

Ars longa vita brevis.

Altar Decoration and the Salvation of the Soul in the Seventeenth Century¹

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Introduction

Altar decoration occupies a special place in the field of religious art from the Modern Era. Not only was this an age when numerous new retables were erected, but many altarpieces dating from this era are considered to this day to be among the absolute highlights of our artistic heritage, with contributions from some of the truly great names from painting and sculpting. From an art-historical perspective, this golden age of retable art unfolded against the ideological backdrop of the Counter-Reformation. Altars and altar decoration were emblematic, in a literal as well as a figurative sense, of the Catholic Restoration. In fact, the erection of new altars was one of the primary objectives in the refurbishment of churches after the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 and the clearing of church interiors during the period of Protestant rule over Antwerp from 1580 to 1585.

But how was the production of all these monumental and extremely expensive pieces financed? The required funds cannot possibly have been provided by the ecclesiastical authorities alone. Yet the history of such pieces has hitherto been studied only fragmentarily, as in Christine Göttler's work on the church of the Discalced Carmelites in Antwerp.² Her pioneering research was the first to shed light on the commemorative context of these commissions and the important

- 1 This text is based on Valérie HERREMANS "eenen loffelycken ende boffelycken aultaer" *Retabelplastiek in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden ca. 1585-1685*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Vrije Universteit Brussel, 2007. The case study of the Rockox Chapel was part of recent research work in the Rubens Project, presented at the *Rubens Study Days*, 14 and 15 October 2010 at KMSKA.
- 2 Christine GÖTTLER, *Securing Space in a Foreign Place: Peter Paul Rubens's Saint Teresa for the Portuguese Merchant Bankers in Antwerp*, in *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 57, 1999, pp. 133-151; EAD., *Religiöse Stiftungen als Dissimulation? Die Kapellen der portugieschen Kaufleute in Antwerpen*, in *Stiftungen und Stiftungswirklichkeiten Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. W.E. WAGNER, Berlin, 2000, pp. 279-305.

- 3 EAD., *Die Kunst des Fegfeuers nach der Reformation. Kirchliche Schenkungen, Ablass und Almosen in Antwerpen und Bologna um 1600*, (Berliner Schriften zur Kunst, 7), Mainz am Rhein, 1996.
- 4 Bert TIMMERMANS, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen: een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld*, (Studies stadsgeschiedenis, 3), Amsterdam, 2008; Jeffrey MULLER, *Confraternity and art in the St Jacob's church, Antwerp: a case study of the altar of the Brotherhood of St Rochus*, in *Concept, Design and Execution in Flemish Painting (1550 - 1700)*, Turnhout, 2000, pp. 97-110.
- 5 Joseph POHLE, *The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, New York, 1909. 10 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05573a.htm>>. *Concilium Tridentinum. Diariorum, Actorum, Epistularum, Tractatum nova collectio edidit societas goerresiana promovendis inter catholicos germaniae litterarum studiis*, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1901-1938: Thirteenth Session, Third under the Pontificate of Julius III, on the eleventh day of October 1551. Decree Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist: '{...} Cap. I. De reali praesentia Domini nostri Iesu Christi in sanctissimo Eucharistiae sacramento. Principio docet sancta Synodus et aperte ac simpliciter profitetur, in almo sanctae Eucharistiae sacramento post panis et vini consecrationem Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum verum Deum atque hominem vere, realiter ac substantialiter {can. 1} sub specie illarum rerum sensibilibus contineri. {...}'
- 6 With the H. Sacrament, the worshipper receives not only the body and blood of Christ, but also his soul and divinity: *Loc. Cit.: '{...}Can. 3. Si quis negaverit, in venerabili sacramento Eucharistiae sub unaquaque specie et sub singulis cuiusque speciei partibus separatione facta totum Christum contineri: anathema sit.{...}'*.
- 7 The bread and wine change during the consecration into the body and blood of Christ.
- 8 From the moment of consecration to their destruction, the bread and wine remain the true body and blood of Christ. *Loc. Cit.: '{...}Can. 4. Si quis dixerit, peracta*

role of private foundations in the funding of altarpieces.³ Interest in the contribution of patronage to the (re)decoration of churches in the seventeenth century has grown quite strongly, not least thanks to the publications of Bert Timmermans and Jeffrey Muller.⁴

The present article continues in the same vein by considering the relationship between the notion of spiritual welfare among the faithful, their hope of Salvation in the hereafter, and the funding of altar decoration by private individuals. In the first part, the focus is on various 'fruits of salvation', the tools for achieving spiritual welfare and how they relate to (the financing of) altarpieces. Part II is devoted to a case study that illustrates these aspects aptly: the commemorative foundations of Nicholas Rockox in the Church of the Friars Minor in Antwerp.

Altars and the Notion of Salvation of the Soul in the Seventeenth Century

In the early twenty-first century, more so than ever before, individuals have the means of taking control of their life's end in order to reduce their suffering to a minimum. In the highly sacralised society of the seventeenth century, however, this was very much regarded as a cardinal sin. Yet, irrespective of religious and cultural circumstances, 'mortals' have always aspired to a 'good death'. In the past, there were numerous brotherhoods whose purpose lay in the pursuit of the *ars moriendi* or the art of dying.

Whereas today the emphasis is on worldly circumstances, on the physical aspect of dying itself, in the past the focus was on the fate of the deceased person's soul in the afterlife. People were consumed by the question of how long their souls would have to spend in purgatory, as only those who were free of sin would be admitted directly to the Celestial Kingdom. Fortunately there were a number of tools whereby one could shorten one's future time in the *purgatorium*. Three of these tools had to do with the altar: attending the Eucharist and the adoration of the Holy Sacrament, altar-related indulgences, and providing for the decoration of the altar as an act of charity or *caritas*. Each of these presumed remedies was connected with the central points of sixteenth-century dogma: the real presence of Christ in the sacraments of the Eucharist, the salvational power of indulgences and the notion of charity.

The first dogma, the real presence (*realis praesentia*) of Christ in the Eucharist,⁵ follows from three doctrines: the totality of presence (*manducare realiter ac sacramentaliter*),⁶ the transubstantiation (*transubstantiatio*)⁷ and the permanence of presence.⁸ The latter principle is connected with the notion of the Adorableness of the Eucharist: the Eucharist may/must be adored permanently as Christ is permanently present in it.⁹ Hence, the frequency of the Holy Communion, the adoration of the Holy Sacrament and the attendance of the Holy Sacrifice became important principles in the Catholic Reformation or Counter-Reformation. As a consequence, great significance was attributed to the re-erection of previously destroyed altars serving either as a temporary resting place during mass or exposition or as a permanent abode of Christ.

Pursuant to the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the ecclesiastical authorities gave preference to the Eucharistic reserve¹⁰ being stored on the altar.¹¹ Previously it had been customary to reserve the *sacramentum* in a tabernacle or an aumbry.¹² Canonical law stipulates that the Eucharist should be reserved in the most honourable place in the church in order that *suo ipso apparatu magis moveat fidelium pietatem ac devotionem*.¹³ The main altar was an obvious choice. However, this gave rise to a practical problem in cathedrals, collegiate churches and abbeys, as it implied that choir services would be constantly interrupted by obligatory genuflections as a mark of respect in the presence of the real body of Christ. To resolve this conundrum, canonical law and the *Caeremoniale episcoporum* (1600) prescribed that the Eucharist should be reserved on a designated altar.¹⁴ This way, the Eucharist could be presented for adoration elsewhere than on the main altar. Although the notion of a Eucharistic altar as such was not an invention of the Counter-Reformation (such designated altars had already been in use previously) they quickly became a striking feature of post-Tridentine church interiors.

Irrespective of whether the tabernacle was stored on the main altar or the Eucharistic altar, the altar decoration had to be in keeping with its venerable purpose. In other words, altarpieces were supposed to be precious, in accordance with the financial status of whoever had commissioned them. Systematic research into the cost price of altar decorations in the Southern Netherlands between ca. 1585 and 1685 has revealed that the sums involved could be quite staggering

consecratione in admirabili Eucharistiae sacramento non esse corpus et sanguinem Domini nostri Iesu Christi, sed tantum in usu, dum sumitur, non autem ante vel post, et in hostiis seu particulis consecratis, quae post communionem reservantur vel supersunt, non remanere verum corpus Domini: anathema sit. {...}

- 9 *Loc. cit.*: '{...} Can. 6. Si quis dixerit, in sancto Eucharistiae sacramento Christum unigenitum Dei Filium non esse cultu laetiae etiam externo adorandum, atque ideo nec festiva peculiari celebritate venerandum, neque in processionibus secundum laudabilem et universalem Ecclesiae sanctae ritum et consuetudinem solemniter circumgestandum, vel non publice, ut adoretur, populo proponendum, et eius adoratores esse idololatrias: anathema sit. {...}
- 10 Churches must reserve the Eucharist for the sake of the sick.
- 11 Hans CASPARY, *Kult und Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie in Italien vor dem Tridentinum, in Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 1965, pp. 102-130; Otto NUSSBAUM, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie, (Theophaneia. Beiträge zur Religions- und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums*, 29), Bonn, 1979; Walter PRUTSCHER, *Das Tabernakel: Geschichte, Vorschriften, Ausföhrung, (Wiener katholische Akademie. Miscellanea. Neue Reihe*, 8), Vienna, 1980.
- 12 Valérie HERREMANS, *De sacramentstoren als blikvanger in bet historische kerkinterieur, in Monumenten, Landschappen en Archeologie*, 28, 2009, 3, pp. 31-37.
- 13 *Codex iuris canonici Pii X pontificis maximi iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus {...}*, Rome, 1919, Can. 1268: § 1. *Sanctissima Eucharistia continuo seu habitualiter custodiri nequit, nisi in uno tantum eiusdem ecclesiae altari. § 2. Custodiat in praecellentissimo ac nobilissimo ecclesiae loco ac proinde regulariter in altari maiore, nisi aliud venerationi et cultui tanti sacramenti commodius et decentius videatur, servato praescripto legum liturgicarum quod ad ultimos dies hebdomadae maiores attinet. § 3. Sed in ecclesiis cathedralibus, collegiatis aut conventualibus in quibus ad altare maius chorales functiones persolvendae sunt, ne ecclesiasticis officiis impedimentum afferatur, opportunum est ut sanctissima Eucharistia regulariter non custodiat in altari maiore, sed in alio sacello seu altari.*

