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## Working with Tradition, Aiming for Reform

### *Dorlandus's Perspective on Hagiography*

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### Abstract

This article examines how the Carthusian Peter Dorlandus (1454–1507) rewrote the material about well-known saints like Joseph of Nazareth, Catherine of Alexandria, Cecilia of Rome, and Francis of Assisi so as to serve in the reformation both of individual believers and of the Church. He experimented with different genres: the traditional hagiographical genre of a *vita*, a hybrid text between the sermon and the *vita*, and the dialogue. Saint Joseph is primarily depicted as excelling in his radical intimacy with Christ and as a missionary. Dorlandus puts forward the virgin martyrs as spiritual leaders, for instance, in a dialogue between Cecilia and Francis, in which she teaches him that devotion is about the inner person. This article argues that this connects to the Carthusian faith regarding female visionaries such as Hildegard of Bingen, Catherine of Siena, and Bridget of Sweden as providers of guidance in the crisis of the Church.

### Keywords

Carthusians – Late Medieval Reform – Peter Dorlandus – Hagiography

From the days of the Early Church, tales about the saints had been regarded as excellent media to transmit ideals of piety.<sup>1</sup> Holy men and women showed the believers how to think, feel, and practice, imitating Christ in contexts different

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\* I would like to thank Dr. John Flood and my co-editors for their careful reading of this article.

1 See, for instance, Augustine of Hippo, *De Mendacio*, ed. J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 161 vols. (Paris, 1840–1841), 40: 508–513.

from those of first-century Palestine. Changing ideals about how this should be accomplished led to the creation of new saints and to a rewriting of the lives of traditional ones.<sup>2</sup> For instance, when, after the twelfth century, the relationship between God and humankind came to be seen as a relationship of lovers, hagiographers added an extensive episode to the Lives of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, which detailed her conversion to Christianity and included a marriage between the saint and Christ.

In the Low Countries, from the fourteenth century onwards, such recreations of the lives of traditional saints were extensive and of major importance.<sup>3</sup> Rewriting their lives, reformist hagiographers, such as the adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* and the Carthusians, put forward the old saints as feasible models for their various audiences. Martyrs had the highest status, since they, like Christ, had made the highest possible sacrifice. In addition, these hagiographers focused on the Desert Fathers, who had long been regarded as the best imitators of Christ after persecution of Christians stopped, along with those figures who had been in actual contact with Him, such as apostles or members of His earthly family.<sup>4</sup>

This article discusses how one of the most prolific of these Carthusian authors from the Low Countries, Peter Dorlandus (1454–1507) from the charterhouse of Saint John the Baptist in Zelem, worked with such material. Like other Carthusians, he used hagiography to educate several target groups, both readers and listeners who used Latin, as well as those who did not. Among his *confratres*, the famous “Bible translator of Herne” (identified by some specialists as the prior of Herne, Peter Naghel) is perhaps the most famous hagiographer. He was the first to translate the most important hagiographical collections, the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Vitae Patrum*, into Middle Dutch. Both collections focused on saints from the Early Church.<sup>5</sup> Other Carthusians in the Low Coun-

2 As discovered by historians of “mentality” such as by Jacques LeGoff, “Les mentalités: une histoire ambiguë,” in *Faire l’histoire*, ed. Jacques LeGoff and Pierre Nora, 3 vols. (Paris, 1974–1975), 1: 76–94, and André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge: d’après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* [Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 241] (Paris, 1981).

3 Compare, for instance, Werner Williams-Krapp, *Die deutschen und niederländischen Legendare des Mittelalters. Studien zu ihrer Überlieferungs-, Text- und Wirkungsgeschichte* [Text- und Textgeschichte 20] (Tübingen, 1986), 53–188, 356–365.

4 See, for instance, Tyrannius Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum sive De Vita Sanctorum Patrum*, ed. Eva Schulz-Flügel [Patristische Texte und Studien 34] (Berlin/New York 1990), Prologue, 243–247.

5 For the debate about the authorship of Petrus Naghel and his works, see Theo Coun, “Exit

tries and the Rhineland collected legendaries in Latin, for instance the Utrecht prior Zweder of Boecholt (†1433) and the Cologne monk Laurentius Surius (1522–1578).<sup>6</sup> Living in the age of confessional division between Protestants and Catholics, the latter engaged in a pre-Bollandist effort of not only collecting the lives and miracles of the saints, but also aiming for an apology of hagiography, retelling their tales so as to counter doubt in Catholics and ridicule from Protestants.<sup>7</sup>

Judging from an analysis of his surviving works, Dorlandus did not aim for the creation of such large collections, but rather concentrated on individual saints. In what follows, a selection of his hagiography will be examined: the life of Saint Joseph, a text about Saint Catherine, of which the genre is a matter for debate, and a dialogue of Saints Cecilia and Francis, unfortunately incomplete.<sup>8</sup> This provides a fair sample of Dorlandus's writings, which encompass several genres, and include both Latin and vernacular material. Moreover, it is typical in its inclusion of tales about saints from the Early Church: the virgin martyrs Cecilia and Catherine, and Christ's foster-father Joseph. Saint Francis, of course, was a much more recent saint, but he still was of very high status, despite the fact that he was neither a martyr nor a desert father. As a scion of the Poverty Movement, he was generally considered to be the epitome of what the imitation of Christ meant.<sup>9</sup>

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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.

- 6 Utrecht, University Library, MS 390 and 391, Nieuwlicht, Carthusians, Zweder of Boecholt cop., 1421–1424, see also J.P. Gumbert, *Die Utrechter Kartäuser und ihre Bücher im frühen fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leiden, 1974), 80–90 and Valerie Vermassen, "Ad erudendum Dei populum. Het *Passionale sanctorum* van Zweder van Boecholt uit de Utrechtse kartuis Nieuwlicht (1424–1426)," *Millennium, tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies* 20 (2006), 23–43; Laurentius Surius, *De Probatis Sanctorum Historiis* (Cologne, 1576–1581). For an overview of editions, see Hildegard Hebenstreit-Wilfert, *Wunder und Legende: Studien zu Leben und Werk von Laurentius Surius (1522–1578), insbesondere zu seiner Sammlung "De probatis Sanctorum Historiis"* (Tübingen, 1975), 57–64.
- 7 Hebenstreit-Wilfert, *Wunder und Legende ... Surius*, 50–57 (see above, n. 6).
- 8 Peter Dorlandus, *In nativitate et vitam inclitae martyris beatissimaeque virginis Catharinae* (Louvain: Theodericus Martinus Alost, 1513), id., *Historie des alderheilichsten ende doerluchtichsten patriarchken sunte Joseph* in Ghent, University Library, MS 895, St. Lucia, regular canons, Sint-Truiden, 1503, fols. 1r–62v; *Dialogus Brevis super virginitate, fide et fenice*, in Brussels, Royal Library, MS 1918–1925, regular canons, Korsendonk, Turnhout, 1530, fols. 230r–233v. A partial edition of the text on Catherine is available in Hermann Knust, *Geschichte der Legenden der H. Katharina von Alexandrien und der H. Maria Aegyptiaca nebst unedierten Texten* (Halle, 1890), 89–92.
- 9 Compare how, in the *Devotio Moderna*, he was seen as one of the great fathers of the ascetic

How did Dorlandus construe these saints? What messages did he want to get across? Who were his intended audiences? To what extent did he address typically Carthusian concerns as opposed to the concerns of other reformers, primarily the adherents of the *Devotio Moderna*? I shall argue that the Zelem Carthusian's hagiography aimed for reform on two levels: the micro-scale of the individual and the macro-scale of the Church, which, in his and other reformers' views, were connected. As for the latter, it had been perceived as being in crisis from the time of the Babylonian Captivity in Avignon (1309–1377), at the very least. The ensuing Western Schism (1378–1418) had been a particularly sad era for the Carthusians, as it had split the order into an Avignonese and a Roman faction. In 1453, disaster struck again when the Turks conquered Constantinople. All of this led to reflection on the causes of these events, to anxious expectations of the apocalypse and, in consequence, to an ever-louder cry for reform, which continued in Dorlandus's time.<sup>10</sup> As we will see, his hagiography contributed to this debate, arguing for individual reform and connecting this to a vision concerning the problems of the Church. Dorlandus's apparent concerns led to a highly creative perspective on the traditional saints he discussed. Before I will analyze the content of Dorlandus's hagiography, more information about the man and his work is needed.

