



**HAL**  
open science

## Musical Practices among Marian Sodality in the Gallo- and Flandro-Belgic Provinces (16th-18th centuries)

Céline Drèze

► **To cite this version:**

Céline Drèze. Musical Practices among Marian Sodality in the Gallo- and Flandro-Belgic Provinces (16th-18th centuries). *The Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 2016, 3 (3), pp.398-414. 10.1163/22141332-00303004 . halshs-02140400

**HAL Id: halshs-02140400**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-02140400>**

Submitted on 27 May 2019

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



BRILL



brill.com/jjs

# Musical Practices among Marian Sodalties in the Gallo- and Flandro-Belgian Provinces from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries\*

*Céline Drèze*

Université catholique de Louvain

*celine.dreze@uclouvain.be*

## Abstract

This paper sets forth an initial synthesis of the musical practices of the Marian sodalties established in the two former Belgian provinces. The musical history of the Belgian sodalties has been compiled on the basis of disparate and heterogeneous archival sources, which shed light on the musical practices of the Marian sodalties in two ways. First, they reveal the financial, human, and material resources brought together by the sodalties, as well as the close links maintained by the sodalties with the various local musical bodies. Secondly, the documents indicate two activities for which particular use of music was made: the yearly Marian feasts and the Lenten meetings for meditation. The information gathered from the archival sources can be cross-referenced here with some musical sources, most probably destined for the celebration of these feasts: 1) an international series of litany settings; 2) a corpus of musical works based on texts on the passion of Christ.

## Keywords

Marian sodalties – repertoire – litany – Lenten devotions – motets – southern Low Countries – principality of Liège – Flandro- and Gallo-Belgian provinces – Antwerp

Within the complex history of the Jesuits' relationship to music, the sphere of Marian sodalties constitutes a privileged domain of musical expression, which, in contrast to spectacular liturgical festivities or theatrical works, has

---

\* Translated from the French by Fr. Bruce Burbidge.

scarcely attracted the attention of researchers. Most of the foundational works on the musical history of the Society of Jesus, when they do deal with musical practice in the Marian sodalities attached to Jesuit establishments, frequently limit themselves to a brief mention of a few characteristics without any in-depth exploration. Furthermore, these works tend to concentrate on Jesuit establishments in Rome, which, on account of their singular status, represent the exception more than the norm.<sup>1</sup>

There are many reasons that may explain music historians' lack of interest in the musical practices of Jesuit Marian sodalities. When historians have studied the foundation, expansion, functioning, and spirituality of these devotional assemblies, they have referred to their musical customs in a merely anecdotal way, and so have not piqued the interest of music historians to explore the subject in greater depth.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, the principal reason for the lack of interest lies essentially in the supposed penury of musical sources and in the fragmentary and heterogeneous nature of the archive material—these reasons also explain the lack of musicological studies undertaken, on a larger scale, on the whole range of confraternal assemblies.<sup>3</sup>

- 
- 1 Graham Dixon, "Musical Activity in the Church of the Gesù in Rome during the Early Baroque," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 49 (1980): 323–37; T. Frank Kennedy, "Jesuits and Music: The European Tradition 1547–1622" (PhD diss., University of California, 1982), 57–60, 152–53; Kennedy, "The Musical Tradition at the Roman Seminary during the First Sixty Years (1564–1621)," in *Bellarmino e la Controriforma*, ed. Romeo de Maio et al. (Sora: Centro di studi sorani Vincenzo Patriarca, 1990), 629–60; Graham Dixon, "Music in the Venerable English College in the Early Baroque," in *La musica a Roma attraverso le fonti d'archivio*, ed. Bianca Maria Antolini (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1994), 469–78; T. Frank Kennedy, "Jesuit Colleges and Chapels: Motet Function in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 65, no. 2 (1996): 197–213; Kennedy, "Jesuits and Music," in *The Jesuits and the Arts*, ed. John W. O'Malley and Gauvin Alexander Bailey (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2005), 413–26.
  - 2 See, among the foundational works, Émile Villaret, *Les congrégations mariales: Des origines à la suppression de la Compagnie de Jésus (1540–1773)* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1947), 404–6; Louis Châtellier, *L'Europe des dévots* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987), 164–65.
  - 3 For a useful bibliography on the musical practices of confraternities, I refer to the following studies: Eyolf Østrem and Nils Holger Petersen, "The Singing of *Laude* and Musical Sensibilities in Early Seventeenth-Century Confraternity Devotion," *Journal of Religious History* 28, no. 3 (2004): 276–97 and 29, no. 2 (2005): 163–76; Céline Drèze and Fabien Guilloux, "Répertoire et pratiques musicales des sodalités mariales: Premiers éléments d'enquête autour d'exemples parisien et anversois," in *La musique d'église et ses cadres de création dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, ed. Cécile Davy-Rigaux (Florence: Olschki, 2014), 85–116.

