Sic vivere est devote vivere
Henry of Coesfeld as Theologian of Modern-Day Devotion

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Abstract

This essay outlines the theology of “modern-day” devotion, as it can be found in the works of the Carthusian monk Henry of Coesfeld (d. 1410). This theology consists of a classical Thomist framework, infused with ideas from Brabantine and Rhineland mysticism (e.g., Ruusbroec, Suso) and Carthusian spirituality, in which contempt for the world, purity of the heart, progression in the virtues, repentance and inner renewal, Eucharistic piety, meditation on Christ’s humanity and passion, “Christiformity,” and the imitation of Christ, play a central role. While pointing at the “present-day” moral decline in the religious orders and the church, Henry’s idea of devotion relates to personal reform, a process of becoming congruent with the “ancient” examples of Christ and the saints. His theology is not anti-mystical and anti-intellectual in nature, but at the same time it warns against the pitfalls of curiosity (curiositas) and the excesses of mysticism.

Keywords

Henry of Coesfeld – Carthusians – Late Medieval Reform – Devotio Moderna

In his seminal book on the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life, John Van Engen has recently called Devotio Moderna a “charged” and “pesky” term. Van

* I would like to dedicate this essay to the memory of Rudolf Th.M. van Dijk, O.Carm. (d. 2015), for his relentless efforts to enlarge the knowledge of the spiritual heritage of both the Modern Devotion and the Carthusian Order. I would like to thank Stephen J. Molvarec, SJ, and Krijn Pansters for looking at my text with a critical eye, and Ana Rodriguez who helped me ask the questions and seek the answers that ultimately bore fruit in the present essay.
Engen eloquently elaborates on the term *moderna*, defining it as “modern-day” or “of this era”. To speak of “devotion in the present-day” (*moderna*) was implicitly to recall an “earlier day” (*antiqua*), a better day. But his characterisation of the word “devotion” falls somewhat short, seemingly lacking a solid theological base.¹

The Dutch scholar Rudolf van Dijk has consistently pointed out that the spirituality of the Modern Devotion might be traced back to the retreat of Geert Grote (d. 1384), the movement's originator, at the charterhouse of Monnikhuizen near Arnhem. In the past century, many scholars have predicated the reformist influence of the Carthusian monk Henry Egher of Kalkar (d. 1408)² on the erroneous assumption that he was the prior of Monnikhuizen during Grote's stay.³

More than Egher of Kalkar's, the works of Henry Kemenade of Coesfeld (d. 1410)⁴ have been overlooked by scholars, although the latter actually was

d a prior of Monnikhuizen in the same period. Moreover, Coesfeld's texts were disseminated more widely within the (monastic) branches of the Modern Devotion and within other reformed religious orders in the Low Countries and Germany.⁵

In this essay, I will outline a theology of modern-day devotion, as it can be found in Henry of Coesfeld's main works. It consists of a classic Thomist framework, infused with ideas from Brabantine and Rhineland mysticism and Carthusian spirituality. I shall argue that a closer and better study of Henry's works might provide a better insight into the reform program of Geert Grote and his early followers. At the same time, it might contribute to the understanding of Carthusian monks as reformist influencers, or as transmitters of ideas within the realm of the development of the spirituality of the Modern Devotion in particular, and of fifteenth-century reformist congregations and reformed religious orders in general.⁶

The following texts were explored for this essay: *De tribus votis monasticis*, an influential tract on the counsels and precepts of poverty, chastity and obedience, but mainly concerned with private property and proprieta ism; several of Henry's chapter sermons, specifically those referring to devotion; the treatise *De sacramento Eucharistie* on the institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist; and Henry's *Epistola de instructione iuvenum et novitiorum* (or *Epistola de institutione novitiorum*), a letter to instruct the youth and novices on monastic life, which survives both in its original Latin version, as well as in a Middle-Dutch translation. Since Henry's work remains unedited, I shall quote from manuscripts. In an appendix, I provide a list of manuscripts, intended for future study.

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² Henry Egher of Kalkar, born in 1383, studied at the University of Paris in the period between 1353 and 1362, where he (and Geert Grote) matriculated in the English nation. In 1366 he professed as a monk of Cologne. He was prior in Monnikhuizen (1368-1373) and rector in Roermond (1373-1377). Afterwards he was prior in Cologne (1377-1384) and in Strasbourg (1384-1396), and visitor (of the Carthusian province *Alemania inferior*) for twenty years. See C. De Backer, *De cartuize Monichusen bij Arnhem. Prospografie samen met de regesten van de zepa ontdekte oorkondenschat*, in *Armo te, sacer ordo Cartusianes, Jan De Grauwe, passioné de l’Ordre des Chartreux*, ed. Frans Hendrikkx and Tom Gaens [Miscellanea Neerlandica 58 / Studia Cartusiana 1] (Leuven, 2012), 132-204, there 154 (no. 94). On his literary works, see H. Rütting, *Der Kartäuser Heinrich Egher von Kalkar (1388-1408)* [Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 18 / Studien zur Germania Sacra 8] (Göttingen, 1967).
⁵ T. Gaens, *Tons hortorum iriguis, ceteras irigius religiones. Carthusian Influences on Monastic Reform in Germany and the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century,* in *A Fish Out of Water?* (see above, n. 3), 51-103, there 56-57, 68-75, and 91. See also the appendix of the present essay.
⁶ For a treatment of this subject, see the volume *A Fish Out of Water?* (see above, n. 3). On Henry of Coesfeld's influence on reformist literature, and particularly on works dealing with the issue of proprietarism, refer to my own essay in this volume (see above n. 5).
Phrased differently, devotion is simply a practical act which inclines the will to meritorious works and to the good pleasure of God, and which presupposes enjoyable love or an act of hope. Hence, devotion is defined more as a fundamental attitude of turning the self towards God, more as an affective inclination and a lasting movement of the will, than simply as a “pious and humble affection” connected to the cult of God (e.g. office and vocal prayer).

