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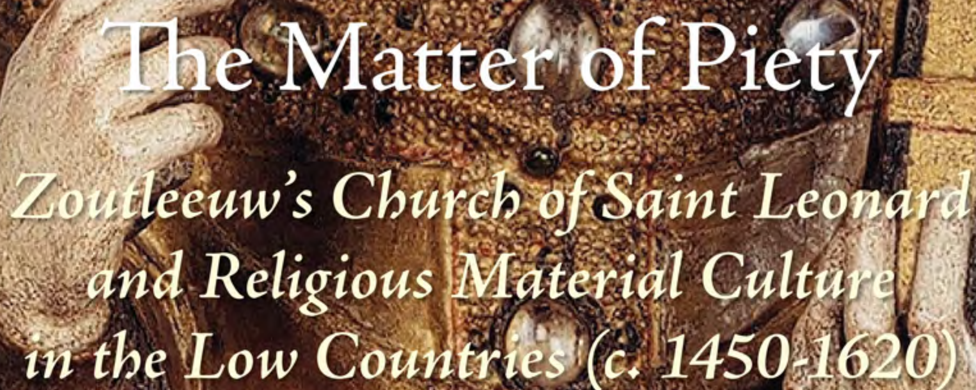

The Matter of Piety

Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard and Religious Material Culture in the Low Countries (c. 1450-1620)

Ruben Suykerbuyk

BRILL

The Matter of Piety

Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History

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By

Ruben Suykerbuyk

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Abbreviations

Archives, Collections and Libraries

AAM	*Aartsbisschoppelijk Archief Mechelen*
DAZ	*Dekenij Archief Zoutleeuw*
KAB	*Kerkarchief Brabant*
KBR	*Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel*
RAB	*Rijksarchief Brussel*
RAL	*Rijksarchief Leuven*
SAA	*Stadsarchief Antwerpen*
SAB	*Stadsarchief Brussel*
SAL	*Stadsarchief Leuven*
SL	*Schepengriffies Arrondissement Leuven*

Coins and Currencies

Kg	*Karolusgulden*
Rg	*Rijnsgulden*
St	*Stuiver*

Other Abbreviations

KR *Kerkrekening* (churchwarden account), followed by the financial year in question. From 1452 until 1577, this ran from 24 June in the year listed until 23 June in the following year. From 1589 onward, it ran from January through December. Unless noted otherwise, reference is always made to the final, official version. See also Appendix 1.

Note on Currencies

The primary monetary unit in the Zoutleeuw accounts from 1452 to 1477 is the *grijp* (*gripe*), worth 10 *stuivers*. This later changed to the *Rijnsgulden*, worth 20 *stuivers*. From 1540 onwards the dominant monetary unit in the accounts is the *Karolusgulden*, also with a value of 20 *stuivers*, although the *Rijnsgulden* continues to appear. Throughout the period, the *stuiver* was subdivided into 24 *groten* or, less frequently, 4 *plakken*. In addition to which, a wide range of other coins and monetary units also appear in the accounts.

INTRODUCTION

The Matter of Piety in an Age of Religious Change

In 1566, a wave of iconoclasm violently swept away many a church interior in the Low Countries. In August, the *Beeldenstorm* broke out in south-western Flanders, and by November, it threatened to spread to the southeastern part of Brabant as well. There, above the hilly landscape of the Hageland, arose the robust towers of Zoutleeuw's collegiate church of Saint Leonard (figs. 1 & 2). Watchmen were installed in the church both day and night, and messengers were continually sent out to neighbouring towns in order 'to have tidings from the *Geuzen*'.[1] Indeed, there was much to protect. The town's political and economical heyday may have been over, but it was still one of the seven *chief-villes* of the Duchy of Brabant (fig. 3).[2] The church itself, long since the seat of a deanery, retained its importance.

In 1566, upon entering the building via the portal in the west front, pilgrims and parishioners saw a richly furnished sacred space (fig. 4). After being welcomed by a Marianum hanging from the vaults and crossing themselves at the brass holy-water font (fig. 5), they could walk along the eight side chapels distributed along both sides of the nave. Each was equipped with its own altarpiece. While most of the older works were carved in wood, the more recent pieces had been painted by important and still living masters such as Pieter Aertsen or Frans Floris. The latter's *Saint Hubert altarpiece* had only recently been installed, in December 1565, and a third triptych from his workshop was soon to be added. The primary destination for pilgrims lay a little further on, in an annex to the southern transept. The wall above its doorway was covered with a monumental depiction of the Last Judgment. Through the doors they would enter Saint Leonard's chapel, where a miraculous sculpture of the saint was placed in a tabernacle on top of a carved, gilded altarpiece. The ensemble was lit by an arched, brass candelabrum, which stood just in front of the altar, its shimmer honoring the thaumaturgic cult object, the very reason for the pilgrims' visit. Parishioners, on the other hand, might have been drawn to the choir. The sanctuary was closed to laypeople by a rood loft carrying a monumental triumphal cross with life-size sculptures of Our Lady and Saint John at either side (fig. 6), but

FIGURE 1
Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard, façade
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FIGURE 2 Anonymous photographer, *Church of Saint Leonard at Zoutleeuw, seen from the south*, late nineteenth century, Ghent, University Library, BRKZ.TOPO.588.B.04

FIGURE 3 Jacob van Deventer, *Map of Zoutleeuw*, c. 1550, Brussels, KBR

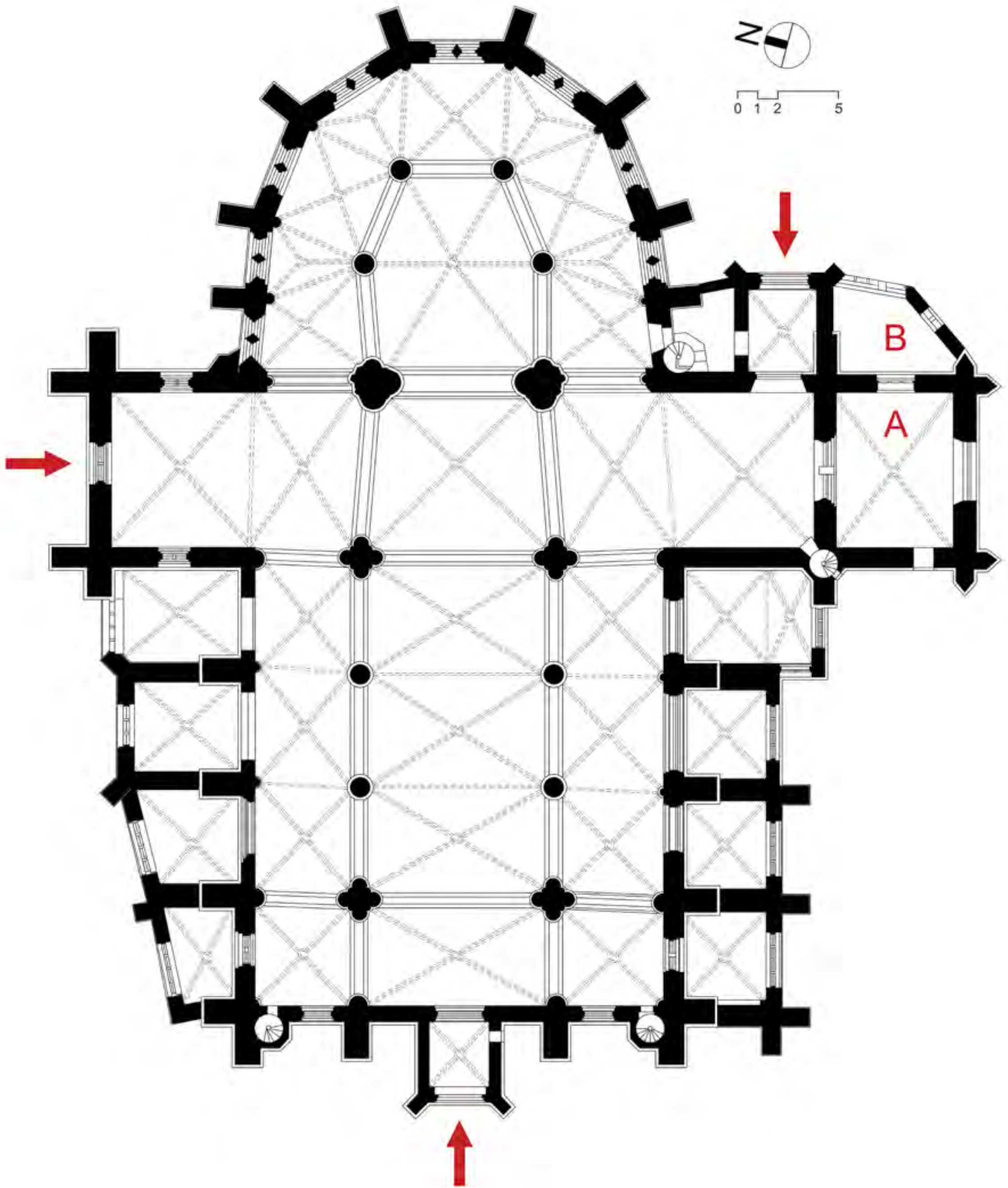

FIGURE 4 Floor plan of Zoutleeuw's church of Saint Leonard, with indication of the entrances (arrows), Saint Leonard's chapel (A) and the churchwarden's room (B) (based on Lemaire 1949, p. 199, fig. 197)

FIGURE 5
Holy-water font, 1468–1469, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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spying through the fencings, it must have been possible to catch a glimpse of the brass eagle lectern (fig. 7), or the more than five meters high Easter candlestand in the same material, cast in the 1480s by Renier van Thienen from Brussels. Arguably, the church's most imposing structure stood a little further, in the northern transept. There, an 18-meter-high sacrament house of white stone of Avesnes, which had been carved only 15 years before by Cornelis Floris, was lighted by candles on a brass fence surrounding the venerable, micro-architectural monument. During liturgical services, this already rich set of objects would be supplemented by all sorts of vessels and implements in precious metal – monstrances, chalices, ostensories, censers – manipulated by clergymen dressed in rich fabrics, reading aloud from more or less decorated books with sacred content.[3]

Eventually, Zoutleeuw was spared from any iconoclastic attacks, and the subsequent absence of drastic baroque refashioning in combination with the collegiate chapter's pledge of allegiance to the French revolutionaries would further safeguard the church interior from significant losses. This combination of factors increasingly set it apart from other churches in the Low Countries, and would ultimately give Saint Leonard's church the exceptional status it now holds. Perhaps most famously, the prolific Leuven art historian

FIGURE 6
Jan Mertens, *Triumphal cross*, 1480–1484, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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Jan Karel Steppe referred to it as the 'sanctuary of the Brabantine Late Gothic', and in November 2016 – exactly 450 years after the *Beeldenstorm* – the Flemish Government definitively listed 18 objects from the 'exceptionally rich, late medieval and renaissance furnishings' of Zoutleeuw's church as inalienable heritage.[4] There is little reason to doubt that, at the moment of the iconoclastic threats, the objects were equally prestigious and valuable to visiting pilgrims and parishioners. Still, they were definitely less unique. Ornamentally elaborate objects such as the sacrament house, for instance, were crucial elements in lay devotional life in the Low Countries. Yet, the fact that they had to be protected in 1566 makes it clear that they had become highly controversial as well. They stood at the center of a heated public debate on the matter of piety.

This book revaluates religious material culture in Netherlandish lay piety during the long sixteenth century (c. 1450–1620) by confronting devotional objects with practices and their surrounding controversies in a microstudy of Zoutleeuw's unique church of Saint Leonard. As a crucial watershed in the history of the Low Countries, the *Beeldenstorm* dramatically reveals the issues at stake. Recent

FIGURE 7
Eagle lectern, upper part bought in 1469, foot bought in 1480, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

studies of the events have firmly established that the actions were in essence about religious convictions, and that the breakings should be understood as a physical reaction against the physicality and materiality of traditional, Catholic devotion.[5] Lavishly ornamented objects in precious materials and their ritual handling had grown to become a major point of contention in the turbulent decades of the sixteenth century, when different reformers stood up to preach that the Church of Rome had been wrong all along in its particular way of worshipping God. Hence, religious material culture – the broad range of devotional and liturgical objects, from monumental sacrament houses over cult statues and altarpieces to small votive offerings or relics – formed the core of contemporary religious discussions, and therefore provides us with an ideal prism through which lay piety can be studied. This book takes Zoutleeuw's exceptional collection of highly contested objects as both a point of departure and as its primary source in order to map their actual usage and understand their changing meanings.[6] In doing so, it consciously bridges the gap between art history and history. Prime attention will

not so much be paid to the signifying processes of artists, but rather to those of patrons and consumers. Whereas Michael Baxandall charted *Patterns of intention* of artists, this book will elucidate the intentions of patrons and the expectations of the communities they represented. This is not meant to discard the contributions of the executing artists, but rather to emphasize the significance of their patrons' choices.[7]

A Pulverized Image? *Status quaestionis*

In his inaugural lecture from 1939 at the University of Amsterdam, wittily entitled 'The pulverized image' (*Het vergruisde beeld*), Dutch historian Jan Romein claimed that a surveyable comprehension of the causes of the Dutch Revolt – of which the *Beeldenstorm* is traditionally seen as one of the starting points – was hampered by increasing specialization and fragmenting of research into the period.[8] There is much to be said both in favor and against his argument, but the historiographical image of lay piety in the Low Countries in the long sixteenth century remains fragmented and incomplete. For a long time, it failed to include an in-depth study of the material culture that stood at the heart of the debates as well as an accompanying appreciation of what it actually meant to contemporaneous believers.[9] Until late in the twentieth century, basic views were characterized by a largely negative appreciation, dominated by narratives of decline and decay. In his *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (1919), Johan Huizinga most famously described pilgrimages, processions and church visits as occasions of worldly amusement, characterized by excess and degeneration.[10] His metaphor of the later Middle Ages as an autumn, an epilogue to what was considered a flourishing preceding epoch, would later be incorporated in classic overviews of the religious history of the Low Countries, thus definitively establishing a negative view on lay piety.[11] It has been noted that such assessments either repeated *topoi* uttered by Protestant reformers, or were firmly rooted in twentieth-century conceptions of Catholicism, projecting later concerns and debates onto the preceding period. As a result, several supposedly typical characteristics of late medieval piety and its Protestant critiques came to be seen in a causal relationship, and the Reformation became a logical next step in a linear progression.[12]

All of these studies strongly depended on an analysis of either normative or literary texts. Soon, however, the subject was approached

from an entirely different angle. Of fundamental importance in the historiographic tradition, *Le sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du Moyen-Âge* (1963) by the French priest Jacques Toussaert offered an even more negative vision on devotional life in the County of Flanders between 1302 and 1526. Contrary to his predecessors, he heavily relied on a quantitative and statistical analysis of administrative sources, mostly churchwarden accounts. Greatly influenced by Gabriël Le Bras' *sociologie religieuse*, he tried to establish the precise number of practicing believers by studying the amounts of offered money, volumes of wine and numbers of hosts bought by the churchwardens. This radically new methodology notwithstanding, he basically posed the same questions and came to pretty much the same conclusions as the scholars before him. But this time, the methodology was fiercely criticized. Toussaert drew too heavily from summary data in accounts that had only been preserved fragmentarily, and he nearly completely neglected socio-economic factors. As a result, his calculations and conclusions were extremely unreliable.[13] This vast body of critique led Ludo Milis to postulate the existence of a 'post-Toussaert syndrome' in the historiography on the subject, leading to a long-lasting neglect.[14]

Insights from recent research on late medieval and early modern religion in Europe allow us to overcome this impasse. First of all, while scholars implicitly or explicitly started from a static concept of piety, it is now increasingly considered to be highly variable in time and space.[15] Secondly, religious history has long been written from an official and orthodox point of view, often informed by modern religious standards. In recent years, however, scholars have increasingly devoted attention to popular piety. This considerably broadened the social spectrum of research, leading scholars to emphasize the strong communal values of devotion and adopt a framework of cultural negotiation in a local context.[16] Natalie Zemon Davis, for instance, propagated a relational study of 'religious cultures', through which different social groups interacted.[17] And perhaps most importantly, in his seminal study from 1992 on late medieval and sixteenth-century piety in England, Eamon Duffy demonstrated that the commonly perceived gulf between the 'elite' religion of the clergy and that of 'the people' was actually non-existent. Within the broad diversity of possible religious beliefs and ideas, he showed how there was a striking homogeneity throughout the social spectrum. Therefore, Duffy preferred to speak of traditional rather than popular religion.[18]

These recent, revisionist tendencies also represent a shift away from a predominantly spiritual approach to religion, increasingly taking its material context into consideration. After all, visiting a chapel, church or shrine was a particularly physical experience, in which all the senses were involved.[19] For example, Reindert Falkenburg has shown how paintings or intricately carved prayer nuts functioned in devotional practice, and how such material objects were crucial in a 'complex synesthetic devotional experience'.[20] The central role of the physical, exterior aspect for interior religious experiences has also been elaborated more recently by Caroline Walker Bynum in her book on *Christian materiality*. Contrary to the traditional view of medieval religiosity as spiritual process, she posited that it was profoundly characterized by an internal contradiction, in which the importance of 'holy matter' grew in parallel with spirituality and mysticism. By focusing on materiality as one pole of this contradiction, she proposed a revaluation of what until then had been interpreted as superstitious and outward piety.[21] In fact, contrary to predominant conceptions, there are no indications of any discrepancies between inward and outward piety. In the same vein as Walker Bynum, Anne-Laure Van Bruaene has recently argued that the strict opposition between the material and the spiritual sphere was alien to medieval reality, and that it would be more appropriate to study religion within the framework of an 'embodied piety', whereby religious convictions and emotions are exteriorized, and had an important social dimension.[22]

Even though materiality is increasingly being incorporated into studies of lay piety, the applied chronological frameworks often remain problematic. While Walker Bynum has aptly mapped the dialectical relation between the material and spiritual aspects of devotion, her study is limited to the period preceding the Reformation, and she even characterized this 'Christian materiality' as inherently late medieval. There is still no in-depth analysis of how the Reformation reacted to this phenomenon, and relevant observations are mostly based on *a priori* assumptions. The chronological scopes chosen in studies often leave little room for long-term continuity, or short-term idiosyncrasies. Yet, recent studies of piety in Europe have done much to emphasize continuity, and are framing the Reformation less and less as a definitive rupture with the past.[23] Hence, a long-term approach to Netherlandish piety in the age of the Reformation is desirable. Toussaert had confirmed earlier narratives of the Reformation as a critical reaction against the late medieval practices that had been dubbed excesses or abuses. The portrait

he painted was damning, and he could not but conclude that the Reformation had been smoldering for a long time, and that it was inevitable and a necessity.[24] However, similar studies with a long-term set-up remained rare.[25] In fact, short-term quantitative analyses that pursued and refined the methodologies introduced by Toussaert have almost unanimously confirmed his negative views and collectively contributed to what has come to be known as the '1520-thesis', which posits a sudden devotional decline after the introduction of Protestant thought in the Low Countries.[26]

A bottom-up, lay Catholic perspective is very rare in the study of piety and religious material culture in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. Scholarly literature on religious developments has largely focused on the origins and development of different Protestant groupings.[27] The situation has recently been revaluated, but to a large extent only for the later sixteenth century. Koenraad Jonckheere and Andrew Spicer, for instance, each assessed the influence of the *Beeldenstorm*, in artistic practice and central politics respectively.[28] Other important recent contributions to the study of the broad range of Catholic visual culture primarily focused on theoretical, theological and spiritual features of devotion, most notably the post-Tridentine influence of the Jesuits.[29] Thus, the situation before the Tridentine reforms and the *Beeldenstorm* remains understudied. Most scholarly attention went to the apparent lack of action and militancy of the clergy in the earliest years.[30] The perspective of the 'Catholic commoner' within its material context remained conspicuously absent, with the notable exception of Judith Pollmann. She has given the lay Catholic a voice by a close reading of a rich corpus of ego-documents, including diaries, chronicles and poems.[31] By supplementing such testimonies with an interdisciplinary microstudy of Zoutleeuw's church of Saint Leonard and its material culture, the present book fills the silence regarding Catholic agency that Pollmann encountered in her material.

Sources, Methodology and Set-up

Rather than the usual focus on one source type, this book presents an integrated, long-term study of religious material culture by analyzing a combination of material, written, and visual sources. Zoutleeuw's church of Saint Leonard serves as the point of departure, precisely because it allows for the unique possibility of confronting selected objects from its exceptional interior with a rich

trove of archival sources.[32] Most important is the church's uncommonly comprehensive series of churchwarden accounts (Appendix 1), a source type of administrative nature that is of prime importance for the study of lay piety.[33] These accounts were drawn up yearly by the representatives of the *fabrica ecclesiae*, i.e. the independent administrative organ that was responsible for the construction of the church, embellishing its interior and providing the necessary material provisions for the liturgy.[34] In Zoutleeuw, as elsewhere, three to four members of the local elite were yearly appointed as churchwardens (*momboren der kercken* or *fabrijckmeesters*). Operating in support of clergy and liturgy, but with important affiliations with the civic government, they formed a middle group of crucial importance for local devotional life.[35] It was they who bought the wax, incense, wine and hosts for the services and the badges for the pilgrims. It was they who discussed church construction with the master builder and kept his designs. And it was they who contracted the most important commissions for the embellishment of the parish church, and were thus in contact with the artists and artisans in question. All these activities and purchases were diligently recorded in the churchwardens accounts, which means that they allow us to track developments on the lowest level, from the front rank, in a manner of speaking, before being processed in other source material such as miracle books or judicial dossiers.

The Zoutleeuw accounts are well-known: Steppe had selective transcriptions made, and Lieve De Mecheleer's publication of the 'entries with art-historical significance' in 1997 further facilitated the use of this rich source material.[36] De Mecheleer's edition, however, left out important parts of the accounts that contain valuable contextualizing information, such as the sections recording the offerings or the income from burials. Furthermore, 'art-historical significance' is a notion open to interpretation, and many entries documenting the acquisition of wax, candles, wine, hosts and incense, or the payments related to foundations, restorations and maintenance, were left out. Also, since the subtotals per section and totals per year are not included, the edition does not allow for a financial analysis, which precludes the possibility of assessing the relative value and importance of the acquisitions. For all of these reasons, the present study draws on a new, integral study of the original accounts. An in-depth analysis of the series from 1452 to 1578 served as the backbone of parts 1 and 2 of this book, whereas for part 3, sample surveys were

taken, since the period under scrutiny here is documented more fragmentarily.

Since they have been compiled for administrative reasons by local elites, churchwarden accounts are biased to a certain extent. For this reason they will be supplemented with data from other archival sources. This includes the vast charter collection of the Zoutleeuw collegiate chapter, which contains almost 1.600 deeds from 1235 to 1680, including various foundation charters.[37] The registers of the prebends also include information on foundations, but other sources from the collegiate chapter – notably their accounts and proceedings – have not been used due to their fragmentary preservation.[38] To these were added the decanal visitation reports of the church, preserved from 1600 onwards.[39] Finally, Zoutleeuw's civic accounts and aldermen's protocols provided important additional data.[40] Source material on the town's confraternity life is unfortunately limited: at least four confraternities are documented, but no accounts or membership lists are available.[41]

Religion was, to an important extent, a local matter, influenced by particular, local or regional dynamics.[42] But Zoutleeuw also existed within a wider context. In order to balance expanding conclusions to a more encompassing level, while at the same time avoiding overly broad generalizations based on just one case, this book emphatically combines a microhistorical focus with a comparative approach. Therefore, findings on Zoutleeuw will be contextualized by source material and case studies from elsewhere in the Low Countries, predominantly in Brabant. A significant set of miracle collections of individual shrines in the Low Countries has been preserved, providing unique insight into the experiences of pilgrims and the evolution of piety and its expressions.[43] Exceptionally rich information is also available in the many sources written in response to the religious debates, including polemical treatises from various confessions as well as a range of narrative sources from laypeople who recorded their observations and fears during this tumultuous period.[44] Precisely because the subject of material piety became so controversial, these writings contain unique information on traditional practices not usually commented upon. The same also holds for the documents from the archive of the Council of Troubles (1567–1576), a tribunal created specifically to punish offenders who had revolted against Church and King during the *Beeldenstorm*. The documents have already been used for various reasons, but up until now, they

have attracted little or no attention in the study of traditional religious practices. Particularly interesting are the often highly detailed sentences.[45] Finally, these data are supplemented with contemporaneous visual representations of church interiors and the practices associated with them. Miniatures and paintings provide a wealth of information which can be used to cross-check the data drawn from the other sources.[46] The combination of all this material allows us to study the foundations and donations of wealthy parishioners alongside the acts of 'common' pilgrims and those of iconoclasts. As such, lay piety can be addressed in a highly pluriform way.

The interdisciplinary character of this book also applies to the analysis. A study of written sources will be combined with iconographical and visual analyses. Most importantly, qualitative methods will be supplemented by quantitative methods. Up until now, the debate surrounding the '1520-thesis' has mostly been based on quantitative parameters, in line with Toussaert's groundbreaking work. This book partly pursues these methods, but it adds the equally important qualitative analysis of data. While quantitative analyses are definitely an indispensable tool to chart long-term evolutions, they unintentionally neglect more subtle nuances and transformations, as well as the meanings attached to the objects that were central in the debates. Thus, this approach responds to Jacques Chiffoleau's call to supplement statistical, 'economic' treatments with anthropological, symbolical readings.[47]

Finally, in line with Duffy's seminal book, this broad set of source material will be analyzed over a long-term period. Because the later Middle Ages and the Reformation are all too often treated separately, even placed in strong opposition to each other, a broad chronological scope that encompasses both allows us to double-check such theoretical observations with the actual facts. Studying lay piety in the long sixteenth century shows continuities as well as periodical idiosyncrasies.[48] The chronological boundaries of this book are 1452, the date of the earliest preserved churchwarden account from Zoutleeuw's church of Saint Leonard, and 1621. The latter date has not only been chosen because it marked the end of the Twelve Years' Truce, which saw an important Catholic *réveil*, but also because, after this particular point in time, Zoutleeuw and the surrounding Hageland region would enter a period of dramatic socio-economic crisis.[49]

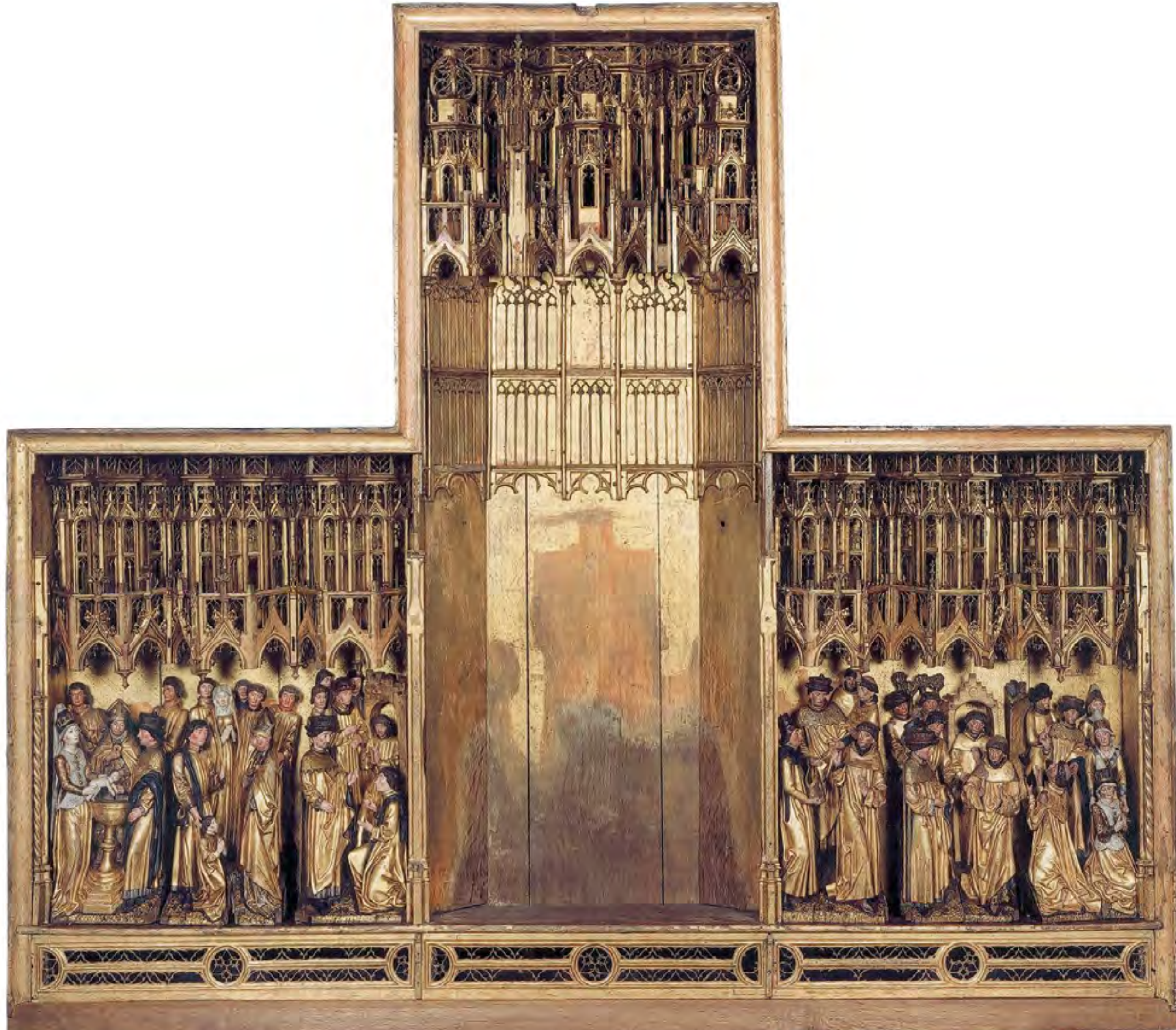
The chapters of this book are grouped into three chronological parts, each revolving around a distinct object from Saint Leonard's

church that is both revelatory for what was at stake in Zoutleeuw and characteristic of contemporaneous religious trends in the Low Countries. In part 1, the carved altarpiece of Saint Leonard from 1476–1478 is looked at to place late medieval piety in perspective (c. 1450–1520). Chapter 1 discusses the origins, developments and importance of the cult of Saint Leonard at Zoutleeuw, and functions as a stepping stone for a sketch of a revised image of Netherlandish piety at the dawn of the age of iconoclasm (Chapter 2). Rather than a withered tail of the Middle Ages, the decades preceding the Reformation are characterized as a period of intense and dynamic piety. Drawing on these insights, part 2 gives central stage to Cornelis Floris' 1550–1552 sacrament house as a means to turn to Catholic piety in the period between the introduction of Protestant thought and the actual breakings in the *Beeldenstorm* (c. 1520–1566). Questioning 1520 as a definitive rupture for religious life and its material culture, Chapter 3 argues for continuity and the persistence of traditional religion. The subsequent chapters elaborate this argument by focusing on various groups of religious agents: pilgrims (Chapter 4), parishioners (Chapter 5) and patrons (Chapter 6). A focus on the actual opposition against iconoclasm in 1566 further elucidates existing resistance (Chapter 7). This mapping of Catholic agency in spite of Protestant critiques allows us to reassess traditional views on the Counter-Reformation and the Catholic *réveil* around 1600 in part 3. Zooming in on a peculiar votive painting from 1612, it discusses the survival of late medieval miracle cults into the seventeenth century. Like so many other shrines around 1600, Zoutleeuw again saw a dazzling miraculous activity that significantly harked back to the popularity of a century before (Chapter 8). Now, however, these local cults engaged in devotional negotiations with the archducal government, as they became key features of their religious politics (Chapter 9).

In conclusion, by privileging a long-term approach, this study challenges persisting negative views and contends that the Reformation by no means paralyzed Catholic culture in the Low Countries. Instead, it was one of several surges in the continuity of devotional evolutions that incited engaged counterinitiatives. The vitality of late medieval devotion in particular is highlighted as the fertile ground from which the Counter-Reformation organically grew under Protestant impulses. Rather than illustrating the tenacity of what Duffy labelled as 'traditional religion', this book shows how thin the line was between tradition and transformation.

PART 1

Late Medieval Piety in Perspective



CHAPTER 1

The Cult of Saint Leonard at Zoutleeuw

Saint Leonard's Altarpiece

In July 1476, the churchwardens of Zoutleeuw gathered in a tavern to discuss commissioning an altarpiece dedicated to Saint Leonard. After their meeting, they placed an order in Brussels, and the work was finished in March 1478. The churchwardens again travelled to Brussels to settle the payment, and the retable was shipped to Zoutleeuw via Mechelen.[1] The subject and the style, as well as the presence of Brussels quality marks on both the sculpture and the case of the oldest retable preserved in the Zoutleeuw church today (fig. 8), confirm that it is the very same one that was commissioned in 1476.[2]

Saint Leonard, the Christian hero of the altarpiece, lived in Merovingian France around the year 500. His hagiography identifies his parents as courtiers to King Clovis and states that he had been baptized and instructed in Christian faith by Saint Remigius, archbishop of Reims. Leonard quickly won Clovis' goodwill, and was granted many favors by him. Not only was he allowed to free the prisoners he visited, he was also offered a bishopric. However, preferring solitude and prayer he refused the honor and instead went to live in a forest near Limoges, where he preached and worked miracles. One of these wonders involved the pregnant queen, who had joined her husband on a hunting party in the woods and was suddenly seized by labor pains. Leonard prayed on her behalf for safe delivery. His efforts were successful, and in gratitude Clovis had the monastery of Noblac built for him, where his miracles attracted pilgrims from far and wide, and where he finally died on 6 November 559. His tomb (now Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat) became the primary center of pilgrimage for his devotion, but he would eventually be venerated all over western Europe, where he 'became a cure for the weak [and] untied the chains of prisoners'.[3]

This is the story that is depicted in the altarpiece, where his life unfolds in six distinct sculptural groups under stately gothic canopies. The groups on the left side depict Leonard's pre-monastic life (fig. 9). The first group shows Clovis and his wife attending the baptism of Leonard by archbishop Remigius, to whom Leonard's

FIGURE 8
Anonymous (Brussels), *Altarpiece depicting the life of Saint Leonard*, 1476–1478, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

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FIGURE 9
Detail of Fig. 8, left side
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parents present him for instruction in the next group. Leonard is subsequently shown at an older age, imploring the king to liberate the chained prisoner standing behind him. The monastic life of the saint begins on the right side of the altarpiece (fig. 10). First, he is shown refusing the episcopal miter proposed to him by Clovis, who instead offers him the monastery in the woods in the next group. Finally, Leonard's miraculous intercession during the queen's delivery is shown.

The Zoutleeuw altarpiece bears all the characteristics typical of contemporary Brussels productions, most notably the inverted T-shape wherein figures are organized under architectural baldachins. To a certain extent, such carved altarpieces were variations on a standardized formula, and it has been argued that the role of patrons was limited as a result.[4] No contract for the altarpiece has been preserved, but circumstantial evidence nevertheless indicates that the churchwardens closely supervised its visual program and outlook. While the accounts do not reveal the name of the sculptor,

FIGURE 10
Detail of Fig. 8, right side
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stylistic and technical analysis suggests that the same workshop also produced the prestigious passion altarpieces for the Italian merchant Claudio Villa and his wife Gentina Solaro (fig. 11), and Michel de Gauchy, councilor and chamberlain to Duke Philip the Good, and his wife Laurette de Jaucourt (fig. 12).[5] This workshop clearly allowed its clients some say in the design, because De Villa's altarpiece has a form which is unusual for Brabantine norms, but typical for the artistic production in the patron's region of origin.[6]

Saint Leonard's altarpiece is atypical too, albeit from an iconographical point of view, as the absolute majority of the altarpieces carved in Brussels depict Christ's Passion or the life of the Virgin.[7] The story of Saint Leonard's life of course circulated in hagiographical texts such as Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, but the highly specific and unusual visual program must have been carefully chosen and defined beforehand. Indeed, the churchwardens commissioned the retable's design from a local artist: Arnold de Raet (act. 1447, d. 1484–1485) from Leuven, who had settled in Zoutleeuw and

FIGURE 11 Anonymous (Brussels), *Altarpiece of Claudio Villa and Gentina Solaro*, c. 1470–1480, Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

FIGURE 12
Anonymous (Brussels), *Altarpiece of Michel de Gauchy and Laurette de Jaucourt*, c. 1466, Ambierle, church of Saint Martin
PHOTO: JOHAN GELEYNS – RO SCAN

became the principal painter to the church between 1469 and 1482.[8] De Raet also accompanied the wardens to Brussels to place the commission, suggesting that he figuratively translated the church-warden's desires by setting out the retable's composition and iconographical program.[9]

The retable, however, has suffered significant alterations. Old photographs not only reveal that the altarpiece was later combined with other, unrelated paintings and statues, they also show hinges at the top right, indicating the presence of wings which are now lost (fig. 13). Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that the 1478 retable was initially wingless, in accordance with the dominant contemporary depiction of altarpieces (figs. 19, 38 & 42).[10] The sculpted altarpiece forms a coherent iconographic ensemble, fully depicting Saint Leonard's hagiography from baptism to monastery.[11] Wings would have disturbed the narrative continuity, from left to right, that was so typical for contemporary altarpieces.[12] Lynn Jacobs has pointed out that such narrative disjunction was either the result of the cooperation of two entirely distinct workshops that did not attune their respective productions, or that the wings were a much later addition.[13] Since Arnold de Raet is known to have provided an overall design for the altarpiece, the latter appears as the most reasonable option, and this was indeed a common practice. A case in point is the famous retable commissioned in 1475 by the Illustrious Brotherhood of Our Blessed Lady from 's-Hertogenbosch. The sculpted part was delivered by Adriaen van Wesel in 1477, but the painted outer wings were only commissioned from Hieronymus Bosch in 1488–1489. Polychromy of the sculpted parts would follow in 1508–1510, and the inner wings would be painted later still, in 1522–1523.[14]

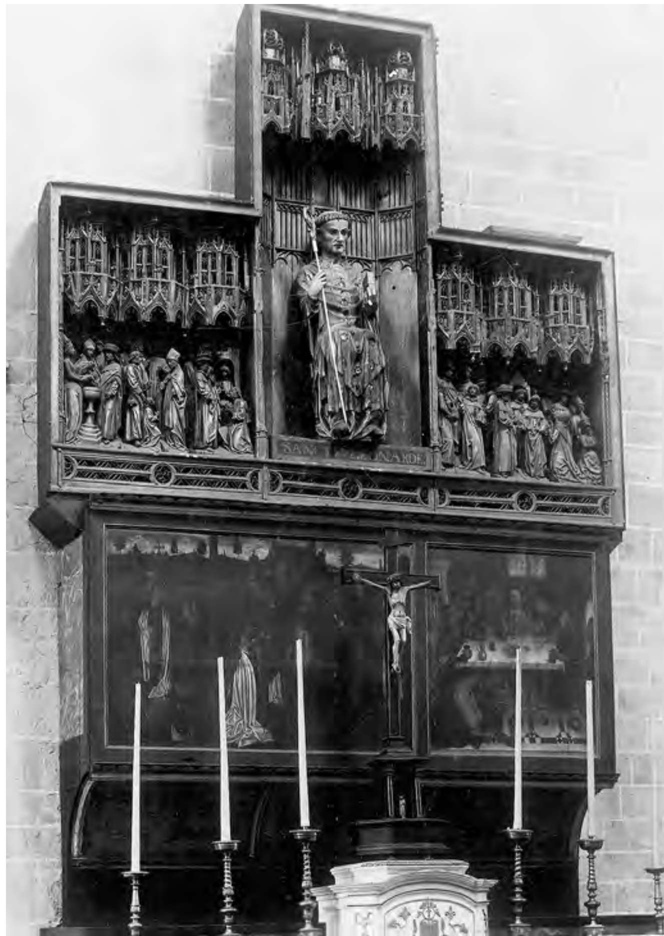

FIGURE 13
The Zoutleeuw *Altarpiece depicting the life of Saint Leonard*, state in 1900, Brussels, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, cliché B003676
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

Finally, none of the documents pertaining to the Zoutleeuw commission refer to wings, and the total sum paid by the churchwardens (126 *Rijnsgulden*) conforms to prices of other wingless altarpieces.[15]

The iconographic program of the initial design was thus limited to sculpted parts that were permanently visible, but these have been altered as well. From at least the nineteenth century onwards the central place of the altarpiece has mostly been occupied by an earlier statue of Saint Leonard (fig. 13). This has led to the hypothesis that the retable had actually been made to house that particular sculpture, which was soon rejected with good reason: the dimensions of statue and altarpiece do not correspond in any way, nor do the traces of the original gilding on the back wall of the case, which in fact suggest a lost sculptural group.[16] Furthermore, as I will argue, the statue was originally installed in a separate tabernacle. The current

FIGURE 14
Jan Gossart, *Design for a triptych with the life of Saint Leonard*, c. 1520–1530, Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, KdZ 4647

consensus therefore is that the original central scene of the altarpiece is lost.

The identification of its subject is pertinent nevertheless. Resulting from the formal emphasis created by the elevated top, the central spaces of carved retables were, as a rule, reserved for key moments in the depicted narrative. In many cases this was a Calvary group, and based on the evocative traces of the original gilding on the Zoutleeuw altarpiece it has been suggested that it similarly represented a crucifixion in the center.[17] The presence of a crucifix on the altar was, after all, an established custom, and the centrality of the body of Christ in altarpieces indeed formed an apt visual backdrop to the priest's elevation of the host, the symbolic re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice during Mass.[18] Calvary scenes were of course easily integrated into altarpieces devoted to either Christ or the Virgin, but in fact never were in pieces on other holy figures where they would – again – breach the narrative coherence.[19] And while retables dedicated to Christian martyrs generally depicted their martyrdoms in the central niche as a parallel to Christ's passion, Saint Leonard was a confessor instead of a martyr as he had died in peace in his monastery.[20]

No other contemporary Netherlandish altarpiece dedicated to Saint Leonard has been preserved, but a later design by Jan Gossart from the 1520s provides valuable clues (fig. 14).[21] On the wings and in

the background of the center panel, he depicted virtually the same subjects as the Zoutleeuw altarpiece. Clockwise starting from the lower left corner, the design shows the baptism of Saint Leonard, his instruction by Remigius, his refusal of the miter, the queen giving birth, the freeing of prisoners, the building of the monastery and the miracles that subsequently happened there. The latter is absent in Zoutleeuw, as is the central scene showing the saint in a church interior in the company of young mothers and prisoners.[22] That very scene also conspicuously shows a crucifixion in the form of a triumphal cross on the rood loft behind the pulpit on which Saint Leonard is preaching – a clever solution allowing for the inclusion of the liturgical crucifix, while at the same time preserving the narrative unity. The same solution occurs in carved altarpieces too. The retable depicting the *vita* of Saint Renelde in Saintes, for instance, similarly sets the central scene in a church interior (fig. 15).[23] It can therefore be assumed that the Zoutleeuw altarpiece centrally depicted Saint Leonard in a similar way: in a church interior, while preaching and working miracles, as was recounted in the *Legenda Aurea*.

The iconographical program thus foregrounded the saint's thaumaturgic character. By emphasizing two aspects from his hagiography that were the very reasons for his later cult, i.e. the freeing of prisoners and the comforting of pregnant women seeking a safe delivery, it presents him as a liberating saint capable of working miracles.[24] As such, the significance of the altarpiece seems to extend beyond a strict liturgical framework. Although the early development of altarpieces was closely related to the liturgy, they were not essential to its celebration as they originated long after the rituals had taken on a fixed form.[25] While the gilding and polychromy created strong visual parallels with genuine liturgical utensils and reliquaries, it provided retables with an aura of sacrality and liturgical importance that they did not have inherently.[26] In recent years scholars have come to understand altarpieces as having been multifunctional objects between official prescriptions of the liturgy and people's individual devotional experiences, increasingly characterizing them as products of devotion.[27]

Reading altarpieces in devotional terms is indeed crucial, because the one in Zoutleeuw is in fact an early example of a veritable production wave of similar altarpieces in the period from *grosso modo* 1480 to 1520, that were distributed throughout the Low Countries and elsewhere in Europe.[28] Interestingly, comparably complex and equally materially splendid devotional objects, such as carved wooden prayer nuts, boomed during more or less the same period

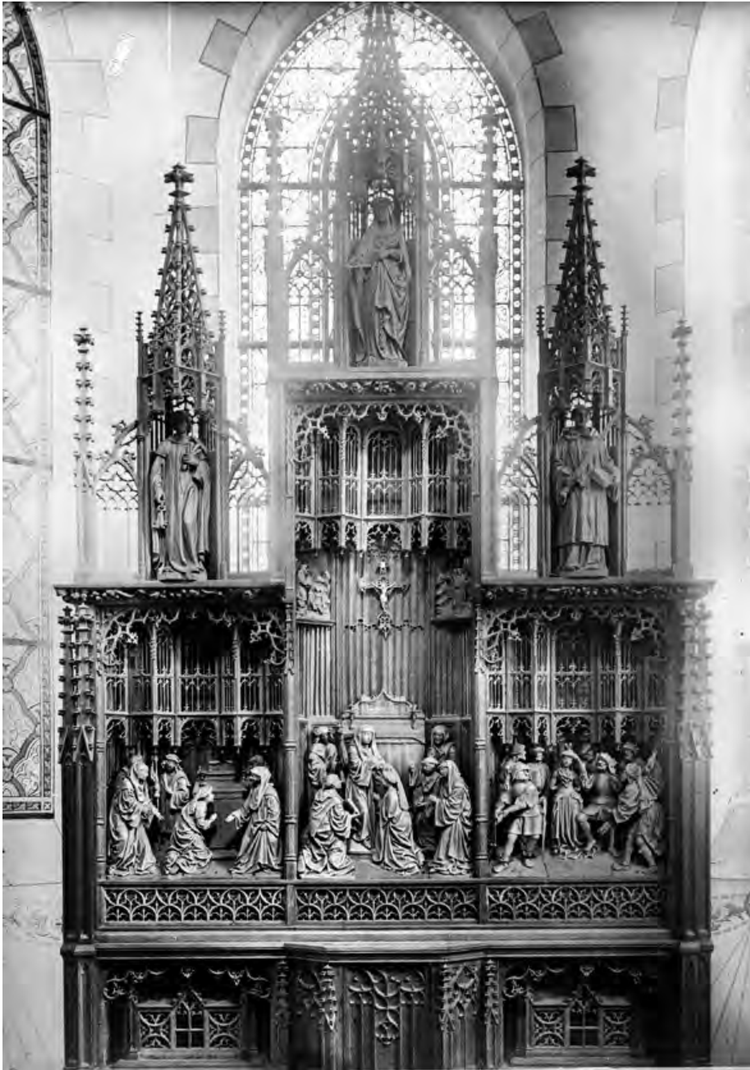

FIGURE 15
Anonymous (Brussels), *Altarpiece depicting the life of Saint Renelde*, c. 1520, Saintes, church of Saint Renelde, state in 1917–1918, Brussels, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, cliché A009922
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

(c. 1500–1530).[29] The broad popularity of such objects prompts the question of how they fit into contemporary lay devotion. A vast body of literature has recently emphasized the importance of increasingly spiritual ideals in late medieval piety, among others propagated by the *Devotio Moderna* movement. It is argued that laypeople, in imitation of the clergy, developed a growing criticism towards images and pursued an 'aniconic piety', i.e. the ideal of a devotion without images.[30] Such an observation clearly is at odds with the material at hand and has rightly been termed paradoxical. After all, it is more logical to consider the material splendor of Brabantine altarpieces

as essentially an expression of contemporary piety, rather than being at odds with it.[31] It is worthwhile to investigate the intended roles for altarpieces such as the one in Zoutleeuw in much the same way that Falkenburg has demonstrated that prayer nuts played a central role in devotional experience.[32] In other words: in what devotional, liturgical and material context did the altarpiece function, and what prompted the churchwardens to commission a piece with such a particular iconographic focus at that precise moment?

Protohistory of the Cult

To answer this question it is necessary to trace the roots of Saint Leonard's cult in the early history of Zoutleeuw's religious landscape. In its earliest mention (1139), the Zoutleeuw parish is identified as the capital of a deanery within the Bishopric of Liège (*decania Lewis*). It testifies to the contemporary importance of the Zoutleeuw church and implies older origins, but this parish church was dedicated to Saint Sulpice, not to Saint Leonard.[33] Only in 1231 would the seat of the parish be transferred from Saint Sulpice's church to the nearby chapel of Saint Leonard, 'for the greater convenience of the people'.[34] This transfer must be seen in relation to efforts on the part of the Counts of Leuven – and later the Dukes of Brabant – to foster the development of the town of Zoutleeuw. In an attempt to secure and control the eastern frontier of their territory, they had given a number of privileges to stimulate the town's economic, political and social development from the early twelfth century onwards: the town was provided with walls, merchants were obliged to use its facilities in their trade over both water and land, an annual fair with Pentecost was instituted and the dukes even formally considered it as one of the seven 'free' or 'good cities' of the Duchy.[35] The transfer of the parish from Saint Sulpice, which lay unprotected in the Zoutleeuw surroundings, to the centrally located chapel of Saint Leonard was an inherent part of these urban developments.[36] It remains unclear when this initial chapel was erected, but it likely happened under the influence of the Bishops of Liège, in whose territories other sanctuaries to Saint Leonard were founded from the late eleventh century onwards.[37] In sum, the *capellam nunc ecclesiam Sancti Leonardi* was likely the product of the ambitions of both the Dukes of Brabant and the Bishops of Liège, respectively attempting to maintain worldly and ecclesiastical power. Indeed, the fact that

FIGURE 16
Letter of indulgence awarded to the Zoutleeuw church of Saint Leonard, illuminated by the workshop of Galterius Alamannus, 1328, Leuven, Rijksarchief

Saint Leonard's right of patronage was shared by the Liège chapter of Saint Denis and the Brabantine abbey of Vlierbeek – founded by Count Godfrey I of Leuven – suggests a compromise between the two powers.[38]

The chapel's elevation to parish church in 1231 prompted a series of building campaigns to adapt the sanctuary to accommodate the growing number of parishioners. The church was probably built around the former chapel before destroying it, as was a common practice at many gothic construction sites. Architectural analysis indicates that work started with the choir in the middle of the thirteenth century, to be followed by the northern transept and the same side of the nave with its tower later in that century. The southern side was built only in the early fourteenth century, seemingly to be concluded with the transept (fig. 4).[39] The founding of the collegiate chapter of nine canons in 1308 – extended to eleven by the middle of the century – would provide an extra impetus to complete the construction.[40]

At this point, the church's patron saint was clearly not the object of a thriving cult, and certainly not one that was lucrative enough to finance the church's ongoing construction. In 1293 the town and the

FIGURE 17
Detail of Fig. 16

clergy issued a letter of recommendation for collectors, stating that workers had started to build the most sumptuous church, but that the resources were lacking and one thus was compelled to beg alms of the faithful.[41] The text significantly fails to mention any particular cult of relics or an image that was venerated in Zoutleeuw, and certainly does not use anything like it as an argument for fundraising, contrary to many other construction sites. A few years later, in 1328, a number of bishops residing in Avignon awarded an indulgence to the church at the personal request of *magister* Johannes de Sceverstene, a clergyman from Zoutleeuw. In established pilgrimage centers such documents included references to cult objects and their miracles, but the Zoutleeuw example does not include anything of the kind (fig. 16).[42] It grants several days of indulgence to those who attended the liturgical services for a whole catalogue of saints, but Leonard is not especially emphasized among them and seems only mentioned perfunctorily for his role as patron saint. Apart from encouraging Christian believers to give money or offerings to the church, the indulgence in fact was essentially related to Sceverstene's personal spiritual welfare, since those who prayed for his salutary state would benefit from it. Sceverstene himself is depicted in the left margin of the document, represented in prayer before a figure of Saint Leonard (fig. 17). But this should not be taken as an indication of the presence of a cult, as it was a standardized illuminating procedure in Avignon to depict the patron saint of the requesting church.[43]

The acquisition of a statue representing Saint Leonard (fig. 18) was crucial for the developments in Zoutleeuw. The oak sculpture, just over a meter in height (107 cm), shows the confessor with tonsured head, identifying him as a monk. The figure is seated and holds a book in his left hand, while his right hand contains a tube-like fitting in which an abbatial staff can be placed. Certain aspects still refer to Romanesque sculpture traditions – most notably the inlaid gemstones decorating his priestly garments – but the figure's elongated pose points to the mid-fourteenth century. Recent technical investigations have confirmed these stylistic assessments, dating it to around 1350–1360.[44] It is this statue that would eventually become the church's cult object and to which many a miracle would be attributed, thus providing a *terminus post quem* for Saint Leonard's cult in Zoutleeuw. But miraculous images were of course not commissioned as such. Beate Fricke has demonstrated that a distinction between cult statues and other religious images was alien to medieval terminology, which generically referred to *sacra imago* or *imagines sanctorum*.[45] It would indeed seem that the Zoutleeuw

FIGURE 18 Anonymous, *Saint Leonard*, c. 1350–1360, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard

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statue initially served as a mere representation of the parish patron saint. Most cults actually developed around older artifacts, and miraculous images – referred to only in the sixteenth century as *beelden van miraculen* or *miraculeuse beelden*[46] – had to earn their reputation.[47] This functional evolution of images, so inherently related to the individual experiences that miracles were, cannot possibly be described in fixed chronological terms. Moreover, this ran parallel to another equally unpalpable transition; that of the liturgical veneration of a patron saint or the personal devotion to a saint in heaven into the actual cult of a material object at a specific location. The remainder of this chapter will trace and characterize this sinuous process.

It may be the case that early attempts to develop the church into a pilgrimage destination occurred quite soon after the statue's acquisition, but the evidence is unclear. In the 1360s, *Lewis* – a locality possibly identifiable as Zoutleeuw – appears as destination in the Maastricht registers of judicial pilgrimages. This was a common form of correctional punishment in the medieval Low Countries, in which ecclesiastical or secular law courts obliged convicts to fulfill one or more pilgrimages to specified destinations. Starting in 1367, the number of Maastricht convicts sent to *Lewis* reached a high point with thirteen sentences in 1369 alone, but after 1377 the destination does not appear anymore.[48] It quickly disappeared just as suddenly as it appeared, and it is only half a century later that a second, crucial piece of evidence pertaining to the nascent cult of Saint Leonard appears: in the course of the 1430s the town institutes a procession on Whit Monday. It is on this occasion – first referred to in 1437 – that the statue of Saint Leonard was carried around.[49] This yearly event would grow out to be a fundamental characteristic of Zoutleeuw's devotional life.

The origin of the procession neatly corresponds to the completion of a separate chapel for Saint Leonard within the Zoutleeuw church, extending the honor of the temporary ritual into a permanent architectural framework. Already around 1355 construction work had begun at the southern transept, a part that initially ended in a portal, still visible today. Later, however, the building was extended further southward into an adjacent yet distinct room that would become Saint Leonard's chapel (*Sijnte Leonarts choer*, fig. 4).[50] A spiral staircase in the southwestern corner of the transept leads to the floor immediately above the chapel proper. The space, equipped with two hearths, five windows and a sink, is subdivided into separate rooms by wooden partitions. In the midst of a jumble of nineteenth- and

twentieth-century *graffiti* on the planks, one large but only partly legible inscription stands out, the most reasonable reading of which seems to be:

> … atrio vorst[ius] kemerlinc
> erant primi … instrati anno domini
> M° CCCC° XL° mensis octobris die xvii
> met verwen …[51]

The date of 17 October 1440 evidently serves as *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the chapel beneath. It has been suggested that the inscription referred to the first occupants of the rooms, which were possibly designed to house pilgrims.[52] Sleeping in the immediate vicinity of cult objects was indeed common practice. In Vorst, for instance, pilgrims are known to have slept in front of Saint Alena's altar, and similar cases have been signaled in nearby pilgrim churches in Aarschot and Oplinter.[53]

However, it more likely served as a commemorative inscription documenting the completion of the construction itself, rather than being the *graffiti* of pilgrims who lodged there. Texts referring to distinct phases in the building process are common in medieval churches, and multiple painted or engraved examples are known throughout Europe. Recent research has demonstrated how they contributed to the promotion of a shared civic memory by commemorating the parties involved in the construction works and by emphasizing the veracity of the claim that was made in the text.[54] Examples preserved in the Low Countries testify to that practice. Sometimes they document the start or completion of a campaign, such as in Leuven (1234 and 1305), Utrecht (1321 and 1382) and Tongeren (1442), or the installation of parts of the interior and its subsequent first use, such as the baptismal font in Handzame (1400). Some refer to the stonemason or the master builder in charge of the works, like the examples preserved in Aarschot (Jean Piccart, 1337), Drogenbos (Jan van Lier, c. 1350) and Peer (Jan Groetheers, 1422), whereas others include the names of churchwardens (Berlaar, 1353) or the reigning abbess (Notre-Dame de Soleilmont, 1496).[55]

Evidence suggests that the three words on the first line are indeed the names of the people involved in the chapel's completion. *Kemerlinc* likely refers to priest and canon Godfried Camerlinck who held the office of steward of the collegiate chapter between 1431 and 1478.[56] *Atrio*, furthermore, was the Latinized surname of the important Van de Kerckhove family. A Petrus and Reynerus Van de

Kerckhove *alias* de Atrio are both documented as aldermen and burgomasters in town in the 1430s and 1440s.[57] Finally, a convincing argument can be made for identifying the remaining name – *Vorstius* – as Sulpitius van Vorst (c. 1375–1439), the famous master builder from Leuven. His involvement in the constructions in Zoutleeuw remains undocumented but is likely, especially since his pupil and successor Mathijs de Layens (d. 1483) is securely recorded as principal master builder in Zoutleeuw in the 1450s. De Layens took over the lead of almost all of the construction sites in the region that were once headed by Van Vorst – including the churches of Saint Peter in Leuven, Saint Sulpice in Diest and Our Lady ten Poel in Tienen – and it is reasonable to assume that the church of Zoutleeuw was among them too. In October 1440 Van Vorst was recently deceased, but the inscription could nevertheless still refer to his responsibility for that particular part of the church.[58] Referring to three individuals involved in the completion of Saint Leonard's chapel – a member of the town council (either Petrus or Reynerus van de Kerckhove *alias* de Atrio), a representative of the chapter (Godfried Camerlinck) and the master builder (Sulpitius van Vorst) – the inscription commemorates a key event in the cultic history of Zoutleeuw's patron saint.

The chapel and its altar were consecrated soon after this completion on 21 October 1442, and dedicated to Saint Leonard, the 11.000 Virgins and All Saints. This event would be commemorated yearly in the so-called 'four Masses' in honor of the altar's patron saints: on the feast day of Saint Ursula and the 11.000 Virgins (21 October, coinciding with the feast of consecration), on Sunday before All Saints, on All Saints' Day (1 November) and on the feast of Saint Leonard (6 November). These Masses were elaborately celebrated by a priest, deacon and subdeacon, accompanied by organ music and the chapter school choir and announced by persistent bell-ringing. It was also on the occasion of the consecration that the hope to receive pilgrims was clearly expressed for the first time. The foundation charter, issued by Denis Stephani, Bishop of Ross (act. 1436–1458) and suffragan to the Liège Bishop, provides a considerable amount of days of indulgence, 40 of which were to be earned at the saint's feast day and at Whit Monday, when the saint's statue was carried around in the recently instituted procession. In relation to the latter, it was explicitly stated that the indulgences were given 'so that the faithful Christians will be encouraged in their devotion, prayer and pilgrimage, and that they will flock together in the chapel'.[59] Any possible pre-existing veneration of Saint Leonard had now become an officially sanctioned cult in Zoutleeuw.

Part or all of the funding for this chapel was possibly provided by a lay couple. In a marginal note next to his 1734 transcription of the act of consecration, priest Daniël Godts (1703–1797) stated that 'Joannes de Katen and Maria, his wife, funded this chapel and Masses in it [on] 23 September 1442'.[60] The conspicuous absence of De Katen's name in the act of consecration seems to exclude the possibility that the chapel was related solely to the family's personal *memoria*, but it is plausible that the couple significantly contributed to its completion. As the construction of the chapel probably was already underway for about a century, their intervention might have been motivated by the fact that the project had remained uncompleted. Comparative analysis of the cutting techniques of the stones used in the chapel led architectural historian Frans Doperé to date the upper parts of the eastern, southern and western walls to 1410 at the earliest.[61] This would mean that the chapel, begun around 1355, remained uncompleted for at least 55 years, and this might account for complementary private funding. Strikingly, this closely corresponds to the two clusters of evidence documenting the nascent cult of Saint Leonard: the first in the 1350s and 1360s, the second in the 1430s and 1440s. By 1442, however, Saint Leonard was finally able to receive pilgrims in a proper chapel, especially designed for that purpose. And soon after the churchwarden accounts would start to register the fortunes of this devotion.

The Fortunes of Devotion: Offerings

The snippets of information recounted above suggest an evolution towards official approbation, but say nothing about how successful and widespread the veneration of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw was. The construction and consecration of the chapel were of course essential steps towards institutional recognition, but they might obscure pre-existing movements of popular piety that remain under the radar. Nor does episcopal support necessarily constitute a successful cult. It is by no means the purpose of the preceding overview to suggest that the actual cult only took off after the 1442 consecration. Rather, the evidence at hand confirms earlier observations of the cyclical movements of the popularity of individual cult objects. Patrick Geary called this the 'careers' of relics, which consist of successive periods of intense veneration alternating with times of general neglect.[62] The same might have been the case at Zoutleeuw, but the lack of churchwarden accounts and other sources referring to

the statue or the Whit Monday procession before 1452 makes it very hard to assess its popularity.

The silence of sources can also be instructive, however. This is particularly true for the lists of shrines that can be deduced from local law courts' sentences of judicial pilgrimages. The localities assigned coincide with the most renowned pilgrimage destinations, as important shrines with international reputations such as Rome, Milan, Santiago de Compostella, Rocamadour and Cologne figure frequently in the condemnations. Authorities mostly chose such faraway destinations to remove the condemned from local society for a sufficient period of time, but the destinations that were chosen within the Low Countries equally seem to reflect a regional hierarchy. Key shrines such as Geraardsbergen, Halle, 's-Hertogenbosch and Maastricht indeed occur most frequently.[63] In relation to Zoutleeuw, however, only one other sentence is known apart from the previously mentioned series of judicial pilgrimages from Maastricht (1367–1377). On 7 September 1520 two men from Neeroeteren were condemned to a pilgrimage to Saint Leonard, proof of which they brought back on 17 September of that year.[64] This rather late date, and the otherwise complete absence of Zoutleeuw from records is striking. Between 1403 and 1516, the city of Brussels sent several convicts to Tienen and Sint-Truiden, but Zoutleeuw, which is located right in between these towns, is never mentioned.[65] Nor was it chosen in the city of Turnhout, for instance, which nevertheless sent convicts to Aarschot and Wezemaal, which are a mere 30 or 35 kilometers away from Zoutleeuw.[66] The same is true of other cities such as Antwerp, Leuven, Tienen or Vilvoorde.[67] In this respect it is interesting to note that the overall high point of the practice of judicial pilgrimages in the Low Countries was in the fifteenth century, and had almost completely disappeared early in the next century. The Brussels peak in the 1430s, for instance, thus definitely preceded the 1442 consecration of the Zoutleeuw chapel.[68] It could therefore be argued that Zoutleeuw's conspicuous absence is an indication of its relatively late development as renowned pilgrimage site in comparison with other localities figuring in the lists.

The churchwarden accounts confirm this chronology. Whereas the desire to receive pilgrims was expressed in the 1442 consecration charter of Saint Leonard's chapel, they only occur in the accounts nearly four decades later. Until then, payments to an extensive group of people formed yearly recurring costs for the Whit Monday procession, including trumpeters, pipers, lutenists, actors, walk-ons, jesters, bell-ringers and torch-bearers, either paid in cash or in wine, beer,

bread, sausages and cheese. Pilgrims were only included in this rich list during the celebration of 1480, and from then on were rewarded with drinks and food on a yearly basis.[69] This does not necessarily mean that pilgrims were not present in Zoutleeuw before, because it is certainly possible that a separate record was kept, that such costs were not specified in the accounts before or simply that there was no money involved.[70] Yet, the fact that the churchwardens started to explicitly register it suggests an intensification at the very least. Furthermore, from 1490 onwards accounts also record the amount of grain used for the baking of the bread that was distributed to the pilgrims at Pentecost. This quickly rose from the initial 2 *halster* (c. 60 liters) in 1490 to 2,5 *halster* (c. 75 liters) in 1492, 3 *halster* (c. 90 liters) in 1493, finally arriving at 4 *halster* (c. 120 liters) in 1496 – an amount that would be maintained during the following years.[71] It is impossible to quantify these figures in absolute numbers, but it is very likely that the increasing amounts of grain reflect a growing number of pilgrims. Most importantly, the 1480s also saw the first clear and indisputable indications of miracles worked by Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw. In April 1484 the sextons were paid to ring the bells after a miracle had happened, and in May 1488 the churchwardens gave 7 *stuivers* to the pilgrim who had been miraculously released by Saint Leonard.[72] All this evidence clearly suggests that it was only in the course of the last decades of the fifteenth century that the church grew out to be a pilgrimage site of regional importance.

Assessing Devotion: Offerings in Kind

Increasing offerings reflect this rising popularity, the importance and variety of which is demonstrated by contemporary imagery. The panel concluding the cycle on the life and cult of Saint Rumbold in Mechelen (fig. 19), for instance, is illustrative of the fact that donations mostly included items that were useful to the church in question, such as grain, wax or wine, which could either be sold or used during Mass. Two canons, sitting in front of the saint's shrine, are depicted receiving various kinds of offerings given by pilgrims in return for the kissing of the saint's reliquary. Previous visitors left coins, which lay scattered upon the table, and the pilgrim depicted in the act of kissing is handing over a wax candle and a bag of what is probably grain. A woman to his right holds a caged chicken, while on the left a man arrives with a sheep slung around his neck.

Ex-votos constitute a particular category of offerings in kind. These are offered objects or images that always stood in direct relation with the favor that was asked of a saint, or with a miracle that

FIGURE 19 Master of the Legend of the Magdalen, *The cult of Saint Rumbold in Mechelen, with Jean Micault and his wife*, c. 1500–1510, Mechelen, cathedral of Saint Rumbold
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

had happened. Pilgrims hoping for the healing of their legs would generally offer an image of that body part and cripples that were able to walk again often left their crutches at the shrine. As these objects were often made of materials that were easy to adapt, such as wax or metal, they could either be reused or cashed in by the *fabrica ecclesiae*. Still, they often remained untouched at their places in or near the sanctuary, because large quantities of ex-votos functioned as striking proofs and illustrations of the popularity and power of the saint to whom they were dedicated.[73] A scene depicted on the central outer wings of the 1516 Antwerp altarpiece in Västerås (Sweden) illustrates the prominent display of precious gifts hung on a rod immediately above the altar (fig. 20, compare with figs. 24, 54, 71 & 135, and p. 74). In Zepperen the donated crutches were even repeated in *trompe l'oeuil* mural paintings in Saint Genevieve's chapel, just beneath a cycle depicting her *vita* (fig. 21).

Similar practices are extensively documented at Zoutleeuw. The church still possesses a fifteenth-century offertory box for grain (fig. 22) and the accounts sporadically registered the amounts donated, recorded most regularly in the early decades of the sixteenth century.[74] Other materials that were offered include wool or flax, but also animals such as pigs or poultry.[75] The accounts equally document ex-votos. In January 1498 a rod for iron gifts – a material that might well have been particular to the cult of Saint Leonard – is installed near the chapel, which was followed by another rod for wax figurines in June 1509.[76] Such objects, including figurines, legs and crutches, are clearly depicted as hanging near the statue on the 1612 painting commemorating a miraculous healing worked by Saint Leonard (fig. 128). The most striking ex-voto gift recorded in the accounts, however, is a suit of armor hanging in front of Saint Leonard in 1491, which was clearly cherished, as an armorer was paid to clean it. On the Västerås panels a similar gift proudly hangs above the altar (fig. 20). Yet, even such prestigious gifts had monetary value and two years later the wardens sold the armor for 2 *Rijnsgulden*.[77] These offerings and the documented accommodation for votive gifts around 1500 are evident consequences of the posited intensification of pilgrimage in Zoutleeuw in the later decades of the fifteenth century.

Quantifying Devotion: Offerings in Specie

The importance of offerings in kind suggests that the wide range of possible expressions of piety cannot and should not be reduced to devotional liberality alone, and the present study emphatically does not posit a direct proportional relationship between financial gifts

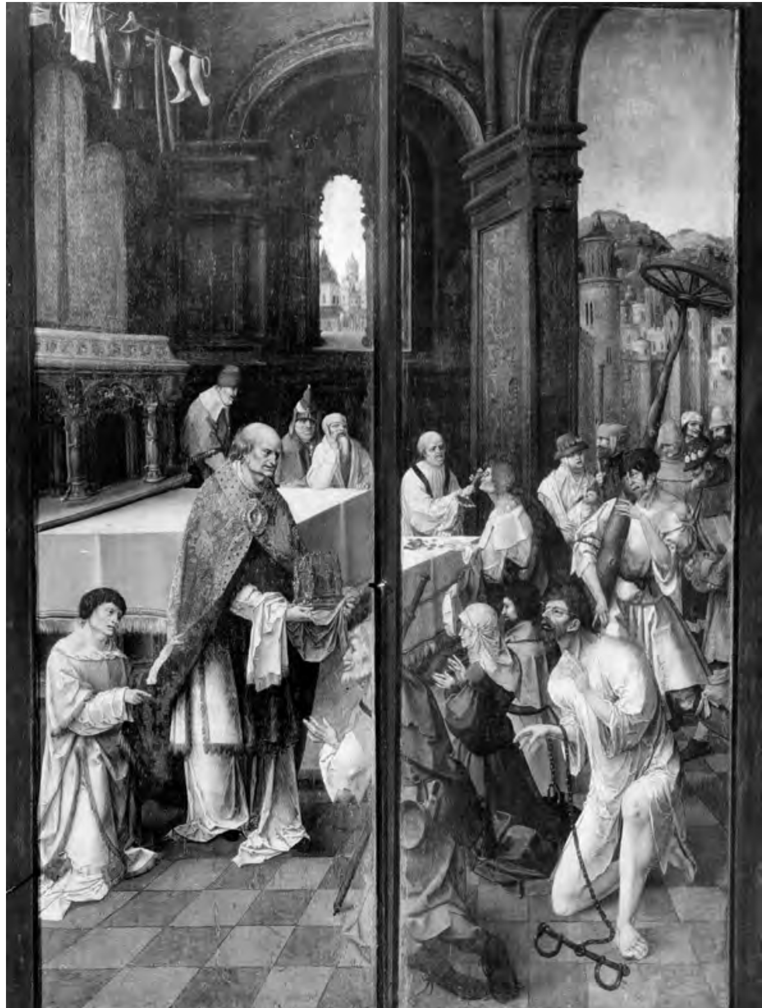

FIGURE 20
Anonymous (Antwerp), *Passion altarpiece*, central outer wings, 1516, Västerås, Cathedral
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

and devotion. However, the historiographical debate on piety in the Low Countries has mainly been based on the evolution of monetary income figures. The financial analysis of offerings is indeed one of the few ways in which devotion can be quantified to any extent, at the same time allowing us to trace its evolution over a longer period of time. In Zoutleeuw, the revenues from devotional gifts – both in specie and in kind – were registered yearly by the churchwardens in a separate section with extraordinary income, i.e. a collection of diverse revenues that were not structural in nature, contrary to the more or less fixed income from taxes or the rents of houses and meadows. The monetary revenues that were demonstrably devotional in nature and which can be followed in the long term mainly

FIGURE 21
Anonymous, *Mural painting depicting crutches as ex-votos in trompe l'oeuil*, 1509, Zepperen, church of Saint Genevieve
PHOTO: AUTHOR

stem from two sources: gifts in an offertory box (*stock* or *kist*), and collections on feast days.

The average village church in the Low Countries probably counted only one offertory box, but urban churches often contained many more, mostly located near entrances or altars. Kortrijk's church of Saint Martin, for instance, had no less than twelve boxes.[78] The Zoutleeuw church initially had two installed.[79] The earliest records are rather vague on their placement in the church, but certainly from 1478 onwards one stood in Saint Leonard's chapel (*Sijnte*

FIGURE 22
Offertory box for grain, c. 1500, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: AUTHOR

Leonaerts coer), while the other was likely placed just outside the chapel doors.[80] From 1497 onwards two other boxes are documented that in later years were mostly located near the altar of Saint Blaise at the rood loft and the Holy Sepulcher (fig. 23). In 1555, finally, the churchwardens took control of a box belonging to the Lauds of the Holy Sacrament, installed near the altar of the Holy Cross, which was probably located near the sacrament house.[81] The boxes were emptied two to four times a year, but no regularity in the moments or the number of times can be established, and it is impossible to infer seasonal variations. Apart from the revenues from the offertory boxes, money was also collected on feast days. Especially the collections at Candlemas (2 February), at the occasion of Saint Leonard's procession on Whit Monday and on the feast of Saint Leonard (6 November) constituted yearly recurring entries. In addition to these two main categories of the offertory boxes and the collections at feast days, sporadic donations were also made for specific purposes such as the casting of a new bell, the polychromy of sculpture or the acquisition of altarpieces.[82]

All these donations were both anonymous and voluntary. In principle, this combination makes them more representative of lay piety than revenues from sacramental obligations, which Toussaert based most of his findings on.[83] It is important, however, that both these terms should be nuanced and contextualized. Firstly, 'voluntary' is a notion open to interpretation in this period. Churchwardens or local clergymen are known to have actively collected offerings from pilgrims and visitors, and donation was also implicitly encouraged in contemporary devotional books. A case in point is the printed booklet issued around 1518 by the shrine of Saint Alena in Vorst, the narratives in which recount miracles happening after pilgrims had made their offering, with or without encouragement from a present churchwarden.[84] A 1527 panel with scenes from her life and cult (fig. 24) indeed shows pilgrims of various social strata kneeling and praying in front of the altar, next to which a churchwarden sits to receive the gifts. Other paintings similarly represent clergymen (figs. 19 & 20, see also fig. 71), and their presence near the shrine might have urged visitors in donating money.[85]

Furthermore, guilds' articles of association often included stipulations that obliged their members to make an offer on the feast day of their patron saint.[86] This was the case with the Zoutleeuw arquebusiers' guild which was founded in 1515 and devoted to Saint Leonard. The guild's extended statutes, issued in 1537, mention that 'every member will go to the church on Saint Leonard's day to attend

FIGURE 23
Jan Mertens and Lodewijk de Raet, *Holy Sepulcher*, 1490–1504, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

a sung Mass that the guild will provide for in Saint Leonard's chapel, and that everyone will bring his offer there'.[87] It is nevertheless likely that money collected at these instances was destined for the guild's own purse and such offerings would, as a consequence, not have been recorded in the churchwarden accounts. Membership furthermore was not available to everyone and it is far from certain that such statutory obligations were actually observed. Moreover, every member or pilgrim determined how much he or she offered. All in all, the voluntary character of the money offered counters any possible critique that changing revenues would reflect evolutions in people's wealth rather than in their devotion. It is undesirable to assume a directly proportional relationship between offered money and devotion, but it is equally wrong to posit a similar relation between increasing wages and increasing devotional revenues.

FIGURE 24
Anonymous, *Pilgrims at the shrine of Saint Alena,* from a panel depicting scenes from her life and cult, 1527, restored in 1638, Vorst, church of Saint Denis
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

Secondly, donations were, to a large extent, anonymous. Other parameters that have been used to map the evolution of certain devotions, such as foundations of (anniversary) Masses or testamentary dispositions, are biased, because they were likely influenced by other motives such as social prestige. After all, the individual memory of the founder was their *raison d'être*.[88] In the Zoutleeuw accounts, personal monetary gifts were generally recorded explicitly as such, including the name in question, and as a rule they were considerably higher than other gifts. Interestingly, even if smaller monetary gifts – under one *gulden* – were not put in the offertory box, they were mostly registered as anonymous, usually identified as 'from a good man' or 'a good heart'.[89] It might be suspected that the churchwardens simply did not deem such low gifts worthy to be registered

nominatim, but other examples make clear that this could definitely happen at the express wish of the giver, presumably because of pious reasons. In 1508, for instance, a woman modestly contributed to the polychromy of the altarpiece of the Illustrious Brotherhood of Our Blessed Lady from 's-Hertogenbosch, but desired to remain unknown.[90]

Delineating the revenues related to the cult of Saint Leonard from the Zoutleeuw accounts provides an idea of how it evolved through time. They are comprised of the gifts in the offertory boxes near Saint Leonard's altar throughout the year, the revenues from the collection on his feast day (6 November), and the money collected at the Whit Monday procession when the statue was carried around through town. The cult's share of the total of devotional revenues is uncertain in the earliest years however, as the accounts do not specify where precisely the money came from. In most cases the churchwardens just recorded a total sum gathered from both boxes, without making clear just how much had been offered in honor of Saint Leonard. The figures from the earliest accounts therefore need to be considered as minimal, and only in the account of 1479 do the entries contain precise references to how much the churchwardens found in the box next to Saint Leonard's altar. This specification in itself suggests that the financial importance of these revenues was increasing at that moment. Furthermore, the rise towards 1500 is clear, and there is a striking peak in the account of 1483. From the late 1470s onward the share of the revenues generated by the cult of Saint Leonard within the total amount of devotional revenues gradually grew and from the late 1490s onwards it took up a portion of 80 to nearly 100% (graph 1). The steadily increasing mentions of foreign coins between the monetary offerings from 1500 onwards further suggests a broader, interregional interest.[91] Subdividing the total revenues into its constituent parts makes clear that the money collected at the occasion of the Whit Monday procession formed the most important share by far (graph 2). Next to the more or less fixed income from taxes or the rents of houses and meadows, the cult of Saint Leonard grew to become an ever more important financial source for the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*. Towards the end of the fifteenth century both categories had the same worth, and the latter even surpassed the former in the first decades of the sixteenth century (graph 3).

These trends cannot be explained by monetary depreciation, inflation and financial policies. Rises and declines are not only visible in the curve depicting the nominal figures, but also when it is

converted by means of a calculated real wage index (graph 4).[92] The changing proportion between the revenues of the cult of Saint Leonard and the fixed revenues of the *fabrica ecclesiae* is telling too: whereas the fixed income remained more or less stable until 1478, the revenues from the cult had already been increasing for some years. The temporary regression in the late 1480s and early 1490s probably has to be explained by the fact that in September 1488 the town of Zoutleeuw joined the County of Flanders, together with several other Brabantine cities, in rebellion against Maximilian of Austria. As a consequence, the town and its immediate surroundings found itself in a state of war, the disastrous effects of which they soon experienced.[93] In addition, the rebel provinces were subjected to a pernicious financial policy, pursued by the central government to finance the war. But such factors cannot account for the rise that preceded these events. Maximilian's first currency reforms only dated to 1485, more than a year after the first peak.[94] Neither can the increasing revenues be explained by demographic evolutions, as population figures of Zoutleeuw and the Hageland region as a whole show a clear downward tendency towards 1500.[95] The assembled data thus depict an evolution in devotion or pious expression. Possibly suggesting an increasing piety on the part of the population, they certainly reveal a rising devotional liberality in the last decades of the fifteenth century. It is therefore worthwhile to have a look at the agency of the churchwardens in this period of flux. Though variable, the cult of Saint Leonard demonstrably became an important source of income for the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae* and all the evidence at hand suggests that the later 1470s and early 1480s marked an important turning point. How did they respond to these trends, and how must the 1476–1478 altarpiece of Saint Leonard be seen within this changing context?

The Promotion of Devotion

Cultic Awareness

The Zoutleeuw churchwardens were clearly conscious of their patron saint's increasing popularity. This cultic awareness is expressed by their progressively meticulous financial record keeping, and was eventually manifested in material form in the construction of the churchwardens' room (*meesters camer* or *camer der fabrijcken*), begun in April 1479 (figs. 4 & 25).[96] The acquisitions for this room – a cabinet (*contoir*) and a treasure chest (*trisore*) – demonstrate that it

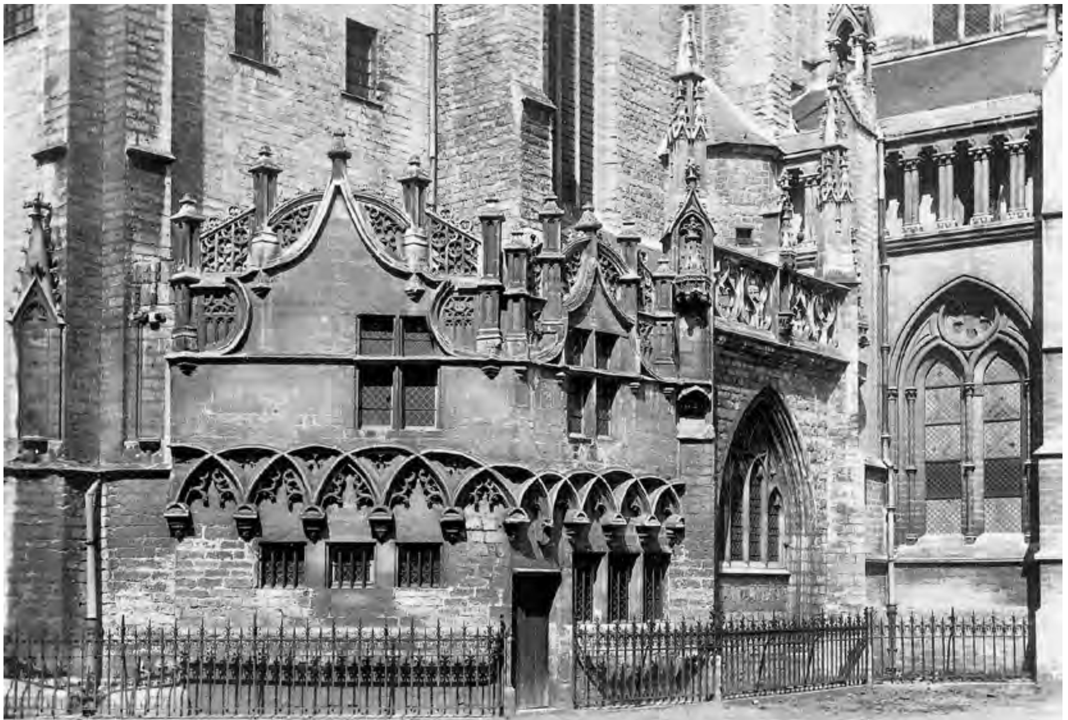

FIGURE 25
Façade of the churchwardens' room, 1479–1480, view from the south-east, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

functioned as a space for administration, safekeeping and storage of their archives, books, money and other valuables, including a, now lost, precious Saint Leonard's play on parchment. It also possibly served as their meeting venue and a room where they organized meals.[97] The fact that the accounts variably refer to it as 'Saint Leonard's room' (*Sinte Leonaerts camere*) clearly emphasizes the wardens' self-identification as the 'guardians of Saint Leonard' – an office that arguably had become more important due to the increased attention to the patron saint.[98] Conveniently located to the east of Saint Leonard's chapel, the room also bordered the principal entrance to the church (the *parvis* or *poertael*), before the construction of the current portal in the west front in 1525 (fig. 1). An 1851 photograph (fig. 26) and contemporary lithograph (fig. 27), both preceding the choir's radical restoration that started in 1861, still show a door in the wall between the choir and the churchwardens' room, now walled up and provided with a window. In 1453 this portal had been provided with three polychromed stone tabernacles, including figurative reliefs depicting scenes from the life of Saint Leonard (figs. 28 & 29), foreshadowing what would follow in the chapel.[99]

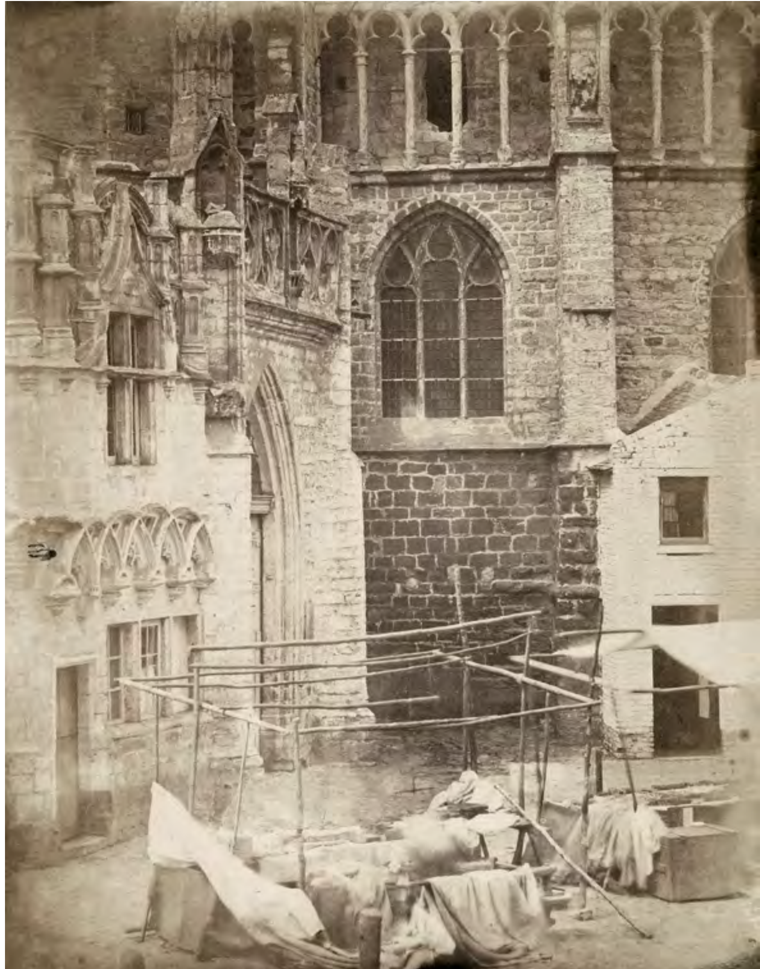

FIGURE 26
Guillaume Claine, *Léau, fragment de l'église, un jour de foire*, 1851, Antwerp, Fotomuseum

This heightened importance of the cult as well as the churchwardens' awareness of it were formally expressed in the structure. The building's facade is arguably the most conspicuously ornamented part of the whole church building's exterior. The accounts thoroughly document the acquisition of various specific decorative and structural elements from the quarry at Gobertange, including *water-* and *dachlijsten, spersteene, sammaranden, avinckels metten perlerkens* and *rabats*.[100] In fact, this is an understated though expressive example of what Matt Kavaler has labeled 'Renaissance Gothic', a term with which he refers to the new, elaborate gothic ornaments with emphatic tracery motifs that were developed in the Low Countries in the late fifteenth century. According to Kavaler, such forms were

FIGURE 27
Henri Borremans et Compagnie, *Vue de l'église de Léau*, c. 1840–1860, Ghent, University Library

consciously located at important places on buildings, which through 'the authority of ornament' were given an important hierarchic position within the whole of the construction.[101] The gaudy decorations on the facade of the Zoutleeuw churchwardens' room thus identified the space behind it as the beating heart that ran the sacred space and thereby strongly asserted the important status of the churchwardens that gathered within. Similarly, about a decade later the liturgical chants for Saint Leonard in the newly commissioned gradual books (fig. 91) would pertinently emphasize how 'Saint Leonard's delightful name flourishes in our church'.[102] The gothic tracery visually translates this very idea of devotional bloom.

FIGURE 28
Anonymous (Brussels), *The baptism of Saint Leonard*, c. 1453, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: AUTHOR

FIGURE 29
Anonymous (Brussels), *Saint Leonard healing a child*, c. 1453, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: AUTHOR

Spreading the Word: Badges and Indulgences

The construction of the churchwarden's room coincided with the commission and installation of Saint Leonard's altarpiece. In fact, there are other strong indications that the churchwardens responded to devotional evolutions and even actively promoted the local cult of Saint Leonard in the wider region at precisely this point in time. It is not unreasonable to assume that they worked in close collaboration with the collegiate chapter in organizing this promotion campaign, because such institutions are known to have intensely cherished the cult of their patron saints and often served as principal commissioners of construction works.[103] Yet, the Zoutleeuw *acta capituli* have not been preserved for this period and the churchwarden accounts remain silent on the chapter's role in these matters.[104] Furthermore, there are no indications that the canons were entitled to part of the revenues from the cult of Saint Leonard and all of the income seems to have gone to the fund of the *fabrica ecclesiae*. Focus will therefore be on the agency of the churchwardens as representatives of the body that maintained and decorated the sacred space of Saint Leonard's church.

The most significant indication of this promotion campaign are the pilgrim badges (*Sijnte Leonaerts tekenen*) that the churchwardens made available to visitors of the Zoutleeuw shrine from March 1478 onwards, i.e. in the very same month as the churchwardens' trip to Brussels after the completion of the altarpiece they had commissioned.[105] The many ways in which these soft metal objects, depicting the shrine's object of veneration, were used, demonstrate the variety of values pilgrims attached to them. Not only were they worn on clothing to publicly express religious feelings, convictions and even social status, they were also kept as amulets or relics that partially carried the thaumaturgic powers of the cult object they represented. It was for this reason that they were sewn into devotional manuscripts or cast onto church bells.[106] At Zoutleeuw, for instance, pilgrim badges depicting Saints Leonard, Cornelius (from Kornelimünster) and Anne (from Düren) were cast onto the seven bells produced by Medardus Waghevens from Mechelen, in 1530–1531.[107] Thus, such badges not only functioned as souvenirs of completed pilgrimages, but also as instruments of both private and public devotion.

Pilgrim badges strongly reflect the ambitions of the issuing shrine. The fact that they were worn on clothing means that they were highly visible markers of the cult that could spread its name

and fame throughout a wider region. As a result, they were preeminent promotional tools, but scholars have demonstrated that churches did not always possess the monopoly on their sale. In several towns they were commissioned by the civic authorities or sold by independent merchants.[108] Despite the lack of such evidence for Zoutleeuw, several arguments make clear that even if they were no new phenomenon in 1478, then at least the churchwardens took measures to control and regulate their production, sale and dispersion at that important moment. Soon after the badges first appear in the accounts in 1478, they are referred to on a yearly basis and the following years show a steady development of the supply, suggesting that the practice was in its early stages. A year after the purchase of the first badges from local goldsmith Bartholomeeus vander Moelen (act. 1469, d. 1490–1491), in March 1479 the Leuven sculptor Joes Beyaert (c. 1405–1483) was paid for the making of 'a mold in which one casts Saint Leonard's badges'.[109] In the earliest years after the acquisition of the mold the accounts do not refer to the casting itself, but they do include entries recording the purchase of tin to make the badges. This suggests that the churchwardens cast the pewter badges themselves at first, while buying the badges in precious metal from the goldsmith.[110] From 1491 onwards, however, the casting was outsourced to professional tincasters (*canghietere*), both in Diest and Sint-Truiden.[111] Certainly from the earliest years of the sixteenth century onwards, the badges were demonstrably available in many different forms and materials, corresponding to different price ranges. Some were made in tinplate, others in copper, silver or gold, and some were supplied with a red paper underneath.[112]

So far, not a single example has been identified with certainty as coming from Zoutleeuw. It has already been proposed that several badges, found in Bruges, Nieuwlande, Rotterdam and The Hague, depicting Saint Leonard and as yet unrelated to any other shrine devoted to him, might have come from Zoutleeuw.[113] Although this remains hypothetical, the fact that the Nieuwlande badges lack the elements characteristic of the examples issued by other shrines such as Dudzele and Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat, as well as stylistic resemblances between the figure of Saint Leonard as depicted on the badges and Joes Beyaert's monumental sculpture suggest that the two badges from Nieuwlande might have been cast from Beyaerts' mold (fig. 30).[114]

The evidence at hand furthermore clearly shows that the badges were available in steadily increasing quantities from the middle of

FIGURE 30
Pilgrim badge depicting Saint Leonard, found in Nieuwlande, possibly from Zoutleeuw, c. 1450–1500, Langbroek, Van Beuningen Family Collection
PHOTO: WILLY PIRON

the 1490s onwards. Whereas 312 badges were recorded in 1492, this number rose to 768 in 1495 and to 1152 in 1497 (graph 5). A similar, steady rise is apparent in the budget allotted to this purpose (graph 6). Oddly, contrary to other shrines in the region such as Wezemaal, the Zoutleeuw accounts never record the number of badges that were sold.[115] This either means that they were handed out freely to pilgrims or more likely, only to those who made an offering, or that the sale of the paraphernalia was subcontracted to stallholders.[116] From 1482 onwards the *fabrica ecclesiae* did receive payments for stallage in the church portal (*parvise* or *provijs*) next to the chapel and the churchwardens' room (figs. 4 & 25, compare with fig. 31). Some of the tenants were merely described as peddlers (*cremer*), but others were described as jewelers, and it is not inconceivable that they sold such badges.[117] In any case, whether the badges were actually sold by these stallholders or not, the fact that they are mentioned points to an increasing diversity of activities in and around the church building, which was presumably caused by a rising number of pilgrims coming to town.

FIGURE 31
Jan Provoost, *Scenes from the legends of St Anthony of Padua and St Bonaventure*, detail, 1521, Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium
© RMFAB, BRUSSELS / PHOTO: F. MAES

A second indication of the churchwardens' promotion of the cult of Saint Leonard is the acquisition of a papal indulgence bull. In April 1485 the accounts record the payment of four *Rijnsgulden* 'for the indulgence bull sent from Rome'.[118] The document itself has not been preserved and its contents are unknown, but it is not

unreasonable to assume that the *fabrica ecclesiae*, with or without the support of the collegiate chapter, had petitioned an indulgence bull related to the statue of Saint Leonard that had worked a miracle one year prior.[119] Most of the papal bulls – including indulgences – were in fact not issued on the initiative of the Pope himself, but only after a supplication was submitted to the Apostolic Chancery by the petitioning party. In case the request was granted, the administration drew up the official bull, the text of which often followed closely that of the supplication, which was then sent to the requesting party.[120] Upon arrival, the obtained privileges were soon proclaimed by means of various media, whereby larger churches such as cathedrals or collegiate churches evidently had more means at their disposal than smaller parish churches.[121] The indulgence letters were often lavishly illuminated by renowned painters and hung in public places such as church doors or city gates. Other churches, such as Antwerp's church of Our Lady, went further than merely advertising within the church or town, and paid for the sending out of copies or priests to preach the indulgence.[122] These media campaigns are not surprising, as it goes without saying that such indulgences made a shrine much more attractive to potential pilgrims. It was therefore of primary importance to spread the information as soon and as far as possible.[123] Given the important financial potential indulgences had, their role and significance in relation to the financing of church construction have been amply emphasized elsewhere, and, as will be argued below, a similar rationale might have been at play in Zoutleeuw.[124]

Furnishing Sacred Space: Saint Leonard's Chapel

The introduction of pilgrim badges and the procurement of the indulgence illustrate that the churchwardens used a variety of methods to spread the word about Saint Leonard's cult in order to firmly establish it. In this respect, the chronological coincidence with the commissioning of Saint Leonard's altarpiece is not accidental. Scholars have indeed argued that the architecture of churches and the art in their interiors played a key role in advertising devotions, as elaborate and ingenious artworks attracted people into the churches.[125] In Zoutleeuw, too, this seems to have been used as promotion strategy. In fact, the enormously increasing expenditures for interior decoration between 1476 and 1483 indicate that the church underwent a major decoration campaign in precisely this period, thus coinciding with the subtly increasing revenues and immediately preceding

the 1483 peak (graph 7). Although the whole church benefited from this campaign, Saint Leonard's chapel was clearly given a prime role, suggesting that it was part of a preconceived plan. The decoration campaign commenced with the commission of the altarpiece in 1476 and in subsequent years the sacred space would be fully provided with lavish ornaments suited to venerating the liberating saint in an appropriate way. The room's 1820 reorganization into a sacristy, the altar's replacement into the southern transept and the subsequent sale of various decorative elements it originally contained have turned it into one of the lesser preserved parts of the church, but a comparative analysis of the churchwarden accounts allows for a reconstruction of its interior to a sufficient degree.

