#### I Continental Case Studies

Chapter 1. Early Printing along the IJssel: Contextualising Deventer's Success as a Centre of Incunabula Production (Laura Cooijmans-Keizer)

It is to Deventer's credit that – when the art of printing began to spread across Europe – the city was among the first to favourably adopt this artistry within the confines of its walls.<sup>1</sup>

These proud words were written by Philipp Christiaan Molhuijsen, who became librarian of the Athenaeum Library in 1830. Situated in the heart of Deventer, this city library is the Netherlands's oldest institution of its kind – representing a nucleus of book historical research for a city whose past is inextricably linked to books and printing. Tracing its roots to a wooden church erected in 768 by missionaries Lebuinus and Marcellinus, Deventer would continue to develop as Christianity began to gain an ever firmer foothold throughout the region.<sup>2</sup> With it came literacy, initially among the clergy, but gradually extending to wider audiences.<sup>3</sup> As the city expanded over the following eight centuries, a shared development of education and religion allowed a culture of writing and book production to flourish. In this manner, fertile ground was prepared for the local introduction of printing with moveable type during the final quarter of the fifteenth century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> P.C. Molhuijsen, 'De eerste Overijsselsche drukkerijen en de Donatus', *Overijsselsche almanak voor oudheid en letteren*, 7 (1841), p. 39. Translation by the author.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Jeroen Benders, '768-ca.1400: Het geschreven woord in kerk en stad', in Suzan Folkerts and Garrelt Verhoeven (eds.), *Deventer Boekenstad: Twaalf eeuwen boekcultuur aan de IJssel* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018), p. 11; Henk Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer. Deel I: Oorsprong en Middeleeuwen* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2010), p. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Jos A.A.M. Biemans, 'Handschrift en druk in de Nederlanden rond 1500', in Herman Pleij and Joris Reynaert (eds.), *Geschreven en gedrukt: Boekproductie van handschrift naar druk in de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar moderne tijd* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2004), p. 20; Benders, 'Geschreven woord', p. 11.

Despite the above developments, the study of book production in Deventer has thus far lacked an overarching investigation into the wider politico-economic grounds for its sustained success up to and during the fifteenth century. Whereas other cities, including nearby Zwolle and Utrecht, have received this scrutiny, particular studies on printing in Deventer have traditionally been limited to general histories of the city itself and the outputs of its initial printers.<sup>4</sup> Aiming to address this lacuna, this chapter will assess the wider political, economic, and cultural factors that facilitated Deventer's development as a prominent centre of early printing.

# The Low Countries up to the Fifteenth Century

Over the course of the fifteenth century, the majority of the Southern Netherlands, including Flanders and Brabant, had been brought under the authority of the Valois dukes of Burgundy. Having consolidated their power throughout the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they set out to formalise and centralise key aspects of societal structure, including language, jurisprudence, currency, and bureaucracy. Despite ongoing conflicts within the Burgundian heartlands, the implementation of this new governmental apparatus gave rise to the formation of a relatively homogenous political entity by the middle of the fifteenth century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For printing in Zwolle, see Jos. M.M. Hermans, *Zwolse boeken voor een markt zonder grenzen, 1477-1523, met een Catalogus van de verschenen edities en gegevens over de bewaard gebleven exemplaren* ('t Goy-Houten: Hes & de Graaf, 2004); Wytze Hellinga and Lotte Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of the Low Countries* vol. I (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger, 1966), pp. 40-43, 104-107. For printing in Utrecht, see Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, pp. 10-14, 47-48, 50-52; Geocontexting Printers and Publishers 1450-1800, <a href="https://www.arkyves.org/view/geocontextutrecht">https://www.arkyves.org/view/geocontextutrecht</a>, accessed 14 March 2020. For printing in Deventer, see L.A. Sheppard, 'Printing at Deventer in the Fifteenth Century', *The Library*, 24 no. 3-4 (1943-44), pp. 101-119; Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, pp. 39-40, 108-111; Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*; Suzan Folkerts and Garrelt Verhoeven (eds.), *Deventer Boekenstad: Twaalf eeuwen boekcultuur aan de IJssel* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries under Burgundian Rule,* 1369-1530 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 93, 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Hanno Wijsman, Luxury Bound. Illustrated Manuscript Production and Noble and Princely Book Ownership in the Burgundian Netherlands (1400-1550) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), p. 10.

The opposite was true for the Northern Netherlands, which was divided among a number of *de facto* independent principalities. Tensions between these regional powers were high, prompting intermittent shifts in geopolitical loyalties and boundaries. The Burgundian rulers, aspiring to extend their sphere of influence, intervened in various such political disputes, most notably those of the Duchy of Brabant and the respective counties of Holland and Zeeland in the Western Low Countries. After 1430, this diplomatic strategy resulted in Duke Philip the Good (1396-1467) being named heir to all three territories, thereby extending the Burgundian sphere of influence further northwards.

