

Vernacular Prayer Book, including WILLEM JORDAENS, *Hundred Articles on the Passion*, in a Dutch translation; a life of Christ, the book of Wisdom (excerpt), and numerous prayers In Dutch, manuscript on parchment

Northern Netherlands (probably province of South Holland or Utrecht), c. 1460-1480

ii + 219 + ii folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil on rectos in the upper right corner, complete, mostly in quires of eight leaves (collation i–xiii^s [ff. 1–104] xiv^s [lacking one leaf before f. 105, cancelled with no loss of text, ff. 105–111] xv^s [ff. 112–119] xvi¹⁰ [ff. 120–129] xvii–xxvi^s [ff. 130–209] xxvii¹⁰ [ff. 210–219]), no catchwords or signatures present, ruled in pale brown ink, no prickings (justification 96 x 71 mm.), written in a littera hybrida by one hand 20–22 long lines, FOUR ILLUMINATED INITIALS, 7- to 5-lines, blue on gold grounds with red pen-flourishes (ff. 4, 16, 39v, 47), two 8- to 7-line decorated initials with red pen-flourishes (ff. 55, 86v), SIX partial BORDERS accompany illuminated and these two decorated initials, one 10-line blue initial with red pen-flourishes and gold dots (f. 3), one 9-line red-and-blue initial with extensive red and blue pen-flourishes (f. 130), one 7-line red-and-blue initial with extensive red pen-flourishes (f. 165), four 6-line red, blue or red-and-blue initials with red and blue pen-flourishes (ff. 6v, 80, 173, 189v), thirteen 5- to 4-line blue (once red-and-blue) initials with red pen-flourishes (ff. 35v, 56, 73, 93v, 106v, 116, 118, 179v, 194, 199, 202v, 206v, 208v), several 3-line blue initials (or I's in the margin) with red pen-flourishes, one 2-line blue initial with minor red pen-flourishes (f. 84v), many 2- to 1-line red and blue initials without pen-flourishes, paragraph signs in red and blue, majuscules in text stroked in red, rubrics in red, the pen-flourishes incorporate representations of a goat-like animal wearing a cape teaching two young animals to read (f. 130), a full-length Virgin and Child (f. 165), the Lamb of God with a crozier (f. 189v), a lion and two dragons (f. 173), birds (ff. 3, 130, 165, 173) and small men's heads (ff. 31v, 116, 189v, 199, 204v), the painted border decoration includes small peacocks (ff. 16, 47, 55, 86v), traces of glue where tabs were formerly attached ff. 3, 16, 98, 101, 130 and 204, in very good condition, unobtrusive water stains on the flyleaves in the front. Simple seventeenth-century binding of vellum over pasteboard blind-tooled (filets, lozenges), paper flyleaves and pastedowns, very good condition apart from soiling, front and back. Dimensions 146 x 106 mm.

A carefully written and corrected prayer book in Dutch, this lengthy collection of devotions in the vernacular was copied for a woman in a region where the influence of the *Devotio Moderna* was strong. In excellent condition, this is a small gem of a book; the illuminated initials and partial borders are attractive, but in this case are outshone by the outstanding penwork initials and borders, redolent of the medieval taste for the fanciful (a lion, dragons, a goat teaching kids to read), and the religious.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in the Northern Netherlands, most likely in the county of Holland or possibly Utrecht, c. 1460-1480, as suggested by evidence of the language and decoration. The dialect suggests an origin from the county of Holland, and the pen-flourishes confirm this, since they incorporate motifs which show some features characteristic for South Holland. Apparently the manuscript was made for a woman, given the feminine form "sondersche" (f. 172v) in a prayer. It seems most likely that this original owner was a member of a religious community, but the general nature of these prayers does not allow us refine this further and identify which Order.

