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## Introduction

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# Introduction

Anna Dlabáčová and Andrea van Leerdaam

Who read in the vernacular in the early age of print? Why did they do so? And how were reading practices and experiences shaped in the triangle between books, book producers and users? This volume focuses on vernacular reading at a time when the vernaculars steadily gained ground as languages of the new medium of the printed book. Authors, translators, editors, and printers across Europe endeavoured to cater to readers who preferred the vernacular over Latin, the language traditionally associated with the Church, scholarship, and science. While initially titles in Latin dominated, printer-publishers pioneered new markets already in the early decades after Gutenberg's invention of printing with moveable type.<sup>1</sup> Printed books in German started to appear in the 1450s and were commonly produced by the early 1460s.<sup>2</sup> The next decade saw the appearance of the first printed books in Italian (1471), Spanish (ca. 1472), Catalan (ca. 1474), French (ca. 1473–1477), Dutch (1477), and English (1477).<sup>3</sup> Other European vernaculars followed suit and readers could obtain printed books in most vernaculars by the early 1500s.<sup>4</sup> The development of print culture thus added new impulses to the dynamic relations between Latin and the vernaculars, as well as between vernaculars themselves. The increased mobility of texts and visual motifs between various vernaculars, in particular French, English, and Dutch, is a case in point.<sup>5</sup>

1 Barbier F., *Gutenberg's Europe. The Book and the Invention of Western Modernity* (Cambridge, UK – Malden, MA: 2016).

2 For example, by Albrecht Pfister in Bamberg, who also printed the earliest illustrated books in German. Häussermann S., *Die Bamberger Pfisterdrucke. Frühe Inkunabelillustration und Medienwandel* (Berlin: 2008).

3 Italian: several editions from 1471; Spanish: proceedings of the synod at Segovia dated after 10 June 1472; Catalan: *Obres o trobes en laors de la Verge Maria*, after 25 March 1474; French: several editions dated ca. 1473–1477 by Guillaume Le Roy in Lyon (on the possibility that William Caxton also printed French texts in the same period in the Low Countries, see the Afterword by John Thompson); Dutch: the so-called *Delft Bible* is the first dated edition (10 January 1477); English: several editions by William Caxton at Westminster. Details can be found in the Incunabula Short Title Catalogue, <https://data.cerl.org/istc> (select language, sort by year).

4 Portuguese: 1486–1493, first dated edition 1489; Czech: 1488; Danish and Swedish: 1495. See <https://data.cerl.org/istc>.

5 See the essays in this volume by Elisabeth de Bruijn, Alexa Sand, and Martha W. Driver.

The growing role of vernaculars in printing shops across Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth century warrants a dedicated study of vernacular books and their readers. This volume offers an exploration of approaches to study vernacular books and reading between ca. 1450 and 1600 by investigating the material book as an interface between book producers and users. The presentation of the text, its mise-en-page, the presence of paratexts, images and other features of book design reveal the strategies and assumptions of printers and their employees (as well as other book producers) as they strived to tailor their books to the needs of readers and cater to certain ways of reading.<sup>6</sup> Individual copies may contain traces left by book owners and users that can range from simple underlining to marginal notes and the addition of manuscript leaves. These traces serve as clues to understanding how readers interacted with the book and they document readers' responses to decisions made in the printing shop.<sup>7</sup> By focusing on material aspects of vernacular books and what they tell us about readers and reading, essays in this volume bring together questions on the production and consumption of vernacular books across Europe through a variety of approaches.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, by bringing contributions on different regions, languages, and book types into dialogue, the volume hopes to advance the comparative study of vernacular books in the early age of print. This was one of the main aims of the 2021 conference 'Vernacular Books and Reading Experiences in the Early Age of Print', organized by the authors of the present introduction, which intended to provide a platform for broader comparison of findings across multiple languages, genres, and areas in the early age of print.<sup>9</sup> In recent years, a wealth of case studies has suggested that developments and demands for books in vernacular languages varied between regions, languages, as well as book types.<sup>10</sup> To uncover larger patterns and acknowledge idiosyn-

6 See below, "Real and Imagined Readers".

7 These traces warrant careful and critical scrutiny as many books have been manipulated in later times (e.g. rebound, trimmed, dismembered). See n. 41 below for literature on users' traces.

8 The 2019 volume *Vernacular Manuscript Culture 1000–1500* edited by Erik Kwakkel teases out precisely such interconnections (between vernacular and materiality) with respect to manuscript culture: it explores vernacular traditions in the written culture of Europe from the eleventh century onward, with a strong focus on material features of vernacular manuscripts.

9 The conference was originally planned for August 2020 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic we decided to postpone the event for one year. Eventually, due to continuing restrictions, the conference was held online from 25 to 27 August 2021.

10 E.g. Bellingradt D. – Nelles P. – Salman J. (eds.), *Books in Motion in Early Modern Europe. Beyond Production, Circulation and Consumption* (Cham: 2017); Besamusca B. –

crasies across time and space, an international and interdisciplinary perspective is essential. The conference brought together scholars from the fields of literary studies, book history, art history, and history of knowledge working on a wide range of printed – as well as manuscript – materials that pertain to such different genres as religious, medical, magic, and chivalric literature. The contributions covered a variety of languages, including English, German, French, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, and Polish, which made for a stimulating exchange. As editors we have endeavoured to capture this cross-fertilization in the present volume.

Essays in this volume have been grouped together to highlight intersections between vernacularity and materiality from three perspectives: real and imagined readers, mobility of texts and images, and intermediality. These perspectives emerged from the conference as common threads for fruitful explorations across genres and languages. They are complementary and may be combined in various ways, whilst the choice of perspective might depend on the nature of the material under scrutiny and the research questions posed. Before further introducing the three perspectives, we will first discuss the chosen periodization and the key concepts underlying the central questions posed at the start of this introduction. Then, for each perspective we will outline its indebtedness to previous scholarship, the approaches developed in the individual contributions and the ways in which these essays expand, nuance, or problematize established insights.

## 1 Conceptual Considerations: Defining Vernacular Books and Readers

The period under consideration covers the first hundred and fifty years after the introduction of printing with moveable type, from ca. 1450 until 1600. During these formative years the printed book developed into a sustained, autonomous medium with its own design conventions – many of which are still recognizable in present-day books –, trade, channels of distribution and increasing specializations.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, manuscripts continued to be produced and

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Willaert F. – De Bruijn E. (eds.), *Early Printed Narrative Literature in Western Europe* (Berlin – Boston: 2019); Minuzzi S. (ed.), special issue “Printing Medical Knowledge: Vernacular Genres, Reception and Dissemination”, *Nuncius* 36.2 (2021); Oates R. – Purdy J.G. (eds.), *Communities of Print. Books and their Readers in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden – Boston: 2022).

11 On design conventions: Smyth A. – Duncan D. (eds.), *Book Parts* (Oxford: 2019); Reid P., *Reading by Design: The Visual Interfaces of the English Renaissance Book* (Toronto: 2019).

circulated. Particularly in the late fifteenth century manuscript and print took on an almost symbiotic relationship resulting in ‘hybrid’ books.<sup>12</sup> In the course of the sixteenth century manuscripts circulated on a smaller scale than printed books, often for specific purposes and specific people.<sup>13</sup> The period thus transcends traditional scholarly divisions between medieval and early modern, manuscript and print, and it spans important societal and religious developments that influenced how certain languages were valued in relation to others, including the rise of humanism and the Reformation.<sup>14</sup> The diversity of production techniques current in this period is reflected in the material studied in the contributions, which frequently look beyond the printed book and explore its relation to manuscripts, hybrids, and broadsides.

