BAROQUE INFLUENCERS

Jesuits, Rubens, and the Arts of Persuasion

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Baroque Influencers Changes our View of the Future

The whole world comes together in Antwerp. That is true today, but it was also true at the dawn of the modern world in the 16th and 17th centuries. With its port, the city was an ideal hub for the trade of goods and ideas. Merchants and explorers set out into the world, entrepreneurs saw opportunities everywhere and, along with the many precious raw materials and goods, new and original knowledge poured into the city. That knowledge was digested and processed into innovative insights, which were sent out into the world again via the same port and thanks to the presses of the Plantin and Moretus families.

Where many people come together, frictions arise. Where ideas and thoughts are able to freely thrive and come to fruition, visions collide. At a time when the view of the world and humanity is coming apart at the seams and transforming, everyone can sense that the stakes are high. In the early modern period this manifested in brutal religious wars. The birth of modern society was far from painless. The new material, intellectual and spiritual riches were unevenly distributed and offered only a few the prospect of a promising and prosperous life. New possibilities were accompanied by major challenges and confronted modern people all the more intensely with important questions. These are questions that still exercise our minds today, ranging from philosophical pluralism and increasing individualism to the fair distribution of wealth and real educational opportunities for everyone.

The Baroque era was turbulent. At that juncture in time, the Jesuit order was born and it developed into a congregation branching off all over the globe. Its members turned their hearts to God, but stood with both feet in the world. It is no coincidence that the Jesuits also settled in Antwerp. And how! With the construction of the Saint Charles Borromeo Church in 1615-1621, they forced everyone to look up as they passed by. With their ingenious educational strategy – also for the weakest in society – they reached a larger audience than ever before. They made Antwerp the Marian city and the stronghold of the counter reformation.

Times may have been turbulent, but the Jesuits' faith in the future was rock solid. Many of them explored new and sometimes daring lines of thought with no sense of taboo. That is also how they communicated: with trust and dedication. It was this confidence in the future – at a time of shifting economic, social, religious, philosophical and scientific paradigms – that spurred the Jesuits into social action (including education), and it still is an inspirational force today. For the Jesuits of the 17th century and now, that confidence was and is rooted in strong religious conviction. Nowadays, faith does not necessarily have to be the source of such confidence. Other beliefs and fundamentals can also offer support.

The search for the roots of that confidence in the future, with a strong resulting social commitment, is the reason for UCSIA (University Centre Saint-Ignatius Antwerp) and the University of Antwerp to explore the material and immaterial heritage of the Jesuits from the 17th century again. Not as an end point, but as a starting point. As the basis for a large city festival with exhibitions, lectures and debates, walking tours and musical performances. To look for that confidence that the Jesuits had in the future. Our future.

Bea Cantillon, Chair of the Board of Directors of UCSIA
Herman Van Goethem, Rector of the University of Antwerp

FIG. 1 Daniël Seghers, *Saint Francis Xavier in a garland of flowers*, 1645 ?, oil on canvas, 128.5 × 91.5 cm. Antwerp, Region ELC Society of Jesus

“The Laurel of this Forest, the Sun of this Heaven”

Pierre Delsaerdt and Esther Van Thielen

This book and the triptych of exhibitions, which offers a broader context and further insights, began with just an intuition: that it might be possible to illustrate the significance of the Jesuits in the 17th century by studying their use of visual media. And by emphasising the fact that they employed those media to persuade the world of their views. In other words, they used strategic communication: a form of communication that aims to impress certain principles upon people and nudge them to adopt specific behaviour. Communication that requires effective use of the proper resources. This intuition turned out to fit nicely with science-based insights from the research literature. In the 17th century, the Jesuits were one of the keystones of the counter reformation, a movement that sought to solidify the position of the Catholic faith and defend the Church against schismatic religious voices. The Jesuits proved to be masters of strategic communication. This is the meaning that lies hidden within the deliberately anachronistic title *Baroque Influencers*.

This finding soon dovetailed with this certainty: if we want to tell this story in relation to the Jesuits in the Southern Netherlands – an area that broadly coincides with present-day Belgium, allowing for the absence of large parts of the provinces of Liège and Limburg – then the city of Antwerp becomes a natural focus of interest. As shall become apparent, in the late 16th and 17th centuries Antwerp was regarded as a “frontier city” in the Catholic south of the Netherlands. The city was strategically close to the border with the predominantly Calvinist Republic of the North – an area that broadly coincides with the present-day Netherlands. The Society of Jesus divided its global operations into “provinces.” The administrative centre of the so-called Provincia Flandro-Belgica (the Dutch-speaking regions in the Catholic South) was located in Antwerp. It resided in a large building complex on the current Hendrik Conscienceplein, with a professed house, a sodality building and the Saint Ignatius Church, now the Saint Charles Borromeo Church. Carolus Scribani, then rector of the Antwerp Jesuit College, dedicated several lyrical verses to the city in his 1610 book *Antverpia*, demonstrating the close ties between the Society and the Scheldt city. He stated, among other things (fig. 2):

“The Netherlands are the forest of the world,
And the laurel of this forest is
Antwerp.
[…]
The Netherlands are the heaven of the world,
And the sun of this heaven is
Antwerp.”

The scale of the exhibition bears testimony to the richness of the Baroque Influencers theme. Or *exhibitions,* to be more precise, because the name covers a triptych of exhibitions at various locations: first of all at the Saint Charles Borromeo Church, followed by the Snijders&Rockox House and the Hendrik Conscience Heritage Library.

In Antwerp, the members of the order – intellectuals, priests, teachers, polemicists and scientists – found the infrastructure required to translate their insights into persuasive words and images: a thriving artistic scene, widely acclaimed painters and printmakers, numerous printing houses and a publishing sector with international allure. A set of minor actors also enjoyed their share of commissions, such as the numerous smaller graphics companies that continued to print religious copper engravings in large editions right up into the early 19th century, even when the copperplates had long since worn down.

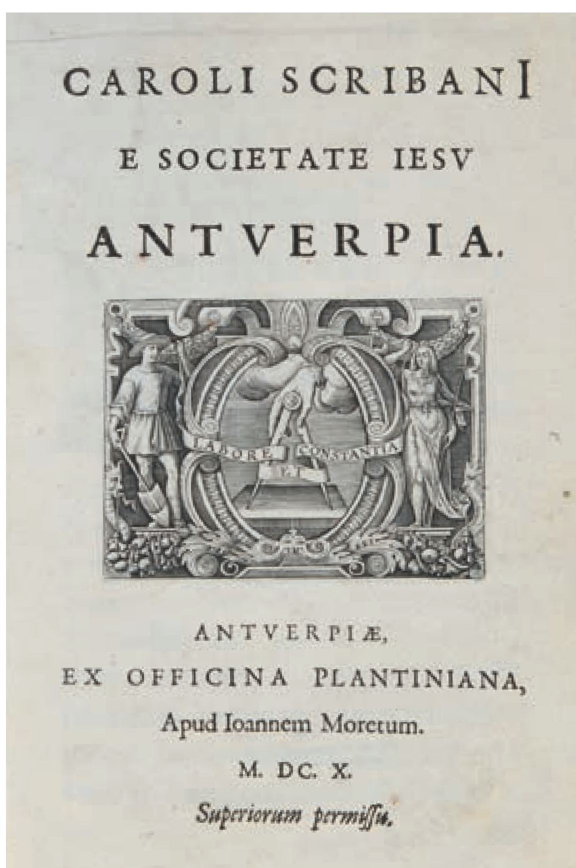

FIG. 2 Title page of Carolus Scribani, *Antverpia*, Antwerp: Jan I Moretus, 1610. University of Antwerp, Library of the Ruusbroec Institute, inv. RG 2030 H 6

It will come as no surprise that the objects reproduced in this book very often come from Antwerp collections: books and booklets; series of prints and single devotional prints; maps, paintings and oil sketches. The institutions providing the most material are those with a collection policy focused on the traces left by the Jesuit order in the city and, by extension, in the Netherlands. The Ruusbroec Institute and the Special Collections of the Antwerp University Library are building on initiatives started by Antwerp Jesuits in the 19th and 20th centuries. For example, the library of the University of Antwerp is a continuation of among others the library of the University Faculties of Saint Ignatius, which in turn continued the library activities of the Saint Ignatius Institute, founded in 1852. The Ruusbroec Institute, now a research centre at the University of Antwerp, was founded in 1925 by four Jesuits who wanted to research the history of spirituality in the Netherlands. The institute’s own library consciously reflects the Society’s activities in this area starting from the second half of the 16th century. It is supported in this by the Jesuit Heritage Foundation, a partnership between the University of Antwerp and the University Centre Sint-Ignatius Antwerp (UCSIA) (fig. 3). The Hendrik Conscience Heritage Library is a continuation of the old City Library of Antwerp. Together with the Plantin-Moretus Museum, it collects the rich typographical heritage of the city, in which the production of Jesuit authors is so strongly represented.

