁷ Indeed, from the second half of the fifteenth century up to the first half of the sixteenth century Joseph's depiction in art in Germany and the Low Countries is that of provider and protector of the Holy Family.⁵⁹⁸ Whatever the reasons, the goals set for the holy husbands such as Joseph were much more realistic than the tasks set to women as reflected by the cult of Mary (such as virginal conception and virginal birth). Mary, of course, continued to occupy her special place.

3.2.3 Anne and Joachim

As explained in the first chapter, St. Anne became increasingly popular in the later middle ages. Since the incunables in which she features have been written so close to the end of the middle ages they are an important gauge to marital relationships of that time. Anne's relationship with her husband Joachim was easier to identify with than that of the lofty, inimitable and ever virginal Mary with Joseph.

⁵⁹⁴ Brandenburg, T., 'De moeder- en maagschapcultus in de Nederlanden omstreeks 1500. De Anna-devotie als symptoom van veranderende opvattingen over huwelijk en gezin', *Vijf eeuwen gezinsleven. Liefde, huwelijk en opvoeding in Nederland*, H. Peeters et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), p. 128.

⁵⁹⁵ For Gerson, see (for marriage partner and father respectively), Brown, D.C., *Pastor and laity in the theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge, London, 1987), pp. 233-234 and pp. 243-244. See also Seitz, J., *Die Verehrung des hl. Joseph in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung bis zum Konzil von Trient dargestellt* (Freiburg im Bresgau, Berlin, etc., 1908), pp. 253-261.

⁵⁹⁶ Vauchez, *Sainthood*, pp. 268-269, signalled an increase in the number of female saints in the later middle ages.

⁵⁹⁷ Herlihy, *Households*, pp. 127-129.

⁵⁹⁸ Seitz, *Verehrung*, pp. 326-332.

Anne's marriage with Joachim is exemplary.⁵⁹⁹ They lead simple, honest and humble lives. They share their goods with the temple, the poor and pilgrims. They are promoters of the caring, sharing and loving conjugal relationship. They display a loving attitude towards each other: Anne thanks Joachim for looking after her well, they address each other in terms of endearment, they are in agreement in their decisions (such as sharing their possessions with the needy), and they live in peace and love keeping the commandments of God.⁶⁰⁰

Anne's sexual relations play a role: Anne remarried twice after her first husband's death. Van Denemarken goes to great lengths to demonstrate that she remarried only because she was still fertile after Joachim had died and could bear children and not out of any libidinous desire.⁶⁰¹ He must have been worried that the image of the pious fertile woman could be confused for a lecherous old female. He calculates she must have been fifty when her last husband died, and since at this age women become infertile, he asserts, she did not marry again.⁶⁰² The *trinubium* of Anne resulted in her having three daughters by three successive husbands.

3.2.4 Summary

The audience of the incunables was presented with marital issues. Various ideas regarding women within the conjugal relationship have been addressed in the sources. Speaking in broad terms and based on the incunables under investigation, two elements are noteworthy.

The first element consists of the emotional ties between the spouses. Eve and Adam's relationship is depicted as strained, perhaps because the authors regretted how much human kind had lost: impassability and immortality.

⁵⁹⁹ *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), *somerstuc, anna*, fol. C1, and *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fols. c1-c1v.

⁶⁰⁰ *Historie anna*, fols. c4-c6v.

⁶⁰¹ Brandenburg, 'Moeder- en maagschapcultus', pp. 117-118.

⁶⁰² *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fol. e5.

Emphasis is laid on the role of Eve who is frequently accused for having a hand in the Fall because of her act of disobedience, but Adam is blamed as well.

Stress is also laid on Eve's position in her relation with Adam. On the whole, Eve should be subservient, but Adam should rule her justly. Because of their chaste marriage and the rejuvenation of Joseph, Mary's and Joseph's emotional ties are emphasised. But it is in Anne's and Joachim's marriage that the partners share an admirable and congenial marital relationship respecting and caring for each other.

The second element is the sexual union within marriage. It was tainted with original sin in the case of Eve and Adam. Mary's position was unique, she remained a virgin within marriage (even after giving birth), despite Joseph's rejuvenation. Anne's sexual relationships were important since her fecundity was explicitly mentioned. The two components of the emotional relationship between the spouses and the sexuality of women play a great part in the sources.

3.3 *Virginity, marriage, widowhood*

The tripartite division of women according to their sexual status, that of virginity, marriage and widowhood, is a *topos* in the middle ages.⁶⁰³ It encompasses all secular women. The concept created a sense of order, of belonging to a group, just as men were ranked according to their 'career': work, fight or pray. The behavioural rules derived from the various states were meant to guide women's real life. It was one of the categories used by preachers to communicate their message to females, although other divisions were used as well.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰³ '... the concept of the three estates and the behavioural expectations for each were so all-pervasive as to constitute a set of shared assumptions, a commonality of opinion expressed in formal legislation and informal social controls', Hallissy, *Maids*, p. 7.

⁶⁰⁴ See Casagrande, C., 'De vrouw onder toezicht', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 75-80. Other categories are, for instance, age and social status.

3.3.1 Virgins

In the church, marriage was never as positively valued as virginity. Particularly when a monastic audience was addressed, virginity was praised. St. Jerome had even used a rating system: virginity scored a hundred percent, widowhood sixty and marriage thirty.⁶⁰⁵ After she had borne her husband children and after she had been widowed, Elizabeth of Hungary put on a religious habit, her confessor friar Coenraad tells us, lest she should lose the hundredfold fruit.⁶⁰⁶ In such a remarkable way her virginity was symbolically restored.

Only female virgins can perform certain special acts. Two virgins can catch an elephant.⁶⁰⁷ When Thomas van Cantimpré views a horn in the church at Bruges he assumes it belonged to a unicorn, and reminds us that only a virgin can tempt the animal to rest his head in her lap.⁶⁰⁸ Because of her innocence, reminding the reader of the prelapsarian world, a girl can escape from enclosed spaces and handle wild birds.⁶⁰⁹

Mary confers special graces on virgins. Mary is the embodiment of the combination of virginity and sanctity. A young devout virgin who had looked after a dilapidated statue of Mary, lay dying in a humble stable but she was collected by a heavenly cortège to be assumed to heaven.⁶¹⁰ The marital state of the celestial ladies who accompany Mary is marked by their clothes: the striped clothes were worn by chaste ladies who had died as wives 'but their glory is great'. Those who wear white are virgins who had vowed chastity, and those clad in red, best liked by Mary, were virgins who had died as martyrs.

⁶⁰⁵ Based on Matthew 13:4-9. See *Spiegel*, fol. 15v, where this tripartite system is discussed in connection with the marriage of Mary and Joseph; here it is pointed out that mutual chastity in marriage is better than marriage (with sexual relations).
⁶⁰⁶ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c3v.
⁶⁰⁷ *Geesten*, fols. s6v-s7 and *Twespraec*, fol. k6v.
⁶⁰⁸ *Bienboeck*, fols. n6v-n7.
⁶⁰⁹ *Bienboeck*, fol. q4v.
⁶¹⁰ *Miraculen*, fols. 77-79.

The virginal state is praised, particularly in the legends of the early medieval female saints. The sensational stories serve to point out the saints' special status, in particular in imitating Christ's suffering. The legends of these virgins may be regarded as an advertisement campaign for the new Christian faith. The fragile St. Blandina (2nd century) is being extra fortified by God in order to withstand excruciating pain while tortured, and her endurance stuns the public.⁶¹¹ But also in later medieval saints' *Lives*, such as that of Liedwij of Schiedam, suffering continues to play a great role. After the saint had fallen whilst ice skating and subsequently suffered various ailments, she was taught by her confessor Jan Pot, who was influenced by the modern devotion, to concentrate on Christ's suffering.⁶¹²

Virgins go to extraordinary lengths to escape marriage. In order to prevent detection they dress up as men. Jakeline, who was reputed to have met Pope Innocent III, escaped her brother's intention of marrying her off by swimming out of his reach and dressing up as a male and living as a hermit afterwards.⁶¹³ Some saints sought refuge in a monastery. Posing as a monk in order to escape marriage has its drawbacks too. St. Euphrosyne (5th century) enters a monastery as Smaragdus, but because of her beauty, even when disguised as a male, the fellow monks started having unchaste thoughts.⁶¹⁴ St. Eugenia, who enters a monastery pretending to be Eugenius, is accused of attempted rape by the widow Melantia.⁶¹⁵ The widow had unsuccessfully tried to seduce the monk, and now takes revenge by accusing 'him'.

It is especially female saints who are involved with conflicts arising out of their sexual lives.⁶¹⁶ Demons occur frequently in our sources in connection with chastity. It is not only a dragon but also a devil who visits St. Margaret in her

⁶¹¹ *Passionael* (Veldener, 1480), *winterstuc, blandina*, fols. M1-M1v.

⁶¹² *Liedwij*, fol. b3v.

⁶¹³ *Bienboeck*, fols. n7v-n8.

⁶¹⁴ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc, eufrosina*, fols. OO2-OO2v.

⁶¹⁵ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc, eugenia*, fols. PP8-PP8v.

prison. On her question why he tempts so many Christians, he replies that he hates good folk and enjoys seducing them, he also would like to prevent people from being saved.⁶¹⁷ A most cunning devil makes his entry in the life of St. Justina (ca. 300): he appears to the young virgin disguised as a young lady who wishes to share the saint's continent life.⁶¹⁸ The disguised devil argued that it would surely be disobedient (and obedience was just the trait recommended to women) to live in continence and so to act against the Lord's command to be fruitful and multiply, which, as seen, God had recommended to Eve and Adam in paradise. Although the young saint was sorely tempted, she manages to ignore the devil. The fourth devil appears in the guise of a beautiful young man, who lies on her bed and desires to embrace her shamelessly. The saint could not be persuaded to join him. The function of the devil in these early medieval legends is to tempt ladies to give up their chastity. When they recognise the devil, who personifies the sexual danger which they face, he disappears.

In the legends where a potential worldly lover/seducer/husband/rapist is mentioned he embodies unchristian pagan behaviour. The brave Eutropia, instead of taking flight with the inhabitants of Reims for the pagans, decides to stay at the city with her steadfast brother St. Nicasius.⁶¹⁹ They are aware that they will be slaughtered imminently, but Eutropia also fears being raped. Not with 'female power but with divine revenge' she manages to scratch out a heathen's eyes and so she dies by the sword and escapes being raped.

But the pagan is often also associated, if not identified, with the idols. For instance, after St. Petronilla (no date) has starved herself to death rather than to marry Flactus, the outraged pagan intended forces her female friend to marry him or worship idols.⁶²⁰ She is condemned to starve to death when she is unable to

⁶¹⁶ Weinstein and Bell, *Saints*, p. 97; about 40% of female saints, and only about 20% of male saints.

⁶¹⁷ *Passionael, somerstuc, margriet*, fol. m1.

⁶¹⁸ *Passionael, somerstuc, justina*, fol. y2v and *Sielentroest*, fols. 103-103v.

⁶¹⁹ *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), *winterstuc, eutropia*, fols. aa8-bb1.

⁶²⁰ *Passionael, somerstuc, petronellen*, fols. f4-f4v.

choose between the two evils. St. Juliana (early 4th century) will only consent to sleep with the man to whom she is affianced if he relinquishes his pagan beliefs and becomes a Christian.⁶²¹ St. Ursula is fortunate to be able to strike a deal with her intended pagan bridegroom: she leaves for a pilgrimage for three years to Rome to fulfil her dedication to her virginity, while he is persuaded to be baptised and receive instruction on the Christian faith.⁶²²

The often lascivious bridegroom signifies heathenism, and in most cases, the young female heroine represents not only virginity but also, in cases of early medieval saints, the new Christian faith. The virgins are willing to suffer for their faith to extreme lengths in rape scenes. Rape scenes show the heathen seducer, the diabolic tempter, in contrast to the female virgin, who has chosen as her lover Christ himself.⁶²³ The scenes also serve to demonstrate the omnipotence of God, who invariably protects the virgin. The virgin never comes to harm in them. When St. Agnes (d. ca. 350) refuses to marry, because she has taken Christ as a lover, she is put naked in a brothel, but God covers her with a white cloak.⁶²⁴ When the judge's son lunges forward to rape her he is killed and consequently Agnes is put to death. In another *Life*, the judge who intends to do his 'dirty business' with St. Anastasia (d. ca. 304) becomes mad through divine intervention.⁶²⁵ The intended rape of St. Euphemia (d. ca. 303) is prevented by God's power who renders the hand of her attacker immobile; she is also threatened by gang rape, but fortunately she is saved by the chancellor who has been converted by the heroine.⁶²⁶

The excuse a lady saint often uses to counteract the lascivious bridegroom is that she is already betrothed or married to Christ the bridegroom. Here we have moved into the realm of mystical marriage: marriage of the virgin to Christ the

⁶²¹ *Passionael, winterstuc, juliaen*, fol. x4v.

⁶²² *Passionael, somerstuc, elf dusent maechden*, fol. A1.

⁶²³ Gravdal, K., *Ravishing maidens. Writing rape in medieval French literature and law* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 24.

⁶²⁴ *Passionael, winterstuc, agniet*, fols. f9-f10.

⁶²⁵ *Passionael, winterstuc, anastasia*, fol. o5.

bridegroom. The honour of metaphorically becoming Christ's bride had been bestowed on Mary first.⁶²⁷ The marriage between Christ and Mary was couched in terms of the biblical Song of Songs. The Canticle had proved a good source for metaphorical love relationships such as love between Christ and his Church, based on St. Paul (Ephesians 5:25), bridegroom and bride, God and the individual human soul, and the Word and the Soul.⁶²⁸ The twelfth-century Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux modelled a series of sermons on the Song of Songs, preached for a public of adult novices and monks who had grown up in the world (as opposed to oblates who entered at a young age) and who were familiar with ideas surrounding marriage.⁶²⁹

Our sources show only scanty references to the marriage of Mary and Christ, which may point to the fact that the metaphor of Mary's marriage was no longer of such importance as it had been. In the legend of Mary's assumption a few references to the Canticle are incorporated. The emphasis of the legend lies not on the marriage metaphor but of course on Mary's integral assumption. But she is to do so in the capacity of his Bride: come from Lebanon my bride (based on Song of Songs 4:8), and at the same time Mary is enthroned by her son.⁶³⁰

Sometimes, holy women marry themselves to devout followers. Mary offers herself as bride to fervent believers. A young man excuses himself from his wedding banquet because of his intention to complete his devotions to Mary, and she whisks him off to heaven before he is able to consummate the marriage.⁶³¹ After a young man has just come into an inheritance and, pressed by his friends, has taken a wife, Mary offers herself as friend and bride and persuades him to

⁶²⁶ *Passionael, somerstuc, eufemia*, fol. x5-x5v.

⁶²⁷ Warner, M., *Alone of all her sex. The myth and cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1976), chapter 8.

⁶²⁸ For an overview of usage of the Canticle throughout time, see Matter, E.A., *The voice of my Beloved. The Song of Songs in western medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1990) and Astell, A.W., *The Song of Songs in the middle ages* (Ithaca, London, 1990).

⁶²⁹ St. Bernard considered marriage to be the highest form of human love, Ferrante, *Women*, p. 27.

⁶³⁰ *Passionael, somerstuc, onser vrouwen hemelvaert*, fol. z8.

⁶³¹ *Bienboeck*, fol. m6.

leave the wedding feast and join a monastery.⁶³² The monk Herman of Steinfeld (d. between 1230-1241) is married to the Virgin by two angels.⁶³³ In this way, Mary rewards him for his life-long devotion to her. She even bestows her husband's name on him to celebrate the grand occasion. St. Agnes marries a devout male follower too. In miracles appended to her legend she weds a priest who feels stirrings of the flesh, and in this way prevents him from sinning.⁶³⁴

The earliest known account of the most popular mystical marriage of a female saint (apart from Mary) with Christ is that of St. Catherine of Alexandria, which dates from 1337.⁶³⁵ Although St. Barbara is also venerated as Christ's bride,⁶³⁶ it is in the legend of Catherine where a mystical marriage is mentioned in detail. In our *Sinte Katherine legende* the mystical marriage features as well. Catherine only desires to marry a man who is on a par with her concerning beauty, wisdom, lineage and wealth and it proves difficult for her family and friends to find a suitable match for this wealthy and studious princess.⁶³⁷ Her mother takes her to a hermit to seek advice since they are incapable of locating such a husband. The hermit shows her a statue of Mary with the Christ child on her arm; this is the husband she has been looking for. After she has been instructed by the hermit on matters pertaining to the Christian faith and has been baptised, she weds Christ in a vision.⁶³⁸ Although in a vision Christ appears as a beautiful emperor aged thirty, she marries him in an other vision when he is a Christ child. In this way the symbolic aspect is stressed.⁶³⁹ The marriage is referred to as a

⁶³² *Miraculen*, fol. 13.

⁶³³ *Miraculen*, fol. 67v. On Herman, see Herlihy, *Households*, pp. 118-120.

⁶³⁴ *Passionael, winterstuc, agniel*, fol. s1.

⁶³⁵ Warner, *Alone*, p. 127. See also Varnhagen, H., *Zur Geschichte der Legende von Katharina von Alexandrien nebst lateinischen Texten nach Handschriften der Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München und der Universitätsbibliothek in Erlangen* (Erlangen, 1891), pp. 18-23, for the (Latin) prose version of Catherine's conversion and marriage, which shows similarities to Bac's edition of the *Sinte Katherinen legende*.

⁶³⁶ *Barbara*, fol. e5.

⁶³⁷ *Katherinen*, fol. a5.

⁶³⁸ *Katherinen*, fols. a6v-b3 and the wedding on fol. b3v.

⁶³⁹ See also Sauer, J., 'Das sponsalizio der hl. Katharina von Alexandrien. Ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie der Heiligen und zur Geistesgeschichte des späten Mittelalters', *Studien aus Kunst und Geschichte*. Friedrich Schneider zum siebzigsten Geburtstage gewidmet

coronation. Mary holds up Catherine's hand for Christ who puts the ring on her finger. The importance of her marriage to Christ from the point of view of the devout faithful is that they can now rely on the intercession of a bride of Christ, bound to him with a sacred and indissoluble bond. Catherine was part of the heavenly family.⁶⁴⁰

Contemporary paintings bear witness to the popularity of the theme. The altar piece of the Two St. Johns (the Baptist and the Evangelist) at the Bruges Hospital of St. John is also known as the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine.⁶⁴¹ The centrepiece shows not only the two male saints, but also St. Catherine at the moment of her celestial marriage, when the Christ child places a ring on her finger. The painting was executed by Hans Memlinc in ca. 1475. Catherine's marriage to Christ is a theme which is part of a contemporary European movement.⁶⁴²

The iconography of St. Agnes's mystical marriage enjoyed exceptional attention in the cathedral city of Utrecht since the relics of the saint were kept in the local church of St. Martin. It was in this city that two fifteenth-century paintings were produced. A painting dating from the last quarter of the fifteenth century, shows the saint receiving a ring halfway down her finger from the Christ child who is

von seinen Freunden und Verehrern, w. ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1906), p. 343, who surmises that the laity viewed Catherine's symbolic marriage as a real historical event. This may be the case, but in our source that was not the intention of the author.

⁶⁴⁰ Assion, P., *Die Mirakel der Hl. Katharina von Alexandrien. Untersuchungen und Texte zur Entstehung und Nachwirkung mittelalterlicher Wunderliteratur* (Heidelberg, 1969), pp. 323-346, mentions another miracle (and variants) in which the saint espouses herself. The *topos* was apparently well-known.

⁶⁴¹ Neilsen Blum, S., *Early Netherlandish triptychs. A study in patronage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1969), plate x, and illustration 62, and pp. 88-89.

⁶⁴² For more examples, see Schröder, A., *Catherine. The saints in legend and art* (Recklinghausen, London, 1967), H.H. Rosenwald trans., pp. 62-73. There is also a fifteenth-century series of woodcuts showing scenes from St. Catherine's legend including her mystical marriage, see Schreiber, W.L., *Die Legende der hl. Catharina von Alexandrien. Holztafeldruck von Michel Schorpp, Maler zu Ulm. Mit Einleitung.* (Einblattdrucke des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts 75; Strassburg, 1931), in particular plate 8.

leaning forwards in Mary's arms. Another painting shows the saint, with her lamb in front of her, accepting a ring from the Christ child.⁶⁴³

St. Agnes tells a young suitor she is already married and sums up to him what a betrothed looks for in a potential husband: noble, beautiful, wealthy, courageous and has the strength to achieve and gives love transcendent.⁶⁴⁴ His love equals chastity, his touch holiness, union with him virginity. The five benefits she and his other spouses have received are the ring of his fidelity, virtues, the blood of his passion, bond of love and they are endowed with the treasures of eternal glory. It is not surprising the disappointed earthly suitor slinks off to bed suffering from a bout of unrequited love: it is after all impossible to equal Christ. In similar frame of mind, Christ offers himself to a girl who has just confessed to Thomas van Cantimpré. He is beautiful, his intentions are good, he is sweet and he is noble and sole heir.⁶⁴⁵ These summed-up qualities admired may well reflect in part the qualities a secular woman was looking for in a potential husband.⁶⁴⁶

Most frequently, the legends of the female virgin saints who are referred to as brides of Christ do not feature a mystical marriage ceremony. In the *Passionael* version of the legend of St. Catherine she is simply married to Christ: Christ speaks to his bride and she answers.⁶⁴⁷ Basilla, a follower of St. Eugenia and an active aid in evangelisation campaigns, refuses to marry her suitor because she is already married to Christ.⁶⁴⁸ St. Apollonia (d. ca. 249) has her teeth knocked out of her jaws not because she refuses to marry but because she refuses to

⁶⁴³ Châtelet, A., *Early Dutch painting. Painting in the northern Netherlands in the fifteenth century* (Oxford, 1981), C. Brown and A. Turner transs., illustration 142 and p. 243.

⁶⁴⁴ *Passionael, winterstuc, agniet*, fols. f9v-f10v.

⁶⁴⁵ *Bienboeck*, fol. z2.

⁶⁴⁶ See Bériou, N. and D.L. d'Avray, 'The image of the ideal husband in thirteenth century France', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 31-69, who pose the question whether these idealised notions reflect lay attitudes. It is concluded that the values concur with those mentioned in certain twelfth-century romances in which knights make their appearance. For a fifteenth-century vernacular reading lay public, they appear to reflect admirable and wishful qualities to look out for in a potential husband rather than anything else.

⁶⁴⁷ *Passionael, winterstuc, katherina*, fol. e3v.

worship idols; it is only when she dies that the reason is given: Christ the groom had chosen her to be his Bride.⁶⁴⁹ St. Gertrude of Nivelles (626-659), daughter of King Pepin, spurns a marriage proposal of a ducal son, to the astonishment of dignities present at the banquet.⁶⁵⁰ In an exemplum, only the prudent virgins who bring oil with their lamps can see the bridegroom whilst the foolish virgins cannot (Matthew 25:1-12).⁶⁵¹ Only the prudent virgins may attend the wedding.

Marriage with Christ the groom was not restricted to virgins, but married saints could participate as well. However, the topic does not fit in comfortably within the legends because of the dilemma posed: the husband competed for attention with the celestial groom. After St. Elizabeth of Hungary had tied the marital knot it was only when her husband was absent that she was able to spend the whole night in prayer with her heavenly spouse.⁶⁵² An easier arrangement occurs in St. Bridget of Sweden's legend. Her husband died first and after that Bridget became spiritually active and then was taught by Mary how she could love Christ.⁶⁵³

The mystical marriage to Christ is usually reflected in two types of scene: one is a 'bed scene' and the other is in the hour of the saint's death. As just seen, both scenes are combined in Mary's ascension. First we shall look at the bed theme. The bed, of course, features in the Canticle (Song of Songs 3:1), where the bride awaits her beloved. When St. Elizabeth as a child has not yet finished her daily recitation of prayers before she goes to sleep, she finishes them in her bed until she has fulfilled her promise to her celestial spouse in that place.⁶⁵⁴ Catherine places the statue of Mary and the Christ child, borrowed from the hermit, in her bedchamber to meditate.⁶⁵⁵ It is in this place that she gets her visions and is married.

648 *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc*, *eugenia*, fol. QQ4.
 649 *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *appollonia*, fols. u8-u8v.
 650 *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *gheertruut*, fol. z4v.
 651 *Spiegel*, fol. 62.
 652 *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *elyzabeth*, fol. c1v.
 653 *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *birgitta*, fols. B3b-B4.
 654 *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *elyzabeth*, fol. b8.
 655 *Katherinen*, fol. b1.

A bed scene is particularly apt for bedridden female saints. St. Catherine of Vadstena, who despite her marriage had remained a virgin, is prevented on her last sickbed from taking the holy communion.⁶⁵⁶ She prays daily in preparation for her heavenly bridegroom. At the hour of her death he releases her from her pain and accompanies her to his eternal Last Supper. Although a mystical marriage as such does not occur in the legend of Liedwij of Schiedam, Christ does visit the saint in her bedroom. Jesus revisits her as the image of the crucified Christ-child which changes into a host with the five wounds which is suspended in the air and then lands on her bed.⁶⁵⁷

Bed scenes are not restricted to virgins, a repentant prostitute is forgiven with this apt symbolism. The unmarried young courtesan St. Thaïs, who invites abbot Pasuncius, posing as a client, to share her bed, is made to repent her sins.⁶⁵⁸ He has her enclosed in a cell in a monastery where a monk has a vision in which three virgins were watching over a bed adorned with precious coverlets; this heavenly bed belonged to Thaïs! Thaïs' sins had been forgiven.

Another scene of union with Jesus is the hour of the saint's death. The major feast-day of the saint is usually the day she passes on to heaven. In the case of female saints it is also the day in which they are united in matrimony with Jesus in heaven. For instance, when St. Agnes is killed by the sword it is stated that the white bridegroom receives his bride.⁶⁵⁹ Just before she meets her death, St. Dorothy (d. ca. 313) expresses her thanks to her soul's lover that he has called her to his paradise and invited her to his heavenly house.⁶⁶⁰ It is paradise which is described exhaustively in her *Life*. To prove that she had arrived there after her death she sends Theophilus apples and roses. According to her biographer, in

⁶⁵⁶ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. i1v-i2.

⁶⁵⁷ *Liedwij*, fol. b7v for Christ visiting her as an adult, and fols. c1-c2 for Christ as a child.

⁶⁵⁸ *Passionael, somerstuc, tays*, fols. r8-r8v and *Vaderen*, fols. D2-D2v.

⁶⁵⁹ *Passionael, winterstuc, agniet*, fol. f10v.

⁶⁶⁰ *Passionael, winterstuc, dorothea*, fol. x3.

the hour of her death St. Elizabeth knows that the time has arrived that the God was to call her to the celestial nuptials.⁶⁶¹

3.3.2 Summary

Virgins are depicted as special beings, on whom sometimes magical powers have been conferred. Particularly the virgin saints whose legends date from the first centuries of Christianity reflect the thought that marriage is a threat to their new religion. However, the idea of marriage was not repulsive: many virgins are married to Christ, and, although less frequently, some earthly men were chosen to marry saintly women. Contact with the heavenly spouse frequently occurs in the bedchamber, which underlines the symbolism of the strength of the theories of consent combined with conjugal rites. The hour of the saints' death converges with her entry in heaven, often as a bride. The mystical marriage of the female saint with Christ is always valued positively in our sources. It is clear that physical virginity is best, but the idea of marriage, in this case to the heavenly groom, is never repulsive.

3.4 *The relevance of ideas concerning virginity to secular women*

What would a late medieval secular reading public have made of the ideas about female virgins? Who would have felt addressed? Modern scholars usually discuss the reception of ideas and images based on the Epithalamium with reference to the female religious or semi-religious.⁶⁶² That is not surprising, since

⁶⁶¹ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c6.

⁶⁶² Ohly, F., *Hohelied-Studien. Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Hoheliedauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden, 1958), pp. 277-302, states that although the Song of Songs was used in various cultural expressions in the vernacular, these in turn were probably used within cloister walls. For Catherine of Alexandria, Agnes and Barbara, see Muller, E., 'Heilige maagden. De verering van maagdheiligen in religieuze vrouwengemeenschappen', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), p. 94, p. 95 and p. 97; and more recently, Vandenbroeck, P. ed., *Hooglied. De beeldwereld van religieuze vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, vanaf de 13de eeuw*. Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, 25 februari-22 mei 1994 (Brussel, 1994). See also Breure, L., 'De hemelse bruidegom', *Spiegel historiael* 15

these (semi-)religious women opted for the alternative of marrying an earthly groom. A pertinent example is that of St. Clare of Assisi who, already loving Christ, marries him at the altar dedicated to Mary.⁶⁶³

What reasons lie behind the continued importance of the traditional views on virginity in relation to martyrdom? In the later middle ages, there was no longer need for young female martyrs to die for the faith and prove their Christianity since the persecutions had come to an end,⁶⁶⁴ but secular women, in particular unmarried women, young or not, may well have been influenced by this positive imagery. It is not difficult to draw parallels since the vast majority of the female saints who espoused Christ in the examples in the legends, did not reside in a convent or monastery. In the later middle ages, this imagery could have inspired secular women not to opt for marriage, and think about a 'career' outside the marital state, such as becoming a (semi-)religious woman. Devotional literature might have influenced young women not to tie the marital knot and remain committed to a virginal state.⁶⁶⁵

The positive and strong imagery of a marriage with Christ the groom could have supported them in difficult times. Male orders displayed a reluctance to accommodate regular forms of religious life for women. Women suffered a lack of support from the thirteenth century onwards when their male counterparts felt increasingly less responsible for looking after their affiliated sisters.⁶⁶⁶ They felt

(1980), pp. 149-157, for an insight into the involvement of the female followers of the modern devotion with Christ as groom. Jongen, L. en W. Scheepsma, 'Wachten op de hemelse bruidegom. De Diepenveense nonnenviten in literair-historisch perspectief', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middel Nederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens ed. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 308-309, relate that in the *vitae* of the Sisters of the Common Life, marriage metaphors were used, particularly on the Sister's deathbed.

663

Clara, fol. aa5v.

664

See Glasser, M., 'Marriage in medieval hagiography', *Studies in medieval and renaissance history* n.s. 4 (1981), p. 23, who relates this fact to the need for a new type of saint, i.e. the married saint. The traditional ideas surrounding virgin saints were not replaced, however.

665

Southern, R.W., *Western society and the church in the middle ages* (Harmondsworth, 1970, 1990), p. 311, as was already the case in the twelfth century.

666

See Freed, J.B., 'Urban development and the 'cura monialium' in thirteenth-century Germany', *Viator* 3 (1972), pp. 311-327.

they were tied up too much with their sisters in overseeing convents, saying mass, taking confessions, etc., so that they could not follow their own spiritual progress. A similar reluctance is observed by some supporters of the modern devotion.⁶⁶⁷ In the Low Countries it was not cheap to enter a convent, and it was sometimes more expensive than providing for a dowry,⁶⁶⁸ it was cheapest to enter a community of the modern devotion where no dowry was payable.⁶⁶⁹

Traditionally, refraining from sexual activity was a more certain way to heaven and salvation than being engaged in sexual activity even within the conjugal bond. The married state did not surpass the virginal state. The positive ideas about female virgins may have served the purpose of promoting chastity to unmarried young females. For instance, Thomas van Cantimpré hears a confession of a young woman plagued by an unchaste love for a young man.⁶⁷⁰ She is dissuaded from seeing him by Christ who offers himself to her as a lover in her bedroom.

The positive ideas with regard to virginity may not have fallen on deaf ears. It has been argued that in the high and later middle ages there was a surplus of females in the cities, the so-called *Frauenfrage*.⁶⁷¹ From the early thirteenth century onward, vast numbers of unattached women resided in the cities of the Low Countries, remained unmarried because of men perishing in wars, or opting

⁶⁶⁷ Bange, P., G. Dresen en J.M. Noël, 'De veranderende positie van de vrouw aan het begin van de moderne tijd', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), p. 32.

⁶⁶⁸ Lists detailing gifts to convents on entry and dowries have been compiled by Koch, E., 'Kloosterintrede, huwelijk en familiefortuin. De kosten van klooster en huwelijk voor adellijke vrouwen in zuidoost-Nederland in de late middeleeuwen', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), table on pp. 255-257. Note that it concerns entry of noble ladies into convents.

⁶⁶⁹ Weiler, A.G., 'De intrede van rijke weduwen en arme meisjes in leefgemeenschappen van de Moderne Devotie', *OGE* 59 (1985), pp. 403-420, states that women from all walks of life entered, from nobles and patricians down to servants.

⁶⁷⁰ *Bienboeck*, fol. z2.

⁶⁷¹ The thesis concerning the surplus of women is proposed by Bücher, C., *Die Frauenfrage im Mittelalter* (Tübingen, 1882).

for the priesthood, and female longevity. These push-factors combined with the pull-factor of the religious poverty movement, meant that some unattached women sought a lifestyle which suited them best.⁶⁷² Consequently, in simple terms, the greater the number of women compared to men, the more difficult it became for girls to marry.

This view has been somewhat altered by recent scholarship,⁶⁷³ but there is also another argument which may be used to account for the abundance of unmarried women. Hajnal points out the uniqueness of the western-European marriage pattern, which incorporates elements of a relatively high age at marriage both for men and women and a high proportion of people who never marry.⁶⁷⁴ The pattern

⁶⁷² As seen in chapter 1, the religious poverty movement was part of a European movement. This is true for the thirteenth- as well as the fifteenth century. A pattern had already emerged in the thirteenth-century southern Low Countries and northern Italy, Bolton, B.M., *'Mulieres sanctae', Sanctity and secularity: the church and the world*, D. Baker ed. (Studies in church history 10; Oxford, 1973), pp. 77-95. For fifteenth-century Italy, see Pennings, J., 'Semi-religious women in 15th century Rome', *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* n.s. 47 (1987), pp. 115-146. An impressive survey concerning various aspects of the lives of late medieval beguines in the northern Low Countries, is by Koorn, *Begijnhoven*. An insight into historiography on the beguinage as institution is supplied by Ziegler, J.E., 'The *curtis* beguinages in the Southern Low Countries and art patronage: interpretation and historiography', *Bulletin de l'Institut historique Belge de Rome* 57 (1987), pp. 31-70. Another option was to become a Sister of the Common Life; differences between the two are outlined by Koorn, 'Women', pp. 135-147. The attraction of the devotionalist movement for single women (for the poor as well as the well-off) was that it offered a positive revaluation of chastity and poverty, Hagemeyer, P., 'Devote vrouwen in Holland omstreeks 1400', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 224-233.

⁶⁷³ See Ketsch, P., *Frauen im Mittelalter* (Studien Materialien 14 und 19; 2 vols., Düsseldorf, 1984), I, pp. 14-18, who concluded that in general there was a balance between the ratio of men and women. Opitz, C., 'Het dagelijkse leven van de vrouw in de late middeleeuwen (1250-1500)', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 274-276, concurs with this view. But compare Ennen, E., *The medieval woman* (Oxford, 1989), E. Jephcott trans., pp. 159-162, who contrasted the work of various researchers using tax lists and concluded that the sex ratio may have fluctuated. She recommended the ratio ought to be established for each city separately, which is a good idea, but cumbersome and time-consuming in its execution.

⁶⁷⁴ Although he assigned this pattern from the eighteenth- to the twentieth century, he does not completely dismiss it for the (later) middle ages, because data for this period is too scarce and incomplete, see Hajnal, J., 'European marriage patterns in perspective', *Population in history. Essays in historical demography*, D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley eds. (London, 1965), pp. 116-120.

suits city life.⁶⁷⁵ Although Hajnal does not mention the pattern for the middle ages (mainly because of scarcity of hard evidence), Brundage regards these elements as an explanation for the presence of late medieval 'rigorist sexual doctrines common among theologians and canonists', which assist the young adult in her sexual repression.⁶⁷⁶

Men then postponed their marriage until they were able to support a wife and family. Men married relatively late in life, in their twenties, and it appears they chose women who did not differ much in age. Not only the fact that men had to gain financial security, but also the conviction that spouses had to know each other well before they embarked on marital life, resulted in a relatively high age of first marriage. De Eyb, for instance, warns women not to trust young unmarried men, since it is not beneficial to fall in love head-over-heels, and men are more guilty in their persuasions than women in this respect.⁶⁷⁷ The sexual ethic surrounding virginity served nubile people who were unable to marry in attributing a spiritual value to their single status.⁶⁷⁸ There must have been a proportion of women who remained single at least for some time waiting for a spouse.

A high proportion of single women are found in cities because in the city single women found the means to support themselves.⁶⁷⁹ As long as they were healthy and able they could be employed as maids, textile workers, spinners, traders. Many young women migrated from the countryside to the cities.⁶⁸⁰ They were employed in various industries and paid on an hourly or daily basis. Although the evidence is ragged, in the Low Countries there were good employment

⁶⁷⁵ Lynch, K.A., 'The European marriage pattern in the cities: variations on a theme by Hajnal', *Journal of family history* 4 (1979), pp. 328-345.

⁶⁷⁶ Brundage, *Law*, p. 495, although he does not refer to Hajnal.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. b1v.

⁶⁷⁸ Brundage, *Law*, p. 495.

⁶⁷⁹ Opitz, 'Leven', pp. 306-307. For evidence from Ghent, see Nicholas, D., *The domestic life of a medieval city. Women, children, and the family in fourteenth-century Ghent* (Lincoln, London, 1985), p. 181 and for German cities, see Ketsch, *Frauen*, I, p. 26.

⁶⁸⁰ Howell, M.C., 'Citizenship and gender: women's political status in northern medieval cities', *Women and power in the middle ages*, M. Erler and M. Kowalski eds. (Athens,

opportunities for unmarried women,⁶⁸¹ particularly in the 'industrialised' northern Low Countries. Despite this, working opportunities for single women dwindled all over western Europe. Women were also gradually excluded from guild membership. In the fourteenth century, in the wake of the Black Death, there was a temporary lack of workers which had benefited women seeking employment. However, in the fifteenth century, when numbers were sustained and growth started again men now vied for jobs. David Herlihy, writing with the cloth industry in general in mind, also blames the urbanisation with its increasing specialisation and professionalism, which forced women out of their workplace.⁶⁸²

Edith Ennen estimates that among unattached women living in single households there was a large proportion of widows and maidservants.⁶⁸³ These unattached women needed guidance and positive imagery of refraining from sexual relationships. Sexual repression, which must have plagued the young unable to marry, calls for self control.⁶⁸⁴ Not only do we find female virgins exhorted to remain chaste but young unmarried males are addressed as well. They were warned about the dangerous nature of women. There is the exemplum of the attractive singing mermaid, for instance, who incites a young man to jump overboard, only to leave him to drown.⁶⁸⁵ A gullible youngster falls in love with a

681 London, 1988), pp. 41-43, discusses the intensive efforts of the towns in Low Countries to register the female immigrant population.
For women's work, see Quast, J., 'Vrouwenarbeid omstreeks 1500 in enkele Nederlandse steden', w. title, w. ed. (Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis 1; Nijmegen, 1980), pp. 46-64, Quast, J., 'Vrouwen in gilden in Den Bosch, Utrecht en Leiden van de 14e tot en met de 16e eeuw', *Fragmenten vrouwengeschiedenis*, W. Fritschy ed. (2 vols., Den Haag, 1980), I, pp. 26-47 and Howell, *Women*, pp. 70-94. Women found employment in draperies, textile industries, retail trade and large breweries, (the latter particularly in the northern Low Countries). Although opportunities were rife, unmarried women appeared to have been barred from certain guilds.

682 Other reasons are capitalization (it was difficult for women to marshal capital) and monopolization (established masters preferred their sons to enter the guild), see Herlihy, D., *Opera muliebria. Women and work in medieval Europe* (New York, etc., 1990), pp. 185-191.

683 Ennen, *Woman*, pp. 276-282. They were reckoned to be among the poor underclass.

684 Pol, L. van de, 'Seksualiteit tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd', *Vijf eeuwen gezinsleven. Liefde, huwelijk en opvoeding in Nederland*, H. Peeters et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 183-184.

685 *Twespraec*, fols. e2v-e3.

beautiful but deceitful woman who becomes his lover.⁶⁸⁶ Even schoolboys in their schoolbooks were cautioned against women who corrupt and who are unchaste.⁶⁸⁷

It was especially the maidservant who needed strong guidance and a positive role model, usually because she was employed outside the family, not subject to stringent control and therefore subject to suspicion.⁶⁸⁸ In reality, this fear was occasionally well founded.⁶⁸⁹ But even if she could stay within a family context, as appears in the exemplum of the French orphan who works as a servant in the household of her brother, her safety was not guaranteed: she had to fend off one of his friends who intended to abuse her.⁶⁹⁰ After the incident because of her bravery, she is invited to work as lady's maid for the Queen of England. Usually, the servants worked intermittently and were mobile. They could conduct their own wooing. The young unmarried woman was viewed with suspicion. Michael Goodich argues that the female servant could mirror herself in the new genre of the holy housemaid.⁶⁹¹ The fourteenth-century Gertrui van Oosten, daughter of a poor farmer, had migrated to the city of Delft, and had also started her career as a maidservant.⁶⁹² After her boyfriend married another girl she started singing divinely inspired songs from the bridges of Delft, espoused Christ the bridegroom and, to the relief of the magistrates of the city, ended up in a beguinage.

It is perhaps somewhat confusing to discuss the provision of dowries at this stage in relation to virginity but it is a problem tied up with women not yet married. De

⁶⁸⁶ *Geesten*, fols. t5v-t6.

⁶⁸⁷ Meder, Th., 'Fatale vrouwen. Een negatief trouwadvies in late middeleeuwse etiquetteboeken', *Literatuur* 10 (1993), p. 89.

⁶⁸⁸ Kettle, A.J., 'Ruined maids: prostitutes and servant girls in later medieval England', *Matrons and marginal women in medieval society*, R.R. Edwards and V. Ziegler eds. (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 19-20.

⁶⁸⁹ See De Meyer, *Min*, p. 21, on a court case which mentions the loose morals of a servant maid.

⁶⁹⁰ *Bienboeck*, fols. p6-p6v.

⁶⁹¹ Goodich, 'Servant', pp. 119-136.

⁶⁹² Bredero, 'Gertrui', p. 90.

Eyb devotes an entire chapter to the question of dowry.⁶⁹³ In it, he attempts to play down the importance of a potential husband requesting a dowry. Poverty may force women to sink to a low level like the women in the exemplum in a port in Africa, where they prostitute themselves in order to earn their dowry. He argues that it is much better to accept a woman without any dowry or a small dowry and find compensation in that she is beautiful, modest, fearful, chaste, wise, virtuous, and of good folk. In short, it is forcibly stressed that virtues and good behaviour of the woman outweigh the importance of a dowry, making it easier for women to contract marriages, and easing the tension for the family with regard to saving up a huge dowry. The difficulties of gathering dowries must have worried medieval daughters as well as fathers. In a charitable act, St. Nicholas of Myra, a popular saint in the Rhineland since the early middle ages,⁶⁹⁴ supplies his poor neighbour's daughters, who would otherwise have been forced into prostitution, with dowries.⁶⁹⁵ In one exemplum, one of the laws drawn up for the virtue and benefit of an ancient Greek community was that virgins should be married without dowry.⁶⁹⁶

In order to catch reluctant grooms, fathers and their families had to reward them. It was necessary for women or their families to save up for marriage of their female family members. From 1200 onwards sums paid as dowries went up in an inflationary spiral,⁶⁹⁷ reflecting that it was by no means certain that all women would marry. But not all virgins desired to remain in that state for ever.

