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From War to Peace; Archery and Crossbow

Guilds in Flanders c.1300-1500

By

Laura Crombie

A thesis Presented to the University of Glasgow,
School of Arts and Humanities. In fulfilment of the
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Abstract

This thesis engages with a broad range archival source from across Flanders to analyse poorly understood urban groups, the archery and crossbow guilds. The development and continuing importance of the guilds, as military and social groups, and as agents of social peace, will be analysed over six chapters. Chapter one traces the guilds' origins and continuing military service. Proving a foundation date or a definitive origin for most guilds has proved impossible, but their enduring military importance can be established. In contrast to the assumptions of Arnade (1996), stating that after 1436 the guilds rarely served in war, I have shown that guilds served across the fifteenth century. Chapter two examines the guild-brothers themselves, through a prosopographical study of the members of the Bruges guilds. Many writers have assumed guilds to be 'elite' but no study to date has attempted to prove the status of guild-brothers. My use of several hundred different sources reveals numerous important details about guilds' composition. Many 'elites' were present, but so too were members of all crafts and, in comparison with the militia records of 1436, many richer crafts were greatly under-represented, but crucially no profession was excluded.

Chapters three and four analyse respectively the devotions and community of the guilds. Both show the centrality of choice; that guilds were reactive and complex groups changing in response to the needs of members, who could include women, children and priests. Chapter five steps back from the guilds to examine their relationships with authorities. The rulers of Flanders granted privileges to guilds, but they also socialised with them. Great lords patronised and joined guilds, helping them gain rights and lands, but such relationships were mutually beneficial. Urban authorities also supported their guilds, through money, wine, cloth and even land the towns cherished their guilds not just as defenders, but as representatives of civic ideology. Chapter six demonstrates the guilds' displays of honour and civic prestige at their best, through a study of their competitions. Competitions brought hundreds of armed men together, yet they did not provoke violence, rather, through the language of brotherhood and symbols of commensality, competitions rebuilt damaged communities. A study of competitions is far more than a study of spectacles; it is an analysis of the greatest forms of civic representation and the guilds becoming agents of social peace.

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Abbreviations

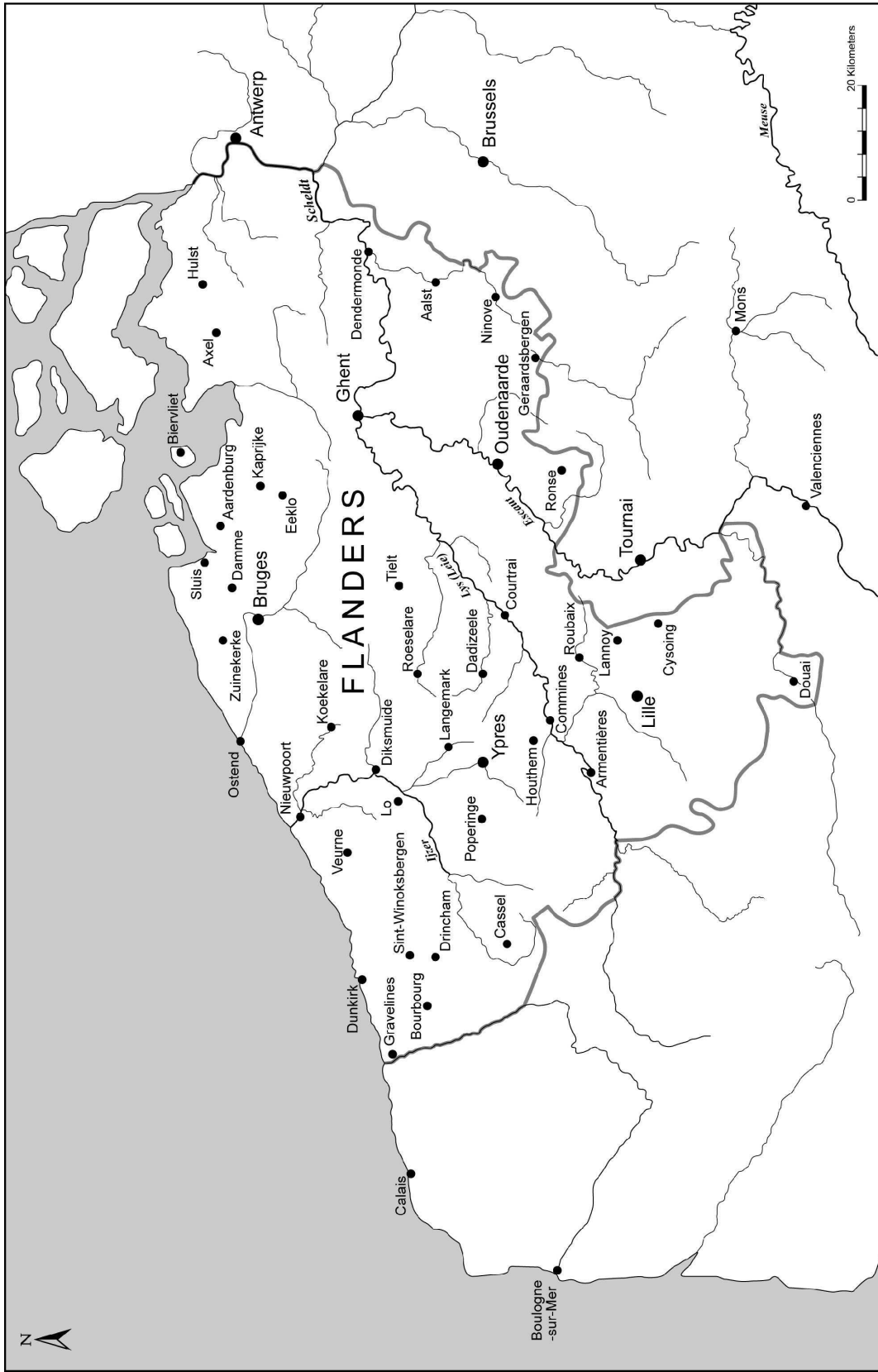
AAM	Armentieres, Archive Municipal
ACAM	<i>Annales du Cercle Archéologique de Mons,</i>
ADN	Archives Départementales du Nord
ADN, LRD	ADN, Lettres reçues et dépêche
AGR	Archives Générales du Royaume
AGN	<i>Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden</i>
AML	Lille, Archives Municipales
AML, OM	Lille, Archives Municipales, Ordonnances des Magistrates
AML, PT	Lille, Archives Municipales, Pièces aux Titres
AML, RM	Lille, Archives Municipales, Registre aux Mandates
AML, RT	Lille, Archives Municipales, Registre aux Titres,
AMR	Roubaix, Archives Municipales
ASAOA	Aalst Stadsarchief, Oude Archief
ASEB	<i>Annales de la Société d'émulation de Bruges</i> later called <i>Handelingen van het Historisch Genootschap te Brugge</i>
BAB	Brugge, Archief van de Biscop
BASS	Brugge, Archief Sint-Sebastiaan
BCRH	<i>Bulletin de la commission royale d'histoire</i>
BCRALO	<i>Bulletin de la comission royale des anciennes lois et ordonnances de Belgique</i>

<i>BMBGN</i>	<i>Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden</i>
<i>BO</i>	<i>Brugs Ommeland</i>
Brown, <i>Civic Ceremony</i>	A. Brown, <i>Civic Ceremony and Religion in Bruges c.1300-1520</i> (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming)
BMG	Bijlokemuseum te Gent
<i>BTG</i>	<i>Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis</i>
<i>Cultural Exchange</i>	R. Muchembled et al (ed.), <i>Cultural Exchange in Early modern Europe, 1400-1700</i> vol. 1-4 (Cambridge, 2006-07)
CC	Chambre des Comptes
CV	Comptes de la Ville
DAM	Douai, Archvies Municipales
De Potter, <i>Jaarboeken</i> F. De Potter, <i>Jaarboeken der Sint-Jorisgilde van Gent</i>	(Gent, 1904)
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Reveiw</i>
Espinas, <i>Les Origines</i> G. Espinas, <i>Les Origines Du Droit D'Association</i> vol. 2	(Lille, 1941)
<i>Inventaire sommaire</i>	<i>Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures a 1790</i>
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
<i>JMG</i>	<i>Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis</i>
<i>MSHLT</i>	<i>Mémoires de la Société historique et littéraire de Tournai</i>

<i>MSRHAT</i>	<i>Mémoire de la société royale d'histoire et d'archéologie de Tournai</i>
<i>MTMS</i>	<i>Millennium: Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies</i>
<i>NBW</i>	<i>Nationaal biografisch woordenboek</i>
Nicholas, <i>Flanders</i>	D. Nicholas, <i>Medieval Flanders</i> (London, 1992)
Nicholas, <i>Metamorphosis</i>	D. Nicholas, <i>The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City, Ghent in the Age of the Artevelde, 1302-1390</i> (Leiden, 1987)
<i>Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi</i>	P. Bonenfant, (ed.), <i>Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi, de Marguerite de Male et Jean Sans Peur, 1381-1419</i> vol. 1-2. (Bruxelles, 1965-74)
<i>ORF</i>	M. de Laurière, (et al), <i>Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race recueillies par ordre chronologique</i> vol. 1-21. (Farnborough, 1967-8)
<i>OSAOA</i>	Oudenaarde Stadsarchief, Oude Archief
<i>PCEEB</i>	<i>Publications du centre Européen d'études Bourguignonnes</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>RAB</i>	Brugge, Rijksarchief
<i>RAG</i>	Gent, Rijksarchief
<i>RAG, RVV</i>	Gent, Rijksarchief, Raad van Vlaanderen
<i>RAK</i>	Kortrijk Rijksarchief
<i>RBP</i>	<i>Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire</i> later <i>Belgie tijdschrift voor philologie en geschiedenis</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Revue Historique</i>

<i>RN</i>	<i>Revue du nord</i>
SAB	Brugge Stadsarchief
SAG	Gent Stadsarchief
SAG, SJ, NGR	GSA, Sint Jorisgilde, niet genummerde reeks
<i>SH</i>	<i>Spiegel historiael</i>
Smet, <i>Collection des Chroniques</i>	J.J. de Smet, <i>Collection des Chroniques Belges inédites, publiés par ordre du gouvernement, Recueil des chroniques de Flandres</i> , vol. 1-4 (Bruxelles, 1837-65)
Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition'	P. Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition des réseaux urbains des Pays-Bas au Moyen âge' <i>UH</i> 12
<i>TVG</i>	<i>Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis</i> ,
<i>TVSG</i>	<i>Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis</i>
UBG	Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent
<i>UH</i>	<i>Urban History</i>
Vaughan, <i>Philip the Bold</i>	R. Vaughan, <i>Philip the Bold, The formation of the Burgundian State</i> (London, 1962)
Vaughan, <i>John the Fearless</i>	R. Vaughan, <i>John the Fearless, the Growth of Burgundian Power</i> (London, 1966).
Vaughan, <i>Philip the Good</i>	R. Vaughan, <i>Philip the Good, the Apogee of Burgundy</i> (London, 1970).
Vaughan, <i>Charles the Bold</i>	R. Vaughan, <i>Charles the Bold, the Last Valois Duke of Burgundy</i> (London, 1973).

Map: The County of Flanders, showing major cities and rivers, 1369- 1500.



Introduction:

Flemish archery and crossbow guilds c. 1300-1500

Archery and crossbow guilds emerged in the early fourteenth century in response to the needs of town defence, and princely calls for troops. Over the next two centuries they became vibrant social, religious and festive groups, central to late medieval urban culture. How such guilds evolved, the forms and choices of their social and devotional activities, and to what extent guilds maintained a military importance while simultaneously becoming agents of social peace and builders of regional communities, will be the focus of this thesis. Shooting guilds existed across Northern Europe, but our focus will be the best documented guilds in the most urbanised area north of the Alps; Flanders.

The guilds defended their towns, were rich and influential socio-religious groups, central to festive networks, but they have not received the attention they deserve. Studies of shooting guilds are either antiquarian or local studies; no analytical modern study of guilds across a region exists. Many other urban groups have recently been studied, making an understanding of the shooting guilds even more necessary. Extensive archival sources are available for the study of shooting guilds, though none are without their problems. As sources are in Latin, French and Flemish, a note on translation and terminology must be given.

The guilds will be studied in six chapters, tracking their changes from war to peace. Firstly the military origins and continuing service of guilds will be set out, demonstrating not just the martial significance of guilds, but the durability and importance of their service. Second, the status and positions of guild-brothers will be examined, through a prosopographical analysis of the members of the two Bruges shooting guilds between 1437 and 1481. Third, the devotional activities of guilds will be analysed, as well as their similarities to other urban devotional groups. Chapter four will build on the previous, to examine the social aspects of guild relations, especially meals and drinking but also small regional networks.

Chapter five will step back from such close scrutiny of internal guild workings to analyse the relationships that existed between guilds and authorities, both noble and civic. Finally chapter six will set out the most spectacular and best documented sphere of guild influence; regional competitions that built communities across and beyond Flanders. As we shall see, the events were not just about display and honour, but built on existing commercial and festive links to create a regional brotherhood and promote peace and friendship.

1. Flanders.

Archery and crossbow guilds existed in towns, even villages, across the Low Countries,¹ in France and in Germany.² The study of guilds outside Flanders holds great possibility for future study; indeed many such guilds attended the same competitions as the Flemish guilds, but this study cannot provide an overview of all guilds across Europe. Flanders presents the greatest possibilities for the study of the shooting guilds for the prestige and power of its cities, and for its unrivalled sources.

As the most urbanised area north of the Alps, a land not just of large towns but also of strong inter-town networks, Flanders is the perfect place to locate a study of any urban group.³ Just as importantly, Flanders has, for generations, been

¹ M. Carasso-Kok and J. L.-Van Halm, *Schutters in Holland- Kracht en zenuwen van stad* (Haarlem, 1988); E. Van Autenboer, *De Kaarten van de schuttersgilden van het Hertogdom Brabant (1300-1800)* vol. 1-2 (Tilburg, 1993-4); idem, *De Schuttersgilde in de Antwerpse Kempen* (Antwerpen, 1993); P. Knevel, *Wakkere burgers de Alkmaarse schutterij; 1400-1795* (1994, Alkmaar); A. Brown and G. Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c1420 –c. 1520* (Manchester, 2007), 210-215.

² P.-Y. Beaurepaire, *Nobles jeux de l'arc et loges maçonniques dans la France des lumières* (Cahors, 2002) ; B. Brassât, *La belle histoire du noble jeu de l'arc en pays de Brie* (Lésée-sur-Seiné, 1991); T. Reintges, *Ursprung und Wesen der spatmittelalterlichen Schützengilden* (Bonn, 1963).

³ P. Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition', 29-58; W. Blockmans et al, *Studiën betreffende de sociaal structuren te Brugge Kortrijk en Gent in de 14e en 15 e eeuw* (Heule, 1971-3); Nicholas, *Flanders*, 124-175; D. Nicholas, *Town and Countryside: Social, Economic and Political Tensions*

examined and analysed by historians. Excellent studies have been produced for many individual towns, especially the large centres of Lille, Ghent and Bruges, but also of the smaller towns and of the networks that existed between them.⁴

In the following, Flanders is understood to be the large medieval county, as shown on Map 1; Flanders as it was from 1369 onwards. In 1300 Flanders had been a strong, relatively independent county; with the towns and Count Guy of Dampierre, resistant to French interference. Such conflicts famously led to the victory of the Flemish militia over the French cavalry at the Battle of Courtrai, the Battle of the Golden Spur, 11 July 1302.⁵ The Battle was a great and heroic victory for the Flemings, but its lasting significance has often been greatly over-

in Fourteenth-century Flanders (Bruges, 1971); 53-74, W. T. TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection: Popular Politics and Peasant Revolt in Flanders, 1323-1328* (Philadelphia, 1993), 15-45; H. Pirenne, *Les anciennes démocraties des Pays-Bas* (Bruxelles, 1922), 95-129; idem, *Histoire de Belgique*, vol. 2, *Du commencement du XIVe siècle à la mort de Charles le Téméraire* (Bruxelles, 1922), 28-74 ; W. Blockmans and W. Prevenier, *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1986), 37-46.

