Are there cases in fifteenth-century Dutch? A 'case study' of an Utrecht manuscript (1464)

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Abstract

This article examines the case system in a fifteenth-century Utrecht manuscript. It demonstrates that there is a functional case system in the manuscript. However, it also identifies a relatively small number of mistakes – grammatical errors as well as hypercorrections – in how this case system is used in the manuscript. It argues that these mistakes indicate that the case system had lost its support in the underlying spoken dialect. The mistakes concern both the use of case forms in the nominative and the accusative, and the use of gender markers in the genitive and the dative. By examining the mistakes in the use of cases (accusative and nominative), it is possible to determine the conditions for syncretic *n*-deletion in the underlying spoken dialect; and, by examining the mistakes in the use of gender markers (in the genitive and dative), it is possible to determine an expansion of masculine flexion in the genitive and dative in the underlying spoken dialect.

1. Introduction

One of the most significant changes that has taken place in the history of Dutch (and most of its relatives, such as English and Danish) is the loss of case distinctions. Like all Germanic languages, Dutch began with a system of four relatively distinct cases (nominative, genitive, dative and accusative). The use of these cases was very similar to other Germanic

languages at the time. In the thirteenth century, Dutch still had functional cases (Marynissen 1996:24). However, by the seventeenth century, the nominative and accusative cases were syncretic, the dative was no longer productive and the genitive was only productive in a rather restricted way, as the ending –s mainly appeared in connection with proper names and kinship terms (Weijnen 1971:50; Geerts 1966:153). This raises the important question of what happened to the case system between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this article, I begin to answer this question by examining the case forms in a fifteenth-century Utrecht manuscript.

I shall begin the article with a brief presentation of the Utrecht manuscript (section 2). I will then demonstrate that there is a functional case system in the manuscript (section 3). However, I will proceed to argue that, because of the mistakes in how this case system is used in the manuscript, the case system had lost its support in the underlying spoken dialect. I will identify two types of mistakes found in the manuscript: firstly, mistakes in the use of nominative and accusative masculine singular (section 4); and secondly, gender mistakes in the genitive and dative cases (section 5). The first type of mistake indicates syncretism of the nominative and accusative cases. On the basis of these mistakes, it is possible to establish the conditions for syncretic *n*-deletion and the effect of this conditioning on gender categorisation. The second type of mistake indicates an expansion of masculine flexion in both the genitive and the dative cases. This expansion constitutes a necessary transitional phase in the evolution of these cases from fully functional in the thirteenth century to restrictedly productive (genitive) or practically non-existent (dative) in the seventeenth century.

2. The Utrecht manuscript

The Utrecht manuscript is currently housed in the BibIiotheek Zuid-Kennemerland in the city of Haarlem in The Netherlands (signature II, 17). It contains the following colophon: *Dit boec is geeindet int jaer ons Heren*

The nominative occurred as subject and predicative complement; the genitive fulfilled a range of functions (it was an indicator for possession and partitive relations, an adjunct of time, an object to certain verbs, and it was used in connection with specific adjectives); the dative functioned as indirect object and was used after several prepositions; and the accusative was used as direct object, after prepositions and as an adverbial adjunct (Van der Horst 2008:145).

MCCCC ende IIII ende tsestich, opten XVI dach in sul. Een Ave Maria om God voer die scryver (fol. 269r), followed by an erased but still readable sentence that can also be found on fol. 179r (in the same handwriting): Dit boec behoert toe Cayman Janssoen van Zerichzee, wonende mit den carthusers buten Utrecht. We thus know that the manuscript was completed on 16th February 1464 (cf. Grotefend 1960:100; MNW selle) and originally belonged to Cayman Janssoen from Zierikzee, who lived in a Carthusian monastery just outside Utrecht, which we now know to be the Nieuwlicht monastery. In the Nieuwlicht monastery necrology, it is stated that Cayman was a lay porter (Van Hasselt 1886:367). We may therefore assume that he had the text copied in the same monastery by an experienced scribe and used the book for his personal meditation (Robbe 2010:173-174). The manuscript contains three religious texts: the Spieghel onser Behoudenisse (the Dutch prose translation of the Speculum humanae salvationis (1r-179r)), which, in its handwritten form, survives only in this manuscript, and two Dutch artes moriendi (179v-231r and 231v-269r), the second of which contains a (selective) Dutch translation of the anonymous Speculum artis bene moriendi, the fifteenth-century standard ars moriendi.² All the texts are written by the same hand in the Utrecht dialect (Robbe 2014:219-222). Interestingly, the language in the Spieghel onser Behoudenisse in the manuscript is identical to the language in the Spieghel onser Behoudenisse in the well-known block book of the same name. And, since the block book - whose first edition was printed between 1465 and 1470 - is considered to be the oldest printed book in Dutch, by studying the Utrecht manuscript, we can also gain an insight into the oldest printed Dutch language variety (Robbe 2013:319-320).

3. The case system in the Utrecht manuscript

By examining formal inflexional distinctions in determiners, it is possible to identify four distinct morphosyntactic cases in the Utrecht manuscript (nominative, genitive, dative and accusative) (cf. Comrie 1991:44-7). This can be demonstrated by the inflexion in nominal phrases headed by the masculine noun *man* ('man'), the feminine noun *bloem(e)* ('flower') and the neuter noun *kijnt* ('child') in different syntactic functions:

For a complete codicological description, see Robbe 2010:162-174.

- (1) Daer om is dat <u>die man</u> ghescapen is inden acker van Damascho, ende dat wijf is ghemaect inden paradise.³ (1v-2r)
 'For this reason, the man is created in the field of Damascus, and the woman is created in paradise.'
- (2) Dat wijf is ghescapen vander ribben <u>des slapenden mans</u>. (2r) 'The woman is created from the rib of the sleeping man.'
- (3) Si is (...) <u>den man</u> ghegeven voer een mede ghesellinne. (1r) 'She is given to the man as a companion.'
- (4) Dat wijf bedroech <u>den man</u>. (5v) 'The woman betrayed the man.'