The most sizable polity in the Northern Netherlands comprised the (prince-)bishopric of Utrecht, whose bishops acted as both secular and ecclesiastical rulers. Having gained and lost territories to the westward county of Holland and the eastward Duchy of Guelders for many years, its temporal borders had mostly stabilised by the early fifteenth century to only include the episcopal enclave of the Sticht. This area encompassed both the Nedersticht (Lower Sticht), roughly analogous to the modern Dutch province of Utrecht, and the Oversticht (Upper Sticht), whose territory encompassed the present-day provinces of Drenthe and Overijssel. In addition to exercising spiritual and temporal authority over the Sticht, the bishop's diocesan authority reached across the counties of Holland, Zeeland, and the northern Flemish territories of the so-called Four Offices.

Scholars have generally assumed the dominant political force over the bishopric of Utrecht to have been Burgundian from 1456, when Philip the Good managed to secure the appointment of his natural son, David of Burgundy, to the episcopal seat. <sup>10</sup> Whilst having to share his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Frank van der Pol, 'The Middle Ages to 1200', in Herman J. Selderhuis (ed.), *Handbook of Dutch Church History* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), p. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Peter Nissen and William den Boer, 'The Middle Ages after 1200', in Herman J. Selderhuis (ed.), *Handbook of Dutch Church History* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), p. 107; Blockmans and Prevenier, *Promised Lands*, p. 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Blockmans and Prevenier, *Promised Lands*, p. 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> L.M.J. Delaissé, *A Century of Dutch Manuscript Illumination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 8; A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen, 'Op het toppunt van de macht, 1304-1528', in R.E. de Bruin (ed.), '*Een paradijs vol weelde*'. *Geschiedenis van de stad Utrecht* (Utrecht: Matrijs, 2000), p. 179.

authority with the city's influential guilds and councils, the newly appointed bishop – over the course of his tenure – embodied the centralist demeanour of the Burgundian hegemony within the episcopal jurisdiction of the Sticht.<sup>11</sup>

### [INSERT FIG 1.1 HERE, FULL PAGE]

Fig. 1.1 Map of places mentioned in the text (Low Countries)

### The Rise of Regional Book Production in the Sticht

Both the Northern and Southern Netherlands played host to many vibrant centres of cultural endeavour over the course of the late medieval period. From the fourteenth century, the production of manuscripts – no longer an exclusively ecclesiastical endeavour – became increasingly realised by secular workshops, a majority of which were based in urban centres. <sup>12</sup> The Southern Netherlands witnessed higher levels of production than any of the more liminal principalities of the north, owing to a higher population density and sustained patronage from regional nobles, foremost among whom were the dukes of Burgundy and their surrounding court. <sup>13</sup> Both regions, however, witnessed a decline in manuscript production after the 1470s. <sup>14</sup> As printing began to gain a firmer foothold in Netherlandish book production, the majority of texts, with the notable exception of prayer books and liturgical manuscripts, were now being set to type in the workshops of the emerging printers. <sup>15</sup>

Utrecht, as a centre of worship, had become a prominent nucleus of artistic endeavour. Up to the middle of the fifteenth century, the city was the most important centre of book production

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 180; Nissen and Boer, 'Middle Ages', p. 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Whereas monastic book production was considerably higher in the Northern Netherlands than in its neighbouring regions, non-religious texts, in particular, were increasingly produced by lay scribes. See J.P. Gumbert, *The Dutch and Their Books in the Manuscript Age* (London: The British Library, 1990), p. 22; Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Gumbert, *Dutch and Their Books*, p. 12; Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, pp. 39, 49-50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Wijsman, Luxury Bound, p. 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Delaissé, *Dutch Manuscript Illumination*, p. 49.

in the Northern Netherlands. <sup>16</sup> Book decoration, in particular, flourished during the fifteenth century, as the city offered livelihoods to many renowned schools of illuminators, including the Masters of Zweder van Culemborg and Catherine of Cleves. <sup>17</sup> Concurrently, Utrecht had become famous for its penwork decorations: in addition to its idiosyncratic local style featuring dragon-inhabited initials, the city played host to a wide array of other regionally distinct designs. <sup>18</sup> Upon his accession as bishop of the Sticht, David of Burgundy's presence is thought to have spurred a renewal of interest in the art of book illumination, offering a rationale for the sudden revitalisation and improved workmanship of locally produced manuscripts during the late 1450s. <sup>19</sup>

In addition to being a thriving centre of manuscript production, Utrecht is the first Northern Netherlandish city to which books printed with moveable type can be attributed.<sup>20</sup> As early as 1473, Nicolaus Ketelaer and Gerardus de Leempt are known to have printed an edition of Petrus Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, in whose colophon they recorded their names.<sup>21</sup> De Leempt, a letter cutter by trade, appears to have resided in Utrecht for only a few years, whilst Ketelaer is known to have hailed from a prominent and wealthy Utrechtian family.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, at least 33 editions can be attributed to their joint press – a high number, considering all but three were printed as folio editions within the space of, at most, two

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Horst, Medieval Manuscripts, p. ix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Gumbert, *Dutch and Their Books*, pp. 35, 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Delaissé, *Dutch Manuscript Illumination*, p. 7.