That being said, many recent studies belie this initial reticence by bringing to light the diversity of musical practices at the heart of these sodalities, whether by making clear the richness of archival material still awaiting musicological study or by identifying a repertoire proper to these groups.<sup>4</sup> My contribution is situated within these ongoing studies and sets forth an initial synthesis of the musical practices of the Marian sodalities established in the territory of the southern Low Countries and the principality of Liège, a territory enclosed initially within the “Provincia Germanica Inferior” (or “Provincia Belgica”) and then after 1612 divided between the “Provincia Flandro-Belgica” in the north and the “Provincia Gallo-Belgica” in the south.<sup>5</sup> This study is subject to the vagaries of chance in the survival of archival and printed sources, and doubly so as far as the contents of this paper is concerned. First, as this study cannot deal with all of the Marian sodalities established in Belgian territory, it will focus especially on those that are best documented, particularly those based in Antwerp. Secondly, in the light of the uneven information gleaned from surviving archival sources, it is only with some difficulty that this study can elucidate the development of musical practice within sodalities, from the end of the sixteenth century to the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. However, the study will offer a hitherto unpublished overview not only of the nature and the variety of the musical devices utilized by these assemblies, but also of the repertoire used.

- 
- 4 Gunther Morche, “Un impedimento della devozione”? Domenico Massenzio in der Congregazione de’ Nobili zu Rom,” in *Tullio Cima, Domenico Massenzio e la musica del loro tempo*, ed. Agostino Ziino, Valeria De Lucca, and Fabio Carboni (Rome: Istituto di Bibliografia Musicale, 2003), 227–52; Alexander Fisher, “Celestial Sirens and Nightingales: Change and Assimilation in the Munich Anthologies of Georg Victorinuous,” *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 14, no. 1 (2008), <http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v14/no1/fisher.html>; Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscapes of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 140–68, especially 141–47; Anne-Claire Magniez, “Les Exercices spirituels sur la scène d’une congrégation mariale: L’expérience originale des jésuites munichois (1695–1717),” in *La poésie latine à haute voix (1500–1700)*, ed. Lambert Isebaert and Aline Smeesters (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 211–26; Emanuele Colombo, “‘The music must serve the poetry’: The Jesuit Oratorio in Eighteenth-Century Milan,” in *Music as Cultural Mission: Explorations of Jesuit Practices in Italy and North America*, ed. Anna Harwell Celenza and Anthony R. DeDonna (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2014), 25–43; Drèze and Guilloux, “Répertoire et pratiques.” See also Alexander Fisher’s article in this issue.
- 5 On the history of the Belgian provinces of the Society of Jesus, see the reference work of Alfred Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas* (Brussels: Marcel Hayez, 1927).

## The Marian Sodalities and their Establishment in the Belgian Provinces

The Marian sodalities were a new kind of pious association which emanated from the Catholic Counter-Reformation and was promoted by the Society of Jesus.<sup>6</sup> They are cast in the mold of older confraternities that opened the way for Marian devotion of the Jesuits; this is particularly true of the Brotherhood of the Rosary, which developed a century before the appearance of Marian sodalities and already encouraged devotion to the Virgin.<sup>7</sup> The Marian sodality is an original institution of groups of Christians based on collective competitiveness and demanding rules of life, in order to strengthen an interior Catholic faith. It seeks the deepening of faith through prayer, good works, and the reception of the sacraments, and ensures for its members spiritual and human accompaniment until they receive the last rites.

The first sodality was founded in 1563 at the Collegio Romano by the Jesuit Jean Leunis (1532–84) from Liège. This first initiative was followed by new foundations in most towns where the Society of Jesus had opened a house. The rapid expansion of this Marian enterprise and the inherent differences in local usage soon necessitated the laying down of an institutional framework so as to promote a degree of homogeneity between sodalities. By the bulls *Omnipotentis Dei* of Gregory XIII (r.1572–85), and *Superna dispositione* and *Romanum decet* (1587) of Sixtus V (r.1585–90), the Roman sodality of the Annunziata founded by Jean Leunis acquired the faculty to aggregate with sodalities founded in other houses of the Society. Whilst preserving a certain autonomy, thereafter new Marian sodalities took inspiration from the model of the Roman *prima primaria* (first primary [sodality]), and they firmly insisted on this affiliation in their various statutes. A veritable network was then established between these sodalities, which thenceforth shared the same regulatory framework and common aspirations, the transmission and coherence of which were ensured by the men involved and by the documents

6 On the history of the Marian sodalities, see Émile Villaret, “Les premières origines des congrégations mariales dans la Compagnie de Jésus,” *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 6 (1937): 25–57; Villaret, *Les congrégations mariales*; Villaret, “Congrégations de la Sainte-Vierge,” in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. 2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1976), 1479–91; Josef Wicki, *Le Père Jean Leunis S.J. (1532–1584): Fondateur des congrégations mariales* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1951); Louis Châtellier, “À l’origine d’une société catholique: Le rôle des congrégations mariales aux XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles,” *Histoire, économie et société* 3, no. 2 (1984): 203–20.

7 Châtellier, *L’Europe des dévots*, 20.

produced.<sup>8</sup> Each sodality was dedicated to the Virgin and placed under the spiritual direction of a Jesuit father who would accompany the members in their common prayer and their Spiritual Exercises. The institution adopted a hierarchical structure established by the regulated election of officers. Originally intended for young students at the colleges, the sodalities were soon open to adults spread among the assemblies on the basis of their social or professional status.

