

## The Institutional Nature of Parishes and the Restoration of the Church after Iconoclasm. The Case of St James and St Pharahild in Ghent (1566-1614)

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## Résumé

L'histoire institutionnelle des paroisses et le rétablissement des églises après les troubles iconoclastes : le cas de Saint-Jacques et de Sainte-Pharaïlde à Gand (1566-1614).

La situation des paroisses aux Pays-Bas au XVI<sup>e</sup> et au début du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle présentait une grande diversité. Elles réagirent toutes selon leurs propres moyens aux défis du temps comme le calvinisme et l'iconoclasme. Cet article étudie deux paroisses gantoises : Saint-Jacques et Sainte-Pharaïlde. À Gand comme dans beaucoup d'autres villes des Pays-Bas, les lieux de cultes catholiques ont été saccagés par les iconoclastes (1566 et 1578-1579) et sous le régime calviniste (1577-1584). Les églises Saint-Jacques et Saint-Pharaïlde furent toutes les deux lourdement touchées, mais la manière dont les deux paroisses ont réagi aux défis posés, est révélatrice. Indépendamment des dommages eux-mêmes, le contexte institutionnel et la taille de la paroisse, le degré de participation des paroissiens et la dynamique locale se révélèrent d'une importance cruciale dans le processus de rétablissement de ces églises.

De institutionele achtergrond van parochies en de restauratie van kerken na de Beeldenstorm. De voorbeelden van Sint-Jacob en Sint-Veerle in Gent (1566-1614).

De Lage Landen kenden een brede waaier aan types parochies die elk op eigen wijze omgingen met de aan hun kerken toegebrachte vernielingen na de opeenvolgende beeldenstormen. Dit artikel bespreekt twee zeer verschillende parochies in de stad Gent : Sint-Jacob en Sint-Veerle op het einde van de zestiende en het begin van de zeventiende eeuw. Deze periode markeerde voor de meeste kerkelijke gebouwen in Gent – net als in andere steden en dorpen in de Nederlanden – een materieel dieptepunt als gevolg van de vernielingen tijdens de Beeldenstorm van 1566 en 1578-1579 en het Calvinistische regime (1577-1584 voor Gent). De kerken van Sint-Jacob en Sint-Veerle werden allebei zwaar getroffen. De wijze waarop de parochies met deze crisis omgingen is veelzeggend. Naast de schade aan de kerk, speelden ook de institutionele achtergrond van de parochie, de grootte, de betrokkenheid van parochianen en – zoals vergelijkend onderzoek aangeeft – ook de lokale dynamiek, een belangrijke rol in het restauratieproces.

## Abstract

The Low Countries knew a wide variety of parishes that followed different roads when reacting to challenges such as the iconoclast destructions of their church. This article focuses on two very different parishes in the city of Ghent : St James and St Pharahild at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. In this period, most ecclesiastical buildings in Ghent – as in many other towns and villages of the Low Countries – were plagued by the waves of iconoclasm of 1566 and 1578-79 and a period of Calvinist Rule (1577-84 for Ghent). Both the parish churches of St James and St Pharahild were severely damaged. The way this crisis impacted the parishes and how they continued functioning afterwards is revealing. It shows that, apart from the degree of damage inflicted, the institutional background of the parish, its size, the degree of involvement of parishioners and – as comparison with other case studies illustrates – local dynamics, determined the processes of recovery.

# The Institutional Nature of Parishes and the Restoration of the Church after Iconoclasm. The Case of St James and St Pharahild in Ghent (1566-1614)\*

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During the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, the Low Countries were the battleground for diverse religious and political forces that had a strong impact on religious and social life. After a short period dominated by republican Calvinist regimes, most towns of the Southern Low Countries reverted to Catholic, princely rule during the last decades of the sixteenth century as a result of political and military defeats at the hands of the Spanish forces of King Philip II<sup>(1)</sup>. Only after this *Reconquista* was the Counter-Reformation able to establish itself in the urban communities of the Southern Low Countries. Throughout this unique and turbulent period, the parish remained a factor of importance. It was not just the building block and the base of the ecclesiastical structure, but a social entity as well<sup>(2)</sup>. Within its territory, it gathered a mix of clergy and laymen and -women of different social backgrounds. In order to grasp how Catholic life and Catholic institutions survived the challenges brought about by the Reformation and the Revolt and to assess whether or how Catholic life changed thereafter, the parish seems to offer the ideal material for a case study.

\* This article is the adaptation of a paper presented during the session entitled "The Urban Parish" at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban History organised by the European Association for Urban History held at Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic) on 1 September 2012. In this article, the following abbreviations were used: KAWLSK (Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten), VKAB (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren); HMGOG NR (Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent. Nieuwe Reeks), RAG (Rijksarchief te Gent), OKA Sint-Jacobs (Oud archief van de kerkfabriek en parochie Sint-Jacobs te Gent), SBB (Archief van de Sint-Baafsabdij, het Sint-Baafskapittel en het Bisdom Gent), SV (Archief van het Sint-Veerlekapittel te Gent).

(1) General works about this period are for example: Geoffrey PARKER, *The Dutch Revolt*, London, Cornell University Press, 1977; Jan Juliaan WOLTJER, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd en burgeroorlog: Over de Nederlandse opstand, 1555-1580*, Amsterdam, Balans, 1994; Peter ARNADE, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt*, Ithaca-London, Cornell University Press, 2008.

(2) Susan J. WRIGHT, *Parish, Church and People. Local Studies in Lay Religion, 1350-1750*, London, Hutchinson, 1988, p. 88.

Even though the historiography of urban life in the Netherlands has given attention to diverse religious themes<sup>(3)</sup>, the case of the parish has been, until now, largely ignored. This seems all the more surprising and indeed deplorable when we take into account the strong interest in the late medieval and early modern parish in international research, as exemplified by the volumes edited by Wright and French<sup>(4)</sup>, for example, or the activities of the Warwick Network for Parish Research<sup>(5)</sup>. During the last third of the twentieth century, some research was done on the seventeenth-century rural parishes of the Southern Low Countries<sup>(6)</sup>. However, the emphasis of these studies was almost exclusively on sources produced by the ecclesiastical hierarchy,

(3) We are thinking of the studies on the role of the mendicant orders, the beguine movement, processions, religious confraternities, the chambers of rhetoric and the advent of the Reformation. Guido MARNEF, "Chambers of Rhetoric and the Transmission of Religious Ideas in the Low Countries", in Heinz SCHILLING, Estvan-György TÓTH, Robert MUCHEMBLE & William MONTER, eds., *Religion and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 274-293 (Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe, 1); Anne-Laure VAN BRUAENE, *Om beters wille. Rederijerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2008; Bart RAMAKERS, *Spelen en figuren. Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en Moderne Tijd*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1996; Walter SIMONS, *Stad en apostolaat: de vestiging van de bedelorden in het graafschap Vlaanderen (ca. 1225- ca. 1350)*, Brussel, AWSLK, 1987; Walter SIMONS, *Cities of Ladies. Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001; Marjan DE SMET & Paul TRIO, *Processions and Church Fabrics in the Low Countries during the Middle Ages. An Inquiry into Secular Influence on Ecclesiastical and Religious Matters on a Local Urban Level*, Leuven, Faculty of Arts of the Catholic University Leuven, 2006; Paul TRIO, *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving. De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 1993.

(4) S.J. WRIGHT, *Parish, Church and People op. cit.*; Beat KÜMIN, *The Shaping of a Community. The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish, c. 1400-1560*, Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1996; Katherine FRENCH, Gary GIBBS & Beat KÜMIN, eds., *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600*, New York, Manchester University Press, 1997; Clive BURGESS & Eamon DUFFY, eds., *The Parish in Late Medieval England*, Donington, Shaun Tyas, 2006 (Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 14); Katherine FRENCH, *The Good Women of the Parish. Gender and Religion after the Black Death*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

(5) For their website, see [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/res\\_rec/parishnetwork/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/res_rec/parishnetwork/). In addition to the overview on parish research in Britain, the website lists many projects in other countries as well. Southern Europe is, however, a bit under-represented. As consulted on 10 September 2012. See for research on parish life in France: Bruno RESTIF, *La révolution des paroisses. Culture paroissiale et réforme catholique en Haute-Bretagne aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, René, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006; Anne BONZON, *L'esprit de clocher. Prêtres et paroisses dans le diocèse de Beauvais (1535-1650)*, Paris, Cerf, 1999.

(6) Jozef DE BROUWER, *Godsdienstig leven en kerkelijke instellingen 1550-1621. Land van Aalst*, Aalst, De Aankondiger, 1961; Leo BRAEKEN, *De dekenij Herentals (1603-1669). Bijdrage tot de studie van het godsdienstig leven in het bisdom Antwerpen*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 1982; Marc THERRY, *De religieuze beleving bij de leken in het 17<sup>de</sup>-eeuwse bisdom Brugge (1609-1706)*, Brussel, AWSLK, 1988 (VKAB, 128); Michel CLOET & Frans DAELEMANS, eds., *Godsdienst, mentaliteit en dagelijks leven. Religieuze geschiedenis in België sinds 1970*, Brussels, 1988 (Archief-en bibliotheekwezen in België, 35), p. 111-128.

such as episcopal visitation reports. This perspective can give us an insight into the attitude of the church authorities, but it generally minimises the role of ordinary parishioners<sup>(7)</sup>. As a result, these parish studies have portrayed early modern Catholic communities in Flanders as relatively passive groups. Especially after the religious troubles of the end of the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of the Habsburg Low Countries were considered to be infected by Protestantism and in need of re-catholicisation. The program for this renewed Catholicism, or Counter-Reformation, was easily found in the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563). During the last decade of the sixteenth century and especially in the first half of the seventeenth century, these decrees were, according to historiography, essentially carried out by the clergy, supported by the prince, his governor, and the urban magistrates. Within this process, the bishop was portrayed as the leading protagonist.