## 1 Famous and Unknown

Peter Dorlandus was famous in the Late Middle Ages, both inside his order and without. In 1572, the Benedictine abbey of Sint-Truiden requested his works from the charterhouse of Saint John the Baptist at Zelem, with the aim of printing them. Apparently, this never happened.<sup>11</sup> Centuries of oblivion

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life, despite the criticism of the devout vs. the contemporary mendicants: Johannes Busch, *Liber de viris illustribus* in *Johannes Busch Chronicon Windeshemense und Liber de reformatione monasteriorum* [Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen und angrenzender Gebiete 19], ed. K. Grube (Halle, 1886), 12 (ch. 4).

- 10 Compare, for instance, Dennis Martin, "Carthusians as advocates of women visionary reformers," in *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Julian M. Luxford [Medieval Church Studies 14] (Turnhout, 2008), 127–153, there 127; 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, 2008), 51–103, there 77.
- 11 Frans Hendrickx, "De sluier over Peter Dorlandus opgelicht: enkele fasen uit het leven

followed. In 1892, Dorlandus acquired new celebrity, when the Dutch literary historian Logeman identified him as the author of the morality play *Elckerlyc*, on the grounds that a certain Peter of Diest had long been named as the author. He connected this with the fact that Dorlandus's monastery was close to Diest and suggested that it would have been feasible to name "Peter" after his place of residence.<sup>12</sup> This contention led to a lively and as yet unresolved debate, which lies outside the scope of this article.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the truth may be about the authorship of *Elckerlyc*, Dorlandus was the author of many works. Several lists survive, citing from eleven to over fifty titles.<sup>14</sup> A sizeable portion of these consists of works on saints in different genres: he wrote lives, dialogues, sermons, and treatises about them. It is unclear how many hagiographical texts survive. In addition to the texts studied in this article, I found five hagiographical texts, including two lives of Saint Anne, in Latin and Middle Dutch, respectively, a treatise on the Desert Father Saint Anthony, and two sermons on the martyr Saint Lawrence.<sup>15</sup>

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van de Zelemse kartuizer in vooronderzoek," in *Amo te, sacer ordo Carthusiensis: Jan de Grauwe, passioné de l'Ordre des Chartreux*, ed. Frans Hendrickxs and Tom Gaens [Miscellanea Neerlandica 38/Studia Cartusiana 11] (Louvain, 2012), 293–332, there 298.

- 12 *Elckerlyc, a fifteenth century Dutch morality (presumably by Petrus Dorlandus) and Everyman, a nearly contemporary translation. A contribution to the history of the literary relations of Holland and England*, ed. H. Logeman (Ghent, 1892), xxi–xxiv.
- 13 H.J.J. Scholtens, "De litteraire nalatenschap van de kartuizers," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 25 (1951), 9–43, there 26–27; id., "De kartuizer Petrus Dorlant en de Elckerlyc-problemen," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 26 (1952), 188–197; Hendrickx, "Sluier" (see above, n. 11), there 331.
- 14 The memoir and the list have been edited separately: respectively, Andrew of Amsterdam, "Vita venerabilis domini ac patris Petri Dorlandi Carthusiensis domus Diestensis per illius confratrem et discipulum," in Scholtens, "Petrus Dorlant en de Elckerlyc-problemen" (see above, n. 13), there 297–300, and Andrew of Amsterdam, *Opuscula edita venerabili patro Petro Dorlando ordinis Carthusiensis*, ed. L. Willems, *Elckerlyc-Studien* (The Hague, 1934), 12–16. In addition to the previous list, Valerius Andreas, *Bibliotheca Belgica, in qua Belgicae seu Germaniae Inferioris provinciae, urbesque Viri item in Belgio vita scriptisque clari & librorum nomenclatura* (Louvain, 1623), 660–661. See also Hendrickx, "Sluier" (see above, n. 11), 307–311, 315–317.
- 15 Peter Dorlandus, *Historia perpulchra de Anna Sanctissima* (Antwerpen: Govert Bac between 1495–1497); id., *Historie vander alder heilichster vrouwen Sunte Anna* in Ghent, UL, MS 895 (see above, n. 8), fols. 62v–124r; id., *Tractatus religiosi presbyter domini Petri Dorlandi Carthusiensis Zeelem prope Diest de multiplici conflictu beatissimi patris Anthonii contra diabolum* in Brussels, Royal Library, MS 15003–15048, Louvain, Carthusians, Saint Mary Magdalen under the Cross (1532), fols. 106r–116r and, in the same manuscript, *Sermo historicus in laudem vite ac penarum sanctissimi et serenissimi martyris Laurentii ... editus a*

Little biographical data about Dorlandus are available, despite the fact that his *confrater* and disciple Andrew of Amsterdam wrote a memoir after his death, containing a list of titles of his works in Latin and referring to unspecified works in the vernacular, which the Zelem Carthusian wrote for religious women. Andrew praised Dorlandus for his virtues, particularly his humility, and for his “Tullian” prose, which was considered to be as elegant as Cicero’s.<sup>16</sup> Such phrases may point to humanist leanings on the part of Dorlandus, although Andrew stressed that his master was keener on writing beautifully in terms of virtues than in terms of style.<sup>17</sup> This would not preclude a humanist literary ambition, at least not as far as hagiography was concerned. For this type of texts, many humanists considered *sermo humilis* (humble speech i.e. a simple way of expressing themselves) as the most appropriate style.<sup>18</sup>

Several scholars investigated the possible connection between Dorlandus and humanists such as Trithemius (1462–1516) and Bostius (1446–1499), in view of his work on the legend of Saint Anne and the propagation of the Rosary. Although Dorlandus does not seem to have belonged to the inner circle of their correspondents, he and his works were known to the jurist Judocus Beysselius (†1514), who dedicated his treatises on the Anne-, Mary- and Jesus Rosary to Trithemius, Dominic of Gelre OP, and Dorlandus respectively. In addition, the Paris printer Judocus Badius (1462–1532), who also was in touch with Trithemius, Beysselius, and other humanists made a Latin summary of Dorlandus’s Middle Dutch version of his life of Saint Anne.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, at least two of Dorlandus’s works were printed by Dirk Martens (ca. 1446–1534) from Aalst: *De Enormi Proprietatis Monachorum Vicio Dialogus Cultissimus* (*Very Elegant Dialogue on the enormous vice of possession by monks*) and *In nativitatem et vitam*

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*disertissimo Petro Dorlando ordinis Carthusiensis*, fols. 347v–355v, and *Sermo secundus de eodem martire typicus ab eodem Dorlando conscriptus*, fols. 355v–361r.

16 Andrew of Amsterdam, “Vita ... Dorlandi” (see above, n. 14), 194.

17 *Ibid.*, 197.

