

# Gift-Giving Practices in the Utrecht Charterhouse

## *Donating to be Remembered?\**

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Some of the main reasons why the Carthusian Order became popular in the late medieval period were the austerity of the order and its aim to stay loyal to its sober and ascetic character.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, this reputation for holiness and poverty frequently brought an excess of donor activities, often inevitably accumulating wealth for charterhouses over time. By donating goods, the benefactors associated themselves with the institution and expected the members of the institution to pray for their souls. This principle of *do ut des* is the key element of the commemoration of the dead and of memorial culture in general during the Middle Ages. Therefore the names of benefactors can often be found in the necrologies (calendars with the names of people who had to be commemorated) of religious institutions. Apart from necrologies, institutions often kept a detailed administration of gifts and donors. These sources are known as necrological documents or 'documents nécrologiques'.<sup>2</sup> In order to gain a better understanding of the gift-giving practices it is important to study these documents in their context and to estimate their value.<sup>3</sup> This article will focus on the Utrecht charterhouse, of which several necrological documents have survived. These give a clear insight into the monastery's early existence and into the gift-giving practices.

\* This article is based on a paper presented at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds on 14 July 2011.

1 For the expansion of the Carthusian Order in the late medieval Low Countries, see Gaens, 'De gebroken spiegel' and Gaens, *De kracht van de stilte*, 85-137. The Carthusian Order is considered to have been a source of inspiration for the late medieval monastic reform movement; see Rütting, 'Die Kartäuser'.

2 Necrological documents were first described by N. Huyghebaert in *Les documents nécrologiques*. Later a supplement was written by Lemaître entitled *Mise à jour*. Huyghebaert divides them into documents with a liturgical function (necrologies) and documents with an administrative function (obituaries). Despite this division he acknowledged that there were several documents that could belong to both categories. It was for this reason that the Werkgroep Memorieboeken (Focus Group Memorial Registers), initiated by Truus van Bueren in 2004, made a different distinction based on the types of registration (*viz.* registers of graves, gifts, memorial services, names and pittance), see Van Bueren, 'Gebruik en functie', 11-14. The Werkgroep Memorieboeken can be considered a direct forerunner of the MeMO project.

3 The memorial culture of lay benefactors in the Utrecht charterhouse and the use of memorial documents for research into memorial culture are the central themes of my PhD research.

### The Utrecht charterhouse

The Utrecht charterhouse of Nieuwlicht was founded in 1391 by Zweder van Gaasbeek, lord of Putten and Strijen (south of Rotterdam).<sup>4</sup> Zweder was a wealthy and influential knight who served under the counts of Brabant, Holland and the prince-bishop of Utrecht.<sup>5</sup> He donated a large sum of money together with four large pieces of uncultivated wetlands from his domain in Putten and Strijen.<sup>6</sup> The monastery was built 1.5 kilometres to the north-west of the city of Utrecht. This was a remarkable location, since it was almost 75 kilometres away from the lands in Putten and Strijen that were considered the economic heartlands of Nieuwlicht.

Building a charterhouse was a costly affair. Income in the form of annual rents was necessary for the upkeep of the monastery, but its construction required funds that were immediately available. Although construction works started in 1392 and parts of the monastery were consecrated two years later, building activities slowed down in 1400 when Zweder died in Italy while on a pilgrimage. Zweder's brother, Willem van Abcoude, took over the role of main benefactor and financed the completion of the church, the eastern part of the great cloister with seven cells, and two communal buildings that bordered the Little Cloister. In 1407 the church was finally consecrated and in the same year Willem died.<sup>7</sup> Despite all the gifts the monastery received its economic position remained unstable, because Nieuwlicht had to pay for the embankment and cultivation of the foundation lands. As a result the monastery could not support all its members and in 1414 several monks were sent to other charterhouses for a while. By 1417 the monks had returned. The St Elisabeth's flood of November 1421 brought about another economic crisis, since some of the wetlands that had been embanked and cultivated shortly before were flooded, which caused vast damage.

A few years later the Utrecht Schism (1425-1449) unfolded. After the death of Frederik van Blankenheim, bishop of Utrecht, a conflict arose between two candidate successors: Zweder van Culemborg and Rudolf van Diepholt. The schism reached its climax between 1425 and 1432. In order to end the conflict Pope Martin V spoke out in favour of Zweder van Culemborg in 1425. Refusing to accept this, Rudolf van Diepholt drove Zweder out of his bishopric the following year. As

4 Nieuwlicht is also known by its Latin name *Nova Lux*, as well as by its aliases *Sint Salvator* (*Sanct Salvator*) and *Bloemendaal* (*Vallis Floris*). For the early history of Nieuwlicht, see also Gaens, *Kracht van de stilte*, 120-122, Gumbert, *Die Utrechter Kartäuser*, 23-41, Scholtens, 'Iets over de bouwgeschiedenis' and *idem*, 'De voormalige kartuizerkloosters'.

5 For biographical information about Zweder van Gaasbeek and his son Jacob, see De Groot, 'Zweder en Jacob van Gaasbeek' and Vercruyse, 'Een eerherstel'.

6 The foundation charter of the monastery and the donation charter of the pieces of land can be found in the two cartularies that have survived: Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief (HUA), Kartuizerklooster Nieuwlicht bij Utrecht (Nieuwlicht), inv. nr 1, fol. 11-31 and HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 2, fol. 11-41.

7 The early history of Nieuwlicht is described in two chronicles; HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 3 and inv. nr 4, 1-6.

a result Rudolf was excommunicated by the Pope, although he managed to maintain power in Utrecht. Shortly after, Zweder placed Utrecht under an interdict because the city supported Rudolf, forcing a cessation of all religious services. When Rudolf tried to persuade the religious institutions to continue their activities of worship, the institutions that were loyal to the Pope were forced to go into exile. Nieuwlicht was among the institutions whose members went into exile. At the end of 1427 or the beginning of 1428 the monks of Nieuwlicht were transferred to other charterhouses, such as Monnikhuizen near Arnhem and St Catharine's near Antwerp.<sup>8</sup> They only returned to Utrecht in 1432, when Pope Eugene IV recognised Rudolf as the bishop of Utrecht.