In (1), *die man* is the subject of the sentence and is therefore nominative. In (2), the possessive determiner phrase *des slapenden mans* is genitive. In (3), the indirect object *den man* is dative. In (4), the direct object *den man* is accusative. Since masculine determiners do not have distinct accusative and dative forms in the singular, a feminine or neuter noun (i.c. *bloem(e)* and *kijnt*) is required to see the distinction between accusative and dative:

- (5) *Daer is <u>die bloem</u>* (...) *die niet verdort*. (155v) 'There is the flower (...) which does not wither.'
- (6) Die bladeren <u>deser bloemen</u> sijn die woerde (...) Cristi. (14r) 'This flower's leaves are the words (...) of Christ'
- (7) In <u>deser bloemen</u> so werden seven goede medicinen ghevonden.
 (12v)
 - 'In this flower, seven good cures are found.'
- (8) *Maria* (...) *heeft voert ghebracht <u>die alre vromentlic bloeme</u>*. (12r) 'Mary (...) has produced the most beautiful flower.'

In (5), *die bloem* is the subject of the sentence and therefore nominative. In (6), the possessive determiner phrase *deser bloemen* is genitive. In (7), *deser bloemen* is dative, as the preposition *in* governs the dative case. In (8), the direct object *die alre vromentlic bloeme* is accusative. Feminine determiners have no distinct nominative and accusative forms. The same applies to neuter determiners:

(9) *Dit is tkijnt dat God ons om doot te slaen ghewesen heeft.* (39v) 'This is the child God said we should kill.'

The definite article *die* signals both masculine and feminine gender in the nominative singular.

- (10) Naaman is bider Jordanen ghemaect alst vleisch eens jonck kijnts.(44r)'The Jordan river made Naaman['s flesh, JR] like the flesh of a young child.'
- (11) Doe die coninghen ghecomen waren, vielen si neder <u>voer den kijnde</u>. (32r)
 - 'When the kings arrived, they lay down before the child.'
- (12) Op dat hi also <u>dat kijnt</u> dat hi ontsach, doden mocht. (39r) 'So that he could kill the child he feared.'

In (9), *tkijnt* (the proclitic form of *dat kijnt*) is the subject of the sentence and therefore nominative. In (10), the possessive determiner phrase *eens jonck kijnts* is genitive. In (11), *den kijnde* is dative, as the preposition *voer* governs the dative case. In (12), the direct object *dat kijnt* is accusative.

Examples (1) to (12) reveal the presence of a functional case system in the Utrecht manuscript. However, I will now continue to identify two types of mistakes in the use of this system in the manuscript. These mistakes indicate that the case system had lost its support in the underlying spoken dialect.

4. Nominative and accusative

In many modern Dutch dialects – including all Dutch dialects in present Belgium – one may assume - ∂n as the basic adnominal suffix form for the masculine singular, cf. een/ne grot[ən] aap 'a big monkey' (Taeldeman 1980:225). The decisive distributional factor for the choice of either $-\partial$ or $-\partial n$ is formed by the initial segment of the subsequent noun: $-\partial n$ before t, d, b, h and vowel, and $-\partial$ elsewhere. Taeldeman (1980:226) provides the following examples: nən dikkən tak ('a thick branch'), nə langən dag ('a long day'), nən (h)ogen berg ('a high mountain'), nə wildən (h)ond ('a wild dog'), no groton aap ('a big monkey'), no lango stok ('a long stick'), nə vuilə pot ('a dirty pot'), nə jongə lijster ('a young thrush') and nə frissə wind ('a fresh breeze'). From a historical perspective, the basic adnominal suffix for the masculine singular represents the accusative, which has been generalised to the nominative. This evolution took place between 1360 and 1570 (Van Loon 1989; MAND 2005:61). In seventeenth-century Holland, one can also assume $-\partial n$ as the basic adnominal suffix form for the masculine singular.⁴ Geerts outlines a situation in which the outer boundary line is

⁴ When I refer to *Holland*, I mean the former County of Holland, which roughly consists of the two present-day Dutch provinces of North Holland and South Holland.

formed by the conditioning word-initial segments (h), d, t, b, r and vowel. As one progresses to the North, first the r disappears as a conditioning segment, then b, d and t disappear as conditioning segments, and, in the extreme north of Holland, even word-initial vowels no longer seem to have a conserving effect on the n (Geerts 1966:179-180). It is assumed that these geographical differences reflect a chronological evolution whereby n-deletion became increasingly unconditioned (Geerts 1966:180). In the Utrecht manuscript, there is a sharp distinction between the nominative and the accusative; however, against the backdrop of this evolution, it is unlikely that this distinction also existed in the underlying spoken dialect. By searching the manuscript for instances of the accusative case being used where correct grammatical usage demands the nominative (simple grammar mistakes) or vice versa (hypercorrections), I hope to situate the underlying dialect in one of the following phases: (1) nominative and accusative are not yet syncretic; (2) nominative and accusative are syncretic without - $\partial n/\partial$ alternation: $-\partial n$ occurs in all positions; (3) nominative and accusative are syncretic with $-\partial n/-\partial$ alternation; (4) nominative and accusative are syncretic without $-\partial n/-\partial$ alternation: $-\partial$ occurs in all positions. In phase 1, we expect no mistakes; in phase 2, we expect random mistakes; in phase 3, we expect mistakes before the word-initial segments mentioned above; in phase 4, we also expect random mistakes. However, we can exclude phase 4 on chronological grounds, as it is unrealistic to suppose that the Utrecht fifteenth-century dialect could have evolved so rapidly into a situation that resembled the situation in the extreme north of Holland in the seventeenth century. In geographical terms, the first phase corresponds to the situation in the whole Dutch language area before 1360; the second phase is preserved in present day French Flanders and in the extreme West of Flanders (Taeldeman 1986:227); the third phase is preserved in the dialects of Dutch-speaking Belgium; and the fourth phase corresponds to the modern dialects of Holland and Utrecht, as well as the present standard language.

