# Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges *c.* 1300–1520

ANDREW BROWN

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# Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges *c.* 1300–1520

Public religious practice lay at the heart of civic society in late medieval Europe. In this illuminating study, Andrew Brown draws on the rich and previously little-researched archives of Bruges, one of medieval Europe's wealthiest and most important towns, to explore the role of religion and ceremony in urban society. The author situates the religious practices of citizens – their investment in the liturgy, commemorative services, guilds and charity – within the contexts of Bruges' highly diversified society and of the changes and crises the town experienced. Focusing on the religious processions and festivities sponsored by the municipal government, the author challenges much current thinking on, for example, the nature of 'civic religion'. Re-evaluating the ceremonial links between Bruges and its rulers, he questions whether rulers could dominate the urban landscape by religious or ceremonial means, and offers new insight into the interplay between ritual and power, of relevance throughout medieval Europe.

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In memory of
Anne Rosemary Brown

and

Clifford Ernest Reader

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADN | Archives départementales du Nord, Lille |
| AGR | Archives générales du Royaume/Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels |
| AHB | Archief van het Heilige Bloede, Brugge |
| AKB | Archief van de ongeschoeide karmelieten Brugge |
| *ASEB* | *Annales de la Société d'émulation de Bruges* |
| ASSB | Archief van hoofdgilde Sint-Sebastiaan Bruges |
| BN | Blauwe nummers (RAB) |
| BAB | Bischoppelijk archief, Bruges |
| CC | Chambres des Comptes/Rekenkamer (AGR) |
| FA | Fonds ambachten (RAB) |
| FD | Fonds découverts (RAB) |
| GVS | L. Gilliodts-Van Severen, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Bruges*, 7 vols. (Bruges, 1871–85) |
| OCMW | Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn |
| OLV | Onze-Lieve-Vrouw kerk |
| RAB | Rijksarchief Bruges |
| SA | Sint-Anna archief (RAB, OCMW) |
| SAB | Stadsarchief, Bruges |
| SBB | Stadsbibliotheek, Bruges |
| SG | Sint-Gillis kerk (RAB) |
| SJ | Sint-Jacob kerk (RAB, OCMW) |
| SS | Sint-Salvator kerk (RAB, OCMW) |
| SW | Sint-Walburga kerk (RAB, OCMW) |

# Note on currency and monies of account

Unless otherwise stated, the currency referred is the Flemish pound (*pond groot*), made up of 240 Flemish groats. The Flemish pound of Paris (*parisis*) also figures as a money of account in Bruges, and was worth 20 Flemish groats.

# Introduction

On 3 May 1475, the day of the Bruges Holy Blood procession, Reynoud Willems, dean of the plumbers' guild, came to the place appointed for the gathering of his craft near the Franciscan friary.[1] The deans of six other guilds who were grouped with the plumbers on this day[2] noticed that he was not wearing the required red silk sash around his shoulders over a black livery. Ordered by the town magistrates to make his peace with the other deans and appear correctly attired at the next Corpus Christi day procession, Reynoud defiantly clothed his guild's torch-bearers in outfits of *meschante* green. The civic authorities evidently did not regard his behaviour as a trifling sartorial faux pas: they had him banished from Flanders for fifty years. But the *parlement* at Mechelen, before which the case came in 1483, considered the penalty a touch draconian. It ordered the town to restore Reynoud's good name and pay him a substantial sum in compensation. The civic authorities appealed. The town of Bruges, they said, was notable, large and full of people, one of the *bonnes villes* that the prince held in his *pays*. In the town were many craft guilds, each with its own dean who was under oath to maintain the welfare and rules of his craft and do everything required of a good and loyal dean. Also in the town there were certain general and solemn processions, amongst them the Holy Blood procession and one on Corpus Christi day, at which the guild deans and their torch-carriers were accustomed to wearing liveries. The 'proud and haughty' Reynoud Willems had disobeyed these 'ancient' and 'laudable' customs.

Quite why Reynoud chose to defy civic authority is hard to say. No reason is given beyond his reported statement before the town council that he had not wanted to remain dean of his guild and guild master in

[1] For the following, see SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 364r–v; W. Vorsterman (ed.), *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen* (Antwerp, 1531), fo. 172v; and SAB, 157, *Civiele sententiën vierschaar* (*Register van de vonissen in burgerlijk zaken door of tegen de stad aangelegend bij de raad van Vlaanderen*, 1461–1519), fos. 144v–147r.

[2] The masons, carpenters, tilers, thatchers, plasterers and sawyers: see Appendix 1.

the town.[3] He may have had material reasons for refusing office. There was prestige and influence attached to the deanship of a guild, but it could be personally costly and time-consuming; guild affairs or duties as a town master could take up time that might be spent more profitably elsewhere.[4] Reynoud had evidently been exploiting market opportunities: he had been in receipt of regular and rewarding sums for his work on the *prinsenhof*, the duke's residence in Bruges.[5]

That Reynoud should have chosen to defy civic authority on Holy Blood day is also puzzling. He must have expected punishment, even if not one so severe. He must have been familiar with Bruges customs and sensibilities regarding honour and hierarchy. He had himself been elected member of the prestigious crossbow guild of St George – which flanked the Holy Blood relic during the annual procession.[6] Reynoud's public defiance at a religious ceremony was a calculated act, but it is an unusual case, and in the end the full reasons for his behaviour will never be known.

Reasons for the extreme reaction of the town magistrates are not self-evident either. Other cases of disturbance on Holy Blood day had occurred, but punishment of them had not been so harsh.[7] Particular circumstances may have played a part: conditions in the 1470s, as we shall see, may have made those in authority more edgy about any act of rebellion. Yet there were deeper reasons for their reaction. The episode is suggestive about the place occupied by certain ceremonies in civic society. The ability to mount processions like the Holy Blood was

[3] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 364r. He had been elected dean of his guild in September 1474 (SAB, 114 *Wetsvernieuwingen*, 1468–1501, fo. 55r). Next to his name appears a note to the effect that he had been replaced following his banishment. His name does not appear among the officers of the guild before this date, nor, less surprisingly, afterwards.

[4] For rules of the plumbers' guild and obligations on deans in 1444, see RAB, BN, 8249; FA, 1, fos. 67r–70r. On the government of Bruges' guilds, see J. Dumolyn, 'De bevoegdheden van de middeleeuwse Brugse ambachtsbesturen (1363–1501)', *Handelingen van het Genootschap*, forthcoming (2011).

[5] Throughout the 1460s and early 1470s, Reynoud's name appears regularly in the accounts of the ducal receivers: in 1462 (for work on the 'great tower': ADN, B4107, fo. 95r), 1464 (*ibid.*, B4109, fo. 108r), 1465 (*ibid.*, B4110, fo. 109v), 1467 (when he was paid £80 2s: *ibid.*, B4111, fo. 127v), 1471 (for work in Bruges and the castle at Male: AGR, CC 27394, fo. 30r), and 1474 (for work on a window in a gallery showing the arms of the duke, on the garden and on the duchess' lodging: ADN, B4113, fo. 52v; B4116, fo. 66r). In 1475, the year of his banishment, his wife Agnes Daneels was paid 'in the absence of her husband' *(ibid.*, B4117, fo. 75r). Connections at court may explain why he was able to bring his case before the *parlement*.

[6] 'Reynoud de Lootghieter' paid 10s for entry into the crossbow guild in 1471/2 (SAB, 385, rekeningen, fo. 182r). He was also paid for work on the guild house (*ibid.*, fo. 183v).

[7] A cooper, Jan Iooris, was accused in 1458 of not appearing properly attired with this guild on Holy Blood day and Corpus Christi day, when he also insulted the guild deans with *meer wonderlike worden*, but his punishment appears to have been dealt with at a guild level: SAB, 336, *Kuipers*, *inschrijvingsregister*, fos. 95v–96v.

part of what it meant to be a 'large and notable town'. The control that the municipal government exercised over these processions was a touchstone of its wider authority in the town. The connections between ceremonial order and civic order were deemed to be close: Reynoud's symbolic defiance was more than a matter of symbols.

This book is about the public religious practices in Bruges, a town 'notable' not just in Flanders but also in late medieval Europe. It deals with three main themes. The first considers these practices as aspects of 'civic religion'. Though problematic, the term directs attention to the social dimension of religion: to the links that might be made between religion and urban society, religious practices and civic government. The second related theme looks more specifically at the role of ceremony in urban society. Processions such as the Holy Blood were evidently implicated in the exercise of municipal authority, but how directly the one served the other is not obvious. The third main theme concerns the relationship at a ceremonial level between the citizens of Bruges and their rulers, the counts of Flanders. The growth in princely power and magnificence, especially under the Burgundian dukes, had a direct impact on the town: much of modern historiography on the subject has stressed the advance of 'state' power over civic liberties, and its encroachment on all aspects of urban life. The *prinsenhof* (which Reynoud Willems helped to aggrandise) was one of the many ways in which the ruler's magnificence was made manifest. But the impact of princely power on civic ceremony and religion is less clear: the limitations of ceremony as a means to express or bolster authority are less often studied; and it requires a thorough exploration of the urban context.

## Civic space and time: Bruges *c.* 1300

By the late thirteenth century, Bruges was already acquiring a level of wealth that was to make it one of the most prosperous towns in Northern Europe. Its population was perhaps already touching 40,000 inhabitants.[8] Trade in textiles still underpinned the local economy, but access to the sea along the Zwin had allowed a great expansion in long-distance trade, bringing in foreign merchants and a still wider range of goods. The increasing commercial activity was reflected in the burgeoning amount of regulation managing this trade, in agreements with foreign merchants like the Hanse and in the organisation of craft guilds within the town.[9]

[8] See J. Dumolyn, 'Population et structures professionelles à Bruges aux XIVe et XVe siècles', *Revue du nord* 329 (1999), 43–64, and references cited there.

[9] The earliest references to their rules date from 1252. See generally C. Wyffels, *De oorsprong der ambachten in Vlaanderen en Brabant* (Brussels, 1951).

Communal government had also been expanding.[10] In the early twelfth century a strong impression of a collective will already emerges from the pen of Galbert of Bruges: burghers expected counts to swear to a charter of 'liberties'.[11] The volume of civic regulation by the thirteenth century demonstrates the widening scope of municipal authority. Craft-guild rules show that the town magistracy had established its right to oversee guild affairs and to appoint guild deans and searchers.

The control that the town's governing body began to exercise over public life was a control, as it were, over space and time within the town. Civic space – administrative and legal – was being more tightly regulated, albeit not quite on the scale apparent in some north Italian towns during the same period.[12] In Bruges, the municipal authorities bought large areas of land in 1246 and 1275 to the north and east of the main urban settlement: this allowed them to establish their jurisdiction over an expanding population that had begun to spill over the boundaries set by the twelfth-century walls. They began to fix clearer administrative structures for the purposes of taxation, and perhaps social order.[13] Public works on the town infrastructure – roads, canals, bridges, market places – absorbed an increasing proportion of an expanding civic budget.[14] A newly reconstructed civic space was enclosed in 1297 by ramparts, walls and gates that all but encircled the town (see Map I.1). The initiative for this venture was not fully municipal in origin: the

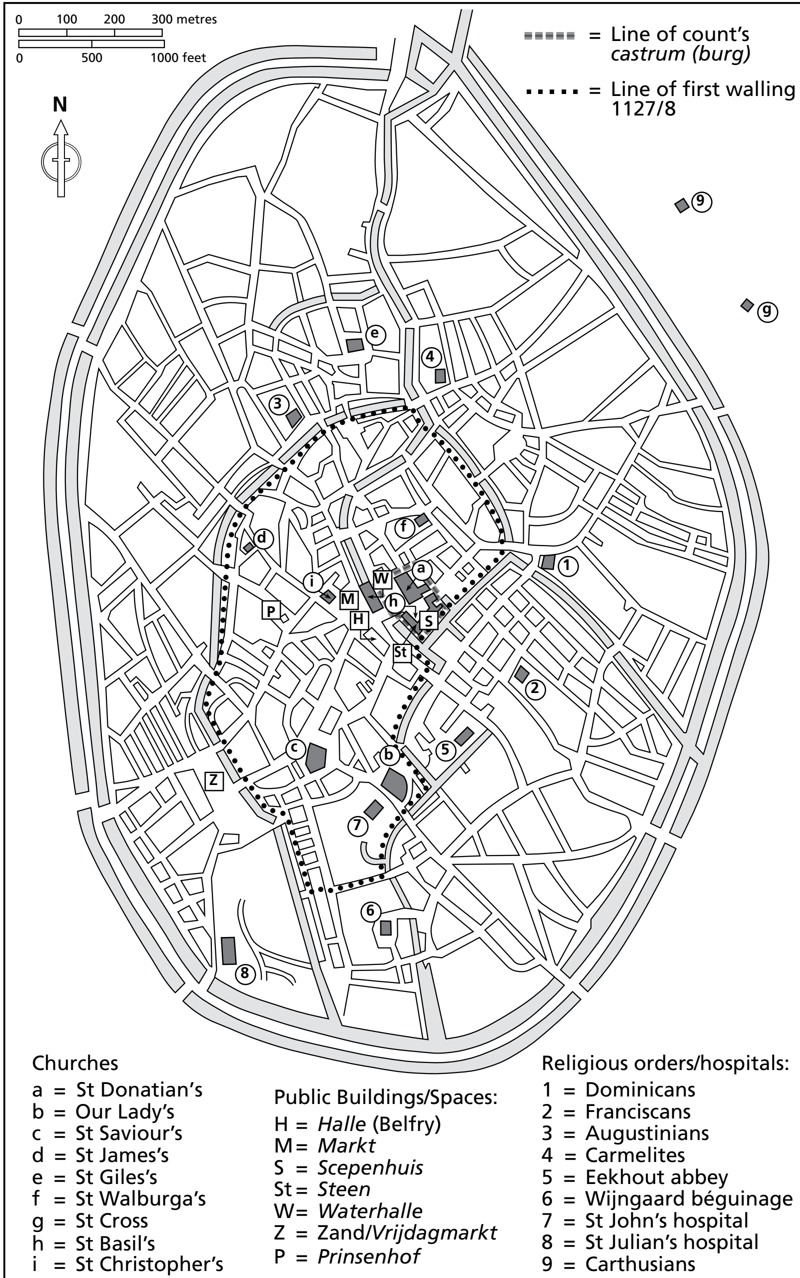
[10] A. Saint-Denis, 'L'Apparition d'une identité urbaine dans les villes de commune de France du Nord aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles', in M. Boone and P. Stabel (eds.), *Shaping Urban Identity* (Leuven, 2000), pp. 65–87.

[11] Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, ed. J. B. Ross (New York, 1959), p. 203.

[12] P. Stabel, 'The Market-Place and Civic Identity in Late Medieval Flanders', in Boone and Stabel, *Shaping Urban Identity*, pp. 43–64. For the production of 'representations' of space (as a process based on market forces): H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991). For recent comment on the historiography of 'space', see P. Arnade, M. C. Howells and W. Simons, 'Fertile Spaces: The Productivity of Urban Space in Northern Europe', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (2002), 515–48.

[13] The division of the city into its six administrative units (*zestendeelen*) headed by *hooftmannen* is apparent from the 1280s. See E. I. Strubbe, 'Van de erste naar de tweede omwalling van Brugge', *ASEB* 100 (1963), 271–300; T. A. Boogaart, II, *An Ethnogeography of Late Medieval Bruges: Evolution of the Corporate Milieu 1280–1349* (Lewiston, 2004), pp. 300–3.

[14] For this and the following, see M. Ryckaert, *Brugge: Historische stedenatlas van Belgie* (Brussels, 1991), pp. 160, 167–8; J. M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism 1280–1390* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 55–61, 63–7; Boogaart, *Ethnogeography*, pp. 305–17. For the expanding communal debt in this period, see J.-P. Sosson, 'Finances communales et dette publique: Le Cas de Bruges à la fin du XIIIe siècle', in J.-M. Dusvosquel and E. Thoen (eds.), *Peasants and Townsmen in Medieval Europe: Studies in Honorem Adriaan Verhulst* (Ghent, 1995), pp. 239–57.




Map I.1 Bruges churches.

order had come from the king of France. But the rapid way in which the walls were thrown up and the vast expenditure on them testifies to the strength of civic will.

Control of civic space reached upwards as well as outwards. New municipal buildings were being erected, giving material expression to a sense of civic pride. The New Hall (*Waterhalle*) was built at great expense between 1284 and 1295 on the main market place to serve as the nodal point of the town's commercial network. On the same square, attached to the old cloth-hall, stood the Belfry (*Halle*), the supreme symbol of civic authority in the late thirteenth century. It served as an alarm bell to alert citizens to danger, probably as a venue for the proclamation of civic decrees, and as a vault for the town's charters of privileges – thus as a veritable *lieu de mémoire*.[15] Following fire damage in 1280, it continued to fulfil these functions, but the town aldermen moved their judicial business into the *ghiselhuus* which lay in the *burg*.[16] Although this was the site of the count of Flanders' castle, municipal affairs were increasingly conducted from this area, and other buildings within it were taken over for municipal use.[17] (See Figure I.1).

The area occupied by urban settlement had been filled by religious as well as secular or civic buildings. Since the tenth century, the urban skyline had been dominated by the two collegiate churches, St Donatian's and Our Lady's, and the parish church of St Saviour. All three were rebuilt in the twelfth century.[18] The Eekhout priory of Augustinian canons was established by the 1140s. The thirteenth century saw a great expansion in the number of religious buildings, in particular the foundation of four new parishes[19] and six mendicant houses.[20] Pastoral concern with the problems presented by a rapidly

[15] See M. Boone, 'Brugge: Het Belfort. De macht en de rijkdom van de middeleeuwse steden', in J. Tollebeek, G. Deneckere, G. Buelens, C. Kesteloot and S. De Schaepdrijver (eds.), *België: Een parcours van herinnering. 1: Plaatsen van geschiedenis en expansie* (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 41–51.

[16] Ryckaert, *Stedenatlas*, pp. 167–8.

[17] In 1299 the town acquired privileges from the French king to take over the *Steen*, the count's prison. City scribes and other functionaries also began to occupy the *Love*, where the count's officials, the *baljuw* (bailiff) and *schout* (sheriff), resided. The *ghiselhuus* was to be rebuilt as the main town hall (*scepenhuis* or *stadhuis*) from the 1370s.

[18] For an overview of the religious foundations in Bruges, see Ryckaert, *Stedenatlas*, pp. 50–3, 82–9, 165–6, 206, 208, 210–15.

[19] Between 1239 and 1241 St Walburga's was elevated from chapel to parish; St James' and St Giles' churches were built.

[20] This was an exceptional number of houses even for a large Flemish town. Between 1230 and 1286 the Franciscans were set up in Bruges (by Hendrik Ram), the Dominicans (by Countess Joanna), the Carmelites (by the Order itself), the Augustinians (by Jan II, lord of Ghistele). Houses for the Pied Friars and Friars of the Sack were also built, but did not survive into the fourteenth century. The other important foundation was that of the Wijngarde béguinage (by the sister of Countess Joanna in 1245).

Figure I.1 Bruges town centre, from a map by Marcus Gerards (1562).

*Key*: 1 = St Donatian's; 2 = East gate of *burg* (*oostburch poort*); 3 = Townhouse (*scepenhuis*); 4 = St Basil's chapel; 5 = *Steen* and *Doncker camer* (Dark Room prison); 6 = Belfry (*Halle*); 7 = New Hall (*Waterhalle*); 8 = St Christopher's chapel; 9 = St Peter's chapel

expanding population, much of it immigrant, was among the reasons for the building effort.

The initiative behind this effort was not entirely municipal. The main founders of new houses were usually not citizens. But civic involvement even in the foundations of great lords is likely.[21] One facet of the control that the town government increasingly exercised over public life was an interest in religious matters. Donations to mendicant houses and parish churches that appear in the first extant civic accounts from 1281 show that the municipal government considered the upkeep of religious buildings to be a civic responsibility.

[21] See W. Simons, *Bedelordekloosters in het graafschap Vlaanderen: Chronologie en topographie van de bedelordenverspreiding voor 1350* (Bruges, 1987), esp. pp. 45–53; W. Simons, *Stad en apostolaat: De vestingen van de bedelorden in het graafschap Vlaanderen* (Brussels, 1987), esp. pp. 176–84. In Bruges, the civic authorities exchanged property with the Franciscans in the 1230s and in 1245 to allow them a more favourable site.

More keenly felt was a civic responsibility towards the town's poor and disadvantaged – *pauperibus nostris* as they are already referred to in 1236.[22] The town authorities had run St John's hospital and smaller foundations from the late twelfth century. A lepers' hospital was founded under civic auspices by 1227. Town magistrates were heavily involved in the restructuring of charitable provision in the late thirteenth century. Arguably, this was part of a social concern with the problems of order within a fast-expanding town. It included the refoundation of the Potterie hospital in 1276 (and its fusion with the Holy Ghost house in the early 1300s), the expansion of St John's hospital from 1280 and the assumption of control over orphans' inheritances in 1287.[23] In the early 1300s we can detect the beginnings of parish 'poor tables', soon to become the town's main sources of charitable provision. The town magistrates formally became their over-guardians.[24]

The activities of the town's growing number of religious institutions had increasingly fallen under the purview of civic government. Moreover, buildings erected by the governing body were also acquiring their own religious attributes. The town paid for decorations of saints' images on town walls, gates and Belfry. The niche above the balcony from which civic proclamations were made was occupied by an image of the Virgin Mary (by 1345 at the latest).[25] The cult of the Virgin had been important in the town at an early date, and it was one of the cults that became civic-wide in the later Middle Ages.

It was the cult of the Holy Blood, however, that the municipal government adopted most closely as the town's own. The relic itself was believed to be the true blood of Christ collected from the Cross. It was probably one of several such relics brought back to the West from Constantinople by looting crusaders in 1204 – notwithstanding a tradition, first recorded in the fourteenth century, that the relic came to Bruges from Jerusalem thanks to Count Thierry of Alsace (d. 1168).[26]

[22] For the following see G. Maréchal, *De sociale en politieke gebondenheid van het Brugse hospitaalwezen in de middeleeuwen*, Standen en Landen 73 (Kortrijk: UGA, 1978).

[23] See also: the foundation of St Nicholas' guesthouse (for pilgrims) in 1290, and the fusion of the *Filles de Dieu* house with St Julian's hospital in the early 1300s. For orphans (and the communal debt), see J. Maréchal, 'Het wezengeld in de Brugsche stadfinanciën van de middeleeuwen', *ASEB* 82 (1939), 1–41.

[24] See M. T. Galvin, 'The Poor Tables in Bruges 1270–1477', unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of Columbia, 1998).

[25] Certain 'images' had been placed on the Belfry in 1285: Boogaart, *Ethnogeography*, p. 315.

[26] Thierry's brother-in-law King Baldwin III had purportedly been given the relic by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. See N. Huyghebaert, 'Iperius et la translation de la relique du Saint Sang à Bruges', *ASEB* 100 (1963), 110–87.

The earliest documented reference to the relic in Bruges occurs in 1256, when two citizens were required to take an oath on the relic in St Basil's chapel.[27] Perhaps the relic was not at this point fully under civic auspices: the oath was one made before the bishop of Tournai. But St Basil's chapel, which had once exclusively served the count's household (and been rebuilt by Thierry's son Philip of Alsace in the 1180s), seems gradually to have become treated as the town's own, like other buildings within the *burg*. By the end of the thirteenth century, the town aldermen regarded the relic as an object strongly connected with the defence of civic liberties: their letter in 1297 to King Philip the Fair of France, whose army seemed poised to invade Flanders, asked assurance that he would not remove the relic from Bruges, to which 'multitudes' were now accustomed to flock.[28]

By this time, the relic had also become the focus of an annual procession involving the craft guilds. The first reference to the procession occurs in the rules of the guild of the St John bridge-loaders in 1291, which stipulate that guild members were required to attend the *ommeganc* of the Holy Blood on 3 May.[29] The procession began to receive official funding from the town treasury in 1303. Was this to commemorate the Flemish victory at Courtrai, or the Matins uprising in Bruges against French authority in 1302? Possibly.[30] Whatever the case, the procession was clearly designed as a civic-wide festivity. It must already have involved many craft guilds. The route in 1303, perhaps for the first time, completed a circuit of the new town walls. The encircling of civic space by the Holy Blood relic reinforced at a spiritual level the protection offered by the walls and gates.

Management of civic space was bound up with management of time. Markets and crafts had to be regulated as to when, as well as where, they were held. Daily time was punctuated with the peal of bells. Bells and trumpeters in the Belfry by 1297 marked the beginning of the working day, lunch-break and closing. The yearly calendar was punctuated by feast and market days. The May fair was already well established, backed by a comital charter granted in 1200.[31] The synchronising of Bruges' most important fair with the beginnings of its main procession was no accident.[32] The choice of 3 May as the processional day was

[27] A. Viaene, 'Zweren ten Heleghen Bloede: Oudste getuignis van verering der reliek in de St Baseliskerk te Brugge', *Biekorf* 64 (1963), 176–80.

[28] SAB, 96, 2 (*Rudenboek*), fos. 29r–v.

[29] E. Huys, *Duizend jaar mutualiteit bij de vlaamse gilden* (Kortrijk, 1926), p. 150.

[30] For the following, see below, Chapter 1.

[31] GVS, Vol. II, p. 18.

[32] The three days before 3 May were fixed as the period when merchants could inspect goods before the market opened: *ibid.*, p. 67.

fixed before any association of the Holy Blood with the events of 1302. Even so, the procession may have acquired a commemorative function too. Civic regulation of time, past and present, became increasingly pronounced – though whether a sense of time other than the sacred ever developed is debateable. The Belfry bells marking the working day followed the celebration of daily hours announced by the bells of St Donatian's; no record of 'civic' memories ever reached the scale and complexity of liturgical memory stored in the *planaria* of the town's main churches (see Chapter 3).

What town regulation also sought to control was the movement of citizens through civic time and space. Civic legislation pronounced on when and where citizens were permitted to carry out their business. The establishment of new market places and town buildings regulated access to key civic spaces. All goods had to pass through the town's tolls and be brought before the proper toll offices.[33] The right to enter the town hall was a mark of citizenship.[34] Craft regulations established conditions under which members were to ply their trade – where they might go to set up stalls, what might be sold and when. The movement of more marginal groups within the town was also subject to municipal decree. Concern with the poor, and their potentially subversive proclivities, was reflected in the increasing attention to hospitals. The establishment of St Nicholas' guesthouse for pilgrims in 1292 may have reflected unease at the presence of immigrants.

Regulation of movement was expressed in its most ceremonial form in processions like that of the Holy Blood. At this event a sense of civic space and time was displayed in its most concentrated and ritualised form. Churchmen, craft guilds, aldermen and other citizens were brought together annually to participate. As we shall see, the processional route taken by the processors encircled the town, and also linked points within it. Movement between urban centre and town walls, and around the perimeter, marked out and generated a sense of civic space. Urban memory might attach itself to certain buildings and spaces, but it was movement between these that strengthened or reaffirmed memory. *Lieux de mémoire* in towns – the civic halls, market places and, to an extent, churches – became fixed as repositories of an urban sense of identity. But it was by being linked dynamically through repetition of processions that the fixing took place. The importance of processions in this regard is one reason why they are treated in detail in this book.

[33] GVS, Vol. II, p. 249; *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 21–4; Boogaart, *Ethnogeography*, p. 324.

[34] M. C. Howell, 'The Spaces of Late Medieval Urbanity', in Boone and Stabel, *Shaping Urban Identity*, pp. 3–23.

By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the civic authorities were already demonstrating a significant will and ability to manage the sacred. Part of what this book documents is how this municipal will developed to an even greater extent in the two centuries that followed. Old processions were elaborated, new ones appeared with different functions. Civic government found further ways to express its authority; and civic 'elites', those with power and wealth, found means to demonstrate their status in fraternities and other kinds of ceremony. Even so, hierarchies did not go unchallenged: the limitations of civic authority need to be further explored.

Other bodies also became more assertive over secular and sacred territory within the town. In the Reynoud Willems case, the magistrates defined their town as a *bonne ville* subject to the prince. Unlike the great towns of northern Italy, those of the Low Countries never became city-states. The *bonnes villes* of Flanders did not always live up to their soubriquet: violent rebellions against comital authority punctuate Flemish history throughout the later Middle Ages.[35] Privileges and liberties were repeatedly demanded from counts, even if towns rarely expressed a desire for autonomy from comital authority. In Bruges, the town's history had been bound up with that of the count's. Urban space had been occupied by comital buildings ever since the establishment of the count's castle (and the *burg*) by the tenth century. Urban symbols were tied up with comital history. The Holy Blood relic was housed within the *burg* in St Basil's chapel, which had been refounded in the 1180s by Count Philip of Alsace. The tradition that the relic had been brought to Bruges thanks to Philip's father, Count Thierry, persisted throughout the later Middle Ages. The most potent religious symbol of civic identity was never purely 'civic' in association.

The count's involvement with the relic could be viewed as part of a wider submission of civic will to princely power. Much of the historiography of late medieval Flanders would point to this conclusion. The inexorable, if halting, advance of state authority over urban government is a theme that has informed many a study of Flemish towns since the work of Henri Pirenne.[36] Modern analyses no longer search, as Pirenne did, for the origins of modern Belgium or Holland in the struggle of native towns against foreign rulers, and many nuance the argument for sharp

[35] For an overview, see J. Dumolyn and J. Haemers, 'Patterns of Urban Rebellion in Medieval Flanders', *Journal of Medieval History* 31 (2005), 369–93.

[36] H. Pirenne, *Early Democracies in the Low Countries: Urban Society and Political Conflict in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York, 1963), esp. pp. 29–40. On this trend, see M. Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270–1380* (Oxford, 2001), esp. pp. 295–6.

division between state and city, at a ceremonial level included.[37] But there remains a strong tendency to set civic history squarely within the context of the struggle against the prince, and to prioritise the expanding hegemony – political, economic, social and cultural – of state over city. This approach tends to allow insufficient room for analysis of religious phenomena that are better explained within the context of wider religious or urban history than within a framework of city–state conflict. In any case, if the 'territory of the sacred is … [the territory] that best resists the centralizing will of the prince',[38] processions and other religious practices within the town deserve more detailed treatment than they are usually accorded in studies of urban and princely ceremony.

Concentration on relations between prince and town also leads to the neglect of other bodies that limited the scope of municipal authority over sacred matters. Bruges lay within the bishopric of Tournai: episcopal power sometimes made itself felt. The civic authorities evidently thought it essential to acquire the bishop's approval for the Holy Blood procession: within a few years of the first official funding of the procession, episcopal sanction had been granted.[39] Town inhabitants were often to witness the personal appearance of the bishop or his suffragan during the later Middle Ages, but they also felt his vicarious presence through his officials, the *sigillifer* or the 'dean of Christianity', who were more permanently resident in the town.[40] Even so, during periods of conflict, especially during the papal schism from 1378, and the upheavals following the death of Charles the Bold in 1477, bishops found it particularly difficult to assert their rights of jurisdiction within the town.[41]

The most powerful and immediate ecclesiastical presence in the town was represented not by the bishop but by the canons of the collegiate church of St Donatian (who themselves frequently chafed against

[37] E. Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies: Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004), e.g. pp. 196, 329; and for an emphasis on princely ceremony built on 'urban scaffolding', see P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), p. 7.

[38] Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies*, p. 296.

[39] See below, p. 40.

[40] See M. Vleeschouwers-Van Melkebeek, 'De mazen van het net: Samenwerking tussen de kerkelijke rechtbanken van Doornik en Brugge in de late middeleeuwen', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor de uitgave der Oude Wetten en Verordeningen van België* 43 (2002), 167–96.

[41] On the situation post-1477, see M. Vleeschouwers-Van Melkebeek, 'Het archief van de bisschoppen van Doornik: Een inventaris uit 1477', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis* 149 (1983), 121–375; and H. Callewier, '*Quis esset episcopus Tornacensis ignorabatur*: Het Schisma van Doornik (1483–1506)', *K. U. Leuven Voorlopige publicatie* 117 (2009), 1–21.

episcopal jurisdiction). Founded in the ninth century, it predated any significant urban settlement. But like the town, its origins were linked with comital authority. A church first dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the count's castle was rededicated to St Donatian when this saint's body was translated from Rheims in 863.[42] It was probably refounded as a collegiate church by Count Arnulf I (918–65). Strong links between church and count continued throughout its history. The provost of the church doubled as the chancellor of Flanders after 1089; the count retained extensive rights of collation over the church's benefices.[43] St Donatian's role as repository of comital traditions was strengthened by the infamous murder of Count Charles the Good in 1127 within the church, and his burial there. Throughout the later Middle Ages, the church continued to serve as the count's household chapel, and its clergy continued to insist on their right to minister to the spiritual needs of household members.[44]

Yet these strong connections with secular authority did not turn St Donatian's into a pliant tool of princely power. If they had duties to founders or benefactors, religious houses nevertheless served their own interests, or rather those of their patron saints, and many also the pastoral welfare of the parishes in their care. The clergy of St Donatian's sometimes found themselves with divided loyalties during urban rebellions against the count. The church was also the main repository of sacred resources in the town, commanding access to the divine through a collection of relics that was already extensive in the early thirteenth century.[45]

The town authorities too could not expect deference from St Donatian's. Despite their extension of control over suburbs in the thirteenth century, the land finally enclosed by the walls in 1297 did not entirely fall under civic jurisdiction. Two large areas within the town, known as the *proose* and *kannunikse*, belonged to the provost and canons of St Donatian respectively, and had their own privileges and law courts. In 1299 the canons secured letters from King Philip of France enjoining the *baljuw*, the count's official in Bruges, to maintain the chapter in possession of its rights of jurisdiction over the inhabitants

[42] BAB, A128, fos. 106v–107v, 109r. The relic was translated to a new shrine in 1096 (*ibid.*, A127, fo. 1r).

[43] R. De Keyser, 'Het St Donaaskapittel te Brugge (1350–1450)', unpublished doctoral dissertation (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1972). For the early records, see more recently V. Lambert (ed.), *De oorkonden van het Sint-Donatiaanskapittel te Brugge 9de eeuw–1300* (Brussels, 2008).

[44] In 1224 the canons insisted on their exclusive right to bury the servants of the count and castle against Our Lady's church (BAB, A128, fo. 52r); and see below, pp. 273–6.

[45] See below, pp. 120–1.

of the town.[46] Although the *burg* was becoming a space dominated by buildings demonstrative of civic authority, there were occasions when the canons could still regard it as an area that was entirely their own.[47] There were other spaces put beyond civic reach. Within the church, St Donatian's clergy jealously defended its rights of sanctuary against secular infringement. In 1294 the canons won a sentence from Count Guy against three malefactors who had violently dragged out an individual taking refuge in the church: they were condemned to appear bareheaded on a day designated by the clergy and to go in procession to the high altar and recite their misdeeds out loud.[48]

Relations between town and chapter were not always fraught. But skirmishes over many matters, particularly those concerning justice and taxation, continued throughout the later Middle Ages.[49] St Donatian's clergy also felt the weight of civic pressure in sacred as well as secular matters. Their involvement in the Holy Blood procession was required at an early date, although the canons may not have approved initially of certain arrangements: the scribe of the fabric accounts noted in 1306 that the ringing of St Donatian's bells on Holy Blood day was a 'bad custom'.[50] As we shall see, St Donatian's was to accept and even enhance Holy Blood day and other civic festivities, but it did not always bow to municipal demands, particularly over use of its most precious relics.

### 'Civic religion'

The authority that the Bruges town government sought to exercise over the sacred might be summed up in the phrase 'civic religion'. It is a useful if problematic term. It has enjoyed considerable currency in medieval urban studies, particularly since André Vauchez's exploration of the term in the early 1990s. Vauchez defined it as a 'collection of religious phenomena – cultic, devotional and institutional – in which civil power plays a determining role, principally through the action of local and municipal authorities'.[51] It meant the exercise of

46 *Ibid.*, A250, 371. See below, p. 301 for the records of the court of the *proosdij*.

47 See below, pp. 245–7.

48 *Ibid.*, A250, 355. They were also to go to Compostela on pilgrimage and pay St Donatian's £30 *parisis*.

49 The town kept a book of cases involving disputes with the chapter: SAB, 96, 20 (*Proose en kannunikse*).

50 BAB, G1, roll 4. After the entry 'pulsatoribus campanam in processionis sanguinis … 5s', the scribe adds: 'hec est mala consuetudo'.

51 A. Vauchez, 'Introduction', in A. Vauchez (ed.), *La Religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne (Chrétienté et Islam): Actes du colloque de Nanterre (21–23 juin 1993)* (Rome, 1995), pp. 1–2. For use of the phrase before then (usually made in the Italian context), see for instance G. Chittolini, 'Civic Religion and the Countryside in Late Medieval

civic authority over matters traditionally regarded as the exclusive province of the church: patronage of clergy and clerical institutions; the organisation of processions; and especially a certain control over saints, relics and cults. It also meant 'the appropriation of values inherent in religious life by urban powers for the purposes of legitimation and celebration of public welfare'.

There are two senses of the term here that can be distinguished more clearly. One refers to the control that municipal authorities exercised over religious practices with a view to constructing a more sacred kind of town. The other refers to the sacred character of civic authority itself, the ways in which town councils acquired legitimacy by being invested with spiritual attributes. Both of these senses will be used in this book, but not without qualification.

Not all would agree, after all, that 'civic religion' might be found in a town like Bruges.[52] Civic control of religion is apparently best exemplified in the great city-states of northern Italy, where by no later than the final years of the thirteenth century, communal governments enjoyed sufficient autonomy to extend their powers into sacred territory. Vauchez was reluctant to discern such control in towns north of the Alps. 'Feudal' authority – princely and ecclesiastical – tended to be too strong for civic governments.[53] Other historians have doubted the presence of civic religion in the *bonnes villes* of late medieval France where *le roi très chrétien* strove to assert a more exclusive control over the sacred above other secular bodies. In so far as town governments assumed authority over cults or processions, 'civic' religion was more likely to

Italy', in T. Dean and C. Wickham (eds.), *City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Essays Presented to Philip Jones* (London, 1990), pp. 69–80; for 'civic Christianity', D. Herlihy, *Medieval and Renaissance Pistoia* (London, 1967), pp. 250–4; and for early adumbrations of the term, see H. C. Peyer, *Stadt und Stadtpatron im mittelalterlichen Italien* (Zurich, 1955). Ultimately, perhaps, it emerges from the long shadow cast by Jacob Burkhardt's vision (1860) of the superiority of civilisation in Renaissance Italy (and his discussion specifically of 'society and festivals' and 'morality and religion').

[52] Though for a recent application of the term to the Low Countries, see A.-L. Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille: Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de zuidelijke Nederlanden 1400–1650* (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 208–12. The phrase 'civic religion' is untranslated in this work: it remains a somewhat alien concept in the historiography of the region.

[53] A. Vauchez, 'Patronage of Saints and Civic Religion in the Italy of the Communes', in A. Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. J. Scheider (Notre Dame, IN, 1993), pp. 153–68; M. J. Scheider, 'Afterword', in J. Cannon and A. Vauchez, *Margherita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti: Sienese Art and the Cult of a Holy Woman in Medieval Tuscany* (Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 221–4 (p. 224). In Italy, it seems that 'civic religion' did not penetrate south of the papal state: see E. Muir, 'Patterns of Social Capital: Stability and Change in Comparative Perspective. Part 1', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29 (1999), 379–406, esp. p. 382.

be submerged under 'royal'.[54] As we have seen, town governments had strong 'feudal' competitors in Flanders, besides the French king: civic authority in Bruges was bound up with the count's. Yet in this respect (as in others) the contrast between urban society in Flanders and that in northern Italy need not be drawn too sharply. Communal government in Tuscan towns, after all, faced encroachment by quasi-princely families. The difference between the two regions in terms of municipal control of religion is one of degree rather than kind. In Bruges, at any rate, there is adequate evidence, even by the beginning of the fourteenth century, that civic authorities considered religion – clergy, institutions and cults – to lie well within their sphere of competence.

The strength of ecclesiastical bodies in towns was also a matter of degree. The construction of a more sacred city, even in Italy, apparently 'needed the cooperation of civic and ecclesiastical authorities'.[55] For Vauchez too, municipal control over religious matters did not necessarily rival the control exercised by the church, and developed in accord with ecclesiastical bodies.[56] Even in Italy civic religion was never entirely in the hands of lay people. In Bruges the control that town magistrates sought to exercise over processions and relics might often require negotiation with the canons of St Donatian. Their chapter-act books provide unusual insight into the limitations of civic appropriation of cults, yet they also show the strong will of town magistrates to manage the sacred resources of the church for their own purposes (see Chapter 2).

Town magistrates all over Europe were faced with other kinds of challenges to their authority besides the princely and ecclesiastical. Disparities of wealth and political influence between different groups of townsmen caused social tension and rebellion. Studies of North Italian urban society have highlighted how fragmented it was, and how far local loyalties of neighbourhood, guild or parish counteracted efforts to create a sense of civic unity. Municipal management of civic processions or cults was partly intended to stimulate a sense of unity, but success in this varied greatly, even in Italy.[57] In Bruges too, success was

[54] B. Chevalier, 'La Religion civique dans les bonnes villes: Sa portée et ses limites. Le Cas de Tours', in Vauchez, *Religion civique*, pp. 337–49; J.-M. Matz, 'Le développement tardif d'une religion civique dans une ville épiscopale: Les Processions à Angers (1450–1550)', in Vauchez, *Religion civique*, pp. 251–66. Where urban structures were weaker, 'civic religion' is seen as being limited to the promotion of local cults and ceremonies (for instance in Poland: S. Bylina, 'La Religion civique et la religion populaire en Pologne au bas Moyen Age', in Vauchez, *Religion civique*, pp. 323–55.

[55] N. Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 216; Matz, 'Développement tardif', pp. 360–1.

[56] Vauchez, 'Introduction', p. 3.

[57] Contrast efforts in Venice with those in Genoa in creating civic-wide cults: E. Crouzet-Pavan, 'Cultures et contre-cultures à propos des logiques spatiales de l'espace public

mixed; a municipal will clearly existed to promote processions, cults or other religious practices across the town: it makes sense to describe this will as an expression of 'civic religion'.

The efforts of town councils to construct a sense of sacred unity were made in tandem with efforts to invest their own authority with sacred attributes. It is easy to regard both kinds of endeavour as simply a means to legitimate the position of those who held power in the town. Some studies make this explicit: Terpstra relates the advance of civic religion in Bologna, particularly from the end of the fourteenth century, to the tightening grip of the 'oligarchy' that ran town government.[58] In Bruges, as we shall see, there is evidence in much the same period for an increasing concentration of office-holding in fewer hands,[59] and simultaneously for greater investment by civic government, for instance, in the Holy Blood procession. The town authorities undoubtedly made use of processions for purposes that were not purely devotional. Reynoud Willems found to his cost that disruption of Holy Blood day was treated by the civic magistracy as tantamount to disruption of the social order.

However, to treat religion solely as an expression of social power (or of 'society' itself) is too reductionist. Vauchez rightly drew back from regarding civic religion as a simple 'instrumentalisation' of social and political power.[60] The control that leading citizens exercised over the sacred was also an expression of their aspiration to involve themselves in matters that pertained to the collective interest. Motives behind aspirations were complex, and among them a sense of piety or duty to public welfare might be included. A more fundamental question might also be asked. To what extent was the 'religion' – the cults, processions or institutions – promoted by municipal authorities susceptible to manipulation? Processions, for instance, carried with them a liturgical tradition: they might be ordered by town councils to demonstrate their authority, yet they came charged with liturgical meaning that was neither entirely malleable nor necessarily supportive of municipal power in any convenient way. Did religious practices inherently promote the power of their promoters?

venetien', in Boone and Stabel, *Shaping Urban Identity*, pp. 89–107; G. Rosser, 'All for One – Constructing an Identity for the Republic of Genoa in the Seventeenth Century: Official Memory and Its Resistance', in H. Brand, P. Monnet and M. Staub (eds.), *Memoria, communitas, civitas: Mémoire et conscience urbaines en occident à la fin du Moyen Age* (Ostfildern, 2003), pp. 33–8.

[58] Terpstra, *Lay confraternities*, p. 17.

[59] These 'hands' had also begun to change, reflecting other structural changes within the Bruges economy. For the shift from the domination of textile merchants to a more diversified group of merchants, see below, pp. 29–30.

[60] Vauchez, 'Introduction', p. 3.

Moreover, a great variety of religious practices existed within the town that were not directly controlled by the town magistrates. The activities of lay people in parishes or guilds were not necessarily conducted within municipal structures. A sense of belonging to a sacred city was diluted by devotional affiliations and collective activities that were more local than civic-wide. But historians have also labelled these activities as part of 'civic religion' in a different and looser sense. This is a third way in which the term tends to be used, referring less to the sacred than to the distinctive character of urban society, less to the control of municipal authorities over the sacred, and more to the kind of religion practised collectively by lay people in towns. In Italy, the activities of urban confraternities, suffused by a mendicant or flagellant piety, suggest the presence of a distinctive form of religion that was more concentrated in towns than in rural regions.[61] It is never easy, however, to distinguish clearly between town and countryside. Town walls were porous; immigration was constant; relations between town and countryside were symbiotic, particularly in the southern Netherlands.[62] Lay activism within guilds or parishes, especially in the later Middle Ages, is as apparent in the village as it is in large towns. If 'civic religion' is little more than 'religion practised by the laity' but specifically in towns, then it loses some of its descriptive value. But there is a case for arguing that differences of degree made for distinctive, even if not wholly distinct, characteristics. In a town like Bruges, the concentration of mercantile wealth supported a level of investment by lay people, both in commerce and religious practices, that was found in few other places.[63]

There remain other implications of the term 'civic religion' – whether meaning the town's sacred or distinctive character – that still need clarifying. Should the term be equated with the 'civil religion' that Robert Bellah first identified in modern America in 1967?[64] The term has caused trouble enough in a modern context; applying it to the medieval town is unlikely to be free of problems. But for Gerald Parsons, civic domination of saints and cults in late medieval Siena indeed 'amount[s] to a form of civil religion'[65] – that is if this religion, whether civil or

[61] See Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities*, pp. 4–5, 18–37, 45–67; and T. Dean, *The Towns of Italy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 2000), esp. pp. 63–8.

[62] For the close relationship between urban centres and their hinterlands in this region, see P. Stabel, *Dwarfs among Giants: The Flemish Urban Network in the Late Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1997), pp. 271–2.

[63] Van Bruaene also argues that it was the ceremonial interaction between towns in the Low Countries (in contrast to those in Northern Italy) that gave 'civic religion' in the region its distinctive character (Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 208–10).

[64] R. Bellah, 'Civil Religion in America,' *Daedalus* (1967), 1–21.

[65] G. Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion* (Aldershot, 2002), esp. p. 7; and *Siena, Civil Religion and the Sienese* (Aldershot, 2004), esp. pp. xiv–xvii.

civic, can be said to relate society to a realm of absolute meaning, and can be defined as a collection of beliefs and ceremonies that give sacred meaning to a community, transcending internal conflict and differences. Ultimately, this is a definition that derives from Durkheim,[66] deployed to circumvent one of the problems in debates surrounding civil religion – that it is simply too secular and too much about local patriotism to be deemed a religion at all. By arguing that 'civic religion' is religion in the Durkheimian sense, the problem seems to be overcome.

Yet linking civil with civic religion raises other difficulties. The association of modern civil religion with a more secularised society inevitably introduces the possibility that medieval civic religion was becoming more secularised too. A process of 'secularisation' has indeed been identified in many late medieval towns.[67] The government of the *bonne ville* of Tours was apparently on its way to becoming a thoroughly lay and secularised institution;[68] processions in Nuremberg and other German towns are said to have become increasingly secularised, serving to commemorate significant events in civic rather than biblical history.[69] In Parsons' Siena, the annual procession on the Assumption quickly came to celebrate the city's victory over Florence achieved in 1260.[70]

66 E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (London, 1964), esp. pp. 225–6.

67 See comments on 'secularising' effects of civic control of religion, in Chevalier, 'Religion civique', p. 349; G. Dickson, 'The 115 Cults of Saints in Later Medieval and Renaissance Perugia: A Demographic Overview of a Civic Pantheon,' in G. Dickson, *Religious Enthusiasm in the Medieval West* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 6–25 (p. 19). It is perhaps a historiographical issue that is more dominant in some countries than in others. In France and the United States, where issues of 'secularism' have been more controversial (with regard to debate on church–state relations or on the religious merits of patriotic values), the question of 'civic religion' is more vigorously discussed – whereas in England the application of the term in urban studies has rarely been made or explored theoretically (e.g. G. Rosser, 'Urban Culture and the Church 1300–1540', in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain: Volume 1 600–1540* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 335–69 (p. 348)). Historians of late medieval towns in Germany have been less inclined to use the term, and it is not often the main focus of discussion (e.g. M. Staub, *Les Paroisses et la cité de Nuremberg en xiiie siècle à la Réforme* (Paris, 2003), pp. 251–79).

68 Chevalier, 'Religion civique', p. 349.

69 K. Graf, 'Erinnerungsfeste in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt', in Brand, Monnet and Staub, *Memoria, communitas, civitas*, pp. 263–73, esp. p. 270. And for *secularisation avant la lettre* in Nuremberg: Staub, *Paroisses*, p. 60; M. Staub, 'Eucharistie et bien commun: L'Economie d'une nouvelle pratique à l'exemple des paroisses de Nuremberg dans la seconde moitié du XVe siècle. Sécularisation ou religion civique?' in Vauchez, *Religion civique*, pp. 445–70.

70 Parsons, *Siena*, pp. 6–7. For similar trends in Venice and Florence, see E. Crouzet-Pavan, 'Sopra le acque salse'. *Espaces, pouvoir et société à Venise à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1992), p. 551; R. C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980), p. 222.

It would not be difficult to discern the same trend in late medieval Bruges: the Holy Blood procession did come to be associated with Flemish military success; secular festivities were used to promote a sense of civic unity (see Chapter 5). But it may be asked whether town governments, when organising processions, wished to access the liturgical associations of such events rather than turn them into secular occasions. After all, as Vauchez writes, municipal power did not rival the church in the sense of setting up alternative mechanisms for accessing the sacred.[71] There were an increasing number of ways in which lay people in late medieval Bruges, as elsewhere, were able more directly to manage their own devotional lives or access the sacred for their own purposes. But it is a trend best not described as a process of 'secularisation'.

A further problem with applying 'civil religion' to late medieval society is really a problem with Durkheim. It leads to the assumption that religion should be regarded essentially as an expression of social concerns, or a means to deal with them. So it may be at times. The Reynoud Willems case might be one such example: the Holy Blood procession does demonstrate a sense of civic unity and the authority of the Bruges magistrates. But to restrict interpretation of the procession to analysis of social or political agendas is to limit an understanding of the event and how it evolved. Developments in the Holy Blood and other processions may be explained by a drive to promote civic unity, yet they must also be set within the context of wider religious and liturgical changes that took place in the later Middle Ages.

This context has been variously described. Huizinga famously perceived late medieval religion in northern France and the southern Low Countries as running to extremes in a climate of morbidity and autumnal decay. Religious symbolism was becoming ever more rampant, following an internal logic of its own; masses were heaped upon masses in a frantic accumulation of good works. New kinds of piety – like the *Devotio moderna* – were formed in part as a reaction to the dominant mechanistic religion.[72] In later studies, this was symptomatic of a decadent church, which explained the need for a Reformation.[73] Historiography on the subject in the last two decades or so has shifted towards a more positive assessment of the late medieval church.[74] The

[71] Vauchez, 'Introduction', p. 3.

[72] J. Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. R. J. Payton and U. Mammitzsch (Chicago, 1996), pp. 176–7, 188, 248, 265–7, 300–1, 313–14.

[73] For a gloomy assessment of late medieval piety in Flanders, see J. Toussaert, *Le Sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris, 1963).

[74] For an example in relation to late medieval processions, see B. A. M. Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren: Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd* (Amsterdam, 1996).

*Devotio* might suggest a more general flourishing of late medieval Catholicism;[75] the accumulation of masses and liturgical service might be reinterpreted as a development that enriched the devotional life of the laity. Thus the polyphonic masses on feast days that Huizinga described as overwrought are more likely now to be perceived favourably as works enrobing the liturgy with fine 'filigree'.[76] This accumulation was particularly evident in a wealthy town like Bruges, especially from the late fourteenth century onwards (see Chapter 3). There is certainly a wider social context to examine, not least the effects of the Black Death and subsequent plagues. But the context of a rapidly expanding liturgical life in Bruges parishes exerted its own pressures on religious practices. Huizinga has been justly criticised for failing to ground the cultural phenomena he described in a social, and particularly urban, context. But his emphasis on the internal logic behind the proliferation of liturgical services is still worth bearing in mind.

'Religion' was neither separate nor autonomous from 'society', and many of its manifestations were adopted by lay people and tailored to their requirements. 'Civic religion' is a useful shorthand to describe three aspects of late medieval religious and social life in Bruges: the use made by civic authorities of various religious phenomena to create a more sacred town, the investment of municipal authority itself with spiritual attributes and (in a weaker sense) the religious activity of townsmen. But the term is not meant here to allow a straightforward reduction of religious practices to social function. If religious forms were ultimately one further dimension of social action, it was another dimension none the less. By adopting actions, gestures and words that were recognised as sacred, lay people or civic governments attached themselves to symbols and traditions that were not always related directly to daily life or amenable to social control.

[75] See now J. Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life* (Philadelphia, 2008).

[76] Huizinga, *Autumn*, pp. 175–7, 314–5, 322–3; R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), p. 17. For continuing emphases on the 'ritualising and externalising' of Christian belief as a defining characteristic of devotion in the Low Countries, see Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*, esp. p. 18; and Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, p. 205 (where this externalising is strongly associated with the appearance of 'civic religion' in the late fourteenth century). For the 'visualising' tendencies of late medieval lay devotion (or *Schaufrömmigkeit*) see K. Schreiner, 'Laienfrömmigkeit: Frömmigkeit von Eliten oder Frömmigkeit des Volkes? Zur sozialen Verfasstheit laikaler Frömmigkeitpraxis im späten Mittelalter', in K. Schreiner (ed.), *Laienfrömmigkeit im späten Mittelalter: Formen, Funktionen, politisch-soziale Zusammenhänge* (Munich, 1992), pp. 1–78, esp. pp. 50–3. Somewhat negative perceptions of the late medieval liturgy or devotion as 'formalistic' or 'obsessive' still abound: e.g. C. White, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris 500–1550* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 121–2; C. Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia, 2007), pp. 176, 244.

## Civic ceremony

Discussion of the social function of religion is inseparable from a discussion of religious ritual. For Durkheim, religion was society expressing itself to itself, taking shape in the form of ritual. Debate about the nature of 'ritual' and its relation to the society that produces it has never ceased, but the tendency has been to prise 'ritual' apart from 'society' or 'power'. Does 'ritual' have some degree of autonomy from the society that produces it; is it a different form of power distinct from what is normally meant by 'power' – the more prosaic kind associated with violence and coercion?[77] The relationship between ceremony and society, and the effect of one upon the other, have been made much more uncertain.

Nevertheless, a strong link between the two is still generally assumed.[78] When analysing processions like that of the Holy Blood, historians tend to adopt one of two approaches. The first is to treat them as expressions of civic identity. The way in which they were organised suggests a collective sense of hierarchy and community. The assortment of citizens into hierarchical ranks 'articulates' the order of things in civic life,[79] revelatory of 'civic identity',[80] 'mirroring' social reality or urban values,[81] expressing a 'particular vision of the community'.[82] This approach echoes a tradition of anthropology that tends to treat ritual as a form of communication, providing 'enacted narratives' that allow people to interpret their own experience.[83] So by analysing the arrangement of guilds and clergy on Holy Blood day, the processional route, or how

[77] For useful summaries of anthropological approaches, see C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford, 1992); C. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford, 1997).

[78] For a discussion of the historiography, see A. Löther, *Prozessionen in Spätmittelalterlichen Städten* (Cologne, 1999), pp. 10–14; E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 3–6. For the 'dangers' of connecting ritual and society: P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, 2001), esp. pp. 188–202.

[79] Trexler, *Public Life*, p. 214.

[80] E. Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 5–6. For the city 'representing itself to itself' in processions (though with difficulties), see R. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (London, 1984), p. 123.

[81] C. Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 178.

[82] B. R. McRee, 'Unity or Division? The Social Meaning of Guild Ceremony in Urban Communities', in B. Hanawalt and K. L. Reyerson (eds.), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 189–207 (p. 202).

[83] C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London, 1973), esp. pp. 10, 87–125, 448 (for interpretation of ceremony as a 'meta-social commentary'). For general comment on 'symbolic culturalists', see Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, esp. p. 83. And for

the relic was carried, we might hope to capture the essence of Bruges' identity.

The second approach adopted by historians, and often elided with the first, is to consider the functional purposes of ritual, the part that processions might play in creating or sustaining social order. The emphasis here tends to be on ritual as 'performance' rather than communication.[84] This approach assumes that performed actions are efficacious in themselves, that ritual does things as well as says things: it is an 'instrument' or 'mechanism'[85] for creating community,[86] for 'building' social relations,[87] 'binding' the social fabric,[88] 'forging a sense of common identity'[89] or 'legitimising' hierarchy. The Holy Blood procession would thus be a tool for the town council to impose its authority and vision of social hierarchy on the citizen body.

Neither approach is free of difficulties. If rituals are supposed to 'say' something, it may not be clear even to participants what they are trying to say. To some anthropologists rituals can reveal not one but many social codes, contradictory rather than a neatly unified vision of society.[90] Any attempt to read 'society' through the symbols displayed in rituals faces the problem that symbols are too multiple in meaning to be reduced to a mere reflection of a unified social order.[91]

If ritual 'does' something, it is not altogether clear how it is supposed to do what it does. Evidently it is not a straightforward process. Historians who take the problem of social divisions into account tend to view ritual as the means or arena in which tensions are 'disguised', 'sublimated',[92]

'symbolic communication' in medieval studies, see J. van Leeuwen, 'Introduction', in J. van Leeuwen, *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns* (Leuven, 2006), pp. vii–xx, and references cited there.

[84] See M. Suydam, 'Background: An Introduction to Performance Studies', in M. A. Suydam and J. E. Ziegler (eds.), *Performance and Transformation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 1–25.

[85] M. James, 'Ritual, Drama and the Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', in his *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 16–47 (p. 30).

[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 30, 34; Trexler, *Public Life*, esp. pp. xix, xxi, 128, 198, 270, 365.

[87] Boogaart, *Ethnogeography*, p. 348.

[88] M. Berlin, 'Civic Ceremony in Early Modern London', *Urban History* 13 (1986), 15–27 (p. 27).

[89] McRee, 'Unity or Division?', p. 190.

[90] D. Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 41–58.

[91] See, for example, S. Lukes, 'Political Ritual and Social Integration', in *Essays in Social Theory* (London, 1977), pp. 52–73, esp. p. 67.

[92] W. P. Blockmans and E. Donckers, 'Self-Representation of Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', in W. Blockmans and A. Janse (eds.), *Showing Status: Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 1999), p. 89.

'released' or 'worked out',[93] or 'negotiated'[94] on a different level. How these mysterious effects are achieved is somewhat obscure. 'Emotion' is the agent most called upon to work the necessary alchemy. The stirring of emotion may not heal all disagreements, but it can create a sense of solidarity.[95] But reference to emotional effects alone is an unsatisfactory explanation for the way rituals might work. The assumption that sensory emotion is separable from rational thought, such that participants who enter a ceremonial space leave their reason at the threshold, to pick it up on the way out – like a hat at a theatre foyer – is a dubious one at best.[96]

In the search to explain what rituals might say or do, historians have tended to turn to one of two models. One is Victor Turner's adaption of van Gennep's analysis of rites of passage. Ceremonies work as processes of liminality: participants enter a ritual arena where the normal social hierarchies are suspended, while an emotionally satisfying vision of the society as-it-ought-to-be is communicated through symbolism.[97] The model may work better for some kinds of rituals than others.[98] But in the case of processions like the Holy Blood, however, the suspension of social hierarchies required in liminality never really happened. The political order was never abolished; hierarchy was still on display; the procession included some but excluded others: hardly a recipe for a sense of *communitas*.

Clifford Geertz's more 'communicative' approach to ritual has offered many historians another perspective. According to Geertz, ceremonies can indeed make statements about the heavenly order, and hint at what society should be like. They provide a mirror for or of society as it is to become, and imply that worldly status has a cosmic base. But it is not a mere reflection of the social structure; instead it works by offering a coherent world-view that it asks participants to embrace.[99] The link between visions of society and social reality are

[93] James, 'Ritual', p. 30. [94] Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, pp. 211–13.

[95] D. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, CT, 1988), p. 175.

[96] Bell, *Ritual Theory*, pp. 19–32; C. Humphreys and J. A. Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual: A Theory of Ritual Illustrated by the Jain Rite of Worship* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 261–2.

[97] V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London, 1969), Chapters 3–5. For its application to Burgundian 'entry ceremonies', see below, p. 236.

[98] See the application of liminality and 'ritual inversions' to flagellant processions in R. F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (London, 1982), pp. 50–3.

[99] C. Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre-State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, 1981), esp. pp. 13–14, 102–5; Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 113. For a recent example of the fruitful adoption of Geertz's approach, see for instance M. Flier, 'Seeing Is Believing: The Semiotics of Dynasty and Destiny in Muscovite Rus'', in N. Howe (ed.), *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe* (Notre Dame, 2007), pp. 63–88.

uncertain; and it is an uncertainty made greater by Geertz's separation of ritual from executive power: indeed ritual is an alternative kind of power.

Yet however attractive this model is, there are difficulties when applying it to particular circumstances. The process of communication within ceremonies may be even more indirect than Geertz implies. Mirrors distort as well as reflect. With the Holy Blood procession, it is difficult to see a 'coherent vision of society' being clearly communicated. A 'supernatural order' may be hinted at, but how it relates to worldly reality is not explained explicitly during the event. Symbolic meaning tends to evade immediate recognition; symbols and gestures are ambiguous or obscure even if drawn from a common fund of knowledge recognised by participants.[100] The ritualised event perhaps involves a process that deliberately and consistently 'displaces intentional meaning'.[101] It may shift a political problem on to another plane without directly explaining or resolving it.

If civic authorities sought to bolster their authority by symbolic communication of power, how did they make it persuasive?[102] Perhaps this was achieved by the deployment of particular kinds of symbol, ones that appear 'natural' by being conceptually related to more eternal ideas. Corpus Christi processions seem to be perfect examples of this.[103] Different groups making up the urban polity come together to offer a vision of community. Carried at the heart of the procession is the Holy Sacrament, the Body of Christ. Closest to the Body of Christ are the town authorities. The civic body so constituted is by analogy as natural and eternal. Argument about the nature of the civic body – and hierarchy within it – is thus put beyond debate.

However, such a process may not have been unproblematic. The ability of town authorities to put hierarchy beyond debate depended on a degree of consent. Processions like the Holy Blood may have been the

[100] Gerd Althoff comments that the meaning of a ritual in public communication had to be 'unambiguous and easily understandable' in order to 'fulfil its function' ('The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages', in G. Althoff, J. Fried and P. Geary (eds.), *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory and Historiography* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 71–87 (p. 80)); but elsewhere stresses the inherent indeterminacy of symbolic meaning: e.g. G. Althoff, 'Zur Bedeutung symbolischer Kommunikation für das Verständnis des Mittelalters', *Frühemittelalterliche Studien: Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster* 31 (1997), 370–89.

[101] Humphreys and Laidlaw, *Archetypal Actions*, esp. p. 260.

[102] M. Bloch, 'The Ritual of the Royal Bath in Madagascar: The Dissolution of Death, Birth and Fertility into Authority', in D. Cannadine and S. Price (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 271–92.

[103] Especially since James, 'Ritual', pp. 20–4 (and his use of M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols*).

result of wider political consensus rather than oligarchical imposition. Use of universal symbols like Holy Blood or Corpus Christi could even provoke debate. The Body of Christ was not an entirely stable symbol on which to found a vision of community.[104] Moreover, the other-worldly vision of the community, supposedly on display in the procession, may have been at variance with the realities of worldly hierarchy. Guilds or other groups might find themselves occupying a processional place that did not match the pecking order in everyday politics. Position within a procession could be hotly disputed.[105] Civic society was riven by division. Attempts by authorities to impose order by symbolic means might even be risky.[106] Far from sublimating tension, processions may have served only to release it.

This argument can be pressed too far. Civic authorities who regularly poured funds into annual processions cannot be supposed to have thought that such events inherently threatened to create disorder. In any case, the possible conflicts regarding interpretation of symbolism in ceremonies may not have been so troublesome. The multivalency of symbolic meaning may even explain why ritualised events did not create more trouble more often. If society was fragmented and processors carried conflicting agenda, symbols chosen in a ceremonial event could not be too specific. Participants in a ceremony may be said to 'misrecognise' what is going on,[107] their sense of unity maintained because different interpretations of the event's meaning are allowed to stand and are not openly debated inside the ritual context.

Perhaps what was more important to civic authorities was their ability to manage such events at all. Another theoretical approach to ritual is to play down the process of symbolic communication and to stress performance: ritual as a form of behaviour. Reading symbols is less important than analysing practices.[108] Participants in processions may experience values and symbols, but the key thing is that they do so while being made to move through structured spaces. Civic authorities expressed their power less in the symbolism on display and more through their repeated and undisputed ability to direct the bodies of citizens, clergy and saints. It mattered less that disputes over the processional

[104] M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 267, 270–1, 288; also S. Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London, 1993), esp. Chapter 2.

[105] For instance: McRee, 'Unity or Division', esp. p. 195; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 263.

[106] Handelman, *Models and Mirrors*, pp. 63–81; Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*, p. 8.

[107] Bloch, 'Ritual of the Royal Bath', esp. p. 289; P. S. Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (Stanford, 1987), p. 221.

[108] See generally Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, pp. 76–83, 159–64.

order took place: more significant was recognition that it lay within the competence of the civic magistracy to solve them. Disputes could be dealt with in ways that affirmed rather than undermined municipal control.

The difficulties of relating ceremony to power have a particular bearing on the study of relations between Bruges and its ruler. There has been a strong tendency to characterise the ceremonial activity of princes in the Low Countries, particularly under Valois Burgundian rule, as an effort to build a 'theatre-state' – a phrase borrowed from Geertz's description of ceremony in Negara. It is not used here for two reasons. One is that its use in the Burgundian context tends to misapply Geertz's term, for it assumes a more direct correlation than Geertz allowed between the building of princely power and the use of ceremony. The Burgundian 'theatre-state' tends to become simply an adjunct of state-building. Secondly, Geertz's own definition is not without flaws: the correlation between the ruler's power and the ritual power it exhibited was arguably closer in Negara than Geertz was prepared to concede.[109]

This study does not adopt a particular model of ritual but it bears in mind three general considerations about ceremonies. The first is that the connections between the exercise of authority and the use of ceremony are very indirect – which implies that ceremony might be an insecure means to establish social or political domination. There was a strong tendency in the later Middle Ages for lay powers, whether civic or princely, to express their authority with reference to the sacred: all authority ultimately derived from God. But links to the divine might be tenuous and sacred symbols too multivalent to allow firm ideas to be imposed on them as forms of social or political control.[110] The kind of displacement that occurs in a ritual event makes the connections between 'ritual' and 'power' or 'society' indirect, and the effect of the one on the other indeterminate. Whether treated as a process of symbolic communication or behavioural performance, the ritualised event may reflect or affect social conditions but in an indirect way. The outcome of ceremony might be uncertain: it could not automatically legitimate worldly hierarchy.

The second is to emphasise that many of the ceremonies discussed – particularly processions – borrowed heavily from liturgical traditions, whether in form or symbolic content. In a sense they had to: processions were made meaningful to contemporaries by being close to forms

[109] See in more detail A. Brown, 'Ritual and State-Building: Ceremonies in Late Medieval Bruges', in van Leeuwen, *Symbolic Communication*, pp. 1–28.

[110] Bell, *Ritual Theory*, pp. 104–7, 204–18; Sangren, *History and Magical Power*, p. 4.

that were established and recognisable. Symbols might potentially be multivalent, but their meanings were not limitless. In new contexts they acquired new meanings, even political ones, but they did not necessarily displace the liturgical associations with which these processions were laden. In any case other limitations on their use were imposed by ecclesiastical bodies.

Thirdly, the application of particular theories of ritual to historical events cannot anyway be done so rigidly. What a ceremony said or did differed depending on its particular social and political context.[111] What it might say could be conditioned by local circumstances. What it might do could depend on the kind of event it was. Different ceremonies may work differently, and in this study a great variety occur: besides the annual civic processions, there are ad hoc or 'general' processions, the festive events of guildsmen, the entry ceremonies of princes into towns and the spectacles of the court.

With these points in mind, civic ceremony or religion will thus be considered in relation to civic society, authority and oligarchy. But 'authority' and 'oligarchy' are also terms that can be used a little too loosely. Who ran Bruges and within what constraints? What were the aims of those who held power? Did government change over the period? Answers to these questions are needed in order to contextualise interpretation of civic ceremony and religion in Bruges.

## Civic government and civic peace

The civic government was neither a monolithic nor an unchanging body. At the beginning of our period it is possible to discern a ruling elite: 'patricians' who dominated communal government; entrepreneurs whose wealth derived from their possession of urban land and their ability to organise the economic life of the town, especially the textile industry. But their hold on power did not go unchallenged; nor was this group undivided. The Moerlemaye uprising in 1280 saw the 'commons' (*meentucht*) demand greater control over municipal finances and choice over the election of the magistracy. Resentment among the lower orders over inequitable urban taxes on consumable goods had been made acute by an economic downturn and the social pressures induced by a rising population. But the 'commons' were not all artisans reacting against 'patrician' domination, for rebels included wealthier citizens. Moreover, the craft guilds that had emerged by this time constituted a kind of

[111] See G. Signori, 'Ritual und Ereignis: Die Straßburger Bittgänge zur Zeit der Burgunderkriege (1474–1477)', *Historische Zeitschrift* 264 (1997), 281–328.

middle class that was also intent on extending its influence over civic affairs. It was a coalition of textile workers, artisans and a faction of wealthy burghers that was behind the Matins uprising of 1302.

Pirenne hailed the uprising as a 'democratic revolution'. However, craft guilds did not suddenly acquire greater privileges or control of municipal government. In practice, those with seats on the town councils probably continued to come from a disproportionately small number of wealthy families. But town government may well have become more representative after this date, and craft guilds may have acquired a greater say (albeit indirect) over civic affairs. The precise constitution of civic government was more firmly settled in 1361. Election to the first bench of thirteen aldermen (the *schepenen*) was made through a process first of guild and neighbourhood elections, and then among fifty-five guilds who were divided into nine groups, each electing one of the aldermen. The remaining four seats were filled by the *poorterij* (wealthier citizens, often in professions not formally organised in guilds), and a combination of guild deans. The first bench then selected the second bench of thirteen councillors (the *raad*).[112]

Even so, divisions within Bruges remained, although not always along obvious and unchanging lines. The effects of the Black Death in 1349 may not have been severe, but there were higher mortalities in subsequent visitations of plagues (1358, 1361 and 1368–9). Population levels in Bruges appear to have been relatively buoyant, but only because of immigration from the countryside.[113] Town 'elites' may have been faced with greater social problems as a consequence. The textile industry remained a source of unrest as well as wealth for much of the fourteenth century. The weavers and fullers in particular were at the forefront of other uprisings. After 1391, their power was on the wane, particularly because of the gradual transformation that

[112] Six additional councils headed the six administrative units (*zestendeelen*) of the town, themselves composed of *poorters* and guildsmen. For the election process, and the tasks of the main and other councils, see J. van Leeuwen, *De Vlaamse wetsvernieuwing: Een onderzoek naar de jaarlijkse keuze en aanstelling van het stadsbestuur in Gent, Brugge en Ieper in de Middeleeuwen* (Brussels, 2004), pp. 208–10; Murray, *Cradle of Capitalism*, pp. 113–14.

[113] Within petitions to the count to be allowed to amortise land next to their churches, the parishioners of St Walburga in 1358 claimed a 'great multiplication' of people within their parish, whereas those of St Giles in 1360 spoke of 'great mortality' within theirs (RAB, SW, 395, fos. 1r–v; SG, 27, fo. 71r). See generally: W. P. Blockmans, 'The Social and Economic Effects of Plague in the Low Countries 1349–1500', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 50 (1980), 833–63; E. Thoen, 'Verhuizen naar Brugge in de late middeleeuwen', in H. Soly and R. Vermier (eds.), *Beleid en bestuur in de oude Nederlanden: Liber amicorum Prof. Dr M. Baelde* (Ghent, 1993), pp. 329–49; Murray, *Cradle of Capitalism*, pp. 103–10. A population of around 40,000 seems to have been sustained in the fifteenth century, except in the years of famine and war (especially 1436–8 and in the 1480s): see Dumolyn, 'Population', pp. 43–64.

merchants and entrepreneurs effected over the cloth industry, and the shift from woollen manufacture to the production of 'light' drapery and of luxury goods.

By the end of the fourteenth century, a 'new economy' dominated by merchants and brokers had emerged. Capital was increasingly concentrated in the hands of entrepreneurs. Their investment created 'the promised lands' that so impressed foreign visitors. The Castilian Pero Tafur in 1438 gawped at the diversity of products he saw on display: 'oranges and lemons from Castile which seemed only just to have been gathered from the trees, fruits and wine from Greece ... confections and spices from Alexandria, and all the Levant ... furs from the Black Sea ... all Italy with its brocades, silks and armour'. The 'goddess luxury has great power there', but it was not, he adds, 'a place for poor men'.[114] Even so, wealth continued to draw in immigrants. The mechanisms of social polarisation that historians have identified as common in the early modern period, particularly the way in which capitalistic entrepreneurs controlled market supply of raw materials, were already in place in fifteenth-century Bruges – though polarisation was tempered by the presence of middling groups of craftsmen who were also able to profit from the expansion of luxury trades. None the less, the hold of these entrepreneurs over civic government also appears to have tightened. Office-holding became further concentrated, from the end of the fourteenth century, in the hands of the wealthy few, those who could control the supply of food and raw materials to the town, or those who could tap and regulate the luxury trades and international commerce: butchers, fish merchants, smiths, rich drapers, shippers and, in particular, the great broker/hosteller families of Barbesan, Metteneye, Honin, Bonin, van Themseke or van der Beurse.[115]

Tafur also considered Bruges to be 'very strictly governed, both in respect of justice and in other matters'.[116] The presence of the magistracy was made more imposing by the building of a new townhouse (*scepenhuis*) in the *burg* from 1376: by 1420 it presented a façade of some magnificence: in the niches of the façade, figures of Old Testament prophets and kings jostled alongside those of former counts and countesses of Flanders, from Baldwin 'Iron-arm' to Countess Margaret, the wife of Duke Philip the Bold.[117] The authority of the aldermen was

[114] Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures 1435–1439*, ed. M. Letts (London, 1926), p. 200.

[115] For the period 1375–1405, see K. Vanhaverbeke, 'De reële machtstructuren binnen het stadsbestuur van Brugge in de periode 1375–1407: Verslag van een prosopografische studie', *ASEB* 135 (1998), 3–54; Murray, *Cradle of Capitalism*, pp. 115–17; and, for 1406–36, J. Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand van 1436–1438* (Kortrijk, 1997), pp. 114–15, 356.

[116] Tafur, *Travels*, p. 198. [117] GVS, Vol. III, pp. 490–3.

backed by an expanding bureaucracy of civic officials with specialised functions. By the late fifteenth century, the 120 or so individuals who served in a civic capacity – burgomasters, aldermen, councillors, treasurers, sergeants, 'pensionars', clerks (of the *deelmannen*, *tafle* and *register*), town masters and workers, prison wardens, chaplains, minstrels and messengers would meet festively four times a year.[118]

Nevertheless, the authority of the town magistracy continued to be challenged. Social polarisation caused further threats to those in authority in the fifteenth century. The power of craft guilds was diminished, but it could still be a force to be reckoned with, and was violently displayed in rebellions of 1411, 1436–8, 1477 and 1488 (where the guilds of the construction industry, especially the carpenters, appear to have assumed the radical role once occupied by the weavers). Once again, the lines of conflict were not drawn straightforwardly between 'elites' and 'guildsmen'. Guilds were not always compact solidarities. Guild officers or masters often had stronger ties with *poorters*, merchants or town councillors than they had with artisans from their own guilds. Guilds quarrelled with other guilds.[119] Moreover, there was no automatic solidarity between members of the 'elite'. Certainly there were many ways, political, social and religious, in which their sense of exclusivity was reinforced. Yet even these ties were put under strain in times of rebellion: different groups of patricians could ally with more radical elements within the town.[120]

Upheaval and faction in towns were invariably linked with rebellion against the prince. In the late thirteenth century, division within the town had been nominally between two groups, one claiming allegiance to the count, the other to the overlord of the county, the king of France. In 1302 rebellion had been sparked by the direct intervention of the French royal authority, at a time when the count's power was weak. But with the reassertion of comital authority during the fourteenth century, there was less inclination among leading citizens to seek redress of grievance by outright revolt.[121] By the fifteenth century, the Burgundian dukes were

[118] At Easter, Pentecost, St Martin's day (15 November) and Christmas. Municipal business evidently generated an impressive thirst: each time, officials consumed more than 120 *kannen* of wine, according to accounts in the 1480s (SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, *passim*). There were other festive occasions in the year in which more exclusive gatherings of town officials met for drinking.

[119] See generally P. Stabel, 'Guilds in Late Medieval Flanders: Myths and Realities of Guild Life in an Export-Driven Environment', *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), 187–212.

[120] For divisions in the town in the early 1480s, see J. Haemers, *For the Common Good: State Power and Urban Revolts in the Reign of Mary of Burgundy (1477–1482)* (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 137–228.

[121] For the following, see especially M. Boone, *Gent en de Bourgondische hertogen* ca. *1384*–ca. *1453: Een sociaal-politieke studie van een staatsvormingsproces* (Ghent, 1990);

increasingly able to use groups of wealthy citizens to extend their own authority, and play off one faction against another. The rewards that an expanding court and centralised administration were able to offer citizens in the fifteenth century – in the form of titles, offices, lucrative contracts and advantageous marriages – may well have undermined any civic attempt to gain greater autonomy. Taxation put further pressure on towns, deepening social divisions. But it created opposition too. Coalitions of wealthy citizens and less wealthy guildsmen could still make common cause and threaten the life and limb of princes: Duke Philip the Good almost perished inside a rebellious town in 1437; Archduke Maximilian was held captive in Bruges for three months in 1488.

Conditions of strife all have a bearing on the themes discussed in this book: the function of the Holy Blood procession (Chapter 1), the use of 'general' processions (Chapter 2), investment in feast days and commemorative services (Chapter 3), guild and civic festivity (Chapters 4 and 5), civic charity (Chapter 6), and the ceremonial relations between the town and its rulers (Chapter 7). Yet for all the conflict and division – perhaps because of it – civic concord and unity were powerful ideals to which all claimed to aspire. The drama of rebellion is the aspect of urban life that tends to capture the attention of historians, but the social history of Flemish towns is marked less by the will to rebel than by the efforts to achieve peace. The need to uphold 'peace and rest' runs through the rules of craft guilds like a mantra.[122] At the end of major conflicts, peace was celebrated with masses, fires, bell-ringing and processions.[123] The intensity of these celebrations expressed more than a sense of relief. Peace was the ultimate aspiration in civic society because it was indissolubly linked with divine order. 'We know and acknowledge that where peace is, so God is', proclaimed the town council in March 1360; 'un-peace, dispute and discord mean destruction for every town and land, as Holy Scripture tells us …'[124] Or, as the Bruges rhetorician Anthonis de Roovere put it a century later, 'where peace is, so God is'.[125] The claim of the civic government to authority over other

J. Dumolyn, *Staatsvorming en vorstelijke ambtenaren in het graafschap Vlaanderen (1419–1477)* (Antwerp, 2003).

[122] For guild rules put together in the 1440s: RAB, FA, 1.

[123] J. van Leeuwen, 'Praise the Lord for This Peace! The Contribution of Religious Institutions to the Ceremonial Peace-Proclamations in Late Medieval Flanders (1450–1550)', in M. De Smet and P. Trio (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Sacred Spaces in Towns* (Leuven, 2006), pp. 47–70.

[124] SAB, 96, 1 (*Rudenboek*), fos. 48r–v.

[125] Anthonis de Roovere, *De gedichten van Anthonis de Roovere*, ed. J. J. Mak (Zwolle, 1955), p. 257. See also his poetic dialogue between Peace and War (*ibid.*, pp. 371–90); and below, pp. 180–2.

citizens was grounded in part on its role as guarantor of unity: in 1386, for instance, it sought to resolve a dispute between certain guilds 'for the peace, quiet and unity of all good members'.[126]

The maintaining of peace was also a duty. The first two oaths sworn by new members of the crossbow guild in 1400 required them to sustain peace between guild brothers and to be loyal to the town magistrates.[127] The oaths that magistrates themselves swore – from the Belfry in front of the people on the *markt* – included the duty to seek concord, unity and fraternity; to serve the church; and to protect widows and orphans. With divine help, by exercising impartial judgment and eschewing corruption, discord would be avoided.[128] At the end of the fifteenth century, town councillors seated in the town chambers could look up to enjoy a visual reminder of the consequences of failing in such public duties: above them on the wall hung Gerard David's *Judgment of Cambyses*, the graphic depiction of the fate of the unjust judge, his living body in the process of being slowly deprived of its skin.[129]

The town itself was often described as a living body. The nine groups of guildsmen who formed part of the civic constitution were its nine 'members'.[130] Here again the implications of this for those in authority were ambivalent. On the one hand, it could be used to justify punishment of rebels. Assaults on the social body could be met with punishment that impinged on the individual's body: banishment, judicial pilgrimage or dismemberment. Pero Tafur recalled seeing the heads of dead rebels fixed to high gallows from Bruges to Sluis, following the repression of rebellion after 1438.[131] Heads of rebels against civic authority might be fixed to the town Belfry, above the niche containing the Virgin Mary. On the other hand, imagery of the town as a body could be used against the powerful. Civic councillors charged with corruption were routinely

[126] SAB, 96, 4 (*Ouden wittenbouc*), fos. 40v–41r.

[127] *Ibid.*, 385, Register, fos. 50r–v.

[128] For civic oaths in 1398, see *ibid.*, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), i (1397–1421), fo. 10v; and the addition of clauses against bribery and corruption in 1432 (*ibid.*, ii, 1423–43, fo. 163r). See J. van Leeuwen, 'Municipal Oaths, Political Virtues and the Centralised State: The Adaption of Oaths of Office in Fifteenth-Century Flanders', *Journal of Medieval History* 31 (2005), 185–210.

[129] H. van der Velden, 'Cambyses for Example: The Origins and Function of an *Exemplum iustitiae* in Netherlandish Art of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 23/1 (1995), 5–62.

[130] Rents from property could be assigned on the 'common body' of the town (e.g. property belonging to the St George guild in 1342 (SAB, 385, Register, fo. 85v)); or the selling of 'rents' by the town between 1464 and 1473 (*ibid.*, 97 (*Stadscartularia* varia), 2, fos. 1r, 14r, 21v, 29r). According to the canons of St Donatian, in 1488 the town magistrates and guild deans heard, 'in the name of the whole body of the town' (*totius corporis villae*), the oath sworn by Maximilian (BAB, A56, fo. 157r).

[131] Tafur, *Travels*, p. 199.

accused literally of devouring the body: as de Roovere put it in one of his poems, the people might call office-holders 'liver eaters'.[132]

The aspiration towards peace did not always serve the interests of municipal authority. Doubtless a holy desire for peace and justice could be mixed with more self-serving motives. It suited those in power to trumpet ideals that made for the stability of their rule. Disturbers of the peace could be legitimately punished. But the duty to maintain peace was one to which the powerful had to pay more than lip-service. Ruling town councils could find their authority challenged by those who claimed to be able to uphold 'peace and unity' better than they. Rebellions in Flemish towns were often marked by armed gatherings of guilds in the main market square, or by marches through the streets by guildsmen, who thus asserted an alternative focus of authority and unity within the town.[133] Even so, the ideal of peace united more than it divided. In the fifteenth century, when crisis threatened the town, civic officials organised 'general processions' to seek divine aid (see Chapter 2): the call for peace during these processions was expected to appeal to a wide audience within the town.

The desire for peace was linked with a desire to uphold the 'common good' – a phrase repeated endlessly in late medieval political discourse by townsmen, representative institutions and princely government.[134] Undoubtedly it was a phrase, like 'peace', that could be bent to serve sectional rather than collective interest. Princes and their officers employed it to justify repression: Duke Philip the Good prefaced detailed punishment of Bruges at the end of the 1436–8 revolt, with a declared intention to reassert *le bien de la chose publicque*. Perhaps it was the prince who gradually imposed his own interpretation of the 'common good' on towns during this period, and exploited the desire for peace to his advantage.[135]

[132] De Roovere, *De gedichten*, p. 327.

[133] For guild assemblies and parades (the *wapening* and *auwette*), see Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand*, pp. 152–8, 185; J. Haemers, 'A Moody Community? Emotion and Ritual in Late Medieval Urban Revolts', in E. Lecuppre-Desjardin and A.-L. Van Bruaene (eds.), *Emotions in the Heart of the City (14th–16th Century)* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 63–81; J. Haemers and E. Lecuppre-Desjardin, 'Conquérir et reconquérir l'espace urbain: Le Triomphe de la collectivité sur l'individu dans le cadre de la révolte brugeoise', in C. Deligne and C. Billen (eds.), *Voisinages, coexistences, appropriations: Groupes sociaux et territoires urbains du Moyen Age au 16e siècle* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 119–43.

[134] See in particular J. Dumolyn, 'Justice, Equity and the Common Good: The State Ideology of the Councillors of the Burgundian Dukes', in R. Boulton and J. Veenstra (eds.), *The Ideology of Burgundy* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 1–20; J. Dumolyn, 'The Terrible Wednesday of Pentecost: Confronting Urban and Princely Discourses in the Bruges Rebellion of 1436–1438', *History* 92 (2007), 3–20.

[135] W. P. Blockmans, *De volksvertegenwoordiging in Vlaanderen in de overgang van middeleeuwen naar nieuwe tijden (1384–1506)* (Brussels, 1978), esp. p. 564. In the immediate

But 'the common good' was still used by townsmen to justify defence of 'liberties and privileges' against the prince, and by radical groups within the town rebelling against ruling elites. For these groups, the 'common good' meant consultation before new taxation and fair use of public money.[136] Rebel demands were sharpened and legitimated by the accusation of corruption levelled against town magistrates. The misuse of municipal funds was the charge brought against officials in almost every rebellion. The 'common good' remained a powerful ideal that defied precise definition and could still be wielded against princely authority.

Peace and the common good were part of a cluster of values that were thought to uphold civic society. In de Roovere's poems, they intermingle with other virtues such as an emphasis on charity, patience or modesty. They were also associated with obedience to authority, but they were nevertheless also values that those in authority had to embrace.[137] 'Civic religion' (although anachronistic) is a phrase that perhaps captures a sense of values that were at once religious and social. De Roovere's writings demonstrate the seamless connections that he and his contemporaries made between divine order and civic peace, between religious ceremony and social order.

It was de Roovere – as the probable author of the local version of the chronicles of Flanders[138] – who recorded the defiance of Reynoud Willems on Holy Blood day in 1475. In his chronicle, disruption of the ceremony is set within a context of rising disorder. The wars of Duke Charles the Bold were taking their toll. More general processions praying for peace were being ordered.[139] In November during the same year, further harsh taxation extracted by the town magistrates, under ducal orders, caused posters to be put up on walls near the Franciscan friary, denouncing the magistrates and guild deans as 'whoresons', 'thieves' – and 'liver-eaters'.[140]

aftermath of the uprising in 1436–8, the Bruges authorities were also prepared to pay heavily for the duke's granting of pardon: besides other punishments, they paid more than £13,700 *parisis* to diverse lords to intercede on their behalf with the prince so that they might have 'peace and rest' (SAB, 216, 1436–8, fo. 136r).

[136] Dumolyn and Haemers, 'Patterns of Urban Rebellion', p. 387.

[137] See below, pp. 180–1.

[138] See J. Oosterman, 'De *Excellente cronike van Vlaenderen* en Anthonis de Roovere', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal en letterkunde* 118 (2002), 22–37.

[139] See below, pp. 85, 86, 264–7.

[140] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 365v. Further defamatory posters went up in the following month. In March 1476 a Hammekin van Noorden was charged in the court of the provost of St Donatian's with placing *brieven* on the church doors of St Donatian's, the friary, Eekhout abbey and others, in which all town office-holders were described as 'liver-eaters'. These words, and others, had caused great unrest in the town, and were considered 'so horrible' that his beheading was demanded (RAB, *Proosdij*, 1510, fo. 108r).

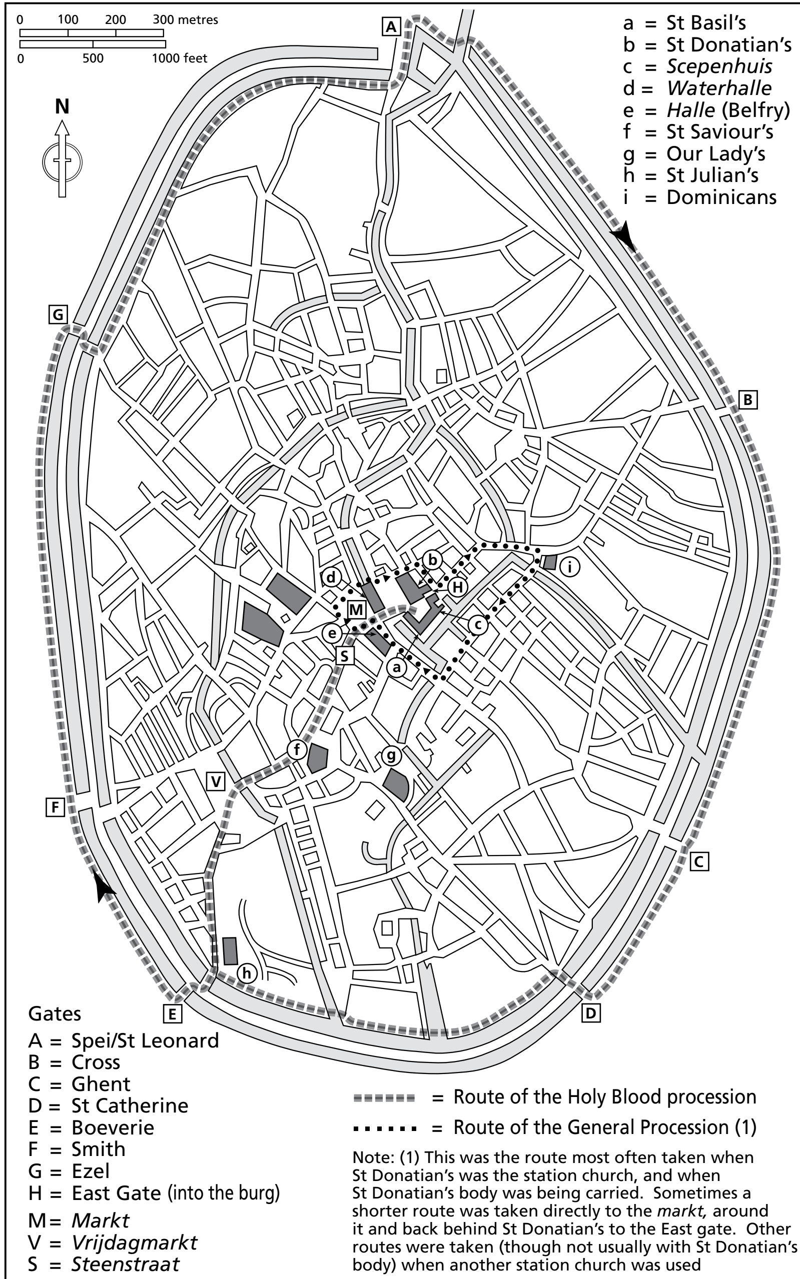
Both the context of threat to civic authority, as well as the high premium placed on peace and the common good, make more explicable the town council's harsh reaction to Reynoud's defiance. If the Holy Blood procession was supposed to generate or exemplify a sense of obedience and hierarchy, then there were clearly limitations. For the effect of Reynoud's behaviour had been to create disorder. In their case before the *parlement*, the Bruges authorities claimed that the altercation between Reynoud and the other guild deans on Holy Blood day had provoked louder and louder 'murmurs' among the guild members who were assembled there in 'great number'. The guild deans had not been able to restore quiet. When Reynoud appeared on Corpus Christi day with his ill-clad torch-bearers, the guild members were so provoked that 'great danger' would have resulted but for the intervention of certain 'notable and discreet' persons. According to de Roovere, there had been 'uproar' in St Saviour's parish where the procession had taken place. Reynoud's refusal to obey civic decree, 'make his peace' with others and take his place in procession struck at the foundations of the urban social order and the ideals that held it together. For some his assault on the body politic had merited more than mere banishment: there were also calls for his decapitation.

# 1 The Holy Blood procession

Joost de Damhouder in the sixteenth century described Holy Blood day as a solemn but festive occasion.[1] Celebration began in the evening of 2 May, with vigils in St Basil's chapel where the Holy Blood relic lay. The town magistrates, important clergy and visiting dignitaries attended. Pipers from all the craft guilds assembled outside in the *burg*. Early next morning, the beguines arrived to process down to the Boeverie gate and back, after which the relic was displayed before the people. Between 7 and 8 am the Belfry bell rang out for the guildsmen to leave their guild houses, where they had breakfasted, and for the smaller crafts (*neeringen*) to gather in the *markt* and *burg*. At 10 am the relic was taken from the *burg* to St Donatian's church where mass was sung, and then it began its journey, through the *markt* down the *Streenstraat*, over the *zand*, towards the Boeverie gate. It was carried by two chaplains from St Basil's, sheltered under a canopy. Before them were carriers of crosses, flanked by the crossbow and archers' guilds, and after them came representatives from all the town clergy, and prelates from outside the town. Closest to the relic were the town officials and the members of the Holy Blood fraternity. The guilds, each in their set order, trailed in the wake of the procession with crosses: several put on plays (dumbshows) of scenes from the Old and New Testaments. At the Boeverie gate the main procession halted, and the town officials and clergy repaired for lunch in St Julian's hospital. The relic meanwhile was borne through the gate and around the perimeter of the town walls, re-entering at the same gate, where it joined the larger procession once more. The magistrates, clergy and craft guilds – in reverse order – accompanied the relic back to St Basil's (see Map 1.1).

Damhouder describes a town on the move – or at least the movements of its most important citizens, lay and clerical, grouped around its most

[1] Joost de Damhouder, *Vande grootdadigheyt der Brugsche stadts-regeringhe* (Amsterdam, 1648), pp. 555–73. His account provides the earliest extant description of the procession.




Map 1.1 Routes of processions in Bruges.

sacred object. What the event 'says' about the community and what it 'did' to its inhabitants are the subjects of this chapter. Is a civic 'identity' to be found reflected or even misrepresented in its display of hierarchy? Did it serve as a mechanism for social bonding or a tool for oligarchy? Answers to these questions, as already suggested, are not straightforward at a general level; and with reference to more specific cases, they may be even less clear-cut. On the one hand, processions of this kind were deliberately conservative in form and content: they incorporated liturgical traditions that were arguably more resistant to manipulation. Damhouder's description gives an impression of the procession as a timeless event. On the other hand, further evidence suggests that it was subject to change and to different pressures and agendas. What the procession 'said' or 'did' might depend on the circumstances in which it was conducted.

## Civic funding

The origins of the procession are difficult to date, but it was well established in some form by 1291.[2] Civic governments in many other towns in Flanders, northern France and Germany began to take a similar interest in managing annual processions around the end of the thirteenth century.[3] Even so, the *ommeganc* in Bruges did not receive funding from the town treasury until 1303, and even then, this funding was limited to a paltry payment to improve the processional route around the ramparts of the town.[4] This may suggest that until then, the relic had not been taken around the perimeter of the town walls – which in any case had been rebuilt and completed only in 1297. Civic expenditure on the procession continued to be small in the six years after 1303.[5] There were larger sums from 1306 spent on the fabric of St Basil's chapel and on a new reliquary.[6]

[2] See above, p. 9.

[3] See P. Trio and M. De Smet, 'Processions in Towns: The Intervention of Urban Authorities in the Late Medieval Processions of the Low Countries', in M. De Smet, J. Kuys and P. Trio, 'Processions and Church Fabrics in the Low Countries during the Late Middle Ages', *K. U. Leuven Voorlopige publicatie* 111 (2006), 5–91 (pp. 5, 9).

[4] SAB, 216, 1303, fo. 24r: £7 *parisis* spent on 'den dijc van den fosseide alomtrent die port te slichtene die weghe en maken doe men dede die processie derden dach meye'. These payments are regular from then on. See now C. Wyffels and J.-J. De Smet (eds.), *De rekeningen van de stad Brugge 1280–1319: Eerste deel 1280–1302* (Brussels, 1965–71).

[5] SAB, 216, 1304, fo. 40r; 1306, fo. 8v (music played by one individual as the Holy Blood was carried); 1305, fo. 99v; 1306, fo. 12r (messengers to the abbeys of Ter Doest and Sint Andries to attend); 1306, fo. 18v (for watching the Holy Blood). See now C. Wyffels and A. Vandewalle (eds.), *De rekeningen van de stad Brugge 1280–1319: Tweede deel 1303–1319* (Brussels, 1995).

[6] SAB, 1306, fo. 20v (£100 for work on St Basil's); 1307, fos. 17r, 18r, 26r, 29r–v (£336 14s for work on the reliquary); 1308, fo. 24r; 1309 fo. 14r.

More significant expenditure on the procession occurs from 1310. In this year, official clerical recognition was given. A papal indulgence, which refers to the procession beginning 'around' seven years previously, offered indulgences to those who visited the relic, and credited it with miraculous powers of liquefaction every Friday.[7] The bishop's approval was also given: his suffragan was paid handsomely for 'obtaining the procession', and the relic of Our Lady of Tournai was brought to Bruges and processed to the sound of trumpets from church to church.[8] Further work was done on St Basil's.[9] From 1310 larger and more regular outlay on the procession was made: messengers were sent out further afield,[10] sermons were preached from 1311,[11] trumpeters were paid from 1315[12] and more effort went into enhancing the display of the relic: torches carried before it began to be paid for; in 1312 a gilded baldaquin was made to cover it.[13]

Whether these developments continued uninterrupted during the 1320s is not clear: there is a break in the run of town accounts between 1320 and 1331. But surviving accounts in the 1330s show more systematic payments towards what appears to be a larger event: more candles and gloves for torch-carriers were paid for during the 1330s;[14] more regular gifts of wine for clergy attending. The crossbowmen began to be paid for attending the event; the *baljuw* and *schout*, the count's officials, for their uniforms.[15]

A significant development appears to occur in 1350. The first reference is then made to the fifteen days of the *ommeganc*.[16] This may represent an expansion of the processional period: from later sources it is clear that the clergy from most of the churches in Bruges, in the two weeks after 3 May, undertook in turn to take the relic on smaller processions, probably within the town walls.[17] Moreover, during the 1350s, and over

[7] *Ibid.*, 96, 2 (*Rudenboek*), fos. 29r–v; 1 (*Rudenboek*), fos. 24r–v. For large expenses towards sending representatives to the pope in Avignon, see *ibid.*, 216, 1311, fos. 54r–v. The indulgence attracted large oblations in 1311 and 1312 (*ibid.*, fo. 19r; 1312, fo. 53r).

[8] *Ibid.*, 1311, fos. 35v, 33r, 48r, 48v.

[9] £964 11s 11d spent principally on the chapel: *ibid.*, fos. 75r–v.

[10] First to prelates in west and east Flanders, and later in Brabant and northern France: *ibid.*, 1311, fos. 30r, 35r; 1312, fo. 20v; 1315, fo. 28r; 1319/20, fo. 18r.

[11] Town criers announced a sermon in the *burg* before the relic (*ibid.*, 1311, fo. 30r).

[12] *Ibid.*, 1315/16, fo. 14r; 1316/17, fo. 48r; 1319/20, fo. 47v.

[13] *Ibid.*, 1312, fos. 48r, 53r; 1315/16, fo. 14r.

[14] In 1332, 50 people carried 50 torches before the relic; 35 pairs of gloves were given to people, probably for carrying candles (*roedekins*); by 1339 there were fewer large torches, but 184 pairs of gloves were given to the town councillors and officials to carry candles (*ibid.*, 1332/3, fo. 103r; 1339/40, fo. 125r).

[15] *Ibid.*, 1338/8, fo. 136v; 1345/6, fo. 124r.

[16] *Ibid.*, 1350/1, fo. 118v.

[17] The clergy from the three main collegiate churches processed on two days each during the two weeks after 3 May (St Donatian's on the 4 and 12 May, Our Lady's

the next twenty years, the 3 May procession continued to grow, mostly on lines already established: more was spent on bell-ringing, on wine for prelates, on the liveries for town and comital officials,[18] on trumpeters and on gloves for torch-carriers (who doubled in number between 1352 and 1379).[19]

Expenditure dipped during the troubled years from 1380 to 1382 (to which we shall return). But from 1383, and over the next twenty years, the procession was reinvigorated. In that year a separate payment of £36 *parisis* was made to the colleges and orders of the town for what is referred to (in later accounts) as the fifteen days of the *ommeganc*.[20] Light surrounding the procession was brightened, and sound amplified: more torches were paid for from 1385;[21] St Donatian's bell-ringers received regular payment from 1389; pipers as well as trumpeters attended from 1390.[22] The reliquary was renewed in 1388 in a translation ceremony.[23] The meal for civic dignitaries, 'thanking the prelates' who attended the procession, was regularly accounted for from 1389:[24] the amount spent on this became the largest single item of expenditure listed under the 'common expenses' of Holy Blood day. The ranks of the crossbowmen flanking the relic were swelled with archers in 1399.[25] From 1396 payments from the civic treasury began to be made to those putting on 'plays' acted out in the procession: a play with the twelve apostles and four evangelists in 1396; work by the painters' guild on plays of the *hovekin*, the Annunciation, Jerusalem, the offering of the Three Kings by 1398; and in 1402 plays additionally of King Herod and the Tree of Jesse.[26]

on 6 and 13 May, St Saviour's on 7 and 14 May); those from Eekhout abbey, the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians, processed once each on the remaining days. See J. Gaillard, *Recherches historiques sur la chapelle du Saint-Sang à Bruges* (Bruges, 1846), pp. 57–8. The first specific payment to the colleges and orders for their processions, however, was made in 1383.