Following this perspective, one might expect to find that parishes where the clergy had a stronger or more prominent position, recovered faster from the blow given by the iconoclasm and Calvinist Republic than parishes where members of the laity held important church positions. The idea behind this is that the clergy was at the source of the catholic renewal initiated by Tridentine decrees and bishops, while in practice, they came out of the religious troubles with mixed affiliations<sup>(8)</sup>.

Recently, historians like Judith Pollmann, Benjamin Kaplan and Charles Parker have shown that there is another side to the story of early modern

(7) Some recent exceptions can be pointed out. A very extensive study that makes use of a wide range of sources and gives insight into daily Catholic life is for example Bart MINNEN, ed., *Den heiligen sant al in Brabant. De Sint-Martinuskerk van Wezemaal en de cultus van Sint-Job 1000-2000*, Averbode, Uitgeverij Altiora, 2011 and Llewellyn BOGAERS, *Aards, betrokken en zelfbewust: de verwevenheid van cultuur en religie in katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600*, Utrecht, Levend Verleden, 2008. See for a more information on parish research in the Low Countries: Michal BAUWENS, "Parish Studies and the Debates on Religious Life in the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)", in *History Compass*, vol. 13, 2015, 2, p. 64-77.

(8) A paper presented by Gert Gielis for instance, underlined the status of members of some cathedral chapters, among which St Bavon in Ghent, as "champions of Trent". Gert GIELIS, "Champions and challengers: the reception of Trent by the higher clergy in the Low Countries in the 1560s" (paper presented at the conference "The Council of Trent, reform and controversy in Europa and beyond" Leuven, December 4-6, 2013). As members of the entourage of the bishop(s), who were esteemed as the flag-bearers of Trent, this seems to be a perfectly acceptable position. Other research however, pointed at the resistance put up especially by members of collegiate chapters, as Trent restricted their juridical privileges. Fernand WILLOCX, *L'introduction des décrets du Concile de Trente dans les Pays-Bas et dans la principauté de Liège*, Leuven, 1929 (Université de Louvain. Recueil de travaux publiés par les membres des conférences d'histoire et de philologie, 2<sup>e</sup> s., 14); Alexandre PASTURE, "La réforme des chapitres séculiers pendant le règne des archiducs (1596-1633)", in *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome*, vol. 5, 1925, p. 5-7. More recent studies show that collegiate chapters did try to implement the Tridentine decrees, although their effort in this respect can be described as rather moderate. Alain LOTTIN, *Lille, citadelle de la contre-réforme*, Dunkerque, Presses universitaires de Septentrion, 1984, p. 84; Philippe LOUPÈS, *Chapitres et chanoines de Guyenne aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, École des Hautes Études en Sciences sociales, 1985 (Civilisations et Sociétés, 70), p. 448-451.

Catholicism<sup>(9)</sup>. Despite the fact that these authors have not studied parishes as a particular entity, they have revealed how lay Catholics or Catholic communities were important agents in everyday church and social life. By reading diaries of ordinary Catholics during the period 1520-1635, Pollmann has been able to point to their changing active role during the Dutch Revolt<sup>(10)</sup>. Also the Counter Reformation has been re-assessed. The laity was strongly involved in Catholicism and did not wait for the clergy to bring alterations. Especially the experiences of Catholics during the Calvinist Republics or as refugees among other Catholic groups proved essential for the formation of an Early Modern Catholicism that differed from medieval Catholicism<sup>(11)</sup>. Also in research outside the Netherlands, the agency of ordinary Catholics is stressed<sup>(12)</sup>.

The theme of agency and laity versus clergy is also of importance in this article. We will highlight a more material aspect of religion that can be linked with the Counter Reformation in the Southern Netherlands: the restoration of the Catholic buildings after the troubles of the late sixteenth century. Two cases will be examined: the St James and St Pharahild parishes in Ghent after the iconoclasm of 1566 and the destructions that took place during the Calvinist Republic of Ghent (1577-1584). Especially the role of parishioners in the repairs will be discussed while taking into account the specific institutional background of the churches. Where St James could be considered an average city parish for the Southern Netherlands with parishioners of diverse social backgrounds, St Pharahild is a more particular case. The two parishes had a different size, a different institutional background and where St James had a lot of lay activity in the church, St Pharahild was a bastion of clergymen. Because of these differences the restoration after the troubles took very different paths. The study of these two parishes after a period of crisis gives us more insight in the various ways in which the urban Catholic fabric was restored at the beginning of what is usually named the Counter Reformation.

(9) Benjamin KAPLAN, *Divided by Faith. Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2007; Charles PARKER, *Faith on the Margins*, London, Harvard University Press, 2008; Judith POLLMANN, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011.

(10) These works on the laity in the early modern Netherlands follow a change in perspective, but this shift occurred in studies on religious medieval life already more than 25 years ago. See for example: André VAUCHEZ, *Les laïcs au Moyen Âge. Pratiques et expériences religieuses*, Paris, Cerf, 1987; Robert Norman SWANSON, *Religion and Devotion in Europe. c. 1215-c. 1515*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995. The transition of medieval to early modern Catholicism was of course covered by John BOSSY's *Christianity in the West. 1400-1700*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 1989.

(11) J. POLLMANN, *Catholic identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands*, *op. cit.*; Geert H. JANSSEN, "The Exile Experience", in Alexandra BAMJI, Geert H. JANSSEN & Mary LAVEN, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2013, p. 73-90; Geert H. JANSSEN, "The Counter-Reformation of the Refugee. Exile and the Shaping of Catholic Militancy in the Dutch Revolt", in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 63/4, 2012, p. 671-692.

(12) Marc R. FORSTER, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque. Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

## The parochial landscape in Ghent

St Pharahild had a peculiar background as it was initially founded as a private chapel by the count of Flanders at the beginning of the thirteenth century. As of the eleventh century, a group of five priests-chaplains had been attached to his residence, the so-called *Gravensteen*, as servants of this chapel. Between 1202 and 1207 this existing association of clergymen was transformed into a collegiate chapter by increasing the number of prebends from five to eight. A new church of the same name was established by 1216. In the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, another four prebends were attached to the chapter, which at its largest totalled thirteen members, consisting of twelve canons (including the dean) and a provost. The origin of the parish of St Pharahild dates back to a moment between 1190 and 1225<sup>(13)</sup>. Its territory included the area surrounding the church and the count's castle, which as a result was rather restricted. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the parish counted some sixty houses<sup>(14)</sup>. The counts of Flanders held the theoretical patronage right over this miniature parish, which they in practice delegated to the chapter. One of the canons was responsible for pastoral care and was appointed priest. In this first period, the parishioners of St Pharahild consisted mainly of courtiers and those who served the chapter. As the function of the castle changed over time, it may be assumed that this was also true for the background of the parishioners. By the fifteenth century, when the supreme comital court of justice (the Council of Flanders) resided in the *Gravensteen*<sup>(15)</sup>, the princely residence and its household had moved to a new location elsewhere in the city. In the course of time, new houses were built within the castral boundaries and former courtyard. As a result, they no longer exclusively housed people who were directly connected to the chapter or to the court. For instance, since 1323 the parish housed the hospice *Wenemaer*. Those who resided or served within this hospital can also be included as parishioners<sup>(16)</sup>. This would categorise St Pharahild as an example of one of the types of parishes related to chapters as introduced by Delmaire<sup>(17)</sup>. It can be characterised as a chapter without a 'real' adjacent

(13) Georges DECLERCQ, "Nieuwe inzichten over de oorsprong van het Sint-Veerle-kapittel in Gent", in *HMGOG*, n.r., vol. 63, 1989, p. 97-101; Brigitte MEIJNS, "Les collégiales des villes de Flandre, X<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles", in Roselyne LE BOURGEOIS, Anne MASSONI & Pascal MONTAUBIN, eds., *Les collégiales et la ville dans la province ecclésiastique de Reims (IX<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles). Actes du colloque d'Amiens-Beauvais 3-5 juillet 2009 organisé en l'honneur d'Hélène Millet*, Amiens, Centre d'archéologie et d'histoire médiévales des établissements religieux, 2010 (*Histoire médiévale et Archéologie*, 23), p. 17-18.

(14) RAG, SBB, serie S, n° 234, f° 147 r° et sq., "Copybook of chapter acts and other documents", 1411-1769.

(15) Jan DUMOLYN, *Het hogere personeel van de hertogen van Bourgondië in het graafschap Vlaanderen*, Unpubl. PhD diss. Ghent University, 2001, p. 113-118.

(16) During the second half of the sixteenth century, between 5 and 15 *proveniers* resided at the hospital. Robbe GRÉGOIRE, *In de schaduw van het Gravensteen. Een huizenonderzoek in Gent: het Wenemaerhospitaal*, Unpubl. Master's Thesis Ghent University, 2011, p. 110-111.

