

## Authorial and Editorial Roles in Song Manuscripts of the *Devotio Moderna*

This essay sets out a model which identifies eight distinct authorial and editorial roles in the transformation of oral sermons to written collections in multi-text codices. This model is then applied to a different genre: collections of songs from the same background, the *Devotio Moderna*. The main differences and similarities between sermons and devotional songs are discussed in relation to the position of their authors, their generic characteristics and the needs of the manuscript users. The model turns out to be a strong heuristic tool for systematically reflecting on the genesis of multi-text codices. It can be used to compare the mechanics of writing and collecting in various genres and cultural circles.

### Introduction

Evidence for successive stages in the creation and organisation of multi-text manuscripts often comes from codicological research. However, in some cases textual information is available; a fruitful field of research is provided by collections of medieval Dutch sermons. Specifically, the sermon collections of the Augustinian convent of Our Lady of the Rose planted in Jericho (hereafter abbreviated to Jericho), a convent located in Brussels, offer a wealth of information about their genesis and the people involved. The collections have extensive prologues and epilogues, in which the sisters, as members of the convent were called, explain in detail how several of them contributed to writing down and editing the sermons delivered by their father confessor (Stoop 2007: 276–80; 2011: 197–200; 2012)). On the basis of this material, Patricia Stoop (2013) has developed a model which identifies multiple distinct phases in the production of these sermon collections. This model offers an interesting starting point for research into song manuscripts originating from the same cultural background as the sermon collections: the *Devotio Moderna*, a spiritual reform movement with an emphasis on the rejection of the world, asceticism and inner reform that domi-

nated religious life in the Low Countries in the fifteenth century. The movement was particularly attractive to women: two thirds of the adherents were female.<sup>1</sup>

This essay presents Stoop's model and discusses whether the mechanics of text collecting are similar for sermons and songs. Specific attention will be paid to the various authorial and editorial roles of the agents involved. Our premise is that by offering a systematic approach, this model will facilitate a better understanding of the genesis of devotional song collections, and possibly of the genesis of multi-text codices in general.

Our corpus consists of twelve multi-text manuscripts. Song is often the only, or certainly the most important genre, though sometimes small blank spaces are filled in with maxims – as is often the case in secular song manuscripts as well. Most codices transmit not only the song texts, but also the melodies, by using musical notation or melody references, quoting the first line of another, often secular, song with the same melody (Van der Poel 2011: 71–73). The number of songs varies from seventeen in a small manuscript like the songbook of Marigen Remen (Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS LTK 218, Gerritsen (ed.) 1966), to almost two hundred in the large manuscript Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. oct. 190 (Mertens and Van der Poel (eds) 2013). The average number is about fifty. Together, they form a repertoire of hundreds of devotional songs in the vernacular and in Latin, originating from the second half of the fifteenth and the first decades of the sixteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Of these twelve manuscripts, eight are connected to female owners, all but one living in a convent or beguinage.<sup>3</sup>

1 The adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* lived in communities of Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life, without taking vows or entering into a monastic order. However, these communities were gradually converted into more official convents: many took on the rule of St Augustine, or the Rule of the Third Order of St Francis. For English language studies on this movement, see, for instance, Hascher-Burger and Joldersma 2008; Van Engen 2008; Scheepsma 2004.

2 The numbers mentioned in the Dutch Song Database (Nederlandse Liederbank, <http://www.liederbank.nl/>) add up to a total of 664 songs, but among them are many songs transmitted in more than one codex. The total number of Latin songs in these manuscripts has not been calculated.

3 Biographical information on Marigen Remen is not available. For a discussion of gender and vernacular religious song, see Joldersma 2001 and 2008.

## I. The Model for the Genesis of Sermon Collections

From the convent of Jericho seven manuscripts with some 200 convent sermons have come down to us (Stoop 2013: 22–24).<sup>4</sup> Usually, the preachers did not write out their sermons themselves, but the sisters, after having listened to them, recorded, edited and collected them. In their writings, the sisters took over the role of the preacher, including the authoritative *I persona* addressing the public: ‘they took up their role as genuine ghostwriters’ (Mertens 2004: 136). As a result, the sermons are characterised by their shared authorship: the contributions of the preaching father confessor and the writing sisters merged in the written records.

Stoop’s model (2013: 312–53) for the genesis of these codices and the texts they transmit is based on several factors: archival sources, a comparative analysis of sermons composed by different preachers and written down by different sisters, references in the extensive prologues and colophons to the first and last names of all preachers and sisters involved, and the codicological structures of the manuscripts. Her model consists of two main phases. The first is concerned with the recording and editing of individual sermons and describes the process from oral performance to written text. The second main phase is concerned with the compiling and editing of a collection of sermons in one codex. Each phase can be broken down into smaller units. Stoop attributes distinct roles to each of the smaller units, thus defining an agent responsible for each phase. These roles might all have been exercised by the same person, but more often the various tasks were carried out by different individuals (Stoop 2007: 280–82; 2011: 200–14; 2013).

## II. Main Phase 1: From Oral Event to Written Text

The first main phase consists of three smaller units (Stoop 2013: 169–311, 352):

### 1.1 The Listening Phase

A sermon was preached by a father confessor or a Dominican or Franciscan preacher visiting the convent and listened to by an audience of sisters. This was mainly an oral event: the preachers probably did not write out their sermons themselves, although Jan Storm, the first father confessor of Jericho, probably

<sup>4</sup> For the period up to 1550, Stoop 2013: 22–24 mentions seven codices. The number of sermons adds up to a total of 315 sermons; 113 of them are copies. See also Stoop 2011: 197–200.

used short notes while preaching, written on ‘rollen, brieven ende ouden quaternen’ [on rolls, letters and old quires] (Stoop 2011: 199).