The old Christian virtue of chastity may have assumed a new meaning in burgher society. The city was not promoting consecrated virginity but advocating a chaste lifestyle before marriage. Some late medieval lay authors of the Low Counties

⁶⁹³ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. d2-d3v.

⁶⁹⁴ Jöckle, *Encyclopedia*, p. 336.

⁶⁹⁵ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *nycolaus*, fol. m7.

⁶⁹⁶ *Geesten*, fol. cc2v and *Kaetspel*, fol. h5.

⁶⁹⁷ Herlihy, D., 'Life expectancies for women in medieval society', *The role of women in the middle ages*. Papers of the sixth annual conference of the center for medieval and early renaissance studies State University of New York at Binghamton 6-7 May 1972, R. Thee Morewedge ed. (London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto, 1975), pp. 1-20.

continued to value virginity higher than the marital state if it could be lived in a chaste manner, which they thought was exceedingly difficult, and marriage was a good alternative.⁶⁹⁸ This does not mean that traditional models did not continue to exist, even a relative newcomer on the saintly scene such as Liedwij of Schiedam threatens to mutilate herself rather than to marry when proposed to before her accident.⁶⁹⁹

3.5 Wives

Saints married not because it was their desire to do so (which would blemish their saintly record since it could link them with unchaste feelings), but because of outside pressure. Usually the parents insisted. St. Elizabeth of Hungary marries not because she likes it but she does not want to oppose her father's order.⁷⁰⁰ Anne's mother Emerentiana is doubtful about marriage because she had read that a virgin would give birth to Christ,⁷⁰¹ which reminds us of Mary who was reading Isaiah, as discussed in chapter 2. The brothers of Carmel advise her to marry since through her marriage Christ would be born. It is stated that she only wanted a husband out of love for God and children.

When the status of remaining unmarried then could not be pursued, a second best was the solution to live as chastely as possible within the marital bond. This chaste cohabitation within the context of licit marriage has recently been dubbed 'spiritual marriage',⁷⁰² which should not be confused with mystical marriage. On their wedding night in their bedroom St. Cecilia (3rd century) convinces her

⁶⁹⁸ Bange, Dresen en Noël, 'Positie', p. 20. The authors discuss the views of some fourteenth-century writers such as the author of the *Dietsche Doctrinale* (1345), the city clerk of Antwerp Jan van Boendale, the physician Jan de Weert and the *sprookspreker* Willem van Hildegaersberch.

⁶⁹⁹ *Liedwij*, fol. a3v.

⁷⁰⁰ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. b8v.

⁷⁰¹ She wished to remain a virgin, in honour to the other virgin, *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fols. b4-b4v.

⁷⁰² Elliott, D., *Spiritual marriage. Sexual abstinence in medieval wedlock* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1993).

husband to live in continence.⁷⁰³ After her wedding St. Margaret (alias Pelagia) escapes.⁷⁰⁴ A pious woman forced into marriage by her parents manages to remain chaste.⁷⁰⁵ Although the couple share a bed they never touch each other. She is followed by the image of Christ on the cross and whenever she has unchaste thoughts Christ places his hand from the cross on her breast to chase them away.

St. Catherine of Vadstena, who had promised perpetual chastity before she married, ties the conjugal knot to please her father.⁷⁰⁶ The chapter heading refers to Catherine's copying the example set by St. Cecilia, which shows the popularity of the ideal of chastity embodied by the latter. Catherine, also in the bedchamber, persuades her newly wedded husband Eggardus to refrain from sexual intercourse for ever.⁷⁰⁷ They pray during the night and sleep fully dressed on the floor, even during the cold winter, with a blanket to separate them. Her brother Karel ridicules their 'sheer madness'. When Catherine exhorts Gisela, Karel's wife, to follow her lifestyle Karel objects in an outburst: he fears that he and his wife Gisela will be ridiculed by their people. It was, of course, more difficult for noble and royal stock to refrain from marital sexual relationships since the future of the line depended on children. None of the references in the saints' *Lives* dealing with abstentions are self-evident, they do not fit in comfortably within married life. It is invariably the wife who seizes the opportunity to persuade the husband to abstain. In these samples then it was important to remain a *virgo intacta*.

Other legends of married women saints show that sexual intimacy no longer precluded sanctity. St. Bridget of Sweden and her husband live together as 'Sarah and Tobias' when they are first married.⁷⁰⁸ But then, after postponing their

⁷⁰³ *Passionael, winterstuc, cecilia*, fol. c9v.

⁷⁰⁴ *Passionael, somerstuc, margarita*, fol. r7.

⁷⁰⁵ *Bienboeck*, fols. t1v-t2.

⁷⁰⁶ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. C5-C5v.

⁷⁰⁷ For this paragraph, see *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. C7-D1.

⁷⁰⁸ *Birgitten*, fols. A6-A6v.

carnal embraces for one year, they wish for a child who is to serve God. Emerentiana is also likened to Sarah, but in this case she is praised because like Sarah, she waited for a long time for the right husband Stollanus to come along.⁷⁰⁹ Although Sarah's story is somewhat dissimilar, the reference to it shows that it was not unknown, indeed, it also occurs in the *Spiegel*.⁷¹⁰ St. Elizabeth of Hungary has to promise her confessor Coenraad to keep her marital obligations whenever her husband wished.⁷¹¹ This advice is spelt out, firstly, because there were not many sexually active married holy women, and the church had to find new ways to reconcile its idea of virginity to that of the married state. Also, as seen, marriage in itself was deemed good. However, whenever Elizabeth could she shunned the marital bed, praying all night long or sleeping on the bedroom carpet.⁷¹² Christ proved a rival for her affections. These married ladies then rank among the saints who were no longer virgins.

Sexual relationships also play an important role in the exempla. One aspect is that of incestuous relationships. A recurring theme is that of the son who accidentally marries his own mother and commits incest. The son himself is also born out of incestuous relationship: St. Alban is born of a liaison between father and daughter, and (a fictitious) Pope Gregory between brother and sister.⁷¹³ The exempla serve to point out twice the horrors that incestuous relationships bring.

The bulk of the exempla deals with adulterous relationships. Adultery occurred when a married partner had sex outside the bond of marriage. In the exempla, it is commonly wives who are associated with adulterous relationships and more often than not, they are depicted as initiating the extramarital affairs. Therefore

⁷⁰⁹ For the passages on Emerentiana's life, see *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fols. b3v-b7.

⁷¹⁰ See *Spiegel*, fol. 16. The story is based on the apocryphal *Tobit* 7:10-18 and 8. Sarah married seven husbands but remained a virgin since a demon killed the bridegrooms on their wedding night. Tobias managed to chase away the demon, and the couple waited for three night before consummating their marriage. The woodcut is printed on fol. 15v.

⁷¹¹ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c1.

⁷¹² *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c1v.

⁷¹³ For Alban see, *Ehebüchlein*, fols. k4v-l3v, and for Gregory, *Geesten*, fols. n1v-o1v..

the exemplum of the adulterous lady stork, caught by her husband, is specifically directed at 'all women'.⁷¹⁴ In a discussion on lust occasioned by sight, the married Bathsheba is captured in David's eyes; their affair was not only adulterous but it also led to treason and death.⁷¹⁵ There are some exceptions of examples targeted more specifically at men, for instance, in the discussion of the Tenth Commandment (you shall not covet your neighbour's wife) exempla feature of David and Bathsheba, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca.⁷¹⁶ De Eyb is rather down to earth, mentioning that husbands cannot expect their wives to be chaste if they are not.⁷¹⁷

The theme of adultery is being addressed in widely different settings which reflect various concerns of medieval society. The reason the wife acquires a lover is not always mentioned. But in many cases she had been left alone for a long period of time without the guidance of the husband after which she turns adulterous. A wife simply forgets her husband while he returns to his native country; wives are left by husbands who go on pilgrimage; a wife stays at home while her husband is at battle.⁷¹⁸ In the *Scaecspel*, a wife is recommended not to receive strangers particularly not while her husband is absent, lest this should lead to a loss of her reputation.⁷¹⁹

Some exempla consist of simple warnings, such as the 'fact' that adultery is detectable. In similar exempla both the stork's wife and the lion's wife are detected by not being able to wash themselves after sexual intercourse with their lovers.⁷²⁰ When a knight suspects his wife is having an affair he arranges for a

⁷¹⁴ *Sielentroest*, fol. 170.

⁷¹⁵ *Bienboeck*, fol. c2v.

⁷¹⁶ *Sielentroest*, see, for David, fols. 168-169; Abraham, fol. 169v; Isaac, fols. 169v-170. The two latter exempla deal with each husband passing his wife off as his sister which led to confusion since both Sarah and Rebecca were perceived to be available to the opposite sex (based on Genesis 20: 1-14 and Genesis 26: 7-11).

⁷¹⁷ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. a6.

⁷¹⁸ *Geesten*, fol. b4v; fol. o5 and fol. v2v; fol. p5v.

⁷¹⁹ *Scaecspel*, fol. h2.

⁷²⁰ For stork and lion, see, respectively, *Geesten*, fols. o1v-o2 and fol. ee6.

cleric to investigate.⁷²¹ The cleric can tell that she is in love with someone else by mentioning the lover's name and feeling her pulse. In an exemplum, it is the product of an adulterous relationship which embodies the 'evidence'. A son of the Queen of Hungary who had fallen ill, only responded to treatment applied to illegitimate children.⁷²² After the boy was healed, the Queen was forced to admit to the healer that her son was illegitimate.

Often the cleverness of the wife is stressed in hiding her illicit love relationship, underlining her evil nature. A queen, who has craftily disguised herself, is given away in marriage to her lover by her very own husband.⁷²³ In the past, she had cavorted with the lover many a time under the palatial roof. A fastidious wife of a merchant, incites her husband to murder his beloved talking magpie, who was prone to tattling about her infidelities which went on in his absence.⁷²⁴ During her husband's latest absence she meets her lover and cons the magpie into believing that the weather is bad by climbing on the roof and cutting a hole in it with the aid of her maidservant and throwing water on the magpie's head. Upon return of the husband, the magpie tells the truth about the wife's lover and also informs him of the bad weather. After the husband has made inquiries with the neighbours about the state of the weather which, of course, had been fine, he wrings the magpie's neck. Afterwards he discovers the ladder and the truth dawns on him.

A seductive wife intent on adultery and subsequently spurned is a female to be reckoned with. In a discussion on the Sixth Commandment (you shall not commit adultery) Potifar's wife tries in vain to seduce Joseph.⁷²⁵ When he does not reply to her advances she accuses him of attempted rape and offers his mantle which she had clutched to draw him nearer as evidence. A similar event happens to the young emperor's son, who declined his wicked stepmother's invitation.⁷²⁶ After

⁷²¹ *Geesten*, fol. g3v.

⁷²² *Seven mannen* (Jacobszoon van der Meer), fols. 213v-214.

⁷²³ *Seven mannen*, fols. g8v-h7v.

⁷²⁴ *Seven mannen*, fols. c8v-d3.

⁷²⁵ *Sielentroest*, fol. 134v.

⁷²⁶ *Seven mannen*, fol. b1.

this she accuses him of attempted rape, setting in motion the framework based on his defence by the seven sages countering the empress's accusations. The wife of Emperor Otto has fallen in love with a happily married count.⁷²⁷ After he turns her down she accuses him of improper behaviour towards her. Her husband decapitates the count, discovers his wife's hand in the sordid business and burns her at the stake.

An ensuing topic involving female adultery is that of the husband who is doubtful about his progeny, and, in particular, his male progeny. De Eyb admonishes husbands not to doubt their wives when it comes to children. He supplies the exemplum of the doubting husband who stands corrected by his wife.⁷²⁸ She, in front of the assembled neighbours and family, transfers their son from her hands into his and says: 'I give it to you ... because what you receive as a gift is truly yours'. An emperor questions his wife about her fidelity in relation to the son she has borne him.⁷²⁹ Although his wife strongly denies adultery he maintains his son is illegitimate because the lad displays an unkind attitude towards him but he is afterwards convinced that the boy is his after the youngster refuses to kill him.

Many exempla deal with the idea of the perfect wife. What traits were admired in wives? Many qualities mentioned are reminiscent of vows taken by nuns in convents (such as chastity and obedience). The traditional ideas about women were difficult to eradicate. A woman then is to be chaste. Lucretia features in many exempla, and she is usually discussed within the context of chastity.⁷³⁰ This married woman, blackmailed by the emperor's son who threatens to murder her and a man servant and put them in bed together as if he had caught them *in flagrante delicto*, allows herself to be raped by him. She subsequently commits suicide. Susanna who refuses to accommodate the two judges in an act of lust,

⁷²⁷ *Biechten*, fols. dd7v-dd8v.

⁷²⁸ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. c3-c3v.

⁷²⁹ *Geesten*, fols. b2v-b3.

⁷³⁰ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. b2v-b3v, *Kaetspel*, fols. h3-h4 and *Twespraec*, fol. i4. In *Geesten*, fols. x7v-x8, the exemplum is discussed in relation to penitence.

and who is consequently blackmailed by them, is saved by the wisdom of Daniel (Daniel 13).⁷³¹

Female silence was praised as well. This topic is reminiscent of God's reason for punishing Adam who listened to his wife and ate the fruit (Genesis 3:17). St. Paul has clearly established a link; it was because of Eve that woman must be a quiet listener (1 Timothy 2:11-14). It is almost exclusively women who are regarded as talkative, garrulous and scandal-mongering.⁷³² An apt exemplum is that of the husband who, when the boat was sinking and the captain was urging to jettison excess luggage, immediately proposes to throw his wife overboard.⁷³³ Surely, her tongue was the heaviest item on board. In two exempla women feature who, bereft of the power of speech, devise clever ways to continue communicating with their husbands.⁷³⁴ In the first exemplum, the husband and his wife quarrel about the quality of a strip of land. The wife cannot stop complaining about it, the husband hits her, and cuts out her tongue, but she proceeds in sign language. In the second exemplum, the wife accuses her husband that he is lice-ridden. He gets angry, hits her in front of the neighbours to humiliate her, throws her in the water, tramples on her, but she still manages to move her hands in a way resembling the killing of lice between her nails. It is concluded that many perished by the sword, but even more by the wife's tongue.

A good wife should be tolerant of her husband. For instance, she should not be jealous. It was jealousy which had led the Queen of the Rhine to strangle St. Kunera who was 'best loved' by her husband.⁷³⁵ Neither should a wife despise her husband as Michal did when David was joyful (2 Samuel 6:16).⁷³⁶ In a

⁷³¹ *Kaetspel*, fols. d5v-d6, *Scaecspel*, fol. b6v and *Sielentroest*, fols. 149v-150. The biblical story is found in the Apocrypha.

⁷³² In the discussion on 'lechery with words' a rare reference appears. Women are admonished to close their ears when men's persuasive words are heard in an attempt to seduce them, *Bienboeck*, fol. y3. Men are here associated with talkativeness.

⁷³³ *Twespraec*, fols. l1v-l2.

⁷³⁴ Both exempla in *Twespraec*, fol. d3.

⁷³⁵ *Kunera*, fol. b1.

⁷³⁶ *Spiegel* (1483), fol. o2.

discussion on the tasks of the chess piece of the Queen, the exemplum of Italia features who tacitly tolerates the smelly breath of her husband.⁷³⁷ Although De Eyb praises the love and tolerance of Tercia who allows her husband Affricanus to keep a concubine in their house De Eyb adds, by way of precaution, that this level of tolerance is not to be lauded.⁷³⁸

A good wife assists in her husband's well-being. Melissa feeds her contemplative philosopher-husband who is prone to forget to eat.⁷³⁹ The sort of care for the spouse's well-being could take other basic forms. A wife, for instance, prays for improvement in her deranged husband's condition.⁷⁴⁰ Even the not so woman-friendly *Sterfboek* contains an exemplum of a good wife married to an adulterous murderer, whom she attempts to persuade to alter his wrongful behaviour.⁷⁴¹ And St. Elizabeth of Hungary persuades her husband to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.⁷⁴²

Obedience was also a trait admired in women, perhaps resulting from the interpretation of Eve being blamed for disobedience. In the *Kaetspel*, Griselda silently and patiently obeys any request of her husband.⁷⁴³ When he pretends to divorce her because of her humble origin, she even obeys him when he requests her help in preparation for the wedding to his new bride. Another husband tests his wife for obedience by commanding her not to touch inside a hole in the wall in which, unknown to her, he has positioned sharp nails.⁷⁴⁴ As soon as he leaves the house she pokes her fingers into the hole, and screams out in pain. He has remained nearby for, of course, he knew what would happen; she is corrected by him and henceforth obeys him for ever. The centaur Satirus tests his wife, half

⁷³⁷ *Scaecspel*, b3v. It also appears in *Twespraec*, fol. i4.

⁷³⁸ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. a5v.

⁷³⁹ *Kaetspel*, fols. e1v-e2.

⁷⁴⁰ *Kunera*, fols. c6v-d1.

⁷⁴¹ *Sterfboeck*, fol. v3.

⁷⁴² *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *elyzabeth*, fol. c2v.

⁷⁴³ *Kaetspel*, fols. f6-g6v.

⁷⁴⁴ *Twespraec*, fol. l1v.

human half horse, for obedience.⁷⁴⁵ After he chases her from his house for being disobedient in lying to him she persists in her bad ways by committing adultery with a donkey.

In an exemplum, a married woman sleeps with a man whom she mistakes for her husband.⁷⁴⁶ Afterwards, when the culprit has disappeared and her husband arrives home, she chides him for having requested sexual obligations on a holy day and tells him to go to church without delay. They both discover what has happened and he forgives her. There is an element of tension created in the exemplum: should a wife be obedient to her husband and sin against her conscience or should she be obedient to the church.

Another *topos* connected with obedience is that of the authority the husband exercises over the wife. His authority regarding her charitable works and eleemosynary practices is also addressed. The husband of St. Elizabeth of Hungary is singled out for praise by her biographer. Although her husband cannot comprehend her charitable acts, he permits his wife power to do what God pleases, though not without some self-interest, because it serves both their souls' sake.⁷⁴⁷ St. Anastasia, parcelling out her goods to prisoners, is confronted by her husband who puts a lid on her activities by starving her and keeping her under close guard.⁷⁴⁸ During a famine, a rich wife in Brabant liberally distributes flour to the poor but is only allowed to share out small measurements by her husband.⁷⁴⁹ When she continues, the stock is miraculously replenished. It is especially mentioned that during the absence of her husband St. Elizabeth offers the hungry wheat from the store rooms.⁷⁵⁰ A wife is not allowed to share her

⁷⁴⁵ *Twespraec*, fols. l1-l1v.

⁷⁴⁶ *Biechten*, fols. cc6v-cc7.

⁷⁴⁷ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c2v.

⁷⁴⁸ *Passionael, winterstuc, anastastia*, fols. o4v-o5.

⁷⁴⁹ *Bienboeck*, fols. l2v-l3.

⁷⁵⁰ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c2.

husband's goods with the poor without his prior knowledge lest he may become poor.⁷⁵¹

In some exempla and saints' *Lives* the husband's authority goes beyond the boundaries of propriety. A bachelor king who is so ugly that he cannot find himself a woman to gratify his sexual desire, is accommodated by his steward who offers, unknown to the king, his very own wife to him.⁷⁵² Although the wife strongly objects she is so fearful of her husband that she obeys. When the king discovers her true identity, the steward is banned from the country. Mary has to intercede for a wife who is being offered to the devil by her husband who had received a treasure from the devil in exchange for his wife.⁷⁵³ The wives obey against better judgement.

One of the dangers a man faces when he marries a woman is that she can become his master instead of his companion.⁷⁵⁴ A bossy wife brings unhappiness to a man. A young wife lures three knights into the house whom she promises to sleep with, and then incites her husband to kill them and steal their money.⁷⁵⁵ Although he predicts trouble, he is browbeaten into it by her. After the deed is done, she then arranges for her brother to dispose of the bodies. She deceives this poor fellow as well. When a fight breaks out between husband and wife, she accuses him in a loud voice that he is a murderer, and by giving themselves away in this manner, they are both put to death.

There are also a few exempla in which two wives occur. Whereas in the *Kaetspel* there features only one wife who quarrelled with Socrates,⁷⁵⁶ both *De Eyb* and the *Twespraec* double Socrates's tribulations.⁷⁵⁷ *De Eyb* informs the reader that bigamy was the custom of Socrates's country. Not only do the twosome quarrel

⁷⁵¹ *Biechten*, fol. ee1v.

⁷⁵² *Seven mannen*, fols. e9-g1v.

⁷⁵³ *Miraculen*, fols. 17-18v and *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *onser vrouwen hemelvaert*, fol. z8.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. d2v.

⁷⁵⁵ *Seven mannen*, fols. g4-g8v.

⁷⁵⁶ *Kaetspel*, fols. l3v-l4. The other woman in his household is his daughter.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. f1v-f2 and *Twespraec* fol. i6v.

about him, but they also conspire against him and both throw dirty water on the eminent philosopher's head. De Eyb uses this exemplum to argue that spouses should be patient with one another. The *Twespraec* discusses the exemplum under the chapter dealing with forgiveness, and the fearsome twosome knock Socrates down. In the *Spiegel*, Lamech (Genesis 4:23) is scolded by his two wives.⁷⁵⁸ The severity of their actions cannot be doubted: they symbolically represent 'heathenism' and 'the Jews' who flogged Jesus. The examples of bigamous men did not serve primarily to point out that it was unlawful to have two wives, but rather they served to demonstrate the double sorrows a man could encounter when married to two wives. The point could equally have been made with one wife instead of two.

Bigamy is also discussed, tongue-in-cheek, in relation to women's problems in keeping secrets. In an exemplum, the young boy Papirius, who has overheard business discussed by the Senate of Rome, is forced to lie to his mother who attempts to browbeat him into divulging the secret matters to her to satisfy her curiosity.⁷⁵⁹ The boy invents that the Senate discussed whether a husband should have two wives or *vice versa*. On hearing this, the woman immediately musters all women of the town who march to the Senate demanding that a wife should have two husbands.

Disparagement in age is mentioned as well. The exemplum which sums this topic neatly up is that of the impecunious young man married to an old but rich woman and the beautiful young virgin married to a rich old knight.⁷⁶⁰ When the young people meet they fall in love: *ghelijc mint ghelijc* (equal loves equal). The young man kills the old knight because of his cruelty towards the young wife, the old wife dies and the youngsters are free to marry each other and live happily ever after. In another exemplum in which two wives feature married to the same middle-aged husband he becomes bald since the old wife pulls out his black

⁷⁵⁸ *Spiegel*, fol. 44.

⁷⁵⁹ *Geesten*, fols. v5v-v6, *Kaetspel*, fols. l4-l4v and *Scaecspel*, fols. b1v-b2.

hairs to make him look older, and the young wife pulls out his grey hairs to make him look younger.⁷⁶¹

In the exempla it is usually the old husband married to a young woman who is mocked. He is unable to satisfy his young wife in bed and cannot pay the conjugal debt. Often the young wife seeks a lover. A young wife strays from her husband's bed every single night to visit a young man.⁷⁶² Not only is she adulterous, but she lies when her husband discovers her nocturnal escapades. She turns the tables on him by locking him out one night and leaving him to be caught and accused of adultery. Another young woman complains to her mother who had given her in marriage to an old dotard who proves inadequate in bed.⁷⁶³ According to the daughter her mother is incapable of imagining her daughter's tribulations, because the mother was married to her husband when both were young. The idea of the licentious woman is shown but the husband stands accused as well because he is not able to pay the marital debt.

The element of love in the formation of marriage is mentioned too. For instance, in a marriage the right kind of love is necessary. Love quickly found cannot lead to a lasting relationship. A promise to marry is made a mockery of in the *Kaetspel*.⁷⁶⁴ It serves to point out the foolishness of the besieged Duchess Remonde who, as soon as she claps her eyes on the King of Hungary, falls in love with him. Although he is an extremely handsome man, he is also the enemy. She communicates to him that if he were to take her as his wife she would surrender her castle. He promises her this, but as soon as the gates are opened the castle is plundered and the Duchess captured. He sleeps with her for one night (to fulfil his 'oath'), after which he hands her down to his fellow soldiers to be raped and tortured. The moral added is not to trust traitorous women! But,

⁷⁶⁰ *Geesten*, fols. v1-v1v.

⁷⁶¹ *Aesop*, fol. o2.

⁷⁶² *Seven mannen*, fols. b8v-c5.

⁷⁶³ *Seven mannen*, fols. e1-e1v.

⁷⁶⁴ *Kaetspel*, fols. i4-i4v.

inter alia, it also shows that the love Remonde felt for the beautiful king was of the wrong kind.

The male admirer besotted with his girlfriends or consorts is ridiculed or comes to a bad end. In a discussion on the Sixth Commandment (you shall not commit adultery), exempla follow the recommendation that a husband ought to follow his good wife's advice, not that of bad ones.⁷⁶⁵ Appenien hits her royal lover; Sardanapalus, who behaves like a woman when surrounded by women, is so love-struck that he locks himself in his palace with his wives and commits suicide; in his old age, the wise Solomon is persuaded by his wives to turn to heathen gods. Bad wives turn a man into an effeminate fellow: a *wijveric*. The wrong kind of love of the male in these cases leads to his being ridiculed or proves self-destructive.

The successful marriage is described by De Eyb, who is important for his contemporary interpretation of marriage.⁷⁶⁶ He pulls out all the stops in his praise for marriage: progeny, remedy for sin, the sacramental value, Jesus's first miracle of turning water into wine at a wedding, love, friendship, and he goes on to paint the picture of a happy family. Parents who love each other, and who are in concordance, are to be praised in *der heilighen gotlicken echtschap*, therefore a man should marry. Immediately underneath follows his chapter on 'the praise of women who are indeed worthy of praise'. The late medieval description of the marriage of Anne and Joachim reflects similar sentiments.

3.5.1 Summary

In the saints' legends chaste marriages were advocated in a variety of ways. In legends of married female saints there were either no sexual relationships at all

⁷⁶⁵ This and the following exempla are mentioned in *Sielentroest*, fols. 138-143. Appenien is also referred to in the *Spiegel*, fol. 45v, where she ridicules the ruler by putting his crown on her head. In this way, it is explained, she prefigures Christ who is ridiculed with a crown of thorns.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. h1-h2.

between the spouses, or they were delayed, or abstained from after a while. But, most importantly, however uncomfortably a sexual relationship fits within the saint's legend, in the late middle ages it does no longer preclude sanctity.

In some cases incest was feared. The vast majority of the exempla dealing with female adultery were often combined with other female traits such as her slyness and seductiveness. Because of her dissipated nature a husband could fear that her children were not his. Not surprisingly, the ideal perfect wife was praised because she was chaste, silent, and obedient. These traits are also admired in a convent. Also, the perfect wife should be tolerant.

A good marriage is founded on the right kind of love, and not the type of love seen in the exempla. Not selfish lust and avarice should lead to marriage, judged by the disparagement in age *topos*.⁷⁶⁷ Neither the self-destructive love of the dotard, nor love quickly found is reckoned to be a good basis for a marriage. The age of marriage partners should not be too different, not only because it may encourage gold diggers to marry a rich elderly spouse, but the elderly spouse proves frequently incapable to satisfy the younger spouse. This then leads to adultery on the part of the younger spouse. A harmonious marital life was advocated.

3.6 *The relevance of ideas on marriage to secular women*

Although virginity remained high on the church's promotional agenda and certain anti-matrimonial tendencies displayed in the sources and certain misogynist ideas persisted,⁷⁶⁸ most women married. Deducing from the exempla and saints' *Lives* many ideas relating to married women deal with their behaviour within sexual relationships. The underlying rationale of the church in regulating sexual

⁷⁶⁷ Coupe, W.A., 'Ungleiche Liebe: a sixteenth-century topos', *The modern language review* 62 (1967), p. 662.

⁷⁶⁸ Jeay, M., 'Sexuality and family in fifteenth-century France: are literary sources a mask or a mirror?', *Journal of family history* 4 (1979), pp. 328-345.

behaviour, in apportioning degrees of sinfulness, was ultimately to save the souls of sinners who had to do penance if they wanted to be saved.

At the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, it was decided that banns were to be called by the priest to make it publicly known that a couple intended to marry.⁷⁶⁹ Anyone who knew a legitimate impediment could object to the marriage. One of the reasons behind this decision was that, before 1215, married couples who no longer wished to remain together could obtain an annulment by claiming they had 'suddenly' discovered that they were related. They could easily do this, since before 1215, a person could only marry another who was not related within seven degrees of consanguinity (those related by blood) or affinity (which entail those related by second marriage or a sexual relationship). It was relatively easy to obtain an annulment since it was not difficult to prove that the marriage partners were related. If they were not related, but claimed they were, it was almost impossible to check perjury by witnesses. To make it easier to contract a valid marriage, and above all, harder to escape from marriage, from 1215 couples were allowed to marry from the fourth degree upwards.⁷⁷⁰ To make it more difficult to opt out, canon 51 was issued.

Despite its reforming nature there still remained the possibility of contracting marriage without the banns being called. Holy matrimony remained a sacrament which could be bestowed upon one another in private. The marriage would be clandestine, but nevertheless perfectly valid. Problems could arise when one of the partners opted out claiming that a wedding had never taken place, which appears not to have been an uncommon event in the later middle ages.⁷⁷¹ The

⁷⁶⁹ Douglas general ed., *Documents*, III, pp. 665-666, canon 51.

⁷⁷⁰ Douglas general ed., *Documents*, III, p. 665, canon 50.

⁷⁷¹ For examples, see De Meyer, *Min*, p. 34 and, for the early sixteenth century, Bange, P. en A.G. Weiler, 'De problematiek van het clandestiene huwelijk in het middeleeuwse bisdom Utrecht,' *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, D.E.H. de Boer en J.W. Marsilje eds. (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 393-409.

presence of a parish priest and witnesses became imperative with canon 10 of the Council of Trent in 1563.⁷⁷²

Behind the regulation of consanguinity, affinity and spiritual kinship (those related to one another through godparents) issues lay the fear of incestuous sexual relationships. In the sources, these issues are dealt with on a rather basic level when mothers become the spouses of their sons. Ideally, these relationships should be sorted out before the wedding takes place and not afterwards.

Although in the sources bigamous and polygamous men are discussed it is never in relation to advocating monogamy, which had been one of the concerns of the church in the early middle ages.⁷⁷³ This indicates that these cases were no longer a problem by the time the sources were compiled. One husband should have one wife. On the whole, the exempla in which polygamous men feature show that the husband's troubles are doubled when having two wives.

Chaste marriages which, in the female saints' *Lives*, are always advocated by the wife and seem to be part and parcel of their holiness, were praised. In practice, women did abstain as in the case of St. Catherine of Vadstena who was attracted to the idea of remaining a virgin. But also, if, for instance, she considered her family to be complete (and presumably had had enough of her share giving birth), sexual relations could be ended as St. Bridget and her husband did. It is, of course, the chastity aspect which is the most important consideration, the fact that no children were born was the result. A well-documented example is that of the self-proclaimed mystic Margery Kempe (ca. 1373-after 1439) who, after a vision in which she had viewed heaven, wanted to make certain she would go to this marvellous place after her death, attempted with great difficulty to persuade her husband to take a mutual vow of chastity since she was convinced that their

⁷⁷² Brundage, *Law*, p. 564.

⁷⁷³ Brundage, *Law*, p. 65 and p. 87.

sexual relationships amounted to incontinence.⁷⁷⁴ Taking account of the chastity aspect, married women attempted to live as chaste as possible marriage. At least, parishioners' concerns are reflected in interpolated questions or comments in a few of our sources. The issue of the wife's choice for abstaining or sinning arises out of the dilemma when the husband requested sexual intercourse on days prohibited by the church.⁷⁷⁵

But marriage was basically good, any other setting for sex was mortally sinful. De Eyb stressed in his interpretation of the exemplum of the intelligent Sigismunda that it was because of her father's refusal to let his daughter remarry, and so denying her a natural outlet for female passion in marriage, that she felt that she had to acquire a lover.⁷⁷⁶

Although bossy wives are occasionally mentioned in the exempla, the many instances in which authority of the husband is asserted over the wife ties in with the theme of the 'battle for the trousers', so often depicted in prints from the second half of the fifteenth century. This theme is popular in the milieu of prosperous burghers, judged by the good quality of the prints.⁷⁷⁷ The battle for the hose concerned the division of tasks in marital life: the wife's aim is to wear his trousers whilst the henpecked husband does the household chores. The message conveyed in these prints was that it was impossible for a married man

⁷⁷⁴ Brundage, *Law*, pp. 503-504 and p. 507. On Margery's problems and those of other married women see, Atkinson, C.W., 'Precious balsam in a fragile glass': the ideology of virginity in the later middle ages', *Journal of family history* 8 (1985), pp. 139-142.

⁷⁷⁵ In a dialogue, the priest argues that she should obey; the husband commits a sin but the wife is not to blame, *Sielentroest*, fol. 145. In the section on the sins against the Son (referring to sins committed in ignorance) in *Biechten*, fols. ee1-ee1v, the wife is urged to confess all her sins (even those committed unwittingly!). She is said to sin in ignorance while she is obedient to her husband having sexual contact with him on 'holy nights'. Brundage, *Law*, p. 162 and p. 508, has summarised prohibitions according to early medieval penitentials and later medieval moralistic literature. He mentions prohibitions in force during the liturgical cycle (on Lent, Advent, Whitsun week, Easter week, feast-days, fast days, and certain weekdays), as well as the woman's physiological cycle (during the wife's menstruation, pregnancy and lactation period).

⁷⁷⁶ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. f4.

⁷⁷⁷ Dresen-Coenders, L, 'De machtsbalans tussen man en vrouw in het vroeg-moderne gezin', *Vijf eeuwen gezinsleven. Liefde, huwelijk en opvoeding in Nederland*, H. Peeters et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 57-99.

burdened with a domineering wife to alter the situation; it was therefore best to consider carefully whom to marry and then to establish immediately who was head.⁷⁷⁸ Many Flemish medieval proverbs mentioned the position which a woman was supposed to occupy: 'a clever woman knows that the hose belongs to the man'.⁷⁷⁹ The theme of tug-of-war for power within the household was also predominantly present in many fifteenth- and sixteenth-century farces which, based on an international corpus, were remodelled to accommodate the taste of the burghers in the Low Countries.⁷⁸⁰ This theme is not present to a great extent in the international corpus.

The period in which the incunables were produced (ca. 1450-1501) falls between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, when burghers became more aware of their urban identity. As Bot explained, when, particularly after 1400, the cities obtained a tight grip on political and economic policies, men dominated society: they ruled the city and felt they alone were responsible for it, which may have resulted in increased anti feminism within the city.⁷⁸¹ The ideal domestic situation is that in which the powerful husband who is also father rules his wife, family, household and business. The wife and mother of his children was to love the husband, do housework, be subordinate and faithful and raise the children well.⁷⁸² The audience of the incunables were dished up tailor-made versions promoted by the church of the perfect wife. It was in the middle and upper echelons of society where the husband earned money and the tasks of the woman were increasingly restricted to household and children where this idea would make an early impact.

⁷⁷⁸ Dresen-Coenders, L., *Helse en hemelse vrouwenmacht omstreeks 1500*. Catalogus tentoonstelling museum 'Commanderie van St. Jan', (Nijmegen, Utrecht, 1988), p. 39.

⁷⁷⁹ Greilsammer, M., 'Le mariage en pays Flamand: un 'fait social total' ', *Marriage and social mobility in the late middle ages*, W. Prevenier ed. (Studia historica Gandensia 274; Gent, 2nd ed., 1992), p. 78, more examples on p. 79.

⁷⁸⁰ Engeldorp Gastelaars, W. van, *lc sal u smiten op uwen tant. Geweld tussen man en vrouw in laatmiddeleeuwse kluchten* (Amsterdam, 1984).

⁷⁸¹ Bot, *Verering en verachting*, pp. 53-59.

⁷⁸² Vecchio, S., 'De goede echtgenote', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, p. 116.

Literature detailing specific tasks and qualities for women was in vogue. The fourteenth-century Goodman of Paris left instructions to his young wife on how to run the household, as did the fourteenth-century merchant Francesco Datini in his letters to his wife, also of tender age.⁷⁸³ The apportioning of tasks was not clear-cut, although it has been argued that this was often the case.⁷⁸⁴ Ruth Kelso mentions throughout her book various protagonists who debated the finer details of several topics related by this point.⁷⁸⁵ It is far from certain to what extent women felt compelled to comply with their being restricted to household tasks and the raising of the family only. Without going into much detail, there seems to have been no division between work and living space. In Antwerp, for instance, the male guild member was assisted at home by his wife and daughters, under his supervision.⁷⁸⁶ The domestic situation detailed by Lyndal Roper in her book on sixteenth-century Augsburg also mentions that there was no strict division between work-place and dwelling-place.⁷⁸⁷ A division of specific tasks was not in place in the seventeenth-century Low Countries, but made an impact when industrialisation on a grand scale took root.⁷⁸⁸

The fifteenth-century press multiplied behavioural rules for the family and marriage for which there must have been a demand. Indeed, sometimes requests were made by secular folk to the religious to write tracts for them on these

⁷⁸³ For the Goodman, see Power, *People*, chapter 5; for Francesco, see Origo, I., *De koopman van Prato* (Amsterdam, 1985), K. van Gulik trans., pp. 175-176. On the household and the wife's role in it, see Gies, *Women*, pp. 184-209.

⁷⁸⁴ See, for instance, Hall, C., 'De geschiedenis van de huisvrouw', *Te elfder ure* 20 (1975), pp. 676-704.

⁷⁸⁵ Kelso, R., *Doctrine for the lady of the renaissance* (Urbana, 1956). For Kelso's omissions relating to the Low Countries, see Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De strijd om de broek. De verhouding man/vrouw in het begin van de moderne tijd (1450-1630)', *Revisor* 6 (1977), p. 29.

⁷⁸⁶ Pleij, *Sneeuwpoppen*, pp. 281-282.

⁷⁸⁷ Roper, L., *The holy household. Women and morals in reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1989), p. 29.

⁷⁸⁸ Leydesdorff, S., 'Kanttekeningen bij 'de geschiedenis van de huisvrouw'. Poging tot een theorievorming van de geschiedenis van de nederlandse vrouw', *Te elfder ure* 20 (1975), pp. 711-712.

matters.⁷⁸⁹ In particular the function of the householder in ruling the household is described in separate and appended chapters. The rule of the husband is not involved with household chores, but rather he is placed in a supervisory capacity. In general, he is to take good care of the family and see to it that the household is well-organised and prudent household management is advocated. But ideas in relation to marriage are discussed as well.

For instance, in the *Scaecspel*, the householder is advised to check up on his wife's behaviour. The couple should live in peace and he should not admonish her without reason.⁷⁹⁰ In the edition of the *Scaecspel* based on the author Dirk van Delft, the householder is recommended not to lavish too much money on an expensive wedding.⁷⁹¹ He should also discourage his widowed mother from remarriage lest problems arise in relation to the inheritance of the children, and indeed, in her foolishness she might even marry a young man. In a chapter which deals with the marital state of the judge, the *Kaetspel* proscribes him to cling to one wife only according to the Ten Commandments.⁷⁹² Presumably, it is meant here that he ought not to be adulterous. Aesop admonishes his adoptive son to be kind to his wife, so she does not go astray because of her fickle nature, and not to trust secrets to her.⁷⁹³ The caring aspect of the householder is summed up in the exemplum of the smith who worked on Good Friday, one of the holiest of days in the church calendar. He was let off the hook by a judge who heard that

⁷⁸⁹ Dionysius van Rijkel, a Carthusian of Roermond (1402-1471) was requested by lay 'friends' to write a book which has been printed as a vernacular incunable (INCIPIT: Dionysius Carthusiensis, *De laudabili vita coniugatorum* [Dutch] *Van den loveliken leven en de staet der echten*, printed at Gouda by Gerard Leeu, 26 July 1479. Bange, P., 'Voorstellingen over seksualiteit in de late middeleeuwen', *Soete minne en helsche boosheit. Seksuele voorstellingen in Nederland 1300-1850*, G. Hekma en H. Roodenburg eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 57-58, discusses Van Rijkel's book in relation to marital sex. Nissen, P.J.A., 'De monnik en het gezin. Dionysius de Kartuizer over huwelijk en gezin', *Geloof, moraal en intellect in de middeleeuwen. Voordrachten gehouden tijdens het symposium t.g.v. het tien-jarig bestaan van het Nijmeegs Centrum voor Middeleeuwse Studies 10 en 11 december 1993*, P. Bange ed. (Middeleeuwse studies X; Nijmegen, 1995), pp. 160-173, gives a more detailed account. Both authors conclude that the Carthusian was traditional, but his view on sex in marriage was cautiously optimistic.

⁷⁹⁰ *Scaecspel*, fols. h1v-h2.

⁷⁹¹ *Scaecspel* (abridged), fols. 14-15.

⁷⁹² *Kaetspel*, fol. n5.

he needed to earn money for his decrepit mother, school-going son and spendthrift wife.⁷⁹⁴

In the texts in which a female adulterer appears her adultery is a result of the married woman making her own decisions when on her own, or when the pair is mismatched. In social reality, adultery may not have been uncommon, at least judged by some court cases.⁷⁹⁵ It is impossible to describe trends based on little evidence. The fact that many exempla deal with female adulterers rather than male adulterers is reflective of the ideas arising out of the woman's perceived salacious nature (as addressed in chapter 2). Also, because of her fickleness, she may have been deemed to be in need of more guidance and support than a man. In any case, standards set for women appear to be higher than those set for men.

Although it is difficult to generalise, perhaps one of the reasons for the *topos* of fathers questioning the legitimacy of their sons (rather than their sibling sisters) may be traced to the fact that from the central middle ages a new kinship system came into existence.⁷⁹⁶ Previously kinship was cognatic (or bilineal), now another form was imposed on (but did not replace) the older system: the agnatic (or patrilineal) system. Duby applies the principle to the marriages of the French nobility in the high middle ages,⁷⁹⁷ where inheritance customs had changed. In order to maintain and build powerful blocks of land only the eldest son could marry, thus allowing for the land to remain undivided. He in his turn needed one legitimate male heir to complete the cycle. Thus, the legitimacy of the eldest son was very important. It also meant that younger sons had to find their luck

⁷⁹³ *Aesop*, fol. d3.

⁷⁹⁴ *Scaecspel*, fols. f4-f4v.

⁷⁹⁵ De Meyer, *Min*, p. 54. The majority of cases deals with a married woman attempting to retrieve her husband from his girlfriend's house, the minority with a married man pursuing his wife.

⁷⁹⁶ Herlihy, D., *Women, family and society in medieval Europe. Historical essays, 1978-1991* (Providence, Oxford, 1995), A. Molho ed., pp. 145-146.

⁷⁹⁷ Duby, G., *The knight, the lady and the priest. The making of modern marriage in medieval France* (Harmondsworth, 1983), B. Bray trans.

elsewhere, preferably with a rich heiress. In many songs and poems it is the lord's wife, trapped in a loveless marriage, who is the happy recipient of the attentions of young unmarried males. The lady is virtually interchangeable with love in lyric.⁷⁹⁸ In this scheme the idea of female adultery too also comes to the fore.

Although wider research is required in this area, David Nicholas has shown that urban inheritance customs in Ghent incorporated cognatic as well as agnatic lines.⁷⁹⁹ Sons and daughters were entitled to an equal share of the parental inheritance. In practice then (at least in places with similar inheritance customs to Ghent), there seems to have been no reason for fathers to question the legitimacy of their (eldest) sons only, if they were worried about the extramarital liaisons of their wives. The *topos* appears to be one in which literary customs survive in a society which has no apparent need for them.

