

Summary of Ph.d. Dissertation: New Readings of Heinrich Suso's *Horologium sapientiae* by Jon Ø. Flæten

Horologium Sapientiae is a devotional book written in the 1330s by the German Dominican Heinrich Suso. The work became extremely popular in late medieval Europe: It was translated into a number of languages and it influenced theologians such as Ludolph of Saxony, Ignatius of Loyola and the authors of the *Imitatio Christi*. Despite its undisputed status as a 'bestseller' in the late medieval period and well into early modern era, the *Horologium* has received relatively little attention by modern scholars. Today Suso is perhaps best known as a key figure in the history of German or Rhineland mysticism, and scholars have for the most part been concerned with Suso's Middle High German works. This study proceeds from the simple idea that, due to its great impact on European religious culture in the late Middle Ages, the *Horologium* deserves more attention from scholars today.

The dissertation has an introduction and three main chapters. Each chapter explores a key theme in the *Horologium*. The first chapter is about *tribulatio*, the idea of enduring suffering and hardships, which is for Suso a main aspect of Christian existence and is seen as way of following Christ. The chapter also considers *tribulatio* in relation to eschatology, that is, ideas about the afterlife, which is a striking and dominant theme throughout the *Horologium*. The second chapter explores Suso's treatise on the Eucharistic sacrament, which is found in Book II of the *Horologium*. This part gives a detailed analysis of key elements of Suso's Eucharist thought and piety. Eucharist devotion offered many challenges in this period, one of them being fear of the Eucharistic host, and the chapter considers Suso's approach to this and other problems surrounding this rite. The final chapter explores Suso's treatise on death and death preparation, also from the second book of the *Horologium*. Suso's 'death book' is interpreted as an early example of *Ars moriendi*, the 'art of dying', which became a widespread literary genre in the following period.

A main argument in this dissertation is that Suso's *Horologium* can be seen as a pioneering work of 'theology of piety' (Ger. *Frömmigkeitstheologie*). This concept was introduced by the German Church historian Berndt Hamm for the analysis of what is held to be a new and innovative type of popular and practically oriented theological literature emerging in the late medieval period. The present study shows that the *Horologium* conforms well to this overall theory in a number of ways. By way of comparisons with other sources from a context of Rhineland mysticism, the study points to key parts of the *Horologium* as expressions of a changing shape of mystical piety, and finds a simplified, practically oriented and integrative theology designed for every-day use and with relevance far beyond a setting of German mysticism. The study also calls attention to the important and underestimated role of 'popular eschatology' in Suso's bestselling work.