

**THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE: CATOLIC AND PROTESTANT
TRANSLATIONS OF THOMAS À KEMPIS', IMITATIO CHRISTI, C.
1420-C.1620**

Max von Habsburg

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THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE:
CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT TRANSLATIONS OF THOMAS À KEMPIS'
IMITATIO CHRISTI, c. 1420 - c. 1620

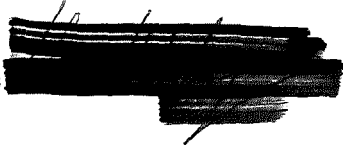
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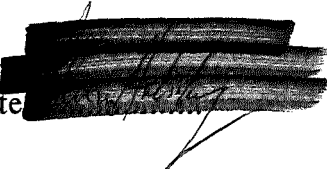
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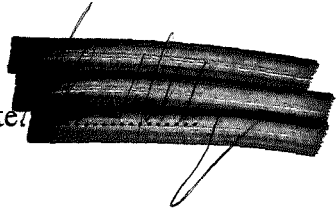
I was admitted as a research student in September, 1996 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in September, 1997; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1997 and 2001.

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The incorporation of the Imitatio by Protestant and Catholic reform movements suggests important points of continuity between late medieval and early modern religion, especially within the realm of spirituality. The study of the Imitatio is testimony to the versatility of spirituality; it was accessible both to the laity and monks and also to Protestants and Catholics. The ethical emphasis of the Imitatio, its interiority, its simplicity and intended renewal in Christ, were vital to its endurance.

The text's accessibility was reinforced by the expansive nature of late medieval and early modern translations. English and French translations of the Imitatio at the turn of the sixteenth century reflected the concern for *simplificatio*, thereby simplifying the text rather than providing an alternative interpretation. In the sixteenth century, Protestant translators, grounded in the essential tenets of Lutheran theology, inevitably revised or removed any explicitly Catholic elements of the Imitatio's spirituality.

Despite its apparent widespread appeal, the promotion of the Imitatio tended to be undertaken by late medieval and early modern movements which had links with the *devotio moderna*. The Imitatio was circulated in late medieval England and France by individuals whose connections with the *devotio moderna* were marked. Indeed, a similar trend was evident with the Protestant tradition of the text; Leo Jud, Caspar Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Castellio were all directly or indirectly influenced by the Brethren.

Most striking of all was the timing with which translations of the Imitatio appeared. The translations by Caspar Schwenckfeld, Leo Jud, Edward Hake and Thomas Rogers were undertaken at a critical stage of their respective Reformations. Similarly, the Jesuits, traditionally viewed as the vanguards of the Counter-Reformation, were deeply committed to the Imitatio. Devotional works were vital to the maturing progress of Reformations, regardless of the confession. Spirituality was not a peripheral, insignificant dimension of religion; it remained at the very centre of Protestant and Catholic self-perception and identity.

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- AC Analecta Cartusiana
- AGKKN Archief voor de Geschiedenis van de Katholieke Kerk in Nederland
- AHR American Historical Review
- AHSI Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu
- ARG Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte
- BBL J. Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise (Lyons, 1895-1964) 12 Vols.
- BHR Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de Renaissance
- BQ Baptist Quarterly
- BSHPF Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français
- CH Church History
- CHB Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, (edited by S. L. Greenslade) (Cambridge, 1963) Vol. III.
- CHR Catholic Historical Review
- CP Juan Alfonso de Polanco, Vita Ignatii Loiolae et rerum Societatis Iesu historica (Madrid, 1894-1898) 6 Vols.
- CS Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum (Leipzig, 1907-1916) Vols. I-V.
- DM Dictionary of the Middle Ages (London, 1982-1989) 12 Vols.
- DS Dictionnaire de Spiritualité: Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire (edited by Marcel Viller, F. Cavallera, J. de Guibert, A. Rayez, A. Derville, P. Lamarche, and A. Solignac), (Paris, 1937-1995) 17 Vols.

- ER The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Reformation (edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand) (Oxford, 1994) 4 Vols. vii
- FN Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Jesu initiis
(Rome, 1943-1965) 4 Vols.
- FRB Sixteenth Century French Religious Book Project
(St. Andrews Reformation Studies Institute)
- GJ Gutenberg Jahrbuch
- JEH Journal of Ecclesiastical History
- JRH Journal of Religious History
- Lib The Library
- LQ Litterae Quadrimestres ex universis praeter Indiam et Brasiliam locis in quibus aliqui de Societate Jesu versabantur Romam missae
(Madrid and Rome, 1894-1932) 7 Vols.
- LSES Leeds Studies in English New Series
- M&H Medievalia et Humanistica
- MIg Monumenta Ignatiana: Regulae Societatis Jesu (1540-1556)
(Rome, 1948)
- MIScripta Monumenta Ignatiana: Scripta de Sancto Ignatio de Loyola
(Madrid, 1904-1918) 2 Vols.
- ML Epistolae et acta Patris Jacobi Lainii (Madrid, 1912-1917) 8 Vols.
- MN Epistolae P Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Jesu ab anno 1546 ad 1577
(Madrid, 1898-1905) 4 Vols.
- MP Monumenta Paedagogica Societatis Jesu
(Rome, 1965-1986) 5 Vols.

NCE	<u>New Catholic Encyclopaedia</u> (London, 1967-1979) 17 Vols.	viii
N&Q	<u>Notes and Queries</u>	
OGE	<u>Ons Geestelijk Erf</u>	
Palmer	Martin Palmer, (ed.), <u>On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: the early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599</u> (St. Louis, 1996)	
P&P	<u>Past and Present</u>	
PBSA	<u>Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America</u>	
PMLA	<u>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</u>	
Pohl	Thomae Hemerken à Kempis, <u>Opera Omnia</u> , (edited by Michael Josephus Pohl), (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1904)	
Q	<u>Quaerendo</u>	
RB	<u>Revue Bénédictine</u>	
RFHL	<u>Revue Française d'Histoire du Livre</u>	
RH	<u>Recusant History</u>	
RHE	<u>Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique</u>	
RHEF	<u>Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France</u>	
RHT	<u>Royal Historical Transactions</u>	
Rib	<u>Patris Petri de Ribadeneira Societatis Jesu sacerdotis Confessiones, epistolae aliaque scripta inedita</u> (Madrid, 1920-1923) 2 Vols.	
RPTK	<u>Realenzyklopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche</u>	
RSSCW	<u>Research Studies of the State College of Washington</u>	

SCH	<u>Studies in Church History</u>	ix
SCJ	<u>Sixteenth Century Journal</u>	
SSJ	<u>Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits</u>	
STC	A. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, (eds.), <u>A Short Title Catalogue of Books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, 1475-1640</u> (second edition revised by W. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson, and K.F. Pantzer), (London, 1976-1991) 3 Vols.	
VD16	<u>Verzeichnis der im Deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts</u> (Munich, 1983-1997) 24 Vols.	
WF	<u>Westfälische Forschungen</u>	
Z	<u>Zwingliana</u>	
ZK	<u>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</u>	

Chapter One. Introduction

The Imitatio Christi is justly considered one of the classics of Western Spirituality. Within less than a century of its composition, the Imitatio existed in more than eight hundred manuscript copies and over one hundred incunabula editions, thereby meriting its classification as a bestseller.¹ With a statistical overview of editions, it is clear that the Imitatio was widely circulated even more so than some recent works have suggested.² Yet, how can this transmission be explained? Why was the Imitatio such a central text in the nurturing of late medieval and early modern spirituality? It is tempting to suggest that, like all bestsellers, it became a text that people wanted to possess. Moreover, perhaps it contained a universality of appeal that transcended both chronological and geographical boundaries. Johan Huizinga went even further, declaring that the Imitatio's spirituality transcended culture itself:

"For this reason, the Imitatio is not limited to one cultural epoch; like ecstatic contemplations of the All-One, it departs from all culture and belongs to no culture in particular. This explains its two thousand editions as well as the different suppositions concerning its author and its time of composition that fall into a range of three hundred years".³

Indeed, it is intriguing that a Dutch Protestant like Huizinga should consider the Imitatio as a high point among a decaying culture. This is less surprising given that the

¹ "The first printed book that deserves the appellation of a bestseller (and quickly also became a steady seller) was Thomas à Kempis's De imitatione Christi". S. H. Steinberg, Five Hundred Years of Printing (Faber & Faber, London, 1959), p. 101; see also John Van Engen, 'The Church in the Fifteenth Century', in Thomas Brady, Heiko Oberman, and James Tracy, (eds.), Handbook of European History 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation. Vol. I. Structures and Assertions (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1994), p. 308; John Olin, The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola (Fordham University Press, New York, 1992), p. xx; R. N. Swanson, Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215- c. 1515 (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 82

² Michael Milway, 'Forgotten Best-sellers from the dawn of the Reformation', in Robert Bast and Andrew Gow, (eds.), Continuity and Change: the harvest of Late Medieval and Reformation History (essays presented to Heiko Oberman on his 70th Birthday) (Brill, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), pp. 115-141; see my appendix.

³ J. Huizinga, Autumn of the Middle Ages (University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 266-267

Imitatio was translated in the sixteenth century by Protestants and, consequently, reached across confessional boundaries. Albert Hyma's statement that the Imitatio transcends both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism may retain a certain validity.⁴ Its appropriation by Jesuits and Protestants at the time of the European Reformation justifies an examination of the Imitatio across a broader chronological, linguistic and confessional frame. Yet, the interpretations of Hyma and Huizinga require careful qualification.

The success of the Imitatio can be explained not by departing from culture (as Huizinga suggested), but rather by the contrary. Only by relating the Imitatio to its historical background can one fully appreciate its tremendous appeal. It must be understood properly in its original context, that is, by identifying its relationship to the culture from which it emerged. Spirituality, and thus devotional literature, do not exist in a vacuum. The themes of suffering, tribulation and interiority are inseparable from liturgical, para-liturgical, doctrinal and indeed even secular concerns. The emphasis on inward forms of piety cannot be analysed separately from the external dimensions of religious culture. Regarding the relationship of spirituality to doctrinal and worldly matters, one need only refer to the examples of persecution and plague. Suffering could result both from the consequences of adhering to a particular doctrinal position and from catching the plague. Both were related to the Passion of Christ. The Imitatio's circulation has to be linked to the wider religious context, which formed an integral part of late medieval and early modern life. Without a proper historical context for its appropriation, circulation, transmission and reception, it is almost impossible to explain its popularity.

⁴ Albert Hyma, The Christian Renaissance: A history of the 'Devotio Moderna' (Archon Books, Connecticut, 1965), p. 595

Spirituality, Devotion, Piety and History

These issues can hardly be addressed without discussing the value of researching spirituality and devotion as historical subjects in their own right.⁵ In assessing variegated currents of spirituality, it becomes increasingly difficult to isolate such themes from their historical context. Modern historiographical trends have reflected these changing attitudes towards the study of spirituality. The foundation of the journal, Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique, in 1920, reflected a greater sensitivity to the implications of periodic and historical changes for the understanding of spirituality. The intention of its founder, Joseph de Guibert, was to apply the "methods demanded by contemporary scientific research to the study of spirituality".⁶ Guibert, who studied history at the Sorbonne and later taught ascetical and mystical theology at the Gregorian university in Rome, was well-qualified also to be one of the founding editors of the monumental Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, begun in 1937, which paid close attention to the historical content of spirituality.⁷ That its 17 volumes were only completed in 1995 is testament to almost six decades of continuous research on the history of spirituality.

This interest has been shared by numerous other works such as the three-volume Christian Spirituality, which concentrated on the "inner dimension of the person called by certain traditions 'the spirit'...[representing] a spiritual core [that] is the deepest centre of the person".⁸ That same spiritual core was then set in its historical context from the patristic to the modern age.⁹ In the Classics of Western Spirituality series, editors have consistently pointed to the necessity of being sensitive to the historicity of the great spiritual writers. As Bernard McGinn noted, the benefits of

⁵ For the history of the term 'spirituality', see Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality and History (SPCK, 1995), pp. 42ff

⁶ J. F. Mullin, 'Joseph de Guibert', NCE, p. 837

⁷ Marcel Viller, F. Cavallera, J. de Guibert, A. Rayez, A. Derville, P. Lamarche, and A. Solignac, (eds.), Dictionnaire de Spiritualité: Ascétique et Mystique. Doctrine et Histoire 17 Vols., (1937-1995)

⁸ Louis Dupré and Don Saliers, (eds.), Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation Modern (New York, 1989), p. xii

⁹ Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff, (eds.), Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century (London, 1986); Jill Raitt and John Meyendorff, (eds.), Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation (London, 1987); Dupré and Saliers, (eds.), Christian Spirituality: Peter Brooks, (ed.), Christian Spirituality: Essays in honour of Gordon Rupp (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1975)

bringing the writings of these authors to life can be attributed to the fact that they are "representative of the era in which they lived, but...also have a perennial message".¹⁰ The examination of spirituality as an historical phenomenon is constantly subject to an underlying tension between the breaking down of geographical, linguistic and even confessional barriers on the one hand, and to pinpointing a particularity of themes which reflect the specificity of cultural and historical conditions on the other. In keeping with these trends, this study of the *Imitatio* has purposely taken a very broad definition of spirituality, which has both an individual and a collective dimension. For as Sheldrake wrote, spirituality is a "conscious human response to God that is both personal and ecclesial".¹¹ It can thrive both in silence with interior prayer and also in outward ministry, be it by preaching (giving or hearing sermons) or caring for the sick and the poor. In short, it is the "expression and development of love of God in prayer and action".¹²

Not only has spirituality as a word entered the mainstream of historical inquiry, but terms such as devotion, sanctity and piety are now generally accepted as worthy components of historical discourse. Note Jan Rhodes' lengthy but very helpful definition of devotion:

"[Devotion] can include prayer, meditation, study or religious instruction; it may denote a particular act of worship or relate more generally to the feelings which accompany or grow from worship; it can be extended to include virtuous resolutions and good deeds; the setting may vary from church to family home or cloister, from layman's place of work to recluse's cell; it can be an entirely private and solitary undertaking, it may be guided by a spiritual counsellor, or may be pursued within an intimate group of family, friends, religious; it is to be

¹⁰ Jean Gerson, *Early Works*, translated and introduced by Brian McGuire, preface by Bernard McGinn (Paulist Press, New York, Mahwah, 1998), p. xiii

¹¹ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, p. 45

¹² E. Larkin, 'Spirituality (Christian)', *NCE*, p. 598

distinguished from public worship and the official obligations of religion by element of personal choice".¹³

Terms like devotion, sanctity and piety no longer remain the exclusive preserve of theological dictionaries and of Catholic and Protestant encyclopaediae.¹⁴ The newly edited historical Encyclopaedia of the Reformation incorporates articles on devotional practices and on piety, both of which present wide-ranging descriptions of how Christians interpret and strive to make closer their relationship to God.¹⁵ Similarly, the Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance includes pieces on female spirituality and on religious piety.¹⁶ Indeed, John O'Malley's relatively recent guide to research on early modern Catholicism contains one article on popular piety and another on spirituality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, illustrating that piety and spirituality both provide useful investigative tools for researching different notions of Catholic reform.¹⁷ Closely related to concepts of piety and spirituality is the ever-increasing interest in placing

¹³ Jan Rhodes, Private Devotion in England on the eve of the Reformation, illustrated from works printed or reprinted in the period 1530-1540 (Phd, Durham, 1974), p. ii

¹⁴ Hans-Jürgen Greschat, Manfred Seitz, and Friedrich Wintzer, 'Frömmigkeit', TRE Vol. II. (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1983), pp. 671-688; Hans-Peter Hasenfratz, Karin Schöpflin, Günter Sternberger, Gerhard Dantzenberg, Horst Seidl, and Konrad Stock, 'Seele', TRE Vol. XXX (1999), pp. 733-773; Hans-Peter Hasenfratz, and Boaz Huss, 'Seelenwanderung', TRE Vol. XXXI (2000), pp. 1-6; Johann Steiger, and Eberhard Hauschildt, 'Seelssorge', TRE Vol. XXXI (2000), pp. 7-54; Karl-Friedrich Wiggermen, 'Spiritualität', TRE XXXI (2000), pp. 708-717; J. Curran, 'Devotion', NCE Vol. IV (1967), pp. 832-833; P. Mulhern, 'Devotions, Religious', NCE Vol. IV (1967), pp. 833-834; K. Kavanaugh, 'Spirituality, History of', NCE Vol. XIII (1967), pp. 594-598; E. Larkin, 'Spirituality, Christian', NCE Vol. XIII (1967), pp. 598-603; W. Hinnebusch, 'Spirituality, Rhenish', NCE Vol. XIII (1967), pp. 606-607; W. Hinnebusch, 'Spirituality of the Low Countries', NCE Vol. XIII (1967), pp. 608-609; W. Hinnebusch, 'Spirituality, French School of', NCE Vol. XIII (1967), pp. 604-607; Erwin Fahlbusch, Carl-Heinz Ratschow, Hans-Günter Heimbrock, 'Frömmigkeit', Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon: Internationale theologische Enzyklopädie Vol. I. (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1986), pp. 1396-1402; Erwin Fahlbusch, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Ulrike Wiethaus, 'Spiritualität', Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon: Internationale theologische Enzyklopädie Vol. III. (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1996), pp. 402-419

¹⁵ Virginia Reinburg, 'Devotional Practices', ER, pp. 476-480; Maureen Flynn, 'Piety', ER, pp. 266-271

¹⁶ Mary McLaughlin, 'Spirituality, female', in Paul Grendler, (ed.), Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance Vol. 6 (Charles Scribner's sons, New York, 1999), pp. 82-85; Carlos Eire, 'Religious Piety', in Paul Grendler, (ed.), Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance Vol. 5 (Charles Scribner's sons, New York, 1999), pp. 246-250

¹⁷ Peter Burke, 'Popular Piety', in John O'Malley, (ed.), Catholicism in early modern history: a guide to Research (Center for Reformation Research, St. Louis, 1988); Massimo Marcocchi, 'Spirituality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in Ibid., pp. 163-192

mysticism within an historical context, especially as it relates to heresy and/or to the laity.¹⁸

The broader historiographical tradition has reflected an attempt to search for the universals and particulars of Christian devotion. Caroline Walker Bynum has rightly pointed out that while the historians of medieval spirituality once analysed the various interpretations of the stages of mystical progress, it now addresses "how basic religious attitudes and values are conditioned by the society in which they occur", thereby acquiring a certain historical legitimacy.¹⁹ The historians R. N. Swanson and Eamon Duffy have provided comprehensive surveys of late-medieval religious life and devotion.²⁰ What these authors succeeded in illustrating was how the daily life of late medieval Christians was inextricably linked to religion in a way that is scarcely comparable today. The rhythm of secular life was affected to such an extent by the liturgical calendar, with its cycle of fasting and festivals, that it becomes virtually impossible to separate the secular and religious spheres. What Larissa Taylor has argued for France appears to ring true for the rest of Europe, namely that "religion was not an abstract system of beliefs but a vital part of daily existence".²¹ For this reason, much attention has been drawn to the practical dimensions of piety. The examination of religious practices has been instrumental in penetrating the devotional patterns of the clergy and the laity.

¹⁸ D. Catherine Brown, Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 171ff; Alastair Hamilton, Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados (James Clarke & co., Cambridge, 1992)

¹⁹ Caroline Walker Bynum, Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (University of California Press, 1982), p. 3; John Van Engen, 'The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical problem', AHR 91 (1986), p. 522

²⁰ R. N. Swanson, Church and Society in late medieval England (Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989); R. N. Swanson, Catholic England: Faith, Religion and Observance before the Reformation (Manchester University Press, 1993); R. N. Swanson, Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-c. 1515 (Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially pp. 136ff; Eamon Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580 (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1992), pp. 1-378; Van Engen, 'The Church in the Fifteenth Century', pp. 305-330

²¹ Larissa Taylor, The Soldiers of Christ: Preaching and Late Medieval and Reformation France (Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 102; for England, see H. L. Spencer, English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages (Oxford University Press, 1993)

The Mass and Eucharist, being at the centre of the sacramental life of the Church, have received considerable attention.²² The historical significance of Eucharistic devotion is amplified by the fact that its practice extended well beyond the physical, sacramental and liturgical structures of the Church. The rise of the feast of Corpus Christi in the late medieval period contributed greatly to the popularisation of Eucharistic devotion. Its different characteristics and dimensions have provided rich source material particularly for art historians and for scholars interested in confraternities and even drama.²³

Devotion of, and to, the saints has also dominated the treatment by historians, partly because the sources relating to saints tend to be so fruitful - including canonization processes, saints' lives or depictions of the saints in art.²⁴ The saints have been studied as models of Christian devotion, embodying exemplary virtues that the laity and clergy were invoked to follow. The saints have provided historians of devotion with ample (if sometimes contradictory) evidence for determining patterns of sanctity.²⁵ Social historians have studied the saints with the intent of unravelling the nature and diversity of popular piety.²⁶ The same can be said for studies of the Virgin

²² John Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200-1700', *P&P* 100 (1983), pp. 29-61; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 89-131; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 12-163

²³ Miri Rubin, 'Corpus Christi fraternities and late medieval piety', *SCH* 23 (1986), pp. 97-109; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 164-287; Leah Sinanoglou, 'The Christ Child as Sacrifice: A Medieval Tradition and the Corpus Christi Plays', *Speculum* 48 (1973), pp. 491-509

²⁴ André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (1997); Aviad Kleinberg, *Prophets in their own country: Images of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1992)

²⁵ André Vauchez, 'Lay people's sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)', in Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell, (eds.), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1991); Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth Century Saints and their Religious Milieu* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1984)

²⁶ Charles Zika, 'Hosts, Processions and Pilgrimages: Controlling the Sacred in Fifteenth-Century Germany', *P&P* 118 (1988), pp. 25-64; Steven Sargent, 'Miracle Books and Pilgrimage Shrines in Late Medieval Bavaria', *Historical Reflections* 13 (1986), pp. 455-471; Philip Soergel, *Wondrous in his Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1993)

Mary, to whom numerous pilgrimage sites were dedicated.²⁷ Devotion to Mary inspired an explosion of religious art in addition to devotional practices, such as the Rosary.²⁸

The importance of evaluating the changing perceptions of sanctity is fundamental to understanding late medieval and early modern devotion. Vauchez's research on canonization processes revealed the different ideals and practices of striving for Christian perfection.²⁹ Vauchez pinpointed a changing attitude towards sanctity which was inseparably related to the historical context of saints' lives. In the early Church, the ideal of Christian perfection was martyrdom, since believers were provided with the opportunity of dying for their faith in times of persecution. In subsequent centuries, following the conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity, the occasions for dying for one's faith almost disappeared. This culminated in the emergence of different interpretations of how to live a perfect Christian life. Evidence gathered from canonization processes points to the rise in the importance of confessors, monks and doctors of the Church.

Scholarship has especially concentrated on the development of monastic spirituality.³⁰ The exemplary nature of monks withdrawing from the world to live a regular prayer life, and the wide spectrum of their spirituality, is well-documented.³¹ As centres of learning and literacy, monasteries provided valuable sources on the spiritual life.³² Yet, recent historiography has pointed out the diversity which characterised the religious orders, such as the differences between contemplative and

²⁷ Ann Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rose: the Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages (1997); Jaroslav Pelikan, Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1996)

²⁸ Émile Mâle, L'Art Religieux de la fin du moyen âge: étude sur l'iconographie du moyen âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration (Paris, Armand Colin Éditeur, 1995), pp. 184-221; Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rose, pp. 133ff

²⁹ Vauchez, Sainthood in the later Middle Ages, pp. 417ff; Brad Gregory, Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1999), pp. 30ff

³⁰ Dennis Martin, Fifteenth-Century Carthusian Reform: The World of Nicholas Kempf (E. J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Cologne, 1992)

³¹ David Knowles, The Religious Orders of England 3 Vols., (Cambridge, 1948-1959)

³² Jean Leclercq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: a Study of Monastic Culture (SPCK, London, 1978); Barry Collett, Italian Benedictine Scholars and the Reformation: the Congregation of Santa Giustina of Padua (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985)

active orders,³³ in addition to the more subtle distinctions between monastic and canonical spirituality.³⁴ The study of monastic spirituality has included an interest in female spirituality, with regard to the composition and translation of religious works by women, their patronage and their devotion.³⁵

In addition, research on monasticism has opened a window for the analysis of lay piety. Recent scholarship has explored sources relating to lay appropriation of monastic devotional practices and patterns. In late medieval England, the study of lay and monastic spirituality has greatly contributed to our understanding of the devotional culture of the period.³⁶ Indeed, monastic authors and themes formed an integral part of the religious literature to which the laity had access.³⁷ The influence of monastic models on lay devotional life was particularly manifest in France, where Books of Hours were widely circulated.³⁸

Recent historiography has also placed far greater focus on gender-related and especially women's history, providing an incredibly rich body of material. Caroline

³³ See also the example of Martha and Mary, standard bearers of the active and contemplative lives, in Giles Constable, Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

³⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (University of California Press, 1982), pp. 22-57.

³⁵ See especially J. Hamburger, Nuns as Artists: the Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent (University of California Press, 1997); J. Hamburger, The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany (Zone Books, New York, 1988); Juliette Dor, Lesley Johnson, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, (eds.), New Trends in Feminine Spirituality: the Holy Women of Liège and their Impact (Brepols, 1999); Ulinka Rublack, 'Female Spirituality and the Infant Jesus in Late Medieval Dominican Convents', in Robert Scribner and Trevor Johnson, (eds.), Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400-1800 (1996), pp. 16-37

³⁶ Hilary Carey, 'Devout literate lay people and the pursuit of the mixed life in later medieval England', JRH 14 (1986), pp. 361-381; Michael Sargent, De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in late Medieval England (D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 1989);

³⁷ Geneviève Hasenohr, 'Aspects de la littérature de spiritualité en langue française (1480-1520)', RHEF 77 (1991), 29-45; *idem.*, 'Religious reading amongst the laity in France in the fifteenth century', in Anne Hudson and Peter Biller, (eds.), Heresy and Literacy 1000-1500 (Cambridge University Press, 1994); *idem.*, 'La vie quotidienne de la femme vue par l'église: L'enseignement des "journées chrétiennes" de la fin du moyen âge', Frau und Spätmittelalterlicher Alltag (Vienna, 1986); *idem.*, 'Place et rôle des Traductions dans la Pastorale Française du XV^e siècle', in Geneviève Contamine, (ed.), Colloque International du CNRS: Traduction et traducteurs au Moyen Âge (Éditions du CNRS, Paris, 1989)

³⁸ Virginia Reinburg, 'Prayer and the Book of Hours', in R. Wieck, (ed.), Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life (1988), pp. 39-44; *idem.*, Popular Prayers in Late Medieval and Reformation France (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1985); and for Germany, see *idem.*, 'Religious Life and Material Culture in Medieval and Reformation Cologne', in Nancy Netzer, and Virginia Reinburg, (eds.), Fragmented Devotion: Medieval Objects from the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne (University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 40-59; for the English context, see Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, pp. 209-265

Walker Bynum, in particular, has written illuminating studies of female spirituality by exploring and elucidating not only the restrictions imposed on women but also the liberty experienced by them. Bynum remains at the forefront of the study of gender, which she insisted is a "study of how roles and possibilities are conceptualized; it is a study of 100%, not of only 50%, of the human race".³⁹ Partly related to their exclusion from Holy Orders, female piety attained certain striking, distinctive characteristics. Canonization processes reveal that visions, ecstasies and miracles were more common amongst women than men. Moreover, female spirituality was more noted both for its somatic quality and sentimentality. Above all, women were important creators of piety and fundamental to the patronage and reception of devotional art.⁴⁰

Protestant and Catholic Spirituality

When one turns one's attention to the tumultuous events of the sixteenth century, it becomes more difficult to penetrate the devotional patterns of the clergy and the laity. An interest in the nurturing of lay piety was characteristic of the early Lutheran Reformation. Yet, the theological implications of Luther's reform programme inevitably led to a changing attitude towards spirituality and devotion. The fundamentals of Luther's theological programme, as outlined in his key treatises of the 1520s, undermined some of the most active devotional practices of the late medieval period, including pilgrimages, processions, devotion to the saints and to Mary, indulgences and votive Masses. The introspective piety of Lutheranism excluded the possibility of benefitting from the external manifestations of religion. Indeed, the externals of faith could all too easily lead to the accusation of a works-righteousness mentality. In this way, piety or *Frömmigkeit* was affected by the theological framework in which it was

³⁹ Caroline Walker Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion (Zone Books, New York, 1991), p. 17; Merry Wiesner, Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 181ff

⁴⁰ Martha Driver, 'Nuns as Patrons, Artists, Readers: Bridgettine Woodcuts in Printed Books produced for the English Market', in Carol Fisher and Kathleen Scott, (eds.), Art into Life: Collected Papers from the Kresge Art Museum Medieval Symposia (Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, 1995), pp. 237-265

constructed.⁴¹ While some devotional practices were prohibited, others were reinforced and even legitimised by implicit theologies.⁴² Reformation spirituality was governed by a belief in the "depravity of the human will confronted by the unconditional love of God".⁴³ Individuals could not contribute anything to their own salvation. Thus, Protestant spirituality was conditioned by a passivity that placed a greater emphasis on the subordination of human will to the Divine will.

Due to the fact that spirituality has been viewed with some suspicion by Protestant writers, it is not too surprising that the Protestant devotional tradition has been insufficiently studied.⁴⁴ Some attention has been given to the spirituality of the Protestant reformers.⁴⁵ Indeed, an entire work has been devoted to the spirituality of John Calvin, in which the *devotio moderna* is mentioned as a possible influence.⁴⁶ Elsewhere, R. Emmet McLaughlin has related Caspar Schwenckfeld's Eucharistic piety to the devotional writings of Wessel Gansfort, who was in close contact with Thomas à Kempis and his community at the monastery of St. Agnes.⁴⁷ Interest in devotional literature has also been shown with the critical edition of Schwenckfeld's *Passional*.⁴⁸ Considerable attention has been devoted to the continuity between late medieval mysticism and the radical groups of the sixteenth century. Werner Packull, for example, referred to a "Protestantized form of a medieval lay ascetical spirituality" which helped to shape Anabaptist spirituality.⁴⁹

The Protestant devotional literature of the Elizabethan Settlement has been analysed by the older, yet still insightful, works of Helen White. White pointed out the measure of continuity with the late medieval period and the way in which devotional

⁴¹ Manfred Seitz, 'Frömmigkeit: systematisch-theologisch', *RPTK*, pp. 677-678

⁴² Virginia Reinburg, 'Devotional Practices', *ER* Vol. I, p. 476

⁴³ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, p. 210

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207

⁴⁵ R. Emmet McLaughlin, 'Spiritualismus', *TRE* Vol. XXXI (2000), pp. 701-708

⁴⁶ Lucien Richard, *The Spirituality of John Calvin* (John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1974)

⁴⁷ R. Emmet McLaughlin, 'The Genesis of Schwenckfeld's Eucharistic Doctrine', in *idem.*, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent: Caspar Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfelders* (Baden-Baden & Bouxwiller, 1996), pp. 95-123

⁴⁸ Caspar Schwenckfeld, *Passional and Prayer Book*, in modern translation by John Stodt (Pennsylvania, 1961)

⁴⁹ Werner Packull, *Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Movements, 1525-1531* (Herald Massachusetts, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1977), p. 19

works sought to nurture the prayer lives of Protestants.⁵⁰ Eamon Duffy has also pointed out the importance of the English primers as a source for lay piety.⁵¹ Given that devotional literature provided a companion to the Bible, it is unsurprising that the majority of devotional tracts were "little more than sheer mosaics of Scriptures".⁵² In his recent survey of English religious literature, Ian Green has illustrated the central role played by devotional literature within Elizabethan Protestantism.⁵³ This subject is particularly intriguing if one considers the corpus of cross-confessional literature, notably the devotional works of the Spanish Dominican Luis de Granada and, of course, Edmund Bunny's protestantised version of Robert Person's Christian Directory.⁵⁴

While the scholarship on Protestant spirituality is relatively limited, the historical value of spirituality has contributed much to our understanding of Catholic Reform. H. Outram Evennett's Spirit of the Counter-Reformation complained that the study of spirituality needs to be linked more explicitly to Church history:

"There has been an insufficient liaison...between the historians of the Church and the historians of religion - between the ecclesiastical historians proper and all those authors who in the last fifty years or so have done so much to explore, map and illuminate something that, for a Christian believer, is basic to the inner life of the Church, and should surely therefore be basic to Church history, namely, the history of spirituality - devotion, prayer, mysticism".⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Helen White, The Tudor Books of Private Devotion (University of Wisconsin, 1951), pp. 11ff; Helen White, 'Some Continuing Traditions in English Devotional Literature', PMLA Vol. LVII., (1947), pp. 966-998

⁵¹ Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, p. 567

⁵² White, Tudor Books, pp. 38, 42

⁵³ Ian Green, Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England (Oxford University Press, 2000)

⁵⁴ Victor Houlston, 'Why Robert Persons would not be pacified: Edmund Bunny's theft of the Book of Resolution', in Thomas M. McCoog, (ed.), The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the early English Jesuits (The Boydell Press, 1996)

⁵⁵ H. Outram Evennett, The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation (Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 3

Work on the Jesuits in particular, including that of Evennett himself, has devoted considerable attention to ministry and spirituality.⁵⁶ Indeed, much of John O'Malley's work was motivated by a commitment to "prevent scholarship from falling into the fallacy that would treat the spirituality of the Society of Jesus independent of its commitment to ministry".⁵⁷ Research has benefited also from the journal for the Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits and from Joseph de Guibert's analysis of Jesuit spiritual doctrine and practice.⁵⁸ Nonetheless the scholarship of Catholic spirituality has had its limitations. The study of Catholic spiritual currents in the early modern period has been dominated by the research on Spanish mysticism and early seventeenth-century French spirituality. This bias is reflected, for instance, in Marcocchi's article on spirituality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁹ It is not surprising, therefore, that these subjects have produced some of the best scholarship on early modern spirituality, including Henri Brémond's classic three-volume work on French spirituality and Terence O'Reilly's more recent collection of essays on Spain, From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross.⁶⁰ Brémond argued that the religious thought and spirituality of seventeenth-century France could be uncovered by exploring the most prominent religious writers of the period. Brémond sought in particular to penetrate the inner life which presented a vital component of religious history.⁶¹

While Brémond was not concerned with the Protestant devotional tradition, the more recent historiographical pattern has been coloured by attempts to re-interpret the

⁵⁶ See especially the works of John O'Malley: Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century: Preaching, Rhetoric, Spirituality and Reform (Variorum, 1993); The First Jesuits (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1993), especially pp. 51ff

⁵⁷ John O'Malley, 'To travel to any part of the world: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation', SSJ 16/2 (March 1984), p. 15

⁵⁸ Joseph de Guibert, The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice - a Historical Study (Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1986). The editors of the Dictionnaire de Spiritualité have been dominated by Jesuits throughout, including De Guibert himself, A. Rayez, and more recently, A. Derville, P. Lamarche, and A. Solignac.

⁵⁹ Massimo Marcocchi, 'Spirituality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in O'Malley, Catholicism, pp. 163-192; see also the section on spirituality in the bibliography of Jean Delumeau, Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire (Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), pp. 27-32; Kieran Kavanaugh, 'Spirituality (History of)', NCE, p. 597

⁶⁰ Henri Brémond, A Literary History of Religious Thought in France from the wards of Religion down to our own Times (London, 1928); Terence O'Reilly, From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross: Spirituality and Literature in Sixteenth-century Spain (Variorum, 1995).

⁶¹ Brémond, Religious Thought, pp. xi-xii

relationship between Catholic and Protestant spirituality. The impetus of the twentieth-century ecumenical movement, greatly reinforced by the Second Vatican Council, has encouraged a re-interpretation of religious history. This has been characterised by a growing *rapprochement* between the confessions and by a shared interest in the development of lay piety, thereby renewing interest in older subjects like the *devotio moderna*.⁶² As Philip Sheldrake has pointed out, the "traditional understanding of the supposed great divide between Catholic and Protestant mentality needs to be questioned", for the differences have tended to obscure our vision of the similarities.⁶³ Even with regard to the study of medieval Christianity, there has been a "decreased tendency to adopt interpretations derived more from religious affiliation than from historical inquiry".⁶⁴ If this has impacted upon the study of pre-Reformation religious history, then the consequences of this new approach will hardly be less significant for the Reformation era.

These developments have encouraged a greater sensitivity to the continuities between late medieval and early modern reform movements and ideas, especially those between late medieval and Protestant/Catholic spirituality.⁶⁵ The Christian Spirituality series was driven at least in part by ecumenical concerns.⁶⁶ Yet, even more striking are those works which address Protestantism and Catholicism alongside each other. Brad Gregory's Salvation at Stake is a vital contribution to this trend for it examines spiritual and devotional currents that cross geographical, confessional and chronological boundaries. Similarly, the recent collection of essays on penitence in the age of reformations reflects the attempt to bridge the gap between confessions; as Katharine Lualdi and Anne Thayer wrote, Protestants did not "simply abandon the sacrament of

⁶² Kaspar Elm, 'Die Bruderschaft vom Gemeinsamen Leben: eine geistliche Lebensform zwischen Kloster und Welt, Mittelalter und Neuzeit', OGE 59 (1985), p. 473

⁶³ Sheldrake, Spirituality and History, pp. 8, 32

⁶⁴ Van Engen, 'The Christian Middle Ages', pp. 536-537

⁶⁵ Bruce Gordon, 'The Changing Face of Protestant History and Identity in the Sixteenth Century', and *idem.*, "'This Worthy Witness of Christ": Protestant uses of Savonarola in the Sixteenth Century', in *idem.*, Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe Vol. I., (Scolar Press, 1996); Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall, (eds.), The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (Cambridge University Press, 2000); Soergel, Wondrous in His Saints; Reinburg, 'Liturgy and the Laity'.

⁶⁶ Raitt, (ed.), Christian Spirituality, p. xvi

penance, but searched for alternatives that would address similar religious and social needs in keeping with their distinctive convictions concerning sin and salvation".⁶⁷

Without understating the significance of the doctrinal differences, this tradition of scholarship has sought to illustrate the depths of commitment and piety of early modern believers.

The Imitatio and the authorship debate

In light of this broad historiographical tradition, research on the Imitatio is particularly informative. The Imitatio was composed in the late medieval period, quickly became a manuscript classic and then acquired the status of a bestseller during the early modern period. Despite the intriguing fact that the Imitatio was appropriated by both Catholics and Protestants at the time of the Reformation, scholarship concerning the Imitatio has been dominated by the authorship debate.⁶⁸

The bulk of this scholarship has focused on the different manuscript recensions of the Imitatio, of which there are a considerable number extant.⁶⁹ More recently scholars have paralleled their early modern counterparts by relating the Imitatio to the other works of their designated author. G. Udny Yule, for example, based his entire thesis on a statistical evaluation of the language in the Imitatio and how it corresponded with Kempis' other works.⁷⁰ Others have compiled critical editions of Kempis's works, such as Pohl's volumes published in Freiburg-im-Breisgau.⁷¹ The Imitatio has also been addressed by literary and linguistic scholars, some of whom have moved beyond the authorship debate. Particular interest has been shown in the early vernacular translations, such as Heinrich Halle's first German translation, the first French

⁶⁷ Katharine Lualdi and Anne Thayer, (eds.), Penitence in the Age of Reformations (Ashgate, 2000), p. 2

⁶⁸ W. Jappe Alberts, 'Zur Historiographie der *Devotio Moderna* und ihrer Erforschung', WF Vol. 11, (1958), p. 54.

⁶⁹ Stephan Axters, De imitatione Christi: Een handschrifteninventarisbijhet vijfhonderdste verjaren van Thomas Hemerken van Kempen, †1471 (Kempen-Niederrhein, 1971)

⁷⁰ G. Udny Yule, The statistical study of literary vocabulary (Cambridge University Press, 1944)

⁷¹ There is another Opera Omnia currently being compiled, located at the Titus Brandsma Institute.

translation known as the Internelle Consolation, and the early English translations in manuscript and in printed form (made by William Atkynson).⁷²

While this thesis is not concerned with the authorship debate, the subject can hardly be ignored. After all, some of the conclusions drawn from this scholarship have broadened our understanding of the Imitatio's appeal. While Kempis does seem to be the most likely candidate, the thesis presented here would not be undermined if his claims to authorship were conclusively disproven. The key point lies in the fact that the Imitatio proceeded from the *devotio moderna*. The *devotio moderna* was characterised by four essential components: the Sisters of the Common Life; the Brothers of the Common Life; the Augustinian canons; and the Augustinian canonesses.⁷³ The Brothers and Sisters represented the foundation of the movement which was, in the first instance, non-monastic: the Brethren did not take vows, though they lived in community. The Augustinian branch was monastic in the sense that its adherents took vows and lived in an enclosed community, and it was to this congregation that Kempis was himself attached. Recent research on the *devotio moderna* has contributed the most to our understanding of the Imitatio. The *devotio moderna*, the movement with which the Imitatio was so closely interlinked, has additionally been analysed in relation to subsequent movements of the sixteenth century. The close association of the Imitatio with the *devotio moderna* has left its mark on the historiography. It is, therefore, almost impossible to address the Imitatio from a historiographical perspective without reference to the *devotio moderna*.

⁷² Erika Bauer, (ed.), Heinrich Hallers Übersetzung der Imitatio Christi (Salzburg, 1982); L. Moland and Ch. d'Hericault, (eds.), Le livre der l'Internelle Consolation: première version françoise de L'Imitation de Jésus Christ (Paris, 1856); John Ingram, (ed.), The earliest English translation of the first three books of the De Imitatione Christi...also the earliest printer translation (London, K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1893); Brendan Biggs, (ed.), The Imitation of Christ: The First English Translation of the Imitatio Christi (Oxford University Press, 1997)

⁷³ Oberman added a fifth component, the "rectors and teachers in the newly founded or newly resuscitated Latin schools that were linked to the Brethren of Common Life by means of student hostels". Heiko Oberman, Masters of the Reformation: the emergence of a new intellectual climate in Europe, translated by Dennis Martin (Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 49

The Imitatio, the *devotio moderna*, northern humanism and early modern Catholicism

The *devotio moderna* has frequently been linked to the movement of northern Humanism. Historians have claimed that the first generation of northern humanists was educated in schools administered by the Brethren of Common Life.⁷⁴ In this way, the *devotio moderna* greatly contributed to the direction and development of northern Humanism. Scholars have also referred to the thematic continuity between the two movements, asserting that the Christian character of the Northern Renaissance, especially its biblicism and its Christocentricity, was partly derived from the *devotio moderna*.⁷⁵

The most comprehensive challenge to these assertions by Mestwerdt and Hyma has come from Regnerius Post's Modern Devotion, which is the most comprehensive and detailed analysis of the *devotio moderna* to date. Post concluded that the *devotio moderna* and humanism had little to do with each other, and while there were links between the northern humanists and the schools, the Brethren themselves owned few schools and were even ambivalent towards humanist education.⁷⁶ While agreeing with the view that the Brethren's participation in education has been exaggerated, Heiko Oberman refined Post's argument by linking the *devotio moderna* to intellectual developments, especially the *via moderna*.⁷⁷ He insisted that while the modern devotion's coalition with the humanist Brethren and canons did retain a pedagogical bearing,⁷⁸ these concerns require qualification. After all, the *devotio moderna* promoted an anti-intellectual notion of piety, rather than advancing a humanist education leading towards an academic ideal of eloquence.⁷⁹ More recently, A.G. Weiler, in preparing the third volume of the Monasticon Fratrum Vitae Communis, discovered that more

⁷⁴ Paul Mestwerdt, Die Anfänge des Erasmus: Humanismus und "Devotio Moderna" (Leipzig, 1917); For Post's summary, see his Modern Devotion, pp. 2-5

⁷⁵ Hyma, Christian Renaissance

⁷⁶ Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 4, 91-93, 559-563, 677

⁷⁷ Oberman, Masters of the Reformation, p. 63

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 48; Weiler, 'Recent Historiography', p. 164

⁷⁹ Oberman, Masters of the Reformation, pp. 48-49

northern humanists were influenced by the Brethren of Common Life than Post initially suggested.⁸⁰

So how does the Imitatio Christi fit into these debates? Post rightly indicated the priorities set by the *devotio moderna* and by the Imitatio with respect to learning.⁸¹ For Kempis, learning distracted one from God and showed that the values of the world were not sufficiently despised, although he admitted that learning or some simple knowledge of reality was in itself good and ordained by God. Post, however, interpreted this to mean that Kempis and the Brothers were less than receptive to Humanism.⁸² While it is difficult to counter Post's argument that the Brethren did not contribute much to the pedagogical content or method of the schools, his analysis assessed the influence of the *devotio moderna* only in terms of institutions and personnel. Even if Kempis was not receptive to Humanism, it did not mean that the humanists would not be receptive to Kempis's works. Post referred to the Imitatio but does not account for the use and influence of the text outside the context of the *devotio moderna*. Indeed, not long after Kempis's death in 1471, the Imitatio was being read in humanist circles, both in the universities (such as Paris and Alcalá), and within the context of monastic Humanism.⁸³ Moreover, the Imitatio was later advocated by educational reformers such as Sebastian Castellio (who produced a Latin edition) and formed an integral part of the Jesuit educational apostolate.

The place of the Imitatio is particularly noteworthy as it relates to the world of Catholic renewal in the late medieval and early modern period. Albert Hyma declared that the Brethren "had much in common with Ignatius of Loyola, but were not precursors of the Counter-Reformation", especially in light of the confessional conflict of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸⁴ The *devotio moderna* was essentially a

⁸⁰ A.G. Weiler, 'The Dutch Brethren of the Common Life, Critical Theology, Northern Humanism and Reformation', in F. Akkerman, A.J. Vanderjagt, and A.H. van der Laan, (eds.), Northern Humanism in European Context, 1469-1625 (Brill, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 1999), pp. 322ff

⁸¹ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 320

⁸² Ibid., p. 535

⁸³ Hyma wrote that the Imitatio was copied in untold numbers at the college of Montaigu in Paris, though he provided no evidence for this. Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 243; Collett, Italian Benedictine Scholars, pp. 28ff, 55ff

⁸⁴ Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 520-521

Catholic movement and there can be no doubt as to the "unswerving Catholic loyalties of Groote and his followers".⁸⁵ Recent scholarship by Post, Oberman and Van Engen has pointed out the extent of generational change in the *devotio moderna*. Oberman stressed that the nature of the *devotio moderna* evolved over time, notably in defending the Brethren of Common Life:

"The Inquisitorial assault from outside had been repulsed, but at a price - the lay element in the *devotio moderna*, suspect in the face of Beghard and Beguine threats, had been reduced to echoes from the distant past. The transplanted Brotherhood withered prematurely due to its own clericalized isolation".⁸⁶

Not only did the Brethren become closer to the monastic tradition, but the Windesheim monasteries experienced a first phase of decline between 1525-1540, and a second period of decline from c. 1560-1570 to 1580-1590.⁸⁷ If the *devotio moderna* experienced a loss of influence in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, was there a parallel decline in the interest for the Imitatio during the period of early modern Catholicism? The continued success of the Imitatio in late medieval and early modern Europe seems difficult to comprehend if the fortunes of the text were tied to the success or failure of the *devotio moderna*, particularly its monastic component. After all, Post could not see how the Imitatio could appeal to a non-monastic readership.⁸⁸ He considered it "amazing" that the text was not only accepted but also warmly received by lay circles in subsequent centuries.⁸⁹ This necessitates a re-evaluation of the Imitatio's spirituality as a component of Catholic reform prior to the Reformation.

⁸⁵ Quite how this relates to his earlier emphasis on predestination is less clear. Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 521; Staubach, 'Church Fathers', pp. 460

⁸⁶ Oberman, Masters of the Reformation, p. 55

⁸⁷ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 640

⁸⁸ "All four books were written for monastics and specifically monastics of the contemplative life. From a negative point of view this means that the reader finds no exhortation to pastoral care, to preaching for the faithful". Post, Modern Devotion, p. 533; Pierre Pourrat, 'The Imitation of Jesus Christ - a study of its spirituality', in Jean Gautier, (ed.), Some Schools of Catholic Spirituality (Desclee Company, 1959), p. 188

⁸⁹ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 535

The Imitatio must also be placed within the post-Reformation context of Catholic reform, especially its apparently mysterious appropriation by Ignatius and the early Jesuits, who contributed most to the text's circulation during the early modern period. The absence of any emphasis on an active apostolate and the praise lavished on the solitary life of contemplation presents the historian with a quandary. Why should the Imitatio's spirituality have been so attractive to Ignatius and his companions? Since a comparison of Jesuit editions with the original reveals no significant adaptations, the lack of textual changes forces a re-evaluation of the place of the Imitatio within the Society of Jesus, particularly in light of the apparent contradiction between the Imitatio's emphasis on solitude and the outward ministry of the Jesuits. Such an analysis is necessitated by the emphases of the previous scholarship on the subject, which pointed to certain irreconcilable features between Jesuit spirituality and that of the Imitatio. Joseph de Guibert wrote that

"Ignatius's thought about the apostolic service of God and about labour throughout the world for the salvation of souls is something almost entirely foreign to the Imitatio. Also, the tendency towards withdrawing oneself from the world, both in affection and also in fact, and the praise given to the retired life within a cell - all this transports us in the Imitatio into an order of thought far removed from that of Ignatius".⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Guibert, The Jesuits, pp. 156-157; see also Pourrat, 'The Imitation of Jesus Christ', p. 188; Post, Modern Devotion, p. 533; O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 265. In another article, O'Malley contrasted the spirituality of the Imitatio with the "world-affirming piety" of Ignatius: 'Early Jesuit spirituality', in O'Malley, Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century, pp. 7-8.

The Imitatio, the *devotio moderna* and the Protestant Reformation

Albert Hyma has pointed to the continuity of themes between the *devotio moderna* and the Protestant Reformation.⁹¹ Indeed, the emphatic Christocentricity, the call to interiority, the recommendation of the vernacular and the central place afforded to the Bible were central elements running through both movements. While Hyma agreed that the Brethren of Common Life shared certain ideals with Luther, he argued that "they were not precursors of the Reformation", by which he meant that there was no underlying doctrinal unity.⁹² Despite this apparent restraint, Hyma seemed to go further than he was willing to admit since he not only described John Calvin's Institutes as "one of the last fruits of the new devotion",⁹³ but also wrote that "Gansfort, Thomas à Kempis and Luther all believed in predestination, holding that man cannot perform one good work on his own initiative".⁹⁴ While Luther's theological framework promoted the doctrine of predestination, quite how the same could be said for Gansfort and Kempis remains unclear.

In his revisionism, Post rightly excluded the possibility of any members of the *devotio moderna* adhering to the doctrine of predestination. Like the Brethren, he continued, the Windesheimers did not believe in *sola fide*, or in underestimating the value of human co-operation.⁹⁵ The modern devotionalists did not believe in *sola fide* as a doctrinal concept in the way that Luther and the early Protestant reformers would have understood it. Nonetheless, while the Modern Devotionalists may not have underestimated the value of human co-operation (they never excluded the possibility of individual merit), they did, at times, de-emphasise its value. The distinction does not reflect a theological statement, but instead is an allusion to spirituality - it is subtle, but absolutely crucial.

⁹¹ Hyma, Christian Renaissance

⁹² Hyma especially emphasised the common elements shared by Martin Luther, Gerard Zutphen and Wessel Gansfort. Ibid., pp. 3, 520

⁹³ Ibid., p. 284

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 223

⁹⁵ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 655

The work of Dennis Martin is particularly instructive on this subject. Martin observed that one should not be surprised that a *sola fide* spirituality was common in monastic communities. Nicholas Kempf's commentary on the Old Testament Song of Songs, for example, mirrored the teaching on justification of faith alone and on extrinsic righteousness, yet Kempf was no proto-Protestant "Reformer before the Reformation". As Martin articulated, "it is his monastic context that places his statements, imprecise as they may be by scholastic standards, within a theology of extrinsic righteousness grounded in sacramental and institutional mediation".⁹⁶ This is of tremendous significance for the *Imitatio*, if one considers the text's emphasis on human worthlessness and on the attribution of all merit to Christ. Bearing in mind the Protestant appropriation of the *Imitatio* in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, one should agree with Dennis Martin that a comparison between pre-Reformation and Reformation spirituality is "neither anachronistic nor arbitrary".⁹⁷

Post argued that the impact of the *devotio moderna* on the Reformation was negligible since so few Brotherhouses and monasteries actually joined the Protestant Reformation; the Herford *fraters* adopted the Reformation, and the Cologne Brothers were accused of being "Lutherei".⁹⁸ More recently, Weiler revealed that the *Chronicle* of the house of Doesburg mentioned Lutheranism frequently and that the younger members followed Lutheran doctrine.⁹⁹ Although Post stated that there were few links between the Windesheimers and Lutheranism, Auke Jelsma has illustrated how Protestantism did make certain inroads even within the Windesheim Congregation. This can be substantiated by the amount of regulations enacted against Lutheran books and teachings, especially in the 1520s.¹⁰⁰

Despite these examples, there were not many contacts between the *devotio moderna* and Protestantism on the personal level, and yet Weiler added that the central

⁹⁶ Martin, *Nicholas Kempf*, pp. 134-135

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 136

⁹⁸ Post, *Modern Devotion*, pp. 625-627.

⁹⁹ Weiler, 'The Dutch Brethren', pp. 329-330

¹⁰⁰ Auke Jelsma, *Frontiers of the Reformation: dissidence and orthodoxy in sixteenth-century Europe* (Ashgate, 1998), pp. 15-17, 21

element of interaction was located exactly in the *praxis pietatis*.¹⁰¹ Moreover, a fuller examination cannot be undertaken without accounting for the rapid diversification of the Protestant Reformation subsequent to Luther's break with Rome. While there may be few points of contact between the *devotio moderna* and Lutheranism, there were more links with the spiritualist and Swiss traditions. In his discussion of William Spoelhof's Concepts of religious nonconformity and religious toleration as developed by the Brethren of the Common Life in the Netherlands, 1374-1489, Post was rightly critical of Spoelhof's assertion that the Brethren of Common Life had a deliberate and conscious indifference towards the externals of institutionalized Christianity. Their personal piety and immediate communion with God was not undertaken to the exclusion of the Church's formal ceremonies.¹⁰² Yet the Imitatio's critical stance (rather than indifference) towards the externals must partly explain its appeal to Protestants. It is interesting that the backgrounds of the Protestant translators of the Imitatio reflect, on the whole, a spirituality that seemed closer to Zurich than Wittenberg, especially those of Caspar Schwenckfeld, Leo Jud and Sebastian Castellio.¹⁰³

While there were common elements between the *devotio moderna* and the Protestant Reformations, the Imitatio did not appeal to the entire Protestant movement. The Imitatio was allegedly unknown to Luther.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, its spirituality was not generally favoured by the Calvinist tradition, although Hyma curiously asserted that Kempis "presents here [i.e. in the Imitatio] the full-fledged Calvinistic doctrine of predestination".¹⁰⁵ On this subject, Post is justified in his criticism of the distinction between the first three Books as Protestant and the fourth as Catholic.¹⁰⁶ Outward ceremony is not rejected in the first three Books and the continuity of emphasis upon inward preparation is no less striking in Book four.¹⁰⁷ What Post does not address,

¹⁰¹ Weiler, 'Recent Historiography', p. 177

¹⁰² Post, Modern Devotion, p. 23

¹⁰³ See Mokrosch, 'Devotio Moderna II', p. 615

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Rather confusingly, Hyma later declared that "unlike Groote and Zerbolt, Kempis believed that grace could be earned by human beings". Hyma, Christian Renaissance, pp. 563, 603.

¹⁰⁶ Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 535-536

¹⁰⁷ The insistence on inner devotion does not mean that the *fraters* refrained from outward ceremonies. Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 438-439, 448

however, even in passing, is that Protestants did translate the Imitatio. And furthermore, they appropriated, not unexpectedly, the first three Books and, even less surprisingly, omitted the fourth Book.

The subjects discussed above have shaped the framework of this thesis. Vital to the interpretation of the Imitatio's spirituality in the sixteenth and in subsequent centuries are the connections between the Imitatio, Thomas à Kempis, the *devotio moderna*, and the broader late medieval religious culture. For how can one discern patterns of change and continuity without an in-depth analysis of the Imitatio's origins? Chapter Two will address the type of concerns and anxieties that the Imitatio's spiritual message was trying to meet. It will also explain in what manner the Imitatio was paradigmatic of the *devotio moderna*, elucidating the way in which the same text of the Imitatio could typify monastic and lay piety. Chapter Two will also challenge Post's assertion that the Imitatio was written solely for monks.¹⁰⁸ It will reassess the Imitatio's spirituality in order to illustrate that the text was written not solely for monks, but for all components of the *devotio moderna* (including the Brethren of Common Life) and even for the laity associated with these communities. This makes it slightly less remarkable that the Imitatio became so much in demand. It also forces the historian to qualify the easily misunderstood notion of *contemptus mundi*.

With this basic framework, it is possible to explore the latter half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries with more confidence. The foundation of this study is laid upon the mass of printed editions. The bibliographical appendix demonstrates the remarkable diffusion of the Imitatio in printed form, from the first edition published in *circa* 1472 to 1650.¹⁰⁹ The extensive chronological range necessitates the somewhat arbitrary division of the statistical analysis of printed editions into two chapters. Chapters Three and Five will make use of the material in the appendix to provide both a statistical and descriptive overview of editions. Chapter Three will address the manuscript transmission of the Imitatio, before moving on to the analysis of the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 533

¹⁰⁹ See Appendix.

incunabula period and the first three decades of the sixteenth century.¹¹⁰ It will explain the choice of the Imitatio as a text to be printed and contextualise its distribution within networks of printers, patrons and the broader literary context. Chapter Five will examine the period from 1531 to 1620, again dealing with networks of printers and patrons. While the dividing line of 1531 is arbitrary to a certain degree, it does represent the date of the first Protestant translation. Three years later, moreover, the early companions of Ignatius of Loyola made their vows at Montmartre, which led to the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540. Chapters Three and Five will focus upon the more practical elements of distribution. Who printed the Imitatio? How often was it published and with which other works? The *terminus ad quem* of chapter Five, 1620, stops three decades short of the bibliographical appendix's closing date.

The remaining chapters will explain why and how the Imitatio was translated during the late medieval and early modern periods. Chapter Four will investigate the English and French contexts for the Imitatio's diffusion both during the incunabula period and in the early decades of the sixteenth century. Devotional literature predominated at this time and much of it was purposely composed and translated to accommodate a lay readership. The use of the vernacular was particularly suited to this intention and yet it is intriguing that much of the inspiration for this movement was derived from monastic communities. Moreover, the accommodation of the laity did not exclude a monastic readership. The focal point of the chapter will be an examination of the process of translation itself. What did translators do to these editions and how flexible was the translation process? While the choice of texts was a significant consideration where lay readership was concerned, the practice of *translatio* was equally pertinent. The chapter will analyse in detail how translators undertook their translations and how this altered the text. Its importance is justified by pointing to the role of translation in the transmission of ideas. It indicates that the spirituality of a text, even a bestseller, is susceptible to change.

¹¹⁰ Axters, De imitatione Christi

While the Imitatio was not written for monks alone, its early distribution was dominated by monastic circles. This might explain why the Imitatio was adapted more explicitly for a lay readership in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It is clear that with Richard Whitford's English translation, the text acquired a tremendous reputation in England. This was made possible by the text's malleability; it could be made to serve both lay and clerical piety. The accommodation of the former was rendered even more explicit by Whitford's translation. This process was even more striking within the French context, where a comparison between the Imitation de Jésus Christ and Internelle Consolation translations reveals a similar trend. The changes in the Internelle and in Whitford's translation reflect the means by which translators sought to nurture and captivate lay devotees.

Chapters Six and Seven will turn to the Protestant tradition of the text. The immediate question concerns the motives for Protestant appropriation. Why would Protestants wish to translate a Catholic text which was known to have enjoyed widespread appeal within monastic communities? Chapter Six will address this question firstly by examining the appeal of the Imitatio. This undoubtedly lay in the fact that the Imitatio's spirituality contained a great deal that was consistent with Protestant spirituality. What were those features and themes? Secondly, the allure of the Imitatio must be explained by referring to the translators themselves. In the absence of comprehensive prefaces and with little contemporary evidence explaining the motives for appropriation of the Imitatio, this chapter will relate the spirituality of the Imitatio to the context of the translators' lives and other writings (compositions and translations), rather than comparing the Imitatio's spirituality with other devotional works.¹¹¹

By contextualising the Imitatio's spirituality according to the lives of the translators, one can uncover the motives for their translation of the text. The chapter will probe the various reasons for Protestant appropriation by focusing on specific themes. Firstly, what was the relevance of the Imitatio's interiority for a Protestant laity engaged with the world? Protestant appreciation for the Imitatio can be explained by

¹¹¹ See Elizabeth Hudson, 'English Protestants and the *imitatio Christi*, 1580-1620', SCJ XIX., No. 4 (1988), pp. 541-558

referring to the notion of *contemptus mundi* within a broader secular context. What was the extent to which the notion of *contemptus mundi* transcended confessional boundaries and was the appropriation of the Imitatio part of a broader search for toleration? Finally, the promotion of the Imitatio by Protestants raises questions about the role and purpose of the broader Protestant devotional tradition and how it related to the Bible.

Having identified the continuity of the Imitatio's spirituality with the Protestant translators, one can hardly ignore the textual changes. Central to chapter Seven is a study of the Protestant editions themselves. What did Protestant translators actually do to the text? How did they view the translation process? Did they Protestantise the Imitatio? While David Crane undertook an analysis of sixteenth-century English translations of the Imitatio, this chapter will provide further examples and a more detailed textual analysis. In addition, the chapter will relate the English tradition to its continental roots through an examination of Caspar Schwenckfeld and Leo Jud's German translations and Sebastian Castellio's Latin text, which Crane mentioned only briefly.¹¹² It will be suggested that the translation process itself was clearly affected by the Protestant theological standpoint of the translators. This will be argued by focusing on the textual changes, which included: the omission of the fourth Book on the Mass; the removal of monastic terminology and phraseology; the exclusion of intercessory prayers to, and veneration of, the saints; the avoidance of any references to the doctrine of purgatory; an attack on outward observances; and the inclusion of a more emphatic Christocentricity. Paying close attention to the language, as in chapter Four, it is possible to determine the nature of the transmission of the Imitatio's spirituality across a confessional divide.

Having considered the Protestant tradition of the Imitatio, chapters Eight and Nine will address Jesuit appropriation. Chapter Eight will examine the place of the Imitatio within the context of Jesuit spirituality. Ignatius of Loyola deeply appreciated it

¹¹² David Crane, 'English translations of the Imitatio Christi in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries', RH Vol. XIII, No. 2 (October 1975), pp. 79-100

and his recommendations were profoundly felt by his followers.¹¹³ The Imitatio formed an integral part of the spiritual development of Jesuits and was intimately related to the retreat of the Spiritual Exercises. The interiority of the Imitatio was fundamental to preparing Jesuits for their outward ministry. Since there are apparent discrepancies between the Imitatio's spirituality and Jesuit itinerancy, the chapter will pay close attention to how the spiritualities co-existed. Furthermore, the role of the Imitatio within the context of Jesuit spirituality will benefit from an analysis of Ignatius' relationship with monasticism.

Chapter nine looks at the Imitatio's stance on learning and its place within Jesuit pedagogy. The Imitatio's gloss on the respective benefits and limitations of learning reflect an underlying continuity between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Though in apparent contradiction, it points to a greater sense of continuity between the Imitatio, the *devotio moderna* and northern Humanism, and especially the use of the Imitatio within the Jesuit colleges. Unravelling the reception of the Imitatio within a pedagogical context necessitates a re-examination of the meaning of the Imitatio's anti-intellectual emphasis. Why should a text allegedly condemning learning be used by the religious order most closely associated with the revival of learning during the period of the Counter-Reformation? In this way, this study will not directly address the relationship of the *devotio moderna* and Humanism, but rather will explain the use of the Imitatio within an educational context.

An analysis of the extent of change and continuity between the *devotio moderna* and early modern Catholicism must also address the broader role played by devotional literature within an increasingly polemical context in the second half of the sixteenth century. Was the presentation of devotional literature during this period markedly different from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries? Fundamental to understanding the place of the Imitatio's spirituality in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are the text's origins. The relation of the text to the *devotio moderna*, including its founder Gerard Groote and the supposed author of the Imitatio

¹¹³ Hyma noted that "what the Bible became for Luther, the Imitatio was for Loyola". Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 269

Thomas à Kempis, will provide the starting point for this study. The place of the Imitatio's spirituality in the context of the *devotio moderna* and the broader late medieval religious culture is the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter Two. The Imitatio Christi in the context of late medieval devotion

A proper assessment of the late-medieval and early modern life of the Imitatio cannot be undertaken without returning to the roots of the text's spirituality. Firstly, it is necessary to relate the Imitatio's spirituality to the *devotio moderna*, the movement from which it emerged. In this context, it is possible to explore the ambivalent nature of the Imitatio's spirituality by illustrating how, from the outset, the same unaltered text remained accessible to those living both inside and outside the cloister. The chapter will then relate the Imitatio's spirituality to the broader context of late medieval religious culture. What was the Imitatio advocating and what did this mean for the fifteenth-century reader and hearer? This detailed analysis will deepen our understanding of how the text was later used and perceived in the late fifteenth, sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The Imitatio and the *Devotio Moderna*

The Imitatio was composed in the early decades of the fifteenth century. It consists of four books that were initially independent treatises. The variegated nature of the vocabulary in the different books make it difficult to view the Imitatio as a single work.¹ The four treatises that form the Imitatio have such a different tone that they could not, in the first instance, have been conceived as part of the same plan. Yet while they were originally separate treatises, their underlying thematic unity remains fundamental.² That the earliest copies of the Imitatio rarely included all four books indicates that the work was not intended to be a whole.³ Indeed, the very title Imitatio Christi is taken from the title of the first chapter in Book one.⁴ Rather, the configuration

¹ Pierre Debongnie, 'Les thèmes de L'Imitation', RHE 36 (1940), pp. 287-344

² Debongnie, 'Les thèmes', pp. 301-302, 338

³ Debongnie and Huijben, L'auteur ou les auteurs de L'Imitation, pp. 1-88; Post, Modern Devotion, p. 523

⁴ Pohl, p. 3:3-5

of the Imitatio points to the tradition of spontaneous spiritual note-taking or *rapiaria* frequently adopted by members of the *devotio moderna*.⁵ These excerpts tended to be used not only for private meditation, but also for noon-time and evening collations, which were essentially talks for spiritual edification.⁶ These collations presented the leading members of each community, whether Augustinian canons or the Brethren of Common Life, with an opportunity to provide spiritual nourishment for their fellow members, and any lay brothers, school pupils and outsiders in attendance.⁷ In this way, the collations actually served the purpose of bringing the Brethren and the laity together on Sundays and feast days.⁸

The term *devotio moderna* was first coined by Henri Pomerius in the 1420s,⁹ who also attributed the beginnings of this movement to Gerard Groote.¹⁰ Groote's conception of reform prepared the way for the different components of the movement. Groote was responsible for founding the Sisters of Common Life, for whom he had made available his house in Deventer.¹¹ He defended the rights of the Sisters, and later those of the Brothers, to profess the communal cultivation of virtues, without the profession of monastic vows.¹² To this end, Groote's Conclusa et proposita non vota, as the title suggests, was written with the intention of promoting a life dedicated to God without vows.¹³

⁵ John Van Engen, (eds.), Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings (Paulist Press, 1988), p. 9; Nikolaus Staubach, 'Memores Pristinæ Perfectionis: The importance of the Church Fathers for *Devotio Moderna*', in Irena Backus, (ed.), The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists Vol. I., (E. J. Brill, Leiden, New York, London, 1997), pp. 422, 432-433; see also Thom Mertens, 'Rapiaria', DS Vol. XIII., (1987-1988), pp. 114-119

⁶ Van Engen, 'The Virtues', p. 189; Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 118

⁷ A.G. Weiler, 'The Dutch Brethren of the Common Life, Critical Theology, Northern Humanism and Reformation', in F. Akkerman, A.J. Vanderjagt, and A.H. van der Laan, (eds.), Northern Humanism in European Context, 1469-1625 (Brill, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 1999), p. 308

⁸ Epiney-Burgard, Gerard Groote, p. 164; Van Engen, 'The Virtues', p. 191

⁹ Émile Brouette, '*Devotio Moderna* I: Die Bewegung der *Devotio Moderna*', RPTK 8 (1981), p. 605

¹⁰ In his Vita B. Johannis Rusbrochii, written between 1414-1421, he described Groote as the "fons et origo Modernæ Devotionis". Post, Modern Devotion, p. xi

¹¹ Van Engen, Devotio Moderna, p. 18

¹² Van Engen, 'The Virtues', p. 178; see Groote's De Simonia, cited in Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 25

¹³ Brouette, '*Devotio Moderna* I', p. 606

Groote remained a fervent advocate of the Brethren's *medius status* throughout his life, reflecting their position between the monastery and the world.¹⁴ This status was manifest in their perspective on property, according to which the Brethren repudiated the customary arrangements for clerical income, earning their keep by manual labour and copying books.¹⁵ That the Brethren did not take vows does not imply that they were for the most part lay communities, wherein lies a significant difference between the Sisters and the Brothers. The majority of Brothers tended to be priests, or candidates for the priesthood, while the Sisters were lay women.¹⁶ Admittedly, even the Sisters gradually leaned closer towards monasticism, many of them adopting the Third Rule of St. Francis, and later the Rule of St. Augustine by the end of the fifteenth century.¹⁷

Following Groote's death in 1384, the monastic branch of the movement was established in 1387.¹⁸ Not only had Groote favoured the foundation of a monastic branch,¹⁹ but his multi-faceted reform programme had explicitly addressed the problem of monastic indiscipline.²⁰ Groote was outspoken in his critique of monastic decadence.²¹ In language consonant with the *Imitatio*, Groote quoted Suso's *Horologium*: "Many so-called religious people go about in cowls and wear outward garbs of religion, but within they are lions, bears - terrible beasts".²² His successors, like Kempis, were later to reinforce that dimension of the medieval *contemptus mundi*,

¹⁴ Willem Lourdaux, 'Dirk of Herxsen's tract *De utilitate monachorum*: a defence of the lifestyle of the Brethren and Sisters of the Common Life', in *Pascua Mediaevalia* (Louvain, 1983), pp. 312-336; Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 438; Brouette, '*Devotio Moderna* I', p. 606

¹⁵ John Van Engen, 'Late Medieval Anticlericalism: The case of the New Devout', in Peter Dykema, and Heiko Oberman, (eds.), *Anticlericalism in late medieval and early modern Europe* (E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Cologne, 1993), pp. 43-45

¹⁶ Post, *Modern Devotion*, pp. 363-364

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-272; Weiler, 'The Dutch Brethren', p. 309

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 293. Indeed, many of the Brethren later joined other monastic communities, whether it be the Windesheim Congregation itself or other religious orders such as the Dominicans and Carmelites. *Ibid.*, p. 254

¹⁹ Hyma, *Christian Renaissance*, p. 46; Post noted that a remarkably large percentage of Groote's letters were concerned with the admission of candidates to monasteries. Post, *Modern Devotion*, p. 64

²⁰ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 405; Post, *Modern Devotion*, p. 55

²¹ Georgette Epiney-Burgard, *Gerard Groote (1340-1384) et les débuts de la dévotion moderne* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1970), pp. 91-92

²² Laviece Ward, 'The influence of Jean Gerson, and the *Devotio Moderna* on the *Fasciculus Temporum* of Werner Rolevinck', *AC* 62 (1993), p. 175; "Habitus et tonsura modicum confert: sed mutatio morum et integra mortificatio passionum verum faciunt religiosum", Pohl, p. 29:9-12

which held that while life in the monastery would provide certain safeguards from the tumults of the world, it did not mean that monks were protected from secular evils.²³

In addition to representing the different components of the *devotio moderna*, Groote was also concerned with lay reform.²⁴ Groote had himself remained in the world and had taken the orders of a deacon.²⁵ He acknowledged that believers neither had to take vows nor had to live in community (like the Brethren) to progress in the spiritual life. At the centre of his reform programme was an emphasis on vernacular devotional literature, not far removed from the monastic tradition in thematic terms, yet also accessible to the laity. Groote's understanding of lay piety (and reading practices) is described in Kempis's biography of the founder:

"He translated the Hours of the Blessed Virgin together with certain other Hours from Latin into the Germanic language so that simple and unlearned lay people might have them in their mother tongue for their use in praying on holy days, so that when the faithful read these or heard them read by other devout persons they might the more easily keep themselves from many vanities and idle conversations and progress in the love and praise of God aided by their sacred readings".²⁶

This passage points to the promotion of devotional works for the laity. Firstly, by their insistence on translating works into the vernacular, Groote and his Brethren broadened the appeal for the devotional corpus. Secondly, this extract hints at the nature of reading practices during this period and illustrates that Groote also targeted the illiterate. The provision of collations meant that the uneducated could receive spiritual nourishment even if they could not read.

²³ Thomas à Kempis, *The Chronicle of the Canons Regular of Mount St. Agnes* (London, 1906), p. 5

²⁴ Epiney-Burgard, *Gerard Groote*, p. 301

²⁵ Van Engen, 'Late Medieval Anticlericalism', p. 23

²⁶ Quoted in Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 434; Epiney-Burgard, *Gerard Groote*, pp. 265-272

Ultimately, Groote's spirituality accommodated a notion of reform that evidently transcended the physical surroundings of the cloister and the world. Epiney-Burgard described it as "la vie ambidextre, concept qui a été interprété de manières diverses...il se caractérise chez Grote par une alternance de méditation et d'action".²⁷ Hence, it was not contradictory for the spirituality of Groote to nurture monastic reform alongside a preoccupation with the moral formation of young students attending local schools.

Having addressed the different components of the *devotio moderna*, one can turn to the Imitatio Christi itself. It is almost universally accepted that the Imitatio originated in one of the communities of the *devotio moderna*; indeed the text was paradigmatic of the movement's different components. That the Imitatio represents the most coherent expression of the *devotio moderna*'s ideals can be illustrated with reference to Kempis's own career.²⁸

The accessibility of his works to both contexts is attributable to his formative experiences with the Brethren of Common Life in Deventer (under Florens Radewijns) and his long career as an Augustinian canon at the monastery of Mount St. Agnes. Kempis's time with the Brothers in the 1390s ensured that he was especially sensitive to the traditions, customs and spirituality of the Brethren.²⁹ Given the contact of the Brethren with the secular world, the influence of the Imitatio extended beyond the communities of the Brethren. At Mount St. Agnes, Kempis became steeped in the monastic tradition. His other writings reflect an overriding concern with nurturing the spiritual life within a monastic context.

Yet, the community at Mount St. Agnes was not so secluded that it was not visited by outsiders, especially from neighbouring Zwolle, such as Wessel Gansfort.³⁰ Moreover, Kempis's direction of the novices meant that he prepared a spiritual programme for those pursuing the monastic vocation. Some novices would have been

²⁷ Epiney-Burgard, Gerard Groote, p. xvi

²⁸ For Kempis's life, see Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 521ff

²⁹ Van Engen, 'The Virtues', p. 182; Hyma, Christian Renaissance, pp. 60-62, 169ff; J. De Montmorency, Thomas à Kempis: His age and book (Methuen & Co., London, 1907), pp. 85ff; Van Engen, Devotio Moderna, p. 9

³⁰ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 536

considered unsuitable for the monastic life and may have had to leave the monastery against their will. Kempis undoubtedly would have provided them with the necessary spiritual counsel to deal with that contingency. What was true of Kempis's advice was equally valid for his written works. As Van Engen has pointed out, in Kempis's treatises "the aura cast round the earliest brothers suited a cloister better than a Brother's house, though it was subsequently read in both places".³¹ In many respects, the Imitatio was well-equipped to cover both spheres.