18 Alison Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York, 2005), 17–19. In contrast, David Collins’s German hagiographers seem to have liked rhetoric rather more, see also his *Reforming Saints: Saints’ Lives and Their Authors in Germany, 1470–1530* (Oxford, 2008).

19 Ton Brandenburg, *Heilig Familieleven: verspreiding en waardering van de Historie van Sint-Anna in de stedelijke cultuur van de Nederlanden en het Rijnland aan het begin van de moderne tijd (15<sup>e</sup> en 16<sup>e</sup> eeuw)* (Nijmegen, 1990), 109–111; Albert Ampe s. J., “Petrus Dorlandus O. Carth. en Dominicus van Gelre O.P.,” in *Hellinga: Festschrift = feestbundel = mélanges: forty-three studies in bibliography presented to Prof. Dr. Wytze Hellinga on the occasion of his retirement from the chair of neophilology in the university of Amsterdam at the end of the year 1978*, ed. A.R.A. Croiset van Uchelen and W.G. Hellinga (Amsterdam, 1980), 29–42.

*inclitae martyris beatissimaeque virginis Catharinae* (*On the Birth and Life of the Famous Martyr and Blessed Virgin Catherine*), which is examined in this article.<sup>20</sup> Martens is known for his connection to the University of Louvain and humanism, for instance, as the printer of several works by Erasmus.<sup>21</sup>

As for Dorlandus's academic status, his biographer Andrew of Amsterdam distinguished between two kinds of doctors: those who earned formal doctorates at a university, and those, who became doctors through their works, like the apostles or the Church Fathers.<sup>22</sup> It was obvious to Andrew that Dorlandus belonged to the latter category. It is questionable whether Dorlandus could also lay claim to a formal doctorate, as no record survives. It is clear that he read *artes* at Louvain University, registering as a student in 1472 under the name of *Petrus Dorlandus de Walcuria*.<sup>23</sup> It is not entirely clear which village this is: either Walcourt, in the county of Namur, or Waalhoven, a hamlet near Sint-Truiden. Either way, Dorlandus's mother tongue may have been French, although he later wrote in Latin and Middle Dutch.<sup>24</sup> The date of his entry into the charterhouse of Saint John the Baptist in Zelem is not clear. Probably, it was after his studies in Louvain, around 1475. Eventually, he rose to the position of *vicarius*.

Saint John's had been founded in 1328 as a part of the amazing spread of Carthusian monasteries in the Low Countries from the creation of Herne in 1314 onwards.<sup>25</sup> It must have been an inspiring venue for the young Dorlandus, as it

20 Peter Dorlandus, *De enormi proprietatis monachorum vicio dialogus cultissimus* (Louvain: Theodericus Martinus Alost, 1513) and Dorlandus, *In nativitatem ... Catharinae* (see above, n. 8).

21 On Martens: *Tentoonstelling Dirk Martens 1473–1973* (Aalst, 1973); *Thierry Martens et la figure de l'imprimeur humaniste, Une nouvelle biographie*, ed. Renaud Adam and Alexandre Vanautgaerden [Nugae Humanisticae sub signo Erasmi 11] (Turnhout, 2009), nos. 101, 108, and 118; Alexandre Vanautgaerden, *Theodericus Martinus Typographicus: de ongelofelijke geschiedenis van de eerste "Belgische" graficus* [Colloquia in Museo Erasmi 30] (Antwerpen, 2009).

22 Andrew of Amsterdam, "Vita ... Dorlandi" (see above, n. 14), 195.

23 Hendrickx, "Sluier" (see above, n. 11), there 299.

24 *Ibid.*, 293–295.

25 See M. Soenen, "La Chartreuse de Zelem," in *Monasticon Belge*, 8 vols., ed. Dom U. Berlière (Liège, 1976), 6: 293–333; Tom Gaens and Jan de Grauwe, *De kracht van de stilte: Geest en geschiedenis van de kartuizerorde* (Leuven, 2006); F. Hendrickx, ed., *De kartuizers en hun klooster te Zelem; Tentoonstelling ter gelegenheid van het negende eeuwfeest van de orde 1084–1984* [Dietsche cronyke 7] (Diest, 1984), 21–22 and 24–25; see also Jan de Grauwe, *Historia Cartusiana Belgica* (Salzburg, 1985), 103–125; Gaens, "Fons hortorum," 51–103 (see above, n. 10).



had a tradition of writing. Several *confratres* wrote religious works, including the influential prior Henry of Coesfeld, the lay brother John of Brederode, who translated a part of the treatise *Somme le roy* into Middle Dutch, Herman Steenken, Everard, Henry of Birnbaum, and Goswin Comhaer.<sup>26</sup>

## 2 God's Friend

According to Andrew of Amsterdam, Dorlandus wrote several works in the vernacular, which were intended for religious women. His *Historie des alder heilichsten ende doerluchtichsten patriarchken sunte Joseph* (*History of the supremely holy and illustrious patriarch Saint Joseph*) is an example of such a text. It survives in the vernacular only, in a heavily damaged manuscript from the convent of Regular Canonesses of Saint Lucia in Sint-Truiden. The *incipit* identifies it as Dorlandus's work:

Here begins the history of the most holy and most illustrious patriarch Saint Joseph, Christ's foster parent and the protector of the worthy Mary, as compiled with effort by the very learned religious Father Peter Dorlandus, Carthusian.<sup>27</sup>

The sisters of Saint Lucia were adherents of the *Devotio Moderna*. In addition, there were Carthusian connections. The convent was founded in 1419. The bishop of Liège approved its creation as a community of Regular Canonesses in 1421. Regular Canonesses from Saint Agnes at Diepenveen came to instruct them in the Augustinian way of life. Their rectors used to come from the Windesheim monastery of Bethlehem at Herent near Louvain. In 1450, the bishop ordered the convent to merge with the Tertiary community of Saint Jerome's. The Liège Carthusian James of Gruitrode, whom we met before as a counselor of similar sisters in Saint Agnes of Maaseik, became the new

26 On Henry of Coesfeld, see the article of Tom Gaens in this issue; De Grauwe, *Historia Cartusiana* (see above, n. 25), 115–117; Scholtens, "Litteraire nalatenschap," (see above, n. 13) there 13; Hendrickx, *Kartuizers ... Zelem* (see above, n. 25), 85–145, 88–91, 92–95, 94, 97–98, 100, and 105–106.

27 Ghent, UL, MS 895 (see above, n. 8), fol. 2r.: "Hier begint die historie des alder heilichsten ende doerluchtichsten patriarchken sunte Joseph Christus voedere ende der werdigher Marien hoeder met arbeyde vergaedert vanden seer geleerden religioesen here Peter Doerlant Carthuser."

convent's spiritual advisor, along with the rector of the old Regular Canonesses' convent.<sup>28</sup>

The Saint Lucia manuscript contains several religious texts, including a version in Middle Dutch of Dorlandus's life of Saint Anne, meditation treatises, and sermons.<sup>29</sup> The combination of lives of Christ's nearest relatives except for his mother is quite common.<sup>30</sup> Paradoxically, as saints, both Anne and Joseph rose to sudden popularity in the Late Middle Ages. Mary's mother is not even mentioned in the Bible, although she is in the apocryphal *Protoevangelium by Saint James*, which was the major source for the cult of the Virgin.<sup>31</sup> Usually her rise is connected to the emergence of a new audience of secular city folk.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to Mary's mother, her husband Joseph was a biblical figure, but he had never been taken seriously as a saint. In the Late Middle Ages, he rose to new prominence, mainly because of the activities of the rector of the University of Paris, Jean Gerson, and leading to several late medieval hagiographies, including Gerson's own works.<sup>33</sup>