2. Owned by the American banker, philanthropist and book collector Joseph William Drexel (1833–1888).
3. In 1889 presented by him to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accession no. 89.2.2165 (a ticket, a stamp and twice a penciled accession number on the front pastedown, f. 1r, and ff. 1v and 213r respectively). Deaccessioned in 2015 (“WITHDRAWN” stamped over the ticket on the front pastedown).

TEXT

ff. 2v-55, *Vander toecoemst ons heren Ende vander begeerten der ynniger sielen tot gode*, incipit, “Vergave god dattu den hemel scoerste ende neder quaemste Vergave god dattu den hemel mijns herten scoerde ende neder quaemste ende mijn herte mit dijnre begeerten also bereytsste dattu midden daer in quaemste ende ewelic daer in bleveste ... Welker mitten vader ende mitten heiligen geest een moet sijn alle eer ende glorie danberlic lof ende gebot in ongeyendere ewicheit der ewicheiden AMEN”;

Abbreviated narrative of the life of Christ, concluding with Pentecost, with some prayers.

ff. 55-72v, *Hier beginnen die hondert articulen vander passien ons heren Ihesu*, incipit, “O wie geheuchnisse der mynliker passien ons heren Ihesu Christe nae sinen vermoegen begeert te doen ende sijnre menichvoudiger pinen mit weder geven der danberheit antwoerden die mach dese hondert articulen der gedenckenisse sijnre bitterre passien mit honder veersen of gebeden die hier na volgen dagelix lessen ... ende als een opgaende roede des roecs van duerbaren welrukende crude wye roecs ende merre ende dat di goedertieren Ihesu genuechlic si dat welruken haerre ynnicheit ende haers goddienstigen mededogens Amen”;

Willem Jordaens (c. 1321–1372), *Hundred Articles on the Passion*, Dutch translation of Jordaens’s Latin version of Henry Suso.

ff. 72v-79, *Hier beginne suverlike gebeden die sancte Bernaerdus ghemaket hevet mede te bescreyen die gecruuste leden ons heren Ihesu Christi daer vele oflaets toe is*, incipit, “Ghegruet sijstu mijn salicheit o du lieve here Ihesu Christe Wes gegruet ende wilt mi bequaem maken te beden tot dinen heiligen cruce ... lieve h[er]e ic bidde toen mi dan di selven in dinen cruce Die leveste mitten vader ende mitten heiligen geest een waerachtich god ewelic Amen”;

Prayers to the limbs of Christ, attributed to St. Bernard.

f. 79rv, *Een gebet van onser liever vrouwen Marien*, incipit, “Die moeder gods vol van rouwen stont wenende onder den cruce dae[r] haer lieve kijnt aen henc ... O Christe wanneer ic hier uut sel gaen sie doch mi overmits dijnre moeder comen totten palme der verwinninge Wanneer mijn lichaam sterven sel so doet dat mijn siele gegeven werde die glorie des paradijns A[men]”;

Prayer to the Virgin.

ff. 80-86, *Hier begi[n]nen die pater nosteren daer sonderlinge gracie toe is diese ynnichlic leest Pater noster per qui*, incipit, “Mijn siele benedie den here in allen steden sijnre moegentheit ... Die daer levet ende regniert mitten vader ende mitten heiligen geest in ewicheit Amen”;

Pater Nosters, concluded with three prayers.

ff. 86-91v, *Hier begint die passie ons heren als orilogius*, incipit, "Voer den fees[t]dach van paesdach doe dat les[te] avontmael gedaen was ende die tijt gecomen was dat ic overliden soude van deser werlt totten vader ... Aldus wert dat leven der werlt ghedodet ende hevet mit sinen duerbaren bloede dat menscelike geslachte verlost ende die vlekken vanden ouden sonden hevet hi mit sinen bloede of gedwoghen";

Passion of Christ.

ff. 91v-93v, *Een Capittel uutter wijsheit boeck*, incipit, "O mijn siele werde ontwake ende stant op uutten gestubbe ende besich ernstelic desen man diet billix weerdich is datmen sijnre gedenct ... opdat hi dijn toerne van ons soude weren ende doen ons mit hem in hemelscen dingen sitten Amen";