18 The *baljuw* and *schout* were being paid £36 up to 1363 (after which there is a gap in the run of accounts) and £72 from 1366 (SAB, 216, 1365/6, fo. 83r).

19 From 564 ('47 dozen') pairs to 1,140 ('95 dozen') pairs (*ibid*., 1351/2, fo. 123r; 1378/9, fo. 90v).

20 *Ibid*., 1382/3, fo. 153v (cf. *ibid*., 1388/9, fo. 109v).

21 But for the politics of these payments, see below, p. 54.

22 *Ibid*., 216, 1388/9, fo. 109r; 1389/90, fos. 106v–107r.

23 See below, pp. 48, 58.

24 *Ibid*., 216, 1388/9, fo. 109r.

25 *Ibid*., 1398/9, fo. 91v.

26 *Ibid*., 1395/6, fo. 84r; 1396/7, fo. 92v; 1397/8, fo. 95v; 1398/9, fo. 92v; 1400/1, fo. 105r; 1401/2, fo. 115v. The civic accounts are laconic on the subject of plays. The author of the *Chronicle of Flanders* refers in 1479 to the Tree of Jesse; the Last Supper; *hovekin* (Agony in the Garden); the carrying of the Cross; and Caiaphas, Annas and Herod. This tallies with Damhouder, *Brugsche stadts-regeringhe*, pp. 564–6, who lists the 'old plays' ('abolished' by his day) as drawn mostly from episodes in the life of Christ: Christ at the house of Simon; the zeal of Martha; Christ turning the merchants out of his Father's house; the Last Supper; scenes in the houses of Caiaphas,

Thus, the Holy Blood procession was not static in form or content: during the course of the fourteenth century it developed into a much bigger spectacle.[27] Perhaps this reflects simply a greater availability of funds: income flowing into the civic treasury was increasing. But so too were outgoings, and in the late fourteenth century (with war and inflation), the civic budget usually ran at a deficit.[28] Increase in spending on processions was the result of choice. Of course, the town accounts may not be an entirely reliable guide as to what choices were made. Later evidence from other sources reveal that certain costs – such as the staging of plays – were borne by craft guilds: absence of such evidence in the fourteenth century skews our knowledge of what the ceremony looked like.[29] But the town accounts at least suggest a growing willingness or effort on the part of the town government to assume a greater financial responsibility for the procession.

Whether this reflects the changing concerns of the urban magistracy or even its increasing control over the event is more difficult to say. There may well be some correlation between expenditure and political circumstances. It is tempting to connect the first appearance of the procession in the town accounts in 1303 with the turmoil of events in the previous year. There may be a grain of truth in the tradition that Civic funding of the procession began as a celebration of victory against French royal authority – if not the famous Flemish victory over the French king's army at Courtrai in July 1302 then the event that sparked the French invasion, the massacre of the French governor and forces within Bruges at the Matins uprising on 17 May 1302.[30]

Annas and Herod, as well as Pontius Pilate; images of Christ with the crown of thorns and of Christ scourged; Christ carrying the Cross to Calvary; the crucified Christ; his grave; and Christ showing himself to Mary Magdalene. The episodes from the Old Testament were Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Jesse, the children of Israel and the parting of the Red Sea, and David and Goliath.

[27] Another indication of this is the expenditure on liveries by the town in May (which was partly connected with Holy Blood day). In the 1330s, expenditure on this was already rising, from around £300 *parisis* to over £800; a large increase (to over £2,000) occurred in 1352. By the 1360s the figure was over £4,000; by the 1390s it was usually over £9,000.

[28] In the 1330s the town treasurers could expect to receive over £30,000 *parisis*; by the 1360s over £60,000; by the end of the 1390s over £90,000 (though there were considerable fluctuations). Expenditure kept pace with income, however (SAB, 216).

[29] Whether they put on plays before 1396 is not clear. Certainly, the records of the weavers' guild in 1362 suggest that Holy Blood day put the guild to considerable, though unspecified, expense.

[30] See K. Verschelde, 'Les Matines brugeoises et la procession du Saint Sang', *ASEB* 17 (1880), 119–24; A. Duclos, 'Les Matines brugeoises,' *ASEB* 32 (1881), 69–296. See anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, in J.-J. De Smet (ed.), *Collection de chroniques belges inédites*, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1841), Vol. I, p. 168. See also the tradition first appearing in a document dated 1418 (though this only in a later copy) that

Commemoration of either event might be expected, given that so many towns in the Low Countries and beyond chose to recall civic victories with the establishment of processions.[31] It is not a tradition recorded in the local versions of the chronicles of Flanders, but its existence is suggested in other sources. The pro-French chronicler at the abbey of St Martin at Tournai in 1348 made the association between procession and the Matins uprising explicit, albeit in a manner hostile to Bruges: he claimed that the Holy Blood had ceased to liquefy because of the treachery of the citizens against the French governor in 1302.[32]

Moreover, the town authorities had already connected the relic with the defence of civic liberties against royal authority: we have met their anxious letter to King Philip in 1297 seeking assurance that the relic would not be removed from the town.[33] In the same year the new town walls had been completed. These were under threat in 1302: in fact the Matins uprising had begun when the rebels prevented the French governor from carrying out his threat to dismantle the ramparts and revoke the privileges of the commonalty.[34] The first civic payment towards the Holy Blood procession in 1303 went on improving the route to make possible – perhaps for the first time – a complete circuit of the town's perimeter. The beginnings of civic expenditure on the procession can be connected plausibly with an event that had seen the town walls delivered from the destruction threatened by French royal authority.

Other pressures on civic life also explain the beginnings of the procession. The town had certainly not been united against the French. Factional conflict had threatened social order.[35] The Claws (ostensibly supporting the Flemish count) and the Lilies (who claimed to be pro-French), reflect divisions within the propertied classes, some of whom took up populist demands. The Lily faction was in control until early

the procession of Our Lady of Blindekens to the Potterie hospital began in 1305 as thanks for the Flemish victory at Pelvenberg the previous year (Bruges, Kerkarchief Onze-Lieve-Vrouw te Potterie, charter 58; J. Van den Heuvel, 'De historiek van Blindekenprocessie', in J. Van den Heuvel, *Van Blindekens naar de Potterie* (Bruges, 1980), pp. 99–155 (pp. 106–11).

[31] Trio and De Smet, 'Processions in Towns', p. 44; K. Graf, 'Erinnerungsfeste in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt,' in H. Brand, P. Monnet and M. Staub (eds.), *Memoria, communitas, civitas: Mémoire et conscience urbaines en occident à la fin du Moyen Age* (Ostfildern, 2003), pp. 263–73, esp. p. 267.

[32] Gillis li Muisis, *Chronica Aegidii li Muisis*, in De Smet (ed.), *Collection de chroniques belges*, Vol. II, p. 194.

[33] See above, p. 9. French atrocities against Flemish relics were recorded later in May 1302, when French soldiers beheaded images 'as if they were alive': H. Johnstone (ed.), *Annales Gandenses* (Oxford, 1985), p. 28.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 15. [35] See above, pp. 28–9.

in 1302, when it tried to imprison the more radical leaders of the 'commons' protesting against the assize on beer and other goods. A mob took control of the town; a Claw magistracy was installed with populist backing. When the French forces were attacked on 17 May, many of the Lilies were massacred or forced to flee. The procession to which the ascendant Claw government made its small contribution in 1303 may have been an attempt to express civic unity, or the desire for peace, but it was hardly done so in a climate of social stability.

The procession's format perhaps reflects the changes of government that followed the Matins. Town government may have become more representative, with craft guilds acquiring a greater though indirect say over civic affairs. Between 1303 and 1311 there are signs of novel institutions and procedures: the nine 'heavy deans' (the leaders of the nine 'members'); the 'Hundred men', which included artisans and *poorters* with powers to inspect town finances; and the beginnings of the Great Council, called on occasion to seek wider urban ratification of civic decisions.[36] Perhaps the first reference in 1303 to public funding of the Holy Blood procession was an expression of a new relationship between guilds and government. Or is this to freight this somewhat laconic reference with too heavy a burden of significance? We can speculate, but little more. More certain is it that civic expenditure on the Holy Blood procession was greater after 1310: the beginnings of regular municipal investment in the ceremony began then. This would coincide with the re-establishment of relative peace, and the return of fleeing Lilies after a smaller revolt in 1309. It would mark the return to greater social stability that the propertied classes no doubt sought after the events of 1302.

Stability was not long-lived. Political upheaval within the city continued, made worse by war and the great famine of 1315–16, poor harvests and then strife over succession to the comital house. A revolutionary regime established itself in Bruges after 1323, one more destructive of 'patrician' groups. It was not brought down until 1328.[37] What happened to the Holy Blood procession during these years is obscure. Judging from the experience of other towns, disruption to it is likely: the dangers of travel across Flanders in the 1320s apparently prevented many 'good people' from attending the annual procession of Our Lady

[36] For this interpretation, see T. A. Boogaart, II, *An Ethnogeography of Late Medieval Bruges: Evolution of the Corporate Milieu 1280–1349* (Lewiston, 2004), Chapter 6. For the difficulties in interpreting evidence in this period for guild involvement in choosing the civic magistracy, see J. van Leeuwen, *De Vlaamse wetsvernieuwing: Een onderzoek naar de jaarlijkse keuze en aanstelling van het stadsbestuur in Gent, Brugge en Ieper in de Middeleeuwen* (Brussels, 2004), pp. 100–3, 106–8.

[37] W. H. TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection: Popular Politics and Peasant Revolt in Flanders, 1323–1328* (Philadelphia, 1993).

at Tournai.[38] The return of order in Bruges may thus be connected with the more inflated expenditure on the Holy Blood procession evident from 1331. Increases from the late 1330s may be related to the rebuilding of the town walls, which had suffered damage in the years of upheaval.[39]

Further allocation of civic resources to the procession in the 1350s may reflect other kinds of social upheaval. The Black Death struck Bruges shortly before August in 1349. Some of the more popular responses to the outbreak of plague, in search of grace from the evident wrath of God, induced considerable unease amongst those in authority.[40] One chronicler referred disapprovingly to the arrival of a new sect called *beggardi*, flagellants revering the Body of Christ 'without the authority of the church'; while another condemned their invented miracle-working and their lack of reverence to the elevation of the Host.[41] Gillis li Muisis reported on their disconcerting presence in Tournai during August and September, orchestrating apocalyptic sermons, public penances and processions, sometimes without the proper liturgical accoutrements of candles, banners and crosses.[42] Plague must have made some impact in Bruges. A contingent of flagellants from Bruges made its way to Tournai. On the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, according to li Muisis, around 200 of them entered the city and caused a commotion on the main market square by their displays of public penance. A month later on the eve of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, two large groups from Bruges joined many others in Tournai to take part in the annual procession there: 'never before' was it celebrated with 'such devotion'. The flagellants in Bruges were aware of their uncertain status in the eyes of the church: they sought the approval of their exercises from the bishop of Tournai – who did not approve of 'excessive' regimes.[43] The favoured response by ecclesiastical authorities in search of divine reprieve from mortalities was to conduct more measured and liturgically appropriate processions: the annual Holy Cross procession

[38] A letter from the dean of the chapter of Tournai on 22 March 1330 to the king of France (recorded in one of Bruges' town cartularies) tells of the 'injuries and griefs' suffered by those who did attempt to attend the Tournai procession during the previous few years: SAB, 96, 1 (*Rudenboek*), fo. 6v.

[39] King Philip VI of France finally licensed the rebuilding of Bruges' walls and fortifications in 1338 after a period of 'loyalty' to the crown by count and citizens: *ibid.*, 96, 1 (*Rudenboek*), fos. 36r, 38v–39r.

[40] See E. Delaruelle, 'Les Grands Processions de pénitents de 1349 et 1399', in E. Delaruelle, *La Piété populaire au Moyen Age* (Turin, 1975), pp. 280–313.

[41] Anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, pp. 201, 226.

[42] Gillis li Muisis, *Chronica*, pp. 348–9, 354–9.

[43] P. Fredericq (ed.), *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae*, 3 vols. (Ghent, 1906), Vol. II, pp. 111–2; Vol. III, 14.

in Tournai in 1349 appears to have absorbed the large number of flagellants who had entered the city. Whether there was similar devotional intensity in Bruges itself in the aftermath of plague is not known.[44] But it may not be coincidental that the extension of the processional period following Holy Blood day, conducted by the town clergy and partly paid for by the town, appears to begin in the early 1350s. As in Tournai, the Bruges authorities were perhaps concerned to accommodate a popular demand for penitential processions but in forms that were less troublesome to social order.

There were serious visitations of plague in the region in 1358, 1361 and 1368–9. Popular responses to these are less well documented, but no doubt continued to be troubling.[45] There was further political unrest: a revolt in 1359 by the weavers of Bruges, in alliance with those of Ghent and Ypres, was finally pacified in 1361, with the town government promising peace and an end to guild *wapeningen* (militarised parades).[46] A clearer system of representation for fifty-five guilds in town government was established.[47] The hierarchy of guilds was set out in processions of the urban militia,[48] and probably in the Holy Blood procession (although it is not until 1421 that we find reference to this – see Appendix 1). No new items of expenditure on the procession appear between 1358 and 1361, which might mark the establishment of a new political system; in any case the system was not entirely new, and power remained effectively in the hands of wealthy *poorters* and the elite of more important guilds, the brokers in particular. But the relative calm perhaps allowed this group, with the approval of guild representatives, to direct further funds towards the annual procession during the 1360s and 1370s.

Extraordinary disruption to the procession occurred in 1382. The context was Count Louis de Male's war with Ghent, which broke out in 1379, sparked by the count's provocative grant to Bruges of permission to dig a canal to connect the town with the river Leie – threatening to divert grain barges away from Ghent. For a time, a pro-Ghent regime

[44] The May procession took place in Bruges before plague struck, and the town accounts for the following year are missing.

[45] For the miracle of the bleeding Host at Brussels in 1369, following alleged desecration by Jews, and carried in procession on Corpus Christi around the town, see anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, p. 232.

[46] SAB, 96, 1 (*Rudenboek*), fos. 48r–v.

[47] See above, p. 29.

[48] Setting off for the expedition to Calais in June 1436, the guilds processed down the *Steenstraat* in the same order as they did on Holy Blood day; *ibid.*, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), 1422–43, fo. 170r; SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 288r (and for a transcription of Hs. 437, see M. Dauwe, M. 'De *Cronike van Vlaenderen*: Historiografische studie en transcriptie van fo. 137v tot fo. 420v', unpublished licentiaat thesis (University of Ghent, 1987)).

was established in Bruges, dominated by cloth-workers. In May 1380, the count's supporters retook the town.[49] In early May 1382, a hostile army from Ghent was camped at Beverhoutsveld, a mile or so from Bruges, and on 3 May forced an entry into the town. The Holy Blood procession on the day may have helped it. Froissart reports that rumours flew about in Bruges on 3 May that the Ghenters were intending to take part in their procession.[50] Versions of the chronicles of Flanders maintain that many in Bruges were too inebriated on the day to resist the invasion. The captain of Bruges, Heylaerd van Poucke, warned that the feast and procession were being celebrated too 'excessively' for citizens to tread safely outside the gates. His advice went unheeded. A drunken contingent emerged, to be set upon by the Ghent army. Another version has the procession passing out of the town gate and almost completing a circuit of the walls, when it was attacked by the enemy. Later tradition adds further colour: the relic was dropped by the fleeing processors into a canal, and was feared lost or captured, until rescued by a beady-eyed and aquatically capable beguine.[51]

The town accounts for 1382 show that the Holy Blood procession took place on a smaller scale that year than previously – unsurprisingly, given the military situation. There are no payments for the *baljuw* and *schout*, or for trumpeters and guards surrounding the relic; torch-carriers were also fewer. Even less surprisingly, there is no reference to processions on the fifteen days after 3 May. The Ghent army's entry into Bruges unleashed a massacre of wealthier citizens in which weavers and other cloth-workers in Bruges took part. Brokers, hostellers and other supporters of the count were butchered, and their property plundered. Blood from the massacred flowed over the shoes of pedestrians from the *beurse* to the *grote markt*. The bodies were pitched into mass graves.[52]

The Ghent regime in Bruges did not last long, and in November, the Ghent militia was defeated by the French army at Westrozbeke. Although this induced fresh panic among the Bruges burghers, relative peace was soon restored. But the invasion left its mark. A chronicle

[49] See J. M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism 1280–1390* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 349–51.

[50] However, this was not a view shared by the count, who ordered a sortie to defeat the Ghent army. Froissart attributes defeat on the day to the Bruges militia who, unlike the count's knights, were too eager to attack the Ghenters ('par grant orgeuil estoient si chaulx et si hastifs de eulx combattre ...'): Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. G. Raynaud, 15 vols. (Paris, 1897), Vol. X, pp. 220, 224–6.

[51] SBB, Hs. 436, fo. 148r; Hs. 437, fos. 229r–v; anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, pp. 239–41; GVS, Vol. II, p. 444.

[52] C. P. Serrure and P. Blommaert (eds.), *Kronyk van Vlaenderen* (Ghent, 1839), 10 vols., Vol. I, pp. 242–5.

was to record how the Ghenters held the town 'for a whole year', during which 'neither right nor justice was administered'. They also razed three gates to the ground – Cross, Ghent and St Katherine, with all towers and walls in between, so that one could cross and recross the walls by day and night.[53] Perambulation of the Holy Blood relic around the walls in the following year must have been a chastening experience. In 1383 the procession was celebrated as before, followed by the clergy's processions over the next fifteen days.[54] Once again the return of 'peace' coincides with investment in celebration of the town's principal feast day.

In the ensuing years, as we have seen, the procession was elaborated upon. This was against the background of the papal schism, which had serious consequences for ecclesiastical authority within Flanders.[55] The towns had sided with the Roman pope, but the bishop of Tournai and the new count of Flanders, Philip of Burgundy, were aligned with the French-backed pope at Avignon. The potential for conflict was increased when the Roman pope invested his own legate, the bishop of Ancona, with administrative functions within the diocese of Tournai. It was he who attended the translation ceremony of the Holy Blood in 1388. The situation became particularly tense in 1392. Many citizens in Bruges still refused to accept the sacraments of priests supporting the Avignon pope; churches were left empty even on feast days.[56] A riot was precipitated when a Bruges burgher was beheaded, on Duke Philip's orders, for supporting the Roman pope. The situation in Ghent was even more grave: people ran amok in the streets killing pro-Avignon supporters, and were quietened only when the Sacrament was carried out on to the main public square.[57] When the bishop of Tournai came to Bruges in May 1393 to celebrate mass on the eve of Trinity Sunday, no one came to church; when he attempted to ordain priests in Sluis a fire broke out.[58]

The crisis in Flanders was ended in March 1394 when papal interdicts on the county were lifted. Its effect on the episcopal authority had been serious; perhaps too the sacramental authority of the priesthood had been shaken. The effect on processions like the Holy Blood is hard

[53] Anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, p. 241.
[54] SAB, 216, 1383/4, fo. 153v. A Ghent force had still managed to threaten the town a few days before (anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, p. 242).
[55] For an overview of the following, see N. Valois, *La France et la Grande Schism*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1896), Vol. I, p. 361; Vol. II, pp. 237–41, 246, 251–2, 265–6.
[56] Jan van Dixmude, *Chronicke van den prinsen ende graven van Vlaenderen en Brabant van 1377 tot 1443*, ed. J. J. Lambin (Ypres, 1835), p. 283
[57] *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, 247.
[58] Van Dixmude, *Chronicke*, p. 284; SBB, Hs. 436, fo. 157v. See also GVS, Vol. III, pp. 234, 236–40.

to say. The town accounts give no indication of disruption to its celebration. But rising expenditure on the procession, including the establishment of regular subsidies for meals in honour of visiting prelates on 3 May, and to the clergy processing in Bruges in the days following, may reflect a municipal concern to enhance liturgical celebration surrounding the exhibition of a sacred object. Exposure of the Sacrament in Ghent, after all, had evidently proved effective in calming commotion.

Thus, there may well be a correlation between the levels of expenditure on ceremony in Bruges and the oscillations of strife and peace. Return to order after upheaval often ushered in a period of extra spending on the procession. But does this indicate that the procession was an instrument used to legitimate municipal authority? Return to political stability often meant the return to power of the wealthy and reassertion of more 'oligarchical' authority: was spending on the Holy Blood procession supposed to shore up power by ritual means? Evidence from the fifteenth century suggests more equivocal answers to these questions.

## Civic order

The trend of official civic spending on the procession in the fourteenth century was not replicated in the fifteenth. The gradual increase in investment that took place in the century after 1303 did not continue at the same rate after the early 1400s. The civic accounts reveal no new additions to the elements that made up the celebrations on Holy Blood day. Subsidies to individuals involved in the event, like the count's officials or town magistrates, were standardised. The payments to town officials for their May liveries could vary but tended to remain stable. Annual payments for plays (usually for the work of painters on the staging) continued to increase in the early 1400s until around 1434; they were resumed again from 1444, but became more irregular after 1468. Extra payments were made when repairs were necessary[59] or when the presence of visiting dignitaries required a more impressive show.[60] The only significant area where there was some increase was on the meal for magistrates and clergy on Holy Blood day. In general, by 1420, payments had become standardised. The procession in the form later described by Joost de Damhouder was probably in place.

[59] The talents of Petrus Christus were bought to restore the Jerusalem and representation of the Tree of Jesse in 1463 and 1467 (GVS, Vol. V, p. 533; SAB, 216, 1466/7, fo. 53v).

[60] See below, p. 238 n. 76. When Louis the dauphin appeared with Duke Philip, besides the £100 *parisis* paid to the painters for the '*hovekin* and other small plays', £240 *parisis* was paid for staging six plays and £216 *parisis* to the 'nine members of the crafts' for help towards 'several stories in dumbshow' (*ibid.*, 1456/7, fo. 53v).

What this reveals about the attitudes of civic authorities to the Holy Blood procession is not obvious. In the fourteenth century payments towards the procession had steadily increased, especially after periods of upheaval. In the fifteenth, however, they were more regular and did not increase even after serious crises in the 1430s, 1470s and 1480s. Perhaps magistrates no longer needed to reassert their authority by ceremonial means: despite the crises, the general trend was towards a tightening of oligarchical power.[61] On the other hand, the picture of the procession revealed by the civic accounts is incomplete. There were areas of expenditure that may well have increased, of which no mention is made in the accounts. As we shall see, some of the costs were borne by guilds. The significance of Holy Blood day to the urban authorities needs to be assessed in the light of other evidence.

Some of it demonstrates specific connections between the Holy Blood and the authority of civic government. The civil and criminal court records that begin to survive from the later fifteenth century show that the relic itself could be linked to the exercise of civic justice. The occasional miscreant was ordered to make payments of wax to the Holy Blood. Those who denounced the peace of Tours in 1492, for instance, were made to make offerings before the relic for 'breaking the peace' of the town.[62] Such punishments were without doubt established practices by then.[63] Moreover, there were further ways in which Holy Blood (of other kinds) was linked to discipline within the town. Punitive pilgrimages were sometimes imposed by the town or by guilds on malefactors: Wilsnack – famous after 1383 for its miraculous bleeding Hosts – was often chosen as the place of destination in the fifteenth century.[64]

The close identification of municipal rule with the Holy Blood was made visible on 3 May by the proximity of the town magistracy to the relic during the procession. Damhouder's description of magistrates

[61] See above, pp. 30–1.

[62] SAB, 157, *Civiele sententïen vierschaar*, fos. 44r–v, 60v, 62r, 106v.

[63] For other earlier examples, see below, pp. 177, 221.

[64] Wilsnack seems to have displaced Compostela as the favoured destination for long-distance punishment. For examples concerning the chandlers (1432), carpenters (1457) and tanners (1463), see RAB (FA, BN), 8127, 8185, 8205; for corn-measurers (1455), see SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A, fo. 323v); for goldsmiths (1455 and 1462) and bowmakers (1465), see RAB (FA), 64; SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenbouc onghecottert*), fos. 132r, 190v–191r. For expiatory pilgrimages in Flanders, see E. van Cauwenbergh, *Les Pèlerinages expiatoires et judiciaires dans le droit communal de la Belgique au moyen âge* (Leuven, 1922); J.-F. Maillot, 'Note sur la pratique du rachat des pèlerinages imposés à Lille', *Revue du nord* 359 (2005), 67–87, esp. p. 83 (where Wilsnack does not figure among the top destinations). On Wilsnack, see C. Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia, 2007), pp. 25–9 and *passim*.

processing closer to the relic than craft guildsmen is doubtless a practice of earlier origin. So too is his reference to the presence of the Holy Blood fraternity. This was a highly exclusive group, its membership drawn from the magistracy: its possible foundation near the beginning of the fifteenth century, at much the same time that civic expenditure on the procession was increasing, replicated and strengthened the town council's association with the relic.[65]

Holy Blood day also allowed the town government to legislate on the behaviour of citizens. The management of the procession provided opportunities to reaffirm municipal authority. The town hall decrees (*hallegeboden*) concerning Holy Blood day (extant from 1491), may give some indication of earlier practice, since they are so formulaic.[66] Most of them were practical: streets along the processional route were to be cleared of any obstruction; care was to be taken by torch-carriers. Occasionally, citizens were reminded to act in a more orderly fashion: there was to be no pushing or shoving among bystanders. Proper behaviour was required of guildsmen: all were to attend the procession in the correct order when required by their deans, or face imprisonment.

The positioning of guilds – and clergy – on Holy Blood day, and thus the hierarchy of different urban groups, was also a matter decided by the town council. The earliest reference to municipal decision on the processional order appears in 1421 (see Appendix 1), but it was presumably again of earlier origin. The order of fifty-five crafts shows them arranged in the same groups that voted representatives onto the two benches of town magistrates, according to the arrangements in place by 1361. The processional order thus made the civic 'constitution' visible but in a more sacred setting. The symbolic importance attached to this constitution, which remained unaltered throughout the later Middle Ages (even if not strictly followed), may explain why the order of crafts in the Holy Blood procession changed so very little. The 1421 order is replicated in 1443, and is almost identical to the order described by Damhouder in the sixteenth century.[67]

[65] See below, pp. 167, 177.

[66] SAB, 120, *Hallegeboden*, i, 1491–9, fos. 56v–57v (1491). The wording there is replicated almost verbatim in subsequent years.

[67] Damhouder's description shows some tinkering with the order, and the presence of other smaller guilds absent in the order set down in 1421 and 1443, but earlier evidence shows that apprentices or crafts under the jurisdiction of one or other of the fifty-five main guilds were already contributing to the procession. For instance, the second-hand shoe-dealers (*scoeboeters*), who were under the cordwainers, were required under rules of 1452–3 to provide four torches on Holy Blood day (*ibid.*, 96, 14 (*Nieuwe Groenenbouc*), fos. 49v–50v). See below for other examples.

Holy Blood day also came at a cost to craft guilds. The occasional reference to civic subsidy of guild performances of plays on the day suggests that this was an expense usually met by the guilds themselves.[68] Regulation or enforcement by the magistracy of these costs provided further opportunities to assert municipal authority over craft guilds. The contribution that each guild member had to pay to their guilds for Holy Blood day was recorded in civic cartularies. In 1467 the barber-surgeons, for instance, were given permission to levy six groats on every guild master whether he attended the guild meal on Holy Blood day or not.[69] Moreover, several guilds in the 1460s requested the town council's permission to increase levies on their members, partly on the grounds of the 'increasing costs' of Holy Blood day.[70] Perhaps overall expenditure on the procession was rising in this period, despite the apparent impression to be gained from the civic accounts that costs were static. If so, it suggests an ability on the part of the civic magistrates to pass the burden of rising expense on to the guilds.

Holy Blood day was thus associated with the – perhaps tightening – assertion of municipal authority over other groups within the town. Given evidence for a growing concentration of municipal office-holding in fewer hands, one might also conclude that the Holy Blood was subject to increasingly oligarchic control. Up to a point, the conclusion is valid, but it is slightly misleading. The 'oligarchy' that ran Bruges was itself riven by faction on many occasions. There was no straightforward opposition between guilds and municipal government – which in any case included many brokers and other guild masters as serving members. Municipal government remained representative up to a point; rebellions in the fifteenth century would show that guild masters could ignore apprentices and journeymen only at their peril. The civic constitution – and thus the processional order on Holy Blood day – had been the result of compromise between different interest groups. As the following will show, the case for presenting the Holy Blood procession as a vehicle for narrow oligarchic control or even as a tool of municipal authority is somewhat equivocal.

[68] As in 1457: see above, n. 60. A payment in 1446 for *stomme personagen* was just for the 'best' ones put on (*ibid*., 216, 1445/6, fo. 64v).

[69] *Ibid*., 96, 14 (*Nieuwe Groenenbouc*), fo. 222v. See also similar rules imposed on the bowyers in 1467 (*ibid*., fos. 209v–210r).

[70] Namely the coopers, 1461 (*ibid*., 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 231v); market-gardeners, 1462 (*ibid*., 96, 14 (*Nieuwe Groenenbouc*), fos. 126r–127r); glovers, 1464 (*ibid*., fo. 177v); tapestry-weavers, basket-makers and coffer-makers, 1465 (*ibid*., fos. 182r–v); image-makers and saddlers, 1466 (*ibid*., fo. 209v); barber-surgeons, 1467 (*ibid*., fo. 222v); carpenters, 1467 (*ibid*., fo. 231r); and cordwainers, 1469 (*ibid*., fos. 245v–6r).

## Civic disorder

### *Guilds*

Serious rebellion engulfed Bruges four times in the fifteenth century. It was usually accompanied by wholesale replacement of the two benches of civic magistrates, allowing guilds and more radical elements in the town a greater voice. Change of regime, however, had little effect on the celebration of the Holy Blood. The procession in 1437 followed a *wapening* of the guilds, which prompted the *schout* and many notable citizens to flee.[71] Perhaps the procession that year was not conducted with quite the same pomp. Expenditure on presents of wine and on the civic lunch for magistrates and clerics was less than in previous years.[72] But most items of expense remained the same, and the chronicler tells us that the place of the *schout* in the procession was taken by another prominent citizen, the 'forester', while other citizens rode with him 'to the honour of the Holy Blood'.[73]

A similar pattern appears during the upheavals of 1488. Notwithstanding the sudden change in magistrates on 12 February 1488, as well as the executions and guild parades that took place over the following three months, payments from the civic treasury towards the procession in May were almost exactly the same as in previous years – except for the addition of payments for twelve 'poor men' to carry a burning torch each during the procession around the town, and a reduction in the amount spent on the official lunch.[74] Perhaps this was an area of expenditure that was most closely identified with sectional interest, or most likely to arouse controversy. Perhaps there were simply fewer mouths to feed: given the threat of war, prelates from outside the town would not have ventured to Bruges in their usual large numbers.[75] Even so, the more radicalised town council in 1488 clearly wished the procession to continue: despite the danger of opening the town gates posed by the presence of Maximilian's soldiers camped outside at the

[71] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 294v.

[72] SAB, 216, 1436–8, fos. 119r–v. The subsidy to the painters for their work on the plays was also not paid. Regular, though not annual, subsidy for this was restored only in 1444 when 'repairs' were made to the plays (*ibid.*, 1443/4, fo. 61v).

[73] The 'forester' (Loys Metteneye in 1437) was the leader of the White Bear jousters (see below, pp. 139, 141–2).

[74] The costs of the meal had risen in the 1480s to over £11 (in 1486 and 1487) but only £5 8d was spent in 1488 (*ibid.*, 216, 1487/8, fo. 133v), returning to larger payments in the following years.

[75] The gifts of wine to prelates on 3 May list the suffragan bishop as the only non-local prelate in attendance that year (*ibid.*, 277 (*Presentwijnen*), 1488, fo. 13r).

beginning of May, the clerics made their tour around the walls.[76] No doubt continuation of a traditional and sacred event added legitimacy to the new regime's assumption of power.[77] Such continuity also suggests that the procession was not an event identified per se as the tool of narrow oligarchy.

The regularity of civic payments to the procession throughout the fifteenth century, in years of peace as well as upheaval, indicates a broader consensus among wealthy merchants and guildsmen about the organisation of Holy Blood day. But consensus was perhaps not always reached without friction. Guildsmen had not always been able to assert their presence as they might have wished. Jan van Dixmude records that Duke Philip the Bold (perhaps in 1385) had deprived the guilds of their right to carry torches in the procession and to process grouped as guilds. 'For many years' the town council had grouped citizens on Holy Blood day under their *zestendeel*.[78] The restoration of these rights under Duke John was evidently a matter of pride. For the fifty-five guilds, the Holy Blood procession was an occasion to demonstrate their prestige.

Tensions of this kind concerning arrangements on Holy Blood day were rare. There were in any case many areas in which the interests of municipal authorities, merchants and guildsmen were similar. Certain disputes surrounding Holy Blood day indicate areas of mutual economic benefit. The commercial domination that Bruges had sought to exercise over the port of Sluis since at least the early fourteenth century

[76] Gifts of wine to relic-carriers between the gates are recorded (*ibid*., fos. 30v–31r). Yet just a few days later, on 12 May, the town magistrates asked St Donatian's not to conduct Rogation processions to station churches outside the town: the threat posed by the enemy soldiers meant that the gates would have to be closed (BAB, A56, fos. 156v–157r; and see below, p. 127).

[77] For the deliberately traditional way in which the civic magistracy was elected in early February 1488, see J. van Leeuwen, 'Balancing Tradition and Rites of Rebellion: The Ritual Transfer of Power in Bruges on 12 February 1488', in J. van Leeuwen (ed.), *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns* (Leuven, 2006), pp. 65–81.

[78] Jan van Dixmude records this restoration of privileges while mentioning the concessions Duke John made in 1411, but does not date Duke Philip's original deprivation. This may have occurred in 1385: in that year the civic accounts record payments for 120 torches carried before the 6 'headmen' of the *zestendeelen*. The restoration of these privileges may have occurred in 1407, when the accounts unusually itemised payments for guild torches on Holy Blood day (see Appendix 1). On 24 April that year Duke John had a new pro-ducal bench of magistrates sworn in and demanded one-seventh of town revenues instead of the usual annual tax. The guilds were forbidden to raise their banners in revolt, but they were permitted to have their banners – and perhaps their Holy Blood torches. There is no further reference to these payments in the civic accounts: the expense may have devolved upon the guilds themselves. Van Dixmude, *Chronicke*, p. 293; and, for the events of 1407, GVS, Vol. IV, pp. 14–16; J. Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand van 1436–1438* (Kortrijk, 1997), pp. 135–6.

suited guilds and merchants alike. Tension between the two towns had become particularly acute in the 1420s.[79] Holy Blood day could be used as an occasion to demonstrate Bruges' claims to superiority. In 1423, the barber-surgeons of Bruges appealed to their town authorities and then the ducal court to assert their prestige over the barber-surgeons in Sluis. The latter had not been paying what the Bruges guild claimed was owed to them – half the money paid by masters and apprentices on entry to the Sluis guild. The Bruges barber-surgeons won a ruling in their favour, which included the stipulation that four jugs of the best wine were to be presented to them by the Sluis guild on Holy Blood day.[80] Admittedly, gift-giving was a way of welcoming outsiders into civic festivity; festive cooperation with neighbouring small towns served the commercial interests of Bruges. Nevertheless, it was also a symbolic way to establish precedence and hierarchy. Payment in kind to the Bruges barber-surgeons in 1423 was also stated to be in compensation for 'lost arrears'; and it is from this period that we find other Bruges crafts similarly requiring their counterparts in Sluis to hand over gifts of wine on Holy Blood day.[81]

The interests of town magistrates and guild masters could be closely identified in other ways. The contributions of guildsmen and apprentices on Holy Blood day were enforced by guild and civic authorities. In 1379 the governors of the brokers' guild were permitted by the town council to require their apprentices to contribute towards the cost of the fourteen candles carried in the procession.[82] In 1408 the town magistrates agreed with the governors of the belt-makers and pin-makers that their apprentices should contribute towards the two guild torches for Holy Blood day.[83] In 1464, the dean of the brokers' guild brought one Jan Meillewaert before the town council because he had refused to carry the guild torch, claiming exemption on the grounds that he

[79] See Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand*, pp. 89–98.

[80] RAB, BN, 8120, 8121 (published in J. M. Murray, *Notarial Instruments in Flanders between 1280–1452* (Brussels, 1995), pp. 304–5). The ruling proved difficult to enforce: the Bruges barber-surgeons had to take their case before the *parlement* of Paris in 1459 when the Sluis guild refused payments (*ibid.*, 8201; SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenbouc onghecottert*), fo. 97r).

[81] The chandlers in 1424 (and again in 1459), the weavers in 1456, the coopers in 1458 (RAB, BN, 8122, 8133, 8194; SAB, 336, *Kuipers*, *inschrijvingsregister*, fo. 94v). The chandlers continued to have trouble with their counterparts in Sluis: in 1483 the Bruges *schepenen* ordered the latter to offer Rhenish wine rather than coin on Holy Blood day (O. Delepierre, *Précis analytique des documents que renferme le depot des archives de la Flandre-Occidentale à Bruges*, 10 vols. (Bruges, 1840), Vol. I, pp. 133–4). See also Dumolyn, *Brugse opstand*, p. 94.

[82] SAB, 299, *Makelaars: Cartularium*, fo. 21v.

[83] *Ibid.*, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 48v–49v.

was a servant of the lord of Etampes (and presumably outside guild authority).[84] In 1467 the magistracy upheld the tapestry-weavers' complaint against one Cornelius and his trumpeters who had refused to play in front of them on Holy Blood day. The reluctant musicians were compelled to perform.[85] Holy Blood day was an opportunity for guild masters, with municipal backing, to assert their own jurisdiction over other guildsmen and their apprentices.

There were disputes on Holy Blood day when the fault line of contention occurred not within particular guilds but between them. The order of the procession, with all participants allotted a certain place, meant that guild prestige within the civic hierarchy was at stake. Squabbles could break out, requiring arbitration by the civic authorities. On 28 May 1378, a quarrel between the guild of brokers and the workers' associations (*neeringen*) assigned to the *markt* over which of them was to precede the other in the processional order, had to be settled by the aldermen and also the 'great council' of the town.[86] A compromise was worked out: on the way out, the associations were to process in front of the brokers, who were to stand nearest to the representatives of the town council; on the way back, guild and associations were to switch places.

Dispute in 1446 between the governors of the tilers' guild and those of the plumbers and plasterers presented a more ticklish problem, because these three guilds were grouped with four others on Holy Blood day (see Appendix 1).[87] The town council's solution on 27 April required some ingenuity, taking into account the sensitivities of all seven guilds. First it decreed that the plumbers and plasterers were to go to the house of their dean, then to the house of the masons' dean and then on together to their accustomed station for the procession. The order of the guilds was to be as follows: the chaplains of the carpenters and the masons were to stand in the first row; the deans of the carpenters, masons and tilers in the next row; the officers of the same three crafts in the next; behind them, the deans of the plumbers, plasterers, thatchers and sawyers; then the officers of these four crafts in a row at the rear.

[84] *Ibid.*, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenbouc onghecottert*), fos. 167r–167v. John of Burgundy (1415–91) was lord of Etampes and Nevers, and was frequently resident in Bruges during this period.

[85] *Ibid.*, fo. 222v. In 1500 the city government upheld the case of the doublet-makers' (*kulkstikkers*) guild against six 'free' doublet-makers, who would not pay the four groats due from guild members to pay for the trumpets and other services on Holy Blood day on the grounds that they were members of the tailors' guild (RAB, BN), 8847).

[86] SAB, 96, 4 (*Ouden wittenbouc*), fo. 141r.

[87] *Ibid.*, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 297r–v.

The occurrence and resolution of all such disputes reveal the presence of many agendas surrounding Holy Blood day, some compatible, some in tension with each other. In general, the procession and conflicts surrounding it tended towards the promotion of town-council authority over guilds. But to claim that it was merely a vehicle to assert oligarchical rule is to overstate the case. After all, its very beginnings had involved the participation of craft guilds. The way in which public expenditure on the procession increased at various points in the fourteenth century may reflect the reassertions of compromise, in changing economic conditions, between 'patricians' and wider guild interests in pursuit of the common goal of social order. Arrangements for Holy Blood day were more a matter of compromise between town magistrates and guilds rather than the imposition of control by the one over the other. Ultimate authority in the town was not always vested in a narrow group of civic office-holders, as some of the disputes indicated: the quarrel between the brokers and the workers' associations on the *markt* had to be resolved by a meeting of the 'great council'.

Guilds also pursued their own agenda. When they appealed to the *schepenen* to arbitrate, it was to further their own sectional interests. If guild governors wished to correct their wayward members, it was useful to appeal to a higher civic authority. Perhaps the burdens of Holy Blood day on guilds were increasing, but guild complaint at this in the 1460s was also a means to justify an increase in fees that guild masters required for their own reasons. If the authority of the civic magistrates was increased by virtue of their management of Holy Blood day, it was partly because it suited the purposes of other interest groups.

### *Clergy*

There were other agenda at work on Holy Blood day besides those of guilds. The procession was not just an arrangement made between laymen, but a liturgical event that involved clerics. It is worth returning briefly to the beginnings of the procession: it had after all required the official blessing of the bishop of Tournai. Moreover, within the town, local clergy played a part in the procession, and, like the guilds, churches and colleges at an early date were probably ranked in a way that marked out an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Civic management of Holy Blood day was also an assertion of municipal over clerical authority. Episcopal jurisdiction over the relic had already slipped into civic hands by the fourteenth century.[88] The Holy

[88] See above, p. 9.

Blood procession had required episcopal blessing, but in some ways the official beginnings of the event also marked an assertion of ecclesiastical independence from Tournai. In the early fourteenth century, the civic authorities of Bruges still made occasional payments for an official delegation to attend the Our Lady procession in Tournai on 14 September. As Bruges' own procession grew, so civic payments for this delegation disappeared. The last of these payments occurs in 1320.[89]

The bishop presided over a public translation of the relic into a new crystal cylinder in 1332.[90] But on a later occasion, the authenticity of the relic was confirmed in circumstances that defied the jurisdiction of Tournai. The presence of the bishop of Ancona in Bruges in 1388 during the papal schism, as we saw, was an assertion of Roman papal authority against the bishop of Tournai's adherence to Avignon. On 29 April the bishop of Ancona presided over the translation of the relic into a new reliquary of gold and crystal. A forty-day indulgence was promised to those who attended the chapel on the feast of Holy Cross or during the following fourteen days.[91]

The expansion of public funding of the procession during the fourteenth century in some ways extended municipal control over the town's clergy. More began to be required of ecclesiastical resources: more bell-ringing, liturgical celebration and, from the 1350s, processions by the town's clerics on fifteen days following 3 May. The ranking of the town's churches was partly a matter decided by the town council. The decree of 1421 set down a hierarchy for both guilds and clergy to follow.

However, the assertion of lay over clerical authority was not unlimited. Clerical agendas could also be served on Holy Blood day. The defiance of the bishop of Tournai's authority in 1388, for instance, did not entirely serve civic ends. The bishop of Ancona had other causes to champion. He had been sent to drum up support for the Roman obedience (and in 1390 he was to be found in Ghent, pronouncing king and count eternally damned for opposition to the true pope). His indulgence for the relic in 1388 was similarly charged with political meaning. The bishop proclaimed the relic to be a 'treasure of Flanders': God himself had endowed the county with the relic so that it 'should never dream of separating itself from the unity of the Roman church'. Although considered a symbol of civic liberties, the Holy Blood was not immune from ecclesiastical pressures.

[89] SAB, 216, 1306, fo. 30r; 1309, fo. 54v; 1311/12, fo. 21v; 1319/20, fo. 54r.
[90] Gailliard, *Recherches*, p. 60 and n. 24.
[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 60–2, 229–31.

Little suggests that the influence of the bishop of Tournai over the procession was at all significant in the fifteenth century.[92] Of greater weight were the concerns of other clergy within and even outside Bruges. These surfaced, much as they did in the case of guilds, when disputes arose over arrangements for the procession. Like craft guilds, the clergy lined up in a set order;[93] and it also appears that all took turns in relay to carry the relic. Quarrels occurred over the details in such matters: three such instances are recorded in the early sixteenth century.

In 1520 the abbot of Zonnebeke (outside the town) inquired of the town council about its position in relation to other clerics during the procession – particularly with respect to the Eekhout abbot (within Bruges). From a register kept in the town *greffe* (chancellery) it transpired that on five occasions, dating back to 1447, the Zonnebeke abbot had been twinned with another cleric and placed in front of the station occupied by the Eekhout abbot.[94] In this instance, the inquiry may not have generated much conflict. Perhaps some flexibility was possible: it seems that the ordering of clerics was not entirely rigid. The same register apparently revealed that the Zonnebeke abbot had not always been twinned with the same cleric and had not always occupied the same place in the procession.[95]

From another source – accounts of civic gifts of wine in the mid 1480s – we also learn that the order could vary slightly. The relic's transport through and around the town involved some complicated juggling between clerical hands.[96] The canons of St Donatian and the brothers of the Eekhout abbey took their turn at an early stage of the processional route. In 1486, for instance, the dean of St Donatian's and the Eekhout abbot were twinned to carry the relic down the *Steenstraat* from the church-house of St Saviour's to the bridge at the entrance to the Friday market; two other canons took over for the route down to St Julian's and the Boeverie gate; once outside the city, further change-overs involving

[92] The bishop occasionally appeared as a processor in the procession.

[93] The town council listed the order of clergy in 1421 and *c.* 1443 to be as follows: Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinians, Dominicans, Ter Doest abbey, Carthusians, Eekhout abbey, St Saviour's, Our Lady's and St Donatian's (for references see Appendix 1).

[94] Bruges, Grootseminarie, Zonnebeke, charters 202bis (cf. digitised image: www.kuleuven-kortrijk.be/doza; last accessed 20 July 2010).

[95] The position of the Zonnebeke abbot varied between sixth place in 1477 (when he was twinned with the abbot of St Nicholas near Veurne) and third place in 1511 (when he was twinned with the Eekhout abbot). Neither of these abbeys was listed in the line-up of clergy in 1421 or *c.* 1443 (see n. 93 above): it may be that the number of participating clergy had increased by the late fifteenth century.

[96] SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1484/5, fos. 30r–31r. Earlier surviving accounts are not specific about the tasks of particular clerics in the Holy Blood procession.

different members of the town's clergy occurred at all the other town gates, seven in all, to ensure a wide share in the honour of carrying the relic.[97]

These arrangements were not quite the same every year.[98] But while in general a degree of flexibility in the clerical order may have reduced the potential for conflict over precedence, on occasion the same flexibility gave rise to fractious uncertainty. Hierarchy mattered to clerics. In 1500 the Eekhout brothers and the St Donatian canons came to blows over their rights. On 6 May that year, the canons complained that the abbot had attempted to 'upset and impede' their 'ancient' privileges concerning the carrying of the relic three days before.[99] The case came before the council of Flanders in 1504. The canons claimed that Clais van Hende from the abbey had come to the church-house of St Saviour's on that 3 May and had tried by force to pull the reliquary from the hands of the eldest canon, causing a great disturbance. The abbot told a different story. He claimed that the town magistrates had ordered him to come to the 'Crone' inn in the *Steenstraat* and, together with the dean of St Donatian's, to carry the relic from there to the church-house of St Saviour's. At this point the Eekhout abbot was to hand over to the prior, and the dean to another canon. Instead the prior's place had been taken forcibly by another canon of St Donatian's who had shoved the prior so violently that he had fallen to the ground. The insignia on his hat had been dislodged. His neck had collected a bloody mark, which was still visible eight days later.[100]

Confrontation between the two clerical institutions on Holy Blood day recurred in 1508. According to St Donatian's chapter act-book, great 'confusion' was caused and 'insolence' committed by the Eekhout abbot. On this occasion, the abbey made haste to settle the situation. Within five days, the abbey's receiver appeared before the dean and chapter to convey the abbot's sadness at what had happened and his humble wish 'with all his heart' to make amends. It appears that another of the abbey's brothers had committed this 'insolence' outside St Katherine's gate on Holy Blood day: another squabble over carrying the relic had perhaps occurred.[101]

97 *Ibid.*, 1485/6, fo. 49r.

98 In 1485, the dean and cantor of St Donatian's carried the relic between the *hospice cerni* and the cemetery of St Saviour's, while the Eekhout prior is not mentioned (nor is he in 1488). In 1486 and 1489 it was the dean of St Donatian's with the Eekhout prior who carried the relic, but further down the *Steenstraat* between the cemetery of St Saviour's and the entrance to the *Vrijdagmarkt* (*ibid.*, 1484/5, fo. 30r; 1485/6, fo. 49r; 1488, fo. 13r; 1488/9, fo. 27v).

99 BAB, A57, fos. 144v.

100 SAB, 96, 13 (*Groenenboec* C), fos. 317v–319r; BAB, I12; A57, fo. 225v. Despite the vividness of the abbot's version, the council of Flanders found for the canons.

101 BAB, A58, fos. 44v–45r.

The significance of these disputes can be read in several ways. On the one hand, the case in 1500 demonstrates that the overall management of the Holy Blood procession lay in civic hands to which clerical bodies had to submit. The Eekhout abbey claimed to have received orders from the town magistrates about the hand-over of the relic, claiming further that a civic ordinance had pronounced on the carrying of the relic in 1499. But in June 1501, the town council announced that this ordinance had not existed. They decided that every year on 3 May a schedule should be placed on the counter in the civic chambers, which presumably was to set down what the order of the relic-carriers should be. It might have given the town government some satisfaction to state that this procedure would prevent future 'scandals and dangers' that might occur because of 'the carelessness of clerics'.[102]

On the other hand, Holy Blood day was clearly an occasion in which clerical bodies asserted their own agenda. Quarrels between the Eekhout abbey and St Donatian's had a long history. Both claimed a special place within the town, the abbot asserting a right to wear a bishop's mitre, the dean claiming authority over all other clergy within the town. In 1447, the dean and chapter had already sent a deputation to the town chambers to inquire whether or not the Eekhout abbot should carry the relic on 3 May before the canons of St Donatian did.[103] Closest to the Holy Blood on 3 May, closer than the ranks of civic officials, occupying the most prestigious place in the procession, were the clergy who actually carried the relic. For the canons or the brothers, Holy Blood day was not so much about the expression of civic community as of their own assertion of precedence over other clerical bodies within the town.

The Holy Blood procession brought together a large number of different interest groups within the town, and thus a variety of agenda. These did not further oligarchical or even municipal power unambiguously. However, whether this implies that such processions were more divisive than binding of the civic 'community' is open to doubt. Much has been made of the squabbles over hierarchy that processions could cause.[104] In Bruges there were probably more disputes than surviving evidence suggests – certainly ones between guilds continued into the

102 BAB, A57, fos. 165r, 167v.

103 BAB, A51, fo. 176v. The canons also inquired about the rewards of wine due from the town on Holy Blood day. The council's answers to these questions are not recorded. Conflict over the same issue continued into the sixteenth century: in 1539 another reference is made to the abbot's rights of precedence (Bruges, Grootseminarie, Fonds Eeckhout, charters n3E, n4E).

104 See above, pp. 25–6.

sixteenth century.[105] But solutions to these disputes suggest that delicate tinkering with the processional order was possible. The quarrel between brokers and guilds on the *markt* in 1378 was not resolved by a blunt ruling on who was to precede whom. The compromise allowed each group precedence over the other during the procession. The processional order set down in 1421 also indicated that the order of the craft guilds was to be reversed on the relic's return through the Boeverie gate. Honour regarding position in the civic hierarchy could be satisfied without switching the position of guilds. The processional order was flexible rather than entirely rigid, and could accommodate change. Emphasis on the risk to peace inherent in open display of hierarchy should not be exaggerated.

Historians have rightly drawn attention to other kinds of risk on processional occasions. The presence of so many people packed into public spaces in the Holy Blood procession created its own problems of disorder. On 3 May 1461, a cooper, Jan Mathijs, had been going with members of his craft in procession, when he had spoken several 'rude and injurious words' to one of his colleagues 'without cause': 'great danger' might have resulted if other craft members had not come between them.[106] Social disorder on such a day was to be feared, and its perpetrators needed to be punished as example to others. But the point should not be taken too far. These cases are few. That civic governments persisted, without interruption, in organising the procession suggests that civil disturbance on Holy Blood day was never perceived as likely, and that benefits to public order were thought far more likely to outweigh the potential risk. The threat of disorder was latent but rarely actual.

## Civic identity

From its very beginnings, Holy Blood day was invariably caught up in secular concerns and occasionally courted controversy. It was a festive event for the civic 'community': guild breakfasts, municipal lunches, perhaps the potential for inebriation (so fatal in 1382) marked

[105] In 1533 a dispute occurred involving some of the same guilds who had squabbled in 1446. The carpenters claimed that 'for a time so long and ancient that no one thinks to the contrary' the seventeen 'crafts' (*neeringen*), among them the coopers, were required to present themselves on Holy Blood day at the carpenters' chapel in the Franciscan friary and then follow them in procession. The coopers on this occasion had failed to do this. For their part, the coopers claimed that they had simply arrived late. Even so they demanded that the carpenters should justify their right. The *schepenen* accepted the coopers' excuse, but ordered them to conform to the custom outlined by the carpenters (RAB, BN, 8318).

[106] AGR, RK, 13777, fo. 81r. The case came before the court of the *schout*.

the occasion. But it was also a sacred and liturgical event. It was centred around the carrying of the Holy Blood relic; and it was conducted according to liturgical precedents. Town authorities, guildsmen and clerics might seek to impose their own agendas, but there was a theological and liturgical framework within which they operated. What the procession might have said about, or did to, a sense of 'community' in Bruges was partly determined by its sacred meanings. These, however, are hard to pin down.

What the Holy Blood relic itself meant to citizens is not easy to discern. On the one hand, blood relics were among the most controversial in the fifteenth century. To theological unease long expressed about the presence of any remains of Christ's body on earth were added the vitriolic voices of certain clerics, following the discovery of the bleeding Hosts at Wilsnack in 1383, against the promotion of any kind of blood relic. Moreover, the controversies reveal that meanings attached to Christ's Blood were multiple and even contradictory.[107] The implications of this seem to undermine any assumption that a procession with Holy Blood at its centre could act as a force for unity: a relic charged with such controversy and multivalency would hardly seem to make an ideal focus for a sense of civic identity, or a stable centre around which a civic hierarchy might be ordered.[108] If the Body of Christ, carried on Corpus Christi processions, did not always lend itself to meanings of binding and unity, the Blood that flowed from his side was even more susceptible to a sense of diffusion, corruption and loss.

On the other hand, the controversies that raged in some quarters do not leave much trace in Bruges itself. The relic had long been reputed to work miracles, according to the papal bull of 1310 (though details of these go unrecorded); and there are specific miracles reported in chronicles from 1470.[109] Admittedly these are few in number. Were reports of them at this date the reactionary result of questions concerning the validity of such relics, or alternatively of local competition from other wonder-working images?[110] Does the paucity of surviving miracle stories suggest doubts about the thaumaturgic properties of the relic, or even that these were considered compromised by too close an association with Bruges and its civic government? In contrast to many other shrines in the region, the Holy Blood of Bruges was not one to which

[107] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, *passim*.
[108] For emphasis on this point see M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. pp. 267, 270.
[109] See AHB, 'Kort verhael van het dierbaer Heilig Bloed …' (1641).
[110] For the upsurge in devotion surrounding the image of Our Lady of the Snow in Bruges following a miracle in 1464, see below, pp. 159–60.

secular or ecclesiastical authorities elsewhere dispatched miscreants on penitential journeys.

Even so, the continuation of miracles into the late medieval period is a mark of belief in the Holy Blood's validity; and the fact that civic authorities in Bruges persisted in sending some of their criminals on pilgrimage to Wilsnack suggests that the controversies generated by this shrine went unregarded. Perhaps the miracle at Wilsnack in 1383 induced miraculous occurrences from the Bruges Holy Blood relic. Fresh drops of blood were visible within the phial containing the relic, according to the indulgence granted in 1388. The confusion over meanings of Holy Blood were perhaps also of little concern. Specific references to these in Bruges are few but are not troubled by the possibility of multiple and contradictory meaning. To the bishop of Ancona in 1388, the appearance of drops of blood was simply demonstrative of the redemption promised through Christ. One of the processional hymns sung during the procession (as we shall see) focuses on the 'sweetness' of Christ's blood. Jacob Obrecht's motet *O preciossime sanguis*, possibly composed for use on the procession itself, also proclaims the blood's salvific powers.[111] As a symbol of healing and salvation, the Holy Blood in Bruges perhaps remained an appropriate and uncontentious focus for unity. As we shall see, it was the relics of certain saints carried in procession that were much more likely to cause contention in Bruges.[112]

In any case, a symbol with multiple associations could even act as an agent of unity. The procession was not an occasion in which the possible meanings of the relic were debated. Just as many different groups in Bruges could process together usually without conflict despite competing agendas, so they might equally process in harmony despite differing views on the meaning of Holy Blood. A symbol with many potential meanings was perhaps inherently better equipped to bring together a complex and divided community than one whose meaning was too narrow and easily fixed.

The relic itself was only one of the sources on which interpretations of the procession might draw. The procession was also a liturgical event, labouring under a heavy baggage of ecclesiastical tradition. A processional for Holy Blood day that survives from the early sixteenth century describes antiphons, hymns and responses that the processors

[111] R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), p. 145. And see the prayer in a mid-fifteenth-century 'prayer-book' from Bruges: 'O zoete jesus ic biddu bi den vierighen bloede dat vloyde ut uwer ziden dat ghi mine herte onsteict' (Bruges, Grootseminarie, *Handschriften*, 72/125, fos. 94v–95r).

[112] See Chapter 2 for controversy surrounding St Donatian's body.

were required to sing at various points along the route.[113] It refers to two processions, one of them from St Basil's chapel to St Julian's hospital and back – probably the smaller procession conducted early on 3 May by the beguines (with whom the processional is associated).[114] The second procession, which carried the relic outside the town walls, paused at each of the seven gates before re-entering the town at the gate from which it had emerged. Where the procession went and what was sung offers clues about what effects the processors intended.

Holy Blood day was celebrated on 3 May, the feast day of the Invention of the Holy Cross, commemorating the Emperor Heraclius' recovery of the True Cross.[115] Citizens were clearly aware of this: in the Entry ceremony laid on for the young Prince Charles in 1515, the third tableau twinned the scene of Heraclius and the Cross with one of Thierry of Alsace and the Holy Blood. In liturgical terms it had come to commemorate the final victory of Christ over death, and the promise of salvation to all mankind. As one of the most influential liturgists, Durandus, had put it in his Divine Offices (*c.* 1180): at the end of the cross is glory, which was why it was appropriate on the day to sing *O crux splendidor.*[116] Holy Cross day had certainly been celebrated as an important feast day in Bruges churches: it had attracted endowments from individuals in the thirteenth century (perhaps earlier) to enhance its celebration.[117] The Holy Blood procession preserved some of the liturgical requirements and thus meanings of Holy Cross day:[118] de Damhouder describes the large number of crosses carried; the antiphon *O crux gloriosa* was sung when the processors approached the Holy Cross gate.[119]

Durandus and other early liturgists, however, had not made a procession a requirement on Holy Cross day. Processions had a number of other liturgical precedents. John Beleth (*c.* 1160) had distinguished

[113] AHB, Register 15, Processional, fos. 1r–39v. See A. Arnould, 'De *handschriften* in het museum van het Heilig-Bloed', in A. Arnould, *Het Heilig Bloed te Brugge* (Bruges, 1990), pp. 79–90.

[114] One of the antiphons in the processional was sung in honour of St Elisabeth, the patron saint of the Bruges beguines (AHB, Register 15, Processional, fos. 23v, 25v).

[115] See below, p. 69.

[116] Guillelmus Durandus, *Guillelmi Duranti rationale divinorum officiorum VII–VIII*, ed. A. Davril, T. M. Thibodeau and B.-G. Guyot (Turnhout, 2000), p. 50.

[117] BAB, A141, fo. 36r (St Donatian's); RAB, FD, 81, fo. 17r (St Saviour's); RAB, OLV, Register 735, fo. 72r (Our Lady's).

[118] Contemporary commentary on the procession of Our Lady of Tournai (held on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – 14 September – and twinned with Holy Cross day on 3 May) explains the feast as recalling Christ coming out of Jerusalem, carrying the Cross on his shoulder for the salvation of the world: J. Dumoulin and J. Pycke (eds.), *La Grande Procession de Tournai (1090–1992)* (Tournai, 1992), pp. 29–30

[119] AHB, Register 15 (Processional), fo. 35v.

between three kinds of processional occasions.[120] 'Stations' were already important in the early Christian era when bishops processed to station churches to celebrate mass.[121] 'Litanies' were instituted to pray to God through his saints in times of danger. In the fifth and sixth centuries – so later tradition asserted – two kinds of litany, the Greater Litany (on St Mark's day) and the Lesser Litany or Rogations (three days before Ascension), had been instituted to elicit saintly protection against calamities such as plague or earthquake. Rogation – founded by Pope Gregory the Great in 590 at a time of plague – was of particular note. Performance of this litany in times of darkness might dispel gloom and allow the fruits of the earth to flourish.[122] The occasion could also demand the carrying of relics. Finally, there were what Beleth termed 'processions', those held regularly on Sundays, but also on special occasions like Palm Sunday.[123]

The Holy Blood procession evidently drew on all these liturgical precedents. Up to a point, it drew on the tradition of Rogations, and thus the sense of delivery from affliction. Some of the antiphons or psalms recorded in the Holy Blood processional were appropriate for Rogation: *Salvator mundi*, *Domine ne in furore tuo* and *Exurge Domine adjura*.[124] A sense of heavenly protection was no doubt encouraged by the relic's itinerary around the town walls; and as at Rogation, the processors left and re-entered the town. A penitential tone was perhaps strengthened by the singing of the other psalms and antiphons used on Ash Wednesday.[125] But the associations of Holy Blood day with Rogation should not be pressed too far. There were other occasions when the connection between rogational and penitential forms of procession were made much more deliberate (see Chapter 2). The festive

[120] Johannes Beleth, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. H. Douteil (Turnhout, 1976), 17–20, 165–7, 232–7. See further A. Löther, *Prozessionen in Spätmittelalterlichen Städten* (Cologne, 1999), esp. pp. 27–49.

[121] A mobile system of worship, with masses held at station churches, appears in towns from an early date: J. F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome, 1987), esp. Chapters 2–4.

[122] Beleth, *Summa*, 236; Guillelmus Durandus, *Guillelmi Duranti rationale divinorum officiorum V–VI*, ed. A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau (Turnhout, 1998), p. 499. For comment on Pope Gregory's litany see A. Vauchez, 'Liturgy and Folk Culture in the *Golden Legend*,' in A. Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. J. Scheider (Notre Dame, IN, 1993), pp. 129–39.

[123] Durandus, *Guillelmi Duranti V–VI*, pp. 28, 67, 88, 102, 104.

[124] AHB, Register 15 (Processional), fos. 11r, 30v, 37v. See T. Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (Toronto, 1971), p. 52.

[125] Namely *Domine ne in furore tuo* and *Beati quoniam remissae*, as well as *De profundis* and *Miserere* (which of course were intoned on other occasions, especially in praying for the dead): AHB, Register 15 (Processional), fos. 37r, 41r.

nature of the Holy Blood day, with its music and plays, was not intended to be particularly sombre. A more subdued form could be conducted in exceptional circumstances: in 1491, when the political situation was still unstable, with Maximilian's forces making pillaging forays in the town's vicinity, the Holy Blood was processed on 3 May 'al simpelick sonder trompetten'.[126] In any case, Rogation processions in Bruges took a different route from the one followed by the Holy Blood: on the three days of Rogation, the processors took a linear rather than enclosing and circular route, and stopped at station churches outside the town gates.[127]

The long tradition of Palm Sunday celebrations provided more obvious precedent for the Holy Blood. These had taken place in some towns from at least the eleventh century. At one level, they re-enacted Christ's entry into Jerusalem, which in itself prefigured the sorrow of his Passion as well as his eventual triumph over death. Liturgists had invested the re-enactment with other meanings. Christ's life in the New Testament had prefiguration in the Old: Beleth had found precedent for Christ's entry in the Old Testament, in the flight of the Jews into Jordan (Joshua 3:15–17). It also provided an exemplary precedent for Christians to follow. Durandus had enjoined imitation of the people of Israel who went out of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and re-entered with Christ. Patience was needed for the tribulation to follow, but celebration too for the promise of eternal life to come. Thirteenth-century evidence from other towns shows Palm Sunday celebrated with the Sacrament being carried out of the town gates, and back again to the sound of singing. The antiphons and hymns chosen for the Holy Blood procession were mostly not ones that were specifically appropriate for Palm Sunday,[128] but some of the plays staged during the event recall the relevant episodes in the life of Christ: his trial before King Herod, the Passion and perhaps his final entry into Jerusalem.

One further liturgical development may also have affected the form of the Holy Blood procession. Corpus Christi was instituted as a feast day in the diocese of Liège in 1264, receiving papal blessing as a universal feast in 1317. Between these years it became an important day in the Low Countries and elsewhere. Corpus Christi processions drawing

[126] With hostile forces threatening, the Bruges processors did not apparently wish to make the mistake they had made in 1382: the relic was carried outside to the Cross gate and then quickly brought in, to be carried along the ramparts inside the town walls (W. Vorsterman (ed.), *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen* (Antwerp, 1531), fo. 271v).

[127] See below, pp. 110–1, 126–7.

[128] The exception may be *Salvator mundi*, an antiphon that appears in some processionals for Palm Sunday.

from Palm Sunday precedent were established in the late thirteenth century, conducted with banners and reliquaries, and with clerical processors who carried the Eucharist out of the church, and around its perimeter and back, or out into the town to a station church.[129] From the late thirteenth century, these clerical processions appear in many places to have attracted municipal sponsorship.[130] During the same period the Holy Blood procession attracted similar civic attention, and acquired similar characteristics. Like the Host on Corpus Christi, the Holy Blood relic was also carried under a baldaquin (from 1312). But the symmetry between the two feasts is not exact.[131] Holy Blood day was not simply a substitute for Corpus Christi, which in Bruges was later to acquire its own specific civic celebrations.[132]

Holy Blood day borrowed from a rich repertoire of liturgical precedent, but in many ways it was also unique to Bruges. The Holy Blood processional brought together a collection of antiphons, canticles, hymns and responses, familiar in other processionals, but combined in a way not used elsewhere. Choice of these antiphons was partly decided by the sacred topography of the town. Some of them were appropriate for particular stations, addressing the patron saints or relics of Bruges' mother churches.[133] Words addressing the Holy Blood itself were intoned as the processors left St Basil's.[134] Many of the antiphons or hymns were familiar to local ears because they were used regularly on other occasions: eight of them were used in processions on other feast

[129] Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 244–5.

[130] Löther, *Prozessionen*, pp. 34–40, 56–80.

[131] The Holy Blood relic was of course held to be the actual blood of Christ (liquefying every Friday in commemoration of the Passion, according to the papal bull in 1310), while the consecrated bread was the body miraculously in 'essence'. Bynum emphasises other aspects of the asymmetry between Christ's body and blood: devotion to the blood of Christ was not simply an aspect of Eucharistic piety (*Wonderful Blood*, p. 12 and *passim*).

[132] See below, pp. 115, 127–8. The Marian antiphon *Ave regina celorum* was sung on both feast days in Bruges, but it was common on other days too. The principal ones sung on Corpus Christi day in Bruges were *O salutaris hostia* and *O sacrum convivium* (e.g. in St Donatian's and St Saviour's: BAB, A141, fo. 105v; RAB, FD, 81, fo. 37v). On 13 April 1480 the bishop of Tournai attended a Corpus Christi procession at St Saviour's in which these two antiphons were sung at the station point in the *markt*: BAB, A55, fo. 88r. They were not sung on Holy Blood day.

[133] *Miles Christi gloriosus, Basili sanctissime* was sung before St Basil's chapel, *Confessor Domini pater Donatione* before St Donatian's (which contained the body of the saint) and *Salvator mundi* before St Saviour's; *Boniface pater pie* was acknowledged when the processors passed close to Our Lady's, which contained the relic of St Boniface. *Regina celi* was sung before the image of Our Lady in a niche in the Belfry tower. Outside the Holy Cross gate, the processors sang *O crux gloriosa*; before St Katherine's gate, *Cum in sancta Katherina* … (AHB, Register 15, Processional, fos. 11r, 15r, 18r, 23r, 35v, 36v).

[134] *Dulcis sanguinis dulcissimus liquor* … (*ibid.* fos. 17r–v).

days within the churches of Bruges, and received special endowment by individual citizens during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[135] On Holy Blood day the sacred resources of the town's churches – saints, relics and liturgical arrangements – were brought together in a combination that no other town quite replicated.[136]

Holy Blood day was also made liturgically distinct in Bruges by the celebrations conducted on the day within the town's churches. In 1419, Holy Cross day began to be celebrated as a triple feast day in St Donatian's.[137] Moreover, within Bruges churches 3 May had become a feast day that remained focused on the celebration of the Holy Blood.[138] In contrast to so many other feast days (including Corpus Christi – see Chapter 3), Holy Cross day, by the fourteenth century, did not attract obits or endowments from individual citizens to enhance liturgical celebration; 3 May was no longer the best day to secure individual commemoration. As a feast day that occupied so many of the town's clergy and laity, Holy Blood day had become a feast identified with civic-wide celebration in a way that other feast days, even Corpus Christi, had not.

There was a strong liturgical framework surrounding the Holy Blood procession. But did this matter to citizens in Bruges? It may be objected that most townsmen were more interested in worldly concerns of prestige and honour on Holy Blood day; or that they were ill-acquainted with the finer points of the liturgy. Yet liturgical meaning evidently was important to late medieval townsfolk. Some sought out clerical advice on liturgical matters. Around 1470, Dionysius the Carthusian, who for a time had been prior of 's-Hertogenbosch, wrote a tract for an unknown citizen on the manner of conducting processions and venerating the saints.[139] The tract is itself clerical recognition of the prominent place that townsmen had come to occupy in the management of liturgical rites. To interpret liturgically the meaning of the Holy Blood procession

[135] These are: *Regina celi*, *Ave regina celorum*, *Salve regina*, *Inviolata*, *Qui sunt isti*, *Miles Christi*, *Beata Dei genetrix*, *O crux gloriosa*.

[136] The processional with the closest similarity to that of the Holy Blood (in the list of processionals compiled by Michel Huglo) is one from Cambrai, though even this has only three hymns or antiphons that are the same as Bruges' (M. Huglo, *Les Manuscrits du processional*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1999, 2004), Vol. I, pp. 121–2.)

[137] See below, p. 100.

[138] There are a few exceptions: Jan Crayscieter's foundation, in the 1350s, in Our Lady's (see below, pp. 113, 115); Bernard van den Voorde's, 1390 (OCMW, OLV, Register 178, fos. 69v–70r), though he specified that his endowed mass was not to impede mass sung for the Holy Blood.

[139] Dionysius the Carthusian, 'De modo agendi processiones sanctorumque veneratione', in *Doctoris Ecstatici Dionysii Cartusiani opera omnia*, 44 vols., Vol. XXXVI (Tournai, 1908), pp. 199–209. For further commentary on the tract, see Löther, *Prozessionen*, pp. 46–9.

is to interpret it along lines that townsmen would have understood and perhaps desired.

Following correct liturgical procedure, moreover, had important implications for the procession's sacred meaning. The miraculous relic itself was a direct source of divine power. But how it was carried was of equal significance. For Dionysius, adopting proper liturgical procedure allowed a procession's participants to follow in the footsteps of worthy predecessors. The true procession for Dionysius would take his townsman back to biblical times. Carrying relics recalled the transporting and display of the Ark of the Covenant by David and Solomon (2 Kings 6:2–5, 3 Kings 8:4–5) and of the Ten Commandments by Moses (Exodus 32:15–16). Christ had taken his Apostles from Jerusalem to Bethany (Luke 24:50–1): hence the early church had instituted Sunday processions, and the church fathers like Pope Gregory had called for other processions as on Ascension. The adoption of processions in Dionysius's own day brought their participants closer to the behaviour of God's chosen people, the Israelites, and of the earliest Christians. Processional liturgy linked the present with the sacred past.

Processors in Bruges sought to imitate and identify themselves with divinely favoured predecessors. Through liturgical analogy, citizens recalled the biblical past. Imitation of Palm Sunday liturgy – processors entering a holy city as Christ had done, citizens welcoming the Holy Blood as the Jews had once welcomed Christ – identified Bruges with the site of the Passion, and its inhabitants with the chosen people. The tableaux played out during the procession focused in particular on the life of Christ, directing attention away from the temporal to the timeless story of salvation. On Holy Blood day, Bruges became Jerusalem.

Liturgical procedure was meant to link earthly space with spiritual, the temporal with the eternal. The journey taken by the Holy Blood around the town perimeter turned the boundary of the town walls into the *via sacra* of Christ himself. Its journey described a space, enclosed by walls and gates but now strengthened by spiritual protection. Moreover, the relic's journey within the town also connected spaces, secular and ecclesiastical. The processors passed by or paused at important civic landmarks as well as religious institutions: the town hall, the Belfry, the *markt* and *vrijdagmarkt*, and the town gates were connected up by the processional route with the three mother churches and their saintly patrons. Within the town walls, sacred time was linked with worldly: Holy Blood day was also the beginning of Bruges' annual fair; the cycle of processions in the fifteen days that followed coincided with the duration of the fair. Economic activity in civic spaces was lent a sacred dimension.

As a liturgical procedure, the Holy Blood procession was thus powerfully suggestive about the sacred identity of Bruges. Yet it was suggestive only. Citizens and clergy may have moulded the procession to fit local traditions, topography and hierarchies, yet the precise connections between the earthly and heavenly were never spelled out. The procession remained a liturgical rite, and had to be so if it were to be deemed a sacred event. Liturgical references drew processors or spectators away from the mundane moment and towards the timeless lessons of salvation. They referred to a heavenly order but did not refer back to the worldly to show directly how the one related to the other.

If Bruges saw itself as Jerusalem on Holy Blood day, it did so by indirect analogy – and in aspiration alone. Performing liturgical rites could not guarantee divine favour, as Dionysius the Carthusian warned his townsmen. The lessons of the Old and New Testaments revealed that reverent behaviour during processions might reap dividends. Sobriety and abstinence when carrying the Ark brought the Jews spiritual joy (2 Kings 6:12–13). Grace flowed from the proper veneration of relics as water had once flowed for the Israelites from desert rock (Exodus 17:6). Citizens who processed without indulging in excessive pomp, inordinate drinking and dissolute behaviour might enjoy the divine grace once granted to a chosen people. Those who indulged could expect consequences. Some 50,000 irreverent people were killed when they looked at the Ark (1 Kings 6:19). Choice episodes from thirteen other books of the Bible revealed God's response to sinfulness, especially on solemn days and at divine service.

The moral worthiness of Bruges was sometimes open to question. Gilles li Muisis (from Tournai), for instance, had cast doubt on the Holy Blood relic's miraculous powers because of Bruges' sinful behaviour. Citizens were aware that Holy Blood day was a festive event, not usually celebrated *al simpelick*. They had been made painfully aware that the relic did not always provide them with a cordon of spiritual protection. Excessive indulgence on Holy Blood day had contributed to the breach of the town walls by the Ghent army on 3 May 1382 (as a cleric like Dionysius might have predicted). One local chronicler affirms that the ensuing massacres were the result of 'drunkenness and headless will'. By this he refers not to the invading Ghenters, but to the behaviour of the Bruges citizens. The captain of Bruges had warned that processors had 'drunk too much' on 3 May for the procession to leave the town gate without risk, a warning that 'drunkards' and 'dullards' ignored.[140]

[140] SBB, Hs 437, fos. 230r; 229v.

However, according to Dionysius, even reverent behaviour was not certain to produce desirable benefits. God's ways were 'incomprehensible and inscrutable'. Even the righteous were not always rewarded. The Israelites had been afflicted by idolators; good Christians were now assaulted by Saracens. God's principal rewards did not lie on this earth but in eternal life. They could not be won by the mere performance of religious rite. His grace had to be continually earned. There was nothing certain about the effects of a procession, even if properly performed.

These were not lessons conducive to furthering political power. If Bruges patricians ever hoped to reaffirm their political authority through the Holy Blood procession, it could only be done indirectly and without certainty of outcome. Just as the meanings it might generate were allusive, so the results it produced were indeterminate. The performance of a liturgical rite was as much about 'saying' as 'doing'; the procession was intended to show citizens striving to be worthy recipients of God's grace. The ranking of citizens around the town's most treasured relic was undoubtedly suggestive of a sacred dimension to secular hierarchy. But no more than that.

# 2 General processions

On Wednesday 6 July 1491, the Holy Blood relic was carried on a procession of a different kind. One anonymous chronicler described the occasion.[1] A great number participated: representatives of the four religious orders – children and priests – and of the seven parish churches – young and old – bareheaded and carrying candles led the way; then came a contingent from St Donatian's, with its choristers; after them, blessing the people, came the bishop of Tournai, holding a gold mitre. The relic itself was carried by the dean and subdean of St Donatian's, surrounded by six guards, each with a burning torch painted with the arms of Bruges. They were followed by another six 'notable men' carrying similar torches; then came the captain, *baljuw*, *schout*, burghers and officers of the town. A further 300 torches lit up the processors. The cortège began its journey in the *burg*, and before reaching Our Lady's church, where mass was held, it paused at a station in the *markt* outside the Belfry, in front of the window 'from which laws were called out'. There the Holy Blood was placed on a costly stage, and before it, barefoot, bareheaded and on their knees, people sang and prayed for peace in Flanders, the welfare of Count Philip and for good weather.

The procession had been agreed upon two days earlier by the town magistrates, churchmen and the suffragan bishop.[2] The magistrates had laid down its route and purpose. In order that their prayers should be 'better heard and received by almighty God', those participating – clerical and lay, old and young, men and women – were to go to confession and mass beforehand and attend the procession bareheaded and barefoot; all men, women and children were to conduct themselves devoutly and in a seemly fashion; there was to be no laughing or talking. Requirements were also imposed on those who did not take part: as good Christians those who could were to go to church as on Easter day; the rest were to stay at home to leave the procession undisturbed; all

[1] C. L. Carton (ed.), *Het boeck van al 't gene datter geschiet is binnen Brugge sichent Jaer 1477, 14 Februarii, tot 1491* (Ghent, 1859), pp. 437–9. The author was possibly a town clerk.

[2] SAB, 120, *Hallegeboden*, i (1490–9), fos. 63v–64v.

taverns were to be closed; no work was to be done. All those attending the procession in a state of grace were to receive a forty-day pardon from the bishop.

In many ways, this procession was an exceptional response to a particular situation. The Holy Blood was not usually carried on this kind of procession. The involvement of the bishop and the offer of indulgences were unusual. The burning of 300 torches far exceeded the customary number for such a procession. These extreme measures were prompted by an urgent sense of crisis caused by the damaging war that still raged in Flanders: this had already prompted Bruges, two months earlier, to celebrate Holy Blood day in a more 'simple' fashion. But although the scale of the procession was exceptional, its format and purpose were not. Ad hoc processions with relics (usually referred to as 'general processions' in Bruges sources) were typical responses to crises or other kinds of events, and had become unexceptional in Bruges by the 1490s. How and why they became so are studied in this chapter.

The procession ordered for 6 July 1491 was clearly under civic management. It seems a striking example of municipal authority over matters sacred. The format of processions praying for God's grace may have originated in a more ancient liturgy of litanies. But here its organisation is largely in lay rather than clerical hands. This was already an 'old custom' according to the anonymous chronicler – although, as we shall see, it dated back little more than a century, and certain features of the procession that day (such as the use of the Holy Blood relic) were of more recent origin. Even so, by 1491 it was a practice to which civic governments had frequent recourse – and with good reason. A liturgical event that could be put together within a day or two, at any time of the year, and could also pack citizens off to church or shut them up indoors, set clergy and relics in motion and have them pause before monuments of civic significance, was likely to be of keen interest to promoters of municipal authority.

Nevertheless, the history of the general procession in Bruges is not all about the civic control of public religion. One of the purposes of the procession on 6 July 1491 was to pray for the welfare of the prince. The initiative behind these processions could come from the prince himself (see Chapter 7). Even so, their history should not be understood primarily within the context of town–state relations. The request for general processions invariably came directly from the town hall and, even if they were prompted by the prince, his agenda was only one of the many at work.

Of more relevance here is the continuing presence of ecclesiastical initiative. Emphasis on 'civic control' of processions obscures the

importance of clerical influence. The involvement of the bishop of Tournai, evident on 6 July 1491, was in fact rare (and reflected the bishop's current difficulties).[3] Much more regular was the involvement of St Donatian's canons. The organising of a general procession in Bruges involved another layer of planning. Before the town authorities issued decrees for processions, they usually asked the clergy of St Donatian's, a day or two in advance, for a procession to be conducted and for a particular relic to be carried.[4] St Donatian's frequently asserted its right to advise on general processions. As we shall see, even the most potent liturgical rite serving 'civic religion' was subject to clerical constraints.

Discussion of the management of processions leads to wider questions about their purpose, function and effect. How were they supposed to work? We may have recourse to modern theories about how 'rituals' affected participants or observers.[5] But analysis of the liturgy itself brings us nearer to an understanding of what contemporaries thought they were doing, and under what constraints civic authorities were operating. The general procession was not the same kind of procession as the annual Holy Blood procession: on 6 July 1491 townspeople were not usually grouped into blocs of guilds as they were annually on 3 May; there were neither festive plays nor noisy trumpets. Differences like these announce that a different kind of effect was intended.

And did processions work? Clearly not always. Another Bruges chronicler, Romboudt de Doppere, a notary from St Donatian – admittedly one inclined to dwell on the 'evils and perverse morals' reigning in Bruges at this time – talks of trouble on 6 July 1491. Jean Tentavilla, the governor of Bruges, and *homo improbus* according to de Doppere, refused to take off his hat or kiss the hand of the bishop during mass at the end of this procession; his hat remained fixed on his head when the Body of Christ was shown to him by the priest.[6] Evidently the cogs of liturgical machinery, however well oiled after a century of use, could not be guaranteed to run smoothly. Our anonymous chronicler, although less baleful in tone than de Doppere, implies that the effect of processions was temporary: a general procession undertaken in the previous

[3] On the 'schism' after 1477, see above, p. 12.

[4] Comparison between the dates for a procession given in the chapter act-books of St Donatian (BAB, A56–A58) and the *Hallegeboden* (SAB, 120) after 1491 shows this to be established practice by then.

[5] See above, pp. 22–5.

[6] Romboudt de Doppere, *Fragments inédits de Romboudt de Doppere … Chronique Brugeoise de 1491 à 1498*, ed. P. H. Dussart (Bruges, 1892), p. 5.

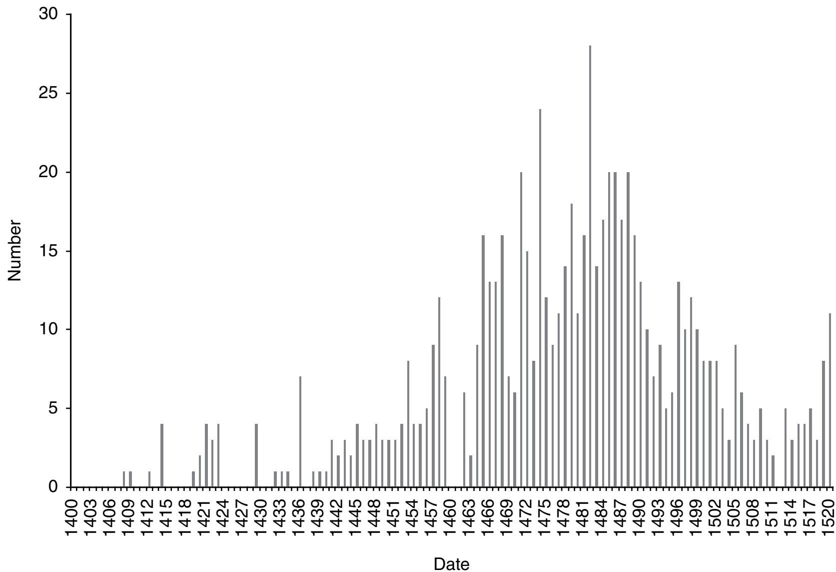



Figure 2.1 General processions in Bruges 1400–1520.

December had achieved eleven days of peace, and further processions had been called (four more between then and the following July).[7] In some years, especially in the 1470s and 1480s, during periods of heightened crisis, processions had been even more frequent (see Figure 2.1).[8] Civic governments clearly deemed general processions to be an appropriate response to certain events, but their frequent repetition suggests uncertainty regarding their effectiveness.

[7] Carton, *Het Boeck*, pp. 408–9, 414, 435; BAB, A56, fo. 237r.

[8] The main (continuous) sources are the town accounts (SAB, 216), which survive from the late thirteenth century, and the St Donatian *acta capituli* (BAB, A50–A57) from 1345, supplemented by the (incomplete) St Donatian fabric accounts (BAB, G1–G7) from 1365. Figure 2.1 lists the following years as having none or few processions: 1410, 1411, 1414, 1424–6, 1428–9, 1435, 1459–61. But in these cases, this is because of gaps in the evidence. Chronicles provide more information for the later fifteenth century, especially for Figure 2.2 (from the 1460s: SBB, Hs. 436 and Hs. 437; from 1478: Carton, *Het boeck*. The *Hallegeboden* provide more regular detail from 1491 (SAB, 120, *Hallegeboden*). For processions involving the Holy Blood relic (after 1469): AHB, Register 18. The accounts of the community of clergy at St Walburga's supplement gaps in the town accounts in 1422, 1423, 1426, 1432 and 1451–61 (RAB, SW, 224, 225); further references may be found in the fabric accounts of St Saviour's (BAB, 616 (1481–92, 1501–3). The town accounts are further supplemented by *presentwijnen* accounts in 1424–6, 1468, 1484–6, 1488–9, 1490 (SAB, 277).

## Origins

Relic processions with a supplicatory purpose had emerged from an amalgam of liturgical precedents: the mobile system of masses held at station churches, the processions required on Sundays and the litanies of Rogation.[9] The carrying of relics was again traditional in certain kinds of processions and litanies. Their use had become well established in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The 'Peace of God' movement had witnessed large-scale perambulations of relics, in clerical efforts to contain knightly aggression.[10] In Flanders, the bones of St Ursmar were processed in 1060 in order to achieve 'reconciliation' within a society deemed by chroniclers to be without order or morals.[11] Bruges in the early twelfth century, according to Galbert of Bruges, was a town in which the moral order had collapsed, particularly after the murder of Count Charles the Good on 2 March 1127. In June 1128, priests were calling for a universal fast within the town; crosses and relics were taken from St Donatian's to Our Lady's church. In July, the people attempted to appease God by following crosses and processions led by the clergy.[12]

Such movements of relics and litanies for God's grace were well established procedures by the twelfth century. Calls for *processiones generales* to be carried out at the diocesan level were made by popes in the hope of inspiring support for crusades.[13] Processions of all kinds were a familiar part of liturgical celebration within towns that contained large collegiate churches. Those furnished with large collections of relics, like St Donatian's, could process them when required. In 1127 the clergy of St Donatian's brought out their principal three relics – those of St Donatian, St Basil and St Maximus – to meet the cortège carrying the corpse of the murdered Count Charles.[14] These same relics were to figure prominently in the 'general processions' of Bruges in the later Middle Ages.

9 See above, pp. 65–6.

10 See T. Head and R. Landes (eds.), *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, NY, 1992).

11 Miraculi S. Ursmari, *Monumenta Germaniae historica, scriptores* Vol. XV (2), 840–1; cited in Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, ed. J. B. Ross (New York, 1959), p. 44.

12 Galbert of Bruges, *Murder of Charles the Good*, pp. 162–3, 299–300, 303–4.

13 For Innocent III's call for a *supplicatio generale* and a monthly *generalis processio* in 1212, and the effect of these at a local level, see G. Dickson, 'The Genesis of the Children's Crusade (1212)', in his *Religious Enthusiasm in the Medieval West* (Aldershot, 2000), Study IV, esp. p. 29.

14 Galbert, *Murder of Charles the Good*, p. 246.

Absence of evidence prevents further glimpses of relic processions in Bruges until the late fourteenth century. It is possible that they were rare before then: sources that are extant from the early fourteenth century – the same sources that by the fifteenth century would refer frequently to such processions – are silent on the subject until the 1380s.[15] The first references to what are explicitly called 'general processions' appear in the fabric accounts of St Donatian's: on the vigil of Ascension in 1381, a relic of the Holy Cross was accompanied by the archbishop in a solemn procession; on the day following St Donatian's day (15 October), because of heavy rain, a procession carrying the relic of St Donatian threaded its way to the Carthusian priory outside the gates of Bruges. Another set out in 1382 on the occasion of an earthquake.[16] These processions seem still to be strongly linked liturgically with annual Rogation processions given the timing (just before Ascension in 1381), the purpose (to avert earthquakes and bad weather) and also the destination (since the Carthusian priory was one of the regular station churches on Rogation days).[17] But there were processions undertaken for other purposes: one in 1381 after the count of Flanders' victory against Ghent at Nevele; and another in November 1382, following news of his victory at Westrozebeke. On this occasion, the clergy processed in torch-light to a crowded market place to give thanks for peace.[18]

One further reference to a 'general procession' in St Donatian's fabric accounts occurs in 1383/4,[19] but unfortunately there is a gap in the run of accounts between 1386 and 1400. The chapter act-books (which begin in 1345) are mute on the subject of general processions until the 1420s. The next reference to a 'general procession' comes from a different source: the town accounts. On 28 September 1408, the civic treasury paid a friar £4 *parisis* for delivering two sermons in a 'general

[15] The early fabric accounts of St Donatian (unlike the later ones) do not make reference to 'general processions' – though there are not many that survive before 1375 (namely BAB, G1: 1236/7, 1251, 1271/2, 1274/5, 1306/7, 1338/9, 1354/5, 1365/6); the chapter act-books (from 1345) and the town accounts (from 1281) are more complete but do not refer to 'general processions' before the fifteenth century.

[16] BAB, G2: 1380/1, fo. 4r; 1381/2, fos. 9r–v; 1375–80, fo. 55v.

[17] See, for example, BAB, A50, fos. 43v, 66v. It was evidently not yet standard practice in the 1380s, as it became in the fifteenth century, for processions to be undertaken for the health of the prince: in 1375/6, the fabric accounts of St Donatian's record payment only for a mass for the count's convalescence (BAB, G2: 1375/6, fo. 4r). News of peace also seems to have been greeted by bell-ringing rather than processions (BAB, G2: 1379/80, fo. 45v; 1380/1, fo. 55v; 1385/6, fo. 4v).

[18] *Ibid.*, 1375–81 (1380/1), fo. 55v; 1380/1, fo. 15v; SBB, Hs. 436, fos. 149v–150r. For the motet composed to celebrate the occasion, see R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), p. 104.

[19] BAB, G2: 1383/4, fo. 6r. The next reference in these accounts to a general procession occurs in 1409/10 (*ibid.*, 1409/10, fo. 8r), after which references are more frequent.

procession' for Duke John's expedition against 'rebels', the Liègeois.[20] Civic accounts survive from 1281, but 1408 is the first year in which payment to 'general processions' is mentioned.[21] Thereafter, these payments become more frequent. It may represent significant change. In the 1380s, it is still the clergy who seem to be taking the initiative in organising the processions. In the fifteenth century, the most regular references to general processions come not from clerical but from municipal sources. At the very least, by the early fifteenth century the balance of financial responsibility – and perhaps initiative – for general processions had shifted from church to town.

Civic demand for processions escalated during the fifteenth century (see Figure 2.1). They were sporadic until the 1420s, when they began to become more regular. In the 1420s, 1430s and 1440s, there were usually no more than four a year (except in 1436). But from 1451, they became more frequent, and in 1458 there was a more systematic effort to organise a general procession every month of the year. Another significant increase occurs from 1465; in 1474, the number reached twenty-four; in 1482, twenty-eight. Particularly intense years were the late 1480s. In January 1485, the town magistrates required daily processions; in February 1486, they wanted continual processions for eight days running; in January 1488, again, they were asking for daily processions.[22] Processions increased in scale as well as number. Until the 1450s, the usual number of sermons required on each occasion was two; but in the 1450s and 1460s, four sermons were often preached. Nine sermons were paid for in August 1468 when all churches in Bruges were ordered to hold processions.[23]

Moreover, a wider selection of saintly intercessors was increasingly sought (see Figure 2.2). Until the 1460s we hear only of the relics of St Donatian and St Basil (both from St Donatian's church) being processed.[24] In late August 1465, for the first time, the Holy Blood relic was brought out on a general procession and taken to the Wijngarde béguinage; then shortly afterwards the Holy Sacrament was taken on a general procession for the first time.[25] In the 1470s other lesser relics

[20] SAB, 216, 1408/9, fos. 85v, 86r.

[21] The town did pay in early 1391 for singing a mass of the Holy Ghost at St Donatian's where all colleges gathered and 'did a procession' (SAB, 216, 1390/1, fo. 92v).

[22] BAB, A56, fos. 58v, 95r, 149v.

[23] And for eight sermons preached on 11 July 1477: SAB, 216, 1476/7, fo. 76r; SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 383r.

[24] Evidence for this is not conclusive: the town accounts do occasionally refer to the relics of St Donatian or St Basil, but before the 1470s do not often indicate which relics were used. For sources available from the 1470s onwards, see Figure 2.2.

[25] Not all sources refer to both these processions. The most explicit is one of the versions of the chronicles of Flanders: Hs. Douai, BM, 1110, fo. 249v, transcribed in

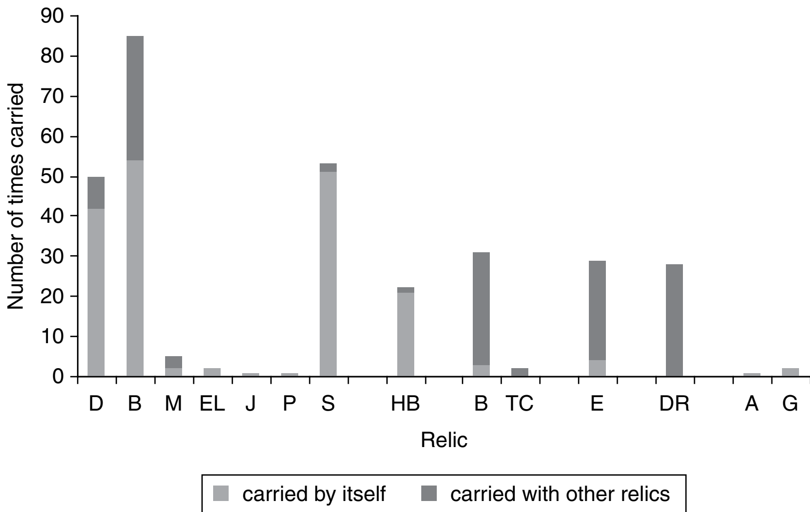



Figure 2.2 Relics carried on general processions 1470–1520.

*Key*: Relics from St Donatian's: B = St Basil, D = St Donatian, El = St Eleutherius, J = St John the Baptist, M = St Maximus, P = St Piat, S = Sacrament.
Relics from St Basil's chapel: HB = Holy Blood.
Relics from Our Lady's church: B = St Boniface, TC = True Cross.
Relics from St Saviour's church: E = St Eligius.
Combination from three main churches:
DR = 'Drie Riven' (usually Saints Basil, Boniface, Eligius).
Other relics: A = St Aernoud, G = St Godelieve (from Ghistel).

from St Donatian also began to be used: those of Saints Maximus, Eleutherius and John the Baptist. There is another apparent shift during the same decade. Before then, the chapter act-books and fabric accounts of St Donatian refer only to the relics of St Basil or St Donatian being processed by themselves. On 14 May 1477 we first hear

S. Vandekerckhove, 'De *Chronike van de lande de Vlaendre*', unpublished licentiaat thesis (University of Ghent, 2007), p. 304. Other versions mention only the Holy Sacrament (SBB, Hs. 436, fo. 238r); as do the chapter act-books of St Donatian (BAB, A53, fo. 155v); while the town accounts mention only a procession to the Wijngarde on 24 August (SAB, 216, 1464/5, fo. 53v). Despars later referred just to the Holy Blood, probably conflating the two separate processions; Nicolaes Despars, *Cronycke van Vlaenderen ende graefscepe van Vlaenderen … van de jaeren 405–1492*, ed. J. de Jonghe, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1839–42), Vol. III, p. 568 – and see below, p. 262. See also BAB, C445 (copy of 'extraordinary processions of the Holy Blood' extracted from the chronicles of Flanders). The fabric accounts of St James' church refer to bell-ringing 'als men processie general drouch metten Heleghen Bloede' (RAB, SJ, 24, 1464/5, fo. 83v).

of relics emerging from different churches, and in combination with others: those of Saints Donatian, Boniface and Eligius, from the three main churches of St Donatian, Our Lady and St Saviour respectively.[26] For the first time in May 1478, the chapter act-books refer to a request from the town magistrates for this combination.[27] Thereafter, these references become more frequent, although the most common combination was Saints Basil, Boniface and Eligius, known collectively as the *drie riven* (the three relic chests).

During the 1470s, local chroniclers begin to record processions more often.[28] This may have been because processions had become more frequent – or perhaps more impressive. De Roovere's version of the chronicle of Flanders, which began to record processions more regularly from 1475, considered one that occurred on 11 July 1477 to be worthy of more detailed description. With the threat of invasion from a French army, following rebellion and repression in Bruges, an 'excellent' procession with the Sacrament was conducted to pray for grace against the enemies of Flanders: the bishop of Tournai, the collegiate churches, the civic magistracy and many others, barefoot and bareheaded, all made their way from St Donatian's to Our Lady's for mass. The whole ceremony lasted three hours. Many torches were carried before the Sacrament. So devoutly did the people of Bruges behave, many of whom went to confession and mass, that the bishop decreed an indulgence of forty days.[29]

These larger-scale processions became more regular. The town government seems to have taken steps to make them so. From 1472 payments for torches accompanying relics were made by the civic treasurers – at first during processions when the Holy Blood was carried, then increasingly during those involving the Sacrament and other relics.[30] By the end of the century, these payments were standard for general processions. Moreover, in the 1470s we first hear of relics pausing en route to or from a station church, often outside the Belfry (*Halle*).[31] The exhibition of relics on platforms, especially inside churches, was hardly new. But

[26] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 383r. [27] BAB, A54, fo. 141v.

[28] SBB, Hs. 436 mentions general processions in 1381, 1436 and 1465 (fos. 149v–150r, 182v, 238r); SBB, Hs. 437 mentions them in 1436 (fo. 288v) but only gives them more attention from 1470 (*ibid.*, fos. 336v, 346r, 348r, 349r, 349v, 350r–v and *passim*). Part of the reason for this, though, may be that the chronicler (Anthonis de Roovere) was by this time recording contemporary events.

[29] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 393r.

[30] SAB, 216, 1471/2, fo. 132r; 1477/8, fo. 134v. The town accounts tend to refer to these specially lit processions as 'solemn' ones.

[31] Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 15 and *passim*.

there are no references to such displays on the streets of Bruges earlier than 1477.[32]

## Processions and civic authority

The beginnings of town payments for general processions, and their growing number in the fifteenth century, may be directly related to the assertion of municipal authority. Aspects of these processions appear expressly designed to display the power of civic magistrates. The principal town office-holders processed close to the relic in some of the larger processions. Stations could be held before the *Halle*, where 'laws were read out'. The demands placed on all citizens during the event make the procession appear an ideal vehicle to further civic authority.

Civic calls for general processions placed various demands on the town's clergy. Sermons during them were usually delivered by the local friars, or canons and masters of theology. General processions meant that the town's churches were used more often for station masses: the destination of processors was usually one or other of the three main collegiate churches (principally St Donatian's), the friaries and, more occasionally, the Eekhout abbey and the Wijngarde béguinage. A wider selection of churches was used in the 1470s and 1480s: some processions began to take in smaller parish churches (St James' and St Giles'), and even cloisters outside the town walls (see Figure 2.3). But churches not regularly used as stations had other roles to play: 'all the clergy of the town' were apparently involved in a general procession in 1420;[33] St Walburga's clergy, for instance, seem to have attended general processions regularly;[34] bell-ringing in other churches was perhaps expected during these processions.[35] Chronicle descriptions of large-scale events from the 1470s show the involvement of representatives from most of the clerical institutions in Bruges. The growing use of churches and clergy in general processions established a regular network of litany and intercession throughout the town.

[32] For the increasing tendency to display relics on stages from the thirteenth century, see H. Belting, *The Image and Its Public in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1990), p. 82. St Donatian's *acta capituli* refer to a *stacio* for relics in 1437, but inside the nave of the church (BAB, A50, fo. 244v). St Donatian's body was processed outside the church on his feast day.

[33] BAB, A50, fo. 91v.

[34] See the accounts of the 'community' of clergy at St Walburga beginning in 1423: RAB, SW, 226 (*Rekeningen*), fo. 15r.

[35] For example, *ibid*., SJ, 24, 1464/5, fo. 83v. Occasionally, gifts of wine were given by the town government to bell-ringers in different churches during a general procession (SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1485/6, fo. 63r; 1488, fos. 5r, 9r).