In February 1478, a month before the new altarpiece was delivered, Arnold de Raet was paid for making paintings (*molerijden*) in the chapel.[126] Immediately before a scaffolding had been bought 'for making Saint Leonard's work', suggesting that De Raet decorated the walls of the chapel with figurative or ornamental mural paintings, comparable to those that have been preserved in the southern transept, above and directly next to the entrance to the chapel (figs. 32 & 33).[127] These are doubtless contemporary and although they are not documented, they might have been executed by De Raet as well.[128] Later, in June 1481, 'a new *casse* in which Saint Leonard will stand' was commissioned from the sculptor Joes Beyaert.[129] The word *casse* was used in a broad sense to designate a shrine holding objects of veneration. Given the description provided in the entry in the accounts, and considering that Beyaert was known to be a sculptor of wood and stone, it is safe to assume that it must have been a wooden tabernacle or niche crowned with a carved ornamental baldachin in which the venerated statue of Saint Leonard was placed. Such tabernacles, which mostly could be closed with painted wings, are standard features in contemporary descriptions and depictions of church interiors (fig. 34).[130] Until a theft in 1983 the Zoutleeuw church itself preserved an example that probably belonged to the altar of Saint Anne (figs. 35 & 36).[131] Saint Leonard's tabernacle has not been preserved, but it is depicted as having wings on the 1612 painting commemorating a miraculous healing (fig. 128). Once again the help of Arnold de Raet was called in by the churchwardens to redecorate Saint Leonard's sculpture with paint in 1481, as well as its new tabernacle in 1482.[132] Still in 1482 an antependium was bought for 18 *Rijnsgulden* from the embroiderer Anthonis Jonckeren from Lier, 'to hang before Saint Leonard's altar on feast and

FIGURE 32
Anonymous (possibly Arnold de Raet), *Saints Servatius, Roch, Albert and Giles*, c. 1480–1500, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

FIGURE 33
Anonymous (possibly Arnold de Raet), *Last Judgment*, c. 1480–1500, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

FIGURE 34
Master of Saint Augustine, *Scenes from the life of Saint Augustine of Hippo*, detail, c. 1490, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

holy days'.[133] Finally, in the same year, a complex brass candelabrum (*luymenarys*, later also *kendelere*) was commissioned for the chapel from the Brussels caster Renier van Thienen (act. 1465–1498).[134] The agreement stipulated that it should be made 'in the manner of that in the church of Saint Gudula in Brussels'. Arnold de Raet was again involved in the design, as he was paid for making a pattern (*patroen*) and accompanying the churchwardens to Brussels for the commission. It was installed in the course of 1483.[135] This candelabrum was sold early in the nineteenth century after a Royal Decree of 1827 had permitted the sale of 'old copper'. As a result it has disappeared completely, save for a 56 centimeter high statuette of Saint Leonard that according to Bets was once part of it and which is now kept in Rotterdam (fig. 37).[136]

Apart from the wooden statue of Saint Leonard, the altarpiece and some scattered traces of the candelabrum, nothing has been preserved. Although the former has been placed in the middle of the altarpiece since at least the nineteenth century, it must originally

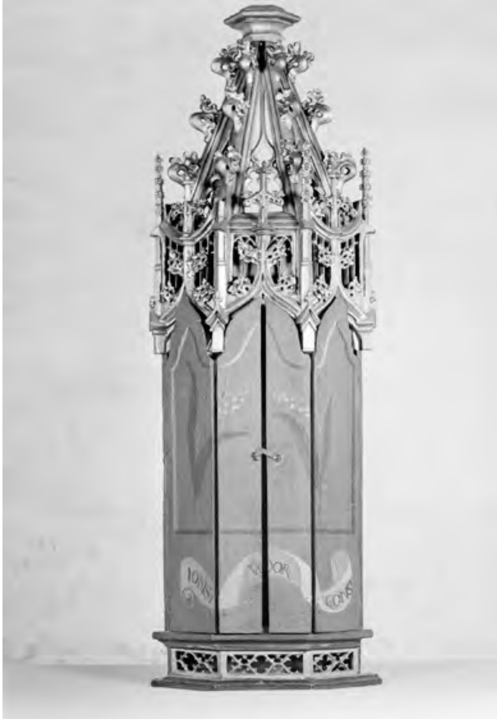

FIGURE 35
Anonymous, *Tabernacle of Saint Anne*, closed, c. 1490–1510, originally Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard, stolen in 1983
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FIGURE 36
Anonymous, *Tabernacle of Saint Anne*, open, c. 1490–1510, originally Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard, stolen in 1983
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

FIGURE 37
Renier van Thienen, *Saint Leonard*, 1482–1483, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen

have been exhibited in the tabernacle carved by Beyaert and polychromed by De Raet. The 1612 painting – the only iconographical source depicting the interior of the chapel – indeed locates the statue in a tabernacle standing on an altar provided with altar cloth and liturgical utensils (fig. 128). This tabernacle, in turn, must have been placed on top of the altarpiece. Several entries in the Zoutleeuw accounts indeed evoke the cult object's high placement, and contemporary depictions of church interiors regularly show statues on top of altarpieces, either or not enclosed in a tabernacle (fig. 34).[137] A 1522 depiction of the miraculous healing of a child by Saint Stephen in Korbeek-Dijle shows precisely such a spatial arrangement: the

FIGURE 38
Jan vander Coutheren, *The healing of a child by Saint Stephen*, from the outer wings of the altarpiece of Saint Stephen, 1522, Korbeek-Dijle, church of Saint Bartholomew
PHOTO: JOHAN GELEYNS – RO SCAN

altar on which the child lies is provided with an altarpiece in inverted T-shape, on top of which stands the invoked image of Saint Stephen (fig. 38).[138] The 1612 Zoutleeuw painting omits the altarpiece, but its absence can be explained as a simplification on the part of the painter, presumably for the sake of clarity.

The original outlook of Renier van Thienen's complex candelabrum can also be reconstructed, although the structure in the Brussels church of Saints Michael and Gudula to which the financial agreement referred has not been preserved. The terms used – *luminaris* or *candelare* – are vocabulary that generally designate candleholders in a broad sense. The preserved Easter candlestand that was commissioned from Van Thienen soon afterwards, for instance, was alternately referred to by one of these terms (fig. 39).[139] Nevertheless, it must have looked quite different, and the evidence at hand in fact suggests that it was an elaborate arched candelabrum standing in

FIGURE 39
Renier van Thienen, *Easter candlestand*, 1483, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

front of the altar. An entry in the accounts related to the acquisition and installation mentions the payment of 'two blue stones on which the posts with the angels stand', and later workmen are paid 'to cut the feet on which the candelabrum stands'.[140] Both entries likely refer to two hexagonal bluestone socles that are still preserved in the church, which in turn correspond to a hexagonal hole in the chapel floor (figs. 40 & 41). No contemporary descriptions or depictions of the work are known, but a church inventory predating the

FIGURE 40 Hexagonal cut-away in the floortiles of Saint Leonard's chapel, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: AUTHOR

FIGURE 41
Hexagonal bluestone socle, 1483, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: AUTHOR

1827 decree provides valuable further information. In the chapel of Saint Leonard it mentions 'two brass pillars, on top of which stands a brass angel. The one with the cross in its hands lacks a wing'. It also describes an arch (*loop*) 'as broad as the chapel is, with elaborate work'.[141] This means that the candelabrum integrated the traditional altar angels, which were a standard feature in church interiors, as evidenced by contemporary depictions (fig. 42). Traditionally, such angels stood on pillars in front and/or on the side of the altar and were usually used to hold up curtains that hung at both sides. Few examples have survived, but they are frequently documented all over the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Low Countries and some rare sets have been preserved (figs. 43 & 44).[142] In Zoutleeuw they were integrated into a more encompassing candelabrum spanning the breadth of the chapel that doubtlessly gave central place to the brass statuette now in Rotterdam. It can therefore be assumed to have been similar to the example still preserved in Xanten, dating to 1501 (fig. 45).[143] Though this example features figures of saints on the pillars, other examples integrating the altar angels are known, such as the structure that was donated to the abbey church of Gembloux in 1515 by abbot Mathieu Petri (r. 1511–1517) (figs. 46).[144]

All these elements enable us to reconstruct the chapel with a high degree of accuracy (fig. 47): it included an altarpiece with an inverted T-shape, crowned with the statue of Saint Leonard in a

FIGURE 42
Master of Saint Godelieve, *Altarpiece depicting scenes from the life of Saint Godelieve*, detail of the center panel, c. 1475–1500, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

tabernacle and flanked by brass altar angels that served as candleholders, and the entire space was lit by a window from the back. However, the precise location and orientation of the altar remains as yet untouched. Traditionally, medieval altars are supposed to be oriented towards the east – like the presbytery in Zoutleeuw – but the reconstruction of the location of the monumental candlestand in the chapel suggests that Saint Leonard's altar did not face east, but south.[145] The only remaining traces of the brass construction are the two hexagonal socles in bluestone and one corresponding hexagonal hole in a tile in the southwestern corner of the chapel floor (figs. 40 & 41). The hole for the second socle is now lost but was located to the east of the hole that is still preserved, implying that the candlestand followed an east-west axis (compare with fig. 4).[146] Similar examples are known to stand before the altar and run parallel to the long frontal side of the altar stone.

This would suggest that in this particular case the altar itself was oriented southward. Any other alternative option based on the location of the preserved tile would not only have been liturgically inconvenient for the celebration and attending of Masses, but would also have gravely diminished the desired effect of the lighted candles

FIGURE 43
Anonymous, *Altar angel*, late fifteenth century, Paris, Louvre
PHOTO: AUTHOR

on it. Surveys of the orientation of churches in English, German and Italian territories have demonstrated that the importance of the tradition of 'easting' diminished from the fifteenth century onwards, but no comparable overviews for the Low Countries exist.[147] Contemporary visual sources nevertheless confirm that the idea of altars with an orientation perpendicular to that of the main altar was not inconceivable.[148] It seems plausible, furthermore, that the orientation of churches as well as the altars within them and in later added structures in part was dictated by practical grounds. The choirs of the Brabantine abbey churches of both Rooklooster (1381–1384) and Groenendaal (1512), for instance, were oriented to the south, and that was also the case in the old, thirteenth-century church of Our Lady in Laken.[149] These churches are all located in the surroundings of Brussels, and their orientations seem to have been due to the highly irregular landscape that characterizes the region. Similarly, the southward orientation of Saint Leonard's altar in Zoutleeuw likely was the consequence of the fact that an ancient portal – with stone pews integrated in both its eastern and western walls – was transformed into a chapel.

FIGURE 44 Altar angels flanking the high altar, Schwerte, Sankt Viktor
PHOTO: JUSTIN KROESEN

FIGURE 45 Aert van Tricht, *Arched candelabrum*, 1501, Xanten, Sankt Viktor
PHOTO: ELIZABETH MATTISON

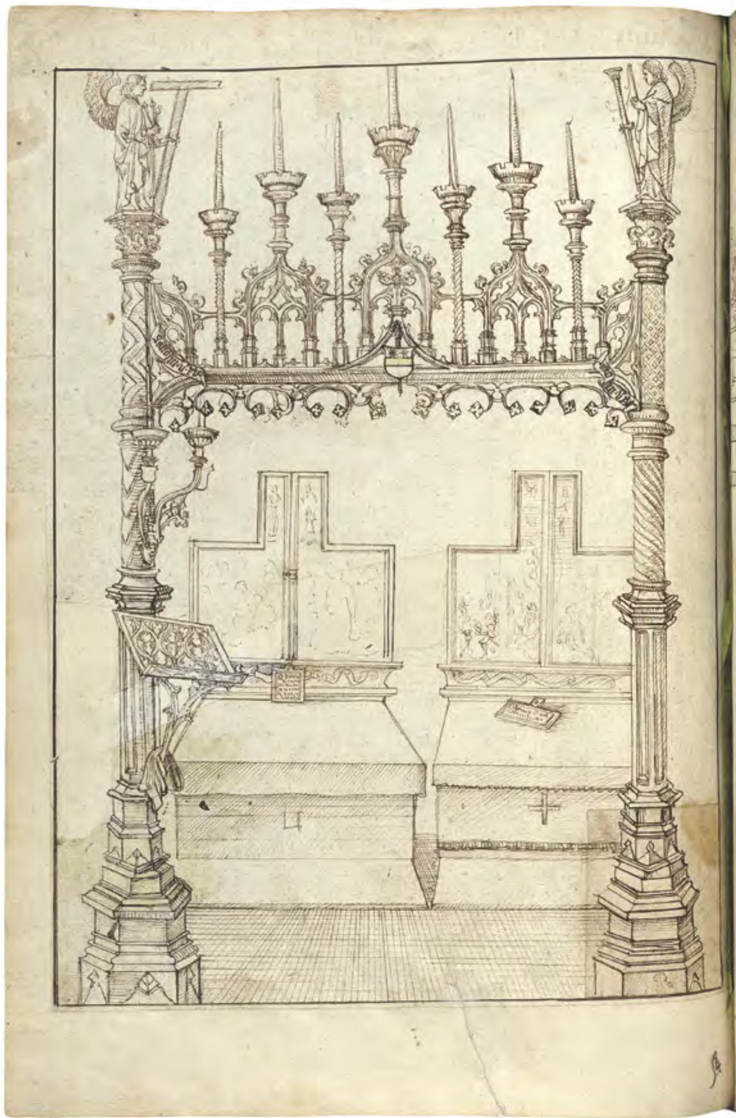

FIGURE 46
Antoine Papin, *Candelabrum donated by Abbot Mathieu Petri in 1515 to the abbey church of Gembloux*, 1527–1528, from the *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensum*, Brussels, KBR, Ms. 10292–94, fol. 71v

Creating Sacred Space: Making It Work

The question remains, how should all these actions on the part of the churchwardens be assessed? Was it a reaction to the increasing popularity of Zoutleeuw as devotional destination, or was it a proactive strategy to attract potential pilgrims? While the revenues from monetary offerings increased subtly in preceding years, this certainly does not provide a conclusive answer. All the references to a broader devotional attention postdate the first stages of the decoration campaign: the first specific references to pilgrims in the accounts date to

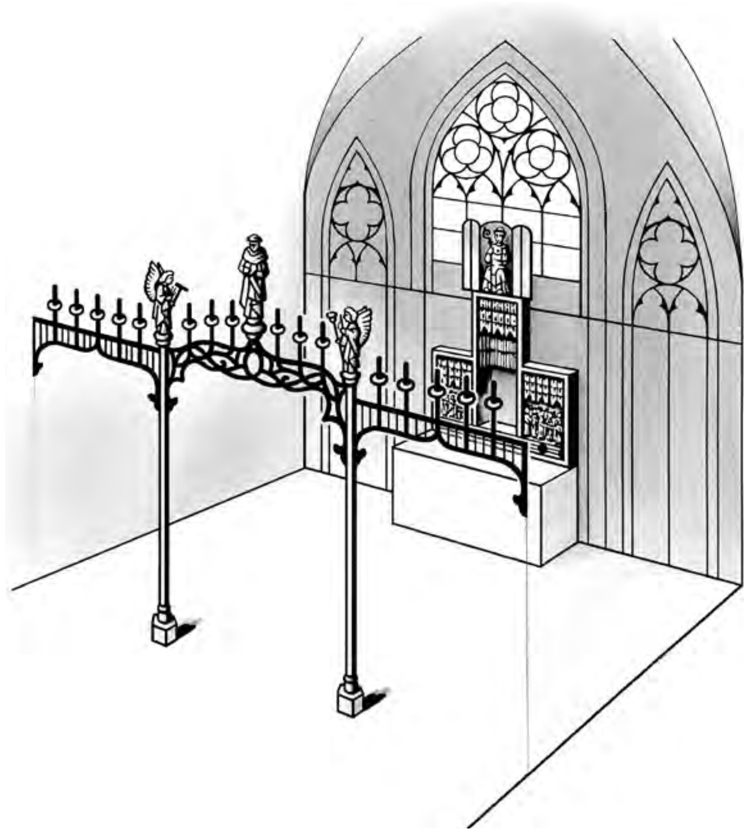

FIGURE 47
Interior view of Saint Leonard's chapel, axionometric reconstruction
DRAWING: JACQUES TOUSSAT

1480, the first incontestable evidence of a miracle to 1484, and the first distribution of bread to pilgrims to 1490. A closer look at the financing of the whole campaign provides clearer answers. While furnishing activities were often partially or fully funded by private investments, no such funding is documented for Saint Leonard's chapel, apart from the modest 2,5 *Rijnsgulden* donated by the dean of the chapter.[150] Confraternities also served as important patrons for the decorations of their chapels, but the only documented organization of the kind in Zoutleeuw was the arquebusiers' guild devoted to Saint Leonard, which was only erected in 1515 and thus cannot have contributed to the furnishing of the chapel. Although the revenues from monetary offerings became proportionally increasingly important in comparison to the fixed revenues, neither of them were sufficient to fully cover the expenses. And yet, it was clearly not a reckless investment on the part of the churchwardens, since the extraordinary revenues were always sufficient (graph 8). In fact, it appears that in precisely these years significantly more corn

was sold from the *fabrica ecclesiae*'s stock, with notable peaks in 1476 and 1478 – not coincidentally the first years of the decoration campaign (graph 9). Since it is very unlikely that in precisely these years the wardens collected more than two to four times more corn than during other years, this pattern most likely points to a controlled and specific sale of surplus from the granaries. This, in turn, suggests a well-planned action.

Churchwardens played an essential role in promoting and developing cults. Research has often linked this to building campaigns, showing that in several cases the numbers and proportions of gifts to churches were, to a considerable extent, connected to the construction of the building in question. For instance, Gerrit Verhoeven has suggested that the churchwardens in Delft actively sought to stimulate devotions when fundraising for new construction projects.[151] In principle, a similar line of argument might be applicable in Zoutleeuw as well. By the second half of the fifteenth century the basic structure of the church building – including the choir, the transept and the western part – were erected, but it was far from finished nor fully decorated. The wooden vaulting of the nave would only be replaced by the current brick one from 1503 onwards, and the side chapels on the southern side of the church were constructed later still, between 1507 and 1511. All these constructions were overseen by Jan I and II Sallaken.[152] The northern side chapels would follow in 1520. Even so, we can deduce from the fact that multiple altarpieces were bought prior to this time, that the decoration of the rest of the church had started even earlier. Initially Joes Beyaert received most of these commissions, but after his death in 1483 the churchwardens turned increasingly to Jan Mertens (act. 1473–c. 1509) from Antwerp with whom they had already worked before for other sculptural works.[153] The list includes the altarpieces for the high altar and for the altar of Saint Catherine (fig. 48), which were both paid for in 1479,[154] the altarpieces for the altars of Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Nicholas commissioned in June 1481,[155] three other unspecified altarpieces early in 1483,[156] the altarpiece of Saint John the Baptist in March 1484,[157] and the altarpieces of the Saint Christopher, Saint George (fig. 49), the Holy Trinity, Saint Anthony and Saint Cornelius in March 1485.[158]

Among all these works, Saint Leonard's chapel was clearly prioritized. Saint Leonard's altarpiece is very likely the oldest of the church's total collection of eleven altarpieces from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Nine of these are nearly fully preserved, two of them are partially preserved. This is significant because also in the

FIGURE 48
Joes Beyaert, *Altarpiece of Saint Catherine*, 1479, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

churchwarden accounts it precedes the whole series of commissions that would follow immediately afterwards. This is all the more striking since Saint Leonard's altar had been consecrated in 1442 and had, in fact, already been provided with an altarpiece in 1453. In October of that year a *tafele* for Saint Leonard's chapel was bought for 16 *gripen* (160 *stuivers*), and immediately afterwards the painter Willem van Colene was paid nearly the same amount to polychrome it.[159] Seen in this light, the sudden campaign in 1476–1483 to redecorate the chapel seems quite striking: only 23 years later the wardens bought a new altarpiece that would cost nearly 10 times more. In principle, there was no need for a new one. Moreover, other altars in the church, including the high altar, would only be provided with their altarpiece later on. Thus, the decoration of Saint Leonard's chapel in many ways preceded that of the rest of the church. Similarly, the *luminaris* in Saint Leonard's chapel was commissioned before that in the presbytery (fig. 39). It therefore seems that the cult of

FIGURE 49
Jan Mertens, *Saint George*, 1485–1486, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

Saint Leonard was given precedence over the traditional, sacramental provisions.[160]

By furnishing the chapel and providing all the necessary accommodation for potential pilgrims, the churchwardens profoundly shaped the cult of Saint Leonard. Although nothing is known about how and where the statue of Saint Leonard was presented before, it is clear that the 1476–1483 decoration campaign foregrounded the statue as the material focus of the saint's veneration in Zoutleeuw. By enhancing its sacred aura it was definitely presented as a cult statue which was worthy of veneration: it was located in its own chapel, separated from the rest of the church, freshly decorated with

paint and given an emphatic, distinguished and privileged place in an ornamented tabernacle on top of a gilded altarpiece narrating the miraculous story of his life. All this was lighted by an impressive candelabrum, that doubtlessly enhanced the atmosphere by animating the statue.[161] The statue was thus imbued with 'miraculous charisma', by means of a process described by David Freedberg as enshrinement, i.e. the giving of a prominent place to cult images within a focused context. According to Freedberg the decoration and presentation of cult objects was, in many cases, more important than the image itself, as that 'is what makes these pictures and statues effective, and what attracts the crowds'. Such a strategy proved to be particularly effective in shrines with older images, as was the case in Zoutleeuw.[162] Other scholars have emphasized the relation between decoration or ornament and the sacred character of objects and places. Kavaler, for instance, has demonstrated how sacred space was essentially created by the gothic ornaments within it and the elaborate vaults that shaped it.[163] The effectiveness and attractiveness of cult objects were thus closely related: in order to be effective within a circuit of competing shrines, they had to be inviting.[164] Thaumaturgic cult objects were the reason for people to undertake pilgrimages, i.e. long or short journeys driven by hope and expectation and undertaken in order to receive divine grace. Especially for the ill and handicapped – arguably the largest part of pilgrims[165] – the bodily experiences of such a journey must have been particularly intense. Consequently, it is not hard to imagine that the distinct setting, atmosphere and presentation of cult objects such as Saint Leonard's statue shaped the religious experience of visitors upon arrival.

In Zoutleeuw, efforts were made to create the optimal conditions for a miraculous experience, and the cult of Saint Leonard was promoted in a wider region. But the motivations behind these initiatives remain to be established. Can a purely financial desire explain these investments and actions? Circumstantial evidence suggests that the cult did not immediately provide a substantial surplus of revenues that was able to cover the full expenses of the further decoration works in the church. In 1481 and 1483 the churchwardens sold considerable amounts of grain, even bringing part of it on the market in Antwerp.[166] This is all the more striking since the early 1480s are known to have been years of deep crisis, caused by failed harvests that were as yet unseen. Even if Zoutleeuw briefly experienced a modest economic resurgence between 1466 and 1484, the harsh

crisis that struck there was as unrelenting as it was elsewhere. This not only led to excessively high mortality rates – in Zoutleeuw too – but also to an impressive increase in the price of grain. Apparently the churchwardens took advantage of this situation.[167] By doing so, they were only just able to finance their expenses on interior decorations. If it is not immediately clear that the wardens promoted the devotion for financial benefit, we should consider other motivations, such as a quest for civic prestige or – most evidently – purely devotional grounds. The next chapter considers how the churchwardens responded to broader trends in the region and abroad.

CHAPTER 2

The Image of Piety at the Dawn of Iconoclasm

The veneration of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw was but one of many cults in the devotional landscape of the Low Countries. Since the 1970s, scholars have increasingly used the concept of 'local religion', emphasizing the diverse and creative ways in which local communities interacted with official religious structures.[1] Because they were able to show how specific these regional and local religious dynamics were, they also caution us not to extrapolate from a single case. It is always necessary to consider the bigger picture. How can the case of Zoutleeuw shed some light on devotion in the Low Countries around 1500 in general? What do we know about lay piety during the decades before the introduction of Protestant thought? The negative views of late medieval piety that long dominated the historiography on the matter have been discussed in the Introduction. On closer inspection, however, some of these views contain several outright contradictions. The Catholic priest Reinier Post, for example, disdained late medieval piety, but still noticed a significant increase in the number of commemorative foundations and new religious buildings. He related this – perhaps correctly – to an increased devotional liberality of believers (*offergezindheid der gelovigen*).[2] More recently, late medieval European devotion has also been studied in its own right, and although there is still no consensus on its quality, scholars now mostly agree on its striking intensity.[3] Particularly around 1500, there was a significant, Europe-wide devotional boom. The German situation is especially well-researched in this respect, most notably in a pioneering article by Bernd Moeller. He was the first scholar to study the period immediately preceding the Reformation as an epoch in its own right, countering the view that it was nothing more than an *Auflösung der mittelalterlichen Welt*.[4] What Post had interpreted in terms of decay or overload, Moeller saw as a series of coherent utterances of extremely intense piety: an enormous increase in the number of religious foundations between 1450 and 1490, the creation of a significant number of confraternities after 1450 and a *Baufrühling* all over Europe that led to a flourishing

Figure 54, detail
Anonymous, *Stained-glass window depicting scenes from the life and cult of Saint Leonard*, 1535, Sint-Lenaarts, church of Saint Leonard
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of the flamboyant Gothic style. As a result, Moeller characterized the later fifteenth century as one of the most pious periods of the Middle Ages.[5]

Later studies confirmed Moeller's views.[6] Philip Soergel, for instance, investigated the many pilgrimage shrines in Bavaria, and found that the large majority dated back only to the late fifteenth century. Especially in the more rural areas, Soergel claimed that 'sites were very much creations ex nihilo'.[7] One famous case in the Rhineland is the town of Düren, which turned into a main cult center for the devotion to Saint Anne overnight after the theft of a relic from Mainz in 1500, and started to compete with long established centers such as Aachen, Trier and Cologne.[8] The most notorious example is the cult of the *Schöne Maria* in Regensburg, where pilgrims flocked together from 1519 onwards. Initially, the town council decided to promote the site by arranging a papal indulgence bull and commissioning pilgrim badges, but soon the pilgrims' more and more extravagant utterings of devotion led to chaos. In the end, the town asked Luther for advice.[9] Although there is a lot less research on the rest of Europe, it seems likely that the devotional surge around 1500 was a broader phenomenon. For example, the devotion for Saint Anne suddenly became immensely popular all over Europe from the 1470s onwards. Her cult was promoted by humanists and clerics, but they were supported by an expanding popular cult.[10] For France, Lucien Febvre famously noted *un immense appétit du divin*, Jacques Chiffoleau spoke about *des manifestations 'aberrantes' ou 'folles' de la piété*, and Neil Galpern placed the apogee of what he called 'late medieval religion' around 1500.[11] In a broader northern European perspective an exponential increase in numbers of pilgrims has been noted, although it has hardly been analyzed and quantified.[12]

Old Sources, New Views: Miracles and Indulgences

This is precisely the period in which the veneration of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw was heavily promoted and put on a broader geographical map. Hence we should try to discover whether a similar development can be found elsewhere in the Low Countries as well.[13] The historiographical overview indeed lays bare the need for a new survey of late medieval piety in the Low Countries through the lens of these latest insights. There are hardly any long-term surveys of individual churches in the Low Countries that focus on their functions as

pilgrimage shrines. As a result, comparing Zoutleeuw with a broader context is difficult. Still, it remains essential to at least sketch a new image in order to understand the environment in which the cult of Saint Leonard was promoted. The following discussion aims to initiate this charting of the broader Netherlandish context by using two proxies: miracles and indulgences – two devotional aspects that have been put forward as central to the cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw. A fresh look at old sources may provide new views.

Miracle Collections

Testimonies of the wonderful stories that happened at shrines were often carefully assembled in miracle books by the local wardens or clergy, usually registering the date of the miracle as well as the place of origin of the *miraculé*.[14] Long discarded as expressions of medieval superstition and devotional hysteria, such collections have now been re-evaluated as highly valuable sources for historical research. The work of Ronald Finucane has been a particularly important contribution in this regard. By approaching miracle narratives through contemporary concepts, he was able to convincingly argue that it is unnecessary to resort to fraud and hysteria to explain medieval miracles. The bulk of the source material he analyzed actually consists of miraculous cures, which led him to consider medieval notions of health and disease. Finucane found that both were highly fluid categories, fundamentally different from ours. Given the high mortality rates, in the right context, the slightest improvement in bodily conditions could easily be seen as a miracle. Not the saints, but the pilgrims worked the miracles: 'A single cure was worth well over a hundred failures, was enough to give a boost to what people desperately wanted to believe'.[15] In Finucane's wake scholars started to reread miracle collections, not only as sources for religious history, but also as documents on medieval notions of infirmity, moral issues and social discourses.[16]

Of course, miracle collections have their bias. They were assembled and written with a very precise purpose in mind. In most cases, these texts – increasingly written in the vernacular and often displayed on a chain near the shrine itself – were used to promote the shrine in question, since having a substantial dossier was indispensable to obtain indulgences and official recognition. It goes without saying that, in the eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities, shrines that could boast a significant number of miracles were more qualified for indulgences. Nor should miracle books necessarily be considered

to be accurate recordings of the total amount of worked miracles. Gabriela Signori has argued that textual miracle collections represent only the very last step in a much larger process, in which they are preceded by narratives in other forms, including sermons and paintings.[17] In this regard, some complaints by early seventeenth-century antiquarian collectors of medieval miracle books in the Low Countries are also telling.[18] Justus Lipsius, for example, essentially used a miracle collection to compile his account of the wondrous events at the shrine of Our Lady of Halle. However, he noted a considerable gap for the sixteenth century, which he attributed to the negligence of those who were in charge of their registration. After all, Lipsius had been able to see for himself that the church still held votive tablets and other images that bore witness to miracles that were not included in the book he was given.[19] Still, the careful collection of evidence and testimonies shows that the correct registration of what happened was often a serious concern in the compilation of miracle books.

No miracle book assembling any wonders from Zoutleeuw has been preserved, but there is ample material elsewhere in the Low Countries.[20] As the registered miracles should be considered genuine religious expressions, i.e. experiences from believers and pilgrims themselves, they can provide a broad outline of how the popularity of devotions evolved. The pertinence of this source type for the present study of piety is evident, all the more so because most miracle collections from the Low Countries in fact date to the long fifteenth century.[21] Starting from a total set of 1850 dated miracles, happening at 27 different shrines all over the Low Countries sometime between 1400 and 1620, it is possible to draw an overall, chronological evolution by which we can chart how late medieval shrines fared throughout the long sixteenth century. This will provide a solid basis for contexualization throughout the subsequent chapters of this book.[22]

The resulting graph (graph 10), charting all individually recorded miracles, suggests a gradual rise throughout the fifteenth century, with the 1440s as a first peak and the 1510s as the absolute pinnacle, with ten active shrines all over the Low Countries: two in Leuven, one in 's-Hertogenbosch and Wezemaal in Brabant, one in Cambrai, one in Bolsward (Friesland), three shrines in Delft (Holland) and one in Malmedy. Per individual collection, miracles are typically concentrated in the early years of a shrine's activity, as is exemplified by the miracle book of Saint Gummarus in Lier. Recordings started in 1475, a year after the authenticity of the Lier patron saint's relics had been

reconfirmed. 64 miracles were written down during the first year, only 27 during the second, and 10 or less per year during the subsequent years.[23] The collection of the Marian shrine at Amersfoort, by far the most sizeable of all preserved Middle Dutch miracle sets, shows a similar pattern. In December 1444, a statue of the Virgin was found in a river and later that month was installed in the local church, where it reportedly started working wonders immediately. During the remainder of the 1440s, no less than 409 individual miracles were attested, but this number quickly fell to a mere seven during the 1450s. During the next decades, the number rose again to around 30 per decade, but never again reached the extraordinary level of the 1440s.[24] It is difficult to assess the degree of activity in later years, when miracles were perhaps less diligently recorded, but at the very least, this general graph roughly charts the 'activation' of new shrines. The rise of miracles throughout the fifteenth century is equally discernible in their chronological evolution in absolute numbers (graph 11), although in this case the 1470s stand out as an absolute high point, followed by a regression in the 1490s and a new – though less prominent – peak during the 1510s.[25] These sudden regressions in the 1480s and 1490s are presumably the result of the disastrous war years in the revolt against Maximilian. The overall image that emerges from these analyses suggests a considerable growth of (recorded) miraculous experiences in the second half of the fifteenth and earliest decades of the sixteenth centuries, with the 1470s standing out as a particularly miraculous decade. Like the German territories around 1500, the Low Countries thus appear to have been under the spell of a particular *climat miraculeux*, a 'culture of the miraculous'.[26]

Indulgences

Whereas miracles were, to a certain extent, spontaneous experiences of individual believers, the indulgence system was established and developed by the Church. Informed by Protestant critique and by scholars' own confessional identities, historiography has often cast them as quintessential markers of excess that characterized the pre-Reformation Church.[27] Such a reductive approach to indulgences as superficial expressions of faith does not do justice to this broadly spread phenomenon. At least as far as the Low Countries are concerned, the issue is still in need of a revisionist survey.[28] Indulgences have almost never been studied from the perspective of the people. It should be emphasized that the system was certainly much more complex than a mere profit seeking enterprise. Indulgences can be

defined as 'remissions of the temporal penalty due for sin granted by the episcopal authority of the Catholic Church'.[29] The system came into being around the middle of the eleventh century, when indulgences were only available after intensive trials, such as dangerous pilgrimages or crusades. This would change dramatically during later centuries. Indulgences could be issued on the authority of various persons, the rules of which were established at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. Depending on the occasion, bishops were allowed to grant a maximum of 40 or 100 days, and only the Pope had the authority to grant a plenary indulgence. However, circumstantial evidence suggests that these regulations were not followed strictly. From the fourteenth century onwards, cardinals are known to have granted indulgences, and the limits to the maximum amount of days were often greatly exceeded.[30]

Gradually, a system developed in which indulgences were granted in different forms, for various reasons, and in campaigns organized on different levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Special indulgences were granted by the pope as Bishop of Rome, while there were also extensive campaigns on a diocesan level with itinerant *quaestores*, i.e. collectors travelling around with relics, providing indulgences to those who offered money. Finally, there were also much lesser known parochial indulgences promulgated by the parish priest.[31] As a consequence of this diversity, the relevant source material is much more scattered, and a 'total survey' is nearly impossible.[32] Furthermore, these sources are much harder to quantify than those pertaining to miracles. Still, Paul Fredericq's posthumously published *Codex documentorum sacratissimarum indulgentiarum Neerlandicarum* (1922), which contains virtually all relevant sources he and his students were able to collect on the papal indulgences in the Burgundian and Habsburg territories, remains an invaluable tool for research on indulgences in the Low Countries. Although it does not contain any material on 'small' or 'local' indulgences, it is the sole nearly complete overview of at least one aspect of the indulgence system in the Low Countries.[33] Furthermore, as it not only contains known letters of indulgence, but also related documents and narrative accounts, Fredericq's corpus is illustrative of the broad culture that surrounded the practice of indulgences. A quantitative analysis of his data displays striking parallels with the previously sketched trends in miracle accounts (graph 12). There is a significant and sudden upsurge in the second half of the fifteenth century that lasts up until around 1520, again with the 1490s as a temporary regression. Even though one could argue that Fredericq's collection is

necessarily incomplete, the fact that the graph that results from his sample closely resembles those on miracle accounts, is telling.

The increasing importance of indulgences in European religious culture during the later Middle Ages in general, and the second half of the fifteenth century in particular, has already been noted. Jan van Herwaarden referred to the situation as 'an inflation of indulgences'.[34] A close-reading of Fredericq's material indeed reveals intensifying dynamics. This is closely related to the celebration of Roman Jubilees in increasingly shorter cycles towards the end of the fifteenth century. The first Jubilee Year, proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300, was meant to draw pilgrims to Rome, where a plenary indulgence was made available for the occasion. Several years later, Clement VI declared 1350 to be a second jubilee, instituting a cycle in which jubilees would be held every fifty years. After the Jubilee of 1450, however, the 50-year cycle was abandoned when in 1470 Paul II initiated a cycle of 25 years and made 1475 the next Jubilee Year. The shortening of these cycles is a partial explanation for the fifteenth-century upsurge, as the benefits of these Jubilees were not restricted to Rome. Since the late fourteenth century, the indulgences of the jubilee year were subsequently made available in a limited number of other cities (*ad instar jubilei*), also in the Low Countries.

In this respect, 1450 turned out to be of unprecedented importance. In 1443, the civic authorities of Mechelen launched a veritable lobbying campaign in order to obtain permission to provide the papal indulgence in their city. They were supported by Duke Philip the Good and John of Burgundy, Bishop of Cambrai. In the end, their efforts proved successful, as the pope allowed the sale of indulgences from April to November 1451 to faithful Christians who – in imitation of the practice in Rome – had visited seven churches in the city and had made their offerings. This became a tremendous success, so much so that other cities in the Low Countries also started setting up campaigns in order to obtain similar privileges. Through the mediation of papal legate Nicholas of Cusa, a whole series of other cities obtained the right to offer indulgences during limited periods of time, but none of them rivalled Mechelen's success. Between 1455 and 1465, Mechelen's privilege was renewed, and it was subsequently made available again to other cities as well, including Ghent (1467–1468) and Bruges (1478), where candidates were required to visit seven churches. In 1498, 1500 had already been proclaimed the next jubilee. In 1499, before it had even started, its term was prolonged, and from 1501 onwards, it was again made available in the Low Countries.[35] Although this indulgence was of course a papal

one, local churches benefited equally from the situation.[36] These campaigns were highly mediatized, and the events must have had a profound impact in the Low Countries.[37]

Parallel to the increasing popularity of jubilee indulgences and the relative ease with which they could be obtained, believers had access to a multitude of other methods to shorten their time in purgatory. Cities and churches still tried to obtain their own, individual indulgences from the pope, a bishop or a cardinal.[38] As discussed in Chapter 1 this might also have been the case in Zoutleeuw. Dioceses continued to send out *quaestores*, and specifically for the case of Utrecht, Wim Vroom has shown that the related financial revenues represented an increasingly important share of the funding for the construction of the cathedral. This share increased throughout the fifteenth century, with a peak during the years around 1500, when it amounted to 70 or even 80% of all the revenues.[39] The documents in Fredericq's corpus illustrate a heightened activity of papal indulgence commissioners in the Low Countries, including papal nuncio Lucas de Tollentis (1428–1491) and cardinal Raymundus Peraudi (1435–1505) who were active from Vollenhove in the north to Brussels and Mechelen in the south.[40]

The intensification of the indulgence system also gave rise to some excesses, which were criticized in writings and controlled or prohibited by secular authorities. In fact, criticism of the indulgence system is nearly as old as the system itself. Peter Abelard already expressed his doubts around 1139, and in the Low Countries writers such as Lodewijk van Velthem and Jan van Boendale also uttered unfavorable opinions on the matter. Criticism endured in the *Devotio Moderna*, and later in the writings of Erasmus. However, none of these objections were aimed at the system *in se*, only the excesses related to it, especially when money was involved. The only exception was Wessel Gansfort, whose writings from the 1480s were later republished in 1521 with a foreword by Luther.[41] The Burgundian and later Habsburg sovereigns also increasingly issued decrees prohibiting and limiting the trade. An early example is Duke Philip the Good, who in 1458 condemned 'indulgence peddlers who walk the county and impoverish it by their extortions'. Similar laws were also issued in 1502 and 1503 by Philip the Fair, who only authorized papal indulgences, and by his son Charles, the future emperor, in 1515.[42] Furthermore, several swindlers and frauds were executed during this period. A certain Jan van Poederlee, for instance, had forged papal indulgence bulls with which he traversed the Low Countries and made good fortune. In 1481, he was caught, and eventually

decapitated in Kampen.[43] A similar trial took place in Bruges around 1512.[44] In short, the indulgence system was increasingly present and visible in both the public space and opinion. Indulgences were available more frequently and in ever more locations. The role of the printing press was essential, producing a whole corpus of promoting materials ranging from calendars and papal bulls to instructive leaflets and booklets. Moreover, a good portion of all this was printed in the vernacular, reaching an even broader audience.[45]

Toward a New Image

The chronological evolutions of miracle collections and indulgences are compatible with observations from other studies on related topics in the Low Countries. Paul Trio's fundamental study of late medieval confraternities in Ghent revealed a steady rise in memberships from the second half of the fifteenth century up until around 1480–1485. In most cases, this was followed by a temporary decline that came to a halt around 1492–1493, and a subsequent revival that lasted until around 1525. Furthermore, the number of confraternities that were simultaneously active in the city doubled during the course of the fifteenth century.[46] Of course, the decision to become a member was not always a purely religious one. Social and moral pressure or secular concerns such as being remembered after one's death surely played their part.[47] Nevertheless, the parallel with the evolutions sketched above is clear. Studies of (testamentary) foundations revealed the same trend: an increase throughout the fifteenth century, and a peak around 1500–1510.[48] A comparable in-depth and long-term analysis of foundations in Zoutleeuw is still lacking, but the sample of the collegiate chapter's charter collection shows a similar peak in the 1500s and 1510s.[49] Finally, the findings in Andrew Brown's study of general processions in Bruges also correspond with the data above. While they are mentioned in the sources from the fourteenth century onwards, civic processions occur ever more frequently throughout the fifteenth century. There was a notable increase in the 1460s leading to a number of absolute peaks in the 1470s and 1480s. Once again, there is a slight decline in the 1490s, but the number of processions was still significantly higher than in the early fifteenth century.[50]

The available source material in the Low Countries thus paints a uniform picture of a strikingly intense piety at the dawn of an iconoclastic age, fully corresponding to the German and broader European context. Contrary to previously held negative views of late medieval piety, which doubted the pious sincerity of this supposedly

mechanical 'economy of salvation', all these different proxies should be considered as coherent, outward expressions of inward devotion. All the evidence suggests that people at least *wanted* to believe in the efficiency of indulgences, for instance, and it is almost impossible to explain their unprecedented success if there were no broad appetite for it. After all, there was more to it than just a transaction of money. Indulgences were typically associated with a whole array of devotional acts, ranging from confession, fasting, pilgrimages and prayers, either before a specified image or not. Multiple paintings and prints from the period in question give precise instructions on how and when to kneel and which prayers to say in order to receive the promised remissions.[51]

Indulgences could also be obtained by saying the right prayers before the right types of images, and in such cases money was not involved in any way. Two examples, *Maria in sole* and the Mass of Saint Gregory, were particularly well-known in this respect, and both aptly illustrate how the indulgence system was inherently related to the spreading and popularity of both devotional and theological ideas. As part of a campaign to promote the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–1484) granted an indulgence of 11.000 years to those who said the prayer *Ave sanctissima Maria mater dei* in front of an image of the Virgin in the Sun (*Maria in sole*).[52] The iconography of the Mass of Saint Gregory, on the other hand, was a highly literal visualization of the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharist during Mass, and therefore served as the perfect vehicle to disseminate the related doctrine. The tradition harkened back to a somewhat obscure story, however. Pope Gregory the Great was said to have granted indulgences to those who looked at a particular image of the Man of Sorrows in Rome. Over time, the terms of these indulgences were gradually both loosened and expanded. Indulgences of 12.000 to even 20.000 years were said to have been granted not only for beholding the original image in Rome, but also for copies and images depicting Christ as the Man of Sorrows in general. Eventually, even the very iconography of the Mass of Saint Gregory was included in this list. This only occurred after 1400, but its popularity increased significantly throughout the fifteenth century, and peaked around 1500.[53]

The Zoutleeuw Marianum (fig. 50), given to the church around 1534 by an unidentified private donor, is a late example of how these and other related iconographic themes pervaded the religious material culture of the Low Countries. The accounts suggest that it was carved by Peter Roesen (doc. 1533–1538), who was probably related

FIGURE 50
Anonymous (possibly Peter Roesen), *Marianum*, c. 1534, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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to the better-known Hendrik (doc. 1496–1518) and Claes Roesen (doc. 1548–1560) from Leuven, both of whom also worked as sculptors for the church of Saint Leonard.[54] In the later fifteenth century, the popularity of the rosary and the *Maria in sole*-theme led to the development of the monumental sculptural Marianum, hung high in the naves of churches for the parishioners to behold. The very same iconography was not only expanded to other objects within the church space, ranging from metal chandeliers to stone epitaphs, but extended into the private sphere as well.[55] It was included in prayerbooks, where rubrics often indicated the acts that needed to

be done and the number of days of indulgence that could be earned, or on precious minuscule carvings of boxwood prayerbeads.[56] The fact that these images were represented on objects commissioned by laypeople and clergy alike, is indicative of their popularity within the whole range of possible devotional practices, but because the Mass of Saint Gregory and *Maria in sole* were frequently depicted together, there can be no doubt that this was at least partly related to the expansion of the indulgence system. In one example, both halves of the interior of the paternoster bead of a decade rosary, said to have belonged to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, each show one of these two themes (fig. 51).[57] Both devotional iconographies were also often included on altarpieces, mostly on the outer wings

FIGURE 51
Anonymous, *Decade rosary, said of Henry VIII*, detail of the opened paternoster bead, between 1509 and 1526, Chatsworth House, Duke of Devonshire Collection

FIGURE 52 Jan van Coninxloo, *Passion altarpiece*, closed, c. 1510–1520, Västerås, Cathedral
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

or the predella, so that they were almost permanently visible to the laity. An oft-recurring formula in Brussels altarpieces was to place the two themes on the small wings closing the central upper part, as in Västerås (fig. 52).[58] Other retables, such as the one in Zepperen (fig. 53), displayed monumental representations of the Mass of Saint Gregory in recognizably Netherlandish church interiors, spread out over the exterior wings.[59]

These images and their related devotions clearly occupied a central place within both individual and collective religious experience. Small or large, private or public, they functioned on various levels. The indulgence system undoubtedly served as a catalyst for their

popularity, but they also disseminated the theological and devotional ideas they represented and visualized, i.e. the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist during Mass and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. As a result, this whole body of intensely entwined and interrelated imagery is at the same time an expression of the dissemination of theological ideas and of the popularity of particular devotions among the people at large. The spheres of private devotion and official liturgy reinforced one another, and thanks to a number of recent studies, we are able to understand how this happened exactly. Beth Williamson has demonstrated how one religious image could have multiple functions for different individuals, referring to the 'devotional afterglow' of altarpieces after the liturgical ritual in the observer.[60] Falkenburg, on the other hand, elaborately described how religious images could incite, with the help of the 'mental eye' or the 'eyes of the heart', a 'dynamic imaginative perception' of the represented subject, by means of which an observer was able to interpret it as reality, and, ultimately, believe it.[61]

The following example illustrates this in more detail.[62] On a normal day, attendants to the Mass in Zepperen would see the closed altarpiece with its depiction of the Mass of Saint Gregory (fig. 53).[63] In such a context, the iconography's visualization of the Real Presence was indeed very pertinent and convincing: it literally depicts what the viewer is supposed to believe and see, namely that Christ is actually present at that very moment (i.e. during Mass) at that particular place (i.e. the altar).[64] Several iconographical details emphasize this: the fact that Christ is shown standing on the depicted altar, pouring his blood into the chalice of the depicted officiating priest. The altarpiece hung directly behind the spot where the very ritual happened, simultaneously serving as its backdrop and a visual focus for attendants. Outside of that very liturgical context, these attendants could subsequently encounter the same theme in more intimate contexts in devotional books or prayer beads, where they would serve as visual support for religious exercises.[65] The indulgences that were promised in the prayerbook's margins might have increased devotional enthusiasm, but the 'devotional afterglow' of the complex liturgical moment in the individual observer equally increased the belief in and devotion for the same themes. Outward expressions, material culture and sensory perceptions were directly connected to inward, spiritual themes. The exteriorization of piety helped its internalization.[66]

FIGURE 53
Anonymous, *Mass of Saint Gregory* (outer wings of a Passion altarpiece), c. 1510–1520, Zepperen, church of Saint Genevieve
PHOTO: AUTHOR

The Cult Circuit in the Low Countries

As miracles and indulgences were inherently related to, and were crucial for, the establishment or re-evaluation of pilgrimage sites, the evolutions described above had important repercussions on the network of shrines in the Low Countries. In order to further contextualize the contemporary developments in Zoutleeuw, it is therefore essential to map the cult circuit in the Low Countries during these years of intense piety. How rare were shrines and how dense was their network? In other words: how unique was Zoutleeuw, and in relation to what other places did it have to position itself? The situation is hard to assess, mostly because of the absence of clear contemporary terminology. Much like 'cult statue' was not an individual medieval category, throughout the medieval and early modern period the

Church of Rome had no clearly defined term for destinations of pilgrimages in its administrative vocabulary. After all, every Christian was a pilgrim on the way to God.[67] The most common term was *locus sacer*, which basically referred to any place of worship that had been consecrated, i.e. every church, chapel, altar or cemetery. As a result, neither 'place of pilgrimage', 'sanctuary' or 'shrine' really correspond to a strictly defined historical reality. Furthermore, vital cults were not necessarily always officially recognized. As a result, it is not always possible to establish whether a certain church or chapel functioned as a destination for pilgrimages.

The database *Bedevaartplaatsen in Nederland* offers a useful working definition: a sacred space that is considered to be especially salutary because of the presence of a certain object of veneration, to which visitors undertake a journey, and which has established cult traditions.[68] However, a considerable number of localities we now consider pilgrimage destinations, such as Delft, largely drew on the local population.[69] Hence, in the late medieval context, it is historically more accurate to consider a spectrum ranging from the three great pilgrimage destinations (Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela) at the one end to other established centers of secondary (e.g. Aachen) and tertiary (e.g. Delft) importance, and every other *locus sacer* that could possess cult objects or was theoretically able to acquire them (through gift, purchase or even theft) on the other. While the places at the top of the hierarchy were fixed, at the bottom there was a considerable degree of mobility. Doubtlessly, there were quite a lot of churches and chapels that tried to move up the scale.

Mapping the Cult Circuit

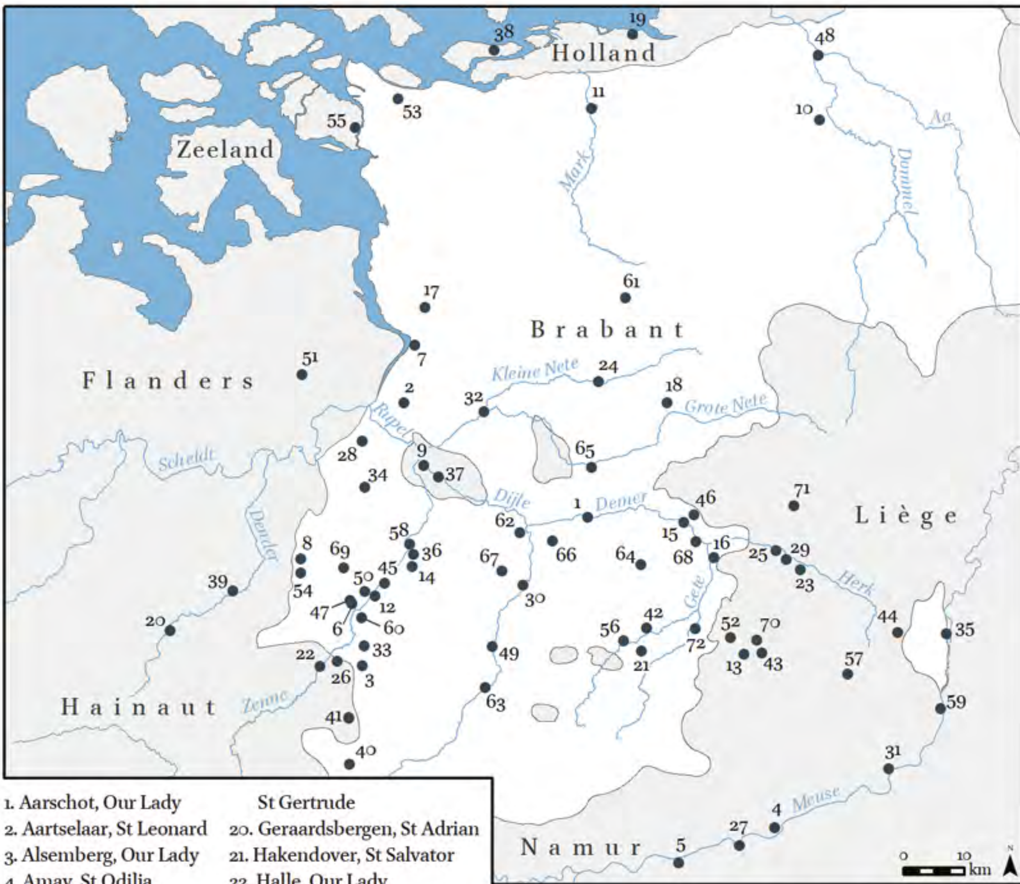
Another impediment in assessing the state of pilgrimage in the Low Countries at the end of the Middle Ages is the lack of a Belgian equivalent to the Dutch database *Bedevaartplaatsen in Nederland*.[70] The only available attempts at surveys or listings are folkloric in both purpose and method, and do not pay attention to the origins or historicity of the various places.[71] The critical history of many sites still remains to be written, as folkloric studies often rely on Counter-Reformational source material. Such texts typically highlight vaguely defined ancient roots – fictive or real – in order to justify the shrines' existence (see Chapter 8). Most scholarship has focused on precisely these Counter-Reformational shrines, as a result of which there is hardly any systematic knowledge of the sites

of pilgrimage in the southern provinces of the Low Countries active around 1500 at our disposal.[72]

The only way to approximate a representative map of the pilgrimage destinations that were active around 1500 in the Duchy of Brabant and the surroundings of Zoutleeuw in the eastern Prince-Bishopric of Liège, is to combine various types of available evidence (map 1).[73] Pilgrim badges, which are frequently found in archaeological excavations, complement essential information provided by the preserved miracle collections and lists of shrines serving as destinations for judicial pilgrimages within the Low Countries.[74] The collection that has been found in and around Nieuwlande (Zeeland), for instance, is invaluable for our knowledge, since these towns and villages were swept away by disastrous storm floods in 1530 and 1532 (maps 2 & 3). Obviously, this sample is only representative of the local preferences of the inhabitants of these villages, and several places that are known to have issued pilgrim badges are not represented here. For instance, not a single badge of Saint Guido of Anderlecht has been found in Zeeland, although they were definitely available from 1474 onwards.[75] Furthermore, since the place of origin of several finds remains unidentified, the sample cannot be expected to provide us with a full overview.

Sporadic information can also be collected from archival attestations, posthumous pilgrimages recorded in testaments[76] and Protestant critiques on particular shrines. The best known examples are *Den Byencorf der H. Roomsche Kercke* (1569) by Philips of Marnix, Lord of Saint-Aldegonde and two anonymous songs dating from the period between 1566 and 1600.[77] Bearing in mind that there might have been unrecorded traditions, it is striking to see that a significant number of these shrines are mentioned for the first time during the period under consideration here, i.e. 1470–1510. This corresponds to some earlier observations on the European context in general and the Low Countries in particular.[78] Margry and Caspers, for instance, stated that 71% of the shrines discussed in the first part of their compendium originated somewhere in the late Middle Ages. Most were of supralocal and regional importance, which meant that most voluntary pilgrims were able to do the trip in a day's journey, as has been established for Delft.[79]

Many sources provide further indications on the relative importance of shrines. Miracle books, for instance, usually included the *miraculé*'s place of origin. This led Verhoeven to argue that mapping out localities provides us with a reliable image of the dissemination

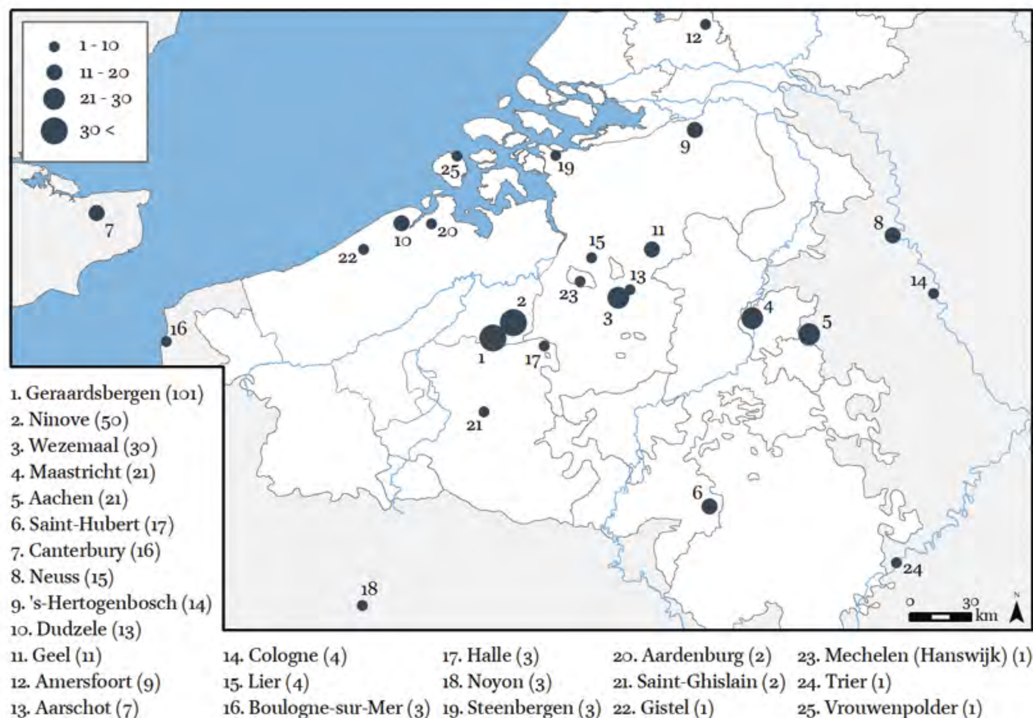


1. Aarschot, Our Lady
2. Aartselaar, St Leonard
3. Alsemberg, Our Lady
4. Amay, St Odilia
5. Andenne, St Begga
6. Anderlecht, St Guido
7. Antwerp, Our Lady op 't Stokske and St Jacob
8. Asse, H. Cross
9. Battel, Bruynekruys
10. Boxtel, H. Blood
11. Breda, H. Sacrament and H. Cross
12. Brussels, H. Sacrament and H. Cross
13. Brustem, St Bertilia
14. Diegem, St Cornelius
15. Diest, Our Lady and St Sulpice
16. Donk, Our Lady
17. Ekeren, H. Cross
18. Geel, St Dymphna
19. Geertruidenberg, St Gertrude
20. Geraardsbergen, St Adrian
21. Hakendover, St Salvator
22. Halle, Our Lady
23. Hasselt, Our Lady and St Quentin
24. Herentals, Our Lady
25. Herkenrode, H. Sacrament
26. Huizingen, St Leonard
27. Huy, Our Lady
28. Kalfort, Our Lady ten Traen
29. Kuringen, Our Lady
30. Leuven, H. Sacrament and Our Lady
31. Liège, St Lambert and St Leonard
32. Lier, St Gummarus
33. Linkebeek, St Sebastian
34. Londerzeel, St Christopher
35. Maastricht, St Servatius
36. Machelen, St Gertrude
37. Mechelen, Our Lady of Hanswijk and St Rumbold
38. Niervaart, H. Sacrament
39. Ninove, St Cornelius
40. Nivelles, St Gertrude
41. Nizelles, Our Lady
42. Oplinter, St Genoveva
43. Rijkel, St Eutropia
44. Rosmeer, St Gerberchte
45. Schaarbeek
46. Schaffen, St Hubert
47. Scheut, Our Lady
48. 's-Hertogenbosch, Our Lady
49. Sint-Agatha-Rode
50. Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, St John the Baptist and St Gertrude
51. Sint-Niklaas
52. Sint-Truiden, St Trudo
53. Steenbergen, St Ontcommere
54. Ternat, St Gertrude
55. Tholen, H. Cross
56. Tienen, Our Lady ten Poel and St Germanus
57. Tongeren, Our Lady
58. Vilvoorde, Our Lady
59. Visé, St Hadelinus and Our Lady
60. Vorst, St Alena
61. Vosselaar, Our Lady
62. Wakkerzeel, St Hubert
63. Waver, Our Lady
64. Wersbeek
65. Westmeerbeek, St Michael
66. Wezemaal, St Job
67. Winksele, Our Lady
68. Zelk, St Pancras
69. Zellik, St Roch
70. Zepperen, St Genoveva
71. Zolder, St Hubert
72. Zoutleeuw, St Leonard

MAP 1

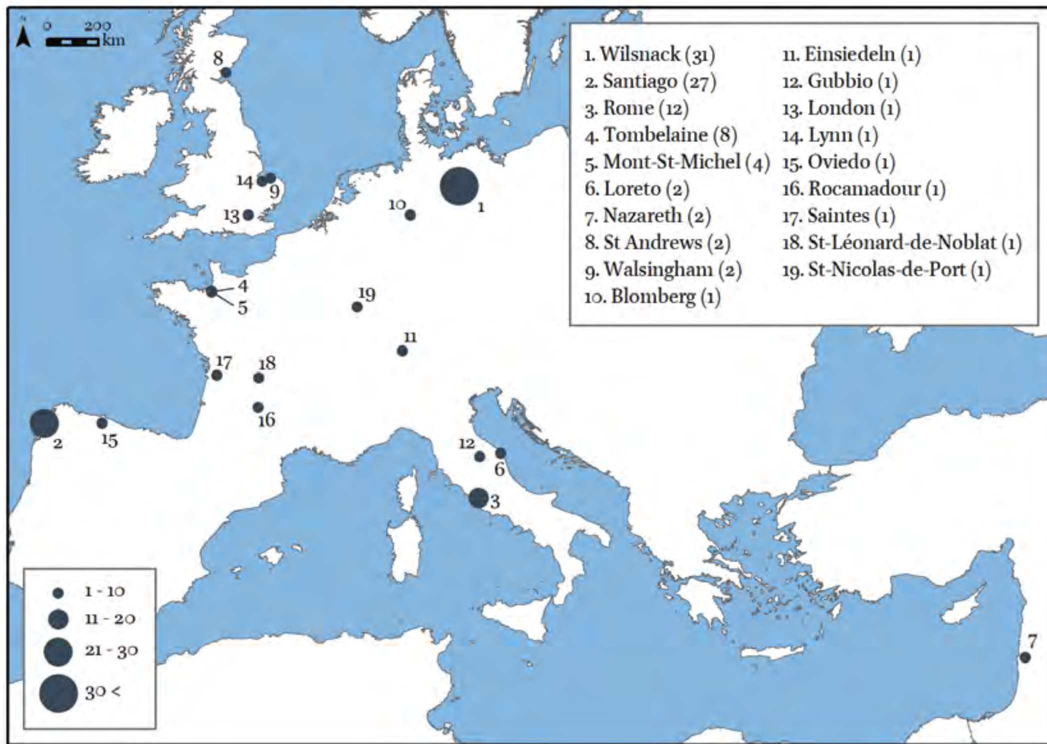
Provisional map of pilgrimage destinations in the Duchy of Brabant and its surroundings, active around 1500.

MAP: RUBEN SUYKERBUYK & HANS BLOMME



MAP 2
Pilgrimage destinations in the Low Countries, and their relative importance, based on the number of pilgrim badges found in Zeeland (between brackets)
SOURCE: VAN HEERINGEN ET AL. 1987; MAP: HANS BLOMME

of the cult in question, the outermost places indicating the 'maximal radiation' of a shrine.[80] Comparisons of such geographical analyses further enable us to evaluate pilgrimage sites' relative importance. For instance, by comparing the two contemporary miracle books of Dadizele (1353–1537) and Gullegem (1450–1503), Antoon Viaene has demonstrated that the latter only was of local importance, while the former had a much larger range of attraction. Circumstantial evidence confirms that Dadizele counted among the most important shrines in the County of Flanders during the fifteenth century.[81] Similarly, mapping the geographical distribution of pilgrim badges can give us an indication of the cults' action radii. Thus, plotting the sites of all 47 known pilgrim badges related to the cult of Our Lady of 's-Hertogenbosch reveals a radius of up to 200 kilometers.[82] Furthermore, the numbers of badges found within one context are also indicative of the relative importance of the represented shrines (maps 2 & 3). The high number of pilgrim badges coming from the shrines of Geraardsbergen (Saint Adrian) and Ninove (Saint Cornelius) indeed reflects their enormous popularity, as is confirmed by their similar predominance at other sites.[83]

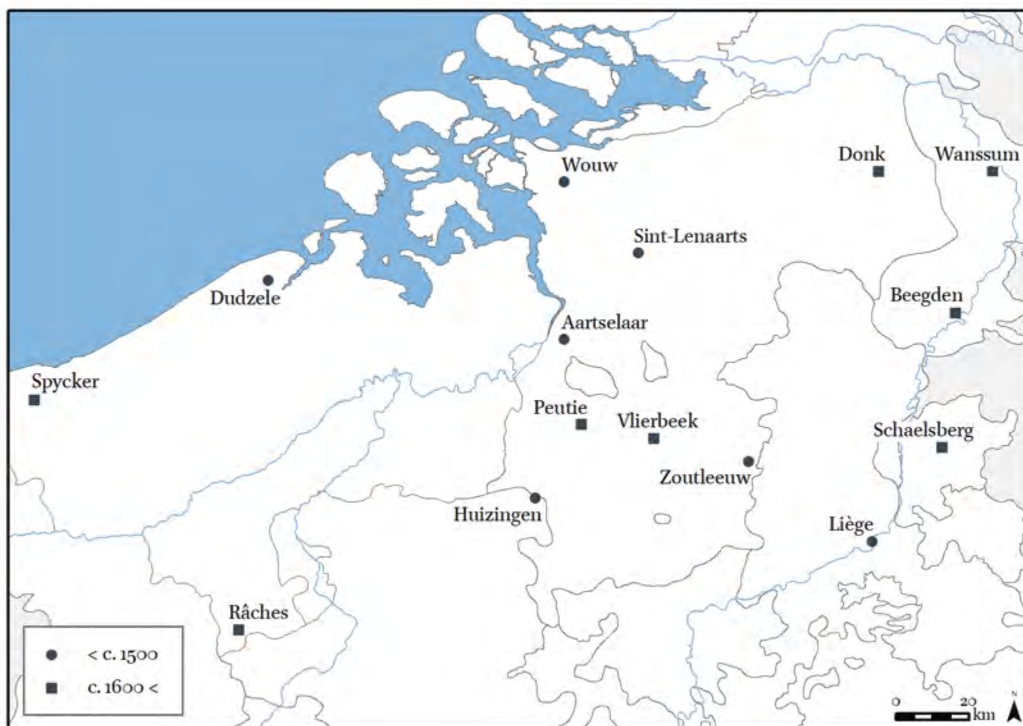


MAP 3
Pilgrimage destinations in Europe, and their relative importance, based on the number of pilgrim badges found in Zeeland (between brackets)
SOURCE: VAN HEERINGEN ET AL. 1987; MAP: HANS BLOMME

Saint Leonard's Share

The relative importance of Zoutleeuw among these shrines is hard to assess, but if the identification of the Nieuwlande badges as coming from Zoutleeuw is correct, this would mean that around 1500 pilgrims came all the way from Zeeland, entailing a radius of around 100 kilometers. As a result of his particular hagiography, visualized in the altarpiece (fig. 8), Saint Leonard had a number of personal thaumaturgic specialisms, and in Zoutleeuw he was demonstrably called upon as a liberating saint. An inscription on a bell hanging in the church's southern tower, cast in 1531 and dedicated to Saint Leonard, states that the he relieved 'women tormented by labor pains, those possessed by the devil, and chained prisoners'.[84] The later Middle Ages did indeed witness an increasing specialization in the patronage functions of saints, but there were other places in the Low Countries where Saint Leonard was called upon for precisely these complaints (map 4).[85]

Possibly one of the oldest sites of veneration was the priory just outside the city walls of Liège, reportedly dedicated to Saint Leonard under Bishop Otbert (1091–1119) in the late eleventh century.



MAP 4
Saint Leonard's shrines in the medieval and early modern Low Countries
MAP: RUBEN SUYKERBUYK & HANS BLOMME

Seventeenth-century authors claim that miracles already occurred there in the twelfth century, but no clear proof of this exists, and the earliest documented cases actually date from the beginning of the seventeenth century (Chapter 8).[86] The cult in Dudzele, north of Bruges, is more securely documented. A charter from 1163 already mentions pilgrims coming for Saint Leonard, but the local procession probably has origins in the fifteenth century. It certainly also was one of the most well-known shrines for this particular saint in the Low Countries. A considerable number of pilgrim badges from Dudzele has been found in Zeeland (map 2), and the place and its procession were explicitly mentioned and ridiculed in the Protestant song *Een liedeken van de Sancten*.[87] The cult of Saint Leonard in the eponymous village Sint-Lenaarts, in the northern Campine area, was probably of slightly more regional importance. A chapel dedicated to the saint is mentioned in 1226, when a chaplain was appointed. A procession in his honor on Whit Monday is first mentioned in 1495, and between 1530 and 1550, the chapel was significantly enlarged and decorated with stained-glass windows depicting the life and the shrine of the saint (fig. 54). This is likely to have happened under the impulse of Adriaan van der Noot, Lord of Brecht (d. 1555), who had

FIGURE 54
Anonymous, *Stained-glass window depicting scenes from the life and cult of Saint Leonard*, 1535, Sint-Lenaarts, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

himself depicted on one of the windows (fig. 55). The funding for these works is said to have come in part from the increasing revenues from monetary offerings by pilgrims.[88] The cult of Saint Leonard in nearby Wouw is first mentioned in 1491, when Jan II van Glymes, lord of Bergen op Zoom – to whose territory Wouw belonged – came on pilgrimage and offered a wax candle. A yearly procession with a statue and relics is documented from 1555 onward.[89] Seigniorial interference was also present in Aartselaar, where it probably marked the very start of the cult and, as in Sint-Lenaarts, eventually led to

FIGURE 55
Anonymous, *Stained-glass window depicting the Resurrection of Christ*, detail of the donors Adriaan van der Noot and Josina Daens with their children, 1544, Sint Lenaarts, church of Saint Leonard

a reconstruction and redecoration of the church. In 1308 the building had been consecrated in honor of Our Lady, but later – in the seventeenth or eighteenth century – this devotion was changed to Saint Leonard. One of the key motivations for this, and possibly the first, was the donation of a relic. *Jonker* Adriaan Sanders, lord of Blaesvelt (d. 1494), is said to have taken the saints' complete arm from Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat. The fact that he donated it 'in honor of God and Our Lady', not of Saint Leonard, indeed suggests that no such cult existed before. Still, in 1472, a tabernacle for the relic was provided, and a yearly procession in the saint's honor was instituted in 1496. In the same year the construction of a new church took off. The building was finished by 1503, its interior was furnished from 1507 until 1527, and in 1513 the relic was placed on a separate altar.[90] A final documented shrine in honor of Saint Leonard is Huizingen, to which a posthumous pilgrimage is mentioned in 1509 in the last

will of a Brussels clergyman.[91] Apart from these more or less securely documented shrines for Saint Leonard that must have existed around 1500, a whole series of localities is known to have had a similar cult from at least the seventeenth or eighteenth century onwards (map 4, see Chapter 8).[92]

The Circuit Condenses: Brabant, c. 1500

How do these shrines devoted to Saint Leonard fit in the larger cult circuit of the Low Countries around 1500? Scholars have assumed that the region was characterized by a relatively uniform pilgrimage praxis with some minor regional differences in the density of shrines.[93] The Hageland and the wider Brabantine region definitely had their share in these developments, the context of which can be sketched by means of three contemporary cases that are strikingly parallel to the developments in Zoutleeuw: Lier, a town south of Antwerp on the edge of the Campine area, and Aarschot and Wezemaal, both in the Hageland region. Contrary to the generally vague dating of shrines in Counter-Reformatory sources, a late seventeenth-century Antwerp chronicle states that in 1475 'Saint Gummarus started working miracles in Lier for the first time'.[94] This date corresponds to the rich material in the extensive miracle book, wherein 232 miracles from 1475 to 1499 are recorded.[95] As elsewhere, these miraculous activities should be seen in relation to the renewed recognition (*elevatio*) of the saint's relics in the same year, at which occasion the church was provided with an indulgence.[96] The churchwarden accounts from Lier provide two indications suggesting that this meant the start of a promotion campaign. On the one hand, there is a significant increase in expenses for processions from 1476 to 1478, and in 1476 the wardens commissioned a play about Saint Gummarus. On the other hand, pilgrim badges were issued in Lier. Just like in Zoutleeuw the accounts have been preserved since the 1450s, but the badges (*tekenen*) only occur from 1476 onwards. From this point onwards, they appear in different forms, either silver or gilded, large or small. Four of these have been found in Zeeland (map 2). In this particular case, the accounts also allow an evaluation of the results of this supposed promotion. At least from 1482 onwards, they show a considerable increase in monetary offerings for the patron saint at the occasion of the procession. Interestingly, during the preceding years the accounts were traditionally closed with a deficit, but from 1478 onwards, revenues and expenses were more or less in balance. The cult of Saint Gummarus thus appears to have developed into a significant revenue for the Lier *fabrica*.[97]

FIGURE 56
Anonymous, *Our Lady of Aarschot*, sixteenth-century copy after a lost thirteenth-century original, Aarschot, church of Our Lady
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

Judging by the number of pilgrim badges found in Zeeland, the cult of Our Lady of Aarschot was even more important (map 2). Here, a miraculous statue survived as a sixteenth-century copy of a lost thirteenth-century original (fig. 56). Legend has it that the statue arrived by boat, and in his *Brabantia Mariana* (1632) Augustinus Wichmans claimed that it was a centuries-old cult, without providing precise data, however.[98] An inscription indicates that the choir of the church was constructed in 1337 and dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but the available evidence only allows us to trace back the history of the church as a destination for pilgrims to the later fifteenth century.[99] Although somebody was sentenced by the Lier authorities to go on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Aarschot between 1452 and 1458, all other known judicial pilgrimages date to the early sixteenth

century, apparently the high point of its fame. Convicts were sent to the shrine from Ghent, Herentals, Kortrijk, Oudenaarde, Turnhout and Vilvoorde, all between 1502 and 1571.[100] A second indication is provided by the pilgrim badges, which all have been dated to around 1500 on archaeological and stylistic grounds. The presence of the coat of arms of Guillaume II de Croÿ, Lord of Chièvres (1458–1521) on one of the known badges further confirms this, since he came into possession of the seigniory of Aarschot in 1494.[101] Around the same time, in 1506, a confraternity in honor of the miraculous statue is documented and soon after, several citizens of Brussels started including posthumous pilgrimages to the shrine in their last wills.[102] The development of Aarschot as a pilgrimage destination has been linked to the acquisition of the seigniory by the important De Croÿ family in 1461. They advanced both the town and the church by instituting a fair, a collegiate chapter (1462) and a chamber of rhetoric (1497). The family might well have fostered the cult of Our Lady of Aarschot as a means to enlarge both the town's prosperity and fame and their own.[103] As one of the highest and leading noblemen in the Low Countries, Guillaume II de Croÿ has been characterized as one of the 'architects' of the Burgundian-Habsburg 'cultural offensive', and he was also closely connected to the prestigious confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows in Brussels.[104] The fact that the cult was the subject of the first significant investments after the sixteenth-century troubles strongly suggests that the revenues from pilgrims were of critical importance to the church.

While Our Lady of Aarschot was renowned throughout the Low Countries, the veneration of the sculpture of Saint Job (fig. 57) in Wezemaal, near Leuven, would spread even beyond these borders (map 2). The shrine is mentioned in collections of sermons published in Haguenau (Alsace) and Lyon in 1514, and a pilgrim badge has been found in Canterbury.[105] Furthermore, it was one of the few shrines in the Low Countries mentioned by name by Saint-Aldegonde in his 1569 *Den Byencorf der H. Roomsche Kercke*, and it would also be ridiculed in later Protestant songs.[106] The cult is supposed to have been introduced between 1377 and 1437, probably in the later fourteenth century, but circumstantial evidence again strongly suggests that, around 1500, its widespread fame was still a fairly recent phenomenon. Bart Minnen assumed that the number of pilgrims increased between 1458 and 1466, but none of his arguments provide definitive proof, as neither pilgrims nor the cult of Saint Job are explicitly mentioned.[107] Yet, pilgrim badges immediately occur in the earliest preserved churchwarden account of 1472–1473. Around a thousand badges were reportedly sold from the

FIGURE 57
Anonymous, *Saint Job*, c. 1400–1430, Wezemaal, church of Saint Martin
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

total number of more than 4800 that were bought for 387 *stuivers*. The following year, more than 10.200 badges were estimated to have been sold. To compare: around this period the Zoutleeuw churchwardens only spent several *stuivers* on such badges (graphs 5 & 6). Several of these badges have been preserved: one is dated to 1491,

while four others carry the coat of arms of the Brimeu family, which only came into possession of the seigniory of Wezemaal in 1472. Hence, much like Aarschot, the cult of Saint Job in Wezemaal presumably benefited from noble support.[108] The earliest judicial pilgrimages to the shrine are documented in Antwerp in 1459 and 1460, but all others date from the early sixteenth century, when convicts came from Amsterdam, Kortrijk, Liège and Turnhout.[109] Posthumous pilgrimages to Wezemaal are recorded in a number of last wills from Brussels between 1509 and 1525–1526.[110] The evolution of the cult of Saint Job has recently been charted by Minnen, who claimed that it only became vitally important to the *fabrica ecclesiae* from 1473 onwards, which he relates to the completion of the church building. During the 1470s, in order to provide services for the increasing numbers of pilgrims, the churchwardens hired external priests, which led to conflicts with the parish priest. The absolute climax of the cult appears to have occurred between 1495 and 1520, with 1513 as an absolute peak as far as revenues from offerings are concerned, taking up as much as 79% of all the church's income. According to Minnen this sudden popularity was the result of the spread of syphilis from 1495 onwards, of which Saint Job was proclaimed the patron saint. A petition to the pope from 1501 mentions numerous miracles worked by Saint Job in Wezemaal as an argument for the approval of a college of priests, the institution of 10 May as feast day, and the granting of an indulgence. The petition received a positive response, but just like Zoutleeuw, neither the miracle book, nor a copy of the letter of indulgence have been preserved.

The chronologies of the shrines at Lier, Aarschot and Wezemaal match that of Zoutleeuw strikingly, suggesting that the cult circuit in the Low Countries condensed considerably during the decades around 1500. There can be no doubt that the *climat miraculeux* notable in miracle collections and indulgence culture stimulated the development of more *loca sacra* into pilgrimage destinations. Most of them only had a supralocal or regional radiation, some had reputations that surpassed the contemporary boundaries of the Habsburg territories, but all tried to recruit their own visitors by using a wide variety of visual and written media. The sudden popularity of shrines thus caused a situation of cultic competition, not only between the new ones, but also with those that were established decades or even centuries ago. In extreme cases such as Regensburg, new shrines could suddenly become so intensely popular that they quickly surpassed centuries-old shrines like Mariazell and Altötting in terms of visitors.[111] Cases of religious competition within one city

are equally documented. Cities such as Antwerp, Brussels or Leuven had multiple active cults, and in fifteenth-century Amersfoort, two confraternities are known to have competed with one another as well.[112] In most cases it is impossible to pinpoint the precise origins and developments leading up to the establishment of local shrines, but nearly every case shows a significant intensification in the later fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Thus, at the moment of its devotional expansion, Zoutleeuw entered into competition with new and established cult centers alike. All this allows us to contextualize the promotion campaign in Zoutleeuw, but it still does not explain the grounds for it. What was the cause of this intense piety?

A Spirited Devotional Culture Materialized

In the early seventeenth century, Jean-Baptiste Gramaye (1579–1635) explained the enlargement of the Zoutleeuw church and the subsequent decoration of Saint Leonard's chapel as being the result of 'monetary offerings and alms given by those who flocked together for the fame of the miracles worked by [Saint Leonard]'. However, our analysis of the churchwarden accounts has shown that the revenues from the cult were insufficient to fully finance the decoration and construction campaign of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[113] Even if such financial concerns might reflect the churchwardens' initial motivation to promote the cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw, the developments that have been discussed should be understood as the result of an interconnection of economic, social and religious factors.

The lion's share of modern studies of pilgrimage sites explain their popularity during the late Middle Ages solely in economic terms, pointing in particular to the churchwardens' or the clergy's efforts at promoting their local cult. Of course, economic motivations certainly mattered. Patterns in structural income led Arnd Reitemeier to distinguish two basic types of parochial *fabricae ecclesiae*. The majority was primarily financed by foundations, by which the churches were entitled to revenues from real estate, annuities and rent-charges. In such cases, income from collections and offertory boxes was only of secondary importance. The reverse was true for the second type, which was responsible for the upkeeping of pilgrimage churches. In these cases, revenues from local or regional pilgrims outshone all other revenues.[114] Many examples from the Low Countries confirm that the cult of saints could be very lucrative. For

instance, Vroom has stated that devotional offerings formed the 'financial backbone' of the Utrecht Cathedral *fabrica*.[115] Thus, it is certainly not inconceivable that churchwardens and clergymen tried to raise the status of their own *locus sacer* in the hierarchy of pilgrimage destinations. In Zoutleeuw, too, the fixed revenues of the *fabrica ecclesiae* consisted of taxes, rents of houses and meadows, a considerable part of which came from bequests or foundations. These revenues were inherently dependent on the local population, either for the yearly payment of the taxes and rents, or for new foundations and bequests. However, the town's economic decline from the early fifteenth century onwards caused depopulation.[116] The Hageland region, and even Brabant at large, befell the same fate.[117] Potentially, this resulted in fewer foundations, less tenants of houses or meadows and fewer people to work the lands and pay tithes and interests. From this perspective, it would make sense for churchwardens to make efforts to get the money from further away.

Still, this money did not enrich the churchwardens or the clergy personally, so there must be some deeper motivations underlying this financial drive.[118] The *raison d'être* for *fabricae ecclesiae* as financial funds was of course to construct, maintain and embellish the local church building, and provide material support for the services that took place in them. Yet, in recent years, the extension and decoration of parish churches have increasingly been interpreted as reflections of individual desires to express piety in a communal context.[119] Church buildings were indeed often the source for, and the physical embodiment of, local or civic pride. Most importantly, they materially embedded the complex of commemorative foundations for deceased citizens (*memoria*), one of the central pillars of late medieval civic religion. As a result, *fabricae ecclesiae* played a key role in these *communautés des souvenirs*.[120] The fact that the Zoutleeuw churchwardens had strong bonds with the town authorities is a further argument in favor of civic pride as key motivation for the promotion campaign they orchestrated. In fact, several entries in the churchwarden accounts explicitly voice civic concerns. In the 1480s a number of payments occur to singers at the Pentecost festivities or at the feast day of Saint Leonard, which are known to have been done on the explicit order of the town's burgomasters. Some entries reveal that the singers were paid 'because they help augment the honor of the church'.[121]

In this regard, it is interesting to compare Zoutleeuw with towns that have a similar socio-economic profile. Regensburg, for instance, equally found itself in economic decline, but the social elite of

the city was still formed by the same age-old patrician families. As Olivier Richard argued, this led to the creation of a strong civic identity in which urban processions and commemorative ceremonies were of crucial importance.[122] Furthermore, the civic authorities of Regensburg were involved in the promotion of the local cult of the *Schöne Maria*: they commissioned pilgrim badges, printed miracle books, and requested indulgences. Such communal conscience demonstrably played an important role in the Low Countries, as well, and the secular influences of local lords on sacred places discussed above should presumably be seen in the same context.[123] Aside from the examples of Aartselaar, Aarschot and Wezemaal, local rulers are known to have promoted cults elsewhere too. We have seen that they were closely involved in Sint-Lenaarts and Wouw, and, just as in Aarschot, a pilgrim badge of Saint Dymphna's shrine in Geel carries the weapon of the Mérode family, the lords of the seigniory from 1483 onwards.[124] Such efforts were likely meant to enhance the honor of the cult, the town and of the local authority.

In the end, however, all of these shrines should first and foremost be seen as responses to genuine devotional needs. In his seminal article, Moeller called upon *Heilssehnsucht* and *Heilsunsicherheit* to explain these intense expressions of faith, claiming that the longing for the hereafter was stirred up by the crisis that characterized the epoch.[125] The years around 1500 are indeed known as an era characterized by an increased fear for the end of the world, during which apocalyptic sermons were widely preached. In Regensburg, for instance, this happened to such an extent that the Fifth Lateran Council thought it necessary to forbid them.[126] Around the same time, Albrecht Dürer created his famous *Apocalypse* (fig. 58). These woodcuts were often seen as anticlerical critiques, but recent readings regard them more as an inherent part of the lay piety of the time, expressing a certain awareness about the end of times.[127] A combination of major religious, socioeconomic, political and philosophical revolutions and crises was interpreted in religious terms, and apocalyptic imagery was never far away.[128] Chiffoleau indeed explained the mentioned *manifestations 'aberrantes' ou 'folles'* as responses to a profound trauma and to worries about the relation between the here and the hereafter.[129] Similarly, Brown argued that the increasing number of general processions in late fifteenth-century Bruges were a 'seismograph of the level of social anxiety'.[130]

A disastrous civil war held the Low Countries in its grip throughout the 1480s and 1490s, which deeply impacted most provinces. Soon after the conflict, a series of new devotions was introduced,

FIGURE 58
Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1498, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

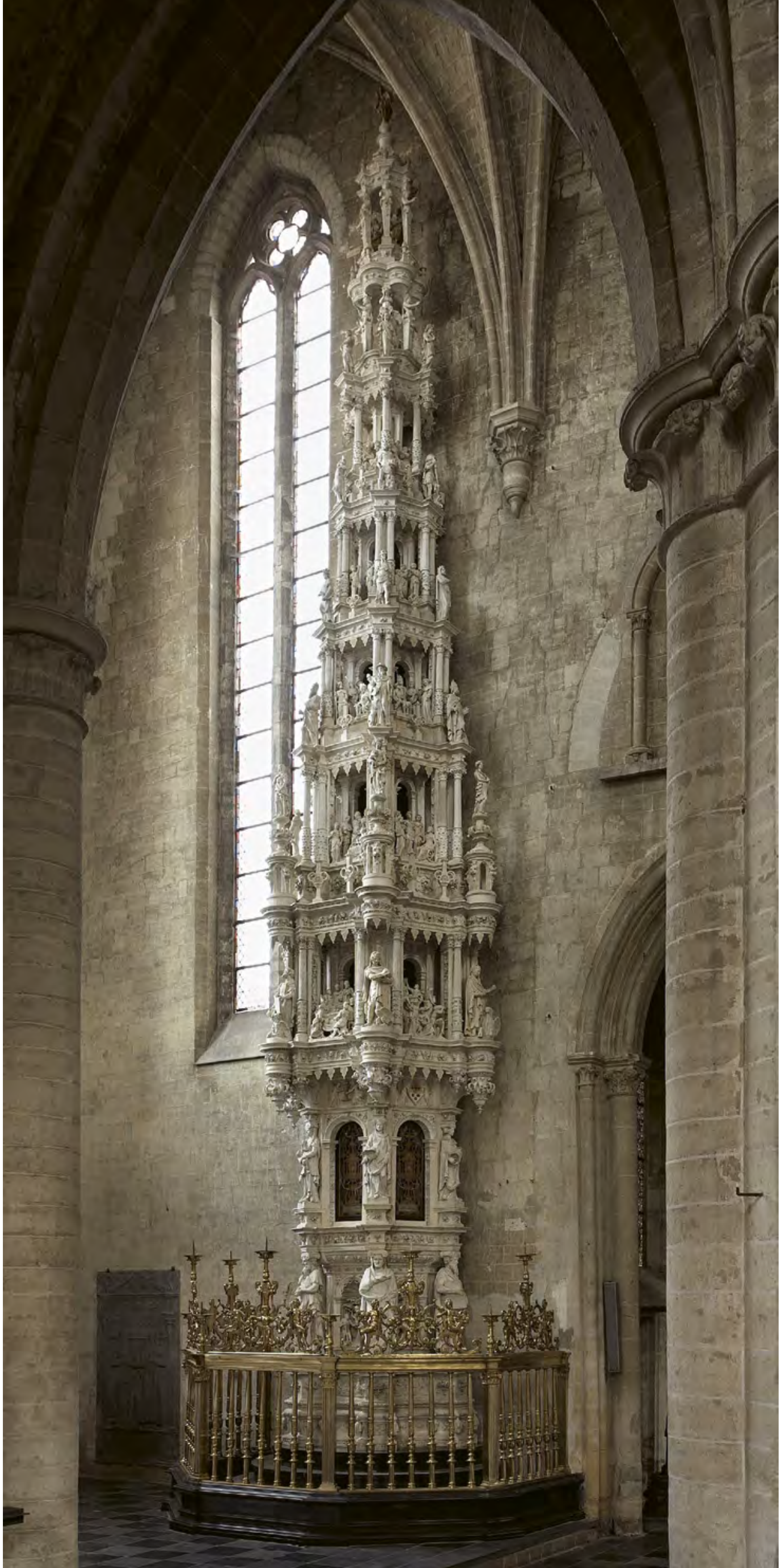
most notably the devotion to the seven sorrows of Mary, which spread rapidly throughout the Habsburg territories.[131] In a similar vein, Elisabeth Dhanens has suggested that there was a relation between the war damage and victims on the one hand, and the sudden popularity of the motherly Saint Anne in the late fifteenth century on the other.[132] Rather than a pure cause of intense piety, such traumatic events provided an extra impulse and strengthening factor. The same can be said about the catastrophic harvest failures of the early 1480s, which led to a dramatic increase in grain prices and enormous mortality rates. The first peak in Zoutleeuw's revenues for the cult of Saint Leonard indeed coincided with a pre-eminent year

of crisis. These severe economic circumstances and their accompanying existential instability drew people's attention to the hereafter. Hope and fear fused, and gave rise, not to a paralyzing atmosphere, but to social action. A recent, long-term investigation of apocalyptic visions throughout history has indeed revealed how they have always been breeding grounds for new ideas and practices. Time and again, apocalyptic angst has stirred up enormous energy.[133] This conglomerate of individual and collective action and emotions fundamentally shaped the devotional climate around 1500. As Kühnel has noted by using the term *Wunderbedürfnis*, perhaps people really wanted to believe in miracles.[134]

This brings us back to the altarpiece commissioned in 1476 by the Zoutleeuw churchwardens. Much more than just a standard liturgical utensil, it was the localized materialization of the vivid devotional movement around 1500. The iconography of the piece explicitly emphasizes the miraculous character of Saint Leonard, and through this suggests a similar potential in the very space it was installed in. What the pilgrim sees is what he may hope to get. It cannot be considered as either the cause or the consequence of the described events; in essence, it is both simultaneously. It was of course part and parcel of a promotional campaign with which the churchwardens sought to establish Zoutleeuw as a valued regional pilgrimage destination, firmly anchoring it in a wider and pre-existing cult circuit along with long-established centers. In sharp contrast with the more prosaic life in town or on the land, the astonishing decorations in the chapel doubtlessly enhanced its popularity, but they were also a response to the actual devotional needs of a time that, far from being a withered tail of the Middle Ages, was characterized by intense lay participation.[135] In Zoutleeuw, Saint Leonard's altarpiece contributed to the enshrinement of that saint's cult statue, providing it with the miraculous charisma that people were looking for. It materialized a spirited devotional culture.

PART 2

Catholic Piety in Iconoclastic Times



CHAPTER 3

1520: The Waning of Medieval Piety?

Cornelis Floris' Sacrament House

In the northern transept of the Zoutleeuw church, opposite Saint Leonard's chapel at the other end of the crossing, stands an imposing, 18-meter-high sacrament house, carved in soft white stone of Avesnes (fig. 59).[1] Moving upwards across nine stories, a parade of sculpted scenes and figures sing the praises of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which is kept behind the three metal doors of the *sacrarium* at the structure's third level. The elaborate iconographic program abounds in visualizations of Christian theology, and particularly highlights the sacramental symbolism of sacrifice. Five reliefs in the base show offering scenes, followed on the next story by episodes from Genesis depicting the Creation and Fall of Man. Four Old Testament prophets function as flanking atlantes, and, in a similar fashion, the four cardinal virtues stand as caryatids beside the doors of the *sacrarium* on the next level. One story up, the honorary parade is continued by the four evangelists standing aside classic Eucharistic prefigurations: the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek, the Gathering of the Manna and the Last Supper. The next two stories contain figures of a whole array of saints, as well as other virtues and the church fathers. The apostles appear on the next two levels, in combination with Old Testament kings and yet other saints. These figures carry a small *tempietto* containing Saint Michael slaying the Devil, flanked by angel musicians, which itself serves as a base for a baldachin with the crowning of the Virgin Mary. The whole is topped by a pelican pecking its own breast to feed its young, the traditional image of Christ's sacrifice.[2]

A memorial stone (fig. 60) in the immediate vicinity of the sacrament house identifies the donors of this petrified Eucharistic praise as *jonker* Merten van Wilre (1481/91–1558) and his wife Marie Pylipert (d. 1554), whose coats of arms occur both at the top of the stone and on the sacrament house itself, just above the doors of the *sacrarium*.[3] On 13 August 1550, this noble couple drew up the contract for the remarkable piece of sculpture before the Zoutleeuw aldermen.[4] The commission was given to Cornelis Floris de Vriendt (1514–1575) from Antwerp, who at that moment was just embarking

FIGURE 59
Cornelis Floris, *Sacrament house*, 1550–1552, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

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FIGURE 60
Anonymous (Leuven), *Memorial stone of Merten van Wilre and Marie Pylipert*, between 1558 and 1574, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

on an international career, receiving assignments to execute funeral monuments for Dorothea of Denmark (1504–1547) and her father, Frederick I (1471–1533).[5] The text laid down the financial conditions and practical arrangements for the construction, but does not provide any iconographical or dimensional guidelines, instead referring to and commenting on a previously made design (*patroone*), which Van Wilre had approved with his signature. A first part was to be installed by Pentecost 1551 (17 May), while Pentecost 1552 (5 June) was agreed upon as final deadline for the work. By March 1551 a part was in place, but only in October 1552 was somebody paid to unload the final stones of the sacrament house from a ship.[6]

Ever since the middle of the nineteenth century, the sacrament house has been one of the church's best-known showpieces. Popular overviews of the artistic treasures of the young Belgian state included prints of the structure, such as Louis Haghe's *Sketches in Belgium and Germany*, published in London in 1840 (fig. 61), or François Stroobant's *Monuments d'architecture et de sculpture en Belgique*, of which the first edition appeared in 1852 (fig. 62). The 'splendid'

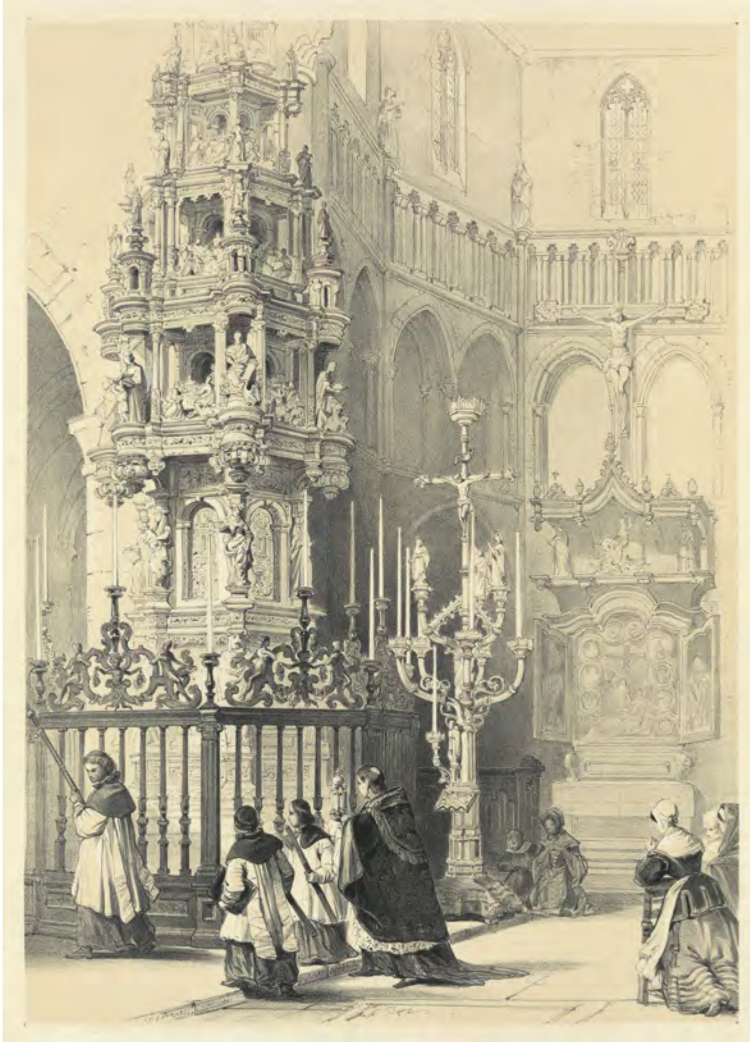

FIGURE 61
Louis Haghe, *Tabernacle de l'église de Léau*, from idem, *Monuments anciens receuillis en Belgique et en Allemagne*, 1842, Ghent, University Library

sacrament house also particularly impressed Victor Hugo during his visit of Zoutleeuw on Sunday 2 October 1864. He had even made a special detour to see it on his way from Tienen to Leuven.[7] Until the publication of the contract in 1868 identified Cornelis Floris as its maker, the work was generally thought to have been executed by a Florentine artist from the circle of Michelangelo. The fact that it figures in the major collections of plaster casts of Europe's great museums of the time, including the South Kensington Museum in London (now Victoria and Albert Museum) and the Brussels Royal Museums of Art and History (fig. 63) further illustrates its particular

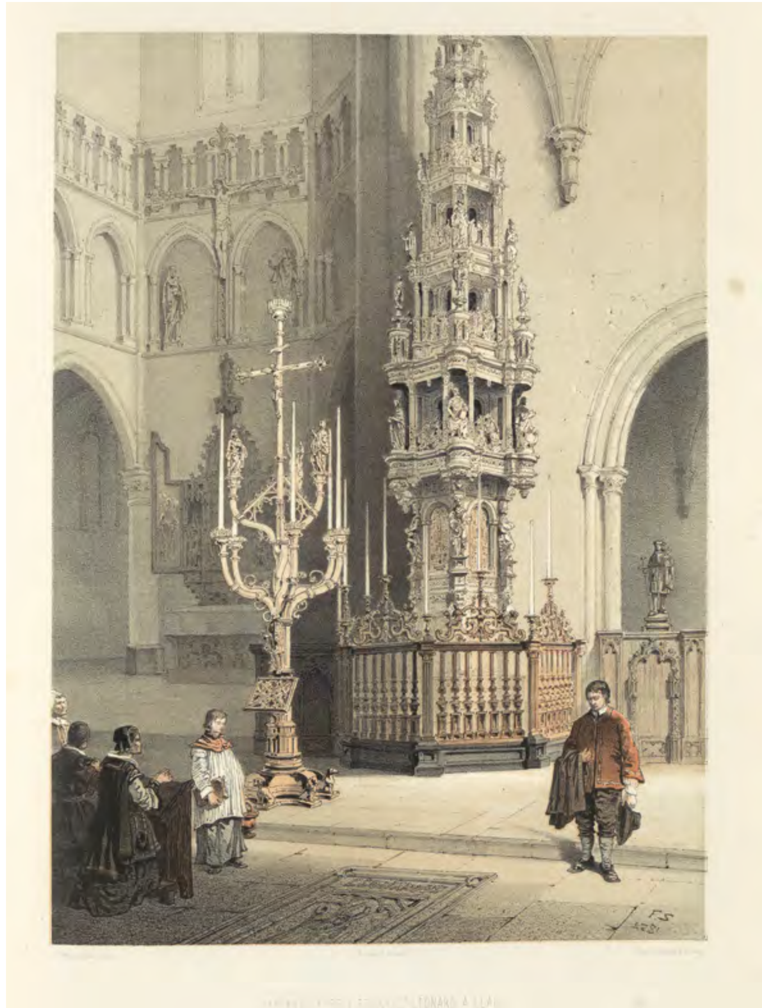

FIGURE 62
François Stroobant, *Tabernacle de l'église Saint-Léonard à Léau*, from Stroobant & Stappaerts, *Monuments d'architecture et de sculpture*, 1881, Ghent, University Library

attraction. In both museums, the cast from the 1870s takes a place of honor beside internationally still renowned sculptural works like Trajan's column and Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*.