The use of the vernacular is of course not exclusive to the early printed book, nor is it new in this period. Dynamics between Latin and the vernaculars, as well between vernaculars themselves, had been at play already for hundreds of years when the new medium of print arose in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>15</sup> For most European vernaculars, a written culture had developed well before, especially since the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Vernacular texts were produced in areas of written culture as varied as jurisprudence, administration, literature, religion, and science.<sup>16</sup> Especially in the cities, a growing part of the population acquired pragmatic literacy, a level of literacy (most often in the vernacular) that was required for professions in trade and administration, for example.<sup>17</sup> This growing literacy also enabled people to read other texts, for

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On book trade: Hellinga L., *Incunabula in Transit: People and Trade* (Leiden – Boston: 2018); McLean M. – Barker S. (eds.), *International Exchange in the Early Modern Book World* (Leiden – Boston: 2016). On specialization: Kirwan R. – Mullins S. (eds.), *Specialist Markets in the Early Modern Book World* (Leiden – Boston: 2015).

12 See the essay by Walter S. Melion.

13 See the essay by Heather Bamford. McKitterick D., *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: 2003).

14 The role of humanism is discussed in the essay by Margriet Hoogvliet.

15 Bloemendal J. (ed.), *Bilingual Europe: Latin and Vernacular Cultures. Examples of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism c. 1300–1800* (Leiden – Boston: 2015).

16 Literature on this topic is vast; examples include Wogan-Browne J. – Watson N. et al. (eds.), *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280–1520* (Exeter: 1999); Corbellini S. – Hoogvliet M. – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Discovering the Riches of the Word: Religious Reading in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: 2015); Besamusca B. – Sonnemans G. (eds.), *De crumen diet volc niet eten en mochte. Nederlandse beschouwingen over vertalen tot 1550* (The Hague: 1999); Crossgrove W., “The Vernacularization of Science, Medicine, and Technology in Late Medieval Europe: Broadening Our Perspectives”, *Early Science and Medicine* 5.1 (2000) 47–63.

17 On this notion see in particular Mostert M. – Adamska A. (eds.), *Writing and the Administration of Medieval Towns* (Turnhout: 2014) and Parkes M.B., “The Literacy of the

example for devotion, moral education, entertainment, or practical instruction. Initially, then, printers/publishers targeted existing audiences for vernacular works, but the technique of print and the commercial strategies that book producers developed in relation with broader, societal developments fuelled a rapid expansion of vernacular readership, particularly during the sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup> In printed book production the vernaculars thus quickly gained ground as languages of arts and sciences, commerce, religion, and literary expression.

We should be mindful of the fact that the choice to publish in a vernacular language was always a deliberate one. Language is never neutral but conveys a message and has implications for ‘what can be expressed in which forms’.<sup>19</sup> Comparably, the choice to read in the vernacular was in many cases not simply determined by a lack of knowledge of Latin, but rather connected to a reader’s purposes, interests, preferences, habits, as well the specific context in which a book was to be read. All these factors determined which language was considered appropriate. As Peter Burke has argued, the ‘division of labour between Latin and vernacular’ was everchanging throughout the early modern period.<sup>20</sup> Since the medium is part of the message, as scholars of material culture and media history now commonly agree, the choice of the vernacular had consequences for and was closely intertwined with decisions regarding the presentation of a text, from the quality of paper to type face and format.<sup>21</sup> Features of individual copies, such as annotations, ownership marks, manipulations/customization, and any other traces of use can reveal readers’ incentives as to language choice. Thus, the considerations and motivations of book

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Laity”, in idem, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers. Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London – Rio Grande: 1991 (1973)) 275–297.

18 Koppitz H.-J. (ed.), “Verbreitung von Drucken in den Landessprachen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert”, thematic section in *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* 62 (1987) 15–108.

19 Winkler A. – Schaffner F. (eds.), *Neo-Latin and the Vernaculars: Bilingual Interactions in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden – Boston: 2019) 5–6 (citation: 6). See also Burke P., “The Social History of Language”, in idem (ed.), *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: 1993) 1–33.

20 Burke P., “Heu domine, adsunt Turcae: A Sketch for a History of Post-Medieval Latin”, in idem (ed.), *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: 1993) 56. See also Burke P., *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2004).

21 The idea that a book’s physical appearance affects its reception and interpretation by readers was foundationally advanced by Donald F. McKenzie and Roger Chartier. McKenzie D.F., *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, Panizzi Lectures 1985 (Cambridge: 1999 (1986)); Chartier R., “Communities of Readers”, in idem, *The Order of Books. Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: 1994) 1–24.

producers as well as readers to choose a particular language are reflected in the material characteristics of early printed books.

Two examples from the Low Countries and the German lands, some thirty years apart, serve to illustrate the deliberate concern with vernacular readers that becomes apparent in many early printed books produced throughout Europe.<sup>22</sup> In 1484, the prolific Netherlandish printer Gerard Leeu (active 1477–1492) who worked in Gouda and Antwerp published a Dutch translation of a work on the devotion to the Rosary [Fig. 0.1], which contains an explicit reflection on the merits of publishing religious works in the vernacular:

And because it is very meritorious to bring others to virtues and to serving God, therefore this present small book has been translated [or: has been given to translate] and transferred from Latin into correct Dutch so that laypeople who do not understand Latin – of whom there are many – may also be informed and perfectly instructed in the virtues and exceptional merits of the Rosary, and due to this instruction [they will be] attracted to the devotion and fervour of that same Rosary.<sup>23</sup>

The reflection on the use of Dutch suggests that the vernacular was considered appropriate to stimulate devotion, to ‘inform’ and ‘instruct’ a substantial group of ‘laypeople’ with a lack of knowledge of Latin but with a potential interest in reading or owning books.

22 Both examples stem from the respective research projects of the authors of the present Introduction: Anna Dlabáčová’s project “Leaving a Lasting Impression. The Impact of Incunabula on Late Medieval Spirituality, Religious Practice and Visual Culture in the Low Countries” (Veni grant, Dutch Research Council NWO, 2018–2022) and Andrea van Leerdam’s project “Woodcuts as Reading Guides: How Images Shaped Knowledge Transmission in Medical-Astrological Books in Dutch (1500–1550)” (PhDs in the Humanities grant, Dutch Research Council NWO, 2016–2022).

23 *Van Marien rosencransken* (Gouda, Gerard Leeu: 1484) fols. a2v–a3v: *Ende om dattet seer verdientlijc is ander menschen tot doechden ende tot godliken dienste te porren ende te trecken, so is dit tegenwoerdighe boecxken doen translateren ende oversetten uten Latyne in gueden Duytsche op dat die leke luden die gheen Latijn en verstaen – die men veel vint – oec mogen geïnformeert ende volmatelic gheleert worden in die doechden ende sonderlinghe verdienste des rosen crans, ende alsoe gheleert sijnde tot devocien ende innicheyt des selven rosen cransken ghetoghen worden.* See Resoort R., “De presentatie van drukwerk in de volkstaal in de Nederlanden tot 1501: waar zijn de auteurs, vertalers en opdrachtgevers? Een verkenning”, in Pleij H. – Reynaert J., *Geschreven en gedrukt: Boekproductie van handschrift naar druk in de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Moderne Tijd* (Ghent: 2004) 188–189, 192, 203 and Dlabáčová A., “Marian Devotions from a Printer’s Perspective. The Rosary, the Seven Sorrows, and Gerard Leeu (d. 1492)”, in Clifton J. – Haeger B. – Wise E. (eds.), *Marian Images in Context: Devotions, Doctrines, and Cults* (Leiden: forthcoming).