But this book takes a broader look, because the Jesuits played an important role in the ecclesiastical, religious and intellectual life of other cities in the Southern Netherlands too. Almost all cities of note had a Jesuit college. One important example is certainly the university city of Louvain, where the order also organised courses in theology and philosophy in its own study house. The Jesuit church of yesteryear – Saint Michael Church on Naamsestraat – is monumental proof of the order’s strong presence. Today, the Maurits Sabbe library, of the Leuven Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, houses very rich collections related to the work of the Jesuits in Belgium and the Netherlands. This Jesuit heritage can be traced in many more collections. This is partly due to the way in which the Society lived through the last decades of the *ancien régime*. In the Southern Netherlands, the order was suppressed in 1773, as a result of an executive decree by Maria Theresia, the empress

FIG. 3 Philips de Mallery, *Ignatius and Francis Xavier*, after 1622, coloured copper engraving, 193 × 154 mm. University of Antwerp, Library of the Ruusbroec Institute, inv. RG-PC H1: Ignatius van Loyola 12.1.1

who was at the time also sovereign ruler over the "Austrian" Netherlands. The contents of the libraries of the Jesuit colleges and the Antwerp professed house came under the hammer during epic auctions in the years 1777-1780. Books and other documents with a Jesuit provenance thus disappeared to the four corners of the world. The most precious works had been set aside in advance to enable their inclusion in the Library of the Dukes of Burgundy in Brussels, among other places. They can still be consulted in their new home at KBR, the Royal Library of Belgium.

We have to look even further if we want to examine what part the artist Peter Paul Rubens played in the Baroque imagery of the Jesuits. We leave the arena of libraries – although Rubens also made an important contribution to a number of prestigious Jesuit publications – and widen our nets to also ensnare architecture and painting in our research. Rubens was a member of one of the so-called Marian sodalities which had their own house in Antwerp. The interior of that building is the subject of the exhibition in the Nottebohm Room of the Hendrik Conscience Heritage Library, where the *sodales* held their meetings until 1773. Rubens painted an *Annunciation* for one of the sodality chapels. He also contributed to the design of the façade of the Saint Ignatius Church in Antwerp. And in addition to two monumental altarpieces, currently in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, he painted an impressive series of 39 ceiling paintings for the same church. Although the original canvases were lost in the church fire in 1718 – ignited by a stroke of lightning – many oil sketches and preliminary studies in grisaille are still preserved in museum collections around the world. The fact that it has been possible to collect so many of these pictures in this book and in the exhibition gallery of the Antwerp Snijders&Rockox House is certainly unique.

This book contains two kinds of texts. The contributions written by the curators of *Baroque Influencers* follow the same lines as the exhibitions in the Saint Charles Borromeo Church and the Snijders&Rockox House. These contributions follow the various categories of audience that would have been confronted with the imagery of the Jesuits at the time: the Jesuits themselves, and the novices following a long and intensive training before making their final vows; their "followers", lay people who were members of the aforementioned sodalities or supported their work as spiritual daughters; pupils on the school benches of the Jesuit colleges and their parents who attended the annual performances of didactic plays; national and international travellers who were overawed by the Saint Ignatius Church, not least of all during the festive anniversaries and other special occasions; the people of Antwerp who participated in several large-scale spectacles in the urban space as well as in said church; and, finally, people from distant countries who came into contact with this baroque Jesuit imagery through the Jesuits' far-roaming missionary work. Rather than exhaustively discussing all of these perspectives, the decision was made to focus on a number of concrete cases. In this way we hope to make the themes visual and tangible, also for a non-specialist audience.

These texts are interspersed with essays that delve deeper into certain aspects of the overarching theme. The book opens with a broad panorama of the history of the Jesuits against the background of the Catholic reformation in Antwerp in the late 16th and 17th centuries, which serves as a frame of reference for the entire book. Further on there is a contribution about graphic techniques and their practice in Antwerp during the period concerned. To make a splash, it was essential to be able to produce images in high volumes. Antwerp plate cutters enjoyed a strong reputation with their sophisticated engravings and the Jesuits were only too happy to leverage this. Two essays discuss the figure of Peter Paul Rubens: they explore his relationship with the Jesuit order and analyse the previously mentioned ceiling paintings which he created for the Saint Ignatius Church. In the last essay, the Jesuit church itself is subjected to an extensive analysis. In addition to examining the elements of the building and its siting in the urban fabric of Antwerp, the authors also consider at length the architects' sources of inspiration. The architects themselves were Jesuits, and their project still bears witness today to the influencer mentality that was such a hallmark of their order.

As stated at the beginning, the book and the exhibition stem from an intuition and a certainty. But they are also the outcome of a long and intensive collaboration that we feel very grateful for. The curators who designed the project and the authors of the texts in the book have generously shared their creativity and expertise with us. The same applies to the scenographers of Exponanza, the Church council of the Saint Charles Borromeo Church, and all of the curators, librarians, lenders, communications staff, publishers, translators and editors involved. Together with the intendant of the Baroque Influencers city festival and with the authorities of UCSIA and UAntwerp, they ensured that we were always able to still see the forest for the laurel bushes.

FIG. 4 Anonymous, *S. Rosalia*, 18th century ?, hand-coloured and coated copper engraving on parchment, 170 × 140 mm. University of Antwerp, Library of the Ruusbroec Institute, inv. RG-PC Beklede devotieprenten 9a

FIG. 1 Gerard Seghers, *A Vision of St. Ignatius of Loyola during the Writing of the Rules of the Jesuits*, c. 1630, oil on panel, 36 × 27 cm. Private collection

The Jesuits – Galvanisers of the Catholic Reformation in 17th-century Antwerp

Guido Marnef

The 12th of September 1621 was a day of celebrations for the Jesuits in Antwerp. The bishop of Antwerp, Joannes Malderus, in the presence of almost all local dignitaries and crowds of people, consecrated the Saint Ignatius Church of Antwerp, the building of which had started six years earlier. The solemn ceremony started at ten in the morning and lasted until three in the afternoon. Afterwards, a play was performed in Latin, telling the story of Saint Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuit Order. It was written by Father Joannes Bollandus (1596-1665) and was presented on a raised podium right in front of the Church. Four hundred sumptuously costumed pupils of the Antwerp Jesuit College participated in the performance and an amphitheatre large enough to seat hundreds had been built on the facing side of the square. The play lasted two days and then was performed all over again to satisfy the great number of people who had flocked to see it.

The festivities of that 12 September are a grand illustration of the strong position that the Jesuits had attained in the urban society of the city on the Scheldt at that moment in time. The beautiful new Baroque church in the centre of the city solidified the position of the Jesuits and at the same time testified to the triumph of the counter reformation. The play, scaled up to be a proper mass spectacle, was only one of many channels employed by the Jesuit Fathers to convince the people of Antwerp of the "true" Catholic faith. The triumphant inauguration of the new Saint Ignatius Church would make it easy to forget that a good half century earlier the Jesuits had gotten off to a difficult start in Antwerp, in a time of great turbulence.

