

By the labour of whose hands?

Two reflections on the appreciation of work in medieval Christianity on the occasion of the publication of Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, Worthy efforts: Attitudes to work and workers in pre-industrial Europe (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 664 p.

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Medieval attitudes to work and their entanglement with religious ideals already received considerable scholarly attention. From the middle of the twentieth century onwards, a good number of medievalists addressed this topic as part of the bigger debate on the origins of technological progress and its effects on the development of western civilisation. At the basis of this debate was Max Weber's immensely influential thesis on the supposed relation between the Protestant work ethic and the development of capitalism. Starting from the premise that during Antiquity, manual labour and workers were disparaged by the intellectual elites, it was habitually argued that it was only in the Christian Middle Ages that Western Europe managed to lay the foundations of a new attitude to labour and technology, and hence of the later rise of capitalism.

Lynn White Jr, for example, argued in a number of publications between the 1940s and the 1970s that since Late Antiquity, western monasticism, and the Benedictines in particular, had paved the way for technological progress by including the ideal of *labor* in their spiritual ideals allowing them to consider technological invention as divinely sanctioned.¹ For Jacques Le Goff, however, early medieval Christian thought had presented manual labour as merely penitential. It was the pressure caused by social and economic change and growing urbanisation in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that fostered a certain new receptiveness to the merits of honest trade, labour and crafts in medieval theology.²

From the 1980s onwards, the alleged importance of medieval Christianity in the valorisation of labour and technology was critically put into question by different scholars. George Ovitt Jr asserted that in the course of the Middle Ages, western ideas and cultural attitudes towards work still remained ambivalent and that monasticism in particular had considered

manual labour invariably subordinate to spiritual and intellectual efforts. With the Gregorian Reform and the rise of new monastic orders, like the Cistercians and their system of subordinate lay brothers working in granges, the Church even seemed to reject any interest in the *opus manuum* that was spiritually grounded. Ovitt therefore argued that from the central Middle Ages onwards, manual labour and craftsmanship became secularised rather than integrated into the Christian classifications of knowledge.³ In 1996, Birgit Van den Hoven too put into perspective some of the all-too-optimistic approaches to the role of Christian thinking in the medieval appreciation of labour, occupations and technology. In her argumentation, she was among the first to critically abandon the old primitivist assumptions about the univocal disdain of manual labour during Antiquity. She succeeded in showing that in Antiquity, and in particular among Stoics, there already existed widespread, positive attitudes to labour and occupations. On the basis of analyses of high medieval sermons and of theological treatises on the liberal and the 'adulterated' mechanical arts, Van den Hoven also seriously questioned the role and the originality of Christianity in laying the mental foundations for the growth of capitalism.⁴

With the publication of the study *Worthy efforts: Attitudes to work and workers in pre-industrial Europe* by Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, scholars interested in this topic are now presented with a new and deeply impressive book. This study does not simply offer a further embroidering on the long tradition of scholarship sketched above. As the major fruit of the remarkable and interwoven careers of two of the most esteemed scholars of pre-industrial social and economic history, *Worthy efforts* distinguishes itself as a most original and magisterial work in many respects.



Illustration 1 From the thirteenth century onwards, saintly figures like the merchant-drapeer Homobonus offered laypeople models of trading and working in a spirit of justice and charity, thus testifying to a growing, yet conditional, ecclesiastical openness toward the changing world of trade and crafts
Fifteenth century polychrome wood sculpture of Saint Homobonus of Cremona, beatified in 1199, in the Saint Leonard Church of Zoutleuw (Belgium)

Worthy efforts

Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly are the first to thoroughly approach the topic of attitudes to labour and workers from the perspective of the *longue durée* and to bring remarkable breadth and depth to a period spanning 2500 years. Inspired by scholars like Van den Hoven, they not only begin their study with a profound analysis of the highly diversified and often very positive range of western thought on work which took root in Ancient Greece, but they also extend their intellectual odyssey to the end of the eighteenth century. It is precisely this *longue durée*-perspective which allows them to free their research topic completely from the old Weberian grand narrative in which it has always been trapped in some way or other. As a result, they achieve a thorough reframing of the importance of both Antiquity and the Middle Ages in the development of the western attitudes to labour, crafts and commerce, informed not by a certain predefined theoretical bias but by a fresh look at the rich historical interplay between ideas and concrete social practices.

