

# **THE SEVEN SORROWS CONFRATERNITY OF BRUSSELS**

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STUDIES IN EUROPEAN URBAN HISTORY (1100–1800)

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**THE SEVEN SORROWS CONFRATERNITY OF BRUSSELS**  
**DRAMA, CEREMONY, AND ART PATRONAGE**  
**(16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES)**

EDITED BY EMILY S. THELEN  
With the collaboration of SUSIE SPEAKMAN SUTCH



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## PREFACE

Emily S. THELEN

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Devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin flourished in the Low Countries in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Following a period of civil warfare, economic hardship, and famine, the Burgundian-Hapsburg rulers encouraged their subjects to unite their sufferings with those endured by the Virgin during the Passion of her Son. The Seven Sorrows devotion generated dramatic plays, artistic works, music, and numerous miracles. Images of the Virgin pierced with seven symbolic swords, each one representing a sorrow, became popular in printed devotional literature and paintings.<sup>2</sup> Underlying the popularity of the devotion was the network of confraternities dedicated to the Virgin of Sorrows. The priest Jan van Coudenberghe (d. 1521) founded the three original confraternity chapters by the early 1490s in Abbenbroek, Reimerswaal, and Bruges, but the Seven Sorrows devotion grew so rapidly in size and popularity that by 1505 confraternity chapters had formed in Leiden, Delft, Mechelen, Antwerp, and Brussels. Of these chapters, the Brussels confraternity received special patronage by the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Fair (d. 1506), and his family.

Until now, knowledge of the history of the devotion and the activities of the Seven Sorrows confraternity has been acquired through prints authored by people associated with the Burgundian-Habsburg court. Van Coudenberghe, for instance, was a secretary to Philip the Fair and wrote a history of the devotion at the request of Charles V to record Philip's role in helping to propagate the devotion.<sup>3</sup> Philip's confessor, the Dominican scholar Michel François de Lille, wrote a treatise to defend the theological implications of the devotion against its detractors.<sup>4</sup> While these sources have offered scholars an opportunity to view the court's role in shaping and propagating the devotion, a view of the devotion from the confraternity's perspective has been lacking.<sup>5</sup> Remco Sleiderink's recent discovery of an account book of the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Brussels, however, makes it possible to complement the court-related history with detailed information recorded and

1 The most recent studies of the Seven Sorrows devotion are: Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, c. 1490-1520', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 252-78 and Emily C. Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows: Music, Devotion, and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2010).

2 For a history of this iconographic tradition, see Carol M. Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: Popular Culture and Cultic Imagery in Pre-Reformation Europe', *Simiolus*, 21 (1992), 5-28.

3 Jan van Coudenberghe, *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissimae virginis Mariae de passione quae dicitur de septem doloribus* (Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519).

4 Michel François de Lille, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christifere virginis mariae ac communi et saluberrima confraternitate desuper instituta* (Antwerp: Thierry Martens, c. 1494).

5 The only previous study of a Seven Sorrows confraternity chapter is Gerrit Verhoeven's work on the chapter in Delft in the context of his analysis of Delft as a pilgrimage centre. See Gerrit Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie. Delft als bedevaartplaats in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1992).

produced by the confraternity itself.<sup>6</sup> The first book of what originally belonged to a set of multiple account books records the activities of the confraternity from 1499 to 1516 and provides an opportunity to examine the inner workings of a chapter of the Seven Sorrows confraternity. The accounts offer significant information on the confraternity's liturgical activities, its involvement in the production of plays and processions, and its patronage of artists and craftsmen in Brussels.

Because the account book supplies information relevant to scholars of multiple disciplines, this volume was conceived to provide an interdisciplinary view of the Seven Sorrows confraternity using these newly found accounts as a starting point. The volume is divided into three sections: the history and foundation of the confraternity, its dramatic performances and liturgical celebrations, and the art produced by or for the confraternity. The first two essays examine the two previously known but unexplored historical sources for the history and foundation of the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Brussels. Through a close study of a seventeenth-century inventory of the confraternity, Brecht Dewilde and Bram Vannieuwenhuyze show how the confraternity members might have understood and envisioned their own history. Susie Speakman Sutch provides a detailed analysis of the confraternity's membership registry, known as the *Liber authenticus*, which sheds light on who belonged to the confraternity, who patronized it, and how it was formed. She also includes two appendices to help clarify the contents of the *Liber authenticus*: the first comprises a list of the coats of arms that are found in the member registry, and the second lists all of the foundation documents contained therein.

The second section explores the early period of the confraternity and begins a detailed analysis of the accounts. Remco Sleiderink challenges previous misconceptions about plays on the Seven Sorrows in Brussels and reconstructs in part the plays performed by the Seven Sorrows confraternity, showing in particular the role of well-known rhetoricians of Brussels. Through an analysis of the liturgical and musical activities recorded in the accounts, I demonstrate how the confraternity functioned as a prayer community embedded in the religious and civic networks of Brussels.

Beginning the section on art patronage, Edmond Roobaert and Trisha Rose Jacobs contribute the final analysis of the account book by demonstrating the confraternity's close connection to the artisan circles of Brussels and offering a view of its early art commissions. Dagmar Eichberger has compiled an impressive collection of woodcuts and engravings visualizing the devotion, some of which are connected to the local confraternity chapters, in order to show the importance of such prints in the propagation of the Seven Sorrows devotion. The volume concludes with a view on the patronage of the devotion by the Archdukes Albert and Isabella in the seventeenth century. Tine L. Meganck and Sabine van Sprang demonstrate how the Seven Sorrows devotion was shaped by counter-reformation principles through their analysis of paintings by Wensel Cobergher and Theodoor van Loon that were commissioned for the confraternity of Brussels.

A chronology collating the events discussed in these various contributions precedes the chapters of this volume. It highlights the major events in the history of the Seven Sorrows devotion and its confraternity along with the publication dates of the sources

6 Remco Sleiderink, 'De dichters Jan Smeken en Johannes Pertcheval en de devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zeven Weeën', *Queeste, Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden*, 19 (2012), 42-69.



discussed. The reader may view at a glance the progress of the confraternity for nearly two centuries and see how the events described in the individual essays fall historically.

These chapters collectively present the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Brussels as a dynamic community, one that was responsive to its surroundings and one that was influenced by the larger historical currents of the Low Countries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Throughout its history, the confraternity, as demonstrated in these essays, engaged the local artisans, rhetoricians, and musicians of Brussels. The confraternity was not untouched by the Calvinist reign in Brussels in the late sixteenth century but enjoyed a revitalization in the seventeenth century, particularly with the support of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella. The interdisciplinary collaboration amongst the authors of this volume reflects the nature of the confraternity itself as a centre for the patronage of diverse arts and presents a microcosm of urban life in Brussels.

## Chronology of Events

Mid 11 <sup>th</sup> century	Foundation of the church of St Gorik in Brussels
Mid 13 <sup>th</sup> century	Construction of the chapel of Our Lady in St Gorik
Early 1490s	Jan van Coudenberghes hangs <i>Mater dolorosa</i> icons in St Saviour in Bruges, Sts Peter and Paul in Reimerswaal, and St Giles in Abbenbroek, establishing the first Seven Sorrows confraternities
1492 July 14	First printing of the Seven Sorrows devotional manual, the anonymous <i>Ghedenckenisse</i> , followed shortly by devotional manuals with the confraternity statutes
1493 April 23	First solemn celebration of the Seven Sorrows confraternity in Bruges
1493 August	Philip the Fair proclaimed of age
1494	The annual celebration of the Seven Sorrows Mass at St Saviour in Bruges begins
1494 March 25	Performance in Mechelen of the Seven Sorrows play written by Hendrik Maes and attended by Philip the Fair
1494 October 26	Papal commission letter from Pope Alexander VI to the deans of Soignies, Zandenburg, and Valenciennes regarding the approval of the Seven Sorrows confraternity as requested by Philip the Fair
1494 August – December	Michel François de Lille's <i>Quodlibetica</i> , a theological treatise defending the Seven Sorrows devotion, is published in Antwerp
1497 February 13	Paulus de Porta, Dean of St Hermès in Renaix, writes a letter granting apostolic confirmation and approval of the Seven Sorrows confraternity and its statutes
1499 February 25	The Bishop of Cambrai, Henricus de Bergis, grants permission for the foundation of the Seven Sorrows confraternity in the chapel of Our Lady in St Gorik in Brussels
1499 March 10	The Seven Sorrows confraternity chapter is officially founded in Brussels by the chamber of rhetoric, The Lily, with Johannes Pertcheval, Jan Smeken, Jan Borreman, and Claes der Weduwe as its first provosts
1499 March	Names of the Brussels Seven Sorrows confraternity members begin to be inscribed in the confraternity's member register, later titled the <i>Liber authenticus</i>
1499 June 9	The chapel of Our Lady in St Gorik is dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin for the confraternity's use
1499-1500	6085 people register in the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Brussels
1500	A new statue of Our Lady carved by Jan Borreman for the chapel of the Seven Sorrows in St Gorik is blessed
before 1503	Jost de Negker prints a representation of the Virgin of Seven Sorrows that includes the coats of arms of Philip the Fair and Pope Alexander VI
1502-03	Singers from Philip the Fair's chapel enrol in the Brussels Seven Sorrows confraternity
1504	Annual Seven Sorrows procession starts in Delft
1505	Annual Seven Sorrows procession sponsored by the Brussels confraternity starts
1505-06	More singers from Philip the Fair's chapel enrol in the Brussels Seven Sorrows confraternity
1507 September 15	The Lily combines with The Violet to form the new chamber of rhetoric, The Garland of Mary

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Chronology of Events	
1508	The Garland of Mary and the Seven Sorrows confraternity sponsor annual plays performed in Brussels and authored by Jan Smeken
1511	Maximilian I elevates the Seven Sorrows chapel in St Gorik to the status of a royal chapel
1515 January 5	Charles, son of Philip the Fair, attains his majority
c. 1512-16	B-Br 215-16 is copied
1516 May 1	Surviving accounts of the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Brussels end
1517 January 31	Letter of Charles V to Van Coudenberghe requesting a history of his father's efforts in propagating the Seven Sorrows devotion
1517 April 15	Jan Smeken, author of a cycle of Seven Sorrows plays, dies
1517 April 23	Pope Leo X grants indulgences to the Seven Sorrows confraternity
1519 November 23	Publication of Van Coudenberghe's history detailing the founding of the confraternity and spread of the Seven Sorrows devotion
1520 April 17	St Gorik becomes a parish church, no longer dependent on St Gudula
early 1520s	Demolition of the church of St Gorik and rebuilding begins
1523	Johannes Pertcheval, Brussels rhetorician and Seven Sorrows confraternity provost, dies
1570s	The <i>Liber authenticus</i> is compiled
1570-85	Significant decrease in activity of the Seven Sorrows confraternity during the Calvinist reign in Brussels
1604 November 12	Archdukes Albert and Isabella install Wensel Cobergher as court artist
1605	Cobergher paints his <i>Lamentation</i> , which serves as the altarpiece for the Seven Sorrows chapel in St Gorik
1605	Archdukes Albert and Isabella commission the building of a heptagonal garden evoking the Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of the Virgin around the chapel of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvcl
1607	Archdukes Albert and Isabella commission Cobergher to design a seven-sided domed pilgrimage church in Scherpenheuvcl (built 1609-27)
c. 1614-16	Theodoor van Loon produces six small paintings to accompany Cobergher's <i>Lamentation</i> in the Seven Sorrows chapel of St Gorik
1615 October 23	Archdukes Albert and Isabella pay for the refurbishment of the bench donated to the Seven Sorrows chapel by Philip the Fair and allow the confraternity to decorate the chapel with their coats of arms
1615-16	Archdukes Albert and Isabella partially finance woodwork and confessionals of the Seven Sorrows chapel in St Gorik and become members of the Brussels confraternity
c. 1685	The inventory of the Seven Sorrows confraternity is compiled
1785	Dissolution of the Brussels Seven Sorrows confraternity



## **FOUNDATION HISTORY**

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# A TANGIBLE PAST

## History Writing and Property Listing by the Brussels Seven Sorrows Confraternity, c. 1685\*

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### Introduction

As early as the seventeenth century, the English urban middle classes developed a keen interest in history.<sup>1</sup> This evolution was connected with the broadening intellectual and cultural horizon of the middling sort, with changes in consumption and material culture,<sup>2</sup> and with the rise of the public sphere.<sup>3</sup> By the turn of the eighteenth century, for most lay readers, history had become the single most important literary genre next to fiction and religious works. Reading and discussing history became a popular pastime and even served a number of social purposes, *e.g.* social promotion or marking respectability.<sup>4</sup>

In late seventeenth-century Brussels, the ‘court capital’ and leading cultural centre of the Southern Low Countries, recreational reading was growing in importance as well, and the share of history books in private collections increased.<sup>5</sup> In the eighteenth century, history made up twenty-five per cent of the subject themes in private libraries and was

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\* This article has been written as part of the IUAP project P7/26: ‘City and Society in the Low Countries (ca. 1200-ca. 1850). The *condition urbaine*: between resilience and vulnerability’ (Belgian Federal Science Policy Office). We would like to thank Emily Thelen, Susie Speakman Sutch, Remco Sleiderink, Tom Verschaffel, David Guillardian, Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld, and Frederic Bocquet for their comments and contributions.

1 F. Smith Fussner, *The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought 1580-1640* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 38-43; Denys Hay, *Annalists and Historians: Western Historiography from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1977), p. 133.

2 Daniel R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 79-167.

3 Jonathan Barry, ‘Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort’, in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed. by Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 1994), pp. 84-112; Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

4 Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1981), pp. 144-45, 219-57; Woolf, *Reading History*, pp. 79-167.

5 Hubert Meeus, “‘Dienstich ende ghenuchelijck tyt-verdryf voor siecken, om ghesont te worden, en voor ghesonde om niet sieck te zijn’. Ontspanningslectuur in de zeventiende eeuw”, in *Gheprint Antwerpen. Het boek in Antwerpen van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw*, ed. by Jan Pauwels (Kapellen: Pelckmans, 2004), pp. 77-89; Alfons K. L. Thijs, ‘Recreatie, educatie, devotie en informatie: functies van populaire lectuur (17de-19de eeuw)’, *Volkskunde*, 105 (2004), 147-79.

outnumbered by religion and theology only.<sup>6</sup> The growth of reading for leisure coincided with the growing commercialization of the reading culture in Brussels, exemplified by a rising number of booksellers and printers, the emergence of newspapers from the 1650s onwards, and the establishment of commercial libraries or ‘reading rooms’ (*leeskabinetten*) in the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Learned societies and various types of other associations contributed to the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century interest in science, culture, history, and archaeology.<sup>8</sup>

While the interest in reading history has been well-documented, less is known about the ways in which early modern citizens approached the history of their own social environment, not only by acquiring knowledge of the past but also with regard to the very act of history writing. In scholarly literature, most attention has been devoted to history writing by individual ‘professional’ historians specialized in specific genres such as chronicles, annals, *memorieboeken* (memory books), national histories, etc.<sup>9</sup> The study of history writing has been barely undertaken from the perspective of early modern associations such as guilds and confraternities. As has been argued by some scholars, the historical consciousness of Netherlandish guilds and confraternities grew in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, on the eve of the Brabant Revolution (1789-90). Worried by rumours about their abolition, guilds and confraternities inquired into their history in order to defend their privileges and public status.<sup>10</sup> However, already well before the end of the old regime, associations studied their own history. We might wonder what motives they had to devote attention to the past.

In this chapter, we investigate how the members of the Brussels’ Seven Sorrows confraternity dealt with the history of their association by combining a ‘genre approach’ (based on a specific historical document) with an ‘association’s approach’ (history writing by a confraternity). Our main source is a seventeenth-century manuscript entitled *Philippus van Oostenrijk fondateur der Seven Wee-en gebroeders gefondeert int jaer 1498* (‘Philip

6 Claude Bruneel, ‘La diffusion du livre dans la société bruxelloise (1750-1796)’, *Archief- en bibliotheekwezen in België*, 54 (1983), 29-46; Bernard Desmaele, ‘Coup d’oeil sur quelques bibliothèques privées bruxelloises du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle’, *Études sur le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 14 (1987), 101-24. On material culture in Brussels in general, see Veerle De Laet, *Brussel binnenskamers. Kunst- en luxebezit in het spanningsveld tussen hof en stad, 1600-1735* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011).

7 Elly Cockx-Indestege and Anne Rouzet, ‘Drukkers en boekverkopers in Brussel van de 15de tot de 17de eeuw’, *Het culturele leven in de Brabantse steden van de 15de tot de 18de eeuw. Verslag Vijfde Colloquium De Brabantse Stad 25-26 november 1977* (’s-Hertogenbosch: Provinciaal genootschap, 1978), pp. 311-15.

8 *Het culturele leven in onze provincies: Oostenrijkse Nederlanden, prinsbisdom Luik en hertogdom Bouillon in de 18de eeuw* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1983); *Oostenrijks België, 1713-1794: De Zuidelijke Nederlanden onder de Oostenrijkse Habsburgers*, ed. by Hervé Hasquin (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1987), especially the essays by Michèle Mat, Jozef Smeyers, and Annette Félix. There were certainly many more clubs and societies in Brussels than are presently known, but no systematic research on this topic has been done. Consider for example: Geneviève Steenebruggen, ‘La Société Royale Linnéenne et de Flore de Bruxelles, 1660-1990. Une Bruxelloise d’un âge respectable’, *Brabant tourisme* (September 1990), 38-43 for evidence of a horticultural society founded in 1660; Edmond Vander Straeten, *La musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Documents inédits et annotés*, 7 vols (Brussels: C. Muquardt, 1867-85), I (1867), pp. 18-20, which mentions an *académie* of music lovers probably founded in the 1660s; Leuven, City Archives/Stadsarchief Leuven, no. 351, fols 475-77, which refers to a Brussels’ association of musicians and dancers in 1731.

9 Tom Verschaffel, *De hoed en de hond. Geschiedschrijving in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 1715-1794* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), especially ch. 1-3. Issues of gender in the study of historiography are apparent as well. See among others: Megan Matchinske, *Women Writing History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

10 Marc Jacobs, ‘Zonder twijfel dat waarschijnlijk... Ambachtelijke geschiedenissen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden aan het einde van het ‘oude regime’’, in *Werelden van verschil. Ambachtsgilden in de Lage Landen*, ed. by Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly (Brussels: VUB Press, 1997), pp. 246-47, 273; Jette Janssen, *De deugd van broederschap. Sociaal kapitaal van gildebroeders in de Noord-Brabantse schuttersgilden, 1600-2000* (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 2009), p. 190; Yvan Vanden Berghe, *Jacobijnen en Traditionalisten. De reacties van de Bruggelingen in de Revolutietijd (1780-1794)*, 2 vols (Brussels: Pro Civitate, 1972), I, pp. 165-66 and 170-72.



of Austria, founder of the Seven Sorrows confrères, founded in the year 1498').<sup>11</sup> The manuscript takes the form of a property inventory, preceded by an introduction relating the confraternity's history. It offers a detailed overview of the goods and title-deeds the confraternity acquired over time: charters, jewellery, liturgical ornaments, real estate, annuities, and foundations. The various acquisitions are situated in time and described within their historical context by providing metadata, including physical descriptions of the objects, dates of acquisition, the names of donor(s), artists/producers (in the case of artistic or luxury objects), and the confraternity's members involved, references to official charters, property deeds, and the spatial, religious, and social contexts. In other words, through the inventory, the history of the Seven Sorrows confraternity becomes tangible.

This kind of source is generally considered to be a gold mine for historians, since such inventories contain a unique set of historical facts and data that, in other cases, can only be compiled after a long quest in the archives. As Otto Oexle has argued, however, these documents are not merely containers of historical evidence. They have to be understood likewise as historical constructions themselves, produced within a given context and with a specific intention.<sup>12</sup> To apply this theory to the Brussels Seven Sorrows inventory, we will first devote attention to the physical characteristics of the document and briefly present its content. Based on internal and external evidence, we will then develop a hypothesis about the author's identity and try to date the source as precisely as possible. On this basis, it will be possible to gain more insight into the ways in which the confraternity looked back at its own history, unravel the author's motives for including metadata and historical details, identify the targeted audience, and to situate the inventory within the wider context of history writing among associations in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Low Countries.

## Description and Content of the Seven Sorrows Inventory

### Authorship and Dating

The inventory is kept in the Brussels' City Archives and belongs to the so-called Historical Archives, Register 1499.<sup>13</sup> The document has the shape of a rather small handwritten register (15.5 × 20 cm) and counts 165 paper leafs, on which most pages have been written. The register is well preserved, although the ink has become faint in some instances. The inventory includes two seventeenth-century hands, which are clearly recognizable and easy to read. Most parts of the text have been written by the main hand, which appears

11 Archives of the City of Brussels/Archief van de Stad Brussel, Historical Archives/Historisch Archief (hereafter ASB, HA), Register 1499, p. 2. The confraternity was founded in March 1499 (n.s.), but in Brussels the new year started on Easter, which explains the use of the date 1498 (o.s.).

12 Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Liturgische Memoria und historische Erinnerung. Zur Frage nach dem Gruppenbewußtsein und dem Wissen der eigenen Geschichte in den mittelalterlichen Gilden', in *Tradition als historische Kraft. Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zur Geschichte des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. by Norbert Kamp and Joachim Wollasch (Berlin-New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1982), p. 324.

13 Charles Pergameni, *Les archives historiques de la Ville de Bruxelles* (Brussels Wauthoz-Legrand, 1943), p. 209. For a full codicological description and an edition of the inventory, see Brecht Dewilde and Bram Vannieuwenhuyze, 'De zeventiende-eeuwse inventaris van de broederschap van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van de Zeven Weeën in Brussel', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis*, in press.

alternately four times with a second one.<sup>14</sup> The reason for these alternations is hard to determine, especially since this even happens once in the middle of a sentence. The scribes are impossible to identify by the manuscript alone, since they did not leave any direct indications in the text. Regardless of their identity, the confraternity probably did not hire a clerk. Luckily, a comparison with a handwriting appearing in the *Liber authenticus*, the confraternity's membership register, makes it possible to identify the main hand as that of Judocus Wouwerms.<sup>15</sup> Wouwerms graduated from the University of Leuven in 1682 and had joined the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows upon his return to Brussels.<sup>16</sup> He was elected a provost (or officer) of the confraternity in 1684 and hereditary provost in 1696.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, the identity of the second scribe of the inventory remains unknown. Possibly another provost occasionally took over the pencil.

The attribution of the main handwriting to Judocus Wouwerms brings us to the dating of the manuscript. The uniform and clear layout and handwriting – though occasionally alternated by the second hand – seem to point to a rather short and systematic editing process. The manuscript itself is not dated, but it includes many dates of which the most recent is 28 February 1685.<sup>18</sup> The manuscript may have then been written during the year 1685, which corresponds with Wouwerms' term as provost of the confraternity. The text further refers to persons holding positions in the city council at the time of its redaction. Among them, Adam de Blicck, 'current mayor on behalf of the craft guild nations and head of the Garland chamber' is mentioned several times.<sup>19</sup> De Blicck held the office of city mayor elected by the craft guild nations during the years 1683-84 and 1684-85.<sup>20</sup> In the inventory he is also mentioned as the city's treasurer,<sup>21</sup> a position he occupied for the periods of 1685-86 and 1686-87.<sup>22</sup> These references could possibly indicate that the manuscript was written during the lapse of time in which Adam de Blicck changed his position as mayor to that of treasurer. In Brussels, the change of the magistracy generally took place on 24 June, although the treasurer took up office as late as 1 October. In brief, it seems that the manuscript was written in the course of the year 1685, perhaps during the month June.

### Layout and Structure

The manuscript's layout is not conducive to everyday use: it does not include a summary or an index. Moreover, the compilers did not paginate the manuscript, but pagination

<sup>14</sup> The second hand appears from p. 13 above until the middle of p. 21; from p. 63 above until p. 64 below; on p. 69; from the middle of p. 131 until the top of p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> In the *Liber authenticus*, Wouwerms copied a contract between Peeter van Cutsem (acting as a spokesperson for the priest and churchwardens of St Gorik) and Jacques de Condé (acting as a spokesperson for the provosts of the confraternity) (ASB, HA, Register 3413, fols 9<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>v</sup> – information provided by Susie Speakman Sutch).

<sup>16</sup> Judocus Wouwerms, *De sponsalibus et matrimonio* (Leuven: typis Martini Hullegerde antè Academiam, 1682).

<sup>17</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3413, fols 332<sup>v</sup> and 334<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 59. The year 1685 is also mentioned on p. 68.

<sup>19</sup> 'Adam de Blicck, tegen woordigen borgemeester uijt de natie ende hooftman van de Crans camere' (ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 62); 'monsieur Adam de Blicck, borgemeester deser stadt Brussel ende hooftman deser Cranskamere' (p. 88); 'monsieur Adam de Blicck, borgemeester deser stadt Brussel' (p. 106); 'monsieur Adam de Blicck, borgemeester deser stadt Brussel' (p. 128); 'monsieur Adam de Blicck, borgemeester deser stadt Brussel' (p. 147).

<sup>20</sup> Alexandre Henne and Alphonse Wauters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles*, 4 vols (Brussels: Perichon, 1845; repr. 1975), II, pp. 552-53.

<sup>21</sup> 'Monsieur Adam de Blicck, rentmeester deser stadt Brussel' (ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 67).

<sup>22</sup> Henne and Wauters, *Histoire de Bruxelles*, II, p. 553.

was added in pencil afterwards, at least up to page 75. Further on the pagination appears irregularly, and after page 89, it disappears totally. Despite the lack of index and pagination, navigation in the manuscript was possible by means of chapter titles, which indicate the base structure of the text. Although the authors further structured the text by using full stops and page breaks, it is still awkward to look up properties, objects or facts recorded in the document. In brief, the inventory seems very impractical to use as a manual. Illustrations, rubrics, and page decorations are completely lacking.

Although not apparent at first sight, the text can be divided into four different parts. The first part recounts the roots, genesis, and history of the confraternity (pp. 3-24). It includes, amongst others, the foundation of St Gorik's church and the chapel of Our Lady (p. 3), the gift of the chapel to the rhetoricians of the Lily and the institution of the Seven Sorrows devotion (pp. 4-5), the alleged foundation of the confraternity by Philip the Fair (p. 6), the confirmation of the confraternity and the grant of indulgences by different popes and church leaders (pp. 7-15), the names of the first chapel masters or provosts (p. 15), the occurrence of a miracle during the first year (p. 16), the organization of the procession and its finances (pp. 16-18), the appointment of provosts among the rhetoricians of The Garland of Mary from 1585 onwards (pp. 18-19), the patronage by the Emperor Maximilian and the Archdukes Albert and Isabella (pp. 19-21), and, finally, the building of the sacristy in the churchyard of St Gorik (pp. 21-24).

The second part of the manuscript contains the 'Generaelen inventaris van de meubelen van Onse Live Vrouwe van Seven Wee'en' (General inventory of the movables of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows), as the chapter title reads (pp. 25-48). It starts with the description of the statue of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows and a series of paintings by Wensel Cobergher (p. 25). The inventory continues with all of the items owned by the confraternity: the wooden altarpiece (p. 26), the silver (pp. 27-31), the copper work (pp. 32-33), the gilded woodwork (p. 34), the skirts of Our Lady (pp. 35-36), her cloaks (p. 37), her veils (p. 38), the copes and chasubles (pp. 39-40), the awnings (pp. 41-42), the frontals (p. 42), the linen (p. 43), some other movables from the chapel (p. 44), the paintings (p. 46), and, finally, the woodwork (pp. 47-48). Most objects are described, and in some cases, details on the use, location, artists, expenses, and date of acquisition are added.

The following part of the document relates to the genesis and 'antiquity' of the houses of the confraternity (pp. 49-68). First, the author elaborates on the acquisition of a yard and a stable, located in the place called *Holland* in front of St Gorik's church, in order to store the *tableaux vivants* that were carried during the confraternity's annual procession (pp. 49-51). In 1553, Emperor Charles V allowed the confraternity to buy a parcel of land with two houses, located on the 'ditch of the White Ladies' (*Wittevrouwengracht*, today the Old Grain market), where a stone shed was built, which was reconstructed as the 'Big house of Our Lady also called the Chamber of the Garland' (*Groot huijs van Onse Lieve Vrouw van Seven Wee'en gesijt die Crans kamere*) in 1624 (pp. 51-58). In 1677, the confraternity also bought the house between its 'Big house' and the yard of the hand-bow guild (pp. 60-68). This so-called 'Small house of Our Lady below the Chamber of the Garland' (*Het Klijn Lieve Vrouwen huijs onder de Crans kamere*) was rented to a private person (p. 59). This part ends with a list of redeemed mortgages (pp. 69-74).

Finally, the last and largest part of the manuscript enumerates all the interest to be paid to or by the confraternity (pp. 75-155). Because the list contains such detailed

information extending back many decades, it must have been based largely on the confraternity's archives, containing an annotated register and the vouchers, which were kept in a chest. In all cases, additional details are given on the date of acquisition, the amount of the interest, the pledges, the generous donors, the current payers, and the paydays. In some cases the author also mentioned for what purpose(s) the money was intended.

## Forms and Functions of History Writing by Associations

### History Writing and Historical Culture

Histories produced by associations tend to be rather short. At best, guilds and confraternities devoted a few pages to their past, but generally a few lines recording the collective memories about the origins and most important events of the association sufficed. That does not mean, however, that the associations' interest in the past was not genuine or only limited. On the contrary: history writing among guilds and confraternities was part of a broader and much more varied historical culture. Associations did not limit history production to written texts. Historical narratives were inserted in a complex visual culture while historical consciousness was present in daily practices. References to the past are apparent in art, theatre, rituals, and other cultural expressions, in record keeping and archival practices, in the care for the association's material heritage and time-honoured traditions, and in the commemoration of deceased guild members or important events (*e.g.* jubilees, centenaries).<sup>23</sup>

The Bruges confraternity of Our Lady of the Dry Tree provides a fine example of the connection between history and visual culture. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, two former provosts conducted research into the origins of their association, for which they consulted the archives of the Order of Friars Minor convent (host of the confraternity's chapel) and interviewed some elder members. The results of their investigation were not written down, however, but were communicated through a painting depicting the Virgin Mary standing in a withered tree, along with Jason and the fleece as a reference to the alleged founder of the confraternity, the duke of Burgundy Philip the Good.<sup>24</sup>

The Brussels Seven Sorrows confraternity merged history and visual culture in a similar way. According to the inventory, there was a painting hanging in the chapel

23 Oexle, 'Liturgische Memoria und historische Erinnerung', pp. 323-40; Paul Trio, *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving: de broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), pp. 171-72; Geoffrey Crossick, 'Past Masters: In Search of the Artisan in European History', in *The Artisan and the European Town, 1500-1900*, ed. by Geoffrey Crossick (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1997), p. 2; Verschaffel, *De hoed en de hond*, pp. 254-56; Llewellyn Bogaers, 'Broederschappen in laatmiddeleeuws Utrecht op het snijpunt van religie, werk, vriendschap en politiek', *Trajecta*, 8 (1999), 97-119 (pp. 111-12); Maarten Van Dijk, *Confrérieën in het Land van Aarschot, Rotselaar en Wezemaal (17de-18de eeuw). Een historische etnologie van Aarschot en omstreken* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Leuven, 2002), passim; Bert De Munck, 'Erfgoed is van alle tijden. Ambachten en hun beeldcultuur in het Ancien Régime', in *Ten Wapen! Heraldiek, teken van gezag en identiteit*, ed. by André Vandewalle (Brugge: Stad Brugge, 2004), pp. 29-45; Janssen, *De deugd van broederschap*, pp. 185-92; Peter Burke, 'Co-memorations. Performing the Past', in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, ed. by Karin Tilmans and others (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 107-09; Brecht Dewilde, 'Corporaties en confrerieën in conflict: Leuven 1600-1750' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leuven, 2012), pp. 267-71, 357-58; Jasmine Kilburn-Toppin, 'Material Memories of the Guildsmen: Crafting Identities in Early Modern London', in *Memory before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Erika Kuipers and others (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 165-81.

24 W. H. James Weale, 'Peintres Brugeois. Les Claeissins (1500-1656)', *Annales de la Société d'Émulation de Bruges*, 61 (1911), 26-76 (pp. 57-60).

commemorating the foundation of the confraternity.<sup>25</sup> The register further lists two carved angels holding a series of genealogical emblems relating to the alleged founders of the confraternity: Philip the Fair, Margaret of Austria, and Emperor Maximilian.<sup>26</sup> Visual culture and history might also have been merged during the confraternity procession or in the theatre plays staged by the rhetoric chamber of The Garland of Mary. In the following, however, we focus on history *writing*.

### Arrangement of Information

There are various ways to structure a historical account. According to Tom Verschaffel, chronology was the most common organizing principle in eighteenth-century religious, local and regional histories.<sup>27</sup> Facts and events were arranged according to their succession in time, although there were numerous ways to divide that time (years, centuries, dynasties, *aetates*, etc.). Chronology turned out to be a convenient solution to unify isolated facts into a coherent narrative, but it had the side effect that related events could be separated out in time, which made the story appear like a loose collection of data.

Unlike this dominant way of arranging information, the content of the Seven Sorrows inventory is arranged by topic. True, chronology has its part in the Seven Sorrows inventory, but it is not its *leitmotiv*. The leading principle here is the thematic division into history and property. Both themes are separated by the chapter titles: the history section (pp. 2-24) is announced by the caption *Instellinge van het broederschap* ('Foundation of the confraternity'), while the property section (pp. 25-157) starts with the heading *Generaelen inventaris van de meubelen* ('General inventory of the movables'). At first sight, this is how the register is structured. However, if we take a closer look, we discover that history and property are not clear-cut categories at all, but that they are heavily intertwined in both sections. The history section includes an expanded overview of the confraternity's indulgences and how and when they were obtained, running from 1494 up to 1667,<sup>28</sup> and an account of the acquisition history of the confraternity chapel and the building of the sacristy in the churchyard of St Gorik.<sup>29</sup> The property section contains an inventory of the confraternity's actual belongings, but this 'property list' is combined with a historical view of the context of the acquisition of the goods.

The lack of clear-cut categories makes the Seven Sorrows inventory an interesting example of the intertwining of history writing and property listing. The confraternity's history is not hung up on chronology – as was the case in many other contemporary histories – but on its possessions. The author reconstructed the history of the association on the basis of property. At the same time, the addition of historical data to the inventoried effects evokes the idea of a clearly defined historical patrimony. This idea is all the more apparent when the author writes about lost, damaged, or stolen property. In his eyes, they undoubtedly belonged to the confraternity's patrimony. While listing the garments of the statue of the Virgin and the infant Jesus, for instance, the author inserted a quick note that one robe

25 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 46.

26 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 47.

27 Verschaffel, *De hoed en de bond*, pp. 273-81.

28 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 7-15.

29 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 21-24.

was stolen.<sup>30</sup> He did not hesitate, however, to quote the lost skirt among the garments that still hung in the confraternity's wardrobe. In a similar vein, effects already sold or foregone profits were listed as if they still made up the confraternity's actual assets.<sup>31</sup> In other words, looking back from 1685, the author gave the impression that the possessions constituted a unity, which existed through time and in that way reflected the confraternity's history.

### Sources and Selection Mechanisms

To recount the history of the Seven Sorrows confraternity, the author extensively made use of what Marc Jacobs has called 'powerful texts' (*krachtige teksten*): recognized and authoritative records with evidential value that surpass oral testimonies, memories, and indirect proof.<sup>32</sup> Most of the author's information is summarized from such powerful texts: indulgences, privileges, ordinances, charters, title-deeds, accounts, etc. The practical reasons for this are evident, but at the same time it is remarkable that the author actually identified his sources as if he understood the concept of powerful texts, given the precise information and type of document to which he referred. On page 10, for instance, the author reported that the confraternity obtained an indulgence for those attending the Seven Sorrows procession in 1532. However, he did not end with this statement but continued to support his claim by referring his readers to a bull of Pope Clement VII, which was confirmed by Cardinal Laurentius (Lorenzo Campeggio) in Brussels on 12 January 1532.<sup>33</sup> The acquisition of the indulgence seemed almost secondary to the very possession of the papal bull. Similar examples of statements supported by references to official records are found throughout the register. Each time, the author specified the type of document (*e.g.* bull, account, title-deed) and gave a precise dating (day, month, year, *gesta*), named the place of publication, and identified the people involved (dignitaries in particular). He explicitly added whether his sources were still present in the archives of the confraternity. Clearly, the express reference to these important documents was an excuse for demonstrating social capital rather than being inspired by methodological concerns.

In addition, the Seven Sorrows inventory may be compared with the cartularies that were produced during the High Middle Ages. According to Patrick Geary, such collections of charters are considered to have served both administrative and commemorative purposes. These combined functions 'greatly affected the form of these collections, as

30 'Item, eenen witten geblomden silveren moiren rock geboort met vier goude kanten. Hier van is het rockken vant kindeken gestolen' (ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 35).

31 The author mentions, for instance, the mortgage interest offered by lord Willem Borreman in his legacy from 1504, which was amortized the same year (ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 99).

32 Jacobs, 'Zonder twijfel dat waarschijnlijk', p. 249. See as well: Maïka De Keyzer, 'Opportunisme, corporatisme en progressiviteit. Conflicten en vertogen van corporatieve belangengroepen in het stedelijk milieu van het achttiende-eeuwse Mechelen', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis*, 7 (2010), 3-26 (pp. 13-16).

33 'Het voorschreven broederschap is desgelijckx geconfirmeert bij den cardinael Laurentius, als blijktt in de bulle daer af sijnde gegeven binnen Brussel in date pridie idus januarii in het jaer vijftien hondert twee en dertigh, in het negenste jaer des pausdoms Clemens den Sevensten, in de welcke hij is seven jaeren ende seven quarantenen aflaets verleenende aen alle de ghene die de processie van Onse Lieve Vrouwe van Seven Weeen sullen accompagneren, hun in staet van gratie gestelt hebbende, ende de kapelle van Seven Weeen besoeckende, hunnen Vader Onsen ende Weest Gegroet Maria lesende ende Seven Weeen mediterende. Ende aen alle die gene die alle vrijdagen in de maent van meert oft op den Goeden Vrijdagh kommen besoecken de capelle van Onse Lieve Vrouwe van Seven Weeen, is verleenende hondert daegen aflaet als blijktt in de voorschreve bulle' (ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 10).

well as the principles of inclusion and exclusion of their contents.<sup>34</sup> The reproduction of original records in the cartularies is subject to selection, suppression, manipulation and interpolation, which ‘determined what access to the past would be available to future generations.’<sup>35</sup> The compiler of the Seven Sorrows inventory applied similar techniques. Consider, for example, the transaction between the churchwardens of St Gorik and the provost of the Seven Sorrows confraternity, dated 28 June 1660. According to the inventory, the churchwardens of St Gorik endowed the confraternity with a parcel in the churchyard to build a sacristy there, the donation of which attested to the success of the devotion to the Lady of Sorrows and to the confraternity’s ‘high esteem’ (*grootte estime*).<sup>36</sup> The author of the inventory clearly interpreted the transaction as a donation. The text of the contract has been copied in full in the confraternity’s member registry, the *Liber authenticus*, which allows us to verify the information presented in the inventory.<sup>37</sup> In reality, the churchwardens only granted the usufruct of the parcel with permission to build a sacristy. The contract states that the churchwardens retained their title to the church space and the churchyard, which meant that the confraternity was not allowed to build an extra entrance to the sacristy from the churchyard. Furthermore, the use of the sacristy was restricted to religious services and could not be used for other purposes.<sup>38</sup> This example shows that the compiler of the Seven Sorrows inventory did not literally copy the powerful texts he employed. Instead, he outlined their content in a schematic or brief way, which allowed him to leave information aside or to slightly modify the information for the benefit of his narrative.

The history of the Seven Sorrows confraternity is conceived as a series of highlights. Important events and acquisition of properties or privileges are carefully listed and described at length. Losses, outstanding debts, or negative occurrences, on the contrary, remain unmentioned or are only mentioned in passing. Discharged annuities are explicitly inventoried to avoid the perception that the confraternity is not able to fulfil its financial obligations.<sup>39</sup> Annuities for which the author ‘could not find any voucher’ are conveniently ‘considered as settled.’<sup>40</sup> As mentioned above, his purpose was to reinforce the idea of the unity of the historical patrimony. However, an exception is made when loans are contracted or when properties are sold for the purpose of acquiring more, new, or better goods.<sup>41</sup> Here, the idea of accumulation is more important. The author stressed the expansion

34 Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 81-107, quotation on p. 84.

35 Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 86. See as well: Georges Declercq, ‘Originals and Cartularies: The Organisation of Archival Memory (Ninth-Eleventh Centuries)’, in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. by Karl Heidecker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 147, 149, 155.

36 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 21-23.

37 ASB, HA, Register 3413, fols 9<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>v</sup>.

38 ‘Sonder dat de voorseide ontfangeren, ofte hunne naercommelinghen op het voorseide kerckhoff sullen vermoegen te maecken eene deure, tsij om te hebben acces oft entree tot het voorseide kerckhoff, oft andersints ende dat sij ontfangeren de voorseide sacristeije niet voordere oft andersints en sullen gebruijcken dan op den voet ende maniere gelijk sij tot heden de voorseide cappelle van onse L. Vre. hebben gebruijckt, ende den dinst is gedaen geweest ende vervolgens, dat de voorseide constituanten, ende ontfangeren sullen blijven in hunne oude gerechticheden, ende privilegien’ (ASB, HA, Register 3413, fol. 10<sup>v</sup>).

39 ‘Dese notie wort alhier gestelt op dat wie voorders eenigh neerstigher ondersoek soude willen doen, niet en souden dencken datter eenighen last ofte obligatie daer toe staet en niet volbracht en soude worden’ (ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 69).

40 ‘Van de welcke men gene brieven is vindende, ergo wort geoordeelt te sijn gequeten’ (ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 73-74).

41 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 51, 88.

of the confraternity's collection to add to its already impressive status. As a result, the history of the confraternity, written on the basis of its properties, should be understood as a (hi)story of progress.

Of course, this positive account must not be understood as an objective representation of the confraternity's history. The author made little or no effort to mark interruptions and breaks or to show evolutions. Though changes in the Seven Sorrows confraternity between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are not evident or manifest in the inventory, a closer look at the dates mentioned in the manuscript yields some interesting trends with regard to the variations over time. Figure 1 presents the frequency of entries in the inventory, rearranged per decade. It makes clear that some periods stand out: the foundation period in the late fifteenth century, the period of Catholic reform starting with the reign of Albert and Isabella, and the decades before the inventory was written. The high frequency in the last decades of the seventeenth century probably reveals the author's interest in the recent history of the confraternity and/or that he had recourse to oral testimonies by the confraternity's members and his former colleagues, who evidently knew much more about their own involvement. It is no surprise that he occasionally mentioned people who were in charge at the time, like Adam de Blicck.

Most striking is the lack of references to the position of the Seven Sorrows confraternity during the Calvinist reign in Brussels (1581-85). Many guilds and confraternities – in Brussels as well as in other towns – suffered material losses and a decline in membership numbers during that period, which forced them to suspend their activities or to go underground.<sup>42</sup> The Brussels archery guilds, for instance, were abrogated in 1580. The confraternity of St Barbara stopped its activities and administration in 1578 and brought its silverware and other valuables to safety, only to resume after the liberation of the city by Farnese in 1585.<sup>43</sup> Catholic services and ritual expressions of Catholic faith were contested and subsequently abandoned from 1577 to 1585.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, Brussels' churches were sacked and appropriated for use for Protestant services. In 1581, Catholic services were prohibited altogether.<sup>45</sup>

The Seven Sorrows inventory does not provide details about this episode, but it is very likely that the confraternity experienced the same difficulties as the other associations did. The registration of new members and officers in the *Liber authenticus* stopped after 1555 (except for the registration of a monastic community in 1569), and restarted only in 1586.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Figure 1 reveals that the frequency of activities was low during the 1570s and 80s. Compared to the first three quarters of the sixteenth century and to the seventeenth century, barely any deed, event, or acquisition is listed for the period 1570-85.

42 Jan de Pottre, *Dagboek van Jan de Pottre 1549-1602*, ed. by B. de St. Genois (Ghent: C. Annoot-Braeckman, 1861), p. 113.

43 Jean Théodore De Raadt, 'Le registre de la confrérie de Sainte Barbe en l'église Sainte Gudule à Bruxelles', *Messenger des sciences historiques de Belgique* (1893), 286-310 (pp. 297-98, 309-10).

44 De Pottre, *Dagboek*, pp. 34, 37, 43, 63, 80-81, 94.

45 Guido Marnef, 'Het protestantisme te Brussel, c. 1567-1585', *Tijdschrift voor Brusselse geschiedenis*, 1 (1984), 57-82; Guido Marnef, 'Het protestantisme te Brussel onder de "Calvinistische Republiek", c. 1577-1585', in *État et religion aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles. Staat en religie in de 15e en 16e eeuw (Actes du colloque à Bruxelles du 9 au 12 octobre 1984. Handelingen van het colloquium te Brussel van 9 tot 12 oktober 1984)*, ed. by Willem Pieter Blockmans and Herman Van Nuffel (Brussels: Van Nuffel, 1986), pp. 231-99; Emile M. Braekman, 'Le protestantisme bruxellois sous la République calviniste', in *État et religion*, ed. by Blockmans and Van Nuffel, pp. 301-18; Johan Decavele, 'Reformatie en Contrareformatie', in *Brussel. Groei van een hoofdstad*, ed. by Jean Stengers (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1979), pp. 93-115; Emile M. Braekman, *Het protestantisme te Brussel: van de oorsprong tot aan het overlijden van Leopold I* (Brussels: Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, 1980).

46 ASB, HA, Register 3413, fols 283<sup>v</sup>, 284<sup>rv</sup>, and 288<sup>r</sup>.



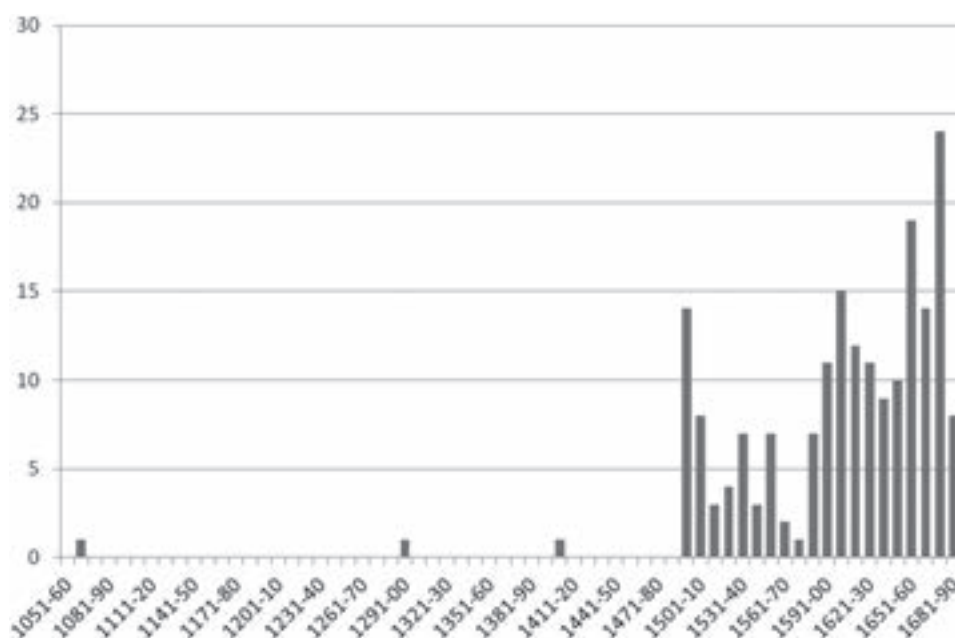


FIGURE 1: Frequency of entries in the inventory of the Seven Sorrows confraternity, arranged per decade (1051–1690). Source: ASB, HA, Register 1499.

The lack of inventoried objects with a (demonstrable) fifteenth- or sixteenth-century origin indicates that the confraternity presumably suffered material losses as well. On the other hand, the profusion of entries related to the year of Reconciliation and the following years, and the large investments in art, furniture, and chapel decorations during the first decades of the seventeenth century point to a new start during the reign of Albert and Isabella.

In short, through his selection of facts the author produced a linear history of the confraternity, a story of continuity and progress. He conveyed the idea that things got better, larger, and bigger. Above all it is a story of accumulation – of splendour, wealth, and networks – in which there was no space for crisis, decline, or any other incident.

### Processing of Information

Guilds and confraternities were obsessive in their concern about origins and age, since these defined their position in the social pecking order and their access to privileges. There are numerous examples of guilds that pushed their foundation back in time, to the building of a city, the emergence of trade as the governing principle of human interaction, and even to the time of Solomon's temple, Noah's ark, or the creation of man.<sup>47</sup> Here as well, the history of the Seven Sorrows confraternity starts well before its formal institution. In the opening lines of the inventory, the author mentioned the foundation of St Gorik's church

<sup>47</sup> Jacobs, 'Zonder twijfel dat waarschijnlijk', pp. 248, 258-65. Similar concerns about the ancient origins of the association are apparent in the choice of patron saints: Frederik Verleynsen, 'Het hemelse festijn. Religieuze cultuur, sociabiliteit en sociale relaties in de corporatieve wereld van Antwerpen, Brussel en Gent (c. 1585-c. 1795)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Brussels, 2005), pp. 146-51.

by Count Lambert the Stammerer, who died on the battlefield in 1063 (sic), followed by the construction of the chapel of Our Lady at the end of the thirteenth century, and the institutionalization of the devotion to the Virgin Mary through the grant of an indulgence in 1401.<sup>48</sup> These three 'historical facts' selected by the author provided evidence for the ancient roots of the Seven Sorrows devotion, and attested to the association's historical importance and its prestige.

At the same time, this 'narrative trick' inserts the history of the confraternity into both the history of St Gorik's church and the ecclesiastical history of the town. However, a striking 'mistake' in the Seven Sorrows inventory is the confusion between the Count of Leuven Lambert I (d. 1015, on the battlefield of Florennes), his son the Count of Leuven Lambert II called *Balderik* (d. 1062-1063), and Lambert 'the Stammerer', a twelfth-century priest and reformer from Liège. It is not known who was responsible for this confusion, but it is probably due to the merging of two traditions which explain the foundation of St Gorik's church. The episode is based, firstly, on the foundation tradition established by Hennen van Merchtenen in his *Cornicke van Brabant*, written in 1414.<sup>49</sup> Van Merchtenen himself had already mixed up two foundation stories, mentioned separately in Jan van Boendale's *Brabantsche Yeesten* from the first half of the fourteenth century: on the one hand, the foundation of the canonical chapters of Brussels and Leuven by the Count of Leuven Lambert II called *Balderik* in the middle of the eleventh century; on the other hand the construction of a residence and a chapel on the isle of St Gorik by the Duke of Lorraine Charles of France during the tenth century.<sup>50</sup> The second source for the foundation story in the Seven Sorrows inventory is an alternative tradition that existed in St Gorik's church, which attributed the foundation of the church to the Count of Leuven Lambert I, as is explained by the phrase *Lambertus comes fundator hujus ecclesie* ('Count Lambert founder of this church') written on a church pillar.<sup>51</sup> By creatively merging both traditions, the author of the inventory shows that the history of the confraternity was inextricably bound up with that of St Gorik's church and with the early ecclesiastical history of the city itself.

Another remarkable feature of the Seven Sorrows inventory is the author's tendency to provide metadata about the properties listed: physical descriptions of the objects, dates of acquisition, cost price or exchange value in the case of gifts, the names of donor(s), the artists or craftsmen in the case of artistic or high-value items, and the confraternity's members involved in the commission. The author mentions, for instance, that the wooden structure of the confraternity altar was ordered and paid by the noblewoman Philippina van Busleiden in 1655. The sculpted frame of the Seven Sorrows statue and a pair of confessionals were partly financed by the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, and the construction of the frame lasted from 1615 until 1616 and was carried out by cabinetmaker

48 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 3-4.

49 The text of Hennen van Merchtenen's chronicle reads: 'Ende des grave Lambrecht waest die de canesie stecht Sente Peters, te Lovene, in stede, ende te Bruessel, Sente Goedelen mede. Ende hij woende te Bruessel binnen tusschen .ii. erm van der Sennen, daer hij .i. capelle dede' (*Hennen van Merchtenen's Cornicke van Brabant* (1414), ed. by Guido Gezelle (Ghent: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde, 1896), l. 1392-98).

50 Bram Vannieuwenhuyze, 'L'histoire des origines et du développement de Bruxelles, est-elle née au Moyen Âge?', in *Ab urbe condita... Fonder et refonder la ville: récits et représentations (second Moyen Âge-premier XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle). Actes du colloque international de Pau (14-15-16 mai 2009)*, ed. by Véronique Lamazou-Duplan (Pau: Presses Universitaires de Pau, 2011), pp. 382-84.

51 Henne and Wauters, *Histoire de Bruxelles*, I, pp. 22-23.

Francois Cosijns for the sum of 850 guilders.<sup>52</sup> The Seven Sorrows inventory thus provides far more than a trivial list of possessions and properties. It reconstructs the context of acquisition and in so doing it reveals a rich culture of patronage and gift-giving. The author does not calculate an overall estimate of the confraternity's means, but by providing a number of specific, suggestive details, he evokes at least the impression of splendour and wealth. At the same time, he maps the confraternity's network of patrons among the Brussels' elite.

A similar 'network approach' can be found in property inventories of other associations across Europe,<sup>53</sup> such as the guild of Our Lady of the Dry Tree in Bruges or the confraternity of the Miraculous Sacrament in Leuven.<sup>54</sup> In the latter case, the donors' motives for gift-giving are recorded as well.<sup>55</sup> Behind these metadata (the dates in particular) there is a further act of appropriation. The confraternity's aggregated property clearly possesses historical roots. However, given that the objects described are still part of the confraternity's actual belongings, they constitute a direct link between present and past. In this way, the author of the Seven Sorrows inventory creates a subtle sense of dynamics in his – for the rest – rather rigid historical account.

#### Author's Intentions and Readers' Experience

This last section compares the Seven Sorrows inventory with other histories produced by associations in order to reveal the intentions of the author and the audience targeted. Some historical accounts were intended for publication. Many confraternities printed small-sized volumes containing a few pages on the foundation history and development of the association, in addition to regulations, model prayers, instructions for a devout way of life, surveys of benefits connected to membership, and so forth. Other histories were not duplicated by the printing press, but were nonetheless generally available since they were written down in splendid books accessible to the public in the confraternity's chapels or other places.<sup>56</sup> Still other histories were produced *ad hoc*, in communication with the authorities, for instance, or in court documents and were not intended to be distributed at all.<sup>57</sup> The Bruges guild of the butchers even integrated a history of its most memorable actions in its printed New Year's greetings for the year 1788.<sup>58</sup>

52 'Item, het houtwerck van den autær, het welck heeft doen maken de edele jouffrouwe Philippina van Buselijden ende bekostight in het jaer seshien hondert vijf en vijftigh. Item, het schrijn houde wercke waer in de Seven Weeen gesneden met twee bichtstoelen, welck maken van die schrijn werck ten deele heeft bekostight den hertogh Albertus ende Isabella, sijne huijsvrouw, saeliger memorie, waer in hunne wapenen gestelt sijn, welcke van sneijden hebben gecost met negen Bourgonsche cruijcen drij en twintigh guldens. Het voorseijde schrijn werck is gemackt ofte begonst in het jaer een duijsent ses hondert en vijftien ende voleijndt in het jaer een duijsent ses hondert seshien door Francois Cosijns schrijnwercker ende heeft gekost volgens accoort acht hondert vijftigh guldens, sonder daer onder begrepen de bichtstoelen ofte gesneden werck' (ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 26).

53 Kilburn-Toppin, 'Material Memories of the Guildsmen', p. 169.

54 Maximiliaan P. J. Martens, 'Artistic Patronage in Bruges Institutions, c. 1440-1482' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1992), p. 310; Jos Wils, *Le Sacrement de Miracle de Louvain (1374-1905). Monographie Historique et Religieuse* (Leuven: Wils, 1905).

55 Leuven, State Archive/Rijksarchief Leuven, Archive of the church of St James / Archief Sint-Jacobskerk, no. 719 (*Liber confraternitatis Sanctissimi Miraculosi apud P.P. Augustinianos Lovanii*), fols 85ff (1618-1817) and fols 113ff (1558-1773).

56 The ancient registers of the confraternity of Our Lady in St Peter's church in Leuven, for instance, could still be admired in the sacristy of Our Lady (Martinus-Geldolphus Vander Buecken, *Wonderen Bystandt van de Alder-Heylighste Maeght ende Moeder Godis Maria, Bethoont aen Haere Getrouwe Dienaers in de vermaerde collegiaele ende parochiaele Hooft-Kercke van den Heyligen Petrus binnen Loven, Hooft-Stadt van Brabant. Met den List der H.H. Reliquien Berustende in de voorsz. Kercke* (Leuven: Theod. C.J. De Zangré, 1757), p. 46).

57 Jacobs, 'Zonder twijfel dat waarschijnlijk', pp. 231-74; Brecht Dewilde, 'In de ban van hertog Jan. Schuttersgilde en kleinhandelsrevolutie in Leuven, zeventiende en achttiende eeuw', *Noordbrabants Historisch Jaarboek*, 29 (2012), 99-119.

58 Vanden Bergh, *Jacobijnen en Traditionalisten*, I, pp. 170-71.

Recently, Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene demonstrated how the Habsburg dynasty promoted the devotion to the Lady of Sorrows in order to create ‘a large spiritual and emotional community that identified with the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty and its ideology of peace and territorial unity.’<sup>59</sup> Key to the promotion of the Seven Sorrows devotion was a network of confraternities in the major cities of Flanders, Brabant, Holland and Zeeland. In 1517, the young future Emperor Charles V ordered Jan van Coudenberghe to redact a volume that retraced the foundation history of this confraternity network.<sup>60</sup> The resulting volume, written in Latin and printed in 1519, was translated into Dutch by the Jesuit Jacob Stratius in 1622.<sup>61</sup> At the request of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, another book was published in 1615, in both French and Dutch. It contains a brief introduction to the foundation history of the Brussels confraternity, besides a series of spiritual exercises and meditations on the sorrows of the Virgin.<sup>62</sup>

Both printed volumes and their translations were primarily aimed at the promotion of the Seven Sorrows devotion and the confraternity network. The 1519 volume by Van Coudenberghe highlighted the role of Philip the Fair and the pious motives of the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty. Great efforts were made to explain the miracles that led to the institution of the various confraternity chapters and to defend the theological accuracy of the Seven Sorrows cult. It was the opinion of the court that in the period of civil war and social unrest following the death of Mary of Burgundy, contemplation of the Sorrows of the Virgin might bring peace to the people and free the country of fear and terror.<sup>63</sup> According to Van Coudenberghe, the cult of the Seven Sorrows flourished precisely because it was a joint project of the Burgundian-Habsburg rulers and the ordinary people. Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene situate the writings of Van Coudenberghe in what they call the ‘Habsburg theatre state’. The same imaginations, identifications, and religious sensitivities were recuperated by Albert and Isabella in the early seventeenth century in order to support the Catholic Reformation.<sup>64</sup> In both cases, the printed histories of the Seven Sorrows confraternity(-ies) served a public goal: the promotion of the cult and membership of the confraternity.<sup>65</sup>

The Seven Sorrow inventory – to return to our source – serves different goals and perhaps also targets another audience. The audience and goals are not manifest in the preparation of the manuscript, but we will propose a possible intention below. The register

59 Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, ‘The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, c. 1490-1520’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), p. 254.

60 Jan van Coudenberghe, *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissimae virginis Mariae de passione quae dicitur de septem doloribus* (Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519).

61 Jacob Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weeen met de mirakelen, getyden, ende misse der selver: insgelycx den oorspronck, ende voortganck der broederschap* (Antwerp: Guiliam Lesteens, 1622).

62 *Briefve relation de la confrairie des Sept Douleurs de Notre Dame instituée par le serenissime prince Philippe de haute mémoire, Archiducq d’Autrice, Duc de Bourgogne, de Brabant etc., en l’an de Notre Seigneur 1498 en l’église de S. Géry en Bruxelles* (Brussels: Hubert Anthoine, 1615); *Cort verhael van het broederschap vande Seve[n] Weeden van Onser Lieve Vrouwe. Inghestelt by den doorluchtichsten Prince hoogher memorie Philippus Eertzhertoch van Oostenrijk, Hertoch van Bourgognen, van Brabant, etc. int jaer ons Heeren 1498. binnen der kercke van S. Guericx tot Brussel. Ghededicert aen den Magistraet der selver stadt [...] Overgheset uyt het françois, door F.I.V.A.M. (Brussels: Huybrecht Anthoon, 1615). This book was translated into Spanish as well; see Annick Delfosse, *La ‘Protectrice du Pais-Bas’: Stratégies politiques et figures de la Vierge dans les Pays-Bas espagnols* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), p. 139.*

63 Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weeen*, pp. 188-94.

64 Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, ‘The Habsburg Theatre State: Court, City and the Performance of Identity in the Early Modern Southern Low Countries’, in *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650*, ed. by Robert Stein and Judith Pollmann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 131-49.

65 *Cort verhael van het broederschap*, pp. 13-14; Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, preface ‘Aenden devoten Leser’.

bears no visible user traces, nor signs of wear. Its size and layout are modest, since the manuscript does not contain any illuminations, rubrications, or page decorations. Although the handwriting is neat and there are barely any cross-outs or alterations, the manuscript gives a rather sloppy impression. Hence, it seems doubtful that the register was ever used as a showpiece, to be displayed on the altar in the confraternity chapel for public inspection and admiration. Nor could it be interpreted as the rough copy of a text destined for publication, for its structure and content do not correspond to that of other confraternity booklets.

The Seven Sorrows register does, however, possess clear similarities to the register of the Leuven hand-bow guild of St Sebastian, which was begun in 1638.<sup>66</sup> In this volume the *overkoningstabel* (superintendent) and lord of Lovenjoel Ferdinand van Spoelberch (1596-1675) thematically classified all knowledge and memories about the history, traditions, achievements, and privileges of his beloved guild. Although the content is neatly arranged and presented in a pleasant handwriting, illustrations and decorations are completely lacking. As is the case with the Seven Sorrows inventory, the St Sebastian register only contains a plain text, which indicates that it was not meant for public display. In the preface and dedication, Spoelberch made abundantly clear that the register was intended for the inner circle of guild members. He argued that many guild traditions had fallen into disuse, were corrupted by time or were simply forgotten. He explained the causes for this decline in an allegorical way, as a severe winter and a biting northern wind, which allude to the period of the Dutch Revolt when many associations were no longer functioning or were losing legitimacy as cornerstones of the urban fabric. A 'return to the past', as Spoelberch proposed, would help his fellow guild members to arm themselves against outside mockery and would be effective to regain their lost pride.

A steady position requires firm roots. For Spoelberch and the archers of the St Sebastian guild, history and tradition were of major importance for creating a collective identity. Their aim was not so much to present a comprehensive, well-structured account of the foundation and further development of the association, but to picture – or imagine – a continuity between the present and the (idealized) past. In this case, the guild was 'calling in the past to redress the balance of the present', as Lawrence Stone put it.<sup>67</sup> It was gazing back to remove that awkward feeling that things were not what they used to be.

The same mechanism seems to apply to the Brussels confraternity of the Seven Sorrows. Though a direct reason for the compilation of the inventory has not surfaced, it might be inspired by a similar concern to increase internal cohesion and corporate identity by taking up the past. In the wake of the Catholic Reform, the Seven Sorrows confraternity regained its prominent position with the support of Albert and Isabella. The archdukes recognized the importance of guilds and confraternities for state formation and confessionalization, which resulted in a rich culture of patronage.<sup>68</sup> By 1650, however, the dynamics

<sup>66</sup> Brussels, Collection of Philippe d'Arschot: *Antiquiteyten ende privilegien der oude, groete, ende edele hand-boge-gulde binnen dese vermaerde boot-stadt van Loven*, c. 1638, with additions up to 1795. For a copy of this manuscript, see: Leuven, University Archives/Universiteitsarchief Leuven, P98: *Archives of the Family Spoelberch de Lovenjoel/Archief van de familie Spoelberch de Lovenjoel*, Annex.

<sup>67</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 751 – quoted in Verleysen, 'Het hemelse festijn', p. 210.

<sup>68</sup> Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 67; *Albert & Isabella 1598-1621. Essays*, ed. by Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); Luc Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety: Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars* (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 212-13.

of the Catholic Reform were waning.<sup>69</sup> It is not yet clear to what extent the Seven Sorrows confraternity suffered from this development and whether or not it could uphold its position as a cornerstone of the Brussels urban and religious fabric. The inventory demonstrates that a need was felt to collect the memories and the available information about the history and the artefacts of the confraternity. Yet whether this was inspired by a feeling of discomfort with the present functioning of the association or whether this fitted within a new emerging interest in history among broad layers of the Brussels society is difficult to establish.