The temporary evacuation of the monastery can be considered a clear break in the monastery's history. Not only did the members of the community go into exile, it also constituted a collapse of the gift-giving economy on which the monastery depended. After the return of the monks in 1432 the number of benefactors and their gifts never reached the old level. This drop in benefactors and gifts can also be explained by the fact that Nieuwlicht, founded in 1391, was no longer considered a new foundation by the 1430s, which resulted in a loss of interest among potential benefactors. It was common practice that newly founded monasteries received large gifts in their early years. After several years or decades the flow of gifts decreased. Particularly in a city such as Utrecht, which housed many religious institutions, there were simply too many institutions to choose from.<sup>9</sup> Despite the fact that for Nieuwlicht the number of gifts and benefactors kept declining, its economic position started to improve quickly after the monks' return in 1432, as the lands they cultivated finally started to pay off. This even led to the monastery lending money to the city of Utrecht on a regular basis.

This first phase of the Utrecht charterhouse is very well documented, unlike the later phases of the monastery's existence, which lasted until 1580, when the monastery was dissolved by the city council of Utrecht. The surviving sources from Nieuwlicht clearly show that the monastery kept a thorough administration of benefactors, their gifts and the counter-gifts expected by the benefactors, at least until the monks went into exile in 1428. In this article I will analyse the gift-giving practices concerning the Utrecht charterhouse in this first phase, *i.e.*, between 1391 and 1428. Who were the benefactors in this early period, what kind of gifts did they donate and what did they receive in return? Special attention will be paid to the participation of women as benefactors in comparison to male benefactors and the

8 Nieuwlicht was not completely vacated. At least five members, among whom three monks, stayed behind, Gumbert, *Die Utrechter Kartäuser*, 37-38.

9 This stands in contrast with the gift-giving practices in the Central Middle Ages, and in rural areas in particular. Gift-giving practices to religious houses created ties between these houses and their benefactors that required periodic renewal through further gifts, benefices and profession. Links between families and monasteries existed over hundreds of years and were constantly renewed. See Rosenwein, *To be the neighbor*; Bouchard, *Sword, miter and cloister*; Jamrozak, *Rievaulx abbey*.

share of artefacts and works of art in the bulk of donations received by the monastery. Before we turn to the gift-giving practices, I will first discuss the sources involved.

### The sources

The gift-giving practices at Nieuwlicht in the first forty years of its existence are very well administrated. Apart from two surviving cartularies, there are four other manuscripts that allow us to reconstruct these practices. These four manuscripts all played a key role in the monastery's memorial culture and can be characterised as necrological documents. These manuscripts are a miscellany (MS 4) with more than twenty texts dealing with several aspects of the memorial culture within the monastery,<sup>10</sup> a necrology (MS 14),<sup>11</sup> and two registers with gifts donated to the monastery (MS 27 and MS 28).<sup>12</sup> One of these two registers of gifts, MS 27, survives as a copy from the mid-fifteenth century only and contains the larger gifts worth more than a hundred pounds (fig. 1). The other register, MS 28 (fig. 2), contains the smaller gifts. According to Peter Gumbert, MS 28 was started around 1407, together with the oldest cartulary and the original of MS 27.<sup>13</sup> He argues that MS 27 and MS 28 supplement each other. In the introduction of MS 28 a reference can be found to the 'other volume' (*alterius voluminis*), containing gifts worth 'more than 100 pounds' (*ultra centum libras monete*). In addition, a fragment has survived of the introduction of the original manuscript of MS 27 that was not copied into MS 27, which states that it contains the gifts worth more than 100 pounds.<sup>14</sup> Apparently, the monk who copied the original around 1450 did not deem it necessary to copy the introduction.

Without questioning the fact that MS 27 and MS 28 supplement each other, there are some striking differences between these two manuscripts that need to be pointed out. Leaving aside the fact that MS 27 is a copy from a lost original, the most im-

10 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 4 (MS 4). Among these texts are a necrology with the names of people to be commemorated by the monastery, a chronicle about the founding history of Nieuwlicht, a list of memorial services that had to be fulfilled annually, a register with the gifts of the most important benefactors until 1448 and seven registers of graves of members of the monastery as well as of lay people from outside who were buried inside the monastery. Several of these texts, such as the necrology and the grave registers, were kept until 1580, the year the monastery was dissolved. MS 4 was published in the nineteenth century by Van Hasselt, 'Het necrologium van het Karthuizerklooster'.

11 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 14 (MS 14). This necrology was based on MS 4, but covers a shorter period (1391-1465) and contains three hundred names, whereas the necrology of MS 4 contains over two thousand entries from 1391 to 1580. 84 names appear only in MS 14. Moreover, the first two weeks of January are missing. MS 14 was integrated into the edition of MS 4 by Van Hasselt.

12 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27 (MS 27) and HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 28 (MS 28), respectively. MS 27 was published in the nineteenth century, De Geer, 'Begiftigers'. In this article I refer to the original manuscript.

13 Gumbert, *Die Utrechter Kartäuser*, 13-16, 111-118.

14 Utrecht University Library (UBU), Charterdoos I, nr 7, hs 1653.

**Q**uando p[er] et filii et sup[er] s[er]v[os]

**P**rimo ac principalis inter o[mn]ia maximus don[or]  
 benefactorum quor[um] me[us] dom[us] fuit felix s[er]v[us] rector  
 dacionis in xpo nobilis baro Wederus de abroude  
dn[us] de chaebeer de putte et de strach eiusd[em] me[us]  
 dom[us] primordialis fundator. Iste assignavit nobis  
 pro dotacione dec[em] me[us] dom[us] in bonis et certis  
 redditib[us] annuatim ducenta viginti quinque nobilia  
 anglicana de quib[us] in suo habom[us] loco firmiffia  
 unummetra

**I**tem ipse fecit emi et soluit fundu[m] sine arcam in  
 transu terra filii vallis floru[m] idest Bloemendack  
 cu[m] suis attinentiis facientib[us] summa[m] annuatim viginti  
 duorum iugera terra[m] tunc xxii iugera sonders