Nevertheless, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, municipal governments increasingly involved themselves with regulating sexual behaviour of the citizens in order to protect public order and keep the citizens healthy.⁸⁰⁰ The city government of Utrecht issued an ordinance on adultery to be publicly read out thrice annually.⁸⁰¹ The new evil of syphilis was also a grave concern when it made its entry on a grand scale during in the second half of the fifteenth century. It was also recognised that in order to prevent mothers and daughters of burghers from falling victim to sexual offenders, it was better to regulate a public brothel in an orderly fashion. This attitude is reflected in an exemplum where a young man who has fallen in love with a married woman is advised by his father to visit a prostitute who subsequently heals him from his interest in the married lady.⁸⁰²

⁷⁹⁸ Ferrante, *Women*, p. 66.

⁷⁹⁹ Nicholas, *Domestic life*, pp. 189-198.

⁸⁰⁰ Brundage, *Law*, p. 487.

⁸⁰¹ De Meyer, *Min*, p. 54.

⁸⁰² *Ehebüchlein*, fol. b2.

In town halls works of art, such as tapestries or paintings, were hung on a ceiling carved (at Katwijk) featuring cunning women in relation to their menfolk, but this was not an attempt to show that women were perceived as being deceitful, adulterous or bad, it advocated lawful marriage and marital fidelity.⁸⁰³

In the late medieval cities of north-western Europe it was not so much the noble young but landless sons of the high middle ages, but the many young male apprentices who remained unmarried until their late twenties. The latter, as discussed, first had to gain financial security. The picture that Rossiaud painted of the youth gangs wreaking havoc on the streets of fifteenth-century southern France appears exaggerated when applied to the Dutch towns.⁸⁰⁴ Although youth gangs, the *charivari*, operated occasionally on special feasts in the Low Countries questioning, for instance, the sexual *mores* of certain nubile women, they were regarded as a pest. At least, this is the case if we are to believe Chaucer's comments on a youth gang in fourteenth-century Flanders.⁸⁰⁵

I have been able to trace only one moralising story in our sources which contains a gang of young men (*ionge gesellen*) compromising a woman, in this case a married woman. Marina, living in Genoa, was pestered by them: arriving on horse and on foot, singing songs and serenading her day and night under her window, 'proving their love for her', while her husband was at sea.⁸⁰⁶ It is questionable that ladies were often wooed this way in reality. However, the secular priest Godschalck Rosemondts from Eindhoven, who wrote a confessional in 1517, forbade men to walk at night playing the lute to attract maidens.⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰³ Vignau Wilberg-Schuurman, *Minne*, pp. 49-50 and Dresen-Coenders, *Vrouwenmacht*, pp. 26-27.

⁸⁰⁴ Rossiaud, J., 'Prostitution, youth, and society in the towns of Southeastern France in the fifteenth century', *Deviants and the abandoned in French society*, R. Forster and O. Ranum eds. (Baltimore, London, 1978), in particular pp. 6-7.

⁸⁰⁵ Chaucer wrote on the Flemish charivari that they led an unchaste life, gambled, and were gluttonous, Robinson ed., *Chaucer*, p. 196, lines 463-484.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. g3v-g4.

⁸⁰⁷ Moolenbroek, J.J. van, 'Seksuele onthouding als norm en waarde in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland. Verkenningen in officiële en niet-officiële cultuur', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland*

The humanists, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam (ca. 1466-1536), promoted the idea of marital love, and challenged contemporary negative ideas about women.⁸⁰⁸ Michael Dallapiazza discussed some marriage tracts by humanists.⁸⁰⁹ He concluded that the humanists attempted to formulate a new ideology taking into account the socio-economic changes of the later middle ages. The wife's role was viewed in relation to her usefulness to the husband and her function within the patriarchal-burgher society, but reciprocal love and happiness were also stressed. The tracts written by humanists laud marital life and mention the joys of domestic bliss: marriage is the foundation of social order. Erasmus concluded '... that all things ... are maintained by the married couple, and without it all things would break apart, perish and slip away.'⁸¹⁰

3.6.1 Widows and elderly women

The *topoi* which appear in the exempla and the saints' *Lives* in relation to widowhood are fairly straightforward and fall typically into a few categories. Also included in this section are elderly women who are not always referred to as widows. As we shall see, one or two of them have children, so these could very well have been married women once. A few of them are described as donning religious clothing, and they probably assumed the widow's mantle on their husbands' demise. They could have made a vow of perpetual chastity at that stage. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, whom we know was a widow, put on a religious habit after the death of her husband.⁸¹¹ Elderly women who feature on their own and widows appear in similar roles.

aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), p. 115.

⁸⁰⁸ Mol, H. de, 'Het huwelyck is goddelyck van aart, wanneer men tsaam uyt reine liefde paart'. Kerkelijke opvattingen over vrijen en trouwen', *Kent, en versint Eer datje mint. Vrijen en trouwen 1500-1800*, P. van Boheemen et al. eds. (Zwolle, 1989), p. 97.

⁸⁰⁹ Dallapiazza, *Minne*, especially, pp. 156-159.

⁸¹⁰ Herlihy, *Households*, p. 117.

⁸¹¹ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c3v.

The first *topos* is that of 'after care' for the deceased husband. This may be regarded as a continuation of the involvement of the wife in her husband's well-being. For instance, a widow pays off the debt of her dead husband who appeared to her in a vision clutching red-hot iron horseshoes in purgatory.⁸¹² Apparently, he had forgotten to pay the smith, and after his wife has taken care of it he may leave for heaven. In an exemplum, a widow features who has just lost her husband in a tournament.⁸¹³ She is referred to as 'holy housewife' and prays every day of her life devoutly for her deceased husband whom she has seen in a vision suffering in the afterlife. The once fun-loving husband is punished in similar fashion for the sins committed during his lifetime. Whereas he used to sleep with young virgins after his tournaments he is now embraced by a fat toad on a sizzling hot bed.

A recurring motif is that of the widow explaining her reasons for refusing to remarry. In a chapter warning against unchaste company, a widow turtledove is praised.⁸¹⁴ The turtledove, we are told, is the most chaste among the birds. When her husband was alive she did not desire another bird, after he died she opts to remain unattached. Although she is friendly, she can no longer tolerate the stench of lechery of the other birds and flees their company.

After burying her husband's body with great dignity, a princess who was happily married to her husband, now finds herself alone.⁸¹⁵ When her friends press her to remarry because she is still young and beautiful she refuses since it will be impossible to equal the love she once shared with her husband but equally it will prove impossible to find such a good, sweet, wise, and rich man as she has had. In the allegorical explanation which follows the woman is compared to the 'bride', the 'soul' and the 'wife' who are loved by Jesus, who has died on the cross for

⁸¹² *Bienboeck*, fol. x2.

⁸¹³ *Bienboeck*, fols. s4v-s5.

⁸¹⁴ *Twespraec*, fols. i3v-i4.

⁸¹⁵ *Geesten*, fols. m6-m6v.

her. Jesus is represented by her dead husband. The widow is addressed directly: 'do not take another husband, that is, do not love any one else except him'.

In a chapter praising the virtue of chastity, De Eyb shows two exempla of women who prefer not to remarry.⁸¹⁶ Sydo jumps in a fire lit on her instigation whilst thinking about her dead husband. Cato's daughter Marcia, despite having goods, beauty and health declines remarriage.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary, staying with her uncle who wished her to remarry, refuses to comply stating that she has promised to remain chaste, that she would rather mutilate herself than remarry.⁸¹⁷ Not only does she dress in a simple religious habit but she also lives as a pauper and performs charitable acts.

A married emperor, but a tyrant, wants to test his wife for their mutual oath to commit suicide out of love when one of them dies before the other.⁸¹⁸ He pretends to be dead and she thinks she is a widow. When her first suicide attempt does not succeed, and her father wants to prevent a second attempt, she tells him that married folk are like two souls in one body.

Sometimes, widows appear in groups of three whilst denouncing remarriage. The three widows from antiquity Marcia, Valeria and Anna, desire not to marry again.⁸¹⁹ The first is afraid that a new spouse will marry her for her goods and the second because her first husband, although deceased, remains alive as long as she lives. The third because she has had a good husband and is afraid that if her second husband proves to be bad she will suffer, but if she likes him she may lose a loved one again.

⁸¹⁶ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. b3v-b4.

⁸¹⁷ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c3v.

⁸¹⁸ *Geesten*, fol. a7v.

⁸¹⁹ *Twespraec*, fol. I2. See also Wilson and Makowski, *Wyves*, p. 50, who appear to trace these ladies back to St. Jerome.

When a king finds himself at home with three widowed daughters he wishes to marry them off.⁸²⁰ They all refuse, the first because she has given her virginity to her first husband, the second because no one can equal the beauty of her first, the third because she still considers herself to be married. She tells that her husband's body is hers, and her body is his. The allegorical explanation which follows compares the three daughters with the soul who has been shown the works of the Trinity. Despite the wives' rather fond memories of their husbands in the exemplum, in the explanation the husbands are compared to the devil, no less, and for this reason the widows are admonished not to 'remarry, but remain under the protection of the Lord'.

Another topos is that of the dangers a widow may encounter. She proves to be vulnerable. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, whose husband died on pilgrimage, is chased away by her husband's relatives.⁸²¹ She is accused of having squandered their wealth on her charitable causes. As a young desirable widow of noble stock, St. Catherine of Vadstena is continually afraid of being captured by suitors whilst in Italy but with God's help she is forewarned when a count lies in wait for her.⁸²²

The two versions of the following exemplum serve to show primarily how a recently widowed woman unscrupulously defiles her husband's memory, but at the same time they highlight the dangers of a widow making decisions by herself. A widow camping out near the grave of her recently departed beloved husband falls quickly in love with a man who is guarding a corpse on the nearby gallows at night.⁸²³ When he discovers that a corpse has disappeared from the gallows whilst he visited the widow, she immediately offers to hang the body of her husband in the prisoner's stead. In this way, we are told, she puts a slight upon the love which she once cherished for her husband because of a new love just found.

⁸²⁰ *Geesten*, fols. m3-m4v.

⁸²¹ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *elyzabeth*, fol. c3.

⁸²² *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. E5-E6.

⁸²³ *Aesop*, fols. h4v-h5.

In the second version, the husband has died out of love for her when he accidentally cut her superficially, thus making her subsequent actions more repelling.⁸²⁴ In a similar scene as just sketched above, the widow is moved out of pity for the keeper but she also offers herself in marriage to the desperate guardian who immediately accepts. Since the disappeared corpse in this version was dismembered, she willingly mutilates her husband's corpse without hesitation. This is known as the 'widow of Ephesus motif', which serves to underline the repulsive actions of the widow.⁸²⁵ After they hang it on the gallows and the widow insists her fiancé and she should go to church in order to be properly wed, he tells her that she ought to be ashamed of herself since her husband had died out of love for her. The keeper then beheads her.

Another problem of the widow is that she is defenceless. A widow (*wijf*) finds herself alone and ill.⁸²⁶ The woodcut accompanying the exemplum shows an elderly female. She has spent all her money on cures which proved in vain. A plant offers a piece of itself to her as a medicine if she is willing to pray for the plant. The moral inferred is that one should attempt to have good folk pray for you.

St. Anne assists widows who find themselves in dire circumstances. One of the widows rescued by the saint is incapable of rendering the services her lord requests and is thrown in prison and tortured.⁸²⁷ The widow has no one who will intercede for her except for St. Anne who saves the widow and also claims the lives of the lord's two sons. A statue of *Anna-te-Drieën* (containing Anne, Mary and Jesus) hits the lord to boot. Anne is shown powerful by virtue of her good connections. Not only is she portrayed as a life saver, but also as a life taker. In

⁸²⁴ *Seven mannen*, fols. h7v-i4.

⁸²⁵ Arden, H.M., 'Grief, widowhood, and woman's sexuality in medieval French literature', *Upon my husband's death. Widows in literature and histories of medieval Europe*, L. Mirrer ed. (Ann Arbor, 1992), p. 307 and p. 310. See also Hallissy, *Maids*, p. 138, on Ephesus.

⁸²⁶ *Twespraec*, fols. d5v-d6. The exemplum is also incorporated in Berlioz, *Rire*, pp. 126-127.

⁸²⁷ *Historie anna*, fols. p1-p5v.

another exemplum, a female, thrice widowed, is saved from abduction by St. Anne.⁸²⁸

However, not all widows prove vulnerable or incapable of giving direction to their lives. The widow St. Sophia turns to Rome with her daughters to convert women to Christianity.⁸²⁹ As soon as she becomes a widow, Claudia, mother of St. Eugenia, assists her holy daughter in the conversion of women to the true faith.⁸³⁰ In fact, she is even referred to as *Saint Claudia*.⁸³¹ As a widow, St. Paula makes a success of her life by turning increasingly to religion now that her movements are unrestricted.⁸³² St. Bridget of Sweden is able to travel as she likes after her husband's death.⁸³³ In her daughter's *Life*, Bridget is described as being without ties and free from worrying about her husband.⁸³⁴ She was certainly not a powerless widow. In her thirty years as a widow, Christ had revealed to her that widowhood was an estate pleasing to God, even more pleasing than virginity.⁸³⁵ Her daughter, the widow St. Catherine of Vadstena tirelessly and successfully campaigns for her mother to be declared a saint and for the convent at Vadstena.⁸³⁶

Often widows, like married women, are cast in either positive roles or negative roles. They are either brave and wise or evil. In a discourse on the Fifth Commandment (you shall not commit murder), the role the apocryphal widow Judith is extensively discussed.⁸³⁷ Paradoxically, a series of exempla follow

⁸²⁸ *Historie anna*, fols. r5v-s2.

⁸²⁹ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *sophie*, fol. M3 and *Sielentroest*, fol. 16. Although strictly speaking the texts do not mention that the saint is widowed, she was regarded as a patron saint of widows, see Jöckle, *Encyclopedia*, p. 412.

⁸³⁰ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc*, *eugenia*, fol. QQ2.

⁸³¹ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc*, *eugenia*, fol. QQ2v.

⁸³² *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *paula*, fol. t3.

⁸³³ *Birgitten*, fol. A7.

⁸³⁴ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fol. D2.

⁸³⁵ Labarge, M. W., 'Three medieval widows and a second career', *Aging and the aged in medieval Europe*. Selected papers from the annual conference of the centre for medieval studies, University of Toronto, held 25-26 February and 11-12 November 1983, M.M. Sheehan ed. (Papers in mediaeval studies 11; Toronto, 1990), p. 169.

⁸³⁶ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. G1-G2v.

⁸³⁷ *Sielentroest*, fols. 115v-118.

featuring brave women putting their own lives at risk murdering brutal warlords. The beautiful Judith is referred to as a 'holy widow', who lives a devout life of praying, fasting, and performing charitable works. She knows how to handle men and makes Holophernes quickly fall in love with her, she plies him with liquor and then beheads him. The exemplum also appears in the *Kaetspel* where her goodness and holiness are pointed out.⁸³⁸

Another positive role is that of the single elderly woman showing her sagacity. An old woman (*out wijf*), wearing a religious habit of some sort, devises a clever plan to recoup a foreign merchant's losses, because she is moved out of pity.⁸³⁹ An old woman (*out wijf*) prays for a tyrant to remain in office.⁸⁴⁰ In the past, she had successfully prayed for his predecessors, who became progressively more oppressive, to be succeeded. By now praying for the worst tyrant she hopes to prevent an even worse ruler to follow him.

Widows are supposed to live a life of goodness in a celibate and devout manner. St. Anne's behaviour as a widow is exemplary. She commands respect, gives to charity, does not care about temporal goods, keeps chaste, never displays her sorrows in excess, serves God, does penitence whilst praying, takes in poor people's children to teach them obedience to God, etc.⁸⁴¹ The old woman who recoups the merchant's losses, as just mentioned, clears the road from stones which may hurt people.⁸⁴² After two Dominicans were refused hospitality by a priest in Brabant, a charitable old woman donated her coarse bread to them.⁸⁴³

There are also negative ideas about widows and elderly women. Countess Marie of Champagne travels with great pomp and circumstance after her husband's

⁸³⁸ *Kaetspel*, fols. f2v-f3.

⁸³⁹ *Aesop*, fols. q1v-q2 and *Geesten*, fols. t1v-t3.

⁸⁴⁰ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. c5v-c6, *Geesten*, fol. h3v, *Kaetspel*, fols. h6-h6v and *Twespraec*, fols. o4-o4v.

⁸⁴¹ *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fols. h4v-h5.

⁸⁴² In the version of the *Geesten*, fol. t1v.

⁸⁴³ *Bienboeck*, fol. g2v.

death.⁸⁴⁴ When she dies no one mourns her, instead her servants are preoccupied plundering her rich belongings as soon as she is died.

An old woman (*quene*) who is baby-sitting, threatens to feed the child to the wolves if it does not stop crying.⁸⁴⁵ An eavesdropping hungry wolf waits patiently at the gate until he nearly dies of starvation. At home, the wolf complains to the she-wolf that women cannot be trusted. Not only is the woman unkind to the child, she does not keep her word either.

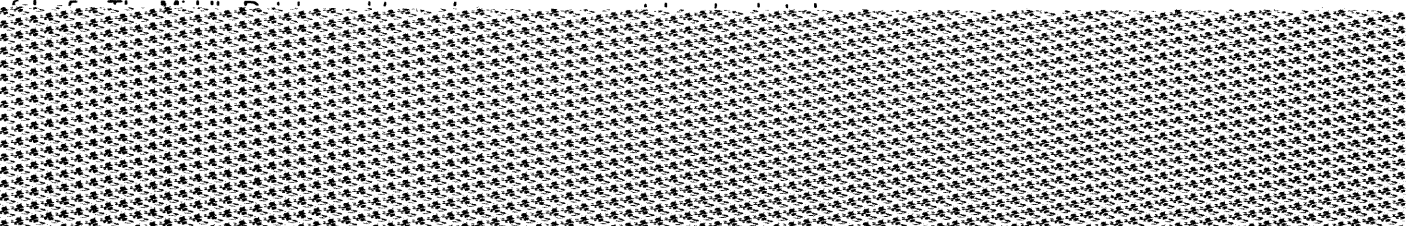
Elderly women often appear as matchmakers and the exempla have been related in some depth here to demonstrate their ingenious craftiness. An old woman (*out wijf*), clad in religious clothes of some sort, assists a young man who has fallen in love with a married woman.⁸⁴⁶ When he pursues her unsuccessfully the old woman offers her services. It is pointed out twice that for the world this old woman appeared honourable, thereby emphasising her cunning nature. She gulls the married woman into believing that God had punished the old woman's daughter by changing the girl into a dog. God had resorted to this extreme measure because the daughter failed to respond to the love of a young man who subsequently died out of love for her. When the wife notices that the dog is crying, which unknown to her has been fed mustard earlier by the sly matchmaker, she is convinced she must now respond favourably to her pursuer.

In Egypt, Palma, her husband, and her neighbours are being deceived by Ida, an old woman (*out wijf*).⁸⁴⁷ Palma has turned down a young suitor who consequently has fallen ill out of love. The old hag offers her services to him for money. She pays a priest to assist her in her plan. He must pretend he has received a message from the god Anubius who wishes to sleep with Palma. Palma is only too happy to comply with this honour and after her husband consents she arrives at the temple. She does not recognise the suitor in the dark. It is when she meets

⁸⁴⁴ *Bienboeck*, fols. b2-b2v.

⁸⁴⁵ *Aesop*, fol. o3.

⁸⁴⁶ *Geesten*, fols. f2-f3.



him during the day and he brags about his conquest of her that she is aware that she has been deceived.

Following Thomas van Cantimpré's discussion of Eve's role in the Fall, as noted above, an exemplum follows. An old woman assists a young man in capturing the love of the young wife of a carpenter.⁸⁴⁷ The wife spurns the riches offered to her by a suitor. An old woman offers her assistance. She gains the trust of the young woman by posing as a relative. She then forcefully captures her and locks her in. On her promise to return she is released. Immediately, the young wife musters three strong female neighbours to fend off the old woman. They give the old woman a good thrashing and send her naked on the street. It is concluded that in this way the young woman built up a good reputation in the city, which she would not have done had she accepted the riches and advances of the suitor.

The go-between then is dangerous because she pretends to be pious, but she deceives. It proves difficult for the young wife not to trust her. It is the go-between who dreams up elaborate plans, even using force, to persuade the invariably young married woman to return the advances of the suitor. When, in an exemplum, a man accuses St. Kunera of being a go-between (*coppelster*), of her bringing together those who should not, he is immediately struck down with insanity.⁸⁴⁸ Fortunately for him, brother Nicolaas van Dordrecht is at hand who, with a sermon, compels the parishioners to invoke the heavenly virgin's mercy. The exemplum, ranked under the sin of blaspheming, shows the negative connotations of the word 'go-between'. In the legend of St. Theodora, the woman is even dubbed 'magician' (*toevenaerster*).⁸⁴⁹ She assures Theodora that God can see during daylight only, paving the way for Theodora to engage in an adulterous relationship with her suitor at night.

⁸⁴⁷ *Scaecspel*, fols. f8-g1.

⁸⁴⁸ *Bienboeck*, fols. p1-p2.

⁸⁴⁹ *Kunera*, fol. c5v. The Middle Dutch word *koppelaar* means a matchmaker but also a woman who offers opportunity to others to commit lechery, see Vries, M. de, et al. eds., *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (27 vols., 's-Gravenhage, Leiden, 1882-1994), VII, c. 5550.

3.6.2 Summary

The positive ideas that surround widows and elderly women are those embodied by the images of empathising, helpful and pious females. They are moved by the plight of their husbands in the afterlife and assist their fellow Christians. They also appear to be vulnerable, easily beguiled and needy. But the elderly female also displays threatening behaviour and aids the unmarried suitor in establishing relationships with married women. They do not simply assist: it is not the young suitor but the old woman who conjures up intricate plans to attempt to persuade the wives to yield.

Some reasons cited by friends and family for remarriage are that the widow is young, healthy and able to bear children. She possesses the goods to attract a new husband. Also she is beautiful, and judged by Judith, she is well aware how to employ her sex appeal to the advantage of her city. Reasons cited by the widows in return for not wanting to marry again are that no one will be able to equal the good married life they once had or that no one will be able to match the qualities of the first husband. In this way, although not in a conscious effort, the benefits of marital relationships are emphasised. The widow frequently opts for continence and in most cases, when she is not a royal or noble whose marriages aided alliances, she is seldom seriously opposed in this respect.

3.7 *The relevance of ideas concerning widowhood to secular women*

The demographical composition of late medieval urbanised areas suggest that there were relatively more elderly people than in previous centuries.⁸⁵¹ In particular, the recurring bouts of the plague affected the mortality of the younger people more than the old. Life expectancy for a medieval woman was higher than

⁸⁵⁰ *Passionael, somerstuc, theodora*, fol. 16v and 'toverste' in *Sielentroest*, fol. 126v.
⁸⁵¹ Minois, G., *History of old age. From antiquity to the renaissance* (Oxford, 1989), S. Hanbury Tenison trans., chapter 8.

for a male after the age of forty.⁸⁵² Then, as now, female longevity was a reality of life. Also, city work could be less demanding, which may have led to an influx from the countryside to the city.⁸⁵³ Widowers may have remarried more commonly and more quickly than widows.⁸⁵⁴ Widowers may have preferred 'fresh young maidens',⁸⁵⁵ leaving elderly women on their own. Perhaps twenty-five to thirty percent of widows remarried, the percentage being higher for widowers.⁸⁵⁶ Thus, in the late middle ages the widow and elderly woman may have appeared ubiquitous. The late medieval cities became increasingly involved with the lot of widows as well as orphans, previously protected more by church than 'state'.⁸⁵⁷

The widow could conduct her own courtship. Financially, with the return of her dowry, and a dower (portion set aside for her for her widowhood by her husband) she had gained freedom. If she had access to capital she could continue her husband's business.⁸⁵⁸

There were numerous options open for widows. She could reintegrate through marriage, particularly if she had possessions, was young and beautiful or remain temporarily unmarried or become a vowess (similar to the females who appeared clad in religious habits), or gained entry in a religious organisation.⁸⁵⁹ However, the many possibilities available to the widow can also be regarded as a weak spot. That the widow who had to fend for herself is also reflected in reality. As seen, Catherine of Vadstena was nearly abducted. It is unknown how common it

⁸⁵² Russell, J.S., 'How many of the population were aged?', *Aging and the aged in medieval Europe*. Selected papers from the annual conference of the centre for medieval studies, University of Toronto, held 25-26 February and 11-12 November 1983, M.M. Sheehan ed. (Papers in mediaeval studies 11; Toronto, 1990), p. 126.

⁸⁵³ Williams and Echols, *Pit and pedestal*, p. 242.

⁸⁵⁴ Herlihy, *Households*, p. 107.

⁸⁵⁵ Herlihy, *Households*, p. 155.

⁸⁵⁶ Hanawalt, B.A., 'Remarriage as an option for urban and rural widows in late medieval England,' *Wife and widow in medieval England*, S. Sheridan Walker ed. (Ann Arbor, 1993), p. 147, based on sixteenth-century parish registers.

⁸⁵⁷ Opitz, 'Leven', pp. 312-313.

⁸⁵⁸ Anderson and Zinsser, *History*, pp. 424-425. The merchant widow, for instance, had free access to capital.

was for widows to be abducted. A wealthy widow from Zeeland was abducted and forcefully married in the 1440s.⁸⁶⁰

The church was ambiguous about recurrent marriages. On the one hand, widows were shown the path of consecrated virginity and on the other, recurrent marriages were not attacked because of the sanctity of marriage. However, canon lawyers argued that nuptial blessings for subsequent marriages should not be dispensed.⁸⁶¹ Van Denemarken comments that women in his day and age (fifteenth century) remarry not to serve God, nor to beget a child, but to satisfy bodily pleasures.⁸⁶² St. Anne remarried for the sole reason that she was still fertile. Remarriage was a topic that did not fit in comfortably in a legend composed in the late middle ages and the utmost is done in order that the reader will not confuse the holy female with a lecherous old woman.

Concerning remarriage De Eyb advises the dying husband not to fret about his wife and children, because the responsibilities will be hers and her future husband 'whom she will indeed take'.⁸⁶³ It is the casualness with which he asserts that she will remarry that is remarkable. It is of course not surprising that a widow with children would be on the look-out for a husband to support the household.

De Eyb also informs the reader that to marry a virgin is preferable to a widow since the former is pliable, indeed as weak as wax, he may model an image of her to suit his own, whereas the latter has known another's love and picked up

⁸⁵⁹ Rosenthal, J.T., 'Fifteenth-century widows and widowhood: bereavement, reintegration, and life choices,' *Wife and widow in medieval England*, S. Sheridan Walker ed. (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 33-58.

⁸⁶⁰ Prevenier, W., 'Vrouwenroof als middel tot sociale mobiliteit in het 15e-eeuwse Zeeland', *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, D.E.H. de Boer en J.W. Marsilje eds. (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 410-424.

⁸⁶¹ Brundage, J.A., 'Widows and remarriage: moral conflicts and their resolution in classical canon law', *Wife and widow in medieval England*, S. Sheridan Walker ed. (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 20-23.

⁸⁶² *Historie, getijden, exempelen anna*, fol. h3.

⁸⁶³ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. c4v.

unfamiliar customs.⁸⁶⁴ The *Scaecspel* also reports that it is better to marry a good virgin than a widow since the latter desires to rule over men.⁸⁶⁵

In our sources ideas about widows vary: a balance seems to have been struck between positive and negative ideas. It is the negative ideas associated with widows and elderly women which stick in our mind, because, with the benefit of hindsight, elderly women were among the first to be prosecuted for witchcraft. Pleij highlights the fourteenth-century occurrence of ideas of shrews playing a role in specific Low Countries settings, which suggests that his particular examples originate from this area.⁸⁶⁶ In the fifteenth century this spills over into the literary image of the bad old woman. However, in the early modern period, women in the northern Low Countries at least, suffered a comparatively light persecution because of a relatively enlightened attitude.⁸⁶⁷

As Brandenburg has shown, it is remarkable that Jacob Sprenger promoted the cult of St. Anne as well as condemned witches.⁸⁶⁸ In the *Malleus maleficarum* (1487) written by Sprenger and Henricus Institoris witches were predominantly women.⁸⁶⁹ Witches were thought to entertain sexual relationships with the devil, and marry the devil. Witches stood accused of murdering young children or dedicating youngsters to the devil. Women could instigate male impotence or make a husband lust after other women. In this way witches undermined the sacrament of marriage. In the *Malleus* protection of marriage and social control of sexual relationships were emphasised.

⁸⁶⁴ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. f1.

⁸⁶⁵ *Scaecspel*, fols. h1v-h2.

⁸⁶⁶ Pleij, 'Wie?', p. 41. He cites, for instance, the example of *Moorkensvel*.

⁸⁶⁷ Gijswijt-Hofstra, M., 'Toverij en tolerantie. Reacties op toverij in Nederland van de zestiende tot in de achttiende eeuw', *Een schijn van verdraagzaamheid. Afwijking en tolerantie in Nederland van de zestiende eeuw tot heden*, M. Gijswijt-Hofstra ed. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 16; Hilversum, 1989), pp. 131-155.

Compared to other countries impact was muted since demonological witch doctrines did not take firm root and early discoveries in medical science and physics led to scepticism.

⁸⁶⁸ For the role of Jacobus Sprenger, see Brandenburg, *Familieleven*, pp. 101-109.

⁸⁶⁹ Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De heks als duivelsboel. Over het ontstaan van de angst voor heksen en de bescherming tegen heksen', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de*

In an agrarian society, elderly women appear to have been more influential than in urban society.⁸⁷⁰ Their role in the agrarian community involved assistance in matters of fertility, birth and death. Also, in an agrarian society women performed magic rituals in and around the house with relation to love, impotence and conception.⁸⁷¹ However, in an urban environment the elderly woman became increasingly superfluous. The municipal community and university trained men partly assumed her role. A positive pendant for the elderly secular woman was St. Anne who not only features in her legends and exempla involved with matters revolving around fertility and birth (which we shall see in the next chapter), but, equally important, led an exemplary way of life. She served as a positive role model for the widow.

3.8 Conclusion

In the second half of the fifteenth century women were presented with ideas from the legends of the female saints' *Lives* and exempla, many of which predated the fifteenth century, which can be related to contemporary female social reality. Women were predominantly presented with ideas about the ties between the spouses in marital relationships and sexual rites which also play a big role in the three well-known marriages of Eve, Mary and Anne.

In certain cities and at certain times an imbalance may have existed when women outnumbered men. The urban environment offered opportunities for single women to sustain themselves. It is in this environment where single female households existed. Men could marry women who had most to offer financially. City dwellers delayed marriage or never married at all. Despite the emphasis and special status of virgins, the subject of dowry and potential marriage remains in

870
871

drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 59-62.
Dresen-Coenders, 'Grootmoeder', pp. 44-78.
Toussaint Raven, J.E., 'Toverende vrouwen', *Middeleeuwen over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 3; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), I, pp. 57-71.

focus. The ideas pronounced in the sources may have drawn secular women to the religious life, but, more generally, they were ideal for promoting chastity for the unmarried with positive and strong imagery too.

Although the married saints' *Lives* convey some ideas about women within the conjugal bond, it is in the exempla where women as wives come into their own. Ample attention is given in the exempla to deviant sexual behaviour, incestuous sexual relationships, and female adultery. These topics are not part of a catalogue of errant female behaviour. Although many adulterous women appear in the exempla that is not to say that women in reality were thought to have been adulterous in great numbers. Equally, the sources which deal with good behaviour of women appear to be rather prescriptive than descriptive, and it is far from certain that married women complied with the tasks described and the behaviour outlined.

The many examples from the saints' legends (as one of the many vehicles available) advocating chaste marriages and good behaviour were useful for secular women. On the one hand, women who were in social reality attempting to lead a chaste life may have mirrored themselves on the ideas mentioned. On the other hand, those who were not so strict, could find it useful to do so. Whatever the case, the examples served as a guideline to a better life.

Widows too could mirror themselves in the sources. Although the sources describe the widow usually either as extremely good or exceedingly bad, a balance is struck. The bivalent attitude in society is reflected in the options widows had available in managing their lives to an extent they had never experienced before.

Seen in an urban context, the sources used by the church paralleled the concerns of the city. Orderly behaviour was striven after for the benefit of the community. Although the context of most of our sources had changed over time, the sources fitted in neatly in contemporary society. What had not changed was

that women were told to behave in a certain way and that chastity belonged to all their life stages.

4 Ideas about women as mothers and as daughters

In the previous chapter we evaluated the textual images of females in the context of their marital status: as virgins, wives and widows. In this chapter we deal with the remainder of images of females in a wider sphere: women within the family. Women will be viewed as mothers (primarily of daughters) and daughters (primarily of mothers). Guided by the corpus of female saints' *Lives* and exempla where mother-in-law, godmother and daughter-in-law appear less frequently, they will be treated only summarily.

4.1 *Historiography on women in the family*

Although there is a wealth of secondary sources written on the family in general, there is a concentration on late medieval Italy⁸⁷² and when north western Europe is discussed it often concerns the family of noble or royal descent in the eleventh and twelfth centuries⁸⁷³ or peasant families in the later middle ages.⁸⁷⁴

Monographs on fifteenth-century 'burgher families' of the Low Countries are off the beaten historiographical track. Some information about women as mothers and daughters can be gleaned from David Nicholas's informative book on late medieval Ghent, despite its geographical, chronological and methodological limitations for our purposes.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷² See, for instance, Herlihy, D. et C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles, une étude du castato florentin de 1427* (Paris, 1978).

⁸⁷³ Duby, *Knight*.

⁸⁷⁴ Hanawalt, B.A., *The ties that bound. Peasant families in medieval England* (Oxford, New York, 1986).

⁸⁷⁵ Nicholas, *Domestic life*. Ghent was a French crown fief, and the northern Low Countries were not part of France. Nicholas uses Ghent records to demonstrate that the family was a social, economic and defensive unit, and does not concentrate specifically on mothers or daughters. He describes the workings of the unit operating within the 'clan', but he does not explain what the term entails. He probably borrowed it from J. Heers, and although Heers does not supply a definition either, he appears to have taken the *albergo* as springboard, see Heers, J., *Family clans in the middle ages. A study of political and social structures in urban areas* (Europe in the middle ages 4; Amsterdam, New York, Oxford, 1977), B. Herbert trans., p. 11.

Although there is information available on family life, research on the role of mothers and daughters is rather disappointing. Philippe Ariès's book revolves mainly around boys and their fathers.⁸⁷⁶ His research material includes educational works, method of instruction and portraits, to the neglect of the mother's involvement in child-rearing. He concluded that society failed to distinguish between adult and child. In his view, it was not until the seventeenth century, that children became highly valued, and that before that time there was no *sentiment de l'enfance* (concept of childhood). In agreement with him is Lea Dasberg.⁸⁷⁷ Roessingh does not mention the role of mothers either.⁸⁷⁸

Similarly, both Lawrence Stone and Edward Shorter concentrated on patriarchal society. Although the latter incorporated some information on motherhood, which he regarded as one element of the nuclear family, he maintained that mother love is an invention of modern times.⁸⁷⁹ Affection between mother and child, Shorter asserted, was negligible in the pre-industrial era.⁸⁸⁰ Elisabeth Badinter relegated a watershed in the quality of mothering among the middle classes to late in the eighteenth century, basing her conclusions on the care a mother bestows on her child, such as breast-feeding.⁸⁸¹ We will shortly see that breast-feeding was regarded of great importance much earlier.

Els Kloek, who compared and contrasted the views of various family historians, concluded that all agree there was a shift towards a more affectionate society though they are not in concordance concerning the dates and do not attribute it

⁸⁷⁶ Ariès, Ph., *Centuries of childhood. A short history of family life* (New York, 1996), R. Aldick trans.

⁸⁷⁷ Although she attributes the emergence of *jeugdland* (youth land) to the eighteenth century, Dasberg, L., *Grootbrengen door kleinhouden als historisch verschijnsel* (Meppel, 1975), p. 18. At this time, she asserts, children were no longer treated as adults.

⁸⁷⁸ Roessingh, A.L.A., *De vrouw bij de Dietsche moralisten* (Groningen, 1914).

⁸⁷⁹ Stone, L., *The family, sex and marriage in England, 1500-1800* (Harmondsworth, 1977, 1982).

⁸⁸⁰ Shorter, E., *The making of the modern family* (London, 1975, 1977), p. 191.

⁸⁸¹ Badinter, E., *The myth of motherhood. An historical view of the maternal instinct* (London, 1981), R. DeGaris trans., pp. 169-171. However, she deals with France in her book.

to the middle ages.⁸⁸² Also, no one attempts to relate it to the position of the woman in society.

Added to these problems are those observed in chapter 2 on modern views about medieval women. We concluded that modern views are often structured by dichotomies, with the exception of a few writers. This in turn gives the modern reader a one-sided impression. In chapter 3, we concluded that specific information about women's social reality or everyday life in the Low Countries is not readily available. There is a real need for more information about everyday life of women within the family in the Low Countries.

Bearing these limitations in mind in this chapter, as in the previous chapter, the attempts to relate the value of the text to the social world of the urban secular burgher woman will again prove challenging. Apart from the historiographical problems of emphasis, chronology and geography there also remains the problem that we have to distance ourselves from our modern concept of motherhood and childhood.

4.2 *Women as mothers*

4.2.1 *Mary and her relatives*

Although emphasis here is first and foremost on mothers of daughters rather than mothers of sons it is impossible to discuss medieval motherhood without reference to Mary and her son Jesus. Many literary motifs appearing in female legends and exempla are better understood when studied in relation to Mary.

It was impossible to emulate Mary since Mary's case is particular, both with regard to how she herself was conceived and how she conceived Jesus. To turn to the former first, how could Mary, as perfect future mother of Jesus, have been

⁸⁸² Kloek, E.M., *Gezinshistorici over vrouwen. Een overzicht van het werk van gezinshistorici en de betekenis daarvan voor de vrouwengeschiedenis* (Amsterdam, 1981, 1989). She

born tainted with original sin? The sources are ambivalent on how Mary was conceived, perhaps through her parents' kiss at the Golden Gate or under more mundane circumstances.⁸⁸³ Since the twelfth century, the concept of the immaculate conception was discussed. In the late middle ages, the Dominican friars believed that Mary, like John the Baptist, had been sanctified only in her mother's womb, while the Franciscans, in closer alignment with popular belief, thought that Mary was also the product of an immaculate conception; that she too was born free from original sin. The issue was still alive in 1500 when the immaculists involved with the support of Anne's cult endorsed the view of Anne's immaculate conception by her mother Emerentiana.⁸⁸⁴

This upwards shift (from Mary to Anne to Emerentiana) emphasised the importance attached to this issue. By stimulating Anne's cult Mary's special coming into being could be more effectively argued. Particularly in the Low Countries depictions in art of St. Anne as mother of Mary and Mary as mother of Jesus were rife (for instance, in their depiction together in the *Anna-te-Driëen*).

The second peculiarity surrounding Mary is her conception of Jesus. After an angelic visitation and after obtaining Mary's consent, Jesus's body and soul entered Mary's womb together, both perfect and sanctified. The abstract mechanics of the incarnation are difficult to comprehend and to explain. In the *Passionael*, the angel explains that the Holy Spirit will shine his light on her.⁸⁸⁵ In

has compared and contrasted the views of Ph. Ariès, L. Flandrin, P. Laslett, E. Shorter, L. Stone and E. Zaretsky.

883

Passionael, *winterstuc*, *onser vrouwen ontfanghenisse*, fol. n4v, mentions that although it took an act of sexual intercourse to conceive Mary (an act of men), the emphasis of the feast of her conception should lie on the conception of her soul (an act of God).

Passionael, *winterstuc*, *onser vrouwen lichtmisse*, fols. u2-u2v, recalls that Mary is purged and sanctified in Anne's womb. The version of the *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), *somerstuc*, *anna*, fols. C1v-C2, also states that Mary will be sanctified in the womb and relates how after the meeting at the Golden Gate, the couple went home and gained a child. In *Historie anna*, fols. d1-d1v, the angel tells Joachim that God will sanctify Mary and that in Anne's womb she will be filled with the Holy Spirit; but it is stated too that Mary will remain a virgin just like her mother. The latter statement implies that both conceived free from original sin. In *Spiegel*, fol. 10, the maculist's version is maintained.

884

She was born 'boven de loop der natueren', Brandenburg, *Familieleven*, pp. 97-110.

885

Passionael, *winterstuc*, *onser vrouwen annunciacio*, fol. g3v.

the *Spiegel*, Mary is impregnated by 'heavenly dew' or God's breathing on Mary.⁸⁸⁶ It was of course Mary's matrilineal descent which is stressed in the Tree of Jesse; in contrast with the usual depiction of a family tree being through the male line, a line of kings.

The difficult concept of Mary's remaining a virgin when conceiving is explained in a sermon praising virginity. Since it was believed in the middle ages that bees reproduced spontaneously, Thomas van Cantimpré uses the life cycle of the bee in an attempt to convince unbelievers (in this case he addresses Jews) that birth, without sexual intercourse, is indeed possible.⁸⁸⁷

Some early medieval female saints called upon to defend the new Christian faith, are also faced with explaining the complicated relationships of Mary. For example, in the accompanying exemplum in the discussion on the First Commandment (you shall have no other god to set against me), St. Euphemia explains that Jesus has a father without a mother, and a mother without a father.⁸⁸⁸ St. Eugenia, accused of being involved in witchcraft, tells to the prefect the very same thing and adds that the father has not carnally known the mother and *vice versa*, and that his virgin-wife brings him children daily.⁸⁸⁹

It is assumed that Mary did not suffer any pain when Christ was born.⁸⁹⁰ In this way, Mary counteracts the curse put on disobedient Eve. In the *Passionael*, Bernard of Clairvaux is quoted reminding the reader that God had instigated this curse on women to bear children with pain (based on Genesis 3:16).⁸⁹¹ Mary, the new Eve, gave birth to Jesus, the new Adam, thereby undoing the wrong Eve

⁸⁸⁶ *Spiegel*, fol. 11v and fol. 18. On the latter folio, reference is made to Gideon's fleece which absorbed dew while the ground stayed dry (Judges 6:36-38).

⁸⁸⁷ *Bienboeck*, fols. m4-m5.

⁸⁸⁸ *Sielentroest*, fol. 17. In the *Passionael*, St. Euphemia is not credited with this statement.

⁸⁸⁹ *Passionael* (*Veldener*), *somerstuc, eugenia*, fol. QQ4v.

⁸⁹⁰ *Passionael, winterstuc, onser vrouwen annunciacio*, fol. g3v.

⁸⁹¹ *Passionael, winterstuc, onser vrouwen annunciacio*, fol. g3v. See Lucas, *Women*, p. 16 for the importance of Bernard of Clairvaux on mariolatry.

had done. Further still, Eve our first mother, is a mother of the mortals, but Mary is a mother of the living.

Since Mary was perceived to be free from the stain of carnal lust and original sin in the act by which she conceived Jesus, it was not necessary for her to be churched. She is praised that she did however go to be purified on her first visit to the temple after giving birth.⁸⁹²

Marina Warner, who has researched the various roles and functions of the Virgin Mary, points to the influence of the friars in promoting Mary's maternal image.⁸⁹³ The mix of the cults of humility and poverty with that of Mary resulted in a more identifiable mother-type for the 'common human being'. The introduction of the 'Christmas manger' in the thirteenth century church confronted the faithful with more or less realistic imagery.

Although Mary was inimitable in certain matters, Mary's motherhood became modelled on a more human basis as emphasis on Christ's humanity increased. The attention which shifted from 'atonement-resurrection and last judgement to creation and incarnation' ushered in a new devotion centring on Christ's humanity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁸⁹⁴ Initially under Cistercian auspices, Jesus was no longer depicted as an omnipotent being, but as a helpless and charming child. The Cistercians drew their intake from adults, who were raised within families and not in monasteries as oblates were. Familial pictures would appeal to the adults. The cult of Mary as mother went hand in hand with Jesus as adorable infant.⁸⁹⁵ Jesus is depicted as a sweet, innocent, pure and approachable human child.

