The first part of the book was devoted to the spatial context in which the domestic material culture was set. Emphasis was put on the relationship between people and spaces, objects mainly figured as parameters to uncover the daily activities that were performed in different kinds of domestic spaces. The second part of the book examines the associations of household objects and domestic activities by putting these objects in their original use context. In the Bruges inventories, a wide range of objects was listed, relating to all kinds of domestic activities, responding to household needs, and they were obtained locally or from a distance and employing diverse technologies.

The field of material culture research – and more specifically research on the material culture of the home – has benefitted greatly from the different ‘turns’ the disciplines across the humanities have experienced throughout the last few decades: the ‘material turn’, with its attention to the ‘materiality’ of things and the ‘spatial turn’, in which ‘spatiality’ was ‘simultaneously a social product (or outcome) and a shaping force (or medium) in social life’ (discussed in the general introduction). The volume *Everyday Objects*, published in 2010 by Richardson and Hamling, has proven seminal in foregrounding the study of the materiality of household objects. *Everyday Objects* could even be considered a strong representative of this new strand of scholarship, taking the first steps in combining both ‘turns’ by relating objects, spaces and people to one another and connecting individuals to wider social and cultural events through their environment of materiality, a new kind of ‘turn’ that was already instigated by scholars writing about city palaces in Renaissance Italy. The authors of *Everyday Objects* proposed an integrated and multidisciplinary approach characterized by a specific methodological interest in the use of artefacts as source materials, and especially aimed towards a type of historical analysis that gives as much space to materiality as has previously been given to economic or political forces, kinship or gender.

Although the study of everyday life generated some strain on existing sources and methodologies in history and historiography, the methodological gaze did not go to artefacts and objects as sources alone; the value of archival documents to
uncover the dialectic relationship between the spatial context and the meaning of objects did not entirely lose attention either. Some years before the publication of *Everyday Objects*, Evans already argued that probate inventories would ‘easily’ allow research on the functions and multiple meanings of objects.\(^5\)

In this part of the book, we intend to revalue the use of archival sources to study domestic culture by focusing on the textual assemblages of objects in inventories to deduce cultures of use.\(^6\) Some objects – for instance a ‘chimney cloth’ – betray their spatial and contextual arrangement in a discursive way, while other objects are sporadically linked to specific places such as the linen in the wardrobe, the candlesticks on the chimney mantle, armour and weapons in large chests, washing basins and bathtubs in specific bathing ensembles linked to the kitchen. Yet, most importantly, even the mass of unlocated objects in such room-by-room listings can be approached in a spatial way by taking the ‘word distance’ between the objects into account. Concretely, this means that we can deduce the location of objects in a particular room – their relation towards each other and thus their spatial context – by assessing the sequence of the objects listed in that same room. Of course, to do this for a broad data sample, the methodology necessitates a complex data architecture designed for taking into account the specificities of the sources and to ensure that all the bits and pieces of information could be captured. It is necessary, therefore, not only to insert the objects mentioned in each inventory into a database but also to take into account their material typologies and their position in the lists as a whole. To achieve this, only inventories that list the material culture in a systematic room-by-room approach were included for this part of the research.

In the following chapters, particular object clusters are discussed: in the first chapter, attention goes to panel and canvas paintings; in the second chapter, the main role is played by household textiles, decorative textiles, seating and sleeping furniture. All these objects were both part of an increasing spectrum of decorative and ornamental furnishings and of an ever more varied array of utilitarian objects and furniture that was put to use in people’s houses.