⁴ J-A. Van Houtte, *Geschiedenis van Brugge* (Brugge, 1982); J. Dumolyn, 'Population et structurés professionnelles a Bruges aux XIVe et XV siècles,' *RN*, 81 (1999), 43-64; idem, 'Les réseaux politiques locaux en Flandre sous la domination bourguignonne; les exemples de Gand et de Lille,' *RN* 88 (2006), 309-329; A. Brown, *Civic Ceremony*; D. Clauzel, *Finances et politique à Lille pendant la période Bourguignonne* (Dunkerque, 1982); P. Stabel, *Dwarfs Among Giants, the Flemish Urban Network in the Late Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1997); idem, *De kleine stad in Vlaanderen 14^{de} – 16^{de} eeuw* (Brussels, 1995) ; A. Van Zuylen van Nyevelt, *Episodes de la vie des ducs de Bourgogne à Bruges* (Bruges 1937); H. Hymans, *Bruges et Ypres* (Paris, 1901); A. M Koldewij, *Foi et bonne fortune, parure et dévotion en Flandre médiévale* (Bruges, 2006); M. Letts, *Bruges and its Past* (London, 1926); R. Mullie, *Monuments de Bruges*, vol. 1-4 (Bruxelles, 1960); A. Vandewalle, et al., *Brugse ambachten in documenten, de schoenmakers, timmerlieden en schrijnwerkers (14^{de} - 18^{de} eeuw)* (Brugge, 1985); E. Aert, W. Blockmans, et al, *Brugge en Europa* (Brugge, 1992); J. Decavele, (ed.), *Ghent, in Defence of a Rebellious City* (Antwerp, 1989); M. Boone, *Gent en de Bourgondische hertogen ca. 1384- ca. 1453, een sociaal-politieke studie van een staatsvormingsproces* (Brussel, 1990); A. Croyez, *Histoire de Lille*, vol. 1, *la constitution urbaine (des origines à 1800)* (Lille, 1935); L. Trenard, (ed.), *Histoire de Lille* vol. 1-2 (Lille, 1970-1981); P. Marchand, *Histoire de Lille* (Lille, 2003); C. Monnet, *Lille, portrait d'une ville* (Lille, 2003); R. Catty, *Douai, ville militaire* (Douai, 1999) ; M. Rouche, (ed.), *Histoire de Douai* (Dunkerque, 1985); D. Jeannot, 'Jean sans Peur et Douai, les relations entre le duc de ses bonnes villes de Flandre,' *Les Amis de Douai*, 14 (2003), 23-31; Y-M. Hilaire (ed.), *Histoire de Roubaix* (Dunkerque, 1964); L. Trenard, 'Roubaix, ville drapant entre Lille et Tournai,' *RN* 51 (1969), 175-200.

⁵ J. F. Verbruggen, (trans K. Devries and D.R. Ferguson), *The Battle of the Golden Spur, Courtrai, 11 July 1302* (Woodbridge, 2002); idem., 'De naam Guldensporenslag voor de slag bij Kortrijk (11 juli 1302),' *Revue Belge d'histoire militaire* 24 (1982) 701-6; B. Hemmerdinger, 'Un curiosum: la bataille de Courtrai (11 juillet 1302),' *Quaderni di storia* 15 (1982) 263-269.

stated. Just two years later; on 18 August 1304 the French army crushed the Flemings at Mons-en-Pevel.⁶ The defeat led to the signing of the Treaty of Athis-sur-Orge, by which Walloon Flanders (the castellanies of Lille, Douai and Orchies) became part of France, not Flanders.⁷

The southern towns were returned to Flanders upon the marriage of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and youngest son of King John II, and Margaret of Male, heiress to Louis, Count of Flanders, in 1369.⁸ The transfer was intended to be temporary, but the early death of King Charles V of France and later weakness of Charles VI allowed the Dukes of Burgundy to keep Walloon Flanders. The extensive records of Walloon Flanders, especially Lille, cannot be ignored, and to begin using them in 1369 would be unacceptable and artificial. In the following work Walloon Flanders is included throughout. The guilds of Lille and Douai continued to attend, even organise competitions with Flemish guilds between 1304 and 1369, and both towns maintained Flemish traditions, even under French rule.

⁶ P. C. M. Hoppenbrouwers, '1302 De Guldensporenslag en zijn nagalm in de moderne tijd,' *BMBGN* 119 (2004), 153-173; V. Lambert, 'Guldensporenslag van fait-divers tot ankerpunt van de vlaamse identiteit (1302) de natievormende functionaliteit van historiografische mythen,' *BMBGN* 115 (2000), 365-391; J. Bovesse, 'La régence comtale Namuroise en Flandre (juillet 1302 - mai 1303). *Recht en instellingen in de oude Nederlanden tijdens de middeleeuwen en de nieuwe tijden. Liber amicorum Jan Buntinx* (Louvain, 1981), 139-165; B. Delmaire, 'Guerre en Artois après la bataille de Courtrai (1302),' *Actes du 101e congrès national des sociétés savantes, Lille, 1976. Section de philologie et d'histoire: La guerre et la paix, frontières et violences au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1978), 131-141.

⁷ H. Van Werveke, 'Les charges financières issues du traité d'Athis (1305),' in his *Miscellanea Mediaevalia verspreide opstellen over economische en sociale geschiedenis van de Middeleeuwen* (Gent, 1968) 227-242; G. Small, *Late Medieval France* (Basingstoke, 2009); 47-8, Nicholas, *Flanders*, 180-207.

⁸ Vaughan, *Philip the Bold* 16-38; Small, *Late Medieval France*, 138-41; Nicholas, *Flanders*, 317-334.

Mechelen.

The guilds of Mechelen have also been examined in the present study, though how far Mechelen can be considered as part of Flanders is debatable. Before 1356 it was a Brabant town; in that year Louis of Male conquered Mechelen, as will be discussed in chapter one, from then on it was ruled as part of Flanders.⁹ The town formed part of the Flemish inheritance of the Dukes of Burgundy, even before Philip the Good became Duke of Brabant.¹⁰ Mechelen from 1356 was administered and ruled as part of Flanders, so its guilds will be considered along with the Flemish ones, their charters and competitions analysed in the same light. An ongoing research project, led by Professor Peter Stabel at the University of Antwerp, will further illuminate the importance of Mechelen and its civic groups.¹¹ In light of this ongoing research, no new archival works has been undertaken in Mechelen for the present study, but published texts and sources have been drawn on.

Tournai.

Though our study will focus on Flanders, published sources relating to the now lost archives of Tournai have also been used. Tournai was a French Episcopal

⁹ S. Boffa, *Warfare in Medieval Brabant, 1356-1406* (Woodbridge, 2004), 3-7, 39-41, 136-140; Vaughan, *Philip the Bold*, 16-17; Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 224-6; A. Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement de duche de Brabant au Bas Moyen Âge*, vol. 1 (Bruxelles, 1975), 45-6; H. Laurent and F. Quicke, 'La Guerre de la succession du Brabant (1356-7),' *RN* 13 (1927), 119-121.

¹⁰ W. Blockmans, 'Le dialogue imaginaire entre princes et sujets: les Joyeuses Entrées en Brabant en 1494 et en 1496,' *A la cour de Bourgogne: Le duc, son entourage, son train*. Ed. J.-M. Cauchies (Turnhout, 1998), 155-170; Boffa, *Warfare in Brabant*, 5-9; P. Avonds, 'Mechelen en de Brabantse steden (1312-1355). Een bijdrage tot de parlementaire geschiedenis van de Derde Stad,' *BTG* 53 (1970), 17-80; W. Godenne, 'Préliminaire à l'inventaire général des statuettes d'origine malinoise présumées des XVe et XVIe siècles,' *Handelingen van de koninklijke kring voor oudheidkunde, letteren en kunst van Mechelen* 73 (1969), 87-146; B. Somes et al, 'Preface' to E. Eichbert (ed.), *Women of Distinction, Margret of York, Margret of Austria* (Leuven, 2007), 11-23.

¹¹ For forthcoming details see <http://webh01.ua.ac.be/cstadg/magazine.php> and <http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.ONDERZKDBE&n=40312&id=UA028&tid=21180> accessed 13/11/10.

city, but by the fifteenth century it was surrounded by Burgundian lands, and influenced by urban culture of the Low Countries. The archery and crossbow guilds of Tournai held competitions, served their town, and received charters just as those in Flanders did. Though no original archival work in Tournai is possible, many publications, especially summaries of town council minutes and charters have been utilised.¹² Nineteenth-century transcriptions are problematic, as authors made choices about what to include and exclude; choices that were not explained and cannot now be checked. Despite such weaknesses, publications remain useful, especially as no town council minutes survive from fifteenth century Flanders.

2. c. 1300- 1500.

As we shall see, setting out a date of ‘foundation’ or ‘establishment’ for a particular guild is virtually impossible. It is likely that the shooters of c. 1300 were forbearers of the guilds, not guild brothers themselves, thus no exact start date has been set for the present study. An end date is equally difficult to justify. It is clear that a thesis cannot provide a total history of guilds from their creation to the present day. The deaths of dukes could form an end date, with either 1477 for Charles the Bold or 1506 for Philip the Fair. Neither death fundamentally and instantly changed guilds and urban culture. In the following 1500 has been applied as an imperfect, but necessary, end date, though some examples will be drawn from the early sixteenth century where appropriate. Further, it is anticipated that future research will look beyond the 1500 boundary, as guilds

¹² A. de la Grange, ‘Extraits analytiques des registres des consaulx de la ville de Tournai, 1431-1476,’ *MSHLT* 23 (1893); idem., ‘Extraits des comptes généraux de Tournai, 1463,’ *MRSBAT* 19 (1885), 1-396; E. Vandenbroeck, ‘Extraits analytiques des anciens registres des de la ville de Tournai, 1385-1422,’ *MSHLT* 7 (1861), 1-302; idem, ‘Extraits analytiques des anciens registres de la ville de Tournai (1422-30),’ *MSHLT* 8 (1863); G. Preud’homme, ‘Extraits des registres Consaulx des de la ville de Tournai (1455-72); complément a l’édition de la Grange,’ *MRSBAT*, nouv. Ser., 1 (1980), 297-341; idem ‘Extraits des registres des Consaulx de la ville de Tournai (1489-99),’ *MRSBAT* 8 (1981), 91-106; F. Hennebert, ‘Extraits des registres des Consaulx de la ville et cite de Tournai (1477-1482),’ *MSHLT* 3 (1856), 58-285. I am very grateful to Dr. Graeme Small for many references to these sources. For an overview of Tournai’s sources and losses see G. Small ‘Centre and periphery in late medieval France: Tournai, 1384-1477,’ in *War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France*. Ed. C. Allmand (Liverpool, 2000), 145-150.

remained influential group into the seventeenth century, but an end date is needed for the present study.

3. Previous studies.

Though they have not received the analysis and scholarly attention they deserve, shooting guilds have been studied before. Many nineteenth-century writers were fascinated by the guilds, and though their studies are now dated and problematic, they provide a useful starting point for research. The most commonly used of these, Delaunay and Janvier, attempted to study the development and activities of guilds across France and the Low Countries.¹³ Though both are weakened by an over-reliance on prescriptive documents, they reveal the fascination guilds hold, and the huge potential for studying such dynamic urban groups.

Other nineteenth or early twentieth studies focused on one group or region. Many such local studies were written by enthusiastic shooters, or local men keen to show the importance of their town, leading to exaggerations in the importance or status of guilds. Despite such drawbacks, many studies, such as those by Barthelemy,¹⁴ Berghe-Loontjens,¹⁵ Le Bon,¹⁶ Cauwenberghe,¹⁷ Régibe¹⁸ and

¹³ L-A. Delaunay, *Étude sur les anciennes compagnies d'archers, d'arbalétriers et d'arquebusiers* (Paris, 1879); A. Janvier, 'Notice sur les anciennes corporations d'archers, d'arbalétriers, de couleriniens et d'arquebusiers des villes de Picardie', *Mémoires de la société des antiquaires de la Picardie* 14 (1855).

¹⁴ E. de Barthelemy, *Histoire des archers, arbalétriers et arquebusiers de la ville de Reims* (Reims, 1873).

¹⁵ E. vanden Berghe-Loontjens, *Het aloude gilde van de handboogschutters st Sebastiaan te Rooselare* (Rooselare, 1904).

¹⁶ F. le Bon, *L'ancien Serment des arbalétriers de Nivelles et ses statuts* (Nivelles, 1886).

¹⁷ E. Van Cauwenberghe, 'Notice historique sur les confréries de Saint Georges', *Messenger des sciences historiques des arts et de la bibliographie de Belgique* (1853), 269-300.

¹⁸ E. Régibe, *Historique de la gilde de Saint Sébastien de Renaix* (Renaix, 1911).

especially Wauters¹⁹ were undertaken by excellent archivists and palaeographers. These writers worked in as yet non-inventoried depots and found much extremely useful information. Others transcribed documents that were destroyed in the twentieth century, or described objects that have since degraded, especially seals, and so are invaluable.²⁰

Modern studies have also focused on one guild, or guilds in one town. Studies of the Ghent guilds are particularly numerous; with Moulin-Coppens' 1985 study the most useful and thorough.²¹ Many Ghent studies, as will be discussed below, rely heavily on older studies,²² rather than new archival work. Such works are nevertheless useful in setting out the different possible approaches for analysing guilds, and the dangers of relying on nineteenth century works. Other studies of one guild, especially studies of the two Bruges guilds, are also important for showing how diverse and fascinating guilds were, and the dangers in accepting local myths.²³ Narratives of guilds from small towns are usually based on far

¹⁹ A. Wauters, *Notice historique sur les anciens serments ou gildes d'arbalétriers, d'archers, d'arquebusiers et d'escrimeurs de Bruxelles* (Bruxelles, 1848), 1-36.

²⁰ A-G. Chotin, *Histoire de Tournai et du Tournaisis* (Tournai, 1840), 348- 364; J. de Saint-Genoise, 'Fetes d'arbalétriers a Tournai', *Revue Bruxelles* (1839), 37-55; T. de Sagher, 'Origine de la guilde des archers de Saint Sébastien à Ypres (1383-1398)', *Annales de la société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Gand*, 5 (1903), 116-130; E. Matthieu, 'Sceaux des serments ou guildes de la ville d'Enghien', *ACAM*, 25 (1878) 9-18; C. Bamps et E. Geraet, 'Les Anciennes gildes et compagnie militaire de Hasselet', *Annales de l'académie royale d'archéologique de Belgique*, 4^e série 10 (1897), 21-46; Anon. 'Le Sceau des archers du serment de Douai (1460)', *Souvenirs de Flandre Wallon*, 2^e série 1 (1881), 103-7.

²¹ B. Baillieul, *De Vier Gentse Hoofdgilden* (Gent, 1994); F. de Basscher, *Confrérie des arbalétriers de Saint George à Gand (Gand, 1850)*; P. de Burgraere, *Notice historique sur les chefs confréries Gantois de Saint Sébastien et de Saint Antoine* (Gent, 1913); J. Cieters (ed.), *Tentoonstelling, 550 jaar schietspelen van de sint-Jorisgilde* (1990, Ghent); P. Voित्रon, *Notice sur le local de la confrérie de Saint Georges a Gand (1381 à 1796)* (Gand, 1890); J. Moulin-Coppens, *De Geschiedenis van het oude Sint-Jorisgilde te Gent* (Ghent, 1985).

²² Especially De Potter, *Jaerboeken*

²³ N. Geirnaert (ed.), *Militie en vermaak – 675 jaar Sint-Jorisgilde in Brugge* (Brugge, 1998); H. Godar, *Histoire de la gilde des archers de Saint Sébastien de la ville de Bruges* (Bruges, 1947); M. Lemahieu, *Het wezen van de eerste vlaamse schuttersgilden* (Brugge, 2008); idem., *De Koninklijke hoofdgilde Sint-Sebastiaan Brugge, 1379-2005* (Brugge, 2005); J. van Praet, *Jaerboek der keyzerlyke ende koninglyke hoofd-gilde van den edelen ridder Sint Joris in de ouden hove*

fewer documents, but can still show the vitality and potential for studying the guilds.²⁴ Crucially no existing study moves beyond an analysis of one guild to examine regional variation, the power of regional networks or the complex relationships that existed between guilds and different levels of authority.