In the sixteenth century, such a sacrament house was hardly unique, however, as they were firmly rooted in medieval tradition. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had defined the doctrine of the Real Presence: a key element in Catholic theology which taught that the transforming rite of Mass rendered Christ physically present in the communion bread and wine, which would so literally be visualized in the iconographic theme of the Mass of Saint Gregory (Chapter 2). The consecration thus turned the hosts into relics of Christ. The doctrine and the subsequent institution in 1264 of the Feast of Corpus

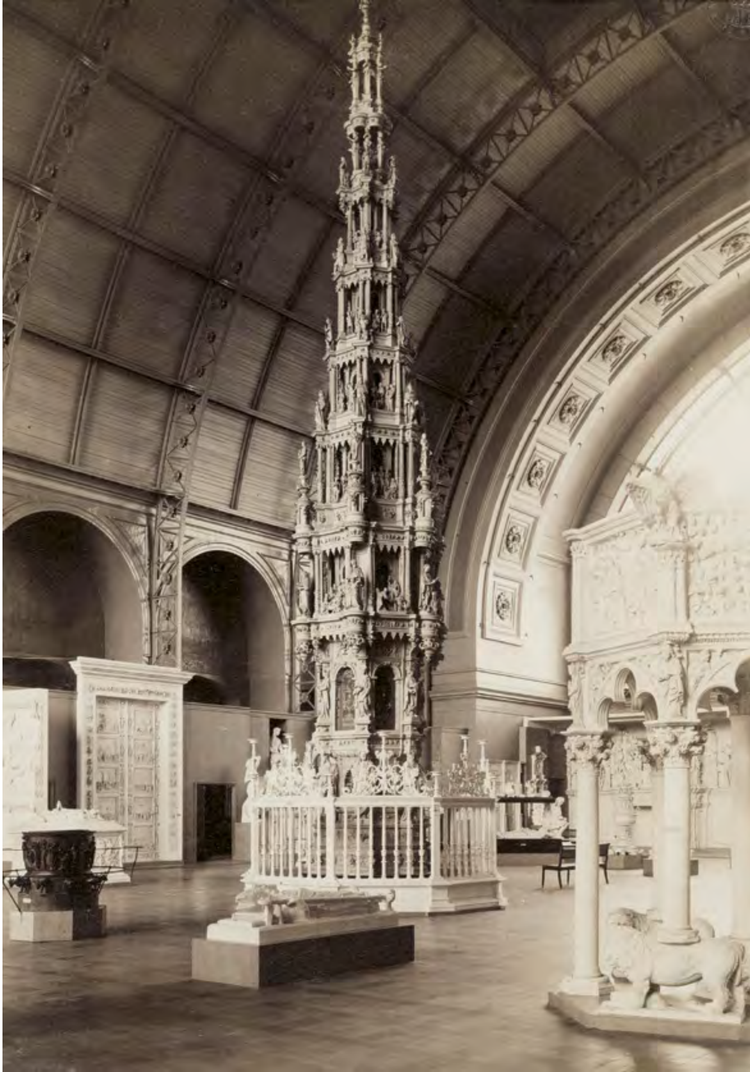

FIGURE 63
Plaster cast from Cornelis Floris' sacrament house in Zoutleeuw's church of Saint Leonard, c. 1876, Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

Christi, first in the Prince-Bishopric of Liège of which Zoutleeuw was a part, led to an intense veneration of the consecrated host in the Low Countries.[8] From the fourteenth century onwards this found its most fascinating expression in a series of cults of miraculous hosts, which had reportedly turned into flesh or started bleeding. In Niervaart such a cult already existed around 1300, and when it was moved to Breda in 1449 miracles continued to be reported. From 1327 onward the Abbey of Herkenrode could also boast a miraculous host. Arguably the best-known example is the Holy Sacrament of Miracle of Brussels, a set of hosts that reportedly went bleeding after

FIGURE 64
Anonymous, *Wall tabernacle*, c. 1500, Havré, chapel of Saint-Antoine-en-Barbefosse
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having been stabbed by Jews in 1370, kept in the church of Saints Michael and Gudula. Soon after, in 1374, a miraculous host was also revealed in Middelburg. It was later sent to Cologne and then, in 1380, to the Augustine convent in Leuven. In 1405, finally, the abbey of Bois-Seigneur-Isaac saw a Eucharistic miracle that meant the start of an important cult.[9] Apart from this limited number of miracle cults with a broad geographic importance, from the late fourteenth century onwards many towns also developed their own Corpus Christi processions, in which the civic community paraded the consecrated host through the streets.[10]

As the host was considered a relic, every church also had to protect and appropriately preserve these sacred remains from Mass. Initially it was stored on the altar itself, but from the twelfth century onwards

it was gradually moved into separate locked cabinets at the side of the altar. Around the same time as the Eucharistic miracle cults were instituted, these precious containers that both protected and displayed the Eucharist grew in size and monumentality, and they were often decorated with lavish ornamentation and iconography. From the late fourteenth century onwards two basic types existed, which were both quite consistently referred to as (*heylich*) *sacramentshuys* in Middle Dutch, *mayson du Saint Sacrement* in French or *sacrae eucharistiae domicilium* in Latin.[11] On the one hand the traditional wall tabernacle remained in use, such as in Havré (fig. 64, compare with fig. 44). On the other hand these cabinets evolved into independent structures, detached from the church wall. The latter were mostly constructed in stone, but examples in metal have survived as well (fig. 65).

FIGURE 65
Anonymous, *Sacrament house*, c. 1500–1510, Bocholt (Belgium), church of Saint Lawrence
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These independent, micro-architectural and tower-like sacrament houses could be found all over the broad Germanic region in Europe, but most examples have been preserved in central Europe and the Baltic, with Ulm (c. 1460–1470) and Nuremberg (1493–1496) being the most famous examples.[12] In the Low Countries, by contrast, as a result of the religious upheavals in the sixteenth century, later alterations of church interiors, and destructions in World Wars I and II almost no sacrament houses remain today. The oldest and most famous sacrament house preserved in the Low Countries was commissioned from Mathijs de Layens by the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament for the church of Saint Peter in Leuven around 1450 (fig. 66).[13] Similar, independent sacrament houses reached their height as an essential feature in most churches in the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries. They were either freestanding or positioned against a wall, but always on the evangelical side, i.e. to the north of the high altar. Reservation of the consecrated host on the main altar was rare before the Tridentine reforms: Jean Mone's 1533 formal experiment in his *Retable of the sacraments* at Halle (fig. 67), which is crowned by a *sacrarium* and originally functioned as main altar, provided an important artistic precedent for post-Tridentine structures, but remained virtually unique throughout much of the sixteenth century.[14]

While most of the known sacrament houses in the Low Countries and Germany are gothic in design, the Zoutleeuw structure is striking for its *all'antica* appearance. Instead of the complex geometric ornamental language so typical for gothic structures, Cornelis Floris' example follows classical architectural orders and is furnished with antique decorative elements, such as caryatids, herms and garlands.

These outer stylistic characteristics must not, however, obscure the gothic essence of the piece. In fact, the sacrament house is a transitional work of art. Its typological form is rooted in a vivid medieval devotional culture, in which the Eucharist and its material cult were central (Chapter 2). It is, moreover, still essentially gothic in its marked verticality, which differed from the more horizontally conceived Renaissance style in which Floris usually worked, and in which Jean Mone, for instance, had designed his *Retable of the sacraments* nearly twenty years earlier.[15] Floris' creation thus balances tradition and innovation, consciously playing with both. How does this observation tie in with the traditional narrative on the evolution of piety and religious patronage in the sixteenth-century Low Countries after the introduction of Protestant thought? 1520 has been characterized as a moment of dramatic disruption with the preceding period; it has even been proclaimed the end of the Middle Ages. However, material sources such as the Zoutleeuw sacrament house, commissioned right in the middle of this period of supposed devotional decline, suggest an alternative, more complex story wherein continuity played a much more important role than previously thought. It encourages a reconsideration of the traditional view of a waning medieval piety. In what devotional context was the sacrament house installed, and what did it mean to commission such a monumental structure in the Low Countries of the 1550s? What did '1520' really signify for religious life and its accompanying material culture in the Low Countries during subsequent years?

The Introduction of Protestant Thought

The years surrounding '1520' certainly were eventful in the Low Countries. Not long after Martin Luther had caused a stir in Saxony with his 95 theses on the sale of indulgences by the Church of Rome, the reformer's writings and his ideas also reached the Habsburg territories. Around the beginning of 1519 a set of his publications arrived in the university town of Leuven, where the professors of the theological faculty would soon engage in a penetrating inquiry. After having consulted their colleagues from the university of Cologne, on 7 November 1519 the Leuven faculty unanimously condemned Luther as heretic and in February 1520 their denunciation was published by Dirk Martens. Only in the course of the following months would a reaction from Rome follow, when Pope Leo X obliged the

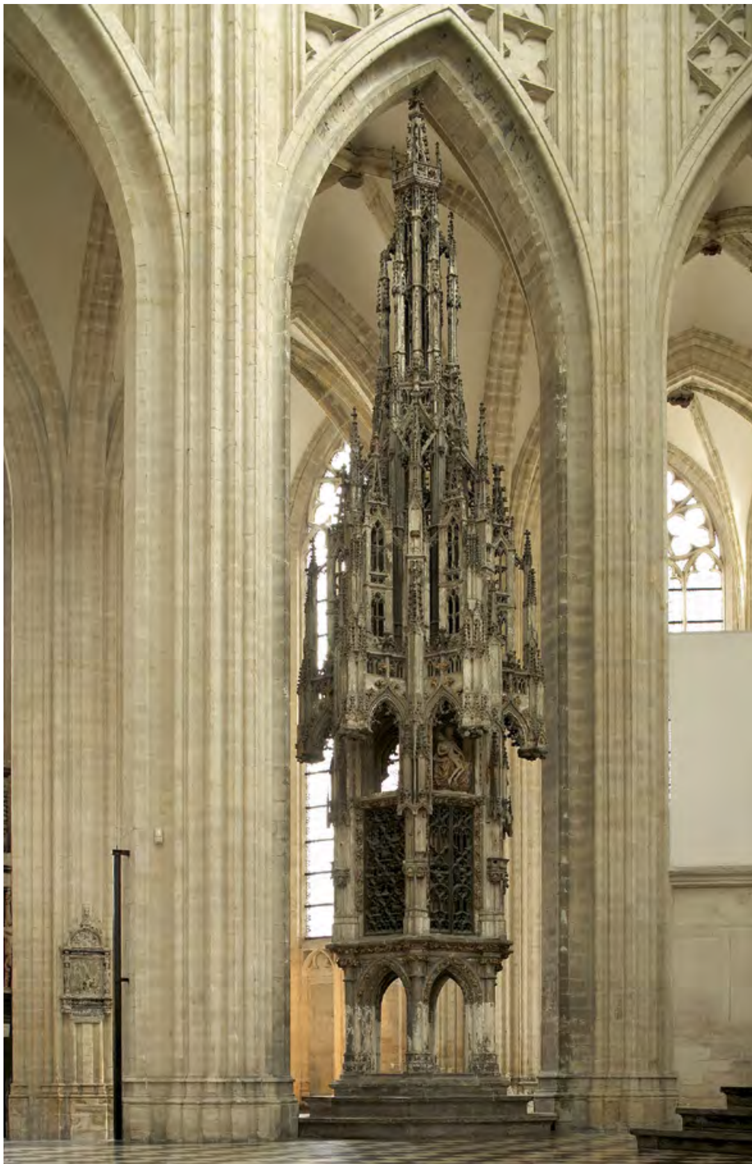

FIGURE 66
Mathijs de Layens, *Sacrament house*, c. 1450, Leuven, church of Saint Peter
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Saxon reformer to revoke his teachings with the bull *Exsurge Domine*, issued in June 1520.[16] Meanwhile, the debate had already burst out of the boundaries of the university, and in November 1520 a Middle Dutch translation of Luther's writings on indulgences circulated in Antwerp.[17] The commercial metropolis soon took up a leading role in the early history of the Reformation in the Low Countries, especially by the activities of the local Augustinian friars. After their

FIGURE 67
Jean Mone, *Retable of the sacraments*, 1533, Halle, basilica of Saint Martin
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convent had been abolished and demolished on imperial command, on 1 July 1523 the friars Hendrik Voes and Jan van Essen were publicly burned at stake on the central market square in Brussels. They went down in history as Europe's first Protestant martyrs.

The gruesome execution did not keep Luther's ideas from spreading, however. When the papal nuncio Hieronymus Aleander arrived in the Low Countries in 1520 to enforce the observation of *Exsurge Domine*, he assessed the situation as being a very dangerous one. He organized public book burnings in Antwerp, Leuven and Ghent, and all over Flanders trials soon followed in the course of the 1520s.[18] In Utrecht, the cathedral churchwardens provided their *quaestores* with printed texts that condemned Luther's ideas, which they held partly responsible for the decline in devotional revenues they had noted in 1522.[19] Best known in art historical scholarship is the 1527 trial held in Brussels against court artists Bernard van Orley, Pieter de Pannemaeker and others, who were also referred to as *lutheriaenen*.[20] Luther's ideas were indeed an important impetus for the Reformation, but the movement at large also drew heavily on the Christian or biblical humanism that had preceded it, with major thinkers such as Erasmus as central figures. Very soon the dynamics in the Low Countries would indeed go far beyond the mere influence and ideas of Luther himself. In these early years 'Lutheran' was used as a general but imprecise umbrella term, because soon other reformers would start spreading yet other heterodox ideas. Anabaptists, Calvinists and many other religious groupings on the Protestant spectrum would gain ground in the Low Countries through increasing organization.[21] As a result, during much of the sixteenth century the Low Countries were *de facto* typified by religious pluralism. Alastair Duke has rightly emphasized the 'protean character' of the early phase of the Reformation in the Habsburg territories, which was characterized by excitement, experiment and chaos.[22]

Chaos and literal destructions were yet other indications of the debates stepping out of the walls of universities and 'popish' institutions, as the spreading of Protestant ideas throughout Europe was soon accompanied by iconoclasm. Building on a long-standing tradition in Western culture with important roots in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire, and resurfacing endemically well into the fifteenth century, iconoclasm became inextricably bound up with the Reformation from the 1520s onwards. The *Wittenberger Unruhen* of late January 1522 are traditionally considered as the starting point of Protestant image-breaking: in response to Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt's tract *Von abtuhung der Bylder* and to popular demand, the city council of Wittenberg decided to do away with images in churches. These actions actually disappointed Luther, who had himself taken a much more moderate stance on the issue of images. In

a similar way, after popular attacks on religious objects in Zürich in September 1523, the magistracy organized a widely attended public debate on the matter of images in which Zwingli defended the harshest position.[23] In the slipstream of Protestant reform, iconoclasm followed all over northern Europe: in Scandinavia (1530s), in England (especially between 1547 and 1553), in Scotland (from 1559 onwards) and in France (most violently between 1559 and 1562).[24] In the Low Countries a series of intense iconoclastic attacks succeeded each other in the course of August, September and October 1566 (Chapter 7).[25] This *Beeldenstorm* or Iconoclastic Fury hit almost all of the provinces of the Habsburg Netherlands in an impressively short time span, but many examples demonstrate that the destruction of sacred objects was by no means an unknown phenomenon prior to 1566 (Chapters 4 & 5). In fact, the decades following 1520 can certainly be called iconoclastic times. News about such events was increasingly available in cities and towns all over Europe due to networks which had developed on an international scale.[26] In addition to the occasional iconoclasms in the Low Countries, its inhabitants must have certainly also heard of the other conflicts throughout Europe. This means that the more encompassing debate, which was essentially about the materiality and physicality of traditional devotion that appeared so central to late medieval piety (as discussed in (Chapters 1 & 2), was certainly not limited to university or humanist circles alone. The debate was public.

The 1520-Thesis

As the community at large was involved in these discussions in significant ways, it is essential to look beyond theological writings in order to consider how Protestantism actually influenced lay piety. However, this common, lay Catholic perspective has only been taken into account to a limited extent in the scholarship on piety and religious material culture in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. Moreover, this literature has mostly looked for changes rather than for possible continuities. Whereas heterodox groupings have been studied in many respects, the perspective on the Catholic situation in the Low Countries has mostly focused on decline. To a significant extent this can be traced back to Toussaert's daunting 1963 assessment of late medieval piety. The portrait he painted was damning and he could only conclude that the Reformation had been smoldering for a long time, that it was inevitable and necessary.[27]

Religious studies from the 1980s onwards took up Toussaert's methods to map devotional transformations. First and foremost, Wim Vroom conducted an in-depth and long-term case-study of Utrecht cathedral in an approach that differed from Toussaert who had used scattered material from all over Flanders in non-continuous sequences. Analyzing various revenues throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Vroom found significant changes in the early 1520s. The revenues from diocesan collections that had grown to become an important source of income for the cathedral quite suddenly and nearly completely fell away after 1525. The collegiate chapter noted, with great disappointment, that 'the glow of ancient piety has cooled off and nearly smothered in these bitter times'.[28] A few years before, in 1522, Luther himself had already been blamed as one of the causes, but it is important to emphasize that the chapter at the same time also saw the raging wars and economic crisis as equally important characteristics of what they defined as bitter times.[29] Vroom later discovered similar developments for Antwerp's church of Our Lady, where he identified 1522 as turning point. The decline was much more gradual, but the devotional offerings clearly diminished, and Vroom explained this a a result of the religious crisis that Luther had initiated.[30] Much as was the case in Utrecht, the churchwardens of Antwerp's church of Saint Jacob had complained to Charles V that the offerings had gravely diminished ever since Luther's teachings were spread in the city.[31]

Guido Marnef later confirmed these general trends for the whole metropolis on the river Scheldt, and furthermore added that after 1520 almost no new confraternities and chaplaincies were founded.[32] In a similar vein, Verhoeven's study of late medieval miracle cults in Delft included an analysis of their revenues, and again presented 1520 as an 'abrupt' end point. He even went so far as to call it a 'total collapse'.[33] Paul Trio's findings were along the same lines. He extensively investigated the origins, developments and functioning of confraternities in late medieval Ghent. As far as his material allowed him to make conclusions on the matter, he saw a 'general and drastic decline of the number of new members in the second quarter of the sixteenth century'.[34] He later ventured another general study of the evolution of anniversary Masses wherein he again noted a decline in the number of foundations from around 1520 onwards.[35]

Together these studies established a still generally accepted narrative of a rapid decline of Catholic devotion in the Low Countries after 1520. Their conclusions resembled Toussaert's characterization

of late medieval piety as forewarning an inevitable Reformation. The 'sudden' implosion of devotion was considered as marking the end of an era. Presented in this way, the material was indeed highly compatible with Protestant critiques: offerings and investments in chantries diminished, pilgrimage sites reportedly became less popular, membership numbers of religious confraternities dwindled, convents attracted fewer vocations and were openly criticized. Taken together, these observations came to be known as the 1520-thesis, proclaiming that this year represented a crucial turning point for religious life in the Low Countries. Alastair Duke concluded that it marked a 'profound transformation' in the religious expressions and behavior of both laypeople and clerics.[36] Koen Goudriaan even went so far as to rhetorically declare it as the end of the Middle Ages, and he spoke of a veritable 'crisis in religious behavior'.[37] From this perspective, the *Beeldenstorm* of 1566 was no more than a logical consequence of the widespread aversion to traditional Catholicism in general and its material devotion in particular. Pollmann brought some more nuance to this point when she established that many lay Catholics did resent this course of events, but remained passive *vis à vis* Protestant critiques as they were convinced that 'each should tend his own garden'.[38] In general, however, the account remained the same.

Problems

The argumentation is problematic. Annemarie Speetjens has already pointed out that a lot of material that does not fit into the general narrative is often left out of the discussion. She cites examples of confraternities in Ghent in 1485, Bergen op Zoom in 1489 and 's-Hertogenbosch in 1510 that already documented diminishing members before the introduction of Protestant thought, while similar organizations in Heusden and the Utrecht Buurkerk, for instance, enjoyed continued popularity until the middle of the sixteenth century.[39] Many more examples can be cited here. Kruisheer also observed a diminishing number of bequests and memorial Masses in the Confraternity of Our Lady in Doesburg (Duchy of Guelders), already around 1510.[40] A similar pattern was discerned in late medieval Lier. Although no churchwarden accounts have been preserved for the period between 1509 and 1547, Meuris argues that monetary offerings, gifts in kind and the sale of pilgrim badges reveal a boom between 1476 and 1490, followed by a decline from around 1490 and 1495.[41] Contrary to Trio's observations, no decline in the number of founded anniversary Masses can be discerned around 1520 in the

Ghent parish of Our Lady, and in Kortrijk a decline in the cult of saints is only notable around 1540.[42] The case of Turnhout, a town in the rural Campine area, is particularly interesting. Quantitative analysis of the churchwarden accounts reveal that after 1520 considerable fluctuations occurred in the revenues from collections. Moreover, the founded anniversary Masses between 1398 and 1574 certainly show no linear downfall, but rather a cyclical pattern over the years.[43]

Furthermore, the documentary evidence that has been used to support the 1520-thesis almost exclusively comes from highly urbanized contexts. In the early sixteenth century, Antwerp was one of the largest cities in Europe. Cities such as Ghent and Utrecht followed in its wake and counted among the largest cities within the Low Countries. Delft, too, had around 10,000 inhabitants or more in 1514 and thus was one of the principal cities in the highly urbanized County of Holland.[44] It goes without saying that such large urban entities had other dynamics than smaller towns and villages. After all, the Reformation has often been characterized as an essentially 'urban event'.[45] This insight should remind scholars of the risks of rash extrapolations. Nevertheless, cities such as Antwerp have all too often been taken as textbook examples for developments elsewhere and the 1520-thesis has also been used to explain developments in non-urban areas. In his study of Wezemaal, for instance, Minnen assumed that there was a 'collapse' of the cult after 1520. There is only limited material to support such a claim, however, and it is only financial in nature. Furthermore, many pilgrims came from out of town, so the developments do not necessarily tell us about the situation in Wezemaal itself. In any case, in 1559 the parish priest reported that he knew of no heresies among his flock.[46]

Virtually no research has yet been conducted on the religious developments throughout the sixteenth century in more rural areas, but it has already been supposed that they remained more or less untouched by Protestant ideas. Both Juliaan Woltjer and Johan Decavele have argued that in the Low Countries Protestantism only settled firmly in larger cities or areas characterized by well-developed industrial infrastructure, whereas traditional ideas and practices comparatively remained stronger in the rural areas.[47] This statement remains to be verified, but recent research on the rural Veluwe area in the Duchy of Guelders confirms this view. Until the early seventeenth century the implementation of the Reformed religion met with fierce resistance there, as both the rural population and the local nobility refused to give up Catholicism.[48] In the

Bishopric of Liège – of which Zoutleeuw was part until the reforms of 1559 – the influence of Protestantism also appears to have been limited. This does not seem to have been the consequence of placards or an active policy of repression as was the case in many of the Habsburg territories. There were only a few persecutions, and executions of heretics rarely if ever caused tumult.[49]

The chronological scope and the historiographical frame within which the events are interpreted are equally of crucial importance. The 1520-thesis is essentially part of a narrative that is firmly rooted in the stereotypical pessimistic views of late medieval piety that have been discussed in the Introduction. Most problematic is the ambivalent position of the fifteenth century in the historiography on the subject, as it is treated as either an epilogue or prologue, depending on the main field of interest. John Van Engen has elaborately established that this is at odds with the period's own rich idiosyncrasies, seeing a multiplication and diversification of pre-existing practices, which resulted in intense lay participation – a view that has been confirmed in Part 1 of this book.[50] With the exception of Marnef, whose principal subject was the development of Protestantism in Antwerp, the 1520-thesis has mostly been propagated in studies that were chronologically limited to the Middle Ages. From this angle, 1520 appeared as a convenient end point. History is continuous, however, and termini are always scholarly constructs that often serve rhetorical purposes.

Alternatives

A long-term study of Zoutleeuw thus provides a valuable, complementary case that allows us to chart the evolution of lay devotion and its material culture after 1520. Located in the relatively rural Bishopric of Liège rather than the more urban bishoprics of Tournai, Cambrai and Utrecht, the town had lost much of its previous importance by 1520. Like the surrounding Hageland region of which it was part, the town was in economic decline, and this clearly had a negative impact on demography.[51] With about 2000 inhabitants around 1520, the Zoutleeuw context certainly was very different from that of Antwerp, Delft, Ghent and Utrecht. A large chronological scope, transcending traditional categories of historical periodization further contributes to overcoming existing bias. Scholars such as Francis Rapp have already emphasized the necessity of studying the events framing the Reformation on a long-term basis.[52] It is indeed impossible to define 1520 as a caesura without studying the preceding and succeeding periods, but such an approach has never

been put into practice where the Low Countries are concerned. The documentary evidence of the preceding 70-year period, presented in Part 1, allows us to re-evaluate this thesis. The years immediately preceding Luther's activity were characterized by a strikingly intense piety and a devotional boom that was manifested in different ways: miracles increasingly occurred at newly established shrines, as a result of which the cult circuit appears to have condensed and the indulgence system was successful to an extent that had not been seen before.

This devotional boom is not only apparent in Zoutleeuw's source material, but ironically also in the material that has been advanced to support the 1520-thesis. For instance, it has been pointed out that in the city of Antwerp, the important cult of the image of Our Lady 'on the stick' (*op 't Stokske*) saw a considerable decline from the early 1520s. It has, however, not sufficiently been emphasized that the cult was of a relatively recent origin, as the statue had only started to work miracles in 1474.[53] Only from that year onwards have individual accounts of the cult been preserved, starting with the account documenting the installation of the stick in question.[54] Marnef's graphs charting the cult's devotional revenues show a steady rise in the later years of the fifteenth century, with a peak around 1490, after which they actually already start to diminish in absolute terms. The same pattern recurs elsewhere in the Antwerp context. The total devotional revenues in the Antwerp church of Our Lady show a parallel evolution, again with an unprecedented peak around 1490. The same can be deduced from other findings by Marnef: while he points at the chronological evolution of the foundation of confraternities and chaplaincies in Antwerp to illustrate the decline after 1520, he places less emphasis on the fact that the years around 1500 stand out as the absolute high point.[55]

Similarly, as we have seen, Vroom established that the revenues from the diocesan collections almost completely fell away after 1525, but it should be noted that his data also clearly show a steady rise throughout the fifteenth century, reaching climaxes in 1500 and 1525 itself.[56] The same can be said of the confraternities in Ghent studied by Trio. They illustrate that the later fifteenth century saw the absolute high point of memberships, which for some confraternities lasted until 1525.[57] While these observations do not counter the argument that there was a devotional decline after 1520 that has been presented by scholars, they do shed a different light on these developments. The perceived sudden – or in some cases not so sudden – drop after 1520 is not absolute, but relative. Although it is possible

to speak of decline, it is only a decline when contrasted to the high peak that preceded it. Thus, and this is central to my argument, both moments cannot be studied separately, but should be considered in interaction.

This long-term approach with which this book proposes to study the events around 1520 should also be applied to the succeeding period. Scholars have been quick to emphasize that the drop noted circa 1520 revealed a definitive rather than a temporary phenomenon. Not all cases confirm this, however. For instance, after a devastating fire in the Antwerp church of Our Lady in 1533 the devotional revenues rose again, and though they would not reach the exceptional level of around 1490 again, they nevertheless remained on a significant level until 1552 at least. The same has been noted in the case of the Delft churches.[58] These examples suggest that at least some citizens continued to care for their church buildings, regardless of the spread of Protestantism and growing criticism on the Church of Rome. This is further corroborated by the increasing popularity of lotteries being organized to finance major church building projects, *grosso modo* between 1520 and 1560.[59] Protestantism had apparently not yet conquered the minds of the parishioners to such an extent that they conscientiously refused to donate money to the church. Finally, a long-term approach also allows us to chart possible transformations of piety.[60] Henry Dieterich, for instance, found that confraternities in the city of Liège took on different forms of piety precisely at the moment when the distinction between Protestant and Catholic became crucial.[61] Such observations are crucial for an understanding of religious material culture in the sixteenth-century Low Countries.

Continuities

The examples discussed above suggest that thinking cyclically about forms of piety and the popularity of cults can prove to be rewarding and more in tune with the documentary evidence. Cyclical patterns similar to those identified with regard to the cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw (Chapter 1) have been proposed by Geary, who noted 'considerable fluctuations in both the short and the long term' in the cult of relics in the Middle Ages.[62] By contrast, the devotional developments in the sixteenth-century Low Countries have generally been interpreted in terms of disruption. Recently, however, historical studies of piety in early modern Europe have started to

look more closely at continuities, pointing to the continued attachment of believers to traditional religious practices.[63] Bossy's pan-European view on *Christianity in the West* between 1400 and 1700 has recently been confirmed by Caroline Walker Bynum and Constantin Fasolt, who similarly argued that the Reformation was not the radical and decisive break with the Middle Ages it often is thought to have been.[64] Regional studies by Neil Galpern for France and Eamon Duffy for England, among others, have illustrated the tenacity of what Duffy labelled 'traditional religion'.[65] A similar continuity in traditional devotional practices has also been noted by Llewellyn Bogaers with regard to Utrecht and by Jos de Weerd on the Veluwe region.[66]

It is interesting to note that heterodox perspectives have also drawn attention to continuities, stressing the clear links between late medieval heresies and the earliest Protestants in the Low Countries. Persecutions were certainly no new phenomenon when the first Protestant martyrs were burned at the stake on the Brussels market square. Moreover, Alastair Duke has pointed out that the same imagery and metaphors continued to be used.[67] Luther's critique in his 95 theses of 1517 was focused on the indulgence system, but as has been signaled in Chapter 2 that was a phenomenon nearly as old as the system itself. Furthermore, iconoclasm also had clear precursors. Walker Bynum, among other scholars, has argued that late medieval iconoclasm actually developed in parallel to the increasing popularity of lifelike images.[68] Still in the later sixteenth century, the Leuven theologian Johannes Molanus referred to a medieval tradition whereby images of saints were humiliated if the requested miracles failed to occur.[69] Although it is tempting, in light of these arguments, to link the 1525 complaint of the Utrecht cathedral chapter that 'the glow of ancient piety has cooled off' to the spreading of Luther's teachings, such utterances are put in perspective when read aside of episcopal complaints in Tournai that use nearly exactly the same wording but date about 150 years before.[70]

These recent studies question the stereotypical image of the sudden breakdown of traditional religion around 1520 marking the end of the long and dark Middle Ages, and suggest that actual practices were far more continuous with previous periods. The following chapters will confirm these observations by closely analyzing how the religious developments in the Low Countries impacted religious material culture in Zoutleeuw, where continuity is materialized through the sacrament house commissioned by Merten van Wilre

and Marie Pylipert. The religious convictions and moral values of a wealthy nobleman and his wife may of course not have been the same as that of a journeyman whose fortunes were much less certain. Nevertheless, in an effort to keep the social scope of this study as broad as possible, the local elite will be treated alongside the other categories of pilgrims and parishioners. None of these groups are of course strictly defined social categories, and overlaps certainly existed: while the cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw doubtlessly drew, in large part, on the local population, patrons such as Merten van Wilre were evidently also an integral part of the parish community, and they might equally have undertaken pilgrimages. But distinguishing between groups allows us to focus on different aspects of the broad religious material culture, thus overcoming the documentary limits related to the study of traditional piety. After all, there was usually little reason to register the orthodox point of view, in contrast to the rich judicial sources produced by the persecution of heresies. Zoutleeuw's representativeness will be measured by contextualization through comparative analysis of cases located elsewhere in the Low Countries. This also allows us to discern motives and intentions. Did the Zoutleeuw community engage in a dialogue with heterodox views, and how should continuity consequently be assessed: as an unconscious continuation of religious practices, or as their conscious confirmation?

·H· COCK EXCVDBAT

CHAPTER 4

Pilgrimage

The Public Debate on Images, Miracles and Pilgrims

The direct causes of the 1566 *Beeldenstorm* were diverse and cannot possibly be reduced to a single factor, but the acts themselves were a physical and material expression of a body of critiques that had become common ground among Protestants all over Europe. One of the most controversial subjects was the veneration of saints, relics and images, which, in turn, were the driving force behind the pilgrimage phenomenon. Harking back to the ban on the making and adoration (*adorare* in the Vulgate, *latreia* in the Septuagint) of images (resp. *sculptile* or *eidolon*) in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20, 1–17; Deuteronomy 5, 4–21), Protestant reformers judged their use and paying honor to them to be idolatrous, distracting the attention of the people from the genuine devotion to God. Luther, Zwingli and Calvin all fulminated against such Catholic practices, although their individual standpoints significantly differed, varying from rather tolerant in Luther's case to virtually encouraging iconoclasm in the case of Zwingli.[1]

Protestant Critiques

After his initial fierce criticism, Luther developed an increasingly moderate attitude. In the series of sermons he held in Wittenberg in early March 1522 to end the disorderly course of the *Unruhen*, he presented images as *adiaphora*, things that in themselves are neither good nor bad. His key distinction was between exterior idolatry, directed to images, and the much more dangerous interior cult of idols 'which every person [has] in his or heart', such as money.[2] Inasmuch as images could help believers to worship God, they were certainly to be allowed in Luther's view. For Calvin, however, the individual and material character of the worshipped images constituted the main problem, the philosophical ground for his stance being that finite matter cannot contain the infinite, spiritual God. A set of rhetorical questions in his *Institutio christianae religionis* (1536) illustrate his point (Lib. I, Cap. XI, 10):

Figure 72, detail
Joannes and Lucas van Doetecum after Pieter Bruegel, *Saint George's kermis*, c. 1559, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

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> Why are such distinctions made between different images [*simulachra*] of the same God, that while one is passed by, or receives only common honor, another is worshiped with the highest solemnities? Why do they fatigue themselves with votive pilgrimages [*votivis peregrinationibus*] to images while they have many similar ones at home?[3]

However different the views of both giants on either end of the Protestant spectrum might have been, the actual cult of specific images – worship (*adoratio* (Lat.) or *latreia* (Gr.)) rather than veneration (*veneratio* (Lat.) or *dulia* (Gr.)) – was considered highly problematic by both; it was idolatry.[4] Calvin's rhetorical questions demonstrate how this was inherently related to the practice of pilgrimage. The notion that some places were to be considered holier than others was fundamentally erroneous for him, as God was omnipresent. Going on pilgrimage was therefore a superfluous practice. Luther, too, had plead for its abolition, calling upon the German princes for practical implementation in *An den christlichen Adel* (1520), his first publication after having realized that a split with Rome was inevitable. Moral and social principles predominate his argument. While pilgrimages were not founded upon divine sanction, he emphasized how they actually often led to the neglect of the commandment of taking care of one's wife and children. Traveling to faraway, so-called holy places such as Rome was a total waste of money and it unnecessarily caused families to be left alone in distress.[5] The many local shrines such as Wilsnack and Regensburg, on the other hand, were driven by the devil, Luther maintained, pushing pilgrims to visit taverns and brothels. Thus, pilgrimages caused a neglect of the parish, where real Christians find baptism, the sacraments, sermons and neighbors – things that are far more important than the saints in heaven.[6]

Closely related to these arguments was the general attempt, from the Protestant side, to criticize and discredit all post-biblical and contemporary miracles.[7] As the Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer explained, pilgrimages were the most flagrant excess that sprang from an unbridled faith in miracles, allegedly worked by cult objects venerated at particular shrines. In Bucer's view, it was precisely such miracles that drove the popularity of devotions to saints, and he tried hard to demonstrate that contrary to common belief miracles were not worked by God, but by the devil or the antichrist in order to pervert true religion.[8] Although the point would later come to be

known as the doctrine of the cessation of miracles, neither Luther nor Calvin treated it as a genuine doctrine, and it has been demonstrated how even Calvinists did, in fact, not so easily give up their faith in wonders and the miraculous.[9] This was clearly contrary to Calvin's wishes, however, and he and Luther both considered their statements on miracles as strongly recommended opinions. Luther, for instance, distinguished between miracles of the soul and of the body. While the former continued because they were to be understood as transformations of the soul by the force of faith, the latter – including miraculous cures, for instance – had ceased. Begging for miraculous signs (*wundertzeychen*) was considered as an undesirable expression of doubt about the Bible, 'signs of an immense unbelief in the people'.[10] Calvin similarly taught that miracles occurred in the Bible only with the purpose of spreading the one true religion by convincing people of the divine nature of Christ, but such acts ceased when the apostolic age came to an end.[11]

In many respects these critiques were not unique to the Protestant Reformation. They stood in a long tradition of criticism on excessive belief in merely outward devotion, that also had become part and parcel of the Christian humanism that had developed in the early sixteenth century. This movement's main spokesman was Erasmus of Rotterdam, who treated many of the topics in his writings from the *Enchiridion milites christiani* (1503) onwards.[12] He most notably did so in the satirical *Colloquia*, a series of short but increasingly critical dialogues on which he worked for the larger part of his life. One of these texts, first printed in 1522 and later entitled *De visendo loca sacra*, incorporates three clusters of grievances related to pilgrimages that recall both Luther's and Calvin's later criticisms: the enormous costs, the waste of time and the fact that family is left unguarded; the immoral and obscene attitudes that often characterizes pilgrims; and the theology of localization that considers one place holier than another, while God is everywhere.[13] He most famously uttered his criticism in the *Peregrinatio religionis ergo* (1526), which also hints at the first successes of the spreading of Protestant ideas by including references to declining offerings and diminished veneration because of a 'new-fangled notion that pervades the whole world'.[14] In other colloquia his discussion of miracles shows clear links with Protestant writings: not only did Erasmus claim that miracles only occurred in apostolic times, just like Calvin would do later he also emphasized that they were not necessary anymore since the Christian faith has spread.[15]

The Low Countries

Erasmus' *Colloquies* were immensely popular and firmly based on his observations in the Low Countries, but being published in Latin their contents were only available to an educated upper class.[16] However, in the Low Countries the debate was also fostered by a number of indigenous treatises that appeared in the vernacular. One of the earliest texts that directly criticized the act of pilgrimage was *Een troost ende spiegel der siecken* by Willem Claesz. de Volder *alias* Gnapheus (1493–1568), written in 1525 or 1526, but first printed in 1531 in Antwerp.[17] Gnapheus, who held the office of rector of the Latin school in The Hague in the 1520s, was an essential figure for the early Reformation in the Low Countries, and his life can be considered exemplary of the eclectic, protean and dynamic character of the early Reformation there. He was soon persecuted by the inquisition, and so decided to flee to North-Eastern Europe where Lutheranism had been instituted as the official religion. Even there he would eventually enter into conflict with colleagues, resulting in excommunication by the Lutheran church as well, and his return to Emden. In *Een troost ende spiegel der siecken*, Gnapheus criticizes the adoration of saints, which he refers to as foreign gods, and he unmasks their miracles as untruthful dreams of false prophets or deceit of the devil. As a consequence, he claimed to observe daily that at places where the true word of God was spread the cult of miraculous images (*beelden van miraculen*) completely collapsed, and he concluded that therefore the 'fairy-tale miracles and pilgrimages' (*sprokerijen der miraculen ende peregrimatien*) were to be eradicated completely.[18]

Saints, their images and the pilgrims that visited them continued to be a popular target in subsequent Netherlandish writings, which were not infrequently published in exile. The supposed thaumaturgic powers of images were ridiculed in a treatise entitled *Den Val der Roomsche Kercken*, written by an anonymous member of the Calvinist exile community in England. It first appeared in Norwich in 1550, but was often reprinted in the years to come, both in England and the Low Countries.[19] The author mockingly points to the hypocrisy of Catholics in relation to images by pointing out that

> the statues that are in the sculptor's shop can do no miracles until these fine fellows have brought them into their whorish church, and while the crucifixes are still in the goldsmith's hands, they possess no holiness, but when one of these hypocrites has fingered it then one must take off one's bonnet before

> it and bow one's knee, and they go bleating and screaming after their false gods.[20]

Passages such as these provide unique insight into the tensions, perceived at the time, between the man-made and the sacred, and between art and traditional devotion that was strongly characterized by an essentially embodied form of piety. Such precise information on unwritten obligations or customs like taking one's hat off and genuflecting before images occur rarely, if at all, in writings from a Catholic perspective. Nevertheless, it is precisely such acts that must have sparked Protestant irritation and consequently became the main bone of contention in religious discussions.

One of the most systematic and encompassing polemical treatises, finally, was *Der leken wechwyser* by Joannes Anastasius Veluanus (Jan Gerritsz Versteghe, before 1520–1570), a priest turned Protestant from Guelders. The book was written in exile and printed in Strasbourg in 1554, but was soon also spread in the Low Countries.[21] Point by point he elaborately discusses why the Catholic belief in and veneration of saints through processions, pilgrimages and offerings is outright idolatry.[22] Images of wood and stone are blind, Veluanus argued, and they therefore cannot possibly see the useless votive offerings given to them. Neither are relics of any use and in most cases they are even fake. In no way can saints work miracles: neither through their images, nor through their relics, and in the rare instances in which miracles were true, they must be attributed to God. Most miracles are, however, false and simulated by the devil to incite idolatry, or 'lied about by monks, papists and other scoundrels, who stole a lot of money with such villainy'.[23]

In the immediate wake of these published criticisms the whole academic and humanist discussion became a highly public debate in the Low Countries. Evidence illustrates how these theological questions trickled down into the discussions of artisans. As early as July 1525, for instance, a cooper from Utrecht had reportedly criticized a man who had vowed to go on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Amersfoort. 'Why do you want to go there? Do you believe in wood and stone?' the cooper had asked, thus rhetorically reducing the Amersfoort cult statue to its bare material essence.[24] Some years later, pilgrims were publicly mocked as people that 'in all the world display the most folly' in a series of refrains recited at a rhetoricians' contest in Ghent in 1539.[25] The commonplace critiques of pilgrimages also found their way into contemporary visual culture. For instance, the *Couple in the cornfield* of around 1535–1540

FIGURE 68
Brunswick Monogrammist, *The couple in the cornfield*, c. 1535–1540, Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum

(fig. 68) directly addresses the issue of amorality and adultery that was considered by some as inherently related to pilgrimages and processional culture. The two paper pilgrimage pennants that lay carelessly on the ground reveal that the couple secretly slipped away from the procession that is still going on in the background, and the fact that both are in the process of undressing unequivocally suggests the reason why.[26] In the 1540s, Cornelis Anthonisz. also linked pilgrimage with amorality in his woodcut series of the *Prodigal son*, based on writings by Gnapheus (fig. 69). After the prodigal spent all of his money carousing, the woodcuts show Superstition and Heresy directing him to Satan's Temple, where Disease awaits him in the guise of the pope. Significantly, Anthonisz. dressed Superstition as a pilgrim.[27] And whereas Pieter Aertsen's *Return from the pilgrimage to Saint Anthony* of around 1550–1555 (fig. 70) at first sight seems to depict a serene processional scene with devout participants, a closer look reveals a group of fighting men in the background.[28]

The increasing occurrence of isolated acts of violence against images and sacred objects from the 1520s onwards must have had

FIGURE 69
Cornelis Anthonisz., *The expulsion of the prodigal son*, 1540s, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

an even greater impact. A rumor that spread in May 1525, claiming that images of saints had been mocked, broken and removed from the churches in Delft, was proven wrong, but only a few weeks later images were actually attacked in Antwerp. A statue of Saint Francis standing on a bridge was thrown into the water and a monumental crucifixion group smashed to pieces.[29] Other early examples are documented in Leuven. In 1535, for instance, a group of six men and two women treated a crucifix in a cemetery in an 'unworthy' (*indigne*) manner, and in 1539 a man daubed an image of Christ with dirt.[30] The breaking and removing of images were explicitly proscribed under penalty of death in Charles V's Eternal Edict of 1550 – meant to suppress Protestantism and known as the Blood Placard – but incidents increasingly occurred towards the end of the

FIGURE 70
Pieter Aertsen, *Return from the pilgrimage to Saint Anthony*, c. 1550–1555, Brussels, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
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1550s and the early 1560s.[31] The collegiate church of Saint Hermes in Ronse, a pilgrimage destination of some importance, was aggressively profaned in 1559 and two other churches in town were subject to partial destruction on the same occasion.[32] Equally notorious were the nocturnal attacks in the Westkwartier from 1560 onwards, whereby images hung on trees and wayside crucifixes were seized and cast on the ground.[33] Even in Bruges, a city that was able to ward off all iconoclastic threats in the summer of 1566, sporadic hostility could not be prevented in the preceding years. In October 1563 a crucifix was chopped into pieces with a sword, the attackers went on to ridicule the parts and then throw them in a public cesspool. In another instance a statue of Our Lady was stolen and thrown into a fountain.[34] Such cases were certainly not limited to the County of Flanders alone. The Brabantine cloister of Hertoginnedal in Oudergem, for instance, was heavily sacked in February 1562, and its consecrated hosts were trampled under foot. The subsequent burning of sculptures, ornaments and paintings resulted in a burnout of the whole complex.[35]

A crucial source for our understanding of the context in the broad region around Zoutleeuw is the diary of Christiaan Munters (c. 1505–1555), chaplain in Kuringen, some 20 kilometers northeast

from Zoutleeuw. He wrote down all sorts of noteworthy events in the period between 1529 and 1545, ranging from wondrous happenings such as the birth of Siamese twins or a cow with two heads, to important international developments and facts, such as the Münster Rebellion (1534–1535) or the death of Erasmus (1536). The manuscript thus offers a unique reflection of the broad variety of news that actually circulated in the region, and it is therefore interesting to observe that Munters devoted a great deal of attention to the spreading of Protestantism and the persecution of its followers in and around Kuringen. Iconoclasm was clearly considered as an inherent characteristic of heterodoxy. In December 1533, Munters described the acts some 'Lutherans' had reportedly committed with a crucifix in a chapel in Repen (now Over- and Neerrepen, near Tongeren). They chopped off the hand and feet of Christ, split his face in two before throwing the damaged image in a ditch 'with his blessed arms upwards'. The scattered pieces of statues of Our Lady and Saint John joined the debris.[36] Some years later, in June 1537, Munters described similar profanations which he heard had occurred in Zierikzee (Zeeland), where four priests had urinated and defecated on an image of Our Lady.[37] At other times he documented news about priests being attacked at Mass in Gorsleeuw or Lutherans of Kuringen threatening to destroy the churches and cloisters and kill all priests and clerics.[38] The diary demonstrates that Protestantism was no unknown phenomenon in the region around Zoutleeuw and that sporadically actual destructions were carried out not too far from town.[39] The city of Leuven is only located some 30 kilometers to the west of the town, and both Repen and Gorsleeuw are some 25 kilometers to its east. More importantly, these reports illustrate that iconoclasm was an important regional news item, well before 1566. However sporadic such actual cases might have been, their significance and impact must not be underestimated. These examples neatly demonstrate how the community at large became increasingly involved in a discussion about how to worship God in an appropriate way. The debate was public, and the acts of common laymen and -women were voices that translated learned, theological objections.

Catholic Responses

All Protestant critique notwithstanding, the written Catholic defense to counter this broad-fronted criticism took a long time to emerge. Johannes Eck's *De non tollendis Christi et sanctorum imaginibus* (Ingolstadt 1522), for instance, contained all the traditional arguments that would later become commonplace, but the fact

that it was written in Latin considerably limited its audience.[40] The same was the case with most of the later defenses published all over Europe.[41] In England, notable humanist Thomas More exceptionally stepped into the breach with *A Dialogue concernynge heresyes* (1529) in the vernacular, defending the veneration of images and relics and the practice of pilgrimages against 'the pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale'. Although he recognizes that pilgrimages sometimes lead to abuses, he maintains that they do not invalidate this practice which had been established long ago.[42] In the Low Countries, the Catholic contribution to the debate was limited prior to 1566. A book by Ghent Dominican Jan van den Bundere (*alias* Bunderius, 1482–1557) is the exception that proves the rule. In 1556 he published a Latin treatise, of which a vernacular version appeared in 1557, wherein he systematically refuted Veluanus' critiques. For Bunderius, the many miracles worked by God were the clearest proof of the pleasure He takes from Christians honouring saints and their images.[43]

The otherwise inadequate reaction by the Netherlandish clergy to Protestant critiques has been analyzed by Pollmann. Contrary to previous suppositions that collectively portrayed Catholics in the Low Countries as indifferent, she claimed that it was not uncommon for them to be strongly committed to their cause. Before 1566, however, it seems that the clergy mostly decided to neglect Protestant ideas in order to keep the laity ignorant about them.[44] It was only the *Beeldenstorm* that acted as a catalyst for the publication of a number of Catholic treatises defending traditional devotional practices, of which the first appeared in 1567. As Freedberg rightly observed, the sometimes violent iconoclastic attacks led to a 'broad-fronted response to the image critics'. Translations and re-editions of earlier works by foreign authors appeared, but there were also new treatises written, not only in Latin, but now also in the vernacular.[45]

The hesitant stance from the Catholic side was doubtless also related to the absence of a quick, firm and clear response from Rome itself. It was only by the end of 1545, when Protestantism had already settled firmly in the European religious landscape, that the Catholic Church organized an ecumenical council to reconsider and redefine its own standpoints and doctrines within these disputes. The council took place in Trent, was spread over 25 sessions and lasted until 1563. As the veneration of both images and relics, and all related devotional practices including pilgrimages and the belief in miracles were severely criticized by the reformers, the church was obliged to take an official stance on these matters. But the question was thorny and it was left until the last session for the church

to handle it. Some participants even wanted to skip the issue altogether. Chiefly instigated by iconoclastic outbursts in France in 1561–1562, the council finally treated images and relics in the 25th session on 3 and 4 December 1563.[46] The decree was entitled 'On invocation, on veneration, on relics of the saints and on sacred images' (*De invocatione, veneratione et reliquiis sanctorum et sacris imaginibus*) and its arguments were partly based on the proceedings of the Council of Nicaea of 787, which had famously put an end to the first phase of iconoclasm.[47]

The arguments in favor of images can be traced back to two theological principles. Perhaps the strongest argument was that the images were the books of the illiterate, the *libri idiotarum* or *Biblia pauperum*. In origin, this argument comes from a letter of Pope Gregory the Great (c. 560–604) to Bishop Serenus of Marseille, who had commanded the destruction of images in his bishopric.[48] The Trent decree explicitly stated that people are instructed by images and that their faith is strengthened by them. Moreover, by looking at images, they can shape their life in imitation of the saints. Secondly, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the distinction between image and prototype. Its theological essence was based on *De spiritu sancto* of the Greek bishop Basil of Caesarea (330–379), which the Council of Nicaea had used to claim that the religious veneration is not directed at the image itself, but rather to the thing it represents, its prototype.[49]

The Council of Trent did all but solve the religious problems. In fact, it mainly restated old principles. There were no concessions towards Protestants concerning the use of religious imagery. A moderate reformer such as Luther, for instance, had a rather tolerant attitude towards images and he accepted that they could be aids for believers to venerate God, but he had explicitly preached against extreme abuses in pilgrimages and begging for miracles. And this was common ground for a lot of other authors, from critical Catholics such as More and Erasmus to Reformed Protestants like Calvin. The Trent decree clearly wanted to put an end to the abuses related to images and the cult of saints, and bishops were given an important new task to ensure that these principles were not violated. They had to give permission for every new image that would be erected, and 'no new miracles [were to] be accepted and no relics recognized, unless they have been investigated and approved by the same bishop'. Apart from these limitations on new images, miracles and relics, it was specified that every superstition was to be removed, and that 'the celebration of saints and the visitation of relics [*sanctorum*

celebratione ac reliquiarum visitatione] [were not to] be perverted by the people into boisterous festivities and drunkenness'.[50] Nevertheless, the decree is clear in its reaffirmation of age-old practices, condemning everybody who counters them:

> They who affirm that veneration and honor are not due to the relics of saints; or that these, and other sacred monuments, are uselessly honored by the faithful; and that the places dedicated to the memories of the saints are in vain visited with the view of obtaining their aid; are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned, and now also condemns them.[51]

In short, although new images, miracles and relics were firmly placed under the authority of bishops, the clergy at Trent decided that the established practice of pilgrimage was to be maintained at all cost. What influence did these theoretical debates and polemics have on actual shrines and devotional attitudes in the Low Countries? How did the public debate affect the cult of Saint Leonard at Zoutleeuw, that had flourished half a century before?

The Cult of Saint Leonard at Zoutleeuw: Tradition and Innovation

The debate on the desirability of pilgrimage included Zoutleeuw. A 1555 report of an investigation held in Kuringen reveals how a certain Jan Caussarts had taunted the pilgrims who went there to worship Saint Leonard:

> Why should they go to Zoutleeuw? The statue of Saint Leonard is made of walnut and its tabernacle of a pig's trough (…) Those are poor, misguided people that put their faith in it, believing that it sweats when it works a miracle, while it had been covered in oil.[52]

The precise religious convictions of the man in question remain unknown, but is clear that he shared a high degree of harsh criticism with the famous writers discussed above. To judge by the statements of forty witnesses, Caussarts had claimed that pilgrimage was a waste of time, that pilgrims were not wise and that the offerings were better spent at home. Fully in line with the aforementioned critiques by

the Utrecht cooper on the shrine of Amersfoort, Zoutleeuw's image of Saint Leonard and its tabernacle were reduced to their bare material, wooden composition, and the supposed miracles debunked as deceptive illusions. These were frequently used Protestant strategies: precisely because images, and three-dimensional sculptures in particular, had animated and lively qualities, it was crucial to emphasize their dead materiality in order to demonstrate their impotence.[53] Though only in words, Caussarts profaned the sacred, miraculous charisma the statue had acquired throughout the preceding decades (Chapter 1).

Maintaining Tradition

The Zoutleeuw churchwardens were aware of such criticism and perhaps even feared actual attacks well before that time. In 1538, a new function appears in the accounts: for the first time 'the woman who sits for Saint Leonard' is mentioned.[54] Elsewhere similar functions are attested earlier, but no guarding of Saint Leonard's chapel is hinted at prior to 1538.[55] Later accounts indicate a near-permanent presence at the shrine throughout the whole year, for which the women in question were paid half a *stuiver* daily. Their further activities or social profiles are unknown, but the rather low wage and the fact that they are only referred to by their first names – Lysken, Berbel, Eelen, Meereken or Gret – indicates that they must have been common laypeople. Presumably they received and supervised the offerings made, as precaution for growing unrest and tensions. Such was certainly the case in 1556, one year after Caussarts' critiques, when special measures were taken during the Pentecost festivities. A man kept watch in the church during the four nights when the miraculous statue was temporarily replaced from its own chapel to the center of the nave for the pilgrims to worship.[56] Vigilance was increased over the next years, when both the number of guards as well as the number of nights were augmented. From 1562 onwards four men were on duty for five nights and in 1566 men were hired to guard even during the daytime.[57] These measures were doubtlessly meant to prevent potential disorder, suggesting that the Zoutleeuw churchwardens realized they had to protect the statue of Saint Leonard. After all, the cult's rising popularity around 1500 had put it at the forefront of their concerns.

Regardless of these security measures, the cult maintained its established traditions, displaying, at first glance, few traces of innovation. The cult statue was provided with a new garment in 1556, but unlike in the later fifteenth century the chapel was not subjected

to major decoration works.[58] The same is true of the yearly procession on Whit Monday, the organization and financing of which the churchwardens shared with the civic authorities. The latter regularly paid for the reparation of participating wagons, giants or the legendary horse Bayard, while theatrical plays on the life of Saint Leonard during and after the procession were organized annually by the local chamber of rhetoric, the *Lelikens uten Dale*.[59] The churchwardens' expenses suggest a steady continuity in budgetary terms. Possible novelties include a painted procession banner depicting the church's patron saint, and children walking along in the processions at Pentecost and at Corpus Christi, carrying candles, torches, thuribles and the priest's cope.[60]

All the available evidence indicates that pilgrims did indeed keep on coming to Zoutleeuw to call upon Saint Leonard for intercession or to thank him for grace already received. Interestingly, they themselves were included in the Whit Monday procession, walking along between ropes as a distinct yet essential group that demonstrated the parade's relevance.[61] The monetary offerings further confirm this continuity. Unlike the cults in Antwerp, Delft and Utrecht, there is no notable significant decrease in Zoutleeuw around 1520, regardless of the common fluctuations. After reaching a summit in 1523 the figures reveal a slight decline, but throughout the period between 1520 and 1566 the revenues never went below the level they had attained around 1500. Furthermore, a new climax was reached in 1547, and the first considerable blow was only to be noted in the financial year 1566, which included the revenues of the first Whit Monday procession after the *Beeldenstorm* (graph 4).[62] Zoutleeuw certainly was not unique in this respect, because the same pattern is discernible in the revenues of other shrines, such as Wezemaal. It is true that in 1523 less money (c. 1100 *Rijnsgulden*) was collected there in comparison with the absolute summit in 1513 (c. 1800 *Rijnsgulden*), but the rate is still much higher than the amount collected in the early 1480s (c. 400 *Rijnsgulden*).[63] And although a decreasing trend can be noted in the devotional revenues of Dudzele, there was certainly no sudden implosion. There, too, the local procession continued to enjoy the same popularity.[64]

The Sale of Devotionalia

The Zoutleeuw accounts further reveal a thriving commerce in all sorts of devotional objects such as ex-votos, the sale of which was to an important extent controlled and organized by the churchwardens. From 1548 onwards they paid 'four women that sat with wax at

Pentecost' on the market place, suggesting that the *fabrica ecclesiae* provided the ex-votos and votive candles (figs. 31 & 71).[65] The churchwardens indeed bought significant quantities of wax throughout the year, from which they had candles made by a candle maker (*kersmakerssen*) who was in permanent service. These evidently included the ones used in liturgical services and on various chandeliers and altars throughout the church, but also votive candles.[66] Until the 1540s the total amount of wax bought by the wardens very rarely exceeded 100 pounds. From around 1547 onwards, however, increasing quantities were bought, going up to 372 pounds in 1565 (graph 13), suggesting an increasing market and interest for votive gifts. The old idea that conspicuously displayed ex-votos in chapels testified to cult objects' powers and popularity was indeed still very much alive in the middle of the sixteenth century, and the churchwardens anticipated this need by installing rods to hang them on.[67] Such infrastructure was already present in the years around 1500 (see Chapter 1), but it obviously proved insufficient as in 1535 three new iron rods 'to hang the iron legs' were installed.[68] The ex-votos in wax were sometimes remade in more durable materials in order to recycle the wax while preserving the gift's memory. This was the case in 1557, when Claes Roesen, principal sculptor to the Zoutleeuw church between 1548 and 1560, was called upon to make a wooden leg – doubtlessly after a wax example given as ex-voto – which was later polychromed.[69] While crutches and metal or wax images of arms or legs constituted the lion's share of the pilgrims' gifts, sporadically more spectacular gifts appeared, and these were clearly cherished. A new suit of armor hung in the chapel by 1549, for instance.[70] Most devotionalia were sold by the stallholders who had their booth in the parvis or church portal (fig. 31). The revenues from the rentals of these booths are systematically registered in the accounts from 1540 onwards.[71] Mostly, two tenants are registered, and the fact that they continued to show interest in renting stalls in the portal throughout the mid-sixteenth century suggests that it remained a lucrative activity. One of the long-term tenants was the painter Philips Vleeschauwers (doc. 1547–1577), who was occasionally hired by the churchwardens for the restoration, cleaning, varnishing or polychroming of artworks.[72] It is unknown what precisely he sold, but given his profession it can be assumed that he offered small-scale images for meditational purposes or as souvenirs.

Beeldekens or metal pilgrim badges were also sold by the women on the market place.[73] By the beginning of the sixteenth century these were available in different formats and materials, and the

FIGURE 71 Bruges Master of the legend of Saint Ursula, *Veneration of the shrine of Saint Ursula*, c. 1480–1500, Bruges, Groeningemuseum
© LUKASWEB – ARTS IN FLANDERS VZW, HUGO MAERTENS

increasing amounts purchased indicate a growing market that paralleled the increasing monetary offerings (see Chapter 1). In the middle of the 1530s the churchwardens altered the offer. In 1534 and 1535 new molds were bought in Brussels and Liège: brass blocks for the casting of lead badges, and an iron block for the striking of copper and silver ones.[74] Just as was the case before, the production of the badges was outsourced to craftsmen, usually based in larger cities like Sint-Truiden, Leuven (Jacob Boba and Mathijs Oten, doc. 1519–1555), Brussels (Jacob Failgie, doc. 1542–1549) or even Halle in Hainaut (Jan Noé, doc. 1551–1577). It resulted in diversified product offering. Silver badges were now also available in small and large forms, for example.[75] Another novelty were badges that included a small glass plate (*glaeskens*), first mentioned in 1534.[76] These have been identified as mirror badges – a type developed at the Marian shrine in Aachen, where the huge flood of pilgrims often hindered direct contact with the sacred object of devotion. A small mirror inserted in the badge partly remedied this situation by permitting at least indirect eye contact.[77] This typological link with mass pilgrimage is interesting and indicates that the churchwardens sought to propose badges of different types and grades of luxury for a whole range of budgets. After a slight decline in the number of purchased badges in the 1520s, they were bought in ever greater quantities in the following years, up to around 4000 in the 1540s and more than 6000 in the 1550s (graph 5). Given the general demographic decline of Zoutleeuw and the Hageland region this is a fascinating development.[78] The strong alternation of extremely large and small quantities one year after the other suggests that these figures indicate the yearly replenishing of the stock rather than the actually sold numbers, but the average tendency throughout the period is nevertheless rising.[79] In combination with the altered offer, this suggests a continued and perhaps even increasing demand.

The commission of 1000 paper pilgrimage pennants in 1541 marks the introduction of yet another type of devotional paraphernalia in Zoutleeuw.[80] Not a single fifteenth- or sixteenth-century copy from any shrine in the Low Countries is known, but they certainly did exist by the later fifteenth century and would gradually take over the role of the metal badge throughout the sixteenth century.[81] Their success has been related to technical and economic aspects, as the printing of a whole series of images from a single block was at once cheaper and easier than the casting of metal badges. The latter was indeed labor-intensive and required more expensive metal, but the increasingly smaller distances of pilgrimages due to the rise

of local shrines around 1500 might also have rendered the durable metal badges superfluous.[82] Although the data from Zoutleeuw demonstrates that metal badges remained popular throughout the sixteenth century, by the middle of the century paper pennants had become a common feature in Netherlandish pilgrimage culture.[83] They are documented at various shrines and painters subsequently used them to identify figures as participants in or onlookers to processions (figs. 68, 70 & 72, and p. 132).[84]

These visual sources also reveal that the typically triangular objects were commonly worn on headwear or held in hand. For that reason they were glued to little sticks, a job that in Zoutleeuw was left to the churchwardens' servant.[85] The paper pennants themselves were delivered by external suppliers, who in several cases appear to have engaged in a broader trade of devotionalia. In 1549 the pennants came from Jacob Failgie, an artisan possibly based in Brussels, who had already provided the church with tin badges from 1542 onwards.[86] Later the wardens bought them from Cornelis Coennen from Dendermonde, who in the 1550s was active elsewhere in Brabant as well.[87] From 1555 onwards, finally, Jan Noé from Halle (doc. 1540–1577) acted as the principal supplier to the Zoutleeuw churchwardens. Already in 1551 he is paid for metal badges and he

FIGURE 72
Joannes and Lucas van Doetecum after Pieter Bruegel, *Saint George's kermis*, c. 1559, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

would remain on the payroll until at least 1577. Interestingly, he also appears to have provided hosts (*mesbroets*), and like Coennen he was active elsewhere in Brabant too.[88] The churches of Saint Peter in Anderlecht, Saint John the Baptist in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek and Saint Martin in Wezemaal were part of his clientele, and he probably served many more. It is unclear whether he himself produced all the objects he sold, but just like Jacob Failgie he certainly was their principal salesman.[89] Artisans are also known to have specialized in the production of pennants. Members of the Schernier *alias* van Coninxloo family from Brussels, for instance, are known to have supplied designs or prints for several churches.[90] These examples suggest that the mid-sixteenth century saw the emergence of a group of specialized furnishers of all sorts of devotionalia, ranging from metal badges over paper pennants to even hosts. This professionalization, in turn, suggests a still thriving commerce.

Quantitative information on the numbers of pennants commissioned in Zoutleeuw is scarce, but sporadic figures suggest an upward trend in the 1550s and 1560s. Whereas in 1552 only 1000 pennants were put on sticks, that number had risen to 3600 in 1565. Other shrines in the Low Countries display similar evolutions. The number of pennants in Dudzele, for instance, is kept up throughout the sixteenth century, and between *grosso modo* 1540 and 1560 it even doubled from 600 to 1200. This case also interestingly demonstrates that the evolution of monetary offerings not necessarily reveals the degree to which the processions were attended, because while the revenues in Dudzele dwindled, the number of pennants did not follow the same pattern. Devotional liberality might have been on the wane, but participation in traditional devotional practices remained popular.[91]

Distribution of Food and Drinks

Sacred souvenirs or meditational aids were not the only things that pilgrims coming to Zoutleeuw were provided with. Apart from this food for the soul, the churchwardens also offered ample food for the body at the occasion of the Whit Monday procession. Here we touch upon one of the spearheads of the Protestant critiques, as it was often mentioned that the gluttonous participants in such holy days were more in search of worldly pleasures than for God. A critical distinction between charity and excesses leading to blasphemous carousals at the occasion of religious festivities is accurately depicted by Pieter Bruegel in his *Wine of Saint Martin's Day* of c. 1566–1567 (fig. 73). The greedy drunkenness and gluttony of the

FIGURE 73
Pieter Bruegel, *Wine of Saint Martin's day*, c. 1566–1567, Madrid, Museo del Prado
© MUSEO DEL PRADO

people attacking the enormous wine barrel in the center of the picture is formally opposed to the true Christian virtue of charity in the form of Saint Martin giving his cloak to the beggars.[92] In Zoutleeuw, the handing out of food nevertheless remained in practice throughout the middle of the sixteenth century. The 4 *halster* of grain the churchwardens had foreseen since the mid-1490s for the baking of bread to distribute to visitors (Chapter 1) was long maintained, until in 1540 it was suddenly doubled to 8 *halster* (c. 240 liters). This would remain the standard for the years to come, only to drop to 6 *halster* in 1577.[93] From the early sixteenth century onwards pilgrims were also invariably given meat, mostly sausages (*pensen*), but occasionally also some more exceptional dishes such as liver, calf's or sheep's head.[94]

This food was all washed away with drinks, equally available in significant quantities. Already well before 1520, sporadic mentions occur of beer that was bought 'for the pilgrims who went before Saint Leonard'.[95] The practice remained current throughout the sixteenth century. The precise quantities, given in the accounts from 1520 onwards, once more display continuity and constancy, as the average of 3 *amen* (c. 390 liters) per year was steadily maintained. It is of course impossible to establish how respectfully or decently these foods and drinks were consumed, but it is not difficult to imagine how such habits sparked the excesses that reformers fulminated against and the drunkenness the Council of Trent tried to do

away with. This, however, did not keep the Zoutleeuw churchwardens from introducing culinary novelties at the occasion of the Whit Monday procession in the 1530s, such as gingerbread (*pepercoek*) and cooked peas in the form of a stew, prepared with butter, sugar and spices such as pepper, saffron and clove.[96]

In sum, nothing in the documentary evidence suggests a collapse of the existing regional pilgrimage culture. While the revenues from monetary offerings show a slight recession in the 1520s and early 1530s, they would reach new peaks in the 1540s and 1550s. The supply of devotionalia, such as ex-votos and pilgrim badges, displays a similar pattern and confirm this sense of continuity. In combination with the increasing numbers of pilgrim badges and their diversification, the introduction of paper pilgrim pennants in the 1540s even suggest renewed dynamics and a slight revival during the period preceding the 1566 *Beeldenstorm*. Comparison with other cases reveals that Zoutleeuw was no exceptional case in displaying a continuity with traditional pilgrimage and procession culture.[97]

Miracles and Cults, Old and New

In spite of growing criticism, the yearly Whit Monday procession was still attended by interested pilgrims. But their deeper religious understanding of the whole happening is a different issue that requires reflection. The parading of a venerated statue was of course a quintessentially Catholic ritual and it can quite safely be assumed that such events would not enthusiastically be attended by staunch Protestants. But while the religious views of the major reformers were more or less definitively worked out by mid-century, the confessional divisions of the people at large would only slowly begin to take shape from that moment onwards. There was still a broad and heterogeneous religious middle group of people who were neither convinced Catholics nor Protestants. Defining moments such as 1566 worked as catalysts that made people move to either end of the religious spectrum, but the speed of this process displayed strong geographic differences.[98] Thus, the mere fact that processions were attended should not automatically be taken to mean that onlookers were convinced of its appropriateness or salubrity. The food and drinks offered at the occasion of the procession might well have served as pull-factors for poor pilgrims attending the procession, especially in times of heavy economic crisis.

Miracles: Continuity versus Cessation

Other aspects of the cult reveal an underlying devotional significance, however. The giving of ex-votos, for instance, testifies to a certain belief in its effectiveness and a conviction of its appropriateness. Although no miracles are referred to in the sixteenth-century accounts, all the available evidence suggests that they continued to occur and that pilgrims continued to successfully address their votive prayers to Saint Leonard. The miraculous character of Zoutleeuw's statue was emphasized around 1543 as an argument in a request for the institutional reform of the collegiate chapter. The Priory of Val des Écoliers (*Scholierendal*), located at the southern border of town (fig. 3), had suffered damages as a result of the Guelders Wars (1502–1543), to such an extent that the community of friars claimed to be unable to assure the fulfilment of their religious duties. In collaboration with the collegiate chapter of Saint Leonard they worked out a plan in which they proposed to abolish the priory and merge both communities. This would result in an unusually large chapter of 16 canons, but in the request addressed to the pope both parties justified this by referring to the importance of the cult of Saint Leonard, 'who by his clear working of miracles, draws many devout Christians to the church'.[99] Such a sizeable chapter would guarantee the continuous presence of clergymen in the collegiate church, heightening its standing with the celebration of the Divine Office, their protection of the existing civic procession and 'the protection of church property against occupiers and devastators'.[100] The request referred to miracles in the present tense, suggesting that they still happened at the time of writing. It can of course be argued that the Zoutleeuw communities embellished the importance of the cult in order to have their wishes granted. But in his 1555 critique Jan Caussarts still referred to people who foolishly 'believe that it sweats when it works a miracle, while it had been covered in oil'.[101] The fact that Caussarts referred to the Zoutleeuw statue, located some 20 kilometers away from Kuringen, demonstrates that it was still a renowned miraculous site in the region. How do these observations about Zoutleeuw fit into the broader pattern of the Low Countries?

Caussarts' critical analysis of the so-called wonders as a result of oil put on statues was part of a general Protestant exposure of miracles as Catholic falsehoods. As they maintained that wonders had ceased after the apostolic age, the events that Catholics presented as miracles could not have been worked by God. A man executed in Kuringen in July 1535, for instance, had expressed his disbelief in very much the same terms as Caussarts.[102] Protestant songs that

circulated in the Low Countries after the *Beeldenstorm* further actualized this conviction of the cessation of miracles, remarking that 'all saints have submerged, they do not work miracles anymore'.[103] But instead of referring back to the apostolic age, the text in fact contrasts the situation in 1566 with the exceptional miraculous climate that had characterized the Low Countries during the decades around 1500 (Chapter 2). To a certain degree the song's observation concurs with the data in extant miracle collections, because an important number of miracle books stop their registrations in the first part of the sixteenth century. More than half of the total corpus end in the first half of the century, seven of which have their last miracle recorded between 1520 and 1545.[104] The collection of miracles worked by the Holy Cross (*Heilig Hout*) in Dordrecht, for instance, started in 1457, ends with the miraculous deliverance of a shipmaster's child in 1509 and closes after 57 silent years with the ominous inscription 'finis actum 1566'.[105] Indeed, very few miracles were recorded in the 1540s, 1550s and 1560s – respectively 9, 1 and 10 as opposed to still 48 in the 1530s – and they also occurred in fewer places (graphs 10 & 11).[106] While the 1510s had marked a high point in the number of active miraculous shrines with ten registering locations, the situation was completely reversed in 1550, when only one shrine recorded a dated miracle. The dearth of tangible information about miracles during these turbulent years was also perceived as a problem in the early seventeenth century, when Catholic authors sought to reevaluate pre-existing miracle cults (Chapter 8). Thus, the reformers' critiques of miracles were clearly reflected in the actual collections, and 1566 was considered by many as the definitive end point of an era. It almost seemed as if the cessation of miracles was an established fact in the mid-sixteenth-century Low Countries.

New Cults and Cultic Renewal: Our Lady of the Ossenweg

Beneath this predominating, pessimistic narrative lies a thin layer of evidence that reveals a particular continuity, however. While documentation of Saint Leonard's miraculous activity is scarce, in the countryside just outside Zoutleeuw's city walls a new cult suddenly arose. Around early May 1538 a Marian statuette (fig. 74) was discovered hanging on an oak tree near a road called the Ossenweg, on a hill some 3 kilometers northeast of town (fig. 3).[107] Immediately after its discovery it started working miracles, the fame of which soon spread in the region. Contemporary chroniclers reported them with awe. In Kuringen, on 19 June 1538, chaplain Christiaan Munters recorded in his diary that he went to the shrine and that he had read

FIGURE 74
Anonymous, *Our Lady of the Ossenweg*, early sixteenth century, Zoutleeuw, chapel of Our Lady of the Ossenweg
PHOTO: AUTHOR

Mass there. A few weeks later, in early August, news had reached him of three new miraculous healings that had been worked by Our Lady of the Ossenweg: she had given speech to a deaf-and-dumb man, she had released a possessed man and given health to a cripple who had taken great pains to come from about 130 kilometers away.[108] Joannes van Brustem (d. 1549), a Franciscan from Sint-Truiden, confirmed in 1545 that devotees came from far and wide to pray for the newly found miraculous statuette.[109] The shrine's miracle book, still referred to in 1632 by Augustinus Wichmans but now lost, was said to have included many other miracles dated to 1538, one of which was also commemorated in a painting that reportedly hung at the site. It testified to the benefactions received by a certain Aegidius vanden

Hoeve, standard-bearer from the Antwerp Guild of Saint George, who had become paralyzed. In the year of the statuette's discovery he had heard of its divine powers, and so he decided to go there too. As he knelt down he was almost instantaneously cured.[110] From its earliest days, the fame of Our Lady of the Ossenweg thus spread throughout the Duchy and the Bishopric.

The flood of pilgrims that Van Brustem highlighted in his account immediately gave cause to the building of a stone chapel in which the visitors could decently be received (fig. 75). From the start, it functioned as an independent institution with own wardens and accounts, the earliest of which provides an unique insight into the earliest development of the shrine after the alleged discovery of the sculpture.[111] It was compiled by Matheus Weers, who was a member of the town's financial elite and at that moment warden of the foundation of the Lauds of the Holy Sacrament in Saint Leonard's church. Later he would function as churchwarden, civic steward, town councilor and after the death of his wife he was ordained priest, celebrating Masses in Saint Leonard's church.[112]

On 19 May, only a little more than two weeks after the statuette's alleged discovery, Weers started registering diligently the affluent revenues and the expenses for the chapel's construction. In the span of half a year, all the necessary building materials were bought: more

FIGURE 75
Zoutleeuw, chapel of Our Lady of the Ossenweg, 1538, with extensions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

than 40,000 bricks, more than 50 cartloads of natural stone, several oaks and quantities of various metals. Later, the decoration of the chapel was taken care of. The roof was topped with a metal cross, one of the windows was furnished with a glass depicting the Mystic Lamb and Peter Roesen carved a Pietà (fig. 76). At the same time, the necessary measures were taken so that it would be possible to celebrate Mass at the shrine: an altar stone was bought in Gobertange; the liturgical utensils in precious metal came from Antwerp, including a silver chalice and ciborium, a holy-water font and a lavatorium; and a chasuble was acquired in Brussels. A request to have the altar consecrated was sent to the Liège *curia officialis* in Diest, but Mass was read there well before the official ceremonies, both by canon Henrick vander Gheten from the Zoutleeuw chapter as by occasional external priests such as Munters, who noted that the chapel was still under construction. From the outset the shrine also engaged in the trade in devotionalia, proposing pilgrim badges (*bilsekens*) to devout visitors and selling votive candles on Zoutleeuw's market place.

The sudden popularity of this new cult is also reflected in the devotional offerings. When Munters came by on 19 June to read his Mass, he claimed that since 3 May devotees had already offered 1200 Brabantine guilders.[113] Comparison with Weers' account shows that this amount is highly exaggerated, but it is nevertheless illustrative of the early perception of the shrine as being incredibly well-attended. Furthermore, it is true that the revenues by far exceeded the costs for the building of the chapel, which concurs with the observations of early-seventeenth-century authors such as Gramaye and Wichmans, who claimed that the chapel was built with the alms of pilgrims.[114] In the course of May 1538 alone a stunning amount of 3571,5 *stuivers* was collected, which equaled the contemporary devotional offerings at Saint Leonard's church for a whole year.[115] Although the revenues would diminish after the first month, the total sum of 8924 *stuivers* collected in this first half year was something the churchwardens of Saint Leonard could only dream of.

The cult of Our Lady of the Ossenweg convincingly testifies to a continued attachment to the belief in miracles worked by images around mid-century. Other cases of active miracle cults elsewhere in Brabant confirm this tendency. Even the cult of Saint Job in Wezemaal that would become such a popular target of Protestant mockery upheld its thaumaturgic faculties in the 1560s. In October 1563, for instance, the bells were rung for three days after the miraculous healing of a man. In 1566 the cult image of Saint Job was temporarily sheltered due to iconoclastic threats, but, after

FIGURE 76
Peter Roesen, *Pietà*, 1538, Zoutleeuw, chapel of Our Lady of the Ossenweg
PHOTO: GUIDO CONINGX – VZW DE VRIENDEN VAN ZOUTLEEUW

these had been successfully warded off, the statue returned and in March and April 1567 new miracles were recorded.[116] In 1519, the Augustinian friars in nearby Leuven suddenly started recording the wonders worked by the miraculous host that had been in their

convent since 1380. These included the only recorded miracle dating to the 1550s (graph 11), documenting the successful 1551 invocation by a woman from Werchter to resuscitate her drowned child.[117]

A similar cult, existing in Brussels since 1370, had been on the wane in the middle of the fifteenth century, but again became the subject of an intense promotion campaign around 1530. In 1529 the city had been threatened by the sweating sickness, from which the government tried to protect itself by carrying around the Holy Sacrament of Miracle in procession. The attempts reportedly were successful and initiatives were soon taken to immortalize the events. In 1531 the wardens of the church of Saints Michael and Gudula started making plans for a new and bigger chapel (consecrated in 1542), a yearly procession in the cult object's honor was instituted in 1532 and in 1533 the miraculous hosts were placed in a new reliquary. It is in this particular context that the compilation of a proper miracle collection must be situated. In 1532 a book was published by the Cologne Carthusian Dirk Loër (Theodoricus Loërius) that not only recounted the story of the Holy Sacrament of Miracle, but also included the increased number of miracles that had occurred in the preceding years. A few years later, around 1543, preparations were made to publish yet another book. Although only the preparatory manuscript is known and the project presumably stranded in this phase, the majority of the miracles were dated between 1523 and 1536.[118] Old cults thus became the conspicuous subject of a renewed interest.

Miracles as Anti-Protestant Statements

Mounting critiques clearly did not prevent these Brabantine shrines from promoting the miraculous character of the sacred objects they hosted, either by persistent bell-ringing, the compiling of miracle books, the institution of processions or the construction of a new chapel. Rather than mere products of tradition, many of these initiatives can in fact be understood as conscious reactions against increasing Protestant questioning and mockery. Only in 1563 would the Catholic Church officially condemn those who did not believe in miracles or the salubrity of pilgrimages. But ever since they were denounced by Luther 'as signs of an immense unbelief' in 1520, the Low Countries' religious landscape was subjected to confessional tensions, both latent and public. Civic and religious communities were now confronted with fundamental questions regarding the cult objects that had provided them with pride and identity for

generations or even recently, and it is therefore not surprising that they took a public stand on the matter.

The Brussels Holy Sacrament of Miracle

As for the Holy Sacrament of Miracle in Leuven's Augustine convent, it remains to be established whether or not it is pure coincidence that the first recorded miracle in the preserved collection is dated to 1519, the year in which the city's university unanimously condemned Luther – a fellow Augustinian friar – for the first time.[119] The active promotion of the Brussels Holy Sacrament of Miracle by the Habsburg court suggests that there was more at stake, however. Margit Thøfner has argued that the cult was only remolded into a militant Counter-Reformation devotion by Archdukes Albert and Isabella.[120] However, their demarche clearly had earlier roots. An anonymous chronicler emphasized that it was 'the imperial court' that carried the shrine with the Eucharistic relics in the successful 1529 procession.[121] Governess Margaret of Austria attended the ritual, and the first stone of the new chapel in the church of Saints Michael and Gudula, laid in 1534, carried her coat of arms. Loërius, who in the same year published the book that included the recent miracles, was well-acquainted with Emperor Charles V, and so was one of the churchwardens responsible for the later miracle manuscript, who furthermore was a member of the Council of Brabant.[122] It was also the Emperor who took the initiative for the major patronage project that would provide the newly constructed chapel with its magnificent stained-glass windows. These were all donated by major European princes who were either member of the Habsburg family or related to it.[123]

The political messages and imperial claims underlying the antique style deployed in the windows have been amply analyzed by scholars, but the importance of the choice for the cult itself has not yet received sufficient attention.[124] The donation of monumental windows was of course an age-old princely tradition in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries, and the Brussels windows were certainly not the first which Charles had sponsored. In 1517, for instance, he had given money for a series in Lier's church of Saint Gummarus. However, these consisted only of representations of himself and his illustrious ancestors looking up to their patron saints and thus mainly served to visualize and glorify the dynasty (fig. 77).[125] By contrast, in the Brussels project from the 1530s, Charles and his fellow Habsburgs deliberately chose to eternally associate their name with the cult of the Eucharist and, in particular, with the

Brussels Holy Sacrament of Miracle. The monumental glass window of 1537 in the north transept shows Charles V and his wife Isabella of Portugal kneeling and praying in perpetuity, not just in front of a generic Eucharistic monstrance, but the actual, new reliquary of 1533 holding the Brussels Sacrament of Miracle (figs. 78 & 79).[126]

The classical architecture that was used to frame the depicted stories and figures furthermore functioned as more than a glorification of just the imperial power and dynasty. On the level above the representations of the European rulers, the triumphant structures also staged the miraculous story of the host that had started bleeding after being stabbed. This was of course the perfect demonstration of the truth of the doctrine of the Real Presence, as it cannot

FIGURE 77
Nicolaas Rombouts (attributed to), *Archdukes Charles and Ferdinand of Austria*, 1516–1519, Lier, church of Saint Gummarus
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

possibly have happened if Protestants were right in their symbolical interpretation of the Eucharist (Chapter 5). The series of windows thus functioned as a glorious and public statement of the Habsburg endorsement of the doctrine, and more broadly of the belief in miracles. After all, in the course of the 1520s Charles V had appointed himself as a staunch defender of the ancient Christian, i.e. Roman, faith. In the Low Countries this policy was put into practice not only by a number of anti-heresy laws, but also by a series of judicial reorganizations and the creation of a new type of inquisition that, contrary to the pre-existing medieval institutions, would be able to actively combat the spreading of heterodox ideas.[127] The windows are an unmistakable visual testimony to this profiling.

The choice for the main church in the city of Brussels is also revelatory in at least one respect, as the city had taken over the role of Mechelen as the *de facto* capital of the Low Countries from 1531 onwards. The central government and public authorities were located there and consequently, in the Habsburg state ideology, it also had to be a stronghold of religious orthodoxy. There are no indications that the initiative to promote the Brussels Sacrament of Miracle was a reaction against a particular Protestant threat or episode, but Protestantism certainly did spread in the city and the veneration of the Eucharist demonstrably was a debated issue there. For instance, in the 1527 investigations held in Brussels leading to the trial against court artists Bernard van Orley, Pieter de Pannemaeker and others, it was revealed that a symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist was propagated in the sermons they had attended. In the end none of the accused were executed, but they were explicitly prohibited from making pronouncements on the topic.[128] Ironically, it was Van Orley who some years later received the commission for the cycle of windows wherein the Eucharistic miracle was glorified. It is difficult to assess just how broad the debate was, but it is clear that the 1529 procession – two years later – was a citywide and extremely public event. A traditional proclamation in front of the city hall informed the civic community that all inhabitants were to fast and attend the Mass that would be held in the church of Saints Michael and Gudula, where the relics would be exposed. Afterwards, everybody was requested to participate in the procession by carrying a candle, and even those who did not attend were directly confronted with the happening as the bells of all churches in the city are said to have rung. After the procession, described by one chronicler as ‘the most beautiful and devout that was seen in more than 100 years’, the relics were again exposed in the church, and it was at that particular

FIGURE 78
Jan Haeck after Bernard van Orley, *Emperor Charles V in adoration of the reliquary of the Brussels Holy Sacrament of Miracle*, detail from the window in the northern transept, 1537, Brussels, cathedral of Saints Michael and Gudula
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

moment that the first, new miracle reportedly happened.[129] The procession was the ideal occasion to bring the Eucharistic relics to the fore again, and it arguably functioned as a strong message to those in doubt.

Miracles against Protestants

Within the Brussels collection of miracles there are no explicit references to Protestantism, but there are many such references elsewhere. The shrine that registered even more miracles than Brussels in the course of the 1530s was that of Saint Quirinus in Malmedy (respectively 20 and 23 on a total of 48, see graph 11), in a collection composed under the direction of Abbot Guillaume de Manderscheid (r. 1501–1546). The manuscript features references to the spreading of Protestantism, and Philippe George even characterized the collection as *une réaction prétridentine*.[130] One of its miracles indeed refers to heterodoxy in direct relation to the cult of the venerated saint. In 1536 a 'Lutheran' from Maastricht who had criticized pilgrimages

FIGURE 79
Anonymous, *Reliquary of the Brussels Holy Sacrament of Miracle*, illumination from the indulgence bull awarded to the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament in the Brussels church of Saints Michael and Gudula by Bishop Johannes Dominicus of Ostia in 1550, Vorst, Rijksarchief

and the cult of saints was instantaneously struck by grave infirmity. Finding himself in such distress and wanting to recover, he soon sent a messenger with sumptuous offerings to Saint Quirinus' shrine.[131] This story was of course an unmistakable admonition for the dangers and inherent wickedness of Protestantism. Furthermore, the geographical origins of the other *miraculés* in the collection is striking: several of them came from Brustem, Diest, Sint-Truiden and Tongeren, i.e. within the broad region around Zoutleeuw that overlapped with what must have been the radius of action of Saint Leonard and Our Lady of the Ossenweg.

The perception of circulating miracle stories as anti-Protestant statements is also documented elsewhere in the region at exactly the same time, which was the climax of both the Anabaptists' activity and their persecution. Chaplain Munters from Kuringen included several miraculous stories testifying to divine intervention in his diary, which all have an explicit anti-Protestant message as they deal with 'Lutheran' critiques or mockings of either the Eucharist or Our Lady.[132] In the course of March 1534, he noted that a man in Münster – where the Anabaptist rebellion had just begun – had ridiculed the Eucharist as 'nothing but bread', after which he was instantaneously struck with deafness, mutism and blindness.[133] Even more cruel was the fate of three pregnant women in Oudenburg who

in 1537 fell dead to the ground after having questioned the blessed state of Our Lady in comparison to other women. The diarist remarked dryly that their babies died as well, without having received baptism.[134] Protestants who merely feigned their Catholic devotion were struck by the anger of God, too, as the story, in April 1534, of a rich, dying Lutheran from Holland demonstrates. At his brother's urgent insistence to abandon his Lutheranism he accepted the last rites, but the moment he died it immediately appeared that he had simulated his orthodoxy. His body suddenly disappeared, except for his head which turned black as coal. Upon looking in his brother's mouth, the priest discovered that the Eucharist still lay on his tongue, and when he took it off the head disappeared too.[135]

Some two years later, on 19 February 1536, Munters again recorded a comparable story about a mortally ill woman from Aachen who had similarly feigned her orthodoxy by accepting the last rites. The Eucharist was again found lying on her tongue, but this time it proved impossible to remove. Therefore it was decided to cut out the tongue, which was carried 'with great reverence' to the church, where it was placed in a glass holder together with the Eucharist on it. Much in the same way that the profanations of the host by Brussels Jews in 1370 had created the Holy Sacrament of Miracle, this new episode of an unbeliever's irreverence towards the holy host created yet another Eucharistic relic. The religious context was completely different, however, as Protestantism now formed a genuine threat to traditional piety, unlike Judaism in the late fourteenth century. The story and the relic it brought forth were therefore much more urgent, and the Aachen canons soon communicated the wondrous news to the Liège Prince-Bishop Érard de la Marck, who had it preached everywhere.[136] In spite of such cruelties, at least one story also left open the possibility for reconciliation after repentance, as the miracle at Malmedy also illustrated. In the course of February 1535 a 'Lutheran' in Maastricht had convinced a 'Christian' to give up his faith, since he claimed it was all deceit. The Christian was promised all knowledge in exchange, but it did not work out that way and he became seriously ill. After his tongue and mouth had turned black as coal, preventing him from speaking, his wife called for a priest who immediately remarked that he had turned to heresy. Yet, the man had remorse and the priest took his confession, which cured him.[137]

The stories' portrayal of Protestants as deaf, dumb and blind, or the rhetorical opposition between the pregnant women in Oudenburg and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary functioned as strong didactical elements. But whereas the quest for knowledge

in the Maastricht story displays striking parallels with *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, first printed in Antwerp around 1518, none of these miracle stories has been identified as being taken from polemical texts.[138] Munters picked them up orally, and in the case of the Aachen miracle he probably heard it at one of the sermons that were ordered by the prince-bishop. In its own turn, Munters' diary was not meant to be published, nor did his writings circulate, and therefore it cannot be considered as having an implicit agenda. His diary is thus not only uniquely revealing of how such miracle stories circulated in a surprisingly large area – from Oudenburg 180 kilometers westward to Münster 215 kilometers north-eastward – but more specifically about how they were included in edifying, oral narratives that countered Protestant ideas.

On a more general level these miracle stories provide a prism through which other miracles that happened in this period should be seen. The miracles' alleged existence efficiently refuted the Protestant idea of their cessation, and they were actively deployed as proofs that the Church of Rome was the one true church. After the Council of Trent this would become the prime strategy among the Jesuits, among others.[139] But similar initiatives existed well before. In 1534, for instance, an Anabaptist in Leiden challenged the doctrine of the True Presence of Christ in the consecrated host by claiming that even if he would stab 50 hosts none of them would bleed, which his opponents countered by referring to the wondrous deeds of the miraculous host in Amsterdam, venerated in the *Heilige Stede*.[140] Similarly, in reaction to Veluanus, Bunderius presented miracles as evidence that God was on the Catholic side.[141] The examples are thus illustrative of the confessional character that miracles and cults assumed. That is not to say that every single miracle was a reaction to Protestantism or perceived as such, but it does reveal what was at stake. The miraculous character upheld by Saint Leonard and the sudden popularity of Our Lady of the Ossenweg must thus be seen within the climate of increasing religious tensions evoked in Munters' diary. At a time when crucifixes and statues of Our Lady in the region were chopped up and desecrated with urine and feces, the discovery of a Marian statuette miraculously releasing pilgrims from far and wide carried huge weight, and its enshrinement in a newly built chapel on a hill conveyed an outright sense of defiance. It challenged all passers-by – Protestants, Catholics as well as the undecided religious middle group – to either venerate or refute it, but unmistakably marked the area as Catholic.[142] The next chapter investigates how this impacted the Zoutleeuw community in their devotion.

CHAPTER 5

Parish Liturgy

Before it became a pilgrimage destination, Saint Leonard's church was first and foremost the seat of the parish of Zoutleeuw. As the smallest unit in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the parish was the level on which Christians practiced and experienced religion on a daily basis. From an administrative point of view, parishes were defined as territorial entities, but they were in fact constituted by the community of its inhabitants, especially in smaller towns or rural areas. Parishioners – the churchwardens among them – had the responsibility to care for their weakest neighbors and contribute to the maintenance of the religious infrastructure. Such commitments often 'fostered a sense of belonging and ownership in the parish community'.[1] Its material exponent was the parish church, often the largest stone building, and both literally and figuratively the center of the town. The church was the framework for the proper administration of the sacraments. Key moments in parishioners' lives were ritually celebrated here (fig. 80), from baptism of new-born children and their subsequent confirmation and participation in communion at Mass, over marriage, to funeral rites and burial after having received the last rites by the parish priest.[2]

The stories chaplain Munters recorded in his diary show that, during the sixteenth century, many of these communal rites of passage were subjected to great pressure. Protestants started questioning and taunting not just religious images, pilgrimages and miracles, but also the core elements of the parish liturgy. Anabaptists rejected infant baptism, and dismissed the Eucharist at communion as nothing but bread. If Protestants did not openly ridicule the sacraments, they feigned belief in their propriety, for instance by accepting the last rites. How did the Zoutleeuw parish community, with its characteristic liturgical activities, react to these troublesome times? To a large extent, the administration of the sacraments remains a blind spot prior to the Tridentine reforms, as parish registers only started recording baptisms, confirmations, marriages and burials systematically at the end of the sixteenth century. This chapter discusses Zoutleeuw's parish life by focusing on two heavily debated aspects that left their traces in the churchwarden accounts: communion and

Figure 80, detail
Philips Galle after Pieter Bruegel, *Fides*, 1559–1560, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

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FIGURE 80
Philips Galle after Pieter Bruegel, *Fides*, 1559–1560, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Eucharistic devotion on the one hand, and the musical embellishment of the parish liturgy on the other.