Excerpt from the book of Wisdom.

ff. 93v-98, *Vander passien ons heren*, incipit, "Almachtige scepper alre dingen goedertieren verlosser alre menscen O Ihesu enige soen des vaderliken herten een hope ende salicheit der verlorenre werlt ... En laet mi niet overmits enige aenstotinge der becominge ofgetogen werden van dat ommehelsen dijnre mynnen Mer regier nu nae dinen wille op dat ic wanderen moet doe di ende comen mach totti ende rusten in di Amen";

On the Passion of Christ.

ff. 98-100v, *Een gebet vanden leven ende passie ons heren Ihesu Christi*, incipit, "O vader der ontfermherticheit ende god alles troestes Sich neder vanden troen dijnre hoger glorien ... O drievoudich weerdich aentebeden verhoert ons Ende brenge ons in dat licht daer du selver in woenste Amen";

Prayer on the life and Passion of Christ.

ff. 100v-103, *Een gebet tot hemelscen vader*, incipit, "Ic roepe totti o mijn god ic roepe totti want du biste alle den genen bi die di inder waerheit aenroepen ... Overmits minen verlosser Ihesum Christum die mitten vader ende mitten heiligen geest levet ende regniert almachtich god ewelic sonder eynde Amen";

Prayer to God the Father.

ff. 103-106, *Een scoen gebet tot onsen here om vergiffnisse der sonden te vercrigen*, incipit, "O hemelsce coninc goedertieren here Ihesu Christe ontfermhertige gods soen gi sp[r]eket inden ewangelio ... Dat moet mi verlenen die godlike moegentheit des vaders die onbegripelicheit wijsheit des soens ende die onmetelike goedertierenheit des heiligen geestes Amen";

Prayer for Absolution.

ff. 106v-110, *Een gebet van der lijdsamheit*, incipit, "O scone spiegel ende levende exempel alre duechden here Ihesu Christe ... ende te bescouwen mit allen heiligen die hier om uwen wille geleden hebben te bescouwen die clærheit uwes godliken aensichtes altoes ende sonder eynde Amen";

Prayer on meekness.

ff. 110-115v, *Dit sijn sonderlinge gebeden vanden wonden ons heren Ihesu Cristi*, incipit: "Dese nagescreve nutte gebede selstu eyscen uutten wonden ons heren Ihesu Christi want hi hevetse gelovet te geven alle den genen die se mit groter begeerten in oetmoedicheit eysce[n]de sijn ... Doe [read: Soe] dit ghebet mit meerre minnen ende aendachten gheschiet totten wonden ons heren Ihesu Christi soe men meer gaven daer uut ontfaet. Ist enen mensche ten eersten onsmakelic soe hi hem langer daer in oefent soe het hem smakeliker wert Amen";

Prayers on the Wounds of Christ.

ff. 116-129v, *Hier beghint een suverlic gebet vanden leven ende passien ons heren Ihesu Christi dat sancte Ambrosius ghemaket heeft*, incipit, "Here Ihesu Christi des levendighen gods soen scepper ende verlosser des menscheliken gheslaches di bewisen wi onghemeten dancaerheit ... Want dusent iaer in dese tijt is minre dan enen dach bider ewicheit te gheliken Laet ons gheerne al onse leven dat nauwe een ure en is Voer gode vrolic liden ende hem minnen ende dienen";

Prayer on the Life and Passion of Christ, attributed to St. Ambrose.