In the following 18 sentences, the accusative is mistakenly used instead of the nominative:

(13) Na dien dat dit beelt (...) verdorven ende te niet ghebracht was, is desen steen tenen groten berch ghewassen. (41r)
'When this statue was destroyed and annihilated, this stone grew into a big mountain.'

- (14) Dat derde conenclike teiken was <u>enen gouden cepter</u>. (77r) 'The third royal emblem was a golden sceptre.'
- (15) In desen bosken van mirren waren alle dinghen te samen gebonden die Cristo (...) ghedaen waren: (...) den doeck daer sijn oghen mede verbonden waren (...), die droom van Pilatus wijf (...), die dorst Cristi (...), dat riet mit der spongien, ysop ende ghemirden wijn. (111r-112r)

 'In this bundle of myrrh, everything was bound together which had been done to Christ: the blindfold by which his eyes were covered, (...) Pilate's wife's dream, (...) the thirst of Christ, the reed with
- (16) Jonas was inden scepe dat mit den storm wert geworpen, dat den doot dreichde alden ghenen die daer in waren. (119v)
 'Jonas was on the ship which was tossed by the storm, so that death threathened everyone who was on there.'
- (17) Die tranen der sonders die waraftelic berouwen, sijn God ende den heiligen den alren besten wijn ende louterdranck. (123r) 'The tears of the sinners who genuinely repent are to God and the saints the very best wine and refined drink.'
- (18) <u>Sinen riem</u> was of waren die banden ende repen. (144v) 'His belt was or were the bonds and ropes.'

the sponge, hyssop and myrrhed wine.'

- (19) Dit is een ander boec van vijf becoringen die den viant den mensche aen doet in sijn uterste. (179v)'This is a second book about five ways in which the devil tempts the human at the end of his life.'
- (20) Onsen Heer God oordeelt enen igheliken niet na sinen voerleden leven, mer na sinen einde. (185v)
 'God Our Lord does not judge anyone according to the life he lived before death but by the way he died.'
- (21) Dat alre sekerste teiken der verdoemenisse is <u>stedighen voertganc</u> tot tijtliken goede. (202r)

 'The most certain sign of damnation is the continuous accumulation of wealth.'
- (22) Dese teghenwoerdighe tribulatie is <u>den wech</u> des levens, die wech der salicheit, die wech der glorien, <u>den wech</u> des stats, die wech der woninghen ende die wech des rikes. (202v)

 'This present tribulation is the way to life, the way to salvation, the way to glory, the way to the city [of Jerusalem, JR], the way to [God's, JR] dwelling and the way to the Kingdom.'

- (23) Die tribulatie is die scat <u>die den Gods</u> soen in deser werlt heeft vercoren. (203r)
 - 'Tribulation is the treasure that the Son of God chose in this world.'
- (24) Hoe seer lijdsam is <u>onsen Heer</u> God in te verdraghen onser misdaden. (210r)'How very patient is God Our Lord in tolerating our crimes.'
- (25) In enen onlijdsamen mensche sijn <u>heren toorn</u> ende verwoetheit ende besitten hem. (211r) 'In an impatient human there is fierce rage and anger and [they, JR] possess him.'
- (26) In deser becoringhen ende in anderen becoringhen en mach den viant niemant verwinnen also langhe als hi sinen vrien wil wel beschicht hevet. (232v)
 'In this temptation and in other temptations, the devil cannot triumph over anyone as long as he has control over his free will.'
- (27) Daer om pijnt den viant mit al sijnre cracht inden utersten den mensche vanden ghelove te brenghen. (232v) 'Therefore the devil tries with all his force to take away faith from the human at the end.'
- (28) *Niet <u>minen wille</u>, mer die uwe gheschie.* (240r) 'Not my will, but yours be done.'
- (29) Dit visioen vertelde <u>desen cappellaen</u> veel luden. (261v) 'This chaplain told this vision to many people.'
- (30) Sich an hoe dat die helle een verveerlic afgront is (...) als <u>enen</u> <u>oven</u> daer die vlamme of anxtelike uut slaet. (262r) 'See how hell is a horrible abyss (...), like an oven that fiercely emits a flame.'

The accusatives are 1) subject of the sentence, as in (13), (16), (18), (20), (24), (25), (26), (27), (28), (29), subject of the relative clause, as in (19); 2) predicative complement, as in (14), (17), (21), predicative complement in a comparative structure, as in (30); 3) part of an enumeration in the nominative case, as in (15), or in a predicative complement function, as in (22), in which they appear to alternate with nominatives for stylistic reasons; whereas the accusative and nominative are inverted in *die den Gods soen* (23) – the relative pronoun *die* being the object in the relative clause and *den Gods soen* being the subject. However, in the following three sentences, the nominative is hyper-correctly used instead of the accusative:

- (31) Die dochter des conincs Astragis beteikende Mariam, die der werlt voert ghebrocht heeft <u>die goedertieren ende gherechten wijngaert</u>.
 (10r)
 - 'The king's daughter Astragis prefigured Mary, who produced for the world the merciful and just vineyard.'
- (32) Salicheit der zielen is biecht, want si reinicht die sondaer ende maect hem rechtveerdich. (186r)
 'Confession is sanctity of the soul, because it cleanses the sinner and makes him righteous.'
- (33) Wanneer dat toorn den sin beroert, so verstoertse die woeninghe des heilighen gheestes ende verdrijft <u>die vader</u> ende <u>die soen</u>.

 (195r)
 - 'When anger touches the mind, it destroys the dwelling of the Holy Spirit and chases away the Father and the Son.'

In (31), the article *die* in *die* goedertieren ende gherechten wijngaert displays the nominative form, whilst the adjective gherechten displays the accusative ending –en. The adjective goedertieren in this phrase can be both nominative and accusative, because it can remain uninflected (Robbe 2014:227-228). In (32), *die sondaer* is the direct object and should have been accusative. In (33), both *die vader* and *die soen* are direct object and should therefore have been accusative.