The territories of the southern Low Countries and the principality of Liège were quickly reached by the Jesuit Marian enterprise,<sup>9</sup> primarily through the activity of the Jesuit François Coster (1532–1619).<sup>10</sup> He founded the sodalities of Douai (1572) and Bruges (1575); later, no sooner was he elected head of the Belgian province in 1585 than he pursued the creation of new assemblies in the establishments under his direction. Coster also produced the first manual intended for all Jesuit Marian sodalities: he published, initially anonymously, the *Bulla super forma iuramenti professionis fidei, cum piis et christianis institutionibus, in usum Sodalitatis B. Mariae Virginis* (Cologne, 1576) which, ten years and multiple revisions later, became the *Libellus sodalitatis* (Antwerp, 1586).<sup>11</sup> At the instigation of Coster and superiors, each Jesuit establishment of the Belgian province would have one or more sodalities, such that in 1640, the year of the Society's centenary, the twenty houses of the Flandro-Belgian province directed ninety sodalities with 13,727 members, and the twenty houses of the Gallo-Belgian province had eighty sodalities with 11,300 members.<sup>12</sup> At Antwerp, the first sodality was founded by Coster in 1585 and given the title of the Annunciation owing to a desire to imitate the *prima primaria*

8 Lance Lazar, "The Formation of the Pious Soul: Trans-alpine Demand for Jesuit Devotional Texts, 1548–1615," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan*, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 289–318.

9 Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 2:321–45.

10 Châtellier, "À l'origine d'une société catholique," 204.

11 François Coster, *Libellus sodalitatis hoc est, christianarum institutionum libri quinque* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1586). A Flemish translation appeared in 1587 under the title *Het Boecxken der Broederschap* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1587), and a French translation came out the following year bearing the title *Le livre de la Compagnie* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1588). See Aloys de Backer and Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Leuven: Éditions de la Bibliothèque S.J., 1960), vol. 2, cols. 1511–14; Jos Andriessen, "Uit de voorgeschiedenis van Franciscus Costerus' *Libellus sodalitatis*," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 35 (1961): 422–26.

12 Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 2:333.

at Rome.<sup>13</sup> Twenty years later, new sodalities came to birth on the initiative of Guillaume de Pretere (1578–1626) and from the first decades of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits of Antwerp were responsible for the direction of some ten Marian sodalities.

The history of the Belgian sodalities and, more specifically, their musical history has been chronicled on the basis of disparate and heterogeneous archival sources, the most useful of which are doubtless the annals, the manuscript and printed rulebooks, the accounts and the inventories of goods. To these can be added the production of printed books of devotions specifically intended for sodality members,<sup>14</sup> and above all the musical sources—which are found to have fewer gaps than might have been thought. The data gathered from unpublished archives sheds light on the musical practices of the Marian sodalities in two ways: first, they reveal the financial, human, and material resources brought together by the sodalities in order to ensure a regular musical presence at their diverse activities; second, among the variety of these activities which mark the daily rhythms of each sodality, they indicate two for which particular use of music was made: the yearly Marian feasts and the Lenten meetings for meditation.

### The Financial, Human, and Material Resources for Music

The history of each of the Marian sodalities is marked out with meetings and festivities of all sorts, most of which unfold with a musical dimension, whether this enhances the solemn character of important events or takes its place more discreetly in day-to-day activities. It was important to make a distinction between ordinary and extraordinary meetings, especially in the use of more elaborate visual or auditory embellishments. Singing by the faithful was often accompanied by a more elaborate musical arrangement requiring the deployment of significant financial, human, and material resources, to which the archival sources bear witness. Within the internal workings of these devotional assemblies, the organizing and managing of musical activity swiftly and necessarily became a privileged place of dialogue and interaction between the sodalities, the Jesuit establishments to which they were linked, and the

13 Louis Delplace, “Les anciennes congrégations de la T.S. Vierge dans la ville d’Anvers 1585–1773,” *Précis historiques* 31 (1882): 209–17, 241–58, 327–45.

14 Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliotheca Mariana de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1885).

principal protagonists of urban musical life. For if the Marian sodalities were attached institutionally and spiritually to the Jesuit establishments, they nevertheless remained autonomous structures which, like other religious and civic confraternities, formed a part of the urban network, maintaining social, economic, political, and cultural ties with its diverse constitutive institutions. It was precisely this local anchoring that ensured that, beyond a certain similarity of musical usage between all the Marian sodalities, each one possessed a musical history proper to it. These individual histories are the result of a complex process of adaptation to the musical customs and sensitivities of the local population, of a musical model at the same time fashioned by the very nature of the Jesuit Marian institution and constrained by the musical practices of confraternities.

