

GERRIT GERRITS, ACADIA UNIVERSITY

A Comparison of Erasmus' *Handbook of the Christian Knight* with Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* and Gerard Zerbolt's *The Spiritual Ascents*¹

Erasmus' *Handbook of the Christian Knight* has often been compared to Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*.² However, the construction, content and tone of the two works is so different in most respects that one is hard pressed to find many parallels between them, apart from the fact that both writings deal with Christian spirituality.³ Exactly why the comparison is made is not altogether clear, although one assumes that it is partly because Erasmus' spirituality is seen by many as having been heavily influenced by that of the Modern Devotion,⁴ and Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* is commonly regarded as the most representative work of Devotionalist spirituality.⁵ It will be argued here, however, that rather than comparing the *Handbook to the Imitation*, it is more instructive and revealing to compare the former to Gerard Zerbolt's *The Spiritual Ascents*. For the parallels between the *Handbook* and the *Ascensions* are much more substantial than they are between the *Handbook* and the *Imitation*.

Before we pursue the thesis just presented, it may be useful to first say a few words in general about the three works in question, especially about the historical context in which they were written, and about their

respective authors. The oldest of the three works is that by Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen (1367 -1398). Zerbolt was one of the first members of the Modern Devotion and may be regarded as one of its founders, especially when it comes to the movement's spirituality.⁶ And what was the Modern Devotion? Briefly, it was the movement for spiritual renewal, and to a lesser degree ecclesiastical renewal, that was founded by Gerard Grote around 1380. From its beginnings in Deventer and Zwolle it spread throughout the Low Countries and much of Germany, and into Switzerland and northern France. From an institutional perspective, the Modern Devotion consisted of two separate branches: the semi-monastic branch known as the Brothers and the Sisters of the Common Life, and the monastic branch represented by the Augustinian Canons and Canonesses Regular of the Congregation of Windesheim. The Modern Devotion is often regarded as the last attempt at religious renewal and church reform before the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, itself largely the cause of the demise of the Modern Devotion.⁷

As was just observed, Zerbolt, a Brother of the Common Life, played a major role in shaping the spirituality of the Modern Devo-

tion, and he did so through his two manuals for the spiritual or religious life, the more important of which is *The Spiritual Ascents*. Both works were more or less required reading for all members of the Modern Devotion, but *The Spiritual Ascents* appears to have been more widely read than the other, *The Reformation of the Powers of the Soul*, judging by the number of manuscripts that have survived of each work. *The Spiritual Ascents* in particular also enjoyed a considerable popularity beyond the confines of the Modern Devotion, for we know that it was read by the monk Martin Luther - and perhaps by Ignatius Loyola, for in 1499 Garcia Ximenes de Cisneros, abbot of the monastery of Montserrat in Spain, had *The Spiritual Ascents* printed, and a copy of this edition may have found its way into Loyola's hands. In fact, Loyola's own *Spiritual Exercises* and Zerbolt's *The Spiritual Ascents* belong to the same genre of manuals for the spiritual life. The popularity and impact of Zerbolt's work in the 15th and 16th centuries is partly demonstrated by the fact that between 1486 and 1579 it was printed some twenty times, both in the original Latin and in translations. Thereafter it largely disappeared from sight.⁸

That, of course, cannot be said of Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, to this day still the most widely sought after, and read, work by Christians after the Bible itself. A native of Kempen, a town in the Duchy of Gelre (Gelderland),⁹ Thomas a Kempis was born around 1380. He came to Deventer at the age of ten to be educated at the famous Latin school of St. Leebwin's, then joined the Modern Devotion and spent almost his entire long life - he died in 1471 at the age of 91 or 92 - as an Augustinian Canon Regular at the monastery of Agnietenberg (Mount Saint

