

CHAPTER IV

THE MEMBERS

In the last chapter, we examined the Confraternity of Our Lady as an organization. Its rule emphasized the traditional ideal of brotherhood as well as loyalty to the parish of Saint-Martin-en-Ile. This brotherhood and more visibly this loyalty appear in the activities the confraternity sponsored. The form and activity of the confraternity was not static, however. It began to change as soon as it was founded, in response to external pressures as well as to the desires of its members. Moreover, this change had a direction: the confraternity moved gradually toward greater liturgical display, towards an emphasis on the living rather than on the dead, and toward the form of a sodality rather than a tightly-bound fraternity. In short, by 1540 the confraternity had assumed a type of piety and organization typical of the Catholic Reformation.

Merely to have noted this development is, perhaps, interesting in itself; yet our enterprise demands that we seek more deeply for the cause. We have seen that the price increase of the sixteenth century, beginning in Liège about 1512, brought a great increase in the confraternity's disposable income, but this by itself did not cause the change. Throughout the 1520s this income is invested rather than spent; it is not until the 1530s that the confraternity sponsors more liturgy instead. Someone has decided to hold masses and other worship services, and to pay less attention to funerals. We shall never truly know why they made these decisions—such questions are fraught with epistemological perils anyway—but at least we can discover who made them. This will give us some insight into the changing mentality of the period.

The change in activities accompanied a change in both the composition and size of the confraternity. A larger organization gave way to a smaller; grocers and artisans gave way to investors and specialized craftsmen. In this chapter we shall examine first the makeup of the Confraternity of Our Lady by sex, marital status, social order, and occupational group, and how this composition changed during the period 1480-1540. Then we shall examine the roles of the members both within and outside the confraternity. The confraternity members were closely tied to the life of their neighborhood, and involved in the affairs of their guilds. Even more important, the lay leaders of the parish of Saint-Martin-en-Ile were part of the confraternity. Thus the confraternity was a means for putting the desires and initiatives of the laity into practice within the institutional Church.

The process of change within the Confraternity of Our Lady was not a contest of parties, but a natural succession of generations against a background of general economic change. New forms and emphases were introduced as younger members took over from older ones. Thus we should be wary of averaging over time, which may obscure the real issues. Even within a single year, sweeping together the old and the young, the neophytes with the veterans, would be at least as misleading as averaging together the merchant and the artisan. Especially with a group as small as this confraternity, averages and percentages are instruments too blunt to cut out the shape of the organization.

It would be tempting to try to draw a picture of the average confraternity member; and yet it is not merely because of the possibility of scientific inaccuracy that we must resist the temptation. The nature of the confraternity, especially of this particular type—the parish confraternity—is that it united very different persons. The existence of these differences is more important to the functioning of the confraternity than is the position of the average among them. Furthermore, within a small group, the influence of individuals is stronger. Indeed, each member is able to contribute more as an individual in a group of neighbors who are personally acquainted. To treat such a face-to-face organization like the faceless masses of the modern state would obscure rather than illuminate it.

Our method of choice, therefore, must involve personal acquaintance. This method is hindered not so much by difficulties as by impossibilities. We cannot actually go back four or five hundred years and shake hands with Henry Peseal, or watch Johan le Cock in his workshop or Lynette Albert at her spinning wheel. Except for the great church of Saint-Paul, the very buildings that come into our story have vanished. Although the streets of the Ile district remain, the channel that made it an island is now solid ground. Still, we must try to make our acquaintance with these people as individuals the basis of our understanding of the organization they built. There will of course be numbers in our discussion, which are statistics; but they are not counted like the votes in a voting machine, but like the placesettings at a dinner. Numbers are important here not in the way they are to a clerk in a welfare office, but in the way they are to a careful host.

We do not, however, know the persons we are discussing equally well. We have many lists of names; but beyond these lists not every member has left the same traces in the archives. We can reconstruct the rather dramatic life of Katherine Woet de Trixhe and her two husbands; but of “Ghebel”—she is given no other name—we know nothing but that she was a woman and a member of the confraternity from 1524 to 1527. For those who were influential in the confraternity, however, as well as for some who were not, we usually have enough information on their occupations, their families, and their roles inside and outside the company to show how they fitted into a greater pattern. Without this acquaintance, whatever figures may arise from counting them are only a mathematical exercise.

Therefore the biographies with which we illustrate our analysis are the real substance of our account. The true story of the confraternity is in fact nothing but a collection of biographies, displaying the life of the organization as the constantly changing combination of the particular lives that made it up. Space does not permit this; we use figures instead. But we must never forget that they are only shorthand for some thirteen score of daily lives of men and women very like ourselves. We may take warning from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry:

Les grandes personnes aiment les chiffres. Quand vous leur parlez d'un nouvel ami, elles ne vous disent jamais: “Quel est le son de sa voix? Quels sont les jeux qu'il préfère? Est-ce qu'il collectionne les papillons?” Elles vous demandent: “Quel âge a-t-il? Combien a-t-il de frères? Combien pèse-t-il? Combien gagne son père?” Ainsi seulement elles croient le connaître.¹

¹ *Le Petit Prince* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), p. 19.

Demographics

Numbers

The first question to be answered is as to the number of members in the confraternity. The uncertainty of our answer is the outer limit of all subsequent discussion, since if we miss someone entirely, or confuse him with someone else, anything we may say about him is worthless. Careful comparison of the annual membership lists with one another and with other documents, however, yields a number that is accurate to within less than five percent.²

The confraternity documents in question, especially after 1500, are remarkably clear. From 1481-82 to 1492-93, the accounts include a list of all members who paid their dues. The last three years, from 1490-91 to 1492-93 may also include those who did not pay. The register containing these lists also includes a list of deceased members, but they will not be included in the totals here. The accounts beginning with the year 1502-1503 include lists of all members, paid-up or not, for each year. Members' names usually appear, especially after 1502, in lists according to the amount of dues they paid, thus with the single persons on a separate list from the married men.³

In all of this chapter except where we are talking specifically about the clergy, we shall only consider the lay members of the confraternity. That is, we shall exclude the priests, as well as the parish clerk, who, though married, was not only a cleric but a salaried member of the parish staff. We shall include, however, beguines and men in minor orders who worked at lay occupations. Thus unless specifically indicated, figures on total membership or membership in any category mean lay members within this definition.

These documents list a total of 143 men and 120 women. These were not, of course, all members of the confraternity at once. Moreover, the wives of the married men who appear on the lists were considered part of the confraternity and must be included in the total membership for any given year. If the list for 1490 includes all the members, then this total is 59. We have no figures for the period from 1493 to 1502, but after this, the membership is higher. The confraternity reaches a high of 153 in 1509, and then declines gradually to 132 in 1515, then suddenly to 90 by 1519 and a low of 79 in 1522. Then the numbers rise to a new peak of 100 in 1529 and decline again to 77 in 1540. Thereafter, throughout the century and into the next, the confraternity dwindles to a handful.⁴

² See the Preface for a discussion of some of the difficulties in making this enumeration.

³ The lists, which will not hereafter be referenced in the notes, appear in the following places: Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, regs. 125, ff. 22, 25v, 32v, 36, 40v, 44v, 49, 53v, 57v, 61v, 65v; 127, ff. 3v-5, 11v-12v, 19v-20, 25v-26v, 32v-33v, 39v-41, 44v-45v, 50v-51v, 55v-56v, 60v-61v, 64v-65v, 70v-71v, 76v-77v, 81-81v, 86-86v, 89v-90; 128, ff. 2v-3, 7v-8, 12-12v, 16v-17, 20v-21, 24v-25, 28-28v, 32-32v, 36v-37, 42-43, 47-48, 52-53, 57-58, 61v-62, 66-66v, 71-71v, 76-77, 80v-81v, 84v-85v, 89v-90v, 93v-94, 97v-98v, 102v-103v, 109v-110, 114-114v, 119-119v, 123, 128-128v, 133-133v, 137v-138. In addition, some data on membership can be gleaned from the other parts of the accounts, especially late payments of dues and payment of entry fees. Because the confraternity year ran from 15 August to 15 August, when it is a question of someone's membership, a year number refers to the year in which the accounts which list the member begin, i. e., 1515 means 1515-16. A final year likewise refers to the first year in which the member's name dCEs not appear, or in which a member's funeral is shown in the accounts.

⁴ See Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, regs. 129 (accounts, 1548-61) and 130 (accounts 1562-1614), *passim*.