Henry recognizes two kinds of devotion. The first kind can be called “rational” or “spiritual” (devotio rationalis sive spiritualis), as it only resides in reason (ratio) or spirit (spiritus), without any significant “overflowing” or “flowing down” into the sensuality (sensualitas). In this case, the sensual part is not yet calmed or not yet promptly subject to the spirit, but rather rebels and murmurs. The second kind of devotion can be called “sensible” or “sensual” (devotio sensualis sive spiritualis).
Reading (and re-reading) these literary works—along with some derivative compilations such as the pseudo-Bernardinian Speculum Bernardi and Speculum monachorum—was highly recommended by Henry of Coesfeld in his letter to instruct the youth and novices.\(^{18}\)

These three kinds of devotion are structured by Henry along the lines of John of Ruusbroec’s Espousals.\(^{19}\) The first kind, desirous devotion (devotio desideriosa), is present in the beginners, when all the senses obey the spirit in a union of the heart (unio cordis) and promptly submit themselves to the service of God, but without noticeable savoring (savor).\(^{20}\) The second kind, delightful devotion (devotio voluptuosa), is present when the senses obey the spirit with a

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14. Ibid., fols. 92v–93v: “Et contingit ni falior nec tranquillitatis sensibilis, sed quo propior forem intentionem intellectus et ferventem inclinationem voluntatis...”


20. Henry of Coesfeld, Epistola de instructione iuvorum et novitiorum (Epistola de instructione iuvorum et novitiorum), in Berlin, SB, Ms. theor. lat. fol. 705, fol. 24v: “De devotione desideriosa quando simpliciter et sine notabili sapor ... ipsa tota sensitias in unione cordis spiritui obedit et ad famulandum Deo se eiderm prompte subiect.”
stronger inclination, perfused with noticeable savoring or spiritual sweetness and consolation (spiritualis dulcedo et consolatio). When it is increased so that it delights the heart enough, it is called pleasure of the heart (voluptas cordis) and spiritual delight (spiritualis iocunditas). When it grows so that the heart can no longer fully take it in, and the mind is alienated in this way, it is called spiritual drunkenness (spiritualis ebrietatis). The third kind, feverish or spiritually fierce devotion (devotio fervorosa vel spiritualiter furiosa), is present when the senses, in an even stronger way, are above all consolation temporarily granted to it or even granted, seek God's honor and glory with such a great fervor, and are inclined to serve God in inconvenient ways so that it looks like the mind is in a rage (furor). When it sees itself not to be able to accomplish at will its intent, sadness arises, and this is called spiritual languor (spiritualis languor), and, in Scripture, the spiritual wounding of love (spiritualis vulneratio amoris). From this devotion, and the previous one, even corporeal languor (corporalis languor) and wounding of the heart (vulneratio cordis) can arise.

To show that this wounding of love again increases devotion, Henry quotes literally the Espousals of Ruysbroeck—whom he calls “that devout [man]” (quidam devotus)—by comparing devotion to a fire causing a boiling and condensation process of a liquid (i.e., resp. the delightful and sad movements of the soul).

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21 Ibid., fol. 92r: “Devotionem vero voluptuosam dico quando ipsa sensualitas adhuc altiori conatu spiritui subicitur et cum hoc quodam notabilis sapore seu quadam spirituali dulcedine et consolatione perpetuatur, qui dum in tantum augetur seu intenditur, quod cor satis multum deflacet voluptas cordis et spiritualis iocunditas nominatur, quando vero in tantum crevit quod cor ipsum plene capere non potest, ymmo quodammodo properatus ipsum a se alienatur tunc spiritualis ebrietatis diciatur ...

22 Ibid., fol. 92v: “Devotionem fervorosam vel spiritualiter furiosam nominavit quando adhuc aliori modo ipsa sensualitas super omnem consolationem sibi temporaliter datam vel dabilem, tanto fervore honore Dei et gloriam querit, ac tam importunum sibi dice fames lari conatur; quod quodammodo spiritualiter furor evidetur. Et hinc se viderit ad libitum intentionem exequi non posse, quodam tristitiam nascitur, quod spiritualis languor nominatur, ... Quia etiam fortissimis tristitiae spiritualis vulneratio amoris vel cordis in scripturis dicitur ... Quinnetiam ex hac ipsa devotione sicut ex immediate precedente corporalis languor et cordis vulneratio orit potest ...