ff. 129v-165, *Hier beghint een suverlic ghebet vanden weerden leven onser liever vrouwen ende haers lieven soens gbedeylt doer die weke des manendaghes Ave Maria gratia plena*, [introduction], incipit, "Ic bughe mijn knyen voer die weerde maghet Maria op dat si ons gheve vander volheit haerre graciën cracht te weder staen alle sonden inden ywendighen mensche ende ynnicheit des herten te volbrenghe dit gebet Ave Maria gracia"; f. 130, incipit, "Weest ghegruet gloriose maget ende moeder gods Maria Ic vermaen u alle die blijscap ende alle die droefheit die ghi op eertrijcke ye hadde ... Dat ghi mi bedecken wilt onder dinen mantel voer die bose geesten in die ure mijne doot ende brenghe ons tot die blijscappen des hemels Amen";

Prayer to the Virgin and Christ, for the days of the week.

ff. 165-172v, *Hier beghint een suverlic cranskijn van onser liever vrouwen*, incipit, "Maria die gloriose maget ende moeder ons heren Ihesu Christi ghebornen vanden gheslachte Yuda Ende vanden conincliken gheslachte Davids ... Ende vercrighe mi arme sondersche ghenade ende een goet eynde Ende nae desen leven die ewige vrouden Amen";

Prayer ("cranskijn") to the Virgin.

ff. 172v-179v, *Hier begint een suverlic cranskijn van onser liever vrouwen totten heilighen sacrament Pater noster*, incipit, "God gruet di Maria een scachtraechster der heiligher kerken begave mi huden mit dier gaven die du ontfenghete ... Op dat ic mijnen scepper ende verlosser mit allen heilighen moeghen bewisen weerdighe dancaerheit sonder eynde Amen";

Prayer ("cranskijn") to the Virgin.

ff. 179v-189v, *Hier begint een suverlic cranskijn van onser vrouwen*, incipit, "Weest gegruet Maria gloriose moeder des almachtighen gods weerdighe coninginne der engelen goedertieren ontfermster der onsaligher menschen ... Ende al dat lof dat ye heilighe van dijnre weerdicheit ghedencken of ghesprecken conde dat hondert dusentwerf ghemenichvoudicht mit enen bondekijn van roeden roesen ende witten lelyen ende fyolen te samen gheknoft sende ic u te love O hemelsche coninginne bidt voer ons den here Amen";

Prayer ("cranskijn") to the Virgin.

ff. 189v-199v, *Hier beghint een suverlic ghebet van onser vrouwen seven psalm*, incipit, "O vrouwe Maria almachtich inder verbloghenheit gods en verhenghet mi niet ewelic verdoemt te werden noch in sinen toerne inden vegevuier ... Mit u o goedertieren bermhertighe ioncfrouwe ende moeder Maria mitten heilighen ende uutvercoren gods ewelic sonder eynde Amen";

Seven Psalms of the Virgin, followed by six prayers on those psalms.

ff. 199v-202v, *Een ghebet van onser liever vrouwen daer Ynnocencius C [= 100] iaer oflaets toe gegeven beft*, incipit, "O gloriose vrouwe ende alre suetste maghet heilighe Maria moeder gods Vol alre goddiensticheit dochter des oversten conincs ... O goedertieren verhoerster ontfanghe ende verhoert ghenaedelic dit ghebet Ende gheweerdighet mi te gheven overmits uwer verdienten ewich leven Amen";

Prayer to the Virgin, with indulgence given by Pope Innocent.

ff. 202v-204v, *Een schoen gebet van onser vrouwen*, incipit, "O hoghe weerde lieflike coninginne des hemelschen throens in di begeren alle heilighen te scouwen ... Ende alle dat inder eerden is moet di loven ende benedien ende moeten dat vervullen dat aen ons gebreket inder ewicheit Amen";

Prayer to the Virgin.

ff. 204v-206, *Een suverlic gebet van onser liever vrouwen herte dat Sunte Bernaerdus ghemaket bevet*, incipit, "Ic spreke tot dijnre herten ende aenbede dat als een heilich tempel gods ... Die maket groet alle zielen ende loven di o moeder sueticheit ende prieset die salicheit dijns herten daer ons alle salicheit uut vloeyt Amen";