Although evidence exists of earlier types of printing (for instance, woodblock prints and proto-typographical editions), this chapter focuses on attributable editions printed using moveable type only. See Lotte Hellinga-Querido, 'Prototypografie', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), pp. 67-78; Lotte Hellinga-Querido, 'Blokboeken', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), pp. 79-89.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> ISTC ip00459000; GW M32182; USTC 435206; Gisela Gerritsen-Geywitz, 'The Utrecht Printer Nicolaus Ketelaer', *Quaerendo*, 31 no. 2 (2001), p. 137; Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 10.
 <sup>22</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 10; Lotte Hellinga-Querido and Wytze Hellinga, 'Nicolaus Ketelaer & Gherardus de Leempt. Willem Hees', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), p. 91; Paul Begheyn, 'Gherard van der Leempt: ca.1450-ca.1491, eerste Nederlandse boekdrukker', in J.A.E. Kuys etc. (eds.), *Biografisch woordenboek Gelderland: Bekende en onbekende mannen en vrouwen uit de Gelderse geschiedenis* vol. 4 (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), p. 80.

years.<sup>23</sup> In 1474 or 1475, Ketelaer and De Leempt's fount was acquired by Wilhelmus Hees, who may have been associated with their press from the outset. Few details survive on Hees's press, and only a handful of books from 1475 can be (tentatively) attributed to him.<sup>24</sup> In 1477 or early 1478, a third printer, Johan Veldener, briefly settled in Utrecht before relocating to Culemborg in 1481, conceivably in a bid to escape growing political tensions surrounding (anti-)Burgundian loyalties within the town.<sup>25</sup> Between 1479 and 1480, a fourth unidentified printer appears to have been active in Utrecht, possibly operating in conjunction with Veldener's press. Nowadays styled the 'Printer with the Monogram', his editions are luxuriously presented but provide no additional clues as to their creator's identity.<sup>26</sup> Following Veldener's relocation to Culemborg, printing activity appears to have stalled for well over 30 years.<sup>27</sup> As such, Utrecht's printing activity can be characterised by its relatively rapid succession of printing presses, all seemingly short-lived.

Whereas Utrecht appears to have been the only locale in the Nedersticht to host printing presses during the final quarter of the fifteenth century, several centres in the Oversticht are known to have accommodated such ventures at the same time. Akin to Utrecht, albeit on a smaller scale, manuscript production flourished in IJssel-region cities like Zwolle, Hasselt, and Deventer before and during the time when early printers practised their trade.<sup>28</sup> In Zwolle, printing appears to have started around 1478-79, although names associated with the earliest local press do not survive. Only from 1480 onward is it possible to connect the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Gerritsen-Geywitz, 'Nicolaus Ketelaer', p. 146.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol I, p. 14; W. Heijting, 'Relationship between Publisher and Author', in Marieke van Delft and Clemens de Wolf (eds.), *Bibliopolis. History of the Printed Book in the Netherlands* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2003), p. 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Lotte Hellinga-Querido, 'Johan Veldener', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), p. 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Lotte Hellinga-Querido and Wytze Hellinga, 'De Drukker met het Monogram', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), p. 338; Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Lawrence S. Thompson, 'Printers and Printing, Fifteenth Century', in Allen Kent etc. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1978), p. 355.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 49.

name of Peter van Os van Breda to a new printing venture.<sup>29</sup> A brief intermission followed after 1481, presumably to permit the acquisition of new type. Hence, when Van Os's business restarted in 1483, he appears to have discarded his older founts for a type acquired from Gheraert Leeu, a Gouda-based printer with whom he kept in close contact throughout his second phase of printing.<sup>30</sup> At least 160 editions have been attributed to Van Os's press between 1480 and 1510, the year of his death.<sup>31</sup>

Only seven miles from Zwolle, Hasselt likewise played host to a printer: Peregrinus Barmentlo. A member of the noble Barmentlo family, his press appears to have functioned less as a commercial venture and more as a means of advancing religious and moral values.<sup>32</sup> Characterised by two short stints of printing between 1480-81 and 1488-90, Barmentlo's press appears to have retained close ties with Van Os's, as the two associates traded expertise, printing materials, and presumably personnel whenever Barmentlo's press became active.<sup>33</sup>

## **Early Printing in Deventer**

Deventer was another city to host a printing press in the Oversticht.<sup>34</sup> As has been the case for Zwolle, the city and its surrounding region accommodated a thriving culture of manuscript production, not least due to the influence of the Modern Devotion. Since the start

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga suggest that Van Os was likely also involved in the first unidentified press, albeit not in a position where he was 'financially responsible' for its outputs. See *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 43; Lotte Hellinga-Querido and Wytze Hellinga, 'Johannes de Vollenhoe, Peter van Os van Breda', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden*. *Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), p. 329. For the relationship between Peter van Os van Breda and Gheraert Leeu, see Aafje Lem, 'De Zwolse drukker Peter van Os en zijn relatie met Gheraert Leeu', in Koen Goudriaan etc. (eds.), *Een drukker zoekt publiek: Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477-1484* (Delft: Eburon, 1993), pp. 184-192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Hermans, Zwolse boeken, p. 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Lotte Hellinga-Querido and Wytze Hellinga, 'Peregrinus Barmentlo', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), p. 343.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, pp. 91-92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Several other small presses can potentially be situated, but not localised, within the territory of the Sticht, as in the case of the Printer of Correctorium and the Printer of St. Rochus. See Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types*.