FIGURE 0.1 Title page of *Van Marien rosen cransken een suuerlic boexken*, with hand-colouring, pen flourishes and rubrication (Gouda, Gerard Leeu: 9 March 1484), 8°. Leiden, University Library, 1370 G 35  
IMAGE: LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



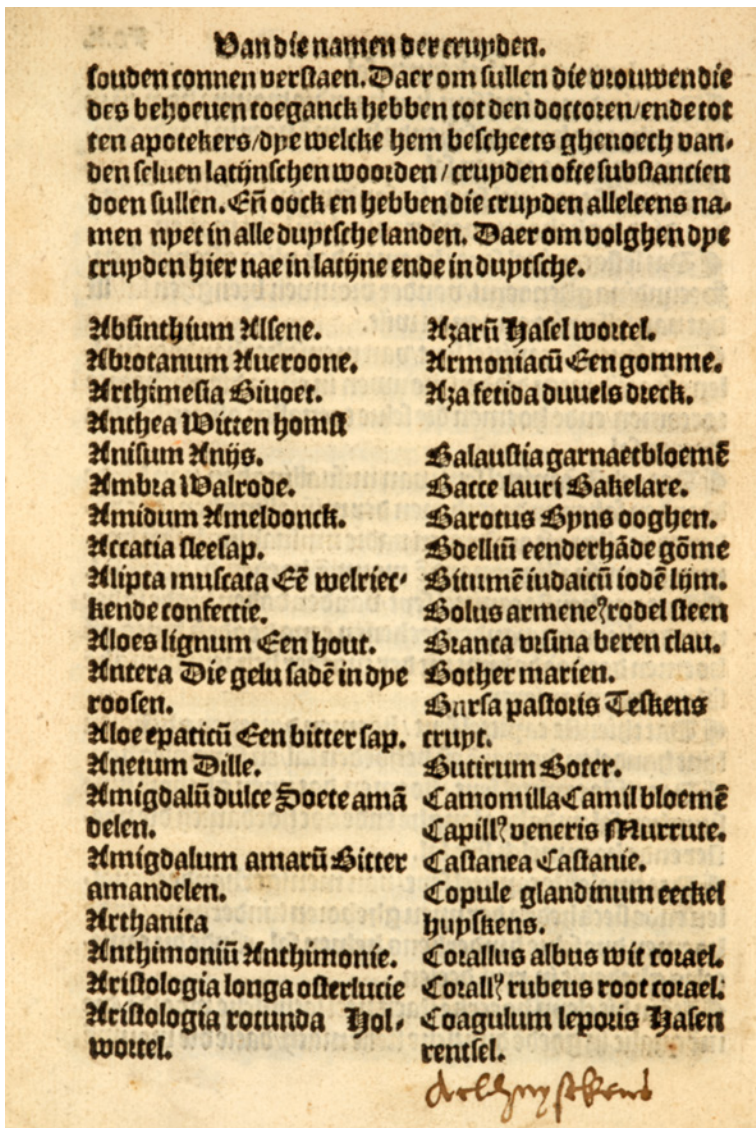


FIGURE 0.2 Index of herb names in Latin with Dutch translations, with an entry added by a reader. Rösslin Eucharius, *Den Roseghaert vanden beuruchten Urouwen* (Antwerp, Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten: 1529), 4<sup>o</sup>, fol. N4v. Allard Pierson – the Collections of the University of Amsterdam, OTM: Ned. Inc. 125

IMAGE: ALLARD PIERSON

Some thirty years later, in 1513, the German physician Eucharius Rösslin (ca. 1470–ca. 1526) explicitly envisioned his obstetrics manual *Der Swangern Frauen vnd hebammen Rosegarten* – the first such publication to gain wide popularity and impact – to be used by midwives and pregnant women alike, not all of whom were familiar with Latin.<sup>24</sup> Introducing a Latin-German glossary of specialist terms at the end of his work, Rösslin reflects on the difficulties of translating a text into the vernacular: there is no German equivalent for many of the Latin terms he uses, and the herbs that are required for medicinal recipes often have different names in different German regions [Fig. 0.2].<sup>25</sup> Rösslin, moreover, argues that women should have access to physicians and doctors who can explain the Latin terms to them. Similar to Leeu, Rösslin thus sees language in direct connection with accessibility of knowledge.

The matter of the plant names brings to the fore that even within a single vernacular, issues of comprehensibility could arise due to a large variation in dialects and locally used terms. As an umbrella term, ‘vernacular’ may falsely suggest more uniformity than actually existed: numerous different mother tongues were spoken across Europe, each of which developed in their own way and had their own cultural significance. Moreover, language borders were highly fluid. Rösslin’s remark points to the plurality and regional variation within vernaculars, which the printing press gradually helped to reduce by contributing to the development of uniform languages. Linguists have argued that the publications of Gerard Leeu, for example, contributed to the standardization of written Dutch.<sup>26</sup>

What binds all European vernacular languages, however, is that they were not the prerogative of a learned elite, but accessible to a wider audience of readers who read in the tongue commonly spoken in the region where they lived and worked. This does not mean, however, that ‘the vernacular’ should be considered in binary opposition to (Neo-)Latin. Recent studies have pointed

24 Rösslin Eucharius, *Der Swangern Frauen vnd hebammen Rosegarten* (Strasbourg, Martin Flach: 1513).

25 Rösslin, *Rosegarten*, fol. 01r: *Item hie in disem cleinen büchlin stand vil latynischer wörter, vnd darumb das man das selbig latyn nit zuo guottem ttsch bringe[n] mag, das es den frawen verstendig sy, Sollent sy zuoflucht habe[n] zuo den doctores vmd apoteckern, die werden inen gnuogsamen bescheid ber yedes geben. Darzuo so habe[n] die krüter nit einen name[n] in allen tütschen landen, als absinthium zuo latyn würt zuo Fryburg genannt wermuot, zuo Franckfurt wygen krut, zuo Trier alsen. Darum[b] so volget nach ein tafel darin man findet das latyn vnd tütsch etc.*

26 Marynissen A. – Bock D. – Terhalle A., “Op weg naar een geschreven eenheidstaal. De ont-dialectisering van de schrijftaal bij Gheraert Leeu, drukker in Gouda en Antwerpen”, *Taal en tongval* 73 (2001) 245–295. On the influence of the printing press on the development of French, see Chenoweth K., *The Prosthetic Tongue: Printing Technology and the Rise of the French Language* (Philadelphia: 2019).

to the interplay between these languages, and the literatures and cultures connected to them.<sup>27</sup> Even though the examples from Leeu and Rösslin cited above illustrate that contemporaries often thought about their ‘own language’, or ‘common language’ (i.e. what we call vernacular) in distinction from Latin, vernacular books should always be viewed in relation to their Latin counterparts, if only because most printers worked in both languages, many texts appeared in both languages and books often combine the two languages.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, languages such as Hebrew and Arabic also played a part in European written culture, in scholarly contexts as well as within Jewish and Muslim communities.<sup>29</sup>

Considerations regarding ‘vernacular readers’ are largely analogous to the reflections on vernacular books: they did not constitute a well-delineated group, fully distinct from ‘latinate readers’.<sup>30</sup> Vernacular readers, in the broad sense of any early modern person who ever leafed through a printed book in the vernacular, were a highly diffuse group in themselves, and a great many of them were by no means unlearned or illiterate. As was already mentioned above, reading in the vernacular could be a matter of preference or even of intellectual statement or religious ideology just as well as a matter of literacy.<sup>31</sup> Anja Wolkenhauer’s project “Versio Latina” draws attention to texts that were translated from vernacular into Latin rather than the other way round.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, readers could of course use more than a single vernacular. A telling example is the recent exploration of how different vernaculars – Dutch and French – and Latin intermingled in all kinds of ways in Flanders.<sup>33</sup> These cases

27 E.g. Deneire T.B. (ed.), *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer* (Leiden – Boston: 2014).

28 See the essays in this volume by Walter S. Melion who discusses a bilingual manuscript and by Suzan Folkerts and Martha W. Driver who both mention several bilingual schoolbooks.

29 See the essay by Heather Bamford.

30 See the essay by Tillmann Taape.

31 An example of the use of the vernacular as an intellectual statement is provided by the chambers of rhetoric (*rederijkerskamers*) in the Low Countries: Van Dixhoorn A. – Mareel S. – Ramakers B., “The Relevance of the Netherlandish Rhetoricians”, *Renaissance Studies* 32.1 (2018), special issue “The Knowledge Culture of the Netherlandish Rhetoricians”, 8–22. The essay by Folkerts discusses the Modern Devotion as a stimulant of religious reading in the vernacular.