### Conclusion: A Tangible History

Until now, not much research has been done on history writing by early modern associations. This article argues that the treatment of the past might vary within a single association, depending on which goal was achieved and which audience was targeted. Our analysis suggests that the Seven Sorrows inventory was destined for the inner circle of confraternity members or at least for a subgroup of board members and affiliates. The internal history was probably used to forge a collective identity. Such a strategy is not unusual, as it is easy to draw a parallel with monastery and abbey histories from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for instance.<sup>70</sup>

Interesting, however, is that the author of the Seven Sorrows inventory wrote or compiled a history on the basis of objects or privileges supported by official documents. The author codified the history of the Seven Sorrows confraternity as if there had been no changes or decline through time. On the contrary, readers received a story of continuity, unity, and progress, based on the subtle selection of what to describe and what to leave aside. Such narrative procedure conveys the impression of a prestigious confraternity with a considerable supply of economic and social capital.

But the inventory does more: it makes the confraternity's history *tangible*. The objects in the confraternity's possession are presented as a tangible history, as souvenirs of the past. By looking at the objects described in the inventory, by touching them or by participating in the activities amidst them, the confraternity members might *experience* the history of their association. The Seven Sorrows inventory, then, is much more than a mere account of the confraternity's history; it serves as a manual for a historic sensation and evokes the great days of the association by means of a guided tour along the confraternity's patrimony. Precisely this experience-oriented approach of the Seven Sorrows inventory is one that differs from the approach of the printed confraternity booklets, whose main goal was to produce propaganda and to inspire new members. In any case, the confraternity's use of the past to pursue multiple objectives reflects the growing importance of and interest in history in Brussels' culture and society.

<sup>69</sup> Alfons K. L. Thijs, 'Religion and Social Structure: Religious Rituals in Pre-Industrial Trade Associations in the Low Countries', in *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation*, ed. by Maarten Prak and others (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 168, 169, 172.

<sup>70</sup> Verschaffel, *De boed en de bond*, pp. 29-34.

# PATRONAGE, FOUNDATION HISTORY, AND ORDINARY BELIEVERS

## The Membership Registry of the Brussels Seven Sorrows Confraternity

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The manuscript entitled the *Liber authenticus sacratissimae utriusque sexus christifidelium confraternitatis septem dolorum beatae mariae virginis nuncupatae* is a precious document.<sup>1</sup> It contains the register of names of the men and women who enrolled in the Brussels devotional confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows from the moment of its establishment by the members of the rhetoricians chamber *De Lelie* (The Lily) at the chapel of Our Lady in the church of St Gorik in early March 1499 (n.s.) until it was officially dissolved in 1785 by order of Emperor Joseph II. Its interest to scholars has largely resided in the information it yields about three of Brussels' rhetoricians chambers as it includes a list of the names of the members of the founding chamber, *De Lelie* (The Lily), as well as of those of *De Violette* (The Violet), that merged with *De Lelie* in mid-September 1507 to form 't *Mariacranske* [*van de zeven weeën*] (The Garland of Mary [of the Seven Sorrows]). Because the officers or provosts of 't *Mariacranske* were also responsible for directing the activities of the devotional confraternity, their names are indicated on an almost yearly basis throughout the register, and hence we know the identities of the officers of this chamber of rhetoric from the beginning of the sixteenth until the end of the eighteenth century. At the same time the manuscript contains the transcription of important documents that help trace the development of the Brussels confraternity until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Finally, over 100 coats of arms are present in the *Liber authenticus*. These coats of arms yield valuable information about the rulers, nobles, and high administrators as well as princes of the Church whose patronage helped this confraternity thrive.

Scholars from numerous disciplines have consistently consulted this manuscript for information regarding both the devotional confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows and the rhetoricians chambers *De Lelie*, *De Violette*, and 't *Mariacranske*, but often the information that they made available has generated misunderstandings and misinterpretations. One such is the tradition that the memorialist, diplomat, soldier, court functionary, and poet Olivier de La Marche was a member of the rhetoricians chamber *De*

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<sup>1</sup> Archives of the City of Brussels/Archief van de Stad Brussel, Historical Archives/Historisch Archief (hereafter ASB, HA), Register 3413 (hereafter *Liber authenticus*). I would like to express my profuse thanks and appreciation to Mevr. Martine Vrebois and Mme Anne Deknop of the Museum of the City of Brussels. Their patience, generosity and good humour made my on-site examinations of the *Liber authenticus*, which at that time was on display at the Museum, a real pleasure. Their help in facilitating my research on this manuscript was invaluable.

*Lelie*. While La Marche certainly was enrolled as a member of the confraternity, there is no indication in this manuscript that he was a member of the rhetoricians chamber that founded this confraternity in Brussels.<sup>2</sup> Misunderstandings such as this one, and their perpetuation, have come about because the nature, structure, and contents of the *Liber authenticus* have until now remained unavailable to all but those who have personally consulted the manuscript. The intention of this chapter, therefore, is quite simply to clarify the sequence of the documents present in the manuscript, to elucidate their content, and to establish when it came to constitute its present structure and shape. In so doing I shall provide a glimpse of the traces of information about patronage, the foundation history of the confraternity, and the devotional practices of ordinary believers that this manuscript can yield, as well as analyse in turn the clusters of documents that it encompasses. This analysis will demonstrate that, while numerous leaves were inserted into the manuscript subsequently, the structure it now exhibits dates to the third quarter of the sixteenth century, namely the 1570s. For this reason, I end the chapter by proposing that Michael Aitsinger, the author of *De Leone Belgico*, very possibly was the designer of the *Liber authenticus*, if not its actual compiler.<sup>3</sup>

Before I can begin to explore the different sorts of documents that the *Liber authenticus* preserves, however, it is essential to go back to the beginning of the Brussels confraternity's existence because from the very moment of its inception its provosts were conscientious in noting down the names of every person – whether male or female, cleric or lay, noble or commoner – who enrolled in the confraternity. This information came to light in the recently discovered accounts of the first seventeen years of the confraternity's existence, 1499-1516.<sup>4</sup>

### The Roots of the *Liber authenticus*: 'den ouden boeck' and 'den rooden boeck al nieu gemaict'

These invaluable account books lay out precisely the sources of the confraternity's income and the nature of its expenditures during these seventeen years.<sup>5</sup> My debt to these accounts will be restricted to what they reveal about the paper and vellum that the provosts purchased

2 His coat of arms, paired with that of his wife Isabeau Machefoing, occurs at fol. 114<sup>r</sup> where they are defined as *confrere* and *seur* respectively; their names appear as well at the top of column 1 on fol. 221<sup>r</sup> (just before Christmas 1499). His name is nowhere stated among the rhetoricians who were the founding members of the confraternity nor among the subsequent officers or provosts of the confraternity. I want to thank Professor Herman Pleij for tracing back the source of this misunderstanding to Gilbert Degroote in the introduction to his edition of *Jan Pertcheval's Den Camp vander doot*, ed. by Gilbert Degroote (Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1948), p. viii. I should also point out here that Degroote's folio reference for La Marche's coat of arms is inaccurate. While it is possible that La Marche could have been an honorary member of the chamber *De Lelie*, I find this difficult to accept given that this chamber did not have a history of soliciting honorary members unlike the oldest rhetoricians chamber in Brussels, *Den Boeck* (The Book), which from the outset counted the dukes of Brabant among its members.

3 The Austrian nobleman Michael Aitsinger, whose coat of arms is included in the *Liber authenticus* at fol. 101<sup>r</sup>, resided in Brussels from the second half of 1573 until 1578; see Wilhelm Bonacker, 'Le Baron Michael von Eitzing et la "Belgici Leonis Chorographica"', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 37 (1959), 949-966 (p. 952). He moved to Cologne in 1581, where the two works for which he is the most famous were published: *Leo Belgicus*, the map of the Netherlands designed in the shape of a lion [engraving by Frans Hogenberg, 1583] and *De Leone Belgico*, an account of the uprising in the Netherlands against Philip II [with illustrations engraved by Frans Hogenberg (Cologne: Gerardus Campensis, 1583)].

4 ASB, HA, Register 3837. The first date noted in the accounts for the first year is 10 March: 'Opden Xen dach marcii dat wij aldereerst saten ten appoerte voer den choor ontfanghen, v s. vi d. gr.' (p. 1).

5 For a descriptive analysis of these accounts, which he discovered in 2009, see Remco Sleiderink, 'De dichters Jan Smeken en Johannes Pertcheval en de devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zeven Weën. Nieuwe gegevens uit de rekeningen van de Brusselse broederschap (1499-1516)', *Queeste. Tijdschrift over middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden*, 19 (2012), 42-69, as well as his contribution to the present volume. See also the chapter by Edmond Roobaert and Trisha Rose Jacobs, likewise in this volume, devoted to the confraternity's art patronage.



for the purpose of recording the names of new enrollees in the devotion and, in the case of royal and noble personages and princes of the Church, coats of arms, and the confraternity member responsible for carrying out this task. Immediately after enumerating expenses for the copying of letters, the accounts for the year 1499-1500 mention the first payments for 'perkement' and 'papier': 'Item perkement coffertorie ende papier dair de [...] broeders inne staen te wetene den ouden boeck met ooc papier tot [...] beeldeken verbesicht, ii s.' (Item parchment envelope and paper on which the [...] brothers are [written], to wit the old book with also paper used for prints, 2s.).<sup>6</sup> On the very next leaf we are told that more vellum and paper were purchased for a new 'red book': 'Item aenden rooden boeck al nieu gemaict aen perkement / iiii boecken papiers / [...] ende ii sloten dair toe, vii s.' (Item for the red book all newly made for parchment / four quires of paper / [...] and two clasps for it, 7s.).<sup>7</sup> These two entries indicate that the material supports initially procured were insufficient to contain the notations that needed to be recorded and that the provosts were obliged, possibly in view of the popularity of the devotion, to purchase more sheets of vellum and paper. Furthermore they suggest that the paper leaves mentioned first were possibly tucked away in a parchment envelope or wrapper, while the new red book, with its ninety-six to hundred sheets of paper and indefinite number of vellum leaves, was a volume of substance. This evidence suggests that this red book was the ancestor of the *Liber authenticus*.

Further details again deriving from the confraternity's accounts link these accounts and the *Liber authenticus* even more securely. The following entry in the third year (1501-02) says: 'Item vanden wapenen ende de namen in den rooden bouck te schrijvene dair op betaelt, x s.' (Item for the coats of arms and to write the names in the red book, 10s.).<sup>8</sup> The name of the person who carried out this task is only revealed in the accounts for the following year (1502-03) in the entry that reads: 'Item betaelt Johannes Steemaer opt schrijven vanden broeders tot vij dulent in den roden bouck, iii s.' (Item paid to Johannes Steemaer for writing the names of seven thousand brothers in the red book, 3s.).<sup>9</sup> This is Johannes Steemaer, alias Pertcheval, who was a member of *De Lelie*, one of the first provosts of the confraternity, the keeper of its accounts for the first seven years, the copyist paid for writing important letters on behalf of the confraternity (pp. 6-7), and not least, the rhetorician who translated the allegorical poem *Le Chevalier deliberé* by Olivier de La Marche into Middle Dutch in 1493.<sup>10</sup> From a comparison of the hand in the accounts and the register of the names of ordinary members recorded in the *Liber authenticus*, we immediately see that it is the same hand and can attribute the transcriptions in both documents – the accounts to page 114 (1505-06) and the names in the *Liber authenticus*

6 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 7. This entry has been heavily corrected: the word 'coffertorie' is written above the line, and two words have been crossed out as has the word 'lillien' before 'beeldeken'. I would like to thank one of our reviewers for pointing out that 'beeldeken' usually refers to printed devotional pictures. Indeed the seventh entry on this page indicates that the confraternity purchased two woodblocks for making prints: 'Item een wrive vander vii lillien houte ende noch i van onser vrouwen om in te printene, iii s.' (a wood block with seven lilies and one with Our Lady to print with 3s.) (p. 7). The term usually used in the accounts for the devotional prints the brotherhood ordered from elsewhere is 'briefkens'; only one entry refers to them as 'beeldeken'. See Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 57.

7 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 8. A quire of paper consisted of twenty-four or twenty-five sheets.

8 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 39.

9 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 52.

10 Degroote, *Jan Pertcheval's Den Camp vander doot*. For the most recent and complete biographical information about Johannes Pertcheval, see Remco Sleiderink, 'Johannes Steemaer alias Pertcheval: De naam en faam van een Brusselse rederijker', in *'Want hi verkende dien name wale'. Opstellen voor Willem Kuiper*, ed. by Marjolein Hogenbirk and Roel Zemel (Amsterdam: Stichting Neerlandistiek VU / Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 2014), pp. 149-54.

to folio 274 recto (1521) – to Johannes Pertcheval.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the homogeneous style of the coats of arms that can be dated to the early years of the confraternity's activities – all in a rounded bejewelled frame – testify to a single hand tasked with their execution. The accounts further confirm this aspect of Pertcheval's continued involvement with the red book. In the sixth and seventh accounts (1504-05 and 1505-06), he is explicitly paid for making the book and coats of arms: 'Item Pertcheval op tgene dat hij inden bouck gemaect heeft, ii s. vi d.' (Item Pertcheval for what he made in the book, 2s. 6d.) and 'Item betaelt Pertchevalen op tghene dat hij inden bouck gemaect heeft aengaende de wapenen binnen deser jaere, iii s. gr.' (Item paid to Pertcheval for what he made in the book concerning the coats of arms during this year, 3s. gr.).<sup>12</sup> All these entries taken together provide conclusive evidence of Pertcheval's handiwork in both of these volumes.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the leaves from the red book, both with the names of ordinary members and with coats of arms of notables and ecclesiastical figures seem to have been seamlessly incorporated into the *Liber authenticus*. Even the most cursory examination of this manuscript, however, reveals that its contents are more extensive than merely a section devoted to coats of arms on vellum and another section devoted to listing chronologically the names of all the individuals who enrolled in the confraternity. The *Liber authenticus* contains a third section likewise on vellum that reproduces copies of other kinds of documents, letters patent, indulgences, and so forth, dating from 1499 to the mid-1540s. For this reason it is now essential to consider this important manuscript as it now stands and analyse its contents and the structure. In what follows I first provide an overview of the contents of the *Liber authenticus* before analysing it gathering by gathering. This analysis allows me to propose a dating for its initial assemblage and for alterations and additions made to the manuscript that resulted in its present contents.

### Description of the *Liber authenticus* as it now Appears

The *Liber authenticus* comprises 110 vellum leaves (including three flyleaves, one at the beginning, two at the end) and 264 paper leaves.<sup>14</sup> Three additional paper leaves have been pasted onto 1) the first and the third flyleaves and 2) the verso of the third vellum leaf of the manuscript. With the exception of the two end flyleaves, the vellum leaves occur in the first half of the manuscript. This section includes copies of letters confirming the confraternity's

<sup>11</sup> At fol. 242<sup>r</sup> of the *Liber authenticus*, during the confraternity's sixth year (1504-05), already more than 7000 names had been recorded.

<sup>12</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 80 and 109.

<sup>13</sup> Once Pertcheval is no longer the keeper of the confraternity's accounts, this role was taken over by Jan Smeken. From this point on no specific payments were made for the painting of coats of arms, but the book that contains them is mentioned among the confraternity's 'juwelen' (jewels) (1507-08, p. 167): 'Item eenen grooten boeck daer vele wapenen in staen van verlichterijen van prinsen ende heeren daer broeders ende susters in ghescreven staen' (Item a great book where many coats of arms of princes and lords are illuminated in which brothers and sisters are written down) and again (1508-09, p. 192): 'Item een grooten boeck met schoon wapenen van prinsen ende heeren daer de bruers ende susters staen in ghescreven' (Item a great book with handsome coats of arms of princes and lords in which [the names of] brothers and sisters are written). Such references continue, though more abbreviated, up until the fifteenth account (1513-14), p. 305.

<sup>14</sup> The first and third flyleaves functioned until recently as paste-downs anchoring the manuscript to the pressed cardboard of the covers at rebinding. However, in the early years of this century, the manuscript underwent some restoration work, and at that time new paste-downs were introduced, leaving the former paste-downs to serve as flyleaves. Mrs Elly Cockx-Indestege and Dr Lieve Watteeuw generously gave of their time to examine the manuscript and share their vast knowledge of printed and manuscript bookbinding practices with me. To each I want to express my profound appreciation.

statutes, indulgences, and other institutional documents and contains the coats of arms of the noble members of the confraternity: rulers, aristocrats, and high-ranking ecclesiastical figures and lay administrators, as well as the provosts of the chambers of rhetoric, *De Lelie*, responsible for the confraternity's foundation. The support in the second half of the manuscript, on the other hand, is paper. This latter section consists of a register of the names of individual members of the confraternity dating from its founding in March 1499 until 1785. The entire manuscript from folio 5 until its end is foliated in Arabic numerals in a consistent hand.<sup>15</sup> Based on internal evidence, I propose that foliation was carried out at the time when an over-arching organizing principle was determined for the assemblage of the various documents that the manuscript comprises (see below). In what follows I first give an overview of the sequence of leaves constituting this manuscript and the documents they contain before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the manuscript quire by quire. (See Table 1.)

The first opening of the manuscript as it now stands comprises the verso of the flyleaf and the manuscript's frontispiece. The flyleaf, to which a paper leaf has been pasted, is vellum. Before the recent repairs to the *Liber authenticus*, this flyleaf functioned as the manuscript's front paste-down; the adhering of this paper leaf to this front paste-down thus accorded it a place of honour. The decoration on this paper leaf consists of a roundel at its centre and above and below of texts in Latin. I will discuss the roundel in more detail later in this chapter. The uppermost text in Latin on this leaf consists of two elegiac couplets addressed to a potential confraternity brother. Magister Aitsinger, whose name is written at the top of the leaf, was the author of the description of the uprising in the Low Countries against Philip II of Spain published in Cologne in 1583 under the title *De Leone Belgico*.<sup>16</sup> Lines of verse in Latin to the left and right of the roundel, together with those at the bottom of this leaf, comprise a citation from Canticles 6. 9, here explicitly dedicated to Mary as the daughter of Jerusalem.<sup>17</sup>

The frontispiece, on the recto of the manuscript's first vellum leaf (fol. [1]), which bears a Roman numeral one (I) in the upper right-hand corner, shows the depiction of a lily in a vase emblazoned with a small escutcheon painted red. This small shield evokes the coat of arms of the city of Brussels. On either side of the lily occur the coats of arms of the patrons of the confraternity: Philip the Fair (on the left) and Margaret of Austria (on the right). On the stem of the lily is a banderole stating: *Liefde groeit* (Love grows), the motto of the rhetoricians chamber *De Lelie*. There are seven other banderoles each offering a biblical quotation featuring the lily. The whole image is circumscribed by a wood frame studded with jewels. On the verso of this leaf is the text of the 'Articuli septem', that is the

<sup>15</sup> A distinctive characteristic of the foliation numbers is the way the 8 is written: the lines forming the number do not cross. I am grateful to Mrs Elly Cockx-Indestege for bringing this detail to my attention (19 May 2005). An 8 formed in this way is called a 'Dutch 8'.

<sup>16</sup> *De Leone belgico eiusque topographica atque historica descriptione liber quinque partibus gubernatorum Philippi regis Hispaniarum ordine distinctus, insuper et elegantissimi illius artificis Francisci Hogenbergii centum et XII figuris ornatus, rerumque in Belgio maxime gestarum, inde ab anno Christi M.D.LIX. usque ad annum M.D.LXXXIII perpetua narratione continuatus* (Cologne: Gerardus Campensis [Gerhart von Campen or Kempen], 1583). Updated editions of this work continued to be published into the early seventeenth century.

<sup>17</sup> I would like to express my immense gratitude to Dr John Pairman Brown for studying, analysing, and translating the texts in Latin transcribed in this first gathering of the manuscript. His knowledge of biblical and classical texts was truly encyclopedic; his enthusiasm for my project unflagging.

TABLE 1: Contents of the *Liber authenticus*

Folios	Gatherings	Contents and Time Period
Flyleaf - folio [3]	1 quire of 4 vellum leaves	Flyleaf verso: Texts and roundel (mid-16 <sup>th</sup> c.); Folio [1] <sup>r</sup> : Frontispiece (end 15 <sup>th</sup> c.); Folios [1] <sup>v</sup> -[3] <sup>v</sup> : Statutes, prayers, indices and images (mid-16 <sup>th</sup> c.)
Folios 5-10	1 quire of 8 vellum leaves plus 2 singletons: 1 vellum, 1 paper	Folios 5 <sup>r</sup> -9 <sup>r</sup> : Coats of arms (18 <sup>th</sup> c.); Folios 9 <sup>v</sup> -10 <sup>v</sup> : Copy of the St Gorik sacristy contract (1660)
Folios 11-42 <sup>18</sup>	4 quires of 8 vellum leaves each	Folios 11 <sup>r</sup> -40 <sup>r</sup> : Copies of foundation documents (mid-16 <sup>th</sup> c.); Folios 41 <sup>r</sup> -44 <sup>r</sup> : Copy of Pope Paul V's indulgence (15 October 1614)
Folios 44-48	1 quire of 8 vellum leaves	Folios 44 <sup>r</sup> -48 <sup>v</sup> : Copies of the Archdukes letters of confirmation and of instruction; coats of arms of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella (early 17 <sup>th</sup> c.)
Folios 49-160	8 quires of varying number of leaves, mixed vellum and paper	Folios 49 <sup>r</sup> -159 <sup>v</sup> : Coats of arms (end 15 <sup>th</sup> c. to second decade of the 17 <sup>th</sup> c.); Folio 160 <sup>r</sup> (paper): Frontispiece of <i>De Lelie</i> (end 15 <sup>th</sup> c.)
Folios 161-283	12 quires of varying number of leaves, all paper dating to 1499	Folios 161 <sup>r</sup> -162 <sup>r</sup> : Membership list of <i>De Lelie</i> and <i>De Violette</i> (1499 and 1507) Folios 163 <sup>r</sup> -283 <sup>v</sup> : Membership list (1499-1555)
Folios 284-360	7 quires of varying number of leaves; all paper dating to mid-sixteenth century	Folios 284 <sup>r</sup> -288 <sup>r</sup> : Membership list: Two cloisters at varying dates); Folios 288 <sup>v</sup> -350 <sup>v</sup> : Membership list (1586-1785); Folios 351-360 are blank
2 flyleaves	Vellum	Blank

18 Fol. 43 has been transposed to the next quire, where it occurs before fol. 48. (See Appendix B.)

Constitutions, Ordinances, and Statutes of the confraternity named Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. This leaf has been tipped in.

The following leaf (fol. [2]), also vellum, is unfoliated and has likewise been tipped in. Bearing the title 'Archetypus Confraternitatis', it comprises numerous Latin texts and three distinct but interrelated images. In the very topmost portion of the page, there occurs a transcription of the twelve verses evoking the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin that the cleric Jan van Coudenberghe had penned to be hung below the image of the *Mater dolorosa* that he commissioned to be hung in the three churches where he instituted the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows in the early 1490s.<sup>19</sup> Below these twelve verses addressed by the Virgin to the individual brothers of the confraternity, a cross is depicted. Here verses invoking Mary, each beginning with *Ave* and referring to each of the Seven Sorrows in turn, have been transcribed in the niches of the cross. Below this cross at the centre of the page is a roundel inscribing a chalice at whose centre is a red heart. The texts inscribed in this roundel likewise enumerate the Virgin's Seven Sorrows. To the left and the right of this roundel are written the versicle: 'Omnia Tribulatione et Angustia' (In all our tribulation and distress) and response: 'Succurre Nobis Pia Virgo Maria' (Succour us Holy Virgin Mary). Finally, the lower third of the page shows an image of the grieving Virgin with seven swords piercing her heart, the literal rendering of the sorrows alluded to in the texts transcribed on this page.<sup>20</sup> (See cover illustration.) This image is circumscribed as well by texts citing Mary's Seven Sorrows. Embedded on both the roundel and the cross is a sequence of letters and numbers referring to biblical passages. The verso of this leaf identifies in turn each of the Seven Sorrows or wounds, the 'Puncta Septem', that have been visually represented by the swords piercing Mary's heart. The first is the Presentation in the Temple where Simeon uttered his prophecy that Mary's heart will be pierced by the sword of sorrow; the other six are the Flight into Egypt, the Loss of the twelve-year-old Christ in the Temple in Jerusalem for three days, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Deposition (also called the Lamentation by the Cross), and the Entombment.

Finally the third leaf of this sequence (fol. [3]), also on vellum, bears an Arabic number one (1) in the upper right-hand corner and the title: LIBER AVTHENTICVS SACRATISSIMAE UTRIVSQUE SEXVS CHRISTIFIDELIVM CONFRATERNITATIS SEPTEM DOLORVM BEATAE MARIAE VIRGINIS

<sup>19</sup> These three churches were the collegiate church of St Giles in Abbenbroek, Sts Peter and Paul in Reimerswaal, and St Saviour in Bruges. For the most recent study of the foundation and spread of the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, see Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, c. 1490-1520', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 252-78. Older, but still useful studies are Pérégrin-Marie Soulier, *La confrérie de Notre-Dame des sept douleurs dans les Flandres 1491-1519* (Brussels: Pères Servites de Marie, [1912]); and Adolf J. Duclos, *De eerste eeuw van het broederschap der Zeven Weedommen van Maria in Sint-Salvators te Brugge* (Bruges: De Plancke, 1922). Emily S. Thelen's research has made an important contribution to our understanding of the role liturgy and music, both plainchant and polyphony, played in shaping devotional practices and in strengthening the devotion's appeal. See Emily C. Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows: Music, Devotion, and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> For very informative analyses of the iconography of the cult of the sorrowing Virgin, see Carol M. Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: Popular Culture and Cultic Imagery in Pre-Reformation Europe', *Simiolus*, 21 (1992), 5-28 and 'The Sword of Compassion: Images of the Sorrowing Virgin in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1987). On the icons that were hung in the churches of Reimerswaal and Abbenbroek, see Tim Graas, 'Verloren gegane Lukas-Madonna's te Reimerswaal en Abbenbroek', in *Christelijke iconografie: opstellen over iconografische aspecten van het Nederlands kerkelijk kunstbezit*, ed. by Paul le Blanc, Tim Graas and others (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1990), pp. 12-26.

NVNCVPATAE.<sup>21</sup> Most sources use this title when referring to this manuscript, as I do here as well.<sup>22</sup> There follow evocations of the princes responsible for the foundation of the confraternity: Archduke Philip the Fair and his father Maximilian, and of the Popes who confirmed and reconfirmed its statutes, Alexander VI and Leo X, as well as a reference to the miracles that had occurred thanks to devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>23</sup> The verso of this leaf gives an index of the names of some of the confraternity's illustrious members. This list of the names of 107 men and women, seven cloisters, and two chambers of rhetoric configured in two columns is on a paper sheet that has been pasted to the verso of this third vellum leaf. I shall return to examine other details contained on these leaves and the construction of the gathering that these leaves constitute later in the chapter because of the important evidence they provide that helps to elucidate the stages of the manuscript's compilation.

There follow forty-four vellum leaves – beginning with folio 5 and ending with folio 48 – all foliated, with several other unfoliated vellum leaves and one paper leaf having been interpolated.<sup>24</sup> This section of the manuscript comprises: 1) the coats of arms of three governors general of the Austrian Netherlands who ruled during the eighteenth century as well as those of several aristocrats from the same time period (fols 5-9<sup>r</sup>);<sup>25</sup> 2) a series of texts – what Charles Pergameni calls the devotion's cartulary – namely copies of the confirmation and reconfirmation of the statutes by popes and rulers and of indulgences proffered to the confraternity by various bishops, cardinals and popes (fols 11-40);<sup>26</sup> and 3) a sequence of leaves whose contents are all relevant to the confraternity's activities during the reign of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella beginning with a copy of the indulgence issued by Pope Paul V in 1614, followed by Albert's coat of arms as a cardinal when he was governor general of the Low Countries.<sup>27</sup> There follow a copy of the Archdukes' confirmation of the confraternity's statutes, the coats of the arms of these joint sovereigns, and a copy of a document confirming their gift of 500 *livres* to the confraternity (fols 41-48). (See Table 1.)

From folio 49 through 159 verso, the manuscript supplies the coats of arms of royal and noble members of the confraternity, those of important ecclesiastical figures, as well as those of highly placed officials and administrators and five rhetoricians. This section

21 AUTHENTIC BOOK of the most sacred confraternity of the faithful in Christ of either sex named '[Confraternity] of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary'.

22 It is number 141 in Charles Pergameni, *Les archives historiques de la ville de Bruxelles: notices et inventaires* (Brussels: H. Wauthoz-Legrand, 1943), p. 207. He has written 'sesus' instead of 'sexus'.

23 Between 1500 and 1519, four books of miracles attributed to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows were printed: *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum beatissime virginis Marie* ([Antwerp], Henrick die Lettersnider, [after 1500]) (Soulier, *La confrérie*, p. 65 and Verhoeven (see below), pp. 58 and 363 date this publication c. 1496); *Dit sijn die miraculen van onse lieue vrouwe* (Leiden, Hugo Jansz. van Woerden, 1503); *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum sacratissime virginis Marie* (Antwerp, Govaert Bac, 1510); *Miracula confraternitatis Septem dolorum sacratissimae virginis Mariae* (Antwerp, Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519). The only extant copy of the latter volume was destroyed during World War II; its contents are known thanks to George Colvenerius, *Miracula CCX confraternitatis VII dolorum sacratissimae Virginis Mariae, una cum Ortu et progressu eiusdem confraternitatis* (Douai: Pierre Auroy, 1619). Jacobus Stratijs, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen met de mirakelen, getyden, ende misse der selver: insgelycks den oorspronck, ende voortganck der broederschap* (Antwerp: Guiliam Lesteens, 1622), is a translation of Colvenerius's volume. For a thorough investigation of these miracles until 1519, attributed to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, see Gerrit Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie. Delft als bedevaartplaats in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1992).

24 There is no folio 4 in the current manuscript.

25 A text in Dutch regarding the construction of a sacristy at the church of St Gorik dated 28 June 1660 and likely transcribed later in the seventeenth century can be found on fols 9<sup>r</sup>-10<sup>r</sup>.

26 Pergameni, *Les archives historiques*, p. 207.

27 Albert was named Cardinal by Pope Gregory XIII on 3 March 1577; he resigned his ecclesiastical offices on 13 July 1598.

has the following characteristics. The vellum leaves on which the framed coats of arms have been painted on the recto and/or verso are interleaved with one or more blank paper leaves, which have also been foliated. The *mise en page* of the coats of arms of royal, noble, and eminent couples follows a consistent pattern: namely, the man's escutcheon is painted above, the wife's lozenge below. The leaf frequently contains as well: an identificatory label often in the shape of a banderole, especially for the coats of arms dating to the early period of the confraternity, that is from 1499 until the mid-sixteenth century, a date (presumably the date on which the couple enrolled in the confraternity or perhaps the date of the member's death), the couples' initials, the man's motto and occasionally that of his wife, and certain decorative details especially relevant to the individual's identity, as for instance the collar and insignia of a chivalric order.<sup>28</sup> Ecclesiastical figures have, naturally, one single escutcheon, a bishop's mitre and crozier or a cardinal's hat with the appropriate number of tassels indicating that person's dignity. Likewise the indentificatory banderoles are often signed by these men of the Church and might include their motto as well.<sup>29</sup> Although the frame encircling the coats of arms and other features varied over time, the presentation of the coats of arms remains constant. While the register of names of ordinary members of the confraternity is arranged chronologically, a hierarchy of prominence organizes the sequence of the coats of arms of the eminent dignitaries, from royal and imperial, to aristocratic and princes of the Church, to lesser nobles, officials, clerics, and rhetoricians. The logic of this organizing strategy provides evidence of the compiler's careful attention to detail. Many of these coats of arms are difficult to decipher; therefore, Appendix A gives a complete list of the arms included, identifying each in turn.

The second half of the manuscript beginning at folio 160 and continuing until folio 350 verso constitutes the register of ordinary members of the confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows from early March 1499 (n.s.), when it was founded by the members of the rhetoricians chamber *De Lelie* (fols 161-162) and continuing until 1785 when it was dissolved (fol. 350<sup>v</sup>).<sup>30</sup> As mentioned above, the support in this portion of the manuscript is exclusively paper. Finally, ten blank paper leaves (fols 351-360) plus the two vellum flyleaves complete the manuscript. These two flyleaves form a bifolium; a paper leaf was adhered to the recto of the second flyleaf, when it served as a paste-down. This paper leaf remains blank.<sup>31</sup>

28 Other examples of decorative details include: marguerites for Margaret of York and Margaret of Austria, the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and the emblematic sparks and flint for Maximilian, Charles the Bold, Philip the Fair, and the future Charles V.

29 These are the two paradigms that predominate. The representation of other coats of arms exhibits different configurations: for example, the arms of the four officers of *De Lelie* occur all together on one leaf unaccompanied by their wives' coats of arms (fol. 159<sup>v</sup>), while those of four administrators of the chamber of accounts with those of their wives have been painted together on one leaf (fol. 149<sup>v</sup>).

30 The names of the members of *De Violette*, when this chamber merged with *De Lelie* on 15 September 1507, were also written in this register at fols 161<sup>r</sup> and 162<sup>r</sup>. At fol. 161<sup>r</sup> col. 1 the date is clearly written; the date given at 162<sup>r</sup>, col. 2, however, is smudged, and it is difficult to determine if the number is a 14 corrected to 15 or vice versa. Willem Van Eeghem, 'Rhetores Bruxellenses (15e-16e eeuw)', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 14 (1935), 427-48 (p. 442) gives the date of this merger as 15 September 1507; Jozef Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum in de XIVe en de XVe eeuw* (Antwerp: 'De Sikkel'/Ghent: Vyncke, 1935, p. 93), assigns the date 14 September to this event.

31 Upon examining the manuscript, Dr Lieve Watteeuw pointed out that the manuscript's leaves were originally larger and confirmed that its current binding dates to the eighteenth century, replacing an earlier one. She noted that the vellum of this bifolium now forming the end flyleaves is thicker than that of the other vellum leaves and surmised that it had once been used as a soft wrapper to bind up documents. Telltale green threads still visible on the verso of the second leaf when we examined the manuscript on 14 March 2006 would seem to validate her hypothesis as green ribbons were commonly used to tie up bundles of documents.

### Analysis of the *Liber authenticus* Gathering by Gathering

The simplicity of the above general description of the *Liber authenticus* belies its complexities and intricacies, particularly in so far as the sequence of its compilation and later alterations is concerned, given that it comprises documents, coats of arms, and signatures spanning three centuries. Fortunately, the individual leaves whether vellum or paper yield valuable information regarding their original manufacture and help immeasurably to determine the moment when the manuscript was originally constructed, which I argue occurred in the 1570s. Equally importantly, the subsequent stages at which alterations to the manuscript took place can be deduced from the leaves of later fabrication that were inserted at a later date. In order to shed more light on this sequence of activity, I shall now analyse the manuscript in greater detail, proceeding quire by quire. (See Table 1.)

The first quire in the manuscript comprises the vellum flyleaf that formerly served as the front paste-down, plus three vellum leaves. For ease of description and analysis I have designated these three vellum leaves folios [1], [2], and [3]. The vellum flyleaf is the conjugate leaf for the third vellum leaf (fol. [3]) with which it thus forms a bifolium. The other two vellum leaves have been tipped in.<sup>32</sup> While the frontispiece (fol. [1]<sup>r</sup>) dates to the very first years of the confraternity's foundation featuring as it does decorative details firmly linking it to *De Lelie*, the information contained elsewhere on these leaves points to a much later date of fabrication, that is sometime in the 1560s or early 1570s. The texts written on the paper leaf pasted to the verso of the flyleaf, on the verso of the frontispiece, and on the sides of the other two leaves of this gathering, including on the paper leaf pasted to the verso of folio [3] are in the same hand, and likewise date, I contend, to this later period.<sup>33</sup> References provided on these pages confirm this dating. Charles V is referred to in his office as emperor (fols [1]<sup>v</sup>, [3]<sup>r</sup> and [3]<sup>v</sup>), although his coat of arms dated 1516 (fol. 70<sup>v</sup>) identifies him as 'archiduc daustrice, prince de castille'. A reference to the indulgence of Bishop Robert de Croÿ dated 4 September 1540 (fol. 40<sup>r-v</sup>) is included at folio [1] verso, and his name appears in the index of names on folio [3] verso. Finally, the coats of arms of several individuals present in the index of names on folio [3] verso date to the 1560s or the first lustre of the 1570s. They include important nobles, prominent officials, and two ecclesiastical dignitaries (see below). These pieces of evidence taken together support my contention that the texts from these leaves of the opening quire of this manuscript owe their composition to the third quarter of the sixteenth century.

The following quire comprises folios 5-10: it consists of three bifolia with an unfoliated bifolium inserted and two unfoliated singletons, one of which is paper, tipped in at different locations, making it a quire of 10 leaves.<sup>34</sup> The coats of arms in this gathering all date to the eighteenth century, the watermark on the tipped-in singleton to 1715, persuading

<sup>32</sup> For the contents of these leaves, see the text above.

<sup>33</sup> This hand recurs at fol. 288<sup>r</sup> where the names of nine members of the Valieres family are listed. It looks also to be responsible for the foliation until the last paper leaf of the manuscript (fol. 360).

<sup>34</sup> As indicated above, n. 24, there is no fol. 4 in the manuscript as it now exists; the recto of fol. 5, which is vellum, is blank except for a very faint signature; its verso is also blank.



me that this adjustment took place sometime in the eighteenth century before this devotional confraternity, and others like it, were dissolved by order of Emperor Joseph II.<sup>35</sup>

The next four gatherings of the manuscript – folio 11 to folio 42 – consist of eight leaves each. These four gatherings contain copies of the confirmations of the statutes and of indulgences, written in a consistent mid-sixteenth-century hand; the last text indicates the date 1540 (fol. 40<sup>v</sup>). The contents of these four quires can be found in Appendix B. Folio 41 recto begins a transcription of the indulgence accorded to the confraternity by Pope Paul V on 15 October 1614, signed on folio 44 recto by Aubertus Miraeus, *protonotarius apostolicus*.<sup>36</sup> What is striking about the transcription of this text is that it begins on folio 41 recto and continues immediately and unbroken from the verso of folio 42 to folio 44 recto. This ordering makes it appear that folio 43 is absent from the manuscript.<sup>37</sup> This absence is illusory, however, as an investigation of the following quire (fols 44-48) discloses because the leaf foliated 43 appears after that foliated 46, the leaf with Archduchess Isabella's ruling arms.

Folio 44 in fact begins a new gathering whose leaves are out of numerical sequence.<sup>38</sup> It comprises one quaternion – a bifolium containing folios 44 and 47 into which an unfoliated, bifolium has been inserted – and two separate bifolia. The two bifolia – the first consisting of folios 45 and 46, the second of folios 43 and 48 – have been sewn to the quaternion. The texts and coats of arms in this gathering are as follows: at folio 44 recto the conclusion of the copy of Pope Paul V's indulgence of 15 October 1614, followed on the recto of the second unfoliated leaf by the arms of Albert as cardinal and governor of the Low Countries. A copy of the Archdukes' 1620 confirmation of the confraternity's statutes in Dutch, transcribed in the eighteenth century, occurs at folio 47 recto, indicating that this leaf had originally been left blank.<sup>39</sup> The ruling arms of the Archdukes Albert and Isabel Clara Eugenia are painted on facing leaves, that is folio 45 verso and folio 46 recto respectively. Finally on folios 43 verso to 48 verso is a contemporary copy of the Archdukes' letter of 23 October 1615 to their chief financial officers granting the payment of 500 *livres* for the restoration of the bench ('ung siege alentour', or possibly stalls) that Philip the Fair had given to the chapel of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows but which had been destroyed during the recent period of religious and political upheaval and also permitting

35 The construction of this quire is as follows: fols 5 and 10, 6 and 9, 7 and 8 comprise three bifolia; the singleton with the arms of Charles de Lorraine has been tipped in after fol. 8; the bifolium with the arms of Joseph Gislénus (on the verso of its first, unfoliated leaf) and of the Baron and Baroness Celles (on the recto of following vellum leaf) follows, and a singleton paper leaf has been inserted in between the two leaves. The watermark on the paper singleton is Gerhard Piccard: *Wasserzeichen Horn* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1979), p. 43: XI 235: Köln, 1715. Fols 9 and 10 complete this gathering. The text at fol. 9<sup>v</sup> is dated 1660 28 *junij* (at 10<sup>v</sup>) which indicates that this leaf (which now has the coat of arms of Isabelle de Brunswick dated 1748 on its recto) had been left blank. In fact I propose that this quire had been initially left blank and assume that the compiler of the manuscript in its original state included numerous blank leaves to be filled in subsequently.

36 Aubert Miraeus or Le Mire enrolled as a member of the confraternity in 1614 (fol. 297<sup>v</sup>: 'Aubert Le Mire, Chanoine d'Anvers'). The Archdukes named him court librarian on 20 September 1617.

37 The bifolia of this quire are as follows: fols 35 and 42, 36 and 41, 37 and 40, and 38 and 39.

38 The numerical sequence of this quire is: fol. 44, two unfoliated leaves, fol. 47, fol. 45, fol. 46 (the number 46 just barely legible), fol. 43, fol. 48.

39 The hand in this copy looks to be that of G. J. van Bevere whose coat of arms appears on fol. 229<sup>v</sup>, where he styles himself 'Guillielmus Josephus van Bevere procureur in den // Souverijnen raede van Brabant greffier van dese // Cranscaemer ende Broederschap anno 1777', and whose signature occurs at fol. 349<sup>v</sup> and on the verso of the first of the two flyleaves at the end of manuscript. The obit on Charles de Lorraine's arms on the unfoliated leaf after fol. 8 is likewise in his hand, as are innumerable notations in the manuscript from fol. 336 to fol. 349<sup>v</sup>. Van Bevere's notation is also revelatory because it confirms that the chamber's clerk was also the clerk of the confraternity.

the painting of the Archdukes' coats of arms to adorn the chapel.<sup>40</sup> The reconstruction of the quire, beginning with folio 44, likely occurred around the time the Archdukes Albert and Isabella confirmed the statutes and their ruling arms were painted in the membership register. The copy of Pope Paul V's indulgence running uninterrupted from folio 41 to folio 44 recto then points to the conclusion that this document was transcribed after the quire's reconstruction.

From this point on, that is from folio 49 to folio 159, quires have been created of vellum leaves containing the coats of arms of important royal, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical personages, high-ranking officials and administrators, and rhetoricians assembled from different manuscripts or reassembled from different parts of the same manuscript perhaps. These vellum leaves with the coats of arms on the recto and/or verso have been interleaved with one blank paper leaf, and very occasionally two or more blank paper leaves. All of the leaves, the vellum leaves and the paper leaves, have been foliated sequentially. There are two instances of double foliation: folios 100 and 150. I have assigned the designation 100 bis and 150 bis to the duplicate leaves respectively. At the same time, no leaves are foliated 66, 67, 108 or 109, and leaves 74 and 122 appear to be missing.<sup>41</sup> The vast majority of the intercalated paper leaves in this section of the manuscript have a watermark giving the name EDMONDENISE in a banderole surmounted by a crescent with a quatrefoil above and between the two points of the upturned crescent; it can be dated to the third quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>42</sup> This watermark dominates the register of ordinary members of the confraternity as well from folio 284 until the end of the manuscript (fol. 360). The presence of these paper leaves indicates that the manuscript was assembled at a time when this paper was in circulation, namely the second half of the sixteenth century.

Where a decorated vellum leaf was inserted into the manuscript at a later date, the paper leaf interpolated at that time, as well as information contained in the coat of arms, helps us isolate the moment of this readjustment. For example, immediately following the leaf with the arms of Johanna of Castile on its recto and young Charles, archduke of Austria and Prince of Castile on its verso (fol. 70), a paper bifolium has been inserted

40 This transcription and description of the document is signed P Numan, 'secretaire de la ville de Bruxelles'. So far as I have been able to determine, Philippe Numan was not a member of the confraternity. Of the financial officers to whom the letter is addressed and whose signatures occur on the document, only Nicolas de Montmorency, comte d'Estaires, was a member. His coat of arms occurs on the recto of the first vellum leaf following fol. 107. He was one of the two *Chefs de finances* at the time.

41 Because the foliation of the manuscript is very consistent, the cases where it is not present offer enigmas begging to be resolved. There are no folios foliated 66 and 67: rather 67 had been removed, reversed and reinserted after fol. 52 where it is unfoliated on the recto, and the remaining paper leaf is blank with a large Arabic numeral 3 in the upper right-hand corner that looks to have been written over a number that is now illegible. In fact this gathering, fols 53-72, seems to have required the most conscientious structuring. The construction of the gathering comprising fols 107-110 offers an explanation for the absence of leaves foliated 108 and 109 (see text below). More intriguing is the fact that fol. 74 is missing. Since the foliation skips from 73 to 75 – both paper leaves – we can suppose that an intervening vellum leaf was present in the manuscript at some point. When we consult the index of names on the paper leaf pasted onto fol. [3]°, we discover that the coat of arms of 'Jan daustrisse' was to be found on this leaf. One of Charles V's illegitimate children, Don Juan d'Autriche was a half-brother to Philippe II and governor general of the Low Countries during a particularly difficult and tumultuous time (1576-78). When Don Juan d'Autriche's arms were removed remains a mystery. Furthermore, since the foliation skips from 121 to 123, and both these leaves are paper, we can posit that we have here as well the case of someone's arms having been excised. Unfortunately, as the index gives no reference for fol. 122, we are unable to guess whose arms those might have been. Fols 121-123 form a bifolium, so this may simply be a skip in foliation.

42 Although I could not find a perfect match for this watermark in Charles-Moïse Briquet, *Les filigranes. Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600* (Paris: A. Picard & fils; Geneva: A. Jullien, 1907), this certainly could be a variant of the watermark – Briquet 5304 – on paper made in Troyes by Edmond Denise and attested in documents dating to the third quarter of the sixteenth century (Briquet, *Les filigranes*, II, p. 308).

before a vellum leaf with the arms of Cardinal Alfonso de la Cueva. None of these added leaves has been foliated. Pope Gregory XV made Alfonso de la Cueva a cardinal on 5 September 1622. The double watermark on the bifolium with the double C monogram of Charles, Duke of Lorraine, and his wife Claude of France, can be dated to the late sixteenth century.<sup>43</sup> These two pieces of information provide a time frame for the insertion of this coat of arms into the manuscript.

Another instance of this same kind of addition occurs at folio 106. The following quire (fols 107-110) comprises seven leaves – four vellum and three paper – displaying the coats of arms of five important aristocratic couples in the court of the Archdukes. This gathering, which is sewn to the preceding one, looks to have been constructed out of singletons: numbers are visible on folios 107 and 110 only; the other leaves are unfoliated. The information contained in the coats of arms points to the years 1613-16 for the construction of this quire and its having been appended to the manuscript.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the countermark present on one of the paper leaves dates to 1600.<sup>45</sup>

As indicated above, the section of the manuscript comprehending vellum leaves with texts and coats of arms continues until folio 159.<sup>46</sup> The register of ordinary members, written on paper, begins at folio 161, after a frontispiece – folio 160 – likewise on paper that depicts a lily in a vase adorned with a banderole again bearing the motto of the chamber of rhetoric *De Lelie*. Two small escutcheons painted red, one to the right and one to the left, frame this banderole. As in the frontispiece at folio [1] recto, these red escutcheons represent the coat of arms of the city of Brussels.<sup>47</sup> The capital letters R and M on either side of the image refer to 'Rhetorica' and 'Musica' written out above. As I have shown above, the vast majority of the paper leaves inserted into the first half of the manuscript bears the same watermark: a banderole with the name EDMONDENISE surmounted by a crescent that dates to the third quarter of the sixteenth century. From folio 161 until folio 283, on the

43 I was unable to find a perfect match for this double watermark either in Briquet, *Les filigranes*; or in Gerhard Piccard, *Wasserzeichen Kreuz Bearbeitet von Gerhard Piccard* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1981), [*Die Wasserzeichenkartei Piccard im Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, Findbuch XI*], nos. 1411-1446; or in Raymond Gaudriault, *Filigranes et autres caractéristiques des papiers fabriqués en France aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: CNRS, 1995), nos. 529-535; or in Lucien Wiener, *Étude sur les filigranes des papiers Lorrains* (Nancy: René Wiener, 1893). However, Briquet, *Les filigranes*, III, pp. 493 and 513, indicates that there were many variations of the double watermark with two Cs, the second reversed, enveloping a crowned cross of Lorraine during the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

44 It is probable that fol. 154, with the coat of arms of Philippe Philibert Bspagen (de Spanghen) and his wife Dame Leonora Damant, was tipped in at this time.

45 This countermark is extremely close to Gaudriault, *Filigranes*, p. 151 and Pl. 103, Fig. 934 (en 1600).

46 In fact the last two gatherings in this section of the manuscript, fols 145 to 160, present a mix of paper leaves dating to different time frames. While fol. 150 has the EDMONDENISE watermark, the watermark at fol. 153 is a very close match to Piccard 852: Gerhard Piccard, *Wasserzeichen Hand und Handschuh Bearbeitet von Gerhard Piccard (+)* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1997) [*Die Wasserzeichenkartei Piccard im Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, Findbuch XVII*], p. 120: no. 852: Freiburg (Breisgau), Grieben, 1499. Furthermore, the watermark of fols 155 and 158 likewise dates to 1499: Piccard, *Wasserzeichen Hand und Handschuh*, p. 121: no. 869: Köln 1499. This is the watermark that dominates in the membership list through fol. 283. There are at least three other *Hand und Handschuh* watermarks that crop up in this section of the manuscript, but unfortunately I have not been able to find matches for them in Piccard. Finally there is a fourth watermark at fol. 146 – a 'por à une anse' – that I have also yet to identify. It is important to point out here that fols 155 and 160 form a bifolium and have been reinforced in such a way that the reinforcement paper tab on the verso of fol. 155 adheres to the recto of fol. 160. The paper reinforcement tab adhering to the verso of fol. 160 serves to anchor fol. 154, a vellum leaf that has been tipped in at the beginning of this gathering. As I indicate in n. 44, this leaf was most likely tipped in at roughly the same time that the quire comprising fols 107 to 110 was inserted into the manuscript. The Arabic numerals on these leaves of the manuscript have, moreover, been rewritten, as the top edge of these leaves were trimmed during rebinding.

47 Soulier, *La confrérie*, p. 64, and reconfirmed by Mme Christiane van den Bergen-Pantens of the Royal Library of Belgium since 'le rouge est la couleur de base des armoiries de Bruxelles' (personal communication).

contrary, the dominant watermark dates to 1499.<sup>48</sup> This watermark shows a hand emerging from a sleeve, with a clover leaf or quatrefoil positioned above the middle finger.

From this point onward, that is from folio 161 onward, the gatherings become more consistent. There are only occasional lapses in foliation indicating a missing leaf, and there is only one case of double foliation.<sup>49</sup> There are, however, two places in this section of the manuscript that warrant clarification: first, the first quire of the register of names, folios 161 to 168, and second, the quire comprising folios 284 to 297 in which we see the EDMONDENISE watermark reappear to become the paper exclusively used in the final section of the manuscript.

My close examination of the first quire giving the names of the members of the confraternity indicates that folios 167 and 168 are out of place in the manuscript as it now appears. I propose that this gathering had originally been arranged as follows: first, two bifolia – namely that currently foliated 161-162 and that with the foliation 167-168 – followed by the quaternion comprising folios 163-166. At some point the two loose bifolia were separated from each other, and the first leaf of the quaternion – folio 163 – was affixed in a permanent way to the verso of the second leaf of the first bifolium (fol. 162). This repair prohibited the replacement of the second bifolium in its original location. Instead it was simply tacked on to the end of the quaternion (fol. 166).<sup>50</sup> The content and handwriting present on these folios furthermore support this reconstruction of the original sequencing of these leaves.

First, the content of leaves of this quire confirms my assertion that it was originally configured differently than the sequence the manuscript now presents. The initial two leaves of this gathering – folios 161 and 162 recto – contain the register, arranged in two columns, of the names of the members of the chamber of rhetoric *De Lelie*.<sup>51</sup> The names of later chamber members as well as those of the members of *De Violette* at the time of this chamber's fusion with *De Lelie* to form 't *Mariacranske* were likewise written on these leaves in spaces that initially had been left blank. The verso of folio 162, moreover, was left blank as well, an indication that this list was considered to be complete and that a new section was anticipated.<sup>52</sup> The heading at folio 167 recto confirms this expectation since it announces the writing down of the names of the ordinary brothers and sisters in the register of the confraternity, beginning with the family members of *De Leliebroeders* (The Brothers

48 Piccard, *Wasserzeichen Hand und Handschub*, p. 121: no. 869: Köln 1499. A variant of this mark occurs at fol. 153, see n. 46 above, and recurs occasionally in this section of the manuscript, as does a second variant that is a very close match to Piccard, *Wasserzeichen Hand und Handschub*, p. 129, no. 962: Düsseldorf, Nimwegen 1500, that is the watermark of fol. 163.

49 Fol. 224 was torn out of the manuscript, a leaf between fols 230 and 231 was removed, and two leaves are foliated 307.

50 Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, already stated that 'folio 163 is echter te plaatsen na folio 167' (p. 74, n. 11), but I think that his suggestion does not go far enough since the handwriting and ink do not support it. However, it may be that when the manuscript was bound, the leaves of this gathering were reinforced to fix the present order of the leaves, as follows: fol. 161<sup>r</sup> was reinforced by a paper tab that adheres to fol. 166<sup>r</sup>; the tab at fol. 161<sup>r</sup> adheres to fol. 162<sup>r</sup>; fol. 163 has simply been glued to the verso of fol. 162; fol. 164<sup>r</sup> has been reinforced, and it adheres to fol. 165<sup>r</sup>; the sewing in this quire runs down the gutter here. The bifolium 167-168 has been reinforced on 167<sup>r</sup> and 168<sup>r</sup> and also sewn in.

51 The date 1498 is given on fol. 161 consistent with Easter style dating. This explains why the date 1498 has traditionally been cited as the year of the confraternity's founding.

52 It now contains the names of the officers of the confraternity for the year 1526.

of the Lily) (fol. 167<sup>r-v</sup>).<sup>53</sup> Second, the hand in folios 161, 162, 167, and 168 is consistently large and the ink dark; the handwriting in the quaternion, on the contrary, is smaller and more compact, permitting the notation of more names per column, and the ink is lighter than that found on the two bifolia.<sup>54</sup>

Now turning to the quire comprising folios 284 to 297, its initial leaves testify to the largest gap in the confraternity's register: the years between 1555 and 1586. As I have mentioned above, the paper in the preceding quires, folios 161 to 283, dates to 1499. The date indicated in a notation on folio 283 verso is 1555, which means that they were in all likelihood using the paper purchased in 1499 during these years.<sup>55</sup> The paper with the EDMONDENISE watermark dating from the third quarter of the sixteenth century begins to be used for the membership register only at folio 284, that is the first leaf of this new quire, and its use will continue uninterrupted until the manuscript's end. There follow two lists of the names of religious sisters of two separate convents (fols 284<sup>r</sup> to 288<sup>v</sup>), the second of which, the Cistercian monastery of La Cambre, is dated 13 October 1569. Otherwise there are no mid-sixteenth century dates on these leaves until the middle of folio 288 verso where the recorder of the confraternity has included the names of the officers for the year 1586 and resumes noting down enrolments in the confraternity. Unfortunately this gap coincides precisely with a most interesting and turbulent period of history of the Low Countries in general and of Brussels in particular. While this manuscript remains disappointingly silent on the confraternity's participation in momentous contemporary events, however, this lacuna helps to isolate the time frame within which the manuscript was assembled in its first state, the question that now occupies the discussion.

Use of the paper with the EDMONDENISE watermark to interleave with the vellum leaves on which coats of arms have been painted in the first half of the manuscript and to receive the names of enrollees in the confraternity in its final portion is the first piece of evidence to help establish the moment when the manuscript was initially assembled. The dates within which Charles-Moïse Briquet's attestations confirm its circulation fall between 1558 and 1588, coinciding precisely with the time period that interests us here.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, while the register of ordinary brothers and sisters may be silent about enrolments in the confraternity between 1555 and 1586, with the exception of the sisters in the Cistercian monastery of La Cambre in 1569, these dates bracket the enrolment of an impressive number of important aristocrats and high-ranking officials in the confraternity, as well as of two ecclesiastical figures, all of whose coats of arms are included in this manuscript. The most striking is the presence of Lamoral d'Egmont and Sabine de Bavière 1569 (fol. 97<sup>r</sup>) and all eleven of their children in 1570 (fols 99<sup>r-v</sup> and 100 bis<sup>r</sup>). As this

53 'Hierna volghen de gemeyne broeders ende susters die hem hebben doen inne Scrijven / tsij van buten ende van binnen gheestelijck ende Weerlijck. daer af dat de ghecruyste voren doot zijn ende overleden waren doen mense hier in dit boeck deden schrijven in teekene van hopen gescreven te wordene int tbouck des levens' (Below are the common brothers and sisters who have had their names added [to the book], both from outside and from inside [the city], cleric and lay; of which those that are preceded by a cross are deceased and had passed away when they were written in this book as a sign of the hope that they might be written in the Book of Life) (fol. 167<sup>r</sup>).

54 The dates contained in the quaternion provide a chronological sequence beginning with 12 March (fol. 163<sup>r</sup>), and continuing 14 March (fol. 163<sup>v</sup>), 17 March (fol. 164<sup>r</sup>), followed by subsequent dates in the next gathering: 18 March (fol. 171<sup>v</sup>), 19 March (fol. 172<sup>s</sup>), etc.

55 ASB, HA Register 3837, p. 8.

56 Briquet, *Les filigranes*, II, p. 312, lists documents bearing mark 5304 dating to between 1558 and 1588. Likewise, Heawood 850, also an example of a variant of Briquet 5304, dates to 1579. See Edward Heawood, *Watermarks, mainly of the 17th and 18th centuries* (Hilversum, Holland: Paper Publications Society, 1950), p. 54.

occurred subsequent to Egmont's beheading in June 1568, it is very likely that his widow sought solace in membership in this confraternity. The two clerics to enrol during this time were Abbot Arnoldus Mahieu in 1571 and Abbot Michael Malenius in 1573 (fols 128<sup>r</sup> and 141<sup>v</sup> respectively). The other prominent members are Jacques de Harbais 1575 (fol. 81<sup>v</sup>), Engelbert van der Noot and two wives 1572 (fol. 130<sup>r</sup>), Charles de Tisnacq and Cathelijne Boisot 1572 (fol. 135<sup>v</sup>), and Pierre d'Overloeppe and Marie Verreycken 1563 (fol. 147<sup>r-v</sup>).<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, the names of all of these important figures occur in the index at folio [3] verso, the paper leaf pasted to the verso of the third leaf of the manuscript. The exceptions are the two young sons of Lamoral d'Egmont and Sabine de Bavière on the one hand, and the two wives of Engelbert van der Noot on the other. The index of names was most likely written out at the time when the manuscript was being compiled sometime in the 1570s and certainly well before 1580. First, Charles de Tisnacq, whose coat of arms is dated 1572, is referred to as 'praesidens' in this index, referring to his position as president of the privy council, a post to which he was appointed in 1569. Tisnacq died in 1573. Second, the coat of arms of Jacques de Harbais dated 1575 is the latest dated arms explicitly referred to in this index. A third argument for contending that the composition of the index was contemporaneous with the compilation of the manuscript is the presence on folio [3] verso of a sequence of letters with correlating numbers running down the index of names that spells out Macsaemiilia, a reference to Emperor Maximilian II who died on 12 October 1576.<sup>58</sup> Finally, proof for this dating can likewise be demonstrated by the following fact: the first dated coat of arms after the capitulation of Brussels is that of Livinus Couwenbergius 1585 (fol. 143<sup>v</sup>) who followed Arnoldus Mahieu as Abbot in Dielegem upon his death 5 January 1574. His name is not included in the index of names at folio [3] verso, an absence that establishes the *terminus ante quem* for the drawing up of the index.

In addition, perhaps the most intriguing arms included in this cluster from the 1560s and early 1570s are those of Jeronimus Piramus and Barbara Blomberch indicating the date 1572 (fol. 76<sup>v</sup>), whose names are likewise present in the index at folio [3] verso. Barbara Blomberch [Blomberg], mistress of Charles V, and mother of Don Juan d'Autriche, governor general of the Low Countries (1576-78), married Hieronymus Kegel in 1548. Kegel died on 12 June 1569, Barbara not until 1598. The presence and placement of their arms can only be explained by reference to the index at folio [3] verso where we learn that the coat of arms of 'Jan daustrisse', who made his Joyous Entry into Brussels on 1 May 1577, is to be found at folio 74. In the manuscript as it now stands, however, there is no folio 74, though the tab for a vellum leaf remains between the two paper leaves foliated 73 and 75, signalling that folio 74 has been excised.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, the framing style for all of these coats of arms, with the exception of that for the more elaborate arms of Abbot Michael Malenius and of Jacques de Harbais, is strikingly homogeneous, a framing style that localizes the coats of arms to the 1560s and

57 In fact D'Overloeppe's coat of arms appears on both of these leaves: at fol. 147<sup>r</sup>, where it is paired with the lozenge of his wife Marie Verreycken, and at 147<sup>v</sup> where it appears alone and announces both his name and his office: P. D'Overloeppe / Audiencier. He held this office from 1555 until 1578. The index at fol. [3]<sup>v</sup> erroneously states his first name as Philippe but does not give his wife's first name at all.

58 The verso of the title page to his *De Leone Belgico* shows an etching portrait in profile of 'D. Michaeli ab Aicing. Ante a Diui Ferdinandi I Nunc Macsaemiliani II Caess: Inuictissimorum Aulae Familiari. Viennae Austriae 21 Septemb. 1576'. The spelling of the emperor's name is very close to that on the paper leaf adhered to fol. [3]<sup>v</sup>.

59 See n. 41 above.

the first lustre of the 1570s. Therefore, although the arms of Michel, comte de Gruyères (fol. 83<sup>r</sup>), are not explicitly dated, and in fact his name does not appear on this leaf though it is present in the index at folio [3] verso, the framing style as well as biographical details lead me to assign the inclusion of his coat of arms to this time period.<sup>60</sup>

Taken together all of these pieces of evidence confirm that the manuscript in its first state was most probably compiled sometime during the 1570s. As indicated above, subsequent adjustments and additions occurred in the early seventeenth century during the rule of the Archdukes as well as in the period of Austrian rule in the eighteenth century, either on inserted leaves or leaves that had, in all likelihood, initially been left blank.

### Michael Aitsinger and the Compilation of the *Liber authenticus*

The establishment of the early 1570s as the moment when the *Liber authenticus* was initially assembled suggests that a key figure in its compilation was Michael Aitsinger, whose name also occurs in the index at folio [3] verso. Although his unsigned coat of arms does not display a date to help us ascertain when he became a member of the confraternity, and its framing style is equally unhelpful, I maintain that he played an active role in determining the construction of the *Liber authenticus* during his residence in Brussels between 1573 and 1578.<sup>61</sup> Indeed his imprint seems to be present in several areas of the manuscript.

First, the arrangement of the disparate elements comprising the *Liber authenticus* and their highly orderly sequencing betray the hand of someone schooled in the science of classification. I see here the participation of Aitsinger, who had been enrolled on and off since 1553 at the University of Leuven, where he studied law, history, mathematics, astronomy, and geography.<sup>62</sup> Second, the presence of the coat of arms of one confraternity enrollee strongly hints at his involvement, namely that of Michel, comte de Gruyères. According to Baron de Reiffenberg, in 1576 Aitsinger 'tenait en dépôt le testament de Michel, comte de Gruyères' (held in his keeping the last will of Michel, comte de Gruyères), suggesting that Aitsinger himself might well have been responsible for the insertion of the count's coat of arms among those of other members of the confraternity.<sup>63</sup> Third, as I have mentioned above, there occur on folio [2] recto and folio [3] verso sequences of ciphers, each comprising a letter and a number intended to be read together in order to yield meaning, in the first instance decorating the cross and the roundel of the leaf entitled 'Archetypus confraternitatis' and in the second spelling out the name Macsaemiilia. These sequences bear a striking resemblance to the system of ciphers or symbolic notations occurring on the title page of *De Leone Belgico* and exude the same intellectual spirit.