The examples presented above (plus a further example I discuss below) represent an exhaustive list of all the accusative and nominative mistakes in the Utrecht manuscript. These mistakes occur too frequently to categorise them as mere oversight (on average, there is a mistake every twelve pages) and they are only possible in a syncretic situation. Moreover, they are not random: they generally occur before the wordinitial segments that condition the use of -n in the adnominal suffix for the masculine singular in modern Dutch dialects: h (20, 24), d (15, 16), t(25), b(17), r(18) and vowel (17, 30), but also – and even more frequently - before s (13, 32, 33), v (19, 21, 26, 27, 33), w (15,17, 22, 28) and g (14, 23, 31). We may therefore assume that *n*-deletion in the underlying spoken language was conditioned and, as such, situate this dialect in phase 3. In light of this, the following question arises: How do these additional segments relate to the conditioning segments in the modern dialects? The conditions for *n*-deletion in the modern dialects have long been the subject of debate among phonologists, because (h), d, t, b, r and vowel do not constitute a 'natural class' in terms of distinctive features

(Taeldeman 1986; De Vriendt 2001; MAND 2005:62). However, De Wulf and Taeldeman (2001; quoted in MAND 2005:62) have shown that, by setting aside *vowel* and h, the combined use of a positive and negative feature specification does in fact show naturalness, as n has the features [+anterior] and [-continuant] in common with d, t, b and does not differ in either of the features [coronal] and [voice]. Also, from an assimilation point of view, we could argue that conservation or insertion of n is natural before *vowel* or h (especially in h-less dialects) in order to avoid hiatus, and that n – itself a dental consonant – is conserved before other dental consonants, including r. Before b, n can be assimilated to m, which can then be deleted by nasalisation of the preceding vowel. Both stages exist in Dutch dialects (MAND 2005:62). The conditioning segments in the Utrecht manuscript seem to fit and support this point of view: s and v are dental consonants; the bilabial semi-vowel w is related to both vowels and bilabial b; and g can be linked to h, as laryngealisation may have pushed g in the direction of h.⁵ The non-native word cappellaen in (29) raises the question of the historic pronunciation: it may have been pronounced as in contemporaneous French with initial [/] or as in modern Dutch with initial [k]; however, considering the conditioning of the n-deletion discussed above, the dental French pronunciation is more likely. We can thus distinguish between the following groups: a vowel-group; a dental group (larger than the dental group in modern dialects) that contains d, t, r, v, s and f; a bilabial group that contains b and w; and a laryngeal group that contains h and g.

Syncretism and conditional *n*-deletion in the underlying spoken dialect can also account for the mistake in the following apposition:

(34) Die coninginne Thamari prefigureerde oec Mariam, die den alren wreetsten Cyrum, die manslachtighen, onthoefde. (113r) 'Queen Tomyris also prefigured Mary, who decapitated the very cruel Cyrus, the murderer.'

In this sentence, *die manslachtighen* is an apposition to *Cyrum*, the object of the relative sentence, and should therefore be accusative. In effect, only the nominalised adjective is accusative, whereas the article shows the nominative case. This is likely to correspond to the (syncretised) spoken

As such, g as a fifteenth-century conditioning segment can shed light on the chronology of the laryngealisation process in the northern Dutch dialects.

language, as n-deletion must have taken place before m. In modern Dutch dialects in Belgium, nominalised adjectives with masculine referents in the singular also always take -n, whereas adnominal n-deletion, as mentioned above, occurs before certain word-initial segments. In the West-Flemish phrase $den\ diksten\ en\ de\ magersten$ ('the fattest and the thinnest', referring to men in the singular), we can witness exactly the same phenomenon: the nominalised adjectives take -n, whilst the n is conserved in the article before d and deleted before m.

As has now become evident, the above-mentioned mistakes strongly indicate that syncretism of nominative and accusative has taken place and that the *n*-deletion is conditioned in a similar way to modern Dutch dialects in Belgium and in the seventeenth-century dialect in Holland. Given that the manuscript dates from 1464 and that the process of syncretism occurred between 1350 and 1670, this is in line with our expectations. Moreover, both the syncretism of nominative and accusative and the conditioning of *n*-deletion must have affected gender categorisation. We may assume that, similar to the seventeenth-century Holland dialect, the fifteenth-century Utrecht dialect has three categories of nouns: (1) a degroup, (2) a (h)et-group and (3) a den-group; the first containing historical feminine nouns and historical masculine nouns with different word-initial segments than nouns in the den-group, the second containing historical neuter nouns, and the third containing masculine nouns with d, t, r, v, s, f, b, w, h, g and vowel as word-initial segments. However, because of this large class of conditioning segments, gender must have been more stable in the fifteenth-century Utrecht dialect than in the seventeenth-century Holland dialect. First of all, there were more words in the *den*-group, but we also have to take into consideration that historically masculine words in the de-group did not suddenly lose all adnominal n-support. For example, in modern West-Flemish, generally only t, d, b, (h) and vowel are n-conserving word-initial segments, but, in a phrase like den oudste win e(s) nie(t) altit den besten ('the oldest wine is not always the best'), the historically masculine de-noun win ('wine') is surrounded by no fewer than three adnominal *n*-suffixes. In the fifteenth-century Utrecht dialect, this kind of *n*-support, considering the amount of *n*-conserving segments,

In the Utrecht manuscript, de appears as <die>, except after the relative pronoun die, cf. <die de> (90r, 173v, 191r, 216r, 220v, 231r); (h)et appears both as <het> (9v, 57v, 93r [2x], 94r [2x], 179v, 184r, 187r, 193v, 194r, 197r, 199v, 214r, 225v, 232r, 232v, 233r, 233v, 236r, 247r, 247v, 260r, 262r, 263r [3x], 368v [2x]) and as <dat> (which is the normal form).

must have been even stronger, and it therefore seems unlikely that many shifts from masculine to feminine gender could have taken place. Only words like *pot* ('pot') and *kerker* ('dungeon') could theoretically undergo a gender shift from masculine to feminine, as they do not begin with any *n*-conserving segments and do not refer to people or animals of the masculine sex; however, they could still enjoy strong adnominal gender support. In the Utrecht manuscript, there is only a single attestation for *pot* (with a masculine gender marker): *bri cleeft anden pot* ('porridge sticks to the pot'); whereas *kerker* has eight attestations with nine gender markers, seven of which display masculine gender: *tot den ewighen kerker* (7v), *vanden kerker* (28r, 51r), *inden kerker* (50v), *totten kerker* (50v, 261v), and two of which display feminine gender: *in die kerker* (7v) and *inder kerker* (27v).

