This manuscript, acquired by Utrecht University Library as a result of Sotheby's sale of 16 December 1970, to which it was sent by a member of the family of the Marquess of Crewe, was described in the sale catalogue (p. 11) with an uncharacteristic lack of information. The title of the first item is copied from the manuscript's fo. 1r.: Incipit liber qui dicitur De nobilitate anime, editus a magno Walterio Hiltonensi Parisius in sacra pagina laureato doctore, qui fuit sanctus vir in opere et sermone, ad cuius tumulum fiunt multa miracula et beneficia prestantur;

and the catalogue observes that De nobilitate anime 'does not, however, appear in the list of his works in Tanner, Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica, nor does the DNB mention the tradition that Hilton was a Doctor of Theology at Paris and that miracles were performed at his tomb'. But at least during the quarter-century which has elapsed since Joy Russell-Smith published her important preliminary notice of some of Hilton's writings, it has been known that some of the manuscripts of the Carmelite Thomas Fishlake's translation into Latin of Hilton's English Scale of Perfection give the work this title. Joy Russell-Smith quoted the colophon of MS. Marseilles Bibliotheque Municipale 729, fo. 12v.: Explicit liber De nobilitate anime editus a magno Waltero Hiltonensi . . . ; and in her article she discussed what was then known of the unpublished evidence concerning Hilton's biography, including the academic distinctions and the posthumous reputation for sanctity attributed to him.

With regard to such matters, the situation now is that Mr. Michael G. Sargent and the present writer are preparing a parallel edition of Hilton's English of Book I of the Scale and of Fishlake's Latin, and that they also propose a thorough re-examination of all the biographical data still

1 The writer is indebted to the University Library at Utrecht, and to its curator of manuscripts, Mr. K. van der Horst, for permission to have access to MS. 5.F.34 and to acquire microfilms of it.
4 'Veneration of Images', p. 204.
unpublished, and that Professor S.S. Hussey is at work on a critical edition of the Scale, Book II.\(^5\)

The Sotheby catalogue was even less fortunate in dealing with the second item, failing to identify the author, and merely repeating the information found in the preface on fo. 181r., that the work had been translated into Latin ‘ex theotonico Brabantino’. Yet the information then available from a number of authorities, notably Stephanus Axters,\(^6\) could easily have shown that this is William Jordaens’s translation of Ruysbroek’s *Gheestelijke Brulocht*. A critical edition of the translation has now been completed by Dr. G.B. Desoer,\(^7\) who hopes shortly to publish it.

The manuscript is a composite; the Hilton-Fishlake and Ruysbroek-Jordaens sections, though both were written in the Netherlands in the fifteenth century, cannot be shown to have had any connexion before they were bound together in modern times. This article will describe only the first book, ff. 1–76, of *De nobilitate anime*. As will be seen, it presents features, and problems, different from those of the second half of the Latin Scale, about which we must wait for Professor Hussey’s presentation. The outstanding difference between Books I and II, as Hilton wrote them, is that Book I was composed for and addressed to a woman recluse, living in canonical enclosure, whereas Book II is written for a ‘dear brother’, evidently vowed to some form of contemplative life, but under conditions wholly different from those described in Book I. We know nothing of the identity of either recipient.

Thomas Fishlake is most careful in his version of Book I to reflect this difference, not always immediately apparent in Hilton’s English. Fishlake’s translation begins:

> Quod existencia hominis interior similis debet esse apparencie exteriori. Dilecta soror in Christo Jhesu, rogo te ut contenta sis uocacione qua vocauit te dominus ad seruiendum sibi, constanter in ea permaneas, laborando solicite ex omnibus viribus anime tum, per graciam Jhesu Christi talis esse veraciter per bonam conversacionem interiorem qualem te ostendis per apparenciam exteriorem. Et sicut mundum reliquisti


\(^6\) *Geschiedenis van de vroomheid in de Nederlanden* (Antwerp 1953), p. 2.