The accessibility of the Imitatio to the cloister and to the world

The spirituality of the Imitatio was in keeping with the monastic tradition, particularly as regards the virtues it expounded, which reflected a monastic morality. Moreover, the Imitatio contains several references to the monastic life and it is clear that extracts from Book Four were directed solely to priests. The monastic component can, nonetheless, be mistakenly overemphasised, thereby diminishing the extent of the book's appeal to the laity. The Imitatio did not represent a codification of monastic spirituality; its spirituality was not constricted by Kempis's monastic background. Rather, the Imitatio purposely embraced the non-monastic branch of the *devotio moderna*, the Brethren of Common Life, in addition to the laity living outside the structures of the *devotio moderna*. The text prescribed a well-disciplined spiritual life. Though this programme was not far removed from monastic ideals, the rigid nature of interior reform did not preclude its relevance and accessibility to those living *in saeculo*. Hence, the following two sections will explore the manner in which the Imitatio was paradigmatic of the different components of the *devotio moderna*.

³¹ Van Engen, 'The Virtues', p. 182; Debongnie, 'Thèmes de l'Imitation', p. 290; John Van Engen, 'A Brabantine Perspective on the origins of the Modern Devotion: The first book of Petrus Impens's Compendium Decursus Temporum Monasterii Christifere Bethleemitice Puerpere', in Werner Verbeke, Marcel Haverals, Rafaël de Keyser, and Jean Goossens, (eds.), Serta Devota in memoriam Guillelmi Lourdaux: Pars Prior. Devotio Windeshemensis (Louvain University Press, 1992), pp. 4, 10, 16

The Monastic Appeal of the Imitatio Christi

The spiritual message of the text promoted a monastic morality, a yearning to strive for a well-ordered pious life. It undoubtedly appealed to the Windesheim Congregation, the monastic branch of the *devotio moderna*. Although monastic vows are not mentioned explicitly in the Imitatio, the virtues espoused therein struck a resonant chord with those living a cloistered life. In particular, the call for humility and patience are recurrent themes.³² To this end, in a chapter on resisting temptations, the reader is told "per patientiam et veram humilitatem omnibus hostibus efficimur fortiores".³³ These virtues are even less distinguishable from monasticism when placed alongside the notion of obedience. In a chapter entitled "de oboedientia et subiectione", the preference for submitting oneself to a superior authority is expressed very strongly: "valde magnum est in oboedientia stare; sub praelato vivere: et sui iuris non esse".³⁴ The Christocentric basis for obedience as a foundation of the Christian life is encapsulated in a later chapter concerning "oboedientia humilis subditi ad exemplum Iesu Christi".³⁵

The characterisation of the Imitatio as a monastic text is further reinforced by the frequent references to silence and solitude; there is even a chapter dedicated exclusively to those themes, "de amore solitudinis et silentii".³⁶ Kempis beseeched his readers to avoid talkativeness ("de cavenda superfluitate verborum"), especially in relation to women ("non sis familiaris alicui mulieri: in communi omnes bonas mulieres Deo commenda").³⁷ The latter reference in particular seems to betray Kempis's distinctly male, monastic origins.³⁸ The provenances of Imitatio manuscripts illustrate that, in

³² See Book one, chapter two, "de humili sentire sui ipsius" and Book three, chapter twelve, "de informatione patientiae et luctamine adversus concupiscentiae". Pohl, pp. 7:3, 166:3-5

³³ Ibid., p. 22:25-27

³⁴ Ibid., p. 16:10-12

³⁵ Ibid., p. 168:7-8

³⁶ Ibid., p. 35:11-12

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 15:24-27; 17:11-12

³⁸ N.B. This specific allusion to women is the only one of its kind in the Imitatio.

spite of this, the text was avidly read in the convents of Augustinian canonesses, and by the Sisters of Common Life.³⁹

With these characteristics of monastic discipline in mind, the *contemptus mundi* leitmotiv that permeates the *Imitatio* appears to reinforce further the association of the *Imitatio* with monasticism. It is precisely this theme that is considered to be the highest form of wisdom: "ista est summa sapientia: per contemptum mundi tendere ad regna caelestia".⁴⁰ Contempt of the world is extended to include any material honours and worldly learning; both are allotted a chapter each in Book three ("de contemptu omnis temporalis honoris" and "contra vanam et saecularem scientiam").⁴¹ In placing that interpretation of *contemptus mundi* alongside the necessity of forsaking creatures in order to find the Creator, the reader is led to a negative assessment of the world.

In this way, it has the appearance of resembling the medieval commonplace that contempt for the world was inextricably linked to retreat within a monastery. In that respect, one could be forgiven for assuming that the following passage points to the monastic life as the ideal way towards a perfect Christian life: "et nisi quis ab omnibus creaturis fuerit expeditus: non poterit libere intendere divinis. Ideo enim pauci inveniuntur contemplativi: quia pauci sciunt se a perituris et creaturis ad plenum sequestrari".⁴² The relatively small number of contemplatives is the direct consequence of worldly attachments. The monastic sense of *contemptus mundi* necessitated withdrawal from the world to a monastery, in order to facilitate contemplation. With that understanding of *contemptus mundi*, it is tempting to suggest that the juxtaposition of nature with grace that concludes Book three presents an austerity to which the reader could only truly relate within the rigid discipline of a monastery.⁴³

It is also possible to discern both implicit and explicit references to the monastic life in the *Imitatio*. As regards the former, the *Imitatio* contains several ambiguous

³⁹ See Chapter three below.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6:13-15

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 218:10-11; 220:9-10

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 202:20-25

⁴³ *Ibid.*, "de diversis motibus naturae et gratiae", p. 245:18-19; "de corruptione naturae et efficacia gratiae divinae", p. 249:19-20

statements that could easily refer to the monastic life. For example, "ut meliores et puriores in initio conversionis nos fuisse inveniamus: quam post multos annos professionis".⁴⁴ The interpretation of "professionis" could represent the many years following a novice's solemn profession of vows. Yet, it is not a conclusive reference since it could also refer to an individual's profession of faith and to living the Christian life. Similarly, in a chapter entitled "de exercitiis boni religiosi", it is definitely plausible to suggest that the term "religiosi" could refer to religious in the sense of those adhering to a religious order. This is again rather unclear.

Less in doubt are the more explicit references to monastic customs and life. Chapter seventeen of Book one takes the title "de monastica vita".⁴⁵ In this chapter, the tribulations of Christians are given a monastic framework: "non est parvum in monasteriis vel in congregatione habitare, et inibi sine querela conversari: et usque ad mortem fidelis perseverare".⁴⁶ Monasticism is supposed to embody such an exemplary form of life that Kempis asked his readers to consider the Carthusians and Cistercians in particular, not solely for their piety in general, but more precisely for their singing of the Divine Office on a regular basis.⁴⁷ The final, albeit implicit, reference to the Imitatio's association with monasticism concerns the final Book, on the Sacrament of the Mass.⁴⁸ Since monastic communities contained several, if not numerous, ordained priests, Book Four's allusion to priestly offices and the celebration of the Eucharist was particularly relevant. Since the fourth Book included elements relating only to priests, it is hardly surprising that the Imitatio was eagerly read in monastic circles.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 19:31 - 20:1-4

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 28:25

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 28:29 - 29:1-4; see also the previous chapter: "O quantus fervor omnium religiosorum, in principio suae sanctae institutionis fuit. O quanta devotio orationis, quanta aemulatio virtutis; quam magna disciplina viguit: quanta reverentia et oboedientia sub regula magistri in omnibus effloruit". Ibid., p. 31:23-28

⁴⁷ Ibid., "Attende Carthusienses, Cistercienses et diversae religionis monachos ac moniales: qualiter omni nocte ad psallendum Domino assurgunt", p. 55:11-15. For the relationship between the *devotio moderna* and the Carthusians, in addition to their contribution to the circulation of the Imitatio, see chapter three below.

⁴⁸ Not all the different translations of the Imitatio included the fourth Book. While both the English, German and Imitation de Jésus Christ translations contained it, the Internelle rarely did. See Appendix.

⁴⁹ Ibid. See especially chapter five, p. 107:4-9; chapter ten, p. 119:10-12; and chapter eleven, pp. 122:30-31 - 123:1-3

Thus, the Imitatio's spirituality was suited to a monastic context and indeed one can see why historians, like Post, have argued that the Imitatio was written for monks.⁵⁰ Its interiority appeared to reinforce the necessity of living in practice the vows professed towards the beginning of the monastic life. The Imitatio also reminded its readers that the monastic life was no less challenging than living outside the world: "Habitus et tonsura modicum confert: sed mutatio morum et integra mortificatio passionum verum faciunt religiosum". The solemn profession of a monk's vows did not safeguard his integrity. Monastic life was not superior to life in the world. It was more secure by God's grace only because it provided an external crutch in the form of the Rule and spiritual direction. As the fifteenth-century Carthusian Nicholas Kempf wrote, "monks are not stronger than lay people, rather, their strength consists in their recognition of weakness and their grateful willingness to lean on the Rule".⁵¹ The profession of vows had to be accompanied by a conversion of life and manners. This interiority both affirmed the monastic vocation and sought to reinforce its legitimacy. In this way, Post was right to point out that the *devotio moderna* was not anti-monachal. He asked, with some justification, whether the *devotio moderna* could be termed anti-monachal when the great majority of open supporters for this movement were monasteries.⁵² Finally, it extended beyond the concerns and practices of the Windesheim Congregation, since the Imitatio was read also within the Benedictine, Cistercian and Carthusian communities.⁵³

⁵⁰ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 533

⁵¹ Martin, Nicholas Kempf, pp. 71-72

⁵² Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 6-7; Post's claims were substantiated by Van Engen, 'Late Medieval Anti-Clericalism'

⁵³ See chapter three.

The appeal of the Imitatio Christi to the Brethren of Common Life and to the laity

In the previous section, it was suggested that the Imitatio certainly suited a monastic environment. At times, its spirituality seems best suited to a monastic temperament. Yet, this could easily be misinterpreted as embodying solely a monastic programme. While the virtues of humility, patience and obedience struck a resonant chord with a cloistered discipline, such virtues were no less relevant to the outside world. There was no reason why readers of the Imitatio should not interpret the notion of obedience within a non-monastic context; living in obedience "sub praelato" was as important outside the monastic walls as within.⁵⁴ Equally deceptive is the allusion to silence and solitude, both cornerstones of the contemplative life, which were so often associated with the Desert Fathers and their successors in the contemplative religious orders. Again the centrality of silence and contemplation for those living in the world was hardly less significant. On the contrary, perhaps they were more necessary given the tumults and challenges of the secular world.⁵⁵ While the laity may not have been able to climb the ladders of contemplation, their daily prayer life represented the means by which they could strengthen their inner countenance.

The most prominent misconception of all concerns the *contemptus mundi* theme. The spirituality of the Imitatio conformed with monastic ideals of worldly contempt, since it could be interpreted in that manner. This does not mean, however, that *contemptus mundi* demanded flight from the world. From the perspective of the Imitatio, it referred, more specifically, to the abandonment of the material or temporal values of the world. Believers were called to spurn worldly honours, learning and all creaturely attachments. In the medieval sense of *contemptus mundi*, this might have pointed to the perfect seclusion offered by monasticism. Yet, in the case of the Imitatio, it also encouraged the laity to take on the struggles and challenges with which they were to be faced in their daily lives. Hence, the juxtaposition of nature and grace, reflecting

⁵⁴ Pohl, p. 16:10-12

⁵⁵ By secular, I mean that which takes place outside monastic boundaries.

the arduous nature of the task ahead, was directed equally to a lay as to a monastic readership.

As for the more explicit references to monasticism, it is clear that in the Imitatio monastic life is seen to be an exemplary form of life. Yet, it is not expressed in such a way as to suggest that it represented the sole, effective means of pursuing the ideal Christian life. For the laity, Carthusians and Cistercians were heralded as examples not because of their cloistered existence, but because of their sheer dedication - in particular, the regularity of monastic prayer life. As it is written in the Imitatio, "non est parvum in monasteriis vel in congregatione habitare, et inibi sine querela conversari: et usque ad mortem fidelis persevare".⁵⁶ The efficacy of monastic life was not in the cloister itself, but in the perseverance shown by those living that existence. An ideal life was typified by the struggles of existing without complaint, anger or jealousy; it lay in the monk's constancy and dedication, remaining steadfast in the practice of the faith until death. The lay person could imitate these virtues outside the confines of the cloister. The example of monks, many of whom had truly persevered until their death, reminded the laity that such an exemplary life was not only possible, but should be emulated on earth. A final counter-point to the belief that the spirituality of the Imitatio was purely monastic is seen in chapter 17 of Book one, entitled "de monastica vita".⁵⁷ It seems curious that a text entirely dedicated to nurturing monastic spirituality should include a chapter on the monastic life. This is surely an admission that the text was addressing a non-monastic as well as a monastic readership.

At the root of this flexible accommodation of lay and monastic piety was the spirituality of the Augustinian canons. Caroline Walker Bynum has identified certain subtle yet crucial distinctions between monastic and canonical spirituality.⁵⁸ The apostolic nature of this canonical spirituality explains to a great extent why the Imitatio played such an integral role in shaping lay piety; canons had always retained the dual

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 28:29 - 29:1-4

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 28:25ff

⁵⁸ Bynum, Jesus as Mother, pp. 22ff

responsibility of personal growth and edification.⁵⁹ The distinction between monastic and canonical spirituality can be explained by referring to the role of silence in the spiritual life. According to the monastic model, the preservation of silence was vital to safeguarding integrity: conversations could easily lead individuals astray and were to be avoided as much as possible. Canonical spirituality, on the other hand, did not insist on the avoidance of discourse altogether. Silence was to provide an opportunity for believers to strengthen their spiritual life, in order that they could be more prepared to face the tests of the secular world. Similarly, the essence of the Imitatio's spirituality did not require believers to withdraw completely from communicating with others; it only sought to avoid idle, careless talk.⁶⁰ Discretion and silence were essential preparation for the conduct of devout conversation. Groote articulated this point effectively in words similar to the Imitatio:

"Although one should avoid too much idle conversation with 'worldly people', one ought never to shun their presence, but work among them, trying to make them also participants of the joys celestial, far superior as they are to any delights bestowed by our bodily senses".⁶¹

Given the Imitatio's accessibility to monks and to the laity, its critique of worldly people was directed equally to monastic and lay communities.

The exemplarity of monks lay in their total submission to God, an acknowledgement that human frailty had to be catered for. It is this exemplarity which could contribute greatly to lay piety. As Oberman has noted, the *devotio moderna*'s "common focus, its continuous vision, its chief appeal and its central impact is to be seen in the transfer of monastic wisdom, experience, and psychology, bursting out of the monastic walls and seeking new rootage *in saeculo*, in the outside secular world".⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 52

⁶⁰ Pohl, p. 17:11ff

⁶¹ Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 22

⁶² Heiko Oberman, 'Wessel Gansfort: Magister Contradictionis', in F. Akkerman, G.C. Huisman, and A.J. Vanderkact, (eds.), Wessel Gansfort (1419-1489) and Northern Humanism (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1993), p. 112.

Not only was there harmony between two contexts, but the monastic tradition contributed positively to the development of lay piety.

The spirituality of the Imitatio Christi within the context of late medieval religious culture

Having addressed the Imitatio's accessibility to monks, to the Brethren and to the laity, it is necessary to elaborate further upon the nature of the text's spirituality. Given that the Imitatio had a relevance to each of these different groups, what was the essence of its message? The Imitatio was characterised by a profoundly inward-looking spirituality, inspired by Scriptures, and was notably Christocentric. Its spirituality can be understood with reference to four inter-related themes: human nature; the saints; interiority; and Eucharistic devotion. In elaborating upon these themes, one can ascertain how the Imitatio responded to the spiritual concerns of the age, and in particular how it fitted into the broader context of late medieval religious culture. Before turning to the four themes, one should begin with a brief summary of the text's spiritual message, while noting that the Imitatio cannot easily be reduced to categorisation.⁶³

The Imitatio is founded upon the fundamental premise that the exact nature of the relationship between the believer and God should be addressed. As believers come to terms with the weakness of their nature in the face of God, so they are able to lay the foundations for their spiritual progress. Meditation cannot, consequently, begin without self-assessment and the recognition of the need for purgation. The requirement of purification allows believers to embark upon their spiritual journey. The frailty of humanity is never laid aside, since the spiritual journey involves hardship and adversity. Indeed, in recognising the gravity of sin, the door to illumination is opened and the reception of grace is made possible.

⁶³ Debonnie, 'Thèmes', p. 289

The infusion of grace and the intensity of spiritual nourishment do not moderate the strains of spiritual torment. The conflict between nature and grace form part of a spiritual progression in which human standards and qualities are rejected in favour of Christ's pure virtues. As human self-knowledge is purified, so believers seek knowledge of God. This progression eventually leads to the conformity of the human will to that of the Divine. The work demonstrates how the soul should seek Christian perfection, adopting the Divine as a model. The reception of the Body of Christ at Mass gives this spiritual process its final goal on earth, while eternal salvation represents ultimate union with the Divine.

Human Nature

Turning to the first theme, the frailty of human nature as a subject within the Christian framework is a commonplace. The broader context for this, during the late medieval period, was evident in the Augustinian Renaissance, where theologians re-evaluated the respective roles of grace and good works for each individual's salvation.⁶⁴ The extent of the depravity of human nature, as elucidated in the *Imitatio*, is especially striking. Fundamental to this conception are the themes of anti-intellectualism, contrition and suffering which, while closely inter-related, will be addressed in turn. The wisdom and knowledge of humanity are characterised by inconsistencies and limitations. The reader is warned of this effect at the beginning of Book one: "Si tibi videtur quod multa scis et satis bene intellegis: scito tamen quia sunt multo plura quae nescis".⁶⁵ Believers are not to place eloquence or "alta verba" at the forefront of their devotional lives.⁶⁶

The *Imitatio*'s anti-intellectual strand requires careful qualification, and here the context of the *devotio moderna* is instructive. Since Groote was well-educated, his

⁶⁴ Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation*, pp. 64ff; see also Bernt Hamm, *Frömmigkeitstheologie am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Johannes von Paltz und seinem Umkreis* (J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1982), pp. 313ff; Heiko Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 120ff

⁶⁵ Pohl, pp. 7:29 - 8:1-3

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6:5

critique of learning is of great significance. Kempis's biography of Groote reveals an ambivalent but ultimately reconcilable gloss on learning.⁶⁷ Kempis used Groote as an example to illustrate that great learning should not lead to pride: "Yet illustrious as he was for his special knowledge in matters of learning both human and divine, he was nonetheless humble and submissive in rendering honour to his superiors and to rulers of the Church".⁶⁸ Learning, however, was a skill neither to be neglected nor abandoned. It could be used for spiritual ends, as Kempis continued: "Nor did he, like that slothful servant, hide his Lord's money, looking only to his own convenience; but the gift of learning, and that talent which was entrusted to him he faithfully put out to earn an usury of souls".⁶⁹ The Imitatio conveyed a similar view that the intellect should be nurtured not spurned.

Yet Groote, like the Imitatio, professed a preference for simple believers rather than the educated.⁷⁰ He also promoted a programme of "deliberate intellectual self-limitation", restricting reading to the improvement of the individual's spiritual rather than intellectual aptitude.⁷¹ Learning was not to be disregarded altogether, though the greater the intellect the more pronounced the threat to the believer's spiritual progress. As Kempis wrote in the second chapter of Book one: "Melior est profecto humilis rusticus qui Deo servit: quam superbus philosophus qui se neglecto cursum caeli considerat".⁷² Given the conflict between the *devotio moderna* and the Dominicans (notably Matthew Grabow's critique of the Brethren of Common Life at the council of Constance), anti-intellectualism could easily be interpreted as a denigration of scholasticism.⁷³ Yet, this was certainly not a critique of learning *per se*. After all, the Imitatio was quickly promoted by the circles of monastic Humanism across Europe,

⁶⁷ Groote's co-founder, Florens Radewijns, who was also well-educated (perhaps the only one with an academic degree) was Kempis's mentor. Brouette, *'Devotio Moderna I'*, p. 606

⁶⁸ Thomas à Kempis, The Founders of the New Devotion (London, 1905), p. 36

⁶⁹ Kempis, Founders, p. 41

⁷⁰ Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 98, 185

⁷¹ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 412

⁷² Pohl, p. 7:7-10

⁷³ Oberman, Masters of the Reformation, p. 53

especially by the Benedictines.⁷⁴ Indeed, the fifteenth-century Benedictine Abbot, Joannes Trithemius, included the Imitatio in his list of recommended religious works, entitled De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis.⁷⁵

With the Imitatio's position on learning defined, one can turn to the second theme relating to human nature, namely the role of contrition. While the Imitatio does not refer to the sacrament of Confession directly, it addresses the practice of confessing sins and questions the ability of humanity to fulfil virtuous designs. Towards the end of Book one, the infirmity of the penitent is unmistakable: "Hodie confiteris peccata tua: et cras iterum perpetras confessa".⁷⁶ In fact, such is the baseness of humanity that honourable intentions can only be founded upon faulty foundations. "Nunc proponis cavere: et post horam agis, quasi nihil proposuisses".⁷⁷ The apparent futility of confessing sins can only be rectified by the sincerity, intensity and repetition of contrition - the feeling of displeasure and sorrow for sin. The themes of contrition and penance are strongly emphasised. Indeed, chapter 21 of the first Book is entirely devoted to the subject of compunction, which is synonymous with contrition.⁷⁸ Human nature, according to the Imitatio, is so depraved that contrition or compunction is fundamental to any spiritual progress. As Kempis reiterated, "Nemo dignus est caelesti consolatione nisi diligenter se exercuerit in sancta compunctione".⁷⁹

The relative absence of explicit references to the sacrament of Confession can be attributed to various factors. Its absence does not mean that the Imitatio's interiority was intended for a non-sacramental framework. Firstly, it is possible that the sacrament was seldom mentioned because believers were not encouraged to practice it regularly. The fourth Lateran council had prescribed that believers should confess at least once a year, though the frequency of the reception of the sacrament was a matter of great debate.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Barry Collett, Italian Benedictine Scholars and the Reformation: the Congregation of Santa Giustina of Padua (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985); see also chapter three below.

⁷⁵ Georg Heser, Dioptra Kempensis (Ingolstadt, 1650), H10^v

⁷⁶ Pohl, pp. 43:31 - 44:1-2

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 44:2-3

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 39ff

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 37:6-8

⁸⁰ Swanson, Religion and Devotion, p. 33; W. David Meyers, "Poor, Sinning Folk": Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany (Ithaca, and London, Cornell University Press, 1996),

Secondly, the infrequency of sacramental Confession explains why so much emphasis was placed on contrition and on a daily examination of conscience.⁸¹ Finally, members of the *devotio moderna* actually opted for more frequent participation in the sacraments of Confession and Communion.⁸² Regardless of the frequency of sacramental reception, a greater emphasis upon contrition remained absolutely vital.

As the faithful increasingly recognised the depths of their weaknesses, so a dependence upon Christ's virtues and example became key to the believer's spiritual journey. The third theme concerning human nature, the perception and interpretation of suffering, is central to the *Imitatio*'s spirituality. The intense devotion to the Passion of Christ, so evident in late medieval religious life, indicated that believers should answer God's invocation to suffering. Indeed, the faithful are reminded in Book three of Christ's total commitment throughout His life, in the Lord's words: "Nam ab hora ortus mei, usque ad exitum in cruce: non defuit mihi tolerantia doloris".⁸³ The interpretation of suffering was often related to Christ's Passion, whether depicted in religious art, or the focus of meditation in devotional practices and literature.⁸⁴ More emphasis was placed on the Passion of Christ, from the agony in the garden of Gethsemane to Christ's death on the Cross, than any other period in His life. The centrality and frequency of themes on the Passion were a constant reminder that believers should not deliberately avoid suffering.

Most poignant of all is that suffering should be enthusiastically embraced. Suffering is inseparable from joy. If the faithful experience suffering, they have found "paradisum in terra".⁸⁵ The joy of suffering reveals the love of Christ, previously concealed. In recognition of Christ's redemptive work, the faithful should feel indebted to Christ. "Gratias tibi quia non pepercisti malis meis; sed attrivisti me verberibus

pp. 2-3; Jodi Bilinkoff, 'Confession, gender, life-writing: some cases (mainly from Spain)', in Katharine Lualdi and Anne Thayer, (eds.), *Penitence in the Age of Reformations* (Ashgate, 2000), pp. 170-171

⁸¹ "Omni die renovare debemus propositum nostrum, et ad fervorem nos excitare: quasi hodie primum ad conversionem venissemus". Pohl, p. 32:20-23

⁸² "Quod utile sit saepe communicare". *Ibid.*, pp. 100:24ff

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 176:15-17

⁸⁴ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 233ff

⁸⁵ "Quando ad hoc veneris quod tribulatio tibi dulcis est et sapit pro Christo; tunc bene tecum esse aestima: quia invenisti paradisum in terra". Pohl, p. 86:24-27

amaris".⁸⁶ The believer was comforted by the prospect of salvation, which placed the severity of suffering into an eschatological perspective. The expectation of the Last Judgment was never far from the disciple's mind. The Lord declared, "Disce te nunc in modico pati: ut tunc a gravioribus valeas liberari".⁸⁷ Freedom from adversity and temptations could only be found in the next life. Peace does not, as a consequence, fit into the context of the material world; "nec tunc totum esse bonum, si neminem pateris adversarium".⁸⁸

Moreover, the context in which the Imitatio was introduced suggests that the Imitatio's emphasis on suffering was applicable to the more practical concerns of believers. The Imitatio was inward-looking in such a way as to allow believers to interiorise their everyday worries. Thus, the Imitatio's attention to suffering would have undoubtedly consoled those afflicted by the plague or by natural disasters during the course of the fifteenth century. This was particularly suited to Kempis's own experiences; his Chronicle contained numerous references to the misfortunes resulting from pestilence and famine, and how some of the Brothers died as a result.⁸⁹ He referred also to the floods emanating from the melting of ice and snow in March 1423, the force of which overwhelmed the dykes, and ruined the corn seeds, not to mention flooding the land.⁹⁰ Readers of the Imitatio could, therefore, interpret their compassionate suffering with Christ by associating it with their own, albeit more practical, trials and tribulations. Indeed, the pictorial equivalent can be identified in the Isenheim altar, where Christ's body is plague-ridden. Located in an Antonite monastery, the principal task of which was to help plague victims, the intent of this altarpiece was similar though visually explicit.⁹¹ Plague victims could identify their

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 238:31 - 239:1-2

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 51:3-5

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 192:18-19

⁸⁹ Kempis, Chronicle, pp. 56ff, 101.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 62, 99-100. Crops were also ravaged by mice. Ibid., p. 99. Kempis also referred to the 1452 fire in Amsterdam, in which "scarce a third part" of the city was saved, with fourteen monasteries burned to the ground. Ibid., p. 103

⁹¹ Pierre Schmitt, The Isenheim Altar (Hallwag Ltd. Berne, no date of publication)

suffering with Christ's Passion on the cross. The language of compassion is crucial, since its very definition implies suffering with Christ.

The interpretation of suffering, as proposed in the Imitatio, recommended that physical suffering should be endured and interpreted literally as a cross for the believer to bear. This underpinned, albeit implicitly, a re-orientation of approach towards relics and shrines as *loci* for healing in late medieval religious culture. Though the Imitatio does not denounce relics as a means of curing physical ills, the very desire to avoid physical suffering would seem to counter the spirituality of the Imitatio. In this regard, the Imitatio shared the sentiments expounded by the fourteenth-century saint, Peter of Luxembourg, namely that the believer should never pray for a cure to an illness.⁹² Human nature had to be tamed so that patience could predominate and culminate in submission to God's will. This is not to suggest that the spirituality of the Imitatio rejected the efficacy of miracles *per se*.

Saints

The references to relics and submission to God leads to the second theme. How are the saints depicted and promoted in the Imitatio Christi? The picture of the saints that emerges is a favourable one. In the Imitatio, they are upheld as exemplars of extraordinary virtue.⁹³ Through their suffering and tribulations, the saints humbled themselves by imitating Christ, some to the point of death and, hence, martyrdom.⁹⁴ In recognition of their outstanding lives, in Book three, the Lord demanded that He ought to be praised in all the saints: "Ego laudandus sum in omnibus sanctis meis; ego super omnia benedicendus sum et honorandus in singulis".⁹⁵ The importance of that love and honour is such that the Lord would consider an attack on the saints as a personal

⁹² Richard Kieckhefer, Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and their religious Milieu (London, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 57

⁹³ While there is a general absence of Marian devotion in the Imitatio (there is a single reference to Mary in the Imitatio), Marian devotion formed an integral part of the *devotio moderna*. The first chapel and altar of Mount St. Agnes were consecrated in honour of Mary. Kempis, Chronicle of St. Agnes, p. 25

⁹⁴ A. Vauchez, Sainthood in the later Middle Ages (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 13ff

⁹⁵ Pohl, p. 258:12-15

affront: "qui derogat alicui sanctorum: derogat et mihi et ceteris omnibus in regno caelorum".⁹⁶ The high status which the saints received in this text is attributable to their self-denial and patience on earth.

The *Imitatio*'s emphasis, therefore, lies not specifically with the individual saints themselves, but rather with the virtues which they extolled.⁹⁷ There is almost a process of de-personalisation within this schema in the sense that no specific saints are called to mind. Instead, attention is devoted to the virtues that are espoused by the saints. The focus on virtues dilutes the importance of the saints themselves, as individuals. In so far as they imitated Christ with suffering and love in the service of God, their sanctity had to be acknowledged and respected. The significance of those virtues lay in their divine provenance. At the beginning of Book one, the nature of the relationship between Christ and His saints is clarified: "Summum igitur studium nostrum sit: in vita Iesu Christi meditari. Doctrina Christi omnes doctrinas sanctorum praecellit".⁹⁸ Given the tarnished form of human nature, virtues are granted by, and belong to, God alone. Therefore, to a certain extent, believers are called to follow the virtues of the saints. They are encouraged not to perform miracles, but to live the simple, even anonymous, Christian life. "Ama nesciri", Kempis told his readers.⁹⁹

The faithful readers of the *Imitatio* are warned about misinterpreting or even abusing their relationship with the saints. The notion of sanctity and of Christian exemplarity, as it relates to sainthood, can only be understood fully in the context of the distinction between human nature and godly virtues. Believers should not aim to be canonized as saints. They should instead be wary of their human frailty and be humble and patient in their pursuit of Christ. That a distinction should be drawn between human nature and saintly virtues reflects an attempt to restrain any excessive devotion towards the saints. The final chapter of Book three raises the problem and provides its resolution, in the Lord's words: "Quidam zelo dilectionis trahuntur ad hos vel ad illos

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 258:20-22

⁹⁷ St. Francis is the only saint to be mentioned by name in the entire text. "Nam quantum unusquisque est in oculis tuis, tantum est et non amplius: ait humilis sanctus Franciscus". *Ibid.*, p. 240:18-20

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5:13-16

⁹⁹ "Si vis utiliter aliquid scire et discere: ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari". *Ibid.*, p. 8: 6-8

ampliori affectu: sed humano potius quam divino. Ego sum qui cunctos condidi sanctos; ego donavi gratiam".¹⁰⁰ While this may appear to challenge the possibility of human co-operation with grace, as well as the notion of human merit, these emphases must be interpreted not theologically, but in terms of spirituality.

This view is reinforced by the way in which the Imitatio helps effectively to define Christocentricity and its relation to the saints. While the devout could seek intercession from the saints, they had to understand the nature and source of that sanctity. How did this Christocentricity fit into the context of the intercessory role of saints, manifest in late medieval devotion? That the Imitatio not only condoned but promoted prayers towards the saints should be stressed from the outset. This is clear from the following passage: "Melius est sanctos devotis precibus et lacrimis exorare, et eorum gloriosa suffragia humili mente implorare: quam eorum secreta vana inquisitione perscrutari".¹⁰¹ While intercessory prayers to the saints were advocated, the key to saintly piety lay in their role as exemplars who taught individuals how to conform more closely to God's will. In this way, there appears to be an implicit message that is closely intertwined with the Imitatio's emphasis on suffering. The spiritual message of the Imitatio sought to remind believers that while reciprocal arrangements between the saints and believers were potentially fruitful, spiritual patronage ultimately belonged to God alone and the key to divine favour was through accepting trials and tribulations. It seems credible, indeed, to suggest that the Imitatio's spirituality ran counter to the type of popular devotion to saints which sought relief from suffering and afflictions. If believers sought intercession with the saints for the sole purpose of lightening the burden of their cross, then they had failed to appreciate the text's message.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 257:27-31

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 259:31 - 260:1-4

Interiority

The Imitatio was characterised by a profound interiority, a preference for self-examination and private prayer. The inward spirituality of the Imitatio was appealing because it addressed both different types of prayer and external practices of devotion. The Imitatio's programme of prayer is notable for its interiority. Prayer is most effective when it is left unspoken. It is almost wiser to refrain from speaking: "Sed quare tam libenter loquimur et invicem fabulamur; cum tamen raro sine laesione conscientiae ad silentium redimus?".¹⁰² Spirituality, according to the Imitatio, is expressed from within. For this reason, it is possible that, "contingit quod multi ex frequenti auditu evangelii parvum desiderium sentiunt".¹⁰³ Jean Gerson similarly placed this interiority within the context of a hierarchy of prayer. He subordinated vocal to mental prayer, the latter being that which takes place exclusively in the soul.¹⁰⁴ Silence was thus absolutely fundamental to prayer. "In silentio et quiete proficit anima devota et discit abscondita scripturarum".¹⁰⁵ This does not mean that the Imitatio advocated only silence. It merely pointed to the necessity and benefits of withdrawing from people. Solitude provided an opportunity for meditation and contemplation, relevant both to the monk in his monastic community and to the lay person in the world. Christ provided the example for individual, private prayer, as practised in the garden of Gethsemane.

The second feature of this interiority can be related to an inward/outward dichotomy. Outward actions should always be governed by pure, inward thoughts. Good deeds are described in this interior way. A good work is to be measured by the extent of love which accompanies it: "Magis siquidem Deus pensat ex quanto quis agit: quam opus quod facit".¹⁰⁶ If a good deed is not inspired by charity, then its efficacy is

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 17:20-23

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 17-19

¹⁰⁴ Paul Saenger, 'Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages', in Roger Chartier, (ed.), The Culture of Print: power and the uses of print in Early Modern Europe (Polity Press, 1987), pp. 143-144. Given the shared spirituality between Gerson and the Imitatio, it is not surprising that he was considered to be a serious contender for authorship of the Imitatio.

¹⁰⁵ Pohl, p. 37:17-19

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 26:16-18

undermined. Moreover, it is preferable to play down and keep secret the reception of consolation. The reader is told that, "utilius est tibi et securius devotionis gratiam abscondere: nec in altum te efferre, nec multum inde loqui neque multum ponderare".¹⁰⁷

Given that human speech cannot meet the spiritual demands that are expected of a believer, it follows that the use of sight is not central to inciting devotion. If the Imitatio had a more negative view of externals, one might ask what was the Imitatio's relationship with the religious art of the period? At the beginning of Book one, a seemingly negative stance on religious art is revealed: "quia non satiatur oculus visu: nec auris impletur auditu. Stude ergo cor tuum ab amore visibilium abstrahere: et ad invisibilia te transferre".¹⁰⁸ This is not to say, however, that external forms of devotion served no purpose whatsoever within the framework of the Imitatio. The use of images for devotional purposes was rendered subordinate to contemplation in the heart of the believer. St. Bernard, a source of inspiration for the Imitatio, noted the relative importance of the visual and the interior in one of his sermons. "Visual images are valuable for beginners...but the ultimate desire is to meditate or to contemplate without relying on them, to perceive the essence of God through pure intellect, unmarred by any shadow of corporal substances".¹⁰⁹

The spirituality of the Imitatio was merely a reaction against the excessive use of images and statues to incite devotion. That the Imitatio presented such a stance reaffirms Jeffrey Hamburger's conclusions that by the late Middle Ages "images had joined texts as recognised sources of religious authority and devotional authenticity, [thereby] serving as an integral, even indispensable part of the experience of prayer".¹¹⁰ While the Imitatio would not question the devotional authenticity of images, it nevertheless attempted to redraw the balance towards greater inward contemplation. Images, like words, presented a point of departure for meditation.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 156:26-29

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 6:28-31

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Bestul, 'Chaucer's Parson's Tale and the late medieval tradition of religious meditation', Speculum 64 (1989), p. 617

¹¹⁰ Jeffrey Hamburger, Nuns as Artists: the Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent (University of California Press, 1997), p. xxi

The emphasis upon inward forms of spirituality is a salient characteristic of Book two, which is entitled Admonitiones ad interna trahentes.¹¹¹ The limitations of external devotional practices are brought to the reader's attention. "Quidam solum portant suam devotionem in libris; quidam in imaginibus: quidam autem in signis exterioribus et figuris. Quidam habent me in ore: sed modicum est in corde".¹¹² The centrality of the heart and soul in contemplation is clear. In fact, the spirituality of the Imitatio is arguably indicative of a hierarchy of contemplation, representing the different levels of spiritual penetration. The devout soul is directed towards contemplative prayer. However, the soul may not be capable of these higher forms of contemplation. The alternative is expounded in the Lord's words: "Si nescis speculari alta et caelestia; requiesce in passione Christi: et in sacris vulneribus eius libenter habita".¹¹³ In this way, the Imitatio held that the blood and the wounds of Christ remained important symbols, but that they did not constitute the spiritual essence of the Christian mystery.¹¹⁴ Thus, one can see that external symbols, whether they be books, images or statues, were not rendered obsolete by the Imitatio's interiority. They merely became subordinate to higher forms of contemplation. Indeed, they were potentially useful channels through which believers would pass as they progressed in their spiritual life.

The final theme of interiority concerns the practice of pilgrimages and how this related to the Imitatio's spirituality. The Imitatio was consistent with the belief that pilgrimages were trials in themselves, removing pilgrims from their natural environment. That these trials were physical in nature counted for little within the interiority of the Imitatio. Moreover, the destination of these pilgrimages, the shrines or relics themselves, could detract from the purest and truest shrine of all - the Eucharistic Body of Christ. An extract from the beginning of the fourth Book on the Mass reveals the nature of this attitude towards relics and pilgrimages.

¹¹¹ Pohl, p. 59:1-2

¹¹² Ibid., p. 150:22-27

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 61:4-7

¹¹⁴ Douglas Gray, 'The Five Wounds of our Lord', N&Q Vol. CCVIII, (1963), pp. 50-1, 82-89, 127-134, 163-168

"Currunt multi ad diversa loca pro visitandis reliquiis sanctorum: et mirantur auditis gestis eorum ampla aedificia templorum; inspiciunt et osculantur sericis et auro involuta sacra ossa ipsorum: et ecce tu praesens es hic apud me in altari Deus meus sanctus sanctorum creator hominum et dominus angelorum".¹¹⁵

The Imitatio did not discount the power of relics in themselves. It simply advocated a reordering of devotional practice, according to which the excessive devotion towards relics and the saints was to be discouraged if it excluded devotion to Christ. In this sense, the Imitatio reinforced the Christocentricity of devotion to the saints. It also meant that in the Imitatio, pilgrimage was as much an inward as an outward spiritual journey, characterised by spiritual torment unrecognisable to the human intellect. The quintessential pilgrimage entailed the purification of the soul; the shrine would remain the soul, but in its purified state. The Imitatio's spirituality acknowledged the increasing popularity of pilgrimages in the later Middle Ages, by seeking to redress the way in which pilgrimages were perceived. Post was right to point out that Kempis's opinions on pilgrimage did not reflect opposition to the practice. However, his stance was unrelated to his own "struggle not to leave the cell" as Post suggested.¹¹⁶ Instead, it points to Kempis's concern for the nature of, and perhaps the lack of depth in, devotion expressed in pilgrimages.

Eucharist

The fourth and final theme concerns Eucharistic devotion. The fourth Book of the Imitatio, entitled Devota exhortatio ad sacram communionem, sought to intensify a specific dimension of Eucharistic devotion. It was indicative of the whole movement of the Imitatio being an inward preparation for the Body of Christ.¹¹⁷ Devotion to the

¹¹⁵ Pohl, p. 95:7-14

¹¹⁶ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 229; see also Weiler, 'Recent Historiography', p. 177

¹¹⁷ "Quod toto corde anima devota Christi unionem in sacramento affectare debet". Pohl, pp. 126:8ff

Eucharist had to be characterised by reverence.¹¹⁸ This reverence was typified by silent contemplation, rather than an emphasis upon physical or verbal gestures. The contemplative strand of devotion is also manifest in the believer's understanding of sacrifice. "Humilis peccatorum contritio, acceptabile tibi est Domine sacrificium: longe suavius odorans in conspectu tuo quam turis incensum".¹¹⁹ The subordination of external to internal forms of devotion does not mean that the former were rejected altogether. The emphasis on inward preparation merely reflects the sense of interior prioritisation within the Imitatio.

The context of late medieval religious culture helps to explain what this strand of Eucharistic devotion was addressing. During this period, the visual components of the Mass had taken on a more striking symbolism.¹²⁰ This was especially the case where the consecrated Host was concerned. By the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Host was increasingly venerated, and in certain cases, idolised.¹²¹ The Eucharist was often revered like a relic. Philip Soergel remarked that "it was the sensual act of viewing hosts that transferred onto the faithful a kind of salvific grace".¹²² The Imitatio was reacting against the importance attached to the visual elements of devotion, in order to direct the emphasis towards inward contemplation.

The view that the elevation of the Host was such a crucial moment was shared by both forms of Eucharistic devotion. However, it was the way in which they expressed that devotion which distinguished the two sides. The Imitatio's emphasis upon that which is invisible and that which can only be captured by the soul is difficult to align with any form of visual reverence. For this reason, the devout beholding of the Host and the recitation of prayers during the elevation represent inferior forms of spirituality to contemplation. In addition, the elevation prayers were recited by human words. The essence of the Imitatio's inward spirituality obviated human speech. Silence

¹¹⁸ "De ardenti amore et vehementi affectu suscipiendi Christum". Ibid., pp. 133:18ff

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 243:13-16

¹²⁰ Swanson, Religion and Devotion, pp. 98-101

¹²¹ Leah Sinanoglou, 'The Christ Child as Sacrifice: a medieval tradition and the Corpus Christi Plays', Speculum 50 (1975), p. 498

¹²² Soergel, Wondrous in His Saints, p. 23

is fundamental to this form of Eucharistic devotion. Yet, the Imitatio does not denounce these external forms of Eucharistic devotion. Their authenticity is merely reinforced by inward preparation.

The difference of emphasis concerning the Imitatio's Eucharistic devotion was also reflected in how the text related to communal piety. The intensity of Eucharistic devotion in the late medieval period had led to the promulgation of the Feast of Corpus Christi, officially adopted by Urban VI in 1311 at the Council of Constance.¹²³ It is noteworthy that Corpus Christi was first suggested as a feast by Beguine communities in the Netherlands. Promoted for the sake of honouring the Real Presence, Corpus Christi was an important didactic feast, as well as an occasion for reinforcing the corporative dimensions of religion. The Imitatio's sense of interiority might imply a degree of individualism. Moreover, that Corpus Christi adopted visual components of devotion, evident in the annual plays, might further displace the interiority for which the Imitatio strove.¹²⁴

So what was the nature of the Imitatio's Eucharistic devotion? The themes and issues raised in the first three books are fundamental. They represent an inherent need to purge the soul, so that it may present a clean vessel in preparation for the reception of the Body of Christ. The interpretation of the reverence for the Body of Christ did not mean that Kempis advocated infrequent communion.¹²⁵ On the contrary, the more frequently believers took communion, the more often they would examine their conscience and prepare themselves for the reception of the consecrated elements. The purest form of devotion was, therefore, to be found in the soul. In Book Three, the Lord tells his servant: "Sic et tu confugere debes in cordis tui secretarium: divinum intentius implorando suffragium".¹²⁶ The use of the term tabernacle is by no means coincidental. This becomes evident as the soul's yearning for the reception of Christ intensifies; "quoniam ad te Domine Iesu animam meam levavi. Desidero te nunc devote

¹²³ Rubin, Corpus Christi, p. 101

¹²⁴ Alexander Johnston, 'The plays of the religious guilds of York: the Creed Play and the Pater Noster Play', Speculum 50 (1975), pp. 55-90

¹²⁵ Pohl, pp. 100:24ff

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 214:21-23

ac reverenter suscipere; cupio te in domum meam inducere".¹²⁷ With the reception of the Body of Christ, the soul now contained the Real Presence.

The reference to the tabernacle of the soul is more significant than it appears at first. With the infrequency of Communion, one would think that the soul could not gain spiritual food on a daily basis. However, this is not the case as the penultimate chapter of the fourth Book reveals. "Potest enim quilibet devotus omni die et omni hora ad spiritualem Christi communionem salubriter et sine prohibitionem accedere: et tamen certis diebus et statuto tempore corpus sui Redemptoris cum affectuosa reverentia sacramentaliter debet suscipere".¹²⁸ This indicates that spiritual communion was not only possible outside a sacramental framework but also recommended. A striking distinction is made between spiritual and sacramental reception of the Body of Christ, though the former was not unique to the *Imitatio*. Similarly, the chronicle of a Dominican convent of Kirchberg bei Salz noted that, in the absence of a priest, Mechthilt von Waldeck received Christ spiritually. Moreover, she received Him as truly in her soul as if she had received Him at the altar.¹²⁹ The notion of spiritual communion was especially prominent in the writings of Wessel Gansfort and also evident in some of Kempis's other works.¹³⁰ In the latter's biography of Groote (chapter 18), he wrote that

"When the Pax doth come be thou prepared as if thou didst verily receive the Body of Christ, and at that time lift up the love of thine heart and prepare thyself so that though thou are not able carnally to receive the Elements of the Holy Sacrament, thou mayest at least do so in the Spirit".¹³¹

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101:6-9

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 118:26-31 - 119:1

¹²⁹ Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, pp. 145-146

¹³⁰ C.M.A. Caspers, 'Magister Consensus. Wessel Gansfort (1419-1489) und die geistliche Kommunion', in F. Akkerman, A.J. Vanderjagt, and A.H. van der Laan, (eds.), *Northern Humanism in European Context, 1469-1625* (Brill, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 1999), especially, pp. 82-92

¹³¹ Kempis, *Founders of the New Devotion*, p. 52; Post, *Modern Devotion*, p. 229

Groote had reinforced the notion of spiritual communion, yet that did not mean a rejection of "sacerdotal priesthood in any formal or theological sense".¹³² The Imitatio's emphasis on the dignity of the priestly office provides the final focal point of this section. In the same way that believers were to pursue an exemplary Christian life, priests were also invoked to become exemplars. Yet given their mediatory role within the sacramental framework of the Church, the importance of their exemplary roles was further magnified. As Kempis noted, "grande ministerium, et magna dignitas sacerdotum: quibus datum est quod angelis non est concessum".¹³³ Indeed, the dignity and example expected of priests was such that they were required to have spiritual qualifications, of which Groote had identified five: to have right intention; to be illumined by learning from God; to have lived and to continue to live good and exemplary lives; to surpass others in inward love and living; and to spurn earthly and mundane matters.¹³⁴ Given the demands of the priestly office, Busch described the sacerdotal charge as being highly dangerous, especially for those whose lives did not correspond to the post.¹³⁵ Above all, priests were urged to consider Christ to be the archetype, the high priest who offered Himself on the cross as an example to humanity.¹³⁶

The spirituality of the Imitatio further underlies the diversity of devotional forms within late medieval religious culture. Its inward spirituality defined its attitude towards human nature. It clarified the relation between the saints and Christ, in order to undermine excessive devotion towards the former in favour of the latter. With the Eucharist, the Imitatio upheld the notion of interiority as the guiding devotional marker, to which everything else had to be subordinated. It presented a precedent of inward spirituality, without which the external manifestations of devotion could not be enhanced. The Imitatio embraced this religious culture by redefining and reordering it according to an interior framework, and thereby responded to the needs of the time. The

¹³² Van Engen, 'Late Medieval Anticlericalism', p. 28

¹³³ Pohl, p. 107:4-6

¹³⁴ The Devout brothers tended to resist promotion to the priesthood. Van Engen, 'Late Medieval Anticlericalism', pp. 28, 33

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 33-34

¹³⁶ Pohl, pp. 112:1ff

uniqueness of the Imitatio lies in the clear and succinct articulation of its themes. Its ideas were common to a variety of spiritual traditions and it is the distribution and reception of the Imitatio among these different groups to which the next chapter will turn.

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

Chapter Three. From manuscript classic to early printed bestseller: the Imitatio Christi in Europe, c. 1470-1530

Introduction

The early printed circulation of the Imitatio cannot be fully understood without an analysis of its manuscript diffusion. The first two sections of this chapter will pay close attention to the reasons behind the copying and distribution of Imitatio manuscripts. What was the precise contribution of the *devotio moderna* in this process and what were its different manifestations? In particular, one needs to address the movement's attention to books and their role in its expansion. The circulation of the Imitatio was encouraged by the apostolate of the Brethren to the laity, which entailed the translation and reading of devotional works. An appreciation of the manuscript tradition is vital if one considers the extent of its continuity with the incunabula editions of the Imitatio. The types of literature recommended for publication tended to be governed by their success in manuscript form. Close attention to the incunabula editions themselves reveals further points of contact.

Having identified the extent of continuity, this chapter will then address the patterns of distribution. How frequently was the Imitatio printed and in what publishing centres? In addition to describing the various networks of printers, the discussion will look at the motives of printers. In printing the Imitatio, were they motivated by profit, or inspired by the desire to encourage readers to follow Christ? Furthermore, it is evident that the Imitatio greatly benefitted from being associated with families of printers. Who were these families and what was their contribution? Finally, lay patronage was vital in consolidating the reputation of the Imitatio and often guaranteed the transmission of the text. Although the main corpus of this study addresses the English, French and German traditions of the Imitatio, the two chapters on circulation (this one and chapter Five) will neither ignore the other vernacular traditions nor the Latin. In order to gain a clearer impression of how the text was so widely circulated

from the incunabula period to 1530 (chapter three) and from 1531 to 1620 (chapter five), the broadest geographical and linguistic sweep facilitates a more thorough enquiry.

The Imitatio Christi as manuscript form

Essential for the remarkable dissemination of printed editions of the Imitatio was the existence of numerous manuscript copies in the fifteenth century. The considerable number of extant manuscript copies - it is estimated that between 700 and 800 were produced within a century - is proof that the Imitatio had tremendous potential to reach a wide readership.¹ Stephanus Axters' bibliography of manuscripts recorded 762 copies of the Imitatio.² The sheer mass of manuscripts originated with the vibrant copying tradition of the *devotio moderna*. Manuscript copying was certainly not unique to the *devotio moderna*, as is evident from what is known of other religious orders - notably the Carthusians.³ Yet, members of the *devotio moderna* clearly excelled in the copying tradition in qualitative and quantitative terms; in this, their founder, Geert Groote, was inspirational.⁴

The practice of manuscript copying was a formidable component of the lives of both the Augustinian canons and the Brethren of Common Life. It served to provide communities with much-needed income: this in itself indicates that there must have been a market for the works. Manuscript copying also provided spiritually-inspiring literature for their own members to read and hear.⁵ The task of manuscript copying was significant for the actual work involved in writing books made it possible for copyists

¹ Van Engen, 'The Church in the fifteenth century', p. 308; B. Biggs, (ed.), The Imitation of Christ: The First English Translation of the 'Imitatio Christi' (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. xxxv; Debongnie and Huijben, L'auteur ou les auteurs de L'Imitation (Louvain, 1957), p. 1

² Stephanus Axters, De Imitatione Christi: Een handschrifteninventaris bij het vijfhonderdste verjaren van Thomas Hemerken van Kempen, †1471 (Kempen-Niederrhein, 1971), p. 10

³ Sigrun Haude, 'The Silent Monks speak up: The changing identity of the Carthusians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries', ARG 86 (1995), p. 127; Martin, Fifteenth-Century Carthusian Reform, pp. 3, 231-233

⁴ Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 99-101; Epiney-Burgard, Gerard Grote, pp. 104, 143, 167

⁵ Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 244, 349, 416-417, 448, 466; Epiney-Burgard, Gerard Groote, p. 167; Otto Gründler, 'The *Devotio Moderna*', in Jill Raitt, Bernard McGinn, and John Meyendorff, (eds.), Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages to the Reformation (SCM Press Ltd., 1988), p. 188

to familiarise themselves with texts.⁶ Indeed, manuscript copying was also regarded as a good work and rubrication was compared to the blood of the martyrs.⁷ The ability to amass manuscripts, moreover, enabled members of the *devotio moderna* to defend themselves and their cause.⁸

Johannes Busch had stated that the Windesheim Congregation had three principal copying projects in mind: the provision of liturgical manuscripts; the preparation of the Vulgate text; and the establishment of a library of standardised texts.⁹ With regard to the third of these, the building of libraries was considered a vital task in the renewal of the apostolic life. Groote's own library was intended to nurture the spirituality of his guests.¹⁰ The collection of books formed an integral part of the Brethren's activity in Deventer and other houses.¹¹ This was reflected by the detailed reading lists compiled by the movement's key proponents including, for example, Groote's *De sacris libris studendis*, and Florens Radewijn's *Propositum*.¹² The appreciation for books was shared by the monastic branch of the movement.¹³ John à Kempis, first prior of Mount St. Agnes, also worked on writing and even illuminating books. In the *Chronicle*, his brother Thomas left his readers in no doubt as to the crucial role of books.¹⁴

"The books by the Doctors are the treasuries of clerks [that is the clergy]...for a clerk without holy books is like a soldier without weapons...Likewise a monastery and congregation of clerks without

⁶ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 431

⁷ Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Beyond the Market: Books as gifts in sixteenth-century France', *TRHS* 5th Series Vol. 33 (1983), p. 72

⁸ Following the attack of the Dominican Matthew Grabow (at the council of Constance) upon the communal life of the Brethren; Gerard Zutphen was especially dynamic in the defence of the Brethren. See Van Engen, (ed.), *Devotio Moderna*, p. 13; Landeen, 'Devotio Moderna, Part I', pp. 197-198; Post, *Modern Devotion*, pp. 282, 286-290; Lourdaux, 'Dirk of Herxen's tract', pp. 312-336

⁹ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 417; see also Van Engen, 'A Brabantine Perspective', p. 29

¹⁰ Epiney-Burgard, *Gerard Groote*, p. 143

¹¹ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 416

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 413-425

¹³ Thomas à Kempis, *The Chronicle of the Canons Regular of Mount St. Agnes* (London, 1906), p. 13

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37

holy books is like a kitchen without pots, a table without foods, a well without water".¹⁵

The sheer quantity of Imitatio manuscripts was aided by the geographical position of the *devotio moderna*, which ensured easy access to German-speaking lands. That location no doubt contributed to the rapid growth of the Brethren of Common Life and the Windesheim Congregation, from which, in turn, the circulation of the Imitatio no doubt greatly benefitted. The Sisters of Common Life, who underwent a greater expansion than the Brothers, had 40-50 houses in 1424, 70 in 1439 and 82 by 1470, a year before the first printed edition of the Imitatio.¹⁶ By 1500, there were approximately 40 male and 90 female houses.¹⁷ In Germany, the union of Münster had 14 Sister houses by 1476, three more than the Brothers.¹⁸

The Windesheim canons enjoyed a similarly successful expansion, with 71 monasteries and 13 convents by 1475 and a total of 92 houses within a hundred years of the foundation in 1387.¹⁹ The distribution of the Imitatio within these houses undoubtedly benefitted from the close co-operation between different communities. The formation of the Windesheim Congregation, which encouraged regular meetings between different monasteries, was paralleled by the creation of unions for the Brethren.²⁰ Communication, and hence the distribution of manuscripts, was intensified by the close co-operation between the different communities, unions and *colloquia*. Moreover, the lending of manuscripts was itself considered to be an act of mercy.²¹

The provenances and colophons of extant manuscripts of the Imitatio point to the centrality of the Brethren of Common Life and the Windesheim Congregation in the early circulation of the Imitatio. The following communities were in possession of the Imitatio from an early stage: the monastery of Eemstein, one of the four founding

¹⁵ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 417

¹⁶ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 271

¹⁷ Van Engen, 'Virtues, Brothers and Schools', p. 178

¹⁸ Landeen, '*Devotio Moderna*, Part I', p. 173

¹⁹ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 511; Landeen, '*Devotio Moderna*, Part I', p. 172; Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 139

²⁰ Landeen, '*Devotio Moderna*, Part II', pp. 237-241

²¹ Davis, 'Beyond the Market', p. 72

members of the Windesheim Congregation,²² communities at Buxheim,²³ Frenswegen,²⁴ Diepenveen (canonesses),²⁵ the Cologne Brotherhouse in Weidenbach,²⁶ Utrecht,²⁷ Windesheim,²⁸ Nijmegen (completed in 1427),²⁹ St. Bethlehem near Louvain (3 copies)³⁰ and St. Agnes (with Kempis' own manuscript hand).³¹

Knowledge of the Imitatio was also transmitted by contemporary witnesses associated with the *devotio moderna*. Hermann Ryd, a Windesheim Brother, confirmed Kempis' authorship: "The brother who has composed the book of the Imitatio is called Thomas; he is sub-prior of the monastery of St. Agnes, near Zwolle".³² Wessel Gansfort is said, by his biographer Hardenberg, to have been so moved by the Imitatio that he went to live in Zwolle, in order to be near to Mount St. Agnes.³³ John Mombaer, who was a novice at St. Agnes, wrote his Rosetum Spiritualium Exercitiorum shortly after Kempis' death and quoted therein several sentences from the Imitatio.³⁴ In another work, the Venatorium, Mombaer wrote that "Brother Thomas à Kempis, among other works which he made, composed the little book, Qui sequitur me, which some attributed falsely to Dominus Gerson".³⁵ The Windesheim Chronicler,

²² Axters, De imitatione Christi, p. 38

²³ Ibid., p. 43

²⁴ Ibid., p. 46

²⁵ Ibid., p. 48; Van Engen, 'The Virtues', p. 183; Landeen, 'Devotio Moderna, Part I', p. 172; Post, Modern Devotion, p. 266

²⁶ Axters, De imitatione Christi, p. 53; Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 179

²⁷ Axters, De imitatione Christi, p. 84

²⁸ Ibid., p. 93

²⁹ Ibid., p. 42; see also Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 179; Post, Modern Devotion, p. 421

³⁰ Axters, De imitatione Christi, pp. 39, 41, 74

³¹ Ibid., pp. 64, 95. The Imitatio was also distributed within some Beguine communities [ibid., p. 58]. Although the Brethren were keen to distance themselves from the Beguines, their way of life and spirituality closely resembled each other. Moreover, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, one of the four Beguine houses in Wesel, called the Mariengarten, was transformed into a house for the Sisters of the Common Life. William Landeen, 'The beginnings of the *Devotio Moderna* in Germany, Part II', RSSCW Vol. XIX., No. 4, (December 1951), pp. 226-228

³² L. Wheatley, The Story of the Imitatio Christi (London, 1891), p. 132

³³ Wessel Gansfort, Life and Writings (by Edward Miller) & Principal Works (translated by Jared Scudder) (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1917), Vol. I., pp. 45-47, Vol. II., p. 341; Wessel Gansfort, Opera (facsimile of the 1614 Groningen edition) (Nieuwkoop, B. de Graaf, 1966), **8^v

³⁴ Debonnie, and Huijben, L'auteur ou les auteurs, pp. 137-142; Wheatley, The Story, p. 133

³⁵ The great reforming abbot of Spanheim, Trithemius, wrote a history of great German men, in which he included Kempis, noting his authorship of the Imitatio. Wheatley, The Story, pp. 133-135

Johannes Busch, referred to Kempis's authorship in his Chronicon Windeshemense; "quorum unus frater Thomas de Kempis vir probatae vitae, qui plures devotos tractatulos composuit, videlicet, qui sequitur me, de Imitatione Christi cum aliis".³⁶ The authority of this attribution is extremely significant since Busch's itinerancy and intense activity in monastic reform inevitably provided him with an intimate knowledge of the *devotio moderna*.³⁷

The movement's commitment to Observant reform contributed to the circulation of the Imitatio, since the implementation of reform included the promotion and distribution of devotional texts. This is of no little significance when one considers that the Windesheim Congregation was responsible for the reform of over three hundred monasteries.³⁸ The Augustinian priory of Marbach, founded in 1090, was reformed by Windesheim canons and was incorporated into the Windesheim Congregation in 1462. Marbach's library consisted of several Imitatio manuscript excerpts.³⁹ The 1525 reading list for the community of St. Martin's in Louvain prescribed the Imitatio for novices and professing brothers.⁴⁰ The circulation of the Imitatio sometimes preceded the date that communities joined the Windesheim Congregation. The Gaesdonck Codex, for example, was copied in the Augustinian monastery of Bethlehem near Doetinchem in 1427, three years before the community joined the Windesheim Congregation.⁴¹

The Windesheim contribution to monastic reform (and hence the diffusion of the Imitatio) was not restricted to Augustinian Canons Regular. It also extended to

³⁶ Karl Grube, (ed.), Des Augustiner propstes Johannes Busch: Chronicon Windeshemense und Liber de reformatione monasteriorum (Halle, 1886), p. 58; Hyma also referred to the testimony of Herman Rijd, who had talked with Kempis himself. Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 179

³⁷ Grube, Johannes Busch, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi; Post, Modern Devotion, pp. 508-516; Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 142

³⁸ Landeen, 'Devotio Moderna, Part I', p. 173

³⁹ Jean-Luc Eichenlaub, 'Marbach et la devotio moderna. À propos de quelques manuscrits de l'Abbaye de Marbach', in Jean-Marie Cauchies, (ed.), La dévotion moderne dans les pays bourguignons et rhénans des origines à la fin du XVIe siècle (Neuchâtel, 1989), pp. 69-75

⁴⁰ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', pp. 429-430. The library of St. Martin's of Louvain contained the works not only of Kempis and Zutphen, but also those of Pierre d'Ailly, Jean Gerson, Nicholas de Clamanges and Heinrich Suso's Horologium. W. Lourdaux, 'Dévotion Moderne et Humanisme Chrétien', in Mag Verbeke, and J. Ijsewijn, (eds.), The Late Middle Ages and the dawn of Humanism outside Italy (Louvain University Press, 1972), pp. 67-68; see also Van Engen, 'Church in the Fifteenth Century', p. 323

⁴¹ Debongnie, L'auteur ou les auteurs, p. 69

Benedictine, Carthusian, Cistercian and Premonstratensian communities.⁴² The admiration for the Carthusian Order in the communities of the *devotio moderna* was frequently expressed in contemporary chronicles,⁴³ and intimated shared interests - especially regarding the promotion of devotional literature.⁴⁴ The Carthusian prior of Monnikuizen, Heinrich Kalkar, who was fundamental to Groote's conversion, later became prior of St. Barbara in Cologne.⁴⁵ The library of St. Barbara was one of the richest and largest in that city, holding many works related to the *devotio moderna*, including six manuscripts and 20 early printed editions of the *Imitatio*.⁴⁶ Moreover, the community at St. Barbara had important contacts with the Brethren in Cologne and Westphalia.⁴⁷ Axter's bibliography lists an impressive selection of *Imitatio* manuscripts copied by Carthusians and/or with Carthusian provenances. In addition to St. Barbara, copies were found in Basle,⁴⁸ Brussels,⁴⁹ Avignon,⁵⁰ Mainz (six copies),⁵¹ Milan,⁵² Olmütz⁵³ and Utrecht (three copies).⁵⁴ The Carthusian contribution to the *Imitatio* confirms the assertion that they were vital to "the increased book production of the *devotio moderna*".⁵⁵

⁴² Hyma, *Christian Renaissance*, p. 144

⁴³ Landeen, 'Devotio Moderna, Part I', p. 164; note Kempis' words, "Amongst the Carthusians indeed the light of the Heavenly life had remained, though hidden". Kempis, *Founders of the New Devotion*, p. 9

⁴⁴ Gerard Achten, 'Die Kartäuser und die mittelalterlichen Frömmigkeitsbewegungen', in Werner Schäfke, (ed.), *Die Kölner Kartause um 1500* (Cologne, 1991), p. 142. Note also the similarities between Carthusian and Windesheim/Brethren of Common Life statutes. Epiney-Burgard, *Gerard Grote*, p. 57

⁴⁵ For the relationship between Kalkar and Groote, see Epiney-Burgard, *Gerard Grote*, pp. 39-40, 51. This is largely based upon Kempis' own biography of the founder. Kempis, *Founders of the New Devotion*, p. 14

⁴⁶ Haude, 'Silent Monks' p. 127; Axters, p. 37; James Hogg, 'Die Kartause, Köln und Europa: Gelehrte Kartäuser zwischen Reform, Reformation und Gegenreformation', in Werner Schäfke, (ed.), *Die Kölner Kartause um 1500* (Cologne, 1991), p. 172

⁴⁷ Ward, 'Influence of Jean Gerson', p. 179

⁴⁸ Axters, p. 36

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 61

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 69

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84

For additional copies with Carthusian links, see *ibid.*, pp. 38, 39, 41, 44, 88

⁵⁵ Ward, 'Influence of Jean Gerson', p. 178

The Benedictines also played a considerable role in the diffusion and reception of the Imitatio. The Codex Mellicensis of the Imitatio was probably given by representatives of Windesheim to the Benedictine monastery of Melk when they met at the Council of Constance.⁵⁶ The Imitatio was disseminated in Italian translation by Ludovico Barbo, founder of the Reformed Benedictine congregation of St. Giustina.⁵⁷ His community's library possessed multiple copies of the Imitatio.⁵⁸ This was replicated in other Benedictine monasteries of the same Congregation, like that of San Giorgio in Alga.⁵⁹ Other Benedictine monasteries with manuscript copies of the Imitatio included Melk (another two copies with explicit references to the monastery), Tegernsee (four copies),⁶⁰ St. Clement's monastery in the diocese of Osnabruck (two copies),⁶¹ Ebersberg,⁶² Zwiefalten in Württemberg⁶³ and the Schotten monastery in Vienna.⁶⁴

The English context provides an insight into the contribution of the religious orders in circulating the Imitatio. The Carthusian and Bridgettine communities played a prominent role in the diffusion of devotional literature in late medieval England.⁶⁵ The Latin text of the Imitatio was allegedly brought to England as early as the 1430s by the Carthusians, with the result that 17 Latin manuscripts of English origin have survived.⁶⁶ The earliest surviving Latin manuscript copied in England was written by John Dygon, a member of the Sheen Charterhouse, and is dated 1438. Two out of the four surviving English manuscripts were written by Sheen scribes, Stephen Dodesham

⁵⁶ Hyma, Christian Renaissance, pp. 178-179. The *devotio moderna* were represented at the Council of Constance by John Vos and John Wale, prior of Zwolle. Kempis, Chronicle, pp. 66-67

⁵⁷ Anne-Jacobson Schutte, 'Printing, piety and people in Italy', ARG 71 (1980), p. 11

⁵⁸ Collett, Italian Benedictine Scholars, p. 6 I have not been able to obtain a copy of R. Pitigliani's Il Venerabile Ludovico Barbo e la diffusione dell' Imitazione di Cristo per opera della Congregazione di Santa Giustina (Padua, 1943), which Collett used regarding the Imitatio. See Axters, p. 49

⁵⁹ Axters, pp. 61-62

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 61-63, 66, 68

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 69

⁶² Ibid., p. 81

⁶³ Ibid., p. 81

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 89

⁶⁵ See Michael Sargent, 'The Transmission by the English Carthusians of some late Medieval Spiritual Writings', JEH Vol. 27, No. 3 (July 1976), pp. 225-239; R. N. Swanson, Church and Society in late Medieval England (Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989), p. 264

⁶⁶ Brendan Biggs, 'The Style of the First English Translation of the Imitatio Christi', in Roger Ellis, and René Tixier, (eds.), The Medieval Translator: Traduire au Moyen Âge, Vol. 5, (Brepols, Turnhout, 1996), p. 187

and William Darker (with the latter written for Elizabeth Gibbs, Abbess of Syon).⁶⁷ On the eve of the Reformation, the Imitatio was known in at least four out of nine English Charterhouses: Sheen, London, Witham and Hinton.⁶⁸

The Imitatio was also read and copied within the Bridgettine community of Syon, a crucial religious centre during that period.⁶⁹ Mary Bateson identified four manuscript copies of the Imitatio in the catalogue for the Syon community.⁷⁰ There was, furthermore, a great deal of interaction between different monastic communities, thereby facilitating the circulation of religious works. Syon was not far from the Sheen Charterhouse and members of these communities frequently collaborated in the composition and translation of religious works. Yet, in the case of these English communities, the influence of the Imitatio tended to be restricted to cloistered confines. As Roger Lovatt pointed out, though translation of religious texts into the vernacular was normally undertaken with the intention of broadening a text's circulation, this does not seem to have been the aim of the translators in the case of the Imitatio, or if it was, the aim was not achieved. The analysis of annotations made to English manuscripts of the Imitatio shows that the chapters with the traditional, monastic flavour attracted the most attention.⁷¹

The rapid circulation of manuscript copies was both the beneficiary of the universal accessibility of Latin within learned circles and also the product of the early translation of manuscripts from the Latin. If the use of Latin did not necessarily ensure a greater degree of textual standardisation, it at least facilitated the transmission of the Imitatio across geographical and linguistic boundaries. Such was the popularity of the text (within monastic circles) in England that there were three different manuscript recensions in Latin, thereby illustrating that Latin adaptations could change and that

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 188; see also Brendan Biggs, 'The language of the Scribes of the First English Translation of the Imitatio Christi', Leeds Studies in English New Series, 26 (1995), pp. 80-86. For Dodesham's copy, see Axters, p. 48; for Darker's copy, see Axters, p. 50

⁶⁸ Roger Lovatt, 'The Imitation of Christ in late Medieval England', RHT 5th Series 18 (1968), p. 111

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 112

⁷⁰ The catalogue is dated from the sixteenth century. See M26, M86, M112 and N37. Mary Bateson, The Catalogue of Syon Monastery (Cambridge University Press, 1898), pp. v, 102-127

⁷¹ Lovatt, 'Imitation of Christ', p. 116

Latin did not necessarily standardise texts.⁷² It is clear that the vast majority of manuscripts in the fifteenth century were copied in Latin.⁷³ The use of Latin presented a basic text from which new and revised vernacular translations could be made.

The emergence of the Vernacular

It is striking how early the vernacular tradition of the Imitatio took hold. The Imitatio appeared in Middle Dutch as early as it did in Latin.⁷⁴ Of all the vernacular manuscripts, those in Dutch were clearly predominant (with a total of 80 manuscripts).⁷⁵ The German context constitutes the second richest vernacular diffusion of the Imitatio, with approximately 32 manuscripts.⁷⁶ The first extant German translation was completed in the Cologne Brotherhouse of Weidenbach as early as 1434.⁷⁷ With regard to the Italian text, Ludovico Barbo and Lorenzo Giustiniani, bishop of Treviso (1437-1443), were fundamental to the dissemination of the Imitatio.⁷⁸ The French tradition of the text included 21 manuscripts.⁷⁹ The French translation by David Aubert was commissioned by Philip the Good in 1447.⁸⁰ The third wife of Philip the Good, Isabella of Portugal, commissioned in 1467 a Portuguese priest, Joao Alvarez, to translate the Imitatio into Portuguese.⁸¹ As for Spain, the eminent reformer, primate and Archbishop of Toledo, Francesco Cisneros, was much

⁷² Ibid., pp. 97-121; Biggs, Imitation of Christ pp. xxxv-xxxviii

⁷³ Axters, De imitatione Christi

⁷⁴ Van Engen, 'Church in the Fifteenth Century', p. 308

⁷⁵ There are approximately 80 Dutch manuscripts in Axters, of which six are no longer extant since 1801. Axters, De imitatione Christi

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 53; Landeen, 'Devotio Moderna, Part I', p. 195; Marion Grams-Thieme, 'Die Kölner Kartause und ihre Beziehungen zu den Niederlanden', in Werner Schäfke, (ed.), Die Kölner Kartause um 1500 (Cologne, 1991), p. 360

⁷⁸ P.E. Puyol, Descriptions bibliographiques des manuscrits et des principales éditions du livre de Imitatione Christi (Paris, 1898); Denys Hay, The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 97-98

⁷⁹ Axters, De imitatione Christi

⁸⁰ The Imitation of Christ being the Autograph manuscript of Thomas à Kempis. De imitatione Christi, reproduced in facsimile from the Original preserved in the Royal Library at Brussels, with introduction by Charles Ruelens (London, 1885), p. 5

⁸¹ Monique Somme, 'Le Testament d'Isabelle de Portugal et la dévotion moderne', in Cauchies, (ed.), La dévotion moderne, p. 35

influenced by the *devotio moderna* and later commissioned a printed edition of the Imitatio.⁸² The spread of manuscript copies of the Imitatio could hardly have eluded the Spanish religious, particularly the Observant movement of which the Benedictines formed an integral part.⁸³

The importance of the vernacular in the circulation of the text can hardly be overstated. It contributed to its dissemination in non-Latinate circles, which had important ramifications not only for the laity but also for the communities of the *devotio moderna*. Although vernacular devotional literature played an important role within the Windesheim Congregation, it was to be found more in the libraries of female than male convents.⁸⁴ This was generally replicated in the communities of both the Brothers and Sisters of Common Life. The main lives of the devout (members of the *devotio moderna*) were translated into Middle Dutch for the Sisters and lay brothers.⁸⁵ The use of the vernacular by members of the *devotio moderna* was of such importance that "for the Church to prohibit religious literature in the vernacular would have cut off numerous members of devout communities...from their spiritual nourishment".⁸⁶ In many cases, the vernacular was specifically used to target the lay members of the communities.

The early association of the Imitatio with the laity was fundamental to its circulation. It is clear that manuscript books copied by the Brethren were intended not only for the use of their own houses, but also for other communities and for the laity.⁸⁷ Moreover, the Brethren were on occasions invited to the houses of the laity and the circulation of books was clearly a central feature of their apostolic activity.⁸⁸ Similarly, despite the enclosed nature of most monasteries, their promotion of devotional literature was not always solely confined to their own members. In 1440, the western wing of the Mount St. Agnes monastery was constructed for the sake of accommodating guests

⁸² Mark Rotsaert, Ignace de Loyola et les renouveaux spirituels en Castille au début du XVIe siècle (Rome, 1982), p. 26

⁸³ Rotsaert, Ignace de Loyola, pp. 43-48

⁸⁴ Weiler, 'Recent historiography', p. 169

⁸⁵ Van Engen, 'The Virtues', p. 184

⁸⁶ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', p. 435

⁸⁷ L.A. Sheppard, 'Printing at Deventer in the fifteenth century', Lib. 4th Series, Vol. 24, No. 3, (December 1943), p. 102

⁸⁸ William Landeen, 'The beginnings of the *Devotio Moderna*, Part III', RSSCW Vol. 21., No. 4, (December, 1953), p. 277

and lay workmen in the household.⁸⁹ By the mid-fifteenth century, most German Charterhouses provided vernacular manuscripts for lay brethren.⁹⁰ In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the Basle Charterhouse regularly loaned its manuscripts and incunabula to non-monastics. The librarians, Georg Carpentarius (d. 1531) and Ludwig Moser (d. 1510) kept a record of approximately 500 books loaned between 1482 and 1528.⁹¹ In Basle, borrowers included secular priests, schoolteachers, university students and professors.⁹² Likewise, Syon abbey received numerous visitors. Though a contemplative community, it was used by the laity as a retreat centre and was vital to the nurturing of lay piety.⁹³

It is highly probable that some fifteenth-century translators adapted the text to cater a lay readership more easily. The first French translation of the Imitatio, entitled the Internelle Consolation, demonstrates an attempt to incorporate lay spirituality. As the editors of the critical edition of the Internelle pointed out,

'L'Internelle Consolation, c'est une sorte de petit commentaire qui intervient à chaque instant dans la version française. Afin d'abaisser le traité ascétique à la portée des esprits les plus humbles et des intelligences les moins cultivées, le traducteur a soin d'éclaircir le sens, quand il lui paroît obscur, de le préciser, lors qu'il lui semble vague...il explique les métaphores qu'il rencontre dans le latin'.⁹⁴

By the interpretative process of translation, translators simplified language. They elaborated the text in order to accommodate a non-Latinate readership. In addition to the type of translations, lay appropriation of the Imitatio is principally seen in the

⁸⁹ Kempis, Chronicle, p. 86 Whether guests had access to books is less clear.