Women

Considering the total membership of the confraternity rather than merely the names on the list, women are always more than half of the members. The number of women who are members in their own right is substantially greater than the number of single men. The percentage of men varies from 45 percent in 1502 to 35 percent from 1523 to 1526. The percentage of men varies with the absolute size of the confraternity because most of the variation is in the number of married men, each of whom represents two members.

The women who are members in their own right (we shall call them “single women” although not all are unmarried) fall into three broad categories. The largest comprises the widows of members. Not only are these the most numerous; they were members for the longest time. Aelid d’Heur, widow of Christian Geister, for example, was a member from her husband’s death in 1481 to her own in 1527. The second identifiable category included married women whose husbands were not members. There were very few of these, and in many cases including women in this category is guesswork. The test is whether the list calls a woman “femme de” or “veuve de”; but since the former expression is sometimes used for widows, it is not conclusive. All we know is that some women fell into that category, never more than seven in one year, usually two or three. The highest number came between 1515 and 1529 when the number of married men is the lowest. These women are in some cases the widows of members who have remarried but whose husbands do not join; Katherine Woet de Trixhe, of whom we shall speak presently, is an example of this. Others, like Katherine de Pepenge, wife of Barthelemy de Pepenge and daughter of Francheu de Laitre,⁵ are the daughters of confreres. Sometimes a woman might precede her husband in the confraternity: Katherine, wife of Abraham de Bearue, joined in 1513; her husband joined only in 1522.

The rest of the women are heterogeneous and hard to identify. They include women who appear never to have married, some related to confraternity families, some not; widows of men other than confraternity members; and a few who defy further identification. There were two beguines at least, Isabeal Renkin and Jehenne de Wihogne; the mother of the vicar Cloes Jandelet was also a member. Some of these may in fact have been married, or the widows of members; some, too, may have married men who subsequently joined the confraternity. Pirette Dary, daughter of a wealthy merchant and widow of Giles de Fanchon, joined the confraternity after his death in 1520. She remained a member throughout her widowhood, and when she remarried in 1544, her new husband, Benedictus Ghernis, also entered.⁶

The women of the Confraternity of Our Lady must have joined for a variety of reasons. Widows sought to preserve and honor their late husbands’ memory; in the case of the wealthier widows, the confraternity provided an outlet for pious benefactions. A married woman with an unhappy home life might also feel the need for some support apart from her husband. A confraternity, especially if she had already established a relationship with it through her own family or a previous marriage, could very well serve.

The case of Katherine Woet de Trixhe illustrates this situation. She was the daughter of the tanner Woet (Walter) de Trixhe of the Outre-Meuse district, and from a family already prosperous and later important in city affairs. She first married Johannes Saverot. By their marriage contract, entered in the court of *échevins* in 1505, her father gave his son-in-law 200 florins in cash and 15

⁵ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 73, ff. 115v-116.

⁶ Camille de Borman, *Les Echevins de la souveraine justice de Liège v. 2: Age moderne* (Liège: D. Cormaux, 1899), p. 96.

muids of spelt in heritable *rentes*.⁷ Saverot was already a man of substance, one of the *tenants* of the parish from at least 1486, the *compteur* of the Pauvres-en-Ile, and a commissioner of the city. He was also a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady, and served as master in 1506-1507. The registers of the *échevins* reveal a continuous series of his investments in land and loans at least from 1492. He had already married once, to another Katherine, and had grown children when he took his second wife.⁸ After he died in 1516, Katherine remarried almost at once. She appears on the confraternity rolls only once as Saverot's widow, and the next year as the wife of Johan de Fanchon. Fanchon was a wealthy butcher who also invested in landed properties. His brother, Maître Giles de Fanchon, was a notary who became *échevin*; their other brother Hubert was a canon of Saint-Paul. Johan himself was only recently widowed; his first wife Idelette had given him several children of whom at least the eldest, Martin, was full-grown. Shortly after Johan and Katherine were married, Martin married Marie, daughter of Katherine and her first husband.⁹

After her second marriage Katherine remained a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady. Her husband did not join until 1528, and then remained a member only until 1530. After her husband's apparent defection from the confraternity, Katherine does not appear in the list for a few years, but reappears in 1535. We may have reasons to doubt Johan's piety, although he was a "*clericus conjugatus*"—a married cleric in minor orders.¹⁰ In 1518 he was condemned by the ecclesiastical court to a pilgrimage to St. Anne at Dueren for attacking a certain Johannes Datis with a sword.¹¹ In 1535, the year she rejoined the confraternity, Katherine herself brought charges against him in the ecclesiastical court. He beat her, she contended, "with his fists as well as with sticks and with drawn and naked swords, both by day and by night."¹² He also tried to strangle her, and had ordered his son Collard (her stepson) to beat her as well. Furthermore he had brought his mistress into the house and lived with her in public adultery. Johan denied the charges, brought in Collard to claim he had only acted in self-defense, and claimed that the woman in question was only a servant and he would fire her anyway. We do not know the outcome of this case; however, one cannot blame her for seeking out the solace of her parish confraternity with a home life like that. Nor can one blame her that when she made out her will in 1543, Johan de Fanchon is not mentioned.

Beyond the sad tale of Katherine Woet de Trixhe we shall have little to say about the women of the confraternity. It is hard to know much about them in most cases. This is not to say that they were unimportant. Many pious bequests and donations came from widows. We have already seen examples of this: Ide de Seyne, Marie de Scalhoven, and Bertheline de Trois Gres; these were not all the women who left or gave property to the confraternity. When they did, however, it was the men who administered it.

⁷ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 24, ff. 361v-362v; Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Fonds Lefort, I, 25, f. 125.

⁸ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 66, f. 257; she nevertheless refers to them as hers, see her will: Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 27, ff. 175-176v. Saverot's will in Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, ptf. 8, lists his children.

⁹ See Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 26, ff. 113v-114v for Idelette's will; *ibid.*, f. 36 for the marriage contract of Martin and Marie.

¹⁰ On the role of such clerics in the diocese of Liège, see Léopold Génicot, "Clercs et laïques au diocèse de Liège à la fin du moyen âge" *Tijdschrift voor rechtsgechiednis* 23 (1955): 42-52.

¹¹ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 8, f. 14

¹² "Tam cum pugnibus quam baculis et gladiis nudis et extractis diurno et nocturno temporibus"; Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 22, f. 12-12v.

Men: Single and Married

Among the men of the confraternity, it is the married men who take the lead. First of all, they vastly outnumber single men. There are never more than nine of the latter, which represents as much as one-fourth of all the men only in 1519. Most of the single men are widowers who had joined when they were married.¹³

The single men paid the same dues (four bodragers) as single women. They were less active than the married men. This position is symbolized by the normal arrangement of the lists of names: the single men, jumbled together with the women, follow the married men. In only two cases do widowers serve as master of the confraternity. Johan delle Halle was newly widowed when he served in 1539-40 and 1540-41; Henry Paseal was in the same situation in 1515-16 and 1516-17. Each may have been elected while his wife was still alive and simply served out the normal two-year term. Each also remarried almost at once.

Henry Paseal, moreover, had already achieved an important position in the confraternity and in the parish. His case illustrates the importance of marriage in a man's life, since he apparently owed this position in part to a fortunate marriage. He was a member of the mercers' guild, and first married Jehenne, daughter of Wilhem de Horion, churchwarden and *compteur* of the parish and the confraternity. He joined his father-in-law on the court of *tenants* of the parish by 1497, and soon succeeded him as churchwarden. From this marriage he had three daughters.¹⁴ After his first wife died, he married Christine, widow of the confrere and fellow *tenant* of the parish Lambert de Hermée the baker, who had just died, making Henry executor of his estate.¹⁵ In addition to his office as churchwarden, Paseal was *compteur* of the Hôpital Saint-Jacques from 1498 to 1523, another office in which he succeeded his formidable father-in-law.¹⁶ He served as master of the confraternity in 1515-17, 1520-22, and 1531-34, as many years as anyone else during this period.