23 Henry of Coesfeld, De sacramento eucharistiae, in Brussels, KB, MS 1881–12 (cat. 2160), fol. 87v: “Et ideo dico quidam devotus [= Ruysbroeck] quod devotio assimilatur igni causante ebullicione aqua in olla qui cum aquam tantum sussum moverit quantum potest, iterum aqua descendit et iterum eam ignis per ebullicionem movet et etiam sic quod semper ignis est agitans et aqua cadens.” Interestingly, Henry did not make use of Jordaeus’s Latin translation of the Espousals; cf. Iohannis Ruysbrochii De ornatu spiritualium nup-


25 Henry of Coesfeld, Sermo in purificatione BMV (De multiplex devotione sine de diversis generibus devotionum), in Brussels, KB, fol. 93r.

26 Henry of Coesfeld, De sacramento eucharistiae, in Brussels, KB, MS 1881–12 (cat. 2160).
decline and the lack of observance of religious vows in the traditional religious orders “in modern times” (*in modernis temporibus*), wondering whether it is still necessary to expose the “adultery, fornications, incest and the worst of carnalities” he sees around him, as it is all “publicly known.” In his view, the professed state is merely a state to acquire perfection and not a state of acquired perfection: “It is said that the monastic state is a state of perfection, and in particular that all monks are perfect and the only perfect people. But alas! Many are the most imperfect. And also the monastic state shows the triple grades of the beginners, the proficient and the perfect, and even outside of the monastic state many holy men and women are living the most perfect life.”

In this context, Henry quotes a passage from the *Epistle to the Romans* (Rom. 12:2), in which Saint Paul exhorts his readers not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by renewing the mind, so that it may be proven what is the “good,” “pleasing,” and “perfect” will of God. Paraphrasing the *Letter to the Carthusians of Mont-Dieu*, Henry interprets the word “good” as pointing to the precepts, the word “pleasing” to the counsels, yet the word “perfect” to anything which pleases God’s will.

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3 Discernment of “Modern-Day” Devotion

Henry’s mild aversion to sensuality is obvious from his treatment of different kinds of false devotion. Those who are profuse in sensual devotion, and who are led to revelations and rapture, must be careful because many are easily deceived in this. Prompted by the spirit of seduction, they might believe that they are a spirit of God. Often, Henry continues, one sees—in both sexes—fornicators and adulterers, and even cruel and impious people or others who are liable to deadly sins, who are brought to tears and who are ready to do many good works, such as giving alms and reciting vocal prayers. Moreover, reaching sensible devotion or devotional savoring, they feel somehow relieved, although they behaved badly, and they are full of themselves, although they are nothing. In this way many who were never good people, or some who at first were devout, have been deceived and brought to heresy and fictitious revelations, as can be read in the lives of the saints.

Discernment (discretio) is therefore crucial to differentiate between true and false devotion.

All of this is categorized by Henry in several types of false devotion: “hostile” and “malicious” devotion (*devotio iniqua et maliciosa*), “pharisaic” and “superstitious” devotion (*devotio pharaonica et superstitionis*), “self-driven” and “obstinate” devotion (*devotio delicata proprietaria et cervicosa*), “vain” and “cursur” devotion (*devotio vana et curiosa*), and “idle” and “atrociou” devotion or Beghards’ devotion (*devotio otiosa et facinorosa, devotio baggradica*). Especially

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27 Gaens, “Ens hortorum” (see above, n. 5), there 52–75. Geert Grote makes a comparable comment in *De simonia ad Beguttas*, cf. Langenberg, *Quellen und Forschungen* (see above, n. 10), there 29: “Dit sint suntque Augustinius woerde, de een advocaat was des geheesters, unde nicht des vlaks, alae men nu vele meesters vint advocaat der werft ende des vlaks.”

28 Henry of Coesfeld, *De tribus votis monastici*, in Brussels, KB, MS 5029–5030 (cat. 2153), fols. 247–248: “Dicitur autem etiam status monasticus status perfectius, non idcirco utique quod omnes et sole persone monastice sint perfecte cum multe heu tales sint imperfectissimae. Et etiam in status monasticus est status incipientium perfectissimium et perfectorium, sed et extra status monasticum multi sancti et multe sancte perfectissimae vivunt ut de se notum est.” For similar comments about devotion outside a vow, see Geert Grote’s *De simonia ad Beguttas*, ed. Langenberg, *Quellen und Forschungen* (see above, n. 10), there 28: “Unde dit [= offering oneself to God] mach men wil hebben als vullencomelike botten gheemeyten unde botten cloesteren unde botten cappen, als sulke in den cloesteren.” On this passage, see Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers* (see above, n. 1), 82.