A difficult beginning in turbulent times

In the 1530s, Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), from a Basque family of minor nobility, formed a group around him with a number of followers who called themselves the company of Jesus. Their plan to found a new religious order, under the direct authority of the Pope, was approved by Pope Paul III in 1540. The foundation of the Company or Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuit order, was thus accomplished. Ignatius envisioned an actively engaged religious order, very much in the world. Preaching, teaching and performing the sacraments were considered core activities. According to Ignatius, action was more necessary than ever, because the new order had come into being in a rapidly changing world in which the Catholic Church was

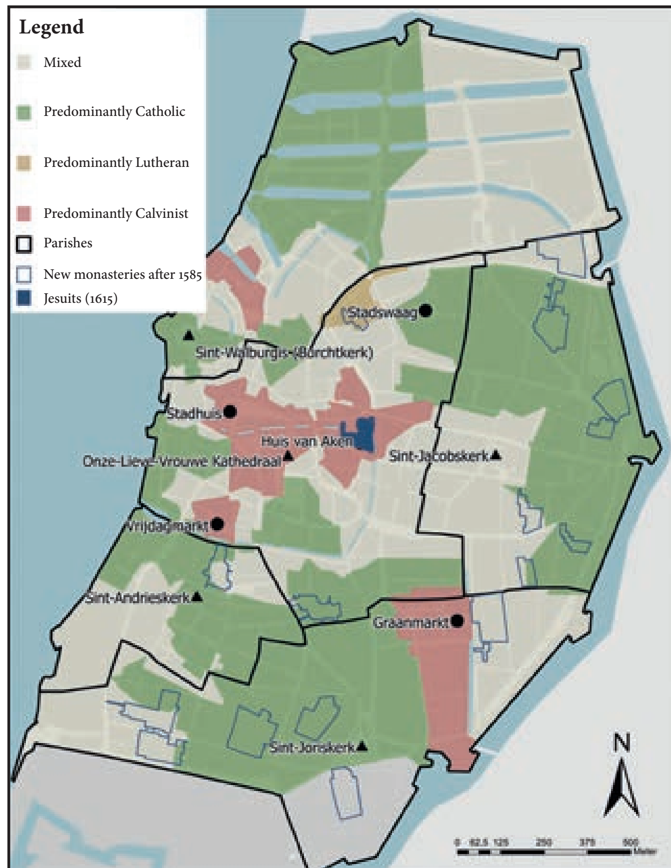

FIG. 2 Guido Marnef and Rogier van Kooten, *Map showing the religious denominations in Antwerp on the eve of the fall of Antwerp (1585) indicating monasteries built after 1585*, 2023. University of Antwerp, Centre for Urban History, GIStorical

facing mounting pressures. The Society of Jesus developed quickly in the first decades after its formation. When Ignatius died in 1556, the order already had more than one thousand members. And yet the Society of Jesus met with hostility in many places where they settled. City councils were often suspicious, and ecclesiastical bodies and parish churches tended to view the newcomer as an unwanted rival. This unforthcoming response was also common in the Low Countries, where the Jesuits settled in Louvain and Tournai initially.

The Jesuits developed a base in Antwerp relatively quickly too. Their activity suited the city on the Scheldt, which was an international trading metropolis in the 16th century. In 1562, a young Spanish Jesuit was serving as a priest for the Spanish Nation – the trade association of Spanish merchants operating in Antwerp. A few years later, two more priests, who preached in Dutch and French, joined him. By 1570 at least twelve Jesuits had already settled there. Nevertheless, the climate in Antwerp was not at all favourable towards pastoral activity that touched on decisions and policy, as determined by the only just concluded Council of Trent (1545-1563). The burgeoning Protestant movements and the simmering Revolt against Spanish policies in the Netherlands were creating instability. The Duke of Alva, the governor-general of the Netherlands from 1567 to 1573, who used a heavy hand to suppress the rebellious movement and supported the Catholic restoration, was no friend of the Jesuits however. He found them insufficiently loyal to his strategy in the Netherlands. His successor, Luis de Requesens y Zúñiga, on the other hand, was a great proponent of the Society. His unconditional support for the Jesuit order and the high hopes he had for the Jesuits were evident in a letter he wrote to the Antwerp city council in 1574:

> “Members of the Society of Jesus, wherever they have gone, have always done good in an exceptional and fruitful manner, both through their good sermons and by the education of the people, and by teaching the youth regarding all sorts of sciences, languages, virtue, and piety, so that it seems expedient to us that they should be more useful and beneficial in this country than anywhere else, and especially in the city of Antwerp, where there is a great concourse of people of all stripes.[1]”

In that same year, with the backing of Spanish merchants, the Jesuits were able to purchase the spacious House of Aachen as well as adjacent lots in the Korte Nieuwstraat. The church they started building there was consecrated in the spring of 1575 by the bishop of Antwerp. Furthermore, they started a college at the same location, which after a few months already numbered 300 pupils, among whom the children of the city's bourgeois and economic elite.

This success of the Jesuits was short-lived, however. In the autumn of 1577, the political arena of Antwerp went through an upheaval. From that time on, the city council followed the lead of William of Orange – the leader of the Revolt against Spanish government in the Netherlands – and his States-General. The Catholic clergy's freedom of movement was increasingly restricted, and this was particularly true for the Jesuits, who were regarded by many as accomplices of the Spanish tyranny. In May 1578 the Jesuits were banned from the city by the city council. Most of them sought refuge in Cologne, where they joined their brothers of the German order. A few years later they were joined by the Catholic Antwerp citizens who left their city after the ban on the public exercise of the Catholic religion. Several of the Catholic exiles joined the Marian sodality, a brotherhood founded in Cologne in 1575 by the Jesuit Franciscus Costerus (1532-1619) from Mechelen. Here they formed a close network with other refugee Catholics from the Netherlands and – more importantly – the leaders of the sodality instilled self-confidence, militancy and a clearly defined denominational identity in their members. The militant Catholic, counter-reformation mentality that was to play such an important role in Antwerp after 1585 had been primed to a considerable extent in the Cologne exile.

While the so-called Calvinist Republic (1577-1585) heralded difficult times for the Catholics in Antwerp, Calvinists and Lutherans succeeded in greatly increasing their following and building church communities that were of international significance to both faiths. After a year-long siege, the Spanish governor and military commander Alexander Farnese succeeded in forcing rebellious Antwerp to surrender to his Spanish army. The capitulation treaty signed by the warring parties on 17 August 1585 stipulated, among other things, that Protestants could remain in Antwerp for another four years, under condition of holding their silence. At the end of that period, however, they faced a clear choice: convert to the Catholic faith or leave Antwerp. The fact that Antwerp had become a thoroughly divided city as a result of the political and religious turmoil is clearly demonstrated in the figures. After the fall of the insurgent regime, the new political rulers wished to purge the civic militias and the shooting companies (*schuttersgilden*). To achieve their purpose, they had lists drawn up, organised by neighbourhood and street, registering the religious denominations of more than ten thousand citizens (fig. 2). This provides us with an exceptional insight into the religious profile of the Antwerp (male) population in the year 1585. After several years of oppression, the Catholics still formed by far the strongest religious community at 45%, followed by Calvinists (26%), Lutherans (15%) and Anabaptists (2%). In 12% of cases, religious affiliation could not be determined. In any case, it meant that the new political and ecclesiastical leaders faced a task of great scale. They needed to convert a significant portion of the remaining Protestants. At the same time, they were aware that the Catholics who had remained in Antwerp had long been without solid religious teaching or sermons. Meanwhile, the war continued. Antwerp was a real frontier city; not far from an area dominated by the revolutionaries. The fall of Antwerp was an important turning point, but in 1585 no one could predict how the Revolt would ultimately end. For many Catholic citizens of Antwerp, the future was still deeply uncertain at first. This is evident from the clauses included in people's wills, for example. When Mayor Nicolaas Rockox (1560-1640) and his wife Adriana Perez drew up a will in the 1630s, they left sums of money to the church of the Franciscan Friars for masses and annual services to be performed after their death. However, they took into account that the tide of war might turn. If Antwerp would fall into the hands of the rebels again, and the Franciscans would have to leave the city, the money now provisionally allocated to religious services was to then be bequeathed to the poor.

Jesuits move to the foreground after the fall of Antwerp

After defiant Antwerp had surrendered, the Jesuits in the Scheldt city were dealt a very favourable hand. The new city council, assembled under the supervision of Alexander Farnese, consisted of trustworthy Catholics. Of the 97 mayors and aldermen who ruled in 1585-1621, 35 were fathers of sons who entered the clergy, and this included 8 Jesuits. Moreover, the Antwerp Jesuits enjoyed the full support of Alexander Farnese, who relied primarily on the Society of Jesus for the education of the laity and the fight against heresy. Partly thanks to his intervention, the Jesuits who had fled to Cologne soon returned to Antwerp, where they again took up residence in the House of Aachen. Father Franciscus Costerus, who had played a key role in Cologne, immediately started intense sermon activities. He also founded a brotherhood within the Jesuit college and formed a sodality called Our Lady's Annunciation in December 1585. Among the very first members of the latter brotherhood were two canons of the Chapter of Our Lady, two

FIG. 3 Anonymous, *The statue of the Virgin in the central niche of the Antwerp city hall*, 18th century, ink and watercolour on parchment, 420 × 270 mm. Antwerp, Region ELC Society of Jesus

members of the city magistrate, and a number of wealthy merchants. All in all, a fruitful coalition was established between the ecclesiastical, political and economic elite, an approach typical of the core strategy of the Jesuits. Among the members of the sodality there were a great number of returned refugees from Cologne. Furthermore, it deserves mention that the Jesuits also quickly gained the support of the bishop during this period. Laevinus Torrentius, who was able to assume his episcopal see at the end of December 1586, greatly appreciated the Jesuits and regularly appealed to them for their aid.