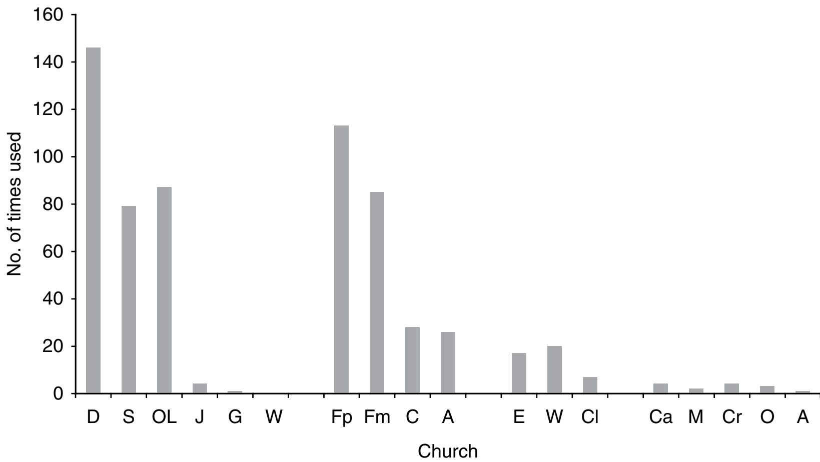



Figure 2.3 Station churches on general processions 1420–1520.

*Key*: Collegiate/Parish churches: D = St Donatian, G = St Giles, J = St James, O = Our Lady, S = St Saviour, W = St Walburga.
The four orders: A = Augustinians, C = Carmelites, Fm = Friars minor (Franciscans), Fp = Friars preacher (Dominicans).
Other religious houses inside town walls: Cl = Rich Clares, E = Eekhout abbey, W = Wijngarde béguinage.
Churches and cloisters outside town walls: A = Annunciation Sisters (Observants), Ca = Carthusians, Cr = St Cross parish, M = Mary Magdalene, O = Observant Fransciscans.

Moreover, by their demand for processions, town magistrates were also requiring more from the saints whose remains lay within the town's churches. Before the fifteenth century, only the Holy Blood relic on its annual procession had emerged regularly from its chapel at civic behest. The increasing number of general processions from the early fifteenth century meant that more relics were on public display in the streets of Bruges. These relics did not follow the sacred route of the Holy Blood procession in its circumambulatory progress around the town walls (see Map 1.1): their routes were either more linear, to a station church and back, or took a shorter circular route within the town. These did not create a sense of civic space in the same way that the route followed by the Holy Blood procession might have done. Yet their more regular repetition and their use of more relics integrated the sacred resources of the town in a different way. From the 1470s, as we saw, the town council was making more regular requests for a combination of relics from the three mother churches in Bruges.

From the 1470s chroniclers record another use made of processions by the town government: as a vehicle of punishment. Certain miscreants began to appear in processions barefoot, bareheaded, dressed in just a shirt and carrying a candle.[36] Requiring sinners to take part in processions as a form of penance was hardly innovative: St Donatian's had long imposed such sentences in cases under their jurisdiction (with civic approval) – though usually the punishment occurred on processions during the appropriately penitential season of Rogatian.[37] The preferred form of penance of St Donatian's in such circumstances, however, was the imposition of pilgrimages.[38] In the chapter-act books, the first reference to sinners being required to appear at general procession occurs in 1466.[39] Even so, this was rarely a punishment imposed by the dean and chapter. Instead, it was the civic authorities who began to make more use of it (though at what point is not clear, since regular records for civic courts do not survive before the 1490s). Chronicles that begin to record this form of punishment from the 1470s suggest that it was inflicted by the town government particularly on those who had disturbed civic peace by deed or word: the miscreant who appeared in a procession in July 1477, at a time of political tension, had spoken 'bad words' about the people of Bruges and Ghent (for which in addition his tongue had been extracted).[40] When records of civic justice become more regular from the 1490s, penance on general processions was a standard kind of punishment.[41]

Regular and repeated general processions thus encouraged a sense of Bruges as a sacred community, shaped by a town government acting as its moral guardian. They allowed municipal authorities to pronounce on the kind of behaviour required of the upright citizen within this community, and also on the kind that would exclude a citizen from

[36] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 293r (1477); Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 12, 13 (1479), 21, 23, 25 (1480) and *passim*.

[37] For example, on 20 April 1363 the *schepenen* pronounced sentence on Jan Teyl for misdeeds against Pieter Andries (chaplain of St John's chapel): Jan was to attend the procession at St Donatian's on the following Sunday (23 April); then on Ascension eve go on the (Rogation) procession to St Cross' church and to the place where he had committed his misdeeds, prostrate himself, kiss the ground and ask for pardon; and on Ascension day he was to go to Our Lady's church and offer a candle there (BAB, A252, no. 297).

[38] See punishments of the provost's court: RAB, *Proosdij*, 1508, fo. 204v; 1509, fos. 61r, 107r, 142v and *passim*.

[39] The murderers of 'magister' Jacob Maes in 1466, besides making pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome and Compostela and founding an anniversary for the victim, were required to take their place in a 'general procession' in penitential garb carrying a candle weighing six pounds (BAB, A53, fo. 177r).

[40] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 392r.

[41] SAB, 157, *Civiele sententïen vierschaar*, fos. 2v–3v, 8v, 12v–13r, 15r–16r and *passim*.

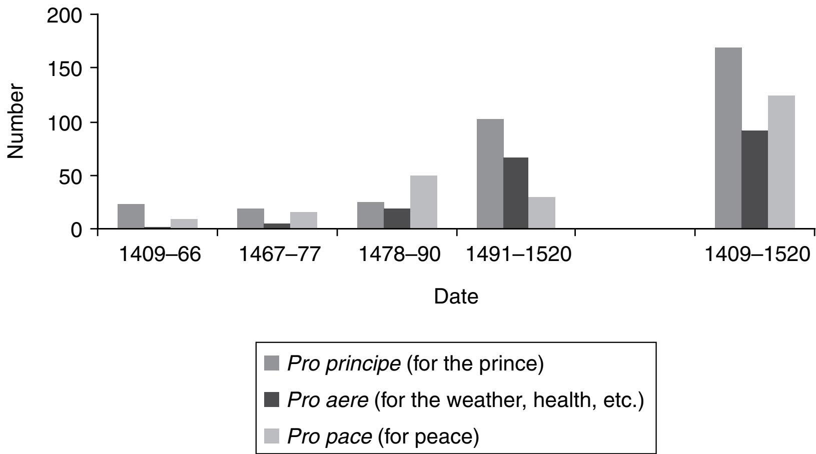



Figure 2.4 Purposes of general processions 1409–1520 (by number). Dates are presented as shown in Figures 2.4 and 2.5 because of the change in sources used. Figures from 1409 to 1466 are drawn from town accounts and the chapter act-books of St Donatian's, which do not give reasons for processions very often; figures for the period from 1467 to 1477 can be drawn, in addition, from chronicles (SBB, Hs. 437); from 1478 to 1490 from Carton, *Het boeck*; and for 1491 from the *Hallegeboden* and town accounts.

it.[42] But whether general processions could always be manipulated to bolster civic authority remains more debateable. A closer examination of purposes behind processions reveals restrictions surrounding their calling and use. The canons of St Donatian's asserted that the primary purposes of these processions were threefold: to pray *pro aere, pro pace et pro principe*.[43] The *hallegeboden* from the 1490s, and before then (though less often) the town accounts, the chapter act-books of St Donatian's and chronicles, show that these three purposes were generally recognised and accepted (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5). In practice, praying *pro aere* – warding off plague, famine, sickness or bad weather – was the expressed motive for many of them. A general procession organised in 1409 – one of the first recorded in the town accounts – was intended to ask for prayers against the 'black plague' and 'flooding'.[44] Praying for the prosperity and health of the prince was also frequent.[45] Even so, in almost half the processions the reason given was the need for 'peace' – an expressed motive in one of the earliest processions mentioned in the

[42] See below, pp. 300–4 [43] BAB, A50, fo. 91v.
[44] SAB, 216, 1409/10, fo. 99v. [45] On this, see Chapter 7.

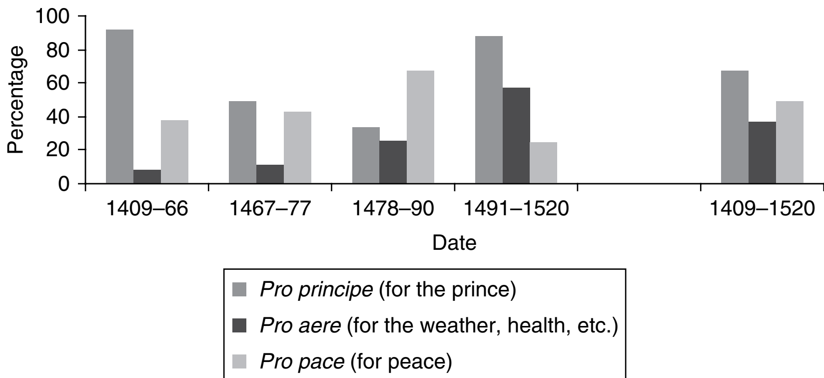



Figure 2.5 Purposes of general processions 1409–1520 (by percentage).

town accounts.[46] In times of particular crisis, especially in the troubled years after 1477, peace was prayed for in more than two-thirds of processions.

Increasing concern for order within the town and the wider region may explain the growing need for general processions. Plotting the fluctuation in the number of relic processions provides a kind of seismograph of the level of social anxiety experienced in Bruges. In the first half of the fifteenth century, the year in which the number of processions reached a peak was in 1436 – when serious rebellion disrupted civic life. In the second half of the fifteenth century, pressure on civic order escalated. Demands on civic resources made by the Burgundian government, economic uncertainty, social upheaval and political instability, especially after 1477, coincide with an escalation in the number of processions. The most intense years for processions were the 1480s, at a period of particular civic strife. During the months of crisis in early 1488 the number of processions becomes impossible to count (see Figure 2.1).

A closer look at conditions in 1488 reveals the uses to which processions were put during periods of particular upheaval. The civic magistracy, who supported Maximilian, feared rebellion. On 16 January 1488 it ordered daily processions for an indefinite period 'for peace and prosperity of the *patrie*'. Crisis point was reached at the end of the month. An armed *wapening* of the craft guilds formed on the *markt* on 31 January; Maximilian found himself trapped in

[46] In 1409 a procession to the Eekhout priory set off on Mary Magdalene day to ask for 'peace' SAB, 216, 1409/10, fo. 99v.

the town and on 5 February was detained by the town officials, now under the sway of the 'common folk'. On 6 February the canons of St Donatian's decided themselves to hold a procession on the following day with the body of St Donatian, which would remain in the choir for the next three days 'to excite the people to pray to God and the saints for the happy and peaceful end to negotiations between the town and Maximilian'. This would also 'calm the commotion of the people'.[47]

Upheaval, however, continued. Yet the new regime that came to power was prepared to adopt the same ceremonies as the old. They did not neglect to ask for saintly intercession. On 10 February a procession was conducted in every church to call on St Donatian, St Boniface and St Eligius to ask God for his 'sweet grace'.[48] Two days later the new magistrates were formally sworn in, following established procedure.[49] No processions were ordered over the next troubled month, but the new regime soon sought further spiritual assistance. On 11, 12 and 13 March three parades were conducted by the guilds marching with banners through the town streets, taking in a different route on each day. With their burning torches, the marches might have taken on the air of a liturgical procession.[50] Nevertheless, the routes they took were not the *via sacra* of relics on general processions. It seems that guild parades did not of themselves provide their organisers with a sufficiently sacred aspect: more established ecclesiastical forms of procession were required. On 15 March deputies from the town authorities were asking St Donatian's for a procession on the following day with St Basil's relics 'to excite the people to devotion'.[51] On 8 April St Donatian's body was taken on a general procession, pausing at a station on the *markt*; in attendance were the *schout*, *baljuw*, aldermen, the six 'headmen' and the deans from fifty-two craft guilds, each with a burning torch in his hand.[52] With Maximilian's soldiers posing a growing threat to the town,

[47] BAB, A56, fos. 149v, 151r. [48] Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 181.

[49] J. van Leeuwen, 'Balancing Tradition and Rites of Rebellion: The Ritual Transfer of Power in Bruges on 12 February 1488', in J. van Leeuwen (ed.), *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns* (Leuven, 2006), pp. 65–81.

[50] J. Haemers and E. Lecuppre-Desjardin, 'Conquérir et reconquérir l'espace urbain: Le Triomphe de la collectivité sur l'individu dans le cadre de la révolte brugeoise', in C. Deligne and C. Billen (eds.), *Voisinages, coexistences, appropriations: Groupes sociaux et territoires urbains (Moyen Age–16e siècle)* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 119–43.

[51] BAB, A56, fo. 152v. It was on 15 March that the hated *schout* Pieter Lanchals was also run to ground and arrested. Besides processions, the town authorities paid for masses of the Holy Ghost to be sung by the 'singers' of St Donatian, on 18, 19, 28 and 30 March (SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1488, fos. 4v–6v).

[52] Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 213.

another general procession for 'peace' was conducted in April, and in early May, with hostile soldiers now encamped outside the town walls, a further two.[53] On 13 May, representatives from every church, cloister and almshouse of the town were rewarded with wine for conducting their own processions and praying for peace.[54] This was finally achieved on 16 May: the relics of St Donatian, the True Cross and the Sacrament were processed and sworn on by Maximilian prior to his release. Another procession, this time with the Holy Blood, was conducted on 18 May to give thanks for peace.[55] But peace was not to last. Maximilian had no intention of abiding by its terms. By 12 June the town authorities were asking St Donatian's for three processions within a week because of the danger of peace breaking down.[56] Seven more were held that year.

The events of 1488 show that the ceremonial procedures at civic disposal were well established. Even more radical governments had recourse to the same liturgical forms adopted by the regimes they ousted. If such forms were used to bolster 'civic authority', they could evidently serve 'authority' that was more popularly based. Yet the events of 1488 also show that such uses of ceremony were not necessarily made from a position of power. In general, crisis explains the increased need for processions,[57] and the easing of tension during the 1490s helps to explain the drop in their number. The calling of general processions says as much about the weaknesses of civic government as it does about its strengths.

Nevertheless, the frequency with which town councils demanded processions shows the value attached to them, especially during crises. Processions were evidently intended to produce certain effects. What did their organisers hope to achieve and how was the procession supposed to achieve desirable effects, such as calming 'the commotion of the people'?

On several occasions, the canons of St Donatian's refer to processions as intending to 'excite devotion of the people'. There was a long tradition of clerical thought as to how devotion might best be encouraged. The most powerful means was through sight of holy objects.

[53] For the conduct of the Holy Blood procession on 3 May that year, see above, p. 61.
[54] SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1488, fos. 14v–15r.
[55] The town accounts and one chronicler give the date of this procession as 18 May, but the accounts of 'present wine' apparently made payments for it on 15 May (SAB, 216, 1487/8, fo. 134r; Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 223; SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1488, fos. 16r–v).
[56] BAB, A56, fo. 158v.
[57] For parallels in Paris, during a period of crisis, see J. Chiffoleau, 'Les Processions parisiennes de 1412: Analyse d'un rituel flamboyant', *Revue historique* 114 (1990), 37–76.

Theologians generally agreed that seeing was the highest of senses. It moved the mind more powerfully than reading or hearing. So highly charged was the interaction between mind and eye that things seen could influence moral development.[58] The visibility of holy objects – relics or Sacrament – was important. Display of the body of St Donatian was to be carried out, according to the canons, so that it might be 'seen by the people'.[59]

Sight of holy objects also mattered to the town magistrates. We have already noted their increasing desire to bring relics out onto public thoroughfares. The apparent adoption of larger-scale processions from the 1470s was perhaps the result of an effort to extend their visual impact. Descriptions of these displays suggest prolonged and impressive exposure: relics mounted on stages bedecked with costly cloths, surrounded by burning torches. The 'excellent' procession on 11 July 1477 was, according to de Roovere, 'very devout to see'. The adjective typically used by the chronicler to describe displays of relics at station points is 'beautiful' (*schoone*), suggesting a strong visual effect. It mattered to civic authorities that relics or other holy objects should be seen – so much so that in January 1491 they banished from Flanders a miscreant who during a general procession wilfully covered up his eyes with nutshells so that he was unable to see the Sacrament.[60]

Sight in particular encouraged piety, but other senses had a part to play. The mounting of relics in the *markt* was an auditory as much as a visual experience. Surrounding the stages, processors and spectators knelt and listened to antiphons and hymns, to which responses were required. Such singing was a regular feature of processions: gifts of wine were almost invariably given to the 'singers of St Donatian' when a general procession was undertaken.[61] Moreover, sermons were preached 'before the people' at station churches or in public spaces, often the *burg*. The main outlay on processions made in town accounts had generally been on the preaching of sermons, and (as already seen) more sermons were preached from the mid fifteenth century onwards. The volume of sermons reached a crescendo in 1485, when relations between Bruges

[58] See A. Brown, 'Perceptions of Relics', for references. And for the application of medieval theories of optics to seeing processions and relics, see E. Muir, 'The Eye of the Procession: Ritual Ways of Seeing in the Renaissance', in N. Howe (ed.), *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe* (Notre Dame, IN, 2007), pp. 129–53 (pp. 136–40).

[59] '… a popolo visa est': BAB, A53, fo. 171r (January 1466).

[60] P. Fredericq (ed.), *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae*, 3 vols. (Ghent, 1906), Vol. II, pp. 279–80.

[61] These expenses appear in the separate accounts for gifts of wine. When references to gifts to 'singers from St Donatian' first appear, these are said to be 'according to custom': SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1484/5, fo. 2r.

and Maximilian were already becoming tense. Besides the sermons paid for on general processions, civic expenditure on other sermons became almost frenetic: twenty-nine sermons from 'diverse masters and brothers of the four orders' were paid for in February, forty-one in March, thirty-nine in April, fifty in May.[62] The content of these sermons is not known, but their direct ordering by the town government leaves little doubt that they were meant to reflect the particular needs of the moment.

Devout citizens were assumed to be orderly ones. Seeing a relic and listening to the word, spoken and sung, helped in theory to encourage devotion. A public procession allowed relic and word to reach a wider audience. But the form of procession itself also helped inculcate the necessary kind of piety. The liturgy of the general procession followed ecclesiastical tradition. Many of the elements ordered by the town magistrates on 6 July 1491 – gathering at churches, movement towards stations, prohibition of work, fasting, and penitential garb and posture – repeated strictures recommended by earlier liturgists. According to Beleth and Durandus, Pope Gregory the Great's Rogation had called for the assembly of seven categories of processors – clerics, monks, nuns, children, laymen, married women and widows. They were intended to represent the whole community. The 'young and old, men and women, priests and lay people' ordered to assemble in 1491 deliberately mirrored this liturgical tradition. Moreover, according to tradition, the public response to Pope Gregory's call was highly penitential in tone – fasting and crying were encouraged of processors and the population at large. The same response was desired from the citizens of Bruges.

In some ways, use of such traditions served the interests of those in authority. General processions provided civic magistrates with liturgical means to orchestrate the behaviour of the whole citizen body. Yet in other ways, the same traditions restricted the ability of civic organisers to dictate the format and tone of the procession. As Dionysius the Carthusian reminded his townsmen, processions were about the following of a correct format. This was not just a matter of technical procedure: God's reward could not be won by mere performance of religious rite. The mimesis involved was of a deeper kind. Processions were about the replication of biblical or early church precedent. Mass at station churches recalled practices in Jerusalem and early Christian Rome.[63] Supplication to God in times of crisis reproduced the Rogations

[62] *Ibid.*, 216, 1484/5, fos. 156v, 158r, 160v, 162v.
[63] J. F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome, 1987), pp. 87, 143–5.

of St Mamertus and Pope Gregory the Great.[64] Processions linked participants to earlier and more pristine forms of behaviour. Adoption of proper behaviour during processions, according to Dionysius, would bring participants closer to the behaviour of God's chosen people. Emphasis on penitential demeanour of all citizens during processions was a feature that the general procession in particular sought to capture. Correct imitation of God's chosen people, in action and mind, would best achieve the supplicatory purpose required.

General processions could not be conducted in the same manner as the annual Holy Blood processions. Different liturgical meanings meant a difference in tone. Participants or spectators of general processions could not adopt the festive spirit of Holy Blood day. Abstinence was required of processors before participation, not substantial breakfast in guild houses; bare heads and feet marked them out, not expensive liveries fashioned from local cloth; mass at station church was the final destination for civic officials, not a banquet at St Julian's. The penitential motif, the reminder that salvation was never certain, was at the heart of general processions in a way that it was not on Holy Blood day.

Secular wealth and power were less visible on general processions too. On Holy Blood day the civic hierarchy of guilds, each with their colourful liveries, was always on show, processing in an order that approximated the realities of power in the everyday running of the town. Occasionally this hierarchy was also displayed in general processions,[65] but the categories of processors usually adopted were those sanctioned by Pope Gregory the Great in his *litania septiformis*, according to medieval liturgists.[66] The 'men and women, young and old, clerics and lay people' surrounding the relic removed citizens from the social realities of power. It suggested other structures, possibly an alternative kind of society. Even when (occasionally) the magistracy processed close to the relic, the penitential tone required of the procession sat less comfortably with display of earthly power.

Dionysius issued his townsmen with other warnings. God's ways were 'incomprehensible and inscrutable'. Even the righteous were not always rewarded. His grace had to be continually earned. There was nothing certain about the effects of a procession. Dionysius' message

[64] Guillelmus Durandus, *Guillelmi Duranti rationale divinorum officiorum V–VI*, ed. A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau (Turnhout, 1998), p. 499.

[65] As in processions ordered in 1509, 1514, 1515 and 1519 (SAB, 120, *Hallegeboden*, ii, fos. 185r–v; iii, fos. 32r, 53v, 166v) – though on these occasions guild deans were required to dress in a penitential black.

[66] Durandus cites seven categories of processors: 'clerici, religiosi, moniales, pueri, laici perfecte aetatis, vidue et continentes, coniugati' (*Guillelmi Duranti V–VI*, pp. 499–500).

was hardly a new one. Galbert of Bruges had been adamant that processions undertaken in the town in 1128 had been to no avail: by following the crosses and processions of clergy with hardened hearts, the people of Bruges had actually provoked God to wrath rather than appeasing him.[67] Likewise in late medieval Bruges, citizens were quite aware of the uncertain potential of ceremonial rite. General processions had to be continually repeated: they could not be anything but indeterminate and provisional in effect.

### Processions and St Donatian's church

Besides the limitations imposed by liturgical format, there were other restrictions on the manipulation of general processions by civic authorities. The growing use made of processions may have marked an assertion of lay authority over ecclesiastical and saintly bodies. Yet despite the encroachment of civic influence, the organisation of general processions was never the exclusive province of the town magistrates.

St Donatian's, the most venerable church in the town, claimed special prerogatives in these matters. In 1463 the canons could assert as 'custom' that general processions assembled in the *burg*, next to their church, and that when the Sacrament was being processed, it could come only from within their church.[68] Later civic ordinances (*Hallegeboden*) tacitly recognise this claim: the call for general processions always began with the assertion that it had been agreed upon by the magistracy and 'churchmen'. This usually meant consultation with the canons of St Donatian, a process referred to as 'antique custom'.[69]

Yet there were other churchmen in the town to whom the municipal government might turn for advice, and who as a consequence threatened to undermine the privileges of St Donatian. The chapter's assertion in 1463 that the Sacrament carried in general processions was to come from its church was part of an assertion of precedence over the two other main collegiate churches, Our Lady's and St Saviour's (made during a case pertaining to burial rights): the Sacrament was not to come from either of these churches.[70] St Donatian's also resented suggestion that the 'dean of Christianity' – the bishop of Tournai's representative – had any claim to organise processions. On

[67] Galbert, *Murder of Charles the Good*, p. 303.
[68] BAB, I13 (bundle of cases, unfoliated); RAB (BN), 2309.
[69] BAB, A55, fo. 180r (27 July 1482).
[70] The chapter could send deputies to the other two churches to advise on how general processions should be organised; BAB, A53, fo. 414v (1472); A57, fo. 182r (1502).

8 June 1467 the chapter insisted that the dean did not have the right to institute general processions, and sent a delegation to the town magistrates to point out that 'ancient customs' were not being observed in this matter.[71]

The church was particularly protective of the rights and precedence of its own patron saints. If the Sacrament carried in processions invariably came from St Donatian's, it is also clear that the relics to which the town authorities had most recourse were also housed within the same church. St Donatian's and St Basil's were the relics most frequently processed. Indeed, over 94 per cent of all processions (for which we have information) carried relics or the Sacrament from St Donatian's (see Figure 2.2). The station church most frequently chosen was also St Donatian's (see Figure 2.3). This was not simply a matter of civic choice: it was implicit recognition of the claims to precedence asserted by this church over others within the town.

Civic requests for the services of St Donatian's saints were not always received by the canons with submissive goodwill. With the number of processions steadily rising by the 1460s, the church had begun to feel the pressure of urban demands. It is in 1466 that the chapter act-books first record explicitly the request for a general procession (with the body of St Donatian) from the town 'legislators'.[72] These requests were recorded with greater frequency thereafter. But they were not always welcome, especially when it concerned the body of St Donatian; and as the demands of the town for processions began to escalate, so did tension with the chapter.

The first hints of trouble began in April 1465. The dean and chapter sent deputies to the civic chambers to insist on their right to initiate general processions. On 27 January 1466, the canons agreed to a procession with St Donatian's body, though their preference had been to offer St Basil's relics. The decision was not unanimous. In June 1467 the canons were grumbling that the town council (as well as the dean of Christianity) were violating 'ancient customs' by initiating general processions. Deputies had to be sent to the civic chambers in October 1468 to insist that St Donatian's body not be carried with relics from other churches.[73] In August 1474 – a year in which a sudden jump in the number of processions had occurred – civic officials came before the chapter asking for St Donatian's body to be processed. They were met with refusal, and were offered St Basil's relics instead.[74]

[71] *Ibid.*, A53, fo. 231v. On 21 December 1482 the chapter declared that the dean of Christianity had no rights of jurisdiction over St Donatian's (*ibid.*, A55, fos. 198v–199r).

[72] *Ibid.*, A53, fo. 171r. [73] *Ibid.*, fos. 132v, 218v, 231v, 287r. [74] *Ibid.*, A54, fo. 48r.

Demands for relics were heavier still in the 1480s, and the chapter complained on 27 July 1482 that the town was not always seeking its advice on general processions. The canons became more obdurate about civic use of St Donatian's services. In May 1483 the town wanted a procession with the relic, but the chapter would only allow use of St Basil. In September, the canons consented to the transporting of St Donatian, but with no other relic.[75] In August 1484, another request by the town council for the body of St Donatian met with the obstinate offer only of St Basil's feretory.[76]

In 1485, dispute reached a new level of acrimony. On 14 May, Adrian Caernoet was sent by the town legislators to request a general procession for the following day to the Franciscans' church.[77] They wanted three feretories to be carried, including St Donatian's. Maximilian's forces were facing 'hostile armies' outside Oudenaarde; saintly intercession was badly needed. The canons declared that St Donatian should only be carried by itself and not with other relics, and that the town council should choose St Donatian alone or process with the relics of Saints Basil, Eleutherius or Maximus. But since they were not in full congregation they could not give a final decision. The town deputies persisted in their request for St Donatian, saying that the best saints were needed to intercede and to inspire devotion among the people. They would not be sent away easily. They would wait till the hour of vespers to hear a full decision. Vespers came. The dean and chapter deliberated but concluded that the body of St Donatian would not be carried with other relics. Those of St Basil or St Maximus might be. The canons had other things to point out: according to 'ancient statute' St Donatian was only to be carried in times of greatest need and only with the greatest veneration, and not with other relics. Deputies were to be sent to the city chambers to remonstrate. The canons were prepared to make a small concession: they might allow St Donatian's body to be carried, by itself, in the following week. This did not entirely mollify the town council. It decided to assemble on the following day in the church of Our Lady and have a general procession with other churches. The councillor Lodewijk Steylin appeared before the chapter to remonstrate, making the sign of the cross, angrily declaring that this would not be forgotten as long as he lived.[78]

[75] *Ibid.*, A55, fos. 180r, 212r, 225v. [76] *Ibid.*, A56, fo. 46r.

[77] For the following: *ibid.*, fos. 72r–v.

[78] As it turned out, Lodewijk (unless it is his son with the same name being referred to here) had only a few months to live: he was executed in August 1485 for opposing Maximilian (Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 86).

After matins, the dean of Christianity informed the canons that he had received letters from the town legislators to the effect that general processions did not customarily congregate in St Donatian's, but in Our Lady's church.[79] Here the dean was deferential: he wanted to know how he should act. The canons stated that they would not prevent a procession leaving from Our Lady's, and would allow St Basil's feretory to be carried with the relics of St Boniface and St Eligius to the friary. They would, however, conduct their own procession, around the choir, with the St Basil to pray for peace and the health of country and prince.[80]

The wranglings did not end there. On 19 May the canons were faced with another urgent request from the town council. The armies of Maximilian and Philip were approaching Oudenaarde: such was the danger that God and his saints needed to be implored to grant peace. The town council asked for St Donatian's body to be carried in procession on the next day, with the feretories of St Boniface (from Our Lady's) and St Eligius (from St Saviour's). To the dean and chapter this was unacceptable: it offended the statutes and customs of the church for the body of their patron saint to be carried with relics from other churches. The town deputies insisted that their request was made not from any right but as a favour. The dean and chapter emphasised their patron saint should only be processed in cases of 'great necessity' and with 'great reverence'. But after much debate, and in order to avoid 'division and discord', the dean and chapter agreed that St Donatian should be carried with the feretories of St Basil and St Maximus.[81] The compromise seems to have gone further, for a chronicler records a general procession on 20 May to St Donatian's with the relics of these three saints, in conjunction with the relics of St Boniface and St Eligius – but his description suggests that there was some physical separation kept during the procession between these sets of relics.[82]

There were still problems in the following year. On 1 February 1486, because of exceptional rainfall, the town asked for processions to be conducted for eight days consecutively, with the body of St Donatian on display in the choir throughout. To the canons, such a request was a 'great novelty'. It could not be done unless the situation was one of

[79] BAB, A56, fo. 72v.

[80] The anonymous chronicler actually states that the body of St Donatian was carried to the Friars Preacher with the relics of Saints Boniface and Eligius on 15 May (Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 72). Yet the town's 'present wine' accounts mention only the carrying of St Boniface's relics and state that the 'singers' of Our Lady's church were given wine on that day 'because [those from St Donatian] were not there at the procession' (SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1484/5, fo. 31v).

[81] BAB, A56, fo. 73v. [82] Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 72–3.

'great gravity', and even then it required the 'greatest reverence'. They would process with St Donatian – once, on the following Sunday – and would process during the ensuing week, without his body.[83]

The chapter act-books record no further confrontations. Demand for relics processions remained high until the 1490s, but subsided slightly thereafter, and thus also the pressure for display of St Donatian. The canons continued to permit processions with his body. But perhaps the town deliberately asked for it less often. Between 1500 and 1520, the proportion of requests for St Donatian's body fell considerably. The holy object most often carried in procession out of St Donatian's church was not the body of a saint but the Body of Christ.[84]

In the end, demand for carrying the Sacrament was less contentious. The symbolic meanings generated by the Body of Christ might have been more varied and even controversial in other contexts,[85] but in late medieval Bruges, controversy was more likely to arise over treatment of other holy objects. The canons of St Donatian regarded custodianship of their patron's saintly remains as their special and exclusive responsibility. His body had always been treated with special veneration. Renovations of his shrine had been frequent and costly. Major expense went into improvements of the feretory in the 1460s and in 1486, at exactly the point when demand for its mobility was increasing.[86] Transport of St Donatian's body had long been the subject of particular attention. In 1296 a statute had laid down that four junior canons should carry the feretory of St Donatian.[87] The carrying of other relics does not seem to have merited special provision. The peregrinations of St Donatian on general processions demanded a larger number of carriers and candle-bearers than those of other relics within the church.[88] In November 1488, the absence of a sufficient number of senior carriers discovered during the course of one procession

[83] BAB, A56, fo. 95r. The anonymous chronicler records a procession on 6 February with the body of St Donatian (Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 100).

[84] To break down the figures in Figure 2.2 further: between 1470 and 1499, the Sacrament was carried in 13 per cent of processions, St Basil in 34 per cent and St Donatian in 18 per cent. In 1500 and 1520, these proportions were different: the Sacrament was carried in 45 per cent of processions, St Basil in 29 per cent and St Donatian in just 9 per cent.

[85] See above, pp. 63–4. [86] See below, p. 121. [87] BAB, A130, fo. 124r.

[88] For St Donatian being carried by four canons in general processions, and St Basil by two (by 1381), see BAB, G2, 1381/2, fos. 9v, 10r. In the disputes on 19 May 1485, the dean and chapter insisted that the feretories of St Donatian should be carried by canons, those of St Maximus by vicars and those of St Basil by chaplains of St Basil's (*ibid.*, A56, fo. 73v). The fabric accounts record payments for six or eight boys carrying candles in general processions before the relics of St Donatian (and before the Sacrament), as opposed to four before the relics of St Basil, St Eleutherius and St Maximus, and two before the relic of the head of St John the Baptist. For the earliest

with St Donatian, stirred the chapter to initiate an internal inquiry.[89] There were practical as well as spiritual reasons for the presence of extra carriers: St Donatian's feretory was probably larger than others within the church, and required a special platform for its display in station churches. Reasons given for the refusal in May 1483 to allow St Donation to be processed were the 'great expense' that went towards the lights attending the feretory, and the 'difficulties of carrying' it.[90]

Townsmen could refer to St Donatian as being 'their' patron.[91] In October 1488, the magistrates even petitioned Philip the Fair to be allowed to hold an annual guild parade on St Donatian's day.[92] It was a proposal unlikely to win favour with the canons. Townsmen may have been inclined to regard St Donatian as one of their special patrons, but the canons never considered him as anything but their own. The town authorities could not expect his body to emerge from its shrine without clerical consent. Nor could they dictate where it went. The relic had its own *via sacra*, which it followed on both its own feast day and on general processions, one quite different from the trajectory of the annual Holy Blood procession. While the Holy Blood relic on its annual May procession made its way out of St Basil's chapel to travel westwards down the affluent *Steenstraat* towards the Boeverie gate and thence to encircle the town walls, the feretory of St Donatian departed from its church to head eastwards down the *Hoogstraat*, turning right by the Franciscans, to return to the *burg* up *Wollestraat* and the *grote markt* (see Map 1.1).[93] This may in part have suited civic need: the route encompassed the main concentration of municipal buildings and took St Donatian past the Belfry (*Halle*). But the route had perhaps been determined by more ancient landmarks. It followed the lines of the first walling of the city in 1127, surrounding the count's castle and the church, St Donatian's, which had served it (see Map I.1). It recalled buildings and spaces associated with memories that predated those that late medieval town authorities had come to regard as symbols of civic identity.

examples of each: *ibid.*, G2, 1381/2, fo. 10r (St Basil), and 1382/3, fo. 6r (St Donatian and St Basil), though these early examples may be for the annual Rogation procession; G2, 1409/10, fo. 8r, and G5, 1463/4, fo. 16v (St Donatian); G5, 1472/3, fo. 12v (St Eleutherius); G6, 1475/6, fo. 15r (St Basil); G6, 1478/9, fos. 16v–17r (Sacrament); G6, 1481/2, fo. 17r (St Maximus); G6, 1484/5, fo. 16r (head of St John).

[89] *Ibid.*, A56, fo. 171r. [90] *Ibid.*, A55, fo. 212r.

[91] In the early sixteenth century, the town council referred to St Donatian as 'patron of our town' when calling for a procession with his body: SAB, 120, *Hallegeboden*, ii, fos. 62r, 185r (1506 and 1509).

[92] ADN, B1705, fos. 10r–11v, transcribed in Haemers and Lecuppre-Desjardin, 'Conquérir et reconquérir', pp. 137–8).

[93] See Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 33.

By the end of the fifteenth century, the general procession had become one of the most distinctive features of 'civic religion' in Bruges. Like the Holy Blood procession, its organisation was considered to fall within the remit of town councils but, unlike the Holy Blood procession, it could be put on more frequently and could call on a greater range of clerical and heavenly intercessors. The Holy Blood relic was no longer the only sacred artefact that might be required to protect the citizens of Bruges. Other relics had increasingly been made to march at civic command. Clerics and relics within the town were being summoned and dispatched to station churches by civic decree more than they had ever been in the past. Lay voices were becoming more insistent in the ears of priests and saints. The regular journeys of relics out to stations emphasised the links between the many churches of the town; the bringing together of several relics in common purpose to intercede for citizens, notwithstanding clerical custodianship of saintly remains, emphasised the public and civic function of saints. Frequent processions between churches, sometimes with stations in public spaces, created a new network of intercession to a large degree under civic management. By their repetition, town governments sought to encourage devotional and orderly behaviour among their citizens – both through what processions 'said' and through what they 'did'. Processions signalled the required behaviour of a chosen people and instilled the necessary devotion.

But the extent of civic authority over general processions was hardly unlimited. The canons St Donatian's were made to listen more frequently to civic demands, but they were still inclined to turn a deaf ear if they deemed such demands to violate tradition. Their grip over the general procession remained tight: their relics were the ones most frequently used, and their church continued to serve as the main station where these relics were taken. Moreover, the timing, purpose and even effects of the general procession were also determined to an extent by liturgical tradition. Civic authorities might attempt to manipulate this tradition, but they could not remove it: for the procession to be understood and for it to work at all, it had to remain a liturgical rite. Thus, the insistence of St Donatian's on the hallowed purposes of relic processions – *pro aere, pro pace et pro principe* – limited the occasions on which such processions might be called. The penitential aspect of the supplicatory procession shaped the effects it generated: these were not the same as those of Holy Blood day. Calling a general procession was potentially a double-edged sword in the hands of a civic government. The ability to marshal citizens and clergy so quickly and frequently was

testimony to its hold over the town. But endless repetition suggested weakness and uncertainty of outcome. Bruges and its government during general processions might present itself as a sacred community, but their claim to sacredness had to be continually earned. And whereas the Holy Blood procession, with its arrangement of guilds and town officials, at least suggested an indirect association between secular hierarchies and sacred authority, general processions usually displayed categories of people sanctioned by liturgical precedent rather than social demand. The penitential community that these processions allowed civic governments to display was not one that necessarily bolstered secular hierarchy.

# 3 Feast days and liturgical commemoration

In 1419 the town magistrates decided to seek another kind of change to Holy Blood day. Liturgical arrangements for the feast day on which it fell – the Invention of the Holy Cross – were now thought insufficiently grand. In April they persuaded the clergy of St Donatian's to elevate the feast from a simple double to a triple, as Holy Trinity day was already then celebrated. Such was the 'popular devotion' for the Holy Blood procession, and so great the number of prelates who attended from Flanders and beyond, that the feast day required a higher rank. The town agreed to pay £24 *parisis* a year towards the more elaborate procedures required: the celebration of the offices of the day from first to second vespers, the singing of mass and motets, the hanging of gold and silk cloths on the high altar, lighting and bell-ringing, and pittances to the clergy who processed during the two weeks that followed Holy Blood day.[1] To ensure that the new arrangements for the feast were remembered, they were copied into one of the town's cartularies.[2]

This chapter is partly about the context in which such arrangements took place. At one level, the initiative of the town council in this matter is a striking example of the steps that civic bodies felt able to take in sacred affairs. It is one further way, besides management of processions, in which the magistracy sought to marshal the liturgical and sacred resources of the town. But such initiatives must also be set within a wider context of social and religious change. Investment in the celebration of feast days was usually the work not of civic governments but of individual benefactors, whose primary purpose was the generation of suffrage for their souls. So besides the efforts of town councils, this chapter is about the post-obit investments made by individual citizens – though links between municipal and individual benefaction can also be made.

[1] BAB, A50, fos. 36r, 63r, 64r–65v.
[2] SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 92v–93r.

Investigation of liturgical commemoration requires closer attention to the organisation of the liturgy within the churches of Bruges. Besides being copied into a town cartulary, the new celebrations on Holy Cross day in 1419 were also incorporated into the *liber planarius* of St Donatian's.[3] This was a more sophisticated book of commemoration than any that the town council needed to possess. It functioned for the canons as a calendar of all liturgical arrangements that took place on every day or season of the year, and the manner in which particular saints' and other feast days were celebrated. It also functioned as a book commemorating the dead. Under each of these days was listed the names of the church's benefactors and the services required for their souls – commemoration of individuals thus synchronising with the passage of liturgical time.

Liturgical time was eternal and cyclical, but arrangements made to mark it were in a state of constant flux. During the later Middle Ages commemoration of all kinds, whether for the dead or special dead, was expanded and elaborated upon more than ever before. Gradations between different types of feast day became more varied, and elevations to higher ranks more frequent.[4] As we shall see, St Donatian's *planarius* had to be replaced more than once: new feast days were added and older ones were augmented; new benefactors were inserted, expanding the number of days on which liturgical celebration took place or adding to the complexity of existing ones. The same was the case for the other two mother churches in Bruges (Our Lady's and St Saviour's), which also possessed similar *planarii*. Analysis of the dates and forms of these benefactions reveals the process of change more precisely, and provides a wider context for the changes made to Holy Cross day in 1419.

## Commemoration for the soul *c.* 1200–1400

The oldest form of commemorative service was the obit or anniversary. Following monastic tradition, the three mother churches of Bruges recorded obit foundations in their *planarii*. The oldest of these to survive belongs to St Saviour's, and was probably compiled in the 1340s (see Appendix 2). Over one thousand obits had been written into it by then: the earliest is dateable to 1231, but many of them probably date back to the twelfth century. The earliest surviving *planarius* of St

[3] BAB, A141, fo. 36r. For a brief overview of these *planarii*, see A. Dewitte, 'Planarii als bron voor cultuur te Brugge in de middeleeuwen', *Biekorf* 97 (1997), 297–304.

[4] In St Donatian's, there were by the fourteenth century five main types of feast days: those of nine lessons, nine antiphons, solemn, doubles and great doubles (or triples). Each of these was subdivided into major/red-letter and minor days.

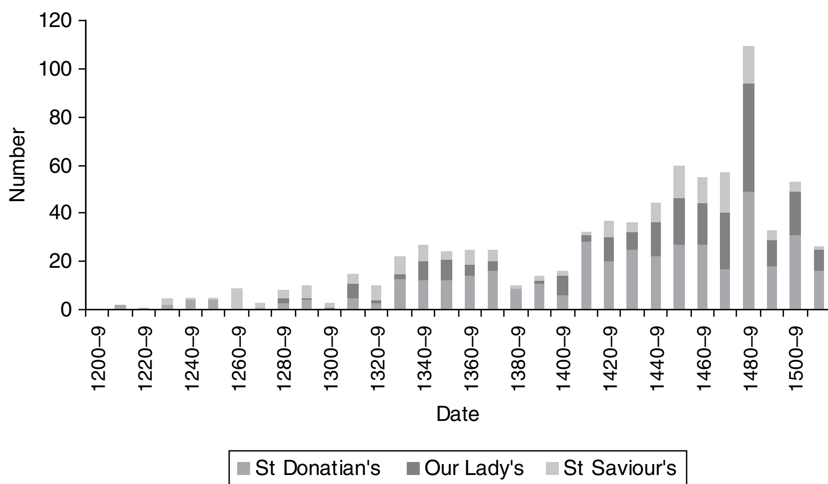



Figure 3.1 Dated obits from the *planarii* of the three mother churches of Bruges. This figure does not include obits that I have not been able to date exactly. This seriously underestimates the actual number founded, especially for the period before 1300 (see below). But the figure gives a better idea of trends from *c*. 1320 onwards. The undated names can be placed within wider periods, following dating methods, for each *planarius*, followed in Appendix 2. I have counted as one benefactor cases where a particular obit was founded by more than one individual (such as a husband and wife). Many benefactors founded obits or services on more than one day, but I have counted their names once. The total number of obit founders in each church are as follows:

| Church | A | B |
|---|---|---|
| St Saviour's | | |
| *c*. 1100?–*c*. 1340 | 1159 | 45 |
| *c*. 1340–*c*. 1490 | 463 | 105 |
| St Donatian's | | |
| *c*. 1100?–*c*. 1320 | 343 | 42 |
| *c*. 1320–1420 | 292 | 149 |
| 1420–1520 | 421 | 278 |
| Our Lady's | | |
| *c*. 1100?–1299 | 52 | 10 |
| 1300–99 | 80 | 52 |
| 1400–50 | 233 | 202 |

*Key*: A = total number of benefactors who founded obits (dated and undated).
B = total number of benefactors whose obits can be dated more precisely (forming figures used in Figure 3.1 above).

Donatian's was begun in the late fifteenth century (possibly in 1481), but it incorporates names that were copied from two earlier such books, referred to as the 'old' and the 'new' book: 343 obit founders were copied from the older of the two ('de antiquo libro'), and belong to a period from the twelfth century to around 1320. As for Our Lady's church, its earliest *planarius* dates to the fifteenth century, and includes at least 52 names that can be dated to the thirteenth century or perhaps earlier (see Figure 3.1; Appendix 3).

The majority of obit founders in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries apparently left no more than a 'pittance' for their anniversary. In St Donatian's (before 1320) thirty-one (9 per cent) made extra provision, the majority of these providing a *refectio*[5] for the canons and clergy on their anniversary or occasionally on another feast day. Some provided for pittances on more than one feast day during the year, which increased clerical attendance for services on those days.

From the late thirteenth century onwards, a few founders made more elaborate provision for augmenting or even establishing a feast day.[6] At St Donatian's in the 1250s, for instance, the canon Jacob Fuchelare gifted £25 of rents a year for pittances and *refectiones* on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Octave of the Ascension, and the feasts of St Mark and Saints Peter and Paul, as well as for the 'new feast' of St Francis.[7] Seven founders (2 per cent) 'from the old book' (again probably from the late thirteenth century onwards) begin to specify particular antiphons to be sung at vespers or matins on feast days they wished to augment (see Figure 3.2 Appendices 3, 4).

The most lavish form of commemoration was the foundation of 'chaplaincies' or chantries, for the daily and perpetual celebration of mass. The earliest in St Donatian's was founded in 1190;[8] eight more were added in the thirteenth century. In the same century, thirteen were founded in St Saviour's (most after 1250), eight in Our Lady's. These continued to be founded in the fourteenth century, but after

[5] This practice reflects the claustral origins of the collegiate church, when meals were all eaten together: benefactions for *refectiones* were turned into distributions to the clergy; L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *L'Obituaire de Saint-Donatien de Bruges* (Brussels, 1889), p. 12.

[6] For overviews of foundations in St Donatian's and Our Lady's, see A. Dewitte, 'Iconen en ritueel in de Brugse Donaaskerk, 1200–1550', *Biekorf* 99 (1999), 44–53; and A. Dewitte, 'Muziek in de Brugse Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk, 1291–1583', *Sacris erudiri* 37 (1997), 421–84, esp. pp. 444–8.

[7] BAB, D40, 158, 159, 186; A141, fos. 13r, 99r, 99v. For his obit in St Saviour's: RAB (FD), 81, fo. 12v.

[8] Countess Margaret of Flanders' foundation (BAB, D40, 29).

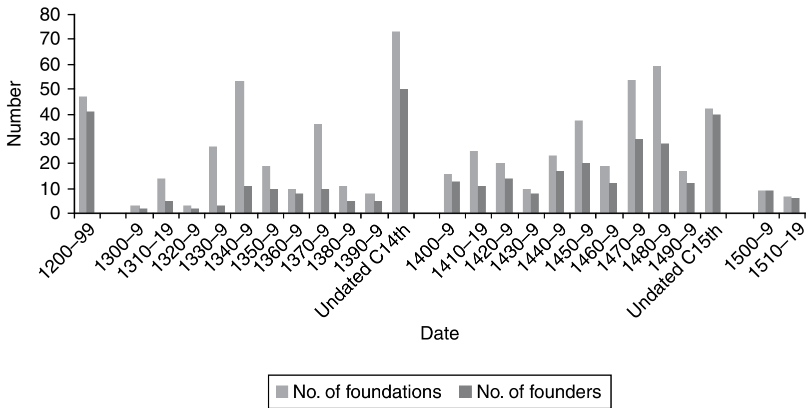



Figure 3.2 Foundations augmenting feast days in the three mother churches of Bruges (see also Appendix 4).

the 1370s fewer daily masses were founded by individuals in Bruges churches.[9] Decreasing availability of altar space may partly explain this decline,[10] but as we shall see there were other distinctive forms of perpetual commemoration that benefactors may have begun to prefer.

It is difficult to tell whether more names were being added to *planarii* in the fourteenth century than before. It appears to be so for St Donatian's and Our Lady's, but not for St Saviour's.[11] What is clear, however, is that from the end of the thirteenth century, benefactors began to require a more elaborate range of celebration for their anniversaries. In addition, a larger proportion of them also made provision for the augmentation of feast days (see Figure 3.2; Appendices 3, 4). In the

9 Between 1300 and 1370, sixteen perpetual chantries were founded in St Donatian's (nine after 1350), six in St Saviour's (three after 1350) and fifteen in Our Lady's (six after 1350). Thereafter far fewer were founded, though there was an increase in foundations specifying weekly or more occasional masses during the year in the 1470s and 1480s (which complements the high-point of other kinds of foundation – see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

10 See for instance the filling up of altar spaces in St Donatian's: J. Gaillard, *Inscriptions funéraires et monumentales de la Flandre occidentale: Eglise cathédral de St Donat* (Bruges, 1863), pp. 12–13. When new space became available in Bruges churches, however, it could still be filled with new chantry chapels, as in the case of St James', rebuilt in the mid fifteenth century (see below, p. 124).

11 See Figure 3.2. It may be that when the fifteenth-century *planarii* from St Donatian's and Our Lady's were compiled, not all the names from earlier *planarii* were copied in: the older the obit, the more likely that its supporting endowment would have disappeared. But the earliest surviving *planarius* of St Saviour's was older and may be a more faithful record of earlier obit foundation.

thirteenth century, 47 feast days[12] were augmented by 41 benefactors in one or more of the three mother churches. In the following century, 257 feast days (107 different days) were augmented by 110 benefactors. More specific and elaborate provision was made in the fourteenth century than earlier: more donors requested the singing of antiphons, the performance of processions (usually from high altar to other altars within the church) or an increase in the number of offices celebrated on the day. More benefactors made provision for feast days to be elevated to the rank of double (see Appendix 4).

The trend towards the endowment of feast days accelerated from the late 1360s onwards, at a point when perpetual chantry foundation began to tail off.[13] More significant is the increasing complexity and detail of foundations made. More benefactors specified antiphons to be sung at certain offices of the day, particularly during processions. Whereas in the early fourteenth century major benefactors tended to spread limited provision over many feast days,[14] their successors from the late 1360s concentrated heavier endowments on more elaborate arrangements for fewer feast days.

In the same period provision for polyphonic singing grew considerably. In St Donatian's the feast days of Saints Donatian, Machut and Leonard were already occasions for polyphonic masses in the late fourteenth century; other feast days were similarly endowed from the end of the century onwards. The regular singing of a *missus de salve* (in honour of the Virgin Mary) was assisted by individual endowments, until the chapter itself made more extensive provision for it with a large choral foundation in 1421. By then, more elaborate mass cycles and motets had begun to be founded.[15]

In the smaller parish churches of Bruges, endowments were not as frequent, but they followed a similar pattern of greater complexity and scale from the late 1360s onwards. At St Walburga's, endowments from 1371 (particularly from Pieter van de Hille's widow) allowed for the celebration of the seven hours of the day from Mondays to Fridays.[16]

[12] Or 29 different feast days if we discount those augmented in one church that were also founded in another.

[13] Most of the foundations listed in Figure 3.2 as 'undated' for the fourteenth century can be placed in the later part of the century.

[14] See for instance Willem de Hond, *c.* 1345 in Our Lady's (pittances for nineteen feast days) or Christian Ketelaers, *c.* 1336 in St Saviour's (endowments for nine feast days); RAB, OLV, 735; FD, 81. See Figure 3.2.

[15] For an overview: R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 13–18.

[16] At least sixteen perpetual chantries were founded in the church between 1272 and 1360; a few founders specified small pittances for a large number of feast days (e.g. 1310: Martin vander Ruge for forty-two feast days; RAB, SW, 396, fos. 295v–298r). But from the 1360s the favoured form of liturgical commemoration was for heavier

At St Giles', endowments for the singing of *Salve* and for feast days increased in number from the 1380s.[17]

Another trend may be noted: a growing proportion of these benefactors from the 1360s were lay people. In the thirteenth century, most founders augmenting feast days had been members of the clergy; from the 1360s the majority were lay people. For example, Boudin de Vos, the mint-master serving the count of Flanders, gave an impressive £550 *parisis* in 1365 to the obedientiar of St Donatian's for rents to be bought to support his foundation: for *Salve regina* to be sung every Saturday in procession from choir to nave after vespers, for the antiphon of St Donatian to be sung at the station point, for a candle to burn before the image of the Virgin Mary and for the bell 'Naes' (Donatian) to be rung until the end of the antiphon.[18] Even more extensive was the provision made between 1368 and 1371 in Our Lady's by Jan van Aetricke, *baljuw* of Tilleghem and town councillor. He provided for a chantry, obit and for the Magnificat to be sung (with crosses carried in full procession) on St John's day in May and at five Marian feasts. These included the feast of Our Lady of the Snow (5 August), a feast day that had not been celebrated in Bruges before.[19] On the day, the great bell would be rung during the procession, and *Salve regina* sung by the choir. As well as extra provision for the feast days of Saints Ambrose, Gregory and Donatian, he requested a sermon to be preached on Corpus Christi day.[20]

endowment of particular feast days and endowment of the offices (*ibid*., 12, 14, 395, 396). In 1363 Ghermino Suudhuus and his brother had already left £129 *parisis* for vespers on Fridays, an Our Lady mass on Saturdays and a procession to Our Lady's altar on Easter Eve and Pentecost after the 'work' bells had sounded; and in 1372 made provision for the canonical hours to be celebrated on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (RAB, SW, 396, fos. 307v–311r). A. Dewitte, 'De zeven getijden in de Brugse Walburgakerk 1371–81', *Biekorf* 92 (1992), 420–1; and P. Declerck, 'Commuun en zeven getijden in de Brugse parochiekerken', *ASEB* 108 (1971), 117–73.

17 Before the 1380s, the most extensive endowment came from Jan van Atrecht in 1321, who asked for pittances on eighteen principal feasts (RAB, SG, 27, fos. 76v–80r). For the singing of *Salve* from 1388: *ibid*., fos. 32r–34v.

18 BAB, A141, fos. 1r–v, 101r; A47, fo. 174v; D42, 25. Boudin was also a benefactor of the Bogaerden and St Obrecht's hospital in Bruges (L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Inventaire diplomatique des archives de l'ancienne Ecole Bogarde à Bruges*, 3 vols. (Bruges, 1899), Vol. II, p. 323; RAB, FD, 86 (*Cartularium* Sint Obrechts), fos. 29v–33v). See J. M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism 1280–1390* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. p. 292.

19 The cult first appears in Rome in the tenth century, commemorating the building of Santa Maria Maggiore on a spot where snow had fallen out of season following a vision of the Virgin Mary. The feast day was extended to all churches in Rome in the fourteenth century, and appeared in the Low Countries at this time.

20 OCMW, OLV, Register 178, fos. 64v–67r; RAB, OLV, Register 735, fos. 37r, 38r, 46r, 57v, 73r, 119r, 124r; *ibid*., charter 110.

The larger investments that more lay people began to make for their souls in their parish churches, especially in the later fourteenth century, may be explained in a number of ways. The advent of plagues from 1349, increasing the likelihood of sudden death, is usually advanced as the most compelling reason to explain a heightened concern to seek insurance for the soul. Mass deaths during outbreaks of plague deepened anxiety that individual commemoration, without careful and specific endowment, would not be provided. The timing of more lavish provision for the soul, especially from the late 1360s after revisitations of plague, seems to fit with the trend towards greater specificity of provision.[21]

To this may be added the more indirect effects of plague on the economy, though these are harder to gauge. The accumulation of the necessary capital to make lavish endowments (and perhaps the relative absence of direct heirs) was more possible in the post-plague economy – though war and inflation took their toll on incomes in the 1370s and 1380s. Other factors, such as Bruges' increasing ability to attract international trade in the late fourteenth century, had a significant impact on native merchant wealth. Moreover, immigration into the town, which helped keep population levels relatively buoyant, as well as increasing social mobility in post-plague years, may have encouraged the foundation of more elaborate provision. It is possible to observe in Bruges a greater concern among 'elites' to distance themselves from social but upwardly mobile inferiors. According to the *planarii*, more citizens were availing themselves of elaborate post-obit commemoration. The pressure on those with status and capital to acquire more exclusive and distinctive forms of commemoration was perhaps greater in the later fourteenth century than it had been before.

Fear of death and oblivion, however, can provide only a partial explanation for these trends. For one thing, they predate the advent of plague. The trend among benefactors to raise feast days to the rank of double, for instance, was already increasing from the 1330s. The increasing tendency among lay people to demand more elaborate provision was also part of a long-term trend towards lay activism in the management of parishes and their post-obit services. In the thirteenth century, endowments for obits seem to have been entrusted principally to clerical bodies; from the early fourteenth century, the involvement of the

[21] See, for example, S. K. Cohn, *The Cult of Remembrance and the Black Death: Six Renaissance Cities in Central Italy* (London, 1992). Comparisons with Bruges are difficult to make: Cohn's studies rely on testamentary evidence (and wishes), unavailable in significant quantity in Bruges. On the other hand, analysis based here on (actual) endowments recorded in Bruges *planarii* gives a different impression of post-obit choices.

laity appears to have increased significantly. More references to lay officials overseeing or even receiving endowments begin to be made.[22] Lay involvement in post-obit provision became more clearly established.

Emphasis on the Black Death as a primary explanation for changes in post-obit provision has another drawback. It can give too much weight to the need for individual commemoration as the main purpose of foundations. While all post-obit foundations were intended to generate suffrage for souls to reduce time in Purgatory, they were also implicitly intended to increase the divine service of the institutions in which they were founded. At the very least, an institution might expect to profit from the endowment. But beyond this, it is quite clear that many foundations were intended to have a wider impact within parish and town.

## Public and civic devotion

The greater tendency in the later fourteenth century to endow feast days with more offices, antiphons and processions is better understood if the public dimension of these services is appreciated. To a large extent, celebration took place within sacred space: mass had to be celebrated at particular altars, and the processions performed and the antiphons sung usually inside the church itself. But sight and sound of more intensive celebration would have been evident to lay people: many of the processions added to feast days moved from choir to nave, into space which the laity were permitted to occupy. Moreover, these liturgical events were announced to a wider public outside. An increasing number of founders, like Boudin de Vos and Jan van Aertricke, specified that bells were to be rung when processions were undertaken.

[22] Lay churchwardens doubtless already had responsibilities towards parish church fabrics in the thirteenth century, but evidence in Bruges for this is lacking. (For elsewhere in the Low Countries: J. Kuys, ‘Secular Authorities and Parish Church Building in Late Medieval Towns in the Netherlands’, in M. De Smet, J. Kuys and P. Trio, ‘Processions and Church Fabrics in the Low Countries during the Late Middle Ages’, *K. U. Leuven Voorlopige publicatie* 111 (2006), 109–33). As for endowments, the earliest cartulary of Our Lady’s records gifts for anniversaries and masses mostly from the 1220s to the early fourteenth century: endowments were invariably given to the ‘provost’ or ‘community of the choir’ (RAB, OLV, 720). The earliest cartulary of St Saviour’s shows endowments for divine service given to the ‘commune’ of clergy within the church from the early thirteenth century. The first reference to the *provisores* of the church appears in 1321 (BAB, S718, fos. 21r–v). At St Walburga’s we find ‘churchwardens’ overseeing foundations from the 1310s (RAB, SW, 396, fo. 201v; 13, fo. 17r; 395, fos. 17r–v); at St Giles’ from 1321 (*ibid.*, SG, 26, fos. 76v–80r): these cartularies were probably begun in the late fourteenth century. At St Cross’, churchwardens and the ‘commune of clergy’ were jointly receiving endowments for anniversaries from 1336 (*ibid.*, SA, 5, fo. 107v). This cartulary was begun in 1372 by the *kerkmeesters ende provisores* of the church.

The aim of reaching a wider audience is sometimes expressed. 'Naes' was to sound for Vos' foundation 'to move the devotion of the people'. Such foundations had to compete with the bell-ringing that already marked the daily mass in this and other churches in Bruges. By 1381 St Donatian's 'clerk of the tower' was required to ring the great bell 100 times before the mass of Holy Cross, and the smaller bells 80 times.[23] By the end of the fourteenth century, church bells must have been in heavier use than ever before, which took its toll in more ways than one: from 1400, extensive work was required on the bell-tower of St Donatian's.[24]

Foundations were deliberately made to involve a wider public in other ways. From the 1360s, we find more endowments for dramatic performances. Franciscus Lootghieter, a citizen, provided for the Easter play in Our Lady's, to which Jan van Aertricke also contributed.[25] In 1380 the provost of St Donatian, Zegher de Beka, established the 'Golden mass' (the *Missus est Gabriel angelus*) which took place on the Wednesday before Ember days near Christmas, and included a dramatic representation of the Annunciation.[26]

Endowments began to be made for the preaching of sermons. In 1391, Niclaas Barbezaen, a wealthy broker highly prominent in civic government, made arrangements with the clergy and churchwardens of St James' for a sermon to be delivered every Wednesday in the church

[23] According to a foundation charter in 1381 (of Aghata, widow of Pieter van Hille, former alderman), which required this bell-ringing to be replicated at St Walburga's: RAB, SW, 74 (*Cartularium*), fos. 27r–33v; OCMW, SW, Register 30, fos. 48r–52r; Declerck, 'Commuun', p. 168.

[24] BAB, A49, fo. 37r. Serious work was begun in 1404 (*ibid.*, fos. 74v–75r; G2, 1405/6, fo. 8r). In 1413, the town contributed £100 *parisis* to the bell-tower (SAB, 216, 1413/14, fo. 81r); but great debts were reported (BAB, A252, 313). A chapter-meeting in 1418 dealt with the hanging of the bells, for which canon Jan de Hagha made provision (A50, fos. 36v–37r). There were signs of strain a decade later: the chapter decided to alter the level of bell-ringing on great feast days because of damage to the tower and bells (*ibid.*, fo. 187r). The main bell had to be replaced entirely: 'Donatianus' was installed in 1431/2, which cost over £613 *parisis* (G3, 1431/2, fo. 16v).

[25] Lootghieter's legacy lists distributions to the actors who played the parts of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist, angels, Jews, robbers and others. Strohm (*Music*, p. 45) dates this to 1432, but a date nearer the 1370s is possible given records of the legacy close to other foundations near that date given in two registers: BAB, OLV, Register 735 (2nd foliation), fos. 196r, 199r; OCMW, OLV, Register 178, fo. 5v. A Franciscus Lootghieter and wife are also mentioned as living in 1346, in BAB, A47, fo. 8r. For Jan van Aertricke: BAB, OLV, charter 110 (1372).

[26] BAB, D42, 33; A141, fo. 102v; Strohm, *Music*, pp. 52–3. Zegher's benefactions included a large anniversary; pittances for canons and choir boys on Good Friday and for singers of *Alma redemptoris* at Advent; and bell-ringing every Wednesday at matins in Lent. In 1393 he bequeathed a crystal reliquary with an image of the Virgin Mary, and *jocalia* for the carrying of the Host on Corpus Christi day and the octave: BAB, A141, fos. 89r–v, 99r, 101v, 102r; D42, 36.

'by a good preacher'.[27] In 1411 Bernard van Aertricke, a wealthy citizen and son of Jan (founder of the feast of Our Lady of the Snow), required the canons of St Donatian's on St Mark's day to preach a sermon in the *burg* 'to the people'.[28]

The display of relics or images was specified by a few founders from the early fifteenth century. In 1405 Jan de Huesden, provost of Our Lady's, stipulated that the procession on the feast of Mary Magdalene be made carrying an image of the saint;[29] Bernard van Aertricke specified a distribution on St Maximus' day to the 'clerk of the tower' in St Donatian's for taking down and remounting the feretory containing this saint's relics.

The number of processions that took place outside the church as well as within was also increasing in the late fourteenth century. Extra provision was made in St Donatian's for processions to be undertaken every Friday, from the octave of Trinity to the beginning of August, to seven neighbouring chapels and churches, including the Franciscans and Dominicans.[30] Feast days on which St Donatian's clergy had traditionally processed outside the church were also enhanced. In 1374, Willem Vernaechten, dean and later provost, augmented the feast day of St Donatian, stipulating the route to be taken by the relics within the church, where a station was to be held and how many canons and vicars were to carry the feretory.[31] In 1419 the chapter made careful arrangements for the carrying of St Donatian's relics inside and outside the church.[32]

The three days of Rogation (before Ascension) also involved processions outside the church, and were part of 'antique custom'. Rogatian involved coordination with the other two mother churches in Bruges: processions were undertaken by the clergy of St Donatian's,

[27] RAB, SJ, 151, charter 111. He also made provision in 1403 for the church commune to sing the seven canonical hours on five Marian feast days (*ibid*., charter 136). For his contribution to public works – bridges, fountains, gates, towers, walls – to the 'profit of the town' (according to his self-exculpatory letter to the duke in 1407), see GVS, Vol. III, p. 12.

[28] BAB, A141, fo. 34r. For his other foundations: *ibid*., fos. 57r, 78r, 86r, 88r; and gifts to the Dark Room prison, SAB, 196 (*Cartularium*), fos. 54v–55r.

[29] BAB, OLV, 735, fo. 111v. *O beata Maria Magdalena* and *Ave regina* were to be sung in the procession. De Huesden and Jacop Grave, a junior cleric, also made provision for another Marian antiphon to be sung on procession every Sunday (*ibid*., fo. cxcvi). For dating his benefaction, see SAB, 406 (*Korenmarkt*), Register, fos. 16v–25r.

[30] This was recorded in the *planarius* of St Donatian's as *de novo libro* – thus after 1320 and quite probably in the late fourteenth century; BAB, A141, fo. 101r.

[31] *Ibid*., A48, fo. 51v; A141, fo. 72r. For his obit in 1397 and masses in St Machut's chapel: D42, 47; and A49, fos. 22r, 52v.

[32] *Ibid*., A50, fos. 74r–v.

Our Lady's and St Saviour's on successive days to station churches outside the town walls – St Michael's, St Bavo's and St Cross'. These were enhanced by endowments for distributions to processors.[33] In 1419 Rogation was reorganised by St Donatian's. The station churches of St Michael and St Bavo were switched to those of Mary Magdalene and St Katherine respectively. This was because of the 'distance of those places' and unsuitable paths (*inepta via*) to the previous churches – and because the new routes and stations would encourage devotion among the people.[34]

A concern for public worship characterises the more elaborate foundations of both lay and clerical benefactors from the late fourteenth century. A large number of different feast days were augmented with additional processions, antiphons and bell-ringing. But there was a particular tendency to expand public worship on days that were associated with Christ or the Virgin Mary. Before Holy Cross day in May was elevated in St Donatian's, its twin feast day in September (the Exaltation) had already been raised to the rank of solemn double (or triple) by the canon Jan de Hagha in 1415 with an endowment worth £50 *parisis*.[35] In St Walburga's the widow of Pieter van de Hille (former alderman), in addition to bell-ringing, required a torch to be lit every Friday at the Holy Cross mass, when the Sacrament was elevated.

A significant number of benefactors, from the 1350s onwards, paid particular attention to the feast of Corpus Christi. Jan van Aertricke was one of eight benefactors (most of them lay people) who made specific provision for celebrating Corpus Christi in Our Lady's in the late fourteenth century.[36] In 1400 Jan van Nieuwenhove and his wife left a large package of rents worth £50 annually to enhance, with antiphons

[33] For gifts to the Rogation procession from Our Lady's: Jan Hanke, *custos*, who also required a sermon to be preached 'to the people' on Rogation Tuesday, *c*. 1349 (RAB, OLV, Register 735, fo. 199r; cf. *ibid*., O323); to the Rogation procession from St Donatian's: Jan Hoste, furrier and alderman, 1331, who also provided for singing the Magnificat on the eve of the Feast of the Conception in 1351 (BAB, A141, fo. 18r; A47, fo. 167r; D42, 12); and Quintin, son of Nicholas, 1418 (*ibid*., A50, fo. 43v; A141, fo. 61r).

[34] BAB, A50, fos. 66v, 67r.

[35] His endowments were made between 1410 and 1424 and included distributions on many feast days, especially those of the apostles: *ibid*., A49, fos. 137r–138v; A50, fos. 36v–37v, 113r; A141, fos. 8r, 13r, 16v, 17r–v, 35v, 46r, 54r–v, 58r, 64v, 69r–v, 70r, 71v, 81r, 88v, 93v, 101v, 165r.

[36] Willem de Hulst, cleric (*c*. 1321); Willem de Hond (1340s) and Margaret Coucklare, his wife (by 1351); Michiel de Joncheer and his wife (1357); Henric Lopin and his wife (after 1357); Jan Judemaer, *magister* (1360s?): RAB, OLV, 735, fos. 200r–201v; and cf. dates in *ibid*., 720 and 1350, fo. 49r; OCMW, OLV, Register 178. Precise dates for fourteenth-century foundations by Margaret, widow of Jan Tebelins; and Hugo de Mirabeele, canon, are unknown.

and bell-ringing, veneration of the Sacrament in procession every Sunday, and on the octave of Corpus Christi.[37] In St Donatian's, the octave of Corpus Christi, already a great double by the late fourteenth century,[38] was enhanced after 1417 by the endowment of Lysebette Parools, widow of Robrecht van Cappele, which required the succentor to assemble choir boys to sing a motet during the procession.[39] In St Saviour's, similar endowments were made. By the early fifteenth century, Corpus Christi was a cult venerated in Bruges churches on a grander scale than most other feast days.

The most frequently endowed feast days in the town were Marian. This was hardly peculiar to Bruges: the feast days of the Virgin Mary, and her wider family, were of course universally venerated, and were increased between 1380 and 1500, often with papal approval.[40] Throughout this period benefactors augmented the offices and processions on those days in countless ways. Marian devotion was built into the liturgy in other forms, not least with the antiphons, particularly *Alma redemptoris mater* and *Salve regina*, which benefactors often requested to be sung in processions on the feast days of other saints. In Bruges, as elsewhere, new Marian feast days were being added by laity as well as clergy – Jan van Aertricke's endowment of the feast of Our Lady of the Snow being a striking case in point.

Clearly then, such foundations were intended not only to generate intercession for individual souls but also to stimulate devotion among citizens at large. The enhancement of liturgical celebration in the later fourteenth century was prompted only in part by a fear of untimely death following the Black Death. It was also driven by the spectacle of unregulated devotional responses to plague. Clerical and civic authorities in Tournai, as we saw (Chapter 1), were compelled in 1349 to take liturgical steps to deal with the excesses of flagellants – many hundreds of whom had journeyed from Bruges. Greater investment in the Holy Blood procession in Bruges itself was one of the measures taken by the civic government during the 1350s in order to enhance ordered public worship: the endowments of individual citizens were perhaps intended to achieve a similar effect. Some enhanced the feast of Corpus Christi

[37] BAB, OLV, charter 741. [38] Gilliodts-van Severen, *L'Obituaire*, pp. 1–2.

[39] BAB, A50, fos. 56r, 57r. To this she was to add further endowments for the great bell to be rung and *O sacrum* to be sung during a procession on the octave after compline (*ibid.*, A141, fo. 104v).

[40] The new Marian feasts were those of the Visitation (2 July) promulgated by the Roman pope in 1389, the Presentation (21 November) by the Avignon and Roman pope in 1372 and 1385, and the Immaculate Conception (8 December). Veneration of Mary's family was enhanced by the new feasts of St Anne, St Joseph, the Name of Jesus, the Sisters of Mary and the Holy Family.

from the 1350s. One made specific provision for Holy Blood day: Jan Crayscieter provided for the bell-ringers of Our Lady's to alert citizens as to the location of the relic as it was processed around the town. The great bell was to be rung at three specific points during the procession, from the Belfry down to the Bouverie gate, from outside the Ghent gate to St Katherine's gate, and from outside the Bouverie gate to the Belfry once more.[41]

Concern with the threat of disorder in the later fourteenth century also lies behind provision for liturgical service. Bell-ringing celebrated and perhaps encouraged peace; processions generated pious behaviour; sight of relic or host could calm commotion. Besides foundations on Corpus Christi day, steps were taken to encourage veneration of the Eucharist. In 1379 Nicholas Scorkin, canon of St Donatian, asked for the great bell to be rung five times for the Five Wounds of Christ 'in memory of the Passion' when the Host was elevated at high mass. The archbishop of Tournai offered an indulgence to those who prayed at this time 'in order to excite the fervent devotion of the people'.[42]

Scorkin's foundations were made shortly after the beginning of the papal schism in 1378. There may be no connection, but the schism did cause profound anxiety and division. St Donatian's found itself in particular difficulties because of its initial adherence to the Avignon pope, in opposition to the adoption of the Roman pope by other clergy and citizens in Bruges and Flanders. The threat to ecclesiastical authority and the yearning for peace that schism generated troubled churchmen of all ranks. The chancellor of the university of Paris, Jean Gerson, who was at the forefront of efforts to heal the schism, sought wholesale reform of church and society in ways that were intended to strengthen clerical and sacramental authority. The voluminous nature of his writings over many years precludes simple summary, but it is worth highlighting some aspects of his teaching here.[43] For instance, he made explicit

[41] OCMW, Register 178, fo. 64r. The foundation is undated, but most of Jan Crayscieter's other foundations are dateable to the 1350s and 1360s.

[42] BAB, A48, fo. 76v. In 1381 Scorkin also made provision for those who sang *Alma redemptoris* at processions in the nave at the five principal feasts of the Virgin Mary (D42, 35), and at some point for a 'triple' bell-ringing on Christmas Day at first mass (A141, fos. 62r, 67v, 94v). In 1404 the chapter provided extra torches at the high altar to be lit at the elevation of the Sacrament 'out of reverence for the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ' (A49, fo. 70v).

[43] For the following, see L. B. Pascoe, *Jean Gerson: Principles of Church Reform* (Leiden, 1973), esp. pp. 134–6, 199–207; D. C. Brown, *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge, 1987), esp. pp. 19–21, 25, 119–20; Jean Gerson, *Jean Gerson: Oeuvres complètes de Jean Gerson*, ed. P. Glorieux, 10 vols. (Paris, 1960–73). Of particular relevance to the following are his tracts *Contra sectum se flagellantium*, *Bonus pastor* and *De Canticis*.

connections between order and reverence of the sacraments. The calamities of schism and civil disturbance, disrupting hierarchical order, were the result of sin; God's grace needed to be sought to restore peace. Grace was primarily channelled through the sacraments: to rely on individual penitence, as flagellants did, was not enough. Reverence in the administration and reception of the Sacrament, especially on Sundays and other days of obligation, had to be encouraged. Gerson's call for reform and inner renewal was a wider pastoral one. Ordinary people required instruction, not least through sermons, on the articles of the faith and the need for grace. Devotion to the Virgin Mary as the treasurer of grace merited particular attention. Institutionalising devotion to Mary and her wider family would enrich the liturgy and 'excite the devotion of the people'. Music had a part to play: singing might combine the songs of heart and mouth, or at least recall their combination in Mary's spontaneous singing of the Magnificat. Bell-ringing might also excite interior affection: their festive resonance recalled seraphic joy. 'How happy is the city', Gerson wrote, 'where there is perpetual celebration'.[44]

Gerson became dean of St Donatian's in 1393, and arrived in Bruges on 12 October 1396. Four days later he presided at a chapter meeting that implemented a wide-ranging 'reformation' of divine service, clarifying the duties of each chaplain in the celebration of the liturgy throughout the year.[45] In the end, Gerson's wider impact in Bruges was limited, for he rarely visited the town, apart from a longer stay between 1399 and 1400, while the canons came to resent his efforts to raise the standards of clergy and laity, and had him removed from his benefice in 1411.[46] But his association with St Donatian's was only one of the many ways in which Bruges was connected with wider currents of clerical anxiety and reform, and the canons did not need Gerson's personal intervention to enhance liturgical celebration that would 'excite the devotion of the people'.[47]

Citizens of Bruges had also been affected by the impact of the schism. Celebration of the sacraments had been disrupted, ecclesiastical authority undermined. Civil disturbances had resulted. It is not surprising that, like clerics, high-ranking citizens from the late 1370s were making foundations that tended to the promotion of public worship. Some canons had

[44] J. L. Irwin, 'The Mystical Music of Jean Gerson', *Early Music History* 1 (1981), 187–201, esp. pp. 193–5.
[45] BAB, A49, fos. 7r–v.
[46] E. Vansteenberghe, 'Gerson à Bruges', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (1935), 5–52.
[47] For the university education of the canons (Paris, Orléans and elsewhere), see R. De Keyser, 'Het St Donaaskapittel te Brugge (1350–1450)', unpublished doctoral dissertation (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1972), esp. pp. 229–31.

strong connections with citizen families: Jan de Hagha, a major founder of feast days from 1415, was the son of a former burgomaster. Citizens as well as clergy had an interest in promoting public worship.

The promotion of certain cults, moreover, was connected with the exercise of municipal authority. Jan Crayscieter's foundation for Holy Blood day chimed with the official steps taken to enhance celebration of the Holy Blood procession. Benefactors who promoted Corpus Christi were enhancing a feast day that had acquired a more civic dimension. No payments for a Corpus Christi procession appear in the civic accounts, but guild rules dating from the late thirteenth century show that it was already a day twinned with Holy Blood day for gatherings of guildsmen.[48] While all churches in Bruges celebrated the day by the late fourteenth century, it seems that St Saviour's had become the church at which craft guilds gathered for a procession.[49] By the later fourteenth century the town council was treating Corpus Christi as a feast day of special significance: the *scepenhuis* was cleaned and specially furnished on the day. As we shall see, a Corpus Christi procession of craft guilds under municipal authority was to emerge more clearly in the fifteenth century.

It would be misleading to identify endowment of Marian feasts in Bruges as a specifically civic endeavour. Besides the universal veneration of the cult, the Virgin Mary was also the patron saint of St Donatian's as well as Our Lady's. Other towns adopted the Virgin Mary as a patron saint in a more explicit way than was done in Bruges. But civic veneration of Christ's blood, collected at his Passion, inevitably meant association with his Mother, and citizens may well have regarded themselves as enjoying her special patronage.[50] Marian devotion was entwined with the Holy Blood on 3 May: the procession came to include tableaux such as the Tree of Jesse, and *Stirps Jesse* was sung by the processors. In a Bruges context, Marian devotion could take on local and civic resonances. An image of the Virgin Mary perched in a niche on the Belfry, and stations were held before it during larger 'general processions' organised by the town council.

It may be significant that Marian feasts were chosen for more extensive celebration by benefactors who were closely connected with civic

[48] See the rules of the St John's bridge-workers, 1291 – though there is no direct reference to a procession on that day; E. Huys, *Duizend jaar mutualiteit bij de vlaamse gilden* (Kortrijk, 1926), pp. 147–8, 152.

[49] The earliest surviving accounts from St Saviour's belong to the poor table: these refer in 1416 to payments for drinking 'as men go to the Holy Sacrament' (OCMW, SS, Register i, 1416, fo. 2r). See below, pp. 127–8.

[50] In one of the poems of the Gruuthuse collection, *c*. 1400, Bruges appears as a town of the Virgin Mary; see below, p. 173.

government. Many of them also made provision for cults, like Corpus Christi and the Holy Blood, which were more obviously civic in nature. Jan van Aertricke, who regularly served on the town council in the 1360s and 1370s, is one such case. An even better example is Jan Camphin. In 1395 he negotiated with St Donatian's for a foundation combining several features of public worship in Bruges that have already been mentioned. 'Wishing to excite the faithful in memory of Christ's Passion', he requested that on the eve of the Annunciation, when the Virgin Mary was saluted by the Angel, the great bells of the church be sounded with a triple peal. The interval between each peal was to be sufficient to allow listeners to say an *Ave Maria* and a *Pater noster*. Moreover, on the next day, at mass, and at every high mass, at the moment when the Body and Blood of Christ were elevated, the great bells were to ring out five times in memory of Christ's Five Wounds.[51] Jan Camphin was a broker, served as burgomaster of the town for several years in the 1390s[52] and was at the centre of changes also taking place with the Holy Blood procession. He was among the town councillors who pushed for the elevation of Holy Blood day to the rank of great double in 1419. He also requested that the collegiate chapter should allow the augmentation of the feast day in its dependent chapel of St Christopher.[53]

There were initiatives in Bruges from the late fourteenth century to increase divine service among a wider public. Whether they came directly from the town council is not known: no minutes of their meetings survive. In any case, most of the foundations that increased public worship were made by individuals rather than by the town council, and benefactors were clerical as well as lay. But a significant number of them were involved in the business of town government – a government that was beginning to extend its authority over matters sacred in other ways. Besides funding of the Holy Blood and general processions, there are signs that the town council was taking other measures in areas of public worship. By the end of the fourteenth century it was funding an annual sermon, preached before the people on Good Friday. The engagement of preachers by town councils for the explicit purpose of effecting moral and social reform is a feature characteristic of other towns in this period, notably those of Italy.[54] It was also involved in an

[51] BAB, A49, fos. 16r–17r; SAB 96, 20 (*Proose en kannunikse*), fos. 30r–31r.
[52] SAB, 299 (*Makelaars*), *Cartularium*, fos. 17r, 24r. He had also been an executor of Boudin de Vos, founder of the *Salve* in St Donatian's and benefactor of Sint Obrecht's (Gilliodts-van Severen, *Inventaire diplomatique*, p. 323; RAB, FD, 86, fo. 29v).
[53] BAB, A50, fos. 63r, 66r.
[54] See below, p. 282.

expansion that took place in the later fourteenth century of charitable doles to the poor (see Chapter 6).

There are signs too that the town council was developing a greater sense of itself as a body with more sacred attributes. In 1372, a daily mass was founded at an altar within the townhouse (*scepenhuis*) itself.[55] But the most explicit sign appears in a foundation set up in St Donatian's in 1395. This was not one funded by the civic government, but by Jan Waghenare and his wife, whose main motive, at least according to the chapter act-books, sprang from the 'great devotion' that they 'had long held for the church'.[56] It was part of a package of extra services that included anniversaries for the founders, as well as a *mandatum* ceremony to be held every Maundy Thursday, in which five poor men were to sit at high mass before the sanctuary near the couple's grave, and have their hands and feet washed and dried by the celebrant. 'Devotion to the church' may have been one of Waghenare's motives, but another was the promotion of civic welfare. His foundation was to involve the municipal government. Two of the five poor people at the *mandatum* were to be chosen by the town council. Moreover, he also set up a mass of the Holy Ghost to be sung on the day, 2 September, when the magistrates serving on the two benches of aldermen were annually changed. This was so that 'grace might be given' when the town council was formed, in 'honour of God, rest and peace of the land of Flanders, and especially the town of Bruges'.[57]

## Public worship in the fifteenth century

The trends in public devotion that had become established by the late fourteenth century intensified in the fifteenth. More citizens than ever sought specific commemoration. Scribes of *planarii* were kept busy, entering names at a more rapid pace, and with more liturgical detail, than ever before. A total of 180 names were added to the *planarius* of Our Lady's in the fifteenth century, compared with 80 in the fourteenth. The same pattern can be observed in other churches (see Figure 3.1).

[55] SAB, 96, 4 (*Oude Wittenboek*), fos. 35r–36r. This was set up as a penitential foundation, involving the lord of the Gruuthuse, for the murder of Jehan de Ruddervoorde by some of his men 'for disturbing the good peace and tranquillity of the town'.

[56] BAB, A49, fos. 9r–10r, 38v; A141, fo. 103r.

[57] Record of this foundation was made in more than one civic cartulary: SAB, 96, 4 (*Oude Wittenboek*), fos. 161v–163r (175r–177r); SAB, 96, 2 (*Rudenboek*), fos. 30r–v; SAB, 96, 20 (*Proose en kannunikse*), fos. 25r–29r. For a transcription, see GVS, Vol. III, pp. 302–4. A Holy Ghost mass was also sung in the chapel of St Basil 'as of old custom' on the day the magistrates were chosen (according to a document dateable to around 1470); BAB, C446.

Most of these benefactors secured obits for their souls, but in addition proportionally more than in the past augmented divine service on other feast days. During the fifteenth century, in the three main churches of Bruges, around 200 benefactors augmented 322 feast days, and in a variety of ways: increasing the offices celebrated, the level of bell-ringing, and the number of processions and sermons. The complexity of polyphonic singing was developed with the greater number of antiphons, masses and mass cycles demanded, and notably with the requirement for motets (see Figure 3.2; Appendix 4). Some of the largest endowments belong to the period from 1420 to 1480.

Many saints' days were elevated in rank, but the cults that received most attention from benefactors centred on the Virgin Mary or Christ. Half of all endowments went towards the feasts associated with Mary or the life, Passion and cults of Christ (see Appendix 4). What is particularly noticeable about such endowments in Bruges is the systematic way in which they were built up. Marian devotion was enhanced by the endowment of more regular singing of Marian antiphons and celebration of Marian masses. In St Donatian's the filling out of daily masses of *Salve* was increased by individual endowments in the 1430s and 1440s.[58] This process culminated, as we shall see, in the early 1480s, when a programme of evening concerts of the *Salve* was instituted. In Our Lady's, around 1469, Paul Lanezone (town councillor in 1468 and 1475, and warden of St Nicholas' hospital) requested that *Salve regina* be sung every Saturday in Our Lady's. A *Salve* or *lof*, sung by the succentor and choirboys after vespers on all Sundays and Marian feasts, was added to the church's programme around the same time.[59]

The smaller parish churches of Bruges followed the lead of the larger collegiate ones. At St James' in 1416, Nicolas van de Beurse (later town councillor) gave an endowment worth 20s a year to the 'community of the choir' to sing the vespers of Our Lady on the first Friday after midwinter and a Marian mass on the Saturday. Over the next nine years, a further thirty-five benefactors added to each successive Friday and Saturday, until a systematic programme of Marian vespers and masses had been built up to cover the whole year.[60] At the same time, initiatives by the parish priests, churchwardens and poor-table masters produced endowments to allow the daily celebration of the seven canonical

[58] For the foundations of Jacob Scaterare (1434); Jacob Buyssard, canon (1441); Guillaume de Niepa, canon (1445); and Edmund Bood, canon (1447): BAB, A50, fo. 219r; A51, fos. 54r, 195r–196r; A141, fos. 41v, 91v, 99v; D42, 69; G3, 1434/5, fo. 6r. See also Strohm, *Music*, p. 29.

[59] RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 202r.

[60] RAB, SJ, 377, fos. 1v–20v; W. Rombauts, *Het oud archief van de kerkfabriek van Sint-Jacob (XIII–XIXde eeuw)* (Brussels, 1986), pp. 36–8.

hours: these endowments, totalling £25 a year, were agreed by the town magistrates in 1423, and the daily celebrations were recognised by the bishop of Tournai in 1424.[61]

Investment in the feast day and octave of Corpus Christi was particularly heavy in most of Bruges' churches in the period from 1450 to 1470. For instance, in 1457 Donaas de Beer, secretary of the town, enhanced the procession of the sacrament on the octave of Corpus Christi at St Donatian's: after vespers, when the procession inside the church usually took place, the processors were also to go out into the *burg* and re-enter the church by its west door 'as was customary at the feast of St Basil', torches were to be carried before the sacrament and the cantor or succentor was to sing *O salvator hostis*.[62] In 1467 the citizen (and later town councillor) Symoen Janszuene and his wife founded a singing mass of the Holy Sacrament every Sunday in Our Lady's (at which the bell 'Maria' was to be rung as on Saturdays at Our Lady mass).[63] In St James', Jacob Bave (town councillor) endowed a motet for the octave of Corpus Christi in 1454.[64]

Two new cults, both connected with affective devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, also acquired formal liturgical celebration as feast days in the late fifteenth century. Devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus had been promoted in the Rhineland and Low Countries since the late fourteenth century, and eventually acquired an official feast day in many regions by the 1480s.[65] The cult fitted well into the liturgical framework and patterns of devotion in Bruges churches: it was associated with the Passion of Christ, and celebration of the Jesus votive mass typically took place on Fridays when that of the Holy Cross was also celebrated. In Bruges the cult attracted several donations in more than one church in Bruges from the 1470s.[66]

[61] RAB, SJ, 377, fos. 1r–v, 6v; SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 134r–v; RAB, SJ, charter 208. Further endowments followed in the 1420s, 1430s and 1440s.

[62] BAB, A52, fos. 45r–v; A141, fo. 101r. Jan le Sarisseur, citizen, and his wife were to add to the same procession in 1464: their foundation mentions the carrying of three crosses, and images of St Donatian and the Virgin Mary with the Host on that day (*ibid.*, A53, fo. 50v; A141, fo. 101r).

[63] RAB, OLV, 741; 1350, fos. 57r–v; 735, fos. 161v–162r. In 1471 they founded another mass of the Holy Ghost to be sung every Thursday.

[64] RAB, SJ, 24, fos. 140r–v; Strohm, *Music*, p. 57. See also the gift of £78 by Willem Moreel, burgomaster, in 1478, towards the *arboris* in which the Sacrament was transferred to the parish altar in St Donatian's (BAB, G6, 1478/9, fo. 9v).

[65] See R.W. Pfaff, *New Liturgical Feasts in Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 62–83.

[66] In St Saviour's, the widow of Jan Ravenscote and her son made provision of the seven canonical hours, and a procession at vespers, for the feast day in 1479 (BAB, S289, fo. 79v). In 1501, an endowment in St Donatian's allowed the feast day to be celebrated 'as in other churches in Bruges' (BAB, A57, fo. 158v).

The cult of St Joseph was similarly augmented: Joseph's marriage to Mary was given a feast day in 1487, but the cult had already been promoted by figures such as Jean Gerson.[67] In Bruges the cult was established by Joos Berthilde, priest at Our Lady's, and member of a prominent local family.[68] His foundations brought together devotion to the Holy Family. From the end of 1473, he embarked on a series of foundations with his sister and her husband, Gillis Mesdach (town councillor in 1469), to augment the feast days of the Presentation, St Joseph, St Martha, the Holy Sisters of Mary and the Holy Name of Jesus, for which he founded a chapel.[69]

Notwithstanding interest in newer cults, attention to older ones remained strong. Some even enjoyed a resurgence. A significant proportion of feast days that were elevated in Bruges churches during the fifteenth century were ones that belonged to long-established saints – apostles, evangelists, early Christian martyrs and confessors (see Appendix 4). Within St Donatian's, one explanation for this was the presence there of a large number of their relics. Two relic lists survive, one dating perhaps to the twelfth century, the other to 1463.[70] Of the sixty-two saints whose feast days were augmented in St Donatian's in the later Middle Ages (and particularly in the fifteenth century), forty-six of them were ones for whom relics were found in the church. Only a handful of these augmented feasts were not associated with saints whose relics were there.[71] The reasons for choosing particular saints to venerate were many (and are obvious in cases where the saint's name was also the benefactor's own); but the presence of saintly remains

[67] Gerson's tract *Considérations sur saint Joseph*, *c.* 1413, which emphasised the saint's paternal qualities within a natural marriage, was influential in the promotion of the cult (Gerson, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. II, pp. 14–17). For the social dimensions of the cult's promotion, see, for example, P. B. McGuire, 'Late Medieval Care and Control of Women: Jean Gerson and His Sisters', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 92 (1997), 5–37.

[68] His father, Gillis Berthilden, had been master of St Julian's hospital; J. Geldhof, *Pelgrims, dulle lieden en vondelingen te Brugge 1275–1975* (Bruges, 1973), pp. 52–3.

[69] RAB, OLV, 735, fos. 43r, 49r–50r, 73r–76v, 115v, 173r, 201v; 1350, fos. 23r–26r. Gillis Mesdach and his wife made their own foundations, which included processions on Corpus Christi day and masses on the octave of the Holy Name of Jesus (RAB, OLV, 735, fos. 83v, 132r; OCMW, OLV, Register 178, fo. 22r).

[70] BAB, A130, fos. 14r–v; A52, fo. 246v. Combined, these lists produce a total of ninety-two saints (this excluding the many relics associated with Christ or the Virgin Mary that the church also possessed). The latter list (1463) is probably more incomplete, but may represent the most significant ones then venerated; and of the fifty-one saints represented there, thirty-three of them had their feast days augmented.

[71] In any case, the veneration of some of these saints was increased in other ways: for instance, St Julian (whose name appears on the relic list) had a new chapel dedicated to him from 1370 (from Jan Goldebeter and his wife: BAB, A48, fos. 222r–225v, 229v), which was later funded by other benefactors and by indulgences (in 1444: A51, fos. 130v–131r).

within the town evidently guided the choice of particular feast days for special veneration at St Donatian's, and perhaps in Bruges as a whole. The extent of benefaction of these feast days suggests a comprehensive effort to increase devotion to local relics.

The veneration of major relics in Bruges was enhanced in other ways. The canons of St Donatian's improved the feretory of their principal patron saint. The completion of a new feretory in 1465 was proclaimed to clergy and people.[72] The long-established procession on the saint's feast day and octave was bolstered by an endowment from Simon Coene, priest, in 1439.[73] Sermons on the feast day were funded from 1488 by a gift from the canon Adrian de Mil.[74]

Veneration of the second most important set of relics belonging to St Donatian's, those of St Basil, was also promoted on the public stage. In 1461, canons were deputed to oversee the construction of a new feretory.[75] On 30 May 1463, the relics were translated from their old reliquary to a new one, wrought in gold and silver, in a ceremony presided over by the suffragan bishop of Tournai. A large and illustrious crowd was assembled for the occasion: besides six other important prelates, Duke Philip, his son Charles and other courtiers, the ceremony was witnessed by a 'multitude of people'.[76] The feast day of St Basil, already celebrated as a solemn double, with processions, and supported by earlier endowments, was further endowed with antiphons and masses over the next thirty years.[77]

Other churches in Bruges promoted their own relics. The most important remains in Our Lady's were those of its reputed founder, St

[72] BAB, A53, fo. 153r (and see G5, 1463/4, fo. 14r). The fabric accounts record running repairs or embellishments to the feretory (for example, 'Jan de scildere' was paid for work on the feretory in 1433/4: *ibid.*, G3, 1433/4, fo. 17r; and for painting the rods on which the feretory was carried: *ibid.*, 1434/5, fo. 11v; and £48 *parisis* was paid out for gilding work in 1440/1: *ibid.*, G4, 1440/1, fo. 13v). For further work later: A56, fo. 99r; G6, 1486/7, fo. 23r.

[73] *Ibid.*, A59, fo. 13v. For his other foundations, including contributions to the singing of antiphons at the Conception and Nativity of the Virgin Mary, and a motet on the feast day of Saints Simon and Jude, see *ibid.*, A141, fos. 67v, 78r, 80r, 90v, 108r.

[74] *Ibid.*, A56, fo. 168r. Sermons were also founded at Christmas by Jan de Hoya, canon.

[75] *Ibid.*, A52, fo. 177v. In September 1462, the silver remaining in the old feretory was ordered to be given to the goldsmith for reworking into the new one (*ibid.*, fo. 223r).

[76] *Ibid.*, A52, fo. 246v. The fabric accounts do not survive for this year, but a payment of £6 *parisis* is noted in the following year to the suffragan bishop for his part in the translation (*ibid.*, G5, 1463/4, fo. 14v). See below, p. 251. In the same year, the fabric also spent £84 *parisis* on its feretory of St Agatha (*ibid.*, fo. 15r).

[77] By the chaplain of St Basil, Bertin Moens, and the provost, Anthony Haneron: *ibid.*, A53, fo. 304v (1469); A54, fo. 117v (1477); A141, fo. 6r (*c.* 1485). Another anniversary founded by the chaplain Petrus Helle was disputed by his brothers in 1467; RAB, FD, 10.

Boniface (d. 754), which may have been acquired in the twelfth century.[78] Eight years after St Basil's relics were translated in St Donatian's church, those of St Boniface received similar treatment at Our Lady's. Expensive work had begun by 1469 on a new shrine; clergy, native and foreign merchants, as well as others 'from the three parishes within Our Lady's parish' donated over £158. The new shrine was finally installed behind the high altar in 1471.[79] A tapestry was made depicting the passion of St Boniface, to hang in the choir on principal feast days. The relics themselves had long been processed outside the church on the saint's feast day: this procession was further endowed in 1426 by Jan vander Heede and four other lay parishioners, and took its participants from the church to the corner of the Belfry in the *markt*.[80] The feretory was also to be carried on Corpus Christi processions, following an endowment of £12 *parisis* rent from Lodewijk Witkin, chaplain of Our Lady's, in 1518.[81]

Soon after St Boniface's translation, Our Lady's also acquired another relic. It was one that reflected a venerable tradition of piety rather than fashionable interest in a new cult. In 1474, Wouter Utenhove, churchwarden and town councillor (in 1468 and 1476), gifted a splinter of the True Cross to the church.[82] The relic had come into his possession through his wife, the widow of Claes Scoutet, who was reputed to have brought the relic back from Jerusalem. An episcopal commission had been set up in April 1473 to verify its authenticity. The inquiry took the commissioners to Middelburg, where around 1457 the relic had attracted the acquisitive instincts of Pieter Bladelin (treasurer of the Order of the Golden Fleece), keen to stock his newly founded town with

[78] The church may have possessed relics of St Boniface's missionary companions, Saints Hilarius and Cyrobaldus, before the bishop of Utrecht acquired further relics of St Boniface from Fulda abbey in 1324; M. Coens, *Le Culte de St Boniface et de ses compagnions en l'église de Notre-Dame à Bruges* (Fulda, 1964), p. 521.

[79] Major work was carried out on the south-east part of the choir where the shrine was to be housed; costs of work (particularly gold-work) on the shrine ran to over £319 in 1469 (RAB, OLV, 1217, fos. 261r, 264r; and, for its installation, *ibid*., fos. 337r–v, 338v–340r).

[80] RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 88v. They gave the commune £6 *parisis* for seven chaplains to process with the feretory: the route specified was one followed *ab antiquo*.

[81] Witkin's foundations, dating from 1496, were large and varied – perhaps the largest made in Bruges in the early sixteenth century. He endowed several feast days: St Louis, St Bartholomew, St Elisabeth, and especially the octave of Corpus Christi and the feast of the 11,000 virgins: RAB, OLV, 735, fos. 3r–6r, 37r, 67r, 129r, 156v, 157v, 177r; charter 358; 1350, fo. 214r; 250 (*Acta capituli*), fo. 70v; OCMW, OLV, Register 178, fo. 59v.

[82] See J. van Cortoen, *Triomphe van het helig kruise Christ Jesu* (Bruges, 1871); N. Geirnaert, 'Bruges and the Northern Netherlands', in V. Vermeersch (ed.), *Bruges and Europe* (Antwerp, 1992), pp. 72–98 (p. 83).

sacred artefacts.[83] The commissioners also visited Dordrecht, where another piece given by the same Claes to the principal church there had already effected miraculous cures and had become the focus of an annual town procession. In 1475, the commission pronounced the relic fit for public worship in Bruges. To cultivate reverence for the relic, a new tabernacle was built for it in 1485, and by 1487 a procession carrying the relic, accompanied by banners, bell-ringing and a 'multitude of people' had been established in the parish on the feast day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.[84]

St Giles' church in Bruges had long possessed its own piece of the True Cross.[85] But in 1466 it was the recipient of the glamorous gift of new relics: the arm-bone of its patron saint. The donor was Guillaume de Crahaut, lord of Hollan, and the gift may have been assisted by the ducal court. Conditions were imposed: an anniversary for the donor and the promise that, should the reliquary be remade, the donor's arms would be placed on the most prominent place on the reliquary. But the relics also brought prestige to the parish, not least by effecting miracles that were investigated by an episcopal commission in 1486.[86]

The promotion of relics and feast days in the parish churches of Bruges was partly the result of efforts by the clergy and laity within those parishes. Each church had its own saints and relics to promote, and the effort of promotion could take on a competitive edge: it was enough for miracles or translations of relics to take place in one church, for similar events to follow in another.[87] Relics were part of traditions, along with other liberties and privileges, which the clerical 'communities' of Bruges considered their duty to protect. We have already seen the tenacity of the canons of St Donatian's in this regard.

Lay parishioners too had their own local loyalties. These become most evident when efforts were made to rebuild the fabric of the

[83] The commissioners wished to seek the testimony of the widow of Pieter Bladelin, who had wanted to furnish his new almshouse with Claes Scoutet's relic.

[84] According to the indulgence granted by the suffragan bishop in that year (RAB, OLV, O1013).

[85] According to the small list of relics dateable to the late fifteenth century, the church possessed a relic of St Giles' hand, of St Katherine's oil, a relic from 'over zee' and a piece of the True Cross (RAB, SG, 27, fo. 96r).

[86] *Ibid.*, 4, fos. 112r–114r; 27, fos. 38v–39r; 273, fos. 106r–107v; 3 (1486). The gift of the reliquary required the consent of the church and parishioners of Our Lady of Rougemont in the diocese of Besançon, where the reliquary had been venerated for some thirteen years.

[87] However, the main relics in St Saviour's, those of St Eligius, were not given a new shrine until 1493 after major rebuilding work on the church had taken place: RAB, S238, fos. 112v, 113v–114r; K. Verschelde, *De kathedrale van S. Salvator te Brugge* (Bruges, 1863), pp. 222–3.

church. Most of the parish churches in Bruges underwent repairs and extensions during the fifteenth century, and much of the work was the responsibility of lay churchwardens. At St James', major rebuilding took place from 1454, resulting in the addition of two more aisles and a new choir. It required the collection, week by week, of small contributions in boxes placed in eight streets within the parish; and in addition the more substantial gifts of 'notables' within the parish.[88] Some benefactors gave handsomely to secure burial places within the new parts of the building, and to fund anniversaries;[89] for even larger gifts, a few individuals and guilds established their own chapels in the church.[90] The coordination of collective effort that went into the rebuilding work, for over twenty years, testifies to the strength of attachment to the local parish church.