29 Henry of Coesfeld, *De sacramento eucharistie*, in Brussels, KB, MS 1281–12 (cat. 2160), fol. 88v.

30 Ibid., fol. 87v.


32 Henry of Coesfeld, *Sermon in purificatione BMV* (*De multiplici devocione sive de diversis generibus devotorum*), in Brussels, KB, MS 1212 (cat. 1945), fol. 93v: “... potestis verum devotionem a ficta sive falsa ... discernere." On devotion and discernment, see chapter 49 of the *Spiritual ascensions*, written by the Modern Devout Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen; cf. Van Dijl, Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen, *Geestelijke Opklimmingen* (see above, n. 1), 123–124: “Sane ut super hoc, quantum ad presentem sufficit, habeatur aliquis discretio, scilicet quod devotio,...” See also Denys the Carthusian, *Dominica 121 Quadragesimae*, sermo 3: “Quiliter vera devotio a ficta possit discerni,” in *Doctoris eschatici D. Dionysii Cartusiani Opera omnia*, vol. 29: *Sermones de tempore* (* Pars prima*) (*Tornaci* [Tournai], 1905), 434–435.
the last two types of false devotion, dealing with speculative theology and the devotion of those who are involved in heresies, who promulgate erroneous doctrines and false revelations, and who contemplate an illusory union with God, are illustrated with a range of ancient and contemporary examples.\textsuperscript{33}

The list of direct and indirect references to some of the extravagances of fourteenth-century mysticism and lay spirituality is what makes Henry's theology of devotion so "modern-day" or "in the present-day." It is not difficult to conclude from the Carthusian's texts, that good devotion, in his view, could also be pursued outside of the monastic vow, that it is not anti-scholastic \textit{per se}, but rather anti-speculative, and that it has an analogic dimension while rejecting the excesses of mysticism.

4 Devotion to the Eucharist and Christiformity

Thomas Aquinas's opinion that the sacrament of the Eucharist requires actual devotion (\textit{devotio actualis}) is used by Henry as a starting point to show that sensual devotion is not required to receive the Eucharist, as this is not always in our power.\textsuperscript{34} Paraphrasing Ruusbroec's \textit{Espousals}, Henry states that man does not need devotion of the senses for the Eucharist, as long as he has purity of conscience (\textit{conscientia pura}), free from sin.\textsuperscript{35}

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\begin{itemize}
  \item Henry of Coesfeld, \textit{Sermo in purificazione BMV (De multiplici devotione sive de diversis generibus devotionum)}, in Brussels, KB, MS 1212 (cat. 1945), fol. 93v-97r. To the wording "Beghards' devotion" Henry immediately adds that he does not target all Beghards (and Beguines), as "there are many who are good [devout]." In 1379 a similar warning against various examples of false devotion would be encoded into a substantial part of the statutes of Geert Grote's foundation of the Deventer Sisters of the Common Life (the so-called \textit{Satinghe ende ordinaunce}); see R. Post, "De statuten van het Mr. Geerhts hie te Deventer," \textit{Archiv voor de geschiedenis van het aartsbisdom Utrecht} 71 (1953), 1-46, there 8-12.
  \item Henry of Coesfeld, \textit{De sacramento eucharistiae}, in Brussels, KB, MS 1181-12 (cat. 2160), fol. 90r-90v: "... non requiritur devotio sensiblis sive sensualis cum illa non sit semper in potestate nostra."
  \item Ibidem, fol. 90v: "Et istud videtur intendere quidam vir devotus [= Ruusbroec] qui scribit quod quamvis homo non semper huismaodi sensationem sive huismaodi desiderium habeat (et loquitor ibi de devotione sensibili) dummodo tamen laudem et honorem Dei suumque preficturn proprium et suam salutem intendat potest fiducialiter ad mensam Dei accedere si conscientiam a peccatis mortalibus habeat puram." Compare with Geert Grote's translation of this passage; cf. H.A.M. Douwen, \textit{De ornatu spirituallis dispensacionis} (see above, n. 19), 218 (par. 216): "Unde quamvis homo iste non semper huismodi sensationem seu huismaodi desiderium habeat, dummodo tamen laudem et honorem Dei suumque preficturn proprium et suam salutem intendat potest fiducialiter ad mensam Dei accedere si conscientiam a peccatis mortalibus habeat puram."
  \item Henry of Coesfeld, \textit{Sermo in festo Pasche}, in Brussels, KB, MS 1212 (cat. 1945), fol. 100v: "... firmum habere propositum malas concupiscientias refrenandi et proprias voluntates frangendi."
  \item Henry of Coesfeld, \textit{Sermo in festo Pasche}, in Leuven [Leuven], KU Leuven [University of Leuven], Faculteit Theologie en Religiewetenschappen, Mauris Sabbbehzibibloekheer (hereafter cited as Leuven, MSB), MS Mechelen 26, fol. 60r: "... cordis contritione..."
  \item Henry of Coesfeld, \textit{Epistola de instructione iurumen et novitiorum (Epistola de institutione novitiorum)}, in Berlin, SB, MS theol. lat. fol. 705, fol. 2r: "puritate cordis..."; fol. 2v: "... vere compunctionis..."; and fol. 24v: "... devotionis et compunctionis..." In some manuscripts, this letter by Henry of Coesfeld, in its Middle Dutch translation, can be found together with Collations of the Modern Devot: John Brinkerick. On \textit{compunction cordis} in the writings of early Modern Devout such as Florens Radewijn, Gerhard Zabrots of Zuiphen, and Thomas a Kempis, see L.A.M. Goossens, \textit{De meditatio in de eerste tijd van de Moderne Devotie} (Haarlem and Antwerpen, 1953), 132-141.
  \item Henry of Coesfeld, \textit{Sermo in festo Pasche}, in Brussels, KB, MS 1212 (cat. 1945), fol. 101r: "... habere dolorem contritionis sive amartitudinem penitentialis de peccatis nostris quibus Deum offendimus."\end{itemize}
Purity of the heart and actual devotion are essential in order to benefit from the sacrament of the Eucharist, and Henry thinks that “in modern times” many secular priests and religious are not proficient enough in the virtues because these conditions are not met, even when they receive daily communion.

