

Introduction

The book is not a closed entity: it is a relation, an axis of innumerable relationships.

JORGE LUIS BORGES, *Labyrinths*¹



On 24 May 1653, Bertheltje Jansdochter visited the Noordermarkt in Amsterdam. At an establishment called ‘het hangeijser’, located at the corner of the market square and the Lindenstraat, she bought two Bibles. One of these was meant for an acquaintance, Hester Bartels, the other copy was for her personal use.² The Bible she decided upon for herself was printed by the Antwerp printer Jacob van Liesvelt more than a century prior, in 1534. The book was folio-sized, bound in a sturdy leather binding with securing metal clasps, and brimming with textual, paratextual, and visual content. Furthermore, whilst leafing through the book, annotations, corrections, names, and smudges would have reminded her of the people who owned and used it before her.³ Through her purchase and with her inscription describing the acquisition in the back of the book, Bertheltje Jansdochter placed herself in a diverse group of people who throughout the early modern period bought, used, and read sixteenth-century vernacular Bibles.

Bertheltje Jansdochter is one of many who claimed ownership of the object, unclasped its clasps, slid their fingers between the paper pages, searched for

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- 1 Jorge Luis Borges, ‘A Note on (Toward) Bernard Shaw’, in Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (eds.), *Labyrinths*, 2nd edition (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 214.
 - 2 ‘Anno 1653, on 24 May, Bertheltje Jansd. bought this Bible on the Noordermarkt in the Hangeijser, and a similar one for Hester Bartels’ (*Anno 1653 den 24. majes heft Bertheltje Jansd. dese bibel cost op norder mart ijnt hangeijser vor hester bartels eender*). This copy of Jacob van Liesvelt’s 1534 complete Bible edition is currently kept in the collection of the Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting, Leerdam. It remains without shelf number.
 - 3 The book contains ownership marks by two other early modern owners: Abraham Ackersdijk, who lived in Amsterdam and, based on the genealogical annotations he left, owned the Bible from ca. 1604 until his death in 1642, and Hendrik Lessiter, who owned the book in 1751.

specific biblical passages, used (or got distracted by) the many printed glosses in the margins, looked closely at the woodcuts, left unintentional traces, picked up pen and ink to leave some personal notes – or did not. These interactions were fleeting and elusive: they occurred at specific points in time and space, and when time elapsed and contexts changed, readers' practices, emotions, and movements would fade away.⁴ Few sources are available for the reconstruction of these ephemeral experiences. Bertheltje Jansdochter did not leave behind any written reflections on her reading practices, no diary of her survives, there are no known inventories of her book collection, nor do we know her date of birth, her profession, or any of her personal interests. However, what we *do* have is her Bible – and a considerable number of similar Bibles that were once owned and used by early modern readers. By placing these surviving Bible copies and the material evidence they bear at the centre of our attention, patterns light up that establish a framework of customs and possibilities within which the reading practices of readers such as Bertheltje Jansdochter would have taken place.

This study results from the NWO-FWO-funded research project 'In Readers' Hands: Early Modern Dutch Bibles from a Users' Perspective'. The project, which hosted two PhD candidates, was carried out at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) and the KU Leuven (Belgium) from 2017 to 2021, initiated and supervised by Prof. Dr. Sabrina Corbellini and Prof. Dr. Wim François. Concentrating on the surviving copies of Dutch Bibles printed in the first half of the sixteenth century, the main aim of the project has been to create new insights into the readership, transmission, and use of these Bibles in a key period in the history of the Low Countries. The project was concerned with Bibles printed between 1522 and 1546 by three influential Antwerp printers: Willem Vorsterman, Jacob van Liesvelt, and Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch. The study by Bert Tops, former PhD candidate at the KU Leuven, focuses on Vorsterman's Bibles, while my research concerns the Bibles of the latter two printers.⁵

The leading aim of this study is to reconstruct the multitude of interactions between early modern Dutch Bibles and their readers. Defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as 'an occasion when two or more people or things communicate with or react to each other', an interaction always requires a certain

4 See also: Paul Tankard and Patrick Spedding, 'Introduction: Writing between the Lines', in Patrick Spedding and Paul Tankard, *Marginal Notes: Social Reading and the Literal Margins* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 1–20, p. 9.

5 For Bert Tops' research into Willem Vorsterman's Bibles, see: Bert Tops, 'The Quest for the Early Modern Bible Reader: The Dutch Vorsterman Bible (1533–1534), its Readers and Users', *Journal of Early Modern Christianity*, 6:2 (2019), pp. 185–222.

two-sidedness. It revolves around a reciprocating synergy in which the agents involved are simultaneously object and subject, creator and created.⁶ While existing studies on sixteenth-century Dutch Bibles have focused predominantly on either the identity and confessional concerns of the book producer – the printer-publisher, translator, or editor – or on the identity and confessionality of the book user, the current study aspires to look closely at the multidirectional dynamics *between* the book and the reader. In doing so, it adheres to a wish already expressed by Roger Chartier in 1989: ‘to bring together two perspectives that are often disjointed: on the one hand, the study of the way in which texts and the printed works that convey them organise the prescribed reading; and on the other, the collection of actual readings.’⁷ Taken together, these perspectives allow for a reconstruction of what printer-publishers expected to happen, what happened, and what could happen in the interactive encounters between the book and its readers.

This book is structured around the juxtaposition of two mirroring issues: 1) how did the book interact with and shape its potential and intended readers, and 2) how did historic readers interact with and shape their books? The first question will be addressed on the basis of a close analysis of the paratextual elements, such as title pages, prologues, marginal glosses, and reading schedules, in Liesvelt’s and Peetersen van Middelburch’s Bibles. I will explore how these elements created, stimulated, and enabled certain readerships. Secondly, in order to examine the engagement of historic readers with their books, I will turn to handwritten or hand-added elements in surviving Bible copies, such as annotations, marks, added material, and unintentional traces of use. By positioning potential, envisioned reading behaviours alongside the material evidence of historical book use, this study intends to avoid the pitfall so often faced by studies that are founded on the basis of traces of reading: to become

6 On reading as a reciprocal relationship between reader and book, see also: Wolfgang Iser, ‘Interaction between Text and Reader’, in Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (eds.), *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 9180), pp. 106–119; Heather Blatt, *Participatory Reading in Late-Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018); Robert L.A. Clark and Pamela Sheingorn, ‘Encountering a Dream-Vision: Visual and Verbal Glosses to Guillaume de Digulleville’s *Pelerinage Jhesuchrist*’, in Sarah Blick and Laura Gelfand (eds.), *Push Me, Pull You: Imaginative, Emotional, Physical, and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 3–38, p. 3; Evanghelia Stead, ‘Introduction’, in Evanghelia Stead (ed.), *Reading Books and Prints as Cultural Objects* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 1–30, p. 4; Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 9.

7 Roger Chartier, ‘Texts, Printing, Readings’, in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 154–175, p. 158.

a study of the annotating practices of exceptional individuals, rather than a study of reading.⁸ ‘Silent’ practices of reading and use were as much a part of the colourful myriad of interactions as were those that resulted in explicit, verbalised traces in surviving copies. The inclusion of the *potentiality* of use through studying reading possibilities as shaped by paratext creates space for these elusive practices that otherwise might not reveal themselves.

In Juliet Fleming’s words, ‘the book is a thing that differs from itself, at all the moments of its production, and at all the moments of its consumption.’⁹ As much as this is the case for the book – as a textual carrier, as a concept, as a material thing – it is the case for the reader and every readerly interaction. The patterns of interaction analysed in this study are therefore not to be considered a comprehensive, definitive list of practices of reading and use. Rather, they draw a dynamic and flexible outline of the potentials, encouragements, requirements, characteristics, and expectations that came into play when an early modern reader opened one of Liesvelt’s or Peetersen van Middelburch’s Bibles.

1 Bible Production in Antwerp, ca. 1500–1550

The Bible copies under scrutiny in this study were printed in Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century. Liesvelt’s and Peetersen van Middelburch’s Bible publishing practices were part of a thriving culture of vernacular Bible production in the Low Countries, and within Antwerp in particular.¹⁰ Throughout the late fifteenth century and in the first half of the sixteenth century, Antwerp developed to become the leading printing centre of the Low Countries and one of the main hubs of book production in Europe, alongside cities such as Paris, Frankfurt, and Venice.¹¹ At the end of the sixteenth century,

8 This has also been pointed out by, amongst others: Tankard and Spedding, ‘Introduction’, p. 7; Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 105; William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. xi.

9 Juliet Fleming, ‘Afterword’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73:3 (2010), pp. 543–552, p. 552.

10 See, for instance: August A. den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen: Dutch Translations of the Bible, 1522–1545* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1997), pp. 13–26; Wim François, *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen (1477–1553): Een kerkhistorische en theologische benadering* (Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2004), pp. 248–264.

11 See also: Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World: Making and Trading Books in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2019), p. 29. Important works concerning printing in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century include: Leon Voet, *De gouden eeuw van Antwerpen: Bloei en uitstraling van de*

twenty-five printing businesses were stationed in Antwerp, employing over 450 people, and between 1500 and 1540, printers in Antwerp were responsible for about fifty-five per cent of all books published in the Low Countries.¹² The Antwerp book production in this period primarily consisted of religious works, including prayer books, devotional works, and Bibles.

Antwerp's dominance as a printing centre is especially apparent with regard to the vernacular Bible production in the Low Countries: nineteen of the twenty-eight printer-publishers who published Dutch Bible editions between 1520 and 1545 were located in Antwerp for at least part of their working life, compared to two in Amsterdam, one in Delft, one in Cologne, two in Deventer, and three in Leiden.¹³ Throughout this period, these nineteen printers flooded the market with over seventy Bible editions, including complete Bibles, New Testaments, and editions of the Gospels. Eventually, the dominant role of Antwerp in the printing industry decreased, in particular after the sack of Antwerp in 1576. Pettegree and Der Weduwen have established that at least 168 Southern Netherlandish printer-publishers and booksellers settled in the North between 1570 and 1630, for instance in cities such as Amsterdam, Delft, Dordrecht, and Leiden.¹⁴

The workplaces of the nineteen printers who published Dutch Bibles in Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century were all located in

metropool in de zestiende eeuw (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1973); Leon Voet, 'De typografische bedrijvigheid in Antwerpen in de 16^{de} eeuw', in *Antwerpen in de XVI^{de} Eeuw* (Antwerp: Mercurius, 1975), pp. 233–255; F. de Nave, 'Hervorming en boekdrukkunst. Antwerpen als typografische centrum in de 16^{de} eeuw', in Emile M. Braekman (ed.), *Protestantse drukken en prenten uit de hervormingstijd te Antwerpen* (Antwerp: Vereniging voor de Geschiedenis van het Belgisch Protestantisme, 1985), pp. 5–15; A. G. Johnston and J. F. Gilmont, 'L'imprimerie et la Réforme à Anvers', in J. F. Gilmont (ed.), *La Réforme et le Livre. L'Europe de l'imprimé (1517–v.1570)* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1990), pp. 155–190; Dirk Imhof et al. (eds.), *Antwerpen, dissident drukkerscentrum: De rol van de Antwerpse drukkers in de godsdienststrijd in Engeland (16de eeuw)* (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju, 1994); Renaud Adam, 'The Emergence of Antwerp as a Printing Centre: From the Earliest Days of Printing to the Reformation', *Die Gulden Passer*, 92 (2014), pp. 11–29; Renaud Adam, 'Living and Printing in Antwerp in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries: A Social Enquiry', in Ethan Matt Kavaler and Anne-Laura van Bruaene (eds.), *Netherlandish Culture of the Sixteenth Century: Urban Perspectives* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 83–98.

