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## Introduction

*Faithful to the Cross in a Moving World: Late Medieval Carthusians  
as Devotional Reformers*

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### Abstract

This is the introduction to the thematic issue *Faithful to the Cross in a Moving World: Late Medieval Carthusians as Devotional Reformers*. The editors discuss how the Carthusian order expanded in the Late Middle Ages and how, in contrast to the first Carthusians, new charterhouses were created in or close to the cities. The introduction studies how this change came about, connecting it to the order's origin in the monastic reform movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the changing economy of piety in the Late Middle Ages, and developing ideas as to what was the best form of religious life.

### Keywords

Carthusians – Late medieval reform

\* The editors and authors would like to dedicate this issue to a great Carthusian scholar, Dennis D. Martin, recently deceased.

pietate in 1398, the Carthusian Henry Egger of Kalkar (d. 1408) contrasted the rise of lay heresy and moral decline in the “traditional” religious orders with the steadfastness of his order.<sup>1</sup> Such narratives of Carthusian moral constancy in the face of trouble had provided Henry’s order—in twenty-first-century marketing terminology—with a strong “brand identity.” To many a late medieval audience, the phrase “the Carthusians” would evoke an image of the perfect monks, living in seclusion, and practicing a very ascetic form of life, in silence, completely focused on God and self-sanctification after the model of the Desert Fathers, who were considered the best imitators of Christ since persecution of Christians stopped.<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary reformist thinkers such as John of Ruusbroec (d. 1381) and Geert Grote (1340–1384) praised the Carthusian monks “above all others” for their purity and steadfastness,<sup>3</sup> which, as Henry Egger detailed in his chronicle, had been molded by the exterior regulations governing Carthusian life, such as the order’s visitation system or its observances with respect to seclusion, maintaining silence, office, and prayer, along with works of penance and fasting.<sup>4</sup> Egger’s main argument, however, was that the Carthusians engaged in these penitential practices “joyfully, gladly, benevolently and freely, without coercion by precepts and constraints, but rather by devout will.”<sup>5</sup> This devotional interiorization, focusing on pious exercises rather than engaging in speculative

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- 1 H.B.C.W. Vermeer, *Het tractaat “Ortus et decursus Ordinis Cartusienensis” van Hendrik Egger van Kalkar*, met een biographische inleiding (Wageningen, 1929), 133: “Sunt orti ... fugatis ab ecclesia ... et pseudo-apostolis hereticis”; 135: “Turpiter etiam de paradiso sunt eieci ... declinantes cotidie in obligationem diaboli cum operantibus iniquitatem communiter heu, heu, seducti”; and 135–136: “Cartusienses vero ... fugerunt semper a facie gladii Sathane.”
  - 2 See, for instance, Tyrannius Rufinus, *Historia monachorum sive de Vita Sanctorum Patrum*, ed. Eva Schulz-Flügel (Berlin/New York, 1990), Prologue, 243–247.
  - 3 On Geert Grote’s qualification of the Carthusian order as “recommended above all others” (*ordo pre ceteris commendatus*), and on the appraisal of the Carthusian order by Grote and Ruusbroec, as well as by their early followers, see Tom Gaens, “Fons hortorum irriguus, ceteras irrigans religiones. Carthusian Influences on Monastic Reform in Germany and the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century,” in *A Fish Out of Water? From Contemplative Solitude to Carthusian Involvement in Pastoral Care and Reform Activity* ed. Stephen J. Molvarec and Tom Gaens [Miscellanea Neerlandica 41/Studia Cartusiana 2] (Leuven, 2013), 56–58, and there for more references.
  - 4 Vermeer, *Het tractaat* (see above, n. 1), 136–138.
  - 5 Vermeer, *Het tractaat* (see above, n. 1), 138: “... ita letanter, gratanter, benivole et libere et sine preceptorum coactione aut inhibitionum, sed ex devota voluntate.”

theology and ecstatic mysticism, put the Carthusians in the forefront of the new movement of spirituality in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, on the crest of a wave striving for reform as an inner process, which Grote and Ruusbroec also endorsed.