## 1.2 The Recording Phase

Immediately after listening, the sisters jotted down notes and possibly elaborated upon these notes shortly afterwards. In most cases, they made use of *memoria* techniques to memorise the sermon in as much detail as possible. The structure of the sermons facilitated this: they typically started with an image or biblical quotation, linked with some points for further development, often marked by ordinals. After this *division*, there followed the *dilatation*, in which each of the points mentioned was developed further.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.3 The Editing Phase

Subsequently, one of the sisters wrote out the entire sermon. Again, the mnemonic structure of sermons helped the sisters to transform their notes into a full-length sermon text by adding biblical quotations or elements from other authoritative sources and *exempla*. The contribution of the sisters varied, as is evident from a comparison of the texts of the sermons, but their role should not be underestimated. Janne Colijns in particular was in all likelihood responsible for the rhetorical style and use of tropes and metaphors in the sermons she wrote down. At the end of this phase, the sermons were written on separate pieces of paper or parchment.

In this first main phase at least two agents were involved: the preacher, who was the *auctor intellectualis* of the text, and the sister who recorded and edited the sermons. Her actual contribution was more often than not quite substantial.

## III. Main Phase 2: From Written Text to Manuscript Collection

The second main phase of the model concerns the arrangement of written sermons into manuscript collections. Again, this process can be broken down into smaller units. Stoop (2013: 312–65) identifies five steps:

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5 Only one prologue mentions a written intermediary: Storm handed his own notes to Janne Colijns (Stoop 2011: 199). On sermons and *memoria* techniques, see Mertens 2004; Mertens, Stoop, Burger 2009.

## 2.1 The Gathering Phase<sup>6</sup>

First, the sisters gathered together the sermons, delivered by a particular preacher on various dates. Whether or not a selection was made is not known. However, some of the contributing sisters do apologise for not having been able to collect more sermons, stating that many more were preached (Stoop 2013: 180–82, 351).

## 2.2 The Arrangement Phase

Next, the collected sermons were arranged, always according to the liturgical calendar, and not according to the order in which they had been preached over the years. Thus, preparations were made for the production of a book to be used every year.

## 2.3 The Annotation Phase

After this, various annotations were made to the individual sermons to make the collection coherent. For instance, headings and cross-references were added.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.4 The Copying Phase

Subsequently, the sermons were copied into a manuscript. For most sermon collections, this was done in one operation, or in several operations within a short time span. It could be done by one scribe, or by several scribes who were all working according to the same plan.

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6 The term ‘gathering’ is chosen, rather than ‘collecting’ or ‘compiling’, to make clear that this stage involves the bringing together of disparate texts, which may or may not have been written down for the purpose of a larger whole.

7 Some of the references were determined after the sermons were arranged, but *before* they were copied from loose pieces of paper or parchment into the book: they follow the liturgical sequence in the book, but conflict with the chronological order in which the sermons were preached.

## 2.5 Adding a Prologue and a Table of Contents

Finally, a table of contents and possibly a prologue and colophon were added to the collection. In most cases, these are later additions by someone who had not been involved in any of the preceding phases (Stoop 2013: 177–80).<sup>8</sup> The prologue often looks back at the genesis of the sermons and the resulting collection. In most cases, the table of contents and prologue were placed at the beginning of the codex.

For most sermon collections, the agents involved in these phases were different individuals, but it is also possible that one sister was responsible for the entire process. Generally, the sister in charge of editing the sermons was considered most important and is mentioned in the prologue and/or colophon.

## IV. Song Manuscripts: From Oral Event to Written Text

The first main phase involves the process from oral performance to written text: listening to, recording and editing the sermons. Can this part of Stoop's model be applied to song manuscripts, and if so, to what extent?

While the sermons were composed by the preachers, the agency of songwriters is generally difficult to ascertain. Owing to the oral character of the genre, a song can be composed orally, without any written intermediary. In the oral transmission process singers would over time have altered elements of a given song, deliberately or not: the result is a collective product and not an invention of only one person. In other words: in the case of songs, the roles of author and listener are more blurred in the listening phase (1.1).

In connection with this, the vast majority of songs are anonymous. In our corpus of twelve manuscripts, only two show some interest in the person of the author: Berlin, mgo 190 and Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS II 2631. In some cases, information about the author is anchored in the text itself, namely in the concluding stanza, for example in song #17 of the Brussels manuscript, which mentions the name of a certain Ysbrandus. Concluding stanzas mentioning 'the poet' occur more frequently in songs, but it is often doubtful whether such references convey any historical information, as may be illustrated by the next example from the same source (#20). Here, the 'I' persona describes his difficulties with the rules of monastic life: he would rather spend his time dancing and having fun. The refrain says it all: 'Die cap en maeckt die monick niet' [The hood does not make the monk]. The concluding stanza de-

<sup>8</sup> In only one case (Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 902) the prologue is probably an autograph of the copyist (Mergriete van Steenberghe, interestingly a lay sister or 'conversin').

scribes the person who made this song: he has renounced the world, but still loves to hear a cheerful song. This is most likely simple role-playing, although it cannot be ruled out entirely that the song was indeed written by a friar in despair. In any case, someone took the information seriously: the rubric states that the song was made by a Dominican friar (fol. 34<sup>r</sup>).<sup>9</sup>

The Brussels manuscript has yet other noticeable headings. Two of them indicate the person who first sang the following song *here*: ‘Dit is een gheestelijc liedekijn, ende heeft *hier* eerst ghesonghen Hillegont Aerontsdochter Cornelis Cornelissoens huusvrouw, int jaer Ons Heren dusent cccc hondert ende xcvii (fol. 35<sup>v</sup>) [This is a devout song and Hillegont the daughter of Aeront, the wife of Cornelis, the son of Cornelis was the first to sing it *here* in the year 1497]; the other one mentions the priest of the new church, master Adrian (fol. 48<sup>v</sup>).<sup>10</sup> The phrasing of these headings is somewhat confusing: does ‘the first to sing’ mean ‘authored’ or ‘introduced to the community’? Whichever this may be, the headings show that someone felt the urge to mention important agents in the transmission of the song, which in these cases seems to be a local matter: a housewife and the priest of a parish church.