12 See: Adam, 'Living and Printing', p. 84; Guido Marnef, *Antwerpen in de tijd van de reformatie: Ondergronds protestantisme in een handelsmetropool, 1550–1577* (Antwerp/Amsterdam: Kritak/Meulenhoff, 1996), p. 66. See also: Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 215.

13 Based on the list of printers provided by Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, supplemented with the Antwerp printer Henrick Eckert van Homburch, who published an Epistles and Gospels edition in 1520.

14 See: Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, p. 32.

the city centre: on the Cammerstraet (currently: Kammenstraat) and the Lombaerdeveste (currently: Lombardenvest), or on streets intersecting those two (fig. 1).¹⁵

To lower the costs and share the risks of publication, printer-publishers regularly formed collaborations with others, both within and outside the city of Antwerp, as well as with other people working in the book industry, such as booksellers and engravers.¹⁶ Although specific guilds for printers were not yet established, Antwerp printer-publishers collectively joined the Guild of St. Luke, alongside other craftsmen and book artisans.¹⁷ Another social feature of the early modern printing world pertains to the relevance of family networks. Spouses, children, or other family members often took over the printing business of their relatives, and family relations defined a considerable part of collaborations and business agreements.¹⁸

The centralisation of printing activities within Antwerp created opportunities for the efficient regulation of the production of heterodox texts.¹⁹ In 1522,

15 The two Bible publishing businesses located furthest away from each other – Jan van Ghelen's business on the Baghijnenstraat and, for instance, publisher and bookseller Peter Kaetz on the Corte Cammerstraet – were about 650 metres apart, equalling a mere ten-minute walk.

16 See also: Hubert Meeus, 'Printing Vernacular Translations in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek/Netherlandish Yearbook for History of Arts*, 64 (2014), pp. 108–137, p. 110. An example of the close social connectivity between printers in Antwerp is the fact that printers Adriaen van Berghen and Jacob van Liesvelt, together with two bookbinders, were appointed guardianship over Henrick Eckert van Homberch's children after their father's death. See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 44.

17 See: Adam, 'Living and Printing', pp. 89–91. On the Antwerp Guild of St. Luke, see also: Jan van der Stock, 'De Antwerpse Sint-Lucasgilde en de drukkers-uitgevers: 'Middeleeuws' achterhoedegevecht of paradigma van cultureel-politieke machtsverschuivingen?', in Jos M. M. Hermans en Klaas van der Hoek (eds.), *Boeken in de Lage Middeleeuwen. Verslag van de Groningse codicologendagen 1992* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994), pp. 155–165; Katlijne van der Stighelen and Filip Vermeylen, 'The Antwerp Guild of St Luke and the Marketing of Paintings, 1400–1700', in Neil de Marchi and Hans J. van Miegroet (eds.), *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe, 1450–1700* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 189–208. On the position of female printers and their involvement with the Guild of St. Luke, see: Heleen Wyffels, 'De drukkersvrouwen van Sint Lucas: Gildenlidmaatschap en arbeidspatronen in het vroegmoderne Antwerpse boekwezen', in Anita Boele and Raingard Esser (eds.), *Nieuwe Tijden: Genderpatronen in vroegmoderne samenlevingen* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2021), pp. 67–87.

18 On family networks in the Antwerp printing business, see: Adam, 'Living and Printing', pp. 91–96. On the roles of women in the early modern printing world, see: Heleen Wyffels, *Women and Work in Early Modern Printing Houses. Family Firms in Antwerp, Douai and Leuven (1500–1700)* (Leuven: KU Leuven, 2021).

19 See also: Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, p. 122.



FIGURE 1 Map of Antwerp by Virgilius Bononiensis (1565). Printed by Gillis Copens van Diest. Museum Plantin Moretus, Antwerp, Collectie Stad Antwerpen
CREATIVE COMMONS ZERO LICENCE

the magistrate of Antwerp promulgated an adjusted version of the Edict of Worms, issued by Emperor Charles v in May 1521, which stated that Lutheran publications should be removed from the book market and that privileges had to be acquired for any initiated publication concerning the Holy Scriptures. The Antwerp version confirmed these regulations and the consequences of disobedience, and it included the penalty, which was being sent into exile. Furthermore, the document emphasised that illegal printing activities did indeed take place in the city of Antwerp and that any person reporting these activities to the authorities would receive half a *pond*. A new local edict was issued in 1525, which recapitulated the regulations of the earlier version and added new requirements regarding the inclusion of the name of the author, date of printing, printer's mark, and the name and address of the printer in any printed book. Similar edicts were issued repeatedly throughout the following two decades.²⁰

Nine Antwerp printer-publishers are known to have been prosecuted because they printed, sold, or disseminated 'heretical' texts in the first half of the sixteenth century. Most of them faced relatively light penalties, such as temporary exiles or pilgrimages. Two Antwerp printer-publishers lost their lives due to their printing or bookselling activities: Adriaen van Berghen in 1542, and Jacob van Liesvelt in 1545. The vast majority of Antwerp's printers, however, could continue to print Bible translations, including Lutheran versions, without much control by the authorities.²¹ This relatively tolerant regulation was dictated by economical concerns: Antwerp played a key role in the international book market. Between 1520 and 1545, Antwerp printers were not only responsible for Dutch, French, Latin, and English editions, but even published several Italian, Spanish, and Danish Bible editions.²² It was not until the

20 See: François, *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen*, pp. 487–492, pp. 499–500.

21 See: Marnef, *Antwerpen*, p. 68.

22 See also: Voet, 'De typografische bedrijvigheid', pp. 233–255; François, *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen*, pp. 520–521. For instance, in 1534, Catherine van Ruremund, widow of Christoffel van Ruremund, printed a New Testament edition with the English Tyndale translation as corrected by George Joye. Both William Tyndale and George Joye took refuge in Antwerp and collaborated with local print businesses to publish their Reformation-minded Bibles. Authorities of the Low Countries and England were undoubtedly aware of the publication and dissemination of English Lutheran Bibles printed in Antwerp. A 1527 edict from the magistrate in Antwerp already issued a ban on the possession and dissemination of English Bibles, and Catharine's husband Christoffel was imprisoned in the Westminster Tower in London in 1531, and died there (see: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 69–70). On this edition and other international printing practices, see: Els Agten, Wim François, and Guido Latré, 'Franse, Spaanse en Engelse bijbelvertalingen in de zestiende-eeuwse Lage Landen', in Paul Gillaerts et al.

second half of the sixteenth century that the printing regulations and changing confessional climate started to hamper the role Antwerp played in the production and dissemination of Bibles, within the Low Countries and abroad.²³

2 Jacob van Liesvelt and Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch

Jacob van Liesvelt and Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch were pivotal actors in Antwerp's Bible production. Together with fellow printer Willem Vorsterman they were responsible for all folio-sized, complete Dutch Bibles printed in the first half of the sixteenth century.²⁴ In addition, they published a significant number of New Testament editions and other partial Bible editions, such as editions of the Epistles and Gospels. Vorsterman's, Liesvelt's, and Peetersen van Middelburch's Bibles – especially their complete Bible editions – have been attracting attention across multiple generations of scholars. Cornelis Cebus de Bruin's *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers* ('The Dutch Standard Version and its Predecessors') from 1937 was the first study that aimed to offer an 'objective', scholarly overview of Dutch Bible translations until 1637.²⁵ Previous publications on early modern Dutch Bibles, for instance by Le Long (1732), Doedes (1872), and Van Druten (1895), had mainly been concerned with defining the 'Catholic' or 'Protestant' nature of certain translations, arising from an ideological, national-Protestant agenda which assumed that vernacular Bible reading was inherently connected to Protestantism.²⁶ De Bruin's initiative was

(eds.), *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen: Elf eeuwen van vertalen* (Heerenveen: Royal Jongbloed, 2015), pp. 342–388. On printing in Antwerp for the international market, see also: Meeus, 'Printing Vernacular Translations', pp. 111–115.

23 See also: Agten, François, and Latré, 'Franse, Spaanse en Engelse Bijbelvertalingen', p. 343.

24 On Willem Vorsterman's Bible editions, see: Wim François, 'De Vorstermanbijbel van 1528 en later: Naar een katholieke Bijbel', in Paul Gillaerts et al. (eds.), *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen. Elf eeuwen van vertalen* (Heerenveen: Royal Jongbloed, 2015), pp. 237–265.

25 However, De Bruin did not feel the need to fully suppress his personal appreciation of certain translations. After quoting Liesvelt's translation of psalm 130, the Bruin writes that 'one should actually read these biblical words aloud. In their well-rounded and stately sound, in simplicity and directness of saying, [these words] greatly excel, thanks to Luther, most translations from previous centuries' (*Men moet deze bijbelwoorden eigenlijk hardop lezen. In volheid en gedragenheid van klank, in eenvoud en directheid van zeggings steken zij dank zij Luther ver uit boven de meeste vertalingen uit vroeger eeuwen*). See: Cebus Cornelis de Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers: Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen vanaf de Reformatie tot 1637* (Haarlem: Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap, 1993, 2nd edition), p. 95.

26 See: Isaac Le Long, *Boek-Zaal der Nederduytsche Bybels* (Amsterdam: Hendrik Vieroot, 1732); Jacobus Isaac Doedes, *Geschiedenis van de eerste uitgaven der Schriften des Nieuwen Verbonds in de Nederlandsche taal (1522, 1523)* (Utrecht: Kemink en zoon, 1872); Hendrik

followed by an increasing interest in Dutch Bible translations, especially with regard to their philological backgrounds and connections to processes of confessionalisation, resulting in studies such as those by Kronenberg (1948) and Augustijn (1975).²⁷ In 1993, Frits G. M. Broeyer revised and updated De Bruin's overview of Bible translations.²⁸

Over the past few decades, research concerning sixteenth-century Dutch Bibles has been driven in particular by the scholarship of August den Hollander and Wim François. Den Hollander's dissertation *Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen 1522–1545* (1997) provides a carefully conducted, bibliographical study of the textual tradition of Dutch Bible translations. This research shows that translations were usually based on a wide array of sources, and hence distinctions between 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' translations were not as clear-cut as previously assumed.²⁹ François' dissertation of 2004, furthermore, places these Bible translations in a broader historical and theological context, displaying the connections between Bible editions, censorship, and religious and historical developments.³⁰ Later publications by both scholars continue to effectively problematise the traditional view on vernacular Bible reading as a Protestant matter and emphasise the historical, textual, and international contexts in which these Bibles appeared.³¹ Moreover, they underscore the

van Druuten, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandse Bijbelvertaling* (Leiden: D.A. Daamen, 1895). See also: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 2; Wim François and August A. den Hollander, 'Introduction', in Wim François and August A. den Hollander (eds.), *Vernacular Bible and Religious Reform in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), pp. 1–11, p. 2.

27 M.E. Kronenberg, *Verboden boeken en opstandige drukkers in de hervormingstijd* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & Zoon N.V., 1948); C. Augustijn, 'De Vorstermanbijbel van 1528', *Nederlands archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis / Dutch Review of Church History*, 56:1 (1975), pp. 78–94.