32 The project “Versio Latina” is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and executed at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen; <https://uni-tuebingen.de/de/231683> (accessed 7 February 2023).

33 Explored in the project “Multilingual Dynamics of Medieval Flanders”, funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) and led by Bart Besamusca at Utrecht University (2018–2023); <https://multilingualdynamics.sites.uu.nl/> (accessed 7 February 2023).

demonstrate that there was not necessarily a hierarchy between languages – i.e. Latin was not necessarily valued higher than vernaculars –, but that they served different purposes.<sup>34</sup> Other studies also challenge notions of linguistic hierarchy, as they show that Latin was not exclusive to the intellectual and cultural elite: in religious and medical contexts, for example, a basic familiarity with Latin terms and phrases was likely present among a wide readership (e.g. prayers, jargon).<sup>35</sup> In other cases, issues of social status of languages were certainly at stake, and not only between vernacular and Latin but also among vernaculars. The French vernacular had a relatively high cultural status in literary circles of the Low Countries, for example, and rhetoricians in the Low Countries and France endeavoured to raise the status of the vernacular.<sup>36</sup> A focus on readers of vernacular books therefore does not mean we exclude Latin from consideration, but instead this focus allows us to explore the manifold intersections between different languages: to explore how book producers conceived of their target audiences and how these vernacular books were designed and read in practice.

Finally, reading and reading practices should be briefly clarified. Inspired by historical studies as well as theories of reading, we propose to approach reading in the early age of print as an embodied, material practice that is affected both by texts and their presentation.<sup>37</sup> This view underlies all contributions in the present volume. Language choice is an important factor that influenced the reading experience, along with book design, marketing strategies, reading purposes, world view and prior knowledge of readers, their use of other media, and the place or setting in which they read. Many different modes of reading are testified for the early period of print [Fig. 0.3]: browsing and searching,

34 See also Burke P., “Translations into Latin in Early Modern Europe”, in Burke P. – Po-chia Hsia R. (eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2007) 65–80.

35 On the use of Latin jargon and standard phrases in medical vernacular texts, see Pahta P., “Code-Switching in Early Modern English Medical Writing”, in Taavitsainen I. – Pahta P. (eds.), *Medical Writing in Early Modern English* (Cambridge New York: 2011) 115–134. On Latin and vernacular in prayer practice see e.g. Reinburg V., *French Books of Hours. Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400–1600* (Cambridge: 2012) 84–112; Pahta P. – Nurmi A., “Multilingual Discourse in the Domain of Religion in Medieval and Early Modern England: A Corpus Approach to Research on Historical Code-Switching”, in Schendl H. – Wright L. (eds.), *Code-Switching in Early English* (Berlin – Boston: 2011) 219–252.

36 See the essays by Margriet Hoogvliet and Elisabeth de Bruijn.

37 Littau K., *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies and Bibliomania* (Cambridge: 2006); Rautenberg U. – Schneider U. (eds.), *Lesen: Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch* (Berlin – Boston: 2015). On the influence of the spaces in which reading took place, see e.g. Flannery M. – Griffin C., *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England* (New York: 2016).





FIGURE 0.3 A man at a lectern with two open books. Woodcut with hand-colouring. Brunschwig Hieronymus, *Medicinarius: Das buch der Gesuntheit* (Strasbourg: Johann Grüninger, 1505), 2<sup>o</sup>, fol. A6r. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Rar. 2128

IMAGE: BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK

cover-to-cover, discontinuous, re-reading, looking at or even meditating on images, reading aloud or discussing passages in social settings, for example in class.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, not everyone who looked at a book was a reader, let alone an owner. To understand the diversified possibilities for engagement with vernacular books, and identify idiosyncrasies as well as patterns, it is important to study reading practices meticulously and to beware of hasty assumptions based on what we associate with 'reading' today.

## 2 Real and Imagined Readers

The diversity in forms of reading already becomes apparent in the first perspective on vernacularity and materiality in the early age of print presented here: the identification of intended and real readers. Imagined or intended and real readers were driving forces of interventions – and hence of innovations – in early printed books. On the production side, layouts, paratexts and other features of book design were tailored to intended readers and ways of reading; on the reception side, it was common for early modern readers to read with pen in hand or physically alter or manipulate books in other ways. Moreover, buyers or owners of books were in most cases responsible for decoration and binding, and in that sense had a decisive influence on the way a book looked and, in case an edition was bound together with other books, on the immediate contexts in which a text was read.<sup>39</sup>

Over the past decades, an increasing number of studies have pointed out how matters of layout, paratext, illustration, and language were tailored to appeal to or to persuade an intended readership.<sup>40</sup> To reconstruct reading

38 For the two latter examples see the essays by Melion and Driver.

39 On the combinations of different texts in a single volume see the essays by Hoogvliet and Lavéant and Knight J., *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia: 2013). The constitution and appearance of early modern Sammelbände is also investigated in the project "Sammelband 15–16" by Malcolm Walsby, Katell Lavéant, Ann-Marie Hansen and others; <https://sammelband.hypotheses.org/> (accessed 7 February 2023); Hansen's contribution to our conference discussed several examples from the collection of the Utrecht theologian Huybert van Buchell (1513–1599).

40 E.g. from Brill's Intersections series: Enenkel K.A.E. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Cognition and the Book: Typologies of Formal Organisation of Knowledge in the Printed Book of the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: 2005); Brusati C. – Enenkel K.A.E. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *The Authority of the Word. Reflecting on Image and Text in Northern Europe, 1400–1700* (Leiden: 2011); Corbellini – Hoogvliet – Ramakers, *Discovering the Riches*. See also Silva A., *The Brand of Print. Marketing Paratexts in the Early English Book Trade* (Leiden – Boston:

practices and identities of real readers, substantial scholarly attention is being paid to the traces that they left in printed books.<sup>41</sup> These traces range from marginal annotations to underlining of words, and from stains to wax drops. So far, this strand of research is still in the early stages of moving from the singularity of case studies towards more comparative, synthetic overviews. Moreover, many of these studies do not relate traces of actual readers to the intended readership as envisioned by the book producers, an issue that most contributions subsumed under the first perspective explicitly address. How can we move beyond individual case studies towards a more integral understanding of readers' traces? What can we deduce from such traces, especially when we know that so many copies have been lost, and particularly those that were used most heavily?<sup>42</sup>

We argue that traces left by readers are a useful source for understanding practices of reading, especially when research is conducted on a substantial corpus of extant copies. Moreover, identifying patterns across regions and languages will help us better understand developments in reading practices, especially during the age in which the printed book developed into a full-grown means of communication and articulation. The essays that focus on the ways in which readers engaged with the book in the early age of print – and the ways in which book producers presumed they would – can in this sense be seen as a step toward a more comparative approach.

In the opening essay, Heather Bamford unsettles common assumptions about several phenomena that are key to this volume. In the first place, her essay reminds us that in the 'early age of print' texts were not exclusively printed and the word was frequently still written by hand, particularly – although not

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2019); Smith H. – Wilson L. (eds.), *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: 2011); Mak B., *How the Page Matters* (Toronto: 2011); Slight W.W.E., *Managing Readers. Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* (Ann Arbor: 2001).

- 41 Examples are numerous. A small selection: Grafton A. – Jardine L., "Studied for Action: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy", *Past & Present* 129 (1990) 30–78; Jackson H.J., *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven: 2001); Myers R. – Harris M. – Mandelbrote G. (eds.), *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading* (New Castle (DE): 2005); Sherman W.H., *Used Books. Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: 2008); Blair A.M., "The Rise of Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe", *Intellectual History Review* 20.3 (2010) 303–316; Orgel S., *The Reader in the Book: A Study of Spaces and Traces* (Oxford: 2015); Leong E., "Read. Do. Observe. Take note!", *Centaurus* 60.1–2 (2018) 87–103; Margócsy D. – Somos M. – Joffe S.N., *The Fabrica of Andreas Vesalius. A Worldwide Descriptive Census, Ownership, and Annotations of the 1543 and 1555 Editions* (Leiden – Boston: 2018); Acheson K. (ed.), *Early Modern English Marginalia* (London: 2019).