4. Historical context.

In recent years, many other urban groups have been analysed. Vincent has looked at French religious confraternities,²⁵ and Trio has looked at similar groups in the Low Countries, particularly those of Ghent.²⁶ Theatrical groups, or chambers of rhetoric, have been studied by Liebrecht²⁷ and more recently by Van Bruaene.²⁸

binnen de stad Brugge (Bruges, 1786); L. A. Vanhoutryre, *De Brugse kruisbooggilde van Sint-Joris* (Handzame, 1968).

²⁴ H. Baillien, 'De Tongerse schutterijen van de 14^{de} tot de 16^{de} eeuw,' *Het oude land van Loon* 34 (1979), 5-34; P. Bruyère, *Les compagnies sermentées de la cite de Liège aux temps modernes, l'exemple des jeunes arbalétriers (1523-1684)* (Liège, 2004); P. de Cock, *Geschiedenis van het koninklijk handbooggild Sint Sebastiaan* (Ninove, 1968); P. Delsalle, 'La confrérie des archers de Cysoing fondée en 1430 par la baronne de Cysoing et le duc de Bourgogne,' *Bulletin de la société historique et archéologique de Cysoing et de la Révèle* 3 (1975), 14-19; W. Iven, et al, *Schuttersgilden in Noord-Brabant ('s-Hertogenbosch, 1983); Knevel, Wakkere burgers de Alkmaarse schutterij*; K. Papin, 'De handboogschuttersgilde van Sint-Winoksbergen in 1469,' *Westhoek* 17 (2001), 3-40.

²⁵ C. Vincent, *Des charités bien ordonnées, les confréries Normandes de la fin du 13^e-début du 16^e* (Paris, 1988); eadem. *Les confréries médiévales dans la royaume de France, XIIIe – XVe siècle* (Paris, 1994).

²⁶ P. Trio, 'Les confréries comme expression de solidarité urbain aux Pays-Bas a la fin du moyen âge,' *Memoria, communitas, civitas : mémoire et conscience urbaines en occident à la fin du Moyen Age* ed. H. Brand et al (Thorbecke, 2003), 131-141; idem, 'Old Stories and New Themes: an Overview of the Historiography of Confraternities in the Low Countries from the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Centuries,' *Religious and Laity in Western Europe 1000-1400: Interaction, Negotiation, and Power*. Ed. E. Jamroziak and J. Burton (Turnhout 2006), 357-384; idem., *De Gentse broederschappen (1182-1580)* (Gent, 1990); idem., *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving* (Leuven, 1993); idem., 'Van gebedsverbroedering naar broederschap. De evolutie van het fraternitas-begrip in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden in de volle Middeleeuwen', *JMG* 9 (2006), 7-46; idem. 'Statutes van laat middeleeuwse broederschappen. Enkele Gentse voorbeelden', *Handelingen van de koninklijke commissie voor geschiedenis* (1989), 279-308.

²⁷ H. Liebrecht, *Les Chambres de Rhétorique* (Brussels, 1948).

²⁸ A-L. Van Bruaene, 'The Chambers of Rhetoric in the (Southern) Low Countries; A Flemish-Dutch Project on Literary Confraternities', *Confraternitas* 16 (2005), 3-14; Eadem, *Om Beters*

Urban jousts have been analysed by Van den Neste and others.²⁹ Expressions of urban devotion or civic solidarities, especially processions, have similarly received a good deal of attention and analysis.³⁰ Craft guilds in Flanders have also been well studied in recent years, and theories developed for craft guilds elsewhere, especially in the works of Gervaise Rosser, are applicable to Flanders.³¹ Many other aspects of late medieval towns, from trade networks to the uses of urban space, are also extremely useful in giving the necessary context to understanding archery and crossbow guilds.³²

Wille. *Rederijkerskamers en de Stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam, 2008).

²⁹ E. Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandre à la fin du Moyen Âge (1300-1486)* (Paris, 1996); A. Brown 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages: the White Bear of Bruges,' *RBPH*, 78 (2000) 315-30; A. Van den Abeele, *Ridderlijk Gezelschap van de witte beer* (Brugge, 2000).

³⁰ E. Lecuppre-Desjardin, 'Les lumières de la ville: recherché sur l'utilisation de la lumière dans les cérémonies bourguignonnes (XIVe-XVe Siècles),' *RH* 301 (1999), 23-43; eadem., 'Processions et propagande à Valenciennes en 1472' *RN* 86 (2004), 757-770; B. Ouvry, 'Officieel ceremonieel te Oudenaarde, 1450-1600,' *Handelingen van de geschiedenis oudheidkundige kring van Oudenaarde* 22 (1985) 25-64; A. Brown, 'Civic Ritual: Bruges and the Count of Flanders in the Later Middle Ages,' *EHR* 112 (1997), 277-299; Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 239-252; E. Knight, 'Guild pageants and Urban Stability in Lille' in E. Strietman and, Happe, (eds.), *Urban Theatre in the Low Countries, 1400-1625*. (Turnhout, 2006), 187-208; T. Penneman, 'De Ros Beiaard-Ommegang te Dendermonde 1377-1789. Een systematisch onderzoek van de voornaamste profane elementen in de "processie ende ommeganghe" aan de hand van de Stadsrekeningen,' *Oudheidkundige Kring van het land van Dendermonde. Gedenkschriften ser.4:1-2* (1975), 5-119; Blockmans and Prevenier, *The Burgundian Netherlands*, 156-196.

³¹ C. Vanden Haute, *La corporation des peintres de Bruges* (Bruges, 1900); Vandewalle, *Brugse ambachten in documenten*; J-A Van Houtte, 'Makelaars en waarden te Brugge van 13^e tot de 16^e eeuw', *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 5 (1950), 1-30, 335- 355; Clauzel, *Finances et Politique à Lille*, 27-34; G. Rosser, 'Going to the Fraternity Feast; commensality and social relations in late medieval England,' *Journal of British Studies* 33 (1994) 430-446; idem., 'Solidarités et changement social: les fraternités urbaines anglaises à la fin du Moyen Âge,' *Annales économiques, sociétés, civilisations* 48 (1993), 1127-43; M. McRee, 'Unity or division? The social meaning of guild ceremony in urban communities,' B.A. Hanawalt, and K.L. Reyerson, (eds), *City and spectacle in medieval Europe* (London, 1994), 189-197.

³² M. Boone, 'Urban Space and Political conflict in Late Medieval Flanders,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32.4 (2002) 621-640; M. Boone and P. Stabel, (eds.), *Shaping Urban Identity in Late Medieval Europe* (Leuven, 2000); A. Classen, (ed.); *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age* (Berlin and New York, 2009); C. Symes, 'Out in the open, in Arras; Sightlines, Landscape and the Shaping of a Medieval Public Space,' *Cities, Texts and social Networks* ed. C. Goodson, A E. Lester and C. Symes (Farnham, 2010), 279-307.

The study of the political and institutional framework of late medieval Flanders has been studied for generations. Older studies, particularly those of Richard Vaughan, remain extremely useful.³³ New studies, using new techniques, have added much depth to an understanding of relations between towns and lords.³⁴ Arnade's study on Ghent's turbulent relationship with the Dukes of Burgundy shows what is possible in understanding different urban groups and their lords.³⁵ Most recently, Brown and Small have translated numerous important documents, setting them in a broad context allowing for new scholarship into many aspects of urban and courtly culture, not least the shooting guilds.³⁶

5. Sources.

Archery and crossbow guilds are well documented in numerous sources; the vast majority of these are unpublished and have been found through extensive archival research. Town accounts from across Flanders, charters and prescriptive documents from lords, guild records and the archives of religious institutions have all been carefully examined. Numerous chronicles, both published and unpublished, mention guilds and their competitions, such narrative sources add greater breadth to the present study.

³³ Vaughan, *Philip the Bold*; idem, *John the Fearless*; Idem, *Philip the Good*; idem., *Charles the Bold*; J. R. L. Highfield and R. Tests, *The Crown and Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1981); E. Le Roy Ladurie, Trans J. Vale, *The French Royal State, 1460-1610* (Oxford, 1994); Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique* vol. 2, 117-412.

³⁴ S. Gunn, et al, *War, State and Society in England and the Netherlands, 1477- 1559* (Oxford, 2007); Blockmans and Prevenier, *The Burgundian Netherlands*, 196-246; W. Blockmans, and W. Prevenier, *The Promised lands. The Low Countries under Burgundian rule, 1369-1530* (Philadelphia, 1999); J. Dumolyn, 'Justice, Equity and the Common Good; The State Ideology of the Councillors of the Burgundian Dukes,' J. D'Arcy, D. Boulton and J. R. Veenstra, *The Ideology of Burgundy* (Leiden, 2006), 1-20; J. Haemers, *For the Common Good, state power and urban revolts in the reign of Mary of Burgundy* (Turnhout, 2009), 137-263; H. Cools, *Mannen met macht, Edellieden en de Modrene Staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse landen (1475-1530)* (Walburg, 2001), 47-81; 727-55 ; B. Schnerb, *L'Etat Bourguignon, 1363-1477* (Perrin, 1999).

³⁵ P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual* (Ithaca and London, 1996).

³⁶ Brown, and Small, *Court and Civic Society*.

Town accounts.

Town financial accounts form an essential starting point for our study. In Ghent and Bruges such accounts go back as far as 1280 and in Lille accounts begin in 1301.³⁷ In many other towns, such as Douai, they are scattered and fragmentary until the 1380s, or even the fifteenth century as in Oudenaarde.³⁸ Accounts from Lille, Douai, Aalst, Oudenaarde, Ghent and Bruges have been examined for every year where they survive in the civic archives until c. 1520.³⁹ Contemporary copies of virtually all Flemish towns were sent to the ducal *Chambre des Comptes*, a great number of these survive in the *Archives Générales Du Royaume*. So numerous are such registers, that reading every register from every town is an impossible task, so choices have been made. Ypres, as the one of the four ‘members of Flanders’, has been thoroughly analysed.⁴⁰ Many studies of Flanders focus only on Ghent and Bruges. To ensure the same mistake was not made in this thesis, accounts from several small towns have been used, namely, Ronse, Kaprijke, Ninove and Damme, though all of these have gaps for the fifteenth century.⁴¹ Finally as a point of comparison, samples of accounts from the medium sized towns of Courtrai and Dendermonde were used. In general every third register was read, but for years known to involve important competitions, the pattern changed slightly.⁴²

³⁷ J. Vuylsteke, *Gentsche stads en balijwrekeningen, 1280-1336* (Gent, 1900); L. Gilliodts-Van Severen, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Bruges* vol. 1-6 (Bruges, 1871-1885); M. A. Richebé, *Compte de recettes et dépenses de la ville de Lille, 1301-2* (Lille, 1894).

³⁸ DAM, CC 200, organised accounts from 1383; earlier fragments CC 201 ter.; OSAOA, stadsrekening, 684, 1406 onwards.

³⁹ AML, CV, 16012-16274; DAM, 201- CC 240; AGR,CC, 31419-31495; AGR CC, Microfilm 684.1-6; SAG, 400;SAB, 216.

⁴⁰ AGR, CC, 38635- 38723.

⁴¹ AGR, CC, 37877- 37891; 33009-33067; 37076-37103; 33544-54.

⁴² AGR, CC 33147-25; 37973-38002.

Town accounts are often difficult to read, palaeographical and analytically, but are extremely rewarding. Accounts list all monies given to the towns every year. Such lists in Bruges helped to set out how wealthy and powerful individual guild-brothers were. Of wider relevance, accounts also set out all payments; for maintaining and defending walls and urban buildings, for gifts of wine and for wages to civic officials and pensions. Guilds were given money for military service or for attending competitions, they were granted wine or even lands for the honour they brought to the town. Accounts were written continuously and contemporarily, though the possibility of fraud or mistakes should not be forgotten.⁴³ They provide a huge amount of details on where guilds went, when and why, and how much they received in return.

Charters.

Charters of rights and obligations were issued to the guilds by rulers of Flanders, by local noblemen, even by ecclesiastic lords; all set out what was expected of guilds. Many charters used in this study have been published either in collections or individually. Most important are collections of charters from Philip the Bold and John the Fearless, edited by Bonenfant and Cauchies.⁴⁴ Charters issued by Philip the Good to the county of Flanders are currently being drawn together and analysed as part of a thesis at Ghent University.⁴⁵ Many charters to shooting guilds were published with those to craft guilds by Espinas in 1942. Some of the later charters, especially those granted to Lille, seem to have been transcribed in a hurry and contain some small errors, but given the dates of Espinas's work this is

⁴³ For example a town clerk of Tournai wrote in a margin of the accounts 'the crossbowmen were paid twice for going to Jeumont where they won the sovereign prize', De la Grange, *Extraits analytiques des registres*, 305.

⁴⁴ *Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi*; J.M. Cauchies, (ed.), *Ordonnances du Jean sans Peur, 1405-1419* (Bruxelles, 2001).

⁴⁵ J. Braekevelt, *Charters of Philip the Good for the County of Flanders and Lordship of Malines* (Universiteit Gent, ongoing) I am extremely grateful to the author for access to his transcriptions, and for references to charters.

hardly surprising.⁴⁶ Other charters have been published in local studies, even biographies. The charter obtained by Jan van Dadizeele for the archers in Dadizeele was published in 1850 along with his memoirs.⁴⁷ Numerous other charters, or ordinances issued by civic authorities, have been found in civic and central archives in Aalst, Douai, Lille, Ghent, Bruges, Oudenaarde and Courtrai.

Charters and civic ordinances set out what was expected of guilds, from how many men should enter to what weapons they should carry, even where and when the guild-brothers should attend mass. Many such ordinances were issued at the request of the guilds in question, so should have standardised existing norms. Others refer to ‘ancient customs’ and ‘ancient service’ again emphasising that their regulations were not innovation, rather standardisation. Not all such charters were issued at the request of the guilds in question; as we shall see in chapter five, some were issued by towns to control guilds. Whether issued at guild behest or not, charters set out how guilds should have acted, when they should have practised, how they should have behaved. As chapter four will show, rules were not always followed, but charters are still important for understanding guilds’ positions in civic society.

Guild-records.

The records kept by the guilds themselves are the most diverse, but most useful, sources for the present research. Records include membership lists from Ghent and Bruges, with the latter even having seating plans and lists of which members attended the annual shooting contest.⁴⁸ Guild financial records are not as complete as town accounts, and in the same way can be difficult to use, but they

⁴⁶ Espinas, *Les Origines*, 104-131, 178-232, 258-260, 300-232, 357-378.

⁴⁷ K. de Lettenhove (ed), *Mémoires de Jean de Dadizeele* (Bruges, 1850), 7-10.

⁴⁸ SAG, SJ, NGR; SAG, Fonds Sint Joris, 155; SAG, Sint Sebastian, 155/1; SAG, Reeks LXVII, Sint Jorishospitaal; SAB, 385, Sint Joris; BASS rekeningen

are nevertheless extremely valuable. The costs of food and drink from Bruges,⁴⁹ and records of bequests from Ghent⁵⁰ and of liveries from Oudenaarde.⁵¹ All give glimpses into the internal, private works of guild social and devotional actions. Guild records also include invitation to, and descriptions of competitions,⁵² the locations and size of guilds' secular properties, even their military service.⁵³

Guild records have not survived everywhere, but where they do they can reveal the internal working of guilds. The dangers of having such complete records from Ghent and Bruges, and far less from elsewhere, could lead to these two towns dominating our study, but intense scrutiny of less full archives has provided a balanced picture. For example chapel accounts from Aalst survive only for one year,⁵⁴ while from Bruges they are extensive from 1454 until 1481, and again from 1486 to 1492. By contrasting small and large towns, scattered detailed with extensive ones, the present study will not just describe one or two guilds, but examine, analyse and contrast different guild across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Religious records.