28 Cebus Cornelis de Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers*.

29 See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*.

30 See: François, *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen*.

31 See, for instance: August A. den Hollander, 'De Liesveltbijbel van 1526 en later: Naar een Protestantse Bijbel', in Paul Gillaerts et al. (eds.), *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen. Elf eeuwen van vertalen* (Heerenveen: Royal Jongbloed, 2015), pp. 226–236; Wim François, 'Vernacular Bible Reading and Censorship in Early Sixteenth Century: The Position of the Louvain Theologians', in August A. den Hollander and M. Lamberigts (eds.), *Lay Bibles in Europe 1450–1800* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), pp. 69–96; Wim François, 'Bible Production and Bible Readers in the Age of Confessionalisation: The Case of the Low Countries', in Erminia Ardissino and Élise Boillet (eds.), *Lay Readings of the Bible in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020), pp. 191–216; Wim François, 'Deconstructing the Protestant Liberation of the Bible: The Case of the Low Countries', *Journal of Early Modern Christianity*, 7:2 (2020), pp. 247–270; Wim François, 'The Antwerpian Printer Jacob van Liesvelt, his Widow, and their Bibles: Myths and Facts from a Confessional Era',

important role played by the presence and contents of paratextual elements in defining an edition's confessional colour and as a leading factor in the decisions made by censors on whether or not to forbid specific editions.³²

These studies have provided crucial insight into the textual and paratextual content of Liesvelt's and Peetersen van Middelburch's Bible editions, the textual traditions in which they ought to be understood, and the confessional developments to which these Bibles testify. It is against this background that the reading practices centred in this study unfold. Furthermore, previous scholarship has provided thorough insight into the particularities of Jacob van Liesvelt's and Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch's printing businesses and their Bible editions. The profiles of both printers, as presented in the following two sections, display the current scholarly understanding of these matters.

2.1 *Jacob van Liesvelt and His Bible Editions*

Jacob van Liesvelt was born in 1489 in Antwerp, the son of printer Adriaen van Liesvelt. Jacob van Liesvelt married Marie Anxt, who would continue the printing business after her husband's death. Liesvelt was active as a printer between 1520 and 1544, and from 1523 onwards, his business was housed at the *Schilt van Artoys* (Arms of Artois) on the Cammerpoort bridge. He collaborated with

Church History, 89 (2020), pp. 779–800. The connection that is regularly made between Protestantism and vernacular Bible reading has been referred to as the 'Protestant paradigm' by Andrew Gow (see: Andrew Gow, 'Challenging the Protestant Paradigm: Bible Reading in Lay and Urban Contexts of the Later Middle Ages', in Thomas Heffernan and Thomas Burman (eds.), *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 161–192). On this assumed connection, see also: Sabrina Corbellini, Mart van Duijn, et al., 'Challenging the Paradigms: Holy Writ and Lay Readers in Late Medieval Europe', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 93 (2013), pp. 171–188; Sabrina Corbellini, 'Afterword: the Bible and the Laity in Long-Term Perspective', in Elise Boillet and Erminia Ardissino (eds.), *Lay Readings of the Bible in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020), pp. 299–306.

32 On the role of paratext, see in particular: August A. den Hollander, *Verboden Bijbels: Bijbelcensuur in de Nederlanden in de eerste helft van de zestiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2003); August A. den Hollander, 'Forbidden Bibles. Paratext and the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. Why Dutch Bibles Were Placed on the 1526-Louvain Index', in August A. den Hollander et al. (eds.), *Paratext and Megatext as Channels of Jewish and Christian Traditions. The Textual Markers of Contextualization* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 152–175; Wim François, 'Typology – Back with a Vengeance! Text, Images, and Marginal Glosses in Vorsterman's 1534 Dutch Bible', in Walter Melion et al. (eds.), *Imago Exegetica: Visual Images as Exegetical Instruments, 1400–1700* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 89–136; Wim François and Sabrina Corbellini, 'Shaping Religious Reading Cultures in the Early Modern Netherlands: The "Glossed Bibles" of Jacob van Liesvelt and Willem Vorsterman (1532–1534ff.)', *Journal of Early Modern Christianity*, 6:2 (2019), pp. 147–184.

various contemporary printers, including Symon Cock and Claes de Grave.³³ The vast majority of Liesvelt's publications were in Dutch, besides some French editions. He printed both non-religious and religious works, including official edicts, almanacs, devotional texts, and editions of parts of the Bible as well as complete Bible editions.

On multiple occasions, Jacob van Liesvelt came into contact with law enforcement. In 1536, he was accused of having unlawfully printed the words 'cum gratia et privilegio Imperialis Maiestatis' in an edition of a papal bull, whilst he was not granted the privilege to do so. Liesvelt was, in the end, not convicted for this offence. A few years later, in 1542, the *schout* of Antwerp accused him of printing the *Troostinge der goddebycker scrjft* ('Consolation of the Holy Scriptures') without having obtained the required privileges. Liesvelt defended himself by claiming that the book was merely a compilation of other texts, for which he did receive the appropriate patents. His arguments were considered sufficiently convincing and the accusation was, again, dismissed. On 15 June 1545, Liesvelt was once more put on trial for disobeying the book censorship measures that were in place, although the archival documents do specify in which publication.³⁴ Liesvelt's defences were similar to those in 1542, but this time to no avail. On 27 November 1545, Liesvelt was sentenced to death. He was beheaded the following day.³⁵

Liesvelt's beheading has led to the creation of an image that profiles the printer as a 'martyr' for the Word of God, and thus a hero of the Protestant faith. As has been closely analysed by Wim François, this image is generally based upon the belief that Liesvelt's conviction centred around the Reformation-sympathetic text and paratext of his 1542 Bible editions. In particular the biblical gloss 'that men's salvation was brought about by Christ alone' would, according to this presumption, have served as the basis of the death sentence.³⁶ This claim was already brought up in 1569, in the memoirs of J. de Wesenbeke, a former town secretary of Antwerp who converted

33 Jacob van Liesvelt collaborated with Symon Cock in the publication of, amongst others, *Die triumphelijcke inconst en coronatie der Conincklijcker majesteit van Hungarien ende Bemen Ferdinande tot Stoebwittenburch*, printed in 1527 (USTC No. 410528). Liesvelt, Cock, and Claes de Grave were all involved in the publication of several prognostications in 1531 and 1532 (USTC No. 442027, 437596, 410751).

34 See also: François, 'The Antwerpian Printer', p. 781–783.

35 Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 28–33. On the developments around this case, see also: François, 'The Antwerpian Printer', pp. 782–783.

36 ... *dat des Menschen salicheyt alleen doer Christum quam*. See: Wim François, 'Jacob van Liesvelt, Martyr for the Evangelical Belief', in J. Leemans and J. Mettepenningen (eds.), *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. 341–369, pp. 359–360.

to Protestantism.³⁷ The argument was widely adopted to sketch an image of Jacob van Liesvelt as an early Protestant man who died for his faith. The popularity of Liesvelt's Bibles in Protestant communities, both within in the Low Countries as well as in Protestant diasporas in British and East Friesian areas, played an important role in establishing and retaining this martyr-like image.³⁸ However, as has been demonstrated by Den Hollander and François, the archival evidence does not connect Liesvelt's beheading directly to the Reformation-minded glosses in his Bible editions.³⁹

Liesvelt published nineteen Bible editions between 1522 and 1544. His Bible printing activities began with an edition of the Gospels (1522), two editions of the Letters of St. Paul (1523), and one edition of the Apostolic Epistles (1523). In 1527, a separate edition of the Book of Wisdom followed. Liesvelt's first complete Bible edition – including both the Old and New Testaments as well as the

37 François, 'Jacob van Liesvelt', p. 360; François, 'The Antwerpian Printer', pp. 784–786.

38 See also: François, 'The Antwerpian Printer', p. 783. The consistent popularity of Liesvelt in the Northern Low Countries is illustrated by the fact that, from the late seventeenth century onwards, three inns on the Warmoesstraat in Amsterdam were named after the printer's Bibles. See: Maarten Hell, *De Amsterdamse herberg (1450–1800): geestrijk centrum van het openbare leven* (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2017), pp. 181–182.

39 See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 32–33; August A. den Hollander, 'Dat oude ende dat nieuwe testament (1526): Jacob van Liesvelt en de nieuwe markt voor Bijbels in de zestiende eeuw', *Jaarboek voor Boekgeschiedenis*, 6 (1999), pp. 105–122, p. 108; François, 'Jacob van Liesvelt', p. 360; François, 'The Antwerpian Printer', pp. 780–786. In addition to the Reformational glosses in Liesvelt's 1542 Bibles, a woodcut at Matthew 4:3 has also been considered to be a reason for Liesvelt's death sentence. The woodcut depicts the devil as monk, wearing a religious habit and rosary. However, the woodcut was also used in catholicising editions, such as Marie Anxt's 1560 Bible, and should be understood to illustrate how the devil could present itself like a wolf in sheep's clothing. See: De Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers*, p. 102. As has been stated by Rosier, the woodcuts in Bibles of this time period were rarely confessionally coloured and were commonly used by various printers and in Bibles across the confessional spectrum. See: Bart Alexander Rosier, *De Nederlandse Bijbelillustratie in de zestiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Centrale Huisdrukkerij Vrije Universiteit, 1992), pp. 125–131. On the fact that Liesvelt was beheaded rather than being burned at the stake, see: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 33; De Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers*, pp. 102–103. Pettegree and Der Weduwen incorrectly state that 'the translator of the first Dutch Bible in the Lutheran tradition, Jan [sic] van Liesvelt, was burned at the stake.' However, not only was Jacob van Liesvelt not the first Dutch translator of Lutheran works, there is also no evidence to support Pettegree and Der Weduwen's claim that Van Liesvelt would have been burned rather than beheaded. See: Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, p. 125.

apocryphal books – was printed in 1526 and is generally considered to be the first complete, Dutch Bible to have been printed (fig. 2).⁴⁰

Liesvelt continued to print adapted editions of his complete Bible in 1532, 1534, and 1535, and two in 1542. In 1538, whilst Jacob van Liesvelt was imprisoned, a complete Bible was published under the name of Hansken van Liesvelt.⁴¹ Jacob van Liesvelt also printed at least seven New Testaments between 1534 and 1544.⁴² Liesvelt's New Testaments, which are all octavo or sextodecimo editions, contain the entire New Testament as well as the lessons from the Old Testament as were read in Mass.⁴³

Before 1526, Liesvelt's editions were based upon late medieval Bible translations.⁴⁴ In his complete Bible edition of 1526, Liesvelt first offered readers a new, Luther-based New Testament translation and an Old Testament that combined Lutheran translations (of those Bible books of which Martin Luther had already published a translation) with translations that were Vulgate-based and relied upon late medieval versions.⁴⁵ Liesvelt also followed Luther in his

40 Colin H. Jory has argued that the first printed complete Dutch Bible was not Liesvelt's 1526 Bible but a 1525 edition by Hans (1) van Ruremund (see: Colin H. Jory, 'The First Printed Dutch Bible: Reassigning the Honour', *Quaerendo*, 44 (2014), pp. 137–178). According to Jory, a 1525 sextodecimo Dutch New Testament (USTC No. 437268) was published alongside Van Ruremund's Old Testament edition of 1525. This edition, however, was published in five separate volumes, which were also printed separately from each other and each contained their own colophon. Although, as Jory argues (139–140), the Liesvelt Bible of 1526 could be bound in two volumes, dividing the Old and the New Testament, it was evidently meant to serve as one book, as the title page suggests, and was also printed as one entirety.