After their return, the Jesuits did everything in their power to make it clear that the public space in the city was now once again commanded by the true Catholic faith. One fine instance of this pursuit is the placement of a statue of the Virgin Mary in the central façade of the town hall. The city hall, built in 1561-1565, was a symbol of the political and economic power of the Scheldt city. However, the Antwerp Jesuits were of the opinion that the statue of the mythical Roman soldier Brabo in the façade was due for a more relevant replacement. Therefore, in July 1586, the Marian Sodality asked the city magistrates permission to place a statue of the Virgin Mary there.[2] The request was granted within a week, which was not surprising since the sodality also had representatives in the city council. Sculptor Philip de Vos received the commission. A collection was held to finance the statue and it raised more than 500 guilders. Contributors included members of the political elite and wealthy merchants. On 22 February 1587, the finished statue was consecrated “with great honour and triumph” by Father Franciscus Costerus, in the presence of all mayors and aldermen. A few days later it was placed in the central niche of the city hall. However, the final apotheosis followed on 7 April, also the feast day of Our Lady’s Annunciation. That is when the crown and sceptre for the statue of Virgin Mary were consecrated in the Jesuit church whereafter they were transported to the Grote Markt in celebratory fashion. The crown and sceptre were placed on a triumphal chariot which also carried a figure representing the city maiden. The wagon was pulled from the church to the city hall by members of the shooting companies, while their fellow militiamen lined up along the course in military formation. When the crown and sceptre were placed upon the statue of the Virgin Mary, the militiamen on the Grote Markt fired a salute, while the city magistrates watched from the city hall gallery. After various speeches, from the provost of the sodality among others, the assembled mayors and aldermen were given a beautiful ornamental coat of arms by the fraternity, which they placed on the altar in their boardroom. This ritual, following a highly scripted plan, made it clear to everyone that Mary was henceforth the patroness or patron saint of the city. The close cooperation between ecclesiastical and secular power will not have escaped anyone’s attention. The fact that the statue of the Virgin stood proudly upon the building that represented the centre of political power was also an excessively clear statement. In the following decades statues of the Virgin Mary were placed all over in the city, on city squares and upon house façades. The Blessed Virgin became ubiquitous in the city.

Snowballing growth and influence of the Jesuits

The fact that the Jesuits had the wind in their sails is also apparent from a number of quantifiable parameters. For starters, the number of Jesuits in Antwerp increased rapidly. During the first two decades of the 17th century their membership increased sixfold. There were 25 in 1601, and that number had risen to 161 in 1619. That high figure was sustained for a long time. In 1663 there were even 171 Jesuits, but after that it quickly slid down again, stabilising at around 115 members from 1684 onwards. We must not forget that the Society of Jesus was only one of many regular orders in Antwerp. As a “new” order, however, it was most strongly represented in numerical terms. In 1629 there were 475 people in the city who belonged to a male monastic order. The Jesuits were by far the largest male monastic order at 20.9%, followed by the Dominicans and Franciscans at 14.7%. In the 18th century the proportion of Jesuits declined in relative terms. In 1716 the Jesuits, with 90 members, reached 14.3% and the order was about the same size as that of the Discalced Carmelites and Franciscans.[3] Numbers, however, do not tell the whole story. Because the Jesuit order was a very active order with a strong emphasis on pastoral care, its influence extended significantly beyond what these figures alone suggest.

Through sermons, education and catechism teaching, the Jesuits contributed to the religious and cultural development of the urban population. The Jesuit college played a significant role in this approach. At the college male adolescents received secondary education in Latin according to the pedagogical principles laid out in the *Ratio studiorum*, compiled in 1599. The study of Latin and to a lesser extent of Greek was central. According to a fixed and stepwise plan, the students had to master the grammar and syntax of Latin so that they could read and recite the classical authors and poets. Latin, incidentally, was also the compulsory spoken language at the college, that even applied in the playground. In addition to teaching classical language and literature, the Jesuit Fathers devoted a great deal of attention to the foundations of the Catholic faith. With a humanism inspired but also counter-reformation driven curriculum, the Jesuits wanted to mould the future ecclesiastical, political and economic leaders in their colleges.

FIG. 4 Alexander Casteels, *Interior view of het chapel of the Jesuit college on Prinsstraat*, c. 1680, watercolour on paper, 300 × 380 mm. Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum /Prentenkabinet – UNESCO World Heritage, inv. AV.1154

Following the fall of Antwerp, the Jesuits made the restoration of their college a priority. It opened its doors as soon as September 1585, and experienced rapid growth in subsequent years. Between 1611 and 1680, the number of pupils fluctuated between 500 and 600, peaking in 1649 with 649 pupils. In the last quarter of the 17th century there was a clear drop in numbers, which was undoubtedly also connected to the downward demographic trend of the urban population, caused in part by the outbreaks of plague. In the 18th century, the Jesuit College in Antwerp was clearly past its zenith. The college still had 350 pupils initially, but in the last decades of its existence (1750-1773) this fluctuated between 200 and 250. No systematic records are available on the social background of the pupils. It is certain though that sons of members of the political and economic elite from the city on the Scheldt were sent to this school. Scions of the urban middle classes also attended. A number of scholarship bursaries ensured that less well-off pupils could also enrol, but these were undoubtedly limited in number. In 1630, mayor Nicolaas Rockox created two bursaries of 180 guilders and two years later he added a third. Curiously enough, the Jesuits forwent access to these bursaries in 1637 – possibly an indication that the inclusion of poorer students was not a

great priority to them. We only have information about the geographical element of pupil recruitment from 1707 onwards. The surviving data shows that in the 18th century the proportion of Antwerp-based pupils generally fluctuated around 70-80%, while 10-20% of the students came from abroad. By far the largest group of foreigners came from the Republic of the United Netherlands. These were Catholics from the Northern provinces for whom it was hard to obtain secondary education with a Catholic imprint in their own country. Unfortunately, we do not have any data on geographical recruitment for the 17th century, but everything suggests that the proportion of non-Antwerp residents in that time period was at least as high, and perhaps even higher, taking into account the success and appeal of the Jesuits in Antwerp at the time.[4]

The rapid expansion of the Jesuit order at the beginning of the 17th century, both in terms of staff and of pupils in the college, created additional material demands. At the same time, the flourishing of this community in Antwerp led to a kind of institutional separation in the Jesuit world. At the beginning of the 17th century, the superior general of the Jesuit order had already proposed a plan to set up a *domus professae,* a professed house, in the Netherlands. Antwerp became the chosen location. A professed house was a pastoral centre where the professed Jesuits could devote themselves to spiritual exercises and scientific research, free of distractions. The Provincial who was head of the Flemish Jesuit province (the Provincia Flandro-Belgica, founded in 1612) resided in the professed house and so it was that it developed into an administrative centre. Once the professed house was formally recognised in 1616, there were two independent Jesuit establishments in Antwerp, each with its own management: the professed house, located in the House of Aachen, led by a *praepositus* or provost, and the college, headed by a rector.

Almost ten years earlier, the college had found more spacious accommodation elsewhere to house the rising number of pupils. After exerting some pressure on the city magistrates, the college was moved to the large, empty Hof van Liere in Prinsstraat during the rectorate (1598-1613) of Father Carolus Scribani (1561-1629). The Hof had belonged to the English Merchant Company, but they had left the city in 1582 because of the war. During Scribani's rectorate, work began on expanding the building complex so that it could accommodate the growing number of pupils. The Jesuits founded their own boarding school – the so-called convict – for the residential pupils of the college. From 1651 onwards they were able to use the buildings of the Hotel van Straelen, located between Sint-Jacobsmarkt and Korte Sint-Annastraat, for this purpose.

The absolute highlight of their physical and visual *acte de presence*, however, was the construction of the new Saint Ignatius Church (1615-1621). Around that time other monastery churches were being built in Antwerp too, but the marble church of the Jesuits surpassed all the other orders in glory and grandeur as well as in cost. The Saint Ignatius Church in Antwerp was the most striking building of a larger complex, built around a new square (the current Hendrik Conscienceplein). Suitable buildings for the recently established professed house (1616) and the Marian sodalities were built alongside the church. In the years 1615-1626, the costs of the entire building complex ran to a considerable 535,000 guilders. Subsidies from the city and gifts from the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, and from the faithful of Antwerp, covered only a fifth of the costs, so that the Jesuits had to take out immense loans, much to the displeasure of the superior general. They believed, however, that the outward display of a confident, jubilant Catholic religion was an expense that was more than justified.