The Eucharist

In 1526 Erasmus dispiritedly observed how the whole Western Church was being 'shaken to its very foundations'. One of the principal reasons for his religious pessimism was the universal questioning of the Eucharist.[3] The Catholic celebration of this rite during Mass included the consecration of bread and wine by the priest, culminated in the elevation of the host (fig. 81), and could be followed by the communion of the attendant faithful. At the moment of the consecration, the bread and wine supposedly transubstantiate into the body and blood of Christ, thus revealing his Real Presence, which was the ground for Eucharistic miracles all over Europe. Many aspects of this Eucharistic theology and related devotions had been criticized long before the rise of Protestantism, not only by

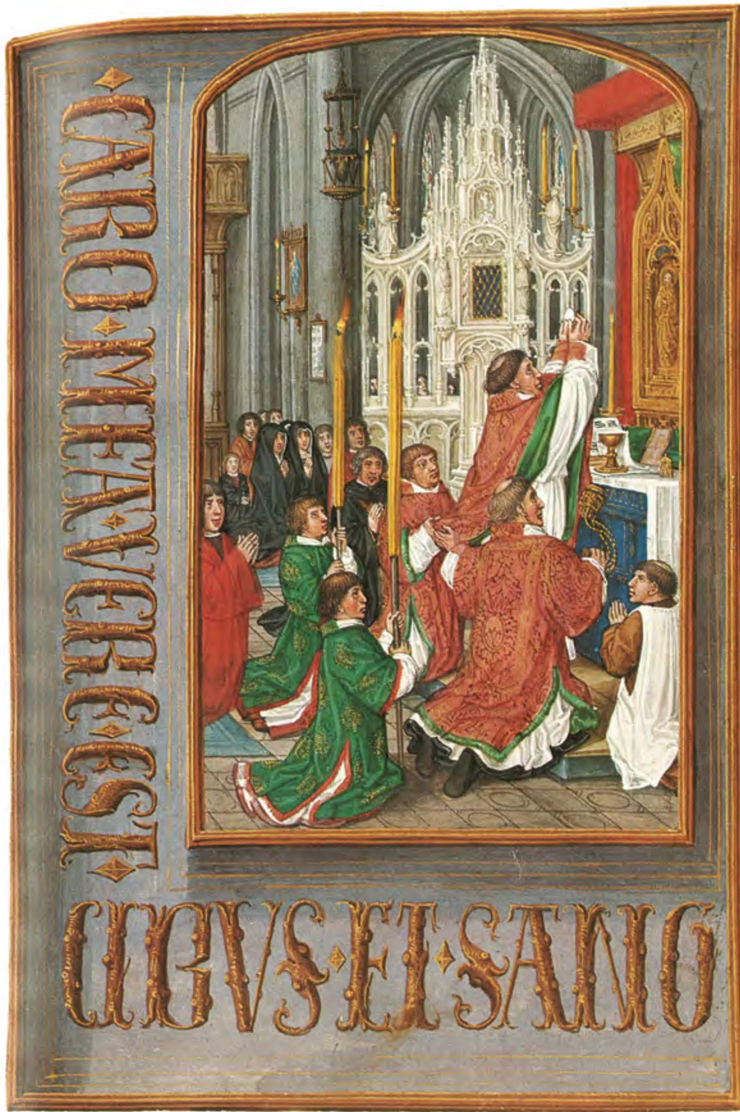

FIGURE 81
Anonymous (Ghent or Bruges), *Elevation of the consecrated host*, from the Rothschild Prayerbook, fol. 55, private collection

theologians, such as John Hus, but also by laypeople. In 1517, for instance, a certain Torreken van de Perre, who was by no means familiar with Protestant writings, was whipped in Oudenaarde 'for having pronounced blasphemous words against the Holy Sacrament'.[4]

The Protestant critique of the Eucharist intensified from the 1520s onwards, and eventually became one of the key focal points in their attacks on the Roman liturgy. Protestant theologians developed and systematized their thoughts on the matter, and while their precise interpretations of Christ's institution of the Eucharist

at the occasion of the Last Supper vary greatly, they share a general rejection of the devotion as it had developed materially and physically throughout the later Middle Ages, and which was most expressively embodied by ostentatious Corpus Christi processions (fig. 82) and monumental sacrament houses such as the one in Zoutleeuw. Veluanus, for instance, explained how the institution of the doctrine of the Real Presence at the Fourth Lateran Council had given rise to 'gruesome idolatry'. Ever since, 'the bread at Mass is called God, preciously locked up, honored with monstrances, lamps, candles and high sacrament houses, and carried among images in great processions with crosses, banners, drums and all other sorts of things to

FIGURE 82
Master of James IV of Scotland, *Corpus Christi procession*, from the Spinola Hours, c. 1510–1520, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig IX 18, fol. 48v

gape at, just like the pagans did to their idols (…) In sum, all over popedom the small dead bread is worshiped as the great living God'.[5] As an alternative Protestant authors proposed a whole range of symbolic and spiritual interpretations of the Eucharist, one of which was expounded in Brussels by Claes van der Elst in the sermons that led to the trial against Bernard van Orley and his colleagues in 1527 (Chapter 4).[6] While this congregation was generically referred to as *lutheriaenen*, it is clear that Van der Elst's conception of the Eucharist was very different from Luther's; Van der Elst's was much more radical and spiritual. This illustrates the variety of heterodox ideas on the subject that circulated during these early years already.[7]

Actions by laymen expressed this disagreement with traditional, Roman Eucharistic practices.[8] In their most subtle form these actions consisted of breaking with deeply-rooted and embodied devotional conventions. For instance, in Bergues (Sint-Winoksbergen) after the *Beeldenstorm*, a certain Jean de Wale was convicted for misbehavior during the local Corpus Christi procession. Working as a mason on a scaffolding at the church as the Eucharist returned, De Wale had not paid due reverence by taking off his hat as one was supposed to. Others had reportedly even turned their backs to the Eucharist.[9] In these days, such corporeal behavior was clearly far from innocent. More explicit were verbal attacks. In Leuven in the course of September 1566 a man was arrested for being drunk at the occasion of a procession with the Eucharist, and for having sung a taunting song when the venerated object passed over the market.[10] He must have had ample inspiration, because by that time there was a rich vocabulary of mocking nicknames for the host, ranging from flour- or breadgod (*meel-* or *broodgod*) and *Dieu des papistes*, over *Jean le Blanc* or *Jan de Witte*, referring to its white color, to 'Melis in the crescent' (*Melis in de halve maan*), referring to it being merely made of flour (*meel*) and placed in monstrances on a holder (*lunula*) in the form of a crescent (fig. 83). Such names attempted to strip the sacred character from the object of veneration by reducing it to its material essence (fig. 84).[11] Indeed, strategies of reduction and carnivalesque inversion of traditional values were widespread.[12] In 1546 a man had to perform an *amende honorable* in Princenhage, near Breda, after having publicly ridiculed the Eucharist by offering a pot of mead to the celebrating priest, who was evidently using wine at that particular moment.[13] And in the church of Walem, near Mechelen, somebody had shouted 'the king drinks!' when the priest consumed the consecrated wine, referring to the popular game played at the occasion of Twelfth Night.[14]

FIGURE 83
Anonymous, *Eucharistic monstrance*, c. 1450–1500, originally Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard, stolen in 1983
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

The most blatant offense was of course physically attacking the Eucharist or the celebrating priest. A famous case was that of young tapestry weaver Hans Tuscaens, which even made it into the correspondence of Governess Margaret of Parma. During the Mass of the Holy Sacrament on Thursday 30 May 1566, celebrated in the parish church of Pamele, near Oudenaarde, the young man in his early twenties was noticed near the high altar, 'irreverently with a bonnet on his head' (*irreventelick metten bonnette up 't hooft*). At the

FIGURE 84
Anonymous, *La généalogie de Jean le Blanc*, c. 1600, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

moment when the celebrating priest knelt down, holding up the consecrated host, it was snatched away from his hands by Tuscaens, who threw it to the floor. Another priest quickly picked it up in order to continue the ritual, but Tuscaens proclaimed that 'God was not in there [i.e. in the host], but in heaven' (*dat God daer niet en was, maer inden hemele*), that 'the idolatry had lasted far too long' (*dadt zo lange duerde, dat zulcke afgoderie ghebeurende was*) and that 'he was prepared to die [for his beliefs]' (*dat hy bereet was daerinne te levene ende te stervene*). Tuscaens was arrested immediately and soon burned alive on the market square of Oudenaarde, for which he was bravely memorialized in Protestant martyrologies.[15] Interestingly, the magistracy later claimed that it was at precisely this place that the iconoclastic troubles began, with Tuscaens' family and friends inciting the people to smash images in August 1566.[16] Regardless of their carnivalesque appearance, such deeds clearly were dead serious expressions of discontent.

There were stories about similar events in the broad region around Zoutleeuw as well. Aside from the tales about Anabaptists

in Münster negating the Real Presence or the miraculous preservation of the Eucharist on the tongues of feigning believers, Christiaan Munters' diary provides ample evidence that, during the 1530s, criticisms of traditional Eucharistic practice had gained ground in this part of the Bishopric of Liège too. Not without a certain sense of horror, he narrates multiple executions he witnessed in Kuringen, upon which occasions he learned a great deal about the convicts' beliefs, since their confessions were read out aloud. In 1534, for instance, he amazedly learned about men who 'would not believe that the priests had any power to consecrate the venerable holy sacrament'.[17] At other occasions, he recorded utterances that were in line with the previously mentioned mocking nicknames for the host. Several prisoners had confessed that they did not believe in the holy sacrament, as it was 'only bread baked in the oven'.[18] In early 1535, he had even heard that there were irreverent characters who had fingered this most venerable object.[19]

The most notorious assessment of Eucharistic piety is probably Toussaert's. By converting the scarce data on numbers of hosts and quantities of wine, recorded in churchwarden accounts, into an estimated number of people that consumed it, he tried to calculate the number of devout parishioners actively participating in communion.[20] This method was soon met with fierce criticism, since his methods of conversion were dubious and highly arbitrary. Furthermore, participation in communion was a sacramental obligation, which meant that it was not necessarily a valuable indicator of individual belief. Scholars have also remarked that frequent communion did not exist during or before the sixteenth century, and that it therefore does not provide information on the intensity of devotion. In fact, aside from the actual communion there was also a spiritual communion that did not require the consumption of the consecrated host and wine, but consisted mainly of contemplating the Eucharist. A vernacular treatise on the Mass from 1507 stated that some people 'out of humility (…) never allow themselves to go to the sacrament but hear the Mass with devotion and behold the sacrament worthily'.[21]

Rather than making estimations on the absolute numbers of participating parishioners, the Zoutleeuw churchwarden accounts can be used to document the actual practice and distill its evolution in the long term. The bread used for the communion was referred to as 'god's bread' (*goeds broet*) or 'Mass bread' (*misbroet*), but exceptionally also as 'hosts' (*ostene*) or 'bread with which one sanctifies' (*broet dair men mede sacreert*).[22] The accounts only occasionally

distinguish between large and small hosts, presumably meant for the consecrating priest and the laity, respectively.[23] These were mostly purchased in larger cities such as Antwerp, Hasselt, Leuven, Maastricht, Mechelen or Sint-Truiden. Ecclesiastical legislation sometimes required that hosts should be made by the clergy in an almost liturgical atmosphere, but the churchwardens from Zoutleeuw simply bought them from specialized bakers, or merchants in devotionalia who also supplied pilgrim badges and pennants.[24] At Easter and Christmas, and in some cases at Pentecost, lay communion also included wine, which in the accounts is referred to as *monigen* or, less frequently, 'to administrate the holy sacrament' (*om theylich sacrament te administreren*) or 'to go to the holy sacrament' (*ten heyligen sacramente gaen*). The wine purchased for this purpose was called 'god's wine' (*gods wijn*), while the participants are mostly referred to in a general way as 'the people' (*tvolc*), or sometimes more specifically as 'the communicants' (*communicanten*).[25] Presumably, the congregation drank from the chalice, but people who were ill received the wine from separate cups.[26] Contemporary visual sources illustrate how participants knelt down at the side or in front of the altar, behind the officiating priest (fig. 85).

Between 1546 and 1551 the purchased volumes of communion wine very suddenly quadrupled, from 23 to 85,5 *quarten* (resp. 31,6 and 117,5 liters). After 1555 the number dropped again to around 40 *à* 50 *quarten*, still more than twice the original level. In 1565–1567, it rose to an unprecedented 119,5 *quarten* (graph 14).[27] The number of hosts is less straightforward. We do not know how long communion wafers could be preserved, but the churchwardens seem to have replenished their stock, successively buying large and small quantities (graph 15). Yet, while the maxima continued to rise to a peak of 25.900 hosts in 1548, the minima did not decline, which is suggestive of an overall upward trend, with a slight drop after the middle of the 1550s. Hence, both datasets suggest a similar slight growth throughout the middle of the sixteenth century, which accelerated quite suddenly around 1550. What do these increasing quantities of communion wafers and wine mean? Do they straightforwardly signal an increased participation in communion around 1550? The Zoutleeuw parish might possibly have been subjected to some organizational changes, but the evidence is unclear, and the documented depopulation of both town and countryside makes it highly unlikely that such developments would account for a quadrupling of the amount of communion wine.[28] Thus, if there was no significant increase of the number of potential communicating parishioners, there are

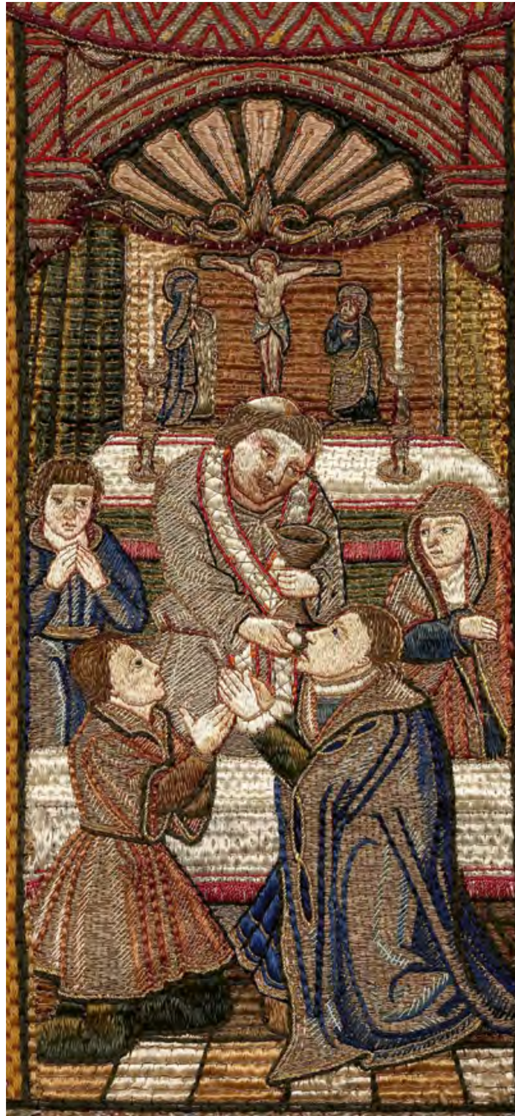

FIGURE 85
Anonymous, *Communion*, scene on the orphrey of a chasuble, c. 1530, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

three possible explanations: a greater number of parishioners participated in conventional communions, there were more occasions for communion per year, or a combination of both.

The actual number of participating parishioners is impossible to determine, but documented changes in the practice strongly suggest that lay communion happened or at least was proposed more frequently throughout the year. From 1556 onwards, the accounts suddenly started recording sums of money that were offered 'on

the table for the wine', referring to a communion rail or bench.[29] Indeed, temporary precursors to what would later develop into the elaborate and permanent baroque communion rails were already in use in the Low Countries well before (figs. 80 & 86).[30] For example, an entry in the account from 1540 of Antwerp's church of Our Lady documents the acquisition of 'six cloths to lay on the tables where the wine is given in the communing of the people'.[31] Similarly, the range of duties of the carilloneur of the church in Tiel (Guelders) included the preparation and decoration of 'the bench where one receives the wine and bread'.[32] And in 1554–1555, the churchwardens of Saint Nicholas' church in Diksmuide commissioned a new table from a local carpenter for that very purpose.[33] It is unclear whether it was common to offer money for the received communion wine in Zoutleeuw before 1556. However, while the earliest recordings only

FIGURE 86
Frans I Pourbus, *Mass and communion*, from the Cycle with the history of Saint Andrew, 1572, Ghent, cathedral of Saint Bavo
© LUKASWEB – ARTS IN FLANDERS VZW

mention this habit at the occasion of Easter and Christmas, other holidays soon followed.[34] From 1561 onwards, offerings for wine are recorded on Candlemas, and from at least 1566 onwards also on All Saints' Day. From at least 1551 onwards, wine was offered at the occasion of the sale of indulgences.[35] The amounts of money offered at the occasion of communion at Easter and Christmas also show an upward trend throughout the period under consideration.

In sum, the evidence suggests a continued enthusiasm for the sacrament of communion, which markedly intensified around 1550. Remarkably, this actually predates the decisions taken at the Council of Trent. At its thirteenth session in 1551, the Council had reaffirmed the doctrine of the Real Presence, propagating a combination of sacramental and spiritual communion, and urging to 'communicate [in a sacramental way] every year, at least at Easter'. However, it was not until 1565 that these decrees were officially published in the Low Countries.[36] Hence, the developments at Zoutleeuw can by no means be considered an early implementation of the Tridentine decrees. Yet, vernacular devotional treatises had already promoted similar tenets. The Mechelen Friar Minor Frans Vervoort (d. 1555), for example, had urged his readers to 'often go to the holy sacrament [i.e. communicate] with burning desire'.[37] It is unclear whether the developments in Zoutleeuw were the result of an initiative from the clergy or from increasing demands from the part of the congregation. Still, similar trends have been noted elsewhere. In Lier the monetary offerings for the communion wine rose between 1548 and 1578, and this was also the case in Turnhout between 1533 and 1569.[38]

Participation in communion is evidently not the same as Eucharistic piety, but both are still ritually related expressions of the same theological principles that were at the heart of the religious debate. While the increasing frequency of proposed communion would foster actual, sacramental communion in the community of Zoutleeuw, other facilities, such as the newly built sacrament house, would stimulate parishioners in their desire to communicate spiritually. Saint Leonard's church was also home to a foundation of Lauds of the Holy Sacrament (*heylich sacraments loff* or *laudes venerabilis sacramenti*). The *raison d'être* of these foundations – referred to in a 1468 document from Breda as a habit in the most important Brabantine churches – was the adoration and benediction of the Corpus Christi with laudatory songs, music, and candlelight. For this purpose, the Eucharistic monstrance was temporarily taken out of the sacrament house and shown to the congregation (fig. 87).[39]

FIGURE 87
Anonymous (Antwerp), *Adoration of the Holy Sacrament*, from the *Passion altarpiece*, first opening, upper right wing, 1516, Västerås, Cathedral
© SWEDISH HISTORY MUSEUM

Financial support for such celebrations was often provided by confraternities, such as in Antwerp. This was not the case in Zoutleeuw, however.[40] The foundation was managed by two lay wardens (*mombaers*), but it is never called a *gulde* or *bruederschap*, nor do the preserved accounts mention any members or subscription fees.[41] Originally, it must have been a private foundation, independent from both the *fabrica ecclesiae* and the collegiate chapter, which grew over time through donations and arrangements. Documented as early as 1458, it was incorporated in the *fabrica ecclesiae* in 1555.[42]

The service took place weekly, together with the Mass of the Holy Sacrament after the matins on Thursdays. The foundation provided yearly payments to the chapter for the service to be celebrated as a solemn Mass: before Mass, the verse *Tantum ergo sacramentum* was sung, followed by *Genitori genitoque* after Mass. Both were parts from Thomas Aquinas' hymn *Pange lingua*, written for the Feast of Corpus Christi.[43]

The foundation's accounts document its evolution, recording expenses as well as income from bequests, an offertory box in the church, and occasional collections in town.[44] Between 1537 and 1543, both the revenues and expenses increased quite suddenly, suggesting that there must have been an increasing number of bequests and services. For example, torches carried by children – a possible embellishment of the lauds ceremony often provided for by private funding – were only documented for the first time in 1537.[45] In 1539, the foundation bought a new black velvet cope in Antwerp. At the occasion of the weekly adoration of the Holy Sacrament, the monstrance was shown only briefly to the people by the parish priest, but from 1533 onwards, the churchwarden accounts also document a long-lasting exposition of the Holy Sacrament at Pentecost and Corpus Christi, possibly lasting a whole day (figs. 80 & 88, and p. 168). For this purpose a carpenter was paid for the 'putting in and out' of the monstrance, presumably being commissioned with the production of a temporary structure for the extended display. In 1547, for instance, Joes van der Gheeten was paid for a 'table on which the Holy Sacrament rests'.[46]

FIGURE 88
Adriaen van Overbeke and workshop, *Adoration of the Holy Sacrament*, from the *Passion altarpiece*, first opening, upper central panels, installed 1523, Schwerte, Sankt Viktor
PHOTO: DIETRICH HACKENBERG

While Eucharistic devotion became highly controversial after 1520, it clearly did not lose its appeal in Zoutleeuw, nor elsewhere in the Low Countries. The cults of the Miraculous Hosts of Brussels and Leuven both enjoyed renewed popularity (Chapter 4), and the confraternity of the Holy Sacrament in the church of Saint Nicholas in Brussels also benefited from a large and constant membership throughout this period, with a number of around 100 members.[47] We do not know anything about the attendance at Zoutleeuw's yearly Corpus Christi procession, but judging by the accounts, it must have remained in vogue. In Oudenaarde for instance, such events continued to attract huge crowds from inside and outside town, and in Liège the number of processions even increased.[48] Interestingly enough, similar increasing numbers of processions in France have been linked to Protestant reproaches.[49] It would be uncareful to interpret this as evidence of a causal relationship at this stage, but at the very least, these examples reveal a stubborn continuity rather than a radical change.

Musical Embellishment

The Eucharist came to be the main subject of Protestant critique on the Catholic liturgy, but it was definitely not the only aspect of the Roman Mass Protestants took offense at. The music performed during the rituals was another bone of contention. All different kinds and functional types were questioned, both instrumental and vocal, from Gregorian plainchant to the most elaborate polyphony. Just like many of the reformers' other critiques, they originally came from an older tradition. In the later Middle Ages a number of church councils had forbidden polyphonic music, and Savonarola strongly condemned it, together with other worldly vanities. Erasmus' notorious critiques reveal the reasons of this relatively broad-fronted opposition to melismatic decoration. From at least 1519 onwards, he regularly uttered his profound dissatisfaction with what he called unintelligible 'musical neighing' (*musicus hinnitus*).[50] He considered the elaborate and ornamental character of late medieval polyphony unnecessarily distractive from the text that was sung, i.e. the word of God. This was the ground for the Protestant's dissatisfaction. Much like the prevalent critiques on images and the Eucharist, critics reduced the music to its physical essence. Karlstadt, for instance, claimed that plainchant was 'merely sound, nothing else'. Yet, their respective positions differed strongly, as did the consequences they

drew from their observations. Here as elsewhere, Luther arguably took the most moderate position, whereas Calvin and Zwingli held the most radical opinions. While in 1522 Luther replaced Gregorian chant by congregational hymns, a year later Zwingli devoted himself to completely abolish all church music.[51] In the Low Countries, Veluanus demanded absolute clarity of text, stripped of all superfluous acoustic ornament (*zyraet*). In order for all to understand, prayers were to be said in the vernacular rather than murmured in Latin and they were not to be 'disturbed by useless Gregorian choral singing'.[52]

Just how inextricably the clergy was connected to music in the minds of Protestants is demonstrated by the former being represented as the devil's bagpipes in widely distributed satirical prints (fig. 89). Music is also given a leading part in *The Mass of the hypocrites*, another woodcut that circulated in the Low Countries around 1566, showing a satirical depiction of the Mass, with the clergy represented as foxes (fig. 90). On the right side, a fox plays the organ, while on the left a choir sings from a songbook on a lectern. In the upper left corner, another fox rings the bell at the occasion of the consecration. The anti-Roman cartoonist clearly considered liturgical music – both vocal and instrumental – a quintessential characteristic of papist hypocrisy. It is in this context that the massive destruction of organs and liturgical songbooks during the *Beeldenstorm* should be understood, as they were the material embodiments of this essential yet thorny aspect of the traditional liturgy.[53] In Tournai, for instance, one man was condemned by the Council of Troubles for having 'torn down and broken the organs in the church of Saint Brice, saying that they have made God dance enough *musettes*', the latter being a traditional pastoral dance to the sound of bagpipes.[54] Once more, such remarks linked the celebration of the liturgy to devilish bagpipes, an instrument traditionally associated with lust.

FIGURE 89
Erhard Schön, *The devil's bagpipes*, c. 1530, London, British Museum

Nevertheless, despite all these dismissive remarks, music was of vital importance to Protestant rituals and actions as well. However, contrary to the elaborate musical arrangements of the Latin liturgy, theirs was mainly vocal music, with texts in the vernacular. Many indexes of prohibited books that had been published in the preceding years – first by secular authorities, and in 1559 for the first time by the Church of Rome – contained songbooks.[55] Doubtlessly, many consisted mainly of satirical songs, but by the early 1540s the Protestant practice of congregational singing had also stimulated the production and distribution of musical arrangements of the psalms, as well as their translation from Latin into the vernacular.[56]

FIGURE 90
Anonymous, *De misse der ijpocrijten/La messe des hippocrits*, c. 1566, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

The most famous reworkings are those by the French poet Clément Marot, some of which Calvin himself had collected and published as *Aulcuns Pseaulmes* (1539). Subsequently, they also came into use in Reformed services. Later, in 1541 and 1543, Marot published some other adaptations himself, which were soon put on the index. At the very same time, there was also a full translation available in Dutch, probably by the Utrecht nobleman Willem van Zuylen van Nijevelt. These were arranged on the melodies of popular and at the time widely-known songs, and published as *Souterliedekens* in Antwerp in 1540.[57] Other translations of Marot were published in 1565 and 1566, by Ghent artist Lucas d'Heere and Petrus Datheen respectively. They were both titled *De Psalmen Davids*.

The performance of these collections and their adaptations played an increasing role towards the Wonderyear. An inquiry into the events at Brandwijk (near Dordrecht) revealed that 'the parish priest had come into the church, ascended the pulpit without stole or cope, during which Dutch psalms were sung and after which the priest delivered his sermon in such way'.[58] They were also a crucial element in the so-called hedge-preachings (*hagenpreken*). On 7 July 1566 in Antwerp, for instance, many people went to these sermons, armed with weapons as well as with Marot's psalms, which

were reportedly for sale in Ghent for a small price.[59] It is overtly clear that the singing of these psalms by the interested audience, both during and after the sermons, was considered highly provocative. At several instances the crowds walked in battle-array through cities while singing psalms. For example, a number of weeks before the actual outbreak of the *Beeldenstorm,* a singing group of Calvinists came into the city of Ieper and marched to the town hall.[60] The singing continued throughout the iconoclastic acts as well. In Antwerp, they immediately preceded the destructions in the cathedral, which led an observer to remark that Marot's psalms 'have always served as foreboding and countersign at all their [the Calvinists'] ventures'.[61] And the chamber of rhetoric in Den Briel reportedly held a mock trial against images and liturgical books, which they then burned while singing psalms and satirical songs.[62] Hence, it is not surprising that singing these songs was also considered a major crime by the Council of Troubles. In Cassel, for example, a man was condemned for having 'scandalized everybody by publicly singing the forbidden psalms' and in Tournai somebody was suspected of having sold psalms and forbidden books.[63]

Bunderius disdainfully rejected Protestant congregational singing as 'the mooing of cows, or the bleeting of sheep'. He contended that only the ornamental, liturgical chant (*cirage*) could 'inspire devotion in the people'.[64] But music would not be a major issue at the Council of Trent. The decrees in which it is discussed only mention it in passing, and the only guidelines were rather limited and vague in terms of content. Much like in the decrees on images, it tried to do away with all lascivious and impure elements, but specific directions on the actual execution of the traditional repertoire were left for the bishops to decide during provincial synods.[65] Nevertheless, the lay appropriation, reworking and translation of sacred songs into the vernacular, as well as their performance in contexts outside the liturgical confines of consecrated church buildings, was clearly considered unacceptable in the eyes of the Catholic authorities.

Devotional songs in the vernacular certainly existed in civic or paraliturgical contexts, but the musical embellishment of liturgical services was first and foremost a task of the clergy: in smaller parish churches, it was performed by the officiating priest, whereas in collegiate churches such as Saint Leonard's, the whole chapter was supposed to perform the prayers at the canonical hours.[66] Schoolmasters were often called in with their pupils as well, and the common musical background for the singing of these different voices was provided by the organ player, who was mostly appointed. Evidently,

larger churches with a higher number of active clergymen had more potential to perform elaborate musical services, but a lot also depended on foundations and patronage. At many places, ensembles of professional musicians under the direction of a *zangmeester* were erected with secular funding, either private or by confraternities. Contrary to many clergymen, these singers were schooled in the newest musical developments, and thus were able to perform highly complex arrangements. In absence of any preserved musical repertoire, it is often very difficult to establish whether these musical arrangements were polyphonic or not, but it is generally assumed that Gregorian chant was sung at normal services, whereas polyphony was reserved for important feast days or special occasions, when external musicians were hired. For instance, this was still the case in the Antwerp parish churches in the second half of the sixteenth century.[67] *Fabricae ecclesiae* were important consumers of religious music, because they paid the musician's wages and were responsible for both the acquisition and maintenance of musical books and instruments.[68] As a result, the Zoutleeuw churchwarden accounts contain important information on musical performances.

Professional musicians hired for the liturgy appear only rarely in Zoutleeuw's accounts before the middle of the sixteenth century, and there is no evidence of the town having a reputation for exceptional musical education. Yet, around the middle of the century, there are a number of indications which suddenly signal an increasing musical adornment of the liturgy. Since the mid-fifteenth century, the Mass performed at the feast day of Saint Leonard (6 November) was solemnly celebrated with a priest, deacon and subdeacon, and musical embellishment of the services was usually provided by the chapter school choir, accompanied by organ music. Apart from some exceptions in the 1480s (Chapter 2), no external, professional musicians were hired at this occasion, suggesting that the singing was relatively uncomplicated. This is corroborated by the church's graduals, commissioned in 1487, in which all musical settings – including those for the liturgy of Saint Leonard – are in Gregorian plainchant (fig. 91).[69] However, this changed over the course of the 1540s, when professional singers under the direction of an independent *zangmeester* were added to the Mass for Saint Leonard. The accounts confirm that this novelty nearly doubled the budget for the celebrations, and that payments were made by order of the civic authorities. Directed by Master Jan *den sangmeester*, the singers were hired from other towns in the region. In 1547 the group was based in Diest, whereas in 1550 they hailed from Sint-Truiden.[70] Nothing is known about

FIGURE 91 Chant for the feast of Saint Leonard in the Zoutleeuw gradual, 1487–1494, Brussels, KBR, Ms. 21132, *Sanctorale*, fol. 65

the latter, but the group from Diest had a wider regional reputation, and there is ample evidence that this town was a relatively important musical center in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Singers from Diest are mentioned in Kuringen and other important churches in the Duchy of Brabant that had impressive musical ensembles, including the churches of Our Lady at Bergen op Zoom, Breda and 's-Hertogenbosch.[71] Hence, the fact that the authorities from Zoutleeuw were able to hire singers from Diest is indicative of their ambition.

The musical arrangements must have been quite elaborate indeed. The accounts reveal that the musicians helped sing the Mass at Saint Leonard's day, but from at least 1557 onwards, celebrations also included lauds (*loff*).[72] Such ceremonies were extra-liturgical devotional services with particular musical attention, whose performance varied from place to place, and often depended on funds that were available. These services included antiphons and hymns, often accompanied by organ music, but also, and most importantly, polyphony.[73] This appears to have been the case in Zoutleeuw as well. Saint Leonard's Mass is known to have been sung in discant in the late 1540s, for which purpose a new large songbook 'in discant' (*van duyskant*) was commissioned from Master Jan *den sangmeester* in 1548–1549.[74] The term refers to a polyphonic singing technique in which one or more upper voices were added as counterpoint to a plainchant part.[75] This was by no means a new phenomenon in the mid-sixteenth century, but it was still considered a marvelous thing. In 1545, for instance, chaplain Christiaan Munters deemed it worthy of mention in his diary that a whole Mass was sung in discant in the church at Kuringen.[76] The addition of extra, melodious layers to pre-existing musical structures was described as 'ornament' by contemporaneous observers, including both Veluanus and Bunderius.[77]

The polyphonic enhancement of the traditional Mass for the church's patron saint must have been a considerable ornamental addition to this highlight in the Zoutleeuw liturgical year. In fact, this was related to broader musical investments in Saint Leonard's church in precisely these momentous years. In 1556, Merten van Wilre – the donor of the sacrament house – provided the *fabrica ecclesiae* with money to have lauds sung on five evenings a week: on Sunday for the Holy Trinity, on Tuesday for Saint Anne, on Wednesday for the Holy Name of Jesus, on Friday for the Holy Cross and on Saturday for Our Lady.[78] Musical embellishments were also at the core of the weekly Lauds of the Holy Sacrament, which had expanded significantly between 1533 and 1537. From 1559 onwards, a group of singers

also received a yearly pay at the occasion of the feast of Saint Cecilia (22 November), the patron saint of musicians.[79] Their precise assignment is unknown, but the accounts suggest that they sang the upper voices in discant, just like on Saint Leonard's day.[80] The contemporaneous acquisition of a number of songbooks is undoubtedly related to these polyphonic novelties, suggesting that new works and arrangements were added to the existing repertoire. In most cases, the precise nature of these musical collections remains unclear, as they were merely referred to as *sancboeck*.[81] However, one entry of September 1559 reveals that Willem van Dalem, then dean of the collegiate chapter, was commissioned to write a Mass *in muesycke*, a term that unambiguously referred to polyphonic arrangements.[82]

The heightened attention for musical performances was also reflected in the infrastructure. For instance, in February 1555 a new lectern for singers was made.[83] The clearest example of the improvement of musical infrastructure can be found in the expenditures for the organ. From 1508 onwards, the salary of the organ player had been fixed at 400 *stuivers* a year. In 1557, however, it was quite suddenly increased to 520 *stuivers*. It is possible that this had had something to do with a more general increase in wages throughout the sixteenth century, but it is was most certainly also linked to a number of investments in the organ itself. Sensitive to climatic changes, it was a near-constant debit item. It had to be tuned on a regular basis, the leather bellows had to be greased or repaired, and the instrument had to be furnished with iron locks or wooden doors. By the middle of the sixteenth century, at least two different instruments were in use in Saint Leonard's church: a relatively small, positive organ on the rood loft (*posetyff opten ocksale*) and a great organ high up against the church wall (referred to as *den organen metten stoele* or *tgroet orghelwerck*).[84] The latter was probably located above the church doors in the eastern wall of the southern transept (fig. 4), where it could be used for the celebrations in the presbytery, as well as in Saint Leonard's chapel.[85]

This great organ in particular underwent some important reparation and extension campaigns, led by the most renowned organ manufacturers in the Low Countries.[86] In the 1470s and 1480s the works had been supervised by Jan II van Aren, who was commissioned to reform the organ for a sum of 45 *Rijnsgulden*.[87] Between 1501 and 1508, the instrument was rebuilt by Daniël van der Distelen (doc. 1472–1508), based in Antwerp and Mechelen but active in the most important churches in the whole Duchy of Brabant. His salary of 55 *Rijnsgulden* again suggests a fundamental intervention.[88] This

was followed by some minor reworkings by Anthonis Toers (doc. 1525–1555) from Tienen, such as in 1525, when a set of eighteen pipes was added to the instrument, and 1533–1534.[89] However, the most important investments took place in the 1550s. In 1554 and 1555, Toers installed a set of new pipes and a new *roeperken*, after which the whole organ was repaired, cleaned and tuned.[90] Subsequently, the churchwardens approached Nicolaas Niehoff (c. 1525–c. 1604), a member of a dynasty of organ builders active all over the Low Countries and up to Hamburg and Lüneburg. His intervention is merely described as *maken*, but it certainly included the installation of a set of 22 new pipes and a register called *tbaerdoenken* (bourdon), an organ stop with a low pitch and a characteristic dark, droning tone. Niehoff's high wage of 108 *Karolusgulden* is indicative of the extent of his work.[91]

This marked interest in religious music in the parish liturgy was a broader phenomenon around the middle of the century. Scholars have noted how, after the Protestant criticisms, there was a revival of the ancient concept of music as praise to God around 1560, and the sudden celebration of Saint Cecilia is a particularly apt expression of that trend. Cecilia had been associated with music from at least the fifteenth century onwards; she was usually represented with instruments such as a viola or a portative organ. Around the middle of the sixteenth century, however, she would take on the role of the patron saint of church music.[92] In the middle of the sixteenth century liturgical celebrations of Saint Cecilia's feast were established all around the Low Countries too, for example in Wezemaal's church of Saint Martin in 1563.[93] Her popularity was also reflected in paintings, such as a popular composition by Michiel Coxcie (c. 1499–1595). Multiple copies exist, some still in Netherlandish churches, but the most famous version was bought by King Philip II in 1569 (fig. 92). Crowned with a richly inlaid diadem and accompanied by three angels, Cecilia is playing a harpsichord. The heavenly group is performing music from three clearly legible printed music books, which have been identified as Petrus Phalesius' 1559 edition of motets written by Jacob Clemens non Papa (c. 1510–c. 1555). In fact, the group is singing a polyphonic, four-part piece entitled *Cecilia virgo gloriosa*, an ode to this very saint.[94] Common to all versions is the key figure of the angel looking straight to the viewer, holding up the clearly legible notes and text of the ode, thus inviting sixteenth-century observers to join them in their praise for Saint Cecilia.

Musicologists have recently postulated a causal connection between the Protestant demands for simplicity, and vernacular,

congregational plainchant on the one hand, and the musical elaboration and its increasing ornamentation in the Roman liturgy on the other. In this context, Eric Rice has studied liturgical changes in the 1570s in Aachen Cathedral. One of his arguments was that, in the liturgy for Charlemagne, the alteration of traditional plainchant melodies into a polyphonic setting was a direct reaction to the Reformation. This new musical treatment was supposed to add both ornament and rhetorical power to the services.[95] Most recently, Stefanie Beghein has similarly described church music as a tool of confessionalization in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Studying the musical culture in the Antwerp parish churches during the Counter-Reformation, she found an increased attention

FIGURE 92
Michiel Coxcie, *Saint Cecilia*, c. 1560–1569, Madrid, Museo del Prado
© MUSEO DEL PRADO

for professional and polyphonic music, exemplified by increasing expenses related to musical performances during parish services. This was but one expression of a general policy that attached renewed importance to the embellishment of the parochial liturgy. Beghein interpreted this as Catholic self-representation, in contrast to the simple, unaccompanied congregational plainchant in Protestant services. Hence, music was used to articulate confessional differences, and by increasing both the quality and frequency of musical performances, it was hoped that this would also make the services more attractive and so strengthen the people's devotion.[96]

The source material from Zoutleeuw around the middle of the century clearly suggests something very similar. However, there is mostly no information about the actors behind these initiatives at our disposal, let alone on their precise motivations. Therefore, such a reading would never be more than speculation, were it not for the fact that the discussed phenomena of adding ornament and rhetorical power also occur in the patronage for the church in those same years, in which Floris' magnificent sacrament house functioned as monumental centerpiece. Hence, the next chapter presents a contextual reading of these private patronage projects, clearing the ground for firmer conclusions on both the initiators and the motivations at play.

CHAPTER 6

Patronage

It has become clear that the commissioning of Zoutleeuw's sacrament house in 1550 coincided with a number of other highly relevant developments in the town's parochial life. First and foremost, there was a continued enthusiasm for the Eucharist and the sacrament of communion, which markedly intensified around 1550. At that very same moment, the parish liturgy was increasingly adorned with new layers of musical ornament. The pertinence of these observations is clear: sacrament houses were not only grand odes to the Eucharist, the ornamentation and iconography on the Zoutleeuw example is also abundant. In order to fully understand the intention behind its donation, it is necessary to consider the last predominant group in my analysis: patrons.

As objects of historical study, patrons provide several advantages over the preceding two groups: they can often be identified, and in several cases, there is enough source material to allow us to draw conclusions about their motivations.[1] Nevertheless, determining the grounds for patronage remains a delicate undertaking. Patronage, especially religious patronage, should always be understood in direct relation to commemoration and practices of *memoria*, both in a general as well as in a narrow, liturgical sense. This inherent connection between patronage and *memoria* is made abundantly clear in the autobiographical notes of the Cologne lawyer, merchant and councilor Hermann Weinsberg (1518–1597). Throughout his text, he repeatedly expressed his anxiety about sinking into oblivion:

> In churches and houses one finds old paintings and windows commissioned by prominent people who died not long ago (…) One cannot tell who their blood relatives are, where their bones lie, where they lived, or where their great property has gone to. If the paintings had not survived, so these persons would have fallen from memory, as if they had never been on earth.[2]

Weinsberg was a patron and a churchwarden himself, and his care for his own commemoration and that of his fellow townsmen was beautifully reflected in his activities and demands. As a

Figure 125, detail
Anonymous, *Sacrament house*, 1555–1557, Zuurbemde, church of Saint Catherine
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churchwarden, he re-organized the parish archives and compiled a detailed *Memorialbuch* that contained all the necessary information on foundations. As far as his own foundations were concerned, he provided the means for an annual Mass and stipulated that a painter and sculptor had to come to his family grave, not just to pray for the dead souls of the people it contained, but also to perform any necessary cleaning or restoration of the adjacent objects.[3] Evidently, both the material monuments and the paper administration were crucial for the adequate functioning of *memoria*.

Thus, patronage and *memoria* should always be investigated *in tandem*. It should be clear that donated objects were not intended to stand alone, but were often meant as visible and enduring material testimonies of a larger immaterial foundation or patronage project. Quite often, costs for liturgical services even exceeded those for the objects themselves.[4] Scholars generally acknowledge the communicative function of these projects, which had a particular potential to emphasize loyalties or perpetuate identities built during their patron's lifetime. There was a great number of possible formats, places and institutions to be endowed with precious objects, and have *memoria* services arranged. For example: people could invest in anniversary Masses, chaplaincies or poor relief, in a parish church, a cloister, a hospital or orphanage, either with or without the necessary material equipment.[5] Precisely because of this multitude of possibilities, the choices patrons made (if it all, since not every wealthy citizen was a founder or donor) are indeed telling.[6] Yet, the motives behind specific patronage projects remain subject to discussion. Historians and art historians alike have often accentuated the social, status-related aspects, describing these projects as opportunistic methods of exploiting religious beliefs to exhibit wealth, status and fame. However, recent research suggests that devotion or piety are not strictly separated from social motives. Even more so, they are not just complementary, but quite often intrinsically intertwined. Scholars have especially emphasized this connection in relation to the nobility, a social concept caught in a still fundamentally religious framework.[7] Similarly, recent studies of later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century funeral monuments have emphasized how these constructions always had a double function: they were not only expressions of status or power claims, but in multiconfessional Europe, they also served as a means to emphasize the deceased's religious conviction.[8] Furthermore, patronage studies have revealed the reciprocal benefits for both the donor and the receiving institution, as well as the topicality of many projects, which

were often direct responses to current events, desires or needs.[9] In sum, the range of motivations for patronage went far beyond individual representation, and by addressing topical issues, patronage projects could hold a clear communal value. How was patronage in Zoutleeuw shaped by the religious debates in the sixteenth century? And how does the sacrament house fit in?

The Memorial Landscape in Zoutleeuw

Documented foundations or donations in Zoutleeuw amply illustrate key characteristics of patronage. The following examples suggest that patrons were mostly individuals or families with important public functions, either religious or administrative. As elsewhere, the number of churchwardens stands out in particular: for a quarter of the wardens that have been identified, a donation or religious foundation could be found. Burgess and Reitemeier argue that this notable interest was due to the contemporary conception of the office of churchwarden being a difficult job worthy of commemoration.[10] This distinct social and public profile was also held by the donors of epitaphs or wall-mounted memorials, i.e. commemorative monuments to founders that were mostly located in the immediate vicinity of the latter's grave. They typically consisted of a devout image – painted, sculpted or chiseled – that depicted the patron, who was identified in an inscription which, in case of larger *memoria* projects, also referred to other foundations and donations.[11] Only two sixteenth-century examples have been preserved in Zoutleeuw, but an early seventeenth-century church inventory mentions many more.[12] Every single epitaph in this document can be related to important public functions: priests, canons, deans, town councillors, aldermen, burgomasters, and a *meier*.

Memorial objects were often connected to more than one individual, and in some cases, they even functioned as family monuments. This was true for epitaphs, but also for the church's now lost stained-glass windows. Reference is made, for example, to a window in Our Lady's chapel that depicts the 'coats of arms of the Gruyters', an illustrious family that lent its name to a local street, and a member of which had founded a yearly distribution of bread to the poor.[13] Before October 1481, another window had been financed by the equally prominent Van Liefkenrode family, which had been supporting aldermen and burgomasters throughout the fifteenth century. Again, the material object had a counterpart in immaterial

foundations: by 1481, Peter van Liefkenrode had provided a yearly donation of a barrel of herring to the poor in the Holy Week, and by the middle of the sixteenth century, one Jan van Liefkenrode would bequest money for the singing of the Eucharistic hymn *O salutaris hostia*, once on Sundays and thrice on feast days.[14] In Zoutleeuw as elsewhere, the material objects in commemorative projects thus acted in dialogue with founded liturgical or charitable activities.

The involvement of multiple individuals often resulted in a complex material history of these commemorative objects. This is clearly the case for the small Strijrode triptych (figs. 93 & 94), one of two epitaphs preserved in Zoutleeuw. An inscription identifies the commemorated party as Master Henrick van Strijrode (d. 1565), documented as a civic steward (*rentmeester*) for the town of Zoutleeuw, and lady Margriet Spieken (d. 1561).[15] Margriet was buried in Saint Leonard's church: for her funeral service, the second most expensive pall was used, and, as was fitting for the local elite, her corpse was placed upon a bier, allowing friends and relatives to mourn and perform vigils.[16] Documents reveal that Henrick gave money to the collegiate chapter for a memorial Mass, an annual distribution of grain to the poor, and for an unidentified purpose to a female convent.[17] Whereas the outer wings of the epitaph stem from 1571, stylistic arguments suggest that the center panel should be dated much earlier, possibly even around 1530. However, none of these dates match the relevant dates of death. In fact, the center panel is a rarely preserved example of a reverse glass painting. Since large glass plates were extremely expensive, the technique was mostly used for small-scale works destined for private devotion, and the size of the Zoutleeuw panel (c. 30 × 20 cm) suggests that this was indeed its original purpose, probably in the intimate context of the Strijrode's household.[18] It was only later – probably in 1571 – that it would be integrated in the triptych format, adding the inscription and the wings. The latter depict Henrick and Margriet, each on one wing, in prayer before a prie-dieu in a landscape that the anonymous painter tried to connect with the center panel in order to unite the pictorial space, making the patrons immediate spectators to the Crucifixion. An interesting parallel to this material reorganization of objects – possibly by an heir – can be found in a later reorganization of the memorial Mass that was founded by Henrick. On 23 March 1599, Hubrecht van Strijrode, Henrick's childless nephew and heir, provided extra money to have his own memory celebrated in his uncle's memorial Mass as well.[19] Hubrecht might also have been the person responsible for arranging the epitaph.

FIGURE 93
Anonymous, *Epitaph of Henrick van Strijrode and Margriet Spieken*, center panel c. 1530, wings c. 1565–1571, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: GUIDO CONINGX – VZW DE VRIENDEN VAN ZOUTLEEUW

FIGURE 94
Anonymous, *Epitaph of Henrick van Strijrode and Margriet Spieken*, outer wings, c. 1565–1571, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: GUIDO CONINGX – VZW DE VRIENDEN VAN ZOUTLEEUW

The origin of the epitaph for Henric Spieken (figs. 95 & 96) is very similar, and in this case the inscription explicitly identifies the individuals responsible for its installation.[20] Soon after joining the collegiate chapter, Henric (doc. 1518–1555) served as a steward, and from at least 1547 onwards, he held the benefice of dean.[21] His brother Willem made a career in the town council that started in 1540. He alternately served as burgomaster, alderman and steward until just before his death in 1570. For his burial service, the most expensive pall was used.[22] It must have been Willem who, together with his wife Marie Helspiegels, took the initiative of installing the epitaph. The couple is depicted side by side behind a prie-dieu on the right outer panel, with Henric Spieken figuring on the left outer panel, identified as a canon by the fur almuce draped over his left arm. The sculpted central part, and probably also the painted scenes on the inner wings, should be dated to around 1530, but the outer wings are definitely somewhat younger. Much like the central panel of the Strijrode epitaph, the small Spieken epitaph (104 × 65 cm) probably served as a triptych for private devotion, and was later turned into an epitaph.[23] These two examples illustrate how public and private devotion were intertwined: objects that initially served private purposes were given an essentially public function after the deaths of their owners, yet still in direct relationship with the latter through their location near the burial site.[24]

The Spieken epitaph also shows that donated objects and their iconographies were carefully chosen. The sculptural part centrally depicts a Crucifixion, while the six smaller compartments on both sides tell the story of the Finding of the True Cross by Empress Helena. The painted inner wings show prefigurations of these events; on the right hand side we see Emperor Constantine's vision of the True Cross before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, and on the left the story of the Adoration of the True Cross by the Queen of Sheba. This theme had a special meaning to Henric Spieken, since he had made a living as the rector of the altar of the Holy Cross in Saint Leonard's church.[25] Spieken's personal devotion for the Holy Cross was also expressed and memorialized in a direct visual manner: another inscription on the monument shows the first lines of an antiphon sung at the feasts of the Invention of the Cross, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and at some places also during the liturgy of Good Friday – feasts Spieken must have celebrated in his capacity of rector of the Holy Cross altar.[26] This inscription is located immediately under the figural scenes, and the first lines are visible whether the epitaph was open or not. When closed, the next lines of the antiphon are visible.

FIGURE 95
Anonymous, *Epitaph of Henric Spieken*, closed, c. 1570, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: GUIDO CONINGX – VZW DE VRIENDEN VAN ZOUTLEEUW

Interestingly, they are integrated into the piece between the heads of Henric and Willem Spieken, as if both men answer to the first lines in responsory, looking up to a vision of the risen Christ holding the Cross.

It was common for clergymen to prefer devotions related to their own benefice, but in some cases this preference took on a more

FIGURE 96
Anonymous, *Epitaph of Henric Spieken*, open, c. 1530, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: GUIDO CONINGX – VZW DE VRIENDEN VAN ZOUTLEEUW

monumental form. The patronage of chaplain Henric Ausems, rector of Saint Peter's altar, is a case in point.[27] Ausems died soon after drawing up his testament on 29 December 1560, with which he had founded both a memorial Mass and a weekly Mass on Sunday for the Holy Trinity in Saint Peter's chapel. He also provided money for the candlelight during these services. He stipulated that a collection was to be held for the priests, and he founded a yearly distribution of grain to the poor.[28] As rector of Saint Peter's altar, he had a personal affiliation with the chapel and is known to have contributed personally to its decoration. Although the altar already existed in the early fifteenth century, a charter by Prince-Bishop Érard de la Marck, dating to 5 July 1514, states that it had to be moved due to reconstruction works on the church.[29] During the first quarter of the sixteenth century, side chapels were added to the nave, starting with the four chapels on the south side in February 1507, directed by Jan I and II Sallaken from Aarschot. The works were finished in 1512, and soon after, the construction of the four side chapels on the northern side began. Saint Peter's chapel was probably part of this building campaign. In March 1516, the accounts mention work on

the chapel, which was finished in April 1521: the keystone was hung and the vaults were painted.[30]

However, the new chapel space still required furnishing, and Henric Ausems financially supported the *fabrica ecclesiae* to this end. In 1533, he gave 5 *Rijnsgulden* for the *tafele* in Saint Peter's chapel. This specific altarpiece is lost, but its acquisition and subsequent installation is amply documented in the accounts. Commissioned by the churchwardens from Peter Roesen in June 1534 for 60 *Rijnsgulden* and 3,5 *mudde* grain, the carved altarpiece with wings was installed in December 1534.[31] Ironwork was provided to attach the three saint's statues and the capitals on top of it, as well as for the wings to rest upon. It was also fitted with a lock, three handles and a bolt, and the whole thing was fixated with ironwork onto the chapel wall. In January 1535, the curtain rods were hung, and in April Jan vanden Kerchoven painted the rear wall black. The last payments for this retable were booked in June 1535, and Roesen was even given an extra payment in kind, 'because he complained' (*midts dat hij claechde*).[32] Later, in 1547, a decorated wooden screen was added that accentuated the demarcation with the nave, to which Ausems again made a substantial financial contribution of 9 *Karolusgulden*.[33] The screen has not been preserved either, but it is the first object in Saint Leonard's church documented as being made in an *all'antica* style. It was commissioned from local craftsman Joes vander Gheeten and decorated in the antique style by Claes Roesen. The work must have been almost finished by January 1548, when the doors to the screen were put in place.[34] Preserved chapel screens demonstrate that such structures often included references to the parties involved in the commission, including coats of arms, visualizations of their activities, or dates (fig. 97), making it likely that a personal reference to Ausems was included as well.[35]

Saint Peter's chapel was partly appropriated and customized by its chaplain, who added memorial functions to the altar, but the sacred space and its furnishings served first and foremost a communal liturgical function. Scholars have indeed suggested that communality was a recurring characteristic of memorial foundations and religious patronage.[36] In Ausems' case, such public service might not be very clear, but the patronage of *magister* Gillis van Haugen (or Houwagen) is somewhat more straightforward in this respect. A member of a local patrician family that held seats in the town council, the collegiate chapter and the *fabrica ecclesiae*, Gillis van Haugen graduated from the Artes faculty of the University of Leuven in 1543. Like several of his family members, he was a canon in the Zoutleeuw

FIGURE 97
Anonymous, *Chapel screen*, 1544–1546, Hoogstraten, church of Saint Catherine
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collegiate chapter and subsequently obtained the benefice of *plebanus*, i.e. the parish priest in the collegiate chapter responsible for the spiritual care of the congregation.[37] He died in the spring of 1566, the beginning of the notorious Wonderyear, and for his funeral service the most expensive pall was used. We can assume that he was buried in Saint Leonard's chapel, where he had an epitaph installed that was illuminated by three chandeliers.[38] For an important part, his testamentary provisions of 30 April 1566 were indeed related to this part of the church. He foresaw a sum of money to be distributed among the canons and chaplains present at the first Mass on the feasts of the consecration of Saint Leonard's altar (Saint Ursula and the 11.000 Virgins, 21 October), All Saints (1 November) and Saint Leonard (6 November), which together with the Whit Monday procession constituted the core of the liturgical veneration of the church's patron saint (Chapter 1).[39] Much in the same way as the increasing musical embellishments of the celebration at Saint Leonard's day were meant to draw the parishioners to these services, Van Haugen's foundation was likely meant to assure the presence of the Zoutleeuw clergy at this important occasion in the years to come. This was of course of interest for his personal *memoria*, as his grave was located in that very chapel, but the celebrations for Saint Leonard were also of great importance for the Zoutleeuw community.

In an earlier testament of 16 October 1564 Van Haugen had already bequeathed a considerable part of his personal library to the *fabrica ecclesiae*. In addition to 53 books and four maps, he also

provided a sum of 60 *Rijnsgulden* so that the construction of the actual library (*liebereye*) with its furnishings 'would not weigh too heavily on the *fabrica ecclesiae*'.[40] From March 1566 to June 1567, extensive works took place in the building, where the wardens also installed furniture, including iron rods to hang on the books and maps (*caerten*), attached with locks. A window was installed in the donor's honor, probably depicting the latter's coat of arms.[41] The list of bequeathed titles testifies to the broad interests and knowledge of the Zoutleeuw parish priest.[42] On top of a depiction of the pre-Copernican cosmos in the world chronicle in roll form by Cornelis van Hoorn (*alias* Cornipolitanus), three additional maps depicted the Holy Land, Europe and the world. Several famous profane or classical works were also present, including the writings of Plato, Seneca, Titus Livius, Herodotus and Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*. However, the greatest part of the collection was taken up by religious publications. These included a printed Bible, Bible commentaries, three volumes on decrees of church councils and a long list of works by theologians. Almost all were classics in the field, such as Dionysius the Areopagite, Origen, Jerome, Ambrose, Thomas Aquinas, Rupert of Deutz and Walafrid Strabo. However, the list also includes some of Van Haugen's contemporaries, such as Joannes Driedo (c. 1480–1535), Adam Sasbout (1516–1563) and the later bishop of Roermond, Guilielmus Damasus Lindanus (1525–1588). These scholars had all been active at Leuven University, which means that Van Haugen could have known them personally from his years as a student.

A close-reading of the list reveals a number of explicitly anti-heretical works, most of which of very recent date and therefore highly topical. It mentions Alfonso de Castro's *Adversus omnes haereses libri XIV* (1534), Johann Cochlaeus' *Historiae Hussitarum XII libri* (1549), Luigi Lippomano's *Historiae de vitis sanctorum* (1551–1560) and Michael Buchinger's *Historia ecclesiastica* (1556 and 1560). De Castro (1495–1558) was born in Spain but came to the Low Countries where he became an advisor of Charles V and Philip II. He attended the Council of Trent, and in the later years of his life was active as a preacher in Antwerp, mostly addressing the problem of Protestantism. His *Adversus omnes haereses* is an encyclopedic work, which lists over 400 different kinds of heresies, and his activities earned him the nickname of the 'heretics' scourge'. In his introductory dedication, he specifically directed this crucial publication against Luther, the 'manyheaded Hydra' who had synthesized and revived all heterodoxy and was the very embodiment of

heresy.[43] The humanist theologian Cochlaeus (1479–1552) also developed a staunch pro-Roman stance. He became one of Luther's most fearsome adversaries, who from 1520 onwards produced a stream of anti-Lutheran and anti-reformatory publications, including his work on the history of the Hussites. The papal nuncio Lippomano (1500–1559), on the other hand, used the genre of hagiography for propagandist purposes. His monumental overview of saints' lives was meant to refute all heretical blasphemies, and included an 'Index of those things which in the following saints' lives demonstrate the truth of Catholic dogma against the heretics of our time'.[44] Buchinger (d. 1571), finally, was a preacher and theologian from Alsace, who 'saw himself as a distinctly Counter-Reformation preacher'. In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, he not only directly denounces Luther, but also defends the Church of Rome and papal authority with historical arguments.[45]

Around the time Van Haugen died, in the spring of 1566, many contemporaries were stunned by the sudden popularity of hedge-preachings. Nevertheless, Protestant sermons had been held long before the Wonderyear: they were delivered at secret meetings, and at public services by priests with Protestants sympathies.[46] Was Van Haugen's library meant as an antidote to heretical poison? In his testament, the parish priest had emphasized communal benefits, specifying that the books were to be used 'by the clergy, and all the inhabitants of Zoutleeuw who wish to study the sacred books'.[47] In fact, circumstantial evidence suggests that the contents of his library particularly served as source material for sermons. While Van Haugen had doubtlessly delivered many homilies in his capacity of parish priest, later sources reveal that his library was especially used by Friars Minor, who preached yearly upon the occasions of Saint Leonard's day and *kermis*.[48] In the mid-sixteenth century, Van Haugen's collection of books with its particular focus on heresy lent itself well to Catholic preachers addressing crowds at these highly public celebrations. Catholic sermons are indeed known to have become increasingly explicit against Protestant doctrines, and they would grow out to become vital weapons in the fight against heresy.[49] In early April 1566, for instance, preachers in Brussels were threatened for talking too much about Calvin, which only made them more perseverant in confirming the people in the ancient Catholic faith.[50] Van Haugen's donation similarly reminds us of the importance of Catholic oral culture and preaching practices. It is suggestive of how Catholic counter-arguments in Latin theological publications could be transferred orally to the laity, despite the

absence of defensive treatises in the vernacular. In order to preserve the Catholic integrity of the community of Zoutleeuw, he responded with a gift.

Van Wilre's Project

The donation of the Zoutleeuw sacrament house similarly was the product of topicality, communality and personal religious convictions.[51] It was the pivot of the well-documented patronage project of Merten van Wilre and his wife Marie Pylipert, which without any doubt was the most extensive patronage project at Zoutleeuw at the middle of the century, and arguably even of the whole history of the church. Its financial importance was so far-reaching that expenses for their foundations were allotted a distinct section in the churchwarden accounts.[52] A description from 1739 of the town straightforwardly calls Van Wilre *the* benefactor of the church, and in an overview of foundations in the *Acta capituli* from 1789, the couple's legacy was still by far worth the most in financial terms.[53] Anecdotal accounts of him financing the complete construction of Zoutleeuw's new town hall (1530–1539) proved to be fictional, but they are certainly illustrative of the later perception of his wealth.[54]

Merten van Wilre was a member of an ancient noble family that ranked among the upper classes of Leuven and Tienen from the late thirteenth century onwards.[55] Several ancestors had been knighted. One of them was the father of our donor – also called Merten (in or before 1430–1490) – who was also a Knight in the Order of the Holy Sepulcher, and had served several terms as *meier* of Tienen.[56] Apparently, his son never acquired such titles, and does not appear to have pursued a political career at all. Still, being the Lord of the seigniory of Oplinter gave him considerable status, since it granted him the rights of high jurisdiction and appointment of the priests.[57] At least from 1526 onwards, he was married to Marie Pylipert (d. 1554), a member of a prominent Zoutleeuw family.[58] While Van Wilre was presumably born in Tienen and held the lordship of the nearby village of Oplinter, all of his known foundations are related to the church of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw, where the couple is known to have resided regularly.[59]

Their munificent patronage started in 1548, when the churchwardens accepted their gift of a silver Eucharistic monstrance and a set of two silver *ampullae*, to be used in the Mass for the Holy Sacrament on Thursdays.[60] On 3 October 1547, the monstrance

was commissioned from the gold- and silversmith Mathijs Oten (doc. 1519–d. 1555) from Leuven.[61] It was one of the few objects taken from the church during the French occupation and is now lost, but Oten's other monstrances are illustrative of his production (fig. 98). Two years after this donation, the couple's sacramental devotion was expressed in an even more monumental way by the donation of the sacrament house (fig. 59, Chapter 3). Subsequently, the couple created their first foundation on 21 December 1554, stipulating that four Masses per week were to be held on the altar of the Seven Sorrows of Mary and Saint Martin, the name saints of the donors. They also allotted part of the money to the maintenance and – if necessary – restoration of the altar and its *ornamenta*.[62]

Marie Pylipert passed away two days after the deed was drawn up, which inspired the widowed nobleman to set up even more

FIGURE 98
Mathijs Oten, *Eucharistic monstrance*, 1545, Landen, church of Saint Gertrude
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foundations.[63] In the course of the following year, Merten van Wilre first founded a daily Mass at Saint Erasmus' altar, which was yet to be consecrated by the time of the foundation. About half a year later, he bequeathed money to the *fabrica ecclesiae* for a monk to preach a sermon every Sunday and holiday, and in 1556, he donated a hereditary annuity to have lauds sung on five evenings a week.[64] Finally, on 12 December 1558 – the day before he died – he had his last will drawn up, in which he arranged immediate *memoria* celebrations: he gave money to three cloisters in the neighbourhood for prayers for his soul, to ten cloisters in the wider region for a Mass to be celebrated thirty days after his funeral, and to the churchwardens to make a yearly distribution to the poor and for his and his wife's yearly and eternal anniversary Mass in Saint Leonard's church. Furthermore, he also ordered a stone and a *tafereel* – presumably an epitaph – to be made for their grave and gave a considerable sum of money to the churchwardens to commission an altarpiece for Saint Hubert's chapel.[65] Other documents further testify to his artistic patronage. In 1555, he commissioned a cope from the Brussels embroiderer Bartholomeus van den Kerckhoven (doc. 1542–1563), depicting the seven effusions of the Blood of Christ (figs. 99 & 100).[66] In addition, an eighteenth-century chronicle suggests that he gave even more liturgical vestments in various colors during that same year, but these have not been preserved.[67] Finally, an inventory from 1746 mentions an otherwise undocumented chalice displaying Van Wilre's coat of arms.[68]

These examples suggest that Van Wilre's patronage was more comprehensive than the preserved documents show. Foundation charters rarely mention altarpieces, even if the altar on which liturgical services were to be performed was newly founded. Yet, three triptychs in the church of Saint Leonard are so closely related to Van Wilre's foundations that if he was not solely responsible for them, he must, at the very least, have had a hand in their commission.[69] The altar of the Seven Sorrows of Mary and Saint Martin in particular was of special importance to Van Wilre and Pylipert, since it was dedicated to their name saints and the subject of their first foundation. The stipulation reserving money to maintain and restore the altar recalls Weinsberg's arrangements and suggests that the preserved altarpiece depicting both saints was related to this foundation (figs. 101 & 102). It was painted in the Antwerp studio of Pieter Aertsen (c. 1508–1575), just like the *Triptych of the seven joys of Mary* (figs. 103 & 104), which in fact forms its visual and thematic counterpart.[70] Again dedicated to Mary and depicting the martyrdom of Saint Erasmus

FIGURE 99
Bartholomeus van de Kerckhoven, *Cope with the seven effusions of the blood of Christ* (front), 1555, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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FIGURE 100
Bartholomeus van de Kerckhoven, *Cope with the seven effusions of the blood of Christ* (back), 1555, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

FIGURE 101
Pieter Aertsen and workshop, *Triptych of the seven sorrows of the Virgin and Saint Martin* (open), c. 1554–1556, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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FIGURE 102
Pieter Aertsen and workshop, *Triptych of the seven sorrows of the Virgin and Saint Martin* (closed), c. 1554–1556, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: GUIDO CONINGX – VZW DE VRIENDEN VAN ZOUTLEEUW

FIGURE 103
Pieter Aertsen and workshop, *Triptych of the seven joys of the Virgin* (open), c. 1554–1556, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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FIGURE 104
Pieter Aertsen and workshop, *Triptych of the seven joys of the Virgin* (closed), c. 1554–1556, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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on its interior left wing, it is still located on the altar dedicated to the latter. On that same altar, Van Wilre had already founded a daily Mass in 1555 before it was consecrated in May 1556. Both altarpieces were installed in the course of 1556 and provided with a sculptural top.[71] Hence, the inscription from 1554 on the *Triptych of the seven joys of Mary* does not necessarily refer to the year of its completion, but rather to Marie Pylipert's death.

The altarpieces' compositional principle of visually juxtaposing a central scene with a number of smaller scenes in roundels was standard practice in the iconography of the seven sorrows of the Virgin (fig. 105), but Van Wilre appears to have had a particular preference for it.[72] While it was no established tradition in textile arts, in the contract for the cope from 1555 he explicitly asked to depict the seven effusions of the blood of Christ in seven roundels.[73] A third triptych preserved in the church displays precisely this rare iconography in the very same compositional structure (figs. 106 & 107), suggesting that it too had been donated by Van Wilre.[74] Unlike the two other

FIGURE 105
Pieter Pourbus, *Our Lady of the seven sorrows*, center panel of the Van Belle triptych, 1556, Bruges, church of Saint Jacob
© LUKASWEB – ARTS IN FLANDERS VZW, HUGO MAERTENS

FIGURE 106
Frans Floris and workshop, *Triptych of the seven effusions of the blood of Christ* (open), c. 1554–1556, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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FIGURE 107
Frans Floris and workshop, *Triptych of the seven effusions of the blood of Christ* (closed), c. 1554–1556, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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altarpieces, the latter stems from the workshop of Frans Floris (1517–1570) – the brother of the sculptor of the sacrament house – who presumably took over the commission from Aertsen after the latter had moved to Amsterdam around 1555.[75] This triptych is the first in a series of three which Floris would eventually deliver to the church of Zoutleeuw. One of these three was the *Saint Hubert altarpiece* (figs. 108 & 109), commissioned in 1557 and installed in 1565.[76] The fact that Van Wilre had donated part of the necessary funds in 1558 is significant in this respect.

In fact, the couple's patronage served as a catalyst for further decoration. The donation of the sacrament house motivated the churchwardens to have the north transept – where the structure was located – redecorated: immediately after its installation, new pews were installed, a sanctuary lamp was hung, the walls were whitened, the roof was repaired, and new windows were made. By 1555, the brass fence or *thuyn* surrounding the structure was also in place (fig. 110).[77] Merten van Wilre also seems to have brought the churchwardens into contact with prominent Netherlandish artists whose influence and renown extended far beyond the local level. After having donated the *Triptych with the seven effusions of the blood of Christ* and generously sponsored the *Saint Hubert altarpiece*, the churchwardens commissioned the *Triptych of the penitent sinners* from the same Frans Floris in January 1566 (figs. 111 & 112).[78] The same also happened with gold- and silversmith Mathijs Oten, who had created the monstrance for the couple in 1547–1548, and was soon employed again by the churchwardens to produce pilgrim badges.[79] Clearly, the patronage of Lord Merten van Wilre and his wife Marie Pylipert was of decisive importance for the appearance of the present interior.

Social, commemorative motives doubtlessly played a significant role in this complex of donations and foundations.[80] By the time their patronage started in 1548, it was already clear that the marriage of Merten van Wilre and Marie Pylipert would remain childless, as they had been married since at least 1526. This meant the end for the hereditary line of the noble Van Wilre family, however, since the seigniory of Oplinter and its accompanying title were legated to Lodewijk van der Tommen, the son of Van Wilre's sister Cornelia.[81] In a society in which continuity of name and lineage was of key importance to uphold noble identity, this was a considerable problem. The only strategy last scions of noble families could resort to was to try and remain present in the realm of the living through foundations and donations, through perpetually performed rituals and installed monuments – the more visible the better.[82] Hence, the couple deliberately had a monumental ensemble placed in their

FIGURE 108
Frans Floris and workshop, *Saint Hubert altarpiece* (open), 1557–1565, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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FIGURE 109
Frans Floris and workshop, *Saint Hubert altarpiece* (closed), 1557–1565, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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FIGURE 110
Anonymous, *Brass screen*, c. 1553–1554, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

parish church, not just for their personal celestial afterlife, but also as a 'last of the line memorial' – a memento for the honor of the ancient noble house that, after Van Wilre's death, would disappear forever.[83]

Compared to his ancestors, Merten van Wilre's patronage was indeed much more extensive and visible. Of course, he was not the first in his family to donate money to religious institutions, but the documented examples almost exclusively consist of yearly commemorative services.[84] In sharp contrast, Merten van Wilre's donations were highly visible and present in the church itself, the center of the parish community to which he and his wife belonged. Together, they provided the church with eleven founded Masses per week, five evenings per week laudatory music was to be heard in the church, and at least once per week a sermon was preached at their expense. As a result, there was at least one service every day of the week that they had provided for, either a Mass or lauds (Table 1). It is very likely that the benefactors' names were mentioned during every single performance of these various rituals, which meant that the congregation of Zoutleeuw was constantly reminded of the couple, both liturgically and visually, since they also provided artwork and material equipment for the services: three side altars were decorated with altarpieces sponsored by the couple, celebrating priests were dressed in precious vestments given by them, and liturgical vessels

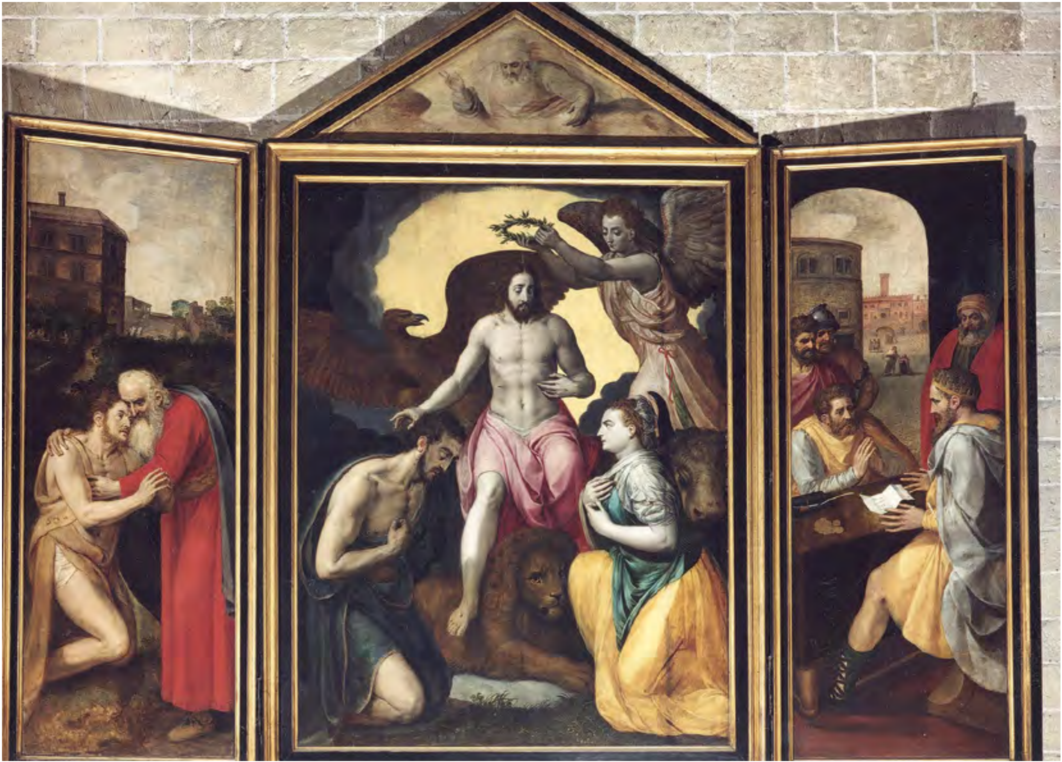

FIGURE 111
Frans Floris and workshop, *Triptych of the penitent sinners* (open), c. 1566–1568, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

FIGURE 112
Frans Floris and workshop, *Triptych of the penitent sinners* (closed), c. 1566–1568, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
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TABLE 1 Weekly schedule of the foundations by Merten van Wilre and Marie Pylipert in the church of Saint Leonard, Zoutleeuw (1548–1558)

	Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**	**Sunday**
1548				*Ampullae*, Mass for the Holy Sacrament			
1554, altar of the Seven Sorrows and Saint Martin		Mass for Saint Anne	Mass *pro defuncte*			Mass for Our Lady	Mass for the Holy Trinity
1555, altar of Saint Erasmus	Mass	Mass	Mass	Mass	Mass	Mass	Mass
1555							Sermon
1556		Lauds for Saint Anne	Lauds for the Holy Name of Jesus		Lauds for the Holy Cross	Lauds for Our Lady	Lauds for the Holy Trinity

such as the chalice and the monstrance used for the exposition of the Eucharist demonstrably remained attached to their names until the eighteenth century. Van Wilre's line ended irrevocably, but the final chord was quite majestic indeed.

This social reading should not obscure the very deliberate religious choices that were made, however. The commemorative aspect explains much about the project, but it does not account for the stylistic or devotional decisions. As a whole, the donated artworks form a coherent ensemble that was in line with the most recent stylistic developments, displaying ornamental features drawn from classical Antiquity. For this purpose, the Van Wilre couple engaged a group of fashionable and prominent artists that worked in an advanced stylistic idiom, including Cornelis Floris for the sacrament house, his brother Frans Floris and Pieter Aertsen for the altarpieces, and the equally renowned embroiderer Bartholomeus van de Kerckhoven for the cope. Through these donations, the interior of the church was renewed and updated: a previous gothic sacrament house was replaced, and two painted altarpieces took the place of outdated, carved wooden altarpieces of the seven sorrows of the Virgin and Saint Hubert (figs. 113 & 114).[85] However, the modernization was

FIGURE 113 Anonymous, *Altarpiece of the seven sorrows of the Virgin*, center, c. 1500–1530, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard

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FIGURE 114
Anonymous, *Fragments of a Saint Hubert altarpiece*, c. 1500–1525, reassembled in a nineteenth-century frame, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

only stylistic, and not formal or thematic. In their triptychs, Aertsen and Floris still used medallions depicting scenes separated from the main narrative, as had been a convention in the representations of the seven sorrows of the Virgin since around 1500, and, like earlier examples, the Zoutleeuw sacrament house pointed vertically to heaven.[86] In this respect Achim Timmermann aptly coined the term 'conservative innovatism' in his study of sacrament houses, defining it as wrapping up traditional but contested beliefs in a reinvented, traditional form.[87] This notion applies equally to the Van Wilres' project: the themes and iconography they chose were highly orthodox and refer to strong Catholic devotions and dogmas. Even if they were cloaked in the latest stylistic idiom, the Immaculate Conception and Real Presence were among the most central and popular doctrines in the Netherlandish piety of around 1500 (Chapter 2). However, at the middle of the century, the Eucharist and the devotion and iconography for the seven joys and seven sorrows of Mary had become central to the Protestant critiques of the Church of Rome.[88] In this

context, the donors' expression of their devotion to both the Virgin Mary and the Eucharist is telling: they selected traditional devotional themes that were of topical interest and gave them a fashionable, new look. The classical, 'Roman' style was thus used to reaffirm orthodox, Catholic tenets. Merten van Wilre was incapable of assuring the genealogical continuity of his noble family, but the monumental ensemble in his parish church abundantly emphasized persistence in its religious identity. Just like his illustrious forefathers, Van Wilre was an upright Christian, adhering to the Church of Rome, who honored his ancestors through traditional memorial practice.[89] Social and religious agendas went hand in hand: they were not merely complementary, but intensely intertwined.

Countering the Reformation

Van Wilre's project is at odds with the traditional account of religious life in the sixteenth-century Low Countries.[90] This argues for a rapid decline of Catholic devotion after 1520, and supposes a widespread aversion to its material culture, of which the *Beeldenstorm* would be the logical consequence. The view still persists that the patronage of ecclesiastical furnishings came to a standstill in the middle of the sixteenth century, only to resurge after 1585 in a top-down Counter-Reformation offensive by both the Catholic Church and the central government.[91] However, this kind of assessment ignores two key observations in our discussion of religious life and material culture in Zoutleeuw between 1520 and 1566: the case of Zoutleeuw does not only confirm the tenacity of traditional religion, it also reveals the important expenditure on religious ceremony and art for churches in the decades directly following the arrival of Protestant thought in the Low Countries. Only recently have scholars started to challenge the classic view, rightly putting forward the *Beeldenstorm* as crucial turning point. Spicer has shown that the destructions and the restorations they necessitated led to early attempts to implement Tridentine tenets, and Jonckheere established how the dramatic events stimulated artists on both sides of the religious divide to take a stand and express their convictions in artworks.[92] The case of Zoutleeuw suggests that we can take these findings one step further.

Defining the Counter-Reformation

In accordance with the observed developments in the town's pilgrimage culture and parish liturgy, the patronage project of Merten

van Wilre and Marie Pylipert signals even more clearly the existence of a desire to counter the Reformation well before 1585. Of course, this identification of a Counter-Reformatory spirit is dependent on the chosen definition. While historiography has turned the term 'Counter-Reformation' into a synonym for the 'Catholic' or 'Tridentine Reformation', i.e. a body of essentially top-down, post-Tridentine initiatives, it was originally a pejorative term coined by Protestant historians in the eighteenth century.[93] John O'Malley instead made a convincing case to use the more encompassing term 'Early Modern Catholicism' to refer to Catholicism after Trent.[94] These internal Catholic reforms were evidently provoked by the Protestant Reformation, but we should distinguish between institutional reform and direct reaction.[95] Contrary to the convoking of an ecumenical council, reacting against the spread of Protestantism was not a prerogative of the Church of Rome. Marcia Hall has observed that post-Tridentine reform was a process 'catalyzed by the initiative of patrons and artists who sought new solutions addressing concerns that had been raised'.[96] But some of these initiatives took place before the Council of Trent. Hence, I use the term 'Counter-Reformation' in its most literal sense, as referring to a general attitude to counter the Reformation in an early phase of Catholic reaction, in which the agency of local elites was crucial.[97] It includes a broad set of actions, encompassing much more than the orchestrated campaign that would follow the Council of Trent.

This has its repercussions on chronology and on the significance of style. Ever since Werner Weisbach's classic study, the Counter-Reformation has been seen through the narrow lens of the Baroque style, which he considered the true expression of the spirituality that was related to a 'renewed' Catholicism.[98] However, his view was soon criticized by Nikolaus Pevsner, who instead saw Mannerism as the true Counter-Reformatory style.[99] While Pevsner's assessment never succeeded in breaking up the intimate connection Weisbach had established, his chronological observations deserve revaluation, as they support a reassessment of the symbolic values and intentions of mid-sixteenth-century patronage projects. Much like Pevsner distinguished a *radikalen Gegenreformation* in the 1550s, recent research on contemporaneous artistic production in Europe makes a case for a reconsideration of the relation between stylistic categories and Counter-Reformatory attitudes.[100] Jonckheere, for instance, showed that Michiel Coxcie visualized orthodox, Catholic tenets in the works he produced after the *Beeldenstorm*. He rhetorically identified him as the 'first painter of the Counter-Reformation'.[101]

Xander van Eck pushed the chronological demarcations even further by including the decade before the Wonderyear. Based on his analysis of the patronage of the stained-glass windows in Gouda's church of Saint John, he called the period from 1550 to 1575 an 'early phase of Counter-Reformation art in the Low Countries'.[102]

Conceptually, the most substantial treatment of the subject is still Andreas Tacke's research on the Holy Roman Empire. Shifting the focus from artist to patron, Tacke analyzed a set of conspicuous *Bildstiftungen* that preceded the Council of Trent. He saw these projects as deliberately countering the Reformation, and described them as thematically and stylistically conservative, but at the same time re-interpreting the traditional.[103] Such conspicuous investments in Catholic material culture that revaluated traditional devotions and iconographies were central to Van Wilre's project. Of course, reading his activities as Counter-Reformatory in spirit does not suggest that patrons like him were representative of the Catholic majority in the Low Countries, but these elaborate *Bildstiftungen* must have had a profound influence. With their far-reaching claims on the communal church space, their founders made clear, religious statements to their communities. As all objects in Van Wilre's project were directly related to contested issues, both donor and donated object were important voices in the public debate on the matter of piety.

The Eucharist as an Emblem of Counter-Reformatory Action

The lavish and exceptionally high sacrament house is the most evident manifestation of this defiant stance. Presented as the centerpiece of the couple's commemorative ensemble in the inscription on their memorial stone (fig. 60), it was located immediately in front of their grave. This devotional preference is in accordance with the continued enthusiasm for the Eucharist observed above (Chapter 5), but in this monumental form, it was at the very least an unmistakable expression of Catholic orthodoxy. As a result of the widespread critique of the Eucharist throughout the Protestant spectrum, Catholic reactions to heresy also placed it central stage. Alastair Duke has shown how the authorities in the Low Countries emphasized Eucharistic devotion, and described attacks or denial of the consecrated host as blatant expressions of heterodoxy that were easy to detect.[104] As a result, from the 1520s onwards, sacrament houses played a significant role in the exemplary punishment and reconciliation of heretics. Multiple cases are known in which convicts had

FIGURE 115
Anonymous, *Triumph of the Eucharist*, detail from the choir stalls, 1538–1540, Dordrecht, Grote Kerk
PHOTO: HERMAN A. VAN DUINEN

to perform an *amende honorable* in front of the sacrament house, a ceremony that included kneeling, imploring forgiveness for their deeds, and an offering of torches.[105] Similar punishments were imposed in Alkmaar, where Protestants were forced to offer a torch to the local Eucharistic relic of the Holy Blood. That very same cult was actively promoted by the churchwardens in 1545: they circulated a printed letter, wherein the Eucharist was presented as the foundation of 'steady, strong belief' in a context of heretical doubt and mockery.[106]

The Eucharist was also a significant exception with respect to the tardiness of the written clerical response to Protestantism in the Low Countries. In a posthumous publication by the Leuven theologian Godefridus Strijroy (d. 1549), Eucharistic prayers and related devotional exercises were proposed as means to strengthen faith in the Eucharist, and as an antidote to denials. He explicitly mentions the Swiss reformer Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531), 'the false

seducer' who advocated a spiritual interpretation of the Last Supper. Interestingly enough, the progression of Strijroy's text was conceived as the mounting of steps toward the 'altar of God', not unlike the upward movement of sacrament houses.[107] Professors from the University of Leuven also publicly defended the Eucharist in their theological publications.[108] Thus, the Eucharist gradually developed into the emblem of Counter-Reformatory action, and its veneration was considered by some as a 'warlike confession of faith'.[109] This central role of the Eucharist in the fight against heresy was unambiguously visualized in the iconographical program of the 1538–1540 choir stalls in Dordrecht's Grote Kerk, which includes a frieze at eye level depicting the Triumph of the Eucharist. The triumphal chariot carrying a monstrance runs over figures identified as *haeretici sacramentarii*, and is pulled by Spes, Caritas and Fides, the latter holding up a church building designated as *Ecclesia Catholica* (fig. 115).[110] The confessional message is clear: the Catholic Church fostered a militant triumph of the Holy Sacrament, and those who obstructed it were outright heretics.

Sacrament Houses as Objects of Defiance

Against this background of religious controversy, it is almost impossible not to see the donation of a sacrament house in 1550 as a deliberate orthodox reaction against Protestantism. Within the broad range of criticism of the Eucharist and its veneration, sacrament houses in particular were subject of virulent remarks. Reformers such as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin all wanted to abolish the sacrament house, and these criticisms were echoed in the Low Countries.[111] In a publication from 1552, Ghent Calvinist Maarten Micronius condemned sacrament houses as idolatrous, and in 1554 Veluanus compared them to 'what the heathen did to their idols'.[112] Petrus Bloccius called genuflection in front of 'deaf sacrament houses' a heresy, and in 1569, Philips of Marnix, Lord of Saint-Aldegonde claimed that nobody had 'the right to make beautiful and costly ciboria, monstrances and sacrament houses'.[113]

Yet, the sacrament house in Zoutleeuw was far from the only example erected between 1520 and 1566. In his analysis of the phenomenon of the construction of sacrament houses within a broader chronological and European framework, Timmermann noticed a last peak from roughly 1530 to 1560, especially in the territories of

Brabant and Flanders.[114] A detailed survey of sacrament houses in the Low Countries confirms his findings. Apart from the four preserved sacrament houses that can be dated with certainty to the period under consideration – i.e. Walcourt (1531, fig. 116), Leuven (1537–1539, fig. 117), Zoutleeuw (1550–1552, fig. 59) and Zuurbemde (1555–1557, fig. 125) – at least 35 other structures have been documented, mostly dating from the 1530s and 1550s.[115] 20 out of the total of 39 were constructed in the Duchy of Brabant, but they are also present in the other provinces.[116]

Funding for these expensive projects was provided by members of various social groups, broadly defined as local elites, including abbots, parish priests and prominent laypeople. Churchwardens constituted the largest group of documented patrons, but various groups often acted in dialogue, and commissions were frequently presented as community affairs. For instance, parish collections to finance the construction of sacrament houses were made in Diest (1526–1527) and in Bourbourg (or Broekburg, 1537), and in Breda donations by testament for reparation demonstrate testators' attachment to the existing structure.[117] In addition to these collective commissions, sacrament houses were also funded by personal gifts from individual lay members of the nobility or from the urban elite, such as Merten van Wilre and Marie Pylipert. Other notable examples are the one donated by the rich merchant Andries Seys to the Church of Saint Nicholas in Ghent (1553–1555), the one in the Celestine monastery of Heverlee (1563) which was a testamentary foundation by the leading nobleman Guillaume II de Croÿ, Lord of Chièvres (1458–1521), and that donated by Giovanni Francesco Affaitadi (before 1545–1609), Lord of Gistel, to the parish church of his seigniory (1565). As in Zoutleeuw, Cornelis Floris played an important role in the production of many of these structures: he supplied the design for that in Gistel and his workshop probably also took care of the remaining fragments of the sacrament house of Heverlee (figs. 118–121).[118]

FIGURE 116
Anonymous, *Sacrament house*, 1531, Walcourt, church of Saint Materne
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Polemical Forms: Style, Size and Iconography

Donating a sacrament house to the church of Zoutleeuw thus was part of a broad, renewed interest in sacrament houses. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis clearly reveals that they were intentional replies to Protestant critiques. Much like the Dordrecht choir stalls' confessional message, they were appropriate and powerful expressions of belief in the Real Presence, and, by extension, of adherence to Catholic convictions, for the local elites who provided these high,

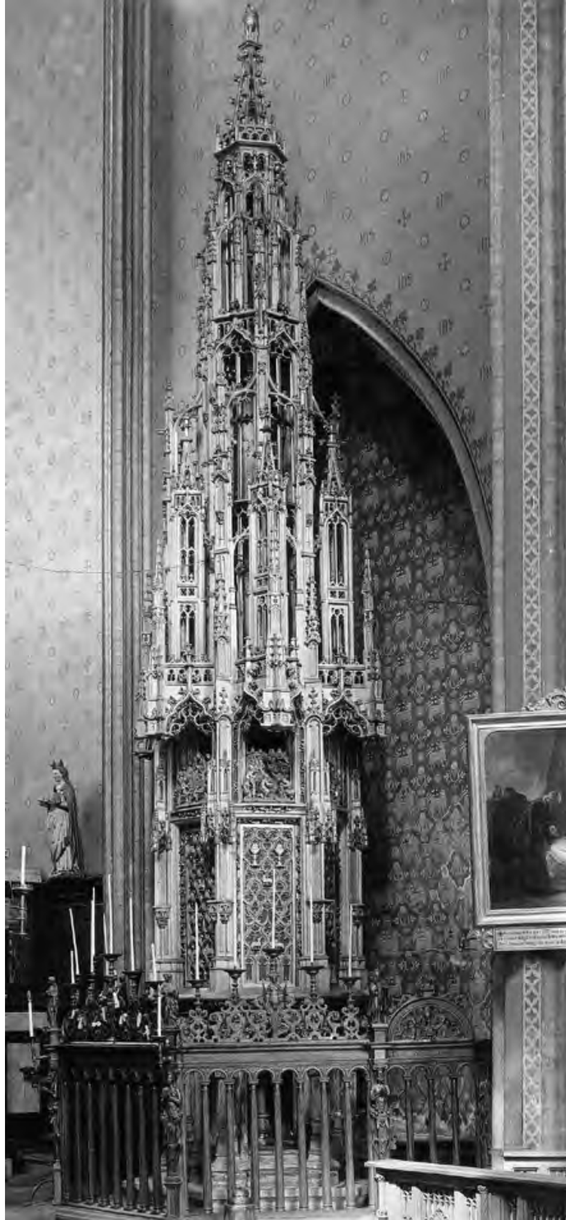
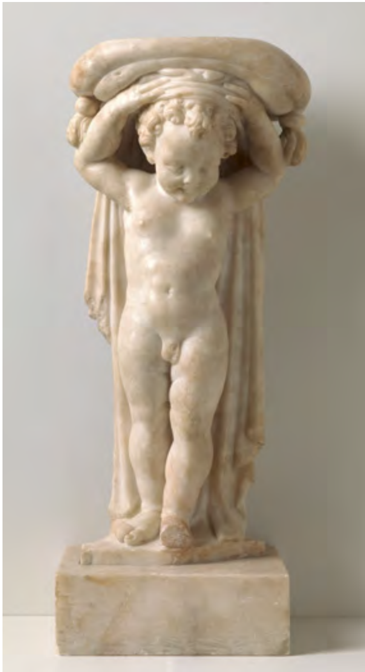


FIGURE 117
Gabriël van den Bruynen, *Sacrament house*, 1537–1539, Leuven, church of Saint Jacob
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

lavishly ornamented and triumphant Eucharistic shrines in expensive materials. The fact that many sacrament houses commissioned between 1520 and 1566 replaced older structures further strengthens this interpretation.[119] Zoutleeuw already had a stone sacrament house from 1469–1470, which was probably designed by Mathijs de Layens, the master builder in charge of the Zoutleeuw church



FIGURES 118–121 Cornelis Floris (workshop), Two putti, Saint Matthew and Saint Marc, from the sacrament house of the Celestine monastery at Heverlee, 1563, Leuven, Museum M
© LUKASWEB – ARTS IN FLANDERS. VZW, DOMINIQUE PROVOST

constructions.[120] Hence, it must have been stylistically comparable to his other creation in Leuven's church of Saint Peter (fig. 66), which by the middle of the sixteenth century had become famous and exemplary. Contracts for sacrament houses in Lier's church of Saint Gummarus (1536) and Leuven's church of Saint Jacob (1538), for example, still referred to it as the model to be followed.[121] In Zoutleeuw, however, De Layens' structure fell into disuse as a result of the donation of the new one, and it was subsequently sold to a nearby church for 20 *Rijnsgulden*.[122] The Van Wilre couple thus must have been very confident in their stylistic choice when they convinced the churchwardens to replace the gothic work made by the famous Leuven master builder, still very much in vogue just a decade earlier, with a new and strikingly *all'antica* sacrament house.

This stylistic choice was fully in line with their other donations. This is quite telling, as in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, the use of the antique was perceived not only as an innovation of style, but also as a political statement.[123] It was promoted by the Habsburg dynasty in order to materially support their state ideology and highly orthodox self-image, of which the donation of the monumental stained-glass windows to the Brussels chapel of the Holy Sacrament of Miracle is the most striking example (fig. 78, Chapter 4). In a similar vein, the *all'antica* choir stalls in Dordrecht combined a depiction of the triumphal entry of Charles V in town with a Triumph of the Eucharist.[124] The nobility imitated the reigning princes, and from the early sixteenth century onwards, also started appropriating motifs from classical Antiquity. In several cases, this was interpreted as a clear expression of Habsburg allegiance.[125] Indeed, a number of donors of sacrament houses was closely linked to the central authorities, or was politically part of the Habsburg party. This double affiliation with the Habsburgs and orthodoxy is very clear in the case of abbots, such as Robert II Leclercq (1489–1557) of the Abbey of the Dunes near Koksijde, and Gerard van Cuelsbrouck (r. 1517–1555) of the Ghent Abbey of Saint Peter, who both commissioned antique sacrament houses (figs. 122 & 126).[126] The same goes for many noblemen, such as the Affaitadi family. A year before Giovanni Francesco Affaitadi ordered designs for the sacrament house from Cornelis Floris, Emperor Ferdinand I had elevated his seigniory to the status of a county, making him a hereditary count of the Holy Roman Empire.[127] Finally, Andries Seys, a patron from Ghent, was also supposed to have been part of the Habsburg party in the civic government.[128] All the sacrament houses commissioned by these patrons must have been in the antique style, as is suggested

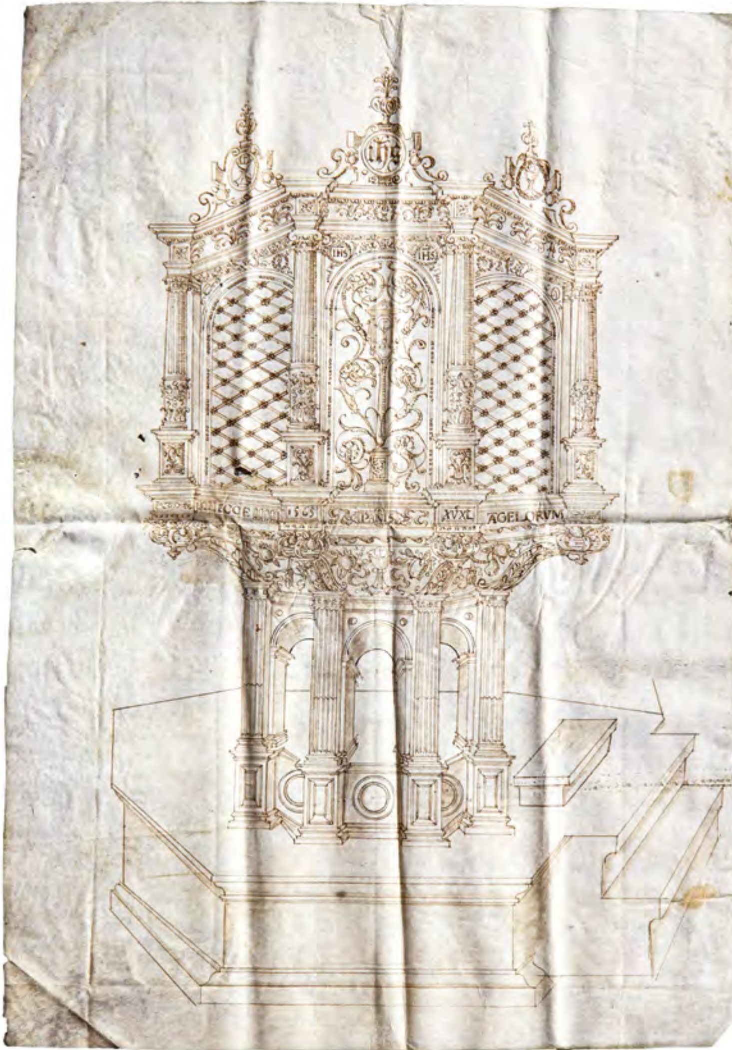


FIGURE 122
Anonymous, *The sacrament house of the Abbey of the Dunes*, c. 1566, Bruges, Grootseminarie
© ABDIJMUSEUM TEN DUINEN KOKSIJDE & PHOTOGRAPHICART/ LAMBERT J. DERENETTE

by their materials (alabaster, marble and touchstone), their designers (Floris) or their dates (1550s and 1560s). This political link is especially relevant in the case of Zoutleeuw, since the devotion for the seven sorrows of the Virgin – also chosen by Van Wilre in his project – was again highly political.[129] In sum, Merten van Wilre and Marie Pylipert explicitly reaffirmed orthodox, Catholic tenets which at the same time had overt political connotations, both in terms of style and of subject matter.

The replacement of Zoutleeuw's sacrament house also must have increased its scale. While critics such as Veluanus explicitly took offense at the height of such structures, it can be inferred that it was

of crucial importance to Van Wilre.[130] The 18-meter-high structure is by far the largest of all documented and preserved sacrament houses in the Low Countries, of which the medium height was 9,6 meters. The second-highest is the (now lost) sacrament house of Tongerlo Abbey with a height of 'only' about 14 meters, which in the mid-seventeenth century was incorrectly considered unequalled in the Low Countries.[131] The verticality of the structure in Zoutleeuw is also highly unusual for Cornelis Floris, who usually worked in a horizontalizing antique mode, which suggests that the orientation was motivated by the patrons.[132] Furthermore, the sacrament house was not installed at the same place as the previous one (which was most likely located at the traditional liturgical site in the choir), but rather in the transept, where it was even more visible from the nave, and accessible to the laity.[133] Furthermore, by installing it in the north transept – explicitly stipulated in the contract[134] – rather than under the low arcades of the choir, the sacrament house had the space to reach its breathtaking size. There are strong indications that in other cases, too, height mattered a lot. This is most clearly the case in the structure donated by Ghent merchant Andries Seys. The contract for the structure that would eventually be 13 meters high was in fact a correction and improvement of a previous design, stipulating that it had to be even 'greater and higher'.[135] Hence, the height of these stone embodiments of the Real Presence equaled their polemical force.[136]

Finally, the elaborate iconographic program also played a key part in transmitting the Van Wilres' intentions. Not much is known about the imagery on Zoutleeuw's preceding sacrament house, but it must have been rather limited. Its only documented iconographic elements are a Last Supper and possibly six other sculptures, commissioned from woodcarver Joes Beyaert.[137] Other known fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century examples had similar restricted iconographic programs, mostly scenes from the New Testament or other related themes. De Layens' sacrament house for Leuven, for instance, only contains representations of the twelve apostles, angels with the Arma Christi, five scenes from Christ's Passion, and a Trinity (fig. 66). As argued above, this example – including its iconography – remained influential for many years. For example, the contract for Leuven's church of Saint Jacob (1537–1539, fig. 117) specified that it was to be made 'with the same sculptures' as De Layens'. Judging by the still extant but slightly worn and altered object, that stipulation was interpreted rather freely, but the selected scenes were still

limited to the Passion.[138] Other examples confirm this observation. The metal sacrament house in Bocholt (fig. 65) only has six figures of apostles and saints. The one in Meerssen (c. 1500) shows three biblical scenes, combined with some freestanding figures, although most are now lost. The sacrament house in Limbourg (c. 1520, fig. 123) only includes a Last Supper and a Salvator Mundi, whereas the one in Walcourt (1531, fig. 116) – again much like De Layens' example – depicts the Arma Christi, the four evangelists, a weeping Saint John and Mary, and a Trinity. The whole is crowned by a Salvator Mundi.