(17) Bernard DELMAIRE, "Les collégiales, leurs paroisses et la vie paroissiale dans les villes d'Artois et de Flandre wallonne (XII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)", in R. LE BOURGEOIS, A. MASSONI & P. MONTAUBIN, eds., *Les collégiales et la ville*, *op. cit.*, p. 46-47.



parish, originally only exercising pastoral care over its own members and those closely related to it<sup>(18)</sup>.

Apart from this exceptional parish<sup>(19)</sup>, Ghent housed from the Middle Ages onwards, more “ordinary” parishes, like St James. The demographic expansion and strong economic development of Ghent from the second half of the tenth century onwards resulted in the founding of most of these Ghent parishes. The two Benedictine abbeys, St Peter (Sint-Pieter) and St Bavon (Sint-Baafs), had become patrons of seven Ghent parishes by the thirteenth century. The dividing line between the jurisdiction of the two abbeys was the river Lys. St James, for example, situated on the right bank of this river belonged to the abbey of St Peter<sup>(20)</sup>.

By the sixteenth century, the population of Ghent numbered between 40,000 and 50,000 souls. St James was not one of the largest city parishes

(18) Other ‘types’ of chapter parishes are those of which the chapter church is the see, but with a priest who isn’t a member of the chapter. Such parishes don’t have a separate temple, all they have at their disposal for the performance of services is an altar in the chapter church. A similar example are cathedral churches of which the nave serves as the church of a worshipping community. This led to a number of practical issues as well: Michael FRANKLIN, “The cathedral as parish church: the case of Southern England”, in David ABULAFIA, Michael FRANKLIN & Miri RUBIN, eds., *Church and City, 1000-1500. Essays in honour of Christopher Brooke*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 179-181. The parish often adopts the patron saint of the chapter, but this is not always the case. An example is the parish of the chapter of St Omer, dedicated to St Jules and St Victor. A third type distinguished by Delmaire is the parish church of which a chapter is the patron, thus an individual church with its own priest, chosen and benefited by the chapter. The chapter of St Peter in Lille for instance, held the right of patronage over the parish churches of St Nicolas and Our Lady in the same city. Contrarily to what is the case for the first type of chapter parish, these last two examples have a broader flock, as their parish territory is more geographically demarcated.

(19) Ghent had more exceptional parishes. She housed from the end of the thirteenth century onwards three beguinages, of which St Elisabeth was the largest. This was a parish as well, just like the Spanish Castle which was a younger Ghent parish situated around a castle built on command of Charles V on the grounds of the old St Bavon’s abbey between 1540 and 1545. Especially in the seventeenth century and until 1700, when the Spanish troops left the citadel, it can be considered as a military parish with its own pastor, church and churchyard. See Lucas LUYTS, *Het groot begijnhof van Sint-Elisabeth in zijn verleden en zijn heden*, Gent, Paters Dominikanen, 1965, p. 16-23 and Griet MARÉCHAL, “De vergeten Gentse parochie. Het Spaans Kasteel in de 17<sup>e</sup> eeuw”, in *HMGOG*, n.r., vol. 65, 1-2, 2011, p. 127-176.

(20) The oldest parish church within the centre was St John (Sint-Jan), which was certainly patronized by St Peter since 964. St James and St Nicolas, also patronized by St Peter, were split off from St John in 1093 and around 1120. St Michael (Sint-Michiël), patronized by St Bavon must have been erected before 1105 as it then was separated from the initially more rural parish of St Martin (first mentioned in 966). The last two regular Ghent parishes to be mentioned are Our Lady of St Peter (presumably founded between 1037 and 1140) and the Holy Christ (consecrated in 1067). They were situated in the enclaves of the ‘villages’ attached to respectively St Peter’s and St Bavon’s abbey. See Georges DECLERCQ & Marie-Christine LALEMAN, “Archeologie van de stedelijke ruimte”, in Marc BOONE & Gita DENECKERE, eds., *Gent, stad van alle tijden*, Gent-Antwerpen, STAM-Mercatorfonds, 2010, p. 48; Walter PREVENIER & Marc BOONE, “De stadstaardroom”, in Johan DECAVELE, ed., *Gent. Apologie van een rebelse stad*, Antwerpen, Mercatorfonds, 1989, p. 48; Paul TRIO, *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving. De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen (12<sup>de</sup>-16<sup>de</sup> eeuw)*, Unpubl. PhD diss. Catholic University of Louvain, 1989, vol. 1, p. 111, 143, 156, 222.



of the city, as it consisted of between 3,000 and 5,000 parishioners, but compared to many urban parishes in other regions it was very populated. The genesis and evolution of St James can be largely attributed to the growth of the population in Ghent from the tenth century onwards and with this the need for places of worship in the city. Because of its institutional background and size, St James can be considered as a more or less average city parish, situated within the heart of the city.

St Pharahild, on the other hand, was the only chapter present within the city until 1536, when the abbey of St Bavon was transformed into a newly created collegiate chapter, to be housed in the former parish church of St John<sup>(21)</sup>. This was a rather unique situation for a city the size and importance of Ghent, as comparable or even smaller cities had housed several chapters since the Middle Ages<sup>(22)</sup>. St Pharahild was unfortunately no match for the larger, wealthier and powerful chapter of St Bavon, by which it was soon completely overshadowed.

### **Responses to a church at peril Laymen's actions in St James' parish**

On 22 and 23 August 1566 almost no ecclesiastical institution in Ghent escaped the first iconoclastic fury: all parish churches, twenty-five convents, ten hospitals and seven chapels were damaged<sup>(23)</sup>. Thanks to the account of Marcus van Vaernewijck (see further), we are well informed about the damage done to each one of these institutions.<sup>(24)</sup>

According to van Vaernewijck the church of St James was among the worst afflicted. The parishioners of St James had a dubious role in Iconoclasm. Van Vaernewijck describes the iconoclasts at first mainly as foreigners or poor journeymen from outside Ghent<sup>(25)</sup>. The presence of many foreigners sus-

(21) Erik VAN MINGROOT, "De lange weg naar het bisdom Gent", in Michel CLOET, ed., *Het bisdom Gent (1159-1991). Vier eeuwen geschiedenis*, Gent, Werkgroep De Geschiedenis van het Bisdom Gent, 1991, p. 22.

(22) For instance the chapters of St Donatian, St Saviour and Our Lady in Bruges, St James and St Gudula in Brussels, Our Lady and St Michael in Antwerp, St Peter and Our Lady in Cassel, St Géry and the Holy Cross in Cambrai... For an overview of all collegiate chapters within the geographical area of the medieval French dioceses: <http://lamop-appli.univ-paris1.fr/collegiales/index.php?i=lieux> (14 May 2015) consultation date.

(23) Johan DECAVELE, "Wonderjaar en beeldenstorm", in Johan DECAVELE, ed., *Het eind van een rebelse droom. Opstellen over het calvinistisch bewind te Gent (1577-1584) en de terugkeer van de stad onder de gehoorzaamheid van de koning van Spanje (17 september 1584)*, Gent, Stadsbestuur Gent, 1984, p. 24. For more information on the iconoclasm in Ghent see Jozef SCHEERDER, *Het wonderjaar te Gent (1566-1567)*, Unpubl. PhD diss. Catholic University of Louvain, 1971 and P. ARNADE, *Beggars, Iconoclasts and Civic Patriots*, op. cit., p. 148-163.

(24) For more details on the community of Ghent before and in the aftermath of the iconoclasm of 1566: Michal BAUWENS, "Under construction? The Catholic community in Ghent after the Beeldenstorm", in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (forthcoming).

(25) Marcus VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden in die Nederlanden, en voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, ed. Ferdinand VANDERHAEGHEN, Gent, Annoot-Braeckman, 1872-1881, vol. 1, p. 101, 106.

pected of having evil intentions is indeed affirmed by the letters of the aldermen to the central government in Brussels in the days preceding Iconoclasm in Ghent. They expressed their worries about *eenen vremden hoop*, a group of strangers, that was destroying church interiors in Deinze, a nearby town<sup>(26)</sup>. However, van Vaernewijck informs us that at least some parishioners of St James had taken part in the destructions. He noted that the blacksmith Jacob de Pruet, who lived nearby the church had been a violent breaker and that also the painter Jan van der Riviere, destroyed his own work out of revenge as one of the parish priests had refused to pay the price they had agreed upon<sup>(27)</sup>. It is hard to calculate the number of parishioners who had been involved in iconoclasm, but there are some indications that it was more than a handful. After the arrival of Alva in the Netherlands, the rumour went abroad that 230 people in Ghent were convicted for having been involved with Calvinism or the breakings, and of this group at least eighty came from the parish of St James. As St James belonged to the smaller centre parishes, this was a high number. In February 1568, placards with a list of one hundred names were hung on the doors of three centre churches, namely St James, St Michael and St Bavon. All the men listed on these placards were ordered to present themselves before Alva. Indeed, here as well the parishioners of St James formed the largest proportion, namely forty out of one hundred<sup>(28)</sup>.