Another important quality of this book can be found in its methodology and structure. The central concept in Lis and Soly's disentangling of attitudes from Antiquity onwards is that of 'polyphony'. As they manage to show on the basis of an astonishing command of both secondary literature and primary sources, Western European history has never been marked by one hegemonic or static cultural appreciation of work and workers before the rise of capitalism, on the contrary. During the Middle Ages, for example, warnings against the sin of idleness and ecclesiastical concerns over the maintenance of the traditional established order, which was seen as God's creation, have always been present in some way in the ecclesiastical voices on work and workers. There existed, nonetheless, a broad variety in the way in which different leading groups and individuals in the Church reflected on questions concerning the actual spiritual value of work, on the status of manual labour, craftsmanship and commerce, or on the social role of laypeople by whose hands the bulk of the labour that sustained society was supposed to be done. These voices were often more inspired by attempts at religious self-definition within the Church than by societal concerns. However, by confronting the polyphonic ideologies of work that emerged and developed throughout Antiquity and medieval Christianity with a very elaborate and differentiated analysis of the images, self-images and real social practices of the main different categories that can be distinguished in the world of physical labour from the High Middle Ages onwards – peasants, merchants, craftsmen and wage labourers – Lis and Soly succeed in

emphasizing even more the heterogeneity of attitudes to work and the professions.

In sum, *Worthy efforts* offers us a highly original and thought-provoking analysis of a research topic which is generally seen as one of the main focal points of economic history, but which is here approached through a combination of the history of ideas and social history, or, one might say, through a cultural history in its broadest sense. Even though one of the strengths of Lis and Soly's work resides in their *longue durée*-perspective, *Worthy efforts* is certainly also a must-read for scholars focusing on distinct historical periods. This is particularly the case for medievalists, for many of whom this book is likely to become the standard work par excellence on this topic.

The two brief comments in the following pages, formulated from the point of view of a medievalist, are meant to complement in some way Lis and Soly's particular treatment of the medieval Christian ideologies concerning the status of work and workers. My dialogue with both authors is inspired by the fact that in their richly documented analysis of the ideological polyphony that can be perceived in the Middle Ages, they have mainly focused on the attitudes developed within the different forms of well-established religious community life and within the circles of leading personalities and thinkers in the ecclesiastical world. This focus on sources stemming from the most authoritative milieux in the Church may make it less obvious, however, that it could be worthwhile to unveil two interesting, complementary, social and religious developments which are also strongly connected with Lis and Soly's central topic. Firstly, there is the gradual rise of religiously inspired voices from below and the possible influence that these voices may have had in the long run on important historical turning points in the history of attitudes to labour. Secondly, it can also be rewarding to have a closer look at the actual interplay between the ecclesiastical and lay worlds at the level of daily practices, especially in urban communities, as well as at the way in which the dynamics of this interplay may have contributed to shifting attitudes towards religiously inspired, methodical labour.

Voices from the fringes

'But we urge you, brothers ... to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one'. This quotation from 1 Tess. 4,11-12 offers but one of the many recommendations of manual

labour ascribed to Saint Paul. Yet at the very end of their treatment of medieval religious ideologies of work, Lis and Soly rightly state that in the Middle Ages, the Pauline defense of manual labour actually never truly prevailed. It was only among the leaders and adherents of the Reformation that a new Christian appreciation of work done by laypeople became generally accepted and that it was emphasised that all occupations were equivalent in the eyes of the Lord. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination in particular had brought about some kind of 'inner-worldly ascetism', in the terms of Max Weber, in which a faithful Christian life became explicitly associated with diligent and methodical labour as part of a 'calling'.⁵ As noted above, Lis and Soly consciously do not want to draw any conclusions from this observation that might possibly feed the old Weberian debate on the origins of the 'spirit of capitalism'. It might be interesting, however, to compare their analysis with a monograph published in 1998 by the sociologist Lutz Kaelber, entitled *Schools of ascetism. Ideology an organization in medieval religious communities*.⁶ In this study, Kaelber proposes to explore the origins of the Calvinist work ethic in the history of medieval ascetism. His motivation for this research is the fact that Weber may have been familiar with the history of early western monasticism, which he already considered an early source for the supposedly distinct rationality of western civilisation, but that he never succeeded in studying the history of other religious movements of the Middle Ages.