The sacrament house of Zoutleeuw has an iconographical program that is far more complex than these previous examples. The traditional apostles and saints are joined by a whole parade of other figures and scenes. These do not only include Eucharistic prefigurations and offering scenes from the Old Testament, but also depictions of prophets, caryatids representing the four cardinal virtues, the four evangelists, and church fathers. More importantly, the tower-like structure is crowned by a *tempietto* containing Saint Michael slaying the Devil, which itself is a base for a baldachin showing the crowning of the Virgin Mary. Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, this growing iconographic complexity can be observed elsewhere too. The contract for the sacrament house in Ghent, donated by Andries Seys, not only stipulated that it had to include the traditional four evangelists, twelve apostles and a representation of Christ's agony in the garden, but also the four church fathers, a set of prefigurations from the Old Testament, six prophets, and the seven sacraments.[139] The contract from 1564 for the abbey church of Saint Gertrude in Leuven referred to even more figures. In addition to sixteen angels, a pelican and the Mystic Lamb, it prescribed twenty-eight freestanding sculptures, among others of prophets and evangelists, and twenty-five reliefs, both from the Old and New Testaments, including prefigurations (*die figueren vanden heylig sacramente*), the resurrection, and the last judgement.[140] Hence, the elaborate iconographic program sculpted by Cornelis Floris and his workshop for Merten van Wilre and his wife in Zoutleeuw was part and parcel of a broad movement of innovation in this traditional type of liturgical furnishing.

In part, this growing iconographic complexity can be attributed to a general stylistic shift around the middle of the sixteenth century from the Gothic (*modern*) to the antique (*antijks*) mode, since the latter brought about increasing possibilities in inserting figurative representations, with its characteristic bas-reliefs, atlantes, caryatids

FIGURE 123
Anonymous, *Sacrament house*, c. 1520, Limbourg, church of Saint George
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

and herms.[141] For example, the contract for Seys' sacrament house in Ghent stipulated that the four church fathers were to be represented as atlantes – structural forms that were only used in the antique style, seen in the contemporary examples of Zoutleeuw and Zuurbemde (fig. 125).[142] But there was more at stake than just stylistic innovation. Old Testament iconographies had long been used as typological prefigurations of the Eucharist, and theologians had used the writings of prophets, apostles and church fathers to support the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence. Its supposed biblical foundations firmly placed it within the tradition of the church, which was exactly what Protestants refuted as a valid basis of doctrine and belief.[143] Other figures, such as the virtues, embedded the structure in a larger Christian context and its moral principles. In themselves, the represented figures were mostly non-controversial, but they strongly underlined the claim for doctrinal truth of the ensemble. Hence, the elaborate iconographies of mid-sixteenth-century sacrament houses confirmed the theological validity of the Real Presence, which in turn was undoubtedly related to the Protestant refutation of the Catholic doctrine. Interestingly, there are parallels to be found in polemical Catholic writings in support of the Eucharist. A case in point is the treatise on the Holy Sacrament from 1567 by Leuven theologian Cunerus Petri, which was published as a response to those who called Catholics idolatrous. Petri devotes nearly half of his book to listing Biblical passages, church fathers, saints and church councils that illustrate the truth of the doctrine – a list of subjects that immediately recalls the iconography of the sacrament houses.[144]

Some sacrament houses offer even more specific indications that the display of Catholic orthodoxy was at stake. For instance, the sacrament house donated by Andries Seys in Ghent included a relief of the seven sacraments, which was a conformation of Catholic orthodoxy, since the number of sacraments had very recently been reaffirmed at the Council of Trent in 1547.[145] In Zoutleeuw, this went even further with the controversial and highly unusual presence of Saint Michael slaying the dragon and the Coronation of Mary on the two upper levels. These scenes cleverly link the Eucharistic function of the sacrament house with the Mariological emphasis in the rest of Van Wilre's project. Catholic theologians referred to Mary as 'the tabernacle of Christ' (*tabernaculum Christi*) for her crucial role in the Incarnation. Mary's body had carried Christ's actual body, the Corpus Christi, just like the structure she crowns in Zoutleeuw does. For Catholics, this justified the belief in her bodily Assumption, when, according to De Voragine, the Archangel Michael presented

her soul to God.[146] Thus, while most Protestants denied both Mary's Assumption and Christ's Real Presence, in the Zoutleeuw sacrament house both are iconographically linked for mutual theological reinforcement. The representation of Saint Michael in his fight with the rebel angels further emphasizes this polemical, anti-heretical reading of the sacrament house in Zoutleeuw, since around the middle of the sixteenth century, plays and paintings in the Low Countries used this scene as a metaphor for the fight against heresy.[147] In sum, contrary to earlier sacrament houses, it is not just an ornamental ode to the Eucharist, but a representation of its triumph and a polemical theological treatise on the doctrinal validity of the doctrine of the Real Presence.

That many of these sacrament houses were indeed replies to Protestant critiques is best illustrated by the most legendary of all documented examples, installed in the Norbertine abbey church of Tongerlo between 1536 and 1543. Commissioned by Abbot Arnold Streyters (1496–1560), the famously monumental structure was designed by Philips Lammekens and contained celebrated carvings by Conrat Meit, among other artists. It was lost during French occupation, but eighteenth-century descriptions confirm that it contained 'all the symbols and all that has been written on the Holy Sacrament', including prefigurations from the Old Testament, plus the cardinal virtues.[148] In the seventeenth century, Antonius Sanderus wrote that Streyters had commissioned it to promote the cult of the Holy Sacrament. The abbot corresponded with theologians such as Cochlaeus and Loërius, both of whom have been discussed above for their important roles in combating Protestantism and promoting Eucharistic piety.[149] The structure was completed with an inscription by Cornelius Jansenius (1510–1576), who was the abbey's lector of theology in the 1540s. The defiant verses directly addressed the spectator:

> Why are you standing and admiring the beautiful stones and
> artifice?
> Behold that God Almighty is inside.
> It should not disturb you that a beautiful shrine is made,
> for it encloses the Creator of all beauty.
> The Creator is included here in an earthly artwork.
> Kneel while you worship the divine majesty.
> Nobody should compare this structure with Solomon's
> temple;
> it does not contain shadows [of God], but God itself.[150]

In just a few lines, Jansenius propagated the doctrine of the Real Presence, justified the preservation of the consecrated host in costly and artful sacrament houses, and urged the passer-by to genuflect. Referring to the divinely sanctioned decoration of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6), Jansenius even reforged the traditional biblical argument in favor of using rich ornamentation to honor God into an original, platonic statement: sacrament houses do not contain shadowy, epistemologically inferior images of God, but God itself.[151] All of these points addressed the relation between matter and spirit, or the tension between the man-made and the sacred – the heart of Protestant critiques.

In Tongerlo as in Zoutleeuw, there are no documented examples of local refutations of the Real Presence. Therefore, these sacrament houses should be seen as statements within a generally hostile climate in the Low Countries. Elsewhere, however, there are strong indications that newly installed sacrament houses were firm reactions against specific local unrest and recent events, just like the renewed attention to the Holy Sacrament of Miracle in Brussels (Chapter 4). This was definitely the case in Leuven's church of Saint Jacob (fig. 117). The driving force behind this commission – also a replacement of an older structure – was Franciscus de Campo *alias* Sonnius, at that time still a simple curate, who eventually became inquisitor and bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch and Antwerp. He is generally known as a staunchly Catholic theologian and an ardent opponent of the Reformation.[152] At the time of the commission, the university town was the scene of growing religious unrest. In 1543, for example, a large heresy trial was held in which Sonnius was heavily implicated, and evidence suggests that much of the controversy revolved around sacramental devotion.[153] The same goes for Ghent, where at least two magnificent new structures were erected in the 1550s.[154] Hence, the erection of a new, and in many cases certainly more impressive, sacrament house was unmistakably a material statement against Protestant refutations.

Catholic Profiling

In case of private donations, the sacrament houses also served as means for donors to emphasize their Catholic profile. Just like Merten van Wilre and Marie Pylipert, patrons were often buried at its foot, or at least in its immediate vicinity.[155] The Van Wilres' memorial stone is now set into the same wall as the sacrament house, but old descriptions and photographs reveal that they were

originally facing each other (fig. 124), which means that the gazes of the depicted couple were directed towards the Eucharist. This must have been a deliberate choice, because the contract with Floris reveals that they did not want to be depicted on the sacrament house itself, as proposed in an earlier design. Consequently, this decision allowed for the possibility to have themselves represented in front of the sacrament house rather than on it.[156] Similar arrangements are known to have existed elsewhere. A contemporary description of the sacrament house in the abbey of Saint Peter in Ghent mentions that Abbot Gerard van Cuelsbrouck was buried right in front of it, and that he was represented kneeling.[157] Doubtlessly, burial in the vicinity of the Eucharist also had its practical advantages, since it allowed the donors to take advantage of the central place it occupied in the liturgy. More visitors would be drawn to the tombs in question, and the candles that were lighted in front of the sacrament houses would also illuminate the donors' effigies.[158]

Still, there was also a strong symbolic connotation. The visual effects that were achieved in Zoutleeuw and Ghent must have been similar to the example in Zuurbemde (fig. 125), where an unidentified couple is depicted in prayer at both sides of the sacrament house. The donors were immortalized in their spiritual communion, in perpetual prayer for the consecrated host, beholding it eternally. There is earlier documentation of sculptural programs that displayed patrons as *priants* at the foot of sacrament houses, but given

FIGURE 124
The state of the north transept of Zoutleeuw's church of Saint Leonard in 1938 (from Wilmet 1938, p. 56)

FIGURE 125
Anonymous, *Sacrament house*, 1555–1557, Zuurbemde, church of Saint Catherine
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

the controversial context described above, such a spatial arrangement was much more pertinent after 1520.[159] It was a direct visual expression of their Catholic combativeness: responding to Catholic exhortations to genuflect, as Jansenius' in Tongerlo, and defying Protestant critics like Bloccius, who called kneeling before sacrament houses a form of idolatry. Tellingly, this was precisely the same

visual technique that had been applied in the exemplary punishments by the authorities from the 1520s onwards. For example, after the *Beeldenstorm* the town council of the severely affected Bergues (Sint-Winoksbergen) sentenced a man for insulting the Eucharist to perform an *amende honorable* during Mass. Bare-headed and dressed only in linen, he had to kneel before the local sacrament house, loudly profess his repentance, and offer a burning torch to the consecrated host he had ridiculed. This act of submission was to be repeated every Sunday during an entire year, making it plain to the local community that the sacrament house had become the emblem of orthodoxy.[160]

The desire to send out a public, religious message is also overtly clear in Van Wilre's project, most obviously so in his foundation (in 1555) of a sermon to be preached every Sunday and holiday by a monk. What it was exactly that was propagated at these occasions is unknown, but it is more than likely that devotional themes similar to Van Wilre's donations and foundations were common. Since they were delivered in the vernacular, such texts were capable of reaching a large audience.[161] The Friars Minor in particular – who were paid to deliver Van Wilre's sermons – were known as sworn enemies of Calvin, and often attacked him in their sermons.[162] They presumably did this in Zoutleeuw too, where they would be armed with anti-Protestant books from the library donated by Gillis van Haugen to the *fabrica ecclesiae* only a few years later. Van Wilre's religious messages potentially also had a broader regional appeal because of the rituals planned on Pentecost, the feast that attracted pilgrims to Zoutleeuw for the annual Saint Leonard's procession: the consecrations of the monstrance, the sacrament house and Saint Erasmus' altar – which van Wilre furnished with a triptych – all likely happened at Pentecost.[163] If sermons were held on these occasions too, the objects' contentiousness and their emphatically Catholic iconographies would have provided ample subject matter. In the end, this public aspect of donations is also inherent in the very concept and self-image of the nobility and elites. Noblemen saw themselves as both leaders and protectors of the local community, for which they had to take responsibility by guaranteeing its unity and Christian character.[164] In Van Wilre's case, this is illustrated by the fact that two of his foundation charters – both from 1555 – explicitly disclaim personal benefits, specifying his motives as the 'multiplication of God's service and the common good'.[165] And the whole project of Masses, Marian and Eucharistic devotions made it immediately clear that, for Van Wilre, this proper service of God was Catholic.

en toūt Fideles aū roy

iusqūes a porter la Besac.

CHAPTER 7

1566: The *Beeldenstorm* and Its Aftermath

Destructions and Descriptions

Because of their defiantly Catholic character, sacrament houses became one of the primary targets of the violent iconoclastic attacks of 1566.[1] Many of the magnificent examples that had been constructed after 1520 were dramatically torn down, giving rise to both vivid and horrifying descriptions by contemporaries. In his description of the first phase of iconoclasm in the Low Countries (between 10 and 20 August 1566, in the Flemish Westkwartier), Marcus van Vaernewijck narrates with awe how an army of around 3000 members travelled in small gangs from village to village and destroyed the interior of every church they crossed on their path.[2] One of the gangs went to the 'rich and very powerful Abbey of the Dunes (…) where they broke the sacrament house made of marble, touchstone and alabaster, which had been commissioned by the previous abbot [Robert II Leclercq]' (fig. 122).[3] A stone fragment of a Last Supper (fig. 126) that has been identified as coming from the structure illustrates how the iconoclasts went about: the figures were meticulously deprived of their heads and hands, just like at so many other places where representations of human figures were disarmed of their potentially most dangerous, i.e. recognizable and speaking features.

The sacrament house that was donated by Andries Seys in Ghent and built between 1553 and 1555 befell the same fate. In his diary, merchant Cornelis van Campene described its destruction and emphasized that it had been 'donated shortly before'.[4] These examples should caution against a too univocal interpretation of the *Beeldenstorm* as nothing more than a destruction of the religious material culture of a preceding, medieval era that was definitively over. The demolition of these imposing structures made as clear a statement as their donation had only a few years before. Authors such as Van Campene and Van Vaernewijck still knew the names of prominent donors, and several of them or their close relatives must have been still alive when these large-scale destructions took place. Moreover, objects in churches often were directly linked to the private lives of donors, such as the epitaphs of Strijrode and Spieken in

Figure 127, detail
Anonymous, *Man in* Geuzen *costume, with medal*, The Hague, Nationaal Archief, Collectie Handschriften van het voormalige Rijksarchief in Zuid-Holland, 3.22.01.02, inv. 1462

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FIGURE 126 Anonymous, *Fragment of a Last Supper from the sacrament house*, c. 1540–1565, Koksijde, Abdijmuseum Ten Duinen
PHOTO: LAMBERT J. DERENETTE

Zoutleeuw. All of this adds a very personal touch to the iconoclastic attacks. The same goes for the creators of these objects, because even the most recent works, made by artists that were still alive, were subjected to fierce attacks during the Wonderyear. Throughout his *Schilder-Boeck* (1604), Karel van Mander gives many examples of paintings that he ranked among the most artful creations of the mid-sixteenth century that were 'smashed by desecrating hands, to the distress of Art, by fierce stupidity'.[5] Such was the case with a large altarpiece painted by Pieter Aertsen for a church in Warmenhuizen, near Alkmaar in Holland. Van Mander writes that a prominent lady from Alkmaar tried to prevent the triptych's destruction by offering 100 pounds, but 'just when it was taken out of the church to hand it over to her, the peasants furiously threw themselves on it and annihilated the beautiful art'.[6]

Our knowledge of Aertsen's religious oeuvre is limited, which in part is certainly the result of the large-scale destructions in the various sixteenth-century waves of iconoclasm. Van Mander even recounts that it drove the painter 'beside himself with despair that the things he meant to leave the world in memory were nullified like that'.[7] But Aertsen was of course far from the only artist who witnessed his production being devastated. Frans Floris is another case in point, with regard to whom it has even been suggested that the psychological shock caused by the sight of his own artworks being

destroyed might well explain his diminished output after 1566.[8] One of his absolute masterpieces must have been the *Assumption of the Virgin*, on which he worked from 1561 to 1564, for the high altar of the church of Our Lady in his hometown Antwerp, which at the time had only recently been elevated to the rank of cathedral. Just like Aertsen's altarpieces, this work was allegedly severely damaged when iconoclasts ransacked the church on 20 August 1566. Reporting that it was broken into pieces, Van Mander especially praised the work's composition, while an anonymous chronicler mostly deplored its artful and costly character.[9] In Zoutleeuw, on the contrary, Floris' and Aertsen's creations were spared. And although sacrament houses were violently attacked by iconoclasts all over the Low Countries, the structure in Zoutleeuw remained standing. How was this possible? While research on the so-called Wonderyear (spring 1566–spring 1567) has largely focused on Protestant action or governmental reaction, this chapter argues that local Catholic agency was of equally vital importance during this period.[10]

The Wonderyear: Facts and Theories

1566 saw the convergence of a number of slumbering tensions. A broad resistance against the harshness of the central government's heresy laws was joined by the nobility's and political elites' profound discontent with King Philip II's centralizing politics. This combination created the unique political and religious climate that would characterize the Wonderyear.[11] The traditional starting point is 5 April 1566, when over 200 armed members of the confederate lesser nobility organized a march on Brussels and presented governess Margaret of Parma with a petition to abolish the Inquisition and suspend the edicts against heresy. The overall tone of the text was moderate and loyal, but the action in itself was absolutely revolutionary.[12] Many inhabitants of the Habsburg Low Countries were hopeful, but tensions immediately ran high and in cities such as Antwerp and Brussels a permanent watch was installed. From this point onwards, the events became international news and foreign observers kept close track of the developments in the Low Countries.[13] Governess Margaret of Parma panicked and proclaimed a moderation a few days later, in anticipation of an official answer from King Philip II. This apparent tolerance was soon misinterpreted, and inhabitants who had been banned for religious reasons in previous years now returned to their home country. Shortly after, Calvinists came out into

the open and organized massively attended hedge-preachings outside many cities. These sermons gradually took on a militant tone, and were soon attended by an armed audience.[14] Thus, during the summer of 1566, Calvinism grew rapidly from a persecuted underground church into a large, popular and increasingly well-organized movement.

One such sermon was delivered on 10 August by Sebastiaan Matte in Steenvoorde (Flanders). Matte urged the crowd to break the images and other religious objects in the nearby convent of Saint Lawrence, which was ritually celebrating its patron saint's day with a procession. This particular event is traditionally identified as the start of the *Beeldenstorm*: in the week following Matte's sermon, many sacred places in the Westkwartier in the south-west of the County of Flanders were attacked by wandering bands of iconoclasts under the guidance of Calvinist preachers. The intense iconoclastic attacks in Antwerp on 20 August were a crucial turning point, since they functioned as a catalyst for further destruction. Important cities such as Ghent and Tournai soon followed, and the fury spread to Holland, before finally reaching the northernmost provinces in September and October 1566 (compare with map 5).[15]

The interpretation of these iconoclastic events has evolved significantly over time. The most notorious view is probably that of Marxist historian Erich Kuttner, who analyzed the *Beeldenstorm* as a dramatic expression of class struggle, identifying slumbering socio-economic tensions as its main trigger. His methods and interpretation of the events were soon met with fierce criticism, but other economic readings were still advocated afterwards.[16] Herman Van der Wee, for example, made a crucial and nuancing contribution to the debate by pointing to the essential role of the middle-classes. As a result of both economic and climatologic factors, their prosperity was threatened quite suddenly during the early 1560s, which Van der Wee interpreted as an important push-factor towards Calvinist teachings.[17] These economic interpretations were able to account for the arising of unrest, but they cannot explain the particular actions and the form they took.[18] Iconoclasm was no haphazard vandalism, but instead targeted specific objects, such as sacrament houses, and was symbolically charged, as the many mock trials against images illustrate. Furthermore, the example of Aertsen's altarpiece in Warmenhuizen demonstrates that iconoclasts refused sums of money, and that at other places they would rather urinate into sacred vessels instead of stealing and selling them.

Recent studies of the *Beeldenstorm* have proposed more cultural readings. Peter Arnade, for instance, explained the events by referring to the traditional, political culture of the Burgundian Low Countries.[19] Most importantly, the religious basis of the controversy was brought back into the debate. In her pioneering work, Nathalie Zemon Davis showed that the iconoclastic attacks in France were indeed all about religious convictions.[20] For the Low Countries in particular, David Freedberg has made important contributions by showing the importance of theological motivations for these destructive actions, and how the latter were in fact inherent to the Judeo-Christian tradition, and even human psychology in general.[21] These theoretical underpinnings and the various stances of their ideologists have been amply discussed above. Scholars have also shown how the iconoclastic wave fits in a much larger sixteenth-century, European pattern. After all, many countries north of the Alps had already been confronted with iconoclasm before 1566 (Chapter 4). Still, although the practice of destroying images was hardly unique, the scope and intensity of the wave of 1566 in the Low Countries was exceptional. Unlike anywhere else, the destructions were not the result of an official command, nor were the iconoclasts' actions approved by local authorities, or limited to individual places. Although the central government had evidently not consented, the upheaval still spread throughout almost all of the provinces, from Steenvoorde in the southwest to Groningen in the northeast. Sergiusz Michalski even spoke of an 'iconoclastic psychosis' in the Low Countries, emphasizing how exceptional it was from a European point of view.[22]

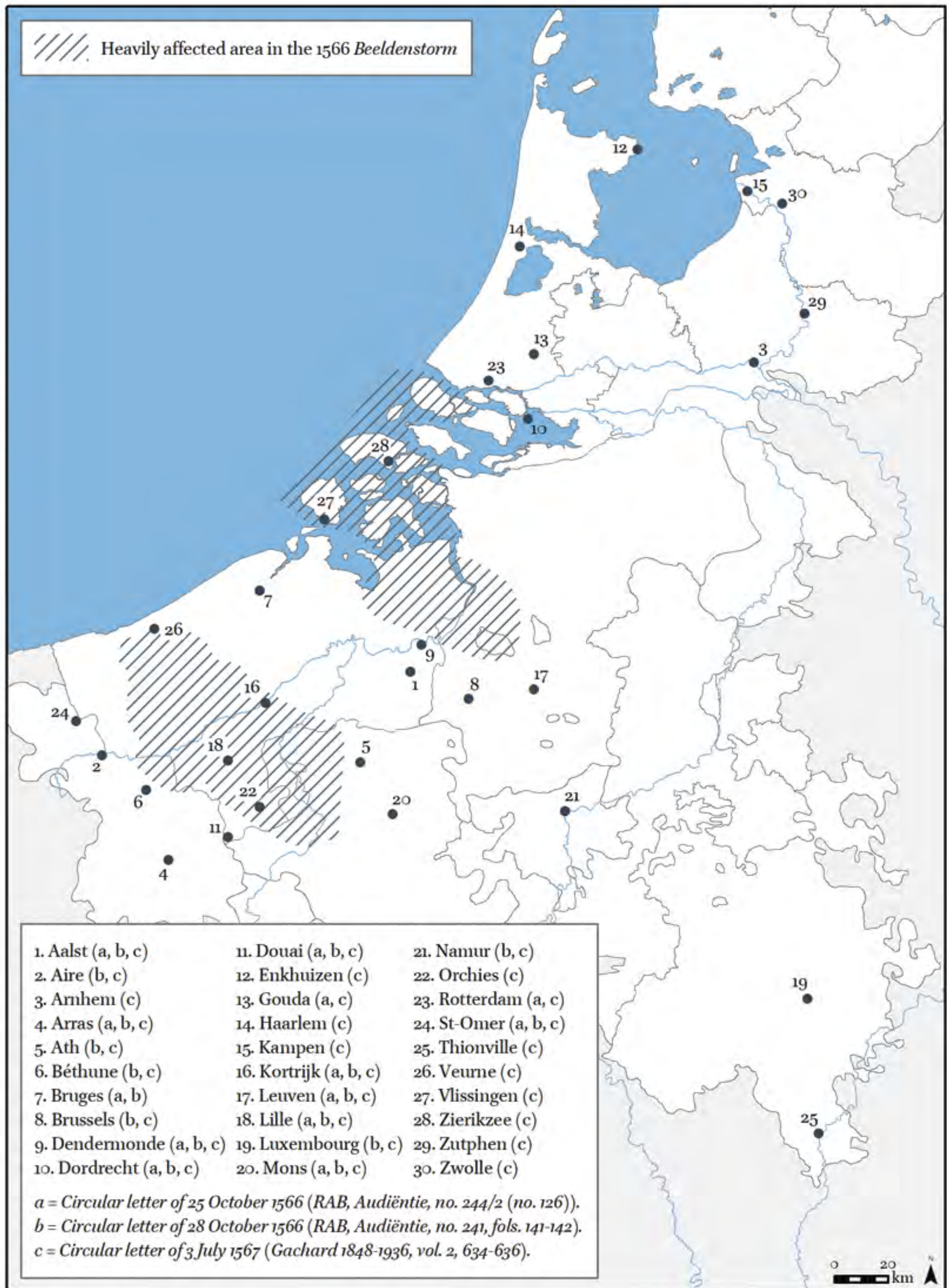
Les villes bonnes

Because of its exceptional character, many chroniclers – both contemporary and later – saw the *Beeldenstorm* as a unique chain of events. The traditional world of the Low Countries was turned upside down in an almost carnivalesque manner. Shouting 'the king drinks!' to a priest consuming the consecrated wine, comparing organ music to pastoral *musettes* and holding mock trials against images are all clear indications of this. Yet, although the iconoclastic scare must have been enormous and the actual impact of the attacks of the summer and autumn of 1566 can hardly be exaggerated, the *Beeldenstorm* was not as comprehensive as it seemed to contemporaries and subsequent historians.[23] In fact, a considerable number of

important economic, political or religious centers in the Habsburg Netherlands were able to ward off destruction. In the Duchy of Brabant, both Brussels and Leuven were spared, as were Bruges and Lille in Flanders – two of the territories' largest cities in terms of inhabitants (map 5).[24] Thus, all over the Low Countries, there were cities that were left untouched.

Nevertheless, the situation remained tense. A good case in point is the city of Leuven, located just off the western border of the Hageland region. The course of events in this town is very well documented thanks to the letters of Maximilien Morillon, the diligent informant of Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle in Rome. On Saturday 31 August 1566, in the midst of the iconoclastic upheaval, Morillon apologized for not being able to provide as much information as usual on the precarious situation in the Netherlands. 'I cannot leave this city as they keep it closed', he wrote, 'which is the reason why I cannot report as fully as I could while being in Brussels. But the danger is too great there'. At the same time, he expressed his gloomy prognosis for the future: 'The good order is maintained here and one keeps great watch, but I am afraid that in the end the inhabitants will get angry'.[25] However, almost two months later and after several weeks of ostentatious destruction in churches, chapels and cloisters all over the Habsburg Netherlands, Governess Margaret of Parma wrote the city of Leuven about 'the satisfaction that His Majesty got from seeing the good work done by his good and loyal subjects in order to preserve and maintain their ancient devotion, both with regard to religion as to the service of His Majesty'.[26] This example illustrates how real the iconoclastic scare was and indicates that the city of Leuven did suffer genuine threats. Yet, it also prompts the question of how it succeeded in warding off the attacks and, as a result, the city's two magnificent sacrament houses were not hewn down as they were at so many other places during the *Beeldenstorm*.

Three days later, on 28 October 1566, Margaret of Parma again sent a letter to Leuven and sixteen other cities in the Low Countries, which she referred to as *villes bonnes*, i.e. those who had remained loyal to the King and the Catholic religion during the troubles, as opposed to *les villes mauvaises* (map 5).[27] The abundance of studies charting the local development of the *Beeldenstorm* illustrates that it was certainly not a homogenous movement that struck identically everywhere it occurred. Instead, it was highly heterogeneous, characterized by pluralism and particularism.[28] Peter Arnade has aptly shown that, in the cases of Antwerp, Ghent and Ieper, the motivations for and precise developments of the iconoclastic acts



MAP 5 *Villes bonnes* in the circular letters of Governess Margaret of Parma, 1566–1567

MAP: RUBEN SUYKERBUYK & HANS BLOMME

differed significantly from place to place.[29] Hence, we may conclude that the reasons why certain cities resisted also differed considerably, and were dependent on a variety of factors. For instance, Robert Scribner has observed 'that the failure of the Reformation in Cologne was as much a product of the urban environment as its success elsewhere'.[30] However, as the iconoclastic scare seems to have been omnipresent, all cities felt threatened and consequently started taking measures. Contemporary Netherlandish sources are rather pessimistic about the resistance and remain silent about the measures taken, but these issues received much more attention in Italian reports on the quick succession of events in the Low Countries.[31] Giovanni Battista Guicciardini, sometime merchant in Brussels and informant for the Medici court, is one of the few authors who offered a succinct analysis of the resistance. He mentions three main reasons for the success of cities such as Brussels and Leuven that remained *intatto*: they closed the city gates, organized a guard that patrolled day and night, and provided armed watchmen to protect the local churches.[32] These are indeed the measures that recur in the cases of the cities that were spared.[33]

By closing the gates and sealing the city's jurisdiction, the magistrates sought to prevent citizens from attending the sermons of hedge-preachers outside the city walls, but it also allowed them to keep a close watch on people coming in. Names, places of origins as well as lodging were registered, while strangers or vagabonds were straightforwardly refused entry. In many cases, non-inhabitants that had already been in the city for a significant period were expelled. In Leuven, for example, all but two gates were closed on 29 August – a policy of which Morillon felt the consequences.[34] In reports on the events and adopted policies, which were later requested by the Council of Troubles, cities were often quick to emphasize that none of their inhabitants had been involved in any of the troubles.[35] However, the actual events seem to have been the result of a combination of internal and external factors. One measure that was meant to counter the danger from the inside was guarding of the churches and chapels in town, or even completely closing them by means of a temporary suspension of its liturgical services. Such was the case in the Church of Saints Michael and Gudula in Brussels. As a reaction to the news of the destructions in Antwerp on 20 August, the Brussels magistracy decided the very next day to put watchmen in the church towers, and all churchwardens were advised to personally stand guard in their churches.[36] Tensions were indeed running high, and a few days later, on 24 August, the word on the street was

that a Calvinist sermon and the despoiling of Brussels' main church were being planned. Morillon was convinced that this destruction would indeed have taken place that day if the local authorities had not intervened: the divine office was suspended, the building was closed, and guards were stationed in and around the church.[37] One week later, on Sunday 1 September, the church was opened again for a limited number of services and under heavy protection, and the very next day the governess had a *Te Deum* sung to celebrate the birth of Infanta Isabella. On this occasion, chronicler Pierre Gaiffier expressed his amazement about the strict surveillance. 'It was very strange to see arquebusiers and a great number of armed soldiers in the church. There were so many that one only had access to the church after great pains and difficulty, through a narrow passage, one after another'.[38] It was only on 15 October that the magistrates decided to officially reopen the church, albeit with limited opening hours.[39]

These examples show that local counter-moves were crucial. In Brussels, military organization was essential, but there was a dire need for soldiers, and for most of them, payment was far in arrears. Several cities made urgent bids for troops, but the central government was often unable to send any at all. As a result, some cities, among which Brussels and Leuven, put up temporary civic armies, paid by local authorities and institutions, both secular and religious.[40] In Leuven, the necessary funds were provided by donations from 'good citizens'.[41] Yet, in addition to these official measures and arrangements, the Catholic population could also take matters into their own hands by firmly resisting iconoclasts. A telling example is the town of Veurne: although it had closed its gates, a number of iconoclasts nevertheless were able to force their way in, and started causing devastation. However, the inhabitants themselves quickly managed to drive them back out.[42] Somewhat less glorious, but apparently equally effective, was to chase the attacking iconoclasts away by using dung, a tactic successfully employed by the inhabitants of Hoorn.[43] These examples illustrate the importance of local factors: in places where the reform-minded were not dominant, the iconoclasts often had severe difficulties carrying out their plans.

Logically, scholars have posited the existence of a correlation between the degree of success of rising Protestantism and iconoclasm.[44] However, this does not mean that the threats were insignificant in the cities that were able to ward off iconoclasm. In fact, there were definitely Protestant communities in several of the *villes bonnes*, and the iconoclastic scare evoked in Morillon and the governess'

many letters was doubtlessly fueled by real threats. In Brussels, the Calvinists were well organized by the time of the Wonderyear, and the university town of Leuven also saw considerable support for Protestant ideas, due to its many contacts with German and Swiss cities. The notorious trial of 1543 has already been mentioned above (Chapter 6): 42 persons were accused of Protestantism, and military security measures had to be taken during both the legal proceedings and the executions.[45]

And of course, iconoclasm could also come from out of town, as the example of Diksmuide shows.[46] When Sebastiaan Matte – the minister who had preached the notorious instigating sermon at Steenvoorde – sent a small army to the city, demanding that they be let in, the magistracy stubbornly refused. Yet, although the population appears to have been predominantly Catholic, they did fear bloody reprisals, and put pressure on the magistrates to let them do their job. Nevertheless, the churchwardens of the parish church of Saint Nicholas took the initiative to bring as much of the interior as possible to safety. During several days, some fifteen men were paid to hide or carry away most of the church's furniture. The sculptures of the rood loft were taken away, as well as the triumphal cross with the images of Our Lady and John the Baptist. The organ was partly protected, while parts of it were hidden in a parishioner's house, as was the baptismal font. Finally, wooden sculptures of the saints (*de houten santen*) were hidden in the church tower, and the brass screen around the sacrament house was carried away.[47] Iconoclasts indeed managed to enter the church and afflicted some damage, but later on magistrates explicitly declared that there were no citizens who had been involved: 'strangers' were said to have carried out an iconoclastic cleansing of the church. However, all of this had happened under the supervision of the bailiff, who made sure that the 'principal ornaments', including the rood loft dating from 1536–1543 and the – presumably contemporaneous – sacrament house, were spared.[48]

Zoutleeuw and the Hageland Region

The analysis above contradicts the idea of the *Beeldenstorm* as an all-destructive wave, and brings some nuance to the cliché that the passivity of magistrates was the main reason for losses. In several cases, such as in Leuven for example, acute and genuine threats were certainly met with active resistance sponsored by at least some

of the city's inhabitants. Yet, it is hard to assess how broad-fronted this opposition was, and in certain areas, the threats must have been considerably less immediate. Contemporary correspondence and chronicles clarify that the cities in the southern counties of Artois, Hainaut and Namur and the Duchy of Luxembourg 'remained constant in their Catholic religion'.[49] Their inhabitants were predominantly Catholic, and no gangs of iconoclasts are known to have wandered through their territories. Returning to the particular case of Zoutleeuw: what was the situation in this town during the summer of 1566?

In the middle of July 1566, the fear that King Philip II would send an army to the Low Countries urged the confederate nobility to convene a meeting in Sint-Truiden – only six kilometers east of Zoutleeuw – to discuss protection measures. For the first time in the Hageland, this entailed a heightened Calvinist presence, since the assembly was attended by delegates of the consistories, including the notorious preacher Herman Moded.[50] Morillon reported that it also attracted 'many merchants of Antwerp and Tournai, infected with heresy (...) threatening to exterminate and massacre the clergy'.[51] It did not come to this, but there were some sporadic cases of occasional iconoclasm, such as in Hasselt – 15 kilometers northeast of Sint-Truiden – where crucifixes and images of saints located outdoors were smashed, and the cemetery was desecrated.[52]

Nothing of the sort happened in Zoutleeuw. The town kept close watch over who entered the town, and peace soon returned to the Hageland.[53] Even in the midst of the iconoclastic upheavals that struck the Low Countries, the town never appears to have been under direct threat. One nightwatchman was installed by the civic authorities from 23 August onwards, when the *Beeldenstorm* had reached the cities of Mechelen and Turnhout, but the very next week, they still had to send out letters to Diest and Rotem (near Halen) 'to have tidings from the *Geuzen*'.[54] However, tensions increased in early December 1566, when the churchwardens took measures as well. Already in 1556, a man was paid to keep watch in the church during the four nights around Pentecost, and vigilance gradually increased in the following years (Chapter 4). From early December 1566 onwards, the churchwardens first appointed four watchmen to guard the church during daytime as well. Later, the granary (*coerenhuys*) was temporarily refurnished and equipped for these watchmen.[55] This heightened surveillance was probably a consequence of the increased tensions in and around Hasselt. After having been accused of being one of the principal leaders of the iconoclastic uprisings in

the territories of Flanders and Brabant, Calvinist preacher Herman Moded fled to the politically independent Prince-Bishopric of Liège. After 5 December 1566 he preached to much acclaim in the city of Hasselt, and just over one month later, on 19 January, the city's parish church was ransacked by iconoclasts.[56] However, these events did not trigger similar uprisings in Zoutleeuw, and at the end of May 1567, the town's nightwatchman was discharged.[57]

Zoutleeuw was definitely not an isolated case, but the situation is difficult to assess since most available studies predominantly focus on uprising and revolt.[58] Much in the same way as Scribner referred to local, urban and communal structures in his explanation of the success or failure of the Reformation, explanations for the existence of continuity and relative stability in the Low Countries should probably be sought on a more structural level.[59] The analysis above has shown that the complex mechanisms behind the *Beeldenstorm* consisted essentially of a combination of internal and external factors, and both were lacking in Zoutleeuw. There are no indications of threats from within, as the evidence at hand suggests that support for Protestantism in town was fractional or even non-existent. Not a single inhabitant is known to have been condemned for heresy by the Council of Troubles and in his history of the town of Zoutleeuw, published in 1606, court historian Gramaye stated that no inhabitant 'has ever been suspected of heresy during these troublesome times'.[60]

Modest measures were taken to counter potential attacks, but Zoutleeuw never really suffered immediate, external threats of iconoclasm either. In the Hageland, there were no gangs of iconoclasts such as those that sacked the Abbey of the Dunes or threatened the city of Diksmuide. The town of Diest, for instance, remained untouched by the *Beeldenstorm* as well, but nevertheless took preventive measures. A nightly guard was organized on 6 August already, and from early September until the end of April 1567, the civic militia served as an additional vigilante patrol.[61] Measures were also taken at the shrine of Saint Job in Wezemaal, where the offertory boxes were emptied and much of the church furniture – including the cult statue – was brought in safety to the city of Leuven on 24 August. But no iconoclasts came, and in April 1567, everything was returned.[62] Tienen also escaped. In the earliest stages of the Reformation, some inhabitants had been accused of adhering to Luther in the 1520s and 1530s, but in 1566, no iconoclastic cleansing of churches occurred. Not without pride, the magistracy later reported that 'concerning those who would have been the leaders and promotors of

the despoiling and sacking of the churches, we announce to your Excellency that we do not know of any, as such events did not happen in this town. God be praised!'[63] Finally, in and around Aarschot, Duke Philippe III de Croÿ (1526–1595) acted firmly. A loyal councilor to the governess, he was known as both an ardent opponent of the Confederation of Nobles and a staunch supporter of the Church of Rome. In response to the *Geuzen*, who collectively identified themselves by wearing medals depicting a beggar's pouch (fig. 127), De

FIGURE 127
Anonymous, *Man in* Geuzen *costume, with medal*, The Hague, Nationaal Archief, Collectie Handschriften van het voormalige Rijksarchief in Zuid-Holland, 3.22.01.02, inv. 1462

Croÿ is said to have issued a silver pilgrim badge depicting Our Lady of Halle. He forced his servants to wear it on their hats 'to show that they remained loyal to the papal church and opposed the *Geuzen*'.[64] De Croÿ's initiative found significant support, and word of the vigorous and efficacious actions he led during the *Beeldenstorm* was met with praise at the Spanish court.[65]

De Croÿ's badge is yet another example that demonstrates how traditional elements from the Low Countries' devotional culture received a new, confessional dimension in the mid-sixteenth century. Much like the sacrament house in Zoutleeuw, it testifies to the complex interplay between tradition and innovation in these times of religious change. Instead of accommodating the Protestant critique, the attacks were countered with even more magnificence, either in ornament – in music or in stone –, height, or iconography, but regardless of all this novelty, the basic forms remained the same. Hence, the sacrament house is exemplary for the religious developments in Zoutleeuw, which by no means suggest devotional decline. Parishioners seem to have upheld participation in the sacraments, and pilgrims continued to visit the shrine of Saint Leonard and attend the yearly Whit Monday procession. It is impossible to measure precisely to what extent this was due to public, orthodox projects such as Van Wilre's or De Croÿ's. The evidence at hand suggests that such initiatives were partially preceded by patterns of growth in traditional piety, but it is not unlikely that, within the intense religious debates of the time, the voices of local elites had an important impact on the communities they governed. In any case, they were clear local experiments in providing a material response to Protestantism.

Despite this relative stability in the summer and autumn of 1566, the Wonderyear marked the start of a particularly hard time for the town of Zoutleeuw. While devotional revenues had remained more or less stable throughout the earlier decades of the sixteenth century, the first considerable blow occurred in the financial year 1566, which included the revenues of the first Whit Monday procession after the upheavals of 1566. The procession immediately preceding the *Beeldenstorm* resulted in a normal sum of 3403,31 *stuivers*. However, the very next year, the sum was more than halved, to a mere 1477,125 *stuivers*. The same trend is notable in the total monetary offerings, 4394,94 and 2207,6 *stuivers* respectively (graph 4). The decline was followed by a modest recovery, but throughout the years to come, like the rest of Brabant and the Low Countries, the town went through a particularly distressful period, mostly due to

the civil war that ensued after the Wonderyear.[66] Due to the town's strategic location at the border of the Duchy of Brabant, Zoutleeuw and its surroundings were particularly hit by the raging war. This had disastrous consequences for the population, and farmers were regularly exempted from payments due to 'great damage inflicted by the *Geuzen*'.[67] Furthermore, a garrison was installed in town, which not only resulted in high maintenance costs, but also in the frequent mutiny and grave misbehavior on behalf of the soldiers. When William of Orange approached the town during his invasions of Brabant of 1568 and 1572, it remained loyal to the Spanish-Habsburg authority. However, between 1575 and 1578, Zoutleeuw temporarily chose the side of the rebellious States Army.[68] This led the Spanish to quarter yet more soldiers in the garrison in 1578 and 1590, respectively. Notorious phases of mutiny followed. These events, combined with a number plague epidemics in the 1570s, had far-reaching consequences for the population figure: in 1581, there were reportedly some 60 households. In 1594 there were only 30, and in a petition from 1601 to the Court of Accounts, the widow of the deceased *meier* claimed that the majority of the inhabitants had died.[69] The situation also had its repercussions on the administration of the *fabrica ecclesiae*: we only have fragmentary accounts on the period between 1566 and 1600, and it would not be surprising if these missing accounts had never been made at all.[70] In every respect 1566, much more than 1520, represents the real rupture in the history of the Low Countries.

PART 3

The Miraculous Counter-Reformation

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HEDWIGIS POLONIÆ REGINA.
DONO
HENRICI VIII.
ANGLIÆ REGIS.
Philippus Bonus.
FRANCISCVS II.
SFORTIA DVX
MEDIOLANENSIS.
IOANNIS DE
CHALON
PRINCIPIS
AVRIACI.
hic iacet
Ioachimus Delphinus
Franciæ
filius Ludovici XI.
qui obiit circa A. M.DIX

CHAPTER 8

The Resumption of Miracles

Paulus Gautier's Miracle Memorial Painting

In a gloomy space, a man is struck by divine light (fig. 128). He is shown twice: kneeling on the right, standing upright on the left. In both cases, he is looking upward with his hands held high. The scene is explained by a text, painted as an unfolded paper document glued to a wooden support in the lower right corner of the painting. Two distinct inscriptions in Dutch and French identify the young man as the leprous Paulus Gautier and date the event to 4 April 1612.[1] On closer inspection, it is possible to identify both the represented space and the 'here' referred to in the inscription as Zoutleeuw's chapel of Saint Leonard. Indeed, the small cross and the monstrance on the red cloth behind Gautier suggest the presence of an altar, and the sculpture of Saint Leonard represented in the tabernacle above can safely be identified as the particular thaumaturgic object that was venerated in the Brabantine town (fig. 18). In the upper right, votive offerings such as waxen or metal legs, feet and figurines leave no doubt that it was indeed a pilgrimage shrine. Among the ex-votos are two pairs of crutches, and one pair is also depicted lying on the foreground of the scene. All these clues suggest that we are looking at a miracle: Paulus Gautier had long been cripple (*estroupié*) and therefore walked with crutches, but through the intervention of Saint Leonard in his chapel at Zoutleeuw, he was miraculously cured. As a result, he no longer needed his crutches, which he probably left as ex-voto. The divine intervention itself is depicted quite literally: as a beam of light coming from heaven, pointing straight to the still-crippled Gautier at the right.

Within a month after the miraculous event, the painting was commissioned by the churchwardens from Jacop Lambrechts (doc. 1606–1616), a painter who regularly worked for both the Zoutleeuw church and town during these years.[2] Referred to as 'the likeness (*contrefeytsel*) of Paulus Gautier's miracle', it is an object that eludes easy categorization. Lambrechts clearly made use of the visual conventions of votive paintings, which were a particular, narrative type of ex-voto with a number of standard formal characteristics.[3]

Figure 138, detail
Lucas II Vorsterman,
The chapel of Our Lady of Halle, Brussels, KBR

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FIGURE 128
Jacop Lambrechts, *The miracle of Paulus Gautier*, 1612, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: GUIDO CONINGX – VZW DE VRIENDEN VAN ZOUTLEEUW

In addition to portraying the worshipper or votary in prayer, they also included a representation of the particular object of devotion, mostly surrounded by clouds or a halo. The scenes are often recognizably set in the actual space where the miracle happened, thus being represented as an accomplished fact. Finally, in addition to the visual information provided by the staging of the scene, the precise intervention is usually clarified in an inscription.[4] Much like the crutches and figurines depicted on the Gautier canvas itself, donating votive paintings was the final act in the fulfilment of a vow. Yet, through their narrative nature they affirmed 'the efficacy of dialogue between a pious petitioner and a holy intercessor' even more strongly.[5] Such devotional dialogue is aptly visualized in the votive

FIGURE 129
Anonymous, *Votive painting of Antonius Walschatten*, 1649, Jezus-Eik, church of Our Lady

painting that was donated to the shrine of Our Lady at Jezus-Eik by Antonius Walschatten in 1649 (fig. 129). Looking up to Our Lady with the Christ child, seated on a series of clouds and illuminated by a light emanating from the back, Walschatten kneels down on a cushion in a wooded landscape, characterizing this particular shrine's environment. In the accompanying inscription, he addresses the Virgin and thanks her for her intercession:

> Having invoked you in this chapel, O sweet Virgin, at the age of 40 years I was miraculously delivered from a rupture that had obliged me to wear this truss for more than 12 years. To the greater glory of the Mother of God. Ex voto. A.W.[6]

Although Gautier's painting clearly makes use of the same visual and iconographical conventions, it cannot be considered a votive

painting *stricto sensu*, which by definition must be donated as an expression of gratitude for the grace obtained by the *miraculé* him- or herself, or by a close relative – mostly parents – rather than by an unrelated third party such as churchwardens. Although formally akin, functionally it is clearly something else. However, without documentation that allows us to identify the donor, this distinction is often difficult to establish.[7] It is entirely unclear, for instance, when and by whom the painting discussed in Chapter 4 testifying to the benefactions received by Aegidius vanden Hoeve at Our Lady of the Ossenweg in 1538, was donated, since it was only first described in 1632.

This categorical confusion is augmented by the absence of precise contemporary terminology. Most descriptions use the broad and generic *tafereel* in Dutch or *tabula* in Latin, but this could refer to all sorts of panels, figurative as well as textual.[8] For example, a painting depicting a number of miracles that once hung next to the altar of Our Lady in Leuven's church of Saint Peter was described as *tafereel* and *tabulis*, but the fact that it depicted multiple miracles accompanied by texts in rhymed verses strongly suggests that it was a retrospective anthology of earlier miracles, rather than a painting that was given as votive offering.[9] In German scholarly literature, this particular type of imagery depicting local miracles is mostly referred to with the somewhat confusing term *Mirakelbilder*.[10] As an alternative, I would like to propose to refer to them as 'miracle memorial paintings', in line with the term *memorie*, which was often used in contemporary Netherlandish sources.[11] For instance, a painting of the miraculous healing performed by Notre Dame de la Fontaine at Chièvres upon a paralyzed beguine who had fled from the *Geuzen* from Ghent to Mons in 1579, was described as 'an eternal memory and remembrance of this miracle'.[12] Similarly, three seventeenth-century paintings preserved in Lede, each depicting a miracle at different points in time (1414, 1582 and 1593), are referred to in accompanying text boards as 'memorial of the miracle' (*memorie van het mirakel*, fig. 130).

In the Low Countries, this pictorial genre would only really start to develop in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but paintings depicting local miracles commissioned by shrines themselves existed well before.[13] We know of an early example connected to Our Lady of 's-Hertogenbosch. After the miraculous sculpture had worked its first healings in 1381, and after the first miracle was officially recorded on 8 November 1382, the administrators presented a painting depicting 'the miracle of Our Lady's image' to the Count of

FIGURE 130
Anonymous (after Otto van Veen), *Memorial painting of Andries Nicolaes' miracle*, seventeenth century, Lede, church of Saint Martin
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Holland on 19 November of the same year.[14] Mostly, however, such images were part of larger series. Not unlike the *tafereel* documented in Leuven, a panel preserved in the church of Our Lady in Damme shows an anthology of six individual miracles worked between 1510 and 1537 by the Holy Cross that was venerated there (fig. 131). The cult object is either shown in its chapel or appearing to the people who invoked it, and the depicted scenes are narrated in Middle Dutch texts at the bottom of the panel.[15] Other, more ambitious

FIGURE 131
Anonymous, *Miracle memorial paintings from the Holy Cross of Damme*, after 1537, Damme, church of Our Lady
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

series visually connected local miracles to the hagiography of the venerated saint. A well-known example is the cycle representing the life and posthumous cult of Saint Rumbold, 25 panels of which are still preserved in Mechelen (figs. 19 & 132). Originally placed in the chapel where the saint's tomb was located, on the cemetery outside the church (later cathedral), the paintings were probably commissioned by the collegiate chapter after the elevation of Saint Rumbold's relics in 1479 and paid for by the city's most notable inhabitants.[16] In this case as well, the saint's chapel with its shrine and tomb are clearly recognizable. Now, however, they connect the legendary past of the saint's lifetime with a very specific 'here' for the contemporary observer, visually and emphatically extending the saint's unabated miraculous powers into the present.

Sources for miracle memorial paintings were diverse. Instead of the hagiographical texts traditionally used for the canonical miracles depicted on altarpieces, this type of imagery often had to rely on local miracle books.[17] For example: the rhyming verses in Middle Dutch explaining the miracle depicted on one of the panels from Mechelen implicitly refer to such a locally consultable written source (fig. 132).[18] Another example is provided by three exceptional tapestries in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Potterie in Bruges. Woven around 1625, the compositions of the depicted miracles and the accompanying texts were in fact directly based on a manuscript illustrated with drawings, which was compiled in 1521–1522 and contained miracles from 1499 onwards (figs. 133 & 134).[19] However, from around 1600 onwards, such images would increasingly refer to the official documents that had recorded the miracle in question. For instance, one of the panels in Lede refers to 'public letters of the city of Dendermonde from the year 1593' as proof (fig. 130).[20] In a similar vein, in one of five paintings of the miracles of Our Lady ter Rive in Ghent, the inscription concludes by saying that the event had been 'testified to on 17 June 1603 in front of the aldermen of the seigniory of Sint Pieters', a document which has been preserved in the church's archives (fig. 135).[21]

FIGURE 132
Master of the Guild of Saint George, *Miracles at the shrine of Saint Rumbold*, c. 1500–1503, Mechelen, cathedral of Saint Rumbold
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

The painting commemorating the miracle of Paulus Gautier shares many characteristics with these examples, since it portrays the event in a specific time and place. Still, it was not part of a larger anthology of wondrous events that had happened in the chapel of Zoutleew, nor was it linked to Saint Leonard's hagiography. The churchwardens had never ordered similar paintings before, and would not do so in subsequent years. In fact, the commission strongly exudes a sense

FIGURE 133
Anonymous, *Pilgrims in veneration of Our Lady of the Potterie*, from the miracle book *Myrakelen van onse lieve Vrauwe ter potterye*, nr. 12, 1521–1522, Bruges, Museum Our Lady of the Potterie
© LUKASWEB – ARTS IN FLANDERS VZW, HUGO MAERTENS

of urgency: it was placed immediately after the miracle had taken place, and the churchwardens clearly opted for quick and relatively cheap action. Why did they suddenly decide to commission this canvas that blurs the boundaries between established genres and functional categories? Who was this Paulus Gautier, and what was the importance of this particular miracle? To understand the intentions of the churchwardens and, by extension, the function of the painting, this chapter analyzes the survival of the cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw into the seventeenth century. Although there has been a lot of research on Catholic miracle cults in this period, most of it has focused exclusively on the establishment of new shrines or on

FIGURE 134
Anonymous, *Pilgrims in veneration of Our Lady of the Potterie*, from the tapestry cycle with miracles of Our Lady of the Potterie, c. 1625–1630, Bruges, Museum of Our Lady of the Potterie
© LUKASWEB – ARTS IN FLANDERS VZW, HUGO MAERTENS

those related to the cult of Our Lady or Christ, usually in the form of the Eucharist.[22] After all, these were the cults which the Catholic Church tried to prioritize. But what happened to the many cult centers that had flourished around 1500, which were such a crucial aspect of the Low Countries' devotional culture, after the troubles of the sixteenth century? Cults of saints of late medieval origins now often aroused suspicion, even though they remained an inherent part of the religious landscape.[23] Iconoclasts and the civil war had seriously damaged both their reputation and furnishing, but traces – both material and mental – remained present.[24] How do the developments in Zoutleeuw fit into the established narratives of how the

FIGURE 135
Anonymous, *Memorial painting of the miracle of Ioosyne van Doorslaere*, Ghent, church of Our Lady and Saint Peter
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

Counter-Reformation proceeded during this period? The successful Spanish *reconquista* of 1585 signaled the start of a careful restoration, not only in a material sense, but also in terms of ecclesiastical organization and Catholic piety.[25] In recent years, historians have shown that this was a highly interactive process rather than a unilateral top-down reform.[26] However, what was the role of local shrines and their churchwardens in this process?

A New Era?

Soon after the *Beeldenstorm* had hit shrines all over the Low Countries, a Protestant song circulated in which the end of an era was proclaimed. It opened with a question which immediately set the tone: 'How have the times changed? Many saints are not honored anymore in these Flemish fields'. The remainder of the song

provides an invaluable catalogue of Netherlandish cult sites, until it suddenly pinpoints the core of the alteration: 'All these saints have submerged, they do not work miracles anymore'.[27] Evidently, the text referred to the scale and efficacy of the 1566 iconoclastic cleansings, which many Protestants – including Philips of Marnix, Lord of Saint-Aldegonde – initially regarded as proof of the legitimacy of their cause.[28] This idea of an age that had come to its end in 1566 was widespread. It is clearly reflected in miracle collections (Chapter 4), and is also expressed in an anonymous print depicting an allegory of the *Beeldenstorm* (fig. 136). In the background on the right side of this image, we see a group of iconoclasts pulling down a statue above a church portal, and hammering on others which are already on the ground. In the foreground, men in typical *Geuzen* costumes symbolically clean up the Catholic debris using brooms. The positive, Christian connotation of these actions is emphasized by the inclusion of a group of clergymen kneeling and praying in front of an altar on which the Pope is depicted as the Whore of Babylon riding the seven-headed beast. Hence, through their actions, the iconoclasts revealed once and for all the falsehood of the Church of Rome, whose members served the Antichrist. The accompanying captions still convey this early sense of euphoria which characterized the immediate aftermath of the *Beeldenstorm*, which means that the print was probably published soon afterwards. It attributes

FIGURE 136
Anonymous, *Allegory of the Beeldenstorm*, 1566, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

the swept-up Catholic material culture ('this peddlery') to the Devil, who is depicted above, flying off with a number of ornaments he was able to save. In a caption next to him, he admits his defeat, stating that his time is over and done. The explicit addition of the year 1566 leaves no doubt about the date of this definitive turning point of the Church of Rome's supremacy.[29]

In accordance with the Protestant conviction of the cessation of miracles after the apostolic age (Chapter 4), the theorists of the Reformation held the Devil responsible for the miracles which had been so vital for Catholic culture and devotional life during the preceding decades. Both the song and the print that appeared after the *Beeldenstorm* accentuated the topicality of the Protestants' theoretical conviction: the Devil flew off and miracles stopped occurring. These religious debates and upheavals had a profound impact on devotional life, since around mid-century, there was almost no shrine left that still recorded miracles, as if they had actually ceased in accordance with the Protestant doctrine. When the most violent period of the conflict temporarily calmed down around 1600 however, the Catholic Church started picking up the pieces. But it faced a major problem: how to account for the apparent lack of miracles during the middle of the sixteenth century?

Explaining Intermittency, Asserting Continuity

Even in Zoutleeuw, 1566 had pernicious consequences for the devotional fabric, regardless of the town's demonstrable tenacity and its continuity of traditional religious practices. Remarks by contemporary authors on the dearth of tangible material on miracles make it clear that this is not a mere misinterpretation by modern historians caused by fragmentarily preserved sources. In his account of the miracles at the shrine of Our Lady of the Ossenweg from 1632, Augustinus Wichmans uttered a general complaint. He found traces of only eighteen authenticated miracles, in the original parchment miracle book and in unspecified 'proofs' (*argumenta*) of healings hanging in the chapel. He concluded that it was regrettable that not all miracles had been recorded, 'just as it is the case in so many other holy places'. According to him, this was the result of negligence, but even more so of carelessness and ingratitude on the part of those who had received the benefaction.[30]

One of the 'many other holy places' Wichmans referred to was the shrine of Our Lady of Halle. Justus Lipsius published his famous treatise *Diva Virgo Hallensis* on this cult in 1604, the lion's share of which was based on a copy of the church's miracle register.[31] Towards the

end of his text Lipsius noted that most of the miracles he had talked about so far were all dated between 1400 and 1500, adding that 'from that point onwards until our time, there is a silence'. This observation corresponds to an actual hiatus in the original manuscript that has been preserved in Halle.[32] Even though he was able to collect evidence of nine miracles between 1535 and 1603, these were not written down in the acts, but rather 'described or depicted on votive tablets'. Thus, 'contrary to what is claimed by some', Lipsius maintained that 'memorable events did actually happen in our time'. As an explanation for the lack of evidence, the author concluded that the people responsible for the registration of miracles must have judged Our Lady of Halle's fame sufficiently spread by their time, and therefore did not deem it necessary to add new miracles to the list.[33] Both authors thus maintained that there had definitely not been a cessation of miracles, and explained the lack of evidence by claiming that they were simply not duly recorded.

Lipsius and Wichmans are among the best-known reporters on seventeenth-century miracle cults, but their publications were preceded by Cornelius Columbanus Vrancx' *Den tweeden cout der nichten* (1600). Written in the vernacular, this was a very popular book and was arguably even more ambitious than Lipsius and Wichmans' publications: it contained an overview of 23 Marian shrines in the southern Low Countries (Artois, Brabant, Cambrésis, Flanders and Hainaut) and elsewhere in Europe (Italy, Portugal and Spain). By the time of its publication, Vrancx (d. 1615) was a well-known and successful preacher and a prolific author, mostly of anti-Calvinist treatises defending Catholic tenets such as the Eucharist or Our Lady. In 1597, he was elected abbot of the Ghent abbey of Saint Peter, and it was in this capacity that he published *Den tweeden cout*.[34] The book is a sequel to a first dialogue (*cout*) on the life and the virtues of Mary, which he had published the year before. In the second dialogue that constitutes *Den tweeden cout*, the two devout women, Margriete and Willemyne, each recount a series of miracle narratives, organized according to cult center.

Vrancx' intentions were essentially practical, and his primary purpose was to demonstrate the existence of miracles. Like Lipsius and Wichmans, he admits that the evidence is rather limited for the middle of the sixteenth century, and at one point he explicitly attributes this to the rise of Protestantism. The occurrence of miracles had always been a custom (*ghewoonte*), but 'due to the heresy of Luther and others who scorn the holy saints, this tradition has disappeared'.[35] In part, he circumvented this lack of evidence

by referring to foreign cult centers – including Guadalupe, Loreto, Mondovì and Montserrat – which he then subtly linked to the Low Countries by showing that the thaumaturgic images venerated at these places had been successfully invoked by Netherlanders throughout the sixteenth century.[36] Yet, like Lipsius, he also emphasized that the thaumaturgic powers of Our Lady and the saints had never disappeared from the Low Countries. In fact, 'miracles would happen daily, if she [Our Lady] were invoked daily'.[37] It is in this precise context that Vrancx' book was supposed to be helpful:

> MARGRIETE: This habit needs to recover.
> WILLEMYNE: By the hearing or reading of these miracles it will doubtlessly be done, and the poor peasant will often find comfort in Mary (...)
> MARGRIETE: I think that the parish priests who read and know these miracles will please their community by preaching and joyfully proclaiming them.
> WILLEMYNE: That's why all parish priests need to know these miracles.[38]

In particular, the actual 'miracles that still occur at various places within the holy Catholic Church need not be concealed, because it is profitable to know them in these pitiful times of the last century, during which so many people have fallen into disbelief and various heresies, and still fall at many places'.[39] In other words, by informing the laity about miracles that have happened both in the past and in more recent years, thus emphasizing the unabated thaumaturgic powers of Our Lady and the saints, Vrancx was convinced that the people's devotion would again increase, which in turn would restore continuity with the pre-Reformation era.

Cultic Antiquarianism

For this reason, Vrancx wanted to collect source material that risked getting lost. The most acute threats were of course the ongoing war and the ruthless behavior of the *Geuzen*. For instance, in his discussion of Our Lady of Hanswijk, he stated that a lot of miracles had been recorded in a parchment book, 'which was found and broken by the *Geuzen*, out of the hatred they bear towards God, his sweet Mother and all the Saints'.[40] Carelessness in registration was equally problematic. For instance, Vrancx observed that in the chapel devoted to the Mother of God in his own abbey church a great many wax ex-votos testified to the thaumaturgic powers and popularity of the

statue (fig. 135). However, he is unable to recount a single event, since nothing had been written down – something which was beyond his comprehension.[41] In order to remedy this situation of imminent loss, Vrancx industriously set out to collect as much evidence as possible, and he appears to have conducted ample research. In most cases, his sources consisted of written or printed miracle books, but his quest also benefited from material sources such as memorial or votive tablets which decorated the walls of the churches and chapels he had visited. In Tongre-Notre-Dame (Hainaut) he obtained his information from old churchwarden accounts, and in other cases he refers to sermons in which miraculous stories had been recounted.[42]

Such antiquarian concerns are characteristic for this period.[43] For instance, when Peeter Spijskens was appointed parish priest of the church of Our Lady in Tielt (Brabant) in 1596, he immediately set out to collect as much material as possible on the miracles worked by the miraculous statue of the Virgin that was venerated there. However, the ravages of war had wiped away many traces, and the earliest miracle he was able to reveal only dated from 1572.[44] Other cult centers, on the other hand, could boast proof of medieval miracles. As a result, such investigations – meant to demonstrate continuity – led to a recurring pattern of adding new miracles to medieval collections after a long, sixteenth-century hiatus. The clearest example provided by Vrancx is the series of stories from the Marian shrine at Tongre-Notre-Dame. No miracle book is mentioned, but the Ghent abbot compiled a selection with the help of 'antiquities and old accounts from the church'. On a total of 29 stories, 25 are dated between 1081 and 1497, to which four were added that occurred between 1591 and 1598.[45] The same tendency can also be discerned in collections that were not included in *Den tweeden cout*. An interesting example is the case of Our Lady of Dadizele, of which the miracle collection consists of 26 stories dating from 1353 to 1537. One final example of 1617 was added to this collection, as 'demonstration that Gods hand was not curtailed'.[46] The same can be seen in the collection related to Saint Alena from Vorst, where the thread was picked up in 1602 after a hiatus from 1527 onwards, and in the substantial book of Our Lady of 's-Hertogenbosch, of which all recorded miracles date from before 1521, with the exception of one from 1603.[47]

Vernacular, devotional treatises on individual shrines, published around 1600, similarly deployed this discourse of emphatic restoration of tradition in order to strengthen their individual legitimacy.[48] Almost without exception, these publications gave historical overviews of the cults, tracing back their origins to a distant past in order

to refute Protestant accusations of being invented only recently. Etienne Ydens' book from 1605 on the Holy Sacrament of Miracle in Brussels is a clear case in point. After having recounted the history and the miracles of the cult by means of the findings of his extensive research in churchwarden accounts, official testimonies and various sorts of gifts, Ydens directly addresses the reader:

> Catholic reader, by the extracts transcribed above and by the narration of so many sufficiently verified miracles, one can clearly recognize how great and shameless the impudence of the heretics of our time is, and in particular of those who had kept our city of Brussels and dared to publish a placard in 1581, in which they – among many other blasphemies, calumnies and impostures – claimed that this Holy Sacrament has only appeared for the first time in 1529 during the disease called the sweating sickness (…) And yet by the same placard they cannot conceal that more than hundred years before people already talked about it.[49]

The rich documentation he provided in his treatise thus was not only meant to arouse enthusiasm for the city's Eucharistic relics, but also to dismiss the very specific rumors of denial that had been spread during the Brussels Calvinist regime (1577–1585). These rumors were launched with the sole purpose of unmasking the relic as a recent invention that had nothing to do with the true, apostolic faith. On the contrary, Ydens tried to show that the cult was already there well before Protestant ideas started to spread, and that it was part of an established Christian tradition. Yet, the simultaneous existence of these two disparate visions is a striking example of opposing, contemporary interpretations of the cyclical movements of cults (Chapter 3): the Brussels cult definitely had fourteenth-century origins, but it was indeed actively revived from 1529 onwards under the impulse of the Habsburg Court, arguably to counter Protestant critiques (Chapter 4).

The Rise of Votive Paintings

Often confronted by a lack of written records, Catholic authors around 1600 increasingly turned to votive paintings as a source to establish the miraculous continuity of Netherlandish shrines. One of the sixteenth-century miracles Ydens was able to collect was

documented on a panel he had seen. It recounted how, in 1536, a certain Lauren Couderlier, courtier and *garde de linge* to Emperor Charles V, was dangerously ill and called upon the Brussels Holy Sacrament of Miracle. It reportedly 'appeared to him in a vision, in the same way as it can be seen in said church [Saints Michael and Gudula]'. He recovered, and 'in memory of this great benefice and as an act of grace, he had a panel painted, representing said vision and carrying a subscription of this beautiful miracle'.[50] Vrancx too made use of this particular type of material source. In his discussion of Notre Dame de la Fontaine at Chièvres, for instance, he includes the story of a man who had been tormented by extreme pain for 21 years, but was miraculously cured after a pilgrimage. In gratitude (*in danckbaerheyt*) for this miracle he had a painting (*tafereel*) made and sent to the shrine.[51] Similarly, Wichmans mentions a painting (*tabulam*) which included a representation of how a child was miraculously cured through the intercession of the statue of Our Lady in the church of Saints Michael and Gudula in Brussels. In this case, the panel was donated by the parents 'as testimony to their gratitude for the received benefaction'.[52] All these panels are now lost, but functionally and formally their descriptions fully correspond to the definition of votive paintings: given in grace by the votary, and documenting the miracle in word and image.

The pictorial genre was mentioned in passing by Molanus in his treatise from 1570 on sacred images, while discussing other votive offerings, the giving of which he described as an ancient custom.[53] Donating wax or metal figurines to shrines had indeed been customary since the early and high Middle Ages, but votive paintings on the other hand are only documented in Europe from the later fifteenth century onwards. Quasi-continuous series from around 1500 until the present have been preserved in Spain and, more extensively, in Italy, where we know of more than 1,500 paintings from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The earliest extant and documented examples from Germany and Austria also date from around 1500. In these regions, the practice came to a temporary standstill with the Reformation, only to become almost a mass phenomenon in the 1620s and 1630s, parallel to the revival of old shrines and the foundation of new ones.[54] In the Low Countries, not a single votive painting dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries has been preserved, and the genre has been neglected in scholarly research. Yet, scrutinizing the available evidence provides us with important insights into the evolving dynamics of miracle cults.[55]

Contrary to what Molanus' discussion suggests, votive paintings were a relatively new phenomenon in the Low Countries when he wrote his treatise. Molanus himself does not give specific examples, and the ones mentioned by Vrancx, Lipsius and Wichmans are often undated.[56] Yet, the evidence suggests that they only appeared during the middle of the sixteenth century. Lipsius only mentions examples from 1535 onwards, and Ydens' example from 1536 likewise seems to have been among the earliest.[57] Furthermore, the absence of unequivocal terminology throughout the sixteenth century might be a sign that the practice was not yet well disseminated. Lipsius, who was well-travelled, was the first author in the Low Countries to use precise vocabulary in his book from 1604 on Our Lady of Halle. When describing the statue's chapel, he mentioned that it was 'decorated with offerings and votive panels (*tabulis votivis*)'.[58] While the very same panels had been mockingly referred to as *tafereelkens* by Philips of Marnix, Lord of Saint-Aldegonde, in 1569, two Dutch translations of Lipsius' text, published in 1605 (Delft) and 1607 (Brussels) respectively, demonstrate that there was still no Dutch equivalent.[59] The – Protestant – translation from Delft interpreted Lipsius' concise term *tabulis votivis* either literally as 'promised panels' or as 'panels that were given out of devotion', whereas in the other version, the term was elaborately translated as 'panels that were given in memory of miracles and received benefactions'.[60]

The relative scarcity of examples makes it difficult to make any definitive claims about the actual dissemination of the practice of donating votive paintings in the Low Countries, but the evidence at hand suggests that it only started well into the later sixteenth century, and that it increased in popularity after 1600. For instance, at the pilgrimage church of Our Lady of Alsemberg, some eight examples dating between 1611 and 1682 have been recorded in the church's archives. The first was donated by Pieter van der Haegen, *meier* of Alsemberg, in gratitude for his sudden recovery. In this votive panel, Van der Haegen was said to have been represented kneeling before Our Lady.[61] A comparison between two prints that show the interior of Our Lady's chapel in Halle, from 1604 and 1658 respectively, further confirms this increase in popularity during the course of the first half of the seventeenth century. This important Marian pilgrimage destination housed a miraculous statue of the Virgin and child since at least the thirteenth century, and its chapel was filled with many costly gifts, several of which were donated by prominent

people, among which the Dukes of Burgundy.[62] However, while the print from 1604 that was included in Lipsius' *Diva Virgo Hallensis* only shows one or possibly two votive paintings, this number increased to at least 10 in the print from 1658, visible on the right wall (figs. 137 & 138). One of these, the one hanging in the doorway on the lower right of the print (p. 258), is still extant, making it one of the earliest preserved examples in the Low Countries (fig. 139). The panel from 1614 depicts wealthy silk merchant from Antwerp Rogier Clarisse (d. 1622), who was part of a network of friends that included Lipsius. Clarisse is shown kneeling in front of Our Lady, who is shown amidst an enlightened group of clouds, through whose intercession he had recovered from health, as explained by an inscription on a banderole in the lower right corner.[63]

This chronological evolution in the Low Countries corresponds to Willem Frijhoff's observation that the practice of giving votive paintings spread across Europe in close connection with the Counter-Reformation, even when taken in its literal sense as countering Protestantism (Chapter 6).[64] The social profiles of the donors indeed fit the observed prominence of local elites in early reactions on Protestant critiques: Couderlier was a courtier, Van der Haegen was a *meier*, Clarisse was a wealthy merchant and, judging by his clothing and coat of arms, Walschatten in Jezus-Eik (fig. 129) must also have been among the better-off. And while the early example (from 1536) from Brussels might at first sight seem to contradict Frijhoff's hypothesis, it is crucial to emphasize that the revival of the whole cult of the Holy Sacrament of Miracle was in fact a direct reaction to Protestant developments, and a refutation of increasing critique (Chapter 4). The Habsburg court was particularly involved, and in this respect it is all the more interesting that the votive panel in question was donated by a courtier of Charles V. Regardless of whether these paintings were a genuine expression of piety and gratitude, a reaction against critique, or indeed a combination of both, the visual representation of the miracle combined with its textual elucidation must have served as a clear and readily understandable argument in ongoing discussions in the Low Countries. In a highly effective way, such images argued in favor of both the Real Presence and of the existence of miracles. As objects they were particularly suitable for a Catholic counteroffensive, and Wichmans certainly had had good reasons to later refer to similar paintings as *argumenta*.[65]

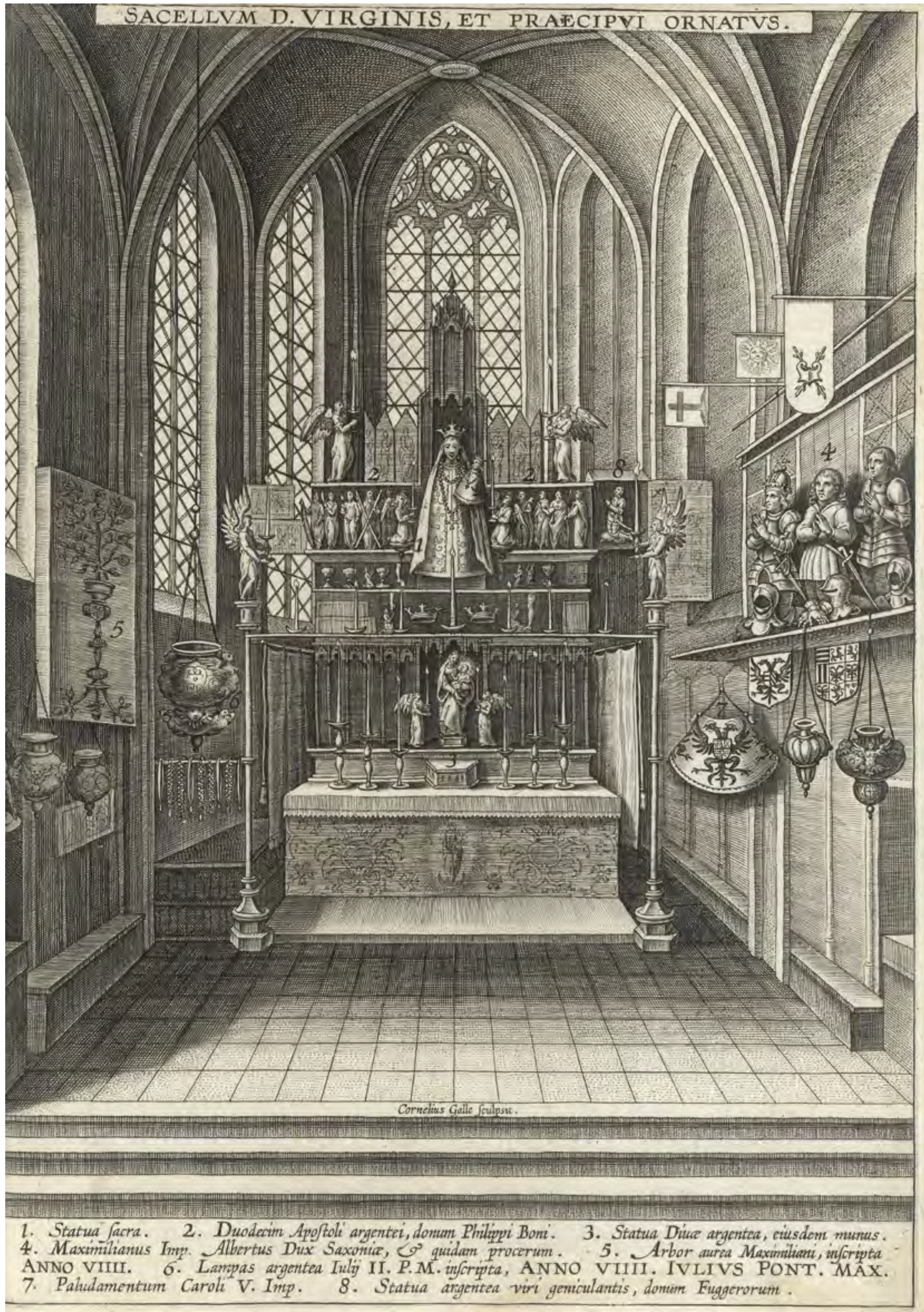


FIGURE 137 Cornelis Galle, *The chapel of Our Lady of Halle*, from Lipsius 1604, Ghent, University Library

FIGURE 138 Lucas II Vorsterman, *The chapel of Our Lady of Halle*, 1658, Brussels, KBR

FIGURE 139
Anonymous, *Votive painting of Rogier Clarisse*, 1614, Halle, basilica of Saint Martin
PHOTO: JAN DEMOL

A Culture of the Miraculous

The rise of this new type of devotional objects around 1600 is illustrative of the fresh dynamics and renewed popularity of miracle cults. The material assembled by Vrancx in his publication from 1600 confirms this development, and he was convinced that his book – and communication on miracles in general – would greatly contribute to this trend. His Jesuit colleague Franciscus Costerus (1532–1619) – an equally popular preacher and prolific publicist – similarly recommended his audience in 1604 to go on a pilgrimage from time to time 'because one observes that at saints' shrines miracles do actually happen'.[66] Quantitative analysis supports this observation: the number of shrines where miracles were recorded increased again (graphs 10 & 11), charting the initially slow but subsequently impressive revival of devotional activities at established

cult centers in the Low Countries at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The prevailing climate has aptly been dubbed 'miraculous' by Henri Platelle, who, while studying seventeenth-century Lille and its surroundings, noticed a steady rise of newly originating devotions and shrines, where all of a sudden new series of miracles started to occur.[67]

This miraculous revival was subtly notable at the already existing shrines, but much more significantly so in the newly established ones. Platelle rightly emphasized the important 'role of newness'.[68] Just like a century before, the Low Countries saw a steady rise in new cult centers, mostly devoted to the Virgin Mary. The best-known is certainly Scherpenheuvel, where – not unlike Our Lady of the Ossenweg – a small statuette hanging on an oak had started to work miracles in the last decades of the sixteenth century. In 1600, Vrancx did not yet include it in his overview of Marian shrines in the Low Countries, but it would very soon become a place of 'national' importance. Its fame spread quickly, and in 1602 a wooden chapel was built to accommodate the increasing flow of pilgrims. The most important impulse was given the very next year, when Habsburg Archdukes Albert and Isabella started to engage with the new shrine. They attributed the successful outcome of the siege of 's-Hertogenbosch in 1603 to Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, which marked the start of a lifelong devotion to the cult statue and an extensive patronage project that would develop the initially small place into a veritable Marian town, which could boast the first church with a cupola in the Low Countries.[69]

The increasing dynamics led Mathias Hovius, Archbishop of Mechelen, to commission an investigation into many of the miracles that were said to have happened there. The task was carried out by Philips Numan, a town clerk from Brussels, and soon afterwards, Hovius gave official consent to have the rich collection published. Numan's *Historie vande mirakelen* came out in the summer of 1604 and contained a set of 63 endorsed stories, 46 of which were dated to 1603, and 14 to the first months of 1604, just prior to the book's publication. Like Vrancx and other authors, Numan also assessed the popularity of the shrine in terms of ex-votos. In 1603, 135 crutches were reportedly displayed in the chapel, in addition to a great amount of shoes, clothes and wax or metal figurines. Furthermore, there was also a selection of more prestigious gifts, including a silver crown from the city of Brussels, two silver chandeliers from the city of Antwerp, an antependium from Dorothea of Lorraine, and several gifts from the archdukes and members of their court. In 1613,

Numan edited a first continuation, and a second one would follow in 1617. A total of 266 different miracles would be published between 1603 and 1682, but their chronological distribution was clearly concentrated in the earliest years: more than one fourth (73) was dated between 1603 and 1605, and more than two thirds (187) between 1603 and 1633.[70]

The practice of pilgrimage and the belief in miracles had taken on a strong confessional character. Some examples from the middle of the sixteenth century already suggest this tendency (see Chapter 4), but around 1600 it was explicitly acknowledged in Catholic writings. Vrancx was convinced of the merits of publishing miracle stories: they would strengthen the people in their Catholic faith. Similarly, Costerus claimed that miracles confirm believers in their religion. Collectively, these publications were intended to create a shared, Catholic identity among the inhabitants of the southern provinces.[71] The fact that official but unpublished documents use the very same discourse illustrates the general dissemination of the idea. For instance, the document drawn up by the Ghent aldermen, which testified to the previously mentioned miracle from 1603 (fig. 135), explicitly stated that it had been drawn up 'lest everyone should be strengthened in the faith and the power of God and his blessed mother, and do not doubt it'.[72] Unsurprisingly, for the great majority of the faithful, such wonderful events indeed counted as the most important parameters for the efficacy of the saints.

Strengthening one's faith is one thing, disproving the validity of the Reformation another. Simon Ditchfield has noted how, after the Council of Trent, miracles came to play a central role in the Catholic Church's argumentation for its position as the one true church.[73] In the Low Countries, this idea also spread among the flock by means of vernacular publications such as Cunerus Petri's *Den schilt teghen die wederdoopers* (1568) and Costerus' *Schildt der catholijcken teghen de ketterijen* (1591) – two prime examples of books that were explicitly meant to furnish Catholics with the necessary readymade arguments to retort Protestant charges to the accusers.[74] Miracles were particularly promoted by the Jesuits, of whom Costerus was a central figure around 1600.[75] He argued that Catholics continued to believe in miracles, since they are signs of the holiness of the venerated objects and proof of the truth of Catholics' faith. Citing Christ from the Gospels (John 15, 24), he established that new faith (*nieuw leeringe*) always needs miracles to prove its validity. Yet, while this clearly does not happen to endorse Protestant doctrine, many miracles still occur within the Catholic Church, which demonstrates

anew the truth of their belief.[76] Miracles were thus considered as proof that the Catholic Church controlled the supernatural realm, and hence also of its position as the one true Church. As a result, going on a pilgrimage and believing in miracles were not only considered as a refutation of Protestant doctrine, but also as an open confirmation of orthodoxy. Hence, Costerus actively encouraged believers to go on pilgrimage, and at the same time pre-empted oft-heard criticisms of the practice. While it was often criticized as an immoral activity that lead participants to engage in lascivious behavior in far-away places while their families remained unprotected at home (Chapter 4), Costerus particularly emphasized the importance of nearby shrines.[77] This indeed become custom, which created renewed opportunities for regional shrines such as Zoutleeuw.[78]

While Costerus saw in the miraculous climate circa 1600 a confirmation of orthodoxy, other writers even posited a direct causal connection between Protestant reproaches and the increase of miracles. Lipsius, for example, claimed that the saints, and especially the Holy Virgin, work so many miracles in these times, precisely because they are being refuted by the heretics.[79] Just as in the mid-sixteenth century, miracles were still seen as anti-Protestant revelations.[80] The clearest illustration is a particular category of miracles in which Protestants actually played a part. In 1598, Jan Coens made use of these as a rhetorical strategy in his confutation of Philips of Marnix' *De bienkorf der h. Roomsche kercke* (1569), one of the most stinging and most popular critiques of the practices of the Church of Rome. As Marnix had employed Our Lady of Halle to make his point, Coens used the same shrine to enforce his arguments.[81] Among the many miracles, he singled out two stories from 1582, when the *Geuzen* tried to capture the city. Not only had the statue of Our Lady successfully defended her stronghold Halle, but through her intervention, her assailants were also suitably penalized: a heretical churchwarden who had boasted that he would sell the thaumaturgic statue was turned into a fearful swineherd, and the soldier who had planned to cut off her nose was deprived of his own by means of a bullet.[82] Coens included similar stories on other cities and their images, where they were linked with episodes of iconoclasm. When in 1566 an iconoclast in 's-Hertogenbosch defied an image of Saint Anthony – a saint who had given his name to ergotism, known as Saint Anthony's fire – to show off his power, the man was instantaneously struck by the disease and died. A similar fate befell a man in Bruges, who had mocked Saint Christopher by climbing on the shoulders of the statue, saying that he had carried the Christ child long enough and

that it was his turn now.[83] The carnivalesque inversions that were so typical of iconoclasm clearly did not go unpunished.

Earlier examples from the 1530s show that there were definitely antecedents (Chapter 4), but now the thorny memories of recent iconoclastic events were systematically forged into arguments in favor of Catholic supremacy.[84] Coens was by no means the only author in late-sixteenth-century Brabant to do so, and the fact that similar miracles also occurred in unpublished acts is illustrative of the degree to which such ideas prospered in Catholic communities. In Everberg, for instance, all original documents attesting to the miracles worked by the locally venerated Holy Cross got lost in the troubles, but in 1588, the local confraternity recorded the testimonies of prominent inhabitants. In this small collection of collectively remembered miracles was a story of a group of *Geuzen* who unsuccessfully tried to take away and burn the Cross and the images in the church, after which they themselves caught fire.[85] This particular category of wonders was also visualized in miracle memorial paintings. One example, preserved in Vilvoorde, depicts an event in 1578, when the *Geuzen* attacked the local beguinage, where the miraculous statue of Our Lady Ten Troost was venerated. However, the statue was saved, and reportedly pushed the assailants from their ladders. Interestingly enough, the painting was probably commissioned around 1586, and carried in the procession for Our Lady Ten Troost that took place after the Calvinists had been driven out.[86]

Precisely because of this heightened importance of miracles as crucial arguments for Catholic orthodoxy, the Church also sought to establish greater control over them. The ecclesiastical authorities now adopted a notably more critical stance, and consequently invested much time and effort into verifying whether the miracles that were reported everywhere were genuine manifestations of the divine, and not human or devilish fraud. As this had been a central Protestant critique of the Catholic Church, Rome evidently wanted to prevent abuse in order to smother all potential critiques in advance. The Tridentine decrees on the cult of saints had stipulated that 'no new miracles [were to] be accepted (...) unless they have been investigated and approved by the same bishop'. Thus, if a local shrine wanted to take advantage of a miraculous intervention by having it pronounced in sermons or published in booklets, they were now obliged to have their miracles officially approved by following a fixed procedure which usually cost a significant sum of money. A dossier with testimonies by the *miraculé* and witnesses, sometimes

supplemented by a doctor's certificate, had to be handed over to the bishop, who appointed an *ad hoc* committee of inquiry. This committee then sent a report with their findings back to the bishop, who took the final decision on the matter.[87]

Such a critical attitude was already adopted soon after the *Beeldenstorm*. An early case of suspected fraud has been documented in Merchtem, a village northwest of Brussels. In January 1569, the church was attacked by iconoclasts, who broke open the sacrament house and threw the consecrated hosts on the ground. They were reportedly picked up by the parish priest the very next day, who noticed red stains on them, which he believed to be blood. In March, the priest eventually decided to show these alleged Eucharistic relics to Maximilien Morillon, whose suspicion was aroused immediately. Morillon based his decision on his familiarity with the art of painting, claimed that the color was in fact artificial, and set up an investigation.[88] Although the priest and the local lord's insistent request to have the miracle pronounced was not granted, they nevertheless proclaimed the news with solemn celebrations and a procession. Evidently, this only aggravated the conflict, and the whole issue was presented to theologians in Leuven. In June, the commission finally debunked the whole story as a fraud and indeed identified the blood as an artificial color. The priest was sanctioned.[89] A similar story is known in Breda. In September 1580, the local Augustinian nuns displayed two crucifixes and an Ecce Homo statue in their convent chapel, which reportedly sweated blood. People were already giving monetary offerings, but an investigation was set up and it was soon revealed that the sextoness had covered them in blood herself.[90]

The treatises on shrines and their miracles, published around 1600, similarly display a heightened sense of source criticism. Lipsius, for instance, assured his readers that he wrote his *Diva Virgo Hallensis* as a historian rather than as a theologian, and before narrating Our Lady's miracles, he devotes a whole chapter to a discussion on how to discriminate between genuine and false cases.[91] Other examples also testify to the role and importance of original documents and images displayed in cult centers as proof of miracles. Printed miracle books increasingly included word-for-word transcriptions of the original notary depositions, sometimes even graphically imitating the documents' signatures – a phenomenon Benz aptly referred to as creating an 'atmosphere of historicity'.[92] As will be demonstrated, the miracle memorial painting from Zoutleeuw is a variation on this very theme.

Zoutleeuw, 1612

Just like so many others, the cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw did not remain unaffected by the hand of God. The lack of a complete miracle collection precludes a detailed analysis, but it is safe to assume that the miracle of Paulus Gautier on 4 April 1612 was the first in a new series. This is suggested by the importance the churchwardens accorded this particular miracle and the renewed dynamics it generated, as clearly shown by their commissioning of the painting. While miracles from the sixteenth century are not recorded in the preserved churchwarden accounts, this event is amply documented. After the miracle occurred, a solemn Mass 'in gratitude' was performed in Saint Leonard's chapel, both on the day itself and on the day after. During these two days, the bells were rung, and the sextons and other *ad hoc* hired bell-ringers were paid in money and beer.[93] Like elsewhere, this new miracle soon engendered others. The day after Gautier's healing, on Palm Sunday 1612, a second miracle was reported. Furthermore, in June the accounts mention another wonder, this time involving a woman, and on 20 September the bells were again rung as a miracle had happened with a man from the region around Leuven. Finally, in April 1616, a certain Livina de Hont claimed to have been miraculously cured from her lameness. The bells were rung and a 'Mass of devotion' was performed as usual, but this time the churchwardens also gave her a garment (*lyffken*) and some money to eat (*teerghelt*).[94] Of course, many more miracles might have happened, but the evidence clearly suggests that Paulus Gautier was the first to have benefitted from Saint Leonard's renewed thaumaturgic powers. Hence, 1612 marked an important event in Zoutleeuw's cultic history.

Restoration

The first phase of the long civil war that followed the Wonderyear had disastrous consequences on life in the Low Countries, and this was particularly the case in Zoutleeuw. It is hard to assess the state of the cult of Saint Leonard during the years of war due to the absence of churchwarden accounts. Albeit still with some lacunae, the series only resumes with the account of 1589 (Appendix 1). Unusually, however, on its title page the clerk drew a group of ex-votos customarily offered to Saint Leonard – two legs, a chain and a crutch – thus visually harking back to the cult that had once constituted the main source of income for the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae* (fig. 140). It is unclear whether these drawings were included as an expression

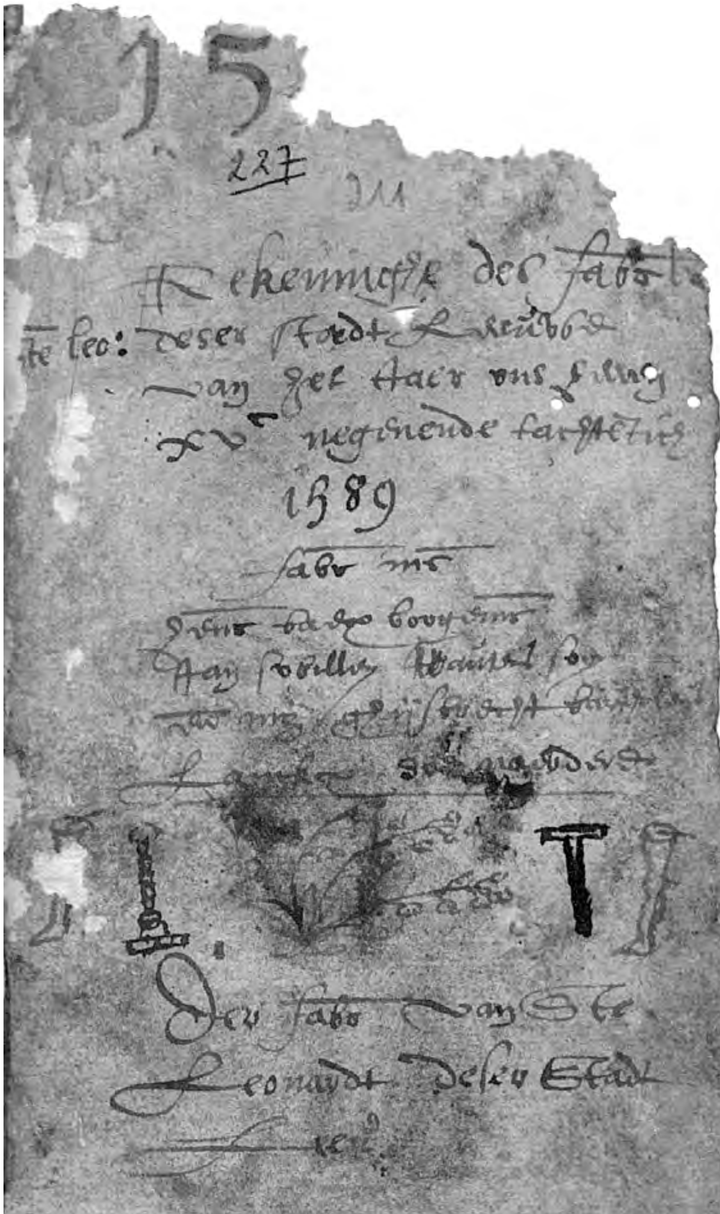


FIGURE 140
Title page of the 1589 churchwarden account, Leuven, Rijksarchief, KAB, no. 1221, fol. 211

of hope for restoration or as a registration of new votives, but the nominal monetary offerings in any case suggest a steady increase throughout the 1590s and later years (graphs 2, 3 & 4). And while the number of pennants is considerably lower than in the period before 1566, the amount of purchased pilgrim badges gradually rose again, from 2016 in 1589 to 5040 in 1591 and 5112 in 1595 (graphs 5 & 6). In

short, the evidence suggests that the cult slowly re-established itself. This seems to be confirmed by active attempts at restoration. There is evidence for yet another type of devotional object being made available to the pilgrims around the turn of the century. While no copies of the pennants are known, there is still an engraved copper plate for a small devotional print in the church (fig. 141). It shows three pilgrims, in front of an enthroned Saint Leonard, bringing votive gifts such as a burning torch and a sack of corn. At both sides of the throne, ex-votos are hanging from rods, as was the case in the chapel of Zoutleeuw itself. At the bottom, a votive prayer sings the praise of the saint as patron of the town.[95] Much like metal pilgrim badges and paper pennants, these small prints helped spread the word about the local cult, and encouraged devotion.

FIGURE 141
Anonymous, *Engraved copper plate for a devotional print to Saint Leonard of Zoutleeuw*, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

The most striking example of such restoring attempts, however, is the foundation, by dean Petrus Tielemans on 23 May 1597, of a *festum recollectionis* for Saint Leonard. Tielemans donated funds to the collegiate chapter in order to have Whit Monday – when the procession for the patron saint was traditionally held – celebrated in Zoutleeuw as a solemnity, a feast of first rank (*festum prime classis*). Money was allocated to cover the costs, including a distribution of payment among the canons as well as to the *cantores*, the sextons, the organ player, and for the lighting.[96] The Latin verb *recolere* from the name of his foundation means 'to resume' or 'to rehabilitate', but it can also refer to the restoration of the honors due to statues in particular, which seems to be the case here, too.[97] Furthermore, this rehabilitation also manifested itself materially. Over time, the cult statue of Saint Leonard has been repeatedly repainted – a recent investigation revealed at least five distinct interventions – and one of these layers of polychromy was clearly dated just above the front lower border of his vestments to 1587 (fig. 142).[98]

The miracles of 1612 and beyond thus occurred in the wake of a gradual re-establishment of the cult. The peaceful period of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621) provided the perfect context for the churchwardens to again put the cult on the map of Brabant's battered devotional landscape. The miraculous climate had affected the Hageland region too. New cult centers developed, Scherpenheuvel doubtlessly being the most important, and older cult centers of more modest geographical importance revived. In 1604 and 1605, miracles were recorded again at the shrine of Our Lady in Aarschot, two of which were also depicted on paintings.[99] Similarly, the happy

FIGURE 142
Detail of Fig. 18
© KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS

end of a grave accident during reconstruction works at the church of Wezemaal in 1607 was attributed to the miraculous powers of locally venerated Saint Job.[100] And even though in 1596 the parish priest of Tielt (Brabant) had tried to collect evidence on the miracles worked by Our Lady before, the majority was still to come. On a total of 29 dated stories between 1572 and 1621, 25 occurred after 1604, with a peak of 13 miracles in 1615 alone. Another five miracles were undated, but they must have occurred between 1594 and 1617.[101] Since the war had had a devastating impact on the religious infrastructure, nearly all churches in the region were in need of material restoration. Zoutleeuw's church of Saint Leonard was spared of drastic damages, but the town had suffered greatly from military attacks and mutiny.[102] Hence, the renewed prosperity that was promised by returning pilgrims was more than welcome. A new cultic competition between shrines was thus established, each promoting the benefits of their cult object, just as had happened a century before.

The churchwardens from Zoutleeuw were certainly aware of these developments. In 1598, for instance, they sent two employees to Our Lady of Halle. The precise nature of their mission is unknown, but upon their return they must have reported on some aspect of the newly intensified cultic activity at this important Marian shrine, in the wake of the increase of miracles that had occurred in the 1590s.[103] What mattered most in the case of Zoutleeuw were of course the other places were Saint Leonard was venerated in the Duchy of Brabant and its neighboring territories (map 4, p. 95). In his discussion of Zoutleeuw from 1632, Wichmans particularly noted Sint-Lenaarts and Donk (near Aarle-Rixtel) as other places worth mentioning, but their relative importance at that specific moment is unclear.[104] In Aartselaar, on the other hand, where Saint Leonard's cult had also peaked around 1500, the venerated relic was stolen by the *Geuzen*. But by the 1620s cultic activity must have been restored, since decanal visitation reports again refer to the pilgrimage as 'famous' (*celebris*, 1621) and mention that it attracted a lot of people (1628).[105]

For Zoutleeuw in 1612, the most relevant event was the cultic renewal at the Priory of Saint Leonard outside Liège. Seventeenth-century authors maintained that miracles had occurred long before, but the earliest documented miracle in fact only occurred in 1605.[106] On 25 February of that year, a ten-year-old boy who for six months had been unable to walk and was declared incurably ill by doctors, was suddenly healed in front of the priory's image of Saint Leonard. The case was immediately substantiated by parish priest Gilles Guillion (c. 1575–1620) 'to the confusion of heretics and

iconoclasts' (*ad confusionem haereticorum et iconoclastarum*). The miracle was soon accepted as genuine by the ecclesiastical authorities, after which a procession was organized in gratitude, in which the boy himself walked barefoot as proof of the efficacy of the divine intervention through the image.[107] The renewed religious activity it gave rise to was fostered by the publication – still in 1605 – of a book by Guillion containing this and other miracles.[108] It was printed by Léonard Streel, who was actually born in Zoutleeuw but lived in Liège, and at least from 1592 onwards served as the standard supplier of printed material, especially pilgrimage pennants, to the church of Zoutleeuw.[109] Hence, this news definitely must have reached Zoutleeuw. Interestingly enough, Liège theologian and chronicler Jean Chapeaville (1551–1617) mentions a certain Leonarda de Leeuwe as the mother of the boy.[110] Although the toponym *Leeuwe* can refer to several places, at the time it was still the prevailing way to refer to Zoutleeuw, both in Latin and in Dutch (fig. 141). It is therefore tempting to assume that the family was believed to have come from Zoutleeuw, where they might have unsuccessfully tried their luck first. This is reminiscent of an ancient rhetorical trick in miracle stories, where previously tested yet unsuccessful shrines were named and listed explicitly, thus suggesting a rivalry with the other shrine for Saint Leonard in the region. The woman's first name as mentioned by Chapeaville – Leonarda – should further be considered a significant detail in this respect.