Prayer to the Heart of the Virgin, attributed to St. Bernard.

ff. 206-208v, *Dit ghebet sende die paues van Roemen die coninginne van Orienten ende gaf daer toe dusent iaer oflaets alle den ghenen diet lesen ende inden staet der gracien sijn*, incipit, "O maghet der maechden ende vrouwe der vrouwen O coninginne der engelen een hope alre hopen Salve ende ghesont makersche alre bedroefder ... ende neemt mijn ziele in haren lesten uutganc ende voertse mit u in dat hemelsche palaes voer dat aenschijn der heiligher drienvoudicheit daer si gode ghebruken mach ende smaken Dat gonne ons die vader die soen ende die heilighe geest Amen";

Prayer to the Virgin, sent by the Pope to the Queen of the Orient, with indulgence.

ff. 208v-210, Een ghebet van onser vrouwen ende Sunt Ian Ewangelist, incipit, "O onbevleete ende ewelic ghebenedijt ende eenpaerlike maghet Maria ... Ende dat ic uwe hulpe ende des goeden Sunte Iohannes een seker ende een rustelike herberghe moet vercrighen ende mit mi alle menschen Des gonne ons die vader die soen ende die heilighe geest Amen;
Prayer to the Virgin and St. John Evangelist.

ff. 210-212v, *Hier beghinnen VIII blijscappen van onser vrouwen die si hadde inden sueten Ihesu naem Ave*, incipit, "Verblijt di o wise ioncfrouwe Maria inder dieper aenmerkinghe dijns reynen pueren ghemoets inder besnidenisse dijns lieven soens beghinnende dat werck sijns hemelschen vaders ... Mer du saerte maghet overmits der verwandelinghe der rechterhand des alren oversten en sel met sterven die mensche mer leven overmits den omhelsen des salighen naems mit den armen der minnen inder ewicheit Amen";

Eight Joys of the Virgin.

ff. 212v-214v, *Hier beghinnen XVI suverlike blijscappen van onser liever vrouwen die goet gelesen sijn Ave Maria*, incipit, Verblijt u blenckende dageraet uutvercoren bruut gods inder engelscher gueten die u Gabriel boetscapten doe ghi den done gods ontfangen sout ende ghi u al verdrontc inden afgront der oetmoedicheit ... Doe [u] lieve soen u te hemel haelde mit ziele ende mit lichaem ende verhoechden boven alle die choren der engelen ende der heilighen inden ewighen leven Amen";

Sixteen Joys of the Virgin.

ff. 214v-216, *Dit sijn vijf gueten van onser lieven vrouwen*, incipit, "Weest gegruet Maria balsem der sueticheit moeder der overster goedertierenheit ende reynicheit Du biste blenckende ende schoen een douwe draghende egelentier ende een oprisende dageraet ... Dat gunne ons die ghebenedide gods soen die in di om onser verlossinghe wille mensche gheworden is Glorie si di o coninginne der hemelen Ende in gheenre tijt en wilt onser vergheten Amen";

Five Ave Marias.

ff. 216-217v, *Een suverlic gebet van Sunte Joseph onser liever vrouwen hoeder*, incipit, "Ghegruet sijstu heilighe vader Joseph ende eersamighe vader Joseph Davids soen Wies rechtveerdicheit dat heilighe ewangelium betughet tot wien die heilighe engel gods dicwil ghesproken heeft ... Sunte Berrent seit Alle die gracie die wi crighen die crighen wi doer Maria Want Maria is die sluefe daer onse alle ghiften ende gracen doer coemen Als onse lieve vrouwe voer ons bidt soe bidden alle die heilighen voer ons Deo gracias"; [ff. 218r-219v blank].

Prayer to St. Joseph.