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- 28 E. Persoons, "Prieuré de Luciëndal á Saint Trond," *Monasticon Belge* 6: 261–266; Gaens, "Fons hortorum," (see above, n. 10), 63. See also the article by José van Aelst in this issue.
- 29 Description in Hendrickx, *Kartuizers ... Zelem* (see above n. 25), 233–239.
- 30 For instance in the manuscript Tilburg, University Library KTFK ms. 4, fifteenth century, several texts on Christ's earthly family are included e.g. the priest John of Denmark's lives of Joseph and her father Joachim, fols. 312v–322v and 327v–331v, respectively. In addition, texts in different genres, including a life of Saint Joseph by Philip of Meron O.F.M. are present, fols. 278r–305v. On John of Denmark, see for instance Brandenburg, *Heilig Familieleven*, 41–80, 180–190 (see above, n. 11).
- 31 *Le Protévangile de Jacques et ses remaniements Latins* [Évangiles Apocryphes 1], ed. Émile Amann (Paris, 1910), 1–17 (ch. 1–7).
- 32 Brandenburg, *Heilig Familieleven* (see above, n. 19); id., *Heilige Anna, Grote Moeder: De cultus van de Heilige Moeder Anna en haar familie in de Nederlanden en aangrenzende streken* (Nijmegen, 1990); id., "Saint Anne: a Holy Grandmother and her Children," in *Sanctity and Motherhood: essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (New York, 1995), 31–65; Karin Tilmans, "Sancta Mater versus Sanctus Doctus? Saint Anne and the Humanists," in *Sanctity and Motherhood*, 331–351.
- 33 For Jean Gerson on Saint Joseph, see: Jean Gerson, "Josephina" in *l'Oeuvre Poétique in Oeuvres Complètes* ed. P. Glorieux (10 vols.) (Paris, 1960–1973), 4: 31–100; Jean Gerson, "Ut Festum Josephi celebretur," *Oeuvres Complètes* 4: 15; "Pour la fête de Saint Joseph: Leçons et Messe," *Oeuvres Complètes* 8: 55–61; Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (Philadelphia, 2005), 235–239; see also Philip of Meron and John of Denmark in Tilburg, MS UL TFKT 4, fols. 278r–305v and 305v–327r respectively (see above n. 30); Paul Payan, *Joseph, une image de la paternité dans l'Occident médiévale* (Paris, 2006), 147–208.

Unfortunately, the acidification of the Saint Lucia manuscript makes it impossible to read all of it. However, as far as the life of Saint Joseph is concerned, the remains allow an insight into its major themes: the way that history works and the virtues, detailing the way in which these were expressed in religious practice. The text consists of two parts. The first covers Christ's conception to the flight to Egypt; the second part extends until Joseph's death, which happens when, at the age of thirty, Christ's mission in the world began. Largely, Dorlandus's *History* follows the course of the gospels, but it is much longer and more adventurous. The author acknowledged Jean Gerson's *Josephina* as a major source for his *History* at several points.<sup>34</sup> In addition, he referred to Saint Jerome, particularly his treatise on the virginity of Mary.<sup>35</sup> As far as it is possible to determine this in view of the bad state of the Ghent manuscript, there does not seem to be textual correspondence with the much shorter lives written by Philip of Meron or John of Denmark, also present in the Low Countries.<sup>36</sup>

In the *History* Dorlandus wrote a fairly traditional *vita*, giving an overview of the life of the saint. In his image of Saint Joseph, several elements are stressed, which were common in the newly created lives of this saint, such as the identification of Joseph as the last patriarch, his similarity to the Old Testament Joseph, and his warm relationship with his foster son, all of which Dorlandus treats extensively.<sup>37</sup>

First of all, as the last patriarch, Dorlandus put forward Saint Joseph as a part of God's great plan for humankind's salvation. Apparently, he shared the traditional view that events in the Bible foreshadow those to come. In an episode in which the Holy Family suffered an attack by robbers when travelling to Egypt, they were saved by the leader's recognition of Christ as the Savior. Dorlandus described this adventure as a prophecy of the good murderer's conduct at Golgotha.

He particularly stressed the similarities of the New with the Old Testament Joseph, for instance by affirming the genealogical data in the gospels of Saints Matthew and John. Contrary to the other gospel that assigns a role for Christ's foster-father—that of Saint Luke—Saints Matthew and Mark assert that a certain Jacob was his father. Dorlandus added a mother called Rachel. A further extension is that the Old Testament patriarchs visited the child Jesus at the

34 Jean Gerson, "Josephina" (see above, n. 33), 8: 4.

35 Hieronymus of Stridon, *De perpetua virginitate Beatae Mariae adversus Helvidium*, ed. J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 23: 183–206.

36 See above, n. 30.

37 Compare for instance the Utrecht anchoress Sister Bertha's Christmas vision: Martien G. de Jong, ed., *Het kerstvisioen van Berta Jacobs* (Amsterdam, n.d.), 54–58.

Nativity. In the New Testament, Joseph was described as a dreamer: like the Old Testament Joseph, he had visionary dreams. According to Dorlandus, he had more of these than were recorded in the Bible. Moreover, the Zelem Carthusian had Joseph himself pointing to his similarity to the Old Testament Joseph in the following tale:<sup>38</sup>

In Egypt, the Holy Family is brought before the king, because all idols crashed on their arrival. Like Joseph does in many other instances, he protects the Virgin and the Child by boldly asserting that, as the old Joseph took God away, he is taking Him back to Egypt. Allowed to stay, he constructs a beautiful throne for the king, depicting the seven plagues.

Dorlandus stressed Joseph's missionary activities: in Egypt, he converted many to God.<sup>39</sup> At the end of the second part, after his death, he is first taken into Abraham's lap, but later, as a true saint, promoted to heaven. A further aspect of the propaganda for Joseph as a true saint is his similarity to another saint, Christopher. In fact, Christ's foster father was better than the latter was, as he carried Christ much more often, as a part of his fatherhood.

Dorlandus's life details the tender relationship between Saint Joseph and Christ, devoting many lines to their cuddling and kissing. Joseph was the "Lord's closest friend"—in the full medieval sense of the word. As he was depicted in many late medieval paintings, but unlike many saints, Christ was described as a real child, playing with his friends and, occasionally, in need of consolation and guidance, which Joseph provided gladly.

Moreover, according to Dorlandus, Joseph and Mary loved each other dearly, although, obviously, their marriage was never consummated. As Joseph asserted: "This lady is my only daughter and even closer than that."<sup>40</sup> The Carthusian showed them as praying and weeping together. Both Joseph and the Virgin received gifts of special grace, occasionally in a joint vision. For instance, after Christ asked them about his parentage, they were taken up in the spirit and saw Him sitting between the Father and the Spirit. Feigning ignorance about this matter, Christ trained them in perfect knowledge.<sup>41</sup>

Dorlandus stressed specific virtues, such as patience, for example, when Joseph had the following dream:

38 Paraphrasis MvD of Ghent, UL, MS 895 (see above, n. 8), fols. 62v–124r.

39 Ghent, UL, MS 895 (see above, n. 8), fol. 41v.

40 Ghent, UL, MS 895 (see above, n. 8), fol. 34r: "Deese vrouwe is mine eenighe dochter ende noch eene graet naerder."

41 Ghent, UL, MS 895 (see above, n. 8), fol. 40v.

A cruel lady, all dressed in black, with gold underneath, who identifies herself as Tribulation, appears, accompanied by her daughter Patience. The gold in Tribulation's clothing signifies that she is wholesome when suffered meekly.