§ 4. *Curent ecclesiarum rectores ut altare in quo sanctissimum Sacramentum asservatur sit prae omnibus aliis ornatum, ita ut suo ipso apparatu magis moveat fidelium pietatem ac devotionem.*

- 14 Cf. the previous note and *Caeremoniale episcoporum iussu Clementis VIII. Pont. Max. novissime reformatum*, lib. I, c. 12., Rome, 1600, pp. 66-67: *Aliud simile ante altare seu locum ubi est Sanctissimum Sacramentum, quod diversum esse solet ab altari maiore, et ab eo, in quo episcopus, vel alius est missam solemnem celebraturus. Nam licet sacrosancto Domini nostri Iesu Christi corpori, omnium sacramentorum fonti, praecellentissimus ac nobilissimus omnium locus in ecclesia conveniat, neque humanis viribus tantum illud venerari et colere unquam valeamus, quantum decet tenemurque; tamen valde opportunum est, ut illud non collocetur in maiori, vel in alio altari, in quo episcopus vel alius solemniter est missam seu vesperas celebraturus, sed in alio sacello, vel loco ornatissimo, cum omni decentia et reverentia reponatur. Quod si in altari maiori, vel alio in quo celebrandum erit, collocatum reperiat, ab eo altari in aliud transferendum est, ne propterea ritus et ordo caeremoniarum, qui in huiusmodi missis et officiis servandus est, turbetur; quod utique absque eveniret, si illud ibi remaneret: siquidem nec altaris thurificatio, nec celebrantis actio, nec ministrorum operatio rite fieri aut servari possent; cum necesse sit, quoties ante illud transimus, genua ad terram flectere, nec deceat celebrantem ante illud stare, aut sedere cum mitra.*

- 15 HERREMANS 2007, pp. 251-55.
The corpus contains 324 retables.
- 16 1621-26, Robrecht de Nole.
- 17 1665-83, Lucas Faydherbe.
- 18 1685, Artus II Quellinus, Guilielmus Kerrix, Ludovicus Willemsens, Norbert Herry.
- 19 1640-42, Jacques Cocx.
- 20 Armandus GOUGNARD, *Tractatus de indulgentiis ad usum alumnorum seminarum archiepiscopalis Mecheleniensis*, Mechelen, 1933; William KENT, art. *Indulgences*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7. New York, 1910. 10 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm>>. Etienne MAGNIN, art. *Indulgences*, in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. VII, Paris, 1927, Col. 1623 ff.

(Pl. 1).¹⁵ A main altar retable in stone implied a hefty investment of between 4500 and 10000 guilders. In some exceptional cases, the cost could mount to around 19000 guilders, as in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp (16500 guilders),¹⁶ the Cathedral of St Rumbold in Mechelen (17580 guilders),¹⁷ St James' Church in Antwerp (17874 guilders)¹⁸ and the Jesuit Church in Bruges (18962 guilders).¹⁹ If the patron's financial resources were limited, the portico would be executed in wood, which in the case of a main altar generally carried a price-tag of between 300 and 600 guilders, but could cost anything up to 2000 guilders. Depending on the 'market value' of the painter and the resources of the patron, the price of a new altarpiece could vary from around 300 (e.g. Gaspar de Crayer, Kruikebeke, Church of Our Lady, ca. 1652-55) to 2000 (e.g. Peter Paul Rubens, Mechelen, St John's, 1616-1617). As a rule, the adornment of a Eucharist altar was considerably more expensive than that of an ordinary side altar. In fact, the price could approximate to that for a main altar. A good example in this respect is the portico to the former Eucharist altar at Antwerp Cathedral, the bill for which amounted to no less than 9900 guilders (Jan and Robrecht de Nole, 1606-15).

Altars and Indulgences

The second, strongly contested, Catholic doctrine was that of the indulgences for the remission of temporal punishment for sin.²⁰ The theory of the *sacrum commercium* was highly controversial. To the Protestants, the so-called Economy of Salvation was a source of derision. But the Catholic Church held firm, and the Council of Trent confirmed the notion that indulgences had power of Salvation.

This dogma, too, was acknowledged and affirmed with a specific type of altar, known as the *altare privilegiatum pro defunctis*.²¹ Privileged altars were altars where a plenary indulgence (*indulgentia plenaria*) could be gained for the soul of the deceased person in whose name the mass was celebrated. This created a new salvational perspective. Henceforth, an altar could contribute not only to the salvation of one's own soul, but also to that of a deceased third party.²² The Reformed Church criticised the system because the offering of mass at a privileged altar required the payment of a certain sum of money, so that Salvation effectively became a commodity.

The privileged altar, unlike the sacramental altar, was introduced by the Catholic Reformation. According to Etienne Magnin, the first documented example dates back to the pontificate of Alessandro Farnese (1534-1549), Pope Paul III, in 1537²³. The concept was further developed under Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585), who followed the example of the predecessor whose name he had adopted, Pope Gregory I (590-604), better known as Gregory the Great: he attached the privilege to a series of altars in his hometown of Bologna, as Gregory the Great had done in the case of an altar in the Church of San Gregorio Magno in Rome. Hence, the celebration before these altars of a mass in commemoration of a deceased person guaranteed that the latter's soul would be spared from purgatory.²⁴

The impact of the privilege on seventeenth-century church interiors is however difficult to ascertain, due to its ephemeral nature. Only in exceptional cases was the privilege attached during the initial phase of altar decoration. Moreover, it was usually limited in time, in two senses: it was attached to an altar for a certain period and applied only on specified days of the ecclesiastical calendar. In other words, there was usually no connection with the intentional perspective of the iconographical programme of the retable. The *in-situ* material evidence of the existence of the privilege consists merely in an inscription (either preserved or not) advertising the privileged status of the altar in question to the faithful. However, the ecclesiastical authorities were not obliged to apply such an inscription. Many of the privileges that are still 'visible' today were, moreover, only granted in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁵ Hence definitive answers can only be obtained from archival sources.

A document from the archives of the archdiocese of Mechelen provides some interesting insights in this respect (Doc. 1). It offers an overview of all the types of indulgences to be granted in the diocese of Mechelen-Brussels²⁶ from 3 August 1639 to 15 October 1641, including those attached to the altar. The document shows that most such concessions lasted for a period of seven years (*septennium*)²⁷ and that most privileged altars were situated in monastery churches of mendicant orders such as the Discalced Carmelites (Brussels), the Dominicans (Brussels), the Franciscans (Diest) and Augustines (Louvain), the Urbanists (Brussels), the Cistercians (Roosendael-bij-Mechelen), the Canons Regular (Leuven, Groenendael), Beguines (Diest) and Oratorians (Leuven). Just a few parish churches were privileged (Bottelare and Orsmaal). Most privileges related to the

- 21 This exceptional altar privilege and its significance to the history of art are explored in depth in the doctoral thesis by Christine Göttler. GOETTLER 1996.
- 22 Indulgences applying to deceased persons in general are documented from the fifteenth century onwards. MAGNIN 1927, col. 1616.
- 23 MAGNIN 1927, col. 1625.
- 24 GOETTLER 1996, pp. 54 ff.
- 25 Pope Benedict XIII, for example, decreed in his Bill *Omnium salutis* (20 July 1724) that all episcopal, archiepiscopal and patriarchal churches could establish a privileged altar. A decree by the H Congregation of Indulgences (19 May 1759) regulated the presence of privileged altars in parish churches. MAGNIN 192, col. 1625-26.
- 26 Just one privilege concerned an altar situated in the Bishopric of Ghent, namely at the church of Bottelare, which was dependent on St Peter's Abbey.
- 27 Prior to the decree of 1759 (cf. note 17), concessions needed to be renewed every seven years. MAGNIN 1927, col. 1626.

- 28 TIMMERMANS 2008, p. 198, speaks in this context of a 'piety market'.
29 GOETTLER 1996, pp. 17-20, 139, 173 ff.

main altar, but some were attached to an altar devoted to a specific saint, e.g. St. Raymond of Penafort at the Dominican Church in Brussels and St. Catherine of Alexandria at St Martin's in Aalst. In some cases, it is specified on which (feast) days the privilege applied. It is not clear whether the absence of such a specification meant that the privilege applied daily (*altare privilegiatum quotidianum*) or only on the feast day of the patron saint.