⁹⁰ Martin, Nicholas Kempf, p. 123; Achten, 'Die Kartäuser', p. 144

⁹¹ Martin, Nicholas Kempf, p. 231

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Roger Ellis, 'Further Thoughts on the Spirituality of Syon Abbey', in William Pollard & Robert Boenig, (eds.), Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England (D. S. Brewer, 1997), p. 220

⁹⁴ Le livre de l'Internelle Consolation: première version française de L'Imitation de Jésus Christ, avec une introduction par L. Moland & Ch. d'Hericault (Paris, 1856), p. 31. This translation, as it was re-composed in the sixteenth century, will be addressed in chapter four.

commissioning of translations by secular patrons. Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, commissioned a translation, which was undertaken by his aforementioned secretary, Aubert.⁹⁵ This was followed, shortly afterwards, by another French version, commissioned by Margaret of York, wife of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and sister of Edward IV.⁹⁶

The manuscript circulation of the Imitatio was founded upon the copying tradition of the *devotio moderna*. In providing income for the communities, the manuscripts also helped to nurture the spiritual lives of the copyists and readers. With the geographical location of the *devotio moderna*, the rapid growth of the movement greatly contributed to the diffusion of the Imitatio. Provenances from manuscripts illustrate that the early distribution of the Imitatio principally concerned the communities of the *devotio moderna* - indeed there are a selection of contemporary witnesses to the Imitatio. The involvement of the Windesheim Congregation with the Observant reform movement and the interest of the *devotio moderna* in lay piety helped to promote the distribution of the Imitatio in different circles. Its monastic flavour was appreciated by the Carthusians and Benedictines in particular. Yet, its vernacular adaptation contributed to its reception within the non-Latinate Sisters of the Common Life and, crucially, for the laity, laid the foundations for its emergence within the printed world.

⁹⁵ Ruelens, Imitation of Christ, p. 5

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 5

Incunabula editions of the Imitatio Christi, c.1472-c.1500.⁹⁷

The remarkable spread in linguistic, numerical and geographical terms of the Imitatio in manuscript form laid the foundations for the printed circulation of the text. The introduction of printing did not, however, lead to any immediate displacement of the manuscript tradition. Within the broader literary context, both manuscripts and printed books persisted.⁹⁸ To this effect, the following manuscript copies of the Imitatio can be identified from Axter's bibliography for the sixteenth century: Latin (17 copies); Dutch (8); French (4); English (2); German (1).⁹⁹ That the Imitatio had formed an integral part of the devotional literature of the pre-1450 period ensured that it was printed from a very early stage. The first printed edition of the Imitatio appeared in Augsburg in *circa* 1472. Paralleling the manuscript tradition, there was a predominance of Latin incunabula editions, accompanied by a significant number of vernacular editions. The significance of the vernacular tradition was even more marked in the first three decades of the sixteenth century (see Table 1.2).

Printers and booksellers were certainly consistent in selecting the Imitatio as a text to be printed. This was in part due to the fact that older, more established works or new translations of old works were generally preferred to original, new compositions during the late medieval period.¹⁰⁰ It was also much easier to translate a text from Latin than to compose a work in a vernacular language that was relatively undeveloped. In the light of this, it is not surprising that the corpus of early printed literature in France was similar to the manuscript tradition. This was largely true of early printed editions in other countries. In England, the choice of works was also conservative, based on well-established appeal.¹⁰¹ The incunabula period was not noticeably adventurous where the

⁹⁷ By incunabula, I mean the period from Johann Gutenberg's invention in c.1450 to c. 1500. Steinberg, Printing, p. 19

⁹⁸ A.S.G. Edwards and Carol M. Meale, 'The marketing of printed books in late medieval England', Lib., 6th Series, Vol. 15, no. 2, (June 1993), p. 95

⁹⁹ Axters, De imitatione Christi. Axters also included seventeenth century (and, in fact, later) manuscripts: Latin (5); French (3); Dutch (2); Greek (2).

¹⁰⁰ Geneviève Hasenohr, 'Religious reading amongst the laity in France in the fifteenth century', in Biller, and Hudson, (eds.), Heresy and Literacy, p. 210; Boffey, 'Wynkyn de Worde', p. 173

¹⁰¹ Edwards and Meale, 'The marketing of printed books', p. 95

thematic content of books was concerned. On the whole, printers during the incunabula period took up successful manuscripts, of which the Imitatio was a classic example.

The similarity between the manuscript tradition and early printed books is manifest in the artifacts themselves. The majority of incunabula editions of the Imitatio closely resembled the manuscript tradition, reinforcing the impression that incunabula printing was not particularly innovative.¹⁰² Firstly, some editions were printed with several columns to a single page.¹⁰³ More importantly, printers would often leave blanks in the place of capitals, which would be subsequently hand-painted.¹⁰⁴ Alternatively, printers would sometimes print a very small letter in order to point out which letter had to be painted by the illuminator.¹⁰⁵ Sometimes, the work of the illuminator was left uncompleted.¹⁰⁶

The conservative nature of incunabula can partly be attributed to the association of the early printing industry with monastic communities, notably Charterhouses. In this early phase, printers were restricted by the limited number of works to which they had access. Printers understandably turned to monasteries for manuscripts. Given the manuscript circulation of the Imitatio within monasteries, the connection between early printing presses and monasteries contributed greatly to the transmission of the Imitatio. William Caxton's successors as printers, Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde, were in close contact with the Bridgettine and Carthusian communities situated near London.¹⁰⁷ Despite their contemplative spirit, they greatly influenced the thematic content of this early phase of printing by providing works of spirituality in manuscript

¹⁰² See Sandra Hindman, 'Cross-fertilization: experiments in mixing the media', in Sandra Hindman, and James Farquar, (eds.), Pen to Press: Illustrated manuscripts and printed books in the first century of Printing (John Hopkins University, 1977), p. 102

¹⁰³ L1488a; L1488d; L1494, Kempis' Opera Omnia printed in Nuremberg by Caspar Hochfeder; L[14??]

¹⁰⁴ See also the vernacular tradition: F[1489-1490]; F1493, where the capitals are hand-painted red and blue. Another copy of the latter edition (BN) has an illustrated capital for the first word of the title page. See also the German tradition, especially G1486. For the Latin tradition, see L1492a

¹⁰⁵ See L1494Op

¹⁰⁶ L1503a. There is a striking example, albeit unrelated to the Imitatio, of an edition of Johannes Cassianus' Collationes Patrum, in which the rubricator painted two initials in one spot. Hesitant about the intended meaning of the text, the rubricator left the interpretation of the text to the reader. Elly Cockx-Indestege, 'Marks in books printed by the Brothers of the Common Life in Brussels: Production and Reception', PBSA (1997), p. 628

¹⁰⁷ Steinberg, Printing, p. 75

form, in preparation for publication. Similarly, the relationship between the St. Barbara Charterhouse and Cologne printers clearly affected the choice of texts to be printed.¹⁰⁸ The Basle Charterhouse had contact with the printers Johannes Amerbach and Jerome Froben, who borrowed books from their library.¹⁰⁹ In fact, relations between Charterhouses extended to a broad geographical scope. In 1532, the prior of the London Charterhouse, John Houghton, ordered ten copies of all the recently printed devotional books from Dietrich Loher, including twenty copies of the De contemptu mundi.¹¹⁰

Some printing presses were actually set up in monasteries. In Strasbourg, Henri Eggestein, who worked from 1466 to 1484, printed Ludolph of Saxony's Vita Christi, for which he had transferred his printing press to a Carthusian monastery.¹¹¹ Günther Zainer, who had completed his apprenticeship in Strasbourg, was called to Augsburg by the Abbot of St. Ulrich and Afra. On that community's press, Zainer printed the first extant edition of the Imitatio in *circa* 1472, only a year after Thomas à Kempis's death.¹¹² From 1475, Anton Sorg worked on abbey premises and quickly started to print vernacular texts. He was responsible for the earliest German incunabula edition of the Imitatio, printed in 1486 at Augsburg.¹¹³ Another edition followed in 1493.¹¹⁴ Monasteries, moreover, clearly benefitted from their association with printing presses.¹¹⁵ Adolphe Rusch, another Strasbourg printer, whose activity spanned the years 1466-1489, donated 15 editions of the Imitatio to the Basle Charterhouse.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ Laviece Ward, 'The influence of Jean Gerson, and the *Devotio Moderna* on the Fasciculus Temporum of Werner Rolevinck', AC 62 (Salzburg, 1993), pp. 171-188. The first printed edition of Kempis' Opera Omnia (printed in 1492 by Caspar Hochfeder in Nuremberg) included a preface written by the prior of the Nuremberg Charterhouse, Georg Pirckamer. L1492Op

¹⁰⁹ Martin, Nicholas Kempf, p. 231

¹¹⁰ Though this may be Dionysius the Carthusian's work, it is still illuminative in showing the distribution network. Hogg, 'Die Kartause', p. 180

¹¹¹ François Ritter, Histoire de l'imprimerie Alsacienne aux XVe et XVIe siècles (Éditions Le Roux, Strasbourg and Paris, 1955), p. 41

¹¹² See L[1471]; Steinberg, Printing, pp. 44-45; Victor Scholderer, 'Notes on Early Augsburg Printing', Lib., 5th Series, Vol. VI., No.1 (June 1951), p. 3

¹¹³ G1486

¹¹⁴ G1493

¹¹⁵ For the mutual benefits of connections between monasteries and early printers, see Laviece Ward, 'The influence of Jean Gerson, and the *Devotio Moderna* on the Fasciculus Temporum of Werner Rolevinck', AC 62 (Salzburg, 1993), pp. 171-188

¹¹⁶ Ritter, Histoire de l'imprimerie, p. 50

Presumably, these were copies of the Latin edition, which he had printed in Strasbourg.¹¹⁷

The Brethren of Common Life were also involved in their own printing enterprises, though this was not a widespread phenomenon.¹¹⁸ Deventer's two printers, Jacobus de Breda and Richard Pafraet, printed some 500 editions between them during the period 1477 to 1500.¹¹⁹ Other presses were established at Marienthal (1474) and Rostock (1476).¹²⁰ The Brotherhouse in Brussels worked the only printing press in that city during the fifteenth century,¹²¹ the first product of which was a collection of Jean Gerson's *Opuscula*.¹²² There are no extant editions of the *Imitatio* from this press, a surprising statistic which is, nonetheless, consistent with the other printing presses of the Brethren. Their presses tended to avoid printing any works composed by members of the *devotio moderna*.¹²³ That there were so few printed editions of works originally composed by members of the *devotio moderna* can perhaps be explained by the limited benefits of reprinting treatises of which they already had numerous manuscript copies in their community libraries.

Patterns of Distribution

The distribution of the *Imitatio* included virtually all the key printing centres, particularly during the incunabula period. The number of incunabula editions of the *Imitatio* is striking enough. Yet, the sheer number of printing centres that brought out editions of the *Imitatio* in the pre-1500 period, both in Latin (Table 1.4) and in the

¹¹⁷ L1489g

¹¹⁸ William Landeen, 'The beginnings of the *Devotio Moderna*, Part IV', *RSSCW* Vol. 22, No. 1 (March, 1954), pp. 65-66; Ward, 'Influence of Jean Gerson', p. 184; Post, *Modern Devotion*, pp. 551-553

¹¹⁹ L.A. Sheppard, 'Printing at Deventer in the fifteenth century', *Lib.*, 4th Series, Vol. 24, No. 3, (December 1943), p. 101; Severin Corsten, 'Köln und die Ausbreitung der Buchdruckerkunst in den Niederlanden', *Q* Vol. 1 (1971), p. 180

¹²⁰ Sheppard, 'Printing at Deventer', p. 103

¹²¹ Anne Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs des XVe et XVIe siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle* (Nieuwkoop, B. de Graaf, 1975), p. 66; Herman Pleij, 'Dutch literature and the printing press: the first fifty years', *GJ* (1987), p. 55

¹²² Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs*, p. 66

¹²³ Post, *Modern Devotion*, p. 553

vernacular (Table 1.5) is truly remarkable.¹²⁴ Two thirds of all incunabula works were printed in 12 centres: Augsburg, Basle, Cologne, Florence, Leipzig, Lyon, Milan, Nuremberg, Paris, Rome, Strasbourg and Venice.¹²⁵ The Imitatio was printed in all of these cities, with the exception of Leipzig. Paris and Venice produced the greatest number of editions of the Imitatio, both during the incunabula phase and in the first three decades of the sixteenth century (Table 1.2).

With 21 different printing centres for Latin incunabula editions of the Imitatio, its circulation was certainly widespread. The prominence of Paris (13) and Lyon (4) reflects the dynamism of the French printing trade which was, nevertheless, dominated by these two key centres. In the case of Paris, it was a dynamism which extended beyond the fifteenth century. The diversity of Italian printing centres (Brescia, Florence, Milan, Rome and Venice) illustrates how rapidly the Italian city states adapted to the new technology. Most prominent of all are the nine cities from the German-speaking lands, the birthplace of the printing press. The absence of English incunabula editions appears to reinforce Roger Lovatt's argument that the circulation of the Imitatio was "restricted to a small, conservative, intellectual and spiritual élite", since it was confined to monastic circles.¹²⁶ More importantly, it illustrates the small size of the English domestic printing industry.

The geographical distribution of editions reveals the predominance of France, Germany and Italy (Table 1.3). Despite the Netherlandish origins of the *devotio moderna* there is a relative absence of Dutch incunabula of the Imitatio: this can be explained by the pointlessness of printing a text with a widespread manuscript circulation in the communities of the *devotio moderna*, which would also have satisfied a lay readership, and therefore a saturated market. However, this changed in the early decades of the sixteenth century (Table 1.5), particularly with the rising importance of Antwerp as a printing centre (Table 1.2). The vernacular tradition of the text also reflected the remarkable geographical dispersal of editions, with 39 editions being

¹²⁴ See Appendix.

¹²⁵ Gerulutis, Printing and Publishing, p. 59

¹²⁶ Roger Lovatt, 'The Imitation of Christ in late medieval England', RHT, 5th Series, 18, (1968), p. 114

produced in 16 different centres. (Table 1.5). Spain had six centres which printed the Imitatio. The absence of English incunabula was compensated for with the appropriation of the Imitatio by the printers Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde.

The Imitatio often appeared as one of the earliest texts to be printed on newly-established printing presses. In Strasbourg for instance, the Alsatian printer, Martin Flach, printed the Imitatio, and was followed by Jean Pruss.¹²⁷ Later, Georg Mittelhus moved from his native Strasbourg and was the last Alsatian to establish himself in Paris during the fifteenth century. His motives for printing the Imitatio in Paris may have been the result of his appreciation for the text's popularity in Strasbourg.¹²⁸ The rapid growth of the printing industry in Strasbourg attracted the brothers Günther and Jean Zainer (from Reutlingen), both of whom became printers. Günther established the first press in Augsburg, whose activity spanned a ten year period and included the aforementioned first printed edition of the Imitatio.¹²⁹ Jean Zainer moved to Ulm where he also introduced printing.¹³⁰ He printed two Latin editions of the Imitatio in 1487 and one German edition approximately a year later.¹³¹

The circulation of the Imitatio within the early phase of printing was also true in Spain. The Great Trading Company of Ravensburg, which controlled most of the trade with Spain, was instrumental in the foundation of presses in Barcelona, Burgos, Seville and Valencia.¹³² Indeed, it provided Spain with her first printers.¹³³ By 1500, editions of the Imitatio had already been printed in all of these towns, as well as in Toledo and Saragossa (Table 1.5).¹³⁴ In 1490, Queen Isabel commissioned the first work to be printed in Seville, a Spanish dictionary by the four *Compañeros Alemanes*.¹³⁵ This was

¹²⁷ L1487d; L1489f

¹²⁸ L1496a

¹²⁹ Günther Zainer: L[1471]; Ritter, p. 34

¹³⁰ Ritter, Histoire de l'imprimerie, p. 34

¹³¹ Jean Zainer: L1487e, L1487f, G[1488]. Mathias van der Goes, who had the first press in Antwerp, also printed the Imitatio. L[1486-1491]

¹³² Steinberg, Printing, p. 40

¹³³ Ibid., p. 70

¹³⁴ S1482; S1495; S1496; S1491; S1500; L1490

¹³⁵ Steinberg, Printing, p. 70; F. J. Norton, Printing in Spain: 1501-1520, with a note on the early editions of the 'Celestina' (Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 8

followed, in 1493 and 1496, by two Spanish editions of the Imitatio.¹³⁶ The most important press in Seville was established by Jacob Cromberger in 1502.¹³⁷ He printed a Spanish translation of the Imitatio in 1516.¹³⁸

Cardinal Francesco Ximenes appointed Arnão Guillén de Brocar of Pamplona as printer to the university of Alcalá.¹³⁹ Before his appointment, Brocar had already printed a Spanish edition of the Imitatio in Logroño.¹⁴⁰ Brocar had numerous contacts outside Alcalá and Logroño, including Fadrique de Basilea at Burgos. The connection was sufficiently significant for him to have a variant block of his device cut for use at Burgos.¹⁴¹ Friedrich Biel, as Fadrique was known, printed editions of the Imitatio in 1495 and 1516.¹⁴² Brocar's successor was Miguel de Eguía, who also printed the Imitatio.¹⁴³ In 1525, Eguía and the aforementioned Jacob Cromberger agreed to sell one another's publications.¹⁴⁴ In fact, Cromberger also bought the right to print the first edition of Erasmus' Enchiridion.¹⁴⁵ The Imitatio was later reprinted by Juan Brocar, who began printing at Alcalá in 1538 and inherited much of Eguía's typographical material.¹⁴⁶ The inheriting or sharing of fonts in particular contributed to the circulation of works, given that the purchase of fonts was such an expense.

No city was more influential in the distribution of the Imitatio than Paris. Within three decades of the first press being founded there in 1469, there were already 60 presses in that city.¹⁴⁷ Paris was the centre for the diffusion of the Imitatio; in no other

¹³⁶ S1493; S1496

¹³⁷ Steinberg, Printing, p. 71

¹³⁸ S1516

¹³⁹ Steinberg, Printing, p. 71

¹⁴⁰ S1505; Norton, Printing in Spain p. 7

¹⁴¹ Norton, Printing in Spain, p. 38

¹⁴² The earlier edition included a title enclosed in architectural compartments of Renaissance character, considered a novelty in Spain. S1495; S1516; Norton, Printing in Spain p. 59

¹⁴³ L1526

¹⁴⁴ Norton, Printing in Spain, p. 11. Eguía knew Ignatius of Loyola in Alcalá, and Eguía's brothers were later to join the Society of Jesus. John O'Malley, The First Jesuits (Harvard University press, 1993), p. 27

¹⁴⁵ A. Gordon Kinder, 'Printing and Reformation ideas in Spain', in Jean-François Gilmont, (ed.) The Reformation and the Book (translated by Karin Maag) (Ashgate, 1998), pp. 293-294

¹⁴⁶ Dennis Rhodes, 'Miguel de Eguía and a Spanish edition of Prudentius', GJ (1987), p. 136

¹⁴⁷ Elsbet Colmi, 'Thomas Kees Wesaliensis: aus der Werkstatt eines Weseler Druckers in Paris, 1507-1515/1516', in Festschrift für Josef Benzing: zum sechzigsten Geburtstag. 4. Februar 1964 (Wiesbaden, Guido Pressler, 1964), p. 68

city were more editions of the Imitatio printed during this period (Table 1.2). Parisian printers of the Imitatio were, moreover, at the very forefront of typographical developments in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Jean Petit, who printed several Latin editions of the Imitatio was one of the most enterprising publishers of the period.¹⁴⁸ The other active innovators included Jean Trépperel, Pierre Levet, Michel Le Noir and the brothers de Marnef,¹⁴⁹ all of whom were involved with either Latin or French editions of the Imitatio in the capacity of printer, publisher and/or bookseller.¹⁵⁰ One particularly innovative dimension relates to the development of title pages; there exist eight editions and variants of Imitatio title pages between 1491 and 1496.¹⁵¹

The Italian context was clearly influential in the distribution of the Imitatio. The printing industry in Italy was established in the 1460s by several German printers. In 1469, printing was brought by Johannes of Speyer to Venice,¹⁵² where 14 editions of the Imitatio were printed in the following three decades. In Florence, the large majority of works were printed by or on behalf of a few booksellers, especially Piero Pacini.¹⁵³ That Pacini was not himself a printer is illustrated by the colophon in his edition of the Imitatio: "Impresso in Firenze A petitione di Ser Piero Pacini da Pescia". The Imitatio was printed for Pacini in 1505, by which time eight editions of the text had already appeared.¹⁵⁴ Milan was the third most significant printing centre for the Imitatio. Ulrich Scinzenzeler and Leonard Pachel were associates in Milan for a long period of time and possessed sets of identical types which remained their property even after their partnership ended.¹⁵⁵ Both printed the Imitatio Christi.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁸ Rudolf Hirsch, 'Title pages in French incunables, 1486-1500', GJ (1978), p. 64
L1505; L1513; L[1520]

¹⁴⁹ Hirsch, 'Title pages', p. 64

¹⁵⁰ de Marnef: L1481b; L[1491-1492; L1492c; L[1495]b; L1515

Pierre Levet for Marnef: L1492b

Jean Trépperel: F[1495]

Michel le Noir: F1500

¹⁵¹ Hirsch, 'Title pages in French incunables', GJ (1978), p. 65

¹⁵² Gerulutis, Printing and Publishing, p. 20

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. xix

¹⁵⁴ This is part of the colophon on i8^v. I1505

¹⁵⁵ Luigi Balsamo, 'Annals of G.A. Scinzenzeler, printer in Milan (1500-1526), A supplement', in Denis Reidy, (ed.) The Italian Book: 1465-1800. studies presented to Dennis Rhodes on his 70th Birthday (The British Library, 1993), p. 67

¹⁵⁶ I1489a; L1488c

The circulation of the Imitatio also benefitted from the broad geographical network and, more specifically, the mobility of the printing industry. Printing often interlinked towns and, as a result, knowledge of different texts increased at a tremendous rate. The German Erhard Ratdolt became an important Venetian printer and type-cutter, who was the first to use gold as a typographic colour. He later returned to Augsburg, a centre for illustrated books, where he perfected the art of book decoration.¹⁵⁷ Despite his tendency to print illustrated books, Ratdolt's edition of the Imitatio, printed in Augsburg in 1488, did not contain any woodcuts.¹⁵⁸ Thomas Kees, from Wesel, followed his German compatriots to Paris and in 1513 he printed an edition of the Imitatio.¹⁵⁹ A similar interlinking of printing traditions can be seen in the career of the Flemish humanist printer Josse Bade (1462-1535). Bade, who latinized his name to Jodocus Badius Ascensius (from Aasche near Brussels), printed an edition of the Imitatio in 1500.¹⁶⁰ He later printed Thomas à Kempis' Opera Omnia in Paris.¹⁶¹ He may have become acquainted with Kempis' work during his apprenticeship at the press of Johann Trechsel in Lyons.¹⁶² Trechsel had printed a Latin edition of the Imitatio in 1489.¹⁶³

In a different context, Rusch, the Strasbourg printer of the Imitatio, also worked for the Basle-based John Amerbach and additionally for Antoine Koberger (1445-1503), who was located in Nuremberg. Rusch specified the works he wished to publish, for which he obtained the necessary manuscripts. Perhaps this explains why Koberger later printed the Imitatio.¹⁶⁴ Koberger began to print in 1470 and at his peak he had 24 presses constantly kept at work. He also had others print for him in Haguenau, Basle, Paris and Lyons.¹⁶⁵ John Amerbach was initially employed as a

¹⁵⁷ Gerulutus, Printing and Publishing, pp. 15-17

¹⁵⁸ L1488a

¹⁵⁹ Elsbet Colmi, 'Thomas Kees Wesaliensis: aus der Werkstatt eines Weseler Druckers in Paris, 1507-1515/1516', in Festschrift für Josef Benzing: zum sechzigsten Geburtstag. 4. Februar 1964 (Wiesbaden, Guido Pressler, 1964), pp. 86-87

¹⁶⁰ L1500b

¹⁶¹ L1523

¹⁶² Steinberg, Printing, p. 63

¹⁶³ L1489b

¹⁶⁴ L1492a. Perhaps Koberger also printed the L1487c edition.

¹⁶⁵ Ritter, Histoire de l'imprimerie, p. 495

corrector in Koberger's printing office and subsequently set up his own press in 1476. He also published an edition of the Imitatio in 1487, in Basle.¹⁶⁶ Koberger's productivity and network of contacts indicates how printers, and consequently their books, were seldom restricted to one town.

The English printer William Caxton was especially itinerant, spending time in Cologne and Paris learning about the trade. Though he did not print the Imitatio, he nevertheless provides a useful insight into the close relations between the French and English book trades, pointing to the itinerancy of printers and the way in which this contributed to the flow of books. Caxton frequently referred to French texts in preparing material for the English market. Many of his books were taken from the French context.¹⁶⁷ Eamon Duffy's Stripping of the Altars reveals the remarkable number of English devotional books which were translated from the French in the first half of the sixteenth century.¹⁶⁸

It was not coincidental, therefore, that the first printed English translation of the Imitatio was made from the French, and printed by Caxton's successors Pynson and de Worde.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, the latter's type bore a close resemblance with that used by the Parisian printers Pierre Levet and Jean Higman; it was either obtained from them or from the same type-cutter who cut their fonts.¹⁷⁰ Both Levet and Higman had printed their own separate editions of the Imitatio; ¹⁷¹ perhaps de Worde had observed the popularity of the text in Parisian circles during his visit to the city. This trend points to the centrality of well-established cultural and commercial links between different

¹⁶⁶ L1487b. He also printed Jean Mombaer's Rosetum exercitiorum et sacrarum meditationum in 1494 and in 1504, in addition to a selection of Gabriel Biel's works. Charles Heckerthorn, The Printers of Basle in the XV and XVI Centuries (London, 1897), pp. 27, 63-67

¹⁶⁷ Boffey, 'Wynkyn de Worde', p. 171

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, the following works: Ordynarve of crystyanite or of crysten men (1502); Kalender of Shepherdes (1506/1508); Doctrinal of Sapvence (c. 1489); Book of Good Manners (c. 1490); Lay Folk's Mass Book. Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, pp. 49-118

¹⁶⁹ For de Worde's relations with Caxton, see N. Blake 'Wynkyn de Worde: the early years', GJ (1971), pp. 62-69; Henry Plomer, Wynkyn de Worde and his contemporaries from the death of Caxton to 1535: A chapter in English Printing (London, 1925); N. Blake, 'Wynkyn de Worde: the later years', King's Mother, p. 184; Gordon Duff, Hand-lists of English Printers, 1501-1556 (London, 1895), pp. 1ff; H.S. Bennett, 'Printers, Authors and Readers 1475-1557', Lib. 5th Series, Vol. VI, No. 3, (December 1949), p. 165

¹⁷⁰ Plomer, Wynkyn de Worde pp. 50-51

¹⁷¹ L1492b; L1498a

countries, which facilitated the dissemination of books. The successful transmission of devotional literature across linguistic and geographical borders was encouraged by printers, who were eager to print identifiably successful texts from other countries.

The itinerancy of printers formed part of a broader network of cultural links between regions. Caxton himself had become involved in diplomatic relations between the kings of England and France, and the dukes of Burgundy. England had relatively close commercial ties with the duchy and contemporaries "tended to look to it also as a model for behaviour".¹⁷² The inclusion of the Imitatio in the magnificent library of the Burgundian Dukes must have had a certain influence upon the English market. Philip the Good had already commissioned a French translation by the mid-fifteenth century, as had Margaret of York.¹⁷³ The Burgundian legacy may explain why Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, commissioned William Atkynson to translate the first printed English edition of the Imitatio.¹⁷⁴

Motives for Printing

Another factor contributing to the dissemination of the Imitatio relates to the motives of printers and booksellers. Were they motivated by piety or profit? Printers must have seen the attraction of printing a well-established, manuscript bestseller, and realised that there was definitely a market for devotional literature.¹⁷⁵ Anne-Jacobson Schutte expressed a similar sentiment for the Italian context, which seems to reflect the broader pan-European context:

"printers were businessmen whose survival depended on the sales of their products. They seem to have been prudently conservative. For the most part, they chose works that had circulated widely for many years,

¹⁷² Norman Blake, 'The spread of printing in English during the fifteenth century', GJ (1987), pp. 30-32

¹⁷³ Ruelens, Imitation of Christ, p. 5

¹⁷⁴ E1503

¹⁷⁵ Boffey, 'Wynkyn de Worde', p. 172

even centuries, in manuscript, shying away from recently composed titles of whose popularity they could not be certain".¹⁷⁶

That several printers printed the Imitatio as the first text of their newly-established press reflects the importance of selecting a work that was in demand.¹⁷⁷ Although it has not been possible to research the costs of editions and how this affected distribution, it is evident that with the growth in competition generated by the establishment of an ever-increasing number of printing presses, there was a sharp decline in the cost of editions, especially as compared with manuscripts.¹⁷⁸ On the whole, the printed book replaced manuscripts even in the monasteries, which could ill afford luxury productions.¹⁷⁹ As books became more affordable, the less affluent groups within society, such as teachers, priests and notaries, were able to build up their own private libraries.¹⁸⁰

Piety was also a fundamental motive for the printing of devotional works. Evidence for printers' and booksellers' religious motives can be found in their devices, which permeated editions of this period. Numerous devices included traditional forms of Christian imagery. These religious symbols illustrated the pious intentions of the printing trade. The bookseller's device of Ambroise Girault, for example, depicts two angels holding a shield, which shows a pelican piercing its breast to feed its young. Above the angels are Girault's initials, located below a fruit-filled tree, through the branches of which is a flag with the words "LE PELLICAN".¹⁸¹ The symbolism of the pelican bleeding itself to nourish its young was an allegorical representation of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, with added Eucharistic symbolism. It not only acted as a

¹⁷⁶ Schutte, 'Printing, piety and people in Italy', p. 12

¹⁷⁷ See, for example, Günther and Johann Zainer, Johann Ulm and Mathias van der Goes above.

¹⁷⁸ Ritter, Histoire de l'imprimerie, p. 483

¹⁷⁹ Sandra Hindman, 'Cross-fertilization: experiments in mixing the media', in Sandra Hindman and James Farquar, (eds.) Pen to Press: Illustrated manuscripts and printed books in the first century of Printing (John Hopkins University, 1977), p. 140

¹⁸⁰ Gerulutus, Printing and Publishing, p. 10

¹⁸¹ [F1522]. The use of the pelican was scarcely absent from the devices of the incunabula period. See L1492b

devotional image for the reader, but also indicated that the printing trade served to nurture Christian piety.

The selection of specific religious phrases in devices may also reflect a commitment to generating piety, although this cannot be substantiated. Jean Lambert's title page device encouraged readers to place their hope in God, "ESPOIR EN DIEV",¹⁸² while Jean Trepperel wrote that love and harmony could be sought by invoking God's mercy: "en provocant ta grant misericorde octroue nous charite et concorde".¹⁸³ Philippe le Noir implicitly suggested that his work represented a service to God: "Cest mon desir a Dieu servir pour acquerir son doux plaisir".¹⁸⁴ His device was perhaps more than personal, inciting readers to serve God in their lives. Jean le Bourgeois' device included the Latin phrase "Sit nomen Domini Benedictum",¹⁸⁵ as did Nicolas Savetier's, which also pointed to the fear of God as the beginning of the spiritual life, "initium sapiente timor Domini".¹⁸⁶ As believers grew in their spiritual wisdom, so fear would be replaced by the love of God.

Printing was interpreted by some as the new monastic *scriptoria*. While monks had previously copied books as part of their daily *labora*, printers served to do the same with their newly-acquired skills.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, within this Catholic context, printers could arguably have interpreted their labours as a good work. Certain printers, moreover, belonged to confraternities. Adolph Rusch and Antoine Koberger were members of the confraternity of the Holy Spirit in Rome from 1478.¹⁸⁸ Both printed editions of the *Imitatio*, in 1489 and 1492 respectively.¹⁸⁹ Mathias van der Goes, who printed the *Imitatio* between 1486 and 1491, was appointed master printer for the guild of St. Luke in 1487.¹⁹⁰ Josse Bade was the first name to appear in a convention made with Jacobin monks, dated September 1, 1491, and signed with the intention of establishing a

182 [F1493]

183 [F1495]

184 [F1525]

185 [F1498]

186 [F1530]

187 Ritter, *Histoire de l'imprimerie*, p. 31

188 Ritter, *Histoire de l'imprimerie*, p. 51

189 L1489g; L1492a

190 Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs*, pp. 74-75; L[1486-1491]

confraternity of the German nation of the University of Paris at the chapel of Our Lady of Comfort.¹⁹¹ The University of Paris seemed to be an important setting for the readership of the Imitatio. Lefèvre d'Étaples had recommended vernacular Scriptures and the Imitatio,¹⁹² and the rector of the Collège de Montaigu, Noel Béda, later recommended it to Erasmus.¹⁹³

Wills can also provide evidence for a printer's piety. In his will, Wynkyn de Worde asked to be buried before the altar of St. Katherine in the parish of St. Bride's and also bequeathed ten shillings to the parish fraternity of Our Lady, of which he was a member.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, three people mentioned in the will had parish connections and de Worde's arrangements for the parish-administered charity were certainly comprehensive.¹⁹⁵ The following extract of his will illustrates the pious intent of de Worde:

"I Wynkyn de Wourde citizen and staciouner of london being hole of mynde and body lawed and thanked by allmighty god knowing nothing so certayne as death...first I bequethe my soule to allmighty god my maker and Redemer and to our lady sainte mary the virgin his glorious and blissed mother and to all the hole cumpanny in hevin and my body to be buried within the body of the church of sainte Bride in ffletestrete of London before sainte katherines aulter after the good mynde and discrecion of myn executours vnderwritton".¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise, Vol. XII, p. 230

¹⁹² Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 278; for the relationship of Lefèvre d'Étaples to the *devotio moderna*, see Philip Hughes, Lefèvre: Pioneer of Ecclesiastical Renewal in France (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan), pp. 35-44

¹⁹³ Hyma, Christian Renaissance, p. 279

¹⁹⁴ The fraternity made use of the parish hall and was actively engaged in poor relief. Mary Erler, 'Wynkyn de Worde's will: legatees and bequests', Lib., 6th Series, Vol. X., No. 2, (June 1988), pp. 108-109

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 109-112

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 118-119

The nature of de Worde's will represents an affirmation of his Catholic beliefs. First, it reflects his concern for the salvation of his soul, which he entrusted not only to God Almighty but also to the Virgin Mary. There is, furthermore, an implicit invocation of the saints ("the hole cumpany in hevin") while his words reflect the importance of being buried on consecrated ground. That he sought to be buried before the altar of St. Katherine's also points to the expectation that priests would celebrate Masses for his soul. While it is difficult to ascertain how representative the example of de Worde actually was, his piety certainly provides an insight into the potential religiosity of printers.

Kinship and Patronage

The ties of kinship were a significant element of the printing trade. Workshops were often family businesses and printing presses often passed down through generations, and in certain towns it is possible to create a family tree of printers and booksellers. Where the Imitatio is concerned, the list of printers is impressive and includes the Scinzenzellers in Milan. Ulrich Scinzenzeler's 1489 edition was surpassed by Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler's four editions, printed in 1500, 1504, 1511 and 1519.¹⁹⁷ Giovanni was the most prolific of the Milanese printers in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. He actually began his independent career with the printing stock of his father, under whom he had worked as an apprentice.¹⁹⁸ In a different context, the aforementioned Josse Bade, who had worked as a corrector at Jean Trechsel's press and later married Trechsel's daughter, also printed the Imitatio in Paris as his father-in-law had done in Lyon.¹⁹⁹ The role of families can be seen through the example of the Crombergers of Seville, which was one of the most important presses on the Iberian peninsula in the early sixteenth century.²⁰⁰ Jacobo Cromberger, a German, settled in

¹⁹⁷ Ulrich Scinzenzeler: I1489

Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler: I1500; I1504; I1511; I1519

¹⁹⁸ Balsamo, 'Annals of Scinzenzeler', p. 67

¹⁹⁹ His departure from Lyon (for Paris) was due to the difficult relationship he had with his mother-in-law. Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise, Vol. 12, p. 230

²⁰⁰ Clive Griffin, 'An unlucky number of Seville Imprints', GJ (1999), p. 146

Seville in the 1490s and was succeeded by his son Juan. On Juan's death, his widow Brígida Maldonado took charge of the Seville office until their son, Jácome, was old enough in the mid-1540s to assume responsibility.²⁰¹ Each generation of Crombergers printed the Imitatio: Jacobo (1516);²⁰² Juan (1528, 1536, 1538, 1542);²⁰³ and Jácome (1547).²⁰⁴

The extent of female participation in the trade was considerable, with wives generally "invisible, working, however, in close partnership with husbands or male relatives".²⁰⁵ The proximity of these relationships is reflected by the frequency with which widows would take over their recently deceased husband's workshop, a tradition that was in keeping with other crafts.²⁰⁶ For example, on the death in 1522 of the Parisian printer Thielman Kerver, his wife Yolande Bonhomme took over the press. Her edition of the Imitatio was printed in 1539,²⁰⁷ and she may have used family connections to distribute it; Yolande was the daughter of Pasquier Bonhomme, one of the four appointed bookdealers of the Sorbonne.²⁰⁸

The additional factor of lay patronage was also fundamental to the diffusion of the Imitatio, since patrons willing to pay for the printing of a devotional text must have liked the book enough to want to see it printed. The role of patronage affected the selection of works to be published and often secured the capital for their production and subsequent diffusion. Patrons would, in particular, meet the cost of typesetting.²⁰⁹ An influential patron could, in addition, incite the public to read particular works, thereby boosting sales.²¹⁰ Johann Schönsperger the Elder was the first official printer to the imperial court of Maximilian I. It is in keeping with his status that his edition of the

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² S1516

²⁰³ S1528; S1536; S1538; S1542

²⁰⁴ S1547

²⁰⁵ Martha Driver, 'Women Printers and the Page, 1477-1541', GJ (1998), p. 140

²⁰⁶ Merry Wiesner, Gender, Church and State in Early Modern Germany (London, and New York, Longman, 1998), pp. 142-143

²⁰⁷ F1539a

²⁰⁸ Driver, 'Women Printers', p. 148

²⁰⁹ Peter Lucas, 'The growth and development of English literary patronage in the later Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', Lib. 6th Series, Vol. 4, No. 3 (September 1982), p. 238

²¹⁰ H.S. Bennett, 'Printers, Authors and Readers 1475-1557', Lib. 5th Series, Vol. 6, No. 3, (December 1949), p. 160; Lucas, 'The growth and development', p. 238

Imitatio included an ornate title page woodcut and was printed on very good quality paper.²¹¹ Printers drew attention to noble patronage by including appropriate iconography. Pynson and de Worde both had heraldic woodcuts made in recognition of their association with Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond.²¹² In fact, there are three different sets of royal insignia preceding the fourth Book.²¹³

Lady Beaufort was a highly significant source of patronage in the early printed English world. She not only commissioned William Atkynson to translate the first three Books of the Imitatio, but also translated the fourth Book of the Imitatio herself.²¹⁴ Patronage of devotional works tended to reflect sincere piety on the part of the patron, rather than concern for profit. Lady Beaufort's involvement in the book trade was an integral part of her active life in the service of God.²¹⁵ It was on her recommendation that Garrett Godfrey, a Cambridge bookseller and bookbinder, was granted the university's privilege to be a stationer (dated 11 July 1502). His accounts reveal the sale of copies of the Imitatio to Richard Bronsby of St. John's and an unidentified man named Marshall.²¹⁶ Since Lady Beaufort was not literate in Latin, she commissioned translations of other devotional works from Latin into English, an undertaking that was no doubt appreciated by members of her circle.²¹⁷ Devotional works were frequently read to her while she had her dinner, in keeping with monastic practice.²¹⁸ The inspiration for this may have been derived from her close links with monasticism; in 1504 she was granted a papal licence to visit members of enclosed religious houses.²¹⁹

²¹¹ G1498. Schönsperger also printed L1487a

²¹² E1503. The title page refers to Lady Beaufort's commissioning of the translation; "at the specyall request and comaundement of the full excellent Prynmesse Margarete". There is, in addition, a representation of the royal coat of arms on the verso of the title page (A1^v). For de Worde, see E[1515], title page and A1^v.

²¹³ E1503, a1^r and a1^v

²¹⁴ E1504

²¹⁵ Susan Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Books', Lib., 6th Series, Vol. XX., No. 3 (September 1998), p. 199

²¹⁶ Elisabeth Leedham-Green, D. Rhodes, and F. Stubbings, (eds.), Garrett Godfrey's accounts. c. 1527-1533 (Cambridge Bibliographical Society, 1992), pp. xi, 34-35, 80-81, 106, 145

²¹⁷ Powell, 'Lady Beaufort', p. 201; Boffey, 'Wynkyn de Worde' p. 178

²¹⁸ Powell, 'Lady Beaufort', p. 206

²¹⁹ E. Thompson, The Carthusian Order in England (London, 1930), cited in Michael Jones and Malcolm Underwood, The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 180

Lady Beaufort's household accounts reveal payments for editions of the Imitatio. In an item for 6 July 1503, a payment was recorded "to a prynter in London for the pryntyng of my ladies bokes"; Powell claimed that this referred to Pynson's editions of the Imitatio.²²⁰ In the same year, payments were made for the binding of 76 copies of the Imitatio; "Item paid the same tyme to Lenard of the vestry for byndyng of lxxvj. bokys of Master John Gersons pryntyng at jd.ob [a penny halfpenny] the boke ixs iiiij d".²²¹ In late December, a hundred printed books, allegedly copies of the Imitatio, were carried from London to her palace at Collyweston.²²² In 1505, she paid Pynson for another hundred printed books which he delivered to Syon when she was staying over the river at the palace of Richmond. Powell believed that these may have been additional copies of the Imitatio, now with the inclusion of the fourth Book which she had recently translated.²²³ The case of Lady Beaufort illustrates the importance of patronage in the promotion of devotional literature. While this type of patronage was not the norm, that the Imitatio was part of the English network under her supervision was absolutely central to the distribution of the text into the sixteenth century.

In conclusion, the mass printed dissemination of the Imitatio could not have taken place without the text's circulation in manuscript form. In the first instance, the vast number of manuscript copies can be attributed to the use of the text within the circles of the *devotio moderna*. Its insistence on inward reform contributed to the text's diffusion within monastic circles associated with the Observant reform movement. With the establishment of movable type, the Imitatio was an ideal text for the market of newly-formed printing presses. While the majority of incunabula were in Latin, some were translated into the major European languages. The circulation of the Imitatio was facilitated by the itinerancy of the printing trade, in addition to the pious motives of printers and booksellers. That the printing trade was part of an intimate, often familial,

²²⁰ Powell, 'Lady Beaufort', p. 223

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

network further encouraged the distribution of the Imitatio. This development was reinforced by the support of lay patrons, who also commissioned various translations during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Chapter Four. Nourishing lay hunger for devotional works:

English and French translations of the Imitatio Christi, c.1480-c. 1530

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the Imitatio's impressive circulation during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This chapter will seek to break down the statistical figures of the previous chapter by explaining how the Imitatio's spirituality fitted into the broader literary context. The Imitatio did not enjoy such widespread diffusion merely because it had the reputation for being a classic, although that clearly contributed to its success as a printed text. The survival and promotion of the Imitatio in the sixteenth century can partly be explained by the fact that it continued to satisfy, at the same time, the needs both of the clergy and of the laity. Indeed, the remarkable success of the Imitatio can principally be attributed to the ever-increasing lay desire for devotional literature.

This chapter will begin by addressing the French and English devotional contexts of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which were crucial to the Imitatio's reception. The thematic content of French devotional literature reflected lay yearning for literary nourishment that would lead believers closer to God. Numerous devotional works were characterised by a concern for a well-disciplined, and often carefully structured, prayer life. The inspiration for this material was more often than not derived from the cloister.¹ Books of Hours provided the central source of monastic spirituality for the laity. Celebrated for their structure and even aesthetic beauty, Books of Hours dominated the market. Devotional authors increasingly promoted the view that people did not have to reside in a monastery to live a perfect Christian life. This did not represent an indictment of monasticism. On the contrary, the laity were encouraged to respect the exemplary nature of monastic life. Authors were keen to advocate a

¹ Richard Kieckhefer, 'Major Currents in late medieval Devotion', in Jill Raitt, Bernard McGinn, and John Meyendorff, (eds.), Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation (SCM press, Ltd., 1988), p. 100

regularity and structure in lay devotional lives similar to that found in monasticism. After all, discipline was as important in the world, where distractions were as pervasive, if not more so, than in the monastery.

The appreciation for monastic discipline was in keeping with the French spiritual tradition, especially as found in Jean Gerson's writings. His monastic morality was carefully tuned to appeal to lay ears and his spirituality struck a resonant chord with the ideals of the *devotio moderna*.² A century after Gerson's death, his influence pervaded French religious life and the subsequent attribution to him of the Imitatio is testimony to shared strands of spirituality. In this way, the spirituality of the Imitatio, with its adaptability to lay and monastic contexts, was ideally suited.

This flexibility was also evident in the English context, although delayed in its realisation. Roger Lovatt pointed to the isolation of the Imitatio as a manuscript in fifteenth-century England, confined as it was to a monastic and clerical élite.³ Indeed, the first printed translation by Atkynson was also restricted in its readership, though less so than in the manuscript phase.⁴ However, Lovatt did not underline the importance of the context in which the Imitatio was diffused in its early stages. While its circulation was limited initially, the introduction of the Imitatio to the circles of Margaret Beaufort, with their printing and monastic links, was absolutely vital for its later dissemination. This connection, in addition to the text's spirituality, secured its appropriation by the Bridgettine and Carthusians communities, not solely for their own nourishment but also for lay use. This is intriguing because in both the French and English contexts, monasteries played a central role in diffusing monastic spirituality to the laity. Indeed, many of the authors who suggested that the laity did not have to join monasteries to live a perfect life were actually monks. While the Imitatio was not a monastic text, its disciplined spirituality was considered ideal for this purpose.

² Mombaer's Tabula librorum included Gerson, "with nearly all his smaller works in which he mingles speculative with devotional matters", cited in Staubach, '*Memores Pristinæ Perfectionis*', p. 428; D. Catherine Brown, Pastor and Laity in the theology of Jean Gerson (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 167ff

³ Roger Lovatt, 'The Imitation of Christ in late medieval England', RHST, 5th Series 18 (1986), pp. 97-121

⁴ Ibid.

The second part of the chapter will analyse a selection of French and English translations from the late fifteenth century through to the mid-1530s, in order to account for the different translations available during this period. While the spirituality of the text was as suited to those living in the secular world as the professed in the cloister, some translators enhanced the accessibility of the text to the laity. The type of textual emendations which made this possible will constitute the main section of the chapter. The German tradition of the text will not be analysed, since it remained closer to the monastic context.⁵ While the Imitatio could hardly have eluded the German laity, no translations were undertaken explicitly for a lay readership during this period (until Caspar Schwenckfeld's 'Protestant' translation, first printed in 1531) - at least not in a way comparable with the French and English translations.⁶

In the pre-1531 period, there existed two different French translations of the text: the first called Imitation de Jésus Christ; the second entitled Internelle Consolation. The former retained the original order of the first three Books of the Latin: "de l'imitation de nostre seigneur Jesus Christ", "de la conversation interieure" and "du parlement secret de ihesuchrist a lame deuote". The Internelle is ordered differently, beginning with Book two, followed by Book three and finishing with Book one. The different titles of these translations are merely derived from chapter one of the first Book in each tradition. While the Internelle enjoyed the same printing output as the Imitation in the incunabula period, the balance radically altered in favour of the Internelle between 1501 and 1550. In that period, there were only five editions of the Imitation as opposed to 33 of the Internelle.⁷ The broadening readership of the Internelle can be understood by analysing the nature and content of the Internelle, which had been adapted for the laity.

A similar balance is evident in regard to the English tradition of the Imitatio Christi. The first printed English translation was undertaken by William Atkynson in 1503. Atkynson, a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, was commissioned to translate

⁵ See G1482, where all monastic terminology is retained.

⁶ The role and characteristics of Schwenckfeld's translation will be analysed in chapters six and seven.

⁷ See Appendix.

the first three books of the Imitatio by Lady Margaret Beaufort.⁸ Lady Beaufort subsequently added her own translation of Book four. A second translation, normally attributed to Richard Whitford, followed two decades later.⁹ At first glance, there seems to be little to distinguish between the Atkynson and Whitford translations. Whitford's preface pointed to several omissions in various chapters of the first Book of Atkynson's translation, which he promised to complete.¹⁰ While both translators seem to address a clerical and monastic as well as a lay readership, Whitford's translation catered for the latter more explicitly. His text, like the Internelle Consolation, was printed more frequently than Atkynson's.

The translations undertaken by Whitford and as contained in the Internelle were responses to the realisation that while the Imitatio was not inaccessible to the laity it had largely been confined to monastic circles. The monastic traits of the Imitatio were certainly more evident in the first printed English translation by William Atkynson and in the French version entitled Imitation de Jésus Christ. The French and English traditions of the text were opened up even more to the laity by the Internelle and by Richard Whitford's translation. There was a similar meditative dimension to the process of translating spiritual works. The exegetical study which the Internelle Consolation translation seems to represent was almost a meditation in itself.¹¹ This type of interpretative translation does not appear to be unique to the Imitatio, as Gerson's translation of St. Bonaventure's Lesguillon damour diuin testifies.¹² In the preface to this work, Gerson stated that the purpose of his translation was not to interpret the original text word for word, but to bring the reader closer to God.¹³ It is thus manifest that translators were given, or rather gave themselves, considerable freedom where the

⁸ Jones and Underwood, King's Mother, pp. 184, 214

⁹ E[1531]a

¹⁰ "yet for as moche as the sayd translatur for some cause hym mouyng in dyuers places lefte out moche parte of some of the chapytres / and somtyme varied fro the letter as in the thyrd chapytre & in the .xviii. & xix. chapytre of the fyrste boke / and also in dyuers other chapytres of the sayd.iii. bokes". E[1531]a, A1^r

¹¹ The equivalent for the Bible would be the monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*.

¹² Bonaventure, Lesguillon damour [British Library: 3806.aa.7]

¹³ Ibid., "de trāslater & describe laguillō damour diuine de latin en frācois nōpas d~ mot a mot / mais p~ telle maniere q~ en solitaireme~t lysāt seras p~sent a tō ame cōme docteur a disciple Et a dieu seras tu p~se~tee cōme espouse et amie familiere de son filz le doulx ihesus", A1^v

art of translation was concerned. The aim of translation was not necessarily to remain faithful to the original. In fact, translation was as important and potentially as innovative an act as the composition of original works. Consequently, the interpretative mode of translation requires careful analysis. Through the adoption of different terms, additions and other emendations, translation managed to simplify the meaning of devotional language; this was evident in both the Internelle and in Whitford's translation.

The broader context of English and French Devotional Literature

France

Monastic authors and translators formed an integral part of the French religious literature of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century.¹⁴ Within the thematic scope of devotional literature, monastic models were frequently recommended for the daily life of Christian men and women.¹⁵ Books of Hours, which numerically dominated the market, represented the archetype for the transmission of monastic spirituality to the laity.¹⁶ Books of Hours were prayer books intended to be used on a daily basis as a "Divine Office for the laity".¹⁷ They were characterised by their intricate structure, reflecting the monastic liturgical tradition. The pervading influence of these monastic forms ensured that they formed an integral part of the literary nourishment for the laity. Yet, the intricate nature of Books of Hours betrays the fact that this type of literature was restricted to the educated élites who could read. The mass of editions printed at the turn of the sixteenth century testifies to the crucial role of the growth in lay literacy.

¹⁴ Geneviève Hasenohr, 'La vie quotidienne de la femme vue par l'église: L'enseignement des "journées chrétiennes" de la fin du moyen âge', in Frau und Spätmittelalterlicher Alltag (Vienna, 1986), pp. 52, 63

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 207

¹⁶ This is evident from the Sixteenth Century French Religious Book Project, which is currently being undertaken at the Reformation Studies Institute, University of St. Andrews. The project has included the first half of the century, building on Francis Higman's excellent bibliography, Piety and the People: Religious Printing in French, 1511-1551 (Scolar Press, 1996)

¹⁷ Virginia Reinburg, 'Popular Prayers in late Medieval and Reformation France' (PhD, Princeton University, 1985), p. 40; idem., 'Prayer and the Book of Hours', in R. Wieck, (ed.), Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life (1988), pp. 39-44

However, the canonical hours were certainly not the sole preserve of Books of Hours. The canonical structure as a framework for regular prayer life can be found in various devotional treatises intended for the laity. In this way, not only monastic literature but also elements of monastic devotional practice were strongly recommended for lay use. While these texts encouraged a regular prayer life and reminded believers about the details of Christ's life, the key issue was for the believer to follow His example. The Imitatio was ideal for this purpose, since its spirituality reminded believers that they had to move beyond a meditation of Christ's life. They were required to make Christ's example a reality in their own lives. Believers were also called to follow Mary in her exemplary discipleship.

Fundamental to French devotional culture were the writings of Jean Gerson (1363-1429), Chancellor of the University of Paris (from 1395), whose influence permeated both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Gerson's writings were frequently printed alongside the Imitatio. This is hardly coincidental if one bears in mind that texts from the *devotio moderna* considered Gerson a Church Father; Gerson was that "all-round author who in the eyes of the *devoti* had already attained to the rank of a Father of the Church as a result of his spiritual affinity to them and his vigorous support for their cause".¹⁸ Gerson's defence of the Brethren of Common Life at Constance and the similarity of his spirituality to that of the Imitatio undoubtedly contributed to the false attribution of authorship. Moreover, the great majority of Latin incunabula editions of the Imitatio were bound together with Gerson's De meditatione cordis.¹⁹ Martin Flach, for example, who possessed his own printing press from 1487 and 1500, printed the works of Gerson in 1494, which included the Imitatio. His son, Martin Flach the younger, followed his father's example in 1502.²⁰

Gerson adapted his vast academic and theological expertise to serve *les simples gens*. He advocated that all in the Church were called to pursue Christian perfection, not

¹⁸ Staubach, 'Church Fathers', pp. 428-430

¹⁹ L1481b; L1485c; L1486a; L1487d; L1487e; L1487f; L[1488]b; L1488a; L1489b; L1488c; L1488d; L1489f. There are many more examples for the 1490s.

²⁰ Ritter, Histoire de l'imprimerie, p. 75

just those in religious orders.²¹ Monastic vows were not essential to the pursuit of Christian perfection; rather they were "aids to virtue and to the life of charity".²² Gerson's mystical writings were derived, to a large extent, from monastic spirituality. Gerson was one of the first to preach and write in French on the topic of mysticism and he encouraged the laity to practise an interior religion.²³ Gerson insisted that uneducated lay people could have direct experience of God, even more than over-educated clerics.²⁴ It was to Gerson that Gabriel Biel had appealed "for proof that limiting the term *religiosi* to monastics and *religio* to a monastic order was nothing short of semantic scandal".²⁵

Yet, the relevance of Gerson's influence lies not solely in the mere accommodation of lay piety. Gerson's role was fundamental also because of his concern for monastic spirituality. While Gerson opted for the mixed life, he considered the contemplative life to be superior to the active life.²⁶ As a consequence, his importance also lies in his contribution to monastic reform. Ultimately, the malleability of Gerson's reform programme was vital. The means by which the believer was to reach the top of the mountain of contemplation - namely, with humble penitence, mortification, solitude and silence, for the sake of God's love - were equally appropriate to the religious orders living within the confines of the cloister or the lay person working in the secular sphere.²⁷

In this context, the contemplative and active lives were to move forward together. The preface to the 1531 edition of the Internelle Consolation, written by Hubert de Suzanne, and dedicated to her aunt, Madame Estienne Deduict, "tres religieuse Abbessse de Sainct Estienne lez Soissons", testified to this explicitly. Suzanne wrote that the "Consolation internelle" was suitable for people seeking spiritual

²¹ Brown, Pastor and Laity, p. 47; Jean Gerson, Early Works translated and introduced by Brian McGuire (Paulist Press, 1998)

²² Brown, Pastor and Laity, p. 47

²³ Ibid. p. 172

²⁴ Gerson, Early Works, p. 4

²⁵ Oberman, Masters of the Reformation, p. 54

²⁶ Brown, Pastor and Laity, p. 188

²⁷ Ibid., p. 183

consolation and the true imitation of Jesus Christ, which every good Christian should learn ("laquelle doit appre~der ung chascun bon Chrestien").²⁸ While the contemplative life was the better of the two, not everyone could follow "la vie de Marie" with such exemplary purity.²⁹ In the light of this, believers were invited to participate in both the active and the contemplative lives.³⁰ Suzanne, in addition, recommended the manifold virtues of the work for the nuns of her aunt's abbey.³¹ In this way, contemplation was recommended not merely for those in the cloister, but also for the laity. Although the author of the translation addressed an aunt that was an Abbess, the nature of the preface indicates that the contemplative life was not restricted to cloistered confines. However, that she addressed an Abbess does reflect an implicit respect for monastic life, one which lay readers could not ignore.

The association of the Imitatio with monasticism is also evident in the prefaces to certain editions. In a French translation (made from a German edition), printed in 1544, the author of the translation firstly attributed authorship of the Imitatio to the Carthusian Ludolph of Saxony.³² In the same preface, the translator addressed his sister, Marguerite, a Dominican nun in Metz.³³ While he did not claim that monasticism was the sole effective means to Christ, in addressing a member of the regular clergy, he stressed monastic fidelity to a solitary and contemplative life. The intended readership, namely his sister's community and any other religious communities with whom she was in contact ("par vous le communiquer a aultres"), are directed to the end goal of the work, namely contemplative elevation of the heart ("cōtemplatiue eleuation du cuer") and a spurning of all worldly things.³⁴ He further declared that if the reader was to spend several hours reading the text, they would soon notice the value of the solitary

²⁸ 1531, π8^r

²⁹ Ibid. "La vie de Marie" symbolises the contemplative life, as opposed to the active life traditionally pursued by Martha. This debate originated in Luke's Gospel - Chapter 10: 38-42. See Swanson, Religion and Devotion in Europe, p. 105; Giles Constable Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

³⁰ F1531

³¹ Ibid., π8^v

³² F1544a

³³ Ibid. A1^v

³⁴ Ibid. A2^r

and contemplative life ("quil apperceura clerement les richesses de vie solitaire & contemplatiue").³⁵ Such a sentiment would inevitably find fertile soil in a religious community.

England

Atkynson's translation was printed in London by Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde, who were fundamental to the dissemination of devotional literature in this period. In similar fashion to the French context, Pynson and de Worde printed both the more complex meditational works, such as Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection (commissioned by Lady Beaufort),³⁶ and the more simple works, like William Caxton's translation (from the French) of the Book of Good Manners.³⁷ These English writers and translators were crucial in making literature inspired by monasticism more accessible to the laity, thereby powerfully illustrating the theme of *de cella in seculum*. For the first time, devout lay people were instructed in the art of contemplation.³⁸ They were urged to pursue the mixed life, combining activity in the world with personal meditative prayer.

Much of the devotional literature was addressed to "symple soules" and to the "unlerned", meaning those who lacked a formal education (including those untrained in theology), and especially a non-Latinate readership.³⁹ As Rhodes has suggested, an anti-intellectual tendency must have appealed to the unlearned English reader liberated from both monastic and academic/theological superiority.⁴⁰ The very use of the vernacular ensured that the readership was broadened, "to the ende that al good crystens

³⁵ Ibid., A2^r, A2^v

³⁶ Lovatt, 'The Imitation of Christ', p. 99

³⁷ Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, p. 78

³⁸ Hilary Carey, 'Devout literate lay people and the pursuit of the mixed life in later Medieval England', JRH 14 (1986-1987), p. 361

³⁹ Jan Rhodes, Private Devotion in England on the eve of the Reformation, illustrated from works printed or reprinted in the period 1530-1540 (D. Phil, Durham, 1974), pp. 18-19

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 126

may read".⁴¹ The Whitford translation was undertaken at the height of this dynamic transitional phase in which monastic spirituality was transmitted to the laity.

The intended audience for Whitford's text was critical to its diffusion and indeed to the type of interpretation made by Whitford himself. His translation undoubtedly benefitted from the established contacts between the major printers of the period (Pynson, de Worde and Robert Wyer) and the Bridgettine community at Syon. The prominence of Syon abbey in the composition, translation and distribution of English devotional literature cannot be overemphasised.⁴² William Bonde, John Fewterer and Richard Whitford were all members of the Bridgettine community and all composed and translated devotional literature.⁴³ Whitford provides a useful case study in that he, more obviously than most, sought to accommodate both the contemplative and active lives. He was simultaneously reforming monasticism and secular society and attained renown with one of his earliest works, A Werke for Householders, which addressed the daily, devotional lives of families.⁴⁴ In parallel with the French context, Whitford recommended a structured prayer life. Prayer was to be divided into morning and evening, with the former being an act of dedication while the latter was mainly confessional.⁴⁵ The Werke was reprinted ten times between 1530 and 1537 and is a good example of Whitford adapting traditionally monastic-based devotional literature for the laity.

It is striking that Richard Whitford was himself a Bridgettine monk. In recognition of the contemporary challenges to monasticism, Whitford had intended to

⁴¹ The Arte for to deye well, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1505, cited in Martha Driver, 'Pictures in print: late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century English religious books for lay readers?', in Michael Sargent, (ed.), De Cella in Seculum: Religious & Secular Life and Devotion in late Medieval England (D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 1989), pp. 229-244

⁴² Jan Rhodes, 'Syon Abbey and its religious publications in the sixteenth century', JEH (1993), p. 12; Ann Hutchinson, 'Devotional Reading in the Monastery and in the late medieval household', in Sargent, (ed.), De Cella in Seculum, pp. 215-228

⁴³ Rhodes, 'Private devotion', pp. 17-18, 195; see also David Knowles, Religious Orders in England 3 Vols., (1946-1961); Marie Collins, 'A little known "Art of Dying" by a Bridgettine of Syon: A daily exercise and experience of death by Richard Whitford', in Jane Taylor, (ed.), Dies Illa: Death in the Middle Ages (Francis Cairns, Manchester, 1984), pp. 179-180

⁴⁴ It was written in the form of a dialogue between a householder and his household. STC 25425.5; V. Lawrence, The Life and Writings of Richard Whitford (PhD., St. Andrews, 1987) p. 25

⁴⁵ Ibid.

reform the religious orders and bring them back to their original ideals. His Pype / or Tonne / of the lyfe of Perfection defended monasticism, re-affirming that withdrawal from the world was more than viable a means of attaining Christian perfection.⁴⁶ In fact, Whitford went so far as to declare that "ye religion of Christe...is better & more perfectly & precisely kepte in religion monastical: than in any of the other states".⁴⁷ In keeping with his belief in the purity of the religious orders, Whitford translated the Rule of St. Augustine, for which he also provided a commentary.⁴⁸

The nature of Whitford's reform programme bore a certain continuity with Erasmus. Erasmus was critical of monastic decadence and he urged the regular clergy to reform themselves and their monasteries. He also possessed a genuine interest in lay piety and, in his works, encouraged the reading of vernacular literature. Equally intriguing was the printing of Erasmus' works alongside the Imitatio, especially since the thematic proximity of the Imitatio and Erasmus' pastoral works is marked.⁴⁹ The Spanish printer, Miguel de Eguía, a fervent humanist active in Alcalá, printed both Erasmus' Enchiridion and the Imitatio.⁵⁰ The example of the French printing industry, particularly Paris and Lyon, is even more informative in this regard. In Paris, the brothers Charles and Arnoul l'Angelier printed Erasmus' works and the Imitatio respectively. The printing of Erasmus' works alongside the Imitatio was particularly common in the 1530s and 1540s. Jean Barbou and Guillaume de Guelques printed his Preparation for death in 1538,⁵¹ the same year as the Imitatio.⁵² Thibaud Payen, printer of the Imitatio,⁵³ also printed Erasmus' Sermon de Jesus enfant traduit par l'Amoureux de vertu, Les Apophthegmes in addition to his more academic De ratione studii, ac legendi.⁵⁴ The printing of the Imitatio alongside Erasmus' works was also

⁴⁶ Rhodes, 'Private Devotion', pp. 27-28; STC 25421; Lawrence, 'Life of Whitford', p. 28

⁴⁷ cited in Lawrence, 'Life of Whitford', pp. 45-46

⁴⁸ STC 922.3; Lawrence, 'Life of Whitford', pp. 21-22

⁴⁹ Given the potential scope of the subject, I have not been able to address the degrees of change and continuity between the spirituality of the Imitatio and Erasmus.

⁵⁰ Jesusa Vega Gonzalez, La Imprenta en Toledo estampas del Renacimiento 1500-1550 (Toledo, 1983), pp. 46-47, 110

⁵¹ Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise, Vol. V, pp. 13, 293

⁵² F1538, Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise, Vol. V, pp. 12-13, 293

⁵³ L1545

⁵⁴ Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise, Vol. IV, pp. 230-231, 243

undertaken by the brothers Galliot and Jean du Pré and Étienne Dolet, François Juste, Jean de Tournes and Denis Janot, who printed editions either in Paris or Lyon.⁵⁵

Not only were Erasmus' and Whitford's treatises printed in English alongside each other, but Whitford actually met Erasmus during the latter's visits to England and both were acquainted with Thomas More. This helps to explain some of Whitford's changes to Atkynson's translation, which demonstrate an implicit Erasmianism. Atkynson seems to have been writing from a position which conformed more easily with the outward manifestations of religious culture. Atkynson's omissions illustrate his wish to avoid criticising the external forms of religious practice. While these extracts, retained by Whitford, show a concern for interiority, their omission by Atkynson suggests that he did not share such a disdain for outward forms of piety.

The first omission suggests that Atkynson wanted to remove any even implicit critique of miracles. Whitford, on the other hand, remained true to the original Latin: "it is better a man be solytarye and wel take hede of hym selfe. Then that he do myracles in the worlde forgettynge hym selfe".⁵⁶ Both shared the sentiment that the key to the spiritual life lay with interiority. Atkynson, however, preferred not to mention external devotional practices unfavourably. While Atkynson's motives are not beyond doubt, Whitford's inclusion of this phrase could easily be attributed to his Erasmianism.

The second omission is similar and concerns the practice of pilgrimages. Whitford included the following extract in his translation:

"nowe whylest thou art in helth thou mayst do many good dedes / but yf thou be sycke I can not tell what thou mayst do / for why fewe be amendyd thorough syckenes / and in lyke wyse they that go moche on pylgrymage be seldom therby made perfyte and holye".⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Some of these editions were printed in the post-1530 period.

⁵⁶ Whitford, d8^v; Pohl, 'Melius est latere, et sui curam agere: quam se neglecto signa facere', p. 37:25-27

⁵⁷ Whitford, e6^v; Pohl, 'Multa bona potes operari dum sanus es: sed infirmatus nescio quid poteris. Pauci ex infirmitate meliorantur: sic et qui multum peregrinantur, raro sanctificantur', p. 46:9-13

That Atkynson omitted this passage suggests that he was uncomfortable with any critical reference to pilgrimages. For Atkynson, the practice of pilgrimages was a constructive means of nurturing devotion. Whitford, on the other hand, was suspicious of pilgrims whose outward piety might not be matched by their interior devotion.

The third omission concerns the symbolism behind wearing monastic clothing. Whitford included the phrase: "the habyte & tonsure helpe lytell but the chau~gynge of lyfe and the mortyfyeng of passyons make a person perfyte & trewe relygyouse".⁵⁸ It testified to his yearning to reform monasticism, and his distaste for monastic indiscipline and decadence. Atkynson's omission of this passage suggests that he was fearful of being overly derogatory towards monks. As a monk, Whitford, on the contrary, was in a better position to criticise monasticism, with the intention of reforming monastic practices.

The fourth and final omission complements the others in that it confirms the contrast made between exteriority and interiority. Whitford included the extract, "yf we set the ende and perfeccyon of our relygyon in these outwarde obseruau~ces / our deuocyon shall soon be ended".⁵⁹ Atkynson's omission of this passage again suggests that he was attempting to protect the external manifestations of religious culture. It may seem curious to draw attention to these omissions, given that both texts reinforced the sense of interiority. Yet, given their recurrence and thematic continuity, the omissions must be taken seriously.

⁵⁸ Whitford, d2^v; Pohl, 'Habitus et tonsura modicum confert: sed mutatio morum et integra mortificatio passionum verum faciunt religiosum', p. 29:9-12

⁵⁹ Whitford, c3^v; Pohl, 'Si tantum in istis exterioribus observantiis profectum religionis ponimus: cito finem habebit devotio nostra', p. 19:23-26

English and French Translations of the Imitatio Christi, c. 1480 - c. 1530

Although the spirituality of the Imitatio Christi was applicable to both cloistered and lay contexts, translators in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries wished to make the text still more accessible to the laity. Far more significant than the mere structural re-ordering of books, the translation of the Internelle Consolation betrays a specific interpretation and almost an exegetical study of the original Latin. The explanatory nature of the translation is indicative of an attempt to clarify the meaning of the text. Translators not only simplified language but also elaborated upon the more complicated themes. These textual emendations constituted an implicit adaptation for the laity, a simplification necessitated by their lack of academic training. The implicit nature of nurturing lay piety was rendered more explicit by the removal of monastic terminology. This undertaking did not exclude monks from reading the new translations, for the end product was no less relevant to monks and nuns. These changes did, however, make it less daunting for lay people to embark upon their spiritual journey.

Since the variations between the two French translations are the most extensive, they will provide the principal source of evidence. The English editions will provide additional material, where similarities (and differences) with the French tradition occur. The careful revision of the Latin original undertaken in the Internelle can be divided into five elements. Firstly, the Internelle's translation removed monastic phraseology, in order to embrace lay readers more fully. Secondly, the Internelle provided a more expansive reflection upon the person of Christ. Thirdly, one can identify in the Internelle a modified outlook upon the relationship between God and the believer, enhancing its appeal to a lay readership. Fourthly, the Imitation de Jésus Christ was emended by the practice of elaborative translation, further clarifying and even embroidering the meaning of the text. Finally, the recurrence of smaller (though copious) additions, each one using the term "c'est-à-dire", made the text more digestible.

The first point of adaptation lies with the removal of the Imitation's monastic terminology. Latin terms such as "religiosus",⁶⁰ "fratres",⁶¹ "disciplina claustrali",⁶² "monastica vita"⁶³ and even "contemplatio"⁶⁴ had to be translated into a language of devotion to which the laity could relate more closely. The notion of cloistered discipline and monastic life had no direct relevance for the everyday lives of the laity and it was thus necessary to change the text accordingly. Consequently, a comparison of the Imitation with the Internelle reveals the following noteworthy alterations. The word "religieux"⁶⁵ was replaced by "vray chrestien",⁶⁶ "freres"⁶⁷ was changed to "gens",⁶⁸ "discipline claustrale"⁶⁹ to "lieux solitaires",⁷⁰ "vie monastique"⁷¹ to "vie salutaire selon lesperit",⁷² and "contemplacion"⁷³ to "vivre selon lesperit".⁷⁴

These changes reflect an acknowledgement of the fact that the context of the reader's devotional life was extended more explicitly beyond the confines of the monastery. Without excluding monastic readers, the translation undoubtedly addressed the laity as much as, if not more than, monastic communities. The spiritual discipline advocated by the Imitatio allowed the monk to enter a state of contemplation, which the secular person could replicate in the world outside the monastery. The cloistered discipline of the Imitatio was transformed by the Internelle's translator into the less explicitly monastic solitary places. Evidence for such an interpretation is most clearly manifest in the first Book of the Imitation (Book three of the Internelle). It contains the majority of monastic terms, including a chapter entitled "de la vie monastique",⁷⁵ which

⁶⁰ Pohl, p. 54:18

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 54:6

⁶² Ibid., p. 55:5-6

⁶³ Ibid., p. 163:7

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 203:12

⁶⁵ F1488

⁶⁶ F1531

⁶⁷ F1488, d6^v

⁶⁸ F1531, S4^v

⁶⁹ F1488, d7^r

⁷⁰ F1531, S5^v

⁷¹ F1488, h5^v

⁷² F1531, E6^v

⁷³ F1488, l3^v

⁷⁴ F1531, I1^v

⁷⁵ F1488, b7^v

was changed to "de la perfection de la vie chrestienne" in the Internelle.⁷⁶ The spirituality of the Imitatio had from the outset reflected the sentiment that striving for perfection no longer presupposed a cloistered life.⁷⁷ Yet with those changes, more emphasis was placed upon the possibility of progressing spiritually within a secular context.

The second aspect of adaptation concerns reflection upon the person of Christ. Dogmatic teaching on such mysteries of Christianity (like the Incarnation, Redemption and Resurrection) were not offered to the laity in the vernacular during the late-medieval period.⁷⁸ Doctrine *per se* could not, under any circumstances, be discussed in French for fear that the laity might attempt to interpret it for themselves. Indeed, this vigilant attitude towards doctrine was little different in the English context. Consequently, allusion to Christ served to inspire devotional fervour rather than prompt debate, a motive particularly suited to devotional literature. The interpretative dimension of the Internelle sought to articulate the purpose of Christ's incarnation upon which the believer was encouraged to meditate. The Latin "cum Iesu" was translated as "a lexemple de nostre saulueur et redempteur Jesu Christ", whereas the Imitatio remained true to the Latin with the phrase, "avec Iesu".⁷⁹ Through this apparently minor alteration, the laity was presented with the person of Christ as being both an exemplar for the faithful and the Saviour and Redeemer of humanity.

Similarly, while the phrase "in cruce Domini" was translated literally by the Imitatio to mean "en la croix de nostre seigneur", in the Internelle the word "croix" was replaced by "passion". The cross of Christ was offered to the laity as His passion and suffering for humanity.⁸⁰ While the laity could sympathise with Christ bearing His cross, the direct association with passion and suffering emphasised the burden which each believer should carry. It inevitably brought home to the reader the crucial teaching

⁷⁶ F1531, Q3^v

⁷⁷ See chapter two.

⁷⁸ Geneviève Hasenohr, 'Place et Rôle des Traductions dans la Pastorale Française du XV^e siècle', in Geneviève Contamine, (ed.), Colloque International du CNRS: Traduction et traducteurs au Moyen Âge (Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1989), p. 273

⁷⁹ Pohl, p. 36:4-5; F1488, c4^r; F1531, Q8^v

⁸⁰ Pohl, p. 68:26; F1488, e6^r; F1531, A7^v

that believers could only properly identify with Christ's Passion by undergoing their own tribulations. Elsewhere, readers are told that Christ never ceased to suffer until His death on the cross, "ad exitum cruce".⁸¹ Contrary to the Imitation's literal interpretation,⁸² the Internelle explains this end in the following manner: "iusques a ce que je rendy lesperit en la croix pour toy".⁸³ Here, similarly, the emotive power and reality of the crucifixion is intensified in order to provoke believers into changing their lives. The laity are called to give up their spirit and, in effect, their life, for God. In this way, the Internelle presented a freer interpretation of the text, which was rendered more digestible for the laity.⁸⁴ It was also more provocative, seeking to stir the reader into action.