Having established nominative-accusative syncretism and conditional *n*-deletion of the adnominal suffix for the masculine singular in the Utrecht fifteenth-century dialect, we can conclude that, although there is a sharp distinction between the two cases in the manuscript, the difference between the nominative *die* and the accusative *den* is not informed by the underlying dialect, whereas gender stability in the manuscript is still largely supported by the underlying dialect.

5. Genitive and dative

In the seventeenth century, *der* and *des* – the historical G.sg.f./G.pl./D.sg.f. and G.sg.m/n. forms of the definite article respectively – no longer exist in Holland dialects except in fixed expressions, and the -*s* attached to the noun no longer acts as a gender marker but as a formal case marker on proper names and kinship terms, in which case it is expanded to feminine nouns (Geerts 1966:179). As such, there is no difference between seventeenth-century Dutch in Holland and the modern Dutch standard language (Geerts 1966:180).⁸ At first glance, the situation in the seventeenth century (and in modern Dutch) seems very different from the situation in the Utrecht manuscript. But it is not as different as one might think. In the manuscript, there is also clear evidence that -*s* has become a formal case marker and no longer acts as a gender marker. This can be illustrated with the example of the noun *moeder* ('mother'):

⁷ We may also assume that the feminisation of *kerker* was helped by the confusion with *kerke* (cf. MNW *kerker* and *kerke*).

Another use of the genitive, which survives in modern Dutch, is the partitive genitive of substantivated adjectives after pronouns: *wat beters* ('something better'), *iets lekkers* ('something tasty') (Weijnen 1971:42).

- (35) Laet ons horen die droefheit sijns alre soetsten moeders. (95r) 'Let us hear his very sweet mother's sorrow'.
- (36) Dat speer (...) doer ghinc dat herte des levende moeders. (110r) 'The spear (...) went through the living mother's heart.'
- (37) Die punten der doornen (...) wonden dat hert sijns moeders. (110r) 'The points of the thorns wounded his mother's heart.
- (38) Aensiet dat liden Cristi ende die ellende sijns moeders. (133v) 'Look at the Passion of Christ and his mother's suffering.'
- (39) Salomon, die coninc, settede die troon sijns moeders ter rechterhant. (135v)'King Solomon put his mother's throne at his right side.'
- (40) Die bose en gehengeden niet dattu na gewoenliker manieren eens moeders sijn oghen sluten mochts. (169v) 'The evil [Jews, JR] did not allow you to shut his eyes in a mother's traditional way.'
- (41) Doe dat onsprekende kijnt Johannes in den buuc sijns moeders hem verblide. (173v)'When the infant John rejoiced in his mother's womb.'

Since it refers to a woman, the noun *moeder* is unambiguously feminine, but, in (35) to (41), *moeder* is treated as a masculine noun. The ending -s is attached to the noun and, moreover, the pronoun *sijns* (35, 37, 38, 39, 41), the definite article *des* (36) and the indefinite article *eens* (40) are genitive. This indicates an expansion of the masculine singular -s in the genitive, regardless of the gender.

A similar trend can be seen in the dative. Just as the masculine singular ending -s expands to feminine nouns in the genitive, the masculine singular ending -n expands to feminine nouns in the dative. A good example is bloem(e) – an unambiguously feminine noun (cf. MNW: bloeme). There are three attestations of bloem(e) in an accusative singular context with four gender-marked determiners or adjectives, none of which displays the masculine ending -n, which is to be expected (see table 1 at the end of this article). There are also four attestations in a dative singular context, where bloem(e) is preceded by a preposition (in and van) and a pronominal determiner (dese): in deser bloemen (12v), van deser bloemen (12v, 13r) and van desen bloemen (13r). In the last prepositional phrase, the determiner reveals the expansion of masculine flexion.

There is no doubt about the singular, since the text refers to *die alre vromentlic bloeme Cristum* ('the most beautiful flower Christ').

In addition to bloem(e), the nouns min(ne) 'love', rust(e) 'rest' and wrake/wraeck 'revenge', which are all Germanic (j) \bar{o} -stems and unambiguously feminine (cf. MNW: minne, ruste, wrake), also provide valid examples of the expansion of masculine flexion in the dative and genitive singular.¹⁰

There are 21 attestations of *min(ne)* in the accusative singular context with 22 gender-marked determiners or adjectives, none of which displays the masculine ending -n (see table 2). There are 22 attestations of *min(ne)* in a dative singular context with 27 gender-marked determiners or adjectives, all of which display the feminine ending -r. Finally, there are 29 attestations of *min(ne)* in a genitive singular context with 37 gender-marked determiners or adjectives. Of these, 35 display the feminine ending. In the genitive possessive phrase [*die edelste soen*] *des vaderliken minne* ('[the noblest son] of fatherly love') (254r), the article displays -s and the adjective takes the weak ending -(e)n, which is the usual adjective ending in a masculine genitive singular context (Robbe 2014:231-233).

There are three attestations of rust(e) in an accusative singular context with four gender-marked determiners or adjectives, none of which displays the masculine ending (see table 3). There are no attestations in a dative singular context, but there is an attestation of rust(e) in a genitive singular context: [inder stat] des rustes (255r) ('[in the place] of rest'). Again, an unambiguously feminine noun is inflected as a masculine noun.