In fact, patience is a recurrent theme. When the Child wept because other children were teasing Him, Joseph advised Him to be patient in preparation for future suffering. Humility is another important virtue, as evidenced by Christ working in Joseph's carpentry shop, in which he was an asset to the business by using his miraculous powers to resolve accidents like mistakes in measurements.

At the end of the second part, Christ announced that he would leave to begin his mission. The seventy-year-old Joseph then had a vision of the crucifixion. In view of his age, he begged to be spared witnessing Christ's death on the cross. Upon this, God allowed Joseph to die.

### 3 The Early Life of a Saint

Except for Dorlandus's choice of a newly popular saint, the *History* about Saint Joseph is an 'ordinary' *vita*. His *In nativitatem et vitam inclitae martyris beatissimaeque virginis Catharinae (On the Birth and Life of the Famous Martyr and Blessed Virgin Catherine)* is different. This work survives in Dirk Martens' printed version only. Its intended audience is doubtful, but, in view of the language, a community of religious men, possibly Carthusians, seems likely.

Despite its title, it is questionable whether the *Birth and Life* should be seen as a saint's life along the lines of Saint Joseph's, or rather as the genre of Dorlandus's writing, which are referred to as 'sermons' elsewhere, such as his two surviving texts about another martyr, Saint Lawrence. These were copied in a sixteenth-century manuscript from the charterhouse in Louvain, a large collection of texts in different genres, which was intended for reading at table.<sup>42</sup> The first sermon is identified as a *sermo historicus* and provides a summarized tale about the martyr's life. In a more systematic account, the second sermon analyzes the saint's virtues.<sup>43</sup>

42 Brussels, RL, MS 15003–15048, fols. 347v–355v and fols. 355v–361r, respectively (see above, n. 15).

43 Currently, I am working on an article on these sermons.

As noted by any scholar who engages in the study of sermons, the genre is extremely difficult to define. In fact, in a medieval manuscript or print, the term may refer to a wide variety of writings. These might concern texts, which were written for the purpose of preaching, texts developed from the notes taken by a preacher's audience, notes developed by the author for the purpose of giving tutorial-like instruction, or longer treatises that may never have had an actual oral existence, except in later readings.<sup>44</sup> Usually, a sermon takes as its point of departure a scriptural passage and addresses the audience directly. In Dorlandus's sermons about saint Lawrence, scriptural passages as point of departure are lacking, as for his *Birth and Life*. Yet, just like he did in the sermons on Saint Lawrence, in this text, the Carthusian suggested a previous oral use by addressing the audience directly: "Let us now speak a little about the virgin's holy way of life."<sup>45</sup> Of course, this may be a fiction, but then again, this would not preclude a definition as a sermon, if understood like Dorlandus or the copyist of the Louvain manuscript did in his "sermons" on Saint Lawrence.

Whatever Dorlandus's intention as to the genre of *Birth and Life*, in this hybrid creation, he did not give the whole story on the virgin martyr, perhaps because this was known to his audience. After all, she was one of the most popular saints in the Middle Ages.<sup>46</sup> The *Birth and Life* provides a full account of Saint Catherine's birth, her conversion to Christianity, and of what happened until she brought herself to the attention of the emperor, chastising him for sacrificing to powerless gods, the traditional start of her passion. Dorlandus summarized this part in a mere eleven lines, recounting how the Satan was angry with Saint Catherine for causing his former worshippers to relinquish his idols, and caused a furious tyrant to have her incarcerated, debated with,

44 Patricia Stoop provided a recent survey of the various meanings of the phrase 'sermon' and literature on this subject in *Schrijven in commissie: de Zusters uit het Brusselse klooster Jericho en de preken van hun biechtvaders (ca. 1456–1510)* (Hilversum, 2013), 28–42, see also my article "Persevere! ... God will help you! Thomas a Kempis's perspective on pastoral care in his Sermons for the novices," in: R.J. Stansbury ed., *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Late Middle Ages (1200–1500)* (Leiden/Boston, 2010), 363–388.

45 Dorlandus, *In nativitatem ... Catharinae* (see above, n. 8), fol. 9r: "Nunc paucis de virginis sancta conversatione loquamur."

46 For an overview of versions of legends of Saint Catherine, see *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina 1656–1700*, accessed through <http://bhlms.fltr.ucl.ac.be/Nrecherchesaint.cfm> (07-26-2014). For the enduring popularity of virgin martyrs, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1450–c. 1580* (New Haven, 1992), 170–177, and Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis, ed., *Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts [Medieval Women. Texts and Contexts 8]* (Turnhout, 2003).

tortured, and executed, after which she was transferred to heaven.<sup>47</sup> His choice caused him to dispense with some of the most characteristic elements in the Catherine legend, such as the torment on the wheel, and a discussion with fifty pagan philosophers, who were called in by the emperor in order to defend the heathen faith. Fortified by the Holy Spirit, the saint did not just vanquish them but converted them all to Christianity. As for the wheel, this became her main attribute in images, despite or perhaps because of the fact that, as a torment, it failed. An angel intervened and hacked it to pieces with his sword, killing thousands of heathen in the process.<sup>48</sup>

Concentrating on the early life of Catherine, Dorlandus added his re-telling to a long tradition about the saint's birth and conversion.<sup>49</sup> Traditionally, these tales contain the following elements:

- Catherine's parents were childless for many years, until an astrologer told them to worship an as yet unknown God, who is the God of Gods. When her father ordered a statue to be made, this, unaccountably, took the shape of the crucifix. When the crucifix was carried into a temple, all the heathen idols come crashing down. The queen conceived and gave birth to a daughter.
- Growing up, Catherine was revealed to be excellent in virtues, in intelligence, and in outward beauty. On his deathbed, her father named her as his successor and made her swear that she would not marry, until she found a man who is her equal in beauty, wisdom, and riches.
- Having refused all suitors, Catherine encountered a hermit in a forest, with whom she shared the problem of finding a husband. He gave her an image of the Virgin and Child, and advised her to pray and weep before it.
- Subsequently, Catherine had a vision, in which Christ and his mother appear. Christ refused to look at her, because she is stupid and ugly. Noting Catherine's distress at this, the Virgin interceded, asking her son what she should do to please him. Christ replied that she should take the advice of his servant, the hermit. The next day, the latter explained about Christianity and baptized Catherine, recommending that she should relinquish all worldly things. The next night, Christ and his mother appeared again. Although Catherine first refused Him, as she felt unworthy, He married her.

47 As, for instance, told in Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. G.P. Maggioni [Millennio medieval 6/testi 3] (Florence 1998), ch. 168, 1205–1255.

48 For instance in Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, ch. 168, 1205–1255 (see above, n. 47).

49 For an overview of the various versions of Catherine's conversion see *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* 1668–1672 (see above, n. 46).

Like other hagiographers before him, Dorlandus embroidered these familiar elements. First of all, he stressed how the virgin loved silence and wisdom all her life, even before she converted. Secondly, he detailed how, in the interval between her conversion and her confrontation with the emperor, she developed into a religious leader for men and women. She preached, converted heathens, and created a virtual convent in her home:

Saint Catherine and her mother lived in seclusion, rarely leaving the house, relinquishing all worldly learning, and the rhetoric of Cicero and the philosophers. After this, Catherine converted all young men, who came to seek her in marriage, and the matrons, who came to her for advice. She gave alms to the poor, defended the widows, and was hospitable to pilgrims. Furthermore, she took in virgins, with whom she daily discussed Scripture, sang the psalms, prayed, fasted, and practiced wakefulness. Moreover, using her God-given gift of rhetoric, she preached and converted people throughout Egypt.

