

CHAPTER III

THE CONFRATERNITY OF OUR LADY

The Confraternity of Our Lady and the Blessed Sacrament was founded in the tradition of the medieval devotional parish confraternity, shortly before Liège became a holocaust to the fierce ambition of the Duke of Burgundy. Having survived the difficult years of occupation and war, it flourished under Erard de la Marck. By the end of his reign, its spirituality, as reflected in its activities, had taken on the cast of the Catholic Reformation.

The Confraternity of Our Lady and the Blessed Sacrament was originally two organizations, the Confraternity of Our Lady, founded in 1457, and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, founded in 1461, which were united in 1473. In the sixteenth century, the dedication to the Blessed Sacrament in its title gradually dropped out of use. Since the only thing we know of the original Blessed Sacrament confraternity is its rule of 1461, we shall call the confraternity by its later name except when referring to this document.

The Confraternity of Our Lady was one of at least twenty-four similar parish devotional confraternities in Liège during this period. It was not unique or even, apparently, unusual among them; it is simply the one with the best-preserved records. These consist of two charters containing the original rules of the two confraternities that made it up, and a series of account books covering the periods from 1480 to 1492 and from 1502 on. These books contain not only receipts and disbursements but also a list of members for each year, together with other information concerning the activities of the confraternity. The only records we can compare with these are some lists of members and fragmentary accounts for the confraternity of St. James at Saint-Jean-Baptiste and the Confraternity of Our Lady at Saint-Séverin, and a rule for the Confraternity of Our Lady, St. Katherine, and St. Barbara at Saint-Pholien.

The Confraternities of Liège

For most of the other confraternities in Liège we have only scattered references in wills and property transactions during this period.¹ In his study of religious life in Lille in the mid-fifteenth century, H. Platelle could only find three devotional confraternities.² Therefore it should not be surprising that we know more than the names of only a handful in Liège. Not only were confraternities extremely changeable; they could be born and die without leaving any written records.

An example of how a confraternity can leave no trace in the records comes from an inspection of the churches of Liège made by the papal nuncio in Cologne, Antonio Albergati, in 1613. In the church of Saint-Nicholas-au-Treit he found a confraternity of a few men who gathered each year to celebrate the feast of St. Anthony. The company had no property, no confirmation from higher authority, and no rule.³ There was nothing, in fact, that would survive in the records. Only a thorough visitation could reveal its presence, but before the Reformation there are no records of any such visitations in Liège.

The remaining traces of confraternities demonstrate that Liège had a substantial network of confraternities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Within their parishes the Liégeois joined together in relations of special brotherhood, and not only in the parishes, but within their guilds, about their religious houses, and for the performance of other good works. Liège had every major type of confraternity encountered in late medieval Europe. The confraternities related to guilds, religious houses, and collegial churches are not well documented, but they appear to have been similar to the parish confraternities. The members of the four freestanding confraternities were either clerics or wealthy laymen.

Confraternities Related to Institutions

Many of the guilds of Liège, themselves confraternal in origin, had parallel religious confraternities for their members. Some of these were founded after 1540, along with several confraternities for professions not included in any guild.⁴ The tanners' guild had a confraternity called "Notre-Dame des Tanneurs," which met in the parish church of Saint-Pholien in the Outre-Meuse district, where many tanners lived.⁵ The mercers' guild also had a confraternity under the protection of the Virgin, which met at the Williamite convent in Avroy.⁶

Several devotional confraternities met in convents. The Franciscan convent harbored a confraternity of "Our Lady of the Angels." It received a bequest from the widow of a substantial

¹ Other references may be buried in the mass of documents that could only be sampled for this study. Still others may be entirely lost through the ravages of time. Indeed, in some cases we cannot even be sure that some of the more obscure confraternities are really confraternities and not simply mass foundations or chantry altars. Most of the references come from the *œuvres des échevins*, not all volumes of which could be studied. When the only surviving reference is in such a document, however, all it tells us is the name of the confraternity. See the Preface for a discussion of the sampling technique. All parish records were examined for traces of confraternities.

² H. Platelle, "Esquisse de la vie religieuse à Lille au XVe siècle" *Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges* 103 (1966): 162-65.

³ Jean Hoyoux, "Quatre inspections d'églises liégeoises faites par le nonce Antonio Albergati" *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 36 (1964): 116-17.

⁴ See André Deblon, "Les Confréries érigées en 1671 dans le diocèse de Liège" *Leodium* 61 (1976): 35-39 for some examples.

⁵ Acts mentioning this confraternity can be found in Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, regs. 63, ff. 140, 239; 64 f. 168v.; 65, f. 267v.; 80, f. 214v.

⁶ Edouard Poncelet, *Le Bon Métier des merciers de la cité de Liège* (Liège: Vaillant-Carmanne, 1908), p. 45.

merchant in 1487, but it probably existed long before.⁷ A Confraternity of St. Anne met at the Augustinian convent in Avroy by 1529.⁸

Some of the confraternities associated with the collegial churches comprised only clergymen, generally the chaplains who served the various altars. Such were the Confraternity of St. Daniel, founded in the 1490s by the will of Arnult Pickar, a canon of Saint-Paul,⁹ and the Confraternity of Our Lady, founded in 1500 by the chaplains of Saint-Jean-Evangéliste.¹⁰ The cathedral of Saint-Lambert had two confraternities, St. Luke's, which may have been clerical, and the Confraternity of Our Lady, which certainly had lay members.¹¹ The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady, and St. Barbara in the collegial church of Sainte-Croix may have been of either type.¹² The Confraternity of Our Lady at Saint-Paul had both lay and clerical members. It was founded in 1483 by various clerics and laymen to pray for God's mercy in response to the evils that had so recently overtaken Liège.¹³

Freestanding confraternities

Of the confraternities that were not related to some other institution, two were purely clerical, variations on the older *kalend* confraternity. The Confraternity of Thirty Priests, under the invocation of St. Willibrod, had united the pastors of all the parishes of Liège since the twelfth century.¹⁴ The confraternity known as "Confrérie Notre-Dame de la Chapelle des Clercs" maintained a chapel in the parish church of Saint-Etienne since 1434, although the confraternity itself was older.¹⁵

Perhaps the most socially prestigious confraternity in Liège was the Confraternity of St. Barbara. It maintained a chapel on the Pont des Arches, the great bridge over the Meuse that still joins the center of the city with the Outre-Meuse district. The confraternity had six clerical and six lay members.¹⁶ The clerics were drawn from the chapters of the cathedral, mostly from the colleges of Saint-Materne and the Lesser Table. The laymen were wealthy merchants and professional men. In both cases they were elected by their confreres; upon joining they had to transfer to the confraternity one marc of *cens*. The confraternity celebrated masses in their chapel and distributed bread to the poor. Its rule is dated 23 April 1514, but its titles to property date back into the fifteenth century.¹⁷

A similar but less exclusive confraternity was that of the Hôpital Saint-Jacques. This "hospital" in the suburb of Avroy, just over the bridge from the Ile district, housed poor pilgrims

⁷ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 21, ff. 192-214.

⁸ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 113, f. 36.

⁹ *Cartulaire, ou recueil de chartes et documents inédits de l'église collégiale de Saint Paul actuellement Cathédrale de Liège*, ed. O. J. Thimister (Liège: Grandmont-Donders, 1878), pp. 506-508.

¹⁰ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Jean-Evangéliste, reg. 403, ff. 2-4.

¹¹ On the Confraternity of St. Luke: Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, regs. 61, f. 129; 89, f. 286v.; 93, ff. 44v-45; 101, f. 113. On the Confraternity of Our Lady: Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, regs. 64, f. 53; 65, f. 109; 85, f. 145; 89, f. 113v-114; 97, f. 197.

¹² Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 119, f. 252v.

¹³ *Cartulaire. . . de Saint Paul*, pp. 503-506.

¹⁴ Léon Lahaye, "Les Paroisses de Liège" *Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Liégeois* 46 (1921): 183-198.

¹⁵ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Confrérie Notre-Dame de la Chapelle des Clercs, chartes nos. 10, 20. The archives of this confraternity, like those of the Confraternity of Thirty Priests and the Confraternity of St. Barbara, are included among the parish archives in the Fonds des Cures at Archives de l'Etat, Liège.

¹⁶ The earliest lists can be found in Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Confrérie Sainte-Barbe, regs. 31, f. 1 (1507), and 12, f. 105v (1514).