<sup>60</sup> The framing style of the undated coats of arms of three other aristocratic couples leads me to conjecture that their inclusion dates to the 1570s as well: Philippe de Croÿ and Jeanne Henriette de Halewyn (fol. 79<sup>r</sup>), Philippe de Lalaing and Anne de Rennenbourg (fol. 95<sup>r</sup>), and Jean de Locquenghien and Anne Vander Gracht (fol. 132<sup>r</sup>). Of these three couples, only the names of Philippe de Lalaing and Anne de Rennenbourg appear in the index at fol. [3]<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> It is likely that he was aided in this endeavor by one or more confraternity officers. Someone like Baltazar van Rode immediately comes to mind. Enrolled in 1545 when he first became one of the provosts of the confraternity (fol. 280<sup>r</sup>), Van Rode is the only officer whose name reappears in the later period (that is from 1586). His name recurs on a yearly basis among the confraternity's provosts until 1597 (fol. 290<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>62</sup> Bonacker, 'Le Baron Michael von Eitzing', pp. 951-52.

<sup>63</sup> Frédéric, Baron de Reiffenberg, 'Notice sur Michel d'Eytzing', *Bulletins de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Bruxelles*, V (1838) (Brussels: Hayez, Imprimeur de l'Académie royale, 1838), 510-26 (p. 515). Exiled from Gruyères in 1555, Michel, comte de Gruyères, died in Brussels in 1575.

Fourth, the texts on the paper leaf pasted onto the flyleaf that formerly functioned as the paste-down at the very beginning of the manuscript likewise offer strong evidence of the association of Michael Aitsinger with the project of compiling the *Liber authenticus*. To begin with, his name explicitly precedes the two elegiac couplets addressing a potential confraternity brother. The couplets, in the same style of Latin as that in the other texts written on the manuscript's first three leaves, are compatible with the kind of Latin that Aitsinger penned in *De Leone Belgico*.

Finally, a subtler, but in fact more conclusive, argument for Aitsinger's close involvement in assembling the *Liber authenticus* is provided by the roundel that decorates the paper leaf pasted onto the manuscript's former front paste-down. The roundel is a larger variant of the roundel to be found on the first two states of the *Leo Belgicus*, the map of the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries configured as a lion that Michael Aitsinger designed, that Frans Hogenberg engraved, and that was printed in Cologne.<sup>64</sup> I surmise that the *Liber authenticus* roundel may well have served as a trial design for the roundel that was subsequently printed on the *Leo Belgicus* map. Although the *Liber authenticus* roundel measures 91 mm and is thus much larger than the diameter of the roundel in the two states of this map – 1583 and 1586 – that measure 52 mm, the content of the two roundels is virtually identical.<sup>65</sup>

At the center of the *Liber authenticus* roundel, we see four animals, one atop the next, beginning on the bottom with a winged lion imprinted with the letter T. The animal above is a bear with the letter C printed on its back. Above the bear is a winged leopard stamped with the letter R surmounted by a double-headed eagle displaying the letter S and crowned with an imperial crown. The number printed to the right and the left of each of these animals completes the cipher. Beneath this column of animals is the depiction of a rocky coastline, a ship at sea to the left, and the outline of a city to the right. The column of animals is framed by two pillars, one to the left and one to the right, the first surmounted by a moon, the second by a sun. Each pillar displays a sequence of letters running vertically from top to bottom. The sequences of numbers corresponding to these letters have been placed outside the pillars to the left and to the right respectively. A series of ciphers, each consisting of a letter with a corresponding number, rings the inside perimeter of the roundel.<sup>66</sup> Two further series of ciphers complete the circle. Finally, around the outermost edge of the roundel at the four compass points we can read: I H W V.

The vast majority of these elements have been retained in the roundel replicated on the *Leo Belgicus* map with two exceptions. While the image on the *Liber authenticus* roundel shows a small shoreline scene with a boat, hills, and a city, these three elements do not appear on the *Leo Belgicus* map's roundel. Furthermore, although the column of animals has been duplicated, the single-headed winged leopard has been replaced by a four-headed one with four wings. Otherwise the content is the same. Likewise the cipher

<sup>64</sup> H. A. M. van der Heijden, *Leo Belgicus. An Illustrated and Annotated Carto-bibliography* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1990), pp. 21 and 23.

<sup>65</sup> Van der Heijden, *Leo Belgicus*, pp. 21 and 23. The version of this map that can be accessed online ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1583\\_Leo\\_Belgicus\\_Hogenberg.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1583_Leo_Belgicus_Hogenberg.jpg)) is in fact the second state dating to 1586 as the presence of two escutcheons confirms: namely the double-headed eagle labeled ANNA (of Austria) and three *fleurs de lys* labeled ELIZABETH (of Valois).

<sup>66</sup> The sequence of letters in the upper half, from left to right, reads: ASECMIAM. The numbers that correspond to these letters are: 8, 23, 11, 10, 4, 17, 18, 10. The sequence of letters in the lower half, likewise reading from left to right, is: NCAICCR. The numbers corresponding to these letters are: 18, 9, 8, 0, 11, 20, 15.



sequences have been retained and reproduced. I infer, therefore, that this roundel furnished the model for or was possibly the proof copy for that of the *Leo Belgicus* map.<sup>67</sup>

Taken in its entirety, this evidence bolsters my assertion that the roundel preserved on the leaf pasted to the flyleaf that formerly functioned as the front paste-down of the *Liber authenticus* has an undeniable connection to Michael Aitsinger and strengthens my hypothesis that he played a fundamental role in the compilation of this manuscript. I posit, furthermore, that it was to pay special tribute to Michael Aitsinger that the final recorder of the brotherhood's membership register, G. J. van Bevere, glued the paper leaf containing the elegiac couplets, the roundel, and the biblical citation from the Vulgate, Song of Songs 6. 9, to the manuscript's front paste-down after its rebinding in the eighteenth century. Its placement on the paste-down, as I stated earlier, certainly situates this leaf in a place of honour.

What I surmise Aitsinger might have done was assemble the leaves and quires from several diverse manuscripts, including those from *den ouden boeck* and *den rooden boeck al nieu gemaict*, mentioned above, that contained the coats of arms of royal and noble members, ecclesiastical figures, officials, and administrators, as well as the register of the names of individuals and cloisters that had subscribed to the confraternity. To these he added gatherings containing copies of the confraternity's foundation documents.<sup>68</sup> He shaped all these disparate leaves into a whole, according to a consistent ordering principle, and imposed a fixed hierarchy on the coats of arms included. The broad lines of this hierarchical arrangement are evident from the outset as the ranking begins with the highest lords of the land, the rulers and princes of the Church responsible for the establishment and perpetuation of the confraternity, and ends with the arms of non-noble individuals.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, it seems he used foresight in assembling the manuscript, because blank vellum

67 A great many of these elements recur dispersed throughout the title page of Aitsinger's *De Leone Belgico* as well. The two pillars that now support the architectural structure represented on the title page are surmounted by a moon and a sun. A sequence of letters ornaments each of the pillars with corresponding numbers to the left and right completing the cipher. Although these are not synonymous with the series that decorate the two pillars in the roundel, the cipher sequence on the left column replicates the cipher sequence that rings the upper half of the *Liber authenticus* roundel (see n. 66 above). The four animals that formed a column in the *Liber authenticus* roundel now embellish the capitals and bases of the pillars each with the same accompanying letter. However, the single-headed winged leopard has now become a four-headed flying beast, just as it is configured in the roundel of the *Leo Belgicus* map, and the winged lion has become a lion passant, its wings now removed. All four depictions are consistent with the four beasts described in the Book of Daniel (Daniel 7. 4 and 7. 6). In the preface to the reader of *De Leone Belgico*, Aitsinger provides a key for decoding many of the elements of the title page, an explanation that clarifies some of the components of the *Liber authenticus* design as well. For example, the four animals represent four empires from ancient times: Assyrian (lion), Persian (bear), Macedonian or Greek (leopard), and Roman (eagle); the sequence of letters NCAICCR alludes to seven monarchs from Nebuchadnezzar to Rudolf I; and the sequence ASECMIAM to the first eight Old Testament patriarchs, from Adam to Methuselah. See 'Michaelis Aitsingeri Austriaci, Ad benevolum lectorem praefatio', unpaginated, and 'Frontispicii explicatio, temporumque continuatio usque initium descriptionis nostrae', pp. 1-13.

68 From the inventory, ASB, HA, Register 1499, we learn that the originals of many of these documents were still preserved in the confraternity's chest at the end of the seventeenth century. (See Appendix B.)

69 The coats of arms originally included on fols 49 to 159 of the *Liber authenticus* span the years from 1500 (fols 57<sup>r</sup> and 70<sup>r</sup>) to 1575 (fol. 81<sup>r</sup>) (cf. names given in the index at fol. [3]<sup>r</sup>); their arrangement is a testimony to a keen awareness of hierarchies. Following the temporal and ecclesiastical princes come the members of the highest nobility, predominantly knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece, but also incorporating members of another chivalric or military order (fols 81<sup>v</sup> and 83<sup>v</sup>). These are succeeded first by the children of prominent nobles and then by lesser nobles who held important administrative positions headed by three chancellors of Brabant from the first three decades of the sixteenth century (fols 112<sup>v</sup>, 114<sup>v</sup>). Among these are functionaries in the households of Philip the Fair, Margaret of Austria and/or Charles V (fols 114<sup>r</sup>, 118<sup>vv</sup>, 126<sup>r</sup>, 156<sup>r</sup>), administrators in the state government (privy council (fol. 135<sup>v</sup>), council of state (fol. 147<sup>vv</sup>)), aldermen/burgemeesters of Brussels (fols 124<sup>r</sup>, 132<sup>r</sup>), administrators in the chamber of accounts of Brabant (fols 149<sup>r</sup>, 150 bis<sup>r</sup>), interspersed with a few ecclesiastical figures and ending with the four rhetoricians of *De Lelie*. (See Appendix A.)

leaves were left on which the coats of arms of later prestigious enrolees could be painted in different parts of the manuscript and later confraternity documents could be transcribed.<sup>70</sup> Likewise multiple blank paper quires were appended to the manuscript to await the names and/or signatures of subsequent ordinary enrolees.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, he interleaved the vellum leaves, both those already decorated with coats of arms and those awaiting the coats of arms of later prestigious members, with paper ones so as to protect the surface of the vellum pages and the coats of arms that were painted on them. In addition, he foliated the leaves of the entire manuscript on the upper right hand corner of the recto of each leaf.<sup>72</sup> Finally and most importantly, he designed and executed the first leaves of the manuscript to emphasize the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, the statutes of the confraternity, and the individuals who achieved their confirmation.<sup>73</sup> He provided folio references to guide the manuscript's reader to these important foundation documents (fol. [1]<sup>v</sup>) and to the names of prominent confraternity members (fol. [3]<sup>v</sup>); this paper leaf was, in all likelihood, glued to the verso of folio [3] after the manuscript was rebound.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

This study in no way pretends to exhaust the valuable information that the *Liber authenticus* contains. Its investigation will remain a rewarding activity for scholars for years to come. What I have been able to do, however, in addition to establishing the dates of its initial compilation and subsequent adjustments, is to tease out a myriad of details that enlighten us about issues of patronage, the foundation history of the Brussels confraternity, and the behaviour of ordinary believers. As we learn from the copies of documents concentrated in folios 11-48, the confraternity was the object of patronage on repeated occasions: from the benefit of receiving indulgences from three bishops, three cardinals and two popes to the sizable monetary contribution from Archdukes Albert and Isabella who, on the model of Maximilian, also confirmed the confraternity's privileges.<sup>75</sup> These same leaves help fill in details regarding renovations to the confraternity's chapel and the expansion of its activities, namely the copy of the contract between the provosts and the churchwardens

70 For example, at the beginning of the manuscript vellum leaves were left blank (fols 5-10 and fols 41-48) for the transcription of important documents relevant to the confraternity of the Sorrows of the Virgin and perhaps for the arms of subsequent rulers; after fol. 101 vellum leaves were left blank for the inclusion of the arms of later nobles, ecclesiastical figures, and administrators (fols 103, 105, 107, 110, 136, 139, 141, and 151). All these leaves now contain material that was added to the manuscript at a later date. Likewise a number of the vellum leaves contain coats of arms on one side only allowing for the painting of arms on the other side at a later date.

71 The leaves containing the names of members from religious houses likewise often contain blank spaces to be filled in at a later date. (See, for example, fols 286<sup>v</sup>-288<sup>v</sup>.)

72 I make this assumption because the hand of the foliation of the manuscript is a consistent one, as I have indicated above. It strongly resembles the hand in the texts composed in the 1570s (fols [1]<sup>v</sup>, [2]<sup>v</sup>, and [3]<sup>v</sup>). Only individual leaf numbers have been rewritten, in a later hand and a darker ink, when the upper edge of a leaf was cropped at rebinding in the eighteenth century. The confraternity's last recorder, G. J. van Bevere, possibly rewrote these numbers.

73 As I have stated elsewhere, the hand in these leaves, excepting the frontispiece, is one and the same. Also the names of the nine members of the Valieres family in the second column of fol. 288<sup>v</sup> are in the same hand. This list of names likely reveals where Aitsinger left off. Interestingly, the order of the leaves of the first quire does not correspond in all points to the sequencing announced in the Latin texts on fol. [1]<sup>v</sup> and fol. [3]<sup>v</sup>; suggesting that the final arrangement of this quire was due to a later collaborator, G. J. van Bevere possibly.

74 The folio references in the index differ in several places from the folios that display the coats of arms in the present manuscript, suggesting that this leaf was a draft.

75 For explicit donations to the confraternity from its brothers and sisters, see the chapter by Brecht Dewilde and Bram Vannieuwenhuyze in this volume.

of St Gorik for the construction of a sacristy attached to the Chapel of Our Lady and the authorization granted to the confraternity to hold its annual procession on the fourth Sunday after Easter. The growth of the confraternity in terms of enrolments is explicitly noted at the end of each year, where not only the number of new members for that year are tallied, but the ongoing total is also reported. This practice persists in a systematic way only until the end of Johannes Pertcheval's service as the principal hand in the manuscript (fol. 274<sup>r</sup>) where the total enrolments come to 9817.

From folio 161 recto to the very end of the *Liber authenticus*, the presence of ordinary believers is strongly attested. Their numbers rose and fell throughout the 300 years of the confraternity's existence but never died out. They persisted in enrolling, sometimes as single individuals, sometimes as couples, sometimes as heads of the family at which point they took the opportunity to enrol extended family members, the benefits of the devotion being open to both the living and the deceased, and sometimes as members of a convent or monastery. Certainly one motivation would have been to garner the protection of the Virgin Mary. But another equally strong motivation might have been to have their names written in the *Liber authenticus* as a sign of the hope that they would be inscribed in the Book of Life.<sup>76</sup> Whatever inspired their registration in the devotion to our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, the result of their fidelity to this confraternity is a rich source document that lays bare family networks, relationships across generations, and clues to the intertwining of the confraternity with the city of Brussels through aldermen and others who were not merely members but were provosts as well. Thus, as well as being a crucial testament to strong and constant devotional convictions, this manuscript is also a rich prosopographical resource, a treasure-house of information whose depths have yet to be plumbed.

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76 See n. 53 above.

## Appendix A: The Coats of Arms Included in the *Liber authenticus*\*\*

- fol. 6 recto: [Maria Christina, archduchess of Austria & Albert, prince of Saxony, duke of Teschen]<sup>1</sup>  
fol. 7 recto: *Maria Elisabetha* [Maria Elisabeth, archduchess of Austria]  
fol. 8 recto: *Maria Anna* [Maria Anna, archduchess of Austria] [& Charles, prince of Lorraine\*]  
unfoliated folio: *Charles de Lorraine\** [Charles, prince de Lorraine]  
There follow unnumbered vellum folios: first folio verso: *Josephus Ferdinandus Gislenus, Comes à Cuypers-de-Rijmenam, Bonneretus D•de et in Alsingen, et s'Hertoghen & c.* [Joseph Ferdinand Guislain, comte de Cuypers]  
third folio recto: *Vicomtesse De Haghen Baronne De Celles* and *Le Baron de Celles*  
fol. 9 recto: *Isabelle de Brunswick de Terdeck(?) de Schoonberghe*  
fols 44-48: folios are out of numerical sequence:  
unfoliated folio recto: [Archduke Albert as cardinal]<sup>2</sup>  
fol. 45 verso and 46 recto: *Albert\** and *Isabel Clara Eugenia* [ruling coats of arms of the Archdukes Albert & Isabella]  
fol. 49 recto: [Emperor Maximilian I\* & Bianca Maria Sforza]  
fol. 49 verso: *Philippe Archiduc dautriche: fondateur de cette confrerie\** and *Marguerite archiduchesse dautriche: fondateresse de ceste confrerie* [Philippe, archiduc d'Autriche & Marguerite, archiduchesse d'Autriche]  
fol. 51 recto: *Charles duc de bourgoinne\** and *Margarite diorc ducesse de bourgoinne* [Charles, duc de Bourgogne & Marguerite de York, duchesse de Bourgogne]  
fol. 51 verso: *Bernardinus episcopus tusculanus Sanctae romanae ecclesiae Cardinalis s.t. Ihierusalem patriarcha burgundiae legatus* [Bernardino Lopez de Carvajal, Cardinal, 20 September 1493; Bishop of Frascati, 17 September 1507]<sup>3</sup>  
fol. 53 recto: *Francois de buslaiden Archevesque de Besancon* [François de Busleyden, Archbishop of Besançon, 1498]<sup>4</sup>  
fol. 53 verso: *Johannes Lampier Episcopus Salubryensis Regis Castellae ac Illustrissimi domini Archiducis confessor* [Johannes de Nivelles, Bishop of Soliwri, 30 August 1504]<sup>5</sup>  
fol. 55 recto: *Jacobus de Croy episcopus primus dux cameracensis* [Jacobus de Croÿ, Bishop, first duke of Cambrai]<sup>6</sup>  
fol. 55 verso: *Guillame de Croÿ Cardinal* [Guillaume de Croÿ, Bishop of Cambrai, 1516; Cardinal, 25 May 1517]

\* Indicates arms where the collar and insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece are present.

\*\* Where identification is present in the coat of arms, I have transcribed the original designations indicated on these leaves, whether provided by the signatures apposed by the confraternity members themselves in the identificatory banderoles or label spaces or added by the confraternity's recorder. I have consistently resolved the abbreviations, and set these designations in italics. For the coats of arms where identification is absent, I have provided it within square brackets. I have also used square brackets to clarify identifications, retaining the language of the original and modernizing the spelling in most instances. The dates included for bishops and cardinals are for their election or appointment to the ecclesiastical dignity mentioned in the coat of arms, not the date given therein, if any.

1 Her signature and motto have been scratched off.

2 His signature has worn away.

3 See fol. 26 for a copy of his indulgence issued 3 September 1508.

4 Preceptor and councilor to Philip the Fair.

5 Confessor to Philip the Fair after Michel François de Lille.

6 See fols 31<sup>v</sup>-32<sup>v</sup> for a copy of the indulgence he issued on 12 April 1513. He was made first duke of Cambrai, 28 June 1510.

- fol. 57 recto: *Henricus de Bergis Episcopus Cameracensis* [Henricus de Berghes (Henri de Berghes / Hendrik van Glymes-Bergen), Bishop of Cambrai, 15 June 1480]<sup>7</sup>
- fol. 57 verso: *Jacques de Croy evesque de cambreye* [Jacques de Croÿ, Bishop of Cambrai, 1 February 1503]
- fol. 59 recto: *Petrus episcopus palentinus comes de pernia* [Pedro de la Gasca, Bishop of Palencia, 6 April 1551]
- fol. 59 verso: *Mathes sanctae Romanae ecclesiae prebiter Cardinalis sedunensis* [Matthaeus Schinner (Matthäus Shiner), Bishop of Sion, 20 September 1499; Cardinal, 10 March 1511]
- fol. 61 recto: *Iacobus Ramirez Episcopus Asturicensis* [Iacobus (Didacus or Diego) Ramirez de Villaeſcusa, Bishop of Astorga, 14 February 1498]<sup>8</sup>
- fol. 61 verso: *Johannes briselot episcopus beritensis Theologicus parisiensis doctor* [Jean Brisselot, Bishop of Beirut, 4 April 1505]
- fol. 63 recto: *Jehan de hornes Esvesque de Liege* [Jean de Hornes, Bishop of Liège, 16 October 1482]
- fol. 63 verso: *Bernardus de mesa helnenssis episcopus Caesareae ac Catholicae Maiestatis orator* [Bernardo de Mesa, Bishop of Elna, 10 September 1515]
- fol. 65 recto: *Charles de Croy Prince de Chimay Seigneur de Wavrin Lilliers\** and *Loyse de Labret Princesse de Chimay dame davesnes* [Charles de Croÿ, prince de Chimay & Loyse de Labret, princesse de Chimay (Louise d'Albret)]
- fol. 65 verso: *Johanes de Fonseca episcopus palantinus (sic) et comes* [Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Palencia, 4 November 1504]
- fol. [68] recto: *Laurentius Cardinalis Campegius tituli Sanctae Mariae trans Tiberim Bononiensis legatus* [Lorenzo Campeggio, Cardinal of the Title of Santa Maria in Trastevere, 27 April 1528; Bishop of Bologna, 2 December 1523]<sup>9</sup>
- fol. [68] verso: [Philibert, duc de Savoie\*] & *Marguerite dausteriche* [Marguerite d'Autriche]
- fol. 70 recto: *Jenne de castille archiducesse daustriche* [Jeanne de Castille, archiduchesse d'Autriche (Johanna of Castile)]
- fol. 70 verso: *Charles archiduc dautrice prince de castille\** [Charles, archiduc d'Autriche, prince de Castille]
- unfoliated leaf recto: *A. Cardinalis de la Cueva* [Alfonso de la Cueva, Cardinal, 5 September 1622]
- fol. 72 recto: [Johann, margrave of Brandenburg\* & Germaine de Foix]
- fol. 72 verso: *Certyen roy de denmarke and fille de Philippe roy de Castille Ysabeau royne de denmarke* [Christian II de Danemark & Isabelle (d'Autriche), reine de Danemark]
- fol. 76 verso: *Jeronimus Piramus* and *Barbara Blomberch* [Hieronymus Kegel & Barbara Blomberch (Blomberg)]
- fol. 79 recto: [Philippe de Croÿ, duc d'Arschot\* & Jeanne Henriette de Halewyn]
- fol. 81 verso: *Messiere Jacques de harbais Gentilhomme de la chambre de feu l'Empereur / Charles cinquiesme de ce nom / Chevallier de Lordre de saint Jacques* [Jacques de Harbais (Herbais)]
- fol. 83 recto: [Michel, comte de Gruyères]<sup>10</sup>
- fol. 88 recto: *Jehan Seigneur de Berghes\** and *Adrienne de brimeu dame de berghes* [Jean, seigneur de Berghes & Adrienne de Brimeu, dame de Berghes]

7 See fols 21<sup>v</sup>-22<sup>r</sup> for a copy of his letter given 25 February 1498 [1499 n.s.] granting permission to the members of *De Lelie* to establish a confraternity honouring Christ's passion and the Virgin's Sorrows and to conduct worship at the consecrated altar in the chapel of Our Lady in St Gorik's church in Brussels. He officiated at the Mass of the confraternity's third feast day, the Purification of the Virgin or Candlemas, on 2 February 1499 [1500 n.s.] and gave the sermon (*Liber authenticus*, fol. 221<sup>v</sup>).

8 Grand chaplain and counselor to Johanna of Castile.

9 See fol. 36 for a copy of his indulgence of 12 January 1532.

10 His arms are depicted with the collar and insignia of the Order of St Michael.

- fol. 88 verso: *Maximiliaen van Horen Heere van gaesbecke, [Houtekerke] etc.\** and *Barbara van Monfoert vrouwe van gaesbeke* [Maximiliaan van Hoorn, heer van Gaasbeek & Barbara van Montfoort]
- fol. 90 recto: [Guillaume de Croÿ, seigneur de Chièvres\* & Marie de Hamal]
- fol. 90 verso: [Wilhelm IV, duke of Julich-Berg, count of Ravensberg]<sup>11</sup>
- fol. 92 recto: *Henri van Wittem hiere van Berselle\** and *Dame Ysabeau delspout (or delspont) seur* [Hendrick van Wittem, heer van Beersel & Isabelle Desponts]
- fol. 92 verso: *Messire charles de poupet seigneur de la chaulx* and *Pheliberte de la baulme dame de la chaulx* [Charles de Poupet, seigneur de la Chaulx & Philiberte de la Baume]
- fol. 93 verso: *Mesire Antoine de lalain conte de Ostrate\** and 1) *Ysabiau De cullanbourg Contesse de Ostrate* and 2) *Marguerite De Lalain Dame de Verneul* [Antoine de Lalaing, comte de Hoogstraten & 1) Isabelle (Elisabeth) de Culemborg & 2) Marguerite de Lalaing, dame de Verneuil]
- fol. 95 recto: *Philippe de lalain conte de hoochstrate\** and *anne de rennenborgh* [Philippe de Lalaing, comte de Hoogstraten & Anne de Rennenborgh]
- fol. 97 recto: *Messire Lamoral Comte Degmont Prince de Gavre etc.\** and *Sabyne pallatyne Ducesse en Bavyre* [Lamoral, comte d'Egmont, prince de Gavre & Sabine de Bavière]
- fol. 99 recto: 1) *Philippe degmont prince de gavre*, 2) *Lamoral degmont second*, 3) *Charles Degmont Troisieme* [1) Philippe d'Egmont, prince de Gavre; 2) Lamoral II d'Egmont; 3) Charles d'Egmont]
- fol. 99 verso: 1) *Leonore Degmont*, 2) *Marie degmont*, 3) *francoise degmont*, 4) *Magdelene Degmont* [1) Léonore d'Egmont; 2) Marie d'Egmont; 3) Françoise d'Egmont; 4) Madeleine d'Egmont]
- fol. 100 bis recto: 1) *Marie Christienne Degmont*, 2) *Anne Degmont*, 3) *Sabyne Degmont*, 4) *Jehenne Degmont* [1) Marie Christienne d'Egmont; 2) Anne d'Egmont; 3) Sabine d'Egmont; 4) Jeanne d'Egmont]
- fol. 101 recto: 1) *Anne de Croy*, 2) *Isabeau de Croy*, 3) *Marguerite de Croy* [daughters of Charles de Croÿ & Louise d'Albret: 1) Anne de Croÿ; 2) Isabeau de Croÿ; 3) Marguerite de Croÿ]
- fol. 101 verso: [Michael Aitsinger (von Aitzing, Eitzinger or von Eitzing)]
- fol. 103 recto: *Guido Bentivolus, Archiepiscopus Rhodiensis Nuntius Apostolicus* [Guido Bentivoglio, Archbishop of Rhodes, 14 May 1609]
- fol. 105 recto: *Matthias Archiepiscopus Mechliniensis* [Matthias Hovius (Van den Hove), Archbishop of Mechelen, 25 September 1595]
- fol. 105 verso: *Jacobus Archiepiscopus Mechliniensis* [Jacobus Boonen, Archbishop of Mechelen, 13 October 1621]
- fol. 107 recto: *Philippe D'Arenberghe Baron de Zevenberghes* and *piere hypolite Anne de Meleun* [Philippe d'Arenberg, baron de Zevenberghen & Pierre-Hippolyte Anne de Melun]
- Five unfoliated leaves:
- second leaf, recto: *N de Montmorency comte d'Estaires* and *Anne de Croÿ* [Nicolas de Montmorency, comte d'Estaires & Anne de Croÿ]
- fourth leaf, recto: *A M De Bournonville Conte de Henin* and *ANE de Meleun* [Alexandre de Bournonville, comte de Hénin & Anne de Melun]
- fifth leaf, recto: *Godefroy De Berghes* and *Honorine De Honres* (corrected to *Hornes*)
- fol. 110 recto: *Ottavio Visconti* and *Deidamia Somaglia*

<sup>11</sup> In some scholarly works, he is referred to as Willem II, hertog van Gulik-Berg, and in others as Wilhelm IV or Guillaume IV, duc de Juliers-Berg. I would like to express my thanks to Mme Christiane van den Bergen-Pantens of the Royal Library of Belgium for helping me to identify this coat of arms.

- fol. 112 recto: *Jan Vander Vorst heer van Loenbeke Cancellier van brabant* and *Vrouwe Jehanne van Thielt* [Jan Van der Vorst, heer van Loonbeek, Kanselier van Brabant & Jeanne van Tielt]
- fol. 112 verso: *Jehan Le sauvaige Seigneur de scaubeke Chancelier de brabant* and *Jaqueline de bouloingne* [Jean Le Sauvage, seigneur de Scaubeke (d'Escaubecq), Chancelier de Brabant & Jacqueline de Bouloigne]
- fol. 114 recto: *Olivier Seigneur de la marche chevalier - - - confrere* and *ysabeau machefoing Seur* [Olivier, seigneur de la Marche & Isabelle Machefoin]
- fol. 114 verso: [Jerome van der Noot & Marie de Nassau.]
- fol. 116 recto: *Andreas de Roubais Cancellier Camere* [André de Roubaix]
- fol. 116 verso: *Petrus Vorstius Episcopus Aquensis Nuncius apostolicus* [Pieter van der Vorst, Bishop of Acqui, 20 February 1534]<sup>12</sup>
- fol. 118 recto: *Johannes Hinckart heer van Obain* [upper escutcheon only]
- fol. 118 verso: *Don Diego de guevara* [Don Diego de Guevara]
- fol. 120 recto: *Godgaff vander Ryvieren* and *Dierick van hamel alias chlorende syn huisvrouwe* [Dieudonné de la Riviere d'Arshot & Thierette de Hamal]
- fol. 124 recto: *Heer Jan van heenvliet here van stavenisse Cattendijck Ridder* and *vrouwe katheline van Steenlant* [Jan van Heenvliet, heer van Stavenisse & Katheline van Steelant]
- fol. 124 verso: *her Jan heere van Ostende Ridder* and *Vrou Geertruyt van heenvliet sijn vrouwe* [Jan, heer van Oostende & Geertruyt van Heenvliet]
- fol. 126 recto: *Joncker Francois van Ostende her Jans sone* and *Willem bastaard van heenvliet* [Jongeheer Francois van Oostende & Willem, bastaard van Heenvliet]
- fol. 126 verso: *Jehan de Marnix* and *ianne de cerfsa femme* [Jean de Marnix & Janne de Cerf]
- fol. 128 recto: *Dominus Arnoldus Mahieu Abbas monasterij Jettensis alias dielegem* [Dominus Arnoldus Mahieu, Abbot of the Norbertine abbey of Dielegem, 28 May 1540]
- fol. 130 recto: [Engelbert] *vander Noot* and 1) *Locquenghien* and 2) *van den Dale* [Engelbert van der Noot & two wives 1) Marguerite de Locquenghien & 2) Marguerite van den Dale]
- fol. 132 recto: *Jehan de Locquenghien Baron de Pamele* and *Anne Vander Gracht* [Jean de Locquenghien, baron de Pamele & Anne Vander Gracht]
- fol. 135 verso: *Charles de Tisnacq* and *Cathelijne de Boisot*
- fol. 136 verso: *Pierre Pecquius Chancelier de Brabant* and *Barbe Marie Boonen* [Pierre Pecq, Chancelier de Brabant & Barbe Marie Boonen]
- fol. 139 recto: *Charles de Lathem Chevalier Seigneur de Court St. Estienne* and *Johanna Schooffz* [Charles de Lathem, seigneur de Court-Saint-Etienne & Johanna Schooffs]
- fol. 141 recto: *Johan Baptista van Cattenbroeck* and *Anthonette van Vuytrecht* [Jan Baptist van Cattenbroeck & Antoinette van Utrecht]
- fol. 141 verso: *Frater Michaël Malenius Bruxellensis Minorum Cornelij et Cypriani prope Niniven Flandriae Abbas* [Michel de Maele (Malenus or van der Maelen), Abbot of the Norbertine abbey of Ninove, before Easter (9 april) 1567]
- fol. 143 recto: 1) *Iohan Baptista Houwaert*, 2) *I.B. Houwaert*, 3) *Raphael Houwaert* [1) Jan Baptist Houwaert; 2) J.B. Houwaert; 3) Raphaël Houwaert]
- fol. 143 verso: *Livinus Couwenbergius Abbas Diliginensis* [Lieven van Couwenberg, Abbot of the Norbertine abbey of Dielegem, 1574]
- fol. 147 recto: *D'Overloepe* and *Verreyken* [Pierre d'Overloep & Marie Verreycken]
- fol. 147 verso: *P D'Overloepe / Audiencier* [Pierre d'Overloep / Audiencier]

12 See fols 37<sup>r</sup>-38<sup>r</sup> for a copy of his indulgence of 23 September 1537.

- fol. 149 recto: *Jan vanden Dale factoer van bruesel der Rethoryken* [Jan van den Dale, factor van Brussel der Rethoryken]<sup>13</sup>
- fol. 149 verso: 1) *Egidius de busleiden computorum brabantiae primarius magister* and *Dame Adriana de Gondeval*, 2) *Jan van Crickengijs meester van der Reken Camere Brabant* and *Katheline Bercmans*, 3) *Meester Reyner cleerhage meester van der Reken Camere Brabant* and *Lysbeth van Winghe Wyngh*, 4) *Jan vander Eycken meester van der cameren etc.* and *Berbel Ophuys* [1) Egidius (Gilles) de Busleyden, first master of the chamber of accounts of Brabant & Adriana de Gondeval; 2) Jan van Crickengijs, master of the chamber of accounts of Brabant & Katheline (Catherine) Bercmans; 3) Reyner Cleerhage, master of the chamber of accounts of Brabant & Lysbeth van Winghe Wyngh; 4) Jan vander Eycken, master of the chamber of accounts of Brabant & Barbe Offhuys]
- fol. 150 bis recto: 1) *Philippe le Sauvaige auditeur des comptes a bruxelles* and *Marie Sweerts*, 2) *Libertus de Hamme auditor camere computorum bruxellensis* and *Barbara Reynbouts*, 3) *Nicolas van Arcle clerc van der Reken Camere te bruessel* [1) Philippe Le Sauvage, auditor of the chamber of accounts at Brussels & Marie Sweerts; 2) Libertus de Hamme, auditor of the chamber of accounts at Brussels & Barbara Reynbouts; 3) Nicolas van Arcle, clerk of the chamber of accounts at Brussels]
- fol. 151 recto: *Messire Nicolas Damant Chancelier de Brabant Conseiller destat* and *Dame Barbara Brant sa compaigne* [Nicolas Damant, Chancelier de Brabant & Barbara Brant]
- fol. 154 recto: *Philippe Philibert bespagen Chevalier gentillehomme de la bouche de leurs Altezes et grand baillij du Roman Pays* and *Dame Leonora Damant sa Compaigne* [Philippe Philibert de Spanghen & Leonora Damant]
- fol. 156 recto: *franchois de vallieres garde joiaulx de lempereur charles v<sup>e</sup> du nom* and *margerite gotz* [François de Valieres & Margerite Gotz]
- fol. 156 verso: 1) *Claudius de Alingio sanctae sedis apostolicae prothonotarius praepositus sancti Albani basilensis*, 2) *Rembertus de Kerssenbroek Sigillifer*, 3) *Waltherus stelle protonotarius apostolicus ac decanus sedunensis* [1) Claudius de Alingio, pronotary apostolic and provost of the St Alban Cloister, Basel; 2) Rembertus de Kerssenbroek, keeper of the seal; 3) Waltherus Stelle, protonotary apostolic and dean of Sion]
- fol. 159 recto: *Frater Wilhelmus Spikinc*
- fol. 159 verso: 1) *Johannes Steemaer alias pertcheval*, 2) *Jan de baertmaker alias Smeken*, 3) *Jan Borreman*, 4) *Claes der Weduwen* [1) Johannes Steemaer alias Pertcheval; 2) Jan de Baertmaker alias Smeken; 3) Jan II Borreman; 4) Claes der Weduwen]
- fol. 229 recto: *Guillielmus josephus van Bevere procureur in den Souverijnen raede van Brabant greffier van dese Cranscaemer ende Broederschap* [Guillielmus Josephus van Bevere, procureur in the council of Brabant]

<sup>13</sup> Jan van den Dale's name occurs twice in the membership list of the confraternity: at the top of column 2 on fol. 193<sup>v</sup> among the members who enrolled on 24 March, Palm Sunday (1498 [1499 n.s.]), and on fol. 162<sup>r</sup>, he wrote his own name among the members of *De Violette* on 15 September 1507.



## Appendix B: Foundation Documents\*

fols 9<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Condt sij allen dat Peeter van Cutsem Inden naem ende van wegen heer Joannes Uyagon Presbiter ende Pastoir [...]*'. [Brussels, 28 June 1660]

In this contract, the pastor and churchwardens of St Gorik grant permission to the provosts of the Seven Sorrows devotion to construct a new sacristy attached to the Chapel of Our Lady in exchange for a '*recognitie*' of 21 *stuivers* payable yearly to the church. The hand in this copy looks to be that of Judocus Wouwerms, who became a provost of the confraternity in 1684 (fol. 332<sup>v</sup>) and '*erfproost*' (provost for life) in 1696 (fol. 334<sup>v</sup>).<sup>14</sup>

fol. 11<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Jan heer van Houthem, ende van huldenberge Ridder Cancellier, ende de andere liiden vanden Rade [...]*'. [Antwerp, 3 April 1492 (1493 n.s.)]

Letter directing administrators throughout Brabant to execute the instructions contained in the enclosed letter from the King of the Romans and Archduke Philip. (See following document.)

fol. 12<sup>r</sup>-12<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Maximilian par la Grace de dieu Roy des Rommains tousiours auguste [...]* et *Philippus par la mesme grace Archiducz daustrice [...]*'. [Mechelen, 1 April 1492 (1493 n.s.)]

Letter to the chancellors and presidents of the councils of Brabant, Flanders, Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, Hainaut, and Lille, and all other officers of justice, to enforce a safe-conduct throughout the provinces thus enabling rhetoricians to attend unencumbered the festive meeting organized by the rhetorician chamber *De Lelie* to take place in Brussels on 12 May [1493]. The duration of the safe-conduct: 8-22 May 1493.

fols 13<sup>r</sup>-14<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Provido ac disereto viro Johanni smeecken, ac communitati Artis Rethoricae In vulgari In Bruxella subtitulo floris lilij [...]*'. [Mechelen, 22 June 1495]

Letter from Michel François de Lille, Philip the Fair's confessor, to Jan Smeken, in which is embedded the letter of Joachim Turriano, Master of the Order of Preachers [Venice, 19 December 1494], extending the spiritual benefits of the Dominican order to the members of the Seven Sorrows confraternity.<sup>15</sup>

fols 15<sup>r</sup>-18<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Universis et singulis reverendissimis ac Reverendis In Christo patribus dominis dei et apostolicae sedis gratia presentibus et futuris Patriarchis Archiepiscopis Episcopis et locorum quorumcumque ordinariis et cumlibet eorum [...]*'. [Leuven, 13 February 1497 (n.s.; indictio 15)]

Letter of Paulus de Porta granting apostolic confirmation of the seven statutes of the devotion and enumerating each one. The letter includes a copy of the bull of Pope Alexander VI [Rome, 26 October 1495 ('*septimo kalendas novembris*'), incarnation style and the third year of his papacy] to Petrus Stricti, Dean of Soignies, instructing him to undertake an investigation of the validity of the devotion and the latter's letter to Paulus de Porta delegating this task to him [Church of St Vincent of Soignies, 2 February 1497 (n.s.)].<sup>16</sup>

fols 19<sup>r</sup>-20<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Universis et Singulis Presentes Litteras Inspecturis et audituris Henricus Ghyselberti [...]* *Salutem in domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Mechelen, 24 April 1497]

Letter from Henricus Ghyselbertus, dean and canon of the collegiate church of St Rumbold, Mechelen, containing a copy of the letter patent [Cologne, 20 April 1494] of

\* Unless otherwise indicated the copies contained in this part of the manuscript are in a consistent mid-sixteenth-century hand. Abbreviations have been resolved, and where the days of the month have been given in curial style, I have converted them using the online calendar utility: <http://www.lieberknecht.de/~prg/calendar.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> The original of this contract was in the brotherhood's chest at the end of the seventeenth century. Cf. ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 22-23: 'den brief [...] is liggende inde comme' (p. 23).

<sup>15</sup> I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr Verena Demoed for making an excellent translation of this letter for me.

<sup>16</sup> Soulier believes that, since the bull specifies incarnation style, it should be dated to 1494 rather than 1495; Soulier, *La confrérie*, p. 26, n. 1.

- Johannes de Nussia, provincial of the Carmelites, granting to the members of the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Harlem participation in the spiritual benefits of his order.
- fols 21<sup>r</sup>-22<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Universis et singulis christifidelibus tam presentibus quam futuris presentes nostras litteras Inspecturis Henricus de Bergis dei et apostolicae sedis gratia Episcopus Cameracensis Salutem in domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Brussels, 25 February 1498 (1499 n.s.)]  
Letter of the Bishop of Cambrai, Henricus de Berghes, to the members of *De Lelie*, in response to a petition received from Jan Smeken, Johannes Pertcheval, and the other members of the rhetoricians chamber, granting permission to the petitioners to establish a confraternity honouring and invoking Christ's Passion and the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary to be celebrated at the altar in the chapel of the Virgin Mary in the church of St Gorik in Brussels, as well as 40 days indulgence to the members of the confraternity who come together in this church on Marian feast days, the Feast of St Gorik, and the dedication of the altar. He singles out for special attention those who devoutly pray before this altar and who help in the restoration of the said altar as well as the maintenance of the altar furnishings necessary for the celebration of the divine cult, and also all those who enter and accept the confraternity.<sup>17</sup>
- fol. 23<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Universis christifidelium presentium seriem litterarum Inspecturis Petrus miseratione divina Cameracensis Episcopus Salutem in domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Brussels, 2 June 1401]  
Letter of indulgence of Petrus de Alliaco [Pierre d'Ailly, Bishop of Cambrai (1396-1411)] in response to a request from the churchwardens and church fabric of St Gorik who wanted to propagate a devotion to Our Lady in the recently built chapel of Our Lady. To this end he grants 40 days indulgence to all penitents who visit the chapel on Saturdays and make an offering for its upkeep.
- fols 24<sup>r</sup>-25<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*honoratissimo divino Johanni de Coudenberghe Illustrissimi Principis Philippi Rege Castellae etc. secretario Collegiatae ecclesiae Abbenbroucensis decano etc.*'  
Two letters to Jan van Coudenberghe. The first from Petrus Judocus [Abbenbroek, 4 May 1502] recounting miracles that occurred in Abbenbroek because of the devotion of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. The second is from Andreas Johannes [Abbenbroek, 15 April 1506] narrating other miracles.
- fols 26<sup>r</sup>-26<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Bernardinus Miseratione divina episcopus Tusculanensis sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae Cardinalis [...]* *Salutem in domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Brussels, 3 September 1508 ('*tertie nonas Septembris*')]  
Letter of indulgence issued by papal legate Cardinal Bernardino Lopez de Carvajal, Bishop of Frascati, granting 200 days indulgence to the confraternity members.
- fols 27<sup>r</sup>-28<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Universis et singulis presentes litteras Inspecturis vicedecanus et capitulum ecclesiae Collegiatae Beatae Gudilae bruxellensis Cameracensis diocesis Salutem In domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Brussels, 23 September 1508]  
Letter from the vicedean and chapter of St Gudula to the brotherhood granting permission to move the confraternity's procession to the fourth Sunday after Easter.
- fols 29<sup>r</sup>-30<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Maximilaen byder graciën Goids gecoren keyser [...]* *Ende Kaerle byder zelver graciën Ertshertogen Oistenryche [...]*'. [Brussels, 19 March 1510 (1511 n.s.)]  
Letter confirming the brotherhood's privileges, recognizing the Brussels chapel of the confraternity as a princely chapel, and according to the rhetoricians of *'t Mariacranske* the status of princely servants in the duchy of Brabant.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> I want to express my wholehearted appreciation to Dr Verena Demoed who expertly translated this letter for me. The original of this letter, as well as that of Pierre d'Ailly, fol. 23<sup>r</sup>, was still in the confraternity's chest at the end of the seventeenth century. Cf. ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 4: 'bijde brieven zijn liggende inde comme'.

<sup>18</sup> The original was still in the brotherhood's chest at the end of the seventeenth century. Cf. ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 19-20: '[brieven] zijn liggende inde comme' (p. 20).

- fols 31<sup>r</sup>-32<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Jacobus de Croy dei et Apostolicae sedis quam Episcopus et dux Cameracensis [...] Salutem in domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Dilbeek, 12 April 1513]  
Indulgence letter issued by the Bishop of Cambrai, Jacques de Croÿ, granting 40 days perpetual indulgence to the members of the confraternity.
- fols 33<sup>r</sup>-34<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Universis et singulis presentes Litteras Inspecturis visuris lecturis pariter et audituris [...] Litteras sanctissimi In Christo patris et domini nostri domini Leonis divina providentia pape decimi [...]*'. [Bruges, 14 August 1518]  
Letter reproducing Pope Leo X's letter patent (Rome, 23 April 1517) granting seven years and seven quarantines perpetual indulgence to the confraternity.
- fol. 35<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Int Jair ons heeren duser vijfhondert ende achtiene. Inder sester Indictien opten veerthiensten dach van meij des pausdome heeren Leonis de thienste paus van dien name In sijnen sesten jaer zijnden coronatien [...]*'. [Brussels, 14 May 1518]  
Copy of two items from the testament of Anthonys Mennens that mention the Brussels confraternity: the first regarding the settlement of a debt; the second the financing of a yearly Mass to be said for the soul of the testator.
- fol. 36<sup>r</sup>-36<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Laurentus Miseratione divina et sancte Marie Transtiberim Sanctae Romanae ecclesiae presbiter Cardinalis Campeggius [...] Salutem in domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Brussels, 12 January 1532 ('*pridie Idus Januarii*')]   
Letter in which the papal legate Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio grants seven years and still seven quarantines indulgence and 100 days perpetual indulgence to the confraternity.
- fols 37<sup>r</sup>-38<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Hugo dei et apostolicae sedis gratia Episcopus Calcedonensis Reverendi In Christo patris et divini domini episcopi cameracensis suffraganeus [...] Salutem in domino [...]*'. [Brussels, 7 January 1538]  
Letter reproducing Hugo de Capella's transcription of the indulgence letter of the papal nuncio Petrus Vorstius, Bishop of Acqui [Brussels, 23 September 1537 ('*nono Calendas Octobris*')] , granting 10 years and still 40 days perpetual indulgence to the brotherhood.<sup>19</sup>
- fol. 39<sup>r</sup>-39<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Georgius de Egmonda dei ac apostolicae sedis gratia Episcopus trajectensis universis et singulis christifidelibus presentes litteras Inspecturis Salutem In domino [...]*'. [Ghent, 8 May 1540]  
Letter of George of Egmond, Bishop of Utrecht, granting the confraternity members 40 days indulgence.
- fol. 40<sup>r</sup>-40<sup>v</sup>. Incipit: '*Robertus de Croy dei gratia et Episcopus et dux cameracensis [...] Universis et singulis Christifidelibus presentes litteras Inspecturis Salutem In domino [...]*' [Brussels, 10 September 1540]  
Letter of Robert de Croÿ, Bishop of Cambrai, granting 40 days indulgence to the confraternity members.
- fols 41<sup>r</sup>-44<sup>r</sup>. Incipit: '*Paulus episcopus, servus servorum Dei, universis christi fidelibus, presentes litteras inspecturis, salutem in domino sempiternam [...]*'. [Frascati, 15 October 1614 ('*Idibus Octobris*')]   
Copy of Pope Paul V's letter of indulgence signed by Aubertus Miraeus / Protonotarius Apostolicus, and written in his hand.<sup>20</sup> Aubertus Miraeus became a member of the confraternity in 1614 (cf. fol. 297<sup>r</sup>).
- fol. 47<sup>r</sup>. Incipit '*Albert ende Isabel Clara Eugenia Infante van Spaignien Bij der Gratien Godts eertshertogen van Oistenrijck [...]*'. [Brussels, 21 October 1620]

<sup>19</sup> This indulgence letter was printed in Antwerp in 1538 possibly by Adriaen van Berghen [NK 4242].

<sup>20</sup> The transcription of this indulgence letter skips from fol. 42<sup>r</sup> to fol. 44<sup>r</sup> as fol. 43 has been transposed to the following gathering.

This copy of the confirmation of the confraternity's privileges issued and signed by the Archdukes looks to be in the hand of G. J. van Bevere. His coat of arms, dated 1777, the year he became a member of the confraternity (fol. 349<sup>v</sup>), is on fol. 229<sup>r</sup>.<sup>21</sup>

fol. 43<sup>v</sup> [transposed from preceding quire]-fol. 48<sup>v</sup> [= two leaves]. Incipit: '*Albert et Isabel Clara Eugenia Infante D'Espagne par la grace de dieu archiducqz daustriche [...]*'. [Brussels, 23 October 1615]

Copy of a document granting the payment of 500 *livres* for the restoration of the bench ('ung siege alentour') that Philip the Fair had given to the chapel of the confraternity but which had been destroyed during the 'recent troubles' and permitting the coats of arms of the Archdukes to adorn the chapel. This copy is in the hand of P Numan, secretary of the city of Brussels, who signed it at fol. 48<sup>v</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> The original of this privilege was still in the confraternity's chest at the end of the seventeenth century. Cf. ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 21: 'den welcken oock in de comme is te vinden'.

## **DRAMA AND CEREMONY**

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# THE BRUSSELS PLAYS OF THE SEVEN SORROWS

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## Introduction

In the Dutch-speaking Low Countries, vernacular theatre played an important role in the propagation of the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady, the most painful moments in the life of the Virgin Mary: Simeon's Prophecy, the Flight into Egypt, the Loss of the twelve-year-old Christ in the temple, the Bearing of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Deposition and the Entombment. Archival evidence has been found for performances of plays on the Seven Sorrows in cities as diverse as Mechelen (1494, 1532), Leiden (1494), Antwerp (1495), Bergen op Zoom (1497), Gouda (1497), Aalst (1499, 1521), Blankenberge (1502), Tielt (1508, 1513), Roeselare (1512), and Geraardsbergen (1518-19).<sup>1</sup> In most of these cases, it is clear that the staging was organized by the local chambers of rhetoric, guilds devoted to the composition and performance of vernacular literature. Studying the play texts would help to understand how lay people in the Low Countries experienced the devotion of the Seven Sorrows, but unfortunately none of these texts are extant, and the references in the archival sources are, in general, too succinct to allow for a proper reconstruction of form and content.<sup>2</sup>

More information on some of the vernacular plays on the Seven Sorrows can be found in the history of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows that was written in 1519 by Jan van Coudenberghe – the *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitas beatissimae virginis Mariae de passione quae dicitur de septem doloribus* (Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519).<sup>3</sup> Van Coudenberghe describes in some detail the play that was

1 Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries (c. 1490-1520)', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 252-78 (pp. 272-77). See also Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille. Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), pp. 66-71 and Susie Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval and the Brussels Leliebroeders (1490-1500). The model of a conformist rhetoricians chamber?', in *Conformisten en rebellen. Rederijkerscultuur in de Nederlanden (1400-1650)*, ed. by Bart Ramakers (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), pp. 94-106 (p. 97). The performances in Mechelen (1532) and Aalst (1521) are mentioned by E. Van Autenboer, *Volksfeesten en rederijkers te Mechelen (1400-1600)* (Ghent: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde, 1962), pp. 126 and 152.

2 Speakman Sutch suggests that the Aalst play, which lasted for two days and was staged by the local chamber of rhetoric St Catherine, may have resembled a mystery play (Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', p. 97).

3 Van Coudenberghe's remarks on vernacular theatre (sig. Cii<sup>v</sup>) are cited *in extenso* by Willem Van Eeghem, 'Rhetores bruxellenses (15e-16e eeuw)', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 14 (1935), 427-48 (pp. 433-35). The Dutch translation by Jacob Stratius S.J. is also useful and available on Google Books: *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen. Met de mirakelen, getyden, ende misse der selver: insgelyckx den oorspronck, ende voortganck der broederschap* (Antwerp: Guiliam Lesteens, 1622); the section on vernacular theatre is on pp. 219-23.

performed in Mechelen in 1494 on Annunciation Day, in the presence of Archduke Philip the Fair. This play was written, according to Van Coudenberghe, by the canon and talented poet Hendrik Maes (d. 1512), a member of the local chamber of rhetoric, The Peony. Even though the performance lasted for five hours, no one found it too long, Van Coudenberghe asserts. In Maes's play each of the Seven Sorrows were represented as well as scenes from the Old Testament. Before the representation of each sorrow, two expositors explained what would be brought on stage, refuting at the same time all possible arguments against the devotion. The magnificent and emotive performance had great success, not only among the court elite but also among the people of Mechelen, who urged for a second performance.<sup>4</sup>

On the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows – which will be the focus of this article – Van Coudenberghe offers interesting details too. Recently, however, new evidence about these plays has become available: in 2009 I discovered the account book of the Brussels chapter of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows, from 1499 to 1516 (340 pp., seventeen years altogether).<sup>5</sup> These accounts mention the composition and staging of Marian plays several times, with detailed information that supplements Van Coudenberghe's description. For example, the accounts allow us to assert that in Brussels not just one play was composed – as some scholars had deduced from Van Coudenberghe's remarks – but a *series* of plays, forming a cycle that must have been comparable to the well-known *Bliscappen*, plays on the Seven Joys of Mary that were composed in Brussels in the middle of the fifteenth century. The accounts also reveal that the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows were composed from 1508 onwards and not in 1497 as was commonly assumed. Therefore, the composition and staging of these plays should be situated entirely in the context of the Brussels chapter of the Seven Sorrows confraternity, founded in 1499, and more specifically at a moment when the Brussels chambers of rhetoric, The Lily and The Violet, were already merged into The Garland of Mary ('t Mariacranske, as of 15 September 1507). Though Van Coudenberghe ascribes the Brussels plays to the Brussels rhetoricians Jan Smeken (d. 1517) and Johannes Pertcheval (d. 1523), only the authorship of Smeken is confirmed by the accounts.

I will start here with a short overview of the information that can be deduced from Van Coudenberghe's exposé, before turning to the new evidence from the accounts. These two sources, however, will not suffice to reconstruct the form, content, and performance of the plays of the Seven Sorrows. Therefore, I will complement this image by taking the preserved plays by Jan Smeken into consideration, and I will also make a comparison with the *Bliscappen*. Although such a tentative reconstruction can never replace the now-lost plays, it will allow us to demonstrate how the Brussels rhetoricians used vernacular theatre to make the devotion of the Seven Sorrows a resounding success among city dwellers.

4 The Mechelen play is more thoroughly discussed by Van Autenboer, *Volksfeesten*, pp. 150-53, Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', pp. 267-68, and Emily Catherine Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows. Music, Devotion, and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2010), pp. 32-38. Given the five-hour performance, Speakman Sutch suggests that the Mechelen play was 'a kind of dramatised sermon' (Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', p. 97). She also suggests that the scenes from the Old Testament were represented in the form of *tableaux vivants* (p. 97).

5 Archives of the City of Brussels/Archief van de Stad Brussel, Historical Archives/Historisch Archief (hereafter ASB, HA), Register 3837. An exploratory study of these accounts is Remco Sleiderink, 'De dichters Jan Smeken en Johannes Pertcheval en de devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zeven Weeën. Nieuwe gegevens uit de rekeningen van de Brusselse broederschap (1499-1516)', *Queeste. Tijdschrift over middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden*, 19 (2012), 42-69 (English summary on p. 66).



### Jan van Coudenberghe and the Date of 1497

Van Coudenberghe starts his digression on the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows with the more general remark that the adherents to the devotion of the Seven Sorrows, and especially the lay people, were so offended by the opposition against it, that they started to write, in Dutch verses, plays on each particular sorrow, to be performed on stage instead of more worldly plays.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that Van Coudenberghe has a particular series of plays in mind, as he continues to describe two negative personae brought on stage in these plays, one that he calls *Malorum Incitator* (instigator of evil things) and the other *Bonorum Impeditor* (obstructor of good things). At each representation of a sorrow, these traitorous servants of the Devil have a dialogue. The ‘instigator of evil things’ expresses his fear for all the benefits that can come from the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows, while the ‘obstructor of good things’ boasts that he is prepared to hinder these benefits by instructing his own disciples. In the context of Van Coudenberghe’s history, these disciples should be understood as the opponents of the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin.

Van Coudenberghe then attributes the composition of this specific series of plays to the skilled Brussels rhetoricians Jan Smeken and Johannes Pertcheval. Filled with arguments and citations from the Holy Fathers, their plays were performed in public, on stages that were built especially for these occasions. In doing so, Van Coudenberghe asserts, these lay people not only presented in words and images the Seven Sorrows, but they also exposed the spiritual benefits of the confraternity. Especially in the dialogues between *Malorum Incitator* and *Bonorum Impeditor*, all the frauds, snares, defences, and lies of the opponents of the devotion were made clear to the audience.

The now-lost Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows are not dated by Van Coudenberghe. The Brussels philologist Willem Van Eeghem, however, situated the Brussels plays in 1497, and this date has been repeated by scholars ever since.<sup>7</sup> Van Eeghem does not give arguments for his dating, but apparently he is following Pérégrin-Marie Soulier who accorded, in a book published in 1912, dates to different sections in Van Coudenberghe’s narrative. Soulier rephrased the section on vernacular theatre in a small chapter with the date 1497.<sup>8</sup> This dating, however, should have been doubted by scholars, as this would have been two years *before* the establishment of the Brussels chapter of the Seven Sorrows by the rhetoricians of The Lily. Moreover, the Brussels city accounts, which have been preserved for the period 1497-1507 and contain numerous details on performances by chambers of rhetoric, never mention plays on the Seven Sorrows.

6 Van Eeghem, ‘Rhetores bruxellenses’, p. 433. I thank Susie Speakman Sutch for sharing with me the tentative English translation of Van Coudenberghe’s remarks on the Brussels plays made by Dr John Pairman Brown in 2001. Cf. also Speakman Sutch’s rephrasing in her article ‘Jan Pertcheval’, p. 98.

7 Van Eeghem, ‘Rhetores bruxellenses’, p. 433. The same date also appears in, for example, Speakman Sutch, ‘Jan Pertcheval’, p. 97 and Speakman Sutch and Van Bruane, ‘The Seven Sorrows’, p. 275.

8 Pérégrin-Marie Soulier, *La confrérie de Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs dans les Flandres 1491-1519* (Brussels: Pères servites de Marie, 1912), chapter 11 (‘Pieuses représentations des douleurs de Marie’), pp. 40-42. After mentioning the Brussels plays, Van Coudenberghe turns to Hendrik Mae’s play, that was composed, according to the city accounts of Mechelen, as early as 1494. This is another indication that Van Coudenberghe did not strictly follow a chronological order in his story.

### Evidence from the Confraternity's Accounts

The account book of the confraternity offers new evidence not only on the dating and authorship of the Brussels plays but also on the place where the plays were staged, the participation of actors from the chamber of rhetoric, and the props that were used. From 1508 onwards, 'Onser Vrouwen spel' (the play of Our Lady) is mentioned virtually every year in the newly discovered accounts, usually with a detailed section on payments.<sup>9</sup> Compensation for composing a *new* play, with both a prologue and epilogue (and proper copying of the text) is found in six consecutive years in the accounts from 1508 to 1513.<sup>10</sup> These entries demonstrate that what Van Coudenberghe refers to in his history of the confraternity is indeed a *series* of plays, one play for each sorrow, instead of one play representing all seven sorrows, as most scholars in the past have presumed. The first sorrow would have been staged in 1508, the second in 1509, etc.<sup>11</sup> In 1514, however, there is not one entry about a play in the accounts, although it is likely that a play on the seventh sorrow was composed that year. Perhaps this play was financed in an alternative manner that would preclude recording in the account book. In 1515 and 1516, the Marian plays are mentioned again, but only briefly and without payments for composing or copying.<sup>12</sup> We can thus assume the cycle on the Seven Sorrows was finished in 1514 and performed for a second time from 1515 onwards.

In the past it has also been assumed that the Brussels rhetoricians were 'explicitly commissioned' to write plays on the Seven Sorrows, and that 'the content had been approved by the court'.<sup>13</sup> The new evidence does not support these interpretations. Of course, the founding of the Brussels chapter was welcomed by the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty – as Philip the Fair proved by donating a pew to the confraternity.<sup>14</sup> And yes, the most fervent promoter of the devotion in the Low Countries, Petrus de Manso from Mechelen (Peter Verhoeven), seems to have preached in the Brussels church of St Gorik on the occasion of their first procession in 1505.<sup>15</sup> He would certainly have given his opinion on the Seven Sorrows, but the specific activities that the Brussels rhetoricians developed in their own chapter of the confraternity seem to have been their own initiative.

Already in the first year of their existence, when more than 6000 brothers and sisters were inscribed in the membership register, the *Liber authenticus*,<sup>16</sup> the rhetoricians bought simple printed images and booklets on the Seven Sorrows that they resold in their chapel.<sup>17</sup> They ordered paintings and sculptures, and they organized their own annual procession on the fourth or fifth Sunday of Easter, which every year comprised more *figurae* and *tableaux vivants* visualising the Seven Sorrows.<sup>18</sup> And then, in 1508 – after the merging of The Lily and The Violet into The Garland of Mary – the rhetoricians finally started to

9 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 62-65.

10 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 156, 187, 213, 239, 262, and 278.

11 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 62-63.

12 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 316 and 333.

13 Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', p. 101; Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 277.

14 Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 70-71.

15 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 60.

16 ASB, HA, Register 3413.

17 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 56-57; see also the section 'meditation: images and texts' in Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', pp. 254-61.

18 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 57-62, and Edmond Roobaert's and Trisha Rose Jacobs' chapter in this volume. See Emily Thelen's chapter for the date of the procession.

stage plays of the Seven Sorrows to show the audience more effectively what this specific devotion was about. There is no indication at all that it was not their own initiative to do so.

In the entries for 1510 and 1511, Jan Smeken is explicitly named as the author of the Marian plays.<sup>19</sup> Smeken had been the city poet of Brussels since 1485 – receiving 90 shillings ‘Brabantse groten’ each year, apart from gifts in natura and additional rewards – and as a leading rhetorician of The Lily, and later of The Garland of Mary, he was heavily involved in the organization of the Brussels chapter of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>20</sup> He was in fact one of its founders, together with Johannes Pertcheval, Jan II Borreman (the sculptor), and Claes der Weduwen. For composing and making proper copies of the plays, Smeken received 12 shillings each time. This same amount is mentioned every year from 1508 to 1513 and is equivalent to the amount that an experienced artist like the painter Joris Schernier (who was also active in the confraternity) received for ten days of work.<sup>21</sup>

Remarkably, Pertcheval is not mentioned in the account book in relation to the Marian plays, although Van Coudenberghe in 1519 explicitly linked the plays to Smeken and Pertcheval. The city accounts affirm that the two rhetoricians often worked together, especially when they organized, commissioned by the city, theatrical competitions, solemn entries, and other public feasts.<sup>22</sup> Of course, it is possible that Pertcheval wrote some of the plays that are not linked in the accounts to a specific author, or that he co-authored some of these plays with Smeken. Another possibility, however, is that Pertcheval played a different role in the process, as a producer or as a director of the plays, for example, or maybe even as *auctor intellectualis*. From the apparently learned Johannes Pertcheval, who wrote a new almanac every year for the city of Brussels, we have only one text preserved, namely the translation he made in 1493 of Olivier de la Marche’s *Le chevalier délibéré*, which is an allegorical treatise, not a play.<sup>23</sup> Jan Smeken, on the other hand, wrote many plays, several of which are preserved. These plays by Smeken will be compared below to the evidence about the plays of the Seven Sorrows to strengthen the hypothesis that Smeken wrote the whole cycle of plays and that Pertcheval’s role was a different one.

According to Van Coudenberghe, the plays of the Seven Sorrows were performed on stages that were specially constructed for this purpose, but he does not say where exactly these stages stood. The accounts of the confraternity reveal that in 1510 – and probably also in the previous years – the Marian play was staged in the churchyard of St Gorik’s church, where the confraternity had its chapel.<sup>24</sup> From the church accounts of St Gorik,

19 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 213 and 239.

20 E. Roobaert, ‘De parochie van Sint-Jans-Molenbeek en de Brusselse rederijkers’, *Eigen schoon en De Brabander*, 84 (2001), 421-49 (pp. 442-43). Cf. Samuel Mareel, ‘Urban Literary Patronage in the Early Modern Low Countries. Public Festive Culture and Individual Authorship’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 64 (2011), 50-78, and Sleiderink, ‘De dichters’, p. 52.

21 Sleiderink, ‘De dichters’, p. 63.

22 J. Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum in de XIVe en XVe eeuw* (Antwerp: De Sikkel / Ghent: Vyncke, 1935), pp. 86-92.