Having identified the more expansive interpretation of Christ's role, one can turn to the third aspect of emendation, namely the different portrayal of the nature of the relationship between God and the believer in the two French translations. There are numerous references to fearing God in the Imitation de Jésus Christ. The image of a punishing God, whose role it is to pronounce sentence on humanity at the Last Judgement, was not abandoned by the Internelle. Yet, through the translation process, the Internelle for the most part revealed a more loving God, who had saved humanity out of a profound sense of love. In the second chapter of Book one, it is noted that knowledge is worth nothing without the fear of God: "mais que vault science sans la craincte de dieu".⁸⁵ In the Internelle, the Latin word for fear, "timor", was replaced with "amour".⁸⁶ For the Internelle, knowledge is only considered to be complete if it is joined with love, in the place of fear. Although emphasis on fearing God was not absent from the Internelle, the relationship with the Divine is characterised more by love than fear, and more by charity than punishment or judgement.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Pohl, p. 176:16

⁸² F1488, i4^v

⁸³ F1531, F7^r

⁸⁴ On the art of translation, see Maurice Pergnier 'Introduction: Existe-t-il une science de la Traduction?' in Contamine, (ed.), Traduction et traducteurs au Moyen Âge, pp. xiii-xxiii

⁸⁵ F1488, a3^r

⁸⁶ Pohl, p. 7:6; F1531, O4^r

⁸⁷ F1531, "toutesfois la ioye & seurete des saintes personnes est tousiours en crainte et paour de dieu" R1^v

In addition, there are further examples of honouring and serving God in the Imitation,⁸⁸ which were also changed to an insistence upon loving God in the Internelle.⁸⁹ The relationship between God and the believer in the Internelle seems to be more explicitly founded on love than in the Imitation. While it cannot be denied that the tone of the Internelle retains a pessimistic view of human nature similar to that found in the Imitation, the Internelle's approach, nevertheless, seems less severe and ascetic. It reinforces the impression that the Internelle was more accommodating than the Imitation to lay readers who were about to embark upon their devout meditation.

The concern for accommodating a lay readership was also evident in the English translations, particularly with Whitford's less pronounced mystical emphasis. In reducing the number of mystical references, Whitford was serving a lay readership. The constant allusion to the soul, though not omitted altogether by Whitford, is a salient feature of Atkynson's translation. In a discussion of how the believer should approach the reading of Scriptures, Atkynson clearly embellished the Latin by making use of traditional mystical language and imagery; "If thou wolde drawe the spirituall watir of wisdom out of the well of scripture, inclyne the vessel of thy soule by mekenes and confidence".⁹⁰ The reader is thus encouraged to appropriate mystical imagery, arguably heightening the sense of interiority and contemplation.

Even the way in which Scriptures was written evokes Atkynson's mysticism. In the translation of "facta est", while Whitford referred to Scriptures as "it was fyrst made", Atkynson alluded to the Bible "as it was receyved firste".⁹¹ Atkynson drew attention to the passivity of writing Scriptures, that the sacred text essentially relayed that which the Holy Spirit passed on. Similarly, the recurrent references to the soul are characteristic of Atkynson's translation. In his interpretation of the phrase "qui scit quid est in homine", Atkynson clearly tended towards a mystical emphasis: "in the lyghte of

⁸⁸ Pohl, "Dei honorem", p. 159:13; F1488, h3^r; Pohl, "qui Deo servit", p. 7:8; F1488, a3^r

⁸⁹ F1531, E2^v, O4^r

⁹⁰ Atkynson, A5^v; Pohl, "Si vis profectum haurire; lege humiliter, simpliciter et fideliter", p. 13:6-8; Whitford's translation seems to be truer to the Latin: "yf thou wylte profyte by redyng of Scripture rede mekely symply and faythfully". Whitford b6^v, b7^r

⁹¹ Pohl, p. 12:20; Atkynson, A5^r; Whitford, b6^v

god: that beholdeth the enlye disposicyon of every soule".⁹² Not only is there an explicit reference to the internal disposition of the soul, but emphasis is also placed upon the light of God, with Divine illumination forming an integral part of the mystical process.

Atkynson's text included more references to the soul than Whitford's. In translating "Regnum Dei intra vos",⁹³ Atkynson placed greater emphasis upon interiority, in addition to mentioning the soul: "the inwarde regne of god is in the soule of man".⁹⁴ The more precise nature of Atkynson's translation, with its mystical focus, provides a hint as to how the believers should conduct their prayer lives. Attention was to be fixed on the soul's purification. The contrast in emphasis is also evident where Whitford avoided references to the soul. Despite Atkynson's fidelity to the Latin, "solamen peregrinantis animae", Whitford provided a more expansive translation omitting any reference to the soul.⁹⁵ The result betrays a less mystical slant, and accommodates a more secular context: "ioye and comforte of al crysten people that are walkynge & laborynge as pylgryms in wyldernes of this world".⁹⁶ Mystical imagery and language tended to be suited, albeit not exclusively to, a more contemplative and spiritually-trained readership. When Whitford did refer to the soul, he did so in a way that did not necessarily indicate a tendency towards mystical imagery. This seems to be the case in the respective translations of "et tunc scrutabitur Ierusalem in lucernis".⁹⁷ While Atkynson remained relatively true to the Latin,⁹⁸ Whitford provided a more expansive interpretation: "then shall Jherusalem that is mannes soule be serchyd with lanternes and lyghtes of goddes hygh knowlege and ryghtfull iugementes".⁹⁹ The

92 Pohl, p. 15:4-5; Atkynson, A6^v; Whitford interpreted this to mean "in the syght of god that knoweth all that is in man", Whitford, b8^r

93 Pohl, p. 59:5; Whitford takes the more literal interpretation: "the kyngdome of god is within you", Whitford, f6^v

94 Atkynson, D5^v. Elsewhere, the translation of "in caelestibus debet esse habitatio tua" confirms this trend. Whitford interprets this phrase in the following way, "thy full reste muste be in heuenly thynges", whereas Atkynson makes use of mystical language as follows: "lette the iye of your soule be fixyd perfily in heuen". Pohl, p. 60:29; Atkynson, D6^v; Whitford, f7^v

95 Pohl, p. 184:10

96 Atkynson, "solace & conforte of wayfarynge soules", K2^r; Whitford, n2^r

97 Pohl, p. 221:6-7

98 Atkynson, "than shall Jherusale~ be lyghtened & enserched with lanternes & lyghtes", M6^v

99 Whitford, q5^v

elaboration of "Ierusalem" as "mannes soule" is less a conscious appropriation of mystical language than a simplification of the language. It may be regarded as little more than an opening up of the figurative language of the original Latin text.

While Atkynson's translation was undoubtedly closer to the mystical tradition, Whitford's text was not altogether free from mystical language and imagery. For example, Whitford's translation of the Latin phrase "quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbae; et volabo et requiescam?" is much more expansive than Atkynson's and in so doing employs mystical imagery:¹⁰⁰ "who shal gyue me wynges lyke to a doue / that I maye flye into the bosome of my sauoure and into the holes of his blessyd woundes and rest me there".¹⁰¹ The meditation upon, and devotion towards, the five wounds of Christ was a common theme within the literary and artistic representations of Christ's Passion, yet it is nevertheless striking that it appears as an addition within Whitford's text.¹⁰² This appears to parallel Gerson's promotion of mysticism for the laity. While Whitford toned down the mystical elements, he did not exclude them altogether.

Given that spiritual and devotional writings which originated in monasteries were better suited to a trained and more specialised readership, such works inevitably had to be rendered more accessible for the laity. The fourth way in which the Internelle adapted the original Latin was by means of a method of elaborative translation, that is, by adding an extra word to the original translation. This both expanded and, paradoxically, simplified the meaning of the Internelle Consolation. In a discussion of the quality of human nature in the Imitation, for example, the individual is declared to be "fragile". The word "pecheurs" was added to the text of the Internelle, thus directly associating human frailty with sin.¹⁰³ Within a monastic context, a reading of the term "fragile" would have been relatively unambiguous. The same could not be claimed for the laity, who were not as rigidly trained and were inevitably affected by their existence in the secular world.

¹⁰⁰ Pohl, p. 202:11-13; "who shall gyue me wi~ges lyke a doue that I may fle & rest", Atkynson L3^v

¹⁰¹ Whitford, o7^r, o7^v

¹⁰² D Gray, 'The Five Wounds of Our Lord', N&Q 208 (1963), pp. 50-51, 82-89, 127-134, 163-168

¹⁰³ The Latin is "fragiles". Pohl, p. 8:17; F1488, a4^r; F1531, O5^r

Elsewhere, the Internelle added "larmes" to the Imitation's "compunction", thereby helping the laity to understand the more complicated notion of compunction.¹⁰⁴ In this way, believers were urged to feel contrite for their sins to the extent that they were drawn to tears, thereby also appealing to their affective devotion. Another example in the Imitation is the reference to the believer's need to depend upon God's "grace", to which the Internelle added the word "ayde".¹⁰⁵ Grace, for the simple believer, was not to be interpreted within an intricate theological framework. Instead, it was to be considered as Christ's helping hand to humanity.

Moreover, the Imitation's recurrent allusion to "choses foreines" and "choses interieures" was simplified in the Internelle, which interpreted the former to be that which pertained to the "corps" and the latter to be all that related to "lame et lesperit".¹⁰⁶ For the trained monk, the Imitation's terminology would suffice for meditational purposes. However, this language had to be clarified for the laity so that they could embark upon their own meditative journey. This demonstrates how an elaborative form of translation greatly facilitated the laity's understanding of traditional devotional language.

A similar practice is evident on comparing the different English translations of Atkynson and Whitford. In his preface Whitford omitted the recurrent preference for different words in his translation. In certain cases, he removed any terminology that might be less comprehensible to the laity. The type of textual changes undertaken by Whitford are subtle, but reflect a concerted attempt to make the text more digestible for the lay reader. The nature of these changes may be understood from the following set of examples.

In the translation of "de laetitia bonae conscientiae", Atkynson remained true to the Latin, whereas Whitford replaced the word "good" with "clene".¹⁰⁷ The rather vague notion of a good conscience was hardly incomprehensible to the lay reader. By

¹⁰⁴ F1488, c3^v; F1531, Q8^r

¹⁰⁵ F1488, i6^r; F1531, G1^v

¹⁰⁶ F1488, i4^v; F1531, I2^v

¹⁰⁷ Pohl, p. 68:5-6; Atkynson, "Of the gladnes of a good cōscie~ce", E2^r; Whitford, "Of the gladnes of a clene conscyence", g5^r

alluding to a clean conscience, however, Whitford was inciting readers to action. In a similar way, the following phrase was simplified by Whitford: "Si enim tuum in aliis quaeris solacium et lucrum: senties saepius detrimentum".¹⁰⁸ While Atkynson translated the Latin literally (with the exception of exchanging the word "displeasure" for "detryment"), Whitford refined the meaning of the text: "and yf thou seke thy comfort in anythinge but in Jhesu / thou shalte fele thereby great spyrytuell losse".¹⁰⁹ The search for personal solace and profit was to be understood in terms of seeking any comfort other than that provided by Christ Himself. As in the later Protestant tradition of the text, Whitford in this way reinforced the Christocentricity of the text. Furthermore, the interpretation of "detryment" is associated more explicitly with the identification of spiritual loss.

Whitford's translation rendered the original text less abstract. It sought to replace potentially abstruse language with clearer alternatives. For example, while the phrase "quod veritas intus loquitur sine strepitu verborum" was translated with relative fidelity by Atkynson, Whitford provided a more explanatory interpretation by replacing "truth" with "almighty god".¹¹⁰ Truth is presented as none other than God Himself, speaking via an inward spirit, without the sound of words. Elsewhere, "consolationis gratiam" is simplified by the Whitford text to mean "devocyon", rather than "cōsolation of grace".¹¹¹ The term devotion would be more intelligible for a lay person than the phrase consolation of grace. In a similar vein, Whitford did not interpret "consolationem carnalem" literally as had Atkynson, but translated it as "fleshely delytes".¹¹²

Whitford's translation was marked especially by his frequent use of elaboration and additions. This expansive form of interpretation served to simplify the text by drawing out its meaning. For example, where Atkynson's translation referred to the

¹⁰⁸ Pohl, p. 71:2-4

¹⁰⁹ Atkynson, "If thou wylt busily seeke solace & lucre / thou shalt fynde many tymes displeasure & detryment", E3^v; Whitford, g7^r

¹¹⁰ Pohl, p. 144:13-14; Atkynson, "how treuthe speketh inwardly to mannes soule without noyse", G1^v; Whitford, "Howe almyghty god speketh inwardly to mannes soule withoute sownde of wordes", i5^r

¹¹¹ Pohl, p. 157:7-8; Atkynson, H2^r; Whitford, k7^r

¹¹² Pohl, p. 194:11-12; Atkynson, "carnall csolaciō", k5^r; Whitford, o1^v

doctrine of Christ which "excelleth" all the doctrines of the saints, Whitford elaborated by noting that the doctrine of Christ is "of more vertue / ghostly strength" than the doctrine of the saints.¹¹³ Whitford's interpretation is perhaps more tangible for the reader. Similarly, the translation of "ad interiora et spiritualia" illustrates the greater expansiveness of Whitford's text.¹¹⁴ While Atkynson interpreted this as "spirituall p~feccion", Whitford was more wide-ranging in his choice of language, and consequently, more helpful to the reader: "to an inward setting of his herte in god & to have the grace of devocyon".¹¹⁵ Hence, that which concerns "interiora" is given a focal point, the heart, whereas "spiritualia" refers to devotion - a devotion which is derived from the grace and help of God.

Whitford's translation gives a clearer indication of the nature of the relationship between the believer and God. This relationship is elucidated in Whitford's translation of the phrase "nulla est ergo sanctitas si manum tuam Domine subtrahas".¹¹⁶ Whitford embellished Atkynson's literal translation, by adding the word goodness to complement holiness ("sanctitas") and he also construed the "manum tuam" to mean the hands of mercy.¹¹⁷ The elaborative nature of Whitford's text gives it a greater impression of completion, a textual solidity more helpful for the reader. This is also evident in the translation of the phrase "suscepi de manu tua crucem", which Atkynson translated literally as "I have take~ the crosse of thy hãde".¹¹⁸ Whitford elaborated upon this again by alluding to the cross of penance, implying that one imitates Christ by bearing a cross oneself and that this cross represents for humanity the need to be repentant and to do penance for any sins committed.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, this addition inserts an element of Catholic sacramental practice into a passage previously devoid of any such reference.

¹¹³ Pohl, p. 5:16; Atkynson, A2^r. Atkynson is faithful to the Latin "praecellit"; Whitford, b1^r

¹¹⁴ Pohl, p. 36:3-4

¹¹⁵ Atkynson, B7^v; Whitford, d7^r

¹¹⁶ Pohl, p. 170:16-18

¹¹⁷ Atkynson, "There is therfore no holynes in man if the lorde withdrawe thy hande", I2^r; Whitford, "Wherfore it may be wel sayd & veryfyed that there is no holynes ne goodnes in us / yf thou withdrawe thy hande of mercy", l8^v

¹¹⁸ Pohl, p. 254:11; Atkynson, P5^r

¹¹⁹ Whitford, "I have take~ the crosse of penau~ce of thy hãde", t6^r

Another distinctive feature of Whitford's text is that he removed any terminology that might not be applicable to lay readers. There are several examples of language in Atkynson's translation which might have better served a clerical or monastic readership. In the translation of "da pro omnibus mundi consolationibus suavissimam spiritus tui unctionem", for example, Atkynson's fidelity can be contrasted with Whitford's looser interpretation.¹²⁰ Whitford avoided the term *unction* perhaps on the grounds that it would have been less comprehensible to the lay reader, despite its sacramental association (with the rite of extreme unction, the last rites). In its place, Whitford used the word "consolation", a term that pointed to the interior essence of the term "unction": "gyve me also for all worldly consolacyōs the most swete consolacion of the holy ghost".¹²¹

Whitford's revision of "nisi integra resignatione et cotidiana sui immolatione prius facta" reveals a similar divergence.¹²² Atkynson's translation retained the less comprehensible term "oblaciō" which was in turn changed by Whitford, who interpreted it as a "dayly offerynge".¹²³ Oblation was a theologically precise term central to Catholic Eucharistic theology, representing its sacrificial nature. Hence, Whitford's interpretation suggests he felt that the laity should not concern themselves with any theological digression. It sufficed that they comprehended the notion of offering, and especially the theme of self-sacrifice. Whitford's translation of "diabolus",¹²⁴ in which he replaced Atkynson's "devyl" with the "ghostly enemye",¹²⁵ suggested how the devil works. If believers were better educated in the subtle and wily ways of the devil, then they would be more prepared to face him.

The final category of adaptation is most striking because of its frequency: it occurs at least 60 times. For each addition to the text, the key expression is "cest-à-dire", meaning "namely" or "that is to say". It essentially serves the same function as in

¹²⁰ Pohl, p. 194:20-22; Atkynson, "Grau~t me for all wordly consolacyons the swete gracyous unccyon of the holy goost", K6^r

¹²¹ Whitford, o1^v

¹²² Pohl, p. 213:1-2

¹²³ Atkynson, "but if they make a hole resygnacyō & a dayly oblaciō of themselfe", M2^v; Whitford, "but thorough a hole perfyte forsakyng for hymself and thorughe a dayly offerynge of theym", p7^v

¹²⁴ Pohl, p. 77:11

¹²⁵ Atkynson, E6^v; Whitford, h4^r

modern day French, where it enables the speaker and writer to reiterate a point in a different manner. Normally, "cest-à-dire" served to introduce phrases which expanded upon the meaning of the Imitation, thereby addressing the simple lay person more effectively. By considering the "c'est-à-dire" additions, one can identify the translator's spiritual interpretation of the text.

In one passage, the Imitation referred to the promise of happiness given to that individual who is vigilant at the Lord's coming.¹²⁶ Instead of referring to the Lord's coming, the Internelle alluded to the time when He will knock on the door. If this is an insufficient hint for the lay reader, a "c'est-à-dire" is added, describing this time to be "a l'heure de la mort".¹²⁷ In a further example found in the first chapter of Book two of the Imitation, believers are told to give themselves to interior things ("te donner auc choses interieures").¹²⁸ The Internelle expands on this by stating "c'est-à-dire, a penser a dieu et a toy".¹²⁹ Interiority is thus divided into self-assessment and meditation upon God, representing a more comprehensible, perhaps even more systematic, method of meditative prayer.

A different example discusses the benefits of following the teachings of Christ's cross, as a result of which the believer need no longer fear the sentence of eternal damnation.¹³⁰ The Internelle interprets the admonishment to follow the teachings of the cross by saying, "c'est-à-dire", namely, suffering tribulation and adversity patiently and voluntarily for the love of Christ.¹³¹ In this way, the teachings of the cross are expounded for the laity, who are shown how to follow Christ actively in their lives. In chapter two of the third Book, the believer declares to His master: "Speak now Lord: as

¹²⁶ F1488, "car bienheureux sera. dit leuūāgeliste saint luc le seruiteur quant le seigneur viendra et le trouuera veillant", c3^v; Pohl, "Beatus servus...quem cum venerit dominus invenerit vigilantem", p. 35:8-9

¹²⁷ F1531, "Bien eureux sera celluy que le seigneur trouuera vaillant quāt il hurtera a la porte. cestadire a l'heure de la mort", Q8^r

¹²⁸ F1488, "Apre~ de mespriser les choses foraines / et te donner aux interieures", d8^v

¹²⁹ F1531, "Aprens a mespriser les choses du monde / et te donne a tes interiores Cestadire a penser a dieu et a toy", A1^r

¹³⁰ F1488, "Mais ceulx qui maintenant oyent volentiers / & ensuyent les enseignements de la croix: ilz ne craindront point lors ouyr ladicte terrible sentence deternelle dampnacion", f5^v

¹³¹ F1531, "Car ceulx qui de present oyent voluntiers et ensuyent la parolle de nostre seigneur de la croix ensuyuir / cestadire souffrir paciamment & volontairement pour lamour de luy tribulatō & aduersite: faire penitence de leurs pechez en ce mōde a celle heure la du iour du iugement ne doubteront pas la parolle de la separatiō de sa compaignie que auront les dampnez", C2^v

your servant is listening".¹³² The Internelle interpreted this by adding, that is to say, your servant wishes to obey you.¹³³ The attentive ear of the believer is understood to be representative of obedience. In another passage, the Imitation alluded to the fact that, for all the good works that a believer does, he or she soon falters and dries up.¹³⁴ The Internelle, adding "c'est-à-dire", described this drying up as being the result of the individual losing the retribution of God.¹³⁵ These various examples allow one to appreciate the language of devotion and how it was adapted to accommodate the laity.

The use of the phrase "that is to say" served the same function in Whitford's revision of Atkynson's translation, since it was used to unravel the figurative language of the original Latin. Towards the end of the first Book, Atkynson interpreted "claudere super te ostium tuum" to mean "shet the dore of thy soule".¹³⁶ Whitford began with a similar translation, "shytte faste the dore of thy soule", but then elaborated upon this by stating, "that is to saye thy ymagynacyon and kepe it warely fro beholdynge of any bodely thyng as moche as thou mayste".¹³⁷ Such an addition encouraged readers to make a distinction between the body and soul, and to be wary to resist the temptations of the body. Elsewhere, while Whitford, like Atkynson, provided a literal interpretation of "beatus quem tu erudieris Domine: et de lege tua docueris eum. Ut mitiges ei a diebus malis",¹³⁸ he then provided a small addition at the end: "O blessyd is he lord whom thou enformyste & techeste so that thou mayst be meke and mercyful lord unto hym in the evyl day", followed by "that is to say in the day of the most dredful iugemente".¹³⁹ The evil day is explained in terms of the Last Judgement. Although it is unlikely that

¹³² F1488, "Parle doncques seigneur: car ton serf escoute", g3^r

¹³³ F1531, "Et pour ce sire plaise vous parler a moy / car vostre seruiteur vo~ escoute / cestadire a volonte de vous obeir", D1^v

¹³⁴ F1488, "Car si tu q~ers toy mesmes en quelque chose tantost deffaulx / & cōmences a terir et seicher", h4^r

¹³⁵ F1531, "Car se en faisant quelque bōne oeuure tu requiers & regarde / tātost tu fauldras & secheras / cestadire tu perdras la retributiō de dieu", E5^r

¹³⁶ Pohl, p. 38:19-20; Atkynson, B8^v

¹³⁷ Whitford, e1^r

¹³⁸ Pohl, p. 146:12-15; Atkynson, "Blessyd is that man that thou doest enfourme and teche good lorde to understande thy lawes & cōmaundementis that thou mayst so spare hym in the day of thy wrath fro thy indignacion", G2^v

¹³⁹ Whitford, i6^v

this interpretation would have been lost on readers of the Atkynson translation, nevertheless, it makes the point more explicit and more poignant.

There remains one final major difference between the two French translations. From the very beginning, editions of the Internelle Consolation consistently contained an extra chapter, situated at the end of Book three, "de l'imitation de nostre seigneur Jesus Christ" (Book One of the Imitation de Jésus Christ). It followed the twenty fifth chapter, "du feruent amendement de toute nostre vie", and is entitled "contre la vanite de ce monde".¹⁴⁰ The chapter began with an analysis of the futility and potential dangers incurred by partaking in worldly conversation: "Certainement griefue & trop perilleuse est la conuersation de ce mōde".¹⁴¹ The theme is not striking in itself; indeed, it closely resembles monastic spirituality. How is the believer to challenge and resist these worldly standards? The chapter emphasises the need for self-denial and abandonment. Again this is by no means remarkable. Yet what follows is particularly interesting in that it shows, albeit implicitly, an extension of this debate within a more explicitly secular framework. The text reveals a powerful criticism of worldly vanities by asking the reader where all former leaders of secular society, who in their time had been such powerful figures, are to be found now.

"Ou sont maintenāt les pri~ces & grāds seigneurs qui ont este au te~ps passe / qui auoie~t grād d[am]ñiation & seigneurie sur la terre... Ou sont les sages & grāds clercs du te~ps passe q~ ont mesure et escript le mōde... ou est Alexādre le vaillant ou sont les puyssās empereurs: ou sont les nobles roys & princes?"¹⁴²

The subject matter of this extract appears to indicate an intended secular readership. Readers were discouraged from using these historical figures as exemplars, since nothing remained of them: "leurs corps sont en terre pourris et des vers deuorez et

¹⁴⁰ 1531, S6^v

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² 1531, S7^v

leurs ames recoipuent la ioye ou la peine q[ue]lles ont desseruy".¹⁴³ The defining goal for the reader was not, consequently, human standards or aspirations, but rather God Himself, as the final sentence of the chapter indicates: "auquel seul roy i~mortel / inuisible / seul dieu soit toute gloire / tout honneur / et action de graces q~ seul est soit commenceme~t / moyen et fin de nostre internelle consolation".¹⁴⁴ Thus, the guiding principle of how to conduct a virtuous life remained the same, regardless of whether readers were monks living in the enclosed space of the cloister or whether they were lay people living in the world.

The centrality of translation in making the original text more accessible to the laity is unmistakable. The Internelle Consolation favoured a freer interpretation rather than opting for a rigid fidelity to the original. The nature of this type of interpretative translation simplified the language of devotion. The text of the Internelle could provide a much more comprehensible and effective devotional focus for the lay person. It is also with an appreciation of the different intentions and devotional preferences of the authors that one should understand the subtle differences between the two English translations. The milieu of the Whitford translation is vital and suggests a more concerted attempt to accommodate the laity. The way in which the translator explained and simplified the language of devotion confirms this trend.

Conclusion

Monastic spirituality provided a significant component of the literary spiritual nourishment made available to the laity in this period; the spirituality of the Imitatio Christi was part of this. Although the spirituality of the Imitatio accommodated both lay and monastic and clerical readers, translators attempted to render the text even more accessible to the laity via the interpretative method of translation. By the mid-sixteenth century, English and French readers of the Imitatio Christi (with Whitford's text and the

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Internelle respectively) were left with a text that was not only more easily digestible, but devoid of any monastic terms and references. In this way, the distribution of the Imitatio was facilitated by the appreciation for Erasmian spirituality and this points to the persistent influence of the *devotio moderna* in a different guise. The significance of the omissions of monastic terms was ultimately dependent on the context, yet one can hardly ignore the fact that English readers would have been more comfortable reading Whitford's text following the dissolution of the monasteries; this is rather ironic given the *raison d'être* of Whitford's writings. In the decades that were to follow, the omission of any references to monasticism was to be given a solid theological base. That Protestant tradition of the Imitatio will be discussed more fully in chapters six and seven.

Chapter 5. Transmission of the Imitatio Christi, 1531-1620:

German Spiritualists, Elizabethan Protestants and the Jesuits

Introduction

"No booke hath byn more approued by generall consent, none more often printed and translated into diuers languages, none more esteemed, commended, yea commaunded also by the chiefe Maisters of Spirit of some Religious Orders, to be often read by euery one in priuate, and once a weeke publikely to all. So full of sweet sense is this diuine Flower, that the most spirituell bees may dayly draw from thence great plenty of celestiall hony".¹

In 1531, the first Protestant translation of the Imitatio Christi was printed, almost a decade after the outbreak of the Lutheran Reformation. Translated by Caspar Schwenckfeld, the Silesian spiritualist, his German edition of the Imitatio became influential not merely because of the number of reprints, but also because it provided inspiration for subsequent Protestant translators. Indeed, a textual genealogy of Protestant editions in the sixteenth century can be briefly outlined. Schwenckfeld's translation may have been used by Leo Jud for his translation into Swiss German, which was first printed in 1539. Sebastian Castellio, the next translator, used a German edition as his source language text from which he prepared a Latin revision of the Imitatio - the German translation is again likely to be Schwenckfeld's. It is beyond doubt that Castellio's text was the basis for the English Protestant translation. Both Edward Hake and Thomas Rogers made reference to Castellio, and while both revised and polished Castellio's text, Hake was certainly the more faithful. The number of Protestant editions during the period 1531-1620 is not overwhelming, but it is by no means insignificant, particularly as regards the English tradition.

¹ E1613, *2^v, *3^r

The textual genealogy is also indicative of the close links between the different Protestant groups that were attracted to the Imitatio. They do not come from the groups of the so-called magisterial reformers, but instead were all members of or closely connected to the spiritualists of south-western Germany and of the Swiss lands. While there were some important differences between the spiritualists, they nevertheless retained relative unity in their opposition to Lutheranism.²

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the appropriation of the Imitatio was for the most part Catholic. The majority of editions from the 1560s onwards included the fourth Book on the Mass.³ In the French context, for example, while the three books of the Internelle Consolation had predominated in the first half of the century, the Imitation de Jésus Christ translation (which had almost always retained Book four) was favoured from the 1560s onwards. A similar trend was evident in the Latin tradition of the Imitatio where all four Books were included, as well as the German tradition. With approximately 360 editions printed during this period alone, any analysis of Catholic editions of the Imitatio from circa 1540 to 1620 must be confined to certain limits: this thesis will focus on the contribution of the Jesuits to the circulation of the Imitatio.

The Imitatio formed an integral part of Ignatius' and Jesuit spirituality and the appropriation of the text by the Jesuits took on various dimensions. Jesuits provided important Latin editions of the work which both accommodated a learned readership and presented source language texts for later vernacular translations. They also undertook their own vernacular translations, rendering the text accessible to a non-Latinate readership, revised the vernacular translations of non-Jesuits and promoted the translations of non-Jesuits. Jesuits not only employed their own printers, but also established some of their own presses. The Imitatio was recommended in the Spiritual Exercises, thereby ensuring that it played a fundamental role in the shaping of Jesuit spirituality. The circulation of the Imitatio by the Society of Jesus is more easily

² Alexandre Koyré, Mystiques, spirituels, alchimistes du XVIe siècle allemand (Éditions Gallimard, 1971), p. 10

³ See Appendix.

understood if one considers the other devotional works recommended by the Jesuits. The transmission of the Imitatio should also be considered in the context of Jesuit pedagogy. Jesuit translators were not only learned but often played an active role in education. Given the close links between the novitiate training and the colleges, the Imitatio was influential in the early (and not merely the later) spiritual development of novices. Moreover, the Jesuits helped to circulate the Imitatio through their intervention in the authorship debate.

Protestant Translations of the Imitatio

The Protestant tradition of the Imitatio was small in comparison with the Jesuit one, but certainly not immaterial. Given that the translations (in German, Latin and English) were undertaken in south-western Germany, Switzerland and England by a variety of Protestants, Protestant use of the Imitatio is more difficult to categorise than Jesuit appropriation. In the short time preceding the outbreak of the German Reformation and during its first decade, the Imitatio did not appear in German translation within either a Catholic or a Protestant context. The first Protestant edition eventually came with Caspar Schwenckfeld's German translation, printed in 1531.⁴ It is likely that Schwenckfeld translated the Imitatio in Strasbourg, though it was printed in Augsburg by Philip Ulhart. The city of Augsburg was not new to the tradition of late medieval spirituality, for the sixth imprint of Luther's version of the Theologia Deutsch was printed there in September 1518.⁵ His translation saw an impressive number of reprints, in 1533, 1535, 1536 and 1537 at Ulhart's press, and two in Strasbourg (1544 and 1552), as well as four editions in the 1580s which, unfortunately, lack a place of publication and a printer.⁶ The reason for the comparatively late Protestant

⁴ G1531. N.B. In the same year, Christen Pedersen translated into Danish Luther's sermon Vom Leiden und Creuz, to which he attached a series of chapters from the Imitatio. See Anne Rüsing, 'The book and the Reformation in Denmark and Norway', in Jean-François Gilmont, (ed.), The Reformation and the Book, translated by Karin Maag (Ashgate, 1998), p. 445

⁵ George Williams, The Radical Reformation (Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, Vol. XV., Kirksville, Missouri, 1992), p. 79

⁶ G1533, G1535, G1536, and G1537; G1544, and G1552; G[1580]

appropriation of the Imitatio can be attributed to the incompatibility of its spirituality with Luther's theology. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone had seemingly allowed no room for the tradition of *imitatio Christi* and its implicit acceptance of good works. Following his early support for the Lutheran Reformation, Schwenckfeld later defected from Lutheranism in the mid-1520s to a more spiritualist tradition.

The printer of his translation, Philip Ulhart, was particularly suited for this project, since his religious views had developed similarly to Schwenckfeld's. By the late 1520s, Ulhart had not only printed some of Luther's works, but also those of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, Huldrych Zwingli and some of Schwenckfeld's other treatises.⁷ It is noteworthy that printers who published the works of spiritualists and Anabaptists risked their careers by printing the works of radicals. This illustrates that they were motivated more by pious intentions than commercial considerations.⁸ Ulhart's contact with the Anabaptist and "Schwärmer" communities was echoed by Schwenckfeld's spell in Augsburg and Strasbourg. Indeed, the idea of translating the Imitatio may have been derived from the Strasbourg Anabaptists.⁹ The spirituality of Anabaptism shared common ground with the notion of *imitatio Christi*.¹⁰ Furthermore, in Strasbourg, Schwenckfeld stayed at first with Wolfgang Capito, whose theology, of all the Strasbourg reformers, was closest to the spiritualists.¹¹ Capito's nephew, Wolfgang Köpfel, who became the semi-official printer of the Strasbourg reformers,¹² later printed the Imitatio.¹³ Moreover, with the omission of the fourth Book, the Imitatio was made more accessible to groups of varying theological stances. The printing of Schwenckfeld's translation came at a good time, a year after the Diet of

⁷ Karl Schottenloher, Philip Ulhart: ein Augsburger Winkeldrucker und Helfershelfer der "Schwärmer" und "Wiedertäufer", 1523-1529 (Munich and Freising, 1921), pp. 28ff, 85, 95ff, 106ff

⁸ Miriam Chrisman, Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480-1599 (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1982), p. 30

⁹ R. Emmet McLaughlin, The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent: Caspar Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfelders (Baden-Baden & Bouxwiller, 1996), p. 80

¹⁰ Clarence Bauman, Gewaltlosigkeit im Täuferum: eine Untersuchung zur theologischen Ethik des oberdeutschen Täuferums der Reformationszeit (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1968), pp. 170ff: For the similarities in spirituality between the notion of *imitatio Christi* and the Anabaptists, see also Gregory, Salvation at Stake, pp. 197-249

¹¹ Williams, The Radical Reformation, pp. 371, 384

¹² Chrisman, Lay Culture, pp. 30-31

¹³ G1552

Augsburg (and two years after the divisive colloquy of Marburg) during which tensions over the Eucharist exacerbated the disunity among Protestants.¹⁴ That he translated the Imitatio in Strasbourg was hardly coincidental, since the Mass had been prohibited in that city by 1529.¹⁵ The principal readership for Schwenckfeld's translation would have been the various Schwenckfeldian communities that existed in Augsburg and Strasbourg in the middle decades of the sixteenth century. In fact, a contemporary, Leonhard Hieber, listed the names of approximately 50 people to whom he had given, lent or sold Schwenckfeld's works three or four years before Schwenckfeld's arrival in Augsburg.¹⁶ While this list did not mention the Imitatio, it nevertheless illustrates the distribution network for his works. In 1543, Schwenckfeld wrote to Sybilla Eisler of Augsburg, offering to send her his personal copy of the Imitatio in order that she could transcribe his annotations. In a later letter, he promised to send his copy for that same reason in order to help her reading of the text.¹⁷

It may be because of Schwenckfeld's influence that Leo Jud undertook his translation of the Imitatio. The links between the Swiss and south German lands were especially strong, and the Eucharistic controversy between the Swiss Sacramentarians and the Lutherans was paralleled by events in south-western Germany.¹⁸ Not only did they correspond with each other in 1533,¹⁹ but Schwenckfeld also sent a copy of his Unterscheid des Alten und Newen Testaments / der Figur und waarhait to Jud; whether Schwenckfeld also sent his translation of the Imitatio to Jud cannot be corroborated.²⁰ Jud's translation was printed only three times by as many printers: Augustin Frieß (1539); Eustachin Froschouer (1545); and Christoph Froschouer (1551). While

¹⁴ Williams, The Radical Reformation, p. 386; see also McLaughlin, Freedom of Spirit, pp. 125ff

¹⁵ Williams, The Radical Reformation, p. 381

¹⁶ McLaughlin, Freedom of Spirit, pp. 205-206

¹⁷ The manuscripts are reproduced in document CXXIV of the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum Vol. IV (Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1914), p. 413

¹⁸ Williams, The Radical Reformation, p. 193

¹⁹ Yasukazu Morita, 'Bullinger und Schwenckfeld', in Ulrich Gäbler, and Erland Herkenrath, (eds.), Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575: Vol. II., Beziehungen und Wirkungen (Theologischer Verlag, Zurich, 1975), pp. 143-147

²⁰ Schwenckfeld's correspondence with Jud includes four extant letters (dated March, July, September 1533 and March 1534). Jud's letters do not survive. CS Vol. I., (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 747ff, 801ff, 824ff; CS Vol. V., (Leipzig, 1916), pp. 3ff

Christoph Froschouer's book-list of 1543 did not include the Imitatio (he had not printed his edition by that time),²¹ the Imitatio (or rather Nachuolgung Christi as it was entitled) is listed in his 1556 catalogue, five years after he had printed his edition of the text.²² The link with the Froschauer presses was vital since the Froschauer family was central to the printing network of the Zurich Reformation.²³

Before undertaking his translation of the Imitatio, Jud had translated many of Erasmus' works, including the Complaint of Peace, On the Education of a Christian Prince and the Paraphrases,²⁴ the first two of which share a very similar spirituality with the Imitatio.²⁵ Indeed, in the decisive years between 1519 and 1523, a remarkable 21 out of 23 works translated by Jud were composed by Erasmus.²⁶ Although Jud translated many of Erasmus' works, his thought was principally based upon the Enchiridion.²⁷ From translating the Enchiridion in 1521, he did not have to make a considerable step in choosing to translate the Imitatio.²⁸

The third major Protestant translator was Sebastian Castellio, whose Latin edition enjoyed a number of reprints. In editing a Latin edition of the Imitatio, Castellio used a German translation as a guide. Since Schwenckfeld's translation appears to conform with Castellio's edition and with no other names proposed for authorship of German Protestant translations from the 1530s to the 1550s, one can surmise that Schwenckfeld was that "prudent man" (as he is described in Castellio's preface) who had undertaken the necessary emendations. First printed at Basle in 1563, Castellio's text was printed another three times in that city (1565, 1576 and 1606).²⁹ That Schwenckfeld's translation was used by Castellio would be less surprising given that

²¹ Index librorum, quos Christophorus Froschouerus Tiguri hactenus suis typis excudit. Ita digestus, ut libros singulos bini fere numeri sequantur, quorum prior annu~ Domini, alter libri formam notat (1543), [B.L. 1565/160]

²² S. Vögelin, Christoph Froschauer erster berühmter Buchdrucker Zürich nach seinem Leben und Wirken nebst Aufsätzen und Briefen von ihm und an ihm (Zurich, 1840), pp. 110-111

²³ Oskar Farner, 'Leo Jud: Zwinglis treuster Helfer', Zwingliana Vol. X., No. 2 (1955), pp. 204ff

²⁴ For the Complaint of Peace, see [BL 3906.d.86]; and for the Education of a Christian Prince, see [BL 8006.c.13]

²⁵ Pestalozzi, Leo Judä, pp. 11, 70; Wyss, Leo Jud, pp. 191ff; Potter, Zwingli, p. 128

²⁶ Wyss, Leo Jud, pp. 40ff, 82, 83, 88

²⁷ Ibid., p. 89

²⁸ Ibid., p. 192

²⁹ L1563a, L1565, L1576 and L1606a, all printed in Basle, printers unknown.

the Swiss Confederation and the German Empire retained "not so much divided as complementary loyalties".³⁰ In addition, the text was printed in 1564 at Birckmann's press in Cologne and at Bremen in 1620.³¹ It is likely that Castellio's Latin text was also translated into French and German, on the grounds that both translations were printed in Basle.³² Castellio's edition of the Imitatio was well-received in northern Germany, according to Caspar Haberijs from Düsseldorf.³³

The risk of printing religious works was especially true in relation to Castellio's works. The printer of Castellio's first edition of the Imitatio, Pietro Perna, whose activity spanned the years 1558-1582, was imprisoned for publishing Castellio's Dialogi Quatuor.³⁴ Indeed, Guggisberg pointed out that it is unthinkable that Perna and the printer Johannes Oporinus "would have done so much to support Castellio's scholarly work, as well as his polemical writings, had they not been in sympathy with his beliefs".³⁵ It is clear that Castellio appreciated the support he received from his circle of friends in Basle, which he sometimes rewarded with copies of his printed works; gifts were a significant reason for the distribution of books.³⁶ The first Dutch translation was printed by Dirk Buyter in Vianem in 1564, a press that was committed to anti-Spanish propaganda.³⁷ In 1565, Jan van Waesberghe printed in Antwerp a Dutch translation of the Imitatio based on Castellio's version.³⁸ On 29 March, 1569, van Waesberghe was called in front of a tribunal for having printed and sold prohibited

³⁰ Peter Bietenholz, 'Printing and the Basle Reformation, 1517-1565', in Gilmont, (ed.), The Reformation and the Book, p. 237

³¹ L1564b

³² De Backer lists a German edition printed in 1580 by Samuel Apiario in Basle, G1580. There was no French Protestant tradition of the text, since there were no Calvinist translators. Initially, I was wondering whether an edition printed in the workshop of Etienne Dolet might reveal yet another divergent interpretation. However, following a comparison between a Catholic edition printed in Paris (1539) and Dolet's edition (printed by an apprentice while Dolet was in jail), the two texts were virtually identical. (F1539c, and F1542a). See R. Christie, Étienne Dolet: the Martyr of the Renaissance, 1508-1546 (London, Macmillan, 1899). There is an edition printed in Basle, F[1576], which is likely to be a French translation of Castellio's edition. I thank Michael Springer for checking this edition for me in Wolfenbüttel.

³³ Guggisberg, Castellio, p. 262

³⁴ Bietenholz, 'Printing and the Basle Reformation', pp. 240, 258

³⁵ Hans Guggisberg, Sebastian Castellio, 1515-1563: Humanist and Defender of Religious Toleration in a Confessional Age, translated and edited by Bruce Gordon (forthcoming), p. 66

³⁶ Ibid., p. 69

³⁷ Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 360-361; D1564b.

³⁸ D1565b

books and for having assisted at Protestant sermons, and was later imprisoned in the Steen on 23 May.³⁹ On 10 July, he was finally absolved, thanks largely to his wife's intervention.⁴⁰ It is interesting that his later editions of the Imitatio included the fourth Book on the Mass.⁴¹

It did not take long for Castellio's Latin edition to reach England, where it became the source language text for Edward Hake's translation into English. This can be attributed partly to the fact that all the major Basle printers aimed for the international market, especially via the Frankfurt bookfairs;⁴² Castellio had himself developed close contacts with England, though his supporters were few following his death.⁴³ Not long after Castellio's second edition (also printed in Basle), Hake's translation was printed in 1567, and subsequently in 1568 and 1571 by Henry Denham.⁴⁴ Denham had joined the Company of Stationers on 30 August, 1560 and within four years he had his own printing house (on White Cross Street, Cripplegate).⁴⁵ In 1565, he moved to Paternoster Row at the Sign of the Star, where he printed the Imitatio. Denham is fundamental to the circulation of the Imitatio in England. Having recognised the popularity of the text in the 1560s and early 1570s, he commissioned Thomas Rogers to make a new translation of the Imitatio.⁴⁶ Rogers' translation was first printed by Denham in 1580, and was reprinted by the same printer in 1582, 1584, 1585 and 1589.⁴⁷ By 1574, Denham had acquired the patent of William Seres for printing the Psalter, the Primer for little children and all books of private prayer in Latin and English.⁴⁸ The printing of the Imitatio was, therefore, consistent with his broader

³⁹ Anne Rouzet, Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs des XVe et XVIe siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle (Nieuwkoop, B. de Graaf, 1975), p. 243

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 243

⁴¹ D1571a, and D1598. On December 4, 1725, Castellio's edition was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books. Fromm, no. 114. E. Fromm, Die Ausgaben der Imitatio Christi in der Kölner Stadtbibliothek (Cologne, 1886)

⁴² Bietenholz, 'Printing and the Basle Reformation', p. 259

⁴³ Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 259, 358-359

⁴⁴ E1567, E1568, E[1571].

⁴⁵ H. R. Plomer, 'Henry Denham', Lib., N.S. X, p. 241

⁴⁶ E1580. Rogers praised Denham in his other works, such as the translation of St. Augustine's Heavenlie Meditations, a4^r, a4^v

⁴⁷ E1582, E1584, E1585a, E1589.

⁴⁸ Plomer, 'Denham', p. 245

programme of work.⁴⁹ It is clear that the Imitatio benefitted enormously from being promoted by as important a printer as Denham. After all, by 1583, Denham had four presses, and he had served the office of Junior Warden of the Company in the years 1586-1587 and 1588-1589.⁵⁰

The influence of political patronage of the printing press had a dramatic impact upon the diffusion of religious literature. The Company of Stationers in England sought to monopolize the book trade towards the end of the sixteenth century. With civil and ecclesiastical authorities sensitive to the necessity of controlling the press, the decision to back the Stationers clearly enhanced their role. The Stationers were given control of the publication, selling and binding of books.⁵¹ That the Imitatio was printed so frequently by the Stationers' Company significantly strengthened the legitimacy of the text.

The prestige of the Imitatio was certainly enhanced through its connection with Thomas Rogers, whose work as a translator was impressive.⁵² Thomas Rogers' edition of the Imitatio was by far the most popular translation from the late sixteenth century through to the Civil War. Between the first imprint in 1580 and 1640, his translation was printed 19 times (14 editions between 1580 and 1609). It was also printed by Henry Middleton (1587),⁵³ by R. Yardley (shared edition with Peter Short in 1592),⁵⁴ by Peter Short (1596, 1598, 1600 and 1602),⁵⁵ by H. Lownes (1605, 1609, 1617, 1628 and 1629),⁵⁶ by Jaggard and Okes (1607),⁵⁷ by M. Dawson (1636) and by E. Purslowe (1640).⁵⁸

⁴⁹ This was also true of the printer Henry Middleton, whose edition of the Imitatio (E1589) was paralleled by his encouragement of Henry Bull to produce a body of prayer books. See Ian Green, Print and Protestantism in early modern England (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 257

⁵⁰ Plomer, 'Denham', p. 249

⁵¹ Gerald Johnson, 'The Stationers versus the Drapers: control of the press in the late sixteenth century', Lib., 6th Series, Vol. X., No. 1 (March 1988), pp. 2-4

⁵² See STC 938, 944, 950, 4342, 11804, 12582.2, 12582.20, 13059, 13066.5, 21066, 23973, and 23995.

⁵³ E1587

⁵⁴ E1592

⁵⁵ E1596, E1598, E1600, and E1602

⁵⁶ E1605, E1609, E1617, E1628, and E1629

⁵⁷ E1607

⁵⁸ E1636a, and E1640

The Imitatio appeared in several book inventories during the Elizabethan period, of which the Cambridge inventories are a case in point.⁵⁹ While book inventories provide a certain indication as to the doctrinal affinity of the collector, one should be wary of depending solely on these sources. It is interesting, nevertheless, to see the Imitatio alongside the works of Jean Calvin, Theodore de Bèze and Heinrich Bullinger. The collection of John Beaumont (catalogued on his death in 1565), who was elected fellow of Trinity College in 1560 and canon of Westminster between 1562 and 1565, included a Latin edition of the Imitatio.⁶⁰ The work is listed as the De imitando Christo, the title of which is fascinating since the only Latin edition with an identical title is Castellio's.⁶¹ If it has been annotated correctly, this would mean that Castellio's first Latin edition, printed in 1563 in Basle, would have reached England by 1565 (if not his 1565 edition). With the appearance of Castellio's edition in a private collection by 1565, it is less surprising that Hake was able to find and use Castellio's text for his English translation printed in 1567. Equally intriguing is the fact that Beaumont allegedly shared the Calvinist convictions of his brother.⁶²

That three further inventories include the Imitatio alongside the works of Calvin and de Bèze suggests that owners considered there to be a certain compatibility between the works.⁶³ Admittedly, one of these inventories belonged to the bookseller Reignold Bridges. Being a bookseller, it is difficult to distinguish his own collection from those works that he wished to sell. Other book inventories seem so contradictory that one can hardly draw conclusions about their owner's religious affiliation, such as Charles Benson, who possessed a work by de Bèze and an Horae beatae virginis grece, in addition to the Imitatio.⁶⁴ Yet in many respects, as later chapters will address, the

⁵⁹ E. S. Leedham-Green, Books in Cambridge Inventories: book-lists from Vice-Chancellor's court probate inventories in the Tudor and Stuart periods (Cambridge University Press, 1986)

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 278-281

⁶¹ L1563a. There is a Latin tradition of the text with a similar title, De Christo imitando, which was printed in Antwerp by Joannes Steels (L1538, L1541, L1546a, L1550, L1552, L1556, and L1564a). Given that the 1538 edition includes Book four, the Castellio text seems to be the more likely edition.

⁶² Leedham-Green, Books, p. 279

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 402-419, 484-492, 508-522

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 524-526

Imitatio was to a certain extent acceptable to many different religious persuasions, which was also true of the Psalms.⁶⁵

The Jesuits

Jesuit association with the Imitatio is crucial if one considers the dramatic rise of the Society of Jesus in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Society was formally established by Pope Paul III in a bull of 1540 (*Regimini militantis ecclesiae*).⁶⁶ By 1565, the Jesuits had 3500 members and were organised into twelve administrative provinces ranging from the Iberian peninsula, Italy and Germany to Brazil, India and Ethiopia. By 1600, the number of professed members had risen to approximately 8500, by which time the Society was in charge of 400 educational establishments.⁶⁷ Within five years of his election as General in 1581, Claudio Aquaviva had already turned down 60 requests for colleges.⁶⁸ By 1626, there were no less than 15 500 Jesuits.⁶⁹

During this period, Jesuits were acclaimed for their teaching apostolate and made their presence felt at the Council of Trent.⁷⁰ They promoted lay and clerical reform through their ministries, which included preaching and administering to the poor and the sick, and the composition and translation of religious works. Above all, the Jesuits were characterised by their mobility, an itinerancy that greatly enhanced their

⁶⁵ As Ian Green has argued, "Protestant practice differed less from Catholic at various points than its proponents imagined". Green, *Print and Protestantism*, pp. 242-243

⁶⁶ For this document, see John Olin, (ed.), *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola* (Fordham University Press, New York 1992), pp. 203-208

⁶⁷ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, pp. 2, 54, 206ff; John Donohue, *Jesuit Education: An essay on the foundation of its idea* (Fordham University Press, New York, 1963), p. 63; John O'Malley, 'Priesthood, Ministry and Religious Life: Some Historical and Historiographical Considerations', in John O'Malley, *Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century: Preaching, Rhetoric, Spirituality and Reform* (Variorum, 1993), p. 241. By 1622, there were approximately 500 Jesuit colleges. Adrien Demoustier, 'Les Jésuites et l'enseignement dans une société chrétienne', in Laurent Cornaz, (ed.), *L'Église et l'éducation: Mille ans de tradition éducative* (L'Harmattan, 1995), p. 102

⁶⁸ John Donnelly, 'The Jesuit college at Padua: growth, suppression, attempts at Restoration: 1552-1606', p. 45

⁶⁹ R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 32

⁷⁰ C. E. Maxcey, 'Double Justice, Diego Laynez and the Council of Trent', *CH* 48 (1979), pp. 269-278

influence and promotion of religious literature.⁷¹ The apostolate of Émond Auger, a translator of the Imitatio, included work in Pamiers, Tournon, Valence, Lyon, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Aurillac, Rodez, Bourges and Paris.⁷² Another French Jesuit, Jean Pelletier, visited the Duke of Ferrara while the former was staying at the Jesuit college. On that occasion, he gave the duke a rosary and a copy of the Imitatio.⁷³ Jesuit mobility was reinforced by their communication network, and especially correspondence, by which recommendations for devotional books were made. Given the impact of the Jesuits on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their adoption of the Imitatio was of considerable importance to the text's fortunes.

The circulation of the Imitatio within the Society of Jesus can be attributed to Ignatius's recommendation of it in the Spiritual Exercises and elsewhere partly because it had influenced him at Manresa, where the Exercises had begun to take form.⁷⁴ It is not ill-advised to presume, therefore, that the majority of those familiar with the Exercises would have encountered the Imitatio. Hence, the diffusion of the Imitatio owed a great deal to the circulation of the Exercises. This is fundamental when one considers the widespread reception of the Exercises.

The first Jesuits who assembled in Paris were bound together by the religious experience of the Exercises.⁷⁵ Jerome Nadal alluded to the Constitution's requirement that all Jesuits who were to be received into the Society should undertake the Exercises.⁷⁶ The Exercises was also used to attract new members to the Society.⁷⁷ Peter Canisius joined the Jesuits in this way, having been led through the Exercises by Peter Favre.⁷⁸ The Exercises were also central for students attending the colleges. In

⁷¹ John O'Malley, 'To travel to any part of the world: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation', SSI 16/2 March 1984, pp. 1-39

⁷² Henri Fouqueray, Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus en France des origines à la suppression: Vol. I. Les origines et les premières luttes (1528-1575) (Paris, 1910), pp. 269, 258, 331, 514, 532

⁷³ CP IV., p. 77. For a different example, see CP VI., p. 154. For the role of gifts in the distribution of books, see Natalie Zemon Davis, The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France (University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp. 36-37, 56, 59, 101-102

⁷⁴ Spiritual Exercises, [100], p. 304. See chapter eight.

⁷⁵ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 32; Palmer, On giving the Exercises, p. 67

⁷⁶ Palmer, On giving the Exercises, pp. 36, 39

⁷⁷ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 44

⁷⁸ James Brodrick, Saint Peter Canisius (London, Sheed and Ward, 1935), p. 36

1553 the Jesuits established their first building at the college of Alcalá with the specific intention of housing men who were undertaking the Exercises, setting a precedent for later houses.⁷⁹ Through the Exercises, those attending colleges were introduced to the Imitatio. In the instructions attributed to Paul Hoffaeus (c. 1525-1608), it was encouraged that extern seculars should

"read a book on the four last things during the time preceding the general confession, one on contempt for the world during the time of the election, and after the election (or after the general confession if they make no election) the Imitatio Christi".⁸⁰

In the Exercises, the Imitatio is recommended specifically "for the Second week, as well as for the future".⁸¹ Does this mean that the Imitatio was not to be read in the context of the First week, implying that it was not applicable to the uneducated retreatants who were not meant to go beyond that week? In fact evidence from numerous directories and guidebooks to the Exercises reveals that recommendations of the Imitatio also covered the First week.⁸² The notion of reading the Imitatio during all four weeks was promoted, most significantly of all, by the Official Directory of 1599, the most complete of all Jesuit directories, released with official status by General Claudio Aquaviva.⁸³

⁷⁹ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 129. See also Aquaviva's letter to the provincials of the Society, dated 14 August, 1599, translated in SSJ, 26/4 September 1994, p. 35

⁸⁰ Hoffaeus was for 12 years provincial of Upper Germany and for ten years assistant for German affairs to the Superior General. See Palmer, On Giving the Exercises, p. 89

⁸¹ Spiritual Exercises, [100], p. 304

⁸² The emergence of directories was a response to the urgent need for more detailed directives on how to give the Spiritual Exercises, since Ignatius had refused to amend the final version of the Exercises, (printed in 1548 and approved by a papal bull). Palmer, On Giving the Exercises, p. 1

⁸³ Palmer, On Giving the Exercises, pp. 289ff, 296, 323. The second directory of Diego Miró declared that "during the first week, however, [the retreatant] may read Gerson's Imitatio Christi. During the Second Week, he could read something from the Gospels, the Imitatio Christi, or the Lives of the saints", ibid., p. 165; see also document 25 on how to give the Exercises by Father Fabio de Fabi, ibid., p. 202; the directory of Father Gil González Dávila, ibid., pp. 243, 250; the answers of Father Lawrence Nicolai, ibid., p. 157; and the directory of Father Juan Alfonso de Polanco. The recommendation of the Imitatio for the whole progression of the Exercises was also reinforced by Nadal, ibid., pp. 67-70.

The role of the Imitatio was particularly pronounced if one makes a distinction between possession and reception of the Exercises. That non-Jesuits were not allowed to possess a copy of the Exercises serves to magnify the stature of the Imitatio. This distinction is reflected in the divergent printing histories of the Exercises and of the Imitatio. The Exercises was first printed, in Latin, only in 1548, and was not printed subsequently on the massive scale that one would expect given its import and the extent of Jesuit expansion. The first printed Spanish translation, for example, was published as late as 1615.⁸⁴ The Exercises remained almost entirely in manuscript form and in Latin. The Imitatio, on the contrary, was made available in the vernacular and was translated and printed numerous times for Jesuits and non-Jesuits alike. It is interesting that printed editions of the Exercises tended to come from presses that also published editions of the Imitatio. This was true of those editions printed at the Jesuit college press in Vienna (1563) and by Joannes Mayer in Dillingen (1582).⁸⁵

One of the most significant Jesuit contributions to the diffusion of the Imitatio was in the realm of translation. Translation from Latin into the vernacular ensured that a non-Latinate readership was accommodated. The Jesuit Antony Hoskins' edition followed a long tradition of English translations of the Imitatio. It was first printed at the English College press at Saint Omer in 1613,⁸⁶ a date that partly reflects the late intervention of Jesuit missions in England; the first Jesuits had come to England no earlier than 1580.⁸⁷ Hoskins's text was dedicated to Elizabeth Vaux, one of the leading members of the Recusant community. It provided English Catholics under persecution in England and those in exile on the continent with a Catholic alternative to the two Protestant translations by Hake and Rogers (it included the fourth Book on the Mass). Libraries of English recusants in Louvain, including those belonging to John Ramridge and Thomas Harding, testify to the appeal of the Imitatio - the latter's collection

⁸⁴ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 128

⁸⁵ B. Duhr, Geschichte des Jesuiten, pp. 463-467, 584

⁸⁶ E1613

⁸⁷ Thomas M. McCoog, (ed.), The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the early English Jesuits (The Boydell Press, 1996), p. xxi

included numerous editions of the Imitatio (although not necessarily Hoskins' translation).⁸⁸

Hoskins' edition was followed by further editions in 1615, 1620 and 1624 at the same press,⁸⁹ another edition printed by John Heigham in 1624,⁹⁰ and finally an edition by John Cousturier for Rouen and Paris in 1633, all of which included Book four on the Mass.⁹¹ Hoskins' edition was later revised by Miles Pinkney, confessor to the English nuns in Paris, and printed in 1636.⁹² In the French context, it is more difficult to determine the extent of Jesuit influence, since sixteenth-century French translations of the Imitatio rarely mentioned the name of the translator.⁹³ Though authorship cannot be affirmed with any certainty, it is very likely that Émond Auger made a French translation of the Imitatio.⁹⁴ The first edition of Auger's translation was printed by Michel Jouve in Lyon,⁹⁵ where there were further editions in 1576, 1577 and, in conjunction with Jean Pillehotte, in 1578.⁹⁶ There were also a number of translations undertaken by Jesuits in the early seventeenth century. The first was by Antoine Vivien (1566-1623),⁹⁷ first printed in 1620,⁹⁸ with reprints in 1629 and 1647.⁹⁹ Antoine Girard's (1603-1679) edition was printed in 1641 and in 1650;¹⁰⁰ Sommervogel noted that this translation had a further 50 editions (albeit beyond 1650).¹⁰¹

⁸⁸ Christian Coppens, Reading in Exile: the libraries of John Ramridge (d. 1568), Thomas Harding (d. 1572) and Henry Joliffe (d. 1573), Recusants in Louvain (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 14, 84, 189-190

⁸⁹ E1615, E1620, and E1624a

⁹⁰ E1624b

⁹¹ E1633

⁹² E1636b

⁹³ The sixteenth-century exceptions are Jean Bouillon (F1571) and Aemar Hennequin (F1582).

⁹⁴ His earliest biographer, Nicolas Bailly, attributed to him a French translation of the Imitatio. "Primae literae Indiarum & Iaponiae ab eo translatae sunt ex Latino Petri Maffei idiomate; & Thomae à Kempis libellus de Christi imitatione". Vitae R. Patris Emundi Augerii (Paris, Sebastian Cramoisy 1652), M3^v

⁹⁵ F1576b

⁹⁶ F1577, and F1578. Pillehotte did print another edition in 1591, yet this was a reprint of Aemar Hennequin's translation, the first edition of which was printed by Olivier de l'Huillier in 1582 (Paris). F1582, and F1591. There was also an edition printed in 1595 (Lyon), which I have not been able to see. F1595c.

⁹⁷ Sommervogel, Vol. VIII., pp. 868-870

⁹⁸ F1620a

⁹⁹ F1629b, and F1647b

¹⁰⁰ F1641, and F1650a

¹⁰¹ Sommervogel, Vol. III., pp. 1434-1435. Pierre Gorse's French translation has been omitted, since it is not clear whether it was printed before 1650. See Sommervogel, Vol. III., p. 1618

The Jesuit contribution was especially marked by the provision of Latin editions at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. At that time, their identification with the Imitatio was reinforced by the fact that the Jesuit college library in Antwerp had inherited in 1595 one of the original, dated and signed, manuscript copies of Kempis's Imitatio.¹⁰² On this account, the two most influential Latin editions of the Imitatio, by Henricus Sommalius and Heribert Rosweyodus, were first printed in Antwerp.¹⁰³ One cannot over-emphasise the importance of these two editions, given the number of reprints that were made.

Sommalius's edition was first printed at Antwerp in 1599 and there were further editions in 1601, 1607 and probably 1626.¹⁰⁴ In Douai, the Bogard and Bellère families reprinted his text in 1602, 1608, 1610, 1612, 1614, 1617, 1624 and 1625.¹⁰⁵ In Cologne, there were editions in 1610, 1611, 1619 and 1630.¹⁰⁶ Sommalius's edition was also re-printed in Crakow (1606), Munich (1612, 1614 and 1621), Paris (1619), Flexiae (1624) and at the Archbishop's press in Milan (1626).¹⁰⁷

Sommalius's influence was considerable not just because of the wide circulation of his Latin edition, but also because it became the source language text for vernacular translations. German editions were printed at the same press in Munich in 1617, 1618 and 1624.¹⁰⁸ Curiously there is no allusion to Sommalius on the title page or in the preface; however, the timing must point to his Latin edition as the most likely source of the translation. Paul du Mont's French translation, printed in 1607 and 1616 at the Bogard press in Douai, was also based on Sommalius's Latin edition.¹⁰⁹

Despite its remarkable diffusion, Sommalius's edition was not as widespread as the Latin edition of the Bollandist Heribert Rosweyodus (1569-1629).¹¹⁰ Rosweyodus's

¹⁰² Ruelens, Imitation of Christ, pp. 9-11

¹⁰³ Both editions refer to the autograph manuscript in the title page: "ad autographum emendati", L1599a (Sommalius); "ad autographum fidem recensiti", L1617a

¹⁰⁴ L1599a, L1601a, L1607, and L[1626]. See also Sommervogel, Vol. VII., pp. 1375-1379

¹⁰⁵ L1602, L1608a, L1610b, L1612b, L1614a, L1617b, L1624a, and L1625

¹⁰⁶ L1610a, L1611, L1619a, and L1630b

¹⁰⁷ L1606c, L1619b, L1624b, and L1626c

¹⁰⁸ G1617, G1618, and G1624

¹⁰⁹ F1607, and F1616a

¹¹⁰ P. Roche, 'Bollandists', NCE Vol. I., pp. 648-649; Sommervogel, Vol. VII., pp. 190-203

edition was first printed in 1617 at Antwerp.¹¹¹ Subsequent editions were printed in 1626, 1627, 1630, 1634 (two editions), 1643 and 1644.¹¹² In Cologne, editions appeared in 1622 (two editions), 1626, 1629, 1632, 1634, 1638 and 1647.¹¹³ There were also editions printed in Luxemburg (1620),¹¹⁴ at the press of a Westphalian monastery (1621),¹¹⁵ at Lucerne (1639, 1649),¹¹⁶ at Paris (1639),¹¹⁷ Munich (1641, 1642),¹¹⁸ Lyon (two editions in 1647) and Vienna (1649).¹¹⁹ Rosweyde's edition was also translated into various languages. In the Dutch language, 20 editions appeared between 1617 and 1650, all of which were printed in Antwerp.¹²⁰ There were, in addition, two editions printed in Hertogenbosch (1629, 1635) and one edition printed in Louvain (1628).¹²¹ In Cologne, there appeared two German translations of Rosweyde's text, printed by Joannes Kinckius (1617, 1629),¹²² and also two Spanish translations, printed in Antwerp (1633, 1649).¹²³

The Jesuit contribution to the Imitatio also extended to translations into Japanese, Chinese, Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Greek. Sommervogel's study illustrates the remarkable appropriation of the Imitatio in Eastern Europe: into Polish by Peter Fabricy (also known as Kowalski),¹²⁴ John Wielewicki;¹²⁵ into Czech by Balthasar Hostovinus;¹²⁶ and into Hungarian by Peter Pazmany.¹²⁷ In addition to Greek translations, by Denis Guilliers and Georg Mayr,¹²⁸ the Imitatio was also

¹¹¹ L1617a

¹¹² L1626a, L1627, L1630a, L1634a, L1634b, L1643a, and L1644a

¹¹³ L1622a, L1622b, L1626b, L1629, L1632, L1634c, L1638, and L1647b

¹¹⁴ L1620b

¹¹⁵ L1621b

¹¹⁶ L1639a, and L1649b

¹¹⁷ L1639b

¹¹⁸ L1641, and L1642

¹¹⁹ L1647c, L1647d, and L1649d

¹²⁰ D1624, D1628a, D1628c, D1629a, D1629b, D[1630], D1631a, D1631b, D1634, D1636, D1637, D1640, D[1640]a, D1642, D1644a, D1644b, D1648, D1649, D[1650]a, and D[1650]b

¹²¹ D1628a, D1629a, and D1635.

¹²² G1617, and G1629

¹²³ S1633, and S1649

¹²⁴ Carlos Sommervogel, Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus, Vol. III., pp. 522-523

¹²⁵ Sommervogel, Vol. VIII., p. 1115

¹²⁶ Sommervogel, Vol. IV., pp. 481-482

¹²⁷ Sommervogel, Vol. VI., pp. 404-406

¹²⁸ Sommervogel, Vol. III., p. 44; Sommervogel, Vol. III., p. 1936. Mayr's edition includes the Latin, L1615b.

translated into Chinese by Emmanuel Diaz.¹²⁹ In 1613 Martinho, a native Japanese Jesuit, revised a Japanese translation of the Imitatio which, according to Diego Mesquita, was the most popular book among the Japanese - no fewer than 1300 copies were printed.¹³⁰ Martinho's edition of the Imitatio, or Contemptus Mundi as it was known in Japan, was preceded by an edition which appeared in romanization at Amakusa in 1596, and in Japanese script at Kyoto in 1610. There was also a Latin edition printed in 1596, and Japanese translations in 1603 and one each in Nagasaki and Kyoto in 1612.¹³¹

This is the sum total of editions explicitly associated with the Jesuits. It shows a certain bias towards the seventeenth century, which is peculiar given the appeal of the Imitatio within the Jesuit order from its foundation in the 1540s. For this reason, the numerous Latin editions (46 excluding Protestant editions) printed during the period 1550-1600 may well have been linked to the Society of Jesus, though it is rather difficult to determine. The majority of these editions were printed in Antwerp (8), Cologne (13) and Lyon (9), all of which were important centres of Jesuit activity.¹³² Cologne was one of the principal centres of the Carthusian publishing apostolate during the sixteenth century.¹³³ From an early stage, the Carthusians and the Jesuits in Cologne collaborated on various projects, principally related to the printing press.¹³⁴ Numerous Latin editions of the Imitatio were printed by Maternus Cholinus, many of which must have been targeted for a learned or educational context.¹³⁵ Cholinus was in contact with the Jesuits and was praised by Peter Canisius for his printing of religious works.¹³⁶ In fact, he had received an imperial privilege for printing Canisius'

¹²⁹ Sommervogel, Vol. III., p. 44

¹³⁰ J. F. Moran, The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in sixteenth-century Japan (London and New York, 1993), p. 188

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² See Appendix.

¹³³ Martin, Nicholas Kempf, p. 5

¹³⁴ The Carthusians, and especially the prior of St. Barbara, Kalkbrenner (1536-1566), were instrumental in helping to install and maintain the Jesuits. Gérald Chaix, Réforme et contre-Réforme Catholiques: Recherches sur la chartreuse de Cologne au XVIe siècle (Salzburg, 1981), pp. 297-302

¹³⁵ L1563b, L1570a, L1582, and L1587a

¹³⁶ Ute Obhof, 'Aristoteles-Studien an der Universität Freiburg-im-Breisgau im 16. Jahrhundert: Studententexte aus der Offizin von Maternus Cholinus in Köln', GJ (1999), p. 226

catechism.¹³⁷ While the links between printers and Jesuits are not always readily discernible, the provenances of the Imitatio point to the collection of numerous editions in Jesuit college libraries.¹³⁸ Moreover, the proximity of the dates of publication and that of provenances does suggest a closer connection between the printers/booksellers and the Jesuit colleges.¹³⁹

One can gain a better insight into Jesuit links with the printing presses by taking a closer look at the printers. Both Michel Jouve and Jean Pillehotte, who published Auger's translation of the Imitatio in Lyon, printed several editions of Auger's other works.¹⁴⁰ Jouve sold books not only for the Jesuits, but also for the archbishopric, town and government of Lyon. His associate and later successor, Jean Pillehotte, also printed for both and was later appointed "imprimeur ordinaire du roi", which did not prevent him from being a bookseller to the Catholic League. Indeed, the records from the "Seneschaucée et siège présidial de Lyon", dated 17 April, 1590, reflected the importance of printing "tous les livres de dévotion & autres servans pour l'édification et instruction du peuple en la Religion Catholique Apostolique et Romaine".¹⁴¹

The case of Michel Jouve reveals the importance of kinship ties to the printing industry. Jouve's first daughter was married to Martin La Roche, a bookseller in Chambéry. His second daughter was married to Jean Pillehotte, the Lyon bookseller, who became his associate from 1575 and later (1580-1612) his successor. Pillehotte's brother, moreover, was a bookbinder in Lyon.¹⁴² Jean Pillehotte's accounts reveals the wide geographical network of booksellers with whom he collaborated. Pillehotte was in contact with booksellers in Billom, Tournon, Bourges, Thou and Aix-en-Provence,

¹³⁷ Gerald Chaix, 'Communauté religieuses et production imprimée à Cologne au XVI^e siècle', in Pierre Aquilon, Henri-Jean Martin, and François Dupuigneret Desronsilles, (eds.), Le Livre dans l'Europe de la Renaissance (Paris, Promodis, éditions du cercle de la Librairie, 1988)

¹³⁸ L1562 (Jesuit college, Munich); L1599b (Munich); F1616b (Munich); L[1600]b (Jesuit college, Ingolstadt)

¹³⁹ G1617b (with provenance dated 1617, Jesuit college, Munich). This copy includes a handwritten reference to the approval of the text by Peter Canisius, dated 1577. Other editions with relatively close dates include: L1570c (1580, Ingolstadt); L1571b (1578, Ingolstadt); L1596 (99, presumably 1599, Ingolstadt).

¹⁴⁰ Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise Vol. II, pp. 102, 125, 135, 141

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 84, 224-226, 232-239

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 82, 224, 226

among others, towns with which Auger and other French Jesuits had maintained contacts.

Another important printing family was the Bellères, who were clearly influential in the circulation of the Imitatio in the latter half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: they too had some important contacts with the Jesuits. Jean Bellère (1530-c.1602) was a printer, bookseller and editor, whose printing activity spanned the years 1562-1600. His two sons became Jesuits, which may explain why he gave his copy of Thomas à Kempis' autograph manuscript of the Imitatio to the Jesuit house in Antwerp five years before his death.¹⁴³ Before that date, he had already translated the Imitatio into French; this was one of the earliest works printed at his Antwerp press.¹⁴⁴ It is interesting that Bellère's brother Peter had married Johanna, the daughter of Joannes Steelsius, who had printed numerous editions of the Imitatio.¹⁴⁵ Peter later represented the heirs of Joannes Steelsius' press for the Lenten fairs at Frankfurt and Basle, and on 15 July, 1562, he became a director of the association "Vidua & haeredes Joannis Steelsii".¹⁴⁶

His son, Balthasar Bellère, left Antwerp for Douai in 1590. In the same year, he married Berthe Bogard, who was the daughter of Jean Bogard, who had already printed the Imitatio.¹⁴⁷ Balthasar later printed the Imitatio in the early seventeenth century in

¹⁴³ The manuscript had belonged originally to the monastery of St. Agnes. In 1559, its possessions and revenues were bestowed upon the bishopric of Deventer and towards 1570, many of the Brethren took refuge in St. Martin's Priory at Louvain, which belonged to their Order. In 1577, Johannes Latomus, prior of the Monastery of the Throne, near Herenthals, and Visitor-General of the Windesheim Congregation, visited St. Agnes, then in ruins and almost deserted. Latomus took the volume to Antwerp, where he had retired to the Priory of the Canonesses Regular of St. Augustine of the valley of St. Mary in Falckenborch. Then he died in 1578, having a short time before his death given the manuscript to Jean Bellère (who had undertaken a French translation in 1565). Bellère died at Antwerp in 1565, leaving two sons who became Jesuits. It was doubtless owing to their influence that five years before his death he gave the volume to the Jesuit house in Antwerp. Following the suppression of the Order, it passed to the Burgundian library at Brussels. The Imitation of Christ being the Autograph manuscript of Thomas à Kempis. De Imitatione Christi, reproduced in facsimile from the Original preserved in the Royal library at Brussels (with an introduction by Charles Ruelens) (London, 1885), pp. 9-11

¹⁴⁴ F1565, with later editions in F1570, and F1572.

¹⁴⁵ L1536a, L1538, L1541, L1545a, L1550, L1552, L1556, and L1564a

¹⁴⁶ Anne Rouzet, Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs des XV^e et XVI^e siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle (Nieuwkoop, B. de Graaf, 1975), p. 11

¹⁴⁷ Exposition: L'Imprimerie dans le Douaisis (Douai, 1980), pp. 8, 20-21; Rouzet, Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, p. 8; Albert Labarre, 'Les catalogues de Balthasar Bellère à Douai, 1598-1636', GJ (1980), p. 150

Douai,¹⁴⁸ and his editions were followed by that of his own sons, Balthasar and Pierre.¹⁴⁹ It was precisely these family connections that opened up enormous commercial opportunities with other printers and booksellers in the Low Countries, thereby explaining the impressive size of his 1603 catalogue.¹⁵⁰

That editions were printed in other towns where Jesuits clearly existed is undeniable, such as Douai and Pont-à-Mousson.¹⁵¹ The first press in Douai was established in 1563, within several months of the university's foundation. Though its proto-printer, Jacques Boscart, did not print the Imitatio, Douai later proved to be an important centre for the diffusion of the Imitatio.¹⁵² The Douai press primarily met the demand of the numerous convents and pious foundations in Douai, in addition to the colleges within Douai university: these included the collège du Roi, the collège d'Anchin, and the collège des Grands-Anglais.¹⁵³ The two printing families who dominated that industry were the Bogards and the aforementioned Bellères. Jean Bogard, who began printing in Louvain, set up his press in 1574 at the mark of "la Bible d'or".¹⁵⁴ Bogard later printed several editions of the Imitatio in French (1589, 1601, 1607 and 1616).¹⁵⁵ It seems Bogard's two sons, Pierre and Martin, did not print any editions of the Imitatio.

The German context provides yet more evidence for Jesuit appropriation of the Imitatio, though of a very different nature. Conrad Braun undertook his German translation in the early 1550s and it was first printed in Dillingen by the university printer Sebald Mayer in 1554.¹⁵⁶ Braun was not a Jesuit, yet his subsequent involvement with Cardinal Otto Truchseß, a key patron of the Jesuits, ensured close

¹⁴⁸ F1595a, F1613, F1619b, and F1632

¹⁴⁹ F1647

¹⁵⁰ Labarre pointed to the discrepancy between the number of editions he had printed between 1593 and 1602 (c. 100) and the size of the 1603 catalogue (c.3,000-3,500 editions). Labarre, 'Balthasar Bellère', p. 151

¹⁵¹ There were French editions printed at Douai in F1589, F1595, F1607, F1616a, F1629a, F1632 and F1647. The one edition identified for Pont-à-Mousson was printed in F[1600].