¹⁷ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Confrérie Sainte-Barbe, reg. 12; the rule is on ff. 102v-105.

making their way through Liège. The confraternity included brothers who had made pilgrimages to St. James of Compostella, Rome, and Jerusalem, and those who had not, although those who had not were ineligible for the mastership and had to pay the cost of a journey in order to join. Not surprisingly, the rule specifies that the confreres had to be “gens de bien” (property owners), as well as of good reputation.¹⁸ This confraternity attracted wealthy men from all parts of the city, especially from the Ile district. Like the confreres of St. Barbara, they had to deed over one marc of *cens* to the confraternity upon their election. The origins of the hospital are obscure; the confraternity existed by 1437 when it received permission to erect a chapel.¹⁹ The extant rule dates from 1479. In a later decision the brothers prohibited all priests, monks, and those employed in the ecclesiastical courts from joining the confraternity. In 1602, this was clarified to provide that any confrere assuming ecclesiastical employment or the ecclesiastical state would have to leave.²⁰

Parish Confraternities

The larger, and especially the wealthier, parishes of Liège had the most confraternities. The tiny parish of Saint-Michel had only one confraternity; all the other confraternities were in the larger parishes. The exception is Notre-Dame-aux-Fonts, a wealthy parish in the center, with two confraternities. Here we find the highest ratio of confraternities to population. The parishes of Saint-André in the market district, Sainte-Marie-Madeleine, also near the market, and Saint-Jean-Baptiste, where many cloth dealers lived, have similarly high ratios.²¹

The saints or mysteries to which the confraternities are dedicated also show a pattern. By far the most common dedication is to Our Lady. Of the eleven parishes for which the names of confraternities survive, nine include a confraternity dedicated to the Virgin. A “Confrérie Notre-Dame” seems to have been a standard parish institution. If we add to the foregoing figure the confraternities of other sorts under her invocation, we come to a total of seventeen for the city. Two confraternities bore the name of the Holy Trinity; two each were dedicated either solely or in part to St. Anne, St. John the Baptist, and St. Roch. Saints Katherine, Barbara, James, Eloy, Fiacre, and Jossé were patrons of one confraternity each, and there was one Confraternity of the Holy Spirit.²² Four of the parishes have a Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, with two in one parish. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was growing throughout Europe in the later Middle

¹⁸ The rule is to be found in Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, charte no. 121; an eighteenth-century copy is among other papers in Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, ptf. non-classé no. 15.

¹⁹ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, reg. 10, ff. 10v-12; a copy much damaged by fire. Daris, in *Histoire du diocèse et de la principauté de Liège pendant le XVe siècle* (Liège: Louis Demarteau, 1887), p. 291, claims that the hospital was founded about 1427, but it is probably much older, perhaps going back to the thirteenth century; see Etienne Hélin, *La Population des paroisses liégeoises* (Liège: Commission communale pour l'histoire de l'ancien pays de Liège, 1959), p. 323.

²⁰ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, ptf. non-classé no. 15; the classification of many of these materials is currently in progress.

²¹ Saint-André and Saint-Jean-Baptiste had four confraternities each, Sainte-Marie-Madeleine had three; based on the figures given by Hélin for 1650 (see Appendix D; the actual population in the early sixteenth century was much lower) the ratios would have been 1:562.5, 1:500, and 1:462.5 respectively. The corresponding ratio for Notre-Dame-aux-Fonts is 1:300.

²² The earliest (in some cases the only) references to each of these confraternities are: Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, regs. 61, f. 145v.; 62, ff. 198, 240v.; 89, ff. 113-114v.; 93, f. 49; 97, f. 278; 101, f. 402v.; 105, f. 267; 109, f. 42; Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, regs. 24, ff. 27v-28; 27, ff. 237v-243; 32, ff. 169-171; Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 13v; Saint-Séverin, reg. 17. See Léon Lahaye, “La Paroisse Saint-Jean-Baptiste à Liège” *Bulletin de la société d'art et d'histoire du diocèse de Liège* 22 (1930): 1-51, on the confraternities in that parish.

Ages. After the Reformation such confraternities became more popular, with the organization of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, centered at the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.²³ This was founded in 1539, and therefore could not have included any of the confraternities enumerated here.

The Confraternities of Saint-Martin-en-Ile

Besides the Confraternity of Our Lady, Saint-Martin-en-Ile had two confraternities during this period, representing the older and the newer types of confraternity. The Confraternity of Our Lady spans the period and has characteristics of both the medieval and the Reformation forms of brotherhood. The first of the other two confraternities in the parish, probably older than the Confraternity of Our Lady, is a company of women under the name of St. Anne. We know very little of this group. A charter given by the dean and chapter of Saint-Paul, 25 February 1454, approves the foundation of an altar to St. Martin in the new chapel erected in the cemetery where the “fraternity of sisters of St. Anne” celebrate their solemn feast.²⁴ The benefactress who made this possible was Dame Yde de Seyne, a midwife (*obstetrix*) living in Chodélistrée. To support the services at this altar, she donated sixteen muids of spelt in *rentes*, and named as first rector Louis Cornelis de Freres. After her death, the dean of Saint-Paul should choose future rectors to celebrate mass at the altar.

The fraternity of St. Anne existed well before Dame Yde established her altar in its chapel. It held landed property, from which the vicar received an income for the celebration of the feast of St. Anne.²⁵ We know nothing about its activities, except that, as Dame Yde’s charter indicates, it was a confraternity of women. All the properties in its patrimony were bequeathed by women. After the sack of 1468, the confraternity disappears, although the chapel continued to exist.

The later of the two confraternities is the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. This is not the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament that had merged with the Confraternity of Our Lady, but an entirely new organization, separate in membership, activities, and patrimony.²⁶ It received an indulgence from Cardinal Reginald Pole, acting as papal legate, in 1537, and another from Pope Urban VIII in 1624.²⁷

The new confraternity had around 600 members, many times the number of the old one.²⁸ Of these about 280 were lay parishioners of Saint-Martin-en-Ile, another 80 were lay people from eight other parishes, and some 240 were associated with thirteen religious houses and chapters. The accounts refer to processions on Corpus Christi with “histoires”—probably plays—and masses on Thursdays at which they took up a collection. The property deeds of the confraternity give some clue to its age. The oldest seems to date from 1535, so that the confraternity was probably founded in the early 1530s.

²³ Giuseppe Barbiero, *Le confraternite del Santissimo Sacramento prima del 1539* (Treviso: Tipografia “Aer” Vedelago, 1941). Barbiero supposed that the earliest such confraternity was founded in Liège when the feast of Corpus Christi was instituted there, but his conjecture is without any foundation.

²⁴ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, charte de 25 février 1454.

²⁵ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 112, f. 6v.

²⁶ Léon Lahaye evidently believed that this confraternity was the earlier one regaining its independence (“La Paroisse Saint-Martin-en-Ile à Liège” *Bulletin de la Société d’art et d’histoire du diocèse de Liège* 25 (1934): 127). The members of the confraternity in the eighteenth century seem to have believed the same.

²⁷ These documents appear in eighteenth-century copies together with other documents referring to the old Confraternity of Our Lady, in Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 123, ff. 2-6.

²⁸ The accounts of this confraternity, 1538-44, are found in Archives de l’Evêché, Liège, reg. H. III. 6.

The new confraternity is the expression of the newer type of confraternity-building associated with the Catholic Reformation. The new model of the large, inclusive fraternity, well integrated into the universal structure of the Church, appears elsewhere in Europe, beginning about this time.²⁹ These were sodalities, associations of individuals who performed good works, rather than brotherhoods first of all. Many of the older type of confraternity survived, but the same forces that brought the new ones into existence changed the older ones as well. That is, as we shall see, the case with the confraternity we are studying.

The Confraternity of Our Lady and the Blessed Sacrament

The first mention of the Confraternity of Our Lady predates either of the surviving rules. In her will dated 28 September 1447, Dame Maroie, widow of Master Giele Scalchoven le Barbier, left one marc of *cens* to the “compagnie Nostre Dame en ladite englise S. Martin.”³⁰ This was one of several pious bequests, distributing some forty-four marcs owed to her by the Dominican convent. Also among her benefactions were the Dominicans themselves, the Carmelites, the parish of Saint-Martin-en-Ile, and its Confraternity of St. Anne.

In the earliest surviving accounts of the confraternity, from 1480, this marc of *cens*, paid by the Dominicans, heads the list of *cens* owing to the company. Since new *cens* were usually added to the end when the list was copied from year to year, its position suggests, but does not by itself prove, that this property was the earliest acquired. A review of the titles to property, moreover, reveals that it is the only one that could have been acquired before 1457, when the rule was written.

A confraternity under the invocation of the Virgin, as we have seen, appears to have been a normal part of the life of a parish. Some of these “confraternities,” however, may have been no more formally organized than the company of St. Anthony that Albergati found at Saint-Nicolas-au-Treit. As long as the confraternity had no possessions, it could remain entirely informal. This may have been the case at Saint-Martin-en-Ile before 1457. The acquisition of income separate from the parish may have provoked the establishment of a formal order for the confraternity. One could therefore say that the confraternity was not founded until 1457. It is certainly true that we know nothing of the organization before the first rule.

The Confraternity Rule

For the two confraternities, either separately or together, we have five versions of the rule. The latest of these, a version published in 1792, represents the confraternity as “renouvelée l’an 1736,” and therefore will not concern the present discussion.³¹ The other four date from the period 1450-1540. The first three, dated 1457, 1461, and 1480, are very similar; the fourth, dated 1529, is significantly different. Along the way, a few surviving decisions of the confraternity point the way toward the changes of 1529. We shall begin by reviewing in detail the primitive rule of the confraternity, noting the variations between 1457, 1461, and 1480. Then we shall examine the decisions that altered the basic rule, and finally, we shall discuss the new rule of 1529.