Scholars such as Heinrich Rüthing, Jan de Grauwe, Dennis Martin, Kent Emery, and others have shown how late medieval Carthusians like Henry Eggher took a very active interest in the spiritual well-being of their fellow Christians and in the affairs of the Church.<sup>6</sup> The extent of their efforts in authoring, copying, and translating texts for both lay and religious readers is only gradually becoming clear. In addition, their work as visitors and reformers of religious communities outside their order has come to the fore, as has their involvement in ecclesiastical affairs, such as the Western Schism and the Conciliarist movement.<sup>7</sup>

This thematic issue aims at taking this field further by means of a series of case studies, which focus on the Carthusian contribution to devotional reform in the Later Middle Ages. This era can be regarded as the Carthusians' heyday, both in terms of influence and of growth. In the Low Countries alone, twenty monasteries for men or women were created, beginning with the charterhouse of Herne in 1314. Usually, these new foundations were located near cities or in an enclave within the city walls, rather than in the remote areas, which the first Carthusians had favored.<sup>8</sup> In his chronicle, Henry Eggher alluded

6 See, for instance, Dennis D. Martin, "Carthusians as Public Intellectuals: Cloistered Religious as Advisors to lay Elites on the Eve of the Protestant Reformation," in *Reassessing Reform: A Historical Investigation into Church Renewal*, ed. Christopher M. Bellitto and David Z. Flanagan (Washington, 2012), 232–253 and, by the same author, *Fifteenth-Century Carthusian Reform. The World of Nicholas Kempf* [Studies in the history of Christian thought 49] (Leiden, 1992); Frans Hendrickx and Tom Gaens eds., *Amo te, sacer ordo Carthusiensis. Jan De Grauwe, passionné de l'Ordre des Chartreux* [Miscellanea Neerlandica 38/Studia Cartusiana 1] (Leuven, 2012); Heinrich Rüthing, *Der Kartäuser Heinrich Eggher von Kalkar (1328–1408)* [Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 18/Studien zur Germania Sacra 8] (Göttingen, 1967); Stephen J. Molvarec and Tom Gaens ed., *A Fish Out of Water? From Contemplative Solitude to Carthusian Involvement in Pastoral Care and Reform Activity* [Miscellanea Neerlandica 41/Studia Cartusiana 2] (Leuven, 2013); K. Pansters ed., *The Carthusians in the Low Countries. Studies in Monastic History and Heritage* [Miscellanea Neerlandica 43/Studia Cartusiana 4] (Leuven, 2014); Kent Emery Jr., *Dionysii Cartusiensis. Opera Selecta. Prolegomena. Bibliotheca manuscripta 1A–1B: Studia bibliographica*, 2 vols. [Corpus christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis 121–121A] (Turnhout, 1991).

7 An overview is provided in Gaens, "Fons hortorum" (see above, n. 3).

8 Tom Gaens and Frans Hendrickx, "Het vaste ritme van verandering. Vijf eeuwen kartui-

to this evolution by relating a story of a Mendicant friar who reproached a prior of an urban charterhouse for not preaching, hearing confession, or performing works of charity. To these allegations, the Carthusian prior responded humbly: "Dear father, we come here to practice what you are preaching. And we would prefer to do this in a forest or a hermitage, if someone were to defend us against plunderers and criminals."<sup>9</sup> No doubt, the Carthusians had sound security (and socioeconomic) reasons for seeking patronage in or near urban environments, but their choice enhanced their claim that devotion was first and foremost a matter of the inner will. Living in or near the cities, they met the challenge of living an eremitical life in much closer physical proximity to the secular and religious city folk, whom they sought to inspire to a more devout life.

The Carthusians' continued good reputation showed that, at least as far as their contemporaries were concerned, they remained most successful in achieving exemplary devotion. However, their choice of new venues to practice a Carthusian lifestyle does seem to be a departure from their earlier desire to separate themselves from the world both physically and spiritually. Before giving an overview of the articles concerning this issue, the question will be addressed as to how the Carthusians came to choose to live much closer to the target groups of their reforming work.