- 42 Bruni F. – Pettegree A. (eds.), *Lost Books: Reconstructing the Print World of Pre-Industrial Europe* (Leiden – Boston: 2016).

exclusively – in cases where print was simply not an option. A case in point are the manuscripts at the centre of her contribution, that contain magic texts produced and used in the sixteenth century by Moriscos, muslims in Spain who were forced to convert to Christianity. By interrogating the nature and materiality of Morisco talisman recipes, Bamford also warns against a too limited view of reading practices and argues for a broader conceptualization of ‘reading’ and ‘manuscript culture’. The Morisco ‘readers’ did not necessarily *read* talisman recipes in the conventional sense that they derived meaning from the text’s semantics. Rather, as Bamford argues, talismans produced meaning through a combination of faith in their magic powers and mastery of rules and principles to perform magic. For example, some recipes indeed contain symbols and formulas that were purposely indecipherable, and certain texts were considered to exert magic powers simply by being present in a certain location: hidden inside a building or carried close to the human body. Bamford’s contribution further demonstrates that the linguistic situation in the era of the Spanish Inquisition was much more fraught than a dichotomy of Spanish and Latin: the magic texts she studies contain Aljamiado (Spanish vernacular in Arabic script), vernacular Arabic, and classical Arabic in quotations from the Qur’an.

In the next essay, Tillmann Taape confronts imagined readers with real readers of Hieronymus Brunschwig’s *Distillation Books* published in the early sixteenth century by the Strasbourg printer Johann Grüninger. Taape derives the imagined or intended audience that Brunschwig had in mind for his printed works from the author’s statements, the images and paratexts, as well as the historical intellectual context. Brunschwig describes his intended reader as the ‘common man’, an identification which, Taape argues, intentionally resonates with the figure of the ‘striped layman’ as depicted in the books’ woodcuts. This figure was a popular trope in the region around Strasbourg that represented a socially and intellectually ambitious middling man who combined limited learned knowledge with the ‘embodied skill’ of artisans. Taape shows that this half-Latinate, half-vernacular practitioner as the reader of Brunschwig’s books is reflected in the material traces left by real readers in extant copies. The annotators often reveal themselves to be ‘hybrid readers’ who used both Latin and the vernacular and who read Brunschwig’s *Distillation Books* in a discontinuous manner, looking for knowledge they needed at a particular moment or to fulfill a specific task. To facilitate this usage of the book, readers modified printed tools such as indices and tables of contents and added their own by hand. Imagined and real readers overlap, yet further complicate the category of ‘vernacular readers’ who, like the striped layman, in Taape’s words ‘inscribe themselves somewhere between lay and learned culture’.



Stefan Matter focuses on another edition that originated in the very same printing shop of Johann Grüninger in Strasbourg, i.e., the earliest edition of the *Hortulus animae* prayer book in German. In tandem with Taape's contribution, Matter's analysis demonstrates just how much pioneering work was involved in Grüninger's endeavours to attract new audiences for works that had never before been published in the vernacular. While the *Hortulus animae* would become the most successful printed prayer book in the German lands before the Reformation, Matter argues that the format of the very first vernacular edition, published in March 1501, can be viewed as something of 'a failed publishing experiment'. Grüninger did not simply translate the texts of the previous Latin editions, which were directed at a clerical audience, but selected texts that better suited the preferences of a German-speaking readership of laypeople. Furthermore, and unparalleled for this type of vernacular book, he spared no effort in adding different kinds of marginalia. Some of these refer to passages in the Bible, others are glosses that elucidate the text or point to the Latin source texts. A highly uncommon category are glosses that provide alternative translations of Latin terms from the source texts. While the references to the Bible were a frequent feature of scholarly and Humanist texts, including Grüninger's own edition of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, the glosses explicating the process of translation appear to be a feature entirely unique to the first German-language edition of the *Hortulus animae*. As Matter argues, this arrangement demanded a great deal of the printer as well as the reader. He tentatively suggests that the commercial failure may also have been due to Sebastian Brant's support of a rival edition that set the standard for subsequent vernacular editions.

As such, Grüninger's edition of the *Hortulus* can possibly be considered something of a hybrid, in between learned and lay reading culture, – in similar vein as the 'hybrid reader' proposed by Taape – a German text arranged and published in a complex scholarly format normally used for Latin works. Apparently, unlike in the case of Brunschwig's successful distillation manuals, the readership and reading practices Grüninger imagined when creating his *Hortulus* edition were not common enough to become a success.

Trial and error in publication strategies for devotional books also take centre stage in Suzan Folkerts' contribution. She looks at the strategies of the earliest printers in the city of Deventer – the top producer of printed books in the Low Countries until 1501 – when issuing vernacular devotional books and the ways in which readers responded to the finished product. Many books produced by the local printers Richard Pafraet and Jacob van Deventer were in Latin; only a small portion of their publisher's list was in the Dutch vernacular, of which the lion's share was made up of schoolbooks, many of them in Dutch and

Latin. In fact, Folkerts finds that only a small fraction of these printers' vernacular works consisted of devotional books. Nevertheless, these editions show that both Deventer printers were prepared to invest in features particular to this type of book: their use of woodcuts set within the text was for example restricted to devotional books. Unlike Johann Grüninger, then, these Deventer printers did not venture into experiment and innovation when publishing devotional works, but instead they relied on tested strategies for a genre that was outside their core business. Even though their production of devotional books in the vernacular was limited, owners' inscriptions suggest that these editions did contribute to making Biblical and devotional texts available to lay readers. Jacob van Deventer's edition of the *Epistles and Gospels* serves as a case study of how printers built upon the previous success of vernacular devotional texts: following the work of other printers, van Deventer included navigation tools and woodcuts in his editions that stimulated interaction with the text. Traces of colouring and inscriptions in extant copies testify to such reader interactions, some of which enabled intensified devotion while others were more concerned with the structure of the book.

Studying an entirely different genre, that of chronicles, Karolina Mroziewicz applies a similar approach that combines close analysis of design and paratext with a study of owners' traces in extant copies. Mroziewicz compares three subsequent editions of Marcin Bielski's world chronicle, the first chronicle printed in Polish, that appeared in the mid-sixteenth century (1551, 1554, 1564). In this case, the author played an active part in the publication process and was responsible for reworking the text and for paratextual elements that had implications for how these books were used. A striking change is that the woodcuts become increasingly refined in subsequent editions, which contrasts with the more commonly observed pattern of increasing crudeness in many early printed works, as woodcuts were copied repeatedly.<sup>43</sup> Although Bielski's chronicle was addressed to a broad vernacular audience, the actual readership consisted of the Polish nobility – to which the author himself belonged – who could afford a copy of such a voluminous book. Several of these readers kept the copy in family possession, which resulted in ongoing interactions with the book even until the nineteenth century. Mroziewicz's approach particularly demonstrates the importance of taking readers' engagement with images into consideration. Her analysis reveals that certain images, including portraits of the author, Luther, and popess Joan, were particularly subjected to readers' marks of criticism or approval. Readers used text passages as well as images to leave their confessionally and emotionally motivated responses.

43 For examples, see the section on "Mobility of Texts and Images".

As various essays in this section demonstrate, early printed books could provoke lively interactions with their readers well past the century in which they had appeared. This observation makes us aware that many notes, especially those that are notoriously difficult to date, such as underlining or other relatively simple marks, do not necessarily tell the story of a book's earliest readers but rather that of the later reception of a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century book. These stories of early modern reception could be long and vivid indeed.