²⁹ A. N. Galpern, in *Religions of the People in Sixteenth-Century Champagne* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 132-33, discusses this movement as it affected parts of France.

³⁰ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 6, ff. 87v-88v.

³¹ *Confrérie de la très-sainte Vierge érigée dans l’Eglise Paroissiale de saint Martin en Isle à Liege, l’an 1457 !& renouvelée l’an 1736 ...* (Liège: L. J. Demany, 1792).

The earliest rule is that of the Confraternity of Our Lady, in a charter dated 23 August 1457.³² The second is the very similar rule of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, in a charter dated 5 June 1461.³³ The third version occurs in the first register of accounts of the combined confraternity.³⁴ This rule is headed,

Copy of the letter of the Confraternity of Our Lady at Saint-Martin-en-Ile. That is to say that the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and of Our Lady that were two before the wars are now combined in one confraternity.

(Copie del lettre de la confraternitet nostre Dame a sain martin en yse. Et est assavoir que des confraternitets du sentisime sacrement et de nostre Dame qui astaent avant les guerres ij sont a present mises a une confraternitet.)

It bears the date and signatures of the 1457 charter, but the text diverges in many places from it. The copy is in the hand of Wilhem de Horion, notary, who was *compteur* of the confraternity from 1480 through the 1490s. It was apparently made in 1480. We shall refer to these three rules as 1457, 1461, and 1480 respectively.

While 1480 claims to be a copy of 1457, and Horion in affixing his signature certifies it to be a “collated and corrected copy of the aforesaid original letter” (“copie collationee et corregie ala susdite principal lettre”), there are notable changes. Some are merely the rephrasing of formulas,³⁵ or changes in spelling, but other changes are more substantial. Several sentences spelling out duties of members are rephrased, apparently to make the meaning clearer. In one case, an entire sentence has been moved to a place where it follows from others to which it is logically related. It thus occupies in 1480 the position of its counterpart in 1461. This is the only case in which 1480 follows the reading of the later charter.

One change has led to some misunderstanding. In its preface, 1480 states that the parishioners “were of old inspired” (“se sont danchinitet inspire”) to found the confraternity. Lahaye takes this phrase to mean that the confraternity was very old.³⁶ This may be the case, as we have seen, but this phrase does not prove it. The corresponding phrase in 1457 does not include the word “danchinitet” (“of old”). Horion must have added it, perhaps referring to the twenty-three-year-old charter.

The rule of 1461 is similar in form and in many particulars to 1457. The greatest differences, of course, concern the specific devotions that each confraternity is to practice. Some corresponding items are in a different order, and the framers of 1461 seem to have tried to eliminate ambiguities or spell out provisions more fully. At the annual meeting, for example, where 1457 only calls for a banquet and the election of masters, 1461 adds, “in order to restore and put in good order anything deficient by the vote of the majority” (“pour toutte chouse deffectueuse revallideir et mettre a bone ordonanche par le sutte de la plus grans partie”).

The similarity of the two rules raises the question of their textual relationship. Lahaye, looking especially at the two prologues, contends that 1461 is “textually borrowed” from 1457.³⁷ The prologue in question is a brief homily on penance, based on Psalm 126:5, “They who sow in

³² The cataloguing of the archives of parishes, and especially of the charters, at Archives de l’Etat, Liège has recently been undergoing revision. The easiest way to refer to charters is currently by parish and date. Thus this charter is Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, charte de 23 août 1457.

³³ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, charte de 5 juin 1461.

³⁴ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, ff. 1-2v.

³⁵ For example, “le glorieux saim Martin vraie confesseur nostre glorieux patron” becomes “sain Martin nostre susdit patron,” or “sa benoit mere laglorieux viergne Marije” becomes “sa glorieuse meer la benoite vergne Marie.”

³⁶ Lahaye, *La paroisse Saint-Martin-en-Ile*, p. 122.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

tears shall reap in exultation.” It also mentions remembrance of the Passion of Christ. Neither of these themes is taken up in the rule: the confreres are not required to practice any special penance, nor are there any observances of the Passion. Thus it is probable that both rules are based on a lost original, perhaps the rule of a different confraternity, to which these themes were more relevant.

The prologue goes on to declare that out of desire to serve God, the blessed Virgin, and their patron St. Martin, they have, moved by divine grace, formed this confraternity, called here “de Nostre Damme & de Sains Martin.” Together, they can serve God in a union of love “as loyal brothers ought to do” (“comme loiaul freres doivent faire”). The 1461 prologue uses the same language, except that the confraternity is “du sains Sacrement,” which, it adds, “is the food of our redemption and salvation for those who receive it in a good state, purified and cleansed of their sins.”³⁸

The choice of language in the prologue, whatever its immediate origin, clearly points to the primary relation of special brotherhood that the rule is designed to establish. The words “as loyal brothers ought” are central. They first of all desire to form a brotherhood, and the activities to which they commit themselves are the means to this goal. Their greatest service to God and to the Virgin Mary is to be loyal brothers. The symbol of this unity is the patron of their parish, St. Martin, to which 1461 adds the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the common meal whereby Christians are united in the Body of Christ.

The prologue is the only literary evidence we have concerning the spirituality of the confraternity. This situation contrasts strikingly with the Italian confraternity rules collected by G. G. Meersseman, some of which are veritable treatises on lay spirituality.³⁹ We cannot, however, thereby conclude that the Liégeois confreres had no spiritual interests. Rather they simply felt no need to express them. There were probably several reasons for this difference. First of all, the Liégeois were likely less self-conscious—one might say less sophisticated—than their Italian counterparts. Religious introspection simply did not occur to them, especially as they were laymen. Furthermore, a great deal of the spirituality of the confreres could be taken for granted. They were good Catholics, loyal parishioners: that said a great deal. Apart from the mention of the Eucharist in 1461, there is no mention of the sacraments in any rule, and there is no requirement that the members receive the sacraments at any particular time. Rather than reflecting a disregard for the sacraments, this omission simply assumes that all loyal brothers of the parish will confess and take communion in accordance with the teaching of the Church.⁴⁰ The formulas of the prologue may be brief, and may even be borrowed, but to contemporaries they summed up a whole religious world. Finally, the spirituality of the confraternity consisted less in words than in actions. If one had asked one of the men who signed these rules what his spirituality was, if he understood the question at all, he would simply have pointed to the charter and replied, “Look at the things I have promised to do.” It is hard to argue with a concrete commitment.

Most of the provisions of the confraternity rules can be summarized and compared under five headings: membership, regular masses, annual meetings, funerals, and finances.

³⁸ “Iequeil est la nourche de nostre redemption et salvacion a cheaux qui le rechoivent en bone estat, mondeis et nettoyez de leur pechies.”

³⁹ Cf. especially the Battuti di San Domenico of Bologna; see Chapter One above.

⁴⁰ It is difficult to estimate the actual level of fidelity to the precepts of the Church on this point. Jacques Toussaert, in *Le Sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris: Plon, 1963), pp. 161-75, attempts to estimate the number of communicants in Bruges, but his methods are so imprecise as to be useless for actual numbers. The one of his techniques that can be applied at Saint-Martin-en-Ile, the amount of wine for “ablutions,” indicates that probably about the same percentage of parishioners communicated faithfully at Easter (85 percent) in Liège as in Bruges, and that, in Liège as in Bruges, Easter communions far outnumbered those on any other occasion.

Membership. The requirements for membership in each case are the same: good name and reputation, a son of holy Church, and without reproach. The confreres are not required to live in the parish. While 1457 only uses masculine forms, 1461 says that the requirements apply to the reception of both brothers and sisters. In each case there is a limit to the number of brothers:⁴¹ 31 in 1457, 32 in 1461.

Regular masses. Regular masses centering around its titular devotion constitute the principal devotional activity of each confraternity. The Confraternity of Our Lady is to solemnize the feasts of the Blessed Virgin: its principal mass comes on the feast of her Assumption (15 August), “with no great pomp or pride” (“sens nulle grande pompe ni orguelle”), as the rule says, as well as masses on the other Marian feasts. Further, there are to be two special masses, one on the Sunday after Epiphany and the other on the Sunday after Corpus Christi. These masses are to be celebrated at the main altar of the church “in token of obedience” (“en representant obedience”) to St. Martin, patron of the parish. The final regular liturgical event is to be a requiem mass on the day after Assumption for the souls of the departed brothers of the confraternity and, says 1457 in a phrase that 1480 omits, all the souls in Purgatory who wait on the mercy of God.

The calendar of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament is simpler but potentially more extensive. The principal mass of the year is to be held at the main altar on the octave of Corpus Christi, because, the rule says, the feast itself is already occupied with the parish celebration. This mass is to be either high or low as the confreres please. In addition, “if God by his grace should grant us any addition of goods” (“se dieux par sa grausce nos donnoit amentation daultcuns biens”), the confraternity will sponsor the celebration of a mass, either high or low, at the main altar of the church, every Thursday of the year, by the vicar or a priest of his choosing. The rule adds that the confreres can take part in the offertory at the parish mass on Corpus Christi carrying candles, as well as in the procession.