Agnes) just north of the city of Zwolle. It was here that he completed *The Imitation of Christ* some time in the 1420's. From the very beginning this work enjoyed an immense popularity; some one hundred editions had come off the presses by the year 1500, less than fifty years after the printing press had been invented. By the 1950's, this work had gone through approximately 3000 editions, with translations into at least ninety-five languages, and by the year 2000 the total number of editions had doubled, reaching some 6000.¹⁰ In a recent monograph on the Scriptural sources of *The Imitation of Christ*, Kenneth Michael Becker provides a list of some people who read, advocated and were influenced by this work, and it reads like a Who's Who of the past 500 years.¹¹ Richard W. Southern, the great British medievalist who died recently, explained the abiding appeal of *The Imitation of Christ* as follows: "This is one of the few books which breaks down without any effort the barrier between the medieval and modern worlds."¹² Indeed, *The Imitation of Christ* has conquered not only the barriers of time, but religious barriers as well, for it is read not only by Christians, but also by Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and Muslims, as well as by those who profess to hold no religious convictions.

Those familiar with the history of *The Imitation of Christ* are, of course, all too familiar with the authorship question that has raged around this work almost from the very beginning. At a very early date it was also attributed to Jean Gerson (1363-1429), one time Chancellor of the University of Paris. Early in the seventeenth century a third major candidate for the authorship of the *Imitation of Christ* was brought forward, namely one Giovanni Gersen (who sounds suspiciously

like Jean Gerson), an Italian abbot, but there is no solid evidence that such a person ever existed.¹³ In the second half of the 19th century linguists demonstrated quite conclusively that the Latin of *The Imitation of Christ* contains enough Dutchisms to make Thomas a Kempis the best candidate for the authorship of this famous work.¹⁴ Furthermore, comparisons of the contents of *The Imitation of Christ* with that of other Devotionalist writings have revealed that the spirituality of *The Imitation* is of a piece with that of the Modern Devotion.¹⁵ Consequently, Thomas a Kempis' authorship of *The Imitation of Christ* is now accepted by all, with the exception of a few Italians who continue to put forward the mysterious Giovanni Gersen as its author.

In spite of the continued appeal and popularity of *The Imitation of Christ*, its author is not as universally known as is Desiderius Erasmus, the author of *The Handbook of the Christian Knight*. In fact, in the early 16th century Erasmus was perhaps the best known commoner in Europe, until Martin Luther stole his thunder. Born sometime between 1465 and 1470, Erasmus was subjected to the influences of the Modern Devotion during most of his teens, but the extent to which these influences shaped his religious outlook and beliefs has been the subject of a debate.¹⁶ This discussion has largely centred on *The Handbook of the Christian Knight*, arguably Erasmus' single most important religious work. It was written in 1501, thus relatively early in his literary career, but the views expressed in it are ones that Erasmus continued to hold throughout the remainder of his life. Almost twenty years after he wrote *The Handbook*, Erasmus, in a letter to Paul Volz, a Benedictine abbot, held the work in question up as a still reliable and accurate statement of

his Christian convictions which he summed up in the phrase *philosophia Christi*.¹⁷

That was about when *The Handbook* first became popular, and soon it was translated into a number of vernacular languages. In fact, in Spain the vernacular version became the first great publishing success,¹⁸ but not all Spaniards were enthusiastic about it. Loyola is reported to have said that "the reading of that book chilled the spirit of God in him and gradually extinguished the ardour of devotion."¹⁹ By contrast, he read daily from *The Imitation of Christ* and highly recommended it to others. He may also have read Zerbolt's *The Spiritual Ascents*, and if not, he was at least influenced by it indirectly.²⁰ That Loyola's negative reaction to *The Handbook* was solely a consequence of its contents may be questioned. It must be viewed, I believe, in light of the fact that Catholics widely regarded Erasmus as having "laid the egg that was hatched by Luther," and because of his unwillingness to throw his support unequivocally behind Rome against Luther, all of which led to the works of Erasmus being censored or banned outright by the Congregation of the Index. Today, *The Handbook* is still one of Erasmus's best known works, but it in no way matches the continued popularity of the *Imitation of Christ*.