⁸⁹² *Passionael, winterstuc, onser vrouwen lichtmisse*, fol. v9v.

⁸⁹³ Warner, *Alone*, p. 182.

⁸⁹⁴ Walker Bynum, C., *Jesus as mother. Studies in the spirituality of the high middle ages* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1982), p. 17.

⁸⁹⁵ Shahar, *Childhood*, p. 18.

Clarissa Atkinson views Mary's motherhood as one predominantly perceived to be filled with suffering and sorrow, with which the reader could identify herself.⁸⁹⁶ Ultimately of course, Mary must relinquish her son, for instance in the *Spiegel* where the sorrows of Mary, as *Mater Dolorosa*, were prefigured by Adam and Eve's mourning for their son Abel.⁸⁹⁷ But equally, I find that Mary's motherhood is also characterised as a happy one. For example, just looking at the infant and thinking or talking about him brings a smile to her face.⁸⁹⁸ Sorrowful or happy, Mary's maternal intimacy and the emotional attachment to her son is crucial because she is made credible in medieval eyes, particularly in her role as *mediatrix*.

In this capacity, in one exemplum, Mary, as Mother of Mercy, had been elevated to the position as protector of the entire sinful humankind. Although the trumpets had already been blown on the day of judgement, she saved humankind from eradication.⁸⁹⁹ She showed Jesus her 'virginal breasts' and reminded him that she had nursed him. She single-handedly postponed the day of judgement. The theme of breast-feeding is caught up in complex symbolism, but it also reflects her nurturing capacity and underlines Christ's humanity. Suckling a child was also the act for the common woman to identify with, excluded as she was from emulating the Virgin in matters pertaining to intercourse and birth.

A quick word must now be said about the relationship of Mary with the rest of the Holy Family. The role allotted to her by medieval society must also be understood in relation to that of her other family members. As explained in the previous chapter, leading churchmen remodelled Joseph from an old cuckold to become a positive and sprightly role model as a husband. In the later middle ages, he also served as a new role model as young father of the infant. Joseph, Christ's father

⁸⁹⁶ 'Maternity was understood to include intense suffering and thus was easily associated with the pains and sorrows of Christ and Mary...', Atkinson, C.W., *The oldest vocation. Christian motherhood in the middle ages* (Ithaca, London, 1991), p. 145.

⁸⁹⁷ *Spiegel*, fol. 54. The woodcut, a *Pietà*, showing Mary receiving Christ's body in outstretched arms, is printed on fol. 53v.

⁸⁹⁸ *Sielentroest*, fol. 71v.

on earth or rather foster father, had to comply with the criteria of the late middle ages to make Joseph worthy of this extraordinary child. Also, the new Joseph was allocated virtues that resembled those of the members of the burgher class of merchants, artisans and tradesman; Joseph became a true family provider.⁹⁰⁰ Reflecting ideals of the later middle ages Mary, Joseph and the infant form a happy family unit.

This unit is also depicted in some works of art, for instance in the painting of *The Meal with the Holy Family* by Jacob Jansz.⁹⁰¹ The family is seated at a table with the child on Mary's lap, she is spooning up porridge for the child to eat, whilst Joseph cuts the rye bread. The emergence of this contented cohesive unit in which emotional domestic relationships are displayed was perceived as ideal.

This nuclear family unit itself was part of a wider family network, that of the Holy Kinship which consisted of Anne's three daughters by three successive husbands and their progeny. The crowded scenes of the Holy Kinship on some late fifteenth-century paintings show Anne, her three daughters and their children or even more relatives. See, for instance, the *Holy Kindred* painted by the Master of the Amsterdam Holy Kindred.⁹⁰² Ordinary families could recognise themselves in these credible family relationships.

4.2.2 Fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth

As discussed in chapter 3, according to St. Augustine's threefold benefits of marriage, having children (*proles*) is one of the main benefits and objects of tying the marital knot. In most of our primary sources the expected result of medieval

⁸⁹⁹ *Sterfboeck*, fols. l4v-l5v.

⁹⁰⁰ Drage Hale, R., 'Joseph as mother. Adaptation and appropriation in the construction of male virtue', *Medieval mothering*, J. Carmi Parsons and B. Wheeler eds. (New York, London, 1996), p. 107.

⁹⁰¹ Châtelet, *Painting*, plate 112.

⁹⁰² Châtelet, *Painting*, illustration 102 and p. 222. The painting shows Anne, Mary and her child, her sisters Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome. Also, Joachim, Joseph, Elizabeth, and the children St. James the Less, John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, St. James the Greater and St. Simon are depicted.

marriage would almost always automatically entail raising a family. Refusing to marry therefore equals refusing to become a mother.

Female fertility plays an important role in the sources. For instance, the *topos* of restricting fertility within marriage (how to remain as free as possible from sexual desire and still conceive children) occurs. After childbirth couples may decide to live in chastity as did, for example, St. Bridget of Sweden and her husband who promised each other mutual chastity in perpetuity after they had had eight children.⁹⁰³

Often, when children were desired and fertility was diminished divine intervention was called for. Examples of women who in old age became pregnant are numerous. Emerentiana conceives Anne in her sixties after having been married in her teens.⁹⁰⁴ The angel who visits the lamenting Joachim, cast from worship because of his childlessness, announces Mary's future birth in the *Passionael* and mentions God's assistance to sterile parents.⁹⁰⁵ The angel recalls some precursors: Sarah was ninety years old when she became pregnant, Rachel was barren a long time before she bore Joseph. The author of *Spiegel* compares Hanna's becoming fertile by a miracle, with that of Mary's conception of Jesus.⁹⁰⁶ All these barren women featuring in the Old Testament conceived in a miraculous and divine set of circumstances.

But younger women's wish for conception was granted too. The mother of Catherine of Alexandria only conceived her daughter after a crucifix had been left in the temple replacing pagan statues.⁹⁰⁷ St. Catherine of Vadstena donates a piece of the clothing of her mother St. Bridget of Sweden as an amulet to an unfortunate woman.⁹⁰⁸ The woman in question, who had disappointed her

⁹⁰³ *Birgitten*, fol. A7.

⁹⁰⁴ *Historie anna*, fols. b2-b2v.

⁹⁰⁵ *Passionael*, *somerstuc, onser vrouwen gheboert*, fol. v10v.

⁹⁰⁶ *Spiegel*, fol. 25.

⁹⁰⁷ *Katherinen*, fols. a2v-a3.

⁹⁰⁸ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. G7-G7v.

husband by giving birth to seven stillborn sons, is now assured that she will bear a healthy girl. The parents of St. Euphrosyne who fervently desire a child involve themselves in charitable acts.⁹⁰⁹ Reminiscent of Anne and Joachim, they serve the poor day and night and they dispense alms. It is only after a large pecuniary gift to the abbot of the local monastery, guaranteeing the abbot's intercession through prayers to God, that the couple duly conceives.

It helps, of course, to rely on the direct assistance of a renowned saint in the tricky business of conception. In an exemplum, St. Mary Magdalene helps a French princely couple to conceive a child through her intercession to God.⁹¹⁰ St. Anne is credited with having cured devout infertile couples in her own right.⁹¹¹

Not being fertile may instigate women to behave irrationally. For instance, because she cannot conceive an empress becomes depressed and decides to kill the emperor's only son by his deceased wife.⁹¹² Also, the wife who, disappointed by the lukewarm response of her husband in bed, is pondering taking on a lover, acts partly from her disappointment in not having conceived.⁹¹³ As may be recalled, the author Jan van Denemarken did his utmost to demonstrate that St. Anne's motivation to remarry was not because of unchaste feelings, but the fact that she was fecund.

The lecherous goddess Venus, depicted extremely scantily dressed in the woodcut, resorts to requesting a piece from the mandrake plant in order to conceive from her many lovers.⁹¹⁴ Female nakedness reminded the audience that

⁹⁰⁹ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc, eufrosina*, fols. NN8-NN8v.

⁹¹⁰ *Passionael, somerstuc, maria magdalena*, fols. n1v-n2.

⁹¹¹ *Historie anna*, infertile couples feature in three exempla, see fol. n6, fol. o5 (Anne intercedes with God) and fol. s2v.

⁹¹² *Seven mannen*, fol. a5v.

⁹¹³ *Seven mannen*, fol. e1.

⁹¹⁴ *Twespraec*, fol. d4. Mandrake plants are associated with fertility in the middle ages, Cadden, *Meanings*, pp. 210-211.

nudity and sexuality were part of the Fall.⁹¹⁵ The plant however, refuses to have anything to do with loose women and chases her away. The moral admonishes the reader to be aware of unchaste women.

After conception pregnancy follows, but the long road to confinement is perilous. It is clearly recognised that a pregnant women is in need of special protection or has special wishes. In the *Bienboeck* an exemplum follows a sermon on virtuousness; in it a charitable abbot saves the life of a pregnant pauper by having an ox slaughtered especially to feed her.⁹¹⁶ After the meal the ox is miraculously restored to the abbot. Mary saves a pregnant woman who was nearly tempted by the devil to renounce her faith.⁹¹⁷ She also rescues a pregnant woman from drowning by sheltering her under her cloak.⁹¹⁸ St. Mary Magdalene prevents a pregnant woman from being shipwrecked.⁹¹⁹ Sigrid, pregnant with St. Bridget of Sweden, is saved from the same fate because, as is explained to her in a vision after her ordeal, her baby is given to her by God.⁹²⁰ St. Clare's mother Ortulana may have gone on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1192 in a wish to become pregnant, or she may have feared difficult confinement.⁹²¹ Whilst pregnant with St. Clare fearing the perils of childbirth, she prays in front of a cross and is told by a heavenly voice that she shall give birth to a light which will shine on the world.⁹²²

Labour is a recognisable separate stage. Eve's punishment for her disobedience was to bring forth children in pain. In an exemplum, warning against ungratefulness, a serpent in labour tells her yet unborn children to be thankful towards her since she has fed them with her blood, kept them warm, suffered

⁹¹⁵ Nichols, J.A., 'Female nudity and sexuality in medieval art', *New images of women. Essays toward a cultural anthropology*, E.E. DuBruck ed. (Lewiston/Queenston, Lampeter, 1989), pp. 165-206.

⁹¹⁶ *Bienboeck*, fol. 12.

⁹¹⁷ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *onser vrouwen lichtmisse*, fol. u3v and *Miraculen*, fol. 21.

⁹¹⁸ *Miraculen*, fols. 56-56v.

⁹¹⁹ *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *maria magdalena*, fols. n5-n5v.

⁹²⁰ *Birgitten*, fol. A5v.

⁹²¹ *Clara*, fol. aa1v.

⁹²² *Clara*, fol. aa2 and *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), *somerstuc*, *clara*, fol. C3v.

pain and will die because of it.⁹²³ The phoenix is only too glad that she will reproduce upon her death through her ashes.⁹²⁴ She explains to the serpent who advocates the solace of marital companionship, the conjugal pleasures and the goodness of children, that she is spared many tribulations. She will not have to relinquish her chastity, she will not have to carry a child, she will not have to give birth with pain, she will not have to raise a child, or be anxious about it. The wardens of the prison in which St. Felicitas (d. 203) was delivered wondered how she would cope with the pain that waited her in the Games at Carthage when she had already suffered so much in delivering her baby.⁹²⁵ Unperturbed, the saint was certain that God would suffer for her.

Saintly intercession helped with the pain and dangers faced by childbirth. St. Margaret of Antioch who is allowed a last prayer before being beheaded, is granted by a voice from heaven that if pregnant women request her intercessory power with God they will be spared the dangers of childbirth.⁹²⁶ A queen donning a coin with a portrait of St. Anne gives birth with happiness and remains in good health.⁹²⁷ The Augustinian Nicolaas van Dordrecht recommends a woman in difficult labour, taking her last confession fearing for her life, to pray to St. Kunera.⁹²⁸ The woman then quickly delivers.

Some mothers are fortunate enough to be singled out to share Mary's experience in bringing forth a child painlessly. This could happen in two ways. Firstly, a saintly mother is rewarded with a little help from above. For instance, St. Bridget of Sweden, a staunch devotee of Mary, receives assistance from a mysterious woman (probably Mary, but she is not mentioned by name) in the birthing

⁹²³ *Parabolen*, fols. m1v-m2.

⁹²⁴ *Parabolen*, fols. n5-n5v.

⁹²⁵ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *perpetue ende felicitas*, fol. y4v.

⁹²⁶ *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *margriet*, fol. m1v.

⁹²⁷ *Historie anna*, fols. s8v-t1. The story is a subplot in the exemplum featuring Procopius, the student from Prague.

⁹²⁸ *Kunera*, fols. d3-d3v.

chamber, who vanishes into thin air after the saint no longer experiences pain.⁹²⁹ Secondly, mothers giving birth to their future holy daughters were shown not to have suffered. Pieterneel, Liedwij van Schiedam's mother, had difficulties in delivering all her children with the notable exception of her saintly daughter.⁹³⁰

Special care for the mother giving birth is also mentioned. In an exemplum, warning the credulous to be vigilant, a wolf offers a sow with birth pangs a place to give birth to her babies, but the sow wisely refuses the offer.⁹³¹ In another exemplum, warning against abusers of the kind-hearted, a charitable female dog offers her home and bed to another dog in labour, and, soon after, is then thrown out by the mother dog and her young pups.⁹³² In a charitable act, St. Elizabeth of Hungary cares for a recently delivered mother, donating her maidservant's sleeves as swaddles for the new-born girl.⁹³³ Liedwij van Schiedam singles out poor women in childbed for charitable purposes.⁹³⁴ She dispenses bread, beer, butter and money to them until they are able to support themselves again.

4.2.3 Maternal responsibilities

4.2.3.1 Guidance for mothers

In chapter 2, a mother's hand in her daughter's education was mentioned, but the exempla also appear to demonstrate how a mother should treat and teach her child.

For example, a mother should set a good example. In an exemplum where teachers are admonished only to teach when they themselves are beyond

⁹²⁹ *Birgitten*, fol. A6v. For St. Bridget's experiences on motherhood, see Nieuwland, J., 'Motherhood and sanctity in the Life of Saint Birgitta of Sweden. An insoluble conflict?', *Sanctity and motherhood. Essays on holy mothers in the middle ages*, A.B. Mulder-Bakker ed. (Groningen, 1995), pp. 297-319. The experiences mentioned do not come to the fore in any great detail in her short legend in our incunabula.

⁹³⁰ *Liedwij*, fol. a2v.

⁹³¹ *Aesop*, fol. f5v.

⁹³² *Aesop*, fol. d5.

⁹³³ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c5v.

reproach, mother crab chides her daughter for not being able to walk in a straight line.⁹³⁵ Daughter invites mother to give a demonstration, which of course mother, being a crab, cannot do. In an exemplum teaching that the poor should not aspire to equal their social betters, mother frog inflates herself in front of her children in her quest to obtain the size of the ox, but she explodes.⁹³⁶

Some pearls of wisdom are thrown in as well. For instance, all children should be treated equally. A she-monkey prefers one child above the other and she protects only her dearest child when being hunted by dogs.⁹³⁷ When she escapes her least loved child jumps on her back, and so forces her to drop her best loved one. In time, she learns to love the former better than beforehand.

That it is better not to sing one's own praises is made clear in the exemplum of the foolish she-monkey who commends the beauty of her own child to Jupiter, only to be mocked by him.⁹³⁸ Surely, it is better to be admired by others for performing charitable acts.

A mother should advise her child well. In an exemplum, a concerned mother prays for her silly daughter to become wise.⁹³⁹ The daughter is aware of her mother's concern. When the daughter sees a man spurring on his horse she begs him to spur her body on too and that her mother would gladly pay for it. The man consequently took advantage of her. Clearly, this mother needed to give her daughter more relevant advice, rather than rely on help from above.

Outside help is not to be spurned. The frustrated but well-meaning mother of St. Catherine of Alexandria, takes her daughter to a hermit to enlist his help to

934 *Liedwij*, fol. d3.
935 *Aesop*, fol. o4.
936 *Aesop*, fols. g6-g6v.
937 *Aesop*, fols. p4v-p5.
938 *Aesop*, fol. o6v.
939 *Aesop*, fol. d6v.

reason with her stubborn daughter who refuses to marry and to ask him to locate a compatible husband.⁹⁴⁰

4.2.3.2 Practical care

Who is responsible for the physical care of the daughter and who is looking after the children? Unfortunately, there is not much information given in the sources, although some *topoi* may be gleaned.

St. Margaret of Antioch is given to a wet nurse.⁹⁴¹ Catherine of Vadstena is given a wet nurse as well, but she prefers to suckle her mother's breasts instead of those of the unchaste wet nurse's.⁹⁴² Refusing to suck from the breast was considered an early act indicative of the holiness of the infant.⁹⁴³

It appears natural for a mother to suckle her own child. For instance, a mother goat, captured by the wolf, is allowed home to nourish her baby so it will not die of hunger on the condition that she returns with her young.⁹⁴⁴ Of course she does not return, and the moral added is that it is better to have little in certainty, than much in doubt.

Nurses do not appear often in the sources. In one exemplum a child is cared for in the castle by three nurses, one who feeds it, one who washes it and one who puts it to bed.⁹⁴⁵ Even so, their care does not protect the child from being attacked by a serpent.

Practical guidelines are specified in the *Scaecspel* where the chess piece of the Queen is discussed.⁹⁴⁶ Although the auspicious heading 'Queen' raises the

⁹⁴⁰ *Katherinen*, fol. a5v.

⁹⁴¹ *Passionael, somerstuc, margriet*, fol. l8.

⁹⁴² *Katerina van watsteyn*, fol. C4.

⁹⁴³ Bejczy, I., 'The *sacra infantia* in medieval hagiography', *The church and childhood*, D. Wood ed. (Studies in church history 31; Oxford, 1994), p. 144.

⁹⁴⁴ *Twespraec*, fols. n2-n2v.

⁹⁴⁵ *Seven mannen*, fols. b5-b7v.

⁹⁴⁶ *Scaecspel*, fols. b2-b3.

expectation that reference will follow to specific maternal tasks, it is in fact *parental* care (which, of course, includes maternal care) which is discussed. 'Natural reasons' dictate that parents should feed and clothe their offspring. Poor parents should teach their children a job, rich parents ought to teach their children wisdom. God will punish those parents whose children are damned. Parents must share their inheritance with their children.

Raising children with a job in mind is also mentioned in the exemplum where Emperor Octavianus is praised for teaching his children a profession.⁹⁴⁷ His son is taught sports and combat skills while his daughter is taught to make cloth. When raising a son, it is stated, one ought to teach him a profession, but when raising a girl the most important factor is to keep her chaste. However, it is predominantly mothers who are involved with their daughters, as the examples which follow show.

4.2.3.3 Maternal guidance

Having looked at the methods children should be taught in chapter 2, they will now be complemented with examples concerning the material daughters were taught.

For example, Ytaberta gives her daughter St. Gertrude of Nivelles a religious education day and night from the time she was a small child.⁹⁴⁸ Hence her daughter is wiser than her peers. Clare was taught the rudiments of faith by her mother.⁹⁴⁹ Although Catherine of Vadstena had been educated from her early childhood, her mother St. Bridget taught her spiritual exercises when Catherine went to Rome to visit her mother.⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁷ *Twespraec*, fol. g6v.

⁹⁴⁸ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *gheertruut*, fols. z4v.

⁹⁴⁹ *Clara*, fol. aa2v.

⁹⁵⁰ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fol. G4.

Parents ought to impart to their children a religious education and also instil into them Christian guidelines. In a discussion on the seven sacraments in the *Boec van der biechten*, it is mentioned under the sacrament of baptism that parents should teach their children about the Christian religion (not further specified) and the *pater noster*.⁹⁵¹ Under the sacrament of confirmation, it is stated that parents should not let their children die without their being confirmed.⁹⁵² Under the sacrament of the Eucharist, parents are exhorted to show their children how to prepare themselves for confession.⁹⁵³

Girls were taught to behave properly. For example, St. Margaret (alias Pelagia) was watched closely by her parents and taught good manners.⁹⁵⁴

Sometimes, children regret not having been raised properly by their parents. The most familiar example is perhaps that of the son who is condemned to death for theft and accuses his mother for not having castigated him in his childhood, and who on his way to the gallows bites off her nose.⁹⁵⁵ In an exemplum, the tormented soul Prevento warns her friend Adoptata to change her life for the better.⁹⁵⁶ She gives the example of her cousin Kyliana whom she has seen being carried off to hell. Her cousin was cursing her mother for having given birth to her, for not killing her in her early childhood, for nursing her and for not raising her correctly.

4.2.3.4 Miracles

Both child miracles wrought by the female saints, as well as the persons at the receiving end of the miracle are mentioned. The first topic demonstrates the frequency and efficacy of female saints' involvement, and the second topic shows

⁹⁵¹ *Biechten*, fol. dd3v.

⁹⁵² *Biechten*, fol. dd4v.

⁹⁵³ *Biechten*, fol. dd5.

⁹⁵⁴ *Passionael, somerstuc, margarita*, fol. r7.

⁹⁵⁵ *Aesop*, fol. o1v. A similar exemplum featuring a son and his father appears in *Scaecspel*, fol. b2v and *Sielentroest*, fols. 129-129v.

⁹⁵⁶ *Sterfboeck*, fols. k5-l3v.

in detail who the beneficiaries were. Mary, in her image of mother of all, is a great rescuer of children. I have not discriminated between boys and girls as recipients of her favours, since the examples set a pattern which is continued in particular in the exempla attached to the female saints' *Lives*. Also, the texts do not always disclose the sex of the children involved.

Mary saves a child from a burning house after it had been blessed in Mary's name when the mother was forced to leave it unattended.⁹⁵⁷ Mary releases a son from prison, after the pleading mother kidnapped the Christ child from Mary's statue in the church.⁹⁵⁸ A virgin who had promised to live in chastity is sold to a knight by her destitute parents.⁹⁵⁹ By virtue of the fact that her name is Mary she is saved from being ravished, and the knight is rid of unchaste feelings.

Some saints follow in Mary's footsteps and assist children in need. The miracles not only give an insight into common ailments and accidents occurring to medieval children, but more importantly, to their parents' emotional requests and responses. This in turn shows the care and love parents bestow on their children in need. St. Brigid of Ireland (d. ca. 525) heals a twelve year old mute daughter and is thanked for this by the girl's mother.⁹⁶⁰ A girl is healed at home by St. Walburga (d. 779), to the immense relief of her parents.⁹⁶¹ St. Samina (no date) restores health to the daughter of the house where she intends to take shelter for the night.⁹⁶² St. Gertrude appears in a vision to a blind and handicapped girl lodging in a convent at Nivelles, who is with her parents desperately trying to find a physician to heal her.⁹⁶³ Gertrude tells the girl to visit the church of St. Paul where her bed is being stored; as soon as the girl lies on it she is healed.

⁹⁵⁷ *Miraculen*, fol. 35 and *Sielentroest*, fol. 83.

⁹⁵⁸ *Miraculen*, fols. 13v-14, *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *onser vrouwen gheboert*, fols. u2v-u3 and *Sielentroest*, fols. 85-85v.

⁹⁵⁹ *Miraculen*, fols. 32-32v.

⁹⁶⁰ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *brygida*, fol. L5v.

⁹⁶¹ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *walburch*, fol. L7v.

⁹⁶² *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *samina*, fol. v6v.

⁹⁶³ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *gheertruut*, fols. z2-z2v.

Elizabeth of Hungary performs miracles posthumously.⁹⁶⁴ She helps a mother who had carried her lame daughter to the saint's grave and who had prayed there for ten days.

A less grave affliction occurs in a discussion on the Third Commandment (observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy) to a girl who dances all the time.⁹⁶⁵ Her worried parents are increasingly concerned with her well-being and they invoke the help, not of a saint, but of a passing brother. He convinces her to stop dancing on earth so she will dance forever with Christ in the afterlife.

The late medieval legend of St. Kunera, whose cult reflects contemporary interests, is positively teeming with miraculous acts performed for anxious mothers (and fathers). It clearly shows a dependency on child miracles. Kunera raises a drowned daughter of distraught parents who had been frantically dragging the well all day after they returned home from worshipping at the saint's church.⁹⁶⁶ A mother whose child has drowned in a cauldron promises wheat and wine if Kunera brings back life to her child, and Kunera obliges.⁹⁶⁷ She restores the sight of two children whose parents had taken them to her church.⁹⁶⁸ A mother spends an entire night in tears out of sorrow for her crippled young daughter.⁹⁶⁹ Only when the girl herself invokes 'Mother Kunera', she is cured.

4.2.3.5 Maternal love

There is no commandment for parents to love their children, but there is a commandment for children to love their parents. As seen in the child miracles, it is depicted as natural for parents to love and care for their children. Mothers are emotionally involved with their daughters, and there is a recognition of the special status of children. There is a definite *sentiment de l'enfance*. Mothers' emotional

⁹⁶⁴ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c8.

⁹⁶⁵ *Sielentroest*, fols. 52-53.

⁹⁶⁶ *Kunera*, fols. c4-c4v.

⁹⁶⁷ *Kunera*, fols. c4v-c5.

⁹⁶⁸ *Kunera*, fols. d2-d2v.

involvement is most dramatically shown in examples of a mother attempting to prevent her child's death.

A good example of maternal love appears in Solomon's judgement.⁹⁷⁰ When two quarrelling mothers were taken before the wise King Solomon he ruled that the child each claimed was hers should be halved. The true mother rather saw her child alive and in a stranger's care than dead, so she consented to give the child away. The wise king then duly restored the baby to the true mother.

Maternal love may take the form of maternal opposition to the daughter's plans. When St. Christina (4th century) refuses to worship the idols and is subsequently incarcerated and beaten at her father's instigation, her mother implores her daughter to change her mind.⁹⁷¹ She tears her clothing, cries and begs her daughter to worship the idols, but Christina cannot be persuaded, not even when further torments follow. St. Perpetua's father implores her in vain on his knees in his and her mother's name not to become a martyr.⁹⁷² The couple had even brought her her small child, not yet weaned, to persuade her to worship the idols and not to die as a martyr, but the saint displayed her perseverance.

These examples then show the powerful love the mother fosters for her child.

4.2.4 A variety of motherhoods

The term mother is used to signify a large variety of motherhoods. Such is the strength of the term that it can be used for many purposes.

Occasionally, mothers appear metaphorically. For instance, in convents, the spiritual head was also called mother. The abbess St. Walburga is referred to as *huusmoeder* (housemother) at her convent at Hildesheim.⁹⁷³ Mary calls St.

⁹⁶⁹ *Kunera*, fol. d5.

⁹⁷⁰ *Sielentroest*, fol. 139v.

⁹⁷¹ *Passionael*, *somerstuc*, *cristina*, fols. n7-n7v and *Sielentroest*, fol. 88.

⁹⁷² *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *perpetue ende felicitas*, fol. y4v.

⁹⁷³ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *walburgh*, fol. L7.

Catherine of Vadstena her 'cherished daughter',⁹⁷⁴ implying that Mary regards herself as the saint's mother.

Mystical motherhood, like mystical marriage, is a *topos* which frequently occurs. Christine Walker Bynum points to the female influence on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century piety.⁹⁷⁵ Whereas male writing concentrates on the Virgin Mary, women show interest in aspects of Christ's humanity, with emphasis on the infant Jesus. Also, God is portrayed as a mother figure.

In our sources, mystical motherhood concentrates predominantly on the nurturing capacity of the 'mother'. It is manifested in the way the 'mother', or holy woman, imitates motherhood. She can, for instance, bring forth milk. It was particularly apt for a virgin to lactate, because as a virgin she was in the exclusive position to imitate the Virgin Mary. In the legend of Liedwij of Schiedam, the holy woman bestows her maternal affection on the Christ child by lactating.⁹⁷⁶ Nuptial contemplation had given way to spiritual motherhood: the lover became the infant.⁹⁷⁷ Liedwij's breasts swell up, of course on Christmas Eve (1427), and she lactates as a sign that she is 'worthy to seek Christ'. A reliable witness, the widow Katrijn, attests to the milk's nurturing quality: she takes three draughts and is completely satisfied.

This nurturing capacity was literally removed from some virgin martyrs. After St. Agatha's (date uncertain) breasts were cut off she boasted to have a spare pair in her soul which had been reserved for Christ from her youth.⁹⁷⁸ St. Barbara's breasts were cut off too.⁹⁷⁹ After her decapitation, St. Catherine of Alexandria's

⁹⁷⁴ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fol. C8v.

⁹⁷⁵ Walker Bynum, *Jesus*, in particular p. 18. Throughout her book she mentions examples of maternal imagery.

⁹⁷⁶ *Liedwij*, fols. e3v-e4v. See also Herlihy, *Households*, p. 120.

⁹⁷⁷ These maternal experiences went beyond the intention of spiritual advisers who exhorted the reader to observe Mary and help her care for Jesus, Atkinson, *Vocation*, p. 163.

⁹⁷⁸ *Passionael, winterstuc, aecht*, fol. u6.

⁹⁷⁹ *Passionael, winterstuc, barbara*, fol. l6v and *Sielentroest*, fol. 89v.

body overflows with milk.⁹⁸⁰ After St. Christina's breasts were cut off, milk trickles out.⁹⁸¹

A good example of a surrogate mother is Elizabeth of Hungary. Among her many charitable and compassionate acts rank those involving children.⁹⁸² For instance, she opens her house for poor mothers and small children. Whenever she is in attendance, the children follow her as 'if they would [follow] their own mother', and she brings them toys. After her husband's death she continues to involve herself with mothers and children: she bathes dirty children, and she takes care of a woman recuperating from childbirth.⁹⁸³ In a string listing her charitable works it is mentioned that she also becomes godmother to numerous children.⁹⁸⁴

Childminders are to assume maternal responsibilities. A destitute woman, mistreated by her husband, becomes a childminder to earn some money.⁹⁸⁵ The husband slays the child and the woman, who is the main suspect, is condemned to be buried alive. The child Jesus is brought in on Mary's arm and he questions the dead child. The truth emerges and the woman is saved.

In a discourse on the Eighth Commandment (you shall not give false evidence), an empress suffers from men from all walks of life bearing false witness against her.⁹⁸⁶ The most blatant example is that of the man who falls in love with her, but whose love she does not reciprocate. The empress, when fallen on hard times and turned nanny, is accused by this man who murders the child in her charge. Mary does not restore the child's life but she saves the innocent empress.

980 *Passionael, winterstuc, katherina*, fol. e3v.

981 *Passionael, somerstuc, cristina*, fol. n8 and *Sielentroest*, fol. 88v.

982 *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fols. c2-c2v.

983 *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c5v.

984 *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol c2.

985 *Miraculen*, fols. 58-58v and *Sterfboeck*, fols. v3-v4.

986 *Sielentroest*, fols. 150-153v. The exemplum also appears in *Miraculen*, fols. 90-92v.

Frequently, when a stepmother is discussed in the sources it is in relation to the sexuality of her stepsons.⁹⁸⁷ Other non-gender specific examples occur too.

When his master is posed a riddle by a gardener who asks him why some herbs grow better than others the clever Aesop knows the answer.⁹⁸⁸ He explains that when a widow with children marries a widower with children her own children will grow better, because she will look after them better. In this metaphor, the earth is mother of the children who require less attention and effort and stepmother of those who do.

Good stepmothers occur too. For instance, when St. Thecla of Iconium has to appear in court because she refuses to reciprocate the advances of Alexander and to honour the gods, a matron provides lodging to her. The matron's recently departed daughter appears to her mother in her dream asking her mother to take on the young woman in her stead.⁹⁸⁹ Thecla could then pray for the daughter to heaven. The matron, now promoted to stepmother, refers to the saint as her 'dear daughter', and argues in Thecla's favour at court.⁹⁹⁰

Then there is also the mother-in-law, in this case of the husband of the daughter. When the mother-in-law makes an appearance in texts it is more often than not in connection with 'age-old taboos', and highlighting difficulties separating affectionate from sexual emotions.⁹⁹¹ So too in the following exemplum in which a newly-wed husband is offered a place in the household of his wife's parents.⁹⁹² It is soon rumoured abroad that his mother-in-law has designs on him. She attempts to save her reputation by having him assassinated, but she confesses the crime to her priest. When her priest and she argue, he violates the secret of

⁹⁸⁷ See, for instance, the wicked empress-stepmother who attempts to seduce the emperor's son by his former wife, *Seven mannen*, fol. b1. Or see the exemplum of the princely son who loves his stepmother to such an extent that he falls ill because his love is unrequited, *Ehebüchlein*, fols. c1v-c2.

⁹⁸⁸ *Aesop*, fol. b3.

⁹⁸⁹ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc, tecla*, fol. OO8v.

⁹⁹⁰ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc, tecla*, fol. PP1.

⁹⁹¹ Stiller, N., *Eve's orphans. Mothers and daughters in medieval English literature* (Contributions in women's studies 16; Westport, London, 1980), p. 64.

⁹⁹² *Miraculen*, fols. 16-17 and *Passionael, somerstuc, onser vrouwen gheboert*, fols. u3v-u4.

the confessional and tells the truth *en public*. Condemned to burning at the stake, Mary saves her because she has always prayed to her.

At first sight, the theme of the 'female as father' appears to fit in rather uncomfortably in an array of maternal themes. However, it is just an elaboration on the theme encountered in the previous chapter, that of the transvestite saint who attempts to escape marriage. In this chapter, the transvestite saint is taken one step further: she is being accused of fathering a child.

The fact that the sex of the saint is revealed at the very end of her legend after her demise, after her long silent suffering, adds to the holiness of the saint. The reader is able to empathise since she is aware from the beginning of the legend that the saint is, in fact, incapable of fathering a child.

The theme of the female as father has parallels with both the *topos* of the transvestite female saint (such as St. Thecla who dresses herself in male garb to follow St. Paul's band of disciples,⁹⁹³ or the female who escapes marriage dressed as a man) and stories in which males are unjustly accused of fatherhood. An exemplum of the latter appears, for example, in *Van den leven der heiligen Vaderen* in which the holy father Macharius features.⁹⁹⁴ He is a recluse who is occasionally forced out of the desert to sell his handicrafts for his upkeep. When accused of impregnating a young woman he is beaten and sent on the streets with pots and cruxifices tied around his neck. Although he is not the father, he works hard to maintain both the mother and her unborn child. When the girl is experiencing a difficult labour it is interpreted that she is being punished for past wrongdoing and she finally admits the truth: a neighbour is the culprit. The crux of the story is that the unjustly suffering person places trust in God so that everything turns out well.

⁹⁹³ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc, tecla*, fol. OO8.

⁹⁹⁴ *Vaderen*, fols. C4-C4v.

St. Theodora then, ashamed of having committed adultery, flees dressed in a man's garb to a monastery where she assumes the habit pretending to be Theodorus.⁹⁹⁵ Whilst carrying out duties which take her outside the monastery, she is accused of fathering the child of a loose young woman. Theodora is ousted from the monastery. But she raises the child with patience and humility, feeding it on animal milk, and is allowed to return after a few years when she and the child are enclosed in a cell. After her demise, when it is revealed to the abbot in a dream that she is a female, and as such had been wrongly accused of fathering a child, the saint's holiness is apparent.

St. Marina finds herself in deep water as well.⁹⁹⁶ She was, in the first instance, admitted to a monastery not to escape marriage but at the behest of her father. Ever since his admission to the monastery he missed his daughter Marina terribly and had arranged for his so-called son Marinus to join the congregation. Like Theodora she too is unjustly accused, ousted, and she takes care of the child. She raises it with patience earning the respect of the brothers who allow her to return. Upon re-admission she is not enclosed but given the dirtiest jobs to do. That the brother is actually a female is only revealed at the end, when she has already been forgiven by her fellow brothers because she raises the child so well, despite adverse circumstances. This fact tells perhaps more about fatherhood than motherhood and will be elaborated on below.

4.2.5 Bad example and influence, abandonment and infanticide

Apparently not every daughter was loved or raised well. Sometimes, a mother acts as a go-between in her daughter's illicit love affair. The idea of the mother exerting a bad influence on the daughter complements that of the elderly woman or widow who acts as an intermediary. The matter is of course graver, since it is the mother herself who spurs her daughter on to behave improperly instead of a

⁹⁹⁵ *Passionael, somerstuc, theodora*, fols. l6v-l8 and *Sielentroest*, fols. 126v-128v.

⁹⁹⁶ *Passionael, somerstuc, marina*, fols. g10v-h1, *Sielentroest*, fols. 91-91v and *Vaderen*, fols. C5v-C6v.

stranger. For instance, a mother encourages the friendship between her daughter and a young man while her daughter's husband is away on pilgrimage.⁹⁹⁷ When the husband returns unexpectedly, while the interloper reposes in the husband's bed, the mother tricks the husband. The young man is able to escape unnoticed. Together with her daughter she obstructs the husband's view by holding up a sheet that she and her daughter made, for the husband to admire.

A daughter who has been given an old dotard in marriage, asks her mother for help because she is thinking of committing adultery.⁹⁹⁸ Her mother advises her to gauge her husband's reaction first to any of her wrongdoing before taking a lover. The mother encourages her daughter to burn his favourite tree, kill his dog and spoil a dinner party. The long-suffering husband only acts on the last occasion. At the instigation of her husband she is bled by the local barber in order to rid her of her 'bad blood', to such an extent that she nearly dies. She is certainly deterred from taking a lover now.

A bad mother does not discourage her daughter who lives in sin with a priest.⁹⁹⁹ The daughter dies and her body is abducted by a bear in the night. The mourning mother is chided by passing friars that she had not taught her daughter well.

The Queen of the North raises her beautiful daughter with 'venom'.¹⁰⁰⁰ Anyone who lays eyes on her risks insanity and anyone who kisses her is doomed. She sends her daughter to Alexander to become his concubine, but Alexander is saved from death by his teacher Aristotle. Alexander immediately packs her off to her mother. In the allegorical explanation the mother is equated with 'abundance

⁹⁹⁷ *Geesten*, fols. v2v-v3.

⁹⁹⁸ *Seven mannen*, fols. e2-e7.

⁹⁹⁹ *Sielentroest*, fol. 90.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Geesten*, fols. b5-b6v. It is not clear whether the Queen raises her daughter literally with venom, or whether it is meant that she raises her badly. In the allegorical explanation, it is mentioned that she taught her daughter to be unchaste and gluttonous. These two properties are then likened to the soul's venom.

of temporal items' which leads to death and destruction of body and soul, while the daughter represents 'lewdness' and 'gluttony' which is venom of the soul.

Duchess Remonde gives her daughters a bad example when she, besotted by her love for the King of Hungary, hands over her besieged castle to him.¹⁰⁰¹ The daughters just avoid being raped by cleverly hiding stinking dead chicks at their bosoms, and are left alone because they are smelly.

In an exemplum a daughter is in doubt whether to follow the lifestyle of her father or her mother.¹⁰⁰² Her father had worked hard for little yield and suffered a long illness before he died. After he had died, the weather turned so foul that his funeral had to be postponed and the neighbours spread rumours that God did not want to receive him in the afterlife. Her mother, on the other hand, was beautiful, uncharitable, gossiping, lying, unchaste as well as spendthrift. After her demise the weather was fine. It is revealed to the daughter in a dream that her father has arrived in heaven because of his good life on earth and her mother is tormented by devils because of her badly conducted earthly life. The daughter therefore chooses to follow her father's example rather than her mother's.

The exacting mother Bridget of Sweden is reprimanded by Mary.¹⁰⁰³ Instead of applying herself to yet another prayer session Mary exhorts Bridget to mend the skirts of her daughter Catherine of Vadstena. Catherine, explains Mary, had not only left her beloved husband behind but also abandoned all her kin and friends to be with her mother.

Occasionally, a mother is forced to abandon her children. Motives vary and accordingly the reader's response does. One motive is that used by the widow-

¹⁰⁰¹ *Kaetspel*, fols. i4-i4v.

¹⁰⁰² *Vaderen*, fols. D3v-D4. The exemplum also appears in an abbreviated version in the *Sielentroest*, fols. 91v-92. In the latter, the sins committed by the mother are not dwelled upon. Perhaps it was thought inappropriate in a discussion on the fourth commandment (honour your father and mother), which was after all intended for children, to spell out these sins.

¹⁰⁰³ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. F6v-F7.

saint who, freed from the responsibilities of caring for her husband, seeks to free herself from her children in order for her to follow her religious quest. Maternal love, attachment to children, is regarded as a weakness. St. Paula, setting sail to the Holy Land, leaves a young daughter, about to marry, as well as an affectionate little son standing on the quay.¹⁰⁰⁴ It is not easy for Paula who suppresses her emotions by looking up to heaven. The text continues that she leaves behind her motherhood to become Christ's handmaiden. She disengages herself from the love of her children out of love for God and only keeps one daughter, Eustochium, at her side.

After sending away her children, the widow St. Elizabeth of Hungary is able to devote her life entirely to others.¹⁰⁰⁵ She prays to God for strength to detach herself from her love towards her offspring. She succeeds at the moment she regards them as fellow Christians rather than her own children.¹⁰⁰⁶ St. Elizabeth abandons her own offspring in her religious quest to look after other children, as if they were her own. This is apparent when she opens a hospice. Also, she does not approve of poor folk abandoning their children. When a pauper leaves her child with the saint she recalls the parents and restores the baby to them to raise her themselves.¹⁰⁰⁷ In this way, Elizabeth disapproves in others what she herself has done.

Whereas the examples of holy mothers abandoning their children was regarded as 'benign neglect' that of sinful mothers approached 'criminal neglect' and sometimes it even evolved into infanticide.¹⁰⁰⁸ In chapter 3, exempla of mothers who accidentally marry their own sons, such as Alban and Gregory, have been mentioned. But before these mothers marry their sons they had abandoned them

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Passionael, winterstuc, paula*, fol. t3v.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c3 and fol. c4.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fol. c4.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fols. c5v-c6.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Newman, B., *From virile woman to woman Christ. Studies in medieval religion and literature* (Philadelphia, 1995), p. 84.

as babies because they were born from illicit and incestuous relationships.¹⁰⁰⁹

Alban is left on a road and Gregory is cast in the sea in an empty barrel. Each boy is left with identifiable material supplied by the mother which is later recognised by their wife who then discovers that she is in fact her husband's mother.

One step further from abandonment is infanticide. It is extremely uncommon to find examples in which the mother actually slays her daughter with her own hands. De Eyb mentions a lady whose town was conquered by the Romans, and who jumps into a fire with her children rather than having them suffer rape.¹⁰¹⁰ It is more common to have examples in which the mother appears not to object to the killing of her child.

In a marriage test Gautier, the husband of Griselda, examines the limits of his wife's obedience.¹⁰¹¹ At her husband's behest both her baby girl and baby boy are removed from her to be killed because, it is explained to her, she is of such humble origin. She does not dirty her own hands with blood, but she sends the children to their deaths. She wakes her daughter, kisses her, blesses her and requests that the body will be buried. However, the text explicitly states, she appears to show no emotions, she is indeed sorrowful.¹⁰¹² The author or compiler blatantly plays along with the response of the reader. Every one can identify with Griselda's plight.

In fact, unknown to Griselda, Gautier has arranged for his children to be raised by his sister. When Gautier announces his separation from Griselda and remarriage he summons his grown-up daughter to his court while pretending to Griselda that the girl is to be his new bride. When he finally reveals the truth to Griselda that he has tested her throughout life, Griselda faints from happiness and they live

¹⁰⁰⁹ For Alban see, *Ehebüchlein*, fol. k5 and, for Gregory, *Geesten*, fol. n1v.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. b2v.