### 3 Mobility of Texts and Images

Book historical studies into early print culture are still often conducted along national lines. Nevertheless, in recent years the insight has been established that printing was a fundamentally transnational enterprise, in which book producers were often highly aware of what colleagues and competitors elsewhere were up to.<sup>44</sup> They exchanged (loaned, sold, inherited) each other's material (typesets, woodcuts) and they copied from one another. The technology of print increased the transnational dissemination of texts and images among large groups of readers. Once published in print, texts as well as images tended to travel relatively quickly across Europe, and sometimes even beyond. These links have been studied for a long time from a predominantly philological and bibliographical perspective, to establish lines of transmission in order to date or attribute certain editions.<sup>45</sup> The fundamental mobility of texts and images, however, must also have impacted readers and their interpretations and associations.<sup>46</sup> For certain visual motifs, we even need to think in terms of a shared, pan-European visual culture across language boundaries. The essays by Alexa Sand and Martha Driver included in this section and discussed below provide telling examples.

44 E.g. Rospocher M. – Salman J.L. – Salmi H. (eds.), *Crossing Borders, Crossing Cultures: Popular Print in Europe (1450–1900)* (Munich – Vienna: 2019); Coldiron A.E.B., *Printers without Borders. Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: 2015) chapter 1: “‘Englishing’ Texts: Patterns of Early Modern Translation and Transmission”, 1–34.

45 E.g. Schramm A., *Der Bilderschmuck der Frühdrucke*, 23 vols. (Leipzig: 1920–1943); Fischel L., *Bilderfolgen im frühen Buchdruck: Studien zur Inkunabel-Illustration in Ulm und Strassburg* (Konstanz – Stuttgart: 1963); Hellinga W. – Hellinga L., *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries* (Amsterdam: 1966); Kok I., *Woodcuts in Incunabula Printed in the Low Countries*, 4 vols (Houten: 2013).

46 For woodcuts: Fumerton P. – Palmer M.E., “Lasting Impressions of the Common Woodcut”, in Richardson C. – Hamling T. – Gaimster D. (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London – New York: 2016) 383–400; Leerdam A. van, “Talking Heads. The Visual Rhetoric of Recurring Scholar Woodcuts in a Sixteenth-Century Handbook on Chiromancy”, *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse Boekgeschiedenis* 26 (2019) 11–29.

A growing number of studies is now devoted to such questions as: What adaptations did book producers in different regions make with regard to the text, images, format, and lay-out? How and why did publication and adaptation strategies differ between various vernaculars, and between vernacular and Latin? And what can these modifications tell us about (envisaged) changes in the readership of a book? What networks did printers maintain, how did they acquire (new) material and how did they decide what to select for publication? The essays that study the vernacular book in the early age of print from the angle of mobility develop approaches to answer these questions.

One effect of printers' exchange of woodcuts and their design(s) was that a particular type of image could become familiar among readers in various geographical regions who learnt to associate the iconography with a particular type of text and reading setting. Martha W. Driver traces the use of the 'schoolmaster image', deriving from Continental sources, in English vernacular works, especially those printed by Wynkyn de Worde. Showing a schoolmaster seated in his chair and surrounded by students, the image provides a flavour of actual practices in the late medieval classroom. Vernacular books in which the image was included were considered suitable for the instruction of younger readers, who constituted a substantial target audience in the market for vernacular books, as also became clear in Suzan Folkerts' contribution. Tracing the image's presence across titles allows Driver to not only shed light on practices of language education but also on some rather surprising choices of schoolbooks. Moreover, she is able to identify many business connections of Wynkyn de Worde in the Low Countries. Engaging in a long-running debate on the possible Dutch origins of Wynkyn de Worde, Driver points out the pitfalls of using woodcuts as evidence to determine the printer's origins.

Alexa Sand's essay further explores Wynkyn de Worde's innovative and clever re-use of images. She shows how readers' likely familiarity with a certain visual language made it possible for de Worde to introduce a ludic aspect and sense of humour to his edition of *The Art and Craft of Dying Well*. Sand argues that de Worde played a formative role in expanding the English audience of printed illustrated pastoral works. He developed the visual literacy of this audience through the re-use of the established Continental *ars moriendi* tradition and translated it into the 'idiom of the early English printed book'. As Sand points out, the *ars moriendi* can be considered a 'born visual' work. By changing the factotum text in the banderole of one of the *ars moriendi* images in his edition of *The Art and Craft of Dying Well*, de Worde gives a sarcastic twist to the speech of the depicted demon that would be appreciated all the more by an audience that recognised the *ars moriendi* setting.

In her essay, Elisabeth de Bruijn takes a quantitative as well as qualitative comparative approach to the international nature of the printing business.

Combining book history, literary analysis, and translation studies, she traces the dissemination of chivalric romances from a Western-European perspective. She does not confine her research to the printed book but also considers the manuscript transmission as well as the strategies of adaptation applied by the translators of these romances. Drawing on the notions of appropriation, foreignization, and domestication, her careful analysis of twelve romances that were printed in at least three of the four languages French, Dutch, English, and German reveals three major patterns of transmission. A first cluster of romances displays strong interconnections between editions in French, Dutch, and English: the printers seem to have kept a close eye on each other's output, and they made relatively few adaptations to the local market. While these romances evidently owe their international dissemination to the printing press, a second cluster reveals the undeniable and continued influence of manuscript culture: several romances did not need the press to circulate widely. The influence of manuscript transmission was particularly strong in German-language regions, where links with the nobility persisted even when the printed romances started to reach a wider readership. For a third cluster of romances, De Bruijn points out further differences between the transmission in German and in the other languages. Again, the relatively strong involvement of aristocratic book producers as well as readers in the German-speaking regions helps to explain why the German texts show a higher degree of local appropriation, whereas Dutch and English translations were often more literal and more indebted to French editions and therefore show a higher degree of foreignization.

#### 4 Intermediality

For a better understanding of vernacular reading practices in the early age of print we not only have to look beyond geographical and linguistic borders, but also beyond the printed book. Elisabeth Eisenstein's influential view of the printing press as a revolutionary 'agent of change' has been criticised – among many other reasons – for considering print in 'relative isolation' rather than in relation to other media.<sup>47</sup> A growing body of research and theorising now challenges the isolated approach of print by exploring the interplay between books and other media, including the visual arts, theatrical and festive

47 Briggs A. – Burke P., *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge: 2009) 19. Eisenstein E.L., *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 1979).

performances, music, religious rituals, and household objects. These studies build on the notion that communicative expressions through different media are not merely complementary, but that they may generate additional layers of meaning in some cases and frustrate meaning-making in others. The foundational notion of intermediality, and the critical apparatus to reflect on it, primarily derives from the field of (modern) media and communication studies and is now fruitfully being applied and adapted to the study of premodern media, even though the term 'media' itself did not obtain its current use (in the plural) until the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup> There is some overlap between 'intermediality' and 'multimodality': the latter emerged from linguistics (especially social semiotics) and considers specifically how different (graphic, aural, textual) modes interact in a single instance of communication to create additional meanings.<sup>49</sup>

Research into image-text relations was thriving already before the concepts of intermediality and multimodality took off in historical research. Various studies have explored the functions of images in vernacular books as mnemonic aids, stimulants of devotion, means of legitimisation, or as visual arguments in epistemological debates.<sup>50</sup> The accent has shifted from makers and