Annual meetings. Each confraternity provided for an annual meeting, involving a banquet, the rendering of accounts, and the election of masters. These meetings were associated with the principal mass of the year: in 1457 the meeting is to take place on the feast of the Assumption, in 1461 either on the octave of Corpus Christi or on the Sunday following, since the octave, unlike the Assumption, was a working day. In both rules the arrangements for this banquet are spelled out in detail. Each confraternity is to have a “varlet” or servant, who should go to each member’s house in order to ascertain who will come to the meeting. Any member who promises to come, but does not, will have to pay his share anyway. While this would imply that the members paid the cost of the meal, the rules also require that the masters make provision for it out of the common fund. The 1457 rule specifies that they are to pay four griffons;⁴² In the copy of 1480, this provision states that beyond these four griffons, the individual members are to pay whatever is required.

In each case, there are to be two masters, elected annually. In 1457, the rule states that two new masters should be elected each year, while 1461 permits the confraternity to retain one of the old masters and elect one new, so that an old and a new serve together. The guilds of Liège each had two governors, for whom such an alternation in office was customary.

Funerals. As in most medieval confraternities, funerals were an important activity here. The provision in each case is the same. All the confreres are to be present at any member’s funeral, each carrying a candle in the offertory. The confraternities will keep these candles after each funeral in a safe place until the next occasion. The confraternity will also provide for a requiem mass to be said on the following day, which all must attend. All members must also say the seven

⁴¹ The rule says “confreres”; this may mean all members or (more likely) only men, with the women not counted.

⁴² See Appendix C for the relative values of units of Liégeois currency.

penitential psalms for the soul of the departed brother, if they know how; if they do not, they should say fifty Our Fathers and fifty Hail Marys. In return, the confraternity is to receive one of the “master candles” that surrounded the bier at the funeral.

Finances. In both confraternities the masters were to be accountable for a common fund. The principal source of income provided in each rule are the members’ annual dues: 1457 requires twelve bodragers, 1461 requires ten. Each rule specifies that if a member does not pay, the masters can proceed against him as for any debt. The only other income mentioned in the rules comes from fines a member must pay for being absent from regular events, a relatively small amount: one “labbaye” (about five sols) in 1457, three sols in 1461.

Upon joining either confraternity, each new member paid one half-pound of wax; if he wanted to leave, he paid the same. The rule of 1457 allows the half-pound “issue” (exit fee) if the member leaves because he moves out of the parish; if he leaves “par rebellion” he must pay a full pound. Wax was a necessary commodity, since candles were used in all church services. The name used for the general operating fund of the parish, *luminnaire*, shows how significant a part of the resources candles consumed.

The sums of money given here mean nothing except in comparison to the income of potential members. Exact wage levels are hard to come by, but it would appear that in the 1470s and ‘80s the daily wage for a skilled workman was seven bodragers, and for a laborer, fifty sols (four bodragers, eight sols). Wax at the same time cost twenty-four bodragers a pound. Wages and prices rose gradually together, until by 1529 the daily wage for a skilled workman was about eight aidans, or over eighteen bodragers.⁴³ The original dues were therefore less than two day’s wages for a skilled workman, with about the same in wax for an entrance fee. Thus the confraternity’s dues began fairly modest and declined; one would have had to be poor indeed to be unable to afford them.

The 1461 rule provides for any excess money that might accumulate. It must not, the framers warn, be expended, through ill counsel, “on gluttony or excess” (“par gourmanderie ne outrequidenche”). Instead, the superfluous goods are to go to the parish, to be used according to the decision of the vicar and churchwardens. Neither 1457 nor 1480 includes anything like this self-denying provision.

Loyalty to the parish is a notable theme in these rules. St. Martin, the parish patron, is mentioned over and over again. In Liège as elsewhere, the patron saint of the parish was the personal patron of the parishioner.⁴⁴ In wills, for example, testators regularly commend their souls to the protection, not of their name-saint, but of the patron of their parish. The Christian’s standing before God depended on his relation to this saint, as his relation to the Church depended on his relation to the parish that bore his name.

By invoking the patron saint of the parish, the confraternity placed itself within this scheme of things. St. Martin’s place in the spirituality of the confraternities corresponds to the seals of the vicar and churchwardens, which they attached to the original charters as a sign of approval. All clearly understood the signs of loyalty offered and accepted. This loyalty had practical consequences. Not only does 1461 provide for its extra income to go to the parish; its annual and weekly masses, like the two special masses in 1457, take place at the main altar. This is more than

⁴³ These figures are based on what the parish paid for various kinds of work; see Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 41, f.76, reg. 51, ff. 189v, 241v. For the price of wax see Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 25v.

⁴⁴ Cf. Galpern, *Religions of the People*, pp. 46-48.

symbolic. Each mass involved a payment to the celebrant and to the parish clerk who assisted. Since the main altar was under the control of the vicar, the rules give him the option of saying the masses—and receiving the income from them—himself.

The organizational and ritual provisions of these rules resemble those found in confraternities throughout Europe. Funerals and banquets, as elsewhere, occupy a central place. The confraternity's main activity is the continual celebration of masses, storming heaven, as it were, on behalf of the living and especially the deceased members of the company. This was an extension of the basic spiritual duty of brotherhood, the duty to pray for one another. Unity in this world did not end with death; indeed it was only the beginning of an eternal unity. The brotherhood expressed in common worship extended to the prayer of the living for the dead. Just as the parish represented a common legacy dedicated to God for the salvation of souls, so the confraternity was a union primarily directed toward common salvation and eternal union with God.

If there was a confraternity spirituality, intercessory prayer for the living and the dead was at its center. By sponsoring masses, the confreres ensured practically that what the Church taught was the holiest form of prayer would constantly be offered. They could not offer mass themselves, but this was the next best thing. For the most critical moment in a brother's life, his passage from this world to the next, the confreres promised to join their poor prayers to those of the priest. The offering of candles represented a considerable sacrifice turned into solid and visible prayer, the flame of the candle truly transforming the worldly wealth of the confrere—and thereby the sin that characterized the worldly life—into a pure light before God.⁴⁵

This mutual prayer was one of the chief duties of brotherhood, the other main theme of confraternity spirituality. Another Liège confraternity headed its list of deceased brethren:

Pray for their souls, all the living, in order that after your death one may have cause to pray for you in the same way, like good brothers and sisters.⁴⁶

Prayer was only one of the manifestations of brotherhood in the rule. The common banquet was not only an enjoyable social gathering; eating and drinking together created brotherhood. As we have seen, a meal established peace after disputes and sealed bargains. A new guild member was received at a meal. The members of the Confraternity of Our Lady renewed their brotherhood each year by a feast, as 1457 put it, “as a sign of love and affection” (“en signe d’amour et d’affection”). Nor was this peace and love to be broken. The final commitment of the confreres went the furthest in safeguarding brotherhood—the prohibition of “lay justice.”

“Lay Justice”

One provision common to both rules that extended beyond the confraternities' ritual functions and organization was the prohibition of lawsuits. It is included in all three rules, although in different language in each case. The meaning, however, is the same. If any of the brothers have a dispute among themselves, they must not take it before what 1457 calls “lay justice”; it must be settled by the company (in 1457 and 1461) or by the masters (in 1480). The only exception is in the case of wounds or blows or offenses against honor, in which case they may plead where they like. The 1461 rule specifies that this provision is to keep peace among the brothers “for without

⁴⁵ A votive candle could in fact be considered as a substitute for the giver himself; this is especially apparent in the earlier custom of offering a candle equal to one's own height or weight. For some examples see Maurice Hélin, “Une Fièvre Chandelle. . .” in *Hommages à Marie Delcourt* (Brussels: Latomus, 1970), pp. 406-417.

⁴⁶ “Preijez pour leurs armez tous lez vivans affin que apres vos deces ons aije cause de preijer pour vous semblablement comme bones confreres et sereurs” Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, ptf. non-classé 15.

this peace we cannot come to the peace and mercy of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ” (“Car sans cest paix nos ne porons venir a la pais et missericorde de nostre redempteurs Jhesucrist”).

This prohibition makes the brotherhood something more than merely a banqueting and funeral society. It shows at least the serious intention of the founders. Such an undertaking also bound the members of some of the parish guilds of England⁴⁷ and the *battuti* confraternities in Italy,⁴⁸ as well as many early medieval confraternities.⁴⁹ In Liège, the brethren who managed the Hôpital Saint-Jacques could not proceed against one another,⁵⁰ nor could members of the same guild⁵¹ or brothers of the confraternity of St. Barbara.⁵² In the last three cases the exception was the same: complaints of physical violence and damage to honor were excluded from the prohibition.