## 1 Seeking Perfection

In the late medieval Carthusian order, three developments interacted: the order's origin in the monastic reform movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the changing economy of piety in the Late Middle Ages, and the swing of the pendulum as to what was the best form of religious life. Dedicated

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zergeschiedenis in de Nederlanden (1314–1796)," in *Het geheim van de stilte. De besloten wereld van de Roermondse kartuizers*, ed. Krijn Pansters (Zwolle, 2009), 30–47, 249–253.

9 Vermeer, *Het tractaat* (see above, n. 1), 129: "Allegant autem ipsi, eis invidentes, quod, circa civitates habitantes, panem Christi fidelium comedunt, otio vacantes, hoc est non predicantes, non confessiones audientes, nec aliter se ad proximum exercentes, sed sibi ipsis tantum in quiete viventes. Quorum invidentium cuidam, hoc uni priori, novam domum recipienti, satis austere improperanti, prior idem humiliter respondit: 'Dilecte pater, nos venimus hoc vivere, quod vos soletis predicare. Et hoc libentius faceremus in silvis vel heremis, si quis nos defenderet a raptoribus et maleficis.'" Thomas à Kempis included a similar story, but one clearly much more targeted against the Mendicants, in his *Vita of the Modern Devout Florens Radewijns*. Cf. Thomas à Kempis, *Dialogi novitiorum III*, ed. M.J. Pohl, *Opera omnia* (Friburgi Brisigavorum [Freiburg im Breisgau], 1902–1922), 7:175.

to furthering perfection, first in themselves but eventually also in others, the Carthusians responded to ecclesiastical and spiritual needs, as they perceived these.

The Carthusians contributed to the reinvention of the eremitical ideal in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Begun in 1084 by the canon Bruno of Cologne (d. 1101) as a retreat for hermits, their typical combination of eremitical and monastic life only became codified when the fifth prior of La Grande Chartreuse, Guigo I (d. 1136), wrote the *Consuetudines*, at the request of bishop Hugh of Grenoble (1080–1133).<sup>10</sup> The prior's prescriptions show that, as far as he was concerned, reform was primarily about the interior life of the monks and about the organization of the monastery. Imitating the tradition of the Desert Fathers, seclusion was seen as a *conditio sine qua non* for a truly pious life. Guigo was adamant about avoiding contact with the outside world and wanted to restrict it to an absolute minimum. For instance, the Carthusians obviously were supposed to practice charity towards the poor, but preferably the latter were not to come to the monastery. Instead, they were to wait for food to be distributed in the nearby villages.<sup>11</sup> Guigo also insisted on the strict observance of poverty. Most telling is the prohibition against commemorating secular donors in the *martyrologium*, giving dinners for them, or burying them and other strangers inside the monastery or in the churchyard, because Guigo (and the early tradition) wanted to avoid any suggestion that the Carthusians' prayers were for sale or could be enlisted privately.<sup>12</sup>

Guigo's emphasis on the eremitical life did not mean that the monks limited their prayers to humanity in general, as far as the world outside the charterhouse was concerned. They were to help others follow the right path by "preaching through their hands": in their cells, they were supposed to write and copy books to spread the Truth over the world, as Guigo phrased it. In this way, they still contributed to the search for perfection by others.<sup>13</sup>

In the first 79 chapters of his *Consuetudines*, Guigo provided a detailed design of the Carthusian life. In the last chapter, however, which is an exhortative commendation of the solitary life, he downplayed his effort by stating that "many of these [customs] are trivial and of little importance" (*in quibus multa vilia et minuta sunt*).<sup>14</sup> As the American scholar Dennis D. Martin argued with reference to the ill-famed characterization of the *Carthusia* as *numquam reformata quia*

10 Guigo I, *Coutumes de Chartreuse*, ed. [M. Laporte] (Paris, 1984), Prologue 2, 155–156.

11 Ibid., Ch. 20: 1, 206–207.

12 Ibid., Ch. 41: 244–247.

13 Ibid., Ch. 28: 3, 222–235.

14 Ibid., Ch. 80: 1, 286–289.

*numquam deformata*, the Carthusians had to “muddle through” in their search for perfection. They needed to find out how to practice as Carthusians in real life, given their own weaknesses as people after the Fall, as well as in the changing socioeconomic and cultural contexts of the day. The attempt to live according to Guigo’s prescriptions and their subsequent revisions meant engaging in a process of interpretation and appropriation of what being a Carthusian actually meant. In this process, they set great store by the biblical virtue of discernment: gazing into the dark mirror, they sought to catch a glimpse of what God expected from them as Carthusians.<sup>15</sup> Their conclusions could lead to very different practices.