¹⁰¹¹ *Kaetspel*, fols. f6-g6v.

¹⁰¹² *Kaetspel*, fol. g2v.

happily ever after. In this exemplum, being obedient to the husband supersedes Griselda's love for her children.

Although strictly speaking St. Sophia, also known as Sapientia, does not commit infanticide, she does not hesitate for one moment to volunteer her daughters to be killed for the true faith at her trial.¹⁰¹³ Called to justice because of her efforts to convert wives in Rome to the dismay of their spouses, Sophia informs the emperor that she wishes to sacrifice her daughters Fides, Spes and Caritas. Paradoxically, the central idea of a mother sacrificing her child can only work when the reader is able to recognise and emphasise with the love a mother bestows on her children. Only the new Christian faith, incorporated in Christ, is worthy of being offered her most precious gifts, i.e. her daughters. Predictably, the legend spins out the long torturous practices of the daughters and their strength in being able to suffer for Christ. In this way, the examples given in the section on maternal love, where mothers are doing their very best to prevent their daughters from dying are not dissimilar to those examples of mothers sacrificing their children for a better cause.

4.2.6 Summary

Conception and birth are discussed at great length in sources dealing with Mary (regarding both the conception of Mary and of Jesus) and her way of giving birth painlessly. These acts are inimitable and miraculous. They serve to point out the holiness both of Mary and her child.

Female saints are a great aid to mothers and future mothers alike. Saints assist in matters of fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth. Some saints are specialised helpers, others, such as Mary, offer succour in a wide variety of mishaps. Some saintly mothers giving birth can rely on help from above as well as some mothers of saintly daughters.

¹⁰¹³

Passionael (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *sophie*, fol. M3 and *Sielentroest*, fol. 16.

The authors rely heavily on exemplary behaviour based on Christian guidelines when they deal with maternal responsibilities. These responsibilities incorporate the physical and psychological well-being of her daughter. There are two main areas of interest. Firstly, the mother receives guidance. Secondly, the daughter receives guidance from the mother.

In the realms of miracles and ultimate sacrifice of the daughter the mother displays emotional response towards her daughter showing her love and attachment.

The term 'mother' is used in such a wide variety of senses, usually with corresponding positive meanings, particularly when it concerns metaphorical and mystical motherhood. An array of maternal responsibilities is assumed by the surrogate mother, childminder, and to a lesser extent stepmother and less still mother-in-law. Godmothers are not discussed at great length. The transvestite female who assumes the role of father of a child that the reader knows is not hers, is praised for raising the child well. These examples show the caring and nurturing capacity of the female, lauded to such an extent in the male that the transvestite was readmitted to the monastery she was ousted from despite having committed the grave sin of having been unchaste.

Bad mothers show how daughters should not be treated and raised. Occasionally, a mother abandons her child. For instance, some widow saints attempt to devote themselves increasingly to the religious life and regard their children as an encumbrance rather than a help. When they abandon their children it is done for the beneficiaries of their (future) ministrations. Nevertheless, some mothers (St. Bridget of Sweden and St. Paula) keep a daughter with them. On the other hand, abandonment of children by more mundane parents is viewed less favourably.

In the sources, the act of infanticide or a mother allowing her child to be sacrificed is not so much condemned as it is sanctioned, but only if it occurs for a

better cause. It is abundantly clear that the public must have been able to associate the deed of the mother with her emotional attachment to her child.

4.3 *The relevance of ideas concerning motherhood to secular women*

On the whole, in the middle ages, in learned circles a woman's role in the reproduction process was often associated with passivity and negativity.¹⁰¹⁴ As seen in chapter 2, where medieval ideas about women were discussed, in the process of conception and pregnancy the man was perceived to be the source of life and the woman merely an incubator. The highest soul was infused by God, forty days after conception in case of a boy, eighty days in case of a girl. Reproductive failure was associated more with women than men and the causes of infertility assigned to women were more diverse.

It was important to conceive. De Eyb devotes an entire chapter to the fertility of women.¹⁰¹⁵ His main anxiety concerns the dealings of the married couple after the wife has given birth. Petrarch is extensively cited to demonstrate how troublesome children can be a strain on marriage. If the wife does not conceive, she is servile, humble and obedient to the man and the couple is able to enjoy peace and quiet. Yet stating his own opinion, De Eyb does not laud childless couples; a man should marry, he asserts, to people the world and perpetuate the human race.¹⁰¹⁶

Our sources show saints working miracles. Special saints were set aside to alleviate special female ailments or anxieties. Not every affliction is mentioned in our sources; other sources mention, for instance, that St. Agatha deals with painful breasts, St. Catherine of Alexandria counteracts a shortage of breast milk, St. Margaret, and to a lesser extent St. Walburga, manage women in childbed, and St. Perpetua looks after young mothers.¹⁰¹⁷ The special treatment received

¹⁰¹⁴ I have made extensive use of Cadden, *Meanings*, chapter 3 and chapter 5.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. b5v-b6.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. e6v.

¹⁰¹⁷ Goosen, *Afra*, p. 19; p. 315; p. 243 and p. 324; p. 277.

by mothers who had conceived in a miraculous way, resulted in these mothers being invoked in prayers dedicated to them. Already in the early middle ages, God was implored to assist infertile women in special prayers in which Old Testament mothers Sara, Rebecca and Rachel appear and New Testament mothers Anne, Mary and Elizabeth were called upon.¹⁰¹⁸

As in the sources, so too in social reality: pregnancy was a specific and dangerous time at which the woman was to be aided and assisted. It was not uncommon for propertied late medieval and early modern women to draw up a will during their first pregnancy.¹⁰¹⁹ It was advocated by the fourteenth-century physician Jan de Weert that priests should spare pregnant woman heavy penitentiary activities.¹⁰²⁰

There may have been a cult of perpetual pregnancy in the Low Countries, which underlines the importance of fertility and also the value attached to children. (The later issue will be elaborated on below.) Christopher Brooke remarks that fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Netherlandish painters portrayed attractive women with swelling stomachs, even virgin saints. '...folk in the Low Countries reckoned a pregnant woman the height of female beauty'.¹⁰²¹ Brooke describes the portrait of the Arnolfini's, a couple who are apparently exchanging their wedding vows in the bedroom, painted by Jan van Eyck. The well-off couple lived in Bruges in the 1430s. Although the wife looks pregnant, she is merely painted in a voluminous dress in the way dictated by fashion. The bed, a reminder that the marriage was to be consummated, stands next to a chair, where a carving of St. Margaret, aide in matters of childbirth, is depicted emerging from the dragon.

¹⁰¹⁸ Hartingsveldt, E.O., 'De schande van onvruchtbaarheid', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), pp. 72-77 Hartingveldt appended the text of the *Orationes ad missam pro sterilitate mulierem*. The prayers date from the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries.

¹⁰¹⁹ Anderson and Zinsser, *History*, p. 384, with reference to Venetian women.

¹⁰²⁰ Jan disapproved of fasting, see, Eerenbeemt, B. van den, *Het kind in onze middeleeuwse literatuur* (Amsterdam, 1935), p. 12.

¹⁰²¹ Brooke, C.N.L., *The medieval idea of marriage* (Oxford, 1989), p. 284, fn. 46.

Recently, the painting has been re-interpreted as a scene of betrothal (where the couple promised future consent to marriage),¹⁰²² making it therefore, *inter alia*, even less likely for the couple to expect a child at this stage.

In general, the primary sources are silent concerning the ordinary practices of pregnancy and birth. The genres of saints' legends and exempla do not easily lend themselves for these concerns. Although Claudia Opitz in her book on thirteenth-century women's *Alltag*, based on the legends of contemporary holy women, has dedicated some paragraphs to pregnancy and birth, she was unable to extrapolate much relevant information.¹⁰²³ We would have been better informed about common practices had men been regular visitors to the birthing chamber.

Pregnancy and delivery was a woman's business, but it also affected her direct environment, and as such it was experienced collectively.¹⁰²⁴ Women, especially those who were mothers among them such as neighbours, family and friends assisted before and with the birth. Since the birth took place at home they lit the fire and prepared the room. In practice, saints were not the only source relied on for easier confinement. In a special ritual, many doors were opened as an example to the womb to open. And, more unusual, in an attempt to cheer up Barbel, wife of Alard Florisz., who always experienced long drawn out childbeds, she was visited by trumpeters at her bedside.¹⁰²⁵ But it was her prayer to Mary of Seven Sorrows at Delft which resulted in an easy delivery.

Birth was surrounded by magical and mystery traditions, close to occult practice. In the late middle ages, midwives were occasionally accused of witchcraft,

¹⁰²² Hall, E., *The Arnolfini betrothal. Medieval marriage and the enigma of Van Eyck's double portrait* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1994). I am not convinced that the painting represents a betrothal rather than a wedding scene. By the author's own admission, it is difficult to determine what happened at a betrothal, p. 67. The fact is the couple married at some stage.

¹⁰²³ Opitz, *Frauenalltag*, pp. 188-199.

¹⁰²⁴ Nijsten, G., *Volkscultuur in de late middeleeuwen. Feesten, processies en (bij)geloof* (Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1994), p. 127.

¹⁰²⁵ Verhoeven, *Devotie*, p. 111.

particularly if they had failed to save the child.¹⁰²⁶ On the other hand, midwives were often employed by the urban authorities, and were in attendance at births. In the fifteenth century, a midwife could receive an annual gratuity, free lodging (in a room where the urban poor were to deliver too), and reimbursement of fuel costs.¹⁰²⁷

The midwife could even rely on specific literature. The *Liber Trotula*, said to have written by an eleventh-century female physician or midwife from Salerno, in which tips and gynaecological treatments are mentioned, appears to have circulated in the southern Low Countries, but I have been unable to trace a printed book of it in the vernacular.¹⁰²⁸ Also, evidence is lacking whether the *Liber* was actually used by midwives.

A good example of the prominent role played by midwives is the medieval depiction of the *Nativity of St. John the Baptist* painted by Jan van Eyck.¹⁰²⁹ The interior of a sumptuously decorated bedroom shows a midwife with rolled-up sleeves handing over the swaddled son to Elizabeth in her bed, another woman sits on a stool at the end of the bed, in front of her a child who points to the door opening (perhaps pointing out that it is time for the father to enter?), whilst the Virgin Mary brings water in a phial to Elizabeth. Mary assumed these

¹⁰²⁶ Shahar, *Childhood*, p. 36. The *Malleus maleficarum* (1487) mentions witches-midwives who kill infants by sticking a needle in the baby's head, which is also depicted in contemporary art by Jeroen Bosch, Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De demonen bij Jeroen Bosch. Zoektocht naar bronnen en betekenissen', *Duivelsbeelden. Een cultuurhistorische speurtocht door de Lage Landen*, G. Rooijakkers et al. eds. (Baarn, 1994), p. 183. See also Wurf-Bodt, C. van der, 'Demonen en 'quaatwyfs'. Magie rond het middeleeuwse kraambed', *Spiegel historiael* 31 (1996), pp. 21-23, for sixteenth-century midwife-witch trials in the southern Low Countries.

¹⁰²⁷ Nijsten, *Volkscultuur*, p. 129.

¹⁰²⁸ Delva, A.B.C.M., *Vrouwengeneeskunde in Vlaanderen tijdens de late middeleeuwen, met uitgave van het Brugse Liber Trotula* (Vlaamse historische studies 2; Brugge, 1983), and Wurf-Bodt, C. van der, 'De vroedvrouw in the late middeleeuwen en de nieuwe tijd', *Spiegel Historiael* 29 (1994), p. 204. As mentioned in chapter 2, a post incunabula printed by Thomas vander Noot in 1516 may have been of assistance to both pregnant women and midwives. Although there was interest from male physicians concerning the women's reproductive system, it was thought improper for them to examine women physically, see Rodnite Lemay, H., 'Anthonius Guainerius and medieval gynaecology', *Women of the medieval world*, J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple eds. (1985), p. 323.

¹⁰²⁹ Châtelet, *Painting*, plate 15.

responsibilities as midwife, for her cousin Elizabeth too was an old woman. Situated outside the room is Zechariah, reading a book, waiting to be fetched.

Churchings still appear to be the order of the day in the fifteenth century. A reminder of that fact is the recommendation of Nicolaas van Dordrecht to the woman in labour to visit Kunera's church in Rhenen after her churching.¹⁰³⁰ The emphasis in the later middle ages had shifted: it was not so much that the mother needed to be ritually cleansed after childbirth, but it provided a way she could thank God for the birth of her child.¹⁰³¹

After the baby was born it needed to be baptised. The baby was to be rid from the stain of original sin, and become a member of the church and receive a name. Unbaptised, a baby's soul could not be saved. There was a high degree of infant mortality, higher perhaps among baby girls than boys,¹⁰³² and even lay people were allowed to baptise babies *in articulo mortis*.¹⁰³³ But the practice may have been abused. The *Boec van der biechten* reckons it a sin, which needed to be confessed, if lay baptism occurred when a priest was readily available.¹⁰³⁴ Midwives too were sometimes admonished by church authorities in relation to lay baptism.¹⁰³⁵

Although there are not many examples in our sources concerning spiritual kin, the tasks of the godmother (and godfather) were important.¹⁰³⁶ They accompanied the child to church on its first visit, and they assisted in raising the child according to the Christian traditions and religion, and in the absence of parents assumed even greater responsibilities.

¹⁰³⁰ Kunera, fol. d3v.

¹⁰³¹ Warner, *Alone*, p. 75.

¹⁰³² For statistics available on early fifteenth-century Florence, see Anderson and Zinsser, *History*, p. 383. It is suggested by the authors that girls may have been fed less.

¹⁰³³ Shahar, *Childhood*, p. 49.

¹⁰³⁴ *Biechten*, fol. dd3v.

¹⁰³⁵ Evidence from fifteenth-century France, Labarge, *Women*, p. 181.

¹⁰³⁶ I have relied on Shahar, *Childhood*, pp. 117-118 and Nijsten, *Volkscultuur*, p. 130.

Before but also after baptism, the baby could be supplied with amulets such as a rosary or palm branch or a picture of a saint, healing stones, letters with *formulae*, crosses, and holy water placed near the crib. It served to combat the bad influence of witches and devils, and to ensure that the baby would lead a prosperous life.¹⁰³⁷ The late medieval *Boec van der Biechten* condemns the contemporary belief in changelings (that the devil replaces a good child with a bad one).¹⁰³⁸

Upon the child's baptism, the mother was often accompanied by other women and after the solemnities they shared a meal. The festivities which accompanied the birth were regulated by some towns.¹⁰³⁹ Perhaps in an attempt to prevent wastefulness and extravagance, as well as to prevent excessive borrowing, certain towns tried to limit the number of women who could attend the festivities. On the whole, it is only women who are mentioned in the regulations. The passages from our sources concerning fertility, conception, and birth must have been particularly relevant to women.

Although care of the daughters (and their young brothers) must have mainly fallen on women, our corpus does not convey much information about the care that the mother provides for her children's physical needs (save for wet-nursing). In 'real life' (in this case the household-workshop environment), childcare was so natural a part of a woman's domain that it is barely mentioned; women are always described as wives and never as mothers.¹⁰⁴⁰ Women must have been involved in actions like feeding, bathing, swaddling, keeping the baby comfortable (i.e. making sure it slept, did not cry too much), teaching it to sit and walk, and to talk,¹⁰⁴¹ and perhaps also to read. These common life concerns do

¹⁰³⁷ Nijsten, *Volkscultuur*, pp. 129-130.

¹⁰³⁸ *Biechten*, fol. cc2.

¹⁰³⁹ Nijsten, *Volkscultuur*, pp. 130-131. Town regulations in Venlo, for instance, restricted the number of women who accompanied the godparents to church to six.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Roper, *Household*, p. 42. Although Roper's book deals with early modern Augsburg after the reformation, household-workshops were very much part and parcel of the cities in the medieval Low Countries.

¹⁰⁴¹ Shahar, *Childhood*, pp. 77-93.

not of course make interesting reading in legends and exempla and may therefore not be mentioned.

When it comes to the pre-eminent physical need elaborated on in the sources, which is wet-nursing, there is a lack of information to its practices in the Low Countries. Perhaps some general statements may be applied: noblewomen and affluent townswomen usually did not suckle their own children, while peasants and the poorer urban echelons were too poor to employ a wet nurse.¹⁰⁴² It may even be argued that the mid and lower strata of the urban society where mothers breast fed themselves, there was a closer bond between the mother and child.¹⁰⁴³ Whilst in Italy wet-nursing was a status symbol for the urban parents of the merchant and upper classes, it appears that in the Low Countries it was never a widespread custom to employ wet nurses.¹⁰⁴⁴

Mothers are involved to a large extent in raising their young children. A mother's task was to raise the daughter with the conventions of the time. The mother was responsible for her daughter's moral and religious education. Books could be at her disposal. In the printed *Spiegel der leken* parents were exhorted to teach the Commandments to their children at home.¹⁰⁴⁵ With few exceptions, the sources are generally silent about household tasks allotted to the daughter. At home, the mother instructed the daughter in managing a household, taught her handicrafts and how to clean, launder and cook.¹⁰⁴⁶ In short, the mother was to prepare the daughter to become a good wife, housekeeper and mother.

¹⁰⁴² Shahar, *Estate*, townswomen, p 183; noble women, p. 140, and peasant women p. 230.
¹⁰⁴³ Uitz, *Women*, p. 150.
¹⁰⁴⁴ Fildes, V., *Wet nursing. A history from antiquity to the present* (Oxford, 1988), p. 246 and Van den Eerenbeemt, *Kind*, p. 21.
¹⁰⁴⁵ Warnar, 'Biecht', p. 49.
¹⁰⁴⁶ Shahar, *Childhood*, pp. 229-230.

Although the beneficiaries of miracles were children, and the miracles as such have justifiably been termed 'miracles for children' by Diana Webb,¹⁰⁴⁷ the miracles were frequently staged at maternal (and paternal) instigation. It shows the love and dedication of the parents towards their child. As Webb mentions in her article, because children mattered to the flock the miracle workers (in Webb's case the mendicants) performed miracles involving children.

Miracle books kept at Marian shrines in Delft (the genre is introduced in chapter 1), reflect the medieval reality that Mary was perceived to be working miracles, especially for children.¹⁰⁴⁸ Verhoeven's interesting observation that a higher number of females than males went on pilgrimage requesting assistance for the health of their child is significant.¹⁰⁴⁹

Mothers who gave a bad example to their daughters, who did not discourage their bad behaviour, and who did not raise them properly, should like the examples dealing with 'bad wives', be set in the literary framework of the 'world turned upside down'. The reading public could, by reversing the bad examples, comprehend what was really intended. There is however a sting in the tail; these topsy-turvy literary examples may have gained a degree of credibility. Sometimes, in witch trials mothers and daughters were accused simultaneously.¹⁰⁵⁰

The emotional attachment of the mother to her child shown in the examples which dealt with 'maternal love', comes particularly to the fore in examples in which the mother attempts to prevent her daughter from dying. The cult of the mourning mother, the *Mater Dolorosa*, Mary who mourns Jesus's death on the

¹⁰⁴⁷ Webb, D.M., 'Friends of the family: some miracles for children by Italian friars', *The church and childhood*, D. Wood ed. (Studies in church history 31; Oxford, 1994), pp. 183-195.

¹⁰⁴⁸ See Verhoeven, *Devotie*. The miraculous statues of Mary Jesse, the Holy Cross (miracles wrought here were connected with Mary Jesse), and Our Lady of Seven Sorrows were positioned in the Old Church, and in the New Church that of Our Lady of Sorrows.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Verhoeven, *Devotie*, p. 135.

cross, made a true impact when the Black Death arrived in fourteenth-century Europe.¹⁰⁵¹ The idea and image of Mary as caring, but also as mourning mother, could have served as an advertisement for mothers not to abandon their dying children, as may have happened when the Black Death or other illnesses took a foothold. Other images such as the Flight into Egypt of the Holy Family or the Massacre of the Innocents may have served as a reminder for parents not to abandon their children.¹⁰⁵²

In the description of the variety of motherhood, Liedwif of Schiedam showed such an extraordinary devotion to the adorable infant Christ that she started lactating. She was special in that she lived at home and was not affiliated to a particular order and is therefore an excellent example of a secular woman. There is at least one semi-religious pre-cursor in the Low Countries: the fourteenth-century beguine Gertrui van Oosten lactated at Christmas.¹⁰⁵³ It was not uncommon in Dutch, Flemish and Rhineland beguinages to have dolls and cribs to assist in devotional practices,¹⁰⁵⁴ which undoubtedly assisted in the religious imagery. Mystical motherhood was another way of reaching Christ, if not in his capacity of bridegroom then as a child (but it should be recalled that for symbolic purposes the saints sometimes married Christ as a child). The correlation between the motherhood metaphor and the caring aspect is defined in mystical motherhood.

However, mothers may have abandoned their children. Medieval methods of restricting fertility are not known to us, although speculations have been made about contraceptive methods in the middle ages, neither is there much known about abortion.¹⁰⁵⁵ There are no figures available to establish any trends of

¹⁰⁵⁰ Brandenburg, *Familieleven*, pp. 193-194.

¹⁰⁵¹ Warner, *Alone*, p. 216.

¹⁰⁵² Ross, J.B., 'The middle-class child in urban Italy, fourteenth to early sixteenth century', *The history of childhood*, L. deMause ed. (North Vale, New Jersey, London, 1974, 1995), p. 211, with reference to fourteenth-century Italy.

¹⁰⁵³ Bredero, 'Gertrui', p. 91.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Koorn, F. en M. van der Eyken, *Begijnen in Brabant. De begijnhoven van Breda en Diest* (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 18-19.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Biller, P., 'Birth-control in the West in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries', *Past and present* 94 (1982), pp. 3-26. In spite of Biller's attempt to make a 'positive case' that

abandoning and murdering of one's own offspring in the medieval Low Countries. On the whole, it appears that unwanted children were kept within the family. An occasional reference points to the fact that infanticide must have been uncommon. For instance, when in 1487 in Dordrecht an infant was found drowned in the harbour, *all* female citizens were to be interviewed by midwives in the town's service.¹⁰⁵⁶ The midwives were also licensed to examine any women they suspected. An investigation on such a grand scale seems unlikely to have been staged if infanticide (in this case of new-borns) had been common. It also reflects the severity of the crime. Abandoning babies was punished by the town. The practice was not allowed, even if the child was to be transferred to good hands. An unwanted baby was given the married but childless Marie van Dort.¹⁰⁵⁷ The married woman had pretended to have been pregnant. Both women were punished by the authorities.

The economic necessity of abandoning or killing of children may not have been as pertinent as in the early middle ages,¹⁰⁵⁸ or other parts of Europe, because the mother may have had fewer children since many mothers in the Low Countries appear to have nursed their own babies to a larger extent. And when nursing, fertility reduced. Also, in a burgeoning urban environment where peace was of the utmost importance for trade and commerce with a reduced possibility for war, famine and poverty, it was not necessary to abandon children.

Illegitimate children seem to have been cared for. Nicholas, for instance, has shown that in fourteenth-century Ghent, fathers who sired illegitimate children did admit paternity but mostly only on their deathbed.¹⁰⁵⁹ In wills, fathers often

contraceptives were used, he presents no evidence. See also Noonan, J.T., *Contraception. A history of its treatment by the catholic theologians and canonists* (Cambridge, MA, 1965), who cites, on the whole, responses of the church towards contraceptive measures, but it is just not known how well spread these practices were.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Van der Wurff-Bodt, 'Vroedvrouw', p. 203.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Van der Wurff-Bodt, 'Vroedvrouw', pp. 203-204.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Boswell, J., *The kindness of strangers. The abandonment of children in Western Europe from late antiquity to the renaissance* (London, 1988), pp. 402-408.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Nicholas, *Domestic life*, examples in chapter 8.

recognised and provided for their illegitimate children, who are regarded as blood relations. Some childless wives accepted the bastards from their husbands, and a widow could even become a guardian of her husband's illegitimate children. However, these arrangements could not always be made. Sometimes, children of unmarried and deserted women became the problem of the city.¹⁰⁶⁰

If children were abandoned they may have found their way to institutionalised foundling homes, established in large western European cities,¹⁰⁶¹ or smaller establishments.¹⁰⁶² As in our sources, in reality too, tokens were left with abandoned children.¹⁰⁶³ They may have served to verify a parental claim for recovery later or to prevent inappropriate marriages.

On another level, a mother may have identified with abandoning her children when, for instance, the baby was with a wet nurse or when it was fostered, or when she was forcefully separated from it. Barbara Newman has applied the empathy factor of the feelings ascribed in the legends of 'maternal martyrs' to those that ordinary women may have felt when being forcibly separated from their children.¹⁰⁶⁴ From Italian sources, she concludes that a widow who felt pressurised to leave her children behind with her husband's lineage when her own family reclaimed her (and her dowry) for remarriage may have had recourse to these tales. This conclusion is not easily applicable to the Low Countries.

The closeness of immediate family, friends and colleagues is striking in the Low Countries. Children may not have been removed from their mother when death struck. When, for instance, Mathias van der Goes, one of our printers, died in

¹⁰⁶⁰ Dresen-Coenders, L., 'Huis en haard', *Kent, en versint Eer datje mint. Vrijen en trouwen 1500-1800*, P. van Boheemen et al. eds. (Zwolle, 1989), p. 13.

¹⁰⁶¹ Shahar, *Childhood*, pp. 122-125.

¹⁰⁶² Opitz, 'Leven', p. 294. There were only two small orphanages in fourteenth-century Ghent, suggesting that most orphans were cared for by their families, Nicholas, *Domestic life*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁶³ Boswell, *Kindness*, p. 418.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Newman, *Woman*, p. 95.

Brussels in 1487, his children were minors.¹⁰⁶⁵ His widow was alive but colleagues and possibly a kinsman were appointed guardians. In the same year her husband died, she married Govaert Bac (who also ranks among our printers), who had in all likelihood been apprenticed to Mathias. The widow had kept her children.

It must have been common for medieval families to merge and become composed of other members. Death struck often and remarriage occurred. New wives were to care for other mothers' daughters and sons. Just as Mary was part of the family with her half-sisters and their children, over which Anne presided as matriarch, so too mothers of earthly families were composed from other families.

A clear difference, peculiar to the Low Countries, is made between this wider family network (blood relatives) and the nuclear family (mother, father, children), the so-called *gezin*.¹⁰⁶⁶ P. Hoppenbrouwers supports the idea that the basis for the 'conjugal family' is laid in the late middle ages.¹⁰⁶⁷ Donald Haks ascribes some elements to this 'modern' conjugal family type found in cities in north-western Europe among the middle classes and lower social groups involved in trade and crafts in later centuries.¹⁰⁶⁸ In his research, he discovered that there was little contact with relatives (other than parents, aunts and uncles and their children, brothers and sisters and their children, consanguineous kin and relatives of the marriage partner) and there was a degree of intimacy and equality between

¹⁰⁶⁵ Cockx-Indestege, *Mathias*, pp. 7-10. Minor in this case means under the age of twenty-five.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Dresen-Coenders, 'Huis', pp. 8-9.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Hoppenbrouwers, P.C.M., 'Maagschap en vriendschap. Een beschouwing over de structuur en functies van verwantschapsbetrekkingen in het laat-middeleeuwse Holland', *Holland en historische demografie* (Hollandse Studiën 16; Dordrecht, 1985), pp. 69-108. The term 'conjugal family' is probably taken from Donald Haks, whose work is discussed with relation to the middle ages, by Hoppenbrouwers.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Haks, D., *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw. Processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven* (Assen, 1982), p. 7 and pp. 219-221. Another aspect mentioned is free choice of partner motivated by affection. There is a summary in English.

partners and parents and children. David Nicholas rates the nuclear family type as predominant in fourteenth-century Ghent.¹⁰⁶⁹

It is not surprising that in the often densely populated cities, the importance of the nuclear family superseded that of the wider extended family. The preponderance of interest went increasingly to the individual, both in social customs,¹⁰⁷⁰ as well as in religion (as observed in chapter 2, in relation to the modern devotion). The life of the nuclear family was juxtaposed with the rest of society. Private life became more distinguished from social life.

By saving the closing paragraph of this part of the thesis for Mary and her closest relatives, we have made a full circle. Just as the immediate relatives of Mary are depicted in late medieval times as a close-knit cohesive unit consisting of mother, father and child living under one roof, so too the 'conjugal family' appears to be the predominant type in the late medieval Low Countries. It is time to turn to another member of this nuclear family: the daughter.

4.4 Women as daughters

Many examples in which daughters feature can be perceived as an elaboration on the *topoi* addressed in the previous chapter where ideas on the virgin as unmarried woman was discussed. Of course, ideas on the nubile virgin overlap with those of female children as they are modelled in a similar frame of mind. The examples dealt with are relevant to the 'concept of childhood' debate. Our examples show that there was indeed a notion that medieval society regarded children as different from adults. And there was a bond between adults and children, between mothers and daughters, and *vice versa*.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Nicholas, *Domestic life*, chapter 9.
¹⁰⁷⁰ Braunstein, 'Intimacy', pp. 535-630.

Just as maternal themes are sometimes mentioned under parental themes in the sources, so it is with the *topoi* concerning the daughter, which are frequently discussed under the non gender-specific heading of 'children'.

4.4.1 Mary's childhood

The example of the perfectly well-behaved daughter and young woman is entrenched in the story about Mary's childhood spent in the temple.¹⁰⁷¹ Mary is presented to the temple by her mother Anne to thank God for the fact that she had conceived. When dedicated to the holy establishment aged three, she is depicted as a precocious independent girl who ascends the staircase unaided as if she were a twelve year old, while her parents look on. She stays here until her fourteenth year reading, learning and studying Moses's laws (the Ten Commandments) as well as the holy Scriptures. She prefers a solitary existence. She fills her time praying and contemplating as well as cleaning and mending clothes. She is diligent, obedient, good-natured, and eloquent in speech. In short, she is a child but behaves like an adult.

The image of Mary's childhood has been used throughout the centuries as example of perfect behaviour, although hers was not a typical childhood because of her isolation, enclosure, composure and self-discipline.¹⁰⁷² Some young saints share similar experiences. The austerity and rigorous penitential behaviour of some girls can be regarded as an early sign of being singled out for a religious life.¹⁰⁷³ The saints' legends, of course, were written with the benefit of hindsight, and therefore incorporate well-worn *topoi*. For instance, the young St. Dorothy thrives on frugality and humility, she fasts and prays; her lifestyle and wisdom are

¹⁰⁷¹ Her combined activities and behaviour are outlined (although not all in one source) *Historie anna* fols. f2v-f3 and fols. f6v-f8v, *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), *somerstuc, anna*, fols. C2-C2v and *Spiegel*, fol. 13v.

¹⁰⁷² Brown, P., *The body and society. Men, women and sexual renunciation in early Christianity* (New York, 1988, 1991), pp. 273-274.

¹⁰⁷³ See, for example, Weinstein and Bell, *Saints*, p. 31.

incomparable.¹⁰⁷⁴ As a child, St. Clare is virtuous, wears a hair shirt, dispenses alms, fasts, and stays up at night praying steadfastly.¹⁰⁷⁵ In short, she lives as a penitent.¹⁰⁷⁶ St. Bridget of Sweden refuses to speak for the first three years of her life, after which her speech is perfect; she is devout, she fasts, prays and is involved in merciful acts.¹⁰⁷⁷ In an exemplum a hint of holiness is bestowed not so much on a saint, but an 'ordinary' girl, the young sister of a monk. In a vision, she is visited by Mary asking her to serve her, and henceforth she is no longer allowed to laugh or play.¹⁰⁷⁸ Her parents are astounded by the virtuous transformation in the behaviour of their young daughter.

Some young female saints shun their inferior peers and excel in learning. Gertrude of Nivelles is learned and she is neither a child in deed or thought; she is wiser than her playmates and does not play with them but instead visits the poor.¹⁰⁷⁹ As a child, the devout Elizabeth of Hungary refuses to play with her friends and her manner of praying in church easily surpasses that of her friends.¹⁰⁸⁰ She dresses in simple clothing and she dissuades others from making merry, and stimulates them to devote themselves to God.

On a slightly different plane, but still reminding us of Mary's youth and eagerness to learn, are both Catherine of Alexandria and Barbara who spent much of their youth studying.¹⁰⁸¹ As discussed in chapter 2, wisdom is frequently perceived as a sign of holiness.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Passionael, winterstuc, dorothea*, fol. x1.

¹⁰⁷⁵ *Clara*, fol. aa2 and *Passionael* (Leeu, 1480), *somerstuc, clara*, fol. C3v.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Leeuwen, B. van, 'Clara penitente in haar jeugd', *Franciscaans leven* 1 (1986), pp. 16-28.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Birgitten*, fol. A6.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Miraculen*, fol. 2v.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Passionael, winterstuc, gheertruut*, fol. z5.

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Passionael, winterstuc, elyzabeth*, fols. b7v-b8.

¹⁰⁸¹ *Katherinen*, fols. a3v-a4 and *Barbara*, fol. a4. In the summarised version of her legend in *Sielentroest* the passage does not occur, instead ample attention is given to her torture, *Sielentroest*, fols. 89-89v.

Less stylised and easier to identify with is the late medieval childhood of Liedwij van Schiedam.¹⁰⁸² Similar to all young 'trainee saints' she is very pious too.

Whenever her mother sends her off to supply lunch to her brothers at school, she always visits the local church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Like a normal girl, she associates with friends however: her accident, which leaves her handicapped for the rest of her life, happens when she is skating with them on the ice.

4.4.2 Filial responsibilities

A daughter is to care for her mother. St. Lucy (d. 304) accompanies her aged mother to the grave of St. Agnes and after having a dream in which St. Agatha reveals herself to Lucy, her mother is healed.¹⁰⁸³ As a result, her mother relents to her daughter's request that she need not marry and allows her to parcel out her dowry to the poor instead.

A daughter should love her mother. An exemplum which appears in many sources is that of the imprisoned and condemned mother who is denied food, but who is fed with the milk from the breasts of her daughter.¹⁰⁸⁴ The mother is subsequently released by the magistrate who is moved by a display of 'natural love' and affection between daughter and mother.

A daughter should be a comfort to her mother in her sorrow. St. Euphemia, after her beheading, appears to her grieve-stricken mother reposing on her child's grave, to report that she has arrived in heaven.¹⁰⁸⁵ The element of comforting the mother after her demise also appears in the legend of St. Eugenia.¹⁰⁸⁶

¹⁰⁸² *Liedwij*, fols. a3-a3v.

¹⁰⁸³ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *lucie*, fols. n5-n5v.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. c2v, *Kaetspel*, fol. k2, *Scaecspel*, fols. e3v-e4, *Sielentroest*, fol. 93v, and *Twespraec*, fol. l4v.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Sielentroest*, fols. 17-17v.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc*, *eugenia*, fol. QQ5.

The daughter may even save the mother's soul. Hylaria, the mother of St. Afra (d. ca. 303), is saved through the actions of her daughter.¹⁰⁸⁷ Her daughter introduces a bishop and his deacon, in need of shelter from their pagan pursuers, into her mother's household. Both ladies are sinners living by means of prostitution. Hylaria is sinful to such a degree that, repentant, she remains at the feet of the Christians for no fewer than three hours. She changes her lifestyle and converts to Christianity. The story elaborates the point that even these sinners can count on God's forgiveness.

A daughter can assist her mother with the latter's death. This happens in several ways, and ranges from personal attention lavished on the mother on her deathbed to her intercession with God to assist the mother after the mother's death. Catherine of Vadstena helps her mother Bridget of Sweden who lies on her death bed, and she prays for her mother's safe passage to God and carries her mother's body back to Sweden.¹⁰⁸⁸ A compassionate Liedwij van Schiedam, although ill herself, assists her mother spiritually and in deed with the latter's dying process.¹⁰⁸⁹ Liedwij is absorbed with her mother to the detriment of her charitable works. She starts punishing herself by wearing a hair garment soon after her mother's demise. After St. Sophia buried her daughters Fides, Spes and Caritas in tears she asks her youngest to intercede with Christ in order for her to die soon.¹⁰⁹⁰

More often the daughter survives the mother. The *Boec van der biechten* warns the reader not to forget her parents after their demise which could make the difference for the reader of going to heaven or hell.¹⁰⁹¹ Although the text does not specifically mention it, reference is made to the intercessory power of prayer. The 'promotion' of purgatory in the thirteenth century encouraged such prayers. The

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *affra*, fols. N7v-N9.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Katerina van watsteyn*, fols. F7v-G1.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Liedwij*, fols. a7v-a8.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *sophie*, fols. M5-M5v. In *Sielentroest*, fols. 16v-17, after having buried the threesome, Sophia prays on the grave for a quick delivery.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Biechten*, fols. cc4-cc4v.

departed who had arrived in purgatory could be released to heaven when prayers were said in their memory. Late medieval chantries were set up for this purpose, but the following examples show that daughters were involved too.

Marie of Oignies frets about her mother who has recently died. But she stops when, after her death, the mother appears to Marie to inform her that her prayers are in vain since she has arrived in hell.¹⁰⁹² The mother is hopelessly lost since she had knowingly lived off dishonest gains and never showed contrition. In another exemplum, a daughter receives a message in her dream from her dead mother. The mother, being tortured by devils, reminds the daughter about the physical pain she had suffered bringing the daughter into the world and in order to compensate her the daughter must assist her mother without delay.¹⁰⁹³

It is not told in the last example whether the daughter complies with her mother's demands, but the trait of obedience was greatly promoted in children. 'Good children should be obedient and pay heed to advice given by parents and friends' reads one of the headings in *Aesop*.¹⁰⁹⁴ In the exemplum, mother goat warns her baby not to answer the door if the wolf knocks. The obedient baby recognises that the wolf imitates mother's voice and leaves the wolf outside. After the death of her father Pepin of Landen, Gertrude of Nivelles always aided her mother and kept to the commandment to be obedient and subservient.¹⁰⁹⁵

Not only should the daughter be obedient, but she should honour her parents too. In the following exemplum a daughter-in-law makes an appearance. Especially intended for children 'to exhort them to honour their parents', an elderly couple is mentioned who is being looked after by their son and their daughter-in-law.¹⁰⁹⁶ When the couple's health deteriorates the daughter-in-law

¹⁰⁹² *Bienboeck*, fols. y4-y4v.

¹⁰⁹³ *Vaderen*, fol. D4.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *Aesop*, fols. g1v-g2.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Passionael*, *winterstuc*, *gheertruut*, fol. z5.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Bienboeck*, fols. f5v-f6v. The exemplum also appears in the *Sielentroest*, fols. 91v-92, where more emphasis is laid on the incorrect behaviour of the son.

urges her husband to build a medieval version of the granny flat, so that the old folk will not trouble them too much. Once, when the son and the daughter in law were having goose for dinner, the mother stood in front of the door. He hid the goose so they would not have to share it with her. After she left the goose had changed into a reptile which clung to the sinner's neck. Although the son is made the scapegoat in the exemplum, it is the daughter-in-law who had incited her husband to arrange for his parents' departure from their own home.

A whole array of admonitions is mentioned when the Fourth Commandment (honour your father and mother) is discussed.¹⁰⁹⁷ Disobedient children or those who sadden their parents are reproached. Furthermore, a child is not to anger the parents, not to ridicule them, be a comfort to them and aid them and to treat them well, to cherish them, and remember them after their demise. In the *Sielentroest*, in scenes drawn straight from reality, parents are mentioned who have cared for and fed the child, endured poverty and anxieties, as well as suffered from interrupted sleep.¹⁰⁹⁸ De Eyb advises children to honour and love their parents and to be subservient and obedient.¹⁰⁹⁹ He mentions how disobedient and recalcitrant children are undeserving of their caring and supportive parents who try to raise them properly.¹¹⁰⁰

Respect towards elders is mentioned too. The following exemplum is specifically directed at children who are disrespectful towards their parents and who shame them.¹¹⁰¹ A pig looking for honour and fame, joined a group of sheep instead of a group of his peers. However, he has to be rescued from the wolf by fellow pigs, rather than by sheep.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Biechten*, fol. cc4v and *Sielentroest*, fols. 85v-98.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Sielentroest*, fol. 91v.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. c2.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. i2v-i3.

¹¹⁰¹ *Aesop*, fol. k6v.

An exemplum shows a daughter who is disrespectful to the distress of her mother.¹¹⁰² The daughter falls ill, but dies confessed. However, since she had declined to ask her mother's forgiveness, she could be heard screaming from her grave, damned as she was in perpetuity. The exemplum shows yet again the strength of the tie between the daughter and mother.

4.4.3 Bad treatment and matricide

Bad treatment of children towards their mothers is mentioned in the *Sielentroest*, again under the Fourth Commandment. In a series of exempla children are advised to honour and nourish elderly parents with parallels drawn between animal and human behaviour.¹¹⁰³ For example, a caring mother dog loves and protects her puppy but when it has grown up the young dog loves another in mother's stead and fights its mother for a bone. It is concluded that children soon forget the love and care bestowed on them by their elders. In another exemplum, as long as mother fox is supplying milk the cubs love her, the moment she stops they bite her. Children, it is stated, love their mothers dearly when she gives, but when she stops giving, they in turn cease loving her and wish her dead.

As just mentioned obedience was advocated in children, but occasionally daughters lapse. This can take a mild form only as in the case of St. Brigid of Ireland, for instance. St. Brigid is given the task of churning butter by her mother.¹¹⁰⁴ However, she decides to donate the butter to the poor and pilgrims because she preferred to please God rather than her parents. But when the time comes to hand over the butter to her mother she is frightened of her mother's reaction. Fortunately, after a prayer she miraculously receives even more butter than her friends.

¹¹⁰² *Biechten*, fols. cc4v-cc5.

¹¹⁰³ *Sielentroest*, fols. 93-93v.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Passionael* (Veldener), *winterstuc*, *brygida*, fols. L4v-L5.

Sometimes, the saint is confused to what extent she should be obedient. The purport of the discussion in the *Sielentroest* is set: the child is admonished to be obedient, indeed disobedience is equated not with a venial but a capital sin.¹¹⁰⁵ The instructive material around which the exempla is arranged elaborates the point that a child should not obey parents if it is against God or if it means the end result is bad.¹¹⁰⁶ Immediately underneath the exemplum follows of the mother who encouraged her daughter to live with a priest.

Liedwij van Schiedam is disobedient to her mother: she had dared to gainsay her.¹¹⁰⁷ Pieternel lashes out at her daughter, in spite of Liedwij's being bed-ridden. The idea of a mother hitting a child was not lauded by the author, but, as the text continues, Pieternel had a good reason for this. The occasion which brought about Liedwij's disobedience was that one man was chasing another who hid himself in her bedroom. In an attempt to save the man's life, Pieternel denied the pursuer was in the house, but Liedwij confirmed it. The miracle which followed was that the pursuer was unable to see the pursued despite standing in front of him. Liedwij spoke the truth, and through her action a man's life was saved.

An example of being obedient to God rather than parents is plain in the legend of Thecla, the holy daughter who is plainly disobedient. St. Thecla is so entranced by St. Paul's preaching that she becomes caught 'like a fly in a spider's web' according to her mother Teocletia.¹¹⁰⁸ Teocletia, in tears, attempts to persuade her daughter to snap out of her trance-like state because Thecla is, after all, her only daughter. Thecla remains rapt. Eventually, when Thecla is summoned to the court for her refusal to marry, Teocletia proposes to the judge that he should burn her daughter at the stake as example to other maids because of her disobedience to her parents.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Sielentroest*, fol. 85v.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Sielentroest*, fol. 87v and fols. 89v-90.

¹¹⁰⁷ *Liedwij*, fol. a4v.

¹¹⁰⁸ *Passionael* (Veldener), *somerstuc*, *tecla*, fols. 006v-007.