Records of ecclesiastical authorities, groups, even buildings, have not survived in as great a number as secular ones. The violence of the sixteenth century, in which the chapels of Saint George in both Aalst and Oudenaarde were destroyed, is not the only explanation for such an absence. In Lille, the archers and crossbowmen had chapels in the parish church of Saint Maurice. The chapels, which included

⁴⁹ BASS rekeningen

⁵⁰ SAG, Reeks LXVII, Sint Jorishospitaal

⁵¹ OSAOA, 507/II/10A

⁵² These will be discussed in depth in chapter six

⁵³ Many in SAG, SJ, NG but also OSAOA 507/II/3B

⁵⁴ ASAOA, 156, Rekening van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2

stained glass windows and many records, were destroyed in the French Revolution. In Bruges an accidental fire destroyed the Franciscan monastery that housed the chapel of Saint Sebastian, and, of course, across Flanders the twentieth century brought even greater destruction.

Despite such problems, much of use has survived. Papal bulls granted rights and privileges to guilds in many towns, not just the great centres of Ghent and Bruges but also the secondary town of Oudenaarde.⁵⁵ I know of no surviving guild chapel, yet inventories and description have survived proving hints of the splendours that once existed.⁵⁶ Such religious records are not without limitations, none record why a bequest was made; the motivations for devotion. Records give simply the cost of having masses said or a descriptions of the goods left to guild devotional actions. Such records show not just the wealth and importance of guilds, through papal privileges and ostentatious donations, and allow tentative conclusions to be drawn about the nature of guild devotions.

Chronicles.

The chronicles described here cover a wide variety of narrative history, famous accounts and unknown local descriptions. One of the most useful of the latter is the unpublished *Bouc van Pieter Polet*, the only known copy of which is in Ghent University Library.⁵⁷ Pieter wrote his book sometime before 1506, when he signed it as being his own work and completed. He was a crossbowman of Ghent; his book describes two of the great events of that guild, the crossbow competitions of 1440 and 1498. As his own works and the town accounts show, Pieter was one of the men who organised the 1498 shoot. It is therefore likely that he found out all he could about the 1440 shoot before 1498, and recorded the later

⁵⁵ GSA, 155, 2; BASS, charter 4; OSAOA 507/II/2A

⁵⁶ BMG, Sint sebastiaangilde; privilegieboek, inv 1059, f. 10-12; SAG, SJ, NGR, 7.

⁵⁷ GUB, G 6112, *Dit es den bouc vander scutters tobehoorende Pieter Polet*.

shoot a few years after it had taken place. The *Bouc* transcribes letters of invitation, ducal letters of consent, section of accounts describing the two competitions, and even accounts of the messengers carrying letters of invitation, nothing so detailed or so personal has survived for any other Flemish guild.

It is possible that another civic chronicle was written by a crossbowman, the chronicle usually called ‘*wondrous happenings*’ and attributed to Olivier van Dixmuide.⁵⁸ The only publication of the chronicle, based on a now lost Ypres original, did not transcribe all details, missing out many elections of officials and local matters, and may not in-fact be the work of one man.⁵⁹ However it is very likely that the Olivier van Dixmuide, who wrote at least part of the chronicle, and was alderman in 1423 and 25,⁶⁰ was the same Olivier van Dixmuide who, as headman of the great crossbow guild, was given uniform and generous expenses in 1428.⁶¹ The majority of the *happenings* are great events of state, ducal envoys, marriages and wars, but several civic events are also described. The 1440 Ghent competition, and the appearances of the Ypres crossbowmen as they left for Calais in 1436, are described in great detail. Such insights demonstrate that the author(s) believed the guilds to be influential civic groups worthy of special attention.

Several Oudenaarde chronicles, and that of the nearby abbey of Enaeme, describe crossbow competitions or the guilds themselves.⁶² An eighteenth century

⁵⁸ Olivier van Dixmuide (ed. J.-J. Lambin), *Merkwaerdige Gebeurtenissen, Vooral in Vlaendern en Brabant en ook in de aangrenzende landstreken van 1377 tot 1443* (Ypres, 1835).

⁵⁹ P. Trio ‘The Chronicle Attributed to ‘Oliver van Diksmuide’; a Misunderstood Town chronicle of Ypres from Late Medieval Flanders’ in E. Kooper, *The Medieval Chronicle V* (Amsterdam, 2008), 211-225.

⁶⁰ Lambin’s introduction to *Merkwaerdige Gebeurtenissen*, iii- xii

⁶¹ Given to ‘Olivier van Dixmuide, headman of the great shooters’ AGR, CC, 38653, f.35.

⁶² Chronicle of Ename quoted in Cauwenberghe, ‘Notice historique sur les confréries de Saint Georges’, 279-291, at the time of writing, the archives of Eename were being moved between the

compilation of Oudenaarde Chronicles, by the archivist Bartholomeeus de Rantere, is also useful, particularly as many of the early chronicles are no longer legible or are too delicate to consult. Parts of De Rantere's work have been published, but not all.⁶³ De Ranter drew heavily on extant chronicles and town accounts, his transcriptions were excellent, but he failed to take into account changes of years in town accounts. In Oudenaarde the financial year ran from Our Lady's day (15 August), but De Ranter almost always dates events to the year accounts began. Other unpublished chronicles in the Oudenaarde stadsarchief set out the history of the town, from creation, or at least the early middle ages, onwards. All mention at least one guild competition, especially the 1408 shoot. In these chronicles the guilds of Oudenaarde are mentioned only in passing, and rarely in depth, but that chronicles saw the guilds as part of their history and their story is significant.

Many other chronicles set out not to describe the history of one town, but all of Flanders, or larger areas, many of these mention shooting guilds. The *Excellent Chronicle of Flanders*, printed in 1531, sets out the history of Flanders from Liederik to Charles V, and is concerned with dynastic events and wars. Yet this huge chronicle provides incredible details on the Ghent crossbow competition of 1498.⁶⁴ The *Chroniques de Brabant et de Flandre*⁶⁵ and the works of Nicholas Despars⁶⁶ set out to give grand narratives of their age, but take the time and space to describe guilds or their shoots.

Ronse and Ghent state archives, the original chronicle could not be found in either; several anonymous, unpublished and in poor condition town chronicles in OSAOA, 241.

⁶³ Original is OSAOA, Bartholomeeus de Rantere, microfilm 1484-6 ; Bartholomeus de Rantere, ed. E. Dhoop and M. De Smet, *Geschiedenis van Oudenaarde, van 621-1397* (Oudenaarde, 1986), and *1397-1468* (Oudenaarde, 1986).

⁶⁴ *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaanderen, beghinnende van Liederik Buc tot keyser Carolus* (Antwerpen, 1531) f. 285 v. – 291 v.

⁶⁵ In Smet, *Collection des chroniques* Vol. 3, 37-93.

⁶⁶ N. Despars, *Cronijke van den lande ende graefscpe van Vlander van de Jaeren 405 tot 1492* (Amsterdam, 1562); F. Buylaert, 'Memory, social mobility and historiography. Shaping noble

Local chronicles from outside Flanders can also be usefully drawn on, as virtually all refer to at least one Flemish shoot. In Liège the canon Jean Stavelot, writing a continuation of the chronicles of Jean d'Outremeuse, is most concerned with matters of local, even European importance. He discussed peace negotiations in France, but is particularly concerned with ecclesiastical matters, notably the Papal Schism and the Hussite heretics. Despite such bias, he describes a crossbow competition in Liège in 1441, and proudly described the crossbowmen of Liège travelling to other competitions.⁶⁷ Even the Blind abbot of Tournai, Gilles de Muisit, writing in the mid fourteenth century, described the crossbow competition of 1350.⁶⁸ The guilds and their competitions became civic powers that could not be ignored, leaders of civic culture as well as some of the most spectacular groups in their towns. It is striking that virtually all surviving chronicles written in the Low Countries mention, at least in passing, archery and crossbow guild or their competitions.

6. Terminology.

Varieties of sources have allowed the present thesis to explore guilds in many ways, but have produced some terminological problems; the first of which is how to refer to the archers and crossbowmen themselves. French sources almost always call them *confreries* occasionally *compaignes*. The Flemish sources, the most numerous, refer to *schutersgilden*, or simply *gilden* less often *ghezellen* (company) or *schutters*. Throughout the present study, the groups are called 'guilds', the literal translation of the most commonly used term.

identity in the Bruges chronicle of Nicholas Despars (+ 1597),' *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 87 (2011).

⁶⁷ Jean de Stavelot, (ed. A. Borghet), *Chronique* (Bruxelles, 1861).

⁶⁸ Gilles le Muisit, (ed. H. Lemaitre), *Chronique et Annales* (Paris, 1905).

Guilds practised, ate, drank and socialised in lands given to them by the town, or purchased with their own funds. French sources often call the entire complex, not simply the open ground used for shooting the *Jardin* less often *gallerie* or *chambre*. Flemish sources almost always call their buildings and gardens *hof* (court) which can be extended to *schuttershof* or even *Sint-Jorishof* less often *kamer*. In both languages, the term is used to refer to guild property, and occasionally the guild itself. Many fines are ‘to the profit of the garden’ or ‘for the benefit of the court’. In the following, guild property is usually referred to as ‘complex’, but in some cases a literal translation of the original term is given.

The use of the bows themselves, whether in practise, war or competitions have no consistent terminology. Most often competitions are for play, the *jeu* of the bow, even the *scietespelen* (shooting-game), but other sources refer to the art or skill of shooting, implying the ludic significant of shooting. The terminology of guild members and officials will be discussed in greater depth in chapter four, but in general members will be called ‘guild-brothers’ in the following work.

Proper names.

The names of most Flemish towns and villages have been given in their modern form, spelt the way native speakers would. References will be made to Kaprijke not Caprijke. Exceptions to this rule have been made only where clear English standards exist; Ghent, Bruges Ypres, Courtrai Antrwerp etc. Personal names are also problematic, with the same name given in variations in French and Dutch texts. Where a common English standard exists, as in the names of the Dukes of Burgundy, it is used; Philip not Philippe. For the important lords and aristocrats who are less well known to an English audience, their names are left in the original Flemish or French, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and Jean de Commynes. For the non-aristocratic guild members all names are given exactly as they are in the original documents.

Monies and Measures.

Unless otherwise stated, in the following all monies are given in pounds of Flanders, with 12 pennies (d) making one shillings and 20 shillings (s) making £1. Some accounts and grants were given in groats, or occasionally French royal money, *livres Paris*. The value of all currencies across the fourteenth and fifteenth century was subject to change and inflation. Wine was a common gift or payment for many guilds, given in several different measurements. 1 *los* was approximately 2.09 litres while 1 *stoop* equated to 1.2 litres.⁶⁹

7. Thesis outline.

Guilds of archers and crossbowmen were complex, dynamic groups, and must therefore be analysed thematically. In setting out first their military origins and role in wars, in chapter one, and ending with their competitions as agents of social peace in chapter six, the thesis is bound by the two extremes of guild life; war and peace. In between are various actions, motives, regulations and disobediences, which must be understood in context and in light of each other, none is a standalone study. Much of the thesis depends upon chapter two, which sets out who members were, their status based on prosopography. No previous study has attempted such an understanding of members; the present study reveals that some guild-brothers were devout, some were not, some were dedicated shooters, attending almost every feast and shoot, and others attended only a handful of guild events in their lives. Memberships, level of activity, level of dedication or devotion, were all choices made in complex urban environments.

Choice is also central to chapters three and four. For medieval guildsmen, separating out their religious and social activities, motives and ideals would have

⁶⁹ M. Somme, 'Étude comparative des mesures a vin dans les états bourguignons au XVe siècle,' *RN* 58 (1976), 171-183; M. Damen, 'Giving by pouring; the functions of gifts of wine in the city of Leiden, 14th-16th centuries,' J. van, Leewen (ed.), *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns* (Leuven, 2006), 83-100.

seemed false, but separating such themes out for our study allows a greater analysis to be undertaken. Guilds existed in towns full of devotional groups, towns with jousts, chambers of rhetoric, civic processions, as well as craft guilds. Shooting guilds were one group among many and were modelled on, influenced by, and influential to the world around them. Guilds became separate and influential groups within their towns, though as the later section of chapter four will show, rules were broken; commensality did not provide unbreakable bonds.

Guilds' relationships with authorities were equally wide ranging. Lords, from local figures like Jean de Commynes, to powerful figures like Adolf of Cleves, even Holy Roman Emperors, were members of guilds. Nobles joined and patronised guilds for many reasons, and such interaction brought the guilds great status, as well as bridging gaps between court and civic cultures. Towns encouraged guilds with lands, money, cloth and wine. In doing so they provided themselves with civic defenders, but more than this they chose what forms of civic culture to patronise, how best to represent civic ideology

Choice is shown again, and most strikingly, in guilds' competitions, which will be the focus of chapter six. Building on military roles and military service of guilds, competitions had huge potential for conflict, with hundreds of fully armed crossbowmen living close to each other in one town, with their full military equipment for weeks at a time, drinking large quantities of civic wine. Yet competitions did not bring war or conflict, rather they helped to mend broken bonds of commensality and community across Flanders. In their dates, their language and their spectacle, competitions helped to restore community across and beyond the county. Further, they provided opportunities to win civic honour, and to promote civic ideals, and individual prestige through ludic display.

In analysing the guilds thematically, rather than geographically, chronologically or through a case study of one or more guild, the importance and variety of guild

culture can, for the first time, be appreciated. The present study will not just shed light on a poorly understood group within Flemish towns; it will show the power of urban culture, the strength of popular devotion, the variety of commensality and the durability of civic festive networks. Archery and crossbow guilds emerged as militias, but through their social, religious and festive choices, choices made by individual members, they became some of Flanders most influential groups, personifying civic values in war and in peace.

Chapter 1:

The origins of archery and crossbow guilds and their continuing military service, c.1300- c.1520.

Guilds of archers and crossbowmen first appeared in response to the needs of town defence, and princely calls for troops. The military origin of guilds seems clear, but many existing studies have made broad generalisations about guild origins, or have attempted to make lists of ‘foundations’ of guilds. Military historians have not analytically studied the first appearances of guilds, nor have local studies that rely too heavily on charters. When guilds wrote about their own past, they often claimed to be ancient, like town histories or noble genealogies claiming prestige through recreating their past. An overview of existing assumptions and guilds’ origin myths is a useful starting point for our study. To understand the origins and development of guilds a thorough analysis of their first appearance and of their continuing military service must be undertaken. Firstly, all archival evidence before 1346 will be set out. Though early evidence is limited, such a survey will demonstrate the origins of shooting guilds. Attention will then be turned to guild military service after 1346. Rather than attempt to sketch a narrative history of all guilds martial actions, three types of service will be analysed; examining first guilds as civic defenders, second as part of larger ducal armies and third the guilds’ role in civic mutual defence forces will prove the guilds continuing and significant service.

1.1. Existing assumptions in studies of archery and crossbow guilds.

Though shooting guilds have been examined before, no study deals with their origins in a satisfactory way. It seems straightforward to say that the guilds originated in war; but war alone cannot explain the emergence of such vibrant groups. In setting out existing assumptions in military histories, and local studies of Flemish guilds, the value of the present study in returning analytically to

archival sources can be appreciated. The works of Oman praised the Flemish militias, less so their crossbowmen, at the battle of Courtrai in 1302, yet he shows no concern for where these Flemings came from or how they learnt their skill.⁷⁰ Delbrück believed that the defeat of the Ghent militia at Rosebeke in 1382 ‘shows us why nothing of a lasting nature, no enduring superiority of the burgher foot troops, resulted from tendencies towards a general arming of the citizens’ in Flanders. In France archery had, he noted, been encouraged by the kings since 1368, but noble suspicions, and more importantly a lack of bows and arrows meant that ‘the inclination to train oneself in the art of archery was probably very limited’.⁷¹

Modern military writers have gone much further in analysing men and tactics, but have not truly engaged with urban fighters. Philippe Contamine has provided a thorough analysis of French knights’ service, numbers and tactics, but little on shooters, or urban soldiers more generally. In his monumental *Guerre, état et société à la fin du Moyen Âge* there is only brief mention of monarchs favouring the creation of privileged companies of archers and crossbowmen in the fourteenth century, and later *Francs-Archers*.⁷² In other works he treats towns almost as passive observers of war, choosing only to open or close their gates,⁷³ or simply alludes to bourgeois civic defenders.⁷⁴ Other writers have given even

⁷⁰ C. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages* (London, 1921, first published 1898), 113-121.