Most strikingly, the document shows that most privileges were obtained by urban monasteries and convents. Such institutions were usually unable to rely on tithes to satisfy their material needs. Moreover, they often had to compete with numerous other local religious organisations for alms from churchgoers²⁸. In the case of the mendicant orders, such *elemosynae* were in fact the one and only source of income. Besides relics or miracle statues, an *altare privilegiatum* was probably the most effective way of raising the kind of resources required for suitably adorning church interiors.

Altar Decoration as a Form of Charity

Alongside worshipping the Eucharist and obtaining indulgences, the third way of cutting short one's future time in purgatory was through *caritas* or acts of charity. In the Reformed conception, *caritas* could refer only to the giving of alms to the poor, but, once again, the Catholic interpretation was quite different. An essential distinction was made in this respect between rich and poor. For the rich, the notion of *caritas* extended to donations to the Church. In exchange, the Church would perform an agreed number of services in commemoration of the donor. These commemorative services were also believed to contribute to the salvation of the donor's soul. Opponents of this system again argued that its implication was that Salvation was purchasable, as if it were a commodity, as reflected in the name *sacrum commercium* or holy commerce.

In response to this criticism, Catholic theologians developed an ethics of Christian charity. As Christine Göttler has shown, this theory served as a humanistic *speculum virtutis* of the Renaissance aristocracy, which was in turn inspired by Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea*.²⁹ The *liberalitas* or generosity and the *magnanimitas* or magnanimity of the donors would be demonstrated on the basis of biblical *exempli*.

An important aspect of the Catholic concept of conations was care for church interiors as a contribution to the general good (*genus elemosynae*). A striking exemplum for painters of saintly representations taken from *De wonderheden van d'ander werelt*, published in 1639, illustrates how donors were made to believe that financing an image of a saint would reduce their time in the *purgatorium* (Doc. 2).³⁰ According to the doctrine, making a donation was a way of ensuring intercession on the part of the represented saint.

De wonderheden van d'ander werelt was originally a Spanish text and was translated into Dutch by the Antwerp Jesuit Franciscus De Smidt (1567-1659). For that matter, a sizeable portion of the writings propagating the private sponsorship of church interiors were written by Jesuit authors: Göttler refers to, among others, Julius Roscius Hortinus, Robertus Bellarminus (1542-1621) and Cornelius a Lapide (1567-1637).³¹ This should not come as a great surprise, as the newly established Jesuit Order was largely dependent on private donations for establishing and maintaining its extensive European network.

Private funding was not only important within the context of a young order such as the *Societas Iesu*, but it also played a crucial role in seventeenth-century church decoration in general. Private patronage appears also to have contributed considerably to the decoration of altars. A quantitative analysis for the period 1585-1685 shows that the ecclesiastical authorities relied partly or wholly on private resources for the funding of altarpieces in almost half of the cases considered. The patronage right over an altar, which also entailed an obligation of maintenance, would then rest with the brotherhood, guild or craft of the private individual concerned (Fig. 2). More systematic research into the origins of the funds applied would most likely reveal the proportion of private funding to be even higher.

De cappella gentilizia

Within the phenomenon of patronage of church interiors, the erection and adornment of private chapels occupies a special place. Catholic authors such as the aforementioned Jesuits, who propagated such patronage as a form of *caritas*, drew inspiration primarily from the Italian notion of the *cappella gentilizia* or noble chapel. During the Renaissance, obtaining right of patronage or *ius patronatus* over

30 David FREEDBERG, *Painting and the Counter Reformation in the Age of Rubens*, in *The Age of Rubens*, Bruges, 1993, p. 131.

31 GOETTLER 1996, p. 38.

- 32 Rosamaria MARTELLACCI, *Cappelle gentilizie dalla controriforma alla fine del Seicento: storia, tipi e linguaggi formali*, in *Architetture nell'architettura: cappelle gentilizie nelle chiese fiorentine (1576 - 1693): geometrie, tipi, storia, documenti*, (Materia e geometria, 5), Florence, 1998, pp. 35-117; EAD., *Cappelle gentilizie fiorentine in epoca di controriforma*, in C. CRESTI ed., *Architetture di altari e spazio ecclesiale. Episodi a Firenze, Prato e Ferrara nell'età della Controriforma*, Florence, 1995, pp. 75-111.
- 33 Johannes Baptist SAEGMUELLER, art. *Patron and Patronage*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, New York, 1911. 11 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11560c.htm>>.
- 34 Additionally, one could obtain a patronage right by papal privilege, inheritance, recommendation, exchange or purchase.
- 35 Rite of the sprinkling of the holy water prior to the celebration of high mass. John WYNNE, art. *Asperges*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, New York, 1907. 11 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01793a.htm>>.
- 36 The rite of the symbolic expression of charity by the kissing of the *pax* and the utterance of the words *pax tecum*, *pax vobis*, or *pax vobiscum* is reserved for the celebrant and a number of privileged. Andrew MEEHAN, art. *Pax*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, New York, 1911. 11 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11594b.htm>>.
- 37 *Codex iuris canonici Pii X pontificis maximi iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus* {...}, Rome, 1919: Can. 1455: '{...}Privilegia patronorum sunt: {...} 3° Habendi, si ita ferant legitimae locorum consuetudines, in sui patronatus ecclesia stemma gentis vel familiae, praecedentiam ante ceteros laicos in processionibus vel similibus functionibus, digniorem sedem in ecclesia, sed extra presbyterium et sine baldachino. {...}'
- 38 TIMMERMANS 2008, pp. 213 ff.
- 39 Cf. the research by Jeffrey Muller into the history of this church. The publication of a monograph is imminent. See also Ulrich SOEDING, *Das Grabbild des P. P. Rubens in der St. Jacobskirche*, (Studien zur Kunstgeschichte, 43), Hildesheim, 1986.
- 40 GOETTLER 1996, pp. 66-71.

a chapel became quite popular in aristocratic circles.³² The acquisition of a private burial chapel was an important aspect of the *atti di magnificenza* or acts of magnificence that were deemed a necessary ingredient of *vivere nobilmente* or leading a noble life.

The *ius patronatus*³³ of an altar could be obtained in different ways. Most commonly, it involved a foundation.³⁴ The donor would provide the financial means for its erection, decoration and maintenance and would thus acquire right of patronage *ipso iure*. This right implied a number of duties (*iura onerosa*), such as duty of maintenance of the chapel, but also a number of privileges, like the authority to introduce a new pattern (*ius praesentandi*) and certain honorary rights (*iura honorifica*). The latter included the right to prayers and intercession, to burial in the church (*ius sepulturae*), ecclesiastical mourning, adulation, sprinkling with holy water (*asperges*),³⁵ the kiss of peace (*pax*),³⁶ precedence over other laymen in processions, and a prominent seat in the church. Furthermore, the patron acquired the right to apply insignias and inscriptions (*ius inscriptionis*).³⁷

Recent research by Bert Timmermans has shown that family burial chapels also occupied a prominent place in the ecclesiastical topography of seventeenth-century Antwerp.³⁸ Such prestigious right of patronage was obtained primarily by members of the new urban aristocracy, which had sprung from elite commercial and political circles. In the course of the 1600s, affluent parish churches such as St James's (Sint Jakob) would be transformed, as well-off parishioners established privately sponsored chapels along choirs and naves.³⁹ The system enabled religious orders to raise funds for the construction of new churches or the renovation and expansions of existing ones.

However, such burial chapels were also a point of debate in the theological polemic on private foundations.⁴⁰ Whereas the sponsoring of altars and other items of church interiors served a public purpose and the common good (*bonum commune*), and hence could be perceived as a form of charity, this was not the case with the funding of private chapels, which were primarily intended to satisfy personal eschatological desires. Consequently, they could be seen to undermine the spiritual rationale behind privately sponsored church interiors. On the other hand, praying in private, before a private altar, was deemed to be a more effective way of attaining salvation of the soul, an estimation that made such investments more attractive to potential patrons. Moreover, in many cases arrangements were made with the church authorities whereby the altars of private chapels were

also made accessible to other churchgoers, either at specified times or through the fact that donors were required to share their right of patronage with a brotherhood.⁴¹

Thus, family chapels became an integral part of post-Tridentine church interiors, not only because they satisfied the material requirements of the church and the spiritual needs of the patrons, but also because they reflected the donors' striving for honour and fame. These prestigious donations and the associated rights constituted an essential element in the creation of a social identity that was in keeping with the noble or elite bourgeois status of the patrons.⁴² The identification of the patron was therefore an essential element in a *cappella gentilizia* as part of a public space such as a church.

In this respect, there was a fundamental difference before and after the Counter-Reformation. Prior to the reformation, it was customary, as a means of identification, to integrate a portrait of the donor in the altar decoration. However, as Adolf Monballieu demonstrates, this practice was curtailed from the seventeenth century.⁴³ The presence of portraits of laymen, particularly living persons, in altar decorations that otherwise featured saints was thereafter regarded as inappropriate by the church authorities. The third Provincial Council of Mechelen of 1607 prohibited the representation of living persons on altarpieces: '*...* neque in intima altarium tabula vivorum effigies depingantur (...)'.⁴⁴ As most altarpieces at the time were triptychs, the ban most probably applied not only to the centre panel, but also to the interiors of the wings. For donors, this implied that they could only assert their patronage of an altar by means of an inscription and an insignia in the decoration, as provided for under canon law. Consequently, the retable relinquished a considerable part of its representative character. The patron of a burial chapel did retain the right to include their portrait in a separate memorial that could be integrated into the chapel decoration.