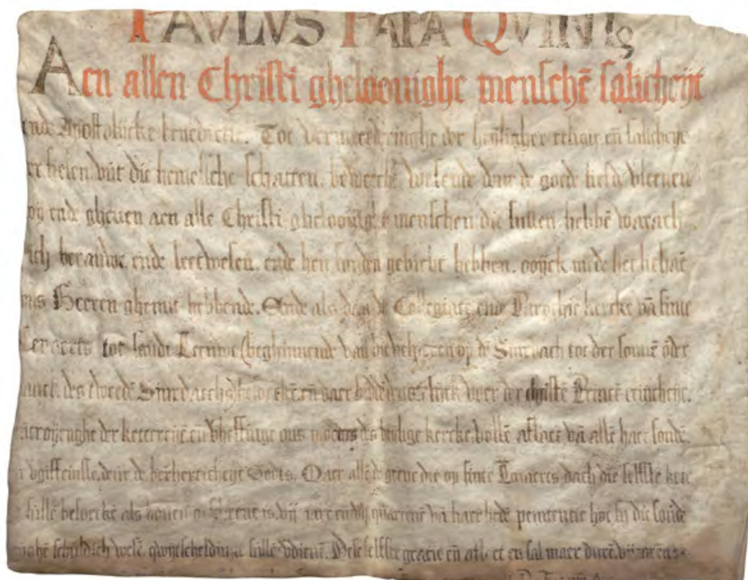
Coincidence or not, the first new miracle at Zoutleeuw also concerned the healing of a crippled boy – Paulus Gautier – exactly like what had happened in Liège a few years before. In order for the revival to be successful, the renewed miraculous activities of 1612 in Zoutleeuw had to be made known as widely as possible. The churchwardens deployed different techniques in order to do so. The first communication after the miracle had occurred was the ringing of the bells and the performance of a Mass. Soon after, they started using promotional devices that enlarged the geographical radius and, moreover, actively engaged the *miraculé*. Gautier was given food, clothes and several pairs of shoes for various trips in the wider region to spread the word about what had happened to him. A week after the miracle, he was sent to the nearby shrine of Hakendover to walk in the town's annual procession on Easter Monday to 'thank God that he was so miraculously cured'. He was also sent to Bastogne, 120 kilometers southeast of Zoutleeuw, and most interestingly also to Scherpenheuvel, together with a preacher.[111] The reason for his trip to Bastogne remains unclear, but the other two destinations were clear publicity opportunities. All in all it was not uncommon

for *miraculés* to be led in procession: we know of several medieval examples, and in 1605, the same had already happened to the boy cured by Saint Leonard in Liège.[112] However, these examples remained strictly local, in contrast with Gautier being sent to other communities and established cult shrines. Although the accounts stress that the ground for his participation in the Hakendover procession was the expression of his gratitude, another, probably at least equally important motivation, was to draw pilgrims to Zoutleeuw. The fact that a preacher was sent with the boy to Scherpenheuvel is telling in this respect.

The miracles from 1612 were also seized as an opportunity to request new indulgences from Pope Paul V (r. 1605–1621). In April 1613, the town council ordered the churchwardens to pay parish priest Willem Strauven (d. 1634) for travelling to the bishop in Mechelen to pick up 'the bulls of Rome from His Holiness'. The text of the indulgence was soon translated from the original Latin into the vernacular, and was subsequently spread in print form. In 1614, a *bottresse* – a female peddler from Liège – brought 150 'print letters to proclaim the indulgence', printed by Léonard Streel. This happened again in 1616.[113] In April 1619, a new indulgence was obtained for a period of seven years, which again was translated.[114] In all likelihood, the indulgence from 1613 had already been awarded in 1612 for a period of seven years, and was renewed in 1619.[115] The text of one undated indulgence bull awarded by Pope Paul V for a similar period has fragmentarily been preserved in a Dutch version, on a large parchment sheet with rubrics (fig. 143). In a rather militant manner, the two most important holidays in Zoutleeuw were promoted: a plenary indulgence was awarded to those who, after having confessed and taken part in communion, visited Saint Leonard's church between the vespers of Pentecost and sunset on Whit Monday – i.e. the day of the yearly procession – and prayed there 'devoutly for the unity of the Christian princes, the eradication of heresy and the exaltation of our mother the Holy Church'. For those who did the same on Saint Leonard's day (6 November), an indulgence was granted for seven years and seven quadragenes, i.e. a period of 40 days.[116]

The Intention of the Painting

The painting commissioned to depict the miracle of 1612 thus fits in this strategy of spreading the word about the thaumaturgic powers of the cult statue in Zoutleeuw. It was not a genuine votive painting given by the *miraculé* as a token of gratitude, but commissioned and paid for by the churchwardens themselves. And although they must have been equally grateful for what had happened, it certainly


PAVLVS PAPA QVINTVS

Aen allen Christi gheloovighe menschē salicheyt

FIGURE 143
Letter of indulgence awarded to the Zoutleeuw church of Saint Leonard by Pope Paul V, Leuven, Rijksarchief, KAB, no. 1240B

served as a promotional image. Evidently, Gautier was cherished at Zoutleeuw; he was provided with food and clothes and probably stayed in town for a while after the miraculous intervention.[117] The outspoken communicative function of the painting is also clear from the fact that the explicative caption on the painting is rendered in both Dutch and French, exactly the two vernacular languages the indulgence bulls would be translated into. Similar efforts for bilingualism also appeared at other cult centers close to the linguistic border, doubtlessly with an eye toward expanding their potential audience.[118] Much like Gautier being sent to other towns as a publicity device, the painting almost literally served as a permanent, visual signboard of a local miracle.

A whole range of media and material objects were used, as had been the case slightly over a century earlier. Still, some things had changed significantly. The pictorial genre was relatively new, and although it is unclear where exactly in the church the painting was originally located, it cannot have taken as central a place as the altarpiece that was commissioned in the 1470s. However, the most significant change is the new climate of miracles and the authorization of their validity. Before really making use of the advertising potential of these events for the local cult, the civic authorities made sure to have each case carefully investigated. At several occasions, delegates were sent to the places of origin of the people that claimed to have been miraculously cured in order to be certain about their previous state of health. For instance, after Gautier's claims, a burgomaster

travelled to Huy 'for an attestation of Paulus Gautier's paralysis'. The same happened following later miracles, when both the town clerk and the parish priest were sent to Geldenaken (Jodoigne). Interestingly enough, the various relevant entries in the accounts stress the necessity of having certainty (*sekerheyt*).[119] This illustrates how the Tridentine procedure was actually applied in a specific context. Well before the ecclesiastical investigations, the magistracy – rather than the clergy – of Zoutleeuw engaged in a substantiating dossier that was to be submitted for episcopal approval.[120] The approval itself remains undocumented, as the miracles or the subsequent procedure are never mentioned in contemporary visitation reports, and no dossier has been preserved in the archiepiscopal archives. Still, the fact that indulgences were awarded confirms that there was papal approval.

This new context, with its heightened quest for certainty and objectivity, is equally embodied in the painting. In fact, Gautier not only served as a promotional tool, but also as piece of evidence. By sending him to shrines and processions, his body – the object of the miraculous change – served as the most direct proof of the veracity of the claims. It is a development which was typical for the period: the Tridentine emphasis on verification and approbation led to a shift in the precise nature of the reported miraculous interventions. They became predominantly physical or mental cures rather than near-magical releases and liberations. Cures were indeed easier to verify, leading to an increasingly closer interaction between doctors and clerics in their quest to distinguish true belief from superstition.[121] Thus, the painting depicting Gautier's body served as both a publicity device and a convincing argument against Protestant denials. This is clear from the contemporary terminology used to refer to the painting. In the entry in the accounts, it is called a *contrefeytsel* or likeness, a term which especially stresses the correct and objective representation of the subject. In early modern artistic discourse, it was used for images that had an ontological status of 'witness to material fact', most notably portraits. They were supposed to be an objective representation of the sitter, and therefore had to be transparent and show no signs of artistic invention.[122] In a similar vein, Wichmans would later refer to the painting depicting the miracle at Our Lady of the Ossenweg from 1538 as 'proof' (*argumenta*) of the event.[123]

This tendency also had stylistic repercussions. As a result of the Protestant emphasis on the Word, the debate on images had led Catholic theologians to formulate a demand for realism and *veritas historica*. Images had to display the historic truth. Source material

and texts needed to be examined critically, and painters were obliged to promptly use this information and represent things true to life in great detail.[124] Jonckheere has shown how this resulted in a 'proto-Caravaggesque naturalism' in Netherlandish painting of the later sixteenth century.[125] In relation to Italian votive paintings, Fredrika Jacobs has stressed their testamentary value, arguing that they not only served as expressions of faith, but also as 'record of verifiable fact'. Interestingly, she pointed out that the typical, simple style of the paintings reflected unpretentious and genuine devotion.[126] In the Low Countries, the genre became popular precisely in the decades preceding the commission of the painting from Zoutleeuw in 1612, which actually makes use of the very same conventions. Hence, it might have been a deliberate choice. The presence of an image resembling a votive painting in the immediate vicinity of the cult object suggested a broader popularity and effectiveness of said object, since 'genuine' votive paintings generally served as illustrations and tokens of efficacy.

Furthermore, the conspicuous absence of ingenious artistic skill was a conscious strategy to stress the veracity of the depicted scene. After all, exaggerated mannerisms and plain expression of creative *inventio* would immediately raise suspicion of invented or alternative facts. In the middle of the sixteenth century, Catholic theologians in Germany, most notably Hieronymus Emser, had contrasted 'simple' (*schlicht*) with 'artful' (*künstlich*), with simplicity serving as a synonym for honesty. Later, in 1570, Molanus also recommended a *simplicitas maiorum*.[127] This was of course not, or at least to a much lesser extent, the case for miracles that had already been proven, most importantly those recorded in the Bible. For instance, when writing about Theodoor van Loon, who provided the newly built church of Scherpenheuvel with a series of altarpieces depicting the life of the Virgin, humanist Erycius Puteanus emphasized that he had rightly represented them as beautifully as possible, with the necessary rhetorical gaudery, since he was convinced that the divine manifested itself in beauty.[128] This was not the case at all for miracles that were still in the process of being recognized and verified, either officially by the ecclesiastical authorities or unofficially by public opinion. Their images and depictions had to be as 'objective' and as 'clean' as possible in order to be convincing. Being a both clear and artistically unpretentious composition, Jacop Lambrechts' rendering of Gautier's miracle thus served this role as an 'objective' promotional image splendidly. The cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw revived modestly, and would soon catch the attention of the higher authorities.

G Funte
C. Albertus

CHAPTER 9

Devotional Negotiation with the Archducal Government

Over the course of August 1616, some four years after the miracles had resumed, the Zoutleeuw authorities were approached by a high-ranked military officer. A delegation of representatives of church and city, consisting of the dean of the collegiate chapter, the burgomaster and a churchwarden, was sent to the nearby town of Sint-Truiden for a meeting with an unidentified *commisaris Generael*, about 'the holy relic of our patron Saint Leonard'.[1] This was to be the first in a series of intense and relatively costly negotiations to obtain a relic of Saint Leonard for the collegiate church, the meetings for which took place primarily in Brussels during the first weeks of November. The parish priest, the burgomaster and a messenger, each in turn, went to the court city to follow up on the developments in the case.[2] These meetings proved to be fruitful: on 14 November a deed of gift was drawn up before a Brussels notary. The document declared that Don Luis de Velasco, general of the light cavalry of the Spanish army in the Low Countries and presumably the man referred to as *commisaris Generael*, donated part of Saint Leonard's cranium to the Zoutleeuw church, as he was convinced that it would be venerated there with due reverence. With this in mind, he handed over the relic to Abbot Godfried Lemmens (r. 1609–1627) of Vlierbeek Abbey, one of the two patrons of the Zoutleeuw church.[3] As the Tridentine decrees had specified that 'no relics [were to be] recognized, unless they have been investigated and approved' by the bishop, ecclesiastical control had become more strict in this regard.[4] Therefore, the abbot presented a request to authenticate the relic to Archbishop Mathias Hovius, who in turn declared the relic to be authentic on 28 November, ironically ignoring the fact that Saint Leonard's complete skull was said to be kept in Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat.[5] After these necessary formalities, preparations for the solemn ceremony of translation could be made in Zoutleeuw. The relic finally entered the town on 11 December 1616.[6] It is still preserved in the church, in a seventeenth-century silvered wooden reliquary bust (fig. 144).[7]

Figure 150, detail
Frans Hogenberg,
Joyous Entry of Archduke Albert in Brussels,
c. 1596–1598, Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum

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FIGURE 144
Anonymous, *Reliquary bust of Saint Leonard*, Zoutleeuw, church of Saint Leonard
PHOTO: AUTHOR

The Object of Devotion: Image versus Relic

This late donation of a relic to an already established shrine of Saint Leonard is striking, and it added a new theological layer to the local cult and its object of devotion. The available evidence indeed suggests that prior to 1616 no relic of the saint was venerated in Zoutleeuw. Liturgically, of course, every consecrated altar needed to contain a relic in or under its base (*stipes*), but these did not necessarily have to be of the titular saint. Moreover, being carefully

wrapped up and placed in a securely closed cavity, these particular sacred remains were never visible.[8] As a result, contrary to miraculous statues or relics acquired after the altar consecration, they could not be viewed, let alone be touched by the worshippers, nor could they be carried around in sanctifying communal processions. Invisible relics in altars were therefore not explicitly presented as part of a church's sacred treasury, and did not serve as cultic focal points.[9] The only cult object documented in Zoutleeuw, prior to the 1616 donation, is Saint Leonard's statue (fig. 18). Jan Caussarts, the man from Kuringen who had reportedly taunted the Zoutleeuw cult and its pilgrims in 1555, clearly attacked a wooden sculpture, not a relic, and sixteenth-century accounts merely mention the statue of Saint Leonard as being carried around in the Whit Monday procession. It is only in the earliest preserved account dating from after the translation that a relic is added to the ceremony.[10] Other subsequent sources, including a 1625 inventory and a town chronicle dating to the 1650s, consistently speak of *the* relic, singular.[11] Thus, up until 1616, the Zoutleeuw cult of Saint Leonard only centered around a miraculous statue rather than the saint's bodily remains.

In this respect, it is a typical late medieval cult. From a pan-European perspective, the cult of relics chronologically preceded the cult of images, enjoying an absolute peak in popularity between the eight and twelfth centuries. It was only because relics had already been introduced that sculptures were eventually allowed into churches. The acceptance of relics made it more difficult to raise claims of idolatry against statues.[12] Only in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did the popularity of relics dwindle in favor of images. Reliquaries were increasingly given figural, human forms, fusing the cult of relics into the cult of images. The latter were gradually being treated as relics and even assumed their roles as far as supernatural powers were concerned. Images – either painted or sculpted – grew ever more costly and became potent even without containing the actual bodily remains of the saints they represented.[13] Eventually this led to a theology of localization whereby places became pilgrimage sites because of the particular image of the saint the shrine housed.[14]

Nevertheless, relics and images remained two entirely distinct theological entities, and the rise of the image as cult object certainly did not mean that relics were discarded altogether. On the contrary, relics continued to take up a central place in cult centers such as Saint Rumbold in Mechelen or Saint Gumarus in Lier, and a significant amount of Protestant critiques were devoted to speaking out

against them, demanding the abolition of their cults. Much like attacks on other Catholic practices, theological critiques of relics were based on a long tradition. But in the sixteenth century critiques were both more widespread and more radical, not calling for a mere correction of abuses, but an outright abolition of the practice. While Luther was still relatively tolerant when it came to the cults of saints and images, he could not accept relics in any way.[15] As a result, they formed a prime target for iconoclasts in general, and for the *Geuzen* in the Low Countries in particular. During and after the *Beeldenstorm* many churches were robbed of their relics, which in most cases were immediately destroyed in order to deprive them of their possible powers.[16] Aartselaar's relic of Saint Leonard, for instance, befell this very fate sometime before 1572.[17]

Protestant hostility greatly contributed to the renewed popularity and traffic of relics in Catholic Europe. In the 1570s and 1580s a large-scale relocation took place, safeguarding them from Protestant territories. The opening of the Roman Catacombs in 1578 further fueled this development, as the graves of supposed proto-Christian martyrs were mined as a relic treasure-trove. Moreover, in 1588 the Catholic Church started a new canonization campaign after a 65-year hiatus, creating an increased demand for the remains of these newfound saints.[18] This increasing mobility of relics was thus part and parcel of the Catholic restoration, as the Church of Rome used them both in order to incorporate its various, local devotions, and to demonstrate the Church's continuity with the pre-Reformation past.[19] In the Low Countries, relics generally moved from the northern to the southern provinces. In Alem, for instance, the corpse of Saint Odrada was unearthed around 1600 and brought to nearby 's-Hertogenbosch, after which the bishop distributed fragments of the corpse to institutions in Catholic territories. Fleeing Catholic exiles also took their personal religious material culture with them, including relics.[20]

Many relic donations were motivated by theological reasons and had much to do with the old issue of the problematic character and ambiguous nature of sculpture. After all, the Ten Commandments had particularly forbidden 'graven images' (*sculptile*). Throughout the Middle Ages, three-dimensional sculpture was also considered much more lifelike than paintings, 'for the very reason of its being tactile and physically present', and many theoretical frameworks from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards therefore ascribed negative connotations to the medium.[21] Unsurprisingly therefore, Protestant critiques mostly focused on sculpted idols. Jan Caussarts had specifically attacked Zoutleeuw's wooden statue of

Saint Leonard, and Veluanus had demanded that all *grove beelden* be removed from the temples and burned. They were all too easily treated as idols, he maintained, and even if that was not the case yet, they could only do harm because the danger of idolatry always remained.[22] During the *Beeldenstorm*, this unease with three-dimensional images was made manifest through focused attacks on the medium of sculpture, which were arguably greater than those on paintings.[23]

In emphasizing the benefits of images, the decrees of the Council of Trent had only referred in very general terms to *sacra imago*, not specifying any particular medium. In line with local Italian tradition and custom, this mostly refers to the less problematic medium of painting rather than sculpture, however, while the latter on the contrary was by far the predominant medium of miraculous images in the Low Countries. Valérie Herremans has pointed out that subsequent provincial councils and diocesan synods in the Low Countries maintained this emphasis on the art of painting.[24] All this meant that the sculptures, already subject to attack, had an even more ambiguous theological status, and remained an issue with which the Church did not always feel comfortable. Cults such as the one at Zoutleeuw were especially problematic in this respect, as they were not only centered around a miraculous statue, but were moreover also focused on a saint, who, contrary to the omnipresence of Christ, were only considered to be really present on earth in their bodily remains.[25] This is why cults such as that in Zoutleeuw qualified well for the sacred approval by adding a relic, which would provide it with a firm theological backbone, and at the same time also revive the early Christian principle of relics as protectors of images against critiques of idolatry.[26]

Such a reading can be substantiated by the example of *Johannesschüsseln*, sculptures of the decapitated head of Saint John the Baptist on a platter. While medieval examples rarely served as reliquaries in the Low Countries, it has been shown how many of the sculptures began to take on such a function after 1575. A striking example is documented in the church of Saint John the Baptist of Kachtem (Flanders). In his 1642 visitation report, the bishop of Bruges noted the particular local devotion for a sculpted head of the church's patron saint, but he remarked that it did not contain a relic. He therefore ordered the church to acquire one and put it in the sculpture, and temporarily forbade all devotion of the image.[27] In this case, the acquisition was clearly the result of an active move toward Catholic Reformation on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities.

On the other hand, similar motivations cannot be demonstrated for the case of Zoutleeuw: comparable indications are lacking and the well-preserved yearly visitation reports remain silent about the donation of the relic. Furthermore, it was placed in an independent reliquary rather than in Saint Leonard's statue. It is clear that the relic did not replace the miraculous statue, since both were carried separately during the yearly procession. This testifies to the latter's continued key role during the seventeenth century.[28] Thus, the motivations for donating the relic were not purely theological, and a better understanding can be reached of what it meant to donate the relic by performing an anthropological reading of political factors.

The Gift

While ecclesiastical authorities were conspicuously absent in the story of the Zoutleeuw relic, representatives of the archducal court played a major role. In particular the donor of the relic, Don Luis de Velasco (1559–1625) holds a prominent place in the record. The *intitulatio* of the deed of gift refers to him as 'hault et puissant Sr. messire Don Louys de Velasco, Marquis de Bellebeder [Belveder], chevalier de lordre de Saint Jacques, commandeur de Valentia del Ventoso, capitaine general de la cavallerie legere de larmee de Sa Majesté en ses Pays Bas et de son conseil de guerre'. These titles are illustrative of how high he stood in the Spanish king's favor, and how close he was to the archducal court of Albert and Isabella. Not only was he an important commander-in-chief of the Spanish army in the Low Countries, he was also a member of the regional Council of War, Archduke Albert's advisory organ in matters of warfare. Particularly relevant is the fact that he was deployed by Albert in the Rhineland, at the eastern border of the Low Countries, from 1614 onwards.[29] Moreover, several of his sons served as page (*menino*) in the service of Isabella. His high status in Habsburg circles is also reflected in his membership of the *Orden Militar de Santiago de la Espada*, wherein he served as commander of Valencia del Ventoso (Extremadura). This was a highly prestigious order of knights that was incorporated in the Spanish monarchy, and thus is ample evidence of royal favor.[30] The correspondence of King Philip III reveals his particular satisfaction with Velasco's military services, and already in 1603 and 1605 he promised him rewards. However, in 1610 Velasco still complained about the meagre recompense he received after thirty years of dutiful service, and only in January 1616 would he be endowed

FIGURE 145
Cornelis Galle after Jacques Francquart, *The knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece in Archduke Albert's funeral procession*, in Puteanus 1623, pl. 56, Ghent, University Library

with the title of Marquis of Belveder.[31] The title of Count of Salazar would follow in 1621. By the time of Albert's death in the same year he was also elected knight in the Order of the Golden Fleece, and, in that role, walked right behind the coffin in the archduke's funeral procession (fig. 145).[32]

It is unclear whether the town of Zoutleeuw actually asked for a relic, but it is clear that it was a gift. This important fact needs to be emphasized. Geary has applied anthropological frameworks to the study of the circulation mechanisms of relics in the Middle Ages, and he has highlighted the consequences of relics being acquired as gifts, rather than through theft or purchase. When gifts were given, no payment in currency was demanded from the receiving party, but there was an alternative 'price' in the unwritten agreement, namely obedience. The act of giving a relic thus created power relationships whereby the donating party underlined its power and importance. Or, to describe the same dynamic using a more peaceful language, a personal relationship of 'brotherly love' was established between donor and receiver.[33] More studies of relic donations in early modernity would be needed in order to determine the validity of this argument on a general level. Nevertheless, it will be demonstrated that Geary's

observations on the medieval period apply neatly to the Catholic Low Countries in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Under the reign of the archdukes, the traffic of relics became a state affair.[34] They were arguably the greatest collectors of relics of their era and both assembled an impressive collection. This interest evidently had its roots in their predecessors Charles V and especially Philip II, whose relic collection eventually counted more than 7000 examples from all over his empire, including those 'saved' from the northern Low Countries. They were stored in the royal monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, which thereby became a sort of national depot of sanctity.[35] The archdukes continued this rescue operation. In 1610, during the calmer years of the Twelve Years' Truce, court historiographer Jean-Baptiste Gramaye proposed Archduke Albert to secure all relics of saints still located in the Dutch Republic and bring them to the Catholic south.[36] After having travelled around for four years to draw up an inventory and copy the necessary documents, he was given permission in 1614 to commence the operation.[37] Its most famous episode was the relocation of the body of Saint Lidwina in 1615. Soon after her death in 1433 she had drawn many pilgrims to the chapel built above her grave in Schiedam, but the town's alteration in 1572 put an end to her cult there. It instigated Gramaye to save her remains from Protestant hands, but a first attempt caused consternation, leading to the arrest of the hired gravedigger by the Reformed town council, who accused him of instigation to idolatry. A second attempt was successful, however, and the relics were brought to the archdukes' private oratory in Brussels. Yet, contrary to Philip II, Albert and Isabella would subsequently redistribute them to several other religious institutions in the Low Countries from 1616 onwards.[38] On the other hand, the court also reacted to local initiatives to recover the artifacts. The example of the Blessed Idesbald, third abbot of the Abbey of the Dunes, illustrates this point. After the sacking of the abbey in 1566, the Cistercian community fled to Bruges. Around 1600 the monks returned and soon started to look for the remains of their illustrious abbot. In November 1623 a leaden coffin was found in the chapter house, which was officially opened by the Bishop of Ieper in April 1624. The ensuing ceremony was widely attended by abbots and other clergymen from all over Flanders. An intense devotion would quickly follow, and in 1625 Isabella visited the abbey and received a personal relic of Idesbald to mark the occasion.[39]

The archducal court thus became a key player in a web of sacred gift transactions, knitting together the Catholic provinces of the Low Countries. Velasco gave the relic to Zoutleeuw in his own name, but

personal links with the town hardly seem to have played a role in this case. In part, the deed of gift emphasizes Velasco's personal piety, referring to the 'great devotion, honor and reverence he holds for the blessed Saint Leonard'. However, the text also reveals that Velasco desired that the saint's relics would be placed 'in a holy place, there where they would be shown due reverence', and that he was 'well assured that this would be the case in the collegiate church of Saint Leonard in the town of Zoutleeuw'.[40] However, we cannot establish a single link between Velasco and the town of Zoutleeuw since his name is not mentioned once in the Zoutleeuw sources and he was not attached to the garrison quartered in the city in any direct way, and indeed might not even have been present in the translation ceremony.[41] But his donation was evidently in keeping with well-established and still prevailing practices at the Habsburg court, of which he himself was part. Since the gift coincided with Gramaye's notorious and large-scale relic relocation campaign, the archducal connotations of Velasco's gift must have been equally obvious to contemporaries. But his choice for Zoutleeuw is intriguing and merits closer scrutiny, because the Low Countries counted several other centers of devotion to Saint Leonard (map 4, p. 95).

Although discussed as a gift, it is also crucial to underline the aspect of negotiation that was involved in the transaction. The successive meetings between the two parties in Sint-Truiden and Brussels have been referred to above, but other, simultaneous discussions with the government had taken place well before. Although Zoutleeuw had housed a garrison since 1565–1566 and was of strategic interest due to its location at the border, it had suffered greatly during the war and its infrastructure and economy were in considerable decline. Thus, after the disastrous troubles of the sixteenth century the town council of Zoutleeuw repeatedly asked for financial aid – in the form of, for example, an extension of payment of taxes or economic privileges – for infrastructural restorations and in particular for renewed ramparts. In 1597, for instance, Philip II granted the town the privilege of having a weekly cattle market, and in 1606 and 1612 Zoutleeuw was granted two respective extensions of payment.[42] But the situation had not changed that much by 1616–1617, however, when similar requests are amply documented. Interestingly, as in the case of the relic, it also involved negotiations with the governmental institutions. These negotiations brought delegates from Zoutleeuw to Brussels for longer periods. Town clerk Jan Bollen, for instance, stayed from 7 until 16 November 1616 in order to obtain a quittance of 700 guilders, and he was sent again from 20 November until 14 December for the same reason as well as 'in order to come

to the fortification of this town'.[43] The same was still the case in 1617, when several requests were sent 'to the lords Estates for the obtainment of some measure for the repair of this town'.[44] The state of the ramparts was inspected, after which an estimation of the 'necessary reparations' was drawn up. At the same time complaints were uttered about the oppressive military presence, and attempts were made to obtain a set of regulations for the soldiers as well as a prison. These requests clearly reflect underlying tensions between town and government, and in particular a discontent with the military state of affairs and its consequences on town life. The supplications did not all remain unanswered. In the context of the general restoration of Catholic infrastructure in the Low Countries, between 1615 and 1621 the archdukes made several financial donations to the Zoutleeuw convent of Bethania and the cloister of the Beghards.[45] But there were of course limits to their aid, since help was needed all over the southern provinces. Eventually, the town would only receive their renewed ramparts in 1642, followed by the construction of a citadel between 1671 and 1679.[46]

Connecting the donation of the relic with this particular situation provides further insights, and three interrelated aspects of its symbolic value should be pointed out. In the first place the gift of a relic served as an extra stimulus to the revival of the cult of Saint Leonard, which the town as a whole would benefit from. After all, in the early seventeenth century relics of Saint Leonard were still rare in the Low Countries. At the shrine in Liège, for example, the cult object was also a statue, and when in 1650 a relic was given to the church as votive offering for a received healing, it was not one of its patron saint.[47] The church of Aartselaar had received a relic in the later fifteenth century, but it was destroyed by 1572. No origin prior to 1616 could be established for any of the other centers, and in his 1628 catalogue of relics in the Low Countries, Arnold de Raisse only mentions one of Saint Leonard in Râches, near Douai.[48]

An asset for the Zoutleeuw shrine, the relic would contribute to a restoration, not only of the cult, but also of the local social fabric. As patron saints were considered protectors of their hosting communities, it goes without saying that receiving such a saint's bodily remains had a profound impact on the identity of Catholic communities after a traumatic period. William Christian has pointed out for later sixteenth-century Spain that relics 'reinforced community pride and chauvinism' by rehabilitating the shared, communal religion.[49] Even more so than in late sixteenth-century Spain, the towns and villages in the Low Countries would benefit from such a

reinforcement during the short period of peace of the Twelve Years' Truce, as they had been torn apart by religious strife – literally and figuratively. Like the archdukes, De Raisse also believed that relics could heal the country of 'its sickness of the soul'.[50] The communal role of the Zoutleeuw relic is illustrated by the fact that it was immediately included in the town's yearly procession at Whit Monday in honour of its patron saint, and by its proud description in a town chronicle dating to the 1650s.[51]

The role of relics in the restoration of a community's pride and identity is directly related to the important political role they could play. This had become painfully clear during the most intense periods of the troubles. Precisely because relics were inherently related to specific communities and, therefore, to particular social and political orders, their destruction was a very conscious attempt to break with a past or regime that was no longer accepted by Protestants.[52] Conversely, relics that had been spared from destruction during a period of Protestant occupation would later on play a crucial role in the installment of the renewed Catholic order. In Mechelen, for instance, the relics of Saint Rumbold had been scattered as a result of a sacking of the cathedral during the city's Calvinist regime (1580–1585). After the Catholic reconquest, the saint's remains were reunited and solemnly reinstalled in the cathedral's choir in 1586, an event that was accompanied by a ceremonial *elevatio* at the occasion of which indulgences were issued. This reunification, and therefore the city's unity and return to Catholicism, would be commemorated annually.[53] Similarly, whenever French Catholics took power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these events were accompanied by processions with, and exhibitions of, relics. Still in early modern times, control over sacred remains – especially those of a patron saint – was equated with control over the town that hosted them, and the public appropriation of local cults often bore fruit in terms of accumulation of public authority in the eyes of the community.[54] Conversely, by virtue of their perceived protective power over communities, relics could also serve as substitutes for public power.[55] In this sense, the donation of the relic of Zoutleeuw's patron saint by a Habsburg officer and member of the archducal court would no doubt reconfirm the bonds between the town and the ruling authority. Regardless of existing tensions, the town was definitively incorporated into their Catholic empire.

A third and final aspect of relics' symbolic values is related to patron saints' roles as protectors and defenders of towns and communities. By carrying the principal cult object in procession through the

parish, the space was simultaneously consecrated and placed under the protection of the saint. Usually such processions took place once a year, but in times of crisis, such as in cases of war or epidemics, their frequency was often increased.[56] However, it was generally believed that protection and defense could only be secured by means of their permanent and physical presence through relics.[57] This has been aptly demonstrated in the case of Cologne and its relics of the Eleven Thousand Virgins. When an attack on the city in 1268 had been successfully warded off, this was attributed to the defense of the city's army of female patron saints. This story was enforced by repeating it time and again in both text and image, and the key role of relics was increasingly emphasized. This was certainly not a uniquely medieval affair, as in 1619 the narrative was brought to the fore once again.[58] Similarly, Zoutleeuw's patron saint would only be considered permanently present, and therefore able to protect the town and its community of inhabitants, if the relic of Saint Leonard was in place.

The defensive properties of relics were particularly relevant for Zoutleeuw, especially considering the profile of the donor: he was a military officer who invested the garrison town with the protective shield of its patron saint. An interesting example for comparison is provided by the town of Uceda in Spain (Guadalajara). In 1574 its church received a set of relics of the Eleven Thousand Virgins from a certain Juan de Bolea, who had served as an officer under the Duke of Alba in the Low Countries. In the subsequent report the community sent to King Philip II, it was stated that he had saved them from the hands of the heretics, 'as a good captain and defender of the Christian faith'.[59] This example illustrates the important role ascribed to officers in the protection and circulation of relics. Yet, contrary to this previously discussed pattern of relics being saved from Protestant territories to Spain, Saint Leonard's relic instead travelled in the opposite direction. Possibly even coming from Spain itself, it was given by a Spanish general to a town in the Low Countries that had been threatened by Protestant forces during the troubles.[60] Thus, in the contemporary political context, the protective connotations of the relic were well understood.

Of course, in the first place, the sacred protection concerned the town and jurisdiction of Zoutleeuw itself, but in a broader sense it also related to the whole region of the Catholic Low Countries. After all, as a garrison town at the border of the Duchy of Brabant, Zoutleeuw occupied an important position in the protection of the frontier to the Habsburg territories. From 1568 onwards, the town had been the subject of military strategies from both Catholic and

Protestant armies, and this continued well into the seventeenth century. Still in 1635, for instance, a Franco-Dutch alliance entered Brabant via its eastern frontier and immediately occupied Zoutleeuw.[61] It would therefore not be surprising that an underlying rationale of the gift was the turning of the garrison town into a Catholic stronghold, sacrally strengthening the frontier of the Low Countries. Various countries are known to have put up a 'wall of relics' as defense against Protestants. Jeffrey Chipps Smith described the rationale behind the Dukes of Bavaria's quest for relics in Protestant lands and their subsequent collection in Munich as transforming their capital 'into a mighty fortress of Catholic faith'.[62] Similar motivations are discernable in the archdukes' policy, and their relic collection has been interpreted as apotropaic, a conscious strategy 'of amassing sacral power within their territories'.[63] Scholars have demonstrated that much the same principles were at play in Scherpenheuvel, which was a clear manifestation of archducal Catholic militancy.[64] This is evident, first of all, in the fortified town's ground plan which is shaped in the form of the religiously charged heptagon.[65] Furthermore, the shrine was located on territory that used to be property of the princes of Orange. Finally, the town lay on the front line, and the fact that the archdukes chose a place close to the territories controlled by the Protestant army was certainly no coincidence. That particular detail was indeed also emphasized by contemporary authors, such as Philips Numan, who explained that the shrine's many miracles might work as a factor that might convince the nearby Protestants of the truth of the Catholic Church.[66] As the devotion to Our Lady was still highly controversial, the pilgrims to the shrine would moreover be turned into militant Catholics, instead of mere opportunistic believers.

Why Velasco chose Zoutleeuw rather than, say, Sint-Lenaarts, which was also home to a cult of Saint Leonard and practically lay on the front line itself, remains an object of speculation. But the fact that Sint-Lenaarts was only a small village, and that Zoutleeuw was garrison town could have played a role in the decision. In that capacity it was doubtless much more relevant to a military leader. Furthermore, the cult of Saint Leonard in Zoutleeuw had only recently experienced a new impulse with a fresh series of miracles starting in 1612. It can be presumed that this devotional revival had attracted the attention of the archducal court, including Velasco, who must have realized the town's relative importance. After all, Zoutleeuw was located close to 'their' shrine of Scherpenheuvel, a place which Velasco had also visited as pilgrim himself in the company of fellow Spanish officers in the summer of 1607.[67] The successions of events

in both places thus show striking parallels, with members of the Habsburg court responding to the increasing popularity of a local pre-existing cult. Like Zoutleeuw, Scherpenheuvel had seen a steady rise in miracles in the years immediately preceding the archducal interventions (Chapter 8). Already on 8 September 1603 – i.e. well before the Archdukes' lavish patronage began, and even before the episcopal approval – an immense crowd of reportedly 20,000 pilgrims had come to visit the shrine.[68] Thus, there is no direct causal relationship between Habsburg interventions and the devotional revival. On the contrary, Albert and Isabella clearly responded to pre-existing processes and local initiatives.[69] The revival of Catholicism preceded governmental actions, but these added significant layers of meaning. While Velasco did not provide Zoutleeuw with the requested fortifications, he nevertheless provided the town with the sacred protection of its patron saint, thus reviving a medieval principle. Through the gift of the relic, the bonds with the archducal government were reinforced, turning the garrison town at the border into a militant, orthodox stronghold and strengthening the frontier of their Catholic territories.

The Translation

Bringing the putative fragment of Saint Leonard's cranium to Zoutleeuw generated new values and significance. Strictly speaking, relics had no material value. Instead, the value they had was attributed to them by the hosting community, and was therefore to a large extent localized. Furthermore, the value and meaning that sacred remains had accumulated in one community was not automatically transposed when they were transferred to another. A new cultural transformation was needed in order for the relic to once again acquire status. This happened in *translatio* ceremonies: 'formal, liturgical processions in which remains of saints were officially recognized and transported from one place to another'.[70] These were usually very costly public rituals, which involved detailed organization undertaken by special committees. Not only were such events attended by the most important regional religious and political elites, but they also attracted large crowds.[71] The practice already existed in the early Middle Ages, but in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries *translatio* ceremonies were particularly encouraged and became widespread.[72]

In Zoutleeuw, the *fabrica ecclesiae* and the civic authorities shared the costs and the responsibility for organizing the events.

Celebrations started with a copious breakfast for the highest guests and their servants. Among those present were of course members of the local religious and civic elite, including the town council, the aldermen and town governor, Thomas de Wijngaerde. Furthermore, the presence of at least three high-ranked, mitered abbots of the most important nearby abbeys is documented: Godfried Lemmens, Abbot of Vlierbeek, Jean de Frayteur, Abbot of Heylissem (r. 1612–1645), and Jean Druys (r. 1601–1634), Abbot of Parc Abbey.[73] The churchwardens served the guests a wide variety of dishes, including chicken, beef, goose, duck, pork and veal, and fish 'since it was Advent for the prelates'. This all was combined with bread, cheese, butter, fruit, oats, almonds, sugar and spices.[74] The ceremony itself mainly consisted of a procession, in which the relic was carried from the *refugium* of the Abbey of Heylissem, at the western edge of town next to Saint John's chapel, to Saint Leonard's church (fig. 3). This route from the ramparts to center was specially cleaned for the purpose, and the church received extra decorations.[75] Headed by four standard-bearers and under the sound of chiming bells, the relic was carried in procession through the city streets with 'great solemnity'. The parade brought it to the middle of the church, where it was displayed in a tabernacle and illuminated by burning torches.[76] Even before the liturgical celebrations in the church began, the event was celebrated with the necessary ceremonial pomp and circumstance. Upon entering the city's marketplace, the parade passed through a temporary wooden arch, decorated with coats of arms by painter Jacop Lambrechts. The square itself was illuminated by a big lantern, suspended on a line that was hung between the church building and the town hall, emphasizing their shared roles. The accounts also mention the presence of decorative elements such as tabernacles, probably installed throughout town along the road that the procession followed. Finally, reference is made to a *specktakel* – presumably a play depicting Saint Leonard's life, organized by the city's chamber of rhetoric.[77]

While the urban ceremonies of Joyous Entries have been well studied, relic translations in the Low Countries have received less scholarly attention. This is surprising because – as is also the case with the entries of sovereigns – an analysis of how such rituals were locally designed and customized reveals the crucial issues at stake.[78] It is difficult to establish whether or not the 1616 Zoutleeuw ceremony followed an established, pre-Reformation tradition. But a documented example of Saint Eustachius' church in Zichem, dating to 1517, only mentions that a relic of its patron saint was 'enthroned with honorable hymns and chants', in the company of the parish priest

FIGURE 146
Goswijn van der Weyden, *Translation of Saint Dymphna*, 1505, Antwerp, Phoebus Foundation

and the local lord (*villicus*). No reference is made to related civic ceremonies that might have taken place outside of the church.[79] Some rare iconographic examples, such as Goswijn van der Weyden's 1505 depiction of the translation of Saint Dymphna (fig. 146), help to visualize the processions, and emphasize the role of the clergy, but do not suggest elaborate pomp. One of the few points of immediate resemblance is the presence of two clerical standard-bearers leading the procession. These similarly figure in the translation of Saint Stephen as represented by Jan vander Coutheren in 1522, which also documents the presence of bishops or mitered abbots (fig. 147).

FIGURE 147
Jan vander Coutheren, *Translation of Saint Stephen*, 1522, right inner wing of the altarpiece of Saint Stephen, Korbeek-Dijle, church of Saint Bartholomew
PHOTO: JOHAN GELEYNS – RO SCAN

However, a comparison of the 1612 Zoutleeuw festivities with other early seventeenth-century examples from the southern Low Countries reveals much more pomp and greater civic involvement at work. One of the best documented contemporary examples in the Low Countries is the translation into Lille on 22 January 1612 of a certain Saint Victor – unrelated to his better-known namesakes venerated in Marseille and Xanten – 'and his companion'. They were two of the many corpses dug up from the Roman catacombs, identified as early Christian martyrs and sent all over the Christian world as newly discovered relics.[80] Saint Victor and his companion were

donated to the Lille city council by Claudio Acquaviva, Superior General of the Jesuits, in gratitude for its support of the order. The construction of their new church, completed in 1611, had indeed been financed with civic money. The translation ceremony and the surrounding festivities have been amply described in a contemporary town chronicle and in an official account by local Jesuit Jean Buzelin, which was printed in 1612 and paid for, at least in part, by the magistracy. A delegation of the Lille political elite met the convoy with the saints' bodies just outside the ramparts and accompanied them to the city gate, where they were welcomed by the town council and the local clergy. After having spent the night in a chapel just outside the city walls, the relics' actual translation ceremony started the next day. They were carried in a solemn procession with abbots and the Bishop of Tournai, intermediately making stops and posing the bodies at five altars along the way. The sumptuous parade passed through several temporary triumphal arches, and during the day multiple cannon volleys were to be heard, and bonfires and theatrical spectacles to be seen. The very first miracles reportedly happened on the day of the translation itself.[81]

The Jesuits played a crucial role in the Lille ceremony. The order was central in the redistribution of relics, and as such they had an important influence on the precise form of the processions and festivities. The Jesuits were of course known for their sumptuous celebrations, stimulating the onlookers' sensory experiences in many ways. But similar celebrations, involving multimedia campaigns also occurred in translation ceremonies where the order was not involved.[82] A well-known example from the same year as the Lille ceremony is the translation of Saint Albert of Leuven from Reims to Brussels. The event was initiated by Archduke Albert for dynastical reasons, as this saint was a member of the ducal house of Brabant, and he had put substantial pressure on the Archbishop of Reims to hand over his patron saint's body to him. Eventually the translation took place on 13 December 1612. The body was carried through the city streets by four mitered abbots, while it was carried into the church of the Discalced Carmelites by Archduke Albert himself, together with general Ambrogio Spinola, Philip William, Prince of Orange, and the Spanish envoy. Inside, the authentication ritual followed. Just as in Lille, an official report of the ceremony was published by court confessor Andrés de Soto, both in Spanish and French.[83] Elaborate media campaigns would frequently recur in later translation ceremonies.

The saints that were thus carried around were carefully selected. It is obvious why Archduke Albert desired to have the body of his name saint close to his court in Brussels, and his spouse actually did the same with her own patron, Saint Elizabeth.[84] Another example of a state-sponsored ceremony with a clear underlying ideological motivation was the translation of the Martyrs of Gorkum to the Brussels Franciscan convent in October 1618. This group of nineteen clerics had been hanged in 1572 by the *Geuzen* in Den Briel, because they were protecting a consecrated host from profanation. Although their beatification would only take place in the later seventeenth century, they soon became the most famous Catholic martyrs of Protestant violence in the Low Countries. Thus, the choice of having their remains transferred to Brussels was not only a symbolic and open condemnation of Protestant atrocities, but also a conscious statement on the Eucharist. The procession that was organized at the occasion of the translation reportedly counted more than 5000 participants, and as was the case in the examples mentioned above, a booklet including a description of the events was printed immediately afterwards.[85]

The Zoutleeuw ceremonial thus tied in with a broader contemporary European pattern. Visual sources on these ceremonials are scarce, but a print depicting a 1698 translation in Augsburg depicts an important, oft-recurring element (figs. 148 & 149). Before entering the cathedral, the parade passed through a triumphal gate, an element that was equally present in Zoutleeuw and Lille, among many other places.[86] While in medieval translations relics were sometimes treated and even addressed as lords, the ceremonies were now often explicitly modelled after antique, Roman triumphal marches.[87] Richard Krautheimer and, more recently, Minou Schraven have both convincingly demonstrated how this was part of a broader papal project that had started under Paul III (r. 1534–1549) wherein the city of Rome was being reinvented in a new, Christian form. It legitimized the ancient city as the capital of Christianity and, consequently, underlined the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church. Post-Tridentine rhetorical language made deliberate use of triumphal imagery to establish an image of Christian victory over the older triumphs of pagan Antiquity.[88] From 1575 onwards, such ideals were put into practice during relic translation ceremonies by Charles Borromeo in Milan and Gabriele Paleotti in Bologna in particular. As was typical for the general paleochristian revival, these churchmen

FIGURE 148
Johann Weidner (after), *Translation of four Augsburg bishops and other relics to the church of Saints Ulrich and Afra*, 1698, Arolsen, Fürstlich Waldeckschen Hofbibliothek

based themselves on the church fathers, especially Saint Ambrose, who had described relics as trophies. Martyrs in particular had long been associated with military victory in hagiographical texts, which would eventually lead to them being viewed as Christian soldiers.[89] Sacred remains thus lent themselves perfectly to Christian triumphal marches. In Milan and Bologna temporary arches were constructed, but when the practice spread to Rome the processions would also pass through the actual antique structures on the Forum Romanum. As such, these ceremonies were powerful visualizations of the triumph of a 'militant cult of church history and saints'.[90] By

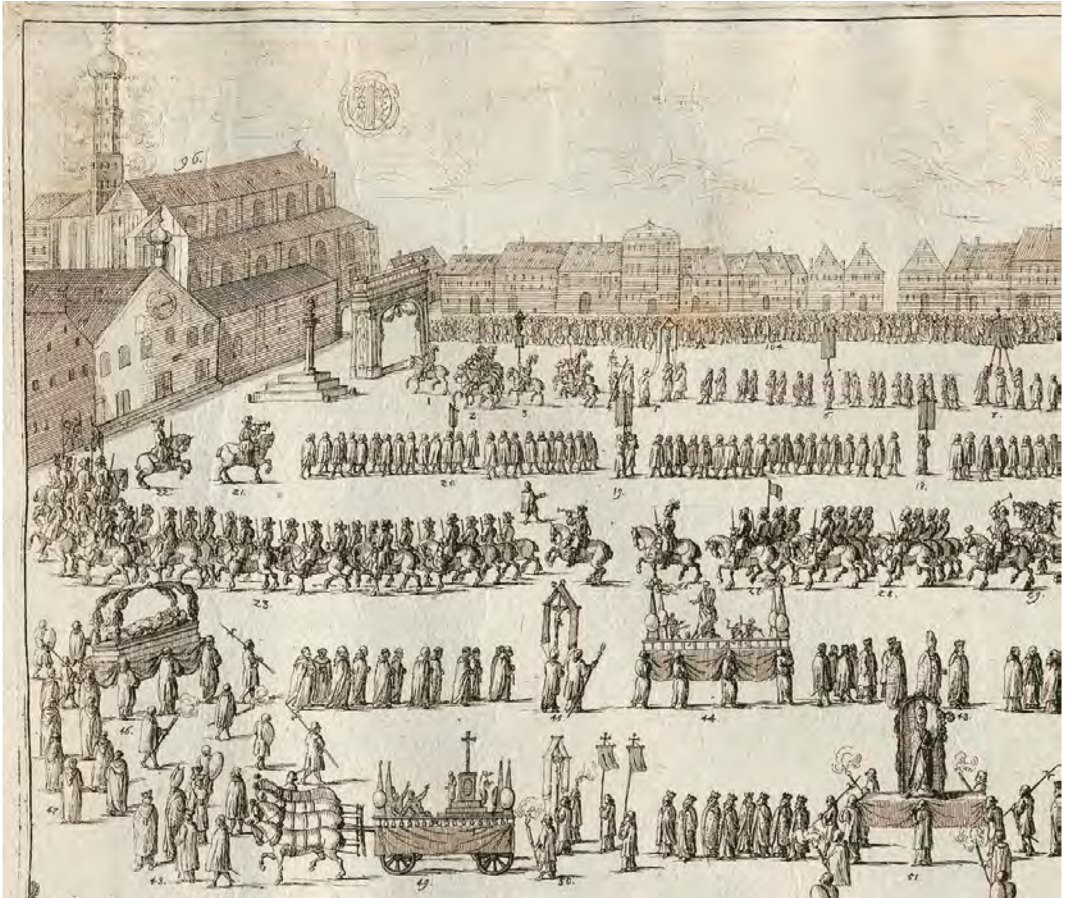

FIGURE 149
Detail of Fig. 148

presenting both a triumph over heathendom as well as a continuity with Christianity's earliest days, two of the contemporary Catholic Church's main goals were realized at once.

Triumphalism was also central to *translatio* ceremonies in the Low Countries. Of course, even though the territories were far away from the antique capital, they too belonged to the Church of Rome, and the rhetorical language used in Italy thus preserved all its pertinence. The most striking example is perhaps the 1612 ceremony in Lille, which in Buzelin's official report is referred to as a *triumphus*. Furthermore, in the book's foreword the translation is explicitly presented as a devout, Christian triumph, as opposed to conceited, antique triumphs. Buzelin emphasizes that Saint Victor deserved a splendid triumphal march as much as Alexander the Great did, but the author explains the differences point by point. For instance, instead of being carried around by golden chariots, the saint was carried on the shoulders of priests. Moreover, the parade was not

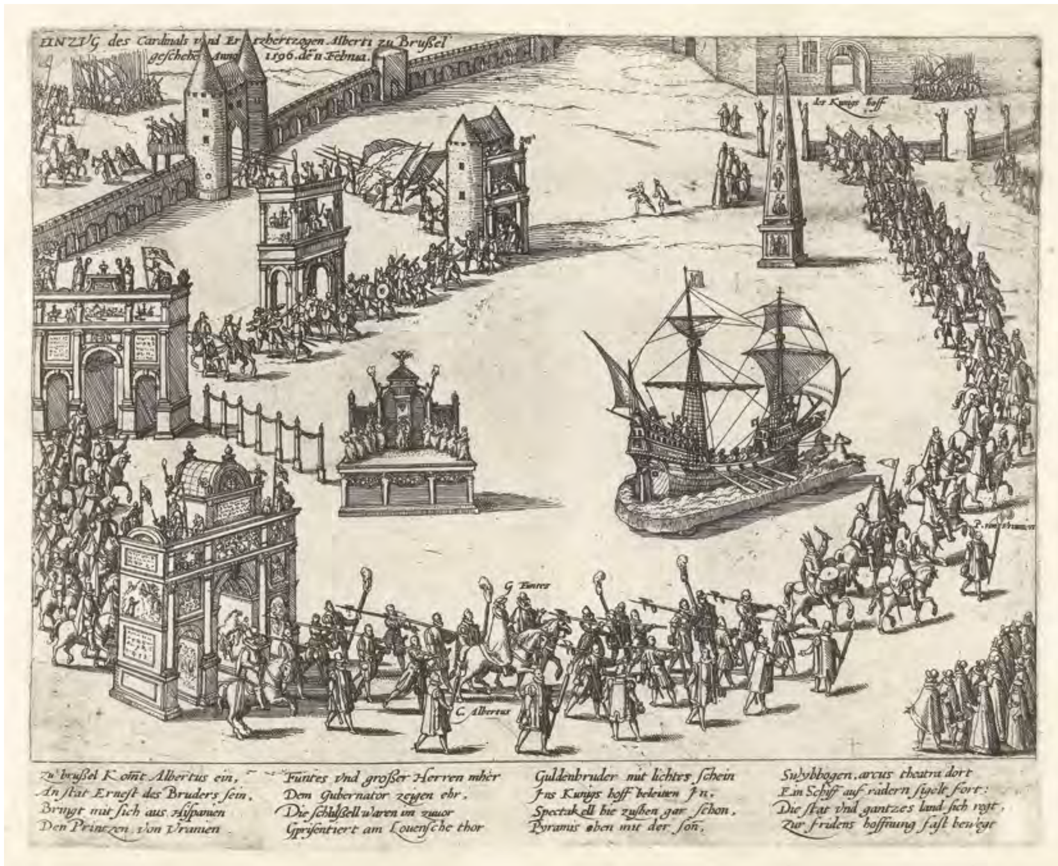

FIGURE 150
Frans Hogenberg, *Joyous Entry of Archduke Albert in Brussels*, c. 1596–1598, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

preceded by a jester and followed by a retinue of slaves. Rather, it was headed by prominent and devout people, and closed by the Bishop of Tournai.[91] Finally, even the name of this otherwise completely unknown Saint Victor is particularly suited to the occasion; so much so that one might suspect that it was invented especially for the occasion.

It is noteworthy, however, that in the particular context of the Low Countries, translation ceremonies were related to the traditional Joyous Entries of sovereigns into the cities of their territories. Ephemeral triumphal arches decorated with coats of arms, theatrical representations on stages spread throughout the city and artillery volleys were all essential elements of such public ceremonies as well (fig. 150).[92] As a matter of fact, this contemporary association is not limited to formal similarities, but extends to the identical terminology used (*innecomen* or *incomste*). In Zoutleeuw, the event is referred to as 'when the holy relic of our patron Saint Leonard was welcomed' or 'brought in'.[93] This is illustrative of the translation's

important association with secular authority. As the archducal government wholeheartedly embraced and actively promoted the Church of Rome, the latter's triumphs in a way were also theirs. This was of course most evident in the various Brussels ceremonies discussed above, but in Zoutleeuw it must have been the case as well, as the relic was donated by an officer of the Spanish army, and therefore a representative of the Habsburg authority. Joyous Entries were furthermore crucial moments of power negotiation: while the cities promised obedience and loyal submission, the sovereign assured protection and respect for the local privileges. Reciprocal gifts were essential items in such ceremonies and have been described as personalized items 'in a bigger process of exchange and as a confirmation of the outcome of political negotiations which could differ with time and place'.[94] The fact that relics and sovereigns were treated in a similar fashion suggests similar things were expected from them. These observations confirm the interpretation proposed above: just as the donation of the relic had been the result of negotiations, the precise form of its translation was an expression of devotional communication between town and government, whereby one of the main demands was protection. Just as an entering sovereign who would promise his protection to a town, the relic was supposed to serve a requested apotropaic function for the Zoutleeuw community.

Viewing the events at Zoutleeuw in terms of negotiation is in keeping with recent historiographical trends on the course of the Counter-Reformation. Instead of the traditional monolithic, top-down approach, Craig Harline proposed to interpret the process as a cultural negotiation in a local context, and Ditchfield likewise stressed dynamic interaction and processes of reciprocity.[95] The present case study fully confirms and expands these views. Thus, we can say that even if ecclesiastical control had markedly increased for a century already, the 'culture of the miraculous' preceded ecclesiastical and governmental actions to an important extent. First miracles were reported, and an intervention 'from above' would only follow later on. The Zoutleeuw churchwardens first commissioned the painting depicting Paulus Gautier's miracle, and only later received the relic. The archducal court reacted to local initiatives, rather than creating a revival of Catholicism out of nothing. But although such interventions from above rarely lay at the base of the devotional developments, they nevertheless incorporated and perpetuated them. The case of the relic donation to Zoutleeuw by a courtier fully fits these observations. Through the process of negotiation, the cult received an archducal touch and was invested with new meaning.

CONCLUSION

The Thin Line Between Tradition and Transformation

In 1621, the Twelve Years' Truce expired and Archduke Albert passed away. Remaining in Brussels as sole governess, Isabella now had to pursue those religious and political goals she had once shared with Albert. Soon after her husband's death, she ordered her court painter Peter Paul Rubens to design a monumental tapestry series depicting the Triumph of the Eucharist. Intended as a gift to the royal convent of Las Descalzas Reales in Madrid where she had in vain hoped to retire, the commission reflected her commitment, intertwining her personal devotion to the Eucharist with a powerful visualization of the Catholic Church's victory over Protestantism. In full baroque splendor, the centerpiece of the series depicts a personification of the Catholic Church, prominently holding up a Eucharistic monstrance and seated on a triumphal chariot, crushing incarnations of evil (fig. 151).[1] The theme retained all its relevance in the 1620s, but this study of the role of religious material culture in the development of lay piety throughout the long sixteenth century demonstrates that the joint project of Rubens and the Infanta did not just emerge out of the blue. Just as Isabella was born in the midst of the troubles, on 12 August 1566, the roots for the Catholic re-establishment can be traced back to the middle of the sixteenth century. The classic perception of a waning medieval piety, as a linear decline accelerated by the introduction of Protestant thought around 1520, reaching a dramatic climax in 1566 only to be restored by top-down archducal initiatives, has been demonstrated to be incorrect in several respects. This study's focus on the case of Zoutleeuw has contributed to challenging such generalizations and shown how a local perspective reveals an alternative story.

As I have argued throughout, a long-term approach allows for a more accurate assessment of the transformation of tradition that occurred during the period under study. As the previous pages have argued, that period was one marked by both continuity and change. But this raises the question of the meaning of these concepts: what is tradition, and what is innovation? In the historiography of piety

Figure 151, detail
Peter Paul Rubens, *The triumph of the Church*, c. 1625, Madrid, Museo del Prado
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FIGURE 151
Peter Paul Rubens, *The triumph of the Church*, c. 1625, Madrid, Museo del Prado
© MUSEO DEL PRADO

in the Low Countries, '1520' is put forward as a decisive break with a long, medieval tradition. It should be clear that this, in part, corresponds to a widespread perception among contemporaries: the Utrecht cathedral chapter complained about Luther being one of the causes for its diminished income, and in 1526 Erasmus referred to the spreading of Protestant ideas as a 'new-fangled notion that pervades the whole world'. Only a few years before, however, in 1522, he had used a similar phrase, *nova religio*, to refer to something that is usually considered Protestantism's extreme opposite, namely a strikingly intense outward piety and accompanying excesses of pilgrimage.[2] As has been demonstrated (Chapter 2), such characterizations were typical of devotional life around 1500, in Zoutleeuw, the Low Countries and elsewhere in Europe. Still more strikingly, even Luther himself, the man who was held responsible for the dramatic changes of around 1520, characterized the religious developments a few decades earlier as something incontestably new. He wrote acrimoniously about the 'new pilgrimages' (*die newen walfarten*) to places such as Wilsnack, Trier and Regensburg, and referred to the sudden popularity of the cult of Saint Anne as something that only originated when he was fifteen years old, i.e. around 1498. 'Before that', he maintained, 'nobody knew anything about her'.[3]

To a certain extent such typecasting was part of the respective confessional parties' broader strategy of denying each other's historical identity, and thereby also their legitimacy. Denouncing specific developments as mere novelties served to underscore the primacy of their own traditions. Similar mutual imputations occurred frequently in contemporaneous polemics. In a 1566 treatise that appeared immediately after the *Beeldenstorm*, Calvin was denounced as a liar for calling pilgrimages 'new inventions' (*nieuwe inventien*).[4] And still in 1581, the Calvinist government of the city of Brussels tried to do away with Catholic miracle devotions by, among other things, proclaiming that the local cult of the Holy Sacrament of Miracle had only been instituted in 1529.[5] While this claim can easily be proven wrong, this book has demonstrated the aptness of such observations: these examples demonstrate the intricate tensions between and relativity of 'old' and 'new', or 'tradition' and 'innovation', as historical categories, prompting closer reflection on the present use of such concepts to refer to developments in the past. One need not take recourse to the concept of invented traditions to account for the various confessional stances on this matter, since, after all, every 'genuine' tradition is a process.

This is most clearly demonstrated by the striking parallels between the two 'cultures of the miraculous' that have been identified around 1500 (Chapter 2) and 1600 (Chapter 8), respectively. In the first place, these reveal the vital, late medieval roots of Counter-Reformatory culture. The strength of this tradition of local pilgrimages proved crucial for the Catholic *réveil* of around 1600. In this respect, the observations on Zoutleeuw and the Low Countries correspond to conclusions in other European studies. The indications are in line with Duffy's characterization of the tenacity of 'traditional religion' in England, and the reasons why temporary restoration under the reign of Mary Tudor (1553–1558) was possible. Soergel has similarly emphasized how the Counter-Reformation in Bavaria was essentially built on the fertile ground of late medieval shrines. Yet, while there are definitely pertinent similarities, the context had changed drastically. In the course of the intervening century, politico-religious developments had dramatically overturned the religious landscape and its geography. Local practices and occasional divergence notwithstanding, it is safe to say that, around 1500, religious life in Europe could still generally be characterized as part of one more or less uniform confession, i.e. the Church of Rome. The situation was completely different around 1600, when religious

identities and political factions had strongly polarized the confessional landscape, with far-reaching consequences for religious experience and practice. While studying the Counter-Reformation in the Upper Palatinate, Trevor Johnson similarly noticed the continuity with late medieval spirituality, but also emphasized that the tone of its main characteristics had changed. It was now much more militant and confessional.

Johnson's conclusions also apply to the Low Countries, where the advancing Reformation gradually aroused a parallel countermovement that cut across the principles of the various Protestant convictions (Chapter 6). In the mid-sixteenth century, elements that had been central to the Low Countries' devotional culture of around 1500 received a radically new dimension: Eucharistic devotion developed into a 'warlike confession of faith', and the practice of pilgrimage and the belief in miracles took on a strong confessional character (Chapters 4 & 8).[6] Both were part of Catholic tradition, but their connotations in the period around 1500 differed radically from those around 1600. The developments of the mid-sixteenth century should thus be seen as catalysts, paving the way for Early Modern Catholicism and its manifestation in archducal projects. Moreover, even if Albert and Isabella's reign can be said to epitomize the Catholic restoration in the Low Countries, they were, in fact, often responding to pre-existing revitalizing dynamics, and showing a marked interest in local devotions (Chapter 9). When they invested in the Brussels cult of the Holy Sacrament of Miracle to foreground it as spiritual weapon against Protestantism, they were clearly harking back to their predecessors' efforts during the previous century. Similarly, the iconography of the *Triumph of the Eucharist* Rubens designed for Isabella (fig. 151) matches seamlessly with that of the Dordrecht choir stalls of 1538–1540 (fig. 115). And in spirit, it expresses the very same idea as the sacrament house Cornelis Floris installed in Zoutleeuw in the early 1550s. Such examples demonstrate how Netherlandish devotional culture of around 1600 had, in a way, grown organically from late medieval piety, but was seasoned and shaped by the sixteenth-century tempest.

Examining religious material culture as primary sources reveals early initiatives to counter Protestant critiques, and contradicts Pollmann's claim that there was only a limited Catholic response to the Reformation in the Low Countries. While such actions are generally thought to have taken place only after 1585 – a view recently confirmed by Muller – in recent years the timeline has been

altered considerably: Spicer and Jonckheere identified 1566 as a crucial catalyzing moment in this respect. But the observations in this book tend to confirm Tacke and Van Eck's hypotheses that Catholic reactions to Protestant ideas were already increasingly articulated in previous decades through visual and material statements. Well before the actual destructions in the *Beeldenstorm* of 1566, religious objects had become involved in public debates: they were criticized by some, but their reinstallation, by others, in more monumental and elaborate forms, can be read as a strong response. With hindsight, these initiatives clearly were not successful in turning the tide, but an awareness of their existence and insight into their purposes considerably enrich our understanding of religious life and artistic production in the mid-sixteenth-century Low Countries, distinct from the mere implication of Tridentine decrees.

Also in a broader sense, this book puts further emphasis on the increasing importance of lay initiatives, participation and engagement in the religious developments of the Low Countries in the long sixteenth century, as has in recent years been put forward by scholars such as Van Engen, Terpstra, Marnef and Van Bruaene. In the consecutive dynamics that have been described, the crucial role of lay groups' agency indeed clearly was a recurring factor. To a significant extent, focus has been on the important local institution of the churchwardens in Zoutleeuw. Their initiatives were of prime importance for the establishment of the cult of Saint Leonard within a broader pilgrimage circuit (Chapter 1). In other places in the Low Countries, evidence indicates that similar initiatives were actively stimulated by local lords (Chapter 2). These local lay elites – lords as well as churchwardens – would also play a crucial role in attempts to counter the Reformation on the community level (Chapter 6). While some lent active support to the Reformation in one place, others committedly countered critiques elsewhere. Finally, churchwardens and the civic magistracy in Zoutleeuw were both found to be prime driving forces behind the revitalization of the local cult of Saint Leonard, after years of disastrous war (Chapter 8). To be clear, this emphasis on the laity is not intended to disregard the role of the clergy. But lay groups clearly responded to, and interacted with, pre-existing clerical structures, whether in the form of established pilgrimage circuits and centers, the indulgence system or the cult of the Holy Sacrament. While these are all aspects of religious life that had been made possible by clerical decisions, the laity clearly tried to take over parts of the organization or at least get involved in it.

Religious material culture formed the core of this book, but the focus was not so much on the creative processes of artists or craftsmen as on their patrons as creators. As was also the case elsewhere, patrons in Zoutleeuw made reasoned choices within a multitude of possibilities that determined the final outlook of the objects in question. The carved wooden altarpiece depicting the life of Saint Leonard, for instance, was clearly an inherent part of a much broader campaign to embellish the sacred space of Saint Leonard's chapel. With the help of a broad range of artists, the churchwardens intentionally created an ensemble that foregrounded and enshrined Saint Leonard's statue as the material focus of the cult in Zoutleeuw. The sacrament house was similarly the product of choices on the part of its patrons, nobleman Merten van Wilre and his wife Marie Pylipert, and it was precisely such choices – form, size, style, iconographical motives – that conveyed deep meaning in the religious debates on the materiality of devotion. The eventual result served as a statement in favor of continuity. Finally, all the evidence suggests that by ordering the painting depicting the miracle of Paulus Gautier, the churchwardens deliberately linked with the relatively recent development of votive paintings to restore tradition. Patrons, like artists, made deliberate choices between tradition and innovation.

In sum, all this adds to our understanding of the multiple layers of meaning pilgrims and parishioners must have attached to Zoutleeuw's rich furnishings, visiting the church on the eve of the *Beeldenstorm*. The Marianum that welcomed entering devotees might have incited them to recite the prayer *Ave sanctissima Maria mater dei*, perhaps almost automatically as a devotional habit, or precisely, and very consciously, in order to obtain the years of indulgence that were connected to that very act. The pilgrims who had selected the shrine of Zoutleeuw from among the much larger cult circuit in the Low Countries walked on to Saint Leonard's chapel, where the multitude of burning candles, suspended crutches, waxen and metal legs and figurines, and other votive gifts such as harnesses, reassured them of the cult object's effectiveness. Many among them would in turn leave their own ex-voto, in gratitude for a received gift, or as a token of careful hope for salvation. This heterogeneous group of significant objects, together with the other items installed by the churchwardens in honor of Saint Leonard, all contributed to a sense of miraculous charisma in the sacred space. On the saint's feast day in early November this would have been greater still, as the Mass in the chapel included polyphonic singing and extra honoring lauds.

Sacred souvenirs of all these devotional experiences were proposed by the stallholders in the church portal, either in the form of metal badges or paper pennants.

Finally, the above observations help to qualify Duffy's concept of 'traditional religion'. In 1566 a large part of the parishioners would have remembered the old gothic sacrament house being replaced by the current antique one, which can be called traditional in terms of function but definitely not in terms of style and size, nor in spatial impact. Together with the donor's memorial stone in front of it, it formed a meaningful ensemble. Moreover, during the Mass of the Holy Sacrament on Thursday mornings the microarchitectural structure was involved in a similarly significant and quintessentially Catholic ritual: the adoration and benediction of the Holy Sacrament with candlelight and laudatory polyphonic music, for which purpose the brand new Eucharistic monstrance was temporarily taken out of the sacrament house and placed on the altar. And leaving the church whilst walking along the side chapels with the triptychs from the Antwerp workshops of Pieter Aertsen and Frans Floris, parishioners must have equally been struck by the traditional devotional subjects they had known for so long, such as the seven sorrows of the Virgin, which were now rendered in the same avant-garde style. These combinations of 'old' and 'new' went beyond mere tradition, and within a climate of increasing Protestant critiques they merged into unmistakable Catholic statements on the matter of piety.

APPENDIX 1

The Churchwarden Accounts of Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard

The edition of the churchwarden accounts (De Mecheleer 1997a) suffers from several inaccuracies, for which reason a full review is offered here. Firstly, the account published as KR 1405 is in fact not a fragmentary churchwarden account of Saint Leonard's church, but rather a full account of Zoutleeuw's *Capella clericorum*. The edition does not include the first part of KR 1502, nor does it include KR 1510, KR 1572, or the official version of KR 1598. Furthermore, the two undated accounts can be identified as KR 1508 and KR 1510, respectively. These identifications are corroborated by data provided in the accounts themselves that match their respective preceding and subsequent accounts. Moreover, the first page of KR 1510 was found elsewhere, showing the same perforations and damages, and was written in the same hand. Lastly, the account published as KR 1590 is actually KR 1560.

Unless otherwise noted, all original documents are in the Rijksarchief Leuven (RAL), collection Kerkarchief Brabant (KAB). These are either draft versions of the accounts compiled during the administrative year, or the official transcripts made for approval at its closing, which in some cases exist in the form of a contemporary second copy. In the table below, 'Account' refers to the version referred to throughout the text. Known copies or draft versions are inventoried under 'Copy' and 'Draft'. When only a draft version is known, reference is made to this version. The accounts in RAL, KAB, nos. 1218, 1222 and 1223 are unbound, and not foliated throughout. RAL, KAB, nos. 38521, 38522 and 38523 are individual accounts.

Further remarks:

- It is unclear what the precise nature of each of the copies of KR 1453 are.
- Some of the accounts are damaged and/or incomplete: KR 1458; KR 1465; KR 1474; KR 1509; KR 1515; KR 1520; KR 1538; KR 1560; KR 1569; KR 1572; KR 1577; KR 1590; KR 1591; KR 1599.
- KR 1538 is incomplete, but although the title page is missing, its dating is corroborated by the data in the account.
- KR 1552 has been bound in the wrong order.

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KR	Account	Copy	Draft
1452	1214, fols. 7–26v		
1453	1214, fols. 27–45v	1214, fols. 46–74v	1214, fols. 75–92v
1455	1214, fols. 93–113v	1214, fols. 114–133v	
1456	1214, fols. 134–176v		
1457	1214, fols. 177–196v		
1458			1238, fols. 117–146v
1459	1214, fols. 197–213v		
1460	1214, fols. 234–254v	1214, fols. 214–233v	
1463	1214, fols. 255–272v	1214, fols. 273–291v	
1464			1214, fols. 292–316v
1465	1214, fols. 317–333v		
1466	1214, fols. 351–370v	1214, fols. 334–350v	
1468	1215, fols. 1–15v		
1469	1215, fols. 32–49v	1215, fols. 16–31v	
1471	1215, fols. 50–69v	1215, fols. 70–84v	
1472	1215, fols. 85–97v	1215, fols. 98–112v	
1473	1215, fols. 113–125v		1238, fols. 149–165v
1474	1215, fols. 153–169v		
1476	1215, fols. 188–206v	1215, fols. 170–187v	
1477	1215, fols. 207–227v		
1478	1215, fols. 228–248v		
1479	1215, fols. 249–272v		
1480	1216, fols. 19–33v	1216, fols. 1–18v	
1481	1216, fols. 54–67v	1216, fols. 34–53v	
1482	1216, fols. 80–100v		
1483	1216, fols. 101–120v		
1484	1216, fols. 121–146v		1238bis, fols. 452–488v
1485	1216, fols. 175–201v	1216, fols. 147–174v	
1486	1216, fols. 231–258v	1216, fols. 203–230v	
1487	1216, fols. 285–309v	1216, fols. 261–283v	
1489	1216, fols. 310–329v		
1490	1217, fols. 25–48v	1217, fols. 1–24v	
1491	1217, fols. 49–69v		
1492	1217, fols. 70–101v		
1493	1217, fols. 102–124v		
1495	1217, fols. 126–149v		
1496	1217, fols. 151–176v		
1497	1217, fols. 179–204v		

(*cont.*)

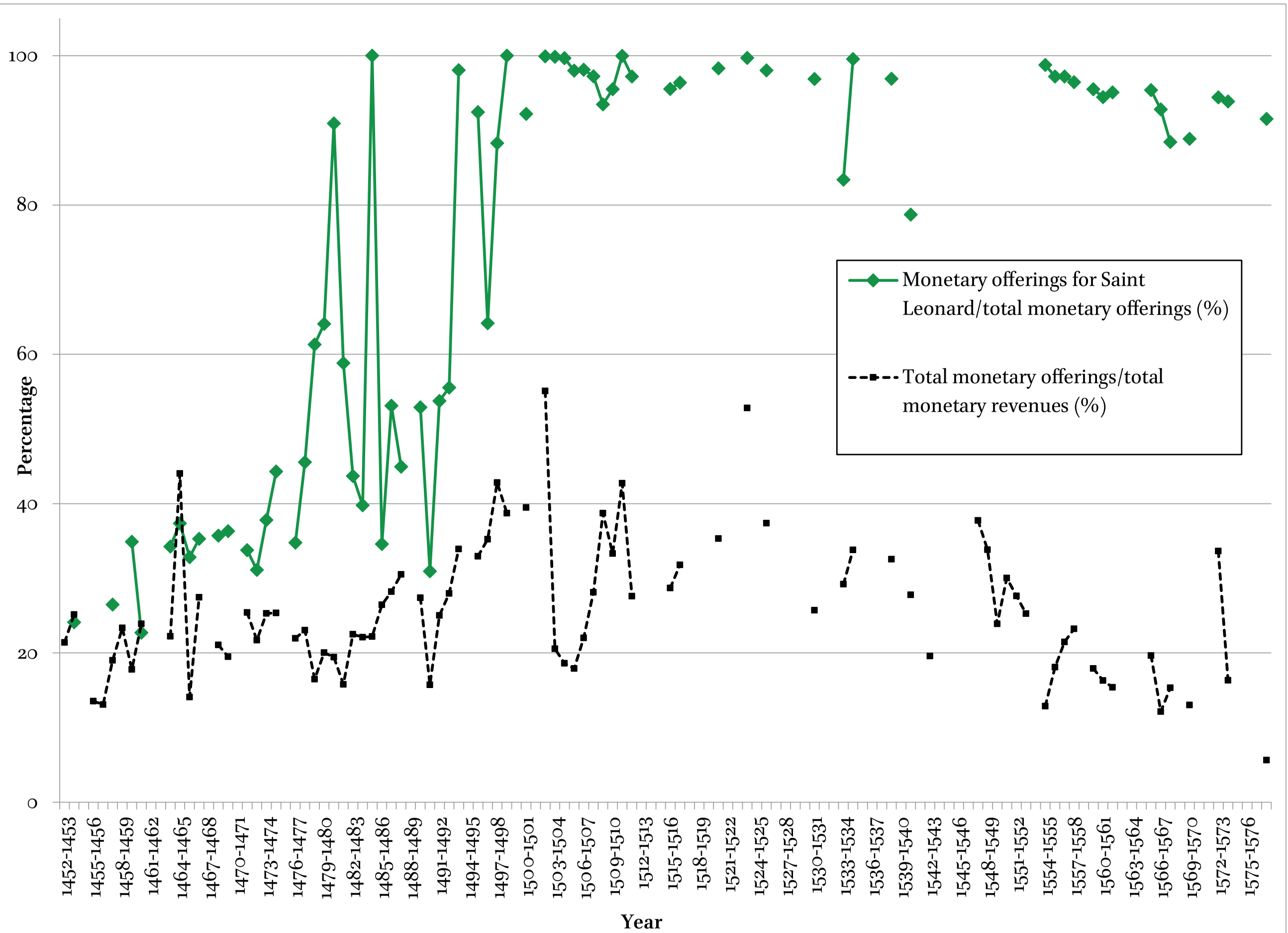
KR	Account	Copy	Draft
1498	1217, fols. 206–233v	1218	
1500	1218		
1502			1238, fols. 240–276v and 1238bis, 416–451v
1503	1218		1218
1504	1218		1218
1505	1218		
1506	1218		
1507	1218		Possibly 1238bis, fols. 559–564v and 625–656v
1508	1238, fols. 277–302v		Possibly 1238bis, fols. 559–564v and 625–656v, or 1238bis, fols. 565–586v
1509	1218	1218	1238, fol. 101 and 1238bis, fols. 587–624v
1510	1238, fol. 103 and 1238bis, fols. 565–586v		
1511	1218		
1515	1218	1238, fols. 73–100v	
1516	1218		
1520	1219, fols. 1–27	1219, fols. 28–53v	
1523	1219, fols. 55–76v		1219, fols. 77–107v
1525	1219, fols. 108–125		
1530	1219, fols. 129–162v		
1533	1219, fols. 164–196v		
1534	1218		
1538			1238bis, fols. 348–391v
1540	1219, fols. 197–227v		
1542	1219, fols. 229–252v		
1547	1219, fols. 253–290v		
1548	1219, fols. 291–329v		
1549	1219, fols. 330–368v		
1550	1220, fols. 1–36v		
1551	1220, fols. 37–70v		
1552	1220, fols. 71–121v		
1554	1220, fols. 122–181v		
1555	1220, fols. 182–228v		
1556	1220, fols. 229–278v		
1557	1220, fols. 279–320v		
1559	1220, fols. 321–366v		
1560	1221, fols. 291–316v		

(*cont.*)

KR	Account	Copy	Draft
1561	1220, fols. 367–390v and 1238bis, fols. 392–413v		
1565	1220, fols. 391–414v and 1238bis, fols. 531–558v		
1566	1220, fols. 509–558v		
1567	1220, fols. 415–457v		
1569	1220, fols. 485–508v		
1572			1238bis, fols. 495–530v
1573	1221, fols. 374–408v		
1577	1220, fols. 458–484v		
1589	1221, fols. 211–236v		
1590			Possibly 1238, fols. 337–342v
1591	1238, fols. 20–72v		
1592	1221, fols. 237–290v		
1595	1221, fols. 113–196v		
1597	1221, fols. 43–113v		
1598	Possibly 1221, fols. 197–210v		DAZ, old no. 107, new no. 153
1599	1221, fols. 317–373v		
1601	1222		
1602	1222		
1603	1222		
1604	1222		
1605	1222		DAZ, no. 102
1606	1222		
1607	1222		
1608	1222		
1609	1222		
1611	38521		
1612	1223		
1613	1223		
1614	1223		
1615	1223		
1616	38522		
1619	38523		

APPENDIX 2

Graphs



GRAPH 1 Relative share of the total amount of devotional revenues within the total monetary revenues, and relative share of the offerings for Saint Leonard within the total amount of devotional revenues
SOURCE: KR

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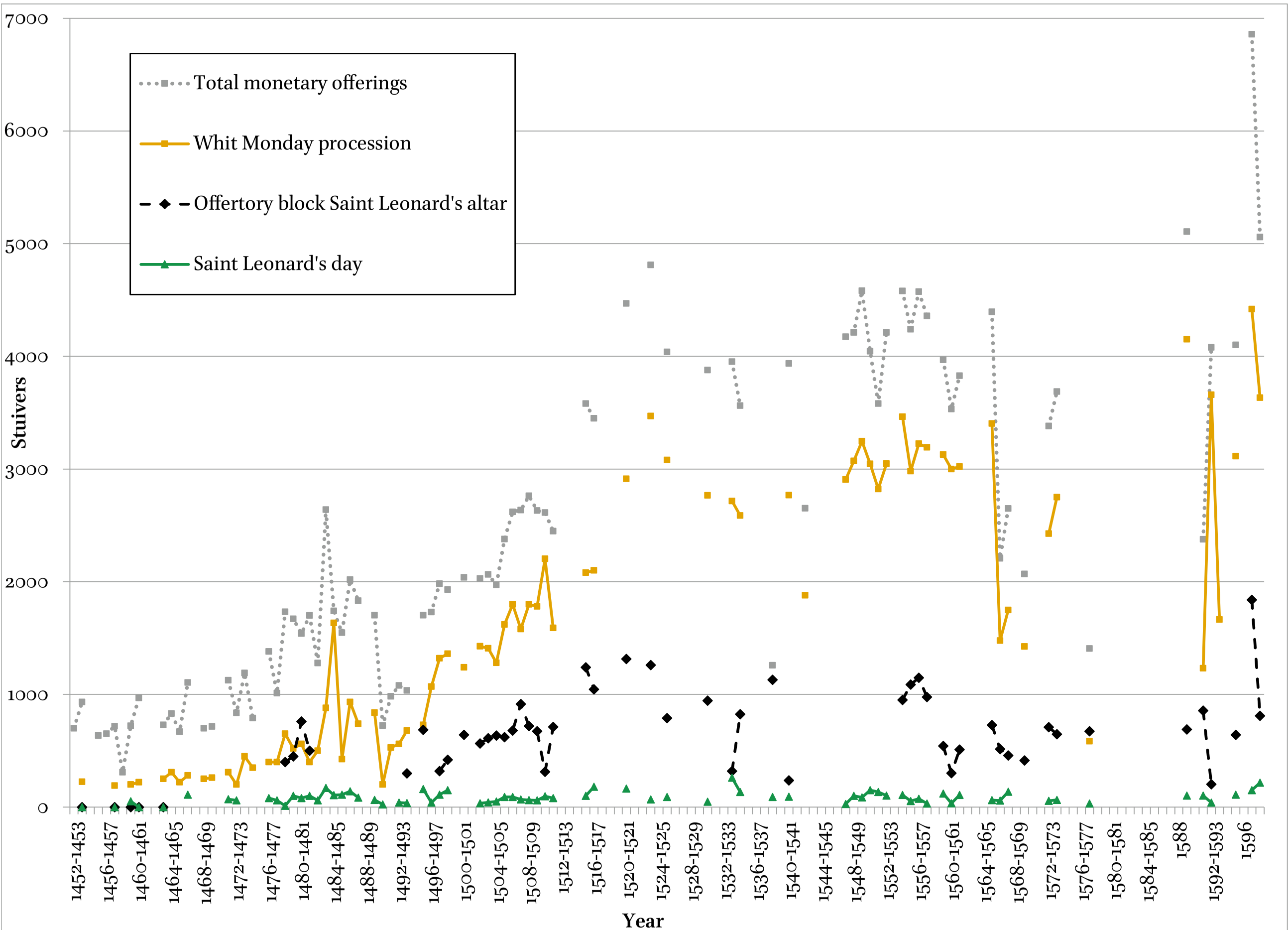
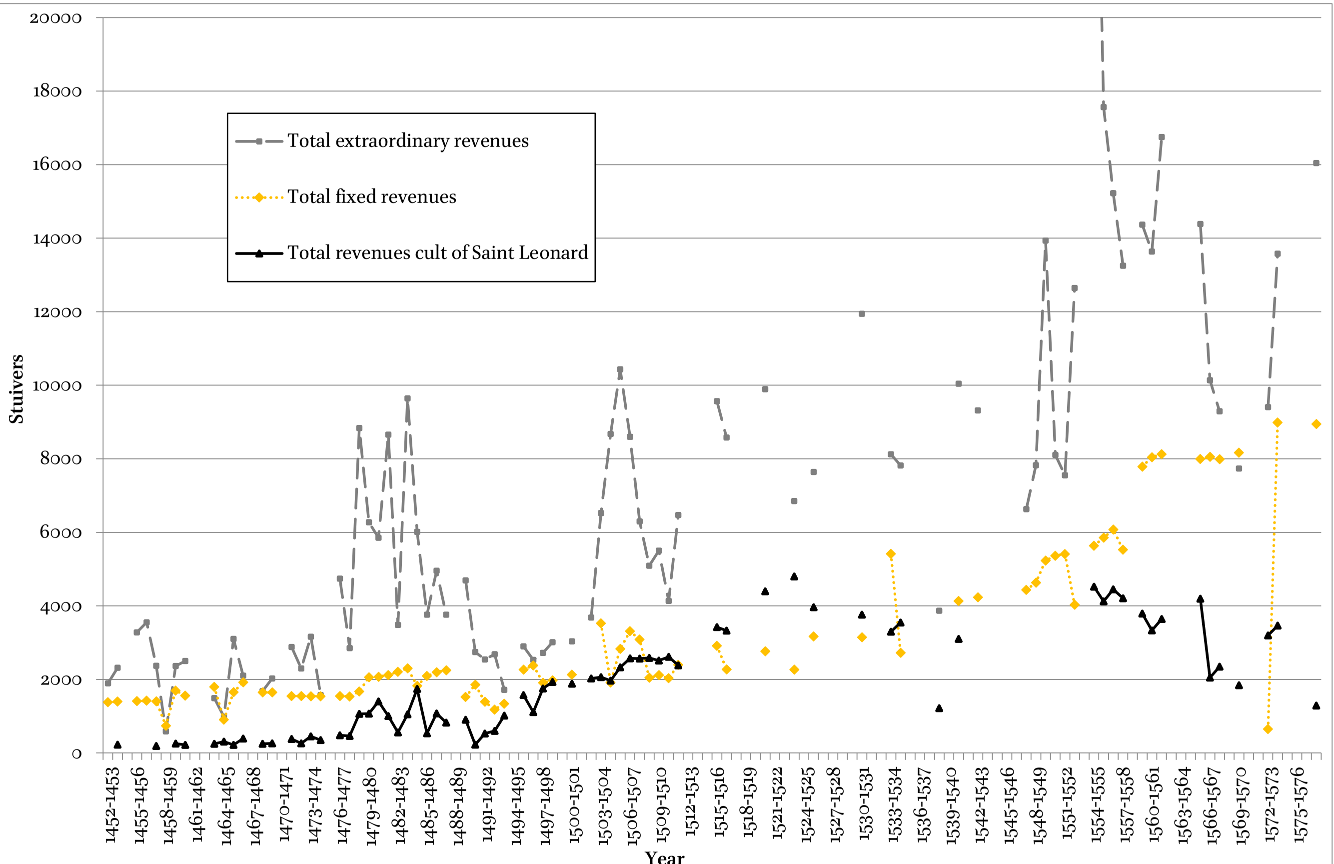


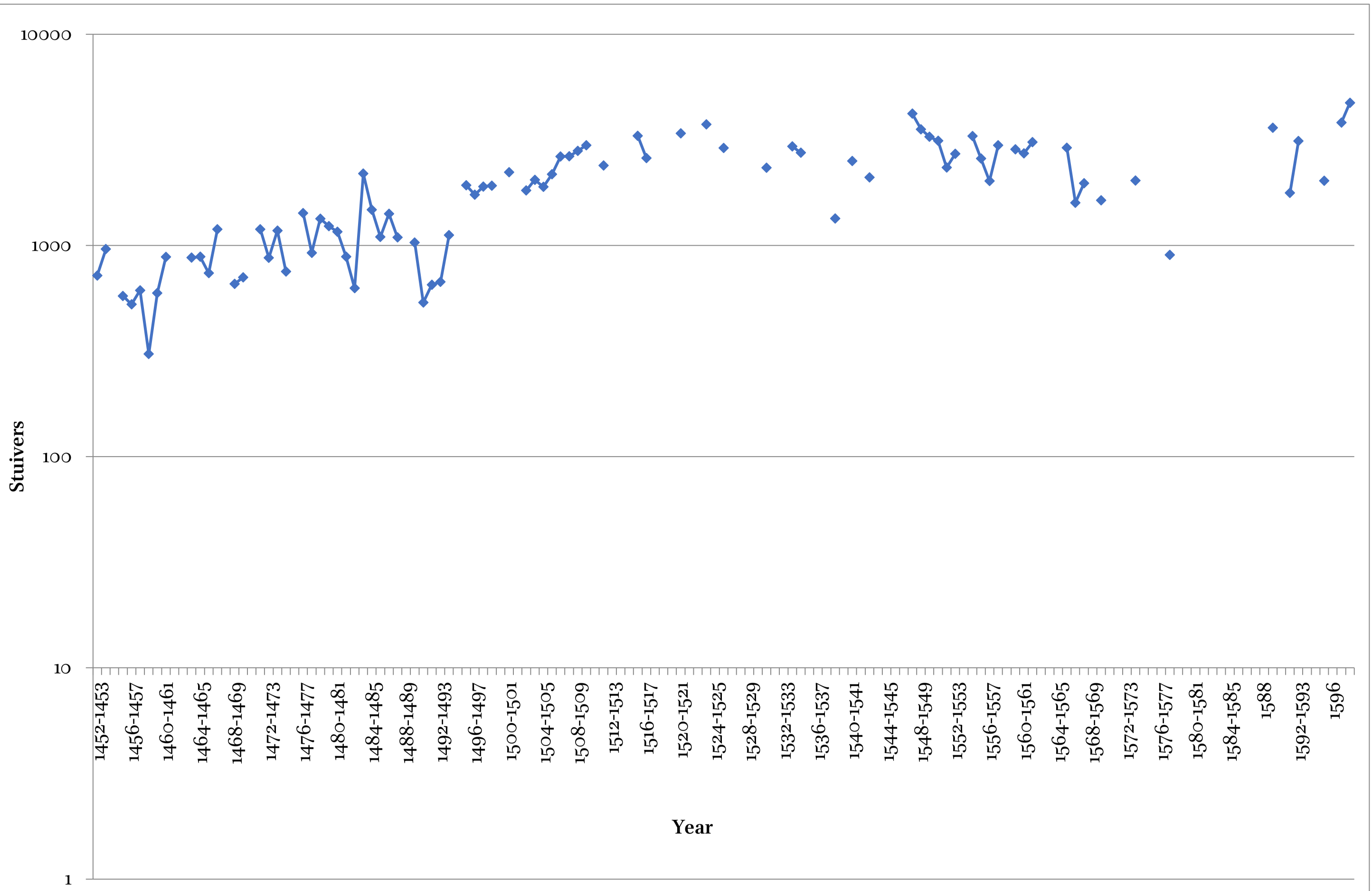
GRAPH 2 Constituent parts of the offerings for Saint Leonard, in comparison with the total monetary offerings, in nominal figures (*stuivers*)

SOURCE: KR



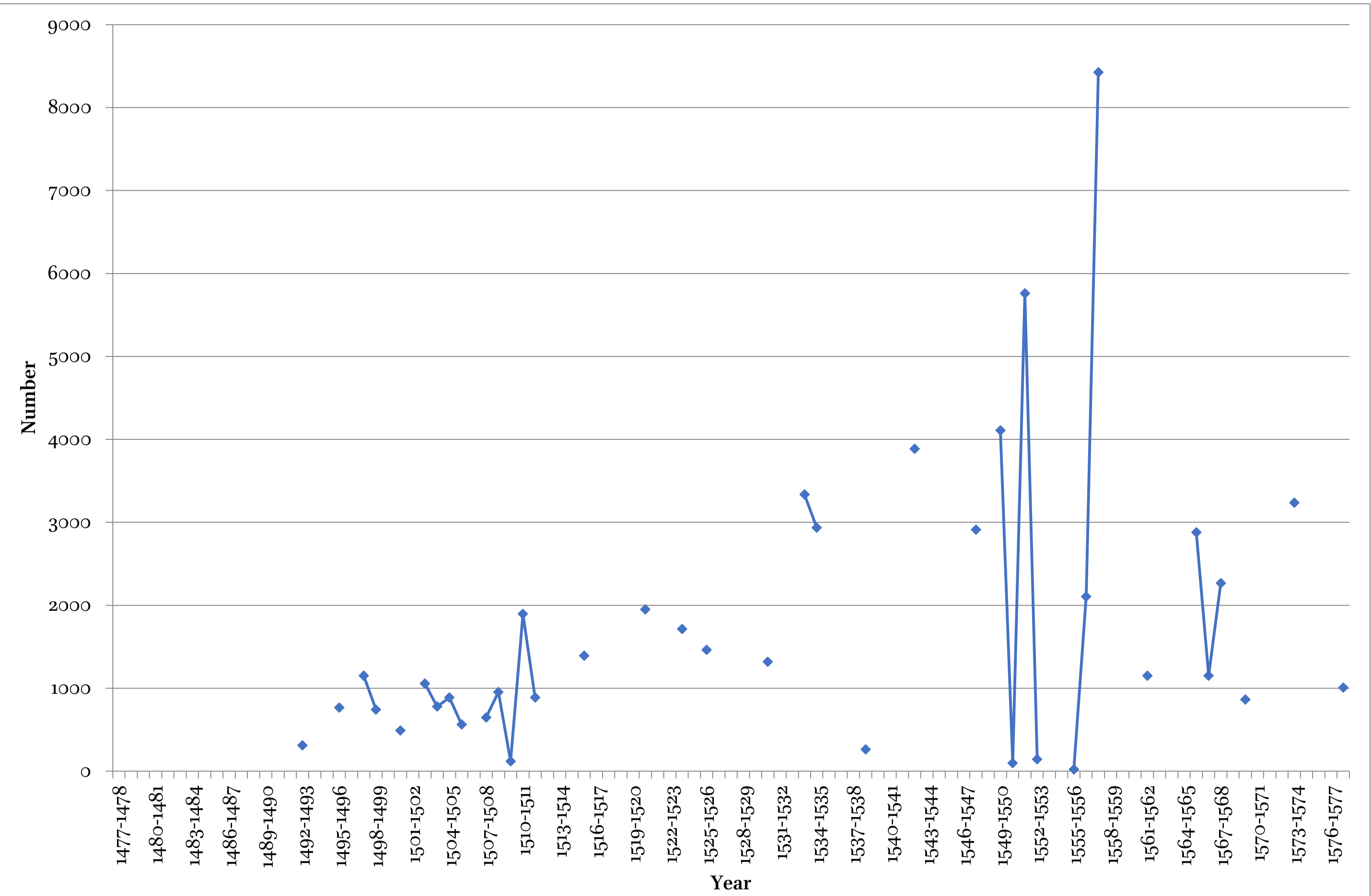
GRAPH 3 Revenues from the cult of Saint Leonard, total extraordinary revenues and total fixed revenues, in nominal figures (*stuivers*)

SOURCE: KR



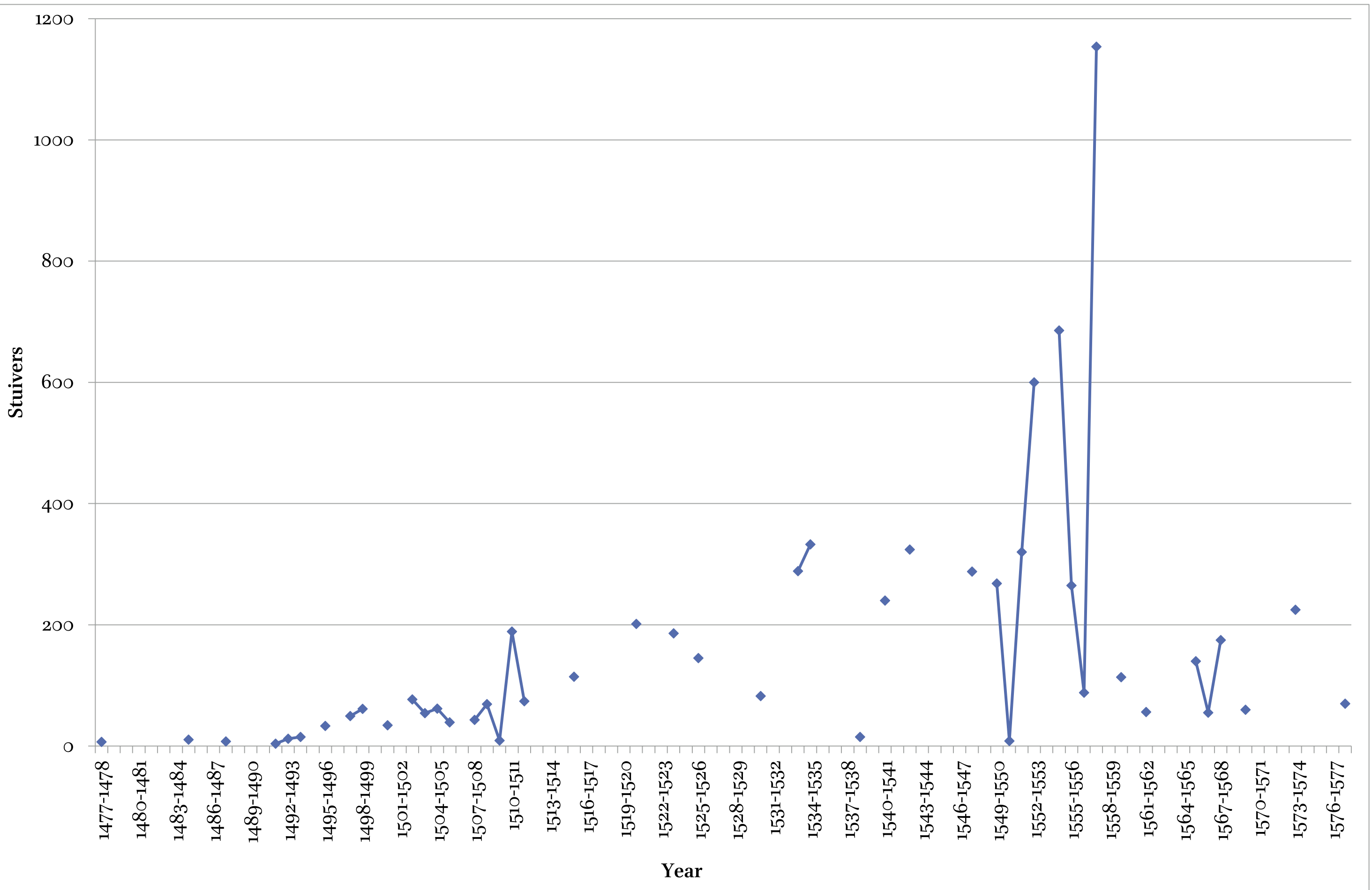
GRAPH 4 Conversion of the chronological evolution of the total amount of devotional revenues, by means of a calculated real wage index on a logarithmic scale (basis: 1452)