Inspired by the research of Ovitt and others, Kaelber first assesses the most important stages in the development of the different branches of mainstream monasticism in the West. In doing so, he comes to conclusions which are often similar to those formulated in *Worthy efforts* about the way in which Benedictines, Cistercians and later also the mendicant orders, lost touch with their original ideals of methodical manual labour. However, Kaelber ultimately arrives at a thorough analysis of the first decades of the Southern French heretical Cathar movement and of certain particular branches of the heresy of Waldensianism. In these movements, he discovers some interesting examples of small lay communities in which religious virtuosi offered their followers or apprentices instruction in both religion and crafts in local workshops and in which both preachers – the so-called Perfects in the case of the Cathars – and followers engaged in some very early forms of 'inner-worldly ascetism'.

The Cathars can be placed, of course, among the most famous and appealing examples of religious dissent in the Middle Ages. According to recent research, however, much of what we know about them is probably telling us more about their adversaries and about the homogenising image that

the latter fabricated of the communities which they considered heretical and dangerous to the Church than about these communities themselves.⁷ Due to the waves of Inquisition in the first half of the thirteenth century they also lost much of their original character.⁸ Yet what is very inspiring in Kaelber's approach, regardless of the overtly Weberian undertone of his analysis, is his sensitivity to religious experiences and convictions which took root on the fringes of the medieval Church and which already displayed some features of the overtly positive approach to labour that was going to permeate religious thinking in the wake of the Reformation.

Even if we simply restrict our attention, by way of example, to the medieval Low Countries, we can already unveil quite an interesting history of the reappearance, between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries, of the biblical ideal to consciously live *de labore manuum suarum* as part of a religiously inspired way of life. This ideal of the 'labour of one's own hands' was well known through both the Old Testament (Tob. 2,19; Ps. 128,2) and the letters of Saint Paul. It was also widespread because of its inclusion in chapter 48 of the Rule of Saint Benedict. But when it resurfaced in the eleventh century among groups of laypeople, and later of semi-religious communities, in the context of a renewed attention to the apostolic ideals, it turned out to have gained the potential to express a novel and often suspect kind of religious emancipation.

Already in the oldest known accusation of 'popular' heresy in the nascent urban centres of the Southern Low Countries, we encounter the biblical *labor* maxim. In the acts of a synod held in Arras in 1025, where the then bishop Gerald I of Cambrai had made a plea for his episcopal authority and for cooperation and stability between the different orders of society,⁹ we find a famous description of layfolk who fiercely criticised the leading clergy and who rejected the administration of baptism by sinful priests. They themselves, as is told by Gerald, pretended to adhere to the following: 'to abandon the world, to restrain the appetites of the flesh, to provide our food by the labour of our own hands, to do no injury to anyone, to extend charity to everyone of our own faith'.¹⁰

Due to the usual silence of medieval sources for this kind of information, it is difficult to have an idea of the extent of the actual circulation of the ideal of apostolically-inspired labour in the following decades of the eleventh century. In the twelfth century, it must also have circulated in other urbanising contexts. The *Gesta abbatum* of the abbey of Sint-Truiden in the diocese of Liège, for example, offer a fascinating account about a group of weavers who, around 1135, had fallen victim to a humiliating ritual in which they were forced to guard a ship on wheels. According to the

chronicler, himself an eye witness, these weavers had defended themselves by arguing that:

they were living from the work of their own hands in accordance with the righteous life of the ancient Christians and apostolic men, laboring night and day to feed and clothe themselves and their children. They asked, and among themselves lamented in tears, why they had deserved more than other workers such disgrace and shame, for there were many other professions practiced by Christians that were more despicable than theirs, although they would not call any of them despicable as long as a Christian could practice it without sin.¹¹

Even if we take into account that the specific wording of this defense, with its plain allusion to I Cor. 4,9-13, was written down by a Benedictine monk, it is interesting to note that by the first half of the twelfth century it had become plausible to a monastic writer that ordinary lay labourers were displaying such a novel kind of religiously inspired self-awareness. In the following decades, weavers in particular often became associated with the spread of heresy. This has inspired interesting debates in the second half of the twentieth century on the question whether weavers tended to become heretics out of social dissatisfaction or whether, on the contrary, radically apostolic people deliberately opted for weaving to make a living.¹²