Even so, such efforts were not just about parochial loyalties. The principal benefactors of St James' may have been parishioners there, yet they were also individuals with high profiles within the town (and beyond). Rebuilding the church required a degree of civic approval: in 1468 the town council permitted the choir to be extended beyond its previous length.[91] It also contributed to the rebuilding work in 1472.[92] The town treasury can often be found dispensing alms for parish rebuilding projects, especially during the fifteenth century.[93] Gifts to Our Lady's between 1397 and 1423 for work on the church

[88] The building effort from 1464 (already in its tenth year) is recorded in the churchwardens' accounts: RAB, SJ, 98 (*Rekeningen* 1464–78). The smaller contributions from the boxes regularly totalled over £20 a year (though they began to dip below this in the 1470s); the larger contributions from named individuals (often more than twenty a year) came on average to over £40.

[89] Pieter vander Eeke in 1460 (*ibid*., charter 354). In 1470, two butchers, Willem van Viven and Jan Meercastel, and others gave over £31 for the church building and to purchase a rent of £19 4s *parisis* for anniversary services.

[90] For a summary of the new altars and chapels established in the church, see Rombauts, *Het Oud Archief*, pp. 10–32. Among the most prominent benefactors were Colart Daut, broker, churchwarden and also a member of the Dry Tree guild (RAB, SJ, charter 377); Jacob Biese and his widow (by 1462: *ibid*., charter 351; 888, fos. 69v–74v); and Adriane van Beversluus, the widow of Philips Bitebloc, furrier, who in 1475 endowed a daily mass, involving the coopers and other crafts (*ibid*., charters 393, 395; Register 647, fos. 254r–255r). Baptiste de Langnello and his wife were granted a burial place in 1477, and founded a weekly mass (*ibid*., charter 443). Tomasso Portinari paid for his own chapel (1477: see below, p. 249); Willem Moreel, burgomaster in 1478, for his own chapel (197, fos. 38v–39r); and Donaes de Moor and his wife for their own altar (1479–87: see below, pp. 218–20).

[91] SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwe groenenbouc*), fo. 240r.

[92] SAB, 216, 1471/2, fo. 111r; and see *ibid*., 1468/9, fo. 107r.

[93] Gifts (in *livres parisis*) to building work of the town's parish churches are found in the town accounts for the following years: to St Donatian's in 1346/7, 1413/14 (£100), 1415/16, 1429/30, 1431/2 (for the bells; and help from the town in rebuilding the tower in 1404 is recorded in BAB, A49, fo. 37r, 74v–75r); to Our Lady's in 1298, 1300/1,

fabric were particularly substantial. There was clearly a sense that such projects were civic as much as parochial. In 1401 Maertin van Lovene was rewarded by the town council for 'the many good services within the town': these included repairs to the New Hall and to Our Lady's.[94]

Despite potential for competition or even tension between churches, there were forces that brought them closer together. The parishes of Bruges were not watertight units of worship. There was considerable traffic of clerical personnel between them: for instance, clergy from Our Lady's moved to take up benefices in St Donatian's. There was a sharing of devotional resources: the choirboys and singers of St Donatian's were often employed by other churches when extra singing was required.[95] The clergy of parish or collegiate churches did not form bodies that were always closed and self-contained. The clergy in Our Lady's had formed its own confraternity in 1298; in 1429 the confraternity announced itself open to all clergy and also to laity in Bruges who applied.[96]

During the fifteenth century, we can also observe a tendency for devotional loyalties in Bruges to converge. The proliferation of feast-day endowment apparent in *planarii* was not without pattern. The promotion of particular feast days in one church was usually intended to cross parochial boundaries. Reverence throughout the town towards St Boniface's relics, following their translation in Our Lady's, was encouraged by the bishop of Tournai's proclamation that the saint's yearly feast was to be celebrated as a holiday in all the churches of Bruges.[97] Wider devotion to a cult at first celebrated locally was cultivated by the securing of indulgences from popes and bishops.[98]

The tendency towards convergence of devotional loyalties is also apparent in the choice of cults adopted (see Appendix 4). Plotting the endowment of feast days in the three main churches of Bruges reveals

1318/19, 1397 (£600), 1400/1 (£300), 1401/2 (£300), 1408/9 (£100), 1420–3 (£100 each year), 1440/1, 1471/2 (for windows); to St Saviour's in 1292, 1347/8, 1449/50; to St Walburga's in 1292, 1391/2; to St James' in 1471/2. The town council took a particular responsibility over work on St Basil's chapel, and in addition to gifts for its rebuilding (namely 1306–13, 1336/7, 1374 for windows; 1404–19, 1421/2 for the new choir; 1485/6 for windows) it supplied and funded its churchwardens annually in the fifteenth century. In 1461, when work was being carried out on the tower, the council ordered the churchwardens to produce their accounts because a loan made by the chaplain, Bertin Moens, had not been paid back; SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwe groenenbouc*), fo. 96r.

[94] *Ibid.*, 96, 4 (*Oude Wittenboek*), fo. 128v. [95] Strohm, *Music*, pp. 26–7.

[96] RAB, OLV, 2003, fo. 13v; O299. [97] *Ibid.*, O943.

[98] See also the civic-wide devotion encouraged by the indulgence in 1487 to the procession of the Holy Cross relic in Our Lady's (*ibid.*, O1013); and the indulgence granted to the Jesus chapel set up by Joos Berthilde in 1483 (*ibid.*, O1417).

differences in the timing of foundations within each. Yet the tendency of liturgical practice in these churches was towards synchronicity. Adoption of a cult or augmentation of a feast day in one church was invariably copied in another; a saint's day endowed by a benefactor in one parish found, at a later date, a benefactor in the next. Some founders endowed cults in more than one church: Joos Berthilde promoted the cult of St Joseph first in Our Lady's, then in St Saviour's in 1473, and in 1484 he began negotiations with St Donatian's to have the feast celebrated as a double in all churches in Bruges.[99] He also endowed the feast of St Boniface as a double in St Saviour's.[100] Pieter Lanchals, the ill-fated *schout*, made provision in his will of 1488, shortly before his execution, for the celebration of the Presentation of the Virgin in all three mother churches.[101] By the end of the fifteenth century, despite the growing complexity and expansion of liturgical arrangements, celebrations of feast days in the three main churches of Bruges had in large measure converged.

Many of the benefactors who endowed these feast days, and thus aided in the process of convergence, were clerical. But a significant proportion were lay people and, of these, most were prominent in civic government. A good example is the foundation of Lodewijc Greffinc. From 1467 to 1483 he served regularly on one of the two benches of town magistrates, or as *hoofdman* ('headman') of the *zestendeel* (town quarter) of St Donatian's. In 1486 he and his wife separately endowed the clergy of St Donatian's, Our Lady's and St Saviour's to sing mass and preach a sermon in the three station churches outside the town walls – Holy Cross, St Katherine's and Mary Magdalene – to which the clergy processed at Rogationtide. Their foundation was intended to increase divine service, 'especially at the time when Holy Church and

99 BAB, S289, fo. 61r; RAB, FD, 81, fo. 11r; BAB, A56, fos. 31r, 31v, 39v, 48r; A141, fo. 24v; D42, 88.

100 *Ibid.*, S289, fo. 78r; A57, fo. 27r; RAB, FD, 81, fos. 21v, 121r.

101 For Lanchals' execution during the rebellion of 1488, see below, p. 192. For his will: RAB, OLV, 1062; O1273. Lanchals' principal foundations were in Our Lady's, where he had founded a chantry chapel in 1485 (*ibid.*, 1350, fos. 114r–115r). He also founded two discant masses for his patron saint, Peter, and augmented all the principal Marian feasts, particularly that of the Presentation, as well as Christmas, Epiphany and the Holy Name of Jesus (*ibid.*, 735, *passim*). The only feast day Lanchals augmented in St Saviour's and St Donatian's was that of the Presentation. Lanchals' relations with St Donatian's were rather more strained (see below, p. 276 n. 227). Negotiations over Lanchals' foundations were protracted, made difficult by his untimely demise and the problems faced by his executors in accessing his funds. With St Donatian's, discussions for the establishment of the feast of the Presentation were begun in 1486, and were still not finalised in 1493 (BAB, A56, fos. 88v–89r, 170r, 205v; A141, fo. 86v); and his foundations in Our Lady's and St Saviour's had to wait until the early 1490s for full funding (RAB, OLV, 250 (*Acta capituli*), fo. 59v; BAB, S328 (*Acta capituli*), fos. 132v–133r).

all the world prays in the three days before Christ's Ascension'. It was also intended that 'the devotion of the people would be turned to God's words'.[102]

Thus there were many ways in which feast days acquired civic-wide devotion. Some were 'civic' in the sense that they were accorded attention by the municipal government. The Rogation processions were occasions for which the town council had come to feel some responsibility. Rogation could clash with Holy Blood day: Greffinc's foundation made it clear that should one of his Rogation processions occur on 3 May, alternative arrangements would have to be made for it.[103] The civic authorities at times considered that decisions concerning Rogation might fall within their remit. In 1438 they had asked the 'dean of Christianity' to request the clergy of St Donatian's to change the station churches back to the ones formerly processed to before 1419.[104] In early May 1488, it had more pressing reasons to insist on alterations. Archduke Maximilian was still 'detained' in Bruges, and his soldiers were besieging the town. Thus the gates were closed: the civic authorities would not allow them to be opened to allow processors out to the station churches. They asked the clergy to remain inside the town walls, and process instead to St Julian's hospital, St Clare's nunnery and the Potterie hospital. In addition, no bell-ringing was to take place.[105]

Other kinds of procession had also come to fall within the sphere of municipal competence. From the late fourteenth century, Corpus Christi had been increasingly favoured as the feast day that benefactors chose to endow with masses and processions within the churches of Bruges. If it was not at first a civic event like the procession of the Holy Blood, by 1475 it had quite clearly become so: the town government could order Reynoud Willems to process with his guild on Corpus Christi day, along with the other craft guilds, as though in a repeat of arrangements for Holy Blood day. When exactly craft involvement in Corpus Christi became a civic requirement is not

[102] Each church was to be endowed with £3 *parisis* of rent to ensure pittances for the choir, celebrants, musicians, organists and cross-carriers: BAB, A56, fos. 71v, 78v, 79v–80r (for negotiations with St Donatian's begun in 1485); D42, 85; A141, fo. 99v; RAB, OLV, O1017; 735, fos. 199v, 202v, 204v; BAB, S289, fos. 102v–103r.

[103] In fact, on 2 May 1486 St Donatian's decided that the mass he had endowed for the following day would have to be postponed because of Holy Blood day, as would masses scheduled for Ascension Day because it was the turn of the church to make a procession 'around the town' (BAB, A56, fo. 103r). There were similar problems in 1488 (*ibid.*, fo. 157r).

[104] *Ibid.*, A50, fo. 254v. See above, pp. 110–111.

[105] *Ibid.*, A56, fos. 156v–157r.

clear. By the mid fifteenth century, contributions of guild members to the costs of their craft on the Corpus Christi procession, as well as Holy Blood day, were evidently established practices.[106] By then, Corpus Christi day had become a civic-wide and not just a parochial event.

The most explicit and regular expression of municipal control over relics and processions appears in civic funding of 'general' processions in the fifteenth century (see Chapter 2). It is also apparent in other areas. The most important relic remained that of the Holy Blood: the renewal of its reliquary was the only one that secured direct civic funding.[107] But renewals of other reliquaries or translations of relics were civic-wide events that caught municipal attention. The making of St Boniface's new shrine involved the town council. Indulgences granted for the veneration of relics or their feast days had civic implications: the veneration of St Boniface in all Bruges parishes ordered by the bishop in 1470 was to include a day of rest from work. By then, the town trumpeters were regularly employed to process with the relic on St Boniface's day.

The feast day of St Donatian was also one that the town magistrates sought to turn into a date of civic significance. The body of St Donatian was a relic over which they had come to assume a more proprietorial attitude in the fifteenth century (see Chapter 2). Moreover, the sense of corporate unity within the town that they strived to encourage by calling for general processions was made particularly explicit from the late 1470s, when they requested the appearance of relics from all three mother churches.

Municipal promotion of devotional behaviour amongst citizens was not confined to the management of processions. Endowment of sermons increased, along with their funding during general processions. Individual town councillors also contributed to the regular programme of sermons in parish churches. In 1470, the civic magistrates approved the foundation of Joos vander Leye, chaplain of Our Lady's, which endowed a priest to preach every Sunday afternoon.[108]

106 The rules of the *scoeboeters* (second-hand shoe-dealers who were subordinate to the cordwainers) in 1452 imply that their provision of torches on Holy Blood and Corpus Christi days was already standard practice: SAB, 96, 14, (*Nieuwe groenenbouc onghecottert*), fo. 54r. References to craft-guild involvement on Corpus Christi day are more plentiful after then; for example, the coopers in 1458 (SAB, 336, *Kuipers inschrijvingsregister*, fos. 95v–96v); the chair-makers in 1462 (BAB, BN, 8203).

107 For work paid in 1406, see below, p. 167. In 1433 the town paid a silversmith £84 *parisis* for work with gold and precious stones on the relic chest (SAB, 216, 1432/3, fo. 83v).

108 *Ibid.*, 457. D. William de Prato, canon, required an extra sermon to be preached 'in front of the people' on St Anne's day, *c.* 1470; Joos Berthilde, 1474; Daniel de Voorme, 1486 (OCMW, OLV, Register 155, fos. 102r–103r; RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 114r).

The sung word attracted endowments even more than the spoken. The gradual accumulation of benefactions for singing the weekly Marian *Salve* in all parishes of Bruges culminated in municipal funding. The evening *Salve* sung at St Donatian's, which began in the 1480s, was the direct result of civic initiative and funding.[109] In 1480 the town magistrates agreed to contribute towards the singing every evening of a *Maria lof ende salve* by the succentor and choir boys, lit up and accompanied by organs, during the ten days of the Bruges market. Aliamus de Groote, member of the Holy Ghost rhetoric guild, was paid presumably for his literary contribution to the *lof*. By 1482 the town increased its funding to £20 annually, to extend the singing to every day of the year.[110] In April 1483 the chapter agreed to the request of Jan de Blasere (treasurer of the town in the late 1470s) to allow the town minstrels and trumpeters of the town to perform at the daily *Salve* concert after compline at the May fair.[111] The town magistrates considered that the public performance of devotional music would be beneficial for every 'good, devout person'.[112] Efforts were made to extend the programme further: since that time, commented the author of the *Excellente cronike*, this singing in praise of God and his Mother was heard 'in all parish churches of Bruges. Amen.'[113]

Notwithstanding the vast investment in the celebration of feast days, the behaviour of citizens on such days could give the town magistrates cause more for despair than congratulation. On 6 April 1493 a town hall decree lamented that 'common people spend feast days and holy mass

[109] See Strohm, *Music*, pp. 33, 39, 85–6.

[110] SAB, 216, 1480/1, fo. 174r (payment of 22s 6d to the *salve*); 1482/3, fo. 157v (payment of £10 for half the year). These payments become regular from then on. Five minstrels were paid from 1483/4 (fo. 172r); from 1483 the fabric accounts of St Donatian's record gifts of £48 *parisis* from the town for 'the lights in praise of Our Lady' (BAB, G6 (1470–86), 1483/4, fo. 9r). The town treasurers evidently kept a close eye on the smooth running of the programme: in 1500 and 1501 they had to sort out the 'great confusion' concerning the manner in which singers were receiving their salaries (SAB, 216, 1499/1500, fo. 73v; 1500/1, fo. 80r).

[111] BAB, A55, fo. 210r

[112] SAB, 216, 1479/80, fo. 174v. In other towns, where similar public concerts began to be founded, a social dimension is sometimes made explicit: in Nuremberg, one founder in 1480 intended his concert to be in the evening 'so that workers could attend'; M. Staub, 'Eucharistie et bien commun: L'Economie d'une nouvelle pratique à l'exemple des paroisses de Nuremberg dans la seconde moitié du XVe siècle. Sécularisation ou religion civique?', in A. Vauchez (ed.), *La Religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne (Chrétienté et Islam): Actes du colloque de Nanterre (21–23 juin 1993)* (Rome, 1995), pp. 445–70 (pp. 451–2).

[113] W. Vorsterman (ed.), *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen* (Antwerp, 1531), fo. 220r. See also Despars' comment that this singing created a 'good example' for all citizens; Nicolaes Despars, *Cronycke van Vlaenderen end graefscepe van Vlaenderen … van de jaeren 405–1492*, ed. J. de Jonghe, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1839–42), Vol. IV, p. 205.

days badly and irreverently'.[114] Many craftsmen engaged in bad habits, failing to give praise to God due on holy days, buying and selling as on any other day. To remedy this – in the interest of 'peace and unity' – all citizens were to go to church at vigils and hear divine service on all Sundays and high Fridays, and at Easter, Ascension, Christmas, Our Lady and apostle days. No craft was to conduct business during high mass; butchers, foreign merchants and others were to close their doors by eight o'clock, and on certain feast days, like Corpus Christi day, by seven. On holy days no guild was to open its shop, and no tavern its doors.

The surviving court records, civil and ecclesiastical, provide tangible evidence for irreverence and sacrilege. St Donatian's suffered thefts from collection boxes of St Machut and even from the feretory of its principal patron saint.[115] The Holy Sacrament was never entirely safe from thieves;[116] not all citizens stayed devoutly in church or indoors on Corpus Christi day;[117] blasphemies were uttered even against the Holy Blood.[118] Had more such records survived, an impression of widespread delinquency might have been left to us. Yet the self-confessed failure of town authorities to raise devotional standards is less significant than the assumption that such a task was well within their sphere of competence. How and when this assumption became fully developed is hard to say. The decree in 1493 doubtless repeated previous decrees that are no longer extant.[119] The stipulation that guilds were not to conduct business on Sundays or holy days had long been embedded in craft rules approved by the magistracy.[120] Such decrees had followed from a more gradual extension of civic authority over issues that touched on the sacred. But although this process had begun earlier, it seems to have strengthened

[114] SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), i, fos. 122v–123r.

[115] RAB (BN), 7721; for the thief who stole a gold image and other things from the feretory of St Donatian in 1374: BAB, A48, fo. 41r; and for another theft from the feretory in 1489: *ibid.*, A56, fo. 181r. Also a crime of poverty in 1474: AGR, CC, 13780, fos. 35v–36r. For a theft from the alms box in St Giles', and illicit bell-ringing: SAB, 192 (*Verluydboek* 1490–1535), fo. 26r; and for other sacrilegious thefts: *ibid.*, fos. 27v–28r, 38r, 45r–46r, 49v–50v.

[116] For example, *ibid.*, 216, 1401/2, fo. 94r.

[117] For a case of *ruudhede* committed near the Bouverie gate on Corpus Christi day, 1510: *ibid.*, 192 (*Verluydboek* 1490–1535), fo. 55v.

[118] For more on blasphemy, see below, pp. 300–2.

[119] The *Hallegeboden* begin in 1491, but in the many town cartularies there is at least one earlier reference in 1484 to a decree ordering guilds to cease work: *ibid.*, 96, 14 (*Nieuwe groenenbouc*), fo. 332r.

[120] The complete collection of craft-guild rules (compiled in the 1440s, incorporating pre-existing rules) prohibited each guild from work on Sundays and certain holy days (RAB, FA, 1). These stipulations do not appear in the earliest (and less uniform) rules that survive between 1291 and 1350; Huys, *Duizend jaar*, pp. 145–57.

from the later fourteenth century onwards. The growth in funding of the Holy Blood and general processions was part of this process. So too was the town government's desire to increase liturgical celebration of Holy Blood day in 1419.

Municipal interest in this was part of a wider investment in public ceremony on feast days. Much of this investment came from individuals whose primary motive was the need of suffrage for their souls. This in itself generated its own inflationary pressure: the augmentation of other feast days made it all the more necessary for Holy Blood day to be celebrated with special distinction. But the effort to invest addressed wider concerns that were set against a background of social and religious upheaval. Foundations enhancing feast days and cults had a public dimension: the singing, bell-ringing, sermons and processions were intended to make a devotional impact on citizens as well as stimulate their prayers of intercession. They served the needs both of post-obit commemoration and of quotidian civic life. Benefactors who enhanced devotion on feast days were mindful of the needs of their souls, but also sensitive (especially if they had held public office) to the fragility of urban unity, and conscious that greater public piety might promote civic peace. The effort by individual citizens to 'excite the devotion of the people' and the calls of civic government for reverential observance of feast days were linked. The one might support the other. On the one hand, some benefactions (like Jan Waghenae's) could explicitly serve civic authority; on the other, official investment in liturgical celebration (such as the promotion of Holy Blood day or *Salve* concerts), built upon earlier benefactions by citizens and clergy. Civic-wide observance of cults or feast days could be encouraged both by the foundations of individual citizens and by the efforts of the town council.

Even so, the sacred dimension of civic authority should not be overstated. The Holy Ghost mass celebrated on election day after 1395, and the hours sung for Holy Blood day after 1419, took place within St Donatian's. Recorded in the church's *planarius*, these events of civic significance were fitted into the structure of the liturgy. Just as the canons remained custodians of sacred relics, so they remained guardians of sacred time. The town magistrates had no book of commemoration comparable to the *planarius*: and thus no sense of time besides the sacred. Commemoration of civic events remained embedded in the cycle of liturgical celebration.

Moreover, if the town council constituted a body with sacred attributes, it none the less remained a body of many parts. The election of councillors was supposed to follow rules in which guilds had

a voice. As the decree of 1493 implied, urban society was made up of groups as well as individuals: guilds had also to be regulated for the proper ordering of civic 'unity and peace'. Discussion of 'civic religion' remains incomplete without consideration of the place of guilds in urban society, and their contribution to the devotional and liturgical life of the town.

# 4 Guilds: feast, festivity and public worship

When the town council requested in 1419 that Holy Blood day be elevated in St Donatian's to a 'great double', it was aware that Holy Trinity day had already been given a similar rank. This had been the result of investment by a particular guild. In 1403, the canons had accepted a major foundation to build a new chapel at the northern end of the church. The endowment allowed over £50 *parisis* to be spent on two chaplains to celebrate daily mass in perpetuity, and on enhancing Holy Trinity day with lights, ornaments and bell-ringing (as on the feast of St Donatian). The foundation had come from a guild dedicated to the Trinity: its six governors in 1403 had served or were still serving on the town council, all as burgomasters.[1]

Membership lists for the guild do not survive, and little is known about its activities. The same is mostly true of the 200 or so guilds whose presence can be detected, sometimes only fleetingly, in surviving records between the late thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Most were not as socially distinguished or lavishly endowed as the Trinity guild, but virtually all provided intercession for the souls of their members under the patronage of particular saints. Their sheer number alone underscores their significance in the social and religious life of the town. It is their significance to 'civic religion' that is dealt with here, and this along two lines of inquiry.

The Trinity guild clearly had strong links with the town council: the specific connections of guilds with civic government will be treated in the next chapter. Here the focus is on the religious activities of guilds and the distinctive contribution they made to urban worship. Three

[1] SAB, 96, 10 (*Geluwenboek*), fos. 29v–30r. Contributions from the guild to the fabric of St Donatian's begin in 1406/7 (BAB, G2, 1406/7, fo. 3r). Later references to the guild outside the fabric accounts are sparse: see SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 166v–167r (in 1425/6, which refers to the guild members as 'notables of the town' and to a meeting of the guild governors in the *scepenhuis* to consider a replacement priest for the guild); also: BAB: A50, fo. 252r (1438); A52, fo. 11r (1452).

main types of guild or fraternity may be distinguished.[2] The most numerous in Bruges appear to be those guilds associated with a particular craft or profession: virtually all crafts, even if primarily formed to protect the economic interests of their masters and apprentices, in addition provided their members with some form of spiritual insurance, though the scale of this could vary considerably. Secondly, there were also fraternities that had a more purely devotional purpose, forming around a particular doctrine or cult (such as the Trinity), with a membership that was not necessarily restricted to a particular trade or occupation. These too could vary in terms of their social profile and religious activity. Thirdly, there were guilds, again with similar devotional arrangements, but also with more specialist activities – like archery guilds or rhetoric chambers, and (though this was a looser kind of association) the town's group of jousters.

The distinctions between these categories are not watertight. Individual citizens could be members of all three kinds of guild simultaneously. The religious benefits provided by one craft guild could be extended to members of another. Moreover, other social categories or divisions could determine membership of certain guilds. Some crafts were more prestigious than others; membership of the more exclusive devotional guilds evidently fulfilled a purpose that was as much social as religious. Within guilds, for all the pious plea for 'charity' and 'brotherhood' among members in their rules, a hierarchy of membership might well exist.

While the focus of this chapter is on the devotional activities of guilds, and on their contribution to public worship in the religious sense, sight of their more social activities should not be lost. Festivity such as banquets and drinking also characterised much guild activity; even for those guilds that were ostensibly more devotional, the fraternity feast was often at the heart of their communal experience. Public 'worship' – in the sense of social standing – also mattered to members of many types of guild: precedence, honour and status of guilds were asserted in a variety of ways, including devotional. Any analysis of these urban groups and their religious functions needs to take account of the economic and social environment, and its intensely competitive nature.

[2] The words 'guild' and 'fraternity' are usually used interchangeably here. Some guilds – particularly those founded specifically in honour of a cult or doctrine – are referred to as 'confraternities' or 'brotherhoods', but although these might have a different structure or different requirements of members from other 'guilds' they remain similar in terms of provision of intercession. For problems of classification, see P. Trio, 'Middeleeuwse broederschappen in de Nederlanden: Een balans en perspectieven voor verder onderzoek', *Tijdschrift voor de geschiedenis van het Katholiek leven in de Nederlanden* 3 (1994), 97–109 (pp. 100–4).

## Guild foundation in the fourteenth century

The early history of guild foundation in Bruges is obscure.[3] It is quite possible that all fifty-five craft guilds formally listed in the civic constitution by 1361 (and even some crafts and workers' associations that were not) had already formed brotherhoods, offering members a wide range of religious services. The earliest surviving rules – for instance those of Our Lady bridge-workers (1291) – show a concern to ensure suffrages for the souls of members: funeral services in particular.[4] Many craft guilds probably had their own altars in various churches by 1300;[5] a few more prestigious guilds, like the smiths, had their own chapels in the early fourteenth century (see Appendix 5).[6] The activities of the brokers/hostellers are better known: by 1327 they had their own almshouse on the *Vlamingdam*, and a chapel newly built that year in honour of the Holy Cross, Virgin Mary and All Saints. Indulgences for visitors to the chapel were acquired from various bishops in 1327, 1332 and 1343.[7] Intimately connected with the business of the brokers/hostellers were the foreign merchants or 'nations', who had already established semi-permanent presences within Bruges, including setting up their own altars in the town's mendicant churches.[8]

As for other kinds of guilds, sources before 1350 are again limited. The beneficed priests in some churches had already formed 'fraternities of the choir'.[9] Evidence for devotional guilds that were not formally

[3] References to guilds not cited in this chapter can be found in Appendix 5.

[4] E. Huys, *Duizend jaar mutualiteit bij de vlaamse gilden* (Kortrijk, 1926), pp. 147–8, 152.

[5] The carpenters apparently had an altar in the Franciscan friary in 1300: RAB, BN, 8084 (though this document is a later copy). The guild rules of Our Lady bridge-workers in 1291 mention a guild house and a priest but no guild altar (Huys, *Duizend jaar*, pp. 147, 150).

[6] The smiths already had their almshouse of St Eligius in 1335 (RAB, BN, 8303).

[7] SAB, 299, *Makelaars: Cartularium*, fos. 48r–v, 88v–89r. For more detail on the brokers, see A. Greve, 'Hansen, Hosteliers und Herbergen: Studien zum Aufenthalt hansischen Kaufleute in Brügge im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert', unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Ghent, 1998); J. M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism 1280–1390* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 186–205.

[8] See generally: J. Maréchal, *Europese aanwezigheid te Brugge: De vreemde kolonies (XIVde–XIXde eeuw)* (Bruges, 1985); A. Vanderwalle (ed.), *Les Marchands de la Hanse et la banque des Medicis. Bruges: marché d'échanges culturels en Europe* (Bruges, 2002). The German Hanse and the English merchants were the earliest founders of altars or chapels. The Hanse had particular connections with the Carmelites, but also favoured the Franciscans and Dominicans with annual gifts, and had burial space for its members in the Augustinian church.

[9] In Our Lady's a 'confraternity of the choir' had been founded in 1298: RAB, OLV, 2003. The collegiate clergy had long formed a 'community of the choir', which corporately managed endowments of the church, but the 'confraternity' specifically made arrangements for the collective intercession for its members.

affiliated to a particular craft or occupation is slight (see Appendix 5). A confraternity of St George, already in existence by 1281, perhaps in St Christopher's chapel, appears to have enjoyed the patronage of some important citizens.[10] The brotherhood of Our Lady of Hulsterlo existed by 1339, and had connections with the Beghard tertiaries. Its dean and a few members annually assembled the day after Pentecost in a chapel outside Damme to make a pilgrimage to a miraculous image that lay in a chapel in a forest east of Hulst.[11] The fraternity had strong associations with the furrier guilds, though its membership included many others.[12]

The more specialist kinds of fraternity make an early impression on surviving sources. The crossbowmen (part of the urban militia from the end of the thirteenth century) also formed a brotherhood. In 1321, under the patronage of Saints George and Denis, it had been granted use of St Peter's chapel in the *burg* for its priest to say daily mass, a weekly mass dedicated to the Virgin Mary and its two patron saints, and requiem masses for its dead brethren.[13] Bruges also had its own jousters from at least the late thirteenth century. Whether they constituted a guild is a moot point: no evidence survives for a guild structure with rules, nor for a guild chapel. But it was to have its own collective identity, and it may be that the jousters already constituted a specialised group by the 1320s (though not known then as the 'White

[10] A charter roll of lands and rents given to the fraternity, begun in 1316, dating back to 1281 and added to until the 1360s, includes the names of prominent families, for instance Bernard van Aertricke in 1313: RAB, OLV, O875. This may be the same as the St George 'confraternity', which was supporting a priest in St Christopher's by 1447 (BAB, A51, fo. 273v; C440). Another St George guild was in existence before 1287, connected with the hospital of Sint Josse, outside the Ezel gate.

[11] An indulgence granted in 1474 rehearses the legend of a monk from Thérouanne who had brought a miraculous statue to the forest of Hulsterlo and had placed it in a tree where two doves had settled: SAB, 524, Gilde Hulsterloo; A. Dewitte, 'Onser Vrauwe vander Loo: Brugge 1349; Damme 1410', *Biekorf* 95 (1995), 192–5. See H. van der Velden, 'Petrus Christus's *Our Lady of the Dry Tree*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 60 (1997), 89–110 (100–2). For the earliest reference, see SAB, 438, *Cartularia*, fos. 91r–v; and for reference in 1417 to its activities, see H. Brinkman, 'De Brugse pelgrims in het Gruuthuse handschrift', in J. Oosterman (ed.), *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede: Literaire cultuur in Brugge op de drempel van de rederijkerstijd* (Leuven, 2005), pp. 9–39.

[12] A. Schouteet, 'De broederschap van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Hulsterlo, 14de–16de eeuw: Archief en ledenlijst', *ASEB* 127 (1990), 109–44. In 1427 the brotherhood was able to list ninety-six street names, from many parts of the town, in which its members lived (SAB, 524). See Brinkman, 'De Brugse pelgrims', for membership of furriers dating back to *c*. 1370. In fact, the three main furrier guilds had a chapel in St James' church; their sub-guild, the *grauwerk touwers*, in St Giles (see Appendix 5).

[13] SAB, 385, Sint Joris *register en ledenlijst*, fos. 71r–72r (a copy of the grant made by Mary, lady of Eyne and Bremen). The chapel had been founded in the late eleventh century by Count Robert 'the Frisian'.

Bear').[14] By the 1330s, jousts appear to have become more regular; by the 1350s the jousters were holding a 'May feast' under a 'king'.[15]

The evidence for guilds before 1350 is thus patchy, but it may not be solely the result of incomplete survival. We might expect to find references to guild religious activity in the many cartularies or charters belonging to churches in Bruges that record endowments for divine service from the late thirteenth century. But few appear. The same sources, however, begin to register more guild activity in the later fourteenth century: groups of citizens seem to have made more concerted efforts to found guilds and guild altars, or increase the level of divine service that they offered their members.[16] At the same time, several free-standing guild chapels either appeared or were enlarged. The brokers, for instance, began a new programme of building and endowment in the 1370s.[17] Papal indulgences were acquired in 1372 and 1374. The chapel was permitted a bell-tower to summon the faithful: this gave it a semi-parochial status, which required negotiation with the clergy of St Giles' and Our Lady's over the disposition of offerings. Further efforts to enhance the status of the chapel were made. In 1410 it was dedicated by the bishop of Tournai, and in 1413 Lubert Hautschilt, the Eekhout abbot and ducal counsellor, with the burgomaster, *schout* and other prominent citizens, confirmed arrangements concerning the chapel and three new altars within. In 1412 and 1419 the guild came to agreements with the churches of Our Lady's and St Giles' concerning rights of burial within the chapel.[18]

The brokers' foundations were more impressive than those of craft guilds in Bruges, reflecting the wealth and political dominance of their

[14] See below, p. 168. A late-fifteenth-century source gives a list of White Bear jousters beginning in 1320 (ADN, 7662 (1) and Bibliothèque Municipale, Lille, MS 466). The list only lasts a decade, before resuming again in 1400: the early dates may be a mistranscription. See A. Van den Abeele, *Het ridderlijk gezelschap van de Witte Beer* (Bruges, 2000), Chapter 5.

[15] SAB, 216, 1353/4, fo. 122r; 1354/5, fo. 116r; 1355/6, fo. 127v.

[16] Compare with a similar trend in Ghent: P. Trio, *De Gentse broederschappen (1182–1580)* (Ghent, 1990), pp. 13–116.

[17] Seven substantial endowments are recorded between 1362 and 1399, the largest of which (£23 *parisis* of rents) were from Jacop van Aertricke, son of Jan 'Spotmakers', in 1376: SAB, 299, *Makelaars*: *Cartularium*, fos. 56v, 57v, 58r, 65r–v, 67r–69r. The guild's *renteboek* of 1413 records some fifty-nine rents from property inside or near the town (forty of them in the wealthier *zestendeelen* of Our Lady between the *Steenstraat* and the *grote markt*, and just outside the town between the Ghent and St Katherine gates, much of which had come from Jan van Aertricke's endowments), and other land purchased in Dudzeele and Damme (SAB, 299, *Makelaars*: *Renteboek*). For the guild's inns and 'pleasure garden', see Murray, *Cradle of Capitalism*, p. 197.

[18] SAB, 299, *Makelaars*: *Cartularium*, fos. 72r–74r, 75r–76v, 78v, 79r, 80r–83v, 91r–92v, 94v–95r; RAB, OLV, O761 (for an agreement with Our Lady's church over offerings in 1376).

guild. But they were part of a wider pattern. The smiths were expanding their own free-standing chapel of St Eligius in the *Smedenstraat* by the town gate in 1352, and in 1376 the guild increased guild subscriptions to pay for the 'great charges' incurred during the rebuilding.[19] Endowments for the guild began to increase from 1362, and especially from the late 1370s.[20] Next to another town gate, St Katherine's, the weavers in 1371 secured for their chapel the right to have a tower hung with a sonorous bell weighing 150 lb, to be rung during mass and in the evening in honour of the Virgin Mary.[21]

Other craft guilds in this period managed to acquire their own chapels within parish churches. In 1358 the chapter of St Donatian's permitted the tailors to found their own chapel on the north side of St Christopher's chapel, with a grille of fine wood for the entrance. In 1372, the cordwainers were permitted (by the churchwardens) to build a chapel, with burial rights, attached to the cemetery of St Saviour's. Several groups of foreign merchants appear to have acquired altars in churches of religious orders in the town from the 1360s onwards. The trend to increase guild celebration, and even found new guilds, was to continue unabated until the later fifteenth century.

Other kinds of guild also follow a similar chronology of foundation. A new 'brotherhood of the choir' for the priests in St Saviour's was founded in 1397.[22] The guild of St Katherine in the same church appears to have received more gifts of rents from the 1350s than before.[23] Crossbow-guild celebrations increased in the later fourteenth century (see Chapter 5), and in the 1380s the guild chapel was extensively renovated.[24] By 1397 the guild had perhaps grown sufficiently large to require division into two – the 'old' crossbowmen and the 'young' – for

[19] J. Gaillard, *Ambachten en neringen van Brugge* (Bruges, 1854), pp. 112, 114; RAB, BN, 8096; RAB, FA, 386 (*Register den smeden*, ambacht 1374–1500), fos. 1v–2r, 3v, 16v.

[20] For two gifts of rents in the 1360s, five in the 1370s, three in the 1380s, two in the 1390s and three in the 1400s: *ibid*., fos. 1v–2r, 3v, 4r–v, 7v–8v, 23v, 24v, 26v–27r, 38v–40r; RAB, BN, 9059, 9056, 9061, 9065, 9149. Endowments for the goldsmiths' guild (part of the smiths' guild but with its own independent foundations) may have been increasing from the 1390s too, to judge from the guild cartulary: RAB, FA, 64, *Goudsmeden cartulaire* (1395–1455).

[21] The chapel was not to infringe the rights of St Katherine's church. See also the fruit merchants who acquired exclusive management of the Sint Josse hospital in 1352: OCMW, *Fonds* Sint-Joos, 0, 1, 2.

[22] The brotherhood of the Assumption was modelled on earlier priestly confraternities in Our Lady's and Eekhout abbey (RAB, FD, 80, fos. 1r–5v).

[23] See BAB, S344, *Gilden* (charters): between 1327 and 1349 six gifts of rents are recorded; in the 1350s eleven, 1360s four, 1370s four, 1380s two, after which gifts appear to tail off.

[24] A. Vanhoutryve, *De Brugse kruisboogilde van Sint-Joris* (Bruges, 1968), pp. 62–6.

whom separate guild rules were written down. The archers had long been part of the civic militia, but it is not until 1396 that they appear under the patronage of St Sebastian, arranging with the Franciscans to celebrate mass every Sunday and festival day in a chapel within the friary.[25] Guilds of rhetoricians appear a little later (the Holy Ghost chamber, according to legend, in 1428 or 1429), but there are signs of official rhetoric activity by the end of the fourteenth century.[26]

In the same period a more regular jousting event was established. In the 1370s it was known as the 'jousts of St George' and was led by a 'prince'.[27] In 1380 we first hear of the jousts of the 'forester',[28] although it is a fleeting reference, and jousts were not held in Bruges during most of the 1380s.[29] From 1391 civic subsidy of the 'bear' jousts began to be placed on a more permanent footing.[30] If not strictly a guild, the jousting 'fellowship' gathered together regularly by the early fifteenth century in a building, the *poorters loge*, which it owned.[31]

In much the same period, there was a similar increase – in recorded evidence – in the number and activities of devotional guilds, such as the Trinity. Most of them (according to later evidence) were exclusive in membership, involving citizens of wealth and status. They also tended to be founded away from the clusters of craft guilds in other parish churches and chapels. By 1378 a 'guild or confraternity' of St Barbara was holding its services in St Peter's chapel behind St Donatian's.[32] A

[25] ASSB, charter 12; H. Godar, *Histoire de la gilde des archiers de S.-Sebastien de la ville de Bruges* (Bruges, 1947), pp. 126–36; M. Lemahieu, *De koninklijke hoofdgilde Sint-Sebastiaan Brugge 1379–2005* (Bruges, 2005), pp. 85–7. This is dated 1491, but refers to an original agreement with the Franciscans in 1396.

[26] See below, pp. 170, 176; and See L. Derycke and A.-L.Van Bruaene, 'Sociale en literaire dynamiek in het vroeg vijftiende-eeuwse Brugge: De oprichting van de rederijkerskamer De Heilige Geest *ca*. 1428', in Oosterman, *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede* (Leuven, 2005), pp. 59–87.

[27] SAB, 216, 1370/1, fo. 81v; 1372/3, fo. 65r; 1375/6, fo. 72v. Heralds coming to other towns to publicise the Bruges 'jousts of St George' continued up to 1378 (E. Van den Neste, *Tournois, joûtes, pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandre à la fin du Moyen Age (1300–1486)* (Paris, 1996), pp. 248, 249, 251).

[28] In January 1380 the town of Cambrai paid a herald who 'cria les joustes de Noble Forestier' (*ibid*., p. 253).

[29] According to the (surviving) civic accounts, jousts were only held in 1387 and 1389 (SAB, 216: 1386/7, fos. 132r, 133v; 1388/9, fo. 110v).

[30] For further references, see A. Brown, 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages: The White Bear of Bruges,' *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 78 (2000), 315–30.

[31] The *poorters loge* was built around 1395. Reference to its ownership by the *ghemeenen ghezelscepe* of the White Bear appears for instance in 1440: RAB, SG, 343, fos. 11r, 14v. For brief reference to its acting collectively in the distribution of doles to the poor: SAB, 1396/7, fo. 91v.

[32] In 1397 the fraternity was rebuilding its chapel as 'a great part of it had fallen down' (RAB, SJ, 646, fos. 46v–47v). Another St Barbara guild existed in St Saviour's by 1387; the chief members in 1396 were prominent citizens.

guild dedicated to Our Lady of the Dry Tree, possibly formed around a miracle-working image, was also founded in the Franciscan friary by 1396.[33] In the same year another Marian guild – Our Lady of Rozebeke – made a similar agreement for services in the Carmelite friary.[34] In 1406 we first hear of a guild, in St Basil's chapel, dedicated to the Holy Blood,[35] and a guild of St John the Baptist in St John's chapel.[36] Corpus Christi guilds were in existence in St Saviour's in the early fifteenth century, and in St Giles' by 1407.

Explanations for these trends may be found partly in social and economic change. The apparent expansion of guild activity in the later fourteenth century – in the 1360s and 1370s, and then again from the 1390s – may be attributed to favourable conditions for investment in commercial as well as religious ventures (even if dampened by inflation and the upheavals during the Ghent rebellion from 1379 to 1385). The reorientation of the local economy, particularly towards trade in luxury goods, was beneficial for middling groups in Bruges, while the brokers in particular were in a position to profit from the return of more peaceful conditions, and the influx of foreign merchants and trade.

The pattern of guild foundation and expansion also matches the wider investment in liturgical celebration that we have already observed (Chapter 3). Membership of a brotherhood would doubtless have provided some security of post-obit intercession in a period when plague increased the threat of sudden death. It also served other purposes. The late fourteenth century saw a larger number of foundations to enhance feast days in ways that encouraged public devotion. Guild activity was not unconnected with this trend. When fuller details of guilds begin to survive (from the mid fifteenth century), the significance of guild contribution to public worship becomes more obvious. But earlier evidence already points in this direction. The Trinity guildsmen evidently intended collectively to enhance the celebration of a major feast day. Individually, they were active in other ways. The six named governors in 1403 were highly placed citizens, and at least three were major benefactors of divine service. We have met two of them already: Jan Camphin, promoter of the Holy Blood procession and feast day; and Niclaas Barbezaen, the wealthy merchant and multiple civic office-holder, contributor to public

[33] SAB, 505; van der Velden, 'Petrus Christus', 89–110, and references cited there.

[34] SAB, 509, Register, fo. 51r; W. H. J. Weale, 'La Procession et les confréries de Notre-Dame de Roosebeke', *La Flandre* 3 (1869–70), 154–87 (p. 182). The 1396 contract is copied into a later document made in 1469.

[35] See below, p. 167.

[36] BAB, A49, fos. 89r–v. The entry refers to the guild's 'long devotion in this chapel in the service of God'.

works, founder of sermons and feast days, White Bear jouster and dean of the crossbowmen in the 1390s.[37] Their benefactions served in part to increase public worship; their efforts as individual citizens dovetailed with their membership of devotional guilds.

## Guild membership and activity

### *Jousters and jousting*

Fifteenth-century sources allow a more detailed picture of guild activity to emerge, though inevitably most of it relates to the wealthier kind of guild or group – jousters and shooters in particular. A description of a jousting event in 1418 was later recorded by Nicolaes Despars.[38] On the afternoon of Sunday 13 March the chief town councillors gathered at the *poorters loge* to discuss how best to conduct the annual jousting event. It was agreed that the jousts should be celebrated once more with all the solemnities that had formerly been customary to honour the memory of the old foresters of Flanders. So Jan van Melane, the new forester, was ordered to make preparations, with his heralds, master of the household, armourer, cooks, pipers and drummers. A few weeks later, on the Saturday after Low Sunday at 8 am, the master of the household, herald and four young jousters rode through the streets to the houses of the principal women and maidens of the town to alert them to the coming festivities. The next day they all breakfasted in the *Mane* house on the *markt* and then began their parade (*vespereyde*): Jan van Melane emerged from the Eekhout priory and made his way with fourteen other jousters to the *markt*.[39] The jousts got underway. Pieter Adornes won the spear,

[37] SAB, 216, 1392/3, fos. 69r, 94v; 1405/6, fo. 118r. Another was Jan Hoste, crossbowman and jouster, whose father had probably enhanced the Rogation processions and the feast of the Immaculate Conception in St Donatian's: BAB, A141, fo. 18r; D42, 12 (1351); A47, fo. 167r (1364 for a chantry chapel). The other three governors were parishioners of St Donatian: Joris Braderic, 'knight' (who paid a redemption fee in 1407 to be permitted burial in the Dominican church: BAB, A49, fo. 91r), and Jan Heldebolle and Jan Honin (*ibid*., fos. 25r–v; A141, fo. 79v). Another example of the overlap between guild and individual religious activity is Bernard van Aertricke, founder of sermons and relic processions, who also became an important founder of sung masses in the archers' chapel in 1416: ASSB, charter 1; Godar, *Histoire*, pp. 82–4.

[38] Nicolaes Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen ende graefscepe van Vlaenderen … van de jaeren 405–1492*, ed. J. de Jonghe, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1839–42), Vol. III, pp. 247–52. The town accounts, however, do not hint (as Despars does) at any renewal of jousting activity in this year, although funds for it were to increase shortly after (see below, pp. 171–2).

[39] The earliest reference to the connection between the abbey and the jousters may be found in instructions given to the abbey gatekeeper (dateable probably to the late fourteenth century): he was required to be on hand, when *de josterrers hier vergaderen*,

the prize for the 'insider', and thus the office of forester for the following year; a citizen from Lille won the prize for the 'outsider', a bear statue cut from white wood. In the evening, jousters and women dined at the cost of the town. The new forester was escorted home and the next day a banquet was held in his honour. On the first Friday of the May market, the herald of the White Bear, accompanied by pipers and drummers, came to the townhouse (*scepenhuis*) to hang up the arms of Jan van Melane within, in memory of and in thanks for his forestership.

Such events are a reminder that a culture of a more secular nature also thrived within the town. Although not unique to the Low Countries,[40] jousting had an established pedigree within towns of the region where differences between urban patrician and rural aristocrat had been eroded early. From the end of the thirteenth century, chivalric *festes* are increasingly recorded in towns, including Bruges. These events brought their participants prestige. Adoption by the Bruges jousters of names such as St George – then White Bear and forester – conjured up the spirit of chivalric enterprise. St George and the Nine Worthies appear in a wall-painting recently uncovered in a house possibly associated with the jousters (before they acquired the *poorters loge*).[41] Bears and forests had Arthurian associations favoured in an international court as well as urban culture.[42] The White Bear and forester had heroic connotations that were more local. Chronicles of Flanders had long accorded the first count, Baldwin 'Iron Arm' (867–97), the title of 'forester' for the improbable feat of clearing Flemish forests of savage polar bears.[43] The Bruges jousters thus surrounded themselves with cultural references that identified them with the nobility.

Some forms of jousting, however, were more noble than others. By the fifteenth century, subtle distinctions were made in heraldic treatises between different forms of chivalric combat.[44] During 'jousts' individuals ran lances against each other. 'Tournaments' were superior

to ensure that there was no *mesdoe* (Bruges, Grootseminarie, *Fonds* Eekhout, 181/150, fo. 170v).

[40] For jousting also in German, Baltic, northern French and Italian towns, see T. Zotz, 'Adel, Burgertum und Türnier in deutschen Städten vom 13. bis 15. Jahrhundert', in J. Fleckenstein (ed.), *Das ritterliche Türnier im Mittelalter* (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 450–99; A. Mänd, *Urban Carnival: Festive Culture in the Hanseatic Cities of the Eastern Baltic, 1350–1550* (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 238–48; Van den Neste, *Tournois*; R. C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980), pp. 223–4.

[41] Van den Abeele, *Ridderlijk gezelschap*, Chapter 9.

[42] See S. Selzer, 'Bürger an König Artus' Tafel: Gemeinschaft und Erinnerung in den Artushöfen des Preußenlandes', in T. Hill and D. W. Poeck (eds.), *Gemeinschaft und Geschichtsbilder im Hanserum* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), pp. 123–43.

[43] Despars, *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, Vol. I, pp. 1–9.

[44] See Van den Neste, *Tournois*, esp. pp. 50–4.

exercises, for they included individual combats with swords as well as lances, and sometimes incorporated team contests (*mêlées*). They were also dignified by religious solemnities, like attendance at mass on the morning of combat. A third form, the *pas d'armes*, emerging in the early fifteenth century, adapted stories from romances, and involved an individual knight taking on all comers in various forms of engagement (on foot or on horse; with lances, swords or axes) and could also include *mêlées*. In theory it was the most exclusive form of combat of all: only those who could prove four blood lines of nobility were supposed to take part.

Distinctions between these different forms of combat were acknowledged by citizens in Bruges. The civic accounts distinguish 'tournaments' from the annual White Bear 'joust' (*jostement* or *sticspele*). In 1393, the lord of the Gruuthuse staged a *tornoyse* in Bruges, in which he pitted fifty of his men against fifty of the lord of Gistel.[45] Later events involving nobles and courtiers, and referred to as *tournaments*, separate from the White Bear 'jousts', also took place in the town.[46] Nevertheless, the differences between these forms of combat were blurred in practice. Some elements of the White Bear joust borrowed from customs more usually associated with tournaments: reference to the presence of heralds, young maidens, dancing, banquets, religious services and displays of arms no doubt surrounded the event with an air of *courtoisie*. The idea of two tournament teams was echoed in the prizes awarded every year to the best jousters from 'within' the town and from 'without'.[47]

The presence of Burgundian courtiers and dukes is itself indication that the White Bear jousts were prestigious (see Chapter 7). Noble participation in *pas d'armes* did not preclude involvement in civic jousts. The *pas d'armes* may have excluded participation of townsmen, but other tournaments did not. The Gruuthuse tournament of 1393 included men who were to serve in civic office.[48] The Gruuthuse family was perhaps associated with the White Bear by the late fourteenth century.[49]

[45] SAB, 539, Hs. 3, fos. 10v–21v; M. P. J. Martens, *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse: Mecenas en europees diplomat* c. *1427–1492* (Bruges, 1992), pp. 89–92; SAB, 216, 1392/3, fo. 94v.

[46] See the town's partial funding of a *tornoye* in November 1412 between the lord of Steenhuse and Roeland van Uutkerke, sovereign *bailli* of Flanders (SAB, 216, 1412/13, fo. 78v); and of a *sticspele* for Philip the Good in 1468 and a *tornoye* for Maximilian in 1481 (SAB, 216, 1467/8, fo. 74v; 1480/1, fo. 163v).

[47] For references, see Brown, 'Urban jousts', p. 321.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

[49] A 'forester' is mentioned in a poem of *c.* 1400 associated with the Gruuthuse: C. L. Carton (ed.) *Oudvlaemsche liederen en andere gedichten der XIVe en XVe eeuwen*, 2 vols. (Ghent, 1849), Vol. II, pp. 479–88. But debate remains over whether the poet identifies the forester as a Gruuthuse family member: see references in Van den Abeele, *Ridderlijk gezelschap*, Chapter 18.

Lodewijk van Gruuthuse held a joust in Bruges in August 1470, subsidised by the town.[50] But he had also been a regular participant in the White Bear jousts in the 1440s, and in the 1470s and 1480s he often met with the civic magistracy to discuss arrangements for the jousts.[51]

The White Bear joust was thus an occasion in which participants could identify themselves with a chivalric culture associated with the highest nobility. Was this merely to 'ape' the noble way of life,[52] slavishly adopting a borrowed culture? The complaint of contemporary moralists would suggest so. Preachers at Lille in 1484 were to condemn urban jousts as unedifying spectacles in which the bourgeoisie toadied up to the nobility in the hope of advantageous marriages for their offspring.[53] But this also suggests that the 'bourgeois' had their own agenda, which extended beyond any simple desire to imitate the aristocracy. By jousting, groups of the urban elite were also self-consciously marking out their own way of life from that of other citizens. The public parades, on horseback, through the streets and into market squares accompanied by heralds and pipers; the display of coats of arms; the occupation of their own stone building; were all forms of social marking that elevated them above other citizens.[54]

Membership of the White Bear was clearly exclusive. The number of participants was not large, never more than 20 (in 1427), and usually between 4 and 8 from 1450 to 1487.[55] Larger contingents were sometimes sent out to the Epinette jousts at Lille (over 30 in 1442).[56] It is possible to list the names of some 252 men from Bruges who participated in the White Bear jousts between 1391 and 1487 (and a further 69 who apparently attended the Epinette jousts in the 1430s and 1440s).[57] A

[50] SAB, 216, 1469/70, fo. 118r.

[51] For Gruuthuse involvement in the White Bear jousts in 1443, 1446, 1448, 1473, 1476 and 1483, see Brown, 'Urban Jousts', p. 321.

[52] C. Fouret, 'La Violence en fête: La Course de l'épinette à Lille à la fin du Moyen Age', *Revue du nord* 63 (1981), 377–90 (p. 390): during the épinette, 'la bourgeoisie lilleoise essayait de singer les modes princières'). Van den Neste, *Tournois*, pp. 189–92.

[53] ADN, B7662 (9), p. 2. See below, pp. 189–90.

[54] For more material expressions of such social marking: W. De Clerq, J. Dumolyn and J. Haemers, '"Vivre noblement": Material Culture and Elite Identity in Late Medieval Flanders', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38 (2007), 1–31.

[55] See Van den Abeele, *Ridderlijk gezelschap*, Appendix 3.

[56] For lists of participants from Bruges in the Lille jousts for 1435, 1438, 1442 and 1447, see ADN, B7662 (9).

[57] The names of participants come from several sources: the Bruges town accounts, and later lists given in Despars, *Cronijke*, Vols. III and IV, *passim*; SAB, Hs. 574 (J. P. van de Maele, *Beschryvinge van Brugge*, *c.* 1721); SAB, 539, Hs. 3; Van den Abeele, *Ridderlijk gezelschap*, Appendix 3 provides a list of about 230 possible members (which does not include the names of those sent to Lille from 1438 to 1447). My own list differs only slightly. Van den Abeele's list of foresters in the 1420s can be slightly altered

strong correlation is apparent between the White Bear and the highest ranked citizens and families of Bruges. Some possessed titles to fiefs, lordships, lands and castles outside Bruges in the *vrije*, and (like Jan van Melane in 1418) had their own coats of arms. Lords of Moerkerke, Lilleghem and Uutkerke became foresters in the fifteenth century. A few, like the Gruuthuse, had exalted connections with the high nobility and the court.

The majority of White Bear participants were more closely associated with the economic and political life of the town. At least 50 (20 per cent) can be found as brokers/hostellers. A further 154 (61 per cent) went on to serve on one of the two benches of civic magistrates, and 32 (13 per cent) became burgomasters. The connection between the White Bear and civic office was perhaps stronger than even these figures suggest. Those who participated in the jousts were usually young men, not all of whom were perhaps destined for public office, yet were often members of families who were heavily represented in civic government during the fifteenth century. The names of eight families – Adornes, van Aertricke, Breydel, de Baenst, Boonin, Hoste, Metteneye and van Themseke – dominated civic office during the fifteenth century, and account for a quarter of all known members of the White Bear.[58]

### *Crossbowmen, archers and rhetoricians*

The bow did not carry quite the same kudos as the lance: the activities of crossbowmen and archers were not as socially prestigious as those of jousters. None the less, annual shooting matches marked their participants out from the majority of other citizens. The budget available to the St George guild by the 1440s[59] allowed the Holy Trinity papagay to be an occasion for conspicuous display of hierarchy and consumption: attendance at sung morning mass in St Peter's chapel, a procession (with a dragon) to the *poorters loge*, the shooting match itself (the winner of which was crowned 'king') and a banquet attended by around 130 people. The food served suggests social pretension: the provision

for the years in the light of evidence from SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), 1397–1421, fo. 174r; 1422–43, fos. 2r, 25v, 33v, 41r, 58v.

[58] Most of the jousters in the lists of participants who fought at Lille between 1438 and 1447 did not go on to serve civic office. But twenty-seven out of sixty-nine were from one of the eight same families.

[59] The surviving guild accounts from 1445 to 1480 show annual receipts totalled around £80 (reaching over £120 in exceptional years), which came from a few rented properties, subscriptions from members and a subsidy from the town of £25 (which could be increased to £70). There was regular expenditure on papagay day (principally for the banquet) of around £7 (SAB, 385, *Rekeningen*, 1445–80).

of several different types of meat (hams, mutton, beef, rabbit, chicken) as well as large quantities of Rhenish wine distinguished the St George banquet from more artisan fare; the occasional appearance of game and fowl (geese, capon, partridge), as well as spices, would have graced more aristocratic tables. The crossbowmen could afford an impressive range of divine service, paying out over £10 a year to the guild priest for daily mass and singers on certain holy days,[60] and sermons on St George's and St Denis' days. The guild chapel displayed a painting depicting the legend of St George.[61]

The St George guild was potentially open to a wider section of civic society than White Bear activities: according to its rules in 1400, membership was open to all *poorters* of the town (and their wives) and who paid the relatively modest entry fee of £6 *parisis* plus two *stoopen* of Rhenish wine.[62] There were thus more crossbowmen than jousters: perhaps some 280 at any one time in the middle years of the fifteenth century. Membership cut across craft affiliations: a wide range of crafts was represented.[63] The guild chapel inventory lists gifts (mostly in the 1430s) from fifteen guilds.[64] But there was also a significant representation from the top levels of Bruges society.[65]

The St Sebastian archers did not rank as highly as the St George crossbowmen in the civic *cursus honorum*. Their deference to the crossbowmen was displayed in the Holy Blood procession.[66] They held their own annual papagay after that of the crossbowmen, to which they came to

[60] The guild accounts usually pick out for special celebration five Our Lady days (i.e. Presentation, Visitation etc), St George, St Denis, Easter, Ascension, Corpus Christi, All Souls, Christmas, *Verzworen* Mondays (after Epiphany) and Maundy Thursday for a *mandatum* ceremony (washing the feet of the poor). Holy Blood day and Ascension were the occasions of large banquets. The cantor and children from St Saviour's are mentioned in 1454/5; singers from St James' in 1479 (*ibid*., fos. 69v, 238r).

[61] Vanhoutryve, *De Brugse kruisboogilde*, pp. 61–3.

[62] For sons of members, the entry fee was halved.

[63] A full prosopographical survey of membership would show the whole range of crafts represented. The members whose professions are given in the guild obituary list and the accounts came from at least forty-five crafts. The research of Laura Crombie, of Glasgow University, will illuminate this in more detail.

[64] The shippers, chandlers, butchers, carpenters, dyers, brewers, coopers, hatters, doublet-makers, painters, fullers, tanners, silversmiths, fish-merchants and bakers: SAB, 385, Register, fos. 77r, 81r–82r; Vanhoutryve, *De Brugse kruisboogilde*, p. 84.

[65] From 1,018 names of crossbowmen known between 1437 and *c*. 1500 (the bulk of which come from the obituary list (from 1437) and the accounts (1454–81), 18 (1.8 per cent) can be identified as brokers, 31 (3 per cent) as White Bear jousters, 5 (0.5 per cent) as Holy Blood members, 17 (1.7 per cent) as Rozebeke guild members and 22 (2.2 per cent) as Dry Tree guild members. (In the case of the last three guilds, however, the list of members only begin from the 1460s.) Of 638 individuals who served as town magistrates (*schepenen* or *raadslieden*) between 1440 and 1500, 73 (11.4 per cent) had been crossbow-guild members.

[66] Vanhoutryve, *De Brugse kruisboogilde*, pp. 162–7.

make a gift of Rhenish wine.[67] Moreover, the St Sebastian archers were more numerous, and their guild slightly less socially exclusive, than the St George crossbowmen. The earliest accounts for the archers list over 350 members who paid subscriptions that year (or back-dated payments later). The entry fee of around 2s was lower than the fee demanded for St George's. Like the St George guild, the archers represented a full range of craft guilds, but perhaps in greater density: there were high-ranking civic officials and brokers/hostellers amongst its members, but not quite as many proportionally as the crossbow guild.[68] Moreover, the budget of the St Sebastian's guild was not as large as that of St George's, and their annual papagay and banquet were not as expensive nor their tables furnished with quite the variety of meats available to the crossbowmen.[69]

Even so, the celebrations of St Sebastian's guild distinguished it from those of most other guilds in the town. Divine service in its chapel within the Franciscan friary was expanded during the course of the fifteenth century. In 1428, the guild acquired from Pope Martin V, through the mediation of Jacob van der Beurse, a relic of St Sebastian's skull, as well as an indulgence for all who prayed at the chapel at mass on St Sebastian's day.[70] Large benefactions also augmented divine service. Bernard van Aertricke's endowment in 1416 allowed for two obits, daily mass and additional masses to be sung by five friars after prime on certain feast days.[71] The friars did not always satisfy the exacting requirements of the guild: a new agreement in 1456 had to clarify the

[67] Presents of wine (usually two *stoopen*) from the king of the archers and the king of the 'young' crossbowmen on the day of the annual Trinity shooting were a standard receipt in the crossbow guild accounts just as they were an expense for the archers, for instance, on 18 May 1455: SAB, 385, *Rekeningen*, 1454/5, fo. 82r; ASSB, *Rekeningboeken*, i, 1454/5 (unfoliated). These gifts were reciprocated by the crossbowmen.

[68] From 912 names of archers known between 1418 and 1512 (the bulk of which come from the accounts of 1454–81), 12 (1.3 per cent) can be identified as brokers, 15 (1.6 per cent) as White Bear jousters, 5 (0.5 per cent) as Holy Blood members, 13 (1.4 per cent) as Rozebeke guild members and 12 (1.3 per cent) as Dry Tree guild members. Of 638 individuals who served as town magistrates between 1440 and 1500, 29 (4.5 per cent) had been archery-guild members.

[69] On average, St Sebastian's guild (between 1455 and 1480) raised around £70 each year, and spent between £3 and £4 on their papagay event (though an exceptional £8 4s was spent in 1480). Roast pork, capon and ham were the usual meats on offer. The number attending the banquet averaged around 70 people (though between 200 and 250 archers seem to have attended the papagay): ASSB, *Rekeningboeken*, i (1455–64), ii (1464–72), iii (1455–72), iv (1468–80; 1506–7, 1511–13).

[70] ASSB, charters 4, 5 and 6 (also for later indulgences in 1429 and 1430). *Clinkers* (town criers) were paid by the guild to announce the pardon annually (e.g. ASSB, *Rekeningboeken*, i, 1454/5).

[71] ASSB, charter 1; Godar, *Histoire*, pp. 82–4. The feast days for special celebration were those of St Sebastian, Holy Cross (May), Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, Holy Cross (September), All Saints, All Souls, St Leonard, St Elizabeth, Presentation of Our Lady, St Maximus and St Vincent.

terms to settle 'difficulties' that included lapses by the friars in divine service. The agreement also allowed the guild greater autonomy in certain areas: the guild was to choose its own priest to perform daily mass, and the friars no longer had the authority to bury people in the chapel without consulting the guild.[72] In 1491, Jan Breydel's foundation referred to further mendicant negligence, but boosted daily mass in the chapel by requiring at least eight friars to sing special masses on specified feast days.[73]

Other activities also lent the archers a certain social distinction. On Holy Blood day, like the crossbowmen, they sported new liveries paid for by the town. They had their midday meal in an inn on the *Steenstraat*, in a back room secluded from the 'noise of the people'.[74] Their papagay, like St George's, marked the archers out from other citizens: they too had morning mass sung and sermons said in their own chapel, and their procession to the guild house was attended by bell-ringing, trumpets and clarions. The archers also held another smaller banquet on St Sebastian's day (20 January) following vespers and mass and the singing of a Magnificat by at least six friars in the guild chapel.[75]

The collective events of shooting guilds were no doubt intended to develop a sense of solidarity among their members. Attendance at masses or banquets was compulsory, avoided only by paying a fine. Guild rules insisted on peace and harmony among members. Yet there were also hierarchies within guilds. Membership was bought at a flat rate, but additional payment of a mortuary fee (*doodghelt*) purchased a special anniversary service in the guild chapel, affording a distinctive kind of membership that extended after death. In the case of St Sebastian's, this fee was paid by only around ten people a year, and these were usually men who had served as guild officers. St Sebastian's papagay banquet was attended by perhaps a third of the members, but some paid at a slightly higher rate than others. There were usually around four tables, with a top table set aside for the guild officers and important guests. There was also a certain distance between guild officers and the majority of members. Although St Sebastian's guild was junior to the crossbow guild, and although it drew its membership from a slightly wider cross-section of civic society, its chief members

[72] ASSB, charter 10; Godar, *Histoire*, pp. 108–11.
[73] ASSB, charter 12; Godar, *Histoire*, pp. 126–36. Jan Breydel was headman of the guild and a former burgomaster.
[74] So it is asserted in the accounts of 1455 (ASSB, *Rekeningboeken*, i, 1454/5 (unfoliated)).
[75] Slightly fewer members (around seventy) attended this one compared with the papagay banquet.

were from the same group of the civic elite as those of the crossbow guild. The families who dominated civic office tended also to populate the ranks of guild officials, archer and crossbow, just as they did the lists of jousters.

Despite hierarchies within these guilds, membership distinguished shooters from other townsmen. Both archery and crossbow feasts, just like the May jousts, could draw in aristocrats, courtiers and princes. Lodewijk van Gruuthuse enjoyed a regular association with the crossbowmen, just as he did with the jousters: he received gifts of the guild livery; he met with the guild officers in a tavern in 1463; his herald accompanied the crossbowmen to the competition at Oudenaarde in 1463; he became honorary 'headman' in 1479.[76] His association with St Sebastian's archers was less regular, but he did receive their livery on occasion, as in 1455 and 1478; and the guild secured his presence at the top table of their papagay banquet on 9 May 1479, when they presented him with a gift of Rhenish and Beaune wine.[77]

Lodewijk was not alone among those with landed titles or noble status who associated themselves with the shooters. The St George guild obit list beginning in September 1437 opens with no less a name than Duke Philip the Good, and those of eight other important lords, plus a further seventeen people of similar standing who were added at later dates. These names are distinguished by appearing before a longer alphabetised list of other members.[78] In the surviving accounts, the lords of Sint Joris, Snaaskerke, Dudzele and Maldegem also received gifts of livery from the crossbowmen in the 1460s and 1470s; the lord of Etampes enjoyed post-obit suffrage from the guild after 1463.[79] The *baljuw* and *schout*, and sometimes the burgomaster (or other civic officials), regularly appeared at the papagay banquets. The archers could also boast illustrious connections, if not quite so many. The forester lord of Moerkerke was at the papagay banquet in 1472; Pieter Bladelin (treasurer of the Order of the Golden Fleece) paid 7s for suffrages in 1472. The Grand Bastard Anthony of Burgundy, devotee of the May jousts, took part in the papagay competition and was made honorary king of the guild in 1463 (whose presence at the guild breakfast on papagay day apparently necessitated the purchase of an *oostersche* ham).

[76] SAB, 385, *Rekeningen*, fos. 92r (1455); 105v (1457); 161v, 169r (1463); 191v (1472); 208v (1473); 231v, 251v (1479).

[77] ASSB, *Rekeningboeken*, i, 1454/5; iii, 1478/9 (unfoliated). Jan van Gruuthuse (Lodewijk's son) was enrolled for free as a member of St Sebastian's archers in 1476 (*ibid*., ii, 1475/6).

[78] SAB, 385, Register, fos. 1v–3r.

[79] *Ibid*., *Rekeningen*, fos. 169r (1463), 191v (1472), 208v (1473), 244r (1479).

Adolf, lord of Ravenstein, who received guild livery in 1478, took part in 1479 – as did Archduke Maximilian.[80]

The festive activities of the other main type of specialist guild, the rhetoricians, are also relevant in this context. Some of the activities of Bruges' first rhetoric chamber, the Holy Ghost, enjoyed civic sponsorship by the 1440s.[81] The reputed founding members of the Holy Ghost guild were located within the same social milieu as many jousters and shooters. Their names suggest strong links with the civic magistracy, craft-guild officer or commercial elite of the town. Some of them were members of the Dry Tree guild; two were involved in the White Bear jousts; another two in the crossbow guild. Gillis Hoonin (who was probably also a White Bear jouster and crossbowman) was a member of the Holy Blood guild.[82] Like jousters and crossbowmen, rhetoricians were also linked with courtly circles. The Holy Ghost chamber had connections with the Gruuthuse family. In 1466, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse permitted the Holy Ghost guild use of an altar in the Carmelite friary, 'in accordance with the wishes of his grandmother'.[83] Lodewijk probably had personal connections with the most famous rhetorician, Anthonis de Roovere, who also drew the benevolent attention of Charles the Bold for his rhetorical work.[84] As well as being a member of the Dry Tree confraternity, de Roovere was also involved in a new rhetoric chamber of the Three Saints (*Drie Santinnen*) founded around 1470.

The involvement of princes and courtiers in town festivities will be explored further (see Chapter 7). Already apparent is that the leading members of shooting and rhetoric guilds were associated with the top levels of civic government, and also with the individuals and families who took part in the May jousts. Nobles who tilted with the May jousters, stretched a bow at papagay competitions, or sat at the top tables of guild banquets, rubbed shoulders in each case with the same groups of citizens – whose own social standing was elevated above those of other citizens by their public association with nobility and court.

[80] ASSB, *Rekeningen*, i, 1463/4; ii, 1471/2; iii, 1478/9 (unfoliated).

[81] See below, p. 176.

[82] For prosopographical details of the reputed founding members, see Derycke and Van Bruaene, 'Sociale en literaire dynamiek', pp. 59–87. In addition, Gillis Hoonin filled the civic office of *Ten Heilighen Bloede* (churchwarden of St Basil's chapel) in 1418 and 1422: SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), 1397–1422, fos. 159r, 173v.

[83] Lodewijk's grandmother, Agnes van Mortaigne (widow of Jan van Gruuthuse) had founded the chapel and been buried at the altar in 1428. For foundations concerning this altar, see AKB, *Liber oblongus*, fos. 99r–v, 183v.

[84] See J. Oosterman, 'Anthonis de Roovere. Het werk: Overlevering, toeschrijving en plaatsbepaling', *Jaarboek De Fonteine* 45–6 (1995–6), 29–140 (p. 95); and below, p. 240.

*Craft guilds*

To turn from these ludic fraternities to craft guilds is not entirely a shift in attention to a lower social level. The brokers (listed with craft guilds on Holy Blood day, although distinct from them in their activities) were on the same social footing as jousters or crossbowmen. There were also the 'nations' of foreign merchants whose links with the brokers were necessarily strong. As we shall see, craft guilds within the town also sought connection with a higher social elite. None the less, there was a hierarchy of status between craft guilds that was most evident during the Holy Blood procession; and there were other means through which a particular craft could demonstrate or enhance its public standing. Among these was a range of devotional desiderata that guilds sought to acquire: a sacred sliding scale of hierarchy existed along which they aspired to move. Securing a free-standing chapel, preferably with certain parochial rights, represented achievement at the top end of the scale. This in itself required considerable material means, but also influence and negotiation. The acquisition of parochial rights infringed on those of existing parish churches; protracted discussion with the relevant ecclesiastical body might be needed. Despite the difficulties, many craft guilds, particularly the more prestigious, considered it worth increasing their privileges. The mercers, for instance, had maintained an altar within St Christopher's chapel until, in 1394, thanks to a large endowment by one of its members, Clais Pagant, they acquired an almshouse with chapel (and bell-tower), a foundation formally ratified by the town magistracy.[85] By 1420, the shippers had acquired papal permission to erect a bell-tower over their chapel.[86] The smiths enhanced the status of their chapel in 1449 by securing episcopal consent to receive offerings within their chapel and to bury their dead there.[87] Permission for a small bell and a cross for high mass was eventually granted from the pope in 1489.[88] Guilds without their own chapel also sought to acquire

[85] For the mercers' altar in St Christopher's chapel in 1362, their agreement with Clais Pagant concerning the foundation of a hospital in 1388, episcopal grant of the bell-tower in 1390, the town magistracy's confirmation in 1394 and the acquisition of burial rights in 1406: OCMW, Godshuis Sint Niklaas, charters 9, 22, 30–2, 50, 75. Clais Pagant also linked his foundation with the six parish poor tables in the town, and secured a grant of amortisation of the land from Duke Philip the Bold; *ibid.*, charters 72, 73, 80, 81, 86, 87, 88, 91, 93.

[86] The shippers already had an almshouse for their own members by 1415 (SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 53v).

[87] This required the permission of St Saviour's, St Walburga's and St Jan's hospital (RAB (FA), 386, Register, fos. 36r–37r).

[88] J. Gaillard, *Ambachten en neringen van Brugge* (Bruges, 1854), p. 113.

one: the painters (in the Bouverie gate) next to their guild house in 1450;[89] the bakers next to theirs in 1470.[90]

The majority of guilds, however, did not manage to build their own chapel. At the other end of the scale were guilds that did not have their own altar space. There existed (by the mid fourteenth century) a confraternity of St Francis, in the church of the Beghard tertiaries, for guilds that did not have their own 'oratories' in any other church. Clearly at this point there were a number in this position, but some of them sought greater distinction. In 1435, the carters' guild withdrew from this fraternity to found their own altar elsewhere.[91] The weavers, who originally had an altar in the Beghard church as early as 1330, acquired a new altar in St Christopher's chapel in 1447. It was allowed to celebrate divine service at an altar of Our Lady on Sundays and feast days, and on the six principal feast days of the Virgin Mary.[92]

Exclusive chapel space within a church was a more desirable acquisition than mere altar space. The process, however, was not always straightforward, and the difficulties illustrate the long-term and collective effort that guildsmen might make to achieve their ends. The cordwainers' chapel, begun in 1372, was apparently still incomplete in 1407 and its building seems not to have secured the full permission of the church's clergy. Over the next ten years, construction stalled because it threatened to restrict the passage of light into the building. There were still lighting problems in 1424; and then damage caused by poor guttering in 1459.[93] The shearers maintained an altar in St Saviour's in 1368 but did not acquire their own chapel there until 1454.

Particularly during the middle decades of the fifteenth century, and up until the end of the 1480s, many guilds can be found further expanding upon their religious celebrations. The cordwainers were still claiming to shoulder 'great burdens and debts' in 1469, partly because of money spent on their chapel.[94] The armourers wanted to increase the contributions of their members in 1462 to fund repairs begun on their chapel in St Saviour's, and in 1466 reached an agreement with the clergy to have daily mass said at their altar.[95]

89 *Ibid.*, p. 160.
90 Their chapel was also permitted a bell-tower (RAB, BN, 8231; OLV, O1365).
91 SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 236v.
92 The 'poor companions of the craft of weavers' had an altar in the Beghard church in 1330, and were still referred to in the accounts of the church in 1446, the year before they apparently moved to St Christopher's chapel.
93 K. Verschelde, *De kathedrale van S. Salvator te Brugge* (Bruges, 1863), pp. 231–2; BAB, BN, 9062, 8112, 8124, 8187.
94 SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenboec onghecottert*), fos. 245v–246r.
95 *Ibid.*, fo. 123r; BAB, S289, fo. 44v.

The butchers extended the length of their chapel within St James' in 1466.[96] Guilds involved in public works – a category of guild outside the main fifty-five – are also found establishing altars or chapels for their members: the chalk-carriers petitioned St Saviour's to augment divine service at their altar in 1465; the king's bridge-workers obtained an altar in St Giles' in 1475.

A plethora of other guilds secured their own chapels within churches during the same period. Many of these represented crafts that were subordinate to the fifty-five main craft guilds: the privileges acquired by the latter were evidently being sought by a widening cross-section of urban society. The basket fish-sellers (*baerdeniers*) established an official presence in St Joos' hospital by 1452.[97] St Donatian's was approached by a number of guilds in the 1470s and 1480s wishing to establish altars within the chapels of St Christopher and St John (which were dependent on St Donatian's). The apprentices of several crafts formed brotherhoods and made agreements with clergy and churchwardens to set up their own altars and have mass celebrated there: those of the shoe-makers (the *elsenaars*), first within St James' in 1415 and then St Saviour's in 1448; the armourers within St Saviour's in 1463; and the tilers within St James' in 1471.

There were other marks of devotional distinction that guilds sought out. Some acquired altarpieces, occasionally from the more illustrious painters. In the 'creative environment' of Bruges, guilds seeking up-to-date paintings from artists to adorn their altars formed one of the many stimuli for production and perhaps innovation in painting.[98] But more valuable to guilds were other kinds of religious artefacts such as relics,[99] and letters of indulgences. The barber-surgeons in 1475 acquired papal indulgences of 100 days in 1475 for all those who visited their chapel on

[96] RAB, BN, 9158; Gaillard, *Ambachten*, pp. 99–102.

[97] OCMW, *Fonds* Sint-Joos, 178, fo. 17r; Huys, *Duizend jaar*, pp. 176–8.

[98] W. P. Blockmans, 'The Creative Environment: Incentives to and Functions of Bruges Art Production', in M. W. Ainsworth (ed.), *Petrus Christus in Renaissance Bruges: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (New York, 1995), pp. 11–20; J. C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1998), pp. 13–86.

[99] The armourers possessed a relic of the Holy Cross by 1420 (Verschelde, *Kathedrale*, p. 230). The smiths owned a relic of the head of St Eligius (according to their inventory made some time before 1476: RAB, FA, 386, Register, before foliation, and fos. 1r–v); as well as the blood – 'it is said' – of St Cornelius (which one guild member had managed to lose along with some other guild ornaments and images in 1465: SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenboec onghecottert*), fo. 204v). The *winnebrooden* or *plateeldraghers* (town-workers who carried fish and meat) agreed to display their relics on certain feast days (Verschelde, *Kathedrale*, p. 241); the bakers were allowed to show their relics to the people on the feast day of their patron St Hubert in 1470 (RAB, BN, 8231, 8232; OLV, O1365).

the feast day of Saints Cosmas and Damian (26 September).[100] Special processions on guild feast days were negotiated by some guilds.[101] Some guilds established pilgrimages to destinations outside the town. The glovers, possibly by the 1350s, were involved in an annual pilgrimage to the illustrious shrine of Our Lady of Aardenburg;[102] while the coopers made one to Our Lady of Ruslede.[103]

Several craft guilds secured connections with high-ranking nobles and courtiers, adding to their public prestige. Besides consorting with jousters and shooters, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse had associations with the tailors and basket fish-sellers: his foundation in Our Lady's in 1470 required the attendance of poor members of these guilds to attend his anniversary services.[104] When the ducal household became more regularly settled in Bruges, especially in the middle decades of the fifteenth century, several high-ranking courtiers made similar arrangements with craft guilds to increase intercession for their souls (see Chapter 6). Other guilds entered into negotiations with certain lords concerning altar or chapel space: in 1477 the coopers acquired the consent of Jan Gros, treasurer of the Golden Fleece, to use his chapel in St James' for their services (provided that his coat of arms remained visible).[105]

The choice of church that guilds made for the location of their altars was also a matter in which considerations of prestige played a part. The majority of craft guilds held their altars and chapels within the parish churches or chapels of Bruges – particularly St Saviour's (see Appendix 5). The decision to choose one church over another is rarely made clear.

[100] RAB, BN, 8518. See also the booksellers (their accounts mention a pardon in 1468/9: SAB, 384, *Librariërs, Rekeningen*, fo. 59r); the bakers in 1470 (RAB, OLV, O1365); the furrier *touwers* in 1477 (RAB, SG, 293); the fish merchants in 1483 (BAB, A56, fos. 19r, 20r).

[101] The *winnebrooden* in 1473 founded two processions on St Sebastian's day and St Denis' day to their altar of St Daniel (BAB, S289, fo. 62v). In Our Lady's the dyers and belt-makers, some time after 1416, made endowments for processions on St Agatha's and St Anthony's days respectively (RAB, OLV, 725, fo. 100v).

[102] In 1464 the guild petitioned the town council to allow an increase in entry fees to the guild because of the costs it sustained during processions on Holy Blood and Corpus Christi days, and to Aardenburg: SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenbouc onghecottert*), fo. 177v. In 1540 the glovers were to claim that they had been undertaking a pilgrimage to Aardenburg at Pentecost 'for a long time past' to offer a gift of a cloak to the image of Our Lady there: L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Essais d'archéologie Brugeoise: Mémoriaux de Bruges* (Bruges, 1912), pp. 360–2.

[103] Gaillard, *Ambachten*, p. 122. The coopers were already using Our Lady of Ruslede in 1418 as a destination for punitive pilgrimages to discipline members. In 1494 some members of the guild were upbraided for journeying to Ruslede without the guild dean's consent (SAB, 336, *Kuipers*: *inschrijvingsregister*, fos. 140r–141v).

[104] SAB, 333 (*Register betreffende fondatïes*), fos. 1r–6r, 7r–19r; RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 40v.

[105] And see their negotiations with the Lady of Middelburg in 1480: SAB, 336, *Kuipers*: *inschrijvingsregister*, fos. 120r–122r; RAB, SJ, 197, fos. 41r–v.

Perhaps an altar in a parish church like St Saviour's was easier to secure than in others; a presence in St Donatian's was itself a mark of distinction open to few. The friaries catered for foreign merchants who would not necessarily have had a parish to belong to. But guilds could have other reasons for selecting one church above another. Occasionally, availability of altar space or convenience for members is mentioned: in 1482, the purse-makers petitioned St Donatian's to be allowed to move their altar from St Christopher's to Our Lady's because many of their members were parishioners of the latter.[106] Perhaps clerical hosts in friaries and other religious houses were not quite as pliable or responsive to the devotional requirements of guilds as their counterparts were in other churches. The brewers and the quay-workers (*pijnders*) both experienced difficulties over arrangements at their altar with the Carmelite friars in the 1460s; the quay-workers moved their altar to St Giles' church in 1463.[107] The archers accused the friars of neglecting their guild services.[108] Guilds in parish churches or chapels do not appear to have encountered the same problems. They may have had to negotiate with clergy in these churches over arrangements for divine service, but by the late fourteenth century, this was done in conjunction with other bodies of lay people within the parish. Churchwardens and poor-table masters were perhaps more willing to take on the responsibilities of post-obit commemoration for parishioners and guild members.[109]

### *Devotional guilds of distinction and Our Lady of the Snow*

Some devotional confraternities founded near the end of the fourteenth century had a socially exclusive character. The St Barbara guild in St Peter's chapel was apparently restricted to *poorters*, wealthier citizens;[110] the known deans and officers of the St John's guild in St John's chapel

[106] BAB, A55, fo. 184v.

[107] For the brewers: SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenboec onghecottert*), fo. 159r. For the dockers: *ibid.*, fos. 160r–v, 193v–194v. The Carmelites' dispute with the quay-workers had become bitter: the Carmelites claimed that 'many great and injurious words' had been spoken against them by the guild, so they had confiscated the guild's ornaments and altar goods. The guild denied the Carmelites' claim. However, it appears that there was also an internal dispute between the quay-workers and nine *rijkepijnders* (who had particular rights over the goods of foreign merchants) over the move and possession of altar goods.

[108] The Dry Tree fraternity complained of neglect of services by the Carmelites in 1469 (SAB, 505). The booksellers were in dispute with the Eekhout abbey, where they had their altar, over their guild services (RAB, BN, 8300).

[109] See above, pp. 107–8. For poor-table masters, see Chapter 6.

[110] Specified in the reference to the guild in 1378. The few names we have for the guild suggest a certain pedigree: Jan Hoste was a member in 1378; Pieter Boudin and Jan vander Buerse in 1397 (RAB, SJ, 646, fos. 16r–18v, 46v–47v). Compare with Ghent, where a guild, similarly open to *poorters*, was also established at the end of the fourteenth century (Trio, *De Gentse broederschappen*, pp. 108–10).

were connected with prominent civic families.[111] The guilds most closely tied with members of the town council were those of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Blood.[112]

The Dry Tree guild was also an exclusive one. Like the Holy Blood guild, its officers were invariably town councillors, but its membership was broader: accounts from the late fifteenth century suggest a figure of around ninety members.[113] Its fees for entry (10d), annual membership (2s) and individual requiem masses (5s) were not prohibitive, but they were higher than most guilds in Bruges. It was not a guild for the lesser-ranked. An eighteenth-century tradition claimed that it had been founded by Duke Philip the Good in thanks for his victory in 1421 at Mons-en-Vimeu – an implausible claim, given references to the guild before this date. But an early association of the guild with the duke is possible, for Duke Philip certainly became enrolled as a member. Of all the guilds in Bruges for which membership lists survive, the Dry Tree is the one most densely populated with nobles and courtiers – some 58 out of 605 known names of members from *c.* 1465 to 1516.[114] The guild was also distinguished by the relatively large number of foreign merchants resident in Bruges, particularly the Florentines and Castilians who also had their chapels within the same friary. Nevertheless, native citizens form the largest group of known members. A significant percentage (9 per cent) of them can be identified as town councillors.[115]

Like the Dry Tree guild, Our Lady of Rozebeke also had some pretensions to social exclusivity. Later tradition again connected the origins of this guild with the rulers of Flanders: it was supposedly founded to give thanks for Louis de Male's victory in 1382 at Westrozebeke over the Ghent rebels with forces that included the Bruges militia. The chronicler Despars in the sixteenth century could refer to the battle as a 'release from Ghentish servitude' achieved through the intercession of the Virgin Mary; and to an annual pilgrimage founded

[111] Jan de Themseke and Jan vande Mersch were deans in 1419 (BAB, A50, fo. 186v); Jacob de Vos, Josse de Baenst and others were guild officers in 1501 (RAB, BN, 8284).

[112] See above, p. 133; below, p. 167.

[113] The total membership in any one year is tricky to calculate because some members fell behind in their payments and back-paid in later years. In 1496/7, there were sixty-seven listed who paid their fee, then a list of another thirty-two who paid later in the year and eighteen others who back-paid their membership in later years (SAB, 505, guild accounts, *passim*).

[114] For the second list of guild members beginning in the later 1480s: A. Dewitte, 'De 173 ghildebroeders van Onser Vrauwe vanden Droghebome 1498', *Biekorf* 99 (1999), 149–59. An earlier list can be dated back to *c.* 1465, which overlaps slightly with the second list; other names survive from miscellaneous charters (SAB, 505).

[115] If we exclude single women and clergy listed as members, this gives a total known membership of 539: some 46 can be identified as town councillors or aldermen.

in gratitude.[116] However, the earliest reference to the guild occurs in 1396. No guild accounts survive to allow computation of annual membership, but it is possible to compile a list of 289 names of members between 1470 and 1516.[117] A few foreign merchants appear, and also some nobles associated with the court, though not in the numbers found in the Dry Tree. But it was certainly a guild for the elite of Bruges, and more strongly tied to the civic magistracy than the Dry Tree: 43 per cent of members between *c.* 1470 and 1500 were also town councillors.[118]

The activities of such guilds tended to mark them out from those that were less socially exclusive. The Rozebeke guild required an active kind of participation from more of its members: an annual pilgrimage. A later description written in 1545 suggests an event distinguished by a certain pomp. The journey was undertaken by the provost, officers, guild brothers and 'other people, men and women'. On the Saturday before Mary Magdalene day (22 July) a *Salve regina* was sung in the convent followed by a banquet with music. Equipped with new hats and cloaks, the pilgrims saddled up and set out to spend Saturday night at Torhout or Roeselare. Early on Sunday, the Bruges pilgrims continued on to Rozebeke, where mass was celebrated. During the ensuing meal (at which three or four fine German (*oostersche*) hams, sent on in advance by the guild, were consumed), another guild from Broubourg came to ask formal permission to take part. A candle-lit procession took place and the pilgrims were met by the singing clergy of Our Lady's church. A wax candle was placed in the church to remain there for the year. The party returned to Torhout where they ate and drank 'richly' and chose new guild officers. Another meal followed at the new provost's house when they returned to Bruges that evening.[119] The Carmelites sang masses on the Sunday, Monday and Thursday of that week.[120]

116 Despars, *Cronijke*, Vol. III, pp. 71, 73. For an earlier record of a thanksgiving procession to Rozebeke: anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, in J.-J. De Smet (ed.), *Collection de chroniques belges inédites*, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1841), p. 242. For ducal commemoration of the battle, see below, p. 268.

117 SAB, 509 Gilde Roosebeke. This contains a book of the guild made in 1545 (transcribed in Weale, 'Procession', pp. 154–87), and a membership list dating from *c.* 1470, while the names of other benefactors of the guild given in the register begin in 1452. The membership list yields up to 370 names (around 76 of which were added after 1516, up to the late sixteenth century). About 176 names can be dated to pre-1500. Five other names of members dating to the 1450s can be found from miscellaneous charters.

118 Of the 418 men who served as town councillors or aldermen between 1468 and 1500, 73 (17.5 per cent) were Rozebeke guild members.

119 Zegher van Male was to emphasise the festive and costly nature of these banquets, which lasted four or five days; Zegher van Male, *De Lamentatie van Zeghere van Male: Brugge na de opstand tegen Spanje 1590*. ed. A. Dewitte and A. Viaene (Bruges, 1977), pp. 74–5.

120 For a contract in 1469: SAB, 509, Register, fos. 51r–57r; Weale, 'Procession', pp. 182–5.

Investment by wealthy benefactors also testifies to the guild's elevated social standing. Endowments enhanced liturgical celebrations – particularly those of the courtier Jean de Wavrin (1452); Jacob van den Weghe (1453); and Heinrich Tarrax, a merchant from Prussia (1466 and 1468).[121] Heinrich's gift in 1468 of £55 (to buy a rent) paid for his burial in the chapel, daily mass, six annual Lady masses and an anniversary on 4 May. The Lady masses were apparently for the exclusive attendance of the fraternity: during the service, the chapel doors were to remain closed to others.

The Dry Tree guild's investment in divine service was also substantial. A contract between the friars and the guild in 1396 agreed on daily morning mass at the guild altar, and sung mass on Sundays and Marian feasts. A new contract in 1469 (apparently required because the friars had at times lapsed in their duties) also included a sermon on Marian and other major feast days. The friars consented to burial of guild members within the chapel, clothed in Franciscan habit.[122] The guild accounts (from 1496) show impressive expenditure, around £7 a year, on masses and music with singers and organists.[123] The daily round of masses, read or sung, and the special celebrations on the guild feast day (the Assumption) were the suffrages that most members required.[124]

The obligations imposed by membership of these guilds were generally limited. Active participation on an annual pilgrimage that the Rozebeke guild expected of members (though probably not all of them) was rarer by the fifteenth century.[125] The Dry Tree was more typical of most fifteenth-century confraternities in requiring a more passive kind of participation: there were no obligations to go on pilgrimages; attendance at the guild banquet was not required. The active role of management was limited to the guild officers. For most, annual payments in return for collective intercession were the norm.[126]

The devotional fraternities discussed so far were exclusive. But some were much less so. The cult of Our Lady of the Snow was more popular,

[121] Weale, 'Procession', pp. 173–81. [122] SAB, 505, charters dated 1396 and 1469.

[123] *Ibid.*, accounts, 1496–1515.

[124] A few benefactors required additional services: Olivier de Haze's wife gave the guild a rent of 25s for three masses to be celebrated on Trinity Sunday with doles to the poor (*ibid.*, charter dated 1492).

[125] Other exceptions were Our Lady of Hulsterlo, still flourishing in the fifteenth century, which also organised an annual pilgrimage (SAB, 524); and the 'confraternity of St James' in St Christopher's, whose members apparently made pilgrimages to Compostela: BAB, A54, fo. 89v (1476). More generally, see P. Trio, *Volksreligie als spiegel van den stedelijke samenleving: De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen* (Leuven, 1993), pp. 300–1.

[126] The number of members shown in the guild accounts making back-payments suggests an even less active participation by these individuals in guild activity.

and flourished as a result of a miracle. In the summer of 1464, a fifty-year-old widow living in the parish of St Cross, and within a poorer neighbourhood of Bruges, was struck down with a fever.[127] She lay prostrate in bed for weeks; a group of female neighbours nursed her. Her condition worsened: a fistula developed, worms infested her body; her intestines burst, emitting an abominable smell. A doctor could do nothing. But it happened that the feast day of Our Lady of the Snow on 5 August was approaching, and criers were announcing the feast throughout the town 'as was the custom'. The bed-ridden widow heard the noise. She sent out a young woman to investigate who returned to tell her of the coming feast day. The widow began praying to Our Lady of the Snow. After the third prayer, she suddenly fell into a state of ecstasy, mute and immobile, seeing but not hearing. She had a vision of the Virgin Mary. When she revived, her wounds had healed. In joy she shouted 'Mary!' three times, so loudly that her neighbours rushed to her aid, thinking that she had cried out in pain. One of them told her that the image in her vision must have been that of Our Lady of the Snow. Her confessor later advised a pilgrimage, sending her to Sluis outside Bruges, where an image of the cult was venerated. But it was not the one that the widow had seen in her vision. Her mind was set at rest only when she had returned to Bruges and seen the true image in Our Lady's.

The cult of Our Lady of the Snow had been celebrated in Bruges from the end of the fourteenth century.[128] By 1450 a fraternity had also developed around the cult, with its own altar in the church, on which the image seen by the widow presumably lay.[129] But the fraternity does not appear to have been a particularly significant one until the miracle of 1464. Its fortunes changed rapidly thereafter. By 26 November that year, the guild agreed with the churchwardens to allow seats to be placed before the altar.[130] By March 1473 negotiations were underway to build a more substantial chapel in the north-east part of the ambulatory. The altar of the St George *ten distele* guild was to be displaced to make way. New rules were drawn up by the guild in 1466. Provision for a *lof* or

[127] For the following, see RAB, OLV, 1501, fos. 8r–12r. See S. van de Capelle, 'De OLV-broederschap ter sneeuw te Brugge gedurende de late middeleeuwen (*ca*. 1467–1536),' unpublished Licentiaat thesis (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1997); R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 47–9; and A. Brown, 'Bruges and the "Burgundian theatre-state": Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow', *History* 84 (1999), 573–89.

[128] See above, p. 106.

[129] RAB, OLV, NK 1403, no. 2808 (churchwardens' accounts for 1450). There are no references to the fraternity in the accounts before this date, but then few of them are extant. An altar to Our Lady of the Snow on the north side of the choir is referred to in a foundation dated 1425: OCMW, OLV, Register 155, fos. 17v–19v.

[130] For the following, see Brown, 'Charles the Bold', p. 581.

*Salve* was initiated by two brothers in 1466, and in 1468 a collection from 115 guild members raised £36 to set up an endowment. The late 1460s were the most active period of endowment of the guild. By 1475 the guild had been granted an indulgence by the bishop of Tournai.

The rapid rise in the fortunes of the guild is explained by its cult's popularity. News of the miracle – which followed a familiar and established pattern – must have spread swiftly. In February 1465, an official investigation headed by the suffragan bishop was busy recording statements from witnesses, and concluded that the miracle should be proclaimed. Whether this heralded a sudden upsurge in new members is not known because guild accounts only survive from 1466, but it is evident that numbers then joining the guild were increasing rapidly. There were over 900 members in 1466/7, and over 1,300 at its peak in the mid 1470s, making it the largest guild in Bruges. Over 100 new members were joining the guild every year.[131]

Particularly striking is the diversity of social backgrounds represented by new recruits. The miracle attracted attention from the highest of ranks. In 1469, Duke Charles the Bold himself was enlisted as a member. Several other nobles and courtiers followed suit – among them names familiar to other Bruges fraternities, such as Lodewijk van Gruuthuse.[132] The fraternity also attracted the most prominent citizens. In September 1468, 38 per cent of the two benches of aldermen were members of the guild; and of the 491 people listed as town and guild officials in September 1469, 133 (27 per cent) of them, or their wives, can be identified as members.

Other social groups were represented.[133] The religious as well as lay people joined: the bishop of Tournai, the Eekhout abbot, parish priests and beguines. The crafts of around seventy-six lay members are mentioned in the accounts between 1467 and 1499, and among them a significant number of important guildsmen: brokers, mercers and goldsmiths. There are also a few foreign merchants. But other less prestigious craftsmen are represented; and many prove to be rank-and-file members rather than guild officers. This broader social mix was doubtless encouraged by a relatively low annual subscription. The guild entry fee cost just 4d, and annual membership 2d.[134] The occasional pauper was admitted for free.

[131] For guilds of comparable size in the Low Countries, see Trio, *Volksreligie*, pp. 198–9. For a table of annual membership, see Brown, 'Charles the Bold', p. 583.

[132] *Ibid.*, pp. 574, 585.

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 582, 584. For a list of members see van de Capelle, 'De OLV-broederschap', pp. 133–261.

[134] The maximum daily wage for a bricklayer was around 4d. See Trio, *Volksreligie*, pp. 153–8.

Social inclusivity is suggested by the gender balance in membership: women make up more than half (52 per cent) of the names listed in 1468–9.[135] Arguably, the cult may have had a particular appeal to women. Not that Marian cults in themselves necessarily attracted more women than men: known members of the Dry Tree suggest more men than women in this guild. But the miracle in 1464 happened to a widow nursed by female friends and neighbours, and the cult initially found its appeal in this milieu. Most of the witnesses to the miracle were female, six in their thirties, one a fifty-year-old, one a septuagenarian. The exception was the doctor who attended briefly (and ineffectually) at the bedside: his testimony no doubt helped to validate or lend patriarchal credibility to the words of the female witnesses. Moreover, most of these women do not seem to have been wives of important citizens. The story of the miracle provides a vignette, albeit through the prism of its genre, of social life within an ordinary district and among a close-knit group of friends and neighbours. Perhaps the guild continued to appeal to women of a lower social rank; the relatively low subscription to the Snow guild allowed more women of lesser means to enter, and without the need for a husband's support: 14 per cent of the women members in 1468–9 are listed as widows; a further 61 per cent appear without the name of a husband attached.

Guild rules drawn up in 1466 give some idea of what was required of members. The annual guild feast, on the first Sunday after 5 August, was expected to be well attended. A play on the miracle of our Lady of the Snow (vetted by the guild dean) was performed.[136] A priest in the middle of the hall read out the names of all guild members who had died that year. Relatively modest fare was on offer: bread, wine, beer, hams, stockfish and cheese.[137] At least 400 attended in the late 1460s, though from 1471 steps were taken to restrict the numbers.[138] In general, though, the level of participation for most was voluntary or relatively passive. In return merely for their subscription, all members could expect inclusion in a continuous round of intercession: prayers at low mass during the week and at high mass every Sunday. Extra masses for all guild members were celebrated in times of pestilence.[139]

[135] Male-dominated guilds were more common, and tended to be those with a socially prestigious membership: see *ibid.*, esp. pp. 220–1.

[136] E.g. RAB, OLV, 1531, 1474/5, fo. 156v.

[137] The 300 white loaves, 44 *stoopen* of red wine, 32 of white wine, 2 *oostersche* hams, stockfish, cheese and olives for some 400 attending cost £4 19s 8d in 1469 (*ibid.*, fos. 34v–35r): a similar amount was spent on many fewer – for more lavish fare – by St Sebastian's archers at their annual banquet (see above, p. 147).

[138] RAB, OLV, 1531, fo. 79v. See table in Brown, 'Charles the Bold', p. 583.

[139] For instance between 1485 and 1489 (RAB, OLV, 1531, fos. 231v, 235v, 243r, 248v, 257r).

Notwithstanding the social inclusiveness of the guild, some members were raised above others. The guild dean and office holders, the active members, tended to be drawn from the higher ranks of urban society. These were required to attend high mass every Sunday; vespers, mass and a sermon on the main feast day; and requiem masses for departed members (which living members could attend 'if they wished'). On St Boniface's and Corpus Christi days, the dean and four young guild brothers would join the parish processions, with the guild banners and crosses. By purchasing further post-obit provision, some benefactors distinguished themselves from others: for an extra sum, members received special requiem masses, and for a larger endowment, more exclusive suffrages were bought.

## Guilds and public worship

The guilds and fraternities that proliferated in the later Middle Ages had much in common. All generated suffrages for the ultimate purpose of reducing time in purgatory. All had annual feast days and banquets or meetings that provided particular focus for sociability and intercession. The increase in services or investment in guild religious life that occurred at the end of the fourteenth century, particularly from the 1370s, was part of a more general increase in divine service that followed (though only partly caused by) the major visitations of plague, and the changing commercial environment that facilitated all kinds of investment, for the soul as well as the body. The need for intercession and the opportunities to ensure its provision continued well into the fifteenth century, such that divine service for guilds, as well as for individual benefactors, sprouted in profusion.

While guilds had common goals, they were all distinct from one another. Each existed primarily to serve the interests of its members. Each chose particular patron saints or cults to venerate and particular ways to celebrate its feast days. All late medieval towns contained several if not many guilds of all kinds, but in a town like Bruges it is not surprising to find a greater variety than most. Densely populated and proto-capitalist, Bruges society by the fifteenth century offered citizens a wide range of choice and goods: to put it a little crudely, the variety of crafts and availability of consumer goods in fifteenth-century Bruges were mirrored by the variety of fraternities and the range of devotional products on the market. There was great scope for pious and social tastes to be satisfied. Guilds offered veneration of a whole range of patron saints, some universal, some highly local. They might formalise an upsurge in devotion to a new miraculous cult, as with Our Lady

of the Snow, or enhance well-established cults, like the Holy Blood. Different guilds offered different kinds of membership. Some merely required annual subscriptions; others were stricter about attendance at feast days, banquets or masses; still others, though more rarely, required active participation such as going on pilgrimage. Guilds were the natural form of expression for a great number of different groups within urban society who felt a particular common identity or who were brought together by the workplace. Be it foreign merchants resident in Bruges, practitioners of a particular craft or profession, the clergy of a collegiate church, aldermen sitting together on the town council or women within a poorer neighbourhood, there was a need felt by all such groups to express their particular identities in a guild-like association.