The other manuscript showing interest in authorship is Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. oct. 190. In some cases the name of the author is a later addition, but still contemporary with the writing down of the songs, for example at folio 119<sup>v</sup> (see Image 1 on the next page), where the scribe (probably the same as the one who copied the song, although the ink and the size of the letters are different) added a remark in the lower margin, stating: ‘Dit liedekijn heeft ghemaect broeder Willem van Amersfoort, die vicarius der minre broederen, op sijn naem: Wilhelmus’ (fol. 119<sup>v</sup>) [This song was made by brother William of Amersfoort, vicar of the Franciscan brethren, on his name: Wilhelmus (the name in acrostic produced by the first letter of each stanza)]. As the vicar general of the Observants of Cologne, William must have been a rather well-known figure in the Low Countries.

The name Brugman, or Frater Johannes Brugman, is added to two songs by another scribe, who copied many songs elsewhere in the codex.<sup>11</sup> This authorisation by a slightly later hand is noteworthy. Johannes Brugman (†1473) was a famous preacher at the time and this might be a case of false attribution. In this manuscript, his name is a later addition and in two other sources his name does not occur at all.<sup>12</sup>

9 ‘Dit liedekijn heeft ghedicht een Dominicus broeder ende gaet op die wijze “troeren moet ic nacht ende dach ende lijde grot verlanghen etc.”’ [This song was written by a Dominican friar and goes to the tune “night and day must I lament and suffer from great longing etcetera”].

10 Both songs are unique to this manuscript.

11 ‘Ic heb ghejaecht mijn leven lanc’ (fol. 111<sup>r</sup>) and ‘Mit vroecheden laet ons singhen’ (fol. 115<sup>v</sup>).

12 One of these sources is Brussels, II 2631, just discussed as a manuscript containing author

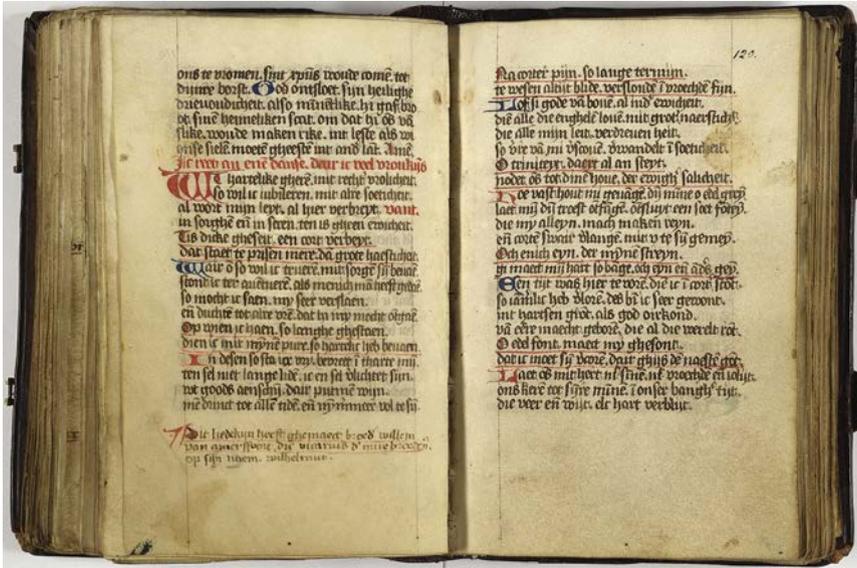


Image 1: Berlin, mgo 190, fol. 119<sup>v</sup>: the remark in the lower margins mentions the name of the author of the song: Willem van Amersfoort (© Berlin Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz).

The mentioning of an author's name can be puzzling. A case in point is the song 'Die werelt hielt mi in hair gewout' ['The world had me in its sway']. In the already mentioned manuscript Berlin, mgo 190, the song is copied twice by the same hand, but there are significant differences between each version. For example, one version has no less than 25 stanzas, the other only 8. In other sources, the song has 7 to 9 stanzas, so the long version is exceptional. In addition, this long version creates the impression of being a product of oral transmission: the overall structure is rather loose and the connection between the stanzas is merely associative. This long version has a heading, written by the same hand as the song, stating: 'Dit liedekijn heeft gemaect Bairt, suster, die clusenarinne tUtrecht' (fol. 153<sup>v</sup>) [This song was made by sister Bairt, the anchoress in Utrecht]. Sister Bairt can be identified: the name refers to Berta Jacobs, also known as Sister Bertken, who indeed lived as an anchoress in a cell adjoining the Utrecht Buurkerk and who must have been famous at the time (Van Aelst 2010). How should we interpret the 'making' of the song by Berta Jacobs? Based upon the tradition of the song in other sources, it might be hypothesised that she reworked

references. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 630b Helmst. mentions a different author for the song: 'Doctor Hinricus Toke composuit' (fol. 19<sup>v</sup>; Janicke 1894). For the tradition, see the *Dutch Song Database* ([www.liederenbank.nl](http://www.liederenbank.nl)). For a discussion of author attributions in multi-text codices, see Besamusca, Griffith, Meyer, and Morcos 2016.

an already existing, shorter version into the song that was ascribed to her in this manuscript.<sup>13</sup>

In short, the people behind the manuscripts generally did not consider the authors important agents in the transmission of the songs. This is a noticeable difference from the situation of sermons, where the preacher is the authoritative source. The vicar Wilhelmus, the preacher Brugman, and the anchoress Berta Jacobs might have been considered as equally authoritative, but their names were recorded in only one manuscript out of a corpus of twelve.