The problematic connotation of crafts with sin is again denounced in a similar way by the famous reform-minded Liège priest Lambert le Bègue. After his imprisonment in 1175 by order of his bishop, he addressed a letter to Antipope Calixtus III to defend himself against the many charges that had been uttered against him. Apparently, one of these imputations bore upon his low birth as son of a smith. Lambert defended himself by referring to the fishermen among Christ's apostles and to Christ himself, who had a carpenter for father, before adding: 'I am rebuked for being born of humble people and because my preaching is heard by weavers and tanners rather than princes, as though guilt resided not in sin, but in the arts necessary to mankind'.¹³ Lambert's complaint, just like the one attributed to the weavers of Sint-Truiden, in the first instance confirms Lis and Soly's statement that during the High Middle Ages, there was no affirmative 'theology of labour' which redeemed productive or commercial activities from their aura of sin and penitence.¹⁴ Yet, on the other hand, scattered sources like the ones just quoted do teach us as well that already quite early on there seem to have existed religiously motivated voices from the lower strata arguing for a new

apostolic spirituality in which lay professions and a Christian life could go together perfectly well.

The importance of such voices should not be underestimated if we want to understand why, from the beginning of the thirteenth century onwards, the possibility of the effective integration of manual labour as a spiritual objective, and not as a mere byproduct, became more acceptable in the urbanised regions of Northern Italy and North-western Europe, as Lis and Soly have noted with reference to the rise of the movements of Humiliati and Beguines. As Walter Simons has shown, the Beguines were very often literally associated with their ideal to live 'by the labour of their own hands'. The influential theologian and later cardinal James of Vitry, who was one of their earliest propagandists, praised them on many occasions for this, as in his famous *vita* of the early Beguine Mary of Oignies, or in his second sermon *Ad virgines*.¹⁵ The same can be noted around 1230 for Robert Grosseteste, who, in spite of his sympathy for the Franciscans, considered the Beguines the most exalted among the religious since they earned their living 'with their own hands' and did not make 'burdensome demands on the world'.¹⁶ The Beguines' self-sufficiency through manual labour was likewise stressed in several later documents.¹⁷ Among the lesser-known and less successful movement of the Beghards, who could be viewed as the male counterparts of the Beguines, this same ideal was also literally adopted.¹⁸

The renewed appeal of 'the labour of one's own hands' in semi-religious communities may well have added fuel to the growing tensions and controversy over the mendicants' refusal to perform manual labour in the thirteenth century – a debate in which, as Lis and Soly very well explain, master William of Saint-Amour and the leading Franciscan Bonaventure were among the fiercest opponents.¹⁹ In any case, the ideal remained very attractive among the late medieval movements of reform. This was particularly the case among the adherents of the *Devotio Moderna*, among whom we find, in order of increasing degree of monasticisation, lay Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life, Tertiaries and Augustinian canons and canonesses.

The *Devotio Moderna* spread its popularity from the IJssel towns in the Northern Netherlands to many other regions in the Low Countries and the Rhineland. Just like the Humiliati, Beguines and Beghards, who all knew different periods in their history in which they had to face accusations of heresy, the Modern Devout too had to defend themselves against such allegations. In their chosen lifestyle we find many similarities to that of other semi-religious movements. In times in which the mendicant ideals were faced with increasing opposition, begging was certainly not an option

for them. It was in particular the female Devout who consciously opted for hard manual work, which was seen as penitential and redemptive at the same time. Even in the language of the Devout's spirituality we can find traces of their affinity with the world of crafts. For example, in one of their so-called sister books, their famous ideal of a continuous reformation of the self is compared with *geesteliker tymmeringe* or 'spiritual carpentry'.²⁰

It would of course be a completely untenable and all too teleological a claim to state that the changes in the religiously inspired appreciation of manual labour, brought about during the Reformation, constituted some kind of logical outcome or crowning of preceding medieval tendencies towards a certain 'inner-worldly' ascetism. Yet it is equally clear that, ever since the eleventh century, and since the beginning of the urbanisation of western society, there has been a succession of voices, even if contingent, especially on the fringes of the Church, who considered it plausible and even salutary for lay and semi-religious people (craftsmen, Tertiaries ...) to aim for a life in which labour was seen as perfectly compatible with some sort of calling.