In the rules, the principal type of dispute envisioned seems to involve harsh words. It is probable, however, that the likeliest sort of dispute between the brothers would involve property, which is also not excluded from the prohibition. What sorts of offenses against “honor” are excluded is not clear. They must involve more than mere arguments. They may be sexual matters, in which case they would fall under the jurisdiction of Church courts anyway.

The use of arbitrators appears to have been common in Liège. Even cases before the court of the *échevins* were often decided by a panel chosen some by one side and some by the other, with the magistrates ratifying and giving force of law to their decision. We have seen, too, that the chapter of Saint-Paul acted in this capacity in a dispute between the parish of Saint-Martin-en-Ile and the convent of “Sœurs de Hasque.” All that is needed to settle disputes is a judge whose authority both sides will respect. In effect, agreeing to a rule like the present one merely constitutes an anticipated choice of arbitrator. The confraternity is incapable of settling certain kinds of disputes, not so much because they are more serious as because they call for punishments of a kind the confraternity had no authority to impose. We shall have occasion in the next chapter to see how well this rule was observed.

Later Changes in the Rule

Our knowledge of the actual operations of the confraternity begins with the register of accounts beginning in 1480. In making up the register, the first concern of Wilhem de Horion, as *compteur* of the confraternity, was to preserve accurate records of the confraternity’s accounts, its titles to property and the debts owed it. However, he also provided much other valuable information: the text of the rule and records of several decisions affecting the organization and activities of the confraternity.

The earliest decision is the merging of the two original confraternities into one. The sack of Liège in 1468 had, as we have seen, caused great damage to the church of Saint-Martin-en-Ile, and the confraternity chapels and possessions had not escaped. Just as he and the churchwardens acted to help rebuild the parish, the vicar, Jehan Thomas, moved to strengthen the confraternities by

⁴⁷ Joshua Toulmin Smith, *English Gilds* (London: Early English Text Society, 1870; repr. 1963), pp. 21, 76, 98, 115, 159, 279, 450.

⁴⁸ Meersseman, “Etudes sur les anciennes confréries dominicaines” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 20 (1950): 97-98; Giuseppe Alberigo, “Contributi alla storia della spiritualità laicale nei secc. XV e XVI” in *Il movimento dei disciplinati nel settimo centenario del suo inizio* (Perugia, 1962): 241.

⁴⁹ Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, 3 vols. (Rome: Herder, 1977), 1: 88, 142, 175, 204.

⁵⁰ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, charte no. 121.

⁵¹ Edouard Poncelet, *Le Bon Métier des merciers de la cité de Liège* (Liège: Vaillant-Carmanne, 1908), p. 61; cf. René Van Santbergen, *Les Bons Métiers des meuniers, des boulangers et des brasseurs de la cité de Liège* (Liège: Faculté de philosophie et lettres, 1949), pp. 308-309.

⁵² Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Confrérie Sainte-Barbe, reg. 12, f. 105.

uniting them. On Corpus Christi, 1473, by his “consent and express wish” they were united. To symbolize this union, four men—probably the masters of the two confraternities—marched behind Wilhem de Horion, acting in this case as churchwarden, in the offertory procession.⁵³

The confraternity established the permanent office of *compteur* in 1480. The masters for the three preceding years, it would seem, had shown “little diligence” in making the members pay their dues and in paying the chaplains who celebrated masses. Therefore, records Horion, the priests “did not want to serve any longer, since they were not paid” (“plus ne voloent servir pour tant quil nastoent pajjes”). The confreres turned to him for help, and he accepted the office of *compteur* of the confraternity.⁵⁴ This was not the first time he had filled this role. In 1468, the Confraternity of Our Lady had put the accounts in his hands to oversee the repairs to their chapel.⁵⁵ While this appears to have been a temporary arrangement, his office as *compteur* beginning in 1480 was permanent. After this, the masters no longer do the actual work of bookkeeping, but rather the *compteur*, who is responsible to them.

With its finances in greater order, the confraternity expanded its schedule of masses. In 1490, the members decided to establish four anniversaries, with vigil and mass, for the departed of the confraternity, on the four Ember Wednesdays of the year. At these masses, all the brothers, sisters, and benefactors of the company will be remembered. From each married couple in the confraternity either the husband or the wife should be present, but, the decision specifies, there will be no fine if they are not. The confraternity celebrated masses on the Marian feasts, the masses of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays, and the two “special masses” as called for in the rule; to these they have added, in addition to the Ember Day masses, a requiem every Monday, the feast of St. Martin, and the anniversary of the dedication of the parish church.

In the case especially of the weekly Monday and Thursday masses, no one could have presumed that all the brothers and sisters could have been present all the time. They would know, however, that the prayers and sacrifices they sponsored were being offered on their behalf and, most importantly, that they would be offered for them after their death. For those who wish to participate in these spiritual benefits, the same decision also spelled out a new schedule of dues. Since the confraternity had acquired twenty-three griffons a year in landed income,⁵⁶ the annual dues would henceforth be eight bodragers for a husband and wife, and four bodragers for a woman alone. Anyone who did not pay, however, would be expelled from the fraternity. Moreover, nothing could be taken from these dues to pay for the feast.⁵⁷

These are the last formal, recorded changes in the pattern of confraternity activities. Already after one generation, the structure has begun to show its flexibility. This flexibility was the great strength of the confraternal form, since it could respond to the needs of the laity who composed it. In Meersseman’s study of Dominican confraternities he shows how one example, the *Battuti di San Domenico* in Bologna, changed so that the confraternity in the seventeenth century resembled very little the same group in the fourteenth century.⁵⁸ In the case of the present confraternity, we can see a new rule emerge within seventy-five years of the original foundation.

On 19 June 1529, Jean de Hornes, provost of Liège, officially approved the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady. This was the first time such approval had been either asked

⁵³ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 7v.

⁵⁴ Ibid., f. 8.

⁵⁵ Ibid., f. 5.

⁵⁶ This figure can only be approximate, since much of the income was in spelt, whose price varied.

⁵⁷ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 21v.

⁵⁸ Meersseman, “Etudes” 20 (1950): 64

for or given. The charter of approval mentions the original charters of the two confraternities, and their union in 1473. It also adds an entirely new version of the rule.⁵⁹

In the new rule, the prologue has disappeared; so has the prohibition of lawsuits and all mention of the feast. The rule also calls for a *compteur* as well as the two masters and the “serviteur” (the “varlet” of the old rule). Alternate election of masters is now the rule, and it is only in this context that the assembly on the feast of the Assumption is mentioned. No longer are the masters to render accounts to the fraternity; now the *compteur* presents them to the masters within two weeks after the Assumption.

The masses listed are the same as those mentioned in the decision of 1490, plus one on the night of St. Lawrence. When the choice of a priest is specified, it is the vicar, or, if he should refuse, another priest chosen by the masters and the *compteur*. The whole confraternity must still come to any member’s funeral and say the psalms or prayers as before; if they do not, they must pay a fine of one aidan. They must also come to the mass on the feast of the Assumption, but no fine is specified; and no other occasion requires their presence.

Entering and leaving still cost one half-pound of wax, and the dues are still at the level set in 1490. The phrasing is different, however. Instead of charging eight bodragers for married couples, the new rule says that “each brother or sister will be required to pay four bodragers to the profit of the said company” (“serat tenu un chacun confrere ou consœur paijer par an au profit de ladite Compagnie quatre Bodragers”).

The spirit of the confraternity has changed. The way in which dues are assessed, small detail though it is, reflects the conception of confraternity membership and thereby the concept of brotherhood. Initially, each brother paid almost two days’ wages a year to be part of a fraternity which celebrated some masses, as loyal brothers ought. After one generation, the motivation for joining was first of all to participate in a treasury of spiritual benefits that the group derived in common from its acts of worship. The married members participated as couples, at a double rate, now about one day’s wages for the breadwinner. After another forty years, the social features have dropped away; the members join as individuals; and the dues remain at the same nominal level, reduced by inflation to less than half.⁶⁰ The price, in personal as well as in financial terms, is now far less.

One can compare the new rule with that of the Confraternity of Our Lady, St. Katherine, and St. Barbara in the parish of Saint-Pholien. This rule was approved by the same Provost, Jean de Hornes, in August 1526.⁶¹ In this rule, the brothers and sisters, after proclaiming their allegiance to the Virgin, St. Katherine, St. Barbara, St. Pholien, and all the saints, commit themselves to celebrate masses on the feasts of their various patrons, as well as requiem masses on the Ember Days. The rule includes no mention of banquets, or of any obligation binding the members outside of church services.

Changes in rules reflect the changing patterns of thought and action. At the same time, those patterns change only slowly and gradually. New functions grow up before they become institutionalized; old attitudes continue to hang on and influence behavior. The Confraternity of St.

⁵⁹ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 123, ff. 7-11v.

⁶⁰ Much of this reduction would have been offset by higher grain prices, but not nearly all. While the relation between prices and wages did require periodic adjustments, wages in general kept up with inflation in Belgium in the sixteenth century. See Charles Verlinden et al., “Mouvement des prix et des salaires en Belgique au XVIe siècle” *Annales. Economies. Sociétés. Civilisations* 10 (1955): 173-198.