Strikingly, their choice of dwelling places away from the world had never precluded their involvement in caring for people on the outside: first and foremost by prayer and secondly by preaching with their hands.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, not only were some Carthusians known for their efforts in the writing of pastoral letters but a number of them had also served as bishops or papal envoys, particularly in the High Middle Ages.<sup>17</sup> In the Later Middle Ages, they could not remain deaf to the spiritual need of their fellow Christians and to the Church that was perceived as being in crisis. Since the so-called Babylonian Captivity (1309–1376), the popes had relocated their see to Avignon, thus severing their connection to the graves of Saints Peter and Paul. Within two years after the Pope’s return to Rome, the Church was divided into two papacies, one in Avignon and one in Rome. Initially, this Western Schism (1378–1418) also led to a split in the Carthusian order, which lasted until 1409. Throughout Western

15 Dennis D. Martin, “Reform Without Revolution. *Discretio* as the Legacy of the Carthusians,” in *Das Erbe der Kartäuser. Internationaler Kongress für Kartäuserforschung. 1.–5. Dezember 1999, Kartause Ittingen*, ed. J. Ganz and M. Früh (Salzburg, 2000), 170. On Carthusian *discretio* and inner reform, see also Krijn Pansters, “*Cor, cella, claustrum, ecclesia*. Denys the Carthusian (1402/1403–1471) on *Discretio* and Inner Reform,” in *A Fish Out of Water? From Contemplative Solitude to Carthusian Involvement in Pastoral Care and Reform Activity*, eds. Stephen J. Molvarec and T. Gaens [Miscellanea Neerlandica 41/Studia Cartusiana 2] (Leuven, 2013), 199–209.

16 On their activities as to burial and commemoration of donors, see Rolf de Weijert-Gutman, *Schenken, begraven, herdenken: Lekenmemoria in het Utrechtse kartuizerklooster Nieuwlicht (1391–1580)* (Utrecht, 2015) and for more examples B.R. de Melker, *Metamorfose van stad en devotie. Ontstaan en conjunctuur van kerkelijke, religieuze en charitatieve instellingen in Amsterdam in het licht van de stedelijke ontwikkeling, 1385–1435* (Amsterdam, 2002).

17 For an overview, see Stephen J. Molvarec, “*Vox clamantis in deserto*. The Development of Carthusian Relations with Society in the High Middle Ages,” in *A Fish Out of Water? From Contemplative Solitude to Carthusian Involvement in Pastoral Care and Reform Activity* [Miscellanea Neerlandica 41/Studia Cartusiana 2] (Leuven, 2013), 13–49.

Christendom, the schism led to a heated debate about the way to amend the situation, in which many proposed reforming both constituent parts, that is the believers and the Church's organization. Several Carthusians participated in these discussions.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards, new definitions of what it meant to be truly pious arose. In the burgeoning cities of Western Europe, the adherents of the many different groups in the Poverty Movement had a different perspective on the imitation of Christ than traditional monks had. Be they Mendicants, Beguines, Waldensians, or, beginning in the fourteenth century, adherents of the *Devotio Moderna*, their desire was to embrace voluntary poverty and to provide spiritual guidance to the secular city folk.

According to contemporary sources, women in particular felt attracted to this lifestyle, especially in the Low Countries. This resulted in the creation of many female religious and semi-religious communities and, consequently, in a massive pastoral effort aimed at them, since their sex was generally supposed to be more vulnerable to heresy than men, as a result of their moral and physical weakness. For instance, when Geert Grote donated his Deventer city house to women wanting to live a devout life, he consciously intended for them to be an improvement on the Beguines. His first concern was to shield the sisters from false devotion by arranging for their spiritual care. Contrary to the Beguines, who chose their pastors, Grote's Sisters of the Common Life (as they were to be called later) were placed under the care of the parish priest.<sup>19</sup> In addition, both the Carthusians and the adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* applied themselves to preparing suitable reading matter for religious women, by translating into and rewriting religious texts in the vernacular, and creating new vernacular literature.