The other side of the coin

Sources originating in monastic institutions and mendicant orders nearly always tend to endorse the ideal of the contempt of the world and to depict monastics and friars as a spiritual elite who pray and preach. Such voices may inspire the assumption of a permanent and sharp differentiation between the medieval worlds of clergy and laity. However, and certainly till the High Middle Ages, religious status was often more contingent and fluid than one can infer from only this kind of source.²¹

In the early medieval period, the majority of ordinary parish priests, secular canons and lower clergy were often much more integrated in the local communities in which they lived than can be presumed on the basis of most of the religious treatises and other traditional ecclesiastical source materials. In his research into early medieval guilds – which were at that time local sworn associations set up for mutual assistance, the remembrance of the dead, common banquets etc. –, Otto Gerhard Oexle has shown, for example, how Carolingian ecclesiastical authorities were seriously worried about the participation of local priests in such confraternities.²² In the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, local clerics may well have carried on being involved in the nascent professional organisations – first of merchants and later also of craftsmen –, even if, as Lis and Soly have noted, an ecclesiastical author like Alpert of Metz harshly denounced the habits of such brotherhoods.²³ The oldest customs of the merchant guild of Saint-Omer, dating



Illustration 2 Scenes, with moralising legends, depicting daily occupations in the life of beguines: laundering clothes, hackling flax, preparing woolen yarn, carding wool, selling cloth, spinning wool

Detail from an anonymous oil on canvas from the end of the 16th century, Oude Priorij Leliëndael, OCMW Mechelen (Belgium)

from around 1100, seem to testify to this. This series of 27 clauses, of which the majority concerned the guild's drinking ceremony, suggest that the local clergy participated in this ritual.²⁴

Shortly after 1000, bishop Adalbero of Laon, whom we know as one of the outspoken advocates of the three orders in medieval society – those who pray, those who fight and those who labour – was eager to emphasise to the clergy that they had to abstain from occupations such as being a butcher, innkeeper or from work in kitchens or laundries.²⁵ There are good reasons to believe, however, that his eulogy of the clergy, also quoted by Lis and Soly, was expressing an ideal rather than a reality. In an illuminating study from 1981, Robert-Henri Bautier offered a very good insight into the little-known medieval phenomenon of ‘mechanical clerics’ and ‘trading clerics’.²⁶ Given the lucrative prospects offered by crafts and trades in the urbanising society of the High Middle Ages, a situation had developed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries in which many people deliberately chose a clerical tonsure or at least pretended to belong to the lower clergy. They made careers as merchants, craftsmen, jongleurs, innkeepers etc., but because of their clerical status they remained exempt from taxes and could only be judged before ecclesiastical courts because of their *privilegium fori*. Regional ecclesiastical authorities such as bishops and abbots were not always keen on taking action against this practice since that would imply a diminishing of their judicial power and of their revenues to the advantage of civil authorities. Token measures often remained ambiguous: lower clergymen who were married and had a profession were subjected to the secular fiscal regime but their lifestyle and activities as such were not condemned. It was actually only in the early 1290s, at the royal instigation of King Philip IV the Fair and with the support of Pope Boniface VIII, that a definitive solution seems to have been found to distinguish between the *clerici clericaliter viventes* and those who were active as merchants or in the mechanical arts, who were bigamous or not even tonsured.²⁷ The latter finally lost their ecclesiastical privileges.

Efforts to discourage the improper use of clerical privileges in the economic sphere are not only to be found at the French royal court. From the thirteenth century onwards, urban groups in particular kept a close eye on the labour performed by people who pretended to do so under the cloak of religion. A good example of this can be found in Ghent in the years 1287-89, when a conflict arose about the fiscal immunity of trading clerics which ultimately drove the Ghent aldermen to bring the cause before the royal Parliament.²⁸ However, I would like to point more specifically to some particularities in the way in which urban groups perceived and appreciated the religious communities that had actually rehabilitated the importance of manual labour as a spiritual objective. While *Worthy efforts*

mainly focuses on clerical attitudes to lay labour, lay attitudes to methodical labour constitute, in a sense, the other side of the same coin.