Capitalism is usually linked with competition as well as choice, and the history of guilds within Bruges also reflects the great range of social gradation and mobility within the town. At one end of the spectrum were the guilds that were exclusive both in number and status. More of these appear to have been founded from the end of the fourteenth century. Their distinctive forms of devotion or activity no doubt helped to increase the 'worship' of their members within the town and to elevate them above other citizens of lesser rank. The impression of a social 'elite' within Bruges seeking to distance itself from others is strengthened by the observation that membership of these exclusive guilds overlapped. Take the White Bear jousters. Many were apparently as handy with the bow as they were with the lance: at least fifty known jousters (between *c.* 1440 and 1480) were also members of the crossbow guild; at least eighteen were members of the archery guild. They were also prominent in exclusive religious guilds. Nineteen became members of the Holy Blood guild, nineteen the Dry Tree, thirteen the Trinity and eight the Rozebeke guilds. These figures underestimate the extent to which membership overlapped because of the limited periods for which we have names of guild members.[140] Such replication of ties that linked members of these elites may have strengthened the social network that both bound them to each other and distanced them from other townspeople.

The social activities of some of these groups or guilds – jousting, archery, rhetoric or feasting – seem to confirm the view of some historians that urban culture in this period was becoming increasingly

[140] For the Rozebeke and Dry Tree guilds lists of names begin only in the 1460s. The chronological overlap is better for some guilds. There are 77 known Holy Blood members between 1420 and 1500: 25 per cent of them had been White Bear jousters. Of the known 18 names for the Trinity guild (from the years 1403, 1425/6 and 1452), 76 per cent of them had been jousters.

'gentrified'.[141] Exclusive guilds came to dominate the cultural activity within the town. This would fit with a general picture of a more polarised urban society, with mercantile entrepreneurs dominating and distancing themselves from craftsmen as never before. In broad terms, this assessment may well be correct. But the process of 'gentrification' must also be set within a wider context of social pressures to which social 'elites', whether merchants, brokers or town councillors, were themselves subject. If top-ranking citizens were seeking out marks of social elevation, so were the lesser ranked. We have seen how craft guilds sought with restive frequency to enhance the status of their devotional celebrations. This was an urban environment in which many groups sought to distinguish themselves from or compete with others. By the mid fifteenth century even apprentices within craft guilds can be found seeking privileges – altars, chapels, indulgences – to which their social superiors had formerly enjoyed exclusive access. These gave a focus for collective identity to groups of workers who were not recognised as fully fledged craft guilds.

This climate of competition is familiar to historians in another context. It doubtless contributed to Bruges as a creative environment for the visual arts: the need to express social identities and hierarchies within a densely packed urban world contributed both to innovation and eventual mass-marketing in painting. But the purchase of distinctive altarpieces was only one means of expressing devotion or social status, and not necessarily the most significant. Other artefacts such as relics or letters of indulgence were important; more so were the foundation of masses, the building of free-standing chapels or securing altar space within churches – which could accommodate newly acquired altarpieces. Innovation and mass-production in painting was a by-product of aspirations, at various social levels, that contributed to a wider expansion of liturgical celebration. These same aspirations from lower levels of Bruges society pushed social 'elites' to take further steps to elevate themselves above other townsmen, whether in a devotional or more secular manner: the 'gentrification' of urban culture was partly the response to pressure from below.

[141] See in general R. Van Uytven, 'Scènes de la vie sociale dans les villes des Pays-Bas du XIVe au XVIe siècles', in R. Van Uytven, *Actes du colloque 'La Sociablité urbaine en Europe du Nord-Ouest du XIVe au XVIIIe siècle'* (Douai, 1983), pp. 11–31; P. Stabel, 'Guilds in Late Medieval Flanders: Myths and Realities of Guild Life in an Export-Driven Environment', *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), 187–212, esp. p. 191. Martha Howell identifies an 'urban aristocracy' in Douai by 1550, whose exclusive social identity was developing in the fifteenth century. Festivity and public rituals seem to be 'agents for [craft-guild] subordination'; M. C. Howell, *The Marriage Exchange: Property, Social Place, and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1300–1500* (Chicago, 1998), pp. 185–90.

To emphasise tensions between guilds or citizens is to create the impression of Bruges as an urban society that was fundamentally fragmented. But this impression needs to be qualified. Focusing on the activities and membership of individual guilds may well show distinct groups following particularist interests, planting their own altars within churches, sometimes elbowing out other guilds to make room. Lift off the roof of a parish church in Bruges and a bird's-eye view would seem to reveal compartmentalised spaces of discrete chapels and altars. Leaf through a *planarius* of the same church, however, and the same view suggests the interlocking structure of a beehive. For the complexity of liturgical arrangements required careful and coordinated organisation. The timing of guild masses and feast days had to be fitted in to the regular divine service of the clergy as well as the increasingly large number of masses and processions founded by benefactors; and by the late fifteenth century, when the liturgical calendar had become more crowded, this might require some smart timing and light footwork by celebrants. No guild that held its celebrations within parish churches could be isolated from the wider parochial worship.

All such guilds, moreover, contributed in some degree to divine service, whether by regular payments to the church fabric for the privilege of a guild chapel, or by enriching celebration on particular feast days, or by supplementing worship on main parish feast days – as Our Lady of the Snow guild did on St Boniface's day in Our Lady's. The contribution within parish and town of all kinds of guild to divine service – the offices of the day, masses, polyphonic singing or processions – can hardly be overstated. Some contributed to the regular singing of the *Salve regina* in their parishes,[142] others to the daily celebration of the seven canonical hours, still others to the preaching of sermons.[143] The barber-surgeons, for instance, came to an agreement with the clergy and churchwardens of St James' in 1432, in return for £12 *parisis* a year, for their feast day of Saints Cosmas and Damian to be celebrated as a 'small principal feast', with the seven canonical hours, the chiming of the great bell before nine o'clock, mass and sung vespers, and a procession to the guild chapel that was to include children singing a motet. They also contributed to the singing of the seven hours on an additional seven days following their

142 In 1440 the tapestry-weavers founded sixty masses a year in St Saviour's and contributed to the singing of the *Salve* every Saturday and on the eve of every Our Lady day BAB, S 335.

143 For instance the tinsmiths in St Saviour's in 1374.

feast day, thus adding to the programme of such investment that had been underway in the church for the previous twenty years.[144]

The indulgences that some guilds acquired for their feast days also enhanced cults that were of wider civic significance. The armourers, for instance, came to an agreement with the churchwardens of St Saviour's in 1420 to display their relic of the Holy Cross for the benefit of 'all the inhabitants of Bruges'.[145] The cult of the Holy Name, which attracted several foundations in the 1470s, was also enhanced in Our Lady's by the investment of the dubbers guild in 1475 following a papal indulgence for the feast day.[146] Guilds dedicated to Corpus Christi amplified a cult that had acquired greater civic significance by the fifteenth century. The numerous craft guilds – and the increasing number of devotional confraternities – that were under the patronage of the Virgin Mary, or contributed to celebration of her feast days, helped to intensify devotion to a saintly patron regarded as the special protector of the town. Individual benefaction and guild celebration, moreover, contributed to events of municipal significance. The endowment in favour of the Snow guild of a weekly *Salve* at the guild altar by two guild brothers in 1466 anticipated the town council's endowment of daily concerts in the *burg* in the 1480s.[147] It is to the connections between guilds and civic government that we turn next.

[144] RAB, BN, 8128. Even a small guild could make similar provision: in 1475 the *koningsbrugge* workers agreed to contribute to the Corpus Christi procession in St Giles', and to the singing of *Salve regina* at vespers at Easter (RAB, SG, 27, fos. 128v–130r).

[145] Verschelde, *Kathedrale*, p. 230. The bakers (from 1470) had a sermon preached from their new chapel and relics displayed to the people on St Hubert's day: RAB, OLV, O1365.

[146] *Ibid.*, O919, 1350, fos. 23r–26r.

[147] Perhaps these 'brothers' were literally the brothers Colard and Pieter de Labie (themselves prominent citizens, Colard a money-lender) who were major benefactors of the guild (*ibid.*, 1501, fos. 56r–58r), and founders of the new rhetoric guild of the Three Saints. Examples of prominent citizens linking wider benefaction with guild celebration are legion. Lodewijk van Steylin, burgomaster in 1483, was a major founder within Our Lady's of processions on Marian days, such as Our Lady of the Snow: the guild's feast day was enhanced with a special procession of the choir to its altar and the singing of a motet (*ibid.*, 735, fos. 27r, 53v, 70v, 102r, 124r, 136r, 202r; 1501, fos. 53v–54r. He and Willem Moreel also asked St Donatian in June 1484 for daily singing at Our Lady altar in the nave (BAB, A56, fos. 39r–v).

# 5 Guilds and civic government

The veneration of the Holy Blood relic in Bruges had long been civic-wide, but by the fifteenth century it had also become the responsibility of a particular guild. On 20 June 1406 the town treasury paid £40 *parisis* to the fraternity of the Holy Blood to help towards its costs in making a large iron grille in St Basil's chapel to place before the relic.[1] This is (almost) the first reference to a fraternity that, like the Holy Trinity guild, enjoyed a special relationship with civic government.[2] Later statutes (from 1449) and accounts (from 1469) show its membership to be tightly bound up with that of the town council. Only twenty-six members were permitted at any one time, mirroring the number of officials who served on the two benches of the town magistracy; most of them became members after a period of service on the town council.[3] The guild had special duties on Holy Blood day: all members were to attend wearing the guild livery on the main procession, from the moment the relic left the chapel until it returned.

The connections of the Holy Blood guild with civic ceremony and authority were unique, yet there were many ways in which other guilds were bound up with the task of municipal government.[4] The links of craft- or devotional-guild members to holders of civic office, the investment made by the town treasury in certain guild festivity, the contribution that guilds made to civic prestige outside the town and to the

[1] SAB, 216, 1405/6, fo. 121v.

[2] 'Almost' because there is a reference in 1405 to the 'wardens of St Basil's church', later referred to as 'wardens of the Holy Blood' (and later guild membership lists show these were members and deans of the guild). Wardens are annually listed as town office-holders from 1405, but not before, suggesting again that the Holy Blood guild was of recent foundation (SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*): 1397–1422, fo. 64r; 1422–41, fo. 1v).

[3] Comparing names of members in the guild accounts, 1469–1500 (AHB, Register 18), with names of town officials in the same period shows that of the seventy-three guild members, sixty-seven had served one or other of the two benches of magistrates.

[4] For an overview, see P. Trio, 'Les Confréries comme expression de la solidarité et de conscience urbaine aux Pays-Bas à la fin du Moyen-Age', in H. Brand, P. Monnet and M. Staub (eds.), *Memoria, communitas, civitas: Mémoire et conscience urbaines en occident à la fin du Moyen Age* (Ostfildern, 2003), pp. 131–41.

'common good' within: in all these areas guilds were called upon to play an increasingly public role. Yet this process was not without friction. However much they might serve civic need, guild agendas were never entirely identified with those of the town. An all-embracing civic identity was hard to achieve, and in an urban environment that was so hotly competitive and so rife with tension, particular groups might well serve – or be perceived as serving – sectional rather than common interests.

## Civic investment in festivity *c.* 1300–1400

Processions and feast days were not the only kinds of festivity in which the town government or citizens invested. In the earliest civic accounts, payments were already being made for jousting: in 1284 a messenger was paid to take letters to the 'hastilude' at Ypres; in 1305 a joust was held by the Belfry between local burghers and merchants from Germany.[5] The increasing frequency of such payments from then on suggests that the importance attached by the town council to jousting was growing. Between 1300 and 1320, jousts were not funded every year and municipal contribution was limited to the costs of scaffolding, stages, wine and torch wax. Wealthy individuals probably bore the brunt of the expense. But during the 1330s, the town began to take on a larger proportion of the costs. The sum of £120 *parisis* was paid to three jousters in May 1334. From the 1350s, larger sums, up to £330 *parisis*, began to be paid out more regularly. There was a suspension of civic funding for most of the 1380s. From 1391 a regular subsidy for the jousters was to continue, almost unbroken, until 1487.

Subsidies to jousters were primarily intended to fund their festive events. The military use of jousters to the town was limited given their small number. Crossbowmen and archers, however, were more numerous and had functions that were more explicitly military in origin. Their involvement in military campaigns remained important to the town throughout the fourteenth century and to some extent beyond.[6] During periods of war in Flanders, such as the 1340s and 1380s, town accounts show large payments to fund their bowmen. The civic militia also had a

[5] For this and the following, see A. Brown, 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages: The White Bear of Bruges', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 78 (2000), 315–30.

[6] For military activities, see A. Vanhoutryve, *De Brugse kruisboogilde van Sint-Joris* (Bruges, 1968), pp. 25–30, 49–53; H. Godar, *Histoire de la gilde des archiers de S.-Sebastien de la ville de Bruges* (Bruges, 1947), pp. 60–81; M. Lemahieu, *De koninklijke hoofdgilde Sint-Sebastiaan Brugge 1379–2005* (Bruges, 2005), pp. 61–5. Readiness for military duty remained a requirement: according to the rules of St Sebastian's guild in 1425 a member had to swear to keep his bow and a dozen arrows in his house.

duty to serve the count of Flanders defending the county. Louis de Male called upon the Bruges militia against the Ghent rebels from 1379. A later account of the early history of the crossbow guild begins in 1380 with the crossbowmen laying siege to Oudenaarde and Dendermonde, and continues to list their exploits during the 1380s, notably their contribution in the count's defeat of Ghent at Westrozebeke in 1382.[7]

Although the military role of the crossbow guild was significant, civic subsidy for its ceremonial activity was also increasing. In the fourteenth century subsidy was limited to the crossbowmen. Unlike the jousters, their attendance was required at the Holy Blood procession along with the craft guilds. From the 1340s the civic treasury began to pay for their livery worn on the day.[8] Trumpeters before the crossbowmen, young and old, were paid from at least 1391.[9] The earliest surviving guild rules, agreed by the town magistracy in 1400, spell out members' duties on Holy Blood day: they were to go to the guild chapel to hear mass and assemble at St Jan's bridge, before proceeding to the *markt* to await the arrival of the relic, which they would accompany on its journey to the town walls.

The ludic activities of the guild were also well established by the 1330s. The annual papagay began to be subsidised by the town. From the 1330s, the crossbowmen, just like the jousters, received more regular subsidies – usually for the gifts of wine provided at the papagay (specified by 1360 as occurring at Trinity).[10] Occasionally there were extra subsidies for competitions attended by the Bruges crossbowmen in other towns: Geraardsbergen in 1355, Oudenaarde in 1362.[11] Civic contributions for the annual papagay were not as large as those for jousting, but like subsidies for jousts, those for crossbow competitions also grew: in 1333, the civic contribution was worth £21 *parisis*, but by the 1350s, it was usually over £100 *parisis*, and reached £186 *parisis* in 1372.[12] The disruption (as well as military commitments) in the early 1380s limited opportunities for festivity: the town accounts in 1380s are as mute on papagay feasts as they are on May jousts.[13]

7 SAB, 385, Register, fos. 60r–68v (partly transcribed in J. van Praet, *Jaer-Boek der keyzerlyke end koninglyke hoofd-gilde van edelen ridder sint Joris* (Bruges, 1786), pp. 9–28).

8 The figure was usually *c.* £6 *parisis* (occasionally more) and became more regular from the 1350s. However, the payment for liveries on Holy Blood day is difficult to track in the town accounts from the 1360s, when this payment was probably placed under the general costs for 'May liveries' (*Meye saysoene lakene*). By the time the guild accounts become extant in the 1440s, the town contribution had increased substantially.

9 SAB, 216, 1390/1, fo. 110v. Payments for trumpeters before the young crossbowmen became more regular from 1398: *ibid.*, 1397/8, fo. 95r.

10 *Ibid.*, 1333/4, fo. 104v; 1360/1, fo. 92r. These subsidies might have begun before the 1330s: town accounts from 1319 to 1333 are missing.

11 *Ibid.*, 1355/6, fo. 130r; 1362/3, fo. 91v.

12 *Ibid.*, 1372/3, fo, 38v.

13 With the exception of 1389 (*ibid.*, 1388/9, fo. 110r).

During the 1390s, however, ludic events of all kinds were revived, and subsidised from civic coffers more than ever before. Chivalric activity became more intense. More began to be spent on the annual White Bear joust, and on extra jousts staged at other times in the year. Crossbow competitions were also revived. The annual papagay competition is difficult to track in the town accounts (because of a change in accounting procedures), but payment towards the crossbowmen competing in other towns is clearer: in 1394, for instance, for a large-scale event at Tournai, involving at least thirty towns and eighteen villages from Flanders, Hainaut, Brabant and Northern France.[14] Similar events occurred at Mechelen in 1404 and Oudenaarde in 1408.[15]

It is not coincidental that this increase in funding occurred at a time when Valois Burgundian rule was being established in Flanders. Some of the extra jousts and tournaments in the 1390s and 1400s were held in honour of the prince or other nobles close to the court. The flourishing of jousts and shooting competitions may to some extent be explained by Burgundian courtly interest and political need (see Chapter 7). Yet it is also plain that these events, especially the annual May jousts or Trinity papagays, were hardly Burgundian innovations, and if they thrived anew from the 1390s it was because relative peace had been restored. The dukes found in Bruges a tradition of civic festivity that needed little princely encouragement. The town councillors' decision in 1418 to renew their jousting (recorded by Despars) reflected a long-standing civic interest in chivalric events.

Growing expenditure on jousting was part of a wider civic investment in festivity of all kinds, not least the Holy Blood procession. There are also signs in the late fourteenth century of municipal sponsorship of rhetoric activity, some of it connected with the appearance of princely visitors, yet some of it with the plays of the Holy Blood procession, which the town had also begun to sponsor.[16] By 1399 the archers were also paid, like the crossbowmen, to flank the cortège that escorted the relic. Moreover, during the course of the fourteenth century, the timing of the annual joust was increasingly aligned with Holy Blood day.

14 SAB, 216, 1394, fo. 69r;

15 See P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), pp. 81–3, and references cited there.

16 A 'Jan van Hulst' was paid by the town in 1394 for plays performed before Duchess Margaret and for those performed during the Holy Blood procession in 1396, as well as for singing – on behalf of the Dry Tree fraternity – for the benefit of the duke in 1410 (SAB, 216, 1393/4, fo. 64r; 1396/7, fo. 92r; 1410/11, fo. 107v). He may or may not be identified with the Jan van Hulst who was an early member of the Holy Trinity guild (SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenboec* A), fos. 166v–167r) and the founding members of the Holy Ghost chamber: see L. Derycke and A.-L. Van Bruaene, 'Sociale en literaire dynamiek in het vroeg vijftiende-eeuwse Brugge: De oprichting van de

In the early decades of the fourteenth century, when civic subsidy of jousts was still irregular, jousts in Bruges tended to be held around Lent. This was a common time for jousting activity in many regions, and remained so at Lille, for instance.[17] But by the 1350s, there was an increasing tendency in Bruges for a regular event to be staged in late April or early May, usually just before 3 May – at the beginning of the annual fair and the Holy Blood procession. From the mid fourteenth century onwards the annual joust had come to be held exclusively on the *markt*.[18] This synchronising of jousting with religious ceremony and commercial fair seems part of a deliberate civic effort to coordinate the timing of its most important festivities. The jousters may not have had an official presence on Holy Blood day, but joust and procession could be explicitly referred to as though part of an integrated programme of events: in 1401, for instance, a herald from Bruges arrived in Douai in late March to publicise 'the *feste* of the town of Bruges and the May procession that followed'.[19] White Bear joust, Holy Blood procession, as well as the papagay competitions that took place in late May or June, were thus made part of an official civic calendar of events, secular and sacred. It may be no coincidence that the town council's decision to increase jousting efforts in 1418 occurred within a year of its determination to increase liturgical celebration on Holy Blood day.

## Festive events and civic honour *c.* 1400–1500

The connections between civic government and festive competition become clearer in the fifteenth century when sources are more plentiful. Public funding of the jousts continued to rise: the subsidy for the forester more than tripled during the fifteenth century.[20] Some of the costs of the forestership were met by allowing its holder to receive the profits of certain civic offices. On 25 April 1422, the town magistrates

rederijkerskamer De Heilige Geest *ca*. 1428', in J. Oosterman (ed.), *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede: Literaire cultuur in Brugge op de drempel van de rederijkerstijd* (Leuven, 2005), pp. 59–87; A.-L. Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille: Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de zuidelijke Nederlanden 1400–1650* (Amsterdam, 2008), esp. pp. 23–51.

[17] A. Männd, *Urban Carnival: Festive Culture in the Hanseatic Cities of the Eastern Baltic, 1350–1550* (Turnhout, 2005), p. 238; T. Zotz, 'Adel, Bürgertum und Türnier in deutschen Städten vom 13. bis 15. Jahrhundert', in J. Fleckenstein (ed.), *Das ritterliche Türnier im Mittelalter* (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 450–99 (pp. 463–4, 471–2).

[18] Prior to this, the staging of an annual joust appears to have taken place in a variety of streets or spaces within the town, the *markt* included.

[19] E. Van den Neste, *Tournois, joûtes, pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandre à la fin du Moyen Age (1300–1486)* (Paris, 1996), p. 268.

[20] The subsidy rose in stages: from £200 *parisis* in the early fifteenth century, to £240 in 1442, £400 in 1448, £600 in 1462 and £720 by 1470.

and 'many other notables of the town' decreed that the forester should hold the 'deanship' of the tax on mead, which was to be used to fund the jousting feast. The forester would be sworn into office on the eve of Ascension.[21]

The readiness of the civic treasury to support regular jousts is explained by the wider benefits that these were perceived to bring. In 1483, a year in which more was spent on the White Bear jousts than ever before, the civic accounts record that the forester was paid 'for the honour of the town'.[22] Evidently civic honour was judged partly on the ability to sustain chivalric festivity in relation to other towns. Inter-town competition in the region was well established. Lively, sometimes deadly, contests between towns had long taken place in efforts to sustain civic honour: in 1284, the haughty refusal of jousters from Douai to tilt at a team from Lille provoked a series of bloody reprisals.[23] Bruges was already hosting the occasional event in the early fourteenth century. A few decades later (especially by the 1350s and 1360s) the town was also paying occasionally for jousters to attend events in other places. Subsidy for this purpose increased from the 1390s: the White Bear jousters enjoyed public money to visit a greater number of places in Flanders, Brabant and Northern France – Brussels, Mechelen, Ghent, Tournai and, especially, Lille, which had its own jousting group (the 'Epinette').[24] By the 1430s Lille had become the only destination to which Bruges officially sent its jousters, but it did so regularly until the late 1480s. Even during the last years of the event, representation at the Epinette joust was something by which the Bruges authorities set some store. In 1483, 1486 and 1487, the town paid out more than ever before for its jousters to journey to Lille. The forester was paid 'for the honour of the town' in 1483 specifically to ensure his attendance there.

Bruges' own jousts were themselves intended to draw in a wider audience. Heralds were regularly sent out to other towns, certainly by the late fourteenth century, to publicise the annual Bruges event. In the 1430s and 1440s, there were still jousters from other towns besides Lille

[21] SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), 1397–1422, fos. 166r, 168r. In 1433, it was decided that the forester should now hold the 'deanship' of wax instead of mead, and receive an annual salary of £400 *parisis* (*ibid*., fo. 164v). The right to collect tolls or customary taxes on wine, mead, wax and beer was usually auctioned to the highest bidder (generally a former alderman or treasurer), who was then allowed to collect the revenue for a certain period.

[22] SAB, 216, 1482/3, fo. 161v.

[23] G. Espinas, *Une Guerre sociale interurbaine dans la Flandre Wallonne au XIIIe siècle: Douai et Lille 1284–1285* (Paris, 1930).

[24] Bruges jousters won prizes at Lille from at least 1356; and received heralds from Cambrai (in 1380), Brussels (1395) and Mechelen (1396): SAB, 216, 1355/6, fo. 126r; 1394/5, fo. 79v; 1395/6, fo. 82r; Van den Neste, *Tournois*, p. 253.

who disported themselves at the White Bear jousts, winning prizes as 'outsiders'. The jousts were no doubt intended to showcase the town's wealth and status, especially as the annual event was now invariably linked with May market and procession.[25]

The White Bear could also perform a protective role for the town. In the later fifteenth century, the forester is sometimes referred to as the 'captain' of the town with military duties. Karel van Halewijn, lord of Uutkerke, captain of Bruges, was awarded a double subsidy in 1469 for holding his forestership in 'higher estate' and spending more than any previous forester, so that he would 'protect the town's honour'.[26] Symbolically the forester might be deemed to hold the honour of the town in his hands. One of the poems associated with the Gruuthuse family, written down in about 1400, describes a hermit and two 'wild men of the woods' holding a model of the town of Bruges.[27] It shows the seven gates of the town, each labelled with a letter spelling out the word 'BRUCGHE', each letter standing for a pair of virtues, emphasising the importance of unity and harmony – 'B' for brotherhood and happiness (*bliscap*), through to 'E' for 'unity' (*eendrachtigheid*) and 'honour' (*eere*). The model of the town is presented to the forester, the 'lord of Bruges', who is thus entrusted with the town's honour and welfare. As protector of the walled town, his function appears almost as the secular equivalent of the role played by the processors who carried the Holy Blood relic on 3 May. Just as the town gates were sanctified on Holy Blood day by the processors who paused in prayer before each of them, so in the poem the gates represent the image and values of the town, now guarded by the forester.

Upholding the honour of Bruges in relation to other towns was a role also assigned to the shooting guilds. During the fifteenth century, inter-town competitions, both inside and outside Flanders, were more regular than they had been in the fourteenth. Civic subsidy for them was more forthcoming, and was steered towards the archers as well as crossbowmen. Although shooting events were not annual as they were for the jousters sent to Lille, archers and crossbowmen competed in a greater number of towns. Particularly intensive were the years between 1440 and 1462, when civic subsidies were at their most generous.[28] The

[25] In 1422, three deputies were sent to Ghent, to ask 'our lady and princess' to come to Bruges for 'the procession and the joust' (SAB, 216, 1421/2, fo. 27r).

[26] SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 245r.

[27] C. L. Carton (ed.), *Oudvlaemsche liederen en andere gedichten der XIVe en Xve eeuwen*, 2 vols. (Ghent, 1849), Vol. II, pp. 479–88.

[28] The crossbowmen competed in other towns during the following years (the figure in *livres parisis* indicates a town subsidy to the event, from SAB, 216): 1408, Oudenaarde (£240); 1415, Courtrai (£36 and £18 to the young crossbowmen); 1416, Courtrai; 1420, Wervik (£60); 1422, Ypres; 1424, Sluis (£357), Boeringe (£22 to the young

St Sebastian archers also received occasional civic subsidy for competing in other towns, though in general their competitions were more local.[29] Success at competitions, both within and outside Bruges, was measured partly by skill shown at shooting the papagay or popinjay (usually placed high up on a pole). Prizes were also awarded at larger events for the best entries made by guilds into host towns. In 1424, in addition to a subsidy of £200 *parisis*, the town magistrates considered it necessary to pay the crossbowmen £157 *parisis* for their 'entry' into Sluis.[30]

It is the jousters and shooters who appear most frequently in the civic accounts as recipients of subsidies. But the festivities of other kinds of guild were also considered to play a part in upholding civic honour. The Rozebeke guild's annual pilgrimage reputedly commemorated a victory in which the town militia had been involved. Official civic interest in the event is evident later. The town minstrels were paid for taking part on the Saturday *Salve*; town trumpeters played at the supper held in Torhout and during the Sunday procession at Rozebeke. The event was a source of civic pride. Zegher van Male in 1590 (following the period of Calvinist purge of Catholic practices) was to lament the passing of a guild that had involved 'the principal and most notable men of the town' undertaking its annual journey with such 'great triumph'.[31] Moreover, certain craft guilds, as we saw, also undertook annual pilgrimages to destinations outside the town. At one level these were expressions of guild solidarity and prestige, yet such activity was perceived to bring wider benefits. Zegher van Male deemed three such guild pilgrimages worthy of mention: like the Rozebeke pilgrimage – and the annual feasts of shooting guilds – these were all occasions of civic celebration that had brought honour to the town.[32]

The collective contribution of craft guilds to the town was organised in more formal ways. The public roles that they played in the town economy, constitution and militia were translated into ceremonial form – especially in the Holy Blood procession (see Chapter 1). From the civic perspective,

crossbowmen); 1427, Sint Omars (£400); 1440, Ghent (£200); 1441, Lille (£84); 1443, Sluis (£72); 1444, Brussels (£300); 1448, Damme; 1450, Roeselare; 1454, Stavele (£50); 1455, Tournai; 1457, Aardenburg; 1458, Mechelen (£350), Vilvoorde, Tournai; 1462, Oudenarde; 1474, Ghent; 1486, Courtrai; 1496, Diksmuide (£60); 1497, Ghent.

29 In 1434 at Nivelles (£50). In 1453 the town council agreed specially to fund the archers for a shooting match at Mechelen (SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 344v).

30 SAB, 216, 1423/4, fos. 94r–v.

31 Zegher van Male, *De Lamentatie van Zeghere van Male: Brugge na de opstand tegen Spanje 1590*, ed. A. Dewitte and A. Viaene (Bruges, 1977), p. 74.

32 *Ibid.* Van Male refers to the glovers and coopers, but also mentions a separate *ommegang* of the coopers' apprentices to Dudzele.

this participation was important partly because the event attracted numerous and distinguished outsiders. On Holy Blood day, the honour of the town in relation to the outside world was at stake. The parade of guilds showcased civic wealth as well as craft prestige. The processional order, at one level, was an expression of civic power, even its military might: the crafts lined up in the same order as they would on military expeditions.

The honour of the town was also at stake when princes or other dignitaries entered Bruges. Here again, craft guilds (and even shooting guilds) were allotted, or burdened with, an increasing role in entry ceremonies. These ceremonies became more elaborate from the 1430s (see Chapter 7). Quite what role guilds played before then is not clear. There is reference in 1430, when Isabella of Portugal entered the town on 8 January, to the archers and crossbowmen lining part of the route she took from town gate to *prinsenhof*.[33] Civic accounts in the mid fifteenth century began to mention subsidies to guilds for putting on 'plays'. When Duke Philip the Good entered Bruges on 23 March 1455, he was treated to several 'dumb shows' presented by several craft guilds, partly paid for by the town. The headman of the archers' guild was among them.[34] Another play, apparently not subsidised by the town treasury, was put on near the Franciscan priory by the crossbowmen.[35] In many entries, guilds were evidently expected to perform a similar function – and to foot a significant part of the bill.[36] In 1461 the coopers and carpenters petitioned the town magistrates to be allowed to put up membership fees because of the 'great costs' that had been incurred

[33] There is a brief account of the entry written down (unusually) in SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), 1422–43, fo. 168v.

[34] For various *stomme personnagen* put on that day, the town paid 10s each to the deans of the brokers, four smaller crafts (*neeringen*), carpenters, tailors, silversmiths, hatters, barber-surgeons and shippers, as well as the headman of the archers. Most of these costs must have been borne by the guilds themselves. The archers' guild accounts show that they paid out £4 18s 9d for their *spele* that day (SAB, 216, 1454/5, fo. 51v; ASSB, *Rekeningen*, i, 1454/5).

[35] SAB, 385, *Rekeningen*, 1454/5, fos. 73r, 73v, 77v. Some trouble had evidently been taken over the play's content: those performing appeared before the guild's headman to have it vetted four days previously. The total costs of the play were over £5, and included the staging, torches and tambourines; the guild banquet; and painting by Aernoud de Mol, who was also employed by the town for official painting work (cf. the entry in 1463: SAB, 216, 1462/3, fo. 52r).

[36] Usually, the town did not pay for craft-guild 'shows', and town accounts normally refer just to the prizes given to some guilds for their efforts (e.g. in 1457: SAB, 216, 1456/7, fos. 51v (cordwainers), 53r; in 1462: GVS, Vol. V, pp. 532–5 (original now lost); in 1466: 1465/6, fo. 50r. In 1478 the tailors won the prize for the best *abatement* during the festivities celebrating the birth of Philip the Fair: SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 419v. This suggests that more guilds were usually involved on these occasions, and were not generally subsidised.

both on Holy Blood day and at the recent *blijde incomst* ('joyous entry' of the prince).[37] In the absence of regular guild accounts, these expenses for the most part remain hidden, but it is evident from more scattered sources that such costs were not always easily met.[38]

Surviving guild accounts (notably those of St George and St Sebastian) do not suggest that dramatic performances were regularly put on by these guilds. By the mid fifteenth century the task of producing plays for civic occasions was already being assumed by a specialist rhetoric guild.[39] The Holy Ghost rhetoric chamber was founded, according to later legend, in 1428 or 1429. Its involvement in inter-town rhetoric competitions, sponsored by the town government, is apparent by 1442: the town paid for costs in the *ghiselhuis* (part of the *scepenhuis*) when plays 'of the Holy Ghost' were staged in the *burg* before the burgomaster and other 'notables'.[40] The role of rhetoricians in official civic festivity becomes clearer in the late fifteenth century (by which time the second rhetoric chamber – the *Drie Santinnen* – had also been founded). By the 1460s, rhetoricians such as Anthonis de Roovere (son of a founding member of the Holy Ghost chamber) are found performing at competitions, and directing 'plays' at entry ceremonies. Thus by this point, the honour of the town is being officially promoted in more ways than has been the case a century before.

## Festive events and the 'public good' *c.* 1400–1500

Just as Bruges guilds served a wider civic function in relation to outsiders, so they might do so in relation to other citizens. But functions varied, and not all groups and guilds were identified with the civic government or the common good in quite the same way. To begin with, as already seen, guild membership varied greatly. At one end of the spectrum lay the Holy Blood fraternity, narrowly confined to individuals who had served on the town council. At the other extreme was a fraternity like that of Our Lady of the Snow, its membership so broadly

[37] SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 231v.

[38] In 1496, for instance, the *schepenen* authorised three crafts – the bakers, millers and barber-surgeons – to tax all their members to raise £20 to cover the expenses for the *chierlicheden* that the crafts proposed to put on at Prince Philip's entry (RAB, BN, 8277). In 1515, however, the barber-surgeons and bakers were at loggerheads over the allocation of £30 required to meet their expenses for prince Charles' entry (*ibid.*, 8876).

[39] For the wider context of growing inter-town rhetoric competitions, see Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 27–51.

[40] SAB, 216, 1441/2, fo. 62r. There were official players sent from Ghent, Ypres, Damme, Dendermonde and Mechelen. In 1459 the Holy Ghost rhetoricians were paid for their costs at Veurne (SAB, 216, 1458/9, fo. 39r).

based – embracing prince and pauper, priest and parishioner, burgomaster and beguine – that it crossed most social divides. The membership of these two guilds might be viewed as 'civic' in different ways: the one as a microcosm of the town council; the other as a microcosm of the wider civic community. As we shall see, the contrast can be made too sharply, since the town government had some guiding influence over the Snow guild. Moreover, between these two extremes lay many other guilds, some closer in membership than others to the holders of civic office, others encompassing a constituency that was wider or less socially elevated.

Just as membership varied, so also did the relationship of each guild to municipal authority. In the case of the Trinity or Holy Blood guilds, this relationship was an intimate one. Comprising town councillors, the Holy Blood guild embodied the town council's special association with the relic, and its claim to particular responsibility for maintaining the 'common good'. The guild livery perhaps alluded to the burdens of civic office: it depicted a pelican feeding her young, the Eucharistic image of sacrifice.[41] The civic duties of the guild were extended further in the later fifteenth century through its involvement in general processions that carried the Holy Blood relic. On 18 October 1490, for instance, a procession undertaken to give thanks for peace included eight guild members carrying torches decorated with images of the Holy Blood.[42] The fraternity's special care of the relic, and its public role in processions, reinforced the image of civic office as one endowed with sacred qualities.

Other devotional guilds that began to appear by the early fifteenth century also had links with civic government. The Dry Tree and Rozebeke guilds included numerous town councillors. The Dry Tree was also implicated on occasion with the exercise of civic authority: like the Holy Blood relic it could receive penitential offerings of wax from criminals punished by the town magistracy. In 1462 Jan Ketelboetere was banished from the town for three years, ordered on a pilgrimage to Wilsnack and required to offer four pounds of wax for a torch in the chapel of the Dry Tree fraternity – for 'injurious behaviour' towards Guy de Baenst, *baljuw* of Sluis.[43] Occasionally, the guild performed

[41] Perhaps the 'notables' who formed the Holy Trinity guild adopted their name because of the Eucharistic associations of the Trinity.

[42] C. L. Carton, *Het boeck van al 't gene datter geschiet is binnen Brugge sichent Jaer 1477, 14 Februarii, tot 1491* (Ghent, 1859), p. 385. Some town-hall decrees required the guild members to process, and the guild could subsidise the procession (e.g. in 1505: SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), ii (1503–15), fo. 56r–v; AHB, Register 18, fo. 165r).

[43] SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenbouc onghecottert*), fos. 131v–132r. See also a case in 1467: GVS, Vol. V, pp. 494–6.

other civic services: in 1410, the town council ordered Jan Hulst and 'others of the Dry Tree' to sing mass for Duke John.[44]

The functions of the more ludic guilds or groups were also linked to municipal affairs. White Bear jousters frequently became town councillors; they made use of the *scepenhuis* and other public buildings (*poorters loge*, *mane* and *ghiselhuis*) for meetings and banquets. Although only a few individuals took part, the May joust held on the *markt* was a public spectacle. The forester himself was a figure whose role was not limited to organising the joust. His honour was identified with that of the town's. The forester's coat of arms was displayed in the townhouse. In 1480 a painting of the jousters was commissioned from the town painter, Fransoys van de Pitte.[45] The painting was to represent the coats of arms of all the foresters present and past, eighty-eight in total, and was to hang in the *poorters loge*.

The jousts could also be regarded as benefiting the 'public good'. As the poem of *c.* 1400 declared, the forester was entrusted with upholding virtues that (literally) formed the bastions of the town. There were other more tangible benefits to the community for which the jousters could apparently take credit. In 1484 a debate was held by preachers at Lille to consider the moral justification for jousting. Unsurprisingly, the balance of the argument weighed heavily against chivalric sport, yet some justifications were considered worthy of scrutiny. Because 'lords and governors of the law' were charged with the 'care and solicitude of public matters', they could justly arrange jousts for recreational purposes to provide relief. Moreover, the *feste* brought great profit to many specialised trades such as metal-workers, publicans, purveyors of roast meats or grooms, so taxes for jousting could be raised for the 'public good'.[46]

However, civic government had stronger connections with the shooters than it did with the jousters. The crossbowmen's role on Holy Blood day remained significant. Annual civic contribution to their liveries worn on the day increased during the fifteenth century. The junior crossbow guild was also obliged to attend the procession;[47] so were the

[44] SAB, 216, 1410/11, fo. 107v.

[45] *Ibid.*, 1479/80, fo. 169r; 1480/1, fo. 158r. For van de Pitte's other services to the town, see, for example, the entry of Archduke Maximilian in 1477 (*ibid.*, 1476/7, fo. 130r). His career again shows how much membership of guilds could overlap: he belonged to the St Sebastian archers from 1465 (ASSB, *Rekeningen*, ii, 1464/5), the Snow fraternity by 1470 (RAB, OLV, 1531, fo. 48v), the Rozebeke guild from around 1470 (SAB, 509 Gilde Roosebeke, fo. 12r) and the crossbow guild (SAB, 385, Register, fo. 13r; *Rekeningen*, fo. 244r). He also painted banners for the Holy Blood fraternity in the early 1480s (AHB, Register 18, fos. 63v, 67v).

[46] ADN, B7662 (9), pp. 8, 14. See below, pp. 189–90.

[47] See guild rules in 1436: SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 241r; GVS, Vol. IV, pp. 455–7.

archers. In 1420 the town magistrates agreed to pay for the archers to take their place in the procession, and from 1425 paid £100 *parisis* for their liveries on Holy Blood day. In 1435 they decided to double the amount 'for the great and notable' service performed by the archers; by 1455 the archers were being paid £240 *parisis*.[48]

The obligations of the shooters to civic government were spelled out in ways that were perhaps not done with the jousters. Besides requiring military service and attendance at the Holy Blood procession, the town council oversaw guild rules by formally ratifying their content. It was with civic sanction that officers would punish members who broke guild rules. Loyalty to the town magistrates was an oath required of new guild members. A newly elected 'headman' of the archers had to be announced before the magistracy and swear an oath of loyalty in the *scepenhuis*.[49]

Guild rules imparted a sense of civic responsibility in other ways. The prominent role of shooters meant that their behaviour was deemed to reflect and sustain the moral quality of urban society – not just at occasional festive events but also in daily life. The schooling in exemplary public behaviour began in youth. Members of the junior crossbow guild were required to conduct themselves according to certain standards of public morality. They risked correction if caught in a brothel or bathhouse (though only if they did so wearing the guild livery).[50] Public morality began with an orderly household and marriage: sharing a house with another woman besides one's 'good and true' wife was expressly forbidden. Graduation of the 'young' crossbowmen into the senior guild was a rite of passage into an adult world of responsibility in civic affairs.[51]

Craft guilds also had a part to play in the encouragement of moral rectitude among citizens. Most of the early surviving rules of these guilds refer chiefly to their economic arrangements, and sometimes to religious services. Rules prohibiting work on certain feast days had long been in place. But certain guild rules by the mid fifteenth century refer more explicitly to other kinds of moral behaviour: these seem to anticipate the development of a 'bourgeois morality' that some historians have detected in civic life at a slightly later date.[52] Rather like the behaviour

[48] ASSB, charter 3; SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 159v, 229r–v; GVS, Vol. IV, pp. 461–6; Godar, *Histoire*, pp. 87–8; ASSB, *Rekeningen*, i, 1454/5.

[49] Guild land transactions were also ratified by the town magistracy – for instance in 1440 the renting out by Pieter Adornes, himself a prominent citizen, and in 1454 the eventual gift of land by Pieter's brother Jacob, where the guild could have their own house and practice shooting (ASSB, charters 6, 7, 9).

[50] SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 241v.

[51] Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, p. 72; P. Kneud, *Burgers in het geweer: De schutterijen in Holland 1550–1700* (Hilversum, 1994), Chapter 1.

[52] See below, Epilogue, p. 302.

enjoined on crossbowmen, the collection of guild rules copied down sometime in the 1440s virtually all echo the behaviour insisted upon of crossbowmen regarding wives and brothels.[53]

The task of disseminating moral values and religious truths, however, was one increasingly entrusted by town governments in the region to specialist rhetoric chambers. By 1466 Anthonis de Roovere was credited with having produced 'morality' plays, dramatic works and shows.[54] His career is itself an indicator of the many threads that tied together a civic network of religious and social practice. His circle of contacts extended well beyond those with purely literary interests, among whom were Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, Jan de Baenst and Pieter van Muelenbeke, who themselves had feet firmly planted inside municipal doors, and fingers in more than one fraternal pie.[55]

Some of de Roovere's literary output had explicit connections with contemporary municipal concerns. He is credited with writing a significant portion of the *Excellente chronike*, which sets the history of Bruges within a wider Flemish context. The crises of the town from the late 1470s become the subjects of particular focus in his chronicle. His poem *Nieuwe jaer van Brugge* in 1480 was also a lament on the woeful condition of the town.[56] Bruges appears to the narrator in a dream as a house and garden in ruins; the poor, pitiful woman within represents the inhabitants. Three helpers arrive to offer help: Charity, Church *verchiernisse* and Divine Service – the Christian worship and protection that the town had once enjoyed. The sun also suddenly appears, its six rays transforming themselves into six 'delegates'. The repairs they effect on the house and garden are symbolically the repairs needed on the gates, walls, streets, bridges and quays of Bruges. Arguably de Roovere intended to identify the six delegates with six prominent town councillors, one of whom was Pieter van Muelenbeke.[57]

Most of de Roovere's known works are less directly related to a political context. Yet a number are permeated with the values that, like the

[53] RAB, FA, 1, *passim*.

[54] SAB, 157 (*Civiele sententïen vierschaar*) 1465–9, fo. 26v; SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenbouc onghecottert*), fos. 208v–209r).

[55] Jan de Baenst, lord of Sint-Joris in Distel, was burgomaster; White Bear forester; and member of the guilds of the St George, Our Lady of the Snow and possibly the Dry Tree. Pieter van Muelenbeke was town councillor; poor-table master in Our Lady's; and member of the Dry Tree, Our Lady of the Snow and Our Lady of Rozebeke guilds. He was buried in St John's hospital, his gravestone inscribed with words composed by de Roovere (1480).

[56] Anthonis de Roovere, *De gedichten van Anthonis de Roovere*, ed. J. J. Mak (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1955), pp. 360–5.

[57] For possible identities of the six 'delegates', see A. Viaene, '*Nieuwe jaer van Brugghe*: Een gelegenheidsgedicht van Anthonis de Roovere, 1480', *Biekorf* 60 (1959), 7–11.

three helpers in *Nieuwe jaer van Brugge*, were considered to perform a wider civic service. Some of these echo the aspirations set down in guild statutes or civic decree: unity, friendship, charity, brotherhood and peace. In the poem *Vander obedientie ende van des ouders reverentie*, virtues like these are linked to authority: a burgher holds forth on the duties of obedience to 'seven fathers' who include God, elders, priests, and authorities in the land, town and diocese. 'Submissiveness' is the foundation of 'a house of peace'; the good work of these fathers allows peace to be achieved.[58] In other poems, an ordered household also enshrines these virtues: the good wife devoutly going to church and working at home; children being dutiful to mother and father.[59] Such virtues are standard in many courtesy books of the period, in Flanders as elsewhere; here they are woven into the fabric of guild and civic life.

A large proportion of de Roovere's surviving poetry is didactic in a more theological than moral way. It deals with the mysteries of the faith and the paths to salvation: its purpose is hardly 'civic' in the first instance. *Lof van den hejlighen sacramente* focuses on the Eucharist's miraculous efficacy, its prefiguration in the Old Testament and the miracle of transubstantiation, in strict adherence to orthodox doctrine. It borrows from Ruusbroec's *Mirror of Salvation*, an influential text of the *Devotio moderna*.[60] Other poems concentrate on the grace and salvation offered by Christ and his Passion;[61] even more poems deal with the virtues and salvific powers of the Virgin Mary. Instruction on the rudiments of faith is given in the poems that translate the Latin words of the Lord's Prayer, and the Ave Maria, as well as those of the antiphon *Salve regina*.[62]

Such poetry points away from the earthly towards the heavenly, towards wider Christian rather than narrower civic duty. Yet in context they are none the less bound into the practices of public religion in Bruges. Marian devotion and imitation of Christ were universal, but they were adopted and imbricated with the structures of parish, guild and civic celebration by the foundations of citizens and even municipal decree. De Roovere's *Lof van den hejlighen sacramente* was perhaps hung up, for public edification, on a pillar in St Saviour's church.[63]

58 De Roovere, *De gedichten*, pp. 248–51. 59 *Ibid.*, pp. 252–4, 256–62.
60 *Ibid.*, pp. 136–44. 61 *Ibid.*, pp. 219–24.
62 For another of de Roovere's translations (also the subject of a play), see *Quicumque vult salvus esse* (*ibid.*, pp. 230–4).
63 Eduard de Dene in his *Testament Rhetoricael* in 1555 refers to de Roovere's prayers hung up 'openly' for all to read in the chancel of the church: a more general practice visible in the Seven Sacraments painting by Rogier van der Weyden (J. Oosterman, 'Anthonis de Roovere. Het werk: Overlevering, toeschrijving en plaatsbepaling', *Jaarboek De Fonteine* 45–6 (1995–6), 29–140 (p. 47)).

Corpus Christi day, with its procession attended by craft guilds, had assumed civic prominence by the mid fifteenth century, and seems to have centred on St Saviour's. It was also the focus of several fraternities and of many individual endowments. The poem was composed around 1457: in that year Donaas de Beer, secretary of the town (White Bear jouster and member of the Dry Tree and Snow fraternities), added to the veneration of the Host by founding a procession in the town, to go out from St Donatian's into the *burg* and back, on the octave of Corpus Christi. The references to the saving power of Christ's Blood (as well as his Body), in the *Lof van den hejlighen sacramente* and in many other poems by de Roovere, are part of an orthodox mainstream in their contemplation of Christ's Passion, but reference to the defeat of the 'enemy' through the 'power of His Holy Blood' might have had a particular resonance for the citizens of Bruges.[64] The 'sweet name of Jesus' was the object of devotion in De Roovere's *O Ihesus Christus* and also of several foundations in Bruges from the 1470s, including Pieter de Muelenbeke's foundation in Our Lady's by 1483, which elevated the day of the Holy Name of Jesus to a great principal feast, celebrated with processions, bell-ringing, motets and masses.[65] *Salve regina* was the antiphon often sung in the rising number of processions in Bruges churches (including the Holy Blood) – and the focus of civic endowment in the 1480s for a daily public concert, of which the *Excellente Chronike* expressed approval.

De Roovere's rhetorical services to Bruges were officially recognised in 1466, when the town council and guild deans decided to pay him £6 a year in return for his continued residence in the town. His connections with so many influential men and guilds underline the civic significance of his literary output. Besides craft and shooting guilds, he can be linked to devotional confraternities. In 1474 he was paid for 'making' the play for the Snow guild at its annual feast day, held in the tailors' guild house.[66]

The involvement of rhetoricians in the Snow guild points to the civic importance of devotional fraternities. Our Lady of the Snow, as already seen, was 'civic' in the sense that it drew in a wide cross-section of urban society. The cult itself was not limited to any single parish, craft or social group. It was venerated in several Bruges churches before the

[64] In de Roovere's *Van pays en oorloghe* (*De gedichten*, p. 387).

[65] RAB, OLV, 735, fos. 18r–v; OCMW, OLV, Register 155, fos. 86r–87r.

[66] RAB, OLV, 1531, fo. 135r. Anthonis was not listed as a member of the guild, but his wife was from 1470 to 1475. Another rhetorician, Aliamus de Groote, was paid by the guild for plays in the 1470s; a Three Saints rhetorician was paid for a play in 1496 (*ibid.*, fos. 156v, 290r).

widow's miracle in 1464.[67] Proclamations announcing the feast day were made throughout the town, according to the miracle story. The miracle crossed parochial boundaries: the miraculous image was eventually found by the widow in Our Lady's church, though she was a parishioner of St Cross'; some of her female neighbours who nursed her were also from this parish; but two were from St Saviour's parish and another from Our Lady's.[68] The enthusiasm for the cult following the miracle reached all parts of the town: the apparent rush to join the fraternity was town-wide. Special collections throughout the town came to be made by the guild officers.[69]

It was not just its ecumenical membership, however, that gave the fraternity a significance that was 'civic'. Initial interest in the cult partly reflected concerns that were more mundane than devotional. The miracle story contained an episode that was overtly related to economic concerns. The widow was first sent on pilgrimage to Sluis to find the image seen in her vision. But the correct image turned out to be located in Bruges, in Our Lady's church. News of an image in Bruges superior in miraculous power to one in Sluis was doubtless welcome in a town that had sought to contain economic competition from its neighbouring port – an aim already asserted in more festive fashion on Holy Blood day.[70]

The miraculous cult also attracted 'civic' interest in another sense. The enthusiasm ignited by the miracle may have awakened other concerns within the town council. Sites of new miraculous cults could often attract crowds and thus cause agitation among those in authority.[71] We lack evidence for popular or municipal reaction in Bruges to the Snow miracle. But the speed with which official inquiries were set up to investigate the miracle suggests concerns at high levels. The earliest guild accounts in 1466 show that town councillors had quickly colonised the guild

[67] In St Saviour's Joris Munter enhanced the feast in 1427 (BAB, S289, fo. 3v); in 1460, St Giles' 'community of the choir' was permitted by the *schepenen* to endow the seven offices of the day on the feast of the Snow (RAB, SG, 273, fos. 67r–69v).

[68] RAB, OLV, 1501, fos. 8r–12r.

[69] The accounts (e.g. RAB, OLV, 1531, fos. 120r, 122r) refer to collections made from members 'within the old walls' (the twelfth-century ring of fortifications) or 'within the new walls' (the late-thirteenth-century walls that encircled the earlier ones).

[70] See above, pp. 54–5.

[71] A good example of this occurred in Brussels in 1450, when news of a new cult outside the city reached the ears of the town council: see Adriaan Dullaert's account, translated in A. Brown and G. Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries* c. *1420–1530* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 245–9; and R. Stein, 'Cultuur en politiek in Brussel in de vijftiende euuw: Wat beoogde het Brussels stadsbestuur bij de annexatie van de plaatselijke ommegang?', in H. Pleij, *Op belofte van profijt: Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 8–51.

membership and its hierarchy. Guild deans and officers were invariably town councillors after this date. Official civic involvement was strengthened by other links. The guild called on the town criers to announce its main feast day, and on town minstrels to play on the feast's eve and day.[72] It contributed to devotional events, such as the weekly singing of *Salve*, that served a wider civic audience. The dean and four guild brothers joined the main processions in Our Lady's on St Boniface's day and on Corpus Christi, both feasts of civic importance.[73] On occasion, the guild was involved in the town's general processions.[74] It also contributed to more secular needs: in 1482 at a time when the town was selling 'rents' to pay off large debts, the guild used its surplus (of £33) to buy a £2 annual rent from the town.[75] The town treasury made regular payments of *losrent* to the guild from then on and, from the 1490s (unusually), small payments annually for the 'guild lights'.[76] The fraternity was thus closely tied in to a civic network of intercession and to the needs of civic authority.[77]

While devotional guilds, like the Snow, might have informal connections with civic government, one other category of guild had official ones. Certain workers or professionals served the town in various capacities. Like craft guilds, bridge-workers operating on the town's canals are recorded from the late thirteenth century: St John's bridge-workers by 1291 provided for its members' souls, and attended the Holy Blood procession. More of these associations had acquired their own altars by the fifteenth century (see Appendix 5), suggesting their growing prestige. This is perhaps a measure too of the expanding role of municipal government in all areas of civic life, public works included. The increasing number of specialised personnel who assisted in the work of the town council is further reflected in the appearance of guilds giving corporate expression to their specialism. The town clerks (of the *vierschaar*), formed their own fraternity, devoted to Saints Ivo and Lawrence, and, like the Holy Blood fraternity, it had its own altar in St Basil's chapel by the end of the fourteenth century.[78]

72 RAB, OLV, 1531, fos. 210v, 219v. 73 *Ibid.*, 1501, fos. 4r–v.

74 In 1496 the guild paid two preachers praying to Our Lady on a *processie generale* because they 'recommended' the guild feast day (*ibid.*, 1531, fo. 289v).

75 *Ibid.*, fos. 203r, 219r. 76 SAB, 216, 1495/6, fo. 224v.

77 See also Nicolaes Despars' comment on the sign of the guild visible next to the *Halle* (*Cronijke van Vlaenderen ende graefscepe van Vlaenderen … van de jaeren 405–1492*, ed. J. de Jonghe, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1839–42), Vol. IV, p. 337).

78 A. Schouteet, *De klerken van de vierschaar te Brugge* (Bruges, 1975), pp. 35–6. The first of their 'protocol' books survives from 1484 (SAB, 198, 828bis). The clerks also appear to have had connections with the exclusive Holy Trinity guild: one of them, Jean de Graeve, was involved in the chapel foundation of 1403 (SAB, 96, 10 (*Geluwenboek*), fo. 29v).

Another guild of civic servants originally maintained its own altar in St Basil's: the town minstrels, pipers or trumpeters. Quite when they formed their own fraternity is not clear. In the late thirteenth century, subsidies were being paid by the town to 'players' for their annual pilgrimage to the Holy Candle of Arras.[79] By 1421 they were sufficiently prestigious to begin building their own chapel by the Wulfhagen bridge, dedicated to St Wilgerfortis.[80] Their role in the pomp of civic festivity began at an early date, and slowly rose in volume.[81] In the first decade of the fourteenth century, civic subsidy paid for a solitary musician to play before the Holy Blood on 3 May; by the last decade, the substantial sums paid to trumpeters and pipers suggest a more deafening presence.[82] Their role in civic festivity was not limited to Holy Blood day. In the fifteenth century their skills were required in numerous guild and parish festivities: those of the shooting guilds, the Dry Tree, Rozebeke, Our Lady of the Snow, Holy Blood and the processions of St Boniface in Our Lady's church.[83] From 1483 they also played in the public *Salve* concerts, paid by the town to perform after the singing had finished. The minstrels' contribution to so many festivities forms yet another link that connected smaller urban groups with each other, and with the wider civic world.

## The common good and urban conflict: the end of the White Bear

There were many ways, therefore, in which guilds and other groups were part of a 'civic' religion and festivity. In the widest sense, their religious activities were civic by virtue of their connections with the

[79] C. Wyffels and J.-J. de Smet (eds.), *De rekeningen van de stad Brugge 1280–1319: Eerste deel 1280–1302* (Brussels, 1965–71), pp. 342 (1292), 709 (1298). These payments disappear from civic accounts, however. Later legend (in the sixteenth century) dates the beginnings of the minstrels' own procession with a miraculous candle to around 1350 (D. van de Casteele, 'Préludes historiques de la ghilde des ménestrels de Bruges, suivies de la légende d'une sainte chandelle confiée à sa garde', *ASEB* 14 (1868), 123–42). For the significance of the *jongleurs* and the Holy Candle at Arras, see C. Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca, NY: Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis, 2007), pp. 84–126.

[80] A chapel for the pipers in St Basil's is still mentioned in 1431 (SAB, 96, 14 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 196r). The minstrels continued to process with their holy candle from their chapel to St Basil's on Our Lady day in August and evidently attracted public attention (and were condemned in 1540 for being too rowdy, to the 'great scandal' of the town: van de Casteele, 'Préludes', pp. 98–100).

[81] See R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 48, 75–6, 86–7, 90.

[82] SAB, 216, 1306, fo. 8v; 1315/16, fo. 94r (for the first reference to more than one trumpeter in the procession); 1389/90, fo. 106v (for payments of over £50 *parisis* for trumpeters and pipers before the headmen and crossbowmen).

[83] For the Holy Blood fraternity's payments to minstrels in the 1480s and 1490s: AHB, Register 18, fos. 87v, 96r.

urban community. As we saw in Chapter 4, the guild provision for members' souls connected them with other providers of divine service. Guilds were not autonomous units of worship: their membership overlapped, and certain kinds (ludic or devotional) cut across sectional interests of craft guilds. In a general sense, guild activity was 'civic' in so far as it contributed to divine service within a parish or to public worship within the town.

The proliferation of craft-guild chapels, although partly the product of competition, served in effect to fill the urban landscape with sacred spaces. Some were also the sites of cults or services – Marian or Christological – that were of particular devotional interest in Bruges. Others helped implicitly to shape as well as increase sacred space. The Holy Blood procession, by following the perimeter of the town and pausing for prayer by town gates, delineated urban space as sacred. Guild chapels founded next to town walls added weight to the cordon of divine protection surrounding the town. Those – like the smiths, weavers or painters – that were founded next to or within town gates further marked out entry into the town as entry into a more sacred kind of territory.

Guilds could also be 'civic' in the degree to which they were either connected to municipal authority or served values that the magistracy were keen to promote. Some were identified directly with town government because their membership dovetailed with those who held high civic office. The Holy Trinity guild (apparently) comprised men who were concurrently serving as town councillors; the Holy Blood of men who had already done so. Other guilds such as the brokers, by virtue of their economic power, were also strongly linked to the town council. Less prestigious guilds might contain fewer members with such ties, yet their governors were often bound into the system of civic office-holding.

Guilds could also serve civic or municipal needs. The Holy Blood guild increased the sacred dimension of the town council's authority. The cluster of guilds involved in municipal service by the fifteenth century gave religious expression to the expansion of town bureaucracy. Official subsidy of shooters, jousters, rhetoricians and minstrels helped create a civic programme of festivity. Craft guilds were regulated as to their functions within the economic, military and ceremonial order within the town. Town governments may even have made the role of craft guilds in the Holy Blood procession more burdensome during the course of the fifteenth century.

Regulation of guilds may have been tricky. Litigation between craft guilds litters the town cartularies. Occasionally troublesome were the

disputes between guilds concerning their ceremonial place within processions or other festive events (see Chapter 1). Town magistrates had to intervene to soothe the wounded *amour-propre* of the St Sebastian archers when a new archery guild with the same name (founded in 1476) was later perceived to be asserting precedence over its older rival.[84] The town council ratified a process of arbitration in what was evidently a serious rift between the two rhetoric chambers in 1494, in which the Holy Ghost chamber claimed seniority in competitions and plays over the Three Saints. 'Friendship, unity and peace' between the rhetoricians were insisted upon.[85] Conflict between guilds may well have undermined these values, yet the frequent resolution of disputes under the auspices of the town magistracy repeatedly underscored its claim to be guarantor of such values.

There are strong indicators of a concerted municipal effort to promote cults, morality and virtues that were conducive to civic order and authority. We lack record of town council proceedings that might demonstrate such an effort more clearly, yet besides the control exercised over civic processions (see Chapters 1 and 2) and the foundations of high-ranking citizens that encouraged public worship (Chapter 3), it is evident too in civic approval of guild statutes that emphasised peace, brotherhood and morality, or in the didactic poetry of an Anthonis de Roovere who was so intimately linked with civic elites. It suggests a will to promote the common good within the framework of a public religion and morality.

But promotion of cults and values was not a straightforward process. The virtues encouraged in de Roovere's poems may have served civic ends, yet never explicitly so. Whatever political inferences citizens might have drawn from praise of the Sacrament or of the Virgin Mary, the direction of the poems is away from the earthly to the heavenly: less towards the immediate needs of the town than towards the necessity of ultimate salvation. Some poems adopt a more apocalyptic tone, critical of current morality and earthly values, corrosive even of those who rejoiced in worldly power and wealth. The *Mollenfeeste* is akin to the Dance of Death: all groups in society will meet their end in the earth. Another *Refrein* exposes the vices of the three estates: lords 'who ride high horses', the clergy and burghers. Urban magistrates, merchants, lawyers, bankers and publicans are greedy deceivers who batten on the poor.[86] Elsewhere de Roovere might extol the virtues of

[84] See below, p. 259.
[85] SAB, 390, Drie Santinnen, *Cartularium* 1, fos. 67r–77v.
[86] De Roovere, *De gedichten*, pp. 335–8.

obedience to those who occupied high office, but its occupants were not always altruistic: small wonder that the 'people' called civic magistrates 'liver eaters'.[87]

The 'common good' was the vaunted aspiration of the civic magistracy. Its claim to work for the benefit of all legitimised its authority – a claim increasingly shored up from the end of the fourteenth century by festive and devotional activity that lent this authority a further public and sacred dimension. It was a claim also given weight when the magistracy stepped in to resolve 'horizontal' conflicts in urban society, between groups of comparable social standing. But conflict of a more 'vertical' kind, across deeper social divisions, was more problematic. In the fifteenth century, the pretension of a narrow – and perhaps narrowing – group of citizens to an exclusive monopoly over power and exercise of the 'common good' was frequently challenged. Four major rebellions in the town (1411, 1436–8, 1477 and 1488) led to sudden changes of civic office-holding. In all four, seething discontent with the town magistracy found an outlet in *wapeningen* of craft guilds who staked their claim to act in accordance with the 'common good' and to represent the town within a larger 'great council'. Individuals perceived to have acted against the common good were executed or forced to flee. Civic 'elites' might identify themselves as guarantors of civic values, but it did not render them immune to attack from their social inferiors, or even from each other.

There were perhaps latent tensions between the wider civic functions that guilds or groups performed and the narrower sectional interests that they represented. Rebellion exposed the fragility of groups who claimed to represent the town, and who profited from civic funds, ostensibly for the public good. This was particularly evident in the case of the White Bear. Public subsidy of jousting events came to an end in 1487, in the midst of political upheaval and in ways that point to divisions underlying expressions of civic 'community'. However much jousting events were part of a wider civic network of festivity, they could on occasion be perceived as more divisive than socially binding.

The jousters were a more socially exclusive group than almost all other groups or guilds within the town – more likely, for instance, than other guildsmen to have landed interests outside the town. Jousting was also an expensive business. In 1431 'some good members of the *poorters*' were no longer prepared to bear the costs of the jousts themselves.[88] The town treasury had to pay an extra subsidy of around £200 *parisis* from then on.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 327. For avaricious merchants 'robbing their own', see *ibid.*, p. 324.
[88] SAB, 216, 1430/1, fo. 86r; 1431/2, fo. 80v.

The costs for harnesses, clothing, lances and other equipment continued to rise. In 1456 it cost the town £240 *parisis* to equip seven jousters; by 1486 it cost four times as much. Part of the spiralling costs by the later 1480s can be attributed to inflation and the debasement of coinage during this period. Sporadic warfare in Flanders after 1477 in any case was hardly conducive to festive jousting. But there are other signs by then that individual jousters were still less inclined to foot the bill for their equipment. There was no forester in 1483 to lead an expedition to Lille; in that year, and in 1486 and 1487, the high costs of jousts are partly explained by extra subsidies for jousters attending the Epinette at Lille.[89]

Perhaps by then participation in jousting no longer held the same appeal for individuals. Arguably, there were other more promising avenues of social advancement: imitation of the noble life was in itself less rewarding by the mid fifteenth century than service to the prince. With the expansion of Burgundian government, service in its administrative apparatus or in honorific posts at court had become a more lucrative and prestigious occupation.[90] Even so, the premium placed on chivalric events by the Burgundian and later the Habsburg court, and the involvement of rulers and courtiers in civic jousts, make it difficult to argue that jousting had lost its social kudos. Bruges citizens still considered that their status might be enhanced by holding jousts. In 1479, Wouter Despars celebrated his wedding to the daughter of Cornelis Metteneye with a joust between two teams, one disguised as devils, the other as 'wild men'. Archduke Maximilian himself competed.[91] Even after 1487, when the last White Bear event occurred, individual townsmen continued to organise the occasional joust, and without civic subsidy.[92]

Although jousting remained attractive for social reasons in the late fifteenth century, it may have attracted more criticism at a moral level. In 1484 the town magistrates of Lille apparently sought the advice of certain friars and theologians about the moral value of their Epinette jousts. The

89 The normal subsidy from the 1430s until 1482 had been £3 (£36 *parisis*); in 1483 the city paid two jousters over £83 (£996 *parisis*) for clothing, minstrels, helmets and a jousting horse (SAB, 216, 1482/3, fos. 157v–159r).

90 See Van den Neste, *Tournois*, pp. 199–206.

91 SAB, 216, 1478/9, fos. 169v–170r; SAB, 539, Hs. 3, fo. 58v.

92 A small-scale joust was held by Lodewijk Metteneye in the *Vrijdagmarkt* (not the *Grote Markt*) in March 1492 (SAB, 216, 1491/2, fo. 168r; W. Vorsterman (ed.), *Dits die excellente chronike van Vlaenderen* (Antwerp, 1531), fo. 273v); another was held in early May 1494 in the *Oosterlinge* square (SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), i, 1490–9, fo. 162v). A larger naval joust (on a town canal) was held in April 1497 when the prince entered the city, and the town paid for the prince's herald for his 'accustomed right' of a joust during a prince's entry. The total cost came to £50 (*ibid.*, fo. 275v; SAB, 216, 1496/7, fos. 120v–121r, 124v–125r). A joust was organised by the town during Prince Charles' entry into the city in 1515.

debate applied equally to the White Bear of Bruges: the friars noted the close intertwining of both jousting feasts. The Bruges magistrates themselves were aware of the criticisms of 'notable preachers', and inquired of Maximilian whether he intended to abolish their jousting event.[93]

The preachers cast in doubt the contribution of jousts to the civic community. Admittedly, there were arguments in favour of chivalric sport. Jousts might be for the public good, peace and profit; they might also provide training for just wars. These arguments, however, were systematically dismantled. Perhaps this was tacit recognition of the social attractiveness of jousting: more than passing disapproval was evidently required to effect its abolition. Some of this criticism followed a clerical *topos* of criticism against aristocratic self-indulgence. But some of it was specific to civic jousts in the fifteenth century. The Lille jousts, the preachers railed, were hardly adequate training for warfare; they encouraged not virtue but vanity and vice. Bourgeois men were goaded to show off their strength before ladies, they indulged in lechery and luxury, they sought marriage alliances above their station. The preachers also argued that jousts threatened civic peace: 'great hatreds' were nourished between bourgeois jousters and families when it came to electing their 'king'; those who refused to be king had suffered imprisonment. In the end, jousts did not contribute to the public good: instead they required taxes, which hit the poor hardest.

Civic magistrates in Lille may have welcomed abolition of the feasts. There had been imprisonments for elected kings refusing to take up office, and princely pressure to ensure that subsidies towards the events were paid.[94] But in Bruges, there is less evidence of strain. Individual jousters may have been unwilling to support events in 1431 without further civic subsidy, but the town government increased its contribution without difficulty. In the 1480s, it may have faced pressure from Maximilian to meet even higher costs of events in which the archduke wished to participate. But the extra burden was not necessarily unwelcome. In 1483, in the absence of a forester, the town councillors met (with Lodewijk van Gruuthuse) to arrange and pay for a jousting contingent to be sent to Lille 'for the honour of the town'.

Even so, there were aspects of the preachers' criticism that were more telling in the 1480s than might have been the case before. Anxiety about

[93] ADN, B7662.

[94] See Van den Neste, *Tournois*, esp. pp. 170–86, 199–206; though even in Lille, the deciding factor in the abolition of the jousts seems to have been one of moral considerations: some time later the *échevins* of Lille were authorised to collect tax once for use for the Epinette, 'which had been held in suspense by order of the sovereign since 1492 because there were great doubts that it could not be done without sin' (ADN, 1616).

the moral welfare of citizens is suggested by the great increase in the number of 'general processions' in this period.[95] It is apparent in the chronicle and poems of Anthonis de Roovere. Criticism of lords 'who rode high horses' and whose lifestyle was 'like a religion' perhaps struck a particular chord in Bruges.[96] Justification for civic spending on the leisurely activities of the White Bear jousts based on their 'public good' may have become less convincing. There had also been growing strain on the public purse and more years of deficit in the 1470s and 1480s than there had been in the past. Yet civic spending on jousting had been rising. We should not exaggerate the level of this spending – the £2,000 *parisis* on some jousts in the 1480s was not a great sum, representing perhaps 1 per cent of the annual total spent by the civic treasury. But it may have been perceived as unjustified. Few festive or religious guilds received regular civic funding, and subsidy of shooting guilds was a good deal less in comparison. Even civic expenditure on the Holy Blood procession did not reach these sums – and unlike expenditure on the White Bear, the civic contribution towards the procession had not risen after 1420.

The Holy Blood procession, for all its display of hierarchy, had always been identified with a wider civic community in ways that the White Bear jousts were not. In every year for which civic accounts survive after 1303, the procession was celebrated. This was not so with jousting. Although there are signs of more regular events in the 1350s, there was disruption during rebellions in the early 1360s. Similarly, jousts were apparently stopped after 1380, again during a period of unrest. There were no May jousts in 1437, 1477, 1482 and 1485, years of particular turmoil. By contrast, in every one of these years, despite the upheavals, the Holy Blood procession was celebrated.

The procession also involved the formal participation of craft, crossbow and archery guilds. These guilds were more closely attached 'constitutionally' to town government than the jousters had ever been. Shooters were more numerous than jousters and were drawn from a wide range of crafts. The White Bear's exclusiveness made it attractive to families who wished to demonstrate their status, but during periods of political tension it was identifiable with faction and with groups perceived by rebels to be oppressive or corrupt. Jousts were not usually held in periods when more radical elements of the town seized power: they were associated too closely with a social group that distanced itself from others.[97]

[95] See below, Epilogue, pp. 301–2, 304. [96] De Roovere, *De gedichten*, p. 335.

[97] For disruption in 1437, when there was no forester to host the event: SBB, Hs. 436, fo. 190r. But the forester (unusually) did take part in the Holy Blood procession that year: though many 'notable *poorters*' had fled the town, he took the place of the *schout*, who was not present (SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 294v).

In some rebellions, members of the civic elite had tended to side with the prince against other citizens. Perhaps this was even more likely to be true of White Bear jousters. Many of them came to hold civic office, but still others held rural *seigneuries* that could set them apart from the regular life of the town. Some were openly supportive of the prince during urban revolts. Morissis van Varsenare, a White Bear jouster, attempted to warn Duke Philip in 1437 of a likely rebellion within the city: he was killed, according to Jan van Dixmude, because 'he worked with the prince to keep down the common people of Bruges'.[98]

The situation post-1477 after the death of Charles the Bold was more complicated because of the succession of Mary of Burgundy and her betrothal to the Habsburg Archduke Maximilian. Several leading citizens were arrested during the troubles in that year – among them were at least five men who had fought in the White Bear jousts.[99] As hostility to the rule of Maximilian grew, especially after the death of Mary of Burgundy in 1482, many others were caught up in faction. Several former jousters took up arms in support of Maximilian in 1485.[100] Others fell foul of the radical regime that seized control of the town in early February 1488. Nicolaes van Montignies and Joos van Varsenare fled the town;[101] others were imprisoned, some executed: Joris Ghijselin, lord of Bolle and *baljuw* of Sijssele, Jan van Nieuwenhove (son of Michiel) and Jacob de Heere.[102] These were all men either with fiefs outside the town or identified, some of them intimately, with Pieter Lanchals, the figure most closely associated with Maximilian's rule in Bruges since 1485.[103] They were accused not just of supporting the prince, but of

[98] For references, see Brown, 'Urban Jousts', p. 323.

[99] Pieter Metteneye, Gelyn van Themseke, Jan Dhondt, Jan de Baenst and Anselmus Adornes, all White Bear jousters, were arrested in 1477 (Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, p. 139). For factions within the town from 1477 to 1482 – especially the merchant groups associated with Willem Moreel, fief-holders from the *vrije* and court functionaries such as Pieter Lanchals – see J. Haemers, *For the Common Good: State Power and Urban Revolts in the Reign of Mary of Burgundy (1477–1482)* (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 137–228.

[100] Daneel van Praet, Jacob Breydel and Wouter Despars (Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, pp. 237–9).

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 340. [102] *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 355, 363–8.

[103] Lanchals was run to earth by the rebels in March 1488. For his career and execution, see M. Boone, 'La Justice en spectacle: La Justice urbaine en Flandre et la crise du pouvoir "bourgignonne" (1477–1488)', *Revue historique* 308 (2003), 59–62; 'Biografie en prosopografie, een tegenstelling? Een stand van zaken in het biografisch onderzoek over Pieter Lanchals', *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies* 7 (1993), 4–13. Lanchals may also have had connections with the White Bear: he was never forester, but he is described as 'king of the White Bear', receiving wine in January 1486 for a feast in the *poorters loge*: SAB, 277, *Presentwijnen*, 1485/6, fo. 32r. Lanchals' first wife was the sister of Jan van Nieuwenhove, son of Michiel, to whom Pieter left £300 in his will to dispose of for Lanchals' soul (RAB, OLV, 1062, O1273).

financial corruption: they had conspired against the 'common good' of the town.[104]

The last forester of the White Bear was one Aernoud Breydel. He had won the forestership at the jousts in 1486. He also joined the St Sebastian archers' guild in July 1487. He was already a member of the prestigious guild of butchers. In September 1487 he was elected to civic office. But when the new regime took over in February 1488, his name disappears from the list of town councillors.[105] With others, he had fled from the town and taken up arms in Maximilian's cause, and had pillaged the surrounding countryside.[106] He was caught during further troubles in May 1489, and was executed with the sword – a shameful death indeed for a forester, according to Despars.[107] Partisanship had finished the last forester, and hastened the end of the White Bear.

Rebellions in fifteenth-century Bruges divided citizens against the prince as well as citizens against each other. Opposition to Burgundian or Habsburg power did not divide neatly along 'class' lines, though it tended to be craft guilds, especially artisan members, who were most radical in defiance of the ruler. The opponents of Maximilian in the 1480s included members of the political and financial elite of the town. They also included former jousters. Lodewijk van Gruuthuse was arrested by Maximilian in 1485. In February 1488, the new radical town government chose Karel van Halewijn, lord of Uutkerke, to be captain of the town, and Pieter Metteneye in place of Lanchals as *schout*. Both had been jousters, van Halewijn a forester.[108] The political troubles in 1488 did not just divide the jousting elite against the more populist regime in Bruges: they also divided former White Bear members against each other.

Other guilds were not immune to these pressures. Jan Breydel, chief of St Sebastian's archers, was beheaded by rebels in February 1483 for

[104] For accusations against Jooris Ghijselin, Joos van Varsenare and Pieter Lanchals that they were guilty of peculation concerning the financial accounts of the town, see Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, pp. 371–2, 389. For condemnation of Lanchals as working against the 'common good' of the town, see Boone, *La Justice en spectacle*, p. 61.

[105] SAB, 216, 1486/7 fo. 161r; ASSB, *Rekeningboeken*, 1486/7; SAB, 114 (*Wetswernieuwingen*, 1468–1500), fos. 165v, 172r; SAB, 574, J. P. van de Maele, *Beschryvinge van Brugge*, fo. 104; SAB, 539, Hs. 3, fos. 58v–59r.

[106] Despite peace sworn in the market place on 16 May 1488, shortly after 'Aernekin' Breydel and others had fired stone and lead into the town, although no one was hurt: Vorsterman, *Excellente chronike*, fo. 253r.

[107] *Ibid.*, fo. 261v; Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, p. 433.

[108] The links of Karel van Halewijn and Pieter Metteneye to the White Bear can be traced back to 1468; SAB, 539, Hs. 3, fos. 53r–v. In 1470 Karel van Halewijn was sent to a joust at Lille; SAB, 216, 1469/70, fo. 113r.

his attachment to Maximilian's cause.[109] There may well have been disruption to shooting activities – guild accounts disappear for a time from 1487. Yet unlike the jousting group, the archery guild survived intact. Like the crossbowmen, the archers had a broader social base, and were formally connected with civic government in ways that the jousters had not been. Their survival at times of extreme upheaval was always more likely. The abrupt end to civic funding of the jousts in Bruges after 1487 is less surprising. The accusations of preachers in Lille 1484 against jousts – that they 'engendered hatreds between families', undermined the 'public good' and imposed taxes that hurt the people – must have struck a stronger chord by the late 1480s. Jousts had not in themselves outlived their usefulness to the upwardly mobile citizen, nor even to a town government concerned to promote its collective honour. It was more that the White Bear had become too identified with faction, and perceived to have the 'common good' of the town no longer at heart.

[109] Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, pp. 237–9.

# 6 Civic charity

Next to St Basil's chapel containing the Holy Blood relic, and near the *scepenhuis* in the *burg*, lay the Dark Room. The building had once been part of the *Steen*, the count's castle, but by the early thirteenth century it was functioning as a prison.[1] It had acquired its lugubrious name by 1303.[2] Its history as a prison is appropriately obscure; sources concerning its role as a place of punishment do not survive much before the fifteenth century.[3] Some of its functions are clearer at an earlier date. Like other buildings in the *burg*, it had long been under municipal authority, governed by two *steenwarders* who were directly appointed by the town council. At one level, it was thus an expression of communal autonomy from comital authority over certain aspects of justice.[4] At another, it gave material form to the ability claimed by civic government to maintain social order in the town.[5] It was also an institution that enshrined other aspects of civic authority, including those of a more sacred kind. The Dark Room dispensed charity as well as punishment. Comforting prisoners was traditionally one of the seven corporal works of mercy,

[1] The first reference to its use as a prison appears in 1224. For brief histories of the *Donkere Kamer*, see A. Duclos, *Bruges: Histoire et souvenirs* (Bruges, 1976), pp. 117–20, 443; J. A. van Houtte, *De geschiedenis van Brugge* (Tielt, 1982), pp. 303–4; M. T. Galvin, 'The Poor Tables in Bruges 1270–1477', unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of Columbia, 1988), pp. 163–6.

[2] SAB, 216, 1303, fo. 24r.

[3] The fragmentary records of sentences for civil crimes in the fifteenth century show that it functioned partly as a holding-bay for debtors – allowing the town government to intervene as mediator in commercial matters concerning debt, and to punish the impecunious and breakers of contracts. It had also become the recipient of fines imposed on miscreants for a range of crimes. For example, two brewers found to be brewing illegally in 1441 (in contravention of the Gruuthuse monopoly of the *gruut*) were ordered to pay two *tonnen* of beer to the Dark Room and the *dullen lieden* (SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fo. 264v).

[4] For an example of a prison established as a means to strengthen civic jurisdiction, see N. Terpstra, 'Confraternal Prison Charity and Political Consolidation in Sixteenth-Century Bologna,' *Journal of Modern History* 66 (1994), 217–48.

[5] For parallels with northern Italy, see G. Geltner, *The Medieval Prison: A Social History* (Princeton, 2008), pp. 4, 28, 54–5.

and from the mid fourteenth century, as we shall see, the charitable provision that the Dark Room offered its inmates increased in a number of ways.

The main focus of this chapter is on the exercise of charity by citizens and municipal government. In a formal sense, charity was about the performance of the works of mercy, a duty enjoined on every Christian, and in a civic context such duty was carried out in several forms. The responsibility of providing charity for those in need was incumbent on every holder of civic office, and was already institutionalised by the thirteenth century in hospitals, run by the town government, that either cared for the sick or fed, refreshed, clothed, lodged and buried the poor. During the following two centuries, other institutions dispensing charity were founded or expanded, the Dark Room included, which also in some degree fell under the supervision of civic authority.

The history of these institutions may well provide insight into changing attitudes to the poor. The way in which almshouses in the later medieval period offered increasingly specific help to select groups of poor would suggest the growth of a more discriminatory attitude towards the socially disadvantaged.[6] This idea sits comfortably beside the view of the late medieval town as an environment in which social gradations were sharpening and unrest was threatening hierarchies. Even so, those who exercised charity in its widest sense did so from a variety of motives, while those who received it did not just include the impoverished. The mendicants, for instance, were also among the 'poor' who merited alms from citizens. A history of charity needs to be set within a more general history of religious practice in the town. This chapter focuses on charity less as an aspect of poor relief,[7] and more as an expression of 'civic religion':[8] how it might be understood in relation to other kinds of penitential works practised by citizens, and in relation to the authority of civic government. Charity, after all, was part of the cluster of virtues that were seen as essential to harmony within the town – fundamental, as Anthonis de Roovere put it, to a 'house of peace'.[9]

[6] For this view in relation to charity in Bruges, see G. Maréchal, *De sociale en politieke gebondenheid van het Brugse hospitaalwezen in de middeleeuwen* (Kortrijk, 1978), *passim*.

[7] Discussion of hospitals, almshouses and poor tables in Bruges is well served elsewhere: see Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*; Galvin, 'Poor Tables'.

[8] For explicit connections made between 'civic religion' and charitable aspirations in an Italian context, see N. Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 4–5; and for charity as an aspect of the 'common good', see J. Henderson, *The Renaissance Hospital: Healing the Body and Healing the Soul* (London, 2006), pp. 28–31.

[9] Anthonis de Roovere, *De gedichten van Anthonis de Roovere*, ed. J. J. Mak (Zwolle, 1955), p. 159.

## Foundations for the poor

Hospitals set up in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries continued to serve the needy, the sick and travellers in the fourteenth century. Some efforts were made to expand or improve their work: St Julian's was rebuilt after 1364. But the era of large hospital foundation was over. Wealthy citizens preferred instead to found smaller institutions – almshouses or 'houses of God' – providing shelter and support for a few specified individuals in return for prayers for the souls of their founders. Eight were founded before 1350; a further five in the 1360s and 1370s. Unlike hospitals they did not generally provide relief for the sick or transient traveller, and were often set up without their own chapels or certain ecclesiastical rights (though some founders laboured to acquire them). Agnes van Boneem's 'hospice', founded between 1348 and 1350, was established to house poor widows.[10] Gerard Sox, chaplain of St Saviour's, made similar provision for seven old women in 1366.[11]

In the fourteenth century, craft-guild activity in charitable provision also began to develop. Guilds were already regular providers of alms: the chance survival of accounts for the weavers' guilds from 1349 show gifts to poor weavers and their widows, and to the friars, Carmelites, Augustinians and tertiaries.[12] In the early fourteenth century, some guilds began to provide relief in a more institutionalised fashion for their own needy members.[13] At first it was the most prominent guilds that made foundations. The Bethlehem chapel founded by the brokers in 1327 was attached to an almshouse for the guild's 'poor and sick'.[14] The smiths may have operated their own almshouse by 1335.[15] From the 1360s onwards there is more evidence for guild involvement in almshouses, just as there is for other foundations (see Chapter 4): the drapers had connections with the Nazareth house by

[10] Agnes was daughter of Gillis van Boneem, a mercer. For her extensive foundations: BAB, S718, fos. 195r–213r, 298r–306r; OCMW, Hospice van Boneem, charters 6, 7.

[11] OCMW, Hospice Lucx, charter 8.

[12] E. Huys, *Duizend jaar mutualiteit bij de vlaamse gilden* (Kortrijk, 1926), p. 163. This is less apparent, though, in early accounts (1340s) that survive for the plumbers' guild (RAB (FD), 172).

[13] Though see the refoundation of St Joos' hospital in 1352 by a guild of that name, which housed permanent residents, pilgrims and indigent travellers: OCMW, Fonds Sint-Joos, charters 0, 1, 2. The St Joos guild seems to have included merchants and burghers. The refounders in 1352, Jan Scalleballe and Jacob de Mey, were fruit merchants. In the fifteenth century, the guild included burghers from prominent town families, but the hospital also attracted benefactions from foreign merchants.

[14] SAB, 299, *Makelaars*: *cartularium*, fos. 88v–89r. See above, p. 135.

[15] RAB, FA, 386, Register, fos. 1v–2r, 16v.

1364;[16] the smiths expanded accommodation for their poor in 1376 when Jacob Losschaert and his wife provided the guild with money to set up a *godshuis*. In 1388 the mercers agreed with one of their wealthy members, Nicholas Pagant, to convert a house in *Mostaertstraetken* into an almshouse for six or more old people. By 1394, it was described as lodging poor merchants, men and women over fifty years old, the widowed or celibate, who would be chosen by the descendants of Nicholas Pagant and the mercers.[17]

The role of the hospital in providing permanent accommodation for the impoverished was thus supplemented by newer almshouses; its role in providing occasional charity meanwhile was being supplanted by the parish poor tables. In the late thirteenth century the Potterie hospital had been the principal dispenser of charity to the 'shamefaced house poor', but by the 1340s, the five main parish poor tables were providing more frequent doles (or 'prebends') than the hospital to the poor within their respective parishes.[18] Doles to the 'shamefaced' and 'enfeebled' poor usually took the form of food (bread, meat, eggs, butter or herring in Lent) or clothing. A day or so before, the poor-table masters would send out tokens to the selected parish poor, who would exchange them for doles on the appointed day. The increase in the number of days on which doles were set out was made possible by the benefaction of individual citizens. Sometimes rents were given directly, but more commonly benefactors gave money to the poor-table masters to buy rents to support their doles. Although many of the major early benefactors were wealthy merchants and brokers, the minimum required for such benefaction (a 'rent' or property with a yearly income of some £4 *parisis*) was within the financial means of a wider group of retailers and craftsmen.[19] Such endowments became more frequent in the 1330s, but increased in number and size particularly in the 1360, and then again in the early 1400s (see Figure 6.1).

The trends established in charitable provision by the mid fourteenth century continued well into the fifteenth. Poor-table foundations increased considerably, especially in the periods of prosperity during the middle decades of the fifteenth century. Many of the founders

16 OCMW, Nazareth, charter 24: the drapers made annual distributions to their 'poor companions'.

17 OCMW, Godshuis St Nicholas, charters 22, 30, 31, 32, 50. The Sint Jacobs house for invalid weavers may have been founded around the same time.

18 Galvin, 'Poor Tables', esp. pp. 32–5.

19 *Ibid.*, esp. p. 179. By the fifteenth century, a gift in money of *c.* £90 *parisis* (which a master mason might expect to earn in around 180 days) would allow the poor table to purchase an annuity rent generating *c.* £4 *parisis* to support a distribution.

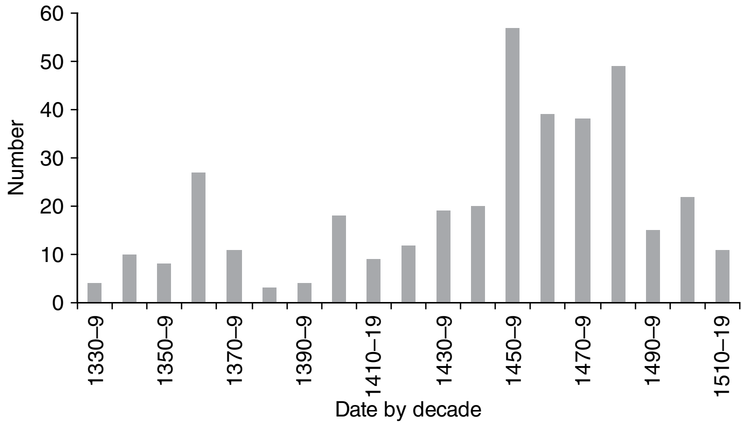



Figure 6.1 Poor-table endowments (in parish churches of Our Lady, St Saviour, St James, St Walburga, St Giles).

were craftsmen who had profited from the expanding local market in goods and services demanded by merchants, native and foreign: 'fashion' workers (furriers, tailors, hosiers, secondhand-clothes-dealers and shoe-makers), makers of luxury goods (smiths, armourers), textile workers and food workers (butchers, brewers and bakers).[20] By the middle of the century, poor-table masters wielded considerable budgets[21] and were able to offer at least weekly assistance to some 180 paupers (or perhaps 700 to 900 people, assuming these paupers were heads of households).[22]

The charitable activity of craft guilds also appears to have become more extensive. There is evidence for more guilds providing systematically for their own poor or enfeebled members.[23] Crafts with almshouses

[20] *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 183–7.

[21] The poor-table master of Our Lady's parish could expect an income of over £2,000 *parisis* by the 1450s (OCMW, OLV, dis *rekeningen*, Register 5; Galvin, 'Poor tables', p. 82). The churchwardens in the same parish during the same period received an income of around £900 *parisis* (RAB, OLV, NK, 1403).

[22] See M. T. Galvin, 'Credit and Parochial Charity in Fifteenth-Century Bruges', *Journal of Medieval History* 28 (2002), 131–54 (p. 132).

[23] Evidence in the fourteenth century is much patchier, so the extent of guild provision for poor members is unclear. But the cartularies of poor tables in the fifteenth century show twelve more craft guilds providing for 'their poor' that are not known to have made such provision in the fourteenth century (in Our Lady's parish: the dyers, tanners, glovers, St John bridge-workers; in St Saviour's: wine-measurers, painters, armourers; in St James': furriers, coopers. The poor of the basket fish-carriers were involved in the Sint Joos almshouse; the masons and carpenters in Donaes de Moor's almshouse: see below, pp. 218–20).

could upgrade their provision. In 1471 the smiths were permitted to increase their members' annual subscription to pay for repairs on the chapel and for the construction of extra rooms on their almshouse to increase the number of inmates to seven.[24]

Almshouses continued to be founded well into the fifteenth century. There were at least eleven foundations (excluding the houses that sheltered the guild poor). Most of them housed a few poor women or widows. One of the largest was connected to the Jerusalem chapel founded by the Adornes family from 1427: twelve 'poor widows' were ensconced behind the chapel.[25] Several of these foundations were given directly to the poor tables to administer; it was also a period in which several poor tables took over or established almshouses for their parish poor.[26]

The poor who lived in almshouses were not usually bound by a rule. But a number of houses that received alms were connected with a religious order. The era of founding large friaries had all but ended by the late thirteenth century, as had the founding of hospitals, but from the mid fourteenth century onwards smaller tertiary houses, and later those following a stricter observant rule, came to be established within the town.[27] The sisters of St Barbara (1342), of the Castenjeboom (by 1356)[28] and of the Holy Ghost (by 1380) were like almshouses of 'poor widows' but followed a rule, while the Staelijzer brothers (founded by 1397) fell under the Franciscan third order. In the middle decades of the fifteenth century there were further foundations of a similar kind: the Grey sisters of St Elisabeth (*c.* 1450), the St Elisabeth sisters (by *c.* 1450) and the Celle brothers (1470). Exceptionally there were also four larger houses founded between 1460 and 1488, in which townsmen but also nobles and dukes were involved: the Observant Franciscans, the Bethany sisters (following the rule of St Augustine), the Poor Clares and the Carmelites of Sion.

24 The bill had already come to £140: RAB (BN), 8688.

25 N. Geirnaert, 'De Adornes en de Jeruzalemkapel: Internationale contacten in het laatmiddeleeuwse Brugge', in N. Geirnaert and A. Vandewalle (eds.), *Adornes en Jeruzalem* (Bruges, 1983), p. 16.

26 For the foundations of Margriet Upthooge (1405); Pieter and Jacob Adornes (1427); Jacquemin Dievel (1432), Joris Fieriens (1434), Jan de Bliec (1435); Pieter van Campen (1436); van Dorlee (1454–72); Jacop Broloos (1459), Matheus Lams (1476), Jan van Onraadsberghe (1478); Donaes de Moor (1480): see details in Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, p. 298; Galvin, 'Poor tables', pp. 157–9.

27 For an overview of the following, see M. Ryckaert, *Brugge: Historische stedenatlas van Belgie* (Brussels, 1991), pp. 179–204.

28 The Castenjeboom sisters (also know as the Celle or Black sisters) took over an early 'convent of Ricele' that had been founded before 1348.

## Charity and municipal authority

Most of the foundations for the 'poor' were the work of individuals or groups of citizens. Yet the role of the civic government, directly or indirectly, in charitable relief was significant. The welfare of citizens was the responsibility of the town magistracy, whose role as dispenser of alms was already in place by the thirteenth century. Before 1490, however, it is difficult to discern municipal policy towards the impoverished and how it dealt with periods of particular crisis. The survival from this date of town-hall decrees (*hallegeboden*) allows observation of regular and rapid responses by the town government to the threats of famine and sickness.[29] These responses were evidently well rehearsed. Civic accounts from an earlier period at least demonstrate extra efforts made in times of dearth: additional quantities of grain brought in and distributions of food made.[30]

Besides managing crises, the town government also gave more regular provision for various groups of poor. Support of orphans, for instance, had long been in place: before 1300 all funds available to orphans were turned over to the town treasury. The town's record in administering this fund was not entirely distinguished,[31] but the words of the swearing-in oath of new councillors continued to include support of orphans.[32] As for other groups of poor, there were several ways in which the role of the town government in dispensing alms was expanded during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The most regular form of alms-giving that appears in the civic accounts was that of gifts to charitable institutions, many of which were under municipal supervision. Regulation of the town's hospitals through their wardens, themselves high-ranking civic officials, continued as it had been carried out from the thirteenth century. Regular civic contributions were made to St

[29] See the response to hunger and pestilence between 1491 and 1493 (SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), i, fos. 48r, 115r, 121r, 133r; and the efforts to contain 'sickness' (*ibid.*, ii, fos. 281v–283r).

[30] During the great 'hunger' in the winter of 1407/8, the town treasury provided bread and soup every day, costing £150 *parisis* (SAB, 216, 1407/8, fo. 100v); and with the 'great dearth of corn' in 1416/17, the town bought in corn worth £1,387 *parisis* (1416/17, fo. 129r); for the 1430s see Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, p. 299; GVS, Vol. III, pp. 56–8, 172–3, 509. But for possible sharpening of these responses from the 1480s, see below, pp. 296–7.

[31] The treasury was supposed to pay interest and refund the principal sum when the orphan came of age. But the orphan fund was to disappear from civic accounts after the 1380s: the town gradually found ways to liquidate the debt. J Maréchal, 'Het wezengeld in de Brugsche stadfinanciën van de middeleeuwen', *ASEB* 82 (1939) 1–41.

[32] For references, see above, p. 33.

John's hospital, its chaplains, inmates and orphans sheltered there; and extra sums for rebuilding work.[33] Most civic investment in hospitals went towards the expansion of existing buildings rather than the creation of new ones, with the exception of St Hubrecht's *dulhuis* for the mentally ill, founded in 1396 near St Julian's hospital.[34]

Official civic involvement in the foundation of almshouses in the fourteenth century was less direct than it had been with the older hospitals. But municipal oversight of them was imposed or sought, suggesting an appetite on the part of the town government to assume a responsibility for the widowed and aged.[35] The charter describing arrangements for the mercers' house in 1394 was made with the approval of the magistracy. From 1405 Margriet Upthooghe's poor widows 'chosen for their good conduct and honourable life' were to be selected, after the death of Margriet's husband, by the town authorities.[36] Some of the new almshouses fell under the supervision of St Julian's hospital, itself under municipal jurisdiction.[37] Civic accounts usually refer to gifts of wine to civic officials who looked over the annual accounts of the *godshuisen*. As the foundation charter of a later almshouse put it, the town authorities were 'overseers of all houses of God, guild companies and crafts'.[38] In any case, the links of some almshouse founders with members of the town council, and of important guilds (especially the brokers), ensured close ties between almshouses and civic government.

The extent of municipal management of poor tables was not as great or direct as it was over hospitals and almshouses. The exception was the small poor table dispensed by the chapel of St Basil in the *burg*, to which the town treasury by the late fourteenth century was making an annual subsidy for a distribution on Christmas Eve.[39] Masters of other parish poor tables do not appear to have been municipal appointees as

[33] For larger-than-normal sums paid for work on St John's hospital: £600 *parisis* in 1403 and 1404 (SAB, 216, 1402/3, fo. 121v; 1403/4, fo. 127r); and £50 *parisis* each year between 1430 and 1433 (SAB, 216, 1429/30, fo. 79v; 1430/1, fo. 82r; 1431/2, fo. 75v; 1432/3, fo. 83r). For contributions to work on St Julian's: *ibid.*, 1396/7, fo. 94v; 1419/20, fo. 119v.

[34] Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, p. 52; J. Geldhof, *Pelgrims, dulle lieden en vondelingen te Brugge 1275–1975* (Bruges, 1973), p. 115.

[35] The oaths of the town councillor by 1398 also specified an obligation to care for widows.

[36] GVS, Vol. III, p. 523.

[37] Gerard Sox's house for widows had rules drawn up in 1401 overseen by St Julian's hospital (Geldhof, *Pelgrims*, p. 330; OCMW, Fonds St Julian, Register, i, fo. 71r).

[38] The foundation charter of Donaas de Moor's almshouse in 1480: *ibid.*, ii, fo. 122r.

[39] These subsidies appear to begin in 1388 (SAB, 216, 1388/9, fo. 106v) when £3 *parisis* was allotted for the purpose.

they were in some other towns. The resources of poor-table activity were also focused on the parish rather than the wider civic community.[40] Nevertheless, indirect municipal control was exercised through the town council's supervision of property transactions made by poor tables (as with other institutions). Although the proportion of poor-table masters who also became councillors and aldermen was relatively small in the fourteenth century, during the fifteenth century this proportion was to double.[41]

The poor tables were also linked at an early date to an institution that was under more direct municipal authority: the Dark Room prison. Like the parish poor, albeit on a lesser scale, the prison inmates also began to receive doles from endowments in the early fourteenth century.[42] These were attached to benefactions made in the first instance to the poor tables (chiefly that of Our Lady's), its masters being asked to administer doles of bread, beer or cheese to the prisoners on specified days.[43] Such arrangements became more frequent in the 1340s (see Figure 6.2). More regular and systematic use of the Dark Room began in the mid 1360s, at a time when benefaction to the poor tables was also increasing. From this date benefactors began to be recorded systematically in a calendar, or *bezettebouck*.[44] Although there was a greater tendency to give money directly to the prison governors, the parish poor tables continued to be the primary beneficiaries of the endowments involving the Dark Room.

The rate of accumulation of these gifts and duties mirrored the rise and fall in foundations of other religious services within the town. A decrease in the number of gifts between 1376 and 1390 was doubtless affected by the disruption of the Ghent war. Lamsin van Aelst's

[40] Galvin, 'Poor Tables', Chapter 5.

[41] In the fourteenth century about 12 per cent of poor-table masters also served as aldermen; from 1400 to 1477 this proportion increased to 25 per cent (*ibid*., pp. 221–3).

[42] A cartulary and two calendars belonging to the Dark Room form the principal sources of evidence for benefaction: SAB, 196 (*Donker Kamer*), 9 (*Bezettebouck* I) lists benefactors from 1365 to 1485; 11 (*Bezettebouck* II) continues the list into the sixteenth century. Most of the benefactions were accurately transcribed by P. Allossery, 'Medeelingen en oorkonden: De oudste giften en fondatiën ten bate der arme gevangenen te Brugge (*ca*. 1300–1475)', *ASEB* 79 (1936), 67–130; *ASEB* 80 (1937), 155–73.

[43] The first clear reference to a benefaction for regular dole to the Dark Room (though his name does not appear in the later *bezettebouck* of benefactors) is from Bartholomew van Brabant, *c*. 1345, who gave rents to the poor table of Our Lady (Allossery, 'Medeelingen', p. 77). Victor van Zwanevaerde's dole to the Dark Room, via the obedientiar of St Donatian's, is listed by Allossery (*ibid*., p. 76) as pre-1342, but belongs in fact to 1482 (cf. BAB, A55, fos. 170v–171r; A141, fo. 118v).

[44] The earliest benefactions directly to the Dark Room recorded in the *bezettebouck* were those made by Jan Buerse in 1357; Pieter van Hille and his wife Aechte in 1365; and Margaret, widow of Jan de Walle, *c*. 1367: SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fo. 9r (Allossery, 'Medeelingen', p. 76).