41 It is unknown who Hansken van Liesvelt actually was, and whether a historical person with this name existed at all. The name does not refer to Liesvelt's son Hans, as he was still a minor at the time. On Hansken van Liesvelt, see: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 111–112.

42 See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 36. Two other New Testament editions, of 1542 and 1543, are mentioned on several Indices of forbidden books, but no copies survive. In addition to his Dutch editions, Liesvelt's press also produced two French New Testaments: one in 1539 (under the name of Hansken van Liesvelt) and one in 1544.

43 These old testamentical pericopes are passages from, amongst others, Leviticus, Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and are placed in liturgical order in the back of the book. The appropriate dates for each of the pericopes are mentioned either in the margins or above each new section. In the New Testament of 1540, Liesvelt also included, at the end of the book, Deuteronomy 6, the chapter in which Moses reminds the Israelites of the commandments of the Law.

44 See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 258–260, pp. 268–273.

45 According to Den Hollander, the New Testament translation published by Liesvelt in 1526 is an original translation that is based upon Martin Luther's second edition of the New Testament, from 1522. The Dutch translations closely follow the German original. See: Den



FIGURE 2 Title page of Jacob van Liesvelt's first complete Bible edition (1526). Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam Library, Ned. Inc. 119

choice of biblical canon: he placed the apocryphal books in a separate section between the Old and New Testament, and the books of Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelations at the end of the New Testament.⁴⁶ In his subsequent complete Bible editions, Liesvelt adjusted parts of his Old Testament translation on the basis of, amongst other reasons, newly appearing Luther translations and the German Zürich Bible of 1531.⁴⁷ The New Testament translation in his complete Bibles and New Testaments from 1532 onwards differed from the 1526 edition, providing a translation that followed a Luther translation that was previously printed by Adriaen van Berghen.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in 1538, Hansken van Liesvelt ‘vulgatised’ some controversial phrases in the New Testament. These adaptations remained present in Jacob van Liesvelt’s subsequent editions.⁴⁹

The majority of Liesvelt’s Bible editions were placed on lists of forbidden books throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. The 1546 edition of the Louvain Index, the first general Index of forbidden books of the Low Countries, prohibited the use and dissemination of Liesvelt’s New Testaments of 1542, 1543, and 1544, as well as both complete editions of 1542.⁵⁰ Later

Hollander, ‘De Liesveltbijbel’, p. 230; Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 224. Liesvelt based his translation of the Bible books Genesis to Deuteronomy on a Dutch translation that was published in 1525 by Hans I van Ruremund in Antwerp and offered a Dutch translation of Luther’s German translation of 1523 (USTC No. 403145). Liesvelt provided his own translation of Luther’s 1524 editions for the books Joshua to Song of Songs. However, it is likely that he also used earlier translations, in particular for the Psalms. Liesvelt’s translation of the Prophets partially originated from the 1525 Ruremund edition. Liesvelt provided an original translation from Luther’s text for the book of Jonah. The book of Isaiah was based upon an Isaiah commentary by Johannes Oecolampadius, published in 1525. The deuterocanonical books provide a new translation of the Latin Vulgate. Liesvelt’s translation of the book of Maccabees goes back to an edition by Christoffel van Ruremund in 1525 (USTC No. 437287). See: Den Hollander, ‘De Liesveltbijbel’, pp. 227–229.

46 See: François, ‘Bible Production and Bible Readers’, p. 193.

47 See: Den Hollander, ‘De Liesveltbijbel’, p. 231; Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 167.

48 See: Den Hollander, ‘De Liesveltbijbel’, p. 231; Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 229–230.

49 For example, by translating ‘do penance’ rather than ‘mend thy ways’ in Matthew 4:17. See: Den Hollander, ‘De Liesveltbijbel’, pp. 229–230. On the variations in sixteenth-century Dutch translations of controversial phrases such as this, see also: François, ‘Bible Production and Bible Readers’, p. 198.

50 See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 36. The Louvain Index stipulated the printing, selling, owning, or reading of the listed titles. It included forty-two Dutch Bible editions, of which thirty-seven were printed in the Netherlands (six complete Bibles and thirty-one New Testaments). It is striking that so few complete Bibles have been included in the first edition of the Index. See also: François, *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen*, p. 580; Wim François, ‘Naar een ‘confessionalisering’ van Bijbelvertalingen

editions of this Index and other lists of forbidden books also include the editions of 1532, 1534, 1535, and 1538. The absence of the 1526 edition confirms that the choice of translation as such did not determine whether an edition would be banned. As has been concluded by Den Hollander, the presence of paratextual elements, and the announcement of these elements on the title page, especially attracted the attention of censoring authorities.⁵¹

With regard to the regulation of Liesvelt's heterodox editions, one event stands out. According to the Antwerp city accounts of 1535–1536, an executioner received twenty-two sixpences and six deniers for the burning of 'Bibles and other books by Jacoppe van Liesvelt, book printer.'⁵² Although this book burning clearly did not eliminate Liesvelt's printing activities or the dissemination of his Bibles, burning heretical books could serve as a way for the authorities to display the gravity of their regulations.⁵³ The explicit mention of Liesvelt in these archival sources coincides with his first contact with law enforcement in 1536, underscoring that the authorities indeed kept a close eye on his printing activities.

2.2 *Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch and His Bible Editions*

The other printer whose Bibles are central to this study is Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch. His date and place of birth are unknown, although his name points towards the city of Middelburg in Zeeland. Henrick worked as printer-publisher, bookbinder, and bookseller in Antwerp from 1520 onwards.

in de zestiende eeuw. Inleiding', in Paul Gillaerts et al. (eds.), *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen. Elf eeuwen van vertalen* (Heerenveen: Royal Jongbloed, 2015), pp. 204–219, p. 213; Den Hollander, *Verboden Bijbels*, pp. 13–14; Jesús Martínez de Bujanda et al., *Index de l'Université de Louvain 1546, 1550, 1558* (Genève: Centre d'Études de la Renaissance (Librarie Droz), 1986), pp. 65–67, pp. 105–130.

51 See: Den Hollander, *Verboden Bijbels*, pp. 19–20. The inclusion of paratextual elements such as prologues, glosses, and summaries in Bibles was already regulated by several edicts from the 1520s onwards, although the modest effectiveness of these regulations can be seen reflected in the vast number of Bibles embellished with paratext that were printed by Liesvelt and other printers up to the 1540s. See also: François, *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen*, pp. 581–582; François, 'Bible Production and Bible Readers', p. 192.

52 *Item gegeven den scerprechtere vanden bibels ende andere boecken van Jacoppe van Liesvelt, boeckprentere, te verbarndene mitten houte ende stroo daartoe gedaen ... xxii s. vi d.* See: Génard 1871, 428. See also: François, 'The Antwerpian Printer', p. 781.

53 Another, and likely much larger, book burning in Antwerp took place in 1521. About 400 heretical books were burned on the Grote Markt. A similar book burning was organised in Ghent in the same year. It is unknown which books were burned on these occasions. See: Marnef, *Antwerpen*, p. 68.

He married Margriete van Molle in 1520 and, after her death, Jacomyne Bars in 1523. Peetersen van Middelburch was elected master printer in the Guild of St. Luke in 1536 and his printing business was housed in the Cammerstraat in Antwerp, in a building called 'In den Mol'. He collaborated with various other printers, amongst others the Antwerp printer Matthias Crom.⁵⁴ Henrick died in 1549 or 1550. His wife Jacomyne took over the business and was granted her own admission to the printing profession in 1552. She also regularly collaborated with Marie Anxt, Jacob van Liesvelt's widow.⁵⁵

Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch printed a variety of religious and non-religious works, amongst which are complete Bibles, New Testaments, several almanacs, schoolbooks, and devotional texts. The latter included both more traditional devotional texts, such as *Die grote Evangelische Peerle*, as well as Reformation-oriented works, for instance his two editions of Otto Brunfels' *Gulden ghebedeboec*.⁵⁶ Peetersen came into contact with law enforcement once, in 1525. He was sentenced to a pilgrimage to Cologne because 'he sold here [in his bookshop] Lutheran books and other, heretical books, against the emperor's mandates.'⁵⁷

Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch printed at least ten Dutch Bible editions, including two complete Bibles, printed in 1535 (fig. 3) and 1541, and eight New Testaments, between 1538 and 1546.⁵⁸

Among these eight New Testament editions are two that have not previously been included in scholarly research. Both editions are difficult to date with certainty due to the absence of a colophon in the surviving copies. The first of these survives in one copy, currently in private ownership. This copy contains an almanac starting in the year 1542 and will henceforth be referred to as Peetersen van Middelburch's 1542 New Testament. The other edition similarly survives in just one copy, housed in the Rolduc Seminary in Kerkrade. This

54 Matthias Crom published an English New Testament for Hendrick Peetersen van Middelburch in 1536 (USTC No. 437869).

55 Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 103–105.

56 Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 104–107.

57 ... *overnidts dien dat hij Luytersche boecken ende andere alhier vercocht heeft, smakende ketterye, tegens den mandementen ons heeren sKeysers ...* See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 105; Kronenberg, *Verboden boeken*, pp. 133–134. Despite the fact that the distance between Antwerp and Cologne is roughly 200 kilometres one way, Peetersen van Middelburch stated he had succeeded his pilgrimage only eleven days later and provided the authorities with the necessary documents to prove his claim.

58 Peetersen van Middelburch also published a French New Testament in 1543 (USTC No. 5590).



FIGURE 3 Title page of Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch's first complete Bible edition (1535). Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam Library, Ned. Inc. 131

edition contains an almanac starting in 1544 and will henceforth be referred to as the 1544 New Testament. However, it cannot be assumed that these books were actually printed in these years, as Peetersen van Middelburch did not necessarily include almanacs that corresponded with the year of printing: his New Testaments from 1540, 1541a, and 1543 include an almanac that starts in 1539, the almanac in his 1541b New Testament begins with the year 1540, and the almanac in his 1546 New Testament with 1543. Hence, the two unknown editions at least would not have *predated* the respective years of 1542 and 1544.

Peetersen van Middelburch did not initiate his own Bible translations: the translation of Peetersen's 1535 complete Bible edition originates from Jacob van Liesvelt's edition of 1534, and the text of the 1541 edition is practically identical to Willem Vorsterman's 1533–1534 edition. Some of the texts of Peetersen's New Testament editions go back to Vorsterman's New Testament of 1528, and others to Van Hoochstraten's New Testament of 1531, the latter providing a Vulgatised version of an Erasmus-based translation.⁵⁹ All Peetersen's New Testaments contain both the New Testament and the Old Testament lessons, similarly to those by Liesvelt.⁶⁰

Peetersen van Middelburch's complete Bible of 1541, his New Testament edition of 1543, and another undated New Testament were included on lists of forbidden books.⁶¹ It is striking that Peetersen's edition of 1535 has not been included in these lists. The models of both Peetersen's complete Bible editions – Liesvelt's 1534 Bible and Vorsterman's 1533–1534 Bible – ended up on the Indices. Peetersen's Bibles also contained glosses and other controversial paratextual elements, and announced the presence of these elements on their title pages. Moreover, the 1535-edition contains a Luther-based translation. According to Wim François, the absence of Peetersen's 1535 Bible on the Indices might simply have to be attributed to the impreciseness of the compilers of the Index.⁶²

59 See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 435–499; François, *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen*, pp. 258–259.

60 The New Testament of 1541b also contains Deuteronomy 6, placed after the sections of the Old Testament, similar to Liesvelt's New Testament of 1540.