After the iconoclastic riots, the reaction of the parishioners did not seem to reflect a large involvement with St James either. The secular government played a main role in demanding the repair of the church patrimony<sup>(29)</sup>. Both Margaret of Parma and the duke of Alba ordered the restoration of the churches. At least twice the local government sent for the deans of the guilds and ordered them to restore their chapels<sup>(30)</sup>. Obviously, the parishioners were considered responsible for the church building, but some of the parishioners evidently seemed less convinced of this themselves. Those that had not contributed to the destructions found it unfair that they had to pay for and organize the repairs of their chapels. Even so, according to Marcus van Vaernewijck they were not without guilt. If they really had wanted, they could have defended their chapel or hidden the main ornaments and valuables. Besides, it was unrealistic to make only the iconoclasts pay for the repairs as most of them were too poor<sup>(31)</sup>.

The parishioners of St James were clearly not a homogeneous group. Apart from the group that had actively joined the breakings, there are indications of indifference towards the Church in this period.<sup>(32)</sup> However, the key role

(26) Gent, Stadsarchief (SAG), Inv. 94bis, n° 8, f° 242, "Letter of the magistrate to delegate Borluut", 18 August 1566.

(27) M. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, op. cit., vol. 1, 138-139, vol. 2, p. 206-207, vol. 3, p. 296-297.

(28) *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 272-279, 299.

(29) Andrew SPICER, "After Iconoclasm. Reconciliation and Resacralisation in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566-1585", in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 44, 2013, 2, p. 411-433.

(30) M. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 258-259, vol. 3, p. 293-295.

(31) *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 258-260.

(32) *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 74-75, 331-332.

of the government in the first repairs does not, necessarily, have to point to an entirely careless or disinterested community. The enormous shock and paralysing effect that iconoclasm brought to daily Catholic life should not be underestimated. Van Vaernewijck subtly reveals the emotional damage of the events in his account:

*“Waerinne sommige lieden zoo verwondert, verscricte ende onstelt waren duer de nieuwe groote wonderlicke veranderinghe, die scheen in veel pointen voor handen te wesen, dat zij spraken: de lucht en verandert niet, als oft haer jeghen reden ghedocht hadde, dat Godt daeromme gheen meerckelicke teeken in de lucht en vertoochde, recht als of hij gheslapen hadde... Ander werden daerof zieck, ander laghen snachts in haer bedden ende zuchten ende en weenden, ende laghen met ghevauden handen, mans ende wijfs”*<sup>(33)</sup>.

Despite the chaos, for some members of St James' parish, the continuation of parish life remained important. Prior to the destruction, the brethren of several confraternities had safeguarded some of the altar pieces, panel paintings and devotional objects<sup>(34)</sup>. In the immediate aftermath of iconoclasm, the church arranged for guards and some small replacements and repairs<sup>(35)</sup>. The guards were laymen such as burghers, noblemen and craftsmen<sup>(36)</sup>. Marcus van Vaernewijck is exemplary for the many responsibilities a layman could have in his parish church. As a churchwarden in 1567, he was part of the official commission that had to assess the damages done to the church. Three clergymen (the dean and the two parish priests) and seven laymen (churchwardens, masters of the Table of the Holy Spirit and craftsmen) were part of this commission. In addition to this function, Marcus van Vaernewijck was, as head of seven crafts, accountable for the restoration of the respective chapels. Furthermore, he organised general and large repairs, such as of the high church tabernacle and he often functioned as a financial buffer for the church by advancing money for the repairs<sup>(37)</sup>.

(33) *“People were so astonished, terrified and shocked by the new, great and wondrous changes that seemed about to happen that they said ‘[yet] the heavens are unchanged’, as if they found it unintelligible that God failed to display notable signs in the skies, just as if He had been asleep... Others became sick; others, men and women, lay in their beds at night sighing and weeping, wringing their hands”*. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 118. The English translation of this quote is from Judith POLLMANN: “Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence, 1560-1585”, in *Past and Present*, vol. 190, 2006, p. 94.

(34) M. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, op. cit., vol. 1, 88, 151. On church art in the Low Countries before iconoclasm, see Jeremy Dupertuis BANGS, *Church Art and Architecture in the Low Countries before 1566*, Kirksville, Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1997, p. 244.

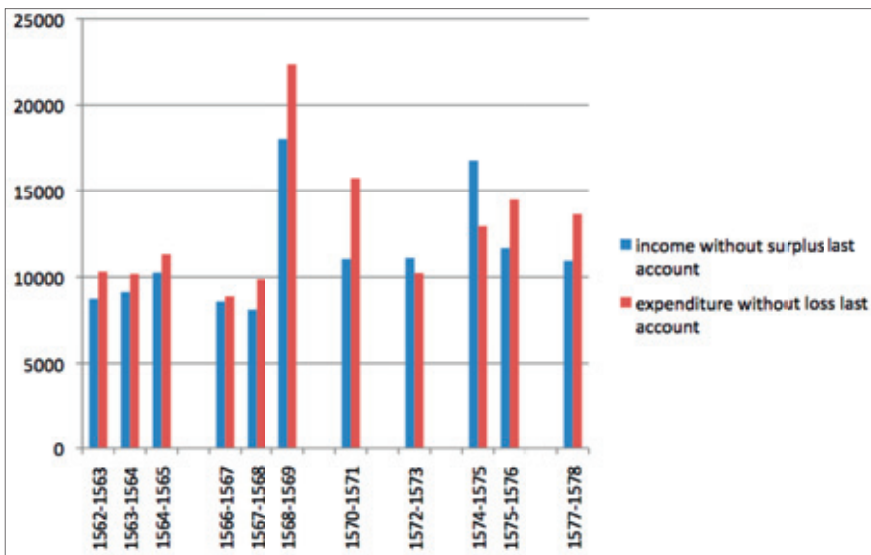
(35) Frans VERSTRAETEN, *De Gentse Sint-Jacobsparochie*, Gent, s.n., 1975, vol. 2, p. 173.

(36) Daniel JACOBS, *Het wonderjaar te Gent (juni 1566-1567)*, Gent, 2004 (1906), p. 21.

(37) M. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 74-76, 91-92, 293-295; RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs, n° 347, f° 27 r°, “Churchwarden account”, 1568-1569. On the reparation works done by the chamber of rhetoric Mariën Theeren, see A.-L. VAN BRUAENE, *Om beters wille*, op. cit.

By 1568-1569, the church repairs received a boost that caused a doubling of the total expenditure of the church. Only with the support of ordinary parishioners was the church able to finance these necessary repairs. The churchwarden account of 1568-1569 gives a detailed list of all the parishioners who contributed to a specific collection held for the repairs. A total of 465 parishioners had given a sum amounting to approximately thirty seven pounds grooten Vlaams, which corresponds to an average of a little less than twenty deniers grooten per person. This was about the daily wage of a mason's apprentice in summer<sup>(38)</sup>. Furthermore, some of the parishioners contributed with unpaid work on the church building instead of money. Although the total of thirty seven pounds is a rather small amount for a relatively large parish, it corresponded to the average annual income of the church fabric in the years before Iconoclasm<sup>(39)</sup>. Furthermore, it was the most important source of income that would be used to pay the repairs. The graph below illustrates that the rise in expenditure due to repairs was followed by an almost equal rise in income. The rise in income in 1568-1569 can be almost entirely attributed to gifts of parishioners.

Graph 1: Total annual income and outgoings of the church fabric of St James in deniers grooten (1562-1578)<sup>(40)</sup>



(38) For the wages of a mason's apprentice during this period see Étienne SCHOLLIERS, "Prijzen en lonen te Antwerpen (15<sup>e</sup> en 16<sup>e</sup> eeuw)", in Charles VERLINDEN et al., eds., *Dokumenten voor de geschiedenis van prijzen en lonen in Vlaanderen en Brabant. I (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> eeuw)*, Brugge, De Tempel, 1959, p. 471-475.

(39) RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, 347, f<sup>o</sup> 11-17v., "Churchwarden account", 1568-1569.

(40) RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, 342-354, "Churchwarden account", period 1562-1578. The account of 1569-1570 is missing. Most likely the repairs section will have been large in this account, just like in the account year following. Throughout this year a shift had taken place. By the mid 1570's, most urgent repairs – especially those on the building – seem to have been finished. In the account of 1570-1571, more attention went to textile and needlework.

With 52 pounds spent on repairs, the large collection of 1568 did not cover all the expenditure of that year. However, this collection was not all that the parishioners had offered to the parish church. Offerings, other gifts and wills (7 pounds groten Vlaams) and payments for funerals (9 pounds) could be used as well, together with other, more stable, income such as rents (17 pounds). The most important repairs must have been completed rather fast. The restored tabernacle was inaugurated in the summer of 1568. Vaernewijck remarked that same year that thanks to the generous gifts of parishioners, the church was now in a better state than before the breaking<sup>(41)</sup>. The church fabric had a small deficit for a couple of years, but already by 1572 the income started to grow faster than the expenditure. Some new losses were made when more repairs followed in 1575-1576 and in 1577-1578<sup>(42)</sup>. The regular rises of expenditure, resulting from the repairs, did not affect the parish in a structural way. Apart from the fluctuating expenses made for repairs, and the occasional collections, the usual church expenses and earnings remained stable until the rise of the Calvinist Republic in 1577.

