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Nota di contenuto	Introduction: The Devotio Moderna and modern history -- Converts in the Middle ages -- Conversion as a medieval form of life -- Converts in the Low Countries -- Circles of converts at Strassburg and Brussels -- Converts under suspicion : legislating against Beguines and free spirits -- Modern-day converts in the Low Countries -- The Low Countries -- Households of devout women -- Societies of devout men -- Modern-day conversion -- Suspicion and inquisition -- Suspicion of devout practices -- Charge and counter-charge in the mid-1390s -- Sisters under inquisition, 1396-1397 : Friar Eylard Schoneveld intervenes -- Resisting the inquisitor : legal tactics -- Awaiting the Bishop's decision, 1398-1401 -- From converts to communities : tertiaries, sisters, brothers, schoolboys, canons -- Tertiaries "living the common life" -- Sisters of the common life -- Brothers of the common life -- Schoolboys -- Windesheim canons and canonesses -- An option for enclosure : male canons and female tertiaries -- Inventing a communal household : goods, customs, labor, and "republican" harmony -- Living together without personal property -- House customs and personal exercises -- Obedience and humility in a voluntary community --

Labor : living from the work of their own hands -- Communal gatherings and a "republican" impulse -- Defending the modern-day Devout : expansion under scrutiny -- Women's houses and converting schoolboys : Burgher critics at Zwolle -- Friar Matthew Grabow and the Council of Constance -- The sisters and the aldermen in conflict at Deventer : the women's narrative -- Institutionalizing under scrutiny -- Proposing a theological rationale : the freedom of the "Christian religion" -- Place in society : taking on the "estate of the perfect" -- John Pupper of Goch (d. 1475) -- Gospel law and the freedom of the Christian religion -- Taking the spiritual offensive : caring for the self, examining the soul, progressing in virtue -- Reading, writing, and the lay tongue -- Exhortation in public and correction in private -- Spiritual guidance and mutual reproof -- Modern-day devotion : examining the self, making progress, experiencing peace -- Private gatherings and self-made societies in the fifteenth century -- The question of an afterlife.

Sommario/riassunto

The Devotio Moderna, or Modern Devout, puzzled their contemporaries. Beginning in the 1380's in market towns along the IJssel River of the east-central Netherlands and in the county of Holland, they formed households organized as communes and forged lives centered on private devotion. They lived on city streets alongside their neighbors, managed properties and rents in common, and worked in the textile and book trades, all the while refusing to profess vows as members of any religious order or to acquire spouses and personal property as lay citizens. They defended their self-designed style of life as exemplary and sustained it in the face of opposition, their women labeled "beguines" and their men "lollards," both meant as derogatory terms. Yet the movement grew, drawing in women and schoolboys, priests and laymen, and spreading outward toward Münster, Flanders, and Cologne. The Devout were arguably more culturally significant than the Lollards and Beguines, yet they have commanded far less scholarly attention in English. John Van Engen's magisterial book keeps the Modern Devout at its center and thinks through their story anew. Few interpreters have read the Devout so insistently within their own time and space by looking to the social and religious conditions that marked towns and parishes in northern Europe during the fifteenth century and examining the widespread upheavals in cultural and religious life between the 1370's and the 1440's. In *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life*, Van Engen grasps the Devout in their humanity, communities, and beliefs, and places them firmly within the urban societies of the Low Countries and the cultures we call late medieval.