The Marian sodalities – male spearheads of Jesuit action

The Jesuits' success in reaching such a large portion of the Antwerp population was partly thanks to the Marian sodalities they created. These sodalities were brotherhoods that consisted exclusively of men and predominantly of laymen. Through prayers, frequent confession and Holy communion, and through doing good works, the members were able to realise the dual goals of the deepening of personal faith and forming an apostolate. The first sodality had been established in Rome in 1563 and operated within the confines of the Roman College. That example was followed elsewhere. At a later stage, sodalities were formed which also recruited members from outside the college. As mentioned earlier, this pattern also surfaced in Antwerp in 1585. The sodality of Our Lady's Annunciation, founded in December of that year, comprised priests as well as lay members from the political and economic elite. Most of the members had lived as refugees in Cologne or Douai and had become deeply religious and militant Catholics during their exile.

After the Jesuits moved their college to the Hof van Liere in 1607, the sodalities in Antwerp flourished and expanded in diverse ways. In 1608, a sodality was added for unmarried men aged twenty and older, the so-called sodality of Our Lady's Nativity for the *bejaerde jongmans* – "elderly young men". In the space of one year, membership increased from 80 to 264. The following year, in 1609, the Jesuits decided to divide the Sodality of Our Lady's Annunciation, founded in 1585, into two. They created one brotherhood for married Dutch-speaking men and one for highly educated Latinists, which included

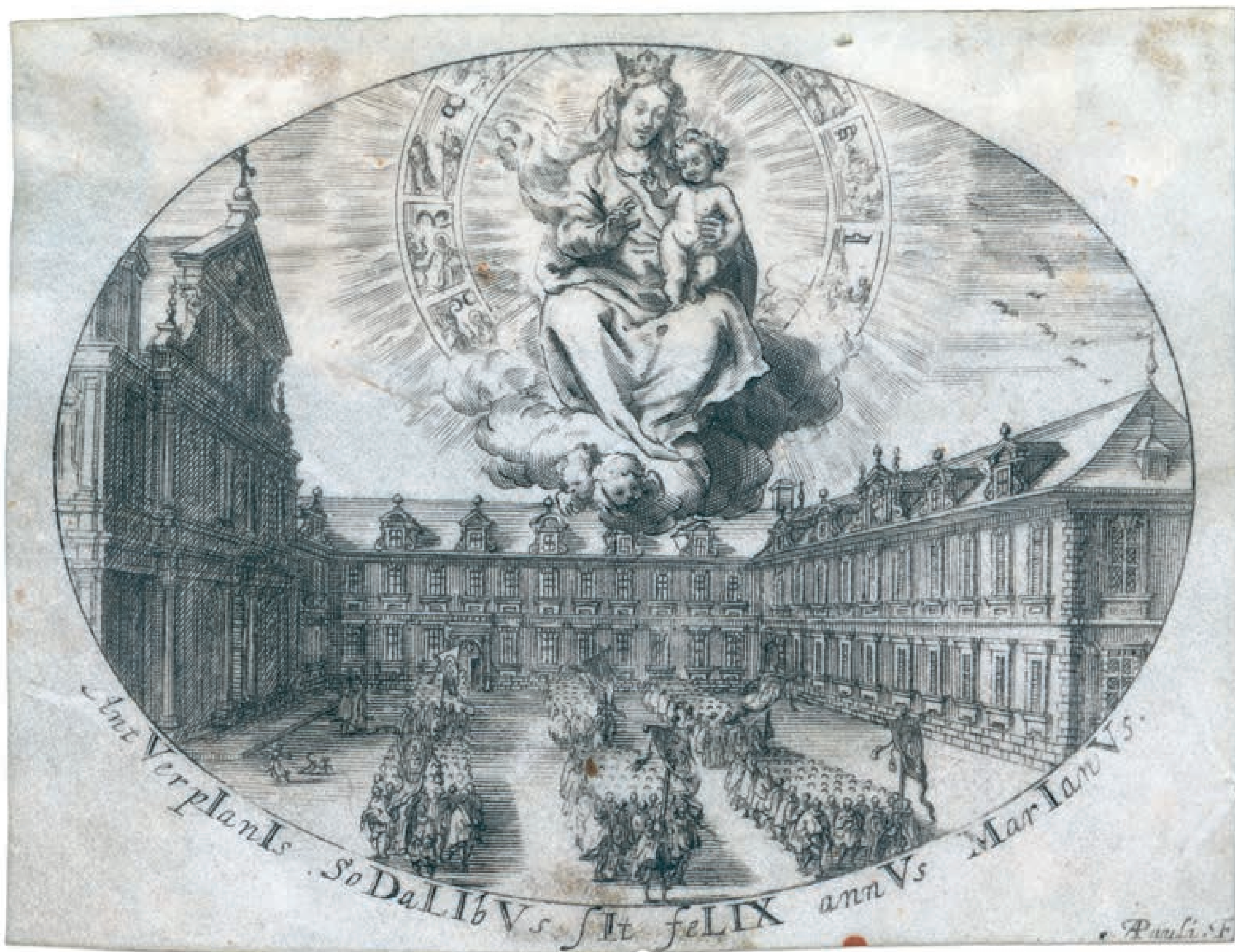

FIG. 5 Andries Pauwels, *Antverpianis sodalibus sit felix annus Marianus* (wishing a happy Maria year to the members of the sodalities of Antwerp), 1636, 69 × 91 mm, etching on paper. City of Antwerp Collection – MAS, inv. MFA.1964.076.1445

canons of the Chapter of Our Lady, city magistrates and, most notably, Peter Paul Rubens. A year later, a French-speaking sodality was founded, the Sodalité de la Vierge Marie entre les Wallons, which, in addition to Walloon and French members, also included Spaniards and Italians if they had mastered the French language. In 1629, this sodality had 301 members already. The younger cohort was also accounted for. In 1626, Father Willem de Pretere founded a brotherhood for boys aged twelve to sixteen, which from 1638 was called the sodality of Our Lady of the Visitation. Finally, in 1644, a sodality for boys under the age of twelve was formed – that of Our Lady Queen of Angels. The promotion of Marian piety has been a core characteristic of the Marian sodalities from the very beginning, as the name indicates.

In general, membership of these sodalities continued to grow in the course of the 17th century. The peak was reached in 1663 with a total of 3,869 members. Although there was a slow decline in the following decades, with 3,200 members in 1681, a high level was still maintained, considering the decline in population across the globe. Questions about the social composition of the sodalities cannot be answered with any precision due to the lack of systematic research. It is certain, however, that the sodality of the Latinists mainly consisted of members of the prosperous class. French historian Louis Châtellier argues that recruitment became less discerning as of the mid-17th century, based on the professions listed in the register of married Dutch-speaking men. From then on, craftsmen from the textile sector and from the wood and leather processing sectors become increasingly prominent. When a sodality became too big, the members would be divided over the different districts of the city and each be governed by its own board. However, Marie Juliette Marinus does note that the *sodales* were concentrated in specific areas of the city, the central district in particular. That was also the most prosperous neighbourhood of the city. In contrast, the more peripheral, poorer neighbourhoods were absent or under-represented.