After introducing these three works, we are ready to compare them. We shall argue that the *Handbook* has much more in common with *The Spiritual Ascents* than it has with the *Imitation of Christ*, to which it is compared more frequently.

To begin with, both Zerbolt's and Erasmus' works are practical manuals for the spiritual life and were specifically written to serve that

purpose - to serve as spiritual roadmaps - and in that connection it is not irrelevant to point out that Erasmus labelled his work a "handbook". There is, however, one important difference between the two works that ought to be mentioned, namely that Zerbolt wrote specifically for those living in a monastic or semi-monastic setting, for he subscribed to the belief, still almost universally held in his day that only those who withdraw from the world can progress spiritually. Erasmus, by contrast, wrote *The Handbook* specifically for a layman, believed to be one Johann Poppenruyter, at the request of his wife.²¹ Erasmus, in fact, no longer subscribed to the traditional view that the monastic life constitutes the surest, and really the only, way to spiritual growth and perfection. And his rejection of this traditional view is summed up in the now famous statement in *The Handbook*: "*Monachatus non est pietas*,"²² "Monasticism is not piety." It is necessary to caution that Erasmus did not reject monasticism outright. What he found objectionable was to automatically equate monasticism with piety and to suggest that there was no true piety to be found beyond the walls of monasteries and convents. But even though Zerbolt and Erasmus addressed different audiences, their works are of a similar nature: they mean to instruct the reader how to progress spiritually. Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, by contrast, is in essence a work of and for meditation and reflection.

As manuals for the spiritual life, the works of Zerbolt and Erasmus represent a literary genre that is totally different from the *Imitation of Christ*, which must be classified with the literary genre known as *rapiaria*. These were collections of sayings, aphorisms, adages, and the like, and in the Middle Ages

they appear to have first been compiled by Latin school and university students for their own educational use. Florens Radewijns, a co-founder of the Modern Devotion, is credited with having adapted the *rapiarium* to the religious life, and following him all members of the Modern Devotion were urged to compile a *rapiarium* for themselves.²³ The proverbs, aphorisms, sayings and excerpts making up the *rapiaria* were drawn from a variety of sources such as the Bible, sermons, and religious literature, but also included edifying and practical observations made by fellow members of the Modern Devotion. Indeed, there are strong indications that the Devotionalists drew on the *rapiaria* of their companions. Most of these compilations appear to have been fairly simple and unsophisticated and lacking in organization, and practically all of them have been destroyed and lost. It is now widely assumed that underlying *The Imitation of Christ* is a *rapiarium*, presumably Thomas a Kempis' own, which he organized into chapters and books, and then gave it a poetic form.²⁴ As a practical manual for the spiritual life, the *Handbook* has quite obviously more in common with Zerbolt's work, which is likewise a practical manual for the spiritual life, than it has with the *Imitation of Christ*, which is a *rapiarium*.

As manuals for the spiritual life, Zerbolt's and Erasmus' works also reveal some surprising similarities with regard to the starting point of the spiritual life, its progress, its goal, and the methods employed to reach that goal. For both Zerbolt and Erasmus, the primary objective of the spiritual life is to restore the faculties of the soul to that condition which they enjoyed before the Fall, when they were still focused naturally on the worship of God. Consequently, both begin with an examina-

tion of the impact of the Fall on the faculties of the soul, for unless that is first established, the believer will not know which direction his or her spiritual quest must take.²⁵ In other words, self-examination and the resulting self-knowledge constitute the starting point of the spiritual life for both Zerbolt and Erasmus. Once the requisite self-knowledge regarding one's spiritual condition has been acquired, one can work towards the goal of restoring one's faculties to their original state and the purpose for which they were created. The spiritual tools used by both authors to achieve their spiritual objective are, in the first place, reading, meditation and prayer: *lectio*, *meditatio*, and *oratio*. Reading provides the mind with material for meditation, and meditation leads to prayer. However, an important difference between Zerbolt and Erasmus in this connection was that Erasmus, unlike Zerbolt, advocated the reading of certain classical authors alongside Christian authors as a means of developing a store of knowledge on which one might draw for spiritual meditation.²⁶ Here Erasmus reveals himself as the Christian humanist, and as the representative of a mentality which was, in essence, foreign to the mentality and spirituality of the Modern Devotion. On the other hand, imitation of Christ plays an important role in Zerbolt's spiritual programme and quest as well as that of Erasmus. For imitation of Christ drives out vice and fosters virtue; in other words, it leads to conformity with Christ in all things. It was to this programme for spiritual renewal, one which reveals many similarities to that of Zerbolt, and one which he set forth most completely in *The Handbook*, that Erasmus attached the label *philosophia Christi*.²⁷