61 Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, pp. 106–107. See also: Bujanda et al., *Index de l'Université de Louvain*, p. 120, pp. 126–127, p. 130.

62 See: Wim François, 'De Leuvense Bijbel (1548) en de katholieke Bijbelvertalingen van de tweede helft van de zestiende eeuw', in Paul Gillaerts et al. (eds.), *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen. Elf eeuwen van vertalen* (Heerenveen: Royal Jongbloed, 2015), pp. 266–303, p. 271.

3 A History of Reading: Developments and Approaches

This study shifts the attention from the printer-publishers of early modern Bibles to their readers, turning towards perspectives developed within the field of the history of reading. The scholarly interest in the historic reader rapidly developed from the last decades of the twentieth century onwards. Driven by the important work of cultural theorists, literary scholars, and book historians such as Michel de Certeau, Roger Chartier, Stanley Fish, Nicolas Barker, Robert Darnton, Roger Stoddard, and Don McKenzie, a field of research has unfolded in which the reader is no longer envisioned merely as a passive recipient of texts, but as an active player in the dynamics of book culture.⁶³ The history of reading crucially relates to the understanding that ‘the history of any particular book does not conclude with its publication’: when a book leaves the printshop, it continues to develop, to create meaning, and to be created as a meaningful thing in its interaction with readers.⁶⁴

In correspondence with more general late twentieth-century concerns with the social circulation of material objects, studies about reading and book use regularly refer to the ‘social life’ of books and texts.⁶⁵ In all phases, from

63 Crucial studies include: Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (transl. Steven Rendall) (Oakland: University of California Press, 1984); Chartier, ‘Text, Printing, Readings’; Roger Chartier, ‘Laborers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader’, *Diacritics*, 22:2 (1992), pp. 49–61; Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (transl. Lydia G. Cochrane) (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1994); Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980); Nicolas Barker (ed.), *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society: The Clark Lectures 1986–1987* (London: The British Library, 1993); Nicolas Barker, ‘The Annotated Book’, *The Book Collector*, 47:2 (1998), pp. 161–175; Robert Darnton, ‘What is the History of Books?’, *Daedalus*, 111:3 (1982), pp. 65–83; Roger Stoddard, *Marks in Books: Illustrated and Explained* (Harvard: Houghton Library Publications, 1985); Donald Francis McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

64 Stephen Orgel, ‘Afterword: Records of Culture’, in Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England, Material Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), pp. 282–289, p. 283. See also: Stephen Orgel, *The Reader in the Book: A Study of Spaces and Traces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 2.

65 For the late-twentieth-century concern with the social circulation of material objects, see in particular: Arjun Appadurai (ed), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). The concept of a ‘social life’ of objects, and books in particular, is used by, amongst others: Jacques Leenhardt, ‘Toward a Sociology of Reading’, in Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (eds.), *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 205–224; Orgel, *The Reader in the Book*; John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid, *The Social*

production to consumption, the early modern book is inherently connected to human activities.⁶⁶ Authors, printers, publishers, editors, translators, and bookbinders create and shape texts and books with an awareness of the prospective reader, and the reader responds to the book and ‘activates’ its text by the very practice of reading.⁶⁷

Within the history of reading, multiple subfields have developed, two of which are of particular significance here: the study of paratext and the study of readers’ traces. Both fields of research emerged in the 1980s. The concept of paratext was coined by literary theorist Gérard Genette in *Seuils* (1987; published in translation as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* in 1997).⁶⁸ Paratext, he claims, ‘is a *threshold*, or ... a “vestibule” that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back.’⁶⁹ Genette’s perspective, however, is based on modern books. When applied in the study of early modern printing, it needs some redefinition. As stated by Smith and Wilson, ‘if Genette’s threshold is a ‘vestibule’ ..., the Renaissance paratext is an ever-expanding labyrinth.’⁷⁰

In accordance with these statements, key publications on early modern paratext have, in their variety, shown that paratext in early modern books – across multiple genres, time periods, and geographical spaces – was prevalent,

Life of Information (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000); William H. Sherman, ‘The Social Life of Books’, in Joad Raymond (ed.), *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, volume 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 163–170; Abigail Williams, *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

- 66 McKenzie used the term ‘sociology of texts’ to discuss ‘the human motives and interactions which texts involve at every stage of their production, transmission, and consumptions’ (McKenzie, *Bibliography*, p. 15).
- 67 See also: Sherman, ‘The Social Life of Books’, p. 167; Helen Smith, ‘*Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England*’ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 2.
- 68 Genette distinguishes between *peritext* and *epitext*, which together make up the paratext. In his definition, the *peritext* consists of the paratextual elements placed within the book, such as prologues, footnotes, and titles. The concept of *epitext* is used for textual elements that are related to the book, but not within it, such as reviews and interviews with the author. See: Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (transl. Jane E. Lewin), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 4–5. However, in accordance with the majority of studies about paratext, I use the term paratext here exclusively to describe what Genette calls *peritext*, i.e. the paratextual elements within the book.
- 69 Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 2.
- 70 Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (eds.), *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 1–14, p. 6.

dynamic, and subject to adaptation and change.⁷¹ Paratextual choices were made with considerable acknowledgement of the preferences, common reading behaviours, and potential movements of future readers. Printer-publishers were aware of the broad functionality of paratexts, not only as devices for interpretation but also as principal instruments in marketing the book and attracting potential readers, and in helping readers navigate through the book and across the page.⁷² The analysis of paratext hence provides insight into the reading possibilities and approaches to the book that printer-publishers envisioned, and, thus, into the type of reading practices that were expected and enabled.

Whereas the study of paratext reconstructs an 'ideal', envisioned readership, the study of traces of reading and use centres around the evidence that was left by actual historic book users. In 1985, Roger Stoddard published the catalogue *Marks in Books, Illustrated and Explained*, which opened up a research agenda that focussed on marginalia and other traces of reading and use.⁷³ Studies into the reading and annotating behaviour of specific individuals have been

71 See in particular: Anthony Grafton, 'Is the History of Reading a Marginal Enterprise? Guillaume Budé and his Books', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 91:2 (1997), pp. 139–157; Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday (eds.), *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (London: Routledge, 2000); William W.E. Slights, *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001); Karl A. E. Emenkel and Wolfgang Neuber (eds.), *Cognition and the Book: Typologies of Formal Organisation of Knowledge in the Printed Book of the Early Modern Period* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005); Michael Saenger, *The Commodification of Textual Engagements in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2006); Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (eds.), *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Bonnie Mak, *How the Page Matters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

72 A similar distinction in the functions of paratext has been made by Dorothee Birke and Birte Christ, 'Paratext and Digitized Narrative: Mapping the Field', *Narrative*, 21:1 (2013), pp. 65–87, pp. 67–68. On the commercial function of early modern paratext, see in particular: Andie Silva, *The Brand of Print: Marketing Paratexts in the Early English Book Trade* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019). Other studies that discuss this function include: Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Goran Proot, 'Converging Design Paradigms: Long-Term Evolutions in the Layout of Title Pages of Latin and Vernacular Editions Published in the southern Netherlands, 1541–1600', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 108:3 (2014), pp. 269–305; Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015). On the navigational functions of early modern paratexts, see in particular: Peter Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible', in Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 42–79.

73 See: Stoddard, *Marks in Books*.

particularly prevalent within the research field, set into motion by Jardine and Grafton's (1990) ground-breaking work on Gabriel Harvey's reading.⁷⁴ Through an in-depth analysis of Harvey's highly annotated copy of Livy, they determined how he read his book simultaneously and in connection with other texts, and how he aimed for active results of this scholarly practice. Other scholars developed studies of marginalia that centred not so much on a single reader but on the annotations in multiple copies of a specific text, or have aimed for 'bigger pictures and broader brush-strokes', discussing a large variety of early modern reading traces.⁷⁵ In most cases, however, studies on readers' traces have practically remained studies on marginalia. Only relatively recently has more attention been granted to those traces of reading and use that are not verbal. Investigations of, for instance, traces of objects or reader-initiated adaptations in the compilation of early modern books demonstrate that, indeed, the history of reading could – and should – also include non-written traces and

74 Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy', *Past & Present*, 129 (1990), pp. 30–78. Other studies that discuss the reading habits of specific readers include: Robert C. Evans, *Habits of Mind: Evidence and Effects of Ben Jonson's Reading* (Lewisburg/London: Bucknell University Press/Associated University Presses, 1995); William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); A. S. Q. Visser, 'Irreverent Reading: Martin Luther as Annotator of Erasmus', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 48:1 (2017), pp. 87–109; M. A. Screech, *Montaigne's Annotated Copy of Lucretius: A Transcription and Study of the Manuscript, Notes and Pen-Marks* (Genève: Librairie Droz s.a., 1998). Jardine and Grafton's project has, furthermore, been pursued with the project 'The Archaeology of Reading in Early Modern Period', which created a digitised corpus of 36 annotated books that bear annotations by John Dee and Gabriel Harvey. See: <https://www.archaeologyofreading.org>.

75 Sherman, *Used Books*, p. xi. On the annotations in multiple copies of a specific text, see for example: Femke Molekamp, *Women and the Bible in Early Modern England: Religious Reading and Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Alison Wiggins, 'What Did Renaissance Readers Write in their Printed Copies of Chaucer?', *The Library*, 9:1 (2008), pp. 3–36. Studies discussing a large variety of reader traces include: Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material*; Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio, *Book Use, Book Theory: 1500–1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2005); Robin Myers et al. (eds.), *Owners, Annotators, and the Signs of Reading* (New Castle/London: Oak Knoll Press/The British Library, 2005); Sherman, *Used Books*; Orgel, *The Reader in the Book*. Furthermore, studies such as those by H. J. Jackson (H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2001)) and Tankard and Spedding ('Introduction') do not focus on the early modern period in particular, but discuss the phenomenon of marginal annotations from a wide temporal perspective.

adaptations by readers.⁷⁶ Crucially, the absence of annotation does not indicate ‘the absence of readers, nor the absence of active reading strategies.’⁷⁷

The study of early modern paratext and readers’ traces problematises the common conception of printed books as stable, fixed objects. In this trope, the fixity of print is positioned opposite the flexibility of manuscript culture, which evidently influences how the reader of both media is envisioned.⁷⁸ Ong states that

print is comfortable only with finality. Once a letterpress form is closed ... and the sheet printed, the text does not accommodate changes as readily as do written texts ... By contrast, manuscripts, with their glosses or marginal comments ... were in dialogue with the world outside their own

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- 76 On object traces, see: Adam Smyth, ‘Book Marks: Object Traces in Early Modern Books’, in Katherine Acheson (ed.), *Early Modern English Marginalia* (New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 51–69. On the compilation of early modern books, see: Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Moreover, various scholars have addressed the issue that the history of reading is often positioned as equal to the history of marginalia. See, for instance: Stephen B. Dobranski, ‘Reading Strategies’, in Joad Raymond (ed.), *Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 101–113, pp. 109–110; Smyth, ‘Book Marks’, pp. 64–66; Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: A New History of Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 39; Femke Molekamp, ‘Using a Collection to Discover Reading Practices: The British Library Geneva Bibles and a History of their Early Modern Readers’, *EBLJ*, 1 (2006), pp. 1–13, p. 2; Smith, ‘*Grossly Material Things*’, p. 179.
- 77 Dobranski, ‘Reading Strategies’, pp. 109–110. The assumed connection between traces and use is illustrated by an e-mail I was sent by a librarian concerning a Peetersen van Middelburch Bible: ‘Our copy doesn’t contain any ownership inscriptions. I haven’t found any annotations or underscorings. ... It seems that our copy was never used!’ (personal communication, 09–04–2021).
- 78 The fluidity of manuscript texts in transmission is centralised, in particular, within the field of New Philology. In the introduction to the *Speculum* special issue ‘The New Philology’ of 1990, Stephen Nichols explains how this then newly established field of research would aim to situate the diversity and fluidity of manuscript transmission ‘squarely within our methodology’ (Stephen G. Nichols, ‘Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture’, *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, 65:1 (1990), pp. 1–10, p. 9). In new philological studies, there is no aim to reconstruct the ‘original’ text, but rather to recognise and analyse the material and textual variations and transformations that shape medieval text culture. See also: André Lardinois, ‘New Philology and the Classics: Accounting for Variation in the Textual Transmission of Greek Lyric and Elegiac Poetry’, in Bruno Currie and Ian Rutherford (eds.), *The Reception of Greek Lyric Poetry in the Ancient World: Transmission, Canonization and Paratext* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020), pp. 39–71, p. 41.