The sodalities were clearly a way for the Jesuits to reach a substantial part of the male population. According to Marinus, the approximately 2,300 adults who were members of a sodality in the second half of the 17th century represented about 16% of the male adult population. Attendance rates at the activities of the fraternities varied according to type. In the sodalities with the youngest members, participation could rise to 87%, but the percentage dropped as age increased. Unmarried men also attended more frequently than married men. Through an intensive programme, the Jesuits aimed to supervise the members of the sodalities during the pivotal stages of their lives and to mould them into true model Christians. To achieve that goal,

FIG. 6 Willem de Pretere, *Handtboexken der sodaliteyt*, Antwerp: Hendrik I Aertssens, 1620, 12° 408 pp. University of Antwerp, Library of the Ruusbroec Institute, inv. RG 3043 H 16

FIG. 7 Hendrik Causé after Jan Sebastiaen Loybos for Daniël van Papenbroeck s.j., *Four suffragia handed out in Antwerp*, 1694, copper engravings on paper, 110 × 70 mm. University of Antwerp, Library of the Ruusbroec Institute, Suffragia Type Van Papenbroec, inv. 235, 245, 247, 248

FIG. 8 Martinus van den Enden, *Communion in the Ignatius Church of Antwerp*, 1623-c. 1644, copper engraving on paper, 166 × 105 mm. Schloss Wolfegg, Kunstsammlungen der Fürsten zu Waldburg-Wolfegg, inv. 210-248

every sodality ran a tight ship. All Marian brotherhoods were led by a director. This Jesuit priest led the meetings and also heard confession for the members. Absences had to be reported to him promptly. On Sunday morning, the members gathered for an *exhortation* led by the director. At that meeting, which lasted in theory no longer than an hour, there was room for spiritual exercises and prayer. In the late afternoon a *conference* followed, in which the members again discussed a spiritual matter under the guidance of the director. At the same time, through these meetings, the Jesuits aimed to promote frequent participation in the sacraments, in particular confession and Holy communion.[5] This ambition was by no means only expressed through the sodalities, incidentally. The Fathers wanted to reach the entire urban community. As of 1636 they introduced the practice of "general communion". On the first Sunday of each month, all believers, regardless of the parish they belonged to, were invited to receive communion. On the very first Sunday, about 10,000 believers descended on Saint Ignatius Church to take part in this initiative, and that number increased even more in the following months. The frequent communion also necessitated a parallel practice of confession. After all, receiving communion presupposed that one had first gone to confession. The interior of the Saint Ignatius Church was well equipped for this purpose. There were sixteen confessionals in the church, and six more were added in the upper galleries. This made it possible for about twenty priests to hear thousands of confessions in a day. From 1623 onwards, the sodalities which were not related to the college had a magnificent building with two chapels at their disposal for their core activities, located directly opposite Saint Ignatius Church. The ground floor was used by the Latinists and the married members; the first floor by the other brotherhoods.

The Jesuits were able to amplify the effectiveness of the sodalities by maximising the potential of the printing press. For example, the genre of *suffragia* was used with great enthusiasm. *Suffragia* were holy cards bearing the image and biography of a saint. The cards also listed the virtues specific to that saint and an intentional prayer. New ones were distributed to the *sodales* every month. The biography and the detailed virtues were intended to inspire the members of the sodality. In addition, each card showed the name of a fellow member for whom the card owner should pray for a month. In this way, the adoration of the saints was used to elevate the religious life of the members of the brotherhood and to stimulate a sense of community.

The sodalities set up by the Jesuits, however, were not only aimed at internal effect, they were also outward looking. Firstly, of course, one's immediate environment: sodality members talked to relatives and friends about the religious matters they had learned and heard about in their brotherhood. When administering the last rites at the death of a fellow member the *sodales* would accompany the priest who carried out the Anointing of the Sick with torches, illuminating the importance of this sacrament. They also participated in processions small and large, and assisted the Jesuit Fathers in religious teaching. Some *sodales* taught Sunday school and others went to the countryside to teach the children catechism.

The Marian sodalities established in Antwerp were not large-scale brotherhoods but such brotherhoods did exist in 17th-century Antwerp. In 1615, the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, which is affiliated with the Dominicans, had no fewer than 22,000 members, while that of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows had approximately 25,000 registrations in 1637.[6] The Marian sodalities were significantly smaller, but they succeeded, through their numerous activities and the extraordinary commitment of their members, in achieving in-depth influence. In his collected manuscripts on the Antwerp professed house, the 19th-century Jesuit Charles Droeshout noted that the tight operations, discipline and mobilisation capacity of the Antwerp sodalities resembled a military organisation.[7] A rare engraving that was made around 1630 shows a visual representation of this. The sodalities are seen here, company after company, lined up in perfect formation before their building, flying their respective banners.

Women devoted to the Society of Jesus: The spiritual daughters

The Marian sodalities were a man's world, but that does not mean that the Jesuits did not also have a plan for women in the advancement of their counter-reformation Church. An important role was reserved for what they called the spiritual daughters. These unmarried women took partial vows and led religious lives in the "world". For example, they could work in areas of education and care for the sick and elderly. In Antwerp the number of spiritual daughters demonstrably increased over the course of the 17th century. Many had a close relationship with the Jesuit order and would choose a Jesuit as their confessor and spiritual guide. But the phenomenon of spiritual daughters was not exclusive to the Society of Jesus in Antwerp. From surviving testaments it is clear that spiritual daughters also entered into privileged relationships with religious orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans. Incidentally, these women made similar testamentary dispositions: they practically always bequeathed to the religious order they had a personal connection with. The profile of the Antwerp spiritual daughters is an interesting subject for further investigation. The Jesuits did have a reputation for reaching out to unmarried ladies of high birth because this offered good prospects for generous patronage and future legacies. The three Houtappel

FIG. 9 Anonymous, *Quesel* (spiritual daughter), c. 1740, miniature on parchment, 120 × 95 mm. Antwerp, University library, Collectie Thijs, inv. KP 34.24

sisters, all spiritual daughters and under the guidance of, among others, Father Carolus Scribani, are a fine example. During their lifetime, Maria, Anna and Christina contributed enormous sums for the furnishing and decoration of the Saint Ignatius Church. After the death of the longest living sister in 1674, their entire fortune was bequeathed to the Jesuit Order. But judging by the testaments and estate inventories that still survive, some spiritual daughters lived more humble lives.

The 17th-century estate inventories give us a nice window on the world of the Antwerp spiritual daughters and their relationship with the Society of Jesus.[8] The first thing that jumps out is that the iconography of the paintings owned by the spiritual daughters in many cases refers directly to the Society of Jesus. Take, for example, the case of Ida Goetsbloets, who died in 1665. She lived in Blindestraat in the house of Marie van Honsem, another spiritual daughter, and she occupied a bedroom above the large *neerkamer* (lower room) and the corridor. On the wall hung a painting of Saint Ignatius and one of Saint Francis Xavier. A little further on, a brass picture of Saint Ignatius hung on the wall in an ebony frame. There were ten *beeldekens* (small images) of Saint Ignatius and Saint Francis Xavier, also framed in ebony. The silverware inventory lists "a heavy silver medallion of Saint Ignatius". Paintings or statues of these two Jesuits, who were both canonised in 1622, often appeared in the inventory of deceased spiritual daughters. But in Ida Goetsbloets' room, there were also other well-known Jesuits watching from the wall. She owned "an illuminated image" of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga (1568-1591) and one of Saint Stanislas Kostka (1550-1568). These Jesuits, one Italian and one Polish, both died in Rome at a young age. They were beatified in 1605 and canonised in 1726. So while they were not yet saints in the 17th century, that did not alter the fact that both were already popular then. Especially from the middle of the 17th century onwards they begin to appear in the estate inventories of the Antwerp spiritual daughters. At the time of her death in 1640, Elisabeth Haecx owned a painting entitled *The four principal Saints under the Society of Jesus*. Anna 's Grevens, a cousin of the Houtappel sisters, bequeathed "four paintings of the Four Fathers of the Society Jesu" to a spiritual daughter friend in her will in 1638. The description of the four Jesuit saints strongly indicates this refers to Ignatius, Francis Xavier, Aloysius Gonzaga and Stanislas Kostka. The four saints also appear together in an engraving that was circulated in Antwerp in the 17th century: Ignatius and Francis Xavier above and Stanislas and Aloysius below.[9]

However, upon returning to Ida Goetsbloets' bedroom, we see more objects holding clues to her devotional life. To begin with, the Virgin Mary was everywhere. With this Marian

FIG. 10 Cornelis van Merlen, *Nine Jesuits gathered around Virgin Mary and the Holy Trinity*, c. 1666-1723, hand-coloured copper engraving on parchment, 129 × 91 mm. University of Antwerp, Library of the Ruusbroec Institute, inv. RG-PC H1: Jezuïeten (groep) VIII.1.1

devotion, Ida affirms one of the typical characteristics of the reverence propagated by the Jesuits. There were both statues and paintings of Mary in her bedroom. In the paintings Our Lady was often depicted together with the infant Jesus. The contents also included nine paternosters and eight reliquaries "of various fashions". Also worth mentioning is a painting of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, standing on an "oratory for Miss van Honsem's private worship". Possibly the reference to Marie van Honsem was a writing error and this should refer to Ida Goetsbloets. In any case, the inventory shows that Ida's room was, as it were, a cabinet of Saints and that all the attributes for a life of intense worship were present here. The iconographic link to the Jesuit order is crystal clear.