ILLUSTRATION

Four illuminated initials (ff. 4, 16, 39v, 47), 7- to 5-lines, white patterned -blue, infilled with floral motifs in red and green, infilled and on highly polished notched gold grounds, with red pen-flourishes, accompanied by short partial borders, in one or more margins, not connected

with the initials, of small flowers, gold leaves, birds, and in four cases, peacocks, in green, blue, gold, with touches of yellow and purple. Large 8- to 7-line decorated initials with red pen-flourishes on ff. 55 and 86v also include partial illuminated borders in this style.

Elaborate penwork initials, including: ff. 129v-130, 9-line intricately parted red-and-blue initial infilled with red and blue pen decoration, extending to form a border in the outer and bottom margin of large, stiff curling foliage with birds, flowers, and at the bottom a goat dressed in a cape teaching two kids (i.e. young goats), to read; the border continues on the facing page, with a large white-patterned blue initial with red pen decoration extending into the outer and bottom margin; and f. 165, 7-line parted red-and-blue initial with a penwork border in the inner and lower margins; in the lower margin, a standing figure of the Virgin, crowned, holding a naked Christ. Other penwork borders include the Lamb of God with a crozier (f. 189v; on this iconography, Rudy, 2011), a lion and two dragons (f. 173), birds (ff. 3, 130, 165, 173) and small men's heads (ff. 31v, 116, 189v, 199, 204v).

A notable feature of this manuscript is its accomplished penwork initials and borders. The charming representations incorporated in the pen-flourishes are partly of a religious nature (the Virgin and Child, the Lamb of God) and partly of a fantastic nature (goat-like animals reading, a lion, dragons) and naturalistic nature (birds, men's heads). Pen-flourishes in Dutch manuscripts are often elaborate and stylistically well recognizable. Northern Netherlandish penwork can often provide trustworthy indications for localizing a manuscript which otherwise lacks any clues of its origin. However, although the penwork in the manuscript described here is quite distinctive, it cannot with certainty be localized to a particular region or city. It does include at least one penwork motif found in manuscripts originating in the province of South Holland or Utrecht, as demonstrated in the drawings in *Kriezels, aubergines en takkenbossen*, 1992, which maps the geography of styles of penwork in the fifteenth-century Northern Netherlands. In particular, the "aubergine" (eggplant) illustrated on p. 69 (ill. 39) of that catalogue can be found in the penwork on ff. 26v, 73v and 93v of our manuscript. However, other motifs frequently found in South Holland or Utrecht penwork are lacking in our manuscript, and many motifs in the penwork of our manuscript are have not yet been identified as characteristic for South Holland or Utrecht penwork. Therefore the localization of the manuscript remains a matter for further research.

The text does not give much away about the preferences of the intended owner. The manuscript must have been made for a woman in a religious community, but the prayers, all except one to Christ or the Virgin, are of a general, not personalized nature. The only exception is the prayer at the end of the manuscript, which is in honor of St. Joseph. Dutch prayer books such as this one, however, which figure so prominently among Netherlandish manuscript production in the fifteenth century, are certainly witnesses to the influence of the *Devotio Moderna* in the region. Founded by Geert Groote (1340-1384) in the fourteenth century, the *Devotio Moderna* (the "Modern Devotion" or the New Devout), included the Houses of the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life and the monasteries of the Augustinian Canons Regular of the Windesheim Congregation. All shared common beliefs expounded by Groote and his associates. They urged a return to the sources (the Bible, the early writings of the Church) in the vernacular languages. Groote wrote a translation of the Book of Hours and most Netherlandish Books of Hours are written in Dutch, in contrast to those from most other countries written in Latin. The same

interest in bringing religion to the people, in an accessible language, is also well-illustrated here by this collection of vernacular prayers in Dutch.

The manuscript is not listed in the online database of the Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

On Joseph W. Drexel:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_William_Drexel

Database of Middle Dutch manuscripts, the Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta (this manuscript not listed)

<http://www.library.leiden.edu/special-collections/manuscripts/subcollections-whs-bnm.html>

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