23 On Johannes Pertcheval see also Sleiderink, ‘De dichters’, *passim*, and Remco Sleiderink, ‘Johannes Steemaer alias Pertcheval. De naam en faam van een Brusselse rederijker’, in *Want hi verkende dien name wale. Opstellen voor Willem Kuiper*, ed. by Marjolein Hogenbirk and Roel Zemel (Amsterdam: Stichting Neerlandistiek VU / Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 2014), pp. 149-54. On his activity as a translator, see Bas Jongenelen, ‘Jan Pertcheval’s translation of *Le chevalier délibéré*: Den camp vander doot. Source, translation and public’, *Publications du Centre européen d’études bourguignonnes*, 43 (2003), 199-212.

24 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 213.

we already knew that this churchyard was sometimes used for theatrical performances, in particular by the confraternity of St Sebastian in 1494-95.<sup>25</sup>

The churchyard of St Gorik seems indeed a convenient place for performances of plays on the Seven Sorrows. In 1511, however, the next play in the cycle was not performed here but at the *Markt*, the prestigious central market place of Brussels, in front of the city hall. That very year the city's treasurers were willing to pay 10 shillings for the labour-intensive construction of the stage on this particular site.<sup>26</sup> Probably all the subsequent performances – at the least the one from 1513 for which the city paid 12.5 shillings and an anonymous patron another 10 shillings – took place at the *Markt*.<sup>27</sup> The reason as to why the location of the performance changed is not explicitly mentioned, but one could suppose that the city council wanted to present the devotional efforts as their own once they started to sponsor the plays.

From the accounts it is clear that, at least from 1508 to 1512, there were two subsequent performances each year.<sup>28</sup> The exact date of the performances is not stated in the accounts, but the accounts suggest that it was on or around the day of the procession that was organized yearly from 1505 and onwards by the confraternity on the fourth or fifth Sunday of Easter.<sup>29</sup> From 1508 to 1512, security personnel were paid every year for guarding the stage for two nights,<sup>30</sup> but the specific nights are not given – probably the night before and after the procession. In 1515 and 1516, the guards were paid for three nights,<sup>31</sup> but it is not clear whether this implies a third performance. In these years – when the cycle was staged for the second time – the accounts are unfortunately less specific.

For their two performances, the actors of The Garland of Mary received 6 shillings from the confraternity.<sup>32</sup> At both presentations they also received beer for free.<sup>33</sup> In 1516 – when most probably the second sorrow was put on stage again – a certain actress *Clere* was paid 2.5 shillings for playing Our Lady. The justification given in the accounts for this relatively high amount is that she had a lot to learn, and she was not eager to do it.<sup>34</sup> Combined with evidence from the city accounts and from the confraternity's *Liber authenticus*, it becomes clear that this actress was a member of The Garland of Mary (and earlier of The Lily) and that she also acted in a rhetoricians' play on the *Markt* in 1503. Her full name was Clara Goolens.<sup>35</sup>

25 They staged a St Sebastian play; see E. Frankignoul and P. Bonenfant, *Notes pour servir à l'histoire de l'art en Brabant* (= Annales de la Société Royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles 39) (Brussels, 1935), p. 60, n. 257; Roobaert, 'De parochie van Sint-Jans-Molenbeek', p. 432, and Remco Sleiderink, 'Sebastiaan en Swa. De zoektocht naar het cultureel erfgoed van de Brusselse handboogschutters', *Madoc. Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen*, 27 (2013), 142-57 (p. 149).

26 'Totter stellinghen van Onser Vrouwen spel dat opde merct voere stathuys gemaect was' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 230).

27 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 272-73.

28 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 156, 187, 213, 239, and 262.

29 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 57-62. A connection with a procession was already supposed by B.A.M. Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren. Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en Moderne Tijd* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), p. 414.

30 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 156, 187, 213, 239, and 262.

31 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 316, and 333.

32 For example in 1511: 'Item van tspele 2 werven te spelene, den rethorisieneen gegeven, 6s. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 239).

33 For example in 1511: 'Item opde 2 spele aen 8 potten cuten ende 6 pot hoppen, 14.5d. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 239).

34 'Item Cleren die Onse Vrouwe spelde ende vele leerens dair in hadde want sijt qualijc doen wilde, 2s. 6d. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 333).

35 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 63-64.

From 1508 to 1512, the account book also mentions props that were used by the rhetoricians while performing the plays on the Virgin's sorrows. In 1509, when the second sorrow (the Flight into Egypt) must have been on the programme, the confraternity ordered Our Lady's mantle and Jesus's cloak to be made.<sup>36</sup> But there must also have been Old Testament scenes in that year's play because Joris Schernier was paid 5 shillings for painting four children who were drowned by Pharaoh.<sup>37</sup> In 1511 (fourth sorrow: the Meeting of Mary and Jesus on the Way of the Cross) 3 shillings worth of cloth was bought for Adam's cloak,<sup>38</sup> and a female hairdresser or wig maker was paid 1.5 shillings for adorning the women.<sup>39</sup> In 1512 (fifth sorrow: the Crucifixion) expenses were made for armour for pagan soldiers who rode with King Herod, but these entries mix costs for the play with costs of the confraternity's annual procession.<sup>40</sup> Explicitly intended for the performance of the play this same year was a hollow lance used for stabbing Christ.<sup>41</sup> The fact that Longinus's lance was made hollow suggests a special effect, probably for the sudden appearance of blood and water from the side of Christ (John 19. 34). Also in 1512, there were payments for paintings for Our Lady's play, including the painting of a snake, which could have been a general image for the devil or more specifically a reference to the biblical snake of copper (Numbers 21. 4-9), a prefiguration of the crucified Christ.<sup>42</sup> After 1512 the entries on the plays are more succinct, and props are no longer mentioned.

### Jan Smeken and a Play in Breda

The account book of the Brussels confraternity for 1499-1516 does not allow for a more detailed reconstruction of the plays of the Seven Sorrows. There is enough evidence to assume that the plays formed a cycle of seven and furthermore that the cycle treated subjects larger than the Seven Sorrows alone. Scenes from the Old and New Testaments were apparently intertwined as the props suggest, probably creating typological relations. The accounts do not contradict the description by Jan van Coudenberghe.<sup>43</sup> Especially interesting, however, is Van Coudenberghe's explanation of the role of the two negative personae *Malorum Incitator* (instigator of evil things) and *Bonorum Impeditor* (obstructor of good things), who vividly express their hopes for the confraternity's demise and their fears for its success.

Remarkably, Van Coudenberghe's *Malorum Incitator* and *Bonorum Impeditor* are identical to two devilish characters in the play of the Sacrament of Niervaart, the *Spel vanden heilighen sacramente vander Nyeuwervaert*, which is preserved in a manuscript from c. 1520, belonging to the confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in the city of Breda, sixty

36 'Item van Onser Vrouwen mantel en Jhesus rocke, van makene, 12d. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 187).

37 'Item Joris Scherniere van 4 kinderen die Pharo dede verdrincken, 5s. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 187).

38 'Item 6 ellen tAnne Veyts om eenen rock voer Adam totten 5ten spele van Onser Liever Vrouwen, cost 3s. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 234; cf. Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 65, n. 87).

39 'Item een hoomakersse om de vrouwen te pallerene, 18d. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 239).

40 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 260.

41 'Item van eenen speere te makene ende binnen hol daer ons heere met ghesteken was aent cruce hangende, betaelt 18d. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 262).

42 'Item van eenen slangen met ander scilderie int spel behorende, is 18d. gr.' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 262); cf. Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 65 and Marcel van der Voort, *Dat seste boec van serpente. Een onderzoek naar en een uitgave van boek VI van Jacob van Maerlants Der naturen bloeme* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), pp. 246-48.

43 Van Eeghem, 'Rhetores bruxellenses', p. 434.

miles north of Brussels.<sup>44</sup> Here these characters are called *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden*, which indeed could be translated in Latin as *Malorum Incitator* and *Bonorum Impeditor*. Although the subject of the play is specific to Breda and the former village of Niervaart, where the Blessed Sacrament was found, there is a direct link to Brussels because the manuscript explicitly mentions Smeken as the author of the play ('Smeken fecit', fol. 66<sup>r</sup>) and the prologue ('Smeken fecit', fol. 69<sup>v</sup>).<sup>45</sup> There has been a long discussion among scholars about the attribution of the Breda play to Jan Smeken, but from the striking combination of elements, it is clear without doubt that the Brussels rhetorician must have been the author of the play of the Sacrament of Niervaart.<sup>46</sup> He could have composed this play on the basis of a book chronicling the history and miracles of the Sacrament of Niervaart. This prose text is also preserved in the manuscript from Breda.<sup>47</sup>

On the basis of the *Spel vanden heilighen sacramento vander Nyeuwervaert*, Susie Speakman Sutch analysed the role that *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden* may have had in the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows. Although she was wrong in assuming that there was just one Brussels play, representing all Seven Sorrows in one play, most of her analysis still holds ground.<sup>48</sup> In the play from Breda, the historical scenes, which are based on the aforementioned chronicle and miracle book, are intertwined with lively and comic dialogues between the little devils *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden*, who are Lucifer's servants. In his prologue, Jan Smeken explicitly mentions that he added the scenes with these devils to the basic story:

Duvelrije sal comen in ons spel  
Hoe dat inden boec soe niet en staet  
Maer ghij mueght beuroeden wel  
Dat de duuvels mesten in alle quaet  
Om dueght te beletten es al haer daet  
In smenschen qualijcvaert zij oit verbliden  
Des zij dit sacrament benijden

Scenes with devils will come into our play,  
although they do not occur in the book in this manner.  
But you may imagine  
that devils grow in all evil.  
They do everything to prevent good things from happening.  
They are always rejoicing over the misfortune of men  
and that is why they are angry about this sacrament.

<sup>44</sup> For an edition of the whole manuscript, see *Het spel vanden heilighen sacramento vander Nyeuwervaert*, ed. by W. J. M. A. Asselbergs and A. P. Huysmans (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1955); the play text is edited on pp. 112-208. See pp. 23-24 on the identification of the devilish characters.

<sup>45</sup> *Het spel vanden heilighen sacramento*, pp. 205 and 116.

<sup>46</sup> Herman Pleij, '24 juni 1500. Spectaculaire duivelscènes domineren de opvoering van het mirakelspel Vanden heilighen sacramento vander Nyeuwervaert in Breda', in *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden. Tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, ed. by R.L. Erenstein (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), pp. 64-69 (p. 66); Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*, pp. 413-14; Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', p. 99. For the former discussion on the attribution, cf. *Het spel vanden heilighen sacramento*, pp. 22-28.

<sup>47</sup> Edited in *Het spel vanden heilighen sacramento*, pp. 63-95 (analysis of Smeken's adaptation process is on pp. 32-35).

<sup>48</sup> Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', pp. 99-100; see also Pleij, '24 juni 1500'.

It is very likely that a similar justification was used in the prologues of the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows.

With the inclusion in his Breda play of these two characters who ‘delight in hatching devilish plots for carrying out Lucifer’s orders and tremble in fear of Lucifer’s punishments, because of course each of their schemes backfires’, Smeken succeeded in creating a lot of dramatic tension.<sup>49</sup> The effect would have been the same in the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows. Moreover, Van Coudenberghe clearly indicates in his story that the polemic function in the Brussels plays was realised most fully in the devilish scenes that were juxtaposed to the scenes on the Seven Sorrows. Speakman Sutch formulates it as follows, and she also explains why Smeken’s dramatic composition must have had an inescapable impact on the audience:

The juxtaposition of the seven holy scenes with scenes presenting the exchanges and pranks of the devil characters must also have embodied a strategy of argumentation that functioned both scenically and verbally. On the one hand the sacred scenes would have represented the Truth incarnate; on the other hand, the devil scenes would have represented the manifest falsity of the action and words of Satan and his accomplices. The effect of this kind of scenic juxtaposition on the audience would have been dramatically compelling and would have served to certify visually the verity and sacredness of the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin and the deceit inherent in any opposing argument.<sup>50</sup>

The ongoing discussions between *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden* must have also exposed – with the same rhetorical irony – the qualities of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows. Speakman Sutch convincingly suggests that in order to justify their intrigues, the two little devils echoed all kinds of criticism, as voiced by the opponents of the devotion.<sup>51</sup> From the very beginning of the devotion, some of its rivals had argued, according to Van Coudenberghe, that there were more than Seven Sorrows – fifteen or even more than one hundred – and that the seven venerated were not very well chosen, while others advocated that there was only one ongoing sorrow in Mary’s life. All of these opponents claimed to have built their arguments on a theological basis.<sup>52</sup> Van Coudenberghe says that the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows were filled with authoritative statements by the Holy Fathers.<sup>53</sup> Apparently this was especially the case in the dialogues between the two devils.

Whatever *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden* discussed, they never reached a conclusion, and at the end of each sorrow they withdrew, Van Coudenberghe asserts.<sup>54</sup> So, the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows must have ended like the play in Breda, with the devils leaving the stage quarrelling, using strong language, and expressing the hope that next time they will have more success in their efforts to deceive the righteous people:

<sup>49</sup> Speakman Sutch, ‘Jan Pertcheval’, p. 99; see also Pleij, ‘24 juni 1500’, p. 67 (‘In theatraal opzicht zijn de duiveltjes met hun gekift en gezanik een gelukkige vondst, omdat ze Smeken in staat stelden dramatische spanning te kweken in wat anders weinig meer dan een verbeeld feitenrelas zou zijn’).

<sup>50</sup> Speakman Sutch, ‘Jan Pertcheval’, pp. 99–100.

<sup>51</sup> Speakman Sutch, ‘Jan Pertcheval’, p. 100.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Stratijs, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen*, pp. 199–200; Soulier, *La confrérie*, p. 17; Speakman Sutch, ‘Jan Pertcheval’, p. 100.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Rationibus tamen et autoritatibus sanctorum Patrum refertis’ (Van Eeghem, ‘Rhetores bruxellenses’, p. 434).

<sup>54</sup> ‘Et quicquid disputarunt, sine conclusione, ad quemlibet dolorem recedebant’ (Van Eeghem, ‘Rhetores bruxellenses’, p. 434).

SONDICH BECOREN:

Nv vervliegen wij ghij bottecroes  
Laedt ons tvolc tempteren met sonden

BELET VAN DUECHDEN:

Wij hebben hier gedaen bijden wonden  
Borre laedt ons van hier vervliegen  
Wij sullen noch menigen mensch bedriegen

INSTIGATOR OF EVIL THINGS:

Now, we will fly away, you fool!  
Let's seduce the people with sins.

OBSTRUCTER OF GOOD THINGS:

Our role is played out here. Jesus!  
Brrr, let's fly away from here.  
Later, we will entrap many people.'

The audience must have been thrilled and excited by these opposing characters and the prospect of hearing and seeing them again the following year, when another sorrow was represented on stage.

The close relationship between the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows and the play from Breda also invokes questions about the chronology of the composition of both plays. Until now with an assumed date of 1497 for the play(s) of the Seven Sorrows, most scholars presumed that the characters *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden* were first introduced in Brussels and recycled by Smeken in the play he wrote on commission by the confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament of Niervaart.<sup>55</sup> With the new dating of the Brussels plays in the period 1508-14, this borrowing seems less secure, as there already was a performance of a play in Breda on the Blessed Sacrament in 1500.<sup>56</sup>

Another possibility, however, is that the reference to the performance in 1500 of the Breda play is related to an older play that was not necessarily written by Jan Smeken. There is evidence that plays that were meant for yearly performances were often replaced by newer ones. The accounts of the parish church of St John the Baptist in Molenbeek, in the near vicinity of Brussels, which are preserved from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, provide such an example of plays replaced frequently. The accounts contain numerous references to performances of a play on St John, being mentioned, for example, three times in a row in 1455. Expenses for a *new* play on this subject are recorded in 1487 (written by 'the clerics of Leuven') and 1505 (written by the rhetorician Janne de Smet). In 1523-24 the accounts of the parish church reveal that Jan Smeken's widow received some wine when she returned the play on St John that her deceased husband improved or adapted ('gecorrigeert hadde').<sup>57</sup> Given the evidence of Molenbeek, we cannot exclude the possibility that Jan Smeken wrote the Breda play later on in his career. The confraternity in

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Pleij, '24 juni 1500', p. 66.

<sup>56</sup> 'Item op Sint Jans dach als men tspel speelde van den Sacramente'. Entry cited in *Middelnederlandsche dramatische poëzie*, ed. by P. Leendertz (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1907), p. LXXX.

<sup>57</sup> Roobaert, 'De parochie van Sint-Jans-Molenbeek', *passim* (the entry on Jan Smeken is on p. 442).



Breda may have been inspired by the success of the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows to commission a play in the same style, with the same devilish characters.

### Other Works by Jan Smeken

The plays of the Seven Sorrows certainly had a lot in common with the play of the Blessed Sacrament of Niervaart, but it is also interesting to take the other literary works by Jan Smeken into consideration to get a clearer view on the form and content of the now-lost plays. By far the most studied work by Jan Smeken is a nonsensical strophic poem that he wrote immediately after the harsh winter of 1510-11, when numerous ice sculptures were built everywhere in Brussels. Although Smeken's description of these sculptures seems quite absurd, they reveal the cultural and literary background of Jan Smeken and his audience. This poem was published in 1511 by the Brussels printer Thomas van der Noot.<sup>58</sup> In 1516 Van der Noot also published Smeken's strophic poem on the Brussels meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece that year.<sup>59</sup> Both poems were probably written by Smeken in his capacity as city poet, and Van der Noot likely published them supposing there would be enough interested readers in the city.

The majority of the surviving works written by Jan Smeken were plays, but plays were normally not published without adaptation. In 1508 or shortly thereafter – coinciding with the period in which the plays of the Seven Sorrows were written – Van der Noot published the *Spiegel der behoudenessen* ('Mirror of Salvation'). The author's name – SMEKEN JAN – is revealed in an acrostic in the penultimate stanza. The lengthy text, 271 stanzas of ten lines each, appears to be an adaptation for readership of a didactic, allegorical play built on *tableaux vivants* (a so-called 'toogspel'). A lost man finds the way back to salvation thanks to his interaction with a whole series of allegorical characters and by meditating on the Passion of Christ. The typological character of these meditations is clearly influenced by the widely known *Speculum humanae salvationis* or its Dutch translation, *Spiegel der menschliker behoudenisse* ('Mirror of Human Salvation'). In his own *Spiegel*, Smeken underlines the importance of the Old Testament for understanding the importance of the Passion.<sup>60</sup> The same kind of typological relations must have been part of the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows, for example in the play on the flight to Egypt, which showed four children who were drowned by Pharaoh. The use of allegorical scenes and *tableaux vivants* is another commonality.

The *Spiegel der behoudenessen*, the *Spel vanden heilighen sacramente vander Nyeuwervaert*, and the revised version of the play on St John (now lost) were all devotional

58 Herman Pleij, *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511. Literatuur en stadscultuur tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd* (Amsterdam / Leuven: Meulenhoff & Kritak, 1988); modern Dutch translation by Rick de Leeuw in *Rederijkerskamer 't Mariacranske 500 jaar aan het woord*, ed. by Rick de Leeuw, Anna Luyten and Remco Sleiderink (Roeselare: Roularta, 2007), pp. 35-69. See also Remco Sleiderink, 'Op de wijze van de literatuur. De held achter de Brusselse stadsdichter Jan Smeken', *Helden bestaan! Opstellen voor Herman Pleij*, ed. by Herman Brinkman and others (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008) pp. 207-15.

59 Jan Smeken's *gedicht op de feesten ter eere van het Gulden Vlies te Brussel in 1516*, ed. by Gilbert Degroote (Antwerpen: Seven Sinjoren, 1946); Samuel Marcel, *Voor vorst en stad. Rederijkersliteratuur en vorstenfeest in Vlaanderen en Brabant (1432-1561)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 132-34.

60 Elly Cockx-Indestege, 'Jan Smeken and Thomas vander Noot. Makers van Den spiegel der behoudenessen, Brussel ca. 1508', in *Liber amicorum Herman Liebaers*, ed. by Frans Vanwijngaerden and others (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1984), pp. 213-34.

plays, as were the now-lost plays on the Seven Sorrows.<sup>61</sup> But Jan Smeken wrote secular plays too. Some of these plays no longer survive, like the short comic plays ('esbattementen') that Jan Smeken, according to the city accounts, wrote in 1507 when Jacques de Croy made his entry as bishop of Cambrai.<sup>62</sup> The secular plays that are not lost are preserved in several manuscripts. Together they shed light on the ability of the city poet to incorporate political vision into his literary works, they bear witness to his thorough acquaintance with ancient mythology, and they demonstrate his theatrical and comical talents.

The *Spel op hertoge Karle* (play on Duke Charles) is preserved in a Brussels manuscript from c. 1525.<sup>63</sup> It is a sophisticated (and quite complicated) allegorical and mythological play in 796 verses that reveals what Brussels city dwellers expected from their future ruler, that is peace and prosperity. The play may have been written in 1505, when the future Emperor Charles V was five years old. The text talks at length about allegorical gifts presented to the young prince.<sup>64</sup> It is also interesting to note that in the manuscript, the play is attributed to Jan Smeken with a simple 'Jan Smeken maectet' at the end. This resembles the 'Smeken fecit' found twice in the manuscript from Breda.<sup>65</sup>

Another secular play by Jan Smeken is *Mars en Venus*, preserved in the manuscript from a rhetorician in Amsterdam, dated 1551, and published also in print, in an adapted version, in Rotterdam in 1621.<sup>66</sup> It is a humoristic play, in 1128 verses, on the love affair of Mars and Venus, which is finally discovered by Vulcan, Venus's husband. For the elaboration of this Ovidian story, the bilingual Smeken seems to have used the printed *Bible des poètes*, an adaptation of the *Ovide moralisé*.<sup>67</sup> Particularly interesting is the role played by the 'sinnekens' *Jolijt van Ooghen* (Joy of Eyes) and *Ghepeijs van Minnen* (Amorous Thoughts), which resembles the role played by *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden* in the play from Breda (and therefore also in the Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows). They interact with the mythological characters and comment upon the erotic encounter of Mars and Venus with vivid, obscene expressions.<sup>68</sup> They are, in a certain way, devilish characters, symbolizing human vices, and they are the real instigators of the misadventures of Venus and Mars. An important difference from the devotional plays is that the 'sinnekens' succeed in their plans, where *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden* do not. Incidentally, the manuscript version of *Mars en Venus* mentions at the end 'Smeeken fecit', two words that apparently functioned as Smeken's 'signature'.<sup>69</sup>

61 Jan Smeken also wrote a short strophic prayer, preserved in the manuscript known as *Jan van Stijvoorts Refereinenbundel*. It praises the name of JHESUS, with an acrostic of the author's own name in the seventh stanza: 'Jesus Almachtichste Notabelheyte / Soet Minlic Edel Keyser Eerlic Name'. See *Jan van Stijvoorts Refereinenbundel anno 1524*, ed. by Frederik Lyna and Willem Van Eeghem (Antwerp: De Sikkell, 1928), pp. 279-80.

62 Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, p. 93.

63 Ed. by Ton Van Bruggen, 'Een spel op hertoge karle ons keyser nu es. Een allegorisch toneelspel van Jan Smeken', *Jaarboek Koninklijke Soevereine Hoofdkamer van Retorica 'De Fonteyne' te Gent*, 55 (2005), pp. 9-78.

64 Mareel, *Voor vorst en stad*, pp. 165-173.

65 Mareel, *Voor vorst en stad*, p. 100.

66 Ed. by Ingrid Van de Wijer, 'Hue Mars en Venus tsaemen bueleerden. Rederijkersspel toegeschreven aan Jan Smeeken, uitgegeven naar Ms. II 368 Kon. Bibl. Brussel', in *Uut goeder jonsten. Studies aangeboden aan prof.dr. L. Roose naar aanleiding van zijn emeritaat*, ed. by K. Porteman (Leuven / Amersfoort: Acco, 1991), pp. 33-91.

67 Anke van Herk, *Fabels van liefde. Het mythologisch-amoureuze toneel van de rederijkers (1475-1621)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), pp. 20-21, 44-45; Pleij, *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511*, pp. 102-03, 141-43.

68 Charlotte Steenbrugge, 'Jan Smeeken: "Sinnekens" and Devils', *European medieval drama*, 12 (2008), 49-66; Van Herk, *Fabels van liefde*, pp. 20-21, 44-45. Van Herk also discusses the Brussels play of *Jupiter en Yo*, which may also be attributed to Jan Smeken.

69 Cf. Van de Wijer, 'Hue Mars en Venus tsaemen bueleerden', p. 91.

## Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys

Focusing on the preserved literary works by Jan Smeken is certainly helpful to get an idea about the form and content of the now-lost cycle of plays of the Seven Sorrows. But to understand the reason as to *why* the plays were composed, and why a whole *cycle* was written, instead of just one play, we must also take a look at another cycle of seven Marian plays, the *Bliscappen* or Joys of Mary, which were also performed in the context of a Brussels procession.

The procession of Our Lady of the Sands (Onze Lieve Vrouw op de Zavel) had been organized by the Great Crossbow Archers' Guild of Brussels since the fourteenth century. This procession attracted big crowds, even from outside Brussels. In 1448 the city council decided to increase their sponsoring, but also to take more control over the procession. They declared that from then on, the crossbow archers should stage one of the seven plays on the Seven Joys of the Virgin Mary every year.<sup>70</sup> The tradition was firmly established, as is proven by the city accounts from 1485 to 1507, which contain many references to these annual performances.<sup>71</sup> In 1486, for example, the crossbow archers performed one of these plays on the *Markt*, in front of the city hall, once on the Saturday evening, and once on the Sunday on which the procession took place, that is the Sunday after Ascension Day.<sup>72</sup>

The procession of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows was, from 1505 onwards, organized on the fourth or fifth Sunday of Easter, that is only one or two weeks before the procession of Our Lady of the Sands. When the rhetoricians of The Garland of Mary started in 1508 with two performances of the first play of a cycle of seven Marian plays, the audience most certainly was prepared to make a comparison between the two cycles, one on the Seven Sorrows and one on the Seven Joys of Mary. The performances were probably organized in a competitive atmosphere. In his history of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows Jan van Coudenberghe hints at animosity between the two devotions. Just before he talks about Smeken and Pertcheval he asserts that some of the opponents argued that given the uncertainty about the Sorrows of Our Lady, one should better venerate her Joys.<sup>73</sup>

Fortunately two of the seven *Bliscappen* have been preserved, the first and the last, in manuscripts from the middle of the fifteenth century with annotations that prove that they were still performed in the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>74</sup> These two surviving texts do confirm the hypothesis that the plays on the Seven Joys and on the Seven Sorrows resembled each other. The most striking commonality is of course that the

70 Robert Stein, 'Cultuur en politiek in Brussel. Wat beoogde het Brusselse stadsbestuur bij de annexatie van de plaatselijke Ommegang?', in *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, ed. by H. Pleij and others (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1991), pp. 228-43 and Robert Stein, 'The Bliscappen van Maria and the Brussels policy of annexation', *Publications du Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes*, 31 (1991), 139-51.

71 Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, pp. 84-92.

72 Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, p. 85.

73 Van Coudenberghe's words are translated by Stratus, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen*, p. 218: 'Ende aenghesien dese sake soo twyfelachtich oft onseker was / datter beter waer de blyschappen te eeren'; see also Soulier, *La confrérie*, p. 41.

74 *Die eerste Bliscap van Maria en Die sevenste Bliscap van Onser Vrouwen*, ed. by W.H. Beuken (Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink / Noorduijn, 1978). The manuscript of the seventh *Bliscap* apparently lacks one quire (some 350 verses). A modern Dutch translation of both plays is *Maria op de Markt. Middeleeuws toneel in Brussel*, trans. by Willem Kuiper and Rob Resoort (Amsterdam: Querido, 1995). On the relation between theatre and processions, see, with a focus on the *Bliscappen*, B.A.M. Ramakers, '5 mei 1448. Begin van de traditie van de jaarlijkse opvoering van een van de zeven Bliscappen in Brussel', in *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden*, pp. 42-49 and, more generally, Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*.

plays were organized as a cycle, which was not at all common in vernacular theatre in the Dutch-speaking Low Countries.<sup>75</sup>

The use of prologues and epilogues is another commonality. In the *Bliscappen* they functioned as a way to link the different plays into a cycle. Already in the prologue to the first *Bliscap*, the following six *Bliscappen* are announced:

Ende altemet jaerlix, soet hoert,  
Sonder verlet ende sonder discoert,  
Soe meinen wier vort, ter stat beveelne,  
Verstaet mijn woert, noch .vj. te speelne.<sup>76</sup>

Mark my words: annually and consecutively,  
without delay and without discord  
as commissioned by the city  
we will play six more plays as needed.

In the epilogue of this first *Bliscap* we find another reference to the performances in the years to come (ll. 2062-71). The prologue of the seventh *Bliscap* brings back to mind the performance of the sixth *Bliscap* in the previous year (ll. 16-20), and its epilogue summarizes all seven *Bliscappen*, that is the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Finding of twelve-year-old Christ in the temple, Christ's Ascension, Pentecost, and Mary's own Assumption and Coronation (ll. 1697-1722). From the accounts of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows, we know that each play on the Seven Sorrows had its own prologue and epilogue. We may assume that they too functioned to forge the seven plays into a cycle.

From a compositional point of view, the cycles may also have resembled each other. The first *Bliscap* contains 2081 verses. If we take the preserved plays by Jan Smeken into consideration, we may assume that the plays on the Seven Sorrows had a comparable length, which means that they probably could be performed in approximately an hour and a half.<sup>77</sup> Like the plays of the Seven Sorrows, the *Bliscappen* make abundant use of the juxtaposition of scenes with positive biblical and allegorical characters and scenes with negative personae (in the *Bliscappen* devils, Jews, and villagers). The devils in the *Bliscappen* especially resemble what we know about *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden*. They are excessive in their joy and anger, and their extremely emotional behaviour is reflected by the vivid and vulgar language they use. Lucifer is their master, whom they fear, but they tremble even more before the archangel St Michael (also patron saint of Brussels) and the Virgin Mary.

Given the record of the purchase of the props described above, the plays of the Seven Sorrows incorporated scenes from the Old Testament, probably typologically linked to the Virgin's sorrows as drawn from in the New Testament. From Van Coudenberghe's remarks we know that the plays on the Seven Sorrows also contained arguments and citations from the Holy Fathers. The first *Bliscap* in particular offers comparable episodes. The story of the Annunciation, which is the main theme in the first play of the cycle of the

<sup>75</sup> Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*, p. 370.

<sup>76</sup> *Die eerste Bliscap van Maria*, ll. 41-44.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', p. 103, n. 34, where a comparison is made with the play in Breda which comprised, prologue and epilogue included, almost 1500 verses.

Seven Joys, has a long prelude with a scene that shows how Adam and Eve lost paradise, orchestrated by devils. There is also a long scene in the first *Bliscap* where allegorical personae like Justice, Truth, and Mercy explain the history of salvation.<sup>78</sup> Whether allegory was used in the plays on the Seven Sorrows as well remains uncertain, but Jan Smeken was certainly capable of doing so.

The fact that Jan Smeken, city poet of Brussels, and his fellow rhetoricians from The Garland of Mary competed in a certain way with the crossbow archers and their *Bliscappen* may have caused some tension in the city. Van Coudenberghe suggests that some of the opponents of the devotion found the Joys of Our Lady more apt for veneration than the Sorrows. Although we cannot exactly reconstruct the circumstances, it is remarkable that from c. 1530 onwards, every new city poet of Brussels, was obliged to swear that he would help stage the *Bliscappen* in the context of the annual procession, using the best actors available in the city, regardless of the chambers of rhetoric they belonged to.<sup>79</sup>

### Conclusion

The Brussels plays of the Seven Sorrows are lost, but thanks to the confraternity's account book, Jan van Coudenberghe's history, and some of the preserved plays by Jan Smeken, it is possible to get an idea of their form and content. There must have been seven plays all together, forming a cycle of which, starting in 1508, each year one was brought on stage by the rhetoricians of The Garland of Mary, in the context of the procession of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. Jan Smeken was probably the author of all seven plays. His fellow rhetorician Johannes Pertcheval was most likely involved in the organization of the performances.

Each play focused on one of the painful moments in the life of the Virgin Mary, but at least some of the plays contained other biblical scenes as well, probably connected to the Seven Sorrows in a typological manner. The seven plays were forged into a cycle by the use of prologues and epilogues and also by two devilish characters that made their appearance in each of the seven plays. They were called *Sondich Becoren* and *Belet van Duechden* and were also used by Jan Smeken in a play that he wrote on commission by a confraternity in Breda. In a very vivid and emotional way, they commented on the action in the scenes and expressed all the arguments one could have against the devotion of the Seven Sorrows. But at the end of each play, their objections proved to be wrong from a theological point of view, and so they had to leave the stage ashamed and disgraced.

It is obvious that the plays were written and staged to propagate the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary among the Brussels city dwellers. Since 1499 the rhetoricians had tried to communicate the content and emotional importance of the Seven Sorrows. They embellished their chapel in St Gorik with paintings and sculptures, they distributed cheap printed booklets and images, and they organized a popular procession

78 John Cartwright, 'From the Old Law to the New. The Brussels Eerste Bliscap van Maria', *Medieval English Theatre*, 20 (1998), 118-26.

79 The oath of the city poet of Brussels (c. 1529-33) can be found in Edmond Roobaert, 'De Brusselse rederijders in de 16de eeuw, hun plaats in het stadsgebeuren en hun beroepsactiviteiten', *Eigen Schoon en De Brabander*, 95 (2012), 542-94 (p. 590). Until now, scholars assumed that Frans Van Ballaer in 1559 was the first city poet to organize the staging of the *Bliscappen* (cf. e.g. Ramakers, '5 mei 1448', p. 46). The oath proves that this development came decades earlier.

that showed the Seven Sorrows in words, images, and *tableaux vivants*. By using vernacular theatre too, they found a way to attract an even larger audience and to communicate the importance of the devotion more effectively. With humour and other rhetorical techniques, all possible arguments against the devotion could be refuted.

Forming a seven-year cycle of Marian plays was not common in the Low Countries, but in Brussels it was a tested recipe. The rhetoricians of The Garland of Mary copied the idea from the Great Crossbow Archers' Guild that staged one of the seven *Bliscappen* every year at the procession of Our Lady of the Sands, apparently attracting big crowds. By associating their own initiative with this successful example, Jan Smeken *cum suis* showed how ambitious they were. They wanted to further the devotion of the Seven Sorrows to a level that could compete with the religious fervour that surrounded the Church of Our Lady of the Sands. Whether they fully succeeded in this aim is difficult to affirm. From 1511 onwards, the city sponsored the plays of the Seven Sorrows, and from then on, they were performed on the prestigious central market place. But sources are lacking to assert whether the plays continued to be successful after Jan Smeken's death on 15 April 1517.

# MUSIC AND LITURGY OF THE SEVEN SORROWS CONFRATERNITY OF BRUSSELS

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The devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin in the early sixteenth century has produced a treasury of music that has long interested musicologists. An illuminated choirbook, Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 215-16 (hereafter B-Br 215-16), contains plainchant, motets, and polyphonic masses, all of which celebrate the Feast of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>1</sup> B-Br 215-16 was copied in the workshop of Petrus Alamire, a scriptorium that produced numerous illuminated music manuscripts, many of them for the Burgundian-Habsburg court.<sup>2</sup> The plainchant of B-Br 215-16 is in fact tied to a competition organized by the court under the direction of Philip the Fair.<sup>3</sup> Philip's plainchant competition is significant not only for the music that it produced but also as an example of the Burgundian-Habsburg court's propagation of the Seven Sorrows devotion and its liturgy. Despite the preservation of B-Br 215-16 and the unique competition that helped create some of its contents, little has been known about the use of this surviving music in the context of the devotion itself. The musical and liturgical practices of the devotees of the Seven Sorrows have until recently remained obscure.

The newly discovered account book of the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Brussels provides the first opportunity to explore this music within the context of a confraternity's liturgical practices.<sup>4</sup> The accounts offer a bridge between the surviving sources for the music and liturgy of the devotion and the actual practices of the devotees of a Seven

<sup>1</sup> For previous studies of this manuscript, see Emily C. Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows: Music, Devotion, and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2010); Barbara Haggh, 'Charles de Clerc, Seigneur de Bouvekercke, and Two Manuscripts: Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 215-16, and Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VI E 40', in *The Burgundian-Habsburg Court Complex of Music Manuscripts (1500-35) and the Workshop of Petrus Alamire*, ed. by Bruno Bouckaert and Eugene Schreurs (Leuven: Alamire, 2003), pp. 185-202; Herbert Kellman, 'Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, 215-16', in *The Treasury of Petrus Alamire: Music and Art in Flemish Court Manuscripts 1500-1535*, ed. by Herbert Kellman (Ghent: Ludion, 1999), pp. 66-67; and Jozef Robijns, 'Eine Musikhandschrift des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts im Zeichen der Verehrung Unserer Lieben Frau der Sieben Schmerzen (Brüssel, Kgl. Bibliothek, Hs. 215-216)', trans. by W. Thoené, *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, 44 (1960), 28-43. I would like to thank Susie Speakman Sutch and Barbara Haggh-Huglo for their comments on this essay.

<sup>2</sup> On this corpus, see *The Treasury of Petrus Alamire: Music and Art in Flemish Court Manuscripts 1500-1535*, ed. by Herbert Kellman (Ghent: Ludion, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Emily C. Snow, 'Music, Competition, and Propaganda in the Court of Philip the Fair', in *Staging the Court of Burgundy*, ed. by Wim Blockmans *et al.* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 147-51.

<sup>4</sup> Archives of the City of Brussels/Archief van de Stad Brussel, Historical Archives/Historisch Archief (hereafter ASB, HA), Register 3837. See Remco Sleiderink, 'De dichters Jan Smeken en Johannes Pertcheval en de devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zeven Weeën', *Queeste, Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden*, 19 (2012), 42-69.

Sorrows confraternity. In addition to the information that the accounts provide about the Seven Sorrows plays and the other artistic works produced for the confraternity as discussed in other chapters of this volume, the accounts also record information about the liturgical services sponsored by the confraternity of Brussels. Each year provides a section on expenses incurred for the various liturgical services held by the confraternity. The accounts specify not only the feasts celebrated but also list payments to the priests, singers, organist, bell ringer, town crier, and those hired to help decorate the chapel, in other words all of the personnel that was needed to celebrate a Mass. Beginning in 1505, the accounts also list the expenses for their annual procession, which include payments for its accompanying Mass and payments to musicians.

With the information that the accounts provide on the specific liturgical celebrations of the confraternity, I will establish the relationship between the confraternity and the surviving music for the devotion and more importantly demonstrate how the confraternity itself functioned from a musical and liturgical perspective. I will first identify the specific liturgical celebrations of the Brussels confraternity and put them in the context of the liturgical celebrations of the Seven Sorrows devotion as a whole. The confraternity's practices can then be situated within the larger musical network of the city of Brussels and within the Burgundian-Habsburg court's interest in the devotion. The analysis of the accounts will show that despite the court's interest in establishing a liturgy for the devotion, the confraternity operated independently of these attempts to influence it. Finally, the practices of the confraternity of the early sixteenth century will be compared to the information that survives in the confraternity's seventeenth-century inventory to demonstrate the later changes in the confraternity's liturgical practices.

### Establishment of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Seven Sorrows Devotion

Before considering the specific case of the Brussels confraternity, I will first establish the practices of the Seven Sorrows confraternity as it functioned as a whole in the Low Countries in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Though the Seven Sorrows confraternity had a set of statutes that applied to all of its chapters, the individual liturgical services of the chapters of the confraternity differed. The first chapters of the confraternities were formed around 1492 in the churches of Sts Peter and Paul in Reimerswaal, St Saviour in Bruges, and St Giles in Abbenbroek, and the confraternity's statutes were first printed shortly thereafter.<sup>5</sup> The earliest preserved source to record the statutes is a devotional handbook used by members of the confraternity that contains meditations for each of the sorrows.<sup>6</sup> Confraternity members were instructed to meditate each week on the Virgin's Seven Sorrows, for which they could use this devotional handbook, and pray a *Pater noster* and *Ave Maria* for each one.<sup>7</sup> In addition to specifying the requirements of the individual

5 Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, c. 1490-1520', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 252-78 (p. 259 n. 21).

6 *Hier beghint een goede oefeninghe ende een seer deuote meditacye van sonderlinghen vij. ween onser sueter vrouwen ende moeder gods marien* (hereafter *Goede oefeninghe*) (Antwerp: [Gheraert Leeu, c. 1492]), fols 2<sup>r</sup>-4<sup>r</sup>.

7 *Goede oefeninghe*, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>.



members and regulations on the membership, the statutes also provide guidelines for the liturgical celebrations of the confraternity as a whole. The final two statutes call for two annual celebrations for the deceased confraternity members, one following Purification and one following Assumption, and an annual celebration honouring Our Lady of Sorrows to be celebrated around Annunciation.<sup>8</sup>

These statutes were revised in the process of an investigation of the confraternity in the 1490s. As part of the court's larger efforts to promote this new devotion, Philip the Fair and his advisors applied for papal approval of the confraternity and its statutes.<sup>9</sup> After supplication by Philip's court, Pope Alexander VI issued a bull in 1494 requesting the investigation of the confraternity by the deans of Soignies, Zandenburg, and Valenciennes. The task was eventually carried out by Paulus de Porta, Dean of St Hermès of Renaix, who issued a letter of apostolic approval for the confraternity and its revised statutes in 1497. The revised statutes appear in a copy of De Porta's letter in the Brussels confraternity membership register, known as the *Liber authenticus*, and are also placed prominently at the beginning of this book.<sup>10</sup> The sixth statute of the revised regulations follows the first version of the statutes specifying two Masses, one each following Purification and Assumption, to be celebrated for the deceased members.<sup>11</sup> This new sixth statute, however, also gives more specific rubrics for the annual celebration of Our Lady of Sorrows: the feast should be celebrated on the Saturday before Palm Sunday unless this is not possible, in which case the feast can be moved to after Easter. Though no money could be collected by the confraternity for membership or enrolment, this statute also made the donation of money possible for the endowment of Masses, the upkeep of the chapel, and items necessary for Mass.

Precisely when and why the confraternity adopted this specific date for the celebration of Our Lady of Sorrows is not known. The confraternity might have chosen to adopt the feast date of an earlier and closely related Marian feast, the Feast of the Compassion of the Virgin. Like the Seven Sorrows devotion, this devotion also

8 *Goede oefeninghe*, fols 3<sup>v</sup>-4<sup>r</sup>: 'Item die broederen ende susteren die comen sullen ten missen vanden iaer getiden die men twerf de iaers houden sal inden voirseiden kercke voir die in den broederscap gestoruen sijn selen / te wetene na onser lieuer vrouwen dach lichtmisse ende na den dach harer hemelvar'. *Goede oefeninghe*, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>: 'Item desghelycs den ghenen die comen selen ter myssen vander compassien of ween onser sueter vrouwen / diemen iaerlijcs omtrent dat hoechtijt van Annunciacie of bootschap doen sal inden voerseiden kercken'.

9 Pérégrin-Marie Soulier, *La Confrérie de Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs dans les Flandres 1491-1519* (Brussels: Pères Servites de Marie, 1912), pp. 24-26. On the dating of this bull, see Adolf J. Duclos, *De eerste eeuw van het broederschap der Zeven Weedommen van Maria in Sint-Salvators te Brugge* (Bruges: L. De Plancke, 1922), p. 25 and Soulier, *La Confrérie*, p. 26 n. 1.

10 For Paulus de Porta's letter, see *Liber authenticus sacratissimae utriusque sexus christifidelium confraternitatis septem dolorum Beatae Mariae Virginis nuncupatae* (hereafter *Liber authenticus*), ASB, HA, Register 3413, fols 15<sup>v</sup>-18<sup>r</sup>. The letter incorporates the Pope's request (fols 15<sup>v</sup>-16<sup>r</sup>) and the letters of delegation as well as the statutes (fol. 17<sup>v</sup>). The statutes are also listed on fol. [1]<sup>r</sup> of the *Liber authenticus*. The statutes as they appear in the 1497 letter can also be found in Jan van Coudenbergh, *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissimae virginis Mariae de passione quae dicitur de septem doloribus* (Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519), sig. Biiij<sup>v</sup>. On the construction of the *Liber authenticus*, see the chapter by Susie Speakman Sutch in this volume.

11 *Liber authenticus*, fols [1]<sup>r</sup> and 17<sup>r</sup> and Van Coudenbergh, *Ortus*, sig. Biiij<sup>v</sup>. See also Soulier, *La Confrérie*, pp. 39-40.

commemorated the Virgin's suffering and response to Christ's Passion.<sup>12</sup> It had already been celebrated in the early fifteenth century and was granted an indulgenced feast in 1423 in Cologne for the first Friday after Jubilate Sunday (the third Sunday after Easter).<sup>13</sup> In his history of the Seven Sorrows confraternity written for Charles V, Jan van Coudenberghe refers to the Feast of the Compassion or the Sorrows of the Virgin, and the court-sponsored liturgical texts also refer to the Compassion or Sorrows of the Virgin.<sup>14</sup> Despite the interchangeable use of these terms, the Seven Sorrows feast date is clearly distinct from that of the Compassion feast.

The confraternity's adoption of a new feast date for the Seven Sorrows devotion may have instead been a result of the efforts of the Burgundian-Habsburg court to establish a liturgy for the devotion. In the early 1490s, the court had held its plainchant competition for the selection and creation of new texts and music for the feast.<sup>15</sup> The winning texts from this competition are preserved as an appendix to a theological treatise written by Philip the Fair's confessor, Michel François de Lille (d. 1502), entitled *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christifere virginis marie ac communi et saluberrima confraternitate desuper instituta* (hereafter *Quodlibetica*). The rubric of the attached office and Mass specifies the same feast date as the 1497 confraternity's statute and additionally clarifies the secondary date of celebration: the office should be celebrated on the Saturday before Palm Sunday unless this date coincides with Annunciation, in which case the feast should be anticipated or moved to the Sunday following Easter.<sup>16</sup> The treatise was published sometime between August and December of 1494, which would indicate that the feast date was established at the latest by 1494.<sup>17</sup> François de Lille indicates that the churches in which the confraternity had first started were indeed using this date for a solemn celebration of the Sorrows of the Virgin.<sup>18</sup>

The feast date was likely chosen even earlier than 1494 because the same office and Mass texts with the same rubric that appear in the *Quodlibetica* also appear in an

12 On Compassion celebrations, see André Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin* (Études Augustiniennes: Paris, 1932, reprinted 1971), pp. 505-36 and Hermann Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung des Deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 2 vols (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1970), I, pp. 26-27. On the history of Compassion devotion, see A. Luis, 'Evolutio historica doctrinae de compassione B. Mariae Virginis', *Marianum*, 5 (1943), 268-85; Carol M. Schuler, 'The Sword of Compassion: Images of the Sorrowing Virgin in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1987), pp. 20-117 and 168-88; and Donna Spivey Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), pp. 77-100.

13 Giovanni Domenico Mansi and Philippe Labbe, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 53 vols (Graz: Akademische Druck-U, 1960), 28, section 11, cols 1057-58.

14 Van Coudenberghe, *Ortus*, sigs Aiiij<sup>o</sup> and Bii<sup>o</sup>. Michel François de Lille, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christifere virginis marie ac communi et saluberrima confraternitate desuper instituta* (hereafter *Quodlibetica*) (Antwerp: Thierry Martens, c. 1494), sig. Fi<sup>o</sup>.

15 Snow, 'Music, Competition, and Propaganda', p. 179.

16 François de Lille, *Quodlibetica*, sig. Fi<sup>o</sup>: 'Sequitur officium de doloribus seu compassione beatissime Virginis Marie cuius festum celebrabitur sabbato ante dominicam palmarum, nisi festum annuntiationis dominice illo die vel feria sexta precedente occurrerit, quia tunc anticipabitur vel post dominicam quasimodo tenebitur'.

17 The *Quodlibetica* contains a letter verifying miracles associated with the devotion, which is dated 9 August 1494, providing a *terminus post quem* for the dating of this treatise. See François de Lille, *Quodlibetica*, sigs Eiiij<sup>o</sup>-Ev<sup>o</sup>. The *terminus ante quem* for the *Quodlibetica* is given by a mention of the treatise in a letter by Joachim Turriano, Master of the Dominican Order, dated 19 December 1494. See Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 268 n. 60.

18 François de Lille, *Quodlibetica*, sig. Dviii<sup>o</sup>-<sup>o</sup>.

undated volume printed by Govaert Bac.<sup>19</sup> Bac's volume contains information on the foundation of the Seven Sorrows confraternity as well as a letter by the printer Gheraert Leeu, introducing the liturgical texts.<sup>20</sup> Because Leeu died in December of 1492, the office and Mass, though printed at an unknown time after his death, must have existed before 1494 in order for Leeu to have written the letter in which he refers to the texts.<sup>21</sup> The more specific feast date of the Saturday before Palm Sunday could have been established soon after the foundation of the confraternity or at least with the publication of the first liturgical texts for the feast.

Whether the confraternity widely celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on this date as François de Lille claimed is unclear. In his history of the Seven Sorrows devotion, Van Coudenberghe mentions that many collegiate churches dedicated days to celebrate the new court-sponsored liturgy but does not say whether the confraternities also used the new texts and music in their celebrations.<sup>22</sup> Of the first three churches in which the confraternity was founded, St Saviour in Bruges provides some insight into the liturgical celebrations for the Seven Sorrows devotion, though the extant records are from St Saviour's church rather than the confraternity specifically. The first account of a celebration for the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin in Bruges was recorded on 23 April 1493.<sup>23</sup> The celebration included a solemn meal with prayers and was attended by a bishop and several other ecclesiastical dignitaries and theologians. The cause of this celebration may have been the establishment of the confraternity, but there is no record of a Mass being celebrated. In his history of the Seven Sorrows confraternity of Bruges, Adolf Duclos claims that the first time a Mass for Our Lady of Sorrows was celebrated in St Saviour was on 22 March 1494, which was the Saturday before Palm Sunday.<sup>24</sup> He chose this date, however, based on the fact that it was the prescribed feast date in the *Quodlibetica* rather than basing it on evidence in the church fabric accounts. Though the date is unspecified, there are payments for a feast for Our Lady of Sorrows each year from 1494 to 1497.<sup>25</sup> According to Duclos, the feast is described not specifically as the Feast of the Seven Sorrows but as a feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of the specific title, the fabric accounts of St Saviours in Bruges do demonstrate that already in the 1490s, the confraternity had established an annual communal celebration and that this must have happened at the same time or soon after the confraternity members started meditating on the Seven Sorrows at home.

19 *Confraternitas dolorum beatissime virginis marie Autore domino Philippo archiduce austrie duce burgondie brabantie etc. novissime erecta* (hereafter *Confraternitas*) [Antwerp, Govaert Bac], fols 11<sup>v</sup>-18<sup>r</sup>. On Bac, see Elly Cockx-Indestege, 'Govaert Bac', in *De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden*, Exhibition catalogue (Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert I, 1973), pp. 466-78.

20 *Confraternitas*, fols 7<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>r</sup>.

21 On Leeu, see Lotte Hellinga-Querido, 'Gérard Leeu à Gouda', in *Cinquième Centenaire de L'imprimerie dans les Anciens Pays-Bas* (Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert I, 1973), pp. 280-306.

22 Van Coudenberghe, *Ortus*, sig. Biii<sup>r</sup>.

23 Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 34-38. Duclos takes this date from a description of a Seven Sorrows celebration mentioned in the chronicle of Rombout de Doppere and correlates it with payments in the accounts.

24 Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 39-41.

25 Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 6 n. 4 and 119-20. For later sixteenth-century celebrations of the Seven Sorrows, including a daily Mass and a feast for the miracles attributed to the Virgin of Seven Sorrows, see Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 121-44.

26 Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 119 n. 5 and 120. n. 1 and n. 2: 'feeste van onser vrouwen vande(r) wee(n)'. According to Duclos, the feast is first referred to as the Feast of the Seven Sorrows in the chapter acts of St Saviour in 1504 and in the church fabric accounts in 1510 (the accounts are missing from 1503-09, o.s.). See Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 5-6.

## Masses Celebrated by the Brussels Seven Sorrows Confraternity

The accounts of the Brussels chapter of the Seven Sorrows confraternity actually provide the clearest picture of a confraternity chapter's liturgical practices. The accounts begin in 1499 with the foundation of the confraternity, approximately six years after the first appearance of Seven Sorrows activity in the Bruges accounts, and provide information on what feasts the confraternity commemorated and how they were celebrated. Table 1 lists all of the feasts celebrated by the confraternity from 1499 to 1516 in two separate categories: those that were particular to the Seven Sorrows confraternity and celebrated solemnly and those that were standard Marian feasts celebrated on a smaller scale.

The accounts indicate that the Brussels confraternity followed the confraternity statutes as approved by Pope Alexander VI only in part. Following the statutes' prescription for Masses after Assumption and Purification, the confraternity did celebrate a feast every year in both August and February as seen in Table 1.<sup>27</sup> These celebrations are recorded with specific dates for the first four years of the accounts and thereafter are listed as the feasts following Assumption and Candlemas (or Purification).<sup>28</sup> In addition to the chaplain, the confraternity typically paid for an organist,<sup>29</sup> bell ringing<sup>30</sup> and tolling,<sup>31</sup> and chapel decorations, as well as singers to celebrate the Masses. If the confraternity followed the prescribed statutes, these Masses were offered for the deceased confraternity members. The confraternity regulations allowed enrolment of the deceased, and the membership registry indicates many deceased members (either at the time of enrolment or later on) by a cross next to the name. Only in the first and third years are specific Requiem Masses recorded in conjunction with these feast dates, and these Masses are actually listed separately from the Mass for the feast.<sup>32</sup> The confraternity also celebrated Requiem Masses with commendation prayers for the deceased members in conjunction with their annual procession, but

27 One exception to this practice occurred in the first year of the accounts. The feast that would normally have been celebrated after Purification was celebrated before it on January 25, the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul: 'Item op sinte pauwelsdach was ons iije feest, xxv Januarij'. ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 4. Three feast dates are also mentioned in the *Liber authenticus* for the first year of the accounts, the first two of which correspond to the dates mentioned in the accounts: the Saturday before Palm Sunday (*Liber authenticus*, fol. 188<sup>r</sup>), the Feast of St Bartholomew (*Liber authenticus*, fol. 216<sup>v</sup>), and Candlemas (*Liber authenticus*, fol. 221<sup>r</sup>). The accounts, however, record a payment for singers for four feasts: 'item den sangers die ons dit iaer gedient hebben tot iij feesten' (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 13). Therefore the fourth feast not listed in the accounts may have been the Candlemas celebration mentioned in the member register.

28 The feast after Purification in the second year of the accounts is the one exception in which no specific date is given. ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 24: 'Na lichtmesse was de derde feest gehouden.'

29 Payments for bellows blowing (*blasen*) are frequently listed in conjunction with the organist. See for example, ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 23, 50, 62, and 150.

30 The accounts differentiate between payments for ringing bells (*beyaerdere(n)*) and tolling bells (*luyden*). The former likely refers to smaller bells of different pitches being rung or played during the Mass, while the latter may refer to the tolling of the church bells. The church sexton was often the person responsible for ringing and tolling the bells. See Barbara Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony in Brussels, 1350-1500' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1988), pp. 177-82. On the function of the *beierman* in the early sixteenth century, see Véronique Roelvink, *Gegeven den sangeren: Meerstemmige muziek bij de Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch in de zestiende eeuw* ('s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands: Adr. Heinen, 2002), pp. 77-80.

31 Payments for *luyden* are not recorded until the sixth year of the accounts (1504-05) and are in conjunction with the annual procession and Requiem. (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 82). Subsequent payments for *luyden* are made in conjunction with the Masses until the tenth year of the accounts (1508-09), at which point one payment is recorded for both bell ringing and tolling (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 179).

32 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 9 and 37.

TABLE 1: Feasts Celebrated by the Brussels Seven Sorrows Confraternity (1499-1516)

	1499–1500	1500–01	1501–02	1502–03	1503–04	1504–05	1505–06	1506–07	1507–08	1508–09	1509–10	1510–11	1511–12	1512–13	1513–14	1514–15	1515–16
<i>Confraternity Feasts</i>																	
Post Annunciation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Post Assumption	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Post Purification	x <sup>1</sup>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Chapel Dedication	x <sup>2</sup>	x	x <sup>4</sup>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Procession						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Marian Feasts</i>																	
Annunciation				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Visitation				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Assumption				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nativity			x	x	x	x	x							x	x	x	x
Conception				x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Purification	x <sup>3</sup>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

<sup>1</sup> The post Purification feast was celebrated in January instead of February this year. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The record of the celebration of the chapel dedication for this year is only found in the *Liber authenticus*, fol. 214<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The Purification is not mentioned in this year of the accounts but is recorded in the *Liber authenticus* as being celebrated by the Bishop. See *Liber authenticus*, fol. 221<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The accounts do not include payments for the celebration of a Mass for the chapel dedication as in other years, but a payment for the decoration of the chapel on the anniversary of the chapel's dedication is recorded in this year. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 37.

these Requiem Masses do not preclude the possibility that the other feasts were offered for the deceased members.<sup>33</sup>

For the annual feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, the confraternity appears to have followed the instruction from the earlier statutes.<sup>34</sup> The feast that was prescribed by the 1497 statutes for the Saturday before Palm Sunday was more loosely interpreted to be sometime after Annunciation, as it was recorded in the accounts from the fifth year on.<sup>35</sup> Only in the first year of the confraternity's activities was this feast held on the Saturday before Palm Sunday.<sup>36</sup> This date is also confirmed by the confraternity's member registry,

<sup>33</sup> See for example, ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 85 and 102.

<sup>34</sup> See n. 8.

<sup>35</sup> The accounts usually record the feast as the feast of half March. For an explanation of this style of dating, see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 45 n. 7.

<sup>36</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 9.

which records the first feast of their founding year as the evening before Palm Sunday.<sup>37</sup> This first year was particularly important for the confraternity's membership: there were over five hundred inscriptions in the confraternity on this feast day, and 6085 members registered by the end of the first year.<sup>38</sup> The following year, however, records the feast simply as celebrated during Lent, and in the third year, the feast was celebrated on the Sunday before Palm Sunday, rather than the Saturday before.<sup>39</sup> The fourth year again accords with the prescribed rubric, though this may have been coincidental. In 1502, the feast was celebrated on the Sunday after Easter, the alternate date prescribed for the feast, because the Annunciation fell on Good Friday.<sup>40</sup> Because there are only two celebrations that correspond to the rubrics, it is also impossible to determine whether the confraternity was using the Mass texts associated with the specific feast date. The confraternity did have in its possession 'a book of various Masses of Our Lady of Sorrows' ('een boeckxken daer diversche messen van Onser Vrouwen ween inne staen'), but it cannot be certain that these are the same newly appointed texts by the Burgundian-Habsburg court.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the Masses prescribed by the statutes, the confraternity also celebrated the anniversary of the dedication of their chapel. The confraternity held its liturgical services in the church of St Gorik, a church dependent on the collegiate church of St Gudula until 1520, when it became its own parish church.<sup>42</sup> By the time of Charles the Bold, St Gorik had seventeen altars and over five thousand annual Masses.<sup>43</sup> The altar used by the Seven Sorrows confraternity was the altar on the north side of the church and had already been in use as an altar dedicated to Our Lady since the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>44</sup> The *Liber authenticus* records the chapel dedication as 9 June 1499, which would appear to be the date when the chapel was first dedicated to the Virgin of Seven Sorrows.<sup>45</sup> In subsequent years, the confraternity celebrated the anniversary of this date, probably sometime in June. In the second year of the accounts, for example, the date is listed as the octave of Corpus Christi, which would have been 13 June, and in later years, it appears chronologically before the feast of the Visitation, celebrated on July 2, in the accounts.<sup>46</sup>

From 1502 onward, the confraternity also celebrated five or six Marian feasts, the total number depending on whether they celebrated the Nativity of the Virgin, as seen in Table 1. These Masses were celebrated on a smaller scale, with the chaplain, organist, and bell ringer only, and sometimes the chapel was decorated with additional

37 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 188<sup>v</sup>.

38 For inscriptions listed on these feast dates, see *Liber authenticus*, fols 188<sup>v</sup>-193<sup>v</sup> and for the total number, see fol. 223<sup>v</sup>.

39 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 23: 'Op onser iersten feestdach betaelt in den vasten'. ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 33: 'Tsondaeghs voer palmsondach was onse ierste feeste gehouden'.

40 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 46: 'Ons ierste feeste was gehouden op den belokenen paesdach'.

41 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 80.

42 Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', p. 51 and René Laurent, 'Les Limites des paroisses à Bruxelles aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Cahiers bruxellois*, 8 (1963), 161-234 (p. 209).

43 For a description of some of these altars and their chaplaincies, see Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', pp. 739-41.

44 Alexandre Henne and Alphonse Wauters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles*, 3 vols (Brussels: Librairie encyclopédique de Perichon, 1845), III, p. 175. ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 3-5. See a copy of the letter of permission dated 25 February 1498 (o.s.) from the Bishop of Cambrai for the confraternity to use this altar in the *Liber authenticus*, fols 21<sup>v</sup>-22<sup>r</sup>.

45 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 214<sup>v</sup>: 'Dedicatio capelle ix Junij'.

46 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 23: 'Item op den cappelle wydinghe tsondaegs na de octave sacramenten'.

tapestries or greenery.<sup>47</sup> Except in some payment records for the confraternity's annual processions, the chaplain for these Masses and the special feasts is not given by name. Until it became its own parish, the portionaries, curate, chaplains, and sexton for St Gorik were appointed by the collegiate chapter of St Gudula.<sup>48</sup> The priests of St Gudula and other Brussels churches, however, were commonly involved in chambers of rhetoric either as chaplains or as members themselves.<sup>49</sup> Three of the earliest members of the Seven Sorrows confraternity in Brussels were in fact priests from The Lily, the chamber of rhetoric that had formed this confraternity: Willem Bouwens (d. 1504), Anthonis de Vos (d. 1508), and Aert Volkaert (Aerd Wolkaert) (d. 1518).<sup>50</sup> Jan Beeckman (d. 1515), another priest who was the prince of a chamber of rhetoric, The Violet, also became a member of the Seven Sorrows confraternity in 1507, when The Violet joined with The Lily.<sup>51</sup> With the exception of De Vos, who was a chaplain at St Gudula and St Nicholas in Brussels, these priests held positions at St Gorik, which would have enabled them to celebrate or sing the Masses for the confraternity.<sup>52</sup> Beeckman was a chaplain of St Gorik and St Gudula, Bouwens was a portionary at St Gorik, and Volkaert was a mercenary, a substitute chaplain who sang services at several different churches.<sup>53</sup> One can also search the confraternity membership lists for others who might have contributed to the services. The *Liber authenticus* does include two organists who were members of The Lily: Gielis Brugman and Claes Brugman.<sup>54</sup> However, the accounts of St Gorik indicate that the organist for this church at the time of the accounts was Peter Stroote,<sup>55</sup> and indeed in the third year of the accounts, payments for the organist were made to a 'Heer Peeter'.<sup>56</sup>

### Hiring of Singers: Brussels Secular Churches

The feasts that the confraternity celebrated solemnly provide more insight into the confraternity's interactions with city and church musicians of Brussels. The accounts show that the confraternity regularly paid singers to add polyphony to their Masses. The Marian confraternities that flourished in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Antwerp,

47 See n. 30 and n. 31.

48 Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', p. 51.

49 Edmond Roobaert, 'Priesters en rederijckers te Brussel in de eerste helft van de zestiende eeuw', *Spiegel der Letteren*, 45 (2003), 267-293 (pp. 267-71).

50 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 161r.

51 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 161r. Roobaert, 'Priesters en rederijckers', p. 269.

52 On De Vos, see Roobaert, 'Priesters en rederijckers', pp. 276-78 and Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', p. 685. Interestingly he also copied books of music for the liturgy at St Nicholas. See Roobaert, 'Priesters en rederijckers', p. 277.

53 On Beeckman, Bouwens, and Vockaert, see Roobaert, 'Priesters en rederijckers', pp. 272-75 and 278-79.

54 M. Gielis Brugman is inscribed on fol. 161r of the *Liber authenticus* and Claes Brugman on fol. 162r. A Gilles Brugeman was also organist for the chapels of Philip the Fair and later his widow. See Mary Tiffany Ferer, *Music and Ceremony at the Court of Charles V: The Capilla Flamenca and the Art of Political Promotion* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2012), pp. 30 and 35.

55 Jean-Pierre Felix, *Orgues, organistes et maîtres de chant de l'ancienne église St-Géry à Bruxelles* (Brussels, 2000), pp. 8 and 36 and Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', p. 671. The organ was probably a portable organ that was played by blowing. See Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony in Brussels', p. 200. On the organ in St Gorik, see Felix, *Orgues, organistes*, p. 8.

56 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 37-38. A Claes Brugman can be found as the organist of St Gorik in 1526-27. See Felix, *Orgues, organistes*, p. 36.