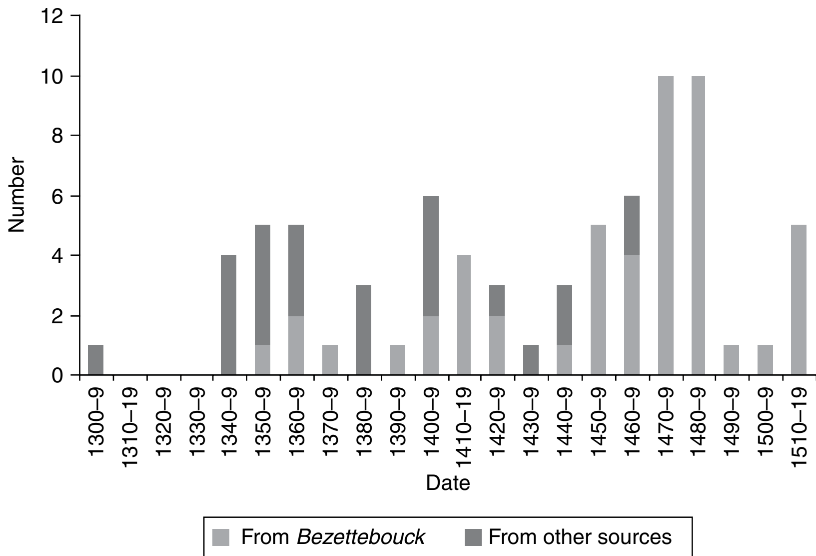



Figure 6.2 Foundations involving Dark Room prison.

foundation for the Dark Room was originally planned in 1378 from a legacy of £200 *gr. tournois*, but because of the 'tribulation and unrest' in Flanders the founders were not able to convert the money into a rented endowment.[45] With relative peace restored by the 1390s, investment in the prison followed, just as it did with other institutions of divine service. Lamsin van Aelst's foundation was eventually set up with the help of his widow, the town government and St John's hospital: the endowment made in 1402 was later credited with providing a daily bowl of soup and bread for each prison inmate.[46] Another wide-ranging set of provisions was made by Jan van Wec in 1390.[47] In return for impressive rents of £23 *parisis* to the poor-table masters of both St James' and Our

[45] SAB, 96, 4 (*Oude Wittenbouc*), fos. 75r–76v; Allossery, 'Medeelingen', pp. 96–7.

[46] The money set aside fell into the hands of the town. The eventual arrangement was that the town treasury would pay St John's hospital a regular sum for administering a daily dole to the prisoners. An initial attempt to fulfil this arrangement was made in 1385 (SAB, 216, 1384/5, fo. 125v), but a regular sum of around £75 *parisis* appears in the town accounts for this purpose from 1411 (*ibid*., 1410/11, fo. 121r and *passim*; Allossery, 'Medeelingen', pp. 96–7).

[47] Allossery, 'Medeelingen', pp. 88–93. A separate register was made for Jan de Wec's foundation (SAB, 196 (Register De Wec), fos. 1r–16v. Like Lamsin van Aelst's foundation, de Wec's also appears in a civic cartulary: SAB, 96, 4 (*Oude Wittenbouc*), fos. 41v–42v, 66v–67v).

Lady's church, doles of eggs or cheese were to be distributed at Easter and on Sundays, and doles of herring in Lent.

The names added to the Dark Room *bezettebouck* continued to multiply in the fifteenth century, especially in the first two decades and in the period from 1450 to 1490. Once again the disruption of war, plague and famine in the late 1430s coincides with a slump in endowment (as it did with the poor tables). The troubles after 1477 did not immediately affect post-obit provision, but there was a more serious decline in foundation after 1490 (as was the case with provision for the poor tables). By then the *bezettebouck* had come to include the names of some fifty-four benefactors[48] whose provisions had considerably increased the charitable responsibilities of the prison wardens: over sixty days of the year were now taken up by doles connected with commemoration of these benefactors' souls.[49]

There were thus many ways in which the civic government offered official aid to all the needy classified under the seven works of mercy. Not all of them were systematic, and the ad hoc nature of much welfare provision is suggested by the gifts to individual recipients that appear in almost all civic accounts. Even more of these appear in the fifteenth century than the fourteenth: among the selected recipients were deserving paupers, maidens in need of dowries, widows, poor knights, pilgrims (especially if travelling to the Holy Land) and beleaguered Greeks (before and after the fall of Constantinople in 1453).[50]

Besides support of impoverished lay people, official alms-giving also extended to the clergy. Collegiate and parish churches were periodically in receipt of civic funds when they undertook repairs to their church fabrics.[51] The religious houses of Bruges might also benefit, though less frequently.[52] But the 'poor' who appear most regularly

[48] Or forty-three separate foundations: nineteen foundations included the names of husband and wife.

[49] This excludes the daily doles apparently supplied by Jan de Wec in 1390, and weekly ones by Jan Camerlinc (1423) and Jan van Nieuwenhove (1453). In addition the *bezettebouck* notes that the poor table of St Saviour's was obliged to send one *tonne* of beer on eight additional feast days (though no benefactor is mentioned): Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, St John the Baptist, Our Lady Day in August, All Souls' Day and Christmas Day (SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fo. 7r; 11 (*Bezettebouck* II), fo. 33r).

[50] See GVS, Vol. V, pp. 490–3. [51] See above, pp. 124–5.

[52] The Eekhout abbey received alms for building work in SAB, 216, 1412/13, fo. 90v; and 1414/15, fo. 96r. The Carthusians just outside the town received £300 *parisis* for a new passage-way in their cloister (1432/3, fo. 83v). In 1430 the Wilhemieten, who had a presence in the town from the mid thirteenth century, built a new house near the Ghent gate with civic support.

in receipt of alms in town-treasury accounts were the mendicants.[53] Friaries had been founded with municipal support in the thirteenth century, and throughout the following two centuries, the friars could turn to the town government in times of need, especially when rebuilding work on their churches was necessary.[54] The connections between the town authorities and their mendicant poor went beyond the occasional hand-out. Presents of wine or pittances were made annually to the Franciscans and Dominicans on the feast days of their respective patronal saints from at least the late thirteenth century.[55] The value of the friars to the town is evident from the official tasks that they were employed to perform. From the late fourteenth century onwards these tasks appear to have increased. By the 1360s, the four orders were paid for saying daily mass in the *ghiselhuis* chapel.[56] From 1409, friars were paid to preach a sermon on Good Friday before the people in the *burg*.[57] From the early fifteenth century it was usually the friars who were asked to preach during general processions. In years of crisis, they were called upon to preach sermons daily in parish churches and elsewhere in the town (see Chapter 2). The friars served both to increase divine service generated by the town government and also to extend the scope of civic authority in matters sacred within the town.

In the mid fifteenth century, the civic government was also involved in the attempts to set up new houses for the observant friars. However, official attitudes to them were somewhat ambiguous.[58] On the one hand, the newer friars could be favoured because of their claims to stricter adherence than the older conventuals to the precepts of St Francis: the efficacy of their prayers was a quality likely to appeal to

[53] For the connections between town government and the friars in Flanders before 1350, see W. Simons, *Stad en apostolaat: De vestingen van de bedelorden in het graafschap Vlaanderen* (Brussels, 1987).

[54] Major work to the Franciscans' and Dominicans' houses drew large sums from the civic treasury in the 1280s and 1290s (C. Wyffels and J.-J. De Smet (eds.), *De Rekeningen van de stad Brugge 1280–1319: Eerste deel 1280–1302* (Brussels, 1965–71), *passim*); further rebuilding drew out smaller sums for the Franciscans in 1349/50, 1414/15 and 1430/1; for the Augustinians in 1408/9 (fo. 90v); and for the Carmelites in 1429/30 (fo. 90r).

[55] SAB, 277 (*Presentwijnen*), roll 8. The friars and sometimes other orders continued to receive gifts of wine in the fourteenth century (recorded in the main town accounts until the 1380s); and later in the separate 'presents of wine' accounts (e.g. *ibid.*, 1424/5, fos. 3r, 24r).

[56] *Ibid.*, 216, 1366/7, fo. 84v and *passim*.

[57] *Ibid.*, 1408/9, fo. 116v; and in all subsequent accounts. There are earlier but infrequent references in the civic accounts to payments for 'preaching the Passion' (*ibid.*, 1341/2, fo. 133r).

[58] In general, see M. De Smet and P. Trio, 'The Involvement of the Late Medieval Urban Authorities in the Low Countries with Regard to the Introduction of the Franciscan Observance', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 101 (2006), 37–88.

the civic government who employed friars for intercessory and pastoral purposes. On the other hand, their long-established links with the older friars could lead town councils to support the conventuals, and even to resent the founding of new observant houses if these were seen as imposed from the outside. The Bruges magistrates initially supported their local Franciscans in 1443 against the reforming attempts of John of Capistrano and Duke Philip the Good to found a new observant house in the town: the new friars were forced to settle beyond the town walls, on territory outside the jurisdiction of the civic magistracy. The magistrates' justification to the pope for this refusal was that there were already many orders settled within the town: any more would put further financial pressure on townsmen and lead to unrest. But by the 1460s, admiration for the observant way of life, and perhaps a civic concern to raise standards of morality among citizens as a whole, caused official attitudes to relent. An observant cloister was given land by the Ezel gate in 1468, and its buildings were finally consecrated in 1478.[59] Meanwhile, the house for the Poor Clares (observant but under conventual authority) was founded on land donated by Lodewijk van Gruuthuse in 1469,[60] and was consecrated in 1477 in the presence of Archduke Maximilian and also the 'whole town'.[61] Similarly the building of the house of the Carmelites of Sion from 1489 to 1498 involved a combination of civic and courtly benefaction.[62]

## Charity and liturgy

The significance of these patterns in alms-giving has to be set within more than one context. Up to a point, charitable provision reflects attitudes to the poor in a social as much as a purely devotional sense. A Christian concern to alleviate poverty no doubt merged with a more secular concern to contain marginal groups perceived to represent a threat to civic order. Wealthy citizens in Bruges had been given good reason to fear the effects of immigration and social unrest in the thirteenth century. According to Maréchal, the establishment of hospitals

[59] A. Houbaert, 'Mindebroederskloosters in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 12, Brugge', *Franciscana* 31 (1977), 119–27; A. Heysse, 'Trois Couvents des observants à Bruges et environs (1461, 1462, 1468)', *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 41 (1948), 217–39. This foundation was still resented by the established mendicants within Bruges in 1484, when St Donatian's agreed to act as mediator *pro bonis pacis* (BAB, A56, fo. 41r).

[60] H. R. Roggen, 'De Clarissen-Coletine van Brugge (1479–1990)', *Franciscana* 50 (1995), 87–99.

[61] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 397v. [62] RAB, FD, 13.

in that period already demonstrates a shift in attitude to the poor amongst the patriciate.[63] Whereas foundation of hospitals like St John's had evinced a sense of 'community' in being open, in theory, to all kinds of poor, later institutions tended to restrict relief to long-term help for the indigent burgher. In the fourteenth century, social divisions sharpened and were attended by further social unrest. Almshouse foundation appears to reflect an even more discriminatory attitude to the poor. Certain groups of poor were privileged above others: widows, the old, poor priests and members of particular families or craft guilds. The growth in charity dispensed by the poor tables channelled doles to the 'respectable' or 'shamefaced' poor resident in the parish.

The attitude of propertied citizens is reflected in evidence for municipal management of the urban poor. The houses over which the town magistracy had direct control took in a selective clientele: a large proportion of the poor in the Potterie hospital apparently belonged to important citizen families.[64] Failure to extend existing hospital provision to the passing traveller from the late fourteenth century was perhaps part of a wider concern to control the movements of the indigent and socially disruptive. Begging was permitted but regulated, according to fifteenth-century evidence. Beggars had to display tokens.[65] There were set places on certain bridges and outside churches where they were permitted to position themselves.[66] Stricter regulation on vagabondage was decreed by Duke Philip the Good in Flanders in 1461,[67] though it was perhaps not until the end of the fifteenth century, following the period of great dearth and unrest, that harsher edicts were imposed on begging.[68]

It is instructive to set charitable giving and regulation on poverty within the darker context of repression: social discrimination may well lurk behind the pious hand-out, civic hierarchy behind expressions of 'community'. Such discrimination may have become stronger in the fourteenth century. Even so, it remains conjecture as to how communally minded burghers had been in the twelfth century compared with their counterparts in later periods. The notion of a 'shamefaced' poor,

[63] Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, *passim*.

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 129–46. See similarly the leper and 'field-sick' houses (*ibid.*, esp. pp. 208–9).

[65] The burgomaster had evidently ordered tokens to be made for all the poor who asked for alms in 1402 (SAB, 216, 1401/2, fo. 117v; GVS, Vol. III, p. 309); and see the tokens made in 1449: GVS, Vol. VI, p. 186.

[66] Distributions were made from the chapel of St Peter (GVS, Vol. V, p. 186); St Basil's chapel was a permitted location in which the 'field-sick' were allowed to beg (Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, p. 205). Evidence from the late fifteenth century shows that beggars had been permitted to station themselves before church doors.

[67] Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, pp. 300–1.

[68] GVS, Vol. VI, pp. 476–8. See below, pp. 296, 304.

as opposed to a poor unworthy of charity, was one in common currency by the early thirteenth century. In any case, the foundation of institutions providing poor relief reflected contexts other than attitudes to the poverty-stricken. Endowment of hospitals, with ecclesiastical rights and clerical staff, was coming to an end by the late thirteenth century, as was foundation of large mendicant institutions. The building of smaller almshouses later for select groups of poor is mirrored by the establishment of smaller houses of mendicant tertiaries. One reason for this was the unwillingness of collegiate and parish clergy to countenance any further infringement within their parish boundaries of their ecclesiastical rights, which new chapels and clerical institutions would have threatened.

Founders of almshouses accommodating a 'respectable' poor had other reasons for discriminatory selection besides the wish to exclude the potentially rebellious. 'Good conduct' (as Magriet Upthooge required of her almshouse inmates in 1405) was necessary for a certain kind of religious life. The setting up of houses in which lay people might live a life of contemplation and intercession without being bound to a rule was a trend characteristic from the end of the fourteenth century of the *Devotio moderna*. The Brethren of the Common Life did not establish houses in Bruges, but the proliferation of *godshuisen* for widows or other poor obeyed the general impulses of the *Devotio* in widening access for lay people to a religious life once confined to the cloistered.[69]

The civic magistracy also approved of a strict lifestyle for lay people living within an institution. In 1401 it established a new set of rules for the inmates of St Julian's hospital: they were expected to wear white costumes striped with grey or black, exercise chastity, fast on Fridays and other days of abstinence, recite grace at meal times and receive the sacraments at least five times a year.[70] Regulation by lay authorities of behaviour within almshouse or hospital was part of a more general

[69] For discussion of this with reference to Leiden in Holland (where the influence of the Brethren was stronger), see H. Brand, *Over macht en overwicht: Stedelijke elites in Leiden (1420–1510)* (Leuven, 1996), pp. 335–66; and 'Mémoire individualisée et conscience communautaire: Souvenir, charité et representation au sein des élites de Leyde à la fin du Moyen Age', in H. Brand, P. Monnet and M. Staub (eds.), *Memoria, communitas, civitas: Mémoire et conscience urbaines en occident à la fin du Moyen Age* (Ostfildern, 2003), pp. 87–116. The Adornes foundation of the Jerusalem chapel and *godshuse* was placed under the oversight of the Carthusian priory of Genadedal, which lay just outside the town (Geirnaert, 'Adornes en de Jeruzalemkapel', p. 20): admiration for the austere Carthusians was also part of a devotional trend that favoured a stricter lifestyle for both clergy and laity.

[70] GVS, Vol. III, pp. 438–44. There were earlier rules established by the magistracy in 1331 that also insisted on chastity, though other stipulations were less extensive (OCMW, Fonds St Julian, charter 11). For prohibitions on gambling and drinking imposed on leper houses in the early fifteenth century, see Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, p. 118.

civic concern to raise the devotional awareness of citizens – of which the eventual approval of observance among the friars was also a part. Stricter selection of the deserving poor was an aspect of a wider municipal interest in standards of morality. While the pursuit of this interest might itself be repressive of citizen behaviour, repression was not necessarily the primary purpose: the work to assist in the salvation of souls was an end in itself. In any case, targeted provision for specific groups of poor – prisoners, lepers or the aged – demonstrated the claim of civic authorities to provide for the common good.[71]

Individual citizens who founded almshouses or poor-table doles had many reasons for doing so. One of them was to generate intercession: benefactors expected returns on their penitential investments. Jan de Wec's gift to the Dark Room required the prisoners to say a Pater noster and an Ave Maria for the souls of Jan and his wife. Most of the benefactors of poor tables linked the distribution of their doles with anniversary services endowed for their souls. The respectable poor summoned to collect their doles on an anniversary were to pray for the soul of the benefactor and perhaps attend the anniversary mass.

The close connection between distributions to the poor and liturgical service means that the history of charitable giving needs to be set within the context of other devotional trends. The increasing number of endowments for poor tables was part of the more general increase in provision for divine service. Benefactors of the poor often contributed to the liturgical life of their parishes. Besides her house for poor widows, Agnes van Boneem made further endowments for the poor table, and for masses within St Saviour's between 1344 and 1351, as well as providing for the elevation of no less than nine saints' days to the rank of double feast.[72] Some benefactors made gifts to more than one parish – few before the late 1340s,[73] but more in the 1360s.[74] Some of these were part of wider kinds of divine service. During the 1360s and 1370s, Boudin van Assenede

71 For more benign views of the tendency to specialisation elsewhere see Henderson, *Renaissance Hospital*, pp. 14–31; Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, pp. 54–5, 104–5.

72 RAB, FD, 81, fo. 36v; BAB, S718, fos. 195r–213r, 298r–306r. For other examples of founders of 'houses of God': Gerard Sox, who also made a gift to St James' poor table in 1349 (OCMW, Hospice Lucx, charter 8; RAB, SJ, 646, fos. 23v–24r).

73 Nicholas Debbout, 1328 (chantry in Our Lady's, 1329: RAB, OLV, O723, O419); and William de Hond by 1346 (to which his wife added later by 1351) made extensive provisions in Our Lady's for processions with antiphons, for elevations to double feasts (St Mark's, St Luke's, St John at the Latin gate) and pittances throughout the year on twenty feast days: OCMW, OLV, Register 180, fo. 180v; RAB, OLV, O780; Register 735, fos. 21v, 26v, 68r, 71r, 72r, 73v, 88v, 91v, 92r, 101r, 113v, 114r, 117r, 121v, 138v, 156r, 163r, 168r, 180v, 188r, 190r.

74 Marie Bonins, widow of Pieter van der Zacke, from 1357 made foundations in St Saviour's and the Dark Room (OCMW, SS, charter 65); in Our Lady's (OCMW,

built up a raft of post-obit celebration that extended into every parish church in Bruges. In St Donatian's he set up an obit; in Our Lady's he contributed to processions on the feast days of St John the Baptist and All Saints, and the singing of *Beata dei genetrix* and *Salve regina* at mass on Saturdays and Sundays in Lent, and *O radix Jesse* in Advent; from St Saviour's he established distributions four times a year to the parish poor, and every Monday to the Dark Room.[75] In 1382 he left £100 *parisis* to the poor-table masters of Our Lady's to pay for distributions to the poor in the parishes of St Katherine, St James, and St Giles.[76]

Donors of the Dark Room also increased divine service in parish and town. Many of them were in any case involved in parish and civic government. One of the earliest was the alderman Pieter van Hille: with his wife, Aechte, he founded doles in the Dark Room in 1365, and weekly masses in St Julian's hospital, and gave to St John's hospital, the lepers and four parish poor tables. In 1381 his widow made provision for the celebration of the seven canonical hours in St Walburga's.[77] Another of the early Dark Room benefactors in the 1360s and 1370s was Margaret de Walle, the widow of Jan (councillor and guardian of the hospital of St Julian, and chantry founder in Our Lady's). She was one of the early providers for the seven canonical hours in St Walburga's. Besides his benefactions to the Dark Room, which involved two parish poor tables, Lamsin van Aelst was also a benefactor of St Jan's hospital, and chantry founder (in 1360) in Our Lady's.

Some of the major Dark Room benefactors in the late fourteenth century, notably those who served civic office, were among the many whose post-obit services contributed to the promotion of public or civic worship: Jan de Hagha, canon of St Donatian (and son of a

OLV, Register. 178, fo. 57r; charter 60); and in St James', St Giles', St Katherine's, St Michael's and St Cross' (RAB, SJ, 646, fo. 6r; 647). In the 1360s, Daniel van Coudenkeuken made foundations in St Saviour's, St Walburga's and St Giles'; Zegher Honin, a broker and burgomaster, in St Saviour's, St Giles', St James' and St Walburga's; Heinric Herresten, a German merchant, in Our Lady's, St Saviour's, St Giles' and St James'; Margaret van Coudenbrouc (whose husband served as alderman) in Our Lady's, St Saviour's and the Dark Room (J.-J. de Smet, 'De liefdadige stichtingen van de Brugse poorter Daniel Coudenkeuken 1360–1374', *Biekorf* 70 (1969), 329–37; Galvin, 'Poor Tables', pp. 296–7, 302, 305–6).

[75] BAB, A47, fos. 107r–108v; A141, fo. 52r; RAB, OLV, Register 735, fos. 54v, 96v–97r, 162v, 186v, 197v–198r; OCMW, OLV, charter 99; SS, charter 93; Register 126, fos. 140v–141r. He also established masses in the Nazareth hospital, where he was guardian and served as *deelman* in the Our Lady *zestendeel*. He was probably a cloth-dealer. See Galvin, 'Poor tables', pp. 276–7.

[76] RAB, SJ, charter 99; Register 887, fo. 37r.

[77] Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, pp. 150, 360–1; SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fo. 9r (Allossery, 'Medeelingen', p. 76); OCMW, OLV, dis charters 81, 82, 94, 117; Register 178, fo. 58r; Register 155, fo. 50r; OCMW, SS, Register 126, fos. 65v, 77r; RAB, SJ, 646, fo. 60v; and above, p. 105.

former burgomaster), who founded motets and processions; Bernard van Aertricke, burgomaster, benefactor of St Sebastian's archers, who founded sermons and promoted relic displays. Jan Camphin, burgomaster and promoter of Holy Blood day, founding member of the Trinity guild (and founder of a bed in St Julian's hospital), was the recipient of several rents in 1397 allocated to support the prisoners.[78] Jan de Wec was one of the richest men in Bruges in the late fourteenth century, and served as churchwarden of St James': his foundation in 1390 chimed with other benefactions that had sought to encourage public worship. In return for his munificence, the Dark Room prisoners were to pray for his soul after the bell for *Salve regina*, endowed by Boudin de Vos in 1365, had sounded from St Donatian's.[79]

In the fifteenth century, poor-table and Dark Room foundations continued at the levels established in the late fourteenth. Some benefactors, especially in the 1450s, made multiple gifts to poor tables while increasing divine service in their own parishes. The alderman Jacop Brandereel in the 1450s gave rents to found anniversaries and doles in all the parish churches of Bruges, as well as an endowment to support the seven canonical hours in St Walburga's.[80] From 1472, the wife of Lodewijk Greffinc, town councillor and endower of Rogatian processions in the three mother churches of Bruges, also required the Dark Room wardens to offer at three annual obits in the Dominican friary and receive six tokens for doles to the prisoners.[81]

The accumulation of foundations that involved alms to the poor had another effect: it prompted more systematic efforts by laymen to record them. Anniversary services had long been inscribed by the clergy of collegiate churches in their *planarii*. Lay churchwardens had increasingly become involved in the management of post-obit services, particular as the number of these grew in the late fourteenth century.[82] In the same way, as the number of foundations vested in poor tables began to increase, so masters of poor tables were impelled to record benefactors in a similar fashion. Calendars listing the specific gifts and requirements of each

[78] OCMW, Fonds St Julian, charter 113 (1401); Geldhof, *Pelgrims*, p. 29.

[79] I. De Meyer, 'De sociale strukturen te Brugge in de 14e eeuw', in W. Blockmans, I. De Meyer, J. Mertens, C. Pauwelijn and W. Vanderpijpen (eds.), *Studiën betreffende de sociale stukturen te Brugge, Kortrijk en Gent in de 14e en 15e eeuw*. Standen en Landen 54 (Kortrijk and Heule: UGA, 1971), pp. 7–78 (pp. 62–3) – a stipulation also required by Jacop Bonin's widow in 1472: SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fo. 22v).

[80] For details see Galvin, 'Poor Tables', pp. 282–3 (RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 33r). For the other main example: the burgomaster Joris Ruebs (*ibid*., p. 334; and RAB, OLV, 735, fos. 71r, 99r).

[81] SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fo. 13r (Allossery, 'Medeelingen', p. 125).

[82] See above, p. 108.

benefactor, month by month, appear in all parishes during the fifteenth century for use by the poor-table masters, in direct imitation of clerical *planarii*. The *steenwarders* of the Dark Room also had their *bezettebouck* by the mid fifteenth century, which listed endowments and attached obligations that had been made since the mid 1360s. Lay involvement in the management of the liturgical year was thus increasing. Certainly, the *planarii* remained the preserve of the clergy, and there was of necessity considerable liaison within each parish between clergy and laity. The names of poor-table benefactors were often recorded in the *planarius* of the same parish, especially because their benefactions were linked to anniversary services requiring priestly officiation, and coordination with other services or feast days. Even so, poor-table and prison calendars were managed by their lay masters: their proliferation represents a considerable extension of lay authority over liturgical arrangements for the commemoration of souls.

## Civic networks of intercession

During the fifteenth century, the complexity and number of these liturgical arrangements increased. One of the trends in charitable benefaction was the multiplication of links between the poor tables and other institutions. From the 1420s, and especially by the 1450s, benefactors of poor tables were more inclined to involve other groups besides the poor-table masters in the performance of their benefactions.[83] Besides the parish poor, others began to be summoned to collect doles at poor tables and attend anniversaries: lepers, friars, tertiaries (the Celle brothers, Castenjeboom sisters or brothers of the sack), widows and other inmates of almshouses.

Similar use also began to be made of craft guilds. Few benefactors did so before the 1420s;[84] not many more did before the 1460s. But by 1490 at least 116 foundations in Bruges churches had been made in which the services of such guilds were called upon; and at least forty-seven crafts had become involved in some way. The most common form of involvement was the attendance of guild representatives and their poor at the anniversary of the founder: the poor-table masters would send out, a day or two before, several tokens to the guild deans, governors or priest to be given to the poor of the guild. For instance, Martin Bliec

[83] Galvin, ‘Poor Tables’, pp. 152–71.

[84] For an early but rare case of craft-guild involvement, see the foundation of Pieter van den Hille’s wife in 1381: if the conditions of the endowment were not fulfilled by the ‘commune’ of St Walburga’s, 12s 5d was to be paid each week to the churchwardens, the poor table and the silversmiths’ guild.

and his wife's anniversary foundation in St Saviour's in 1491 required the poor-table masters to send tokens to seven poor people living in the goldsmiths' almshouse, to the wine-measurers' guild and to Jan de Bliec's house of widows, so that they would come to offer at his mass service and attend vigils at his grave.[85]

Devotional guilds were also called upon to assist in these commemorative services.[86] The cartulary of the Snow guild lists twenty foundations by individuals between 1466 and 1516: in more than half of these, the guild itself was not the immediate beneficiary, but was involved more indirectly in endowments given to other groups or religious bodies. Often this meant the attendance of the guild dean or poor at the anniversary of the founder.[87] The foundations of the brothers Colard and Pieter de Labie, for instance, were typical in kind even if exceptional in scope. In 1480 they paid over £97 to the poor-table masters of Our Lady's to establish two tables of sixty doles: the poor-table masters were to send tokens to the Celle brothers, the guilds of Our Lady of the Snow, the Three Saints and the New and Mary bridge-workers, so that they would attend the anniversary.[88]

The practical purpose of such arrangements from the benefactor's point of view was two-fold. It enhanced the security of the foundation to have more than one body responsible for its oversight. Guild governors were sometimes required explicitly to attend the dole in order to 'oversee' its fulfilment by the poor-table masters.[89] Secondly, it expanded (with relatively little expense) the number of intercessors present at the obit or dole, and allowed the benefactor to specify which groups of poor were to benefit. Some founders additionally linked their foundation with guild services, requiring the guild priest to say mass for their souls in the guild chapel on the same day as their anniversary.

[85] OCMW, SS, Register 127, fos. 98r–v; Register 181.

[86] For example, Heinrich Tarrax's obit in 1466, set up with the Rozebeke guild, involved a dole of sixty prebends to be managed by the masters of the St Cross poor table. Olivier de Haze's endowment in favour of the Dry Tree guild in 1492 required the offerings and oversight of the white-leather-workers and the purse-makers.

[87] RAB, OLV, 1501, fos. 42r–63v. In brief, the guild deans were required to attend the anniversary doles or masses of eight founders during this period, alongside one or more of the following: the Celle brothers, friars, Augustinians, Wilhemites, guilds of St George, the Three Saints, the 10,000 Martyrs, Mary Magdalene and the bridge-workers.

[88] RAB, 1501, fos. 56r–57v. Colard de Labie's obit founded in 1473 also included the attendance of the 10,000 Martyrs' guild (RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 114v). For the full range of the Labie foundations see also: RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 116r; 155, fos. 41r–42v, summarised by R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), p. 47. See also above, p. 166.

[89] Services celebrated by craft guilds could also be overseen by poor-table masters, though less commonly. For example, the three annual masses established in the

The advantage to guilds of such involvement was partly financial. The guild usually collected a fee for its oversight, and further provision for its own poor members. Some founders added 'spoiling' clauses to their endowment, specifying that if its provisions were not fulfilled, it was to be handed over to the guild.[90] Moreover, like other ecclesiastical privileges acquired by guilds, the accumulation of obligations to provide services was both a mark and a promoter of guild prestige. The increasing use from the mid fifteenth century of craft guilds in the provision of charity and in liturgical arrangements shows how far many more of them had established themselves as providers of divine service in their own right. Their acquisition of altars, chapels, endowments and spiritual benefits had expanded from the later fourteenth century (see Chapter 4): perception of guilds as generators of good works encouraged founders to exploit their services.

A measure of this enhanced role is suggested by the types of benefactor who began to make use of them. Some employed guilds of crafts to which they did not belong; others belonged to social ranks that placed them well above membership of any craft. Even local nobles and ducal counsellors are found making use of craftsmen in their own foundations. Lodewijk van Gruuthuse's were connected with the shippers, tailors and basket fish-sellers. In the middle decades of the fifteenth century, when the ducal household was more regularly settled in Bruges, several high-ranking courtiers made similar arrangements with craft guilds to increase intercession for their souls. Charles, lord of Rochefort made use of the smiths to supervise his two anniversaries founded in St Donatian's in 1458;[91] Pauwels van Overtvelt, secretary and counsellor of Duke Philip the Good, made use of the fullers in his foundation, with doles to the poor, in Our Lady's in 1460.[92] From 1480 at least four members of the smiths' guild were to attend the anniversaries in St Donatian's of the canon, Jan Meurin, secretary to the Burgundian dukes and Archduke Maximilian.[93]

Smiths' chapel by the widow of Simon van Langemarkt in 1469 required offerings from the widows in the *Nieuwe genteweg*, poor-table masters, Dark Room prisoners, and the Celle and Grey brothers (RAB, OLV, dis charter 29; SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* 1), fo. 25r).

[90] Benefactions to guilds could also have spoiling clauses attached to them: in 1440 Herman Hoofd gave money to the silversmiths to buy rents for his anniversary; if they failed to fulfil the terms of the benefaction, the poor table of St Walburga's would be given the rents (OCMW, SW, charter 48; RAB, FA, 64, *Goudsmeden cartulaire*).

[91] BAB, A52, fo. 60v; RAB, FA, 386, Register, fos. 27r–28r; OCMW, Sint Josse, Register 178.

[92] RAB, OLV, 735, fo. 83r.

[93] BAB, A55, fos. 93r–v; A141, fos. 113v–114r; RAB, FA, 386, Register, fos. 43v–44r; RAB, BN, 8776.

Jan Vasque, Portuguese secretary of Duchess Isabella, employed not one but three guilds for foundations in St Saviour's between 1459 and 1468: the cordwainers, wine-measurers and old-clothes-sellers.[94] Use of multiple guilds was not uncommon among native citizens: at least twenty-five other founders (almost a quarter of founders who made use of craft guilds) did similarly. The arrangement made by the mason Frans van den Beke with the poor table of St Saviour's in 1462 bound the governors of both the masons' and the armourers' guilds to send between six and eight guildsmen each to his anniversary, to attend mass to oversee the dole, to celebrate mass at their guild altars and to give to their own guild poor.[95] Such foundations thus encouraged the collaboration of guilds belonging to crafts that were not usually grouped together in the civic 'constitution'.[96]

Moreover, guild involvement in foundations was often required in conjunction with other religious bodies. More than a quarter of founders who required guild services also asked for the simultaneous involvement of other groups, especially the inmates of almshouses and leper houses, houses of widows, tertiaries, and occasionally of the religious orders. The baker Jacob de Vos in 1453 required doles to be distributed by the poor-table masters of St Saviour's on St Bavo's day, which representatives from the bakers and old-clothes-sellers were to attend alongside those from the Dark Room prison, the Jerusalem chapel priest and seven poor widows living behind the chapel.[97] The increase in the number of these foundations thus multiplied the number of ties and occasions that linked craft guilds to other providers of divine service.

Such links spread through the whole town, cutting across parish boundaries. Guild connections to poor tables were not limited to the parishes in which they had their own altars or chapels. More than half of the guilds (twenty-eight of the forty-seven) known to have been involved in foundations were required to oversee or attend services in churches other than the ones in which they celebrated mass for their own members. By the end of the fifteenth century, the smiths (who had their own free-standing chapel) were sending their governors or poor to services in Our Lady's, St Donatian's and St Saviour's; the coopers (whose chapel was in St James') had obligations to attend services in Our Lady's. Even lesser crafts such as the shoe-makers' apprentices had obligations in both St James' and St Saviour's.

94 OCMW, SS, Register 127, fos. 27r–28r; Register 181; charters 216, 246, 250; RAB (FA, BN), 8702.
95 OCMW, SS, Register 181; charter 248.
96 For craft groupings, see Appendix 1.
97 OCMW, SS, Register 126, fo. 4r; Register 181.

Partly because they were linked to poor tables, benefactions to the Dark Room followed a similar pattern. Guilds, friars, tertiaries, hospitals and almshouses became linked to the charitable and intercessory activities of the prison. The exclusive Trinity guild involved the Dark Room in its foundation in 1403. Failure of its priests to celebrate the required four weekly masses was to result in fines paid to the fabric of St Donatian's and to the Dark Room. Jacop Brandereel's anniversary foundations in 1453 involved all the parish churches of Bruges, and required tokens to be sent to St John's hospital, the *dulhuis*, the lepers, the Celle brothers and the wardens of the Dark Room. Lodewijk van Gruuthuse's post-obit arrangements with Our Lady's and three guilds also included doles to prisoners at his four annual anniversaries.[98] By 1488 Jacob van Dorlee had established an almshouse and several foundations in Our Lady's, St Walburga's and the Franciscan priory where he was to be buried: among the many recipients who attended his anniversary were representatives from the Dark Room.[99]

Like poor tables, guilds also took part in provision for prisoners. A (rare) early link between a craft guild and the Dark Room was established in 1401, when Jan Claerboud and others made a gift to the silversmiths for an anniversary and dole in St Walburga's: the guild was to make provision for a sermon to be preached in the Dark Room.[100] From 1423 benefactors began to involve craft guilds in doles to prisoners, alongside doles to other 'shamefaced' poor.[101] Occasionally, the prison wardens were given a vested interest in overseeing the proper conduct of other services. The widow of Jan van Cutseghem, master carpenter and (briefly) town councillor in 1486, endowed the masons' guild to celebrate masses for his soul in St Basil's chapel. A sermon was to be preached after mass; the mass was to be attended by a member of each of the four main religious orders in Bruges, and tokens for doles were to be given to the heirs of the founder, the 'field-sick', the Celle brothers and Grey sisters, and the Wijngarde infirmary, as well as the

[98] SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fo. 4v.

[99] SAB, 457 (A), fos. 1r–31v; BAB, OLV, 735, fo. 204v; BAB, A56, fo. 174v.

[100] OCMW, SW, charter 25.

[101] Jan Camerlync, dean of the armourers, endowed his guild in 1423 to provide a weekly dole to the prisoners. After 1453, ten out of twenty-eight foundations in the *bezettebouck* required guild involvement. In 1453, Jan van Nieuwenhove, burgomaster, required the painters' guild to provide a dole for the prisoners every Sunday. The other guilds involved in similar ways were the smiths (1469), bakers (1474), furriers (1476, 1488), stone masons (1487), curriers/tanners (1489) and secondhand-clothes-dealers (1490): Allossery, 'Medeelingen', pp. 111, 118, 122, 129, 158, 169. Not mentioned by Allossery: a benefaction by Gheertrude, widow of Jacob Caneels, which involved the goldsmiths (SAB, 196, 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fo. 30r). The shippers became involved in another benefaction made in the early sixteenth century (SAB, 196, 11 (*Bezettebouck* II), fo. 13v).

Dark Room prisoners. If these stipulations were not carried out, the rent would default to the Dark Room.[102]

Thus, the links that bound together all these groups or institutions – Dark Room, poor tables, almshouses, religious orders and guilds – proliferated. By the late fifteenth century, most guilds in Bruges – especially the craft guilds – were connected to foundations in churches throughout the town. Imagine a map of Bruges with these links drawn as lines between guild altars and other churches: it would show a complex web of threads, criss-crossing the whole urban landscape. Imagine a liturgical calendar of all Bruges parishes listing post-obit arrangements simply involving guilds: it would show that on more than 100 days in the year, guildsmen or their poor, often in collaboration with other guilds or religious, had to make their way through town streets to attend services at altars in parish or collegiate churches. The network of intercession that had been created in Bruges by the end of the fifteenth century stretched across urban space and liturgical time.

This intercessory network was 'civic' in two senses. In the first place, it was specific to an urban environment that sustained a high concentration of institutions providing divine service, and of citizens – particularly civic-office holders – with the resources to invest heavily for their souls and divine service within the town. A good example of this use of resources is shown in the series of foundations made by one benefactor and his wife, Donaes and Adriana de Moor. Donaes was one of the wealthiest men in Bruges,[103] a furrier who had profited from the market in luxury goods, and prominent town councillor, serving several times up to 1481. He was a member of the prestigious Trinity guild.[104] In May 1482 he was accused of corruption and banished from Flanders, dying in Middelburg a year later. Despite banishment his body was permitted burial in St James', where he had been a parishioner.[105] Arrangements for his soul were already in place.[106] In 1469 he had made an agreement

[102] SAB, 196, charters 12; 9 (*Bezettebouck* I), fos. 25r–v. Also AHB, Register 10, no. 1; OCMW, Wijngarde, charter 701.

[103] He was amongst the twenty top contributors to Charles the Bold's forced loan on the town in 1476 (GVS, Vol. VI, p. 100; SAB, 216, 1475/6, fo. 34v).

[104] BAB, A52, fo. 11r (for his involvement in the Trinity guild in 1452).

[105] Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen ende graefscepe van Vlaenderen … van de jaeren 405–1492*, ed. J. de Jonghe, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1839–42), Vol. IV, pp. 233–5; SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwen groenenboec*), fos. 330r–v. A payment of £30 was made to the town to allow burial in St James'.

[106] For the following, see: RAB, SJ, charters 426, 441, 444, 447; Register 647, fos. 265r–267v, 284r–286r; Register 197, fo. 31r (for a seat next to St Anthony's altar in 1473); Register 887, fo. 58v; Register 888, fos. 19r–36r; SAB, 336, *Kuipers inschrijvingsregister*, fos. 123v–128r; 345, *Peltiers: Register lamwiltwerkers en grauwerkers*, fos. 2r–17r, 19r–21r; 457, *Fondatïes*, F (1486); 100 (*Politieke oorkonden*), 65; RAB (BN), 8663.

with the Augustinians to have a Marian *lof* sung every Sunday within their church and to attend the distribution of four annual doles in St James': these doles involved the poor-table masters of St James' and the governors of the three furrier guilds. By 1479, Donaes and his wife had built their own chantry chapel in St James', the priest of which was to be presented by the parish clergy and churchwardens. In 1482, in a large endowment recorded in a civic cartulary, Donaes gave thirteen new stone houses to the hospital of St Julian and the crafts of the carpenters, masons and coopers. These were to be filled by 'poor, shamefaced, honourable people, made weak from ill fortune and misadventure'. In 1487, Donaes' wife agreed with the poor-table masters of St James' to have daily mass in her husband's chapel, dedicated to Our Lady, St Donatian and St Adrian. She may also have commissioned the *Missa de Sancto Donatiano* from Jacob Obrecht.[107] Special services included celebration on St Donatian's day: at vigils the great bell 'Jacop' was to be rung for half an hour; mass would be sung in the chantry chapel with six musicians; the presiding priest would go to Donaes' grave. Overseeing these arrangements were the furriers. A further benefaction set up a distribution of sixty doles on 5 September for his soul – to which no less than twelve separate groups were to send representatives to make offerings: Donaes' own almshouse; St Julian's hospital; the Dark Room; the lepers; the Grey, Bethany and Castenjeboom sisters; the carpenters, masons and coopers; and two furrier crafts.

Donaes de Moor's complex compound of post-obit foundations was exceptional in scale, but all its elements were typical of arrangements made for post-obit services by this period. The integrated involvement of those who ruled religious houses, hospitals, almshouses, poor tables, prison and craft guilds created intercessory arrangements that spread across the whole town, bringing some or all of them together on certain days for the commemoration of citizens' souls. They also integrated the poor into an expanded system of poor relief that regulated and confined the distribution of charity to specified groups – the respectable poor that included those living under a rule or in a 'house of God', as well as the parish or guild poor.

Commemoration of Donaes de Moor's soul was also secured in ways that had another civic dimension. The extra services on St Donatian's day in St James' were a felicitous marriage of a personal and civic sense of devotion towards the saint of the founder's Christian name and the saint deemed a heavenly patron of the town. The singing of a Marian *lof* was a service that the town magistracy endorsed as beneficial to citizens

[107] See Strohm, *Music*, pp. 146–7.

as a whole. This is closer to the second way in which this network of intercession was 'civic' in character: it was also tied in several respects to municipal authority. Citizens like Donaes had an eye fixed on the needs of public worship, and like others he was member of a town government that had come to regard public worship as a civic matter. Also like others, Donaes made use of institutions that were under municipal authority: such use served indirectly to increase its sacred character.

One of the institutions used by Donaes was the Dark Room.[108] The prison's gradual accumulation from the mid fourteenth century of foundations that required doles during the year to prisoners meant an expanding role for municipal charity: the occasions when the charitable role of civic government could be demonstrated were considerably increased. A growing number of foundations, moreover, linked the Dark Room with other institutions and groups: by 1490, the arrangements for its annual distributions involved the activity of five parish poor tables; St Donatian's; St John's hospital; the Carmelites, Franciscans and Dominicans; and twelve guilds. Such links made the Dark Room one of the nodal points in the civic network of charity and intercession.

The Dark Room provided divine service as well as alms. It contained a light burning before an image of the Virgin Mary by 1357,[109] but more substantial arrangements were in place after 1390 following Jan de Wec's foundation. This provided the prison with ornaments for divine service at an altar within the building, and with its own priest to celebrate mass four times a week and to administer other sacraments, including confession, to the inmates. The priest was later to receive a salary from the town treasury. Like other divine service established at the end of the fourteenth century, such as the daily services of the friars in the *scepenhuis* or the annual *mandatum* ceremony for the selection of town councillors, the good works generated in the Dark Room – situated close to the complex of civic buildings in the *burg* – added to the spiritual aura that surrounded the business of municipal rule.

Alms-giving by the town government served many purposes. It was partly about the demonstration of its earthly authority and the links of this authority with the divine. The growing number of ways in which town magistrates administered alms for the poor during the later Middle Ages was part of a wider development of powers assumed by

108 Strohm identifies the unusual reference to giving alms to prisoners in one of the cantus firmi within the *Missa de Sancto Donatiano* (and the link with the O-antiphon *O clavis David* referring to delivery from hell's captivity) with de Moor's benefaction involving the Dark Room (*ibid.*).

109 SAB, 196, *Cartularium*, fos. 1r–2r (mentioned in the legacy of Jan vander Beurse).

civic government, including those over matters sacred. It was also about the meeting of obligations, spiritual and social, fulfilling penitential requirements and discharging the responsibilities of wealth and office for which office-holders could be called to account. The Dark Room, close to the *scepenhuis*, gave tangible expression to the claim of town magistrates to be guarantors of public order, and to the seamless links assumed between the performance of charity, the exercise of justice, and the bringing of order and peace. The same associations could be made when peace-breakers were punished. In 1474, for instance, the town councillors dealt with one Jooris Ram, who had uttered 'injurious words' before Heinric Man, canon of St Donatian. His punishment gave intimation of the sacred dimension both of municipal authority and civic peace in Bruges. Jooris was made to pay half a *hoet* of bread each to the inmates of the *dulhuis*, and to the prisoners of the Dark Room. He was also made to find three pounds of wax to offer before the Holy Blood relic.[110]

[110] SAB, 157, *Civiele sententïen vierschaar*, fo. 37v.

# 7 Civic ceremony, religion and the counts of Flanders

In May 1468, Charles the Bold came to Bruges to hold his first chapter as sovereign lord of the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece. The occasion combined magnificence with solemnity. In tones of some awe, de Roovere records the precise order of knights and heralds as they rode on horseback to Our Lady's church for vespers on 8 May to attend the vigils of one of their own, the count of Nivers.[1] A shield was later hung in the choir in memory of the deceased knight. Sixteen days later, the knights attended mass at St Donatian's for the soul of another member of the Order, Jacques de Bourbon. Charles himself processed closest to the body. The chronicler takes note of the costly splendour of the occasion.[2] He also records that townsmen were involved: behind the funeral cortège came town councillors, with burning torches carried before them.

The chronicler's description of the Golden Fleece event conjures a familiar image of Burgundian magnificence. As to the effects of princely ceremony on the town, it permits an equally familiar interpretation: of a court festivity imposing itself on civic landscape and memory, displaying its exclusive and exemplary hierarchy, reducing citizens to the role of passive observers who trail in the wake of the courtly cortège. Burgundian court spectacle was indeed increasingly played out in the towns of Flanders and Brabant, particularly from 1430 onwards; Bruges citizens had become well acquainted with spectacles like the Golden Fleece meetings, which they had first hosted in 1432. It is the great set-pieces of princely magnificence that have usually claimed the attention of historians – the marriage feast of Duke Charles to Margaret of York, held in Bruges two months after the Golden Fleece meeting in 1468, being the most spectacular example of all. Yet focus on such one-off events tends to be at the expense of other more regular forms of ceremonial contact between rulers and citizens. This chapter concentrates

[1] SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 326r–327r.

[2] Jacques de Bourbon's obsequies cost the ducal receivers over £925 *parisis*. One hundred poor people, clad in black, carried a hundred torches in the procession; masses were held also in nine other churches in Bruges (ADN, B2068, fos. 104r–106v).

on these: the ceremonies that took place when rulers were present in the town and those carried out when they were absent.

The other main theme of the chapter concerns the limitations of these ceremonies as symbols or tools of princely authority. For one thing, traditions within the town partly determined their shape, character and even timing. There is after all another aspect to the event in 1468 that the local chronicler does not relate. The protocol book of the Order records that the chapter had planned to begin its meeting on 3 May, but had decided to postpone the event. This was out of 'reverence for the Holy Blood'. The book goes on to explain that 3 May was the day for the town's principal procession and feast, with which churchmen, town councillors and foreign merchants, together with the 'common townsmen', craft guilds and other residents would be occupied and caught up.[3]

There had been a long tradition of princely reverence for the Holy Blood. The Dampierre counts of Flanders had frequently witnessed the procession from at least the 1330s.[4] Count Louis de Male was present at least three times, particularly in the late 1370s and early 1380s.[5] His successor may not have attended: Philip the Bold's preoccupation with events in Paris took him away from Flanders. But Philip's son appeared more often. In 1405, the civic authorities sent messengers to Sluis on 1 May to ask Duke John to see the procession.[6] John's wife came in 1408, his son in 1415: Philip the Good watched from a house in the *Steenstraat*. Dancing in the townhouse entertained him and his wife that day.[7] As duke, Philip the Good attended in 1425 and 1426, receiving gifts of wine from the town.[8] His second wife, Isabella of Portugal, saw the procession in 1438.[9] In 1457 Duke Philip and the

[3] S. Dunnebeil (ed.), *Die Protokollbücher des Ordens vom Goldenen Vlies ii: Das Ordensfest 1468 in Brügge unter Herzog Karl dem Kühnen* (Stuttgart, 2003), p. 40.

[4] The count and countess were present in 1334 (SAB, 216, 1333/4, fo. 104v); the count in 1335 (*ibid*., 1334/5, fo. 90r). There are gaps in the town accounts during the 1340s and 1350s (and in later years), and these accounts do not always record the ducal presence at the procession (when other sources show that they were there). Ducal attendance may well have been more frequent than the examples listed here.

[5] In 1369, 1379 and 1382 (*ibid*., 1369/70, fos. 38v, 39r; 1379/80, fo. 40r; SBB, Hs. 436, fo. 148r).

[6] SAB, 216, 1404/5, fo. 103r.

[7] *Ibid*., 1407/8, fo. 103v; 1414/15, fo. 93r. Duke John was probably present on 3 May 1408 too: he received gifts of wine from the town on 1 May (*ibid*., 1407/8, fo. 108v).

[8] SAB, 277, 1424/5, fo. 18v; 1425/6, fo. 18r. (The main town accounts are not extant for these years.) In 1422 Philip's first wife had received a deputation from Bruges asking her to attend the procession (SAB, 216, 1421/2, fo. 27r).

[9] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 301v; Nicolaes Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen ende graefscepe van Vlaenderen … van de jaeren 405–1492*, ed. J. de Jonghe, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1839–42), Vol. III, p. 417. The lady of Charolais and others hired a house, at the town's expense, to see the Holy Blood in 1446 (SAB, 216, 1445/6, fo. 52v).

dauphin Louis watched the relic and procession pass by from a specially constructed platform along the *Steenstraat*.[10] Charles the Bold, then count of Charolais, was also present. As duke he probably saw the event in 1468. On 'Holy Blood day' in 1470 he left Sluis *a petit estat et compagnie* to dine at Bruges;[11] the town paid for a barge to transport the duke down the canals and back so that he could 'see the procession'.[12] After Charles' death in 1477, his Habsburg successors continued the comital tradition of attendance. Archduke Maximilian held his first chapter meeting of the Golden Fleece in Bruges on 1 May 1478, which avoided a clash with the procession, though he departed in haste for Ghent on the eve of Holy Blood day, leaving behind him his wife Mary to watch the event.[13] Both were present in 1479, to witness the 'most beautiful' procession that had been held for a long time.[14] After then, troubled relations between Bruges and Maximilian prevented regular attendance,[15] but Habsburg visits on Holy Blood day were to resume from 1498.[16]

The history of princely association with the annual Holy Blood ceremony is one of continuity rather than change. A tradition of attendance at the event by rulers of Flanders survived changes of dynasty. Certainly this was achieved partly through effort on the part of townsmen. The presence of the ruler and his family was cultivated by the town: messengers were sent to request their appearance; gifts rewarded their arrival; extra entertainment was laid on. Maximilian's hasty departure on 2 May 1478 meant that he missed seeing the many 'novelties' that the local chronicler claimed were put on for the procession, presumably for his benefit. But rulers did not visit merely out of lordly condescension to civic entreaty. There were other pressures that might compel attendance. Their recorded visits are often timed with moments of particular need to find favour with townsmen, either in the early years of a new reign or at moments of political difficulty: in the early 1330s after the disastrous events of the previous decade; in the late 1370s and early

[10] ADN, B4104, fo. 104r.

[11] The rest of his 'estate' remained at Lille, so the culinary requirements of Charles' entourage that day were modest by Burgundian standards: 24 dozen white bread, 20 dozen bread *bis*, 7 lb beef dripping, 30 lb lard, 5½ sheep, 4 pigs and 200 eggs (ADN, B3434, No. 118501).

[12] SAB, 216, 1469/70, fo. 115r.

[13] C. L. Carton (ed.), *Het boeck van al 't gene datter geschiet is binnen Brugge sichent Jaer 1477, 14 Februarii, tot 1491* (Ghent, 1859), p. 5; SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 412v.

[14] Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 11.

[15] Maximilian was in Bruges at the right time in 1482 (*ibid.*, p. 39); the lord Ravestein came to the event in 1484 (SAB, 216, 1483/4, fo. 169v), and Prince Philip was in town too (*ibid.*, p. 63; Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, p. 241).

[16] See below, pp. 293–4.

1380s, when the Ghent revolt threatened to undermine comital power; or during the crisis following the death of Charles the Bold in 1477.

The continuing association of rulers with the procession may even suggest a more passive or deferential attitude on the part of princes towards civic cults than might be expected. Throughout the whole period, the prince remained a spectator rather than a participant at the procession, watching the relic, clergy, guilds and town magistrates pass in front of him from platform or townhouse. As we shall see, rulers did seek to manipulate civic ceremonies and even the Holy Blood relic to suit dynastic needs. There were occasions when rulers attempted to ride roughshod over civic ceremonies. Yet these were exceptions to the rule, and there were other kinds of limitation to any princely attempt to manipulate civic tradition that are worth investigating.

## Ceremony in the presence of the prince

### *The prince in the town: familiarity and distance*

It is with good reason that the later Middle Ages are characterised as a period in western Europe when the authority of ruler over subject grew, despite frequent crises of seigneurial authority. The mechanisms of 'state' control expanded and became more entrenched, in the Low Countries as elsewhere, notwithstanding dynastic setbacks and rebellions against princely rule. Burgundian bureaucracy in particular became more fixed in residence and enlarged in personnel, exerting a heavier gravitational pull on urban subjects, and imposing ever greater judicial and financial pressure on the territories under its sway. Yet given the rise of impersonal government, it is ironic to find that on the whole the personal presence of the rulers of Flanders in their towns increased during the late medieval period.[17]

In the early fourteenth century counts did not arrive at the town gates very often, preferring their rural castles of Wijnendale and Male to residence in towns like Bruges, where they had long ceased using the castle buildings within the *burg*.[18] They appear to have acquired buildings for residence elsewhere in the town by the beginning of fourteenth century,[19] and town accounts register occasional visits during the 1330s

[17] Compare with a similar trend in Guelders: G. Nijsten, *In the Shadow of Burgundy: The Court of Guelders in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 385.

[18] They also chose to spend more time in French- rather than Flemish-speaking Flanders: M. Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270–1380* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 145–8.

[19] T. de Meester and B. Schotte, 'De woning van de graaf in de 14de eeuw', in B. Hillewaert and E. Van Besien (eds.), *Het prinsenhof in Brugge* (Bruges, 2008),

and early 1340s. But Louis de Male (1346–84) was anxious to develop closer relations with his Flemish subjects, and town accounts correspondingly record his more frequent visits, especially in the 1360s and 1370s.[20] Even so, the necessity of visits to Paris, and a predilection when in Flanders for staying at his country castles rather than within Bruges, may explain why the count's townhouse was in a state of some disrepair even in the late 1370s.[21] Duke Philip of Burgundy, who succeeded to the county in 1384, was more often drawn away to Paris, spending only six months of his twenty-six-year rule in Flanders.

Nevertheless, the sense of separation between court and urban society that his absences may have caused was partly offset by the occasional if fleeting appearance of Philip himself and by the more frequent and extended visits of members of his immediate family. Philip's wife Margaret was in residence in January 1386, February 1387 and (with Philip) in 1390 and 1394.[22] Their son John's return from captivity in Turkey in 1398 was celebrated when he arrived in Bruges. John the Fearless visited again in 1401, and as duke (1405–19) proved a more frequent visitor than his father had been, at least until 1416 when events in Paris required his attention full-time.

The development of a grander princely residence in Bruges was both symptom and cause of more prolonged courtly presence in the town. The comital household was growing in number of personnel under the Dampierre counts, and was to expand exponentially under their Burgundian successors. Even by 1379 the *prinsenhof* was apparently too small to accommodate Count Louis's entourage.[23] Its state of neglect was compounded by the ransacking it received in 1382 by the Ghenters, who made free with the silver and gold vessels within, and relieved its cellars of forty pipes of red wine.[24] But by the late 1390s a rebuilding programme was under way: living quarters were enlarged with a hall and gallery; the chapel was rebuilt with an oratory over the new spicery.[25] It was under Duke Philip the Good, however, that the *prinsenhof* was given its most extensive remodelling and enlargement, particularly at

pp. 15–16 (p. 15). The count did pay for the chapel in his Bruges residence to be enlarged in 1325/6 (ADN, B1343).

[20] See below, p. 237.

[21] J. M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism 1280–1390* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 371; Vale, *Princely Court*, p. 157.

[22] For the following, see below, p. 237. [23] Vale, *Princely Court*, p. 157.

[24] Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. G. Raynaud, 15 vols. (Paris, 1897), Vol. X, p. 240; Murray, *Bruges*, p. 351. The castle at Male received more brutal treatment according to Froissart.

[25] For the beginnings of repairs see ADN, B4077, fos. 55r–v (1388); B4079, fos. 44r–46r (1394); B4080, fos. 50r–52v, 56v, 70r; B4081, fos. 61r–63v. Even in 1394 disrepair was still evident: parts of the walls by the chancellery continued to pose a danger

moments of special need – in 1429, in time for the festivities surrounding the duke's marriage to Isabella of Portugal; or when the Golden Fleece was held in Bruges in 1432 (which among other things prompted the building 'in great haste' of five extra furnace-ovens).[26] The accounts of the receiver general of Flanders from the 1420s to the 1450s show continuing additions of rooms, a new wing, the *hotel vert* (in 1446), a double gallery and a new chapel complex, complete with bell-tower. The exigencies of princely entertainment, particularly those of the young Charles the Bold, were met for instance by the building of a tennis court (which also appears to have burdened the building accounts with regular payments for mending smashed windows in its immediate vicinity).[27] The addition of modern conveniences included the purchase of an impressively capacious bath-tub: at twenty-four feet long, fourteen wide and eight deep, its transport by canal to Bruges from Valenciennes where it was manufactured, and from a dock near Our Lady's church where it was berthed for seven days before its final installation in the *prinsenhof*, required considerable manpower and machinery, as well as the presence of guards to keep watch over it at night.[28]

The capacity and luxury of the *prinsenhof* made it suitable for more prolonged sojourn. The reign of Duke Philip the Good (1419–67) is marked by the increasing gravitation of the Burgundian dynasty towards its northern territories, and although it was Brussels (with its own palatial residence) that became the principal place of princely residence, Bruges was regularly favoured. After 1458, when age and illness forced

to those passing by them (B4079, fo. 45v). On rebuilding see A. Van Zuylen Van Nyvelt, *Episodes de la vie des ducs de Bourgogne à Bruges* (Bruges, n.d.), pp. 248–55. See also especially K. de Jonghe, 'Bourgondische residenties in het graafschap Vlaanderen: Rijsel, Brugge en Gent ten tijde van Filips de Goede', *Handelingen der maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent*, n.s., 54 (2000), 93–134, esp. pp. 109–26; and 'Het prinsenhof als "Bourgondische" residentie', in Hillewaert and Van Besien, *Het prinsenhof*, pp. 41–55.

[26] ADN, B4097, fos. 161v–162v. The five new ovens required the purchase of 3,000 bricks.

[27] Work on the tennis court 'for the count of Charolais' was ordered by the duke in 1447 (AGR, CC, 27390, fo. 8v), though one was already in place by the 1420s (ADN, B4096, fo. 106r). For the mending of broken windows near the tennis court see, for example, ADN, B4099, fo. 92v (1443); AGR, CC, 27392 (1448–52), fo. 7r; ADN, B4103 (1452), fo. 138r. Desecration of windows in the chapel, which evidently lay within perilous range of the tennis court, may have been forestalled by the placing of wire grilles to protect them (AGR, CC, 27390, fo. 7r).

[28] *Ibid.*, fos. 9r, 19v. The bath-house measured eighty feet by twenty-eight (AGR, CC, 27388, fo. 1v). For references to the menagerie, occupied at various times by lions, monkeys and bears; and to Philip the Good's room, where he kept his *mappa mundi* and clocks, see Van Zuylen Van Nievelt, *Episodes*, p. 267; De Jonge, 'Bourgondische residenties', p. 101; AGR, CC, 27390, fo. 14v.

the duke to become more sedentary, visits to Bruges were frequent and lengthy. These visits were encouraged by the town magistrates. In 1448 and 1449 they had made handsome contributions towards the building of a 'new chamber' in the *prinsenhof*.[29]

Duke Charles the Bold (1467–77) spent proportionally more of his time in Bruges than any of his predecessors had done. Until the end of 1472 he was often in the town, partly for great courtly occasions such as his marriage feast in July 1468 (which also prompted further hasty work on the *prinsenhof*). But he was also present, as we shall see, at other civic ceremonies besides the Holy Blood procession. Closer connections with the town magistrates are suggested by the huge banquet laid on for Charles at the *scepenhuis* in February 1470.[30] After 1472 he was much less often in the Low Countries because of his military campaigns further south. But the Burgundian habit of princely residence in Bruges initially survived his death in 1477. Margaret of York and Mary of Burgundy continued to visit frequently, as did Mary's husband Archduke Maximilian. However, the gathering crisis between Maximilian and his Flemish subjects meant these visits began to drop off after 1486. Maximilian was in Bruges for over three months in 1488, but as prisoner of rebels. His release in May that year effectively marked the end of regular princely residence: the town accounts become barren of references to festive gift-giving to the rulers of Flanders until Philip the Fair's entry in 1497, and by the early sixteenth century it was clear that the regency family preferred lodging elsewhere.

For most of the fifteenth century, however, the ruler's physical presence in the town was the norm. Even so, frequency of visits may not have meant greater familiarity between ruler and town-dweller. The building of a more luxurious residence within town walls allowed the prince to be in the town more often, yet also apart from it. In any case, distance between prince and subject was encouraged or implied by the impresarios of Burgundian etiquette, for which the court was to become famous.[31] How the prince was seen mattered a great deal – particularly to Charles the Bold, whose determination to win a crown impelled him to posture to an exaggerated degree before the Emperor Frederick III at Trier in 1473.[32] One of the hallmarks of courtly ceremony was a careful presentation of the ducal body in public display. The household

[29] AGR, CC, 27392, fo. 1r. The burgomaster and *schepenen* paid £960 *parisis* in August 1448 and a further £1,440 in January 1449. The town accounts for the financial year 1448/9 are missing.

[30] SAB, 216, 1469/70, fo. 112v. It cost over £74.

[31] For precedents see Vale, *Princely Court*, pp. 200–20.

[32] R. Vaughan, *Charles the Bold* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), pp. 140–7.

ordinances by Olivier de la Marche spell out the conduct required by and towards the princely body.[33] At table 'the prince eats in public and is watched by everyone and should be the mirror of all respectability'. The goblet of wine brought by the cup-bearer had to be placed at a far end of the princely table so that it would not prevent other guests from seeing the prince; the cup-bearer was to avoid filling the prince's goblet too often, as this would be 'unseemly'. The genuflections, reverential kissing of napkins, and reverence of objects and food brought before the duke elevated service of the princely mouth into a quasi-sacred ceremony.

What also mattered was the management of distance between the ruler's body and those of others. At table, no one was to approach the prince from behind while he was eating. In other areas of court life, proximity to the prince might determine status: the knights of the bedchamber who read romances to the duke at bedtime were (in theory) among the elite. De la Marche's refinements on etiquette were to some extent complemented by the growing architectural complexity of the *prinsenhof* and by particular items purchased to furnish it. The addition of new rooms permitted greater separation between 'public' and 'private', restricting and structuring access to the duke, who might receive visitors on a ceremonial bed.[34] In the room where Duke Philip dined and supped before his household, two locks were installed in doors behind his seat to ensure that no one could approach him from behind while he was at the table.[35]

Outside the ceremonial chambers distance between the prince and his lesser subjects was also created. The *prinsenhof* slowly began to present an exterior of some magnificence, with its parapets, crenellated walls encased in Brabantine stone, imposing gatehouse with adjoining hexagonal tower and its central tower rising behind the parapets, heightened still further in the late 1450s. Moreover, when the prince emerged from his residence, according to de la Marche, his body was to be well protected: as the duke went to mount his horse, four foot-valets were to be in attendance, armed with batons to repel the people, 'who lovingly run after the prince' and who might try to come too close.

[33] Olivier de la Marche, 'L'Estat de la maison du duc Charles', in Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*, ed. H. Beaune and J. d'Arbaumont, 4 vols. (Paris, 1883–8), Vol. IV, pp. 1–94. See W. Paravicini, 'La Cour de Bourgogne selon Olivier de la Marche', in *'Autour d'Olivier de la Marche': Rencontres de Chalon-sur-Sâone*, Publication du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes (XIVe–XVe s.) 43 (2003), 89–124.

[34] De Jonghe, 'Bourgondische residenties', pp. 98–101.

[35] AGR, CC, 27390, fo. 13r. Also quoted in de Jonghe, 'Bourgondische residenties', p. 100.

Batons were not to be sharp or pointed, de la Marche writes – less out of concern that repulsion might perhaps inflict pain, but that it would be 'unseemly'.

Princes were all too aware that the people were not always loving; and Burgundian subjects who came too close had occasion to feel the unseemly point of a princely blade. Duke Philip was sufficiently alarmed on 22 May 1437 by the proximity of one Bruges inhabitant – an old and perfectly respectable baker (according to a local account) who had merely approached to doff his cap – that he drew his sword and struck him down.[36] There was good cause to assume that towns, even Bruges, were dangerous places for rulers to be. Count Charles the Good's assassination in 1127 was an uncomfortable precedent; and in later rebellions, other rulers almost lost their lives at the hands of townsmen. According to Froissart, Count Louis de Male found himself wandering through the maze of Bruges' streets and alleys on 3 May 1382 trying to escape the marauding Ghenters.[37] Duke Philip the Good's apparently panicked assault on the baker was in a context of rising tension, culminating in his hasty attempt to leave Bruges through the Boeverie gate, which he found temporarily barred against him. Maximilian's imprisonment in 1488 was also not without precedent in comital history.[38]

The chroniclers most closely associated with the court make the unruliness of townsmen – or at least of the lower orders – something of a topos. The bodies of princes and those of his family are not infrequently under threat from urban crowds. With trouble brewing in Bruges in the summer of 1436, Duchess Isabella tried to leave the town with her young son Charles on 28 August but was arrested near the Cross gate. Her carriage was searched, and according to Monstrelet she was insulted with *rudes paroles* and then *moult troublee* by the searching of the carriage behind hers, containing two wives of nobles who were forced to get out.[39] Monstrelet's account of the Bruges rebellion

[36] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 295v. An unfortunate cooper who found himself within reach of Philip's blade was similarly slain.

[37] Froissart, *Chroniques*, Vol. X, pp. 229–32.

[38] Count Louis de Nevers was detained in Bruges in 1325 for five months; his great uncle John of Namur had been taken prisoner in 1323 and narrowly escaped execution: anon., *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium* in J.-J. De Smet (ed.), *Corpus chronicorum Flandriae*, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1837–65), Vol. I, p. 193; J. Bovesse, 'Le Comte de Namur Jean Ier et les événements du comte de Flandre en 1325–1326', *Bulletin de la commission royale d'histoire* 131 (1965), 385–454; W. H. TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection: Popular Politics and Peasant Revolt in Flanders, 1323–1328* (Philadelphia, 1993), pp. 49–50, 84–6.

[39] Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *Chroniques d'Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, ed. J. A. Buchon, Collection des chroniques nationales françaises 6–7 (Paris: Verdière, 1826–7), p. 270. And see M. Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal, duchesse de Bourgogne: Une Femme au pouvoir au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1998), p. 391.

of 1436–8 paints the town as ruled by a bloodthirsty mob, in which the 'people of little estate' sought to create confusion so that they might have power over the richest.[40] The urban environment could be so fraught that the slightest gesture, however friendly, was liable to fearful misinterpretation. Outside Bruges in 1457, the dauphin Louis, according to Chastellain, was reduced to a state of embarrassing paralysis by the sight of waving torches carried by a welcoming group of foreign merchants, which he mistook for hostile lances.[41] Despite his own urban origins, Chastellain could be highly contemptuous of commoners within the town – in Ghent as well as Bruges – though his description of the dauphin's unkingly bouts of terror serves purposes other than denigration of the town-dweller, for it allowed a favourable contrast to be made with Duke Philip's regal sangfroid in the face of perceived rebellion.[42]

In April 1477, when Mary of Burgundy entered the town shortly after Duke Charles' death, she was faced by discontented demand for the restoration of urban privileges. An official account has her on the *markt*, confronting the 'crafts and commonalty', and in danger of *grand meschief*.[43] Jean Molinet, Chastellain's successor as court *indiciaire*, recounts Maximilian's imprisonment in 1488 in the town as a breakdown of law and order: lack of reason prevailed; the commons rose in a 'horrible commotion'; a 'fever' ran in their blood. The executions of Maximilian's supporters were the 'tyranny of injustice and unreasonableness'. Molinet lingers over the execution of Jan van Nieuwenhove – his torture, dismemberment and disgorging of entrails on to the scaffold – as though to demonstrate the somatic effects of disorder in the body politic. When Maximilian was finally released to swear a solemn oath before the citizens on a stage in the *markt* on 16 May, he encountered a still volatile crowd. As he entered the Cranenburch house first, a 'hideous cry' went up from the people, apparently because they were expecting him to mount the stage first. The cry was so frightening that it caused the assembled churchmen to scatter, discarding their robes and hats so that they could flee all the faster, for fear that they were

[40] De Monstrelet, *Chroniques*, p. 335. Philip the Good's propaganda letter on 23 May 1437 defines the rebellion as a series of 'mutinies, murders and other great crimes'; see J. Dumolyn, 'The Terrible Wednesday of Pentecost: Confronting Urban and Princely Discourses in the Bruges Rebellion of 1436–1438', *History* 92 (2007), 3–20.

[41] Georges Chastellain, *Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain*, ed. M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 8 vols. (Brussels, 1864), Vol. III, p. 303.

[42] The dauphin was apparently put into a similar state of fear in the following year when preparing to enter Ghent (*ibid.*, p. 408). For Chastellain's concealed urban origins, see G. Small, *George Chastelain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 9–50.

[43] See the extract concerning events in Bruges from the *Trésor des chartes* copied into a town cartulary (SAB, 96, 12 (*Groenenbouc* B), fo. 341v).

about to be butchered. But for no reason at all, the tumult subsided just before Maximilian appeared at the window.[44]

The distinct impression created in these chronicles is of the threat represented by urban crowds to the body of the prince. It is not surprising to find in the same accounts that within the town horseback was the preferred form of princely locomotion. The ruler is apparently rarely to be seen on foot. The danger to Louis de Male, lost and distraught in the back streets of Bruges in 1382, seems all the greater, in Froissart's account, for his apparent lack of a horse.[45] It may well be that fifteenth-century townsmen most often saw their prince astride a saddle. The dukes of Burgundy did not apparently hazard impromptu walkabouts into city streets. This impression seems confirmed by the wonderment among the Bruges citizens, recorded by a local chronicler, at the appearance on foot of another ruler, Edward IV of England. On 19 February 1471 he made his way through the town without an entourage from the Gruuthuse residence to the Spey gate to board a boat for Damme. So astonished and pleased were the people at this 'novelty', that they followed Edward on his walk.[46]

What the incident may also reveal, however, is that urban crowds were not always quite as menacing as 'court' chroniclers imply. At any rate the chronicles more closely associated with the civic world – the various versions of the *Chronicle of Flanders* – give a more positive impression of urban stability. Edward IV apparently felt so unthreatened by his journey to the town gate without the assistance of a quadruped that he repeated his performance on the following day, walking the three miles to Damme, surrounded by happy throngs. Even during an urban uprising, townsmen were not as threatening in local accounts as they were in courtly chronicles. Duchess Isabella's arrest in August 1436 is not passed over, and she is made to stand in the rain while her carriage is searched, but she suffers no 'rude words' or personal anxiety.[47] Duke Philip the Good's life is not in danger in May 1437; and in an unregal fit of hot blood, it is he who strikes the first blows that precipitate the ensuing violence.[48] When Mary of Burgundy appeared on the *markt* where

[44] Jean Molinet, *Chroniques de Jean Molinet*, ed. G. Doutrepont and O. Jodogne, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1935), Vol. II, pp. 6–13. 'Voila la justice et raison qui en ce temps regnoit a Bruges' is also Olivier de la Marche's sarcastic comment on the executions: de la Marche, *Mémoires*, Vol. IV, pp. 286–94.

[45] Certainly, according to Froissart, the count is able to effect a discreet exit from the town 'tout seul et à piés', and, on encountering one of his knights, prefers first to call for a horse rather than tell of his adventures (Froissart, *Chroniques*, Vol. X, p. 237).

[46] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 340v. My thanks to Malcolm Vale for first drawing my attention to this episode.

[47] *Ibid.*, fo. 284v. [48] *Ibid.*, fos. 295v–296v.

the 'commons' had gathered on 17 April 1477, in contrast to the official report, there is no suggestion of potential harm to her person.[49]

Even in times of upheaval, there is order rather than chaos. Crowds do not surge through town streets but gather in ordered parades, or *wapeningen*, under the banners of their craft guilds. The chronicles of Flanders describe the rebellion between 1436 and 1438 as a series of such orderly gatherings. In 1477, the town was in a state of some upheaval: the local chronicler describes the 'uproar' in the market place, two days before Mary of Burgundy's arrival there, when people began shouting for the death of corrupt officials. But order was restored, 'in the blink of an eye', by the goldsmiths' dean, who called for everyone to stand under his guild banner – although the chronicler concedes that the call for order was assisted by the timely intervention of the Holy Ghost.[50]

Another local chronicler of events in 1488 gives a very different impression from the one offered by Molinet. There are a few days of 'wild fury', perpetrated by the carpenters' guild in early February, but again the crowds generally appear on the streets in ordered parades under guild banners. The executions of princely supporters do not run to bloody excess. No entrails drop unceremoniously onto bare scaffolding. There are decapitations, but the head of one victim, the lord of Dudzeele, is allowed to fall on to soft red velvet, and his body is given the full funerary rites. Maximilian's oath-taking on the market place on 16 May is an occasion of peace and joy, unmarred by any threat of crowd violence. Throughout, the archduke had been held 'in good protection and safety'. So safe from harm had Maximilian been, that on three successive days in early February he was able to stroll about the crowded market place, on foot, unescorted, hobnobbing in friendly fashion with the artisans.[51]

Maximilian's own letters reveal that his private views of citizens were rather less than admiring. Princes doubtless preferred to keep their distance from common townsmen. Court chroniclers elevate their rulers above the lower orders, both in what they say of them and in what they leave out. The suitability of the future Louis XI to regal status (again in contrast to Duke Philip) is further diminished in Chastellain's account by description of his vulgar familiarity with the Bruges townsmen in 1457.[52] But necessity might force face-to-face encounters between prince

[49] *Ibid.*, fos. 379v–380r. But there were less than complimentary comments about her in the taverns of Bruges: shortly after her entry one Martin vander Beke was overheard calling her an 'ugly black whore' (RAB, *Proosdij*, 1510, fos. 188v–204v).

[50] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 379r.

[51] Carton, *Het boeck*, esp. pp. 180–1, 197, 201, 221–2.

[52] Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, Vol. III, Book 4, p. 302. See E. Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies: Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004), p. 183 for princely reserve in speaking.

and citizens, even commoners, however much Burgundian etiquette dictated otherwise. The Valois dukes may have felt under some pressure to develop the aura of princely magnificence around them, in Charles the Bold's case because of his desire for a crown. But the pressure was not entirely self-imposed, nor did it arise solely from a need to impress an international or courtly audience. The pressure came too from the necessity of engagement with the urban world of towns like Bruges. Princely magnificence competed with urban: the rebuilding of the *prinsenhof* in the late 1390s had been preceded by the town's substantial investment in its own *scepenhuis* in the *burg*, begun in 1376, for which Louis de Male had been invited to lay the first stone;[53] expansion of the princely residence in the fifteenth century paralleled continued embellishment of the façade of the *scepenhuis*, as well as the building of private residences for the wealthiest citizens. Its chapel with bell-tower joined the many other free-standing chapels in the town that had been built by guildsmen.

When the prince emerges from his residence, Chastellain allows him little regular and familiar contact with the common town-dweller, yet he acknowledges it could be 'a necessity' to be seen 'in order to content his people'.[54] Flemish townsmen demanded the personal presence of their ruler throughout the period. There was pressure on princes to be on view and thus on devising means to manage how they were viewed. Some of that pressure came from the growing frequency of occasions when rulers were seen by townsmen. Even the walls of the *prinsenhof* may not always have preserved the prince from the gaze of an urban public. In 1447, a large wooden screen or grille was placed over some upper windows that overlooked the *Moerestraat* so that the duke could see out but not be seen.[55]

### *Joyous entries*

Sight of the prince by citizens, and thus ceremonial procedures, began at the town gates. The ruler's entry into the town had long been subject to formalities. Galbert of Bruges described the arrival before Bruges on 5 April 1127 of the king of France and the newly elected count William Clito. They were met by the canons of St Donatian, who brought out their relics. The following day, at 'the usual place' on the *zand*, then at

[53] Jan van Dixmude, *Chronicke van den prinsen ende graven van Vlaenderen en Brabant van 1377 tot 1443*, ed. J. J. Lambin (Ypres, 1835), p. 231.

[54] '… ce que nécessité estoit d'estre venu droit là pour contenter son peuple corporelle vue': Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, Vol. III, Book 4, p. 70.

[55] '… pour regarder a couvert au long de la dite rue de Moerstrate'; AGR, CC, 27389, fo. 22r.

the outskirts of the town, a charter of St Donatian's liberties was read out, followed by a 'little charter' and agreement between count and burghers over ground rents and rights of toll. Both parties bound themselves by oath on relics brought there by the canons. A few days later, Count William approached the town again and was greeted by a party of youths with bows and arrows, pretending to resist his entry, until he granted them the customary liberty to shoot wildlife in woodlands during the summer months. In the following year on 31 March, clergy and people came out to the *zand* to meet the new Count Thierry of Alsace, who also swore an oath on the shrine of St Donatian. Three days later Count Thierry went in procession to St Donatian's, and then dined at the count's house 'as his predecessors had done'.[56]

Comparisons between entries in Galbert's day with those three centuries later show some continuity of practice. Galbert was describing the first visits of new counts, and throughout the later Middle Ages, an important distinction remained between the first entry of a ruler and entries he subsequently made. The requirement for a new count to appear bodily in the town remained an absolute one: all later rulers – Dampierre, Valois and Habsburg – swore an oath before the people to uphold urban liberties, in return for an oath of obedience. Yet not all the customs described by Galbert survived. By the fifteenth century, pleasure-seeking youths no longer sally forth from the town to greet the prince; the *zand* is no longer a meeting place, having been swallowed up behind new town walls; relics are no longer taken out of St Donatian's; the count can no longer repair for lunch at his house in the *burg*. How the prince was met at his first entry or at subsequent entries, where he was met and by whom, altered considerably: notwithstanding tradition, the entry ceremony was flexible enough to accommodate change. But the interpretation of these changes is not straightforward. Only fragmentary descriptions of entries into Bruges survive even in the fourteenth century; more complete but varying accounts appear in chronicles of the fifteenth century.

Problems of evidence make it harder still to interpret what 'happened' at an entry ceremony – in terms of what it meant to rulers and citizens or what it did, if anything, to their relationship. Modern historiography on the Burgundian dukes tends to place their entries in the context of a shift in balance of power from town to 'state'.[57] Entries

[56] Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, ed. J. B. Ross (New York, 1959), pp. 201, 227–30. Count Baldwin VII (1111–19) had also sworn on relics in St Donatian's (*ibid.*, p. 234).

[57] See generally H. Soly, 'Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd: Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984), 341–61. For a wider discussion of

were unavoidably couched in a framework that favoured the flattery of princely power;[58] the flexibility of the ceremony could be exploited to mark the aggrandisement of state authority.[59] How far entries could also be used to demonstrate urban agendas may be debated; but there are also wider issues worth clarifying. Different approaches to the nature and effects of ceremonial entries have been adopted (or implied). Some tend to emphasise what ceremonies 'did' to participants, others what they 'said' to them.[60] For some historians, the entry is a 'rite of passage', a liminal process in which the normal hierarchies are suspended, emotions heightened and sacred truths communicated; if the ceremony works, participants emerge transformed.[61] For others it is instead a 'vehicle of negotiation' that allows political relations to be 'confronted, assessed and confirmed', or differences between town and prince to be 'sublimated'.[62] Those who adopt a Geertzian approach to ritual stress that ceremonies are more significant for what they communicate to participants, though they might still have transformative potential. Duke and citizens perform a 'microcosmal drama' that shapes the 'imperfect world into an approximation of the supernatural order'.[63] Some historians, however, are reluctant to grant ceremonies such transformative power. For Lecuppre-Desjardin, entries are not tools of state power but instruments in the politics of communication; they are not vehicles of negotiation but 'mirrors' of political intention, 'telling of' state power but not constructing it. Even so, entry ceremonies allowed town and prince to express expectations and political messages but in a different register.[64]

historiography on entries, see G. J. Schenk, *Zeremoniell und Politik: Herrschereinzüge im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 34–80.

[58] P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), pp. 135–6 (though see comments on p. 142).

[59] For Lecuppre-Desjardin's comments on the distance that Philip the Good made townsmen travel out of Ghent to meet him, and the oaths of loyalty that Charles the Bold made townsmen swear: *La Ville des cérémonies*, pp. 141–5, 154.

[60] See A. Brown and G. Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries* c. *1420–1530* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 23–35.

[61] J. D. Hurlbut, '"Vive Bourgongne est nostre cry": Ceremonial Entries of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold (1419–1477)', unpublished doctoral dissertation (Indiana State University, 1990), esp. Chapter 2. Hurlbut also discusses objections to adopting Victor Turner's model.

[62] Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, pp. 157, 212–3; W. P. Blockmans and E. Donckers, 'Self-Representation of Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', in W. Blockmans and A. Janse (eds.), *Showing Status: Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 81–111 (pp. 110–11).

[63] G. Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. pp. 47, 50 n. 4, 114.

[64] Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies*, pp. 151, 231, 302, 324, 327.

Before addressing these issues, the evidence for Bruges entries needs further consideration: what entry ceremonies 'did' or 'said' depended partly on particular circumstances. The value attached by Bruges citizens to the princely entry is suggested by the financial investment that they were prepared to make in the event. Payments in civic accounts are laconic but hint at changing priorities. The most substantial outlay triggered by entries was not for any part of the entry ceremony itself, but for gifts given to the princely visitor shortly after arrival. The right of the count to receive food and wine from his hosts in Flanders had a long tradition; and gifts of wine and other presents to visiting dignitaries appear in the earliest town accounts.[65] Regular though modest gifts were made to the count during the 1330s and early 1340s.[66] These increased under Louis de Male; his first entry as count in 1346 cost the town almost £200 *parisis* in wine alone.[67] Gifts of wine and other presents – usually cloths or silverware – became more frequent in the 1360s and 1370s, and were particularly costly in 1369 when Philip, duke of Burgundy, Louis's eventual successor, arrived.[68] Although Philip as ruler appeared less often, the occasions on which he or his family were received drew even more lavish gift-giving from the town. Philip's wife Margaret was fêted in January 1386, February 1387 and 1390.[69] Gifts to the duke in January 1390 were extensive, and in February 1394, the town's outlay on presents of gold cups, silver dishes and horses to prince and courtiers exceeded in scale all previous gift-giving to its ruler. In September of the same year, Philip's wife was similarly showered with gifts of wine and cloth.[70] So was their son John in 1398,[71] and in the early years of his rule he was in regular receipt of such gifts.[72] Under Philip the Good, courtly residency in Bruges being more frequent, scarcely a year passed in which the civic treasurers did not have to record expenditure on presents to the duke, his family or their entourages to mark their arrival. The scale of gift-giving increased considerably in the fifteenth century.

[65] SAB, 277 (*Presentwijnen*), roll 8 (1290s).

[66] These cost around £40 *parisis* (see town accounts from 1333 to 1343: SAB, 216).

[67] *Ibid.*, 1346/7, fos. 125r–v.

[68] The bill to the town came to more than £750 *parisis* in 1362, more than £1,000 *parisis* in 1368 and over £2,000 *parisis* in 1369 (*ibid.*, 1362/3, fo. 50r; 1368/9, fo. 38v; 1369/70, fos. 38v, 79r–80v). Gifts to the count and his family could still reach in excess of £700 *parisis* in the 1370s.

[69] *Ibid.*, 1385/6, fo. 119r; 1386/7, fo. 130r; 1389/90, fo. 104r.

[70] *Ibid.*, 1393/4, fos. 61v–63r, 64r; 1394/5, fos. 76r–77v (when the cost came to more than £5,000 *parisis*).

[71] *Ibid.*, fos. 91v–92v, 93v–94v. The arrival of John, lord of Nevers set the town back £1,000 *parisis* in gifts; but payment of his ransom cost twenty times this amount (*ibid.*, 1398/9, fo. 48r).

[72] *Ibid.*, 1400/1, fo. 105v; 1403/4, fo. 122v (to 'Our lady of Burgundy'); 1404/5, fos. 132r, 137r; 1406/7, fo. 112r; 1407/8, fos. 98r, 99v, 103r–105r, 108v; 1408/9, fo. 86v;

The cost to the town of gifts to the ruler remained the single most expensive item that resulted from princely arrivals. But there were other costs. Doubtless the entry of a prince had always been accompanied by some degree of visual and auditory splendour. In 1301 King Philip the Fair had been met by the patricians of Bruges sporting extravagant adornments on their garments, though also by a stony silence from many disgruntled inhabitants who had been prohibited from clamouring for the abolition of assizes.[73] The town accounts do not always provide a full picture of the entry spectacle. Jousting also formed part of the festivities – as described in 1301 – but it was not always an expense then met by the town. Civic accounts mention little besides the costs for gifts at entries for most of the fourteenth century; but in the fifteenth century, they begin to record other items. More was spent on features that seem designed to enhance the scale of the ceremony. Fanfares of trumpeters at the town gates and jousting are first recorded in 1405. Torch-carriers preceding the prince are paid for first in 1419.[74] For the first *bliden incomene* of Duchess Isabella in January 1430, the civic officials spent unprecedented amounts on their appearance in Sluis to greet the duchess in advance of her arrival. Jousting to fête her appearance was paid for by the town.[75] In 1440, for the first time, the town paid for tableaux to line the streets through which Duke Philip passed. This entry was an exceptional event (with exceptional costs), marking reconciliation between citizen and duke after the rebellion of 1436–8, but thereafter funding of *historien* and *stomme personnagen* at entries of all kinds became more regular: the town subsidised them on at least twelve occasions between 1440 and 1486. The amount spent was relatively small compared with other items such as gift-giving, and tended to be reserved for first or more significant entries,[76] but the appearance of tableaux marked a distinct alteration of procedure.

1410/11, fo. 112v; 1413/14, fos. 80v–81r, 82r, 83r–v; 1416/17, fo. 124r. By this period too, some more exotic gifts were also being made: falcons, monkeys (1406), rare confections from the East (1411).

[73] The extravagance of display was also a contentious issue: H. Johnstone (ed.), *Annales Gandenses* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 13–14.

[74] SAB, 216, 1404/5, fo. 134r; 1419/20, fo. 93v.

[75] *Ibid.*, 1429/30, fos. 72v–73r. Refusal by 'notable burghers' to fund jousting fully in 1431 (see above, p. 188) may be connected with the growing expense of additional jousts associated with the entry of rulers. Archers also lined the streets to welcome the visitors, though they did not receive civic subsidy (SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), 1397–1422, fo. 168v).

[76] The usual amount spent by the town on *remonstrances* was around £25, though it is clear that guilds were expected to foot some of the bill (see above, pp. 175–6). Expense was exceptionally high in entries in 1440 (£169 for painters' work on the 'plays' and 'stories', and for the stages and gates); 1446 (£117 *parisis* for the best

Relating these changes to shifts in the balance of power between town and prince is not straightforward. On the one hand, the rising expense of gift-giving and spectacle suggests that the advent of rulers was placing the town under increasing pressure. It appears to be part of the financial grip that rulers were tightening around their urban subjects. The cost of entry ceremonies rose steadily in the fifteenth century, and were never higher than for Maximilian's entry in 1486. The magnificence of rulers obliged the town to respond in kind; their growing power, especially from the late 1430s, made demonstrations of urban strength and identity more urgent. 'Dumbshows' were perhaps a belated and rearguard reaction to the threat posed by 'state' power to urban liberties.[77] On the other hand, the pressure was not all one-way. Gift-giving may have been an acknowledgment of subservience, carefully calibrated to mark out social distinction in favour of the ruler.[78] But the gift also placed the recipient under an obligation; the practice of marking vessels of wine, cloths and silverware with the arms of the town served as a reminder of a need to reciprocate, even if in ways that were indeterminate and 'generalised'.[79] Moreover, greater civic investment in spectacle during entry ceremonies, from town gate to *prinsenhof*, prolonged demonstration of civic wealth in the eyes and ears of the visiting ruler.

The question as to whose agenda was being promoted at entry ceremonies is also problematic. Answer to this depends partly on who was controlling the event and what it was supposed to mean. No single group within the town had complete say over the content of tableaux. Part of the task of putting them on was delegated to guilds who could use

*stomme personagen* when the lady of Charolais was present); 1457 when the dauphin also appeared (£290 on 'diverse stories and fine figures'). See also the entries in 1454 for the count of Charolais, in 1462 for Philip the Good and his sister, in 1466 to mark the return of Charles the Bold from his 'wars in France and Liège', twice in 1468 for the first entry of Duke Charles and his entry with Margaret of York, in 1475 for Duke Charles, twice in 1477 for Mary of Burgundy's and Maximilian's first entries, in 1483 for Philip the Fair's 'first entry', and in 1486 for Maximilian (SAB, 216, 1440–86).

[77] See Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies*, pp. 131–2.

[78] The count received the largest quantity of wine, usually more than double the amount of any other individual. In the earliest surviving fifteenth-century accounts of 'present wine' (SAB, 277, 1424/5 and 1425/6), the duke received thirty-two *stoopen* for every day of his visit, the prince of Orange twenty-four, a high-ranking nobleman (such as the lord Lilleadam) or cleric (such as the bishop of Tournai) twelve, important courtiers or officials (lord Gruuthuse or the *schout*) eight, important townsmen six or four.

[79] For discussion of this (with reference to Marshall Sahlins' distinction between the 'balanced' and 'generalised' counter-gift), see M. Damen, 'Princely Entries and Gift Exchange in the Burgundian Low Countries: A Crucial Link in Late Medieval Political Culture', *Journal of Medieval History* 33 (2007), 233–49.

them to showcase their own wealth and status, while there was even less control over the groups of foreign merchants who put on their own pageants.[80] Even so, the multivocality of urban agendas in entries should not be exaggerated. Overall coordination of the event and most tableaux probably rested with the town council or a designated committee.[81] Anthonis de Roovere was the chief rhetorician regularly paid by the town for responsibility over the staging of entries between 1462 and 1477. But whether his 'stories' were designed to present an entirely civic viewpoint is another moot point. His emolument from the town, awarded in 1466, had been granted at the request of Charles the Bold, gratified by the shows that Anthonis had put on. Some of the 'figures' and 'stories' allowed flattering comparisons between the prince and the antique past. Negotiation between townsmen and princely household prior to an entry doubtless took place: perhaps chief citizens colluded in lionising their ruler. On the other hand, on a political level, collusion did not always take place, and interpretation of 'stories' might depend on circumstances: those surrounding the entry in 1440 (when the whole town sought reconciliation with Philip the Good) were different from those in 1486 (when faction divided the civic elite against Maximilian).

How contemporaries interpreted the symbolism of tableaux may have varied. Some kind of message was intended by their organisers, but its political meaning was rarely made clear: most tableaux were biblical and their relevance to the contemporary situation had to be inferred. Whether the message was received as intended by the ruler and his entourage may also be doubted. The chronicles of Flanders, or other sources more closely associated with the urban world, fill folios describing entry tableaux; chroniclers associated with the court – Monstrelet, Chastellain and de la Marche – mention ducal entries into Bruges (as in 1440, 1457 and 1468), but scarcely trouble to record the content of tableaux at all.

Problems presented by the sources contribute to conflicts of interpretation between historians over the symbolic meaning of entries. The entry of Duke Philip the Good on 11 December 1440, his first after the end of the rebellion in Bruges in 1438, has provoked

[80] See for instance B. A. M. Ramakers, 'Multifaceted and Ambiguous: The *tableaux vivants* in the Bruges Entry of 1440', in R. Suntrup and J. R. Veenstra (eds.) *Medien der Symbolik in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), pp. 163–94.

[81] This is clearest in 1515 (see below, pp. 292–3). For earlier indications of coordination, see G. Small, 'When *indiciaires* Meet *rederijkers*: A Contribution to the History of the Burgundian "Theatre State"', in J. Oosterman (ed.), *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede: Literaire cultuur in Brugge op de drempel van de rederijkerstijd* (Leuven, 2005), pp. 133–61.

particular debate. What happened before Duke Philip entered the town seems clear enough: all contemporary sources agree on the ritual of humiliation suffered by the townsmen at the gates. Some 1400 men knelt before the duke, barefoot and bareheaded, and begged for forgiveness. The duke (after a small delay) granted their request, whereupon he was handed the keys of the town.[82] Less clear is what happened afterwards. Monstrelet had little to say about the pageants (and considered it 'tedious' to describe the diversions that took place in the following days), but admitted to a display of civic magnificence. The various versions of the chronicles of Flanders, however, describe the tableaux meticulously. These suggest to Kipling a coherent programme organised around the liturgies of the first and second Advent, in which Duke Philip is invited to identify himself – in imitation of Christ – as the Messiah.[83] He is greeted and led into the town at the Cross gate by the figure of John the Baptist, who calls out for penance: according to a local chronicler, this meant 'that our honoured lord came and that each should make ready to receive him'. The ceremony thus becomes for Kipling 'a secular ritual of princely advent'. The theme of Advent is played out in subsequent tableaux, some of which appear to invite the Messiah/duke to place himself within the holy scene: on top of the Tree of Jesse, in the Nativity crib, as the 'wealthy man' performing the works of mercy. At the same time, however, there is a subtle process of movement intended behind the sequence of the tableaux, from ones that emphasise sin and punishment (such as the fate of Job) to ones that emphasise grace and mercy. The duke might initially be the Messiah, but the town reveals itself as Jerusalem, the town of David, forgiven (like Mary Magdalene) because of its penitence. And at the tableaux of the Last Judgment and of the Day of Resurrection near the end, all stand in need of mercy, the duke included.

However, it is not clear that we can interpret the tableaux holistically or wholly in this way. For Ramakers, the sequence is neither as seamless

[82] Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *Chroniques*, Chapter 251, pp. 117–21; SBB, Hs. 436, fos. 208v–214r; C. P. Serrure and P. Blommaert (eds.), *Kronyk van Vlaenderen 580–1467*, 10 vols. (Ghent: Maetschappy der Vlaemsche Bibliophilen, 1839), Vol. II, pp. 105–11; W. Vorsterman (ed.), *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen* (Antwerp, 1531), fos. 107r–108r; Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. III, pp. 436–41. There were precedents for the ritual of humiliation: in 1328 the citizens of Bruges had suffered a similar submission before the count (Vale, *Princely Court*, p. 270). Whether all citizens were entirely compliant with the ceremony in 1440 is doubtful: a few citizens were punished later by the *schout* for not 'going with their craft' during Philip's entry (AGR, CC, 13773, fos. 86r–v).

[83] Kipling, *Enter the King*, pp. 49–60, 102–14.

nor as systematic as Kipling suggests.[84] Not all the scenes necessarily refer to the liturgy of Advent. Although central direction of the tableaux by the town government is conceivable, the delegation of performance to various groups of guilds, neighbourhoods, clergy and foreign merchants tended to the dissipation of a uniform programme; while the likelihood that certain tableaux (the Tree of Jesse, Mary Magdalene at the feet of Jesus, the Resurrection) were recycled from the Holy Blood procession points to a more ad hoc arrangement. Explicit connections made by chroniclers to contemporary events are later interpolations and are not always uniform. In so far as there was an underlying theme in the tableaux, it appears that Duke Philip was being called to account even more than Kipling suggests. The early tableaux are not so penitential in tone: Job on his dunghill is an image of patient suffering; Abraham has to be restrained from punishing Isaac too severely.

The arguments of both Kipling and Ramakers can be qualified or extended.[85] Where they agree is that the balance of the tableaux themes tilts towards an emphasis on the need for penance, reconciliation and redemption. The tableaux are not so ambiguous or uncoordinated that they fail to make clear that all men are sinners, and that in the ultimate scheme of things the duke, like everyone else, is in need of redemption. But the tone of the tableaux might also be gauged by a further consideration of what the entry ceremony was for. Was there any additional need for the town to exemplify its humble need for forgiveness? Punishment had already been meted out under the terms agreed in 1438; the humiliation of townsmen had occurred outside the town gate. Pardon had already been given; no further restitution was needed. The tone of the early tableaux suggests a sense that not all punishment was justified: Job is the patient sufferer of arbitrary punishment; Abraham is prevented from arbitrarily killing Isaac, the innocent. Further on, Esther persuades Ahasuerus, against advice from evil advisors, to save the Jewish people – who have done nothing wrong.[86] The local chroniclers who connect some of the biblical scenes with contemporary politics seem to assume that forgiveness had already taken place, and had been merited. Mary Magdalene in the house of Simon is supposed to

[84] Ramakers, ‘Multifaceted and Ambiguous’.

[85] See Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies*, pp. 284–7.

[86] For similar use of the theme of Esther and Ahasuerus, see the entry of Joanna ‘the Mad’ of Castile into Brussels in 1496: the text accompanying the tableau insists that just as Esther freed the Jewish people from Haman so Joanna will protect her people from the envious (see B. Franke, ‘Female Role Models in Tapestries’, in D. Eichberger (ed.), *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York and Margaret of Austria* (Leuven, 2005), pp. 155–6.

indicate that 'Our Lord *had* forgiven Bruges of all its crimes through the love that the town had towards him' (my emphasis).[87]

It remains the case, however, that the references to contemporary politics are the chroniclers' own. Explicit interpretation was not given by the tableaux performers or in the scrolls that accompanied the scenes. Direct connection with politics was perhaps not supposed to be drawn. If the town were already forgiven by its ruler, it was not necessary for Duke Philip to be cast in the role of the Messiah. John the Baptist's cry at the town gate – 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; make straight the way of the Lord' – is a call for all present, citizens and duke, to turn away from the earth-bound moment and towards the eternal pattern of salvation, which must ultimately lead to the Day of Judgment. The path towards it requires contrition, good works, forgiveness and reconciliation; the intercession of the saints and the Virgin Mary; the grace of God foreshadowed in the Virgin Birth and the birth of Christ. It is the path mapped out for Duke Philip on his journey from town gate to *prinsenhof*.

The tableaux seen and heard by the duke were archetypal in content, but they also drew attention to the town's special links with the divine, with which Duke Philip was personally familiar. The hymns or psalms sung 'by the best singers in Bruges' that accompanied many of the scenes drew from the rich tradition of singing within Bruges churches – to which Duke Philip, as we shall see, had recourse. Recycling of tableaux used in the Holy Blood procession, which Philip had already witnessed, was more than convenient. It drew attention to Bruges' special association with Christ and his Passion.[88] The Marian references in many of the tableaux had local resonances (see Chapter 3). The tableaux exemplifying the seven works of mercy had a local context. Perhaps Duke Philip, when standing before the first of these scenes, was being invited not to identify himself with the 'wealthy man' performing acts of charity, but to witness the charitable aspirations of the citizens of Bruges. By the fourth scene, after all, the one wealthy man has been joined by others. In the *burg* the scene of St Peter escaping from prison, delivered from the hand of Herod, is interpreted by one chronicler to be a flattering allusion to the rescue of the duke of Orléans from the English by Duke Philip. But the scene had resonances that were visibly more

[87] SBB, Hs. 436, fo. 211v. The chronicler uses the pluperfect more than once when referring to the duke's pardon.

[88] There were other reminders of Bruges' Holy Blood day: representations of the earthly Jerusalem in the procession are echoed in the stages explicitly identifying Bruges with the eternal city, in particular the scene of King David (son of Jesse) at the gate of the *burg*, turned into a triumphal arch, which showed a replica of Bruges. For the plays of the Holy Blood procession, see above, pp. 41–2.

applicable to the town's own achievements: it was staged before the Dark Room prison, a nodal point of civic charity under municipal control, where the dispensing of alms to prisoners could be likened to the freeing of souls.[89]

The tableaux in the 1440 entry are thus representations of Bruges as the town of devotional singing and charitable good works, the town of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Blood. This was the town that municipal authorities had been building particularly since the late fourteenth century. Investment in tableaux of biblical scenes is best seen as a natural extension of municipal funding of religious activity, rather than as a reaction to the encroaching sovereignty of the ruler. Moreover, the tableaux did not convey a straightforward political message. Both duke and citizens were equal before God; Duke Philip was not the Messiah, but neither were the people of Bruges entirely 'Christ-like'. As in the Holy Blood procession, the claim to be the chosen people was an aspiration, not a proud assertion of fact: an aspiration contingent upon continuing penitence and uncertain grace. This was not a 'secular advent' but an event designed to draw attention away from the earthly. The words spoken by performers or written on scrolls were not in the vernacular but in the language of the liturgy. It was a call to inform actions with reference to the eternal truths; how the path to salvation was meant to be followed on earth, how it was meant to relate back to the present, was not spelled out.

Entry ceremonies like these were designed to 'say' and 'do' things to participants. It is difficult to see them as 'vehicles of negotiation' or even as 'dialogues' between prince and town, since there was little specific that was negotiated, and strictly speaking dialogue took place in the planning stages, not during the event. Townsmen who choreographed the entry wished to demonstrate civic prestige and to persuade the ruler of the need to inform action with regard to a wider context of religious imperatives. They used the language of bible and liturgy to give their voice an authority that was indisputably set above the secular realm. But in using this language, any political message became inherently oblique. If entries were 'mirrors' of political intention, they were distorted at best. They did not permit any straightforward assertion of power, nor could there be any certainty in effect.