¹⁵² Albert Labarre, 'Les imprimeurs et libraires de Douai aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles', in Francine de Nave, (ed.), Liber Amicorum Leon Voet (Antwerp, 1985), pp. 242-249

¹⁵³ Exposition: L'Imprimerie dans le Douaisis, p. 7

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 8

¹⁵⁵ F1589, F1601, F1607, and F1616a

¹⁵⁶ See especially Otto Bucher, Bibliographie der Deutschen drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts: Teil I Dillingen (Walter Krieg Verlag, 1960), pp. 1-34

collaboration with the Society of Jesus.¹⁵⁷ While the first edition was printed before the Jesuits were in charge of the university of Dillingen, later editions were printed (in 1563, 1567, 1572 and 1573) following the Jesuit appropriation of the university in 1563.¹⁵⁸ Sebald Mayer had been forced to sell his printing press to Cardinal Otto Truchseß von Waldburg in 1560, after which he had no alternative but to work for the Jesuit cause. In 1568, Waldburg gave the press to the university and college of St. Jerome in Dillingen. Mayer and his son Johann, who succeeded him, became influential printers for the Jesuit cause.¹⁵⁹ In fact, Johann printed Braun's translation in 1578, 1588, 1593, 1600, 1608 and 1613.¹⁶⁰ After Johann's death on 7 May, 1615,¹⁶¹ his widow took over the press and continued working until 1620.¹⁶²

More direct proof for the active involvement of the Jesuits with the printing press can be found in Liège and Vienna. The college of the former had been transferred from the Brethren of Common Life to the Jesuits,¹⁶³ and it was there that Jean Ouwerx became the official printer for the Jesuits and printed an edition of the Imitatio in 1615.¹⁶⁴ In Vienna, Ferdinand I was keen to establish a printing press at the Jesuit college, a proposition that was enthusiastically embraced by the college's rector, Joannes Victoria.¹⁶⁵ Shortly after the press was founded, two Latin editions of the Imitatio were printed in 1561.¹⁶⁶

The circulation of devotional literature and especially the Imitatio also benefitted from the fact that many printers considered their trade to be immensely profitable to the nurturing of piety. The inclusion of the fourth Book of the Imitatio by Johann Mayer

¹⁵⁷ Maria Rößber, Konrad Braun (ca. 1495-1563) - ein katholischer Jurist, Politiker, Kontroverstheologe und Kirchenreformer im konfessionellen Zeitalter (Münster, 1991)

¹⁵⁸ G1563, G1567, G1572, G1573, and also L1571b

¹⁵⁹ Otto Bucher, 'Der Dillinger Buchdrucker Johann Mayer (1576-1614)', GJ (1955), pp. 162-163

¹⁶⁰ G1578, G1588, G1593, G1600, G1608, and G1613

¹⁶¹ Albrecht Classen, 'Frauen als Buchdruckerinnen im deutschen Sprachraum des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', Gutenberg Jahrbuch (2000), p. 193

¹⁶² Classen, 'Frauen als Buchdruckerinnen', p. 193; Otto Bucher, 'Der Dillinger Buchdrucker Johann Mayer (1576-1614)', GJ (1955), pp. 167-168

¹⁶³ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 566

¹⁶⁴ F1615a

¹⁶⁵ Bernard Duhr, Geschichte des Jesuiten in den Ländern Deutscher Zunge im XVI. Jahrhundert (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1907), pp. 582-584

¹⁶⁶ L1561c, and L1561d

could be interpreted in terms of a printer submitting to the wishes of Jesuit patrons. Yet on 10 May, 1603, Mayer joined the Corpus Christi fraternity in Dillingen, illustrating his profound faith in the Roman Catholic Eucharistic presence.¹⁶⁷ The piety of printers can also be identified by their wills. The following extract from Michel Jouve's will (dated 31 August, 1579) is testimony both to his piety and confessional affiliation:

"Premièrement, comme bon chrestien et catholicque, a faict le vénérable signe de la croix sur son corps, le priant par l'intercession et prière de la glorieuse vierge Marie et tous les saintz et saintes de Paradis la vouloir colloquer au royaulme de Paradis quand elle sera séparée de son dit corps...que son héritière après nommée, face dire et cellebrer pour le salut de son âme deux messes basses eucaristialles et une messe haulte, à diacre, soubz diacre".¹⁶⁸

Not only was the sign of the cross to be made over his body, but those gathered before his dead body were urged to make intercessory prayers to the Virgin Mary and to the saints. Above all, it is noteworthy that his heir was nominated to ensure that votive masses should be celebrated to intercede for him. The Eucharist never seemed to be far from the pious motives of printers. Evidence for the piety of printers is also discernible in the editions of the *Imitatio*. In the preface of a Latin edition printed in Dillingen probably in 1590, the printer expressed to the reader his concern for introducing this divine book of immense profit.¹⁶⁹

Another explanation for the distribution of the *Imitatio* can be found by referring to the works bound together with the *Imitatio*. Jesuit directories tended to recommend not only the *Imitatio*, but also other devotional works. The advice of Fr. Lawrence Nicolai (1538-1622), for example, commented on the suitability of the *Imitatio* and Dionysius the Carthusian's *De perfecto mundi* as reading material for the believer in the

¹⁶⁷ Albrecht Classen, 'Frauen als Buchdruckerinnen im deutschen Sprachraum des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* (2000), p. 193

¹⁶⁸ Baudrier, *Bibliographie Lyonnaise*, Vol. II, p. 87

¹⁶⁹ L[1590], Dillingen, A2^r

first week of the retreat for the Spiritual Exercises.¹⁷⁰ It was perhaps on that account that the heirs of Jacques Giunta printed the Imitatio together with Dionysius the Carthusian's De perfecto mundi.¹⁷¹ Later, Paul Guittus printed both works within the Giunta workshop.¹⁷² While these medieval works had already been printed individually in the 1540s and 1550s,¹⁷³ it is very tempting to speculate that the binding together of several devotional works in single editions was commissioned by Jesuits. They realised how influential such works had been and how conveniently they conformed with Jesuit spirituality. Since these works were recommended by Jesuit documents and composed in Latin, it would have suited the context of the Jesuit colleges ideally. The 1564 edition of the Imitatio, which was bound together with Dionysius the Carthusian's De perfecto mundi, could be found in the Ingolstadt Jesuit college library four years later.¹⁷⁴

The association of the Imitatio with education was reflected in the number of translators who taught in Jesuit colleges. This is not to suggest that they were necessarily intending the text to be read solely within that context. It merely points to the promotion of the text by learned Jesuits via translation.¹⁷⁵ In the numerous volumes of Carlos Sommervogel's Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus, there are at least 20 Jesuit translators of the Imitatio for the period until 1650 - with translations into Catalan, Chinese, Czech, English, French, Greek, Hungarian, Japanese, Latin, Polish and Spanish. Of those translators, over half were involved in education in one way or another. By taking a selection of them, one can see that translation of the Imitatio was undertaken by Jesuits who were actively involved in the educational apostolate as founders of colleges, teachers and rectors. These examples also illustrate that involvement in a pedagogical apostolate did not necessarily tie the Jesuits to a specific geographical location.

¹⁷⁰ Palmer, On giving the Spiritual Exercises, p. 156

¹⁷¹ L1564d, L1567b, L1570c, and L1579

¹⁷² L1585a, and L1587b

¹⁷³ Baudrier, Bibliographie Lyonnaise, Vol. IV., pp. 234, 262, 283

¹⁷⁴ L1564d

¹⁷⁵ The relationship between the Imitatio and Jesuit pedagogy will be addressed in greater detail in chapter nine.

Émond Auger, for example, taught poetry at the Roman college, then at Pérouse where he stayed for four years, until he returned to Rome in order to teach theology.¹⁷⁶ He played a formidable role in the foundation of several French colleges, including that of Pamiers where he stayed between 1559 and 1561, and the college of Tournon where he was rector from 1560 to 1562.¹⁷⁷ Emmanuel Diaz (1574-1659), who was born in Portugal, translated the Imitatio into Chinese. He taught theology at Macao for six years and was vice-provincial in China.¹⁷⁸ Peter Fabricy or Kowalski (died in 1622) translated the Imitatio into Polish. Born in Poland, he supervised the colleges of Pultovsk, Jaroslaw and Calisz and was the first provincial of Poland.¹⁷⁹ Peter Gil (1551-1622) translated the Imitatio into Catalan. Born in Reus within the diocese of Taragon, he taught theology for 20 years in Barcelona, where he was thrice rector of the same college, before moving to Majorca, eventually becoming provincial of Aragon.¹⁸⁰ Balthasar Hostovinus or Hostounsky (1535-1600) translated the Imitatio into Czech. He laid the foundations for the colleges at Braunsberg, Pultawa and Vilna. He taught theology at Prague and then in Olmutz.¹⁸¹ Peter Pazmany (1570-1637) translated the Imitatio into Hungarian. He taught philosophy and theology at the university of Graz, before concentrating his entire apostolate in Hungary.¹⁸² Finally, Henri de Sommal or Sommalius (1534-1619) edited a Latin translation of the Imitatio. He taught Greek at Loretto, physics and metaphysics at Cologne, founded a college at Dinant, where he became rector in 1563, before taking the rectorship of Verdun.¹⁸³

The suitability of the Imitatio to an educational context is further reinforced by the Liber Noviciorum, the list of books carried by novices studying at the Collegio

¹⁷⁶ Dictionnaire de Biographie Française (Paris, 1948) 'Auger, Émond' p. 505; Sommervogel Vol. I., pp. 632ff

¹⁷⁷ Henri Fouqueray, Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus en France des origines à la suppression: Tome I. Les origines et les premières luttes (1528-1575) (Paris, 1910), pp. 269-288; Jean Dorigny, La vie du P. Emond Auger, de la Compagnie de Jésus, confesseur et predicateur de Henri III, Roy de France et de Pologne (Lyon, 1716), pp. 28-49

¹⁷⁸ Sommervogel, Vol. III., p. 44

¹⁷⁹ ibid., pp. 522-523

¹⁸⁰ ibid., p. 1413

¹⁸¹ Sommervogel, Vol. IV., pp. 481-482

¹⁸² Sommervogel, Vol. VI., pp. 404-406; See also R. J. W. Evans The making of the Habsburg Monarchy: 1550-1700 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979, reprinted 1998) p. 319

¹⁸³ Sommervogel, Vol. VI., pp. 1375-1379

Romano.¹⁸⁴ In its account of the Irish, Scottish, English and Welsh candidates until 1562, six out of 19 carried the Imitatio: Robert Methuen,¹⁸⁵ Thomas Rouye,¹⁸⁶ Simon Belost,¹⁸⁷ Thomas Langdale,¹⁸⁸ Jasper Heywood,¹⁸⁹ and Edmund Hay.¹⁹⁰ More interesting, six out of the nine candidates who had books possessed the Imitatio. More impressive still is the college of Cologne, almost all of whose residents possessed a copy of the Imitatio.¹⁹¹ Even two decades later, the Imitatio was still suggested as a source for spiritual reading in the rules for the Master of Novices, first printed in 1580 under the influence of the Jesuit General Everard Mercurian. The list also recommended other "opuscula" by Kempis, as well as Ludolph of Saxony's Life of Christ and Pedro de Ribadeneira's biography of Ignatius.¹⁹² The introduction to section eight of the Regulae explained that the purpose of compiling a list of profitable books was justified, if not necessitated, by the fact that novices should be taught which particular books were suited to the principles of the Society, in order to prevent the perusal of any literature that might be harmful to those unconfident in the spiritual life.¹⁹³ The Jesuit predilection for making lists of useful devotional works was not uncommon. In 1598, for example, Balthasar Bellère printed a French edition of Innocent III's Contempt of the World, which included a catalogue of 50 devotional works.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, Ignacio Balsamo's An Instruction how to pray and meditate well included a chapter (13) on "such spiritual bookes as are most profitable for all persons" - the very first book of an

¹⁸⁴ I thank Fr. Thomas McCoog for drawing my attention to the Liber Noviciorum.

¹⁸⁵ Methuen entered the house on 9 November, 1558. MA, Vol. III., pp. 455-456

¹⁸⁶ Rouye came to the house on 8 February, 1560. MA, Vol. III., p. 456

¹⁸⁷ Belost entered the house on 24 June, 1560. MA, Vol. III., p. 457

¹⁸⁸ Langdale came to the house on 21 May, 1562. MA, Vol. III., p. 459

¹⁸⁹ Heywood entered the house on 21 May, 1562. MA, Vol. III., pp. 459-460. Heywood was later sent to teach at the university of Dillingen where in 1564 he received his bachelor of theology and was ordained by Cardinal Otto Truchsess. See Dennis Flynn, 'The English Mission of Jasper Heywood', AHSI Vol. 54 (1985), p. 46

¹⁹⁰ Hay came to the house on 5 December, 1562. MA, Vol. III., p. 461

¹⁹¹ "In catholica religione et pietate prae caeteris omnibus plurimum proficiunt convictores. Omnes fere coronas et Gersonum habent". ML, Vol. III., p. 12

¹⁹² This is taken from rule eight, cited in Guibert, The Jesuits, pp. 215-217. The edition printed in Rome (1582) also included the Imitatio as part of the "Libri ad Usum Magistri Nouitiorum accommodati". Regulae Societatis Iesu, G2^r

¹⁹³ "Nouitijs vero eos tantu~ legendos tradet, qui nostro instituto conueniunt, ne quid ab eo alienum hauriãt aut quacunq~ ratione quicquam detrime~ti capiant", Regulae, G1^v

¹⁹⁴ Albert Labarre, 'Les catalogues de Balthasar Bellère à Douai, 1598-1636', GJ (1980), p. 150; see also Huizinga, Autumn of the Middle Ages, pp. 160-167. I have been unable to see the 1598 edition.

extended list is the Imitatio Christi.¹⁹⁵ Balsamo's work was printed by John Heigham, who also printed an edition of the Imitatio two years later.¹⁹⁶

The Imitatio was especially recommended within the sphere of Jesuit houses. In the rules for the professed house in Rome, extracts from either the Scriptures, the Lives of the Saints or the Imitatio were selected to be read aloud in the refectory.¹⁹⁷ Inside the colleges, community life was modelled on that of religious houses with communal meals, including the reading of devotional works. Indeed, Nadal urged the reading of the Imitatio at dinner, following an extract from a book of the New Testament.¹⁹⁸ Even in the smaller colleges where reading during meals was less common, the Imitatio was one of the works that was recommended for those few occasions when devotional literature was read aloud.¹⁹⁹ These recommendations were generally replicated throughout the Jesuit provinces, even in the Far East. In Japan, the rules of the Society, the noviciate regulations, the Imitatio Christi and some of Luis de Granada's treatises were all translated into Japanese for the benefits of the noviciate at Usuki.²⁰⁰ Sixtus V had even offered an indulgence to those who would read a chapter of the Imitatio in Japanese translation.²⁰¹

The final Jesuit contribution to the circulation of the Imitatio relates to the authorship debate at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, members of the regular clergy had added to their editions of the Imitatio treatises concerning authorship. The motives for their involvement in this debate must be seen in the context of the maintenance and development of the identity of their orders. This was particularly true of the Augustinian canons regular, who

¹⁹⁵ Ignacio Balsamo, An Instruction how to pray and meditate well ([St. Omer], John Heigham, 1622) STC 1341, H8^r

¹⁹⁶ E1624b

¹⁹⁷ "Essendo copia di persone, si lega alla mensa in latino o in volgare, della Scriptura, Flos sanctorum o De Contemptu mundi, secondo ordinara il ministro; et il lectore intendendo alcune bone cose, le potra dechiare agli altri". Taken from section thirteen of the 'Regole Communi di Casa Secondo il tempo', from the 'Regulae Communes Romanae Anni 1549' Regulae, pp. 156-162

¹⁹⁸ "Catalogus eorum, quae legi ad mensam possunt praesertim in collegiis". MN, IV., pp. 448-450. The Regulae also recommend that the Imitatio should be read after the Scriptures. Regulae (Rome, 1582), M8^r, M8^v; see also Rib, Vol. I., p. 368, translated from the Italian.

¹⁹⁹ Translated from the Italian. ML, Vol. II., p. 631

²⁰⁰ Josef Schütte, Valignano's mission principles for Japan (St. Louis, 1985), p. 67

²⁰¹ L. Wheatley, The Story of the Imitatio Christi (London, 1891), p. 182

unsurprisingly promoted Thomas à Kempis as the author of the Imitatio. Franciscus Tolensis, as the last sub-prior of Mount St. Agnes (Thomas' brother John had been the first), not only edited a Latin edition of the Imitatio, but also included therein a defence of claims for Kempis' authorship.²⁰² Augustinian support for Kempis's authorship was as fervent in the seventeenth century. In the preface to his 1641 translation, Miles Pinkney, confessor to the Augustinian nuns in Paris, addressed Lady Marie Tredway, first Abbess of the English Nunnery of St. Augustine in Paris and her community and purposely ascribed the work to "your brother Thomas of Kempis", while also discrediting any other possible authors, including Gerson or Gersen.²⁰³ Pinkney pointed to the Benedictine Abbot Cajetan as the instigator of this false attribution to Gersen.²⁰⁴

In the early 1600s, Cajetan had promoted the authorship of Jean Gersen, an Italian Benedictine abbot of St. Étienne at Verceil from 1220-1240, on the basis of a newly discovered manuscript (codex Aronensis).²⁰⁵ Cajetan's cause was embraced by others, such as Robert Quatremaires, who composed a treatise against the attribution of Kempis and in favour of Gersen.²⁰⁶ Richard Selby, president-general of the English Benedictine Congregation from 1645-1649, produced a Latin edition of the Imitatio, which included an introduction supporting the claims of John Gersen.²⁰⁷ Considerable doubt was later cast over whether Gersen even existed at all, since his name may have been confused with that of Gerson.²⁰⁸

²⁰² L1575a

²⁰³ E1641, a2^v, a3^r

²⁰⁴ "Abbot Caietane [was] the first mouer of this doubt in his [edition] putt out at Paris 1616. almost tho first yeare that euer it was moued in print, at least for Gersen, deliuers that testimonie of Aron Manuscript thus. Gessen, Gesen, Gessen, Gersen. Father Fr. Walg. in his 1638 Gesen, Gesen, Gesen, Gesen, Gersen. Our Eng. Preface. Gersen, Gersen, Gersen, Gersen, Gersen, Gersen. So that as though euery thing that liked vs were lawfull. First Gessen, Gesen, Gersen, were indiffere~t with them. Then they brought them to Gesen and Gersen, onely; and now at last they haue gott all the three to Gersen. The child is at length named". E1641, e~7^r, e~7^v

²⁰⁵ G. de Gregory Histoire du livre de l'Imitation de Jésus Christ, et de son véritable auteur Vol. II. (Paris, 1843), pp. 2-13ff

²⁰⁶ It was printed in Paris (1649). [Nîmes BM]

²⁰⁷ Joseph Gillow, A literary and biographical history, or Bibliographical Dictionary, of the English Catholics from the breach with Rome to the present time Vol. V, (London, 1902)

²⁰⁸ Delaveau attributed it to a spelling error, "Gerson se transformant en Gersen". Martine Delaveau, 'Les traductions françaises de l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ au XVIIe siècle: aspects d'une histoire éditoriale', RFHL 90 (1996), p. 77

The Jesuits Henricus Sommalius and Heribertus Rosweyduus responded to Cajetan by their promotion of Kempis as the rightful author. Given that the Jesuits had no obvious links with Kempis and the Augustinians, their commitment to Kempis's claims may appear slightly bizarre. However, the fact that the Jesuits gained possession of one of the earliest dated autograph (by Kempis) manuscripts in Antwerp goes a long way to explaining why they were so dedicated to the authorship debate (not to mention the influential role of the text in the shaping of Jesuit spirituality). In addition to composing extensive treatises upholding the attribution to Kempis, both Sommalius and Rosweyduus also re-edited numerous Latin editions of the Imitatio, which were used as the source language texts for certain vernacular traditions (see above).

Prefaces to Jesuit editions of the Imitatio in the seventeenth century tended to refer to numerous recommendations of the Imitatio. One German edition printed in Cologne included an extensive preface, pointing out that Ignatius recommended a chapter each in the morning and in the afternoon and that further recommendations came from his followers, such as Ludovico Gonzales, Jerome Nadal, Orlandius in the first part of the fifth Book of his history of the Jesuits, Pedro de Ribadeneira, Cardinal Bellarmine and also non-Jesuits like Cardinal Caesar Baronius.²⁰⁹ Indeed, one of the greatest contributions to our knowledge of the circulation of the Imitatio during the late medieval and early modern period was the 1650 Latin edition composed by the Jesuit Georg Hesper, which included over two hundred leaves of references to proofs for Kempis's authorship.²¹⁰ Hesper's work begins by listing all manuscripts and later printed editions which refer directly to Kempis's authorship. Interestingly he even included the Latin edition of Sebastian Castellio.²¹¹ Part two is entitled Dioptrae Kempensis and provides the authority, judgments and agreements of learned men upon the authorship debate.²¹² The evidence is derived from various sources such as

²⁰⁹ G[16??], A2^{ff}

²¹⁰ Georg Hesper, Georgii Hesperii à Societate Jesu Dioptra Kempensis qua Thomas a Kempis Can. Reg. Ord. S. Augustini (Ingolstadt, Wilhelmus Ederus, apud Ioannes Ostermay, 1650) [Fib K7287]

²¹¹ Ibid., A6^r

²¹² This begins at sig. H1^r.

Busch's Chronicon, Johannes Trithemius's De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis and numerous other works wherein the Imitatio is mentioned.

In this way, the Jesuit contribution to the diffusion of the Imitatio was considerable. From the moment that the Imitatio was recommended in the Exercises, the former's reputation was greatly enhanced. Jesuit regard for the Imitatio was such that numerous Latin and vernacular translations were undertaken by members of the order. The majority of these editions were then issued by printers with whom the Jesuits had contacts, many of whom seem to have been inspired by sincere religious motives. The diffusion of the Imitatio was also facilitated by its reception within an educational context. Finally, Jesuit appropriation of the Imitatio was, in the seventeenth century, often related to the authorship debate.

Chapter Six. Protestant attraction to the Imitatio's spirituality

Introduction

The Imitatio was translated by several leading figures of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That Protestants should translate the Imitatio in the first place might seem curious. The Imitatio, after all, had been read eagerly within monastic communities. Moreover, the inward reform promoted in the Imitatio was primarily intended to serve as a preparation for the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Catholic Mass. It was, furthermore, a Catholic text in so far as it made reference to purgatory, intercessory prayers to the saints and their veneration, aspects of Catholicism that Protestant theology had compromised.

Some Protestants, however, were undeniably attracted to the text in spite of its association with Catholicism. The intense Christocentricity of the Imitatio and the manner in which this related to the saints greatly appealed to Protestants, especially given the text's emphasis on interiority, not to mention its accessibility to the laity.¹ In addition, the Imitatio's focus on repentance and humility suited Protestant sensitivities. Indeed, the extent of the depravity of human nature, characterised by the juxtaposition of nature and grace in Book three, seemed to conform to a Protestant theological framework. Protestants also naturally appreciated that the Imitatio favoured the subordination of external forms of religion to inner piety.

Even the elements that were ultimately removed by Protestants are worthy of mention. While references to purgatory were omitted, the quintessential purgatorial experience in the Imitatio was suffering on earth, which Protestants would have shared. Moreover, the majority of references to merit related to Christ, rather than any intrinsic righteousness of believers themselves. That the principal source of the Imitatio was the Bible provided a further attraction, for Scriptures were regarded by Protestants as their primary authority for any religious works, be they doctrinal or devotional. The inherent

¹ Mokrosch, '*Devotio Moderna* II', p. 613; Staubach, 'Church Fathers', pp. 406-407.

biblicism of the Imitatio attracted Protestant interpreters. Almost paradoxically, the existence of a devotional text alongside the Bible went to the very roots of Protestant theology. The elaboration of Scriptures had the potential to inspire the religious life of Protestants with more vigour.²

Crucially, the Imitatio was not translated by any of the key magisterial reformers, though the translators were, nevertheless, influential in their specific contexts. The first Protestant translator, Caspar Schwenckfeld (1489-1561), was part of the Protestant spiritualist tradition, and had been inspired, and disappointed, by the Lutheran Reformation. Leo Jud (1482-1542), the second translator, was instrumental in the progress of the Zurich Reformation, working together with both Huldrych Zwingli and his successor, Heinrich Bullinger. Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563), who edited a Latin edition of the Imitatio, attained renown in the sixteenth century for his reaction against the execution of Michel Servetus in Geneva and has since become associated with theories of confessional co-existence and toleration. Edward Hake and Thomas Rogers formed an integral part of the English context in which the maintenance and consolidation of the Elizabethan Settlement was paramount.

This chapter will consider the type of Protestants who were attracted to the Imitatio and the motives for translating it. Since the extant prefatorial material is scant and given the absence of direct evidence explaining their appropriation of the Imitatio, it is necessary to turn to the context of the translators' lives and writings. Each translator will be considered in turn and their attraction to the Imitatio explained by contextualising its spirituality according to their lives and writings. Although Schwenckfeld, Jud and Castellio undertook their apostolates in different locations, there remains an underlying continuity of spirituality between them. All were strongly committed to an inward piety and they shared a concomitant attraction for mystical and spiritualist interests. While they were themselves deeply affected by the mystical currents of the sixteenth century, they also contributed to the shaping of that tradition. Edward Hake and Thomas Rogers translated the Imitatio within the environment of Elizabethan England. By contrast, the

² Helen White, 'Some Continuing Traditions in English Devotional Literature', PMLA Vol. LVII, (1942), p. 971

appeal of the Imitatio for English Protestants was less a response to spiritualism than a means by which church-building could be reinforced. Due to the remarkable number of English editions printed during the Elizabethan period, the balance of the chapter will favour the English Protestant tradition.

The chapter will also concentrate on the role of devotional literature within the Protestant tradition. How was the role of devotional works understood in relation to the Bible? Moreover, given that devotional literature was not introduced in a theological, ecclesiological and worldly vacuum, was its purpose to reinforce a Protestant ecclesiological framework? Furthermore, how should one interpret the *contemptus mundi* theme within a Protestant context? In addressing why the Imitatio was chosen by Protestants, one needs to assess whether the appropriation of a Catholic text was part of an attempt to stress the continuity between Catholics and Protestants. With the appropriation of the Imitatio by Sebastian Castellio, a leading advocate of toleration, one might expect that the selection of the Imitatio reflected an attempt to bring the confessions closer together. Does this also explain the translation of the Imitatio within the context of the Elizabethan Settlement? Finally, the chapter will briefly assess the Imitatio and devotional literature more generally within the broader context of Protestant history and identity, in particular the incorporation of medieval and/or Catholic works into the Protestant tradition.

Caspar Schwenckfeld (1489-1561): The first Protestant translator

Schwenckfeld's 1531 edition and subsequent reprints of the 1530s and 1540s did not contain prefaces by the translator. This necessitates a degree of speculation as regards his motives for translation. Although the Schwenckfeld edition included a preface by the printer Philip Uhart, its contents are not particularly revealing: Uhart merely expressed the desire to crucify the old self and follow the cross of Christ.³ The editors of the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum pointed to the similarity of Uhart's language with

³ G[1581], A2^r, A2^v

that of Schwenckfeld, and stated that his preface was probably written "according to the sketch of the leader".⁴ Yet, it would be difficult to distinguish the thought and language of the preface from the writings of any other spiritual writer of the period. The universality of the preface's language and themes can be affirmed by the fact that the Catholic translator, Georg Witzel, included the preface verbatim in his edition.⁵

In assessing how Schwenckfeld perceived the *Imitatio*, it is necessary to trace the evolution of his religious ideas in the period up to 1531. Caspar Schwenckfeld was born in 1489 on the ancestral estate of Ossig in lower Silesia.⁶ He studied at Cologne in 1505 (where the *devotio moderna* had thrived), and attended a Brethren of Common Life school, making it possible that he encountered the text at an early age.⁷ Following his studies, he joined various households as a noble courtier, during which time he came into contact with, and gradually contributed to, increasing levels of anticlerical sentiment.⁸ By 1519, Schwenckfeld had received his first *Heimsuchung*, or divine visitation, after which he joined the Reformation cause.⁹ Inspired by Luther's writings, Schwenckfeld worked as an active lay preacher, contributing enormously to the reception of the Lutheran Reformation in Silesia.¹⁰

Yet as Lutheranism was gradually established, Schwenckfeld became dissatisfied with the progress and direction of the Lutheran movement. Increasing disillusionment soon turned to outright opposition when, in his second *Heimsuchung* of 1525, he broke with Luther by denying the Real Presence in the Eucharist. This eventually led to his third *Heimsuchung* two years later, which crystallised his thoughts and confirmed his departure from Luther. While welcoming the Lutheran critique of Catholic doctrine and practice, Schwenckfeld believed that the Reformation had not

⁴ *C.S.* IV., p. 263

⁵ G1539a, A3^v

⁶ R. Emmet McLaughlin, *Caspar Schwenckfeld, Reluctant Radical: His life to 1540* (Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 3-4

⁷ Selina Shultz, *Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561): Spiritual Interpreter of Christianity, Apostle of the Middle Way, Pioneer in Modern Religious Thought* (Pennsylvania, 1977), p. 4

⁸ McLaughlin, *Reluctant Radical*, p. 9

⁹ R. Emmet McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent: Caspar Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfelders* (Baden-Baden & Bouxwiller, 1996), p. 10; McLaughlin, *Reluctant Radical*, pp. 14-19

¹⁰ McLaughlin, *Reluctant Radical*, pp. 22-23

successfully secured a return to his conception of the pure, primitive Church. For Schwenckfeld, the Lutherans had over-emphasised the outward significance of the Gospel, and had thereby misled the faithful with the external Word of Scripture and with the concomitant over-emphasis upon the pulpit.¹¹ As Emmet McLaughlin has written, Schwenckfeld sought a middle way, in order to "avoid the Scylla of the Catholic tyranny of conscience through works righteousness, and the Charybdis of a *sola fide* antinomianism".¹² Schwenckfeld's *via media* was to be expressed through an inward form of spirituality, very similar in tone to that of the Imitatio Christi. Yet it also reflected a position that was closer to the reformers in Zurich than those in Wittenberg.

In Schwenckfeld's association with the Imitatio, one can determine the different strands of his religious development. First, Schwenckfeld's Lutheranism of the first *Heimsuchung* was evident in the way in which he adapted the Imitatio. His precise textual changes reflected an acceptance of the Reformation (as will be shown in the next chapter). Schwenckfeld's critique of Lutheranism did not mean that he renounced the central theological tenets of the Reformation. Secondly, in Schwenckfeld's thoroughgoing spiritualism, which followed his third and final *Heimsuchung*, one can identify a further attraction to the Imitatio. Schwenckfeld shared the Imitatio's concern with interiority. This represented not only a critique of Catholic practice, but also an acknowledgement that Protestants (and more precisely Lutherans) had over-emphasised their own outward rites, thereby losing their sense of direction. McLaughlin points to Schwenckfeld's complaint that the Lutherans had become so tied up with the letter of Scriptures that they had fallen into the same erroneous overemphasis on externals as the Catholics, replacing one idol with another; "what had been torn down as transubstantiation had been rebuilt in the doctrine of a Real Presence".¹³

By definition, spiritualists like Schwenckfeld viewed Scripture of secondary importance.¹⁴ Schwenckfeld did not believe that Scriptures represented the Word of

¹¹ Shultz, Caspar Schwenckfeld, p. 330

¹² McLaughlin, Reluctant Radical, p. 30

¹³ Ibid., p. 110

¹⁴ Judith Holyer, 'Continuity and Discontinuity between the medieval mystics and the spirituals of the Radical Reformation', BQ XXXV, (1993-1994), p. 231

God, but that they merely bore witness to that Word.¹⁵ This was true of the spirituality of the Imitatio, which noted that "mã sol sy gleich in dem gaist lesen / d~ sy gemachet hat".¹⁶ The Bible was one of the means by which the Word of God could be conveyed. In his book on the Holy Scriptures, Schwenckfeld articulated how the Word was to be revealed:

"the inner word of the spirit must be differentiated from the external word spoken by the preacher; that the living Word of God is not the Scriptures, but Christ; that the Scriptures must be interpreted spiritually; that external ceremonies, services and ministers are of value, but must be distinguished from the power and service of Christ, the living Word".¹⁷

As for the efficacy of external ceremonies, the Imitatio offered further counsel, along the same lines as Schwenckfeld's spirituality: "Jst sach / daß wir in die Ceremonien oder außwendige~ obseruationen / gebrauch oder behaltnissen / allain das zünemen unserer gaistlichait od Christenthum~s setzen / so hat unser andacht schier ain end".¹⁸ External observances were meaningless without a rightly-ordered interiority. Active participation in ceremonies was rendered futile if believers were not sufficiently prepared inwardly.

Schwenckfeld's critique of Protestant externalism clearly had a role to play in the appeal of the Imitatio to him. Its stress upon the inefficacy of the Gospel, if believers were not moved by the spirit, rang particularly true for Schwenckfeld.¹⁹ The reference in the Imitatio to the futility of knowing the Bible by heart without having the

¹⁵ C.S., Doc. CLXX (1535); cited in Shultz, Caspar Schwenckfeld, p. 234

¹⁶ G[1581], B2^r; Pohl, "Omnis scriptura sacra eo spiritu debet legi quo facta est", p. 12:18-20

¹⁷ C.S., Doc. DCCCXIII; cited in Shultz, p. 330

¹⁸ G[1581], C1^v; Pohl, "Si tantum in istis exterioribus observantiis profectum religionis ponimus: cito finem habebit devotio nostra", p. 19:23-26. The addition of "Christenthums" is unique to Schwenckfeld's translation.

¹⁹ G[1581], "Es beschihet aber off / daß vil menschen klaine begird empfinden von empfinden hören des Euangelions / dann sy den gaist Gotts nit haben noch begeren", A3^v; Pohl, "Sed contingit quod multi ex frequenti auditu evangelii parvum desiderium sentiunt: quia spiritum Christi non habent", p. 5:17-20

love and grace of God was also striking in this regard.²⁰ These concerns addressed what, for Schwenckfeld, remained a criticism equally appropriate to Protestantism as to Catholicism. As Schwenckfeld declared elsewhere,

"there are at present two parties that misuse the Gospel; the one swerves in many respects to the right, the other to the left from the straight and only true way of the Lord. The first party is that of the Papacy, which despises the Gospel of Christ with His saving ministry, and...remains and persists in its old error in doctrine and life. The other party which misuses the Gospel consists of those to whom God lately had made a gracious light to appear whereby to a certain extent they perceive what is right and Christian, but by no means live up thereto, although they desire to be regarded as evangelical".²¹

The relevance of the Imitatio's spirituality was indicative of Schwenckfeld's concern that fidelity to the Gospel and to a set of theological tenets was worthless without a true conversion of heart and morals. Thus, placing Christ at the centre of each believer's life was Schwenckfeld's principal goal. This is particularly evident when one compares the Imitatio with Schwenckfeld's German Passional, Deutsch Passional unsers Herren Jesu Christi / Mit schönen tröstlichen Gebetlein, first printed at Nuremberg in 1539.²² The Passional was composed of 60 prayers, covering the 60 hours between the agony in the garden and the Resurrection. It represented not merely a literary history of the Passion, but also a means by which the believer could identify with Christ's suffering.²³ It resembled the Imitatio thematically, in that the prayers that

²⁰ G[1581], "küdestdu die gantz Bibel außwendig / und aller Hayden sprüch / was hulff es dich alles / on die lieb und gnad Gottes", A4^r; Pohl, "Si scires totam bibliam exterius et omnium philosophorum dicta; quid totum prodesset sine caritate Dei et gratia?", p. 6:8-11

²¹ C.S., Vol. XII, p. 859; cited in Shultz, Caspar Schwenckfeld, p. 105

²² Caspar Schwenckfeld, Passional and Prayer Book (in modern translation by John Joseph Stodt) (Pennsylvania, 1961)

²³ Schwenckfeld, Passional, pp. xii-xiii

follow each event sought to make the actions and example of the Passion a reality in the believer's life.

What was implicit in the Imitatio was made explicit in the Passional by way of a transition from a meditational theme to a prayer, the purpose of which was to inspire imitation of Christ. In the second theme on the Passion, for example, Christ fell on his face and prayed "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt". The prayer responding to this theme reflects how the believer ought to follow Christ's example: "Grant that I may fully yield my will to Thy all-holiest will so that my deeds, life - yea, all my words, works and thoughts - may be found in submissive loyalty to Thy service".²⁴ The emphasis on conforming to the will of God was especially suited to a Protestant theological framework. A similar example is given in the twentieth theme, when Jesus made no further answer to Pilate. The prayer interprets Christ's example in the following manner: "Grant that I may patiently overcome all accusations, persecution and unrighteousness of my accusers by silence and never start, say or begin anything at all in an agitated mood".²⁵ Imitation of Christ was, for Schwenckfeld, an acceptance of the turbulent fortunes of a faithful believer: trials and tribulations were the inevitable burdens of a Christian. The Imitatio's insistence on welcoming adversity in the Christian life was thus crucial.

Finally, in the 56th theme, when all returned home beating their breasts following Christ's death on the Cross, the prayer implores the following: "O Lord my God! I beseech Thee that I may be, not only a spectator, but an imitator of Thy humility and Thy cross".²⁶ While it did not refer to specific events of the Passion, the Imitatio's insistence on following the example of Christ was very similar to the intended purpose of the prayers expounded by Schwenckfeld's Passional. Hence, believers could identify with the Passion of Christ by following His example in their own hearts. In keeping with this spirituality, the title pages of later editions of Schwenckfeld's

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 6-7

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 20-21

²⁶ Ibid., p. 46

translation included a woodcut of Christ carrying the cross, followed by believers also bearing their own crosses.²⁷

Since Schwenckfeld's spiritualism allowed no room for a sacramental conception of the Church, the spirituality of the Imitatio struck a resonant chord with his writings. This was made possible with the removal of Book four, which ensured that any explicit references to the sacraments were omitted. Having said this, the allusion to spiritual communion in Book four of the original represented a continuity of spirituality with Schwenckfeld. Schwenckfeld had derived this notion of spiritual communion from Wessel Gansfort, who was in close contact with Kempis and the St. Agnes community. Schwenckfeld's understanding of the devotional life was characterised by a similar sense of interiority that questioned the depth of each believer's religious fervour. He consistently drew the attention of his readers to the centrality of experiential faith. The key to the Christian life entailed a process of conversion by the spirit, without which the reading and hearing of the Word of God and the attendance of external ceremonies were superfluous.

Leo Jud (1482-1542), Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563), Protestant Biblicism and Pedagogy

Like Schwenckfeld's edition, Leo Jud's text (first printed in 1539) did not contain a preface. One is forced, therefore, to look at his life and writings in order to explain the reasons for his attraction to the Imitatio. Jud was born in 1482 in Alsace and was sent to the Latin school at Sélestat (Schlettstadt), the rector of which, Ludwig Dringenberg, had been taught by the Brethren of Common Life at Deventer. Dringenberg's successor, Hofmann von Utenheim (Crato) was also strongly influenced by the *devotio moderna*.²⁸ If Jud did not come across the Imitatio in this context, he may have

²⁷ The G1531 and G1533 editions of the Imitatio do not include woodcuts. Woodcuts do, however, appear in the G[1535], G1536 and G[1581] editions.

²⁸ Karl-Heinz Wyss, Leo Jud: Seine Entwicklung zum Reformator, 1519-1523 (Herbert Lang Bern, Peter Lang Frankfurt, 1976), pp. 20-22

encountered it during his studies at Basle, which was also an important Erasmian centre.

Central to understanding Jud's religious thought is the theological programme of the Swiss Reformation. Luther's theology clearly provided an important springboard. Although the Zurich reformers were to depart from the Lutheran Reformation, particularly on matters relating to the Eucharist, both Reformations shared certain crucial tenets of reform. In his close association with Zwingli,²⁹ Jud played a formidable role in the Zurich Reformation, whether it concerned removing the obligation of fasting, the prohibition of intercessory prayers to saints and to Mary, or the abolition of the Mass.³⁰ It was in keeping with these reforming sentiments that Jud's translation of the Imitatio differed little from Schwenckfeld's in terms of the omission of Book four and the differing perceptions of the after-life.³¹ These theologically sensitive emendations were consistent with Jud's changes to the Zurich liturgy in the previous decade.³²

Despite the strong affinity with Luther, part of the motivation for translating the Imitatio was derived from Jud's intention to stress the continuity with the late medieval period. In responding to the Lutheran critique that the Zwinglians smacked of innovation, Jud and his companions were eager to illustrate the points of continuity between the Swiss Reformation and the pre-Reformation era. For this reason, Jud justified his translation of a work by the medieval monk Ratramnus by drawing attention to the seemingly remarkable fact that Ratramnus had made the same points as Luther now expounded seven hundred years before the Wittenberg professor:

²⁹ For Jud's relationship with Zwingli, see Oskar Farnet, 'Leo Jud: Zwingli's treuere Helfer', Zwingliana 10 (1955), pp. 203ff

³⁰ Wyss, Leo Jud, p. 155; G. R. Potter, Zwingli (Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 130, 208, 274; Pamela Biel, 'Personal Conviction and Pastoral Care: Zwingli and the cult of the saints, 1522-1530', Zwingliana 11 (1985), pp. 452-453

³¹ See chapter seven.

³² Bruce Gordon, 'Transcendence and community in Zwinglian worship: the liturgy of 1525 in Zurich', in R. N. Swanson, (ed.), Continuity and Change in Christian Worship (The Boydell Press, 1999), pp. 128-150, especially pp. 139ff

"in disem büchlin / das garnach vor sibenhundert jaren / ein frömer man / mit namen Bertram / uff ansüchen Keiser Karles / zü dess zyten sich diser span vom Nachtmal ouch zütragen / gemacht hatt / wol sähen / wie warlich der Luter uff uns rede / das wir söliche meinung nüwlich erdacht / oder uß einem finger gsogen habind / und wie war es sye / das syn meynung fünfftzehenhundert jar von der kilchen sye gehalten worden...".³³

The principal attraction of the Imitatio for Jud must be related to its biblicism. Jud's Erasmianism was, in the first instance, centred upon his translation of Erasmus's Paraphrases. Later on in his career, Jud would translate the Bible into Swiss German and he was also responsible for a Latin edition of the Bible; both were printed in Zurich.³⁴ These projects were motivated by a concern to make the Bible available to the populace. Jud shared the Brethren of Common Life's dual concern for simple Latin ("ein gepflegtes Latein") and for rendering the Bible into the vernacular.³⁵ Jud reinforced these biblical texts by composing and translating works of spirituality which generated enthusiasm for the Scriptures. Hence, devotional literature served a pedagogical function, elucidating the Biblical message.³⁶

Jud's work as a prolific translator was indicative of how he envisaged his role in the Zurich Reformation. While the provision of Biblical texts was the cornerstone of his pastoral programme, the exposition of the Word of God built upon this foundation. On the one hand, Jud achieved this through his preaching, for which he acquired a tremendous reputation.³⁷ On the other hand, Jud recognised the potential of the written word. As the preacher sought to relate Scriptural readings to the practical lives of those living in the community, so devotional works could inspire the Word of God in the

³³ Ratramnus, Ein büchlin Bertrami des Priesters / von dem lyb und blüt Christi (Zurich, 1532) [BL 3906.aa.18], A3^v

³⁴ Wyss, Leo Jud, pp. 200, 207, 209

³⁵ Ibid., p. 23

³⁶ Gordon, 'Transcendence and Community', pp. 146-147

³⁷ Wyss, Leo Jud, pp. 121, 166-167

believer's heart. A good book could be as effective in nurturing piety as an edifying sermon. Indeed, much of the inspiration for Jud's works were derived from the meetings of the Prophezei, the band of Zwingli's companions who met in order to discuss the various versions and interpretations of Scriptures.³⁸ The corpus of Jud's devotional treatises constitutes the literary equivalent of Jud's collations and sermons to the laity. To this end, Jud prepared catechetical programmes with the intention of simplifying the biblical message.³⁹

It is perhaps within this context that one should interpret Jud's harmony of the Gospels. In focusing attention entirely upon the notion of suffering, this work sought to make the Gospels a reality in the believer's life, a truth which could only be comprehended by an experiential faith. Through their experience of suffering, individuals were brought to a deeper understanding of their faith, in closer conformity with Christ. These themes seem to be equally central to the *Imitatio*'s spirituality. Moreover, it may be significant that Jud translated the *Imitatio* during Bullinger's leadership, given that the latter may have been influenced by the *devotio moderna* and had studied in Cologne.⁴⁰

Sebastian Castellio's life and writings shed much light on his possible motivations for translating the *Imitatio*. Castellio's humanist training in Lyon, Strasbourg and Basle partly explains the choice of Latin for the translation.⁴¹ His interest and active participation in education is arguably proof of the *devotio moderna*'s influence, if one considers that from 1540 Castellio taught at the Latin school in Strasbourg (reformed by Johann Sturm, and inspired by the Brethren of Common Life).⁴² Castellio's interest in the Bible, manifest in his Latin and French translations of

³⁸ Gordon, 'Transcendence and Community', p. 144

³⁹ Carl Pestalozzi, *Leo Judä* (Elberfeld, 1860), pp. 56-62

⁴⁰ Hans Georg von Berg, 'Die Brüder vom Gemeinsamen Leben und die Stiftschule von St. Martin zu Emmerich. Zur Frage des Einflusses der *devotio moderna* auf den jungen Bullinger', in Ulrich Gäbler, and Erland Herkenrath, (eds.), *Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575: Vol. I., Leben und Werk* (Theologischer Verlag, Zurich), pp. 1-12

⁴¹ See Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio* (forthcoming)

⁴² Ferdinand Buisson, *Sébastien Castellion: sa vie et son oeuvre (1515-1563). Étude sur les origines du Protestantisme libéral français* (Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1892), Vol. I., p. 24; Charles Delormeau, *Deux pédagogues protestants français: Mathurin Cordier, Sébastien Castellion* (Supplément du Journal des Écoles du Dimanche, no. 3, 1970), pp. 5-19; Gabriel Codina Mir, *Aux Sources de la Pédagogie des Jésuites: Les "Modus Parisiensis"* (Rome, 1968), pp. 218-230

the 1550s, was also evident in his other writings, and in the Imitatio. Given its inherent biblicism, the Imitatio could itself be considered an exposition of Scriptures.

Castellio's philological examination and translation of the Bible provides an insight into the close links between his involvement with Scriptures and the Imitatio.⁴³ In the first half of the 1550s, Castellio completed his Bible translations. Given the biblicism of the Imitatio, the Bible translations provide a few hints as to his motives for translating the Imitatio. His translation of the Latin Bible (printed in 1551) followed a very strict classical style, similar to the edition of his Pentateuch translation entitled Moses Latinus (1546) and his Psalterium (1547). In the preface to Moses Latinus, Castellio had criticised previous translations of the Bible on the basis that they were uncultivated in style and that their sense was obscured by a literal transcribing of Hebraisms, rather than being true translations guided by philology.⁴⁴

Castellio's treatment of language finds a parallel in his translation of the Imitatio. First of all, in the preface, he responded to the criticism that a translation from Latin into Latin might seem a ridiculous and pointless exercise. He justified the classical style of his translation by declaring that the more Latin his edition appeared, the more easily the believer would be able to read it. Paralleling the Latin Bible translation,⁴⁵ he claimed that men ought to be attracted to the reading of pious books by all permitted methods: "Quòd latiniozem feci, causam habui hãc, quòd multi latiniora libentius legunt: & ego homines ad piorum librorum lectione[m] omni licita ratione alliciendos esse censeo".⁴⁶ Philology served not only to draw the reader closer to the culture of the biblical authors, but could also be used to bring the biblical story closer to the cultural environment of the reader.

His attention to style was not intended solely to satisfy a secular, humanist yearning for eloquence. Eloquent language had the power to attract and persuade readers to fulfil their destiny,⁴⁷ although as he noted, piety itself does not reside in the

⁴³ Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 75ff

⁴⁴ Buisson, Castellion, Vol. I., pp. 294-295

⁴⁵ Guggisberg, Castellio, p. 77

⁴⁶ L1565, A2^r

⁴⁷ E. Haag, La France Protestante, Vol. III. (Slatkine, Geneva, 1966), p. 364

elegance of language.⁴⁸ However, it is also noteworthy that the Imitatio contained a dialogue in Book three. The service of dialogues in constructing a rhetoric of piety was also important to the Protestant cause. In attempting to inspire a yearning for God in believers, devotional literature consisted of rhetorical elements, in order to exhort them to lead a religious life and to persuade them to follow their vocation.

Moreover, Castellio's concern for addressing the unlearned in his French Bible is shared by the anti-intellectualism of the Imitatio, which consistently stressed the applicability of the biblical message to the unlearned. As Castellio emphasised, learned theologians had no grounds to think that they had an advantage over the simple folk.⁴⁹ It was not erudition but faith, animated by the Spirit, which was requisite for the comprehension of Scriptures. In his Defensio suarum translationum Bibliorum, printed in 1562, Castellio pointed to the simplicity of Paul's language:

"The glory of Paul can be found in his ignorance of fine language...I would say that there is nothing more lacking of literary merit than the style of St. Paul, if the spirit which inspires it is withdrawn; but that there is nothing more excellent than the spirit which animates it".⁵⁰

It is the accessibility of Scriptures to all, learned and unlearned, which resonates with the ideals upheld by the Imitatio. Both had to be presented with a Scriptural text most suited to their respective abilities. Castellio's manipulation of language brought this about, as his eloquence or persuasion, could serve both the unlearned and the learned. Hence, the Imitatio's claim that simple people could understand the Scriptures was appealing to Castellio.⁵¹ Not only was this the case because they could be instructed by divine grace, but it was also due to the Imitatio's inspiring message which led Christians to a yearning for an exemplary life. Indeed, Castellio's tendency towards

⁴⁸ Buisson, Castellio Vol. I., p. 295

⁴⁹ Guggisberg, Castellio, p. 97

⁵⁰ cited in Buisson, Castellio Vol. I., p. 321

⁵¹ Pohl, "Si vis profectum haurire; lege humiliter, simpliciter et fideliter: nec umquam velis habere nomen scientiae", p. 13:6-9; Castellio, "Si fructum inde vis percipere, submissè, simpliciter, fideliter legito, néue scientiae nomen vnquam affectato", A8^v

the spiritualist tradition provided a point of contact with the undogmatic nature of the Imitatio.⁵² It also represented the mystical dimension of Castellio's spirituality; he had himself edited a Latin edition of the Theologia Deutsch, first printed at Antwerp in 1556.⁵³ Above all, Castellio strove to render Scriptures in a comprehensible form for believers, as his Dialogi Sacri clearly shows. That work presented biblical scenes in dialogue form with the vernacular alongside the Ciceronian Latin, easily digestible for the student.⁵⁴ It thereby provided both a textbook for classical Latin and a medium for Protestant religious education.⁵⁵ Castellio's biblicism and humanism, which enforced and promoted spiritual progression, were fundamental to his spirituality and explain his decision to publish a Latin edition of the Imitatio.⁵⁶

The Protestant *Contemptus Mundi*: The English Protestant Tradition of the Imitatio Christi, Edward Hake and Thomas Rogers

With relatively little known about Hake's life and given his involvement in law and politics, there is no obvious background for his association with the Imitatio Christi.⁵⁷ His translation, first printed in 1567, remained relatively faithful to Castellio's Latin edition, which had been printed for the first time only four years previously in Basle.⁵⁸ The absence of clear motives for his appropriation of the Imitatio necessitates an examination of the relationship between the Imitatio and Hake's other

⁵² The revelatory power of Scriptures was "wholly dependent on the Spirit". Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 90-91

⁵³ Ibid., p. 203

⁵⁴ Buisson, Sébastien Castellion, Vol. I., pp. 152-169; Roland Bainton, 'Sebastian Castellio, champion of religious liberty, 1515-1563', in Castellionana: Quatre études sur Sébastien Castellion et l'Idée de la Tolérance (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1951), p. 36

⁵⁵ Guggisberg, Castellio, p. 47

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 317

⁵⁷ Hake was educated by the Reverend John Hopkins and later adopted the profession of law. He practised both in Gray's Inn and Barnard's Inn. The dates of his birth and death are uncertain. By 1567, Hake was under-steward for the town of New Windsor. On 16 September, 1576, he was acting as recorder in New Windsor and in June 1578, he was one of the bailiffs. On 10 August, 1586, Hake addressed the Queen on behalf of the town and delivered an oration on her birthday, 7 September, 1586, which was printed on 17 November, 1587. DNB, p. 5

⁵⁸ Hake referred to Castellio's edition in his preface. E1567, A4^r, A4^v

writings. By relating the Imitatio's spirituality to his other works, it is possible to probe the reasons for his attraction to the text.

Although a politician and a lawyer, Hake's writings reveal a profound interest in the spiritual life, notably the pervasiveness of spiritual mediocrity owing to sin within English society. In his Touchestone for the time present, Hake presented a critique of an English culture devastated both by sin and by an infidelity to the Christian religion. Hake criticised Christians for only professing their adherence to the faith in name, lacking the necessary spirit;⁵⁹ this demonstrates a definite continuity with the Imitatio's spirituality. Pastors and ministers were scarcely excluded from Hake's tirade, for all Christians who failed to live an exemplary life, regardless of their status or position within the Church, not only departed from the Gospel but also betrayed it.⁶⁰ Hake denounced these ineffectual ministers as "hipocrites and damnable sort of luskish loytering Lubbers" and as "cursed Chaplins, & notorious numbers of monstrous unlearned Sicophants, which take the fleece, & starue the flocke".⁶¹ Nor were the laity exempt from Hake's critique, for even with absentee or ignorant pastors, the laity could not plead ignorance since the Gospel could never be unheard.⁶² Similarly, nobody was excluded from the Imitatio's invocation to inward reform.

Hake remarked that sins permeated parishes and families to such an extent that England, once honoured for her piety,⁶³ was reproved for her iniquity by the Turks.⁶⁴ In similar fashion, in his Oration, he contrasted the virtues of the pagans with the absence of "godlinesse and good graces" among the English.⁶⁵ His Newes out of Powles Churchyarde attributed the multiplication of abuses to virtually all professions.

⁵⁹ Edward Hake, A Touchestone for this time present, exprestly declaring such ruines, enormities, and abuses as trouble the Church of God and our Christian commonwealth at this daye (London, 1574), A4^r

⁶⁰ Ibid., B6^r

⁶¹ Ibid., B7^v

⁶² "There is none can say that the sound of the gospel hath not passed throughout euery coast, hath not been preached and taught in euery place & beene rung into the eares of euery man, woman and childe. Al haue heard, al haue seene, yea, and al haue felt aswel saluation profered, as plague for sinne threatned: Ignoraunce may not be pleaded, neither is there at al any excuse to bee receiued". Ibid., B8^r, B8^v

⁶³ Ibid., D6^r

⁶⁴ Ibid., D2^v

⁶⁵ Hake, Oration conteyning an expostulation as well with the Queenes Highnesse (London, 1587), A4^v

In emphasising the weaknesses and frailty of the English, Hake sought to nurture piety. In that endeavour, there existed a striking continuity with the Imitatio, especially regarding the degree to which he was critical of that society's failings.

Most striking was Hake's attention to the subjects of death and Hell. He believed that focussing on the torments of the after-life would provide a perspective on a believer's sorrows and suffering. Hake's Newes shared the Imitatio's insistence on the futility, and even stupidity, of fleeing death.⁶⁶ Both works reminded their readers that nobody was guaranteed to live another day and that death was potentially unexpected.

"How fondly they perswade themselues

(at least how they suppose)

That griefly death shall neuer strike.

O sottish sinfull brittle age...

But what is he can promise beere

himselpe to liue a day:

No doubt not one.⁶⁷ Death unawares

shall take our life away.

And then we thinke us surest, then

most often doth he strike".⁶⁸

The subject of death is given further prominence in Hake's spirituality as the Newes out of Powles Churchyarde included a letter written by Hake to a friend lying on

⁶⁶ Hake, Newes, D6^r; E1567, "Againe, if thou wouldest throughly way in thy minde the Torments that shall be in Hell, gladly I thinke thou wouldest sustaine labour and sorrow, and wouldest not be afeard of any seueritie and streightnesse applied to thy selfe. But bicause those things are not suffered to sinck deeply into our mindes, and for that we are not in loue with flattrng shewes of the worlde, it hapneth that we continue still to remaine colde and slow, many times poore and needie of the spirite of God, whereby our wretched bodie taketh occasion quickly to cōplaine & mone" D3^r; Pohl, pp. 40:30-31 - 41:1-7. Note Hake's omission of the reference to purgatory.

⁶⁷ "Be in doubt in the Morning whether thou shalt liue till the Euening: And again at night be afeard to promise thy selfe life till Morning: and alwayes be in such a redinesse, & liue in such sort that death may neuer find thee unprovided", Hake, Imitation of Christ, D6^r, D6^v; Pohl p. 45:20-23

⁶⁸ Hake, Newes, D6^v

the point of death.⁶⁹ The letter related "sickness and the assaults of death" to the "bytter temptations and assaults of the common enemies of mankinde, the olde Serpente, the vaine, wicked and unconstant worlde, and the fraile, peruerse and rebellious flesh".⁷⁰ The point of the letter, in keeping with the Imitatio's spirituality, was to bring the meaning and importance of affliction to light. Although suffering to the point of martyrdom was not relevant to English Protestants during the Elizabethan period, that was not to suggest that suffering *per se* was subordinated to a secondary role. On the contrary, the interpretation of suffering, conceptualised as a struggle between worldly and spiritual values, was hardly a peripheral concern, especially at the point of death. Moreover, on this level, the contents of the Imitatio had much to offer, for it had from the outset presented a spirituality that engaged with the world without recognising its values. In keeping with the Imitatio, Hake's letter interpreted suffering in terms of a divine love that chastised; "for who is he whome the lorde chasteneth not? Surely, surely, whome he loueth, the same dothe he chasten".⁷¹

Hake, furthermore, conceptualised sickness in several ways: first, it could be imposed as punishment for sin; secondly, in order to exercise one's faith; and finally, to the point of death. Hake's recommendation of how to deal with these different interpretations of sickness typifies the spirituality of the Imitatio.

"And therefore, if it be punishment, beseeche him to giue you patience and assure your selfe upon repentaunce, to haue free & full remission in Christ: if it be for tryall, giue him thanks: & if it be to the death, reioise in it, & thinke it is the greatest gift that euer he gaue you in this world, being the very passage to the heauenlye and Angelicall Paradice".⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid., H3^r

⁷⁰ Note the allusion to the triumvirate of Serpent, world and flesh, apparent in Hake's other treatises and also in Rogers' works. Ibid., H3^r. The identification of the three enemies of humanity as the world, the flesh and the devil are also found within the circles of the *devotio moderna*. See Van Engen, 'The Virtues', pp. 192-193

⁷¹ Ibid., H5^r

⁷² Ibid., H5^v

Ideally, one should desire and look forward to death. This required an intense preparatory period of conforming one's will to the will of God. After all, once believers died, their memories would quickly fade away. In this regard, Hake referred to families forgetting dead relatives after their death.⁷³ While this is very reminiscent of the Imitatio,⁷⁴ the notion does seem particularly suited to a Protestant theological framework.

The closest of Hake's works to the Imitatio (in terms of spirituality) was The perpetuall reioyce of the Godly.⁷⁵ This work filled the place left by the omitted fourth Book of the Imitatio. The dominant theme of this treatise concerned the Christian interpretation of joy. Hake reminded the reader how difficult it was to accept St. Paul's exhortation to joy in a life full of temptations by the flesh, the world and the devil.⁷⁶ As in the Imitatio, the way of the Christian can be identified by making the distinction between transitory and worldly joy on the one hand and perpetual joy on the other.⁷⁷ Fundamental to the understanding of joy is the acceptance of adversity that accompanies Christian discipleship. Believers should welcome both adversity and prosperity, for as they become stronger in spirit so they realise that the faithful disciple needs to be chastised.⁷⁸ Glory would be discovered in affliction and tribulation.⁷⁹

The continuity between the perpetuall reioyce and the Imitatio is particularly evident in the biblical sources, especially with the book of Job and the Psalms.⁸⁰ The continuities do not end here. In the original fourth Book of the Imitatio, the spirituality of the previous three books is given a visible sacramental and ecclesiastical framework, with emphasis placed upon the priest and the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. In the perpetual reioyce, there are references to the two Protestant

⁷³ Ibid., H5^v, H6^r

⁷⁴ E1567, D5^v; Pohl, p. 44:24-26; E1567, D7^v; Pohl, p. 47:19-21

⁷⁵ Edward Hake, The perpetuall reioyce of the Godly, euen in this lyfe (London, 1568)

⁷⁶ Ibid., S5^r, S5^v

⁷⁷ Ibid., S6^v, S7^r, S7^v

⁷⁸ Ibid., S8^r

⁷⁹ "He knoweth that the affliction that endureth but a moment, and is but light, doth worke in us a glory that is euerlasting, and more heauy than al poise or weight, as the Apostle saith: & that the troubles of this present worlde are not worthy to be compared with that glory that shall be reuealed towarde us", Ibid., S8^v

⁸⁰ Ibid., T3^r, T3^v

sacraments, the Lord's Supper and Baptism.⁸¹ In addition to the sacraments, Hake also alluded to the "continuall and diligent reading of holy Scripture" and the "Sermons and godlye Exhortacions, which the Preachers of the Worde of Saluacion doe make".⁸² Moreover, he mentioned the liturgical calendar, including the "Easter Holydayes, which are kept to cōtinue the remembrance of Christs Resurrection: of Pentecost or Whitsontyde, to call the sending downe of the holy ghost upon the Apostles: to minde the feastfull daies of Christs birth, when the worde being made fleshe, is celebrated".⁸³ In this way, the spirituality of the Imitatio was intended to nurture the believer's piety, which was to be professed in a visible Church distinguished by a Protestant sacramental framework. While there existed a different ecclesiology and sacramental theology, the basic message remained the same. The interiority of the Imitatio would reinforce the fervour of the visible Church. The perpetual rejoice of the Godly was to be expressed within the context of the Elizabethan Church.

Hake's attention to the negligence of religion was motivated by a concern for promoting piety. He recognised that the theological purity of the English Church was secured by the Elizabethan Settlement. The English populace was fortunate to be living under that "most prosperous and peaceable Raigne of Elizabeth".⁸⁴ Yet, theological purity could not guarantee that the Christian community practised their faith. Nor did it ensure that 'popery' was totally extinguished. Hence, progressing in the spiritual life was vital, both for the sake of conforming ever closer to Christ and in order to consolidate the Elizabethan Settlement. Hake's spirituality advocated not a withdrawal from the world, but a confrontation with the world, though not on its own terms. The Imitatio was thus to be interpreted precisely within that context. It presented Elizabethan Protestants with a manual for living in the world, by pointing to the dangers with which believers would be faced, regardless of their profession.

⁸¹ Ibid., V6r

⁸² Ibid., V4r, V4v. The reading of Scriptures was recommended in Book one of the Imitatio. E1567, A6v, A7r

⁸³ Ibid., V4v, V5r

⁸⁴ Edward Hake, A Commemoration of the most prosperous and peaceable Raigne, A1r

Thomas Rogers

Hake's translation was soon superseded (at least quantitatively) by that of Thomas Rogers, first printed in 1580. Rogers, unlike Hake, played a more active role in the Church than Hake, working as a minister.⁸⁵ His appreciation for the Imitatio can also be determined by analysing his other works, in which one can identify a similar concern for developing progress in the spiritual life. In the preface to his translation of St. Augustines Manuel, Rogers addressed the notion of human frailty. As prayer and meditation were seen to provide the sole remedy in St. Augustine's time, the cure for Rogers' readers was no different:

"he wil confesse that calleth into remembrance the great and general corruption of al mankinde; and waieth by what sleighes and subtelties both the Diuel seeketh to deuoure, the flesh to entangle, and the world to drawe vs headlong vnto perdition: which to auoide, we haue none other remedie, beside earnest, godlie, and continual praier".⁸⁶

An eschatological emphasis is also manifest in Rogers's works, especially his translation of John Rivius' Of the foolishness of men in putting off the amendement of their liues. The preface (composed by the author, not by Rogers) insists upon preparation for death and remains critical of those believers who fail to consider the brevity of life, given that judgment awaits them.⁸⁷ This echoes the Imitatio, which reminded believers that the time of death was unpredictable. Similarly, in his treatise entitled Of the ende of this worlde, and the seconde commyng of Christ, Rogers announced the following purpose for his treatise: "that by reciting the signes and tokens

⁸⁵ Rogers studied at Christ Church, Oxford from 1571, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in July 1573 and with a Master of Arts in July 1576. He then became rector of Horringer in Suffolk near Bury St. Edmunds in December 1581 and was later chaplain to Richard Bancroft, who was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1604. He died at Horringer in 1616. DNB, p. 142

⁸⁶ St. Augustine, St. Augustines Manuel, translated by Thomas Rogers (London, 1581) STC, 938, a3^v, a4^r

⁸⁷ John Rivius, Of the foolishnes of men in putting-off the amendement of their liues, translated by Thomas Rogers (London, 1582) STC, 20166, A2^r, A3^r

of dangers imminente, and of the worldes destruction, he might draw the wicked from securitie, and driue them to a care of godlynesse and vertue".⁸⁸ The intention of that work is little different from Rogers's General Session, in which he showed how those who contemplate the end of their lives are able to prepare for death more easily.⁸⁹ This work in particular shares a similar spirituality with the Imitatio where emphasis is placed upon the distinction between transitory and eternal joy, in addition to enduring affliction in the present world.⁹⁰

Rogers' attention to spirituality is most intriguing where it is directly related to activities and professions in the secular world. Of particular note are the responsibilities and duties which Rogers attributed to magistrates. In the preface to his translation of St. Augustine's A pretious booke of Heavenlie Meditations, Rogers outlined certain responsibilities of magistrates, notably preventing the circulation of unedifying books in the vernacular:

"among al abuses which you studie to reforme, as a godlie Magistrate, and ought to informe hir Maiestie of, as a prudent Counseler, you would remember the hurt that commeth by corrupt bookes in our English tong. First, they infect the mindes of the simple; secondarilie, they offend the godlie; and thirdlie, they confirme the obstinate, and the more a great deale, because they are allowed by publike auctoritie, and not either diligentlie corrected, or orderlie forbidden".⁹¹

Here Rogers alluded to the necessity of promoting pure English books. The importance of edifying books was also expressed in the preface to his translation of Hemmingius's Faith of the Church Militant. He noted that books were as important as

⁸⁸ Thomas Rogers, Of the ende of this worlde, and the seconde commyng of Christ (London, 1577) STC, 11804, *2^v

⁸⁹ Thomas Rogers, General Session, conteining an apologie of the most comfortable doctrine concerning the ende of this World, and second commyng of Christ (London, 1581), A2^v

⁹⁰ Ibid., A1^r, E4^v, F5^r

⁹¹ St. Augustine, A pretious booke of Heavenlie Meditations, translated by Thomas Rogers (London, 1581) STC, 944, a6^v

preaching, for "the instruction, and confirmation of the posteritie to come. For bookes will teach, and strengthen, & testifie, and confute when men happilie cannot".⁹²

Strikingly, Rogers pointed to the necessity of books in a context where the ignorance, negligence or non-residence of pastors might deny the laity the opportunity to hear the Word being preached.⁹³ In this way, reading devotional works not only could reinforce a believer's participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church, but it could also provide the faithful with an impetus to follow the Gospel in a parish context where they might be deprived of adequate instruction. In a very practical sense, Rogers was insisting upon the necessity of an individual's spiritual progress where the communal life of the Church was wanting. The importance of Christian example, of a good life flowing from an eternal truth, was central to Rogers's understanding for which English Protestants should strive. Hence, devotional literature had the intention of working on individuals, helping them to expound Scriptures and making it a reality in their daily lives. Devotional works were tools for moral improvement and provided a guide to, not a replacement for, Scriptures.

The final context for the Imitatio, central to Rogers' religious thought, was that the spiritual lives of believers were to be experienced within a visible, sacramental Church. The propositions of article 19 "of the Church" in Rogers' English Creed illustrate the nature of the Church envisaged by Rogers. Its framework which drew on the Elizabethan Settlement was structured by the "markes and tokens of the visible church, the due and true administration of the Word and Sacraments".⁹⁴ The indispensability of the Church is emphatic in the final proposition: "There is no saluation without this church, and therefore euerie man if firmly to ioyne thereunto, and neuer to depart therefrom by schisme, and contention".⁹⁵ Thus, Rogers's intention was that Protestant readers of the Imitatio interpreted their spirituality as reinforcing a sacramental Church.

⁹² Nicolas Hemmingius, The Faith of the Church Militant, translated by Thomas Rogers (London, 1581), A4^r

⁹³ Ibid., A4^v

⁹⁴ Rogers, The English Creede (London, 1585), H4^r

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Rogers, like Hake, acknowledged that the Elizabethan Settlement denoted a starting point rather than providing an end in itself. It represented a structure within which believers could practise their faith. Yet, in order to do so successfully and sincerely, believers had to be encouraged and guided in their religious lives, both by means of drawing upon eschatological themes and by pointing out the evils to be avoided within society.

The Imitatio Christi and the evasion of Polemic?

There is a great deal of evidence for a continuity between Catholic and Protestant spirituality exemplified in the essential tenets of Christianity and contained within the Imitatio. The text reflected an experiential form of spirituality which provided nourishment that theology could not. Emphasis was placed upon doing rather than understanding God's will. Devotional literature, as opposed to doctrinal and theological works, addressed all levels of readership and comprehension. This was as important to the Protestant as to the Catholic faithful. The establishment of a Protestant prayer book tradition would lead the brethren forward on their spiritual journey.

The existence of Protestant editions of the Imitatio was an indication that doctrine and theology needed to be reinforced with devotion. The transmission of doctrine, and even the expounding of Scriptures, to the laity was not uncomplicated and, for this reason, emphasis was placed upon the practical implications of theology. Thus, the following of Christ was as much (if not more) a process of self-discovery as it was a search for a clearer understanding of the Divine mysteries. Moreover, as the anonymous "Godlie" preface of Rogers's translation of the Imitatio noted (citing Augustine), orthodoxy did not prevent wickedness, a feat which only charity could secure.⁹⁶ However, does this emphasis upon self-discovery suggest that the type of

⁹⁶ "In respect whereof it is no amis to alledge the saieng of S. Augustine. The wicked man (saith he) may haue baptisme; he may haue the gift of prophesieng; he may receiue the Sacrament of the bodie and blood of our Lord; he may beare the name of a Christian & haue Christs name in his mouth; and he may haue other virtues: but charitie is the thing which the wicked cannot haue; it is peculiar to the true Christians", E1580, B11^v, B12^r

individuals who translated the Imitatio were less concerned with polemical exchanges and upholding doctrinal purity than nurturing piety? This section will deal with Schwenckfeld, Castellio, Hake and Rogers in turn, primarily addressing the extent to which their respective translations of the Imitatio were motivated by an avoidance of polemic.

Caspar Schwenckfeld did not tend towards polemic. The corpus of his writings is characterised by pastoral and spiritual concerns. He was principally intent on nurturing piety, thereby aiding the reader (or hearer) in the process of conversion. Yet, what seems striking about Schwenckfeld's spirituality is the relation of interior reform to doctrinal purity. Schwenckfeld's critique of Lutheranism was based upon the general failure of Lutherans to bear true witness to their faith. Schwenckfeld welcomed and accepted a considerable part of the Lutheran theological programme, but he was critical of individuals whose lives did not correspond to their doctrinal purity. If Lutheranism represented the true faith, he asked, what prevented Lutherans from living an exemplary life which ought inevitably to flow from that grace? Schwenckfeld's thoughts on the matter are clearly shown in the following extract, taken from a letter to Speratus, dated 7 October, 1526:

"Not once, but often I was violently agitated and assaulted with something like pain because at that time still so few of those who heard the present preaching of the gospel showed any improvement. And if we should admit the truth (and I speak here of our people), the longer it was preached, the worse they were, God help us. Therefore, I suspected that there must be something lacking, whatever it could be, and that things were not as perfect as we allowed ourselves to think".⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Cited in McLaughlin, Reluctant Radical, pp. 61-62

It is interesting to note that the failure of believers in adhering to the faith encouraged him to challenge theological truths. Christian example was thus crucial to Schwenckfeld's teaching. Indeed, this theme is central to his writings. However, it was hardly an attempt to search for a *via media*, to unite Catholicism and Lutheranism, not to mention a *rapprochement* with the Lutherans. Indeed, by replacing a sacramental with a non-sacramental Church, he was widening the gap between the confessions, not to mention his divergent Eucharistic theology.⁹⁸ Schwenckfeld's association with the Imitatio Christi in this context concerned the application of the truth. Believers had to be exemplars of their faith, in order to persuade their peers to do the same.

Sebastian Castellio provides an instructive yet certainly different approach, given his renown for advocating religious toleration.⁹⁹ The affinity between Castellio's thought and the Imitatio is evident in his reaction against the controversial nature of doctrinal debate. Castellio's views on polemical disputations were mirrored in the Imitatio, which leads the believer towards self-examination on a purely spiritual and interior level, rather than on a doctrinal and intellectual one. Castellio took his interpretation of the exemplary life to its apparently logical conclusion, namely the promotion of peace and harmony within communities. The prefaces to his Bible translations reveal this particular strand of thought, for which he is perhaps best known, namely, the promotion of religious toleration.

Castellio's thought cannot be disassociated from the Basle context in which he lived, especially as regards the influence of Erasmus's writings (whether it be the Complaint of Peace or the plea to fight with spiritual weapons in the Handbook of a Christian Soldier).¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Erasmus's uncomfortable relationship with both the Protestant Reformation and the purely conservative Catholic attitude of reaction was echoed in Castellio's own life. Given the Erasmian influence upon Schwenckfeld and Jud, this aspect of Protestant spirituality should not be under-emphasised.