Case Study: The Church of the Friars Minor in Antwerp and Nicholas Rockox, "[...] eenen geaffectioneerden weldoener [...] wiens siele Godt den heere wil loone, nu ende hier namaels"]⁴⁵

I have dwelt longer on this picture than any other, as it appears to me to deserve extraordinary attention: it is certainly one of the first pictures in the world, for composition, colouring, and, what was not to be expected from Rubens, correctness of drawing.

41 For an example, see MULLER 2000.

42 TIMMERMANS 2008, pp. 211 ff.

43 Adolf MONBALLIEU, *Het probleem van het 'portret' bij Rubens' altaarstukken*, in *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, XXIV, 1976-78, pp. 159-168.

44 Petrus Franciscus Xaverius DE RAM, *Nova et absoluta collectio synodorum tam provincialium quam dioecesanarum, archiepiscopatus Mecheleniensis*, Leuven, 1828, p. 387.

45 Doc. 4

- 46 *The works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, knight (...)* containing his Discourses, Idlers, A journey to Flanders and Holland, and his commentary on Du Fresnoy's art of painting: printed from his revised copies (...), London, 1801, p. 323.
- 47 Leen HUET & Jan GRIETEN, *Nicolaas Rockox, 1560-1640: burgemeester van de Gouden Eeuw*, Antwerp, 2010.
- 48 Rockox financed the altarpiece of St Joseph's Chapel. Rudi MANNAERTS, *De artistieke expressie van de mariale devotie der jezuiteten te Antwerpen (1562-1773)*, unpublished licentiate's thesis KULeuven, 1983, pp. 137-38.
- 49 Cordula VAN WYHE, *Court and Convent: the Infanta Isabella and her Franciscan Confessor Andres de Soto*, in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 35, 2, p. 423.
- 50 Archangelus HOUBAERT, *Lexikon van de Belgische Minderbroederskloosters*, Brussels, 2002, pp. 6-8.
- 51 HOUBAERT 2002, p. 15.
- 52 Catharine CRYNS & Maryse GYS, *Bouwgeschiedenis van de Academie van Antwerpen 1811-1900*, unpublished thesis, Hogeschool Antwerpen, 1996, p. 17; Thomas COOMANS, *L'architecture médiévale des ordres mendiants (franciscains, dominicains, carmes et augustins) en Belgique et aux Pays-Bas*, in *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art*, 70, 2001, p. 65. It consisted of a three-bayed nave with eight aisles and a choir with seven aisles and an polygonal choir termination. The two parts were separated by a rood loft with a breadth of a single bay. Around the middle of the seventeenth century, two large chapels were constructed to the north and south, forming a kind of transept. By the end of the eighteenth century, the choir was surrounded by various other chapels that had been erected in the course of the church's history.

Sir Joshua Reynolds on the altarpiece for the Friars Minor in Antwerp, 1780⁴⁶

After the funeral mass in the Cathedral, Nicholas Rockox was taken to his final resting place, but, rather peculiarly, the destination of the solemn procession was not St James's⁴⁷, which was, after all, his parish church and the location of the Rockox family chapel. Nor did the funerary procession head for the church St Ignatius, the new, prestigious 'marble temple' of the Society of Jesus, the interior decoration of which Rockox had helped sponsor.⁴⁸ Instead, the body of Rockox was brought to the age-old church of the Friars Minor, which, like the two other churches, was within walking distance of Rockox's home, 'Den Gulden Rinck' in Keizerstraat. Perhaps Rockox's choice of burial place had been influenced by the fact that the Franciscans, and particularly their third order, had a strong spiritual appeal to the better-off in society. For example, the father confessor of none other than Archduchess Isabella, Andrés de Soto, was a Recollect, and after the death of her husband, she indeed entered the order of the Tertiaries. Archduke Albrecht, for his part, was buried in a Franciscan habit.⁴⁹ According to tradition, the mendicant order of the Friars Minor, *Ordo Fratrum Minorum*, was founded by Francis of Assisi (1181/82-1226) on 6 April 1209. The Antwerp monastery was established by Franciscan Observants in 1446 under the patronage of Philip the Fair (+ 1467), *archifundator*.⁵⁰ Construction work on the monastery at Raamveld, a plot of land situated between present-day Mutsaertstraat, Blindestraat, Venusstraat and Stadswaag, which is now occupied by the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, was begun in 1450. In accordance with the wishes of the Duke of Burgundy, the monastery was dedicated to St Andrew and St Francis. It developed into a prominent religious institution where no fewer than forty provincial chapters would take place and that connected to a house for novices.⁵¹ The no-longer-existing monastery church, the construction of which was not completed until 1500, was an imposing building measuring almost a hundred metres in length.⁵² In the centuries following the destruction occasioned by the religious troubles of the sixteenth century, the building was transformed through patronage into a veritable shrine of art, housing work by, among others, Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck, whose first workshop was for that matter located in nearby Minderbroederstraat. In 1796, after the French in-

vasion, the institution was confiscated and its possessions were sold off the following year.⁵³

Nicholas Rockox's great fondness of the Franciscan monastery was apparent from the various paintings in the interior he had financed, including the famous main altarpiece known as *The Coup de Lance*⁵⁴ and an epitaph triptych, both by Peter Paul Rubens.⁵⁵ After the confiscation of the monastery, these paintings became part of the collection of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (hereinafter KMSKA). Already in 1970, Adolf Monballieu posed the question of whether the triptych representing the *Incredulity of St. Thomas* and the portraits of Rockox and his wife Adriana Perez had not been part of a larger commemorative foundation.⁵⁶ In what follows, this hypothesis is substantiated with new arguments.

Former mayor Nicholas Rockox was a forward-looking man. An agreement with the monastery, dating from 19 March 1640, nine months before his death, shows just how concerned he was with the preparation of his own funeral, with his *commemoria* and the salvation of his soul in death (Doc. 4). The document asserts that Rockox had, out of pure devotion and affection, had a chapel erected behind the high altar of the church; it is described as having a crypt intended as a burial place for himself and his wife. Around the crypt, there was room for the tombs of members of the monastic community. The document further specifies that his heirs would henceforth be required to maintain the roof, walls and windows of the chapel. Furthermore, it informs us that Rockox held right of patronage not only over this private chapel, but also over the high altar, which he likewise paid for personally, generously funding it with daily and annual masses. In return, he demanded that this altar should only be draped in mourning for longer than a day for himself and for others having donated generously to the monastery.

But that is not the only remarkable information provided by the deed, which he and the provincial of the order of Hermanus Lisens concluded on the aforementioned date in the presence of notary Cornelius De Brouwer. It also mentions that his wife had been reburied in the crypt a few months earlier. At the same time, he relinquished the right to a tomb in the high altar, where his wife had previously laid buried. Adriana Perez had, after all, passed away on 22 September 1619, aged barely 51. It was after her premature death that the Recollect monastery had become involved with the salvation of the Rockox couple. Until the discovery of this document, it had been as-

53 CRYNS & GYS 1996, pp. 46, 68; LEEN DE JONG et al., *Het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen: een geschiedenis, 1810-2007*, Oostkamp, 2008, pp. 80-81.

During the period of French rule, the empty buildings housed 'Workshops of Charity', the Academy of Fine Arts, and the Academy Museum, the precursor to today's KMSKA. In 1807, the French engineer Joseph-Nicolas Mengin began to convert the monastery church, which, from 1811, accommodated the Academy Museum. In 1841, the nave of the monastery church was demolished with a view to an extension of the museum. The walls of the choir were integrated into the new building. After the inauguration of the present building of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1890, the premises were occupied by the Academy.

54 LEO WUYTS recently devoted an iconographic study to the altarpiece: *Het barokke hoogaltaar van de voormalige minderbroederskerk te Antwerpen: een iconologische benadering*, in *Liber memorialis Erik Duverger. Bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, Wetteren, 2006, pp. 557-587.

55 It is conceivable that a rendering of Christ on the Cross, attributed to Rubens and bearing the inscription NR, which used to adorn the church, was donated by Rockox (KMSKA, inv. 313). The altar in the Rockox Chapel was adorned with a representation of the H. Virgin with the Infant Jesus (attributed to Ambrosius Benson, KMSKA, inv. 262). It also contained a representation of the Holy Virgin with the Infant Jesus and St Catherine (lost; attributed to Van Dyck in old inventories) and an anonymous *Ecce Homo* (lost).

56 ADOLF MONBALLIEU, *Bij de iconografie van het Rockoxepitafium*, in *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 1970, p. 146.