Bergen op Zoom, and 's-Hertogenbosch offer a point of comparison for the use of polyphonic music within a confraternity setting. These confraternities had larger budgets, through their own income but also through the support of the churches in which they were located. Kristine Forney has shown that since the beginning of the fifteenth century, for example, Our Lady's church in Antwerp had a strong musical foundation that included twelve chaplains specifically appointed for singing polyphony.<sup>57</sup> The confraternities within the church used these musicians for their daily and weekly services. The confraternity of Our Lady led in elaborate musical practices, celebrating nightly *Salve* or *lof* services, all of the Marian feasts, and several major feasts of the church year with polyphony.<sup>58</sup> The guild of Our Lady in the church of St Gertrude in Bergen op Zoom enjoyed the patronage of John II of Glymes and his son John III through the establishment and extensive growth of a choir that sang a daily polyphonic *lof* service starting in 1470 and over fifty Masses with polyphony a year.<sup>59</sup> The wealthier confraternities with regular services could afford to hire their own singers, and those of Bergen op Zoom were some of the highest paid by the early sixteenth century.<sup>60</sup> Since the fourteenth century, the wealthy confraternity of Our Lady in St John's church in 's-Hertogenbosch had also paid their own prestigious choir capable of singing polyphony.<sup>61</sup>

The Brussels confraternity functioned differently than these well-known confraternities because it did not have a large budget, and the church of St Gorik itself did not yet have its own musical institution. Because the confraternity did not have a sung weekly service, it could not keep regularly paid singers on hand or use the same singers for their services. Unlike many confraternities in the Low Countries at the time, membership in this confraternity was open to all and was free. Without dues or death payments, the confraternity had to rely solely on monetary offerings and donation of goods for income.<sup>62</sup> Even though the revised statutes allowed for the donation of money for the Masses and the upkeep of the chapel, the income received from donations in the offering box and members' testaments was relatively small, and no specific endowments were made for Masses with polyphony during the time of the surviving accounts.<sup>63</sup>

Since neither the confraternity nor the church had its own singers, the confraternity instead hired singers from three other Brussels churches with established musical foundations: the collegiate church of St Gudula, the church on which St Gorik

57 Kristine K. Forney, 'Music, Ritual and Patronage at the Church of Our Lady, Antwerp,' *Early Music History*, 7 (1987), 1-57 (pp. 6-14).

58 The daily *lof* service was established in 1479. Forney, 'Music, Ritual and Patronage,' pp. 9-10, 17, and 30-31.

59 Rob Wegman, 'Music and Musicians at the Guild of Our Lady in Bergen op Zoom, c. 1470-1510,' *Early Music History*, 9 (1990), 175-249 (pp. 183 and 191-92).

60 Wegman, 'Music and Musicians', pp. 188-91 and 197.

61 On this confraternity during the early sixteenth century, see Albert Smijers, 'De Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch: V. Rekeningen van Sint Jan 1475-1500,' *Tijdschrift der Vereeniging voor Noord-Nederlands Muziekgeschiedenis* (1931), 187-237; Albert Smijers, 'De Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch: VI. Rekeningen van Sint Jan 1500-1525,' *Tijdschrift der Vereeniging voor Noord-Nederlands Muziekgeschiedenis* (1935), 48-64; Albert Smijers, 'Meerstemmige muziek van de Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch,' *Tijdschrift der Vereeniging voor Noord-Nederlands Muziekgeschiedenis* (1940), 1-30; and Roelvink, *Gegeven den zangeren*, pp. 13-88.

62 For a table of the confraternity's yearly income, see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 48.

63 On endowments in other Brussels churches and by other Brussels confraternities, see Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', pp. 102-10.



was dependent, St Nicholas, the church of the guilds, and the church of the nobility, Our Lady of the Sands.<sup>64</sup> The confraternity's connection to St Gudula extended further than the hiring of the singers because two priests who had been important in establishing the Seven Sorrows devotion were prominent canons there. Philip the Fair's preceptor and later advisor, François Busleiden (d. 1502), was a canon at St Gudula since 1492 and treasurer in 1497 and was a member of the panel that chose the plainchant texts promoted by Philip's court.<sup>65</sup> He was also a member of the Brussels confraternity, and his coat of arms appears in the *Liber authenticus*.<sup>66</sup> Another canon at St Gudula, Pierre Duwez (d. 1508), was the priest who composed the winning plainchant for the Seven Sorrows office of Philip's competition.<sup>67</sup> Though these men would not have been hired as singers for the confraternity, their involvement with the devotion demonstrates the confraternity's connection not only to St Gudula but also to the ecclesiastical circles in Brussels.

By drawing on the other secular churches in Brussels, the Seven Sorrows confraternity was able to provide polyphony for several of their annual feasts. Payments to singers from these three churches can be found throughout the accounts and are listed in Table 2.<sup>68</sup> Singers from St Nicholas, for example, are paid in 1503-04, and beginning in 1506, the confraternity hired singers from Our Lady of the Sands. From its eighth year until 1511, the confraternity made payments to singers from both Our Lady of the Sands and St Gudula but relied on St Gudula after 1511. The confraternity paid singers for all of their feasts for the first two years but soon after limited the number of feasts per year in which extra musicians were hired. In the fourth year, for example, there were no payments for singers, though it was this year that the confraternity expanded their celebrations to all of the Marian feasts in addition to their three yearly feasts and the celebration of the anniversary of the dedication of the chapel. When the confraternity started their annual procession in its sixth year, more of its resources were channelled to this event instead of being spread out over three feasts, and by the twelfth year of the accounts, the confraternity had settled into a pattern of hiring singers only for the feast after Purification and their annual procession.

<sup>64</sup> Barbara Haggh, 'Singers and Scribes in the Secular Churches of Brussels', in *Music and Musicians in Renaissance Cities and Towns*, ed. by Fiona Kisby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 145.

<sup>65</sup> On Busleiden, see Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', pp. 563-64; *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, ed. by Conrad Eubel, 3 vols (Monasterii, Sumptibus et typis librariae, Regensbergianae, 1898-1910), II, p.106; and Felix Nève, 'Busleiden (François)', in *Biographie nationale*, 44 vols, ed. by L'Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique (Brussels, 1866-1986), III (1872), pp. 204-05.

<sup>66</sup> *Liber authenticus*, fol. 53<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Duwez received the sixth canonicate of St Gudula in 1494. Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', p. 582. On Duwez' career in collegiate churches and the Burgundian-Habsburg court chapels, see David Fiala, 'Le mécénat musical des ducs de Bourgogne et des princes de la maison de Habsbourg (1467-1506)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, 2 vols, University of Tours, 2002), p. 477 and Barbara Haggh, 'Dufay and Josquin at the Collegiate Church of St. Gudila', *Revue belge de Musicologie / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap* 55: *Six siècles de vie musicale à Bruxelles / Zes eeuwen muziekleven te Brussel* (Brussels: Société Belge de Musicologie, 2001), 41-52 (p. 48).

<sup>68</sup> The churches are referred to in the accounts as: Sint Claus (St Nicholas), Zavelkerk (Our Lady of the Sands), and Sint Goedele (St Gudula).

TABLE 2: Payments to Singers and Shawm Players in the Confraternity Accounts (1499-1516)\*

YEAR	CELEBRATION	MUSICIANS	PAYMENT (Brabant groats)
1 (1499-1500)	Saturday before Palm Sunday		
	St Bartholomew		
	Conversion of St Paul	Total sum for singers for four feasts"	8s.
2 (1500-01)	During Lent	Singers	2s. 6d.
	St John	Singers	2s. 6d.
	After Purification	Singers	2s. 6d.
3 (1501-02)	Sunday before Palm Sunday	Singers	2s. 6d.
	August 28	Singers with 5 from the Duke	3s.
5 (1503-04)	First feast in March	Singers from St Nicholas	2s. 6d.
	Second feast in August	Singers from St Nicholas	2s. 6d.
6 (1504-05)	Second feast in August	Singers	2s. 6d.
	Procession	Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s. 9d.
		Singers in discant	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	21d.
7 (1505-06)		Duke's singers celebrate a Mass	–
	First feast in August	Singers from St Nicholas	2s. 6d.
	Feast after Purification	Singers from Our Lady of the Sands	2s. 6d.
	Procession (held on the Sunday before Ascension)	Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
		Singers for Mass in discant	3s.
8 (1506-07)	Feast after Assumption	Singers from Our Lady of the Sands	2s. 6d.
	Feast after Purification	Singers from Our Lady of the Sands	2s. 6d.
	Procession	Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
		Singers from Our Lady of the Sands & St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	21d.
9 (1507-08)	Feast after Annunciation	Singers from Our Lady of the Sands	2s. 6d.
	Procession	Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
		Singers from Our Lady of the Sands & St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	2s.
10 (1508-09)	Procession	Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
		Singers from Our Lady of the Sands & St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	2s.
11 (1509-10)	Procession	Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
	(held on the fourth Sunday of Easter)	Singers from Our Lady of the Sands & St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	2s.

YEAR	CELEBRATION	MUSICIANS	PAYMENT (Brabant groats)
12 (1510-11)	Feast after Purification Procession	Singers from Our Lady of the Sands	2s. 6d.
		Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
		Singers from Our Lady of the Sands & St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	2s.
13 (1511-12)	Feast after Purification Procession	Singers of the Bishop of Cambrai	2s. 6d.
		Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
		Singers from St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	2s.
		Shawms from the chapel	12d.
14 (1512-13)	Feast after Purification Procession	Singers from St Gudula	2s. 6d.
		Double <i>cotidiane</i>	3s.
		Singers from St Gudula	3s.
		Singers of the Bishop of Cambrai	4s. 6d.
		City shawm ensemble	2s.
		Shawms from the chapel	12d.
15 (1513-14)	Feast after Purification Procession	Singers from St Gudula	3s.
		Double <i>cotidiane</i>	4s. 6d.
		Singers from St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble & Shawms from the chapel	3s. 6d.
16 (1514-15)	Feast after Purification Procession	Singers from St Gudula	3s.
		Double <i>cotidiane</i>	4s. 6d.
		Singers from St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	5s. 6d.
17 (1515-16)	Feast after Purification Procession	Singers in discant	3s. 6d.
		Double <i>cotidiane</i>	4s. 6d.
		Singers from St Gudula	3s.
		City shawm ensemble	2s. 6d.

(1 pound = 20 shillings = 240 deniers (pence) = 5760 mites)

\* The payment years run from Annunciation (25 March) to Annunciation of the following year for the first five years and are given in new style. In the sixth year, the accounts run from Annunciation to Ascension and then from Ascension to the following Ascension for the remainder of the accounts.

\*\* The fourth feast is not named in the accounts but was likely Candlemas, see n. 27.

All three of these churches of Brussels had established musical foundations from which the Seven Sorrows confraternity could have drawn. The work of Barbara Haggh has been instrumental in establishing the role of musicians in Brussels in the late Middle Ages. In addition to the vicars and chaplains who could sing polyphony, she has shown that

professional singers were paid at St Gudula, St Nicholas, and Our Lady of the Sands.<sup>69</sup> Tenors had been paid in all three churches since the 1470s, including for example, two tenors identified by Haggh at St Nicholas, Abertijne Malcourt and Crispijne vander Stappen.<sup>70</sup> The churches of St Gudula and St Nicholas also had their own singers for their Marian confraternities, who were paid jointly by the confraternity and the church fabric, and who perhaps could have been the singers who were hired to sing for the Seven Sorrows confraternity at St Gorik.<sup>71</sup>

That the confraternity in St Gorik would hire singers from other churches is not unusual. According to Haggh, Brussels had a tradition of itinerant musicians – both musicians coming from outside Brussels and singers within Brussels’ institutions singing at different locations.<sup>72</sup> The hiring of singers from different institutions was indeed common practice throughout the Low Countries, and confraternities such as those in Antwerp, Bergen op Zoom, and ’s-Hertogenbosch often competed for the best singers.<sup>73</sup> Though the individual payments to the singers hired by the Seven Sorrows confraternity cannot be compared to the annual salaries offered to the confraternity singers in these larger and wealthier confraternities, the confraternity in St Gorik still nearly doubled their normal spending on Marian celebrations to add singers of polyphony, paying an average of 4 shillings 6 deniers instead of 2 shillings 4-5 deniers.<sup>74</sup>

### Singers from Philip the Fair’s Chapel

In addition to the singers from the secular churches in Brussels, there are also two cases in which singers from Philip the Fair’s chapel participated in confraternity celebrations. For the feast after Assumption in 1501 (the third year of the confraternity accounts) the hired singers for the celebration were joined by five from the Duke.<sup>75</sup> These additional singers are not listed by name in the accounts, but in the following year, 1502-03, five of Philip’s singers (‘tsPrinchen sangers’) are inscribed in the *Liber authenticus*: ‘Jo Biest, Jooris vander Hagen, Franchois vander Rits, J. Brachener, Gheraret Berbet.’<sup>76</sup> The most obvious reason for their inscription in the confraternity would be that these singers were those who had sung for the confraternity on 28 August 1501. They were all chaplains of Philip the Fair’s *grande chapelle*, and as Table 3 shows, all were in the service of the court during the time of their appearance in the confraternity accounts and member register with the exception of Jooris vander Hagen, who is not found in the chapel payment records after 1 June 1501.<sup>77</sup>

69 Haggh, ‘Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony’, pp. 188-91 and Haggh, ‘Singers and Scribes’, pp. 150-51.

70 Barbara Haggh, ‘Crispijne and Abertijne: Two Tenors at the Church of St Niklaas in Brussels’, *Music & Letters*, 76 (1995), 325-44 (pp. 325-40).

71 Haggh, ‘Singers and Scribes’, pp. 151-52.

72 Haggh, ‘Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony’, pp. 193-96.

73 Wegman, ‘Music and Musicians’, pp. 177 and 216.

74 For a discussion of singers’ wages from the confraternities in Antwerp, ’s-Hertogenbosch, and Bergen op Zoom in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see Wegman, ‘Music and Musicians’, pp. 186-93, 197, and 214-17.

75 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 37 (1501-02): ‘Item den sangers met v van thertogen sangers, 3s. gr.’.

76 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 230r. For biographies of Gerard Barbet (Berbet), Jean Biest, Jean Braconnier, Georges du Buisson (Jooris vander Hagen), and Fransquin de Retis, see Georges Van Doorslaer, ‘La Chapelle Musicale de Philippe Le Beau’, *Revue belge d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’Art*, 4 (1934), 21-57 and 139-65 (pp. 140-41, 144, and 153), and Fiala, ‘Le mécénat musical’, pp. 397, 403, 409, 416, and 467.

77 Van Doorslaer, ‘La Chapelle Musicale’, pp. 46-47 and 144 and Fiala, ‘Le mécénat musical’, p. 416.

TABLE 3: Singers from Philip the Fair's Chapel enrolled in the Brussels Seven Sorrows Confraternity\*

Year of Enrolment	Singer	Service in Philip the Fair's Chapel
1502–03	Gerard Barbet (Berbet)	1492–1505
	Jean Biest	1492–1505
	Jean Braconnier	1497–1506
	Georges du Buisson (Jooris vander Hagen)	1498–1501
	Fransquin de Retis	1492–1506
1505–06	Pierre Brulé	1504–06
	Nicolas Champion (Liégeois)	1501–06
	Guillaume Chevalier	1504–06
	Antonin François	1492–1506
	Lucas (chaplain)	1501–06
	Jean Mathys	1505–06
	Philippe Paillette	1501–06
	Guiot (Binet) Prézet (Prezel)	1504–06
	Henry Zanteman	1501–06

\* The dates are limited to the singers' service in Philip's court and do not necessarily represent the entire time these singers were in the service of the court. The dates are taken from Fiala, 'Le mécénat musical', pp. 397–481 and Van Doorslaer, 'La Chapelle Musicale', pp. 139–59.

In 1502, however, four of the singers who enrolled in the confraternity, those who were still in the service of Philip's court, were actually in Spain at the time that their names were entered in the register.<sup>78</sup> Philip the Fair and his wife Joanna had begun their first trip to Spain in November of 1501 and had brought their *grande chapelle* with them.<sup>79</sup> Though there is no record of the court's chapel being in Brussels in August of 1501, the singers enrolled in the confraternity could have been those who had sung at the confraternity's service and have simply enrolled at a later date from afar, or the record of their enrolment could have been delayed.<sup>80</sup>

Singers from Philip the Fair's chapel appear again in the seventh year of the accounts (1505–06) at a time between the court's voyages to Spain. The 'singers of the King of Castile' took leave of Our Lady with a sung Mass, possibly in June of 1505 as the entry appears chronologically between the dedication of the chapel and the Visitation.<sup>81</sup> The court chaplain, Lucas, sang the Mass, and the confraternity also paid the deacon,

<sup>78</sup> Van Doorslaer, 'La Chapelle Musicale', pp. 141 and 154.

<sup>79</sup> Ferer, *Music and Ceremony*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>80</sup> For the places and dates of surviving payment records of the court chapel, see Van Doorslaer, 'La Chapelle Musicale', pp. 56–57.

<sup>81</sup> Van Doorslaer, 'La Chapelle Musicale', p. 57. The court chapel payments record the presence of the singers in Brussels with payments on 18 September, 24 October, and 2–3 November of 1505. The reference to the singers in the accounts would indicate their presence in Brussels earlier than these dates because it is recorded between the chapel consecration (June) and the second feast in August.

subdeacon, and bell ringer for the Mass.<sup>82</sup> In the same year of the *Liber authenticus*, more of the Duke's singers are inscribed: 'Petrus Brule, Anthoine Franchois, Johannes Mathis, Heer Lucas sangher ende chapellaen van ons Coninck van Castillien ('singer and chaplain of our King of Castile'), N. Liege presbiter, Robertus Presel dit Binet, Guillaume Chevalier, Henricq Zantman alias Leodiensis, Philippus Paelliet'.<sup>83</sup> The list includes Lucas, the chaplain who had sung the Mass and notably Nicolas Champion (N. Liege presbiter, d. 1533), a well-known composer whose music is found in multiple sixteenth-century sources.<sup>84</sup> As seen in Table 3, all of these singers were members of Philip's chapel at the time of their enrolment and the entry in the accounts, and thus these singers were certainly those mentioned in the accounts.

Though the singers likely enrolled in the Seven Sorrows confraternity on their own initiative, their connection with Philip's chapel is significant because of the court's patronage of the devotion and the confraternity. Represented as the founder and head of the Seven Sorrows confraternity in both contemporary devotional literature and later letters describing the foundation of the confraternity, Philip the Fair patronized this particular confraternity chapter by donating a luxurious bench for the chapel in St Gorik.<sup>85</sup> He is listed as the founder on his coat of arms in the *Liber authenticus* along with Margaret of Austria.<sup>86</sup> In 1511, Philip's father Maximilian I and son Charles issued a privilege, with the express support of Margaret of Austria as well, that elevated the chapel of the Seven Sorrows confraternity in the church of St Gorik to a royal chapel and thus gave the members of the confraternity the status of royal servants in Brabant.<sup>87</sup> The privilege itself stated that the members of the confraternity, in addition to seeking salvation for themselves, supported their political leaders and desired to promote friendship throughout the Burgundian territories.<sup>88</sup>

Though the court sponsored a plainchant competition for new music for the devotion, it did not patronize the liturgy or music of the Brussels confraternity specifically. Philip the Fair did, however, have a daily sung Mass for the intercession of Our Lady of Sorrows established for him by the Bruges chapter of the confraternity. Before leaving for his second trip to Spain in January of 1506 to claim the crown of Castile, Philip had visited Bruges. According to Van Coudenberghe, the particularly enthusiastic and fervent Seven Sorrows confraternity members from St Saviour's church were concerned for Philip's safety because of the sea storms and frequent shipwrecks during that time of

82 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 99 (1505-06): 'Item betaelt ten tyde doen des Coninck van Castillien sanghers orloff nemende aen onser vrouwen haer een messe songhen na spaengien reysende / Her Luycas de messe sanck voer den dyakenen ende subdiaken elcken van hen 1.5d. gr. den beyaerdere 1d. 3 mijten Jannen den cnap 1.5d. ende neefken 1.5d. tsamen 1s 7d. gr. 3 mijten'.

83 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 244<sup>r</sup>. The singers are identified as a group in the register with the additional description: 'Sanghers van onser Coninck'.

84 Van Doorslaer, 'La Chapelle Musicale', pp. 142-43 and Ferer, *Music and Ceremony*, p. 52.

85 Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille: Rederijerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2008), p. 70. See also *Liber authenticus*, fols 43<sup>v</sup>-48<sup>r</sup> and Appendix B of the chapter by Susie Speakman Sutch in this volume.

86 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 49<sup>r</sup>.

87 Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 275. See the copy of this privilege in the *Liber authenticus*, fols 29<sup>v</sup>-30<sup>r</sup>.

88 Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 263.

year.<sup>89</sup> Through the donation of their own goods, these confraternity members established a daily Mass to be sung in perpetuity by the boys' choir of St Saviour to ask for the Virgin of Sorrows' intercession for Philip the Fair's safety. The fears of the confraternity members became a reality when Philip's fleet was struck by a storm and scattered shortly after they had begun their journey. Philip's ship managed to reach England, and according to Van Coudenberghe, his survival and safety were attributed to the intercession of the Virgin of Sorrows and the Mass in Bruges. The daily sung Mass was continued for at least six years after Philip's journey, at which point Jan van Coudenberghe himself took over responsibility for celebrating the Mass.<sup>90</sup>

### Musicians for the Processions

Another aspect of the confraternity's liturgical celebrations included their annual processions. Processions for the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin had been part of the devotion since its inception. The installation of the confraternity in Bruges in 1493, for instance, included a procession along with the solemn meal referred to above. Miracle accounts from another of the three earliest pilgrimage sites, St Giles in Abbenbroek, mention a procession for Our Lady of Sorrows by 1496.<sup>91</sup> In 1504, the Seven Sorrows confraternity of St Hippolyte began a large yearly procession in Delft, another pilgrimage site where numerous miracles through the intercession of the Virgin of Sorrows were reported.<sup>92</sup> Starting in 1505, the Brussels confraternity held an annual procession in which they carried a statue of the Virgin through the city along with seven round panels with images of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>93</sup> Numerous priests, including the rector of St Gudula, also walked in the procession, and judging by the number of flags made for the procession, the lay attendance was evidently as high as 2000 people in some years.<sup>94</sup>

The procession was not celebrated in conjunction with the feast day after Annunciation, as one might expect for a celebration connected specifically to the Seven Sorrows, but was actually celebrated during Easter time, either on the fourth or fifth Sunday after Easter. The date of the procession is not mentioned in the accounts until its second year in 1506, when the accounts state that the procession was held on the Sunday before Ascension.<sup>95</sup> In 1508, however, the confraternity received permission from the chapter of

<sup>89</sup> Van Coudenberghe, *Ortus*, sig. Ciii<sup>r</sup>; Jacobus Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen. Met de mirakelen, getyden, ende misse der selver: insgelycks den oorspronck, ende voortganck der broederschap* (Antwerp: Guiliam Lesteens, 1622), pp. 233-36; Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, p. 131; and Soulier, *La Confrérie*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>90</sup> Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 131-33. Van Coudenberghe's promise to continue the Mass is recorded in the chapter acts of St Saviour's church on 4 June 1512. See Episcopal Archive of Bruges/Bisschoppelijk Archief Brugge, *Acta capituli* S238, fols 78<sup>v</sup>-79<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*, pp. 36-37. The procession in Abbenbroek is mentioned in a letter to Michel François de Lille describing miracles there, dated 16 August 1496 and published in Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen*, pp. 14-20. The procession may have continued yearly because the procession day of Our Lady of Sorrows is mentioned in another miracle account as if it were a regular occurrence as late as 1517. See Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen*, p. 163.

<sup>92</sup> Gerrit Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie. Delft als bedevaartplaats in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1992), p. 47.

<sup>93</sup> For more detailed information on the processions in various years, see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 57-62.

<sup>94</sup> Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 61.

<sup>95</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 101: 'processien van onser vrouwen altijt sijnde des sondaegs voer assencie dach'. According to the confraternity's inventory, the dean of St Gudula gave the approval for this date on 1 February 1504 (o.s.). See ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 17.

St Gudula to move the procession a week earlier.<sup>96</sup> The procession the following year in 1509 was indeed held on the fourth Sunday after Easter.<sup>97</sup> Processions in the city were in fact numerous, held not only by the churches of Brussels on major and minor feast days but also by confraternities in which relics of saints were carried in procession.<sup>98</sup> Given the number of processions, all of which had to be approved by St Gudula, and the fact that there was already a large procession in Brussels on Palm Sunday, the confraternity's placement of the procession during Eastertide rather than on their specific feast day is not surprising.<sup>99</sup>

Music accompanying these processions was common both in Brussels and especially in large Marian confraternities throughout the Low Countries.<sup>100</sup> The Seven Sorrows confraternity hired singers to sing a Mass with polyphony to be celebrated in conjunction with the procession as well as musicians to play in the procession itself. In 1513, for instance, the confraternity paid singers of the Bishop of Cambrai ('den zangers van mijnen heer van camerijcke') to sing for a Mass for the procession.<sup>101</sup> This payment was already the second time that the singers of the Bishop had joined the confraternity as they were also paid to sing for the feast after Purification in 1511.<sup>102</sup> Instrumental music was also commonly played at processions in the Low Countries, and city musicians were hired to be part of the procession itself.<sup>103</sup> Starting in 1505, as shown in Table 2, the confraternity paid the 'stapipers' or the city shawm ensemble to process before Our Lady.<sup>104</sup> Keith Polk has shown that at this time, the ensemble would have consisted of four to five players, likely three reed instruments, possibly two shawms and a bombard, and a sackbut.<sup>105</sup> For three years, from 1512-14, the city players were also joined by those of an unspecified chapel ('den pipers van den capellen'), perhaps those from the church of Our Lady, known as the Kapellekerk.<sup>106</sup>

The confraternity spent a significant portion of its income on the processions, supported financially by the members of The Lily (later known as The Garland of Mary), and the largest payments to singers were in fact for the confraternity's procession. In addition to paying singers from St Gudula, Our Lady of Sands, and Cambrai for the Masses as shown in Table 2, the confraternity also paid singers to chant the Divine Office.

96 *Liber authenticus*, fols 27'-28'. The letter is dated 23 September 1508.

97 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 181. The procession date is also recorded as the fourth Sunday of Easter in the following year. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 207.

98 On processions in Brussels, see Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', pp. 422-46.

99 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 58 n. 52. According to Haggh, there is evidence of a Palm Sunday Procession from St Gorik as early as 1383. See Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', p. 429.

100 For examples of the use of music by confraternities during processions, see Forney, 'Music, Ritual and Patronage', pp. 26-29 and Wegman, 'Music and Musicians', p. 182.

101 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 276. On the choir at the Cathedral in Cambrai during this period, see Craig Wright, 'Performance Practices at the Cathedral of Cambrai 1475-1550', *The Musical Quarterly*, 64 (1978), 295-328.

102 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 256.

103 Keith Polk, 'Instrumental Music in Brussels in the Early 16<sup>th</sup> Century', *Revue belge de Musicologie / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap*, vol. 55, *Six siècles de vie musicale à Bruxelles / Zes eeuwen muziekleven te Brussel / Six Centuries of Musical Life in Brussels* (2001), 91-101 (p. 96); Keith Polk, 'Music and Minstrels in the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century', in *Musicology and Archival Research*, ed. by Barbara Haggh et al. (Brussels: Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique, 1994), pp. 392-410; Bruno Bouckaert and Paul Trio, 'Trompers, pipers en luders in de Gentse Sint-Baafsabdij (14de-16de eeuw): over de muzikale opfluistering van enkele processies', *Musica antiqua: actuele informatie over oude muziek*, 11 (1994), 150-55; Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', pp. 213-20 and 445-46; and Forney, 'Music, Ritual and Patronage', pp. 14-16.

104 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 84, 126, 152, 182, 208, 233, 257, 276, 296, 314, and 329.

105 On the makeup of the shawm ensembles and on shawm players identified in Brussels, see Polk, 'Instrumental Music in Brussels', pp. 96-97.

106 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 257, 276, and 296. On instrumental musicians at the Kapellekerk, see Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', p. 212.



From the first year of the procession in 1505 and every year following, there is a payment for a 'double cotidiane'.<sup>107</sup> *Cotidianen* were known in the Low Countries beginning in the fifteenth century and were choirs of vicars who were paid to chant the daily office and some high Masses and who also sang polyphony.<sup>108</sup> According to Haggh, *cotidianen* capable of singing polyphony were established in St Gudula in 1477 and St Nicholas in 1472.<sup>109</sup> Because the payments for the *cotidiane* were made on the same day as singers from Our Lady of the Sands, St Gudula, and the Bishop's singers, the *cotidiane* singers may have come from these churches as well or have even been the same singers as those who sang the Mass for the procession.

### Surviving Musical Sources

The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin were clearly and visibly celebrated in the confraternity's processions through the painted panels of the Virgin's sorrows. Should there have been confusion as to what the Seven Sorrows were, there were explanatory texts on smaller panels accompanying the visual representations in the procession.<sup>110</sup> The plays and artistic works produced by and for the confraternity also helped to explain the devotion and enumerate the Seven Sorrows.<sup>111</sup> The Masses celebrated by the confraternity could have helped to define the devotion as well. Because there was not a clear adoption of a specific feast day dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin at this time, the music and texts of the liturgies could have provided another way to distinguish the Seven Sorrows.

The only known surviving polyphonic music for the feast, contemporary to the confraternity's surviving accounts, is contained in the Alamire manuscript B-Br 215-16. The manuscript seems particularly suited for use and ownership by the confraternity for three reasons. First, the manuscript is designed in such a way as to explain the Seven Sorrows devotion. Visually, the manuscript depicts the Virgin of Seven Sorrows with a miniature of the Virgin pierced with seven symbolic swords.<sup>112</sup> The individual sorrows are described in a text, the sequence *Salve virgo generosa*, added to the tenor voice of the polyphonic masses. The text of Mattheus Pipelare's *Memorare mater* also narrates the Seven Sorrows, while each of the motet's seven voices are labelled as a sorrow.<sup>113</sup> Because these texts make clear what the Seven Sorrows are, the music offers an aural and liturgical counterpart to the confraternity's didactic plays, which Remco Sleiderink treats in the preceding chapter of this volume.

The manuscript can also be placed in the context of the confraternity through the Burgundian-Habsburg court's interest in the devotion. The manuscript is connected to

<sup>107</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 82, 101, 126, 151, 181, 207, 232, 257, 275, 296, 314, and 329.

<sup>108</sup> On *cotidianen*, see Bruno Bouckaert, *Sint Baafskathedraal in Gent van Middeleeuwen tot Barok* (Ghent: Ludion, 2000), 174-78; Haggh, 'Crispijne and Abertijne', pp. 325-40; Barbara Haggh, 'The Archives of the Order of the Golden Fleece and Music', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 120 (1995), 1-43 (p. 6); and Barbara Haggh, 'Foundations or Institutions? On Bringing the Middle Ages into the History of Medieval Music', *Acta Musicologica*, 68 (1996), 87-128 (pp. 99 and 114-15).

<sup>109</sup> Haggh, 'Crispijne and Abertijne', pp. 326 and 335.

<sup>110</sup> Sleiderink suggests that the texts were in both French and Dutch. See Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 59.

<sup>111</sup> See the chapters in this volume by Remco Sleiderink, Edmond Roobaert and Trisha Rose Jacobs, and Dagmar Eichberger on the artistic and dramatic works produced by the confraternity during this period.

<sup>112</sup> B-Br 215-16, fol. 33'. This miniature is reproduced in Kellman, 'Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, 215-16', p. 66.

<sup>113</sup> B-Br 215-16, fol. 33'-34'.

the court not only because it was produced by the court-associated scriptorium of Petrus Alamire but also because of its contents. The plainchant Mass and vespers are one of three known musical settings of the texts from the court's plainchant competition, and one of the polyphonic masses was composed by the court composer, Pierre de la Rue (d. 1518).<sup>114</sup> As a member of Philip the Fair's chapel, La Rue had sung with the court singers who are listed in the *Liber authenticus*.<sup>115</sup> Unfortunately his name does not appear in the accounts or the member register, though he certainly would have had contact with the devotion through the court's promotion of it.

Finally, B-Br 215-16 contains not only music specifically written for the feast but also precisely the music, as Haggh has noted, that the confraternity would have needed.<sup>116</sup> The polyphonic masses, motets, and the plainchant mass setting could have been used for any of the feasts for which they hired singers but would have been particularly suited for the feast following Annunciation or the Mass connected with the procession. The confraternity celebrated solemn vespers in conjunction with the procession, in which case they could have used the plainchant vespers setting. The confraternity did not celebrate the other hours of the Divine Office nor did they celebrate *lof* services, and thus the genres of B-Br 215-16 would have been sufficient for their purposes.

Though B-Br 215-16 would have been perfectly suited for the confraternity, there is no evidence linking this manuscript to the Brussels confraternity. Other Marian confraternities, such as those mentioned above, often commissioned choirbooks from Alamire's workshop, but the Brussels confraternity did not have a budget comparable to the confraternities ordering such manuscripts.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, the coat of arms of Charles de Clerc (d. 1533), a high-ranking official in the Burgundian-Habsburg court's chamber of accounts, appears in the manuscript, indicating that B-Br 215-16 was likely owned by a private individual.<sup>118</sup> While it would have been possible for De Clerc to commission the manuscript as a gift for the confraternity, De Clerc does not appear in the Brussels confraternity member registry, nor is there any record of him making such a donation.

The confraternity's accounts do mention two books of music owned by the confraternity since 1510. Given this date, B-Br 215-16 is not likely to have been one of them since this manuscript was probably copied slightly later.<sup>119</sup> The books are described simply as two books from which the Masses of Our Lady were sung.<sup>120</sup> They may have been donated to the confraternity, since they are among their list of possessions along with various jewels and Mass ornaments, but there are no payment records for them. The music could have been polyphonic music used for the Masses in which the confraternity hired singers. As we would expect, the accounts do not cite specific compositions sung

<sup>114</sup> On La Rue and his connection to the court, see Honey Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life at the Habsburg-Burgundian Court* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 19-40 and 83-92. For the other musical settings of the competition texts, see Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', pp. 92-130.

<sup>115</sup> Van Doorslaer, 'La Chapelle Musicale', pp. 44 and 53-54.

<sup>116</sup> Haggh, 'Charles de Clerc', p. 195.

<sup>117</sup> Forney, 'Music, Ritual and Patronage', pp. 2 and 36-37; Wegman, 'Music and Musicians', pp. 195-96; and Roelvink, *Gegeven den sangeren*, pp. 101-26.

<sup>118</sup> See B-Br 215-16, fol. 2<sup>r</sup> and Haggh, 'Charles de Clerc', p. 202. On De Clerc, see Alexandre van Langenhove de Bouvekercke, 'Les De Clerc, seigneurs de Bouvekercke', in *Recueil de l'office généalogique et héraldique de Belgique VI* (Brussels: Amibel, 1957), pp. 75-79.

<sup>119</sup> Kellman, 'Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, 215-16', p. 67.

<sup>120</sup> 'Item ij boeken daer men ons vrouwen misse vanden ween uut zingt'. ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 244 (repeated with slight differences at pp. 265, 283, and 305).

but do say that the singers sang in *discant*. By this time the term *discant* was used more frequently to describe set polyphony, though the tradition of improvised polyphony, an older meaning of the term, was also probably current in Brussels at this time.<sup>121</sup> Another possibility is that one of the books could have been a collection of plainchant settings for Marian offices and Masses, such as the collection in Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 21123, which contains a chant Office and Mass setting for the Feast of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>122</sup>

### Continuation of the Confraternity's Liturgical Practices

Though the surviving accounts end in 1516, the confraternity continued to record its expenses for at least another one hundred years, and the *Liber authenticus* indicates that the confraternity gained new members until the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>123</sup> The late seventeenth-century inventory discussed in chapter one of this volume includes references to liturgical services held in the chapel of the Seven Sorrows in St Gorik in the context of receiving papal indulgences for participation in these services as well as visiting the Seven Sorrows chapel on Marian feast dates.<sup>124</sup> These services are mentioned in a Bull issued by Pope Clement IX as late as 21 July 1667, and purchases for items necessary for the Mass are made throughout the seventeenth century, including for example a Roman Missal that was paid for in 1661.<sup>125</sup> The latest mention of liturgical services occurs in 1684, when the pastor of St Gorik was paid a yearly honorarium to offer services for the Seven Sorrows confraternity.<sup>126</sup> The liturgical services, however, may not have been continuous up to this point. As Brecht Dewilde and Bram Vannieuwenhuyze have suggested, the confraternity was likely affected by the Calvinist reign in Brussels in the 1580s, and their liturgical activities may have ceased for a period because of prohibitions of Catholic liturgical services.<sup>127</sup>

While the confraternity's liturgical celebrations had resumed by the seventeenth century, it is not clear to what extent the confraternity continued the practices of the early sixteenth century in their celebration of Masses. The pastor of St Gorik was paid from 1599-1601, for instance, to celebrate a high Mass and take the Blessed Sacrament in procession as well as say Masses for the deceased members, but no indication is given as to particular dates of the celebrations.<sup>128</sup> In the years 1624-25, the pastor was paid an annual sum for a Saturday Mass, showing that at some point the liturgical practices did

<sup>121</sup> See Forney, 'Music, Ritual and Patronage', pp. 2, 6, 10, 18-20, and 32. Polyphony in the Alamire manuscripts was described as *discant* in the account books of the confraternity of Our Lady in Antwerp; see Forney, 'Music, Ritual and Patronage', pp. 34-36, 37, and 56. On the use of late improvised polyphony, see Alexander Blachly 'Archaic Polyphony in Dutch Sources of the Renaissance', *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, 53 (2003), 183-227 (pp. 187-88). On the use of the term *discant* in Brussels, see Haggh, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony', pp. 98-100.

<sup>122</sup> On this manuscript, see Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', pp. 101-04.

<sup>123</sup> Accounts from the early seventeenth century are mentioned in the confraternity's inventory of the late seventeenth century; see ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 17-18.

<sup>124</sup> ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 10 and 12-13.

<sup>125</sup> ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 12, 27, and 41-43.

<sup>126</sup> ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 94.

<sup>127</sup> See the chapter by Brecht Dewilde and Bram Vannieuwenhuyze in this volume.

<sup>128</sup> ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 90. In 1684, the pastor of St Gorik is also mentioned as having received an annual sum for services for the Seven Sorrows confraternity. See ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 94.

change from those of the early sixteenth century.<sup>129</sup> An annual Seven Sorrows feast date is implied by one testament, recorded in 1642-43, in which Catharina de Peuter endowed a sung Mass for her soul on the Monday during the octave of the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin.<sup>130</sup> The procession also continued to the late seventeenth century because the inventory mentions an expensive cloak not completed until 1667 that was made for the statue of Our Lady and used in the processions.<sup>131</sup> The date of the procession changed as well, being moved from its original time in Easter and carried out on various dates in the seventeenth century, including the second Sunday of July and the Sunday before the Feast of the Miracle of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>132</sup>

The only specific information that survives about the Masses of the confraternity in the inventory relate to individual endowments by various confraternity members. Only one endowment made during the time of the accounts survives in the inventory. The testament of Margareta vander Perren on 1 April 1502 states that she gave the interest on a house for a weekly read Mass in the chapel of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>133</sup> The inventory records ten sixteenth- and seventeenth-century testaments that make provisions for read Masses in the Seven Sorrows chapel on various days, often with distributions for the poor.<sup>134</sup> In 1657, Philippina van Busleiden, for example, endowed not only a weekly Saturday Mass but also a Mass on each of the seven feasts of Our Lady.<sup>135</sup> She requested that the prayers for the dead be said for her soul as well as the souls of her parents and friends and also that the provosts of the confraternity have a lamp continually lit in the Seven Sorrows chapel of St Gorik. In addition to the sung Mass endowed by Catharina de Peuter mentioned above, there are also two other foundations for sung Masses, which were made by provosts of the confraternity. In 1590, Balthasar van Rode endowed a sung Mass to be celebrated on the Nativity of Our Lady with distributions of bread for fifteen poor people.<sup>136</sup> In 1668, Peeter Ballaert instituted a foundation not only for an annual solemnly sung Mass on 21 November, the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, but also for sung vespers, matins, and a *lof* service.<sup>137</sup>

Though many of these endowments include distributions for the poor attending the Masses, the primary beneficiaries of the Masses were intended to be the people who endowed the service or their spouse or family members. These private foundations were not part of the confraternity's collective efforts of saving souls.<sup>138</sup> The advantage for the poor of the early sixteenth-century Seven Sorrows confraternity was that there were collective Masses for the dead. The primary purpose of the confraternity was indeed to make the spiritual benefits of the confraternity available to all of its members, especially those who could not afford to endow a private Mass. The members were not required to pay any dues

129 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 91.

130 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 137-38.

131 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 37.

132 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 13 and 18.

133 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 96-98 and 157. This date could also be 1 April 1503 (n.s.) as the Easter-style year of 1502 went from 27 March 1502 to 15 April 1503, encompassing two April firsts. The foundation was reduced in 1559 by the chapter of St Gudula, and the weekly read Mass was replaced by six sung Masses on the feasts of Our Lady.

134 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 101-02, 108-10, 115-18, 123, 127, 129-30, 137-38, 139, 140-41, 142-45, and 154-55.

135 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 142-45. She had also given a substantial sum for the construction of a new sacristy for the Seven Sorrows chapel in 1660. See ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 22-23.

136 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 119-21.

137 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 146-49.

138 Haggh, 'Foundations or Institutions', p. 91.

in order to enjoy the spiritual benefits of the Masses celebrated by the confraternity and those granted by various religious orders that had offered members participation in their prayers.<sup>139</sup>

## Conclusion

This analysis of the accounts and inventory of the Brussels Seven Sorrows confraternity has revealed not only the confraternity's particular liturgical practices but also how these practices fit into the musical life of Brussels. While the Brussels confraternity did not have the financial resources of the well-known Marian confraternities of the Low Countries that were rich sources of polyphony and other musical activity, the accounts have demonstrated how a confraternity with a limited budget functioned musically. The liturgical practices of the Seven Sorrows confraternity provide an important point of comparison to such confraternities by showing how an ordinary confraternity operated and could still support the singing of polyphony, expanding the overall picture of confraternity culture in the Low Countries. Furthermore, the analysis of the confraternity's liturgical services has broadened our perspective on late Medieval musical life in Brussels. Because the confraternity was not musically self-sufficient, it engaged musicians from other Brussels churches and the city itself, offering a view as to how these institutions interacted and cooperated with each other. By placing the confraternity's activities within the known networks of musicians and musical institutions of Brussels, this analysis has revealed a microcosm of urban musical life in Brussels at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Now that the liturgical practices of the Seven Sorrows confraternity have been established, it appears that the confraternity was not influenced by the Burgundian-Habsburg court's attempts to codify the Seven Sorrows liturgy or its feast date. Contrary to historical letters that emphasize Philip the Fair's role as the founder of the confraternity, the accounts show that the confraternity operated independently from the court's efforts to establish a feast date and possibly also from its liturgical texts and music. The Saturday before Palm Sunday, the date suggested for the celebration of the feast in the court's Office and Mass, for instance, does not appear to have been widely or consistently adopted. There is also no evidence that the confraternity used the texts published by the court or even the music preserved in B-Br 215-16.

Even though the confraternity does not appear to have been influenced by the court in their liturgical celebrations, the fact that the details of its activities are now established allows for a better understanding of the early development of the Seven Sorrows devotion. The musical and liturgical practices provide a devotional context for B-Br 215-16 and its music, even if it was not specifically used or owned by the confraternity. A fixed feast date for the Seven Sorrows does not appear to have taken hold during the course of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, but this detailed analysis of the early liturgical practices lays the groundwork for a study of the feast's development and later history of the devotion.

<sup>139</sup> On the spiritual benefits that the Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite, and Augustinian Orders granted to the confraternity members, see Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 266 n. 53.



# **ART PATRONAGE**

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# AN UNCELEBRATED PATRON OF BRUSSELS ARTISTS

## St Gorik's Confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows (1499–1516)

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Up until the 1560s, there were dozens of confraternities practicing their religious devotions in any one of a number of Brussels churches. Together, they formed a very diverse group; not all were equally prominent, nor were their members, both male and female, who came from significantly different socio-economic backgrounds. For example, the confraternities associated with the collegiate church of St Gudula tended to recruit their members from the upper reaches of the clergy, nobility, and wealthy bourgeoisie, and they were required to pay comparatively high annual membership fees and death dues. Other confraternities, at filial churches or chapels with more pedestrian congregants, tended to make fewer financial demands of their members and were therefore more accessible. The confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in the church of St Gorik was one such confraternity.

Decorating and equipping an altar or entire chapel, as well as arranging for opulent displays on special occasions, would have required these organizations to employ craftsmen and artists, but the investigation into the extent to which the Brussels confraternities served as patrons of urban artists throughout the 1500s has thus far yielded fragmentary results. By and large, their accounts have not withstood the ravages of time; the recently discovered records of the confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows are a happy exception to this rule. Remco Sleiderink has already made a general survey of the confraternity's early accounts, paving the way for more in-depth study.<sup>1</sup> Not only do the accounts contain new, valuable data regarding folk customs and popular devotion, the veneration of saints, the liturgy, the liturgical calendar, and music in Brussels between 1499 and 1516, as we have seen in the preceding chapters of this volume, but they are also an important source of information on one contemporary network of artistic patronage.<sup>2</sup>

The materials available relating to the confraternity permit us to go beyond flat, object-oriented descriptions and general statements. Paul Trio's research into the various

1 Archives of the City of Brussels/Archief van de Stad Brussel, Historical Archives/Historisch Archief (hereafter ASB, HA), Register 3837; Remco Sleiderink, 'De dichters Jan Smeken en Johannes Pertcheval en de devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zeven Weeën', *Queeste, Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden*, 19 (2012), 42-69. Our heartfelt thanks to Remco Sleiderink for giving us the opportunity to examine the accounts, to Susie Speakman Sutch for her help in interpreting them, and to our reviewers for their kind and thoughtful corrections and suggestions.

2 The first five accounting years employ the old-style system of dating. In the sixth year, they switch, which is why the accounts for that 'year' run from March 25, 1503 (o.s.) to May 1, 1505 (n.s.). In the interest of clarity we have chosen to follow new-style dating throughout.

Ghent confraternities has shown that they were important patrons of the arts, but the scattered inventories and accounts available to him do not allow for examining their relationship with the individual artists involved, which is of particular interest in this context.<sup>3</sup> As Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene have shown, existing urban networks played an important part in promoting the devotion of the Seven Sorrows, and this chapter seeks to answer whether the Brussels confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows relied upon such a network of artists and to what extent.<sup>4</sup>

Our contribution will begin by outlining the links between Brussels' artists, St Gorik, and the confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. We will also briefly examine the confraternity's finances, before proceeding to analyse the role it played as a patron of Brussels craftsmen, sculptors, and visual artists. This means examining not only how the confraternity outfitted and maintained its chapel but also the commissions it arranged in relation to its procession and plays. A table showing all such purchases has been placed at the end of this chapter for the reader's convenience.<sup>5</sup> By determining whether the craftsmen and artists employed by the confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows were among its members and attempting to address how they were selected for particular commissions – whether by cost, skill, proximity, or all of the above – we hope to shed light on this aspect of early sixteenth-century artistic patronage.

### **St Gorik and the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows as Patrons of the Arts**

The confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows was situated in St Gorik, a church with strong ties to the Brussels art community. Important artists were numbered among its wardens: the master painters Bernaert van Orley and Colijn de Coter, as well as Jan II Borreman, one of the most innovative sculptors of the day.<sup>6</sup> The wardens not only commissioned sculptors and painters to produce works calculated to inspire devotion and lend to the lustre of its services, but they ordered artworks as rewards for people who had done the institution some special service. For example, in 1525-26, Jean Caulier, seigneur

3 Paul Trio, *De Gentse broederschappen (1182-1580): Ontstaan, naamgeving, materiële uitrusting, structuur, opheffing en bronnen* (Ghent: Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Ouheidkunde te Gent, 1990) and Paul Trio, *Volksreligie als Spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving. De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1993), pp. 248 and 260-65.

4 Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, c. 1490-1520', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 252-78.

5 Table 1 is not comprehensive, and only encompasses works discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, while we have included paintings for which the provenance is not certain, we have not included repair work to the fabric or furnishings of the chapel, nor the purchase of raw materials. Rather, we merely seek to provide an overview of the confraternity's most important possessions and purchases as described in the accounts.

6 See the remaining accounts of St Gorik's church fabric, where all were listed as churchwardens on different occasions (State Archives Anderlecht, Church Archives of Brabant, 29.135, 29.172, 29.217). Colijn 'van den Couter' appears on folio 167<sup>v</sup> of the *Liber authenticus* (ASB, HA, Register 3413), which also lists Jaspar 'Hasaert' (fol. 163<sup>v</sup>), Jan Borreman the Elder (fol. 167<sup>v</sup>), Paeschier Borreman (fol. 167<sup>v</sup>), Cornelis 'Gapenberghe' (fol. 178<sup>v</sup>), and Valentin van 'Oerley' (fol. 209<sup>v</sup>) as confraternity members.

d'Aigny, and chairman of the Privy Council, received a painting of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows by Van Orley because he interceded on behalf of St Gorik in a dispute.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the chamber of rhetoric that had founded the confraternity at St Gorik, *De Lelie* (The Lily), was itself comprised of writers, visual artists, master craftsmen, and other artisans, and several of its poets, sculptors, and painters performed work for the city and the ducal court.<sup>8</sup> These artists played a prominent role in the confraternity, including the aforementioned Jan Borreman, and Cornelis and Joris Schernier of the Coninxloo painting dynasty, all of whom dominated its governing body.<sup>9</sup> Borreman, one of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows' founders, was a provost in 1499 and 1500; Cornelis in 1501 and 1502; and Joris served in that capacity every year from 1503 right up until 1516, the end of the extant accounts.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the presence of the confraternity's own members and other artists among the churchwardens of St Gorik – the body that supervised the confraternity's accounts – the confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows still faced significant challenges in financing its artistic patronage.<sup>11</sup> These were not insignificant outlays, and the confraternity had limited funds: just £17.5 a year on average, although it was often much less.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the confraternity's financial arrangement with the wardens entailed giving up a portion of the offerings and monies collected on feast days, and it paid them an annual fee, which covered, among other things, the use of both the chapel and the church fabric's liturgical vestments.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, the members and artists associated with *De Lelie* and with *De Violette* (The Violet), the chamber it merged with to form 't *Mariacranske* (The Garland of Mary) in 1507, often resorted to financing the confraternity's purchases and activities with their own

7 Initially, St Gorik was subordinate to St Gudula, which meant that the collegiate church was entitled to some of its tithes and offerings. St Gudula continued to attempt to exert its ecclesiastical rights over St Gorik even after it became a parish church in 1520, until the Privy Council forced the two institutions to a compromise in March of 1527. See Placide Lefèvre, *L'organisation ecclésiastique de la ville de Bruxelles au Moyen Âge* (Leuven: UCL. Bibliothèque de l'université, 1942), pp. 204-07, and Alexandre Henne and Alphonse Wauters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles*, ed. by Mina Martens, 4 vols (Brussels: Culture et civilisation, 1975), VIII, p. 226. State Archives Anderlecht, Church Archives of Brabant, 29.175, fol. 15<sup>v</sup>.

8 *Liber authenticus*, fols 161<sup>v</sup>-162<sup>r</sup>, records the names of the members of *De Lelie* and *De Violette* coupled with the names of their wives. The following artists and craftsmen who figure in our discussion were members of *De Lelie*: Jan II Borreman, Joris and Cornelis Schernier Coninxloo, Adam de Cupere, Gielis van Halle, Jan and Peeter van Yseren, Jan van Roome, alias van Brussel. In addition, Jan van den Dale was a member of *De Violette* and hence his name occurs twice: on fol. 193<sup>v</sup> when he enrolled in the confraternity and again on fol. 162<sup>r</sup> when the two chambers of rhetoric merged in 1507 to create 't *Mariacranske*. Pending the availability of source materials, it would be interesting to see how the artistic patronage of Seven Sorrows confraternities played out in other cities, particularly in Antwerp, where the artists' guild of St Luke hosted a chapter, probably aided by a local chamber of rhetoric. See Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', pp. 273-74.

9 The chapel also hosted the funeral of Jan van Coninxloo in 1499-1500, who was still serving as the city painter as late as 1498, thus allowing us to more precisely date the death of the founder of the Coninxloo painters dynasty. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 2 and Jozef Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum in de XIV<sup>e</sup> en de XV<sup>e</sup> eeuw* (Antwerp: De Sikkel / Ghent: Vyncke, 1935), pp. 65-66 and 86-87.

10 For a complete list of the provosts, see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 45-46.

11 The closing formula of several accounts mention that they were examined and signed off on in the presence of members of the confraternity's council and the churchwardens of St Gorik. The 1509-10 account was reviewed and approved by St Gorik's *porcionarissen* or portionaries and churchwardens, who numbered the painter Colijn de Coter among them. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 219. At the close of the accounts for 1510-11 and 1511-12, Jan Borreman and De Coter were described as churchwardens. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 242 and 262. In 1516, the same men approved the account for 1513-14. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 304.

12 See Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 47.

13 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 134, 165, 189, and 318. The statue of Our Lady stood on a pedestal bedecked with a cloth, which the accounts note was cleaned in 1511-12. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 259.

private funds.<sup>14</sup> In 1504-05, Joris Schernier, alongside the other provosts, contributed 10 *schellingen* (s.) to the costs of an altarpiece and a processional piece, and Adam 'de Cuper' or Cupere, another member of *De Lelie*, gave 30s. towards the production of vestments.<sup>15</sup> Others, such as Jan van Roome, alias van Brussel, appear to have done work as favours to the confraternity, while in 1513-14 Borreman reduced his fee for a commission he received from the confraternity, as did his fellow rhetorician, Jan van den Dale. At least one of the artists, Cornelis Schernier, continued to support the confraternity even after his death, leaving them a legacy in his will.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, money was always in short supply and new sources of income eagerly seized upon. As was the usual practice among confraternities, even in those with more in the way of financial resources, the provosts of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows had little compunction about converting gifts of silver or jewellery set with precious stones into hard cash. A gold and sapphire ring was liquidated for 27s. 6 *penningen* (d.).<sup>17</sup> A silver gilt belt, the testamentary bequest of a young maiden, fetched 18d.<sup>18</sup> A large paternoster, an earlier form of the rosary, bequeathed to the confraternity by the widow of Aert Boterams was disposed of for 2 *ponden* (£) 10s., while another patron's paternoster had been auctioned off for 27s. 6d.<sup>19</sup> The confraternity's search for funds left no stone unturned: a hunk of metal found in the street was refined and the gold thus harvested sold in 1500-01 for 15s.<sup>20</sup> Once liquidated, these assets helped to fund the commissions discussed below.

### Craftsmen: Supplying the Basics

Despite such significant gifts, donations, and the occasional windfall, the confraternity's constrained means limited the extent to which it could invest in commissioning or purchasing artworks for the purpose of embellishing services with lustrous adornments. And yet, the confraternity did not lack the chapel accoutrements standard in sixteenth-century Brussels: candlesticks, sconces, lecterns, and chandeliers in latten – all seemingly supplied

14 Other rhetoricians not necessarily associated with *De Lelie* also appear to have made donations to the confraternity; see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 50-51. One of these, Jan Smet, may have been a member of the Seven Sorrows confraternity. Among the names of individuals enrolling in the confraternity during the ninth year (1507-08) is a Jan Smet, *Liber authenticus*, fol. 255'. However, as that name is extremely common, the literal equivalent of 'John Smith', this could be a mere coincidence.

15 'Item ontfangen totten behulpe vander doren vanden outertafelen van gielis crabbe van Jooris schernier van pertchevale van heindric de lichte van elcken vii s. vi d. van heindric bras iii s. van Jannen segers ii s. gr. valet – i lb. xv s.', ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 75; 'Item ontfangen van adam de cupere tot behulp van een gouden cruce op de casuffle – xxx s. gr.', ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 75.

16 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 327.

17 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 74; for more on the owner of the ring, see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 60. The accounts use Brabant *grooten* as their basic bookkeeping unit, regardless of the actual currency used. These are expressed in *ponden* (£), *schellingen* (s.), *penningen* (d.) and *mijten* (superscript te). *Stuivers* and *Rhenish guilders* also occasionally appear. Within the body of this text, we have sometimes converted figures to *schellingen* for ease of reading, retaining the original notations in the footnotes. One *pond* equals 20 *schellingen* or 240 *penningen*, and there were 24 *mijten* to a *penning*, while four *Rhenish guilders* were equivalent to one *pond*, and one *stuiver* the equivalent of three *penningen*. For more on the currencies used in the accounts, see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 46-47.

18 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 273.

19 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 293.

20 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 21.

by local craftsmen.<sup>21</sup> In 1499-1500, a donation allowed the purchase of two, large – possibly latten – candlesticks.<sup>22</sup> In 1502-03, Jan van Nanoenen, a well-known craftsman who established the Thienen dynasty of brass-founders in Brussels, received 9s. for a latten chancel lectern, and a cast altar bell was purchased from an unknown artist at the same time.<sup>23</sup> The choice of Van Nanoenen could lie in his family's ties to the Borremans. In 1489, the latter stood surety for a door cast by one 'Jan van Thienen' for St Peter's church in Leuven. Jan Borreman also collaborated with Renier van Thienen on the paschal candlestick cast for the church of St Leonard in Zoutleeuw, and later he worked with both Van Thienen and Jan de Hervy on the tomb of Mary of Burgundy in Bruges. Finally, Borreman supplied wooden models to Renier van Thienen's son, also named Renier, for figures cast for the Palais Royal in Bruges.<sup>24</sup>

The confraternity made further purchases later that decade. In 1506-07, an iron candelabra with seven arms was obtained from Jan vander Goten, a member of a famous family of Brussels ironsmiths. That same year, four candlesticks, described as two beaten and two small, latten ones, were also installed in the chapel.<sup>25</sup> In 1509-10, a chandelier was hung from the vault by a chain.<sup>26</sup> In 1513-14, Joos de Ketelaar delivered four metal 'apples', or cast latten bulbs, which were placed on the apex of the chapel's roof.<sup>27</sup> The confraternity's apparently close association with this community of craftsmen was not limited to commissions: thanks to the mediation of an unidentified Brussels brass-founder, the confraternity succeeded in regaining possession of a candlestick stolen from the altar of Our Lady.<sup>28</sup>

Considering the tight finances, and the sums required to outfit and maintain such a confraternity, it should come as no surprise that certain crafts and their representatives do not appear in the accounts – or do so only on rare occasions. This lack of artisans is particularly true of goldsmiths, tapestry weavers, and needle workers. In 1499-1500, the confraternity possessed just one monstrance and two ampoules, all in tin.<sup>29</sup> Liturgical vessels in such cheap metal were generally only used temporarily, or if there were not yet the means to purchase something better. Sometime during 1502-03, the monstrance was gilded and burnished in order to improve its appearance – a highly unusual practice, indicating just how strapped the confraternity was, although the gilding, burnishing, and

21 Generally speaking, latten or *latoen* referred to an alloy, usually a type of brass. While produced in sheets that were then worked further, cast work was more typical for the period – certainly for such things as candlesticks and lecterns – as one of our reviewers has pointed out. At one point the accounts even appear to distinguish between 'beaten' and 'latten' (or cast) candlesticks. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 132. For more uses, see Claude Blair and John Blair 'Copper Alloys', in *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*, ed. by John Blair and Nigel Ramsay (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), pp. 81-106.

22 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 14. In 1503-04, a gift of 3s. 6d. was recorded, used to help purchase a large candleholder for the altar of Our Lady; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 65.

23 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 52.

24 Kim W. Woods, 'Borman', in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Northern Renaissance Art*, ed. by C. Campbell, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), III (2009), pp. 211-12; Kim W. Woods, 'Thienen, van', in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. by C. Hourihane, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), II (2012), pp. 76-77. Ann M. Roberts, 'The Chronology and Political Significance of the Tomb of Mary of Burgundy', *The Art Bulletin*, 71 (1989), 376-400 (pp. 378 and 383).

25 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 132.

26 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 215.

27 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 300.

28 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 260. Even the confraternity was not spared from the plague of church thefts, despite the drastic penalties for such crimes.

29 The monstrance was purchased for 6s. 9d.; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 7 and 14.

repair of altar vessels were typical commissions that many Brussels goldsmiths performed for the local churchwardens.<sup>30</sup> The monstrance does not ever appear to have been replaced by a better quality piece either. There is also no reference in the accounts to the purchase of church plate from a known Brussels goldsmith, although this cannot have been for lack of contacts. Indeed, the accounts reference one of the few goldsmiths working in sixteenth-century Brussels: Jaspas Hazaert, a member of the confraternity, but only because he delivered materials to the artists working for the confraternity in 1513-14.<sup>31</sup> In fact, apart from a crucifix, the confraternity had no precious metalwork worthy of the name.<sup>32</sup>

The confraternity also possessed little in the way of tapestries and thus borrowed some on occasion, a practice that was not unheard of in Brussels, at least not among those organizations with the right connections. The ducal palace, for example, loaned works to St Gudula's confraternity of Our Lady.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, tapestries were regularly conveyed from the court to St Gorik for the Feast of the Assumption in mid-August and returned afterwards.<sup>34</sup> This practice was not without its costs – for example, in 1513-14 the *tapissier's* assistants received 2s. 6d. 'for their wine' – but it was still far less expensive than having tapestries made to order.<sup>35</sup> In fact, the confraternity owned nothing in this line apart from two 'cussenbladeren', small cushions covered with inferior tapestry, usually depicting heraldic or animal and plant motifs.<sup>36</sup>

During the confraternity's early years, they did not yet have their own vestments. Instead, the confraternity paid an annual sum to St Gorik's churchwardens to cover the cost of wear and tear resulting from their use of the church's best adornments on high Marian feast days, and this amounted to 7 stuivers in 1505.<sup>37</sup> Around that time, two chasubles were commissioned for the 'porcionarissen' or portionaries, who conducted services in the confraternity's chapel, one of red velvet and the other coloured red, white and yellow. An embroidered cross, made from one 'ell' of cloth of gold, was placed upon one of the

30 The work cost just 7d. 12 mijten; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 52. In 1505-06, the monstrance was burnished again and its glass was replaced; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 108. Both the monstrance and the ampoules appear in the lists of the confraternity's 'jewels' from 1499-1500 to 1513-14; among others, see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 14 and 295.

31 It seems Hazaert was familiar with the confraternity's members and artists; in 1519 he sold gold leaf to Cornelis Schernier. See State Archives Brussels, Kwijtschriften van de Rekenkamer 1077, loose document dated 14.06.1513, and Eddy D'Hondt, *Extraits des comptes du domaine de Bruxelles aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles concernant les artistes de la cour*, *Miscellanea Archivistica, Studia 4* (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1989), no. 62, 40-41; no. 79, 53; no. 81, 54-55; and no. 85, 60.

32 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 66. What trinkets it did possess were obviously common among the inventories of both the clergy and laity of the period: a red coral paternoster with seven chaplets and five gilt medals, a paternoster with jet beads, and another with gilded latten medals and scallop shells; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 76 and 111-12. At the time, a paternoster was a typical votive gift from a devout person, who in turn received the confraternity's prayers for their salvation; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 76. The one with the scallops was obviously contributed by a pious individual who had undertaken the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela; see Edmond Roobaert, 'Brusselse bedevaarders en hun bedevaarten in de 16e eeuw', *Volkskunde*, 102 (2001), 97-144 (pp. 106-07). Any ex-votos, usually in silver or wax, left by devout worshippers are missing from the lists of 'jewels', unless the small silver rings, spoons and medals described as hanging on two wooden plaques may be taken into consideration here. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 66, 112, and 264.

33 The court *tapissier*, Pieter van Aelst, was remunerated with one gold crown for his time and trouble: Edmond Roobaert, 'Een driemanschap: Peter Coecke van Aalst, Peter van Edingen van Aalst en Peter Fabri van Aalst', *Archief- en Bibliotheekwezen in België* (2004), 74, 9-124 (p. 85).

34 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 9, 37, 77, 127, 276, and 314.

35 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 296.

36 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 112.