Dorlandus claimed to have found the source material for his *Birth and Life* in “ancient books.”<sup>50</sup> Anyway, he inserted the etymology of Catherine’s name from the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the element of the convent-like existence of Catherine after the conversion also occurs in a manuscript from the Windesheim regular canons at Rooklooster, but was developed differently. Textual correspondences are lacking. According to the Rooklooster copyist, Catherine was not the leader, but excelled in obedience to her mother.<sup>52</sup> Textual correspondence between the Rooklooster manuscript and Dorlandus’s *Birth and Life* is lacking.

In itself, Dorlandus’s construction of Saint Catherine as a spiritual leader was not new, as it had been present in the earliest versions of her legend. Hagiographers had always described Saint Catherine as a talented orator and a spiritual advisor to her male and female converts, for instance, in the episode about the philosophers. In the Late Middle Ages, scholastics put Catherine forward as an exception to Saint Paul’s rule that women were not allowed to preach to women as well as to men.<sup>53</sup> They used her example to argue for

50 Dorlandus, *In nativitatem ... Catharinae* (see above, n. 8), fol. 1r: “Veteribus in libris.”

51 Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea* (see above, n. 47), ch. 168, 1205.

52 Brussels, RL, MS 197, Brussels, Rooklooster, Regular Canons, 1465, fols. 205r–206v, edited in *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Bibliotheca Regiae Bruxellensis* (Brussel, 1886–1889), 1: 105–108.

53 Referring to Saint Paul: 1 Tim. 2, 11–14.



more exceptions, if such women were found to have privileged access to the Truth through visions.<sup>54</sup> Dorlandus strengthened Catherine's profile as such by inserting the new elements that she converted her suitors, by making her the leader of a convent-like group of virgins, and her missionary and pastoral work in all of Egypt for several categories of believers.

The scholastic debate about Saint Catherine took place against the backdrop of a true explosion of female visionaries after Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179). *Discretio spirituum* (discernment of the spirits) had been a problem from Late Antiquity, as is obvious from the many tales about Desert Fathers in the *Vitae Patrum*, who found it hard to distinguish messages from God from those of Satan. The discussion about the capacity to do so gained new momentum in the Late Middle Ages in view of the problem of separating true from false female visionaries. Where it concerned women, physical purity and a spotless reputation came to be seen among the most important requirements in order to be able to have this discernment.<sup>55</sup> *Confratres* of Dorlandus, such as Denys the Carthusian, participated in the debate.<sup>56</sup> As a virgin martyr, Catherine would be fully capable of transcending the prohibition against female spiritual leadership. Dorlandus made a special point of it by extending her effectiveness beyond the usual convertees from her passion, such as the fifty philosophers.

#### 4 Phoenixes

The *Dialogus Brevis super virginitate, fide et fenice* (*Brief Dialogue on Virginité, the Faith, and the Phoenix*), as the conversation between Saint Cecilia and Saint Francis is entitled, is an example of another genre, which Dorlandus used to

54 Alcuin Blamires, "Women and preaching in Medieval Orthodoxy, Heresy and Saints' Lives," *Viator* 26 (1995), 135–152.

55 In recent years the *Discretio spirituum* has become a much debated subject; see, for instance, Dyan Elliott, *Proving women: female spirituality and inquisitional culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1993); Rosalyn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: the Discernment of Spirits in Writings of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (Woodbridge, 1999); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 2003); Wendy Love Anderson, *Discernment of Spirits: Assessing Visions and Visionaries in the Late Middle Ages* [Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation 63] (Tübingen, 2011).

56 Denys of Rijkel, *De particularo iudicio in obitu singulorum dialogus*, in *Doctoris Ecstatici D. Dionysius Cartusiani Opera Omnia*, 42 vols., ed. "Monachi sacri ordinis Carthusiensis" (Tournai, 1912), art. 21–29, 9: 455–468.

communicate his messages. It is available in a 1530 manuscript from the community of Regular Canons in Korsendonk.<sup>57</sup> It contains texts by the Church Father Saint Ambrose of Milan, the humanist Erasmus, and the observant Franciscan Henry Herp. Several copyists worked on it.<sup>58</sup> The priory of Korsendonk belonged to a group of fourteenth-century Brabantine priories which joined the Chapter of Windesheim. It was connected to the Carthusians in that it belonged to the Brabant-Liège cloister movement, for which the Carthusians acted as sources of inspiration and advisors.<sup>59</sup>

Dialogues were a beloved genre in the educational literature of the Middle Ages. In humanist milieus, it rose to renewed popularity, which led some scholars to identify it as the humanist genre par excellence.<sup>60</sup> Dorlandus wrote several. In the *Brief Dialogue*, he combined an unexpected duo: a virgin martyr from Late Antiquity and the most prestigious saint from the Poverty Movement. Cecilia is the master, like Catherine of Alexandria was to her followers. Probably, as chastity is the main subject, Dorlandus chose her because of her exceptional record as far as this was concerned. According to her *vitae*, she was married off to a certain Valerianus, but, *in extremis*—that is, when in their bedroom about to begin their wedding night together—she convinced her spouse that she was protected by an angel and that he would go to hell if he touched her. The angel would reveal himself if the young man had himself baptized by Pope Urban; and so it happened.<sup>61</sup> As for Saint Francis, he had a reputation for jumping into snow as to counter the heat of his body and for flogging it.<sup>62</sup>

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- 57 E. Persoons, "La prieuré de Korsendonk à Oud-Turnhout," in *Monasticon Belge* 8.2: 459–490; E. Persoons, H. de Kok, and R. Peeters, *Korsendonk* (Antwerpen, 1981); W. Kohl, E. Persoons, and A.G. Weiler, *Monasticon Windeshemese*, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1976–1984), 1: 68–82.
- 58 A description of Brussels, RL, MS 1918–1925, in J. van der Gheyn, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, 13 vols. (Brussels, 1902), 2: 42–43 (see also n. 8).
- 59 F. Prims, *De kloosterslotbeweging in Brabant in de vijftiende eeuw* (Antwerpen, 1944); Wilhelm Kohl, Ernest Persoons, and Anton G. Weiler, *Monasticon Windeshemense* (4 vols.) (Brussels, 1976), 1: 67–82. See also Gaens, "Fons hortorum" (see above, n. 10), 63.
- 60 Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-Francois Vallée, "Foreword," in: id., eds., *Printed voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue* (Toronto, 2005), x; R.I. Vulcan, *Savoir et rhétorique dans les dialogues français entre 1515–1550* [Ars Rhetorica 7] (Paris, 1970), 1.
- 61 Compare for instance Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea* (see above, n. 47), ch. 165, 1180–1187.
- 62 Bonaventura, *Legenda Maior*, 5: 3–4, see [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z\\_1221-1274\\_Bonaventura\\_Legenda\\_Major\\_Sancti\\_Francisci\\_GE.pdf.html](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_1221-1274_Bonaventura_Legenda_Major_Sancti_Francisci_GE.pdf.html), accessed 10-11-2015.