In the next phase (1.2) in the model for the preservation of sermons, a sister jots down notes of what she had memorised from the preaching. In all likelihood, this did not happen with songs, for the simple reason that songs are designed to be remembered easily, even more so than sermons. Formal qualities like rhyme, metre and melody provide more varied and precise prompts than is the case with the rhetorical structure of the sermons. However, there are some indications that songs were written out individually before being collected (cf. phase 1.3). A rare example of a wax tablet with a song for the Virgin Mary is preserved in Iceland.<sup>14</sup> Two lines of a well-known Christmas song were written down as a later addition in the margin of the *Evangelarium* of Otto III, and yet another popular Christmas song, 'In dulci iubilo', occurs on the flyleaf of an incunable.<sup>15</sup> Such findings show that individual devotional songs were indeed written down on whatever writing medium was available, although oral transmission was probably more usual.

## V. Song Manuscripts: From Written Text to Manuscript Collection

The second main phase of Stoop's model is concerned with the process of arranging multiple sermons into one collection in a codex. As mentioned, this phase starts off with the gathering of individual texts (2.1). For songs, the gathering phase is hard to determine, due to a lack of informative sources such as prologues and colophons. What is more, songs, unlike preaching, do not spring from specific events, and unlike sermons, songs were probably already well known to their users before the decision was made to collect and copy them. Aspects like local traditions probably determined a convent's song culture and

13 See Van Buuren 2000 for a discussion of the complex tradition of this song.

14 The tablet is in the City Museum of Reykjavik; see the illustration in Hogenelst and Van Oostrom 1995: 53. The song is also extant in two manuscripts.

15 'Syt willekomen heirre kirst / want du unser alre here bis', in Aachen, Domschatzkammer (dating from tenth or eleventh century). The incunable is the copy of Gerard van Vliederhoven, *Cordiale de IV novissimis* (Deventer: R. Paffraet, 1485), in the Cathedral Library, Hildesheim (Inkunabelsammelband EG 404); see Kornrumpf 2000: 179–80.

pre-shaped any song collection before it was recorded. Therefore, no gathering phase was necessary: the songs were ubiquitous. Brussels, II 2631 is the only song manuscript that furnishes the years in which some songs were composed or introduced to the community. The dates occur in chronological order – 1495, 1497, 1525 – covering a period of thirty years (De Loos and Van der Poel 2001: 108).<sup>16</sup> The individual sermons in the collections studied by Stoop were gathered over a considerably shorter period of three to six years (Stoop 2013: 22–24).

This raises the question of what patterns, if any, might govern song collections (cf. phase 2.2). A song arrangement of the strictest kind is found in a collection entitled *Die Geestelicke Melody* [*The Spiritual Melody*], in Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS LTK 2058. It consists of fifteen songs with accompanying prose introductions, partly arranged according to the days of the week. In the introduction that precedes it, this cycle is explicitly presented as a coherent programme for meditation (Mertens 2009: 124, 130; Joldersma 2008: 373–74). However, this example is unique. Two other sources, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Ser. nova 12875 and The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 75 H 42, contain the same texts in identical order, but both present the songs surrounded by other texts and without the programmatic frame that plays such an essential role in the Leiden manuscript.<sup>17</sup>

Most song manuscripts do not show such an overarching organisational principle. They indicate rather that someone arranged some of the material according to certain criteria, such as melody, theme, liturgical calendar, or language. Some collections even seem to be governed by more than one principle. Unlike sermon collections, which are always arranged according to the liturgical year, a range of criteria may operate in song manuscripts. A twofold division according to the liturgical year is to be found in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. oct. 185. In this codex someone divided the songs into two groups explicitly marked as the summer part, containing Easter songs, and a section with songs for the Christmas period (see Image 2).

The relevant headings are: ‘Dit is dat sangeboec dat somer stuc’ (p. 0 [*sic*]) [This is the songbook, the summer part] and ‘Dit is dat sangeboec vander hoechtyt der gebuerten christi’ (p. 188) [This is the songbook of the feast of Christ’s birth]. At the end of both parts, numerous pages were initially left blank. This allowed later users to make additions at the appropriate place, making the manuscript open-ended in this respect. An arrangement according to temporal criteria is also apparent in the songbook of Catharina Tirs and the Werden song