⁷¹ H. Delbrück, (trans. W. J. Renfroe), *History of the Art of War within the framework of Political History* vol. 3 (London, 1982 first published 1929) 446-7, 512-5.

⁷²P. Contamine, *Guerre, état et société à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1972), 45-6.

⁷³P. Contamine ‘Les fortifications urbaines en France à la fin du Moyen Âge: aspects financiers et économiques,’ *RH* 260 (1978), 23-47 ; idem ‘Les gens de guerre et la ville. Achat d’armures à Orléans, 1434-1438,’ M. Bourin (ed.) *Villes, bonnes villes, cités et capitales: études d’histoire urbaine (XIIIe-XVIIIe siècle) offertes à Bernard Chevalier* (Caen, 1993), 3-11; idem., ‘La noblesse et les villes dans la France de la fin du Moyen Âge,’ *Bullettino dell’Istituto Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 91 (1985), 467-489.

⁷⁴P. Contamine, *La guerre au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1980), 45-6; idem, ‘The soldiery in Late Medieval Urban Society,’ *French History* 8 (1994), 1-13; idem ‘L’armement des populations urbaines à la fin du Moyen Âge: l’exemple de Troyes (1474),’ in his (ed.), *La guerre, la violence et les gens au Moyen Âge, II: Guerre et gens*. (Paris, 1996), 59-72.

greater emphasis to the role of princes; Meynies stated that the French kings 'created' urban companies of archers between 1367-9, and reorganised them in 1389.⁷⁵ In examining the French responses to the English longbow, Strickland has insightfully shown that French towns had provided soldiers to the kings since the time of Philip-Augustus, but relies on antiquated studies for the origins of shooting guilds.⁷⁶ It should be emphasised that military historians cannot detail all aspects of all soldiers, so such absences are understandable, if regrettable.

Greater depth could be expected of local studies. Many are weakened by an over reliance on prescriptive documents, and an overemphasis of the power of princes for guild origins. When looking at the archers of Quiévrain, local historian Dernier believed they were 'registered' by Simon de Lalaing in 1415 for his personal safe guard.⁷⁷ In Enghien local writer Mathieu believed the crossbowmen were 'established' around 1340 by Walter III, lord of Enghien.⁷⁸ Many Brussels writers have accepted unquestioningly local legend that the crossbow guild was founded in 1213 by Duke Henry III of Brabant.⁷⁹ Reliance on prescriptive documents is by no means limited to nineteenth-century writers. In 1965 Millon wrote that the archers of Dunkirk were 'founded' in 1322 by Robert of Cassel, lord of Dunkirk.⁸⁰ In 1975 Delsalle wrote that the archers of Cysoing

⁷⁵ J. Meynies, *Archers et arbalétriers au temps de la guerre de cent ans, 1337-1453* (Paris, 2006), 25.

⁷⁶ M. Strickland and R. Hardy, *The Great Warbow* (Stroud, 2005), 254.

⁷⁷ T. Dernier, *Notice sur le serment des archers de saint Sébastien de Quiévrain* (Quiévrain, 1873), 5-7.

⁷⁸ Matthieu 'Sceaux des serments ou guildes,' 15-23.

⁷⁹ Wauters, *Notice historique*, 3-5 ; O. Petit-Jean, *Historique de l'ancien grand serment royal et noble des arbalétriers de Notre-Dame de la Sablon* (Bruxelles, 1963), 13-18 ; the earliest surviving charter, from 1381 issued by Wenceslas states it is confirms one from 'Duke John' and internal evidence strongly suggest this means Wenceslas's father-in-Law John III (1312-55); published as an appendix in Jan de Klerk, (ed. J. F. Willems), *De Brabantsche Yeesten, of Rymkronyk van Braband* vol.2 (Brussel, 1843), 642-4.

⁸⁰ M. Million, *Les archers Dunkerquois, histoire de la société des archers réunis de Saint Sébastien (1322 à 1965)* (Dunkerque, 1965), 18,

were 'founded' by the Baroness of Cysoing in 1430,⁸¹ though the original charter from Philip the Good, states that the guild had been established 'for a long time'.⁸² Studies of the Ghent guilds are an important exception, as Moulin-Coppens rightly recognised that the Ghent crossbowmen were first mentioned in town accounts, not princely letters.⁸³

Other studies have looked to local legends, and their results are just as problematic. Renson wrote that many guilds were founded in the new confident spirit following the Battle of Courtrai (1302), but cannot prove the date of any guild foundations.⁸⁴ More specific, but now impossible to confirm, is Vereecke who claimed the archers of Saint Sebastian of Ypres were founded by soldiers returning from Courtrai in 1302.⁸⁵ Another Ypres study claimed that the origins of the archers went back to contact with Edward I and English archers in 1297.⁸⁶ Studies linking the battle of Courtrai to guild origins ignore the apparently minor role of the crossbowmen at Courtrai, and the fact that archers are not mentioned at all in contemporary battle accounts.⁸⁷ Many other studies have taken guild foundation legends, often involving the Crusades, at face value, believing in ancient foundation.⁸⁸

⁸¹Delsalle, 'La Confrérie des archers de Cysoing', 14-19.

⁸² AML, RM, 16973, 215.

⁸³ Moulin-Coppens, *Sint Jorispilde te Gent*, 5-7.

⁸⁴ R. Renson, 'The Flemish archery guilds, from defence mechanisms to sports institutions,' in R. Renson and D. Nager (eds.), *The History, Evolution and Diffusion of sports and games in different cultures* (Brussels, 1976), 135-159.

⁸⁵ J. J. Vereecke, *Histoire militaire de la ville d'Ypres* (Gand, 1858).

⁸⁶ M. Mus, *Geschiedenis van de Ieperse boogschutters vanaf hun opkomst tot aan de eerst wereldoorlog* (Leuven, 1988), 5-9.

⁸⁷ Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spur*, 152-162; crossbowmen were present in 'small elite corps' possible the precursors of guilds, but archers are not mentioned.

⁸⁸ Almost all studies begin with such a story, even if they state it is unlikely or uncertain; H. Stein, *Archers d'autrefois; archers d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1925), 7-16; F. Samin, *De la Grootte Gulde à l'ancien grand serment royal et noble des arbalétriers de Notre-Dame au Sablon* (Bruxelles, 2001), 7-11; G. J. J. van Melckebeke, *Geschiedkundige aanteekeningen rakende de Kruis- of*

Before turning to archival sources, it is worth noting one final problem in the historiography of shooting guilds. Many nineteenth-century writers attempt to gather a great quantity of evidence and produce lists of guilds' foundations. Frans de Potter stated that the first guild established in Flanders were the crossbowmen of Courtrai, given privileges by Count Louis of Nevers in 1323,⁸⁹ but provided no source of reference.

The longest, and most problematic, list comes from Delauney's 1879 study. He compiled two long lists of the earliest guilds; the crossbowmen mentioned include those of Namur 1266, of Ghent 1322, of Chimay 1338, and of Bruges 1369 while the archers include those of Bruges and Ypres 1302, of Rouen 1347, of Caen 1358, and of Lille 1379.⁹⁰ Delaunay provides few footnotes, and for many guilds the dates can be shown to be wrong; the archers of Lille were receiving wine by 1330,⁹¹ while the Bruges crossbowmen attended competitions in Tournai in 1350,⁹² and Gerardsbergen in 1355.⁹³ Despite Delaunay's weaknesses, and lack of references, many later, and otherwise excellent, studies have used some of his examples.⁹⁴ In the following only archival documents or reliable transcriptions will be relied upon though older writers, who may have had access to now lost documents, will also, be referred to.

Voetboog-Gilde te Mechelen (Mechelen, 1869), 12-25; Barthelemy, *Histoire des archers, arbalétriers et arquebusiers*, 6-24.

⁸⁹ De Potter's *Jaarboeken* 12.

⁹⁰ Delaunay, *Etude sur les anciennes compagnies*, 4-9.

⁹¹ AML, CV, 16019 f. 54.

⁹² Gilles le Muisit, *Chronique et annales* 272-3.

⁹³ Brown, *Civic Ceremony*.

⁹⁴ Strickland and Hardy, *Great Warbow*, 254-5; R. Payne-Gallwey, *The Crossbow* (New York, 2007, first published 1903), 223-227. W.G. Paterson, *A Guide to the Crossbow* (London, 1990), 37-8.

1.2. Guilds' origin myths.

The fifteenth century was an age of historical writings, with many different groups seeking out prestigious foundation myths. Noble families had genealogies produced, displaying ancient pedigree and status.⁹⁵ Many towns likewise recorded their ancient foundation and prestige.⁹⁶ Guilds of archers and crossbowmen also sought out ancient traditions or legends, and recorded them to emphasise their rank, although such myths cannot be assumed to show the true origins of guilds, they are nevertheless revealing.

The Ghent crossbow guild of Saint George began a new guild book around 1497. Most of the book consists of a death list from c. 1468 to the mid eighteenth century, but first the guilds included some history, recording that they had been created by Count Baldwin IV in 1016.⁹⁷ The Oudenaarde crossbowmen dated their foundation to 1112, placing the date on fifteenth-century banners and sixteenth-century furniture.⁹⁸ Such claims are difficult to believe, and an even more implausible claim comes from Tournai. In May 1448 the crossbowmen asked magistrates for a copy of their foundation charter, which, they claimed, granted them exemption from the watch, and had been granted by King Dagobert

⁹⁵ B. Guenee, 'Etat et nation en France au moyen âge,' *RH* 237 (1967); 17-30, M.-F. Alamichel, 'Brutus et les Troyens: une histoire européenne,' *RBPB* 84 (2006), 77-106; R. Waswo, 'Our ancestors, the Trojans: inventing cultural identity in the Middle Ages,' *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (1995), 269-290; W. Keesman, 'De Bourgondische invloed op de genealogische constructies van Maximiliaan van Oostenrijk,' *MTMS* 8 (1994), 162-172.

⁹⁶ K. Tilmans, 'De humanistische stedenmythe: cultuurkritiek avant-la-lettre,' *De Pijn van Prometheus: Essays over cultuurkritiek en cultuurpessimisme*. Ed. R. Aerts and K. van Berkel (Groningen, 1996), 68-82; G. Rosser, 'Myth image and social process in the English medieval town,' *UH* 23 (1996), 5-25; R. Van Uytven, 'Stadsgeschiedenis in het Noorden en Zuiden' *AGN* 2 (1983), 188-253; G. Small 'Les origines de la ville de Tournai dans les chroniques légendaires du bas moyen âge,' *Les Grand siècles de Tournai, recueil d'études publié à l'occasion du 20^e anniversaire des Guides de Tournai* (Tournai, 1993), 104-112; W. T. M. Frijhoff, 'De Sprekende stad; stedelijke identiteit en ruimtelijke ordening,' *Sporen en Spiegels, beschouwingen over geschiedenis en identiteit* (Tilburgm 1995), 85-96.

⁹⁷ BMG, G 3018/3 f. 1.

⁹⁸ M. J. Van de Velde, *Het Stadsmuseum van Oudenaarde, Kataloog* (Gent, 1995), 28-31.

in the seventh century.⁹⁹ Claims of an ancient foundation reveal how highly the guilds thought of themselves and their self image as powerful and prestigious groups, but should not be taken at face value nor used as proof of early foundation date.

1.3. Guilds before 1346 in civic sources.

The earliest town accounts, from Ghent and Bruges before 1300 and Lille from 1301 all refer to shooters.¹⁰⁰ The Flemish call them ‘schutters’ or ‘zelscutters’ while the Lille sources refer to ‘les arbaletriers’. The men signified by these terms served in battle, provided escorts of dignitaries and watched the town walls. Who these shooters were is not recorded, but they cannot be assumed to have been members of already established guilds.

For the origins of the guilds, other section of towns’ accounts can be used; each year the Ghent accounts provide lists for the ‘present-master’, a civic official who gave wine to important visitor, to messengers, to lords and to significant groups within the town.¹⁰¹ It is on the Ghent lists of gifts of wine that the guilds first appear. In 1314-5 the guild of crossbowmen of Saint George received wine worth 12 lb 8 s 4 d for their annual shoot.¹⁰² The archers of Saint Sebastian began to receive wine for their annual shoot in 1320.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Grange, *Extraits analytiques des registres 1431-1476*, 135.

¹⁰⁰ Vuylsteke, *Gentsche stads en balijwsrekeningen, 1280-1336*, 41, 46, 52, 62, 67, 69 etc; Gilliodts-Van Severen, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Bruges*, vol. 2, 376, 389, 411 etc ; Richebé, *Compte de recettes et dépenses de la ville de Lille*, 56, 65-7, 72.

¹⁰¹ M. Boone, ‘Dons et pots-de-vin, aspects de la sociabilité urbaine au bas Moyen Âge. Le cas gantois pendant la période bourguignonne,’ *RN* 70 (1988) 471-5.

¹⁰² Vuylsteke, *Gentsche stads en balijwsrekeningen, 1280-1336*, 86.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, 158.

The earliest ordinance or set of regulations, for the Ghent guilds is later, dating from 1362.¹⁰⁴ In Bruges both shooting guilds were receiving money annually for their *papegay* shoot by 1336-7.¹⁰⁵ In Lille the first reference to guilds, taking part in a procession, and called *confreres*, comes from 1323.¹⁰⁶ By 1330 both the crossbowmen of Saint George and the archers of Saint Sebastian of Lille were receiving annual grants of wine.¹⁰⁷ Towns began to sponsor their guilds between 1315 and 1325. It is possible, even likely, that guilds had been meeting, shooting and drinking for several years without civic support. In the decade following 1315 the guilds became recognised, patronised, civic groups. Such a date is in keeping with the small number of guild documents from the early fourteenth century. The guild book of the Bruges crossbowmen was compiled in 1437. It records earlier military service, and that in 1321 Mary Lady of Eyne and of Bremen gave the 'guild of the crossbowmen in Bruges' permission to use her chapel of Saint Peter's for their masses, and that they installed their own chaplain.¹⁰⁸ In Oudenaarde there are no fourteenth-century town accounts, but here a guild document, an undated membership list, survives. The first name is that of Robert, Count of Flanders,¹⁰⁹ so the list must be dated to shortly after Robert's death in 1322. The first charter, from the magistrates, is also earlier than those issued elsewhere in Flanders, it is dated 1348.¹¹⁰

Military service before 1346.

Few documents written before 1346 make an emphatic link between guilds and military need, but it is very likely that the violence of the period stimulated guild

¹⁰⁴ SAG, Jaerboeken, 310, 2.2 f. 37r.

¹⁰⁵ SAB, 219, rekeningen 1336-7 f. 100.

¹⁰⁶ AML, CV 16016 f. 21 v.

¹⁰⁷ AML, CV, 16020 f. 29 -31.

¹⁰⁸ SAB, 385, Sint Joris, register met ledenlijst enz. 1321-1531 f. 70-71v.

¹⁰⁹ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/6A.

¹¹⁰ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/1A.

growth. For the earliest year of guilds' existence, proving that they served, as opposed to the 'shooters' outlined above is difficult. For example it is likely that the 150 shooters sent by Ghent to Count Robert against Liège in 1315 included guildsmen.¹¹¹ It is also extremely likely that many shooting guilds played a role in the siege of Tournai in 1340,¹¹² but references in town accounts are to militias and 'shooters' not to guilds.

The shooters of c. 1300 became guilds with civic support, they developed fraternities with devotional and social activities; this process took place between 1315 and 1325. War is not the only explanation for change, for the first half of the fourteenth century saw a growth of religious confraternities and craft groups, with an increase in piety, social bonds and regulations as recurring features.¹¹³ War caused towns to pay archers and crossbowmen, but social and religious factors, with civic and princely support, influenced guilds formation between 1315 and 1325.