SOURCES: KR; VAN DER WEE 1975, 436–447; JACKS & ARROYO ABAD 2005

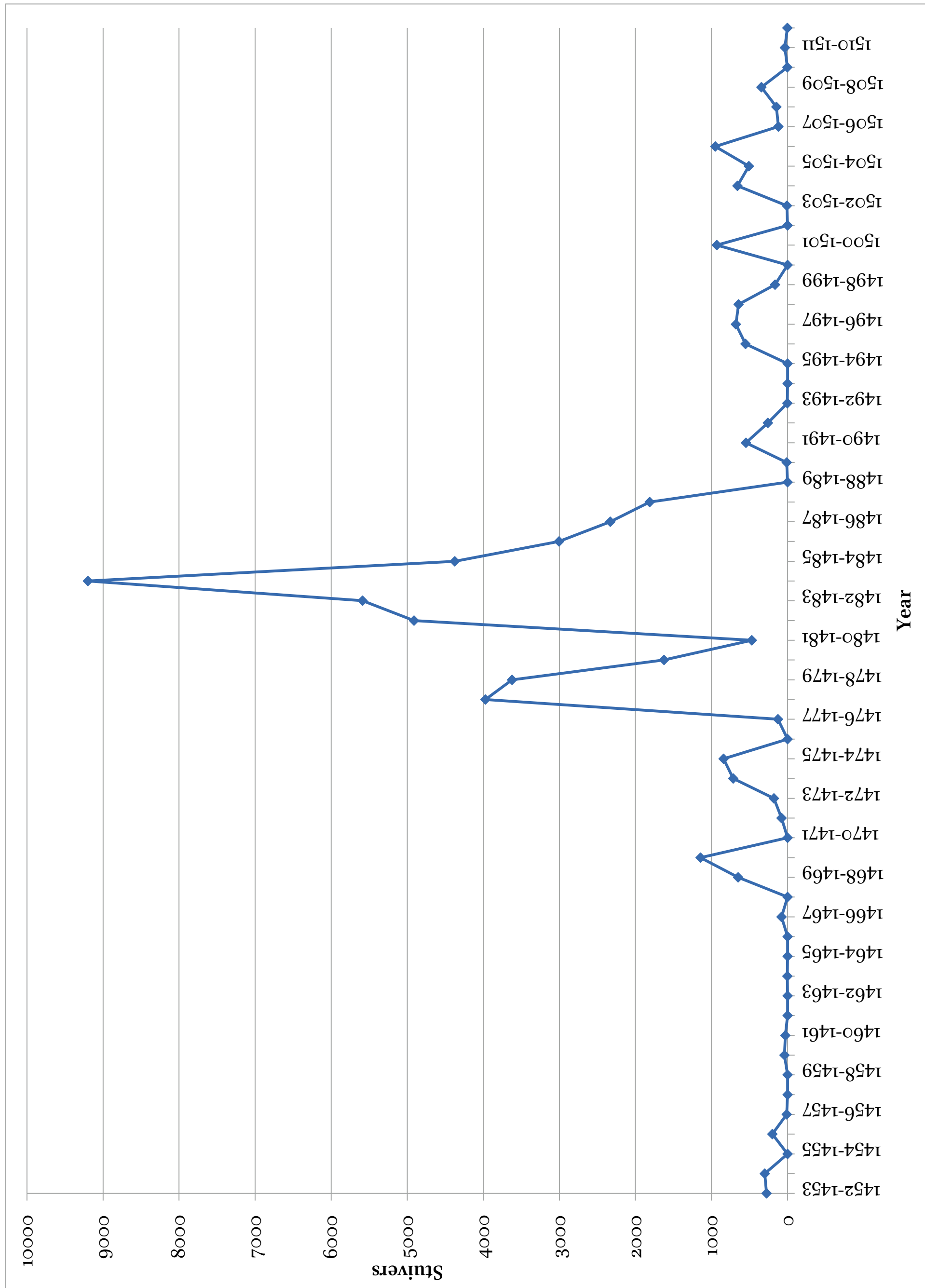


GRAPH 5 Yearly number of metal pilgrim badges bought by the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*

SOURCE: KR

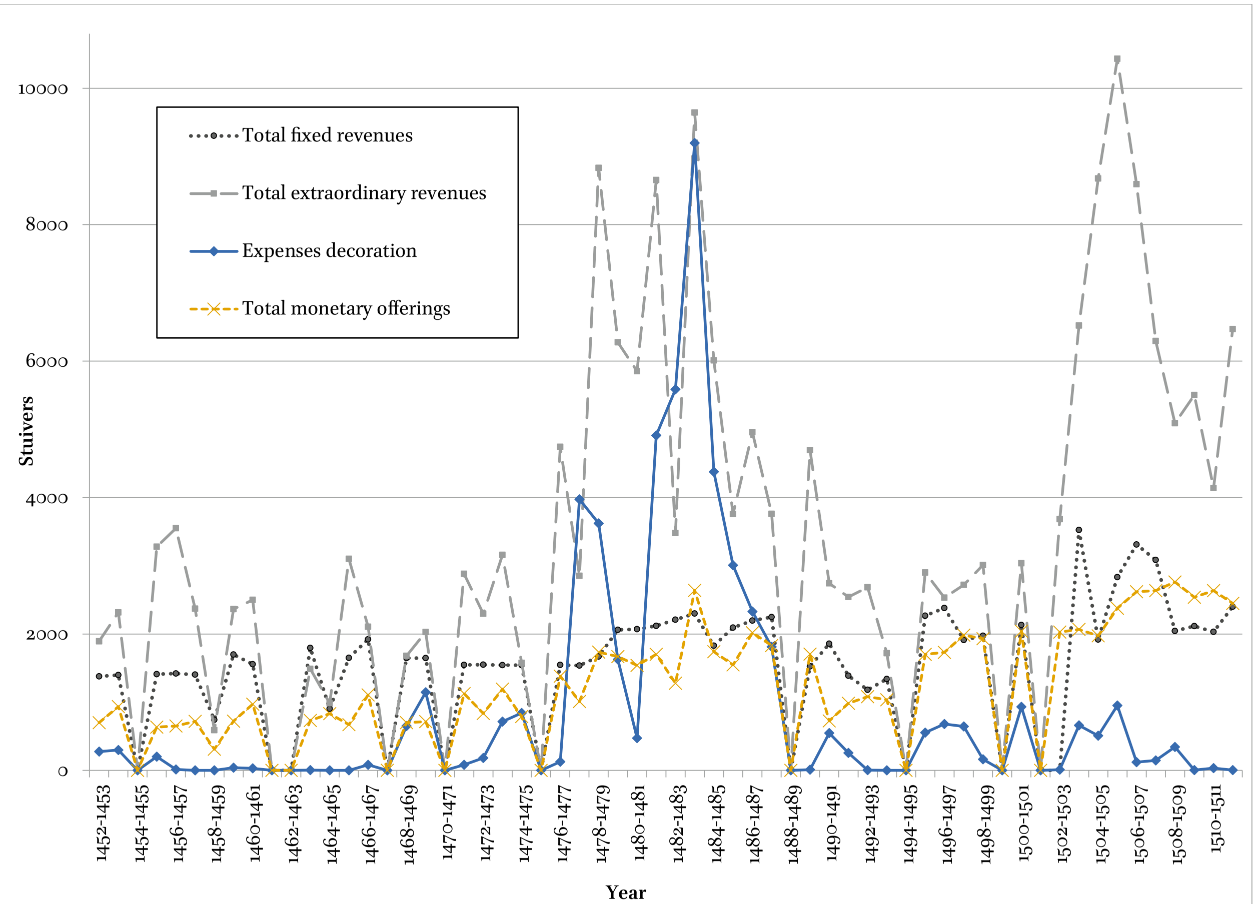


GRAPH 6 Yearly budget allotted to metal pilgrim badges by the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*, in *stuivers*
SOURCE: KR



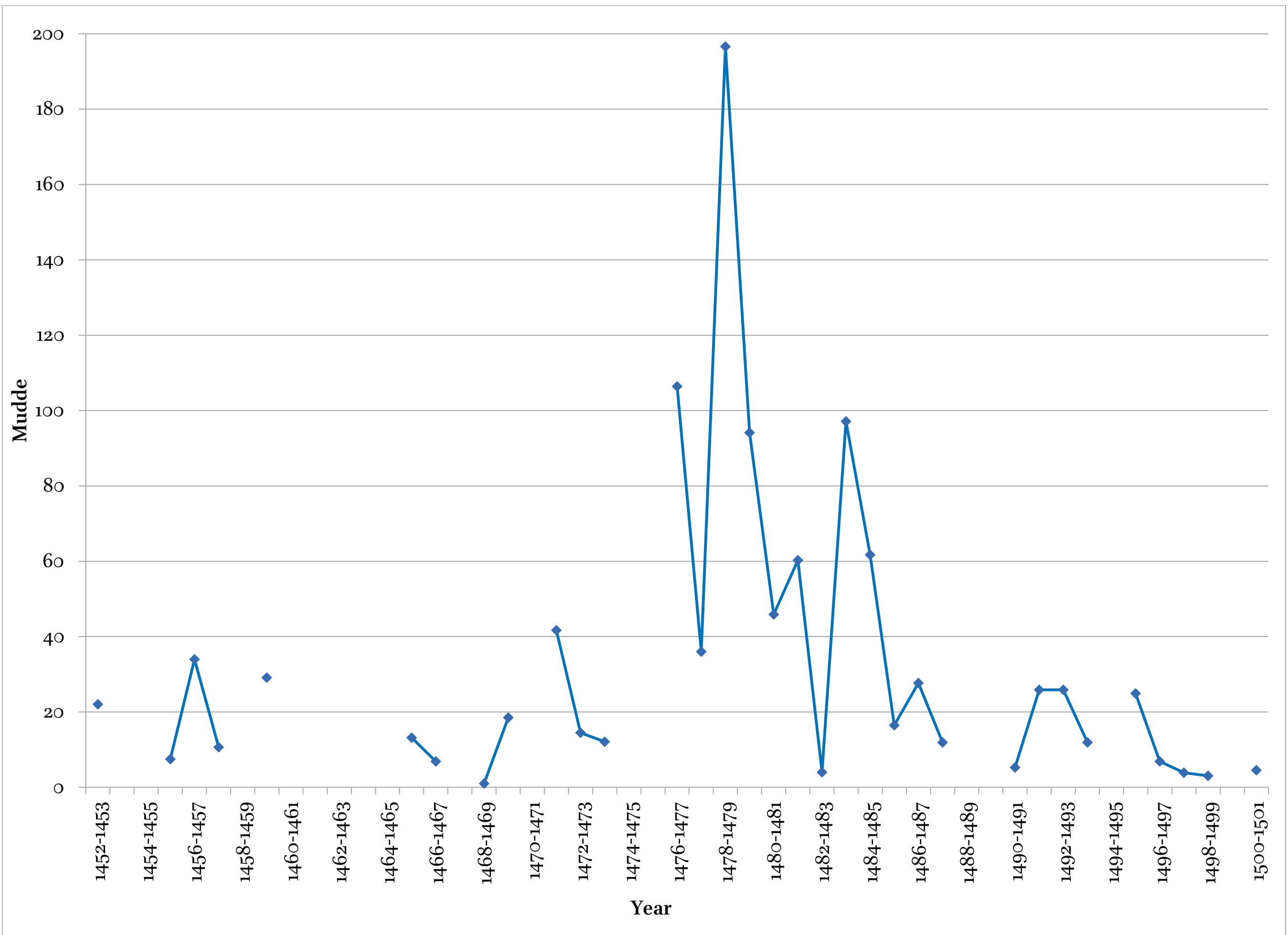
GRAPH 7 Yearly expenditures for interior decoration by the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*, in *stuivers*

SOURCE: KR



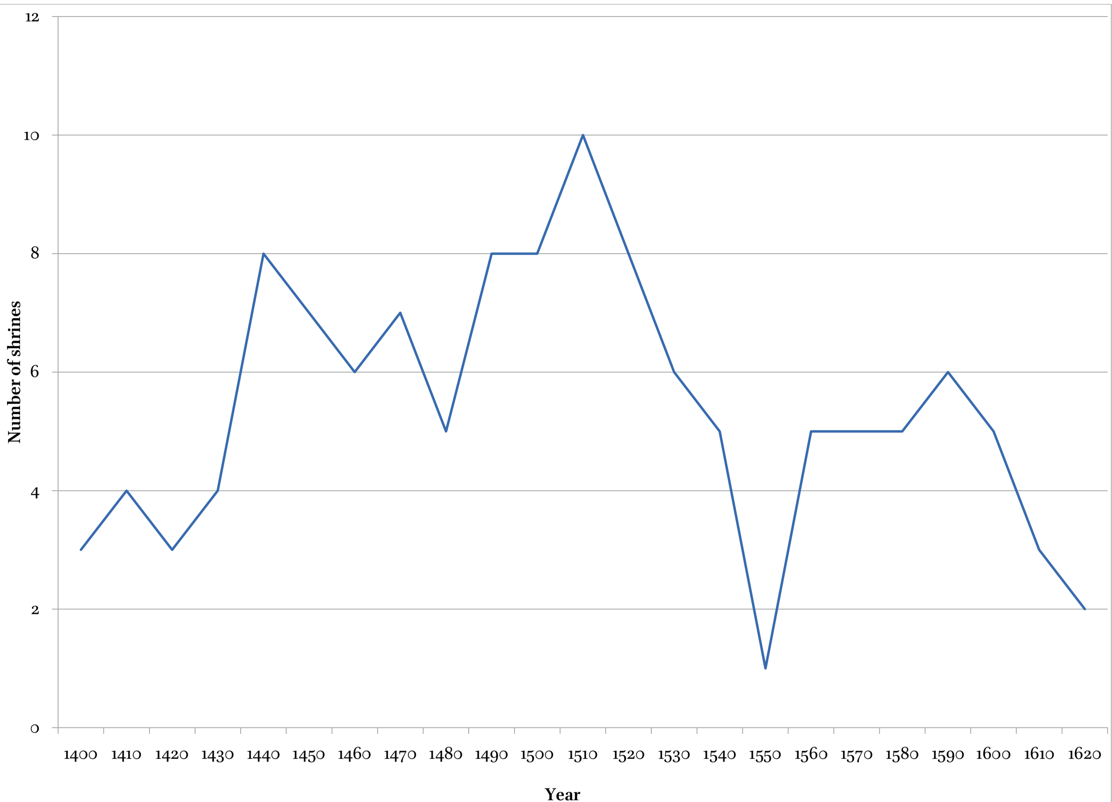
GRAPH 8 Comparison of the yearly expenditures for interior decoration by the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*, with the institution's revenues (fixed, extraordinary and monetary offerings), in *stuivers*

SOURCE: KR

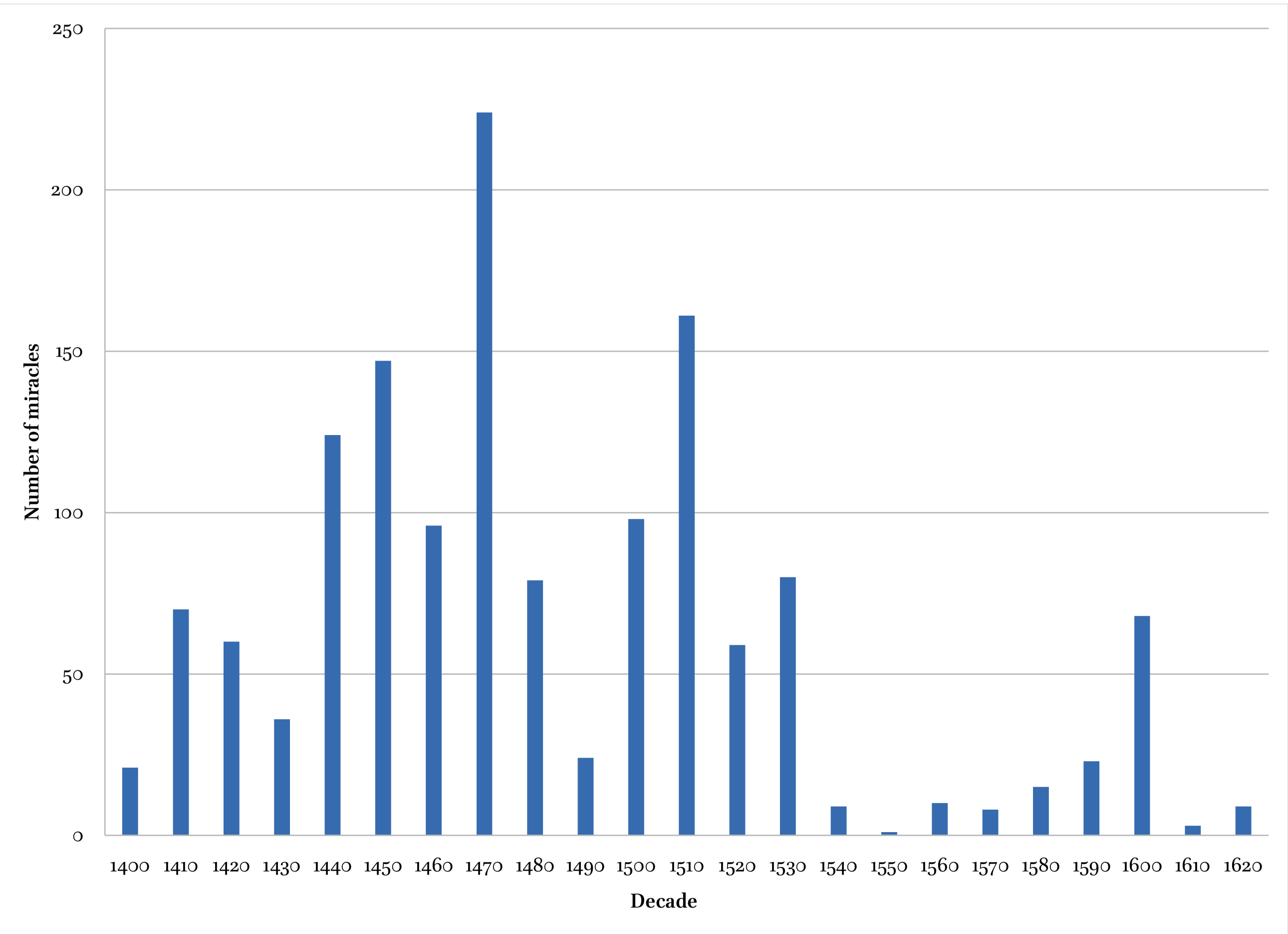


GRAPH 9 Yearly amounts of corn sold from the stock of the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*, in *mudde*

SOURCE: KR

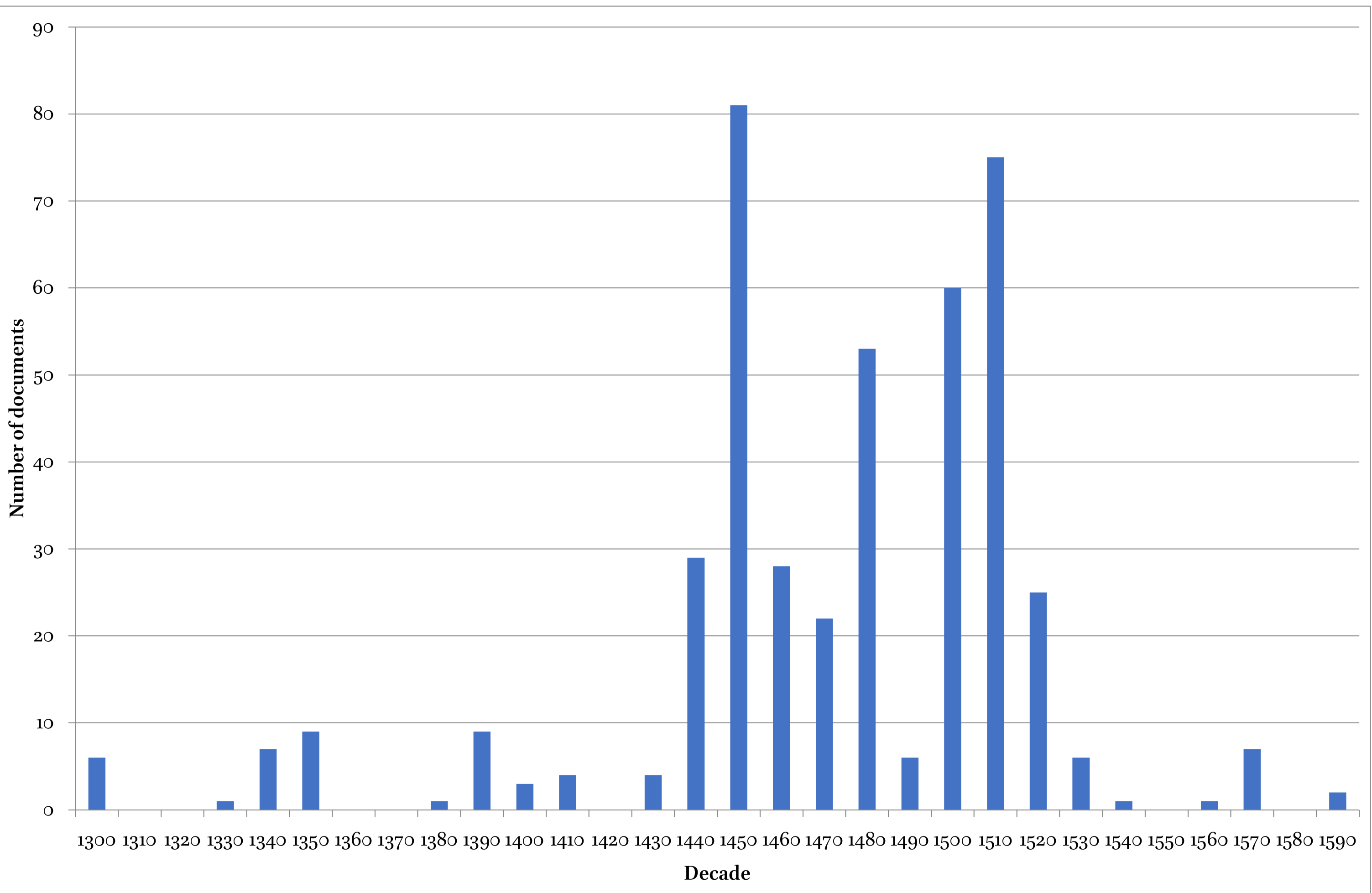


GRAPH 10 Chronological evolution of the number of shrines in the Low Countries where miracles were recorded, per decade. The dataset includes Aalst, Alsemberg, Amersfoort, Arnhem, Bolsward, Breda (Niervaart), Brussels, Cambrai, Dadizele, Delft (Maria Jesse, Seven Sorrows and Holy Cross), Dordrecht, Gullegem, Halle, Kerselare, Lede, Leuven (Holy Sacrament of Miracle and Our Lady), Lier, Malmedy, Scheut, 's-Hertogenbosch, Tongre-Notre-Dame, Waver and Wezemaal
SOURCES: VRANCX 1600; *HISTORIA* 1674; GEORGE 1998; MINNEN 2011; GIRALDO 1959A; DE BOER & JONGEN 2015, 19–20; VAN MULDER 2016, APPENDIX 1 AND *PASSIM*

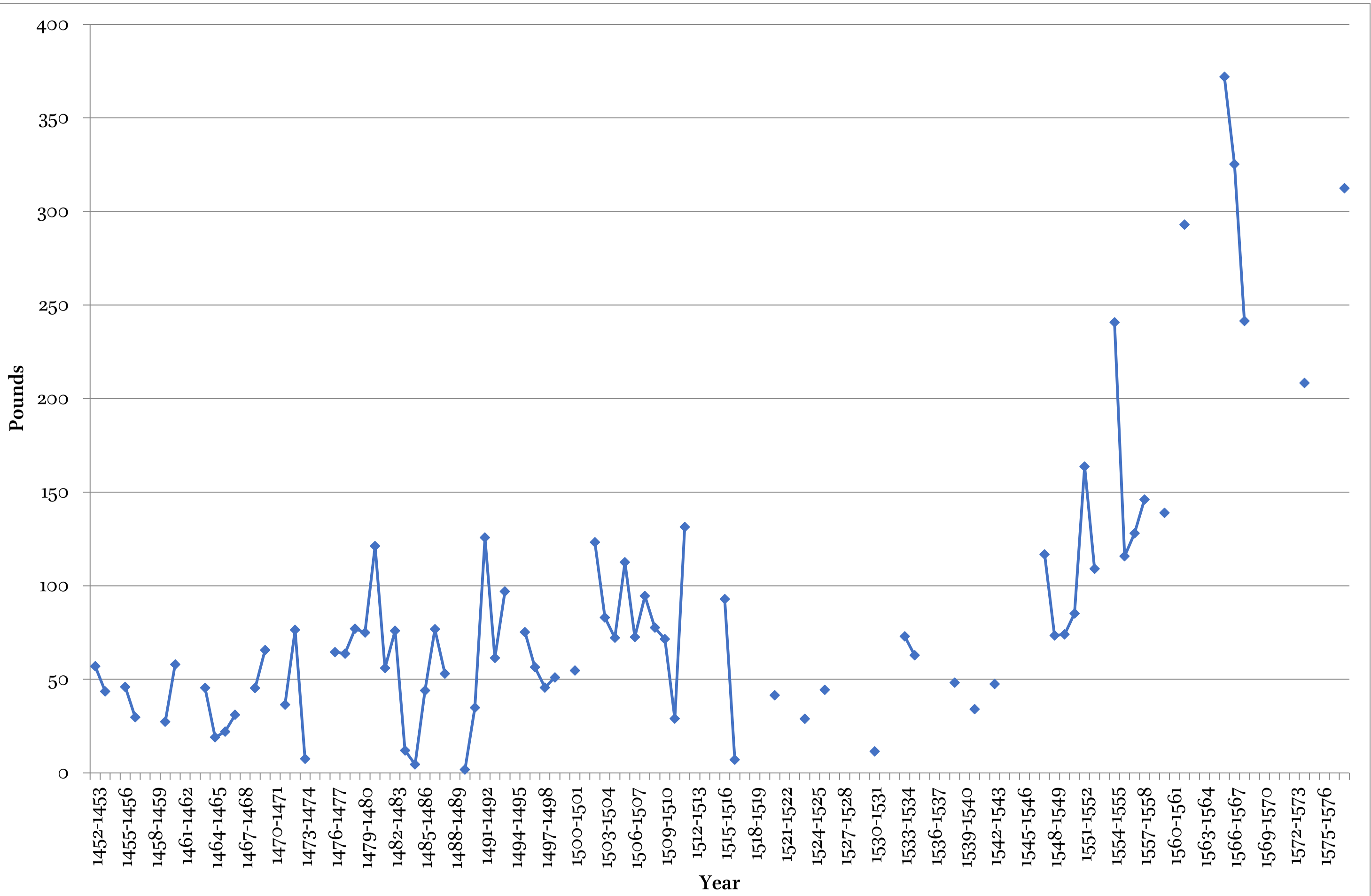


GRAPH 11 Chronological evolution of the total number of recorded and dated miracles in the Low Countries, with the exception of Amersfoort, per decade

SOURCES AND DATASET: SEE GRAPH 10

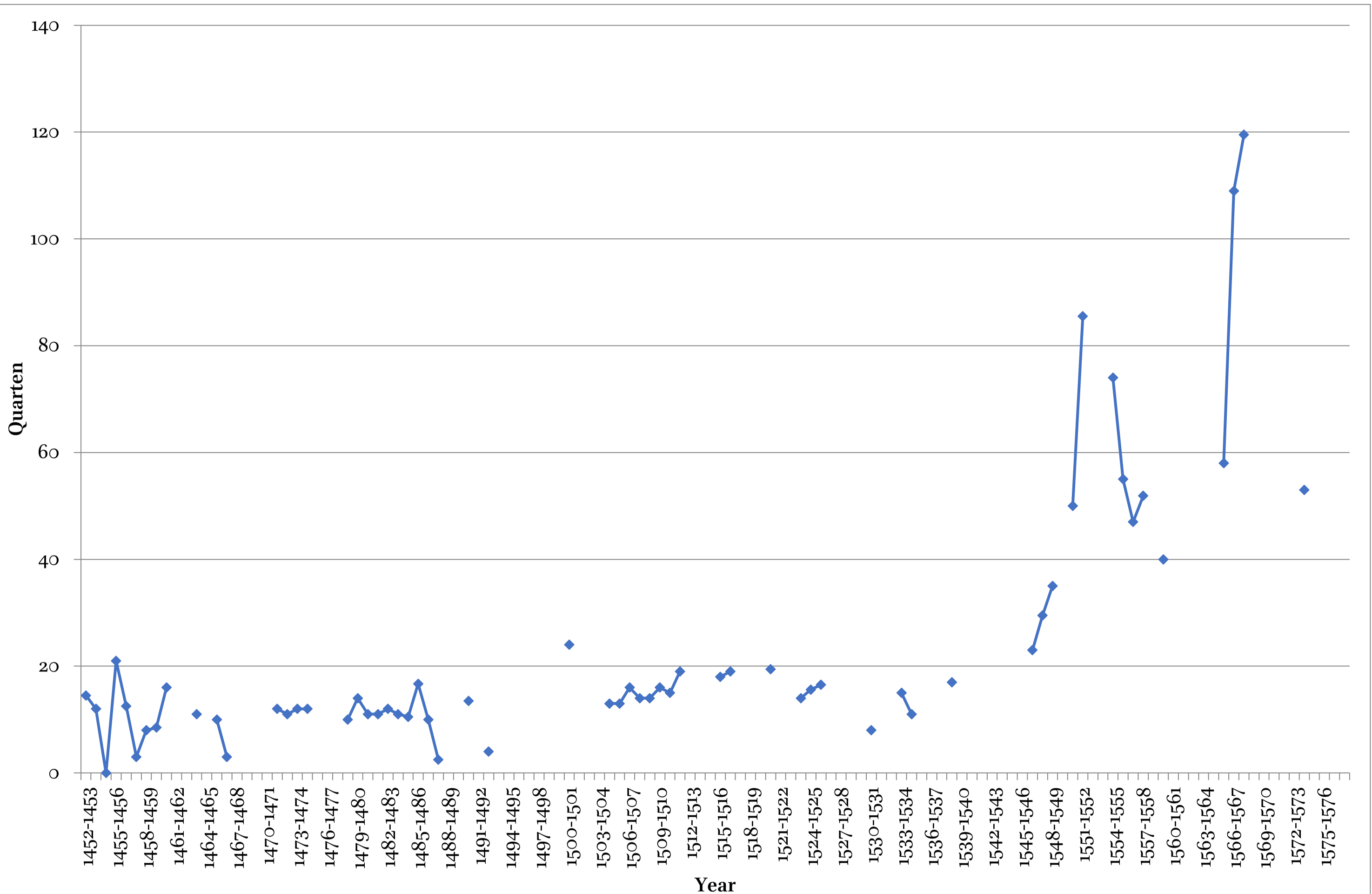


GRAPH 12 Chronological distribution of the number of documents included in Frederic 1922, per decade



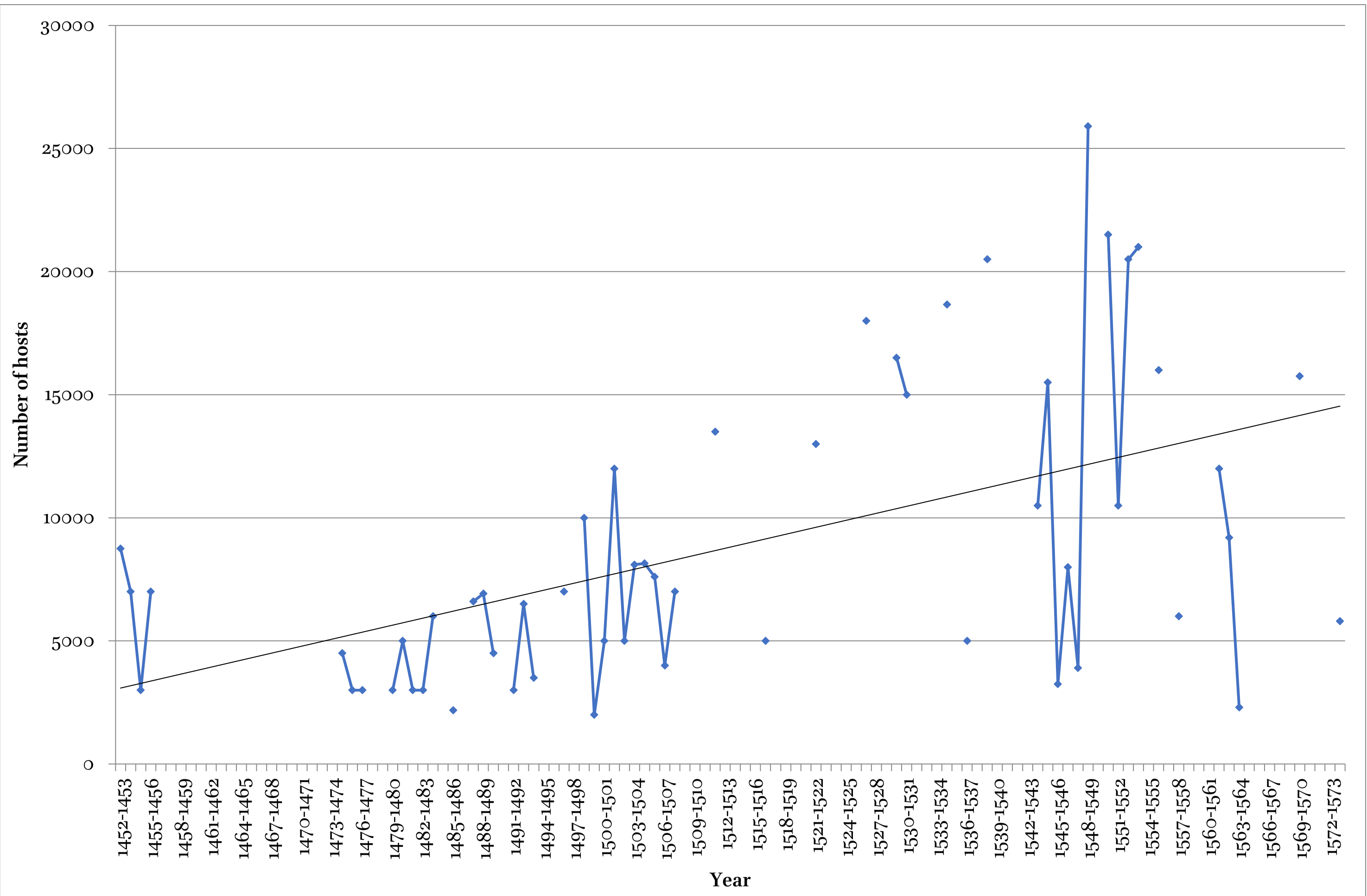
GRAPH 13 Yearly total amounts of wax bought by the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*, in pounds

SOURCE: KR



GRAPH 14 Yearly volumes of communion wine bought by the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*, in *quarten*

SOURCE: KR



GRAPH 15 Yearly number of hosts bought by the Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae*, with trendline

SOURCE: KR

Notes

Introduction: The Matter of Piety in an Age of Religious Change

1 RAL, SAL, no. 3608 (unfoliated, account of 1566).
2 Van Uytven 1995a.
3 The objects mentioned in this paragraph will be discussed in detail throughout this book.
4 Steppe 1971; 'Roerende goederen van de Sint-Leonarduskerk te Zoutleeuw op Vlaamse Topstukkenlijst', consulted 29 January 2019. http://www.kunstenenerfgoed.be/.
5 See most recently Van Bruaene *et al.* 2016, as well as the other contributions to that issue, and Spicer 2017.
6 Thus, the present approach is more object-based than the 'Christian materiality' in Bynum 2011, 18–32. Compare with Evangelisti 2013 and Williamson 2014.
7 By taking Zoutleeuw's church as case study, my focus will inevitably be on public rather than private piety. Although I will argue (in Chapters 2 and 6) that the two cannot be strictly separated, an important part of the religious material culture related to private devotion – including crucifixes, Christmas cribs and prayer books – will consequently not be dealt with.
8 Romein 1946. A well-known reply is Woltjer 1980.
9 Good overviews of the relevant historical studies are provided by Milis 1982; Trio 1993, 15–16; Speetjens 2007; Soen & Knevel 2013; Bauwens 2015. For the period in question the most important art historical overview still is Bangs 1997. De Groot 2013 is a recent exception that includes discussions of the broader use of the objects described.
10 Huizinga 2009, 210–213 and 229.
11 Axters 1950–1960, vol. 3, 389–410; De Moreau 1945–1952, vol. 3, 574–593; Post 1957, vol. 2, 287–306.
12 Chiffoleau 1984, 252; Soen & Knevel 2013, 4–5.
13 Toussaert 1963. For an overview of the most important reviews of his book, see Speetjens 2007, 111–114.
14 Milis 1982, 142.
15 Lutton & Salter 2007, 2–4.
16 Harline 1990; Laven 2006, 709–710; Hall 2013, 3–6.
17 Zemon Davis 1982.
18 Duffy 1992, esp. 2–3 on the terminology chosen.
19 A selection from the growing corpus of relevant literature: Freedberg 1991; Blick & Tekippe 2005; Göttler 2010; Blick & Gelfand 2011; De Boer & Göttler 2013; Dyas 2014; Laugerud *et al.* 2016.
20 See for instance Falkenburg 2001 and Falkenburg 2016 (quote on 117).
21 Walker Bynum 2011.
22 Marnef & Van Bruaene 2016, 178–182; Van Bruaene 2016a.
23 Bossy 1985; Duffy 1992; Terpstra 2013.
24 Toussaert 1963, 597, 604–605. Compare with Rapp 1971, 315–331; Weiler 1980; Walker Bynum 2011, 268–273.
25 Meyers-Reinquin 1969 and Bogaers 2008 are exceptions, although the former is mainly limited to methodological remarks. Another intended long-term study on chantries in the northern Low Countries between 1400 and 1580 by Annemarie Speetjens has not (yet) been completed either, but see Speetjens 2011.
26 Vroom 1981; Vroom 1983; Marnef 1996; Verhoeven 1992; Trio 1993; Trio 2009. A general discussion in Goudriaan 1994. The 1520-thesis will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 3.
27 Of fundamental importance for the Low Countries are Delmotte 1963; Moreau 1968; Van Uytven 1968; Van der Wee 1968; Van der Wee 1969; Decavele 1975; Backhouse 1976; Marnef 1996; Marnef 2004.
28 Jonckheere 2012; Spicer 2013.
29 Dekoninck 2005; Melion 2009; Göttler 2010.
30 Pollmann 2006.
31 Pollmann 2011a.
32 The church's collection is simply too large to be covered in one study. To a large extent, the selection of objects is based on the availability of documentary or contextual evidence. Many of the preserved freestanding sculptures and the

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liturgical textiles or silverware will not be dealt with.

33 Whereas most series from the Low Countries are fragmented or only start later, comparable sets are available for the Antwerp collegiate church, later cathedral, of Our Lady, and for Utrecht Cathedral and the Buurkerk. See Vroom 1983, 7–8 and 111, note 2; Meyers-Reinquin 1970; De Smet 1970. Most methodological reflection on churchwarden accounts as a historical source is related to England: Foster 1997; Burgess 2002; Kümin 2004; Burgess 2004; Hutton 2005. They have also been used intensively in recent French and German research: Follain 2000; Reitemeier 2005.

34 For the Low Countries, the basic discussions on the *fabrica ecclesiae* as an institution are Laenen 1924, 176–195; De Moreau 1945–1952, vol. 3, 369–370; Nolet & Boeren 1951, 346–347; Post 1957, 427–431; De Smet *et al.* 2006. The Zoutleeuw *fabrica ecclesiae* is only briefly touched upon by De Mecheleer 1997a, 10–11 and De Mecheleer 1997b, 10–11.

35 Compare with Chiffoleau 1984, 265.

36 De Mecheleer 1997a, quote on 15. See also De Mecheleer 1997b.

37 RAL, KAB, Boxes 966 to 986, as well as three registers with copies, nos. 989, 990 and 991. See Grauwen *et al.* 1996.

38 RAL, KAB, nos. 1023–1052. The accounts of the chapter are incomplete and the *acta capituli* are preserved only from 1593 onwards.

39 AAM, DV, Z1 and Z2. See Cloet, Bostyn & De Vreese 1989, 245–248.

40 RAL, SL, resp. nos. 3581–3621 and 2976–3065.

41 Four certain confraternities include those of Saint Sebastian (handbowmen), Saint George (crossbowmen), Saint Leonard (arquebusiers) and Saint Anne (chamber of rhetoric). There also was a foundation of the Holy Name of Jesus and the Lauds of the Holy Sacrament (discussed in Chapter 5), but it is unclear whether these were confraternities.

42 Christian 1981; Terpstra 2013, 266–267.

43 Recently discussed by Van Mulder 2016.

44 For the treatises, see Freedberg 1972; Jonckheere 2012; Spicer 2012; Spicer 2013. For the chronicles and diaries, see Pollmann 2011a, esp. 203–206. See also the overview on the Dutch Revolt website (Leiden University).

45 On the Council, see Marnef & de Schepper 1994. On the sentences, see Woltjer 1964.

46 There is no comprehensive study of representations of church interiors dating to the period under consideration, but useful tools are the online database Missa Medievalis, and Steinmetz 1995. These have been supplemented by a large set of other representations collected throughout the research.

47 Chiffoleau 1984, 250. On the quantitative analysis of accounts for these purposes, see also Mols 1964; Meyers-Reinquin 1969, 212; Aerts 1982, 152.

48 Similar remarks by Terpstra 2013, providing further references. A similar chronological scope has also been proposed by Eire 2016.

49 Compare with observations by Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 160 and 169.

1 The Cult of Saint Leonard at Zoutleeuw

1 KR 1476, fol. 198 (July 1476, 'Doen men die tafele verdincde aen die meester in dy herberghe, betaelt 10 st ende verteert in di herberghe 4 st (…) Item di meesters te Bruessel ghewest om di tafelle te verdinghene'); KR 1477, fol. 220 (March 1478, 'Item van Sijnte Leonaerts tafelen ter cost gedaen metter vragte 6 Rg. Item vander selver tafelen te Bruesele ghecocht, cost 126 Rg'); KR 1478, fol. 243 (April 1479, 'Item Henric Wouts vanden jare voerleden van Sijnte Lenaerts tafelen te brijnghene van Mechelen tot Leeuwe').

2 See most recently De Boodt 2005, cat. A19, and Geelen & Steyaert 2011, cat. 62. On the contrary, Engelen 1993, 187–205 dated the present altarpiece to 1453.

3 Poncelet 1910; Van Roey 1910; De Voragine 1995, vol. 2, 243–244. The quote comes from the chants in the Zoutleeuw liturgy: Brussels, KBR, Ms. 21131, fols. 85–86 ('fit medela languidorum, nexus solvit captivorum'). See also fols. 172–174v for the hagiography.

4 Jacobs 1989; Jacobs 1991.

5 Cat. Detroit 1960, 239; De Boodt 2005, cat. A9 and B17; Geelen & Steyaert 2011, 124 and cat. 62. For the De Villa altarpiece, see Jacobs 1998, 188–190. For de Gauchy's altarpiece in Ambierle see Cat. Brussels 2013, cat. 8.

6 Woods 1988, 72 and 76.

7 A catalogue of Brussels altarpieces is provided by De Boodt 2005. Compare with the inventory of Netherlandish altarpieces in De Boodt & Schäfer 2007, 281–291.

8 KR 1476, fol. 198 (July 1476, 'Item meester Aert van bewerpene doen hi te Bruesel was te lone ende metter cost 15 st'); KR 1478, fol. 240 (September 1478, 'Item Meester Aert dij moeldere ghegeven … van dat hij bij dij kerchmeesters te Bruesele ghegaen was om die tafele van Sijnte Leonarts int jaere voerleden ghegeven ter goeder rekenynghen 5 gulden'). The identity of the artist has been a matter of debate. The Zoutleeuw accounts clearly identify him as a painter (*scildere* or *meeldere*), excluding the possibility that he was the sculptor of the altarpiece, as was proposed by Piot 1859–1860, 59; Rousseau 1890–1891, 440–446; Destrée 1894, 164–169; Roosval 1933, 137–139. All the available evidence – the Zoutleeuw accounts as well as documents published by Van Even 1870, 26–29 – further confirms that he can be identified as De Raet, as had been suggested by Frans Baudouin in Cat. Brussels & Delft 1957, 166, and Steppe 1971, 616 and 640. The identification was nevertheless refuted by Hulin de Loo 1905; Van de Ven 1972, 206; Engelen 1993, 158.

9 Contemporary examples confirm that the involvement of local artists was common practice. De Raet himself would later provide another design for a candlestand, see KR 1482, fol. 89 (July 1482). Another example is provided by Van de Ven 1972, 215. For altarpieces, see Jacobs 1998, 100–101.

10 Woods 1988, 82–83. Compare with the iconographic sources assembled in Steinmetz 1995. Engelen 1993, 196 has proposed two panels (Antwerp, KMSKA, inv. nos. 127–130) as possible wings of the Zoutleeuw altarpiece, but this is highly unlikely. The present dimensions of the panels (94 × 58 cm) do not match with the retable's case (229 × 241 cm) in any way and they repeat scenes already present in the sculpted part. The backs furthermore depict the entirely unrelated Saints George and Hubert, whereas the altar in Zoutleeuw had Saint Leonard, the 11.000 Virgins and All Saints as *tituli*.

11 Contrary to what has been claimed by Engelen 1993, 195, technical research has confirmed that the current order of the different sculptural groups is authentic. See Brussels, KIK/IRPA, no. 2L/47–98/6382.

12 De Boodt 2005; Woods 2005.

13 Jacobs 1998, 113.

14 Cat. Amsterdam 1980, 34–35. Compare with a contemporary Brussels example: Dickstein 2009, 19–23. In general, see Périer-d'Ieteren 1984, 104–105.

15 Such as 140 *gulden* for the altarpiece commissioned in 1510 from Jan Borman by the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament in Turnhout: SAL, no. 7404, fol. 39v. Compare with prices in Asaert 1972, 54–55; Jacobs 1998, 175–182; Helmus 2010, 139–144 and 404–410.

16 Proposed by Achter 1960, 254–255, rejected by Marijnissen & Van Liefferinge 1967, 78, note 13.

17 For instance by Marijnissen & Van Liefferinge 1967, 78, note 13.

18 Jacobs 1991; Reinburg 1992, 533–535; Van der Ploeg 2002; Williamson 2004, 365–367; Woods 2005, 91. On the use of the crucifix, see also Hope 1990 and Gardner 1994, 7–9.

19 The only known exception is the much earlier Hakendover altarpiece (c. 1400–1410), where the unrelated crucifixion scene probably is a later addition: Marijnissen & Van Liefferinge 1967, 87–88; De Boodt 2005, cat. A15.

20 Woods 2005; D'Hainaut-Zveny 2008, 160–164.

21 The contract from 1506 for a carved wooden retable on Saint Leonard's altar in the Leuven church of Saint Peter does not request particular scenes either: SAL, no. 7400, fol. 151r; Helmus 2010, 368.

22 Ainsworth 2010, cat. 90.

23 De Boodt 2005, cat. A21.

24 Van Roey 1910, 16.

25 Ehresmann 1982; Skubiszewski 1989, 15–18.

26 Jacobs 1991, 46; Jacobs 1998, 94–95; Van der Ploeg 2002.

27 Harbison 1990, 65–73; Williamson 2004.

28 Périer-d'Ieteren 1984, 123. Compare with De Boodt, 2005 and de Boodt & Schäfer 2007, 281–291.

29 Cat. Toronto etc. 2016.

30 A critical overview of the recent literature is provided by Falkenburg 2007, 180–181.

31 Compare with Jacobs 1998, 80–81 and 94–95.

32 Falkenburg 2016.

33 Lisson 2014a, 413; Lisson 2014b, 12; Lisson 2015.

34 RAL, KAB, Box 966, no. 1 ('ad majorem populi commoditatem'). Published in Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 297–298. See also Lefèvre 1942, 32–33. Saint Sulpice's was subsequently donated to the Order of Val des Écoliers in Liège, thus becoming a priory church: Pieyns-Rigo 1970, 1118–1121.

35 Gaier 1968; Lisson 2014a; Lisson 2014b.

36 Miraeus & Foppens 1723–1748, vol. 3, 729 ('Ecclesiam Sancti Sulpitii esse extra villam sitam, & esse solitariam').

37 Including a chapel just outside the Liège city walls (Stiennon 1951, 287–291; Russe 1955, 376) and a leper house in Huy (De Moreau 1945–1952, vol. 6, 250; Dury 2016). Lisson 2014a, 424–425 suggested that the Liège chapter of Saint Denis founded the chapel after the Battle of Steps in 1213.

38 Lisson 2014a, 425.

39 The basic architectural analysis in Lemaire 1949, 198 and 213–214 is to be supplemented by Leurs 1951; Doperé 1996, 429; Buyle *et al.* 2004, 39–43. Branner 1963 does not take into account the 1861 reconstruction of the choir.

40 Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 85–86; Laenen 1935, vol. 1, 324–325. The foundation charter of the collegiate chapter (RAL, KAB, Box 966, no. 20) is published in Miraeus & Foppens 1723–1748, vol. 3, 730–731.

41 Piot 1879, no. 22; published in *Analectes pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique* 1 (1864), 81–83.

42 RAL, KAB, Box 966, no. 32bis; published in Delehaye 1926, 363–364. The statements on the document by Wilmet 1938, vol. 1, 233–234 are incorrect. Compare with an other example in Mak 1946, 172. On the requesting procedure, see Swanson 2007, 120–121.

43 Oliver 1995, 188–190. Compare with contemporary indulgence bulls awarded to the beguinage church in Diest (1333) and Saint Martin in Halle (1338): RAL, KAB, resp. nos. 13722/bis and 3066/4.

44 Cat. Namur 1993, fig. 33, and Brussels, KIK/IRPA, no. 2L47 2002 07752. A dendrochronological investigation yielded no results, but the original polychromy was found to date after c. 1330. I am grateful to Emmanuelle Mercier for sharing this information with me. Earlier dates were proposed by De Borchgrave d'Altena 1924–1925; Steppe 1971, 615; Buyle *et al.* 2004, 45.

45 Fricke 2015, 13–16.

46 Coens 1598, fol. 206v–207; Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 1, 196. However, in line with the Tridentine decree on images, many theologians continued to use generical terminology (*sacris imaginibus*). See, for instance, Molanus 1996.

47 Vauchez 2004; Trexler 2004, 21; Walker Bynum 2011, 22.

48 Van Herwaarden 1978, 486–487, notes 6 and 7.

49 RAL, SL, no. 3581, account of 1437, fol. 10 ('smaendachs in die tsinxen dach doen men Sinte Lenart om droech'). The account of 1434 is the one preserved immediately preceding the 1437 account, suggesting that the procession had been instituted somewhere in between these years. Other proposed dates of origin are 1274 (Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 87–88; Lisson 2014b, 16–19) or 1328 (Buyle *et al.* 2004, 38), but analysis of the civic accounts proves these assumptions wrong.

50 Doperé 1996, 429. The current location of Saint Leonard's altar in the southern transept is due to a relocation in 1820: DAZ, no. 45, 142; Piot 1859–1860, 59.

51 '… Atrio, Vorstius, Kemerlinc were the first … to cover, in the year of Our Lord 1440, in the month of October, the 17th day … with paint', personal reading on 9 March 2016. Wilmet 1938, vol. 1, 239 and Doperé 1996, 429 provided transcriptions with minor differences.

52 Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 127–128 and 200; Wilmet 1938, vol. 1, 238.

53 Brussels, KBR, IV 42.129A, fol. 146v; Breugelmans *et al.* 1987, 61; Brigode 1936, 91.

54 Gerevini 2015.

55 See Coveliers 1912, 92–93, Haslinghuis & Peeters 1965, 456–458, as well as BALaT, object nos. 83325 (Berlaar); 10142268 (Notre-Dame de Soleilmont); 46921 (Handzame); 49820 (Tongeren); 71632 (Peer); 4045 (Aarschot); 81285 (Drogenbos); 55293 (Leuven).

56 See Grauwen *et al.* 1996, nos. 632, 709, 762, 774, 781–782, 785, 833, 835, 842, 849, 855, 858, 863 and 922.

57 RAL, SL, nos. 2986 and 2987; Grauwen *et al.* 1996, nos. 547, 712, 715, 718, 720, 721, 733 and 736.

58 Roggen & Withof 1944, 129–138; Cheyns 1979, 146–152.

59 '(…) ut ipsi christi fideles eo libentius devotionis, orationis et peregrinationis causa confluant ad eamdem (…)' The text of the charter is known in an eighteenth-century transcription (DAZ, no. 45, 141–142), published by Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 127, note 1. For Stephani, see Ernst 1806, 132–133.

60 'Joannes de Katen et Maria ejus uxor fundaverunt hanc cappellam et in ea fundaverunt missas secundum litteras Joannis Episcopi Leodiensis 23 septembris 1442'. DAZ, no. 45, 141. The Mass is referred to yearly in the churchwarden accounts from 1460 to 1473.

61 Doperé 1996, 429.

62 Geary 1986, 176–180.

63 The best overviews are Van Cauwenbergh 1922, esp. 138–139, and Van Herwaarden 1978. For Brabant, see Vanhemelryck 1993.

64 Van Herwaarden 1978, 703. I am grateful to Jan van Herwaarden for sharing his additional data with me.
65 Vanhemelryck 1993, 155.
66 Peeters 1956, 56–64.
67 Brouwers 1965; Roobaert 2001; Vandevenne 2005.
68 Peeters 1956, 64; Vanhemelryck 1993, 151.
69 KR 1479, fol. 266 (May 1480): 'Smaendaechs in dij Puynxendaghe (…) verteert dij speelliede ende die dienaers ende die pelgrijme tsamen 15 st'. In the same account, the receipt of 3,5 *stuivers* for a *beaten pelgrym*'s pall (fol. 257v) was also registered.
70 Compare with Burgess 2002, 309–310, and Hutton 2005, 66–69.
71 KR 1490, fol. 29v ('ghebacken te Pinxten voir die pelgheryme'); KR 1492, fol. 75; KR 1493, fol. 107v; KR 1496, fol. 157v. The conversion from *halsters* to liters is based on Doursther 1840, 356–358.
72 KR 1483, fol. 116v (April 1484, 'Item gegeven den custers van luyden doen Sinte Leonart mirakel deede'); KR 1487, fol. 303 (May 1488, 'Item den pelgherym gegeven dair Sinte Leonart mirakel over ghedaen heeft'). An earlier entry might also refer to a miracle, but the terminology used is ambiguous: KR 1459, fol. 210v (April 1460, 'Item om gode gegheven Willeken die Sinte Leonart verloest hadde').
73 Verhoeven 1992, 139–144. For ex-votos, see Signori 2002, 441; Holmes 2009; Blick 2010b; Blick 2011; Weinryb 2016. Van der Velden 2000, 213–222 provides a classification. For crutches in particular, see Craig 2010.
74 The first recording is KR 1466, fol. 354v ('ontfaen van gheoffert coren'). KR 1503, fol. 4v is the first in the subsequent series of entries.
75 For instance KR 1516, fols. 10r–v; KR 1525, fol. 116.
76 KR 1497, fol. 196 ('twee gerden metter toebehoirten welcke staen voir Sinte Cristoffele voir Sinte Leonarts choer dairmen dat yser aen hanghen sal'); KR 1508, fols. 292v, 294 and 297 ('vanden scalen te makene voer Sinte Leonart daer men dat was op set ende aenhanckt', 'vanden ysers in te houwen in Sinte Leonarts choer daer dwas aen hinckt', and '3 kerbeelen oft yseren daer dwas op steet voer Sinte Leonart'). Compare for instance with KR 1592, fol. 264v ('Vercofft (…) 283 pont yseren mannekens ende beenkens'). Van der Velden 2000, 261–262 claims that premodern iconic votive gifts made of iron were only given to Saint Leonard.
77 KR 1490, fol. 44 (March 1491, 'Item den wapenmekere betaelt voir tharnas scoen te maken dat voir Sinte Lenart hinct'); KR 1493, fol. 114.
78 Meindersma 1973; Meyers-Reinquin 1969, 215.
79 The earliest accounts refer to 'both boxes' ('beyder stocken'): KR 1452, fol. 14.
80 KR 1478, fol. 236v ('stocke aen dy doere' and 'stocke in Sijnte Leonaerts coer'); KR 1479, fol. 258 ('wytten stocke ontfanghen in Sijnte Lenaerts coer bijden autaer' and 'stocke aen dij coer doere').
81 KR 1497, fol. 191v; KR 1500, fol. 13v–14; KR 1555, fol. 199v.
82 For instance KR 1453, fol. 36v ('Item dat ter clocken geoffert was ter Scoliere'); KR 1460, fol. 244v ('Item vanden offere vander schellen dy ter scolieren hinc'); KR 1479, fol. 258 ('Item ontfanghen van Roeben Cloets dat hij te hulpen ghegeven heeft tot Sijnte Catelijnen tafele te stofferene'); KR 1483, fol. 111 ('Item ontfanghen vander deeckene Sinte Leonarts te hulpen sijnen backen te makene').
83 Compare with Marnef 1996, 83–84.
84 Brussels, KBR, IV 42.129A, fols. 145 and 146v–147.
85 Compare with miniatures depicting the cult of Saint Adrian in Geraardsbergen: Maredsous Abbey, Ms. F°3/1–4, vol. 4, fol. 1, and Van der Velden 2000, 220, fig. 108.
86 Van Autenboer 1993, vol. 2, 535–539.
87 'Item op Sinte Leonaerts dagh sal elcke geselle (…) te kercke gaen tot eender gesonghe misse, die de Camer oft Gulde alsdan sal doen singhen in Sinte Leonaerts choor, ende dat eenigelyck daer sal brenghen synen offer (…)' Published in Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 284–292, quote on 288.
88 See for instance Mol 1986; Trio 2009; Suykerbuyk 2017.
89 'Van enen goeden man van offer' or 'van eender goeder herten'. See for instance KR 1523, fol. 64; KR 1516, fol. 10v; KR 1520, fol. 13; KR 1540, fol. 209; KR 1572, fol. 519v.
90 'Item ontfanghen van eender vrouwen die des nyet bekent weesen en woude in behulpe Onser Liever Vrouwen tafel te schilderen'. Cat. Amsterdam 1980, 65.
91 KR 1500, fol. 13v first mentions 'haechmunten', i.e. coins that have not been issued or ratified by the government. See the online *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*. Later accounts also refer to 'Liège money' (*Luydicks gelde*). See for instance

KR 1507, fol. 12v. On illegal or broken coins as offered gifts, see also Nilson 1999, 110–111.

92 Van Der Wee 1963, vol. 3, 26–27, Graph 7. The real wage index was calculated on the basis of Van Der Wee 1975, 436–447 and Jacks & Arroyo Abad 2005. I am grateful to Erik Aerts for his valuable suggestions.

93 Van Uytven 1980 and Willems 1998, 266. The churchwarden accounts of these years feature notably more people in the lists with financial exemptions (*cortsel*), often specified as a result of damages caused by soldiers.

94 Van Houtte 1952, 198–199; Van Uytven 1980, 434–435; Spufford 2012. Van Gelder 1951 provides a complete overview of the monetary ordinances issued in the Low Countries under Maximilian.

95 Van Uytven 1974, table IV; Van Uytven *et al.* 2004, tables 6.5 and 6.7.

96 The construction of 'dij nouwe camere staende achter Sijnte Leonarts coer' is amply documented in KR 1478, KR 1479 and KR 1480, *passim*. Compare with KR 1503, fol. 29, where it is described as 'our room' (*ons camere*). A 1625 church inventory describes it as the 'tresorij oft camer der fabrijcken', see De Ridder 1908, 47.

97 KR 1486, fol. 252; KR 1490, fol. 42v; KR 1504, fol. 20v ('Item betaelt Henricken Strookorff om tspel van Sinte Leonart te scrijven op franchyn, dwelck altyt blijven sal in Sinte Leonaerts camere'); KR 1573, fol. 403 ('den ontbijt ende noenmael inde camer voer mans ende vrouwen die opden offer ende metten wasch voert gheseten hebben').

98 In KR 1520, fol. 1, for instance, they present themselves as 'momboren ende provisoers van Sinte Leonarde te Leuwe'.

99 KR 1453, fol. 37v (July 1453, 'van den tabernakelen te makenne aen parvijs ... Everart van den drie tabernacelen te stofferen'), fol. 38 (August 1453, 'Everaert van drie stenen te stofferenne aen poertael'). KR 1453 (Draft), fol. 63 specifies that the tabernacles were made by 'die huwars van Brusele', and that also three figurative sculptures (*bielgen*) were polychromed. The construction of the 'new' portal in the west front (*neuwen provise*) is documented in KR 1525.

100 KR 1479, fol. 265 (May 1480). For the meaning of these terms, see Doperé 1997–1998, 95, and Doperé 2000, 125–128.

101 Kavaler 2000; Kavaler 2012.

102 'Leonardum, cuius nomen tam iocundum floret in ecclesia', Brussels, KBR, Ms. 21131, fol. 85.

103 Vroom 1981, 40; Somers 2015, 157–159.

104 An in-depth analysis of the chapter's accounts might provide more information on their share.

105 KR 1477, fols. 219v (March 1478) and 221 (May 1478).

106 In general, see Blick 2010a, and Freedberg 1991, 124–126. On their different uses, see Koldeweij 1999; Van Loon van de Moosdijk 2004, 85–114; Van Asperen 2009; Foster-Campbell 2011; Rudy 2016.

107 Van Loon van de Moosdijk 2004, 54–56, 94, 102–103, 450–461.

108 Cohen 1976; Nilson 1999, 116; Soergel 1993, 52–61.

109 KR 1478, fol. 242v (March 1479): 'Item betaelt den selven Joese [Beyaert] van eender vermen daer men Sijnte Lenaerts byelden in ghyet'.

110 Compare KR 1484, fol. 133v (July 1484, 'Item Meeus vander Molen gegeven van selveren tekenen te makene') and KR 1487, fol. 301 (January 1488, 'Item betaelt Vrancken den Ketelbueter van tinne dair tekenen af ghegoten sijn'). See further KR 1487, fol. 302v (April 1488); KR 1489, fol. 325v (May 1490); KR 1490, fol. 45v (June 1491).

111 KR 1491, fol. 65 ('Item den canghietere van beelden te ghietene betaelt'); KR 1492, fol. 88 (June 1493); KR 1493, fol. 119v (June 1494); KR 1495, fols. 143v (May 1496) and 145 (June 1496); KR 1502, fol. 439v (June 1503).

112 KR 1503, fol. 18v (August 1503); KR 1509, fol. 41v (July 1509, 'Item betaelt vanden (...) pampier roet te makene aende beelden van Sinte Leonaerts voer de pelgrijms'); KR 1510, fols. 573 (October 1510) and 574v (December 1510); KR 1520, fol. 21v (May 1521); KR 1523, fols. 66v (August 1523) and 68v (November 1523).

113 Van Beuningen & Koldeweij 1993, 178, figs. 276, 277 and 278; Van Beuningen *et al.* 2001, 277, fig. 1188.

114 Compare, for instance, with the egg-shaped face with beady eyes in Beyaerts' Zoutleeuw *Saint Catherine* (fig. 48). For the pilgrim badges from Dudzele and Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat, see Koldeweij 1987; Van Beuningen & Koldeweij 1993, 176–177; Van Beuningen *et al.* 2001, 276–277. On Beyaert, see Crab 1977, 219–225 and *passim*.

115 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 107.

116 Compare with the observations by Nilson 1999, 116.

117 KR 1483, fol. 110v ('ontfangen van (...) twe jair hueren als van stadghelde int parvijs'); KR 1485, fols. 185v ('ontfangen van Art der Juwelier van

staene int parvijs') and 186v ('ontfangen van Lippen der Cremer van sijnen staene inden parvise'); KR 1487, fol. 296; KR 1489, fol. 321v; KR 1491, fol. 59v.

118 KR 1484, fol. 137v (April 1485): 'Item ghegeven vanden bullen vanden aflate van Roemen gesonden, 4 Rg'.

119 A 1625 church inventory still mentions several indulgence bulls, without any specification: 'Daude ende neeuwe bullen van de indulgentien (…) Daude besegelde bulle vander indulgentien metten grooten zegelen. Die neeuw indulgentien deur Paulus papa verleent'. De Ridder 1908, 53–54.

120 Weigl 2010; Tingle 2015, 54–55.

121 Soergel 1993, 29–43; Nilson 1999, 113–114; Morris 2011, 335–340.

122 For examples, see Fredericq 1922, 252, no. 181; Fournier 1923; Prims 1939, 105, 109, 114; Van de Ven 1972, 208, note 6; Nilson 1999, 113–114.

123 Compare with Trio 1993, 282–283. On indulgences in general, see Shaffern 2006; Morris 2010; Bird 2010.

124 Lewis 1992; Caspers 2006, 72–76; Morris 2011.

125 Nixon 2004, 83; Swanson 2007, 162. For altarpieces in particular, see Van der Ploeg 2002, 112–113.

126 KR 1477, fol. 219 (February 1478): 'Item Meester Aert vander molerijden te makene in Sijnte Leonaerts coer ende metten cost samen 20 Rg'.

127 KR 1476, fol. 202 (June 1477): 'di stellinghe te Lintere ghecocht Sijnte Lenaert werck mede te makene'. See also KR 1477, fol. 217v (September 1477).

128 The composition of the *Last Judgment* is closely related to the lost painting of the same subject that Dirk Bouts painted for the city of Leuven in 1468–1469, known through an anonymous copy (Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen). See Buyle & Bergmans 1994, 188–189; Périer-d'Ieteren 2005, 69 and cat. 16–18. For these mural paintings, see also Raes 1995, cat. 34 and 35, and Geelen & Steyaert 2011, cat. 65.

129 KR 1480, fol. 40v (June 1481): 'Item ghegeven Joes Beyaerts van eender nouwer cassen daer Sijnte Lenaert in sal staen te makene'.

130 For examples of depictions, see Steinmetz 1995, cats. TB3, TB9A, TB68A, TB71, TB86, TB87, TB88, TB97A, BM2, BM7, BM9, BM11, BM40, BM54, BM71 and BM76; Steyaert 2015. For a preserved example, see Didier 1995. On the practice and its origins, see Van der Ploeg 2002, 108.

131 Steppe 1971, 636–638.

132 KR 1480, Fol. 30v (June 1481); KR 1481, Fol. 65 (April 1482, 'Item betaelt Meester Aert dij Scildere van Sijnte Lenaert te stoffere (…) ende noch vander nouwer cassen te stofferene').

133 KR 1481, fol. 66v (June 1482): 'Item ghecocht teghen Tonys van Liere der capmekere een cleet voer Sijnte Lenarts autaer te hanghene te hoghentijde ende op dij heyleghe daghe'. See for this embroiderer also KR 1480, fol. 27v (September 1480) and KR 1486, fol. 247v (November 1486).

134 On van Thienen, see Duverger 1939; Frederiks 1943; De Ruette *et al.* 1993.

135 KR 1481, fol. 65v (May 1482, 'Item verdinct te makene teghen Meester Reynder van Thienen, gheelghieter te Bruysele enen luymenarys voer Sijnte Lenaert staende in sijnen coer na dy maniere van Sijnte Goedelen te Bruysele'); KR 1482, fols. 89v (July 1482, 'Willem van Halle, Reynder Froeytens ende meester Art di scildere doen si te Bruesel gheweest waren om den kendelere te verdijnghene (…) Item meester Art der Scildere ghegeven van enen patroen te beworpene ende van 2,5 daghe mede te gane te Bruesele') and 93; KR 1483, fol. 114v (November 1483).

136 Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 130 and 140–141.

137 See for instance KR 1505, fol. 25 (June 1506, 'Sinte Leonaert daerboven').

138 Bruijnen 1997; De Boodt 2005, cat. A18.

139 KR 1482, fol. 93 ('Item verdinct te makene teghen meester Reynder van Thienen, gheelgieter te Bruyesele, enen candelare staen sal inden hoghen coer na tenoer ende na di maniere van Sijnte Peters te Lovene'), and KR 1483, fol. 114r–v (November 1483, 'enen luminaris inden hogen choer'). For the candlestand, see also Cat. Leuven 2019, 71, 175, 192.

140 KR 1482, fol. 93 ('twe blau steene daer die posten metten ynghelen op staen'); KR 1483, fol. 114v (November 1483, 'vanden voete te houdene dair den luminaris op staet').

141 De Ridder 1909, 148: 'De Choor van St Lenaert heeft: (…) Twee coeperen pilaeren; op elk pont van die pilaeren staen eenen coeperen engel; aen dien met het cruys inde hand mankeert eenen vleugel. Een loop soo breet als de coer is met een uytgewerkt werk'. De Ridder dated the inventory to c. 1810.

142 In general, see Randall 1959. For other documented examples in the Low Countries, see for instance Prims 1939, 122; De Mecheleer 1997a, 31.

143 As had been proposed by Frederiks 1943, 123–125, and Steppe 1971, 613–614 and 646–647. On the Xanten candelabrum, see Klapheck 1941, 73–74, and Beissel 1966, 22–25. For a different interpretation, see Engelen 1993, 146–148.
144 Straus 2012, 156–157. Similar structures are depicted on a miniature in a Book of Hours (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.lat.3769, fol. 66v), on the last painting of the Cologne Saint Severin cyle of c. 1500, and on Colyn de Coter's *Veneration of the shrine of Saint Stephen* (Enghien, Capucine Convent). See respectively Cat. Los Angeles 2003, 374–376; Oepen & Steinmann 2016, 48–49; BALaT object no. 10019283.
145 De Blaauw 2012.
146 Oral communication by conservator Ward Hendrickx (9 March 2016), who still knew the original disposition. Furthermore, given the location of the preserved hole, quite far in the southwestern corner, a north-south orientation would have been quite strange, as the candlestand would have stood near the western wall.
147 De Blaauw 2012, 40–45; Arneitz *et al.* 2014.
148 See for instance Jan de Beer's *Joseph and the suitors* (Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, inv. 51.5) and Adriaen Isenbrandt's *Mass of St Gregory* (Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. P001943).
149 De Jonge 1993, 92–94; Delbeke *et al.* 2015, 233.
150 KR 1483, fol. 111: 'ontfanghen vander deeckene Sinte Leonarts te hulpen sijne backen te makene'.
151 Verhoeven 1992, 55–56 and 62–63. Compare with Vroom 1981, 347–348 and 351; Verhoeven 1986, 205, 210, 214 and 220; Leysen 2001–2002; Mertens 2012; Purkis 2010.
152 Saintenoy 1911–1913; Vanhoof 2015.
153 A biographical summary of Jan Mertens is provided by Asaert 1972, 68–69, but the information he provides on his activities for Zoutleeuw is inaccurate.
154 KR 1478, fol. 242v (March 1479, 'betaelt Joes Beyaerts van eender tafele te makene di op Sijnte Catelijnen autaer staet'), fol. 243 (April 1479), fol. 244 (June 1479, '1 tafele ghecocht tot Antwerpen die opden hoghen autaer steet te Jan Mertens dij bieldescnydere').
155 KR 1480, fol. 30v (June 1481): 'noch ghegeven den selven Joese [Beyaert] op 2 backen dij hij verdinct heeft te makene op Sijnte Jans Ewangelijsten autaer ende op Sijnte Claes autaer'.
156 KR 1482, fol. 92v: 'die drie backen metten bielden en Sijnte Jacop teghen Jan Mertens van Antwerpen'.
157 KR 1483, fol. 116 (March 1484): 'den back oft tafelle op Sint Jans Baptisten altair'.
158 KR 1484, fols. 137r–v (March 1485): '[Jan Mertens] noch betaelt vanden tafelen van Sinte Cristoffels ende Sinte Joris (…) Item verdinct tjeghen Janne Mertens eene tafele vander Drivoldicheit, Sinte Anthonis etc'. KR 1484 (Draft), fol. 478v specifies the third altarpiece in adding 'ende Sinte Cornielis'.
159 KR 1453, fol. 39: 'Item die tafele in Sinte Leonarts choer, cost 16 gripen. Item Willem van Colene vander tafelen te stofferenne 12 gripen 3 st'. Engelen 1993, 187–205, on the contrary, identified this altarpiece as the one now preserved in the church.
160 Compare with Vauchez 2004, 13.
161 Compare with Davies 2004, 79.
162 Freedberg 1991, 99–135, esp. 103 and 109–110, quote on 118. See also Bergmann 2017. 'Miraculous charisma' is borrowed from Trexler 2004, 23.
163 Kavaler 2014.
164 Geary 1986, 180; Fricke 2015, 15–16.
165 Finucane 1975.
166 KR 1481, fol. 58v.
167 Van den Broeck & Soens 2017, 80–81; Curtis *et al.* 2017, 124–125 and 135–136.

2 The Image of Piety at the Dawn of Iconoclasm

1 Christian 1981; Terpstra 2013, 266–267; Soen & Knevel 2013, 9–10.
2 Post 1957, vol. 2, 266–267 and 288f.
3 Eire 1986, 10–11.
4 Moeller 1965. Compare with Walker Bynum 2011, 18–19, 32 and 268.
5 Moeller 1965, 22 ('eine der kirchenfrömmsten Zeiten des Mittelalters').
6 On the *Baufrühling* in particular, see Göttler 1990, 285–286.
7 Soergel 1993, 20–27 and 43.
8 Nixon 2004, 31–38.
9 Kühnel 1992, 105–107; Soergel 1993, 52–61.
10 Dhanens 1987, 118–119; Nixon 2004, 21–27.
11 Febvre 1929, 39; Galpern 1974, 175; Chiffoleau 1983, 129.

12 Blick & Tekippe 2005, xxi; Soergel 2012, 34–35. A general discussion of medieval pilgrimage with a large geographical and chronological scope is Webb 2002.
13 Weiler 1980, 438 noted 'groeiende intensiteit van vroomheid', but referred to Moeller and did not elaborate on it.
14 General discussions of the source type include Signori 2002, 441–447; Hofmann-Rendtel 1992; O'Sullivan 2010; Purkis 2010; Gross-Diaz 2010.
15 Finucane 1975, 10.
16 Finucane 1977; Van Mulder 2015a.
17 Signori 2002, 438–445.
18 This topic will elaborately be discussed in Chapter 8. On the seventeenth-century reception of medieval miracle books, see Thijs 1996, 276–281, and Van Mulder 2016, 335–350.
19 Lipsius 1604, 65–66.
20 Van Roey 1910, 29, Wilmet 1938, 335 and Buyle *et al.* 2004, 38 claimed that the miracle book got lost under the French occupation, but no contemporary reference is known.
21 Van Mulder 2015b.
22 Overviews of the material are available in Giraldo 1959a; De Boer & Jongen 2015, 19–20; Van Mulder 2016, Appendix 1 and *passim*. These are to be supplemented with Vrancx 1600; *Historia* 1674; George 1998; Minnen 2011. For evident reasons only dated miracles were used and only collections with pre-1550 origins were included in order to focus on the long-term evolution of piety. The chronological and the numerical scope of this dataset is comparable to Finucane's (2300 miracles from 1066 to 1300), although he only studied nine sites. See Finucane 1977, 9–14.
23 Mertens 2012; Van Mulder 2016, 119–120.
24 De Boer & Jongen 2015; Van Mulder 2015a; Van Mulder 2016, 79–83.
25 The Amersfoort data have been left out here, as its 542 miracles represent more than one fourth of the whole dataset and thus proportionally outweighs all other shrines and distorts the curve.
26 Phrases borrowed from Platelle 1968, 45, and Johnson 1996, 202.
27 In general, see Shaffern 2006; Swanson 2007; Morris 2010; Bird 2010; Tingle 2015. For the Low Countries and the historiographical issue, see Van Herwaarden 2003a and Caspers 2006.
28 Compare with Caspers 2006, 66 and 92. A recent revision is Sugiyama 2017.
29 Shaffern 2006, 11.
30 Van Herwaarden 2003a, 91–94.
31 On the latter, see Caspers 2006, 93–97.
32 Caspers 2006, 75.
33 Fredericq 1922, x.
34 Van Herwaarden 2003a, 120–121; Kuys 2006, 123–124; Morris 2010.
35 Most of the relevant documents are included in Fredericq 1922. Detailed discussions include Remy 1928, 40–116; Jongkees 1944; Van Herwaarden 2003a, 101–106; Caspers 2006, 74–75; Kuys 2006, 123–124.
36 Jongkees 1944, 82.
37 Compare with Eisermann 2006.
38 Van Herwaarden 2003a, 99.
39 Vroom 1981, 300 and 508–512.
40 Fredericq 1922, nos. 174, 189, 191–193, 195, 199, 206–212, 215, 226–228, 231–235, 237, 282, 289–291, 293 and 294–297. On Peraudi see also Caspers 2006, 84, and Eisermann 2006, 325–329.
41 Fredericq 1922, nos. 4, 7, 250–253, 264, 283, 326, 368–369, 398–399, 400, 404, 406–408; Erasmus 1965, 627. On Abelard, see Shaffern 2006, 11. In general, see Van Herwaarden 2003a, 97–98; Caspers 2006, 68–69, 77–81 and 86.
42 Fredericq 1922, nos. 149, 286, 301 and 339. On related politics by secular authorities, see Van Herwaarden 2003a, 100 and 107.
43 Fredericq 1922, nos. 196 and 216–217. On that case, see also Caspers 2006, 68.
44 Fredericq 1922, no. 328.
45 Eisermann 2006. See also Soergel 1993, opposing the classic view that only Protestants would actively make use of the printing press.
46 Trio 1993, 167–199 and 347.
47 Trio 1993, 344.
48 Mol 1986, 61–64; Speetjens 2007, 124; Trio 2009, 153–155; Speetjens 2011, 205–206, graph 2.
49 Grauwen *et al.* 1996.
50 Brown 2007.
51 For an overview, see Sugiyama 2017.
52 Ringbom 1962; Sugiyama 2017, 50–58.
53 D'Hainaut-Zveny 1992–1993; Göttler 2001; Sugiyama 2017, 59–73.
54 KR 1533, fols. 189v (April 1534, 'Item betaelt Peter Rosin van dat hij dy sonne ghemaek heef, 6 st') and 191v (May 1534, 'Item betaelt Peter Hollants van dat hij met sijn cnape heef hulpen dye Lieve Vrouwe op hangen, 11 st 1 ort'). See also Steppe 1971, 611; Bangs 1997, 136–138. Raes 1995, cat. 43 identified the coat of arms as that of a certain Cleynen-Bellen family, but I have not come across any of these names in the sources

I studied. In general, see Smeyers 1994. Hendrik Roesen's work is documented in KR 1496, fol. 168; KR 1503, fol. 18, 27v–28 and 29; KR 1504, fols. 15v and 18. For Peter and Claes Roesen, see also Chapters 4 and 6.

55 Contemporaneous examples of chandeliers are in Bocholt, Bruges and Xanten, see respecitvely BALaT object nos. 78276 and 108541, and Klapheck 1941, fig. 53. An example of an epitaph is in Nivelles, see BALaT object no. 10149609.

56 Examples in Rudy 2012 and Sugiyama 2017.

57 Cat. Toronto etc. 2016, 232–235 and cat. 35. For the use of such objects, see Falkenburg 2016.

58 For this and similar examples, see De Boodt 2005, cat. B30, B35, B38, B40, B41 and B43. Closely related are the Brussels altarpiece of Sala and the 1516 Antwerp altarpiece of Västerås, both showing each of the themes in one of the two openings. See, respectively, De Boodt 2005, cat. B34, and BALaT object no. 40001372.

59 Other examples in De Borchgrave d'Altena 1959 and D'Hainaut-Zveny 1992–1993, esp. 55–56. To these should be added Jheronimus Bosch' *Adoration of the Magi* (Madrid, Museo del Prado) and the 1520 polyptych with the Death of the Virgin by Bernard van Orley (Brussels, Museum van het OCMW, BALaT object no. 20000373). Compare also with Hoffmann 2004–2005, figs. 2–3 and 6–7.

60 Williamson 2004.

61 This process has been first described in Falkenburg 2001. For the iconography of the Mass of Saint Gregory in particular, see Falkenburg 2007 and Falkenburg 2015.

62 This fictive example is based on the analysis in Falkenburg 2007.

63 Contrary to what has often been supposed (see Falkenburg 2007, 196), there is clear evidence that Masses were performed in front of closed altarpieces on normal days. See, for instance, the c. 1475–1479 miniature in Brussels, KBR, Ms. 9272–76, fol. 55; the c. 1520 miniature in Kassel, Landesbibliothek, Ms. 50, leaf 27; the contemporary panel depicting the Mass of Saint Agilolf in Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum. See, respectively, Cat. Los Angeles 2003, 160, fig. 28a; Biermann 1975, 129, fig. 169; Steinmetz 1995, cat. TB7B. For the opening and closing of altarpieces in general, see Fabri 2009, 39–41, and Helmus 2010, 48. To the examples mentioned in these publications can be added the one in Cat. Amsterdam 1980, 63.

64 Compare with Reinburg 1992, 533–535.

65 Falkenburg 2016, esp. 118 and 125.

66 Compare with observations by Walker Bynum 2011, 24–25, 36 and 267–270.

67 In classical Latin *peregrinatio* meant 'trip' and *peregrinus* 'stranger'. Halkin 1969, 240.

68 For the definition, methodological remarks and relevant references, see Margry & Caspers 1997–2000, vol. 1, 12–16. See also Margry & Post 1994.

69 Verhoeven 1992, 123–127. Compare with Duffy 2002.

70 Van Herwaarden 2003b, 205–210 lists medieval destinations in the present-day Netherlands.

71 An example is Sannen 1950. For other relevant literature, see Margry & Caspers 1997–2000, vol. 1, 36, note 149, and 43, notes 212–214.

72 Thijs 1996; De Roeck 2003.

73 See Margry & Caspers 1997–2000, vol. 1, 21 for methodological remarks.

74 Van Heeringen *et al.* 1987; Van Beuningen & Koldeweij 1993; Van Beuningen *et al.* 2001. Most data are available in the online Kunera database.

75 Roobaert 2004, 2–15.

76 Roobaert 2001.

77 Mak 1946; Van Haver 1993. For the surroundings of Zoutleeuw, see Hansay 1913.

78 See, for instance, Kühnel 1992, 95, and Hofmann-Rendtel 1992, 129.

79 Verhoeven 1992, 123–127; Margry & Caspers 1997–2000, vol. 1, 26, note 106. Compare with Duffy 2002.

80 Verhoeven 1992, 123–127.

81 Viaene 1974. Compare with Verhoeven 1986, 217–219.

82 Kruip 2009; Kruip 2010; Kruip 2011.

83 Compare Van Heeringen *et al.* 1987 and Kruip 2010, 17.

84 'Sum leo, sum nardus, michi nomen est Leonardus, femineos artus anxiatos pondere partus, demone vexatos ac compede solvo ligatos'. See Steppe 1971, 608, and Van Loon van de Moosdijk 2004, cat. 109. Compare with Sannen 1950, 322–323, 377–378, 380–381 and 384.

85 Hofmann-Rendtel 1992, 129–131.

86 Stiennon 1951, 290; Russe 1955; George 2001, 264. Judiciary pilgrimages are documented in the later 14th century: Van Herwaarden 1978, 486 (note 6) and 696.

87 Mak 1946, 160; Koldeweij 1987; Van Heeringen *et al.* 1987, 80–83; Dombrecht 2014, 283–284.

88 Michielsen 1887, 23–24; Goetschalckx 1909, 124–129; De Roeck 2003.
89 Merkelbach van Enkhuizen 1949, 39–40; Toebak 1995, vol. 1, 88–89.
90 Goetschalckx 1910, 399–402; Van Heurck 1922, 4–5.
91 Van Heurck 1922, 220–224; Roobaert 2001, 142.
92 Beegden, Donk, Peutie, Pont-à-Râches, Schaelsberg, Vlierbeek and Wanssum. See Sannen 1950, 322–323, 377–378, 380–381 and 384; Coningx 2009, 108–115; Margry & Caspers 1997–2000. On Pont-à-Râches, see Platelle 1973, 229 and Rayssius 1628, 446–448.
93 Margry & Caspers 1997–2000, vol. 1, 25.
94 'In het selve jaer [1475] begost tot Lier aldereerst St Gummaers mirakelen te doen'. Van Havre 1879, 18. See also Vroom 1983, 52–53 and 106.
95 Mertens 2012.
96 On the ritual of elevation and its importance for the revitalization of cults, see Geary 1986, 177–180.
97 Van Heeringen *et al.* 1987, 94; Meuris 1993, 59, 62, 64–67, 78, 99 and 125.
98 Wichmans 1632, 498 ('ita quoque antiquissimo Deiparae cultu').
99 Van Haesendonck 1982; Breugelmans *et al.* 1987.
100 Peeters 1956, 61; Gerits 1983; Van Heeringen *et al.* 1987, 91–93.
101 Van Beuningen *et al.* 1987; Cuypers 1989.
102 In 1509, 1510 and 1525–1526: Roobaert 2001, 142.
103 Van Beuningen *et al.* 1987; Delbeke *et al.* 2015, 231–232.
104 Van Bruaene 2008, 65; Speakman Sutch 2015, 40–42.
105 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 37–39.
106 Mak 1946, 160.
107 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 49–50.
108 Hoc 1937; Van Beuningen 1990; De Kroon & Minnen 2011. A selection from the churchwarden accounts has been published by Erens 1939.
109 Peeters 1956, 61–62.
110 Roobaert 2001, 142–143.
111 Soergel 1993, 59–60. See also Signori 2002, 446; Kühnel 1992; Hofmann-Rendtel 1992; Nixon 2004, 89; Blick & Tekippe 2005, xxi.
112 Van Mulder 2015b.
113 'Ea [Aedem D. Leonardi] ex collatitia stipe et eleëmosynis accurentium ad famam miraculorum interventu istius Divi patratorum, aucta et multum exornata est', Gramaye 1968, 131.
114 Reitemeier 2005, 615.
115 Vroom 1981, 276. Another example is Kortrijk: Meyers-Reinquin 1969, 215.
116 Peeters 1982; Van Uytven 1995a; Van Uytven 1995b.
117 Van Uytven *et al.* 2004, tables 6.5 and 6.7.
118 Only from 1530 (KR 1530, fol. 155) onwards were the churchwardens paid a modest yearly compensation of 4 *Rijnsgulden*.
119 Roffey 2006.
120 A term borrowed from Monnet 2010, 108 and 115.
121 KR 1484, fol. 135v (November 1484, 'Item den senghers bij bevele der borgenmeesteren'); KR 1486, fol. 248v (January 1486); KR 1487, fol. 303 (May 1488); KR 1490, fols. 45 (April and May 1491) and 45v (June 1491, 'Item den senghers betaelt voir haeren dienst die ere vander kercken te vermeerderen te Pinxten'). Compare with van Autenboer 1983, 411, note 8.
122 Richard 2010.
123 Brand 2003.
124 On Geel, see Van Heeringen *et al.* 1987, 86–88. In general, see Kühnel 1992, 99. For similar patterns in the 17th century, see Harline 2002 and Perneel 2009, 350–353.
125 Moeller 1965. Compare with Zemon Davis 1974, 315.
126 Soergel 1993, 49 and 58; Soergel 2012, 33–34; Signori 2002, 447–458.
127 Price 1994.
128 Cunningham & Grell 2000, 1–18.
129 Chiffoleau 1983, 129.
130 Brown 2007, 188.
131 Speakman Sutch & Van Bruaene 2010; Marnef & Van Bruaene 2016, 189–190.
132 Dhanens 1987, 118–119.
133 Fried 2016.
134 Kühnel 1992, 95–96.
135 Van Engen 2008.

3 1520. The Waning of Medieval Piety?

1 This paragraph is a partial reworking of Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017.
2 Van Gelder 1972, 181–200; Huysmans *et al.* 1996, 104–108; Timmermann 2009, 327–328; *Monumenten, landschappen & archeologie* 28, 3 & 4 (2009). The iconography is discussed in detail by Ceulemans 2009.
3 'Hier leyt begraven die Eedele Joncker Marten van Wilre, heerre van Oplinteren, hy sterf int jare ons heeren 1558 13 december ende joffrou Maria

Pylliepeerts syn huysvrouwe die sterf anno 1554 23 december ende hebben ter eerre Goedts dit sacraments huys hier gestelt'.

4 RAL, SL, no. 3033, fols. 2r–v, first published by Wauters 1868. See also Huysmans *et al.* 1996, 105–106, and Van Ruyven-Zeman 1998, 262. On 31 October 1550 Cornelis Floris arranged the surety, stipulated in the contract, before the Antwerp aldermen: SAA, Schepenregisters, no. 239, register WG I, fol. 318v. I am grateful to Robrecht Janssen for drawing my attention to this document.

5 Huysmans *et al.* 1996, 96 and 81.

6 KR 1550, fol. 27 (March 1551); KR 1551, fol. 65v (June 1552); KR 1552, fols. 102r–v (July 1552); KR 1552, fol. 106v–107 (October 1552, 'Betaelt de selve [Jan van Haughen, byldesnyder] van dat hy die steen vanden heylyghen sacramens huysse uwytten scepe heeff helpen loessen, twee daeghen').

7 Arty 1968, 155.

8 Zika 1988; Rubin 1991; Caspers 1992.

9 For these cults, see Pauli 1620; *Historia* 1674; Schoutens 1887; Dequeker 2000; Cauchies & Collet-Lombard 2009; Van Mulder 2016, 102–115 and *passim*.

10 Zika 1988; Caspers 1992.

11 They are never described as *sacramentstoren* or *tourelle eucharistique*, which are neologisms, nor as *tabernakel*, which was a more encompassing term for ornamented niches. Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 127–128.

12 The most recent survey of sacrament houses is Timmermann 2009. For the Low Countries, see Maffei 1942; Van Gelder 1972; Lambert 1986; Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017.

13 Welzel 2000.

14 It is unclear whether the *sacrarium* was a later addition, as has been claimed by Roggen 1953, 226, or part of the original altarpiece, as recently argued by Lipińska 2017, 91–97. Mone's *Passion altarpiece* of 1536–1541, now in Brussels cathedral, might also have contained a central niche for the Eucharist. For both works, see Saintenoy 1931, 39–51 and D'Hainaut-Zveny 2008, 118–121.

15 A similar assessment in Hedicke 1913, vol. 1, 67–70.

16 Gielis 2014, 82–92.

17 Fredericq 1922, 595–602.

18 Decavele 1975, chapter 1; Führer 2004, 176–185.

19 A similar statement was again uttered in 1529. Vroom 1981, 298, 316 and 320–321.

20 Gielis 2015.

21 Marnef 1996; Marnef 2004.

22 Duke 1990, 18–23.

23 See Michalski 2002, as well as the other contributions to that volume. Classic studies include Michalski 1993, esp. 10–11, 52–54 and 75–98, and Wandel 1995.

24 Eire 1986; Van Bruaene *et al.* 2016, 6–7.

25 A recent overview of the events and historiography on the *Beeldenstorm* with earlier references can be found in Van Bruaene *et al.* 2016. See also Spicer 2017.

26 Lamal 2013.

27 Toussaert 1963, 597, 604–605.

28 'Ob antique pietatis calorem (…) hac infellici tempestate infrigeratum et pene extinctum'. Vroom 1981, 266–267.

29 'Propter magnam caristiam, propter doctrinam magistri Martini Lutheri, propter guerras transysulanas, ubi non potuereunt habere cursum'. Vroom 1981, 298 and 316.

30 Vroom 1983, 58–60.

31 'Want zindert dat trumoer ende opinie van Lutherus geregneert heeft, soe zijn die aelmoessen der menschen zeere gedeclineert'. Goovaerts 1890, 10–11.

32 Marnef 1996, 83–86.

33 Verhoeven 1992, 160–184.

34 Trio 1993, 167–199 and 346–347.

35 Trio 2009, 153–154.

36 Duke 1990, 8–10.

37 Goudriaan 1994.

38 Pollmann 2007; Pollmann 2011a.

39 Speetjens 2007, 122–123.

40 Kruisheer 1976.

41 Meuris 1993, 73–74, 80–89, 95–96, 99–100.

42 Franck 2013, 52; Meyers-Reinquin 1969, 216.

43 Leysen 2001–2002, 54, 113–115.

44 De Vries 1984, 271–272 and 280–282; Verhoeven 1992, 7–12.

45 Quote from Dickens 1974, 182. See also Moeller 1962; Ozment 1975.

46 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 95–98.

47 Decavele 1975, 586–588; Woltjer 1994, 134–135. More recently, see Führer 2004, 176–185.

48 De Weerd 2016a; De Weerd 2016b.

49 Halkin 1930; Bax 1937; Harsin 1962; Dieterich 1982.

50 Van Engen 2008. Compare with Pollmann 2011b.

51 Van Uytven 1974; Peeters 1982; Van Uytven 1995a.

52 Rapp 1971, 317–318. Compare with Lestocquoy 1964, 160.

53 'Doen [1474] begonst onse Lieve Vrouwe opt Stocxken tot Antwerpen in de hooftkercke eerst miraculen te doen, die men doen eerst openbaerde'. Van Havre 1879, 18.
54 Philippen 1925; Vroom 1983, 51.
55 See Marnef 1996, 83–86.
56 Vroom 1981, 300, 321, 337, 360 and 508–512.
57 Trio 1993, 167–199.
58 Vroom 1983, 59–60; Verhoeven 1992, 168, 176–177 and 184.
59 Kuys 2006, 127–130.
60 Compare with Speetjens 2007, 123–126.
61 Dieterich 1981; Dieterich 1982.
62 Geary 1986, 176–180, quote on 178.
63 See the extensive body of literature referred to by Van Engen 2008, 257–259, as well as Burnett *et al.* 2008 and Muldoon 2013.
64 Bossy 1985; Fasolt 2008; Walker Bynum 2011, esp. 272–273.
65 Galpern 1974; Duffy 1992. See also Terpstra 2013, 263.
66 Bogaers 2008; De Weerd 2016a; De Weerd 2016b.
67 Duke 1990, 23–28; Ozment 1971. Compare, however, with Rapp 1971, 320.
68 Walker Bynum 2011, 24–25. See also Camille 1989, 41–44.
69 Examples in Rooijakkers 1996, 32–35.
70 'Refrigescit devotio laicorum et diminuitur debita reverentia sacramentorum'. Quoted from Toussaert 1963, 594.

4 Pilgrimage

1 Von Campenhausen 1957; Eire 1986; Freedberg 1986, esp. 39–45; Michalski 1993, esp. chapters 1 & 2.
2 Michalski 1993, 6 and 13–15; Von Campenhausen 1957, 113 and 116.
3 Calvin 2008, 56. See also Eire 1990.
4 Zwanepol 2011, 417–419; Rasmussen 2014.
5 Clemen & Leitzmann 1932–1934, vol. 1, 392–393.
6 Clemen & Leitzmann 1932–1934, vol. 1, 402–404. See also Eber 2012.
7 Vogler 1972; Walker 1988.
8 Eire 1986, 89–90.
9 Sluhovsky 1995.
10 'Es sein zeychen einis grossen unglaubens ym volck'. Clemen & Leitzmann 1932–1934, vol. 1, 402. See also Soergel 2012, 34–46.
11 Walker 1988, 111–112; Eire 1990, 258–259.
12 Halkin 1969; Halkin 1971; Van Herwaarden 1974; Eire 1986, 43–44; Van Herwaarden 2007; Nagel 2011, 39–40.
13 Erasmus 1965, 4–7. On the 'theology of localization' and broader Protestant critiques on this principle, see Van der Velden 2000, 199–208.
14 Erasmus 1965, 285–312, esp. 288–291; Godin 1988.
15 Erasmus 1965, 208 (*The Well-to-do Beggars*, 1524) and 340–341 (*A Fish Diet*, 1526).
16 In *Peregrinatio religionis ergo*, for instance, he referred to Antwerp pilgrims and the cult of *Onze Lieve Vrouw op 't Stokske* in that city. Erasmus 1965, 291 and 309.
17 Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 1, 151–249.
18 Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 1, 196.
19 Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 1, 399–420.
20 'Merkt haer supersticie die sy tot noch toe gebruyckende zijn daghelicx, want die beelden so langhe als sy inden beeltsnijders winckel zijn, so en connen sy geen miraculen doen, tot der tijt toe datse dese fijne ghesellen ghebrocht hebben in haer hoerachtige kercke, ende die cruycen dewijle si zijn onder de goutsmits handen, so en is daer gheen heilicheyt in, maer alse dese ypocriten die eens gevinghert hebben, dan moetmen die bonet daer voor af nemen ende die knien buyghen, ende sy gaen daer achter bleetende ende crijschende achter haer valsche goden'. Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 1, 416; translation from Moxey 1976–1977, 159.
21 Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 4, 123–376.
22 See in particular Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 4, 277–295.
23 '(…) gantz gelogen van munnicken, papen und ander boeven, de mit sulcke schelmery viel geltz gestolen hebben'. Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 4, 289–291 and 293–294.
24 'Wat wildy daer maken? Geloofdy an houdt ende steen?' Fredericq 1889–1906, vol. 4, 373.
25 Mak 1946, 103–104 ('ter waerelt meest zotheyt tooght').
26 Becker 1994, 22–27; Ubl 2014, 155–167 and 316–319.
27 Haeger 1986, 135–136.
28 Moxey 1976, 62–70; Becker 1994, 37.
29 Fredericq 1889–1906, vol. 4, 338–339, 356–357 and 393.
30 Molanus 1861, vol. 2, 818–819; Van Uytven 1963, 16, note 39.
31 Laurent *et al.* 1893–1978, vol. 6, 56.
32 De Brouwer 1961, 133.
33 Heinderyckx 1853–1855, vol. 3, 6–7.