16 One of these dated headings is discussed above.

17 For further details, see Mertens 2009, 132–34.

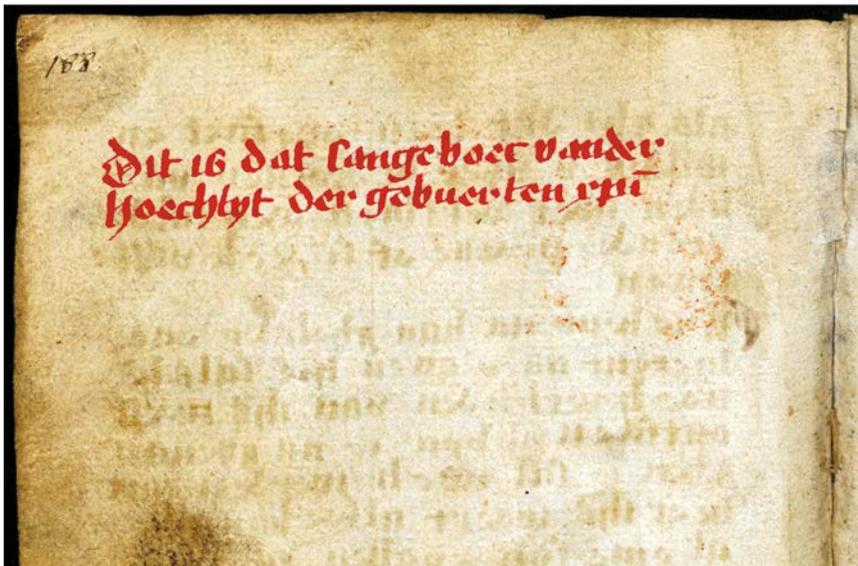
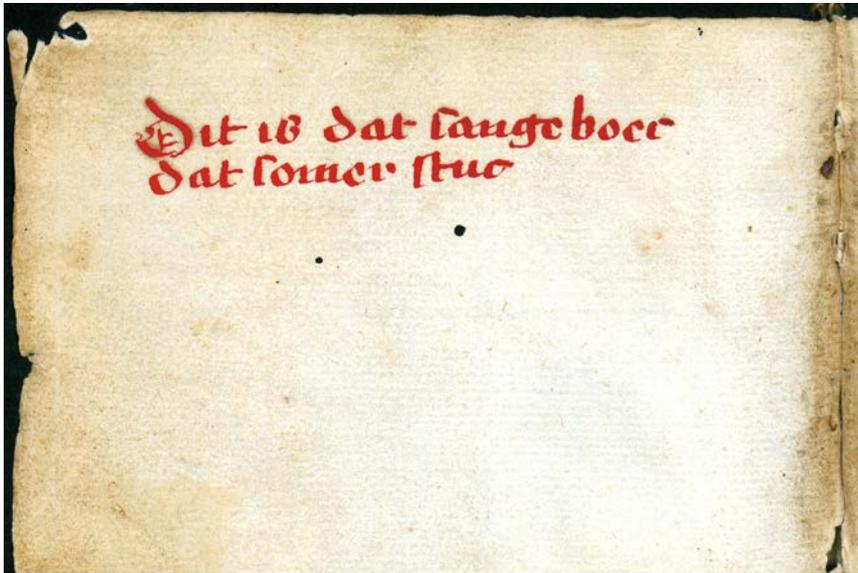


Image 2: Berlin, mgo 185, p. 0: heading indicating the summer part of the manuscript: 'Dit is dat sangeboec dat somer stuc' [This is the songbook, the summer part] and p. 188, heading indicating the section with songs for the Christmas period: 'Dit is dat sangeboec vander hoechtyt der gebuerden christi' [This is the songbook of the feast of Christ's birth] (© Berlin Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz).

manuscript, in which Christmas songs are grouped together – we shall return to these manuscripts later.<sup>18</sup>

Songs could also be arranged by theme, as is evident in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. oct. 280, the songbook of Anne of Cologne, its first owner (Salmen and Koepp (eds) 1954). Someone (Anne?) initially chose to cluster the songs: in succession the codex presents songs about Christmas, songs about the sufferings of life on earth and the desire to be united with the heavenly Spouse, songs about Mary, songs about other female saints and finally various Latin chants. The agent responsible for it also made the manuscript open-ended, by leaving multiple blanks at the end of each thematic cluster. This allowed for the insertion of other songs at the appropriate place within the arrangement.

For the manuscripts Brussels, II 2631, Berlin, mgo 190, Vienna, Ser. nova 12875 and Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, II 270, someone decided to keep the Latin and vernacular songs separate. It is very likely that this division was not made especially for these books, but that the two repertoires already functioned on different occasions and that the arranger had no reason to shuffle them.<sup>19</sup> Then, the person responsible for Brussels, II 2631 applied a further structure to the vernacular repertoire: songs that could be sung to the same melody were grouped together in five places throughout the collection. In four of these cases, this arrangement is made explicit by the songs' headings (fols 29<sup>r</sup>, 31<sup>r</sup>, 33<sup>v</sup>, 34<sup>r</sup>). Yet, in all these cases there are more songs elsewhere in the manuscript that can be sung to these same tunes, but that are not organised accordingly, so for some unknown reason, the principle was not maintained throughout the codex (De Loos and Van der Poel 2001: 114–16).

Several elements of song manuscripts reveal that an annotation phase (2.3) then followed. As mentioned, headings containing cross-references occur in Brussels, II 2631, labelling small groups of songs with the same melody. The most illustrative example is a group of four songs explicitly grouped together under the heading of the first song. It states that the following four songs can be sung to four specified melodies as well as 'to the tune of any other song that can be sung on four lines' (fol. 29<sup>r</sup>). The headings of the next songs refer to these instructions, by stating: 'On the same tune' (fol. 29<sup>v</sup>), and 'Again on the same tune' (fol. 30<sup>r</sup>) (De Loos and Van der Poel 2001: 114).<sup>20</sup> This kind of cross-reference is typically the

18 The current whereabouts of both Tirs and Werden are unknown.

19 Van der Poel 2011: 77–79; De Loos and Van der Poel 2001: 116–17; Mertens and Van der Poel (eds) 2013. The Middle Dutch songs of Brussels, II 270 were edited by Van Dongen (ed.) 2002.