⁹⁸ For his Eucharistic theology, see McLaughlin, Freedom of the Spirit, pp. 95ff

⁹⁹ For Castellio's interpretation, see Guggisberg, Castellio, p. 6

¹⁰⁰ Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 123-125

In tracing the development of Castellio's thought towards toleration, one can see how closely related it was to the spirituality of the Imitatio. In the 1551 preface to the Latin Bible, Castellio put forward his defence of religious toleration.¹⁰¹ He addressed the preface of his Latin Bible to the young Edward VI who had recently acceded to the throne, for England represented favourable soil for religious toleration. Castellio's views on toleration were refined in reaction to the execution of Michel Servetus in Geneva on 27 October, 1553. Servetus had been condemned for expressing anti-Trinitarian beliefs, judged heretical by Calvin and the Genevan Company of Pastors, and became the *cause célèbre* of the toleration controversy.¹⁰² Following the death of Servetus, Castellio's literary output focused almost entirely on issues relating to toleration. Castellio's subsequent critique of religious persecution, evident in his De haereticis an sint persequendi and in his Conseil à la France désolée, was entirely based upon his interpretation of Scriptures.¹⁰³ In their undogmatic nature, these writings bore a strong resemblance to the Imitatio.¹⁰⁴

Castellio stated that a life of Christian morality is far better than an adherence to specific doctrines. The preface of Martin Bellie in Castellio's De haereticis argued that it is wrong for a Christian to torture and kill people over doctrinal differences (such as the Trinity, predestination or baptism), especially if they otherwise live an honest life.¹⁰⁵ The disparity between the practical life of a Christian on the one hand and doctrinal speculation on the other was shared by the Imitatio. In chapter one of the first Book, the believer is asked what is the point of discoursing profoundly about the Trinity when one is void of humility, thereby displeasing the Trinity.¹⁰⁶ The Imitatio's spirituality

¹⁰¹ Peter Bietenholz, Basle and France in the Sixteenth Century: the Basle humanists and printers in their contacts with Francophone culture (Geneva, 1971), p. 129

¹⁰² Bainton, 'Sebastian Castellio, champion', p. 28; Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 107ff

¹⁰³ Sébastien Castellion, De Haereticis an sint persequendi et omnino quomodo sit cum eis agendum. Luteri & Brentii, aliorumque multorum tum veterum tum recentiorum sententiae (reproduction of 1540 edition, with an introduction by Saepe van de Woude), p. 1; Buisson, Castellion, Vol.I., p. 358; Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 117ff

¹⁰⁴ "De pace acquirenda et zelo proficiendi", Pohl, pp. 18:14ff; "De pace consequenda, studioq; proficiendi", L1565, A11^r

¹⁰⁵ Sape van der Woude, 'Gestaltung der Toleranz', in Castellioniana: Quatre études sur Sébastien Castellion et l'Idée de la Tolérance (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1951), pp. 20-21; Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 122ff

¹⁰⁶ Pohl, p. 6:2-4; L1565, A3^v

followed this undogmatic line throughout the text, culminating in the Last Judgment when believers would not be judged on their knowledge, but rather on the way in which they have conducted themselves in their lives.¹⁰⁷

Castellio's interpretation of tolerance also included the legitimacy and necessity of doubt where doctrinal and intellectual matters were concerned. As he expressed it in the De arte dubitandi, printed the same year as his first edition of the Imitatio: "Faith is not knowledge...it proceeds not from intelligence, but from the heart and, therefore, the will".¹⁰⁸ In the light of Servetus's execution, it is striking that Castellio's translation of the Imitatio omitted all references to martyrdom. Towards the end of the second Book, Castellio changed the phrase, "Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium", so that the word "martyrium" was replaced by the word "cruciatu", meaning torment.¹⁰⁹ This apparently minor emendation illustrates Castellio's reluctance to promote martyrdom as an ideal of Christian perfection, which provides an interesting point of contrast with the conclusions drawn by Brad Gregory's Salvation at Stake.¹¹⁰ The opposition to martyrdom and persecution was emphatically expressed in Castellio's 1562 treatise entitled Conseil à la France désolée, in which he proposed the principle of peaceful co-existence.¹¹¹ As the year 1562 also saw the outbreak of the French religious wars, this treatise came at an opportune time, although it was condemned by the National Synod of the Huguenots at Lyon in the following year.¹¹²

The notion of torment and suffering leads to another interpretation of *tolerantia*, that of enduring affliction for the sake of Christ. Protestants stressed that the Christian life was inevitably an arduous struggle. Castellio believed that suffering in the face of adversity for Christ, the practice of an exemplary imitation of Christ, would bring believers back to the Gospel and back to the source of Revelation.¹¹³ One need only

¹⁰⁷ Pohl, p. 10:24-27; L1565, A7r

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Delormeau, 'Deux pédagogues', pp. 98-99; Guggisberg, Castellio, pp. 326-327

¹⁰⁹ "Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium: et tu tibi quaeris requiem et gaudium?", Pohl, p. 84:25-27; "Tota vita Christi crux fuit & cruciatu, & tu tibi quaeris & laetitiam?", L1565, E5v

¹¹⁰ Gregory, Salvation at Stake

¹¹¹ Delormeau, 'Deux pédagogues', p. 21

¹¹² Haag, La France Protestante, p. 366

¹¹³ Guggisberg, Castellio, p. 125

glance at the 21st chapter of Book three in Castellio's translation, entitled "De iniuriarum tolerātia, & quémnam verè patientem esse constet", to appreciate the significance of the theme of suffering in the face of adversity.¹¹⁴ The Imitatio's emphasis on tribulation and suffering, centred upon Christ's example and, above all, upon His death on the cross, which was central to Christian teaching.¹¹⁵

Having identified Castellio's legacy of toleration and its relationship to the Imitatio's spirituality, one can turn to the English Protestant translators and determine whether they borrowed Castellio's ideas in addition to his text of the Imitatio. In choosing the Imitatio, was Edward Hake seeking to discover and emphasise the unifying elements of Christianity, thereby avoiding harmful polemic with Roman Catholics? It is clear from Hake's writings that he was not by any means an advocate of toleration. In fact, his antipathy towards Roman Catholicism was unbridled and remained the principal source of his animosity and polemics.

In his Touchestone for this time present, Hake attributed the ripeness of sin to the devilish deceits of the "Romish Dragon": "How rageth, how roareth, how thundreth, how threateth, how whispereth, how braggeth the Babilonical strumpet, that Romish Dragō, that bloodthirsty Ciclops, Minotaure, & horrible mōster?...how rageth beyond the seas her bloody Bishops?"¹¹⁶ Similarly, in the Commemoration of the most prosperous and peaceable Raigne of Elizabeth, Hake lamented the period preceding her accession to the throne, when the faithful were "pursude to death by Romishe beastes...with stomackes stuft with guile".¹¹⁷ Hake pointed out that with her reign, Elizabeth had succeeded in re-establishing the Gospel and preventing the spread of the "Popish" religion.¹¹⁸ In his Oration, Hake referred to Elizabeth as another Moses, sent by God in His great mercy to liberate the Israelites (i.e. Protestant

¹¹⁴ "De tolerantia iniuriarum et quis verus patiens probetur", Pohl, p. 178:1-2; L1565, G7^r. See van der Woude, 'Gestaltung der Toleranz', p. 2

¹¹⁵ For references to the necessity of suffering and tribulation, in addition to Christ's example, see especially: Pohl pp. 61:21; 65:11; 68:25; 84:19; 88:3; 166:20; 176:15; 178:5-17; 179:12; 239:23.

¹¹⁶ Hake, Touchestone, B3^v

¹¹⁷ Hake, Commemoration, B1^v

¹¹⁸ Ibid., A7^v

believers).¹¹⁹ Yet, this deliverance did not ensure that England remained free from the assaults of her devilish opponents, for the threat of Roman Catholicism had not been totally eradicated.¹²⁰

Hake concluded his oration by declaring that to grant Roman Catholics permission to practise their religion would encourage the existence of two contrary religions, potentially leading to a massacre, the likes of which had been seen in France - clearly referring to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres of 1572 (which had been perpetrated two years before the first edition of the Touchestone).¹²¹ Thus, Hake's attraction to the Imitatio had clearly nothing to do with any sympathy towards Catholicism. This is reinforced by his criticism of believers who neglected their faith: their bad example contributed to the success of unbelievers and only encouraged them to pursue their heretical doctrines. As Hake noted in the Touchestone for the time present:

"But it is to be thought & assuredly to be beleueed, that our sinnes, euen our sinnes so great, so greuous & so manifold, (as that the measure of them is intollerable) are the only cause that our aduersaries doo flourish & beare the[m]selues so bold against the furtherers of this work as they do, & that our iniquity is the very cause that so many cold brethren do encrease & remaine at this day".¹²²

Thomas Rogers, like Hake, was not attracted to the Imitatio as part of a plan to establish an (anachronistic) corpus of bi-confessional literature. His writings indicate a powerful opposition to Roman Catholicism, and indeed were characterised by virulent antipathy rather than controlled distaste. Even the anonymous 'Godlie preface' attached to his translation of the Imitatio contained an implicit opposition towards Roman

¹¹⁹ Hake, Oration, B3^v

¹²⁰ Ibid., B4^r

¹²¹ Ibid., C4^r, C4^v

¹²² Hake, Touchestone, B4^r

Catholicism. The preface introduced various examples from both Testaments, explaining which were to be admired and followed, and which were to be spurned and rejected. Abraham's faith, for example, was juxtaposed with the adultery of David. Most striking of all is the allusion to anachronistic practices and especially the reference to the offering of "blodie sacrifices" unto the Lord, which "we maie not so do".¹²³ It is difficult to interpret this as anything other than a reference to the Catholic Mass, the theology of which retained a sacrificial element. Moreover, his discussion in the preface of the Holy Spirit and the imputation of righteousness has an (albeit implicit) anti-Catholic tone. The context for this is the Elizabethan Settlement which, while at first partially accounting for the presence of Catholic sympathies in the early 1560s and 1570s, became increasingly confident in its assertion of an ever purer Protestant religious culture.

Rogers' other works reveal an explicit denunciation of Roman Catholicism. In the preface to his translation of Nicholas Hemmingius' Faith of the Church Militant, Rogers attributed the increase of errors to the Papacy and the Turks.¹²⁴ The opposition to Roman Catholicism also remained at the forefront of the English Creed, wherein Rogers noted how Papists had falsely considered Elizabeth's ecclesiastical authority to be "lothsome and base flatterie, abominable and blasphemous adulation, shameful haeresie, and vntruth, against nature".¹²⁵ Similarly, the question of supremacy was raised, wherein the Pope was lambasted for his "blasphemous titles".¹²⁶ The Church of Rome was considered to be more than corrupt, with Satan identified as its spiritual father.¹²⁷

Rogers's An Historical Dialogue touching Antichrist and Poperie was perhaps the most polemical of his works,¹²⁸ the preface of which designated the "whore of Babylon in the holie booke of Reuelations...to bee the church of Rome".¹²⁹ A significant

¹²³ E1580, A5^v

¹²⁴ Nicholas Hemmingius, The Faith of the Church Militant (London, 1581), A3^f

¹²⁵ Thomas Rogers, The English Creede (London, 1585), *2^v

¹²⁶ Ibid., *2^v

¹²⁷ Ibid., *4^r

¹²⁸ Thomas Rogers, An Historical Dialogue touching Antichrist and Poperie (London, 1589)

¹²⁹ Ibid., A2^v, A3^r

part of the dialogue focused its critique upon the alleged claim that St. Francis was an *alter Christus* (perhaps most prominently through his receiving the stigmata).¹³⁰ In ridiculing the notion that any resemblance existed between Christ and St. Francis, Rogers was not merely taking a polemical stance but also presenting a specific interpretation of *imitatio Christi*.¹³¹ The Franciscan and Roman Catholic sense of conformity to the life of Christ was antithetical to Rogers's stance.

Conclusion

The initial attraction of Protestant translators to the *Imitatio* can be attributed to the influence of the *devotio moderna*. Schwenckfeld studied at a Brethren of Common Life school, while Jud's rector was also an *alumnus* of the Brethren. Castellio had taught at Sturm's school in Strasbourg, the foundations of which owed a great deal to Sturm's experiences at the Liège school (founded and administered by the Brethren). Given the prominence of the *Imitatio* within the educational contexts of the *devotio moderna*, it is probable that Schwenckfeld, Jud and Castellio encountered the text at an early age.

The spirituality of the *Imitatio* was partly disseminated in the sixteenth century by the works of Erasmus. It is, therefore, likely that some of the Protestant translators within this study obtained a taste for the *Imitatio* via the spirituality of Erasmus. Schwenckfeld recommended Erasmus's *Annotations to the New Testament* and quoted him frequently in the 1530s and 1540s.¹³² The quantity of Jud's translations of Erasmus are an indication of their significance for his spirituality. Castellio's relationship to Basle, a vibrant Erasmian centre, cannot be disassociated from his promotion of peace and religious harmony, and illustrate a continuity beginning with the *Imitatio* and reinforced by Erasmus, with both traditions accommodated and welcomed by Castellio. Hake's translation of Erasmus' educational treatise, in addition to one of his dialogues, reflect the Dutch reformer's enduring appeal, even into the

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, B4^v

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, B2^v

¹³² André Séguenny, *The Christology of Caspar Schwenckfeld: spirit and flesh in life transformation* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), p. 48

second half of the sixteenth century in England. The appeal of Erasmus' writings was hardly unrelated to the attraction of the Imitatio Christi.

The Imitatio was attractive also because some of its themes were universal to Christian teaching. Discussion of human frailty as well as eschatological concerns were themes common to devotional literature. Above all, the Scriptural roots of the Imitatio were absolutely central to its appeal. In particular, Protestants appreciated the specific message conveyed by the Imitatio, notably the practical implications of the Gospel. Without the spirit, the Bible simply could not be comprehended. Though the Bible protected believers from erroneous doctrine, that in itself did not suffice for spiritual progression. For all of the translators, the Imitatio was part of a broader attempt to spread the message of the Gospel. Jud and Castellio were especially involved in promoting Biblical texts, with their Latin and vernacular translations. Yet, equally important were devotional and expository treatises which attempted to implement biblical teaching. The purpose of devotional works were to provide pedagogical and spiritual tools with which simple believers could interpret the complicated message of the Bible.

In the English context, the practical consequences of this spiritual programme were related directly to the secular world. Spirituality was linked by Hake and Rogers to an engagement with the world. As the Brethren of Common Life had interpreted their *via mixta* as an existence within secular society but not in keeping with its values, so did Hake and Rogers recommend a type of spirituality stressing the difficulties and tribulations which were to be expected. These details serve to elucidate why a lawyer and politician should be so concerned with writing about the spiritual life. Hake lambasted ministers, pastors and lay church-goers no less than members of secular professions. In this way, secular and spiritual spheres were inseparable.

The believer's spirituality was also governed by the broader conception of the Church. In this respect, the Protestant translators differed considerably. Jud's beliefs were indistinguishable from those of the Zurich Reformation, which was far removed from the traditions of the Elizabethan Settlement. Hake and Rogers both promoted the

notion of a visible Church, as identified by the English Creed, a document summarising the boundaries of the English Reformation. Castellio and Schwenckfeld, on the other hand, had very different conceptions of the Church, marked by their spiritualist perspectives. Schwenckfeld, however, was so emphatic about interiority that his conception of the Church excluded the need for sacraments. Jud's spiritualism certainly did not place him outside the mainstream of Protestantism. Despite the difference of opinion between Schwenckfeld and Jud on this issue, both shared with Castellio an appreciation for the residual mystical tradition. It is thus intriguing that the Imitatio could be interpreted by Protestants as promoting and reinforcing both a sacramental and non-sacramental Church.

What is clearly evident is that the Imitatio was not translated in an attempt to bring Catholics and Protestants (as well as different Protestant confessions) closer together. While Castellio's religious toleration is striking, it only went so far. As the next chapter will show, he still sought to correct erroneous opinions. For Schwenckfeld, the purity of doctrine was essential, for its true reflection was an exemplary life. In his view, Roman Catholics were prevented from attaining the Christian life due to doctrinal impurity, and even Lutherans had disappointed Schwenckfeld. As for Hake and Rogers, their writings certainly did not reflect 'ecumenical' concerns.

Chapter Seven. Protestant Appropriation of the Imitatio Christi

Introduction

The process of translation frequently entails an interpretative dimension by which the target language text will differ, to varying degrees, from the source language text. Such a transition is further accentuated in the case of cross-confessional literature, where the theological standpoint of the translator serves as a filter for textual alterations. This chapter will examine the nature and method of Protestant translation of the Imitatio, and consider whether translations were ultimately dependent on faithfulness to an original text or whether they were tied to the confessional faith of the translator.

Fundamental to the Protestant interpretation of devotional texts was the Bible. Biblical canonicity represented a filter for the purging of false beliefs and provided a corrective lens through which any accretions could be erased. The key was not finding the best expression to render the sense of the original, since Protestants entertained a different conception of the original. To Protestant interpreters, the original was not the literal original manuscript copy of Kempis, but rather any pure and godly extracts existing in the Imitatio which were true to the Protestant Bible. All that was not in conformity with the Protestant interpretation of the Bible had to be removed.

Translation was, to a certain extent, more than a mere literary endeavour, but could even be an exegetical enterprise in itself. Translators of the Imitatio, like those of the Bible, shared a concern for reforming the Church by means of a renewal of biblical theology. In its own way, the interpretative element of translation was tantamount to expounding the Bible. Within the Protestant tradition, the writing of devotional literature was scarcely different from the work of Biblical exposition. Thus, Castellio's biblical translation was not so much concerned with the "factual aspects of the narrative as with the spiritual nourishment of particular passages".¹ The translation of both the

¹ Guggisberg, Sebastian Castellio, (forthcoming), p. 93

Bible and of devotional literature could be regarded as devotional acts, offering a literary and complementary apostolic alternative to the preaching of the Gospel.

With the removal by Protestant translators of Book four on the Mass, the spirituality of the Imitatio remained focused entirely upon interior renewal, without any allusion to the sacrament. Beyond this simple and highly significant omission (made by all Protestant translators), one would imagine that the text could not have remained unchanged. Given the Catholic provenance of the Imitatio, surely there needed to be an element of textual emendation, to make the text more compatible with Protestant theology? Were textual differences merely a matter of emphasis or rather the reflection of deeper theological divisions between Protestants and Catholics in an age of controversy? Before addressing the precise textual changes, it is necessary to examine the Protestant translators and determine whether there are any discernible patterns in their translation methodologies.

Protestant Translators

An examination of Protestant editions is facilitated by the existence of a genealogy of Protestant translations. Central to the Protestant adoption of the Imitatio was the German context, in which the first Protestant translation appeared. Following an intriguing dearth of German editions between 1515 and 1530, Caspar Schwenckfeld's translation was printed in 1531. One can regard this translation as Protestant not solely on the basis that it excluded Book four but also due to other textual emendations.² While the attribution to Schwenckfeld is not beyond doubt, it seems very likely that he was the translator. His edition contained a preface by the printer, Philip Uhart, who was also responsible for the publication of Schwenckfeld's other works on similar themes. Uhart printed Von der Erbaruung des Gewisses and Vom Christlichen Streite unnd Vom Gewissen in 1533, shortly after his first edition of the Imitatio.³

² One need only refer to the French Catholic translations of the Internelle Consolation to prove that the exclusion of book four did not necessarily entail Protestant adaptation - see chapter three. G1531

³ Von der erbaruung || des gewissens / zum anfang und zünemen || des Glaubens / und aines Gotsäligen || Christlichen lebens. || Ain kurtzer unterricht für || die einfältigen. (1533)

Moreover, all the texts directly ascribed to Schwenckfeld, with one exception, for the most part contain the Augsburg orthography of the 1531 edition.⁴ Further, the title pages of later reprints of the Imitatio in the second half of the sixteenth century name Schwenckfeld as the translator.⁵ Frustratingly, the absence of a preface written by Schwenckfeld himself prevents any speculation about his methodological approach.

It is highly probable that Schwenckfeld's promotion of the text convinced Leo Jud to undertake his own translation, which was first printed in 1539.⁶ Jud had corresponded with Schwenckfeld in the 1530s, principally on the subject of civil and ecclesiastical discipline, the same issue which was ultimately responsible for the breakdown of their friendship by the mid-1530s. It is nevertheless tempting to surmise that their joint concern for spiritual reform was echoed in Jud's translation of the Imitatio. It is also very likely that Jud used Schwenckfeld's text as a base for his own translation.⁷ Unfortunately, neither Jud's translation nor the subsequent reprints include any prefatory material, nor do title pages or colophons shed any further light. However, Jud's other translations reveal that he considered it justifiable and indeed necessary to undertake freer interpretations of texts, an approach that was linked to his preaching.⁸ This attitude provided Jud with much greater leeway in simplifying texts and making them more accessible.

The next significant Protestant edition of the Imitatio was undertaken by Sebastian Castellio. It is striking not only because Castellio translated the text from Latin into Latin, but also because he used a German translation as one of his source

Summarium: || Vom Christlich || en Streite / || Unnd / || Vom Gewissen. (1547)
Shultz, Caspar Schwenckfeld, p. 176; Séguenny, Christology of Caspar Schwenckfeld, p. 83; C.S., Vol. IV., p. 264

⁴ C.S., Vol. IV., p. 264

⁵ G[1581]. For the sake of convenience, I have used this edition for my analysis, as it does not appear to differ from earlier editions (with the exception of a title page woodcut).

⁶ G1539b

⁷ Karl-Heinz Wyss, Leo Jud: Seine Entwicklung zum Reformator 1519-1523 (Herbert Lang Bern, 1976), pp. 23, 205; Leo Weisz, Leo Jud: Ulrich Zwinglis Kampfgenosse 1482-1542 (Zurich, 1942), pp. 113-115; Pestalozzi has alluded to the existence of a 1523 edition, which is not supported by any modern bibliographies and its authenticity is consequently doubtful. Carl Pestalozzi, Leo Judä (Elberfeld, 1860), pp. 72, 104. N.B. It needs to be pointed out that Schwenckfeld and Jud were using different languages.

⁸ Otto Herding, 'Die deutsche Gestalt der Institutio Principis Christiani des Erasmus. Leo Jud und Spalatin', in Josef Fleckenstein, and Karl Schmid, (eds.), Adel und Kirche: Gerd Tellenbach zum 65. Geburtstag dargebracht von Freunden und Schülern (Herder, 1968), p. 543

language texts.⁹ In the short, second preface, concerning his translation, in which he characterised Kempis as "a well-learned and God-loving man",¹⁰ Castellio stated that he had made use of a German edition for his translation. He described the translator as "a prudent man", who "had passed over certain things, changed some things a few times, since they smacked of a bygone age or of superstitious times", a procedure which Castellio had also judged necessary.¹¹ At the end of the preface, he pointed out that it was the light of Christ which had uncovered these many errors and superstitions, thus justifying tampering with another person's work.¹²

In the longer, first preface of his translation, addressed to the pure and pious reader, Castellio explained the nature of these textual changes to his readers. He declared that with his translation he intended to purge the text from numerous errors.¹³ One would be forgiven for thinking that this was merely a reference to Castellio's more classical rendering of the text. Yet, later in the preface, the allusion to errors is given a more precise context: "perceiving that this is truly a book full of piety, I thought that it ought to be protected from errors, and marked with Scriptural references (which are the only genuine witness of truth), and illuminated by annotations".¹⁴ It is noteworthy that the protection from errors mentioned in his preface was to be realised with reference to Scriptures. Castellio was emphatic that the Scriptures were not merely a genuine witness to truth, but the only witness. The rest of the preface contained a relatively long (15 pages) discussion of the inward teaching of Christ, showing how Christ is the way of salvation with His liberating faith. Particularly prominent is the focus on Pauline

⁹ I justify using the word 'translate' even though the source and target languages are the same on the grounds that Castellio also makes use of a German translation in the interpretative process.

¹⁰ L1565, "opus ante multos annos à quodā bene docto & Dei amante conscriptum", A1^v

¹¹ L1565, "Omisit enim ille prudens quaedam, paucula etiā nonnihil immutavit, quia illius vel temporis, vel status superstitionem sapiebant: quod idem ego mihi faciendum esse iudicavi", A1^v, A2^r

¹² L1565, "Quòd alteru~ attinet, postquam Christi lux nostro seculo sic affulsit, vt multos errores & superstitiones detexerit, puto non nefas esse nonnullos castrare libros, vt omnia probantes, quae bona su~t, teneamus", A2^v

¹³ L1565, "Libellus hic ex Latino in Latinum, hoc est de agrestiore sermone in puriorem conuersus, à compluribus mendis meritò repurgandus mihi visus est", a2^r

¹⁴ The translation is mine. L1565, "Ego verò hunc libellu~ pietatis plenu~ percipiens, à me~dis vindicādu, Scripture~ locis q~ genuine~ veritatis sunt testimonia) insigniendum, annotiunculis collustrandu~, ac indicib. locupletandu iure putavi", a2^v

language of the flesh and the spirit. The text is saturated with Scriptural references, the majority of which come from the New Testament.

Castellio's Latin edition later became the source language text for Edward Hake's English translation. In the preface to his translation, Hake referred to Castellio's text, which had "renewed, purged and polished the original".¹⁵ Like Castellio, Hake removed the fourth Book on the Mass. In the second edition, printed in 1568, this omission was compensated by the inclusion of Hake's Short and Pretie Treatise touching the Perpetuall Reioyce of the Godlye. The texts of Castellio and Hake were subsequently used by the second English Protestant translator, Thomas Rogers. Rogers' translation of the Imitatio can only be properly analysed with reference to his other works and presents a useful case study for the understanding of Protestant translation methodology.

First, Rogers was not concerned with fidelity to a specific author. Kempis was not fully enlightened and any intention to translate his words faithfully had to be censored by Scriptures. In his translation of St. Augustine's Manuel, Rogers argued that the content and spiritual substance, not the author, of a book mattered:

"notwithstanding, were S. Augustine the Author of the same, or were he not, it skilleth not greatlie. For the matter it conteineth, is verie spiritual, godlie, and necessarie: and wise men either do not respect the Author, or not the Author so much as the matter; not so much who writeth, as what is set downe".¹⁶

Thus, fidelity to a specific author was replaced by the necessity of being faithful to the Bible. In the preface to his translation of the Imitatio, Rogers noted that the purpose of translation was "not so much to translate as to illustrate the same with places of Scripture".¹⁷ In order to emphasise the significance of the Bible, he included

¹⁵ E1567, "At the first written by Thomas Kempyse a Dutchman, and lately renevved, purged and polished by one of the best Latinistes that in our tyme hath writte~", A4^r, A4^v

¹⁶ St. Augustine, Manuel (London, 1581), a3^r

¹⁷ E1580, A8^v

Scriptural references in the margins of the text. "I have not onlie shewed the chapter," wrote Rogers, "but the verie sentence also of everie chapter where what is written maie be found".¹⁸

With Scriptures as a theological reference work, the Protestant translator could then proceed, thereby ensuring that the text was free from erroneous opinions and superstitious practices. Rogers pointed out that Hake, in following Castellio's edition of the *Imitatio* with uncritical fidelity, had included certain unnecessary, superstitious and un-Scriptural elements. Rogers alluded to four sentences in particular, which he quoted in full (including both the Castellio and Hake versions), and demonstrated how he revised them. These lines included two references to the sign of the cross, one to merit and one to the doctrine of purgatory.¹⁹ Rogers himself declared that he "left out nothing but what might be offensive to godlie".²⁰ A similar concern for purifying, purging and correcting texts was manifest in his other translations.²¹ Only by revising texts in accordance with Scriptures could devotional texts be guaranteed to edify and to lead the faithful to contemplation, as Rogers concluded:

"Whatsoever is done either in translating, correcting, quoting, or publishing this booke, is al done for their edification, and to prouoke thee vnto this godlie exercise of praier. For a better meanes thou hast not to keepe thy selfe in the feare of God than it is. Therefore the more zealous, godlie, and learned bookes to this purpose are published, the more thou hast to praise God, and be thankfull".²²

With this understanding of Protestant translation methodology, it is possible to address the specific emendations undertaken by the translators of the *Imitatio*

¹⁸ Rogers claimed apparent originality in this practice, "a thing which, that I heare of, none afore me hath done". *Ibid.*

¹⁹ E1580, A9^r, A9^v

²⁰ *Ibid.*, A10^v

²¹ St. Augustine, *Manuel* (London, 1581), a4^v; St. Augustine, *Heavenlie Meditations* (London, 1581), a6^r; St. Augustine, *Praiers* (London, 1581), a2^v to a4^v

²² St. Augustine, *Manuel* (London, 1581), a5^r

considered in this study. What did Protestant translators do to the Imitatio? To what degree was the text altered? Indeed, was the Imitatio effectively Protestantised?

Textual Changes

The similarities between the Protestant translations enable a joint examination of the various textual changes. Before dwelling on the differing spiritual cosmology offered by the Protestant translations, one has to account for the omission of the fourth Book on the Mass. In the original where Book four was included, the whole spiritual progression of the Imitatio found its ultimate goal in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Inward preparation and renewal were not only inseparable from the reception of the consecrated elements, but were considered to be part of the same process. It is thus not surprising that Book four was removed, especially since the Protestant interpretation of the Bible challenged the Catholic understanding of the Mass on several points. The grounds for opposition included a rejection of the Catholic notion of the Real Presence (as articulated in the doctrine of transubstantiation), of the sacrificial element of the Mass and of the mediating role of the priest as celebrant who consecrated the elements of bread and wine. Admittedly, certain reformers believed in a Real Presence, yet their interpretation was far removed from Catholic Eucharistic theology.²³ With no possibility of compromise on this issue, Protestant translators could not include the fourth Book. One scholar has suggested that Schwenckfeld's omission of Book four also reflected a sensitivity to the profound discord resulting from the Eucharistic controversies amongst Protestants in the late 1520s.²⁴

There were further features in the Imitatio which ran counter to the Protestant tradition. The divergent nature of the Protestant translations is reflected in the following categories: the removal of monastic terminology and phraseology; the exclusion of intercessory prayers to, and veneration of, the saints, including a more emphatic

²³ The scope of the study did not permit an examination of the Eucharistic piety of the different Protestant translators which, in the case of Schwenckfeld, Jud and Castellio, may entail more continuity with the Imitatio's spirituality than one initially thinks possible.

²⁴ Williams, The Radical Reformation, p. 386

Christocentricity; the omission of any references to purgatory; and the attack on the visible remnants and outward observances of Catholic practice.

First, given the Protestant formation of these translators, the removal of monastic terminology and phraseology represented more than a concern for accommodating a lay readership as it had done, for example, in the Internelle Consolation translation.²⁵ It was indicative of the Protestant critique of monastic practice. On the whole, the Protestant translators rejected monastic life as a valid way of practising the Christian life, though Schwenckfeld and Castellio may provide exceptions to this rule. Schwenckfeld continued to maintain close links with monastic communities even after he joined the Reformation cause. In 1523, he wrote a letter to nuns at Naumburg-am-Queiss in which he asked them to write prayers and Psalms in the vernacular.²⁶ As late as 1541, Schwenckfeld was welcomed at the Benedictine abbey of Kempten as a guest of Abbot Wolfgang von Grünstein, where he wrote his Great Confession.²⁷ As for Castellio, his interpretation of tolerance may have extended to an accommodation of the monastic ideal.

Leo Jud, however, abandoned any previous links with monasticism and translated one of Luther's works on the subject, entitled De votis monasticis. The text dealt more specifically with the issue of clerical celibacy, which was one of the major Protestant objections to monastic vows and practice.²⁸ At some points, the text verged on the polemical: "Und darumb die klosterlüt sind eygentlich eerer des abgots Baal / die durch diesbarkeit des gelübds jnen got zü einem eeman wellen verbide der sy durch Evangelische frygheit fryg gemacht hat".²⁹ The Elizabethan Protestants also removed any monastic terminology, for which the dissolution of the monasteries near the beginning of the English Reformation had laid the foundations.

²⁵ See chapter four.

²⁶ McLaughlin, Reluctant Radical, p. 37

²⁷ McLaughlin, Freedom of Spirit, p. 209

²⁸ Jud sent a copy of his translation, Von den Mönchsgelübden, to the Bishop of Constance. The work was dedicated to the Benedictine Hieronymus Munghofer, with the request that he leave his order. Pestalozzi, Leo Jüda, pp. 15-16; Wyss, Leo Jud, p. 66

²⁹ Wyss, Leo Jud, p. 141

Although the levels of antipathy towards monasticism varied, all the Protestant translators under discussion removed any allusions to monastic practice. In Kempis' original, there is a chapter on the monastic life, which was re-interpreted by the majority of the Protestant translators to be on the solitary life.³⁰ In that same chapter, the following phrase was either entirely removed or adapted in the translations to accommodate a non-monastic readership: "Non est parvum in monasteriis vel in congregatione habitare, et inibi sine querela conversari: et usque ad mortem fidelis perseverare".³¹ Schwenckfeld's translation replaced monastery and congregation with the word for community, "gemain", while Jud used the phrase "in den samlungen by ander lüten wonen"; both can be interpreted for a non-monastic context.³² "Gemain" in particular could relate either to the parochial and/or secular community. Hake and Rogers followed Castello's lead in omitting this sentence altogether.³³ In similar fashion, the word monk was of course taken out of all the translations, so that "the life of a good monk" was changed to the life of a devout or true Christian.³⁴ Allusion to monks singing the Divine Office was also removed, so that no remnants of monasticism were left in the translations.³⁵ The removal of monastic terminology was justified by the fact that Protestants questioned the efficacy of a cloistered life, on the basis of Scriptural interpretation.

The second category concerns allusions to intercessory prayers to saints and to the veneration of saints. The *Imitatio*'s spirituality was strongly Christocentric, and

³⁰ Pohl, "de monastica vita", p. 28:25; G[1581], "Vom einsamen leben", D2^v; G1539b, (no chapter title), B4^v; L1565, "de solitaria vita", B7^r; E1567, "Of solitarie Life", C2^r; E1580, "The waie to quietnes both temporal, and eternal", D4^v

³¹ Pohl, pp. 28:29-29:4

³² G[1581], "Es ist nit ain klain ding / in ainer gemain on klag sein und wohnen", D2^v; G1539b, "Es ist nit ein klein ding in den samlungen by ander lüten wonen / daselbs on klag wandlen", B4^v

³³ L1565, B7^r; E1567, C2^v; E1580, D4^v

³⁴ Pohl, "Vere vita boni monachi crux est: sed dux paradisi", p. 254:13-14; G[1581], "Ja warlich / ist das Creütz / aines frum~en Christen leben", Bb3^r; G1539b, "Ja warlich ist eins from~en Christe~ läbe~ ein crütz", M1^v; L1565, "Certè veri Christiani vita crux est: sed hac via itur in paradisum", L9^v; E1567, "Surely the lyfe of the Christian man, is a Crosse: but by this waye, men go into Paradise", S1^r; E1580, "Doubtles the life of a true Christian, is the crosse; but that is the waie into heauen", N12^v

³⁵ Pohl, "Attende Carthusienses, Cistercienses et diversae religionis monachos ac moniales: qualiter omni nocte ad psallendum Domino assurgunt", p. 55:11-15; Schwenckfeld slightly adapted the phrase in the following manner, "Nim~ war / daß die hailigen menschen zü mitternacht (wie Daudid gethon hat) dem Herzen lob unnd danck züsagen auffstehn", G4^r; G1539b, "Nim~ war / das die heiligen menschen zü mitternacht (wie Daudid gethon hat) dem Herren lob uñ danck züsage~ uffstond", C8^v; Castello, Hake and Rogers omitted the phrase entirely - L1565, C11^v, E1567, E5^r, E1580, E10^r

emphasised the unambiguous relationship between Christ and His saints. It is interesting, though not surprising, that, despite the fact that this distinction is clearly made in the *Imitatio*, Protestant interpretation was all the more emphatic in its rejection of the active role of the saints. At the beginning of Book one, Kempis had noted that "Doctrina Christi omnes doctrinas sanctorum praecellit", yet, in his edition, Castellio added the adverb "sanè" meaning "thoroughly", thereby rendering the Christocentricity more pronounced.³⁶

Kempis' distinction between Christ and the saints did not exclude the possibility of offering up intercessory prayers to the saints. Protestant interpreters pounced on this doctrinal inaccuracy and emended it accordingly. In chapter 19 of Book one in the original, it was noted that "circa principalia festa renovanda sunt bona exercitia: et sanctorum suffragia ferventius imploranda".³⁷ Schwenckfeld removed the reference to intercessory prayers, replacing it with an insistence upon helping the poor.³⁸ Jud, on the other hand, omitted reference to feast days and instead placed emphasis on the Sabbath, the day when believers were called to rest from bodily work.³⁹ In Castellio's text, the second part of the sentence was removed altogether.⁴⁰ Hake and Rogers also referred to the "good exercises on holidays", and added that they should be renewed "as though at that time we were departing out of this life and going to the everlasting holidays".⁴¹

Attributing honour to the saints was not, however, excluded altogether from all the Protestant translations. Schwenckfeld, for instance, referred to the "Ehrwürdigen hailigen Gottes", remaining relatively true to the original.⁴² However, Jud, Castellio

³⁶ Pohl, p. 5:15-16; L1565, "Excellit sanè doctrina Christi omnem omnium sanctorum doctrinam", A3^v

³⁷ Pohl, p. 34:23-25

³⁸ G[1581], "Güt übungen seind züerneweren an den hochzeitlichen tagen / dann solle man auch der armen notdurfft statlichen erfüllen", D8^r

³⁹ G1539b, "Güt übungen sind oft zü vernüweren fürnämlich am Sabath / so wir von lyblicher arbeit rüwen", B7^v

⁴⁰ L1565, "Se~pè renouande~ sunt exercitationes bonae, praesertim festis diebus", B10^v

⁴¹ E1567, "Good exercises are to be renewed oftentimes, especially upon the holydayes, as though at that time we were departing out of this life and going to the everlasting holidayes", C6^v; Rogers' translation is very similar, D8^v

⁴² Pohl, "Fac nunc tibi amicos venerando Dei sanctos, et eorum actus imitando", p. 47:27-29; G[1581], "Mache dir nu fürbaß zü freünd die Ehrwürdigen hailigen Gottes / mit nach folgen jren wercken", F5^r

and the English translators omitted this phrase.⁴³ It is also striking that even when the use of the word "suffragium" refers to divine intercession in the original, Castellio replaced it with "opem", meaning help.⁴⁴ This clearly demonstrates the very close attention which Protestants accorded to detail, and the importance in the construction of an appropriate devotional language.

Elsewhere in the original, it is stated that the devil seeks to prevent believers from taking part in devout exercises including the veneration of the saints and the pious remembrance of Christ's Passion.⁴⁵ Protestant editors removed the reference to honouring saints ("verehrung der Heiligen").⁴⁶ There are further references to saints in the original which were also omitted by Protestant translators.⁴⁷ Towards the end of Book two, the original declared that "et si eligendum tibi esset: magis optare deberes pro Christo adversa pati quam multis consolationibus recreari; quia Christo similior esses: et omnibus sanctis magis conformior".⁴⁸ Schwenckfeld and Jud failed to mention the saints, again reinforcing the Christocentric focus of the text. Castellio did, however, retain the reference to saints, which Hake and Rogers translated as "servantes".⁴⁹ Yet in this instance, there is clearly no question of intercessory prayers.

For Protestants, these types of textual changes reflected a different doctrinal framework. Indeed, Jud had played a central role in Zurich by calling for and ultimately

⁴³ L1565, removed the reference to saints, "Nunc tibi amicos para", C6^v/C7^r; G1539b, C5^r; E1567, D7^v; E1580, E5^r

⁴⁴ Pohl, "Sic et tu confugere debes in cordis tui secretarium: divinum intentius implorando suffragium", p. 214:21-23; L1565, "Sic & tu in cordis tui penetrare debes cōfugere, diuinā opem intentius imploranda", I7^r

⁴⁵ Pohl, "Scito quod antiquus inimicus omnino nititur impedire desiderium tuum in bono, et ab omni devoto exercitio evacuare; a sanctorum scilicet cultu a pia passionis meae memoria, a peccatorum utili recordatione a proprii cordis custodia: et a firmo proposito proficiendi in virtute", p. 155:15-22

⁴⁶ G[1581], M7^v; G1539b, f4^r, f4^v; L1565, F4^v; E1567, I3^v; E1580, H4^r. The two German Catholic translations interpret it as the "verehrung der Heiligen": by Georg Witzel, G1539b, P2^r; and by Conrad Braun, G1554, O8^v.

⁴⁷ Pohl, "Melius est sanctos devotis precibus et lacrimis exorare, et eorum gloriosa suffragia humili mente implorare: quam eorum secreta vana inquisitione perscrutari", p. 259:31 - 260:1-4

⁴⁸ Pohl, p. 87:25-29; G[1581], M7^v; G1539b, f4^r, f4^v; L1565, F4^v; E1567, I3^v; E1580, H4^r, "Und wurde dir die wahl geben / so soltestu mehr erwölen unnd begeren / umb Christus willen zuleiden / dann von jhm mit vil trost ergetzet werden / du wärest ye Christo desto gleichförmiger", L3^r; G1539b, E6^v

⁴⁹ L1565, "adeò vt si tibi detur optio, malle debeas pro Christo aduersa pati, q~ multis consolationibus recreari. ita enim & Christo & omnibus eius cultoribus sanctis similior existes", E7^v, E8^r; E1567, "Insomuch that if thou be put to thy choyse, thou oughtest to desire rather to suffer aduersitie for Christ, then to bee refreshed with many comfortes. For so shalt thou bee the lyker, both unto Christ, and to all his holy seruauents", H2^r; E1580, G6^v, G7^r

securing the removal of any visible representation of the saints.⁵⁰ This was also reflected in the English context, where opposition to Roman Catholic notions of sainthood were confirmed by attacks undertaken during the Elizabethan period on the visible remnants of the Catholic cult.⁵¹ The removal of references to the saints represents one dimension of the enhanced Christocentricity of Protestant translations.

The second dimension is particularly evident in Caspar Schwenckfeld's translation. Protestant editors obviously found the text's Christocentricity especially appealing and this was confirmed by their textual additions. It has been noted that few writers of the sixteenth century were more Christocentric than Caspar Schwenckfeld, and this is particularly clear in his numerous additions of the word Christ in Book one. For example, the original stated that one should not desire to know too much, to which Schwenckfeld added "ausser Christo".⁵² Similarly, one can see Schwenckfeld's additions, indicated in italics, in the following sentence: "Nit beger hohe ding *ausser Christo* zü wissen / sonder bekeñe vergihe dein unwissenhait *uñ lerne allein vō Christo weißhait*".⁵³ Schwenckfeld had elsewhere criticised the German Theology on the grounds that more mention of Christ should have been made.⁵⁴

For Catholicism, intercessory prayers to the saints also concerned the after-life, entailing an acceptance of the doctrine of purgatory, the third category to be adapted. It was from the book of Maccabees that the Catholic church had derived one of its most significant Scriptural citations for the doctrine (II Maccabees 12:40-46). Luther had rejected the doctrine of purgatory on the basis that he did not consider the book of Maccabees to form a legitimate part of the canon. This view was, for example, upheld by the English Creed, composed by Thomas Rogers. In the sixth article, entitled "of the sufficiencie of the holy Scriptures for saluation", a distinction was made between the "Canonical bookes" and "the other bookes the Church doth reade for example of life,

⁵⁰ Potter, Zwingli, p. 130; Pamela Biel, 'Personal Conviction and Pastoral Care: Zwingli and the cult of the saints, 1522-1530', Zwingliana, 11 (1985), pp. 442-469

⁵¹ Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, p. 569

⁵² G[1581], "Hör auff uñ beger nit vil zü wissen / ausser Christo", A5^r; Pohl, "Quiesce a nimio sciendi desiderio", p. 7: 15-16.

⁵³ Pohl, "Noli altum sapere: sed ignorantiam tuam magis fatere", p. 8:3-4; G[1581], A6^r
For more additions, see A6^r; A6^v; A7^r; B6^r; B7^v; B8^v

⁵⁴ Shultz, Caspar Schwenckfeld, pp. 272, 376

and instruction of manners: but yet doeth it not applie them to stablish anie doctrine".⁵⁵

The book of Maccabees fell into the second category. While it remained important in the edification of believers, it was not used as a source for the formulation of doctrine.

One should not forget, however, that purgatory was hardly central to the Imitatio and in any case, references to that doctrine tended to focus on the pains of purgatory in order to urge the believer to suffer and sustain all the more afflictions in the present life. The stress of the Imitatio was, therefore, placed upon a concerted struggle in the world, as in the chapter concerning the meditation on death (chapter 23) in Book one: "Melius est nunc tempestive providere, et aliquid boni praemittere: quam super aliorum auxilio sperare. Si non es pro te ipso sollicitus modo: quis erit sollicitus pro te in futuro?"⁵⁶ Although the emphasis was clearly upon the present life, Castellio and the English Protestant translators omitted this passage, thereby preventing the reader from even beginning to consider the after-life. Thus, in the believer's reading of these editions, contemplation of the soul's purification in the after-life was to be avoided altogether.⁵⁷

Further references to purgatory were consistently omitted by Protestant translators. For example, Kempis wrote "si etiam futuras inferni sive purgatorii poenas cordialiter perpenderes; credo quod libenter laborem et dolorem sustineres: et nihil rigoris formidares".⁵⁸ Protestant translators omitted the allusion to purgatory and asked the believer to consider the torments of Hell alone.⁵⁹ The removal of the word 'purgatory' and its replacement with Hell was replicated in the English and German Protestant translations. This process of adaptation was also seen in Book three, where the believer is asked the following question: "Si dixeris te non posse multa pati; quomodo tunc sustinebis ignem purgatorii?"⁶⁰ Protestant translators predictably

⁵⁵ Thomas Rogers, The English Creede, consenting with the true Auciēt Catholique, and Apostolique Church (London, 1585), B4^v, B5^r

⁵⁶ Pohl, p. 46:16-21

⁵⁷ L1565, C6^r; E1567, D7^r; and E1580, E4^v. G[1581] (f3^v) and G1539b (C4^v) retain the passage.

⁵⁸ Pohl, pp. 40:30-31 - 41:1-3

⁵⁹ G[1581], E6^r; G1539b, C2^r; L1565, "Rursum si futuros Orci cruciatus animo perpenderes, libenter opinor laborem doloremq; tolerares, nec seueritatem vllam reformidares", C2^v; E1567, D3^r; E1580, D12^v

⁶⁰ Pohl, p. 166:17-19

replaced the fire of purgatory with the fire of eternal torment.⁶¹ Given that one could not get out of Hell, these changes were extremely significant and provided further impetus for believers to amend their lives.

In Castellio's edition, even where the word "purgatorium" is intended to mean purification rather than being a reference to the doctrine of purgatory itself, the language was also changed. Kempis declared that "habet magnum et salubre purgatorium patiens homo", which Castellio revised by using the verb "expiatur": "et omnino salutariter expiatur patiens homo".⁶² Similarly, in a chapter heading from the third Book, entitled "oratio pro purgatione cordis et caelesti sapientia", the understanding of *purgatio* is one of cleansing, and has nothing to do with purgatory.⁶³ Yet again, in order to avoid confusion, Castellio and the English Protestants translated it as a cleansing of the mind ("ad animi mundiciem").⁶⁴ The German translators also interpreted it in this way.⁶⁵

The fourth category includes the revision of any references to external manifestations of Catholicity, be it to individuals or devotional practices. Whereas in the original, love is reflected in one's subjection and obedience to a prelate, Castellio replaced the word prelate with the more neutral "maioribus", to those that are greater.⁶⁶ In discussing the believer's anxious state of mind, Kempis described how the believer should prostrate himself in prayer in the church before a certain altar.⁶⁷ The Protestant

⁶¹ G[1581], "Sprichstü aber / du mügest nit vil leyden / Wie wilt du dann der hellen feür leyden?", O2^v; Jud, G1^v; L1565, "Quòd si te multa pati posse negabis, aeternum ignis cruciatum ferre qui poteris?", F12^r; E1567, k3^v, k4^r; E1580, H11^v

⁶² Pohl, p. 48: 26-27; Schwenckfeld and Jud retain the word purgatory - "diser mensch hat ain groß hailsams Fegfeür", F6^r; G1539b, "diser me~sch hat ein groß heilsams Fegfhür", C5^v; L1565, C7^v; Hake and Rogers follow Castellio, "And wholly is the pacient man purged after a healthful sort", D8^r; E1580, "And in deede thoroughlie is the patient man purged", E6^r. Note also the use of the passive in Castellio, Hake and Rogers, emphasising the greater passivity of the believer.

⁶³ Pohl, p. 196:15-16

⁶⁴ L1565, "Preces ad animi mu~diciem, caelestemq; sapientiam obtinendam", H7^r; E1567, "Prayers to attaine to cleanness of minde, and the heauenly wisdom", N1^r; E1580, "A praiet to obtaine the puritie of minde, of heauenlie wisdom", K8^r

⁶⁵ G[1581], "Ein Gebett / umb reinigung des hertzens / unnd auch umb himlische weißhait", R6^v; Jud has no chapter titles

⁶⁶ Pohl, "Est amor subiectus et oboediens praelatis", p. 153:30-31; L1565, "Est amor subiectus & oboediens maioribus", F3^v; Pohl, "Verus autem patiens non attendit a quo homine utrum a praelato suo, an ab aliquo aequalis aut inferiori...exerceatur", p. 179:3-7; L1565, "At verè patiens homo nihil pensi habetà quónam homine: maiórene, an aequali, an inferiori...exerceatur", G8^r

⁶⁷ Pohl, "Cum quidam anxius inter metum et spem frequenter fluctuaret; et quadam vice maerore confectus, in ecclesia ante quoddam altare, se in oratione prostravisset: haec intra se revoluit dicens", p. 52:19-23

translators did not change the sense, only the context: the believer was still to pray, but no longer in the setting of a Church in front of an altar.⁶⁸

Castellio slightly altered Kempis' references to outward observances. The Imitatio is well-known for its subordination of outward manifestations of religion to a stronger sense of interiority. As Kempis declared, "si tantum in istis exterioribus observantiis profectum religionis ponimus: cito finem habebit devotio nostra".⁶⁹ Yet again, Castellio took it a step further, by replacing the word "observantiis" (observances) with the more vague "rebus" (things). Castellio was adamant that he should avoid any allusion to the external observances to which Kempis was undoubtedly referring, such as pilgrimages and religious processions.⁷⁰ Castellio's reluctance to include the outward manifestations of religion seemed to follow Kempis's insistence on the prioritising of interiority. At the same time, Castellio was also adhering to his Protestant beliefs by stating that if the outward or physical practices are an impediment to piety, then religion should divest itself altogether of all external devices.⁷¹

The final textual changes discernible in the translations concern the alterations in linguistic emphasis that arguably conformed more easily to a Protestant theological framework. This category reflects more subtle emendations, apparent chiefly and sometimes solely in Castellio's translation, portraying a different emphasis on the relationship between God and the believer as understood by Catholics and Protestants respectively. This category can itself be sub-divided into three themes: first, concerning merit; secondly, concerning compunction and contrition; and finally, concerning humility and the understanding of submission to God.

⁶⁸ G[1581], "Es was auff ain zeyt ain me~sch gar sehr bekümmert / unnd zweyfelt oft zwischen forcht und hoffnu~g. Ains mals was er traurigklich beschwäret // und da betrachtet er dise ding in jm selber / unnd sprach", G1^v; Jud, C7^r; L1565, "Extitit aliquãdo quidam, qui inter metum & spem anxius fluctuans, inter precandum supplex sic dicebat", C10^r; E1567, E3^r; E1580, E8^v

⁶⁹ Pohl, p. 19:23-26

⁷⁰ L1565, "Quòd si in exterioribus duntaxat rebus istis praestandis gressum religionis collocauerimus, breui fine~ habitura est nostra religio", B1^r

⁷¹ Roland Bainton, 'The Bible in the Reformation', in S. Greenslade, (ed.), The Cambridge History of the Bible Vol. III., (Cambridge, 1963), p. 29

The first theme concerns the Protestant attitude towards merit. The Protestant theology of *sola fide* allowed no room for individuals to contribute to their own salvation. The only righteousness belonged to Christ alone, excluding the worth of a Catholic faith and works-righteousness. Within the Protestant tradition all merit was to be accorded to God explicitly. Kempis noted the following: "Certare autem adversus incidentes malos motus animi, suggestionemque spernere diaboli, insigne est virtutis, et magni meriti".⁷² In order to prevent the believer being accorded any merit, Castellio stated that "to despise the sollicitations of the Devil is truly a work of great virtue and worthy of great reward".⁷³ While still ambiguous, the omission of the term "merit" made the text more consistent with a Protestant standpoint. While Hake remained faithful to Castellio, Rogers removed the reference to reward, possibly because he believed that there was little to distinguish between merit and reward. Instead, Rogers noted that "to striue against the wicked motions of the minde, and to despise the inticements of Satan, is doubtles a valiant exploit, highlie pleasing God".⁷⁴ Elsewhere in his translation Castellio did make use of the word "merit", but in that particular instance it refers to Christ's death, rather than any merit belonging intrinsically to the individual.⁷⁵

The different German Protestant translators even sought to remove any implicit allusion to human merit. The original text stated that "et necesse est te ubique tenere patientiam: si internam vis habere pacem, et perpetuam promereri coronam".⁷⁶ Catholic translators had translated the Latin word "promereri" (to be rewarded) with the verb "verdienen", which meant to earn or to deserve.⁷⁷ Schwenckfeld and Jud placed a different slant on this passage by replacing "verdienen" with "erlangen", thereby

⁷² Pohl, p. 155:3-6

⁷³ L1565, "Sed aduersus animi prauos motus certare, Diabolique sollicitationes spernere: hoc verò virtutis opus, magna; mercede dignum est", F4^v

⁷⁴ E1567, I3^r; E1580, H3^v

⁷⁵ L1565, "quinetiam qui tunc iusti seruandique erant. ii ante supplicium tuum, sacraeq; mortis meritum in celeste regnum intrare non poterant", G6^v, G7^r

⁷⁶ Pohl, p. 84:5-8

⁷⁷ G1539a, "das du allenthalben gedult behaltest / so du jinnerlichen fride haben / und die ewige kron verdienen wilt", M6^v; G1554, "daß du allenthalbe~ gedult behaltest / so du innerlichen fride haben / unnd die ewige kron verdienen wilt", M6^r

referring to the attaining or obtaining of the perpetual crown, rather than earning it.⁷⁸ In keeping with Protestant theology, merit was solely attributed to Christ's redemptive work, discounting the possibility of good works contributing to salvation. This Protestant view of the means of salvation was particularly evident in articles 11 and 12 of the English Creed, entitled "of the iustification of man" and "of good workes" respectively.⁷⁹

The second theme concerns the existence of sin and how the believer should deal with it. In the original, Kempis made frequent use of the term "compunctio", which is synonymous with contrition, and essentially expresses sorrow for sin. In chapter 21 of Book one, entitled "de compunctione cordis", one can distinguish a difference of language sensitive to confessional differences. Kempis wrote that "quando homo est perfecte compunctus: tunc gravis et amarus est ei totus mundus".⁸⁰ Kempis' interpretation seemed to place more emphasis upon the role of the believer. Castellio, on the other hand, interpreted this from a perspective that can more easily be attributed to a Protestant standpoint, as follows: "Si quãdo stimulaturo homo animi veris igniculis, sit vt grauis ei & amarus sit totus orbis".⁸¹ The use of the passive does not seem coincidental and points to the work of divine providence. It reflects the view that man is being stirred by God, with the true sparks of the soul being an allusion to the Divine. In the preface to his translation of St. Augustine's Praiers, Thomas Rogers noted that the use of the passive was more suited to Protestant theology than the active voice. In justifying the corrections and revisions of his translations, Rogers declared "that which I haue altered, are the rest specified afore: the onlie difference betwene the Latine copie and mine in those places is, for that I turne the present tence into the preterperfect tence, which agreeth to the truth".⁸² The use of the passive provided one of the interpretative tools which facilitated conformity with Protestant truth.

⁷⁸ G[1581], K7^v; G1539b, E5^r

⁷⁹ Rogers, English Creed, E3^r, F1^r

⁸⁰ Pohl, p. 40:16-18

⁸¹ L1565, C2^r, C2^v; E1567, D2^v; E1580, D12^r

⁸² St. Augustine, A right Christian Treatise, St. Augustines Praiers, translated by Thomas Rogers (London, 1581), a4^v

The emphasis upon the relationship between God and the believer in the context of sin was slightly different in Protestant translations. Again in chapter 21 of the first Book, Castellio's emphasis is placed more firmly in the directing hands of God. In the original, Kempis wrote: "Felix qui abicere potest omne impedimentum distractionis: et ad unionem se recolligere sanctae compunctionis".⁸³ Reinterpreting Kempis' notion of the individual recollecting himself, Castellio wrote that the believer should surrender himself to the stirring of the soul.⁸⁴ The distinction between recollection and surrender is quite subtle, but it makes Castellio's interpretation conform more easily to a Protestant belief system. It is important to stress that Kempis' understanding included the view that the spirit of compunction came from God; it is the varying degrees of cooperation with that spirit or grace which distinguished Castellio and Kempis, and for that matter, Protestants and Catholics.⁸⁵ Moreover, it should not be overlooked that Castellio and other Protestants also believed that one should feel repentance for sins, even if they never used the term compunction.⁸⁶

The third and final theme concerns the greater emphasis upon submission to God in Castellio's translation. There are numerous examples which show the believer to be more explicitly in subjection to God. This is not to say that Kempis' text did not encourage submission to God; on the contrary, the *Imitatio* is characterised by the emphasis which is placed upon the will of God. Yet, what is distinctive about Castellio's interpretation is that it is all the more emphatic. In the original, for example, the believer is told the following: "Pone te ad patientiam magis quam ad consolationes: et ad crucem portandam magis quam ad laetitiam".⁸⁷ Castellio highlighted the notion of

⁸³ Pohl, p. 39:19-22

⁸⁴ L1565, "Felix qui potest abiectis occupationum omnium impede~tis vni sese dedere animi stimulationi", C1^v; E1567, "Happie is the man that is able to cast away the impediments and lets of all worldely things, and yeelde himselfe wholly to the chastning of his soule", D2^r; E1580, "Happie is that man which casting of the lets of al worldlie busines, can giue himselfe wholie to the stirring vp of his minde", D11^v

⁸⁵ Pohl, "Ora igitur humiliter ad Dominum, ut det tibi compunctionis spiritum", p. 41:7-9

⁸⁶ Pohl, "Opto magis sentire compunctionem: quam scire eius definitionem", p. 6:6-8; L1565, "Equidem peccatorum poenitentiam sentire, quam eiusdem definitione~ tenere malim", A3^v

⁸⁷ Pohl, p. 77:18-21

submission more explicitly, by asking the believer to surrender himself rather than dispose himself.⁸⁸

The change in Castellio's interpretation is most forceful where it relates to the interpretation of the word "humilitas". Castellio presented a very precise definition of humility. Within Kempis's text, the interpretation of humility accommodated the possibility of being humble as a virtue in itself. The virtue is derived from God through grace, but there remains an element of co-operation. For Castellio, however, that humility could only be attributed to God. He consequently adopted a slightly different devotional language, to convey this subtle change. For example, Kempis emphasised how "Humilem Deus protegit et liberat".⁸⁹ Castellio replaced the word "humilem" with "demissum hominem", again placing the virtue of humility more firmly in the hands of God. The word "demissum" can also be interpreted as being humble, but the meaning which Castellio appeared to be extracting was of a man "brought down" or "lowered".⁹⁰ With this interpretation, there can be no doubt who is doing the lowering. This interpretation is reinforced throughout the text. The subtle difference in interpretation was not consistently recognised by Hake, although Rogers acknowledged it. In the previous example, Hake's translation was not different to the original - "God doth defend and deliuer the humble person".⁹¹ Rogers's translation, on the other hand, confirms the subtle change, by replacing "humble" with "humbled" - "the humbled man doth GOD protect, and saue".⁹²

In Book three of Kempis' text, the Lord speaks thus: "Lacrimae tuae et desiderium animae tuae: humiliatio tua et contritio cordis inclinaverunt me et adduxerunt ad te".⁹³ In keeping with this interpretation, Castellio wrote that it is the believer's

⁸⁸ L1565, "Dede te potius patientiae, quàm consolationi, & cruci portandae quàm laetitiae", E1^r; E1567, "Yeelde thy selfe rather unto paciencie, then to comfort, & to beare the Crosse, then to ioy and gladnesse", G2^v; E1580, "Giue thy selfe to patience rather than to pleasure; and to beare the crosse, than to delectation", F12^v. See also Pohl, "Vt desiderium tuum ponas totaliter secundum beneplacitum meum", p. 164:29-165:2; L1565, "Vt cupiditatem tuam arbitrio meo planè subiicias", F11^r

⁸⁹ Pohl, p. 63:19-20

⁹⁰ L1565, "Demissum hominem Deus protegit & liberat", D3^v

⁹¹ E1567, F1^r

⁹² E1580, F2^v

⁹³ Pohl, pp. 184:30-31 - 185:1-2

dejection and anguish to which God is attracted.⁹⁴ The distinction remains a delicate one, but nevertheless seems to capture a different slant. This is all the more emphatic where Castellio later replaced "in true contrition" with "in true affliction" and "humility of heart" with "a pressing down of the soul".⁹⁵

There are certain examples in Castellio's translation where the word "humilitas" or "humiliter" is retained. Yet, the contexts of these sentences reveal that humility is to be interpreted as baseness and lowliness, rather than the interpretation of being humble as a virtue intrinsic to the individual. For example, the believer declares in Book three of Kempis' text: "O quam humiliter et abiecte mihi de me ipso sentiendum est".⁹⁶ Castellio leaves the stem of the Latin word "humiliter", although he provides the superlative for it. It reads thus, "Enimuero mihi de me ipso humillimè & abiectissime sentiendum est".⁹⁷ The English Protestant translators do not hesitate to translate "humillime" as humbly, since it is placed alongside their translation of "abiecte".⁹⁸ It is difficult to separate this divergent interpretation of the understanding of humility from the realm of theology. Luther had declared that humility was nothing more than the humble recognition that good works were excrement.⁹⁹ As Dennis Martin pointed out, "humilitas" as Luther understood it was "not some kind of virtue...[but] far more the admission of human helplessness and need".¹⁰⁰ While Castellio may not have taken it

⁹⁴ L1565, "tuae me lachrymae, animique cupido, & deiectio atq; angor, ad te me commoue~do deuocarunt", G11^v

⁹⁵ Pohl, "In vera contritione et cordis humiliatione nascitur spes veniae; reconciliatur perturbata conscientia", p. 243:8-10; L1565, "Nam in vera sui afflictatione, animiq; depressione, nascitur spes veniae reconciliatur Deo perturbata conscientia". N.B. The insertion of "Deo" by Castellio also changes the emphasis, L2^r; E1567, "For in the true punishing of a mans selfe, and pressing downe of the soule, hope of pardon commeth forth, the troubled conscience is reconcyled to God", R1^v; E1580, "For of true repentance, and humbling of the minde, ariseth hope of pardon; the trobled conscience is reconciled vnto God; the fauor of God which was lost is recouered", N5^r

⁹⁶ Pohl, p. 170:27-28

⁹⁷ L1565, G2^v. This is replicated elsewhere in book three, where Castellio leaves "humilitatem" untouched, because it is placed alongside the word "fragilitatem" (frailty), thereby associating humility with frailty rather than representing humility as a virtue. For example, Pohl, "Vide ergo Domine humilitatem meam et fragilitatem tibi undique notam", p. 180:15-17; L1565, "Quamobre~ aspice, Domine, humilitatem fragilitatemq~; meam tibi cognitissimam", G8^v

⁹⁸ E1567, "Surely, I muste thinke of my selfe most humbly and basely", K6^v; E1580, "Doubtles it is my part to conceaue most humblie, & baselie of my selfe", I2^v

⁹⁹ Martin, *Nicholas Kempf*, p. 17

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 136

as far, his revision of the original reflects a greater sensitivity to the Protestant theological standpoint.

Conclusion

In this way, one can see the extent of Protestant adaptation of the text. With the removal of monastic phraseology, the text was opened up to the Protestant laity who understood that an exemplary Christian life could be lived without experiencing a cloistered existence. The notion of withdrawal from the world was not interpreted literally to mean flight from the world, but rather a departure from its values. Moreover, for the Protestant reader, the Christian life was presented with an alternative spiritual cosmology. Any references to purgatory were omitted altogether; believers would go either to Hell or Heaven. The saints could no longer be relied upon as intercessors; Christ was to be the sole intercessor. It was to Christ alone, furthermore, that all merit had to be attributed. Any good works belonged to Christ alone and were merely an extension and product of the grace of God flowing through the individual believer. This spiritual cosmology was clearly reflected in the outward manifestations of religious practice. Despite the *Imitatio*'s emphasis upon interiority, the original had not excluded externals from the devotional lives of its readers. Yet Protestant interpreters omitted any allusions to Catholic devotional practice. The result, enhanced by subtle changes in terminology, conveyed a different emphasis regarding the relationship between God and the believer. These emendations appear to reflect a Protestant perspective, in which a different spiritual world-view was accommodated and reinforced.

Having illustrated how the text was Protestantised in the translation process, the end product, curiously enough, was not explicitly Protestant. Although Book four was omitted by all the Protestant translators, one must not forget that the same had occurred in a pre-Reformation context. The absence of the fourth Book did not make an edition of the *Imitatio* necessarily Protestant, and the same could be argued for the removal of monastic terminology. Furthermore, though the Protestantisation of the text led to the

exclusion of any references to the doctrine of purgatory, intercessory prayers and veneration of the saints, the process of translation did not render the text Protestant *per se*. When studied in isolation, Protestant translations of the Imitatio do not appear to be explicitly Protestant. The confusion is reinforced by the fact that the names of Jud and Schwenckfeld are not evident anywhere on their early editions.¹⁰¹ Moreover, that some of Schwenckfeld's editions have provenances from Jesuit colleges might suggest that Jesuits were none the wiser.¹⁰² There does not appear to be any reason why Jesuits could not derive immense spiritual profit from Schwenckfeld's translation regardless of the Protestant intent in the translation process. Perhaps that can be explained by the fact that the Protestantisation of the Imitatio was effectively a de-Catholicisation. By removing references to Catholic doctrine and practice, Protestants were making the text accessible to Protestant readers. Yet, in that same process, there were few explicitly Protestant additions, so the text remained relevant to the Catholic faithful.

Yet, underlying the inter and intra-confessional conflict that permeated early modern religious culture, one should not forget the extent of continuity between Catholic and Protestant spirituality as shown in the Imitatio and between the late Medieval and Early Modern period. Central to the continuity of spirituality was the Christocentric focus of the text. Through the redemptive work of Christ, believers were both redeemed and given an example to follow. In this way, the Imitatio sowed the seeds of faith in the incarnation, redemption and resurrection on the one hand and also provided a framework for action and a handbook for the Christian faithful on the other. Protestants clearly also appreciated the emphasis upon disciplined spirituality, an enthusiasm which they shared with the *devotio moderna*. If one agrees that readers of the Imitatio Christi were firmly entrenched within their theological persuasion, it then remained for them to live their Christian lives in practice. The theology which Protestants preached was meaningless without the reformation of life.

¹⁰¹ Jud had avoided putting his name to translations on several occasions. He justified this, in response to Erasmus's criticism, by explaining that this practice was done out of humility. See Leo Jud, Vf entdeckung Doctor Erasmi vō Rotterdam / der dückischen arglisten / eynes tütschen büchlin / antwurt vñ entschuldigung Leonis Jud (Zurich, Christoph Froschauer, 1526), a3^r

¹⁰² G[1581]

The restoration of morals and virtues exemplified in this text appealed to all confessional sides who recognised that theological purity was insufficient truly to grasp the essence of the Christian message. While Catholics were called away from over-emphasis upon good works, Protestants were detracted from over-emphasis upon faith alone. The essence of the Imitatio's spirituality was a living faith, and one of good works attributed to God alone. Central to that living faith was contemplation. Prayer provided the nourishment and direction for the active lives of the Protestant faithful. Prayer, above all, was the means by which believers could cement their relationship with the divine. Therein lies the crux of Catholic and Protestant devotional literature, providing the spiritual flesh to the dry theological and polemical bones of early modern religious culture.

Chapter Eight. "The partridge of spiritual books": Jesuit appropriation of the Imitatio Christi, c. 1540-c. 1620

Introduction

Chapter five illustrated that the Jesuits were instrumental in the diffusion of the Imitatio during the period c. 1540 to c. 1620. The remarkable number of Jesuit-translated and Jesuit-printed editions of the Imitatio merits closer attention. Considering that Jesuit translations of the Imitatio differed little from the original, it is necessary to contextualise the Imitatio's spirituality alongside that of the Society of Jesus. The influence of the Imitatio upon Jesuit spirituality originated principally in the life and inspiration of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius recommended the Imitatio frequently, most notably in his Spiritual Exercises. Yet how widely known among the Jesuits was Ignatius's appreciation for the Imitatio? The number of recommendations begs the question, why did Ignatius find the Imitatio so appealing? The answer lies, first of all, in the specific context of his conversion experience and early life, and especially in the timing with which he was introduced to the Imitatio. Fundamental to understanding his familiarity with the text is the spirituality of the Spiritual Exercises. Yet how were these two texts to work alongside each other? In addition to the obvious continuity of spirituality, one should address the alleged discrepancies between the Imitatio and Jesuit spirituality, especially as regards the Imitatio's emphasis on detachment from rather than engagement with the world. With this in mind, Ignatius's relationship with monasticism is particularly illuminating.

Ignatius of Loyola and the Imitatio Christi

Ignatius's captivation by the Imitatio Christi is well-documented. The principal source of evidence is derived from the biographical notes composed by Gonçalves de Câmara (c. 1519-1575). Portuguese by birth, Câmara served as a sub-superior under

Ignatius at the Jesuit house in Rome. Nearing the end of Ignatius's life, Câmara was entrusted with the responsibility of writing down any biographical details pertaining to the founder. It was to Câmara that Ignatius dictated his Autobiography.¹ Although not mentioned in the Autobiography, the Imitatio does appear in a separate document also dating from the 1550s. Câmara recounted therein that

"it was at Manresa, he first saw the little Gerson [the Imitatio] and never afterwards wished to read another book of devotion. He recommended it to all those with whom he dealt and read a chapter from it every day. After eating, and at other moments, he opened it at random and always came upon what he had in his heart at that moment, and also upon what he needed".²

Such was his dedication to the book that when he was General of the Society, Ignatius had only two books permanently on his desk, the New Testament and the Imitatio Christi.³

Ignatius' fondness for the Imitatio was not lost upon his Jesuit contemporaries. One such Jesuit, Olivier Mannaerts,⁴ recounted how Ignatius had the habit of calling the Imitatio the partridge of spiritual books.⁵ Juan Polanco (1516-1576), Ignatius' personal secretary in Rome, knew Ignatius very closely and wrote a chronicle of his life. He once commented upon the extent to which Ignatius was pleased by that golden book.⁶

¹ Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, in *idem.*, Personal Writings: Reminiscences, Spiritual Diary, Select Letters including the text of the Spiritual Exercises, translated with introductions and notes by Joseph Munitiz and Philip Endean (Penguin, 1996), pp. 1ff

² FN, I., p. 584. The translation is taken from Joseph de Guibert, The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice (St. Louis, 1986), p. 155. That the Imitatio was called the "Gersonzito" illustrates that the early Jesuits considered Gerson to be the author.

³ "Nam in cubiculo suo secretiori ordinarie super mensam alios libros non habebat quam Novum Testamentum et Thomam de Kempis, quem solebat appellare perdicem librorum spiritualium", FN, Vol. III., p. 431

⁴ Mannaerts, or Manare as he was also known, accompanied Possevin and Auger in the apostolic work in France (1565-1575). Fouquieray, Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus, p. 533

⁵ As above, "perdicem librorum spiritualium". FN, Vol. III., p. 431. The partridge was, according to Brodrick, the most appreciated of all the game birds of Spain. James Brodrick, Saint Ignatius Loyola: the pilgrim years (London, Burns & Oates, 1957), p. 104

⁶ "Placebat autem ei mirum in modum libellus ille aureus, qui Ioannes Gerson, De imitatione Christi dicitur, et ab aliis eum legi pergratum habebat". FN, II., p. 543

Jerome Nadal (1507-1580) also affirmed Ignatius' attachment to the Imitatio in words that echo Câmara's account. They record Ignatius' advice to Nadal as he entered the Society in 1545.⁷ In this way, all the major early Jesuit companions were not only aware of Ignatius' recommendation of the Imitatio, but also realised the importance of implementing the book's message in their daily lives.

Ignatius' endorsement of the Imitatio easily endured beyond his death in 1556. Later in the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century, Ignatius's identification with the Imitatio was acknowledged in some prefaces to Jesuit editions of the Imitatio. Certain prefaces specifically referred to the Imitatio as forming an integral part of his conversion experience, thereby cementing his association with the text in later years. As the preface to a German edition of 1604 says:

"Also hat Ignatius Loiola, ein anfänger u~ Vatter der Societet IESV, diß Büchlein geliebt / von anfang seiner bekehrung auff's fleissigt gelesen / sein Lebe~ mit alle~ ernst darnach gerichtet / für andern geistlichen Büchern sonderlich gerühmet / u~ den seinigen befohlen".⁸

Ignatius' attachment to the Imitatio was also promoted via Pedro de Ribadeneyra's biography, which was the official Jesuit biography of Ignatius. In 1567, the three biographical accounts pre-dating Ignatius' death (including the Autobiography) were withdrawn from general circulation in order to make way for Ribadeneyra's account, commissioned by the third General Francis Borgia.⁹ In the first Latin edition of this biography, printed in 1572, Ribadeneyra referred to Ignatius's enthusiasm for the Imitatio (in the 13th chapter of Book one), using Câmara as his source:

⁷ MN, Vol. I, p. 19; see also William Bangert, edited and completed by Thomas M. McCoog Jerome Nadal, S. J., 1507-1580 (Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1992), p. 29

⁸ G1604,):6v; see also Georg Mayr's dedicatory preface to Claudia Aquaviva, L1615b, A2r; and I[1635].

⁹ Terence O'Reilly, 'Ignatius of Loyola and the Counter-Reformation: The Hagiographic Tradition', in idem., From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross: Spirituality and literature in sixteenth-century Spain (Variorum, 1995), pp. 439-440

"Thomae de Kempis De imitatione Christi libello plurimum tum utebatur, illiusque lectionem valde semper probavit. Atque illa illius libri spiritum et doctrinam hausit, tam avidè arripuit, tam perfecte in se expressit, ut (multorum iudicio) Ignatii vita solida quaedam, eminens, ac viva esset imago eorum praeceptorum omnium, quae aureo illo libello continentur".¹⁰

Numerous prefaces to the Imitatio in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries cited Ribadeneyra's biography as the source for Ignatius's advocacy of the Imitatio:

"wie Ribadeneyra schreibt im I. Buch des Lebens Ignatii im 15. Cap."¹¹

Ignatius' recommendation of the Imitatio becomes all the more significant when one takes into account the special grace with which Ignatius was associated. Every Jesuit came to be deeply attached to the life and spirituality of Ignatius and there was a movement towards following his example.¹² The worth of Ignatius' recommendation of the Imitatio was vital if one considers the high esteem in which he was held; this was further enhanced as biographical accounts became increasingly hagiographical. Michael Walpole's English translation of Ribadeneyra's text, printed in 1616, expanded the original by including a list of miracles and prophecies which had occurred in the intervening period. A third of Walpole's text was dedicated to the life of Ignatius while the remainder was divided into a list of his virtues, visions, prophecies and, finally, his miracles.

While the primary purpose of these accounts was that of spiritual edification, the marked emphasis on miracles reflected at least an implicit process towards canonization. This was rendered explicit towards the end of the biography, where a list of eminent

¹⁰ FN, Vol. IV., p. 174.

¹¹ G[16??], A3^r. The reference to the 15th chapter does not, however, correspond to the Latin original.

¹² In an instruction on giving the Spiritual Exercises (attributed to Everard Mercurian), the Exercises were recommended because "they are by our order's original founder, whose life and precepts we ought to follow and imitate...Christ himself gave these Exercises to our Father Ignatius, more or less in the very order and manner in which they are written. And the reason for their power and effectiveness is that they are from Christ". Palmer, On Giving, p. 101

religious and secular figures were cited for "making intercession for his canonization".¹³ The strong movement for Ignatius' canonization was also depicted in the art of the period, perhaps most strikingly in Peter Paul Rubens' Miracles of St. Ignatius, painted in 1617.¹⁴ The objective of this campaign was very quickly realised, for Ignatius of Loyola was canonized by Gregory XV in 1622.¹⁵ The pervading influence of Ignatius reinforced his authority and how he was perceived by the Jesuits. Hence, Ignatius' pious reputation further encouraged Jesuits to follow his life. Consequently, Jesuits responded to Ignatius' recommendation of the Imitatio by circulating and reading the text.