Ensuring a musical presence at their various meetings demanded that sodalities allot often-considerable sums of money to music, with an inevitable impact on the usually modest budgets of these groups, which subsisted essentially on gifts, alms, income from foundations, and above all the annual dues and the generosity of their members. The funds raised served to cover the myriad costs, including those apportioned to music—the remuneration of musicians, the purchase of song books, or repairs for a defective organ. In Liège in 1629, for the sodality's annual feast of the purification, it was planned that "on Sunday before the feast of the purification whilst the prayer intentions are read out the brothers will contribute to a collection plate, according to their devotion, to pay the musicians both of the Mass sung at the high altar of the church, and of the vespers and Eucharistic benediction."<sup>15</sup> The greatest restraint was encouraged in spending; thus, in Luxembourg the director of the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception is to ensure that the musicians are not paid an exorbitant amount, for the funds come "not in great quantity, but drop by drop into the coffers of the sodality."<sup>16</sup> But the sodality is not always required to sustain musical expenses by itself; on certain occasions, it would happen that the neighboring Jesuit college took responsibility for a part of the

15 "Le dimanche devant la fete de la purification en baillant les suffrages, les confrères jeteront dans un plat selon leur devotion pour payer les musiciens tant de la messe qui se chante au grand autel de l'eglise, que des vepres et salut": Leuven, Kadoc (Documentation and Research Centre for Religion, Culture and Society), Archivum Belgicae Meridionalis et Luxemburgus [hereafter A.B.M.L.], Fonds Poncelet, 1X-2,1<29> Notes 64bis, ff. 108–9.

16 "Non affluenter, sed guttatim in aerarium sodalitatatis": C. A. L. Held, "Archivum Sodalitatis Mariano-Angelicæ sub titulo Conceptionis Immaculatae Luxemburgi," *Publications de la Section historique de l'Institut Royal Grand-ducal de Luxembourg* 41 (1890): 267–307, here 298.



cost. For example, in Brussels, from the beginning of the eighteenth century the Latin Sodality of the Visitation made a commitment to organize the festivities for the octave of the presentation.<sup>17</sup> From 1701, the sodality decided to take sole responsibility for the costs, so as to ensure a better standard of music. If the octave of the feast fell on a weekday, it would pay the whole amount; if the octave fell on a Sunday, it fell to the college to remunerate the ordinary musicians attached to the establishment,<sup>18</sup> and to the sodality to supplement the sum of three or four florins, so as to benefit from a “*meliori [sic] musica*” for the occasion.<sup>19</sup>

To financial resources must naturally be added human resources: the maintenance of musical activity at the heart of the sodalities required, on the one hand, that someone take charge of management and, on the other, the participation of competent performers engaged specifically to strengthen or supplement the singing of the assembly. In most cases, the management of the musical activities was entrusted either to the Jesuit who held the role of *praefectus musicae* in the neighboring establishment, or to an accomplished musician of the town. In Mons, in July 1730, the prefect of the Sodality of the Visitation paid Father Albertus Descornaix (1702–*post* 1731) for “the Mass which the said sodality had sung on the day of the visitation of the Virgin, the patronal feast.”<sup>20</sup> A teacher in the town’s college, Father Descornaix doubtless also took on the function of prefect of music within the Jesuit establishment of Mons, since he is referred to in the accounts of the sodality as “Reverend Father Descornaix, director of music.”<sup>21</sup> Some years later, the same sodality acquired the services of another musician who also held the office of master of music at the Jesuit college, a certain “Mr. Pepin.” In July 1736, he received “fourteen florins, fourteen shillings for the music and oboe and *cor de chasse* instrumentalists, seven in number, for the High Mass and benediction of the said feast of

17 Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.M.L., Fonds Poncelet, IX-2.1 - VAP 9, ms. 31, ff. 127–28.

18 On the musical activity of the college in Brussels in the eighteenth century, see Céline Drèze, “Les jésuites et la musique dans les provinces gallo- et flandro-belges (2<sup>e</sup> moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle–1773)” (PhD diss., Université catholique de Louvain, 2011), 1:157–68.

19 Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.M.L., Fonds Poncelet, IX-2.1 - VAP 9, ms. 31, f. 133.

20 “La messe que laditte sodalité fit chanter le jour de la visitation de la Vierge titre de leur congregation”: Mons, Archives de l’État [hereafter A.E.], Collège des jésuites de Mons, AEM.02.146/17.

21 “Révérend Père Descornaix directeur de la musique.” In the *Catalogi personarum*, the role of prefect of music is not attributed to any Jesuit of the college of Mons during the period 1723–31; see the list of prefects of music of this establishment in Drèze, “Les jésuites et la musique,” 2:80–82.

July 2, 1736," which he was to distribute to the various participants.<sup>22</sup> In Namur, it was the members of neighboring ecclesiastical institutions who were called on by the Sodality of the Purification. During the 1734–66 period, Canon Nicolas Bara, benefice holder and chantmaster of Saint-Aubain Cathedral, was paid "for the Mass and benediction sung on the day of the purification."<sup>23</sup> When funds were lacking or the necessary personnel could not be found, the sodality director was sometimes obliged to take responsibility himself for managing the musical activity as stipulated by the regulations (1670) drawn up by the Luxembourg Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, which went into considerable detail on the topic of music.<sup>24</sup> It was foreseen that as the annual feast approached, the sodality director would call in the prefect of music and request that he offer his services to the sodality. If he refused, it then fell to the director to provide for the organization of the festivities; in first place he was to take care that the organist, instrumentalists, and singers be notified and assembled, to ensure that the organ was in perfect condition, and, finally, to choose a suitable sheltered place for the ceremony. He was furthermore keenly encouraged to carry out his duties in good time so as to avoid the unseemly agitation of last-minute preparations. If no instrumentalist was available to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception, it was suggested that the hymns (*Iste confessor, domini colentes* at the start and then, for example, *Sanctorum meritis in clyta gaudia*) be sung by a child, for "be it known that, in our experience, this manner of singing is more agreeable than the music itself, especially for those unfamiliar with the latter, as are in general all those who then attend the sodality."<sup>25</sup>