While the Humiliati in Northern Italy, especially after their recognition in 1201, became quite successfully integrated into the urban economies and the activities of secular government and administration,²⁹ we notice that in North-western Europe, and in particular in the Low Countries, the appreciation of urban semi-religious communities who had adopted manual work in their spirituality was rather ambivalent. Beguines, living in courts and convents, could practice their labour in different sectors (farm work, services in leper houses, etc). The majority of them, however, became active in the margins of the flourishing textile sector. As Walter Simons has shown, they met the demand for cheap labour that was needed in the preparatory and finishing stages of cloth production, doing the kind of labour-intensive women's work that was not regulated by guild structures (combing, spinning, napping...).³⁰ However, they sometimes also engaged in weaving woollens or linens, which they could sell on the market at low prices because they could rely on cheap labour, took rather narrow profit margins and were sometimes even exempt from certain taxes levied on the laity. As such they acted as entrepreneurs and traders, which brought them in competition with the guilds. This resulted in several conflicts.³¹ In the small town of Aalst, for example, the count of Flanders had to intercede in 1321 in an enduring conflict between the Beguines and the aldermen, which led to the decision that in the case where they did not produce their cloth for private use but also for sale, they lost their exemption from duties.³² However, it was the communities of male Beghards who faced real problems integrating in the urban labour markets. They were nearly exclusively active as weavers and were therefore obliged, as in Bruges for example, to accept all kinds of restrictions imposed by the weavers' guild and to financial control by the city government. In addition to often-repeated accusations of heresy and misdemeanours, this may also have been one of the reasons for their limited success in the Late Middle Ages.³³

In the fifteenth century, similar problems arose in a number of towns in the Northern Low Countries with respect to sister houses associated with the *Devotio Moderna*. Contrary to the Beguines and Beghards, the actual practice of manual labour among the Devout was often marked by a striking gender difference. Male communities, who were not dependent to the same extent as their female counterparts on the revenues from their labour, in many cases became specialists in the copying and manufacture of books.³⁴ Their professionalism in this work allowed them to position themselves in the luxury goods market. Communities of women on the other hand, had

to opt for traditional physical labour and mostly did textile work. They met with the same kind of problems from city authorities and guilds as Beguine communities. This sometimes resulted in the reproaches and insults by laypeople and occasionally in acts of vandalism about which different sources inform us,³⁵ as well as in all sorts of legal provisions regarding, for example, the number of looms that such communities were allowed to possess.³⁶

It seems therefore legitimate to state that while, in the Middle Ages, Christian ideologies as expressed by leading figures in the Church were often marked by little interest in, and even disdain for, work and workers, there existed at the same time among lay associations and authorities a considerable degree of distrust of those clerics and religious communities who had become actively involved in labour, crafts and commerce. If one is allowed speak of a process of 'secularisation of labour' from the High Middle Ages onwards, as George Ovitt Jr has done, one could add to this that some leading groups in the lay world also tended to contribute in a certain sense to this same process.³⁷

Conclusion

Worthy efforts is a very generous work in many respects. Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly have brought together an enormous body of knowledge, analyses and new insights in one voluminous yet always tightly-focused study. At the same time – and this is also a major achievement – their study can be seen, not as the kind of definitive synthesis which would discourage new generations of scholars from venturing into this field, but as an invitation to continue research on the basis of a new, impressive and stimulating standard. Their conceptualisation of polyphony as a heuristic framework in which to define new research questions will certainly prove to be very inspiring for many scholars to come. With my two, brief comments, which are in no way aimed at contradicting the insights of Lis and Soly but at rather modestly complementing them, I hope to have paid extra tribute to the inviting potential of their work. Pre-industrial Europe certainly was marked by polyphony, yet there are still so many voices to discover.