Guilds in War.

War and military service were not the only forces behind guild establishment, but were important. Service provided by the guilds must now be analysed; such

¹¹¹ Vuylsteke, *Gentsche stads en balijwysrekeningen*, 67, details 135 'selscutteren'. This is the first campaign to refer to shooters being sent 'for the honour of the town' further implying this could be the first expedition of an honourable guild. This campaign is discussed in M. Paul, *Histoire de l'artillerie en Belgique; depuis son origines jusqu'au règne d'Albert et Isabelle* (Bruxelles, 1865), 20-22.

¹¹² For the composition of the Flemish armies, including archers and crossbowmen, see J. F. Verbruggen, 'De orginasatie van de milite te Brugge in de XIVe eeuw,' *ASEB* 87 (1950), 163-170 ; idem., *Het Gemeenteleger van Brugge van 1338 tot 1340 en de namen van de Weerbare Mannen* (Brussel, 1962); C. J. Rogers, 'An unknown news bulletin from the siege of Tournai in 1340,' *War in History* 5 (1998), 358-66.

¹¹³ B. Chevalier, 'Corporations, conflits, politiques et paix social en France aux XIV et XV siècles,' *RH* 268 (1982), 34-44; Brown, *Civic Ceremony*; H. van Werveke, 'Ambachten en erfelijkheid' *Konelijke Academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schoon kunst van België* 4 (1923), 5-7; Vincent, *Les confréries médiévales dans le royaume de France*, 9-12, 21-27, 42-47; Trio, 'Les confréries comme expression de solidarité', 131-140; J. Verhavert, *Het ambachtwezen te Leuven* (Leuven, 1904), 21-37; Nicholas, *Flanders*, 201-8.

service was varied, not always successful, but significant and continuous. The military activities of guilds will be studied thematically, with representative examples drawn from across Flanders. First the great potential of the guilds in defending their towns and county, second their weakness when called upon to serve beyond Flanders and thirdly the role of guilds in helping neighbouring towns, with or without ducal orders.

1.4. Defending the town.

Towns invested heavily in defence, not just in building walls but also in inspecting, maintaining and guarding them.¹¹⁴ Like the guilds themselves, civic maintenance of walls and fortifications had a practical role to play, but can also be seen as demonstrations of civic power and urban values, with guilds quickly becoming an integral part of civic self-defence. Financial records show guilds being paid to defend the town. In 1347 Lille, as a French town, fearing the approach and pillage of English armies, ordered watches to be made of the walls, the shooting guild played a leading role in such civic protections.¹¹⁵ Again in 1382, now as a Flemish town threatened by the rebellious Ghent forces, Lille looked to its guilds for protection, passing ordinances that crossbowmen must watch the walls, and must not leave the town.¹¹⁶ Lille also paid significant sums to named guildsmen who performed the watch.¹¹⁷ In 1411, as John the Fearless went to war, the archers and crossbowmen again watched the walls of Lille, even though at least ten crossbowmen were absent from Lille in the ducal army.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Contamine, 'Les fortifications urbaines au France à la fin du moyen âge', 23-47; idem., 'Les villes de Languedoc et la chevauchée d'Edouard, Prince de Galles (12 Oct.-28 Nov. 1355),' D. Le Bilevec, *Défendre la ville dans les pays de la Méditerranée occidentale au moyen âge* (Montpellier, 2002), 195-210; G. Bliet, et L. Vanderstraeten, 'Recherches sur les Fortifications de Lille au Moyen Âge,' *RN* 70 (1988), 107-122; A. Salamagne, 'Les garnisons des villes et châteaux dans le Nord de la France aux XIVe et XVe siècles,' *RN* 83, 707-29.

¹¹⁵ AML, CV, 16045 f. 11-14v.

¹¹⁶ AML, OM, 373 f. 3 v, f. 6v., f. 12v. f. 35.

¹¹⁷ AML, CV, 16112 f. 19 v. – 22 v.

¹¹⁸ AML, CV, 16155 f. 78 – 81 v.

Sixty-six years later, after the death of Charles the Bold, the guilds, now joined by the gunners, guarded the town against threats from Louis XI.¹¹⁹ Later still, in 1513-5, the three guilds of Lille guarded the walls and protected the English artillery, for the feast of the Emperor and the English King.¹²⁰ For almost two centuries, the archery and crossbow guilds were the first line of Lille's urban defences.

Independently of royal actions or ducal orders, the governors of Lille organised their defences with their guilds. Lille also gave its guilds land to aid civic defence; both archers and crossbowmen had gardens and property along the walls.¹²¹ The hand-gunners (*coulveriniers*) even had their own tower by 1465. The tower was used for storing their gunpowder and other guild objects in, but it was also an integrated and vital part of Lille's defences.¹²² The guilds were part of Lille's standard defences; guilds could also defend their towns in extraordinary circumstances.

In 1452 Ghent rebelled against Philip the Good, and called on its neighbours for help. Oudenaarde refused, leading Ghent to besiege Oudenaarde on 14 April 1452.¹²³ The defences were led by Simon de Lalaing, who was 'above all a man of war and tactics'. He took part in eight military campaigns, had been a knight of the Golden Fleece since 1431 and became Admiral of Flanders in 1436. Simon

¹¹⁹ AML, CV, 16216 f. 65-80.

¹²⁰ AML CV, 16249-51; 16251, f. 197 v. – 204.

¹²¹ The crossbowmen's garden was near the Chateau de la Salle, AML, RT, 15883 f. 134, the archers were near the Porte de Courtrai, AML RT, 15879 f. 215.

¹²² AML, RT, 15917 f. 146. For Lille's defense see Bliet, et Vanderstraeten, 'Recherches sur les Fortifications de Lille', 107-122 ; G. Bliet, 'Le Château dit de Courtrai a Lille de 1298 à 1339 : une citadelle avant l'heure,' *Bulletin Monumental* 3 (1997) 185-206 ; idem., 'Les fortifications de Lille et Flandre au bas moyen âge; approches archéologique et historique,' *Médiéval Europe Brugge*, 1997 éd. Guy de Boe et Frans Verhaeghe (Zelikil, 1997) 167-171.

¹²³ Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 303-333; R. Castelain, *De Mentaliteit van Boeren en burgers in Oudenaarde en zijn kasselrij* (Oudenaarde, 1987), 83-7; P.L. de Deyn, *Heldenmoed van Simon de la Lalaing en de stad van Oudenaarde verwerende ten jare 1452* (Brussel, 1824).

was also an important court figure; he was a chamberlain from 1426 onwards, becoming *Conseille-chamberlain* in 1455. In 1473 he was appointed one of four *noble councilors* of the newly created *parlement* of Mechelen.¹²⁴ Throughout April 1452, Simon de Lalaing and the shooting guilds were given large amounts of wine in reward for ‘service’ and ‘to the honour’ of the town.¹²⁵ The guilds of archers and crossbowmen were paid for watching and defending the walls against the Ghent forces, and for watching for fires caused by the Ghent missiles.¹²⁶ Even Olivier de la Marche praised not just Simon, but the men of Oudenaarde, especially the archers, for their notable and loyal defence.¹²⁷ It was a short siege; Ghent abandoned the town after their defeat on 24 April. The actions of the guilds, and Simon de Lalaing, doubtless played an important role in Oudenaarde’s resistance, showing the real defensive strength of guilds.

Shooting guilds could further provide small civic offensive forces to drive out undesirables in the suburbs. In 1428 the aldermen of Douai sent their archers out against ‘pillagers and rebels’ who were harassing the roads to Douai, especially at night.¹²⁸ In 1488 the aldermen of Lille sent their shooting guilds out to a place called ‘Rorques’ in the forest. The stronghold had been seized by a military band, described as ‘pillagers’, who were attacking local labourers and destroying houses. The crossbowmen, archers and hand-gunners drove out the undesirables.¹²⁹ Guilds watched the walls and defended towns, both as potential defenders and as small offensive military forces; they could successfully go out in

¹²⁴ P. De Win, ‘Simon de Lalaing,’ in R. De Smedt (ed.), *Les chevaliers de l’ordre de la Toison d’Or au XVe siècle, notes bio-biographique* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1994), 69-71.

¹²⁵ AGR, CC, microfilm 1554, register 1452-3, f. 14v. – 15 v., f. 74 – 75 v.

¹²⁶ Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 316-9.

¹²⁷ Olivier de la Marche, (ed. M. Petitot), *Collection complète des mémoires relatifs à l’histoire de France*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1825), 70-1.

¹²⁸ DAM, CC211 f. 185.

¹²⁹ AML, CV16227 f. 109.

small numbers against groups of armed men; acting on civic orders to defend civic interests

1.5. Weakness beyond Flanders

Guilds did not just defend their own towns, they could also form small but important parts of larger armies sent beyond the county. Here they did not always enjoy such success; guilds could not become occupying forces. Guild service beyond Flanders was varied, but it was continuous and appreciated, as will be shown through an analysis of five campaigns; 1356, 1411, 1436, 1474 and 1479.

1356, The war of Brabant succession.

Louis of Male declared war on Wenceslas, duke of Brabant, in June 1356, amid claims of unfair distribution of land of his wife's dowry.¹³⁰ The Flemish army left Aalst on 18 June, and pushed rapidly into Brabant. Wenceslas, with his own large army, met Louis at Asse; both armies contained significant contingents of urban militias and shooting guilds. The importance of the Brabant guilds has been touched on by Boffa, but deserves greater analysis than can be given here. Wenceslas also had large numbers of mercenaries.¹³¹ Neither Wenceslas nor Louis would risk battle, so arbitration took place and both armies returned home.

¹³⁰ Boffa, *Warfare in Medieval Brabant*, 3-9; F. Blockmans, 'De erfstrijd tussen Vlaanderen en Brabant in 1356,' *Bijdragen en mededelingen van het historisch genootschap Utrecht*, 69 (1955), 11-16; J. J. De Smet, *Mémoire sur les guerres entre le Brabant et la Flandre au quatorzième siècle* (Bruxelles, 1855); C. Dickstein-Bernard, 'La construction de l'enceinte Bruxelloise de 1357,' *Cahiers Bruxellois* 35 (1995), 91-129; A. Kempeneer, 'Les aliénations de Malines au XIVe siècle. Étude sur la situation politique de la seigneurie (1300-1357),' *Bulletin du cercle archéologique littéraire et artistique de Malines*, 15 (1905), 81-104; and 17 (1907), 157-169; and 19 (1909), 113-29, 205-216; Laurent and Quicke, 'La Guerre de la succession du Brabant', 81-121; J. Lindemans, 'De oorlogen tusschen Brabant en Vlaanderen in de XIIIe en de XIVe eeuw,' *Eigen schoon en de Brabant* 4 (1912), 49-53; Nicholas, *Flanders*, 226-7; Uyttebrouck, *Gouvernement du Duche de Brabant*. 470-74, M. Vandermaessen, 'Vlaanderen en Hengouwen under hut Huis van Dampierre, 1244-1384,' *Nieuw Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 2 (1982), 399-430.

¹³¹ Boffa, *Warfare in Medieval Brabant*, 3-9; L. Galesloot, 'Acte de Wenceslas et de Jeanne duc et duchesse de Brabant, du 19 juillet 1356, concernant la ville de Bruxelles,' *BCRH* 5 (1863), 21-8; C. Terlinden, 'Les milices communales en Belgique,' *Revue générale* 2 (1931), 432-49.

The Brabant towns were unhappy at the terms agreed by Wenceslas, especially large fines that they would have paid, and so war resumed.¹³²

War restarted in August 1356 with a Flemish naval siege of Antwerp.¹³³ The force included the Bruges archery guild led by their headman Jan van Varsenare,¹³⁴ and many more archers and crossbowmen were among the 1300 combatants.¹³⁵ Louis blockaded the Scheldt, at the same time a powerful land army moved through Brabant, arriving before Brussels on 12 August.¹³⁶ Brabant chronicles emphasise the violence of Louis's army, burning property and threatening the towns, what part guilds played in such violence is not recorded.¹³⁷ Louis actions succeeded on drawing the Brabant host out, into the Battle of Asse on 17 August 1356, a resounding Flemish victory.¹³⁸

The victorious Flemish army included significant numbers of guild-brothers, as well as those present at the siege of Antwerp. The crossbow guild-brothers of Oudenaarde were rewarded with extra wine for their part in the battle.¹³⁹ The *Breve Chronicon Flandriae* is full of praise for the heroic actions of the Dendermonde crossbowmen and their commander 'Jean dit Longus'.¹⁴⁰ Laurent

¹³² P. Avonds, 'De Brabantse steden in de 14e en 15e eeuw,' *BTG* 54 (1971), 240-259; idem 'Mechelen en de Brabantse steden (1312-1355),' *BTG* 53 (1970), 17-80.

¹³³ M. A. Goovaerts, 'La flotte de Louis de Male devant Anvers en 1356,' *BCRH* 13 (1886), 33-58.

¹³⁴ Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 59-71, his numbers, if not his claims of bravery, are backed up by town accounts, Gilliodts-Van Severen *Inventaire des chartres, table analytique*, 18-9.

¹³⁵ Laurent and Quicke, 'La Guerre de la succession du Brabant', 98-99.

¹³⁶ Boffa, *Warfare in Medieval Brabant*, 6-7.

¹³⁷ E. de Dynter, *Chroniques des Ducs de Brabant* vol. 3 (Bruxelles, 1957), 548-9; Laurent and Quicke, 'La Guerre de la succession du Brabant', 96-99.

¹³⁸ Nicholas, *Flanders*, 266-7

¹³⁹ OSAOA 507/II/1A

¹⁴⁰ *Breve chronicon Flandriae* in De. Smet, *Collection des chroniques* vol. 3 (1856), 548-551

and Quicke's account of the campaign, based on accounts, partially backs up this comment, stating that the Dender towns provided infantry forces for Louis's army.¹⁴¹ Though Flemish sources emphasise Louis' skill and the army's bravery, Brabant sources make clear the heroism of their civic contingents, especially those of Brussels, Antwerp and 's-Hertogenbosch. They argue that defeat in battle left these towns extremely vulnerable. Brabant chronicles go further, blaming the lord of Asche for the defeat, claiming that he dropped the Brabant standard in the midst of battle, leading to confusion and loss.¹⁴²

Brussels surrendered the day after the battle, two days later Louis of Male entered Mechelen. By the end of the month all the important towns of Brabant had submitted.¹⁴³ Whether by treachery, as nobles alleged, or simply because, as the civic source emphasised, their militias and defenders had been killed at Asse, Louis was briefly master of the Brabant towns. The skill of the count, and the power of the Flemish army including shooters had clearly been shown in 1356, a month before Poitiers. Louis was now overstretched, his ports vulnerable to English piracy and his own Flemish towns poorly defended.¹⁴⁴

The primary role of archery and crossbow guilds was to defend their towns. They had helped Louis to a great victory, but they could not supply an occupying force and leave their own communities vulnerable. Just as the Brabant guild could not serve in battle and then defend their towns, the Flemish guilds could not stay indefinitely in Brabant. Louis was left in Brabant with a tiny force, little support from his captured towns, and no way of holding onto his gains. By the end of

¹⁴¹ Laurent and Quicke, 'La Guerre de la succession du Brabant', 93-95.

¹⁴² Jan de Klerk, (ed. J. F. Willems), *De Brabantshce Yeesten, of Rymkronyk van Brabant* vol.2 (Brussel, 1843), 44-51

¹⁴³ Boffa, *Warfare in Medieval Brabant*, 6-9.

¹⁴⁴ Nicholas, *Flanders*, 226-7; Laurent and Quicke, 'La Guerre de la succession du Brabant', 104-107.

October, all of Brabant had been returned to Wenceslas, save for the lordship of Mechelen.¹⁴⁵ Flemish militias, and the shooting guilds, could provide an excellent short term force, but they were not professional soldiers and would not, could not, stay beyond their own towns indefinitely.

1411, John the Fearless in Vermandois.