Despite the differences between religious and semireligious, and, among the latter, between Beguines and Beghards, on the one hand, and Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life, on the other, all of them still regarded a religious lifestyle—with or without vows—as essential for the imitation of Christ. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, secular men and women also began to wonder about their place in this economy of piety. How could they imitate Christ without taking a solemn vow or a promise to live ascetically? How could they ensure their fate in the hereafter?

18 For an overview, see Gaens, "*Fons hortorum*" (see above, n. 3), 52–56 and 78, and there for further references.

19 "Statuten van het Mr. Geertshuis te Deventer," ed. R.R. Post, *Archief voor de geschiedenis van het aartsbisdom Utrecht* 71 (1952), 1–46, Chaps. 4 and 5, there 4.



Passionate interest in these matters existed at all levels of society, from aristocrats like the Valois dukes of Burgundy to the burghers in the cities. Participation in masses, pilgrimages, and processions became huge. Aristocrats and wealthy burghers created religious houses. Individuals and organizations such as guilds and fraternities erected altars for their patron saints in the local churches. Moreover, there was a great demand for religious instruction. Travelling preachers attracted large audiences. The adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* catered for the needs of secular folk by organizing so-called collations, in which they invited them into their houses in order to receive instruction about the Bible and the Church Fathers.<sup>20</sup> They and other reformist groups such as the Lollards prepared books in the vernacular for them: Scripture, manuals on how to live a pious life, hagiography, and so on.<sup>21</sup>

Dedicated to reform from the very beginning of their order, and, in principle, called to pastoral work through the tradition of preaching through their pens, late medieval Carthusians developed their way of life in response to the needs in religious and secular milieus. Often, they were called in to oversee reform in other religious communities. Occasionally, this led to a transfer, in which a Carthusian was called to be the abbot or prior of a reformed monastery. In addition, some Carthusians virtually functioned as spiritual advisors for female religious communities. Moreover, they were in the forefront in copying texts and translating these for a non-Latin-reading audience, aiming at both lay and religious audiences. For instance, the earliest surviving Middle Dutch translation of Scripture was prepared by a Carthusian monk from Herne—possibly Peter Naghel, the prior of that charterhouse.<sup>22</sup>

The Carthusians also functioned as sources of inspiration and models for other reformers. Their connection with the *Devotio Moderna* is well known. Geert Grote went on a retreat with the Carthusians in Arnhem before start-

20 Jacobus of Utrecht or Voecht, *Narratio de inchoatione status nostri et deinde de fratribus domus clericorum in Zwollis*, ed. M. Schoengen [Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd in Utrecht 3: 13] (Amsterdam, 1908), Ch. 22, 64. For a study of this practice: Lydeke van Beek, *Leken trekken tot Gods Woord. Dirc van Herxen en zijn Eerste Collatieboek* [Middelieuwe Studies en Bronnen 120] (Hilversum, 2009).

21 Examples in Sabrina Corbellini ed., *Cultures of Religious Reading in the Middle Ages. Instructing the Soul, Feeding the Spirit and Awakening the Passion* [Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 25] (Turnhout, 2013).

22 For the debate about the authorship of Petrus Naghel and his works, see Theo Coun, "Exit Petrus Naghel als bijbelvertaler," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 85 (2014), 3–38; Mikel Kors, "Het oeuvre van Petrus Naghel: een status quaestionis," in *De bijbel voor leken: Studies over Petrus Naghel en de Historiebijbel van 1361*, ed. Mikel Kors (Leuven, 2007), 169–184.