⁶¹ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Pholien, charte d’août 1526. As noted the Fonds des Cures has been in the process of being recatalogued; when first examined (1979), this charter, in two pieces, was found in a box of miscellaneous charters marked “Cures carton no. 5.”

Barbara on the Pont des Arches approved a rule forbidding lawsuits only fifteen years before the new rule of the Confraternity of Our Lady, which omitted such a provision. The exclusion of clerics and those associated with ecclesiastical courts, which was an issue as late as 1602 with the confreres of the Hôpital Saint-Jacques, may have been an attempt to enforce a similar policy by excluding the possibility of conflicting jurisdictions. Thus while the rules are illuminating, we need to look more closely at the activities and membership of the confraternity in order to appreciate its changing role.

The Activities of the Confraternity

Between the first rule in 1457 and the one approved by the provost in 1529, considerable change had taken place in the confraternity's mentality and approach to its life. Because we possess an annual record of much of its activity for this period and beyond, we can more closely describe how the original rule was translated into action and how the activities of the confraternity gradually changed. Our source for the activities of the confraternity are its series of surviving account books.⁶² Certainly the accounts give us considerable information concerning the distribution of the confraternity's resources. On the other hand, there are many things we do not know. We can find out how much it cost to have a mass said; we cannot find out how many people attended. We know that the company spent so much on a banquet; we do not know who was there, what occurred, what sort of activities accompanied it, or often where it took place. We know who signed the accounts; we do not know how much they argued about them beforehand. Nevertheless, not much escapes the need to be figured in terms of income and expense. How the confraternity spent its money tells us a great deal about the intentions and the priorities of its members.

External factors, especially the rise in prices beginning early in the sixteenth century, affected the financial stability of the confraternity. They are, however, merely the background against which the confraternity made decisions about how to allocate its resources. The brothers were, no doubt, freer to change their pattern of activities because the rise in grain prices brought a surplus that enabled them to secure their financial footing. The form this change took, however, reveals not simply a new financial confidence, but a new attitude toward devotional activities. This is manifested in the changing relation of the three main categories of activity prescribed by the rule: regular worship, funerals, and annual meetings.

Regular Worship

In the first year of surviving accounts, 1480-81, the confraternity celebrated the masses called for in the original rules, that is six feasts of the Virgin, a mass of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays, and the two special masses. In addition to those mentioned in the rules, the confraternity had celebrated a requiem every Monday, and high masses on the feast of St. Martin and on the dedication day of the parish church. The accounts mention the requiem on the day after Assumption for the first time in 1484-85, and only occasionally thereafter. It may have fallen into disuse when the Monday requiems were established. These masses, and the new ones added with time, occur regularly. The priests who said them were under contract to the confraternity and were

⁶² The books covering the period before 1540 are three registers in Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile: reg. 125 (rule, decisions, property deeds, and accounts from 1480 to 1492); reg. 127 (accounts from 1502 to 1517); and reg. 128 (accounts from 1518 to 1548). The fiscal year of the confraternity ran from the feast of the Assumption (15 August) to that day the following year. The year for *rentes* began on the feast of St. Andrew (30 November), while the civil year in Liège began on Christmas. In this discussion, a year number refers to the fiscal year ending on 15 August of that year, new style.

paid by the year, one priest saying all the Thursday masses or all the Marian feasts. After 1500, the fulfillment of this rule becomes more and more regular and routine.

The first new masses added to the schedule followed the decision of 1490 to celebrate masses at the Ember Days. These appear in the accounts beginning the following year. In 1510, a lady named Ydelette la Barberesse left six marcs of *cens* to the confraternity to pay for six low masses on the feasts of the Virgin; these appear thereafter beside the six high masses already in the program. An anniversary on the night of St. Lawrence appears beginning in 1512-13. From 1529-30 to 1532-33, the confraternity celebrated a mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin every Saturday; these are not mentioned after 1533. From 1533 to 1540, the schedule of masses does not change.

The confraternity provided oil for the lamp that burned day and night before the tabernacle containing the reserved Blessed Sacrament. Wilhem de Horion mentions in his accounts that this service dated from before the wars, which have since made it impossible.⁶³ For this purpose, the confraternity had acquired or received as a bequest a *rente* of four quarts of rapeseed oil. Since they both took and used the payment in kind, without converting it to cash, it does not often show up in the account. From 1504 to 1523, the accounts show that the confraternity bought oil for the sanctuary lamp in addition to the *rente* payment. Between 1514 and 1522, the parish paid one florin a year to the confraternity as a subvention of the lamp. After 1523 there is no further mention of the sanctuary lamp.

The confraternity decorated their chapel with garlands called “chapeals” on the feast of the Assumption. Such decoration was customary in Liège. The accounts show purchases of these “chapeals” beginning in 1524-25.

More permanent decoration of the confraternity’s chapel also occupied its attention, especially in the early years. Several brothers in the confraternity, as well as outside workers, did major structural repairs on the chapel in 1468. The cost of masonry, carpentry, and other work was more than seventeen griffons. In the 1480s, the confraternity decorated its chapel. Antoine le Pondeur, a confrere, painted and gilded the statue of Our Lady and the wall behind the altar; in 1480, seven confreres contributed to buy seven “chapiteals” of copper. After 1500 the chapel is complete, but the confraternity still needs to buy altar linens and supplies occasionally. The confraternity also owned many ornaments, such as small statues and rosaries, which were kept in the chapel. Many were stolen by the Burgundian soldiers and only recovered many years later.⁶⁴

The years from 1480 to 1492 were a time of rebuilding and restoration, not only of the chapel but also of the annual routine of worship. Once the facilities and the routine are established, not much needs to be said in the accounts. When there are changes, they are new masses added by the generosity of donors. The organization itself functions with increasing smoothness.

The greatest expansion in the worship life of the confraternity appears after 1530. We have already noted the temporary addition of a mass every Saturday from 1529 to 1533. Beginning in 1532, the confraternity engaged the choir of Saint-Paul to sing the *Salve Regina* every Saturday and Sunday, probably as part of Vespers. To help pay them, the confraternity took up a collection, but also paid a considerable sum out of the common fund. That a collection was taken shows that these services were meant to be, and in fact were, attended, probably by other parishioners as well as by confraternity members.

⁶³ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 8v.; the wars to which Horion refers are probably those surrounding the revolt of the La Marck, since he speaks of them as going on at the time he is writing (1480).

⁶⁴ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 18-18v.

In 1540, the confraternity began to celebrate masses in honor of St. Anne, on her feast and on the first Tuesday of each month. Toward the end of that decade, the Confraternity of Our Lady contributed toward the Corpus Christi procession of the new Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, including the “histoires et jeux de personnages lors fais et exhibeis.”⁶⁵ The 1461 rule had provided for special participation in the parish mass of Corpus Christi, and the record of the union of 1473 show that at least on that occasion the leaders of the confraternity in fact did march in the offertory. In the 1540s, however, we find the first reference to participation by the Confraternity of Our Lady in a procession outside the context of mass. The procession would have been an outdoor parade through the streets of the parish, with plays and banners as well as prayers. This form of piety, well known in the Middle Ages, became even more popular and elaborate in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Liège.⁶⁶ The lavishness and variety of liturgical and paraliturgical life after 1530 is far from the celebration “sens nulle pompe ni orguelle” of the 1457 rule. Not only is it elaborate; it is public. The confraternity has turned from activities focused on itself and its members outward, to edify the entire community.

Funerals

As in the case of most medieval confraternities, the original rule of the Confraternity of Our Lady makes extensive provision for funerals. In its original intention, therefore, the confraternity had as one major purpose caring for those who were passing from this world to the next. The new rule of 1529 continues most of the earlier provision. In the actual practice of the confraternity, however, funerals occupy a smaller place in the confraternity’s life after 1530 than they had before.

The obligations in the rule concerning funerals entail on the one hand the attendance of the confraternity at the funeral of any member, for which the confraternity received a candle, and on the other hand the confraternity’s obligation to celebrate a requiem mass for the departed brother or sister. Generally the accounts show two entries when a member dies: a credit for the candle, a debit for the mass. Almost every year there are a few notations of this kind.⁶⁷

After 1502, the membership records are complete, and the single and married men are on different lists. Therefore in cases where a married man dies and his widow remains a member, or where a man’s wife dies so that he moves to the list of single members,⁶⁸ we can be certain that someone has died for whom the confraternity might be expected to hold a funeral. From the accounts, we know if it did or not.

The figures for 1502 to 1540 show a division into three periods. From 1505 to 1515, 87 percent of the husbands, but only 42 percent of the wives, had confraternity funerals. During the next period, from 1516 to 1530, the accounts show funerals for 85 percent of the husbands and all of the wives. After 1530, however, none of the five husbands and only three of the seven wives (43 percent) have either a candle or a mass noted in the accounts. After 1530, moreover, very few funerals of either married or single persons are indicated in the accounts. There are only five

⁶⁵ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 128, f. 139v.