Henry Paseal's entrance into the confraternity very likely followed soon after his marriage to Wilhem de Horion's daughter. This event, unless he lived to a remarkably old age, must have taken place in his twenties. Most confreres joined as married men, but in the absence of census records it is impossible to give their average age. Many clearly had years of working life already behind them. Martin le Pondeur, who joined in 1506, was old enough in 1486 to be sent to Cologne by his father to buy gold leaf.¹⁷ Johan delle Halle, who joined in 1527, was working on vestments for the parish in 1518. Jan Scheers, a glazier, who joined in 1525, did work for the parish in 1516. Peter le Pondeur repainted a statue of St. Martin in 1515; he joined the Confraternity of Our Lady in 1529.¹⁸ As a solid householder, Baldwin de Barbeal, son of Baldwin de Scagier, joined the

¹³ The only unmarried men to join the confraternity entered between 1502 and 1506. Gerard Dame Yde and Johan Lynard both joined in 1502; neither ever married while he was a member, the former dying in 1517, the latter vanishing from the list in 1521. Wilhem Wathier joined the same year; he married in 1516 and continued in the confraternity until three years after his wife's death in 1541. Adrian de la Boverie joined as a single man in 1503, married in 1506, and died in 1509. Martin le Pondeur, probably the son of the confrere Antoine le Pondeur, joined in 1506, and married the next year. After his wife died in 1515, he remained a member until 1523.

¹⁴ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 27, ff. 33v-34.

¹⁵ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 28, ff. 336-336v. Henry and Christine appear not to have had any children. In her will made in 1532 she left a house to Lambert's nephew and the rest of her estate to Henry (Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 32, f. 186-186v). She had previously settled Lambert's bakery on her son Loren, also a baker and a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady (Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 113, ff. 140v-141).

¹⁶ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, non-classé ptf. 7.

¹⁷ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 37v.

¹⁸ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 48, ff. 109v (Peter), 167 (Jan); reg. 49, f. 111 (Johan).

confraternity in 1533; but as a young clerk in 1522 he was condemned to go on a pilgrimage to the Three Kings in Cologne for getting involved in what appears to have been a barroom brawl.¹⁹

Thus the Confraternity of Our Lady contrasts with the Florentine confraternities Ronald Weissman has studied. He finds that his confraternities included many men who joined young and before marriage, whose participation generally slackened just after their first marriage and then increased again as their families became established.²⁰ That the confreres in Liège were normally married when they joined is already a clear difference. The available examples seem to indicate that they were also older. Apparently the married men of the Confraternity of Our Lady were settled family men ready to take their places among the elders of the church.

That most of the confreres were married men should not be surprising. Bachelors were, to use a modern phrase, second-class citizens in Liège. No man who had not been married could be chosen as burgomaster, for example. This restriction continued through the eighteenth century, when Liégeois legal theorists saw the need to defend it at length in their works.²¹ In the sixteenth century, the guilds allowed only married men to vote.²² Within the parish, the electors of the churchwardens were not all the men, but only the heads of households. While a man was of age in Liège, and able to manage his own affairs, at the age of fifteen, he was not suited to manage the affairs of the community until he had at least a wife to steady him.

Social orders

Clergy

Although the Confraternity of Our Lady was essentially a lay organization, there were always some representatives of the clergy in it. To begin with, the priest currently in charge of the parish, whether the vicar appointed by the chapter of Saint-Paul or his “lieutenant,” was always a member. The other priests were either chaplains of the parish, like Johan Vaillant or Baldwin Charlier, or chaplains of Saint-Paul like Ott Stratman or Johan Coreal, who also served in the parish. These priests also celebrated masses for the confraternity. It is not clear from the accounts whether or not priests were expected to pay dues. Some pay sometimes; almost all pay for their entry. The confraternity seems to have recognized a special role for the vicar. By rule, he said many of the confraternity’s masses; while they were successively vicars of the parish, Cloes Jandelet and Cloes Jamart approved the confraternity accounts each year. As with other members, the confraternity celebrated requiem masses for its priests.

The parish clerk, like the priests, received a salary from the confraternity for his services. While his name does not often appear on the membership lists, he enjoyed many of the privileges of membership.²³ The parish clerk throughout most of this period was Godefrin Vaillant; his son, a priest, and later his widow, were also members. Antoine de Bealmont, a former parish clerk, was a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady throughout the 1480s.

¹⁹ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 11, f. 155v.

²⁰ Ronald F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), pp. 144-160.

²¹ Yves Moreau, *Les Bourgmestres de Liège au XVIIIe siècle* (Kortrijk-Heuk: UGA, 1978), p. 36.

²² 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. 180-81.

²³ In the 1480s, the accounts show that he attended the banquet at the confraternity’s expense; in 1523 his daughter received a confraternity funeral (Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 128, f. 22).

No members of religious orders seem to have been part of the confraternity. One secular canon, Pir de Freres of Saint-Barthélemy, appears on the list of members who died before 1480. He was the brother of Louis, the first rector of the chantry established by Yde de Seyne, and the brother-in-law of a confrere, the baker Stein del Rue.²⁴ Thus he quite likely lived in the parish. In general, the priests in the confraternity, rather than setting themselves up as chaplains in opposition to the parish clergy, served to strengthen the confraternity's relation to the parish.

Nobles and Patricians

Among the lay inhabitants of Liège, the highest orders were hardly represented in the Confraternity of Our Lady. There is only one who claimed a noble title, Damoiseau Adrian de la Boverie. He was a member from 1503 to his death in 1510; his mother, who died in 1505, had been a member before him. His family's fortunes, it seems, were in a state of decline. His father, Sir Jean de la Boverie, knight, hereditary *avoué* of the city of Liège, supported the citizens against the prince-bishop Louis de Bourbon. He had served as burgomaster in 1455, 1460, and 1465, and lived to serve again in 1482. He made enough of a peace with the Burgundian administration to serve on the council with which Charles the Rash replaced the *échevins*, and after Charles's death served as *échevin* until his death in 1492. His son Adrian, who never held civic office, was styled "esquire" (*écuyer*); he sold the office of *avoué* to Count Everard de la Marck, cousin of the future prince-bishop, while he continued to hold the *seigneurie* of Vijane in Flanders.²⁵ He married Marguerite de Marneffe, and had four children. Marguerite's name appears among the single women of the confraternity in 1505 and 1506. Adrian moves from among the single members to the head of the list of married members in 1507-1508, although his name is not followed by "et sa femme," as are the members' names that follow. This leads one to wonder if he had his children very quickly between his marriage to Marguerite in 1506 and his death in 1510, or if he had had an earlier wife. His will mentions his widow Marguerite and four children but leaves no further clue.²⁶ As a married man, he served as master in 1508 and 1509, just before he died. Marguerite continued to be a member until 1513; later one of their daughters married the notary Johan Corbeau de Xheneumont, himself from a distinguished family, who joined the Confraternity of Our Lady in 1546.²⁷

Holding office as *échevin* or burgomaster was one indication of patrician status. No *échevin* or burgomaster, however, was a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady during our period. This was not for want of *échevins* in the parish. The widow of the *échevin* Maître Giles de Fanchon, herself from a wealthy merchant family, joined immediately after his death, so that although he had never been a member, the confraternity celebrated a requiem mass for him.²⁸ It was his brother Johan who married Katherine Woet de Trixhe, and briefly joined the confraternity himself. The Fanchon family were butchers, and Giles had risen to become *échevin* by taking a licentiate in laws and practicing as a notary. Aelid d'Heur, whose husband Christian Gheister had been *compteur* of

²⁴ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 1 cf. f. 15v, reg. 141, f.131.

²⁵ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Fonds Lefort, I, 4, ff. 91-92; De Borman, 2: 41-43

²⁶ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 26, ff. 105-106v.

²⁷ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Fonds Lefort, I, 25, f. 233

²⁸ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 128, f. 9.

the chapter of Saint-Jean-Evangéliste, was the sister of the *échevin* and count palatine Tilman d'Heur.²⁹

Mobility into the patriciate was such that in the absence of office-holding information or an indication of noble status, it is hard to identify those in it. Of the three terms used to describe those in the original mercantile patriciate, two—*vinier* and *hallier*—were still in use in the sixteenth century, but those whom they described were now members of the coopers' and drapers' guilds. A man might therefore be described as a cooper in one document and as a *vinier* or vintner in another. André Stouten is called a *hallier* (cloth merchant); this may indicate high social status. His brother Johan was dean of Saint-Paul; as such he should have been a member of the chapter of Saint-Lambert. Johan is called “magister,” showing that he would have achieved this by virtue of a university degree rather than by nobility.³⁰

Two members of the confraternity were associated with the family of Chokier, one of the oldest patrician families in Liège. Both are notaries. Joseph Juppen, whose family had recently come from Hasselt, married Margaret de Chokier;³¹ a Raes de Chokier, who may have been her brother, married the daughter of Maître Mathieu Lagace, another confrere. Maître Mathieu, a “citain” and therefore native to Liège, is called a vintner as well as a notary.³² These examples suggest that one avenue by which members of the confraternity were rising into higher positions in society was the legal and notarial profession. They also suggest that those who had already ascended into the traditional patriciate or who held the highest magistracies no longer had time for a parochial organization like the Confraternity of Our Lady.