The remuneration of musicians for feast days constituted the most important task; the archived accounts of the sodalities show multiple payments to one or several musicians, often, however, without mention of their identity or even where they came from or to what civil or religious establishment they belonged. The case of the sodalities of Antwerp nonetheless clearly demonstrates the relationships formed between sodalities and the musical performers

22 "quatorze florins et quatorze sols pour la musique, et joueurs d'instrumens aubois et cor de chasse au nombre de sept pour la grande messe et Salut de ladite fete du 2<sup>e</sup> de juillet 1736": Mons, A.E., Collège des jésuites de Mons, AEM.02.146/18.

23 "Pour la messe et salut chantés le jour de la purification": Namur, A.E., Institutions ecclésiastiques catholiques. Jésuites, n. 3760.

24 Luxembourg, Archives nationales, Fonds Notre-Dame, n. 48. The text has been put in order and reproduced in Held, "Archivum Sodalitatis," 267–307.

25 "Sciendum hunc cantandi modum experientia nostra suaviolem esse ipsa forte musica, maxime eius ignaris, quales plerumque sunt, qui tunc sodalium frequentant": Held, "Archivum Sodalitatis," 297–98.

resident nearby.<sup>26</sup> The annals of the Annunciation Sodality repeatedly refer to the participation of various musicians in the festivities organised in their oratory: they thus bear witness to the periodic involvement of *stadspeelers* (town musicians). The *stadspeelers*, who usually played wind instruments, formed an established musical body attached to the town magistrate: they accompanied him on his travels and took part in ceremonial entries, religious services in the various churches of Antwerp, and the city's numerous processions.<sup>27</sup>

The musical activity of Antwerp's Marian sodalities was important and apparently remained so until the suppression of the Society in 1773. This musical activity was certainly favored by the presence in Antwerp of numerous musical institutions with which the fathers interacted, but also by the intense musical life of the Jesuit college and the Professed House. The fathers of Antwerp had shown an interest in music from very early on: in 1577 the college purchased two collections of works by Orlando di Lasso (1530/32–94) from the Plantin press.<sup>28</sup> The musical activity of the Antwerp Jesuits became more intense during the first third of the seventeenth century and lasted right up to the suppression of the order. In the Professed House, the fathers were so free in spending money that bankruptcy threatened. The superior general of the Society imposed on them, amongst other measures, a considerable reduction in expenditure on music. Nevertheless, musical activity was maintained, and with such regularity that a particular Jesuit was entrusted with organizing it: the first *praefectus musicae*, Guilelmus Greyns (1582–1649), took up the role in 1611; the post was maintained almost without interruption until the suppression of the order.<sup>29</sup> This attention to music and a well-honed organization would have necessarily reflected well on the musical life of the sodalities attached to the Antwerp Jesuit establishments.

26 On the musical practices of the Marian sodalities and their insertion in the urban scene, seen from the perspective of Peter-Paul Rubens, see Céline Drèze, "Rubens et les milieux musicaux anversoïis," in *Rubens et la musique*, ed. Céline Drèze and Fabien Guilloux (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

27 On the town musicians of Antwerp, see Godelieve Spiessens, "De Antwerpse stadsspeel-lieden," *Noordgouw* 10 (1970): 1–53 [1]; 18 (1978): 107–85 [2]; *Provinciale Commissie voor Geschiedenis en Volkskunde: Provincie Antwerpen: Jaarboek 1990–1991* 3 (1993): 4–62 [3]; *Jaarboek 1991–1992* 4 (1994): 5–71 [4].

28 Henri Vanhulst, "Suppliers and Clients of Christopher Plantin, Distributor of Polyphonic Music in Antwerp," in *Musicology and Archival Research*, ed. Barbara Hagg, Frank Daelemans, and Andre Vanrie (Brussels: Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique, 1994), 558–604, here 598.

29 Drèze, "Les jésuites et la musique," 1:56–58 (for a list of prefects of music in the Professed House of Antwerp, see 2:11–13).

The organization of feasts and the employment of musicians also demanded considerable material means from the sodalities. For the most part, the sodalities occupied premises reserved for their use within the Jesuit establishments and sometimes a chapel, which they shared with other local sodalities.<sup>30</sup> In Antwerp in 1623, a building in front of the church belonging to the Professed House was specially allotted for the sodalities' use.<sup>31</sup> The specific spaces were distributed over two floors; two chapels were available for the sodality members to attend on Sunday and to celebrate feasts. These rooms usually contained various musical instruments and chant books, accounted for in inventories (notably those drawn up by the committee entrusted, on the suppression of the Society, with compiling a register of the goods of the religious). In Antwerp, the Annunciation Sodality had the use of an organ from September 13, 1596 until it acquired an instrument that had belonged to a certain "Mr. van Duncken" for twenty-seven florins.<sup>32</sup> Repairs were made to the organ for the sum of twenty-seven florins and a half, and we also learn that it was certain office-holders of the sodality who were responsible for the financing of this repair.<sup>33</sup> In 1773, the "Jesuit committee" mentions the presence of a small organ on the premises of the Antwerp sodality.<sup>34</sup> In Brussels, the same committee lists an organ in the chapel of the Annunciation Sodality and in that of the Immaculate Conception and of the Presentation;<sup>35</sup> in Courtrai, a bass viol;<sup>36</sup> in Liège, a small organ and a "book for singing in choir in large *quarto* bound in leather;"<sup>37</sup> and in Ath, "a plainsong book for the dead and other offices of the sodality, entitled *ad usum Congregationis sub titulo Annuntiationis Beatae Mariae Virginis erecto in ecclesia R.R.P.P. Societatis Jesu Athi*."<sup>38</sup>

30 Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 2:359n3.