**I**tem de pecunia valde multa qua[m] ab ipso in vita sua  
 et post mortem eius a suis successorib[us] huiusmodi duntaxat  
 vna[m] et p[er] partes ad edificia seu ad fabrica[m] ac libros  
 necessarios b[e]n[e] ponere certam summa[m] cuius quide[m] pecuniarum  
 summa aliqui effrauerunt extendi vlt[imo] et in quaginta milia  
atque florenoz gheleue

**I**tem post huc don[or] willhelm[us] de abroude et de duerscheden  
 Iste nobilis baro et don[or] de abroude ac de duerscheden  
 fuit fundator legitimus p[er] mortem ipsius domo[m] n[ost]ra[m] n[ost]ra[m] p[ro]p[ri]e  
 completa parte ex hereditate patris illa[m] complere studuit  
 Insuper de p[ro]p[ri]o orientali parte magne[m] me[us] galilee ad  
 septem cellis ibid[em] gentib[us] vna[m] cu[m] plurib[us] alijs edificijs  
 dom[us] me[us] de nouo erigi et construere fecit cu[m] ill[is] duab[us] mansijs  
 que vulgari[ter] eius nom[ine] dicuntur groot abroude et deyn abroude  
 pro quib[us] p[ro]p[ri]e sicut color tenet[ur] exposuit tria milia et  
 quingenta nobilia aurea monete regis anglie v[el] curie  
 Iste dedit nob[is] certas porciones terre in diversis locis situate  
 Ite p[er] mortem eius huiusmodi ex parte ipsius curia summa[m] quinq[ue] milia  
 coronaz auri monete regis fidei. Pro quib[us] omib[us] tribuat  
 sibi m[er]ito de[us] cu[m] fide suo et alijs eor[um] a[n]i[m]as regni etie[m] b[e]n[e]ficio

Fig. 1 First page of the register of gifts (MS 27) containing the larger gifts of more than one hundred pounds, 22 x 15 cm. Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, Klooster Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 1r.

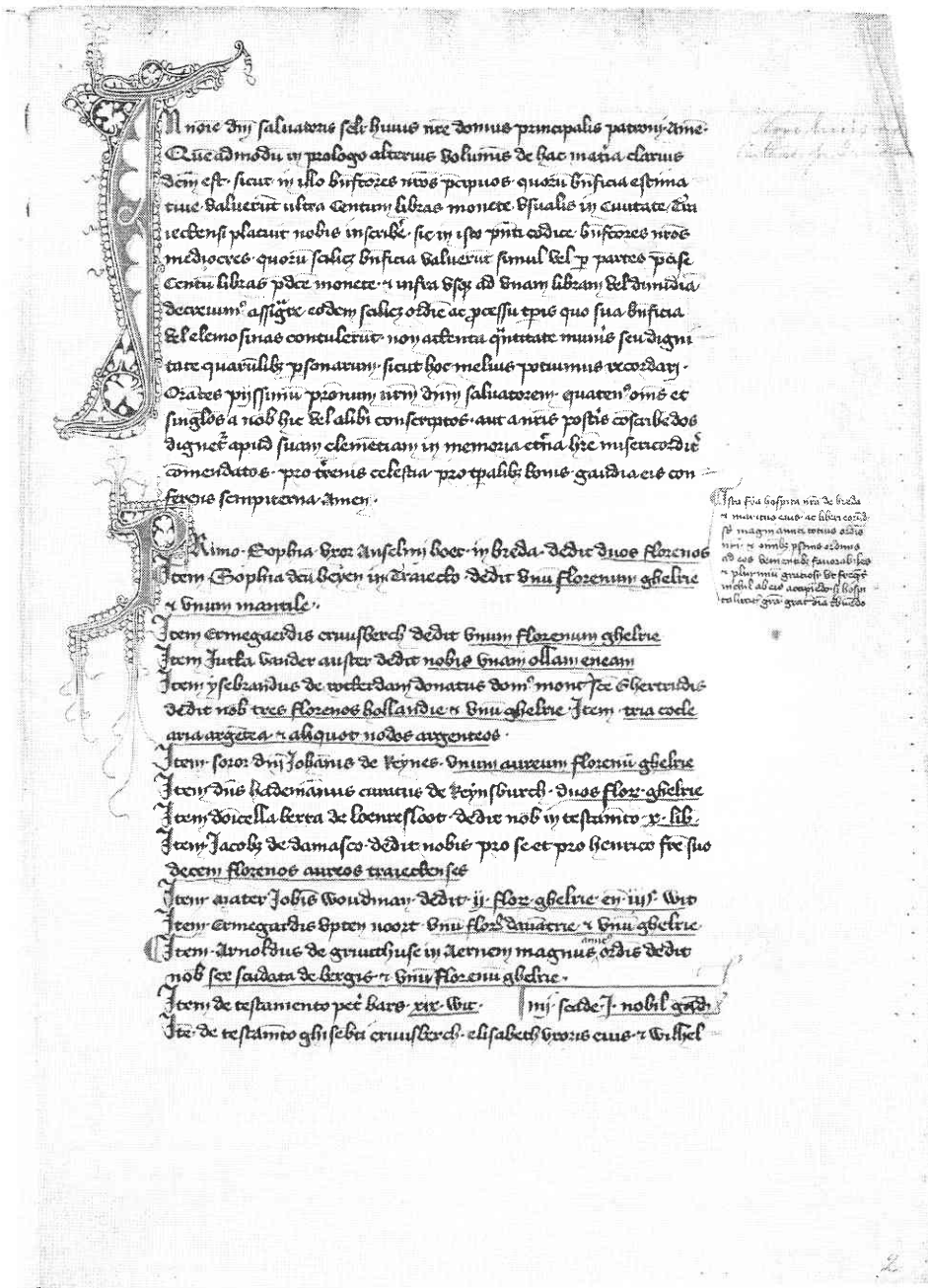


Fig. 2 First page of the register of gifts (MS 28) containing the smaller gifts of less than one hundred pounds, 31 x 22 cm. Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, Klooster Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 28, fol. 1r.

portant distinction is the different structure of the content of the two manuscripts. MS 28 is mostly a chronological account in which, starting from 1415 on, the year is written in the margin or above the entries, making it clear in which year gifts were received. MS 27, on the other hand, contains a list of approximately one hundred benefactors and their gifts, registered by the donor's name. This means that the gifts donated at different moments in time (in life and/or after death) are all grouped together. These gifts are mostly undated. Only four gifts are dated and two additional dates are given as references to the year of death of the benefactor. When the donations of land mentioned in MS 27 are compared with the donation charters that were copied into the oldest cartulary it becomes clear that, apart from a few entries at the beginning of the manuscript, MS 27 does not really follow a chronological order. It is unclear, however, whether the original of MS 27 was also structured by the name of the benefactor, or whether the copyist reorganised the text.