In contrast with the quite rigidly structured

manuals by Zerbolt and Erasmus, the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis is fairly loosely structured, exploring the spiritual life and ascent to God much more freely, broadly, and perhaps more comprehensively, but also more amorphously. In spite of its loose structure, one can nonetheless detect a certain progression in that it moves on balance from the lower levels of the spiritual life to the higher. However, what really distinguishes *The Imitation of Christ* from the manuals is its tone. For whereas the manuals read rather like the spiritual roadmaps that they are, and that applies to Erasmus' work in particular - in fact, Heiko Oberman called it "the dullest book in the history of piety"²⁸ - the language of *The Imitation* possesses lyrical qualities and its content ascends, at times, to quasi-mystical heights. Finally, it can also be said that while the manuals prescribe and outline a relatively active ascent to the divine in which the believer plays a major role, *The Imitation of Christ* can, by contrast, almost be labelled quietistic in its surrender to the divine. This feature seems to account for the tranquil quality that *The Imitation* exudes, putting the reader at peace with God, oneself and the world; and it is this quality that perhaps explains the perennial appeal of *The Imitation of Christ* to people of many and varied backgrounds.

In summary, the tendency to compare the *Handbook of the Christian Knight* to *The Imitation of Christ* appears to result from the fact that of all the Devotionalist writings, *The Imitation* is the best known and regarded as the epitome, as well as the most representative, of Devotionalist spirituality.²⁹ However, when one looks at the entire body of Devotionalist spiritual writings, it can easily be argued that Zerbolt's manual is more representative of

Devotionalist spiritual writings and spirituality than *The Imitation* is - but then, it helped to shape that spirituality. Consequently, if the objective is to determine to what degree Erasmus was indebted to the Devotionalists for his spirituality and his views on the spiritual life, it makes more sense to compare the *Handbook* with Zerbolt's work than with the *Imitation*. And our comparison of the three works in question has shown that Erasmus' work has much more in common with that of Zerbolt than with that of Thomas a Kempis, which is not to deny that there are also substantial differences between Erasmus and Zerbolt, such as the former's advocacy of classical authors, for example, and the fact that Zerbolt was addressing members of religious orders, while Erasmus was not.

NOTES

¹ Erasmus, *The Handbook of the Christian Knight/Enchiridion militis christiani*, translated by Charles Fantazzi, in: *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Volume 66: *Spiritualia*, edited by John O'Malley (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 1-127 (hereinafter Erasmus); Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, translated by William C. Creasy (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1989); and Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, *The Spiritual Ascents*, in: *Devotio Moderna, Basic Writings*, translated by John van Engen (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988), pp. 245-315.

² Cf. Robert Stupperich, "Das *Enchiridion militis Christiani* des Erasmus von Rotterdam nach seiner Entstehung, seinem Sinn und Charakter," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 69 (1978), 5-23; and Richard L. De Molen,

The Spirituality of Erasmus of Rotterdam (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1987), p. 49.

³ Cf. Erasmus pp. xl-xli (Introduction).

⁴ See footnote 16 below.

⁵ Cf. Cornelis Augustijn, *Erasmus: His Life, Works and Influence*, translated by J.C. Grayson (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 15; R.J. Schoeck, *Erasmus of Europe. The Making of a Humanist, 1467-1500* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 51; Bard Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers. A History of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), p. 335; and M. Huig and D.F. Lunsingh Scheurleer, *De Vijftiende Eeuw* (Utrecht: Spectrum/Aula, 1995), pp. 149-150.