In the inventories as well as in the testaments of other spiritual daughters we observe strong parallels, even though the religious objects are not always present in the same quantity as in the case of Ida Goetsbloets. It is noteworthy that some spiritual daughters possessed relics of Ignatius and Francis Xavier. In 1675, the elderly Clara Antheunis stipulated in her will that "the golden reliquary in which the true relics of Saint Francis Xavier reside" should be donated to the Fathers of the professed house. Anna Diericx, who died in 1676, owned a reliquary cabinet made of ebony and tortoise shell with silverwork, which contained the relics of various saints, including a *tombeken* (a small box) with a number of relics of Saint Ignatius. Anna Houtappel – one of the three Houtappel sisters mentioned previously – left behind a silver-mounted reliquary of Saint Ignatius and Saint Francis Xavier when she died in 1674. References to the books possessed by the spiritual daughters are usually succinct, but can also yield interesting clues. For example, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis is listed more than once. This connection with late medieval piety certainly deserves further investigation. Spiritual daughters spent a lot of time indoors in worship, meditation and reading, but they also ventured forth into the world. For example, there were quite a few spiritual daughters who taught Sunday school for girls. Others became sacristans in a church or chapel, or made clothes for the poor.

The Antwerp Jesuits as multimedia *influencers*

The Jesuits who returned to Antwerp in 1585 faced an immense task: to convert a city dominated by Protestants into a Catholic stronghold. To achieve their ambition they made use of many different communication channels over the following decades. Printed media, oral messaging, visual media and carefully orchestrated public rituals all played a role and reinforced each other through deliberate interweaving.

To begin with, the Jesuits proved themselves to be masters of oral communication. In the years that followed the fall of Antwerp, the fight against heretical Protestantism was an important theme. In 1586 and 1587, for example, between Advent and Easter the Jesuits organised daily meetings in the chapel of the Marian Sodality. Every member of the sodality was expected to bring a Protestant. During these *conversion sessions*, Father Franciscus Costerus (fig. 11) addressed the theological differences that divided Catholics and Protestants and refuted the arguments advanced by the attending Protestants. During the same period – from Advent to Easter – the Chapter of Our Lady selected a Jesuit to hold a sermon in the cathedral every morning. This tradition was continued throughout the 17th century. In addition, the Jesuits preached in a number of other parish churches and nunneries and of course also in their own church.[10] During the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621), when many people from the Northern Netherlands, including Protestants, moved to the Scheldt city, the Jesuits were given permission to preach for this audience especially in the cathedral. Later in the 17th century, the Jesuits held *controversy sermons* – in which the Catholic faith was defended – in their own church during the small and large annual fairs, for the Protestants visiting in Antwerp. The Jesuits preached not only in the city, but also ventured into the countryside around Antwerp. The violence of war had disrupted various parishes, or deprived them of a priest, so that there was a great demand for adequate religious teachings.

The truths of faith that the Jesuits proclaimed from the pulpit were also communicated via the printing press. For example, Franciscus Costerus published a whole series of *Catholijcke sermoonen* (Catholic sermons) from 1598 to 1616. In addition, there was a constant stream of religious controversy publications in which the Jesuits polemicised against Protestant theologians and pastors from the Northern Netherlands. In the first phase the indefatigable Fathers Franciscus Costerus and Joannes David (1546-1613) were prominent representatives of this genre, and in the second half of the 17th century Cornelius Hazart (1617-1690) (fig. 12) was the most visible author. Recent research has shown that these authors of controversy not only addressed the "religious other", but also, and maybe even primarily, their own Catholic lay constituency. They employed religious polemics to establish clear dividing lines and to affirm the Catholics in their own faith. They used a clear argumentation structure, often based on questions and answers.[11] The latter method, in turn, was a typical feature of the printed catechism books used by the Jesuits in their religious teachings.

FIG. 11 Lucas Vorsterman, *Portrait of Franciscus Costerus*, 1619, engraving on paper, 120 × 84 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-OB-33.098

FIG. 12 Richard Collin, *Portrait of Cornelius Hazart*, 1677, engraving on paper, 295 × 193 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-1906-2432

Sermon books, controversy publications and catechism books are examples of the wide range of genres that the Jesuits used to proclaim or deepen the "true" faith. Devotional literature and ascetic works were also part of that purpose. In more academically oriented writings, such as history books, the defence of the faith was included too. The fact that the Jesuits in Antwerp made such an important contribution to all of these genres was undoubtedly related to the position of the professed house. After all, the Fathers associated with that house were given the freedom to dedicate themselves wholly to apostolate and academic work. A number of them were engaged in the critical study and publication of hagiographies. The Bollandists, named after Joannes Bollandus, furnished the publication of the well-known *Acta Sanctorum*, the first two volumes of which appeared in Antwerp in 1643. This collective undertaking also featured the aforementioned aspect of the defence of the faith, because the Jesuits wanted to use critical text publications to repudiate the Protestants' negative criticism and ridicule of the veneration of the saints. The fact that the Antwerp professed house was selected to realise the prestigious project of the *Acta Sanctorum* shows that this Jesuit establishment had become one of the most important in Europe.

With the *Acta Sanctorum*, the Bollandists in Antwerp were able to address – through the printing press – an international audience of literate people who were conversant with Latin. At the other end of the complex communication spectrum, they made effective use of public rituals to reach the local urban population. Such public rituals could develop into proper mass spectacles and tapped into oral and visual communication methods. We have already mentioned the festive installation of the statue of the Virgin Mary in the façade of the city hall in 1587, and the festivities at the inauguration of the Saint Ignatius Church in 1621. The jubilee celebration of 1685 offers another textbook example. Here the Jesuits commemorated and celebrated the capitulation of rebellious Antwerp and the founding of the first Marian sodality one hundred years earlier. On Sunday, 26 August 1685, a solemn procession passed through the city with representatives of the guilds, the shooting companies, the clergy and the city council all joining in. The next day there was an *ommegang* or civic parade. In addition to the traditional decorated cars, there were five more cars specially decorated for this occasion. The tableaus enacted on those cars were performed by pupils of the Jesuit college. In this way visual images were presented illustrating how the city had suffered from heresy and rebellion and how – with the help of the Virgin Mary – it had been liberated and made prosperous again by Alexander Farnese. Both processions passed under the triumphal arches erected in the city. The triumphal arch on the Meir crossing Huidevettersstraat was designed by the Jesuits of the professed house. It was about 23 metres high and 15 metres wide and consisted of a central arch flanked by two lateral wings. Large paintings and inscriptions, referencing the central theme of the jubilee, were placed on the arches or galleries.[12]

For the organisation of the jubilee celebrations, the city and church authorities worked together closely. In old historiography, these public rituals – and, by extension, the broader process of the Catholic reformation – have often been presented as top-down processes imposed by Church and State. From that point of view, the common believers were thought to be primarily passive participants. The accounts of the jubilee of 1685 seem, at the very least, to call for more nuance. Several neighbourhood committees were actively involved in the decoration of the triumphal arches that were erected in their district. A traveller from the Dutch Republic who stayed in Antwerp during the festivities was struck by the great enthusiasm he witnessed in the streets of Antwerp, and by the beautiful decorations in private homes. Regarding the 1622 celebrations of the canonisation, historian Louis Châtellier commented that such exuberantly festive manifestations were only possible when they enjoyed the support and daily effort of ordinary citizens and craftsmen.[13]

* * *

The Jesuits played a pivotal role in the organisation of the jubilee celebrations of 1685. At that time they still had an enormous influence on urban society. Nevertheless, there are quantitative parameters that indicate that the Jesuit order had already past its prime at that time. The trend in the numbers of Jesuits, college pupils and sodality members points in that direction. In the 18th century the decline became even stronger. The waning influence of the Jesuits undoubtedly had several sources, and merits further investigation. Their involvement in the quarrels with the Jansenists, their loyalty to the Roman Church and the shifting dynamics within the varied monastic landscape all played a role. Until the order was suppressed in 1773, the Antwerp Jesuits in the professed house and in the college nevertheless continued to dedicate themselves *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (to the greater glory of God).