⁶⁶ Albert Verschuere, “Fêtes et solennités liégeoises durant l’Ancien Régime” (Mémoire de licence, Université de Liège, 1979), pp. 25-26, 156, 194.

⁶⁷ Generalizations of the kind that follow are impossible for the period 1480-92 because the membership records are incomplete; only those who paid dues are listed. We have no way of knowing if a member died or merely dropped out. During this period, there are eleven funerals mentioned, for eight of the men in the confraternity and three of their wives. Only in one case, where the widow of a member is later listed as a member, do we know that a brother died without a funeral appearing on the books.

⁶⁸ The former case is much more common than the latter: forty-eight husbands died as against twenty-six wives.

funerals in ten years, as opposed to thirty-two for the first period (over two per year) and forty-five (three per year) for the second.

The observance of the rule on funerals follows the same pattern visible earlier for the rule and the schedule of worship. In the beginning, the organization struggled to establish a pattern, which worked smoothly through the 1520s. That the confraternity buried more and more wives indicates that women were increasingly included in the same spiritual community as their husbands. Then, around 1530, the emphasis shifted. This sudden change coincided with the new rule and the elaboration of the company's worship. The confraternity became not so much a tight-knit brotherhood as a service organization. Its emphasis on common worship turned outward to provide spectacles in which the whole parish could share. By the same token it no longer seemed so important that every member receive a confraternity funeral. The living, not the dead, could appreciate the music, the flowers, and the processions.

Annual meetings

According to the original rules, the central event of the confraternity year was the annual feast, where the confraternity examined its accounts and elected new masters. The combined confraternity, at least from 1480, held this meeting on the feast of the Assumption, following the rule of the original Confraternity of Our Lady. That rule states that the masters should take four griffons from the common fund to pay for part of the dinner. The decision of 1490 forbade taking this from the dues of members, but the confraternity had other sources of income.

The accounts for the 1480s show how the original scheme for the feast worked out. For several of these years, there is an expense indicated for the feast in general. In one year it is as high as one griffon. In addition the expense (*escot*) of several priests, the parish clerk, and, in one case, one of the widows of the company, is paid in full. When a location is specified, it is in the house of one of the masters. It must have been a good-sized house, even if the total membership was no more than sixty.

In 1502, the accounts not only give the cost of the feast, but also a full list of what was served. On that occasion, the confreres consumed two sheep, twelve brace of pigeons, and chicken, flavored with pepper and other spices, as well as bread and cheese. This meal they washed down with a half-tun of beer and over forty-one quarts of wine. All this was paid for out of the common fund, totalling, including fuel and cartage, ten florins, three aidans, eighteen sols, or over twenty-three griffons. If all the wives of the married men in the confraternity attended, as well as the priests and the parish clerk, as many as 150 people may have eaten this dinner, whose location is not specified.⁶⁹

After 1509 there is no indication of a feast until 1538-39, when the accounts include notations of two feasts, for that year and for the one preceding, both at the house of the same man, one of the masters for the year.⁷⁰ Since the cost is less than the feasts of thirty years earlier in money that is worth half as much, either the fare was simpler, many fewer people attended, or the common fund only paid part. In the 1540s dinners on the feast of the Assumption or at the rendering of accounts are mentioned regularly. The notations for them are phrased similarly to those for dinners at the rendering of accounts in the parish books, and leave open the possibility that not all the members attended. The corresponding parish dinners are essentially planning

⁶⁹ The feast of 1502 is the most expensive the confraternity paid for, as well as the only one for which we have a detailed account. The next two dinners, in 1508 and 1509, each cost less than half the 1502 figure.

⁷⁰ In Figure 3:1, only the feast for the year 1538-39 is included in the totals.

meetings for the lay leaders and clergy of the parish. The new-style confraternity dinners may well have been the same, befitting an organization at the service of the community.

The Financial Balance

Our discussion of the confraternity's affairs has not strayed far from the lines of the accounts. There was little indeed that the confraternity did that did not involve the expenditure of money. The operations of the confraternity, either liturgical or social, were closely related to its financial condition. What it did depended on what it could afford to do. Like the parish, but on a smaller scale, the confraternity represented a set of shared resources devoted to God for the spiritual benefit of all the brethren. Therefore it is possible to sum up the changing activities of the confraternity in the changing allocation of these resources.

Three kinds of income are mentioned in the rule: annual dues, entrance and leaving fees, and fines for non-attendance. Of these, the most substantial and that which appears most regularly in the accounts is the first. Even this form of income, however, eventually became insignificant beside that derived from landed property. The rule of 1461 foresees that the confraternity might acquire such property, and provides that the excess should go to the parish under the direction of its officers. In the event, the result was, at least on paper, different. The confraternity did not surrender control over its added income, but rather spent it mainly on worship services within the parish. The story of the confraternity's income and its expenditures is, of course, inseparable from the economic history of the period. The confraternity benefited from the economic growth and in fact from the general price rise of the sixteenth century.

The first period of accounts, covering the years 1480-81 to 1491-92, show the payment of dues as very irregular. Since only those members who paid are shown, we cannot tell what portion of actual members were paying. Sometimes a member would pay several years' dues at once. The situation became more orderly after 1490, when the assessment was reduced. Beginning in 1502, both paying and non-paying members are shown. Thus we can see that as the real value of money fell, payment becomes more and more regular. Some members seem to be exempt from dues. The vicar and the parish clerk enjoyed free membership; so did other priests, and, for a while, the *compteur* of the confraternity. Wilhem de Horion gave the confraternity an annual *rente* of four setiers of spelt in 1490;⁷¹ thereafter he paid no dues. Johan le Barbier and probably Baldwin de Scagier also used this method. Especially in the 1480s, it was common for a member to pay "por discompt," that is, to be credited for goods or services furnished to the confraternity.

The other payments listed in the rule do not appear in the accounts. The wax each member was supposed to contribute on entering may simply have been given as candles and therefore not shown, although the candle associated with members' funerals is given a money value. On one occasion this is referred to as "candeilh et yssue"⁷² but this is the only reference to payment of a leaving fee (*issue*). It is hard to say whether the "amendes" occasionally referred to are the fines provided for in the rules. They seem to be too high and too infrequent, and the accounts never state what they are for. They may in fact be payments offered in reparation for some other fault. On one occasion, the donor is not even a member of the confraternity.⁷³ Although it is nowhere mentioned in the rule, the confraternity did take up a collection (*queste*) on Sundays and feasts of the Virgin during the 1480s, and during the same period had a collection box (*block*) in its chapel. In the

⁷¹ The setier was about a bushel; see Appendix C.

⁷² Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 32v.

⁷³ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 127, f. 87.

sixteenth century there is no mention of these sources until the collection taken up at the singing of the *Salve Regina*.

By far the largest source of income was the ownership of real property in the form of *cens* and *rentes*. In this respect the confraternity fitted the pattern of other ecclesiastical institutions in Liège. These properties had three main sources. First of all, members of the confraternity either donated them during their lifetimes or bequeathed them in their wills. As noted above, a donation of property could serve in place of dues.

Secondly, some of the confraternity's property in the late fifteenth century came from the parish, having been donated by the churchwardens to help the confraternity get back on its feet, especially to rebuild the chapel.⁷⁴ This property was returned early in the sixteenth century. That the churchwardens would actually make such a donation shows the close relation of the confraternity to the parish. Just as the confraternity's chapel was part of the parish church, so too their patrimonies could be freely shared. The churchwardens of Saint-Martin-en-Ile clearly saw the benefit to the whole community of the brotherhood in their midst.

Finally, the confraternity itself invested in land. Between 1520 and 1540, the confraternity invested 150 florins in *cens* paying 5 percent per year. In its earlier days, according to documents in its first register, the confraternity had lent money. The furrier Herman Paren borrowed money from the confraternity which they were hard pressed to recover from his widow who had remarried and moved to Huy.⁷⁵ Similarly the brewer Pieter de Trois Gres, a member, borrowed ten griffons from the confraternity in 1466; when he died in 1483, his widow signed over two marcs of *cens*.⁷⁶ She thereafter remained a member until her own death in 1502. A more straightforward investment came in 1480, when the confraternity bought a dilapidated house from the widow Jehenne Rives, which it restored to habitable condition.⁷⁷

The largest expense for which the confraternity had to pay was its annual budget of masses. In addition to this regular expense, there were the funerals of members, the annual banquets, work done on the chapel, and the expenses of owning property: work on houses and *cens* paid to the next owner higher up. After 1512, the *compteur* of the confraternity also received a salary.

Figure 3:1 gives some representative figures illustrating the financial operations of the confraternity. The first three rows give the changing values of the most important elements in the confraternity's income and expense: the price of spelt and the stipend paid for a mass. Up to 1512, the price of spelt, in which most *rentes* were figured, remained fairly stable, if fluctuating; after that year, it takes off. In 1514, it passed 30 aidans per muid, never to return. It was never below 40 aidans per muid after 1521 or below 60 after 1526. It reached a peak of 100 in 1538-40, then briefly declined, but afterwards continued to rise throughout the century. The price of masses does not increase so dramatically; this does not mean that the priests were going hungry. The parish vicar and chaplains, like the confraternity, received their regular salaries from the parish in spelt; therefore they were not under pressure to raise their fees in proportion to inflation.