On balance the entry ceremony served the interests of the town more than it did those of the prince. Undoubtedly there were opportunities afforded by the flexibility of the ceremony for the ruler to display magnificence. When Maximilian arrived in August 1486, newly recognised

[89] See above, p. 220.

as emperor-elect, he appeared accompanied by 1,500 horses (900 more apparently than at his first entry in 1477) and was escorted through the town in a manner never enjoyed by former counts: underneath a gold cloth more usually carried on Corpus Christi day above the Holy Sacrament.[90] There was greater scope, though, for the town council that directed procedures and invested in them with increasing sums, to project an impression of the magnificence and merits of civic society. Tableaux might flatter princely power, but sometimes not without barbed reference to the limitations of that power. The path through the town took the ruler on a journey through topography of civic significance,[91] past the main monuments of municipal power – Belfry, *scepenhuis*, Holy Blood chapel and Dark Room.[92]

But the flexibility of the ceremony was not infinite, and there were elements within it that could not be bent easily to suit the interests either of townsmen or princes. A first entry into Bruges required particular formalities involving one other body within the town: oaths had to be sworn not just to the townsmen but also to St Donatian's. Deference to the liberties and relics of St Donatian had been required of twelfth-century counts; similar deference was demanded of all subsequent rulers. When the chapter act-books begin to record first entries, they describe only the entrance that rulers made at the east gate of the *burg*. In 1384, when Duke Philip and Duchess Margaret arrived in Bruges, the canons came out in procession to meet them not at the Cross gate by the town walls but at the entrance to the *burg*.[93] It was at

[90] Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 116. This was an innovation resulting from Maximilian's royal status, a mark of distinction previously given to French kings and German emperors (see Schenk, *Zeremoniell*, pp. 455–70). The gold canopy seems to have been acquired somewhat hastily and was perhaps not the idea originally of the town council. It had had to be donated by the parish church of St James, apparently under the direction of the Florentine banker Tomasso Portinari, and later the town had to compensate the parish with another canopy for the Host, costing £40, with a border showing the arms of Florence and of the Medici (SAB, 216, 1486/7, fos. 173v–174r).

[91] The point is stressed, for instance, by Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies*, pp. 239–46.

[92] Though not, apparently, in 1468: Charles the Bold was delicately steered away from passing too close to the Dark Room because men had recently died of pestilence there (SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 325v).

[93] BAB, A48, fo. 111r. For the best-detailed interpretation of this entry see J. M. Murray, 'The Liturgy of the Count's Advent in Bruges, from Galbert to Van Eyck', in B. A. Hanawalt and K. L. Reyerson (eds.), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 137–52. On the issue as to where the canons met the ducal couple, the original text in the chapter act-books is somewhat ambiguous. Duke and duchess 'intraverunt villam Brugensis circa horam prandii. Et dominus, decanus et capitulum cum totum chori processionaliter invenerunt eis obviam inducti cappis sericatis usque ad portam burga versus forum …'. In Murray's translation, the canons 'clad in silk robes … went out in procession to meet and accompany [duke

this gate that the couple – until then on horseback – dismounted. Holy water was sprinkled, incense burned: this was holy ground. They were accompanied into St Donatian's to the sound of singing up to the high altar, where they swore oaths on the church's book of privileges. The duke then made offerings of gold to the church. Only after the oath was sworn to St Donatian's did the ruler emerge to make another oath to the people from the *scepenhuis*. Almost exactly the same procedure was followed (or was supposed to be followed) at the beginning of every ruler's reign: in 1405, 1419, 1468, 1477 and 1497.[94]

Not all entries were made without dispute. The town council put pressure on St Donatian's to alter its processional customs. Four days before Maximilian's arrival in 1486, it tried to persuade the canons to join the other clergy in meeting the prince at the Cross gate. There was still heated discussion on the subject the day before.[95] On 18 April 1497, two days before Philip the Fair's first entry into Bruges, the canons were badgered again to process as far as the Cross gate. The canons stood firm against these 'novelties', insisting they would not meet the visitors beyond the *burg* gate. The other clergy of the town or in other towns might meet the ruler at a town gate; they did not.

Thus, when counts first entered Bruges they were required to make not one entry but two: the first through the outer perimeter of the town walls through the Cross gate, the second at the east gate of the *burg* nearest St Donatian's. The requirement to enter this second gate may explain why the counts took the route through the town that they did. It was not one imposed by any lay authorities, who might have preferred alternative routes: entry via the Bouverie gate and along the affluent *Steenstraat* would have allowed, from the townsmen's point of view, a more favourable display of civic wealth.[96] Entry via the Cross gate was dictated by the requirement to reach St Donatian's first, through the

and duchess] to the gate of the burg that opens on the market square', implying that the canons joined the couple in procession before they reached the *burg* gate (or even met them at the Cross gate). But the passage seems to mean that the canons came out (from the church) as far as the *burg* gate to meet the couple there. Later evidence shows that this is what the canons regarded as custom.

[94] The swearing of an oath before the people is not mentioned in 1384, but is recorded in the chapter act-books (and in other sources) in later first entries. For references to these, 1405: BAB, A49, fo. 78v; SAB, 1404/5, fos. 132r–134r. 1419: BAB, A50, fo. 73r; SAB, 1419/20, fos. 106v–108r. 1468: BAB, A53, fo. 272v; SAB, 1467/8, fos. 37v, 69r; SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 325r; ADN, B2068, fos. 84v–85r. 1477: BAB, A54, fo. 125r; SAB, 1476/7, fos. 129v–130r, 142v–143r; SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 376r–v, 396v–397r. 1497: BAB, A57, fos. 86v, 87r–v; SAB, 1496/7, fos. 119r–121r; ADN, B3455.

[95] BAB, A56, fo. 113r.

[96] This was the route followed in 1457 when the dauphin and duke entered (not as a first entry).

main gate of the *burg* on the east side.[97] During their two entries, moreover, the counts were met by townsmen and separately by the canons. Dismounting at the *burg* gate, they entered space defined not at that moment by the presence of municipal buildings, but by the presence of a more ancient and sacred monument. Their oath at the high altar, near the body of St Donatian, and their offerings to the church, were marks of respect not to relics 'dear to the town',[98] but to relics that the canons regarded as their own. Whereas the count received gifts from the town, they had to make offerings to the church.[99] Of all the elements that made up an entry ceremony, it was the traditions associated with St Donatian's that remained the most impervious to change.

### *Churches, relics and guilds*

The arrival of the prince at the *prinsenhof* at the end of an entry ceremony did not mean seclusion within its walls until departure from the town once more. He and his family frequently emerged for many reasons. One reason was to go to church. On some occasions, church-going allowed display of princely magnificence. The significant moments in the life-cycle of ruler and family, such as baptisms and marriages, could be celebrated with courtly processions to town churches. But the need to attend for other reasons might have declined: the *prinsenhof*, equipped with its own oratory and well-staffed double chapel, could accommodate the sacramental needs of the resident family, and could even draw in the town's clergy if required: in 1434 singers from St Donatian's were paid to amplify divine service at the chapel on Ascension Day.[100] But despite the convenience of the princely chapel, visits to town churches seem to have increased during the Burgundian period.

Ducal offerings at mass in the churches of Bruges became more frequent from the 1430s.[101] St Donatian's had traditionally served the

[97] The canons required this route of other important visitors to the church, such as a new provost (e.g. John of Burgundy in 1438) or bishop (e.g. 1463): BAB, A50, fo. 254r; A53, fos. 247v–248r. Lecuppre-Desjardin's elegant image of the count's progress from town gate to *prinsenhof* cutting through the circumambulatory routes of civic processions (as a further demonstration of sovereign power over civic liberties) does not quite take account of the significance of the route for St Donatian's (*La Ville des cérémonies*, pp. 235–6).

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[99] Though St Donatian's did reciprocate with gifts of wine to the counts (BAB, G2, 1384, fo. 6v).

[100] ADN, B1951, fo. 227r.

[101] The following comes from the accounts of the ducal almoner within the ducal 'general receipts' (*ibid.*, B1998–B2061).

spiritual needs of the count's household,[102] and it remained the most frequent recipient of ducal offerings. But from the late 1440s a wider range of churches began to be favoured with princely visits: those of the religious (Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinians and Carthusians), and the parish churches of St Saviour, and especially of Our Lady. There were certain feast days that the duke usually chose to spend in his household chapel when he was in town: Christmas, Easter (and Maundy Thursday, when the duke symbolically washed the feet of fifty poor people).[103] But on almost all other major feast days (Corpus Christi, Trinity, Pentecost or Marian feasts), visits to mass at other churches might be made – even on saints' days that were of particular significance to the duke, such as St Andrew's.

Other members of the ducal family and entourage also visited Bruges churches. The fabric accounts of St Donatian's record separate gifts from the duchess and children. The accounts of the parish poor tables show occasional offerings by household members.[104] When resident in the town, the ducal family, counsellors and household officers required the sacraments. Besides attending mass, they had their marriages solemnised, their children baptised or their wives purified in town churches. Catherine of France, first wife of Charles the Bold, had extreme unction administered to her by a priest from St Donatian's.[105]

Duke Charles' frequent periods of residence in Bruges in the early years of his rule meant more visits to town churches. He was a more assiduous attender of mass than his father, managing to visit thirteen Bruges churches in 1470, including some in which Duke Philip had

[102] Previous counts had made use of other churches: Louis de Male's almoner paid five francs for the offering that the count made in Our Lady's on 25 October 1381 (ADN, B3239).

[103] Occasionally there are offerings recorded when at divine service on Christmas Day and on Good Friday.

[104] Duke Philip gave alms to the poor table of Our Lady's on Our Lady Day in August, when he heard mass there: OCMW, OLV, Register 2, 1426/7 (unfoliated). The master of the poor table of St Saviour's promised to install Pauwels Hooft, fuller, as its servant, at the behest of Isabella of Portugal in 1464 (OCMW, SS, 127, fo. 42r).

[105] BAB, I10 (document dated to 1449). For Catherine of France see *ibid.*, fo. 85v. Witnesses recalled that her banns of marriage had been published in St Donatian's (fo. 90v). Other witnesses testify to the names of some sixty other servants, counsellors and courtiers of the duke, who in living memory had received the sacraments from St Donatian's or had paid redemptions to St Donatian's for burial elsewhere. Witnesses for the other churches in Bruges, however, recalled that another thirty servants and counsellors had received sacraments elsewhere. The most illustrious case was the Gruuthuse family: one witness recalled that Jan van Gruuthuse with all his family had received the sacraments from Our Lady's in 1429; his wife had been purified in the church, their children baptised and buried there (fos. 147v, 162v, 172r–v). For more on this case see below, p. 276.

never made offerings – the Observants, Eekhout abbey, St James' and St Basil's.[106] The absence of household accounts after 1470 makes it difficult to assess whether he kept up this pace. The fabric accounts of St Donatian's and Our Lady's at any rate record further offerings from Duke Charles in 1472 and 1473.[107]

Duke Charles showed a particular interest in the rebuilding of St James' – a project that had enjoyed the town council's approval, the backing of prominent citizens and the collective effort, over more than two decades, of a wider group of parishioners.[108] One of the benefactors was Tomasso Portinari, who also had a chapel founded in the new choir from an endowment managed by the three furrier guilds.[109] His influence at court doubtless sharpened ducal interest in the rebuilding programme.[110] Philip the Good made offerings at the church shortly before his death; Charles the Bold offered there in 1466 and 1477, and heard mass again in 1469. In that year several courtiers made gifts to the church. On 6 May Tomasso Portinari gave part of the £120 he had promised the fabric, and ten days later handed over 100 francs (worth over £14), which Duke Charles had given to the church works. A gift of £8 10s is recorded in the general receipts of the duke in 1470. Charles heard mass in St James' three more times in 1471 and 1472, offering the unusually large sum of 100 crowns on the last occasion.[111] Charles' solicitude towards St James', in which so many citizens had invested considerable effort, no doubt won him favour: the churchwardens record their gratitude to the duke, asking that 'God may protect [him] always'.[112]

The Burgundian court was also involved with guilds that had chapels or altars in these churches. Dukes Philip and Charles were enrolled as members of the prestigious Dry Tree fraternity in the Franciscan friary; so later were Anthony of Burgundy and several other lords and ladies.[113] On two occasions, Duke Charles made offerings to 'see the relics' of

[106] AGR, 1925, fos. 459r–460r; and for offerings to Our Lady's: RAB, OLV, 1217 (1464–71), fo. 264v.

[107] The fabric accounts of Our Lady's and of St James' also record offerings from Charles in 1471, 1472 and 1473.

[108] See above, p. 124.

[109] RAB, SJ, charter 405.

[110] The dukes may have felt some responsibility to the church already: in 1455 ducal receivers compensated the parish for rents it had lost when three houses were demolished to make way for the expanding *prinsenhof* (AGR, *Trésor de Flandre (chartes)*, *1er série*, 1697).

[111] RAB, SJ, 98 (*Rekeningen*, 1464–78), fos. 31v, 47r, 80v–81v, 84v, 98r–v, 117v, 128r, 133r. In 1471 Portinari gave the full £120 for the building of his own chapel in the new choir (*ibid.*, fo. 106r). See also AGR, 1925, fo. 254v.

[112] RAB, SJ, 98 (*Rekeningen*, 1464–78), fo. 81v. Charles' interest in the rebuilding was considered sufficient for the church to send a priest to Antwerp in 1474 to keep the lord chancellor informed of progress on the new doxal (*ibid.*, fo. 169r).

[113] SAB, 505.

the guild within the church.[114] This was the guild most favoured by courtiers: at least twenty-two lords, ladies or Burgundian officials were enrolled as members in the 1460s and 1470s. But less exclusive guilds also caught courtly attention. In 1469, Charles the Bold was enrolled for free in the guild of Our Lady of the Snow, which had enjoyed a recent upsurge in popularity following the miracle attributed to the image.[115] Charles' involvement in the guild was more than perfunctory. In 1470 the provost of Our Lady's noted Charles' special devotion to the cult; early in 1471 Charles made an offering at mass before the altar, and in August the guild paid for a sung mass for the duke, which required the attendance of fifty poor men and two singers hired from St Donatian's. On Sunday 5 April 1472, the duke was present at the guild mass – albeit from the vantage point of Lodewijk van Gruuthuse's oratory, which looked down on the choir end of the church.[116] He seems also to have attended mass at the guild altar itself, surrounded by sixteen foreign ambassadors. He then dined in some style with 'many notable' members of the guild.[117]

Charles' successors continued the Burgundian tradition of guild membership and church attendance, at least initially. There was some continuing though waning courtly interest during the Habsburg period in the Snow[118] and Dry Tree guilds.[119] The fabric accounts of St Donatian's record offerings until 1481.[120] Maximilian attended high mass at St Donatian's twice in 1485.[121] His wife's vigorous efforts in 1479 had drawn particular attention. On seven successive days, from 27 July to 2 August, Mary went to mass in seven different churches: ones with which her family had particular associations (the newly built

[114] ADN, B2068, 1468/9, fo. 359r (December 1468); AGR, CC, 1925, fos. 456v, 465v (April, August 1470).

[115] RAB, OLV, 1531, fo. 27r. His name appears with those of the dukes of Luxembourg and Cleves, the lord Gruuthuse and the ducal chaplain Philippe de Siron.

[116] The oratory, entered via the Gruuthuse residence, was begun in January 1472 and was not completed until 1474; M. P. Martens, *Lodewijck van Gruuthuse: Mecenas en europees diplomat* c. *1427–1492* (Bruges, 1992), pp. 39–42, 47–8.

[117] For references, see Brown, 'Bruges and the "Burgundian Theatre-State": Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow', *History* 84 (1999), 573–4, 585–6.

[118] The count of Romont (who paid for twenty-seven years' membership in 1481–2) was the one main exception to the dearth of nobles or courtiers in the guild after 1476 (RAB, OLV, 1531, fo. 198r).

[119] Olivier de la Marche, doyen of Burgundian ceremony, who continued to serve the Habsburgs, was one notable member after 1486 (SAB, 505 (*Ledenregister*), fo. 17v; *Rekeningen*, fos. 15r, 28v).

[120] Duchess Margaret in 1477, Mary of Burgundy in 1477 and 1481, and Maximilian on Ascension Day in 1480 (BAB, G6 (1470–86), 1476/7, fo. 9r; 1479/80, fo. 15v; 1481/2, fo. 9r).

[121] Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 75.

Colletines and Observants), but also the older Franciscan friary and the three main collegiate churches.[122]

During the fifteenth century, until the early 1480s, the trend had been for rulers of Flanders to visit town churches with increasing frequency. The reasons for attending were various. Aside from any motives of piety, to be seen attending was a demonstration of princely virtue. As servant of the church, a prince might be expected to attend before a wider public. Rulers of Flanders perhaps made a point of going to mass in town churches at the beginning of their rule, or on other occasions when their authority was shaky. Charles made a particular effort to visit Bruges' churches after his first entry; his daughter's daily visits to churches in 1479 occurred at a time of great threat to Maximilian's rule in Flanders.

Visits to town churches brought benefits that not even a large household chapel could offer. Ducal offerings in churches were also made for 'seeing the relics'. The Burgundian chapel was well stocked with its own sacred artefacts, including a piece of the True Cross, but within other churches lay the remains of saintly protectors upon whose patronage it was politic as well as pious to call. Within Bruges, some relics were particularly popular or supported by the town authorities: princely reverence for these relics would be well received. Some of the same relics were also ones with which former counts of Flanders had been associated: the contact that Burgundian or Habsburg families made with these symbolically strengthened their ties to the traditions of town and county.

The body of St Donatian was of special importance. The relics enjoyed a cult that was civic-wide; they had also come to the town with the help of a former count. Of all relics in Bruges, St Donatian's were the ones that Burgundian dukes most frequently made offerings to see. Similarly, the relics of St Basil had also been brought to Bruges by Robert II of Jerusalem, count of Flanders, after the first crusade. On 30 May 1463, these relics were translated to a new reliquary. The scribe of the chapter act-books recalled that Count Philip of Alsace and his son Thierry had been present at an opening of the old relic chest in 1186. There was a symmetry (which the scribe deliberately notes) that another father and son, Duke Philip and Charles, were present for the translation in 1463. It was a big occasion, bringing together church, court and town. The archbishop of Tournai presided over a ceremony witnessed by six highly ranked courtiers and six other important prelates, as well as many townspeople. The scribe also listed a large number of other relic fragments that were housed in St Donatian's.[123]

[122] *Ibid.*, 14–15. [123] See above, p. 121.

Princely interest was also shown in the relics of other churches,[124] but the Holy Blood relic was the object of particular reverence. The relic was visited in its chapel. Charles went to mass in St Basil's in 1470. The second church that Mary of Burgundy visited in July 1479 – the day after the procession she made with the body of St Donatian's – was St Basil's, when she 'came to the Holy Blood'. The relic had already come once to her in May 1478, brought to her lying-in bed in the *prinsenhof* by a priest with a 'notable' of the Holy Blood fraternity.[125] As we shall see, rulers began to require that the Holy Blood be taken out of its chapel on other occasions. But in general, princely association with relics in Bruges was limited to contact that was deferential to civic and ecclesiastical traditions.

### *Civic festivities: jousting and shooting*

The growing level of involvement by rulers in the religious life of the town was matched by a similar engagement with other festive occasions. Jousting was a mark of chivalric and princely behaviour *par excellence*, and the counts of Flanders in the fourteenth century had been active patrons of jousts and tournaments – both in the vicinity of their castles, but also inside the walls of major towns in Flanders and elsewhere.[126] When held within a town, the courtly tournament might draw on civic subsidy. Celebration of the treaty of Lessine in 1352 was marked in Bruges with jousting on the *Vlamingstrate* in the presence of Louis of Bavaria and Margaret of Hainaut, and with the help of civic funds. A three-day joust was more amply funded by the civic treasurers at Christmas time in 1362 for Count Louis de Male.[127] Jousters from the town could attend jousts at courtly venues: Simon van Aertricke and Jan de Hoedemaker were paid by the town to take part in a joust at Male in 1350.[128] But counts also saw fit to participate in the May jousts. Count Louis de Nevers attended in 1333; Count Louis de Male in 1352, 1362, 1363 and possibly in 1380 during the Ghent revolt.[129]

[124] Philip the Good may also have indirectly assisted in the acquisition of a new reliquary containing the arm-bone of St Giles for St Giles' church in 1466 (see above, p. 123). The notarial-public instrument setting out the conditions of the gift included two ducal secretaries, and was witnessed by two ducal chaplains. One of the conditions was that the anniversary for Duke John should continue to be celebrated: RAB, SG, 4, fos. 112r–114r.

[125] SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 413v.

[126] For tournaments, for instance, at Mons, Brussels and Ghent in the 1360s and 1370s, see Vale, *Princely Court*, pp. 184–200.

[127] SAB, 216, 1352/3, fo. 115r; 1362/3, fo. 92v.

[128] *Ibid.*, 1349/50, fos. 119r, 121r.

[129] *Ibid.*, 1332/3, fo. 95v; 1352/3, fos. 112r, 115v; 1362/3, fo. 92v; 1363/4, fo. 96r.

The Burgundian dukes inherited and expanded upon these traditions of civic and princely jousting. Philip the Bold's one prolonged appearance in Bruges at Shrovetide in 1394 was celebrated with jousts. The town spent more on this than it had on any previous jousting event. A courtly air surrounded the occasion: the best jouster won a falcon; maidens from the town attended the foresters.[130] During Philip's rule, the town accounts also began to record expenses for entertaining high-ranking courtiers at jousts. Duke John's more regular appearances increased the number of occasions when extra jousts were held in Bruges (1405, 1411, 1415 and 1416). On other occasions, the town also contributed more frequently to jousts performed by nobles and courtiers within its walls (1401, 1408, 1412 and 1413).[131] Duke John himself was present for jousts within the town on two occasions, his son on one.[132]

From the beginning of Philip the Good's reign, the presence of rulers and courtiers at jousts within town walls became more regular.[133] Jousting activity was suspended from 1434 until the early 1440s during the period and aftermath of urban rebellion. But with peace granted, jousting resumed. The years from 1444 to 1470 witnessed the high-point of Burgundian activity in towns: chivalric events were more frequent and more heavily funded by both court and town. Charles the Bold was a particularly enthusiastic jouster, until field warfare after 1472 took him away from town and lists. In the early years of Habsburg rule, with rulers once more visiting regularly, jousts involving the prince were continued. The highest expenditure on jousts was made by the town in the early 1480s when Maximilian attended.

The years between 1444 and 1470, and between 1478 and 1481, were also the most intense periods of princely involvement in urban shooting contests. In this, Burgundian rulers did not build on tradition in the way that they did with jousting. The bow did not carry the same chivalric kudos as the lance, and nobles and princes were slower to involve themselves in urban shooting matches than they were in urban jousts. Although the Bruges crossbowmen had annual contests established by the 1330s, the Dampierre counts do not appear to have attended them. In the early Burgundian period, there are few indications that the dukes or courtiers participated in Bruges' competitions, though the

130 *Ibid.*, 1394, fos. 64r, 67r, 67v.

131 For the lord of Sampol on 25 August 1401: *ibid.*, 1400/1, fo. 108v; for the lord of Steenhuse and Roland van Uutkerke in November 1412: *ibid.*, 1412/13, fo. 78v.

132 In 1405, 1411 and 1416 (*ibid.*, 1404/5, fo. 134r; 1410/11, fo. 113v; 1415/16, fo. 104v).

133 See A. Brown, 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages: The White Bear of Bruges', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 78 (2000), 315–30, esp. pp. 329–30.

count of Nevers attended the papagay in 1388.[134] But the larger-scale competitions of inter-urban events were beginning to excite princely interest: like more than forty other towns, Bruges sent a contingent of crossbowmen to the event at Oudenaarde in 1408 at which John the Fearless himself competed.[135]

It is not until the 1440s that we first hear of the duke attending the Trinity papagay match in Bruges.[136] But Duke Philip had been involved with the St George crossbowmen for some time, or at least his interest in the guild had already been courted. In 1437 a new guild book listed its members, beginning with the names of Duke Philip and several high-ranking courtiers. In the 1460s the ducal family also began to involve itself in the festivities of the less prestigious archery guild of St Sebastian. Anthony of Burgundy was elected 'king' in 1463 for his skill in shooting down the bird, and attended the archery and the guild banquets over the next three years.[137] On the night of Good Friday 1467, Duke Charles visited the guild chapel and made an offering of two crowns to the relic of St Sebastian there.[138] Maximilian continued Burgundian precedent in 1479 by attending the St George papagay and banquet as 'king' of the guild on 9 May, a few days after parading at the *vespereye* and jousts of the White Bear.

The increasing level of involvement by dukes and courtiers in urban jousts and shooting matches may be interpreted in several ways. Doubtless it could serve to demonstrate princely authority over urban subjects. The local chronicler who recorded Maximilian's appearance at the *vespereye* on 25 April 1479 was compelled to note that his magnificent parade from the *prinsenhof* was made with 800 horses. The jousting list was the ideal venue for princes to demonstrate chivalric prowess and display their bodies to their best advantage – on horseback.

Some jousting occasions were more demonstrative of princely authority than others. One of the trends in Burgundian chivalric activity was the increasing use of the *pas d'armes*, a form of jousting that in theory excluded all but the most noble from taking part.[139] On at least five

[134] SAB, 216, 1388, fo. 112r. [135] See above, p. 173.

[136] In May 1444 a papagay was presented by the town to the count of Charolais when he was made 'king' (SAB, 1443/4, fo. 62r). Duke Philip was apparently present at the papagay of June 1446, when the lord of Etampes and Simon de Lalaing competed (C. Custis, *Jaerboek der stad Brugge* (Bruges, 1738), p. 54; SAB, 1445/6, fos. 54r, 65r).

[137] It may be that his skills were honed by covert practice within the *prinsenhof*: in 1461 a barrier was erected there to prevent arrows and crossbow quarrels from causing injury to anyone outside the tennis court, where Philip the Good had installed two *versaux*, or *buytes* (ADN, B4106, fo. 92r).

[138] ASSB, *Rekeningen*, 2 (1466/7). [139] See above, p. 143.

occasions between 1449 and 1472, the court held *pas d'armes* in Bruges at which citizens were spectators rather than participants, their market place all but hidden behind the drapery and scaffolding required for the courtly occasion. The *pas du perron fée* in 1463 saw Philippe de Lalaing taking on all-comers;[140] in 1468 Anthony of Burgundy played out this role in the *pas de l'arbre d'or* (until kicked by a horse's hoof, which forced him to spend the rest of the *pas* prostrate on a litter).[141]

Some shooting matches were different in kind from others. The large-scale events involving many towns were ones that the Burgundian dukes had particularly sought to patronise. These increase in frequency from 1440, beginning with the event at Ghent, attended by representatives from more than fifty towns across the Low Countries, including ten Bruges crossbowmen who were accompanied with a retinue of almost 400 men. The town paid for its crossbowmen to attend at least six other similar events until 1458 – three of them outside the county of Flanders.[142] The dukes' encouragement of these events was perhaps part of a deliberate policy to develop a sense of pan-regional identity among territories newly brought together under their authority.[143]

However, the *pas d'armes* and the large-scale inter-urban matches were relatively rare events. A more common sight for Bruges citizens was Burgundian appearance at their local May festivities. Occasionally, the town put on additional events at other times of the year for the benefit of the prince or members of his household, but these too were less common than courtier attendance at papagay and White Bear jousts. Rulers and courtiers were also more likely to appear at these local events than citizens were to attend jousts or shooting contests hosted by the prince in other towns. The doyens of the exclusive *pas d'armes*, like Anthony of Burgundy and Philippe de Lalaing, did not shun the urban jousts of the White Bear.[144] Moreover, Bruges jousters and shooters frequented competitions within Flanders more often than they did competitions

[140] F. Brassart, *Le Pas du perron fée* (Douai, 1874); GVS, Vol. V, p. 533. The original civic account for the year 1462/3 is also now lost.

[141] See Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, p. 77.

[142] See above, pp. 79–80. For contingents sent to Ghent in 1440, Brussels and Sluis in 1444, Damme in 1447 (a *grote sceitspele* attended by Philip the Good), Sluis in 1451 (where Simon de Lalaing and the lord of Etampes were present), Stavele in 1454, Tournai in 1455, Mechelen in 1458: SAB, 216, 1439/40, fo. 52r; 1443/4, fos. 63r, 71r; 1453/4, fo. 53r; Custis, *Jaerboek*, pp. 57–8 (1447); SAB, 216, 1457/8, fo. 65r.

[143] See Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, pp. 83–91.

[144] Philippe de Lalaing was present at the May jousts in 1448 (SAB, 216, 1447/8, fo. 44v); Anthony of Burgundy carried off a succession of prizes from the May jousts in 1454, 1455, 1456, 1458, 1459, 1461, 1463, 1468, 1470, 1472 (*ibid.*, 1453/4, fo. 49r; 1454/5, fo. 49v; 1455/6, fo. 51v; 1457/8, fo. 61v; ADN, B2304, fo. 209r (1459); Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, pp. 19, 53, 76–7).

beyond the county – even after 1440. The accounts of St Sebastian's guildsmen in the 1450s and 1460s reveal a highly active round of competitions between them and archers from towns or villages all within Flanders. The local cycle of annual competition in Flanders had not expanded to encompass the wider territorial dimensions of ducal rule.

Ducal involvement in urban jousts and shooting was principally about engagement with local traditions of festivity. Involvement provided occasions to cultivate ties with local elites – with guilds, like St George's, that were locked into the structure of urban government and ceremony, and with individuals, like the White Bear jousters, whose families were prominent on town councils or in the economic life of the town and beyond. Shooting guilds numbered several hundred members from diverse occupational backgrounds: participating in their events or becoming honorary 'kings' allowed dukes and courtiers contact, physical as well as symbolic, with a wider circle of the town's elites.

The cultivation of these ties could be put to political ends. Burgundian dukes on occasion made direct interventions to secure selection of town councillors favourable to their interests, but it was by festive contact that more subtle influence over the town council was exercised. Moreover, jousters and shooters had military uses. The forester Philip van Aertricke served with Philip the Good's army in 1419. The Flemish militia continued to be of significant service to the Burgundian dukes at least until the 1440s. When the St George crossbowmen compiled their new guild book in 1437, they listed within it the princely campaigns in which they had fought, dating back to 1380. The account moves seamlessly on, without reference to the change in dynasty, to the services rendered to the dukes of Burgundy at Biervliet 1388, at Sluis against the English in 1405 and – outside Flanders – at Ham in 1411.[145] Military service to the prince was a duty evidently still valued, and could be bent to the ruler's will.

Flemish militia continued to be called upon for service until the 1460s, although perhaps with greater reluctance after the defection of the Bruges militia during Philip the Good's siege of Calais in 1436. Ducal military needs escalated under the bellicose Charles the Bold. These needs led to the establishment in 1476 of an entirely new St Sebastian archery guild in Bruges over which ducal control was greater. The new guild's local activities were not quite focused within the town itself: they were based in the parish of St Cross, the boundaries of which stretched beyond the town walls (where the church itself lay), and which fell under the jurisdiction of the *proosdij* of St Donatian's. The provost

145 SAB, 385, Register, fos. 60r–66r.

at the time was Anthonis Haneron, tutor of Charles the Bold and his *maître d'hotel*. The guild rules show a tighter alignment with princely requirements than was the case with other guilds in Bruges. The archers were to gather only with the permission of the provost's bailiff; they were to wear the Burgundian cross of St Andrew and the black lion of Flanders on their livery; and were to serve the prince unpaid if fighting within Flanders, and paid if they fought without.[146]

In general, however, the military support of Flemish shooters was called upon less frequently after the mid fifteenth century. Charles the Bold came to prefer the security of a standing army and the less reliable services of Italian mercenaries. In any case, princely cultivation of Bruges jousters and shooters had been more about investment in political capital than in military resources. Contact made with influential families at festive events could be turned to political advantage. Count Louis de Male's appearance at the lists in Bruges in the 1350s occurred at a time when he needed Flemish support in his efforts to detach the duchy of Brabant from the empire. His need after 1379 for support against Ghent was particularly acute. His presence in Bruges in 1380 was perhaps instrumental in the change in name adopted by the Bruges jousters around this time.[147] Reference to 'White Bear' and the 'forester' conjured up the legendary history of the counts. Louis himself had wished to cultivate memory of his heroic ancestors for a Flemish audience: by 1374 he had images of his predecessors, back to Liederic de Buc, painted full-length – with inscriptions in Flemish – on the walls of his chapel at Kortrijk.[148] In 1380 he would have welcomed the adoption for the Bruges jousts of names that were associated with his heroic ancestors. Interweaving the civic traditions of Bruges with the wider history of comital Flanders might have encouraged the loyalty of one Flemish town against another.

In times of crisis or rebellion, the Burgundian dukes could find support in the town from individual jousters: Jacob Breydel in 1411; Morissis van Varsenare in 1437. When Maximilian's relations with Bruges began to deteriorate seriously after 1486, loyalty to his cause could be found among former White Bear jousters and among the governors of the shooting guilds.[149] In calmer times, festive contact with civic elites served financial purposes. It was easier for rulers to request

146 SAB, 96, 20 (*Proose en kannunikse*), fos. 57v–59v; and F. Dewitte, *500 jaar vrye archers van mynheere Sint Sebastiaen te Sint-Kruis-Brugge* (Bruges, 1975).
147 See above, pp. 139, 142.
148 F. Vandeputte, 'La Chapelle des comtes de Flandre à Courtrai', *ASEB* 10 (1875), 189–212; and Vale, *Princely Court*, p. 230.
149 See above, pp. 192–4.

loans and taxes from town councillors with whom ties had been nurtured in the amicable atmosphere of chivalric or guild activity. The connection between taxes and goodwill was sometimes explicitly made. A letter from Charles the Bold that came before the town council in February 1466 began with Charles expressing (in Flemish) a 'heartfelt thanks' to the 'good men and commonalty of Bruges' for the 'good and hearty cheer' that they had shown him, and for the loan of £800 during the last expedition he had made into France, 'for the welfare of all the lands of the duke of Burgundy, Brabant and the county of Flanders', for which his father had been most fearful 'as everyone knows'. But the costs of this and the expedition against the Liègeois had been great, so that if further 'good cheer' were to continue, the loan of £800 would need conversion into outright gift.[150] Such a demand was hardly welcome to any townsman, but it may have been more warmly received by a town council that then included nine White Bear jousters, seven St George crossbowmen, two St Sebastian archers and eight Dry Tree guild members.[151]

However, rulers could not expect that submission to requests would automatically follow from goodwill fostered during festive encounters. Even Charles the Bold's request in 1466, if not entirely absent of menace, was hedged with ingratiating language. Rulers presented their interest in civic ceremonies clothed in words that citizens liked to hear: Duke Philip the Good's letter permitting the crossbow match at Ghent in 1440 expressed a desire that the coming event would 'maintain good peace and unity', and 'raise spirits' following the afflictions (war, plague and famine) recently visited on 'the common folk of our city'.[152] The entry of princes into town lists and archery fields was more an exercise in ingratiation than imposition of a princely presence on the urban landscape: participating as jouster or shooter, the ruler appeared as a first among equals rather than as sovereign lord, being elected 'king' or winning prizes like other contestants. On occasion, such participation was the result of political weakness rather than strength: it was not from a position of security that Louis de Male in 1380, or Maximilian early in his rule, attended Holy Blood processions, May jousts or shooting contests.

Moreover, rulers could not always count on the support of shooters or jousters, however much festive dalliance they had enjoyed with

[150] SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwe Groenenbouc*), fos. 208r–v.

[151] There were a total of thirty-five councillors, treasurers and 'headmen' who had been elected to office in September 1465 (SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), iii, fo. 1r). Seventeen of their names can be found in one or more of the sources for members of these guilds or groups.

[152] Quoted in Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, p. 85.

them. Members of the civic elite might have tended to side with the prince against other citizens, but they were never entirely united behind service to him. Faction within the elite was even more evident after 1477 because of hostility to Maximilian's rule.[153] The political troubles in 1488 did not just separate a jousting elite from the more populist regime: it also divided former White Bear members against each other. The jousters did not form a useful basis of political support to which Maximilian could turn.

The new St Sebastian guild, directly serving Charles the Bold, was also of little use during the troubles of the 1480s. The guild leaders – Adrian Drabbe, Jooris Ghyselin and Victor Hugheyns – supported Maximilian, but were forced to flee the town in 1488. In any case, the guild was not of great influence in town politics. The older shooting guilds kept the new St Sebastian guild at more than a bow's length. In 1490 the town council was to order the St Sebastian guild to hold their own papagay at least a mile away from the town walls. In 1503 the guild was instructed to refuse admission to Bruges *poorters* unless they lived outside the town; its annual shooting match was not to take place before that of other guilds within the town.[154] The St Sebastian guild, with its duties of military service to the prince, was never integrated fully into the political and festive life of the town.

The other shooting guilds of Bruges, even the White Bear jousters, were more closely linked to urban life and government, but their contests did not always serve princely need. Rulers may have wished to use ludic events to demonstrate magnificence, but Bruges town councils had their own reasons for funding them. For most of the fifteenth century they supported the rising costs, and invited rulers to be present.[155] They were also prepared to subsidise *pas d'armes* or jousts for courtiers within their walls. In 1449 they begged Jean de Luxembourg to hold his *pas de la belle pèlerinne* within the town. On this occasion the *pas* was held at St Omer, despite another rival bid from Lille, but in August of the same year Bruges did pay for a joust between the distinguished bastards of St Pol and St Foix on the *vrijdagmarkt*. The town also paid more than £500 towards Philippe de Lalaing's *pas de la perron fée* in Bruges in 1463.[156] A meeting of the town magistrates, the six 'headmen' of the *poorters*, and the 'heavy deans' even agreed to pay Anthony

[153] See above, pp. 192–4.

[154] ASSB, charter 11 (H. Godar, *Histoire de la gilde des archiers de S.-Sebastien de la ville de Bruges* (Bruges, 1947), pp. 142–5).

[155] See the gift made by the duke to the pursuivant *ours blanc* in 1445, who came to Ghent to invite him to attend the jousts in Bruges (ADN, B1988, fo. 82r).

[156] GVS, Vol. V, p. 533. The original town accounts for this year are now missing.

of Burgundy a certain sum for holding a *passe en faite van wapeningen*, which he had tried to hold in 1462 (and to which no one had apparently come).[157] To have towns footing the bill for its courtly games, or having them compete among themselves for courtly favour, no doubt served the interests of rulers. Even so, civic authorities had their own purposes for attracting princes to their festive events. The jousts and shooting contests promoted 'the honour of the town', and their celebration elevated townsmen to a level of social prestige with which princes and nobles saw fit – and at times felt compelled – to engage.

## Ceremony in the absence of the prince

### *General processions 'for the prince'*

Ceremonial contact with townsmen did not end when the prince left the town. Besides personal appearances in church or at festive events, more impersonal links between town and princely government were also developed during the fifteenth century. The still itinerant court was supported by an expanding financial and judicial infrastructure. More bureaucrats impinged upon the town; more townsmen were drawn into the apparatus of impersonal government. The demands of the 'state' on civic resources unquestionably increased. One of the means through which demands or needs were communicated was through the growing use made by rulers of general processions.

The rising number of general processions in Bruges is best explained with reference to the requirements of civic government (see Chapter 2). Yet the liturgy associated with this kind of procession contained a tradition that permitted its use for the benefit of a ruler. The chapter act-books of St Donatian's state that general processions had three main functions: to pray *pro aere*, *pro pace et pro principe*. Greater use of such processions by kings of France has been detected from the 1380s.[158] Princely need was behind the earliest references to general processions in Bruges. A procession set out after the count of Flanders' victory against Ghent at Nivelles in 1381; another set out in November 1382, following news of his victory at Westrozebeke, in which the Bruges militia had been involved. On this occasion the clergy processed with

[157] SAB, 96, 14 (*Nieuwe groenenbouc*), fos. 172r–v. The sum in question is not stated, and the town accounts for 1462/3 are missing. For the jousts attended by Anthony of Burgundy in October and on 17 December 1463 on the occasion of the marriage of Adolphe of Cleves with Catherine of Bourbon, see ADN, B2501, fo. 276v.

[158] J. Chiffoleau, 'Les Processions parisiennes de 1412: Analyse d'un rituel flamboyant', *Revue historique* 114 (1990), 37–76.

torches to a crowded market place to give thanks for peace.[159] Moreover, the first payment for a general procession in the town accounts occurs in 1408: this was to support Duke John against his 'enemies' in Liège.[160] The siege of Liège was an event in which the Bruges militia were involved.

The procession in 1408 followed a period in which the ruler's presence in the town had become more frequent. Duke John's fêted first entry, his attendance at the Holy Blood procession and his involvement in the May jousts were all occasions for sociability with civic elites. The duke had also begun to seek more control over the selection of town councillors. The town's payment of a procession in support of the duke's campaign was a natural extension of these efforts. Whether the duke himself, or ducal officials, were directly behind the initiative to organise the procession is not clear. Fuller evidence available for later periods suggests that rulers could indeed send letters to the town explicitly asking for processions. But the decision generally seems to have been taken by the town council. Either way, processions 'for the prince' potentially offered a valuable tool for the communication of princely need.

Up to the 1470s (when other sources become more plentiful), reasons for general processions have to be adduced mostly from the laconic references to them in town accounts. Some processions were intended to announce news of princely activity and to generate both civic and saintly support for princely ventures. Duke John's activities in Paris between 1410 and 1414 were supported by prayers, sermons and processions in Bruges.[161] Wider dynastic ambitions beyond Flanders could be brought to the attention of Flemish citizens. Philip the Good pursued claims over Holland and Zeeland while enjoying prayers and sermons in Bruges during a procession to the Wijngaard béguinage in August 1433 'against his enemies'.[162] Processions could alert citizens to significant moments in the life-cycle of their rulers: from the joys of Burgundian births to the perils of bad health or approaching death.[163]

159 See above, p. 78.

160 SAB, 216, 1408/9, fo. 85v. St Donatian's had paid for a sermon to be preached in 1407 for the 'prosperity of the duke at Calais' (BAB, G2, 1406/7, fo. 7v).

161 In December 1410 for the 'good news' concerning the prince in Paris; 17 July 'for our prince in Paris'; March 1414 for 'our lord and prince's journey from Paris', as well as (what appears to be) another seven general processions that took place between September 1413 and September 1414 for 'peace and rest' and 'for our prince': SAB, 216, 1411/12, fos. 93v, 98v; 1413/14, fos. 86r, 90r.

162 *Ibid.*, 1432/3, fo. 86r.

163 For several processions in 1462, 1463 and 1467 'for the health of our prince' – Philip the Good at the end of his life – see *ibid.*, 1461/2, fos. 52r, 52v, 53r, 57v; BAB, A53, fo. 232v. For a procession 'on the joyful news of the birth of the dauphin's son' in July 1459: BAB, A52, fo. 110r.

Under Charles the Bold there was a significant increase in the number of general processions (see Figure 2.1). Direct princely initiative for these events was partly responsible. On 12 July 1474, the chapter act-books record (for the first time) that the request for a general procession had come from the town council, in response to its receipt of letters from the duke. Unusually, the clergy were being asked to process on three successive days.[164] Duke Charles was certainly aware of the potential value of these processions. In 1475 he sent letters to his *bonnes villes* asking for sermons and prayers on his behalf: following peace made between France and England, a large number of processions and sermons had been made in France in which he had been covertly criticised; so it was his wish that his own towns should undertake solemn processions, in which notable preachers, secretly and suitably instructed, should assure his citizens of his 'great desire, will and affection' for 'guarding and preserving peace', and for protecting his subjects from grief and harm, which he had done with great care, effort and risk to his own person.[165]

Under his rule, the growing frequency of processions was matched by an increase in the number of relics used. In late August 1465 the Holy Blood relic was sent on a general procession for the first time. This was done to petition divine protection for Charles on campaign in France.[166] Such use of the Holy Blood relic, which had never been processed in the town except at the annual May processions, began a precedent. By the end of Charles' reign, the Holy Blood had been dispatched around the town a further five times. The occasions were usually connected with Charles' military needs: Charles fighting the French king in 1472, or besieging Neuss in 1475.[167]

The Holy Blood enjoyed little rest following Charles' death. In 1477 it was carried on two general processions within the space of two months.[168] By the end of 1486, it had been processed another eight

[164] BAB, A54, fo. 45r.

[165] GVS, Vol. IV, p. 108. I have not found the original document for this. For counter processions in the empire, see G. Signori, 'Ritual und Ereignis: Die Straßburger Bittgänge zur Zeit der Burgunderkriege (1474–1477)', *Historische Zeitschrift* 264 (1997), 281–328.

[166] On 4 September, the Holy Sacrament was also taken on a general procession for the first time to give thanks for his safety following news of his 'victory' at Monthléry. For references see above, pp. 79–80. Despars seems to have conflated the two processions, for he refers to the procession with the Holy Blood being undertaken as 'thanksgiving' for Charles' 'victory' (*Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. III, p. 568).

[167] February 1471; Mary Magdalene day 1472, 'against the French king'; May 1475; July and September 1477: SAB, 216, 1470/1, fo. 122r; 1471/2, fo. 122r; 1474/5, fo. 138r; SB, Hs. 437, fo. 362v; and AHB, Register 18, fos. 6r, 13v, 30r, 39r; SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 362v (1475).

[168] 22 July and 8 September (SAB, 216, 1476/7, fo. 137r; 1477/8, fo. 134v; SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 353r, 398v; AHB, 18, fo. 39r).

times.[169] Once again, the reason most often given was the threat of French forces, which had become greater in the early years of Maximilian's rule. There were other novelties. Maximilian sought to be seen closer to the relic than his predecessors. Burgundian dukes are not known to have participated personally in processions. But on 8 September 1477 Maximilian and his wife walked behind the Holy Blood in procession to 'ask the grace of God against his enemy'; and when news came to Bruges that Maximilian had been successful against Louis XI at Guinegate in August 1479, his wife in thanksgiving walked barefoot behind the relic, accompanied by torches with arms of the town and those of the Holy Blood fraternity. Maximilian again positioned himself in a procession next to the relic on 16 August 1486.[170]

The Holy Blood was made to process further as well as more frequently. To pray for her husband's success, Mary asked on 17 May 1479 for the relic to be taken to the hospital of Mary Magdalene outside the town walls – further than the relic had ever travelled on a general procession before.[171] On 27 March 1482, with Mary on her deathbed, the Holy Blood and the body of St Donatian – an exceptional combination of relics – were processed once again outside the town gates to the Carthusian priory.[172]

The exertions of the Holy Blood relic were made within a context in which processions were more frequent and the combination of relics used more various. Moreover, the routes taken by some processions were also new. Relics on procession seem generally to have followed time-honoured routes: certain relics had their own *via sacra*.[173] But unusually, on two occasions in 1478, general processions were guided round the Bruges *prinsenhof*.[174] The first, on 8 May, was prompted by

[169] 17 May 1479 (Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 12; SAB, 216, 1478/9, fos. 171v; AHB, 18, fo. 48r); 9 August 1479 'for good news of victory over the French' (Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 15–16; SAB, 216, 1478/9, fos. 174r–v; 1479/80, fo. 150v for 'bringing the standard of Bruges' following 'the prince's victory against the French, to hang in the chapel before the Holy Blood'; AHB, 18, fo. 48r); 27 August 1481 'for the serenity of the airs' (Carton, *Het boeck*, 37; BAB, A55, fo. 133r; SAB, 216, 1480/1, fos. 155r, 182r); 27 March 1482 (for the duchess Mary *in extremis*) and 8 September 1482 (Carton, *Het boeck*, 43; SAB, 216, 1481/2, fos. 147r, 160r; 1482/3, fo. 151r; BAB, A55, fo. 162v); 22 June 1483 'for peace' (BAB, A55, fo. 213v; Carton, *Het boeck*, 54; SAB, 216, 1482/3, fo. 165v); 9 August 1485: *ibid.*, 1485/6, fo. 157v; 16 August 1486 (Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 131–2; SAB, 216, 1485/6, fo. 179r); AHB, Register 18, fo. 76r, *als de keyser … was ghetrocken naer Vrankereyke*).

[170] Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 16, 131–2.

[171] *Ibid.*, p. 12; BAB, C445.

[172] BAB, A55, fo. 162v; Carton, *Het boeck*, p. 37.

[173] The favoured routes of particular relics can be traced from the following sources: SBB, Hs. 437; Carton, *Het boeck*; and SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*; see map I.1).

[174] SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 413r–v (8 May), 418r (24 June).

Maximilian's expedition to Haec in Hainaut 'against his enemies'; the second, on 24 June, was to give thanks for the birth of Mary of Burgundy's son Philip. It is as though the centre of princely power within the town was by then exerting a stronger gravitational pull on relics in Bruges.

Processions were occasionally exploited for secular purposes. According to Despars, a general procession was ordered by the town magistrates on 1 June 1485 to pray for the prosperity of Flanders.[175] The context was one of mounting crisis: in March, Maximilian's supporters had been removed from civic office, some banished, some executed; his armed forces were conducting pillaging raids on the surrounding countryside. Despars describes how the Sacrament was carried from St Donatian's along its accustomed route. As the cortège reached the *burg* once more, a group of highly ranked courtiers, including the chancellor of Brabant, Philip of Burgundy, clattered into the square on horseback. Among them also was Jan van Nieuwenhove (son of Clais), notwithstanding his recent removal from civic office. A herald stepped out before the gathering of people, and shouted: 'Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!'. The chancellor began to speak: great had been the desolation and tribulation suffered by Flanders since the death of Duke Charles; much had Maximilian done to fight their enemies, the French, and protect the land of Flanders. What would the people prefer, he cried, peace or war? As one they shouted in reply: 'Peace! Peace!'. The chancellor proceeded to read out the peace conditions, conditions that hitherto not everyone in Bruges had been prepared to accept: recognition of Maximilian as guardian of his children, the payment of taxes for his campaigns and for Margaret of York. The people agreed with one accord.

There is scarcely a better example, it would seem, of princely manipulation of a sacred occasion. The heightened state of penitence that the procession was supposed to generate among citizens perhaps made them more suggestible to the words of an orator. Yet there were no guarantees that the effects of procession and speech would last. A mood of penitence could quickly evaporate: goodwill generated towards Maximilian was to disappear within a month. There was also a more fundamental limitation to such attempts at manipulation. Citizens listened best to words they wanted to hear. The chancellor had to present his case with circumspection. He could not make a direct appeal for military help. His theme was peace. Support for Maximilian on the battlefield, he implied, was ultimately the best means to secure it. Peace was the word

[175] Despars, *Cronijke van Vlaenderen*, Vol. IV, pp. 251–5. This procession is not mentioned as paid for in the civic accounts.

that prompted such a Pavlovian response among the people present. The ideal of peace was deeply ingrained in civic society, and must have seemed a distant prospect in 1485. Proclaiming the prince's desire for peace would play better with townsmen than outright requests for support in war.

Duke Charles had known this too. His letter in 1475 ordered his preachers to reassure their audience of his great desire for peace rather than prayers for victory. Given Charles' evident martial proclivities, this might have required sermons of some ingenuity. To citizens, success on the battlefield mattered less than the securing of peace, unless the one led to the other. Chronicles in the 1470s and 1480s show that processions arranged during wartime invariably coupled prayers for the prince with prayers for peace. Certain relics were particularly appropriate for the purpose of invoking peace. The ones most heavily used (when the canons of St Donatian's would allow it) were those of St Donatian and St Basil (see Figure 2.2). The canons habitually referred to these saints as 'the authors of peace'.[176]

The Holy Blood relic had first set off on the occasion of a princely victory. It continued to be called upon in times of military crisis. But often a peaceful purpose is given by chroniclers for its journeys, in addition to or instead of a martial one. The juxtaposition of these two purposes may well have begun to jar. As early as February 1471, Anthonis de Roovere's report of the Holy Blood's third outing on a general procession suggests a sense of disjuncture between the prayers for victory and the call for peace. Prayers were made for Charles' 'victory'; but the poem (*incarnacion*) composed for the event dwells on the 'destruction, murder, hunger and grief' suffered by the people, and the acrostic made by the first letter of each line spells out another invocation: 'Bruges bids God for peace.'[177] De Roovere records a procession with the Holy Blood on 19 May 1475 (which perhaps came after Charles' call for processions that year): this one set out to support Duke Charles in the field 'against his enemies' at Neuss, but also to further the peace-seeking efforts of the papal legate who was present there.[178] It was increasingly difficult for Charles' subjects to credit him with any pacific intentions. Processions proclaiming his quests for peace may only have put Charles' presence

[176] For St Donatian and St Basil as *auctores pacis*, see for instance BAB, A55, fo. 29r (1484); A56, fo. 205r (1489). De Roovere, when describing a general procession on 4 April 1471 (with the relics of Saints Donatian, Boniface and Eligius) during Charles' siege of Amiens, includes a poem that asks the help of St Donatian for those at the siege to find peace (SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 350v).

[177] *Ibid.*, fos. 348r–v. [178] *Ibid.*, fo. 362v.

on the battlefield in starker and more unfavourable contrast. For all the increase in processions on the prince's behalf, it is not surprising to find Charles the subject of unfavourable tavern-talk by 1477: one townsman was overheard calling him a 'murderer'.[179]

On the other hand, there were circumstances when the call for military campaign sat well with the desire for peace. The first use of the Holy Blood on a general procession had been made in 1465 during war against the French. The threat of the French king was one that Charles was to invoke with increasing regularity, especially after he broke formally with French sovereignty. This threat became all too real after his death in 1477, and once again the Holy Blood was called upon to resist French armies. Maximilian's victory in August 1479 (which had involved the Bruges militia) was celebrated by a procession with the Holy Blood, and by bringing the standard of Bruges back to St Basil's chapel to be placed before the relic.[180] The use of the relic in this context was calculated. Resistance to French sovereignty had been one of the contexts out of which civic sponsorship of the Holy Blood procession itself had originally emerged in 1303. While Holy Blood day never appears to have explicitly commemorated the Flemish victories of 1302, an association between the relic and its capacity to protect citizens from French invasion was a plausible one to make.

In the late 1470s and early 1480s, war against the French was defensive. Defending Bruges and Flanders was the cause that made calls for military campaign compatible with calls for peace. Anthonis de Roovere laments the woes of Flanders in this period, afflicted by plague, famine or war:[181] the prince who sought to relieve them – as the chancellor of Brabant was to claim of Maximilian in 1485 – was certain of some support. But the call to defend Flanders was not one that Maximilian could easily invoke, least of all because Flemish townsmen were reluctant to recognise him as count. By the mid 1480s, the predominant reasons for processions were for prayers for peace *tout court*, without consideration for the 'welfare of the prince'. Even the Holy Blood ventured out of St Basil's chapel in 1488, 1491 and 1492 simply to pray for or celebrate peace.[182]

[179] RAB, *Proosdij*, 1509, fo. 189v.

[180] Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 15–16; SAB 216, 1478/9, fos. 174r, 174v, 177r, 178v; 1479/80, fo. 150v.

[181] J. Oosterman, 'Oh Flanders Weep! Anthonis de Roovere and Charles the Bold', in M. Gosman, A. J. Vanderjagt and J. R. Veenstra (eds.), *The Growth of Authority in the Medieval West* (Groningen, 1999), pp. 257–67.

[182] Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 223, 385, 437.

One of the traditional purposes of general processions was the seeking of divine aid *pro principe*. It is the single reason most frequently cited in the sources for particular processions to set out. But it is not as frequently cited as processions *pro aere* and *pro pace* together (see Figure 2.4). Moreover, processions were usually called for multiple causes, in which the 'welfare of the prince' was combined with an invocation for peace or prosperity of the land. Prince and citizens might differ in what they considered suitable for princely welfare. For citizens, victories of rulers were to serve as harbingers of peace and prosperity rather than as proofs of princely magnificence. When rulers sent letters to towns asking for prayers, they had to couch their requests in language that was pleasing to citizens' ears: promising peace was the mechanism that worked best.

There were also more fundamental considerations that limited the political use of general processions. A ruler could legitimately call them, but it was necessary to link prayers 'for the prince' with prayers 'for peace'. The link was not always a plausible one to make during periods of warfare. The princely desire for peace had to manifest itself outside the ritualised context of a procession if announcing the desire within it was to have any lasting effect. Charles the Bold and Maximilian sought to use the Holy Blood relic on processions for their own military ends, but they could only do so if they presented their campaigns as wars for defending Flanders. Appropriation of civic cults, if such it was, had to *be* appropriate.

### *Commemoration of princely events*

The general procession might serve to advertise the ruler's political needs of the moment. But some moments were deemed to require more long-term commemoration. One of the first general processions that the town paid for was to support John the Fearless in his war against Liège in 1408. His victory on 23 September prompted a foundation to commemorate his achievement. A year later, with the consent of the town magistrates, an annual mass was endowed by Bartholomew Niet (priest and seal-bearer of the dean of Christianity) on the Sunday before St Michael's day in the parish church of St Giles.[183] A rent of £4 16s *parisis* a year was to support vigils, a sung mass with nine lessons and a distribution from the poor table of twenty-four 'prebends'. The service would be a perpetual reminder of the Duke John's victory.

[183] SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 18v–19r (1409); RAB, SG, 4, fos. 69r–74r (1412), 104r–105v (1409); 27, fos. 41r–43r (1409); 271, fos. 97v–99r (1409); 273, fos. 73v–77v (1412).

There were perhaps precedents for this: victory over the Ghent army at Westrozebeke in 1382, and Philip the Bold's interest in commemorating it, may have inspired the foundation of the Rozebeke guild in Bruges.[184] But the foundation in 1409 was the first one in Bruges that explicitly commemorated a princely victory. It may seem to mark another way in which Valois Burgundian rule extended its authority over the town – and its magistrates. On the Saturday before the mass and dole, the poor-table masters were to go to the town chambers and ask two servants to be sent to offer at mass, and to hand over thirteen tokens to the burgomaster who was to select thirteen poor to receive doles on the Monday. Thus the foundation established a permanent reminder of Burgundian power, supported by civic authority, within the liturgical calendar of a town church.

A second foundation established in 1440 was even more assertive of princely authority. Commemoration of the death of the lord Lilleadam, knight of the Golden Fleece, was imposed upon the town. The killing of such an illustrious noble inside the Boeverie gate on 22 May 1437 during the fracas that almost claimed Duke Philip's life too, was not one that the town could be allowed to forget. Duke Philip had quickly demanded 20,000 gold *philippi* coins from the town in expiation for Lilleadam's murder,[185] but measures were also taken to ensure a more perpetual form of commemoration. On 12 May 1438, Lilleadam's body was taken from the hospital of St Julian, near the Boeverie gate, where it had lain, to St Donatian's for exequies and mass. Duchess Isabella attended.[186] Over the next two years, St Donatian's funded an anniversary service for the dead lord, and in 1440 the town magistrates were conducted to the church to view a pillar on which the image of the lord had been placed.[187] In that year, Duke Philip imposed his peace conditions: this included the requirement that the town pay for a chapel to be set up in the Boeverie gate where a daily mass would be said for Lilleadam's soul, and an anniversary in St Donatian's in which twenty-four people were to be paid for carrying torches. The painters' guild was to be paid for administering the chapel's services.[188]

[184] See above, p. 140. For Philip the Bold's gift to the church of Our Lady at Westrozebeke since his 'victory' – which had not been paid for sometime in 1395 by the *bailli* of Bruges or by 'notable men' at Westrozebeke – see ADN, B4080, fo. 66v.

[185] J. Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand van 1436–1438* (Kortrijk, 1997), p. 283. The canons of St Donatian secured letters of protection from Duke Philip exonerating them from any part in the rebellion (4 September 1437: BAB, A253, 337).

[186] BAB, A50, fo. 254v.

[187] *Ibid.*, G3, 1437/8, fo. 4v; 1438/9, fo. 6r; 1439/40 (unfoliated).

[188] *Ibid.*, A51, fos. 213r–v, 222v; D42, no. 47.

The foundation had another impact on civic ceremony. The peace conditions also required that the Boeverie gate be bricked up.[189] It remained closed until July 1452. This was the locked gate that had prevented Lilleadam's escape from the town, but it happened to be a gate of particular significance in civic ceremony: it was also the exit- and re-entry-point of the Holy Blood procession in its perambulation of the town walls. Whether the twelve years of closure forced the town magistrates to choose an alternative route is not known: certainly, as the decree in 1452 makes clear, passage through it had not been possible in these years by foot, horse or wagon. Permission to take down the bricks in 1452 was perhaps dearly bought. It took Bruges' support – 'good duty' as the ducal decree called it – against 'the enemies of Ghent' for the duke to permit the gate's reopening.[190]

Foundations such as these appear to mark the extension of Burgundian power over civic landscape and memory. Yet the significance of these foundations in relation to princely authority needs to be qualified. Annual commemoration of the 1408 victory was not established in any of the major churches of Bruges. Nor did initiative for it come directly from the ducal court or from the town authorities. Bartholomew Niet had other devotional concerns: he was also to specify (in 1412) that the same rent he had gifted should also support the celebration of St Bartholomew's day as a double feast. The participation of the town magistrates resulted from causes other than a desire to flatter the prince. The victory commemorated was also one that had been achieved with support from the civic militia, and against a town that lay outside Flanders. Commemoration of such a victory was acceptable in the eyes of Flemish citizens.[191]

Commemoration of Lilleadam's soul was more damaging to civic authority in Bruges, and it was to continue into the sixteenth century as a constant reminder of the town's misdeeds against its ruler. Yet the story of this commemorative service is not all about the submission of town to princely will. For one thing, interest within the town in sustaining commemoration came less from a municipal than from an

[189] For more general comment on the ceremonial destruction of the civic landscape, see M. Boone, 'Destroying and Reconstructing the City: The Inculcation and Arrogation of Princely Power in the Burgundian–Hapsburg Netherlands (14th–16th Centuries),' in M. Gosman, A. Vanderjagt and J. Veenstra (eds.), *The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997), pp. 1–33.

[190] SAB, 96, 11 (*Groenenbouc* A), fos. 326r–v.

[191] It was acceptable again in 1467 when Liège was sacked by Charles the Bold. The duke removed the *perron*, Liège's symbol of civic liberties, and sent it to Bruges. The town government was prepared to pay for its transport and erection: SAB, 216, 1467/8, fos. 34r, 67r.

ecclesiastical body. The burial of Lilleadam in St Donatian's had principally served the interests of the canons: the removal of his body from St Julian's hospital, which lay in St Saviour's parish, was quickly used by the canons as a test case to defend their privileges against the claims of other churches in the towns.[192] More significantly, the foundation of the obit involved negotiation between the town and the canons who celebrated the service. A local chronicler claims that the first vigils and requiem for Lilleadam in May 1438 were attended by the town magistrates and paid for by them.[193] But other sources seem to tell a different tale. St Donatian's chapter act-books record some heated exchanges between townsmen and canons in May 1440 concerning the town's contribution, which resulted in the town refusing to pay the £12 *parisis* for the wax that the clergy required for the anniversary. 'To avoid scandal', the dean and chapter decided to make the payment themselves, this for the third year running.[194] On 20 February 1441, conditions with the town were finally agreed.[195] But in 1447, the dean and chapter insisted that they were still not being paid sufficiently for the burden of celebrating the obit. It took 'many words' to persuade the town to increase its level of funding. The exact requirements had to be spelled out in some detail in 1448, and again in 1455.[196]

During the reaction to Burgundian rule after Charles the Bold's death, the town treasury stopped funding the anniversary altogether. In June 1478 the canons noted that the obit had not been celebrated in the previous year because of the 'tribulations' on the *burg*, *markt* and elsewhere, and sent a deputation to the town council to ask it to have the obit performed in the future 'if it wished'.[197] Evidently it did not. The town finally paid £30 in 1481, but failed to do so in 1482 because of 'popular commotion'.[198] A new accord between the town

[192] The canons claimed that as counsellor of the duke he was therefore a parishioner of St Donatian's, even though his body had been taken first to a resting place inside St Saviour's parish (BAB, I10, unnumbered document (*c.* 1449), fo. 82r). See below, p. 276.

[193] SBB, Hs. 436, fo. 203r.

[194] BAB, G3, 1440/1, fo. 2r; BAB, A51, fos. 34r, 34v. Reference to the obit seems to appear in the town accounts in 1440; but in 1443 an entry referring to payment to St Donatian's for torch carriers at the obit was struck out as not agreed upon. Reference to the mass service in the Bouverie gate first appears in 1444 (SAB, 216, 1439/40, fo. 52v; 1442/3, fo. 68r; 1443/44, fo. 76v).

[195] *Ibid.*, fos. 55v, 57r, 58r.

[196] *Ibid.*, fos. 191r, 212v–213r, 213v, 222v; BAB, C446: arrangements made by the burgomasters in 1447 and 1448.

[197] BAB, A54, fo. 143r.

[198] BAB, A55, fos. 121v, 166v, 169r; A57, fo. 28v; G6, 1477/8, fo. 3r; 1478/9, fo. 3v; 1479/80, fos. 3v, 13r.

and St Donatian's had to be made in 1493.[199] But even in more peaceful times defaults still occurred.[200] The dean and chapter perhaps did not regard as certain that these payments would continue, at least not without further princely confirmation of their rights. In 1505, one of the canons placed before the chapter letters patent from the king of Castile that required the confirmation of certain rents that the town owed the chapter, among which were those supporting the Lilleadam anniversary. The chapter ordered the document to be stored in its archives.[201] This was fitting and perhaps necessary: the canons of St Donatian had made more consistent effort to ensure celebration of this service than the town had ever done.

The imposition of princely authority on civic memory could be a fraught process. It was not always welcomed or supported, and on other occasions it was ignored. Part of the peace terms in 1492 with Maximilian included a clause that called for the establishment of another expiatory chapel within the town. The chapel appears never to have been founded. Moreover, the significance of these foundations can be overstated. Few foundations commemorating princely victories were ever founded. Other kinds of liturgical commemoration were much more common, for rulers as well as citizens.

### *Commemoration for the soul*

The rulers of Flanders had requirements of the town that extended beyond the needs of the moment. Most entered Bruges on many occasions, but some never left, at least not alive. On 15 June 1467, Duke Philip the Good perished at the *prinsenhof*. The funeral services six days later were the most spectacular that the town had ever witnessed.[202] Like other Burgundian ceremonies it was an occasion for courtly display. The whole household, in hierarchical order, turned out in the procession to St Donatian's for vigils, repeating the journey on the following day for mass. The occasion was also a civic-wide event. The 1600 torch-bearers lining the streets along the route were provided by the town, guild masters and the *vrije*. The town treasurer distributed 100 doles to the poor. At least seven other churches in Bruges held

[199] BAB, A57, fo. 28v.

[200] For absence or arrears of payments: BAB, G7, 1494/5, fos. 3r, 34r; 1495/6, fo. 30v; 1496/7, fo. 2r. The chapter pressed its case against the Bruges magistrates for default in payments in 1495: BAB, D41 (in box 'Titles of goods').

[201] BAB, A57, fo. 251r.

[202] For references and detail see A. Brown, 'Exit Ceremonies in Burgundian Bruges', in *Splendours of Burgundy*, forthcoming (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

vigils and mass for the dead duke's soul; blazons of arms were placed on the portals of every church in the town.

The duke's body remained in St Donatian's for six years. On 29 December 1473 it was dug up.[203] Vigils were sung again, and a new catafalque was placed over it. The next day, mass was celebrated and in the afternoon a procession set off from the church. Nearest the coffin was the lord Ravestein, charged by Duke Charles to fetch his father's body for reburial at Champmol. Knights followed, then kings of arms, and then the craft guilds of Bruges, clad in black, carrying torches; after them representatives of the four religious orders, of the four members of Flanders, and then the magistrates of the town and *vrije*. Philip's body took two hours to reach the walls of Bruges, leaving as it had once entered by the Cross gate. His soul was already being interceded for. Charles had already arranged for daily masses and two anniversaries in St Donatian's; the first of these was attended by two town magistrates.[204]

Like other ceremonies connected with the lives of the ruling family, those connected with their deaths were intended to make a wider public impact. Philip the Good's funeral drew in every church and cleric in the town, and called on all magistrates, guilds and common townsmen to bear witness to his passing and intercede for his soul. The scale of such events, as with other Burgundian ceremonies, had been increasing. The heraldic display of arms and horses had followed comital precedent.[205] But no funeral had been quite so grand as Philip the Good's. Moreover, large-scale services in St Donatian's for members of the Burgundian family were also becoming more numerous during the period when the court was in regular residence in the town.[206]

Direct civic involvement in the commemorative services of rulers had also been increasing. Whether or not rulers died in Bruges, citizens were called upon to intercede for their souls. The death of Louis de Male in 1384 was marked by services in Bruges that were paid for directly by the town treasury: £429 *parisis* were dispensed for Louis's soul to the poor tables of the St John's and Potterie hospitals, and the Wijngarde béguinage and St Obrecht's hospital, as well as for torch wax for the obsequies held in St Donatian's.[207] Contributions to the obsequies of

[203] SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 356r–v.
[204] Strohm, *Music*, p. 29. BAB, A53, fos. 232v, 233v, 236v, 237r, 238v–239r, 272v; ADN, B2064, fos. 357v–358r.
[205] For the growing grandeur of funerals of the Dampierre counts (and their use of gold cloths over the catafalque), see Vale, *Princely Court*, pp. 239–44.
[206] For details, see Brown, 'Exit ceremonies'.
[207] SAB, 216, 1383/4, fo. 160r.

Burgundian dukes and duchesses, usually towards the torch wax and alms to the poor, became more regular in the fifteenth century. The funeral on 2 April 1482 of Mary of Burgundy, who died in Bruges (after falling off a horse), was similar to her grandfather's in its heraldic finery and long procession of nobles and clergy. It also brought townsmen together in a manner that seems to demonstrate how far Burgundian events could harness civic ceremony: according to one local chronicler, all the craft guilds of the town assembled for the funeral procession, dressed in black, and carrying as many torches 'as they would bring to the *markt* on Holy Blood day'.[208]

The ceremonies surrounding the death of rulers doubtless served to emphasise ducal power. As with their coming, so with their passing, rulers could lay claim to civic resources. Civic commemoration of their souls was expected even if their bodies were not physically present. As we shall see, the vicarious presence of living rulers, and the intercessory demands of dead ones, made an increasingly demonstrative impact upon the town. Nevertheless, in death as in life, post-obit ceremonies for rulers were also subject to traditions that determined their form, and to circumstances that limited their impact.

Duke Philip the Good's body was claimed by the canons of St Donatian. The traditions of the church could not be ignored. The church had served the count's household in the *burg*. The murdered Charles the Good had been brought in procession to the church on 25 March 1127, and distributions had been made to the poor.[209] Four centuries later, the canons still regarded their church as a potential necropolis for comital remains. In 1449 they could boast the presence within the church of some prestigious corpses: they had a scribe record the epitaph 'in the most ancient lettering' of black marble (though now almost 'obscure'), on the tomb of Margaret countess of Flanders, who had died in 1194; more legible to the scribe was the writing on the tomb of Louis de Nevers (d. 1346).[210]

Most counts did not find burial within St Donatian's. Members of the Dampierre dynasty had preferred other resting places within Flanders.[211] But most were commemorated in St Donatian's with anniversary services: St Donatian's remained the most ancient repository of comital memory in the town. The later *planarius* of the church was able to record anniversaries celebrated for counts and countesses stretching

[208] Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 37–8.
[209] Galbert of Bruges, *Murder of Charles the Good*, p. 141.
[210] BAB, I1, unnumbered document, fo. 142r.
[211] For Guy de Dampierre's burial near Pettegem (1305) and Louis de Male's choice of Our Lady's in Kortrijk, then burial at Lille, see Vale, *Princely Court*, pp. 229–30. On

back to the 'founder', Count Arnulf, in the tenth century.[212] Most of these services by the later Middle Ages committed the church to little more than modest distributions of pittances for their souls, except for Countess Margaret of Alsace, who had founded daily masses in 1194.[213] The Dampierre dynasty made some larger foundations: in 1367 Countess Margaret endowed two chantry priests to celebrate four masses a week in the chapel that her father Louis de Male had built.[214]

Throughout the later Middle Ages, St Donatian's insisted on exclusive claims, not just over the bodies and souls of counts, but also over those of their entourages. In 1463, the canons recalled, for ducal benefit, how in 961 Count Arnulf had established twelve prebends for twelve canons, who were to administer the sacraments to his successors and their officers.[215] The right to administer the last rites and bury the bodies of household members, if they died in Bruges, was supported by practice in the fourteenth century: the canons were later able to list the epitaphs from tombs in the church of seven counsellors or officers (including the master pantler) who had served Louis de Male from the 1350s to 1382.[216]

Despite the strong traditions that connected counts to St Donatian's, however, other churches in Bruges had also enjoyed patronage from the rulers of Flanders. The extensive foundation of religious houses in the thirteenth century had been achieved with comital help. The friaries, the Rich Clares, the béguinage, St Obrecht's and St John's hospital had all received endowment or protection from counts or countesses in return for intercession.[217] Perpetual commemoration had also

choice of burial places (which might be decided by location of death), see P. Godding, 'Le Testament princier dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux (12e–15e siècles): Acte privé et instrument politique', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 64 (1993), 217–35.

212 Counts Arnulf (d. 965), Charles the Good (d. 1127), Philip (d. 1191); Countesses Margaret of Alsace (d. 1194), Joanne (d. 1244); Count Louis de Nevers (d. 1346): BAB, A141, fos. 19r, 19v, 26v, 43v, 64v, 76v, 90r.

213 *Ibid.*, D40, no. 29.

214 *Ibid.*, A141, fo. 33r; D42, no. 27; ADN, B1507.

215 BAB, I13 (document dated *c.* 1463).

216 See *ibid.*, I10 (document dated *c.* 1449). In the nave of the church, the scribe found the epitaphs of Guidonis Amati (d. 1354); Jan de le Delf, receiver of Flanders (d. 1359) and his wife (d. 1358); Nicasis de Waghenare, the count's receiver (d. 1375); Lamsin de Waghenare, the count's secretary (d. 1378); *Magister* Johanne de Gardino, the count's chancellor (d. 1379); Jan de Brune, secretary, and Gillis Basin, master pantler (the exact dates of death of Johanne and Jan were apparently illegible to the scribe, though those of their wives were recorded as 1380 and 1382 respectively); Pieter Basin, chaplain (d. 1403): *ibid.*, I10 (unnumbered document), fos. 142v–146r.

217 See above, p. 6. In 1233, Ferrand of Portugal, husband of Countess Joan, had founded a chantry in St John's hospital: Maréchal, *Sociale en politieke gebondenheid*, p. 149.

begun to be sought in the parish churches of Bruges. The earliest was Count Baldwin's grant in 1194 of rents for the anniversary of Countess Margaret to the church of St Cross. Joan, countess of Flanders, had a chantry founded in St Saviour's in 1235.[218] The Dampierre counts became more consistent benefactors of Bruges parish churches. The gratitude of St Giles' parishioners to Louis de Male in 1360 for his permission to amortise land near the church house was expressed by their promise to celebrate an obit for the count's father 'as is done at St Donatian's where he is buried'.[219]

Members of the comital household spread their benefactions more widely too. Some chose burial within other town churches. In 1374 Henric van de Pitte, the count's farrier, required the churchwardens in St Cross' church to send eight candles for his requiem mass, whether he died in Bruges or Male.[220] Such post-obit agreements between comital officials and town churches may have become more frequent the more the ruler and household were resident in Bruges. This could threaten the traditional rights of St Donatian. In 1365 the canons insisted on their exclusive right to bury officers of the count against the church of St Cross.[221]

During the Valois Burgundian period, St Donatian's continued to insist on their privileges, although with more difficulty. The first two Valois dukes of Burgundy did not favour St Donatian's or other churches of Bruges quite so much.[222] The claim of St Donatian's to be a comital necropolis was all but eclipsed by the establishment of Champmol as a dynastic mausoleum by Philip the Bold. With the court less in residence, there was a hiatus in the number of household officials buried in Bruges, at least in St Donatian's, from 1383 to 1414.[223]

[218] BAB, D40, no. 30; S718, fos. 257v–259v.

[219] RAB, SG, 27 (*Cartularium*), fos. 70v–71r; charter 265. The parishioners were also to pay 30s a year to Our Lady's for an anniversary to be celebrated there too – though there is no record of this in the *planarius* of this church. For a similar agreement between the count and parishioners of St James' in 1368, see RAB, SJ, 95, charter 68. For Louis de Male's chantry in St John's hospital in 1384, and his benefaction of St Julian's hospital in 1382: AGR, *Trésor de Flandre*, 1684; ADN, B1347; OCMW, Sint-Juliaans, no. 135; Geldhof, *Pelgrims*, pp. 328–9. It was reported in 1388 that the wars in Flanders had prevented celebration of mass 'once every month' in the hospital church for the late count and countess (ADN, B4077, fo. 64v).

[220] RAB, SA, 5 (*Cartularium* Sint-Kruis), fos. 43v–46v.

[221] OCMW, Godshuis van de Potterie, charter 364.

[222] Bartholomew Niet's foundation in St Giles in 1409, besides commemorating John the Fearless' victory, also required obits for Duke John and for John's father and mother, Philip the Bold and Margaret of Flanders.

[223] Only the epitaphs of Pieter Basin (d. 1403) and Fransois van Hofestede (d. 1406) are recorded by the scribe (compiling the list of burials in 1449) between these dates.

The more frequent presence in Bruges of Philip the Good and his 'counsellors' meant more frequent burials. Even so, the canons were unable to hang on to Philip's body for more than six years (though they retained possession of his heart and entrails).[224] Much to their chagrin, they were not able to claim the body of Mary of Burgundy in 1482, who chose burial in Our Lady's.[225] The canons had also to compete for the remains of other members of the ducal household, although these too found themselves under some compulsion to choose St Donatian's as a place of burial. In 1449, the canons were able to list the epitaphs, in their nave, cloisters and cemetery, of twenty-two men (or their wives) who had served the Burgundian dukes, and who had died between 1414 and 1447.[226] The list had been compiled in preparation for a case taken to the papal curia, because according to the canons their rights over the dead were being flouted. In addition to a list of epitaphs they marshalled witnesses to recall the names of ducal counsellors who, by virtue of their service to the duke, had in recent times received their sacraments in St Donatian's, and had been buried in the church even if they had died within the boundaries of other parishes, or had paid redemptions to St Donatian's as the price of choosing burial elsewhere. Yet they were opposed by the clergy of St Saviour's and Our Lady's, who for their part were able to summon an equal number of witnesses to show that many ducal counsellors had been buried within their churches. These disputes continued throughout the fifteenth century and beyond, because the canons remained tenacious in the defence of their privileges, even against the most powerful of princely officials.[227]

Post-obit commemoration of Burgundian dukes was also spread well beyond St Donatian's – less so in the case with the first two (apart from services held for John the Fearless in St Giles'), but more so in the case of the last two. Besides making offerings made at mass, Philip the Good made gifts to the religious orders: the Friars Preacher ('founded by the counts of Flanders') in 1423 and 1459; Augustinians and friars in 1433. In 1451 three windows bearing the ducal arms were put into the church of the friars minor.[228] Duke Philip had daily mass set up in St John's

224 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp. 1, 2.

225 For the canons' claim for redemption payments from Our Lady's for her burial, see BAB, A55, fo. 163v.

226 BAB, I10 (unnumbered document), fos. 142v–146r.

227 The wife of the *schout* Pieter Lanchals chose burial at Our Lady's in 1485, which led to a quarrel over the payment of a redemption fee to St Donatian's, who claimed her as their parishioner. The canons even mounted a protest over this during a general procession to the Carmelites' church (BAB, A56, fos. 81r–v, 82v). Full rehearsals of the privileges of St Donatian's in these matters were made again in 1485 and 1521 (BAB, I10, I13).

228 ADN, B4093, fo. 106r; B1948, fos. 209r, 212r; B1954, fo. 186v; B2008, fos. 284r–v; B4105, fos. 131v–132r.

hospital (following Louis de Male's precedent).[229] The dukes and their family were also involved in the foundation of new houses that reflected the latest trends in piety, as well as the interest of civic elites. A second Franciscan priory, under the stricter observance, was established in Bruges with ducal assistance in 1461. The Poor Clares were founded in 1469, again with ducal support.[230] On 31 August 1477, the house of the Poor Clares was consecrated in the presence of Maximilian, Margaret of York and Mary of Burgundy. A local chronicler records that they asked the whole town to come to offer at the mass service.[231]

Dukes Philip and Charles also showed interest in collegiate and parish churches that had previously escaped significant attention from their ancestors. Our Lady's had not received endowments for comital souls;[232] its most important relics, those of St Boniface, had not been gifted by a former count. The translation of these relics into a new shrine in 1471 did not attract the same level of courtly interest as the translation in St Donatian's of St Basil's relics had done in 1463. Nevertheless, Philip the Good had begun to bestow favour on the church. In 1451, the commune of the clergy received the sum of £30 from Duke Philip to set up an endowment for an annual mass at the high altar on the morrow of the Assumption (16 August).[233] The organs, bell-ringing (a *grande et notable sonnerie* during mass), and especially the singing in discant required, including a motet after mass, added significantly to the depth of polyphonic music in the church. Charles the Bold and his daughter Mary, who were both eventually buried in the church, also made provision for their souls there. Mary's endowment in 1482 (confirmed by her successors) was particularly splendid: an annual rent of £108 supported the succentor, four choir boys and the organist to sing two daily masses. In 1495 a copy of the foundation was recorded in one of the town cartularies.[234]

While smaller parish churches were not usually entrusted with large-scale foundations by rulers, some enjoyed their patronage. Ducal support of parish building works or membership of guilds was intended to ensure more permanent commemoration. Other courtiers made similar use of collective suffrage. Particularly striking is the use of craft guilds

229 Strohm, *Music*, pp. 58–9. 230 See above, p. 207. 231 SBB, Hs. 437, fo. 397v.

232 Our Lady's *planarius* (RAB, OLV, Register 735) lists no obit for counts or countesses before that of Duke Philip the Good.

233 *Ibid.*, fo. 93v; AGR, *Trésor de Flandre, 1er série*, 1698; OCMW, OLV, Register 179 (penultimate folio). The income generated came to £18 *parisis*.

234 BAB, OLV, Register 735, fos. 27v, 52r, 53v; charters 1020, 1022, 1330; SAB, 96, 15 (*Tweeden nieuwen groenenboec* B), fos. 1r–3r. And for Mary's costly tomb: A. M. Roberts, 'The Chronology and Political Significance of the Tomb of Mary of Burgundy', *The Art Bulletin* 71 (1989), 376–400.

by counsellors such as Jan Vasque to oversee poor-table distributions within parish churches during their anniversary services.

Although the last two Burgundian dukes had extended favour to many churches and guilds, the tradition of comital involvement with St Donatian's church was not forgotten.[235] Nor were rulers allowed to forget their obligations. In a *mémoire* produced around 1463 for ducal benefit, the canons recalled the ties that had bound church to count since the days of Baldwin 'Iron Arm', who had founded the castle and *burg* in 862 and brought the body of St Donatian from Rheims to Bruges.[236] St Donatian's could not always enforce its claims of spiritual precedence over other churches, but it made them none the less, and sometimes with effect. Alive or dead, the rulers of Flanders found their movements constrained by pressures that were not of their own making. Flemish townsmen demanded the presence of their living bodies; the clergy of St Donatian's claimed the presence of their dead ones.

There were undoubtedly ways in which rulers demonstrated or even exerted authority in death as they had in life. The tightening of fiscal control over the town, particularly under Charles the Bold, extended to the economy of post-obit commemoration. A large number of religious institutions in the 1470s were required to pay for ducal grants to amortise endowments they had acquired in the recent past.[237] Moreover, the presence of an increasing number of tombs and services in Bruges for the commemoration of rulers, their family and household members served as a perpetual reminder of princely authority. The bestowal of favour by dukes on churches and guilds was a demonstration of lordly power. The extension of ducal patronage to churches that had not enjoyed patronage before, as well as an increasing level of benefaction to those that had, seem to mark the creeping influence of the Burgundian dukes over the town as a whole, especially when their gifts resulted in liturgical or visual commemoration.

But their patronage was not entirely a matter of ducal choice. Their gifts towards windows or the fabric of churches had often followed on

[235] For the gift of copes by Charles (and the countess Mary) see BAB, G6 (1470–86), 1476/7, fo. 24r. For the posthumous foundation of an obit for Charles in 1486 by his former tutor Anthonis Haneron, see *ibid.*, A56, fo. 121v; A141, fo. 11v.

[236] BAB, I13 (document dated *c.* 1463).

[237] Amortisement grants in 1474–5 were supplicated by the Franciscans, Dominicans, St Walburga's and St John's hospital (ADN, B1695, fos. 60v–62v, 77v–78v, 81r); St James' poor table (RAB, SJ, 888, fos. 280r–v); the Carmelites (AKB, *Liber oblongus*, fos. 102v–106v); St Donatian's (AGR, *Trésor de Flandre, 1er série*, 1701); and possibly the Carthusians (*ibid.*, 1703 – charter now missing).

demands by the clergy and laity from these institutions.[238] The larger benefactions made by Dukes Philip and Charles for divine service were also the result of other pressures. They reflected the rising scale of investment in commemorative services that other wealthy citizens and guilds had begun to make within town churches, especially since the late fourteenth century (see Chapters 3 and 4). The relatively small pittances for former counts that were distributed in St Donatian's prior to this were out-dated forms of commemoration. By the fifteenth century, liturgical calendars within Bruges were becoming increasingly crowded with feast days and obits, and burdened with more lavish and protracted celebration. If commemoration for rulers in those same churches was not to be swamped by the number of these services or dwarfed by their scale, Burgundian benefaction had to be gauged at the appropriate level. Duke Philip's *sonnerie* required during his mass in Our Lady's by 1451 had indeed to be *grande et notable*. In death as in life, the rulers of Flanders were not at liberty to impose a 'liturgy of state' on civic landscape and memory. Their ceremonial contact with clerics and citizens of Bruges had to be made with due regard to ecclesiastical traditions and the changing religious practices of their urban subjects.

[238] See M. Damen, 'Vorstelijke vensters: Glasraamschenkingen als instrument van devotie, memorie en propaganda (1419–1519)', *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse geschiedenis* 8 (2005), 140–200.

# Conclusion and epilogue: civic morality *c.* 1500

When the town council issued a decree in April 1493 concerning irreverence on feast days, it lamented that citizens listened 'neither to the orders of town councillors nor to the commands of God'.[1] Behind the admission of failure lies a confident assumption that civic government possessed sacred qualities. Civic decree and divine law remained distinct, but an equation between the two could evidently be made. This had been the result of a long process of evolution; and part of the purpose of this book has been to uncover the many ways in which civic authority had come to assume a more sacred dimension.

Equation of civic orders with divine command had required the growth of a sense that the town council itself constituted a body with attributes and responsibilities that were more than mundane. While elements of this are apparent in the thirteenth century – notably with municipal involvement in charity – it is in the late fourteenth century that this sense becomes more detectable and its scope enlarged: in the increase of divine service within new municipal buildings, in the procedures surrounding the annual renewal of the magistracy, or in the founding of guilds, like the Trinity and the Holy Blood, to which town magistrates had exclusive access.

Moreover, greater investment from this period in the Holy Blood and other processions, with their perambulations of relics and preaching of sermons, allowed town governments repeatedly to assert their authority over citizens in contexts that drew on hallowed liturgical tradition. One of the hallmarks of civic authority was its ability to manoeuvre the bodies of citizens, to move them through space and time within the town: where and when guildsmen could practice their crafts, the parish poor collect their doles, beggars their hand-outs, miscreants their punishment. This ability acquired a more sacred aspect in civic management of processions. On Holy Blood day, the town magistracy annually placed citizens in order and set them in motion. It did the same to the

[1] See above, pp. 129–30.

town's clergy, who by the later fourteenth century also processed during the fifteen days that followed. General processions at other times of the year began to require more of the clergy. They also required the movement of relics: the bodies of the special dead, as well as those of the living, were increasingly placed at the service of municipal need. By the end of the fifteenth century, the burghers who ran civic government had more access to the sacred resources of the town than their counterparts had enjoyed at the beginning of the fourteenth.

Management of processions was one of the ways in which civic government could increase public worship in the town as a whole. Sight of relic and sound of word – in sermons or liturgical music – were considered the most effective means of instilling the correct devotional attitudes in citizens. Efforts to increase the number and scale of occasions when holy relics would be seen and sacred word heard are particularly apparent from the late 1360s onwards. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, relics carried in processions began to appear on the streets more than they had done in the past. Through the plays of rhetoricians, or the performance of sacred music, town governments took active steps to promote appropriate devotional behaviour.

A more sacred kind of town and more sacred kind of civic authority: these are the first two senses in which a 'civic religion' was in the process of construction. It was not a process unique to Bruges. Many other town councils in the Low Countries and beyond had similarly sought to increase the sacred quality of their election procedures, their deliberations and institutions. Although this is most evident in the largest towns of northern Italy, where urban governments were most autonomous, it may be found in smaller towns across Europe, wherever townsmen sought to maintain or extend their privileges and liberties.[2] While the timing of this process differed between towns, and followed upon longer-term developments, it was from the later fourteenth century that investment in the sacred character of town government was increased.

In the same period, across Europe, governing bodies took greater steps to promote public worship among their citizens. Town-wide veneration of saints was encouraged, especially in great annual processions. In the Low Countries and elsewhere, the beginnings of investment in them may be dated to the late thirteenth century. But the increasing expenditure on civic processions, the appearance of dramatic performances at these events, the marshalling of craft guilds in this process and

[2] For the ritual of Holy Ghost mass in German town councils, see D. W. Poeck, 'Rituale der Ratswahl in westfälischen Städten', in B. Stollberg-Rilinger (ed.), *Vormoderne politische Verfahren*, Zeitschrift für historische Forschung 25 (Berlin, 2001), pp. 207–62.

extension of the processional period are phenomena common to many towns from the 1370s onwards.[3] Similarly, the promotion in Bruges of other kinds of processions (particularly propitiatory ones) and the subsidising of sermons or divine service, spoken and sung, are echoed elsewhere.[4]

A partial explanation for these wider trends may be found in more general conditions that affected many parts of Europe. Crises of authority in the later fourteenth century arguably became greater: social upheaval and revolt intensified a need for civic peace; papal schism raised troubling questions about the nature of ecclesiastical order. The Black Death and subsequent visitations of plague had already provoked extreme reactions in the short term: the spectacle (or the threat) of flagellants in many regions prompted authorities to encourage more ordered kinds of processional events.[5] The longer-term impact of plague on 'mentalities' is harder to discern (and thus lends itself to more fanciful speculation); but civic encouragement of penitential behaviour in

[3] For example, Brussels (B. Haggh-Huglo, 'Music, Liturgy, and Ceremony in Brussels, 1350–1500,' unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1988), pp. 419–35); Ghent (and the Tournai procession; D. Nicholas, 'In the Pit of the Burgundian Theatre State: Urban Traditions and Princely Ambitions in Ghent, 1360–1420', in B. A. Hanawalt and K. L. Reyerson, *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 271–95 (pp. 283–90); possibly Oudenaarde (B. A. M. Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren: Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen middeleeuwen en moderne tijd* (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 43–68); Florence (R. C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980), pp. 222, 253); Venice (E. Crouzet-Pavan, 'Sopra le acque salse'. *Espaces, pouvoir et société à Venise à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1992), pp. 528–59 – though not all processions flourished); Bologna (N. Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 224). For England see e.g. A. F. Johnstone. 'English Guilds and Municipal Authority', *Renaissance and Reformation* 13 (1989), 73–83; R. B. Dobson, 'Craft Guilds and City: The Historical Origins of the York Mystery Plays Reassessed', in A. E. Knight (ed.), *The Stage as Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 91–105. For France see e.g. N. Coulet, 'Les Jeux de la Fête-Dieu: Une fête médievale?', *Provence historique* 126 (1981), 315–20; J. Chiffoleau, 'Les Processions parisiennes de 1412: Analyse d'un rituel flamboyant', *Revue historique* 114 (1990), 37–76 (pp. 43–4). For Germany (Nuremberg and elsewhere): A. Löther, *Prozessionen in Spämittelalterlichen Städten* (Cologne, 1999), esp. pp. 90–9. For Spain (e.g. Valencia): J. Hadziiossif, 'L'Ange custode de Valence', in A. Vauchez (ed.), *La Religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne (Chrétienté et Islam): Actes du colloque de Nanterre (21–23 juin 1993)* (Rome, 1995), pp. 136–52 (pp. 140–2).

[4] See Chiffoleau, 'Les Processions parisiennes'; G. Signori, 'Ritual und Ereignis: Die Straßburger Bittgänge zur Zeit der Burgunderkriege (1474–1477)', *Historische Zeitschrift* 264 (1997), 281–328; D. E. Bornstein, *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy* (Ithaca, NY, 1993), p. 19.

[5] See also reactions in German towns like Erfurt: Löther, *Prozessionen*, pp. 187–90. And for more ordered flagellant processions welcomed by most Italian authorities in 1399 see Bornstein, *Bianchi*, *passim*.

citizens can be plausibly connected in part to a sharpened sense of the need for penance in the wake of plague.

Similarly, the effects of plague on urban economies also had a bearing on civic expenditure on ceremony, though the exact effects are complicated: some towns weathered demographic downturn and managed to increase civic budgets; others suffered more severely, yet still invested in ceremony. Decision on expenditure was a matter of choice as much as of availability of funds. Who made these choices also mattered. A more general trend discerned in many European towns in the late fourteenth century is a greater tendency for governments, notwithstanding broader craft-guild representation, to be run by smaller groups of citizens.[6] Promotion of 'civic religion' has been identified with assertion of oligarchy, for whom the domination of sacred space and time offered a key to wider civic control.[7] But 'oligarchy' is an elastic term, and some ruling bodies were more representative than others; and accordingly the processions they organised were more or less inclusive of other citizens.[8]

Placing ceremonies in Bruges within a wider urban context is helpful, but their particular character is explained as much by local context. Growing expenditure on the Holy Blood procession in the later fourteenth century seems to correlate with a widening flow of income into the civic treasury; yet general outgoings also increased and the budget often ran at a deficit. Demand rather than supply better explains civic subsidy of ceremony. There are signs of tightening oligarchy towards the end of the fourteenth century, particularly in the hands of entrepreneurial merchants who were best placed to exploit the emergence of Bruges as an international market and banking centre. But their grip on power was partly offset by the presence of middling groups of guildsmen, particularly those who began to profit from the shift in manufacture and trade in luxury goods. For both groups, civic order and peace provided the best conditions to profit both body and soul. The remarkable inclusiveness of Holy Blood day, in which so many guilds and smaller associations participated in an orderly hierarchy, reflects to some degree a particular kind of urban society. The threat of disorder that came from various quarters in the late fourteenth century made

[6] D. Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City 1300–1500* (London, 1997), pp. 120–36.

[7] E. Muir, 'The Virgin on the Street-Corner: The Place of the Sacred in Italian Cities', in S. Ozment (ed.), *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Kirksville, MO, 1989), p. 37; Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities*, esp. p. 17. For Ghent and expenditure on 'prestige items for the town aldermen' spent during festivities from 1360 to 1420 (though the government there was not apparently using festival to solidify its power): Nicholas, 'In the Pit', p. 290.

[8] See for instance Löther, *Prozessionen*, pp. 139–46, 187–90.

ritual demonstrations of order more urgent. Investment in display of the town's principal relic signalled the collective need for intercession for all those living within Bruges' walls. It was also done in ways that no other town quite replicated. The preference that town authorities showed for local traditions, liturgies, cults and relics, when organising 'general processions', gave the town its own particular identity and distinctive 'civic religion'.

The Holy Blood procession also deliberately included outsiders to spectate and even participate. Messengers were dispatched throughout Flanders and beyond to encourage attendance; important prelates arrived to take their place in the procession and to carry the relic itself. One of the features of the religious landscape in this region – in contrast to the region occupied by the large cities of northern Italy – was the degree of ceremonial exchange and interdependence between different towns.[9] Jousting and shooting competitions were becoming more regular by the mid fourteenth century; rhetoric competitions were to assume greater importance after the mid fifteenth century. In part this reflected a political and economic environment of mutual interdependence in this area of the Low Countries: Bruges entrepreneurs, for instance, needed the cooperative efforts of the town's hinterland for the manufacture of certain goods. A Florence or Venice was more likely to stifle signs of economic and political autonomy of smaller towns in their *contadi*. On the other hand, this contrast perhaps underplays the efforts Bruges made to curtail the privileges of Sluys or the *Vrije*. Even so, the gifts of wine that Sluys guildsmen were required to make to their counterparts in Bruges on Holy Blood day, although an acknowledgment of deference, were also recognition of a welcoming invitation to take part in festivity. Moreover, Bruges appears to have been less assertive over cults in its hinterland than were some north Italian towns over cults in theirs. In the later fifteenth century, a Florence or Bologna was apparently intent on 'desacralising' the surrounding countryside, plundering its relics and images to bring their miraculous potential to work from within their walls.[10] In contrast there is less sign of this in Flanders. For instance, during the time of military crisis in 1489 and 1490 the relics of St Godelieve lying in nearby Ghistel were, unusually, brought three times into Bruges as part of propitiatory processions – and three times

[9] See A.-L. Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille: Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de zuidelijke Nederlanden 1400–1650* (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 208–10. For the wax candles given by towns 'acquired' and 'controlled' by Florence at its annual procession on St John the Baptist's day, see T. Dean, *The Towns of Italy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 2000), p. 73.

[10] See Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities*, pp. 212–15.

allowed to leave through the Smith gate once stations and processions were completed.[11]

Like other towns in the Low Countries, Bruges did not enjoy the same degree of political autonomy as north Italian city-states. This was a second way in which, as a result, the character of civic religion differed to a degree between these two regions. The cults promoted in Flemish and Brabantine towns were never entirely ‘civic’: just as urban privileges were bound up with the authority of count or duke, so urban cults and religious traditions were imbricated with the history and piety of the ruler, or were assumed to be. In Bruges, the Holy Blood relic was (according to legend) the gift of a former count; in Brussels, the arrival of the miraculous Marian image in 1348, which was to begin the annual Zavel *ommegang*, was met (reputedly) by the duke as well as the townspeople.[12] The involvement of the Burgundian dukes, especially during the middle decades of the fifteenth century, in the processions, competitions, fraternities and cults of their urban subjects was greater than their predecessors’ had been. It appears to match their extension of government over their subjects. But ‘civic’ religion in the Low Countries was not subsumed by ‘princely’. The contrast with northern Italy can be made too sharply. After all, dominant families or princes in Tuscan and Lombard towns encroached upon communal religious practices.[13] In the Low Countries ducal involvement in civic religious life was not simply about the extension of authoritarian rule; the liturgies of urban churches did not slavishly follow those in courtly households;[14] ecclesiastical institutions had their own liberties to protect; civic religious traditions, however much connected with rulers, could not be manipulated by the prince at will.

Discussion of ‘civic religion’ as an aspect of municipal or princely authority raises wider questions about the relationship between religious ceremony and power. Neither civic authorities nor state officials could use ceremony to extend their authority in any straightforward

[11] C. L. Carton (ed.), *Het Boeck van al ’t gene datter geschiet is binnen Brugge sichent Jaer 1477, 14 Februarii, tot 1491* (Ghent, 1859), pp. 293, 341. Bruges needed support from the surrounding region, in which Maximilian’s hostile forces were still active: on the third occasion the departure of the relic was followed by the arrival of a military contingent from Ghistel.

[12] See A. Brown and G. Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries* c. *1420–1530* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 242 and references cited there.

[13] For the ‘Medicianisation’ of Florentine sacred time, see Trexler, *Public Life*, pp. 504–5; and for the appropriation of liturgy, see M. S. Tacconi, ‘Appropriating the Instruments of Worship: The 1512 Medici Restoration and the Florentine Cathedral Choirbooks’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 56 (2003), 333–76.

[14] See Haggh-Huglo, ‘Music, Liturgy’, p. 228.

way. Processions borrowed from liturgical traditions, laden with meanings that could not easily be displaced or made to serve earthly power. Town councils and rulers, especially from the reign of Charles the Bold, made increasing use of rhetoricians whose technical expertise in religious drama and communication was called upon in ritual encounters between townsmen and prince.[15] Yet the messages of *tableaux vivants* in entries or the poetic expressions of religious virtues in rhetoric competitions were usually political only in an oblique way, and more often pointed away from the mundane and towards eternal truths. Rhetoric competition was part of a wider religious culture that was not constrained by political needs and flourished for many other reasons. Those who held power aligned themselves with cults, subsidised processions, joined or founded devotional groups, implicitly linking their authority with a more sacred realm, but they could not do so with any certain expectation that their power would thereby be strengthened. There was no 'system' of symbolic communication and no 'theatre-state' in operation that furthered state-building: use of liturgy and religious symbols precluded systematic promotion of political power.

'Civic religion' is thus a useful shorthand to describe two processes under way in many late medieval towns: the creation simultaneously of a more sacred kind of civic authority and of urban landscape. But description of all manifestations of religious life in terms of power and authority is to limit and distort their meaning. One of the most striking trends in public worship in late medieval Bruges is the exponential increase in divine service of all kinds: the increasing celebration of the offices and mass in almost all urban churches, the expansion of the temporale and especially sanctorale, and the embellishment of feast days with processions and polyphonic singing. Much of this increase was funded by endowments made by the clergy and even more by the laity, as individuals or in fraternities. Explanations for this trend can be found in social and religious changes that are only in part related to the needs of power and authority.

Proliferation of religious ceremony all over Europe is a trend that has long been observed by historians, most memorably by Huizinga. But its description can still be problematic. Categorising it as a tendency to 'formalise' devotion and 'externalise' ritual, or as an 'obsessive' concern to quantify and elaborate,[16] risks echoing two questionable traditions: on

[15] For rhetoricians and the building of a 'theatre-state', see Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 53–9. For alternative views on the theatre-state, see above, p. 27.
[16] See above, p. 21 n. 76.

the one hand, a long confessional historiography that condemned the late medieval church for failing the spiritual needs of the people; and on the other, traditions of socio-anthropology that tended to class 'ritual' as outward performance empty of inner belief.[17] There were of course other currents of piety, such as the *Devotio*, that encouraged inner spirituality and criticism of outward conformity, yet these currents were not incompatible with investment in ceremony and might even complement it.[18] Clear-cut distinction between belief and practice, informal and formal religion, are hard to make and, in late medieval Bruges, the seamless entwining of private piety and public worship (sacred and worldly) is ubiquitous: for instance, in the elevated oratory built by Lodewijk van Gruuthuse by 1472, accessed only from his townhouse, yet opening out through a window onto the east end of Our Lady's church, and the performance below of offices, mass, processions – and of polyphonic singing, endowed by citizens and guilds – that by then daily enriched liturgical celebration, if not the inner soul.