31 Rudi Mannaerts, "Het Sodaliteitsgebouw en zijn decoratie (1623–1773): Een reconstructie van twee barokke Mariakapellen," in *De Nottebohmzaal. Boek en mecenaat*, ed. Jean-Paul Lissens and Oscar Nottebohm (Antwerp: Stadsbibliotheek, 1993), 63–81.

32 Leuven, Kadoc, Archivum Provinciae Belgicae Septentrionalis [hereafter A.B.S.E.], n. 117, f. 19<sup>v</sup>.

33 *Ibid.*, n. 116, f. 58.

34 Brussels, Archives générales du Royaume [hereafter A.G.R.], Comité jésuitique, n. 14a, f. 699<sup>v</sup>.

35 *Ibid.*, n. 11a, ff. 23<sup>v</sup>, 25.

36 *Ibid.*, n. 28, f. 23.

37 "livre pour chanter au chœur in 4to magno couvert de peau": Liège, A.E., Collège des jésuites en Isle, n. 76, ff. 59<sup>v</sup>, 60<sup>v</sup>, 63.

38 "Un livre de plein chant pour les morts et autres offices de la Congregation, intitulé *ad usum Congregationis sub titulo Annuntiationis Beatae Mariae Virginis erecto in ecclesia R.R.P.P. Societatis Jesu Athi*": Brussels, A.G.R., Comité jésuitique, n. 31, f. 24.

These facts gleaned from the archives bring to light the funds invested by the sodalities to ensure a musical presence as well as revealing the close links maintained by the sodalities with the various musical bodies in their immediate environments. By showing the care bestowed by the sodalities on the presence of music, this information above all makes clear the decisive role of music in the practices of each Marian sodality.

### Marian Feasts and Lenten Devotions

The examination of archival sources allows one to distinguish four principal kinds of assembly organized on a regular basis at the heart of each sodality: 1) the weekly assemblies, 2) celebrations linked to internal affairs (election of a magistrate, jubilees, the death of a member, etc.), 3) Marian feasts, and 4) the devotional assemblies, which took place more frequently in Advent and Lent. These gatherings are not all documented to the same degree. Despite their frequency, the weekly meetings, which were traditionally held on Sundays, are the object of little attention: the annals give priority to the description of events that depart from the ordinary and which for this reason are worthy of being remembered. These meetings lasted about an hour, during which time the faithful listened to a sermon and shared a time of prayer.<sup>39</sup> There is no indication concerning the presence or otherwise of music during these weekly meetings; this gap in information does not however mean that music was *de facto* excluded from these meetings, but simply that at this stage it is difficult to evaluate more precisely what its place might have been. In Luxembourg, in any case, the rule (1670) of the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception appears categorical: "One never uses music for the sodality unless possibly on a feast or some extraordinary celebration, with the exception of the sodality's feast day."<sup>40</sup> The meetings during which there was a celebration of an internal event of the sodality benefit from more detailed descriptions, in which there is often mention of a musical presence, but without this being more fully defined. Marian feasts and assemblies for meditation for their part constitute the primary object of attention, and are reported in great detail. Above all, the information gathered from the archival sources can be cross-referenced with the musical

39 For a detailed description of a weekly meeting at the Latin Sodality of the Visitation in Brussels in 1736, see Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.M.L., Fonds Poncelet, IX-2.1 - VAP 9, ms. 31, ff. 121–24.

40 "Musica sodalitatatis nunquam nisi forte in festo aut inauguratione quadam extraordinaria utitur, excipie festum sodalitatatis": Held, "Archivum Sodalitatatis," 297.

sources, which can probably be linked to the Marian feasts and these devotional assemblies.

### *The Marian Feasts*

The six Marian feasts of the annual liturgical calendar—Purification (February 2), Annunciation (March 25), Visitation (July 2), Assumption (August 15), Nativity of Our Lady (September 8) and Immaculate Conception (December 8)—constituted significant moments in the life of each sodality. Each sodality was responsible for organizing its own patronal feast, but it was not rare for other sodalities of the town to share in the rejoicing. The celebrations followed a relatively similar program from one sodality to another, traditionally articulated in this way: in the morning, a solemn High Mass was celebrated with music in the Jesuit church. In the afternoon, the members gathered for a period of preaching and prayer: a sermon was given by a Jesuit father, followed by the singing of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin with music, sometimes with one or two Marian motets, and finally by the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, during which the *Tantum ergo* was sung.<sup>41</sup>

Among the plethora of diverse details that surrounds the narration of these festivities, the litany set to music stands out as a central and almost indispensable element. The archives mention it frequently and sometimes give information on the instrumental resources brought together to accompany the singing of the sodality members. In Antwerp, on the occasion of the feast of December 8, 1591, for example, the singing of the litany was accompanied by two bass viols and a harpsichord, a musical arrangement which, as the annals make clear, intensified the devotion of the faithful.<sup>42</sup> More than simply testimony to musical practice, these frequent references raise two questions at once: whether there existed a repertoire of litanies intended for the use of the sodalities, and whether the musical sources have been preserved.