Guildsmen

One reason why it is difficult to distinguish patricians from their neighbors is that all male inhabitants of Liège had to be members of guilds. Guild membership was also the means to citizenship, and therefore to holding civic office. Even nobles, to be citizens, had to join guilds: Adrian de la Boverie, the one clearly noble confrere, “relieved” the drapers' guild in 1503; this of course was a guild with a great many high-status members. Nobles, patricians, lawyers, and others might join a guild without, of course, practicing the profession; the same applies to those who joined several guilds. Those who joined more than one guild might do so in order to avoid conflicts, as in the case of a brewer who also ran a bakery, but other motives might be political ambition or to provide more options for one's children.³³

The habit of joining guilds whose profession one did not practice (in technical legal terms, for *hantise* rather than *usance*) and of joining several guilds, complicates the problem of defining

²⁹ De Borman, 2: 53. Although the d'Heur were wealthy, doubtless patrician, they were not old nobility. Tilman's title of count palatine was conferred on him personally.

³⁰ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 39, ff. 53v-57.

³¹ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 66, ff. 295v-296.

³² Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 35, ff. 140-142, 196v-204v.

³³ Occupational information for members of the Confraternity of Our Lady found in the membership lists had been supplemented chiefly by the few remaining records for the guilds from the period. These are, in the Fonds des Métiers at Archives de l'Etat, Liège, regs. 25C (brasseurs), 68 (charpentiers), 130, 151 (merciers), 166, 169 (drapiers), 220 (vairanxhohiers), and 227 (tanneurs); also Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Fonds Abry, regs. 17, 19, 20, and 21 (transcriptions of guild records); Bibliothèque de l'Université, Liège, MS. 2195 (boulangiers); and the documents summarized by Edouard Poncelet and Emile Fairon in “Liste chronologique d'actes concernant les métiers et confréries de la cité de Liège” *Annuaire d'histoire liégeoise* 1 (1929-1937): 306-343; 2 (1938-1942): 8-66, 87-132, 203-267, 397-466, 509-543; 3 (1943-1947): 7-56, 131-82, 374-90, 447-97, 575-683.

the representation of various professions within the Confraternity of Our Lady. The figures that follow have been compiled using several principles which are, in theory, better than arbitrary.

1) Every man has been assigned to a guild if one can be found, even if he clearly never practiced the profession. For example, Raes de Lammines, a lawyer, was a member of the sawyers' guild, though he probably never sold, let alone sawed, a board in his life. We can count him among the sawyers, nevertheless, since he did legal work on their behalf and they considered him their "confrere."

2) Most men are counted with their occupational title rather than their guild membership. First of all, not many records of actual guild membership exist, while occupational titles, especially used as surnames, are common. This identification is especially sure if we have records of the man actually doing a job. Antoine le Pondeur, if he really was a painter (*pondeur*) would have been a member of the goldsmiths' guild; we know he was a painter because he did painting and gilding work for both the confraternity and the parish, as well as elsewhere. Jehan le Cock, although he joined both the drapers' and the brewers' guilds, is counted among the smiths, since he is always called a coppersmith (*potier de kevre*) and served as governor of the smiths.

3) In the absence of contrary evidence, we follow an occupational surname. Thus Wegier le Cuvelier is counted among the coopers (*cuveliers*). This can be tricky. One early confrere, Tossen le Claveteur, would be considered a nailer (*claveteur*) and therefore a smith, if he were not always referred to as a mercer.

4) Where someone who had no clear connection with any trade joined several guilds, we follow the one he joined first, or the one his father belonged to, or the one in which he held office. Joining by virtue of one's wife, while not inconclusive, may not indicate one's primary allegiance. For example, Johannes Saverot, trade unknown, relieved the tanners' guild by virtue of his wife, a tanner's daughter. His daughter's husband relieved both the bakers' and tanners' guilds by virtue of his wife, Saverot's daughter. Since we know the origin of his membership in the tanners' guild but not in that of the bakers, we may suppose that Saverot was a baker first, especially since there seem to have been no tanneries in the Ile district.

5) A special category of business and professional men includes those whose guilds are known (and are therefore also assigned to guilds) and those whose guilds are not known. It contains those who were lawyers or notaries by trade, who invested heavily in land (that is, lent money on *cens* contracts), who held some administrative post or who farmed taxes, who were *compteur* or *rentier* of some institution, or who were tonsured clerics, but not priests, and who had therefore probably been students. These criteria probably underestimate the number of those who had had training in some learned profession.

Classifying members by guild leaves unanswered several important questions, not the least of which is what actual work the confrere was engaged in. Even if he "used" his guild's profession, we do not know if he was an employe, an independent artisan, or an employer-manager. These questions are generally unanswerable anyway, given the state of the records. In adopting the present system, we are simply following the pattern used in medieval and early modern Liège. Since political rights and political activity were still exercised through the guilds, they form the most complete system for social classification we have. Of course, political classification and social structure are hardly the same thing. The kinds of information tax rolls, census records, sumptuary laws, and estate inventories could yield would complete the present picture, but none of these sources survive. Failing these, we must fall back on the system that, because it penetrated so deeply into Liège life, has left the most traces in the records. Classification by guild locates the member within the system of social identities by which he would most likely have identified

himself. In a study of social groups and their mentality, this is more important than how we should identify him today.

Using the above criteria, we can see that of the 143 men who were members of the Confraternity of Our Lady between 1480 and 1540 more than half (76) were members of five guilds: brewers, smiths, bakers, mercers, and coopers in that order. Only 17 cannot be assigned to a guild, some of whom were members only a short time. Thirty at least were business or professional men, or a little over one in five.³⁴ The mercers and coopers, at 11 each, were merchants, since the coopers' guild included the vintners. The number of bakers (12) may not be significant, since every neighborhood needed plenty of bread, but the smiths (22) and brewers (20) are probably over-represented. It is true that the Ile district had many breweries and forges; but these were also two of the guilds most affected by the economic changes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We have noted that many brewers took to various forms of investment, and true to form, 8 of the 22 brewers were business and professional men.

One may well ask how wealthy these confraternity members were. Unfortunately, there is not a great deal of evidence for this question. There are no tax records for Liège, for example, of the kind that survive in Italy. Even the few wills of confreres that survive do not provide more than a minimal indication of the wealth of the testator. Certainly some members of the confraternity were wealthy. We may well assume that such lenders as Collard delle Barbe d'Or and Joseph Juppen the notary were rich. Johan le Cock the coppersmith left marriage portions of 200 florins to each of his married children in addition to other unspecified inheritance, but only 6 florins in *cens* to his son Friar Thomas, O. Carm., "because the said testator said he had cost him much to maintain in schools and at his profession."³⁵ When the father-in-law of Jan Scheers died, he and his wife inherited *rentes* amounting to over 36 florins, two and a quarter *aymes* of wine, and eight muids of spelt a year.³⁶

On the other hand, it is harder to tell if any of the members were actually poor. Most were probably working tradesmen, like the mason Johan Gerin or the roofer Johan Hochet, two early confreres who did work for both the confraternity and the parish.³⁷ Johan le Pexherea, another mason who served as both master and *compteur* of the confraternity, was also paid for work done on the church in 1542.³⁸ The daughter of Simon de Pont, a cabinetmaker and one-time master, worked as a domestic servant.³⁹ Anyone who was truly poor, however, would not leave much record of the fact. The records of parish poor relief reveal only a few names of those who received its distributions. Only seven members of the confraternity are among those names.⁴⁰ In four cases, we know that the recipients (Johan Dyvo, Martin le Pondeur, the wife of Jacques del Hepp, and the wife of Henry Paseal) received distributions of wine because they were sick.

Figure 4:1 divides the men by the date they joined the confraternity. The first group includes all those who joined before 1493, thirty-five in all. The second includes the fifty who were members in 1502 but not in 1492-93. Between 1493 and 1502 there are no records of membership. The last two groups include those who joined from 1503 to 1515 and from 1516 to 1540, including twenty-four and thirty-five respectively.

³⁴ Twenty-one of them were members of the five most heavily represented guilds.

³⁵ "A cause que ledit testateur disoit quil luy avoit beacop coster allentreneir a scolles et a sa profession." Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, reg. 30, ff. 156v-157.

³⁶ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 133, ff. 26v-27.

³⁷ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 125, f. 5; reg. 46, f. 39v.