20 'Dese vier navolghende lyedekens machmen sijnghen op dese wijsen: die eerste wijse: "Ic sach mijnheer van Valkesteyn", die ander: "Van die hartoch van Sassen", die dorde: "Ic sie die morgensterre", die vierde wijs: "Het viel op eenen morghenstont" ende alle ander lyedekijns diemen op vier regulen sijnghen mach' (fol. 29<sup>r</sup>). The second song has the heading 'Op die

kind of annotation we expect to be made during this phase. Another heading states that the next three songs were made by the same author (De Loos and Van der Poel 2001: 117).<sup>21</sup> Interestingly enough, a small piece of paper, pasted over the original writing, indicates that these three songs were composed by the scribe of the book. In other words, this is an annotation by a near contemporary witness, who identifies the scribe with the author. At the same time, the scribe chose not to state that s/he was the one who wrote the songs.<sup>22</sup>

To the songbook of Catharina Tirs (Hölscher (ed.) 1854 and Classen (ed.) 2002), someone added headings, thus marking groups of songs. The heading applied to the first song of a group presents the unifying theme, for example 'Here begin the pure songs about the birth of Our Lord Jhesus Christ'. The headings of the next songs depend on the preceding heading by simply stating 'Another one' or 'More pure songs about the birth etcetera'.<sup>23</sup> The songs about New Year and the suffering of Christ are arranged in a similar vein and accompanied by mutually referential headings.

Similar headings occur in the *Werden* manuscript (Jostes (ed.) 1888). The fifth song of this collection is dedicated to Mary, but has no heading. Yet, the heading to the following song refers back to it, by stating 'Likewise, next follows another devout song about our dear virgin'.<sup>24</sup> Also, two Christmas songs are grouped according to melody. The first song states simply 'A pure song for Christmas'; the heading of the second song refers to the first, by stating 'Another one to the same tune'.<sup>25</sup>

When comparing the copying phase of sermon manuscripts with song codices (2.4), a major difference becomes evident. While sermon collections were most often written in a single operation, song manuscripts may contain more or less substantial additions, made after the book was finished in the first instance. As stated above, in some codices pages were initially left blank, possibly deliberately,

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selven wijze. Een suverlijc lyedekijn'. The heading of the third song is missing due to a lost leaf between folios 29 and 30, but the fourth song has the heading 'Noch op die selve wijze. Een suverlijc lyedekijn, maer het is wat vernuft' (fol. 30').

- 21 After the heading to 'Jhesus mijn alre liefste heer' (fol. 25') the main scribe has written: 'Dese drie navolgede liedekijns heeft een persoen ghedicht maer dat dorde liedekijn van jaren out wesen XIII jaer' (fol. 25').
- 22 The attribution to a specific author also functions as an organisational principle for these three songs within the collection.
- 23 'Hir begynnen suverlike ledekens van der geborten unses heren Jhesu Christi' (#1). The following songs have headings like 'Noch eyn ander leedt' (#3), 'Eyn ander' (#4, 5), 'Noch suverlike ledekens van der geborten etcetera' (#6), 'Eyn ander leid' (#7, 8), 'Eyn ander' (#9, 10, 11). Hölscher (ed.) 1854: 1–27; Classen (ed.) 2002: 154–257.
- 24 The heading to the second song is 'Item hijr na volget een ander devoet gesengh van onser lever vrouwen'; Jostes (ed.) 1888: 66–70.
- 25 The first song: 'To kerssmisse een suverlicke loysse'. The second song: 'Een ander up die selve wijze'; Jostes (ed.) 1888: 61–64.

to allow for further songs to be inserted, as in Berlin, mgo 185. However, in three other cases more far reaching changes were made, changes that also affected the codicological structure of the book.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds néerlandais 39, the songbook of Liisbet Ghoeyuaers, is our first example. Initially one scribe copied twenty-five songs in a well-arranged sequence dedicated to specific saints, but shortly afterwards, a second scribe apparently considered the collection incomplete. In order to be able to extend the original collection of songs on Saint Barbara, a leaf was cut out, and a quire was added. This adaptation shows an effort on the part of the agent responsible to unite her own work with her predecessor's. The organic growth of the manuscript continued: still later, someone added at the back of the codex four loose folios written by a third scribe, but she did not follow the same plan as her predecessors.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, Berlin, mgo 190 was copied in several stages, in each of which the person responsible added her/his own personal touches to the book. The oldest part was written by one scribe, and consists of two codicological units: one has a collection of Latin chants and the other contains a vernacular song repertoire. In the second part, the relevant musical notations are gathered in a separate quire. The quires with the song texts must already have been produced when, at a later stage, the same scribe tried to add a written melody for each of the songs. Actually, the addition of musical notation was not at all necessary, since the songs were already accompanied by melody references. Presumably, this person wished to complement the system of oral references with written melodies. Later on, a second scribe made various additions and adaptations: throughout the codex, five quires of different sizes were inserted, single folios were added to three existing quires, and additional texts were copied on blank pages in three cases (see Image 3 on the next page). In a final stage, all quires were rebound in a different order, and several other hands added various songs, loose stanzas and maxims (Van der Poel 2011: 77–79; Mertens and Van der Poel (eds) 2013).

A similarly complicated process can be seen in Berlin, mgo 280, which also consists of several codicological units. The original components of the codex display many irregularities: switches of script, ink and pen occur – sometimes even within one song (see Image 4 on page 382).