ing out as a travelling preacher. Like him, his followers attempted to work in the world but not belong to it, aiming for a spiritual rather than a physical withdrawal. This connected with their ambition to provide spiritual guidance to their fellow city folk. An inner striving towards a stricter life (*arctior vita*), as well as external pressure from within their networks and from secular and ecclesiastical authorities, caused many Devout to take one or more vows and to congregate in more traditional communities such as Tertiary houses and priories of Augustinian Canons Regular, for which the Carthusians were to some extent (directly or only indirectly) the normative and spiritual models.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, several male and female communities (Canons Regular but also Tertiaries) chose a form of enclosure (*inclusio* or *clausura*) following the Carthusian example.<sup>24</sup> Finally, many reformist congregations and reformed communities promoted the ancient Carthusian tradition of “preaching through the pen,” leading to a panoply of spiritual tractates on inner reform, chronicles and hagiographical texts of a more instructional than miraculous nature, exhortative works containing spiritual exercises and meditations, and compilations of prayers and sayings both in Latin and in the vernacular. These, however, seem to be primarily directed towards their own communities or networks of communities rather than to secular layfolk.<sup>25</sup>

23 Gaens, “*Fons hortorum*” (see above, n. 3), 60–63, and there for further references. In his study on the constitutions of Windesheim communities of Canonesses Regular, the late Nijmegen medievalist Rudolf Th.M. van Dijk pointed to the influence of the Carthusian Statutes on the Windesheim constitutions. See Rudolf Th.M. van Dijk, *De Constituties der Windesheimse Vrouwenkloosters voor 1559*, 2 vols. [Middelieeuwse studies 3] (Nijmegen, 1986), 1: 227–238. On the normative dependency of the Tertiary movement on the Windesheim constitutions (and hence, indirectly, on the Carthusian Statutes), see Hildo van Engen, *De derde orde van Sint-Franciscus in het middeleeuwse bisdom Utrecht. Een bijdrage tot de institutionele geschiedenis van de Moderne Devotie* [Middelieeuwse studies en bronnen 95] (Hilversum, 2006); on the influence of the model of the Carthusian *donati* (i.e., the typical Carthusian institution of unprofessed lay brethren) on fifteenth-century reformist congregations and religious orders, see Tom Gaens, “Acquiring Religious Perfection Outside a Vow. The Carthusian Institution of the Donati in Late Medieval Reformist Communities and the Modern Devotion,” *The Medieval Low Countries* 1 (2014), 139–171.

24 Tom Gaens, “Les chartreux de Zelem lez Diest et la clôture des monastères dépendant du chapitre de Windesheim,” in *Liber amicorum James Hogg. Kartäuserforschung 1970–2006*. Internationale Tagung Kartause Aggsbach 28.8–1.9.2006, Kartause Mauerbach, ed. Meta Niederkorn-Bruck, 6 vols. [Analecta Cartusiana 210: 1–6] (Salzburg 2007–2008), 1: 133–174; Gaens, “*Fons hortorum*” (see above, n. 3), 62–67.

25 Thomas Kock, *Die Buchkultur der Devotio Moderna, Handschriftenproduktion, Literatur-*

## 2 Inspiring Devotional Reform

This thematic issue provides five examples, which concentrate on Carthusian work in terms of devotional reform. These include assessments of the theology of devotion, Carthusian involvement in the reform of others, and their vision of the connection of past, present, and future, specifically with respect to the much-needed reformation of the ecclesiastical organization. They show how the Carthusians set about adhering to Christ's example in a changing world, not by becoming dried up in a fundamentalist abhorrence of change but by negotiating what it meant to be following Christ in an ever-changing world. Thus they are examples of how Carthusians in the Late Middle Ages lived their motto, "the Cross stands still while the world moves" (*Stat crux dum volvitur orbis*). As argued by scholars such as Dennis D. Martin, their history should be seen as a series of experiments about how to be a Carthusian in different contexts.<sup>26</sup> The following articles provide examples.

Tom Gaens explores the theology of "modern-day" devotion as outlined by the prior of Monnikhuizen, Henry of Coesfeld. In spite of the wide dissemination of Henry's work in reformist circles in the Low Countries and Germany, he has been largely disregarded by modern scholarship. The article details how the Carthusian prior aimed for a practical theology of devotion, which—although it was targeted at a Carthusian reading audience—provided clues to how people of different sexes, regions, and states of life (religious or secular) could reform themselves towards attaining spiritual perfection. In essence this meant acquiring a Christiform personality. Defining devotion Thomistically as the benevolent will to serve God and appropriating assessments of such mystical authors as Ruusbroec and Suso, Henry detailed different kinds of devotion, the training in the virtues needed to acquire it, the pitfalls of false versus true devotion, and the sacrament of the Eucharist as devotional tonic.