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- 48 Bellingradt D. – Rospocher M., "The Intermediality of Early Modern Communication. An Introduction", *Cheiron* 2 (2021), special issue, 5–29. On the meaning of the term 'media': Eliassen K.O., "Remarks on the Historicity of the Media Concept", in Nünning V. – Nünning A. – Neumann B. (eds.), *Cultural Ways of Worldmaking: Media and Narratives* (Berlin – New York: 2010) 124.
- 49 Key publications on present-day multimodality include Bateman J.A., *Multimodality and Genre: A Foundation for the Systematic Analysis of Multimodal Documents* (Basingstoke etc.: 2008); Jewitt C., *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* (London: 2009); Bateman J.A. – Wildfeuer J. – Hiippala T., *Multimodality: Foundations, Research and Analysis. A Problem-Oriented Introduction* (Berlin – Boston: 2017); Nørgaard N., *Multimodal Stylistics of the Novel: More Than Words* (London: 2018). Multimodality approaches of early modern sources: e.g. Gloning T., "Textkomposition und Multimodalität in Thurneysers Buch über die Erdgewächse (1578). Eine Erkundung", in Schuster B.-M. – Dogaru D. (eds.), *Wirksame Rede im Frühneuhochdeutschen. Syntaktische und stilistische Aspekte* (Hildesheim – Zurich: 2015) 177–211; Armstrong G., "Coding Continental: Information Design in Sixteenth-Century English Vernacular Manuals and Translations", *Renaissance Studies* 29 (2015) 78–102.
- 50 E.g. Luborsky R.S., "Connections and Disconnections between Images and Texts: The Case of Secular Tudor Book Illustration", *Word & Image* 3.1 (1987) 74–85; Orgel S., "Textual Icons: Reading Early Modern Illustrations", in Rhodes N. – Sawday J. (eds.), *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (London: 2000) 59–94; Chatelain J.-M. – Pinon L., "Genres et fonctions de l'illustration au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle", in Martin H.-J. (ed.), *La naissance du livre moderne. Mise en page et mise en texte du livre français (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Paris: 2000) 236–269; Ott N.H., "Word and Image as a Field of Research: Sound Methodologies or Just a Fashionable Trend? A Polemic from

intentions to readers/viewers and the effects of the interplay between texts and images. This shift is paired with more theoretical substantiation of the nature and communicative potential of textual and visual media, respectively, and of the complex acts of reading and viewing. Extensive attention is being paid to current as well as early modern conceptualizations of the sense of sight, of what it means to see, and to 'read' images.<sup>51</sup> In addition to images in a narrow sense, the effects of other visual elements on reading processes are increasingly scrutinized, including typography, layout, and 3D elements such as volvelles and flaps.<sup>52</sup> Some scholars argue for an even broader, multi-sensory approach of books: along with sight, reading experiences are equally shaped by sounds and smells in the reading environment, and by what it feels like to touch the book.<sup>53</sup>

The contributions in this volume focus on 'media' and therefore 'intermediarity' to emphasize that the interplay between different signs systems not only takes place within printed books but also between books and other media. Daniel Bellingradt and Massimo Rospocher have recently offered a systemic approach to assess early modern 'intermedia situations or processes' both from

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a European Perspective", in Starkey K. – Horst W. (eds.), *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages* (New York: 2015) 15–32; Meier C., "Typen der Text-Bild-Lektüre. Paratextuelle Introduction – Textgliederung – diskursive und repräsentierende Illustration – bildliche Kommentierung – diagrammatische Synthesen", in: Lutz E.C. – Backes M. – Matter S. (eds.), *Lesevorgänge. Prozesse des Erkennens in mittelalterlichen Texten, Bildern und Handschriften* (Zurich: 2010) 157–181; Dackerman S. (ed.), *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: 2011).

- 51 Reid, *Reading by Design*; De Hemptinne T. – Fraeters V. – Góngora M.E. (eds.), *Speaking to the Eye: Sight and Insight through Text and Image (150–1650)* (Turnhout: 2013); Melion W.S. – Palmer Wandel L. (eds.), *Early Modern Eyes* (Leiden: 2010); Clark S., *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: 2009); König A.-R., *Lesbarkeit als Leitprinzip der Buchtypographie. Eine Untersuchung zum Forschungsstand und zur historischen Entwicklung des Konzeptes "Lesbarkeit"*, dissertation Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nuremberg 2004, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn/resolver.pl?urn:nbn:de:hbv:29-opus4-58359> (accessed 7 February 2023); Kress G. – Van Leeuwen T., *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design* (London – New York: 2006 (1996)).
- 52 Münkner J., *Eingreifen und Begreifen. Handhabungen und Visualisierungen in Flugblättern der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: 2008); Mak, *How the Page Matters*; Carroll R. – Peikola M. – Salmi H. et al., "Pragmatics on the Page", *European Journal of English Studies* 17.1 (2013) 54–71; Karr Schmidt S.K., *Interactive and Sculptural Printmaking in the Renaissance* (Leiden – Boston: 2017). See also the essays on various book design features on the website *Architectures of the Book*, <https://drc.usask.ca/projects/archbook/index.php> (accessed 7 February 2023).
- 53 Raven J., "Sensing Books. Communication By More Than Sight and Sound", *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 2019, 7–15.

producers' and receivers' perspectives.<sup>54</sup> They propose 'to access intermedia situations or processes by firstly assessing the different media involved, secondly by analyzing the additional or new quality of the interaction or coexistence created, and thirdly by considering the temporal dimension: the special follow-up communications' dynamic of intermedia'.<sup>55</sup> This approach allows for analysis of a single object, such as an illustrated book in which 'intermedia processes' unfold, as well as of different objects in relation to each other. Both kinds of analysis are undertaken in the present volume.<sup>56</sup>

For the early age of print, an important category of intermedial interactions is that of printed books and manuscripts. The still dominant narrative of a 'transition' from an 'old' medium to a 'new' one is undermined and problematized in many recent studies that show that manuscript culture continued to thrive as it underwent influences from the new medium of print and its developing conventions.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, a growing number of studies examine the experimental, often hybrid formats that combined manuscript and print, text and image.<sup>58</sup> These mixed media products consisted, for example, of printed text with drawings or painted miniatures, or of handwritten text with printed images. A telling example can be found in the work of the already mentioned printer Gerard Leeu: the blank spaces in the 1479 edition of a Dutch adaptation of *De ludo scachorum* by Jacobus de Cessolis (ca. 1250–ca. 1322), a moralising treatise on the game of chess, gave buyers the possibility to have illustrations added by hand [Fig. 0.4].<sup>59</sup>

In scholarship, but especially in preserving institutions, a persistent divide continues to exist between manuscripts, printed books (typically collected by

54 Bellingradt and Rospoche, "The Intermediality".

55 Idem, 14.

56 See e.g. the essays by Sand, Hoogvliet, and Melion.

57 Daybell J. – Hinds P., *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: Texts and Social Practices, 1580–1730* (Houndmills etc.: 2010); McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript*.

58 Examples include Rudy K.M., *Image, Knife, and Gluepot: Early Assemblage in Manuscript and Print* (Cambridge: 2019); Hauwaerts E. – Wilde E. de – Vandamme L. (eds.), *Colard Mansion: Incunabula, Prints and Manuscripts in Medieval Bruges*, exh. cat., Groeningemuseum Bruges (Ghent: 2018); Hindman S., *Pen to Press – Paint to Print: Manuscript Illumination and Early Prints in the Age of Gutenberg* (Paris – Chicago: 2009); Weekes U., *Early Engravers and Their Public: The Master of the Berlin Passion and Manuscripts from Convents in the Rhine-Maas Region* (London: 2004). Dlabáčová A., "Compiled Compositions. The Kattendijke Chronicle (c. 1491–1493) and Late Medieval Book Design", in Melion W.S. – Fletcher C. (eds.), *Customized Books in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1700* (Leiden: forthcoming). At the University of Groningen, Anna de Bruyn is currently conducting PhD research on "The image between manuscript and print: re-reading the 'printing revolution'".