For the sodalities of Antwerp, one of such sources has been preserved: a small *octavo* volume of fifty-five folios published by Pierre Phalèse (1545–1629) in Antwerp in 1598, entitled *Litaniae septem Deiparae Virgini musice decantandae*.<sup>43</sup> This collection is comprised of a series of seven Litanies of Our Lady

41 See the descriptions of Marian feasts at the sodality of the Annunciation in Antwerp in 1590 (Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.S.E., n. 117, ff. 9<sup>r-v</sup>), at the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception (of the Walloons) in Antwerp in 1635 (Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.S.E., n. 120, f. 250), and at the Latin Sodality of the Visitation in Brussels in 1736 (Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.M.L., Fonds Poncelet, IX-2.1 - VAP 9, ms. 31, ff. 125–29).

42 Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.S.E., n. 116, f. 31.

43 I refer here to Drèze and Guilloux, “Répertoire et pratiques.”

laid out according to a weekly cycle, the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, a *Magnificat*, a Marian motet (*In omni tribulatione*), and a penitential motet (*Peccantem me quotidie*). The group of pieces is set to music: the seven litanies in faux-bourdon, and the latter four in four-voice counterpoint. This collection has the peculiarity of having been published as a musical supplement to the *Thesaurus litaniarum ac orationum sacer* also published in 1598, but in this case by Velpius (c.1540–1614) in Brussels. This *Thesaurus* was the work of the Jesuit Thomas Saily (1553–1623) who, in the same way as Coster or de Pretere, stood out as one of the principal promoters of the Marian sodalities. The organic link that unites the two publications (the *Thesaurus litaniarum* and the musical collection) is explicitly set down in the table of contents of the *Thesaurus*, which specifies that they are intended for Marian sodalities: “in tertia parte. Conventus musicus quattuor vocum quo septem Litaniae B. Virginis decantari possunt, a praecipuis huius aevi musicis conceptus, & nunc recens in lucem editus. Opera P. T. Saillii, in gratiam Sodalitatis eiusdem Virginis Matris Dei.”<sup>44</sup> One notices, furthermore, an exact correspondence between the contents of the collection of litanies and the *Thesaurus litaniarum*. In the *Thesaurus*, each chapter corresponds to a day of the week. For each of them, Saily sets out a kind of devotional service with hymns, psalms, responsories, readings and meditations; each service concludes with the Litany of Our Lady, marked out by an engraving and an explicit reference to the musical supplement. The Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, also present in the musical collection, is sung on two occasions during the week, on Sundays and Tuesdays; the *Magnificat* is sung on Tuesdays, and the *Stabat Mater* on Fridays—the use of the two motets *In omni tribulatione* and *Peccantem me quotidie* is not indicated in the volume. Regarding the data gathered from the archival sources, it seems that the collection of 1598 sets out a repertoire of a more festive nature that could be performed on Marian feasts and their octaves; furthermore, the presence of litanies for double choir and contrapuntal motets seem to provide confirmation that they were destined for occasions that were out of the ordinary.

In reality, this Antwerp collection does not constitute an isolated example, but finds its place among a vast body of similar works. Indeed, it shares a clear common lineage with another collection also coming from a Jesuit environment: the *Litaniae in alma domo Lauretana*, published in 1578 in Paris by Thomas Brumen (c.1532–88).<sup>45</sup> In addition to a similar format, the two collections share the same contents: the one from Antwerp appears to be a corrected

44 Thomas Saily, *Thesaurus litaniarum ac orationum sacer* (Brussels: R. Velpius, 1598), [403].

45 Drèze and Guilloux, “Répertoire et pratiques,” 86–88.

version of the collection from Paris, further enlarged with two faux-bourdon litanies for double choir and two motets missing from the original.

The recognition of a direct dependence between these collections from Antwerp and Paris allows one to hypothesize the existence of a network of similar musical publications conceived specifically for the Jesuit Marian sodalities. Alexander Fisher's recent work on the Marian sodalities in Bavaria and on the output of Georg Victorinus (c.1570–1630)—notably his *Thesaurus litaniarum* (Munich: A. Berg, 1596)—in particular makes it immediately possible to broaden the horizon of the production and circulation of the repertoire of litanies destined specifically for the Marian sodalities.<sup>46</sup> But this network extends more broadly still on a European scale. Fabien Guilloux and I have recently established an initial list of collections of litanies set to music published during the last decades of the sixteenth century, which situates the collections explicitly dedicated to the sodalities within the context of the more extensive production of the general repertoire.<sup>47</sup> This list needs to be extended both chronologically and geographically, but even in its present state, it gives an outline of a corpus of musical collections that, gravitating around the Marian sodalities, adopts their logic of a centralized and interconnected organization—characteristic of the Society of Jesus and *a fortiori* of its Marian activities.