34 Vandamme 1982, 102–103.
35 Germonprez 2015, 73. For other examples, see Mack Crew 1978, 10; Parker 1988, 75; Arnade 2008, 151.
36 Grauwels 1972, 18–19.
37 Grauwels 1972, 51.
38 Grauwels 1972, 19 and 22.
39 See also Sterken 1950.
40 Hecht 1997, 85.
41 Freedberg 1972, 52–54; Jedin 1935, 148–167.
42 Duffy 2011.
43 Van den Bundere 1557, 14–28, 172–179; Verdée 2008, 271–272.
44 Pollmann 2006; Pollmann 2011a.
45 Freedberg 1972, 72. On these treatises see most recently Jonckheere 2012.
46 Jedin 1935; Fabre 2013, 45–68; O'Malley 2013.
47 Waterworth 1848, 233–236. Gilmore Holt 1957–1966, vol. 2, 62–65 provides only a partial translation of the decree. An edition of the original Latin text with a French translation and discussion is provided by Fabre 2013. For the Byzantine image controversy, see Bryer & Herrin 1977.
48 Davis-Weyer 1971, 47–49; Norberg 1982, 873–876. See also Hecht 1997, 169.
49 Hecht 1997, 224–225.
50 Gilmore Holt 1957–1966, vol. 2, 65. See also Jedin 1935, 427. Note that Latin decree does not use *peregrinatio*, which was a consequence of the absence of established terminology to refer to pilgrimages (see Chapter 2). The 1565 Dutch edition nevertheless specified that it concerned pilgrimages: 'Dat ooc de menschen het vieren vanden heyligen, oft pelgrimagie gaen, ende besoecken de heylige reliquien, niet en misbruycken tot overdaet ende dronckenscap (…)'. *Ordonnancien* 1565, fol. 235.
51 Waterworth 1848, 234.
52 'Wat die luyden te Leuwe muchten bevaert gaen? Dat beelt van Sint Lenarts weer van eenen noteleer gemaeckt ende Sint Lenarts kroht weer van eenen verckens troech gemaeckt (…) Arme verdoelde menschen weer dat sy daer geloeff op stelden meynende dat dat beelt van Sint Lenart mirakel deede, want alst scheen sweeten, dan weert met olyen bestreecken'. Hansay 1913, 31–33. For the investigations see also Bax 1937, 266–267.
53 Interestingly, the exact same strategy would later be used by Catholic apologists in defense of images. Dekoninck 2013, 150.
54 KR 1538, fol. 358v (August 1538, 'dy vrouwe dy voer Sintte Leonart sit').
55 In the 1509 mural paintings in Saint Genevieve's chapel at Zepperen a man called 'Adriaen der Stockhueder' is depicted, i.e. 'Adriaen the surveillant of the offertory box'. See BALaT object no. 79960. Compare with the visual sources in Chapter 1.
56 KR 1555, fol. 222v (June 1556, 'enen man van te Sinsen in de kercke 4 nachten te waecken').
57 KR 1561, fol. 402 (January 1562); KR 1565, fol. 541 (January 1566); KR 1566, fol. 539 (December 1566); KR 1567, fol. 445 (December 1567).
58 KR 1555, fol. 220v (May 1556, 'van een cleet voer Sinte Lenaert te maken').
59 Van Autenboer 1983; Van Autenboer 1985, 258–260. On the chamber of rhetoric, see also Sacré 1919, 41–44.
60 KR 1542, fol. 242v (July 1542, '[Meester Anthonis de Schilder] heeft inde vanen onsen patroen gemaect (…) Heere Peeter Scutiser vanden vanen te repareren ende de patroen in te setten'); KR 1556, fol. 268v (April 1557, 'Betaelt te Sinsen 7 kinderen van de goude cappe op te houden, de candelaren te dragen ende vieroeck te verpen').
61 KR 1523, fol. 72v (June 1524); KR 1530, fol. 153v (May 1531); KR 1534, fol. 25 (May 1535); KR 1538, fol. 379v (June 1539); KR 1547, fol. 279 (May 1548, 'die pelgrams zeel dair sye tuesschen gaen'). Compare with the yearly procession with the relic of the Holy Blood in Alkmaar, 'in welcke processie gaen menich menschen in linnen cleeren ende in pansijsers, diet theilige bloet gheloeft hebben ende daer doer vertroest syn ende noch hoepen vertroest te worden'. See Rijkenberg 1896, 402.
62 The low figure in the graph for 1538 is to be explained by the fact that only an incomplete draft version of the account has been preserved, in which the revenues for the Whit Monday procession are missing.
63 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 73 and 77.
64 Dombrecht 2014, 284–287 and 423.
65 KR 1548, fol. 317v ('vier wrouwen die te Sinsen met wasse geseten hebben'). See also KR 1556, fol. 268v (April 1557); KR 1557, fol. 312 (April 1558); KR 1559, fol. 354v (February 1560). Compare with Van der Velden 2000, 249–250.
66 See for instance KR 1551, fol. 1560 (February 1561, 'de kerssen voir Syncte Leonardt').

67 'De selve ghiften tooghen oock wat cracht ende macht dat die martelaers hebben, die daer begraven sijn'. Du Val 1566, fol. 71v. See also Molanus 1996, vol. 1, 266–267.

68 KR 1534, fol. 26v (June 1535, '3 yseren geerden met 6 ooghen gemaeckt ende inden muer geslaghen om dyseren bienen aen te hanghen').

69 KR 1556, fols. 265 (January 1557, 'Claes Roesen van enen hulten been te maken') and 272 (June 1557, '[meester Anthonis van Hulleberge] van een hulten been te schilderen geel'). For other examples, see Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 102, as well as Van der Velden 2000, 175–176, 185–187 and 262, who also discusses the process in general.

70 KR 1549, fol. 350v (August 1549): 'Betaelt van het haernies dat voir Syncte Leonardt hanght schoen te maken'.

71 KR 1540, fol. 206v.

72 First registered in KR 1547, fol. 265v. For his activities in the service of the churchwardens, see for instance KR 1557, fols. 312v–313 (May 1558). See also Van Autenboer 1983, 410, 414, 417 and 423.

73 KR 1554, fol. 163 (May 1555, 'betaelt 4 vrouwen die metten beeldekens ende met was opten merckt geseeten hebben').

74 KR 1533, fol. 190 (April 1534); KR 1534, fols. 17v (August 1534, 'Noch betaelt van eenen ijser daermen Sinte Leonart op steeken soude om bielsekens te slaene (…) Noch betaelt den meester van Luydick van Sinte Leonart daer op te steeken'), 19 (October 1534, 'Noch gecocht tot Luydich een lattonen voermen ende een yseren om silveren teekenen te slaene ende die lattonen om loeten te ghieten voer de pelgrems') and 24 (April 1535, 'Noch betaelt tot Bruesel van eenen yser daermen silveren ende cooperen teekenen van Sinte Leonart op slaet voer de pelgrims te Pinxsten').

75 KR 1547, fol. 278 (May 1548); KR 1549, fol. 357v (March 1550).

76 KR 1534, fol. 17 (August 1534, 'teekenen van Sinte Leonart met gelaeskens').

77 Van Loon van de Moosdijk 2004, 103.

78 Van Uytven 1974, 186, table IV; Van Uytven 1995a, 13; Van Uytven *et al.* 2004, tables 6.5 and 6.7.

79 A similar pattern can be observed at the shrine of Saint Guido in Anderlecht, see the data collected by Roobaert 2004, 2–15. In Wezemaal, on the contrary, the number significantly diminished: Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 68–69 and 94–95.

80 KR 1540, fol. 222v (June 1541, 'vaynkens voer die pilgrims').

81 An early example from Brussels in 1471 is mentioned by Roobaert 2000, 261.

82 Van Heurck 1922, viii–xviii; Thijs 1991, 76–80.

83 Compare with the observations by Van der Stock 1998, 133–134, 186. See also Freedberg 1991, 124–126.

84 Van der Linden 1958, xviii and 118 gives several early sixteenth-century examples from the County of Flanders.

85 KR 1548, fol. 321; KR 1551, fol. 64v (June 1552); KR 1561, fol. 406 (May 1562, 'vaenkens te stelen ende te pappen').

86 KR 1542, fol. 244 (October and November 1542); KR 1547, fol. 277v (April 1548); KR 1549, fol. 352v (November 1549).

87 KR 1550, fol. 22 (October 1550); KR 1560, fol. 315v (November 1560). He also furnished pennants to the church of Saint Gertrude in Machelen: Roobaert 2004, 20.

88 KR 1551, fol. 62v (April 1552); KR 1552, fol. 115 (April 1553); KR 1555, fol. 220 (May 1556); KR 1556, fol. 254v (July 1556); KR 1557, fols. 303v (August 1557), 309 (January 1558) and 314 (June 1558); KR 1561, fols. 397 (September 1561), 401 (December 1561) and 401v (January 1562); KR 1565, fol. 541v (January 1566); KR 1566, fol. 539v (January 1567); KR 1567, fols. 439v (August 1567), 445 (December 1567) and 448v (April 1568); KR 1569, fol. 506 (July 1569); KR 1573, fols. 395 (December 1573) and 400 (May 1574); KR 1577, fol. 475v (November 1577).

89 See especially Roobaert 2004, with many references.

90 Roobaert 2000, 262–263, 266, 276 and 289.

91 Dombrecht 2014, 286–287. Compare with the data on the confraternity of Our Lady in the Church of Saints Michael and Gudula, and the confraternity of the Holy Sacrament in the Church of Saint Nicholas: Roobaert 2000, 258–268 and 281–286.

92 Sellink & Silva Maroto 2011, 789–790.

93 KR 1540, fol. 201; KR 1577, fol. 461. The conversion from *halsters* to liters is based on Doursther 1840, 356–358.

94 KR 1516, fol. 17v (June 1517); KR 1534, fol. 26 (May 1535, 'gecocht te Pinxsten voer die pelgrems een rintspense, een kalffhoot metter leveren, een scaeptshoot ende smout totter soppen').

95 KR 1503, fol. 29 (June 1504, 'biere dat daer gehaelt waert voer die pelgrijme dij voere Sinte Leonart gingen'); KR 1515, fol. 13 (July 1515); KR 1516, fol. 17v (June 1517).

96 KR 1530, fol. 155 (June 1531); KR 1533, fols. 168v and 192v (June 1534), and KR 1540, fol. 213v (July 1540); KR 1549, fol. 359v (June 1550, 'Betaelt aen perper, saffraen, suker ende naeghelen om te Syncsen in die pergroms eerten te doene'). Cooked peas were also provided to pilgrims elsewhere, such as in Amersfoort and Berchem: Thiers 1994, 25; Prims 1949, 105. The conversion from *amen* to liters is based on Doursther 1840, 158 and 437.

97 Woltjer 1962; Woltjer 1968, 383; Duffy 1992.

98 Woltjer 1994, 89–102 and 134–136; Marnef 1996, 88–90; Kaplan 1994.

99 '(…) dicte ecclesie S. Leonardi, que a Christi fidelibus undique confluentibus propter multa miracula, quibus Divus Leonardus in eadem ecclesia S. Leonardi valde clarere dignoscitur'. Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 294–295.

100 '(…) adversus occupatores et devastatores bonorum suorum'. Full text and discussion in Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 170–175 and 292–297. See also Pieyns-Rigo 1970, 1128–1129.

101 Hansay 1913, 31–33.

102 'Item dy papen goeten smalt op dy hoefden van dy bilderen, dan seede sy dat sy mirakel deden'. Grauwels 1972, 33.

103 'Alle die Sancten sijn gaen duycken/ Sy en doen geen mirakel meer'. Mak 1946, 161.

104 Van Mulder 2016, Appendix 1.

105 Verhoeven 1985, 109 and 136.

106 Note that the figure for the 1530s does not include the miracles recorded at the shrine of Bolsward, because of a lack of chronological details.

107 Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 155–165. Early twentieth-century versions of the story specify that the statue was found by a ploughing peasant: De Cock & Teirlinck 1909–1912, vol. 2, 157–158; Hendrickx 1924–1925. On this type of narrative, see Delbeke *et al.* 2015, esp. 221.

108 Grauwels 1972, 87 and 92.

109 Balau 1913–1931, vol. 2, 131.

110 Wichmans 1632, 457–459.

111 The earliest account has been erroneously included in RAL, KAB, no. 1075. Subsequent accounts are in RAL, KAB, no. 3367.

112 RAL, KAB, nos. 1048 and 1075; KR 1566, fol. 529; KR 1569, fol. 503. His financial status can be judged by the high costs he paid for his wife's funeral (KR 1557, fol. 295v).

113 Grauwels 1972, 87.

114 Wichmans 1632, 458; Gramaye 1968, 133–134.

115 In KR 1534 3561 *stuivers* were collected, in KR 1550 3935 *stuivers*.

116 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 98, 103–104 and 108.

117 On the cult, see Pauli 1620, 134–147. The original miracle book has not been preserved, but it was published in the later 17th century: *Historia* 1674, 9.

118 For the miracle collections, see Loërius 1532; Adam 2014, 415–416; Van Mulder 2016, 106–115. On the new chapel and reliquary, see De Bruyn 1870, 167–168; Lefèvre 1956–1957, 34–38 and 62–71; Van Ypersele de Strihou 2000, 6–11 and 76.

119 In this early period other Augustine cloisters in the Low Countries, including those of Antwerp, Dordrecht, Ghent and Tournai, were strongly influenced by Luther's teachings. See Decavele 1996, 69.

120 Dequeker 2000, 52–60; Thøfner 2007, 255–275.

121 Brussels, KBR, Ms. 14896–98, fol. 62 ('des keysers hoff').

122 Van Mulder 2016, 111.

123 Van den Boogert 1992.

124 But see Reintjens 2013, 152–153.

125 Leemans 1972, 279–281; Damen 2005.

126 The original reliquary has not survived, see Van Ypersele de Strihou 2000, 75–92. Van der Velden 2000, 123, discusses an equally exceptional example of a window donated in 1501–1503 by Philip the Fair to the Brussels Church of Our Lady of the Zavel.

127 Fühner 2004.

128 Fredericq 1889–1906, vol. 5, 243–244; Decavele 1990, 20–25; Gielis 2015, 426 and 442.

129 'Schoender noch devoter processien en was in hondert jaeren te voeren noeyt gesien'. Brussels, KBR, Ms. 14896–98, fol. 62; Van Mulder 2016, 113–114.

130 George 1998, 8.

131 George 1998, 21, no. 15.

132 Other discussions of this material in Waite 2007, 42–45 and Pollmann 2011a, 52–57.

133 Grauwels 1972, 20 ('nyet dan broot').

134 Grauwels 1972, 46.

135 Grauwels 1972, 23.
136 Grauwels 1972, 37–38.
137 Grauwels 1972, 27–28.
138 Pleij 1973–1974; Pollmann 2011a, 55.
139 Heiss 1990–1991; Ditchfield 2007, 213; Waite 2007, 40–41, 49 and *passim*.
140 Waite 2007, 37.
141 Van den Bundere 1557, 22–23, 177–178. Other examples in Brussels, KBR, Ms. 14896–98, fols. 41 (1523) and 42v–43 (1524).
142 Compare with Freist 2009, 215, who referred to the 'confessionalization of public space'.

5 Parish Liturgy

1 Laqua-O'Donnell 2013, 291–294.
2 Kümin 1997; Bijsterveld 2000–2001; Bauwens 2015.
3 Erasmus 1965, 267–285 (*Puerpera*), quote on 269–270.
4 Decavele 1975, 274 and 591.
5 'Dit misbroit is Gott geheten, kostelic opgesloten, mit monstrantien, lampen, kerssen, unde hogen sacramentzhousen gheeret, onder den beelden in groten processien omgedragen, mit crucen, fanen, trommen, unde allerley gaipspul, ghelijck de Heiden voirhin, mit horen affgoden gedain hebben (...) Summa dat kleine dode broit is op allen orten des pausdoms vur den groten levendigen Gott angebeden'. Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 4, 212.
6 Wandel 2014 provides detailed discussions of the Eucharistic theologies of the different confessions.
7 Decavele 1990, 20–25.
8 Decavele 1975, 266 and 589–599; Van Bruaene 2016a, 44–47.
9 De Coussemaker 1876, vol. 3, 156–157 and 166; Deyon & Lottin 1981, 182.
10 SAL, Oud Archief, no. 299, fol. 268.
11 RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 38, fols. 26r–v and 84v; *Historie* 1569, fols. 240v–241; Acquoy 1873, 42–45; Kumler 2015, 119–121.
12 Arnade 2008 discusses carnivalesque aspects of the *Beeldenstorm*.
13 Beenakker 1971, 25.
14 RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 6, fol. 442.
15 Enno van Gelder 1925–1942, vol. 2, 237–239; Russe 1953, quotes on 115–118. A similar case is documented in Tournai's cathedral of Our Lady in 1554: Arnade 2008, 115.
16 Vander Meersch 1842, 17–19.
17 '(...) en woude nyet gheloven dat dy priesters eynighe macht hedden te consacreeren dat eerwerdich heylich sacrament'. Grauwels 1972, 21–22.
18 '(...) nyet dan broot inden oven gebacken'. Grauwels 1972, 29, 33 (1535), 36 (1536) and 48 (1537).
19 Grauwels 1972, 28. Another example of irreverence in Daris 1887–1891, vol. 3, 410–411.
20 Toussaert 1963, 122–204.
21 Quote from Falkenburg 2007, 183. In general, see Post 1954, 401 and 405; Kroesen 2006; Falkenburg 2007. On the frequency of communion, see also Van Miert 1921–1922, 112–124.
22 KR 1456, fol. 148v; KR 1468, fol. 13. Elsewhere it was also referred to as 'monnichbroets': Bonenfant & Frankignoulle 1935, 63.
23 Toussaert 1963, 180–184; Mols 1964, 407; Meyers-Reinquin 1969, 210–211. Elsewhere churchwarden accounts distinguish between 'messebroets' and 'sacrament broots': Weale 1874, 9–11.
24 KR 1496, fol. 170 (March 1497); KR 1557, fol. 309 (January 1558); Kumler 2015, 126–128.
25 See for instance resp. KR 1534, fol. 19v (November 1534), KR 1490, fol. 41v (September 1490) and KR 1505, fol. 25v (June 1506). Toussaert 1963, 162 and Meyers-Reinquin 1969, 208–209 respectively refer to it as 'vin d'ablution' and 'nataalwijn' or 'ablutiewijn'.
26 KR 1555, fol. 206 (July 1555, 'croeskens voer de siecken om te Paesschen vut te drincken').
27 The conversion from *quarten* to liters is based on Doursther 1840, 158 and 437.
28 Confrontation of a 1497 *pouillé* (Paquay 1908, 84) with one from 1558 (De Ridder 1865, 141–142) reveals an unaltered parochial organization. The 1543 request to abolish the Priory of Val des Écoliers (Chapter 4) might have entailed an extension of Saint Leonard's parish rights, however, as part of the parochial services – including burial – were held in the priory church, see Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 170. While Pieyns-Rigo 1970, 1129 maintained that the request did not have any practical consequences, the funeral rights of Saint Leonard's church appear to have been extended in 1556 (KR 1555, fol. 215 (February 1556)). It remains unclear if both events are related. For Zoutleeuw's demographical evolution, see Van Uytven 1995a; Van Uytven 1995b.

29 KR 1556, fol. 247r–v ('van offer voer den wijn opde tafel'). Compare with KR 1566, fol. 535 (August 1566, 'banckens (…) diemen beesicht als men tOnssen Heer gaet'). See also Brian 2014, 186–188.

30 Toussaert 1963, 162 claimed that such furniture did not yet exist, and it is lacking in classic overviews such as Reinle 1988 and Bangs 1997.

31 Prims 1939, 119 ('6 dweelen om te Paschen de tafelen mede te dekken daar men den wijn geeft int moenigen van den gemeynen volke').

32 '(…) dat men generalick ten Sacrament solde gaen, die communiceerbanck setten mit die banck, dair men den wiin aff ontfengt, ende idt bret, dair men die wiinkannen op settet, ende alle desen becleeden mit den cyraet dairtoe behoorende (…)'. Van Veen 1916, 110.

33 Weale 1874, 20.

34 Toussaert 1963, 175–180 and Meyers-Reinquin 1969, 210 respectively referred to it as 'nataelpennijnck' and 'wijngeld'.

35 KR 1552, fol. 112 (February 1553); KR 1561, fol. 384; KR 1566, fol. 526v. Compare also with the list of holidays for which wine was bought in KR 1561, fol. 400 (December 1561): 'weyn (…) op Alder Heyligen dach, Kersmisse, Lichtmisse ende ander hoechgheteyen ende lieffve vrouwen dagen'.

36 '(…) ten minsten jaerlicx te paesscen ten heyligen Sacramente te gaen'. The different sorts of communion are referred to as 'sacramentelyck' and 'gheestelyck'. *Ordonnancien* 1565, fols. 112r–v and 114v; Daly 2014.

37 Vervoort 1552, Chapter 6: 'Hoe wij met berrender liefden sullen dickmael gaen totten heylighen sacramente'. See also Van den Bundere 1557, 132–133.

38 Meuris 1993, 74–78; Leysen 2001–2002, 57–59. Compare also with Van Miert 1921–1922, 121–123.

39 Paquay 2001, 36.

40 For Antwerp, see *Antwerpsch chronykje* 1743, 76 and Wegman 1989, 185. For other examples, see Van Veen 1916, 247–250; Gysseling 1952, 51; Post 1954, 402–405; Paquay 2001, 36–37; De Loos 2012, 91–93.

41 RAL, KAB, no. 1033, fol. 13v.

42 Grauwen *et al.* 1996, 183, no. 830; KR 1555, fol. 195v.

43 RAL, KAB, no. 1033, unfoliated, and no. 1043, fols. 18v and 21. For other examples, see Post 1954, 402–405. For a definition of *lof* ceremonies, see Wegman 1989, 185.

44 RAL, KAB, no. 1074 (1520–1533); RAL, KAB, no. 1075 (1537–1544 and 1554).

45 Such as at Tiel in 1540: Van Veen 1916, 249–250.

46 See for instance KR 1533, fol. 168; KR 1547, fol. 280v; KR 1556, fol. 272v.

47 Roobaert 2000, esp. 299–300, Appendix II.

48 Halkin 1930, 206–208; Ramakers 1996. See also Goudriaan 1994, 74.

49 Joblin 1999, 134–135.

50 Erasmus 1965, 307; Eire 1986, 44.

51 Kist 1840, 228–238; Wegman 2005, 181–185.

52 'In den pauselicken tempelen wurt dat gebet gestoirt mit den onnutten Gregorianschen coirsang'. Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 4, 230–232 and 297–298, quote on 231.

53 For instance Beenakker 1971, 71–72; Scheerder 1974, 82–85; Scheerder 2016, 103–116. In general, see Bangs 1997, 83–94.

54 '(…) chargé davoir avecq aultres pillé et sacagé en leglise Saint Brixe, et meisme davoir happé, abbatu et brisé les orghues dicelle eglise, disant quon avoit faict assez danser dieu des musettes'. RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 6, fol. 43v–44.

55 Kronenberg 1948, 44, 129–130.

56 Oettinger 2001.

57 Mincoff-Marriage 1922.

58 'Ende es die pastoor inde kercke comende ter stondt opte preeckstoel gegaen sonder stole ofte coorcleet. Ende worde daer duytsche psalmen gesongen ende die pastoor dede voorts alsoe zijn sermoen'. RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 115, fol. 48.

59 Parker 1988, 73.

60 Mack Crew 1978, 8; Arnade 2008, 98 and 129.

61 '(…) qui ont tousjours servy d'advertence et de mot du guet en toutes leurs entreprinses'. Henne 1860–1861, vol. 1, 177.

62 Freedberg 1972, 111.

63 '(…) zynghende openbaerlijc de verboden psalmen in scandale van eenen yeghelicken', and 'vendu pseaulmes et livres reprouvez'. RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 6, resp. fols. 266 and 277.

64 'Ghi wiltse al tsamen doen zingen alzo (…) coeien loyen, scapen bleeten (…) De ceremonien der kercke, den sanc in de tempelen, de cirage, verwecken den mensche tot devotien (…)'. Van den Bundere 1557, 163.

65 See Beghein 2014, 32–33.

66 Oettinger 2001, 55–60 discusses pre-Reformation devotional songs in the vernacular.

67 Bouckaert & Schreurs 1998, 35; Beghein 2014, 53. See also the example in Thelen 2015b, 75–80.
68 Beghein 2014, 27–32.
69 Brussels, KBR, Ms. 21131 and 21132.
70 First mentioned in KR 1547, fol. 274 (November 1547, 'Meester Jan Jelviedoy met die zanghers van Diest, uwt bevel van borghenmeesters gegeven'). See also KR 1548, fol. 311 ('Ghegeven Ghielen van Doen met consente van boergemesters van in Sinte Lenaert dage dy messe helpen te singen') and KR 1550, fol. 24 (December 1550, 'meester Jan de sangmeester met die sangher van Synctruyden'). The accounts suggest this *zangmeester* was a certain Jan Ghielen van Doen, who returned yearly throughout the 1540s and 1550s. Van Autenboer 1983, 411, note 8 referred to one unique but similar entry in the civic accounts of 1536, when singers from Sint-Truiden came over on Saint Leonard's day.
71 Vente 1960–1961, 39; Grauwels 1972, 49; Wegman 1989, 175–176, 194–195, note 38 and 245; Paquay 2001, 77, note 149. In 1532 some singers from Diest also took part in the Whit Monday procession at Zoutleeuw. See Van Autenboer 1983, 414.
72 KR 1557, fol. 304 (September 1557, 'den sangers van op Sinte Lenaerts dach de meesse ende loff te singen').
73 Wegman 1989, 185; Trio & Haggh 1994, 72–78.
74 KR 1548, fol. 315 ('Ghegeven meester Jan van Doen om dobbel pampier te copen om enen sanboeck te maken'); KR 1549, fols. 356v (January 1550, 'Betaelt Mr. Jan de Sangmeester van een boeck pampiers te coepen in grote forme om sanck inne te scryven') and 362 (June 1550, 'Betaelt Meester Jan die Sangmeester van eenen boeck van duyskant in groete forme'). See also KR 1550, fol. 25v (January 1551) and KR 1554, fol. 149 (September 1554, 'den sangers van die misse in discant te singen op Sinte Leonarts dach').
75 Thelen 2015b, 87.
76 Grauwels 1972, 49 and 192.
77 Compare with Kavaler 2000, 238–239.
78 RAL, KAB, box 982, no. 1281.
79 First mention KR 1559, fol. 347 (September 1559). In the late fifteenth-century graduals Saint Cecilia occurs in the rubrics, but not in an individual chant: Brussels, KBR, Ms. 21132, *Sanctorale*, fol. 66v.
80 KR 1565, fol. 533 (July 1565); KR 1567, fol. 438v (July 1567); KR 1569, fol. 508v (September 1569). Compare with KR 1549, fol. 362 (June 1550).
81 KR 1555, fol. 213 (December 1555, 'enen sankboeck'); KR 1561, fol. 400v (December 1561, 'eenen sancboeck voer die sanghers').
82 KR 1559, fol. 348 (September 1559); Beghein 2014, 100.
83 KR 1554, fol. 158v (February 1555).
84 See for instance KR 1533, fol. 192v (June 1534) versus KR 1487, fol. 303v (June 1488) and KR 1506, fol. 22 (March 1507).
85 KR 1503, fols. 20v–21 (October 1503).
86 Most of the relevant sources and identifications have been published by Vente 1956, 164–165.
87 KR 1473, fol. 122 (September 1473); KR 1487, fols. 298 (July 1487) and 301v–303v (February-June 1488); Vente 1956, 164 and 220–221, note 2.
88 KR 1500, fols. 15v (October 1500), 16v (December 1500) and 17 (January 1501); KR 1503, fol. 18 (August 1503); KR 1505, fols. 15 (September 1505) and 21v (March 1506); KR 1506, fol. 22 (March 1507); KR 1508, fol. 292v (May 1509); Vente 1956, 164; Vente 1958, 21.
89 KR 1525, fols. 119 (September 1525) and 120v (December 1525); KR 1533, fols. 183v (January 1534), 185–186 (February 1534) and 188–190 (April 1534). See also Vente 1956, 143.
90 KR 1554, fols. 154–159v (December 1554–February 1555) and 169 (June 1555).
91 KR 1557, fol. 304v (September 1557), 308v (January 1558) and 309v (February 1558); KR 1559, fols. 346 (August 1559), 347 (September 1559), 349 (October 1559), 351v–352v (December 1559), 357 (April 1560), 359v (June 1560); Vente 1958, 90.
92 Compare with the founding of the prestigious Saint Cecilia confraternity in Evreux (Normandy) in 1571 and the Congregazione de' musici di Roma in her honor in 1585: Husk 1857, 113–115.
93 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 98–100.
94 Van Durme 1964, 202, no. 913; Fischer 1975, 12. Other versions are kept in the churches of Saint Hilarius in Bierbeek and Saint Eustace in Zichem, for instance. See resp. BALaT nos. 32354 and 26634.
95 Rice 2007.
96 Beghein 2014, esp. 93 and 185–186.

6 Patronage

1 Parts of this chapter are based on Suykerbuyk 2017 and Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017.
2 Quoted from Lundin 2012, 175–176.
3 Lundin 2012, 172–177.

4 Schleif 1990, 235; Van Bueren 2005, 20. Such an integrated approach has recently been proposed by Van Bueren *et al.* 2011, 220–221. On patronage, see Martens 1992; Flora 2012; Hourihane 2013.
5 On the many different formats, see for example Trio 2009.
6 Schleif 1990, 228; Timmermans 2008, 257; Trio 2009, 145.
7 Bijsterveld 2007, 200–201; Buylaert *et al.* 2014.
8 Pawlak 2011; Lipińska 2013.
9 See for instance Hourihane 2013, xx–xxi.
10 Burgess 2002, 314–315, 326; Reitemeier 2005, 121–122.
11 Brine 2015.
12 De Ridder 1908, 58–61: 'het epithaphium Kempeneers', 'het epithaphium Mr. Jan Bollen', 'Frans Minten epitaphium', 'tepithaphiom Kerckhoffs', 'tepithaphiom Gilis Vreven' and 'het epithaphium Egidii Hugeni'.
13 KR 1452, fol. 10; KR 1503, fol. 26 (March 1504, 'vinsteren daer die Gruyters wapenen inne staen'). On the De Gruytere family, see Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 104–105.
14 KR 1480, fol. 29v (April 1481); KR 1481, fol. 63v (October 1481, 'dy ghelasen vinstere metten wapenen van dy van Liefkenrode'); RAL, KAB, no. 1043, fol. 8v.
15 'Hier [leyt begraven] M. Henrick van Strijroeij, hy sterf int jaer xv^C ende lxv den xii dach Meij ende joeffrouwe Margriet Speken sy sterf int jaer xv^C lxi den x augustus. Bidt voer h[en] siele [om] Godts wille'. The last part of the inscription is not legible.
16 KR 1560, fol. 308.
17 KR 1565, fols. 409 and 532v.
18 Compare with the *Virgo lactans* and the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* (both in Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History, resp. BALaT object nos. 20048978 and 11016576) and the *Penitent Saint Jerome* in Liège (Musée Curtius, BALaT object no. 10133480). On the technique and its use, see Helbig 1945 and Brauneck 1978, 205–237.
19 Grauwen *et al.* 1996, 317.
20 'Domino et Magistro Henrico Spieken, ecclesie huius collegiate canonico et decano, anno 1555 21 octobris defuncto, heredes memorie ergo posuerunt Willem Spieken, obiit anno [15]70 18 Augusti, Joncfro Mari Helspighels, obiit anno [15]97 4 Ianuwarii, Iofrouw Anna Copis, obiit anno 1604 13 decembris'.
21 Grauwen *et al.* 1996, 236 and 265.
22 KR 1572, fol. 527v. A genealogy is included in Brussels, KBR, Ms. II 1517, fols. 47–52.
23 The name of their daughter-in-law Anna Copis seems to have been added only later on. On the epitaph, see also Rousseau 1890–1891, 448–451, and Steppe 1971, 632–636.
24 Compare with Brine 2015, 32 and 50–51.
25 RAL, KAB, no. 1076, unfoliated.
26 'Tuam crucem adoramus Domine/ tuam gloriosam recolimus passionem/ qui passus es pro nobis, miserere nobis'. Cantus Manuscript Database ID 006046a.
27 RAL, KAB, no. 1076, fol. 5.
28 Grauwen *et al.* 1996, 289, no. 1314. Compare with RAL, KAB, no. 1033 (unfoliated), KR 1561, fol. 372, and KR 1559, fol. 338v.
29 Grauwen *et al.* 1996, 116 (no. 529) and 232–233 (no. 1055).
30 KR 1520, fols. 18r–v (December 1520 & January 1521) and 20v (April 1521). In September 1523 mention is made of a consecration, but the accounts do not specify which altar: KR 1523, fol. 67v (September 1523).
31 KR 1533, fols. 168, 177 and 193 (June 1534).
32 KR 1534, fols. 4v, 20v–21 (December 1534), 21v–22 (January 1535), 24 (April 1535) and 27v (June 1535).
33 KR 1547, fol. 268 ('heer Handrick Aussems heeft gegeven totten aff sluyten van Syncte Peeters coer 9 Kg').
34 KR 1547, fols. 260v, 274 and 275 (November 1547), 276v (January 1548), 282v and 283v (July 1548, 'Claes Roossen van dat antyckx werck dat boven Syncte Peeters coer affsluytten staet').
35 Bangs 1997, 64–65.
36 Zemon Davis 1974, 327–328; Schleif 1990, 232–234; Duffy 1992, 139; Speetjens 2011, 200.
37 Reusens 1866, 12; Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 262–264, note 2. On the benefice of *plebanus*, see Bijsterveld 1993, 96.
38 KR 1565, fol. 410; De Ridder 1908, 61.
39 Grauwen *et al.* 1996, 293, no. 1335.
40 Document published by Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 35, note 2. Compare with KR 1565, fol. 409v.
41 KR 1565, fols. 544–549 (March–June 1566), KR 1566, fols. 533v–545 (July 1566–June 1567).
42 Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 38 stated that a part of the library of Saint Leonard's church went to the Royal Library in Brussels, but of all the publications on Van Haugen's list none of the copies preserved there bears witness to a

Zoutleeuw provenance. Contrary to the church's manuscripts, no print books from Zoutleeuw are recorded in the library's registers of acquisitions.

43 Müller 2001; Maihold 2001.

44 Quoted from Ditchfield 1995, 124–125.

45 Frymire 2010, 293–296, quote on 293.

46 Mack Crew 1978, 5–8.

47 'Libros sequentes nominatos relinquo eidem fabrice in usum cujusquumque ecclesiaste ac litterarum sacrarum in nostro oppido studiosi'. Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 35, note 2.

48 See for instance KR 1456, fol. 148 (November 1456), and KR 1463, fol. 269 (April 1464). For the use of the library, see Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 45, note 1; Gramaye 1968, 132. On preaching in general, see Van Herwaarden 1982, 192.

49 Compare with the emphasis on sermons in visitation reports: Toebak 1992, 127–128.

50 'Aussi at le prédicateur de la court, et celluy de saincte Goule, auquel l'on at miz ung billet affin qu'il se gardît de tant parler de Calvin; mais il ne le lesse pour cela, et tous ceulx que preschent en ceste ville se sont fort bien acquitez à confirmer le peuple'. Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 201.

51 The ideas discussed in this paragraph were first published in Suykerbuyk 2017.

52 The first such entry is in KR 1559, fol. 341v.

53 RAL, KAB, no. 1000, 101–107; Wauters 1892, 538.

54 Recounted in Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 262 and 268, note 1, and Wilmet 1924, 12, but see Van den Bossche 1996, vol. 3, 352 and Verleysen 2003. Wilmet 1938, vol. 1, 167 also mentions the story of the church's carillon as a gift from Van Wilre, which is not documented either.

55 On the family, see De Troostemberg 1912 and Van den Bossche 1996.

56 Van den Bossche 1996, vol. 1, 14–15, and vol. 3, 366–387.

57 Van den Bossche 1996, vol. 3, 332–333 and 337.

58 RAL, SL, resp. nos. 3012, fol. 166, and 3013, fol. 78; Van den Bossche 1996, vol. 3, 330.

59 On their residence, see RAB, Familiearchief De Troostembergh, no. 24, and RAL, SL, no. 3037, fol. 87. On his birthplace see Van den Bossche 1996, vol. 3, 348.

60 Original deed of gift in RAL, KAB, box 981, no. 1213, published by Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 131–132, note 1.

61 Transcript of the contract in RAL, SL, no. 3030, fol. 6v. On Oten (also spelled Oyen, Oeyen, Oeen and Oyeten), see Van Dievoet 2000, 123–124.

62 Original foundation charter in RAL, KAB, box 982, no. 1258.

63 Her date of death is recorded on the couple's gravestone (Chapter 3). Compare with KR 1554, fol. 142.

64 The original foundation charters are all in RAL, KAB, box 982, resp. nos. 1261, 1268 and 1281.

65 The present whereabouts of the testament are unknown, but is published in full by Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 262–264, note 2. *Tafereel* and *epitaphium* are used interchangeably to refer to epitaphs, see for instance KR 1597, fol. 99. Compare with Brine 2015, 7–9.

66 Transcript of the contract in RAL, SL, no. 3037, fols. 87r–v. See also Steppe 1962, cat. T/21. On Van den Kerckhoven, see Cat. Brussels 1979, 76–77.

67 Wauters 1892, 531.

68 De Ridder 1909, 146.

69 The fact that none of their acquisitions are referred to in the churchwardens' accounts suggests that they were donated rather than bought, although it should be mentioned that KR 1553 is missing. On foundation charters, see Martens 2005, 359. Wilmet 1924, 10 was the first to suggest that both Aertsen triptychs were donated by van Wilre. This was accepted by Genaille 1954, 282 and 285; Kreidl 1972, 82–83, note 98; Buchan 1975, 108; and Van de Velde 1975, vol. 1, 228–231, who also included Floris' *Triptych with the seven effusions of the blood of Christ*.

70 First attributed to Aertsen by Michel 1923. An attribution to his workshop seems justified, see Kloek 1989a, 6–9, 15–16 and 20–21. An autograph preparatory drawing of the left outer wing depicting Saint Martin is preserved in Munich (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, inv. 1949:32): Cat. Munich 1989, 9–10, and Kloek 1989b, cat. A9. Quality marks confirm the triptychs' Antwerp origins: Boreel & Van Zon-Christoffels 1989, 170.

71 KR 1555, fols. 219v–222 (May and June 1556), and KR 1556, fols. 262v–264 (December and January 1557).

72 Schuler 1992, 24.

73 '(…) sess teekenen ende figueren vander bloetstortingen ons lief heeren ende opden capruyn de sevenste bloetstortinge al in rondeelen nae vuytwijsen die patroonen die hij daer af ontfangen heeft'. RAL, SL, no. 3037, fols. 87r–v.

74 As the iconography had its basis in religious theater and devotional literature, most iconographic examples are in print: Braunfels

et al. 1968–1976, vol. 1, 311; Veldman 1986, 267. No other contemporary examples are known in painting.

75 Van de Velde 1975, vol. 1, 228–233; Wouk 2018, 315–323. It is unclear on which altar it was originally installed, but possibly it decorated that of the Eucharist, with which the themes of the Blood of Christ, death and resurrection are consistent. Work on an unspecified altar next to the sacrament house was done in August 1554. See KR 1554, fol. 147. For the hypothetical shift of the commission from Aertsen to Floris, see Suykerbuyk 2017, 55.

76 KR 1557, fol. 307 (November 1557); KR 1565, fol. 540v (December 1565); Van de Velde 1975, vol. 1, 265–268; Suykerbuyk 2020, 50–54.

77 KR 1551, fol. 65v (June 1552, 'sydtsel voir Heylych Sacramenhuys'); KR 1552, fols. 102–104 (July and August 1552), 106–107v (October 1552, 'een metalen lampe meten candelaren soe die voir theylycht sacramens huys hanckt'), 113–114v (March and April 1553), 118v–120v (June 1553), and KR 1555, 216 (March 1556). The *thuyn* is first mentioned in March 1555, see KR 1554, fol. 161. Its maker remains unknown and it is unclear whether or not it was donated by van Wilre, see Suykerbuyk 2017, 56–57.

78 KR 1565, fols. 542 (January 1566) and 548 (May 1566); KR 1569, fol. 506v (July 1569); Van de Velde 1975, vol. 1, 328–330; Wouk 2018, 320–322; Suykerbuyk 2020, 54, 60.

79 KR 1549, fol. 362 (June 1550), and KR 1554, fol. 164 (June 1555).

80 For an elaborate discussion of the project's social aspect, see Suykerbuyk 2017, 64–71.

81 As stipulated in his testament of 10 December 1545 (RAB, Familiearchief De Troostembergh, no. 24).

82 Vroom 1981, 275; Van Bueren 2005, 17; Timmermans 2008, 214–215 and 260. A highly comparable example is discussed in Bogaers 2005, 203–205.

83 Contamine 1998, 100. The concept of 'last of the line memorials' comes from Gittos 2002, 144–145. I am grateful to Frederik Buylaert for drawing my attention to it.

84 Van den Bossche 1996, vol. 1, 12.

85 More in detail, see Suykerbuyk 2017, 57–64.

86 Schuler 1992, 24.

87 Timmermann 2009, 325–327.

88 Knipping 1939, vol. 2, 49 and 55; Tixier 2014, 237–242.

89 Compare with Pollmann 2013, 169.

90 The central thesis of the following paragraph was first proposed in Suykerbuyk 2017, and was further elaborated in Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017.

91 Duverger & Onghena 1954; Thijs 1990; Binski & Black 2003; Muller 2008; Muller 2016.

92 Spicer 2013; Jonckheere 2012, 45–78.

93 Laven 2006.

94 O'Malley 2000.

95 Compare with Spiertz 1986, 58.

96 Hall 2013, 3–6.

97 Compare with Dieterich 1982, who referred to an 'active and pious laity', and Laven 2006.

98 Weisbach 1921, recently confirmed by Lepage 2013.

99 Pevsner 1925. See also O'Malley 2000, 35 and 183, note 55.

100 For Italy, see Steen Hansen 2004; Nagel 2005; Nagel 2011.

101 Jonckheere 2013.

102 Van Eck 2012, 84.

103 Tacke 2008. Compare with Nagel 2005.

104 Duke 1990, 18–23.

105 Decavele 1975, 32; De Win 2003, 159–160.

106 Rijkenberg 1896, 339–340 and 398–399 ('dat vaste starcke geloef').

107 Strijroy s.d., quote on fol. 3v. It was printed between 1557 and 1563, see Axters 1933, 123–125. Other examples are Vervoort 1552 and Van den Bundere 1557, 131–149.

108 For instance Hessels 1563.

109 Klauser 1969, 137; Tixier 2014, 237–257.

110 Van Duinen 1997, 67–74.

111 Timmermann 2009, 321 and 342; Van Bruaene 2016a.

112 Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 1, 486 and 522–523 (Micronius) and vol. 4, 212 (Veluanus).

113 Bloccius & Pieters 1567, 62 ('De lxxv ketterije is dat de ketters knielen voor een (…) doof Sacrament-huysken'); Van Marnix van Sint Aldegonde 1868, vol. 2, 35 ('de macht noch niet en hadden, om schoone costelijcke ciborien, oft monstrancien ende Sacrament-huyskens te maken'). Other examples in Van Bruaene 2016a, 44–51.

114 Timmermann 2009, 324.

115 To the list of sacrament houses in Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 147–149 and 150, note 31 can

be added the example in the Brussels Hospital of Saint Peter (Passchier Borman, 1528–1531), in Berchem's church of Saint Willibrord (Franchois de Roose, 1555), in Borgloon's church of Saint Odolphus (design by Laurens Heroudt, 1557–1558), in the church of Koudekerke in Zeeland (Henrick Lenaerts, 1558), and in Varsenare's church of Saint Maurice (Ambrosius van Cattenbrouck, 1560–1561). See resp. Bonenfant & Frankignoulle 1935, 42–43 and 45; Prims 1949, 107 and 132–133; Peeters 1984; SAA, Certificatieboek 13, fol. 349v; Parmentier 1948, 88, note 62.

116 Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 128–130.

117 For Diest, see Raymaekers 1857, 47–49, and Bonenfant & Frankignoulle 1935, 65–67. For Bourbourg, see De Coussemaker 1871. For Breda, see Paquay 2006, 154 and 193–194, note 181. Compare with Mol 1986; Craig & Litzenberger 1993.

118 For Ghent, see De Smidt 1971, esp. 9–10. For Heverlee, see Smeyers 1986–1987. For Gistel, see Parmentier 1948, 56–58, and Lambert 1986, 19–24. These and other examples are amply discussed in Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017.

119 Maffei 1942, 116–117; Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 137.

120 KR 1469, fols. 42–46v (July 1469–June 1470). The attribution was first proposed by Hulin de Loo 1913 and subsequently accepted by Destrée 1923 and Roggen & Withof 1944, 166. De Layens' heightened presence in Zoutleeuw in comparison to other years is an important argument in favor of the hypothesis. Engelen 1993, 135–139 and Timmermann 2009, 114, note 84 refuted the attribution without further argument.

121 See resp. Maere 1946, 346–348, and Van Even 1877, 412. See also Kavaler 2000, 233; Kavaler 2012, 10–11.

122 KR 1552, fol. 97v.

123 Van den Boogert 1992; De Jonge 2010; Jonckheere 2012, 240–242.

124 Van Duinen 1997; Glover 2017. Compare with the political and religious claims in Floris' Tournai rood loft: Kavaler 2006.

125 Van der Laarse 2011; Woollett 2012, 18.

126 Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 130–133. An in-depth study of the drawing of the sacrament house of the Abbey of the Dunes is in preparation, in collaboration with Jan Van Acker and Alexander Lehouck.

127 Lansens 1863, 458–459 and 529–531; Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 135–136.

128 Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 144.

129 Speakman Sutch & Van Bruaene 2010.

130 Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 4, 212.

131 See the data in Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 147–149. For Tongerlo, see Sanderus 1659, 75–76.

132 See the many examples in Huysmans *et al.* 1996.

133 This suggested by the installation of a bench at the location of the previous sacrament house: KR 1554, fol. 152v (November 1554).

134 RAL, SL, no. 3033, fol. 2 ('gelyck men hem de plaetse gewesen ende gedesigneert heeft').

135 The contract is published in De Smidt 1971, 9–10 ('wat vromere ende hooghere'). Compare also with Van Vaernewijck 1872–1881, vol. 1, 152, who referred to it as 'a high rising work' ('een hooghe upghaende weerck'). See more in detail Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 142–145.

136 See also Kavaler 2012, 101 and 264.

137 KR 1477, fol. 219 (January 1478).

138 Van Even 1877, 412–413, note 1; Kavaler 2012, 10–11.

139 De Smidt 1971, 9–10.

140 The contract is published in Crab 1977, 311–313.

141 On the contemporary distinction between these two styles, see Duverger 1930, 7–8; Cat. Amsterdam 1986, vol. 1, 39–48; Kavaler 2000; Van Miegroet 2001; Kavaler 2012.

142 De Smidt 1971, 9 ('vier beelden inde pylaeren vanden voet, wesende de vier leeraerts'). Compare with Patigny 2020, 160–168.

143 Hecht 1997, 79–151.

144 Petri 1567, fols. 34–58v. Another example is Vervoort 1552, Chapter 1.

145 Daly 2014, 164.

146 *Patrologia Latina* 40, cap. VI, col. 1146; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, quaestio 25, art. 5; De Voragine 1995, vol. 2, 81–93. Compare with Nagel 2005, 406–409.

147 Meganck 2014, 134–140. See also Chastel 1983, 191–198.

148 Sanderus 1659, 75–76; Van Spilbeeck 1882, 22–23; Duverger 1934, 56–57, 97 and 105–108; Jansen 2015.

149 Sanderus 1659, 27–29; Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 130.

150 'Quid stas, & lapides pulchros miraris, & artem,/ Cerne quod interius sit Deus Omnipotens./ Hoc te non moveat quod pulchra aedicula facta est/ Omnis nam pulchri hic Conditor occluditur./

Auctor mundana fabrica hic concluditur intus./ Flecte genu supplex, numina sancta colens./ Non hanc quis celebri Salomonis conferat aedi,/ Non umbras, verum sed capit ipsa Deum'. Sweertius 1613, 151–152; Sanderus 1659, 76.

151 Hall 2013, 16.

152 Gielis 2010.

153 Van Uytven 1963.

154 Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 142–145.

155 Examples in Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 147. Compare with Van der Velden 2000, 237–238 and Herremans 2009, 35.

156 RAL, SL, no. 3033, fol. 2 ('behoudelyck dat myn joncker oft zyn huysvrouwe daer aen nyet en willen gecontrefeyt zyn'). For a discussion of the original placement of the stone, see Suykerbuyk 2017, 63–64.

157 Van Campene 1870, 17 ('daer vooren hij [Van Cuelsbrouck] knielende ghemaeckt es, ende lichter vooren begraven').

158 Compare with Schleif 1990, 40–45; Duffy 1992, 329–331; Heinz 2012, 322–323.

159 An earlier example is the sacrament house commissioned from Matheus II Keldermans in 1506 by Abbot Gerard vander Scaeft for the Abbey of Averbode. See Lefèvre 1927, 22–23.

160 This and other examples in De Coussemaker 1876, vol. 3, 154, 156–157 and 166.

161 Van Herwaarden 1982, 192.

162 KR 1559, fol. 341v. Compare with Henne 1860–1861, vol. 1, 172–173.

163 Consecrations often took place on significant holidays, see Germonprez 2012, 280. The deadlines for the delivery of the monstrance and the sacrament house were respectively Pentecost 1548 and 1552, see RAL, SL, no. 3030, fol. 6v and no. 3033, fols. 2r–v. Saint Erasmus' altar was consecrated in May 1556: KR 1555, fol. 220. In that year Pentecost fell on 24 May.

164 Buylaert *et al.* 2014; De Weerd 2016b. On the Protestant side, too, the nobility was called upon to defend 'genuine' Christianity, as is exemplified by Luther's *An den christlichen Adel*.

165 The foundation charters for the daily Mass at Saint Erasmus' altar and for the sermons: RAL, KAB, Box 982, nos. 1261 and 1268 ('tot vermeerderinge des dienst Goids ende gemeyne welvaerts').

7 1566. The *Beeldenstorm* and Its Aftermath

1 Van Bruaene 2016a.

2 Scheerder 1974, 18–19.

3 'Emmer heeft groote schade gheleden dat rijcke ende zeer machtich clooster van den Dunen, daer voren dat zij ghecommen zijn, ende om dat haer daer wederstant ghedaen wart, zoo hebben zij daerinne afghebroken een sacramentshuus van marbere, toetse ende albastre, dat den voorleden abt hadde doen maken ende hadde wel xiiii^C pont grooten ghecost'. Van Vaernewijck 1872–1881, vol. 1, 75. See also Suykerbuyk & Van Bruaene 2017, 130–132.

4 Van Campene 1870, 17 ('een luttelken hier te vooren ghegheven'). Compare with Van Vaernewijck 1872–1881, vol. 1, 152.

5 Van Mander 1604, fols. 232v (Willem Key), 236 (Jan van Scorel), 244 (Pieter Aertsen), 247 (Maarten van Heemskerck), 254 (Anthonie Blocklandt van Montfoort) and 259v (Dirck Barendsz), quote on fol. 244 ('van scheyndige handen, tot jammer der Const, door het woest onverstandt vernielt'). On Van Mander and iconoclasm, see Ford 2007.

6 'Dit werck, als A° 1566 t'ghemeen in zijn raserije was, wiert in stucken gheslagen met bijlen, alhoewel de Vrouw van Sonneveldt t'Alckmaer daer voor boodt 100 pondt, want alsooment uyt de Kerck bracht om haer te leverne, vielen de Boeren als uytsinnigh daer op, en brachten die schoon Const te niet'. Van Mander 1604, fols. 244r–v, including other examples.

7 'Pieter was dickwils onverduldigh, dat zijn dingen, die hy de Weerelt tot gedachtnis meende laten, soo te nieten wierden ghebracht'. Van Mander 1604, fol. 244v. On his religious oeuvre, see Cat. Amsterdam 1986, vol. 2, 342–343.

8 Freedberg 2012, 45, note 14; Wouk 2018, 503.

9 Van Mander 1604, fol. 241; *Antwerpsch chronykje* 1743, 88–89. On the painting and its fame, see Van de Velde 1975, 280–282; Held 1996, 179–180 and 201; Wouk 2018, 512–513.

10 The origins of the term 'Wonderyear' are discussed by Marnef 1999, 193, its further fortunes by Pollmann 2016, 172. See also Van Vaernewijck 1872–1881, vol. 1, 188. For Catholic reactions in the period immediately after the *Beeldenstorm*, see De Boer 2016.

11 Excellent overviews in Woltjer 1994 and Marnef 1999.
12 Van Nierop 1991.
13 Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 201–202; Lamal 2013.
14 Mack Crew 1978.
15 A detailed chronological overview is provided by Scheerder 1974. See also Duke & Kolff 1969; Backhouse 1971; Deyon & Lottin 1981; Scheerder 2016.
16 Kuttner 1949. Critiques by Leblanc 1951 and Roelink 1964.
17 Van der Wee 1969.
18 Compare with Van Nierop 1995, 218.
19 Arnade 2008.
20 Zemon Davis 1973; Holt 1993.
21 Freedberg 1972.
22 Michalski 1993, 86.
23 Suykerbuyk 2016.
24 Compare with the data in De Vries 1984, 271–272 and 280–281.
25 'Je ne puis (…) sortir de ceste ville que l'on tient close, qu'est cause que je n'ay moien de faire si ample advertence comme je polroie faire estant à Brucelles: mais le dangier y est trop grand (…) L'on tient icy assez bon ordre et grand guest: mais je craindz que, à la longue, les bourgeois se fascheront'. Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 438.
26 '(…) le contentement qu'elle prend de veoir les bons offices et debvoirs que ses bons et loyaulx subiectz font pour eulx conserver et maintenir en leur ancienne devotion tant au regard de la religion que pour service de Sa Majesté'. RAB, Audiëntie, no. 244/2 (no. 126), partially published in Enno van Gelder 1925–1942, vol. 3, 62.
27 Suykerbuyk 2016, 18–19.
28 Duke & Kolff 1969, 322–323. See also the remarks in Roelink 1964, 53 and 70, and Scheerder 1974, 18 and 114.
29 Arnade 2008, 125–165.
30 Scribner 1976, 241.
31 Lamal 2013, 75–76.
32 Battistini 1949, 267. The date of 2 August 1566, suggested by Battistini, is evidently wrong, since the letter mentions the destruction suffered in Antwerp, which only started on 20 August.
33 This is discussed in detail in Suykerbuyk 2016, 21–33.
34 SAL, Oud Archief, no. 299, fols. 250–256.
35 Such as Bruges, Diksmuide and Hoorn. RAB, Raad van Beroerten, respectively no. 64, fol. 205; no. 55, fol. 53; no. 109, fol. 362v.
36 SAB, no. 1724, fol. 99v.
37 SAL, Oud Archief, no. 299, fol. 254; Battistini 1949, 272–273; Poulet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 432 and 440.
38 'Et estant fort étrange de veoir en ladite église harquebusiers à crocq et grand nombre de sauldars armez, tellement que à grand peine et difficulté pouvoit-on avoir accèz en ladite église, sinon par estroict passage et l'ung après l'autre'. Verheyden 1954, 31–32. On the re-opening of the church, see De Saint-Genois 1861, 22, and Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 448 and 451.
39 SAB, no. 1724, fol. 106; Hoynck van Papendrecht 1743, vol. 2, 377; Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 462.
40 Suykerbuyk 2016, 26–28.
41 SAL, Oud Archief, no. 299, fols. 258v–262 and 264. Compare with Battistini, 1949, 274; Molanus 1861, vol. 1, 442 and vol. 2, 885; Enno van Gelder 1925–1942, vol. 1, 159.
42 RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 55, fols. 110–111; Scheerder 1951, 300; Backhouse 1971, 82–83 and 100.
43 RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 109, fols. 363–365. Other examples in Scheerder 1974, 20–21, 35 and 51; Verheyden 1954, 5 and 24; Duplessis 1991, 210; Pollmann 2006, 95.
44 Duke & Kolff 1969, 324; Scheerder 1974, 58–59, 109–110.
45 Van Uytven 1963. For Brussels, see RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 38, esp. fols. 14, 15, 16, 17v, 42, 73v and 85v, and Marnef 1984, 57–61. Other well-documented examples include Lille and Bruges: Willems-Closset 1970; Backhouse 1971, 64; Dewitte 1982, 39; Vandamme 1982, 107.
46 Partially discussed in Scheerder 1951, 299–300; Backhouse 1971, 99–100; Scheerder 1974, 27.
47 See the excerpts of the 1566–1567 churchwarden accounts published by Weale 1874, 32–33.
48 RAB, Raad van Beroerten, no. 55, esp. fols 49v–52v and 58–62; Weale 1874, 13 and 138–142.
49 'Les villes du pays d'Arthois, Namur et Luxembourg demeurarent tousjours constantes en la religion catholicque'. Henne 1860–1861, vol. 1, 185–186. Compare with Enno van Gelder 1925–1942, vol. 1, 151 and 162; Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 457–458; Wauters 1858, 345–346.
50 Parker 1988, 73–74; Scheerder 2016, 54–55; Mack Crew 1978, 9.
51 '(…) beaucop de marchantz d'Anvers et de Tournay infectéz d'hérésie que font beaucop de maulx (…) menassent d'exterminer tous

les ecclésiasticques et les massacrer'. Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 374.

52 Daris 1887–1891, vol. 3, 400; Hansay 1931, 226–227; Venner 1989, 101.

53 Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 380. Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 201 erroneously referred to this source as the reason why Zoutleeuw escaped the *Beeldenstorm*, which would only escalate weeks later.

54 RAL, SL, no. 3608, Account of 1566, unfoliated ('eenen brieff ghedraghen tot Diest vande borghmeesters om tijdinghe te weeten vanden gueus').

55 KR 1566, fols. 539 (December 1566), 543–544 (May 1567) and 545 (June 1567).

56 Hansay 1932; Venner 1989.

57 RAL, SL, no. 3608, Account of 1567, unfoliated.

58 DuPlessis 1991, esp. 313.

59 Scribner 1976, 240–241.

60 'Cives hoc commendat, quod nemo umquam his iniquis temporibus nomine haereseos vel suspectus fuerit'. Gramaye 1968, 130. No individuals from Zoutleeuw are included in Verheyden 1961.

61 Van der Eycken 1976, 26–27.

62 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 108–109.

63 'Ende aengaenden dengenen, die souden syn geweest als hoeffden oft promoteurs van het beroven en sacageren van de kercken, enz. adverteren wy uwe Excell. dat wy daer aff nyet en weten, als saeken die binnen dese stadt nyet gebeurt en syn. God hebbe loff!' Deracourt 1953, 127.

64 '(…) als tot een teeken datze zich aan de Pausselijke kerke verbonden hielden, en tegens de Geuzen kanten wilden'. Brandt 1663, 361–362. For the *Geuzen* medals, see Parker 1988, 72.

65 Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 1, 453; Geevers 2008, 23–25, 100, 135 and 165–168.

66 Piot 1859–1860, 29–42, and Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 202–228. Compare with Wezemaal: Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 131–140. In general, see Toebak 1991.

67 For instance KR 1569, fols. 491v–492 ('voer syn groete schade vanden gueyens').

68 On these invasions see Parker 1988, resp. 110–111 and 140. On Zoutleeuw in particluar, see also Battistini 1949, 358 and 360.

69 See the data provided by Piot 1859–1860, 40–41; Cosemans 1936, 343; Van Uytven 1995a, 12–14. Compare also with the observations by Gramaye 1968, 127.

70 After 1585 the ecclesiastical authorities were confronted with gaps in the archives everywhere, which they tried to remedy as soon as possible. See Toebak 1991, 78–79.

8 The Resumption of Miracles

1 'A° 1612 4 APRIL IS ALSVLLIKE MELAETSEN JONGMAN/ GENAEMPT PAVLVS GAVTIER HIEN [sic] GENESEN GEWORDEN OVER/ DIE VERDIENSTEN VAN S. LENAERT./ A° 1612 davril le 4 jour Paul Gautier icy pourtraict estroupié/ par les merites St Leonard est gary comme voyez'.

2 KR 1612, unfoliated (April 1612): 'Betaelt Meester Jacop Lambrechts, Schilder, voor het contrefeytsel van het mirakel van Paulus Gautier 4 gulden'. For other references to Lambrechts, see KR 1606, unfoliated (receipts in money); KR 1612, unfoliated (June 1612); RAL, SL, no. 3622, fol. 73.

3 Kriss-Rettenbeck 1958; Kriss-Rettenbeck 1972; Brauneck 1978, 89–94; Frijhoff 1985; Freedberg 1991, 136–160; Jacobs 2013. For a recent criticism on Kriss-Rettenbeck, see Van der Velden 2000, 211–212 and 227–229.

4 Whereas Kriss-Rettenbeck qualified the inscription as distinguishing feature, Jacobs emphasized the direct visual communication between devotee and cult object within the painting. For definitions, see especially Kriss-Rettenbeck 1958, 12 and 112; Brauneck 1978, 89–94; Jacobs 2013, 7–10.

5 Van der Velden 2000, 218–219; Jacobs 2013, quote on 1.

6 'T'AYANT INVOQUE EN CESTE/ CHAPELLE O DOUCE VIERGE SUIS IE/ MIRACULEUSEMENT DELIVRE/ EN MON AGE DE 40 ANS DUNE/ ROMPURE QUI M'AVOIT OBLIGE/ A PORTER CEST BRAYER PLUS/ DE 12 ANNEES. AD MAIOREM DEIPARE GLORIAM./ EX VOTO/ A.W.' Canvas, 78 × 60 cm. See Harline 2002 and Harline 2003.

7 Compare with Kriss-Rettenbeck 1958, 12; Kriss-Rettenbeck 1972, 119 and 214–216; Jacobs 2013, 7–10.

8 Even *tabella votiva* could refer to a text board. See for instance Erasmus 1965, 299, and Halkin 1969, 250.

9 Vrancx 1600, 267; Wichmans 1632, 258–261.

10 Giraldo 1959b, 103–107; Kriss-Rettenbeck 1972, 75, 119 and 214–216. This type of imagery is also briefly discussed by Benz 2014, 80–82.

11 It should however be noted that similar wording was occasionally also used to refer to genuine votive gifts, and Platelle 1968, 32 and 53 used 'tableau commémoratif' to refer to votive paintings.

12 '(…) ghelijck sy daer inde cappelle oock hanght gheschildert, tot een eeuwighe memorie en ghedinckenisse van dit Mirakele wtnemende groot en schoone'. Vrancx 1600, 19.

13 For examples, see Giraldo 1959b, 103–107 and Delbeke *et al.* 2015.

14 '(…) ghegeven tot hoveschede bi miner vrouwen bevelen 1 man van die vanden Bosche, die hoer brochte 1 bort daer op ghemalen stont de miracle van onser vrouwen beelde die daer is, 1 oude scilt'. De Boer 1998, 210–211.

15 Tanghe 1862, 94–95; Giraldo 1959b, 104.

16 Laenen 1919–1920, vol. 1, 95–113; Périer-d'Ieteren 1975; Périer-d'Ieteren 1976; Cat. Brussels 2013, cat. 86. For the *elevatio* of his relics, see De Munck 1777, 246–252.

17 In general, see Kriss-Rettenbeck 1972, 75.

18 'Drie verwoede menschen ghequelt vanden vyant/ werden hier oec verlost soe wij lesen'.

19 Pannier-Deslypere 1980; Van Mulder 2016, 100–102.

20 '(…) soo t'selve blyckt breeder by d'opene brieven van de stede van Dendermonde in t'iaer 1593'. See also Vrancx 1600, 137–138 and Müller-Hofstede 1957, 133–134.

21 '(…) twelcke sy insghelycx verkent heeft op den xvii^{en} iuny 1603 voor schepenen deser heerlicheyt van Sente Pieters'. See Daem 1990a, 33, and Daem 1990b, 229 and 242–244. The author erroneously refers to them as votive offerings.

22 Among the most recent studies on seventeenth-century shrines in the Low Countries are Duerloo & Wingens 2002; Harline 2002; Harline 2003; Delfosse 2009; Perneel 2009; Delbeke 2012; Dekoninck 2013; Adam 2014; Delbeke *et al.* 2015; Constant 2015.

23 Toebak 1992, 131–132. See also the remarks in Ditchfield 2007.

24 Van der Steen 2015.

25 On the situation in Brabant, see Toebak 1991 and Toebak 1992. On the southern Low Countries in general, see Thijs 1990; Marnef 2003; Pollmann 2011a, 125–158.

26 In general, see Harline 1990, 250–254; Forster 1992; Forster 2001; Ditchfield 2007. For the Low Countries, see Harline & Put 2000. For Brabant in particular, see Toebak 1992. For an excellent recent historiographical overview, see Laven 2006.

27 'Hoe is den tijdt aldus verkeert?/ Veel Sancten en zijn niet meer gheeert/ In dese Vlaemsche Landouwen/ (…) Alle die Sancten sijn gaen duycken/ Sy en doen geen mirakel meer'. Mak 1946, 161.

28 For early reactions to the *Beeldenstorm*, see Göttler 1997, 62–64; Van Deursen 2001, 25–26; Duke 2009, 179–180; Pollmann 2016, 159–162.

29 The full caption reads: 'Laet ons wel bidden sonder ophelden/ Och dat ons heylichdom te meer mach gelden./ Laet ons ras keren en worden niet moe/ Want aelle dees cremekie [*sic for* cremerie] hoort den duyvel toe' (below), and 'Tis al verloren, ghebeden, oft ghescheten/ Ick heb de beste canse ghestreken/ 1566' (above). On this print see especially Göttler 1997 and Duke 2009, 191–193.

30 'Dolendum tamen, non omnia miracula (siquidem solummodo decem & octo authentice subsignata penes me habeo) esse scripto commendata: quod & aliis quam plurimis sacris locis commune fatum est'. Wichmans 1632, 459.

31 Cat. Leuven 1997, 249–253; De Landtsheer 2004, 73–74.

32 The last two dated miracles in the manuscript supposedly took place in 1461 and 1526. Van Mulder 2010 and Van Mulder 2016, 87–94 and 339–341.

33 'Et quae hactenus dedi, unius ferè saeculi sunt (duo excipio) id est ab anno M. CCCC aut circa, ad annum quingentesimum, imo ad eum non pertingunt. Deinceps usque ad hoc nostrum aevum ferè silentium est, an non incuria, aut omissione eorum, qui Actis praefuerunt? Ego arbitror: sive etiam satietas eos cepit scribendi aut colligendi, cum viderent Divae gloriam satis iam propagatam testatamque esse. Neque enim desiisse miracula, vel haec aetas dicit: in qua paucis ab annis memorabilia evenere: quae tamen non Actis comprehensa, sed Tabulis ferè votivis signata, aut depicta, breviter hic commemorabo'. Lipsius 1604, 65–66.

34 Winnepenninckx 1964; Andriessen 1987.

35 'Dwelck deur de ketterye van Luther, en meer andere die de Heylighen Sancten en Sanctinnen

versmaen is wt de ghewoonte ghegaen'. Vrancx 1600, 152–153. Compare with 209.

36 For instance Vrancx 1600, 257, 259 and 266.

37 '(…) datter noch daghelicx souden Mirakelen werden ghedaen, waert dat sy daghelicx noch aenroepen en versocht wierdt, dwelc deur de ketterye hier en elders is verkaut'. Vrancx 1600, 209.

38 Vrancx 1600, 152–153.

39 'Oversulcx de Mirakelen, die noch daghelicx in de heylighe Catholijcke Kercke op diveersche plaetsen gheschieden, en dienen niet verzweghen, ende zijn profytelick gheweten in desen deerlicken tijt vande leste eeuwe, alster soo veel Menschen in ongheloovicheyt en diveersche ketteryen ghevallen zijn, ende noch vallen in veel plaetsen'. Vrancx 1600, 4–5.

40 '(…) die stonden gheschreven in eenen Boeck van Perkemijn met volcommen bescheedt, die vande Gheusen ghevonden ende ghebroken is gheweest, wt den haet die sy draghen op God, zijn lieve Moedere en alle Heylighen'. Vrancx 1600, 281, 283.

41 Vrancx 1600, 117–118, 127.

42 Vrancx 1600, 20, 28, 58, 127 and 152–153.

43 In general, see Van Mulder 2016, 335–350.

44 Van De Woude 1950.

45 '(…) antiquiteyten en oude Rekeninghen vande kercke van Tongre'. Vrancx 1600, 37–63, quote on 58.

46 Quoted from Van Mulder 2016, 95–98.

47 *Histoire* 1753, esp. 46, 67 and 101; Indestege 1948; Hens *et al.* 1978, 72; Van Mulder 2016, 83–85 and 341–343.

48 Dekoninck 2013, 150.

49 'Lecteur Catholique, par les extraitz cy dessus transcriptz & la narration de tant de miracles suffisamment verifiez, on peut clairement cognoistre, combien est grande & effrontée l'impudence des Heretiques de nostre temps, & particulierement de ceux qui ont tenu nostre ville de Bruxelles, qui oserent publier en l'an 1581 un placart, dans lequel, entre eultres blasphemes, calumnies & impostures, ilz misrent en avant, que ce S. Sacrement a esté manifesté premierement en l'an 1529 durant la maladie, que l'on appelloit lors, la Sueur d'Angleterre, de laquelle avons parlé cy dessus en nostre Histoire. Et neantmoings par le mesme placart ilz ne peuvent dissimuler, que plus de cent ans auparavant on en parloit'. Ydens 1605, 236–237. See also Adam 2014 and Van Mulder 2016, 106–115. The text of the placard can be found in *Waerachtich verhael* 1581.

50 '(…) s'apparut a luy en vision, en la mesme figure, comme il est monstré en ladicte Eglise (…) en memoire de ce grand benefice, & pour action de grace, feist peindre un tableau, representant saditte vision avec la soubscription de ce beau Miracle'. Ydens 1605, 205–206.

51 '(…) doende daer af een tafereel maken, dat hy nae Cheevre ghezonden heeft in danckbaerheyt'. Vrancx 1600, 30.

52 Wichmans 1632, 290 ('in beneficii accepti gratam testificationem').

53 Molanus 1570, fols. 83v–84v ('depictam tabellam testem miraculi'); Molanus 1996, vol. 1, 266–267.

54 Kriss-Rettenbeck 1958, 109–110; Brauneck 1978, 90–91; Frijhoff 1985, 39–40; Jacobs 2013, 5–7.

55 Some rare examples are discussed in Giraldo 1959b, 107–108, and Zuring 1991, 99–103.

56 Vrancx 1600, 30, 104; Lipsius 1604, 65–67 (1591); Wichmans 1632, 290, 499 (1604).

57 Lipsius 1604, 74 mentions a *tabula* dating to 1455, depicting Duke Philip the Good kneeling in front of the Virgin and including a French inscription, but the painting's precise function remains unclear. Van der Velden 2000, 279 interpreted it as a commemorative epitaph rather than a votive painting or portrait. Jan Gossart's 1517 *Diptych of Jean Carondelet* (Paris, Louvre) has been interpreted as ex-voto, but does not meet any of the criteria: it does not represent a specific miraculous image or a miracle, nor was it given to a specific shrine. For the proposition, see Ainsworth 2010, cat. 40.

58 Lipsius 1604, 14. See also 65–66.

59 Van Marnix van Sint Aldegonde 1868, vol. 1, 281.

60 See, respectively, Lipsius 1605, 18 ('tafereelen, die wt devotie gheschoncken zijn') and 72 ('beloofde tafereelen'), and Lipsius 1607, 22 ('tafereelen, die aldaer ghegheven zijn in ghedenckenisse van eenighe mirakelen ende ontfanghen weldaden') and 106–107 ('gheschildert in tafereelen tot memorie aldaer ghegeven'). On these translations, see Cat. Leuven 1997, cat. 78–79; De Landtsheer 2004, 84–85; Hermans 2015.

61 Theys 1953 and Theys 1960, 391–392. For another documented example in Ghent (Our Lady, 1631), see Daem 1990a, 39–40, and Daem 1990b, 229.

62 Van der Velden 2000, 166–178; Bass 2007.

63 'VIRGINI DEI GENETRICI/ A morbo restitutus/ ROGERIVS CLARISSE sua [impensa] f./ MDCXIIII'. Smellinckx 2010. On Clarisse, see Vlieghe 1987, cat. 84; Timmermans 2008, 17, 112, 124 and 239–240.

64 Frijhoff 1985, 39–40. Similar observation by Van der Velden 2000, 218, with a hypothetical explanation of the difference between Italy and northern Europe on 282–285.

65 Wichmans 1632, 459. Compare with Büttner 1994.

66 '(…) daer men ghewaer wordt dat aen de memorien der Heylighen miraeckelen gheschieden'. Costerus 1604, 259.

67 Platelle 1968, 45 ('un climat miraculeux'). Compare with Johnson 1996, 202, who spoke of 'a culture of the miraculous' in the Palatinate. For a brief overview of the early seventeenth-century Low Countries, see Platelle 1973.

68 Platelle 1968, 37–45.

69 Numan 1604, 33–35; Goetschalckx 1902a, 387; Duerloo & Wingens 2002, esp. 23–28.

70 Numan 1604, 39–43 and *passim*; Duerloo & Wingens 2002, 37–39 and 56–64.

71 Vrancx 1600, 4–5 and 152–153; Costerus 1604, 259 ('(…) op dat wy door de miraeckelen in het gheloove souden bevesticht worden'); Delfosse 2002; Delfosse 2009, 25–54.

72 '(…) up dat een yeder int gheloove ende moghentheyt Gods met zijne ghebenedide moeder ghesterct zij ende daerinne niet en twijffele'. Daem 1990a, 33.

73 Ditchfield 2007, esp. 213.

74 On Petri, see Waite 2007, 40–41.

75 Waite 2007, 34, 41 and 49.

76 '(…) nochtans wordt de heylige kercke oock nu ter tijdt met veel miraeckelen, die gheschieden aen de heylighe beelden ende reliquien der Heylighen, verlicht, ende de waerheydt van ons gheloof bevesticht'. Costerus 1591, 28–30.

77 '(…) nae bequaemheydt de by-gheleghen heylighe plaetsen besoecke daermen ghewaer wordt dat aen de memorien der heylighen miraeckelen gheschieden'. Costerus 1604, 259.

78 Thijs 1991, 76–80; Angenendt 1994, 249.

79 Lipsius 1604, 18.

80 Pollmann 2011a, 166–167.

81 See for instance Van Marnix van Sint Aldegonde 1868, vol. 1, 116–117 and 281–282.

82 Coens 1598, fols. 207v–208. The latter was also included in Lipsius 1604, 23–24. One these miracles, see also Viaene 1931 and Pollmann 2011a, 167.

83 Coens 1598, fol. 208v.

84 In general, see Soergel 1991 and Pollmann 2011a, 167–168. For other examples, see *Histoire* 1753, 124–125; Hansay 1932; De Boer 2013, 65–68.

85 'Noch de guesten en hebbet Cruys niet connen nemen, maer alst sij inde kercke voerschreven mijnden de bilden te verbranden soo sijn sij int vier gevallen'. See the documents published online by Heemkring Campenholt: 'Mirakels te Everberg (1588)' (accessed 6 June 2019).

86 Marnef 2009, 88. The story is recounted in many later publications, including Wichmans 1632, 919–920. See also Delbeke *et al.* 2015, 229.

87 Platelle 1968, 27–37.

88 'La coleur est artificiele, si j'ay jamais cognu coleur de painctres'. Poullet 1877–1896, vol. 3, 543.

89 Van der Linden 1941.

90 Toebak 1992, 134.

91 Lipsius 1604, unpaginated ('Historiam scripsi') and 15–18. Compare with Benz 2014, 89.

92 Benz 2014.

93 'Den 4en april als het mirakel ghebuerde over Pauls Gautier van Limborch ende den 5en alsmen een solemnele messe dede in Sinte Leonaerts choor in danckbaerheyt die custers van luyen den 4 ende 5 ghegeven, 12 st. Noch aen andere 3 luyers 18 st. Den personnet vande messe te doen 5 st. Aen 7 potten bier voor die luyers 10,5 st. Die gareelmaker voor een riem vande groote clocke die wuyt gevallen was 13 st'. KR 1612, unfoliated (April 1612).

94 'Heer Willem Marien gherestitueert het gheens hij hadde Merten Reers ghegheven die naer Gheldenaken ghesonden worden om sekerheyt te hebben van het 2[en] mirakel die sanderdaechs was ghebuert als Pauls van Limborch ghesondt worde, 20 st. (…) Als den pastoor met ons secretaris naer Gheldenaken reden om sekerheyt te hebben van het mirakel aen een vrau persoon betaelt voor peertshueren, 30 st. (…) Op 20 september alsmen luyde voor het mirakel vanden man van omtrent Lueven betaelt aende luyers 6 st'. KR 1612, unfoliated (April, June, September 1612): 'Livina de Hont die seyde hier verlost te syne van haren cruepelheyt haer ghegheven tot teerghelt 2 gulden 10 st. Voor die selve een lyffken costen 2 gulden 8 st. Den maeckloon 6 st. Die costers van luyen als het mirakel ghebuerde 15 st. Die selve vande messe van devotien 15 st'. The miracle in June 1612 might have happened at the occasion of Saint Leonard's procession at Whit Monday (1 June).

95 'Lost doch wt prangghen die ligghen ghevanghen/ En croepele maect gaende ter deser vaert/ Blust elcx verlanghen in pynen verhanghen/ So wort hi van elcken devotelijc verclaert/ Lof heilich patroon te Leeuwe sinte Lenart'. See also Thijs 1991, 78.

96 The original foundation charter is lost, but copies exist in DAZ, no. 45, 142, and in RAL, KAB, no. 991, 140. See also Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 88, and Grauwen *et al.* 1996, 316, no. 1453. The foundation is also mentioned by Gramaye in 1606: Gramaye 1968, 131–132.

97 Gaffiot 1934, 1321.

98 Brussels, KIK-IRPA, dossier no. 2L47 2002 07752. I am grateful to Emmanuelle Mercier for kindly providing me the necessary information. This particular intervention is not documented, but other restorations are: KR 1480, fol. 30v (June 1480); KR 1481, fol. 65 (April 1481, 'betaelt Meester Aert dij Scildere van Sijnte Lenaert te stoffere'); KR 1505, fol. 25 (June 1506); KR 1547, fol. 280v (June 1548, 'betaelt meester Anthonis die Schieldere (…) van Syncte Leonardt te stoefferen'). In general, see Bergmann 2017.

99 Wichmans 1632, 499; Coveliers 1912, 76–78; Breugelmans *et al.* 1987, 69.

100 Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 148.

101 Van De Woude 1950.

102 Piot 1859–1860, 31–41; Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 208–228.

103 KR 1598, fol. 199v: 'Peeter Briers en Aerdt van Haughen om naer Ons L. Vrau van Hal te gaen, gegeven 4,5 gulden'. For the miracles in Halle, see Vrancx 1600, 6–15; Lipsius 1604. See also Platelle 1973, 175.

104 Wichmans 1632, 457.

105 Goetschalckx 1910, 399–402.

106 Stiennon 1951, 290; Russe 1955; George 2001, 264.

107 Chapeaville 1612–1616, vol. 3, 643–644; Russe 1955, 380; George 2001, 265.

108 It was reportedly titled *De l'invocation et de l'intercession des Saints, avec la vie de saint Léonard et les miracles advenus par ses mérites au foubourg de la cité de Liège*, but no actual copy is known. See *Acta Sanctorum Novembris III*, 145, col. E; De Becdelièvre 1836–1837, vol. 1, 364; Wauters 1884–1885, col. 547.

109 Hermans 2004, 128–133.

110 Chapeaville 1612–1616, vol. 3, 643.

111 KR 1612 (unfoliated): 'Peeter van Lier voor een paer aude schoen voor Paulus van Limborch daer die mirakel in Sinte Leonaerts choer over ghedaen was, 15 st (…) Paulus Gautier van Limborch als hy naer Hakendever ginck om aldaer inde prosessie te gaen ende Godt den heere dancken van dat hij soe miraculueselycken was ghenesen, hem ghegheven 4 st (…) Paulus Gautier als hy naer Bastonien reysde, 2 gulden 10 st. Betaelt Dirick Buys voor een paer schoen voor Pauls Gautier, 35 st (…) [April] Als Pauls Gautier naer Scherpenhuevel reysde met dij Predicant, hen tot teerghelt ghegheven 27,5 st (…) Betaelt aen Aerdt Moleneers die montcosten van Pauls Gautier, 4 gulden (…) [August] Suster Marie Gilis betaelt soe van lynwaet, den montkost van Paulus van Limborch die ghenesen is van syne cruepelheyt, 4 gulden'. Easter Monday in 1612 fell on 13 April.

112 Nilson 1999, 108.

113 KR 1613 (unfoliated): '[April] Duer ordonantie vande magistraet ghegheven onsen pastoor Struyven om die bullen oft brieven tot Mechelen aen den bischop te halen die de bullen van Roomen van sijne Heylicheyt hadde ontfanghen'. KR 1614 (unfoliated): '150 ghedruckte brieven om den afflaet te condighen (…) Den selven [Lenaerdt Straels] betaelt vanden afflaten te drucken'. KR 1616 (unfoliated, March and May 1616).

114 KR 1619 (unfoliated, 'den solisitatuer vanden afflaet vercreghen in april 1619 voor 7 jaeren, 12 gulden').

115 Compare with Van Herwaarden 1983, 418 and Tingle 2015, 54–55.

116 RAL, KAB, no. 1240B. See also the 1625 inventory, mentioning 'Die neeuw indulgentien deur Paulus papa verleent': De Ridder 1908, 54. Similar formulations equally occur in other indulgences awarded by Paul V. See for instance the printed edition of a Dutch translation awarded to Scherpenheuvel in Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-OB-81.407.

117 A similar example in Wezemaal, 1635. See Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 177–179.

118 Compare with an example in Alsemberg: Theys 1960, 351 and 395.

119 KR 1612 (unfoliated): '[April] Ons borgemeester Minten ghegheven als hy naer Hoye reysde om attestatie te hebben van Pauls Gautiers lamheyt, 4 gulden (…) Heer Willem Marien gherestitueert het gheens hij hadde Merten Reers ghegheven die naer Gheldenaken ghesonden worden om sekerheyt te hebben van het 2en mirakel die sanderdaechs was ghebuert als Pauls van Limborch ghesondt worde, 20 st (…) [June]

Als den pastoor met onsen secretaris naer Gheldenaken reden om sekerheyt te hebben van het mirakel aen een vrau persoon betaelt voor peertshueren 30 st'.

120 Compare for instance with the case of Wezemaal in 1635, where it was the parish priest who took the principal initiative: Minnen 2011, vol. 1, 177–179.

121 De Landtsheer 2004, 82–83; Benz 2014, 90; Van den Abeele 2015, 9–14.

122 Parshall 1993; Swan 1995.

123 Wichmans 1632, 459.

124 Hecht 1997, 248–266.

125 Jonckheere 2012, quote on 37.

126 Jacobs 2013, 12–19 and 85–125.

127 Freedberg 1971, 238; Göttler 1990, 286–291.

128 Thøfner 2000; Suykerbuyk 2018.

9 Devotional Negotiation with the Archducal Government

1 RAL, SL, no. 3622, fol. 34 ('die heylige reliquie van onsen patroen Sinte Leonaert').

2 KR 1616, unfoliated (November 1616): 'Den pastoor om naer Brussel te reysen om te vervolghen van eenighe reliquien te vercryghen van Sinte Lenaert (…) Willem den bode naer Brussel gesonden om naer die reliquie te vernemen (…) Den pastoor als hy naer Brussel reysde om die reliquien (…) Pastoor broer als hy oyck naer Brussel om die oyrsake gonck (…) Jan Bollen, borgemeester, op den 20 november als hy naer Brussel reysde inde sake van Sinte Lenaerts reliquie (…)'. KR 1616, unfoliated (December 1616) 'Jan Bollen borgemeester op geleet tgheens hy heeft verleet int soliciteren vande reliquien vanden reliquien van onsen patroon van Sinte Leonaert'.

3 Vlierbeek, Heemkundige Kring, A3.5.8a. I am grateful to Robrecht Janssen for helping me to bring this document to the surface again. For Lemmens, see Smeyers 1964, 101–102.

4 Platelle 1968, 32.

5 AAM, Acta episcopalia Mechliniensia, reg. no. 5, fol. 131v. A transcription of that document is included in DAZ, no. 45, 158–159.

6 A transcription of the official report of the translation written by Abbot Lemmens is included in DAZ, no. 45, 158. It is published in Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 133–134.

7 The most important previous literature on the Zoutleeuw relic is Wilmet 1938, vol. 1, 242–244; Van Roey 1910, 26–28; Smeyers 1992, 41; Coningx 2009, 52–53.

8 Reinle 1988, 3–23; Angenendt 1994, 168–172; Gardner 1994, 10–11.

9 Compare with Christian 1981, 127, and Vanhauwaert & Geml 2016, 117–118, discussing the 'gradation of the visibility of the relic'.

10 Compare KR 1589, fols. 244v–245 (May 1589, 'het beelt van Sinte Leonardt') with KR 1619, unfoliated ('Te Pinxten 8 draghers die het beelt van Sinte Leonaert droeghen (…) 2 jonghen met flambeauwen die voor die reliquie van Sinte Leonaert ghinghen').

11 'Een berrie (…) daermen het reliquium op draecht', and 'In de choor van Sint Lenaert rusten en worden bewaert syne H. reliquien, aen dese kercke gegeven ende solemnelycke gebrocht (…) door den eerw. heere Godefridus Lemmens, prelaet van Vlierbeeck, den 11 decembris 1616'. See respectively De Ridder 1908, 52–53, and Wauters 1892, 528–529.

12 Geary 1986, esp. 169 and 176; Angenendt 1994, 167–172; Schmidt 2003; Fricke 2015, 5–16; Vanhauwaert & Geml 2016, 119.

13 Meyer 1950; Soergel 1993, 21–22 ; Schmitt 1999, 156–157; Vauchez 1999, 79–91; Brown 2007, 186; Fricke 2015.

14 Freedberg 1991, 119–120; Van der Velden 2000, 199–208.

15 Schreiner 1966, 33–50; Angenendt 1994, 236–241; Joblin 1999.

16 For examples, see Duke 2009, 190–191, and De Boer 2016, 63–67.

17 Goetschalckx 1910, 401.

18 Christian 1981, 136–138; Burke 1984; Ditchfield 1993; Angenendt 1994, 243–244 and 250–251.

19 Ditchfield 1993.

20 Jansen 2013; Janssen 2014, 167–169; Van Strydonck *et al.* 2016, 115–116.

21 Quote from Camille 1989, 41–44. See also Walker Bynum 2011, 24–28.

22 Cramer & Pijper 1903–1914, vol. 4, 289.

23 Ford 2007, 83, 85.

24 Herremans 2015–2016. See also De Boer 2016, 72.

25 Dinzelbacher 1990; Angenendt 1994, 102–122.

26 On the tensions and interactions between images and relics, see Meyer 1950; Angenendt 1994, 183–189; Schmitt 1999; Zchomelidse 2016.

27 Vanhauwaert & Geml 2016, 117–119; Vanhauwaert 2018.
28 Compare with Vauchez 2004, 11–12.
29 Duerloo 2012, 377–378.
30 Lambert-Gorges 1993, 108.
31 Lonchay & Cuvelier 1923, vol. 1, 221–222 and 358. The letter of elevation is in RAB, Secretarie van State en Oorlog, no. 179, fol. 53 (25 January 1616).
32 Duerloo 2012, 87 and 377–378; Raeymaekers 2013, 77, 176 and 231–232.
33 Geary 1986, 182–183.
34 Duerloo 1997, 9–11 and 14. Van Lommel 1879 provides many examples.
35 Christian 1981, 135–136; Vroom 1992, 10–21; Lazure 2007.
36 Vermaseren 1941, 203–208; Benz 2003, 323–324; Esser 2012, 182–184, 194 and 207–211.
37 The relevant documents and correspondence have been published by Van Lommel 1879, 115–141.
38 Huysmans 1901, 315–317; Dresch 1925; Cat. Brussels 1998, 265–266.
39 Pybes 1624 includes a report of the events and the certificate of authenticity. For Isabella's visit, see Viaene 1929.
40 '(…) grande devotion, honneur et reverence quil port au bienheureux Saint Leonard et desirant que ses saintes reliques soient mises, colloquees et gardees en lieu sacre et la où il leur soit faite toute reverence deue, et estant bien asseure quil les seront en leglise collegiale de Saint Leonard en la ville de Liau'. Vlierbeek, Heemkundige Kring, A3.5.8a.
41 For the persons present see RAL, SL, no. 3622, as well as the official report of the translation in DAZ, no. 45, 158, and Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 133–134. Governor of town at that moment was Thomas de Wijngaerde.
42 For many examples of requests and complaints, see especially Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 202–232.
43 '(…) om te comen tot fortificatie van dese stadt'. See RAL, SL, no. 3622, fols. 41–43.
44 '(…) requeste aendie heeren Staeten om te vercrygen eenige middelen tot reparatie deser stadt'. RAL, SL, no. 3623, fols. 39–41.
45 I am grateful to Dagmar Germonprez for generously sharing these data of her ongoing research with me. On the Archdukes' overall financial aid in the Low Countries, see Germonprez 2015.
46 Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 240–241.
47 George 2001, 265–272.
48 Rayssius 1628, 446–448. The shrines of Peutie and Sint-Lenaarts only claimed to possess relics of their patron saint in the later 17th and 18th centuries, respectively, and in 1770 a relic of Saint Leonard was authenticated for Vlierbeek abbey. See Van Heurck 1922, 373–375 and 402–404, and Smeyers 1992, 42.
49 Christian 1981, 141.
50 Pollmann 2011a, 164–165.
51 Wauters 1892, 528.
52 Joblin 1999, 134–135.
53 De Boer 2016, 64–65.
54 Vroom 1992, 8 and 15–21; Joblin 1999, 138; Ditchfield 2007, 221.
55 Geary 1986, 179.
56 Brown 2007; Herremans 2015–2016, 125.
57 See for instance Philip II's personal belief: Vroom 1992, 14–15.
58 Montgomery 2010, 99–115.
59 Christian 1981, 136–137.
60 The provenance of the relic is not mentioned in any of the contemporary sources, but an eighteenth-century history of Vlierbeek Abbey states that the relic came from Spain. See Brussels, KBR, Ms. 13.553, fols. 23r–v. No relic of Saint Leonard is mentioned as coming from the northern provinces in the collection of documents published by van Lommel 1879.
61 See the many examples in Bets 1887–1888, vol. 1, 202–228, and Deracourt 1953.
62 Chipps Smith 2010, 38.
63 Nagelsmit 2014, 167–169.
64 Duerloo & Wingens 2002, 28, 71–109; Thøfner 2007, 281.
65 Lombaerde 1998, 178–182.
66 Duerloo & Wingens 2002, 97; Pollmann 2011a, 166.
67 Duerloo 2017, 157.
68 Thøfner 2007, 278–279; De Landtsheer 2004, 75.
69 Duerloo &Wingens 2002, 46; Germonprez 2015, 76–77. Compare with the similar example of Ekkergem (near Ghent) in Suykerbuyk 2018, 78–83.
70 Geary 1986, 179.
71 Achermann 1981; Geary 1986, 181 and 186; Angenendt 1994, 172–175, 247 and 250–251; Heinzelmann 2002.
72 Achermann 1981, 110; Nagelsmit 2014, 170–173.
73 KR 1616, unfoliated (December 1616); RAL, SL, no. 3622, fol. 38v; DAZ, no. 45, 158.

74 KR 1616, unfoliated (December 1616).
75 RAL, SL, no. 3622, fol. 71. For the *refugium*, see Gramaye 1968, 127, and Bets 1887–1888, vol. 2, 177–178.
76 KR 1616, unfoliated (December 1616): '4 vaendraghers alsmen die reliquie met prosessie gonck halen int huys van Heylesim (...) 6 luyers (...) Die inde kercke sierden (...) Noch aen 2 fyn hatsen gecocht tot Thienen die branden voor het tabernakel int midden der kerken voor die reliquie'.
77 RAL, SL, no. 3622, fols. 35v–38v and 71–73 (damaged): 'Item die den lanterne hebben gehangen tusschen het misseclocxken ende den toren vanden stadthuys in het innecomen vandie heylige reliquie ... Item in het ... specktakel ... reliquie van ... Sinte Leonaert ... Vandie gaten toe te maken daer tabernakels hebben gestaen betaelt ... Jan Bollen Librechtsz. betaelt voer 92 voet berts bijden selven gelevert tot die poorte gestelt aen Willem Morren als die heylige reliquie waren innecomen ... [La]mbrechts, schilder, ... voerseide poorte ... zekere wapenen ...'.
78 On Joyous Entries in the early modern Low Countries, see Soly 1984, Thøfner 2007 and Van Bruaene 2016b.
79 '(...) cum ymnis et canticis honorabiliter intronisate'. Goetschalckx 1902b, 561.
80 On the relation between the Roman catacombs and the circulation of relics, see Achermann 1981. For other examples in the Low Countries, see Platelle 1973, 233 and Nagelsmit 2014, 170–173.
81 Buzelinus 1612; Houdoy 1879, 190–191, nos. 8 and 9; Debièvre 1911, 118–121; Platelle 1968, 73–79; Lottin 1984, 274.
82 Dekoninck & Delfosse 2016. On the Jesuits' interest in relics see Christian 1981, 137–138.
83 Vervaeck 1907, 397–398; Duerloo 1997, 9 and 14; Van Wyhe 2004, 430–431; Duerloo 2012, 387–389.
84 Duerloo 1997, 9–10. Compare with Schraven 2014, 127–140.
85 Duerloo 1997, 10 and 14; Nagelsmit 2014, 166–167.
86 In general, see Angenendt 1994, 250–251. Compare, for instance, with the elaborate description of a 1654 Swiss ceremony in Achermann 1981, 104–109. Triumphal arches also occur in late sixteenth-century Spain, see Vroom 1992, 12.
87 Dinzelbacher 1990, 132–133; Walker Bynum 2011, 34.
88 Krautheimer 1969; Schraven 2014, 115–116. Compare with Angenendt 1994, 248.
89 Delehaye 1921, 213.
90 Krautheimer 1969, 176; Schraven 2014, 127–140, quote on 128.
91 Buzelinus 1612, sig. A3–A5.
92 Thøfner 2007; Van Bruaene 2016b.
93 RAL, SL, no. 3622, fol. 35v ('alsmen die heylige relique vanden H. Patroen Sinte Leonaert heeft inne gehaelt'); KR 1616, unfoliated (December 1616, 'als die reliquie inne quampt').
94 Damen 2007, 248. In a similar vein, Schraven 2014, 128 interpreted relic translations from parish churches to the cathedral of Milan in 1576 as a visualization of 'the loyal submission of the parishes to the archdiocese'.
95 Harline 1990, 250–254; Ditchfield 2007; Pollmann 2011b, 99. For other case studies in the Low Countries, see for instance Toebak 1992; Harline & Put 2000; Perneel 2009; Delbeke *et al.* 2015, 244–245.

Conclusion: The Thin Line Between Tradition and Transformation

1 Cat. Los Angeles & Madrid 2014.
2 Halkin 1971, 88. Thompson translated it as 'a strange devotion', see Erasmus 1965, 6.
3 'Bej meinem gedencken ist das gross wesen von S. Anna auffkomen, als ich ein knabe von funffzehen jharen war. Zuvor wuste man nichts von ihr, sondern ein bube kam und brachte S. Anna, klugs gehet sie ahn, den es gab jederman darzu'. Quoted from Nixon 2004, 38. For the pilgrimages, see Clemen & Leitzmann 1932–1934, vol. 1, 402–404, and Eber 2012.
4 Du Val 1566, fol. 71.
5 *Waerachtich verhael* 1581; Ydens 1605, 229–230.
6 Klauser 1969, 137.

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