There are three attestations of wrake/wraeck in an accusative singular context with four gender-marked determiners or adjectives, none of which displays the masculine ending (see table 4). There are three attestations of wrake/wraeck in a dative singular context: vander wraken (139v, 149r) and vanden wraken (9r). In the first two instances, the article displays the feminine form and, in the third instance, it displays the masculine form. Just like min(ne) in the genitive singular, wrake is treated is a masculine noun in the dative singular. Unfortunately, there are no attestations in a genitive singular context.

The noun *son(ne)* ('sun') is an interesting example. Although this noun is labelled as both feminine and masculine in the MNW, the only basis for its masculine attribution is the one attestation in the Utrecht manuscript

I have chosen to disregard Germanic *i*-stems such as *werlt* ('world') and *cracht* ('craft', 'power'), because these nouns are listed in the MNW as both masculine and feminine (even though there are few attestations for the masculine gender) (cf. MNW: *werelt* and *cracht*). However, it is not unlikely that the expansion process of –*s* in the genitive may have originated from *i*-stems, since they could take –*s* in the genitive singular in Old Saxon (Van Helten 1887:§276).

in a genitive singular context. There are two attestations of son(ne) in the manuscript in an accusative singular context with three gender-marked determiners or adjectives, none of which displays the masculine ending (see table 5). There are six attestations of son(ne) in a dative singular context with eight gender-marked determiners or adjectives, six of which display the feminine ending. In the phrase den waraftighen sonne (16v) ('to the real sun'), the article and the adjective display masculine flexion. Finally, there are 14 attestations of son(ne) in a genitive singular context. 13 display the feminine form of the article. In the phrase hetten des sonnes (3v) ('the sun's heat), sonne displays masculine flexion. However, since we now know that the flexion of sonne is no different from bloem(e), min(ne), rust(e) and wrake/wraeck, and, as such, its attestation in the Utrecht manuscript provides no counterevidence for its feminine gender, it is perhaps time to reconsider its 'masculine' label in the MNW. Moreover, since there is no reason to assume this is an isolated instance, it could prove worthwhile to undertake a systematic review of the MNW to eliminate gender determination on the basis of fifteenth-century attestations of nouns with generalised masculine flexion in the genitive and the dative respectively.

The expansion of masculine flexion also applies to derived nouns with a suffix which imposes the feminine gender class, such as heit derivatives (Van Loey 1976:18) (see table 6). In the Utrecht manuscript, there are 90 heit derivatives in an accusative singular context with 112 gendermarked determiners or adjectives, none of which displays the masculine ending. There are 126 heit derivatives in a dative singular context with 133 gender-marked determiners or adjectives. 129 determiners or adjectives display the feminine ending and four display the masculine ending. Two of these occur in combination with determiners with feminine flexion in the same prepositional phrase. In one instance, the article displays the feminine ending and the adjective displays the masculine ending: mits der smaliken sericheit (80r) ('by humiliating pain'); in another instance, the possessive pronoun displays the feminine ending and the adjective displays the masculine ending: tot sijnre meerren smaetheit (81r) ('in order to increase his humiliation'). However, in both these instances, the ending -en could also be interpreted as a weak adjective ending.¹¹ In contrast, in the phrase

An argument in favour of this interpretation is the fact that weak declension is the historical declension for comparative adjectives, such as *meerre* (Paul 2007:204). It is also worth mentioning that we could consider *smaliken* as a non-inflected adjective with a historical modal dative plural ending (Paul 2007:206).

voerden dancbaerheit (17v) ('for the gratitude'), the article unambiguously displays the masculine singular form.

Furthermore, *heit* derivatives also demonstrate the expansion of masculine flexion in the genitive singular. There are 62 *heit* derivatives in the Utrecht manuscript in a genitive singular context with 66 gendermarked determiners or adjectives, 63 of which display the feminine ending and three of which display the masculine ending. In two instances, the masculine flexion seems to be triggered by the flexion of the preceding noun: *mit der gaven des medelidens ende des goetheit* (13r) ('with the gift of compassion and goodness') and *tot behoef des rijcs ende des mogentheits* (67v) ('for the benefit of the kingdom and the power'). However, this cannot account for the form *des* in *die bloem des joncheit* (155v) ('the flower of youth'), which constitutes a clear case of the expansion of the masculine singular ending -s in an independent syntactic context.

Finally, the following sentences demonstrate very clearly that the dative ending -n has lost its function as a masculine gender marker:

- (42) Mer dit is die bedudinghe <u>naden godliker figueren</u> (28r) 'But this is the meaning according to the divine prefiguration.'
- (43) Die soon Gods nedergheclommen vanden hemel in deser werlt op dat hi hiliken soude <u>anden menscheliker natueren</u>. (108r)
 'The son of God has descended from the sky in order to be united with human nature.'

In (42) and (43), the article *den* acts as an enclitic attachment to the preposition – an invariable particle signalling the dative case –, whereas the adjective is inflected in agreement with the noun's feminine gender. It is clear that this could not occur if *-n* still acted as a gender marker. This levelling of gender in the dative, whereby different gender-markers occur in the same phrase, also has its parallel in the genitive. In the possessive determiner phrase [*mit der cronen*] *der ewigher sijns rijcs* (178v) ('[with the crown] of his eternal kingdom'), both the ending *-r* and *-s* are used alongside each other, similar to the combined use of different gender markers in (42) and (43).

6. Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to begin to answer the question of what happened to the case system in Dutch between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries by examining nominal flexion in a fifteenth-century Utrecht manuscript. Although the manuscript reveals the presence of a functional case system, a number of mistakes – grammatical errors as well as hypercorrections – show that this case system is no longer supported by the underlying spoken dialect. The mistakes in the manuscript concern both the use of cases (accusative and nominative) and the use of gender (in the genitive and dative case).