According to Dorlandus, Saint Francis asked him to write the dialogue. After refusing several times out of humility, he complied. His acceptance letter serves as a prologue to the dialogue. Two more letters follow: a letter by Francis to Cecilia asking her to talk to him about chastity, and a reply by Cecilia to her beloved friend Francis. In this letter, she chastised him for having abandoned love, that is, charity, a reference to *Revelation*.<sup>63</sup> She reminded him that he should be willing to take on Christ, to live and suffer as he did.<sup>64</sup>

A Carthusian like Dorlandus needed a disclaimer for a text in such an oral genre, in view of the silence that was a foundational characteristic of the spirituality of his order. Therefore, his dialogue starts with a warning about the dangers of vain speech. It is divided into chapters, in which the saints discuss several aspects of chastity. The most important points are chastity as an interior virtue; the connection of chastity with other virtues, primarily charity; the punishment of those who are unchaste; the manner of training oneself in virtue; and what chastity entails. The argument runs as follows:<sup>65</sup>

First of all, replying to Francis's contention that the eyes breed lechery, the virgin Cecilia asserts that the heart is the real problem: a heart focused on God makes the eyes immune to seduction. Moreover, she details how one can train one's heart by ascesis, by relinquishing carnal pleasure: fasting, wakefulness, and so on. In the second part, she paints a frightening picture of what awaits the unchaste, particularly those who are priests or religious people. She urges her pupil Francis to be penitent, to close off the senses, to flee the world, and, most importantly, to love Christ. "This is the love, which beats the flesh, the devil, and the world," as Francis agrees.<sup>66</sup> Cecilia stresses that true faith, love, and chastity require performance: "Faith is dead without acts."<sup>67</sup> She illustrates her words by referring to her own conduct on her wedding night, detailing how the devil made Valerianus fall in love with her. After his conversion, he converted his brother Tiburtius.

63 Ap. 2,4.

64 Brussels, RL, MS 1918–1925, fol. 231r. Compare Hadewijch, *Visioenen*, ed. and trans. Frank Willaert and Imme Dros (Amsterdam, 1996), *Vision* 1, 49–53.

65 Paraphrasis MvD of Brussels, RL, MS 1918–1925 (see above, n. 8), fols. 230r–233v.

66 Brussels, RL, MS 1918–1925 (see above, n. 8), fol. 234r.

67 Brussels, RL, MS 1918–1925 (see above, n. 8), fol. 234r, a reference to James 2,17. I thank John Flood again for pointing to this reference.

According to Cecilia, chastity means “sharing the angelical nature”; it allows her, a member of the weaker sex, to attain the dignity of an angel.<sup>68</sup> At the request of Francis, she retells the tale of her martyrdom. Before it actually started, she experienced a moment of temptation, but afterwards nothing could touch her because of the love of her heavenly bridegroom.

In the third part of the *Brief Dialogue*, an allegorical explanation of the phoenix follows:

Cecilia explains that, like the martyr, the phoenix is born again, referring to the legend that the phoenix dies and rises from the flames. The phoenix does not eat anything beyond heavenly ambrosia. “Nor is there male or female” in the phoenix, as Saint Paul explained about people living in Christ.<sup>69</sup> Cecilia concludes by identifying the phoenix as the virgin in view of its sexless way of reproduction. She and whoever chose the angelic state of being a virgin are in fact phoenixes.

The final surviving part of the *Brief dialogue* relates how Cecilia imitated the Virgin Mary. Unfortunately, for no apparent codicological reason, it stops in the middle of a sentence.

## 5 Models for Individual Reform

In this article, I examined three hagiographical texts in different genres: a life, a more hybrid account of Saint Catherine’s early years, and a dialogue. As for the second text, the *Birth and Life* on Saint Catherine, compared to the sermons on Lawrence, it begs the question whether the term sermon could be used for any text, which catered for oral delivery, thus challenging modern scholarly debate about genre.

As far as content is concerned, Dorlandus’s hagiographical texts provide messages on different levels. First, the saints presented here provide models for the reform of individuals. Second, the Zelem Carthusian showed how history worked in terms of God’s plan for the salvation of humankind. To twenty-first-century students of his works, the most striking point, however, is how he construed a specific type of female saint, that is, virgin martyrs, as spiritual

68 Brussels, RL, MS 1918–1925 (see above, n. 8), fol. 237r.

69 Brussels, RL, MS 1918–1925 (see above, n. 8) fol. 241v, a reference to Gal. 3,28.

leaders. This connects to his representation of hagiography as an account about the way in which history proceeds.

As far as individual reform is concerned, it is important to note the structure of the texts. These contain wonderful phrases like the ones cited in the section on the *Brief Dialogue*. Such material would be eminently useful as “points” to meditate upon in order to focus the mind on God, as was usual in meditation treatises of the Later Middle Ages.

Dorlandus made clear that true devotion was primarily about the interior self. Moreover, he showed how it translated into virtue and virtuous conduct—a subject dear to reformists like the Carthusians and the adherents of the *Devotio Moderna*. For instance, his Cecilia insisted on interiority, when she corrected Francis’ statement on the propensity of the eyes to lead to sin. As the Church Father Saint Augustine taught, the problem was not that Adam happened to eat from a tree but that he wanted to do so, despite the fact that it was against God’s command, thus infecting all humankind with a desire for carnality rather than for God.<sup>70</sup>

Dorlandus’s saints showed how to restore one’s relationship with God. Helped by grace, they engaged in traditional ascetic practice, as advocated in reformist hagiography: silence, asceticism, wakefulness, manual labor, and weeping. This effort led to virtues—first and foremost chastity, patience, charity, and humility—and led to good conduct.<sup>71</sup> Dorlandus encouraged his audience by showing them that even the saints had to struggle to stay on the right track. For instance, he detailed Cecilia’s interior struggle in the face of martyrdom. Some messages were directed towards a specific audience. In the life of Joseph, which Dorlandus wrote for the female religious, he included many points, which are usually connected to this target group, such as a radical intimacy with Christ’s daily life.

It is tempting to compare Dorlandus’s biography by Andrew of Amsterdam with his life of Catherine, as the similarities are quite obvious. In particular, Andrew praised him for his humility, which is also an important feature of Catherine’s character. In addition, as discussed, just as the virgin martyr had done when she had no longer studied Tullian philosophy, Dorlandus relinquished Tullian prose as well. Clichéd as such a denunciation of worldly learning might be, we may speculate that Dorlandus himself regarded Saint Cather-

70 On the problem of the unwilling will, see, for instance, Augustine of Hippo, *Confessiones*, 3 vols., ed. James Joseph O’Donnell (Oxford, 1992), 8: 93–94.

71 Krijn Pansters, *De kardinale deugden in de Lage Landen, 1200–1500* [Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen 108] (Hilversum, 2007), 165–201.

ine as a role model and may have told Andrew about how he tried to emulate her, thereby himself becoming a role model in his own right. Or did his biographer feel that his master had become similar to this important saint and therefore described him based on her as model?

## 6 Agents of God's Plan

In addition to messages intended to help the readers or listeners to train themselves into a pious lifestyle, Dorlandus provided an insight into the way in which history works. In accordance with the usual view of the Bible as an example of how God works for our salvation, he gave several instances as to how the past, the present, and the future were connected, for instance, when the patriarchs attended the newborn Christ. The Old Testament was commonly seen as a prophecy of the New Testament. Figures from the Old Testament were *prefiguratae* of Christ or, occasionally, of other figures in the New Testament: the Old Testament Joseph was a prefiguration of his New Testament namesake down to the names of their parents.<sup>72</sup> As imitators of Christ, saints were *postfiguratae* of Him: through imitating them, one was in fact imitating Christ. After the biblical age, God continued to provide information about future events by giving some people access to prophecies and by charging them with the improvement of their fellow man's behavior.<sup>73</sup> In the Late Middle Ages, many of those claiming such direct access to God's plan were women.