5

“New” Devotion and the Imitation of Christ

For Henry, the beginning of “Christiform” virtue (initia virtutum Christiformium), which is the state of the beginner, corresponds with spiritual nativity, the birth of Christ in man. The state of the proficent then corresponds to the spiritual circumcision of the false habits and inclinations working against Christ’s works and virtues, through regular exercises and good works, and using the gifts of the irascible, concupiscible, and rational powers. Essential for reaching the state of the perfect is then the following spiritual purification of man—obviously for Henry as a Carthusian monk, this process is intimately tied to contempt for the world and the monastic conversion.

It is no accident that the feast of the purification of Mary as a symbol of renewal was the occasion for most of Henry’s sermons concerned with...
devotion. Mystically interpreting the arms of Symeon, which received Christ during the presentation at the temple, as the intellect (intellectus) and the affect (affectus), Henry asks those who are called to a devout life, to meditate and contemplate Christ (i.e., with the intellect) and to be affected with love (i.e., with the affect), and thus to spiritually expand both arms to receive Christ, viz., to prepare for the appropriate service to God: “Let us receive Him, I say, with devotion; a new devotion (nova devotion) will always earn that new grace of which it is said that the Lord lives in us.”

The two turtle doves presented by Mary and Joseph at the temple are interpreted by Henry as the contemplative (vis contemplativa) and active (vis activa) powers of the soul, each having two wings (i.e., the intellect and the affect). The contemplative power is the masculine dove and the active power the female one, the former impregnating the latter. As the former flies higher in cognition and love of God, the latter follows, in a practical judgment to serve and in actual devotion.

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\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{vis contemplativa/speculativa} & \text{vis activa/practica} \\
\text{intellectus} & \text{cognitio} & \text{consideratio circa divinum obsequium} \\
& \text{visio} & \\
\text{affectus} & \text{fruitio} & \text{devotio rationalis/sensualis} \\
& \text{(amor frutivius)} & \text{(amor activus)}
\end{array}
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Following Bernard of Clairvaux’s sermons on the Song of Songs (written at the request of the Carthusian Bernard of Portes), Henry compares the nesting of the turtle doves in the cracks and holes of a rock to the meditation on what Christ did for humanity and on the passion of Christ (intellect/contemplative), the amorous compassion with this (affect/contemplative), the consideration of imitating Christ (intellect/active), and the affection linked to this (affect/active).

Devotion, Henry says, leads us to “Christiform” works. Being devout means imitating Christ’s virtues and studying God’s mandates and the statutes of the Church (hoc enim est devotum esse). In this respect, Henry refers to recollecting the heart (cor recolligere), bringing sins and defects back to the memory (ad memoriam reducere) with true repentance, ruminating on the mystery of the incarnation and passion of Christ (ruminare), worshipping the divine omnipotence, revering God’s abyssal wisdom with shame and fear, and loving the infinite goodness of God, while virtuously serving the Lord in the hope of eternal remuneration: sic vivere, fratres mei, est devote vivere.

6 Concluding Remarks

While devotion in Thomas Aquinas’s oeuvre is one of the interior acts of the will within an abstract theological scheme, it becomes a principal and dynamic process, placed in the “present-day” within Henry of Coesfeld’s works.

51 Henry of Coesfeld, Sermo in purificatione BMV, in Leuven, MSB, MS Mechelen 26, fol. 78v. See John Busch, Liber de origine devotionis modernae, cap. 1, ed. K. Grube, Des Augustinerpropstes Johannes Busch Chronicum Windeshemense et Liber de reformatione monasteriorum [Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen und angrenzender Gebiete 19] (Halle, 1886), 253: “Praes ergo sacerdotes honesti viri et feminae diversis in locis ad eius predicationem corde compuncti totis precordiorum suorum affectibus mundum reliquere et mundanam conversationem deserere et Deo creatori su in vera penitentia fide spe et caritate et eternorum bonorum amore fideler deservire ferventissime desiderabant.” See also John Busch, Liber de viris illustribus, cap. 27, in ibidem, 75–76: “... hic veram in vitam contemplativam perficit, ea quod vera devotio interneaque contemplatio non in sentimentis dulcedinis sed in veris virtutibus et animi qualitatis fide et caritate consummatis consistere comprobatur.”