The next article by Michael Sargent takes us into the dangerous context of late medieval England, focusing on the reformative work of Nicholas Love. It aims at a more measured view of this prior of Mount Grace, who has been seen either as the agent of archbishop Arundel's conservative machinations against the Lollards or as a progressive, who contributed to the religious education of

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*versorgung und Bibliotheksaufbau im Zeitalter des Medienwechsels* [Tradition—Reform—Innovation: Studien zur Modernität des Mittelalters 2] (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 11, 306–309.

26 Molvarec, "Vox clamantis" (see above, n. 11), 44–49, and Martin, "Reform without revolution" (see above, n. 10).

non-Latin speakers through his most famous work, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. The article shows the monastery's careful maneuvering to stay on the winning side so as to find supporters for reform. In this context, Nicholas Love's presentation of his *Mirror* to archbishop Arundel was a clever move that positioned an orthodox vernacular text against the "false" devotion of the Wycliffites and, perhaps, encouraged the archbishop to act against them. In addition, Nicholas took on a role in the reform of the Benedictines under the auspices of King Henry v.

José van Aelst continues with an analysis of the Carthusians' involvement in the communities of religious women, studying as an example the convent of regular canonesses of Saint Agnes at Maaseik. After initial stages as Beguines and Sisters of the Common Life, the community was transformed into a priory of Canonesses Regular in 1429 and, in 1455, became a member of the Chapter of Venlo. Like other adherents of the *Devotio Moderna*, the Maaseik canonesses opted for claustration after the Carthusian model in 1430. Later, the Carthusians were involved in creating the proper spiritual climate. Van Aelst focuses on the contributions of two Carthusians, James of Gruitrode and Denys the Carthusian, to the education of the Maaseik sisters through binding books, copying, and writing devotional texts for them.

The final two articles concentrate on hagiography as a guide for devotional reform and as a source of information about the Carthusians' view of history. Suzan Folkerts analyzes the interest of Carthusians in the lives of religious women in the Poverty Movement in the Low Countries, most notably those of women not linked to a religious order, such as Christina Mirabilis and Mary of Oignies. On the continent and in Britain, Carthusians were most important in the transmission of these texts, both in Latin and in English. Why were they so interested in these women? To what extent did their hagiographies function as a model for them? In addition, the article explores how they connected with other religious milieus in the interest of text exchange and how they connected with the readers of vernacular translations of the religious women's lives.

Mathilde van Dijk concentrates on hagiography by the Zelem Carthusian Peter Dorlandus and investigates how he rewrote the material concerning traditional saints in order to put them forward as models for "modern-day" devotion. He targeted different audiences, including religious women from the *Devotio Moderna*. His texts show how to practice devotion, describing this as a matter of the interior person and the virtues. This connects with the previous article because of Dorlandus' interest in holy women, whom he consistently portrays as religious leaders. Van Dijk suggests that this links to the Carthusian propagation of more contemporary prophetesses. In addition to the dissemination of the hagiography about the holy women of the Poverty

Movement discussed by Folkerts, they played a major role in the transmission of the works of such figures as Hildegard of Bingen, Catherine of Siena, and Bridget of Sweden.

The articles show how, in the Late Middle Ages, the Carthusians saw the need for more involvement with the outside world in view of its spiritual and ecclesiastical needs, joining forces with those who called them in, and others, like the Devout or their secular supporters, who felt called upon to respond. Eventually, unlike the more radical reformers in the sixteenth century, the Carthusians and the adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* continued to feel that the outside “world” should be reformed by winning it for “religion.” Eventually, devotion—identified as working at inner reform and progressing in the (monastic) virtues, avoiding heretical and speculative excesses, and preferably being protected by living in a recognized and approved (semi-)religious community—came to be seen as the surest way to this end.

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