The precise motivations of the parishioners donating money in 1568-1569 are unknown. The collection was carried out by the two pastors, the churchwardens and the members of the institution for poor relief of St James, all highly respectable parishioners. Consequently, the registration of donor names would have impelled even more people to give money. Furthermore, in a time and area controlled by the duke of Alba and his soldiers, this could have been a way for parishioners to show their attachment to the church and to the Catholic faith, and thus to proclaim their innocence. Despite not knowing the exact motives, it is clear that contributions like these were crucial for the continuation of normal parish life after the iconoclast attacks.

The reaction of the parishioners following the period of Calvinist Republic seems less dubious. From 1577 to 1584 a revolutionary Calvinist regime ruled in Ghent. More towns in the Netherlands would set up similar Calvinist regimes, but Ghent would be known as the most radical one<sup>(43)</sup>. Although this regime accepted, under influence of William of Orange, a religious peace in December 1578, Catholic life was made practically impossible. And in March 1579, another iconoclasm swept through Ghent, destroying the newly repaired ecclesiastical buildings again. After this, the church of St James was mostly left unused<sup>(44)</sup>.

(41) M. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 203-204; F. VERSTRAETEN, *De Gentse Sint-Jacobsparochie*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 175; RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, 347, "Churchwarden account", 1568-1569.

(42) RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs, n° 348-351, 352, f° 20 r°, 20 v°, 353-354, "Churchwarden account", period 1570-1578.

(43) For a better understanding of the Calvinist Republic in Ghent: J. DECAVELE, *Het eind van een rebelse droom*, op. cit.

(44) André DESPRETZ, "De instauratie der Gentse Calvinistische Republiek", in *HMGOG*, n.r., vol. 17, 1963, p. 170-183; J. DECAVELE, *Het eind van een rebelse droom*, op. cit., p. 82; F. VERSTRAETEN, *De Gentse Sint-Jacobsparochie*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 185.

In 1584, the Republic had to surrender to Alexander Farnese, who was responsible for the recapture of the cities in revolt. As in most of the reconquered towns he did not force the Ghent Calvinists to convert to Catholicism immediately in order to be pardoned. Instead, he offered a period of two years in which heretics, under the condition that they did not cause any scandal, could remain in the city. However, if they did not reconcile with the Church within this period, they had to leave<sup>(45)</sup>. This political step and the following migration had important consequences for the parish as a community. The general characteristics of the group of parishioners belonging to St James altered throughout this period.

When Ghent reverted again to Catholic rule, the restoration works on the church could commence. Although the local and central government played an important role in the restoration, the churchwarden accounts reveal an immediate reaction of the parishioners of St James. Despite the fact that in the years following the fall of the Republic some 15,000 people left Ghent and the city was in the middle of an economic crisis, the parishioners managed to accumulate, within the first year after the Calvinist Republic, an income fivefold that of the years preceding Calvinist rule<sup>(46)</sup>. Also the repairs began immediately. Consequently, for at least five years after 1584, the total expenditure grew to about the double of what it had been during the record year 1568-1569 (the year in which the most repairs after the first period of iconoclasm were recorded)<sup>(47)</sup>.

Because of the economic hardship of these years and inflation it is not very useful to compare the absolute amounts of what was offered to the church. However, looking at the portion of the gifts in total income, the relative importance of parishioners is striking as well. In previous years the gifts of parishioners never had exceeded thirty per cent of the total income of the church fabric. In the account of 1568-1569, when the discussed collection was recorded, the gifts had reached sixty per cent of the total income and after 1585, parishioners offered freely money or gave loans to the church which totalled for several years between sixty and eighty per cent of the church's income! The graph on page 682 illustrates this further.

(45) Violet SOEN, "De reconciliatie van "kettters" in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden (1520-1590)", in *Trajecta*, vol. 14, 2005, p. 355-356.

(46) Whereas Ghent had counted about 45,000 people in 1571-1572, the population, after a period of growth during the Calvinist Republic, fell back to 27,000 citizens in 1590. This meant that about 15,000 people left Ghent in the period 1584-1590. The emigration had not taken the proportions it had in Antwerp, where half of the population (40,000 people) left the city after the reconciliation; however, it was substantial. See Johan DAMBRUYNE, *Mensen en centen. Het 16<sup>de</sup>-eeuwse Gent in demografisch en economisch perspectief*, Gent, Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde, 2001 (Verhandelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent, 26), p. 87-89; RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, 357-363, "Churchwarden account", period 1583-1591.

(47) The expenses would remain, at least until 1590, above 200 pounds. This is a multifold higher than in the period 1562-1584, when the church spent per year on average a little more than 35 pounds. Even after taking inflation into account, the rise in expenditure is striking.



Despite the increased gifts, the many repairs caused the expenditure of the church to exceed the income from 1584 until 1589. After that, St James' financial situation improved and the church had a surplus on the end of most account years. This flow of money, immediately following such a dark period in Catholic history, is remarkable. It points to a Catholic community that had a strong will to restore its own parish church to its former glory. The fact that this revival of the financial and material aspects of church life occurred during an age of economic and demographic decline is even more remarkable. Most likely the support of the military and political force (Farnese) gave parishioners the assurance that, this time, Catholicism indeed would prevail.

Of course, this assurance could as well have driven less committed Catholics to give money and thus showcase their loyalty to the Catholic Church. Again, the precise motivations of the donors are hard to retrieve, but the large amounts of money coming from the offertory boxes, which were a rather anonymous form for donating money to the church, does not allow mere ostentation to be the main explanation for the rise in income. Although the study of the exact role of higher worldly and ecclesiastical authorities could bring more insights into these complex changes, the important role lay parishioners could have in the reconstruction of the church buildings and thus, parish life, is undeniable. Precisely because parishioners of St James strongly interfered in the functioning of their church, the parish had a lot of resilience<sup>(48)</sup>.

### Parish government and the influence of the laity

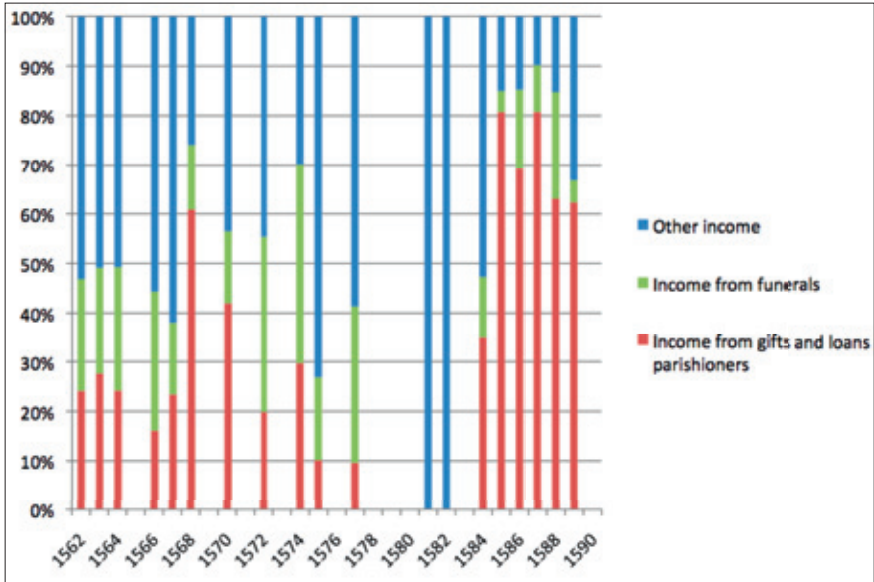
The strong influence of lay parishioners in St James during and after the iconoclasm and Calvinist Republic was not incidental but related to its genesis and institutional background. Almost every expansion that the church building and church institution had underwent since the eleventh century can be linked to the rise of parishioners and an increase of gifts coming from the laity, for example through the foundation of chantries and other initiatives. Only after the guilds and the confraternity of Our Lady had erected altars in St James, the abbot of St Peter appointed chaplains to serve there. Most of these priests were supported by the gifts of parishioners. In 1311, the increased number of parishioners lead to the appointment of two priests to run the ecclesiastical affairs in St James<sup>(49)</sup>. Not just their number and their devotional initiatives have influenced the functioning of the church. Already from the thirteenth century onwards, Flemish lay parishioners had become increasingly involved in the surveillance of church goods, institutionalised in

(48) Michal BAUWENS, "Restoration and Reform in the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)", in *Church, Censorship and Reform in the Early Modern Habsburg Netherlands*, Louvain, forthcoming (Bibliothèque de la Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique).

(49) F. VERSTRAETEN, *De Gentse Sint-Jacobsparochie, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 6-44. The precise Dutch name of the confraternity was Onze-Lieve-Vrouw op de Rade. Marc BOONE, *Gent en de Bourgondische hertogen ca. 1384-ca. 1453. Een sociaal-politieke studie van een staatsvormingsproces*, Brussel, 1990, p. 96-98 (VKAB, 133).



Graph 2: Percentage of gifts and loans from parishioners and the income coming from funerals in the total income of St James parish between 1562 and 1590<sup>(50)</sup>



church fabrics administered by churchwardens<sup>(51)</sup>. The compilation of records of income and expenditure formed part of their activities as ‘agents’ of the parish population<sup>(52)</sup>. Indeed, the churchwarden accounts are exemplary for the role of the laity in parishes such as St James. Both the churchwardens and the members of the parochial institution for poor relief, also called the Table of the Holy Spirit, were lay parishioners. They generally held their position for several years<sup>(53)</sup>. Apart from their practical and organisational tasks, the laity could also have a role in organizing religious matters such as the establishment of chantries<sup>(54)</sup>. Thus from its beginning, the agency of

(50) RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, 342-363, “Churchwarden account”, period 1562-1591. Some of the offerings recorded in the accounts might have come from people visiting the church who were no parishioners. However, this will have been a small number.