In 1411 John the Fearless faced open war against the Orleanist and Armagnac forces. His enemies gathered between Coucy and Soissons in Picardy, just south of Artois. In August 1411 John gathered his troops in Douai, including many nobles, most importantly his brother Anthony Duke of Brabant.¹⁴⁶ John also drew selectively on the services of shooting guilds, those present in his host included 10 crossbowmen from Lille,¹⁴⁷ 11 from Ninove,¹⁴⁸ 120 archers and an unspecified number of crossbowmen from Bruges.¹⁴⁹ Also present were contingents from Sluis, Damme, Monikeerde, Hoecke, Muyden, Blankenberghen, Oostende, Dixmuide and the Franc of Bruges.¹⁵⁰ As with the campaign of Louis of Male, John enjoyed great initial success, quickly passing through Vermandois and taking the town of Ham on 14 September. Other towns, including Péronne and Nesle, quickly surrendered to John's advancing forces. The skill of John the Fearless, and the power of his army, is clear from this quick campaign, though the opinion of the anonymous writer of the Ghent *Memorieboek* is interesting to note, stating in 1411 'Ham in Vermandois was conquered by the citizens of Ghent'.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Boffa, *Warfare in Medieval Brabant*, 6-9.

¹⁴⁶ Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, 87-96; Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, 513-548.

¹⁴⁷ AML, CV16155 f. 80.

¹⁴⁸ AGR, CC, ville de Ninove, 37085 f. 10v.-11.

¹⁴⁹ Vanhoutytre, *De Brugse Kruisboogilde*, 54-6; SAB, 210, accounts 1411 f. 104-118 v., The Bruges crossbowmen were led by their headman Philip van Aerteke; SAB, 385, Sint Jorisgilde, registre met ledenlijst enz. 1321-1531 f. 68.

¹⁵⁰ Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 89-93.

¹⁵¹ *Memorieboek der stad Gent* vol. 1 ed P. J. van der Meersch (Gent, 1852), 154; for background see A.-L. Van Bruaene, *De Gentse Memorieboeken, als spiegel van stedelijke historisch bewust zijn 14^{de} tot 16^{de} eeuw* (Gent, 1998), 42-65.

In 1411, as in 1356, the Flemish shooting guilds formed part of an important and successful military campaign, but again they could not maintain their momentum.¹⁵² Vaughan is very harsh to the Flemish militias of 1411, stating the militia ‘deserted him (John) en masse on 26 September as soon as its (i.e. the militia’s) leader had contrived the pretext that there was no enemy to attack’.¹⁵³ But he may be expecting too much. As in 1356, the guilds could not stay for long outside Flanders; the guilds could not provide an occupying force. It is striking that in both 1356 and 1411 Flemish local chroniclers proudly recorded the heroism of their own shooting guilds within a wider princely force, showing that they supported the campaign.

Calais, 1436.

In 1436 Philip the Good attacked the powerfully fortified English town of Calais. After the Treaty of Arras, in 1435, England, not France, was considered the enemy and Philip besieged Calais on 9 July 1436 with a large force. Despite its size, opinions of the viability of Philip’s strategy in attacking such a fortress, and in using Flemish troops to attack their trading ally, are divided, with many believing the siege was doomed to fail.¹⁵⁴ The Burgundian force included leading nobles, Jean de Croy, Jean de Lalaing and Waleran of Luxembourg, troops from the Low Countries and the two Burgundies as well as an impressive amount of artillery, perhaps as many as 60 medium sized cannons (*veuglaires*), 55 longer,

¹⁵² For the disunity among the troops, and the violence of the Bruges troops returning home, known as the Calfvel, prefiguring much of 1436, see Nicholas, *Flanders*, 344-6; V. Fris, ‘Het Brugsche Calfvel van 1407-1411,’ *Bulletin de l’Academie d’Archeologie de Belgique* 1910, 183-274.

¹⁵³ Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, 145-8; Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, 513-548.

¹⁵⁴ J. Doig, ‘New Source for the Siege of Calais in 1436,’ *EHR* 110 (1995), 404-7.

but more mobile cannons (*crapuadeaux*),¹⁵⁵ and 450 hand-gunners.¹⁵⁶ Philip also had a powerful fleet, commanded by Simon de Lalaing, implying a naval blockade was planned.¹⁵⁷

Significant numbers of Flemish shooting guilds were present at Calais. Militias had been summoned en masse, and the shooting guilds were just one part of large civic forces. Douai had provided £2 400 as well as the service of its militia and guildsmen.¹⁵⁸ The Bruges contingent included 30 archers, with the militia of 450 men.¹⁵⁹ The Bruges crossbowmen must have also been at Calais, there with the larger militia, but their new guild book, begun in 1437,¹⁶⁰ chose not to mention the siege. Ghent sent its militia, and members of shooting guilds.¹⁶¹ The Ypres chronicler Olivier van Dixmuide described the Ypres crossbowmen as an ‘outstanding group’ among the civic militia as they left for the siege,¹⁶² but he was probably a crossbowman himself, and may be exaggerating their splendour.¹⁶³ Oudenaarde also sent its guilds, with special expenses in their

¹⁵⁵ Definitions from ; K. DeVries and R. D. Smith, *The Artillery of the Dukes of Burgundy, 1363 – 1477* (Woodbridge, 2005), 230-6,221-224; Veuglaire vary in size, but have a low length to bore ration, a short gun used widely between 1417 and 1467; Crapaudeaux were longer breech loading weapons, usually mounted on their own carriages called *ribaudequins*.

¹⁵⁶ M. Somme, ‘L’armée bourguignonne au siege de Calais,’ P. Contamine and M. Keen (eds.), *Guerre et société en France, en Angleterre et en Bourgogne XIV-XV siècle* (Lille, 1991), 196-213; Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 74-84; M. R. Thielemans, *Bourgogne et Angleterre. Relations politiques et économique entre les Pays-Bas Bourguignons et l’Angleterre. 1435-1467* (Brussels, 1966), 65-107; Nicholas, *Flanders*, 327-9.

¹⁵⁷ De Win, ‘Simon de Lalaing’ in de Smedt, *les chevaliers de l’ordre*, 69-71.

¹⁵⁸ DAM, EE4.

¹⁵⁹ Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 95-101. Numbers confirmed by town accounts.

¹⁶⁰ The book begins with military service and loyalty to the dukes from 1380, but makes no mentions of Calais, or the Bruges revolt that followed, SAB, 385, Sint Jorisgilde, registre met ledenlijst enz. 1321-1531.

¹⁶¹ De Potter, *Jaerboeken*, the town accounts name 46 crossbowmen of Saint George and 9 archers of Saint Sebastian, and other costs for equipment, that formed part the Ghent militia, SAG, 400, rekeningen, 15, f. 43-49 v.

¹⁶² Olivier van Dixmuide, *Merkwaardige Gebeurtenissen*, 148.

¹⁶³ In 1428 a new uniform, and other expenses, were given to ‘Olivier van Dixmuide, headman of the great shooters’, AGR CC comptes des villes, 38653, f.35.

accounts for new weapons and banners for the guild of Saint George.¹⁶⁴ Even the small town of Ninove sent its shooting guilds as well as militias.¹⁶⁵

The complex political motives behind Philip's decision to attack Calais, and Flemish reluctance to attack their economic ally, need not concern us here.¹⁶⁶ The divisions within the Flemish host were more significant. Flanders had changed greatly since 1411, with economic tensions between Ghent and Bruges impacting negatively on the unity of the army. When the men of Ghent were attacked, they felt that Bruges did not help sufficiently, and left; Bruges, and other Flemish forces, followed. The great force gathered by Philip the Good could not stay together and could not take a strong target; Calais in 1436 was far better defended than Brussels in 1356 or Ham in 1411. Guilds and militias were effective only if they supported their prince's ambition, were not internally divided, and had an achievable short term goal. The failure at Calais cannot be placed entirely on the Flemish militias, still less with the shooting guilds themselves, but they had shown that they were not as durable, as united or as effective as permanent soldiers.

Philip the Good after Calais.

It would be easy to follow Peter Arnade here and simply state that 'after the militias of Bruges and Ghent abandoned Philip' at Calais 'the Burgundians drew very selectively on the Flemish archers and crossbowmen'.¹⁶⁷ Even if the forces

¹⁶⁴ de Rantere, *Geschiedenis van Oudenaarde* vol. 2, 39-57; OSAOA, CV, 1436-1448, microfilm 686, include £12 given to the *deken* (dean) of the Saint George guild, on top of wages and expenses for arms, for his 'good advise' to the town before Calais.

¹⁶⁵ AGR, CC comptes des villes, 37103, f. 5-7 v.

¹⁶⁶ J. Haemers's review of S. Rose, *Calais: An English Town in France, 1347-1558*. (Woodbridge 2008), Book review from H-Urban, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=23439> accessed 03/11/10; J. Fris "Documents gantois concernant la levée du siège de Calais en 1436," in *Mélanges Paul Frédéricq* (Brussels, 1904), 245-258; J. Dumolyn, *De Brugse Opstand van 1436-1438* (Kortrijk-Hérule, 1997), 231-266.

¹⁶⁷ Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 68.

of Ghent could not be relied upon, other Flemish guilds, especially those from Walloon Flanders, were called out. Guild-brothers served Philip in the 1440s.¹⁶⁸ During the Ghent war the guilds again supported their duke, Philip's host at the battle of Gavere (1453) included crossbowmen from Lille, archers from Douai,¹⁶⁹ hand-gunners from Mechelen¹⁷⁰ and archers from Aalst.¹⁷¹ That Philip thought highly of the service provided by the archers of Douai is clear from a later charter. In 1455 ten archers had, for unspecified crimes, been banished from their town. Philip pardoned them in recognition of their good and loyal service in the wars with Ghent.¹⁷² The guilds of Douai seem to have enjoyed a great reputation even beyond Flanders; in 1449 the crossbowmen were summoned by Charles VII, King of France for the siege of Beauvais.¹⁷³ When a quick victory was possible guilds could prove an effective part of a large force, those of Douai¹⁷⁴ and Bruges,¹⁷⁵ and probably others, were part of Charles the Bold's victorious army at Montlhéry. Many towns sent their guild for the 1467 campaign against Liège,¹⁷⁶ showing continuous service.

¹⁶⁸ For Brabant guild service see van Melckebeke, *Geschiedkundige Aanteekeningen rakende de Kruis- of Voetboog-Gilde*, 25-41; for Oudenaarde see Bartholomeus de Rantere, *Geschiedenis van Oudenaarde*, 69-81.

¹⁶⁹ DAM, BB1; AML, CV, 16194; C. Brusten, *L'armée Bourguignon de 1465 à 1468* (Bruxelles, 1995). Mechelin provided gunners, archers, equipment and money, P.-J. van Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines* vol. 1-5 (Malines, 1859-68), vol. 2, 112-7; the chancellor Nicholas Roulin wrote to the town to praise the service of these loyal guild brothers, van Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines* vol 4, 61.

¹⁷⁰ Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines*, vol. 3, 110-111.

¹⁷¹ Olivier de la Marche, *mémoires*, vol. 2, 68-9.

¹⁷² DAM, affaires militaires EE14.

¹⁷³ DAM EE5.

¹⁷⁴ DAM, BB1 f. 20, all of the archers and hand-gunners are named.

¹⁷⁵ Discussed in Vanhoutyre, *De Brugse Kruisbooggilde*, 56-62; Godar, *Histoire des archers* 80-137, town accounts confirm numbers.

¹⁷⁶ Brusten, *L'armée Bourguignon*, 44-49.

Neuss, 1474.

The ducal army that arrived before Neuss on 29 July, 1474 had changed greatly from that of Philip the Good. The force led by Charles the Bold was based on companies of Ordinance, in his analysis of Charles's army Richard Vaughan does not even mention Flemish militias or shooting guilds.¹⁷⁷ The force was not just huge, but international, including at least some English archers.¹⁷⁸ In a famous letter to Georges Chastellain, Philippe Croy refers to English and Italian mercenaries,¹⁷⁹ while Olivier de la Marche emphasised the strength of the artillery.¹⁸⁰

As at Calais, shooting guilds were a small but nevertheless important and valued part of a far larger ducal host. Guilds present included 20 archers from Lille,¹⁸¹ 20 archers, 6 crossbowmen, 6 hand-gunners and 2 varlets from Douai,¹⁸² 30 archers and 60 crossbowmen from Bruges¹⁸³ as well as contingents from Brabant. All towns sent more men and money the next year.¹⁸⁴ Worthy of note were the

¹⁷⁷ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 197-299.

¹⁷⁸ M. Ballard, 'An Expedition of English Archers to Liège in 1467 and the Anglo-Burgundian Marriage Alliance,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 34 (1990), 152-174; Strickland and Hardy, *Warbow*, 361-368.

¹⁷⁹ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 327-8; R. J. Walsh, *Charles the Bold and Italy (1467-77) politics and personnel* (Liverpool, 2005), 341-366.

¹⁸⁰ Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires*, 290-297; DeVries, K. and Smith, *The Artillery of the Dukes of Burgundy*, 174-8; J.-M. Cauchies, 'Charles le Hardi a Neuss (1474/5); folie militaire ou contrainte politique?', *PCEEB* 36 (1996), 105-116; Contamine, *Guerre, Etat et Société*, 279-289.

¹⁸¹ AML, CV 16212 f. 130 v., led by their constable, Jehan de Britanault dit le Holland.

¹⁸² DAM, BB1, f. 41.

¹⁸³ Discussed by Vanhoutyre, *De Brugse Kruisbooggilde*, 56-61; Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 80-137, with expenses in the towns accounts confirming their numbers, though not Vanhoutyre's detailed description of their uniform as yellow and red; SAB, 210, rekeningen 1475-6 f. 137. The Death registers from the guilds of Saint George show a far higher than average number of deaths in the year 1474-5 SAB, 385, gilde Sint Joris, Rekeningen 1445- 1480, f. 215-215 v. ; as do the archers records, BASS, Pak 3, VI (3.6) f. 22 v. – 23, but both registers give only annual totals, not when and where men died.

¹⁸⁴ P. Jansen, (ed.), *Om en rond de kruisbooggilden : juwelen, wapens, dokumenten* (Antwerpen, 1981), 9-34.

Mechelen crossbowmen, who received a new generous charter in 1474 due to the fact that 36 out of the 90 crossbowmen they had sent to the siege had died.¹⁸⁵ The siege failed, not because of disunity of the Flemish militias or shooters, or because they left the field, on the contrary, they seemed to support the duke's goals, and were willing to serve, in return for privileges. Even with mercenaries, allies, a standing army and gunpowder weapons, Charles still relied in part on the Flemish shooting guilds, and trusted them to provide valuable and meaningful service.¹⁸⁶

Guinegate, 1479.

Though it is usual to see Maximilian's rule or regency as a period of division and rebellion, yet in 1479 the guilds followed him loyally. The army, with German horsemen as well as Flemish infantry, went into land recently conquered by Louis XI, towards Th rouanne. Though Louis XI had given orders that his forces should not leave their fortifications, Maximilian worked to draw the French into battle. At the resulting battle, Guinegate, the French cavalry inflicted losses upon the mainly German cavalry, and chased them from the field. The Flemish forces remained; their forces were mainly composed of pike-men and shooters, including those from Lille.¹⁸⁷ At least 2 Bruges crossbowmen were knighted by Maximilian for service in this battle, as will be discussed in the next chapter. The remaining French forces, mostly *Francs-Archers* were quickly defeated.

The battle of Guinegate has received little historical attention or analysis. Where it has been studied, authors have concentrated on the weakness of the *Francs-Archers*, and French incompetence in giving battle at all. The Flemings, and their

¹⁸⁵ Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines* vol. 1, 158.

¹⁸⁶ Compare to Nicholas, *Flanders*, 393, 'the military fecklessness of the Flemings was as notorious now as their bellicosity had been in the eleventh century. Charles generally avoided using Flemish troops'.

¹⁸⁷ AML, CV, 16218, f. 106 v., they were paid  10.

organisation and strength even without noble leaders, have not received the attention and praise they deserve.¹⁸⁸ Though victory brought no lasting territorial advantage, that Maximilian could lead a loyal strong army of lords and townsmen out of Flanders, into French lands, and draw the French forces into battle is significant.¹⁸⁹ Just as in 1356 and 1411, the guilds showed they could serve as an effective part of an offensive force if they were serving for a limited time, had achievable goals and supported the campaign.