of the movement in the late fourteenth century, books came to hold a central place within its followers' devotional practices, spurring scholarly and book producing endeavours both within and outwith their immediate circles. This emphasis on the written word and learning likewise tied in with wider societal changes: as urbanisation developed and traditional socioeconomic hierarchies were transformed, a middle class of merchants, craftsmen, and inn keepers began to emerge. As increasingly literate burghers, they often employed writing to manage their respective businesses.<sup>35</sup> Expanding literacy, in turn, increased the demand for books, a requirement which gradually outstripped services rendered by local scribes, thereby opening a door to innovative technologies with a potential to speed up production.<sup>36</sup> Deventer's increased local demand for books was met by the arrival of its first printer, Richard Pafraet, whose first attributable edition was published in 1477 (see Fig. 2 below). Hailing from Cologne, Pafraet went on to produce a sizeable yield of printed works during the final quarter of the century.<sup>37</sup> When discussing the printer's output, scholars often distinguish between two periods of activity. Pafraet's first press, active between 1477 and 1485, was characterised by folio-sized editions, of which as many as 81 were produced, altogether comprising around 18,000 printed sheets. This would imply that his workshop produced more than 2,000 sheets per year, a considerable number, which, at the time, would have constituted the largest output of any printer in the entire Low Countries by a substantial margin.<sup>38</sup>

### [INSERT FIG. 1.2 HERE]

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> J.F. Benders, *Bestuursstructuur en schriftcultuur: Een analyse van de bestuurlijke verschriftelijking in Deventer tot het eind van de 15de eeuw* (Kampen: IJsselacademie, 2004), p. 290.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Biemans, 'Handschrift en Druk', p. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Dinand Webbink, 'Anna Mater', in Suzan Folkerts and Garrelt Verhoeven (eds.), *Deventer Boekenstad: Twaalf eeuwen boekcultuur aan de IJssel* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018), p. 78; Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 325.

Fig. 1.2 Colophon of the *Liber bibliae moralis* by Petrus Berchorius, the earliest book printed by Pafraet. ISTC ib00338000; GW 03864; USTC 435327. (Deventer, Athenaeumbibliotheek, 113 C 9 KL)

This period of intensive production was followed by a three-year lull, notable for its absence of attributable works from Pafraet's workshop. By 1488, however, his press was once more in operation, albeit with a different type of output. Whereas the first period of printing was characterised by large tomes of sermons and reference works, this subsequent phase largely abandoned folios for quartos, which often contained less than a hundred leaves. Their contents had also changed, now consisting of grammars and other books for instructional use.<sup>39</sup> Several scenarios have been put forward to explain this abrupt hiatus and change of direction in Pafraet's printing activity. One such hypothesis states that it may have been a cost-cutting exercise, as his sizeable earlier works had become a drain on resources. Another proposal relates to the change in printing types between the first and second presses. Although Pafraet's first fount had travelled with him from Cologne when he first established himself in Deventer, he had acquired a new set of type for his second press – one that had become increasingly popular in Germany. 40 It is possible to imagine that Pafraet ceased his printing for a number of years to obtain more modern types, ensuring the longer-term viability of his business. His old founts would not go to waste, however: the same year Pafraet ended his first phase of activity, Jacob van Breda, another local printer, produced his first attributable edition, having used Pafraet's old founts. Although little is known about Van Breda, contemporary records acknowledge his work from the moment he acquired his

<sup>39</sup> Dinand Webbink, 'Deventer: de pers van Jacob die Prenter. Meer dan vijf eeuwen 'wonderbaarlijke boekdrukkunst", in Wim Coster and Jan ten Hove (eds.), *Overijssel. Plaatsen van herinnering* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2011), p. 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, pp. 39, 108; Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, pp. 325-326.

citizens' rights in 1483. Van Breda continued to use Pafraet's old founts for an additional three years, before he, too, exchanged them for more modern type.<sup>41</sup>

#### [INSERT FIG. 1.3 HERE]

Fig. 1.3 The printing device of Jacob van Breda, (c. 1515) containing the text *Prelu*[*m*] *Jacobi*, 'Jacob's press'. USTC 420503. (Deventer, Athenaeumbibliotheek, 11 E 106 KL)

Rather than being competitors, the two printers appear to have been on good terms with one another despite their shared target audience. Prior to setting up his own establishment, Van Breda may have even been an associate of Pafraet's printing business. From 1489, when both businesses were operating, their respective outputs closely resembled one another: both printed quarto editions focused predominantly on the educational market. Likewise, both printers were highly productive, jointly representing over 40% of the entire printing output of the Northern Netherlands, and as much as 25% of the Low Countries overall. These percentages warrant investigation into how such productivity could be achieved. What defined the success of these printers, and how were they able to use the prevailing political, economic, and cultural climate to their advantage?

#### **Political Reasons for Success**

As mentioned above, when David of Burgundy was anointed Bishop of Utrecht, the entirety of the Sticht would have presumably become part of the Burgundian area of influence. In practice, however, would this have been true for Deventer? Both cities – each functioning as *de facto* politico-administrative centres for their respective subregion within the Sticht – initially opposed the appointment of a bishop with Burgundian ties, causing David's father,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Lotte Hellinga-Querido and Wytze Hellinga, 'Jacob van Breda', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), p. 403.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 326.