(51) Walter DE KEYZER, Alfred MINKE & Michel VAN DER EYCKEN, eds., *Richtlijnen en aanbevelingen voor het beheer van het archief van de kerkfabriek en van andere parochiearchieven*, Brussels, Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1997 (Miscellanea Archivistica Studia, 96), p. 18; M. CARNIER, *Bidplaatsen en parochies*, op. cit., p. 401.

(52) Clive BURGESS, “Pre-Reformation Churchwarden’s Accounts and Parish Government: Lessons from London and Bristol”, in *English Historical Review*, vol. 117 (470), 2002, p. 307.

(53) Annelies SOMERS, *Inventaris van het oud archief van de kerkfabriek en parochie Sint-Jacobs te Gent, met inbegrip van de parochiale instellingen*, Brussels, Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2010, p. 43-45.

(54) F. VERSTRAETEN, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 38, 89, 112-117, 137-140, 157.

parishioners has been crucial for the functioning of the St James parish as a community and an institution. Their positive impact on the recovery of the church building after the iconoclasm can be understood in the same light.

On the face of it, St Pharahild appeared to be very similar to the other town parishes, as all stipulations seemed fulfilled: its church had an adjacent graveyard and housed a baptismal font, the parish had the right to perform funerals since 1190<sup>(55)</sup> and the sources give evidence for the existence of affiliated members of the church, such as a church fabric, a table of the Holy Spirit and a *cotidiane* which consisted of canons and chaplains, who were responsible for the singing of the mass and the daily office. Furthermore, as every other Ghent parish, the church housed several confraternities and chaplaincies. Nonetheless, the parishioners took a much more limited part here compared to elsewhere in the city. With regard to the office of churchwarden, for instance, the parish of St Pharahild was a particular case. During the last quarter of the sixteenth century, but presumably since its establishment, the *magistri fabricae* of the fabric were selected among the canons and appointed at the yearly general chapter meeting<sup>(56)</sup>. The collector of the fabric accounts was during the period 1570-1614 in three out of four cases also a chaplain or a canon related to the church instead of a parishioner or a layman. An investigation of a number of other church officials, such as the gravedigger, the bell-ringer, the bailiff, the verger, the organ player and the caretaker, shows that these were presumably all laymen. The individuals burdened with these offices were annually appointed by the chapter, or their term of service was extended. No indications of interference by parishioners in these events could be found. A *status animarum* or state of souls for the parish was drafted in the year 1591. A comparison of the names mentioned in this document with those appearing in the *acta capituli* or chapter acts as newly appointed servants over the period 1585-1614 reveals that only three of them could be identified as parishioners of St Pharahild<sup>(57)</sup>.

Other *members* of the chapter probably went on in the same vein. The table of the Holy Spirit also seems to have been governed by the chapter instead of the parishioners<sup>(58)</sup>. When later the chapter was translated to the nearby parish church of St Nicolas (see further), it was stipulated that the revenues of the table would be given half to the chapter and half to the poor. No lay involvement or claims were mentioned<sup>(59)</sup>. As early as 1298, a canon had been appointed to act as *homo mortalis* with regard to a donation to the

(55) G. DECLERCQ, "Nieuwe inzichten", *op. cit.*, p. 98.

(56) RAG, SBB, serie SN, 165 (*passim*), 166 (*passim*), 167 (*passim*), "Acta capituli", 1584-1613. This meeting was held the first Monday after Ascension Day. See also RAG, SV, serie charters, "Act concerning an annual rent", 28<sup>th</sup> May 1376 and RAG, SV, 127, f<sup>os</sup> 174-175, "Inventory of copied letters and documents", 18<sup>th</sup> century, for earlier evidence.

(57) One of these examples regards the widow of a presumed gravedigger, who is not mentioned by his first name in the state. RAG, SBB, n<sup>o</sup> S 231, p. 7, "Status animarum", 1591.

(58) RAG, SV, 65, "Account of the table of the Holy Spirit", 1570-1571. However, we must emphasise the fundamental lack of sources which hampers proving this assumption absolutely positively.

(59) RAG, SV, 129, "Documents concerning several court cases", 1581-1578.

poor table<sup>(60)</sup>. Thus lay intervention was very minimal in St Pharahild and this characteristic was highlighted as well after the iconoclastic attacks of the late sixteenth century.

During the first attack, the church of St Pharahild was severely damaged, as illustrated by van Vaernewijck<sup>(61)</sup>. The role of the church's own parishioners in the violence is unknown, although it can be assumed that there were no excesses similar to those in St James<sup>(62)</sup>. For instance, none of the names listed in the aforementioned placards of 1568 could be related to parishioners of St Pharahild. Nevertheless, the first iconoclasm of 1566 and the iconoclasm that took place during the period of Calvinist regime had serious consequences for St Pharahild. Especially for the chapter, the destructions of 1579 meant the final blow for their autonomous existence. The church was reduced to ruins and found unfit for use. Moreover, the chapter had suffered great losses in both material goods and income. This gave rise to increasing budgetary difficulties and obstructed the regular continuation of the offices. The fabric suffered shortfalls and was obliged to borrow large sums from the other members or the collector<sup>(63)</sup>. In the aftermath of these events, the chapter was permanently (that is to say, until 1783) transferred to the nearby church of St Nicolas in 1614. More than three decades of muddling along preceded this decision.

As early as April 1579, the city council had decreed that the remains of the church and some adjacent constructions be levelled to the ground. The parcel was sold and new houses were built on it<sup>(64)</sup>. In the meantime, the chapter had to make do with the chapel of the nearby *Wenemaerhospitaal*<sup>(65)</sup>.

In 1585 however, this sale of the church's land was ruled illegal and the chapter was restored in its possession<sup>(66)</sup>. Nevertheless, due to the losses brought about by the revolt, combined with a setback of revenues caused by the flooding of a large number of properties during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, no sufficient financial means could be found to reconstruct the building<sup>(67)</sup>. As the church fabric accounts for the years 1570-1576 prove, only thirty-four pounds Parisis (less than three pounds grooten Vlaams) were

(60) RAG, SV, 86, "Notes concerning the income of the table of the Holy Spirit", 1576.

(61) M. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 110.

(62) Van Vaernewijck mentions only one incident concerning a hosiery manufacturer living on St Pharahild square who was believed to have thrown away the relics of the patron saint of the chapter and who was decapitated in Brussels. M. VAN VAERNEWIJCK, *Van die beroerlicke tijden, op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 82-83 and vol. 7, p. 38.

(63) RAG, SV, 129, "Documents concerning several court cases", 1581-1578.

(64) RAG, SV, 105, "Documents concerning the tearing down of the church of St. Pharahild and the court case versus Jan Serlippens", 1585.

(65) SAG, "Nota's van Werveke", 511. Thanks to Daniel Lievois for making these data available to us.

(66) RAG, SV, 105, "Documents concerning the tearing down of the church of St. Pharahild and the court case versus Jan Serlippens", 1585.

(67) RAG, SV, 11, "Resolutions and excerpts from the *acta capituli*", 1586-1771; RAG SV, 102, "Documents concerning the translation of the chapter", 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century; RAG, SV 103 ; RAG, SV, 150, "Copies of charters for the period 1323-1694", 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century and Louis COLINEZ, *Collégiale de Sainte-Pharaïlde à Gand*, Gent, De Busscher Frères, 1852, p. 19-20.

on average spent on repairs during these years, which was inadequate for a proper restoration<sup>(68)</sup>.

A solution was found in a translation of the chapter to the church of St Nicolas, as decreed by Alexander Farnese, duke of Parma, on 10 May 1585<sup>(69)</sup>. Unfortunately, this cohabitation was granted only a short life. The differences between the chapter on the one hand and the priest, church officials and parishioners of St Nicolas on the other, soon came to a climax. Ultimately, it was the abbot of St Peter's abbey as the patron of the parish, who successfully addressed a petition to the pope to break the union<sup>(70)</sup>. With a view to obeying this order, the chapter started the construction of a new church on its former location in 1586, a project that would not be finished before 1592<sup>(71)</sup>. Notwithstanding the fact that the chapter once more had its own building at its disposal, the prosperity and aura of the olden days were never regained. The choir of the new church was described as small, low and miserable, unsuitable for divine services as expected by the foundation of the chapter<sup>(72)</sup>. Once more, expenses on church repairs remained restricted, with an average amount of about twelve pounds Parisis (about one pound grooten Vlaams) for the years 1585-1601. Consequently, it is of no surprise that the idea of a translation was never completely relinquished. At last, on 20 June 1614, after a series of consultations, a new translation was decreed by the archdukes Albert and Isabella<sup>(73)</sup>. The chapter would be, *par grâce speciale* and perpetual privilege, united again with the parish church of St Nicolas.