At a certain moment, severed quires of two pre-existing manuscripts were inserted. Both these insertions and the irregularities suggest that the book was produced with many interruptions and over a longer period of time: while copying, the scribe presumably continued to gather and arrange new material. If so, s/he fulfilled the multiple roles of gatherer, arranger, annotator and copyist.

26 Van Seggelen (ed.) 1966: 7–10; Van der Poel 2011: 76. The codicological terminology used here is derived from Gumbert 2004.



Image 3: Berlin, mgo 190, fols 98<sup>v</sup>–99<sup>r</sup>: folio 99<sup>r</sup> is written by the first scribe; the second scribe wrote one of the additional texts on folio 98<sup>v</sup> that had been left blank initially (© Berlin Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz).

The genesis of this manuscript is best characterised as an on-going process, involving a range of materials, scripts, and hands (Salmen and Koeppe (eds) 1954: 3–4).

Such an on-going process of gathering, arranging, annotating, and copying seems to be a specific feature of the genesis of song manuscripts, since it can be seen in at least three codices: BnF, f. ne. 39, Berlin, mgo 190 and Berlin, mgo 280.<sup>27</sup> This process allowed for collections to be shaped and re-shaped according to the differing needs of successive users, or for modifications when new songs became available. The fact that BnF, f. ne. 39 and Berlin, mgo 280 were probably in the personal ownership of individual sisters may have been an important factor too: as owners they felt free to do with the books whatever they wanted.

Regarding the final phase (2.5), it is noteworthy that none of the surviving song manuscripts have prologues that reflect on the process of writing and editing the collection, as is the case for many sermon codices. Despite the large

<sup>27</sup> This on-going process involves more than what Gumbert (2004) distinguishes as the ‘continuous enrichment’ of manuscripts. He reserves this for the addition of material of restricted length, being less than a quire. Yet, in song collections, numerous additions might be made, stretching from guest texts (loose texts, written down by later users in available blank spaces) or loose leaves or additional quires to the insertion of the remains of heavily used manuscripts. See Gumbert 2004: 30–31, 40–42.

anyt edelē gartē blomē  
 ws cūve wortzēle kome **V**  
**Die** wortzel heyszet āna  
 die eyrste bloē mā **Dat** is  
 die hoeste werde der got so  
 hoeghe hbegeerde **V** **He** hat  
 sy wsirove he is vā on ge//  
 boere **Die** alle bloemē gew//  
 ret der hemel in erde regert  
**V** **Die** ander bloē mā is auch  
 geplantzē vā āna **Dar** vā  
 syn vort gekome vier edel  
 schoen bloemē **V** **Symon**  
 in iudas jacob in barnabas  
**Die** hantē wail vruchtē ge//  
 drage v oere dagen **V**

Image 4: Berlin, mgo 280, fol. 138<sup>v</sup>: fragment of a song with changes of script and ink (© Berlin Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz).

number of texts gathered in some collections, few have contemporary foliation – this only applies to Brussels, II 2631 and Vienna, Ser. nova 12875.

Until now, only one song anthology with a table of contents is known: Vienna Ser. nova 12875 (fols 164<sup>r</sup>–165<sup>v</sup>) (see Image 5).

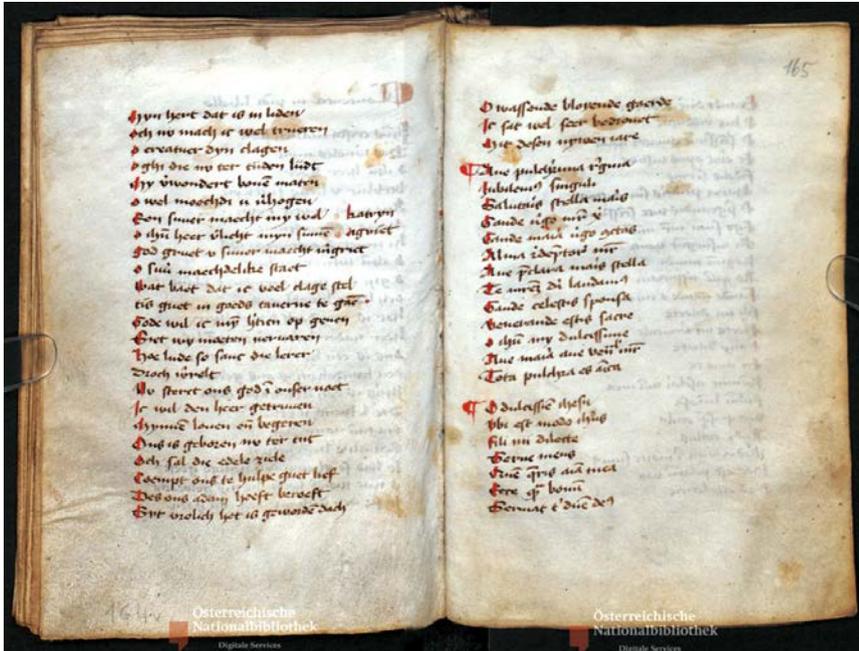


Image 5: Vienna, Ser. nova 12875, fols 164<sup>r</sup>–165<sup>v</sup>: two folios of the Table of Contents (fols 164<sup>r</sup>–165<sup>v</sup>), with the division by paragraph signs (© Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek).