### *The Lenten Meditation Assemblies*

As pastoral and spiritual endeavors, the Marian sodalities multiplied public displays of devotion for the sake of increasing the piety of the people.<sup>48</sup> The seasons of Advent and Lent were for them privileged times for gathering the faithful together in preparation for the feasts of Christmas and Easter. The fact that the meditation assemblies organized during Lent are particularly well documented in the archives implies that they were the object of particular attention on the part of the Jesuits. The faithful were invited to gather together at defined times—for example, in Bruges the assemblies took place on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays<sup>49</sup>—to meditate on an episode of the passion of Christ. The agenda of each assembly might vary from one town to another, but comparison of different archival sources indicates four principal components:

46 Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda*, 141–47; Fisher, “Celestial Sirens.”

47 Drèze and Guilloux, “Répertoire et pratiques,” 111.

48 On the Lenten meditation assemblies organized by the Jesuits, see Céline Drèze, “Un corpus inédit de méditations pour le carême, conservé dans le fonds d’archives jésuites à Anvers (xvii<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles),” *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 3 (2011): 267–303, here 268–74.

49 Bruges, A.E., Jezuietencollege te Brugge, n. 2139.



1) a sermon during which the preacher developed an aspect of the mystery of the passion and then proposed it for the reflection of the faithful, 2) some prayers, 3) some music related to the topic of the meditation, and finally 4) the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which concluded the assembly.

The usage was established in Antwerp from very early on: in 1590, just five years after its creation, the Annunciation Sodality organized daily assemblies for meditation during the Lenten season. As the sodality's annals make clear, the object was to meditate on the sufferings of Christ, and to do so from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday.<sup>50</sup> The walls of the oratory were hung with black cloth and lit by candles for the occasion, thereby plunging the chapel into an atmosphere suitable for prayer.<sup>51</sup> To be sure, music was already present, and apparently remained so until the suppression of the Society: in 1749, the annals mention that "for the music [for the meditations], we had a chorale, a bass, and a harpsichord, which was enjoyed and praised more than [the music] of previous years."<sup>52</sup> The pieces probably consisted of spiritual songs in one or several parts, although the brief references scattered throughout the archival sources do not allow precise identification of the repertoire used for these occasions.

Part of the mystery can, however, be cleared up with the discovery, among the material in the Antwerp State Archives concerning the Flemish Jesuits, of a corpus of sixty-three pieces of music written for the Lenten meditations.<sup>53</sup> These pieces set texts in Dutch (fifty pieces) and Latin (thirteen pieces), which treat of all the distinct, successive episodes of the passion of Christ.<sup>54</sup> These compositions, dating from the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, are written for between one and four parts accompanied by an instrumental ensemble of variable composition (essentially organ and/or small string ensemble and/or bassoon or trombone). The musical notation varies: alongside pieces of simple structure (homosyllabic and homorhythmic), there are others which receive a more complex treatment that elaborates

50 Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.S.E., n. 117, f. 9<sup>r</sup>.

51 Ibid., On the decoration of the venues used for devotions in the activities of the Marian sodalities, see the study by Jeffrey Chipps Smith, "Rebuilding Faith through Art: Christoph Schwarz's *Mary Altarpiece* for the Jesuit College in Munich," in *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, ed. Marcia B. Hall and Tracy E. Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 230–51.

52 "Voor het musieck eenen corael, eenen bas, ende de Clavecingel, t'welck beter ende meer gepresen is geweest als op andere tijden": Leuven, Kadoc, A.B.S.E., n. 116, f. 373.

53 Antwerp, A.E., Nederduitse Provincie van de Jezuiten, n. 1749.

54 Drèze, "Un corpus inédit."

on the traditional elements of baroque musical idiom. A great many of these pieces are numbered (e.g., meditation 1, 2, 3, and so on) and are thus arranged as a complete cycle of meditations, with each piece based on an episode of the passion. Furthermore, two pieces each bearing the same title, “meditation 1,” further specify “point 1” or “point 2,” suggesting their use together as a pair during a single assembly. Although it is not possible to affirm an irrefutable link between this corpus and the devotional exercises of the Jesuit Marian sodalities, these pieces are outstanding evidence of musical practices as yet scarcely documented for southern Belgium; furthermore, the recent discovery of new documents in a musical collection of the State Archive of Mons provides an incentive to continued research.<sup>55</sup>



Given its particular richness and complexity, the relationship between the Jesuits and music demands that researchers return to it repeatedly and with new questions, and that they test it in the light of new problems and new methodologies. The study of the musical practices and productions of the Marian sodalities is incorporated within this movement and contributes to the enrichment of a historiography as yet incomplete—both in the musical history of the meetings of the confraternities and the more general history of the Society. The Marian sodalities stand out as a privileged area for grasping the relationship between the Jesuits and music, which in the end can only be understood in the context of the constant search for balance between the mission of an order and its activity in the field of its apostolate. The study of the Marian sodalities of the two former Belgian provinces, undertaken here through the examination of unpublished archival sources, has strongly confirmed the validity of this observation.

---

55 Mons, A.E., Fonds musical de l'église Sainte-Elisabeth, AEM.02.058; my thanks go to Fabien Guilloux for drawing to my attention these pieces, of which I shall make a study.