borders. ... The readers of manuscripts are less closed off from the author, less absent, than are the readers of those writing for print.⁷⁹

In other words: because of the presumed stability of the text, considered to be a prominent consequence of 'the print revolution', the reader is seen as a passive consumer rather than an active player in the construction of texts and meaning.⁸⁰ However, this assumption proves to be questionable, for early modern books were more fluid than these stereotypes imply, and 'instability, permeability, sociability, and adaptability to particular occasions and readership' were, in the early modern period itself, considered essential features of printed books.⁸¹ Printer-publishers made mistakes, initiated paratextual, textual, or visual changes between multiple print runs of the same text, and published creative and dynamic combinations of texts.⁸² This resulted in the fact that the individual copies of an edition were in fact never entirely identical.⁸³ Moreover, readers were involved as 'completers' as well: they were likely to choose the book's binding, were invited by paratextual elements such as errata lists to continue adapting the book, were prompted by blank spaces on the page to respond to what was absent, and – as studies into traces of reading display – actively engaged with the materiality and contents of the book by illustrating it, assembling and disassembling it, and by leaving personal notes.⁸⁴

79 Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London/New York: Routledge, 1982) (ed. 2002), pp. 129–130.

80 In accordance with this idea, Dijstelberge claims that whereas medieval readers would include their own paratextual elements in manuscripts, early modern readers would passively consume the ideas of others. Annotating the book, he states, became less common. See: Paul Dijstelberge, *Wat is een boek? Een kleine geschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), p. 75. For a critical response to this trope, see: Orgel, *The Reader in the Book*, p. 9.

81 Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer, 'Current Trends in the History of Reading', in Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 1–20, p. 2. See also: Eva Nyström, 'Codicological Crossover: The Merging of Manuscript and Print', *Studia Neophilologica*, 86:1 (2014), pp. 112–133, p. 114.

82 On printing errors and the dynamics of printing, see: David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 97–138; Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011); David Pearson, *Books as History: The Importance of Books beyond their Text* (London/New Castle: British Library/Oak Knoll Press, 2012), pp. 77–92; Smyth, *Material Texts*, pp. 4–7.

83 See also: Zachary Lesser, 'The Material Text between General and Particular, Edition and Copy', *English Literary Renaissance*, 50:1 (2019), pp. 83–92, p. 83.

84 See: McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, p. 224; Pearson, *Books as History*, pp. 93–140; Tamara Atkin, *Reading Drama in Tudor England* (London/New

Several studies into the history of reading, paratext, and readers' traces have focussed specifically on Bible reading. Premodern English Bible readership has been particularly well researched, with influential and diverse studies by, amongst others, Femke Molekamp, Kate Narveson, Mary Raschko, Thomas Fulton, William Sherman, and Victoria Brownlee.⁸⁵ Their studies show that for

York: Routledge, 2018), p. 178; Smyth, *Material Texts*, p. 15; Blatt, *Participatory Reading*, pp. 2–3; Anna Dlačáková, 'Illustrated Incunabula as Material Objects: The Case of the Devout Hours on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ', in Rijcklof Hofman et al. (eds.), *Inwardness, Individualization, and Religious Agency in the Late Medieval Low Countries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 181–221; Laurie Maguire, *The Rhetoric of the Page* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2020), p. 31. On readers' involvement through errata lists, see in particular: Ann Blair, 'Errata Lists and the Reader as Corrector', in Sabrina Alcorn Baron et al. (eds.), *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 21–41; Smyth, *Material Texts*, pp. 80–104. On the performative and rhetorical power of blanks, see especially: Maguire, *The Rhetoric of the Page*. Readers' activities in assembling and reassembling medieval and early modern books have been discussed by, amongst others: Knight, *Bound to Read*; Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Kathryn M. Rudy, *Image, Knife, and Gluepot: Early Assemblage in Manuscript and Print* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2019); Smyth, *Material Texts*, pp. 17–54.

- 85 See: Molekamp, *Women and the Bible*; Kate Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England: Gender and Self-Definition in an Emergent Writing Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012); Mary Raschko, 'Taking Apart the Wycliffite Bible: Patterns of Selective and Integrative Reading', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 47:3 (2017), pp. 461–486; Thomas Fulton, 'English Bibles and their Readers, 1400–1700', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 47:3 (2017), pp. 415–435; Sherman, *Used Books*, pp. 71–86; Victoria Brownlee, *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England, 1558–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). Other relevant publications on early modern, English Bible reading and use include: Francis Higman, "'Without Great Effort, and with Pleasure": Sixteenth Century Genevan Bibles and Reading Practices', in Orlaith O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Bible as Book: The Reformation* (London/New Castle: British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2000), pp. 115–122; Scott Mandelbrote, 'The Bible and Didactic Literature in Early Modern England', in Sara Pennell and Natasha Glaisyer (eds.), *Didactic Literature in England 1500–1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 19–39; W. R. Owens, 'Modes of Bible Reading in Early Modern England', in Shafquat Towheed and W.R. Owens (eds.), *The History of Reading: international Perspectives, c. 1500–1990* (volume 1) (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 32–45; Kevin Killeen and Helen Smith, "'All Other Bookes ... Are but Notes upon This": The Early Modern Bible', in Kevin Killeen et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1–18; Ian Green, "'Hearing" and "Reading": Disseminating Bible Knowledge and Fostering Bible Understanding in Early Modern England', in Kevin Killeen et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 272–286; Eyal Poleg, *Approaching the Bible in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016). Paratextual elements in premodern (i.e. late medieval and early modern)

both men and women, Bible reading was deeply ingrained within early modern English life. They also underline the importance of paratexts in directing the reader and stress the fact that readers often ‘styled their Bibles to conform to their preferences and ... fashioned themselves using these sacred objects.’⁸⁶ The methods and approaches developed in this English context have found their way into Bible research in other European countries over the past few years. Edited volumes such as those by Poleg and Light (2013), Corbellini et al. (2015), and Ardisino and Boillet (2020) present a broad range of studies on Bible reading across a wide geographical area and from multiple perspectives.⁸⁷

With regard to the Dutch situation, the line of research concerning Bible reading in the premodern period has benefitted hugely from the scholarship and initiatives directed by Sabrina Corbellini at the University of Groningen. Structured around multiple large-scale research projects – ‘Holy Writ and Lay Readers’ (2009–2013), ‘New Communities of Interpretation’ (2013–2017), ‘Cities of Readers’ (2015–2019), and ‘In Readers’ Hands’ (from which the current study results; 2017–2021) – Corbellini and her research teams have developed a rich

English Bibles are also discussed by Slights, *Managing Readers*; Elizabeth Morley Ingram, ‘Maps as Readers’ Aids: Maps and Plans in Geneva Bibles’, *Imago Mundi*, 45 (1993), pp. 29–44; Stallybrass, ‘Books and Scrolls’; Matti Peikola, ‘Tables of Lections in Manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible’, in Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (eds.), *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 351–378.

86 Molekamp, *Women and the Bible*, p. 42.

87 Chapters in these edited volumes that are of particular relevance to this study are: Sabrina Corbellini, ‘Vernacular Bible Manuscripts in Late Medieval Italy: Cultural Appropriation and Textual Transformation’, in Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (eds.), *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 261–282; Margriet Hoogvliet, ‘The Medieval Vernacular Bible in French as Flexible Text: Selective and Discontinuous Reading Practices’, in Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (eds.), *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 283–306; Elizabeth Solopova, ‘Manuscript Evidence for the Patronage, Ownership and Use of the Wycliffite Bible’, in Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (eds.), *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 333–349; Peikola, ‘Tables of Lections’; Suzan Folkerts, ‘Approaching Lay Readership of Middle Dutch Bibles: on the Uses of Archival Sources and Bible Manuscripts’, in Sabrina Corbellini et al. (eds.), *Discovering the Riches of the Word: Religious Reading in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 18–43; Elisabeth Salter, ‘Evidence for Religious Reading Practice and Experience in Times of Change: Some Models Provided by Late Medieval Texts of the Ten Commandments’, in Sabrina Corbellini et al. (eds.), *Discovering the Riches of the Word: Religious Reading in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 88–110; Margriet Hoogvliet, ‘Reading the Gospels in the Life and Passion of Christ in French (ca. 1400–ca.1550)’, in Erminia Ardisino and Élise Boillet (eds.), *Lay Reading of the Bible in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020), pp. 139–169; François, ‘Bible Production and Bible Readers’; Corbellini, ‘Afterword’.

variety of methods and perspectives with regard to Dutch religious and biblical reading culture in the late medieval and early modern period.⁸⁸ As their studies demonstrate, vernacular Bible reading was common in the Low Countries from the Middle Ages onwards. Contrary to general assumptions, lay-people's involvement in religious reading culture 'was well under way before the great wave of (Protestant) Bible translations ... before the invention of the printing press ... [and] before the Protestant and Catholic Reformations.'⁸⁹ Religious experience and development was already 'textualised' in the late medieval period, for lay as well as religious people.⁹⁰

Dutch Bibles were wide-spread in the late medieval and early modern period, both in manuscript and in print, and were disseminated as separate Bible books or in larger collections, in Old or New Testaments, and Epistles and Gospels. Lay readers, both men and women, were actively involved in the creation, circulation, and reception of Bibles, in particular within urban networks.⁹¹ Bibles were used for devotion, studious purposes, or to read before

88 Within these projects, the Italian and French contexts are covered as well, see for instance: Sabrina Corbellini, 'Reading, Writing, and Collecting: Cultural Dynamics and Italian Vernacular Bible Translations', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 93:2 (2013), pp. 189–216; Margriet Hoogvliet, 'Encouraging Lay People to Read the Bible in the French Vernaculars: New Groups of Readers and Textual Communities', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 93:2 (2013), pp. 239–274. In addition, Suzan Folkerts, who was a member of the research teams of 'Holy Writ and Lay Readers' and 'New Communities of Interpretation', also received a personal NWO-VENI grant for her project 'From monastery to market place. Towards a new history of New Testament translations and urban religious culture in the Low Countries (c. 1450–1540)' (2013–2018). Folkerts also edited a recent volume on reading and religious connectivity in urban communities. See: Suzan Folkerts (ed.), *Religious Connectivity in Urban Communities (1400–1550): Reading, Worshipping, and Connecting through the Continuum of Sacred and Secular* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021).

89 Sabrina Corbellini and Sita Steckel, 'The Religious Field during the Long Fifteenth Century: Framing Religious Change beyond Traditional Paradigms', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 99:3–4 (2019), pp. 303–329, pp. 306–307.