³⁸ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 52, f. 210.

³⁹ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 8, f. 60v.

⁴⁰ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, regs. 46, f. 50v; 47, f. 103; 49, f. 106v; 51, ff. 149v, 254.

Figure 4:1 Guilds Represented in the Confraternity

Guild	Period of entrance				Total
	1480-92	1493-1502	1503-1515	1516-1540	
Brewers	5	***8	3	*****6	22
Smiths	*4	12		***4	20
Bakers	*3	6	2	1	12
Mercers	**5	3	*1	*2	11
Coopers	*3	*2	2	**4	11
Goldsmiths	1	2	1	6	10
Cobblers		2		*3	5
Masons	1	1	1	2	5
Millers		2	2		4
Roofers	2	1		1	4
Weavers§		2	1	1	4
Drapers§	1	1	1	*1	4
Carpenters		1	2		3
Butchers				**2	2
Tailors	1		1		2
Wheelwrights	2				2
Sawyers		1	*1		2
Shearmen				*1	1
Vinedressers	1				1
Chandlers				1	1
Unknown	*6	*5	*6		17
Total	35	49	24	35	143
Business and professional men	6	5	3	16	30

* indicates the number of business and professional men in each category.
 § "Weavers" includes all those so designated; it is not clear if they were weavers in the drapers' guild or those in the linen-weavers' guild. "Drapers" includes only *halliers*.

The brewers are fairly evenly divided among the four groups: they form from 11 percent in the 1516-40 group to 16 percent of the 1502 group. The smiths, however, are concentrated in the earlier groups: sixteen of twenty smiths had joined by 1515, and of the remaining four, three are in fact business and professional men, two of them apparently to the exclusion of any other occupation. Brewers also show a more pronounced tendency to be heavily involved in legal work and investment after 1516: five of six as against three of sixteen. The coopers are rather evenly divided: they form 6 percent of those who joined before 1515, and 11 percent of those who joined after. But nine of eleven mercers and eleven of twelve bakers joined before 1515. The goldsmiths' guild provided ten members (six glaziers, three painters, and an embroiderer); six of these joined after 1516, including four of those engaged in the new glass industry. Moreover, business and professional men form 13 percent of those who joined before 1515, but 46 percent of those who joined after.

In terms of guild affiliation, the principal dividing line among members of the Confraternity of Our Lady comes in 1515. Those who joined before, a much larger group, included many small businessmen, shopkeepers, and artisans. Many of these worked in highly competitive occupations. The smiths, as we have seen, encouraged competition within their guild. The mercers, because they dealt in a wide variety of goods, found themselves in frequent conflict with other guilds whose monopolies they infringed.⁴¹ Exposed as they were to competition and conflict, they might well seek out a supporting group within which they could be at peace with their neighbors. A rule against lawsuits might well appeal to such men as these.

Those who joined after 1515 formed a smaller and more select group. The confraternity itself was smaller, and the mix of occupations was significantly different. Those in the second group who were either members of the goldsmiths' guild or in business or professions amounted to twenty-three out of a total of thirty-five. Many of these confreres supplemented or replaced a traditional occupation with legal work or simply living on investments, and with a certain number of those practicing highly skilled, indeed artistic trades, where competition was controlled not by guild regulation but by the skill or taste of the artisan. They were less dependent on wages and small merchandise than their predecessors and more involved in investment and trade.

These new men appear to have enjoyed more breathing space, socially speaking, than many of their contemporaries, and certainly than their successors. The previous century's wars had disrupted the social fabric of Liège, making it easier for new wealth to rise. Many of the inhabitants of Liège in the sixteenth century were immigrants from the surrounding countryside, the principality, and yet farther afield. Those who had recently come to prosperity were numerous if not the majority. Economic conditions still permitted expansion and opportunity, at least for the inhabitants of the city. The social struggles of the mid-seventeenth century were yet far off. While we cannot make windows into their minds, the men who filled the ranks of the Confraternity of Our Lady had every reason to be confident. More educated, more established, more cosmopolitan, we might well expect them to be less concerned with traditional solidarity and more concerned with display, more outward-looking and open to innovation.

Examination of some of the membership lists reveals when and how the transition from the first group to the second occurred. Between 1515 and 1520 the number of men in the confraternity dropped from fifty-five to thirty-six. This represents a loss of twenty-five men balanced by a gain of only six. Of these, we know that twelve died; the other thirteen simply disappear from the rolls, and the sources do not clearly reveal whether they were alive or dead thereafter. Half of the thirty-five men from the group that joined between 1493 and 1502 who were members in 1515 were gone by 1520. They were replaced only slowly. Five years later, when membership was at a low point, twelve of twenty-seven members had joined since 1516. In 1529-30, they were twenty-three of thirty-nine. By 1534-35, only nine of those who had joined before 1515 were still on the list of married men, with four widowers in addition. The new generation had taken over.

After 1530 especially, it is accurate to speak of a new generation. Of the five men who joined between 1530 and 1534, all but one were sons of current or former confraternity members. Jan delle Barbe d'Or provides an example of this group. He was the son of Collard delle Barbe d'Or, a substantial brewer. Collard had been a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady at least since 1502; after he was widowed in 1521 he remained a member until his death in 1548. As a young man, Jan seems to have had his share of scrapes. He was condemned to go on a pilgrimage to the Three Kings in Cologne in 1520 for striking a cleric; again in 1526, he had to make a penal

⁴¹ Edouard Poncelet, *Le Bon Métier des merciers de la cité de Liège* (Liège: Vaillant-Carmanne, 1908), pp. 20-22.

pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady in Huy.⁴² His father Collard lent money on *cens* contracts on a large scale, and Jan's name begins to appear with his father's in such contracts in 1531.⁴³ In the same year he and his wife joined the Confraternity of Our Lady. He served as master 1531-33 and as *compteur* from 1533 to 1539. After this he went to live outside the Ile district,⁴⁴ and he was no longer a member of the confraternity. He went on to be a commissioner and *rentier* (collector of revenues) for the city, and an investor in, among other things, coal mines.⁴⁵

In 1525, men of Jan delle Barbe d'Or's generation were still a minority; by 1530, they had become a majority. Thus the change in devotional forms and emphasis noted in the last chapter corresponds to a new generation of members. Socially, they were a more restricted group, representing the new families who had risen to prominence in the parish. But inclusiveness was no longer the mission of the confraternity; responsibility appropriate to their position was now the brothers' concern. Moreover, the professional activities of this generation imply different social needs and different tastes in public worship. The purpose of the confraternity was unchanged: it still expressed the devotion of its members to God, to their parish, and to one another. But times had changed, and with them the moral demands on the individual and the social demands of the community. These in turn required a new expression of the age-old ideal of brotherhood, one that looked less to the safeguarding of ties among the brothers, and more to the service of the parish community by spending the confraternity's patrimony on enhancing divine worship.

Relations within the Confraternity

Leadership

While sheer numbers may have increased the influence of some groups within the confraternity, there were also some confreres who played more central roles than others. The most obvious position is that of master. From 1503-1504 to 1540-41 we have the names of both masters for all but one year. In all this period, twenty-seven men served as master, generally for two- or three-year terms. Six served two terms, and two served three terms. Their division by occupation shows a similar division to the confraternity itself, except that there are only two smiths in the group, one actually a lawyer, the other the wealthy coppersmith Johan le Cock. Furthermore, of the thirteen men in the business and professional category, nine served their first term as master before 1520. If the confraternity as a whole consisted of better educated and more sophisticated members in the later period, more of the members would have had training and experience in financial affairs. It would have been less necessary to entrust the leadership to the few specialists in the confraternity's ranks.

To be elected master, a brother did not have to have been a member for long. Of those masters who joined after 1502, three served the very year they entered, five served in the subsequent year, and three more in three or four years. Only three took longer than this. Thomas de Fechier, who joined before 1502, and Gerard le Pontenier, who joined in 1507, served their first

⁴² Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 9, f. 17v; reg. 15, f. 32.

⁴³ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 119, f. 283-283v.

⁴⁴ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 52, f. 30.

⁴⁵ Jean Lejeune, *La Formation du capitalisme moderne dans la principauté de Liège au XVIe siècle* (Liège: Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, 1939), p. 342; Paul Harsin, *Etudes critiques sur l'histoire de la principauté de Liège, 1477-1795 v. 2: Le Règne d'Erard de la Marck, 1505-1538* (Liège: Sciences et Lettres, 1955), p. 214; Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Obligations, reg. 23, f. 124.

terms as master in 1527 and 1534 respectively. Nothing else is known of them, not even their professions. Johan delle Halle, an embroiderer, joined in 1527 and first served as master in 1539.