Having illustrated the recommendations of the Imitatio, one can address the motives for Ignatius' attraction to the Imitatio. In particular, how significant was the timing of Ignatius' introduction to the Imitatio in the context of his conversion experience? Ignatius was born in 1491 at the castle of Loyola in Basque territory. He trained as a courtier and entered military service in 1517. The broken leg he suffered at the siege of Pamplona in 1521 sparked the beginnings of his conversion experience.¹⁶ As he recovered from his battle-wounds, according to his Autobiography, Ignatius was unable to obtain any "of those books which he normally read", namely "tales of chivalry".¹⁷ Instead, he was given Ludolph of Saxony's (d. 1378) Life of Christ and Jacopo da Voragine's (1228-1298) Lives of the Saints. Both these works shared certain key themes with the Imitatio. The Life of Christ was a meditational manual with teachings from the Church Fathers and medieval theologians on the Gospel accounts of Christ's life.¹⁸ It resembled the Imitatio in that Ludolph portrayed Christ's life as a

¹³ Ribadeneyra, Life of Ignatius (1616), Aa2v

¹⁴ This enormous painting can be seen in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. It hangs opposite Rubens's equally impressive portrayal of St. Francis Xavier.

¹⁵ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 1

¹⁶ Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, p. 13

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 14

¹⁸ Robert Schmitt, 'The Christ-Experience and relationship fostered in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola', SSJ, 6/5 (October 1974), p. 230; Paul Shore, 'The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony and its influence on the Spiritual Exercises', SSJ, 30/1 (January 1998), pp. 1-32; and Guibert, The Jesuits, p. 153

model to be followed. As in the Imitatio, human service was perceived in terms of bearing the cross and leading a life of spiritual warfare.¹⁹

Voragine's treatise contained the lives of approximately 150 saints and 33 narrations concerning the life and death of Jesus and Mary. Paralleling the Imitatio, saints were seen as God's knights and sanctity was defined in terms of a service, as a response to God's love expressed primarily in carrying one's own cross. The model of life as spiritual warfare on earth is found throughout the Lives of the Saints, and it is also a prominent theme in the Imitatio.²⁰ In Book three of the Imitatio, the Lord tells the disciple that "numquam securus es in hac vita: sed quoad vixeris semper arma spiritualia tibi sunt necessaria. Inter hostes versaris: et a dextris et a sinistris impugnaris. Si ergo non uteris undique scuto patientiae: non eris diu sine vulnere".²¹ Ignatius additionally took his spiritual inspiration from chivalric tales, thereby demonstrating a certain continuity with the period of his life preceding his conversion experience; it represented a shift of Ignatius's "chivalrous ideal towards the imitation of the imitators of Christ".²² Inspired by Amadis de Gaul, probably the best known tale of chivalry in this period, Ignatius's keeping vigil in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary at Montserrat echoed the piety of Amadis' son Esplandián.²³

Montserrat was also the location of a Benedictine monastery, where Ignatius made a spiritual retreat and a general confession.²⁴ It is highly probable that this is where he was introduced to methodical prayer. The abbot of Montserrat, Garcia de Cisneros, had written a work entitled Exercises for the spiritual life (Ejercitatorio de la vida spiritual) through which, Mark Rotsaert claimed, the *devotio moderna* definitively

¹⁹ "Esto itaque expeditus ad pugnam: si vis habere victoriam", Pohl, p. 179:14-15; "Nec sine pugna pervenitur ad victoriam", Pohl, p. 179:19-21

²⁰ "Si niteremur sicut viri fortes stare in proelio: profecto auxilium Domini super nos videremus de caelo", Pohl, p. 19:17-20; "Nunc tempus est pugnandi", Pohl, p. 43:11-15

²¹ Pohl, p. 209:4-9

²² Javier Melloni, The Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition (Gracewing, 2000), p. 2

²³ Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, pp. 20, 362 (fn. 18). The lord-vassal relationship conveyed in Amadis de Gaul became a model not only for a knight's love of his lady, but also for a believer's relationship to God. Schmitt, 'The Christ-Experience', p. 228

²⁴ Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, p. 20

entered Spain.²⁵ The existence of several incunabula editions of the Imitatio before the first printed edition of Garcia's work in 1500 does suggest an earlier penetration of the *devotio moderna* into Spain.²⁶ Nonetheless, it is very likely that Ignatius became familiar with the spirituality of the *devotio moderna* through Garcia's work, before reading the Imitatio.

A year after the siege of Pamplona, Ignatius moved from Montserrat to Manresa, where he first came across the Imitatio. The timing of Ignatius' introduction to the Imitatio is of considerable importance. The contents of the Imitatio provided a response to the spiritual crisis, which Ignatius had experienced immediately following his conversion. In his Autobiography, it is written that "up to this time he had always persisted almost in one identical interior state, with largely unvarying happiness, without having any acquaintance with spiritual things within the self".²⁷ Indeed, the very next section of that work concerned his ensnarement by scruples and revealed a certain lack of spiritual depth.

"At this time he still used to talk sometimes with spiritual people, who thought he was genuine and wanted to talk to him, because, although he had no knowledge of spiritual things, still in his speaking he showed much fervour and a great will to go forward in the service of God".²⁸

According to early Jesuit sources, in the aftermath of his conversion experience, Ignatius' piety was characterised by its outward manifestations, conspicuous in three

²⁵ Mark Rotsaert, Ignace de Loyola et les nouveaux spirituels en Castille au début du XVIe siècle (Rome 1982), pp. 45-51; Mark Rotsaert, 'L'originalité des Exercices spirituels d'Ignace de Loyola sur l'arrière-fond des nouveaux spirituels en Castille au début du seizième siècle', in Juan Plazaola, (ed.), Ignacio de Loyola y su Tiempo: Congreso internacional de Historia (9-13 Setiembre 1991) (Bilbao, 1991), pp. 331-333; Adrien Demoustier, 'L'originalité des Exercices Spirituels', in Luce Giard and Louis de Vaucelles, (eds.), Les jésuites à l'âge baroque 1540-1640 (Grenoble, 1996), pp. 27ff; Terence O'Reilly, 'The Structural unity of the Exercitatorio de la Vida Spiritual', in O'Reilly, From Ignatius Loyola, pp. 287-288; Terence O'Reilly, 'The Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola and the Exercitatorio de la Vida Spiritual', in *idem.*, From Ignatius Loyola, pp. 301-305

²⁶ S1482, S1491, S1493, S1495, S1496, S1499.

²⁷ Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, p. 21

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 22

ways:²⁹ firstly, by an excessive attachment to vocal and liturgical prayer to the neglect of mental prayer; secondly, his devotion to the Passion and suffering of Christ, which was focused on His humanity to the exclusion of His divinity;³⁰ thirdly, he thought that by his practice of ascetical penances and by his good works he might merit pardon.³¹ By focusing on interior renewal, Ignatius discovered the means by which he could overcome this crisis, thereby addressing the incomplete nature of his conversion.

The Imitatio was vital in the resolution of this crisis, for its spirituality forced believers to subordinate external to inward forms of piety. Firstly, vocal and liturgical prayer were not to be excluded altogether, but were to remain secondary to mental prayer. The priority in the Imitatio undoubtedly lay with the latter. Secondly, devotion to the Passion of Christ was to serve as a stepping stone for higher contemplation. As it is written in Book two, "si nescis speculari alta et caelestia; requiesce in passione Christi: et in sacris vulneribus eius libenter habita".³² Finally, the Imitatio's allusions to merit were especially conducive to the solving of Ignatius' spiritual crisis. Believers were not to dwell on their own merits; instead they were to attribute all merit to Christ and nothing to themselves. This message is conveyed throughout the Imitatio. For example, referring to the saints, the Lord says to the disciple that "non gloriantur de propriis meritis; quippe qui sibi nihil bonitatis ascribunt sed totum mihi: quoniam ipsi cuncta ex infinita caritate mea donavi".³³ That particular outlook served to incite believers to be all the more fervent in their spiritual quest.

It was, therefore, a question of prioritisation and emphasis - the more pure the inward reform, the greater the outward actions and the more modest and altruistic the

²⁹ Terence O'Reilly, 'The Spiritual Exercises and the crisis of medieval piety', in *idem.*, From Ignatius Loyola, p. 104

³⁰ "It was while he was entering a church where he used to hear the main Mass each day, as well as Vespers and Compline, all sung, feeling great consolation at this. And he would normally read the Passion during mass, always going along in a state of serenity". Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography p. 22

³¹ O'Reilly, 'The Spiritual Exercises', p. 105. Note Ignatius' attitude towards penance: "He was resolved...to do great penances, with an eye at this point not so much to making satisfaction for his sins as to pleasing and being agreeable to God...And in these thoughts he had all his consolation, not considering anything within himself, nor knowing what humility was, or charity, or patience, or discernment in regulating and balancing these virtues". Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, pp. 18-19

³² Pohl, p. 61:4-7

³³ Ibid., p. 260:6-10

intention, the greater the reward. While one could question the factual authenticity of Ignatius' biographical details,³⁴ the essence of early Jesuit records (especially the Autobiography) lies in their edificatory purpose. Ignatius, albeit reluctantly, dictated to Câmara and to the early Jesuits his vision of the spiritual life, at the centre of which was the understanding that a conversion of faith and beliefs could only be authenticated and confirmed if it was followed by a conversion of life and morals. In many respects, the Imitatio provided the necessary litmus test reminding believers to progress via self-denial and humility.

The Spiritual Exercises and the Imitatio Christi

In the Memoriale, Câmara had observed how Ignatius' life was only a putting into practice of those principles laid out both in the Spiritual Exercises and in the Imitatio.

"One thing I will remember is how often I have noticed that in his entire manner of proceeding Father observes with exactitude the rules of the Exercises. He seems to have rooted them first in his own soul and to have drawn the rules from his own interior acts. The same can be said of Gerson [i.e., the Imitatio] - living with Father seems to be nothing else than reading Gerson translated into action." ³⁵

The most influential source for Ignatian spirituality was the Spiritual Exercises. The reputation of the Exercises was, of course, inseparable from the founder of the Society.³⁶ The Exercises contained Ignatius' interpretation of his own conversion and

³⁴ See Terence O'Reilly, 'Saint Ignatius Loyola and Spanish Erasmianism', and *idem.*, 'Erasmus, Ignatius Loyola and Orthodoxy', in *idem.*, From Ignatius Loyola, pp. 301-320, 115-126

³⁵ FN, Vol. I., p. 659. The translation from the Spanish is undertaken by Martin Palmer, (ed.), On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599 (St. Louis, 1996), p. 29

³⁶ The Exercises was "in a sense the systematised, de-mysticised quintessence of the process of Ignatius' own conversion and purposeful change of life, and they were intended to work a similar change

was begun in Manresa at the same time that he first came across the Imitatio. With Jesuit prefaces of the Imitatio referring specifically to Ignatius, it is difficult to separate the Imitatio from the process of Ignatius' conversion and, as a consequence, the conversion of other Jesuits. The Imitatio was intended to play as central a role for the Jesuits (and also non-Jesuits taking the Exercises) as it had done for Ignatius. Since the retreat of the Exercises was not restricted to Jesuits alone, the recommendation of the Imitatio was made available not only to monks but also to the laity. Moreover, given that retreatants used the Exercises to determine which career path to pursue, one can assume that the Imitatio played a role in the decision-making process. It encouraged retreatants to submit themselves to the will of God through self-denial and prayer.

Fundamental to the connection between the Imitatio and the Exercises was the movement of spiritual progression encouraged by both texts. There is much continuity between the two texts, as can be illustrated in regard to two themes. The first theme concerns human nature and how the individual can progress in the spiritual life. The second relates to the different movements provoked by consolation, desolation and temptation. In the Imitatio, the believer is depicted as a pitiable wretch ("miser") who can only be freed by turning to God.³⁷ Believers are represented as having frail bodies, never free from sin, to the extent that believers confess their sins one day and commit the same the very next day.³⁸ The believer is asked in the Imitatio, "quid aliud ignis ille devorabit; nisi peccata tua?"³⁹ Such is the Imitatio's pessimistic tone that Hell is described as a place wherein "ibi luxuriosi et voluptatum amatores ardenti pice et foetido sulphure perfundetur: et sicut furiosi canes prae dolore invidiosi ululabunt".⁴⁰

Historians have often underlined the Jesuits' positive attitude to human nature.⁴¹ However, the Exercises present an equally damning portrayal of the depths of

in others". H. Outram Evennett, The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation (Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 45

³⁷ "Miser es ubicumque fueris et quocumque te verteris: nisi ad Deum te convertas", Pohl, p. 41:15-16

³⁸ "Quamdiu istud fragile corpus gerimus, sine peccato esse non possumus", Ibid., p. 43:20-21; "Hodie confiteris peccata tua: et cras iterum perpetrass confessa", Ibid., p. 43:31-44:2

³⁹ Ibid., p. 49:10-11

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 49:18-21

⁴¹ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 265

degradation to which human nature can reach. In the meditation on sins of the First week, retreatants are asked to "look upon the corruption and foulness of [their] bodies, and to look at [themselves] as if [they] were an ulcer or an abscess, the source of many sins and evils, and of great infection".⁴² In the meditation on Hell, not only are retreatants asked to imagine the interior sense of suffering which the damned endure, but, in language reminiscent of the Imitatio, they are also invited to "smell with the sense of smell the smoke, the burning sulphur, the cesspit and the rotting matter".⁴³ Both texts urged believers to consider the frailty of their nature as a necessary step before embarking on any spiritual progression. Indeed, the message of the Exercises was no less pessimistic about human nature than the Imitatio.

The continuity, moreover, extends to the process of spiritual progression which leads to the end goal of these meditations. The shock-tactics employed by both texts have a specific purpose. Believers are supposed to realise the necessity of changing their lives and to overcome their natures out of servile fear, that is fear of being punished for their sins. The notion of spiritual progression is more evident in practice when, from a position of examining one's conscience out of fear for hell (and, in the case of the Imitatio, also purgatory), believers begin to reform themselves because of filial fear, that is, fear of offending God and of losing His love. In fact, the same passage relating to the meditation on Hell, where believers are asked for an interior sense of suffering which the damned endure, continues thus, "if through my faults, I should forget love of the Lord, at least the fear of punishments may help me not to fall into sin".⁴⁴ In this way, the process of spiritual progression reflects a hierarchy of meditation, the level of which was ultimately dependent on the believer's capabilities. Given that this progression is identifiable in the Imitatio, this must partly explain why Ignatius was attracted to the text.

⁴² Spiritual Exercises, [58], p. 297

⁴³ Ibid., [68], p. 298

⁴⁴ Ibid., [65], p. 298. This spiritual progression, known as the grades of fear, has already been identified as a point of continuity between Garcia Cisneros's Exercitatorio and the Spiritual Exercises. See O'Reilly, 'The Structural Unity', pp. 287ff; and O'Reilly, 'The Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola', pp. 301ff

Even the juxtaposition between nature and grace, so striking towards the end of the third Book of the Imitatio, is paralleled in the meditation on sins, where the use of contraries is a recurring theme:

"I consider who God is, against whom I have sinned, going through His attributes and contrasting them with their opposites in myself: His wisdom with my ignorance, His almighty power with my weakness, His justice with my injustice, His goodness with my malice".⁴⁵

The message of both texts reminded believers of the need to recollect the frailty of their nature before they could embark on any spiritual progression. The relationship between nature and grace should be understood within the context of spirituality, not theology. It is possible to discuss the relative merits of nature and grace outwith a theological framework. The state of human nature reminded believers that purification, self-denial and contrition were cornerstones of the spiritual life. When nature was placed alongside grace, believers realised that their frailty necessitated a dependence on grace. If the contrast between nature and grace was emphatic, the intention was to incite believers into action. It did not mean that believers could not contribute anything to their own salvation. This view is reinforced by the fact that Thomas à Kempis was not a theologian,⁴⁶ nor was Ignatius when he composed the Spiritual Exercises. Indeed, much of the Exercises was composed before Ignatius had taken up his studies.

The second theme concerns consolation, desolation and the temptations of believers, pointing to the same movement of spiritual progression central to both texts.⁴⁷ The necessity of consolation and desolation are underlined as integral parts of the spiritual life. In the annotations to the Exercises, it is implied that retreatants are not undertaking spiritual exercises properly, if they are "not affected by any spiritual

⁴⁵ Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises, [59], p. 297

⁴⁶ Post, Modern Devotion, p. 521

⁴⁷ See also John O'Malley's First Jesuits for the role of consolation in attracting the Jesuits to the Imitatio, p. 265

movements, such as consolations or desolations".⁴⁸ Similarly, in Book three of the Imitatio, the Lord tells the following to His servant: "dupliciter soleo electos meos visitare: temptatione scilicet et consolatione. Et duas lectiones eis cotidie lego; unam increpando eorum vitia: alteram exhortando ad virtutum incrementa".⁴⁹ The underlying notion of spiritual progression is shared by both works. Believers are first exhorted to distinguish between human and divine comfort. They are strongly encouraged to seek divine solace, but it is stressed that the latter cannot be gained without a great deal of desolation and temptation. Believers are taught both to accept the necessity of temptations in the spiritual life and how to deal with them.⁵⁰

Ultimately, the pinnacle of this spiritual progression is reached when believers seek desolation for the sake of getting closer to God, instead of yearning for constant consolation.⁵¹ In the third Book of the Imitatio, the essence of spiritual progression is articulated in the following way: "nec est in eo tantum spiritualis vitae profectus, cum consolationis habueris gratiam: sed cum humiliter et abnegate patienterque tuleris eius subtractionem".⁵² Similarly, in the rules on the discernment of spirits in the Exercises, it is noted that "anyone in desolation must consider how Our Lord has placed them in a trial period".⁵³ The implication is that a believer who is well-trained in the spiritual life will not only accept but also welcome periods of desolation. It encouraged the faithful to address the reality of desolation and it helped them to comprehend the benefits of suffering.

The Imitatio was not necessarily a source of influence for the Spiritual Exercises on these two themes, although it may, of course, be one. The continuity of themes, in which a particular spiritual progression is articulated, explains why the Imitatio was recommended by Ignatius in the Exercises and elsewhere. The thematic similarities between the two texts also concern the subject of death, the need for devout

⁴⁸ Spiritual Exercises, [6], p. 284

⁴⁹ Pohl, p. 147:25-29

⁵⁰ See especially chapter thirteen of Book one. Ibid., pp. 21:23ff

⁵¹ "Non est grave humanum contemnere solacium: cum adest divinum. Magnum est et valde magnum tam humano quam divino posse carere solacio". Ibid., pp. 73:27-29 - 74:1

⁵² Ibid., p. 157:6-10

⁵³ Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises, [320], p. 349

conversation (as opposed to idle gossip) and, most importantly, the pronounced emphasis on the suffering and Passion of Christ. To these, one could add the process of self-examination (with an emphasis on humility and contrition) and frequent confession and communion. With regard to penitence, the Exercises shared the Imitatio's emphasis on an inward/outward dichotomy. This was reflected in the approach to penance. In the Exercises, penance was divided into interior and exterior elements, "the interior being grief for one's sins with the firm determination not to commit those or any others, and the exterior, which is the fruit of the former, being the punishment we impose on ourselves for sins committed".⁵⁴ The implication is that exterior penance had little substance if it was not preceded by inward preparation. This struck a chord with the Imitatio, which placed considerable emphasis on contrition.⁵⁵ The use of the Imitatio to inspire an examination of conscience provides the historian with one particular context for its readership, that of solitary, private meditational reading.

The reclusive dimension of devotional reading was a theme echoed in the Exercises. The benefits of withdrawal from the world are strongly emphasised in the 20th annotation, wherein it is stated that "as a general rule in making the Exercises, the more one disengages oneself from all friends and acquaintances, and from all worldly preoccupations, the more profit will there be".⁵⁶ The annotation lists three advantages of withdrawal: firstly, that in separating oneself from friends and acquaintances, one gains no small merit before God; secondly, with one's mind focused entirely on God, one can search for what one desires more easily; and thirdly, "the more we are alone and by ourselves, the more capable we become of drawing near to and reaching our Creator and Lord".⁵⁷ The importance of withdrawal reflects the nature of the retreat advocated by the Exercises, and is directly related to the Imitatio.

⁵⁴ Ibid., [82], pp. 300-301

⁵⁵ Pohl, pp. 39:1ff

⁵⁶ Spiritual Exercises, [20], p. 288

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The role of devotional literature, and particularly that of the Imitatio, was significantly amplified if one considers the nature of the Ignatian retreat. While the director and retreatant might meet twice daily (depending on circumstances and profession), the main part of the retreat was undertaken by retreatants on their own as they meditated upon the various prescribed exercises and meditations. The purpose of the Exercises was to instill a meditational precedent within each individual's life, so that believers could practise and conduct their own meditations without guidance. The use of a devotional text like the Imitatio would sharpen the focus of the retreatant's attention during the retreat.

Withdrawal was emphasised in the Exercises because it was supposed to provide opportunity for reflection and to revitalise the spirit before facing the world again. It pointed to the centrality of solitary, mental prayer, particularly for those actively engaged in the world, whether Jesuits or not. In order to aid the spirit of contemplation, directors recommended the reading of devotional literature for that period following the retreat of the Exercises. Mercurian's instructions, for example, expressly recommended that "[one] should also occasionally read devotional books which will help...especially Gerson's Imitatio Christi and Luis de Granada's book On Prayer".⁵⁸ In this way, directories of the Exercises stressed the importance of devotional literature outwith the context of the spiritual retreat of the Exercises, in addition to forming an integral part of the retreat itself, thereby confirming Ignatius's wish that the Imitatio should be read on a frequent, if not a daily, basis.

Jesuits, furthermore, stressed that the spirituality of the Exercises reflected the threefold conception of spiritual progression (beginning with purgation, followed by illumination, and ending with mystical union),⁵⁹ a similar underlying current of spirituality as in the Imitatio. The structure of the different weeks in the Official Directory to the Exercises followed this progression, beginning with the need for self-knowledge and purgation, followed by seeking interior knowledge of Christ, as a

⁵⁸ Palmer, On Giving the Exercises, p. 113

⁵⁹ As Nadal noted, "the method and order of the Exercises is purgation, illumination, union, beginning humbly and without undue curiosity from the bottom, with great faith and hope". Ibid., p. 36

model which believers should imitate in sorrow and joy.⁶⁰ This sequence was explicitly related to the Imitatio in Jesuit prefaces in which the three stages of spiritual progression were meant to correspond with the first three Books of the Imitatio. For example, in an edition printed by Balthasar Moretus at the Plantin workshop in Antwerp, the author of the preface pointed to the three mystical stages:

"Or ce Liure estant une guide spirituelle, qui nous conduit par les voies de la Purgation, de l'Illumination, & de l'Vnion, iusques dans le sein de IESUS...Au premier Livre, qui est de la vie Purgative...au second qui est de l'Illuminative...Ce troisième Liure...les subiets entrent plus auant dans la perfection de voie Unitieue".⁶¹

Numerous early seventeenth-century translations elaborated upon this theme by including an explanatory treatise on the purpose and intent of the Imitatio. The author of this text was Martin de Funez (1560-1611), the first edition of which was printed at Cologne in 1590, with a later edition in 1610.⁶² Funez' work was quickly incorporated and bound together with Latin and vernacular editions of the Imitatio.⁶³ These prefaces pointed out that the goal ("scopus" or "but") was to reach Christian perfection. The means by which believers could acquire perfect charity was by pursuing the three ways of purgation, illumination and union.⁶⁴ These prefaces described how believers could pursue Christian perfection. With regard to the purgative way, they proposed five different thematic ladders by which believers could ascend towards contemplation and cleanse the soul. For each theme, the prefaces recommended specific chapters from the Imitatio, thereby promoting a different way of reading the text. Rather than a chapter a

⁶⁰ Palmer, On Giving the Exercises, pp. 310-311

⁶¹ F1644, *4^v to *6^r

⁶² Sommervogel, Bibliothèque, Vol. III., p. 1067. There were translations of this text into Italian and French (François Mainfroy). Sommervogel, Bibliothèque, Vol. V., p. 359

⁶³ "Peritia libelli de Imitatione Christi", L1621b, ††2^r; "La pratique du livret de L'Imitation de Iesus", F1619, X11^r

⁶⁴ "Pour acquerir vne parfaicte charité, & exercer ses 4. offices il faut marcher par 3. voyes, purgatiue, illuminatiue, & unitiue", F1619, Y2^r; "Ad assequendam perfectam charitate~, & exerce~da quatuor eius munera, triplici via incedendum est, purgatiua, illuminatiua, & vnitiua", L1621b, ††4^r

day, Jesuits and, for that matter, non-Jesuits, were encouraged to pursue a more methodical meditation.

While the end goal of this meditative reading was union with God and a conformity of wills, the Jesuit understanding of the three mystical stages did not entertain the possibility of reaching mystical union in the believer's life on earth.⁶⁵ To this effect, the aforementioned preface (of the 1644 edition) referred to the third Book as leading its readers (or subjects) closer to the perfection of the unitive way. The choice of the words "plus auant" are, consequently, vital. Similarly, the 1619 preface pointed out that the Imitatio "ne traicte pas de la voye vnitive mystique, qui consiste en vn excés & abstraction d'esprit".⁶⁶

The advice on methodical meditation was indicative of Jesuit attempts to instruct believers how to read and pray. Such was their attention to this subject that Jesuits even re-worked and adapted the Imitatio. A 1626 edition, printed in Dillingen, entitled Elementa Christianae Perfectionis a Thomas de Kempis, arranged the Imitatio in the form of *loci communes*.⁶⁷ The treatise is based entirely upon the Imitatio, but is organised thematically. The structure of the work is such that excerpts are taken from the Imitatio according to particular themes and arranged alphabetically. The 140 themes cover the whole scope of the Imitatio's spirituality, from self-denial ("abnegatio"), the benefits of God ("beneficia Dei"), and spiritual consolation ("consolatio spiritualis") to preparation for the Holy Eucharist ("praeparatio ad SS. Eucharistiam"). Since the treatise is so comprehensive, the reader would certainly not have required an edition of the Imitatio for reference.⁶⁸

While the treatise may have been read as a work of devotion, it would more likely have been used either as a thematic guide for preparing sermons or to help confessors address more specific problems (not to mention for use by the penitent

⁶⁵ Similarly, Kempis was "silent on the complete union of the mystic with God while still on earth...No matter how sublime the dialogue of the soul with God in the third Book of the Imitatio and in the Soliloquium, it is not yet the language of the mystic in ecstasy as in Ruusbroec or in Henry Mande and Gerlach Peters". Post, Modern Devotion, p. 523

⁶⁶ F1619, Y3^v

⁶⁷ Elementa Christianae Perfectionis a Thoma de Kempis Quatuor libris de Imitatione Christi olim comprehensa, nunc iisdem verbis, novo ordine, per locos communes digesta, (Dillingen, 1626)

⁶⁸ It is unclear how widespread this tradition of the text was.

before and after confession). In a Latin edition printed in 1571, there is a brief, alphabetically-arranged preface, entitled "Alphabetum spirituale Thomae de Kempis".⁶⁹ Each letter of the alphabet presents the first letter of the first word of a brief, sentence-long meditation, extracted from the Imitatio, such as "Ama nesciri, & pro nihilo reputari: hoc tibi salubrius est et vtilius, quam laudari ab hominibus".⁷⁰ Presumably, this would encourage readers either to memorise these short meditations with the alphabet as an aid, or perhaps also to construct their own.

While the Imitatio provided thematic inspiration for the Jesuit understanding of methodical meditation, it would be wrong to suggest that the text was only interpreted from that perspective. The Imitatio remained a bestseller during the late medieval and early modern period partly because of its simplicity. Its spirituality appealed either to believers who were at the beginning of their spiritual life or the uneducated. For this reason, the Imitatio was recommended for young boys striving to progress in the spiritual life, as a visitation (1587) to the Parisian college illustrated.⁷¹ The accessibility of the Imitatio's spirituality was such that it was also relevant to the lay, domestic helpers in the colleges (that is, the cooks, porters, and so on). The Imitatio was a devotional text prescribed in the rules for the domestics at the seminary in Olmutz for nurturing their prayer lives.⁷² In a letter to the General Diego Laynez in March 1561, Father Joannes de Victorias described how a domestic helper ("domesticus adjutor") had just learned how to read and that the first works he used were the Divine Office and the Imitatio, indicating how accessible the language of the latter was for the uneducated.⁷³ The Imitatio was also intended to be a companion work to the Bible. A 1604 preface noted that the end goal of all Christians was for their soul to conform to the image of God, which explained the importance of Christ's example as a model. While believers could find such a model in the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament, the Bible was difficult to read and its message was complicated. For that

⁶⁹ L1571b, *6ff

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ MP, Vol. I., p. 661

⁷² MP, Vol. I., p. 824

⁷³ Translated from the Italian. ML, Vol. V, p. 439

reason, individuals needed works like the Imitatio as guides to spiritual progress, since the Imitatio represented a simplified précis of biblical principles.⁷⁴

The Imitatio was, in this way, fundamental to the spiritual development of Ignatius and the early Jesuits. Ignatius' fondness for the Imitatio was beyond doubt and emulated by his closest followers. Since the conformity of the Imitatio to Jesuit spirituality was widely appreciated, it is not surprising that Jesuit works referred to the text in prefaces. Luca Pinelli's The Mirroure of Religious Perfection noted his intention "in a simple and perspicuous stile to write a Treatise not like vnto that which is intituled, The Imitation of Christ, composed by...Thomas à Kempis".⁷⁵ Yet at the heart of Ignatian spirituality was the Spiritual Exercises with which the Imitatio was so intimately associated, both in terms of thematic continuity and in practice. Yet for all the apparent harmony between the Imitatio and Jesuit spirituality, there still seems to be some fundamental discontinuity between the emphasis on solitude of the former and the outward ministry of the latter.

'Monastic' morality and Jesuit ministry?

In assessing the Jesuit preference for the Imitatio, it is necessary to address the apparent contradiction between the Imitatio's interiority and the ministry and apostolate of the Jesuits. There does appear to be a certain disparity between the Imitatio and Jesuit spirituality. It is curious, however, that Jesuit translators of the Imitatio neither altered nor removed any such discrepancies from the text. It has already been shown in chapter Four that the removal of monastic phraseology did not necessarily challenge the Catholicity of the text. So why did Jesuit translators not revise the Imitatio accordingly to suit their apostolic tastes? The lack of alterations necessitates a re-evaluation of the place of the Imitatio's spirituality within the context of Jesuit ministry.

A consideration of the different components of the *devotio moderna* serves to clarify the monastic nature of these values, to which historians have alluded. While the

⁷⁴ G1604,):2^r

⁷⁵ Luca Pinelli, The Mirroure of Religious Perfection (1618), *5^r

nature of these values have been analysed in chapters One and Two, it is necessary to reinforce these themes in order to contextualise Jesuit spirituality. If the emphasis upon fleeing the company of others, on solitude and on silence was directed solely to a readership confined within a cloister, then one can certainly call these monastic values *per se*. Yet, it is clear that this message was also addressed to the Brethren who, though they lived a semi-monastic life, nevertheless lived outside the cloister. In order to stress the continuity with the Jesuits, one should, therefore, especially consider the Brethren of Common Life. As Heiko Oberman has stressed, "Ignatius not only drew on the Imitatio Christi for his Exercises, but also institutionalised the original vision of the Sisters and Brethren of Common Life when he required members of his order to live outside the monastery, and, in this way, serve the civic community *in saeculo*".⁷⁶

References to monks withdrawing from the world, therefore, do not represent the only strand of the Imitatio's spirituality. After all, Kempis noted that "non enim omnibus datum est, ut omnibus abdicatis saeculo renunciaret: et monasticam vitam assumant".⁷⁷ Was it not in the world that Ignatius himself came across the text as a lay person who at that time was planning, and later completed, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land? Historians have often interpreted the phrase "imaginatio locorum et mutatio, multos fefellit" as evidence for the Imitatio's opposition to pilgrimages and itinerant ministry in general.⁷⁸ O'Malley implied that Kempis was opposed to the practice of pilgrimages, which Ignatius "turned...around by insisting that it was only by engaging in pilgrimage implied in ministry that Jesuits could hope to attain sanctification proper to their vocation".⁷⁹ Yet, Kempis was not against pilgrimages *per se*; however, he feared that the practice could be abused. Ignatius did not see a contradiction between a joint appreciation for the Imitatio and pilgrimages. As he yearned to go on pilgrimage, so did he read enthusiastically the Imitatio. Ignatius realised the close relationship between spiritual and actual pilgrimage, that the former underpinned the latter and that both were

⁷⁶ Heiko Oberman, 'Ignatius of Loyola and the Reformation: The Case of John Calvin', in Juan Plazaola, (ed.), Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo (Bilbao, 1991), p. 810

⁷⁷ Pohl, p. 163:5-7

⁷⁸ ibid., p. 16:21-22

⁷⁹ John O'Malley, 'Early Jesuit Spirituality: Spain and Italy', idem., Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century, p. 8; O'Malley, 'To travel to any part of the world', pp. 10-11

accommodated in the Imitatio. While the allusion to outward ministry in Jesuit sources is undeniably emphatic, the Imitatio's deeply inward spirituality reminded Ignatius and his companions that the active life had to be rooted in contemplation. The spirituality of the Imitatio appeared to challenge Jesuit apostolicity, yet it did so for the sake of purification. Ignatius and the early Jesuits recognised this and embraced it.

Contemplation and prayer were the foundations for all Jesuit ministry. The apostolic life in the world was, for the Jesuits, the fruit of a rightly-ordered interior life. As Joseph Conwell noted, "one who is not a contemplative can hardly be a contemplative in action".⁸⁰ The Imitatio's emphasis upon solitude was appealing to the Jesuits, who recognised that apostolic mobility had to be founded upon a stable prayer life. Contemplation nourished action; the latter could not work without the former. Even works of mercy were given a spiritual context by the Imitatio, one which the Jesuits would have not only accepted, but also appreciated. In Book one, in a chapter on the theme of good works springing from love, Kempis wrote that "sine caritate opus externum nihil prodest; quidquid autem ex caritate agitur quantumcumque etiam parvum sit et despectum: totum fructuosum efficitur".⁸¹ In similar fashion, Jesuits conveyed the view that inward reform was the starting point for any outward and active ministry. Mercurian's instructions declared that "once the person has reached the perfection he goes out to make others perfect, that is, to help his neighbour".⁸² Later in his instructions, Mercurian linked contemplation more explicitly to Jesuit apostolic activity:

"when he has reached a somewhat higher level of perfection he can afterwards (depending on how God moves him in accord with his talents and state of life) move out toward helping his neighbour in some spiritual or corporal work of mercy in hospitals, prisons, etc.; or by

⁸⁰ Joseph Conwell, Contemplation in Action: A study in Ignatian Prayer (Washington, 1957), pp. 26-39, 84

⁸¹ Pohl, p. 26:13-16; similarly, "homo videt in facie: Deus autem in corde. Homo considerat actus: Deus vero pensat intentiones", Pohl, p. 69:16-18

⁸² Palmer, On giving the Exercises, p. 104

preaching, teaching catechism, giving the Spiritual Exercises themselves, hearing confessions, etc".⁸³

Inward reform was thus a necessary stepping stone to an active apostolate in the world. With this construct in mind, one can, and should, reconcile Ignatian spirituality with that of the Imitatio. Furthermore, the prescription of the Exercises for monastic communities was actually not markedly different. Although detached from the world, monks still distinguished between the solitary and contemplative life on the one hand, and the communal and active life on the other. Though their active lives were not undertaken *in saeculo*, the pursuit of an exemplary life was no less challenging or dynamic within the confines of a cloister.

The relationship between Ignatius, the Jesuits and monasticism is remarkably instructive. While the Jesuits considered chanting in choir an impediment to their own works of charity and initially prohibited it, that prohibition was later lifted as some Jesuits gained a greater degree of stability, due to their involvement in education.⁸⁴ Jesuits were, furthermore, by definition a religious order, taking religious vows, though they did not follow a strictly monastic rule. Ignatius himself had retained very close links with monasteries and monks throughout his life. He had once considered becoming a Carthusian in the Seville Charterhouse.⁸⁵ He was strongly influenced by the Benedictines of Montserrat, and in particular by Jean Chanones, who had been his confessor and spiritual director.⁸⁶ Some of Ignatius's friends had entered religious orders, such as Juan Castro, a student from Burgos, who became a Carthusian in the Charterhouse of Vall de Cristo, where he was visited by Ignatius in 1535.⁸⁷ Indeed,

⁸³ Ibid., p. 113

⁸⁴ This development had run counter to Ignatius's earlier intentions, yet he changed his mind as education became an important context for the Jesuit apostolate. For the place of the Imitatio within Jesuit pedagogy, see chapter nine.

⁸⁵ Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, p. 17

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 20

⁸⁷ O'Reilly, 'Ignatius of Loyola and the Counter-Reformation', in idem., From Ignatius of Loyola, p. 457

O'Malley's seminal article on whether Ignatius was a church reformer, expounded the interpretation of *reformatio* to include the notion of monastic reform.⁸⁸

Above all, that the Spiritual Exercises could encourage an election, or vocation, to the monastic life illustrates that Jesuit spirituality did not run counter to monasticism. As an instruction pointed out, "by means of these Exercises hundreds, not to say thousands, of persons have entered other religious orders and large numbers have entered our own".⁸⁹ Not only did there exist a certain harmony between monastic and Jesuit spirituality, but the Jesuits actually promoted monasticism as a significant component of *reformatio*. The Official Directory insisted that monks were allowed to possess a copy of the Exercises to use in their communities with the Jesuit provincial's permission. This was intended for monks in positions of authority, who could direct their *confrères* through the duration of the retreat. As the Directory noted, "in this way the reformation of a single person will often bring about the reform of many others; and this is preferable to our performing this function ourselves, lest we appear eager to be reformers of other religious - generally an invidious role".⁹⁰ Consequently, with the Exercises being practised in monasteries, Jesuits contributed to the circulation of the Imitatio within monastic communities. With this in mind, it is interesting, though hardly unexpected, that Ignatius left copies of the Imitatio to each of the monks in Montecassino.⁹¹

Conclusion

The reasons for Jesuit adoption of the Imitatio are more profound than the mere appropriation of a bestseller with a convenient reputation for unquestioned orthodoxy. While this no doubt helped their cause, Jesuit association with the Imitatio was rooted in Ignatius' own conversion experience and early life. Ignatius' recommendation of the

⁸⁸ John O'Malley, 'Was Ignatius of Loyola a Church Reformer? How to look at Early Modern Catholicism', in *idem.*, Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century, p. 182

⁸⁹ Palmer, On giving the Exercises, p. 102

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 305

⁹¹ See chapter 62, Julii VII, Acta Sanctorum (Antwerp, 1731), n. 641, xxx2^r

text was well-known within Jesuit circles in his lifetime and this endorsement endured beyond his death. Its significance was enhanced by Ignatius' authority and grace as founder of the Society of Jesus and that was further reinforced by his canonization.

The appeal of the Imitatio was centred upon its connection with the Exercises. As Ignatius began to write the Exercises, he came across the Imitatio. His companions and followers recognised that the spirituality of the Imitatio would strengthen the understanding and resolve of believers as they struggled to live the spiritual life. It taught them to understand the frailty of their nature, how to overcome it, and that onerous trials and tribulations inevitably accompanied spiritual progress. Both the Exercises and the Imitatio affirmed that, as believers followed Christ in suffering, they would also follow Him in glory. This inward spiritual progression would hold the key to the apostolate in the world, which always remained the fruit of interior strength.

The alleged discrepancies between the Imitatio's interiority and the Jesuit apostolate in the world present a distortion of spiritualities that were considered compatible and complementary by Ignatius and the early Jesuits. It is of profound importance that the Imitatio was attributed by the early Jesuits to Jean Gerson.⁹² Gerson was not a monk and while some of his writings were directed to religious orders, he was known for his accommodation of lay piety. Consequently, by speaking fondly of the "Gerçonzito", one can infer that the Jesuits did not consider the Imitatio to be a monastic text *per se*. It illustrates an acknowledgement that the Imitatio's spirituality did not need to be re-configured or re-constructed to suit Jesuit apostolicity. The Imitatio was, in fact, ideally suited to the Jesuit notion of contemplation in action. It encouraged sincere inward preparation before and during their various ministries in the world.

⁹² I am indebted to Jodi Bilinkoff for encouraging me to pursue the attribution of authorship to Gerson by the Jesuits.

Chapter Nine. The place of Thomas à Kempis' Imitatio Christi in the ministry of Jesuit spirituality

Having explained in the previous chapter the place of the Imitatio within the spirituality of Ignatius and the early Jesuits, this chapter will address the association of the text within different contexts of the Jesuit apostolate. The principal concern of the chapter will be to place the Imitatio within the context of Jesuit pedagogy. The provision of formal education was not a priority of Jesuit ministry from the beginning, but it quickly became a major part of their apostolate within Ignatius's own lifetime from the 1540s onwards.¹ The prominent role given to education in the Constitutions, printed in 1558-1559, reflected a decade of Jesuit pedagogical activity.² It is hardly coincidental that Jerome Nadal was given the responsibility of promoting the Constitutions, since he was also the leading instigator of Jesuit education. The pedagogical enterprise was so important that by August 10, 1560, Polanco could write that the colleges were one of the two ways "of helping our neighbours".³ It is noteworthy also that women played a formative role in Jesuit education, principally as patronesses.⁴ Given its significance, it is vital to assess the Imitatio's place within the educational apostolate. Firstly, one needs to address Ignatius's stance on learning and how this corresponded with the spirituality of the Imitatio. Secondly, the chapter will analyse the relationship between the Imitatio and Jesuit education. Jesuit directories provide a useful insight into the place of the Imitatio and devotional literature, while Jesuit prefaces to the Imitatio indicated how the text should be read and perceived within a pedagogical context. Furthermore, the dissemination of the Imitatio within the colleges is intriguing when one considers the text's critical stance on learning and intellectual knowledge.

¹ Arthur McGovern, 'Jesuit education and Jesuit spirituality', SSJ, 20/4 (September 1988), pp. 24-29

² Saint Ignatius of Loyola, The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, translated, with an introduction and commentary by George Ganss (St. Louis, 1970), pp. 171-229

³ MP., Vol. III., pp. 305-306, translated by John O'Malley, 'Renaissance Humanism and the religious culture of the First Jesuits', in idem., Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century: Preaching, Rhetoric, Spirituality and Reform (Variorum, 1993), p. 481

⁴ James Reites, 'Ignatius and Ministry with Women', in Women and Ignatian Spirituality in Dialogue, The Way Supplement No. 74 (1992), pp. 7-15

However, learned circles were attracted to the text not in spite of but rather because of its critique of learning. The Imitatio does not condemn learning *per se*, though every practising Christian was encouraged to recognise their intellectual limitations in the face of divine knowledge. For this reason, the Imitatio's apparent anti-intellectual emphasis requires careful definition and qualification.

The second part of the chapter will elucidate the appearance of Jesuit editions of the Imitatio within the confessional polarity that existed in the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Particularly instructive are the prefaces, other works and mini-catechisms bound together with the Imitatio, which illustrate the changing appearance of Imitatio editions as they were introduced into that context. Yet, were these additional features accompanied by substantial changes to the text itself? Further, was the Imitatio now interpreted differently than had previously been the case? That section will also look at the doctrinal content of prefaces, and how they may have influenced the reading of the Imitatio.

Ignatius and the Imitatio's anti-intellectualism

Ignatius came across the Imitatio before he began his studies. The Imitatio's critique of learning appeared to strike a resonant chord with Ignatius' formative years, as he was uneducated while at Montserrat and Manresa. Ignatius had acknowledged that learning had its limitations, where searching for divine knowledge was concerned. The Autobiography conveys this aspect of Ignatius' spirituality very effectively. While at Manresa, for example,

"the eyes of his understanding began to be opened... One cannot set out the particular things he understood then, though they were many: only that he received a great clarity in his understanding, such that in the whole course of his life, right up to the sixty-two years he has completed, he does not think, gathering together all the helps he has had

from God and all the things he has come to know (even if he joins them all into one), that he has ever attained so much as on that single occasion".⁵

That the Autobiography was dictated towards the end of his life makes this passage all the more striking. It was written with hindsight, after Ignatius's active participation in and promotion of education. Even then, at the end of his life, he considered that true understanding came not through the intellect but through revelation from God.⁶

This perception of knowledge, that is the acquisition of understanding in the spiritual sense, is a central theme of the Imitatio. As Kempis wrote in a chapter on the teaching of truth, "quanto aliquis magis sibi unitus et interius simplificatus fuerit; tanto plura et altiora sine labore intellegit: quia desuper lumen intellegentiae accipit".⁷ Indeed, he stressed that the infusion of divine knowledge can easily match the acquisition of human knowledge over the course of many years. In the Imitatio, this is related explicitly to an academic context. The Lord declares in Book three that

"Ego sum qui humilem in puncto elevo mentem; ut plures aeternae veritatis capiat rationes: quam si quis decem annis studuisset in scholis. Ego doceo sine strepitu verborum, sine confusione opinionum: sine fastu honoris, sine pugnatione argumentorum".⁸

Ignatius was attracted to the Imitatio's perspective on knowledge for it stressed the extent to which the intellect could hinder spiritual progress. Initially, Ignatius interpreted this as an uneducated man, embracing the view that lack of education was not considered to be an obstacle to spiritual progress. Following a pilgrimage to the

⁵ Ignatius of Loyola, Autobiography, p. 27

⁶ See also Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Diary, in idem., Personal Writings, (Penguin, 1996), p. 82

⁷ Pohl, p. 9:18-21

⁸ Ibid., p. 221:9-15

Holy Land, Ignatius returned to Spain convinced that he should begin his formal education. It is certainly significant that he studied in Alcalá, the spiritual climate of which was very similar to that of the Imitatio. The founder of the University, Francesco Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo and the cousin of Garcia Cisneros, had commissioned medieval works of spirituality to be printed in the early 1500s, including the Imitatio.⁹ A decade or so later, in Ignatius's time, Miguel de Eguía printed both Erasmus's Handbook of the Christian Soldier and the Imitatio.¹⁰ The thematic continuity of these texts is particularly intriguing as it relates to the resolution of Ignatius' spiritual crisis at Manresa. It is possible that Ignatius suggested to Miguel de Eguía that he print the Imitatio.¹¹

Ignatius' understanding of the Imitatio took on an extra dimension when he began his scholarly education. As noted above, Ignatius recommended reading a chapter from the Imitatio every day: clearly, he could not have seen a contradiction between the spirituality of the text and the promotion of learning. After all, the Imitatio had been widely circulated precisely in those university towns where Ignatius and his companions had studied, especially Alcala and Paris, not to mention the various Italian cities in which the Imitatio was also printed.¹² As Ignatius was drawn to education, so he must have noted the Imitatio's striking attitude towards learning.

How did the Imitatio's stance on learning fit into this context? O'Malley has described this stance as pointing to another discrepancy between the Imitatio and the Jesuits, namely the "decided bias not only against scholastic philosophy and theology but to some extent against learning as such".¹³ So what type of anti-intellectualism was

⁹ Mark Rotsaert, Ignace de Loyola et les nouveaux spirituels en Castille au début du XVI^e siècle (Rome 1982), p. 27; Mark Rotsaert, 'L'originalité des Exercices spirituels d'Ignace de Loyola sur l'arrière-fond des nouveaux spirituels en Castille au début du seizième siècle', in Juan Plazaola, (ed.), Ignacio de Loyola, pp. 330

¹⁰ Cándido de Dalmases, Ignatius of Loyola: Founder of the Jesuits, his life and works (St. Louis, 1985), p. 94. For a number of years, Erasmus's Sermon on the infant Jesus was published in the same volume as the Imitatio Christi. Rotsaert, 'L'originalité des Exercices', p. 335; Rotsaert, Ignace de Loyola, p. 90

¹¹ Henri Bernard-Maitre, 'Saint Ignace de Loyola', p. 28

¹² See Appendix.

¹³ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 265

the Imitatio promoting? The first three chapters of Book one are filled with references to the limitations of learning.

"Quid prodest tibi alta de Trinitate disputare; si careas humilitate unde displiceas Trinitati? Vere alta verba non faciunt sanctum et iustum: sed virtuosa vita efficit Deo carum. Opto magis sentire compunctionem: quam scire eius definitionem. Si scires totam bibliam exterius et omnium philosophorum dicta; quid totum prodesset sine caritate Dei et gratia?".¹⁴

As this extract suggests, the limitations of learning are given a particular context. Learning *per se* is not explicitly discouraged, though if its pursuit is undertaken to the neglect of a virtuous life (characterised by humility and compunction), then its purpose is not only undermined but rendered meaningless. This point is made so emphatically that historians have, as a consequence, regarded the Imitatio as condemnatory towards learning. The believer could hardly ignore the fact that human learning inevitably had its limitations, as Kempis reminded his readers: "si tibi videtur quod multa scis et satis bene intellegis: scito tamen quia sunt multo plura quae nescis".¹⁵ Ultimately, the reservations about learning are given a soteriological gloss. "Certe adveniente die iudicii non quaeretur a nobis quid legimus sed quid fecimus; nec quam bene diximus: sed quam religiose viximus".¹⁶ Where salvation was concerned, knowledge of God had, in the first instance, to be experienced rather than conceptualised or speculated about.

There are, however, passages which suggest that piety and learning are reconcilable, as long as the latter remained subservient to the former. In chapter two of Book one, for example, it reads "quanto plus et melius scis: tanto gravius inde

¹⁴ Pohl, p. 6:2-11

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 7:29 - 8:1-3

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 10:24-27

iudicaberis nisi sanctius vixeris".¹⁷ If growth in learning was not matched by an increase in piety, then the repercussions would be problematic. However, this does not mean that the former was inconsistent with the spiritual life. Indeed, the anti-intellectual emphasis is so pronounced that it would seem more suited to a learned than an unlearned readership. The very fact that one required a certain degree of literacy to read texts like the Imitatio seems to make this argument all the more convincing.

Jesuit promotion of learning and of the Imitatio

Both the limitations and benefits of learning were themes acknowledged and articulated by the Jesuits themselves. The counsels of Duarte Pereyra (1527-1587), a novice master in Spain, made a crucial distinction between the different types of knowledge.

"It is very important to get him [that is, a novice] to understand the difference between knowing a thing speculatively and knowing it practically. A physician can say what milk is - its essence and accidents, with all its qualities and properties - but not savour or taste it like a nursing infant; the latter cannot say what milk is but does savour it. Similarly, this divine wisdom is very different from theoretical knowledge; it is a savouring wisdom which gives one a taste of the things of God, a practical and loving knowledge which ignites and enkindles the will".¹⁸

While it was considered possible for believers to acquire a certain knowledge of the divine with the intellect, true knowledge was derived from actively pursuing the Christian life. Moreover, Pereyra's position as a novice master is particularly significant, since novices were encouraged to acknowledge the limitations of learning at

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 7:25-27

¹⁸ Palmer, (ed.), On Giving the Exercises, p. 48

the beginning of their spiritual and educational training.¹⁹ This approach inevitably impacted upon the way in which novices were encouraged to read devotional books. Indeed, many recommendations of the Imitatio in directories specified what retreatants should derive from devotional literature. In his directory, Polanco noted that "this reading should be calculated more to nourish his piety than to exercise his intellect - for example, something from the Gospel, or from Bernard, or from Jean Gerson's Imitatio".²⁰ The same sentiment was conveyed in the official Directory of 1599: the Imitatio "should be a book calculated to nourish piety rather than busy the intellect with novelties".²¹

The promotion of the Imitatio within an academic environment is supported by evidence found in the Jesuit editions. The dedicatory preface to Conrad Braun's translation certainly addressed an academic readership.²² Though not a Jesuit, Braun was clearly influenced and impressed by the Society of Jesus. Moreover, Braun's translation was dedicated to Otto Erbtruchseß who, from the 1550s onwards, was increasingly in collaboration with the Jesuits and was also Braun's patron.²³ Both Braun and Erbtruchseß worked together to promote Catholic education, for which the Jesuit template was their inspiration.²⁴ His translation is central to a discussion of the German Jesuit colleges, because it was reprinted numerous times in Dillingen, Cologne and Munich.

¹⁹ Further on in his counsels, Pereyra related knowledge to practising meditation: "Regarding meditation, he should be told to endeavour to avoid in this exercise too much intellectual speculation and to try to handle this matter with the affections of the will rather than reasonings and speculations of the mind. For this, one should be aware that the intellect both helps and can hinder the working of the will, which is love for divine things... When the speculation is excessive it hinders the affections of the will, for it does not allow it room or time to work". Ibid., p. 55 See also the directory of Antonio Cordeses (1518-1601), Ibid., p. 273

²⁰ Ibid., p. 131

²¹ Ibid., p. 323

²² G1554, ii'

²³ "Dem Wolgeborenen Herrn / Herr Wilhalmen des heyligen Rö. Reichs Erbtruchsässen / Freyherrn zü Waldburg / Rö. Küniglicher Maiestat Rath und Camerern / dem ältern / meinem gnedigen Herrn", G1554, ii"; see also Maria Rößner, Konrad Braun (ca. 1495-1563) - ein katholischer Jurist, Politiker, Kontroverstheologe und Kirchenreformer im konfessionellen Zeitalter (Münster, 1991); Bernard Duhr, Geschichte des Jesuiten in den ländern Deutscher Zunge im XVI. Jahrhundert (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1907), pp. 19-23, 194-197

²⁴ Rößner, Konrad Braun, pp. 194, 199

It is clearly within this academic context that one should read Braun's dedicatory preface, which placed the virtues of classical philosophy both alongside and in opposition to that of true philosophy, the *philosophia Christi*.²⁵ Braun stressed that while certain pagan philosophers had been correct in many things, their philosophies were ultimately incomparable with the doctrine and life of Christ. In reinforcing the limitations of human learning, Braun quoted St. Paul: "Der welt weißheit ist ein torheit vor Got".²⁶ In this way, the Imitatio challenged educated readers to defy intellectual and spiritual complacency within the Jesuit colleges, where learned piety was a *leitmotiv*.

Such was the demand for the Imitatio within the collegiate context that the diffusion of Latin editions was considerable. Furthermore, given that literacy in Latin was almost a requirement in the colleges,²⁷ perhaps the simplicity of the Imitatio's style made it attractive to those not fully competent in Latin. Latin editions could also have accommodated Jesuits who preferred to read the text in the same language as the Exercises. Where learning languages was concerned, Georg Mayr's edition of the early seventeenth century supplied Greek and Latin translations. In a dedicatory preface to the General of the time, Claudio Aquaviva, Mayr noted that the purpose of his edition was to supply a work that both nurtured piety and provided readers with an opportunity to study the Greek language; "Cum singulari enim Christianae pietatis fructu animis lectorum ingenerando, eximiam praeterea opportunitatem Graecae linguae studium".²⁸ With this in mind, editions of the Imitatio could actually serve to cultivate the intellect and not just piety.

The Imitatio also fitted neatly into the Jesuit educational framework because of the religious and devotional culture that accompanied Jesuit academic training. The

²⁵ "Und darumb ist allein die lehr unnd leben Christi / die rechte Philosophia / so von himel herab kom[m]en ist", G1554, ii^v to iii^v

²⁶ "Und wiewol solche der Haidnischen Philosophen und Weysen lehr / in vile[n] dingen hailsam und güet / der natur gantz änlich und gmäß / so ist sie doch der lehr und leben Christi unsers Seligmachers gar nit zuergleichen / Dañ der grösser tail derselben ebe~ die weißheit ist / dauon d[as] heilig Paulus spricht: Der welt weißheit ist ein torheit vor Got". G1554, iii^r

²⁷ "All, and especially the students of the humanities, should ordinarily speak Latin, and commit to memory what was indicated by their teachers... Moreover, some with the approval of the rector may read privately some authors besides those on whom they have lectures". Constitutions, [381], pp. 195-196

²⁸ L1615b, A2^v to A3^r

foundation of schools and colleges tended to be accompanied by the construction (or appropriation) of a Church which became the focal point for each institution's religious life.²⁹ At the centre was the liturgical and sacramental life, and particularly the Mass. The emphasis upon daily Mass, not to mention the frequent reception of the consecrated elements, permeates the Jesuit directories and the school ordinances.³⁰ Nadal's rules for the college at Messina constituted a whole programme of Christian life: daily Mass; monthly Confession; frequent Communion; attending sermons each Sunday; teaching Christian doctrine once a week; and public prayer in class. Students were supposed to attend daily Mass before their first class and teachers prayed briefly and asked their pupils to do the same before the beginning of classes. Teachers were encouraged to nurture the prayer lives of their students.³¹

The devotional culture of the colleges naturally presents one of the major reasons for Jesuit adoption of the Imitatio. Devotional works were recommended partly with the intention of nurturing the prayer lives of those students attending the colleges, as Nadal intimated to the college of Cologne.³² The Imitatio was particularly profitable given the contents of Book four on the Mass. Its appeal lay not merely in the orthodox belief in transubstantiation and in the mediatory role of the priests that brought this about, though these were undoubtedly crucial. Jesuits were attracted by the type of Eucharistic piety encouraged by the Imitatio.³³ They were attracted by the Imitatio's call for frequent Communion, to which an entire chapter (chapter three, Book four) was devoted.³⁴ Equally significant was the allusion to inward preparation, which reinforced the necessity of sacramental Confession.³⁵

It is thus not surprising that Conrad Braun's preface, which begins by discussing both the advantages and limitations of learning, ends by highlighting the

²⁹ O'Malley, First Jesuits, p. 93

³⁰ Constitutions, pp. 158-162

³¹ Codina Mir, Aux Sources, pp. 331-333; Donohue, Jesuit Education, p. 176; Adrien Demoustier, 'Les Jésuites et l'enseignement dans une société chrétienne', in Cornaz, (ed.), L'Église et l'éducation, p. 118

³² MN, Vol. IV., p. 314

³³ O'Malley, First Jesuits, pp. 152ff

³⁴ Pohl, pp. 100:24ff

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 124:1ff

necessity of inward preparation for receiving the consecrated elements. Not unrelated to the section on learning, knowledge of the mystery was said to come with devout, inward preparation and the pursuit of virtue. The emphasis was both practical and sacramental, since an interior renewal would prepare believers for virtuous actions, as well as intensify the believer's experience in the Mass. The intention was to inspire the need for, rather than clarify the recipient's understanding of, the sacrament; "zü de~ wirt in disem vierten büch / mehr der gebrauch / daß die einsatzu~g uñ hohe geheimnus des hochwirdige~ Sacrame~ts gelehrt / welche lehr dann je zü einem Christenliche~ leben gehört / uñ alle~ Christen mensche~ g~main sein soll".³⁶ The purpose of a devotional book like the Imitatio was to nurture piety rather than the intellect. Knowledge was to be derived from participation rather than study.

Evidence regarding the place of the Imitatio within the devotional culture of the colleges can further be gleaned from the editions themselves. The Imitatio itself may have been used as a reference work for priests in the confessional. A Latin edition of 1572, printed in Venice, includes a *forma absolutionis* in manuscript hand, a form of absolution undoubtedly written for use by the priest in the sacrament of reconciliation.³⁷ Either the priest derived material from the Imitatio in order to advise the penitents on how to stamp out their vices and progress in virtue, or else the confessor may have used the Imitatio for his own private meditational purposes. After all, spiritual direction, particularly within the Jesuit context, had to be inspired by the example of the director. While the author of these particular manuscript annotations may not have been a Jesuit, they are still noteworthy.

³⁶ "Dañ ich kan nit erachten / was zü einem Christenlichen leben / uñ nachfolgung Christi fürderlicher sey / daß die Cõmunion diß hochwirdige~ Sacrame~ts / durch welche alle Christen in einem leibveraint" G1554, vii^r, vii^v

³⁷ L1572

The Imitatio Christi and the Jesuit defence of the Catholic Faith

This section addresses the relationship between the Imitatio Christi, devotional literature and the defence of the Roman Catholic faith. In determining the extent of continuity and change between late medieval and early modern Catholicism, it is necessary to assess whether the basic substance and framework of Catholic devotional literature remained the same. Emphasis upon the Mass and Eucharistic devotion had been central to the definition of Catholic identity in the late Medieval period and these themes were accompanied by devotion to the Virgin Mary and to the saints. Were the more peripheral elements of Catholic piety diluted in order to undercut Protestant polemic, or were they instead reinforced, thereby making a clearer distinction between Protestant and Catholic devotional practices? Since the progress of the Protestant Reformation in the second half of the sixteenth century was not always ignored by editors and translators of the Imitatio, what was the nature of the Catholic defence? How was the context of confessional polarity reflected and defined in Jesuit editions of the Imitatio? In addition to the prefaces, this section will refer to prayers and mini-catechisms, all of which were incorporated into editions of the Imitatio.

Prefaces to editions in the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries certainly reflected the context of confessional polarity, although the non-Roman Catholic position always remains somewhat unclear. Auger's translation, first printed in Lyon by Michel Jove and Jean Pillehotte in 1576, contains a preface addressed to the reader by the bookseller.³⁸ In that preface, the use of the French language ("en nostre propre langue") is carefully explained. It is justified as a means of countering the numerous vernacular books in circulation, which - it was claimed - were packed with venomous poison and also heresy by which good morals have been corrupted.³⁹ Later in the preface, the bookseller stressed that the counter-poison to heresies should be given in the same cup (that is, the vernacular) by which the venom

³⁸ I have not seen a copy of the F1576 edition, hence the use of the F1578 edition.

³⁹ F1578, *2*. The F1616b edition has an almost identical preface.

was first taken.⁴⁰ Elsewhere, the bookseller uses the word antidote, adopting language that echoed contemporary contrasts between Ignatius and Luther;⁴¹ the conversion of the former presented the antidote to the latter.⁴²

Indeed, the corruption of truth is portrayed in the Imitatio as an assault upon the sacred canons and councils of the Catholic Church, "à laquelle tous fidelles doyuent obeissance & subiection".⁴³ The emphasis upon subjection is pronounced in the Imitatio and the interpretation of this obedience within the framework of the hierarchical and institutional Roman Catholic Church would not have been lost upon readers of the Imitatio.⁴⁴ Moreover, while the nature of these heresies is not clearly defined in the preface, the representatives of those heresies are depicted in strong, and even condemnatory terms such as "meurdriers du salut".⁴⁵

The dividing line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy was made plain in the mini-catechisms that followed the four Books of the Imitatio. They tended to begin with a summary of the Christian religion, emphasising the three things that Christians should know.⁴⁶ First and least controversially, what they should believe, as it was encapsulated in the Apostle's Creed. Secondly, what they should do, namely follow the Commandments of God and the Church. Thirdly, reciting the Our Father, and more controversially the Hail Mary and acknowledging intercession of the saints: "pour embrasser l'intercession des Saints, qui grandement nous aydent à impetrer ce que nous demandons à Dieu".⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Ibid., *2^r. The bookseller made use of other analogies, comparing the readership of corrupt books to the swallowing of poisonous meat, which destroys faith and the soul, "lesquels n'ont trouué meilleur ny plus expedient moyen, que de bailler la contrepoison du mesme gobelet, avec lequel ils ont beu le venin". Ibid., *3^r

⁴¹ Ibid., *3^v

⁴² FN., Vol. II., pp. 306-307, translated in O'Reilly, 'Ignatius of Loyola and the Counter-Reformation', p. 441. In 1562, Nadal pitted Ignatius, the new David, against Luther, the Goliath. Five years later, he told the Cologne Jesuits that in the year Luther was called by the devil, Ignatius heard the call from God. John O'Malley, 'Attitudes of the Early Jesuits towards Misbelievers', in idem., Religious Culture, pp. 62-64

⁴³ F1578, *2^v

⁴⁴ "les decretz & mandemens du souuerain Pasteur de l'Eglise", Ibid., *2^v to *3^r

⁴⁵ F1616b, *3^r

⁴⁶ Ibid., M11^r

⁴⁷ F1578, Y6^r. N.B. The mini-catechism also lists the 15 mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Rosary and the Salve Regina.

While the Christocentricity of the Imitatio reminded believers that Christ's doctrine excelled the doctrines of all the saints,⁴⁸ it did not disempower the saints of their intercessory role. In a small work preceding a Latin edition of the Imitatio, explicit reference was made to intercessory prayers to the saints ("suffragia poscenda sanctorum"), for which some biblical examples are provided.⁴⁹ The use of biblical sources is indicative of an implicit response to the Protestant accusation that Catholics had strayed from the true Word of God, the Bible. Yet, in the Jesuit prescription of devotion to the saints, there was also an element of reform. This was particularly the case with the work of the Bollandists in Antwerp at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Jean Bolland, and Leribert Rosweyde, laid the foundations for the Acta Sanctorum, which entailed the compilation of a list of authentic saints, and the exclusion of all apocryphal stories and figures.⁵⁰ This was in keeping with the spirituality of the Imitatio which sought to purify the devotion to saints by emphasising their Christocentricity.⁵¹ Indeed, such was the belief in the Imitatio's spirituality that Anthony Hoskins could write in the preface to his translation (dated 1 November, 1612) that the text was "commended vnto vs by the highest Wisdome, & which haue made as many Saints, as they haue had diligent and obseruant followers".⁵²

The mini-catechisms are even more clearly identified with the Roman Catholic Church since its structures and channels of authority are elucidated. It is noted that Christ's authority had resided in the Church through the Apostles and their successors through a visible leader, namely the Sovereign Pontiff.⁵³ Readers were also obliged to call the Church's infallibility to mind, that the Church was always guided by the Holy Spirit since Christ had promised that the latter would never forsake the Church.⁵⁴ This confirmation of Tradition reinforced the Roman Catholic sense of continuity from the

⁴⁸ Pohl, p. 5:15-16

⁴⁹ L1561c, e~2^r

⁵⁰ P. Roche, 'Bollandists', NCE, Vol. I., pp. 648-649

⁵¹ For Rosweyde's editions of the Imitatio, see chapter five.

⁵² E1615, [p]4^r

⁵³ At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Anthony Hoskins, a translator of the Imitatio, had defended papal authority and agreed with the Pope that the oath of allegiance was unlawful. Anthony Hoskins, A briefe and cleare declaration of Sundry Pointes (1611) STC 13840, A4^r, A4^v, G4^v

⁵⁴ F1616b, M12^v

early Church through to the end of the Middle Ages and was central to Catholic identity. The allusion to papal authority, furthermore, is joined to an affirmation of the seven sacraments:

"Et pour la conuersation d'icelle, outre qu'il luy a laissé en sa place vn chef visible, c'est à dire vn souuerain Põtife, auquel il a promis que sa foy iamais ne defaudra, il a ordonné les Sacreme~s, qui sont en nombre sept, par le moyen desquels, comme par conduicts, il communique ses dons & graces aux Chrestie~s, pour les engendrer, nourrir, confirmer, augmenter & conseruer en la vie spirituelle".⁵⁵

It is vital that the authority for the sacraments should be derived from Christ. They were the instruments by which He could nourish and increase the spiritual life of the Church. All those denying the infallibility of these truths would be damned to eternal death like those who died in the flood. Hence, Noah's ark is symbolic of the true Church. Following the Ten Commandments are the commandments of the Church, which reinforced the necessity of going to Mass every Sunday and on feast days and instructed that each believer should confess once a year and receive Communion at least at Easter.⁵⁶ Signs of true penitence were identified by a vocal confession (that is, to a priest), contrition of heart, satisfaction by works, and a firm will never again to return to sin.⁵⁷ In this way, the implication is that the *Imitatio*'s emphasis upon contrition should be seen as a preparation for the sacrament of Confession. Indeed, a German preface incited readers to practise Confession by criticising them for their neglect of that sacrament: "Wir meiden vñ Beicht vñ Büß: treiben hergege~ allerley sünde vnd laster vnuerschampt".⁵⁸ Furthermore, that individuals are able to account for their own sins ("sich selbs rechnung thün") is indicative of a Catholic theology which inevitably placed

⁵⁵ F1616, Y6^v

⁵⁶ "Les commandemens de sainte Eglise / Les Dimanches la messe oyra / Et festes de commandement. / Tous tes pechez confesseras / A tous le moins vne fois l'an. / Et ton createur receuras / Au moins à Pasques humblement." *Ibid.*, Y8^v

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Z2^r

⁵⁸ G1572, ‡5^v. The G1567 is virtually identical.

the interpretation of the Imitatio's spirituality more within a Catholic sacramental framework.⁵⁹

Numerous editions included references to the Mass and preparation for Holy Communion. The prologue to a 1619 French edition noted that there were three things that were profitable for salvation: the Word of God; continual prayer; and the Holy Communion of the precious Body of Jesus Christ.⁶⁰ It is striking that the anonymous author of the prologue stressed the continuity of these three elements with the early Church, pointing to Tradition (vital to the understanding of the Catholic Church) and the continuity of witnesses to the Truth through the Middle Ages.⁶¹ The aforementioned edition of Conrad Braun, which referred to a particular type of Eucharistic piety, also included a foreword in which all four Books of the Imitatio are summarised - the emphasis regarding the fourth Book is placed upon inciting the desire for the sacrament.⁶² Indeed, the great majority of Jesuit editions of the Imitatio included the fourth Book on the Mass.⁶³

The contents of prefaces to editions of the Imitatio were in keeping with Jesuit correspondence. In December 1554, Erardus Avantianus wrote to Ignatius from Vienna, pointing out that scholastics (that is, novices) should read devotional works such as the Imitatio in preparing for the sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist.⁶⁴ Similarly, the rector of the Jesuit college in Cologne, Joannes Rethius, wrote to Diego Laynez on 16 January, 1558, recommending the promotion of piety with the allusion to

⁵⁹ G1572, ¶6'. See Michael Maher, 'Confession and consolation: the Society of Jesus and its promotion of the general confession', in Katharine Lualdi, and Anne Thayer, (eds.), Penitence in the Age of Reformation (Ashgate, 2000), pp. 184-200

⁶⁰ F1619, St. Omer, *2^r

⁶¹ "Ces trois remedes, comme nous lisons, ont esté fort visités en la primitiue Eglise, laquelle par ce moyen a esté tant chérie & caressée de Dieu", *ibid.*

⁶² "Ferner dz viert uñ letzt Büch / welchs D. Conrad Braun in recht teutsche sprach gebracht / ist ein gar Christliche underweisung vō de~ Hochwirdigen Sacrament des Altars... Were wol uñ vast zu wünschen / daß man auß disem büch mehrer andacht uñ beraitung in die jetzige / grobe / und ungöttische welt bringen köndt / nach dem die erfahrung nur zuuul bezeuget / daß d~ gemain hauff / mehr zur verdammuß / daß zum hail der Seeln / mehr auß gewonheit und leichtfertigkeit / daß mit rainem und inbrünstigem hertzen / diß hochwichtig Sacrament brauchet..." , taken from the 'Vorred zü dem Christlichen güchertzen Leser', G1572, ¶5^r

⁶³ See appendix.

⁶⁴ LQ, Vol. III., p. 209

frequent Confession and Communion, the recitation of the Rosary and reading of the Imitatio.⁶⁵

In the spirituality of the Imitatio and with the nature of the mini-catechisms and prefatorial material, one can see an interesting dimension of the Jesuit defence of the faith, namely the affirmation of the Catholic position without entering into polemical debate. Ignatius repeatedly advised that doctrinal issues should be avoided especially when preaching; instead there should be a clear exposition of Catholic teaching.⁶⁶ Indeed, not only should controversy generally be avoided, but it should be replaced with an element of self-critique. As Laínez stated in one of his Roman lectures, "contraries are cured by contraries. We must therefore lead good lives".⁶⁷ This element of self-assessment was in keeping with the Imitatio's spirituality. It reminded believers that the defence and even the promotion of the Roman Catholic faith could be undertaken by illustrating an exemplary life. This points to the importance in the Catholic Reformation of leading an exemplary Christian life, which had to lie at the centre of any missionary activity, for which reason the Imitatio was held in such high regard. While this study certainly does not claim that the Jesuits avoided polemical debate, they did not take every possible opportunity to dispute with their theological foes. Moreover, the notion of exemplarity was not insignificant in the Catholic defence of the faith, not to mention as a tool for conversion. This debate is curtly summarised by Robert Persons, in the preface to his First Booke of Christian Exercise, in which he wrote that controversial books were necessary, given the state of affairs, but that they did not contribute greatly to the promotion of a good life and could hinder devotion.⁶⁸

Despite this, devotional literature was not always free from polemic. There were, in particular, marked tensions over the appropriation of the Imitatio by the Protestant tradition. This is reflected implicitly in Hoskins's preface to the Imitatio: "assuring my selfe that it will be no lesse gratefull to You [namely, Elizabeth Vaux] to

⁶⁵ LQ, Vol. V., p. 515; see also his letter dated 22 May, 1558, LQ, Vol. V., p. 669

⁶⁶ Cited in O'Malley, 'Attitudes of Early Jesuits towards Misbelievers', in O'Malley, Religious Culture, p. 69

⁶⁷ Cited in O'Malley, Religious Culture, p. 69

⁶⁸ Robert Persons, The First Booke of Christian Exercise (1584)

see it appear in light, purged from many mistaken sentences which were in the former Translation, then the reading and practice thereof will be profitable to others".⁶⁹ Hoskins seemed to be relating the purging to the English Protestant tradition (as opposed to a faulty Catholic translation). More explicitly, Robert Persons denounced the incorporation of Medieval and Catholic works into the Protestant corpus of devotional literature, especially Edmund Bunny's Protestantisation of his Christian Directorie and also

"of one Rogers cited heer by M. Buny for translating, or rather peruerting in our English tongue, that excellent little Booke of Iohn Ierson, or rather of Thomas de Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ, and of others that haue offered the like iniury unto the heauenly meditations of S. Augustine, and S. Bernard, mending, or rather marring therein, what seemed best unto their owne appetites".⁷⁰

One can understand why Persons complained about the Protestant appropriation of his own work. His defence of the Imitatio can partly be attributed to the fact that its spirituality influenced his Christian Directory.⁷¹ Persons also referred to Protestant use of Catholic works for polemical purposes. Protestants translated Catholic devotional literature because, according to Persons, they did not have such works of their own. Persons attributed the absence of true devotion in the Protestant devotional tradition to their lack of spiritual depth:⁷² "For (alas) they are not come yet so far forward, nor euer are likely to doe".⁷³ Furthermore, the necessity of reading devotional works like the Imitatio was enforced by the multitude of "peruers and abhominable errors" transmitted by heterodox works to "seduce the simple people".⁷⁴

⁶⁹ E1613, *2^v

⁷⁰ Robert Persons, The First Booke of Christian Exercise (St. Omer, 1607), *1^v

⁷¹ David Salomon, Examinations of Conscience: Robert Parsons' Christian Directory and Catholic Spirituality in Post-Reformation England (PhD., University of Connecticut, 1999), p. 8

⁷² He defined true devotion to be "a prompt will towards all things that concerne Gods glory". Persons, (St. Omer, 1607), ***3^r

⁷³ Ibid., **7^v

⁷⁴ E1585b, A2^v

In other respects, the *Imitatio*'s spirituality was particularly suited to a climate of confessional polarity, especially with its emphasis on solitude where Catholics had to keep their faith quiet. Where the Mass was not celebrated due to an absence of priests, spiritual communion was both comforting and necessary. Furthermore, the *Imitatio*'s emphasis on suffering in the face of adversity and on bearing the cross in difficult circumstances seemed especially appropriate to a context of confessional polarity. This would be particularly true for the English recusant community as well as French Catholics during the French Wars of Religion. For this reason, it is fascinating that a French edition in 1619 included several prayers for periods of persecution ("prieres pour obtenir patience au temps de persecution") after the four Books. These prayers not only lie at the heart of the *Imitatio*'s spirituality, but include a dimension relevant to the particular context in which that edition was printed. The prayers pointed to the example of Christ, whose patience was perfectly shown by injuries, persecutions, torments and ultimately death on the Cross.⁷⁵ The reference to Christ as the Lamb of God is particularly apt, given that believers were called to sacrifice themselves as well. The prayers are petitionary, in that the believer was to ask for the endurance to suffer afflictions for Christ, such as accepting slander.⁷⁶ The context is such that there is even a prayer for enemies and for those who intend to inflict harm on the believer. The intent is to nurture the same spirituality of bearing with tribulations and slander, so that no vengeance would be taken out on enemies.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ "O Tres-benin Aigneau de Dieu, mon Seigneur Iesus Christ, ie te supplie par ton ineffable mansuetude, & part ta tres-douce patience, laquelle tu as tresparfaitement montree, iusques à la fin, entre toutes les iniures, persecutions, & tourmens qui t'ont esté faits: de vouloir illuminer mon coeur de ta grace, & mortifier en moy toute aigreur, morosité, cholere, & impatience à fin qu'à l'honneur de ta mort ie recoiue avec vn grand desir toutes les iniures, derisions, detractions, confusions, persecutions, peines, & autres fascheres qui peuuent tomber tant sus moy, que sus les miens". F1619, Douay, X4^v

⁷⁶ That prayer is entitled, "quand l'on te diffame, prie ainsi". *Ibid.* X5^r

⁷⁷ "Que nous n'entreprenions point de nous venger d'eux, n'y par parolles, ny par faits: & que le desir de vengeance ne soit point en nous: mais que nous en soyons tant esloignez, que mesmement nous leur aydions selon nostre pouuoir". *Ibid.* X5^v

Conclusion

Ignatius's attitude towards the Imitatio's stance on learning developed through various stages. The Imitatio's spirituality was appealing both before, during and after he had undertaken his formal education. The Imitatio also played a significant role in the Jesuit colleges and its spirituality neither contradicted nor undermined the Jesuit pedagogical enterprise. On the contrary, the challenging nature of its spirituality reinforced it. The Imitatio, moreover, conformed with the Jesuit understanding of piety and letters, subordinating the latter to the former, without rendering the promotion of learning meaningless. That the Imitatio fitted neatly into this context was hardly surprising when one considers the diffusion of the text within the universities of Alcalá and Paris in the early part of the sixteenth century. Not only was the system that underpinned Jesuit education (not to mention colleges in Paris and Alcalá) inspired by the Brethren of Common Life, but the Imitatio was perfectly suited to the devotional culture of the colleges. Colleges were noted for their rich religious culture, in which a sacramental, liturgical, para-liturgical, communal and private devotional life was both encouraged and actively pursued. Hence, the Imitatio's inward spirituality was particularly relevant as a preparation for participation in the sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist.⁷⁸ In this way, the colleges represented a microcosm of the broader devotional culture, providing a means by which novices could train for their imminent departure for the wider world. As Demoustier articulated, the Jesuit colleges were "le point de départ de la mission dans la société".⁷⁹

The centrality of interior reform was equally appropriate to the context of confessional polarity in the second half of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth. Polemical writings were meaningless, if the Christians who promoted them did not lead exemplary lives. Devotional literature was, consequently, instrumental in leading believers closer to Christ. By their example, devotional works

⁷⁸ These were the only two sacraments with which Jesuits were principally engaged.