There is another important difference between the two manuscripts. Both registers contain gifts from 1391 onwards, but MS 28, which contains the smaller gifts, is kept until 1470, while MS 27, the manuscript with the more important gifts, ends around 1427. No new donors were added to the register after that date, although some additional information about benefactors and some gifts must have been added at a later point. This can be concluded by analysing the entries. One of the remarks that were added later concerns Jan Taets, a monk in Nieuwlicht who entered the monastery in 1422. His gifts are described in one of the last entries of MS 27.<sup>15</sup> When he entered the monastery he brought with him 450 florins and an annual rent of 20 pounds from a plot of land to the north-west of Utrecht. Later on he also donated another annual rent from the town of Haarlem of 25 French *écus*. During the Utrecht Schism Jan was sent to the Carthusian monastery of Antwerp. He did not return to Nieuwlicht in 1432, but remained in Antwerp and even took his second profession there. He died in the Antwerp charterhouse and was buried there in 1438. The information about his second profession and death is also included in MS 27.<sup>16</sup> Another example of information added later is the last entry of the register, which sums up the gifts of Hendrik Foek, canon of the Utrecht chapter of St Saviour. Apart from the pittance he founded together with his mother in 1426, it also mentions his gift of 45 Rhenish florins and the donation of a chalice 'during his illness and death' in 1439.<sup>17</sup>

Although some new information was added at a later point, it is unclear whether these additions were made by the copyist, or whether they were made in the origi-

15 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 8r-v.

16 It says that he was professed in Antwerp 'tempore disturbii ecclesie traiectensis quod conventus fuit divisus ubi et defunctus est ac sepultus', HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 8r.

17 It reads: 'Item legavit nobis in infirmitate sua scilicet tempore obitus quinquaginta florenos renenses et unum calicem'. HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 9r. For Foek see Van den Hoven van Genderen, *Heren van de Kerk*, 719.

nal before it was copied. If it was the copyist who added the additional information, why did he leave out a few other important benefactors from the 1430s and 1440s? Apparently MS 27 was not copied to be continued. Does this mean that the monastery did not receive large gifts after their return from exile in 1432? A look at the two cartularies shows that the monastery received quite a few plots of land and rents. So why was the original of MS 27 not kept after the monks returned in 1432? Was this document temporarily lost or did they think it unnecessary to continue this type of administration? It could very well be that they forgot about this administration for a while. The entries in MS 28 between 1426 and 1443 are written in two hands without mentioning the years. The second hand, identified by Gumbert as that of Hendrik Bor, wrote most of them in the early 1440s, when he also began a new administration that would become MS 4.<sup>18</sup> This miscellany also contains a register of gifts, but interestingly enough this register only deals with the building of the monastery and the sustenance of several monks, together with some other donations until 1450. In total it only contains the gifts of some twelve benefactors.<sup>19</sup> It was no longer continued after 1450. No other register or manuscript survives either that can be considered a continuation of MS 27. The monks may have started a new administration that is now lost.

As was mentioned before, MS 28 was not kept after 1470 and unfortunately hardly any accounts have survived. This makes it unfeasible to reconstruct the gift-giving economy of the monastery in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>20</sup> Fortunately, the gifts to Nieuwlicht up to the Utrecht Schism are well documented, which enables us to gain a good insight into the gift-giving practices of the first forty years of its existence. For the analysis of donors and their gifts I will focus on MS 27, because over ninety percent of MS 28 consists of gifts of small amounts of money.

### The benefactors

MS 27 contains nearly one hundred benefactors or groups of donors who donated one or more gifts to Nieuwlicht. The manuscript starts with the three most important benefactors from the time of its foundation, *viz.* Zweder van Gaasbeek, his brother Willem van Abcoude and Zweder's steward Otto Koudaver. They donated

18 In the prologue of MS 4 he states that he started his task in November 1440 at the request of Prior Thomas van Mijnen. MS 4, 1. For the attribution of the second hand to Hendrik Bor, see Gumbert, *Die Utrechter Kartäuser*, 15.

19 It could be argued that this register of gifts was meant to be the compendium of MS 27, since MS 27 was copied around the time MS 4 was also begun. However, there is some overlap between the two registers of gifts. Six benefactors and their gifts can be found in both manuscripts, although the information given in MS 4 is much more detailed.

20 Accounts have survived for the years 1457-1458, 1466-1470 and 1483, which are incomplete, together with a few incomplete registers of revenues from 1497-1507 and 1520-1534.



parcels of land and large sums of money. The entries listing their gifts are followed by entries of the other important benefactors and their gifts.