59 Cf. Kok I., *Woodcuts in Incunabula printed in the Low Countries*, vol. 1 (Houten: 2013) 150–151.





FIGURE 0.4 Coloured drawing at the start of chapter 4 on the King's advisors in *Dat Scaecspel* (Gouda, Gerard Leeu: 1479), f<sup>o</sup>. Manchester, John Rylands Library, 17262  
IMAGE: THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER LIBRARY

libraries), single-sheet prints (typically collected by museums), and ordonnances and similar ephemera (typically collected by archives). These divides interfere with the study of intermediality and its influence on reading practices. Books that consisted of manuscript leaves and printed gatherings or images have often been dismembered in the past to make them forcefully fit scholarly disciplines and institutional departments.<sup>60</sup> Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen have called the attention of book historians to printed ephemera kept in archives.<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Savage and Suzanne Karr Schmidt have been preparing the ground for a more integrated approach of printed images within and outside of books.<sup>62</sup> Such an integrated approach is all the more urgent as both types of prints were frequently produced by the same printers. The work of Peter Schmidt, Susan Dackermann, and especially David Areford has been foundational in showing how the reception of printed images can be studied through users' manipulations of individual copies, an approach that has become well-established for the study of books.<sup>63</sup>

The contributions in the present volume's section 'Intermediality' shed light on intermedial dynamics both within books and between books and other media, including manuscripts and broadsides.

Questions about readership and modes of reading are notoriously difficult to answer for the largely vernacular genre of joyful books, as Katell Lavéant discusses in her contribution. These works with comic, parodic or other

60 Rudy, *Image, Knife, and Gluepot* 3.

61 Pettegree A. – Weduwen A. der, "Forms, Handbills and Affixed Posters", *Quaerendo* 50.1–2 (2020) 15–40; Pettegree A. (ed.), *Broadsheets. Single-sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print* (Leiden – Boston: 2017).

62 Savage E., *Early Colour Printing: German Renaissance Woodcuts at the British Museum* (London: 2021); Savage E. – Stijnman A., *Printing Colour 1400–1700: History, Techniques, Functions and Receptions* (Leiden – Boston: 2015); Karr Schmidt, *Interactive and Sculptural Printmaking*; idem, *Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life* (Chicago: 2011). Grössinger C., *Humour and Folly in Secular and Profane Prints of Northern Europe, 1430–1540* (London: 2002) discusses motifs that were widespread in prints as well as other (visual) media.

63 Areford D.S., *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe* (Farnham: 2010); Dackerman S., *Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color in Northern Renaissance & Baroque Engravings, Etchings & Woodcuts* (Baltimore – University Park: 2002), Schmidt P., "Beschriebene Bilder. Benutzernotizen als Zeugnisse frommer Bildpraxis im späten Mittelalter", in Schreiner K. (ed.), *Frömmigkeit im Mittelalter: Politisch-soziale Kontexte, visuelle Praxis, körperliche Ausdrucksformen* (Munich: 2002), 347–384; Schmidt P., "Beschrieben, bemalt, zerschnitten: Tegernseer Mönche interpretieren einen Holzschnitt", in Eisermann F. – Griesse S. et al. (eds.), *Einblattdrucke des 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhunderts: Probleme, Perspektiven, Fallstudien* (Berlin – Boston 2011) 245–276. In the present volume, see the essay by Mroziewicz.

entertaining subject matter survive in few copies and hardly contain any paratexts and traces of use. Lavéant tackles these issues by bringing together material bibliography, performance studies, and intermediality theory in her approach of the French tale of the monsters Bigorne and Chicface. These two creatures feed, respectively, on obedient husbands (of which there are many, as the story jokes) and devoted wives (of which there are few). The monsters' appearance in divergent formats, including manuscripts, broadsides, booklets, and even mural paintings, illustrates their popularity as well as the ease with which such popular stories transcended media boundaries. Even though few copies of the earliest transmission in print are extant – a broadside published in Paris toward the end of the fifteenth century and booklets published in Lyon in the 1530s – the broadside and booklet formats already suggest divergent modes of reading. In the later dissemination in broadsides – that appeared in French, German, English as well as Dutch – the images become increasingly large and more dominant, which demonstrates an increased pictorial approach to this tale. Lavéant's careful analysis of the contexts in which the copies have come down to us and in which they circulated shows a surprisingly broad readership that included the higher echelons of French society. The "intermedial transposition" of the printed material to murals in two castles of the French social elite facilitated an interactive, communal, and performative mode of reading that was actually very similar to the type of reading facilitated by broadsheets. Lavéant thus shows how another medium can be used to uncover settings and modes of reading of vernacular texts of which few printed copies survive.

In the next essay, Margriet Hoogvliet also investigates the long-term transmission, in manuscript and print, of a single work, in this case the religious-moralising *Danse aux aveugles* by Pierre Michault. The concepts of the 'implied reader' and of the 'ideal reading practice' are central to Hoogvliet's analysis that considers text, paratext, illustrations, and other aspects of materiality. Based on all these features together, Hoogvliet proposes that the implied reader is one who understands Michault's allegorical dream narrative 'as a lesson in medieval humanist and Christian Neo-Stoic moral values'. She argues that the lively allegorical images of the 'three horrible dances' in the first part of the book served as reminders of – or invitations to search for – the 'refined' moral lessons in the second part of the book. This latter part, though usually unillustrated, contains the book's most important message as it teaches readers how to resist temptations.

To support this reconstruction of the reading experience, Hoogvliet points to two influential contemporary examples where ekphrastic allegorical visualisations served to trigger moralising interpretations: Petrarch's *Trionfi* and

Alciato's *Emblemata*. The ideal reading practice for the second and most important part of the *Danse aux aveugles*, as Hoogvliet goes on to show, entailed a performative setting to which the images of the protagonists Acteur and Entendement in the first part already point. The second part's format of a didactic teacher-pupil dialogue suggests an ideal reading practice similar to the so-called *tafelspelen* or table plays that featured personifications and were performed in an informal, semi-theatrical setting (often during banquets) by companies of rhetoricians in the Low Countries. The wide readership of Michault's work that can be deduced from the 'affordable quality and the number of early printed editions' was thus presented with a variety of modes of reading in a single book.

Walter S. Melion's concluding essay likewise focuses on intersections of image and text and of manuscript and print and, moreover, of vernacular and Latin. In this case, all of these intersections converge in a volume that can be considered a mixed media product par excellence. While many contributions in this volume recognize the continued importance of manuscript culture, Melion offers an extensive close reading of the various kinds of interplay between hand-written text and printed images (a series of twelve engravings as well as two woodcuts) in a single manuscript known as the *Groenendaal Passion* (New York, Metropolitan Museum Album 2003.476). The makers of this prayer book – members of the community of Augustinian Canons at Groenendaal near Brussels – brought together imprints of the *Grosse Passion* by Israhel van Meckenem with an extended version of a Middle Dutch recension of Heinrich Suso's *Hondert articulen der passien Iesu Christi* that incorporates excerpts from various other devotional texts. Marginal glosses in Latin taken from Ludolphus of Saxony's *Vita Christi* offer the reader condensed summaries that are in line with the Middle Dutch text. A third sequence of texts, again in Latin, can be found on the versos of the engravings. These present the reader with an 'alternative register' to meditate Christ's death: while the corporeal language of the Middle Dutch texts expands on Christ's suffering, the Latin texts emphasize salvation and Christ's divinity. The different foci of the texts and the mental images they evoke influenced the reader-viewer's perception of the pictorial images and their role in meditative practices. Melion's meticulous in-tandem reading of text and image as well as his historical contextualization of reading practices at Groenendaal uncovers the role (or indeed roles, dependent on the language(s) in which a reader read) this prayerbook played in the meditation and spiritual growth of the canons.

The three intersecting perspectives presented here provide a structure for exploring the identities and interests of those who engaged with early printed books in the vernacular as consumers, as well as those involved in producing

and selling these books. The afterword by John J. Thompson will turn to the beginnings of printing in English to comment on the yields of the essays. His analysis of William Caxton's commercial insight and strategies shows how the three perspectives that group the essays in this volume naturally cross-fertilize to reveal the profoundly transnational nature of vernacular printed books.

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