The fact that both Farnese and after him, the archdukes tried to give the chapter a new home, counters the idea that the chapter was considered nothing but an old remnant of the past. Rather than a "clean-up"-operation, the translation concerned a reduction of the parish *ratione personae*, limiting the parish to the chapter itself and the high bailiff as princely officer within the city. Only the "geographical parish" was abolished and added to the territory of St Nicolas. If both ecclesiastical and lay authorities had wanted

(68) RAG, SV, 16-17, "Accounts of the church fabric", 1571-1634.

(69) RAG, SBB, serie S, 234, f<sup>os</sup> 117 v<sup>o</sup> et sq., "Copybook of chapter acts and other documents", 1411-1769.

(70) RAG, SBB, Gent, serie S, 234, f<sup>o</sup> 125 r<sup>o</sup>, "Copybook of chapter acts and other documents", 1411-1769 and RAG, SBB, serie SN, 165, fo. 54 v<sup>o</sup>, "Acta capituli", 1584-1595.

(71) RAG, SBB, serie S, 234, f<sup>o</sup> 127, "Copybook of chapter acts and other documents", 1411-1769 and L. COLINEZ, *Collégiale de Sainte-Pharaïlde, op. cit.*, p. 20-21.

(72) RAG, SV, 102, "Documents concerning the translation of the chapter", 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century.

(73) RAG, SBB, serie S, 234, f<sup>os</sup> 48-49, "Copybook of chapter acts and other documents", 1411-1769 and RAG, SV, 102, "Documents concerning the translation of the chapter", 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century. An analysis of the discourse used by the chapter in order to emphasize the importance of its survival as well as the motives of the Archdukes to agree upon the translation, can be found in Annelies SOMERS, "A Post-Reformational Contradiction? The Survival of the Chapter of St. Pharahild in Ghent at the Turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century", in *Journal for Early Modern Christianity*, vol. 1, 2014, p. 1-28. The translation of chapters by a territorial prince was not exceptional: Monique MAILLARD-LUYPAERT, "Les collégiales du Hainaut. Le cas du chapitre collégial de Saint-Ursmer, déménagé de Lobbes, en principauté épiscopale de Liège, à Binche, "bonne ville" du comte de Hainaut (1409)", in R. LE BOURGEOIS, A. MASSONI, P. MONTAUBIN, eds., *Les collégiales et la ville, op. cit.*, p. 183-196.

to completely eliminate St Pharahild, it would have been more logical to incorporate the canons into the chapter of St Bavo and thus let St Pharahild “vaporise” as both a chapter and a parish. By moving the chapter to St Nicolas, the infrastructural problems were solved<sup>(74)</sup>.

With reference to the role of the former lay parishioners, the decree spoke volumes. It mentioned not only that the church could not be rebuilt [to its former glory] due to a lack of financial means, but more specifically as a consequence of the insufficient number of parishioners. It was added that no help was to be expected from their side, as the parish counted only sixty houses, of which most comprised of small cellars. As a result of this situation, St Pharahild was never mentioned as one of the city’s parishes in the municipal records<sup>(75)</sup>. Although the decree put its emphasis merely on the insufficient *number* of parishioners, it can be wondered whether their actual *contribution* was worth mentioning – if existent at all.

An excerpt from a court case handled by the Council of Flanders is revealing in this respect<sup>(76)</sup>. In the aftermath of the translation, a small number of parishioners put forward a complaint to the same Council against the union of St Pharahild and St Nicolas. The incomplete remains of the court file consist mainly of the chapter’s reply to the charges brought against them by these parishioners. In no fewer than ninety articles, they refuted the claims of the plaintiffs and argued why these were unfounded. The major complaint addressed the question of the church fabric. More specifically, it concerned the use of its financial means by the chapter to pay the canons and chaplains, whose benefices had lost much of their material value.

The translation and union had been mutually decided upon by the chapter on the one hand and the priest and churchwardens of St Nicolas, together with the abbot of St Peter as their patron, on the other. The parishioners of St Pharahild were not consulted, as the bishop of Ghent was considered to represent their interests in this matter<sup>(77)</sup>. The chapter stood by this decision and rejected the eventual consultation with or intervention of the parishioners. The counter arguments of the plaintiffs were disproved because they had never contributed in any way to the restoration of the demolished church nor offered financial support to warrant the continuation of the divine services. According to the chapter, the parishioners furthermore did not excel in attending services, so offertories were very poor. This is confirmed by the scarce accounts we possess for the period 1570-1576 and 1585-1601, which prove that the income collected through offertory boxes during the first period was relatively poor (approximately ten pounds Parisis on average per year, so less than one pound grooten Vlaams), and almost completely absent during

(74) See for an example of a Counter Reformation chapter: Jeffrey M. MULLER, “Institution and Framework: the New Chapter of Canons and its Choir Space in the St. Jacob’s Church, Antwerp”, in Hans Vlieghe & Katlijne Van der Stighele, eds., *Sponsors of the Past. Flemish Art and Patronage 1550-1700. Proceedings of the Symposium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven December, 14-15-2001*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2001, p. 117-134, at p. 117.

(75) RAG, SV, 102, “Documents concerning the translation of the chapter”, 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century.

(76) RAG, SV, 129, “Documents concerning several court cases”, 1581-1578.

(77) RAG, SV, 129, “Documents concerning several court cases”, 1581-1578.

the second, with no proceeds at all for the years 1591-1598<sup>(78)</sup>. Although St Pharahild counted significantly fewer parishioners than St James at the time, the difference is still remarkable<sup>(79)</sup>. Other help from parishioners, such as loans or collections, are not mentioned in these accounts, although other sources indicate the support of certain devotions, such as those for St Barbara and the Holy Sacrament by laymen<sup>(80)</sup>. Direct financial means for the church restoration were however mainly procured by the canons themselves and a petition for financial support was sent to the government.

What is more, the chapter argued that, as for the church fabric and its material and monetary means, the parishioners had no right to speak, since they never had held positions in the administration of the church fabric, nor had laymen ever been churchwardens. Moreover, inspection of the accounts had never been granted to any of them. The chapter recalled that the church was not built by or on behalf of the parishioners: it was essentially an 'accessory' of the chapter and its foundations. It was established within the *castrum* as a chapel served by canons as chaplains of the count of Flanders. A small number of houses had been built on the square in the vicinity of the church. The inhabitants of these dwellings were given permission to receive sacraments in St Pharahild instead of the nearby parish church of St Michael. This was considered as a privilege provided to the chapter, not to the parishioners personally. All of these arguments are up to a point supported by archival evidence, as cited above.

It is thus noticeable that the part played by the lay parishioners in the reconstruction was in this case limited. This can be linked to the fact that St Pharahild was not a regular urban parish church. It was related to a chapter which was originally set up with a particular purpose, that is, to serve the count and his family. It can be assumed that since the departure of the princely court, the boundaries of the parish were more and more considered as a fixed geographical instead of a personal matter. As a result, 'newcomers' within the castral area considered themselves as parishioners and enjoyed favours concerning the administration of the sacraments which were originally assigned to a select group. The absence of these parishioners in the organisation and administration of religious life within St Pharahild however, seems to have affected their identification with the parish as well<sup>(81)</sup>.

The fact that St Pharahild was a small parish and was more severely damaged than St James will have played a role, but was not necessarily a deciding factor. Other cases prove that restoration was also an option in small parishes. The rural parish of St Martin in Wezemaal in Brabant, for example, had only a small number of parishioners as well. It had been damaged by

(78) RAG, SV, 16-17, "Accounts of the church fabric", 1571-1634.

(79) According to the *status animarum* of 1591, their number must have been between 202 and 243 by this time. RAG, SBB, serie S, n° 231, "*Status animarum*", 1591.

(80) Data concerning these interventions are scarce, and more information on the background of the initiators is needed in order to contextualize these initiatives. See for instance RAG, SV 129, "Documents concerning several court cases", 1581-1578.

(81) On the issue of *saintes chapelles* and their parishes in France, see Claudine BILLOT, "Les saintes-chapelles (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles). Approche comparée de fondations dynastiques", in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, vol. 73, 1987, p. 236-238.



continuous warfare in the region from 1568 onwards, an iconoclasm in 1578 and a big fire after it was struck by lightning in 1579. Only parts of the church had not collapsed and the church would remain in a bad shape for about 25 years. Warfare had hunted many people away from Wezemaal, but by 1598, many parishioners had returned and some new people settled there as well. Wezemaal counted at that time 47 families (about 200 people). It is logic that this small community alone could not rebuilt the church. The main source of income for the church fabric, the offerings for St Job given by pilgrims, had fallen away because of the troubles and damage on the church. Nevertheless, also in this case, parishioners took initiatives to repair their church not just by donating and working on the church, but by informing the archbishop of Malines, Matthias Hovius of the difficult situation and consistently demanding the patron of St Martin, the abbey of Averbode and the village lord to aid the church financially. Their supplications had result. The archbishop interfered and also an agreement for support coming from the patron and the village lord followed. Even though, the repairs were not completed in 1610, the church was in a sufficiently good shape so that Hovius could consecrate the altars. By 1619, the church restoration was finalized<sup>(82)</sup>.