When we take a closer look at the gender of the benefactors we observe that most of the benefactors mentioned in MS 27 were men (table 1). Two-thirds of the benefactors were male and one-third were female. Interestingly, Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld came to similar conclusions for the benefactors of Rolduc Abbey in the South of the Netherlands in the twelfth century.<sup>21</sup> However, the division of men and women in MS 27 might not be completely accurate. Although only nine married couples are mentioned as donors, several of the men registered as benefactors might have donated with the consent of their wives, even if the latter are not mentioned in MS 27. The founder's wife, for example, is not mentioned. On the other hand, several of the male benefactors were widowers. This holds true for the female benefactors as well. Most of the women who acted on their own were widows. These women gained more independence after the death of their husbands. Alienora van Zuylen (d. 1404), whose husband had died in 1386, for instance, was an important benefactor of the Utrecht charterhouse, but also of the charterhouses near Arnhem and Geertruidenberg. In addition, she made donations to several other religious institutions in Utrecht, including St Cecile's convent and the Franciscan convent where she was buried next to her husband.<sup>22</sup>

TABLE 1 BENEFACTORS ACCORDING TO MS 27

Benefactor	Number of benefactors
Man	55
Woman	25
Married couple (with children)	9
Group (of men)	6
Gender unknown	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>

The large number of male benefactors needs further clarification (table 2). When the social standing of the benefactors is taken into account it is evident that half of them belonged to the clergy or were Carthusian monks themselves. And of these Carthusian monks all but one were members of Nieuwlicht.<sup>23</sup>

21 Bijsterveld, 'Commemorating patrons and gifts', 149-150.

22 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 2v. mentions that Alienora was a donor of these two other charterhouses. To Nieuwlicht she donated among other things a monstrance, a chasuble and money. She was married to Frank van Borselen. A bequest of Alienora is published in Mattheus, *Fundationes*, 248-249 in which her burial and her memorial service in the church of the Franciscans are arranged. For her last will, see also Gaens, 'Van woestijn naar de stad', 71-75.

23 They were Zweder van Boecholt (d. 1433), one of the first monks of Nieuwlicht, originally from the

TABLE 2 MALE BENEFACTORS ACCORDING TO MS 27

Male benefactors	Number of male benefactors
Laymen	28
Clergy	20
Carthusians	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

Thirteen out of the twenty benefactors who belonged to the clergy were canons holding a prebend in one of the five Utrecht chapters.<sup>24</sup> In addition, among the seven Carthusians were two former canons of the Dom Cathedral, Hendrik van der Laen and Otto van Moerdrecht. Evidently, special bonds existed between the chapters of Utrecht and Nieuwlicht. The chapter of St Saviour in particular had special ties with Nieuwlicht. From 1395 onwards the two communities joined in a confraternity, obliging each other to pray for each other's deceased members. This was the oldest confraternity in which Nieuwlicht participated.<sup>25</sup> The chapter of St Saviour as a whole was also one of the six groups of benefactors.<sup>26</sup> This institution donated several liturgical vessels, ornaments, a relic and a stained glass window for the church.<sup>27</sup> These gifts were probably donated shortly before 1407, when the church reached its completion and was consecrated.

When the twenty benefactors who belonged to the clergy and the seven members of the Carthusian Order are taken out of the equation it is apparent that the number of male and female lay benefactors is relatively balanced: 28 male versus 25 female benefactors. Among these female benefactors there were no women belonging to a religious order. The social background of these men and women was also more or less equally divided. They were either citizens of towns, mostly of Utrecht, or they belonged to the nobility or aristocracy from the Utrecht area. Some of them belonged to the nobility and were citizens of Utrecht at the same time.

charterhouse of Cologne (he entered Nieuwlicht in 1396), Hendrik van Vethusen (d. 1421), originally from the charterhouse of Arnhem (he entered Nieuwlicht *ca.* 1407), Willem Vrieman (d. 1456), Hendrik van der Laen (year of profession 1422, d. 1438), Johan Taets (year of profession 1422, d. 1438) and Otto van Moerdrecht (year of profession 1424, d. 1438). The seventh Carthusian was Willem van Diepenbroek, a monk from the charterhouse of Geertruidenberg.

<sup>24</sup> St Martin: seven canons; St Saviour: four canons; St Peter: one canon; and St Mary: one canon. Among the remaining seven members of the clergy who were benefactors of Nieuwlicht are four canons from chapters in various cities, two bishops and one priest.

<sup>25</sup> The confraternity charter in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 18, a copy can be found in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 2, fol. 207v-208r.

<sup>26</sup> Four of those groups of benefactors were other Carthusian monasteries, *viz.* the charterhouses of Geertruidenberg, Arnhem, Cologne and Koblenz. The sixth group was the city of Utrecht that collected money for the benefit of Nieuwlicht after the St Elisabeth's flood of 1421.

<sup>27</sup> HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 5r.

### The gifts in MS 27

The gifts registered in MS 27 vary from large sums of money and plots of land to building materials, ornaments for the decoration of the church, liturgical vessels and vestments, and books.<sup>28</sup> Before we analyse the gifts in MS 27 it is important to note that an exact reconstruction of the gifts is not possible, since the manuscript does not always state all the gifts made by a person. Sometimes gifts are described in more general terms, probably where many small gifts were concerned. These are then described as *multi alia* or *diversis clenodiis*, 'various valuables'. Furthermore, immaterial help to the monastery such as (legal) advice and assistance (*consilia et auxilia*) is regularly mentioned, but this was not expressed in monetary value.

#### Money

It may not be surprising that many of the gifts concern money. At least 66 of the 97 benefactors or groups of benefactors in MS 27 donated a sum of money. Several of these benefactors donated money as part of various other gifts, but at least 42 of them gave money only. As can be expected the amount of money varies from relatively small to rather large amounts. Sometimes the purpose of the money is also indicated, such as the gift of Agatha Ruusch, a citizen of Utrecht, who donated one hundred florins for the construction of a monk's cell sometime before 1405, or the gift of Willem van Merode, who donated 600 crowns around 1415, the time when some of the monks had been sent to other charterhouses due to poverty. With this money land was purchased that was to be used for the maintenance of two monks.<sup>29</sup> It also occurred that Nieuwlicht received objects, probably jewellery, that were sold for money, as was the case with the *diversis clenodiis* of knight Jan Uyten Campen from Breda, which were sold for a hundred florins.<sup>30</sup>

#### Real estate

Apart from money, land was an important type of donation. In sum, nineteen benefactors donated plots of land, varying from a few *morgen* (1 morgen = 0.85 hectare)

<sup>28</sup> One type of gift, the annual pittance, is hardly mentioned in MS 27. There is only one reference to an annual pittance. Although the General Chapter did not encourage pittances as a gift to charterhouses, it also stated that they should not be refused. The annual pittances of Nieuwlicht were enlisted in a separate register that can be found in MS 4 (for this separate register, see HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 4, 13-19). In this register the pittances are organised according to the liturgical year. The register shows that there were not many annual pittances donated to Nieuwlicht before the 1430s. In MS 28 some thirty single pittances are registered for the period 1391-1425, including ten pittances that were donated shortly after the monks had returned to Nieuwlicht in 1417.