90 See also: Anna Dlabáčová, 'Printed Pages, Perfect Souls? Ideals and Instructions for the Devout Home in the First Books Printed in Dutch', *Religions*, 11:45 (2020), pp. 1–21, pp. 17–18.

91 See, for instance: Suzan Folkerts, 'The Cloister or the City? The Appropriation of the New Testament by Lay Readers in an Urban Setting', in Sabrina Corbellini (ed.), *Cultures of Religious Reading in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 175–200, pp. 181–184. On the active role of the laity in the circulation of books, see also: Johanneke Uphoff, "Dit boec heft gegeven": Book donation as an Indicator of a Shared Culture of Devotion in the Late Medieval Low Countries', in Suzan Folkerts (ed.), *Religious Connectivity in Urban Communities (1400–1550): Reading, Worshipping, and Connecting through the Continuum of Sacred and Secular* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 99–124.

or after Mass.⁹² These various reading behaviours cross the divides between the medieval and early modern period, between lay and religious communities, and between confessional groups.⁹³ It is within these dynamic religious, temporal, cultural, and textual contexts that the Bible reading practices explored in the current study ought to be understood.

4 Research Corpus and Scope

This study discusses the interactions between early modern readers and one specific type of book: the Bible. Although the approach that is developed in this study could be applied to practically any collection of early modern books, it is particularly well suited for studying books that were deeply embedded in every fibre of early modern daily life and experience. From childhood onwards, people would hear Bible readings in Mass and internalise them through sermons, liturgy, and prayer.⁹⁴ Biblical stories were visually present in public and private spaces, depicted in churches, in illustrated Bibles, on devotional prints, and in domestic decoration.⁹⁵ Moreover, inventories of early modern households in the Low Countries demonstrate that Bibles were the kind of books

92 See, for instance: Mart van Duijn, *De Delftse Bijbel: Een sociale geschiedenis, 1477–circa 1550* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2017), pp. 133–140; Suzan Folkerts, ‘The Cloister or the City?’, in Sabrina Corbellini (ed.), *Cultures of Religious Reading in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 175–200; Suzan Folkerts and Arend Elias Oostindiër, ‘New Bibles and Old Reading Habits around 1522’, *Quaerendo*, 47:3–4 (2017), pp. 175–198, pp. 185–186; Hoogvliet, ‘The Medieval Vernacular Bible’.

93 See: Suzan Folkerts, ‘Middle Dutch Epistles and Gospels: The Transfer of a Medieval Bestseller into Printed Editions during the Early Reformation’, in Wim François and August A. Den Hollander (eds.), *Vernacular Bible and Religious Reform in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), pp. 53–74; Folkerts and Oostindiër, ‘New Bibles and Old Reading Habits’. On Bible reading in a monastic context, see, for instance: Sabrina Corbellini, ‘Sitting between Two Sisters: Reading Holy Writ in a Community of Tertiaries in Sint-Agnes, Amersfoort’, in Virginia Blanton et al. (eds.), *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 83–98.

94 See also: Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers*, pp. 28–29, p. 53.

95 On depictions of the Bible on furniture and as domestic decoration, see: Andrew Morrall, ‘Domestic Decoration and the Bible in the Early Modern Home’, in Kevin Killeen et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 577–597; Tara Hamling, ‘Living with the Bible in Post-Reformation England: The Materiality of Text, Image and Object in Domestic Life’, *Studies in Church History*, 50 (2014), pp. 210–239; T. G. Kootte (ed.), *De Bijbel in huis: Bijbelse verhalen op huisraad in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Zwolle/Utrecht: Waanders Uitgeverij/Rijksmuseum het Catharijneconvent, 1992).

most commonly owned by people across social-economic and confessional divides.⁹⁶ In other words: the early modern Bible was not *just* a book. For many, it would have served as a lifeline and a continuous point of reference. Bibles could provide a sense of community and identity, as well as reflect and inflict religious change. They were read, treasured, and passed on as valuable heirlooms to following generations. Early printed Bibles need to be understood as part of a rich and versatile field of meanings and social and cultural practices.

In addition, the omnipresence of the Bible in the early modern period correlates to a large number of printed editions, with considerable print runs and – especially in the case of complete Bibles – a relatively good survival rate. This enables the composition of a coherent research corpus consisting of a large number of copies from a selected combination of editions. The coherency within the corpus allows for a systematic approach to the material and for effective comparisons between different copies and reading behaviours.

The research corpus of this study consists of 189 surviving copies of Dutch Bibles printed by Jacob van Liesvelt and Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch (see table 1). The temporal framing of the research corpus of this study is defined by two years: 1522 and 1546.⁹⁷ In 1522, the first Dutch Bible which was not directly based upon a medieval Vulgate translation appeared.⁹⁸ Moreover, in the same year, Jacob van Liesvelt published his first Bible edition. Although this edition still provided a traditional translation, it was the first in an impressive row of increasingly Reformation-minded Bible editions that Liesvelt printed. The year which closes off the printing period under scrutiny here

96 See: Hester Dibbits, *Vertrouwd bezit: Materiële cultuur in Doesburg en Maassluis, 1650–1800* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1998), p. 217; Johan A. Kamermans, *Materiële cultuur in de Krimpenerwaard in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw: ontwikkeling en diversiteit* (Wageningen: Afdeling Agrarische Geschiedenis Landbouwniversiteit Wageningen, 1999), pp. 124–129; Hans van Koolbergen, 'De materiële cultuur van Weesp en Weesperkapel in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw', *Volkskundig Bulletin*, 9:1 (1983), pp. 3–52, p. 32; Jeroen Blaak, *Geletterde levens: Dagelijks lezen en schrijven in de vroegmoderne tijd in Nederland, 1624–1770* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), p. 28; M. L. Caron, 'Boeken en tafereelen in bezit van de molenaarsweduwe: De geestelijke cultuur van Leidse burgers tot in de 16^{de} eeuw', in J. R. ter Molen et al. (eds.), *Huisraad van een molenaarsweduwe: Gebruiksvoorwerpen uit een 16^{de}-eeuwse boedelinventaris* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1987), pp. 68–78.

97 This temporal framework is commonly used in the research on early modern Dutch Bible translations. See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 4; Den Hollander, 'Forbidden Bibles', pp. 154–156.

98 This Bible, printed by the Amsterdam printer Doen Pietersoen and containing the Gospel of Matthew, provided the first Dutch translation which (partially) followed Erasmus' *Novum Testamentum* of 1519. See: Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 4, pp. 261–263.

TABLE 1 Research corpus of this study: editions and number of copies

Printer	Year and kind of edition	USTC number	Number of studied copies	Abbreviation of the edition
Jacob van Liesvelt	1522, Gospels	400440	1	JvL Ev 1522
Jacob van Liesvelt	1523, Epistles of Paul	437214	1	JvL EP 1523a
Jacob van Liesvelt	1523, Epistles of Paul	437215	1	JvL EP 1523b
Jacob van Liesvelt	1523, Epistles of the Apostles	437213	2	JvL EA 1523
Jacob van Liesvelt	1526, complete Bible	400463	12	JvL CB 1526
Jacob van Liesvelt	1527, Book of Wisdom	407331	2	JvL BW 1527
Jacob van Liesvelt	1532, complete Bible	402970	8	JvL CB 1532
Jacob van Liesvelt	1534, complete Bible	410766	24	JvL CB 1534
Jacob van Liesvelt	1534, New Testament	441763	1	JvL NT 1534
Jacob van Liesvelt	1535, complete Bible	437754	18	JvL CB 1535
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1535, complete Bible	437755	13	HPvM CB 1535
Jacob van Liesvelt	1535, New Testament	437803	1	JvL NT 1535a
Jacob van Liesvelt	1535, New Testament	437792	1	JvL NT 1535b
Hansken van Liesvelt	1538, complete Bible	403973	19	HvL CB 1538
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1538, New Testament	442647	1	HPvM NT 1538
Jacob van Liesvelt	1540, New Testament	438122	1	JvL NT 1540
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1540, New Testament	438026	2	HPvM NT 1540
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1541, complete Bible	408196	37	HPvM CB 1541
Jacob van Liesvelt	1541, New Testament	442648	1	JvL NT 1541
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1541, New Testament	441722	2	HPvM NT 1541a
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1541, New Testament	403008	2	HPvM NT 1541b
Jacob van Liesvelt	1542, complete Bible	404047	25	JvL CB 1542a
Jacob van Liesvelt	1542, complete Bible	408233	9	JvL CB 1542b
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	Ca. 1542, New Testament	–	1	HPvM NT (ca.) 1542
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1543, New Testament	416046	1	HPvM NT 1543

TABLE 1 Research corpus of this study: editions and number of copies (*cont.*)

Printer	Year and kind of edition	USTC number	Number of studied copies	Abbreviation of the edition
Jacob van Liesvelt	1544, New Testament	410456	1	JvL NT 1544a
Jacob van Liesvelt	1544, New Testament	442651	1	JvL NT 1544b
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	Ca. 1544, New Testament	–	1	HPvM NT (ca.) 1544
Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch	1546, New Testament	404113	1	HPvM NT 1546

is 1546. On 8 April 1546, at the Council of Trent, it was proclaimed that the Vulgate was the only authentic version to be used in the Church. In accordance with this statement, the Louvain Index of the same year strictly prohibited the use and dissemination of an extensive list of books, including forty-two Dutch Bibles.⁹⁹

In spite of the fact that this study is not primarily concerned with the confessionality of Bible translations or the regulation of print by the authorities, the diverging confessional climate and the relative freedom that printer-publishers enjoyed throughout the 1520s to early 1540s created an atmosphere in which they could experiment with textual, paratextual, and visual developments, and thus with the stimulation of new reading techniques.¹⁰⁰ Printers could initiate new types of editions, include elaborate and innovative paratexts, and attract potential readers with the richness and variety of their editions. When restrictions became more strictly imposed after 1546, this had a substantial influence on vernacular Bible production. Printers saw themselves compelled to adapt

99 See: Den Hollander, 'Forbidden Bibles', pp. 160–161; François, 'Bible Production and Bible Readers', p. 196. On the Louvain Index, see also: Bujanda et al., *Index de l'Université de Louvain*. It is important to note that the role of the Catholic Church's authorities in the printing industry was not at all merely repressive. A growing body of research on Catholic printing in the early modern Low Countries displays how the Catholic Church embraced, utilised, and further developed the benefits of print. See, for this matter: Helmer Helmers et al., 'Introduction: The Printing Press as an Agent of Power', in Nina Lamal et al. (eds.), *Print and Power in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021), pp. 1–17, pp. 8–9.

100 On the religious dynamics in the 1520s to 1540s in the Low Countries, see: Christine Kooi, *Reformation in the Low Countries, 1500–1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 46–73.

their translations and decrease the number of paratextual elements and reading aids in the editions. Therefore, the Bible printing activities by Liesvelt and Peetersen van Middelburch can not be separated from the broader contexts in which these took place. The decisions both printers made with regard to text and paratext, as well as the reading opportunities which were created and enabled by these choices, are undoubtedly connected to the relatively open and confessionally dynamic sphere within which they acted.