- 57 Stephanus SCHOUTENS, *Geschiedenis van het voormalig Minderbroedersklooster van Antwerpen (1446-1797)*, Antwerp, 1908, pp. 306-307. Spoelbergh was the church superior in 1618 and 1619.
- 58 Adolf MONBALLIEU, *De reconstructie van een drieluik van Adriaen Thomasz. Keij bestemd voor het hoogaltaar van de Antwerpse Recollettenkerk*, in *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 1971, p. 102.
- 59 MONBALLIEU, *loc. cit.*
- 60 E.g. the figure in the right foreground gazing at the viewer.
- 61 Marguerite CASTEELS, *De beeldhouwers de Nole te Kamerijk, te Utrecht en te Antwerpen, (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Schone Kunsten, 16)*, Brussels, 1961, pp. 354-55 and 377-78. The pedestal on the gospel side of the altar mentioned the inauguration date: 'Hunc Christo posuit Consul Roccoxius aram, Expressit tabulam Rubeniana manus 1620' [Pieter GENARD], *Verzameling der graf- en gedenkschriften van de provincie Antwerpen. Antwerpen: kloosters der Orde van St- Franciscus*, Antwerp, 1871, p. 146.
- 62 In the late eighteenth century, the portal was adorned with three sculptures: the Virgin Mary at the centre, flanked on the left by St Andrew and on the right by St John the Evangelist. WUYTS 2006, p. 561. According to the *Liber recommendationis Benefactorum* of the monastery, the sculpture of the *Immaculata* had been donated by Johannes Brant in 1715. KADOC, Archives of the Friars Minor, monastery Antwerp, no. 3 F^o 99 r^o: "Eodem die A.o Dni~1696 obiit R/ Dominus Ioannes Brant sacerdos ex parte eius R: P: [M]archaut eleemosynam [...] torum florenorum accepit unde A. ° 1715 confici curavit imagines in ara summa positae representantem immaculatam Deiparae conceptionem anima benefactoris requiesca in pace." It is not known whether similar sculptures adorned the original elevation.

sumed that Adriana Perez had been immediately buried in the chapel behind the high altar. But according to this newly emerged piece of evidence, she received an initial resting place in a tomb in the presbytery near or under the high altar, the retable of which had also been paid for by Nicholas Rockox.

When the new high altar retable was erected in 1619, the monastery was led by superior Wilhelmus Spoelbergh (+1633), an erudite man who had written numerous devotional books.⁵⁷ Perhaps the initiative for the new retable was in part the result of his pious influence. However, there is an alternative explanation, for it is unclear whether the old altarpiece, which had been painted in 1575 by Adriaen Thomasz. Key (1534/1554 -1589/1609), still adorned the high altar in 1619.⁵⁸ The painting is known to have remained in the church up to its confiscation towards the end of the eighteenth century, and the wings are today likewise in the collection of KMSKA. The centre panel of the triptych has however been lost. Like the *Coup de Lance*, it represented Christ at Golgotha, but whether the actual lancing itself was depicted is unknown.

Besides the fact that the altarpiece, being a triptych, must have looked outmoded – side panels had gone out of fashion – its content was in itself quite problematic, due to the presence of portraits.⁵⁹ This was attributable to the fact that the piece served a dual purpose: it adorned the high altar of monastery church and it was the epitaph of the De Smit-De Decker family, by whom the work had been donated. Hence the interiors of the side panels contained portraits of the family members, which was in contravention of the ecclesiastical ordinances of 1607. Moreover, the representation of the *Last Supper* on the exterior also included a number of portraits.⁶⁰ This prior history may shed light on the reasons for replacing the existing retable, and it also illustrates the continuity in terms of the iconography and the funerary context of the genesis of the work.

The earliest date to have been associated with the origin of the new high-altar retable is 14 September 1619.⁶¹ On that day, a contract was signed in Namur for the execution of the architectural components of the marble portico by the local master sculptor Jean Brigaude.⁶² The work had been commissioned by his colleague from Antwerp Melchior van Boven († 1620), a former pupil of court artist Robrecht de Nole († after 9 July 1636). The document expressly mentions that the components were intended '*pour le dressement d'une table d'autel servante pour le grand autel des frères Cordeliers en ladite ville*

d'Anvers'. It was just a few days after the conclusion of this agreement, on 22 September, that Adriana Perez died.

The chapel most probably originated later. A document dated 29 November 1624 mentions its existence and may be regarded as a *terminus ante quem* (Doc. 3). The location of the chapel at the head of the church was very significant from a liturgical point of view. Traditionally, this type of chapel was devoted to the Holy Virgin. In this sense it is interesting to note that Rubens was buried in a chapel with a similar liturgical status at St James's. The so-called Rockox chapel was devoted to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin⁶³, but it was probably also intended as a replica of the Porziuncola, as Jacob De Wit mentions it in this sense as recently as the eighteenth century.⁶⁴

It was in the Porziuncola, a chapel not far from Assisi devoted to Saint Mary of the Angels, that St Francis received his calling. He returned there at the end of his life to die. This spiritually important church was granted the privilege of indulgence. Initially, the so-called Porziuncola Indulgence could be obtained only at the chapel in Assisi. However, on 4 July 1622, Pope Gregory XV extended it considerably.⁶⁵ All the faithful who, upon confession and the reception of Holy Communion, visited a Franciscan church on 2 August, the feast day of St Mary of the Angels, would receive it. Hence it is conceivable that the construction of the chapel is related to this important extension of the Porziuncola Indulgence. According to father Antonius Gonzalez (*Hierusalemsche reyse*, 1678), the 'fruit of salvation' associated with the Porziuncola Indulgence resulted in an unusually large flood of believers. He testifies that, on that day, no fewer than 28,000 faithful received Communion!⁶⁶ So the Porziuncola Chapel emerged in the period 1619-24, most probably between 1622 and 1624, which ties in with the entombment in 1619 of Adriana Perez in the high altar, as there was no crypt in the chapel yet.⁶⁷

The original status of the Rockox Chapel as a Porziuncola Chapel is apparent not only from the moment of its construction, but also from a second significant clue: its location. So-called Porziuncola Chapels are a specific phenomenon in the architectural history of the Franciscan Order.⁶⁸ According to Thomas Coomans, the addition of such chapels to existing churches, most commonly aisleless ones, only became customary after mediaeval times. They were conceived as apse chapels on the central axis of the choir, as is the case in the Rockox Chapel. A very similar construction exists in the church of

63 Antonius SANDERUS, *Chorographia sacra Brabantiae: sive celeberrimorum aliquot in ea provincia abbatiorum, coenobiorum, monasteriorum, ecclesiarum, piarum fundationum descriptio, Tomus Tertius*, The Hague, 1727, vol. III, p. 200.

64 In the course of the history of the monastery church, various chapels served this purpose, causing some confusion among scholars. Sanderus mentions that the first chapel bearing this title was located north of the choir. It was donated in the sixteenth century by Gregorio de Ayala and restored under Gregorius del Plano after the destruction of the iconoclastic fury. Under Sanderus, however, the chapel was devoted to St. Bonaventure. In 1661, a newly erected chapel, also located on the north side of the choir at the eastern end, was designated as a Porziuncula chapel. The latter chapel, alongside the Rockox Chapel, is also identified as a Porziuncula chapel by Jacobus De Wit. JACOBUS DE WIT, *De Kerken van Antwerpen; met aantekeningen door J. de Bosschere en grondplannen*, (Uitgaven der Antwerpsche Bibliophilen, 25), Antwerp-The Hague, 1910, pp. 74-75; SANDERUS, 1727, pp. 200, 221. As the altar of the Lopez Franco y Feo chapel was adorned with a piece depicting the granting of the indulgence of Porziuncula (Cornelis Schut, KMSKA, inv. 326), this chapel is sometimes also referred to as the Porziuncula chapel. TIMMERMANS 2008, p. 215.

65 *Cort verbael van den oorspronck des aldervolsten aflaets van Ons L. Vrouwe ter Engelen, ghenoeemt Portiuncula*, Antwerp, s. d. [17th century], p. 23.

66 Although this estimate is probably an exaggeration, it does provide a rough indication. SCHOUTENS 1908, p. 117.

67 It is possible that the plan for the construction of a (burial) chapel already existed in 1619, when Rockox had the high altar erected, but that the premature death of his wife thwarted this plan, so that her remains initially had to be buried in a crypt in the presbytery.

68 COOMANS 2001, p. 33.

- 69 J. A. J. BECX, *Johan Gerardi en het "Huis van Broekhoven" te Tilburg*, in *De Brabantse Leenu*, 17, 1968, 1-2, p. 10.
- 70 This date is an overpainting of an earlier date, 1613, which is still visible with the naked eye. This has led certain authors to speculate that the panels were created at different moments. David FREEDBERG, *Rubens: The Life of Christ after the Passion, (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, VII)*, Brussels, 1984, p. 89.
- 71 MONBALLIEU 1970, p. 147.
- 72 Hans Vlieghe, *De schilder Rubens*, Utrecht, 1977, pp. 171-72 note 32.
- 73 Marcel Viller et al. (eds.), *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique: doctrine et histoire*, XXXIII-XXXIV, Paris, 1962, cols 1279-1282.
- 74 HERREMANS 2007, vol. 1, p. 219.
- 75 It has been argued that the hymn *Stabat mater dolorosa* was composed by the Franciscan poet Jacopone da Todi (+1306). Livarius OLIGER, art. *Jacopone da Todi*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8. New York, 1910. 17 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08263a.htm>>.
- 76 Although it may originally have been depicted. FREEDBERG 1984, p. 82.
- 77 MONBALLIEU 1970

the Friars Minor in Weert. It was donated in 1652 by Johan Gerardi, sheriff of Heeze and Leende and his wife Maria de Roy.⁶⁹ Like the Rockox Chapel, it would also come to serve as the donors' burial place.

It is not known when the epitaph triptych of the Rockox pair appeared in the Antwerp chapel. If it was created in 1615 (the date mentioned on the left wing)⁷⁰, then it must have been housed elsewhere prior to being moved to the chapel. This does not however rule out that the painting was always intended for the burial chapel of the pair where, together with the high altar, it would form part of a grander commemorative project, particularly given the iconological coherence between the represented Biblical themes on the two pieces. Adolf Monballieu already pointed out in 1970 that the wound in the side of Jesus is an important focal point in both representations.⁷¹ But that is not the only point of convergence. Both works are highly unusual renderings of traditional iconographic motifs, breaking with all the conventions. These specific accents are, moreover, internally quite coherent.