<sup>29</sup> Resp. HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 3r and 7r.

<sup>30</sup> HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 3r. In 1418 Jan Uyten Campen also founded a chantry in the church of Our Lady in Breda (see the contribution by Annemarie Speetjens in this volume).

to large parcels. Most of the entries concerning donated lands were written down on the first few pages of MS 27. Twelve out of the seventeen benefactors who are mentioned on the first four folios donated land. Besides, and this is quite striking, all these donations of land can be traced back in the (oldest) cartulary and were donated before 1414, when the monks were temporarily sent to other charterhouses due to the impoverishment of the monastery. Four other donations of land that can be found elsewhere in MS 27 were also donated before 1414. The remaining three donations of land were all donated in the early 1420s and are entered on the final pages of MS 27. In the two cartularies no charters can be found for these three donations. In addition, two of these plots of land were donated by novices of Nieuwlicht upon entering the monastery. These benefactors were the already mentioned Hendrik van der Laen and Otto van Moerdrecht. They donated several other gifts apart from real estate.

A comparison of MS 27 with the cartularies and other archival documents shows that MS 27 gives a rather complete overview of the real estate received by Nieuwlicht from its start until 1428. Only a few donations of real estate from that period were not registered in MS 27. The oldest cartulary contains the charters concerning six donations of land from before 1415 that were not registered in MS 27.<sup>31</sup> Remarkably, four of these donations were given by new members of Nieuwlicht at the time of their profession. The fact that the donations of new members of Nieuwlicht are not consistently registered whereas the administration of the benefactors is rather accurate might indicate that Nieuwlicht used a separate manuscript to register the arrival of new members of the community and their entry gifts. Such a document has survived for the Amsterdam charterhouse, with which Nieuwlicht was in close contact.<sup>32</sup>

The donated lands were located in two areas: in and around the seigniory of Putten and Strijen, where the foundation lands were located, and around Utrecht, where Nieuwlicht was situated. An analysis of the donors and the lands donated by them shows that there are two types of land donations. There are benefactors who donated land from their family estate, such as Katherina van Sterkenburg, who in 1407 donated 2 *morgen* in Woerden near Utrecht from an estate she had inherited from her sister.<sup>33</sup> Other benefactors purchased land that subsequently was donated to Nieuwlicht, such as Dirk van Amerongen, a citizen of Utrecht, who bought land in Poortugaal (south of Rotterdam) for this purpose in 1400.<sup>34</sup>

31 One of these gifts is mentioned, however, in one of the necrologies (MS 14), on the day of remembrance of the benefactor (28 October). The charters concerning this donation can be found in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 1, fol. 50r-v; fol. 67v-68r and HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 2, fol. 101r-103r.

32 For this *Liber benefactorum* that also contained a separate register of gifts of lay benefactors, see De Melker, *Metamorphose van stad en devotie*, 9, 121, 217-223.

33 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 5v. The charter in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 1, fol. 32v-33r. Remarkably, apart from donating 2 *morgen* to Nieuwlicht, Katherina also sold 1 *morgen* to the monastery. Apparently altruism had its limits.

34 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 2r. The charter in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 1, fol. 27r-v and HUA.

*Building materials*

MS 27 contains a few references regarding the construction of Nieuwlicht. The money donated by the two founders was used *ad fabricam*.<sup>35</sup> In addition there were a few other gifts of money that were used for the construction of cells.<sup>36</sup> Apart from these there is the entry of the gifts from Herbert van Donk (d. 1407). He was a canon of the chapter of St Mary in Utrecht and he donated, among other things, some 50,000 bricks for the construction immediately after the monastery had been founded.<sup>37</sup> Another donation worth mentioning is the gift of a large church bell (*magna campana*) by the Utrecht canon Hugo Wstinc.<sup>38</sup> He also donated money for a missal to be used on the High Altar, a large cooking pot (*unam magnam ollam*) and an additional sum of money after his death.

A few donations recorded in MS 28 also concern construction works. In 1416 and 1418 the monastery received money to have the western and northern hallways of the Great Cloister paved.<sup>39</sup> And in 1425 three gifts were received for the new wall that was being built around the monastery.<sup>40</sup>

The gift of the church bell by Hugo Wstinc may have been made around the time when the church was completed and consecrated in 1407. Several of the stained glass windows for the church must also have been donated around that time (table 3). MS 27 contains nine entries with donated glass windows.

At least three of these windows were received at the same time, presumably around 1407, during what could be called a glazing campaign, probably organised by the monastery. This may be concluded from the fact that these three windows were all worth the same amount of money (52 florins) and are grouped together in the register. In addition it is known that one of the donors, Dirk van Zuylen, died in 1408, which makes it plausible that these windows were donated before that year.

Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 2, fol. 54r-v.

35 The entry of Willem van Abcoude mentions that the money that he donated was used for the completion of the east wing of the Great Cloister with seven cells and for two guest houses called 'Groot Abcoude' and 'Klein Abcoude'; HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 1r.

36 Mechteld van Nes and Agatha Rusch donated money for the construction of two and one cells respectively; HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 2v, 3r.

37 Herbert van Donk is the fifth benefactor who is mentioned in MS 27 and his gifts are mentioned between land donations that were given in 1394 and 1393 respectively. Apart from the building materials Van Donk donated a small house next to the bridge over the river Vecht near Nieuwlicht, a gilded chalice, a silver chain and other silver objects, 660 guilders and an alabaster image of the Adoration of the Magi; HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 1v.