Although the choice of editions is thus defined by a relatively brief time span, this is not the case for the traces, adaptations, and transformative practices of readers under scrutiny in this study. Bibles from the first half of the sixteenth century continued to be used throughout the entire early modern period or even beyond. In order to grasp the broad scope of interactions between these books and their readers, I take readers' traces into account from the entire time frame between the printing date and ca. 1800, with a particular focus on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century traces. This approach allows for the inclusion of traces that are not as easily dated, in particular non-verbal traces such as underscorings or rubrication. Moreover, the broad temporal perspective provides room for the insight that the early modern Bible, as any object, had a 'lifetime'. As the book moved through time and space and from reader to reader, it could accumulate traces and adaptations, offering each subsequent reader an object that could already bear the remnants of previous interactions. In the words of Lesser, the pieces of physical evidence we find in books 'derive from multiple historical moments overlaid onto a single trans-historical object that is never truly "finished."¹⁰¹ Hence, rather than treating the traces of reading and use in Liesvelt's and Peetersen van Middelburch's Bibles as 'all-composed-at once; ... existing in a synchronic instant,' they are understood here as elements that 'have time.'¹⁰² The broad temporal frame facilitates the understanding that interactions between the reader and the book always take place at a certain point in time, in relation not only to the intentions and choices of printers, but also to traces of previous use.

The corpus of 189 copies has been compiled on the basis of the *Biblia Sacra* database, the WorldCat catalogue, the Universal Short Title Catalogue, digital library catalogues, and auction catalogues, and through contact with private Bible collectors in the Netherlands and Belgium.¹⁰³ The aim has been to

101 Lesser, 'The Material Text', p. 85.

102 Smyth, 'Book Marks', p. 66.

103 The listing of surviving copies in *Biblia Sacra* mostly corresponds to the copies mentioned by Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*. The *Biblia Sacra* database aims to provide an overview of Bibles printed in the Netherlands and Belgium between 1477 and 1800. It was developed within two research projects, both led by August den Hollander.

bring together a research corpus that, as much as possible, would approach the entirety of surviving copies. It includes copies in university library collections, national libraries, small public libraries, and private collections across the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States of America, and several other countries.¹⁰⁴ Despite its broad scope, the corpus is undeniably limited. Not only will a considerable number of surviving copies have remained undetected, for instance because they are kept in unknown private collections, several copies also proved to be inaccessible for research or were lost.¹⁰⁵

Besides these practical concerns of access and findability, the corpus is altogether defined by the very survival of certain copies. The survival rate of copies differs between various editions, and most strikingly between the folio-sized, complete Bibles and the small, partial editions, such as New Testaments. In most cases, only one copy per smaller edition survived, contrasting strongly with the fact that the complete Bibles are represented by generally ten to twenty surviving copies per edition.¹⁰⁶ Of Peetersen van Middelburch's complete Bible of 1541, no fewer than forty copies have been detected. The low survival rate of small printed books is a well-known paradox of early modern print culture. Contrary to the large and heavy folio-sized Bibles, these New Testaments were

The technical realisation and management of the database are overseen by the Digital Production Centre of the University Library of the University of Amsterdam. The database provides descriptions and reproductions of printed Bible editions, including information on typography, illustrations, and surviving copies. Some copy-specific descriptions contain further information on, amongst other aspects, missing pages, binding characteristics, provenance marks, handwritten annotations, or rubrications. The database is freely available at bibliasacra.nl. I studied two copies after having detected them in a auction catalogue: I studied a 1541 complete Peetersen van Middelburch Bible when it temporarily remained at Bubbe Kuyper Auctioneer (Haarlem) in October 2020, and a 1534 complete Liesvelt Bible at Arenberg Auctions (Brussels) in June 2019. The current owners of these copies are unknown.

104 For a complete overview of the copies under scrutiny in this book, see Appendix.

105 The latter is the case for, amongst others, a 1538 Hansken van Liesvelt Bible which originally belonged to the Preußische Staatsbibliothek of Berlin (Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen*, p. 443). In 1941, the library building was bombed and the decision was made to evacuate the library holdings, including the special collections. The books were brought to 29 locations across Germany. After the war, a large number of valuable (music) manuscripts and early printed books did not return and were scattered across Germany and abroad, amongst which was the 1538 Hansken van Liesvelt Bible. Its current holding place is unknown. On the lost books of the Staatsbibliothek, see also: P. J. P. Whitehead, 'The Lost Berlin Manuscripts', *Notes*, 33:1 (1976), pp. 7–15.

106 Although the corpus includes copies from 9 complete Bible editions versus 17 smaller editions, there are only 23 surviving copies *in total* of New Testaments and other partial editions.

the kind of books ‘that readers carried around on their travels, that accompanied them to church on Sunday, and that they consulted every day.’¹⁰⁷ These books were used until they fell apart, were discarded, were replaced by new versions, and did not become ‘collectibles’ as often as their larger equivalents.

Other factors that could influence the survival rate of copies are, amongst others, the context or place in which they were kept (e.g. private or institutional ownership) and the material characteristics of specific books and their bindings. Furthermore, one might expect that the suppression of certain Bibles by the authorities would also significantly impact the survival rate of specific editions. However, this assumption cannot be convincingly confirmed by the survival of the various editions by Liesvelt and Peetersen van Middelburch. Of all Liesvelt’s complete Bible editions, for instance, the only Bible not to be included on the Louvain Indexes and other lists of forbidden books is the edition from 1526. Still, the number of surviving copies from this edition (twelve) is not higher than those of the censored editions of 1535 and 1538, and even considerably less than the survival of, for instance, the 1534 complete Bible, of which twenty copies are known to have survived. In the case of Peetersen van Middelburch’s Bibles, the forbidden complete edition of 1541 is represented by about three times as many copies as those that survive from the 1535 edition, which was not included on the Indexes.¹⁰⁸ Hence, although censoring regulations undoubtedly impacted book production and transmission, this has not resulted in a visible influence on the survival rate of the editions.¹⁰⁹

5 Formative Spaces and Transformative Practices: Structure of the Study

This book consists of five main chapters, structured in two parts. This first part is titled ‘Formative spaces: paratext and the construction of meaning and

107 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, pp. 16–17. On this paradox, see also: McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 43–45.

108 In the case of the survival rate of Willem Vorsterman’s Bible, there similarly does not seem to be a direct correlation between which Bibles were placed on Indices of forbidden books and which Bibles had a high survival rate. Vorsterman’s editions of 1528 and 1533–1534, for instance, were censored but both have survived in over forty copies; the highest numbers among all Vorsterman’s editions. My gratitude goes to Bert Tops for this remark.

109 On the impact, and lack of impact, of Indices on book production and transmission, see also: McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 153–165. See also McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 279–280, for extensive bibliographical references to research about early modern censorship and print control.

reading practices.' It explores how the paratextual elements in Liesvelt's and Peetersen van Middelburch's Bibles shaped, stimulated, enabled, and required certain reading behaviours, experiences, and practices. By analysing the presence, content, form, and potential influence of the paratexts in these Bibles on reading behaviours, the chapters thus aim to provide insight into the reading possibilities created and demanded by the printed book. Furthermore, this part of the thesis will look at the differences in paratextual material between complete Bibles and partial editions, in order to determine whether these various editions provided different opportunities and incentives for the reader of the book. A distinction is made between 'constructive' paratext and 'directive' paratext. Although this distinction is artificial and diffuse, as all paratexts share the space of the book and might simultaneously adhere to different functions, it structures the exploration of the paratextual programme of the Bibles studied here.

The concept of constructive paratext, as will be discussed in chapter 2, is used to describe those paratextual elements that shape and influence readers and their reading behaviour before or after they entered the main text of the book. Positioned at the beginning or the end of textual sections, this type of paratext functions as 'a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public.'¹¹⁰ Chapter 2 will discuss the following paratextual elements in Liesvelt's and Peetersen van Middelburch's complete Bibles and New Testaments: blank spaces, title pages, prologues, calendars and almanacs, and 'terminal paratext' (i.e. explicits and colophons).¹¹¹ Together, these paratexts form the textual, visual, and material framework through which the reader is invited to enter and leave the main Bible text.

Chapter 3 will concern what is referred to here as directive paratext: the paratextual elements that continue to direct, shape, and facilitate the movements of readers when they turn to the reading of the main Bible text. These paratexts – printed marginalia, summaries, woodcuts, maps, tables of contents, liturgical reading aids, and topical registers – enable and structure the reader's navigation between one part of the book and another. The analysis of these various elements will display several ways in which the book could

¹¹⁰ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 2.

¹¹¹ The term 'terminal paratext' has been introduced by William Sherman. The last pages would have been the place where early modern readers would expect to find colophons, tables of contents, addresses to the reader and dedications. See: William H. Sherman, 'The Beginning of "The End": Terminal Paratext and the Birth of Print Culture', in Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (eds.), *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 65–88, p. 66.

facilitate discontinuous, non-linear reading movements, while simultaneously providing aids for readers to maintain a sense of 'where they are' within the book.

After having established how paratextual elements structured potential reading practices, the question remains how actual, historic reader-users of these Bibles responded to the paratextual, textual, and material characteristics of their books. Hence, the second part of this study, titled 'Transformative practices: readers' responses, adjustments, and traces', turns from the impact and agency of the book to that of the reader. By investigating the many and various traces of reading and use, this part will explore how historic readers responded to the encouragements, possibilities, and invitations presented in the paratextual, textual, and visual programme of their Bibles, and how they would appropriate and impact their books. Because of the low survival rate of New Testaments, the corpus under scrutiny in this part of the thesis has been enlarged by including traces of reading and use in the surviving copies of other partial editions: Liesvelt's Gospels (1522), his Epistles of Paul (1523), Epistles of the Evangelists (1523), and his Book of Wisdom (1527).

This part consists of three chapters. The first of these, chapter 4, will provide an overview of the traces, readers, and book owners that can be detected in the Bible copies under scrutiny. It will present the categorisation of traces of reading, use, and ownership as applied in subsequent chapters, and analyse differences in the presence, form, and content of traces between the various Bible editions under scrutiny. In addition, it will portray the Bible reading public in terms of gender, confessional preference, profession, and location.

Chapter 5 will discuss how readers interacted with the textual and paratextual elements of their Bibles. The first section of this chapter will centre around readers' reflections on the textual and paratextual content of the book, usually expressed in markings (e.g. manicules or *notate bene*) or written annotations. The second section will move from readers' responses to the contents of the book to their transformative actions in accommodating reading practices. Presenting examples such as corrections to and additions of texts, images, or paratexts, I will consider how readers could create efficient navigation through the book and across the page, expand the volume by including new texts or images, and personally facilitate liturgical and devotional use of the book.

In the last main chapter, chapter 6, I will shift my attention from the use of the book as a carrier of text and paratext, to the use and appropriation of the book as a physical object. This chapter will discuss, firstly, how book owners could establish their ownership of the book and, simultaneously, how they might appropriate the object as a way to shape their 'self' and solidify

their personal relation to their faith. The second part of this chapter will focus on those interactions between the user and the object that left material, non-verbal, and often unintended traces. Overall, this chapter illustrates the various ways in which users could appropriate the book and its material characteristics beyond reading in the strict sense of the word.

In the conclusions, I will bring the two main strings of this study back together. I will discuss whether the reading practices that are enabled and stimulated by paratext are indeed taken up by the reader, or if they approach the book with contrasting and divergent expectations and actions. Furthermore, it will display how the roles of the printer-publisher and the reader relate to each other in the dynamic, continuing processes that make the book and shape readership. Ultimately, the combination of these various perspectives will lead to the conclusion that the transmission of biblical knowledge from book to reader was not a straightforward, one-way street, but rather shaped by a myriad of ongoing interactions between the textual, conceptual, and material Bible, and its involved and creative readers.