In the thirteen years from 1502 to 1515, thirteen different men served as master, each man once, in alternating two-year terms. For the next ten years, however, only three new men joined the ranks of the masters, with several men serving second or third terms. On three occasions in this period, neither master was replaced. Beginning in 1527, a new generation began serving in office. From then until 1541, at least one of the masters each year was a brother who entered in 1524 or afterwards. In all eleven men served as master who had never served before. This pattern indicates that not only did a new group of men join the ranks, they also took on leadership positions.

Besides the masters, a somewhat larger number of names can be gathered from among those who witnessed the annual accounts. Most also served as master at some time, but sixteen men who never were master witnessed the accounts at least once. Johan Masier, a *mignon* or pot-maker, witnessed the accounts eleven times; the tailor Ernult de Bliexhe, Sr., witnessed them eight times. The number of names each year varies, and for many years there are no names at all. The lists of witnesses give the impression that a group of brothers aided the masters in conducting the affairs of the confraternity, just as a similar group did in the parish.

Relations among Members

Personal relations among members of the confraternity naturally went beyond the purely formal. They encompassed every sort of familial, economic, and legal relationship, many of which leave little trace in written records. The best sources for such questions are the records of ecclesiastical and civil courts, which, however, only let us know about disputes and wrongdoing. We know that the members of the confraternity were neighbors, living side by side in the same streets, and therefore would have had daily dealings with one another. It should not surprise us that they sold goods to or performed work for the parish church of Saint-Martin-en-Ile. In some cases, where we have documents like wills or marriage contracts, we can see the names of confraternity brothers and sisters acting as witnesses for one another. Many members, however, call on other neighbors and family members for such services.

Many of the members of the confraternity were also relations by blood or by marriage. Among neighbors, this should be no surprise. Joining the confraternity, however, was a matter of personal choice, and family members could be found both within and outside. Wilhem de Horion, the *compteur* of the confraternity in the 1480s and '90s had two daughters, both of whom married men from the parish; only one, Henry Paseal, was a confrere. Both sons-in-law were mercers like their father-in-law; but it was Paseal who inherited his positions as churchwarden and as *compteur* of the Hôpital Saint-Jacques, as well as his standing in the confraternity.

The many connections of the baker and three-time master Piron de Jalhea, known as de Forre, illustrate family relations within the confraternity (see Figure 4:2). Johan de Jalhea was probably his uncle. His first wife, Ysabeau, was the sister of the confrere Johan de Flémalle, whose daughter Katherine married Simon Damerier, Jr., son of the brewer Simon Damerier, Sr., who was himself connected to the family of Johan de Trois Gres, and whose daughter married the son of Collard delle Barbe d'Or. Piron's third wife, Katherine, was the daughter of Raes de Laminnes, Sr., a lawyer, himself the son-in-law of the confrere Collard de Cologne. Another of Raes's daughters married the confrere Henry de Cock, and his son Raes, Jr., was a confrere as well. By his three wives, Piron had at least six sons and three daughters, but none seem to have joined the confraternity.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Convenances et Testaments, regs. 25, ff. 31v-32, 26, ff. 48v-49, 170-171, 28, ff. 205-206v, 31, ff. 22v-25v, 37, f. 33, 42, ff. 68v-74; Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, reg. 145, f. 386v, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, ptf. 9.

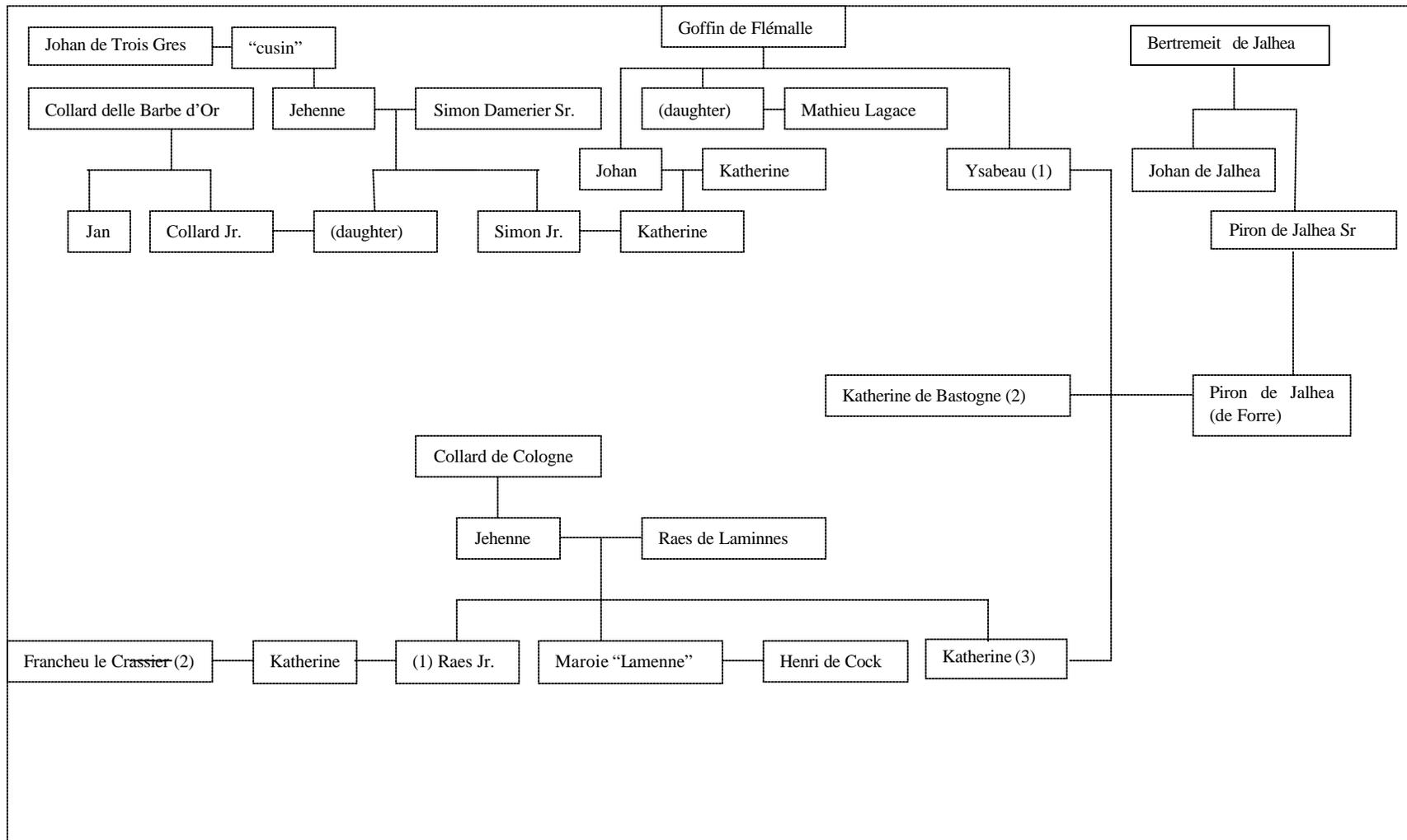


Figure 4:2 The Family of Piron de Jalhea
 Male members of the Confraternity of Our Lady are shaded

Lawsuits

One element in the relations among members was in theory controlled by the rule against lawsuits. We have, however, little evidence as to how well this rule was observed. A cryptic note at the end of one register may indicate that some members of the confraternity acted as arbiters, but if so, only one of the parties to the dispute was a member of the confraternity.⁴⁷ The registers of the court of the *échevins*, where most civil cases that escaped the jurisdiction of the confraternity would have ended, are incomplete for the period, and yield only three cases that could be relevant to the question at hand.

In the clearest case of two confreres contending before a lay court, Johan de Flémalle sued Thomas de Fechier before the *voir-jurés du cordeau* in 1527 concerning an infringement of his lights (*clartés*) by a wall between their properties.⁴⁸ The case ended in a compromise to be enforced by the *échevins*. Thomas de Fechier was a long-time member of the confraternity, but Johan de Flémalle's name only appears in the lists in 1519 and in 1529, just before he died and after the dispute with his neighbor had been settled. We may therefore have cause to question Flémalle's loyalty to the confraternity.