38 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 2v. He was also provost of Elst. In 1389 he matriculated at the university of Heidelberg; De Wal, *Nederlanders. Studenten te Heidelberg*. Hugo died between 1404 and 1410. He is not to be confused with his namesake (d. 1349) who wrote the famous collection of law texts *Statuta ecclesie Trajectensis*.

39 HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 28, fol. 6v, 7r.

40 *Idem*, fol. 11r.

TABLE 3 DONATED GLASS WINDOWS IN MS 27

Benefactor	Location	Value
Evert Foek, canon of the chapter of St Saviour	Church	38 florins
Lodewijk de Wael, citizen of Utrecht and his wife	Refectory*	?
Willem Buser and Herman van Lokhorst, successive deans of the chapter of St Martin	Church, next to the entrance of the lay choir (devotional portraits mentioned)	5 French <i>écus</i>
Willem van Rhenen, canon of the chapter of St Martin and provost of Emmerich	All windows in the sacristy	209 florins
Chapter of St Saviour	West side of the church	?
Frederik van Blankenheim, bishop of Utrecht (1393-1423)	Church	33 florins
Dirk van Zuylen, knight	South side of the church (devotional portrait mentioned)	52 florins
Lodewijk van Montfoort, knight	North side of the church (devotional portrait mentioned)	52 florins
Sophia Minnenboden	Church (devotional portrait mentioned, later moved to the chapel)	52 florins

\* An additional donation of a glass window for the refectory is mentioned in MS 28. The priest Gerrit Stella donated more than 8 florins for a glass, probably around 1396; HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 28, fol. 2v.

#### *Liturgical objects, books and works of art*

Other donations apart from (stained) glass windows that are usually absent in charters and cartularies are the various liturgical vessels, vestments and other church furnishings, as well as (liturgical) books and jewellery. These may have been mentioned in last wills and testaments. Many last wills have either been lost or are dispersed over various archives. Unfortunately, a thorough inventory and overview of last wills and testaments in the Netherlands is lacking, making it impossible to make a broad analysis of these types of gifts using last wills.<sup>41</sup> No wills from before 1440 have survived in the archive of Nieuwlicht. Moreover – and this should not be overlooked – gifts were often donated during the donor's lifetime as well. Therefore, the necrological documents are essential for the inventory of liturgical vessels, vestments, furnishings and even books. According to MS 27, the aforementioned Katherina van Sterkenburg, for instance, did not only endow Nieuwlicht with a parcel of land but also donated a gilded chalice (*unum preciosum calicem de aura-*

<sup>41</sup> An inventory of last wills only exists for the Frisian area; see Mol, *Zorgen voor zekerheid*.

tum) and a silk drape (*ornamentum sericum*). Not surprisingly, these gifts are not mentioned in the charter by which she donated a plot of land.<sup>42</sup>

At least 24 benefactors (or groups of benefactors) mentioned in MS 27 donated liturgical objects or books. Table 4 shows that these gifts were especially popular among the clergy and women. Although the type of gift is not always mentioned (*parva clenodia*, 'little valuables' or *satis bonum ornamentum*, 'a rather good ornament'), MS 27 mentions at least ten gilded chalices. As might be expected it were especially canons and women who were the donors of these objects (three canons, three women, one man, one married couple, and two Carthusian benefactors). Seven more chalices are mentioned in MS 28.<sup>43</sup> Three of these were most likely donated around 1396, at the start of the construction of the church.<sup>44</sup>

TABLE 4 BENEFACTORS OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTS, BOOKS AND OTHER OBJECTS IN MS 27

Benefactors	Number of benefactors
Canons	10
Women	7
Men	3
Married couples	2
Carthusians	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

Books were donated by seven benefactors who were all canons, apart from the Carthusians of Geertruidenberg. Among them was the earlier mentioned canon Otto van Moerdrecht, who became a Carthusian in Nieuwlicht in 1424. As an entry gift he commissioned and donated an illuminated copy of *Postilla in prophetas* of Nicolas de Lyra (fig. 3 and plate 12), together with a volume with sermons, a breviary and a psalter.<sup>45</sup> MS 28 and MS 14 mention two other canons who donated books. Three further donors appear in the *ex libri* notes in the surviving volumes of the Nieuwlicht library.<sup>46</sup>

42 Katherina's donations are listed in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 5v; see also note 33.

43 These chalices that might have been of lesser value than the ones mentioned in MS 27, were donated by three women, three men and one married couple.

44 These chalices are registered near the entry that mentions the laying of the first stone of the church, HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 28, fol. 3v.

45 See Van der Horst, *Handschriften*, 38-44. Otto van Moerdrecht is well-known as the patron of several illuminated manuscripts. For his patronage see Van Bergen, *De meesters van Otto van Moerdrecht*.

46 Benefactors of books mentioned in MS 27 are Richard van Oye (d. 1398), Johan van Scharpenes, Willem van Rhenen (d. 1424), Hendrik van der Laen (d. 1438), Herman van Lokhorst (d. 1438), Otto van Moerdrecht (d. 1438). Benefactors of books in MS 28 are the dean of the chapter of St Mary and Jan van Galencoep (d. 1428). Benefactors from the *ex libri* notes from the Nieuwlicht library are Herbert van Donk (d. 1407), Frank Over de Vecht (d. 1414) and Hendrik Walvis, a regular canon and prior in Windesheim (1407-1414).

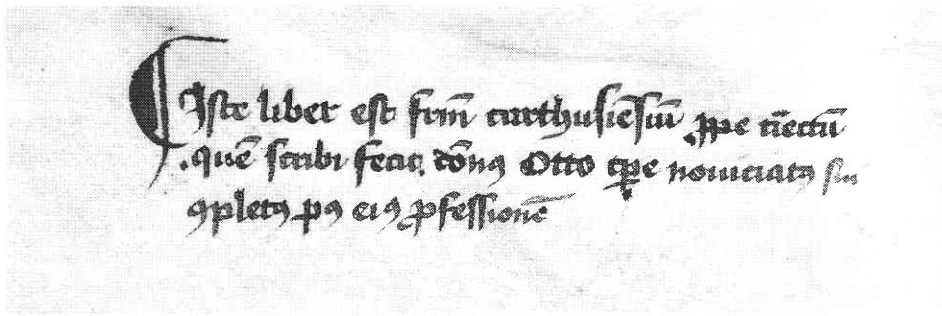


Fig. 3 *Ex libris* from Ms. 252, Nicolas de Lyra, *Postilla in Prophetas*, that mentions the donation of the manuscript by Otto van Moerdrecht. The text reads: 'Iste liber est fratrum carthusiensium prope Traiectum quem scribe fecit dominus Otto tempore noviciatus sui completus post eius professionem' ('This book belongs to the Carthusians near Utrecht, which dominus Otto ordered to be made as a novice, while it was completed after his profession'). Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ms. 252, fol. IIv.