The essential elements of this devotio way of life, as outlined in Henry’s theology, can be found in the opening sequence of a Customary of the Brethren of the Common Life; cf. M. Schoengen, ed., Jacobus Tractia alias de Vocet, Narratio de inchoatione domus clericorum in Zwillin. Met akten en bescheiden betreffende dit fraterhuis [Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht. Derde serie 13] (Amsterdam, 1908), 240–241: “... ut sic possint Deo gratum et acceptibile servitium exhibere ... Quia igitur verus profectus vité spiritualis consistit in cordis puritate, quia neglecta frustra ad perfectionem nititum, que est in caritate, sit igitur summum et cottidianum studium et exercitium nostrum proficere in cordis puritatem, ut videlicet primo omnium discam us nosipps cognoscere, vivia et passiones animo sine dissimulatione djuicare et eas totius viribus niti extirpare, gulam domare, concupiscientias refrenare, superstitionem deprimere, temporalia contemnere, proprias voluntates franger e et aliilla quilibet vita impugnan-
rowing from mystical writers from Brabant and the Rhineland (such as John of Ruusbroec and Henry Suso), and mixing elements from Carthusian spirituality (such as the famous pseudo-Bernardian Letter to the Carthusians of Mont-Dieu), Henry builds an ascetical-mystical concept of devotion, in which contempt for the world, purity of the heart, progress in the virtues, repentance and inner renewal, Eucharistic piety, meditation on Christ's humanity and passion, "Christiformity" and the imitation of Christ, play a central role. While pointing at the "present-day" moral decline in the religious orders and the church, his idea of devotion relates to personal reform, a process of becoming congruent with the "ancient" examples of Christ and the saints. His theology is not anti-mystical nor anti-intellectual in nature, but at the same time it warns against the pitfalls of curiosity (curiositas) and the excesses of mysticism.

One last point that needs to be made deals with the originality of Henry of Coesfeld and the influence of his work. The obvious kinship between Henry's theology and Geert Grote's reform program begs the question of who was influencing whom. However, one has to realize that Henry's theology was much more a fresh and concise synthesis of existing ideas than a revolutionary vision. Long before Geert Grote's conversion, Carthusians were amongst the earliest recipients of the teachings of Henry Suso and John of Ruusbroec. Long before the Modern Devout idealized monastic texts such as those of David of Augsburg and the pseudo-Bernardian Specula, these were standard literature for Carthusian novices in many charterhouses. Henry of Coesfeld's theology is a reflection of an intellectual climate that emerged in charterhouses of the Low Countries and the Rhine and Danube regions during the fourteenth century. Henry Egher of Kalkar, who is held responsible for Geert Grote's conversion by the latter's biographers, and Henry of Coesfeld, who was prior during Geert Grote's retreat at the charterhouse of Monnikhuizen, are but its most vocal, authoritative, and influential exponents. It is this intellectual climate that Geert Grote experienced.

The surviving evidence of the circulation of Henry's works in the Low Countries and the Rhineland (see appendix), shows that his texts were read both within the Carthusian Order, as well as in the various (monastic) branches of the Modern Devotion. Henry of Coesfeld could therefore be regarded not only as an influence on reformers, but also as a true theologian of modern-day devotion.

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58 See Van Engen, Sisters and Brothers (see above, n. 1), 278.

59 See, for example, the ms Ljubljana, Narodna in Univerzeitca Knjižnica [National and University Library], 40 (K06 46) from the early fourteenth century, originating from the Jarkloster (Gericht] charterhouse, or the fourteenth-century ms Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár [National Széchényi Library], lat. 34, originating from the charterhouse of Žiče (Seitz). See above, n. 17 and 18.
Appendix: Written Sources for the Study of Henry of Coesfeld's Theology

De tribus votis monasticis
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, 76-A (Williams 281), pp. 255-460
15th century

olim Antwerpen [Antwerp], Carthusians
probably lost

olim Arnhem, Canons Regular
probably lost

Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, II.2 quart. 48, fols. 1r-77v
incomplete, Benedictines of Sankt Mang in Füssen, 15th century

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek—Preussischer Kulturbesitz, theol. lat. fol. 225, fols. 167r-212r
long redaction, Franciscans of Brandenburg, 15th century

Brussel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1520-1542 (cat. 1467), fols. 33r-48r
15th century

Brussel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 5029-5030 (cat. 2159), fols. 1r-68r
Carthusians of Herne, c. 1430

Brussel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 9654-9663 (cat. 3707), fols. 222r-236v
Benedictines of Saint-Laurent in Liège, c. 1440

olim Cambion, Cistercians
probably lost

Deventer, Stadsarchief en Atheneumbibliothek, 10 w 2 (olim 178), fols. 46r-78v
Canons Regular of Windesheim, 1409

Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 16, fols. 1r-88v
1st half 15th century

Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, 379, fols. 1r-119v
long redaction, Benedictines of Anchin, 1435

Grenoble, Bibliothèque municipale, 1845, fols. 1r-33r
Carthusian provenance (?), 15th century

olim Herent, Canons Regular of Bethlehem
probably lost

olim Hoeilaart, Canons Regular of Groenendael
probably lost

olim Köln [Cologne], Carthusians
probably lost

Köln [Cologne], Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, 247, fols. 121r-170r
Benedictines of Gross Sankt Martin in Cologne, end of 15th / beginning of 16th century

olim Kreuzdonk, Canons Regular
probably lost

Lambach, Stiftsbibliothek, 254, fols. 59r-100r
long redaction, Benedictines of Lambach, 15th century

olim Leuven [Louvain], Canons Regular
probably lost

Liège, Bibliothèque du Grand Séminaire, 6 G 28, fol. 30v-82r
Cisterces of Liège, 1466

Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, 1137, fols. 66v-91v
Carthusians of Mainz, beginning of 15th century

Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, 1 306, fols. 3r-84v
Carthusians of Mainz, 1st half 15th century

Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 909, fols. 130r-159r
long redaction, Benedictines of Melk, 15th century

Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 993, fols. 149r-200r
Benedictines of Melk, 15th century

Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 1806, fols. 90r-166r
Benedictines of Melk, 18th century

München [Munich], Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 7507, fols. 234r-253v
Canons Regular of Ingolstadt, 15th century

München [Munich], Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14919, fols. 46r-146r
Benedictines of Sankt Emmeram in Regensburg, 15th century

60 As reported by Gaens, 'Fons hortorum' [see above, n. 5], there 69 (n. 79) and 73-74 (n. 105-114). The MS Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 988, listed in ibidem, 74 (n. 109)—following the erroneous "Coesfeld" entry in Dictionnaire de spiritualité 7 (1969), 182-184—does not contain Henry's work.

61 According to the Roklooster register (Wien [Vienna], Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS s. n. 12694 [hereafter cited as RKL], fol. 199v). A digitized microfilm of the Roklooster register is available at http://rrkl.cartusiana.org.

62 Idem.

63 According to J.-N. Paquot, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire littéraire des dix-sept provinces des Pays-Bas, de la principauté de Liège et de quelques contrées voisines, 18 vols. (Louvain, 1753-1770), 7152.

64 According to the Roklooster register (RKL, fol. 159v).

65 Idem.

66 According to a 1748 inventory, the charterhouse owned two copies of this text (MS Köln [Cologne], Historisches Archiv, 03 fol. 15.425).

67 According to Paquot, Mémoires [see above, n. 63], 7152.

68 According to the Roklooster register (RKL, fol. 159v).
München [Munchen], Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18381, fols. 122r–155r
Benedictines of Tegernsee, 15th century
olim Oudergem, Canons Regular of Roodeloster probably lost
Praha [Prague], Národní knihovna České republiky [National Library of the Czech Republic], XIII 015 (cat. 2382), fols. 234v–268v
Canons Regular of Teobōl [Wittingau], 15th century
olim Tongeren, Canons Regular probably lost
Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 230/1401, fols. 204r–223r
Carthusians of Trier, 14th/15th century
Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 379, fols. 147r–181r
Carthusians of Utrecht, end of 14th century
Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 378, fols. 31r–88v
Canons Regular of Utrecht, early 15th century
Vorau, Stiftsbibliothek, 214, fols. 130r–159r
Benedictines of Vorau, middle of 15th century
Wien [Vienna], Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 4257, fols. 73r–90r
excerpt; Scotch Benedictines of Wien [Vienna], 15th century

Epistola de instructione iuvenum et novitiorum (Epistola de institutione novitiorum)71
olim Antwerpen [Antwerp], Carthusians72 probably lost
Berlin, Staatsbibliothek—Preussischer Kulturbesitz, theol. lat. fol. 705, fols. 2r–25r
Carthusians of Köln [Cologne], c. 1570
Brussel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2415–2418 (cat. 1423), fols. 2r–36v
Canons Regular of Leuven [Louvain], 14th century
Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, 835, fols. 1r–31r
Benedictines of Saint-Sépulcre in Cambrai, 1411
Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, 2246, fols. 1r–54v
Carthusians of Köln [Cologne], c. 1600

69 According to Paquot, Mémoires (see above, n. 63), 752.
71 According to the Roodeloster register (BRLX, fol. 159v).
72 According to a 1748 inventory, the charterhouse owned four copies of this work (Ms Köln [Cologne], Historisches Archiv, 63 fol. 15, 425–426).
73 According to a note in Ms Praha [Prague], Národní knihovna České republiky [National Library of the Czech Republic], 1 G 21, 66. See note 76.
74 According to Paquot, Mémoires (see above, n. 63), 752.
75 According to Paquot, Mémoires (see above, n. 63), 752.
76 Copied from a Ms belonging to the charterhouse of Gaming (ex M.S. libello Gennici 8 foliij 1706). See n. 74.
77 According to Paquot, Mémoires (see above, n. 63), 752.
De sacramento eucharistiae

olim Antwerpen [Antwerp], Cartusians
probably lost
olim Arnhem, Canons Regular
probably lost
Brussel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 4971–4973 (cat. 2158), fols. 3r–117r
Cartusians of Herne, 1416
Brussel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2160, fols. 3r–109v
Canons Regular of Bethlehem in Herent, 1516
olim Eindhoven (Woensel), Cartusians
probably lost
olim Hoëilaart, Cartusians of Groenendaal
probably lost
olim Köln [Cologne], Cartusians
probably lost
Köln [Cologne], Historisches Archiv, GB quart. 173, fols. 1r–15v
incomplete, Benedictines of Gross Sankt Martin in Cologne, c. 1480
Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, 147, fols. 69r–116r
Cartusians of Mainz, c. 1450–1500
Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, 145, fols. 117r–165v
Cartusians of Mainz, 1st half 15th century, 1426
Leuven [Louvain], KU Leuven [University of Leuven], Faculteit Theologie en Religiewetenschappen, Maurits Sabbathbibliothec, Mechelen 25, fols. 1r–62r
Canons Regular of Bois-Seigneur-Isaac, 15th / 16th century
olim Metz, Bibliothèque municipale, 357
incomplete, Cartusians of Rettel, lost in WW 11