The crucifixion is a commonly encountered theme in Franciscan high altarpieces. Other examples include those at monasteries in Ath, Lille, Mechelen and Bruges.⁷² This choice of subject matter has its origin in the order's spirituality, which drew inspiration from St. Franciscus and hence was strongly inclined towards the Passion.⁷³ The theme was, for that matter, quite prevalent in seventeenth-century altar decoration in general, and particularly in high altars or sacrament altars.⁷⁴ Unlike in typical seventeenth-century representations, however, the Antwerp version is strikingly epic and rather gruesome. It is obvious that inspiration was drawn from the most detailed account of the Passion, in the Gospel of John, and particularly the events after the actual death of Christ: the *coup de lance* and the *crurifragium* or breaking of the legs (19: 31-36). The motif of the *Stabat Mater*, which was also popular in Franciscan circles, goes back to the same source.⁷⁵

The rendering of the *Incredulity of Thomas* likewise deviates from the pictorial tradition: Thomas does not place his hand on Christ's side and there is no visible side wound.⁷⁶ Adolf Monballieu identified the two elder witnesses as St Peter and St Paul, and the specified the theme as the *videre Christum*.⁷⁷ According to this doctrine, the *seeing* of Christ in order to believe in eternal life and salvation in the hereafter is to be understood not in a literal but in a figurative, metaphori-

cal sense, as described in John 20:29, which relates the apparition of Christ to Thomas and the apostles: ‘Then Jesus told him: “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”.’

The combination of these two themes, i.e. perception or seeing and the belief in the salvation of the soul, is also characteristic of the *Coup de Lance*. The notion of seeing or, to be more precise, of being *able* to see as a metaphor for the recognition of the true faith is central to the composition. According to the tradition, Longinus, the Roman soldier who applied the coup de lance, was cured from blindness by a drop of blood from Jesus’ side wound.⁷⁸ It was by experiencing this miracle that he immediately converted to Christianity.

Additionally, the representation of the water and blood flowing from the side of Christ is tributary to the pictorial tradition of the *fons vitae*, the fountain of (eternal) life. In his writings, the Franciscan theologian, Church Father and biographer St Bonaventure deals repeatedly with the topic of the *fons vitae* as a metaphor for Christ as a source of eternal life. In his *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, he writes: ‘{...} he is the Tree of Life, for by this means we return to the very fountain of life and are revived by it’⁷⁹ The tree of life or *lignum vitae* is a Franciscan theme *par excellence*. Hence the representation of the vertical section of the cross as a branch is conceivably a visual reference to this imagery.⁸⁰ Bonaventure also devoted an entire book to the subject of the vine and the branches, which he likewise borrowed from the Gospel according to John (15:1-17). The chapter entitled *Over de overwinning in de doodstrijd* includes a paragraph on the lancing of Christ: *Iesus translançatus*. Here, the blood and the water flowing from the body of Christ are described as sources of eternal life. This belief in Christ as the source of salvation, expressed metaphorically through the ‘seeing’ of the source by the worshipper, ties in remarkably well with the verse that follows the description of the *coup de lance* in the Gospel of John (19:35): ‘The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.’ The same notion is expressed by the motto of the Perez family, which was adopted by Nicholas Rockox: *In christo vita*.⁸¹

Finally, it is worth considering a remarkable detail, previously mentioned by Jacobus De Wit in his description of the interior of the church of the Friars Minor. It provides additional clues that the various donations by Nicholas Rockox may have constituted a com-

78 Herbert THURSTON, art. *The Holy Lance*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8, New York, 1910. 17 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.newadvent.org/catben/08773a.htm>>.

79 S. Bonaventurae {...} *Collationes in Hexaëmeron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta*, (Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 8), s.l., 1934.

80 John KNIPPING, *The Iconography of the Counter Reformation in the Netherlands*, Leiden, 1974, p. 465; Richard JUDSON, *Rubens, The Passion of Christ*, (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, VI), Turnhout – London, 2000, p. 144.

81 [GENARD] 1871, p. 157.

82 DE WIT 1910, pl. VI, nr. 22 bis.

83 [GENARD] 1871, p. 147: "Achter het hoog altaer, voor het tabernakel". The tabernacle at the back of the high altar provided an alternative for the accommodation on a separate sacrament altar. HERREMANS 2007, vol. 1, pp. 98-99.

memorative ensemble. First and foremost, it answers the question of how Rockox was able to access his chapel during the twenty-one years that he survived his wife Adriana. The floor plan of the church suggests that this was practically impossible. The choir of a mendicant order church was, after all, not accessible to laymen. Moreover, the church had no cloister. The only entrance according to the floor plan was located behind the high altar. The legend to the floor plan mentions an '*oratoire*'.⁸² Although it is not entirely clear what this denotes, it most probably refers to a kind of tribune, accessible via a staircase from the adjacent room. This way, Rockox had permanent access to his chapel without needing to enter the choir. Perhaps the tribune also offered him a view of the back of the high altar where the *sacrarium* of the church was situated, so that he was able to worship the H. Sacrament from this privileged position.⁸³

Conclusion

As the silent procession carried the body of Nicholas Rockox into the choir of Franciscan church in Antwerp on a quiet winter's day in 1640, the sight of the *Coup de Lance* will have instilled in the mourners the same sense of repugnance and compassion that it had instilled for the past twenty years in monks and visitors alike. Rarely had an altarpiece brought across to viewers the suffering of Christ in such compelling fashion. The imposing painting and its expensive marble frame, which the deceased had donated to the monastery, had for the past two decades served as a memorial to Rockox's beloved wife Adriana Perez, who had been taken from him prematurely. It had adorned her tomb and the altar had been used for daily masses in her memory. Henceforth, it would stand as a memorial to them both.

At last, after more than twenty years, the couple would be reunited as, just a few months earlier, Rockox had had the remains of his wife moved from the choir to the crypt in the chapel, behind the high altar, where he himself would also have his final resting place. This so-called Rockox chapel was an elongated space oriented along the main axis of the church and illuminated by the warm light that fell through the two windows that occupied the entire southern wall. Upon entering the chapel, the funerary procession most probably passed under the wooden platform from where their beloved deceased

had, in the course of so many years, attended mass and prayed for the Holy Sacrament near the tomb of his wife. The windowless northern wall, above the couple's crypt, may already have been adorned with the triptych, which, like the *Coup de Lance*, Rockox had commissioned from his friend Rubens and which would serve as a memorial to the pair that had been reunited in death. The altar against the eastern wall was decorated with a precious old altarpiece known as *Deipara Virgo* and perhaps there were other valuable paintings in the chapel as well. Rockox had not only intended this chapel as his private burial place, but he had also furnished it in a manner that befitted the Porziuncola Indulgence, which could be obtained here on 2 August from the year 1622 onwards. This way, he also contributed to the salvation of numerous fellow believers.

Nicholas Rockox passed away on 12 December 1640 knowing that he had spared neither effort nor expense to ensure the spiritual salvation of himself and his wife in the hereafter. As so many people of his social status – Rockox belonged to the so-called nobles of the robe, and his wife was born into a wealthy Spanish merchant's family – he made use of a fruitful and age-old socio-religious system that benefited not only himself but also the ecclesiastical institutions. By contributing to the furnishing of the church, which in this case encompassed not just an exceptional altarpiece but also an 'aristocratic' burial chapel at the considerable expense of several tens of thousands of guilders, Rockox consolidated his and his wife's salvation and at once confirmed his social status. Despite reformed criticism of the underlying points of dogma, this clearly remained an effective mechanism. Indeed, the quest for certainty regarding the salvation of the soul and the desire of the wealthy to confirm their social status are two essential contributory factors to the golden age of altar decoration in the seventeenth century.

Documents

Document 1

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Mechelen, Archiepiscopal Archives, *Acta episcopalia Mecheleniensia*, reg. 14, f^o 95 e. v.: altar-related indulgences from an (incomplete) catalogue of indulgences granted by the archbishop between 28 Oct 1639 and 19 July 1678

Syllabus Indulgentiarum ab illmo~ dno~ approbatae ab anno 1639
October [...]

Bruxellae die 19. octobris approbavit Illmus~dnus~indulgentiam plenariam ad septennium duraturam concessam Eccliae Beatae Mariae de Monte Carmelo frum~ord.is carmelitarum discalciatorum bruxellis pro altari seu capella Beatae Mariae de columna in festo presentationis B.tae Mariae sub data Romae die 3.a Augusti 1639

November [...]

Ibidem eadem die approbata fuit bulla per qm concessum fuit altare privilegiatum Ecclae~ S. Martini [...] Can. reg. ord. S. Augustini Lovanii, expedita Romae 15 Octob 1639. [...]

December [...]

Ibidem die 14. decemb approbata indulgentia plen. concessa monialibus Urbanistis Brux. ae visitantibus quoddam altare intra clausuram pro festis Annunciat. Concept. et Assumpt. B.M.V. et S.M. Magd.ae duratura 7. an. data Romae 10 iunii 1639

Anno domini 1640. [...]

Martius [...]

Ibidem eadem die approbatae indulgentiae plenariae ad septennium duratura concessae monialibus Monrii~S.tae Elisabethae oppidi bruxellis visitantibus septem altaria seu capellas et scalam ad hoc deputatam quater in anno. Expeditae Romae 25. februarii 1640. [...]