In 1522 the glazier Jehan de Laitre brought suit before the *échevins* against his father Francheu de Laitre to recover certain sums his father owed him by his marriage contract.⁴⁹ Both father and son were members of the confraternity. This may have been the sort of case that the masters of the confraternity would have been perfectly willing to let someone else settle; moreover, if the family bonds could not prevent its going to a secular court, it is difficult to see how confraternity bonds could do so.

We have noted that the form of the rule approved in 1529 omits any reference to lawsuits. One more case, however, suggests that some sense of the impropriety of suits among confraternity members remained. In 1540, Benoîte, widow of Jehan le Cock, sued Ernult de Bliexhe, a tailor and the husband of Jehenne, widow of Gerard Winand, to obtain payment of a *rente* of twelve setiers of spelt which, she claimed, Jehenne had sold to her late husband. Ernult replied that his wife had never paid the *rente* in question, and the *échevins* agreed, dismissing Benoîte's case.⁵⁰ There were two men in the confraternity, father and son, named Ernult de Bliexhe, both of whom were members in 1540.⁵¹ Benoîte was a member from her husband's death in 1527 until 1555, except that her name does not appear on the lists for the years 1539-40 and 1540-41. This temporary absence, just at the point of a dispute, is probably no coincidence. The old prohibition had not been forgotten, and in order to sue Ernult, Benoîte had to leave the confraternity temporarily. The bond of fraternity, while it did not prevent the dispute, still was not compatible with it.

The prohibition against "lay justice" may not have included suits before the ecclesiastical court. The kinds of cases handled by this court—violence, marital cases, and offenses against the Church—were outside the competence of private arbiters. In any case only two lawsuits are recorded that might have violated this rule. In neither do we know what was the matter of the

⁴⁷ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 127, f. 92v.

⁴⁸ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Grand Greffe, reg. 78, f. 250-25v.

⁴⁹ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Grand Greffe, reg. 71, f. 330.

⁵⁰ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Grand Greffe, reg. 85, ff. 114-115.

⁵¹ The elder was already married in 1493, and therefore would have been quite old by 1540, although he continues to pay dues as a married man until 1541-42. His son was member of the confraternity from 1527 to 1570. We do not know the names of either the younger Ernult's wife or of his father's second wife, and hence we do not know which of the two was the defendant in this case. That he is not called "the younger" suggests that it may have been the father rather than the son. Of Benoîte's identity, however, we can be quite certain.

dispute. The first involves Jehenne, wife of the brewer Hanchot delle Fleur de Lys and a woman called Katherine Jaspar.⁵² A woman of the latter name figures in the the confraternity lists, and is probably the same as Katherine, widow of Jaspar le Vigneron, a confrere who died in 1509. This case, however, is in 1507, and there is no indication that Katherine is married.

The second, in 1517, involves Jehenne, wife of Piron delle Fleur de Lys (a cooper, also known as Piron de Grand Han), and Johan del Angle.⁵³ There was a Johan del Angle in the confraternity before 1507 and either another or the same returned after 1523; but at the time of the case he was not a member.

A case of a different sort comes up in 1522. Baldwin de Scagier, Jr. (later known as Baldwin de Barbeal), a cleric, was condemned to go to the Three Kings at Cologne for striking Collin delle Spee, a layman, on the head with a “potto dictus ung gobba”—that is, a drinking cup.⁵⁴ Collin himself had been sent to St. Anne’s at Dueren for striking another cleric only four months earlier.⁵⁵ In ten years, these hot-blooded young men both joined the Confraternity of Our Lady, Baldwin in 1531 and Collin in 1533, their differences apparently forgotten. Collin succeeded Baldwin as master in 1535, and their names appear together at the end of the accounts for 1537.

At least one confrere continued his violent ways even after joining the confraternity. In 1533, Wilhem Beeckmans de Tonnelet, a respectable cooper and a confrere since 1527, was sent to St. Anne’s for beating a cleric named Sebastian de Dura.⁵⁶ One of the witnesses in this case, “Theodoricus de Halle,” is probably Dirick van Halle, a glazier and another member of the confraternity.

The records of the ecclesiastical court also inform us about other kinds of offenses. The most detailed accounts, although they represent only a small fraction of total cases, concern sexual and marital matters. It is thus that we know about the domestic trials of Katherine Woet de Trixhe. It is also thus that we know of the seduction of Lynette Albert, widow of the confrere Albert le Fevre, who died in 1505. In the year 1508 a certain Collard from the parish of Sainte-Véronique in Avroy, repeatedly promising marriage, induced her to sleep with him.⁵⁷ She demanded that he take her as his legal wife. Three months after the case came up, Lynette was back before the court, purging a sentence of excommunication arising out of the affair.⁵⁸ The problem did not affect her membership in the confraternity, which continued until 1514. There is no indication that she and Collard ever married.

Offices outside the Confraternity

While the records of the ecclesiastical court reveal that the members of the Confraternity of Our Lady were sometimes less than angels, many did hold respectable positions in the community. These positions were not, as we have noted, the highest magistracies or those concerned with the affairs of the larger principality. Many, in fact, were of a professional rather than a political nature. Those that were political dealt with smaller groupings, guilds and neighborhoods.

The City

While none of the members of the Confraternity of Our Lady became burgomasters or

⁵² Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 4, f. 152.

⁵³ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 7, f. 240v.

⁵⁴ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 11, f. 155v.

⁵⁵ Ibid., f. 100v.

⁵⁶ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 20, f. 70.

⁵⁷ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Officialité, reg. 5, f. 6v.

⁵⁸ Ibid., f. 35. The charge appears to have been clandestine marriage; there is no evidence that they regularized their union.

échevins, several were commissioners (*commissaires de la Cité*).⁵⁹ Johannes Saverot was the earliest of these, being a commissioner in 1476. Baldwin de Scagier, known outside the parish as Baldwin de Halinghen, served as commissioner from 1500. He was followed by his son Baldwin (called de Barbeal in the parish), who was eventually followed by his son of the same name. In the fourth generation, Jean de Halighen became burgomaster in 1623.⁶⁰ Simon Damerier, another confrere, was also a commissioner. The commissioners were chosen either by the prince or by the wards; we do not know how any of the confreres who held this office were chosen, except for Baldwin de Barbeal, who was chosen by the ward. Since he replaced his father, presumably he too was elected rather than appointed. In addition to choosing the electors for burgomaster each year, the commissioners had some responsibility for maintaining public order, conducting inquests, and so on.⁶¹ They were therefore closer to the life of their district than those in higher political office.

Several members held office under the city or the bishop. Collard de Cologne, a confrere until his death in 1503, was chief secretary of the court of *échevins*.⁶² Another confrere, Arnult de Serville, was *cérier* to the bishop. This office involved responsibility for levying and collecting the very numerous *rentes* in kind belonging to the episcopal domain. Arnult's son, Maître Jean de Serville, a university-trained lawyer who never joined the confraternity, eventually became an *échevin*.⁶³ Much later, Jan delle Barbe d'Or was collector of revenues for the city, but by that time he had left the parish and the confraternity. Berthol Osmont, a member from 1502 to 1517, served the city as one of the *Quatre de la Cité* who helped with police inquiries.⁶⁴ In the church administration, Piron Hannoton was a prosecutor (*procureur*) in the ecclesiastical court.⁶⁵

Guilds

Closer to the daily life of most inhabitants of Liège than the organs of government, no doubt, were the guilds. Ten members of the confraternity were at some time governors of their guilds, three served as *rentier*, and two as *juré*.⁶⁶ It makes sense that more should serve as governor since *jurés* were often career politicians, and *rentiers* tended to keep their jobs for long terms: Simon Damerier was *rentier* of the brewers from 1518 to 1550.⁶⁷ Governors had to be chosen from among the guild masters who actually practiced the trade, although in many cases this meant that they were owner-managers rather than manual workers.

One guild *rentier* who is important both to the history of the confraternity and to the history of Liège is Wilhem de Horion. He was a notary and a member of the mercer's guild. After the liberation of the city in 1477, he took up the office of *rentier* of the guild, in which capacity he

⁵⁹ Bibliothèque de l'Université, Liège, MS. 1606B (*Recueil héraldique des commissaires de la cité de Liège, 1424-1542*), pp. 69, 82, 100, 104, 132.

⁶⁰ [Joseph Abry], *Recueil héraldique des bourgmestres de l'ancien cite de Liège. . . depuis l'an 1200 jusques en 1720* Liège: J.-P. Gramme, 1720, p. 379.

⁶¹ Edmond Pouillet, *Essai sur l'histoire du droit criminel dans l'ancien principauté de Liège* (Brussels: F. Hayez, 1874), pp. 390-395.