Philip the Good, to take military action against both cities, leading to their surrender in 1456.<sup>44</sup> As the new bishop took up (near-)permanent residence in Utrecht, its distance from the Oversticht would have curbed the control he was able to exert over the latter region, despite his temporal influence officially extending there. In fact, Hellinga and Hellinga have gone as far as asserting that '[p]olitically speaking Deventer did not belong to the Burgundian area which at this period of the fifteenth century we usually think of as the Low Countries'. 45 With this in mind, continued conflicts surrounding the bishop's tenure would have been less pronounced in Deventer than they were in Utrecht, which, situated at the centre of such struggles, became more economically volatile. 46 As a result, Utrecht's early printers may have struggled to market their trade further afield, and may have even run afoul of anti-Burgundian sentiment by selling books in supposed 'enemy territory'. <sup>47</sup> Deventer, conversely, would have been in a more politically resilient position, lending stability to its commercial network. As a result, when its printers became active during the final quarter of the fifteenth century, their trade would have been largely unencumbered by political contentions. 48 Whereas the city's formal connection to the incumbent bishop would have facilitated trade with regions within his sphere of influence, as well as those under more established Burgundian control such as the county of Holland and the Southern Netherlands, the lack of direct episcopal oversight in the Oversticht would have also allowed it to nurture closer ties to regions beyond the Burgundian sphere of influence. Deventer's proximity to neighbouring Guelders might have further facilitated such connections, for example. In addition to its secular ties to Utrecht, Deventer also benefitted from a strong historical bond to the episcopate itself, having acted as a safe haven for the Utrechtian bishop following

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 208.

<sup>45</sup> Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 179-180; Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, p. 39. 46 Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', pp. 180-181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, pp. 48-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 272.

viking antagonism during the ninth century. Although the city would not become an official suffragan see until 1559, it nonetheless functioned as a secondary seat to incumbent bishops during the intermediate centuries. <sup>49</sup> This status led Deventer to become an important node in the ecclesiastical network of the diocese and the Oversticht in particular, allowing it to develop its administrative infrastructure. <sup>50</sup>

### **Economic Advantages**

As its favourable ecclesiastical position had made Deventer the most important centre of the Oversticht, its ties to the Church represented only one side of the coin; the other was the city's well-disposed economic infrastructure, being strategically situated along important trade routes. Originally established near a fording place in the IJssel, the settlement had long enjoyed a principal position within a wider (inter-)regional network of overland trade and was further enhanced by a bridge built across the IJssel during the early fifteenth century. Whilst connecting Deventer with Utrecht in the west, local land routes linked the city to important eastbound centres like Bremen, Osnabrück, and Münster, and further onwards to Braunschweig, Magdeburg, and Southern Germany. The River IJssel likewise facilitated waterborne trade, connecting the city to other economic entrepôts throughout Northwestern Europe. Whilst not accommodating large seafaring ships, the river enabled goods and people to be conveyed at a much higher rate than overland alternatives could. Its position alongside this waterway therefore further enhanced Deventer's status a leading hub for (inter-)regional trade. S2

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> E.H. [Guus] Bary, 'Excentriek in het bisdommenlandschap. Deventer als bisschopsstad in de rooms-katholieke en oud katholieke traditie', in E.H. Bary etc. (eds.), *Lebuïnus en Walburgis bijeen: Deventer en Zutphen als historische centra van kerkelijk leven* (Delft: Eburon, 2006), pp. 15-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 11; Job Weststrate, *In het Kielzog van Moderne Markten: Handel en Scheepvaart op de Rijn, Waal en IJssel, ca. 1360-1560* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2008), pp. 171-172.. <sup>52</sup> Weststrate, *Kielzog*, pp. 19, 157, 170-171.

Peak trading seasons coincided with Deventer's renowned annual markets, which are known to have attracted merchants from across Europe. The city hosted as many as five markets throughout the year and had over the preceding centuries developed the appropriate supporting infrastructure, which Weststrate has deconstructed into three interconnected components. The judiciary, first of all, oversaw the implementation of market peace, offering prospective traders military protection to safely reach markets. Dealing with local disputes in an efficient manner, it employed an expedited tribunal headed by city officials. The city also boasted a physical infrastructure to facilitate trade, ranging from the provision of a harbour, crane, and transportation to town by cart, to ample accommodation, storage facilities, and a sizeable market square. Finally, the city benefitted from its financial infrastructure: Deventer had been granted rights to mint coins, and likewise employed money changers. Equally significant, if not more so, was the role of the city government, which profited from and therefore actively invested in the upkeep of the aforementioned physical infrastructure.

All of the above allowed Deventer to have an early hand in the development of the Hanseatic League, which, through shared negotiations, was able to offer privileges and protections to its members. Examples included reciprocal arrangements between towns to help market each other's wares, whilst offering political and military support when local trade was threatened. Additional benefits involved more routine aspects of exchange, including agreements on standards of weights and measures, thereby largely dispensing with associated transaction costs. <sup>56</sup> Local protections offered by the Hanse were important to Deventer, as it was better

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Peter M.H. Cuijpers, *Teksten als koopwaar: vroege drukkers verkennen de markt. Een kwantitatieve analyse van de productie van Nederlandstalige boeken (tot circa 1550) en de 'lezershulp' in de seculiere prozateksten* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1998), p. 30; Weststrate, *Kielzog*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Weststrate, *Kielzog*, pp. 170; Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 169; Benders, *Bestuursstructuur*, p. 135. <sup>55</sup> Weststrate, *Kielzog*, pp. 170-173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, 'The Hanse in Medieval and Early Modern Europe,' in Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz and Stuart Jenks (eds.), *The Hanse in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 6, 8, 11.