The endowment of divine service was not a purely urban phenomenon, but it was most prolific and systematic in the largest of towns. A third implication of the term 'civic religion' refers less to the sacred and more to the distinctive character of urban society: towns like Bruges, and religious practice within them, were different from smaller or more rural communities, at least in degree rather than kind. Greater scope was possible for investment in liturgical services and for satisfying a variety of devotional tastes. Even so, not all great towns were the same. Those in northern Italy have been characterised particularly by a mendicant (and observant) spirituality, influencing citizens in their confraternal and charitable activities, in their veneration of new saints (often former friars), and their sporadic enthusiasm for revivalist preaching.[19] These characteristics were not absent in the large towns of the Low Countries, where the friars had a strong presence; but the framework of the parish was stronger, and large collegiate churches exercised a more powerful influence. Few new saints were added to the liturgical calendars of Bruges; traditional patrons like St Donatian remained central to collegiate and civic devotion.

[17] P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, 2001), *passim*. And for ritual as 'thoughtless action': C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford, 1992), p. 19.

[18] For the *Devotio* and Corpus Christi processions, see Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*, p. 22.

[19] See, for example, Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities*, pp. 4–5, 18–37, 40–67; G. Dickson, 'The 115 Cults of Saints in Later Medieval and Renaissance Perugia: A Demographic overview of a Civic Pantheon', in G. Dickson, *Religious Enthusiasm in the Medieval West* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 6–25.

Netherlandish, Italian and large towns in other areas were most alike in the investment made by their citizens in liturgical celebration and commemoration. In many places, investment appears to become heavier from the 1360s onwards.[20] Plague had some effect: the need for post-obit commemoration may have become more acute when mortality was abnormally high. But intercession was a need long felt by lay people exposed to the church's teachings on purgatory; and to some extent the elaboration of liturgical celebration was a creative process that had gathered its own momentum. In Bruges (if not elsewhere) the pattern of investment in perpetual obits was already being established in the thirteenth century: the beginnings of systematic lay-management of such investment in fabric funds, poor tables and guilds is apparent in the early 1300s, while the elaboration of feast days was already under way by the 1340s. Even greater investment from the 1360s seems more an acceleration of existing trends than the product of a new, post-plague mentality.

What distinguished Bruges most from other towns in the region, and beyond, were the scale and complexity of its liturgical celebrations. Similar investment in obits, offices, votive masses and polyphonic singing is apparent, for instance, in Brussels, but at a slightly later date and slower pace.[21] Part of the explanation lies in socio-economic conditions; the greater availability of capital in Bruges; perhaps also the intensity of social competition, which stimulated display of distinction in life as well as death. But also discernible is a civic dimension to commemorative foundations: here the three elements of 'civic religion' come together. Foundations by citizens (notably municipal office-holders) were intended to improve public religious life as well as fulfil individual intercessory need.[22] They also made religious practice distinctive in Bruges and contributed to the sacred character of both urban society and municipal authority. The proliferation of almshouses and free-standing chapels increasingly filled the urban landscape with sacred

[20] See for instance the 'cult of remembrance' apparently beginning in several Italian towns from the 1360s: S. K. Cohn, *The Cult of Remembrance and the Black Death: Six Renaissance Cities in Central Italy* (London, 1992); 'The Place of the Dead in Flanders and Tuscany,' in B. Gordon and P. Marshall (eds.), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 17–43. For a study that stresses more the indirect effects of plague on post-obit 'flamboyance': J. Chiffoleau, *La Comptabilité de l'au-delà: Les Hommes, la mort et la religion dans la région d'Avignon à la fin du moyen âge (vers 1320–vers 1480)* (Paris, 1980), esp. p. 274.

[21] Haggh-Huglo, 'Music, Liturgy', pp. 383–408.

[22] For comparison elsewhere, see for instance Nuremberg (and foundations made for the 'common good' in the late fifteenth century): R. Staub, *Les Paroisses et la cité de Nuremberg en xiiie siècle à la Réforme* (Paris, 2003), pp. 249–79.

spaces. Guild chapels founded next to town ramparts and gates also served to reinforce a sense that the encircling walls enclosed a sacred kind of space within. Investment in commemoration of saints whose relics lay in Bruges churches enhanced public worship; investment in the feast days of Mary, Christ or the Eucharist promoted cults that were at once both universal and local in the town of the Holy Blood.

The management of these foundations also developed in significant ways in the fifteenth century. More of them came to require a wider range of intercessors. Their accumulation, alongside the increasing use of relic-carrying processions, created a network of intercession within the town to an extent not possible in smaller or less wealthy communities. Foundations and providers of religious service proliferated: by the late fifteenth century the services offered by institutions (religious houses, hospitals, almshouses, collegiate and parish churches and chapels) and by groups of clergy and laity who ran them (parish priests, churchwardens, poor-table masters or guild deans) were interlinked in Bruges to a greater extent than ever before.[23] The civic government itself was involved directly and indirectly in these intercessory services: it ran institutions (like the Dark Room) that formed nodal points in the network of charity; it presided over guild affairs, almshouses and to some extent poor tables; and it oversaw property transactions that set up foundations. The growing volume of these services made recourse to municipal judgment and authority greater by the late fifteenth century than it had been at the beginning of our period.

The phrase 'civic religion' is a useful shorthand, but it remains potentially anachronistic. It is not used here to suggest any 'secularisation' of civic society. Processions could come to commemorate secular victories, but these were regarded as marks of divine favour. No civic calendar of such events came to replace liturgical time in its annual cycle and timeless repetition. Civic virtues remained Christian, their promotion indissolubly linked to the task of salvation. Civic government rested on the pillars of harmony, unity, justice and fidelity: by observing such virtues the city would resemble the sacred city of Paradise to be gained at the end of time.[24] Neither is 'civic religion' used here to mean that lay government encroached, at least in any straightforward way, upon

[23] Trexler describes what appears to be a similar proliferation of institutions in Florence by the late fifteenth century, but regards this as a product of a more fragmented society (*Public Life*, pp. 453, 542–3).

[24] This was how the Franciscan Francesc Eiximenis put it to the magistrates of Valencia in 1383: F. Eiximenis, *Regiment de la cosa publica*, ed. P. Daniel de Molins de Rei (Barcelona: Impremta Varias, 1927), 45–66; and he recommended an origin myth that linked citizens to the chosen people of the Old Testament (*ibid.*, p. 34). See Hadziiossif, 'L'Ange', p. 136.

sacred territory that had traditionally been solely clerical. This sacred territory had itself changed and expanded: there were more feast days celebrated with heightened liturgical observance; more processions, masses and sermons. More lay people became involved in the foundation and management of divine service, but it required mediation of the clergy and synchronisation with liturgical time. Ecclesiastical bodies in Bruges – especially St Donatian's – could resist municipal wishes to determine the use of sacred resources and solicitation of divine grace.

Civic authorities had more sacred resources at their disposal, but religious ceremony remained inherently resistant to manipulation for political purposes. Increasing use was made of the specialist skills of rhetoricians to encourage appropriate piety, but attempts to communicate a political message symbolically could prove an insecure means to achieve a particular end. Occasionally, the effects were disastrous, as the rhetorician and chronicler Anthonis de Roovere seems to admit. On 15 February 1478 during Lent, he records that the burgomaster Martin Lem ordered the performance of a play on top of a wagon in the streets.[25] The play was supposed to express the great harm that the king of France had done (by his invasion of Flanders) and the need for the people to pay for soldiers. But some people apparently twisted all the words to mean something different. The players themselves were attacked. Great disturbance in the town was the result.

## Civic morality *c.* 1500

The play was performed in a climate of rising tension, which also explains why its effects were not so easily managed by the town magistrates. Even processions and plays on Holy Blood day could cause unrest – as they had three years before when Reynoud Willems had acted so defiantly. Charles the Bold's wars in the 1470s, the threat of French invasion after his death and growing hostility towards the new Habsburg ruler in the 1480s put severe pressure on civic finances and unity. In addition, Bruges was suffering economic difficulties. Quite when and why Bruges faltered as a major international centre is still a matter of debate; but its decline was irreversible by the 1490s. Population levels may have climbed back up to 40,000 by the 1470s (after reduction in the late 1430s), but the dwindling number of immigrants from then on, and the great mortality caused by war, famine and the devastation of the surrounding countryside in the 1480s, severely

[25] SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 404r–v.

depleted numbers.[26] A letter by Maximilian and Philip the Fair on 11 December 1494 reckoned that between 4,000 and 5,000 houses in the town were empty and in ruins.[27] Flight and only partial return of foreign merchants, problems with access to the sea along the Zwin and the gradual shift of international trade in the region to Antwerp were to compound these effects.

Adversity did little to alter the forms of 'civic religion'. Its main expressions continued as before. The Holy Blood procession was conducted in even the darkest years of crisis, and was to enjoy a regular subsidy and similar format (with some embellishments) well into the sixteenth century.[28] General processions continued to be ordered in almost every year. Officially sponsored rhetoric guilds and competitions flourished, and Bruges remained an important cultural centre. Charitable welfare continued to exercise civic governments. Responses to sickness or hunger may even have been sharpened and made more routine by crises in the 1480s. Severe famine in particular impelled the town government to take stronger action than before, prompting a tax inquiry to raise money to deal with the extreme situation.[29] It may also have encouraged the magistracy to legislate in ways that demonstrated further its authority over religious matters. On 16 February 1491, such was the great want and sickness in the town, that the magistracy secured episcopal permission to allow all poor people during Lent, with the advice and counsel of their parish priest, to consume milk, butter and eggs despite the seasonal restrictions normally required.[30]

The most obvious and direct effect of economic change was on post-obit provision. The rents that supported endowments for divine service were badly affected, at least initially. For most of the 1490s, the ability of the fabric of St Donatian's to meet its obligations towards obit services was compromised by the 'destruction and desolation of the goods of the obedientiar'.[31] Parish poor tables too were hit by recession.

[26] See J. Dumolyn, 'Population et structures professionelles à Bruges aux XIVe et XVe siècles', *Revue du nord* 329 (1999), 43–64 (esp. pp. 61–3).

[27] GVS, Vol. VI, p. 386.

[28] For the addition of four children astride *Roosbayaert* (the horse Bayart belonging to Reinout van Montalban, reputedly in the time of Charlemagne) as part of Holy Blood festivities from 1518: SAB, 1517/18, fo. 135r; 1518/19, fo.119v.

[29] GVS, Vol. VI, pp. 475–6; G. Maréchal, *De sociale en politieke gebondenheid van het Brugse hospitaalwezen in de middeleeuwen*, Standen en Landen 73 (Kortrijk, 1978), p. 300. A fire was stoked in the *burg* to warm the poor during the winter of 1482/3; 7,630 *tarwebroden* were baked for the poor in April and May 1483 (SAB, 216, 1482/3, fo. 164r); corn was bought in during the great famine of 1486/7 (1486/7, fo. 176r).

[30] SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), i (1490–99), fo. 48r.

[31] The obedientiar had many rents coming in from the regions surrounding Bruges that had been particularly hit by war. For references to the depletion in services from the fabric accounts: BAB, G5, 1489/90, fos. 9r, 10v; 1490/1, fo. 9r; 1491/2, fos. 1v (for

With the abandonment of so many houses in the 1490s, the rent market was put under great strain. There was certainly some recovery in the early sixteenth century, but guilds were no longer founding altars and chapels in quite the same quantity; once populous guilds like Our Lady of the Snow declined in number. Fewer large-scale foundations for feast days, processions, masses, anniversaries or doles were made in the town churches (see Figures 3.1, 3.2, 6.1; Appendices 3, 4, 5).

A reduction in available capital to support new services and guilds must partly explain their relative decline.[32] Even so, a shift in devotional attitudes by the beginning of the sixteenth century cannot be discounted as another possible cause.[33] The effects of humanist thought, and criticism of the clergy, arguably made more available by the advent of the printing press, are issues that require fuller and more careful treatment than space allows here. Not all new trends of spirituality were harmful of established Catholic practices; and discussion needs to guard against a teleological view of these trends as harbingers of the Reformation. Treatment of two aspects of civic ceremony and religion in Bruges will close this book: the ceremonial relationship of town to ruler, and the apparent sharpening of 'moral' attitudes within the town. Neither was new, but changes of emphasis in these areas were significant, and both have a bearing on the later progress of the Reformation in Bruges.

In the hope of reversing the town's fortunes, the Bruges magistrates in 1515 turned to their ruler. On 18 April, the young prince Charles made his first official entry into the town. The eleven tableaux, put on by the guilds and native citizens along the route for his entertainment, made explicit reference to the present woes of the town at the end of the sequence: the age of gold under the last two Burgundian dukes had been succeeded by an age of iron, in which 'merchandise' had abandoned the town. In the last tableau, a wheel of fortune was shown with the hand of a miniature Charles poised to turn it.[34]

The entry ceremony followed well-established procedures: entry by the Cross gate, tableaux at intervals all the way to the *prinsenhof*.

'long deliberation' about these problems), 9v; 1492/3, fo. 1v; 1494/5, fo. 12r; 1495/6, fo. 3r; 1496/7, fos. 1r, 23v; 1497/8, fo. 3r.

[32] P. Trio, *Volksreligie als spiegel van den stedelijke samenleving: De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen* (Leuven, 1993), pp. 191–9.

[33] See for instance K. Goudriaan, 'Gilden en broederschappen in de Middeleeuwen', in K. Goudriaan, M. Hulshof and P. Lourens, *De gilden in Gouda: Tentoonstelling in Museum Het Catharina Gasthuis te Gouda* (Zwolle: Stedelijk Museum het Catharina Gasthuis, 1996), pp. 21–41.

[34] S. Anglo, *La Tryumphante Entrée de Charles prince des espagnes en Bruges 1515* (Amsterdam, New York, 1973); and S. Mareel, 'Jan de Scheereres *Triumphe ghedaen te brugghe ter intreye van Caerle*: Teksteditie met inleiding en aantekeningen', *Jaarboek De Fonteine* 55 (2005), 79–143.

It demonstrated again the ability of the town magistrates to marshal guilds and rhetoricians to produce a coherent programme. But it did have some unusual features. No previous ruler entering Bruges had been entertained by tableaux that carried an explicit political message. Charles was treated to a potted history of the links both sacred and political that bound the town to its ruler: starting with the legendary beginnings under Liederic de Buc, the reputed gifts to Bruges of the Holy Blood relic by Count Thierry of Alsace, and of the relics of St Donatian by Count Baldwin 'Iron Arm', through to the privileges granted by Dampierre counts and Burgundian dukes. Almost all the 'historical' scenes were twinned with ones drawn from biblical precedent, setting the history of Flanders within the higher realms of sacred history. Bruges appears once more, by analogy, as the holy city: the gift of the Holy Blood to the town is twinned with the Emperor Heraclius' return of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem. The two scenes are set within a representation of the *scepenhuis*: the sacred nature of civic authority is also implied. The traditions that bound ruler to the town and its magistracy thus acquired a more timeless dimension: undoubtedly the purpose was to instruct Charles of his ancestral and quasi-sacred obligations to the town. To ensure that the message made a more lasting impression, the town paid both a local rhetorician for a Flemish version of the event, and a court *indiciaire* for one in French.

The town authorities thus continued to use ceremony to put forward agendas favourable to their interests. But they were doing so now from a position of greater weakness. After peace was restored in Flanders in 1492 it became apparent that the presence of Habsburg rulers would be less frequent in Flanders than that of their predecessors. The *prinsenhof* was still used by the regency court in the early sixteenth century, but less often.[35] There was less courtly involvement in the town's devotional fraternities;[36] the fraternity that received most Habsburg attention was a new one dedicated to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows in St Saviour's, founded in 1493 by one of Philip the Fair's court secretaries, Jan van Coudenberghe.[37] The Habsburg family resumed visits to the Holy Blood procession by 1498, regents and princes occupying townhouses

[35] For the increasing importance of Mechelen as residential and administrative centre: K. de Jonghe, 'The Principal Residence in Mechelen: The Court of Cambrai and the Court of Savoy', in D. Eichberger (ed.), *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York and Margaret of Austria* (Leuven, 2005), pp. 57–66.

[36] See above, p. 250.

[37] A. Duclos, *De eerste eeuw van het broederschap der zeven weedommen van Maria in de Sint-Salvators te Brugge* (Bruges, 1922), esp. pp. 6, 12–13, 20–1. For reference to Habsburg involvement in the cult of the Seven Sorrows as part of a 'cultural offensive' see Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 58–71.

to spectate.[38] In 1515, Charles himself was treated to a more lavishly staged event shortly after his first entry into the town.[39] But the political gaze of the dynasty who now ruled Flanders was fixed on wider horizons than those of its Burgundian forebears. The distance between dynasty and town was greater than it had been, which was perhaps why the civic government felt so impelled to remind Charles in 1515 of the historical links that connected him to the town.

Other elements of the entry ceremony also suggest a shift of power in favour of the ruler. His first entry made into the town was traditionally the occasion when he swore oaths in the *burg* both before the canons of St Donatian's and separately before the townsmen. According to the chapter act-books of St Donatian's Charles did indeed enter the town on 18 April in order 'to make his oaths'. Yet the route he took this time skirted around the *burg*, and he did not enter it until five days later.[40] This delay between entering the town and swearing the oaths appears to have begun under the Habsburgs. In Galbert of Bruges' day, and up until the end of Valois Burgundian rule, it had been custom for a new count to swear his oaths on the same day as his arrival into town. Even Charles the Bold, arriving on 9 April 1468, made his entry and swore his oaths at St Donatian's and at the *scepenhuis* on the same day. Mary of Burgundy was apparently intending to swear an oath to the town on the same day as her arrival on 5 April 1477.[41] But Maximilian made his oaths the day after his arrival on 28 August that same year. It took Philip the Fair eight days after his arrival in March 1497 to do so.[42] Whether these novelties troubled canons or townsmen is not known, but the detachment of entry ceremony from oath swearing was perhaps of symbolic significance. The count still had to make an oath, but there

[38] Archduchess Margaret of Austria attended in 1498; in 1501 she attended with the princess of Castile, sister of Philip the Fair; in 1511 the lady of Savoy took a house in the town to see the procession, as did the lord Ravestein in 1512 (ADN, B3456; B3459; SAB, 216, 1510/11, fo. 80r; 1511/2, fo. 112r; SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), ii, fo. 317r).

[39] ADN, B3346; SAB, 216, 1514/15, fo. 115v. An extra £10 5s more than usual was spent on plays and 'personnages' for the procession.

[40] BAB, A58, fos. 136v–137r.

[41] SBB, Hs. 437, fos. 377v–378r. Technically, hers was not a first entry as countess, but she apparently went to St Donatian's to hear mass and 'swear to the town'. However, the 'people' were not happy to accept an oath without assurances of their privileges regarding the *Vrije*. The fabric accounts of St Donatian's record the canons' gifts of wine and cloth to the countess on 9 April, and her gift to their relics on 10 April (BAB, G6, 1476/7, fos. 9r, 16r).

[42] For references see above, p. 246 n. 94j. In 1507 Margaret, duchess of Savoy took two days after her entry on 2 June to swear an oath on behalf of her grandson Charles, 'count of Flanders', though the correct offerings were apparently made (BAB, A58, fos. 23v–24r).

was evidently now no hurry to do so. The prince's residence in the town was not quite so dependent on his formal assurance that he would uphold urban liberties. Perhaps it also showed a more careless or ill-informed attitude towards custom. The canons also reported with some consternation that Prince Charles in 1515 failed to make the traditional offering of gold coins and cloth after he had sworn his oath as count.[43]

The ceremonial customs that had grown up during the Valois Burgundian period continued to be used by the Habsburgs for their own dynastic ends. After peace was concluded in 1492, and the main political crisis had passed, there was a reduction in the frequency of general processions (see Figure 2.1). Yet they continued to be summoned, and on behalf of the prince and his family. Citizens may not have embraced the extent of their new rulers' ambitions, insisting that the Habsburg right to rule was still nominally based on their title of count: prayers for the welfare of princes were invariably still coupled with prayers for the welfare of Flanders. Yet citizens were made to peer more often into the new dynastic horizons of their ruling family: processions had to set off with prayers for the safe passage of rulers to their other lands, or even for their wars outside Flanders.[44] The *Hallegeboden* seem to show that the ability of rulers to call for general processions had become a routine procedure.[45] The Habsburgs could sometimes ask more of relics than their predecessors. Maximilian and Mary had managed occasionally to steer the route of general processions around the *prinsenhof*.[46] On 21 April 1515, three days after Charles entered Bruges (two days before he swore his oaths) and at his 'instance', the town magistrates prevailed

[43] The canons' investigation into this blamed the dean for failing to alert the prince and his entourage about this custom (BAB, A58, fos. 136v–137r). Philip the Fair in 1497 had made the offering, but it had required the canons to visit the *prinsenhof* the day before the swearing ceremony to inform him about correct procedure (A57, fos. 87r–v). Evidently this precaution had not been taken twenty years previously, for Maximilian failed to observe these customs at his first entry (A54, fo. 125r). The Valois Burgundian rulers had all dutifully followed tradition at their entries.

[44] For the return of the archduke from Spain in May 1504, for the king's whole family bound for Spain in January 1506, and for the king's return from England and voyage to Spain in March 1506, see SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), ii (1503–13), fos. 30r, 56r, 62r, 72r–v; BAB, A57, fos. 256r, 227r. For 'the prince at war in Guelders, laying siege to Arnhem' in August 1505, see AHB, 18 (*Rekeningen*, 1469–1516), fo. 165r; SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), ii (1503–13), fos. 56r–v; or in 1520, for Charles' entry into Aachen for his coronation and success against the Moors in Algeria: *ibid*., fos. 205v–206v, 216v–217r.

[45] For references in the *Hallegeboden* between 1503 and 1520 to general processions called following letters received 'from the prince': SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), ii, fos. 54v, 55r, 60r, 62r, 72r, 89r, 144v, 185r, 269r; iii, fos. 42v, 101v, 154v, 175r, 198r. Town contributions for the exequies of the ruler and family also seem to have become more routine, and even more costly: see the expenses in January 1507 for the all the town's churches to pray for the soul of the 'king of Castile': SAB, 216, 1506/7, fos. 110r–v.

[46] See above, pp. 263–4.

upon the canons of St Donatian to conduct a general procession on the following day with the Sacrament, and to hold a station next to the *prinsenhof* itself.[47]

Charles' arrival in Bruges that year did not bring about any reversal of fortune for the town. Besides economic troubles, there was the threat of pestilence: the same procession on 22 April, like others around this time, was intended to pray for protection against 'sickness'. Precautions against plague appear to have become stricter. Tighter quarantine controls were issued from around 1509: the doors of infected houses had to be marked with white crosses; restrictions were imposed on the movement of people and goods. From 1509, the magistrates began a new kind of 'general procession', involving everyone in the town. On 18 August processions were ordered in every church in Bruges, for several weeks to come, in which at least one person from every household was to attend, in order to ask God for the prosperity of the prince and for protection against the sickness.[48] These orders were repeated several times over the next few years. In one further way, the town authorities demonstrated their ability to set citizens in motion.

The movements of others besides the sick were also being more carefully regulated. Pilgrims were permitted in 1512 to stay in hospices for only a single night, and there were warnings issued against false pilgrims. In 1513, the dean and chapter of St Donatian's echoed civic legislation against the poor and 'dishonest beggars'.[49] Such ordinances were a response to a particular crisis, yet they may be evidence of more long-term tightening of municipal control. Civic legislation on begging appears to become more repressive from the mid 1490s. In 1496 the town authorities were complaining that many young, strong and healthy men and women from within and outside the town were daily begging in Bruges: all were required to have licenses to beg and they were forbidden to ask for alms inside churches. In 1497, the authorities claimed that public order was being threatened daily by *rouckloose knechten*, who did not practise a craft. From them on, restrictions on beggars were regular, if not always effective: in 1508 there was still great disruption to divine service caused by poor people who went into church to beg.[50]

[47] The chapter act-books say the station was to be held *in curia dicte principe*; the *Hallegeboden* describe it as held *voorbij* the lord's house. The procession was to include all former burgomasters, as well as present aldermen and guild deans dressed in black carrying torches (BAB, A58, fo. 136v; SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), iii, fo. 53v).

[48] SAB, 120 *(Hallegeboden*), ii, fo. 231r (1509); iii, fo. 28v (1514).

[49] BAB, A58, fo. 103r.

[50] SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), i, fos. 262v, 285v, 340v; ii, fos. 160r–v.

The series of civic decrees only survive from 1490; it is doubtful whether this legislation was entirely new. But evidence from another source indicates that such decrees reflect a change in attitude that began shortly before. The chapter act-books of St Donatian's begin in 1345, but it only from the mid 1470s that a more hostile view towards begging, among clergy and laity, seems to emerge. Harsher measures began to be recorded towards the poor who sought alms in the church. Women had long been allowed to sell candles within the cloisters, but in September 1475 restrictions were placed on them ostensibly because of the risk of fire. Further 'aggravations' caused by the women candle-sellers were reported, culminating in 1487 when they were entirely expelled from the church.[51] Other poor people began to be made less welcome: in 1475, the dean and chapter discussed removing the poor who sought alms in the church or seated themselves outside; in 1480, they were concerned to stop so many poor wandering about the church for fear that they might spread plague. In 1489 the poor were expelled.[52]

Practical considerations such as risk of fire or plague were not the only causes of such measures. The behaviour of the poor apparently had unwelcome effects on worship: the poor women in church impeded the celebration of divine offices. The canons were not the only ones troubled by this. Discussion about the expulsion of beggars and sellers in the church in 1482 had been prompted by complaint from one Pieter de Labie – town councillor, dean of the mercers and multiple benefactor of divine service.[53] His complaint against certain selling of cloth in the church was partly economic, but in their discussion of the matter, the canons conceded that commerce in sacred places was not desirable and could lead to public 'scandal'.

Anxiety about giving rise to 'scandal' seems to have increased among the canons during the 1470s and 1480s. The misdemeanours of clergy had often appeared in chapter act-books before, but the number of recorded cases rose in this period, and they were often accompanied by fears that delinquent behaviour would give rise to 'scandal'. Concern was raised in 1481 that many clerics were wearing laymen's clothes, failing to attending divine office, frequenting taverns and being seen in the presence of meretricious women: this was causing 'scandal' among the people.[54] Some lay people complained directly about clerical behaviour.

[51] BAB, A54, fos. 76r, 82r, 114r; A55, fos. 165r–v, 178r–v, 184r; A56, fos. 47r, 148r. The women petitioned soon after to be allowed to continued their trade (A55, fo. 164r).

[52] *Ibid.*, A55, fo. 76r; BAB, A55, fo. 90v; G6, 1489/90, fo. 18r.

[53] BAB, A55, fos. 165r–v, 178r–v. Other guilds (such as the rosary-makers) also complained at the economic activity sheltered by the church: A56, fo. 127v (1487).

[54] BAB, A55, fo. 140v.

In the mid 1480s this could be dangerous for the canons: townsmen were deeply divided politically, and clergy who joined one or other faction could expect reprisal. In 1484 the town council called for extreme measures against Jacop Maes for 'many seditious words' that he had spoken in support of Maximilian to a local baker.[55] On 27 January 1488, days before Maximilian's imprisonment in the town, the chaplain Henricus Regis had returned drunk from a tavern, followed by a mocking crowd, and had attended divine office scarcely able to stand up, to the ridicule of the people. Worse still, the same tavern had been full of partisan talk; Henricus had shouted 'bad words' about the *schout* (Pieter Lanchals). He had also carried a sword under his robes, and later confessed to involvement with the artisans who had taken up arms against Maximilian.[56] On 9 June the canons noted that hostility among townsmen had been incurred because priests and others were 'partial and passionate in the quarrels of Flanders and the King of the Romans', and had been uttering insolent words and doing violent deeds – to the scandal of the people.[57]

Henricus Regis was a cleric who required punishment because he 'could not rule himself'.[58] Disorderly behaviour among clerics had incurred the complaint of townsmen in other ways. On 6 March 1482, the canons gave leave to their succentor Aliamus de Groote and his 'associates' to take to the streets to perform a Passion play – a *ludum moralisantem* – on a wagon, and to deliver a sermon in Flemish.[59] Aliamus de Groote's involvement was doubtless welcomed by the town authorities: his connections with rhetoricians, his involvement in other

[55] *Ibid.*, A56, fos. 66v–67v, 69v–70r. Jacop Maes was accused of saying that if five or six deans of the town took over the council and if three or four magistrates had their hands and feet bound and handed over to Maximilian, peace could be made.

[56] A brief stretch in prison, on a diet of bread of water, did not dampen his partisanal ardour. On 9 June, three weeks after Maximilian's release, Henricus was reported to have gone about the town with a *journetam*, depicting the Sacrament, the Cross of Christ and an image of St Donatian. Henricus claimed that these were just symbols of his priestly office, but clearly they were meant to mock the worthlessness of the treaty, which Maximilian had soon denounced, despite swearing an oath on a piece of the True Cross and the body of St Donatian. 'Public rumour' was still being raised by his partisan behaviour in December that year (*ibid.*, fos. 150v, 151r, 159r–v, 173r).

[57] The chapter act-books recorded that there were clerics who supported Maximilian: on 10 March, unknown to the town regime, two canons had been concealing Nicolas van Delft, son-in-law of the hated *schout* Pieter Lanchals, who had been caught the day before. The dean and chapter concluded that these two canons must be kept out of the way so as not to incur the wrath of the people (*ibid.*, fo. 152v).

[58] '… qui non se regeret' – the scribe permitting himself a brief *jeu de mots* (*ibid.*, fo. 150v).

[59] BAB, A55, fo. 158r; and R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 34, 257–8 (though the date given here is 1483).

guilds and his assistance in setting up the daily *Salve* concert had made him an indispensable figure in the promotion of public worship in the town.[60] The canons granted Aliamus' request on condition that some canons read through the play beforehand to ensure that no 'scandal' or 'commotion' would result from the performance. Unfortunately, their efforts at censorship were in vain. The canons later received notice from the *schout* Anthonis van der Vichte that certain players, full of wine, had a conducted a more scurrilous play before the house of Jan van Nieuwenhove.[61]

Concern about the wider impact of clerical improprieties had surfaced in other incidents. The 'Feast of Asses' that took place in St Donatian's between 7 and 13 January had always potentially been a riotous occasion, ending with a burlesque procession, probably around the *burg*, involving the youngest chaplain elected as the 'priest of asses' and the schoolboys singing profane songs.[62] It had given rise to problems in the past,[63] but it was in the 1480s that concern among the canons and municipal authorities mounted about its effects. On 26 December 1483, Willem Moreel, burgomaster and benefactor of divine service, appeared before the dean and chapter to ask for the annual festivity to be prohibited, because it always caused 'great scandal' and the people would be provoked into similar 'petulant' behaviour by clerical example. The canons demurred, but on 31 December they reflected further that 'scandals and insolences' would not be appropriate, especially when there were many 'nobles and magnates' present, and imposed restrictions on the Asses' Feast that year. This must have led to some disgruntlement among the young clerks, for on 7 January one of them defiantly dressed up as the 'priest of asses' and appeared in the choir. In the following year, the canons decided that the feast should not be held, particularly because of 'war and discord' and because they feared 'the commotion

[60] Strohm, *Music*, esp. pp. 30, 33–5, 48–50.

[61] BAB, A55, fo. 161r. This was a politically motivated disturbance: the Jan van Nieuwenhove here was the associate of Pieter Lanchals (Jan, son of Michiel was tutor to Lanchals' children). The clerk who caused particular trouble, Matthius Meerschaert, confessed in June 1488 to carrying a sword under his tunic and to have abetted Henricus Regis in his partisan behaviour (A56, fo. 159r).

[62] The 'Feast of Asses' was one event in a season of burlesque festivity, beginning with the ceremony of the boy-bishop on 28 December. It appears to have received civic subsidy in the fifteenth century (see SAB, 277 (*presentwijnen*), 1424/5, fo. 10v; 1425/6, fo. 10v). See Strohm, *Music*, p. 33, and especially H. Callewier, 'De omgekeerde wereld van de Brugse ezelspaus: Een omstreden aspect van de laat-middeleeuwse kerkelijke feestcultuur', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis* 12 (2009), 175–95.

[63] In 1436 there were concerns that the election of a 'pope' would disturb divine offices; and in 1452 the feast was cancelled (BAB, A50, fo. 230r; A51, fo. 290v).

of the people'. In 1486 they reinstituted the feast but insisted that it should be conducted in a more decorous manner.[64]

These concerns did not cease with the formal end of political crisis in 1492. In the following year the canons decided that the 'Feast of Asses' was a 'bad custom' and should be abstained from.[65] Fears about the wider impact of clerical impropriety continued. On 22 December 1500 the canons' thoughts turned once more to the approaching 'Feast of Asses', during which 'dishonest customs and mores' were observed and divine office neglected. It was decided that the feast should be stopped in order to avoid 'scandals in the ears and eyes of the people'.[66]

The task of protecting citizens from harmful sounds and sights had also been one undertaken by the town magistrates – with increasing vigour in the late fifteenth century. Suitable plays for general edification were funded more regularly.[67] Citizens were required to see relics on general processions, and could be punished if they did not.[68] What citizens said also mattered. In some ways this had always been the case: words that disturbed civic peace were always likely to have brought punishment down on those who uttered them. But by the late fifteenth century, the 'bad words' that invited particular punishment could now include blasphemy. On 26 March 1491 a civic decree proclaimed that no one 'from now on' was to blaspheme almighty God and his saints, nor to swear any unseemly oaths, on threat of severe punishment.[69] Twelve days previously, Hannekin van Uphove had had a piece of his tongue cut out, and had been wheeled in a cart through the *burg* before St Donatian's, onto the *beurse* and the Carmer's bridge, and then been banned from Flanders for fifty years, because he had customarily sworn 'horrible' oaths by the Blood, Head and Five Wounds of Christ; and that on one night, somewhere behind the *Rodenstrate*, he had even said that there was no God. In the same year, another miscreant was accused of making blasphemous oaths, in particular swearing by the Holy Blood.[70]

[64] *Ibid.*, A56, fos. 21v–22r, 58v, 93v. [65] *Ibid.*, A57, fo. 29v.

[66] *Ibid.*, fo. 156v. The 'Feast of Asses' disappears from record at St Donatian's after 1510, following further bans, and seems to have been supplanted by the more anodyne 'boy-bishop' ceremony (see Callewier, 'De omgekeerde wereld'.) For measures against clerical 'scandals' on Holy Blood day, see above, p. 61.

[67] For large-scale rhetoric competitions organised in 1493 and 1517: SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*): i, fo. 130v; ii, fos. 121r–122r; 216, 1516/17, fos. 137r–138r. The town's second rhetoricians' chamber (the *Drie Santinnen*) was founded in the 1480s; and more generally see Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 58–76.

[68] See above, p. 89.

[69] SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), i, fo. 51r.

[70] *Ibid.*, 157 (*Civiele Sententïen Vierschaar*), 1490–2, fos. 36r, 39v; see also fos. 96r–97r.

Concern with blasphemy was hardly new, though it has sometimes been described as a wider phenomenon in early modern Europe during or owing to the Reformation.[71] In Bruges, it is doubtful whether this decree or these prosecutions were the first of their kind: the *Hallegeboden*, where the decree is given, begin only in 1491, and the *civiele sententïen* where these cases occur become more plentiful only from 1490. Yet it is plausible to suggest that the town authorities' concern to deal more severely with blasphemy began only a short time before. Fragments of judicial cases survive before this period, but no case concerning blasphemy appears in them.[72] The court of the *proosdij*, for which there is a more continuous run of cases dating back to the 1430s, dealt with miscreants who had uttered 'injurious words',[73] but none of these included blasphemy until 1500 – when a Hannekin van Voorde, for uttering blasphemy, had his tongue cut out with a 'glowing iron' to serve as an 'example to others'.[74] Punishment for blasphemy occurs in other sources shortly before this time. The anonymous town clerk (who began his 'chronicle' in 1477) records the first known case prosecuted in Bruges, in 1484.[75] The second known case occurs in 1485, when five men were beheaded for blasphemy against the Sacrament – and for their rebellion against Maximilian.[76] Heightened concern with public order and civic unity during the mid 1480s – when Sacrament and relics were being carried in town streets with unprecedented frequency, when sermons were being preached as never before, when more profane festivity (like jousting or the Feast of Asses) was being suppressed, when clerical behaviour and seditious words were being scrutinised more sharply then ever; in other words when divine grace was more

[71] Jean Gerson, dean of St Donatian's for a time, had written a treatise against blasphemy. Civic governments, certainly in Italy, took a stand against blasphemy from the thirteenth century: see E. Horodowich, 'Civic Identity and the Control of Blasphemy in Sixteenth-Century Venice,' *Past and Present* 181 (2003), 3–33. On blasphemy and the Reformation, see for instance A. Cabantous, *Histoire du blasphème en Occident, XVIe–XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1998), esp. pp. 10–17.

[72] Some records of the civil court survive in the 1430s, 1447–53, 1470s and 1487–8.

[73] For cases of 'injurious words', usually defamatory: RAB, *Fonds Proosdij*, 1507, fo. 104r (1433); 1508, fos. 25v (1456), 114v (1460), 182r (1464); 1509, fos. 3v (1468), 113r–v (1472), 163r (1473); 1510, fos. 4v, 11r (1474), 108r (1476), 130v (1477), 188v–205r (1478), 219v–220r (1479); 1511, fos. 3v, 10r (1481), 116r (1485), 133v, 142v, 147v (1486); 1512, fos. 192v–193r (1499).

[74] *Ibid*., 1513, fo. 16v.

[75] Carton, *Het boeck*, pp. 67–8, 267, 331.

[76] P. Fredericq (ed.), *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae*, 3 vols. (Ghent, 1906), Vol. III, pp. 141–3; also Vol. II, pp. 278, 280–92. For the wider concern in the region with blasphemy, see the treatise written in 1495 that considered blasphemy worthy of civil punishment because it angered God, who countered with 'plagues … tempests and earthquakes' (*ibid*., Vol. II, pp. 288–9).

urgently sought – may also have prompted town magistrates to take a keener interest in the moral quality of their citizens' speech.

The late fifteenth century is frequently seen as a period in which a new 'burgher morality' developed among civic elites in the Low Countries, characterised by a sober stoicism, a work ethic, self-reliance, and regard for peace and the common good of the town.[77] There are difficulties with the term: not all can detect a 'burgher' mentality distinct from a 'courtly' one, nor restrict its application just to civic 'elites', nor regard these virtues as new.[78] But there is a case for arguing that stricter standards of 'morality,' in public and private, for men and women, were being insisted upon. Towns like Florence may have experienced more enthusiastic outbursts of purgation in much the same period,[79] yet a similar strain of penitential morality may be detected in Bruges. In particular it was a morality that apparently required stricter standards of sexual behaviour from men and women, and harsher prosecution of behaviour that was deemed to transgress gender boundaries or undermine the integrity of the family household.[80] In Bruges, there is evidence for tightening legislation on prostitution, and more vigorous prosecution of crimes such as sodomy or transvestism.[81] Sodomy in particular was evidently regarded as crime that might contaminate the town in a way

[77] See for instance H. Pleij, *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511: Stadscultuur in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1988); 'Inleiding: Op belofte van profijt', in Pleij (ed.), *Op belofte van profijt: Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 8–51.

[78] For an overview, see Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 232–51 and references cited there.

[79] For Savonarola's regime in 1494 (which included more rigorous separation of the sexes) see Trexler, *Public Life*, pp. 336–8, 358–61. Sharpening standards of 'morality' in various other guises have been identified in other European towns at the end of the century: Venice (Crouzet-Pavan, 'Sopra le acque salse', p. 560); England (e.g. M. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370–1600* (Cambridge, 1998), *passim*; P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Coventry's "Lollard" Programme and the Making of Utopia,' in R. Horrox and S. Rees-Jones (eds.), *Pragmatic Utopias: Ideals and Communities 1200–1630* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 97–116).

[80] The decision of the Dry Tree guild in 1508 to prohibit women from entering their chapel in the Franciscan friary might be interpreted in the light of the sharpening of gender boundaries, and the adoption of the stricter standards of morality, for the friary turned itself over to the observance in 1516 and prohibited the singing of polyphonic music (SAB, 505) – though this may not have been hostility to polyphony per se (see R. C. Wegman, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe 1470–1530* (London, 2005), esp. pp. 1–2, 7–8, 18–19, 39).

[81] G. Dupond, *Maagdenverleidsters, hoeren en speculanten: Prostitutie in Brugge tijdens de Bourgondische periode (1385–1515)* (Bruges, 1996), esp. pp. 70–9; M. Boone, 'State Power and Illicit Sexuality: The Persecution of Sodomy in Late Medieval Bruges', *Journal of Medieval History* 22 (1996), 135–53; M. Naessens, 'Judicial Authorities' Views of Women's Roles in Late Medieval Flanders,' in E. E. Kittell and M. A. Suydam (eds.), *The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in the Southern Low Countries* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 51–77.

few others did: executions of criminals often took place in the *burg*, but for the 'horrible' crime of sodomy, those convicted were taken 'to the accustomed place' outside the Cross gate.[82] Sacred space enclosed by the town walls required preservation from polluted bodies.

The Bruges *Verluydboek* of prosecutions between 1490 and 1515, in which these cases of sodomy occur, is also a catalogue of wider crimes 'against nature': child murderers, mothers hiring out daughters as prostitutes, married women who dressed as men, mother beaters, thieves of chalices and other church goods, performers of lewd acts (even on Corpus Christi day) and blasphemers.[83] Undoubtedly, such crime and prosecution was not new. The relative paucity of judicial records of crime in Bruges makes comparisons with an earlier period difficult.[84] The enforcement of moral behaviour that encouraged public worship and peace was already an integral part of 'civic religion', and is apparent in guild legislation or statutes, or in the plays of rhetoricians. A disturber of civic peace was likely to be reckoned deviant in other areas of social and religious activity. What seems to have altered is the level of anxiety provoked by 'deviance'.

The case against one Corneille vande Poorten in 1494 illustrates both change and continuity in attitude.[85] The initial charges against him were for sedition and theft. He was also a *vagabond de mal renomme*. The court recorded that he was a native of Brussels, who had spent several years in Rome, where he had become a cook. On his return to the Low Countries, he had served in various households, in the abbey of Ter Doest, in Antwerp and latterly in Bruges, where he had taken up service in quick succession in the households of three prominent citizens. Thievery landed him in prison; word was spread by his employers about his reputation, so Corneille had decided on revenge. Under 'temptation from the devil', this he had done by stirring up sedition. The devil had apparently prevailed on Corneille to put up 'seditious and defamatory' letters and bills in public places in Bruges, particularly the *beurse*. These had defamed the three households that had employed him, and the town as a whole as a place where 'great sodomy reigned secretly and in public'. There had been 'murmurings' among craftsmen, the 'commonalty' and 'bourgeois' that had threatened to cause unrest. For this Corneille was beheaded (in Tournai) and his body hung on a gibbet.

[82] SAB, 192 (*Verluydboek*), fos. 38v, 47r, 60v, 75r, 77r.

[83] *Ibid.*, fos. 19r–v, 27v–28r, 34r–v, 36v–37r, 38v, 45r–46r, 47r, 49v–50v, 54r–v, 59r, 60v.

[84] There are the judicial records of the *schout* in Bruges, the earliest of which date back to the 1390s. Accusations of sodomy first appear in the 1470s (AGR, CC, 13780, fos. 40v, 59v–60r).

[85] SAB, 192 (*Verluydboek*), fos. 10r–12r. See also Boone, 'State Power', pp. 137–8.

Before his execution, evidence for an impressive curriculum vitae of malefaction, stretching back to his youth, was extracted from him: he confessed to bestiality, sodomy and theft of rosaries.

In a fundamental respect, the prosecution of Corneille was not the result of any shift of moral attitude. His principal crime was to have threatened civic peace, concern for which had long underpinned urban society. But the interest of his prosecutors in the range, depth and history of his criminality suggests a sharpened sensitivity in the town to the possible wider effects of individual delinquency. Civic peace in Bruges had been threatened many times, but perhaps not so seriously and in so prolonged a way as in the period from the late 1470s to the early 1490s. Those in authority may have felt under greater compulsion to include in their prosecutory inquiries a broader range of behaviours considered to pose a threat to peace. The crimes confessed by Corneille included many that had begun to trouble those in authority more acutely: vagabondage, blasphemy and 'scandalous' behaviour of many kinds. Corneille threatened civic order in all forms: his mobile, sacrilegious, defamatory, rebellious and sexually deviant behaviour were all of-a-piece, to be expected of someone so open to diabolic temptation. His defamation of the town was also likely to be seen as particularly subversive by this time. The town magistrates had made greater efforts during the crisis years of the 1480s, especially through procession and sermon, to produce citizens who behaved like a chosen people and to create a sacred and unpolluted city that might bear comparison with Jerusalem. They were unlikely to ignore someone who publicly identified Bruges with a biblical city of a less salubrious reputation and one that had merited divine destruction.

The morality of citizens was not the concern only of urban authorities. The *Verluydboek* in which Corneille's misdeeds are recorded was a collection of cases that had also come before the *parlement* as the highest princely court of justice.[86] The town's *hallegeboden* that sought to control the devotional and moral behaviour of citizens echoed or repeated decrees that had also come from a higher lay authority. It was imperial legislation in 1508, 1509, 1512 and 1513 that directed the town to root out false pilgrims and punish them as vagabonds, and to keep beggars out of churches.[87] Princely edict in 1512 and 1515 required all parish churches in the town to publish proper conduct on feast days.[88] By this

[86] For the increasing tendency for legists to see sodomy as a crime of *lèse-majesté*, and its persecution as a part of growing state power, see Boone, 'State Power', esp. pp. 238–9.
[87] SAB, 120 (*Hallegeboden*), ii, fos. 103v, 220v–221r.
[88] *Ibid*., ii, fos. 351r–352r; iii, fos. 83r–84r.

period, the power of the state over the town could make itself felt more strongly than in the past.

The moral and religious behaviour of subjects, however, became even more difficult to manage. Late in 1517 letters from the prince arrived in Bruges ordering citizens to be on the look-out for any 'horrible oaths' sworn against God and his saints, or any blasphemies uttered on the Wounds, Sorrows or holy limbs of Christ 'in contempt of God and the Catholic Faith'. Such letters arrived with increasing frequency, as the fall-out from Martin Luther's theses began to be more widely felt.[89] The Reformation did not sweep into Bruges as easily as it did into some towns in the Low Countries. Why this was so is beyond the scope of this book; part of the answer lies in the ability of state and civic authorities to keep Bruges within the Catholic fold – at least until the 1560s. Only then did the apparatus of Catholic worship that had been built up in the churches of Bruges, particularly over the previous two centuries, begin to be dismantled – though not with the iconoclastic fury experienced elsewhere.[90]

A new Calvinist regime from 1578 strove to create another kind of Godly city on earth. It was overwhelmed in 1584, its disappearance testifying to the strength of orthodox forces built up over a long period. But its appearance perhaps reflects other longer-term developments. Although theologically different, it inherited a strong tradition of municipal government that considered the moral correction of its citizens to lie well within its remit. Calvinism may not have gripped the town until 1560s, but it drew on a kind of civic puritanism that had taken hold much earlier.

[89] *Ibid.*, iii, fos. 134v–135r; 176v–179r (1519), 189v (1519), 193r (1520), 335r (1522), 474r–478r (1526) – when the books of Martin Luther were particularly condemned.

[90] D. van der Bauwhede and M. Goetinck (eds.), *Brugge in de Geuzentijd: Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis der Hervorming te Brugge en het Brugse Vrije tijdens de 16de eeuw* (Bruges, 1982).

# Appendix 1: Order of craft guilds in the Holy Blood procession

| A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| | | **Near Franciscans** |
| | | 1. crane '*kinders*' |
| 1. wine-measurers (*wijnschroders*)[c] | | 2. wine-measurers |
| | | 3. wine-measurers' servants |
| 2. wine-measurers (*wijntappers*)[c] | 4 | 4. wine-measurers |
| | | 5. tilers'/masons' servants |
| | | 6. chalk-carriers |
| 3. carpenters[c] | 10 | 7. carpenters |
| 4. masons[c] | 6 | 8. masons |
| 5. tilers[c] | 4 | 9. tilers |
| 6. plumbers[c] | 2 | 10. plumbers |
| 7. plasterers[c] | 2 | 11. plasterers |
| 8. sawyers[c] | 2 | 13. sawyers |
| 9. thatchers [c] | 2 | 12. thatchers |
| 10a. painters[c] | 4 | 14. painters |
| 10b. saddlers (*beeldenmakers, zadelaars*)[c] | | 15. saddlers |
| | | 16. coopers' servants |
| 11. coopers[c] | 4 | 17. coopers |
| 12. wheelwrights[c] | 2 | 18. wheelwrights |
| 13. chair-makers (*draaiers*) | 2 | 19. chair-makers |
| | | 20. cabinet-makers' servants |
| 14. cabinet-makers (*schrijnwerkers*)[c] | | 21. cabinet-makers |
| 15. bowyers[c] | 2 | 22. bowyers |
| 16. rope-makers[c] | 2 | 23. rope-makers |
| 17. potters[c] | | 24. potters |
| | | **On *markt* before fountain** |
| | | 25. smiths' servants |
| 18. smiths[d] | 8 | 26. smiths |
| | | 27. goldsmiths' servants |
| 19. silversmiths[d] | 4 | 28. silver-/goldsmiths |
| 20. armourers[d] | 4 | 29. armourers |
| | | 30. pewter-makers' servants |

| A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| 21. pewter pot-makers (*tinnenstoopmakers*)[d] | 4 | 31. pewter pot-makers |
| | | **On *burg*** |
| 22. weavers[a] | 6 | 32. weavers |
| 23. fullers[a] | 8 | 33. fullers |
| | | 34. cloth-carriers |
| 24. shearers[a] | 6 | 35. shearers |
| 25. dyers[a] | 6 | 36. dyers |
| | | **On *markt* before Meeuwen house** |
| | | 37. butchers' servants |
| 26. butchers[b] | 12 | 38. butchers |
| | | 39. bread-makers |
| 27. fish merchants[b] | 8 | 40. fish merchants |
| | | 41. harness-makers |
| | | 42. cordwainers' servants |
| | | ***Steenstraat*** |
| 28. cordwainers[e] | 8 | 43. cordwainers |
| 29. black-leather-workers[e] | | 44. black-leather-workers |
| 30. tanners[e] | 6 | 45. tanners |
| 31. dubbers[e] | 4 | 46. dubbers |
| 32a. purse-makers[e] | 4 | 47. purse-makers |
| 32b. white-leather-workers[e] | | 48. white-leather-workers |
| 33. glovers[f] | 6 | 49. glovers |
| 34. hosiers[f] | 4 | 50. hosiers |
| | | 51. tailors' servants |
| 35. tailors[f] | 8 | 52. tailors |
| 36. doublet-/mattress-makers (*kulkstickers*)[f] | 4 | 53. doublet-/mattress-makers |
| | | 54. small tanners |
| 37. furriers (*lamwerkers*)[f] | 2 | 55. furriers (*lamwerkers*) |
| 38. furriers (*wiltwerkers*)[f] | 4 | 56. furriers (*grauwerkers*) |
| 39. old-clothes-sellers[f] | 6 | 57. old-clothes-sellers |
| 40. second-hand furriers (*oude grauwerkers*)[f] | 4 | 58. second-hand furriers |
| | | **On *markt* before fountain** |
| | | 59. bakers' servants |
| 41. bakers[g] | 6 | 60. bakers |
| | | 61. grain-carriers |
| | | 62. millers' servants |
| 42. millers[g] | 4 | 63. millers |
| 43. hatters[g] | 4 | 64. hatters |
| 44. earthen pot-makers | 2 | |
| | | 73. weavers' servants |
| 45. weavers[g] | 4 | 74. weavers |
| | | 70. tapestry-weavers |

| A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| | | 71. basket-makers |
| 46. tapestry-weavers[g] | 4 | 72. linen-weavers |
| 47. wool-beaters[g] | 4 | 75. wool-beaters |
| 48. barber-surgeons[g] | 4 | 65. barber-surgeons |
| | | 66. saddle-makers' servants |
| | | 67. saddle-makers |
| 49. belt-makers[g] | 4 | |
| 50. sheath-makers[g] | 2 | 68. sheath-makers |
| 51. rosary-makers[h] | 4 | |
| 52. fruit-sellers[h] | 2 | 69. fruit-sellers |
| 53. chandlers[h] | 6 | 76. chandlers |
| | | 77. shippers' servants |
| 54. shippers[h] | 6 | 78. shippers |
| 55. brokers[h] | 14 | 79. brokers |

*Key*: A = order as specified by the town council in 1421 and *c.* 1443 (SAB, 114 (*Wetsvernieuwingen*), 1397–1421, fo. 187v; 1422–43, fo. 167r)

B = number of torches permitted to each guild from town accounts 1407 (SAB, 216, 1406/7, fos. 100r–v)

C = order as given by Damhouder (1567)

*Groupings of guilds:*

[a] The four textile crafts
[b] Butchers and fish merchants
[c] Seventeen lesser crafts or workers' associations (*neeringen*)
[d] Smiths and related crafts
[e] Leather crafts
[f] Needle crafts (*confectie*)
[g] Bakers and subordinate crafts
[h] Brokers and subordinate crafts

# Appendix 2: Dating obits and foundations in the *planarii* of Bruges churches

The *planarii* rarely provide the dates of benefaction. These have to be found from other sources, which are scarce before the fourteenth century. For the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, dating is made easier through charter evidence, and poor-table and parish records (for Our Lady's and St Saviour's). The chapter act-books of St Donatian's register larger foundations.

The oldest surviving *planarius* of St Saviour's is dateable to the early 1340s, after which names were added in later hands until the late fifteenth century.[1] This dating can be established as follows. Some forty-five names of benefactors written down in the first hand can be identified:[2] all belong to the period *c.* 1231 to 1336.[3] All the names that appear after the 1340s were written down by later hands. The frequently appearing names of Gerard Sox and Bernard Priem, whose foundations can be dated to *c.* 1342, were written down sometimes in the same older hand, sometimes in a later one. The name of Jan de Burgrave (whose obit can be dated to 1343) was entered by the older hand. The name of Agnes de Boneem (whose extensive foundations can be dated to between 1344 and 1351), was added slightly later. Additional material can be found in the sixteenth-century *planarius*.[4] It seems that the first *planarius* was not added to much beyond 1490: there are a number of obits that can be dated to the 1480s, but very few after then.[5]

The earliest surviving *planarius* of St Donatian's was begun in the late fifteenth century.[6] There are two copies. One of them is partially transcribed in Gilliodts-van Severen, *L'Obituaire*, and seems to have been written into up to *c.* 1509.[7] The other is almost identical but entries continued to be made into the late sixteenth century.[8] Gilliodts-van Severen

[1] RAB, FD, 81. [2] From BAB, S195; S718; S728.

[3] Cf. Simon Bernaerds, 1231 (RAB-FD, 81, fo. 1r; BAB, S718, fos. 51v–52r).

[4] BAB, S47.

[5] Niclaes Culc in 1508 (RAB, FD, 81, fo. 28r) for an exception. [6] BAB, A141.

[7] SAB, 446; L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *L'Obituaire de Saint-Donatien de Bruges* (Brussels, 1889).

[8] BAB, A141.

suggested that this *planarius* was made in the mid fifteenth century, but it may have been later, perhaps in 1481, when the chapter decided to 'make a new *planarius*'.[9] It records names that were copied into it from two earlier books, *de libro antiquo* and *de libro novo*. It is not known when the older book was begun: Gilliodts-van Severen thought around 1284,[10] although it incorporates names that can be dated much further back, perhaps to the twelfth century. This book may have been used up until *c.* 1320; from the names that can be dated securely (forty-two between *c.* 1200 and *c.* 1320), it seems that the last of these were copied into the 'old book' possibly in 1314.[11] The earliest dateable names copied from the 'new book' appear to have been those of Jan de Oostkerke in 1317; possibly Theodericus de Caprike in 1318/21; and more certainly Henricus Gandavo, for whom a date of 1324 is actually given in the *planarius*.[12] The last dateable name *de novo libro* is that of Simon Bancke, who made provision for his obit in 1420.[13] The earliest dateable names added in a later hand are all from 1420 onwards (e.g. Radulphi Maioris, provost, whose double obit and augmenting of St Michael's day were founded in 1420).[14] (My thanks to Hendrik Callewier for help in identifying clergy in the latter period.)

Our Lady's *planarius* belongs to the late fifteenth century.[15] Identification of early names is helped by the survival of an earlier cartulary.[16]

[9] *Ibid.*, A55, fo. 133r. [10] *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

[11] Alard Lam (A141, fo. 54v; D41, 49); and Hertoghe Zeverins (A141, fos. 53v, 57r, 80r; A251, 246); although Willem de Steelandt *de antiquo libro* (A141, fo. 4r) had an obit set up (or perhaps added to) by his executors in 1337 (D41, 145).

[12] A141, fo. 84v; A251, 426; A141, fo. 81v; AGR, *Trésor de Flandre, 1er série*, 1701, fo. 5r; BAB, A141, fo. 55r.

[13] BAB, A141, fo. 4r; A50, fo. 106r.

[14] *Ibid.*, A141, fos. 88r, 104r; A50, fos. 92v–93r, 95v.

[15] RAB, OLV, 735. [16] *Ibid.*, 720.

# Appendix 3: Foundations augmenting feast days (by date)

| | St Donatian's | | Our Lady's | | St Saviour's | | **Total** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | A | B | A | B | **A** | **B** |
| *c*. 1220–99 | 28 | 20 | 12 | 14 | 7 | 7 | **47** | **41** |
| 1300–9 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **3** | **2** |
| 1310–19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 5 | **14** | **5** |
| 1320–9 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **3** | **2** |
| 1330–9 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 20 | 3 | **27** | **3** |
| 1340–9 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 3 | 37 | 6 | **53** | **11** |
| 1350–9 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 6 | 1 | 1 | **19** | **10** |
| 1360–9 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | **10** | **8** |
| 1370–9 | 18 | 4 | 17 | 5 | 1 | 1 | **36** | **10** |
| 1380–9 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **11** | **5** |
| 1390–9 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | **8** | **5** |
| *Undated C14th* | *24* | *18* | *29* | *14* | *20* | *18* | ***73*** | ***50*** |
| 1400–9 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 2 | **16** | **13** |
| 1410–19 | 22 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | **25** | **11** |
| 1420–9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 4 | **20** | **14** |
| 1430–9 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | **10** | **8** |
| 1440–9 | 15 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | **23** | **17** |
| 1450–9 | 13 | 7 | 17 | 7 | 7 | 6 | **37** | **20** |
| 1460–9 | 6 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 2 | **19** | **12** |
| 1470–9 | 5 | 4 | 31 | 15 | 18 | 11 | **54** | **30** |
| 1480–9 | 17 | 10 | 40 | 17 | 2 | 1 | **59** | **28** |
| 1490–9 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 4 | **17** | **12** |
| *Undated C15th* | *5* | *5* | *9* | *9* | *28* | *26* | ***42*** | ***40*** |
| 1500–9 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | **9** | **9** |
| 1510–19 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | **7** | **6** |

*Key*: A = number of feast days augmented
B = number of benefactors

# Appendix 4: Foundations augmenting feast days *c.* 1200–1520

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **January** | | | | |
| *1. Circumcision* | | 1355 | 1401 (p) | C15th |
| | | 1471 (p) | | |
| | | 1488 (p) | | |
| *6. Epiphany* | | *c.* 1350 (a) | C14th (a) | 1473 (m) |
| | | 1370 | 1450 (p) | |
| | | 1463 (p) | 1498 (p) | |
| | | 1488 (p) | | |
| *15. Name of Jesus* | | 1474 | 1501 (m) | 1479 (p) |
| | | 1483 (p) | | |
| | | 1484 | | |
| | | 1488 (p) | | |
| 17. St Anthony | | C15th | 1467 | 1344–51 |
| | | 1505 (p) | 1485 (d) | |
| | | | | 1451 (d) |
| 20. Saints Fabian, Sebastian | (r) | 1457 (d) | C13th | 1473 (p) |
| | | 1460 (p) | | |
| 21. St Agnes | (r) | C13th | 1373 | 1337 (d) |
| | | | 1526 | 1344–51 |
| *22. St Vincent* | (r) | 1441 | 1445 | |
| | | 1460 (p) | | |
| 23. Octave Name of Jesus | | 1474 (d) | | |
| *25. St Paul* | (r) | C16th | 1417 | *c.* 1337 (d) |
| | | | | C15th |
| 27. St John Chrysostom | | | C15th (d) | |
| **February** | | | | |
| *2. Purification* | | 1345 (p) | 1370 | |
| | | 1371 | 1379 (a) | 1427 (p) |
| | | 1447 | 1427 (a) | 1454 (a) |
| | | 1480 (p) | | 1470 (m) |
| | | 1488 (p) | | 1473 |
| 3. St Blaise | | 1446 | C13th | C15th |
| | | 1477 | | |
| *5. St Agatha* | (r) | 1302 (d) | 1348 | 1337 (d) |
| | | | C14th (d) | C15th |

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *6. Saints Amand, Vedast* | (r) | 1457 | C14th (a) | |
| | | | 1441 | |
| 9. St Apollonia | | 1311 (d) | C14th | |
| 10. St William | | 1360 | | 1460 (d) |
| 14. St Valentine | | 1368 | | |
| 20. St Eleutherius | (r) | C14th (d) | 1443 (d) | C14th (d) |
| *22. St Peter ex cathedra* | (r) | 1287 | 1415 (a) | 1337 (d) |
| | | C15th (p) | | |
| | | 1441 (p) | | |
| | | 1488 (p) | | |
| *24. St Matthew* | (r) | 1370 | 1415 | 1344–51 (d) |
| | | 1463 (p) | | |
| **March** | | | | |
| 4. St Adrian | | 1457 | 1488 (d) | |
| | | 1471 | 1496 | |
| | | 1488 (p) | | |
| 6. Our Lady of Pity | | 1474 (p) | | |
| 7. St Thomas Aquinas | | 1488 | | |
| 10. Transl. St Boniface | | 1457 | | |
| *12. St Gregory* | (r) | 1370 (p) | C13th (d) | 1344–51 (d) |
| | | 1480 (p) | | C15th (p) |
| 17. St Gertrude | (r) | 1463 (p) | | C15th (a) |
| 19. St Joseph | | 1474 (d) | 1484 (d) | 1473 (d, mo) |
| 20. St Wulfram | | | *c.* 1330 (a) | C14th (p) |
| 21. St Benedict* | (r) | 1311 | | |
| *25. Annunciation* | | 1355 | C13th (a) | 1342 |
| | | 1371 (p) | C14th (a) | 1427 (p) |
| | | c.1400 (a) | 1381 (a) | 1449 (a) |
| | | C15th (p) | 1397 (b) | |
| | | 1477 | 1434 (a) | |
| | | 1480 (p) | 1450 (p) | |
| | | 1484 (p) | C15th (p) | |
| 27. Seven Sorrows | | | | 1493 |
| **April** | | | | |
| *4. St Ambrose* | (r) | 1370 | 1374 | 1344–51 (d) |
| | | 1480 (p) | 1441 | |
| | | | 1514 | |
| *9. Mary Egypt* | | 1311 | C14th | 1350 (d) |
| | | 1484 (m) | | |
| *20. St Katherine of Siena* | | 1457 (p) | 1364 | 1480 (d, p, mo) |
| | | 1486 (p) | 1500 | |
| 23. St George* | (r) | C14th | 1402? | 1473 |
| *25. St Mark* | (r) | C13th | *c.* 1250 | 1344–51 (d) |
| | | 1338 | 1410 (s) | C15th (p) |
| | | 1471 (p) | | |
| *Movable feasts March/April/May:* | | | | |

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lent | | 1316 (a) | C14th | 1298 |
| | | 1370 (a) | C14th | |
| | | | 1411 (s) | |
| | | | 1447 (mo) | |
| | | | 1501 (a) | |
| Palm Sunday | | | 1372 (p) | |
| *Easter* | | 1340 (p), | 1331 (p) | *c.* 1267 |
| | | 1350 (p, play) | 1379 (a) | *c.* 1330 |
| | | 1375 (p) | 1450 (p) | *c.* 1340 |
| | | 1390 (play) | 1481 (p) | 1345 (a) |
| | | 1491 (p) | | C14th (a) |
| | | | | 1473 (m) |
| Rogation | | 1349(s) | 1418 (a) | *c.* 1267 |
| | | 1480 (p) | 1485 (m) | 1486 (m) |
| *Ascension* | | 1318 (a) | | 1344–51 |
| | | | | 1345 (a) |
| | | | 1450 (p) | 1473 (m) |
| *Pentecost* | | 1350 (p) | 1450 (p) | *c.* 1330 |
| | | *c.* 1400 (p) | 1481 (a) | *c.* 1345 |
| *Trinity* | | (C14th – | 1403 (d); | 1267; |
| | | lights); | 1419 (p) | C14 (a) |
| | | C14th (a) | | |
| | | 1474 | 1450 (p) | |
| Corpus Christi | | C14th (p) | C14th | *c.* 1330 |
| | | *c.* 1321 | 1450 (p) | 1344–51 |
| | | *c.* 1350 (p) | 1452 (a) | 1428 |
| | | 1365 | 1457 (p) | 1466 (a) |
| | | 1370 (p) | 1464 (p) | 1473 (m) |
| | | 1381 (s) | | 1475 (a) |
| | | 1467 (m) | | C15th (p) |
| | | 1474 (p) | | |
| | | 1496 (p) | | |
| Octave Corpus Christi | | 1357 | 1417 (mo) | *c.* 1340 |
| | | 1496 (p) | 1454 (p) | 1344–51 |
| | | 1400 (p) | | 1437 (p) |
| | | | | C15th (a) |
| **May** | | | | |
| *1. Saints Philip, James* | (r) | C14th | C14th (p) | 1344–51 (d) |
| | | C15th | 1415 | |
| *3. Invention Holy Cross* | | 1302 | C13th | C14th |
| | | *c.* 1321 | C14th | |
| | | 1390 (m) | 1419 (d, mo) | |
| 6. St John Latin Gate* | (r) | 1370 (p) | 1417 | *c.* 1330 (d) |
| | | 1446 (p) | | |
| 8. St Michael Archangel | | 1454 (p) | 1417 (p) | |
| 9. Transl. St Nicholas | | 1454 (p) | | |

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. St Macarius | | | | 1474 (d) |
| 24. Transl. St Francis | | C14th | | |
| 25. St Mary sisters | | 1474 (p) | | |
| **June** | | | | |
| *5. St Boniface* | | 1338 (p) | C13th | 1473 (d) |
| | | 1354 (p) | | |
| | | 1390 | | |
| | | 1426 (p) | | |
| *11. St Barnabas* | | | 1417 | 1344–51 (d) |
| *14. St Basil* | (r) | 1311 | *c.* 1370 (p) | C14th |
| | | | 1477 (a) | C15th |
| | | | 1485 (m) | |
| *24. St John Baptist birth* | (r) | C14th | 1374 (a) | C14th (p) |
| | | 1370 (p) | | |
| | | 1484 | | |
| 25. Transl. St Eligius* | (r) | 1390 | C14th | 1480 |
| | | | 1481 (mo) | |
| *29. Saints Peter, Paul* | (r) | 1411 (a) | 1220 | 1345 (d) |
| | | C15th (p) | C14th | 1438 (p) |
| | | 1457 | 1420 (p) | C15th (p) |
| | | | 1428 (p) | |
| **July** | | | | |
| *2. Visitation* | | *c.* 1400 | 1435 (d, mo) | 1442 (p, a) |
| | | 1454 (p) | 1450 (p) | |
| | | 1480 (p) | | |
| | | 1488 (p) | | |
| *3. Transl. St Thomas* | | 1345 | | 1344–51 (d) |
| 4. Transl. St Martin | | | 1486 (m) | C14th (d) |
| *11. St Benedict transl.* | (r) | 1311 | C15th | C15th (d) |
| 13. St Godelieve | | 1454 (d) | 1472 (p) | 1444 (a) |
| | | | | 1472 (p) |
| 15. Divisio apostolorum | | | | *c.* 1330 |
| *17. St Arnulf (of Metz)* | | | | *c.* 1330 (d) |
| | | 1470 | | |
| *19. St Wilgefortis* | | C14th (d) | | |
| *20. St Margaret* | (r) | C14th (d) | 1446 | *c.* 1336 (d) |
| *22. Mary Magdalene* | (r) | *c.* 1340 | 1400 | 1400 |
| | | 1410 (p) | 1477 | C15th (p) |
| | | 1474 (m) | | |
| *25. Saints James, Christopher* | (r) | C14th | | *c.* 1340 |
| | | | | 1403 (p) |
| 26. St Anne | (r) | 1345 | 1482 (d) | |
| | | 1470 (s) | 1501 | |
| | | | 1506 (p) | |
| 26. Transfiguration | | | 1234? | *c.* 1336 |
| | | | 1415 | C15th (p) |
| 27. St Pantaleon | | | | 1508 (d) |

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29. St Godelieve (exaltation) | | | | 1472 (p) |
| 30. St Martha | | 1474 (d)<br>1485 (p) | | |
| **August** | | | | |
| *1. St Peter's chains* | (r) | 1480<br>1488 (p) | 1415<br>1428 (p) | *c.* 1330 (d)<br>C15th |
| 4. St Walburga | (r) | | | C14th (d) |
| 5. Our Lady of the Snow* | | 1371 (p)<br>1480 (p)<br>1499 (d) | C14th | 1371?<br>1427 (p) |
| 8. St Dominic | | C14th<br>1370 (p) | | C15th (d) |
| *11. St Lawrence* | (r) | 1312<br>1441 (p) | C13th | C15th (p) |
| 12. St Clare | | 1266 | | |
| 13. St Hippolitus | (r) | | 1474 (d) | C15th (p) |
| *15. Assumption* | | 1223 (d)?<br>1318<br>C14th (p)<br>1350<br>1371 (p)<br>1400 (a)<br>*c.* 1428<br>1480 (p)<br>1488 (p)<br>1499 (bells) | C14th<br>1381 (p)<br><br><br><br><br>1445 (p) | 1342 (d)<br><br><br><br><br>1427 (p)<br>1452<br>1473 (m)<br>1475 (p) |
| 15. St Arnulf (of Soissons) | | | | C14th (d) |
| 16. Morrow of Assumption | | 1451 (mo) | | |
| 20. St Bernard | | 1291<br>1355 | C14th | |
| 22. Octave of Assumption | | 1311 | C13th (a) | *c.* 1340 |
| *24. St Bartholomew* | (r) | *c.* 1345<br>1460 (p)<br>1488<br>1518 | 1415 | *c.* 1340 |
| 25. St Louis | | 1390<br>1496 (p) | *c.* 1330 | 1473 (p, mo) |
| 28. St Augustine* | | C14th<br>1480 (p) | C13th | 1344–51 |
| *29. Decoll. St John* | (r) | C14th<br>*c.* 1428 (p)<br>1488 | 1265 | *c.* 1330 (d) |
| 30. St Fiacre | | | | 1336 (d) |
| **September** | | | | |
| *1. St Giles* | | 1461 (p)<br>1493 | 1395? | 1459 (p) |

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Transl. St Katherine | | 1494 | | |
| *8. Nativity of Our Lady* | | 1400<br>C15th (p)<br>*c.* 1428<br>1480 (p)<br>1488 (p) | 1250<br>1348<br>1379 (p)<br>1439 (a)<br>1450 (p)<br>1461 (p) | 1345 (d)<br>C14th<br>1427 (p)<br>1454 (mo)<br>1473 (m) |
| 9. St Audomar (Omer) | (r) | 1441 (d) | C15th (d) | |
| *14. Exaltation of the Cross* | (r) | C14th (p)<br>1390 (m) | C13th<br>1415 (d) | *c.* 1330 (d)<br>1428 (p)<br>C15th (p, mo) |
| 16. St Euphemia | | 1474 | | |
| 17. St Lambert | (r) | *c.* 1316<br>1360 (d) | | |
| *21. St Matthew* | (r) | C14th | 1424 (d) | *c.* 1340 |
| 25. St Firmin | (r) | | C14th (d)<br>1374 (a) | |
| *29. St Michael Archangel* | | C14th (p)<br><br>1455 (m) | 1220<br>C14th | *c.* 1340<br>1463 (p)<br>C15th (p) |
| 30. St Jerome | | 1432<br>1480 (p) | 1373 (a)<br>1486 (d) | 1344–51 (d) |
| **October** | | | | |
| *1. St Remigius, St Bavo* | (r) | 1447 (mo) | 1460 (a) | 1344–51 (d)<br>C14th (p) |
| 2. St Leodegar | (r) | C15th | | |
| 4. St Francis* | | *c.* 1316 | 1250<br>C15th (d) | C14th |
| *9. St Denys* | (r) | | | 1344–51 (d)<br>1473 (p) |
| 10. St Demetrius | | C14th | | |
| *14. St Donatian* | (r) | C13th | 1220<br>1374 (p)<br>1439 (p)<br>1442 (a)<br>1488 (s) | C14th |
| 15. St Wulfram (translation)* | | | | C14th (p) |
| *18. St Luke* | | C14th | 1510 (a) | *c.* 1340 |
| 21. 11,000 virgins | (r) | 1496 (d) | 1445 (mo)<br>1501 | C15th (d)<br>*c.* 1424 (p)<br>1496 |
| 24. St Severinus | (r) | | 1445 | |
| 25. Saints Crispin, Crispinian | (r) | | C13th<br><br>1493 | <br><br>C15th (p) |

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *28. Saints Simon, Jude* | (r) | *c.* 1450 (p)<br>1482 | 1415<br>1434 (mo) | C14th |
| 31. St Quintin | (r) | C13th<br>C15th (p) | 1351<br>1372 (d) | 1342 (d) |
| **November** | | | | |
| *1. All Saints* | | C14th (p)<br>1365<br>1370 (p)<br>*c.* 1400 (a) | 1511 (p) | C15th (p)<br>1474 (p) |
| *2. All Souls* | | 1350 | C14th (p) | 1344–51 (p) |
| 6. St Winnoc | | C13th<br>*c.* 1418 (p) | | |
| 6. St Leonard | | 1410<br>1457 | C14th | |
| 7. St Willibrord | | | 1513 (d) | |
| 8. St Theodore, martyr | | | *c.* 1321 (d) | |
| *11. St Martin* | (r) | C14th<br>1400 (p)<br>1457 (p)<br>1482 (m) | 1354<br>1486 (m, p) | *c.* 1340<br>C15th |
| 12. St Livinus | | *c.* 1350 (p)<br>1460 (p) | | |
| 15. St Machutus | (r) | C15th | 1385 | |
| 19. St Elisabeth | | C14th<br>1518 | | C14th (d) |
| 21. Presentation | | 1474 (d)<br>1480 (p)<br>1488 (p) | 1488–93 (p) | 1492 |
| 22. St Cecilia* | (r) | 1315<br>1494 (p) | 1373 (d) | 1337 (d) |
| *23. St Clement* | (r) | *c.* 1330 | | 1344–51 (d) |
| *25. St Katherine of Alexandria* | | 1350<br>1381 (p)<br>1460 (m)<br>1471 (m)<br>1474 (p) | 1422?<br>1474 (m) | 1345<br>C14th (p)<br>C15th |
| 27. St Maximus | (r) | C14th | 1407? (d)<br>1514 | |
| *30. St Andrew* | (r) | 1291 (p)<br>C14(p)<br>1454 (a) | 1415 | *c.* 1340<br>C15th (p) |
| **December** | | | | |
| Advent | | | C13th<br>C14th (p)<br>1380<br>1411 (s) | |
| *1. St Eligius* | (r) | C13th | C14th (d) | C14th (a) |

| | | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1481 (a) | |
| 4. St Barbara | (r) | 1360 | 1467 (d, mo) | 1330 (d) |
| | | C15th (p) | | C14th (p) |
| | | 1474 (mo, p) | | C14th (p) |
| | | 1480 | | C14th (p) |
| *6. St Nicholas* | (r) | C14th | C14th | C13th |
| | | | | C15th (p) |
| *8. Conception* | | 1291 | *c.* 1291 (a) | |
| | | *c.* 1350 (p) | C14th (a) | C14th (d) |
| | | 1381 | 1351 (a) | 1343 (d) |
| | | *c.*1400 (a) | 1361 | 1453 (a) |
| | | 1484 (p) | 1381 (p) | C15th (p) |
| | | 1488 (p) | 1439 (a) | |
| | | | 1450 (p) | |
| 12. St Judoc | (r) | *c.* 1340 (p) | 1373 (a) | 1345 (d) |
| | | 1373 | | |
| | | 1446 (d) | | |
| 13. St Lucy | | C14th | 1373 (d) | 1337 (d) |
| *14. St Nicasius* | | 1340 | | 1344–51 (d) |
| | | 1475 | | 1448 (p) |
| Golden Mass | | 1475 (m) | 1381 (m) | 1425 |
| *21. St Thomas Apostle* | | 1345 (a) | 1415 | *c.* 1340 |
| | | 1446 (p) | | C15th (p) |
| | | 1470 | | |
| | | 1475 | | |
| *25. Christmas* | | 1350 | 1374 | C13th |
| | | 1381 | 1381 (b) | *c.* 1340 |
| | | *c.* 1474 | 1488 (s) | C14th |
| | | 1488 (p) | | 1473 (m) |
| *26. St Stephen* | (r) | C14th (p) | | |
| | | 1345 | | |
| *27. St John Evangelist* | (r) | 1355 | 1374 (a) | 1344–51 |
| | | | | C14th |
| 28. Holy Innocents | | C14th | 1304 | 1491 |
| 29. St Thomas of Canterbury | | 1316 (p) | 1415 | |
| | | 1345 (p) | | |
| | | 1457 | | |
| 31. St Silvester | (r) | C14th | | |
| Saturday/Sunday *Salve*/ masses | | 1370 | *c.* 1330 | 1296 |
| | | 1371 | 1365 | 1350 |
| | | 1429 | 1378 | 1366 (p) |
| | | 1468 | 1421 | |
| | | 1470 (s) | 1434 | |
| | | 1471 | 1441 | |
| | | 1474 | 1445 | |

| | O | D | S |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1477 | 1447 | |
| | 1485 | 1447 (mo) | |
| Fridays | 1474 (p) | 1483 | |

*Key*: D = foundations in St Donatian's church
O = foundations in Our Lady's church
S = foundation in St Saviour's church
*Italics* = red-letter day in all three churches
* = red-letter day in one or two of the churches
(a) = antiphons specified
(d) = double or great double feast specified
(p) = procession specified
(m) = masses specified
(mo) = mass and motet specified
(r) = relic preserved in St Donatian's (excluding relics associated with Christ or Our Lady)
(s) = sermon specified

# Appendix 5: Guilds and fraternities in Bruges churches

| **St Saviour's church**[1] | |
|---|---|
| St Daniel | 1279 |
| St Nicholas | *1319*[2] |
| St Katherine | *1327*[3] |
| Cordwainers | *1352*; 1372 (ch); 1454[4] Holy Ghost; Saints Crispin and Crispinian |
| Shearers | *1368* (a); 1454 (ch) Trinity |
| Ropemakers | *1372* use chapel of Holy Ghost; 1509 |
| Pewter potmakers | *1374* (a); St Genevieve (altar of St Wulfram); later St Eligius and Presentation of Our Lady |
| Armourers | 1378 (ch) Holy Cross |
| St Barbara | *1387*;[5] 1469, 1487 (a); 1515 (ch) |
| Our Lady of the Assumption | 1397 |
| Corpus Christi | *1452*;[6] 1490 (ch) |
| *Chairmakers* (*stoelendraaiers*) | *1422* St Nicholas; St Lawrence; 1469 (to St James') |
| Cloth-sellers of Old *Halle*[7] | 1422 (ch) St James |
| Fullers' apprentices | *1438*[8] |
| Tapestry weavers | *1440* altar Our Lady *lange moeder gods* |
| Wine-measurers (*wijnschroders*) | *1445* (a)[9]; 1456, 1473 (masses); St Daniel |
| *Shoemakers' apprentices* (*elsenaars*) | 1448 (a) Visitation Our Lady; (from St James's) |
| North/South bridge-workers | *1449* (a) St Anthony |
| Old-clothes-sellers | *1453* (ch); 1485 (daily mass);[10] St Nicholas; Our Lady of Seven Sorrows |
| *Hosiers* (*kousmakers*) | *1454* (a) (from Friars minor); 1515 (ch); Saints Blasius and Ghislain |
| Chalk-carriers | 1465 (a)[11] St Adrian |
| Armourers' apprentices | 1463 (a) St Leodegarius in St Cross' chapel |
| Pot-makers | *1469* (a) in St Katherine's chapel |
| Basket-makers | *1470* (a) Our Lady *loretten* |
| Wulfshaghe bridge-workers | *1472* (a) St Agnes[12] |
| Cloth-carriers | *1473* (a) St Joris |
| Beer-carriers (*biervoorders*) | 1477 St Godelieve |
| *Gold/silversmiths* | *1480* (ch) St Eligius; 1510 (ch) (to Our Lady's) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Broom-makers (*Bessemakers*) | *1481* (a) use altar of St Anne |
| *Linen-weavers* | 1481 St Drogo (a) |
| Saints Peter and Paul | *1481* (a); 1489 (ch) |
| *Cabinet-makers* (*shrijnwerkers*) | *1486* in St Lievin's chapel (from Friars minor) |
| Our Lady of Seven Sorrows | 1493 |
| Plumbers | *1515* (ch) St Blasius |
| Wheelwrights (*wagenmakers, weilwerkers*) | 1516 (ch) St Katherine |
| Bowyers | St Katherine in St Cross' chapel |
| St Job | *C15th* |
| *Tilers and thatchers* | *1499* use altar of St Agatha |
| **Our Lady's church** | |
| Brotherhood of the Choir | 1298 |
| Trinity | *1348*[13] |
| Tanners | *early C15th*; St Bavo |
| Beltmakers | *1408*[14] (altar St Anthony) |
| Dyers | *1425?*;[15] *1486* (St Nicholas in Holy Cross chapel) |
| Our Lady of the Snow | *1450* |
| St George *ten distele* | *1473* |
| Three Saints | *c.* 1470 Saints Mary Magdalene, Katherine and Barbara[16] |
| 10,000 Martyrs | *1474/5*[17] |
| Dubbers | *1475* (ch) Name of Jesus |
| Our Lady/St John bridge-workers | *1291*; *1480* use chapel of Our Lady of Grace[18] |
| 11,000 Virgins | *1498*[19] |
| Our Lady of Grace | *1498*[20] |
| *Gold/silversmiths* | *1510* (ch) *Our Lady of Milan* |
| Corn-sellers | 1515 (a) St Fiacre |
| **St Walburga's church** | |
| Gold/silversmiths | *1381*;[21] *1440* (ch) St Eligius[22] |
| Wine-measurers (*wijntappers*) | *1481* (a)[23] |
| Corpus Christi | *1494*[24] |
| St Barbara | *1494*[25] |
| Our Lady | *1494*[26] |
| **St Donatian's church** | |
| Trinity | 1403 |
| St Barbara | *1424*[27] |
| **St James' church** | |
| *Shoemakers' apprentices* (*elsenaars*) | *1415* (a)[28] Saints Katherine and Barbara (until 1448) |
| *Gardeners* | *1415* (a);[29] *1471* (to St Giles'); Holy Ghost |
| *Second-hand shoedealers* (*scoeboeters*) | *1420s* (from St Amand's chapel);[30] Our Lady and St Adrian |
| Coopers | *1424* (ch) St James; Our Lady chapel |
| Barber-surgeons | 1432 (ch); 1475;[31] Saints Cosmas and Damian |

| | |
|---|---|
| Butchers | *1447* (ch)[32] Saints Benedict and Lievin; 1466 |
| Furriers (*grauwwerkers*) | *1456*; *1472* (ch); 1475[33] St Elisabeth |
| Woolbeaters | *1465* (a)[34] |
| Tilers' apprentices | 1471 (a)[35] St Katherine; in chapel of St Katherine |
| St Anthony | *1474*[36] |
| Our Lady of the Presentation | 1499[37] |
| *Chairmakers* (*Stoeldraijers*) | 1469 (from St Saviour's) |
| *Bonnet-makers* (*mutseerders*) | 1492 St Francis; Our Lady of Angels (from *Bogaarden*) |
| Taverners (*cabaretiers*) | *1500* (ch) St Zacchaeus; Our Lady of Angels |
| **St Giles' church** | |
| Corpus Christi | *1407*[38] |
| Linen-weavers | 1410 (a)[39] St Katherine |
| Shippers' mates | 1446 (use chapel of Our Lady)[40] |
| *Schotsche Courtenaers* | 1455 St Andrew[41] |
| *Rijke pijnders* | *1463* (from Carmelites); St Katherine; use altar of Our Lady[42] |
| *Gardeners* | 1471 (from St James) altar of St Peter |
| Corn-carriers/-measurers | *1473* (a) St Ninian;[43] Assumption of Our Lady |
| Furrier-menders (*touwers*) | *1473* (a) at altar of St John Baptist 1476[44] |
| Coopers' apprentices | *1475* (a) Our Lady[45] |
| King's bridge-workers | 1475 *Nood Gods*; use altar of St Lawrence[46] |
| *Tapestry-weavers* | *1523* in St Genevieve chapel |
| Wagon-loaders (*Balottenmakers*) | *1508* St Anthony |
| Cloth measurers | in St Katherine's chapel |
| **St Christopher's chapel** | |
| St George | *1316* (*1281?*) (ch)[47] |
| Tailors | 1358 (ch); 1470[48] |
| *Mercers* | Anthony)[49] (1394 moved to *godshuis* St Nicholas) |
| *Linen-weavers* | *1447* (a)[50] St Drogo; at Our Lady altar |
| St James | *1476*; 1478 (ch)[51] |
| Fish merchants (27) | *1480* St John the Evangelist |
| *Purse-makers* and white-leather-workers | *1482* (a) (*to Our Lady Church*)[52] |
| Crane *kinders* | 1486 (a)[53] St Hubert; in chapel of Our Lady |
| Pinmakers (*spellmakers*) | 1489 (a)[54] |
| Plasterers | 1493 (a)[55] St Hubert's altar |
| St Anne | 1493 (a)[56] |
| Cheese-sellers | *1494* (a)[57] St Christopher's altar |
| **St Basil's chapel** | |
| Holy Blood | *1405* |
| *Town minstrels/pipers* | *1431*[58] (also free-standing chapel 1420s) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Chandlers | 1432 (ch)[59] |
| Masons | *1470* (a)[60] |
| *Town clerks* | Saints Ivo and Lawrence (also free-standing chapel 1505) |
| **St Peter's chapel** | |
| St George crossbowmen | 1321 |
| St Barbara | *1378* (ch)[61] |
| **St John's chapel** | |
| Wine-measurers (*wijnschroders*) | 1394 Our Lady |
| St Nicholas | *1413*; *1493* (a)[62] |
| St John the Baptist | *1406*[63] |
| St John's bridge-workers | 1435 (a)[64] |
| Hatters | 1474 (ch)[65] |
| Oil-sellers and soap-sellers | 1481(ch)[66] |
| St Wilgefortis and St Roche | 1484 (ch)[67] |
| **St Cross' church** | |
| Dyers | *1463*[68] |
| Rosary-makers | *1465* |
| St Sebastian archers | 1476 |
| Holy Cross | *1522*[69] |
| **St Katherine's church** | |
| *Clog-makers* | *1464*[70] St Adrian |
| St Erasmus | *1487* (a)[71] |
| **St Amand's chapel** | |
| *Second-hand shoe-dealers* (*scoeboeters*) | *1420s* (to St James' church) |
| Waxlight-makers | St Amand |
| Spice-dealers (*kruideniers*) | *1418*;[72] *1515* |
| **St Anne's church** | |
| St Anne | 1501[73] |
| Corpus Christi | 1516 |
| **Jerusalem chapel** | |
| Glovers | 1431 (daily mass)[74] |
| **Eekhout abbey** | |
| Brotherhood of the Choir | *1298* |
| Book sellers | *1449* (ch)[75] Sts John the Evangelist and Luke (St Nicaise chapel) |
| *Tilers and thatchers* | *1499* (*to St Saviour's*) |
| **Augustinian priory** | |
| Lucca merchants | 1360s (ch) |
| Venetian merchants | 1360s (ch) |
| Genoese merchants | 1360s (ch) |
| *Tapestry-weavers* | 1471 (ch)[76] St Genevieve |
| Vlaming bridge-workers | *1517*[77] St Katherine |
| Swordsmen (*schermers*) | *1524*[78] St Michael |
| **Carmelites** | |
| Hanse merchants | 1262–5 |
| St Judoc | *1287*[79] |
| English merchants | 1344 (ch)[80] St Thomas Becket |
| Scottish merchants | 1366 (ch)[81] Our Lady and St Ninian |

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|---|---|
| Catalonian/Aragonese merchants | 1389 (ch)[82] Our Lady |
| Brewers | *1395* (ch)[83] chapel of St Arnulf |
| Our Lady of Rozebeke | *1396* |
| Holy Ghost (Rhetoricians) | 1428/9 |
| Conception Virgin Mary | *1457*[84] |
| *Quay-workers* (*pijnders*) | *1465* (*1365?*)[85] (*to St Giles*) |
| Doublet-makers (*Kulkstickers*) | *1469* (ch) St Nicholas[86] |
| **Friars minor** (Franciscans) | |
| *Carpenters* | 1300 (a); 1489 (ch);[87] chapel St Louis; St Joseph |
| Our Lady of the Dry Tree | *1396* |
| St Sebastian archers | 1396 |
| Florentine merchants | *c.* 1400 St Francis |
| Castilian merchants | *c.* 1414 |
| Biscayan merchants | *c.* 1414/1432 |
| *Hosiers* | *1454 to St Saviour's* |
| *Cabinet-makers* | *1465*[88]; St Lievin (*to St Saviour's*) |
| **Friars preacher** (Dominicans) | |
| Black-leather-workers | *1300* Our Lady, St Victor, St Philip |
| Second-hand furriers | *1454*[89] (ch) |
| Our Lady 'hoedekin' | *1488*[90] |
| Portuguese merchants | 1410 |
| **Beguines/Wijngarde**[91] | |
| Our Lady | *1361* |
| Holy Ghost | *1401* |
| Trinity | *1412* |
| St Dominic | *1433* |
| **Beghards** (Bogarden) | |
| *Linen-weavers* | *1330*[92] (to St Christopher's chapel 1447) |
| Our Lady of Hulsterlo | *1339* (ch)[93] |
| St Francis | *1330s? (1435)*[94] |
| *Carters* | *1435* St Katherine[95] (to St Saviour's by 1517) |
| St Barbara | *1456* (ch)[96] |
| St Lawrence | *1460*[97] |
| *Bonnet-makers* | *1492* (a) (to St James' church) |
| **Staelijzers** (tertiary) | |
| St Barbara | *1458*[98] |
| **Celle brothers** | |
| St Jerome | *1498*[99] |
| **Colletines** | |
| Hosiers (*kousemakers*) | *1454* (to St Saviour's) |
| **Potterie hospital** | |
| St George | *1264*; 1277 (masses)[100] |
| Potters (*Potmakers*) | *1515* (ch)[101] |
| Ships' carpenters | *1522* (a) Our Lady |
| **St Joos' hospital** | |
| St Josse (fruit merchants) | *1287*; 1352[102] |
| Basket fish-carriers (*buerdenaars*) | *1452*[103] |

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|---|---|
| **Magdalene hospital** | |
| Millers | St Victor |
| **St John's hospital**[104] | |
| St Cornelius and Ghislain | *1394* (ch); 1479 (ch)[105] |
| St Hubert | *1451* |
| **St Julian's hospital** | |
| Leather-workers (*tauwers*) | *1431*[106] |
| **Blindekens almshouse** | |
| Our Lady | *1418* |
| **Free-Standing chapels** | |
| Brokers/hostellers | *1327*; Our Lady; Bethlehem |
| Smiths | *1335* St Eligius; hospital |
| Carters (*wagenars, voerlieden*) | 1364?; *1453*; *1490* (ch)[107] Flagellation of Saviour |
| Weavers | *1371* hospital chapel;[108] Our Lady; St James (and Severinus?) |
| Fullers | St Martin |
| *Town minstrels/pipers* | 1421 (from St Basil); St Cecelia; Volto Santo |
| *Painters* | 1450 |
| *Mercers* | 1390–4; St Nicholas *godshuis* |
| Shippers | 1415; 1418;[109] St Clement |
| Sawyers | 1416; St Victor (St Nicholas and Three Kings). |
| *Cloth shearers* (*droogscheerders*) | 1454 (from St Saviour's); Trinity |
| Bakers | 1470 (ch)[110]; St Hubert and St Lucy |
| *Town clerks* | *1503* (from St Basil's) |

*Key*: (a) = guild altar
(ch) = guild chapel
**St Saviour's** = name of church/chapel where guild altar/chapel located
1300 = date of altar/chapel/chantry foundation
*1300* = date of first reference to guild altar/chapel
Cordwainers = craft guild listed in Holy Blood procession
*Chair-makers* = guilds or associations that moved church

References not given here can be found in Chapter 4; and P. de Stoop, 'Particularités sur les corporations et métiers de Bruges', *ASEB* 1 (1843), 133–66; J. Gaillard, *Ambachten en neringen* (Bruges, 1854).

1 Unless otherwise cited, for references to guilds in St Saviour's, see K. Verschelde, *De Kathedrale van S. Salvator te Brugge* (Bruges, 1863).
2 RAB, SS, 609, fo. 72v; BAB, S718, fos. 4v–5r.
3 BAB, S344, no. 1.
4 RAB, BN, 8112, 9062; 1454 augmented feast of Nativity with procession and motet: BAB, S47, fo. 62v; RAB, FD, 81, fo. 33v.
5 L. Gilliodts van-Severen, *Inventaire diplomatique des archives de l'ancienne Ecole Bogarde à Bruges* (Bruges, 1899), 3 vols., Vol. II, p. 326.
6 BAB, S344, no. 42.
7 RAB, BN, 8772.
8 OCMW, SS, Register 181 (November).

[9] *Ibid.*, Register 128, fo. 176r.
[10] *Ibid.*, charter 275.
[11] BAB, S289, fos. 53v–54r.
[12] *Ibid.*, FD, 81, fo. 26v.
[13] RAB, OLV, O398.
[14] SAB, 96, 11, fo. 49r.
[15] RAB, OLV, 275, fo. 100v.
[16] *Ibid.*, FD, 81, fo. 116r
[17] OLV, 1350, fos. 55r, 61r–v.
[18] *Ibid.*, 1501, fos. 56r–57v.
[19] *Ibid.*, 1350, fo. 214r; 250, fo. 70v.
[20] *Ibid.*, 735, fos. 3r–6r.
[21] OCMW, SW, Register 30, fo. 50r (*aurifabri*).
[22] *Ibid.*, charter 478.
[23] *Ibid.*, *Cart.* I, Register 30, fo. 253r.
[24] SAB, 457, *Fondatiës*, fo. 37v (will of Jacop van Dorlee's widow).
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*, 277, 1424/5, fo. 7v.
[28] RAB, BN, 8135; RAB, SJ, 377, fos. 1r–v
[29] SAB, 96, 14, fos. 126r–127r.
[30] RAB, BN, 8727; *Ibid.*, SJ, 377, fo. 23v.
[31] *Ibid.*, BN, 8128, 8518.
[32] *Ibid.*, SJ, 24, fo. 63v.
[33] *Ibid.*, BN, 8727. The furriers included the *grauwerkers*, *wiltwerkers* and *lamwerkers*.
[34] *Ibid.*, BN, 8845.
[35] *Ibid.*, SJ, 197, fos. 29r–30r.
[36] ADN, B1695, fo. 76v.
[37] A. Hodum, 'Oorsprong van de broderschap van O. L. Vrouw Presentatie in de Sint-Jacobskerk te Brugge', *ASEB* 91 (1954), 97–116.
[38] RAB, SG, 273, fo. 12v.
[39] *Ibid.*, 27, fos. 37r–v; 271, fos. 94v–95v.
[40] *Ibid.*, fos. 113r–v.
[41] *Ibid.*, fo. 114v.
[42] *Ibid.*, fo. 66r (1473).
[43] *Ibid.*, fo. 121v.
[44] *Ibid.*, fos. 60v, 65r, 122r; 273, fo. 71r.
[45] *Ibid.*, 27, fo. 125r.
[46] *Ibid.*, 128v–130r.
[47] *Ibid.*, OLV, charter O875; BAB, C440; SAB, 216, 1482/3, fos. 161r–v (chapel of 'St Jooris-Stegher' on the *markt*).
[48] SAB, 333 (*Kleermakers*); copy of foundation 1358; BAB, C440; RAB, BN, 9154.
[49] OCMW, Godshuis St Niklaas, charter 9.
[50] RAB, BN, 3947; BAB, A51, fo. 176v. In 1362 the mercers had augmented divine service at their altar of St Anthony: BAB, A47, fo. 148r.
[51] BAB, A54, fos. 89v, 127r, 130v; RAB, BN, 8592.
[52] BAB, A55, fo. 183v.
[53] *Ibid.*, A56, fos. 93v, 99v, 177r, 180v–181r, 183r.
[54] *Ibid.*, fos. 18r, 177r.
[55] *Ibid.*, A57, fo. 18r.
[56] *Ibid.*, fo. 27r.
[57] *Ibid.*, fo. 34r.
[58] SAB, 96, 11, fo. 196r.
[59] RAB, BN, 8127.
[60] AHB, 18, fo. 4r.
[61] RAB, SJ, 646, fos. 16r–18v; charter 97.
[62] BAB, A56, fo. 166r (refers to guild letters dated 1413).

[63] *Ibid.*, A49, fos. 89r–v.
[64] *Ibid.*, A50, fo. 221v (*cordewaghcruders*).
[65] *Ibid.*, A54, fo. 26r.
[66] *Ibid.*, A55, fos. 138v–139r.
[67] *Ibid.*, A56, fos. 45r, 49v.
[68] OCMW, Dis St Kruis, charter 90.
[69] L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Essais d'archéologie brugeoise: Mémoriaux de Bruges*, 2 vols. (Bruges, 1913–20), Vol. I, p. 163.
[70] SAB, 96, 14, fos. 180v–181r.
[71] *Ibid.*, fo. 122v.
[72] Agreement to rebuild choir of chapel (M. Vleeschouwers-Van Melkebeek, 'Het archief van de bisschoppen van Doornik: Een inventaris uit 1477', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis* 149 (1983), 121–375 (p. 328)).
[73] RAB, Sint Anna kerk 251, no. 264.
[74] SAB, 96, 11, fo. 203r.
[75] RAB, BN, 8300.
[76] RAB, SJ, 888, fos. 275r–278v.
[77] Gilliodts van-Severen, *Inventaire diplomatique*, Vol. II, p. 391.
[78] Cf. reference to the *schermers* of St Michael's on Holy Blood day 1518 (SAB, 216, 1517/18, fo. 127v). Probably also 'the brotherhood of the Archangel Michael' referred to in 1456: SAB, 157 (*Civiele sententïen*), fo. 144v.
[79] AKB, *Liber oblongus*, fo. 148v.
[80] *Ibid.*, fos. 18r–22r.
[81] *Ibid.*, fos. 48v–51r.
[82] *Ibid.*, fos. 87r–88v; cf. SAB, 96, 14, fos. 97v–98r (1458).
[83] *Ibid.*, fos. 74v–75r.
[84] *Ibid.*, fo. 162v.
[85] SAB, 96, 14, fos. 193v–194v.
[86] AKB, *Liber oblongus*, fo. 181v.
[87] RAB, BN, 8084, 8271.
[88] RAB, BN, 8219.
[89] SAB, 457 (*Fondatïes*), Jacob de Witte.
[90] *Ibid.*, Jacop van Dorlee, fo. 16r.
[91] OCMW, *Fonds* Wijngarde, charters 153, 450, 483, 539.
[92] RAB (BN), 3947.
[93] *Ibid.*, *Cartularia*, fo. 91r–v.
[94] For guilds that did not have oratories in churches: SAB, 96, 11, fo. 236v.
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] *Ibid.*, 438, *Rekeningen*, 1458/9, fo. 10r.
[97] BAB, A52, fo. 145r.
[98] Gilliodts van-Severen, *Inventaire diplomatique*, Vol. I, p. 196.
[99] Will of Ghyselbrecht Zeghers (J. Geldhof, *Pelgrims, dulle lieden en vondelingen to Brugge 1275–1975* (Bruges, 1973), p. 331).
[100] OCMW, Potterie, charters 13, 30; BAB, D40, 229 (charters).
[101] AKB, *Liber oblongus*, fo. 85v
[102] OCMW, Sint Josse, charters 0, 1318; Register 178, fo. 6v.
[103] *Ibid.*, fo. 17r.
[104] E. vander Elst, *L'Hôpital Saint-Jean de Bruges (de 1188 à 1500)* (Bruges, 1975), pp. 78–82.
[105] RAB, OLV, O969.
[106] Geldhof, *Pelgrims*, p. 83.
[107] BAB, A47, fos. 152v, 160r (for a 'confraternity' in 'Columpna' hospital chapel); *ibid.*, A254, no. 354 ('confraternity' building a bell-tower, 1453).
[108] RAB, BN, 8092.
[109] SAB, 96, 11, fo. 53v.
[110] RAB, BN, 8231; Vleeschouwers-Van Malkebeek, 'Het archief', p. 328.

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