⁷⁹ Adrien Demoustier, 'Les Jésuites et l'enseignement dans une société chrétienne', in Cornaz, (ed.), L'Église et l'éducation, p. 118

had the potential to attract 'unbelievers' to the Roman Catholic faith. While the basic substance of the Imitatio did not change, the framework for its spirituality was carefully constructed. It presented readers with confessional, sacramental and liturgical settings as backdrops to their devotional lives.

Chapter Ten. Conclusion

The incorporation of the Imitatio by Protestant and Catholic reform movements suggests important points of continuity between late medieval and early modern religion. The renewal of sixteenth and early seventeenth century Protestantism and Catholicism was by no means disassociated from the late medieval period; indeed, the links between late medieval and early modern religious culture were even closer in the realm of spirituality. The study of the Imitatio provides a fascinating insight into the paradoxical nature of this spirituality. The versatility of the Imitatio can partly be explained by the fact that its spirituality is not necessarily coupled with institutional forms. A spiritual text like the Imitatio was by nature far more flexible than a doctrinal one and more adept at transcending confessional boundaries. The ethical emphasis of the Imitatio, its interiority, its simplicity and intended renewal in Christ, were thus vital to its endurance in a culture deeply attached to the humanity and suffering of Christ.

The Imitatio's attention to interiority did not signify that the text was incompatible with the external manifestations of religious culture. That the Imitatio's spirituality was critical of the practice of pilgrimage and excessive devotion to the saints did not reflect a concern to uproot these devotional practices. It sought merely to prevent excesses and purify external practices. Indeed, the all-embracing nature of its spirituality ensured that devotional literature was as appropriate to the public sphere as to the private. Devotional texts could nurture communal devotion, be it para-liturgical (reading a Book of Hours in a household) or liturgical (meditating on a prayer book during the Mass). Furthermore, the benefits of devotional works like the Imitatio were also relevant to the secular domain; believers would seldom distinguish their religion from their daily lives. In this way, the experience of suffering, while often related to the Passion of Christ, could be simultaneously referred to natural phenomena. Natural disasters, financial hardship, plague and other diseases were rarely interpreted without reference to religion. The Imitatio was also used in another secular sphere, namely education. That the spirituality of the Imitatio smacked of a virulent anti-intellectualism

did not prevent its appropriation by Erasmians, to the Jesuits in particular and to Protestant educationalists like Sebastian Castellio.

In addition to the nature of the Imitatio's spirituality, the text's accessibility was reinforced by the expansive nature of late medieval and early modern translations. English and French translations of the Imitatio at the turn of the sixteenth century reflected the concern for *simplificatio*. Although the Imitatio addressed lay and monastic readers from the beginning, translators during the late medieval period recognised that the language of the Imitatio had favoured a more educated and, predominantly, clerical readership. They sought to make the text more comprehensible for the simple reader by breaking the language down. They achieved their task principally by elaborating upon the source language text. Without changing the underlying meaning or substance of the Imitatio, translators expanded the text by glossing the original. In this process, they simplified the text rather than providing an alternative interpretation. That lay readers were the principal targets of this appropriation was illustrated by the omission of all monastic terminology. It is interesting, nonetheless, to note that by omitting references to monasticism for the sake of accommodating lay piety, translators did not leave the target language text or end product in such a form that it was inaccessible to monks. The appropriation of the Imitatio for the laity did not mean that the text could not be used by monks.

Translation methodology was further expanded in the sixteenth century with the emergence of a Protestant tradition of the Imitatio. With the theological impetus of the Reformation, translation of the Imitatio took on a new dimension. Protestant translators, grounded in the essential tenets of Lutheran theology, inevitably revised or removed any explicitly Catholic elements of the Imitatio's spirituality. For this reason, the fourth Book on the Mass was omitted by all Protestant translators. While the Lord's Supper was considered to be a sacrament by both sides of the confessional divide, the respective Eucharistic theologies and their liturgical implications were hardly sources of unity. Moreover, the original text of the Imitatio was written from a standpoint consistent with the Catholic view of the after-life and, therefore, contained references to

purgatory and to intercessory prayers to the saints. While the Imitatio's Christocentricity cannot be denied, the saints were heralded as examples to the extent that they could and should be venerated. Consequently, Protestant translators emended these theological counterpoints in order that the Imitatio should not defy Protestant sensitivities.

Despite the apparent adaptability of spiritual currents, the promotion of the Imitatio tended to be undertaken by late-medieval and early modern movements which had links with the *devotio moderna*. While the different movements of the *devotio moderna* experienced a decline in the sixteenth century, the influence of the *devotio moderna* persisted. In late-medieval France, Jean Gerson was a central figure to the renewal of religious life and his defence of the Brethren of Common Life at the Council of Constance provided a clear staging post. The Imitatio was circulated so successfully in France partly because its spirituality fitted Gerson's model so aptly. In England, the Imitatio was circulated in circles of religious orders, especially the Carthusians and Bridgettines, whose links with the *devotio moderna* were marked. Like in France, the intention was to nurture lay and monastic piety. It is hardly coincidental that the Imitatio was circulated within the university of Paris, where the *modus Parisiensis* was influenced by the schools associated with the Brethren of Common Life. These same schools also impacted upon the development of Protestant education, notably with Jakob Sturm's time with the Liège Brethren. With their schools, the Brethren directly and indirectly influenced Heinrich Bullinger, Leo Jud, Caspar Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Castellio.

Most striking of all was the timing of the appearance of translations of the Imitatio. In each case, the Imitatio seemed to be printed at the critical stages of Protestant and Catholic Reformations. It does not seem coincidental that there were no editions of the Imitatio printed in the German-speaking lands from 1515 to 1530. Schwenckfeld's translation appeared in 1531, over a decade after the outbreak of the Reformation. Similarly, Jud's translation was first printed almost two decades after the Zurich Reformation was established. Castellio, given his place within early modern

Protestantism, is more difficult to place. However, it is intriguing that he undertook a Latin edition of the Imitatio towards the end of his career, presenting almost a synopsis of his religious views. The English Protestant translations by Hake and Rogers are also noteworthy in that they appeared during the Elizabethan period. In this way, the majority of Protestant translations were first printed at the later, more mature stages of Reformation. It seems particularly apt then that the Jesuits, who are traditionally viewed as the vanguards of the Counter-Reformation, should be so committed to the Imitatio.

This study has shown the place of the Imitatio in the development of Protestant and Catholic reform. Devotional works were vital to the maturing progress of Reformations, whatever the confession. The translators of the Imitatio firmly believed that no reformation was of any value without spiritual renewal. Spirituality was not a peripheral, insignificant dimension of religion; it remained at the very centre of Protestant and Catholic self-perception and identity.

Appendix A: The Imitatio Christi and the authorship debate

To this day, it cannot be stated with any certainty who wrote the Imitatio. The attribution of authorship to different writers was made as early as the manuscript and incunabula periods during which *incipits*, title pages and colophons referred either to Jean Gerson (1363-1429), the fifteenth-century Chancellor of the University of Paris, or to Thomas à Kempis (1379/80-1471), an Augustinian canon, or to St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), or else the work was left anonymous.¹

Numerous incunabula, such as the 1483 edition printed in Venice, promoted Gerson as the author,² while other editions frequently included his De meditatione cordis alongside the Imitatio.³ Kempis's name was also often used on title pages and his standing was further reinforced with the inclusion of the Imitatio in his Opera Omnia, printed in 1492 and 1494 at Nuremberg, and by Josse Bade in 1520 at Paris.⁴ The disagreements over authorship persisted into and throughout the sixteenth century with one additional, but less frequently cited, contender, Ludolph of Saxony (d. 1378).⁵ It is difficult to determine precise geographical trends for the attributions of authorship, although Kempis's name appeared more frequently in the German-speaking lands and in the Low Countries, while Gerson was more prominent in Spain, France and Italy.⁶ The early Jesuits called the Imitatio the "Gerçonzito", though they appeared to change tack in the early seventeenth century by which time they opted for Kempis's authorship.⁷

From the latter half of the sixteenth century onwards, and especially in the early seventeenth century, members of different religious orders vied with each other in proposing their respective claimants for authorship. The Augustinian canons and Jesuits

¹ See Pierre Debongnie and Jacques Huijben, L'auteur ou les auteurs de l'Imitation (Louvain, 1957) and my Appendix.

² L1483; see P.E. Puyol, Descriptions bibliographiques des manuscrits et des principales éditions du livre de Imitatione Christi (Paris, 1898), p. 450

³ For example, L1485c, L1486a, L1486b, L1487a, L1487c - hence, some editions attributed to Kempis also included Gerson's De meditatione cordis.

⁴ L1492Op, L1494Op, L1520Op.

⁵ Ludolph of Saxony: F1544a, F1544b. St. Bernard: L1481a, L[1488]a

⁶ See Appendix.

⁷ FN, Vol. I., p. 584; and see appendix.

normally attributed the text to Thomas à Kempis, while the Benedictines nominated Jean Gersen as author (different from Jean Gerson).⁸ Subsequent centuries did not lead to a decline in interest in the authorship debate. If one peruses the secondary works concerning the Imitatio in the British Library catalogue, over three quarters of the works listed relate to the authorship debate.⁹ In the nineteenth century, P. E. Puyol upheld the claims of Jean Gersen by referring to the French and Italian manuscript traditions of the Imitatio.¹⁰ Pierre Debongnie and Jacques Huijben contradicted Puyol and provided the most comprehensive defence of Kempis's authorship to date, not to mention a convincing refutation of Jean Gerson's claims.¹¹ To this scholarship was added the work of J. Van Ginneken, who asserted that the Imitatio could not be attributed to a single author. He argued that the basic framework for the Imitatio was, in the first instance, composed by Geert Grote, the founder of the *devotio moderna*, was subsequently embellished and refined by copyists including Gerard Zutphen, and finally completed by Thomas à Kempis.¹² While van Ginneken's interpretation is difficult to substantiate, it retains a certain plausibility and, above all, reminds the historian that the understanding of authorship and composition in the late medieval and early modern period can be far removed from that of modern times.

⁸ It was claimed that Gersen was an Italian Benedictine Abbot from the thirteenth century; it is unclear, however, whether he even existed at all. For details of these debates, see chapter five.

⁹ See under Haemmerlein (Thomas à Kempis's surname). British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books, Vol. 95., (London, 1961), p. 524

¹⁰ P. E. Puyol, Descriptions Bibliographiques des manuscrits et des principales éditions du livre De Imitatione Christi (Paris, Victor Retaux, 1898)

¹¹ In particular, Debongnie and Huijben pointed out that Gerson's brother, a prior of the Lyon Célestines, did not incorporate the Imitatio as part of Gerson's Opera Omnia. Debongnie and Huijben, L'auteur ou les auteurs de l'Imitation, p. 331

¹² Ibid., p. 42; Thomas à Kempis et la dévotion moderne: Catalogues d'exposition, Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er (1971), p. xv

Appendix B: Introduction to the bibliography on the Imitatio

In preparing a bibliography of the Imitatio, one is immediately aware of the potential loss of editions. Vernacular religious books were among those most likely to have disappeared entirely: for incunabula, that meant a loss rate of between 10 and 25 percent.¹ Vernacular works tended to be smaller and were more likely to be read outside a library. Franklin Williams discovered that 15 percent of the books once owned by the late sixteenth-century printer Andrew Maunsell are no longer traceable, illustrating that the loss of editions was no less severe a century later.² How this rate of lost editions can be compared with the Imitatio is almost impossible to determine. With many editions surviving in only one copy and with others only identifiable from bibliographical sources, one can surmise that many more editions were lost. Moreover, some bibliographies have excluded the Imitatio on the basis that it was too common. Jean Dagens, for example, noted that "nous avons renoncé à mentionner les rééditions innombrables qui paraissent pendant tout le seizième siècle sous les noms de Gerson ou de Thomas à Kempis".³ It is difficult to account for the loss rate of editions for the period under investigation (c.1472-1650), and hence, any statistical overview inevitably has its limitations and will forever remain work in progress.

The additional problem concerns the nature of the Imitatio. In a late medieval and early modern context, it was more likely for the Imitatio, as a private devotional book, to be kept within somebody's private quarters than the more public domain of a library. It was not the type of book that one showed off and was generally kept for one's personal devotion. The unwillingness to flaunt a devotional text was in keeping with the spiritual current of the text. It was also reflected in the physical size of editions which, more often than not, was relatively small.⁴ Possession of the elaborate and

¹ Rudolf Hirsch, cited in Anne-Jacobson Schutte, 'Printing, Piety and the People in Italy: The First Thirty Years', ARG, 71 (1980), pp. 8-9

² Franklin Williams, 'Lost books of Tudor England' Lib., 5th Series, Vol. 33, No.1 (March 1978), p. 7

³ Jean Dagens, Bibliographie chronologique de la littérature de spiritualité et de ses sources, 1501-1610 (Paris, 1953), p. 25

⁴ There are numerous editions between 140mm and 150mm in size, which is relatively small. For example: L1487e; L1492a; L1492b.

sizeable 1640 edition (commissioned by Cardinal Richelieu and the first book to be printed on the royal press of Louis XIII) provides solitary counter-evidence.⁵ For this reason perhaps, one cannot find as many copies of the Imitatio in late Medieval and Early Modern inventories as one might at first have anticipated. Schutz's analysis of vernacular books in Parisian private libraries included 220 notarial inventories, none of which mention the Imitatio.⁶ This is surprising given that from 1511 to 1551, no text was printed more frequently than the "Internelle consolation and other part translations of the Imitatio Christi".⁷

A statistical analysis is additionally necessitated by the absence of up-to-date bibliographies for the Imitatio. Augustin de Backer's nineteenth-century bibliography of editions is the most comprehensive work to date.⁸ While his survey extended beyond the seventeenth century, de Backer's work is incomplete and he seldom indicated where particular editions could be found. My bibliographical survey, while certainly not complete, has discovered numerous editions not listed by de Backer.⁹ The number of editions for each vernacular and Latin tradition from c. 1470 to 1650 are listed below:

⁵ L1640. This edition of the Imitatio has been described as an "éditions de luxe". Steinberg, Printing, p. 135; Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, (eds.), Histoire de l'édition française: Le livre conquérant du moyen âge au milieu du XVIe siècle (Fayard, 1982), p. 479

⁶ A. H. Schutz, Vernacular Books in Parisian Private libraries of the sixteenth century according to the notarial inventories (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 5; see also the relative absence of devotional works in M. Pellechet, Catalogue des Livres de la Bibliothèque d'un Chanoine d'Autun, Claude Guiland, 1493-1551 (Paris, 1890). The rare appearance, if not the absence, of devotional books in historical records is also reflected in late Medieval wills. P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Lay book ownership in late medieval York: the evidence of wills', Lib., 6th Series, Vol. XVI, No. 3 (September 1994), p. 186

⁷ Higman, Piety and the People, p. 7. Higman accounted for no less than 31 editions from 1511-1551. For that period alone, my project has uncovered a further five editions.

⁸ Augustin de Backer, Essai Bibliographique sur le livre De Imitatione Christi (Liège, 1864)

⁹ The difficulty of preparing a bibliography of the Imitatio is exacerbated by the authorship debate, not to mention Kempis's name. The following list provides an indication of the different titles under which the Imitatio can be found in library catalogues: Jesus Christ; Imitatio Christi; Imitation of Christ; Internelle Consolation; Gerson; Charlier de Gerson; Haemmerlein; Thomas à Kempis; and Kempis.

Statistical overview of Imitation of Christ (Work in progress!)

Language	Incunabula	1501-1550	1551-1600	1601-1650	Total
Dutch	1	18	17	33	69
English	0	13	17	22	51
French	9	36	25	41	111
German	7	16	20	24	68
Italian	16	27	40	24	107
Latin	63	45	52	92	252
Spanish	9	20	13	14	56
Miscellan. ¹⁰	0	0	4	13	17
Total	105	175	189	262	731

The number of editions is testimony to the text's persistent appeal, especially since the number of copies of a specific edition is seldom quantifiable. Michael Milway's description of the publishing history of incunabula rings true for the later period; it "still constitutes the most reliable index of a book's popularity and the most objective manifestation of a century's literary taste".¹¹ Even if a figure for the print run is known, it merely reflected the foresight and judgement of publishers more than the reading taste of the public, since there is no indication whether editions sold out.¹² Furthermore, given the great diversity in the size of editions it is difficult to give an average number, although by the middle of the incunabula period there were between 400 and 500 copies per edition.¹³ Since such information is scarcely available, the number of editions of a book represents the greatest indication of the demand. It reflected the insight of printers and/or booksellers, who "relied on their skill in judging what the public wanted".¹⁴

¹⁰ These include Chinese, Czech, Greek, Hungarian, Japanese and Polish.

¹¹ That it represents the most reliable indication does not mean that it cannot be questioned. Milway himself placed the Imitatio at number 28 on his list, with 72 incunabula editions, while my bibliographical survey accounted for 105 editions. Michael Milway, 'Forgotten Best-sellers from the dawn of the Reformation', in Robert Bast, and Andrew Gow, (ed.), Continuity and Change: the harvest of late Medieval and Reformation History (Brill, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), pp. 119, 141

¹² Leonardas Gerulutis, Printing and Publishing in fifteenth century Venice (Mansell Information, London, 1976), p. 8

¹³ Ibid., p. 8

¹⁴ H. S. Bennett, 'Printers, Authors and Readers 1475-1557', Lib., 5th Series, Vol. 6, No. 3, (December 1949), p. 156

Tables 1.1 to 1.5 correspond to chapter three and illustrate the distribution of editions from the incunabula period through to the early 1530s.

Table 1.1	Incunabula Editions	1501-1530
Language	Total number of editions	Total number of editions
Dutch	1	17
English	0	6
French	9	10
German	8	6
Italian	14	17
Latin	63	29
Spanish	7	6
TOTAL	102	91

Table 1.2	Top Cities
Incunabula editions	1501-1530
Place of publication	Place of publication
Paris - 20	Paris - 24
Venice - 14	Venice - 14
Florence - 8	Antwerp - 13
Augsburg - 6	London - 7
Milan - 4	Cologne - 6
Ulm - 3	Florence - 5
TOTAL = 55	TOTAL = 69

Table 1.3	Incunabula Editions
Country of Publication	Number of Latin editions
France	18
Germany	24
Italy	15
Low Countries	4
Country Unknown	2
TOTAL	63

Table 1.4	Incunabula Editions	1501-1530
Place of Publication	Latin editions	Latin editions
Alcala	0	1
Antwerp	2	1
Augsburg	3	0
Basle	1	0
Brescia	2	0
Cologne	2	4
Florence	1	0
Ingolstadt	1	0
Leiden	0	1
London	0	1
Louvain	2	0
Luneborch	1	0
Lyon	4	1
Magdeburg	2	0
Memmingen	2	0
Metz	1	0
Milan	2	1
Nuremberg	4	0
Paris	13	14
Rome	1	0
Strasburg	5	0
Tubingen	1	0
Ulm	2	0
Venice	9	5
Place unknown	2	0
TOTAL	63	29

Table 1.5	Incunabula Editions	1501-1530
Dutch	Dutch	17
Antwerp	0	12
Cologne	0	1
Hem (?)	0	1
Leiden	1	2
Rostock	0	1
English	English	6
London	0	6
French	French	10
Paris	7	10
Rouen	1	0
Toulouse	1	0
German	German	6
Augsburg	3	2
Cologne	0	2
Constance	0	1
Lubeck	4	0
Magdeburg	0	1
Ulm	1	0
Italian	Italian	17
Florence	7	5
Milan	2	3
Venice	5	9
Spanish	Spanish	6
Barcelona	1	1
Burgos	1	1
Logroño	0	1
Saragossa	1	0
Seville	2	2
Toledo	1	1
Valencia	1	0
TOTAL	39	62

Short Title Catalogue of all Latin and vernacular editions of
the Imitatio Christi, c. 1470-1650

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
L[1471]	Augsburg	Gunther Zainer	2o	4	Kempis	D1, BL
L1472	Tubingen	=	=	=	Kempis	D12
L1480	Cologne	P. ter Hoernen	4o	=	=	JR
L1481a	Brescia	Jacobus Britannicus	12o	=	Bernard	D13
L1481b	Paris	Marnef	8o	=	Gerson	D14
L1481c	Strasbourg	=	=	=	Gerson	D15
L1482	Metz	Johannes Colini, & Gerhard von Neustadt	4o	=	Anon.	D16, BL
L1483	Venice	P. Loeslein de Langencenn	4o	4	Gerson	D17, BL
L[1484-1487]	Louvain	Johannes de Westfalia	4o	=	Gerson	BN
L1485a	=	=	=	=	=	D18
L1485b	Brescia	Jacobus Britannicus	8o	=	Gerson	D19, BL
L1485c	Venice	D. Bertochum, & P. de Pasqualibus	4o	4	Gerson	D20, BL
L[1485]	Louvain	Johannes de Westfalia	4o	=	Gerson	D4, BL
L[1486]	Cologne	P. ter Hoernen	4o	=	=	D3, BL
L1486a	Venice	Franciscus de Madiis	8o	4	Gerson	D21, BL
L1486b	Venice	Bernardino Benagli	4o	4	Gerson	D22, BL
L[1486-1491]	Antwerp	Mathias van der Goes	4o	=	Gerson	BN
L1487a	Augsburg	J. Schönsperger	8o	4	Gerson	D23
L1487b	Basle	=	8o	4	=	D27
L1487c	Nuremberg	=	=	=	Kempis	D28
L1487d	Strasbourg	Martin Flach	4o	4	Kempis	D25, BL
L1487e	Ulm	Johannes Zainer	8o	4	Gerson	D24, BL
L1487f	Ulm	Johannes Zainer	8o	4	Gerson	BN
L1488a	Augsburg	Erhard Ratdolt	4o	4	Gerson	D29, BL
L1488b	Lyon	Du Pre	=	=	=	D32
L1488c	Milan	Leonardus Pachel	8o	4	Gerson	D31, BL
L1488d	Venice	Bernardino Benagli	8o	4	Gerson	D30, BL
L[1488]a	Lyon	Guillaume Balsarin	8o	4	Bernard	BN
L[1488]b	Lyon	Jean Carcain	8o	4	Gerson	TBM
L1489a	Ingolstadt	=	=	=	Kempis	D36

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
L1489b	Lyon	Johann Trechsel	4o	==	Kempis	D37, BL
L1489c	Memmingen	=	==	==	Kempis	D38
L1489d	Paris	Johann Higman for G. & E. de Marnef	8o	4	Gerson	D33, BL
L1489e	Strasbourg	Martin Flach	==	==	Kempis	D35
L1489f	Strasbourg	[Johann Prüss]	8o	4	Kempis	D34, BL
L1489g	Strasbourg	[Adolph Rusch]	8o	==	==	JR
L1490	Saragossa	=	==	==	==	<u>GJ</u> (1987)
L[1491-1492]	Paris	Philippe Pigouchet for E. J. & G. de Marnef	8o	4	Gerson	D39, BL
L1492a	[Nuremberg]	[Anton Koberger]	8o	4	==	D40, BL
L1492b	Paris	[Pierre Levet] for G. de Marnef	8o	4	Gerson	EU
L1492c	Paris	Philippe Pigouchet for E. J. & G. de Marnef	8o	4	Gerson	D41, BL
L1492Op	Nuremberg	Caspar Hochfeder	==	==	Kempis	DA
L1493a	Luneborch	Johann Luce	8o	4	Kempis	D44, BL
L1493b	Memmingen	=	==	==	==	HC3234
L1493c	Rome	Stephan Planck	8o	==	Gerson	D42, NUC
L1493d	Venice	Petrus de Quarengiis Giovanni Maria di Occiminiano	8o	4	Gerson	D43, BL
L1494	Nuremberg	Caspar Hochfeder	==	==	Kempis	D45
L1494Op	Nuremberg	Caspar Hochfeder	==	==	Kempis	DA
L[1495]a	[Milan]	[Scinzenzeler]	==	==	Gerson	NUC
L[1495]b	Paris	[Felix Baligault] for E. J. & G. de Marnef	8o	==	Gerson	BN
L1496a	Paris	Georg Mittelhus	8o	4	Gerson	D46, BL
L1496b	Venice	[Georgius Arrivabenus]	8o	4	Gerson	D47, BL
L[1496]	[Magdeburg]	[Moritz Brandiss]	4o	==	Kempis	D8, BL
L1497	Florence	Johannes Petri	8o	4	Gerson	D48, BL
L1498a	Paris	Johannes Higman	8o	==	Gerson	D50
L1498b	Paris	Pierre Le Dru	8o	4	Gerson	D49, BL
L1498c	Paris	Philippe Pigouchet	12o	==	Gerson	D51
L[14??]	=	=	4o	4	Kempis	MSB
L[1498-1500]	[Magdeburg]	[Moritz Brandis] for Johannes Numburg	4o	==	Kempis	BN

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
L1500a	Antwerp	Eckert de Homberch	16o	==	==	HC3237
L1500b	Paris	Badius	==	==	Kempis	D54
L1500c	Paris	Johannes Parvus	8o	==	Gerson	DB52
L1500d	Venice	[Antonius de Zanchis]	8o	4	Gerson	D53, NUC
L1501a	Cologne	retro Minores, M. de Werdena	8o	4	Kempis	D55, BL
L1501b	Paris	Johannes Parvus	8o	==	==	D57, Ad.
L1501c	Venice	J. Baptista Sessa	8o	==	Gerson	D56, BL
L1503a	Cologne	retro Minores, [M. de Werdena]	8o	4	Kempis	D59, BL
L1503b	London	=	==	==	Gerson	D61
L1503c	Milan	Alexandrus Pelizonus	8o	==	Gerson	D58, Ad.
L1503d	Paris	Gaspard Philippe for Johannes Parvus	8o	==	Gerson	D60, BL
L1505	Paris	Gaspard Philippe for D. Rosse & J. Petit	8o	4	Gerson	D62
L1507a	Cologne	Martin de Werdena	8o	4	Kempis	BL
L1507b	Paris	Johannes Parvus	8o	4	Gerson	D63, BL
L1509	Cologne	Martin de Werdena	4o	4	Kempis	D64, FC
L[151?]	Venice	[B. & A. Bindonos]	8o	==	Gerson	NUC
L1510	Paris	Johannes Parvus	8o	4	Gerson	D65, FC
L1512	Paris	Marnef	==	==	==	PSG
L1513a	Paris	T. Kees for J. Lamberto	8o	==	Gerson	D66, BN
L1513b	Paris	Johannes Petit	8o	==	Gerson	D67
L1515	Paris	Johannes Parvus	8o	==	Gerson	D68, BL
L[1515]	Paris	G. & E. de Marnef	8o	4	Gerson	FC
L1516	Venice	=	4o	==	==	RS
L1517	Paris	Johannes Parvus	8o	==	Gerson	D69, BL
L1518a	Antwerp	Eckert de Homberch	8o	4	Gerson	D70, BL
L1518b	Paris	=	==	==	==	D72
L1518c	Venice	C. Arrivabenus	8o	4	Gerson	D71, BL
L1519	Paris	Regnault Chaudiere	8o	4	Gerson	BL
L[1520]	[Paris]	Jean Petit	8o	4	Gerson	BL
L1520Op	Paris	J. Badius	==	==	Kempis	DA
L1521	Paris	J. Badius	8o	==	Gerson	BL

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
L1524	Venice	Benedictus and Augustinus Bindonos	8o	4	Gerson	D73, BL
L1526	Alcalá	Michael de Eguia	8o	4	Kempis	D74, BL
L1529	Lyon	A. Blanchard	8o	==	==	BN
L1530	Leiden	==	==	==	==	D76
L1535a	Venice	Aurelius Pincius	16o	==	==	BL
L1535b	Venice	Stephan Sabiens	16o	==	==	D77
L1536a	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	16o	==	Gerson	D78, Ad.
L1536b	Venice	Bernardinus Stagninus	16o	==	Kempis	D97, BL
L1537	Antwerp	William Vorsterman	16o	4	Kempis	BL
L[15??]	Antwerp	William Vorsterman	8o	==	==	BN
L1538a	Antwerp	Joannes Grapheus for Joannes Steels	16o	4	Kempis	D75, Br.
L1538b	Venice	Putei	==	==	==	MSB
L1541	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	==	==	==	BT
L1544	Venice	Bernardinus Bindono	16o	==	==	D80
L1545	Lyon	Theobaldus Paganus	16o	==	Gerson	BL
L1546a	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	16o	==	Kempis	BL
L1546b	Paris	Joannes de Roigny	16o	==	Gerson	BL
L1550	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	==	==	Kempis	D81, Fb.
L1551	Lyon	==	==	==	==	MSB
L1552	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	12o	==	==	D82, FC
L1554	Lyon	Theobaldus Paganus	16o	4	Gerson	D83, BL
L1555	Lyon	Theobaldus Paganus	16	4	Gerson	D84, BL
L1556	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	16o	==	==	Ad.
L1561a	Lyon	Theobaldus Paganus	==	==	Gerson	NUC
L1561b	Venice	Franciscus Laurentinus	16o	==	Gerson	BL
L1561c	Vienna	Jesuit college press	8o	4	Gerson	MSB
L1561d	Vienna	Jesuit college press	8o	4	Gerson	MUB
L1562	Cologne	Werner Richwin	8o	4	Kempis	D85, MUB
L1563a	Basle	[Peter Perna]	8o	3Prot.	Kempis	D87, BL
L1563b	Cologne	Maternus Cholinus	12o	4	Kempis	BL
L1564a	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	16o	==	==	D105
L1564b	Cologne	Arnold Birckmann	8o	3Prot.	Kempis	D88, Ad.
L1564c	Cologne	Werner Richwin	8o	4	Kempis	D86, FC

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
L1564d	Lyon	Jacobus Juncta	8o	4	Gerson	D106, FC
L1565	Basle	=	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	D89, NUC
L1567a	Basle	=	8o	3Prot.	Kempis	D107
L1567b	Lyon	Jacobus Juncta	16o	4	Gerson	BL
L1567c	Venice	Guerra	24o	=	=	D108
L1568	Venice	Philip Juniani	=	=	=	D109
L1569	Antwerp	=	12o	=	Kempis	D110
L1570a	Cologne	Maternus Cholinus	12o	4	Kempis	D112, BL
L1570b	Louvain	Ioannes Foulerus	12o	=	Kempis	D111, BL
L1570c	Lyon	Jacobus Juncta	16o	4	Gerson	D113, BL
L1571a	Crakow	=	=	=	=	D115
L1571b	Dillingen	Sebald Mayer	16o	4	Kempis	D114, BL
L1572	Venice	Antonius Bertanus	16o	4	Gerson	BL
L1573a	Paris	Jerome de Marnef & William Cavellat	16o	=	Gerson	D116
L1573b	Paris	=	16o	=	Gerson	D117
L1575a	Antwerp	Joannes Bellerus	16o	4	Kempis	D121, BT
L1575b	Antwerp	Joannes Steels	12o	=	Kempis	D119, FC
L1575c	Cologne	Ludovicus Alectorius	16o	4	Kempis	D120, BL
L1575d	Louvain	J. Masius	12o	=	=	D118, BT
L1576a	Basle	=	16o	3Prot.	Kempis	D90, BL
L1576b	Dillingen	=	=	=	=	PSG
L1579	Lyon	Ioannes Iacobus Iuncta	16o	4	Gerson	D122, BL
L[1580-1590]	Dillingen	Ioannes Mayer	12o	4	Kempis	D537, BL
L1582	Cologne	Maternus Cholinus	12o	4	Kempis	D123, FC
L1583	Rome	Franciscus Zanettus	16o	4	Gerson	D124, BL
L1585a	Lyon	Iunta & Paul Guitius	16o	4	Gerson	D126, BL
L1585b	Vilnae	Ioannes Velicens	12o	=	Kempis	D125, BL
L1587a	Cologne	Maternus Cholinus	12o	4	Kempis	D128, FC
L1587b	Lyon	Iunta	16o	4	Gerson	D127, BL
L1592	Cologne	Birckmann, Arnold Mylius	16o	4	Kempis	D129, BL
L1594	Cologne	=	=	=	=	D130
L1595	Cologne	Birckmann, Arnold Mylius	16o	4	Kempis	MSB

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
L1596	Cologne	Birckmann, Arnold Mylius	16o	4	Kempis	D131, BL
L1599a	Antwerp	Plantin, Ioannes Moretus	24o	4	Kempis	D133, BL
L1599b	Cologne	Birckmann, Arnold Mylius	16o	4	Kempis	D132, BL
L[1600]a	Augustoriti Pictonum	Antonius Mesnerius	12o	==	==	W, BN
L[1600]b	Dillingen	Joannes Mayer	16o	4	Kempis	MUB
L1601a	Antwerp	Plantin, Ioannes Moretus	12o	4	Kempis	D134, BL
L1601b	Lyon	Horace Cardon	==	==	Gerson	FC
L1602	Douai	Bogard	==	==	==	Nij.
L1604	Graecum	=	==	==	==	MSB
L1606a	Basle	=	==	3Prot.	Kempis	NUC
L1606b	Cologne	Birckmann, Hermann Mylius	16o	4	Kempis	BL
L1606c	Crakow	N. Lob	24o	4	Kempis	D135, BL
L1607a	Antwerp	Plantin, Ioannes Moretus	12o	4	Kempis	D136, BL
L1607b	Rothomagi	Allemanum	==	==	==	BN
L1608a	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	32o	==	==	BL
L1608b	Lyon	Horace Cardon	16o	4	Gerson	BL
L1610a	Cologne	Conrard Butgenius	16o	4	Kempis	D138, FC
L1610b	Douai	Joannes Bogard	24o	==	Kempis	D137, Nij.
L1611	Cologne	Bernardus Gualterus	==	4	Kempis	NUC
L1612a	Cologne	Birckmann, Hermann Mylius	==	4	Kempis	FC
L1612b	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	16o	4	Kempis	D139, BL
L1612c	Munich	Widow of Bergin	24o	4	Kempis	BL
L1614a	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	32o	4	Kempis	D140, FC
L1614b	Munich	Widow of Bergin	24o	4	Kempis	BL
L1615OPa	Antwerp	Nutius	==	==	Kempis	Kr.
L1615b	Augsburg	Christophorus Mangius	12o	4	Kempis	FC
L1615c	Lyon	Pietri Rigaud	==	==	==	BN
L1616a	Antwerp	Gaspard Bellere	32o	4	Kempis	BL

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L1616b	Cologne	=	=	=	=	MUB
L1616c	Paris	Nivelle, Sebastian Cramoisy	12o	4	Gersen	D155, BL
L1616d	Rome	Vincentius Castellanus	24o	=	=	BL
L1616e	Rome	Jacobus Mascardus	12o	4	Gersen	BL
L1617a	Antwerp	Plantin, Balthasar & Joannes Moretus	12o	4	Kempis	D161, BL
L1617b	Douai	Bellere	=	=	=	Nij.
L1618	Paris	=	=	=	=	PSG
L1619a	Cologne	Bernard Gualterus	12o	4	Kempis	D141, FC
L1619b	Paris	Sebastian Chappelles	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1620a	Bremen	Thomas Villerianus	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
L1620b	Luxemburg	Hubertus Reuland	32o	4	Kempis	D162, BL
L1620c	Ursellis	Antonius Hieratus	12o	4	Kempis	BL
L1621a	Munich	Widow of Bergin	8o	4	Kempis	BL
L1621b	Westphalian monastery	Michael Dalius	12o	4	Kempis	BL
L1622a	Cologne	Joannes Kinckius	=	4	Kempis	FC
L1622b	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	32o	4	Kempis	D165, BL
L1622c	Paris	=	=	=	=	MSB
L1623	Leodii	Joannes Tournay	=	4	Kempis	FC
L1624a	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1624b	Flexiae	G. Griveau	=	4	Kempis	NUC
L1624c	Rothomagi	Miermani	=	=	=	BN
L1625	Douai	=	12o	=	=	D142
L[1626]	[Antwerp]	=	=	=	=	NUC
L1626a	Antwerp	Plantin, B. Moretus	12o	4	Kempis	BL
L1626b	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1626c	Dillingen	=	=	=	=	MUB
L1626d	Milan	Archebiscopal press	24o	4	Kempis	BL
L1627	Antwerp	Plantin	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1628	Amsterdam	Henricus Laurentius	24o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
L1629	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1630a	Antwerp	Plantin, Balthasar Moretus	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1630b	Cologne	=	12o	4	Kempis	D213

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L1630c	Rothomagi	Carolus Osmond	==	4	Kempis	FC
L[1630]	Lyon	J. & D. Elsevirios	12o	4	Kempis	FC
L1632	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	==	==	Kempis	Nij.
L1633	Paris	=	==	==	=	MUB
L1634a	Antwerp	Henricus Aertsen	32o	==	=	BL
L1634b	Antwerp	Plantin, Balthasar Moretus	==	4	Kempis	FC
L1634c	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	16o	4	Kempis	BL
L1635	Paris	Franc. Valgravius	==	==	=	MSB
L1638a	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	==	==	=	BL
L1638b	Paris	=	==	==	=	MSB
L1639a	Lucerne	Johannes Herderlein	24o	4	Kempis	BL
L1639b	Paris	Claudius Calleville	==	4	Kempis	NUC
L1640	Paris	Typographia Regia	2o	4	=	BL
L1641a	Munich	Cornelius Leyserius	24o	4	Kempis	BL
L1641b	Paris	=	==	==	=	PSG
L1642	Munich	Melchior Segen	24o	4	Kempis	BL
L1643a	Antwerp	Plantin, Balthasar	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1643b	Cologne	Joannes Kinckius Moretus	==	==	Kempis	FC
L1643c	=	=	16o	4	Kempis	BL
L1644a	Antwerp	Cnobbaert	==	==	=	D176
L1644b	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1644c	Rome	Sacred Congregation of the Faith	8o	4	Gersen	BL
L1647a	Antwerp	Plantin, Balthasar Moretus	12o	4	Kempis	BL
L1647b	Cologne	Cornelius ab Egmond	==	==	=	D177
L1647c	Lyon	Benedictus Bache	32o	4	Kempis	BL
L1647d	Lyon	Rigaud brothers	12o	4	Kempis	Fib.
L1648	Paris	=	==	==	=	MSB
L1649a	Brussels	Mommartius	==	4	Gersen	FC
L1649b	Lucerne	David Haultus	24o	4	Kempis	BL
L1649c	Paris	Sebastien and Gabriel Cramoisy	8o	4	Kempis	BL
L1649d	Vienna	Matthaeus Cosmerovius	8o	4	Kempis	BL

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L1650a	Ingolstadt	=	=	=	=	MUB
L1650b	Paris	Cramoisy	=	=	=	PSG
L1650c	Venice	Merlo Horstius	=	=	=	MSB
L[1650]	Rome	Jacobus Mascaro	=	4	Gersen	NUC
L[????]a	Louvain	H. Nempei	=	4	Kempis	FC
L[????]b	=	=	8o	=	=	BN
D[1496]	Leiden	Hugo Janszoon van Woerden	8o	=	=	LUL
D1504	Hem	Regulieren	=	3	=	Nij
D1505a	Antwerp	Adr. van Bergen	8o	=	=	D2372, BL
D1505b	Antwerp	[H. Eckert]	8o	=	=	BL
D1505c	Antwerp	H. Eckert van Homberch	8o	=	=	BL
D1505d	[Leiden]	=	8o	=	=	Nij
D1507	[Rostock]	[Hermann Barkhusen]	4o	=	=	BSB
D1510	Cologne	Bungart	=	=	=	D1852
D1511	Antwerp	Henric Eckert	8o	=	=	D2373, BL
D1514	Antwerp	Henric Eckert	8o	=	=	BL
D1516	Antwerp	=	=	=	=	D2373a
D1517	Antwerp	Henric Eckert	8o	=	=	Nij
D1519	Leiden	Jan Seversz	8o	=	=	D2374, BL
D[1520]	Antwerp	Willem Vorsterman	8o	=	=	D2370, BL
D[1525]	Antwerp	Willem Vorsterman	8o	=	=	D2371, BL
D1525	Antwerp	Willem Vorsterman	8o	=	=	D2374b
D[1530]	Antwerp	Willem Vorsterman	8o	=	=	BL
D[1544]	[Antwerp]	W. van Vissenaken	=	=	=	BT
D1548	Antwerp	Henrick Peeters	8o	=	Kempis	BL
D1552	Antwerp	widow of Henrick Peeters	=	=	Kempis	D2375, Nij
D1556	Antwerp	widow of Henrick Peeters	8o	=	Kempis	D2376, BL

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D1558	Antwerp	J. Roelants	==	==	Kempis	BT
D1564a	Antwerp	Jan van Ghelen	8o	==	Kempis	BL
D1564b	Vianen	Buyter	8o	==	==	D2381, Nij
D1565a	Antwerp	J. Roelants	==	==	Kempis	BT
D1565b	Antwerp	Jan van Waesberghe	8o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2382, BL
D1568	Munster	Johan Ossenbrug	12o	==	==	BSB
D1571a	Antwerp	Jan van Waesberghe	8o	4	Kempis	D2383
D1571b	Wittenberg	==	4o	==	==	VD16
D1576	Louvain	Jan Maes	8o	==	Kempis	D2377, BT
D1577a	Antwerp	Gheeraert Smits	12o	==	Kempis	D2384, FC
D1577b	Reesz	Derick Willix van Santen	==	==	==	D2385, Nij
D[1581]	Rotterdam	Dierick Mullem	16o	==	==	BL
D1591	Antwerp	Hieronimus Verdusse	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
D1597	Antwerp	Hieronimus Verdusse	==	==	Kempis	BT
D1598	Antwerp	Jan van Waesberghe	8o	4	Kempis	D2386, BL
D1601	Louvain	Jan Maes	8o	==	Kempis	D2378, BL
D1606	Antwerp	Jan van Keerbergen	12o	==	==	BL
D1610	Antwerp	Jan van Keerbergen	12o	==	Kempis	D2387, FC
D1615a	Antwerp	Stroobandt	==	==	==	Nij
D1615b	Louvain	==	==	==	==	D2379, Nij
D1617	Antwerp	Hieronimus Verdusse	12o	==	Kempis	BL
D1619	Antwerp	Jan van Keerbergen	==	==	Kempis	Nij
D1624	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	16o	==	Kempis	D2388, FC
D1628a	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	12o	==	Kempis	D2389
D1628b	Ghent	Kerchove	==	==	==	Nij
D1628c	Louvain	Jan Maes	8o	4	Kempis	D2380, BL
D1629a	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	16o	==	Kempis	D2391, BL
D1629b	's-Hertogenbosch	==	==	==	Kempis	D2390
D[1630]	Antwerp	[Godtgaf Verhulst]	32o	==	Kempis	BL
D1631a	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	==	==	Kempis	Nij
D1631b	Antwerp	Jan Cnobbaert	16o	==	Kempis	BL
D1633	Rotterdam	van Waesberghe	==	==	==	D2394
D1634	Antwerp	Jan Cnobbaert	==	==	Kempis	Nij
D1635	's-Hertogenbosch	Scheffer	==	==	==	Nij
D1636	Antwerp	Jan Cnobbaert	12o	==	==	BL

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D1637	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	==	==	Kempis	Nij
D1640	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	==	==	Kempis	Nij
D[1640]a	Antwerp	P. Jouret	32o	==	Kempis	BL
D[1640]b	Louvain	N. Braau	16o	==	==	BL
D1642	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	12o	==	Kempis	Nij
D1644a	Antwerp	Jan Cnobbaert	16o	==	Kempis	D2395, BL
D1644b	Antwerp	Verdussen	==	==	==	Nij
D1645	Dordrecht	P. Loymans, & M. de Bot	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
D1648	Antwerp	Jan Cnobbaert	12o	==	Kempis	BL
D1649	Antwerp	Hendrick Aertssens	12o	==	Kempis	D2402, BL
D[1650]a	Antwerp	widow of Jan Cnobbaert	16o	==	Kempis	BL
D[1650]b	Antwerp	Hieronimus Verdusse	32o	==	==	BL
D[????]	Antwerp	Michiel Cnobbaert	==	==	Kempis	FC
E1503	London	Richard Pynson	4o	4	Gerson	D2285, BL
E1504	London	Richard Pynson	4o	4	==	D2286
E[1515]	London	Wynkyn de Worde	4o	4	Gerson	D2284, BL
E1517	London	Richard Pynson	4o	4	==	D2287, STC
E1522	London	Wynkyn de Worde	4o	Only 4	==	JR
E[1525]	London	Wynkyn de Worde	4o	4	==	BL
E[1531]a	London	Robert Wyer	8o	4	==	NUC
E[1531]b	London	Robert Wyer	8o	4	==	NUC
E[1531]c	London	[Robert Redman]	8o	4	==	SC
E[15??]	London	Robert Wyer	16o	==	==	D2289
E[1535]	London	Thomas Godfray	8o	4	Gerson	D2289, BL
E[1545]a	[London]	==	8o	4	==	BL
E[1545]b	London	William Middleton	8o	4	==	BL
E1556	London	John Cawood	8o	4	==	D2290, BL
E1566	London	John Cawood	8o	==	==	NUC
E1567	London	Henry Denham	8o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2292, NUC
E1568	London	Henry Denham	8o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2293, BL
E[1571]	London	Henry Denham	8o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
E1580	London	Henry Denham	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL

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E1582	London	Henry Denham	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
E1584	London	Henry Denham	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2295, BL
E1585a	London	Henry Denham	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
E1585b	[Rouen]	[G. L'Oyselet]	12o	4	Gerson	D2301, BL
E1585c	=	=	8o	=	Gerson	D2291
E1587	London	Henry Middleton	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
E1589	London	Henry Denham	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2296, NUC
E1592	London	Peter Short and Richard Yardly	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2297, BL
E1596	London	Peter Short	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2297, BL
E1598	London	=	16o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2298
E1600	London	Peter Short	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	STC
E1602	London	Peter Short	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	D2299, BL
E1605	London	[H. Lownes] for Co. of Stationers	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
E1607	London	[W. Jaggard, N. Okes] for Co.of Stationers	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	NUC
E1609	London	[H. Lownes] for Co. of Stationers	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	NUC
E1613	[St. Omer]	=	8o	4	Kempis	D2302, STC
E1615	[St. Omer]	=	12o	4	Kempis	D2303, STC
E1616	Mackline	H. Jaye	18o	4	Kempis	STC
E1617	London	[H. Lownes] for Co. of Stationers	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
E1620	[St. Omer]	=	12o	4	Kempis	BL
E1624a	[St. Omer]	=	12o	4	Kempis	STC
E1624b	[St. Omer]	[C. Boscard], John Heigham	24o	4	Kempis	STC
E1628	London	[Peter Short]	12o	3Prot.	=	D2300
E1629	London	[H. Lownes, R. Young] for Co.of Stationers	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL
E1633	[Rouen & Paris]	John Cousturier	16o	4	Kempis	BL

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E1636a	London	[M. Dawson] for Co. of Stationers	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	BL	
E1636b	Paris	Mistris Blageart	16o	==	Kempis	BL	
E1639	Oxford	Leonard Lichfield, for E. Forrest	12o	4	Kempis	BL	
E1640	London	E. P[urslowe] for Co. of Stationers	12o	3Prot.	Kempis	NUC	
E1641	=	=	12o	==	==	PSG	
E1642	Cambridge	R. Daniell	16o	==	==	BL	
E[????]a	Southwarke	Johann Redman	16o	==	Kempis	D2288	
E[????]b	London	=	8o	==	==	D2294	
F[1486]	Paris	Jean Du Pré	8o	3Int.	==	D1436	
F1488	Toulouse	Henric Maier	8o	4Imit.	Bernard, Gerson	D546, BN	
F[1489-1490]	[Paris/Lyon]	[Jean Du Pré]	2o	3Int.	==	D1435, BN	
F1493	Paris	Jean Lambert	4o	4Imit.	Bernard, Gerson	D547, PG	
F1494	Paris	Jean Lambert, for André Bocard	4o	==	==	D548, Sor.	
F[1495]a	Paris	Jean Du Pré	8o	==Int.	==	D1439	
F[1495]b	Paris	Jean Trepperel	4o	4Imit.	Kempis	D549, BN	
F1498	Rouen	Jean le Bourgeois	8o	4Int.	==	D1437, PM	
F1500	Paris	Michel Le Noir	4o	3Int.	==	D1438, PG	
F1514	Paris	=	8o	==	==	D1440	
F1520	Paris	Jean Du Pré, for [Pierre Viart]	8o	3Int.	==	D1441, PM	
F[1520]	Paris	Philippe Le Noir	4o	==	==	D550	
F1522a	Paris	Pierre Leber, for Ambroise Girault	8o	==	3Int.	==	D1443
F1522b	Paris	Jean Du Pré, Pierre Viart	8o	3Int.	==	D1442, PM	
F[1525]	Paris	Philippe Le Noir	4o	4Imit.	==	PG	

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F[1527]	Paris	Nicolas Higman, for Ambroise Girault	8o	3Int.	==	D1444
F[1529]	Paris	Pierre Leber, for Ambroise Girault	8o	3Int.	==	PG
F1530a	Paris	Yolande Bonhomme	4o	3Int.	==	HigI13
F1530b	Paris	Nicolas Savetier	8o	3Int.	==	D1446. PA
F1531	Paris	Nicolas Savetier	8o	3Int.	==	D1447, BN
F1532	Paris	Philippe Le Noir	8o	3Int.	==	D1448, BN
F1533	Paris	Pierre Leber	8o	3Int.	==	D1449, BN
F[1534]	Paris	Nicolas Higman, for Ambroise Girault	8o	3Int.	==	D1445, HigI18
F1535	Paris	[Antoine de La Barre] Jacques Kerver	8o	3Int.	==	BN
F1536	Paris	==	16o	3Int.	==	D1450
F1537a	Paris	Ambroise Girault	8o	3Int.	==	D1451, NUC
F1537b	Paris	Henri Paquot	8o	3Int.	==	D1452, PG
F1538	Lyon	Guillaume de Guelques, Jean Barbou	16o	3Int.	==	D1453, BN
F1539a	Paris	Yolande Bonhomme	8o	3Int.	==	D1454, BL
F1539b	Paris	Denis Janot	16o	3Int.	==	HigI23
F1539c	Paris	[Pierre Sergent]	8o	3Int.	==	BN
F1540a	Lyon	François Juste	16o	3Int.	==	PG
F1540b	Paris	Denis Janot	16o	3Int.	==	BN
F1540c	Paris	Jean Ruelle	8o	3Int.	==	D1454a, Brux
F[1540]	Paris	Denis Janot	4o	4Imit.	==	D551, PG
F1541	Paris	Denis Janot	16o	3Int.	==	D1455, PG
F1542a	Lyon	Estienne Dolet	16o	3Int.	==	D1457, BN

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F1542b	Lyon	Denis de Harsy	16o	3Int.	==	BN
F1542c	Paris	Arnoul Langelier	8o	3Int.	==	D1456, BN
F1543	Lyon	Jean de Tournes	16o	3Int.	==	D1458, PG
F1544a	Antwerp	Jean de Grave	16o	3Imit.	Ludolph	D552, PG
F1544b	Antwerp	Jean de Grave	16o	3Imit.	Ludolph	PG
F1544c	Lyon	François Juste, Pierre de Tours	16o	3Int.	==	Carp.
F1544d	Paris	Jean Ruelle	16o	3Int.	==	D1459
F1550	Paris	Jean Amazeur, for Jean Ruelle	16o	3Int.	==	HigI38
F[1553]	Paris	==	8o	4Int.	==	D1460
F1554	Paris	Yolande Bonhomme, for Thielman Kerwer	8o	4Int.	==	D1461, BN
F1556	Lyon	Jean de Tournes	16o	3Int.	==	D1462, PG
F1565	Antwerp	Jean Bellère	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	D553, BL
F1570	Antwerp	Jean Bellère	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	D554, BL
F1571	Paris	Claude Fremy	16o	4Imit.	Kempis	D556, BN
F1572	Antwerp	Jean Bellère	8o	4Imit.	Kempis	D555
F1573a	Paris	==	12o	==	==	D558
F1573b	Paris	veuve Jean Ruelle	12o	3Int.	Gerson	D1463
F1576a	Antwerp	==	16o	3Imit.	==	D562, PG
F1576b	Lyon	Michel Jove	16o	4Imit.	Gerson	BBL
F1576c	Paris	Sebastien Nivelles	8o	==	==	D557
F[1576]	Basle	==	16o	3Imit.	==	HAB
F1577	Lyon	Michel Jove, Jean Pillehotte	16o	3Imit.	Gerson	D560, D561
F1578	Lyon	Michel Jove, Jean Pillehotte	18o	4Imit.	Gerson	D559, MSB
F1581	Paris	Jean Corbon	16o	4Imit.	Gerson	BN
F1582	Paris	Olivier de L'Huillier	16o	4Imit.	Gerson	D564, PG
F1585	Paris	Jean Corbon	16o	4Imit.	==	D565
F1589	Douai	Jean Bogart	16o	4Imit.	Gerson	BL

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
F1591	Lyon	Jean Pillehotte	16o	4Imit.	=	D566, PG
F1595a	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	12o	4Imit.	=	D569, DBM
F1595b	Liège	Chr. Ouwerx	=	=	Kempis	BT
F1595c	Lyon	=	16o	=	=	BN
F1599	Rouen	Jean Osmont	8o	4Imit.	Gerson	PG
F[1600]	Pont-à- Mousson	Melchior Bernard	12o	4Imit.	Gerson	MSB
F1601	Douai	Jean Bogart	12o	=	Kempis	D570
F1605	Paris	veuve de Guillaume de la Noue	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	D573
F1607	Douai	Jean Bogart	=	=	=	D571, Nij.
F1613	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	D576
F1615a	Liège	Jean Ouwerx	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	D577, Nij.
F1615b	Paris	Thomas de la Ruelle	12o	=	=	D567
F1616a	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	12o	=	=	D572
F1616b	Pourrentruy	Jean Faivre	12o	4Imit.	Gerson	Fib.
F1619a	Cambray	Jean de la Rivière	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	BL
F1619b	Douai	Balthasar Bellere	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	D578b, BL
F1619c	Rouen	=	12o	=	Kempis	D568
F1619d	St. Omer	P. Geubels	12o	4Imit.	Kempis	BL
F1620a	Rouen	=	=	=	=	PSG
F1620b	Toulouse	=	=	4	Kempis	SVII, p. 869
F1621a	Paris	=	=	=	=	PSG
F1621b	Toul	Simon S. Martel	16o	4Imit.	Kempis	MSB
F1626	Paris	Nicolas Gasse	=	4Imit.	=	BN
F1627a	Candy	=	12o	=	=	D574
F1627b	Toul	Simon S. Martel	16o	4Imit.	Kempis	MSB
F1629a	Douai	Wion	8o	=	=	PA
F1629b	Mons	Jean Havart	=	4	=	Nij., SVIII, p. 870
F1630	Paris	=	=	=	=	PSG

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
F1631	Paris	Sebastien Huré	12o	4	imit. ==	BL
F1632	Douai	Bellere	==	==	==	D612
F1634	Paris	Vitre	==	==	==	PSG
F1635	Paris	Roculet	==	==	==	PSG
F1636	Paris	Roculet	==	==	==	PSG
F1639	Paris	=	12o	==	==	PSG
F1641	Paris	Pierre Le Petit	12o	==	==	SIII, p. 1435
F1642	Antwerp	Moretus	==	==	==	D584
F1643a	Paris	Le Bé	==	==	==	BN
F1643b	Paris	P. Moreau	8o	4	imit. Kempis	BL
F1644	Antwerp	Balthasar Moretus	8o	==	Kempis	BL
F1645	Paris	Jean Guignard	32o	4	imit. ==	BL
F1646a	Antwerp	Balthasar Moretus	16o	==	Kempis	BL
F1646b	Paris	=	==	==	==	PSG
F1647a	Douai	Bellere	==	==	==	D635
F1647b	Toulouse	Arn. Colomiez	==	==	==	PSG, SVIII, p. 870
F1648	Paris	=	12o	==	==	D575
F1650a	Paris	Jean Henault	8o	==	==	SIII, p. 1435
F1650b	Paris	Sebastien Huré	8o	==	==	BL
G1486	Augsburg	Anton Sorg	4o	4	==	D1844, BL
G[1488]	[Ulm]	[Johann Zainer]	8o	4	==	BL
G1489	Lubeck	[Matthaeus Brandis]	4o	3	==	BL
G1492	Lubeck	[Matthaeus Brandis]	4o	3	==	BL
G1493	Augsburg	[Johann Schobser]	4o	4	==	BL
G1496	Lubeck	[Matthaeus Brandis]	4o	3	==	D1848, BL
G1498	Augsburg	Johann Schönsperger	4o	4	==	D1849, MSB
G1501	Magdeburg	Mauricus Brandis	4o	==	==	D1850
G[1505]	Cologne	Herman Bogart	8o	==	==	BL
G1510	Cologne	Herman Vungart	8o	==	Kempis	D1852

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
G1508a	Augsburg	Erhart Oglin, Jorg Nadler	4o	4	=	MUB
G1508b	Augsburg	Erhart Oglin, Jorg Nadler	4o	4	=	D1851, BL
G1515	Constance	Hannsen Schöffeler	4o	4	=	D1853, MSB
G1531	Augsburg	Philip Ulhart	8o	3	=	MUB
G[1533-1534]	Augsburg	Philip Ulhart	8o	3	=	BL
G[1535]	Augsburg	Philip Ulhart	8o	3	=	MSB
G1536	Augsburg	Philip Ulhart	8o	3	=	MSB
G[1537]	=	=	8o	3	=	ASB
G1539a	Leipzig	Nicolas Wolrab	8o	3	=	D1855, MSB
G1539b	Zurich	Augustin Frieß	8o	3	=	ZSB
G1544	Strasbourg	Hans Preuss	8o	3	=	D1856, BL
G1545a	St. Victor bey Mainz	Franciscus Behem	8o	3	=	D1857, FC
G1545b	Zurich	Eustachin Froschouer	16o	3	=	MSB
G[1551]	[Zurich]	[Christoph Froschouer]	16o	3	=	MUB
G1552	Strasbourg	Wolfgang Köpfel	8o	3	=	HAB
G1554	Dillingen	Sebald Mayer	8o	4	=	D1858, BL
G1558	Worms	Paul & Philip Köpfleyn	8o	3	=	MSB
G1559	Pfortzheim	Georg Raben	8o	3	=	MSB
G1563	Dillingen	Sebald Mayer	12o	4	=	D1859
G1565	Cologne	Godfrid Hirtzhorn	8o	3	=	D1860, MSB
G1567	Dillingen	Sebald Mayer	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
G1572	Dillingen	Sebald Mayer	12o	4	Kempis	BL
G1573	Dillingen	Sebald Mayer	16o	4	Kempis	BL
G1574	Cologne	Maternus Cholinus	12o	=	Kempis	D1861
G1578	Dillingen	Johann Mayer	=	4	Kempis	D1862
G1580	Basel	Samuel Apiario	=	=	Kempis	D1864
G[1581]	=	=	8o	3	=	MSB

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
G1584	Dillingen	=	=	=	=	PSG
G1588	Dillingen	Johann Mayer	8o	=	Kempis	ASB
G1593	Dillingen	=	=	=	Kempis	D1863
G1594	=	=	12o	=	Kempis	D1862
G1598	Mümpelgarten	Jacob Foillet	12o	=	=	VD16
G1600	Dillingen	Johann Mayer	12o	4	Kempis	Fib
G1604	Munster	Lambert Raßfeldt	12o	4	Kempis	Fib
G1606	=	=	8o	3	Kempis	BL
G[1606]	=	=	=	=	=	NUC
G1608	Dillingen	Johann Mayer	=	4	Kempis	D1865
G1613	Dillingen	Johann Mayer	8o	4	Kempis	D1866, FC
G1616	Cologne	Johann Kincker	12o	4	Kempis	D1871, FC
G1617a	Magdeburg	Johann Francken	=	[3]	Kempis	D1872
G1617b	Munich	Anna Bergin	8o	4	Kempis	MSB
G1618	Munich	Anna Bergin	16o	4	Kempis	Fib
G1621	=	=	8o	[3]	=	BL
G1622	Cologne	Peter Hennings	12o	4	Kempis	Fib
G1624a	Munich	Anna Bergin	16o	4	Kempis	MUB
G1624b	=	=	4o	[3]	=	BL
G1625	Strasbourg	Paulus Lederz	4o	[3]	Kempis	ONB
G1629	Cologne	Johann Kinckius	24o	4	Kempis	D1873, BL
G1630	Cologne	Peter Hennings	12o	4	Kempis	D1874, FC
G1631	Amsterdam	Dirck Meyer	16o	3	Kempis	MSB
G1632	Munich	Cornelius Leysserius	12o	=	Kempis	D1875
G1634	=	=	12o	3	=	BL
G1640	Constance	=	=	4	Kempis	D1876
G1641	Constance	Johann Geng	12o	4	Kempis	Fib
G1644	Cologne	J. Münch	16o	=	Kempis	D1877
G[1650]	=	=	=	=	Kempis	BL
G[16??]	Cologne	=	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
I1488	Venice	Giovanni Rossi	4o	=	Gerson	D1470, BN

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
I1489a	Milan	Ulrich Scinzenzeler	4o	==	Gerson	D1472, Sc.
I1489b	Venice	Matteo Capcasa for Lucantonio Giunta	4o	==	Gerson	D1471, Sc.
I[1490]	[Florence]	=	8o	==	Gerson	D1483
I1491a	Florence	Antonio Miscomini	4o	4	Gerson	D1471, MSB
I1491b	Venice	Bartolomeo Zanni	4o	==	Gerson	D1473, BN
I[1491-1492]	[Florence]	[Antonio Miscomini]	4o	==	Gerson	D1480, Sc.
I[1492]	=	=	4o	==	Gerson	D1482
I1493	Florence	Antonio Miscomini	4o	4	Gerson	D1475, MSB
I1494	Florence	Antonio Miscomini	4o	4	Gerson	D1476, NUC
I[1495]	[Florence]	[Bartolomeo de'Libri]	4o	==	Gerson	BN
I1496	Venice	Simone Bevilacqua	4o	==	Gerson	D1478, BN
I1499	Venice	=	=	==	=	PSG
I[14??]	=	=	=	==	Gerson	D1479
I1500	Milan	Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler	4o	==	Gerson	D1484, BL
I[1500]	[Venice]	=	8o	==	Gerson	NUC
I1502	Venice	Giovanni Battista Sessa	4o	==	Gerson	D1485, Sc.
I1504	Milan	Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler	4o	==	Gerson	D1486, NUC
I1505	Florence	Piero Pacini	4o	4	Gerson	D1487, NUC
I1509	Florence	Filippo Giunta, Agnolo Cartolaio	4o	==	Gerson	D1489, NUC
I1511	Milan	Scinzenzeler	4o	==	Gerson	D1490
I1514	Florence	Filippo Giunta	4o	==	Gerson	D1491, NUC
I1516	Venice	Melchiorre Sessa	4o	==	Gerson	D1492, Sc.
I1518a	Florence	Filippo di Giunta	=	==	=	D1488

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
I1518b	Venice	Cesare Arrivabene	8o	==	Gerson	D1493, Sc.
I1519	Milan	Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler	4o	==	Gerson	Sc.
I1520	Venice	Giuntini	4o	==	Gerson	D1494
I1522a	Florence	heirs of Filippo Giunta	4o	==	Gerson	D1497, Sc.
I1522b	==	==	4o	==	Gerson	D1495
I1522c	Venice	Gio. Ant. e fratelli da Sabio	8o	==	Gerson	D1496
I1524	Venice	Benedetto and Agostino Bindoni	8o	==	Gerson	NUC
I[1530]	[Venice]	[Francesco Bindoni, and Matteo Pasini]	8o	4	Gerson	BL
I1531	Venice	Francesco Bindoni, and Matteo Pasini	8o	4	Gerson	D1498, BL
I1532	Venice	Francesco Bindoni, and Matteo Pasini	8o	==	Gerson	D1499
I1534	Venice	Francesco Bindoni, and Matteo Pasini	8o	==	Gerson	D1500, BL
I1538	Venice	Francesco Bindoni, and Matteo Pasini	8o	4	Gerson	Sc.
I1539	Brescia	Damiano Turlino	8o	==	Gerson	D1501, BL
I1540a	Venice	Pietro de Nicolini da Sabbio	8o	==	Gerson	D1502
I1540b	Venice	Giovanni Padovano	8o	==	Gerson	BL
I1541	Venice	Sessa	8o	==	Gerson	D1503
I1543	Venice	Aloise de Tortis	8o	==	Gerson	D1504
I1545	Venice	Francesco Bindoni, and Matteo Pasini	8o	==	Gerson	BL
I1547	Venice	Giovanni de Farri	16o	4	Gerson	MSB
I1557	Venice	Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari	4o	4	Gerson	D1506, BL
I1558a	Venice	Francesco Bindoni	24o	==	Gerson	D1515
I1558b	Venice	Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari	4o	4	Gerson	D1505, BL

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
I1559	Venice	Francesco Lorenzini da Turino	16o	==	Gerson	Ad.
I1560	Venice	Gabriel Giolito	12o	==	Gerson	D1507
I1561	Florence	heirs of Bernardo Giunti	8o	4	Gerson	D1516, NUC
I1561	Venice	=	4o	==	=	PSG
I1562a	Venice	Girolamo Scotto	16o	==	Gessen	D1517
I1562b	Venice	Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari	12o	4	Gerson	D1508, BL
I1563	Venice	Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari	4o	4	Gerson	D1509, BL
I1568a	Venice	Giorgi de' Cavalli	16o	4	Gerson	D1510
I1568b	Venice	Giovanni Chrighero	4o	4	Gerson	D1518, BL
I1568c	Venice	=	4o	==	=	D1519
I1568d	Venice	Gasparo, and Domenico compagni	16o	4	Kempis	Fib
I1569a	Venice	Giolito	12o	==	=	D1511
I1569b	Venice	Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari	12o	==	Kempis	D1520, FC
I1570	Parma	Viotto	12o	==	Gerson	D1521
I1571	Venice	A. Muschio	4o	4	Gerson	D1522, BL
I1572	Venice	=	4o	==	=	PSG
I1573a	Florence	Marescotti	8o	==	Gerson	D1523
I1573b	Venice	G. Giolito de' Ferrari	12o	==	Kempis	BL
I1574	Venice	Giovanni Antonio Bertano	8o	4	Gerson	D1524, NUC
I1578a	Parma	Ser Viotto	12o	4	Kempis	D1525
I1578b	Venice	Bortholamio Simbeni & fratelli	4o	4	Gerson	BL
I1579a	Bologna	=	8o	==	Gerson	D1526
I1579b	Milan	Meda	12o	==	Gerson	D1527
I1580	Venice	Altobello Salicato	16o	==	Kempis	D1528
I1581a	Venice	Altobello Salicato	16o	4	Kempis	MUB

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
I1581b	Venice	Domenico Cavalvalupo	16o	4	Gerson	MSB
I1584a	Milan	Francesco, and heirs of Simon Tini	4o	4	Kempis	D1530
I1584b	Venice	Ventura de Salvador	16o	==	Kempis	D1529
I1585	Milan	F. Tini	4o	==	Kempis	BL
I1586	Milan	=	4o	==	Gerson	D1531
I1588a	Venice	Altobello Salicato	12o	==	Gerson	D1532
I1588b	Venice	Ventura de Salvador	16o	4	Kempis	BL
I1590	Rome	Domenico Basa	16o	==	Gerson	D1533
I1594	Venice	Mattio Zanetti, and Comino Presegni	24o	==	Gerson	D1534, Ad.
I1595	Venice	Bernardo Basa	12o	==	Gerson	D1535
I1598a	Venice	Marco Claseri	24o	==	Gerson	D1536
I1598b	Venice	Spineda	16o	==	Gerson	D1537
I1601	Venice	G. Alberti	=	=	Gerson	NUC
I1602	Venice	Pietro Ricardi	16o	==	Gerson	D1538
I1603	Venice	Giovanni Alberti	16o	4	Gerson	MSB
I1604	Venice	Altobello Salicato	=	4	Gerson	NUC
I1610	Venice	=	=	4	=	FC
I1617	Rome	Bartolomeo Zannetti	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
I1619	Venice	Andrea Baba	=	=	Kempis	NUC
I1620	Milan	Gio. Battista Bidelli	16o	4	Gerson	MSB
I1626	Venice	Lucio Spineda	16o	4	Gerson	MUB
I1627	Venice	Francesco Baba	24o	4	Kempis	BL
I1629	Rome	Paolo Masotti	8o	4	Kempis	MSB
I1635a	Venice	Francesco Baba	16o	4	Gerson	BL
I1635b	Venice	Nicolo Misserini	16o	4	Kempis	MUB
I[1635]	Bassano	Antonio Remondini	16o	4	Kempis	MUB
I1637a	Rome	Francesco Cavalli	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
I1637b	Venice	Battista Combi	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
I1639	Venice	I. Giunti	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
I1641	Trent	Peril Zanetti	16o	4	Kempis	MUB
I1645	Paris	widow of Giovanni Camusat and Piero Le Petit	32o	4	Kempis	D1550 BL
I1647	Rome	Manelfi	=	4	Kempis	FC
I1648	Rome	Manelfo Manelfi	16o	4	Kempis	MSB

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
I[????]a	=	=	=	=	Gerson	D1481
I[????]b	Brescia	Giacomo Britannico	12o	=	=	D1512
I[16??]	Paris	=	16o	4	Kempis	MSB
S1482	Barcelona	Pere Posa	4o	=	Gerson	BN
S1490	Saragossa	[Jean Hurus]	=	=	=	BM
S1491	Valencia	[Nicolaus Spindeler]	4o	=	Gerson	BL
S1493	Seville	Menardo Ungut Alemano e Lancislao	=	=	Gerson	Hain
S1495	Burgos	Frederic Biel	4o	=	Gerson	PSG
S1496	Seville	tres compañeros alemanes	=	=	=	NUC
S1499	Burgos	=	=	=	=	GJ
S1500a	Saragossa	=	=	=	=	BM
S1500b	Toledo	Pierre Hagenbach	=	=	=	Uriarte, BM
S1505	Logroño	Arnao Guillen de Brocar	4o	4	Gerson	Norton
S1510	Saragossa	=	=	=	=	BM
S1512	Toledo	Nicolas de Piemonte, Juan de Villaquiran	4o	4	Gerson	Norton
S1513	Toledo	=	=	=	=	PSG
S1516a	Barcelona	=	=	=	=	BM
S1516b	Burgos	Frederic Biel	4o	4	Gerson	BL
S1516b	Seville	Jacobo Cromberger	4o	4	Gerson	Norton
S1518a	Barcelona	Amoros	=	=	=	Kinder
S1518b	Valencia	Miquel Perez	4o	4	Gerson	Norton
S1523	Toledo	Juan de Villaquiran	=	=	=	BM
S1528	Seville	Juan Cromberger	=	=	Gerson	Guzman
S1536	Seville	Juan Cromberger	8o	=	Gerson	BL
S1538	Seville	Juan Cromberger	=	=	Gerson	Guzman
S1542	Seville	Juan Cromberger	=	=	Gerson	Guzman
S1543	Seville	Dominico Robertis	=	=	=	Guzman
S1544	Antwerp	=	=	=	=	Nij.
S1546a	Antwerp	Juan Steelsio	12o	=	=	BL
S1546b	Seville	Andres de Burgos	8o	=	=	BL
S1547	Seville	Jácome Cromberger	=	=	=	Guzman

Language & Date	Place	Printer	Size	Books	Author	References
S1550	Baeça	=	8o	==	==	BL
S1551	Antwerp	Iuan Steelsio for Iuan Lacio	8o	4	Kempis	ONB
S1553	Medina del Campo	G. de Millis	8o	==	==	BL
S1555	Alcala de Henares	Juan de Brocar	8o	==	==	BL
S1564	Antwerp	Juan Steelsio	==	==	==	Nij.
S1567	Madrid	=	==	==	==	Uriarte
S1572	Antwerp	Plantin	==	==	==	Nij.
S1586a	Alcala de Henares	Sebastian Martinez	8o	==	==	Uriarte
S1586b	Antwerp	Gusleno Jansenio	12o	==	==	Uriarte
S1587a	Antwerp	P. Bellere	12o	==	Kempis	BT
S1587b	Seville	Iuan de Leon	12o	==	==	Uriarte
S1598a	Barcelona	Iaume Galuan	12o	==	==	Ad.
S1598b	Madrid	L. de Ayala	16o	==	==	BL
S1599	Madrid	=	16o	==	==	BL
S1609	=	=	==	==	==	NUC
S1612	Antwerp	G. Jansenio	12o	4	Kempis	BL
S1614	Lerida	=	==	==	==	Uriarte
S1620	Antwerp	Guilielmo van Tongeren	12o	4	Kempis	MSB
S1621a	Barcelona	=	16o	==	==	BL
S1621b	Seville	=	==	==	==	PSG
S1630	Antwerp	=	==	==	==	Nij.
S1633	Antwerp	Henricus Aertssens	16o	4	Kempis	MUB
S[1644]	[Madrid]	Balthasar Moretus	16o	4	Kempis	MUB
S1645	Valencia	J. B. Marçal	16o	==	==	BL
S1647	Seville	Francisco de Lyra	16o	==	==	BL
S1649	Antwerp	Henricus Aertssens	12o	==	Kempis	BL
S1650	[Antwerp]	=	==	==	==	Nij.
S[????]	Barcelona	Juan Pablo Marti	16o	==	Kempis	Uriarte

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