able to protect the city's commercial interests – particularly those with the German hinterlands – than its own regional ruler could, whose lack of direct control over the Oversticht left the region politically disconnected and economically vulnerable.<sup>57</sup>

Despite these overarching measures, the Hanse did not have a fixed hierarchical structure, and did not tend to punish its members for non-compliance. As a result, merchants were mostly able to steer their own course, as long as agreements were not coded into affiliated towns' bylaws. As a result, individual members often seem to have pursued their own economic interests before considering their collective ties to the Hanse, emphasising their alliance only when it suited them individually.<sup>58</sup> Deventer, situated on the fringes of the Hanse's sphere of influence, did exactly this.<sup>59</sup> As a central point of trade between Western Germany and the expanding economic influence of the county of Holland, the city government sought to protect its own economic interests by remaining impartial in the intermittent conflicts between Holland and the Hanse.<sup>60</sup>

Although the economic power of the Hanseatic League had begun to diminish during the second half of the fifteenth century, membership still carried status, signifying an implicit expectation of mutual trust, reliance, and quality control.<sup>61</sup> In attempting to attract as much trade as possible to the city, Deventer's merchant class benefitted from these associations, emphasising them whenever profitable.<sup>62</sup>

Much like its merchants, Deventer's printers were able to make use of the city's established economic infrastructures and connections. Above all, printing was a business, and one which often required substantial investment before sales could generate profitable returns. As such, printers would have heeded economic risks, putting stock in stable economies and relocating

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Wubs-Mrozewicz, 'The Hanse in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', pp. 6-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, pp. 196-197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Wubs-Mrozewicz, 'The Hanse in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', pp. 10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 169.

to preserve such conditions. <sup>63</sup> Deventer's connections to the Hanse and its profitable annual fairs provided its printers with wide-ranging opportunities for distribution from their doorstep. <sup>64</sup> As both Pafraet and Van Breda predominantly printed in Latin, this would have further broadened potential markets for their output. <sup>65</sup> In accordance, their editions were distributed across Europe, with copies turning up as far afield as Poland and Austria. Some of Pafraet's editions are even known to have been tailored to the English market. <sup>66</sup>

Prior research has concluded that early printers preferred to establish themselves either in cities with a strong commercial infrastructure or those in which universities had been established. <sup>67</sup> As explored above, the former held true for Deventer, which attracted merchants from far afield buying books to supply them elsewhere. <sup>68</sup> The latter rationale might likewise hold true, however: even though the city did not host a university at this time, its established Latin school may well have offered comparable advantages.

#### **Cultural Developments**

From the late fourteenth century, the production and dissemination of the written word in the Northern Netherlands became strongly influenced by the so-called Modern Devotion.

Emerging from widespread societal desires to return to the values of the early Church, the movement sparked a series of religious reforms that would eventually affect sizeable parts of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Cuijpers, *Teksten als koopwaar*, pp. 28-29; Lotte Hellinga-Querido and Wytze Hellinga, 'Richard Pafraet', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden. Catalogus* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1973), p. 309.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 327.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 326; Lotte Hellinga, 'The Bookshop of the World: Books and Their Makers as Agents of Cultural Exchange', in Lotte Hellinga etc. (eds.), *The Bookshop of the World: the Role of the Low Countries in the Book-trade*, 1473-1941 ('t Goy-Houten: Hes & de Graaf, 2001), p. 15; Cuijpers, Teksten als koopwaar, p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Dinand Webbink, 'Deventers eerste drukker', in Suzan Folkerts and Garrelt Verhoeven (eds.), *Deventer Boekenstad: Twaalf eeuwen boekcultuur aan de IJssel* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018), p. 73; Hellinga and Hellinga, *Printing Types* vol. I, pp. 110-111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Cuijpers, Teksten als koopwaar, p. 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 327.

Western Europe. <sup>69</sup> Deventer played an important role in the spread of this spiritual revival, especially as its founder, Geert Grote (1340-1384), used the city as a base from which to advance it. 70 Grote advocated a return to a simpler form of piety, emphasising personal devotion and charitable deeds over placid Mass attendance. 71 As a result, a strong emphasis was placed on education, allowing the faithful to better devise their own path to salvation by grasping the theological tenets set out by the Church. 72 This desire to educate manifested itself in various ways: during the decades following the rise of the Modern Devotion, many followers turned to the pen, disseminating their own theological reflections. Other endeavours included the institution of scriptural discussion groups (so-called collations), as well as the reproduction and distribution of considerable quantities of written materials.<sup>73</sup> As previously touched upon, the rise of this movement coincided with wider societal shifts of urbanisation and the professionalisation of trade, both of which contributed to an increase in literacy beyond the clergy and ruling classes. Meeting a growing local demand for education, Deventer's chapter school, originally reserved for clerical training, now began to provide instruction to the sons of city burghers. 74 By opening itself to secular students, the school would become one of the most prominent educational establishments in the Northern Netherlands, attracting applicants from far and wide. 75 As the success of the Latin school was closely tied to the city's early association with the Modern Devotion, its followers were actively involved in the educational and spiritual development of local students, albeit not in an official capacity. The so-called Brethren of the Common Life – lay followers of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Delaissé, *Dutch Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 8-9; Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, pp. 263, 307.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Mathilde van Dijk, '1350-1500: Nieuwe doelen en nieuwe doelgroepen', in Suzan Folkerts and Garrelt Verhoeven (eds.), Deventer Boekenstad: Twaalf eeuwen boekcultuur aan de IJssel (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018), pp. 37-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Hoven van Genderen, 'Toppunt', p. 168; Delaissé, *Dutch Manuscript Illumination*, p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Delaissé, *Dutch Manuscript Illumination*, p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> Nissen and Boer, 'Middle Ages', p. 126; Blockmans and Prevenier, *Promised Lands*, p. 226.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Suzan Folkerts, 'De Latijnse School', in Suzan Folkerts and Garrelt Verhoeven (eds.), *Deventer Boekenstad: Twaalf eeuwen boekcultuur aan de IJssel* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018), p. 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 312.