37 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 85.

chasubles. In total, the sewing and embroidery cost 6 *Rhenish guilders*, not a great deal of money given the work involved.<sup>38</sup>

Often, the craftsmen performing such commissions or carrying out other work are mentioned anonymously or by first name only in the accounts, making their identity difficult to determine.<sup>39</sup> For example, we do not know whether a vestment maker or an embroiderer made the chasuble cross, just that it was a master who employed an apprentice.<sup>40</sup> In 1510-11, thanks to a donation from a pious woman, a certain William added embroidered panels depicting Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows to the vestments and was even given 12d. to break his fast, indicating that his skills were valued.<sup>41</sup> However, it cannot be stated with any certainty that he was the embroiderer of the chasuble cross, nor is it possible to identify him as either the 'Willem the embroiderer' interred at the Carmelite church of Brussels in July of 1523 or Willem de Meester, an embroiderer whose widow signed over a legacy provided for her in her late husband's will to the almoners of Saint-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg in 1525-26.<sup>42</sup> We do not even know the first name of the artisan who made the mantel for the new statue of Our Lady, only that some of the multi-coloured cloth left over from one of the chasubles was used and that the work was paid for well in advance.<sup>43</sup>

### Sculptors: the Role of Specialization in Making Commissions

While craftsmen from assorted trades provided Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows with the smaller items necessary to hold services, such as vestments and liturgical objects, statue makers, stone carvers, and woodworkers were essential in outfitting and decorating the confraternity's chapel and choir. One important structure was the *apporte*, where the confraternity's *apportenaars* received gifts and money, a substantial source of much needed income.<sup>44</sup> According to the accounts for 1499-1500, confraternity member Gielis van Halle was paid for 'an *apporte* with a screen and a bench', and while unclear, the entry suggests that the items were related to one another and produced by Van Halle. He certainly seems

38 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 75 and 82. See the analysis of costs associated with English liturgical garments from the same period in Judith Middleton-Stewart, *Inward Purity and Outward Splendour: Death and Remembrance in the Deanery of Dunwich, Suffolk, 1370-1547* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001) pp. 197-212. It was not until 1505-06 that the provost of the Augustinian monastery at Saint-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg could consecrate the velvet chasuble and its alb. The suffragan bishop of Cambrai consecrated the other because prior to the creation of the Archbishopric of Malines in 1559, the Brussels clergy were under his jurisdiction. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 102.

39 One exception is Hendrik Doeghens, a 'gelaesmaker' who worked on a window in the choir in 1504-05; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 79. Hendrik Dueghens was active in Brussels from 1488 to 1535; see Edmond Roobaert, 'Doegens [Dueghens], Hendrik', *Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, 28 (2001), cols. 225-26.

40 The cloth of gold cost 9 Rhenish guilders total, with an advance of 6 Rhenish guilders. The apprentice had to be satisfied with 6d. Tassels and trimming were included, paid for in part by a small gift. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 82. Adam de Cupere also gave 30s., which covered the down payment for the production and sewing of the gold embroidered cross; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 75.

41 'Item Willemen die de ornamenten maecte, van Jouffrouwe van catthem om dat hij ons vrouwe vanden weeden daer op ghestelt heeft gesconcken tot eenen inbijte - xii d. gr.'; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 236.

42 See the State Archives Anderlecht, Archive of the Capital Church of St Michael and St Gudula, 2.655, fol. 135<sup>v</sup>; Placide Lefèvre, 'Obsèques et sépultures d'artistes à Bruxelles au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Pictura*, 2 (1945), 39-41, for Willem the embroiderer, and Brussels, Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn, B 1.147, fol. 11, for Willem de Meester.

43 In 1502-03, a generous individual gave 7 *stuivers* for the making of the mantel, and the trimming and tassels were purchased in 1503-04. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 45 and 64.

44 The provosts may have collected these offerings themselves, although there is mention in the accounts of five or six women who were paid a *stuiver* apiece to carry out the task; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 35 and 49.

capable of carrying out the work; he placed another screen behind the altar while making several other repairs and additions to the chapel.<sup>45</sup>

Just keeping things in good order required the employment of a professional artist such as Antoon Wittric.<sup>46</sup> A Brussels burgher up until 1506, Wittric was a member of the *steenbickeleren* guild, which included masons and both stone and woodcarvers. He joined at least as early as 1479 and became an officer in 1501.<sup>47</sup> First, he repaired the confraternity's tabernacle when it was moved.<sup>48</sup> Then in 1500-01, Wittric carved large capitals on wooden columns and worked on the choir seating.<sup>49</sup> Finally in 1506-07, he carved two more capitals and again repaired the tabernacle.<sup>50</sup> All of this amounts to some rather minor commissions, yet this does not appear to have been because of a lack of skill. For example, he carved an altar retable for the church fabric of St John the Baptist in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek.<sup>51</sup> However, Wittric was not a member of the confraternity, and when it came to the more significant commissions, the provosts simply seem to have preferred to hire Jan II Borreman, one of their own.

Borreman was in charge of providing one of the confraternity's single most important pieces of statuary: an image of Our Lady. There was already a figure of the Holy Virgin on the chapel's altar, where it seems to have remained until 1513-14, when the accounts state that it was sold for 12s. 6d.<sup>52</sup> Yet a gift 'to help' fund a new statue was made in 1499, and in 1500-01, Borreman was paid £2 10s. for carving it.<sup>53</sup> As usual, the figure was immediately polychromed for a cost of £3 – an expense only partially covered by a further gift of 21d. – and the new statue was placed in the chapel.<sup>54</sup> The following year, Borreman

45 'Gielis van halle van dappoert metten scutsel ende banck, 17s. 6d.'; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 12 and 26. The entry is ambiguous as it is not clear if the payment was for the production or merely the placement of these items and if they were associated with one another. Also unclear is whether this bench is actually the one gifted to the confraternity by Philip the Fair and simply installed by Van Halle. We do not know what year the duke donated it, just that it survived to be restored by the Archdukes; see *Liber authenticus*, fols 43<sup>v</sup>-48<sup>r</sup>. Yet while the later inventory does list one bench with two doors, even if this were the same item, the document does not link it with Philip, or the *apporte*; see ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 48. Nor does it seem likely that the accounts would have failed to mention Philip's name as a patron when they do list other benefactors. Furthermore, Tine L. Meganck and Sabine van Sprang suggest in their chapter that Philip's gift may in fact have been one of stalls, not a mere 'bench'. Finally, our source discusses the 'apporte' as though it were itself a structure, but this is rather unusual; originally the term referred only to the offerings themselves and their place of collection described as a bench, lectern, or other such piece of furniture. This one, whether with bench and screen or not, appears to have been a freestanding cabinet with locking doors; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 8 and 108. See Antoon Viaene, 'Appoort. Een term uit de kerkelijke boekhouding in Vlaanderen 1300-1600', *Handelingen Genootschap 'Société d'Emulation' Brugge*, 103 (1966), 87-101. Nevertheless, the 'apporte' was a featured item in the chapel: the candelabra delivered by vander Goten in 1506-07 was intended to highlight the inscription above it; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 132.

46 Antoon Wittric is also known as Anthonis van Wittriet.

47 For more information on the *steenbickeleren*, see Daniel De Stobbeleir, 'Le nombre des nouveaux membres et la corporation des maçons, tailleurs de pierre, sculpteurs et ardoisiers bruxellois (1388-1503)', in *Hommage au professeur Paul Bonenfant*, ed. by Maurice A. Arnould and others (Brussels: Université Libre, 1965), 293-333; Jozef Duverger, *De Brusselsche steenbickeleren. Beeldhouwers, bouwmeesters, metselaars in de XIV<sup>e</sup> en de XV<sup>e</sup> eeuw* (Ghent: A. Vyncke, 1933).

48 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 11.

49 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 25-26.

50 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 132.

51 Duverger, *De Brusselsche steenbickeleren*, Name Register; C. Van de Velde, 'The Sixteenth Century', in *The Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp*, ed. by Willem Aerts (Antwerp: Fonds Mercator, 1993), p. 180, where the name of the stone carver is spelled Anthonis Wytack. It is interesting to note that *De Violette*, the chamber of rhetoric that merged with the *De Lelie* in 1507, had a long history of involvement with Sint-Jans-Molenbeek; see Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 50-51. Perhaps Wittric could have gained commissions elsewhere via his association with the confraternity.

52 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 7 and 293.

53 'Item tot behulp van een Nieuw marien beelde ontfangen van mijn Jouffrouwe van pe - iiiii s. vi d.'; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 4 and 26.

54 Original notation: 7 stuivers, see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 21, 26, and 38.



was responsible for producing the statue of an angel for which he was paid 30s.; this figure was also polychromed upon completion for 20s.<sup>55</sup>

The accounts of 1508-09 show that carvings depicting the Annunciation, described the following year as statues of Our Lady and the Archangel Gabriel to be placed on pillars before the chapel's altar, were ordered from Jan II Borreman for 40s.<sup>56</sup> The payments were made in instalments: an advance of 15s. upon ordering, 20s. in 1509-10, and the remaining 5s. in 1510-11.<sup>57</sup> This method of payment was a typical move for the cash-strapped confraternity, which was also not above taking advantage of artists' devotion. In 1513-14, for example, Borreman waved 30s. of an agreed upon fee of 200s. for four carvings depicting Mary's Seven Sorrows – referred to in the source as 'poenten' – agreeing to take the rest of the money in instalments: £6 10s., with a further £2 to be paid later on.<sup>58</sup> The same piecemeal payment scheme applied to Borreman's last mention in the accounts: for his work on the fifth sorrow in 1515-16, he received a new advance of 5s., followed by payments of 3s., 10s., and a further 5s.<sup>59</sup>

However, despite being the confraternity's most prolific sculptor, Borreman was not the artist behind one of the confraternity's most visible works of art. In 1510-11, donations were made to aid in purchasing a new image of Christ to place on the crucifix carried in processions, and the artist was paid 25s. for the carving, which was to be painted.<sup>60</sup> The name of the sculptor is unclear but could be read to indicate Jacques Daret. This master became a burgher of Brussels in 1516, and during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, he carried out numerous commissions for various institutions in the city, religious and otherwise. Daret may also have been the same artist mentioned in 1514-15 in connection with creating another image of God for the confraternity.<sup>61</sup> If so, it would

<sup>55</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 51-52.

<sup>56</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 188 and 214. While locally made like French wooden 'altar angels', it seems somewhat unlikely that Borreman's figures were used as supports for curtains to enclose the altar, as Richard Randall states was common in northern churches. In such instances, four or six columns with angels affixed to the top were employed, usually holding candlesticks or instruments of the Passion. The accounts only mention this Annunciation set, plus the angel carved by Borreman in 1501-02, and neither its placement nor its attributes are mentioned; ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 51-52. See Richard H. Randall, Jr., 'Thirteenth Century Altar Angels', in *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University*, 18 (1959), 2-16 (pp. 8 and 10).

<sup>57</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 188, 'Item Jan borreman op de boodscap van onser vrouwen die coste ii lb. gr. betaelt xv s. gr.'; ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 214, 'Item Jan borreman van dat men hem sculdich vanden ij beelden die staen op de pilaren in onser vrouwen choir, voer den outaer – xx s. gr.'; ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 240, 'Item Jan borreman vander boodscap boven vij rijngulden die hij daer af ontfangen heeft noch v s. gr.'

<sup>58</sup> Original notation: 10 *Rhenish guilders* per piece, 6 *guilders* waved, see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 300. As one of our reviewers pointed out, these carvings may be comparable in appearance to the reliefs depicting the Seven Sorrows of Mary in the choir of the Grote Kerk in Breda, on the wall behind the monument to Frederik van Renesse. Yet our objects are of particular interest from an art historical perspective because the accounts are unclear as to where they were placed. If wooden, it would make sense for them to have been hung in the chapel, out of the elements, much as panels depicting the Stations of the Cross were displayed in sixteenth-century Catholic churches as a Poor Man's Bible. However, it appears that they may have been affixed to the outside of the building: a stonemason was hired to make holes in a wall to attach the scenes, while Jan van Yseren, together with a colleague, made shingled canopies to place above the first four. Van Yseren, who did other work for the Seven Sorrows, was likely a relative of Peeter van Yseren – both were members of *De Lelie*, both belonged to the confraternity from its inception, and Peter van Yseren served as provost in 1502-03 and 1503-04. See Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 45.

<sup>59</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 331. The additional 6d. worth of drinking money the confraternity paid him may have been for his apprentices, as was customary. The accounts also offer an intriguing detail here: the second payment was made 'dat men hem tachter was inde cluijse'. It could be that the confraternity may have been repaying him for a bar tab run up at an inn called 'The Hermitage'.

<sup>60</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 229, 236, and 235.

<sup>61</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 316.

seem that he specialized in these types of carvings; in 1511-12, a 'Jacquet, resident of the Coolmarkt' produced one for the almoners of Saint-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, the sculptors employed by the confraternity each seem to have had their own skill sets. Wittric, who we know was capable of highly skilled work, handled small odd jobs, as did one 'Hendrik', who was hired in 1506-07 to make among other things cabinets, a decorative screen behind the tabernacle, and pillars and arches to help frame various items.<sup>63</sup> Jacques Daret, if he is the sculptor mentioned in the accounts in association with the image of Christ, may have specialized in such carvings. Of the two confraternity members employed, Gielis van Halle and Jan II Borreman, the former appears to have focussed on decorative furniture and the latter provided the confraternity with several statues and other figurative works. While Borreman's close ties to the confraternity and willingness to defer payment were undoubtedly a factor in his employment, the quality of the St George retable now housed at the Royal Museum for Art and History in Brussels that bears his signature, as well as the sheer number of his attested commissions, makes it clear that proximity was not the only consideration. Rather, the confraternity placed a high value on hiring the right people and would turn to outside artists like Wittric or Daret when necessary, even if it may have cost them more.

### **The Painters: Making Careful Use of the Confraternity's Membership**

From the accounts, it appears that the confraternity employed far more painters than sculptors – or, at least, more who can be identified – but it did not pay them better than other artists. Rather, the confraternity paid its painters in accordance with the standards of the time, which dictated payment on the basis of the duration and difficulty of the labour, and the quality and amount of materials used, and not the intrinsic artistic value of the work produced.<sup>64</sup> Such was the case when the confraternity hired two painters in 1505-06, one with an established reputation and the other hitherto unknown, to work on the same piece. In return, they each received the usual daily wage for painters of the time: 15d., which is comparable to that given to craftsmen employed by the confraternity.<sup>65</sup>

While a painter's work was far more varied, it was probably performed according to the methods and styles of the time and consisted of routine, decorative tasks. Only a few inventive master artists of established reputation would have had the opportunity to produce an original piece of their own devising for the confraternity. Painted altarpieces and altar doors were ordered, but more frequently polychroming was requested for wooden or stone statues, the less expensive and more ephemeral canvas props and scenery for processions and plays, wall and vault decorations for the chapel, doors, windows and screens or other building elements, or furniture. Indeed, even the candle-rings on the candlesticks and the candles themselves were sometimes painted.<sup>66</sup>

62 Eugène Frankignoulle and Paul Bonenfant, 'Notes pour servir à l'histoire de l'art en Brabant', *Annales de la Société Royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 39 (1935), 1-204 (p. 62).

63 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 132.

64 Edmond Roobaert, 'Een prinselijke bruiloft in Brussel in 1565 en de schilderwerken in het paleis op de Coudenberg. Het profiel van de Brusselse schilder in de 16de eeuw: archivalische gegevens', *Oud Holland*, 117 (2004), 1-32 (pp. 21-27).

65 The hitherto unknown Peter vander Wouwere spent two days painting the processional piece and the provost Joris Schernier a further thirteen. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 106, 161, 185, and 301.

66 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 52.

Such work appears to been tendered to one of the confraternity's founders, the aforementioned Joris Schernier van Coninxloo, by preference. In 1506-07 alone, the provost painted the tabernacle, the inside of an *ammarisen* or aumbry, and decorated the red wall above the altar with small lilies, the symbol of both the chamber of rhetoric and the Virgin.<sup>67</sup> In 1507-08, he polychromed the figures on the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>68</sup> Over the course of twelve days in 1513-14, he carried out further decorative tasks, probably with the assistance of a journeyman, one Andries Veylen, who received 12d. a day.<sup>69</sup>

Another Coninxloo and confraternity founder, Cornelis Schernier, also performed small jobs for the confraternity – indeed, he is the first painter to appear in the accounts.<sup>70</sup> For example, he primed portions of the lectern, whitened and glazed elements of the Holy Sepulchre, painted the base of the altar, coloured the trellis of the choir screen red and 'seeded' small lilies across it, and painted a wall red as well, the start of the colour scheme Joris later continued. All told, Cornelis' efforts made him 17s. richer.<sup>71</sup> He carried out further decorative work in 1507-08 when he painted the *wintberch* or bargeboard.<sup>72</sup> His only substantial commission came in 1502-03, when he was hired to polychrome Borreman's angel for 20s.<sup>73</sup> Just as was often the case with the sculptor, he was not paid all at once and in 1504-05 received a back payment of 12d. for his work.<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, just painting Borreman's sculptures was enough to keep several artists of varying degrees employed. In 1500-01, Cornelis Capenbergh, a competent but not particularly illustrious painter, guild official, and one of Borreman's fellow confraternity members, polychromed the sculptor's statue of Our Lady for £3.<sup>75</sup> Another, Jan van den Dale, member of both the confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows and *De Violette*, was famous as a poet if nothing else. Jozef Duverger states that his surviving artwork – one polychromed piece and a tabernacle – is not spectacular.<sup>76</sup> And while renowned for the tapestry designs he created for Jan de Roy, the Brussels weaver, around 1520, his work for the confraternity was not particularly original: in 1513-14 he polychromed the first scene

67 An aumbry was a kind of cabinet, either free-standing or a wall niche, formerly used for storing vessels or the reserved sacrament; see Jonathan Goodall 'Aumbry', in *New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. by Paul F. Bradshaw (London: SCM Press, 2005), p. 33; ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 133.

68 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 155. This item appears to have been in the chapel when the confraternity took it over. Though it was consecrated so that they could employ it in the service of their cult, there is no mention in the accounts of its construction; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 7. A Holy Sepulchre, or 'Holy Grave', could vary widely in appearance, from a stone tomb to a simple pit. That this one had figures suggests a rather more elaborate set-up. See Charlotte Stanford 'From Bishop's Grave to Holy Grave: The Construction of Strasbourg Cathedral's St. Catherine Chapel', *Gesta*, 46 (2007), 59-80, Caroline Bynum, *Wonderful Blood* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 60-61, and Poul Grindler-Hansen, 'Public Devotional Pictures in Late Medieval Denmark', in *Images of Cult and Devotion, Function and Reception of Christian Images in Medieval and Post-Medieval Europe*, ed. by Søren Kaspersen and Ulla Haastrup (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2004), pp. 229-44.

69 Original notation: 4 stuivers, see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 299.

70 This particularly active member of the family still awaits further research; see Placide Lefèvre, 'Travaux exécutés à la collégiale Sainte-Gudule à Bruxelles par les peintres Corneille Coninxloo Père et Fils', *Pictura*, 2 (1945), 90-93; D'Hondt, *Extraits des comptes du domaine de Bruxelles*, see Index; Edmond Roobaert, 'De Brusselse seculiere clerus als opdrachtgever van schilders in de 16de eeuw', *Archief- en Bibliotheekwezen in België* (2010), 90, 87-124, see Index; Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, pp. 66-69.

71 In 1500-01, he received a further 6s. for the work (see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 13 and 27), which suggests that it may have taken more time and labour than he had originally estimated.

72 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 160.

73 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 52.

74 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 80.

75 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 26. For more on Capenbergh, see Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, pp. 63-64 and 67-8; Roobaert, 'De Brusselse seculiere clerus', pp. 93, 94, and 119.

76 Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, p. 80.

in the Seven Sorrows series produced by Borreman.<sup>77</sup> In what is apparently a later addition to the accounts, the third bookkeeper inserted 'aent gout en stoffe' (for gold and pigments) at the end of the entry, suggesting that the painter did not claim any fee for the labour, possibly out of devotion, and was satisfied with reimbursement for the materials used.<sup>78</sup>

It is not clear whether Colijn de Coter, churchwarden of St Gorik, worked for the confraternity despite having been a member and having collaborated with both Van den Dale – his son-in-law and student, according to Duverger – and Borreman elsewhere.<sup>79</sup> There is one 'Colijn' listed in the account of 1502-03, but no last name is given, and it was not a large job: painting the frame of 'his' *tafereel* for the princely sum of 2s.<sup>80</sup> It could be that this master, who had certainly already won his spurs as an artist by that time, had either donated a painting to the chapel or received a commission for one, but finding definitive confirmation of it has proven difficult. In 1499-1500, the accounts mention that the confraternity already owned an image of the Crucifixion.<sup>81</sup> And we know that there was a large painting of Our Lady on the altar when the confraternity moved into the chapel, and the accounts record that extensions were attached to it in 1501-02.<sup>82</sup> Both would have been serious works of art, and De Coter would have been a logical choice for any such commissions. However, while it seems unlikely that Pertcheval, the confraternity's industrious keeper of the accounts at the time, would have failed to mention such an important donation or commission, he did not indicate any other origin for these works.<sup>83</sup>

It is equally unclear who was responsible for an item mentioned under miscellaneous expenses from 1511-12, which state that iron hooks were purchased to hang a *tafereel* by one 'master Jan' in the St Jacob guesthouse, which was later moved back to the chapel of Our Lady.<sup>84</sup> This may have been by the hand of Jan van Roome, a member of *De Lelie* and the confraternity who occasionally carried out work for the provosts. However, while Van Roome was referred to in the accounts as a master more than once, his preference for designing rather than doing means that not all of the early sixteenth-century works ascribed

77 Edmond Roobaert, 'De Brusselse tapijtindustrie rond 1520. Tapijthandelaars, grotere en kleinere weefateliers, legwerkers in loondienst en kartonschilders', *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis*, 71 (2002), 3-46 (pp. 35-40).

78 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 301.

79 *Liber authenticus*, fol. 167<sup>v</sup>. See Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, pp. 68 and 81. De Coter collaborated with the Borreman workshop (Jan II, his brother Paeschier, and Jan III) on an altarpiece centred on the Virgin for the Strängnäs Cathedral in Sweden; see *Het meesterlijke atelier. Europese kunstroutes (Sde-18de eeuw)*, ed. by Roland Recht and others (Brussels: Museum voor Schone Kunsten/Mercatorfonds, 2007), pp. 128-29; Kim W. Woods, 'Five Netherlandish Carved Altar-Pieces in England and the Brussels School of Carving c. 1470-1520', *The Burlington Magazine*, 138 (1996), 788-800 (pp. 791-92).

80 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 52. Caution must be exercised when interpreting 'tafereel' in the accounts. For example, the two that hung above the altar were little more than wood boards decorated with ex-votos, while the one listed as having been placed (but not purchased or commissioned) in the choir in 1500-01 showing the Apostles can be considered an actual painting; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 26.

81 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 10.

82 'Item Aen i groot tafereel voerden choir daer ons vrouwe Inne staet met tween oversprongen', see ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 12 and 40.

83 There is another mystery piece mentioned in the accounts of 1503-04: an image of Christ bearing the cross. No artist is listed as having been commissioned for the piece, and it is not clear if it was ever purchased. 'Item betaelt tot behulp vanden tafereele daer ons heer zijn cruce draegt, ij s. vj d. gr.', see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 65.

84 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 259.

to this extremely talented artist may have actually come from his hand, and so we should exercise caution before adding yet another to the list.<sup>85</sup>

More is known about the source of the altarpiece depicting Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows that the confraternity commissioned in 1503-04. Nearly every confraternity would have had a large carved retable or a painted altarpiece in its chapel. Such works of art not only inspired devotion among members of the confraternity, but they also attracted visitors and potential patrons. Oddly enough, this appears to be the only piece that the provosts decided to outsource. A readied panel, planed and primed, was shipped to a 'master Albrecht' in Leuven.<sup>86</sup> This was likely Albrecht Bouts, a leading artist of the time and the son of master painter Dirk Bouts.<sup>87</sup> What can account for the decision to employ someone so wholly unconnected with the confraternity? The provosts must have known several artists in Brussels with the skills to complete the painting, including a few among its own membership. On top of which, master Albrecht may not have been especially zealous in carrying out his commission: in 1505-06 he was sent *six* whole sausages as an incentive to speed up the work.<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, the central panel appears to have been finished by 1506-07 because that was the year that Joris Schernier gilded 'the scene from Lovens (Leuven)'.<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile, in 1504-05, the provosts organized the financing for the polyptych's side panels, and master Jan van Roome received 2s. 6d. for the 'vidimus' or design of the doors.<sup>90</sup> With the collected monies, Valentin van Orley, father of the famous master Bernaert and a member of the confraternity, was paid £6 2s. 6d. 'for the portraits on the outside of Our Lady's altarpiece'.<sup>91</sup> However, judging by similar works of the time, these probably were not portraits but rather figurative representations based on the theme. The time and effort in arranging and organizing the work, which was carried out by several artists and in two different cities, demonstrates how important it was to the confraternity that they have a stunning centrepiece for the chapel.

Yet despite Bout's involvement in the altarpiece, which could have been due to availability, it is clear that the provosts preferred to rely on the confraternity's own members: the Scherniers, Van den Dale, Van Roome, Van Orley, and possibly De Coter, whether for larger, more important commissions or smaller, more insignificant work. Again, proximity to the confraternity and its leadership counted, as did skill. If Bouts were unable to live up to the standard set by his father, for example, it hardly seems likely that the provosts would have bothered going as far afield as Leuven to find an artist. Cost may have been a

<sup>85</sup> For example, Thomas Campbell, among others, has pointed out that while Jan van Roome was responsible for designing the *Miraculous Communion of Herkinbald* tapestry, he did not draw up the cartoons for the work, as has often been assumed. Rather, the contract specifies 'Philip den Schilder' as the cartoon artist, and so the ultimate product may reflect his style more than that of Van Roome. *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence, Exhibition Catalogue*, ed. by T. Campbell (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), pp. 137-38. Van Roome even collaborated with Loys van Boghem to design the church of St Nicolas of Tolentino in Brou along with its tombs of Margaret of Bourbon and Margaret of Austria, 'the ultimate manifestation' of Renaissance Netherlandish Gothic. See Ethan Matt Kavaler, 'Renaissance Gothic in the Netherlands: The Uses of Ornament', *The Art Bulletin*, 82 (2000), 226-51 (pp. 237-39).

<sup>86</sup> The account refers to the latter as 'whitening'. See ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 65 and 108. For preparatory painting techniques of the time, see Catheline Perier-d'Ieteren, *Colyn de Coter et la technique picturale des peintres flamands du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Brussels: Lefebvre et Gillet, 1985), p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> With the exception of a small gift to the almoners of St Gudula in 1529-30, see Valentine Henderiks, *Albrecht Bouts (vers 1460-1549)* (Brussels: Centre d'étude des primitifs flamands, 2011), pp. 25 and 33. The suggestion that Albrecht Bouts either resided or owned property in Brussels has not been confirmed by any documents originating in that city.

<sup>88</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 108.

<sup>89</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 133.

<sup>90</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 80.

<sup>91</sup> 'Item betaelt Valentijne van Orley voer de pointratuere buten op onser vrouwen tafele'. Van Orley also received 12d. drinking money for his assistants, original notation: 24 ½ Rhenish guilders (ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 80).

factor here as well; Van den Dale did work at cost on one occasion, and Cornelis Schernier accepted back payments, but otherwise it appears that the confraternity's painters worked for standard rates, at least when paid by the day.

There were assuredly more artists employed, however, than those the accounts indicate because the officers of public institutions, including those belonging to church fabrics and fraternities, were not required to mention the craftsmen or artists by name in the records. For example, the confraternity did not always keep track of who kept up the chapel's paintwork, so while we know that Father Gheerde vander Horst contributed 2s. 3d. towards the whitening of a wall, we do not know who actually did the work.<sup>92</sup> He may have been a member of the confraternity, or he may have been an apprentice working for one of the confraternity's members. However, the nature of the work and the fact that no name is recorded indicate that the individual painter involved – while part of the confraternity's network of patronage – was not considered a particularly significant member of it.

### Artists, the Annual Processions, and Plays: Increasing the Confraternity's Public Profile

The entries in the accounts regarding the annual procession in Brussels also reveal a great deal about the confraternity's patronage of the arts simply because it was a major production and one that grew year after year with the addition of new wagons to accompany the statue of Our Lady through the streets of Brussels on her bier. The scale and ambitiousness of such an event could have forced the provosts to turn to outside help out of necessity, but by and large, that does not appear to have been the case. The first procession, which took place in 1505, naturally centred on a scene depicting Mary's Seven Sorrows in as many 'ronden' or rounds.<sup>93</sup> The priming and painting of these canvasses cost 2s. 6d., and the design was from the hand of Jan van Roome. Five of the paintings were covered via donations, and the confraternity contributed a further £1 6s. 3d., 3s. of which came out of Joris Schernier's own pocket.<sup>94</sup>

In 1509-1510, Jan van Roome was again at work, painting Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows and St Gorik on one of the processional pieces, possibly a painted canvas, fastened to a support structure on one of the procession *huyskens*.<sup>95</sup> It appears that this work was done almost as a favour to the confraternity, which only paid 3s. 1.5d. for the work, and on at least one occasion Joris Schernier seems to have earned more than Van Roome while working on the same item.<sup>96</sup> In 1506-07, the latter was given 7s. 3d. for a piece to be used in the procession of Our Lady, and this piece could have been the same one that Schernier was paid 17s. 6d. for painting.<sup>97</sup> This difference does not, however, mean that Van Roome was donating his services; it may be that he was merely the designer, as he so often was.

92 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 36 and 39.

93 The term here may derive from the roundels employed in stained glass windows, either as separate circular pieces or incorporated into a larger work. The exact configuration in this context is unclear.

94 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 75. Other painted elements were also commissioned, such as fourteen large scrolls 'with scripture', banderoles with text, fourteen small scrolls, and a crown of thorns, which all carried the meaning of the presentation to the audience; see ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 82.

95 This account entry probably refers to painted figures, rather than props or *tableaux vivants*. A *stuk* or *huysken* was a wooden platform, sometimes vaulted, covered with canvasses at the front and sides, and carried by ten of the members via straps and poles in the confraternity's procession.

96 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 214. In actuality, they paid this sum to Jan van Roome's wife; compensating the spouse of a craftsman either *in natura* or with a small sum was a common practice often stipulated in a contract.

97 ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 133 and 130.

If Van Roome was indeed the designer, it would again demonstrate that the confraternity chose artists according to their talents rather than who was immediately available. However, it must be said that Schernier was well positioned to receive such commissions and did fairly well out of it. In 1505-06, he made 15d. a day while working with Peter vander Wouwere on a *tableau vivant* depicting the Road to Calvary; in 1508-09, he made 30d., the standard rate, for two days working on 'pieces'; in 1509-10, he painted one element and decorated another piece with a temple, possibly as part of a scene showing the Presentation in the Temple, which was the first sorrow, making him 17s. 6d. the richer; and he later polychromed the crucifix carried during the procession, which netted him a further 15s.<sup>98</sup>

In 1508, in addition to the annual procession, the confraternity began putting on a cycle of yearly plays, each depicting one of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, first in St Gorik's churchyard and then later in the *Markt* / Grand Place.<sup>99</sup> This was yet another instance in which the provosts had to call upon artists' skills. Joris Schernier, for example, painted a canvas showing four children drowned by the Pharaoh in the Exodus for use in 1509.<sup>100</sup>

However, it is not always easy to determine from the accounts whether any particular painting commissioned by the confraternity portrayed figures or scenes for use in a play or a procession. For example, the two new 'pagan hats' and 'devils' skirts' that Cornelis Schernier painted on canvas in 1507-08 could have been used in either, as could the other accessories made from six more 'ells' of cloth purchased in 1510-11.<sup>101</sup> The following year, various props to help illustrate the Flight into Egypt were purchased from Josse van Loven, including lances, pagan hats, and six small shields for the cavalry. And while the accounts state that these were to be used during the procession, they could just have easily been used in a play.<sup>102</sup>

Whether their commissions were for a play, a procession, or both, Josse van Loven and Peter vander Wouwere were the only two named individuals involved in this aspect of the confraternity's activities that do not appear to have been part of the confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>103</sup> There were also anonymous artisans who helped to print and decorate the hundreds of small flags that were distributed, presumably for free, during the processions.<sup>104</sup> Overall, however, the provosts once again demonstrated their preference for hiring the confraternity's own artists, relying upon Jan van Roome and the Scherniers, Joris in particular, to design and paint the pieces for the processions and plays. Again, proximity was not necessarily the deciding factor as the choice of artists indicates that the confraternity wanted to ensure that its hard-won monies were used to best advantage. It made perfect sense to employ Van Rome, who would have been up to the task of designing eye-catching works on a large scale, alongside the Scherniers, who were no doubt already familiar with the production and staging of public spectacles via their association with *De Lelie*.

<sup>98</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 106, 186, 211, and 235.

<sup>99</sup> See Sleiderink, 'De dichters', pp. 62-65, for the involvement of 't *Mariacranske's* playwrights.

<sup>100</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 187 and 262.

<sup>101</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, pp. 160 and 234. For more on 'devils' skirts', see Luther Link, *The Devil. A Mask without a Face* (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), pp. 59-60.

<sup>102</sup> ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 260.

<sup>103</sup> Personal communication with Speakman Sutch, 13 September 2013.

<sup>104</sup> On the use of flags in processions, see Edmond Roobaert, 'Michiel van Coxcie, de schildersfamilie van Coninxloo alias Scherniers, en andere Brusselse schilders als ontwerpers en verlichters van 16de-eeuwse processievaantjes voor de broederschappen van de stad', *Volkskunde*, 101 (2000), 257-303.

TABLE 1: Commissions and Purchases by St Gorik's Confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows

Year of the Account Book	Commission/Purchase	Artist(s)	ASB, HS, Register 3837
1499-1500	Tin monstrance and ampoules	Unknown	pp. 7, 14
1499-1500	Two large candlesticks	Unknown	p. 14
1499-1500	Apporte, bench, and screen <sup>1</sup>	Gieles van Halle	p. 12
1499-1500	Screen behind the altar	Gieles van Halle	p. 12
1499-1500	Painting of Crucifixion <sup>2</sup>	Unknown	p. 10
1500-01	Wood capitals	Antoon Wittric	p. 25
1500-01	Statue of Our Lady	Jan II Borreman	p. 26
1500-01	Our Lady polychromed	Cornelis Capenbergh	p. 26
1500-01	Painting of the Apostles <sup>3</sup>	Unknown	p. 26
1501-02 <sup>4</sup>	Statue of an angel	Jan II Borreman	p. 51
1501-02	Extensions to painting of Our Lady <sup>5</sup>	Unknown	p. 40
1502-03	Latten chancel lectern	Jan van Nanoenen	p. 52
1502-03	Cast alter bell	Unknown	p. 52
1502-03	Angel polychromed	Cornelis Schernier	pp. 52, 80
1502-03	Monstrance gilded and burnished	Unknown	p. 52
1502-03	Mantel for statue of Our Lady <sup>6</sup>	Unknown	pp. 45, 64
1502-03	Frame of painting painted	'Colijn'	p. 52
1503-04	Large candleholder for altar	Unknown	p. 65
1503-04	Painting of Christ bearing the Cross <sup>7</sup>	Unknown	p. 65
1503-04	Altarpiece of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows	'Master Albrecht' Joris Schernier Jan van Roome Valentin van Orley	pp. 65, 80, 108, 133
1504-05	Two chasubles	Unknown	pp. 75, 82
1504-05	Procession paintings: Mary's Seven Sorrows	Jan van Roome	p. 75
1504-05	Procession elements: various	Unknown	p. 82
1505-06	<i>Tableau vivant</i> : Road to Calvary	Joris Schernier, Peter vander Wouwere	p. 106
1506-07	Iron candelabra	Jan vander Goten	p. 132
1506-07	Four candlesticks: two beaten, two latten	Unknown	p. 132
1506-07	Two wood capitals	Antoon Wittric	p. 132
1506-07	Decorative screen	'Hendrik'	p. 132
1506-07	Pillars and arches	'Hendrik'	p. 132
1506-07	Cabinets	'Hendrik'	p. 132
1506-07	Inside of aumbry painted	Joris Schernier	p. 133
1506-07	Tabernacle painted <sup>8</sup>	Joris Schernier	p. 133

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Year of the Account Book	Commission/Purchase	Artist(s)	ASB, HS, Register 3837
1506-07	Wall above altar decorated	Joris Schernier	p. 133
1506-07	Procession painting: unspecified	Jan van Roome, Joris Schernier <sup>9</sup>	pp. 130, 133
1507-08	Holy Sepulchre polychromed	Joris Schernier	p. 155
1507-08	Bargeboard painted	Cornelis Schernier	p. 160
1507-08	Procession/play elements: 'pagan hats', 'devils' skirts'	Corenelis Schernier	p. 160
1508-09	Statues: Our Lady, Archangel Gabriel	Jan II Borreman	pp. 188, 214, 240
1508-09	Play painting: Exodus scene	Joris Schernier	p. 187
1509-10	Chandelier	Unknown	p. 215
1509-10	Procession paintings: Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, St Gorik	Jan van Roome	p. 214
1509-10	Procession paintings: Presentation in the Temple	Joris Schernier	p. 211
1510-11	Embroidery for vestments	'William'	p. 236
1510-11	Carving of Christ for processional crucifix	Jacques Daret (?)	pp. 229, 235, 236
1510-11	Procession crucifix polychromed	Joris Schernier	p. 235
1511-12	Painting: subject unknown <sup>10</sup>	'Master Jan'	p. 259
1511-12	Procession/play elements: Flight into Egypt <sup>11</sup>	Josse van Loven	p. 260
1513-14	Cast latten bulbs for roof	Joos de Ketelaar	p. 300
1513-14	Carvings of Mary's Seven Sorrows (nos 1-4)	Jan II Borreman	p. 300
1513-14	Mary's first sorrow polychromed	Jan van den Dale	p. 301
1513-14	Procession pieces: unspecified	Joris Schernier, Andries Vervlen	p. 299
1514-15	Carving of image of God	Jacques Daret (?)	p. 316
1515-16	Carving of Mary's fifth sorrow	Jan II Borreman	p. 331

<sup>1</sup> These items may or may not be part of a single structure, and it is not clear if Van Halle produced them or merely installed them.

<sup>2</sup> It is not clear if this was a purchase, a gift, or if it came with the chapel.

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear if this was a purchase, a gift, or if it came with the chapel.

<sup>4</sup> This date is an inference. The accounts state on page 51, the start of the bookkeeping for 1502-03, that the angel already stood in the chapel.

<sup>5</sup> This is just the first mention of the painting in the accounts, but it is clear that it was already there when the confraternity moved into the chapel.

<sup>6</sup> The entry only refers to sums collected to cover costs, while the exact year of its completion is unknown.

<sup>7</sup> It is not clear if this was ever actually purchased or if this was an extant painting (either a gift or a painting inherited by the confraternity) that needed some kind of repair work.

<sup>8</sup> Like the Holy Sepulchre sculpture, the tabernacle appears to have been in the chapel when the confraternity moved in.

<sup>9</sup> That they both worked on the same piece is a conjecture.

<sup>10</sup> It is not clear if this was a purchase, a gift, or if it came with the chapel, nor is it clear when it was obtained. This mention in this account just refers to the purchase of iron hooks for hanging it up.

<sup>11</sup> The accounts state that these were used for the procession but like many other processional elements could have been used to help illustrate the play.

### Conclusion: Skilled Artistry and the Role of Competition

Just as Emily Thelen's chapter on the hiring of singers for liturgical celebrations makes clear, the provosts, despite their financial constraints, still managed to hire skilled artists to contribute to the Brussels confraternity's *raison d'être*: the promotion and veneration of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin both in the relatively private services held in their chapel in St Gorik and in public through the use of plays and processions. In both contexts, craftsmen, sculptors, and painters were required to help bring the message to the people. Yet the identities of those charged with outfitting Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows with the basic necessities required for holding services are, by and large, unknown, as are their possible ties to the confraternity. Of the two known artists who were not members of the confraternity, Jan van Naoenen and Jan vander Goten, we know that both came from well-known families of highly skilled craftsmen in Brussels and that the former was connected with the Borreman workshop.

We can say with rather more certainty that the confraternity rarely employed non-members to fill the commissions for sculptures and paintings, and such partisanship appears to have been standard practice, at least for confraternities that began as artisanal associations. The painters, stained glass artists, and goldsmiths who took part in the day-to-day management of the brotherhood of St Eloy, for example, were routinely requested to produce decorative elements for the confraternity's chapel or cult objects for use during the services.<sup>105</sup> However, the Seven Sorrows confraternity's unique relationship with *De Lelie*, or '*t Mariacranske*', as it later became, meant that they did not have to settle for second best. Both the chamber of rhetoric and its confraternity included many top artists, and they could be prevailed upon to accept lower fees, payment in instalments, or even – as may have been the case with Jan van den Dale – to do the work at cost. And in terms of promoting the devotion, it seems that this was quite a successful strategy: in 1511, the confraternity's ultimate patron, the Emperor Maximilian, expressed his approval of their 'very devout procession', conferred princely status upon their chapel, and raised the rhetoricians to the status of princely servants.<sup>106</sup>

Yet despite the court's promotion of the cult, the pattern of patronage exhibited by St Gorik's chapter of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows suggests that the rhetoricians who organized it were playing their own game. The commissions outlined in Table 1, incomplete as they are, show that the confraternity made many initial purchases that were simply meant to put the chapel in order. This pattern makes sense because, as Thelen points out in her chapter, liturgical celebrations and Masses were important parts of the cult's activities and Masses for the dead one of its major benefits. The devotional space of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows had to be ready for operation as quickly as possible; hence the early commissions for accoutrements, furniture, and even basic statuary.

However, around 1505 the nature of the commissions began to change. First, rather than continuing to make do with the painting of Our Lady it had inherited and then modified or renting the vestments of St Gorik's, the confraternity ordered its own chasubles and altarpiece. Next, they began to hold processions and elaborate on the interior of the chapel, purchasing more lighting fixtures and decorative elements and making outlays for improving on what they had. Finally, they branched out into plays and improving the external appearance of the chapter, with accessories for the roof and possibly even carvings.

<sup>105</sup> Frankignoulle and Bonenfant, 'Notes pour servir à l'histoire de l'art en Brabant', pp. 18-30.

<sup>106</sup> Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, p. 94 and Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 275.

This pattern of purchases seems to conform to that described by Trio in his research on Ghent's confraternities, with basic outfitting followed by the purchase of more extravagant items as funds allowed, an altarpiece first and foremost among them. Not only was this done to enhance the devotional space, but garnering prestige was an important motive as well, and that certainly seems to be the case here.<sup>107</sup> As Van Bruaene has shown, rhetoricians' chambers strived for precedence and honours, and not just among themselves, but against the archers' guilds as well.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, in his contribution to this volume, Sleiderink discusses the rivalry between *De Lelie*/*'t Mariacranske* with the *Grote Gilde* (Great Crossbow Archers Guild of Brussels).

This latter guild dominated the city's feast culture through both its annual procession to Our Lady of the Sands, the related plays devoted to the Seven Joys of Mary, and the performances given by its own rhetoricians. And while *De Lelie* was increasingly paid to perform at public functions from 1486 onwards – such as the celebrations held to commemorate peace with France, the christening of Archduchess Eleanor, and the birth of Charles V – it seems they still regularly lost to the *Grote Gilde* in the rhetoricians' competitions held during various festivities.<sup>109</sup> The confraternity's patronage of craftsmen and artists could reflect *De Lelie's* struggle to gain prestige, in which they may have used the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows as another vehicle for competition.<sup>110</sup> Such rivalry could help to explain the effort poured into the procession and later on the plays. With regard to their success, Sleiderink points out in his chapter that it is difficult to say whether Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows ever managed to achieve the same level of devotional fervour that the well-established devotion at Our Lady of the Sands had obtained, while Van Bruaene is certain that *De Lelie's* efforts in this area had a positive effect on their position in the feast culture of Brussels.<sup>111</sup>

This competition may have also driven some of the confraternity's choices in *who* it hired. Of the princely rhetoricians, Jan II Borreman and Joris Schernier carried out the greatest number of commissions and this must, at least in part, be linked with the fact that they were both counted among its provosts, Schernier for many years. Judging by the commissions they received, Borreman was up to the task of handling the most important sculptures, but Joris does not seem to have been trusted to execute the most demanding or original works. Rather, the provosts employed leading masters such as Jan van Roome or Jan van den Dale more than once and even turned to an apparent outsider, Albrecht Bouts, for the central panel of the all-important altarpiece.<sup>112</sup>

When commissioning works, skills and ability apparently counted for more than membership or proximity to the confraternity's leadership. This suggests that no matter

<sup>107</sup> Trio, *Volksreligie*, pp. 248 and 260-61.

<sup>108</sup> Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille. Rederijkerskamers en de Stedelijke Cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), pp. 218-26.

<sup>109</sup> Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum*, pp. 85-92.

<sup>110</sup> For more on this rivalry, see the chapter by Remco Sleiderink in this volume. For the cult of Our Lady of the Sands in particular, see Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c. 1420-1530* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 242-45.

<sup>111</sup> Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>112</sup> This competition may also help to clarify what seems – on the face of it – a rather odd purchase in 1508-09: two statues representing the Annunciation, which was counted as the first of Mary's Seven Joys. In her chapter of this volume, Dagmar Eichberger states that having representations of both the sorrows and joys in one devotional space was not a unique combination.

how short of funds they may have been, quality came first. Their personal aesthetic values aside, well-made, beautiful objects or eye-catching public displays were more likely to inspire devotion, expand the Marian cult, and increase the prestige of *De Lelie/t Mariacranske*. However, the precise meaning of the laconic entries in the accounts is not always evident, probably at least in part because the keepers of these accounts were well-acquainted with the matter at hand, as well as the people involved, and so they omitted what they considered to be excessive details, including precise descriptions of the works commissioned. Despite these lacunae, this examination of their records has made clear that the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows in Brussels was not only an important patron of the arts during the early sixteenth century, but also that it was highly selective, relying heavily upon an established network of local artists.

### Epilogue: Works that Survived into the Seventeenth Century

How many, if any, of the items described in this chapter survived the later religious upheavals is unknown. There are a few entries in the late seventeenth-century inventory of the confraternity's various properties and belongings that are possibly related to the items described in the accounts.<sup>113</sup> For example, the inventory lists a number of undated 'copere' and 'kopere' candle holders as well as a type of chandelier.<sup>114</sup> If the author meant 'latten' or copper alloys such as brass or bronze, then perhaps these are among the earliest fittings purchased for the chapel. Delicate items such as a set of chasubles are also listed, including one in red and another with red stripes, as well as several cushions.<sup>115</sup> However, the accounts only mentioned two, and they are not described in enough detail to make a positive identification here.<sup>116</sup>

With regard to paintings, most of those in the inventory are clearly dated to the seventeenth century, yet two could relate to an item in the accounts: a painting of the Seven Sorrows depicted between poems with the date of the confraternity's founding and a painting with two doors.<sup>117</sup> Either of these could refer to the painting of Our Lady to which extensions were added in 1501-02. If so, the additions may have converted a basic painting into an object more typically associated with the cult – like those with a central image accompanied by text given by Jan van Coudenberghe to the three original confraternities in Bruges, Abbenbroek, and Reimerswaal, or Palencia Cathedral's *Altar de Nuestra Señora de la Compasión* as described by Rosario Inés Granados Salinas.<sup>118</sup> Finally, the inventory lists a bench with two doors;<sup>119</sup> it is possible that this refers to the bench installed in the chapel by Gieles van Halle. It must be stressed that all of these identifications are highly speculative. The accounts have an entirely different function than the later inventory and so do not provide detailed descriptions of most of the items contained therein.

113 For a complete transcription of this document, see Brecht Dewilde and Bram Vannieuwenhuyze, 'De zeventiende-eeuwse inventaris van de broederschap van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van de Zeven Weeën in Brussel', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis*, 180 (2014), in press. See also the chapter by Brecht Dewilde and Bram Vannieuwenhuyze in this volume.

114 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 32.

115 ASB, HA, Register 1499, pp. 40-41.

116 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 112.

117 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 46.

118 Rosario Inés Granados Salinas, 'Sorrows for a Devout Ambassador. A Netherlandish Altarpiece in Sixteenth Century Castile', in *POTESTAS. Religión, Poder y Monarquía*, 1 (2008), 101-29 (pp. 104-07 and 113-14).

119 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 48.

# VISUALIZING THE SEVEN SORROWS OF THE VIRGIN

## Early Woodcuts and Engravings in the Context of Netherlandish Confraternities\*

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In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Netherlandish and German artists produced large numbers of prints, book illuminations, panel paintings, and sculptures that paid homage to the popular cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin. These images were either produced for individual adherents to this cult or served the needs of a religious community, such as one of the confraternities that had formed from 1492 onwards in churches like Sts Peter and Paul in Reimerswaal, St Giles in Abbenbroek, the Thabor convent close to Mechelen, St Saviour in Bruges, the Carmelite monastery in Haarlem, Our Lady in Antwerp, St Rumbold in Mechelen, St Gorik in Brussels, and St Hippolyte in Delft.<sup>1</sup> This essay aims at shedding new light on the significance of printed images produced in the early years of this devotion that spread across Europe before the onset of the Reformation. While several studies concentrate on individual paintings by well-known

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<sup>1</sup> Two essays, one by Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene and the other by Susie Speakman Sutch, shed new light on the political implications of the Netherlandish movement under the leadership of Jan van Coudenberghe, priest and secretary to Archduke Philip the Fair (1478-1506) and focus in particular on the analysis of the earliest devotional booklets published by Gheraert Leeu in Antwerp (d. 1492), by Christiaan Snellert in Delft (1494), the Collaciebroeders in Gouda (1494), and Hendrick Eckert van Homberch, again in Antwerp (c. 1501). See Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, c. 1490-1520', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 252-78 (pp. 264-65); Susie Speakman Sutch, 'Politics and Print at the time of Philip the Fair', in *Books in Transition at the time of Philip the Fair. Manuscripts and printed books in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Low Countries*, ed. by Hanno Wijsman (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), pp. 231-55; and Emily C. Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows: Music, Devotion, and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2010).

Netherlandish and German artists,<sup>2</sup> the large body of woodcuts and engravings that was produced in the early modern period has not received much attention thus far.<sup>3</sup> These images on paper deserve to be studied and looked at in more depth as they played a crucial role in the daily life of the confraternity, serving both as an aid for devotion and as a vehicle for promoting this cult.

In the first part of the chapter, I will provide an introduction to the current state of research regarding all types of images that were produced for the cult of the Seven Sorrows in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In addition, I will briefly examine the devotional objects that once furnished the well-documented confraternity chapels in Brussels and Delft in order to understand which types of objects the members of the confraternity favoured in the early period. In the second part of this essay, I will introduce a group of images on paper that were produced in different parts of the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands. These prints give rise to a range of questions concerning the specific nature of devotional images on paper. What was the preferred iconography selected for these prints and how did motives travel from one workshop to the other? What do these prints tell us about the devotional and/or theological concerns of the day, and how were they used by their owners? While it will not be possible to link one of the existing prints unequivocally to the Brussels confraternity, there are several woodcuts that may well have been used by this confraternity. The high-quality engravings that are associated with the famous pilgrimage centre in Delft offer themselves for comparison, as they can be associated with a specific site, showing how such prints were used by a confraternity.

2 Such paintings were produced by Albrecht Dürer, Adriaen Isenbrant, Bernard van Orley, Quentin Massys, Jan Jost van Kalker, Heinrich Douverman, Simon Bening, Pieter Pourbus, and others. See for example, Adriaen Isenbrandt: *Virgin of Sorrows*, right wing of the opened diptych, in grisaille (Bruges, Church of Our Lady), *Virgin of Sorrows* from the altarpiece, inner panel (Brussels, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten van België); Quentin Massys, *Virgin of Sorrows* from the Madre de Deus convent in Lisbon (Lisbon, Gulbenkian Museum); Pieter Pourbus, *Virgin of Sorrows*, central panel of the Van-Belle triptych (Bruges, St James's Church). For secondary literature and reproductions, see Carol M. Schuler, 'The Sword of Compassion: Images of the Sorrowing Virgin in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1987); Klaus Niehr, 'Dürers Bild der Sieben Schmerzen Mariens und die Bedeutung der retrospektiven Form', *Marburger Jahrbuch der Kunstwissenschaft*, 36 (2009), 117-43; Hugo van der Velden, 'Diptych Altarpieces and the Principle of Dextrality', in *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, ed. by John O. Hand and Ron Spronk (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, 2006), pp. 124-55; Ulrike Wolff-Thomsen, *Jan Joest von Kalker, ein niederländischer Maler um 1500* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1997); Lioba Schollmeyer, *Jan Joest. Ein Beitrag zur Kunstgeschichte des Rheinlandes um 1500* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2004); Rosario Inés Granados Salinas, 'Sorrows for a Devout Ambassador. A Netherlandish Altarpiece in Sixteenth Century Castile', *POTESTAS. Religión, Poder y Monarquía. Revista del Grupo Europeo de Investigación Histórica*, 1 (2008), 101-29. Joachim M. Plotzek, *Des Gebetbuch Kardinals Albrecht von Brandenburg aus der Handschriften-Sammlung Ludwig* (Mainz: Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum, 1982); and Paul Huvenne, *Pieter Pourbus meester-schilder; 1524-1584* (Bruges: Gemeentekrediet, 1984). For anonymous Seven Sorrows works, see anonymous Netherlandish, *Virgin of the Seven Sorrows*, oil on wood, 1526, Aix-la-Chapelle, Suermondt Ludwig Museum, inv. no. GK 357, in Anna Koopstra, 'Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-van-Zeven-Weeën / Die Sieben Schmerzen Mariens. Ein Relief und das Umfeld seiner Entstehungsgeschichte', in *Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Van-zeven-Weeën. Ein Sieben-Schmerzen-Mariens-Relief, sein spätgotischer Ursprung und sein späterer Abdruck. Kopie oder Krimi?* ed. by Christine Vogt (Aachen: Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, 2007), p. 4; and anonymous German, *Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, 1536, originally from the St Vitus chapel of the St John's church in Schwäbisch Gmünd, in Peter Spranger, *Wallfahrtskirche St. Salvator, Schwäbisch Gmünd* (Herlikoven: Fischer Druck, 2006), pp. 10 and 17.

3 Ursula Weekes, *Early Engravers and their Public. The Master of the Berlin Passion and Manuscripts from the Convents in the Rhine-Maas Region, c. 1450-1500* (London: Harvey Miller, 2004); see also Ursula Weekes, 'Convents as Patrons and Producers of Woodcuts in the Low Countries around 1500', in *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-century Europe* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2009), pp. 259-76.

## Visual Imagery for the Cult of the *Mater dolorosa* or the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows

The only comprehensive study ever undertaken on the iconographic tradition of the Seven Sorrows cult is the doctoral dissertation by Carol M. Schuler. She has investigated the artistic and theological framework in which the notion of the *Mater dolorosa* was developed.<sup>4</sup> Schuler lists more than 316 visual representations of the Virgin with the 'sword of compassion', from its first appearance in the mid-thirteenth century up to the period before the outbreak of sixteenth-century iconoclasm and the ensuing religious wars.<sup>5</sup> She argues that in the course of the late Middle Ages, a shift took place from concentrating exclusively on the passion of Christ to emphasizing the grief and compassion of Mary. The term 'sword of compassion' refers to a central motive in the cult of the *Mater dolorosa*. Based on Simeon's prophecy from Luke 2.35, Mary's heart is pierced by a sword. This attribute soon became the poignant visual symbol of her pain and agony.<sup>6</sup> Mary now takes centre stage and the beholder participates in the drama by watching her emotive response to Christ's passion. In some of the more elaborate altarpieces, such as Bernard van Orley's triptych for the Granvelle family, the Virgin is depicted all by herself, sitting on the ground, absorbed in her grief, meditating over the death of her Son.<sup>7</sup>

Schuler's study provides a general overview and classifies the available images into four distinct groups. These groups are based on strictly formal criteria: a) images of the isolated *Mater dolorosa* surrounded by seven swords; b) images of the *Mater dolorosa* with one sword in a more complex iconographic context; c) polyptychs with the *Mater dolorosa* surrounded by seven scenes on distinct panels; and d) compact images with a central *Mater dolorosa* surrounded by seven scenes. Within the last group, a further distinction is made between scenes either in roundels or in square-shaped frames.<sup>8</sup>

According to Carol Schuler and Klaus Niehr, no dominant pictorial formula existed for the cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin before 1500, that is in the first decade of its flourishing.<sup>9</sup> It has not been possible to reconstruct a sequential development of the various iconographic types that have been proposed by Schuler, as the movement had many different centres of activities. It is thus important to note that there is no evidence for a central agency that successfully propagated one specific image. In the course of the early sixteenth century, there was a tendency to consolidate all elements into one single image: the mourning Mary with one or several swords either seated on the ground or in a niche.<sup>10</sup>

4 Schuler, 'The Sword of Compassion', pp. 124-45; see also Carol M. Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: Popular Culture and Cultic Imagery in Pre-Reformation Europe', *Simiolus* 21 (1992), 5-28. She treats the theme in a very broad manner, also including diptychs with Christ as a Man of Sorrows and Mary looking towards him in despair; see for example, Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 15, Fig. 8.

5 Schuler, 'The Sword of Compassion', pp. 329-52.

6 King James Version of the Bible: St Luke 2. 34-35: 'And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed'; <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A34-35&version=KJV>, consulted on 10 September 2013.

7 *De Bellini à Bonnard, chefs-d'œuvre de la peinture du Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie de Besançon*, ed. by Matthieu Pinette and Françoise Soulier-François (Paris: Pierre Zech éditeur, 1992), pp. 36-39.

8 Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', pp. 21-24. This classification is of limited value, as it does not sufficiently clarify the choices that patrons or artists made.

9 Schuler 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 21; Niehr, 'Dürers Bild der Sieben Schmerzen Mariens', p. 131.

10 This type of image corresponds to Schuler's fourth group.

With its main focus on seven scenes from the childhood and Passion of Christ, the cult made use of narratives that were paramount to the foundations of Christianity. While this set of seven images was central to the cult, the individual scenes could be arranged in many different ways. The Seven Sorrows could for instance be combined with complementary devotional images such as the Virgin in the Sun, the Holy Kinship, or the *Ecce Homo*. Images of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin were occasionally juxtaposed with depictions of the Seven Joys of the Virgin.<sup>11</sup>

Carol Schuler's research constitutes an important contribution to the study of this cult, as her analysis of the visual imagery addresses a number of crucial issues: the iconographic traditions, the religious foundations, and the political aspects of the cult of the Seven Sorrows. Due to the lack of scholarship in this field, the author does not, however, sufficiently acknowledge the significant role played by the confraternities as promoters of the new cult.<sup>12</sup> This aspect will be taken into account in the present study.

### The Confraternity Chapel as a Focal Point for Devotional Practice

In my view, it is essential to distinguish more pronouncedly between the artistic patronage of a confraternity that was in charge of a communal chapel and the commissions of individual donors who acted more or less on their own. The latter were primarily concerned with their personal salvation and that of their close family.<sup>13</sup> In many cases, such altarpieces were displayed in a private chapel or in religious spaces far removed from the local church that was frequented by the members of the Seven Sorrows confraternity.<sup>14</sup> These expressions of individual worship will be left aside in the ensuing investigation as they follow different parameters.

Confraternity chapels were sacred spaces in which members congregated either to participate in devotional exercises, to attend Mass, or to pray for a deceased fellow member. It can be assumed that all confraternity chapels were initially equipped with a representation of the sorrowful Virgin or *Mater dolorosa*. The devotional images displayed in the chapel of a local confraternity were thus intended to serve the community at large. Some of these religious sculptures and paintings in the confraternity chapels were venerated as miracle-working images and were linked with specific indulgences. In Delft, for instance, a Marian image from the confraternity's chapel that had been associated with numerous miracles was carried along in the annual processions that were organized by the confraternity. Printed images of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin were produced in large numbers in order to be available to those adherents of the cult who wished to possess a memento of their visit to a confraternity chapel or their participation in a procession.

To date, very few of these confraternity chapels have been analysed with regard to their original decoration with painted images and sculptures. This is partly due to the fact that the majority of these artefacts are now lost or can no longer be identified. Yet

<sup>11</sup> Schuler, 'The Sword of Compassion', pp. 267-68.

<sup>12</sup> The only research that has come out in the meantime concentrated on devotional books and musical manuscripts; see Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', pp. 38-45.

<sup>13</sup> See n. 3.

<sup>14</sup> A good case in point is the so-called Van de Velde Diptych by Adriaen Isenbrandt that was displayed in the church of Our Lady in Bruges, whereas the confraternity congregated in another church in Bruges, the Church of St Saviour. See Hugo van der Velden, 'Diptych Altarpieces and the Principle of Dextrality', pp. 124-55.



some such decorations are known to us through written sources. We thus have to combine the material evidence with the written documentation that records some of the original furnishings. In the following, I will summarize what is known about the numerous artefacts in these chapels. I will then investigate which motives were favoured in the printed material in order to explain the relationship of the iconography between the printed material and chapel decorations.

### Devotional Images for Three Churches: Reimerswaal, Bruges, and Abbenbroek

In his official account of the history of the Seven Sorrows cult, entitled *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissimae virginis Mariae* (1519), Jan van Coudenberghe states that he had three Marian paintings made for the churches in Reimerswaal, Bruges, and Abbenbroek.<sup>15</sup> Van Coudenberghe, who was serving as a priest at these three churches, had complemented the Marian images with a Latin text that described the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin and encouraged the beholder to meditate on the individual sorrows. From the outset, such images were employed as aids for meditation and their function was described explicitly in the devotional booklet issued by the representatives of the confraternity in July 1492.<sup>16</sup> This devotional tract entitled *Ghedenckenisse van de vij. weeden oft droefheyden onser liever vrouwen* was published in Antwerp by Gheraert Leeu. On the first page of the pamphlet, the illiterate members of the confraternity were encouraged to look at these images to exercise their devotions.

In Reimerswaal and Bruges, a half-length image of the sorrowful Virgin was displayed in the churches of Sts Peter and Paul and St Saviour. This image was based on the famous italo-byzantine icon from Santa Maria in Aracoeli that was venerated as one of the authentic portraits of the Virgin allegedly painted by St Luke himself.<sup>17</sup> The Aracoeli image shows the Virgin without child, her left hand held close to her chest, the right hand raised in mourning as if standing under the cross. Tim Graas has suggested that the painting commissioned for St Saviour in Bruges has survived in the church's treasury (Fig. 1).<sup>18</sup> The panel painting in question represents a late fifteenth-century adaptation of the archaic model in the style of Quentin Massys. In accordance with the Flemish style, the empathic

15 'Tres ymagines/ virginis in tabulis ad instar ymaginum per sanctum Lucam (ut fertur)/ depictarum depingi faceret: quas ea tempestate qua predictę angustię: & tot rerum adversarum calamitates in belgis desęvirent/ in tribus ecclesiis dedicavit & appendit', in Jan van Coudenberghe, *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissimae virginis Mariae de passione quae dicitur de septem doloribus* (Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519), sig. Aiiij (copy consulted: Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (KBR), II 85.807 A LP). See also Tim Graas, 'Verloren gegane Lukas-Madonna's te Reimerswaal en Abbenbroek', in *Christelijke iconografie: opstellen over iconografische aspecten van het Nederlands kerkelijk kunstbezit*, ed. by Paul le Blanc, Tim Graas and others (The Hague: Sdu uitgeverij, 1990), p. 18, n. 15.

16 'Dit is een seer devotie salige een profitelike ghedenckenisse van de vij. weeden oft droefheyden onser liever vrouwen' (Antwerp: Gheraert Leeu, 14 July 1492); see Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 257. The printer Gheraert Leeu joined the painters' guild in 1485-86; see Jan Van der Stock, *Printing Images in Antwerp: The Introduction of Printmaking in a City, Fifteenth Century to 1585* (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive, 1998), pp. 28-30.

17 Peter Verhoeven reports on these images and their significance in a letter he wrote to Jan van Coudenberghe on 20 January 1492. See Graas, 'Verloren gegane Lukas-Madonna's', pp. 12-26, 74-75; F. de Ridder, 'Brief van Petrus de Manso over de VII Weeden van Maria', *Mechlinia*, 2 (1922/23), 23-30; and Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', p. 1.

18 See Graas, 'Verloren gegane Lukas-Madonna's', p. 20, Fig. 5. Bruges, St Saviour, Virgin of Sorrows, 84 x 56.5 cm; <http://vlaamseprimitieven.vlaamsekunstcollectie.be/en/collection/mater-dolorosa>, here attributed to Jan van Eekele and dated 1491-94. On Bruges' ceremonial life, see Andrew Brown, *Civic ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges c. 1300-1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 293, 313, and 321.



FIGURE 1: Anonymous [Jan van Eecke ?], *Virgin of Sorrows*, undated, panel painting, 56.5 × 84 cm, Bruges, St Saviour, inv.no. 25. © KIK-IRPA, Brussels.

character of Mary is emphasized.<sup>19</sup> The Latin text on the frame is identical with the words used for the offertory in the Seven Sorrows Mass as published by Michel François de Lille in his *Quodlibetica* (c. 1494). The choice of this liturgical text lends further weight to the hypothesis that this was indeed the original painting used by the Bruges confraternity.<sup>20</sup>

The church of St Giles in Abbenbroek owned a copy of an equally important cult image from Rome – in this case a Virgin with the Christ child – that was based on the early medieval devotional picture that was kept in the church Santa Maria Maggiore.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the fifteenth century, these two cult images from Rome had been very popular north of the Alps and were frequently copied by Netherlandish and German painters and book illuminators.<sup>22</sup> Jan van Coudenberghe went a step further by equipping these popular images with a new devotional text and linking them closely with the new cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin.