The mistakes concerning the use of the accusative instead of the nominative and vice versa not only reveal syncretism between these cases, but also make it possible to gain a better understanding of the conditioning of the n-deletion in this syncretic phase and the effect of this conditioning on gender categorisation. With d, t, r, v, s, f, b, w, h, g and vowel as n-conserving word-initial segments, the underlying dialect must have had a larger group of den-words and thus more gender stability than any modern Dutch dialect.

Although gender was relatively stable, genitive and dative endings had lost their function as gender markers and masculine flexion had become the default in both cases. This situation constitutes an important link between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries. In the thirteenth century, genitive and dative endings were gender markers as well as case markers. In the seventeenth century, the genitive *des*, with exception of fossilised expressions, had ceased to exist in the spoken language, whereas the genitive ending *-s* mainly appeared in connection with proper names and kinship names. The dative case, with the exception of fossilised expressions, had also ceased to exist.

Finally, the expansion of masculine flexion in the genitive and dative has consequences for the determination of nominal gender, which the genitive and the dative do not reveal. In order to determine the gender of a fifteenth-century noun, we can only look at the nominative and accusative.

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Tables

Table 1: bloem(e)

	Gender-marked determiners or adjectives	
	F	M
A	die bloeme (12r), een begheerlike bloem (14v), dese bloem (15r)	
D	in deser bloemen (12v), van deser bloemen (12v, 13r)	van desen bloemen (13r)
G		

Table 2: min(ne)

	Gender-marked determiners or adjectives		
	F	M	
A	grote minne (7v, 57r), gheen min (32v), die minne (36r, 245v, 245v, 247r, 243v), onbegripelike minne (159r) meerre minne (7v, 159r, 159v, 161v, 162r, 224r, 267v), gheen volcomen minne (235r), dese minne (86v [2x], 98v), gheen ghewaer minne (235r)		
D	mit der minnen (15v), uut puerre minnen (33v), om der minnen (56v), van godliker minnen (60r), in mijnre minnen (125r), van onderlingher minnen (155r), bi deser wonderliker minnen (159v), mit sulker groter minnen (177r), ter minnen (190r, 198r), vander minnen (198r, 198v), inder godliker minnen (287v), mit haerre minnen (230v), overmits dijnre minnen (252v), mit volcomender minnen (254v), overmits dier onsprekeliker minnen (255r), inder selver minnen (255r), overmits der minnen (255v), mit sienliker minnen (259v), overmits deser minnen (261r), overmits sijnre minnen (261r)		
G	dijnre min (160v), der beruster minne (254r), der minnen boec (10v, 97r, 132r), der alre volmaecster minnen (15v), der minnen (33v, 65r, 128v, 132r, 132v, 187v, 217r, 221v, 230r, 237v, 243v, 254v), onghemetenre minnen (86r), der godliker minnen (86r), sijnre ewiger minnen (134v), dijnre minnen (177v), sijnre minnen (180v), sijnre minnen (192r), der godliker minnen (200r, 218v), sijnre minnen (209), der onsprekeliker minnen (261r)	des vaderliken minne (254r)	

Table 3: rust(e)

	Gender-marked determiners or adjectives	
	F	M
A	die ewige ruste (257r), die ruste (258r), gheen ruste (218r)	
D		
G		des rustes (255r)

Table 4: wrake/wraeck

	Gender-marked determiners or adjectives	
	F	M
A	danighe wraeck (72r), ghelike wrake (207r), die ewighe wrake (236v)	
D	vander wraken (139v, 149r)	vanden wraken (9r)
G		

Table 5: son(ne)

	Gender-marked determiners or adjectives	
	F	M
A	die sonne (101r), een claer sonne (14v)	
D	der sonnen (16v), bider sonnen (16r, 30r, 174v), mit der claerre sonnen (135r)	den waraftighen sonne (16v)
G	der sonnen (16r, 16v [8x], 57v, 58v, 112r, 184v)	des sonnes (3v)

Table 6: heit derivatives

Gender-n	Gender-marked determiners or adjectives	
F		M
A gheen hee siecheit (5 bequaemh begeerlich salicheit (groenheit [2x]), die reinheit (3 oncuische (47v), die menichfor overvloed begheerlic (65v), alle goetheit (84r), alle dese droef droefheit (124r), die alle droeffe (135r), die trouwehei (155r), die trouwehei (159r), alle die ewighe (159r), alle ander droefheit (162r), die ander droefheit (162r), die ander droefheit (159r), die droefheit (159r),	rlicheit (2r), lange ghesontheit (5r), die ewig r), gheen onderscheidenheit (13v), enighe eit (13v), die soetheit (14v), alle wellustende eit (14r), die godheit (15v, 86r, 104v), die 18v, 82r, 85v), groot onderscheit (20v), sijn (25r), dijn waerheit (27r), die groenheit (29v), die maechdelike reinicheit (31r), die 2v), die maechdelike reinicheit (32v), gheen it (35r), die bermherticheit (41v), die gulsich ontfermherticheit (50r), die hoecheit (50v), dicheit (50v), sijn goedertierenheit (51r), alle cheit (56r), die waerheit (57v, 68r, 74r), alle heit (58r), rechte vasticheit (59v), grote boes smaetheit (70r), sulke lijdsamheit (78v), die 3v), die soeticheit (83v [2x]), dese wreetheit mogentheit (87v, 100v), die droefheit (95r, 9) heit (95r), grote bitterheit (98r), die alre mee 101v), die grootheit (103r), die overste hoec scoenheit (124v), die godlike claerheit (124v), die godlike claerheit (124v), die soete teghenwoerdicheit (124v), die soete teghenwoerdicheit (124v), sijn vergetelheit (147v), die ewige vestiche oncuuscheit (136r), die giericheit (136v), sijn vergetelheit (147v), die mogent goetheit (157v), die hemelsche hoecheit es smaetheit (161r), warachtige lijdsaemheit es maetheit (161r), warachtige lijdsaemheit es maetheit (161r), warachtige lijdsaemheit es maetheit (161r), die vierde droefheit (168v), die efheit (164v), die vierde droefheit (168v), die 169r), die vijfte droefheit (169r), die seste 170r), grote sericheit (170r), die sevende 171r), sijn teghenwoerdicheit (171r), alre su	the die die de