Modern Devotion organised into communal houses – provided boarding and offered tutoring and extracurricular discussion groups so as to enrich students' formal studies. <sup>76</sup> This crosspollination between the school and the Modern Devotion culminated in the appointment of early humanist Alexander Hegius (c.1433-1498) as headmaster in 1483. <sup>77</sup> Sympathetic to the ideals of the movement, Hegius championed reform, opening the door to new bodies of thought. <sup>78</sup> Within the school, this led to the integration of novel teaching methods and the application of new texts for students to work with. <sup>79</sup> As the introduction of moveable type had begun to make books more affordable, students were now able to own their copy of material taught at the school. <sup>80</sup> The Deventer printers Richard Pafraet and Jacob van Breda eagerly accommodated this increased demand, predominantly printing editions for use within the school, thereby securing their income. <sup>81</sup> The school nurtured its ties to both printers, as evident from editions containing commentaries by its instructors, most notably schoolmasters Johannis Synthen and Hegius himself. <sup>82</sup> These bonds between school and printers were easily upheld: Van Breda's workshop abutted the institution, and Pafraet provided lodgings for Hegius in his own house. <sup>83</sup>

The influence of the Modern Devotion can be further attested by the sober appearance of most of the printers' outputs. Incunabula from Deventer (especially those printed after Pafraet's first phase) can be perceived as relatively plain, containing few pictorial elements

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 319.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Ad Tervoort, "Pro inchoacione librarie." A Close Look at Two Late-Medieval Schoolmasters and Their Books', in Koen Goudriaan etc. (eds.), *Education and Learning in the Netherlands, 1400-1600. Essays in Honour of Hilde de Ridder-Symoens* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 150. Slechte noted that cross-pollination between humanism and the Modern Devotion resulted in the two movements being so intertwined within the Deventer Latin school as to be near-indistinguishable. See *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 314.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 317.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Slechte, *Geschiedenis van Deventer*, p. 272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Cuijpers, *Teksten als koopwaar*, p. 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> P. Franssen, 'Introduction', in Marieke van Delft and Clemens de Wolf (eds.), *Bibliopolis. History of the Printed Book in the Netherlands* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2003), p. 47.

<sup>82</sup> Tervoort, 'Late-Medieval Schoolmasters', p. 143; Heijting, 'Relationship', p. 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Jan Bedaux, '1500-1600: Van hoogtepunt tot neergang', in Suzan Folkerts and Garrelt Verhoeven (eds.), *Deventer Boekenstad: Twaalf eeuwen boekcultuur aan de IJssel* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018), p. 91; Hellinga-Querido and Hellinga, 'Richard Pafraet', p. 310.

such as woodcuts. <sup>84</sup> This sobriety had been present in manuscript production in the IJsselregion before the advent of printing, especially in books supplied by the Brethren of the
Common Life. <sup>85</sup> In line with their devotional practices, they distanced themselves from
splendour and materialism in producing their books, favouring austerity over opulence. <sup>86</sup> As
such, between the manuscript and printing traditions of Deventer, both of which coexisted
until well into the sixteenth century, it is possible to perceive a continuity in the simple and
subdued appearance of their respective outputs. <sup>87</sup> As Deventer and the surrounding IJsselregion represented principal markets for Van Breda and Pafraet, their adherence to the
aesthetic preferences of their target audience would have represented an economically sound
strategy. Likewise, as plain editions would have been more cost-effective to print, Deventer's
printers were able to reach higher levels of productivity than their counterparts in regions
favouring more abundant aesthetics. <sup>88</sup>

#### **Conclusion**

According to the Incunabula Short Title Catalogue, Deventer's overall output between the establishment of its first press in 1477 and the close of the century amounts to 621 distinct editions. Incunabula printed by Pafraet and Van Breda have been distributed across more than 35 different countries, and are now found in more than 500 libraries, archives, museums, and private collections the world over. Having considered the societal context of printing in Deventer during the final quarter of the fifteenth century, it is warranted to identify three causes underpinning its success: political stability, economic prosperity, and a favourable

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Webbink, 'Deventer', p. 112.

<sup>85</sup> Gumbert, Dutch and Their Books, p. 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Blockmans and Prevenier, *Promised Lands*, p. 227; Delaissé, *Dutch Manuscript Illumination*, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 304.