Ibidem eadem die approbavit Ill.mus D.nus bullam pro altari privilegiato in Ecclia~Monrii~Monialium St.ae Elisabethae oppidi bruxellis pro animabus monialium p.ti Monrii~, id [...] ad septennium in die commemorationis defunctorum ac singulus feriis secundis totius anni tantum valituram. [...]

Iunius [...]

Ibidem eodem die concessit Ill.mus Dnus facultatem publicandi Bullam pro Altari privilegiato pro p.ta Ecc.lia St.ae Gertrudis Lovanii celebrantibus in eodem die commemorationis defunctorum et per octavam ac feria secunda cuiusq [...] hebdomadae modo quotidi [...] septem missae in p.to Altari celebrentur. Data erat bulla Romae 1 Maij 1640

September

Bruxellae die 5. septemb. concessit Ill.mus Dnus facultatem publicandi bullam pro Altari privilegiato in Monria Viridis Vallis prop. Bruxellam ad septennium duraturam expeditam Romae die 6. octob. 1639. [...]

Ibidem die 7. concessa facultas publicandi bullam pro Altari privilegiato in sacello de Berlijmont Bruxellis ad septennium, expeditam Romae 14. Iulii 1640. [...]

October [...]

Ibidem die vigesima secunda Octobris concessit Ill.mus Dnus facultatem publicandi indulgentiam plenariam in perpetuum concessam confratribus et consororibus confraternitatis S.ti Quintini erecta in parochiali Ecclia. eiusdem St. Lovanii sub data Romae 24 martij 1640. Item aliam indulgentiam ad septennium eiisdem confratribus concessam qui interfuerint orationi 40 horarum continuatarum semel in anno instituendae sub data Romae 15. septemb. 1640. Item bullam pro altari privilegiato concessam pro liberationi animarum confrum. et consororum ptorum. sub data Romae 15. septemb. 1640 ad septennium duraturam. [...]

December

Bruxellae die quinta decemb. data facultas publicandi Bullam pro Altari privilegiato in Ecclia. PP. Dominicanorum huius urbis ad septennium expeditam Romae die 10 novemb. 1640.

Annus 1641 [...]

Martii

Ibidem eodem die data facultas publicandi bullam pro Altari privilegiato en Ecclia. parli. loci de Botelare ad septennium expeditam Romae die 5. ianuarii 1641. [...]

Iulius

Bruxellae die undecima data facultas publicandi bullam pro Altari Privilegiato in Ecclesia Monrii. Monialium Ordinis S. Bernardi loci de Rosendal ad septennium, expeditam Romae die 8 Maij 1639. [...]

October [...]

Ibidem die vigesima septima concessa facultas publicandi indulgentias plenarias pro [...] in [festo] S.ti Huberti a visitantibus Altare eiusdem S.ti in Ecclia. Collegiata (oppidi Alostensis) S.ti Martini. [...]

Ibidem eodem die data facultas publicandi Bullam pro Altari privilegiato in Ecclia. Parli. de Orsmael de septennium de data Romae 27 7bris Anii 1641.

November

Bruxellae dia secunda Novembris in Ecclia. PP. Praedicatorum Bruxell. impetrata facultas publicandi Bullam pro Altari Privilegiato S.ti Raijmondi Confess. per breve datum Romae die 10 Decemb. 1640. pro septennio

December

Bruxellae die quarta Decembris, data facultas publicandi Bullam pro Altari privilegiato in Ecclesia Dilighemsi prope hanc Urbem, ad septennium expeditam Romae die 25 Octobris Anni 1641.

Ibidem die sexta data facultas publicandi indulgentias plenarias concessas Monlibus. Monrii. Monlium. Beginarum oppidi Diestensis visitantibus capellam seu Altare intra claustra pti. monrii. [situm] in Annuntiationis, Assumptionis B.mae V. Mariae ac Stae. Beggae festis diebus, a primis vesperis ad occasum solis. Nec non [interessentibus] Litaniis eiusdem B.M.V. semel in hebdomada intra claustra decantari solitis, [...] in forma ecclia. relaxationem. ad septennium expedit Romae die XI septemb. 1641.

Annus 1642

Ianuarius

Bruxellae die vigesima quinta Ianuarii concessa facultas publicandi indulgentias plenarias elargitas interessentibus precibus quadrag. horar. continuatarum non interpolatarum, [instituentibus] Dominica quinquagesima ad altare Confrat. is SS. Trinitatis in Ecclia. FF.rum Predicat. ad septennium expedit. Romae die 23 oct. 1641. [...]

Bruxellae die vigesima quinta Ianuarii, data facultas publicandi indulgentiam per modum suffragii applicandam aiabus. in purgatorio existentibus [...] de confrat. SS. trinit. ad [cuius] Altare missa dici debet per sacerdotem saecul. aut cuiusvis etiam ord. is ad septem. expedit. Romae die 23 Octob. 1641. [...]

Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Iunius [...]

Ibidem eodem die data facultas publicandi bullam pro altari privilegiato in oratorio Cong.nis Oratorii domus Lovani[ensis]ad septennium expedit. Romae die 22. Aprilis 1642. [...]

Iulius [...]

Ibidem eodem die concessa facultas publicandi bullam pro altari privilegiato in Ecclia. Frum Minorum [convivitus] diestemiensis pro septennio, expedit. Romae die XVI. Iunii 1642. [...]

September [...]

Ibidem eodem die concessa facultas publicandi indulg. plenar. concessa visitantibus Eccliam. Colleg. S. Martini Alosti et in ea altare S. tae Catharinae die festo eiusdem. Exped. Romae die 15. octob. 1641 ad septennium. [...]

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Document 2

De wonderbeden van d'ander wereldt begriipende 1. Den staet der Salighen in den hemel. 2. Den staet der kinderen in't voorgheborgh. Den staet der zielen in't vaghe-vyer. 4. Den staet der verdoemde in de belle. Eerst in't Spaensch door R. P. Martinus de Roa beschreven, daer naer verduytscht by P. Franciscus de Smidt, beyde priesters der Societeyt Iesu, Antwerp, 1639, p. 251:
F. Joseph de Jesus Maria, ongheschoeyde Carmeliet/ Lib. 4.cap. 25.tom. I van de deught der suyverheydt /seght/dat een Religieus van sijn Ordre/ende grooten dienaer Godts/eenen Schilder kende/ die voor deughdelijck ghehouden wierdt. Welcken gheschildert hebbende verscheyden heylighen in een autae-stuck/'twelck in sijn Clooster ghemaect wierdt/wilde daer begraven worden/ ende gaf een goede aelmoesse/om tot lavenisse van sijne ziele Missen te doen. Men volbrachte't al nae't bewijs van sijn testament. Luttel dagen daer naer soo enen Religieus op den choor naer de Mettenen in sijn gebedt was/ vertoonde hem den Schilder met vyerighe vlammen omringelt/ende seyde dat hy afgrijsselijcke pijnen lede. Gevraeght zijnde/waerom; antwoorde/Dat hy sijnen gheest gevende/voor den rechter-stoel van den oppersten Rechter ghestelt wierdt/alwaer een menighte zielen over hem claeghden/datter vele door een oneerlijcke schilderije/die hy gheschildert hadde/in de helle verdoemt waren. Stracks quamen vele heylighen om hem te helpen/segghende/dat die schilderije van hem in sijne jonckheydt gheschildert was/dat hy daer van/hem biechende/penitentie ghedaen hadde/ende gheschildert de beelden van de Heylighen/die daer teghenwoordigh waren; waer mede hy de eere der

84 SCHOUTENS 1894, pp. 365-66 contains a similar document dated 20 February 1629, but with a number of omissions.

Heylighen seer hadde ghevoordert: daer-en-boven dat hy 'tghewin van sijnen arbeydt besteedt hadde in aelmoessen voor dat Convent/ om daer voor Missen sijne Majesteyt op te offeren. Daerom baden dat hy die ziele soude met bermhertighe ooghen aensien/ende niet toelaten dat de duyvels hem eenighsins souden ghenaken. Den heere was te vreden dat de begheerte der Heylighen soude volbracht worden/ ende beval dat men hem in't vaghe-vyer soude leyden tot dat die schilderije verbrandt ware. Oversulcks kome ick u bidden aen dien persooone te willen segghen (hy noemde den Edel-man/tot wiens ver-soeck hy die schilderije ghemaectt hadde) dat hy volbrenghe 'tghene Godt ghebiedt. Tot kennisse der waerheydt suldy segghen/dat twee van sijne sonen in een maendt sullen sterven; en~ en doet hy't niet: sal't oock haest met sijne doot betalen. Den Edel-man vermaent wesende/verbrande de schilderije/ en sijne sonen stierven: hy voldede voor sijne sonden met wercken van penitentie; en tot een weder-geldighe dede schilderen vele beelden der heylighen/op dat sijne ziele voor't oordeel Godts hunne voorbiddinghe soude ghenieten.

Document 3

Leuven, KADOC, Archives of the Friars Minor, no. 154, Convent. Antverpiensis, Copy of a private agreement between Nicholas Rockox and Monastery of the Friars Minor in Antwerp, 29 November 1624 (unpublished)⁸⁴

Wy ondergenoemt respectie Minister provinciael van Oorden der Minderbroederen vande observantie, guardiaen ende discreten van het Convent der selver Oorden binnen deser stadt Antwerpen v~claren ende getuygen midts desen dat heer Nicolaes Rockox Ridder ende oude borgemeester der selver stadt heeft ter eeren Godts, zynder gebenedyde Moeder, S. franciscus, ende allen heyligen, oock wt goede affectie die hy tot onse voorschreven Oorden is draegende, op synen cost alleen doen maecken ende opbouwen wt den gronden hoogen autaer van onsen choir met den toebehoorten met oock de Capelle daer achter.