## Conclusion

Other local studies have already illustrated how the contributing role of parishioners of one church could change over time<sup>(83)</sup>. We focussed on one period, namely the crises of the late sixteenth century. The case studies of St James and St Pharahild present to us how two very different parishes coped with the destructions caused by the iconoclasm of 1566 and 1578-1579. The simultaneous presence of different-natured parishes in one city is not unique, as the literature on European parishes reveals. Insight into the parish as a historical and organic institution is crucial to understand the responsibilities taken up by both the laity and clergy, in general as well as during and after crises. The way these responsibilities were distributed impacted on the strategies used to overcome hardships during crises.

Whereas St James was a large parish in which laymen held various parochial functions, St Pharahild remained, as a result of the specific context of its foundation and its relation to the chapter, a small parish and a bastion of clergymen. In St James, lay parishioners contributed in various ways to the parish and had, in return, a say in its organisation. Throughout the period 1560-1590, parishioners displayed varying degrees of commitment to their parish. The iconoclastic violence is illustrative of the destructive effects people could have on their churches. Some of the parishioners took an active part in the destruction of church patrimony while a large group abstained from the breakings. As a whole, they remained rather passive after the first

(82) Bart MINNEN, *'Den heyligen Sant al in Brabant'*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 131-154.

(83) See for examples in the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century: Llewelyn BOGAERS, *Aards, betrokken en zelfbewust*, *op. cit.*, p. 398-404; W.H. VROOM, *De Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk te Antwerpen. De financiering van de bouw tot de Beeldenstorm*, Antwerp, Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1983, p. 64-95.



iconoclastic episode of 1566. However, by 1584 when the Calvinist Republic fell and an exodus took place, the remaining parishioners of St James seemed to have developed a strong attachment to their church. Moreover, it was their general and generous contributions that made the continuation of parish life in St James possible.

St Pharahild was less dependent on its lay parishioners, as canons and chaplains took up crucial positions in both church administration and traditional parochial institutions such as the church fabric and charity. As a result of both the changing function of the geographical area in which the parish of St Pharahild was situated, and the fact that being a parishioner was essentially personally attributed to individuals based on their status, the relationship between chapter and parishioners came under pressure. It can be stated that the seeming advantages of having no lay involvement were, in the period of crisis after the iconoclastic attacks, overshadowed by financial disadvantages. Whereas St James could use its churchwardens and parishioners as a financial buffer, St Pharahild lacked sufficient external monetary support to restore the church and make it viable for even the most basic services. The precarious financial situation of the chapter finally resulted in a translation to the church of St Nicolas and a union of both parishes. Some parishioners were however alerted by the implementation of this decision, as they – in the chapter's opinion – suddenly seemed to appear out of the void to question it.

The two parishes discussed in this article almost seem to be each other's opposites and especially St Pharahild can be considered an exceptional case. In a way, this makes a comparison more difficult. However, as the Low Countries knew a wide range of parishes, the study of cases from both ends of the spectrum can give us a hint of the variety in strategies that could possibly be used by parish institutions to cope with material destructions in the churches. A quick look at other local studies of urban parishes in the Netherlands, similar to St James in size and structure, illustrates how they took different paths after the destructions of the end of the sixteenth century as well. The restoration of St Andrew in Antwerp seemed of less importance to both magistrate and parishioners, especially in comparison with the churches of the mendicant orders who received quite some donations. While St Andrew was still in need of repair in 1608, the transept of the church would only be erected in 1663. Also the renewal of the high choir of St James in Antwerp started rather late (in 1602), while the construction of the vaults, ambulatory and chapels were only completed in 1656. In comparison, during this same period, Jesuits erected a brand new baroque church from scratch in Antwerp within a period of seven years. Gifts from the magistracy, king Philip IV and the archdukes Albert and Isabella aided the construction, but the collections held among the citizens of Antwerp formed an even larger contribution. The Jesuits were not the only ones constructing, but they did have the most prestigious building project of that moment. Obviously, the context of the city of Antwerp created a dynamic that made it harder for parishioners to sufficiently support their parish church as their money was needed by other ecclesiastical institutions as well. Nevertheless, also in Antwerp, parish churches were supported by their parishioners. Jeffrey Muller has illustrated that wealthy parishioners laid at the base of the reconstructions of the church

of St James in Antwerp as well, even though financial intervention of the city council was necessary<sup>(84)</sup>.

The study of the parish has showed us some of the many faces of the universal Church. Local dynamics played a role, but also two parishes of the same bishopric, even the same city, coped totally differently with the destructions of their church as a result of their institutional background. St James and St Pharahild in Ghent, but also St Andrew and St James in Antwerp and St Martin in Wezemaal, all illustrate the importance for every institution of having a financial buffer or source of income to overcome material hardships. In Ghent, the identification of a sufficient number of parishioners with their parish turned out to be decisive at times when an appeal was made to this buffer. Contradictory to the ideas of the older historiography on the mainly seventeenth-century parish of the Southern Low Countries, the top-down or perhaps clergy-to-laity flow of ecclesiastical knowledge and renewal was not of exclusive importance for the survival of the Church in the decades following the Calvinist Republic. Recovery and renewal on a local level and in a “bottom-up”-fashion was possible in parishes with enough enthusiastic and generous parishioners, while others, without a significant community of lay believers to depend upon materially, had to rely on ‘external’ help in order to survive.

## ABSTRACT

**Michal BAUWENS & Annelies SOMERS, *The institutional nature of parishes and the restoration of churches after iconoclasm. The case of St James and St Pharahild in Ghent (1566-1614)***

The Low Countries knew a wide variety of parishes that followed different roads when reacting to challenges such as the iconoclast destructions of their church. This article focuses on two very different parishes in the city of Ghent: St James and St Pharahild at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. In this period, most ecclesiastical buildings in Ghent – as in many other towns and villages of the Low Countries – were plagued by the waves of iconoclasm of 1566 and 1578-79 and a period of Calvinist Rule (1577-84 for Ghent). Both the parish churches of St James and St Pharahild were severely damaged. The way this crisis impacted the parishes and how they continued functioning afterwards is revealing. It shows that, apart from the degree of damage inflicted, the institutional background of the parish, its size, the degree of involvement of parishioners and – as comparison with other case studies illustrates – local dynamics, determined the processes of recovery.

Iconoclasm – Calvinist Republic – Ghent – Counter Reformation – parish – ecclesiastical institutions – agency – church building – restoration – church finances – clergy – laity – bottom-up

(84) Alfons K.L. THUJS, *Van geuzenstad tot katholiek bolwerk. Antwerpen en de contrareformatie*, Turnhout, 1990, p. 78-80; J.M. MULLER, “Institution and Framework”, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

## SAMENVATTING

**Michal BAUWENS & Annelies SOMERS, *De institutionele achtergrond van parochies en de restauratie van kerken na de Beeldenstorm. De voorbeelden van Sint-Jacob en Sint-Veerle in Gent (1566-1614)***

De Lage Landen kenden een brede waaier aan types parochies die elk op eigen wijze omgingen met de aan hun kerken toegebrachte vernielingen na de opeenvolgende beeldenstormen. Dit artikel bespreekt twee zeer verschillende parochies in de stad Gent: Sint-Jacob en Sint-Veerle op het einde van de zestiende en het begin van de zeventiende eeuw. Deze periode markeerde voor de meeste kerkelijke gebouwen in Gent – net als in andere steden en dorpen in de Nederlanden – een materieel dieptepunt als gevolg van de vernielingen tijdens de Beeldenstorm van 1566 en 1578-1579 en het Calvinistische regime (1577-1584 voor Gent). De kerken van Sint-Jacob en Sint-Veerle werden allebei zwaar getroffen. De wijze waarop de parochies met deze crisis omgingen is veelzeggend. Naast de schade aan de kerk, speelden ook de institutionele achtergrond van de parochie, de grootte, de betrokkenheid van parochianen en – zoals vergelijkend onderzoek aangeeft – ook de lokale dynamiek, een belangrijke rol in het restauratieproces.

Beeldenstorm – Calvinistische Republiek – Gent – contrareformatie – parochie – kerkelijke instellingen – agency – kerkbouw – restauratie – kerkfinanciën – clerus – leken – bottom-up

## RÉSUMÉ

**Michal BAUWENS & Annelies SOMERS, *L'histoire institutionnelle des paroisses et le rétablissement des églises après les troubles iconoclastes: le cas de Saint-Jacques et de Sainte-Pharaïlde à Gand (1566-1614)***

La situation des paroisses aux Pays-Bas au XVI<sup>e</sup> et au début du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle présentait une grande diversité. Elles réagirent toutes selon leurs propres moyens aux défis du temps comme le calvinisme et l'iconoclasme. Cet article étudie deux paroisses gantoises: Saint-Jacques et Sainte-Pharaïlde. À Gand comme dans beaucoup d'autres villes des Pays-Bas, les lieux de cultes catholiques ont été saccagés par les iconoclastes (1566 et 1578-1579) et sous le régime calviniste (1577-1584). Les églises Saint-Jacques et Saint-Pharaïlde furent toutes les deux lourdement touchées, mais la manière dont les deux paroisses ont réagi aux défis posés, est révélatrice. Indépendamment des dommages eux-mêmes, le contexte institutionnel et la taille de la paroisse, le degré de participation des paroissiens et la dynamique locale se révélèrent d'une importance cruciale dans le processus de rétablissement de ces églises.

Iconoclasme – régime calviniste – Gand – contre-Réforme – paroisse – institutions ecclésiastiques – pouvoir – construction, restauration et finances des églises – clergé – laïcs – approche *bottom up*