In an exemplum, the young noblewoman Iolanda is being prepared for marriage but she kindly petitions her mother that she may become a nun.¹¹⁰⁹ Her mother, absorbed by household tasks, fails to notice that Iolanda quietly escapes into a chapter house where she surreptitiously takes the vows. When her mother discovers that her daughter has become a nun she seizes her daughter violently, takes her home and places her under house arrest. Iolanda continues to live here as a nun, she only lacks a habit. After three years she is finally allowed to retire to a convent.

In these examples disobedient daughters were obstructed by their mothers in their attempts to turn to the religious life. The examples point out that although the daughter is disobedient, it serves a good purpose. The saint perseveres against all the odds to follow her own chosen path, her own religion. The powerful influence that the mother exerts over her daughter is negated by the new religion.

Some daughters treat their mothers in a less than perfect way, but I have only been able to trace one example of matricide in our corpus. The exemplum states that even the greatest sinner with sins of the magnitude of Mary Magdalene, may be forgiven by God after doing confession with true contrition.¹¹¹⁰ In the exemplum, the daughter sleeps with her father, and when her mother scolds her for it she kills her mother. Subsequently, she also kills her father when he discovers she has killed the mother. After confession the daughter dies of remorse, but before the confessor has absolved her. A voice from heaven, however, reassures the church community that the daughter has arrived in heaven.

¹¹⁰⁹ *Bienboeck*, fols. n8v-o1.

¹¹¹⁰ *Biechten*, fols. aa2v-aa3v.

4.4.4 Summary

Mary is the best example of perfect childhood and filial behaviour. Many young female saints follow in her footsteps. A daughter was to care for, assist, love and comfort her mother. Occasionally, a daughter was called upon to assist in matters pertaining to her mother's death. Sometimes, a daughter's intercessory powers are preferred by the mother instead to those of saints. A daughter was to be obedient, subservient, and she was to honour the mother. Comparatively, the topic of obedience is treated most frequently and exhaustively. The permissible extent of disobedience is explored. The worst sinner, on a par with Mary Magdalene, is she who kills her mother. Again, a perception of the emotional bond between daughter and mother becomes a necessity to enable the reader to interpret the ideas presented in the texts.

4.5 *The relevance of ideas concerning daughters to secular women*

The ideas and thoughts pronounced on the behaviour of the perfect daughter run parallel to ideas which predominantly touch on Mary's childhood and that of the daughters, some destined to become saints. The legendary and stylised childhood of the holy daughters shows that the child behaved as a *quasi senex*, as a miniature adult. If in reality all daughters behaved well, these examples held up to them would be superfluous.

Unfortunately, we will never know to what extent daughters would have felt compelled to follow the examples set, although they were repeated to them in *ad status* sermons (directed at a specific social group, in this case, unmarried girls) too. In medieval Europe, preachers directed sermons at girls illustrated with examples from female saints' legends. Preachers would advocate chastity, discuss the perils of make-up, and prepare the girls for the

marital state and admonish the audience not ^{to} laugh in church.¹¹¹¹ A subclass of children may never have heard these messages in the first place.¹¹¹²

It is debatable for which age category the various aspects of perfect childhood were held up (and therefore for which age category the examples were intended). Although there was a definite idea of stages of childhood in learned circles as described by Shahar (*infantia*, *pueritia*, *adolescentia*),¹¹¹³ in the vast majority of female saints' *Lives* and exempla it is not determined specifically. It was probably more important to find suitable material according to the marital state of the daughter, rather than addressing specific age groups.

A confessant may have been as young as seven years of age, confessing the sin of avarice (a child's indulgence in relation to sweets).¹¹¹⁴ However, there was no consensus among the clergy concerning the first age of confession, one of the obstacles being the delicate questioning of the child without telling about sins she had not been aware of before.¹¹¹⁵

Many examples are placed within the framework of the Fourth Commandment. Ever since Moses received God's commandments among which ranks the Fourth Commandment to honour the parents, it was 'officially' recognised that children needed admonishment in this respect. After all, there is no commandment for parents to honour their children. But when studying the examples in the sources and the comments made in the accompanying texts, a general flavour emerges rather than an outlined specific set of sins, as is the case with women of various

¹¹¹¹ Swanson, J., 'Childhood and childrearing in *ad status* sermons by later thirteenth century friars', *Journal of medieval history* 16 (1990), p. 322.

¹¹¹² For a subclass of urban young female prostitutes, thieves and beggars, see Löhmer, C., *Die Welt der Kinder im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* (Weinheim, 1989), pp. 193-195. It is not made clear whether these children were orphans.

¹¹¹³ See Shahar, *Childhood*, pp. 21-31. The stages lasting from birth to seven (the latter marks the age when the child is able to express herself and make choices), from seven to twelve for girls (the latter marks the onset of puberty), and the third stage from twelve onwards. Although the upper limit of the period of the third stage was vague for both sexes, it was usually upon marriage that girls transcended from the third stage into full adulthood.

¹¹¹⁴ Van den Eerenbeemt, *Kind*, p. 116.

marital states (as discussed in chapter 3). It would appear that in the incunables, children's eyes and ears were protected.

Children were to cherish, comfort and love their parents and to care for them. Children were regarded as an investment for the future, they were to accept responsibility for the upkeep of the parents when they were no longer able to look after themselves. Perhaps it was necessary to reiterate the recommendations found in our corpus, since De Eyb deems it necessary to comment on fifteenth-century contemporary society when he mentions that when hungry parents tie the 'breadsack' around their neck they are better received in a stranger's house than in their children's house.¹¹¹⁶ Though, as a matter of fact, daughters (and daughters-in-law) cared for their elderly parents. As in the exemplum so too in social reality, in Ghent, old mothers surrendered properties to their children and their spouses in exchange for lifetime support.¹¹¹⁷ In the *Ehebüchlein*, the ailments of old age were recognised (stinking breath, runny nose, deafness, rotten teeth, suffering from tremors, temperamental, mean, sad, cantankerous, looking back to the past and not to the future);¹¹¹⁸ viewed in this light old folk must have been a burden. The examples supplied in the incunables, particularly those in which the daughter patiently and with consideration deals with her mother, for example on her deathbed, and in the afterlife, gave the medieval carer something to hold on to.

The issues at stake concerning care of elderly parents in the Low Countries may have differed from other parts such as southern Europe. Firstly, in a nuclear family unit (mother, father and children) without extended family residing under the same roof, relatively more responsibility was laid on the shoulders of the children. Secondly, since inheritances were shared among all siblings (brothers and sisters) in a partible inheritance system not all the children may have felt

¹¹¹⁵ Shahar, *Childhood*, p. 176.

¹¹¹⁶ *Ehebüchlein*, fol. d5v.

¹¹¹⁷ Nicholas, *Domestic life*, p. 178.

¹¹¹⁸ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. i4-i4v.

compelled to support and care for their elderly relatives. In a system of impartible inheritance and primogeniture, it would have been common for the main beneficiary to care for the elderly parents. Whereas the impartible inheritance system suited an agrarian as well as a warrior society (where the ground or power base remained intact and went to the oldest son), the partible inheritance system was more suited to life in cities and towns. It may have been difficult to decide which child would take in or care for mother or father.

The attributes admired in a good daughter may be used for other purposes than solely outlining the relationship with her mother. For instance, the traits praised in her behaviour towards her mother (such as respect, honour, comfort, love and obedience) are similar to those greatly appreciated in a married woman in her behaviour towards her husband. Although boys must have been taught these traits as well in their behaviour towards their parents, girls must have felt particularly addressed.

Being obedient also played a role in the household. Girls from middle class families were expected to help out in the household.¹¹¹⁹ The older daughters of the family had to chop wood, cook (which could take hours) and look after their siblings.¹¹²⁰ Daughters could mirror themselves in Brigid of Ireland (God negated her disobedience by supplying her with churned butter for her mother), and Liedwij van Schiedam (bringing food to her brothers at school). These daughters helped out in the household.

Also, the qualities of respect, honour and obedience in the child's relation towards figures of authority at home, are reflected in the qualities in maintaining the proper social hierarchical order too.¹¹²¹ Within an urban setting the admirable behaviour of the Virgin Mary, exercising self-control and displaying

¹¹¹⁹ Mitterauer, M. and R. Sieder, *The European family. Patriarchy to partnership from the middle ages to the present* (Oxford, 1987), K. Oosterveen and M. Hörzinger transs., p. 103 and Löhmer, *Kinder*, p. 189.

¹¹²⁰ Dasberg, *Grootbrengen*, p. 31.

¹¹²¹ Shahrar, *Childhood*, p. 169.

proper behaviour, fits in well. This behaviour contains key elements in what Norbert Elias describes as *Prozess der Zivilisation*.¹¹²² When, in order to survive, outside constraints become less important (war, violence), mutual dependency of people rises and with it the significance of people's regulation of their 'affective life'. Elias ranks self-discipline, self-control and self-restraint among the most substantial factors in the regulation of people's emotions. In this way then, children trained in correct behavioural attitudes towards their parents in private, could utilise their training outside the household, in the larger society of the town, in public.

But urban life was prone to tensions, in particular those evolving from the demands and fluctuations of the economy. This in turn may have resulted in a nostalgia in the form of an idealised childhood. The medieval 'life in the fast lane' striving after materialism and wealth led to a wish for different systems of existence, those which involved innocence and freedom from material gains.¹¹²³

The friar Jan Brugman also picked up on the image of the innocent and sweet child. In a sermon, Brugman, who also authored a Latin legend of Liedwijn, commented on the special state of childhood. There is a saying, still employed in the Low Countries today, which recalls the longevity of his sermons: 'talking like Brugman'. His fame preceded him, wherever he preached he was certain to draw large crowds. In the sermon, he affectionately reflects on children's small stature, their innocence, the dependence on their parents and the mess they make when eating. He uses the special state of childhood to bring to the attention of the faithful that they should approach God like children.¹¹²⁴ Thus, the concept of the innocent and adorable child served as a vehicle for the adult to communicate with God.

¹¹²² Elias, N., *Het civilisatie proces. Sociogenetische en psychogenetische onderzoeken* (Utrecht, 1982, 1987), H. Israëls, W. Kranendonck et al. transs., chapter 3 and pp. 662-632. Violence was monopolised and society imposed rules on itself. This process encouraged the streamlining of social behaviour.

¹¹²³ Herlihy, 'Essays', p. 241.

¹¹²⁴ Van den Eerenbeemt, *Kind*, pp. 207-208.

The idealisation of late medieval childhood is also reflected in the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, a reminder of the innocent children massacred at King Herod's instigation.¹¹²⁵ The celebration highlights the emotive value of attachment of mothers to, in this case, their innocent sons. The feast was celebrated near Christmas, already a charged time in the Christian calendar. The massacre, showing mothers protecting their babies from the brutal killers, also features in the *Flight of St. Elizabeth*, a painting attributed to Hugo Jacobsz.¹¹²⁶ In the scene, Elizabeth and her fleeing son are saved by an opening mountain. Zechariah, refusing to say where his son is hidden, is martyred in the background. In woodcuts featuring in the incunables protective mothers cling to their children.¹¹²⁷

As observed, pregnant women in the Low Countries seem to have lived in a society which depicted pregnancy in a fashionable way, thereby emphasising their fertility. How were children and daughters perceived in the late medieval Low Countries? There is not enough material available to make any comparisons, but there is a definite impression of a child-friendly society.

A special saint was invented for children. Saint Nicholas, whom we have already met previously when he was distributing dowries to three daughters of a family, is the friend of children and adolescents *par excellence* in the Low Countries.¹¹²⁸ Also, the many child miracles invoked by parents, and, in particular the late medieval saints' compliance (such as Kunera's), show that children were highly valued.

In towns, medieval children participated in cultural life. Although boys celebrated the boy bishop festivities (when the local bishop was temporarily deposed by a

¹¹²⁵ The event was commemorated with much fervour in western Europe, see Dudley, M.R., 'Natalis innocentum: the Holy Innocents in liturgy and drama', *The church and childhood*, D. Wood ed. (Studies in church history 31; Oxford, 1994), pp. 233-242.

¹¹²⁶ Châtelet, *Painting*, illustration 133.

¹¹²⁷ See, for instance, *Dat leven ons heren Jhesu Christi*, fol. g4v. Other examples are by Kok, *Houtsneden*.

¹¹²⁸ Van den Eerenbeemt, *Kind*, pp. 142-143.

boy), girls participated in specially organised events. For instance, in a medieval play on Mary's Joys, Mary's stay in the temple was mimicked by a three-year old, flanked by four friends who accompanied Mary to the establishment.¹¹²⁹ In a late medieval procession in Venlo, organised in honour of Mary, girls were dressed up by the devout beguine Beelken Segers, who also maintained order among them.¹¹³⁰

Children were not barred from public events. Many young children flocked to Liedwijn's wake, some who complained they could not view the holy body properly, were raised by the crowd.¹¹³¹ They were treated to white bread afterwards and sent home. A very young child displayed such extreme piety and devotion, that those who kept vigil wept.

Moving from the late middle ages into the sixteenth century, the individual within the family acquired an increasingly distinct personality of its own. Individualism is at the root of the problem incorporating the view that adolescent behaviour in the later middle ages was different from that of the eleventh- and twelfth-century teenager.¹¹³² Within nuclear families with such close and emotional ties adolescent problems were aggravated and often resulted in the 'triumph of the rebellious teenager' in sexual matters and career decisions.

The examples of the disobedient daughters (particularly those who refuse to marry and refuse to worship the idols, or like Iolanda who secretly takes the vows) who are disobedient, but for what they perceive to be a good cause, are easily transposable to the mind of a medieval rebellious teenager.

¹¹²⁹ Van den Eerenbeemt, *Kind*, pp. 185-186.

¹¹³⁰ Nijsten, *Volkscultuur*, p. 52.

¹¹³¹ *Liedwijn*, fols. f6v-f7.

¹¹³² Weinstein and Bell, *Saints*, pp. 67-68.

4.6 *Fathers*

It is not sensible in a discussion on daughters to leave out fathers completely. Up to a certain extent any demarcated framework of research is artificial, but the sources are too explicit on fathers for them to be ignored.

As observed in the *Vitae patrum*, the female, considered to be a male, is lauded in raising a child so well, that she as contrite sinner was readmitted to the monastery. This must have served as a positive example to some fathers. There are other exempla which make obvious that children matter to their fathers. In some sources, fathers are punished for errant behaviour through their children. Although reprimanded by his wife, a man continues to hunt on feast-days, and consequently he begets a child with a dog's head inclusive of droopy ears.¹¹³³ A father who curses his crying toddler is punished by the devil who spirits the child away.¹¹³⁴ She is returned after seven years, neglected and incapable of speech. A father is punished for doting on his only child, neglecting his charitable duties, and consequently he is punished by an angel who smothers the child.¹¹³⁵

Not only do the sources give advice to the householder in his role as husband, but also as a father. Since middle class fathers were home more often than fathers from noble households (except for travelling merchants), they may well have been in need themselves of advice on how to handle their daughters.

Fathers were given information on how to handle their fickle womenfolk. De Eyb advises that the daughter, for instance, should be kept chaste and he recommends that she should not be allowed to dance or be in too much company, that she should stay at home occupied with needlework and that 'her leash' should not be too long.¹¹³⁶ In the *Scaecspe/* the householder and his wife ought to set a good example for their children, and he should raise them

¹¹³³ *Bienboeck*, fol. s7v.

¹¹³⁴ *Geesten*, fol. aa7.

¹¹³⁵ *Geesten*, fol. m7v.

¹¹³⁶ *Ehebüchlein*, fols. a6-a6v.

rigorously.¹¹³⁷ Also, the householder should make certain that his daughter's bedroom is locked so that no one can enter it.¹¹³⁸

4.7 Conclusion

Mary's role as mother is exemplary, but she is difficult to imitate. Mothers are emotionally attached to their daughters, which is mirrored in the miracles she requests for the daughter and, in the ultimate case, the suffering she experiences when the daughter is about to die. Motherhood is so strong a notion that it is used in a wide variety of senses. Only when this strength is understood by the reader is she able to comprehend that mothers who abandon, sacrifice or kill their daughters do so for a better cause. For instance, Griselda does not object because obedience to her husband supersedes the love for her children and, in St. Sophia's case, because only Christ is worthy of such an offer. (In contrast, infanticide of boys serves to point out concerns surrounding incest.)

The majority of common women married and bore children. In the absence of advanced medical understanding and help, problems surrounding fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth were subject to saintly intervention and intercession as well as magical traditions. Not much is known about the practical solutions surrounding these problems, but it appears to have been predominantly 'women's business'. For this reason, and the fact that it is women only who are equipped to give birth, passages in the sources must have been relevant to them.

Although in the sources mothers are seen to raise their daughters according to Christian guidelines, set good examples and bestow physical and psychological care on the daughter, practical guidelines are only supplied scantily. That is not surprising, since the sources reflect the miraculous and the extraordinary, and do not lend themselves to dwell at any great lengths on these matters.

¹¹³⁷ *Scaecspel*, fols. h2v-h3.

¹¹³⁸ *Scaecspel*, fol. h4.

Turning to daughters, Mary is yet again the paragon of virtue as a well-behaved daughter. Some girl saints attempt to mimic Mary's childhood. The caring attitude of the daughter towards her mother is scrutinised in the sources. Mention is also made of praiseworthy qualities in the daughter, in particular obedience. The emotional bond between daughter and mother comes to the fore in the example (one of its kind) of the girl murdering her mother. She is considered to be the worst of all sinners.

Examples of well-behaved daughters were held up to daughters in real life in sermons. It is not clear how psychologically adapted for particular age categories the examples were, but the gist of them must have filtered through.

Good qualities of respect, honour, care and obedience admired in the daughters are useful for an array of functions. Daughters appear to have looked after their mothers in old age. The qualities also reflect those which shape the ideal wife's behaviour towards her husband. They are useful when the girl is to work in the household. Furthermore, qualities learned at home may be used in a wider environment in the town, regulating behavioural tendencies.

The idealised, bordering on the doting, childhood promoted by the church served to stress Christ's humanity, his and his mother's approachability, and helped the secular woman in her attempt to approach Christ as a child herself. These textual images must have been recognised, since children were highly valued in the late medieval Low Countries.

When the western European marriage pattern gained ground, the cohesive family unit became increasingly important in cities of the Low Countries. One of the goals of the family, headed by the father, assisted by the mother, was to raise children in an orderly fashion. The female saints' *Lives* and exempla played an important role in this process.

5 Conclusion

Both genres of exempla and female saints' *Lives* have proved fruitful sources for harvesting ideas about women, particularly those within a family setting. The evaluation of each of the sources showed that in many the laity is mentioned as readers. Women, although on the one hand seldom specifically addressed, but on the other hand never positively excluded, must be counted as part of the lay audience.

The genres were familiar to the laity; they had been used for centuries, and continued to be used, by preachers in sermons to the laity. The genres, although divergent, contain similar ideas about women. The ideas were recognisable for a secular female public. By filtering out textual images of laywomen rather than religious women, we show that an interesting residue is left for medieval secular middle class women to identify with.

It cannot be denied that gender-marked writing occurred, but some modern historiographers, who dwell on medieval gender polarities, exaggerate. We should also bear in mind that not all ideas about women were negative or that all women were portrayed as either exceedingly good or incorrigibly bad. It is questionable whether middle class women were as aware of antifeminism or dreary stereotyping as modern readers are. Women could contribute to perpetuating these ideas about them when studying women's involvement with book culture. Women were surrounded in everyday life with images and ideas promoting similar values to those which occur in the books.

The influence of the modern devotion (and similar previous and concurrent movements) with its interest in the spiritual well-being of the laity, its usage of the vernacular and promotion of certain reading habits is important. In particular, the individual's responsibility for her own salvation is of significance.

Within city boundaries the middle class seized the advantages which education and literacy had to offer. There is evidence that middle class girls were educated at schools. It was not necessary to be fully literate (i.e. to be able to write as well as read) in order to understand the ideas expressed in books. Reading was also regarded as part of domestic spirituality. The sources, although had originally been intended to be read in an ecclesiastical environment, share their literary tastes with secular readers. Women at home could combine the ideals promoted by the modern devotion and also mirror themselves in models for emulation. They could mix domestic duties with recreational diversion. Women could be erudite and interested in the books.

Accessibility to books within the city was not prohibitively difficult. Books were available in the vernacular and cheaper than before (although we are not informed either on prices of our genres or on (female) disposable income on books). There is evidence that secular middle class women owned books. However, possession of books and accessibility does not indicate that they were read. Books were borrowed from religious establishments by the laity, books were still hand-copied by the religious for the laity, books were bequeathed and they were occasionally available in churches.

Although they took a variety of forms, were placed in different settings, and were presented in different genres, ideas about women within the family are remarkably uniform. A unifying factor is that of chastity. In a subservient relationships (wife-husband or daughter-mother) other elements (obedience, silence, tolerance, care) are promoted as well. Another feature is that emotional ties between the woman and other family members are often mentioned. In particular in the sources dating from the later middle ages, marital happiness and an idealised family life (which includes childhood) are discussed.

Certain *topoi* are relegated to certain stages of womanhood (for instance, adultery is by definition mentioned in connection with married women rather than virgins). Such is the strength and versatility of the genres that ideas and

messages still have a validity and relevance, although they predate the incunable era (which stands to reason, because otherwise they would probably not have appeared in print: a mass communication medium).

Unfortunately, the history of fifteenth-century social reality for middle class secular women in the Low Countries is too ragged to make any sweeping statements about the influence of books. If historians and specialists in related fields delve into records and publish on 'real life', I am confident that more points of contact can be established. With the ideas presented in this thesis, we can argue in general that the sources were valid and pertinent to secular women, they were prescriptive and useful for admiration and emulation.

With few exceptions, the sources are part and parcel of an international corpus rather than that of the Low Countries specifically. Though the thesis contributes to various fields which I found myself drawn into, I hope to have inspired particularly non-Dutch readers to involve themselves in the rich and diverse culture of the late medieval Low Countries. In the future, in a concerted effort, some gaps may be closed.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

PRINTED EDITIONS TO 1501

Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek

Historie, getijden en exempelen van St. Anna, by Jan van Denemarken
Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, [between 9 February 1491 and 1492]
facsimile at Documentatie Centrum Neerlandistiek at the Universiteit van
Amsterdam, shelf mark H24-H25

Leven ende passie van St. Kunera
[Leiden, Govert van Ghemen, between 1496 and 1504]
microfilm at The Hague KB, shelf mark OD 445

Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek

Historie van St. Anna, by Jan van Denemarken
[Zwolle], Peter van Os, 7 September 1499
shelf mark Res. 457

Göttingen, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek

Historia septem sapientium Romae [Dutch] *Historie van die seven wise mannen
van Rome*
Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 25 July 1479
facsimile at Documentatie Centrum Neerlandistiek at the Universiteit van
Amsterdam, shelf mark F11

London, British Library

Aesopus, Vita et Fabulae [Dutch] *Vita, hystorien ende fabulen*
Delft, Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, 27 April 1498
shelf mark IB. 47233

Ars moriendi "Quamvis secundum philosophum tertio Ethicorum ..." [Dutch] *Dat
sterfboeck*
Delft, Christiaan Snellaert, 1488
shelf mark IA. 47166

Biblia. Vetus Testamentum Neerlandica [Dutch] *Bijbel (without the Psalms but
including the Apocrypha)*
Delft, Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantszoon, 10 January
1477
shelf mark IB. 47101 and IB.47102

Boec van der biechten
Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 30 October 1480
shelf mark IA. 47114

Bonum universale de proprietatibus apum [Dutch] *Der bienboeck*, by Thomas Cantipratensis

Zwolle, Peter van Os, [15 January] 1488

shelf mark IB. 48134

Dat leven ons heren Jhesu Christi

Delft, Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, 1498

shelf mark IA. 47235

De ludo scachorum [Dutch] *Dat scaecspel*, by Jacobus de Cessolis

Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 2 October 1479

shelf mark IB. 47320

De ludo scachorum [Dutch] *Dat scaecspel*, by Jacobus de Cessolis

(abridged text by Dirk van Delft)

[Zwolle, Johannes de Vollenhoe, about 1478/79-80]

shelf mark IA. 48112

Dialogus creaturarum moralisatus [Dutch] *Twespraec der creaturen*

Delft, [Christiaan Snellaert], 2 November 1488

shelf mark IB. 47162

Kaetspel gemoraliseert, by Jan van den Berghe

Delft, Hendrick Eckert van Homberch, 9 January 1498

shelf mark IA. 47231

Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia [Dutch] *Passionael, Winter-ende Somerstuc*, by Jacobus de Voragine

Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 1478

shelf mark IB. 47306 and IB. 47307

Ob einem Mann sei zu nehmen ein ehelich Weib oder nicht [Dutch] *Van den Echten state*, by Albertus de Eyb

[Deventer, Richard Pafraet, between 1493 and 6 June 1500]

shelf mark IA. 47670

Somme rurale [Dutch] *Somme rurael*, by Jean Boutillier

Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 19 August 1483

shelf mark IB. 47126

Speculum humanae salvationis [Dutch] *Spiegel der menselijker behoudenis*

[The Netherlands, prototypography, about 1474-75]

shelf mark IB. 47000

Speculum humanae salvationis [Dutch] *Spiegel der menselijker behoudenis*

Culemborg, Johann Veldener, 27 September 1483

shelf mark IA. 48302

St. Catharina de Alexandria [Dutch] *Sinte Katherinen legende*

Antwerp, Govaert Bac, [not before 3 July 1496]

shelf mark IA. 49965

Vitae sanctorum patrum, sive vitas patrum [Dutch] *Van den leven der heiligen vaderen*, by Hieronymus
[Zwolle], Peter van Os, 1 April 1490
shelf mark IB. 48140

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek

Gesta Romanorum [Dutch] *Die geesten of geschiedenis van Romen*
Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 30 April 1481
shelf mark 170 E 24

Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia [Dutch] *Passionael, Winter-ende Somerstuc*, by Jacobus de Voragine
Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 1480
shelf mark 171 D 37 and 171 D 38

Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia [Dutch] *Passionael, Winter-ende Somerstuc*, by Jacobus de Voragine. Add. Usuardus: *Martyrologium*
Utrecht, Johann Veldener, 12 September 1480
shelf mark 168 E 30

Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia [Dutch] *Passionael, Winter-ende Somerstuc*, by Jacobus de Voragine
Delft, Hendrik Eckert van Homberg, 1499-1500
shelf mark 170 E 15

Legenda beatissimae virginis Barbarae [Dutch] *Die Historie van Sinte Barbara met die miraculen*
Delft, [Christiaen Snellaert or Hendrik Eckert van Homberch], 1497
shelf mark 169 G 90

Legende en leven van Sinte Clara, by Thomas de Celano
Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, 28 June 1491
shelf mark 150 F 17

Leven van Liedwij, die maghet van Schiedam, by Johannes Gerlach
Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer or Christiaen Snellaert], 3 March 1487
shelf mark 169 G 62

Miraculen Onser Liever Vrouwen
[Delft, Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantszoon, between 10 January 1477 and 20 November 1479]
shelf mark 169 G 44

Seelentrost [Dutch] *Der sielentroest*
Utrecht, [Printer with the Monogram], 7 May 1479
shelf mark 168 E 31

Speculum sapientiae [Dutch] *Parabolen*, by Cyrillus
Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 20 June 1481
shelf mark 169 G 51

The Hague, Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum

Opusculum vitae et passionis Christi eiusque genitricis Mariae ex Revelationibus
[Dutch] *Leven en passie van Christus en zijn moeder, getrokken uit de*
Revelacien van S. Birgitten. Add: Bonifacius IX: *Bulle der canonizacien van S.*
Birgitten; Leven Katarinen, by Petrus Olavi
Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, 4 June 1491; 21 June 1491
shelf mark 1 F 11

Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek

Historia septem sapientium Romae [Dutch] *Historie van die seven wise mannen*
van Roman
Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 13 January 1483
shelf mark Squ 377 (3) rar

MODERN EDITIONS

Bergkvist, E. ed., *Dat boec van der ioncfrouscap (sprachlich untersucht und*
lokalisiert), (Göteborg, 1925)

Blamires, A. et al. eds., *Woman defamed and woman defended. An anthology of*
medieval texts (Oxford, 1992)

Botermans, A.J. ed., *Die hystorie van die seven wijse mannen van romen* (2
vols., Haarlem, 1898)

Bruin, C.C. de, ed., *Middelnederlands geestelijk proza* (Zutphen, 1940)

Bruin, C.C. de, ed., *Tleven Ons Heren Ihesu Cristi. Het pseudo-bonaventura-*
ludolfiaanse Leven van Jesus Christus (Verzameling van Middel nederlandse
bijbelteksten Miscellanea II; Leiden, 1980)

Combrink, J. ed., *Dat leven van Kunera*. Getranscribeerd, van annotaties en een
inleiding voorzien (Historische heuvelrug-reeks I; Rhenen, 1988)

Daniëls, L.M.Fr. ed., *Meester Dirc van Delf, O.P. Tafel van den kersten ghelove*,
naar de handschriften uitgegeven, ingeleid en van aantekeningen voorzien
(Tekstuitgaven van OGE IV-VII; 4 vols., Antwerpen, Nijmegen, Utrecht, 1937-
1939)

Daniëls, L.M.Fr. ed., *De spiegel der menschelijker behoudenesse. De*
Middel nederlandse vertaling van het Speculum humanae salvationis. Naar het
handschrift uitgegeven, ingeleid en toegelicht (Studiën en tekstuitgaven van OGE
IX; Tiel, 1949)

Dat leven ende die passie ende verheffinghe vander heiligher maget sinte
Kunera, zonder plaats en jaar (c. 1515), w. ed. ('s-Gravenhage, 1902)

Delva, A.B.C.M., *Vrouwengeneeskunde in Vlaanderen tijdens de late*
middeleeuwen, met uitgave van het Brugse Liber Trotula (Vlaamse historische
studies 2; Brugge, 1983)

Gerritsen, W.P. ed., *Dyalogus creaturarum, dat is Twispraec der creaturen*
(typoscript, Utrecht, 1982)

- Geus, B. de, et al. eds., *Een scone leeringe om salich te sterven. Een Middelnederlandse ars moriendi*, uitgegeven, geannoteerd en ingeleid (Publikaties van de vakgroep Nederlandse taal- & letterkunde van de Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden 12; Utrecht, 1985)
- Gilleland, B.B. trans., *Johannes de Alta Silva, Dolopathos or The king and the seven wise men* (Medieval and renaissance texts & studies 2; Binghampton, 1981)
- Granger Ryan, W. trans., *Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend* (2 vols., Princeton, 1993)
- Gräße, J.G.Th. ed., *Das älteste Märchen- und Legendenbuch des christlichen Mittelalters oder die Gesta Romanorum* (Wiesbaden, 1847, unveränderter Neudruck, 1971)
- Gräße, J.G.Th. ed., *Die beiden ältesten lateinischen Fabelbücher des Mittelalters des Bischofs Cyrillus Speculum sapientiae und des Nicolaus Pergamenus Dialogus creaturarum* (Tübingen, 1880)
- Grau, E., *The legend and writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*. Translation by P. Robinson of *Legenda sanctae Clarae virginis* by Thomas of Celano, and of St. Clare's own writings. Introduction by E. Grau (New York, 1953)
- Groot, J. de, en G.S. Overdiep eds., *Een pelgrimage naar den Sinai anno 1217* (Rotterdam, 1936)
- Hens, H. †, H. van Bavel, G.C.M. van Dijck en J.H.M. Frantzen eds., *Mirakelen van Onze Lieve Vrouw te 's-Hertogenbosch*. Transcriptie, annotatie en inleiding (Tilburg, 1978)
- Herrmann, M. ed., *Deutsche Schriften des Albrecht von Eyb. Das Ehebüchlein* (Schriften zur Germanischen Philologie I-4; Berlin, 1890)
- Jongen, L., 'Heerlijk-helder-heilig. Een kort, Middelnederlands leven van de Heilige Clara', *Madoc* 8 (1994), pp. 149-158
- Jongen, L. en C. Schotel eds., *Het leven van Liedewij, de maagd van Schiedam*. De Middelnederlandse tekst naar de bewaarde bronnen uitgegeven, vertaald en van commentaar voorzien (Middelnederlandse tekstedities 2; Hilversum, 1989, 1994)
- Kratzmann, G. and E. Gee eds., *The Dialogues of Creatures Moralysed* (Medieval and renaissance texts 4; Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1988)
- Kuiper, W. en R. Resoort transs., *Het ongelukkige leven van Esopus* (Amsterdam, 1990)
- Lagerwey, E. en B. Kruitwagen eds., *Legende van Sinte Willebroert. Gereproduceerd uit het Passionael Winterstuc gebruikt door Gheraert Leeu ter Goude, 31 juli 1478* (Maastricht, 1940)
- Lelij, C.M. ed., *De parabelen van Cyrillus* (Amsterdam, 1930)

- Mercator, J. trans. en ed., *Het Leven van de Heilige Lidwina van Schiedam door Thomas van Kempen. In het Hollandsch overgezet* (Amersfoort, 1924)
- Millett, B. and J. Wogan-Browne eds., *Medieval English prose for women. Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford, 1990)
- Neurdenberg E. ed., *Van Nyeuvont, Loosheit ende Practike: hoe sij Vrou Lortse verheffen* (Utrecht, 1910)
- Oosterley, H. ed., *Gesta romanorum* (Berlin, 1872)
- Oostrom, F.P. van, ed., *Voorbeeldig vertellen. Middelnederlandse exempelen* (Amsterdam, 1985)
- Pennink, R. ed., *Twee uit het Latijn vertaalde Middelnederlandse novellen. 1. Pseudo-Petrarca, Teghen die strael der minnen. 2. Petrarca, Hystorie van Griseldis met Latijnse teksten* (Zwolsse drukken en herdrukken voor de Maatschappij der Nederlandse letterkunde te Leiden 43; Zwolle, 1965)
- Roetert Frederikse, J.A. ed., *Dat kaetspel ghemoralizeert* (Leiden, 1915)
- Schaick Avelingh, G. H. van, ed., *Dat scaecspel* (Leiden, 1912)
- Schmitt, M. ed., *Der Grosse Seelentrost. Ein niederdeutsches Erbauungsbuch des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Niederdeutsche Studien 5; Köln, Graz, 1959)
- Schoutens, S. ed., *Legende der glorioser maghet Sinte Clara* (Hoogstraten, 1904)
- Stallaert, K. ed., *Van den VII vroeden van binnen Rome. Een dichtwerk der xiv de eeuw* (Ghent, 1889)
- Stutvoet-Joanknecht, C.M. ed., *Der byen boeck. De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Bonum universale de apibus van Thomas van Cantrimpré en hun achtergrond* (Amsterdam, 1990)
- Thiébaux, M. ed., *The writings of medieval women. An anthology* (Garland library of medieval literature 100, series B; New York, 1987, revised ed., 1994)
- Tjader Harris, M. ed., *Birgitta of Sweden. Life and selected revelations* (New York, Mahwah, 1990), A. Ryle Kezel trans.
- Vooy, C.G.N. de, ed., *Middelnederlandse Marialegenden. Onser liever vrouwen miraculen* (2 vols., Leiden, 1903)
- Wilson, K. M. ed., *Medieval women writers* (Manchester, 1984)

SECONDARY SOURCES

UNPUBLISHED THESES

- Evans, R.G., *A turning point in the education of women in western Europe, with special reference to mathematics. A social-historical study of the medieval/renaissance period (1400 to 1600)* (unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of London, 1991)

SECONDARY SOURCES IN PRINT

- Adamson, J.W., 'The extent of literacy in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: notes and conjectures', *The Library* 10 (1930), pp. 163-193
- Anderson, B.S. and J.P. Zinsser, *A history of their own. Women in Europe from prehistory to the present* (Harmondsworth, 1988)
- Anonymous, 'Brief die in Suster Barte dootkist geleyt is', *Tijdschrift van geschiedenis, oudheden en statistiek van Utrecht* 9 (1839), p. 289
- Arden, H.M., 'Grief, widowhood, and woman's sexuality in medieval French literature', *Upon my husband's death. Widows in literature and histories of medieval Europe*, L. Mirrer ed. (Ann Arbor, 1992), pp. 305-319
- Arès, Ph., *Centuries of childhood. A short history of family life* (New York, 1996), R. Aldick trans.
- Assion, P., *Die Mirakel der Hl. Katharina von Alexandrien. Untersuchungen und Texte zur Entstehung und Nachwirkung mittelalterlicher Wunderliteratur* (Heidelberg, 1969)
- Astell, A.W., *The Song of Songs in the middle ages* (Ithaca, London, 1990)
- Atkinson, C.W., 'Precious balsam in a fragile glass': the ideology of virginity in the later middle ages', *Journal of family history* 8 (1985), pp. 131-143
- Atkinson, C.W., *The oldest vocation. Christian motherhood in the middle ages* (Ithaca, London, 1991)
- Augustin, P. et al. eds., *Kinderen laten, kinderen lezen. Catalogus [van de tentoonstelling gehouden in het] Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam van 31 oktober 1958 - 7 januari 1959* (Catalogus Stedelijk Museum 195; Amsterdam, 1958)
- Axters, S., *Geschiedenis van de vroomheid in de Nederlanden* (4 vols., Antwerpen, 1956)
- Axters, S., 'Nederlandse mystieken in het buitenland. Van Rupert van Deutz tot Ruusbroec', *Verslagen en mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor taal- en letterkunde* 6 (1965), pp. 163-326
- Bachrach, A.G.H. et al. eds., *Moderne encyclopedie van de wereldliteratuur* (10 vols., Haarlem, Antwerpen, 1963-1984)
- Badinter, E., *The myth of motherhood. An historical view of the maternal instinct* (London, 1981), R. DeGaris trans.
- Bange, P., 'De Spieghel ofte Reghel der kersten ghelove ofte der kersten eewe: een leefregel voor een vijftiende eeuwse Christen', *OGE* 56 (1982), pp. 144-174
- Bange, P., *Spiegels der Christenen. Zelfreflectie en ideaalbeeld in laat-middeleeuwse moralistisch-didactische traktaten* (Middeleeuwse studies Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen II; Nijmegen, 1986)

Bange, P., 'Laat-middeleeuwse moralistisch-didactische traktaten in de zestiende eeuw: invloeden van de Moderne Devotie?', *De doorwerking van de Moderne Devotie*. Voordrachten gehouden tijdens het Windesheim Symposium Zwolle/ Windesheim 15-17 oktober 1987, P. Bange et al. eds. (Hilversum, 1988), pp. 233-251

Bange, P., 'Voorstellingen over seksualiteit in de late middeleeuwen', *Soete minne en helsche boosheit. Seksuele voorstellingen in Nederland 1300-1850*, G. Hekma en H. Roodenburg eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 42-60

Bange, P. ed., *Moderne devotie, figuren en facetten*. Catalogus bij de tentoonstelling ter herdenking van het sterfjaar van Geert Grote (1384-1984), (Nijmegen, 1984)

Bange, P. en A.G. Weiler, 'De problematiek van het clandestiene huwelijk in het middeleeuwse bisdom Utrecht,' *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, D.E.H. de Boer en J.W. Marsilje eds. (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 393-409

Bange, P., G. Dresen en J.M. Noël, 'De veranderende positie van de vrouw aan het begin van de moderne tijd', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 9-38

Barratt, A., 'Dame Eleanor Hull, a fifteenth-century translator', *The medieval translator. The theory and practice of translation in the middle ages*. Papers read at a conference held 20-23 August 1987 at the University of Wales Conference Centre, Glynrhonog Hall, R. Ellis ed. (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 87-101

Basse, M., *Het aandeel der vrouw in de Nederlandsche letterkunde* (2 vols., Gent, 1920-1921)

Bastemeijer, A., 'De zesde kerk van bisschop Bernold van Utrecht. Oorsprong en betekenis van de St. Walburgskerk te Zutphen', *Madoc* 9 (1995), pp. 8-20

Bejczy, I., 'The *sacra infantia* in medieval hagiography', *The church and childhood*, D. Wood ed. (Studies in church history 31; Oxford, 1994), pp. 143-151

Belle, A. van, 'Het boekenwezen aan de Leuvense universiteit in de xvde eeuw', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 543-562

Berbée, P.A.J.S., ' 'Bedevaart' en 'pelgrimstocht' in Nederland. Over oude termen en nieuwe methoden in bedevaartonderzoek', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 167-199

Berg, E. van den, 'De Karelepiek. Van voorgedragen naar individueel gelezen literatuur', *Tussentijds*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan W.P. Gerritsen ter gelegenheid van zijn vijftigste verjaardag, A.M.J. van Buuren et al. eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 5; Utrecht, 1985), pp. 9-24

- Bériou, N., 'La Madeleine dans les sermons Parisiens du XIII^e siècle', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 323-399
- Bériou, N. and D.L. d'Avray, 'The image of the ideal husband in thirteenth century France', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 31-69
- Berlioz, J., 'Introduction à la recherche dans les exempla médiévaux', *Les exempla médiévaux. Introduction à la recherche, suivie des tables critiques de l'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach*, J. Berlioz et M.A. Polo de Beaulieu eds. (Carcasconne, 1992), pp. 15-73
- Berlioz, J., *Le rire du prédicateur récits facétieux du Moyen Age. Textes traduits par Albert Lecoy de la Marche*. Présentation, notes et annexes par Jacques Berlioz (Turnhout, 1992)
- Berlioz, J. and M.A. Polo de Beaulieu, 'Exempla: a discussion and a case study', *Medieval women and the sources of medieval history*, J.T. Rosenthal ed. (Athens, London, 1990), pp. 37-65
- Biller, P., 'Birth-control in the West in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries', *Past and present* 94 (1982), pp. 3-26
- Biller P., 'The common woman in the western church in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries', *Women in the Church*, W.J. Sheils and D. Wood eds. (Studies in church history 27; Oxford, 1990), pp. 127-157
- Blackham, H.J., *The fable as literature* (London and Dover, New Hampshire, 1985)
- Blamires, S., 'The limits of bible study for medieval women', *Women, the book and the godly*. Selected proceedings of the St Hilda's conference, 1993, L. Smith and J.H.M. Taylor eds. (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1-12
- Bloch, R., *Medieval misogyny and the invention of western romantic love* (Chicago, London, 1991)
- Boekholt, P.Th.M., *Onderwijsgeschiedenis* (Zutphen, 1991)
- Boer, B. de, 'De souter van Alanus de Rupe', *OGE* 29 (1955), pp. 358-388
- Boer, B. de, 'De souter van Alanus de Rupe', *OGE* 30 (1956), pp. 156-190
- Boer, B. de, 'De souter van Alanus de Rupe', *OGE* 33 (1959), pp. 145-193
- Boeren, P.C. ed., *Catalogus handschriften van het Rijksmuseum Meermann-Westreenianum* ('s-Gravenhage, 1979)
- Boffey, J., 'Women authors and women's literacy in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England', *Women and literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, C.M. Meale ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 17; Cambridge, 1993), pp. 159-182