⁷⁴ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 32.

⁷⁵ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 5v.

⁷⁶ Ibid., f. 7. Two marcs was equivalent to almost two members' annual dues.

⁷⁷ Ibid., f. 9v. The confraternity spent 10 griffons for the house, and almost 17 griffons on repairs. The confraternity then rented the house to tenants, receiving 30 aidans a year (net of *trescens* paid to the overlord, the parish church of Notre-Dame-aux-Fonts). This equalled over eight members' annual dues, or a return of over 12 percent on the initial investment.

	Year ending	1481	1490	1503	1510	1520	1525	1530	1535	1539
Price of spelt (aidans/muid)		20	20	24	20	35	40	75	65	100
Fee for Mass (aidans)		1	1.5	2	2	2.5	2.5	3	3	3
Masses/muid		20.0	13.3	12.0	10.0	14.0	16.0	25.0	21.7	33.3
Landed income										
Amount of <i>rentes</i> (muids of spelt)		3.5	3.5	6	7.25	7.375	7.375	7.375	7.375	7.375
Nominal value		1680	1680	3456	3480	6195	7080	13275	11505	17700
Value of <i>cens</i>		1621.3	2939	3210	2442.5	3011.5	4020	6228	6342	9220
Income										
Total		8693.75	4069.25	13614	10388.5	15308.5	15606	22968	19777	27484
% <i>rentes</i>		15.90	29.50	21.30	29.30	40.50	45.40	49.10	49.70	53.90
% <i>cens</i>		8.50	16.10	12.10	17.40	15.40	25.80	27.10	32.10	33.50
% dues		29.20	17.10	25.00	47.30	17.50	19.60	18.70	18.20	12.60
% "candles"		1.80	0.00	1.40	6.00	16.50	2.80	5.10	0.00	0.00
% other		44.60	37.30	40.20	0.00	10.10	6.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Expenditure										
Total		11049	5251	14623	12450	14098	10144	15032	16200	21192
% liturgies		29.50	100.00	39.80	54.80	59.70	85.40	83.80	91.70	78.40
% funerals		0.50	0.00	0.00	1.90	2.90	1.60	3.10	0.90	0.00
% banquet		3.20	0.00	33.50	20.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	14.20
% <i>luminaire</i>		5.20	0.00	2.80	23.10	25.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
% other		60.50	0.00	23.80	0.00	11.50	13.00	13.10	7.40	6.40
Balance		(2355.25)	(1181.75)	(1009.00)	(2061.50)	1210.50	5462.00	7936.00	3577.00	6292.00

All amounts are in sols commun unless otherwise noted (24 sols = 1 aidan). Investments, which occurred in 1481 and 1530, are not included in the totals.

Figure 3:1 Confraternity Finances: Sample Years

The group of figures concerning the confraternity's income shows how much of this was derived from *rentes* in spelt. The nominal value of the *rentes* is the amount that the confraternity would have received if all the *rentes* had been paid at the going price of spelt. This was not always the case. First, not all the *cens* or *rentes* were paid every year; in fact, some were chronic bad debts. Second, the confraternity gave preferential rates to some of its tenants, allowing them to pay *rentes* at a lower price per muid. This policy began as prices started to rise, and seems to reflect a favor to fellow parishioners. This is clearly expressed in 1511 when Piron Gheneurt is allowed to pay at a lower rate "a cause quil estoit del paroiche."⁷⁸ Piron and, after his death, his widow Lorette often paid less than other tenants. They were in fact not only parishioners but also members of the confraternity.

The confraternity's grain income, although the amount of *rentes* does not increase, represented a higher and higher proportion of the total as the money in which other forms of income were figured declined in value. The proportion of income derived from *cens* held up because of the purchase of new *cens*. These constantly needed to be replaced as the old ones lost their value and it was no longer worthwhile to take legal proceeding to make tenants pay. Five-percent *cens* contracts, the favorite way of raising money in sixteenth-century Liège, were readily available to anyone who had extra money to invest.

The first four columns of the table reflect the situation of the confraternity before the price revolution. During the turbulent 1480s and '90s, when the scarcely rebuilt city of Liège was undergoing the further trial of the revolt of the La Marck, the existence of the confraternity was still tenuous. Wilhem de Horion took over as *compteur* in order to make the tenants and members pay what they owed, but he had great difficulty. Many properties were still devastated, and had either to be excused payment or allowed to pay at a reduced rate. The confraternity operated at a loss most years, meaning that Horion absorbed the debt, carrying it forward from year to year. In 1486, the deficit reached twenty-six florins, an amount greater than the total annual budget.⁷⁹

In the first decade and a half of the sixteenth century, the situation is the same. Things have stabilized a bit, but the confraternity is still struggling. Deficits are common, and the confraternity is usually in debt to its *compteur*, Piron Hannoton.

As grain prices rose, so did the cash income of the confraternity. Since the mass stipends paid in cash to the priests did not rise in proportion, the confraternity expenses, which consisted chiefly of liturgies, did not keep up with income, so that the confraternity accumulated a surplus. Real income as expressed in muids of spelt, although it fell, fell much less than real expenditure; income therefore surpassed expense in the early years of the price revolution. The confraternity at first invested this unspent income, buying *cens* in 1521, 1522, 1527, and 1530. Another disbursement on a similar scale came in 1529. The letter of approval from the provost cost the confraternity twenty-five florins. This too was an investment, in the intangible commodity of respectability rather than in land.

After 1530, while inflation continued, the pattern of accumulating huge surpluses and investing them changed. The confraternity expanded its activities, first liturgical, and then social. The former surplus went instead to pay for the new Saturday masses, then for the choir to sing on Saturdays and Sundays.

In joining the original two confraternities that made up the Confraternity of Our Lady, an earlier generation of confreres had dropped the rule of 1461 that superfluous goods should return to

⁷⁸ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 127, f. 58.

⁷⁹ There is no record of repayment. This probably occurred when Horion retired as *compteur*, sometime between 1493 and his death around 1499.

the parish. Yet in a way they did. The priests who celebrated the masses in the confraternity's schedule were mostly members of the parish staff. The vicar, himself a member of the confraternity, celebrated a great many of them; the rest were celebrated by chaplains who were also members of the confraternity. Only from 1507 to perhaps 1512, when the Carmelite friars celebrated the regular Monday masses, did the confraternity go outside the parish. The chapel with its gilded and painted decorations, garlanded with flowers for major feasts, the lamp burning day and night before the tabernacle, the singing of the *Salve Regina* at Saturday and Sunday Vespers: these were things all the parish could appreciate. Nor was this activity outside the control of the vicar and churchwardens; they figured among the leaders of the confraternity.

In all the areas of confraternity activity: liturgy, funerals, banquets, and finances, we can perceive a pattern. Up to 1515, the confraternity struggled to maintain itself financially and to keep up the basic schedule of services that formed its reason for being. Ceasing to pay for the banquet out of the common fund helped somewhat, but it was not until after the price rise began to take hold that the confraternity was soundly established. From 1515 to 1530, the confraternity was able to ensure that the engagements of the rule would be fulfilled. This was the period during which funeral services are celebrated most faithfully. But the confraternity's activities did not expand beyond the rule. The only new masses established were in response to specific bequests; the rest of the windfall is invested in property.

The years after 1530 brought a dramatic change: the confraternity observed far fewer funerals; but at the same time, instead of investing its surplus income, it spent it on more lavish liturgy, and, after 1537, on once again supporting a more restrained confraternal banquet. It was not merely that the confraternity had more money; someone decided to spend it in a new way.

The same years saw the establishment of a new Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament at Saint-Martin-en-Ile, to which many of the members of the Confraternity of Our Lady belonged, a confraternity of the type that was to characterize the Church of the Catholic Reformation. It was, that is, a mass organization with clerical participation, approved and endowed with indulgences by Church authorities. It was far too large for the members to be personally acquainted; its purpose was rather to mobilize the whole community and incorporate it in a renewed Church. Confraternities of this type were springing up all over Catholic Europe.

The changes reflected in the rule of 1529 of the Confraternity of Our Lady complement this pattern. Membership is less demanding, but not in order to enlarge the confraternity. The focus of attention is outward rather than inward. The bonds uniting the confraternity are ignored or rather taken for granted; the object is the community, not in order to include it, as in the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, but in order to serve it. It is fitting that the Confraternity of Our Lady should at last seek official recognition as part of a larger system. Special brotherhood is a less important purpose now than the renewal of the community.

As we shall see in the next chapter, this change represents a new type and a new generation of confraternity members. Although the new forms are typical of the Catholic Reformation, they do not come from the hierarchy, from the clergy, or from religious orders. The laity held the purse strings, and it was the laity who, as members of the Confraternity of Our Lady, sponsored the new forms of worship and association.