In comparison to other legends of Cecilia and Catherine, Dorlandus stressed their spiritual leadership over women and men. Both were portrayed as visionaries. Dorlandus's description connects to the Carthusian appreciation of certain female prophets such as the Benedictine abbess Hildegard of Bingen.<sup>74</sup> Her prophecies were generally supposed to have predicted the Western Schism. In

72 Henri de Lubac, *Exegèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1959–1964).

73 See, for instance, M. van Uytvanghe, *Stylisation Biblique et Condition Humaine dans l'hagiographie mérovingienne [600–750]* [Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en kunsten van België 120] (Brussels, 1987), and Mathilde van Dijk, *Een rij van spiegels. De heilige Barbara van Nicomedia als voorbeeld voor religieuzen* [Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen 71] (Hilversum, 2000).

74 Johannes Mangei, "Kartäuserorden und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Bücher, Bibliotheken und Schriftkultur der Kartäuser*, ed. Sönke Lorenz [Conturbernium 59] (Wiesbaden, 2002), 289–316, there 310–313, 314–315; Martin, "Carthusians as advocates of women visionary reformers" (see above, n. 10).

addition, in the Late Middle Ages, her concept of the effeminate age came to be used as an explanation for the sad state of Christendom. Hildegard taught that, like Adam obeying his wife rather than God, the men of her day had become effeminate and were no longer able to perform their natural task of being the masters of Creation. Instead, they allowed women to rule, as Adam had, and followed false prophets (or prophetesses). Hildegard abhorred this unnatural state of affairs.<sup>75</sup>

In the Late Middle Ages, the recycling of her views had contradictory effects. On the one hand, it led to suspicion of woman visionaries. The later adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* were wary of mystical experiences such as visions and did not encourage female visionaries. In 1455, the Chapter of Windesheim forbade women to write about mystical and speculative theology. In addition, it is striking how, in the surviving copies of the sisterbook of Diepenveen, both from the sixteenth century, visions are mentioned and downplayed at the same time: for instance their content is seldom revealed, except when these concerned the fate in the Hereafter of a fellow sister.<sup>76</sup> Some Carthusians were also skeptical, such as Henry Eggher of Kalkar.<sup>77</sup> This did not necessarily mean that they rejected visions; rather, the challenge was to distinguish true visions from the devil's messages, as noted in the section on Catherine. On the other hand, true prophetesses could have very high status. Figures like Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) and Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373) participated in the debate on Church reform at the highest level. They also warned their followers about the end to come, and spoke about the need for reform on both the individual

75 Hildegard of Bingen, *Liber Divinorum Operum*, ed. J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 197: 1005–1007 and id., *Epistolarum Liber*, ed. J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 197: 1005–1007, Letters 13, 47, 49, resp. 197: 167, 221–222, 254–255; Caciola, *Discerning Spirits* (see above, n. 33), 14–15, 274–275, 284–291.

76 *Acta Capituli Windeshemensis. Acta van de kapittelvergaderingen der Congregatie van Windesheim*, ed. S. van der Woude (The Hague, 1953), 53; see also Mathilde van Dijk, “Miracles and visions in *Devotio Moderna* biographies,” in: Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory ed., *Signs, wonders and miracles in the life of the Church. Studies in Church History* (London, 2005), 239–248.

77 Heinrich Rütthing, *Der Kartäuser Heinrich Eggher von Kalkar 1328–1408* (Göttingen, 1967), 97–204. For illustrating quotations, see Henry's letters: “*Non est credendum talibus mulieribus.*” Hildegard was included in these *mulieribus*. Yet, he primarily opposed those who *prophetari volunt de preteritis dicendo istud et istud predixit Hildegardis* in Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 710, Cologne, fifteenth century fol. 74v. Accessed through: <http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/Hs-710/0076?sid=cob2724171e9899c3d6dcdd62f0b7ae3> (11-5-2015). See also “*Fons hortorum*,” 55 (see above, n. 10), 82–83 (n. 160–162), and 101–102. I thank Tom Gaens for this reference.

and the ecclesiastical levels in the strongest terms, much as the Old Testament prophets had chastised Israel.<sup>78</sup>

Obviously, these women were not seen to be part of the problem of the effeminate age. Chastity, preferably virginity, was a primary criterion for a true visionary. In accordance with the medical theory of the day, women were generally supposed to be weaker than men, both physically and morally, because of the proportion of the humors in their bodies. In comparison to men, they had too much humidity and cold. Men, who had more fire and dryness, were closer to God, as He too was connected to these elements.<sup>79</sup> However, women who lived ascetically changed the proportion of the humors and, by becoming more fervid and dryer, became more masculine. Therefore, in an effeminate age, female prophets could be manlier than emasculated men, since those who indulged in carnality lost heat and dryness.<sup>80</sup> This is why, when—as happened in the catalogue of the Carthusian monastery at Erfurt—Hildegard was listed under the category of “illustrious men of the Order of the Benedictines,” this was not just an instance of routine sexist sloppiness.<sup>81</sup> An accomplished ascetic like the Sybil of the Rhine actually had become male, as had been asserted about female saints from the Early Church.<sup>82</sup>

As for Peter Dorlandus, it is certain that he had access to the works of Hildegard and, in addition, Hadewijch of Antwerp, as all of these were present in the Zelem library. The same is true for the legend of Catherine of Siena.<sup>83</sup> As virgins, Cecilia and Catherine of Alexandria would certainly qualify as true visionaries and therefore as instructors of true devotion. Judging by the use of Latin, both texts referring to these martyrs were created for male audiences. Their construction as true visionaries encouraged these men to take the prophecies of later woman visionaries seriously.

78 Elsewhere in this issue, the Groningen historian Suzan Folkerts shows how Carthusians gathered tales about the Low Countries' visionary women from the Poverty Movement. See Suzan Folkerts, “The Transmission and Appropriation of the *Vita* of Christina Mirabilis in Carthusian Communities.”

79 Compare Ex. 3,2 and Acts 2,1–4.

80 Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge/London, 1990), 25–62; Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Differences in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge, 1993).

81 Paul Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz*, 3 vols. (München, 1928), 2: 578.

82 For example: *Vita sanctae Euphraxiae*, in: *Vitae patrum*, 2 vols., in *Patrologia Latina* 73: 1, 1:630 and 631.

83 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Series nova 12694, *Registrum*, Rooklooster (1532–1540), fols. 137r, 168v, and 393r.



## 7 Conclusion: A Carthusian Perspective on Reform?

The *Birth and Life*, the *History*, and the *Brief Dialogue* were aimed at different religious audiences. Dorlandus's messages about renunciation, asceticism, and chastity inside marriage, as Cecilia and Joseph practiced it, seem ill suited to a secular audience. The *Brief Dialogue* and the *History* were actually used in Devotio Moderna communities. The ownership of the life of Catherine is unclear, but its intended audience probably also consisted of religious, most probably men, in view of the language.

On the level of contents, Dorlandus wrote heavily edited versions of the exploits of his saints, allowing maximum space for reformist themes, as shared by the Carthusians and the Devout: the interiority of piety and sin, the need to change the direction of the heart, and religious practices such as asceticism, silence, and seclusion. As a Carthusian, Dorlandus may also have stressed silence and seclusion rather more, as is true in the *Birth and Life*. Still, his narration about the progress of history and God's plan was in line with the usual accounts. A typically Carthusian element, however, is Dorlandus's enhancement of virgin martyrs as spiritual leaders. This corresponded to the Carthusian faith in late medieval prophetesses as guides in an effeminate age and as advisors in how to solve the crisis in the Church.