FIG. 13 Anonymous, *Triumphal arch raised by the Jesuits in 1685 on Meir,* 17th century, oil on canvas, 108 × 146 cm. Antwerp, Cathedral of Our Lady, Guild of Our Lady's Praise

1 Letter from Luis de Requesens y Zúñiga of 19 April 1574, in: Louis Prosper Gachard (ed.) *Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays-Bas,* 5 vol., Brussels 1848-1879, vol. 3, pp. 7-8.
2 About placement of this statue, see: Theodoor Van Lerius, *Kronyk van de sodaliteit der getrouwden te Antwerpen (1585-1773)*, Antwerp 1862, pp. 8-15.
3 Figures taken from: Marie Juliette Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585-1676). Kerkelijk leven in een grootstad,* Brussels 1995, pp. 155-156.
4 Figures from: Marianne Moehlig, *Het jezuïetencollege te Antwerpen in de 17de en 18de eeuw*, onuitgegeven unpublished licentiate thesis, KU Leuven 1988, pp. 94-97.
5 A good description of the meetings is provided in the manuscript by Charles Droeshout, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus à Anvers. B. La Maison Professe*, Leuven, KADOC, inv. 3290, vol. I, p. 251 onwards.
6 Figures from: Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen*, p. 264.
7 Quoted in: Louis Châtellier, *L'Europe des dévots*, Paris 1987, pp. 73-74.
8 Based on Erik Duverger (ed.), *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw,* 13 vol., Brussels 1985-2004.
9 Photograph of this engraving in: Droeshout, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus à Anvers. B. La Maison Professe*, vol. I.
10 See overview in: Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen*, p. 163, table VIII.
11 See in particular: Birgitte Martens, "Nederlandstalige religieuze controversepublicaties en de kunst van het argumenteren in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1591-c. 1688)", in: *Trajecta. Religie, cultuur en samenleving in de Nederlanden*, 19-20 (Louvain 2010-2011), pp. 241-272.
12 A description of the festivities and triumphal arches in: Petrus Franciscus de Smidt, *Hondert-jaerigh jubile-vreught Bewesen in dese Stadt Antwerpen*, Antwerp 1685.
13 Châtellier, *L'Europe des dévots*, pp. 70-72.

Pierre Delsaerdt

JESUITS AND NOVICES

Of all the books related to the history of the Jesuit order, few tickle the imagination as much as *Adnotationes et meditationes* by the Spanish Jesuit Hieronymus Natalis (Jerome Nadal, 1507-1580). That the book ran to four editions indicates its enduring popularity and the numerous prints that appear in it are remarkable: they employ an original narrative technique and testify to the excellent quality delivered by Antwerp plate cutters in the late 16th century. It is a work that continues to fascinate historians and art historians.

According to the book's introduction, it was Ignatius Loyola himself who commissioned Nadal, one of his closest collaborators, to write a book of meditations on the Gospel stories. It was intended to guide young Jesuit novices through the meditation exercises they did after their first vows to prepare for their holy orders.

In translation, the full title of the book is *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospel which are to be read throughout the year at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*. The structure of the work is therefore determined by the pericopes, the Gospel units that were read in a fixed order over the course of the church year. Each chapter begins with the title of a Gospel story, followed by a reference to the relevant text in the Bible and short captions. Then comes the passage from the Gospel text, offering possible text variants in a parallel column. There is an *adnotatio*, a textual commentary in which Nadal places the event in time and space and describes and interprets some passages. The chapter closes with a *meditatio*, a prayer addressed to Christ about the moral and spiritual benefit the reader can gain from the stories.

The first edition of *Adnotationes et meditationes* was published posthumously in 1595 by the Antwerp printer Martinus II Nutius, who often published work by Jesuits. There are several variants of this edition: the number of pages varies, and not every copy contains the finely engraved vignettes. That same year Nutius delivered a second edition, and in 1607 Jan I Moretus brought a third edition to market. Exactly a century later, one final edition was published in Antwerp by Hendrik and Cornelis Verdussen. In the meantime an Italian translation of the book had appeared too, whereas one French and two German translations remained unpublished.

The ecclesiastical approbation at the back of the book shows that Nadal's text was already completed in 1579. The fact that it took so long for the work to appear in print is possibly because it took an unusually long time to produce quality illustrations. Interpretative visualisation was an integral part of the book's structure: Ignatius had specified this also to Nadal. Each Gospel story had to be accompanied by a full-page copper engraving. Sublime visual experiences would inspire affective piety. The author put it approximately as follows:

> "We should in mind and spirit be there in the place where the events occur, so that we can draw inspiration and piety from all the circumstances of places, people, things and actions." (Hieronymus Natalis, s.j., *Adnotationes et Meditationes*, Antwerp 1595, p. 462.)

In the foreword to the 1607 edition, readers were even counselled to spend at least one day on each print. The "immersive" purpose of the book is precisely what caused the tremendous delay in the realisation of the project. Engraving the planned 153 images in as many copperplates was a labour-intensive activity, but the design of the drawings also travelled a long road. The first rough sketches were made in Rome between 1555 and 1562, possibly under the personal supervision of Nadal. In view of their stylistic features, they are attributed to Livio Agresti (c. 1508-c. 1580), who worked mainly in Rome. However, these washed ink drawings (today preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma) lacked sufficient detail to be translated into engravings. In, or shortly after, 1579, the Florentine Jesuit friar Giovanni Battista Fiammeri (c. 1540-c. 1609) made more precise designs of them in ink and red chalk, in portrait format, so that they would be more appropriate for a standard-sized printed book. Yet these drawings (currently in the Royal Library of Windsor Castle, London) were still not good enough to serve as *modelli* for engravings. And so a second reworking was required, this time by the Roman painter Bernardino Passeri (c. 1540-c. 1596), who converted most of these designs into detailed pen drawings, while five additional drawings were made by the Antwerp painter and printmaker Maarten de Vos (1532-1603). These *modelli* (now in the Royal Library of Belgium, KBR, in Brussels) are bound in a register next to a print of the copper engravings. A handwritten note on the title page indicates that the register was once part of the library of the former Jesuit college in Antwerp.

But of course the book could not go to print before skilled engravers translated the drawings into copperplates. From Rome, the Jesuits contacted the Antwerp publisher Christophe Plantin with their request. He let them know that in Antwerp only the Wierix brothers – Johannes, Hieronymus and Antonius II – were capable of carrying out the assignment, but he also added that their dissolute lifestyle would cause problems. Plantin himself did not want to act as an intermediary. In the end, it would have been Carolus Scribani, then prefect of studies at the Jesuit college in Antwerp, who approached them with the assignment. Together with four other engravers, who produced a limited number of plates, the Wierix brothers brought the work to a successful conclusion. The clients were so pleased with the result that they also put the prints to market separately, in a bundle, without Nadal's texts. The first edition of this *Evangelicae historiae imagines* appeared in 1593, that is to say, well before *Adnotationes et meditationes*.

The images are said to have a *panoramic* character, depicting the Gospel stories in the form of a journey made by Jesus in the company of his disciples. This becomes evident when we take a closer look at an example. Print 35 (fig. 1) shows the bible story of the Samaritan woman, a text found only in the Gospel of John (John 4, 1–42). On his way from

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Cover image: Peter Paul Rubens, *Archangel Michael defeats the Rebel Angels*, c. 1617–1620, oil on panel, 46.8/47.2 x 52.4/53 cm. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. 7444

Backcover image: Lucas Vorsterman after Peter Paul Rubens, *The Adoration of the Magi, after the altarpiece in the Sint-Janskerk in Mechelen*, 1620, engraving, 575 x 438 mm, Brussels, KBR, Prentenkabinet, inv. S.I 33360

p. 2: Paulus Pontius after Anthony van Dyck, *Virgin Mary with Child and Saint Rosalia*, c. 1629 (detail, see p. 75)

pp. 8-9: Anthony van Dyck, *Virgin Mary with Child and Saints Rosalia*, *Peter and Paul*, 1629 (detail, see p. 74)

pp. 34-35: Peter Paul Rubens, *Solomon receiving the Queen of Sheba*, 1620 (detail, see p. 119)

pp. 60-61: Juan Bautista Villalpando, *The Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon*, 1604 (detail, see p. 141)

pp. 90-91: Peter Paul Rubens, *The Annunciation*, 1620 (detail, see p. 115)

pp. 102-103: Peter Paul Rubens, *Saint Margaret*, c. 1620 (detail, see p. 126)

pp. 134-135: Peter Paul Rubens, *The Martyrdom of Saint Lucy*, c. 1616-1620 (detail, see p. 127)

pp. 166-167: Anton Günther Gheringh, *Interior view of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, c. 1665 (detail, see pp. 84-85)

p. 198: Peter Paul Rubens, *Esther before Ahasveros*, 1620 (detail, see p. 122)