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84 According to the Rooklooster register (BRKL, fol. 159v).
85 Idem.
86 As reported by Wostebrock, "Heinrich von Coesfeld" (see above, n. 71), there 62a–64a, with some additions.
87 According to ms Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 1859, fol. 38r.
88 According to the Rooklooster register (BRKL, fol. 159v).
89 According to the Rooklooster register (BRKL, fol. 159v).
90 According to Paquot, Mémoires (see above, n. 63), 733.
91 A suppression inventory of the charterhouse of Brussel [Brussels] made by the Austrian administration lists a ms containing chapter sermons by Henry of Coesfeld. See Liste des manuscrits trouvés au couvent supprimé des Chartreux à Bruxelles, ed. J. Machiels, Inventarissen van kloosterbibliotheken door Jozef II afgezien en aangeweug in het Algemeen
Brüssel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1212 (cat. 1945)
Canons Regular of Groenendaal in Hoellaert, 1440

Brüssel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2415-2418 (cat. 1423), fols. 48r-70v (De multiplici devotione sive de diversis generibus devotorum)
Canons Regular of Leuven [Louvain], 15th century

Brüssel [Brussels], Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2641-2647 (cat. 1371), fols. 91r-100v (De multiplici devotione sive de diversis generibus devotorum)
Canons Regular of Rooklooster in Oudergem, 15th century

Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 493
Canons Regular of Mainz, 15th century

Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, B 191, fols. 1r-145v
Benedictines of Werden

Grande Chartreuse, Archives, 3 Henr I (olim 1062)
15th century

Olms Herent, Canons Regular of Bethlehem (Collatio de generibus devotorum) probably lost

Innsbruck, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Tirol, 434, fols. 11r-121v
Carthusians of Geirach / provenance: Carthusians of Schnals, 15th century

København [Copenhagen], Kongelige Bibliothek, Ny kgl. S. 1596, fols. 11r-200v
Carthusians of Werdern near Dülmen, 15th century

Köln [Cologne], Historisches Archiv, GB fol. 163, fols. 671-234v
Croisiers of Cologne, c. 1450-1500

Köln [Cologne], Historisches Archiv, GB quart. 34, fols. 52r-54v
Croisiers of Cologne, 15th century

Leuven [Louvain], NU Leuven [University of Leuven], Faculteit Theologie en Religiewesenschappen, Maurits Sabbelbibliotheek, Mechelen 26
Canons Regular of Bois-Seigneur-Isaac, 15th century

Liège, Bibliothèque du Grand Séminaire, 6 F 22, fols. 29v-30v
Croisiers of Huy, 15th century

Rijksarchief (rnr. 52-95) [Algemeen Rijksarchief en Rijksarchief in de Provinciën. Reprints 158] (Brussel 2000), 522 (no. 12): "Sermones capitulares Patris Henrici Coeswilli in 4°, manuscrit sur papier."

92 Probably the same MS which is mentioned in the Rooklooster register (RRKL, fol. 159v).

93 Idem.

94 Idem.

95 See also the 1548 inventory of the charterhouse, which mentions one collection of sermons (MS Köln [Cologne], Historisches Archiv, GB fol. 15, 495).

96 According to the Rocklooster register (RRKL, fol. 159v).

olim Lier, Carthusians97 probably lost

olim Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, 159
Carthusians of Mainz, 15th century, lost
Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, 1154, fols. 306r-309v
Carthusians of Mainz, 15th century
Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, 1206, fols. 95r-136r
Carthusians of Mainz, 1st half 15th century
Melk, Benediktinerstift, 140, fols. 70r-71r and 73r-75v
Benedictines of Melk, 15th century

olim Metz, Bibliothèque municipale, 374
Carthusians of Rettel, 1470, lost during WW II

München [Munich], Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18390, fols. 143r-294r
Benedictines of Tegernsee, 1454
München [Munich], Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18528b, fols. 74r-91v
Benedictines of Tegernsee, 1473
München [Munich], Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18551, fols. 212r-244r
Benedictines of Tegernsee, 15th century

olim Münster, Universitätsbibliothek, 748 (cat. 134), fols. 50v-90v
lost during WW II

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lyell 61, pp. 454-475 [olim Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 1760] (De devotione et generibus devotorum excerptis ex dictis cuissdam doctoris theologiae Carthusianis ordinis)
Benedictines of Melk, 1452-1453

Trier, Bibliothek des Priesterseminars, 55
Benedictines of Trier, 1469

Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 238/1392 8°
Carthusians of Trier, 15th century

Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 295/1968 8°, fols. 218r-227v
Carthusians of Trier, c. 1470

Wien [Vienna], Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, S. n. 12848, fols. xcii-cxciv (De multiplici devotione sive de diversis generibus devotorum)
Carthusians Regular of Rooklooster in Oudergem, and half 15th century98

97 According to Paquot, Mémoires (see above, n. 63), 733. Probably, this is the same MS which is mentioned in the Rooklooster register for the Carthusians of Antwerp (see above, n. 87).

98 Probably one of the MSS which are mentioned in the Rooklooster register (RRKL, fol. 422v).