### Furnishing the Chapel of the Brussels Confraternity in St Gorik

Based on the information in the account books of the Brussels branch of the confraternity, Edmond Roobaert and Trisha Rose Jacobs have demonstrated that already in 1499-1500 a painting of Our Lady stood on the altar in the chapel of the confraternity in the church of St Gorik in Brussels.<sup>23</sup> Another large panel with a depiction of the Virgin Mary was fitted with two 'extensions' in 1501-02.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, the confraternity's account book does not include any details about the particular iconography of these two images. It is not evident that these two paintings made a direct reference to the new cult at all, such as a depiction of the Virgin pierced by a sword.

In March 1499, a *Sepulchrum Domini* ('Heilig Graf') that was by then already in the chapel was consecrated by the suffragan bishop of Cambrai, Godevaert, Bishop of Dagen.<sup>25</sup> This kind of sculptural group corresponds to the Entombment of Christ, a

19 A mid-fifteenth-century copy based on the Aracoeli painting has been preserved in the St Rumbold's cathedral in Mechelen. See Maryan W. Ainsworth, "À la façon grèce": The Encounter of Northern Renaissance Artists with Byzantine Icons, in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, ed. by Helen C. Evans (New York/ New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/ Yale University Press, 2004), p. 547, Fig. 17.2.

20 See Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', pp. 86 and 121-22. The text on the frame quotes two passages from the Old Testament: II Kings 26 and Song of Songs 1. 12. According to the documentation on the website of KIK-IRPA, the text reads as follows: DOLEO SVPER TE IHESV FILI MI AMABILIS SVPER AMOREM MVLIERV // SICVT MATER VNICVM AMAT FILIUM ITA TE DILIGEBAM FASCVLVS MIRRE DILECTVS MICHI INTER VBERA MEA. / COMORABITVR.

21 Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 20; Niehr, 'Dürers Bild der Sieben Schmerzen Mariens', pp. 131-33; Figs. 12-15. Apart from these two locations, these Roman icons are not mentioned in conjunction with another confraternity. Nothing is known about the original painting in St Giles, which seems to have perished; see Graas, 'Verloren gegane Lukas-Madonna's', pp. 25-26.

22 Ainsworth, 'À la façon grèce', pp. 545-55; see also Laura Sobez, 'Der heilige Lukas als Maler der Madonna im Kontext von Marienfrömmigkeit und Schutzpatronat. Zur Verbreitung des Lukasmotivs im deutschsprachigen Raum', *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg*, 47, 2010 (2011), 11-38.

23 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 12: 'Item den voet onder douter tafele / metten tafereele daer onse vrouwe opstaet xv s'; I am grateful to Susie Speakman Sutch for providing additional information and discussing these entries with me.

24 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 40: 'Item Aen i groot tafereel voerden choir daer ons vrouwe Inne staet met twen oversprongen i lb. v s'.

25 ASB, HA Register 3837, p. 13: the Holy Sepulchre and the apostles were cleaned on this occasion. See also Justin E.A. Kroesen, *The Sepulchrum Domini through the Ages* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000). An almost contemporary statue can be found in the former collegiate church of St Martin and St Severus in Maifeldmünster; the *Sepulchrum Domini* in Our Lady's church in Reutlingen dates from 1510-20; see *Die Marienkirche in Reutlingen, Bedeutung, Geschichte, Kunstwerke*, ed. by Friedrich Keppeler (Reutlingen: Gryphius-Verlag, 1946).

scene that has its equivalent in the last of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin. The Brussels representation of the Holy Sepulchre probably encompassed several coloured statues, the dead body of Christ as well as the mourning Virgin and a group of followers. This choice of subject may be explained by the fact that the confraternity's chapel was also dedicated to the *Sepulchrum Domini*.<sup>26</sup> The emphasis on the Passion of Christ was stressed even further by a painting of the crucifixion that was rehung within the confraternity's chapel.<sup>27</sup>

In the same year, 1499, a new statue of Our Lady was commissioned from the famous Brussels sculptor Jan II Borreman (act. 1479-1520) for the Brussels confraternity.<sup>28</sup> This wooden statue was completed by Borreman a year later. Once it had been polychromed by Cornelis Capenbergh in 1500-01 it was placed in the confraternity chapel in 1501-02.<sup>29</sup> Again, the confraternity's account book does not provide any details on the specific iconography of this statue. Did the new sculpture represent a *Mater dolorosa* shown in mourning, impaled by the sword of compassion? Or was it perhaps a *Virgin with Child* or alternatively, a *Pietà* as in Delft? Additional information surfaces in the accounts in 1503-04 when the provosts of the confraternity record expenses for fitting the new statue with a mantle made from costly materials. This rules out the reconstruction as a *Pietà*, as it is not possible to dress the Virgin in a cloak if she holds her dead Son in her lap. A late fifteenth-century *Virgin and Child* was removed from the Seven Sorrows' chapel in connection with the demolition of the St Gorik's church and passed on to the church of Our Lady ter Rijke Klaren (Our Lady of the Rich Clares) in Brussels.<sup>30</sup> This wooden statue shows a seated Virgin in a frontal position; she holds her child with her left hand and touches her left breast with her right hand, a motive that is often associated with the Virgin's grief.

In 1503-04 the confraternity commissioned a panel painting of the Virgin of Sorrows from the famous Leuven painter Albrecht Bouts that was destined to become the central panel of an altarpiece.<sup>31</sup> The decoration on the foldable wings for this image was designed by the well-known Brussels painter Jan van Roome. The execution of the exterior decoration was left to another Brussels painter, Valentin van Orley. The new altarpiece was evidently in place in 1506-07, as some gilding work was undertaken by the Brussels painter Joris Schernier.<sup>32</sup> This is the first image in this chapel that unequivocally depicts the new image of the Virgin of Sorrows. It is remarkable that the central painting was commissioned from an artist outside of Brussels, despite the fact that many well-known artists lived in the vicinity of St Gorik's church and served in various roles in the confraternity.

In 1509-10, Borreman manufactured two additional sculptures-in-the-round representing Mary and the Archangel Gabriel.<sup>33</sup> They were placed on two columns that had been erected in front of the altar within the Seven Sorrows confraternity chapel.

26 See the chapter by Meganck and Van Sprang in this volume; a link between the entombment and the Virgin of Sorrows is later made by the Monogrammist S (Fig. 19).

27 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 10: 'Vinien den sloetmaker... [den] tafereel daer tcruce Inne staet te herhangene iii s. xviii mijten.'

28 See the chapter by Roobaert and Jacobs in this volume.

29 This new statue was favoured over an older statue of the Virgin that was finally sold in 1513-14.

30 I am grateful to Sabine van Sprang and Tine Meganck for this information (email correspondence, dated 3 October 2013). The wooden sculpture under discussion is called 'Onze Lieve Vrouw van Smarten'; see KIK-IRPA, object no. 20008493.

31 See the chapter by Roobaert and Jacobs in this volume.

32 See the chapter by Roobaert and Jacobs in this volume.

33 There is a Virgin of the Annunciation attributed to Johannes Borman [Jan Borreman] in the collegiate church of St Gertrude in Nivelles, painted wood, 135 cm high; KIK-IRPA, object no. 10001647.

The Archangel Gabriel's annunciation to the Virgin does not form part of the canonical sorrows of the Virgin, but represents a joyful event in Mary's life. Showing the joys and the sorrows of the Virgin in the same spatial context was not unique and did occur on several other occasions.<sup>34</sup> In the following years, Jan Borreman produced five reliefs depicting the sorrows of the Virgin.<sup>35</sup> It cannot be ascertained why he only carved five instead of seven panels, as one would expect. One possibility is that Borreman incorporated more than one scene in two of the individual panels in order to reach the standard number of Seven Sorrows. Equally enigmatic remains the location for which these reliefs were intended within the context of the confraternity's chapel. As Roobaert and Jacobs point out, these panels were fixed to the walls by a stonemason and provided with four canopies.

To summarize then, in the case of the Brussels confraternity that occupied this chapel from 1499 onwards, initially a large panel painting of the Virgin Mary was combined with a painting of the crucifixion and a three-dimensional representation of the Entombment of Christ, thus paying homage to the consecration of the chapel and to two of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin. Both images could serve as a focal point for the weekly meditations on the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin as prescribed by the founders of the confraternity.

The confraternity evidently felt the need to furnish their chapel even more lavishly by commissioning additional paintings and carved images. Soon after founding the Brussels chapter, the representatives of the confraternity approached two highly regarded artists to carve a new statue of the Virgin Mary and to produce a new altarpiece with the *Mater dolorosa*. By adding an Annunciation scene with Gabriel and Mary to the altar's decoration, the focus was directed even more strongly to the Virgin. Christ's passion does, however, remain an important theme within the chapel's decoration, as it is the subject of four of the Seven Sorrows: the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, and the Entombment.

As we shall see below, a particularly well-documented parallel case is the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin in Delft that developed from 1503 onwards.<sup>36</sup> The management and promotion of the miracles associated with the Seven Sorrows devotion at the church of St Hippolyte, the so-called Old Church (*Oude Kerk*), have been reconstructed on the basis of rich archival sources. In the *Oude Kerk*, the public devotion focused on a *Pietà*, a statue of the Virgin with the dead body of Christ on her lap. This sculpture was carried around in annual processions and was venerated in the chapel of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. The Delft cult image received many gifts and donations from its devotees and became an important pilgrimage centre. Gerrit Verhoeven has shown that Marian images played a significant role in the visions and miracles that occurred in the Delft region.<sup>37</sup>

34 Examples of this concurrence can be found in St Hippolyte (Delft) and in St Leonard (Zoutleeuw). In the monastery of Brou, St Nicholas de Tolentin, an alabaster altarpiece with the Seven Joys of the Virgin was placed in the chapel of Margaret of Austria; the chapel of Antoine de Montcut, her confessor, was dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin and was decorated with a complementary altarpiece, now lost.

35 See the chapter by Roobaert and Jacobs in this volume.

36 Gerrit Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie. Delft als bedvaartplaats in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1992), p. 46.

37 Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 47, 58, 61-62, and 225-27; Jan van Coudenberghe received six letters from Dirck Adamsz van der Burch (d. 1531), the chaplain of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin devotion in Delft, who reports on the numerous miracles that occurred in his parish church.

## The First Woodcuts for a New Religious Movement

The 1492 devotional tract entitled *Ghedenckenisse van de vij. weeden oft droefheyden onser liever vrouwen* soon became one of the most important texts to be used by the members of this newly founded confraternity and was reissued several times.<sup>38</sup> This slim leaflet was decorated on fols 1<sup>v</sup> and 2<sup>v</sup> with simple woodcut reproductions of the two Italo-byzantine icons venerated in Bruges, Reimerswaal, and Abbenbroek. The Dutch text mentions explicitly that the original paintings had been painted by St Luke.<sup>39</sup> In addition to these iconic images, seven scenes from the life of Christ were each illustrated by a full-page woodcut equipped with short subtitles in Dutch. This set of narrative scenes encompassed three episodes from the childhood of Christ: the Presentation in the Temple on fol. 5<sup>v</sup>, the Flight into Egypt on fol. 7<sup>r</sup>, the twelve-year-old Christ in the Temple on fol. 8<sup>v</sup>, and four scenes from Christ's Passion: the Carrying of the Cross on fol. 10<sup>r</sup>, the Crucifixion on fol. 11<sup>r</sup> (Fig. 2), the Deposition on fol. 12<sup>v</sup>, and the Entombment on fol. 13<sup>v</sup>. These seven scenes all included the Virgin Mary and were introduced to the reader as the canonical images for this confraternity.

While the *Ghedenckenisse* had offered the reader two different types of Marian images on which to meditate, the Virgin with Christ child and the Virgin in mourning, Michel François de Lille, one of the promoters of the new cult and Philip the Fair's confessor, exclusively employed the latter image. In his treatise *Quodlibetica decisio de septem doloribus virginis Mariae ac confraternitate desuper institute* (1494/95),<sup>40</sup> published a few years later in Antwerp, the woodcut on the title page is based on the half-length image from Santa Maria in Aracoeli.<sup>41</sup> By depicting the Virgin in tears and by adding a bundle of seven swords pointing to her heart, the mood of the image was intensified and gave additional weight to the grief of the Virgin.

In the early treatises of the devotional movement, the *Ghedenckenisse* and the *Quodlibetica*, the printers used small woodcut images with a simple structure that were inserted into the text. These treatises were not the place to employ a complex iconography

38 Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 257.

39 Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 257. The text reads: 'volcomelic gheconterfeyt ende gemaect na die beelden by Sinte Lucas gescildert of gemaect', cited by Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', p. 188. See also n. 16.

40 A copy of the book has been scanned by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Ink F-236 – GW 10255; see [http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00080509\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digital-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00080509_mets.xml). Another edition of the *Quodlibetica* was published in Schrattenthal, Austria. The artist who designed the title page for this publication reversed the image and changed the positioning of Mary's hands so that the original icon from Rome is no longer recognizable. See Michel François de Lille, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christifere virginis Mariae* (Schrattenthal, 1501), Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, VD16 F 2206; for further references, see Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', p. 46, n. 110.

41 Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 20, Figs 12 and 13; Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', p. 63; and Graas 'Verloren gegane Lukas-Madonna's', p. 17. Booklets about the miracles that occurred in conjunction with the new cult were published in successive versions reproducing the letters testifying to the miracles that were addressed initially to Michel François de Lille and after his death in 1502 to Jan van Coudenberghe. The earliest collection was published by Hendric Pietersz Lettersnijder in c. 1501 and did not have any illustrations at all. The next edition that was published in Leiden in 1503 by Hugo Jansz van Woerden contained a woodcut depicting a full-length Virgin and child standing on the crescent of the moon, surrounded by rays of light. In 1510, the Antwerp printer Govaert Bac (d. 1511) decided to publish a new, updated edition that included reports on the miracles that had occurred more recently in Delft and Abbenbroek, the *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum sacratissime virginis Marie*.



FIGURE 2: Anonymous Dutch, *Dit is een seer devotie salige ende profitelike ghedenkenisse van de vij. weeden oft droefheyden onser liever Vrouwen*, Antwerp: Gheraert Leeu, 14 July 1492, fol. 11<sup>v</sup>: The Crucifixion, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

or to develop new visual elements. This development would happen, however, only a few years later in the city of Delft, where the demand for single-leaf prints was ever growing.<sup>42</sup>

### Devotional Prints for the Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in Delft

In his study on the pilgrimage centre in Delft, Gerrit Verhoeven has drawn attention to the use of printed material distributed in large numbers among the confraternity's members. He identified three devotional prints produced for this important brotherhood but without studying them in the context of the other prints focussing on this subject.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the large number of woodcuts depicting the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, the surviving prints in Delft are actually all engravings. This is surprising in so far as this technique was generally reserved for high-quality prints. Based on the information garnered from the

<sup>42</sup> Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 164-67; see also <http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/bedevaart/bol/plaats/155>, consulted on 16 September 2013.

<sup>43</sup> Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 48-49, front cover, Fig. 4.1; see also F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts, c. 1450-1700*, vol. XIII: 'Monogrammists of the 16th and 17th century' (hereafter Hollstein XIII) (Amsterdam: Van Gendt, 1956), p. 65 no. 1 (1507), p. 158 (1510), p. 65 no. 2 (1511).

annual accounts of the *Oude Kerk*, Verhoeven proved that in 1506-07 the churchwardens spent 10 shillings for an engraved plate with which the confraternity was able to generate devotional prints or 'briefges van Onse Vrou van de zeven ween' (prints or leaflets of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows).<sup>44</sup> In 1510, 1100 such prints were produced and were sold for the price of 11 shillings; between 1506/07 and 1514, at least 2650 prints from an unknown number of plates were acquired for sale by the Delft confraternity. It can be assumed that these prints were made available to all those participating in the annual processions in honour of the Virgin of Sorrows or to individual pilgrims coming to Delft to visit the cult image in the *Oude Kerk*. While the income from these prints was not as high as the income from other kinds of donations, the sheer number of impressions is a striking testimony to the use of devotional prints in early modern culture.<sup>45</sup>

The above-mentioned engravings can be linked closely to the city of Delft on the basis of their coats of arms. Three of these prints are similar in size and employ the same layout with only slight variations (see Figs 3-5).<sup>46</sup> The composition of all three consists of a central image that shows the Virgin under the cross kneeling next to the dead body of Christ. This motive recalls the Deposition or Lamentation of Christ, the sixth sorrow of the Virgin. The central motive in these prints probably makes reference to the cult statue venerated in the *Oude Kerk* because the *Pietà* motive is intimately linked to Christ's death on the cross. The image of the sorrowful Virgin is surrounded by a ring-like design that is embellished with six additional roundels depicting the remaining sorrows. The entire structure resembles a late Gothic reliquary, as its circular body has tracery-like ornaments at the top recalling goldsmiths' work and a square-shaped base with an inscription. In all three prints, Mary is placed in the central axis under the cross, mourning her dead Son who is placed on the ground in front of her. She crosses her arms in front of her chest while a large sword impales her heart. This diagrammatic combination of motives unequivocally visualizes the central notion of Mary's grief and compassion.

The artist responsible for the earliest dated print is the anonymous Monogrammist II with a skull; his signet appears in the central axis at the bottom of the outer circle (Fig. 3). The text on this print encourages the pious to mediate both on the Passion of Christ and the Sorrows of the Virgin. In addition, reference is made to the miracles that happened in Delft:

*Eert Jezus passie ende die ween van Marien  
Doir welck te Delft veel miraculen gheschien.*<sup>47</sup>

Honour Jesus' passion and the sorrows of Mary  
which cause many miracles to happen in Delft.

<sup>44</sup> Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Delft, Archief kerkmeesters vóór 1572, inv. no. 29, p. 294, quoted from Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 48.

<sup>45</sup> Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 157-84.

<sup>46</sup> Monogrammist II with a skull, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, 1507, engraving, 13.2 x 9.5 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. OB-2123; Monogrammist AH, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, 1510, engraving 15 x 11 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum inv. no. 1912:385; Monogrammist II with a skull, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, engraving 1511, 13.9 x 9.4 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. OB-2124 [Hollstein XIII, p. 65].

<sup>47</sup> Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 48.





Figure 3: Monogrammist II with a skull, *Lamentation with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, 1507, engraving, 13.2 × 9.5 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. OB-2123 [Hollstein XIII, p. 65].

The 1510 print from Delft (Fig. 4) closely follows the earlier model but reproduces the central image in reverse. The anonymous artist who signed with his initials AH along with a horseshoe has not been identified to date. The original distribution of the six sorrows in smaller roundels is closely adhered to. Most images have been copied accurately, and only in one case has the composition been reversed. In this representation, the quality of the images is less refined. The subtle modelling with cross-hatching has been given up in favour of a simple outline drawing.

The two prints dating from 1507 (Fig. 3) and 1510 (Fig. 4) are each decorated with two coats of arms that represent a specific locality, in the first case, the duchy of Cleves and the city of Delft and in the second case, the cities of Gouda and Delft. The two-line inscription at the bottom of the 1510 image alludes to the sword of Simeon (Luke 2.34-35) and then names a certain 'brother Jan Melisz van der Goude'.<sup>48</sup> Verhoeven proposed that the coats of arms on the print signed by the Monogrammist AH (Fig. 4) refer to the location of the cult (Delft) and to the place of origin of the printer (Gouda). This identification, however, does not address the question as to whether 'Jan Melisz' is indeed the name of the printer or whether the inscription refers to the man in clerical attire kneeling behind the Virgin in the central scene.

In the case of the 1507 print (Fig. 3), the coat of arms on the left represents the Duchy of Cleves, one of the States of the Holy Roman Empire. The reason for including the coats of arms of an important political region was possibly linked to an act of patronage or to the political influence of this noble family. One could hypothesize that John II (1458-1521), Duke of Cleves and Count of Mark, was as much in favour of promoting this cult as were Emperor Maximilian I and Archduke Philip the Fair, who both represent the empire.<sup>49</sup>

A very fine, hand-coloured engraving that was produced sometime between 1503 and 1513 demonstrates how important it was to include the coats of arms of political leaders in order to give the new cult more authority and credibility. The small print attributed to the anonymous Monogrammist S contains the coats of arms of the city of Delft and the Duchy of Cleves in the upper left and the lower right-hand corners (Fig. 5).<sup>50</sup> The print shows two further coats of arms, that of Pope Julius II (r. 1503-13) in the upper right corner and that of the Duke of Burgundy in the lower left corner. The latter can either be identified with Philip the Fair (1478-1506) or with his underage son, Archduke Charles (1500-58).<sup>51</sup> From the outset, the cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin was closely associated with the house of Habsburg. Philip the Fair is called 'Archiduc dautriche fondateur de cette confrerie' (Archduke of Austria, founder of this confraternity) and his widowed and at the time still unmarried sister Margaret of Austria is called 'Marguerite archiducesse dautriche – fondatrice de ceste confrerie' (Margaret, Archduchess of Austria – founder of this confraternity) in the *Liber authenticus*, a manuscript that lists both regular members and honorary members of

48 'Simeon seit: dat swaert daer droefheit u sylle doersniden/ sal. Broer Jan Melisz van der Goude', quoted from Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 48.

49 This reading is supported by the use of coats of arms in the woodcut by Jost de Negker (Fig. 11).

50 Monogrammist S, *Lamentation with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, engraving, 11 x 8.8 cm, London, British Museum, no. 1848,0212.131 [Hollstein XIII: 288]. For a reproduction, see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1497974&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1497974&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1) (accessed on 23 August 2014). Jan Van der Stock has rightly questioned the identification of the Monogrammist S with Alexander (Sander) Bening proposed by Gustav Glück and others and places the anonymous artist in the context of the goldsmiths in Antwerp; see Van der Stock, *Printing Images in Antwerp*, p. 33, fol. 34 and p. 108. The engravings that carry a date were produced in 1519 and 1520.

51 On 19 March 1511, Emperor Maximilian I and his grandson gave privileges to the Brussels confraternity of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, recognizing it as a princely chapel; see Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 275.



FIGURE 4: Monogrammist AH with a horseshoe: *Lamentation with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, 1510, engraving 15 × 11 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. 1912:385.



FIGURE 5: Monogrammist S, *Lamentation with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, engraving, 11 × 8.8 cm, London, British Museum, no. 1848,0212.131. [Hollstein XIII: 288]  
© Trustees of the British Museum.

the Brussels chapter of the confraternity.<sup>52</sup> Emperor Maximilian and his grandson Charles continued to support and promote this cult after the death of Philip the Fair in 1506. The composition of this engraving differs considerably from the prints discussed so far. The six roundels are arranged in such a way that the medallion with the Crucifixion is the only scene displayed in the semi-circular arch framing the central *Pietà* scene.<sup>53</sup>

Four years after having designed his first print for Delft (Fig. 3), the accomplished Monogrammist II with a skull provided another plate for this prominent pilgrimage centre (Fig. 6). The coats of arms of the city of Delft and the Duchy of Cleves appear again on the margins of the print. As before, the admonitory inscription is placed underneath the central scene with the Deposition.<sup>54</sup> Mary now moves closer to Christ and holds His left hand while her right hand grasps the tip of her veil as if preparing to wipe the tears from her eyes. Surprisingly, the artist decided to deviate from the layout of his earlier design. The circular form was given up in favour of a rectangular structure, recalling the shape of a triptych with foldable wings.

In all four prints from Delft, the artists paid close attention to the fact that the Crucifixion was always placed at the top of the image either accompanied by the Carrying

<sup>52</sup> Archives of the City of Brussels/Archief van de Stad Brussel, Historical Archives/Historisch Archief (hereafter ASB, HA), Register 3413: *Liber authenticus sacratissimae utrisque sexus christifidelium confraternitatis septem dolorum beatae Mariae virginis nuncupatae*, fol. 49<sup>v</sup>; see the contribution by Susie Speakman Sutch in this volume.

<sup>53</sup> The layout of the engraving is reminiscent of contemporary miniatures, especially the codices with architectural borders coming from Ghent; see Bodo Brinkmann, *Der Codex Vat. Lat. 10293 und verwandte kleine Stundenbücher mit Architekturbordüren* (Zurich: Belser, 1992).

<sup>54</sup> 'Eert Iesus passie ende/ die ween van Marien/ doer welck te Delft/ weel miraculen gheschien', quoted from Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 324, n. 71. For a reproduction, see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1498356&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1498356&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1).





FIGURE 6: Monogrammist II with a skull, Lamentation with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, engraving 1511, 13.9 × 9.4 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. OB 2124 [Hollstein XIII, p. 65].

of the Cross or by the Entombment. The two sorrowful scenes from the childhood of Christ, the Presentation in the Temple and Flight into Egypt, were consistently placed at the bottom of the pictorial grid. In the prints with a circular layout, the scenes could be read clockwise, starting from the lower right-hand corner. In the 1511 print with a tripartite structure (Fig. 6), the six accompanying scenes could be read from the bottom to the top. It seems as if the basic structure – circular or square-shaped – did not carry any particular significance for those who administered the cult.

### Single-leaf Engravings without Coats of Arms

These engravings from Delft are important examples in so far as they clearly demonstrate that the local administrators of the confraternity took great care in promoting their cult centre by mentioning Delft in the inscription and by including the city's coat of arms. This specificity was, however, not always the case, and many prints do not bear any specific marks so that they could be marketed more widely and could be used in many different locations. Some workshops seem to have specialized in producing prints for the cult of the Seven Sorrows. For example, there is a small undated engraving attributed to the workshop of the Monogrammist S.<sup>55</sup> This print copies the 1507 image by the Monogrammist II with a skull (Fig. 3) but without repeating the Dutch text or including the coats of arms. At the bottom of the page, four adherents pay homage to the Virgin of Sorrows: on the left a kneeling monk with a rosary and a male peasant-like figure appear, and on the right a nobleman and his wife are depicted in prayer. These figures can be understood as generic types rather than representing portraits of specific individuals. Their presence demonstrates the popularity of the cult among different groups of society, men and women, rich and poor, clerics and simple folk.

Another engraving produced by the prolific workshop of the Monogrammist S employs the basic shape of a circular monstrance with a *Pietà* in the middle and six additional roundels revolving around the central image (Fig. 7). The layout of this print is simplified compared to the 1507 print from Delft (Fig. 3). In addition to the engraved image without text, a French prayer was written in red ink onto the four margins of the sheet of paper. The inscription evoked the idea that Christ himself is speaking to the beholder:

*Amour ma fait du ciel descendre \* Amour ma fait chair et sang prendre  
Amour ma fait en la croix pendre \* Amour ma fait  
mon esprit rendre \* Amour ma fait mon costeit fendre  
Don(t) l'(h)omme me doebt bien amour rendre \* Jhesus \* Maria \* Anna.*

Love made me descend from heaven \* Love made me take on flesh and blood  
Love made me hang on the cross \* Love made me die  
Love made me have my body pierced (by a lance)  
Thus man should return love to me \* Jesus \* Mary \* Anne

<sup>55</sup> Master S, *Lamentation with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, engraving, 14.5 x 9.7 cm, London, British Museum, inv. no. 1847.1009.21 [Hollstein XIII: 217]; for a reproduction, see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1498356&partId=1&searchText=virgin+sorrows&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1498356&partId=1&searchText=virgin+sorrows&page=1).



FIGURE 7: Monogrammist S, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, engraving, hand-colored, 16.4 × 11.8 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1938-1880 [Hollstein XIII: 147].





FIGURE 8: Monogrammist S, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, engraving, hand-colored, gilded, 15 × 10.5 cm, glued into a prayer book, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-2011-115-15 1.



Adding prayers to a devotional print is a reflection of a way in which these images were used by those who purchased them.<sup>56</sup>

The practical use of such devotional prints can also be studied from another fine engraving by the Monogrammist S (Fig. 8). This print with an image of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin was glued into a prayer book consisting of sixty-nine pages of parchment.<sup>57</sup> Each of the eighteen engravings that were inserted into this manuscript was provided with a Dutch prayer. The owner evidently intended to give the hand-coloured and partially gilded prints by the Monogrammist S, Lucas van Leyden, Frans Crabbe, and Jakob Binck the status of illuminated miniatures.<sup>58</sup> The print with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin is formally related to one of the prints from Delft. The two coats of arms at the bottom of the architectural frame are left empty as if to be filled in at a later point in time. The central theme of the print is complemented by the *Arma Christi*; the instruments of the Passion are placed in the niches in between the roundels at the bottom and the top of the image.

### Single-leaf Woodcuts for the Cult of the Seven Sorrows in Brussels

How important prints were for the operations of a confraternity can be gauged from the account books of the Brussels chapter that had its seat in St Gorik's church. Remco Sleiderink has shown that in 1499 the newly founded confraternity purchased 350 booklets in Antwerp and had them bound in order to be sold for a small profit to its members and visitors. He has suggested that these *boecxkens* are identical with the pamphlet entitled *Ghedenkenisse* that was printed by Gheraert Leeu in 1492 (Fig. 2).<sup>59</sup>

Additional entries in the account book of the confraternity report on consignments of *beeldekens vander ween* (images of the sorrows) or *brieven van Mechelen van Onser Vrouwen ween* (pamphlets from Mechelen of the Sorrows of Our Lady).<sup>60</sup> The latter mention reveals that the prints of Our Lady of Sorrows were purchased from an unidentified printer in the nearby city of Mechelen.<sup>61</sup> Whether this entry refers to a civic print workshop or to a workshop in a monastery cannot be determined.<sup>62</sup> Every year the confraternity purchased fifty to one hundred devotional prints described as *beeldekens vander ween* or *briefkens vander ween*.<sup>63</sup> These figures suggest that the Brussels confraternity only sold approximately

<sup>56</sup> Occasionally, the beginning of a prayer was already included in the print. There is for instance a small engraving printed in red ink with the *Mater dolorosa* mourning her dead son. This print includes one of the two prayers prescribed by the confraternity at the bottom of the page: 'AVE: MARIA'. The cross with the *Arma Christi* and the seven swords, which are arranged in a circular pattern behind Mary, link this print closely with the devotion to the Seven Sorrows; anonymous Netherlandish, *Mater Dolorosa with inscription 'AVE: MARIA'*, engraving in red ink, 11 x 8 cm, c. 1500, London, British Museum, no. 1848,0306.165; see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1502503&partId=1&searchText=ave+maria&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1502503&partId=1&searchText=ave+maria&page=1), accessed, consulted on 24 August 2013.

<sup>57</sup> On the practice of pasting prints into books, see Peter Schmidt, *Gedruckte Bilder in handgeschriebenen Büchern. Zum Gebrauch von Druckgraphik im 15. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003).

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-2011-115>, consulted on 12 August 2013.

<sup>59</sup> Remco Sleiderink, 'De dichters Jan Smecken en Johannes Pertcheval en de devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zeven Weën. Nieuwe gegevens uit de rekeningen van de Brusselse broederschap (1499-1516)', *Queeste. Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden*, 19 (2012), 42-69 (p. 56).

<sup>60</sup> Sleiderink convincingly explains that the term 'brieven' is used synonymously with 'beeldekens' and refers to a single-leaf print with little or no text; Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 57.

<sup>61</sup> Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 57; ASB, HA, Register 3837.

<sup>62</sup> Jan Van der Stock points to the fact that there were several monastic workshops that were involved in printing woodcuts, such as the Bethanië monastery in Mechelen. See Van der Stock, *Printing images in Antwerp*, p. 31, n. 26.

<sup>63</sup> Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 57, n. 48.

one third of the number of prints vended in Delft. This difference may be explained by the fact that Delft was a popular pilgrimage centre, where numerous miracles had been reported, whereas Brussels never took on such a role. Nevertheless, there obviously was a constant need for printed images to which the Brussels confraternity catered.

In the accounts of the Brussels association, no mention is made of the technique in which these prints were executed. There is, however, an indication that in 1499 the confraternity purchased one or two woodblocks for printing images itself. The wording *een wrive vander vii lillien van houte ende noch i van Onser Vrouwen om in te printene* (a wood block with seven lilies and one with Our Lady to print with) suggests that these blocks depicted the Virgin of Sorrows and possibly one of the Seven Sorrows on which the brethren meditated.<sup>64</sup> In 1504-05 another wood block was purchased by the confraternity.<sup>65</sup>

The question arises as to what extent the confraternity was in a position to print woodcuts themselves. Given that there were several artists and artisans as well as rhetoricians involved in the administration of the brotherhood or the church of St Gorik, the confraternity would in all likelihood have known how to manage this practical aspect of its faith. The self-sufficiency of the confraternity is attested to for very simple images such as small printed paper flags with a depiction of a garland.<sup>66</sup> These pilgrim's pennants on wooden sticks were carried along in the annual procession organized by the confraternity.<sup>67</sup> The consumption of small paper flags by the confraternity was indeed very large. In the period between 1512 and 1516, their number varied between 1200 and 1600.<sup>68</sup>

Despite having these simple wood blocks available for production in Brussels, the confraternity continued to order printed images or *beeldekens* from elsewhere. A distinct difference in quality may have been one reason for doing so. Another motivation could have been the fact that some of the prints available on the market bore the official imprint of Archduke Philip the Fair as well as that of the Pope. These may have been attractive to the Brussels branch of the confraternity that prided itself on having the support of the ruling dynasty, which is stressed repeatedly in the Brussels membership register, the *Liber authenticus*, which lists many important members of the court and the clergy.<sup>69</sup>

### A Woodcut by Jost de Negker with References to the Pope and the Emperor

The woodcut by the Flemish cutter and printer Jost de Negker (fl.1500-44) is of particular interest in this context.<sup>70</sup> The large woodcut was produced some time before 1503 and carries the signature of Jost de Negker from Antwerp (Fig. 9).<sup>71</sup> The Virgin is seated on the

64 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 57. See also the chapter by Roobaert and Jacobs in this volume.

65 ASB, HA, Register 3837, p. 80.

66 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 58.

67 David Freedberg, 'Prints and the Status of Images in Flanders', in *Le Stampe e la diffusione delle immagine e degli stili* (Atti del XXIV Congresso Internazionale di Storia dell'Arte / Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art, vol. 8), ed. by Henri Zerner (Bologna: CLUEB, 1983), pp. 401-41; see also Emile van Heurck, *Les drapelets de pèlerinage en Belgique et dans les pays voisins, contribution à l'iconographie et à l'histoire des pèlerinages* (Antwerp: Buschmann, 1922).

68 Sleiderink, 'De dichters', p. 62, n. 70.

69 See the chapter by Susie Speakman Sutch in this volume.

70 Van der Stock, *Printing in Antwerp*, pp. 95-96, Fig. 55.

71 Christine Vogt, 'Vorbild und Nachbild. Graphische Vorlagen und ihre Verwertung im spätmittelalterlichen Kunstbetrieb', in *Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-van-Zeven-Weeën. Ein Sieben-Schmerzen-Mariens-Relief, sein spätgotischer Ursprung und sein späterer Abdruck. Kopie oder Krimi?* ed. by Christine Vogt (Aachen: Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, 2007), pp. 9-13.



FIGURE 9: Jost de Negker, *Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows with Arma Christi*, woodcut, before 1503, 37.31 × 26.99 cm, © Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Gift of Mr. Herschel V. Jones, 1926; P.10,672.

ground covered with rich vegetation but devoid of any narrative detail such as the foot of the cross or the *Arma Christi*. Mary is portrayed in meditation; her hands are clasped in prayer. The seven swords that divide the space above her into six compartments form the spokes of a wheel-like structure. This layout frequently occurs in illuminated manuscript,<sup>72</sup> and even in gold-metalwork such as a late fifteenth-century silver badge from Mook.<sup>73</sup>

In the print by De Negker, the sorrows of the Virgin are depicted in seven roundels that are placed in between the large swords that symbolize her pain. The entire scene is framed by two columns and surmounted by an elaborate tracery arch. There are four coats of arms distributed across the page that allow for an approximate dating of the print and give the image an authoritative character. The coat of arms and the inscription 'PP SEXT(US)' in the top left corner of the print refer to Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492-1503) who died in August 1503. Alexander had granted apostolic confirmation to the confraternity on 13 February 1497.<sup>74</sup> The coat of arms and the scroll 'QUI VOULDRA' on the opposite side of the print pay homage to Archduke Philip the Fair, who had supported the new confraternity from the start.<sup>75</sup> In the central axis, right above the head of the Virgin, a second reference to the ruling dynasty appears: the coat of arms of the house of Burgundy-Habsburg with the imperial crown. At the apex of the architectural structure, Jost de Negker inserted a much smaller shield that acknowledges his association with the guild of St Luke in Antwerp. Jan Van der Stock assumes that this print was commissioned by the Antwerp guild for the Antwerp confraternity of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin that had been founded in 1495 by the guild of St Luke and the chamber of rhetoric, *De Violieren* (The Gillyflower).<sup>76</sup> While Antwerp was the place where this image was printed, this print was probably also sold to confraternities in other cities, like the devotional booklets produced by the Antwerp printer Gheraert Leeu.<sup>77</sup>

The woodcut by De Negker is complemented by a long inscription in Latin that lists the duties of the Seven Sorrows confraternity members. The text encourages the beholder to pray daily, to say seven *Pater Nosters* and seven *Ave Marias*, and to meditate

72 Anonymous, *Mater dolorosa* (initial), choir book, Brussels, KBR, ms. 215-16, fol. 33<sup>v</sup>, see Snow; Simon Bening, *Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, c. 1525-30, in Hours of Albrecht of Brandenburg, Los Angeles, J. P. Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig IX 19, fol. 251<sup>r</sup> or anonymous French artist, *Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, 1531-32, in Hours of Nicolas Perrenot de Grandvelle, London, British Museum, Add 21235, d. 119<sup>v</sup>.

73 Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, anonymous, *badge with the Virgin of Sorrows, St Christopher and St James*, late fifteenth century, diameter 9.2 cm; see <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/BK-NM-10749-B>, consulted on 23 August 2013.

74 Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 269; see also *Liber authenticus*, fol. [3]<sup>r</sup>: 'non tantum approbatae et confirmatae verum gratiarum quoque et Indulgentiarum concessione liberalissimo munitae' (not only approved and confirmed but equipped with a most generous grant of graces and indulgences also).

75 *Liber authenticus*, fol. [3]<sup>r</sup>: 'Per Clare memoriae Philippum Hispaniorum Regem, Archiducem Austriae, Ducem Burgundiae etc non sine peculiari spiritus sancti inspiratione laudabiliter premium institutae'. ([The Confraternity] first laudably instituted by Philip of distinguished memory King of the Spaniards, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy etc., not without a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit).

76 Van der Stock, *Printing in Antwerp*, p. 100, Fig. 55.

77 Timothy De Paep, 'Painting, Drama and Discomfort: The Great Painters' Hall of the Antwerp Saint Luke's Guild (1664-1810)', in *Artibus et historiae* 66 (XXXIII), pp. 247-68.

on the sorrows with the help of images such as the woodcut.<sup>78</sup> There is thus a close correspondence between this print and the requirements for membership spelt out in the *Ghedenckenisse* and in the confraternity statutes.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the text makes a general reference to erudite theologians who approved of the cult ('doctores et magistros in cristiana religione peritissimos'). This comment can be understood as a response to the fierce opposition to the devotion that occurred since its inception.<sup>80</sup>

The devotional woodcut by De Negker (Fig. 9) must have played a key role for further images of the *Mater dolorosa* and the cult of the Seven Sorrows, as a number of print makers used his layout for single-leaf woodcuts or for simplified versions in illustrated booklets. The three following examples show how individual motives moved from one print to the other. The powerful image of the Virgin sitting on the ground all by herself being surrounded by her individual sorrows was used widely both in the Netherlands and in Germany.<sup>81</sup> In 1503, soon after Pope Pius III (d. 1503) was elected to office for only 26 days, an anonymous German artist made a woodcut (Fig. 10).<sup>82</sup> The coat of arms, however, belongs to his successor, Pope Julius II. The coat of arms of Archduke Philip the Fair is embellished with the chain of the order of the Golden Fleece of which he was sovereign until he died in 1506. The text at the bottom of the wood block carries the date 1508, a detail that suggests that the original block was altered to accommodate the new pope.<sup>83</sup> The German text is of a very different nature than the Latin text in De Negker's print. It appeals to the beholder to recognize Mary as a model for compassion and lists the Seven Sorrows in an abbreviated form. A banderole with the words 'Sicut lilium inter spinas' (like a lily among thorns) coils itself around one of the swords that point towards Mary. This Latin text visualized the notion of Mary, the unblemished lily among thorns, a metaphor based on the Song of Solomon 2.2.

The phrase 'like a lily among thorns' was used repeatedly in woodcuts, panel paintings, and manuscripts and became closely associated with the cult of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>84</sup> The verse

78 The transcription was made by the author with the kind support of Susie Speakman Sutch; all abbreviations have been resolved.

'Omnipotens eterne deus. qui devotissima virginem Mariam. doloris gladio. Infantu nece. et filij a= missione. sauciare voluisti. quique eo capto. mortuo et sepulto eidem tormentorum genera maternosque/ gemitus augmentasti. Concede quaesumus: nos tantarum impetu penarum concuti. vt de obmissis veniam. et/ de commissis gratiam impetrare valeamus. et tetu celestis regni partitipes esse mereamur. Per dominum./ Qui contrito corde perscriptam orationem quotidie dixerit. in quacumque tribulatio positus precibus Marie/ virginis internam consolationem effectum operum omnium virtutum impetrabit. Scriptum est eum Cum ipso sum in/ tribulatione. et cum hijs qui tribulato sunt corde. Orationes fraternitatis Septem dolorum Mariae/ virginis matris Jesu sunt. vij. pater noster. et totidem Ave Maria. cum memoria dolorum super effigiarum. hebdomadatim semel persolvende. et participes fiunt omnium bonorum fraternitatis recepte et approbate per doctores et magistros in cristiana religione peritissimos. Just de Necker'

79 See the chapter by Emily Thelen in this volume.

80 Speakman Sutch and Van Bruane, 'The Seven Sorrows', pp. 268-69; Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', pp. 45ff.

81 In this context, one should mention the *majolica* image formerly in the collection of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Berlin, now lost, that was first discussed by Otto von Falke, 'Eine Majolika des Quattrocento', *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Sammlungen*, 15 (1894), 40-47; see also Koopstra, 'Onze-Live-Vrouw-van-Zeven-Wecen', pp. 5-6.

82 Hans Eickel, 'Der Siebenschmerzenaltar in St. Viktor zu Schwerte', *Westfalen. Hefte für Geschichte, Kunst und Volkskunde*, 36 (1958), pp. 148, Abb. 81; von Falke, pp. 40-47.

83 'O mensch, nym hiezu herzen die syben hertenleit und smertsen von maria uns zu einem exempel als sy iehsus hat geopfert in den tempel und simeon sa[g]t ein swert sal dein hertz durchslahn. Das ander leit als in egipten ist geflohen. Das drit leit ist Maria worden als iehsus drei tag hat verloren und ihn in dem tempel fant die iuden lert. Das viert leit was er sein creutz tragen. Das fünfte do er genagelt am creutz hing. Das sechst was von dem creutz genomen. Das siebene lob sei dir maria geleit als dein kint iehsus in das grab wart geleit amen :: 1508' [transcription by the author].

84 The frontispiece of the *Liber authenticus*, fol. [1]', shows a lily in a vase that is accompanied by this Latin verse. In a large panel painting by Quentin Massys, this text decorates the hem of Mary's blue dress (Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antigua). On this painting, see *Casa Perfeitissima. 500 anos da fundação do mosteiro da Madre de Deus/ celebrating 500 years of the foundation of the Convent of Madre de Deus* (Lisbon: Museu Nacional do Azulejo, 2009), cat. no. 1, pp. 176-77.





FIGURE 10: Anonymous, *Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows*, woodcut, circa 1503, remodeled 1508, Landesbibliothek Gotha (lost) (reproduced here from Hans Eickel, 'Der Siebenschmerzenaltar in St Viktor zu Schwerte', in: *Westfalen. Hefte für Geschichte, Kunst und Volkskunde* 36 (1958), p. 148, Fig. 81).

appears, for example, in several woodcuts used as covers for important literature on the Seven Sorrows devotion and its confraternity. In 1510, the Antwerp printer Govaert Bac (d. 1511) published a new edition of the *Miracula confraternitatis septe[m] dolorum sacratissime virginis Marie*, in which recent reports on the miracles in Delft and Abbenbroek are included.<sup>85</sup> For his newly designed title page, Bac required a small woodcut with an image of the *Mater dolorosa*. This frontispiece presents an image of the Virgin of Sorrows combined with the Latin heading printed in red ink (Fig. 11). The verse 'Sicut lilium inter spinas' appears in a banderole above the Virgin. The central image is surrounded by three ornamental borders,

<sup>85</sup> [Johannes de Coudenberghe], *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum sacratissime virginis Marie*, Antwerp: Goveart Bac, 1510, Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (KBR), INC A 1.476; the colophon states: 'Finiunt miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum // beate marie virginis Antwerpie impressa per me // Godfridum Back. Anno. M. CCCCC. X'. On the *Miracula confraternitatis*, see also Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 58-62 and 225-27. The author of this text is not mentioned explicitly, but Jan van Coudenberghe was the recipient of the more recent testimonials from Delft and Abbenbroek. Govaert Bac also printed liturgical texts for the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows and a history of the devotion; see Snow, 'The Lady of Sorrows', p. 74, n. 187 and Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 21, n. 59.

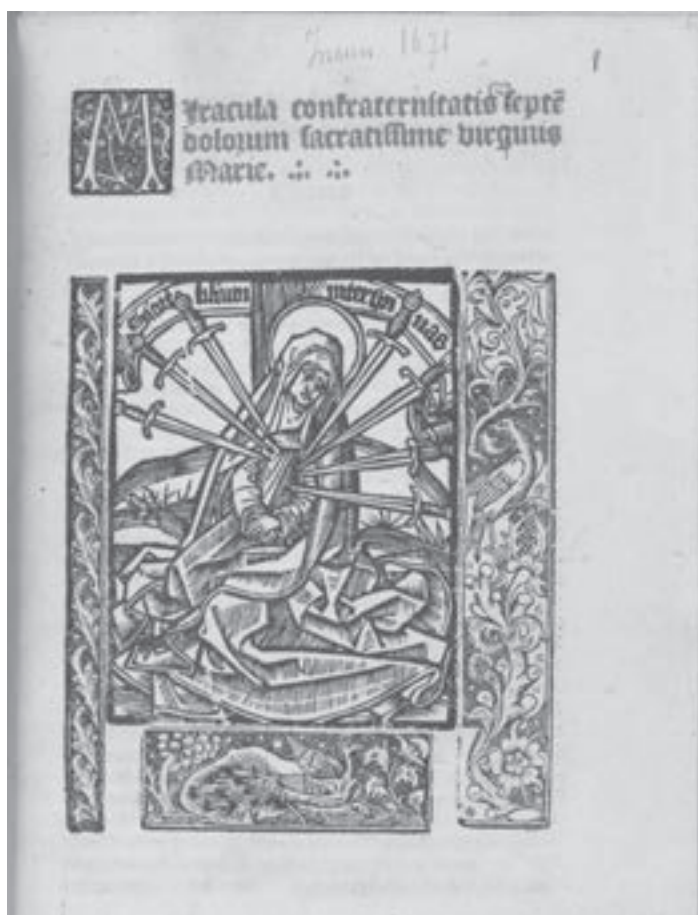


FIGURE 11: Anonymous, *Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows*, woodcut, title page of: [Johannes de Coudenberghe], *Miracula confraternitatis septem[m] dolorum sacratissime virginis Marie* (Antwerp: Goveart Bac, 1510) Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, INC A 1.476.

which are also printed from separate blocks.<sup>86</sup> Whoever designed this frontispiece did not opt for the *Pietà* image that was popular in Delft. The artist working for Bac was instructed instead to follow the Antwerp design that had been introduced a few years earlier through De Negker's print: the Virgin with the seven swords. The grieving mother of Christ is seated on the ground in front of the empty cross. Her head is tilted to the right, and her left hand rests on the right; seven swords point to her chest – three on the left and four on the right.

On 23 November 1519, the Antwerp printer Michiel Hillen van Hoochstaten (act. 1506-46) published Jan van Coudenberghe's account of the confraternity: *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissimae virginis Mariae*.<sup>87</sup> The title page of this pamphlet (Fig. 12) shows a woodcut that is an almost identical copy of the image introduced by Bac. The new block that was carved for Hillen's publication follows the earlier model in almost

<sup>86</sup> [Johannes de Coudenberghe], *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum*, fol. 1.

<sup>87</sup> See n. 15.



Figure 12: Anonymous, *Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows*, woodcut, title page of: Johannes de Coudenberghe, *Ortus progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissimae virginis Mariae de passione quae dicitur de septem doloribus* (Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519) Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (KBR), INC II 85.807 A LP.

every detail. It seems as if this image was adopted for the decoration of the *Liber authenticus* at a later point in time, albeit in a mirror image (see cover illustration).<sup>88</sup>

This formulaic image enjoyed a growing popularity in the Low Countries as it was reused and redesigned well into the seventeenth century. The engravings by Theodoor Galle and Schelte Adamsz. Bolswert (1612) illustrate its ongoing popularity.<sup>89</sup> The engraved title page of Jacob Stratius's translation of Van Coudenberghe's text (1622) makes equal use of this archaic depiction and is deliberately equipped with an image based on the original frontispiece.<sup>90</sup>

The body of woodcuts discussed in the previous section can be considered as an autonomous group with its own visual parameters. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the print workshops located in Antwerp developed a pictorial tradition that was

<sup>88</sup> *Liber authenticus*, fol. [2]<sup>r</sup>. See the chapter by Speakman Sutch in this volume.

<sup>89</sup> Theodoor Galle, *The Virgin of Sorrows*, engraving, 5.4 x 7.4 cm, Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, no. RP-P-1904-450; inscription: 'Ecce dolor gladijs scrutatur pectoris ima/ Haec lux, quam simeon vaticinatus erat. Theodor. Galle excud.'; see <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-1904-450>; consulted on 22 August 2013; Schelte Adamsz. Bolswert, *Virgin of Sorrows with Arma Christi and Vera Icon*, 1612-15, engraving, 39.9 x 29.7 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, no. RP-P-BI-2499; see <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-BI-2499>, consulted on 22 August 2013.

<sup>90</sup> Jacob Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen. Met de mirakelen, getyden, ende misse der selver: insgelycks den oorspronck, ende voortganck der broederschap* (Antwerp: Guiliam Lesteens, 1622); I would like to thank Emily Thelen for alerting me to this image.



markedly different from the contemporary engravings produced for the pilgrimage centre in Delft. The last section of this study will investigate a group of undated engravings that has been attributed again to a group of anonymous monogrammists.

### Combining Different Devotions within One Printed Image

Most of the examples discussed so far focussed on a single devotional motive, the *Mater dolorosa* with either one or several sorrows. The last section of this essay is dedicated to prints that evoke different devotions within one engraving and thus create an interesting interaction between the individual elements. This trend can be observed in a group of miniature-like engravings that were produced in the Low Countries in the early sixteenth century. The following four prints demonstrate that in the late Middle Ages devotions that involved the Virgin and her family could overlap and reinforce one another. This merging of different devotions into one single image had the advantage of multiplying the salutary effect of such pictures. The cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin is particularly prominent in these synthetic prints.

The Monogrammist I with a knife produced a small engraving measuring only 11 by 7 centimetres.<sup>91</sup> This print shows intertwined roundels with six sorrows of the Virgin that revolve around a central image of the Lamentation. The branches framing the roundels lead to an image of the Virgin in the Sun seated on a pedestal. This small but iconic image is placed in front of a stage-like setting populated with numerous children, men, and women – a representation of the Holy Kinship of Christ. St Anne is standing right behind the Virgin and Child; the print thus also pays homage to the popular cult of St Anne. All these individual elements are framed by two ornate columns that are fixed to a solid base. Similar to the print by the Monogrammist II with a skull (Fig. 6), two angels present a shield with an *Imago Pietatis* labelled 'ECCE HOMO'. In the central scene, one sword pierces Mary's heart, thus pointing the viewer to the cult of the Seven Sorrows.

This model was copied closely by the Monogrammist S, who invested neither time nor effort to reverse text and images. He also enriched his representation of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin by referencing additional devotions.<sup>92</sup> The Virgin in the Sun is again inserted at the top of the architectural structure together with the Holy Kinship; at the bottom of the print, two angels present a shield with a Man of Sorrows surrounded by the *Arma Christi*.<sup>93</sup> He replaced the two *putti* on top of the column with a representation of St Bruno and of St Hugo of Lincoln, both members of the Carthusian order.

91 Monogrammist I with a knife, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin with Virgin in the Sun and Holy Kinship*, engraving, 11 x 7 cm, early sixteenth century, London, British Museum, no. 1892.0714.437. For a reproduction, see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1502489&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1502489&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1). Little is known about the anonymous artists who produced these prints or the mechanisms of production and distribution. On the monogrammists linked with Antwerp, see Van der Stock, *Printing images in Antwerp*, p. 100.

92 Monogrammist S, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin with additional devotional images*, engraving, 12.2 x 8.2 cm, London, British Museum, no. 1854.0513.189 [Hollstein XIII: 289]. For a reproduction, see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1497996&partId=1&searchText=Master+S+lamentation&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1497996&partId=1&searchText=Master+S+lamentation&page=1) [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1497996&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1497996&partId=1&searchText=Virgin+sorrows&page=1).

93 For various interpretations of this development, see Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 324, n. 71.

Offering a large variety of devotional prints of high quality and preferably hand-coloured was the strategy adopted by the Monogrammist S and his workshop; the number of combinations that were produced seems almost unlimited. The structure of a central image with surrounding medallions as such is a modular one that can be used for numerous devotional images such as the Joys and the Sorrows of the Virgin, the Passion of Christ, and many other motives.

While these first two prints in this section give centre stage to a *Pietà* surrounded by roundels, there is a print by the same workshop in which the presentation is rearranged.<sup>94</sup> The Virgin in the Sun now fills the central compartment, while the roundels depicting the Seven Sorrows are grouped around the standing Virgin and child. The Virgin in the Sun was a Marian cult that had been promoted by Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471-84); the prayer 'Ave sanctissima Maria' was granted prolific indulgences.<sup>95</sup> The image of a triumphant Virgin does not interfere with the elements that focus on the sorrowful moments in the life of Christ. The inscription 'septem dolores marie virginis' clearly assigns this print to the cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin.

Another print by the Monogrammist S confirms the hypothesis that in the late Middle Ages devotions that involved the Virgin and her family could overlap and reinforce one another. This small engraving crosses the cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin with the veneration of St Anne.<sup>96</sup> The three protagonists Anne, Mary, and the Christ child (*Anna Selbdritt*) appear in a shallow niche at the top of the print. In the main apsis at ground level, Mary attends to the dead Christ in her lap. She is accompanied by an elegantly dressed saint in prayer, possibly Mary Magdalene. The seven swords are fanned out behind the two women, thus turning the image into an almost abstract ornament.<sup>97</sup> The six remaining sorrows are grouped on either side of the central axis: those to the left are from Christ's childhood and those to the right from His Passion.

A last example from this group combines the seventh sorrow, the Entombment of Christ, with an iconic image of the *Mater dolorosa* as a *Pietà* in a large medallion.<sup>98</sup> While the principal scene follows the narrative account of the passion and depicts a multitude of people, the roundel is reserved for the grieving mother of Christ. As was the case in the previous print, the swords no longer point to the Virgin's heart but are placed behind the group in a circular fashion.

<sup>94</sup> Monogrammist S, *Virgin in the Sun with the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, engraving, 9.7 x 7.2 cm, London, British Museum, no. 1868,1114.53 [Hollstein XIII: 266]. For a reproduction see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1498352&partId=1&searchText=1868,1114.53+&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1498352&partId=1&searchText=1868,1114.53+&page=1).

<sup>95</sup> Bonnie J. Blackburn, 'The Virgin in the Sun: Music and Image for a Prayer Attributed to Sixtus IV', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 124 (1999), 180-87.

<sup>96</sup> Monogrammist S, *Lamentation with six sorrows of the Virgin, Saint Anne and the Virgin* (top), 9.7 x 7.2, hand-colored, London, British Museum, no. 1868,1114.65 [Hollstein XIII: 219]. For a reproduction see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1497679&partId=1&searchText=virgin+sorrows&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1497679&partId=1&searchText=virgin+sorrows&page=1).

<sup>97</sup> This could also be said for a late fifteenth-century pendant with the *Mater Dolorosa* made from gilded silver, measuring 9.9 cm in diameter; see anonymous, pendant, *Virgin of Sorrows with St James and St Christopher*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, see <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/BK-NM-10749-B>, consulted on 23 August 2013.

<sup>98</sup> Monogrammist S, *Entombment with Mater dolorosa*, engraving, 7.5 x 5 cm, hand-colored, London, British Museum, no. 1848,0212.133 [Hollstein XIII: 154]. For a reproduction see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1498332&partId=1&searchText=virgin+sorrows&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1498332&partId=1&searchText=virgin+sorrows&page=1).

## Conclusion

The cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin that was promoted with the support of the ruling dynasty developed in the last decade of the fifteenth century and quickly spread across the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands. From the start, images were favoured as important aids for meditation as had been expressed in the *Ghedenckenisse*. The images that were used in the early years of the movement were based on older traditions either representing well-known Marian icons (Fig. 1) or narrative scenes from the childhood and Passion of Christ (Fig. 2). No attempt was made to develop an entirely new iconography for the followers of this cult. Paintings such as the *Mater dolorosa* in St Saviour, Bruges (Fig. 1) and the Virgin of Sorrows in St Gorik, Brussels, were displayed to aid with prayers to the Virgin. In some cases Latin inscriptions explained the guidelines for membership or described the individual sorrows for the devotees. Devotional sculptures such as the *Pietà* in the *Oude Kerk* of Delft or the Entombment of Christ in St Gorik's church helped to visualize the Seven Sorrows and encourage emphatic reactions. The emphasis on the pain and grief experienced by the Virgin Mary was the element that increasingly turned into the identifying feature for visual imagery whether the medium was print, painting, illumination, or sculpture. The depiction of one or several swords impaling the Virgin's breast was soon favoured by the confraternities and their members as the indispensable feature for the cult of the *Mater dolorosa*.

Prints reflect this development in so far as most images depict the sorrowful Virgin with one or several large swords piercing her body. Mary is either kneeling on the ground, close to her dead Son, or she is depicted all by herself, reflecting upon the Seven Sorrows that are often portrayed in small medallions. How these 'ingredients' were organized and framed depended entirely on the individual workshop, as there was no prescribed layout. Many prints carry an inscription that has a devotional character or provides additional information on the movement.

The engravings produced for Delft form a coherent group that created a pictorial tradition of its own. In all these prints, the central scene is a *Pietà*-like image. This may be in response to the miracle-working cult statue that was venerated in the confraternity chapel in Delft. The woodcut published before 1503 by the Antwerp printer Jost de Negker (Fig. 9) heads a second group of images. Seven outsized swords that symbolize the Virgin's sorrows now partition the image into individual segments. One determining feature of this group is the strong presence of official heraldry, suggesting the support of the decisive authorities, the pope and the emperor. As we know, the confraternity established in Brussels printed woodcuts themselves; nevertheless, they regularly bought prints from outside of Brussels. While it cannot be ascertained beyond doubt which images the confraternity acquired, it can be assumed that they are more likely of the Antwerp tradition than of the Delft tradition, which contained coats of arms specific to Delft. *Boekjes* and *beeldekens* of the kind marketed by the Antwerp printing workshops of Gheraert Leeu, Govaert Bac, and Jost de Negker were readily available for the many confraternities that sprang up in the Southern Netherlands.



# REFORMING THE SEVEN SORROWS

## Paintings by Wensel Cobergher and Theodoor van Loon for the Brussels Chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows\*

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Like many religious buildings in the Spanish Netherlands, the chapel of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows at the church of St Gorik was significantly restored and redecorated during the first decades of the seventeenth century. This campaign of refurbishment was linked to the Catholic renewal under the aegis of the newly installed Archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621/1633), following a period of political upheaval and iconoclasm. Our essay will focus on the paintings that were newly installed in the chapel during that period: the *Lamentation* by Wensel Cobergher (1557/61-1634), dated 1605 (Fig. 1), and the six smaller paintings by Theodoor van Loon (1581/82-1649), depicting the other sorrows of the Virgin. Together with the *Lamentation* by Cobergher, these paintings entered the museum in Brussels after the church's demolition in 1797.<sup>1</sup> Around 1830, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels must have sold the Van Loon paintings, for they have since vanished without a trace.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, museum records, together with earlier archival and narrative sources, have left us with a record of the paintings' format and iconography, and enable us to have a good idea of what the paintings looked like.

We will argue that Coberghers' altarpiece and Van Loon's paintings were not executed simultaneously, as it is generally thought, but were part of two distinct redecoration campaigns. Painted at the beginning of the Archdukes' government, the *Lamentation* by Cobergher subtly but strikingly incorporates visual references to the Seven Sorrows in a depiction of a major episode of the Passion of Christ. In delivering a remarkably Christocentric painting as the main altarpiece of a chapel devoted to the Seven Sorrows, Cobergher followed the latest guidelines of Catholic Reform, a fact that

\* The research of Tine L. Meganck and Sabine van Sprang has been sponsored by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (Belspo), IUAP project P7/26 'City and Society in the Low Countries (ca. 1200–ca. 1850). The *condition urbaine*: between resilience and vulnerability'.

1 The paintings were included in the so-called *anciens dépôts*, the stock of paintings the French superintendents had left in Brussels after having confiscated them from churches and public spaces all around the Southern Low Countries.

2 The paintings are mentioned in the Museum catalogues of 1819, 1821 and 1824, under the nos. 77-78 (*Notice des tableaux et autres objets d'art composant le musée de Bruxelles* (Brussels, 1819, repr. 1821, 1824)) but no longer in the catalogue of 1832 (*Catalogue des tableaux exposés au Musée de la ville de Bruxelles* (Brussels, 1832)). However, in 1830 the Museum organized several sales of 'less valuable paintings' ('tableaux de rebut') that are not all documented in detail. See Michèle Van Kalck, 'Het museum onder het Hollands bewind (1814-1830)', in *De Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België: Twee eeuwen geschiedenis*, ed. by Michèle Van Kalck, 2 vols (Brussels: editions Racine, 2003), vol. I, p. 95.

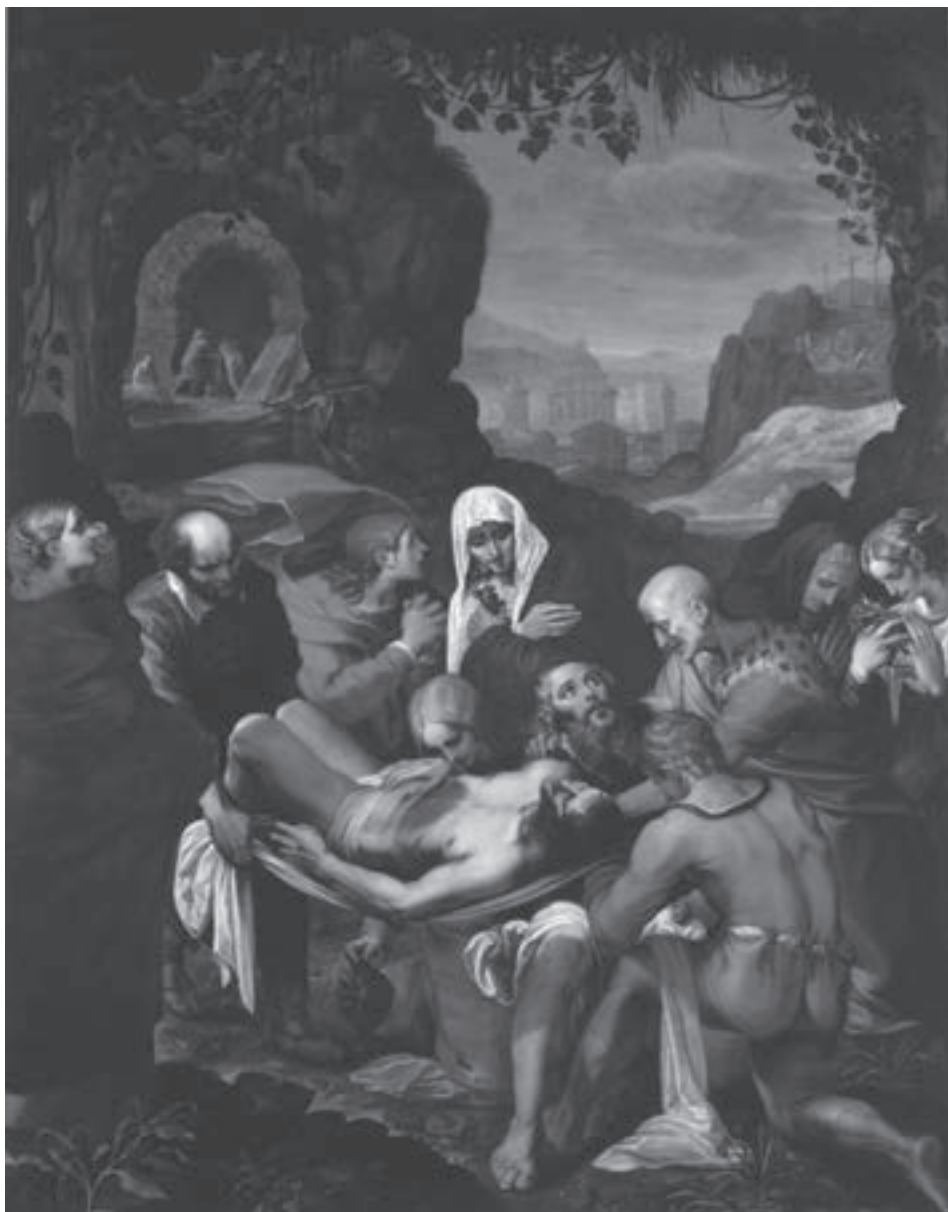


FIGURE 1: Wensel Cobergher, *Lamentation*, 1605, oil on wood, 306.5 × 239.5 cm, Brussels, KMSKB/MRBAB. Photo: © KMSKB-MRBAB, Brussels.

has not been properly addressed by art historians until now. Our close reading will also demonstrate that Cobergher's *Lamentation* was first conceived as an independent painting and not as a part of a series. The additions by Van Loon explicitly situate the decorative scheme again in the traditional iconography of the Seven Sorrows with its seven individual scenes. We situate this return to tradition around 1615, at a time when the sovereignty of the Archdukes was particularly fragile and when they could help revitalize the Brussels confraternity.