Unlike indexes of most sermon collections, it was written by the same hand as the rest of the manuscript, and placed at the end of the collection. The index does not provide the folio numbers extant in the codex, but all entries listed are present in the codex, and in the same order. Interestingly, the table of contents divides the songs into three groups, separated by paragraph signs: the first group includes all of the Middle Dutch songs in the collection (fols 1<sup>r</sup>–76<sup>v</sup>), the second (fols 76<sup>v</sup>–103<sup>v</sup>) and third group (fols 104<sup>r</sup>–164<sup>v</sup>) consist of various Latin chants. Obviously, the first and second group are differentiated by language. The division of the Latin repertoire into two groups was made for hitherto unknown reasons, but it was done deliberately, for the codex itself shows a clear caesura between the second and third group in the index: between fols 103<sup>v</sup> and 104<sup>r</sup> a quire boundary coincides with a text boundary.

There is, however, also a remarkable discrepancy between the table of contents and the actual texts copied: the index concludes with the listing of two Latin

chants one after the other, but in the manuscript these are separated by 21 pages with various Middle Dutch prose and verse texts, written on folios 152<sup>r</sup> to 162<sup>r</sup>, that do not occur in the index. Also, the contemporary foliation ends on folio 151<sup>r</sup>, just before this group of vernacular texts. Therefore we hypothesise that the codex has later additions from folio 152<sup>r</sup> onward (possibly including the index), but codicological research is necessary to solve this issue.<sup>28</sup> Whatever the case may be, the index does not only cover the collection up to folio 152<sup>r</sup>, for it does list the final Latin song written on folios 162<sup>v</sup> to 164<sup>v</sup>, but it may be genre-specific, listing only songs.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

The material discussed by Stoop (2013) provides us with quite detailed information about the genesis of texts and manuscripts within the culture of the *Devotio Moderna*. This essay discusses the main similarities and differences in the handling of sermons and songs within this particular environment. One similarity, certainly, is that in both cases the genesis of the text collections in the manuscripts cannot just be considered the work of an individual, because several agents were involved in succeeding phases.

The differences discussed are rooted primarily in genre: the attitude towards song as a genre allowed for more freedom and variety than was the case for the transmission of sermons. This is apparent in the first phase: from oral performance to written text. In sermons, the person of the *auctor intellectualis*, the father confessor, is of prime importance and therefore the manuscripts are designed to preserve his particular sermons by and for the sisters under his care. The poet of a song is a much less authoritative source – the naming of an author in only two manuscripts can be regarded as exceptions to this rule. Listeners easily become singers and can participate in the creation of new song variants (1.1). The taking of short notes (1.2) seems to be specific to sermons as well, but both sermons and songs could initially be written out individually (1.3). For the second phase, from written text to manuscript collection, we notice that for the song repertoire, the gathering phase was not undertaken with the aim of producing a collection in a codex: the songs were already present as a part of everyday life (2.1). While sermons were arranged primarily according to the liturgical year, we find various organisational principles in song manuscripts, which

28 Unfortunately, at the time of writing this article we had not been able to carry out codicological research in Vienna.

29 There is one exception: the index lists one prose text, appearing in the manuscript on folios 16<sup>r</sup> to 17<sup>v</sup>. For more information on tables of contents, see Wendy Scase's essay in this volume.

might indicate a difference in intended use. The structure of the sermon codices allows for the reading of these sermons in a particular sequence every year. The arrangement patterns in some of the song manuscripts facilitate the finding of the appropriate songs for Christmas or a saint's day, but the varying arrangement principles within one collection do not point to an evident intended use (2.2). Annotations in the form of cross-references appear in the manuscripts of both genres, particularly in the headings (2.3). An important difference becomes apparent in the copying phase (2.4): the blank spaces in some codices, combined with the later insertion of guest texts or additional codicological units, are a specific feature of song manuscripts, and may result from an on-going process of gathering, arranging, and adapting. This phenomenon, which is not visible in the making of sermon collections, may be due to the appearance of new songs or to the changing needs of users. This on-going process might also explain why these sources never have editorial prologues and only very rarely foliation or tables of contents (2.5).

The application of Stoop's model has enabled us to gain insight into the peculiarities of the genres of sermons and songs, and of the manuscripts which preserve them. If the model is to be applied to yet other genres, some caution is needed. Stoop's material is rather exceptional: the book collection of Jericho is the third largest of any female convent in the Low Countries and contains mainly Middle Dutch sermons, copied to be used in the convent itself (Stoop 2013: 354). We should not rule out the possibility that some of the characteristics described by Stoop are particular to Jericho, or that they are connected with the fact that the collections originated in a well-defined and isolated social group. In this essay, our point of departure was that the textual culture in the Modern Devout convents where the song manuscripts originated was more or less the same as the textual culture in Jericho. It is, however, open to debate whether similar pre-conditions existed outside the communal way of living associated with convents.

Even so, we argue that Stoop's model offers an alternative way of researching multi-text codices. Research on these codices has generally focused on possible arrangement patterns and organisational principles, and on the interpretation of variations within one text influenced by differing contexts. Stoop's model enables us to reflect systematically on medieval text collections. It leads us to consider the manuscripts as we know them from a slightly different angle. By sorting out the various tasks and establishing the order in which they were carried out by the agents involved, the model draws attention to features such as the authority of the text, layered authorship, the influence of genre, and the possible tension between individual versus collective efforts.

Finally, the genesis of what has previously been referred to as ‘growth miscellanies’<sup>30</sup> may well benefit from reconsideration along the lines in which we have looked at song manuscripts. Despite the Stoop model’s limitations, it can be considered a strong heuristic tool that allows researchers to consider the genesis of multi-text codices systematically and to compare the mechanics of writing and collecting in various genres and cultural circles.

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