- Bolton, B.M., '*Mulieres sanctae*', *Sanctity and secularity: the church and the world*, D. Baker ed. (Studies in church history 10; Oxford, 1973), pp. 77-95
- Bolton Holloway, J. et al., 'Introduction: the body and the book', *Equally in God's image. Women in the middle ages*, J. Bolton Holloway et al. eds. (New York, San Francisco, etc., 1990), pp. 1-23
- Bondt, C. de, '*Heeft yemant lust met bal, of met reket te spelen?*' *Tennis in Nederland tussen 1500 en 1800* (Hilversum, 1993)
- Booy, E.P. de, *De weldaet der scholen. Het plattelandsonderwijs in de provincie Utrecht van 1580 tot het begin der 19e eeuw* (Utrecht, 1977)
- Booy, E.P. de, 'Volksonderwijs in de noordelijke Nederlanden', *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, w. ed. (15 vols., Haarlem, 1980-1982), VII, pp. 264-266
- Bornstein, D., *The lady in the tower. Medieval courtesy literature for women* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1983)
- Boswell, J., *The kindness of strangers. The abandonment of children in Western Europe from late antiquity to the renaissance* (London, 1988)
- Bot, P.N.M., *Humanisme en onderwijs in Nederland* (Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1940)
- Bot, P., *Tussen verering en verachting. De rol van de vrouw in de middeleeuwse samenleving 500-1500* (Kampen, Kapellen, 1990)
- Boureau, A., 'Jacques de Voragine: les âmes du purgatoire', *Prêcher d'exemples. Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Age*, J.-Cl. Schmitt ed. (Paris, 1985), pp. 93-98
- Boyer, R., 'An attempt to define the typology of medieval hagiography', *Hagiography and medieval literature. Proceedings of the fifth international symposium organised by the centre for the study of vernacular literature in the middle ages. Held at Odense University on 17-18 November 1980*, Odense, H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. eds. (Odense, 1981), pp. 27-36
- Brandenburg, T., 'St.-Anna en haar familie', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 101-127
- Brandenburg, T., 'De moeder- en maagschapcultus in de Nederlanden omstreeks 1500. De Anna-devotie als symptoom van veranderende opvattingen over huwelijk en gezin', *Vijf eeuwen gezinsleven. Liefde, huwelijk en opvoeding in Nederland*, H. Peeters et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 99-139
- Brandenburg, T., *Heilig familieleven. Verspreiding en waardering van de Historie van Sint-Anna in de stedelijke cultuur in de Nederlanden en het Rijnland aan het begin van de moderne tijd (15e/16e eeuw)*, (Nijmegen, 1990)
- Braunstein, Ph., 'Towards intimacy: the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', *A history of private life*, Ph. Ariès and G. Duby general eds. (3 vols., 1985-1986, Cambridge, MA, London, 1988-1989), II, pp. 535-630

- Bredero, A.H., 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten (ca. 1320-1358) en haar niet-erkende heiligheid', *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, D.E.H. de Boer en J.W. Marsilje eds. (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 83-97
- Bree, F. de, 'Gheraert Leeu als drukker van Nederlands verhalend proza', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 61-80
- Bremond, C., J. Le Goff et J.-Cl. Schmitt, *L' 'exemplum' (Typologie des sources du moyen age occidental 40; Turnhout, 1982)*
- Breure, L., 'De hemelse bruidegom', *Spiegel historiael* 15 (1980), pp. 149-157
- Breure, L., *Doodsbeleving en levenshouding. Een historisch-psychologische studie betreffende de Moderne Devotie in het IJsselgebied in de 14e en 15e eeuw* (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen V; Hilversum, 1987)
- Brooke, C.N.L., *The medieval idea of marriage* (Oxford, 1989)
- Brown, D.C., *Pastor and laity in the theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge, London, 1987)
- Brown, P., *The body and society. Men, women and sexual renunciation in early Christianity* (New York, 1988, 1991)
- Brügmann, M., 'Re-searching the literary presentation of the 'female' ', *Historiography of women's cultural traditions*, M. Meijer en J. Schaap eds. (Women's studies 3; Dordrecht, 1987), pp. 129-142
- Bruin, C.C. de, 'De moderne devotie en de verspreiding van de volkstaalbijbel', *OGE* 59 (1985), pp. 344-356
- Brummel, L. en H. Liebaers eds., *Oude drukken uit de Nederlanden*. Boeken uit de collectie Arenberg thans in de verzameling Lessing J. Rosenwald. Tentoonstelling Den Haag, Meermannno-Westreenianum en Brussel, Albert I Bibliotheek (Den Haag, 1960)
- Brundage, J.A., *Law, sex, and Christian society in medieval Europe* (Chicago, London, 1987)
- Brundage, J.A., 'Widows and remarriage: moral conflicts and their resolution in classical canon law', *Wife and widow in medieval England*, S. Sheridan Walker ed. (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 17-31
- Bücher, C., *Die Frauenfrage im Mittelalter* (Tübingen, 1882)
- Bullough, V.L., 'Medieval medical and scientific views of women', *Viator* 4 (1973), pp. 485-501
- Burnier, A., 'Het beeld van de vrouw in de litteratuur', *Poëzie, jongens en het gezelschap van geleerde vrouwen*, w. ed. (Amsterdam, 1974), pp. 96-124
- Bußmann, M., 'Die Frau - Gehilfin des Mannes oder eine Zufallserscheinung der Natur? Was die Theologen Augustinus und Thomas von Aquin über Frauen gedacht haben', *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter. Fragen, Quellen, Antworten*, B. Lundt ed. (München, 1991), pp. 117-133

- Buuren, F. van, 'Sint Cunera van Rhenen, een legende', *Gouden Legendes. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 109-125
- Cadden, J., *Meanings of sex difference in the middle ages. Medicine, science, and culture* (Cambridge, 1993)
- Carasso-Kok, M. ed., *Repertorium van verhalende historische bronnen uit de middeleeuwen. Heiligenlevens, annalen, kronieken en andere in Nederland geschreven verhalende bronnen* (Bibliografische reeks van het Nederlands historisch genootschap 2; 's-Gravenhage, 1981)
- Carey, H.M., 'Devout literate laypeople and the pursuit of the mixed life in later medieval England', *The journal of religious history* 14 (1986), pp. 361-381
- Carlé, B., 'Structural patterns in the legends of the holy women of christianity', *Aspects of female existence. Proceedings from The St. Gertrud Symposium 'Women in the Middle Ages'*. Copenhagen, 1978, B. Carlé et al. eds. (Copenhagen, 1980), pp. 79-86
- Caron, M., 'Ansien doet gedencken. De religieuze voorstellingwereld van de moderne devotie', *Geert Grote en de Moderne Devotie. Tentoonstellingscatalogus Athenaeumbibliotheek, Museum de Waag Deventer, Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht*, M. van Bussel-Eijlander ed. (Utrecht, 1984), pp. 25-42
- Caron, M., 'Het beeld van Christus in de vrouwenkloosters en bij de zusters van het Gemene Leven', *OGE* 59 (1985), pp. 457-469
- Caron, M., 'Goede en slechte vrouwen in de kerkelijke traditie', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht*, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), pp. 6-20
- Carruthers, M., *The book of memory. A study of memory in medieval culture* (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 10; Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh, 1990, 1993)
- Casagrande, C., 'De vrouw onder toezicht', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 71-105
- Catalogue of books printed in the XVth century now in the British Museum* (12 vols., 1908-1985, London, 1962, annotated, photo-lithographic repr., 1967), IX, *Fascicule 1 Holland, Fascicule 2 Belgium*, introduction by M.G. Painter
- Châtelet, A., *Early Dutch painting. Painting in the northern Netherlands in the fifteenth century* (Oxford, 1981), C. Brown and A. Turner transs.
- Christ, K., 'Mittelalterliche Bibliotheksordnungen für Frauenklöster', *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 59 (1942), pp. 1-29
- Clair, C., *A history of European printing* (London, New York, San Francisco, 1976)

- Clanchy, M., *From memory to written record. England 1066-1307* (Oxford, Cambridge USA, 1979, 1993)
- Clanchy, M., 'Looking back from the invention of printing', *Literacy in historical perspective*, D.P. Resnick ed. (Washington, 1983), pp. 7-22
- Clark, L.G., *Collectors and owners of incunabula in the British Museum. Index of provenances for books printed in France, Holland and Belgium* (Bath, 1962)
- Cockx-Indestege, E., *Mathias van der Goes en het Boexken van der officien ofte dienst der missen van Simon van Venlo* (Antwerpen, 1985)
- Coleman, J., *English literature in history 1350-1400. Medieval readers and writers* (London, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg, 1981)
- Collinson, W.E., *Die Katharinenlegende der hs. II, 143 der KGL. Bibliothek zu Brüssel* (Heidelberg, 1915)
- Coupe, W.A., 'Ungleiche Liebe: a sixteenth-century topos', *The modern language review* 62 (1967), pp. 661-671
- Cross, C., 'Great reasoners in Scripture'. The activities of women Lollards 1380-1530', *Medieval women*, D. Baker ed. (Studies in church history subsidia 1; Oxford, 1978), pp. 359-380
- d'Avray, D.L., *The preaching of the Friars. Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985)
- d'Avray, D.L., 'Katharine of Alexandria and mass communication in Germany: woman as intellectual', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 401-408
- d'Avray, D.L., 'The gospel of the marriage feast of Cana and marriage preaching in France', *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray eds. (Biblioteca di medioevo latino 11; Spoleto, 1994), pp. 135-153
- Dael, P. van, 'De Legenda aurea en de beeldende kunst', *Gouden Legendes. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 89-108
- Dalarun, J., 'De vrouw in de ogen der geestelijken', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 19-44
- Dallapiazza, M., *Minne, hûsêre und das ehlich leben. Zur Konstitution bürgerlicher Lebensmuster in spätmittelalterlichen und frühhumanistischen Didaktiken* (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 1, 455; Frankfurt am Main, Bern, 1981)
- Dasberg, L., *Grootbrengen door kleinhouden als historisch verschijnsel* (Meppel, 1975)

- Daxelmüller, C., 'Narratio, illustratio, argumentatio. Exemplum und Bildungstechnik in der frühen Neuzeit', *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*, W. Haug und B. Wachinger eds. (Fortuna vitrea 2; Tübingen, 1991), pp. 77-94
- Deanesly, M., *The Lollard Bible and other medieval biblical versions* (Cambridge, New York, etc., 1920)
- Deanesly, M., 'Vernacular books in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', *Modern language review* 15 (1920), pp. 349-358
- Debaene, L., *De Nederlandse volksboeken. Ontstaan en geschiedenis van de Nederlandse prozaromans, gedrukt tussen 1475 en 1540* (Antwerpen, 1951, herdruk, Hulst, 1977)
- Deijk, A. van, *Middeleeuwse kerken in Utrecht* (Clavis kunsthistorische monografieën V; Zutphen, 1988)
- Dekker, R., 'Vrouwen in middeleeuws en vroeg-modern Nederland', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), III, pp. 415-443
- Dekkers, M., *Bestiarium. De eenhoorn, meermin, aspidochelone, manticore, mosseleend, pegasos, sater en andere fascinerende dieren uit de middeleeuwse beestenboeken* (Amsterdam, 1977)
- Delany, S., *The naked text. Chaucer's Legend of Good Women* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1994)
- Demyttenaere, A., 'De auteur en zijn publiek in de middeleeuwen', *Literatuur en samenleving in de middeleeuwen*, A. Demyttenaere et al. eds. (Wassenaar, 1976), pp. 8-31
- Demyttenaere, A., 'De God van Augustinus en het geheim van de gesluierde vrouw. Enkele passages in een tractaat over de Drieëenheid', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), pp. 195-234
- Deschamps, J., 'Middel nederlandse vertalingen van *Super modo vivendi* (7de hoofdstuk) en *De libris teutonicalibus* van Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen', *Handelingen Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse maatschappij voor taal- en letterkunde en geschiedenis* 15 (1961), pp. 175-220
- Deschamps, J., 'De Middel nederlandse handschriften van de grote en de kleine 'Der sielen troest' ', *Handelingen Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse maatschappij voor taal- en letterkunde en geschiedenis* 17 (1963), pp. 111-167
- Dijk, A. van, *Jan Brugman als biograaf van de heilige Lidwina* (Universitas catholica lovaniensis tomus xv, 7; Rijswijk, 1948)
- Dijk, M. van, 'Hagiografie van de heilige Barbara in Brabantse vrouwengemeenschappen. Waarheid, ideologie en fantasie', *Genoechlicke en lustige historiën. Laatmiddeleeuwse geschiedschrijving in Nederland*, B. Ebels-Hoving et al. eds. (Middeleeuwse bronnen en studies iv; Hilversum, 1987), pp. 141-155

Dijk, R.Th.M. van, *De constituties der Windesheimse vrouwenkloosters vóór 1559. Bijdrage tot de institutionele geschiedenis van het kapittel van Windesheim* (Middeleeuwse studies Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen III-1 en III-2; 2 vols., Nijmegen, 1986)

Dijk, R.Th.M. van, 'Methodologische kanttekeningen bij het onderzoek van getijdenboeken', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 210-229

Dinzelbacher, P., *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1981)

Dixon, L.S., 'The curse of chastity: the marginalization of women in medieval art and medicine', *Matrons and marginal women in medieval society*, R.R. Edwards and V. Ziegler eds. (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 49-74

Dodde, N.L., ... *tot der kinderen selfs proffijt. Een geschiedenis van het onderwijs te Rotterdam* ('s-Gravenhage, 1991)

Doornink-Hoogenraad, M.M., *Adamanshuis een zusterhuis van de moderne devotie in Zutphen* (Zutphen, 1983)

Douglas, D.C. general ed., *English historical documents* (12 vols., London, 1955-1977)

Drage Hale, R., 'Joseph as mother. Adaptation and appropriation in the construction of male virtue', *Medieval mothering*, J. Carmi Parsons and B. Wheeler eds. (New York, London, 1996), pp. 101-115

Dresen, G., 'Het verloren paradijs en wat vrouwen daar verloren. Notities over ethiek en seksepolitiek aan de hand van de paradijsmythe', *Vrouwen in opspraak. Vrouwenstudies als cultuurkritiek*, M. Brüggemann ed. (Nijmegen, 1987), pp. 31-45

Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De strijd om de broek. De verhouding man/vrouw in het begin van de moderne tijd (1450-1630)', *Revisor* 6 (1977), pp. 29-37

Dresen-Coenders, L., 'Machtige grootmoeder, duivelse heks. Speurtocht naar de samenhang tussen heksenvervolging en de verering van de grote moeder Anna op de drempel van de nieuwe tijd', *Vrouw man kind. Lijnen van vroeger naar nu*, K. Bertels et al. eds. (Baarn, 1978), pp. 44-78

Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De heks als duivelsboel. Over het ontstaan van de angst voor heksen en de bescherming tegen heksen', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 59-82

Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De machtsbalans tussen man en vrouw in het vroeg-moderne gezin', *Vijf eeuwen gezinsleven. Liefde, huwelijk en opvoeding in Nederland*, H. Peeters et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 57-99

Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De omgekeerde wereld: tot lering en vermaak', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur (1400-1600)*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), pp. 73-84

Dresen-Coenders, L., *Helse en hemelse vrouwenmacht omstreeks 1500*. Catalogus tentoonstelling museum 'Commanderie van St. Jan', (Nijmegen, Utrecht, 1988)

Dresen-Coenders, L., 'Huis en haard', *Kent, en versint Eer datje mint. Vrijen en trouwen 1500-1800*, P. van Boheemen et al. eds. (Zwolle, 1989), pp. 8-19

Dresen-Coenders, L., 'De demonen bij Jeroen Bosch. Zoektocht naar bronnen en betekenis', *Duivelsbeelden. Een cultuurhistorische speurtocht door de Lage Landen*, G. Rooijakkers et al. eds. (Baarn, 1994), pp. 168-197

Dresen-Coenders, L. en J. van Haaren, 'Ontmoetingsplaatsen van vrijers en vrijsters', *Kent, en versint Eer datje mint. Vrijen en trouwen 1500-1800*, P. van Boheemen et al. eds. (Zwolle, 1989), pp. 64-84

Dubbe, B., 'Het huisraad in het Oostnederlandse burgerwoonhuis in de late middeleeuwen', *Thuis in de late middeleeuwen. Het Nederlands burgerinterieur 1400-1535*. Tentoonstelling in the Provinciaal Overijssels Museum van 5 oktober tot 31 december 1980. Catalogus door J.W.H. de Jong, w. ed. (Zwolle, 1980), pp. 20-30

Dubbe, B., 'Meubilair', *Thuis in de late middeleeuwen. Het Nederlands burgerinterieur 1400-1535*. Tentoonstelling in the Provinciaal Overijssels Museum van 5 oktober tot 31 december 1980. Catalogus door J.W.H. de Jong, w. ed. (Zwolle, 1980), pp. 24-41

Dubbe, B., 'Voorwerpen betrekking hebbend op de godsdienst, sieraden en diversen', *Thuis in de late middeleeuwen. Het Nederlands burgerinterieur 1400-1535*. Tentoonstelling in the Provinciaal Overijssels Museum van 5 oktober tot 31 december 1980. Catalogus door J.W.H. de Jong, w. ed. (Zwolle, 1980), pp. 76-80

Dubois, J., *Martyrologes d'Usuard au martyrologe romain* (Abbeville, 1990)

Duby, G., *The knight, the lady and the priest. The making of modern marriage in medieval France* (Harmondsworth, 1983), B. Bray trans.

Duby, G. en M. Perrot general eds., *Geschiedenis van de vrouw* (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1991-1992), H. Beneden et al. transs.

Dudley, M.R., '*Natalis innocentum*: the Holy Innocents in liturgy and drama', *The church and childhood*, D. Wood ed. (Studies in church history 31; Oxford, 1994), pp. 233-242

Ebels-Hoving, B., 'Nederlandse geschiedschrijving 1350-1530. Een poging tot karakterisering in Nederland', *Genoechlicke en lustige historiën. Laatmiddeleeuwse geschiedschrijving in Nederland*, B. Ebels-Hoving et al. eds. (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen IV; Hilversum, 1987), pp. 217-242

Edler de Roover, F., 'New facets on the financing and marketing of early printed books', *Bulletin of the business historical society* 27 (1953), pp. 222-230

Eerenbeemt, B. van den, *Het kind in onze middeleeuwsche literatuur* (Amsterdam, 1935)

Eisenstein, E.L., *The printing press as an agent of change. Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe* (2 vols., Cambridge, etc., 1979)

Elias, N., *Het civilisatie proces. Sociogenetische en psychogenetische onderzoeken* (Utrecht, 1982, 1987), H. Israëls, W. Kranendonck et al. transs.

Elliot, J.K., trans. and ed., *The apocryphal New Testament. A collection of apocryphal Christian literature in an English translation* (Oxford, 1993)

Elliott, D., *Spiritual marriage. Sexual abstinence in medieval wedlock* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1993)

Engeldorp Gastelaars, W. van, *Ik sal u smiten op uwen tant. Geweld tussen man en vrouw in laatmiddeleeuwse kluchten* (Amsterdam, 1984)

Engels, L.J., 'Zeven Wijzen van Rome', *Van Aoil tot de Zwaanridder. Personages uit de middeleeuwse verhaalkunst en hun voortleven in literatuur, theater en beeldende kunst*, W.P. Gerritsen en A.G. van Melle eds. (Nijmegen, 1993), pp. 375-380

Ennen, E., *The medieval woman* (Oxford, 1989), E. Jephcott trans.

Ettes, B.J.C., 'De 'vleescelike becoringhe' van Antonius de Kluizenaar', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), pp. 21-39

Falkenburg, R.L., 'Het huishouden van de ziel: burgerlijk decor in het Mérode-altaarstuk', *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, H. Pleij ed. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen IV; Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 244-261

Farmer, D.H., *The Oxford dictionary of saints* (Oxford, New York, 1978, 2nd ed., 1987)

Farmer, S., 'Persuasive voices. Clerical images of medieval wives', *Speculum* 61 (1986), pp. 517-543

Febvre, L. and H.-J., Martin, *The coming of the book. The impact of printing 1450-1800* (London, 1976), D. Gerard trans.

Ferrante, J. M., *Women as image in medieval literature from the twelfth century to Dante* (New York, London, 1975)

Ferrante, J.M., 'The education of women in the middle ages in theory, fact, and fantasy', *Beyond their sex. Learned women of the European past*, P.H. Labalme ed. (New York, London, 1980), pp. 9-42

Fildes, V., *Wet nursing. A history from antiquity to the present* (Oxford, 1988)

- Fisher, S. and J.E. Halley, 'The lady vanishes: the problem of women's absence in late medieval and renaissance texts', *Seeking the woman in late medieval and renaissance writings. Essays in feminist contextual criticism*, S. Fisher and J.E. Halley eds. (Knoxville, 1989), pp. 1-17
- Fleith, B., *Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der lateinischen Legenda aurea* (Subsidia hagiographica 72; Bruxelles, 1991)
- Flou, K. de, en E. Gailliard, 'Beschrijving van Middelnederlandsche handschriften die in Engeland bewaard worden', *Verslagen en mededeelingen der Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor taal-en letterkunde* 3 (1895), pp. 39-259
- Fluck, H., 'Der Risus Paschalis. Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Volkskunde', *Archiv für Religiöswissenschaft* 31 (1934), pp. 188-212
- Franssen, P.J.A., 'Gerard Leeu voltooit te Gouda het drukken van Die hystorie van Reynaert die vos', *Nederlandse literatuur, een geschiedenis*, M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen ed. (Groningen, 1993), pp. 109-115
- Freed, J.B., 'Urban development and the 'curia monialium' in thirteenth-century Germany', *Viator* 3 (1972), pp. 311-327
- Gaiffier, B. de, 'La légende latine de Sainte Barbe par Jean de Wackerzeele', *Analecta Bollandiana* lxxvii (1959), pp. 5-41
- Geldner, F., 'Bücherfestpreise in der Wiegendruckzeit?', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 15 (1975), cc. 1289-1292
- Gent, duizend jaar kunst en cultuur*. Tentoonstellingen ingericht door de stad Gent. Museum voor Schone Kunsten 19 april – 29 juni 1975. Ingeleid door R. Vandewege (Gent, 1975)
- Gerrits, G.H., *Inter timorem et spem. A study in the theological thought of Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen (1367-1398)*, (Studies in medieval and renaissance thought xxxvii; Leiden, 1986)
- Gies, F. and J., *Women in the middle ages* (New York, 1978)
- Gijswijt-Hofstra, M., 'Toverij en tolerantie. Reacties op toverij in Nederland van de zestiende tot in de achttiende eeuw', *Een schijn van verdraagzaamheid. Afwijking en tolerantie in Nederland van de zestiende eeuw tot heden*, M. Gijswijt-Hofstra ed. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 16; Hilversum, 1989), pp. 131-155
- Ginzburg, C., *The cheese and the worms. The cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller* (London, Henley, 1980), J. and A. Tedeschi transs.
- Glasser, M., 'Marriage in medieval hagiography', *Studies in medieval and renaissance history* n.s. 4 (1981), pp. 1-34
- Gold, P.S., 'The marriage of Mary and Joseph in the twelfth-century ideology of marriage', *Sexual practices and the medieval church*, J.A. Brundage and V.L. Bullough eds. (Buffalo, New York, 1982), pp. 102-117

Goodich, M., 'Ancilla Dei: the servant as saint in the late middle ages', *Women of the medieval world*, J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple eds. (Oxford, New York, 1985), pp. 119-136

Goody, J., 'Introduction', *Literacy in traditional societies*, J. Goody ed. (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 1-26

Goosen, L., *Van Afra tot de Zevenlappers. Heiligen in religie en kunsten* (Nijmegen, 1992)

Gottlieb, B., 'The problems of feminism in the fifteenth century', *Women of the medieval world*, J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple eds. (Oxford, New York, 1985), pp. 337-346

Goudriaan, K., 'Inleiding', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 3-11

Goudraan, K., 'Het Passionael op de drukpers', *Gouden Legendes. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 73-88

Grafton, A., *Joseph Scaliger. A study in the history of classical scholarship* (2 vols., Oxford, 1983-1993)

Grafton, A. and L. Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities. Education and the liberal arts in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe* (London, 1986)

Gravdal, K., *Ravishing maidens. Writing rape in medieval French literature and law* (Philadelphia, 1991)

Green, D.H., *Medieval listening and reading. The primary reception of German literature 800-1300* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994)

Greilsammer, M., 'Le mariage en pays Flamand: un 'fait social total' ', *Marriage and social mobility in the late middle ages*, W. Prevenier ed. (Studia historica Gandensia 274; Gent, 2nd ed., 1992), pp. 60-98

Grendler, P.F., 'What Zuanne read in school: vernacular texts in sixteenth-century Venetian schools', *The sixteenth-century journal* 13 (1982), pp. 41-53

Grijs, F.J.A. de, 'Heiligen, wat zijn dat eigenlijk?', *Andere structuren, andere heiligen. Het veranderende beeld van de heilige in de middeleeuwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 2; Utrecht, 1983), pp. 13-32

Groag Bell, S., 'Medieval women book owners: arbiters of lay piety and ambassadors of culture', *Sisters and workers in the middle ages*, J.M. Bennett et al. eds. (Chicago, London, 1976, 1989), pp. 135-161

Grundmann, H., 'Die Frauen und die Literatur im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Entstehung des Schrifttums in der Volkssprache', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 26 (1936), pp. 129-161

- Gumbert, J.P., 'Over Kartuizerbibliotheken in de Nederlanden', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 159-186
- Gumbert, J.P., *The Dutch and their books in the manuscript age* (London, 1990)
- Gumbert, J.P. et G.I. Liefstinck eds., *Manuscripts datés conservés dans le Pays-Bas* (2 vols., Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1964-1988)
- Gunning, M.J., *Gewaande rechten. Het denken over vrouwen en gelijkheid van Thomas van Aquino tot de Bataafsche Constitutie* (Zwolle, 1991)
- Haakman, G.C., *Rhenen en omstreken* (Amersfoort, 1847)
- Haan, F. de, 'Na vijftien jaren. Vrouwengeschiedenis in Nederland, 1976-1991', *In haar verleden ingewijd. De ontwikkeling van vrouwengeschiedenis in Nederland*, S. Dumont et al. eds. (Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis 11, Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 3-37
- Habermas, R., 'Weibliche Erfahrungswelten, Frauen in der Welt des Wunders', *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter. Fragen, Quellen, Antworten*, B. Lundt ed. (München, 1991), pp. 65-80
- Hagemeijer, P., 'Devote vrouwen in Holland omstreeks 1400', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 224-241
- Hajnal, J., 'European marriage patterns in perspective', *Population in history. Essays in historical demography*, D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley eds. (London, 1965), pp. 101-143
- Haks, D., *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw. Processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven* (Assen, 1982)
- Hall, C., 'De geschiedenis van de huisvrouw', *Te elfder ure* 20 (1975), pp. 676-704
- Hall, E., *The Arnolfini betrothal. Medieval marriage and the enigma of Van Eyck's double portrait* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1994)
- Hallissy, M., *Clean maids, true wives, steadfast widows. Chaucer's women and the medieval codes of conduct* (Contributions in women's studies 130; Westport, Connecticut, London, 1993)
- Hanawalt, B.A., *The ties that bound. Peasant families in medieval England* (Oxford, New York, 1986)
- Hanawalt, B.A., 'Remarriage as an option for urban and rural widows in late medieval England', *Wife and widow in medieval England*, S. Sheridan Walker ed. (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 141-164
- Harthan, J., *Books of Hours and their owners* (Milan, 1977)

- Hartingsveldt, E.O., 'De schande van onvruchtbaarheid', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), pp. 47-77
- Hasenohr, G., 'La vie quotidienne de la femme vue par l'église. L'enseignement des 'journées chrétiennes' de la fin du moyen âge', *Frau und spätmittelalterlicher Alltag*. Internationaler Kongress Krems an der Donau 2. bis 5. Oktober 1984, w. ed. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 473; Wien, 1986), pp. 19-101
- Haverkamp, A., 'Maria Magdalena: een voorbeeldige heilige', *Helse en hemelse vrouwen. Schrikbeelden en voorbeelden van de vrouw in de christelijke cultuur*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, M. Caron ed. (Utrecht, 1988), pp. 65-72
- Heel, D. van, *De Goudse drukkers en hun uitgaven* (12 vols., Gouda, 1951-1953)
- Heers, J., *Family clans in the middle ages. A study of political and social structures in urban areas* (Europe in the middle ages 4; Amsterdam, New York, Oxford, 1977), B. Herbert trans.
- Heijting, W., 'Succes becijferd. Een bibliometrische analyse van het fonds van Geraert Leeu', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige Kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 204-223
- Hellinga, W., *Kopij en druk in de Nederlanden. Atlas bij de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse typografie met twee inleidende studies van H. de la Fontaine Verwey en G.W. Ovink* (Amsterdam, 1962)
- Hellinga, W. and L., *The fifteenth-century printing types of the Low Countries* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1966), D.A.S. Reid trans.
- Hellinga-Querido, L., *William Caxton. Englands eerste drukker en de Nederlanden* ('s-Gravenhage, 1976)
- Hellinga-Querido, L., 'De betekenis van Geraert Leeu', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige Kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 12-30
- Henderikx, P.A., *De oudste bedelordekloosters in het graafschap Holland en Zeeland. Het ontstaan van bedelordekloosters voor ca. 1310 te Dordrecht, Middelburg, Zierikzee en Haarlem, alsmede enige aspecten van de plaats van deze kloosters in het stedelijk leven en daarbuiten gedurende de middeleeuwen* (Hollandse studiën 10; Dordrecht, 1977)
- Herlihy, D., 'Life expectancies for women in medieval society', *The role of women in the middle ages*. Papers of the sixth annual conference of the center for medieval and early renaissance studies State University of New York at Binghamton 6-7 May 1972, R. Thee Morewedge ed. (London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto, 1975), pp. 1-20
- Herlihy, D., *Medieval households* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1985)

- Herlihy, D., *Opera muliebria. Women and work in medieval Europe* (New York, etc., 1990)
- Herlihy, D., *Women, family and society in medieval Europe. Historical essays, 1978-1991* (Providence, Oxford, 1995), A. Molho ed.
- Herlihy, D. et C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles, une étude du castato florentin de 1427* (Paris, 1978)
- Hermans, J.M.M., 'Laatmiddeleeuwse boekcultuur in het Noorden: zoeken en vinden', *Boeken in de late middeleeuwen. Verslag van de Groningse codicologendagen 1992*, J.M.M. Hermans en K. van der Hoek eds. (Groningen, 1994), pp. 221-228
- Herwaarden, J. van, 'Gemeenschappen en kloosters van de Moderne Devotie', *Geert Grote en de Moderne Devotie. Tentoonstellingscatalogus Athenaeumbibliotheek, Museum de Waag Deventer, Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht*, M. van Bussel-Eijlander ed. (Utrecht, 1984), pp. 12-24
- Herwaarden, J. van, ' 'Dat Scaecspel'. Een profaan-ethische verkenning', *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, J. Reynaert et al. eds. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur IX; Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 304-321
- Herwaarden, J. van, en R. de Keyser, 'Het gelovige volk in de late middeleeuwen', *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, w. ed. (15 vols., Haarlem, 1980-1982), IV, pp. 405-420
- Hiller, J.A., *Albrecht von Eyb, a medieval moralist* (The Catholic University of America studies in German 13; Washington D.C., 1939)
- Hirsch, R., *Printing, selling and reading 1450-1550* (Wiesbaden, 1967)
- Hogenelst, D. en S. de Vries, ' 'Die scone die mi peisen doet ...'. De vrouw als opdrachtgeefster van de middeleeuwse literatuur', *Tijdschrift voor vrouwenstudies* 3 (1982), pp. 325-346
- Hollander, R., 'Typology and secular literature: some medieval problems and examples', *Literary uses of typology from the late middle ages to the present*, E. Miner ed. (Princeton, 1977), pp. 3-19
- Holz knecht, K.J., *Literary patronage in the middle ages* (Philadelphia, 1923)
- Hoppenbrouwers, P.C.M., 'Maagschap en vriendschap. Een beschouwing over de structuur en functies van verwantschapsbetrekkingen in het laat-middeleeuwse Holland', *Holland en historische demografie* (Hollandse Studiën 16; Dordrecht, 1985), pp. 69-108
- Horst, K. van der, et al. eds., *Handschriften en oude drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek. Catalogus bij de tentoonstelling in het Centraal Museum te Utrecht ter gelegenheid van het 400-jarig bestaan van de bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit 1584-1984* (Utrecht, 1984)
- Houston, R.A., *Literacy in early modern Europe. Culture and education 1500-1800* (London, New York, 1988)

Howell, M.C., *Women, production, and patriarchy in late medieval cities* (Chicago, London, 1986)

Howell, M.C., with the collaboration of S. Wemple and D. Kaiser, 'A documented presence: medieval women in Germanic historiography', *Women in medieval history and historiography*, S. Mosher Stuard ed. (Philadelphia, 1987), pp. 101-131

Howell, M.C., 'Citizenship and gender: women's political status in northern medieval cities', *Women and power in the middle ages*, M. Erler and M. Kowalski eds. (Athens, London, 1988), pp. 37-60

Hughenoltz, F.W.N., 'Middeleeuwers over vrouwen: de historische bronnen', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 4; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), II, pp. 13-24

Hughenoltz, F.W.N., 'Het vertekend beeld. Bij wijze van nabeschouwing', *Gewone mensen in de middeleeuwen*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan F.W.N. Hughenoltz ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 7; Utrecht, 1987), pp. 315-337

Hughenoltz, F.W.N., 'Historici over heiligen', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van wetenschappen, afdeling Letterkunde*, n.r. 50, 5 (1987), pp. 163-182

Hull, S.W., *Chaste, silent and obedient: English books for women 1475-1640* (San Marino, 1982)

Hutchison, A.M., 'Devotional reading in the monastery and in the late medieval household'. *De cella in seculum. Religious and secular life and devotion in late medieval England*. An interdisciplinary conference 20-22 July, 1986, M.G. Sargent ed. (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 215-227

Iterson, W. van, 'De stichtingsbrieven van het St. Cuneragilde te Rhenen en het ellendige gilde te Eembrug', *Rechtshistorische opstellen aangeboden aan A.S. de Blécourt*, J.B. Wolters ed. (Groningen, Batavia, 1939), pp. 41-53

Jansen, K.L., 'Mary Magdalen and the mendicants: the preaching of penance in the late middle ages', *Journal of medieval history* 21 (1995), pp. 1-25

Jansen-Sieben, R., 'De vrouw in de medische literatuur', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 4; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), II, pp. 160-178

Jansen-Sieben, R. ed., *Repertorium van de Middelnederlandse artes-literatuur* (Utrecht, 1989)

Jauss, H.R., 'The alterity and modernity of medieval literature', *New literary history* 10 (1979), pp. 181-220

Jauss, H.R., *Toward an aesthetic of reception* (Theory and history of literature 2; Brighton, 1982), T. Bahti trans.

- Jeay, M., 'Sexuality and family in fifteenth-century France: are literary sources a mask or a mirror?', *Journal of family history* 4 (1979), pp. 328-345
- Jöckle, C., *Encyclopedia of saints* (London, 1995), German Translation Centre trans.
- Johnson, S.M., 'Luther's Reformation and (un)holy matrimony', *Journal of family history* 17 (1992), pp. 271-288
- Jong, M. de, 'Merovingische en vroeg-Karolingische heiligenlevens als spiegel van kindertijd en jeugd', *De heiligenverering in de eerste eeuwen van het christendom*, A. Hilhorst ed. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 41-52
- Jong, M. de, 'Geletterd en ongeletterd: zin en onzin van een tegenstelling', *Oraliteit en schriftcultuur*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 12; Hilversum, 1993), pp. 9-31
- Jongen, L. en W. Scheepsma, 'Wachten op de hemelse bruidegom. De Diepenveense nonnenviten in literair-historisch perspectief', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens ed. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 295-317
- Jongen, L. en C. Schotel, 'Waarheid of fictie? Over de bruikbaarheid van het Middelnederlandse Leven van Liedewij, de maagd van Schiedam als historische bron', *OGE* 65 (1991), pp. 39-51
- Kelso, R., *Doctrine for the lady of the renaissance* (Urbana, 1956)
- Kersten, H., 'Van een monnik en een hoer. De legende van Maria Aegyptiaca in de Middelnederlandse verhaaltraditie', *Literatuur* 9 (1992), pp. 194-202
- Ketsch, P., *Frauen im Mittelalter* (Studien Materialien 14 und 19; 2 vols., Düsseldorf, 1984)
- Kettle, A.J., 'Ruined maids: prostitutes and servant girls in later medieval England', *Matrons and marginal women in medieval society*, R.R. Edwards and V. Ziegler eds. (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 19-31
- Kieckhefer, R., *Unquiet Souls. Fourteenth-century saints and their religious milieu* (Chicago, London, 1984)
- Kist, N.C., 'De Reenensche Kunera-Legende, in betrekking tot die van Sinte Ursula en de Elfduizend maagden', *Kerkhistorisch Archief* 2 (1859), pp. 1-48
- Klamt, J.-C., 'Gewone mensen op grote pleinen', *Gewone mensen in de middeleeuwen*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan F.W.N. Hugenholtz ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 7; Utrecht, 1987), pp. 219-253
- Klecha, G., 'Albrecht von Eyb', *VL*, I, cc. 180-186

Klein, K., 'Frühchristliche Eremiten im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit. Zur Überlieferung und Rezeption der deutschen >Vitaspatrum<-Prosa', *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*. Symposion Wolfenbüttel 1981, L. Grenzmann und K. Stackmann eds. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände V; Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 686-696

Kleinberg, A.M., *Prophets in their own country. Living saints and the making of sainthood in the later middle ages* (Chicago, London, 1992)

Kloek, E.M., *Gezinshistorici over vrouwen. Een overzicht van het werk van gezinshistorici en de betekenis daarvan voor de vrouwengeschiedenis* (Amsterdam, 1981, 1989)

Knust, H., *Geschichte der Legenden der h. Katharina von Alexandrien und der h. Maria Aegyptiaca nebst unedirten Texten* (Halle a. S., 1890)

Koch, E., 'Kloosterintrede, huwelijk en familiefortuin. De kosten van klooster en huwelijk voor adellijke vrouwen in zuidoost-Nederland in de late middeleeuwen', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 242-257

Kok, C.H.C.M., *De houtsneden in de incunabelen van de Lage Landen, 1475-1500. Inventarisatie en bibliografische analyse* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1994)

Koorn, F.W.J., *Begijnhoven in Holland en Zeeland gedurende de middeleeuwen* (Assen, 1981)

Koorn, F.W.J., 'Women without vows. The case of the beguines and the sisters of the Common Life in the Northern Netherlands', *Women and men in spiritual culture, xiv - xvii centuries. A meeting of south and north*, E. Schulte van Kessel ed. (The Hague, 1986), pp. 135-147

Koorn, F. en M. van der Eyken, *Begijnen in Brabant. De begijnhoven van Breda en Diest* (Amsterdam, 1987)

Koyen, M.H., 'Krankzinnigenzorg. St. Dimpna en Geel', *Spiegel Historiael* 9 (1974), pp. 514-521

Kreek, M.L. de, 'De bibliotheek van 'Mariëwater/Maria-Refugie' ', *Birgitta van Zweden 1303-1373. 600 jaar kunst en cultuur van haar kloosterorde*. Tentoonstelling Museum voor religieuze kunst Uden, 22 maart t/m 25 mei 1986, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen ed. (Uden, 1986), pp. 42-56

Kreek, M.L. de, ' 'Geprent te Mariënwater'. Onderzoek naar - en voorlopige inventarisatie van - mogelijke 'Mariënwater-prentjes' ', *Birgitta van Zweden 1303-1373. 600 jaar kunst en cultuur van haar kloosterorde*. Tentoonstelling Museum voor religieuze kunst Uden, 22 maart t/m 25 mei 1986, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen ed. (Uden, 1986), pp. 17-30

Krol, T., 'Vrouwen en retorica', *Vrouwen in taal en literatuur*, K. Korevaart ed. (Amersfoort, Leuven, 1988), pp. 23-38

Kronenberg, M.E., *Catalogus van de incunabelen in de Athenaeum-Bibliotheek te Deventer* (Deventer, 1917)

Kronenberg, M.E., 'Een onbekende 15e eeuwse druk van Sinte Kunera's Leven en Passie', *Het boek* 20 (1931), pp. 331-344

Kronenberg, M.E., 'Later gebruik van een der Kunera-houtneden', *Het boek* 21 (1933), pp. 287-290

Kruitwagen, B., 'Wat men in de Nederlanden las in de 15e eeuw', *Bibliotheekleven* 10 (1925), pp. 41-58, pp. 51-58, pp. 87-95, pp. 102-111

Kuiper, J., *Geschiedenis van het godsdienstig en kerkelijk leven van het Nederlandsche volk (100 voor Chr. - 1903) aan ons volk verhaald* (Nijkerk, 1900, 1903)

Labarge, M.W., *Women in medieval life. A small sound of the trumpet* (London, 1986)

Labarge, M.W., 'Three medieval widows and a second career', *Aging and the aged in medieval Europe*. Selected papers from the annual conference of the centre for medieval studies, University of Toronto, held 25-26 February and 11-12 November 1983, M.M. Sheehan ed. (Papers in mediaeval studies 11; Toronto, 1990), pp. 159-172

Leeuwen, B. van, 'Clara penitente in haar jeugd', *Franciscaans leven* 1 (1986), pp. 16-28

Leeuwen, C.G. van, 'Opvattingen omtrent ziektes en zieken in de Nederlanden gedurende de late middeleeuwen. Een eerste aanzet', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 134-166

Lemaire, R., 'Vrouwen in de lyriek', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 3; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), I, pp. 111-126

Lemaire, R., 'Inleiding', *Ik zing mijn lied voor al wie met mij gaat. Vrouwen in de volksliteratuur*, R. Lemaire ed. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 11-41

Lemaire, R., 'Rethinking literary history', *Historiography of women's cultural traditions*, M. Meijer en J. Schaap eds. (Women's studies 3; Dordrecht, 1987), pp. 180-193

Lemprière, J., *Lemprière's classical dictionary* (London, 1788, revised ed., 1994)

Lenkey, S.V., 'Printers' wives in the age of humanism', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1975), pp. 331-336

Leydesdorff, S., 'Kanttekeningen bij 'de geschiedenis van de huisvrouw'. Poging tot een theorievorming van de geschiedenis van de nederlandse vrouw', *Te elfder ure* 20 (1975), pp. 705-721

- Liebaers, H. ed., *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden*. Tentoonstelling in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I. Catalogus (Brussel, 1973)
- Liebaers, H., *Noordnederlandse miniaturen. De gouden eeuw der boekverluchting in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*. Catalogus tentoonstelling Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albrecht I, 18 september-16 oktober 1971. Tentoonstelling door A. Brounts samengesteld, door H. Liebaers ingeleid (Brussel, 1971)
- Lingier, C., 'Boekengebruik in vrouwenkloosters onder de invloed van de moderne devotie', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens ed. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 280-294
- Lips, E.J.G., 'Huden gesont, morgen doot'. Troost en dreigement in het *Sterfboek of die conste van sterven* (1488)', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 65-86
- Lockwood, W.B., 'Mirakelen van Sinte Barbara in Middelnederlandse handschriften', *OGE* 30 (1957), pp. 367-387
- Löhmer, C., *Die Welt der Kinder im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* (Weinheim, 1989)
- Lone, E.M., 'Some bookwomen of the fifteenth century', *The colophon* 11 (1932), w. page numbering
- Loonen, P.L.M., '*For to learne to buye and sell*'. *Learning English in the Low Dutch area between 1500 and 1800. A critical survey* (Studies of the Pierre Bayle Institute 22; Amsterdam, Maarssen, 1990, revised ed., 1991)
- Lourdaux, J., 'Kartuizers - Moderne Devoten. Een probleem van afhankelijkheid', *OGE* 37 (1963), pp. 402-418
- Lourdaux, W., 'Het boekenbezit en het boekengebruik bij de Moderne Devoten', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 247-325
- Löwensteyn, M., 'Toveren en spinnen. De evangeliën van de spinrokken in beeld gebracht', *Nederland betoverd. Toverij en hekserij van de veertiende tot in de twintigste eeuw*, M. Gijsijt-Hofstra en W. Frijhoff eds. (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 133-147
- Lucas, A.M., *Women in the middle ages. Religion, marriage and letters* (Brighton, 1983)
- Lynch, K.A., 'The European marriage pattern in the cities: variations on a theme by Hajnal', *Journal of family history* 16 (1991), pp. 79-96
- Lyons, J.D., *Exemplum. The rhetoric of example in early modern France and Italy* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1989)

Machiels, J. en P. van Peteghem, 'Incunabelbezit in Zuidnederlandse kloosterbibliotheken. Kan men het incunabelbezit in Zuidnederlandse kloosterbibliotheken tot rond 1500 samenstellen op grond van de herkomstvermelding?', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 327-366

Magry, P.J., 'Het Katharijneconvent te Heusden. Een onderzoek naar het boekenbezit en boekengebruik van een tertiarijnenklooster in de late middeleeuwen', *OGE* 60 (1986), pp. 148-203

Mann, J., *Apologies to women*. Inaugural lecture delivered 20th November 1990 (Cambridge, New York, etc., 1991)

Marchalons, S., 'Medieval symbols and the *Gesta Romanorum*', *The Chaucer review* 4 (1974), pp. 311-319

Markiewicz, H., 'On the definitions of literary parody', *To honor Roman Jakobson*. Essays on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, w. ed. (3 vols., The Hague, Paris, 1966-1967), II, pp. 1264-1272

Marrow, J.H., *Passion iconography in Northern European art of the late middle ages and early renaissance. A study of the transformation of sacred metaphor into descriptive narrative* (Kortrijk, 1979)

Marrow, J.H. et al., *The golden age of Dutch manuscript painting* (New York, 1990)

Matter, E.A., *The voice of my Beloved. The Song of Songs in western medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1990)

Matuszak, J., *Das Speculum exemplorum als Quelle volkstümlicher Glaubensvorstellungen des Spätmittelalters* (Quellen und Studien zur Volkskunde 8; Siegburg, 1967)

McDonnell, E.W., *Beguines and beguards in medieval culture, with special reference on the Belgian scene* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1954)

Meale, C.M., '... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englich, and frensch': laywomen and their books in late medieval England', *Women and literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, C.M. Meale ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 17; Cambridge, 1993), pp. 128-158

Meder, Th., 'Fatale vrouwen. Een negatief trouwadvies in late middeleeuwse etiquetteboeken', *Literatuur* 10 (1993), pp. 88-96

Meiner, A., 'Die Frau im Druckgewerbe. Aus Notizen zu einer Geschichte der Frau im Buchgewerbe', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1933), pp. 333-343

Meinsma, K.O., *Middeleeuwsche bibliotheken* (Zutphen, 1903)

Mertens, Th., 'Lezen met de pen. Ontwikkelingen in het laatmiddeleeuws geestelijk proza', *De studie van de Middelnederlandse letterkunde. Stand en toekomst*. Symposium Antwerpen 22-24 september 1988, F.P. van Oostrom en F. Willaert eds. (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen XIV; Hilversum, 1989), pp. 187-200

Mertens, Th., 'Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Ter inleiding', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 8-35

Mertens, Th., 'Geert Grote schrijft aan Ruusbroec dat hij als een vrek op boeken aast', *Nederlandse literatuur, een geschiedenis*, M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen ed. (Groningen, 1993), pp. 74-79

Mertens, Th., 'The Modern Devotion and innovation in Middle Dutch literature', *Medieval Dutch literature in its European context*, E. Kooper ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 21; Cambridge, New York etc., 1994), pp. 226-241

Mertens, V., 'Theologie der Mönche-Frömmigkeit der Laien? Beobachtungen zur Textgeschichte von Predigten des Hartwig von Erfurt', *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*. Symposion Wolfenbüttel 1981, L. Grenzmann und K. Stackmann eds. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände V; Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 661-685

Meyer, G.M. de, met medewerking van E.W.F. van den Elzen, *Min en onmin. Mannen en vrouwen over hun omgang aan het einde van de vijftiende eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989)

Meyer, M. de, *Volksprenten in de Nederlanden 1400-1900. Religieuze, allegorische, satirische en verhalende prenten. Speelkaarten, Ganzen-en Uilenborden, Driekoningenbriefjes, Nieuwjaarsprenten* (Amsterdam, Antwerpen, 1970)

Miltenburg, A.P.J., 'Leven en streven. De gewone mens in de mediëvistiek ca. 1850-1960', *Gewone mensen in de middeleeuwen*. Bundel studies aangeboden aan F.W.N. Hugenholtz ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 7; Utrecht, 1987), pp. 23-49

Minois, G., *History of old age. From antiquity to the renaissance* (Oxford, 1989), S. Hanbury Tenison trans.