### A Novelty from Rome: the *Lamentation* (1605) by Wensel Cobergher

#### The Commission

When Cobergher painted the *Lamentation* in 1605, he had just arrived in the Spanish Netherlands after a sojourn of more than twenty years in Naples and Rome. The Archdukes had personally invited him to return to his native country. Jean Richardot (1579-1640), their representative to the Holy See, had informed them of Cobergher's success in Italy, where he was connected with distinguished patrons, many of them prelates and cardinals. During his time in Italy, Cobergher gained a reputation for being not only an excellent painter but was also respected as an architect and antiquarian.<sup>3</sup> While in Naples, for instance, he had made several paintings for the old noble family of the Carafa, whose most illustrious descendant was Paul IV (papacy 1555-59), founder of the Roman Inquisition. In Rome he befriended Jacopo Boncompagni (1548-1612) as well as Cinzio (1551-1610) and Pietro Aldrobrandini (1571-1621), nephews of Pope Clement VIII (papacy 1592-1605), as Richardot recounts in his report. Through Richardot he must also have been connected with the Flemish circles in Rome that included, among others, the young Pieter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

The Archdukes installed Cobergher as court artist ('serviteur de leur hostel et maison') on 12 November 1604.<sup>4</sup> Just one year later, by 24 November 1605, Cobergher received the more prestigious title of 'nostre architecte et ingénieur' (our architect and engineer).<sup>5</sup> He probably painted the *Lamentation*, dated 1605 on a ribbon in the lower left corner, in the months leading up to this promotion. Indeed, the panel, made of fourteen pieces of wood and measuring 306.5 by 239.5 cm, must have taken several months to produce.

Although Cobergher was already in the service of Albert and Isabella when he painted the *Lamentation*, nothing in the confraternity's inventory or in its membership book, known as the *Liber authenticus*, indicates that the Archdukes paid for or donated it, a fact that one would expect to be recorded. On the other hand, the inventory mentions explicitly that the confraternity paid the large sum of 1700 guilders for its

3 See Tine L. Meganck, 'Wensel Cobergher (1556/61-1634), Painter, Antiquarian, Architect', in *The Notion of the Painter-Architect in Italy and the Southern Netherlands, Acta of the colloquium 1-3 december 2011*, Antwerp, Rubenianum, ed. by Piet Lombaerde (Turnhout: Brepols, series *Architectura Moderna*, 11, 2013), pp. 127-46.

4 Marcel De Maeyer, *Albrecht en Isabella en de schilderkunst. Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de XVIIe-eeuwse schilderkunst in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Schone Kunsten, verhandeling nr. 9) (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1955), pp. 277-78, doc. 36.

5 De Maeyer, *Albrecht en Isabella*, pp. 279-80, doc. 40.

execution, suggesting that the confraternity was directly involved in the commission of the painting.<sup>6</sup>

Some of the richer members of the confraternity might have been solicited to contribute financially to the painting. Indeed, several entries on Cobergher's painting in the Brussels museum catalogues of the nineteenth century also mention a payment of 1400 guilders for the use of lapis lazuli, an extremely expensive pigment at the time.<sup>7</sup> As we found no source for this information, it may be a misreading of the confraternity's inventory.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the restoration of the painting in 2002-03 has confirmed the presence of lapis lazuli in the upper paint layers of the Virgin's cloak.<sup>9</sup>

Although the *Liber authenticus* contains no evidence of the Archdukes' direct involvement with the altarpiece, it does include the signed coat of arms of Albert as a cardinal (Fig. 2) on an inserted vellum leaf. This inclusion suggests that Albert had visited the confraternity sometime between 11 February 1596, when he had arrived in Brussels as governor general, and 13 July 1598, when he had resigned from the College of Cardinals to marry his cousin Isabella Clara Eugenia, daughter of Philip II.<sup>10</sup> Albert had thus already demonstrated some sympathy towards the Brussels confraternity, which had long been favoured by the Burgundian and Habsburg courts.<sup>11</sup> By asking the court artist Cobergher

6 'In den eersten, soo is te consideren het belt van Onse Lieve Vrouwe van Seven Ween sittende in eenen stoel staende op den autaar der selve capelle, waer in is eene groote schilderije met sesse andere cleijne schilderijen, op ider seijde drij, welcke zijn bediedende de Seven Mijsterien ende Ween van de Onbevleekte Maget ende Moeder Godts Maria, welcke is geschildert door meester Wentel Cobberge in het jaer een duijssent ses hondert en ses ende heeft gekost seventhien hondert guldens voor de hant alleen.' Archives of the City of Brussels/Archief van de Stad Brussel, Historical Archives/Historisch Archief (hereafter ASB, HA), Register 1499, p. 25. The last word of the sentence is not written in a very clear manner; it might be read as 'hant' (= hand, that is the execution) or 'hout' (= wooden panel). However, since it is preceded by 'de' and not 'het', we believe that 'hant' seems more plausible although it is a rather unusual expression. The painting is dated 1605 and not 1606, which could be the date of installation or a misreading. The date 1606 was repeated by Mensaert and Descamps: Guillaume Pierre Mensaert, *Le peintre amateur et curieux, ou description générale des tableaux des plus habiles maîtres, qui font l'ornement des églises, couvents, abbayes, prieurés et cabinets particuliers dans l'étendue des Pays-Bas autrichiens*, 2 vols (Brussels: Pieter de Bast, 1763), vol. 1, p. 26 and Jean-Baptiste Descamps, *Voyage pittoresque de la Flandre et du Brabant, avec des réflexions relativement aux arts & quelques gravures* (Paris and Antwerp: J. Grange, 1792; 1st edition 1769), p. 73. On the position of court artist, which does not exclude outside commissions, see Sabine van Sprang, 'Les peintres à la cour d'Albert et Isabelle: une tentative de classification', in *Sponsors of the Past. Flemish Art and Patronage, 1550-1700, Proceedings of the symposium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Faculteit Letteren, Departement Archeologie, Kunstwetenschap en Musicologie, December, 14-15, 2001*, ed. by Hans Vlieghe and Katlijne Van der Stighelen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 37-46.

7 See the *Catalogue des tableaux exposés au musée de la ville de Bruxelles* (Brussels, 1832; repr. 1836), no. 45; the *Catalogue des tableaux exposés au Musée de la ville de Bruxelles* (Brussels, 1840; repr. 1841), no. 124, and the *Musée royal de Belgique. Peinture et sculpture. Catalogue publié par la commission administrative* (Brussels, 1844; repr. 1846, 1847, 1850, 1851, 1857, 1859, 1861), no. 124. For the high price of lapis lazuli at the time, see Jana Sanyova, Sabine van Sprang, Hélène Dubois, Catherine van Herck, and Marie-Annelle Mouffe, 'La technique picturale de Van Loon: une première approche', in *Theodoor van Loon, 'Pictor ingenius' et contemporain de Rubens*, ed. by Sabine van Sprang (Cahier des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, no. 10) (Ghent and Kortrijk: Snoeck editions, 2011), pp. 81-97 (p. 90).

8 A misreading is even more plausible because according to Mensaert and Descamps, the inventory of the confraternity mentions an extraordinary outlay of 1600 guilders for lapis lazuli used by both Cobergher and Van Loon in their respective paintings. See Mensaert, *Le peintre amateur et curieux*, vol. 1, pp. 26-27 and Descamps, *Voyage pittoresque de la Flandre et du Brabant*, pp. 73-74.

9 The restoration was possible thanks to the financial support of the association Les Amis des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique /De Vrienden van de Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België. The pigments analyses have been carried out by Jana Sanyova, researcher at the laboratory of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage. See File KIK-IRPA no. 2002.07679.

10 See *Liber authenticus*, (ASB, HA, Register 3413), recto of the second unfoliated vellum leaf inserted after folio 44. See also Luc Duerloo and Marc Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel: Het Jeruzalem van de Lage Landen* (Leuven: Davidfonds, 2002), p. 149.

11 Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, c. 1490-1520', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 252-275.





FIGURE 2: Coat of arms of Albert as Cardinal, *Liber authenticus*, second inserted vellum after fol. 44. Photo © Archives de la Ville de Bruxelles/Archief van de Stad Brussel.

to paint the altarpiece of its chapel in 1605, the confraternity certainly wanted to secure archducal patronage, and in this way demonstrate its importance and status in the Brussels urban and religious fabric. Indeed, Cobergher was then the most prominent painter at court – Rubens would not return from Italy until 1608 – and had been specifically chosen by the Archdukes for his ‘skilled and fortunate inventions’.<sup>12</sup>

### Facing Tradition

Cobergher’s painting replaced an early sixteenth-century triptych that may have been destroyed or lost during the Calvinist reign in Brussels.<sup>13</sup> We do not know much about this altarpiece, but archival sources mention as possible authors Albrecht Bouts (1451/55–1549) from Leuven as well as Jan van Roome and Valentin van Orley (1466/67–1532), the father of the famous Bernard van Orley. We can assume that the central panel of the altarpiece followed one of the established iconographies of the Virgin of Seven Sorrows in the Spanish Netherlands prior to the troubles. As we shall demonstrate, Cobergher’s

<sup>12</sup> See n. 4.

<sup>13</sup> See the chapter by Edmond Roobaert and Trisha Rose Jacobs in this volume.



FIGURE 3: Pieter Aertsen, *Triptych of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin*, mid sixteenth century, Zoutleeuw, St Leonard's Church. Photo © KIK-IRPA, Brussels.

altarpiece fundamentally reformed this tradition into an emphatic meditation on the most sorrowful episode of the Virgin's life, the death of her son. To do so, he fused traditional Netherlandish devotional imagery with artistic sources from Italy. Therefore, before considering Cobergher's innovations, it is important to explain briefly how the Virgin of Seven Sorrows was usually depicted in the Low Countries.

One of the most common models was a diagrammatical composition with roundels showing Mary's sorrows organized around a central scene, according to the sequence compiled by Jan van Coudenberghe, who helped establish the first Seven Sorrows confraternity in Low Countries.<sup>14</sup> This central scene could be one of the Seven Sorrows, usually the Deposition/Lamentation, surrounded by the six others, as in the altarpiece by Pieter Aertsen in Zoutleeuw (Fig. 3).<sup>15</sup> It could also show an isolated *Mater dolorosa*, as in a print by Hieronymus Wierix after a design by Crispin van den Broeck, c. 1588.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Carol M. Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: Popular Culture and Cultic Imagery in pre-Reformation Europe', *Simiolus*, 21 (1992), 5-28 and the chapter by Dagmar Eichberger in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> See Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 27, ill. 21.

<sup>16</sup> See Walter S. Melion, 'Theory & Practice. Reproductive Engravings in the Sixteenth-Century Netherlands', in *Graven Images. The Rise of Professional Printmakers in Antwerp and Haarlem, 1540-1640*, ed. by Timothy Riggs and Larry Silver (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 51-53.

The Virgin is shown with her heart pierced by a sword, referring to the prophecy of Simeon during Christ's presentation in the temple: 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against: (Yes, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed' (Luke 2.35). Known as the sword of sorrow (*gladius doloris*) or compassion (*gladius compassionis*), it was interpreted throughout the Middle Ages as the embodiment of Christ's pain, which was shared by his mother during his Passion.<sup>17</sup> As the only gospel evidence of Mary's sufferings, Simeon's Prophecy was all the more important in the elaboration of the *Mater dolorosa* devotion.<sup>18</sup> The Wierix print inspired several paintings, one of which is interestingly attributed to Wensel Cobergher (Fig. 4). The latter slightly differs, in that it shows the *Mater dolorosa* in prayer but without her heart pierced with a sword. If the Tournai painting is indeed by Cobergher, it reveals how well the painter knew this long-standing popular tradition. At the same time, the fact that Cobergher omitted the sword would be significant in view of his later interpretation of the theme, as we will see. Finally, another popular type of image of the Virgin of Seven Sorrows, used primarily in devotional prints, shows her with her heart pierced by seven swords.<sup>19</sup> An image of this type illustrates the *Liber authenticus* of the Brussels confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows (Cover illustration) and would be reused in the confraternity's meditation book of 1615, which will be discussed below (Fig. 5).<sup>20</sup> As we shall demonstrate, Cobergher referenced this particular image in a most unusual way.

### The Influence from Rome

Against the background of this tradition, Cobergher introduced several innovations that reveal clear influences from his time in Rome. First of all, he represents not seven scenes but a single Lamentation. Long before Rubens, Cobergher discarded the customary triptych and opted for a single, monumental altarpiece, a format more common in Italy. Cobergher shows Christ's body in the foreground as it is being carried to his grave, depicted in the left background. In the distant right, one sees the empty crosses of Golgotha. The scene thus displays a Lamentation on the way of the Entombment. The body of Christ is surrounded by several people said to have been present at the Passion: St John stands beside the Virgin Mary, and Mary Magdalene kneels at Christ's side. The three other Marys as well as four other men are present, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea most probably among them. The latter was a wealthy Jew and convert to Christianity who asked Pilate for the body of Christ, paid for his tomb and burial, and shrouded his body. He can therefore probably be identified with the bearded man who extends his hand to wrap the body of Christ for burial.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> For more on the iconography of devotional prints, see the chapter by Eichberger in this volume.

<sup>20</sup> See n. 72.

<sup>21</sup> Attempts to identify the men who attended to Christ's burial have proven inconclusive for many paintings, as Wolfgang Stechow pointed out long ago: Wolfgang Stechow, 'Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus', in *Studien zur toskanischen Kunst. Festschrift für Ludwig Heinrich Heydenreich zum 23. März 1963*, ed. by Wolfgang Lotz and Lise Lotte Möller (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1964), pp. 289-302. On Joseph of Arimathea, see Matthew 27. 62-65; Mark 15. 42-47; Luke 23. 50-56; John 19. 38-42. The evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke add that he shrouded Christ's body.



FIGURE 4: Attributed to Wensel Cobergher, *The Virgin of Seven Sorrows*, Tournai, Cathedral. Photo author.

By representing the Lamentation between Golgotha and Christ's burial place, the overall composition clearly refers to the Italian type of Lamentation initiated by Raphael (1483-1520). The attitudes of the figures as well as the way they are arranged around Christ's body are clearly borrowed from Raphael's most famous painting of the subject (Fig. 6). Raphael painted this altarpiece for a funerary chapel in Perugia where it hung until 1608, when Cardinal Scipio Borghese (1576-1629) seized it for his own collection.<sup>22</sup> Borghese, a nephew of Pope Paul V (papacy 1605-21), was a preeminent collector of the time, whom Cobergher may have met in Rome, as Borghese later tried to acquire

<sup>22</sup> *Raffaello da Firenze a Roma*, ed. by A. Coliva (Exh. Cat, Rome, Galleria Borghese) (Milan: Skira, 2006), especially pp. 133-35.



FIGURE 5: *Briefve relation de la confrairie*, 1615, Image of Virgin of the Seven Sorrows sitting at the cross with seven swords piercing her heart. Photo© KBR, Brussels.

Cobergher's coin collection.<sup>23</sup> Although the transfer to Rome of Raphael's *Lamentation* postdates Cobergher's innovative painting, Raphael's masterpiece was surely discussed in the learned artistic circles the Fleming frequented in the Eternal City, and Cobergher could easily have seen it in Perugia during his Italian sojourn. While in Naples, Cobergher was commissioned to copy several paintings by Raphael, and we find echoes of the latter's stylistic and compositional inventions in several of his works.<sup>24</sup>

Other details in the Brussels *Lamentation* also reveal the influence of Italian painting, such as the head of the bald ascetic man, wearing leopard skin and standing next to Joseph of Arimathea, which recalls designs by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). The city of Jerusalem represented in the background of the Brussels *Lamentation* has a

23 Tine L. Meganck, *De kerkelijke architectuur van Wensel Cobergher (1557/61-1634) in het licht van zijn verblijf te Rome* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Schone Kunsten, 60) (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1998), p. 24.

24 Meganck, 'Wensel Cobergher (1556/61-1634), Painter, Antiquarian, Architect', pp. 131-32.





FIGURE 6: Raphael, *Lamentation*, 1507, oil on wood, 184 × 176 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese. Photo© SCALA, Florence.

distinctly Roman look. On the one hand, the view follows iconographical tradition, which typically included a round church that prefigured the church of the Holy Sepulchre as seen by later pilgrims to the Holy Land, as in the central panel of Pieter Aertsen's triptych of the Seven Sorrows, for example (Fig. 3). On the other hand, the atmospheric rendering of the city view recalls the *vedute* of Rome by the brothers Matthijs and Paul Bril, who were working there at the same time as Cobergher and whom the latter personally knew.<sup>25</sup> Cobergher must also have known the devotional print of the *Repentance of Peter* (Fig. 7) after a design by Maerten de Vos (1531/32-1603), his former master in Antwerp. He closely follows the rock formation with the Holy Grave opening on a Roman cityscape, in front of which De Vos had depicted the penitent saint.<sup>26</sup> The specific rendering of the domed building, however, which features a drum decorated with classical columns and volutes that make the transition to the dome proper, reveals Cobergher's unprecedented knowledge of

<sup>25</sup> Cobergher collaborated with Paul Bril in Rome; see Joan Bosch Ballbona, 'Paul Bril, Wenzel Cobergher, Jacob Frankaert I, Willem van Nieulandt y los eremitas de Pedro de Toledo, V marques de Villafraña', *Locus Amoenus*, 9 (2007-2008), pp. 127-54.

<sup>26</sup> Christiaan Schuckman, with Dieuwke De Hoop Scheffer (ed.), *Maarten de Vos, Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700* (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive and Amsterdam: Rijksprentenkabinet, 1995), XLVI, p. 110, n° 1145/1.



FIGURE 7: Maerten de Vos, *Repentance of Peter*, engraving. Photo ©British Museum, London.

late sixteenth-century architecture, in particular the design of St Peter's Basilica. Cobergher, who was already active as an architect in Italy, undoubtedly had an eye for the many churches that were rebuilt during his sojourn in Rome, including a principal church of the Roman Catholic Church. Cobergher saw it with the colonnaded dome designed by Michelangelo (1475-1564) and finished in 1590 by Giacomo della Porta (1533-1602) and Carlo Fontana (1543-1607) (Fig. 8) but without the later additions by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680). With this subtle allusion, Cobergher shifts the scene of the Lamentation from Jerusalem to contemporary Rome, the 'new Jerusalem'. Cobergher himself later designed a domed and centrally planned church for the pilgrimage site of Scherpenheuvel, to which we shall return.<sup>27</sup> Overall, Cobergher's *Lamentation* has an Italian look and feel, and must have made a similar impression on contemporaries when it first entered the old chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows in Brussels. As late as 1781, when Sir Joshua Reynolds visited the church, he acknowledged immediately the 'Roman' character of the painting.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Jan Hendrik Plantenga, *L'architecture religieuse dans l'ancien duché de Brabant depuis le règne des archiducs jusqu'au gouvernement autrichien (1598-1713)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1926), p. 13, Fig. 35, already noted the domed church on the *Lamentation*, but did not draw further conclusions.

<sup>28</sup> Joshua Reynolds, *A Journey to Flanders and Holland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 16-17: 'the entombing of Christ, by Koeberger, 1606: an admirable picture in the style of the Roman school'.

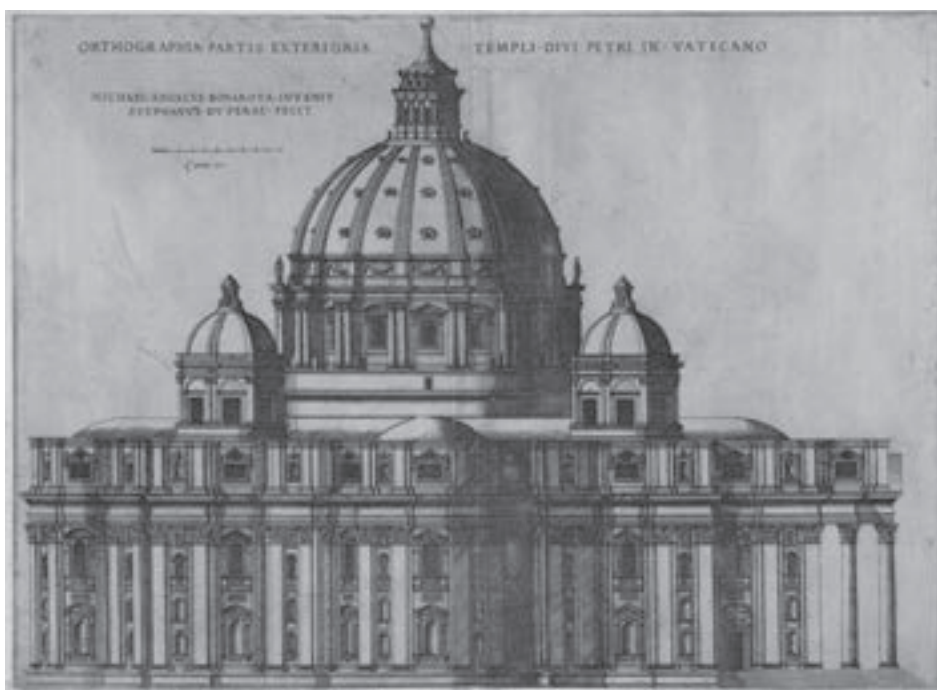


FIGURE 8: Etienne Dupérac, *Design for the Saint Peter Church in Rome by Michelangelo*, 1575-1590, etching. Photo ©British Museum, London.

## Updating Local Tradition

Within this Italian format, Cobergher adapted the scene to the specific context of the Brussels confraternity in a subtle yet striking manner. First of all, the choice to associate his Lamentation with the Entombment, or the last of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, must have been motivated by the fact that the Brussels chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows was long since dedicated to the *Sepulchrum Domini* as well.<sup>29</sup> Prior to the religious troubles, a sculptural representation of the Entombment adorned the chapel.<sup>30</sup> Cobergher's awareness of a specifically Northern piety focused on extreme sadness and on the bodily suffering of Christ further appears from the unique orientation of Christ's body. The painting, which would have been hung above the altar of the confraternity, makes Christ's body almost parallel to the altar, underscoring the Eucharistic significance of the *Corpus Christi*. By directing the dead Christ towards the spectator and emphasizing his brightly lit head pierced with thorns, Cobergher increases the emotional impact of the Lamentation. A mourning woman at the far right has lifted the crown of thorns from Christ's head and touches the sharp spines with her soft hands, a gesture that almost causes the spectator to feel the brutality of Christ's torture. Northern painters had long

<sup>29</sup> See the introduction of the inventory of the Brussels Confraternity that states that since 1498 (o.s), the chapel in St Gorik has been dedicated to the devotion of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows 'met den gebruijcke van den Hijligen Grave daer in staende, met alle de profijten, vruchten, emolumenten ende oblaeten die aen den Heijligen Grave sullen geoffert worden'. ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> See the contributions by Roobaert and Jacobs and Eichberger in this volume.



favoured spiritual movements such as the *Devotio Moderna*, which encouraged meditation on the physical sorrow of the Passion of Christ, often with the aid of images.<sup>31</sup>

The composition with three male attendants standing around Christ's wounded head further contributes to the distinct atmosphere of sorrow. The bearded man, probably Joseph of Arimathea, stands closest to Christ and looks up as if he were having a vision. The grief-stricken man with a bald, Leonardesque head extends his left hand towards the head of Christ, while he wraps his right arm around the kneeling, bearded man, as if to console him.

Most remarkably, the Virgin holds four nails of Christ to her breast, a gesture unprecedented in the *Lamentation* iconography. It echoes the long-established image of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows with seven swords piercing her heart, used by the Brussels confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows (See cover illustration and Fig. 5).<sup>32</sup> Cobergher thus refers simultaneously to the suffering of Christ through the nails that had pierced his hands and feet and to the swords that pierced the Virgin's soul. The special status of the Virgin, who stands upright in the middle of the panel, is emphasized by the lapis lazuli of her cloak, a most precious material usually reserved for the main figure(s). Instead of supporting Mary, John the Evangelist holds his hands in prayer towards her, as if he himself stands before a cult image of the Virgin of Sorrows.<sup>33</sup> By representing St John in this attitude, Cobergher established a parallel between the saint and the worshipper praying in front of the old wooden cult image of 'Our Lady of Seven Sorrows sitting on a chair' that was actually placed on the Brussels altar at the time, as we learn from the inventory of the confraternity.<sup>34</sup>

#### Cobergher's Intended Audience, from Rome to Brussels

The Christocentric focus of the altarpiece shows that Cobergher, who had been connected with important prelates and princes of the Church in Naples and Rome, was firmly committed to the latest guidelines of Catholic Reform. The Protestant attack on Marian devotion was of major concern to Catholic reformers. Though the Church did not formally condemn the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, the devotion found its critics among local academics and learned circles in Rome. Johannes Molanus (1533-83) in his *History of Sacred Images and Pictures*, first published in Leuven in 1570, explicitly objects to the non-biblical origin of the Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows of the Virgin but tolerates these devotions because of their local popularity.<sup>35</sup> Cobergher, in tune with the Roman milieu, searched for a more doctrinal solution and ingeniously incorporated subtle visual references to the Seven Sorrows devotion in a representation of Christ's Passion that relied more on scriptural evidence. Cobergher's almost 'antiquarian' rendering of the four nails

31 James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study in the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative*. Ars Neerlandica 1 (Kortrijk: Van Ghemmert Publishing Company, 1979); Walter S. Melion, *The Meditative Art. Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550-1625* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2012).

32 See the contribution by Eichberger in this volume.

33 The swooning Virgin, often shown in early earlier paintings, was explicitly rejected by the Council of Trent. See Duerloo and Wiggins, *Scherpenheuvel*, pp. 72-73.

34 The statue was already in use in 1604, as we can deduce from a payment for candles to be burned on the altar on which the image stood; see ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. [125]. It still exists and belongs now to the Our Lady of the Rich Clares. Dated 1585 on the chair of the Virgin but probably older, it represents Mary holding the infant Jesus.

35 Johannes Molanus, *De historia sanctorum imaginum et picturarum* (Louvain, 1570); see also David Freedberg, 'The Hidden God: Image and Interdiction in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century', *Art History*, 5 (1982), 133-53 (p. 136).

of Christ as an echo of the seven swords of the Virgin is further informed by the reformed ideas of the learned circle he had been part of in Rome.

The key figure of this Roman, Catholic, and antiquarian network was Cardinal Cesare Baronio (1538-1607), whom Cobergher probably knew.<sup>36</sup> According to Baronius, the best way to rebut Protestant attacks on the veracity of the Catholic creed was to return to early Christian sources – both historical texts (*historia sacra*) and archaeological evidence (*archaeologia sacra*).<sup>37</sup> He considered sacred relics tangible evidence of the life and suffering of Christ. Cobergher probably met Baronio in Rome, perhaps when he delivered a book on behalf of Johannes Moretus to the Roman cardinal, who had commissioned it for the Vatican library, which Baronio oversaw as head librarian.<sup>38</sup> Cobergher may further have encountered Baronio at the Oratorian church of Santa Maria in Vallicella, Baronio's principal church, for which Cobergher painted an altarpiece, which is now lost.<sup>39</sup> Cobergher's connection with the Roman circles around Baronio is further attested to by his friendship with Johannes Macarius (l'Heureux, 1551-1617). Thanks to a letter from Macarius to Abraham Ortelius, we know that Cobergher had arrived in Rome in 1597.<sup>40</sup> Macarius, a fellow Fleming in Rome, was the author of the *Hagioglypta*, one of the earliest studies of early Christian iconography based on the close examination of catacomb paintings.<sup>41</sup> In 1598 Cobergher depicted the *Vera Icon*, a famous relic believed to be the imprint of the face of Christ and preserved in the Vatican, an image that was soon turned into a devotional print.<sup>42</sup>

Some of the most important relics of Christ's Passion, including three fragments of the true cross, a nail of the cross, thorns from the crown of thorns, and earth soaked with the blood of Christ, were enshrined in the Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, one of the seven early Christian basilicas of Rome.<sup>43</sup> Santa Croce was also, interestingly, the titular church of Archduke Albert, who had been a cardinal priest before his betrothal to Isabella of

<sup>36</sup> David Freedberg, 'The Origins and Rise of the Flemish Madonnas in Flower Garlands: Decoration and Devotion', *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, 32 (1981), 115-50 (pp.124-25); Ilse Von zur Mühlen, 'Nachtridentinische Bildauffassungen: Cesare Baronio und Rubens' Gemälde für S. Maria in Vallicella in Rome', *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, 41 (1991), 23-60.

<sup>37</sup> *Baronio e l'arte: atti del Convegno internazionale di Studi, Sora, 10-13 ottobre 1984*, ed. by Romeo de Maio (Sora: Centro di Studi Sorani 'Vincenzo Patriarca', 1985); Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, 'Cesare Baronio and the Roman Catholic Vision of the Early Church', in *Sacred History. Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World*, ed. by Katherine Van Liere Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 52-71 (pp. 65-68).

<sup>38</sup> Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum, Archive, reg. XII, p. 245 and 248: Letters of Jan Moretus to Cardinal Baronius, Antwerp, 1603, mentioning that he has asked Cobergher to deliver a missal to the Cardinal, published by De Maeyer, *Albrecht and Isabella*, doc. 33.

<sup>39</sup> Cobergher decorated together with the Flemish sculptor Gillis van Vliete the funerary chapel of Didaco del Campo, the Flemish chamberlain of Clemens VIII in Santa Maria in Vallicella (Chiesa Nuova) with a painting of the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*. See Antonino Bertolotti, *Artisti belgi e olandesi a Roma nei secoli XVI e XVII, notizie e documenti raccolti negli archivi romani* (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1974), pp. 59 and 198. See also Timon Henricus Fokker, *Werke Niederländische Meister in den Kirchen Italiens* (Studieën van het Nederlandsch Historisch Instituut in Rome) (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1931), p. 134.

<sup>40</sup> *Abrahami Ortelii (geographi Antverpiensis) et virorum eruditorum ad eundem et ad Jacobum Colium Ortelianum (Abrahami Ortelii sororis filium) epistulae, cum aliquot aliis epistulis et tractatibus quibusdam ab utroque collectis (1524-1628)*, ed. by Joannes Henricus Hessels (Cambridge, 1887, reprint Osnabrück: Zeller, 1969), no. 310.

<sup>41</sup> Irina Oryshkevich, 'Cultural History in the Catacombs: Early Christian Art and Marcarius's *Hagioglypta*', in *Sacred History. Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World*, ed. by Katherine Van Liere and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 250-66.

<sup>42</sup> Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, Print Room, Inv. 11541, Holy Face (29.5 x 24 cm). 'Vera effigies Salvatoris nostri JESU vulgo vultus S. Romae in Vaticano conservatus quem (sicut apparet in medio limbi aurei, qui reliquum lintei tegit) D.Wensl. Cobergher delineavit: favore Rmi Vestrij Barbiani, inter praelatos propi admiss. Dum 30 Non. 1598 in Processione deferetur.'

<sup>43</sup> Frances Huemer, *Rubens and the Roman Circle. Studies of the First Decade* (New York and London: Garland Publishers, 1996), p. 89.

Spain. Albert renounced the cardinalate in 1598, but from Brussels in 1601, he commissioned Cobergher's countryman, Pieter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) to paint the altarpieces relating the story of the true cross for the Jerusalem chapel in his former titular church in Rome.<sup>44</sup> It was Jean Richardot, friend and supporter of Cobergher, who had chosen the young Rubens for this task, while Baronio may have devised their decorative program.<sup>45</sup>

It is often forgotten that in 1605, the same year that he painted the *Lamentation*, Cobergher also painted an altarpiece *Emperor Constantine, Saint Helena, and the Finding of True Cross* for the Chapel of the Holy Cross in St James' church in Antwerp. As Tine Meganck has noted elsewhere, it was commissioned by Judocus Robeyns, Lord of Borgerhout and bailiff of Antwerp, a decisive leader in the October 1595 counterattack that expelled the rebellious States General from Lier and secured that strategically important city in the vicinity of Antwerp for Philip II.<sup>46</sup> That Robeyns chose court artist Cobergher to paint a theme particularly dear to Albert may have been a sign of his loyalty to the central regime in Brussels.

Cobergher's specific innovations in his Brussels *Lamentation* similarly reveal multiple insights into the commission, intended audience, and political-religious context of the altarpiece for the Brussels confraternity of the Seven Sorrows. Foregoing the traditional representation of the Seven Sorrows, Cobergher painted a *Lamentation/Entombment*, an iconography that shows the Virgin's most grievous sorrow but relied more firmly on scriptural evidence. He further reforms the traditional image of the Virgin with her heart pierced by seven swords by depicting Mary holding the four nails of Christ in front of her heart. This antiquarian attention to sacred relics such as the nails of the cross was strongly advocated by Catholic reformers such as Cardinal Baronio, with whom Cobergher had been connected in Rome. The fact that the Virgin holds four and not three nails may relate to contemporary discussions on the historicity of the nails of Christ, among others by Justus Lipsius (1547-1606).<sup>47</sup> Cobergher's reference to the dome of the newly built St Peter's Basilica in the background of his *Lamentation* further underscores his close association to Baronio, who strongly defended the primacy of Rome as the one and only Holy See of the Church, against the Protestant argument of distinct apostolic foundations as evidence of multiple churches.<sup>48</sup> The fact that the confraternity accepted for its Brussels chapel an altarpiece that only obliquely refers to the devotion of the Seven Sorrows suggests that, at least c. 1605, it was willing to follow these latest trends from Rome. Above all, the confraternity may have hoped that by commissioning an unusually Christocentric painting from court artist Cobergher, it could gain the direct patronage of the Archduke Albert, who was particularly devoted to the Holy Cross and the Passion of Christ. At the same

44 De Maeyer, *Albrecht and Isabella*, p. 95; Hans Vlieghe, *Saints* (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, VIII) (Brussels: Arcade Press, 1972-73), II, nos. 110-112; Michael Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 59; Luc Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety. Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars* (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 235-37.

45 Huemer, *Rubens and the Roman Circle*, pp. 89-91.

46 Meganck, 'Wensel Cobergher. Painter, Antiquarian, Architect', pp. 141-42.

47 Lipsius gives a survey of the historical sources in favour of either tradition, but ultimately concludes that no certainty can be deduced from them: if the Fathers of the Church do not agree, neither can he. Justus Lipsius, *De cruce libri tres. Ad sacram profanisque historiam utiles* (Antwerp: ex officinal Plantiniana, 1594), Cap. IX, pp. 47-48: 'In quibus partibus clavi, et quo numero? Tres quidum volunt [...] Alii quattuor [...]. Si de Christo tamen quaeritur; nescio, & in dissensu Patrum non est meum arbitrari.'

48 Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, 'Cesare Baronio and the Roman Catholic Vision of the Early Church', pp. 58-61.

time, Cobergher's *Lamentation* revived the old veneration of the *Sepulchrum Domini*, the tomb of Christ, a sculpture of which had been present in the chapel of the confraternity prior to the troubles.

### The Brussels Altarpiece as a Prefiguration of the Pilgrimage Church of Scherpenheuvel

The manner in which Cobergher reformed the Seven Sorrows iconography prefigures in several ways his most famous architectural realization, one that enjoyed the direct patronage of the Archdukes: the church of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel (Montaigu).<sup>49</sup> In the same year 1605, while he painted the *Lamentation* for the Brussels confraternity, the Archdukes commissioned the building of a fortified heptagonal garden evoking the Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows of the Virgin around the small chapel of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, not far from the border with the Protestant territories (Fig. 9). According to Philips Numan, city secretary of Brussels, the initial concept came from Albert himself. On 20 November 1603, after successfully keeping 's-Hertogenbosch, the Archdukes made a pilgrimage to Scherpenheuvel to see the then-rudimentary chapel containing the miraculous image of the Virgin. Numan writes (emphasis ours):

Ende die Eertshertoghe Albertus heeft selfs uut zyn eigen inventie geordineert een schoone maniere om de voornoemde plaetse oordentlyck met boomen rontomme te beplanten. Onder welke boomen **gemaect sullen worden veertien statiën oft Capellekens verthoonende die blyschappen ende droefheden van die H. Moeder Godts** ende dat in sulcker manieren geset zynde dan den geheelen berch van Scherpen-heuvel sal hebben die gedaente van een sterre d'welck bediet den naem van Maria. Ende sal voorts met grachten ende hagen rondomme bezet worden dat het sal wesen Hortus Conclusus, den besloten Hof. Welcken naem die Schrifthuere onsen L. Vrouwen is gevende.<sup>50</sup>

And the Archduke has commissioned himself and from his own invention a beautiful manner to plant the said place orderly with trees all around. Under these trees **fourteen stations or chapels will be erected displaying the Joys and Sorrows of the Mother of God**, and this in such a manner that the entire hill of Scherpenheuvel will appear as a star, referring to the name of Mary. And it will be further structured with moats and hedges all around so that it will be a Hortus Conclusus, or Garden Enclosed, the name the Gospel has given to Our Lady.

Apparently Albert first envisioned Scherpenheuvel as a sort of *Sacro Monte* with fourteen chapels devoted to the Joys and Sorrows of the Virgin on the naturally hilly site, but after an attack by the Army of the Estates on the stone chapel in the centre (consecrated 1604), it was

<sup>49</sup> Luc Duerloo and Marc Wogens have already pointed out the importance of courtly and artistic agency in linking Scherpenheuvel with the Brussels chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows. While Duerloo and Wogens mention that Cobergher painted an altarpiece for the Brussels confraternity prior to his design of Scherpenheuvel, they were not aware that this is the *Lamentation* now preserved in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels. See Duerloo and Wogens, *Scherpenheuvel*, pp. 137-55.

<sup>50</sup> Philips Numan, *Historie vande Mirakelen* (Brussels, 1606), pp. 41-42.



FIGURE 9: Plan of Scherpenheuvel, circa 1605, copy of 1630, Archive of the Church. Photo © KIK-IRPA, Brussels.

decided in 1605 that the seven-starred *Hortus Conclusus* would be fortified.<sup>51</sup> Only two years later, Albert and Isabella asked Cobergher, then promoted to ‘architect-engineer’, to design a completely new heptagonal pilgrimage church (1609-27) as the focal point of this fortification, a total work of art for which Cobergher also oversaw the sculptural and painterly decoration.<sup>52</sup>

In Scherpenheuvel, Cobergher designed a unique, centrally planned, seven-sided domed church, a model that was widespread in Italian architectural theory but rarely

51 Account books of Scherpenheuvel: State Archives of Belgium, Schepenboek van Scherpenheuvel (Book of the aldermen of Scherpenheuvel), account no. 26455. See also Fig. 9 of this article, the plan of 1630 with fortified *Hortus Conclusus* around first stone chapel, with entrenchment of 1605. Meganck, *De kerkelijke architectuur van Wensel Cobergher*, Fig. 16; Duerloo and Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 87.

52 For a transcription of this assignment document, dated 28 April 1607, see Plantenga, *L’architecture religieuse*, p. 297. See also Meganck, *De kerkelijke architectuur van Wensel Cobergher*, p. 62 and Duerloo and Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 89.

executed. As we have seen, Cobergher already reflected on this architecture in the background of his *Lamentation*, where he fused the centrally planned church of the Holy Sepulchre with references to the recent rebuilding of St Peter's in Rome. The domed pilgrimage church of Scherpenheuvel stands at the centre of a newly fortified town, as a bulwark against the Protestant Reformation, a 'new Jerusalem' in the Spanish Netherlands. Cobergher thus reformulates sacred history, making it relevant for local audiences: from Jerusalem to Rome, from Rome to Brussels, from Brussels to Scherpenheuvel. It must have been this ability to innovate Netherlandish image and building traditions according to the latest precepts of Roman reform that inspired the Archdukes to invite Cobergher to return to his native country, where they were planning a most comprehensive campaign of Catholic restoration.

### A Return to Tradition: The Six Remaining Sorrows Painted by Theodoor van Loon

The inventory of the confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows as well as eighteenth-century artistic guides by Guillaume Pierre Mensaert and the painter Jean-Baptiste Descamps mention that Cobergher's altarpiece was surrounded by six small paintings ('cleijne schilderijen') to complete the cycle of the Seven Sorrows.<sup>53</sup> Both Mensaert and Descamps reveal the name of their author: Theodoor van Loon, Cobergher's regular collaborator, particularly when courtly commissions were concerned.<sup>54</sup> According to Mensaert, these paintings measured approximately four by three feet or 85 x 115 cm and were hung between the columns of the altar. In other words, they adjoined Cobergher's painting at its full height on either side, recalling the shape of a traditional triptych. Already in the sixteenth century, Quentin Metsys had opted for a similarly flat, wall-like display for the altarpiece of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows that he executed for the high altar of the choir at the Madre de Deus convent in Lisbon, founded by the Queen Leonor of Portugal. As Dagmar Eichberger rightly points out in her article on this altarpiece, this structure made it possible to see all of the images simultaneously, an essential component for the celebration of the Seven Sorrows devotion.<sup>55</sup>

Thanks to Mensaert and the old catalogues of the Royal Museums in Brussels, we know the subjects of Van Loon's six paintings. With the exception of the Entombment, they represented the traditional sorrows of the Virgin: the Presentation in the Temple, the Flight into Egypt, the Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple, Christ bearing the Cross, the Crucifixion, and the Deposition.<sup>56</sup> At the time the paintings by Van Loon were added, the subject of Cobergher's painting was thus perceived as the Entombment, although the grave itself is partially depicted in the background.

<sup>53</sup> See n. 6 and Mensaert, *Le peintre amateur*, pp. 26-27; Descamps, *Voyage pittoresque*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>54</sup> Meganck, *De kerkelijke architectuur van Wensel Cobergher*, p. 46; Sabine van Sprang, 'Van Loon et les tableaux de la chapelle ducale Saint-Hubert à Tervuren', in *Theodoor van Loon, 'Pictor ingenius' et contemporain de Rubens*, ed. by Sabine van Sprang (Cahier des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, no. 10) (Ghent and Kortrijk: Snoeck editions, 2011), pp. 43-59.

<sup>55</sup> See the reconstruction by Dagmar Eichberger, in Dagmar Eichberger, 'Devotional Networks across Europe: the Early Habsburgs and the Spreading of the Cult of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', in *Religion, the Supernatural and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe: An Album Amicorum for Charles Zika*, ed. by Jennifer Spinks and Dagmar Eichberger (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions) (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2015). We thank Dagmar Eichberger for sending us an advance copy of her article.

<sup>56</sup> Mensaert, *Le peintre amateur*, pp. 26-27. At the museum of Brussels, the three first paintings and the three last ones were assembled in order to form two paintings each divided in three parts. See n. 2.

Nothing is known about the date of execution of the Van Loon paintings, which has led some scholars to suppose that they were painted at the same time as or soon after Cobergher's altarpiece.<sup>57</sup> This supposition is not tenable because Van Loon was still in Rome in 1605, and several documents mention his presence there until June 1608.<sup>58</sup> It may be that Van Loon first encountered Cobergher in the Eternal City, since he resided in the parish of Santa Maria del Popolo, where the latter would live from 1601 until 1604, the date of his departure for the Netherlands.<sup>59</sup> But Van Loon's presence in Brussels is only cited for the first time in 1612, in a letter written by Erycius Puteanus (1574-1646), in which the learned man praises the young painter's talent, elegant manners, knowledge, and wisdom.<sup>60</sup> One year later, Van Loon was working with Cobergher on the decoration of the church of the Discalced Carmelites in Brussels, commissioned by the Archdukes. In an arrangement similar to the one employed in the chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, Cobergher asked Van Loon for help: Cobergher painted the main altarpiece whereas, in this case, Van Loon executed the paintings for the side altars.<sup>61</sup> Van Loon also painted the portrayals of *Saint Elisabeth of Hungary* and *Albert of Leuven*, which still belong to the Brussels convent of the Discalced Carmelites,<sup>62</sup> and he may also have executed the portraits of the Archdukes, for which Cobergher was paid in September 1615.<sup>63</sup>

We propose that Van Loon executed the small paintings for the chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows concurrently with or soon after this commission, around 1614-16. Although we do not know who commissioned them, we may assume that it was Cobergher who recommended Van Loon, as he did for the church of the Discalced Carmelites and would do for other courtly commissions as well.<sup>64</sup> The paintings should, in our view, be understood within the framework of the Archdukes' promotion of Marian devotion and support for local confraternities at a particular moment during their reign. Indeed, at that time, the support of both the Church and the court helped breathe new life into the confraternity. On 15 October 1614, Pope Paul V granted a series of indulgences to its members, and on 7 January 1615, the nuncio at the Brussels court, Guido Bentivoglio, did the same for every person who visited the Brussels chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows for five consecutive years and there recited five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys.<sup>65</sup> As the confraternity's membership book, the *Liber authenticus*, testifies, the very same year, on 23 October, the Archdukes themselves responded positively to the confraternity's petition for support by providing 500 *livres* to fund the restoration of a 'bench' ('ung siege alentour',

57 Duerloo and Wingens, *Scherpenbeuvel*, p. 149; Annick Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du País-Bas': Stratégies politiques et figures de la Vierge dans les Pays-Bas espagnols* (Turnhout: Brepols, series Église, liturgie et société dans l'Europe moderne, 2009), p. 135.

58 Irene Baldriga, 'Entre l'Italie et les Pays-Bas méridionaux: le parcours artistique et culturel de Theodoor van Loon', in *Theodoor van Loon, 'Pictor ingenius' et contemporain de Rubens*, p. 21.

59 Meganck, *De kerkelijke architectuur van Wensel Cobergher*, pp. 24-25.

60 Alphonse Wauters, in *Biographie Nationale de Belgique* (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique), XII, 1892-1893, col. 386. On the relationship between Puteanus and Van Loon, see Auguste Castan, 'Les relations du peintre Théodore van Loon avec la citadelle de Pallas à Louvain', *Bulletin de l'Académie royale des Sciences, des lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 3<sup>e</sup> série, 7 (1884), p. 208; Margit Thöfner, 'Amico intimo; ingenio et arte pingendi celeberrimo: Erycius Puteanus and Theodoor van Loon', *Humanistica Lovaniensia, Journal of Neo-Latin studies*, XLIX (2000), pp. 359-76.

61 Meganck, *De kerkelijke architectuur van Wensel Cobergher*, p. 46.

62 *Albert and Isabella 1598-1621*, ed. by Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), I, pp. 22-23, nos 7-8.

63 De Macyer, *Albrecht and Isabella*, p. 210 and doc. 106

64 See n. 54.

65 Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du País-Bas'*, p. 136.

maybe stalls) donated to the chapel by Philip the Fair and heavily damaged during the religious troubles.<sup>66</sup> They also allowed the confraternity to decorate their chapel with the Archdukes' arms, 'as it had been done by their predecessors'. Moreover, according to the inventory of the confraternity, in 1615-16, the Archdukes paid in part for the woodwork representing the Seven Sorrows and two confessionals, also decorated with their armorial bearings, executed by local sculptor François Cosijns.<sup>67</sup>

If our supposition concerning the date of their execution is correct, Van Loon's paintings would fit into what we would call a second renovation campaign in the Brussels chapel of the Seven Sorrows. According to Delfosse, it was also around 1615 that the Archdukes – whose arms appear without a date in the *Liber authenticus* – became members of the confraternity, and not at the beginning of their reign, as has generally been thought.<sup>68</sup> This dating is all the more plausible in light of the fact that their blazons figure in the *Liber authenticus* just one opening before the registration of their aid in restoring Philip the Fair's bench.<sup>69</sup>

The fact that the Archdukes became members of the confraternity around 1615 is even more probable because at that time the future of their government was uncertain. Indeed, the couple was childless, and Albert, who suffered severe attacks of gout, could have died at any moment.<sup>70</sup> The return of the Southern Netherlands to Spanish authority was thus considered imminent.<sup>71</sup> In this context it was crucial to underscore once again the dynastic legitimacy of the house of Habsburg, which had inherited the Low Countries through Philip the Fair's mother, Mary of Burgundy. Seen in this light, financing the restoration of a bench Philip had given to the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows, which he allegedly founded, becomes a powerful symbolic gesture on a political as well as religious plane.

The court's further support of the confraternity also includes their approval of a devotional manual, designed to promote or encourage the Seven Sorrows. This meditation manual for each sorrow, enlarged by a brief history of the origins of the confraternity, was published in French and Dutch by the Brussels court publisher Hubert Anthoine-Velpius

66 *Liber authenticus*, fols 43<sup>v</sup>-48<sup>r</sup>, fol. 43 having been transposed from the preceding quire and inserted immediately before fol. 48; Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, p. 139.

67 ASB, HA, Register 1499, p. 25/26: 'Item, het schrijn houte wercke waer in de Seven Weeen gesneden met twee bichtstoelen, welck maken van die schrijn werck ten deele heeft bekostight den hertogh Albertus ende Isabella, sijne huijsvrouw, saeliger memorie, waer in hunne wapenen gestelt sijn, welcke van sneijden hebben gecost met negen Bourgonsche cruijcen drij en twintigh guldens. Het voorseijde schrijn werck is gemackt ofte begonst in het jaer een duijssent ses hondert en vijftien ende voleijndt in het jaer een duijssent ses hondert sestien door Francois Cosijns schrijnwercker ende heeft gekost volgens accoort acht hondert vijftigh guldens, sonder daer onder begrepen de bichtstoelen ofte gesneden werck'.

68 Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, p. 139. According to Luc Duerloo and Marc Wingens, p. 149, the Archdukes had become members in 1602. See also Luc Duerloo, 'Archducal Piety and Habsburg Power', in *Albert and Isabella 1598-1621*, ed. by Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), II, p. 272.

69 See *Liber authenticus*, fols 45<sup>v</sup>-46<sup>r</sup>. The pagination has been inverted, so that fol. 43 now follows fol. 46. See the chapter by Susie Speakman Sutch in this volume.

70 Sabine van Sprang, 'Voyez notre belle capacité à gouverner. Sobre las 'Fiestas del papagayo de 1615 en Bruselas' en honor de la infanta Isabel', in *El Legado de Borgoña. Fiesta y Ceremonia cortesana en la Europa de los Austrias (1454-1648)*, ed. by Krista De Jonge and others (Madrid: Marcial Pons Ediciones de Historia / Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2010), pp. 305-21; Werner Thomas, 'La fiesta como estrategia de pacificación en los Países Bajos meridionales 1598-1621', in *El Legado de Borgoña. Fiesta y Ceremonia cortesana en la Europa de los Austrias (1454-1648)*, ed. by Krista De Jonge and others (Madrid: Marcial Pons Ediciones de Historia / Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2010), pp. 267-303.

71 In conformity with the clauses in the Act of Cession, Philip II, on the eve of his death, gave the Low Countries to his daughter Isabella and her husband Albert. See Victor Brants, *Albert et Isabelle. Etudes d'Histoire Politique et Sociale* (Leuven: Peeters, 1910), pp. 22-23; Alicia Esteban Estríngana, *Madrid y Bruselas, Relaciones de gobierno en la etapa postarchiducal (1621-1634)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), p. 8.



in the same year, 1615.<sup>72</sup> It would also be translated into Spanish by the highly influential confessor and councillor of the Infanta Isabella, Andres de Soto.<sup>73</sup> The handbook's foreword states that its purpose was to encourage the worshipper to meditate on Christ's Passion and the Virgin's compassion in order to help him resist heretical ideas and secure his faith.<sup>74</sup> Fighting against heretics seems to be a crucial issue of the manual. In the closing text on indulgences, for example, the reader is encouraged several times to pray for the extirpation of heresy as one of the best ways to gain forgiveness.<sup>75</sup> Though the author's name is not mentioned, the dedication of both the French and the Dutch editions is signed by the 'prince', the *hoofdman*, and the deans of the Brussels rhetorician chamber, 'The Garland of Mary' ('*t Mariakranske*'). It is addressed in French to the States of Brabant and in Dutch to the Brussels magistracy. The manuals do not mention the Archdukes apart from the privilege they granted for their publication in December 1614. However, in 1618, a certain Pierre du Bois, writer 'en las baillas deste Real Palacio' (at the 'Place des Bailles' or outer courtyard of the Royal Palace), petitioned Isabella on account of his having composed in 1615 a short textbook on the confraternity.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, the handbooks insist rather heavily on the princely character of the confraternity, since its author declares in the title as well as several times in the text that it had been 'founded' ('*instituée*' in French) by Philip the Fair, 'Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy and of Brabant'.<sup>77</sup>

While the addition of Van Loon's paintings to Cobergher's altarpiece clearly marks a return to tradition and to the established practice of empathetic meditation on each of Mary's sorrows, it is also in perfect accordance with the 1615 manual. The handbook is moreover illustrated by anonymous prints representing each sorrow in accordance with local tradition. As mentioned earlier, the manual also contains a print of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows sitting at the foot of the cross with seven swords piercing her heart; in the background, one recognizes a typical imaginary view of Jerusalem (Fig. 5).

### Van Loon and Scherpenheuvel

The decision to add the remaining six sorrows to Cobergher's *Lamentation/Entombment* may have been further motivated by the need to underscore parallels between the Seven Sorrows devotion and another sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin and the defence of the Catholic faith: the seven-sided pilgrimage church at Scherpenheuvel, on which Cobergher was working at the time and which as we have seen was founded by the Archdukes. There

72 *Briefve relation de la confrairie des sept douleurs de Nostre Dame instituée par le serenissime prince Philippe de haute mémoire, Archiducq d'Autriche, Duc de Bourgogne, de Brabant etc., en l'an de Nostre Seigneur 1498 en l'église de S. Géry en Bruxelles* (Brussels: Hubert Anthoine, 1615) (see Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, p. 136). This version was translated into *Cort verhael van het broederschap vande seve[n] weeden van Onser Lieve Vrouwe. Inghestelt by den doorluchtichsten Prince hoogher memorie Philippus Eertzhertoch van Oostenrijk, Hertoch van Bourgoignen, van Brabant, etc. int jaer ons Heeren 1498. binnen der kercke van S. Guericx tot Brussel. Ghedediceert aen den Magistraet der selver stadt [...] Overgheset uyt het François, door F.I.V.A.M.* (Brussels: Hubert Anthoine, 1615). See also the chapter by Dewilde and Vannieuwenhuyze in this volume.

73 Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, p. 139.

74 *Briefve relation*, pp. 4, 15-16, and 22-31; see Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, p. 136.

75 *Briefve relation*, pp. 178-81.

76 Bruxelles, State Archives of Belgium, Chambres des Comptes, Acquits de Lille, carton 1226; see Nicole Rowan, 'Pierre Du Bois. Vertaler der Aartshertogen en de Brusselse Ommegang van 31 mei 1615', *Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique*, XLIII (1972), pp. 710-16. In the French version of the 1615 manual, the anonymous author states in his preface that he has translated the text from the 'Thiois' language. Since Pierre Du Bois seems to have been also a translator, it seems all the more plausible that he is the author of at least the French version.

77 *Briefve relation*, pp. 13-14, 17, 25, 162, and 185-87.

too, seven paintings would represent individual episodes of the Virgin's life. But this time, these paintings were to be monumental and decorate seven altars. Furthermore, Cobergher entrusted the execution of all of them to Van Loon, who would probably have painted the side altarpieces between 1623 and 1628, and the main altarpiece in 1632.<sup>78</sup> Their subjects correspond to the seven Marian celebrations (one for each day of the week) described in the *Hebdomada Mariana* (Antwerp: Jan I Moretus, 1609), written by the court chaplain Richard Stanyhurst (1547-1618) and dedicated to Isabella: the encounter of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate (or the Immaculate Conception), the Birth of the Virgin, Anna and Joachim presenting Mary at the Temple, the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Presentation in the Temple, and on the main altar, the Assumption.<sup>79</sup>

Although the narrative of the Scherpenheuvel scenes differs from the sorrows depicted in the Brussels chapel, the cycle ends with the *Presentation in the Temple*, which is the originating episode of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows. In fact, Simeon's Prophecy is stressed in Van Loon's painting (Fig. 10) by the fact that he opens his mouth, which suggests that he is speaking.<sup>80</sup> With the exception of the *Assumption* on the main altar, the cycle at Scherpenheuvel ends where that of the Seven Sorrows begins. Moreover, the church also possesses a *Pietà* that may be a copy after a work executed by Van Loon for Scherpenheuvel while he was working on the paintings for the chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows in Brussels.<sup>81</sup> Showing the mourning Virgin praying in front of her son's body, this painting testifies to the importance of the *Mater dolorosa* theme at Scherpenheuvel as well. Around the middle of the seventeenth century, the reference to the devotion of the Seven Sorrows would become even more explicit in Scherpenheuvel with the addition of seven bas-reliefs decorating the external altars of the church and dedicated to a Sorrow or to a Joy of the Virgin.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, Luc Duerloo has rightly observed that, parallel to the slow and laborious process of Scherpenheuvel's completion, civil and ecclesiastic authorities redoubled their efforts to spread the devotion to the Virgin of Seven Sorrows.<sup>83</sup> A decisive step in promoting the confraternity was made in 1619, when George Colvener, chancellor of the University of Douai, reissued Jan van Coudenberghe's works.<sup>84</sup> This new Latin edition, dedicated to Albert, revived the role traditionally assigned by Burgundian-Habsburg rulers to the *Mater*

78 For previous literature on the paintings, see Baldriga, 'Entre l'Italie et les Pays-Bas méridionaux', pp. 38-39.

79 Duerloo and Wings, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 131. It seems that there was some hesitation in selecting the scenes of the cycle, since it underwent at least one major change: before 1625, Van Loon had painted a *Nativity* probably for the main altar at Scherpenheuvel, which was consequently rejected. Thöfner, 'Amico intimo', pp. 366-67. The order in which the altars are shown today is not original and dates from around 1930.

80 As has been rightly observed by Duerloo and Wings, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 141.

81 According to Victor Brughmans, *Les peintures de Theodore Van Loon à Montaigny* (Leuven: Wouters-Ickx, 1935), p. 27, this *Pietà* comes from the sacristy. The supposition, made by Duerloo and Wings, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 145, that it was originally facing the *Presentation in the Temple* is thus incorrect. In 2005, a much better version of the same composition appeared at the Van Ham Kunstauktionen (Cologne), where it was sold on 19 November to the Galerie Neuse, in Bremen. This version is a bit smaller than the painting in Scherpenheuvel (152 x 124 versus 185 x 135 cm), but according to the Galerie Neuse, it was originally made for the church and was replaced, at an unknown date, by a copy. According to Jan Frans Pallemarts (*Schilderijen van Theodoor van Loon te Scherpenheuvel* (Mechelen: Ryckmans, 1934), p. 18), the church archives mention an early *Pietà* by Van Loon.

82 Duerloo and Wings, *Scherpenheuvel*, pp. 153-55. The author of the bas-reliefs is unknown.

83 Duerloo, *Archiducal Piety and Habsburg Power*, pp. 275-76.

84 Jan van Coudenberghe, *Miracula CCX confraternitatis VII. dolorum Sanctissimae Virginis Mariae. Una cum ortu et progressu eiusdem confraternitatis*, edited and completed by George Colvener (Douai: Pierre Avroy, 1619). A new edition was later published by the same Pierre Avroy in 1629. See Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, p. 140.



FIGURE 10: Theodoor van Loon, *Prophecy of Simeon*, 1623-28, oil on canvas, 220 × 160 cm, Church of Scherpenheuvel. Photo © KIK-IRPA, Brussels.

*dolorosa* in their ideology of peace and territorial unity.<sup>85</sup> Hence the Brussels confraternity, through its spiritual exercises, strove for the preservation of the city and country, as the Archdukes themselves – by now full members of the confraternity<sup>86</sup> – recalled in 1620 when they guaranteed once again the privileges granted in 1511 to the Brussels confraternity by Philip the Fair's father and son, Maximilian of Austria (1459-1519) and the future Charles V, respectively.<sup>87</sup> Since it was henceforth certain that the Southern Netherlands were destined to revert to Spain, this act could be seen as Albert and Isabella's political testament on the eve of the expiry date of the Twelve Years' Truce between the Northern and Southern Netherlands (1621).<sup>88</sup> As for the church at Scherpenheuvel, the Archdukes saw the Seven Sorrows devotion as the perfect tool for ensuring the longevity of their action in favour of political and confessional unity that only dynastic continuity could guarantee, sanctified by the Virgin's patronage.

<sup>85</sup> Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>86</sup> Their names appear in the list of the members at the end of George Colvener's edition of 1619. About this list, see Delfosse, *La 'Protectrice du Pais-Bas'*, p. 140.

<sup>87</sup> Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 275.

<sup>88</sup> Already in May 1616, the Provincial States started to swear oaths of allegiance to the king of Spain, Philip III. See Van Sprang, 'Voyez notre belle capacité', p. 308 with references to the previous literature on the subject.

## Conclusion

A key aspect of archducal patronage was the refurbishing of sanctuaries that had suffered during the religious troubles, which were restored according to the latest guidelines of the Catholic Reformation. As Duerloo has recently shown, this patronage was often indirect and left to a group or middleman who shared the same values as those pursued by the archducal regime.<sup>89</sup> When the Brussels confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows selected the recently appointed court artist Wensel Cobergher to execute its altarpiece in 1605, it participated in this process. By reforming the traditional iconography of the Virgin of Seven Sorrows according to the latest guidelines of Roman orthodoxy, Cobergher created an unprecedented syncretic image that addressed both the archaeological and theological concerns of his intellectual world and the ethos the court believed in and wanted to promote. Eventually, around 1615, Albert and Isabella gave their direct support to the confraternity by contributing financially to the further renovation of the chapel and by becoming members. But by then, the innovative formulation Cobergher had demonstrated in the main altarpiece was no longer sought after.<sup>90</sup> Instead, the second decoration campaign carried out in the chapel, which we contend included the addition of six paintings by Theodoor van Loon, revived the traditional image and political role of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows. This return to tradition was also proclaimed in the confraternity's publications. Indeed, times had changed. In these circumstances of greater political insecurity, securing an 'emotional community' by encouraging meditations upon each of the Seven Sorrows, as had been done in the past, was again deemed of primary importance.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Luc Duerloo, 'Patronage, Painting and Faction. Rubens, the Archducal Court and its Network from the Franché-Comté', *La Franche-Comté et les anciens Pays-Bas XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, T. I: *Aspects politiques, diplomatiques, religieux et artistiques* (Actes du colloque international à Vesoul (Haute-Saône) et Tournai (Belgique), les 25, 26 et 27 octobre 2006), ed. by Laurence Delobette and Paul Delsalle (Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2009), pp. 449-70.

<sup>90</sup> That Cobergher's innovations were specific to the context of the confraternity *c.* 1605, and no longer relevant in the late seventeenth century is confirmed by an etching after the *Lamentation* by the Antwerp engraver Michiel Bunel (1670-1739) (Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, Print Room, Inv. S.I. 11541). It omits systematically any specific motif related to the Seven Sorrows devotion (*e.g.*, the Virgin holding the nails, St John praying in her direction) or to the compassion theme (*e.g.*, the woman who touches the thorns of the crown in the painting now holds the *titulus*, the sorrowful bold character has disappeared). It also substitutes a view of Rome for the imaginary one, transforming the scene into a more generic image of an *Entombment*.

<sup>91</sup> We borrow this expression from Barbara Rosenwein, cited in Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows', p. 265.