MS 27 contains ample references to works of art donated to Nieuwlicht. There are only two objects specified as works of art: a sculpted *Adoration of the Magi* donated by canon Herbert van Donk and a gilded statuette donated by Angela Grauwert, a citizen of Utrecht. MS 28 has only one reference to a work of art. This is the sculpted altar piece for the High Altar, which was donated by the Carthusian Albertus Buer. He came from the charterhouse of Monnikhuizen, but was prior in Utrecht between 1409 and 1412 and again from 1421 to 1426.<sup>47</sup>

Another category of works of art is not mentioned as gifts to Nieuwlicht in MS 27, although it is certain that some of these objects were present in the monastery before 1428. These are painted or sculpted memorial pieces to commemorate deceased benefactors or lay people, as well as tomb monuments for people buried in Nieuwlicht.<sup>48</sup> Although MS 27 contains eleven references of benefactors buried inside Nieuwlicht, some information is given about a tomb monument or memorial piece in only three cases.<sup>49</sup> However, this information is more or less given as background information accompanying a benefactor rather than to record it as a gift to the monastery. From the register of graves of lay people buried in Nieuwlicht in MS 4 it is known that before 1428 there were at least ten more persons buried in Nieuwlicht who had a memorial piece above or near their grave. These were mostly sculpted pieces. None of these are mentioned in MS 27 or MS 28.<sup>50</sup>

47 For Buer see Scholtens, 'De priors van Nieuwlicht', 320-323; Gumbert, *Die Utrechter Kartäuser*, 42-43.

48 At least 250 lay people were buried on the grounds of the monastery according to one of the registers of graves in MS 4. HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 4, 105-116.

49 These are the graves of Frederik van Zuylen van Nyenvelt, Evert Scout van der Kelre and Agatha van Halst.

50 The memorial painting discussed by Henry L.M. Defoer in this volume dates from the 1520s, i.e., from a century later. Interestingly, this memorial piece is not mentioned either in the sources from Nieuwlicht.



### The countergifts

The benefactors obviously expected something in return for their gifts, since reciprocity was an essential element of the gift-giving culture. Originally the Carthusian Order only had commemorative services for all benefactors as one group, but by the mid-thirteenth century it also allowed individual annual memorial services for non-members of the order.<sup>51</sup> By the end of the fifteenth century these annual memorial services for benefactors were common practice.<sup>52</sup> It might therefore be expected that the names of the benefactors, especially the ones who donated the larger gifts that were registered in MS 27, can be found in either one of the aforementioned two necrologies of Nieuwlicht that have survived. The main necrology that can be found in MS 4 contains more than two thousand names of people to be commemorated and was used throughout the existence of the monastery, from 1391 until 1580 (plate 13). The other necrology (MS 14) contained some three hundred names and was kept only from 1391 until 1465. The question arises whether or not all benefactors mentioned in MS 27 were also entered in the Nieuwlicht necrologies.

It is hardly surprising that the answer is negative. Only 60 of the 97 benefactors or benefactor groups can be found in the two necrologies, leaving 37 donors without an annual memorial mass. The possibility that benefactors did not ask for an annual memorial service but for the celebration of a series of thirty masses right after their death, for instance, should not be ruled out. However, there are examples of benefactors who did order an annual service but failed to end up in one of the necrologies. One of them was Mabelia van Steenre. She donated 7 acres of land, a chalice and some other objects. The foundation charter of the land can be found in the both cartularies and clearly states that the gift was given for an eternal memorial service.<sup>53</sup> Obviously, she deserved to be included in the necrology, but was omitted for unknown reasons.<sup>54</sup>

51 See King, *Liturgies*, 24.

52 Burial inside a charterhouse was not allowed either in the early phase of the order, but this became a privilege that was increasingly accepted over time.

53 Mabelia's donations are listed in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 27, fol. 2v; the charter in HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 1, fol. 28v-29r and HUA, Nieuwlicht, inv. nr 2, fol. 103r-v.

54 There is a chance that Mabelia's anniversary was to be held in the first two weeks of January and was registered only in MS 14, the smaller necrology, of which the first two weeks are missing. If that is the case, it is remarkable that a woman who donated so much was not mentioned in the main necrology of MS 4. There is also a possibility that she was entered in the necrologies under a different name. In both necrologies there is a Belia van Oppijnen mentioned (29 October). She is described as a *magna benefactrix domus huius*. However, the gift mentioned for her in MS 14 is a green velvet ornament instead of the silk drape mentioned in MS 27.

### Conclusion

We have seen that the Utrecht charterhouse of Nieuwlicht kept detailed accounts of the donations of their benefactors. One of these sources, MS 27, contains a list of important donors and their gifts. This register covers the period from 1391 until 1428, when the monks of Nieuwlicht were forced into exile because of the Utrecht Schism. A number of 97 benefactors or groups of benefactors are listed from that period, consisting mostly of canons, laymen and laywomen coming from the Utrecht area. The monastery received various types of gifts, mostly money, but also real estate, building materials, liturgical objects and books. Apparently, memorial pieces and tomb monuments to commemorate deceased donors were not considered gifts to the monastery. Also, despite the generosity of the benefactors, they were not always remembered annually in the monastery, since only 60% of the benefactors are mentioned in the surviving necrologies of the charterhouse. It needs to be researched further whether this is due to sloppy administration or whether there are other explanations. It can also be concluded that donating large gifts did not necessarily lead to eternal remembrance.