Soo dat wt desen respecte heer ende meester Andreas Gerardi geestelycken vader van ons Convent heeft aenden voorgenoemden heer Nicolaes Rockox ende zynen naercomelingen by hem te specificeren getransporteert ende overgeschreven het recht tot den selven hoogen Autaer ende Capelle, met de plaetse van begrafenisse sonder

dat wÿ oft eenige andere persoon oft personen in eeniger manieren: noch de memorie ofte wapen des voorgeng~ heer Rokox soude wechgenomen woorden: midts wÿ door desen bekennen dat dit transpoort niet alleen redelyck, maar oock voor ons Convent oorbaer ende profÿtelyck is.

Ten anderen alsoo tot onse kennis gecomen is, dat de huijsvrouwe der voorgeng~ heer Nicolaes Rockox saliger memorien heeft beset ende gelaeten de somme van tweehondert guldens 't sjaers die onsen Convente sullen iaerlyckx wtgereyckt worden by manire van [aelmisse] voor eene daegelycksche misse, met eene iaergetÿde in onsen voors ~ choor te celebreren:

soo ist dat wÿ v~klaren midts desen, dat wy door onse profesie niet [en] v~mogen wt cracht van dien legatē iedt rechtelyck te heyschen oft pretenderen; maer indien Imandt des lasthebbende vrymoedelÿck begeert ons convent [de] voors~ somme bÿ manire van aelmisse om godts wille wttēreÿcken, dat wÿ ge[r]en naer ons v~mogen sullen den goeden wil ende begeerte [ww] voors testatrice naercomen, ende getrouwelycke voldoen.

behalven nochtans dat gelyckerwys de toegunninge van dese aelmisse naer het believen van~ genen hier af lasthebbende sonder ons te aensien sal mogen cesserē; alsoo oock w l. ende onse succes[eur]s sullen besorgen al voldoeninge der voors~ testatrice begeerte, sonder v~bindinge lanckduriger continuatie, dan het ons sal gelegen zÿn oft goetduncken.

gegeven in ons voors ~ convent der [minderbroederen] Antwerpen den 29 dach novembris int iaer ons heeren duÿsent seshondert ende vierentwintich

Fr Judocus. A. Castro
Min prov germ~ inferioris

Document 4

Leuven, KADOC, Archives of the Friars Minor, no. 154, Convent. Antverpiensis, copy of a deed passed by notary Cornelius De Brouwer, agreement between Nicholas Rockox and the Monastery of the Friars Minor in Antwerp, 19 March 1640 (unpublished)⁸⁵

85 Details from the document are mentioned in Herwig OOMS, *Grafkapellen in de voormalige minderbroederskerk van Antwerpen*, in *Franciscana*, 50, 2, 1995, pp. 104-105.

Op heden den XIX dach der maent van meert, des iaers xvi. c ende veertich, compareerden voor my Cornelis de brouwer openbaer notaris by den Rade van Brabant geadmitteert ende geaprobeert, tantwerpen residerende ende ten bywesen van de getuyghen naergenoemt, in propren persoon heer Nicolaes Rockox Riddere, out borgem.r deser stadt my notario wel bekent zynde, seggende ende verclarende,

[soo] dat hy uit puer devotie, ende affectie hadde doen maken, de cappelle achter den hooghen choir, int convent vande eerw. Patres vande minnebroeders alhier, ende mede inde selve cappelle, eenen kelder, met intentie daerinne met zyn huysvrouwe alleen begraven te worden, gelyck de selve zyn huysvrou saligher over eenige maenden aldaer oock is begraven,

ende de sepulture oft kelder, die hy comparant insgelyckx hadde doen maecken, inden hoogh choir aldaer, dat hy den [onleesbaar] ter dispositien van~ eerw. Patres was [rennuverende / renuntierende] tot haren [beliefte], sonder eenich recht daer aen te behouden,

verclarende mede den voorgenoemde heer comparant tevreden te syn ende te consenteren, mits desen, dat inde voorgen~ cappelle, rontsom den kelder sullen moghen begraven worden, dusdanighe gegradueerde Patres van~ Ordre, sulcx als den oversten vant Convent, nu zynde off ten tyde wesende, [gelieven] zal, sonder tegensegghen van ymanden, oft dat ymant anders, inde selve capelle oft kelder sal moghen ligghen,

verclarende mede ende wel expresselyck begeirende, midts desen, dat de selve capelle voordaen ten eeuwighen daghen sal worden onderhouden, in syne [daken], muragie ende gelasen, soo ende gelyck de selve tegenwoordelyck is staende, by zyne naertelatene erffgenamen, sonder cost oft last van die vanden convente,

ende dat mits redenen & om daer toe moverende (soo hy verclaerde) oock met expresse begeerte, dat den hoogen autaer insgelyckx by hem comparante alleen becosticht, ende met een dagelyckxse misse, ende iaergetyde liberal gefundeert, nyet en zal worden behanghen langer met rouw, dan eenen dach vuytgenomen voor synen persoon alleen, ten waere, voor eenighe ghequalificeerde personen die daer voren ten behoeve sullen vant voors convent sullen vuytreycken, eene liberale aelmoesse

ende dat ten [opsight] dat hy heer comparant nyet en begeert (dat men om te [verhueden] merckelycke schade van quetsinge van tselve stuck, schilderye oft autaer) [moet] en worden beschadicht oft

de dagelyckxse xi uren misse, daer doore nyet en werde becommert,
als andersins in eenigher manieren

Mede compar~ende den seer eerw Pater hermanus [Lisens], Mi-
nister provinciael van dese Nederlanden, soo voor hem, als uytten
naeme vande eerw. paters van~ minnebroeders deser provincien,

ende verclaert mits desen danckelyk te accepteren, de goede ende
gewillige renuntiatie, vanden kelders inden hooghen choir, mette
begraeffenis ende sepulture inde voor~ cappelle, gelyck voorseyt is,
met obligatie, vande voorn~ heere comparant te houden, als eenen
geaffectioneerden weldoener van desen convente, ende voor hem te
bidden, wiens siele Godt den heere wil loonen, nu ende hier namaels,
versueckende hier aff van my notaris voorn~ gemaect te worden acte
in behoorlycke forme, Aldus ghedaen, ende gepasseert, ten daghe,
iaere ende maende als boven ter presentie van Cornelis Janssen, ende
Andries Rademaekers als getuyghen ende de minute by de compa-
ranten ondert

quod attestor
de brouwer cornelius
1640

Figures

Figure 1

Price in guilders of dated and documented retables per (without altarpiece) in the archbishopric of Mechelen ca. 1585-1685. Source: HERREMANS 2007

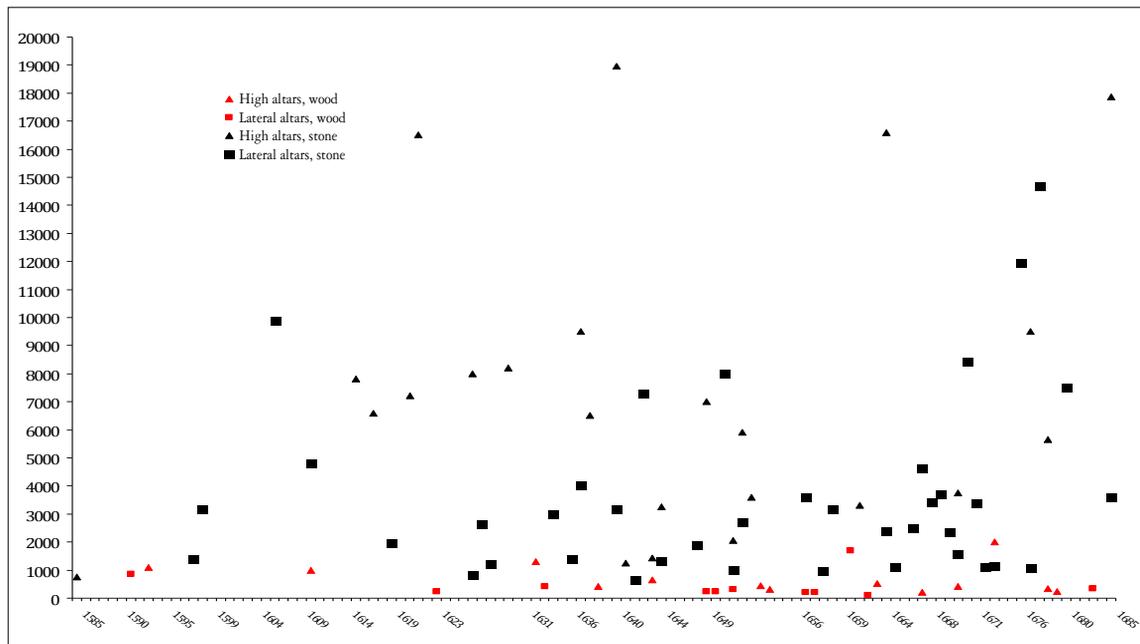


Figure 2

Number of patronage holders per category of altar with a dated and documented retable in the archbishopric of Mechelen ca. 1585-1685.

Source: HERREMANS 2007