overmits der bermherticheit (1r), ter rechtvaerdicheit (10r), mits haere vastheit (11r), vander hoecheit (1r), mit groter neersticheit (6v), bi sijnre barmherticheit (7v), inder ewicheit (15r), mit der suverheit (15v), voer onser salicheit (17r), inder ewicheit (19v,), van onbehoerliker oncuischeit (19v), van hare salicheit (20v), inder ewicheit (21r), om der reinicheit (21r), inder ewicheit (21v [2x], 26v, 102r), van haere kijntscheit (24r), der mogentheit (30r), om sijnre edelheit (33v), tot der hoecheit (34r), in haere hoecheit (37r), inder outheit (41r), mits sijnre onmetelheit (41r), mits sijnre bermherticheit (47r), vander gulsicheit (47r), mits der gulsicheit (47r), bider gulsicheit (47v), van sijnre stercheit (48r), vander ontfermherticheit (50r [2x]), mits sijnre bermherticheit (51r), ter quaetheit (51v), tot dijnre tegenwoerdicheit (53r), vander onsalicheit (53v), van deser sueticheit (58v [2x]), mit alre sachtmoedicheit (62r), inder quaetheit (66v), mit alre sachtmoedicheit (69v), mit veelre smalicheit (69v), omder waerheit (74v), in sijnre smaetheit (78v), mit groter lijdsamheit (78v), mits der (...) sericheit (80r), tot sijnre (...) smaetheit (81r), van groter soeticheit (85r), om sijnre eerbaerheit (85v), inder godheit (90v, 93r), na onser salicheit (92r), uut der grootheit (92v), inder menscheit (93r), in sijnre teghenwoerdicheit (93v), inder ewicheit (95r, 96r, 117v), der ewicheit (110r), mit groter droefheit (95r), in sijnre droefheit (96r), van haerre droefheit (97r), mit der godheit (102v), tot dijnre tegenwoerdicheit (106r), bi eenre ghelijcheit (106r), om sijnre snootheit (107v), om sijnre heilicheit (107v), om sijnre smaetheit (107v), mit der godheit (113v), mit sijnre teghenwoerdicheit (114v), mit mijnre menschelicheit (125v), mit mijnre godheit (125v), om groter verscrictheit (126v), inder waerheit (128r), inder overvloedicheit (128r), omder sueticheit (128v), tot gheenre vuulheit (134r), mit der godheit (135r), bider idelheit (136r), bi sijnre dwaesheit (137v), bi hare wijsheit (139r), vander onweerdicheit (139v), voer onser salicheit (143r), inder ewicheit (143r), mit sijnre rechtvaerdicheit (146v), mit hare ontfermherticheit (146v), nader grootheit (147v), inder teghenwoerdicheit (148v), groter lelicheit (151r), inder ewicheit (155v), in groter rijcheit (167v), tot dier ewigher vrolicheit (158r), mit dicker ende devoter dancbaerheit (158v),

mits (...) smaliken sericheit (80r), tot (...) meerren smaetheit (81r), voerden dancbaerheit (17v)

- D bi deser overovervloedigher oetmoedicheit (159r), tot dijnre tegenwoerdicheit (159v), mit alre sachtmoedicheit (160r), bider smaetheit (161r), mit groter lijdsamheit (162r), om deser smaetheit (162r), om der meester versmaetheit (163v), tot dijnre versmaetheit (163v), vander droefheit (164v), mit der alre grootster droefheit (165r), mit der alre groetster sericheit (165r), mit groter sericheit (166r), in groter droefheit (166r), om deser droefheit (166v), mit groter nidicheit (167r), bi deser droefheit (167r, 168r, 171v), bi dijnre verghetelheit (167v), tot der hoecheit (168r), mit groter droefheit (168r, 170r), bi deser droefheit (169v, 170v), na deser onsalicheit (170r), van maechdeliker reinicheit (171r), mit groter droefheit (171v), van deser droefheit (171v), mit vrolicheit (173v), tot sijnre teghenwoerdicheit (176r), inder ewicheit (176r)
- der onsalicheit (4v), der ontfermherticheit (8r), der salicheit (8r), der heiligher drievoudicheit (11r), der salicheit (11v), der traecheit (13v), der stercheit (13v), der ghiericheit (14r), der gulsicheit (14r), der oncuischeit (14v), dijnre sueticheit (15r), der alre reinste suverheit (15v), haere reinicheit (20r), onser menschelicheit (26r), der ewigher vrolicheit (26r), dijnre mogentheit (27r), der heiligher drievoldicheit (28r), der maechdeliker suverheit (32v), der bermherticheit (36r [2x]), der goedertierenheit (36v), der ontfermherticheit (36v), sijnre outheit (41v), der gulsicheit (47v, 48r), der giericheit (49r), der salicheit (49v), sijnre bermherticheit (53r), der ontfermherticheit (55r), danigher voersichticheit (66r), der boesheit (86r, 100r), der waerheit (94v), onser salicheit (98r), groter wreetheit (99r), der sinlicheit (103r), der godheit (104r), der vrolicheit (110v), der menschelicheit (115v), der godheit (115v), onser salicheit (122v), der waerheit (123v), der ewicheit (124v), sijnre teghenwoerdicheit (130r, 170r), der menschelicheit (131r), der giericheit (136r), der vuulheit (138r), der nidicheit (140v), der ontfermherticheit (148v, 149r), dijnre goetheit (158r), der alre volmaecster oetmoedicheit (159r), der groenheit (174r), der enicheit (178r), onser duusterheiden (37r), der dancberheiden (75v), der ontfermherticheiden (86v, 251v)

des goetheit (13r), des mogentheits (67v), des joncheit (155v)