Mitterauer, M. and R. Sieder, *The European family. Patriarchy to partnership from the middle ages to the present* (Oxford, 1987), K. Oosterveen and M. Hörzinger transs.

Mol, H. de, 'Het huwelyck is goddelyck van aart, wanneer men tsaam uyt reine liefde paart'. Kerkelijke opvattingen over vrijen en trouwen', *Kent, en versint Eer datje mint. Vrijen en trouwen 1500-1800*, P. van Boheemen et al. eds. (Zwolle, 1989), pp. 85-120

Moll, W., *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-klooster te Delft, in de tweede helft der vijftiende eew* (Amsterdam, 1857)

Montag, U., 'Birgitta von Schweden', *VL*, I, cc. 867-869

Montag, U., 'Katharina von Schweden', *VL*, IV, cc. 1075-1076

Moolenbroek, J.J. van, 'Seksuele onthouding als norm en waarde in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland. Verkenningen in officiële en niet-officiële cultuur', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 109-133

Moolenbroek, J.J. van, ' 'Dat liden ende die passie ons Heren Jhesu Cristi' een bestseller uit het fonds van Gheraert Leeu in vijftiende-eeuwse context', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Oudheidkundige Kring Die Goude 23; Delft, 1993), pp. 81-110

Morse, C.C., 'The exemplary Griselda', *Studies in the age of Chaucer* 7 (1985), pp. 51-86

Mostert, M., 'Literatuurwijzer vrouwen in de Middeleeuwen', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), pp. 319-340

Muir, L.R., *Literature and society in medieval France. The mirror and the image, 1100-1500* (London, 1985)

Mulder-Bakker, A.B., 'Heilige maagden aan de Maas', *Genoechlicke en lustige historiën. Laatmiddeleeuwse geschiedschrijving in Nederland*, B. Ebels-Hoving et al. eds. (Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen IV; Hilversum, 1987), pp. 121-139

Muller, E., 'Heilige maagden. De verering van maagdheiligen in religieuze vrouwengemeenschappen', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 83-100

Müller, M., *Die Lehre von der Paradiesesehe des hl. Augustinus und ihre Auswirkung in der Sexualethik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts bis Thomas von Aquin* (Regensburg, 1954)

Murray, A., 'Confession as a historical source in the thirteenth century', *The writing of history in the middle ages. Essays presented to Richard William Southern*, R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill eds. (Oxford, 1981), pp. 275-322

Naaktgeboren, C., 'Wonder en realiteit in het verleden en heden; een verkenning van de gedachten over zwangerschap en baring bij onze voorouders', *Een kind onder het hart. Verloskunde, volksgeloof, gezin, seksualiteit en moraal vroeger en nu*, R. Kistemaker ed. (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 57-84

Naber, J.W.A., *Vrouwenleven in prae-Reformatietijd, bezegeld door den marteldood van Wendelmoet Claesdochter* ('s-Gravenhage, 1927)

Nauwelaerts, M.A., *Latijnse school en onderwijs te 's-Hertogenbosch tot 1629* (Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het zuiden van Nederland 30; Tilburg, 1974)

- Neilsen Blum, S., *Early Netherlandish triptychs. A study in patronage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1969)
- Newman, B., *From virile woman to woman Christ. Studies in medieval religion and literature* (Philadelphia, 1995)
- Nicholas, D., *The domestic life of a medieval city. Women, children, and the family in fourteenth-century Ghent* (Lincoln, London, 1985)
- Nicholas, D., *Medieval Flanders* (London, New York, 1992)
- Nichols, J.A., 'Female nudity and sexuality in medieval art', *New images of women. Essays toward a cultural anthropology*, E.E. DuBruck ed. (Lewiston/Queenston, Lampeter, 1989), pp. 165-206
- Niekus Moore, C., *The maiden's mirror. Reading material for German girls in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 36; Wiesbaden, 1987)
- Nieuwland, J., 'Motherhood and sanctity in the Life of Saint Birgitta of Sweden. An insoluble conflict?', *Sanctity and motherhood. Essays on holy mothers in the middle ages*, A.B. Mulder-Bakker ed. (Groningen, 1995), pp. 297-319
- Nijsten, G., *Volkscultuur in de late middeleeuwen. Feesten, processies en (bij)geloof* (Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1994)
- Nissen, P.J.A., 'De monnik en het gezin. Dionysius de Kartuizer over huwelijk en gezin', *Geloof, moraal en intellect in de middeleeuwen. Voordrachten gehouden tijdens het symposium t.g.v. het tien-jarig bestaan van het Nijmeegs Centrum voor Middeleeuwse Studies 10 en 11 december 1993*, P. Bange ed. (Middeleeuwse studies X; Nijmegen, 1995), pp. 160-173
- Noble, P., 'La légende de Pélagie en moyen-néerlandais', *Pélagie la pénitente. Métamorphoses d'une légende*, P. Petitmengin et al. eds. (2 vols., Paris, 1984), II, pp. 337-364
- Noonan, J.T., *Contraception. A history of its treatment by the catholic theologians and canonists* (Cambridge, MA, 1965)
- Noordegraaf, L., *Hollands welvaren? Levensstandaard in Holland 1450-1650* (Bergen NH, 1985)
- Nyberg, T.S., 'Birgitta von Schweden', *Mein Herz schmilzt wie Eis am Feuer. Die religiöse Frauenbewegung des Mittelalters in Porträts*, J. Thiele ed. (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 225-236
- Obbema, P.F.J., 'De overlevering van de middeleeuwse letterkunde', *Literatuur en samenleving in de middeleeuwen*, A. Demyttenaere et al. eds. (Wassenaar, 1976), pp. 101-131
- Obbema, P.F.J., *Boeken in Nederland* (w. place, 1979)

Obbema, P.F.J., *Grenzen verleggen. Nijmeegs onderzoek naar de handschriften van de Moderne Devotie*. Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van buitengewoon hoogleraar in de hulpwetenschappen der geschiedenis aan de Katholieke Universiteit te Nijmegen (Leiden, 1987)

Obbema, P.F.J., *De middeleeuwen in handen. Over de boekcultuur in de late middeleeuwen* (Hilversum, 1996)

Obrist, B., 'The Swedish visionary: Saint Bridget', *Medieval women writers*, K.M. Wilson ed. (Manchester, 1984), pp. 227-251

Oerle, H. van, 'Liedwy von Schiedam: mystica oder hysterica?', *Religiöse Frauenbewegung und mystische Frömmigkeit im Mittelalter*, P. Dinzelbacher und D.R. Bauer eds. (Beiheft zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 28; Köln, Wien, 1988), pp. 395-404

Ohly, F., *Hohelied-Studien. Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Hoheliedauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden, 1958)

Olson, G., *Literature as recreation in the later middle ages* (Ithaca, London, 1982)

Ong, W.J., *Orality and literacy: the technologizing of the word* (London, New York, 1982)

Ooms, H., 'Boek en boekenbezit bij de Minderbroeders in de Nederlanden tijdens de middeleeuwen', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 367-385

Oosterman, J., 'Om de grote kracht der woorden. Middelnederlandse gebeden en rubrieken in het Brugge van de vroege vijftiende eeuw', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 230-244

Oosterman, J., 'Heiligen, gebeden en heiligengebeden', *Gouden Legenden. Heiligenlevens en heiligenverering in de Nederlanden*, A. Mulder-Bakker en M. Carasso-Kok eds. (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 151-163

Oostrom, F.P. van, *Het woord van eer. Literatuur aan het Hollandse hof omstreeks 1400* (Amsterdam, 1987)

Oostrom, F.P. van, 'Lezen, leren en luisteren in klooster, stad en hof. Kinderboeken in de middeleeuwen?', *De hele Bibelebontse berg. De geschiedenis van het kinderboek in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, H. Bekkering et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1989, 1990), pp. 15-40

Opitz, C., *Frauenalltag im Mittelalter. Biographien des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Ergebnisse der Frauenforschung 5; Weinheim, Basel, 1985, 1987)

Opitz, C., 'Het dagelijkse leven van de vrouw in de late middeleeuwen (1250-1500)', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 271-325

- Orbàn, A.P., 'Het middeleeuwse antifeminisme', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 4; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), II, pp. 121-133
- Orbàn, A.P., 'De invloed van het ascetisch ideaal der kartuizers op hun oraal en schriftelijk gebruik van het Latijn', *Oraliteit en schriftcultuur*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 12; Hilversum, 1993), pp. 103-118
- Origo, I., *De koopman van Prato* (Amsterdam, 1985), K. van Gulik trans.
- Owst, G.R., *Literature and pulpit in medieval England. A neglected chapter in the history of English letters and of the English people* (Oxford, 1961)
- Palmer, N.F., 'Preventa und Adoptata'. Eine erbauliche Klosterlegende aus dem 15. Jahrhundert', *Poesie und Gebrauchsliteratur im deutschen Mittelalter*. Würzburger colloquium 1978, V. Honemann et al. eds. (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 290-303
- Palmer, N.F., 'Seelentrost', *VL*, VIII, cc. 1030-1039
- Payer, P. J., *The bridling of desire. Views of sex in the later middle ages* (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1993)
- Pegel, R.H., 'Heer ghy neemt uselven bij der noes'. Prediking voor leken in de stad Utrecht in de vijftiende eeuw', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* w. nr. (1992), pp. 75-122
- Pellegrini, L., *Specchio di donna. L'immagine femminile nel XIII secolo: gli exempla di Stefano di Borbone* (Religione e società. Storia della chiesa e dei movimenti cattolici 14; Roma, 1989)
- Pennings, J., 'Semi-religious women in 15th century Rome', *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* n.s. 47 (1987), pp. 115-146
- Peters, U., *Literatur in der Stadt. Studien zu den sozialen Voraussetzungen und kulturellen Organisationsformen städtischer Literatur im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Literatur und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur 7; Tübingen, 1983)
- Petroff, E.A., *Medieval women's visionary literature* (New York, Oxford, 1986)
- Pettas, W., 'The cost of printing a Florentine incunable', *La bibliofila* 75 (1973), pp. 67-85
- Pickford, C.E., 'Fiction and the reading public in the fifteenth century', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 45 (1963), pp. 423-438
- Pigeaud, R., 'De vrouw als verleidster. De stedelijke moraal in de 15de eeuw', *Tussen heks en heilige. Het vrouwbeeld op de drempel van de moderne tijd, 15de/16de eeuw*. Nijmeegs museum 'Commanderie van Sint Jan', P. Bange et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1985), pp. 39-58
- Piponnier, F., 'Het domein van de vrouw: ruimten en voorwerpen', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 331-344

- Pleij, H., 'Wie wordt er bang voor het boze wijf? Vrouwenhaat in de middeleeuwen', *Revisor* 6 (1977), pp. 38-42
- Pleij, H., *Het gilde van de Blauwe Schuit. Literatuur, volksfeest en burgermoraal in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1979)
- Pleij, H., *Het literaire leven in de middeleeuwen* (Leiden, 1984, 1988)
- Pleij, H., 'Literatuur en stad in de middeleeuwen', *Literatuur* 4 (1987), pp. 116-123
- Pleij, H., *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511. Literatuur en stadscultuur tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd* (Amsterdam, Leuven, 1988)
- Pleij, H., 'Dirck van Delft in Göttingen', *Literatuur* 7 (1990), pp. 325-326
- Pleij, H., 'Inleiding: Op belofte van profijt', *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, H. Pleij ed. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen IV; Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 8-51
- Pleij, H., *Sprekend over de middeleeuwen* (Utrecht, Amsterdam, 1991)
- Pleij, H., 'De betekenis van de beginnende drukpers voor de ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse literatuur in Noord en Zuid', *Spektator* 21 (1992), pp. 227-263
- Pleij, H., 'The rise of urban literature in the Low Countries', *Medieval Dutch literature in its European context*, E. Kooper ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 21; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), pp. 62-77
- Pol, L. van de, 'Seksualiteit tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd', *Vijf eeuwen gezinsleven. Liefde, huwelijk en opvoeding in Nederland*, H. Peeters et al. eds. (Nijmegen, 1988), pp. 163-193
- Post, R.R., *Scholen en onderwijs in Nederland gedurende de middeleeuwen* (Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1954)
- Post, R.R., *Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland in de middeleeuwen* (2 vols., Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1957)
- Post, R.R., *The Modern Devotion. Confrontation with reformation and humanism* (Studies in medieval and reformation thought 3; Leiden, 1968)
- Power, E., *Medieval people* (London, New York, 1924, 10th ed., 1963)
- Power, E., *Medieval women* (Cambridge, etc., 1975, 1976), M.M. Postan ed.
- Pratt, K., 'Analogy or logic: authority or experience? Rhetorical strategies for and against women', *Literary aspects of courtly culture*. Selected papers from the seventh triennial congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, 27 July-1 August 1992, D. Maddox and S. Sturm-Maddox eds. (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 57-66
- Pratt, R.A., 'Jankyn's Book of Wikked Wyves: medieval antimatrimonial propaganda in the universities', *Annuaire medievale* 3 (1962), pp. 5-27

- Prevenier, W., 'Vrouwenroof als middel tot sociale mobiliteit in het 15e-eeuwse Zeeland', *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, D.E.H. de Boer en J.W. Marsilje eds. (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 410-424
- Price, B.B., *Medieval thought. An introduction* (Oxford, Cambridge USA, 1992)
- Prims, F., *De kloosterslot-beweging in Brabant in de xvde eeuw* (Mededeelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor wetenschappen letteren en schoone kunsten van België klasse der letteren jaargang VI, 1; Antwerpen, Utrecht, 1944)
- Quast, J., 'Vrouwen in gilden in Den Bosch, Utrecht en Leiden van de 14e tot en met de 16e eeuw', *Fragmenten vrouwengeschiedenis*, W. Fritschy ed. (2 vols., Den Haag, 1980), I, pp. 26-37
- Quast, J., 'Vrouwenarbeid omstreeks 1500 in enkele Nederlandse steden', w. title, w. ed. (Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis 1; Nijmegen, 1980), pp. 46-64
- Régner-Bohler, D., 'Imagining the self', *A history of private life*, Ph. Ariès and G. Duby general eds. (3 vols., Cambridge, MA, London, 1988-1989), II, pp. 311-394
- Rehm G., *Die Schwestern vom gemeinsamen Leben im nordwestlichen Deutschland. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Devotio moderna und des weiblichen Religiosentums* (Berliner historische Studien II, Ordensstudien V; Berlin, 1985)
- Reijsbergen, R., 'De clarissen in de Noordelijke Nederlanden', *Clara in de Nederlanden 1193-1253*. Museum voor Religieuze Kunst Uden 24 april - 26 juni 1994, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen en W. Prins eds. (Uden, 1994), pp. 56-66
- Reimöller, H., 'Die zwei Gesichter der *femina ludens*. Bemerkungen zur Kartenspielerin im spätmittelalterlichen Diskurs', *Von Aufbruch und Utopie. Perspektiven einer neuen Gesellschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters*. Für und mit Ferdinand Seibt aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages, B. Lundt und H. Reimöller eds. (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1992), pp. 303-321
- Resoort, R.J., 'Een proper profiteljc boec. Eind vijftiende en zestiende eeuw', *De hele Bibelebontse berg. De geschiedenis van het kinderboek in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, H. Bekkering et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1989, 1990), pp. 41-104
- Reuter, E., 'Barbara', *VL*, I, cc. 601-603
- Reynaert, J., 'Leken, ethiek en moralistisch-didactische literatuur. Ter inleiding', *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, J. Reynaert et al. eds. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur IX; Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 9-36
- Rezéau, P., 'Les livres d'heures', *Prier au Moyen Age. Pratiques et expériences (ve - xve siècles)*, N. Bériou et al. eds. (Turnhout, 1991), pp. 34-41
- Ribaucourt, C., 'L'alphabet des récits: pour parler des femmes', *Prêcher d'exemples. Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Age*, J.-Cl. Schmitt ed. (Paris, 1985), pp. 107-120

- Riddy, F., 'Women talking about the things of God': a late medieval sub-culture', *Women and literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, C.M. Meale ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 17; Cambridge, 1993), pp. 104-127
- Robinson, F.N. ed., *The riverside Chaucer* (Oxford, etc., 1987, 1992)
- Rodnite Lemay, H., 'Anthonius Guainerius and medieval gynaecology', *Women of the medieval world*, J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple eds. (1985), pp. 317-336
- Roessingh, A.L.A., *De vrouw bij de Dietsche moralisten* (Groningen, 1914)
- Roggen, H., 'Het Brabantse Umbrië. Volgelingen van Clara van Assisi in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden,' *Clara in de Nederlanden 1193-1253*. Museum voor Religieuze Kunst Uden 24 april - 26 juni 1994, L.C.B.M. van Liebergen en W. Prins eds. (Uden, 1994), pp. 44-50
- Roper, L., *The holy household. Women and morals in reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1989)
- Rosenthal, J.T., 'Introduction', *Medieval women and the sources of medieval history*, J.T. Rosenthal ed. (Athens, London, 1990), pp. vii-xvii
- Rosenthal, J.T., 'Fifteenth-century widows and widowhood: bereavement, reintegration, and life choices,' *Wife and widow in medieval England*, S. Sheridan Walker ed. (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 33-58
- Rosenwein, R.H. and L.K. Little, 'Social meaning in the monastic and mendicant spiritualities', *Past and Present* 63 (1974), pp. 4-32
- Ross, J.B., 'The middle-class child in urban Italy, fourteenth to early sixteenth century', *The history of childhood*, L. deMause ed. (North Vale, New Jersey, London, 1974, 1995), pp. 183-228
- Rossiaud, J., 'Prostitution, youth, and society in the towns of Southeastern France in the fifteenth century', *Deviants and the abandoned in French society*, R. Forster and O. Ranum eds. (Baltimore, London, 1978)
- Ruh, K., 'Klara von Assisi', *VL*, IV, cc. 1172-1183
- Runte, H.R., J.K. Wikeley and A.J. Farrell, *The Seven Sages of Rome and The Book of Sindiband. An analytical bibliography* (Garland reference library of the humanities 387; New York, London, 1984)
- Russell, J.S., 'How many of the population were aged?', *Aging and the aged in medieval Europe*. Selected papers from the annual conference of the centre for medieval studies, University of Toronto, held 25-26 February and 11-12 November 1983, M.M. Sheehan ed. (Papers in mediaeval studies 11; Toronto, 1990), pp. 119-127
- Sauer, J., 'Das sponsalizio der hl. Katharina von Alexandrien. Ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie der Heiligen und zur Geistesgeschichte des späten Mittelalters', *Studien aus Kunst und Geschichte*. Friedrich Schneider zum siebzigsten Geburtstage gewidmet von seinen Freunden und Verehrern, w. ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1906), pp. 339-751

- Scanlon, L., *Narrative, authority, and power. The medieval exemplum and the Chaucerian tradition* (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 20; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994)
- Scheepsma, W., 'For hereby I hope to rouse some to piety': books of sisters from convents and sister-houses associated with the *Devotio Moderna* in the Low Countries', *Women, the book and the godly*. Selected proceedings of the St Hilda's conference, 1993, L. Smith and J.H.M. Taylor eds. (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 27-40
- Scheepsma, W., *Deemoed en devotie. De koorvrouwen van Windesheim en hun geschriften* (Amsterdam, 1997)
- Schenda, R., 'Stand und Aufgaben der Exemplarforschung', *Fabula* 10 (1969), pp. 69-85
- Scherf, Y., 'Zij was mooi en goed en zij hield van Christus. Onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden van heiligenlevens als bron voor de geschiedenis van vrouwen van de zesde tot de twaalfde eeuw', *Vrouw, familie en macht. Bronnen over vrouwen in de middeleeuwen*, M. Mostert et al. eds. (Amsterdamse historische reeks grote serie 11; Hilversum, 1990), pp. 259-298
- Schibanoff, S., 'Taking the gold out of Egypt. The art of reading as a woman', *Gender and reading. Essays on readers, texts, and contexts*, E.A. Flynn and P.P. Schweickart eds. (Baltimore, London, 1986), pp. 83-106
- Schippers, A., 'Dit boeck hoort toe ...': bezitters en lezers van de 'Dialogus Creaturarum' en de 'Twispraec der creaturen', *Een drukker zoekt publiek. Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484*, K. Goudriaan et al. eds. (Delft, 1993), pp. 162-183
- Schippers, A., 'Ethiek in de Middelnederlandse fabelbundel 'Parabelen van Cyrillus'', *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, J. Reynaert et al. eds. (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur IX; Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 322-336
- Schippers, A., *Middelnederlandse fabels. Studies van het genre, beschrijving van collecties, catalogus van afzonderlijke fabels* (Nijmegen, 1995)
- Schmitt, J.-Cl., 'Recueils franciscains d'exempla' et perfectionnement des techniques intellectuelles du XIIIe au XVe siècle', *Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartes* 135 (1977), pp. 5-21
- Schmitz, P., 'De mannentaal van Emma Bovary', *Vrouwen in taal en literatuur*, K. Korevaart ed. (Amersfoort, Leuven, 1988), pp. 144-154
- Schofield, R.S., 'The measurement of literacy in pre-industrial England', *Literacy in traditional societies*, J. Goody ed. (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 311-325
- Schraut, E., 'Kunst im Frauenkloster. Überlegungen zu den Möglichkeiten der Frauen im mittelalterlichen Kunstbetrieb am Beispiel Nürnberg', *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter. Fragen, Quellen, Antworten*, B. Lundt ed. (München, 1991), pp. 81-114

- Schreibell, W.L., *Die Legende der hl. Catharina von Alexandrien. Holztafeldruck von Michel Schorpp, Maler zu Ulm. Mit Einleitung* (Einblattdrucke des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts 75; Strassburg, 1931)
- Schröder, A., *Catherine. The saints in legend and art* (Recklinghausen, London, 1967), H.H. Rosenwald trans.
- Schulte, J.F. von, *Die Geschichte der Quellen und Literatur des canonischen Rechts von Gratian bis auf die Gegenwart* (3 vols., Stuttgart, 1875-1880)
- Schwinges, R.C., 'Student education, student life', *A history of the university in Europe*, H. de Ridder-Symoens ed. (2 vols., Cambridge, 1992-1996), II, pp. 195-243
- Scott, J., 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American historical review* 91 (1986), cc. 1053-1075
- Scribner, R., 'Oral culture and the diffusion of reformation ideas', *History of European ideas* 5 (1984), pp. 237-256
- Seitz, J., *Die Verehrung des hl. Joseph in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung bis zum Konzil von Trient dargestellt* (Freiburg im Bresgau, Berlin, etc., 1908)
- Shahar, S., *The fourth estate. A history of women in the middle ages* (London, New York, 1983, 1985), C. Galai trans.
- Shahar, S., *Childhood in the middle ages* (London, New York, 1990), C. Galai trans.
- Shank, M.H., 'A female university student in late medieval Kraków', *Sisters and workers in the middle ages*, J.M. Bennett et al. eds. (Chicago, London, 1976, 1989), pp. 190-197
- Shaw, B.D., 'The Passion of Perpetua', *Past and present* 139 (1993), pp. 3-45
- Shorter, E., *The making of the modern family* (London, 1975, 1977)
- Smeyers, M., 'Bidden en pronken. Devotie en beeldgebruik 15de-16de eeuw', *Stad in Vlaanderen. Cultuur en maatschappij 1477-1787*, J. van der Stock ed. (Brussel, 1991), pp. 219-236
- Someren, J.F. van, ed., *Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht. Incunabelen beschreven door Dr. J. Alblas en uitgegeven met toelichtende aantekeningen, platen en facsimiles* (Utrecht, 1922)
- Southern, R.W., *Western society and the church in the middle ages* (Harmondsworth, 1970, 1990)
- Spitz, L.W., 'The course of German humanism', *Itinerarium Italicum. The profile of the Italian renaissance in the mirror of its European transformations*, H.A. Oberman and T.A. Bradley eds. (Studies in medieval and reformation thought 14; Leiden, 1975), pp. 371-436
- Sprandel, R., 'Die Gesta Romanorum als Quelle der spätmittelalterlichen Mentalitätengeschichte', *Saeculum* 33 (1982), pp. 312-322

- Sprandel, R., *Gesellschaft und Literatur im Mittelalter* (Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich, 1982)
- Stammler, W. et al. eds., *Verfasserlexikon. Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters* begründet von Wolfgang Stammler, fortgeführt von Karl Langosh und Kurt Ruh (9 vols., Berlin, New York, zweite völlig bearbeitete Auflage, 1978-1995-)
- Steer, G., 'Die Laie als Anreger und Adressat deutscher Prosaliteratur im 14. Jahrhundert', *Zur deutschen Literatur und Sprache des 14. Jahrhunderts*. Dubliner Colloquium 1981, W. Haug et al. eds. (Heidelberg, 1983), pp. 354-367
- Steinberg, S.H., *Five hundred years of printing* (1955, revised ed., London, 1996)
- Stiller, N., *Eve's orphans. Mothers and daughters in medieval English literature* (Contributions in women's studies 16; Westport, London, 1980)
- Stone, L., *The family, sex and marriage in England, 1500-1800* (Harmondsworth, 1977, 1982)
- Stutvoet-Joanknecht, C.M., 'Het Bijenboek van Thomas van Cantimpré in relatie met de Moderne Devotie', *Middeleeuwse boeken en teksten uit Oost-Nederland*, A.J. Geurts ed. (Nijmeegse codicologische cahiers 2-3; Nijmegen, Grave, 1984), pp. 30-46
- Stutvoet-Joanknecht, C.M., 'Een zeldzaam teken van begrip voor het jodendom in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de vijftiende eeuw', *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero*, N. Lettinck en J.J. van Moolenbroek eds. (Utrecht, 1986), pp. 87-108
- Swanson, J., 'Childhood and childrearing in *ad status* sermons by later thirteenth century friars', *Journal of medieval history* 16 (1990), pp. 309-331
- Swanson, R.N., 'Literacy, heresy, history, and orthodoxy: perspectives and permutations for the later middle ages', *Heresy and literacy, 1000-1530*, P. Biller and A. Hudson eds. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 23; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), pp. 279-293
- The new English bible with the apocrypha*, w. ed. (Oxford, Cambridge, 1961, 1970)
- Thienen, G. van, ed., *Incunabula in Dutch libraries. A census of fifteenth-century printed books in Dutch public collections* (Bibliotheca bibliographica neerlandica XVII-I, XVII-II; 2 vols., Nieuwkoop, 1983)
- Thomas, A.H., 'Boekenbezit en boekengebruik bij de Dominikanen in de Nederlanden vóór ca. 1550', *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* numéro spécial 11 (1974), pp. 417-476
- Thomasset, Cl., 'De vrouwelijke natuur', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 45-69

Thompson, S., *Motif-index of folk-literature. A classification of narrative elements in folktales, ballads, myths, fables, mediaeval romances, exempla, fabliaux, jest-books, and local legends* (6 vols., Copenhagen, revised and enlarged ed., 1955-1958)

Tibbetts Schulenburg, J., 'Sexism and the celestial gynaeceum – from 500 to 1200', *Journal of medieval history* 4 (1978), pp. 117-133

Tibbetts Schulenburg, J., 'Saints' Lives as a source for the history of women, 500-1100', *Medieval women and the sources of medieval history*, J.T. Rosenthal ed. (Athens, London, 1990), pp. 285-320

Tigcheler, J., 'Martha en Maria', *Speling* 35 (1983), pp. 89-93

Toussaint Raven, J.E., 'Toverende vrouwen', *Middeleeuwers over vrouwen*, R.E.V. Stuip en C. Vellekoop eds. (Utrechtse bijdragen tot de mediëvistiek 3; 2 vols., Utrecht, 1985), I, pp. 57-71

Trio, P., *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving. De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen* (Leuven, 1993)

Tubach, F. C., 'Strukturanalytische Probleme. Das mittelalterliche Exemplum', *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 59 (1968), pp. 25-29

Tubach, F.C., *Index exemplorum. A handbook of medieval religious tales* (Folklore Fellows Communications 204; Helsinki, 1969)

Tuttle Hansen, E., 'The powers of silence: the case of the Clerk's Griselda', *Women and power in the middle ages*, M. Erler and M. Kowalski eds. (Athens, London, 1988), pp. 230-249

Uitz, E., *Women in the medieval town* (London, 1990), S. Marnie trans.

Utley, F.L., *The crooked rib. An analytical index to the argument about women in English and Scots literature to the end of the year 1568* (Contributions in languages and literature 10; Columbus, 1944)

Vandenbroeck, P., 'Vrouwenhaat, mannenpraat', *Stad in Vlaanderen. Cultuur en maatschappij 1477-1787*, J. van der Stock ed. (Brussel, 1991), pp. 110-126

Vandenbroeck, P. ed., *Hooglied. De beeldwereld van religieuze vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, vanaf de 13de eeuw*. Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, 25 februari-22 mei 1994 (Brussel, 1994)

Vanderauwera, R., 'The Brabant mystic: Hadewijch', *Medieval women writers*, K.M. Wilson ed. (Manchester, 1984), pp. 186-203

Varnhagen, H., *Zur Geschichte der Legende von Katharina von Alexandrien nebst lateinischen Texten nach Handschriften der Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München und der Universitätsbibliothek in Erlangen* (Erlangen, 1891)

Vauchez, A., *Sainthood in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1997), J. Birrell trans.

Vecchio, S., 'De goede echtgenote', *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, G. Duby en M. Perrot general eds. (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1992), II, pp. 107-138

- Velay-Vallantin, C., 'La Gesta romanorum: l'encyclopédisme édifiant', *Prêcher d'exemples. Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Age*, J.-Cl. Schmitt ed. (Paris, 1985), pp. 151-162
- Velay-Vallantin, C., 'Gesta romanorum', *Les exempla médiévaux. Introduction à la recherche, suivie des tables critiques de l'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach*, J. Berlioz et M.A. Polo de Beaulieu eds. (Carcasconne, 1992), pp. 245-261
- Verhoeven, G., *Devotie en negotie. Delft als bedevaartplaats in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1992)
- Verhoeven, G., 'Kerkelijke feestdagen in de late middeleeuwen. Utrechtse en Delftse kalenders', *Historisch tijdschrift Holland* 25 (1993), pp. 156-173
- Vermeulen, Y.G., *Tot profijt en genoegen. Motiveringen voor de produktie van Nederlandstalige gedrukte teksten, 1477-1540* (Groningen, 1986)
- Verrycken, A., 'Naar een analysemodel voor middeleeuwse mirakelverhalen', *Hoofsheid en devotie in de middeleeuwse maatschappij. De Nederlanden van de 12e tot de 15e eeuw*. Handelingen van het wetenschappelijk colloquium te Brussel 21-24 oktober 1981, J.D. Janssens ed. (Brussel, 1982), pp. 208-227
- Vervliet, H.D.L., 'Humanisme en typografie: de introductie van de romein en cursief in de Nederlanden (1483-ca.1540)', *Boek, bibliotheek en geesteswetenschappen*. Opstellen door vrienden en collega's van dr. C. Reedijk geschreven ter gelegenheid van zijn aftreden als bibliothecaris van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te 's-Gravenhage, W.R.H. Koops et al. eds. (Hilversum, 1986), pp. 316-330
- Vervliet, R., 'Literatuur en lezerspubliek. Receptiesociologie als bijdrage tot de sociale geschiedenis', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 35 (1984), pp. 315-345
- Vet, W.A. van der, *Het Bienboec van Thomas van Cantimpré en zijn exempelen* ('s-Gravenhage, 1902)
- Vignau Wilberg-Schuurman, T., met medewerking van R. Pigeaud, *Hoofse minne en burgerlijke liefde in de prentkunst rond 1500* (Leiden, 1983)
- Vooy's, C.G.N. de, *Middelnederlandse legenden en exempelen. Bijdrage tot de kennis van de prozalitteratuur en het volksgeloof der middeleeuwen* ('s-Gravenhage, 1900)
- Vries, M. de, et al. eds., *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (27 vols., 's-Gravenhage, Leiden, 1882-1994)
- Wachinger, B., 'Der Dekalog als Ordnungsschema für Exempelsammlungen. Der 'Große Seelentrost', das 'Promptuarium exemplorum' des Andreas Hondorff und die 'Locorum communium collectanea' des Johannes Manlius', *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*, W. Haug und B. Wachinger eds. (Fortuna vitrea 2; Tübingen, 1991), pp. 239-263

- Wackers, P.W.M., *De waarheid als leugen. Een interpretatie van Reynaerts historie* (Utrecht, 1986)
- Wackers, P.W.M., ' 'Buecken die men leest in scolē'. Middelnederlandse letterkunde en Latijnse traditie', *Misselike tonghe: de Middelnederlandse letterkunde in interdisciplinair verband*, F.P. van Oostrom en W. van Anrooij eds. (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 111-129
- Wackers, P.M.W., 'Words and deeds in the Middle Dutch Reynaert stories', *Medieval Dutch literature in its European context*, E. Kooper ed. (Cambridge studies in medieval literature 21; Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1994), pp. 131-147
- Wailes, S.L., 'Why did Jesus use parables? The medieval discussion', *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in medieval & renaissance culture* n.s. 13 (1985), pp. 43-64
- Waithe, M.E. ed., *A history of women philosophers* (4 vols., Dordrecht, Boston, London, 1989)
- Walker Bynum, C., *Jesus as mother. Studies in the spirituality of the high middle ages* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1982)
- Walker Bynum, C., *Holy feast and holy fast. The religious significance of food to medieval women* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987)
- Warnar, G., 'Biecht, gebod en zonde. Middelnederlandse moraaltheologie voor de wereldlijke leek', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens et al. eds. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 36-51
- Warner, M., *Alone of all her sex. The myth and cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1976)
- Webb, D.M., 'Women and home: the domestic setting of late medieval spirituality', *Women in the church*, W.J. Sheils and D. Wood eds. (Studies in church history 27; Oxford, 1990), pp. 159-173
- Webb, D.M., 'Friends of the family: some miracles for children by Italian friars', *The church and childhood*, D. Wood ed. (Studies in church history 31; Oxford, 1994), pp. 183-195
- Webber, Ph. E., 'Varieties of popular piety suggested by Netherlandic *Vita Christi* prayer cycles', *OGE* 64 (1990), pp. 195-226
- Wehrli-Johns, M., 'Maria und Martha in der religiösen Frauenbewegung', *Abendländische Mystik im Mittelalter. Symposium Kloster Engelberg 1984*, K. Ruh ed. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände 7; Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 354-367
- Weiler, A.G., 'De intrede van rijke weduwen en arme meisjes in leefgemeenschappen van de Moderne Devotie', *OGE* 59 (1985), pp. 403-420

- Weiler, A.G., 'Over de geestelijke praktijk van de Moderne Devotie', *De doorwerking van de Moderne Devotie*. Voordrachten gehouden tijdens het Windesheim Symposium Zwolle/ Windesheim 15-17 oktober 1987, P. Bange et al. eds. (Hilversum, 1988), pp. 29-45
- Weinstein D. and R.M. Bell, *Saints and society: the two worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700* (Chicago, London, 1982)
- Weiske, B., *Gesta romanorum* (Fortuna vitrea 3 und 4; 2 vols., Tübingen, 1992)
- Wiesner, M.E., *Women and gender in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1993)
- Willeumier-Schalijs, J.M., 'Bronnen voor de kennis van het middeleeuws gezinsleven en hun problematische waarde', *Paedagogische studiën* 40 (1963), pp. 335-360
- Williams, M. and A. Echols, *Between pit and pedestal. Women in the middle ages* (Princeton, 1994)
- Williams-Krapp, W., 'German and Dutch legends of the middle ages: a survey', *Hagiography and medieval literature*. Proceedings of the fifth international symposium organised by the centre for the study of vernacular literature in the middle ages. Held at Odense University on 17-18 November 1980, Odense, H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. eds. (Odense, 1981), pp. 66-75
- Williams-Krapp, W., 'Laienbildung und volkssprachliche Hagiographie im späten Mittelalter', *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*. Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1981, L. Grenzmann und K. Stackmann eds. (Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände V; Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 697-709
- Williams-Krapp, W., *Die deutschen und niederländischen Legende des Mittelalters. Studien zur ihrer Überlieferungs-, Text- und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Tübingen, 1986)
- Williams-Krapp, W., 'German and Dutch translations of the Legenda aurea', *Legenda aurea: sept siècles de diffusion*. Actes du colloque international sur la Legenda aurea. Texte latin et branches vernaculaires à l'Université du Québec à Montréal 11-12 mai 1983, B. Dunn-Lardeau ed. (Cahiers d'études médiévales, cahier spécial 2; Montréal, Paris, 1986), pp. 225-232
- Williamson, J.B., 'Philippe de Mézières Book for Married Ladies: a book from the entourage of the court of Charles VI', *The spirit of the court*. Selected proceedings of the fourth congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, G.S. Burgess and R.A. Taylor eds. (Toronto, 1985), pp. 393-408
- Wilson, K.M. and E.M. Makowski, *Wykked wyves and the woes of marriage. Misogamous literature from Juvenal to Chaucer* (New York, 1990)
- Wittek, M. et al. eds., *Manuscrits datés conservés en Belgique. Bibliothèque Royale Albert I, Bruxelles* (5 vols., Bruxelles, 1968-1987)
- Woerkum, S.C.J., 'Enige opmerkingen aangaande de methodische meditatie bij de moderne devotie', *OGE* 29 (1955), pp. 222-227

- Wolfskeel, C., 'Birgitta of Sweden', *A history of women philosophers*, M.E. Waithe ed. (4 vols., Dordrecht, Boston, London, 1989), II, pp. 167-190
- Woude, A.M. van der, 'De alfabetisering', *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, w. ed. (15 vols., Haarlem, 1980-1982), VII, pp. 257-264
- Wouters, D. en W.J. Visser, *Geschiedenis van de opvoeding en het onderwijs, vooral in Nederland* (Groningen, 1926)
- Wurf-Bodt, C. van der, 'De vroedvrouw in the late middeleeuwen en de nieuwe tijd', *Spiegel Historiael* 29 (1994), pp. 202-206
- Wurf-Bodt, C. van der, 'Demonen en 'quaatwyfs'. Magie rond het middeleeuwse kraambed', *Spiegel historiael* 31 (1996), pp. 18-23
- Wüstefeld, W.C.M., *De boeken van de Grote of Sint Bavokerk. Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het middeleeuwse boek in Haarlem* (Hollandse studiën 24; Hilversum, 1989)
- Wüstefeld, W.C.M., 'Haarlemse kerkmeesters als bestellers van boeken', *Middeleeuwse handschriftenkunde in de Nederlanden. Verslag van de Groningse codicologendagen 28-29 april 1988*, J.M.M. Hermans ed. (Groningse, 1989), pp. 291-307
- Zemon Davis, N., *Society and culture in early modern France. Eight essays* (Palo Alto, California, 1965, Oxford, 1987)
- Ziegler, J.E., 'The *curtis* beguinages in the Southern Low Countries and art patronage: interpretation and historiography', *Bulletin de l'Institut historique Belge de Rome* 57 (1987), pp. 31-70
- Zieleman, G.C., *Middel nederlandse epistel- en evangeliëpreken* (Leiden, 1978)
- Zieleman, G.C., 'Preken als litteraire documenten', *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Th. Mertens ed. (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 70-86