⁶² De Borman, 2:528.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129. He was also burgomaster; see Abry, *Recueil héraldique*, p. 278.

⁶⁴ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, *Echevins de Liège*, Œuvres, reg. 97, f. 103v.

⁶⁵ Archives de l'Etat, Liège, *Echevins de Liège*, Œuvres, reg. 55, f. 134.

⁶⁶ Poncelet and Fairon, "Liste chronologique" 1: 321, 328; 2: 39, 44, 122, 240, 244; Archives de l'Etat, Liège, *Métiers*, reg. 130, pp. 8, 27, 32; *Echevins de Liège*, Œuvres, reg. 80, f. 109v.

⁶⁷ Poncelet and Fairon, "Liste chronologique" 2: 242-251.

recorded the circumstances of the reestablishment of the guild.⁶⁸ In addition to this job, he was *compteur* of the Premonstratensian abbey of Beaupart, of the Hôpital Saint-Jacques, and of the parish of Saint- Martin-en-Ile, a churchwarden of the parish and a member of its court of *tenants*, as well as a member and clerk of the court of *tenants* of the collegial church of Saint-Paul.⁶⁹ It is no wonder that in describing how he accepted the job of *compteur* of the Confraternity of Our Lady, he wrote, “and I accepted their request notwithstanding that I had enough to do.”⁷⁰

Like Wilhem de Horion, other members were *compteur* and members of courts of *tenants* for various organizations, especially in the neighborhood. Johannes Saverot was *compteur* for the Pauvres-en-Ile, and after him Baldwin de Scagier filled this office.⁷¹ The Hôpital Saint-Jacques had a strong contingent of members of the Confraternity of Our Lady within its confraternity. At least twelve were to be found on its court of *tenants*;⁷² more were probably members of the hospital confraternity, but the earliest formal list begins only in 1535. Those who were brothers in the hospital would all have been “gens de bien.” Johan Douffey, a member of both, left one muid of spelt in *rente* to the Confraternity of Our Lady, and eighteen to the hospital in a bequest to take effect after his wife’s death.⁷³ The form of this bequest may indicate the place of the two organizations in Johan’s mind. While he left more to the hospital, his bequest to the confraternity was to take place immediately, while his wife was still alive. In effect, she too was making the donation to the confraternity. She thus shared his membership in that organization as she did not among the “gens de bien” of the hospital. In fact she continued as a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady until her own death in 1518.

The Parish

It was within the parish, however, that confraternity members most frequently held office. Not only did the Confraternity of Our Lady include many members of the clergy on the parish staff, it also included almost all the lay leaders of the parish almost all the time.

Between 1480 and 1540 the parish of Saint-Martin-en-Ile had only six different churchwardens. Of these, five—Wilhem de Horion, Johan Grenir, Henry Paseal, Baldwin de Scagier, and Johannes Fabri—were all members of the confraternity. From 1488, all the churchwardens were confreres.

Baldwin de Scagier, a churchwarden for many years and a confrere from before 1502 to his death in 1535, seems to have been, with Henry Paseal, one of the pillars of the parish in the early years of the sixteenth century. Unlike Paseal, he had numerous children. Only one followed him in the confraternity, Baldwin, called de Barbeal. Four entered religious life: Collard at the monastery of Saint-Jacques, Jehan at the Carmelites, Paulus as a brother in the hospice of Cornillon, and Gerard as a chaplain in the collegial church of Saint-Paul. This last son was also a chaplain in the parish, but he died young. In a note in the accounts of Saint-Martin-en-Ile, of which he was *compteur* at the time, the bereaved father mentions a donation of vestments which had

⁶⁸ The original document was damaged in a fire in the archives caused by a German bomb in 1944. Fortunately most of it was published in the *Régestes de la cité de Liège*, ed. Emile Fairon, v. 4 (Liège: Commission communale pour l’histoire de l’ancien pays de Liège, 1939), pp. 370-371.

⁶⁹ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, regs. 41, f. 64, 43, f. 79, 44, f. 113v; Hôpital Saint- Jacques, non-classé ptf. 7; Archives de l’Evêché, Liège, reg. C.VII.21, f. 45v.

⁷⁰ “Et je a leur request lay accepte nonobstan que avoy asses affair.” Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en- Ile, reg. 125, f. 8.

⁷¹ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Echevins de Liège, Œuvres, regs. 64, f. 187, 113, f. 111.

⁷² Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, reg. 9, ff. 105-105v, 127v, 131-131v, 133v, 143, 208.

⁷³ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Hôpital Saint-Jacques, non-classé ptf. 16

belonged to “Messir Gerar nostre fis que Dieu pardon.”⁷⁴ His eldest son, Heuskin, a vintner like his father, moved to the center of town and became *rentier* of the cooper’s guild; Baldwin, who stayed in the parish, practiced the same trade and served as guild governor.⁷⁵

When the documents give us the names of all seven *tenants* of the parish land court, we can clearly see that that body was dominated by members of the Confraternity of Our Lady. In 1480, four of the *tenants* are also confreres; five in 1486; and six in 1497. At least six of the seven are members from then on. In 1525, all seven *tenants*—counting the parish clerk as a confrere—are members of the Confraternity of Our Lady.⁷⁶

The earliest records for membership in the new Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament at Saint-Martin-en-Ile coincide with the end of the period we are studying here. This was, as we have noted, an entirely new confraternity distinct from the old Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament founded in 1461 and merged with the Confraternity of Our Lady. Comparison of the records shows that among the some 150 members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament who were lay parishioners of Saint-Martin-en-Ile are to be found 13 of the 33 men who were members of the Confraternity of Our Lady in 1539-40, and 7 of the women. The new confraternity seems to have been more in favor among the younger men. Five of the 8 who joined the Confraternity of Our Lady between 1530 and 1540, and 7 of the 8 who joined between 1540 and 1545, were members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament between 1539 and 1542.⁷⁷

Conclusion

The Confraternity of Our Lady included the élite of the parish, not in that the members were the wealthiest or the most high-ranking residents, but in that those who were responsible for the affairs of the parish were members, indeed leaders, of the Confraternity of Our Lady. The confraternity could serve the parish by functioning as a “core group,” providing a vehicle for the expression of the pious desires of its members. Since it was a lay organization, easily changed according to the changing needs of those who composed it, it could introduce a new style of piety to the parish.

Its first function, especially in the early years, was to bind together neighbors who might otherwise have been divided by economic conflict and rivalry. This is no less a religious function than the masses and prayers around which they united. The affairs of this world might draw men apart; but remembrance of the world to come encouraged the love that the teachings of Christ demand. The confraternity began as a small group, but gradually increased in size to accomodate more and more brothers and sisters under the common banner of service to God, the Virgin Mary, and St. Martin.

The sixteenth-century price rise that brought extra cash and financial stability to the confraternity was part of the general economic growth Liège experienced, in which many of the groups that made up the confraternity had a share. Their increasing security and prosperity meant that they had less need for a confraternity of this sort, so that increase in wealth brought a decrease

⁷⁴ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 50, f. 39.

⁷⁵ On the elder Baldwin and his family, see Paul Ansiaux, “Grégoire Sylvius, inquisiteur et évêque auxiliaire liégeois (1502-1578)” *Bulletin de la société d’art et d’histoire du diocèse de Liège* 26 (1935): 1-20. Ansiaux’s information concerning Baldwin de Scagier is accurate, except that he was not the father of Grégoire Sylvius. The error originates with Abry, *Recueil héraldique* p. 358.

⁷⁶ Archives de l’Etat, Liège, Saint-Martin-en-Ile, reg. 141, ff. 50, 91v, 98v, 113v, 117v, 120; added signature, f. 4.

⁷⁷ The lists for the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament are in Archives de l’Evêché, Liège, H.III.6, ff. 1-17, 22-24, 40v-48, 64-69, 84-91, 103-106.

in membership. Their sons, when they became heads of households and pillars of the community, made a different role for the confraternity they joined.

As the Church about them moved to deal with a changing world, the new generation that took over in the 1520s turned their brotherhood to the service of a renewed community. More established and better-educated, they did not need the protection from one another that their fathers had needed. For a large group, there was the new-style Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, which included not only their own parish, but neighboring parishes and religious communities as well. The smaller Confraternity of Our Lady, a traditional parish organization, did not need to be large. Its substantial endowment could be turned to providing the kind of worship and other services that appealed to the rising generation. A few members, with dedication, wealth, and taste, could accomplish that task as easily as a larger group.