⁶ G.H. Gerrits, *Inter Timorem et Spem. A Study of the Theological Thought of Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen (1367-1398)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), Conclusion: p. 284-301.

⁷ R.R. Post, *The Modern Devotion. Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968).

⁸ On the dissemination of Zerbolt's two manuals for the spiritual life see Gerrits, pp. 27-37.

⁹ At the time, the Duchy of Gelre straddled the present-day Dutch-German border. Cf. R.R. Post, *De Moderne Devotie. Geert Groote en Zijn Stichtingen* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen, 1950), p. 148.

¹⁰ Kenneth M. Becker, *From the Treasure-House of Scripture: An Analysis of Scriptural Sources in De Imitatione Christi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), p. 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-35.

¹² R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 353-354.

¹³ Jacques Huyben and Pierre Debongnie, *L'Auteur ou les Auteurs de L'Imitation* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain/Bibliothèque de la Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique, Fascicule 30, 1957); and Albert Ampe, "Imitatio Christi, I: Le livre et l'auteur," in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Volume 7, columns 2338-2355.

¹⁴ O.A. Spitzen, *Les Hollandismes de l'Imitation de Jésus Christ, et Trois Anciennes Versions du Livre* (Utrecht: J.L. Beijers, 1884).

¹⁵ Cf. Becker, *From the Treasure-House of Scripture: An Analysis of Scriptural Sources in De Imitatione Christi*, pp. 51-94; and Paul van Geest, *Thomas a Kempis (1379/80-1471), Een Studie van Zijn Mens-en Godsbeeld. Analyse en Tekstuitgave van de Hortulus Rosarum en de Vallis Liliorum* (Kampen: Kok, 1996), pp. 13-14.

¹⁶ Albert Hyma, *The Youth of Erasmus*, Second edition (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), pp. 81-142; Post, *The Modern Devotion*, pp. 658-673; Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), pp. 8-26; and De Molén, pp. xvi-xvii and 35-36.

¹⁷ For Erasmus' letter to Paul Volz, translated by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson, see Erasmus, pp. 8-23. and cf. p. xliii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-7; and Augustijn p. 44.

¹⁹ Augustijn, p. 45.

²⁰ Becker, p.31; Hyma, pp. 3 and 268-275; Otger Steggink, "De Moderne Devotie in het Montserrat van Ignatius van Loyola," *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 59 (1985), pp. 383-392; and Gerrits, p. 36.

²¹ Otto Schottenloher, "Erasmus, Johann Poppenruyter und die Entstehung des *Enchiridion militis christiani*," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 45 (1954), 109-116. Cf. Erasmus, p. 274, footnote 1.

²² Erasmus, p. 127.

²³ Thom Mertens, "Rapiarium," in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Volume 13, columns 114-119.

²⁴ Bernard Spaapen, "Imitatio Christi, II: Doctrine, 3: Le genre littéraire," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Volume 7, columns 2357-2359; and Nikolaus Staubach, "Diversa raptim undique collecta: Das Rapiarium im geistlichen Reformprogramm der Devotio moderna," in: Kaspar Elm, editor, *Literarischen Formen des Mittelalters: Florilegien, Kompilationen, Kollektionen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), pp. 115-147.

²⁵ Gerrits, pp. 231-283; and Erasmus, pp. 38-55.

²⁶ Erasmus, pp. xliii and 30-38.

²⁷ While this term is not found in the *Enchiridion*, Erasmus employs it in his letter to Paul Volz, his own exposition of the *Enchiridion*. Cf. O'Malley, editor, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Volume 66: *Spiritualia*, p. xxii.

²⁸ Augustijn, p. 44.

1

²⁹ See footnote 5 above.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources

Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, *The Spiritual Ascents*, in: *Devotio Moderna, Basic Writings*, translated by John van Engen, pp. 245-315. New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988.

Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, translated by William C. Creasy. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1989.

Desiderius Erasmus, *The Handbook of the Christian Knight/Enchiridion militis christiani*, translated by Charles Fantazzi, in: *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Volume 66: *Spiritualia*, edited by John O'Malley, pp. 1-127. Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Literature

Ampe, Albert. "Imitatio Christi, I: Le livre et l'auteur." In: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Volume 7, columns 2338-2355.

Augustijn, Cornelis. *Erasmus, His Life, Works and Influence*. Translated by J.C. Grayson. Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Bainton, Roland. *Erasmus of Christendom*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969.

Becker, Kenneth M. *From the Treasure-House of Scripture: An Analysis of Scriptural Sources in De Imitatione Christi*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2002.

DeMolen, Richard L. *The Spirituality of Erasmus of Rotterdam*. Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1987.

Geest, Paul van. *Thomas a Kempis (1379/80-1471), Een Studie van Zijn Mens- en Godsbeeld. Analyse en Tekstuitgave van de Hortulus Rosarum en de Vallis Liliorum*. Kok: Kampen, 1996.

Gerrits, G.H. *Inter Timorem et Spem. A Study of the Theological Thought of Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, 1367-1398*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986.

Huyben, Jacques, and Pierre Debongnie. *L'Auteur ou les Auteurs de l'Imitation*. Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain/Bibliothèque de la Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique, Fascicule 30, 1957.

M. Huig and D.F. Lunsingh Scheurleer. *De Vijftiende Eeuw* Utrecht: Spectrum/Aula, 1995.

Hyma, Albert. *The Christian Renaissance. A History of the "Devotio Moderna"*. Second edition. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965.

Hyma, Albert. *The Youth of Erasmus*. Second edition. New York: Russell and Russell, 1959.

Levi, Anthony. *Renaissance and Reformation. The Intellectual Genesis*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2002.

Mertens, Thom. "Rapiarium." In: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Volume 13, columns 114-119.

Oberman, H.A., and Th. A. Brady, eds. *Itinerarium Italicum. The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of Its European Transformations*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975.

Post, R.R. *The Modern Devotion, Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968.

Rummel, Erika. "Voices of Reform from Hus to Erasmus." In: Thomas A. Brady Jr., Heiko A. Oberman and James D. Tracy, eds., *Handbook of European History, 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, Volume 2: *Visions, Programs, Outcomes*. Leiden/New York/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1995, pp. 61-91.

Schoeck, R.J. *Erasmus of Europe. The Making of a Humanist, 1467-1500*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.

Schottenloher, Otto. "Erasmus, Johann Poppenruyter und die Entstehung des *Enchiridion militis christiani*," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 45 (1954), 109-116.

Southern, R.W. *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970)

Spaapen, Bernard. "Imitatio Christi, II: Doctrine, 3: Le genre littéraire," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Volume 7, columns 2357-2359

Spitzen, O.A. *Les Hollandismes de l'Imitation de Jésus Christ, et Trois Anciennes Versions du Livre*. Utrecht: J.L. Beijers, 1884.

Staubach, Nikolaus. "*Diversa raptim undique collecta: Das Rapiarium im geistlicher Reformprogramm der Devotio moderna*." In: Kasper Elm, editor, *Literarische Formen des Mittelalters: Florilegien, Kompilationen, Kollektionen*, pp. 115-147. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000.

Steggink, Otger. "De Moderne Devotie in het Montserrat van Ignatius van Loyola." *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 59 (1985), pp. 383-392.

Stupperich, Robert. "Das *Enchiridion militis Christiani* des Erasmus von Rotterdam nach seiner Entstehung, seinem Sinn und Charakter." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 69 (1978), 5-23.

Thompson, Bard. *Humanists and Reformers. A History of the Renaissance and Reformation*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

Weiler, Anton G. *Desiderius Erasmus. De spiritualiteit van een christen-humanist*. Nijmegen: Titus Brandsma Instituut/Valkhof Pers, 1997.