Notes

1. Lynn T. White, Jr., *Medieval technology and social change* (Oxford 1964); Lynn T. White, Jr., *Medieval religion and technology. Collected essays* (Berkeley 1978).
2. See especially Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Âge. Temps, travail et culture en Occident: 18 essais* (Paris 1977).
3. George Ovitt Jr., 'Manual labor and early medieval monasticism', *Viator* 17 (1986) 1-18; George Ovitt Jr., *The restoration of perfection. Labor and technology in medieval culture* (New Brunswick 1987).
4. Birgit van den Hoven, *Work in ancient and medieval thought. Ancient philosophers, medieval monks and theologians and their concept of work, occupations and technology* (Amsterdam 1996). With some critical qualifications of Elspeth Whitney, *Paradise restored: The mechanical arts from Antiquity through the thirteenth century* (Philadelphia 1990). For a more elaborate historiographical overview, see also Catharina Lis and Josef Ehmer, 'Introduction. Historical studies in perceptions of work', in: Josef Ehmer and Catharina Lis (eds.), *The idea of work in Europe from Antiquity to Modern Times* (Farnham 2009) 1-30. For some recent German scholarship, see: Fabian Rijkers, *Arbeit – ein Weg zum Heil?: Vorstellungen und Bewertungen körperlicher Arbeit in der spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen lateinischen Exegese der Schöpfungsgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 2009); Verena Postel, *Arbeit und Willensfreiheit im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart 2009).
5. *Worthy efforts*, 148-152.
6. Lutz Kaelber, *Schools of asceticism. Ideology an organization in medieval religious communities* (University Park PA 1998).
7. See Uwe Brunn, *De contestataires aux 'cathares'. Discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l'Inquisition* (Paris 2006), 342-363; R.I. Moore, *The war on heresy. Faith and power in medieval Europe* (London 2012) 332-336.
8. See e.g. the characterisation of the Cathars in *Worthy efforts*, 128.
9. *Worthy Efforts*, 169.
10. Translation in Moore, *The war*, 47, also 51.
11. C. de Borman (ed.), *Chronique de l'abbaye de Saint-Trond*, vol. 1 (Liège 1877) 223-224. Translation kindly provided by Walter Simons.
12. Kaelber, *Schools*, 196-202. See also *Worthy efforts*, 163 for the association of heresy with *rustici*.
13. Translation in R.I. Moore, *The birth of popular heresy* (London 1975) 104-105.
14. *Worthy efforts*, 141.
15. Walter Simons, *Cities of ladies. Beguine communities in the medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia 2001) 35, 92.
16. As cited by Simons, *Cities*, 35.
17. See e.g. Simons, *Cities*, 95, 134.
18. Walter Simons, 'The lives of the Beghards', in: Miri Rubin (ed.), *Medieval Christianity in practice* (Princeton 2009) 238-245, 238.
19. *Worthy efforts*, 124-126.
20. John Van Engen, *Sisters and brothers of the Common Life. The Devotio Moderna and the world of the later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia 2008) 301.
21. Frances Andrews, 'Living like the laity? The negotiation of religious status in the cities of late medieval Italy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 20 (2010) 27-55, 34.
22. Otto G. Oexle, 'Gilden als soziale Gruppen in der Karolingerzeit', in: H. Jankuhn c.s. (eds.), *Das Handwerk in Vor- und Frühgeschichtlicher Zeit. Teil I: Historische und rechtshistorische Beiträge und Untersuchungen zur Frühgeschichte der Gilde* (Göttingen 1981) 284-354, 312.
23. *Worthy efforts*, 232.

24. Georges Espinas and Henri Pirenne, 'Les coutumes de la gilde marchande de Saint-Omer', *Le Moyen Age* 5 (1901) 190-194. On this guild, see also *Worthy efforts*, 231.
25. See *Worthy efforts*, 120.
26. Robert-Henri Bautier, "Clercs mécaniques" et "clercs marchands" dans la France du XIII^e siècle', *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Comptes rendus*, 125 (1981) 209-242.
27. Bautier, 'Clercs mécaniques', 239-241.
28. Bautier, 'Clercs mécaniques', 233-234.
29. Steven A. Epstein, *Wage labor and guilds in medieval Europe* (Chapel Hill-London 1991) 97-98; Frances Andrew, 'By the labour of their hands? Religious work and city life in thirteenth-century Italy', in: R.N. Swanson (ed.), *The use and abuse of time in Christian history* (Oxford 2002) 81-93.
30. Simons, *Cities*, 85-86, 116.
31. See also Tine De Moor, *Homo Cooperans. Instituties voor collectieve actie en de solidaire samenleving* (Utrecht 2013) 14.
32. Georges Espinas and Henri Pirenne, *Recueil des documents relatifs à l'histoire de l'industrie drapière en Flandre. Première partie. Des origines à l'époque bourguignonne*, Vol. 1 (Brussels 1906), 42-43.
33. Simons, *Cities*, 116; Simons, 'The lives', 242.
34. Van Engen, *Sisters*, 190-191.
35. See e.g. Madelon van Luijk, *Bruiden van Christus. De tweede religieuze vrouwenbeweging in Leiden en Zwolle 1380-1580* (Zutphen 2004) 210-214, 245-246.
36. R.R. Post, *The Modern Devotion. Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden 1968) 495; Hildo Van Engen, *De Derde Orde van Sint-Franciscus in het middeleeuwse bisdom Utrecht. Een bijdrage tot de institutionele geschiedenis van de Moderne Devotie* (Hilversum 2006) 321-323; Van Engen, *Sisters and brothers*, 190.
37. Ovitt, *The restoration*, 137 ff. (ch. 5).

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