<sup>88</sup> Cuijpers, *Teksten als koopwaar*, p. 47.

cultural climate. Together, these combined elements offered an optimum environment for local printing businesses to emerge and thrive in.

Deventer existed along borders in more ways than one. Politically speaking, the city was situated on an intersection of various overland routes and the River IJssel, the latter of which constituted a physical border between the Sticht and the Duchy of Guelders. Likewise, being located in the Oversticht, Deventer abided along the margins of the bishop of Utrecht's authority, who was often unable to protect the city's interests to any great degree. Furthermore, Deventer and its environs might be considered liminal to the consolidating powers of the Burgundian hegemony, situated further south and west, as well as the more politically fragmented territories to the east. Deventer also operated along economic boundaries: located between the county of Holland and the German hinterlands – and situated along the fringes of the Hanse's sphere of influence – the city functioned as a trade hub for several distinct economic areas. Its position along these physical and intangible borders gave Deventer the autonomy to decide its own politico-economic path, allowing it to develop specific infrastructures to turn its liminal position to its advantage. As exchanges between the Netherlandish and German spheres had already provided scope for local cultural developments, the rise of the Modern Devotion and success of the Latin school allowed the city to develop into a cultural hub, wherein books and their printers played an integral role. As mentioned, early printers were most successful in towns that functioned as centres of trade and education. Even though Deventer would not formally host a university until several centuries later, it did develop all the infrastructure associated with university towns by virtue of its renowned Latin school. Pafraet and Van Breda's links to this establishment ensured them a steady income: not only was the growing presence of local educators and students able to justify a print run of several dozen copies, institutional links between the school and

other centres of learning were actively fostered across the wider European continent. <sup>89</sup> As the city's annual markets continued to attract long-distance traders, the printers' sales area further expanded. All of these factors combined with relative political stability and few demands for aesthetically intricate editions allowed Deventer's printers to reach near-unparalleled levels of productivity. Thus, during the later fifteenth century, Deventer provided highly favourable conditions for local printing businesses. Pafraet and Van Breda's choice to settle within a stone's throw of the city's most important centres of governance and education (i.e. town hall, Latin School, and St. Lebuinus church) reinforces the notion that these resident printers nurtured close ties with those institutions, allowing them to take full advantage of existing local infrastructures. <sup>90</sup>

The conditions underpinning Deventer's successful printing ventures would endure during the final quarter of the fifteenth century, after which it was economically overtaken by cities towards the south and west that were able to support trading throughout the year without relying on seasonal markets. <sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, the glowing words by the Rev. Molhuijsen hold true. Despite losing some of its lustre to Antwerpen from 1500, Deventer remained a highly productive centre of printing well into the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, it is the preceding period, during which printers first established their local presses, that continues to be characterised as the city's golden age. <sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Cuijpers, *Teksten als koopwaar*, p. 30.

<sup>90</sup> Webbink, 'Deventer', p. 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Slechte, Geschiedenis van Deventer, p. 327.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Dijk, 'Nieuwe doelen', p. 43.

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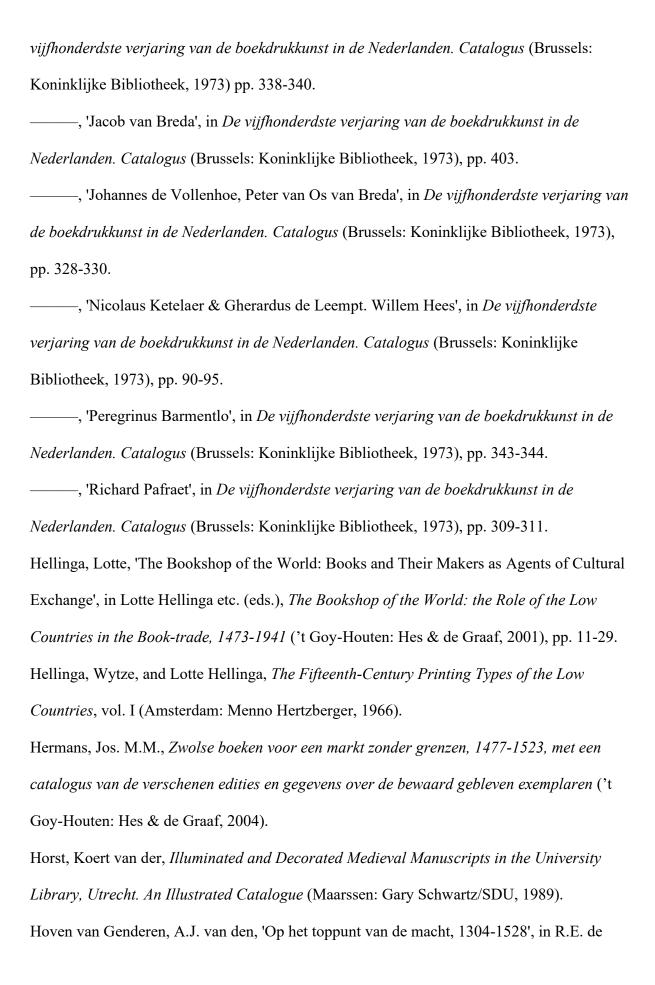
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