1.6. Civic mutual defence.

Guilds served their lords and towns in defending Flanders, or in limited service beyond. These two types of service, defensive and offensive, are most common for the guilds, but another type of service is also present. Flanders was, as we have seen, a densely urbanised area, with strong connections between towns. Given such strong inter-urban bonds, that guilds regularly went out in service to defend each other is not surprising, but is poorly studied. Though motives for mutual defence were strong in Flanders, they were also present elsewhere. In France, especially in the years of instability following Poitiers, civic governments maintained contacts with other communities. Small has shown that in France collaboration between towns was strengthened by a lack of competition between them.¹⁹⁰ The town accounts of Clermont-Ferrand show that in the two decades following Poitiers the towns of the Midi looked to each other for advice, troops and defence. The municipal deliberations of Clermont show that the town

¹⁸⁸ Paul, *Histoire de l'artillerie en Belgique*; for the battle more generally, Strickland and Hardy, *Warbow*, 55; M. Kendal, *Louis XI* (London, 1971), 236-7; J. M. Tyrell, *Louis XI* (Boston, 1980), 167-9; D. Potter, *Renaissance France at War, Armies, Culture and Society, c. 1480-1560* (Suffolk, 2008), 102-3, 199; E. Richert, *Die Schlacht bei Guinegate, 7 August 1479* (Berlin, 1907).

¹⁸⁹ Jan van Dadizeele proudly noted his service here, Jan de Dadizeele, *Memoires*, 93-104; for Flanders more general support of Maximilian in his defensive policies see Haemers, *Common Good*, 22-7.

¹⁹⁰ Small, *Late Medieval France*, 202-3

regularly sent out its archers and crossbowmen, even its masons and carpenters, to help near-by towns when English forces were near.¹⁹¹

In period of turmoil, French towns turned to their neighbours, not a distant and weakened centre. In a French context, it is worth looking at Lille before 1369, as a French *bonne ville*. As in the south in the years after Poitiers, Lille and other Northern French towns looked to each other for aid. In 1359 Lille sent their crossbowmen and paviseurs on service to Amiens, in response to the appearance of unspecified 'enemies'.¹⁹²

In Flanders, where towns were closer, physically as well as socially and economically, civic mutual aid is well documented. From at least the twelfth century, the three cities of Bruges, Ghent and Ypres, had worked together in defence of the county.¹⁹³ Unlike the French towns analysed by Small, it cannot be stated that these Flemish towns were not in competition with each other, but that the towns could put aside differences and unite against a common threat is all the more significant. Even when towns were rivals, they could unite and provide aid in times of outside threat.

In 1405 the threat came from England, following Waleran de Luxembourg's attack on English-held La Marck. The English fleet arrived on the Zwin in May 1405, John the Fearless called for troops from his brother, but advised the Flemish militias to defend their shores.¹⁹⁴ During the crisis year of 1405, Arras

¹⁹¹ E. T. de Chardin (ed.), *Inventaire, ville de Clermont- Ferrand, tome premier, AA. - CC. 332.* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1902), 367-9, years 1346-48.

¹⁹² AML, CV, 16072.

¹⁹³ Haemers, *Common Good*, 6-7.

¹⁹⁴ Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, 20-22; Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, 159-62.

sent 16 crossbowmen from their guild to Saint Omer for 15 days.¹⁹⁵ Douai sent 10 crossbowmen and 20 archers to Bruges ‘for defending the lands against the English’.¹⁹⁶ 40 crossbowmen were requested from Lille for the same purpose, but only 25 were sent.¹⁹⁷ In June the guilds of Lille were sent to guard Gravelines ‘against the English’ and in September another 24 crossbowmen were sent ‘in service of the Duke of Burgundy’.¹⁹⁸

Some of the defensive operations and plans of 1405 were organised by the duke, especially the defence of Gravelines. John was concerned for the defence of Sluis, but so too were the towns. Bruges sent both of its guilds to Sluis, in response to civic pleas, no ducal requests are referred to in records of sending out the shooters.¹⁹⁹ In 1415 towns in southern Flanders and Artois requested and received defenders from their neighbours. Douai sent their crossbowmen to Bapaulms, at the town’s request.²⁰⁰ Fearing ‘damage and inconvenience’, on 15 March 1415 Gravelines requested 25 crossbowmen from Saint Omer, who were promptly sent out.²⁰¹ In both 1405 and 1415 the Flemish towns feared English attacks. John the Fearless encouraged the towns to defend themselves, he ordered some troop movements, but towns responded to pleas from their neighbours, regularly sending out their guilds to defend one another.

¹⁹⁵ Each man was paid 5 shillings a day, the constable double, for 15 days, Arras also paid for 918 bolts and other equipment, pulled in carts by 4 horses, Espinas, *Les origines*, 112-3 .

¹⁹⁶ The Douai accounts reveal that the crossbowmen were led by their constable, Estars Mahieu, the archers by Pierot Moiton, all 30 men are named. They were sent out with fine new clothes. The archers were paid 1 shilling a day less than the crossbowmen, DAM, CC 207, 177-181.

¹⁹⁷ AML, CV 16146 f. 32 v.

¹⁹⁸ AML, CV 16146 f. 61 v.

¹⁹⁹ 40 crossbowmen from the guild of Sint Joris, were led by their headman, Jan Beernaert SAB, 385, Sint Joris, register met ledenlijst enz. 1321-1531, f. 68.

²⁰⁰ Prolonged service and defence; the town paid the guildsmen who went a total of £651, 18 shillings, DAM, CC209, f.500.

²⁰¹ H. de Laplane, ‘Les Arbalétriers, les arquebusiers et les archers, leur servie a Saint Omer et les environs’, *Bulletin de la société des antiquaires de la Moraine*, 3 (1862), 28-37.

At the end of the fifteenth century guilds were still defending their neighbours, especially after the death of Charles the Bold. Such aid could even extend beyond Flanders; in the weeks following Charles's death, in the face of approaching French troops, the Hainault town of Valenciennes wrote to Mechelen, asking them to send their guilds, specifically crossbowmen and arquebusiers, for their defence.²⁰² After Mary's death in 1482, the Flemish guilds aided the defence of Leuven, in Brabant.²⁰³ We have seen the Lille guild paid to defend and guard their own walls in these year, but in 1482-3, and again in 1487, the guilds were required to help protect all 'parishes of this castellany of Lille'.²⁰⁴ In the same year Adolf of Cleves, an important figure we shall return to in chapter 5, asked the hand-gunners of Mechelen to come to Lille.²⁰⁵ Such precautions for the towns and all nearby villages and parishes was intensified again in 1496 as reports were received that the king of France was near.²⁰⁶ In the sixteenth century, towns borrowed guns from each other for sieges.²⁰⁷ Whatever rivalries existed between towns, even between large towns and surrounding areas, whatever concerns weakened their effectiveness beyond Flanders, the shooting guilds sought to defend not just their town, but also their county and their neighbours against common enemies.

Conclusion.

Guilds of archers and crossbowmen evolved and grew in war, probably before the first surviving documents from 1315-25. A study of the origins and continuing service of guilds faces problem of insufficient and limited early documentation, but this does not excuse existing generalisations and simplification in existing

²⁰² Van Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines*, vol. 3, 241.

²⁰³P. Rock, *Historiek der Tiense schutterijen* (Toreke, 1982), 13.

²⁰⁴ AML, RM 16.975, n. 114.

²⁰⁵ Van Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines*, vol . 4, 1-3.

²⁰⁶ It is not clear if they were paid in 1487; in 1496 they were, at a rate of 8 shillings a day, double for the constables of the archery and crossbow guilds, CV, 16234 f. 120 v.

²⁰⁷ Gunn, et al, *War, State and Society*, 64-5.

scholarship about shooting guilds. Their origins can be tracked, based on gifts from towns and religious privileges, to 1315-25, though military service is difficult to trace before 1346. Guilds' own records for their origins are strong indicators of guild status and identity, but cannot be relied upon.

Guild military service was continuous and significant, in both defensive and offensive wars. The records of Lille and Oudenaarde show guilds effectively defending their towns, against foreign or Flemish enemies. Beyond their walls guilds were not always so effective, but they helped larger hosts to victory in 1356 and 1411. Guilds could not stay in the field indefinitely in 1356 or 1411. The failures of 1436 and 1474 were larger than the guilds themselves, in the later case the guilds supported their duke and were rewarded for serving, even dying, in his army. The poorly researched battle of Guinegate provides a fitting end for our study. In 1479 the guilds, and the Flemish militias, supported Maximilian and defeated a small disorganised French army, showing their superiority to *Francs-Archers*. Guilds aided their neighbours in times of need, they were only one part of this, but by the fifteenth century towns could put rivalries aside to stand together against a common enemy. Guilds of archers and crossbowmen were not simply soldiers, but they originated and grew in violence and in service and provided meaningful continuous service to their lords and to towns.

Chapter 2:

The membership of the archery and crossbow guilds of Bruges, 1437-1481.

Archery and crossbow guilds can only be appreciated as complex, social and devotional groups, as well as soldiers, if their members are studied and understood. Yet many authors have used prescriptive sources to make generalisations about 'elite' or 'bourgeois' status of members, without offering any proof for such statements. To rectify such simplifications, a prosopographical study of guild membership within one town is necessary. Bruges, as the second largest town in Flanders, one of the wealthiest market places in Europe and cultural centre, is a fitting location for a study of any urban groups. Further, in Bruges unparalleled guild sources are available. The records for the crossbowmen of Saint George begin in 1437, and the record of the archers of Saint Sebastian in 1454, both become fragmentary in 1481, providing the chronological parameters of our study. Before turning to the records of Bruges, previous assumptions about guild status, the value of prosopography and Bruges' position must be considered.

Information on guild-brothers will then be drawn together and analysed under eight headings. Firstly noble members will be discussed, from Philip the Good himself to newly ennobled patricians. Secondly the legal status of members will be examined through a survey of those who purchased citizenship, the *poorters*. Sections three and four will deal with the supposed elite status of members, examining how many in each guild held municipal office of any kind or collected any form of municipal tax. The fifth section, the most detailed, will examine the professions of guild-brothers. Occupations could not be found for all members, but enough information can be gathered to analyse the professional make up of the two guilds, and to compare them to each other, and to the urban population as a whole. Section six will examine all non-professional activities of the members, in particular which social or religious confraternities guild-brothers chose to join. Section seven will explain relationships within guilds, and question whether these

can be classed as networks, and what kin or professional relationships reveal about guild unity. Finally section eight will consider rebellions and Flemish urban factions, and question how far guilds participated in revolts, and whether they were part of or indeed an antidote to factionalism.

2.1 Previous studies of shooting guilds.

An understanding of members' social and economic status reveals far more about guild standing than analysing charters and making general statements about 'elite' status. Yet only 3 small studies have been undertaken of the membership of one guild.²⁰⁸ No in-depth analysis of membership has been completed. Other studies, especially descriptions of individual guilds, have used only ordinances or charters or have commented on a few of the more famous members, but the status of a few famous members cannot be taken to be representative of all.²⁰⁹ Most studies make generalisations about status based on the rights guilds should have enjoyed.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Papin, 'De handboogschuttersgilde van Sint Winoksbergen', 1-16; S. Van Steen, "*Den ouden ende souverainen gilde van den edelen ridder Sente Jooris*" : *het Sint-Jorisgilde te Gent in de 15e eeuw, met prosopografie (1468-1497)* Masters Dissertation, Ghent University, 2006; A. Janssens, 'Daar komen de Brugse kruisboogschutters van 'oude' gilde van Sint Joris (tweede helft 15de eeuw) in *BO 46* (2006) 81-136.

²⁰⁹ J. A. Jolles, *De Schuttersgilden en schutterijen van Zeeland, Overzicht van hetgeen nog bestaat* (Genootschap, 1934), 8-16; A. Van Lerberghe & E. Louvaert, *Esquisse historique de l'ancienne gilde du noble chevalier St. George à Courtrai* (Courtrai, 1972), 61-78; P. Desmette, 'Les archers de Saint Martin à Moustier au XVIe siècle. Visions de l'organisation d'une confrérie militaire au travers d'un document normatif,' *Revue Belge d'histoire militaire* 6 (1994) 419-440; R. Roche, 'La Confrérie des arbalétriers de Beaucaire,' *Bulletin de la société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Beaucaire* (2004), 30-33.

One study attempted to analyse members, those who attended a guild feast in The Hague, but assumed that names indicated professions, and so is deeply flawed. Assuming Jan de Smit was a smith, Joos de Baker was a baker, but offers no evidence; F. J. W. Van Kan, 'Around Saint George: integration and precedence during the meetings of the civic militia of The Hague,' in W. Blockmans, and A. Janse, (ed.), *Showing Status; Representations of Social Position in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 1999), 177-198.

²¹⁰ Baillien, 'De Tongerse schutterijen van de 14^{de} tot de 16^{de} eeuw', 5-9; F. Van Kan, 'Rondom Sint Joris,' *Die Haghe Jaarboek- geschiedkundige vereniging die Haghe* (1995), 9-13; F. Meulenaere, 'Les Confréries et société d'arbalétriers de la Flandre française (arrondissements d'Hazebrouck et de Lille),' *Annales du Comité de Flandre* 54 (1996), 291-310, and 55 (1997), 55-105; Delsalle, 'La Confrérie des archers de Cysoing', 14-19; Renson, 'The Flemish archery guilds, from defence mechanisms to sports institutions', 135-159; D Snoep, 'Voorword,' to Carasso-Kok and Van Halm, *Schutters in Holland-Kracht*, 13-15.

Peter Arnade is typical in describing the guilds as ‘staffed by townsmen of means but patronised selectively by noblemen and Burgundian sovereigns’,²¹¹ while Gunn, Grummit and Cools describe the guilds as ‘manned by master-craftsmen and officered by the town elite’; none of these statements can be proven.²¹²

Papin’s study of the crossbowmen of Sint-Winnoksbergen is fascinating, but as it is based on one membership list from one year it is limited.²¹³ Further the small town of Sint-Winnoksbergen has less sources of information on professional and social groups than a large centre like Bruges can offer. The study is useful in showing the possibility of studying guilds prosopographically, and important in demonstrating that although aldermen were in the guild, by no means all guild-brothers were so powerful. In Ghent, an analysis of the Saint George guild was undertaken as part of a master’s dissertation, by Sarah Vander Steen. The project is insightful but flawed; no discussion is given of how names were dated, in a large undated membership list. No discussion of the problem of homonyms is present in her study, and more problematically several mistakes occur in transcription. The research does show what is possible in a larger town by attempting to analyse guild members across several years, here 1468-1498.²¹⁴

In Bruges, Janessens has studied the Saint George guild-brothers who received uniforms in the 1470s. his work highlights that many of them were of high status, even holders of municipal offices. His study shows the enormous potential of

For studies that look at Ghent, this tendency is even hard to explain, as writers mention guild books and membership lists, but do not engage with them, often using the nobles among the Saint George crossbowmen to argue they were of higher status than the archers of Saint Sebastian, Moulin-Coppens, *Sint Jorisgilde te Gent*, 12-18; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 65-73; Burgraere, *Notice Historique sur les chefs confréries*, 10-20.

²¹¹P. Arnade, *Beggars, iconoclasts, and civic patriots : the political culture of the Dutch Revolt* (London, 2008), 64-5.

²¹² Gunn et al, *War, State and society*, 46-7.

²¹³ Papin, ‘De handboogschuttersgilde,’ 1-16.

²¹⁴ Van Steen, *Den ouden ende souverainen gilde*.

Bruges's evidence, and how much can be discerned about guild-brothers, but as not all guild-brothers received uniforms, his study cannot be taken as representative of the guild as a whole.²¹⁵ Many studies of the shooting guilds were produced in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries; these are products of their age, and are concerned with rights, not the members.²¹⁶ Even recent studies, such as those of Autenboer, rely too heavily on prescriptive sources, and make generalisations about membership based on entry conditions, rights or names of officials. Even more problematically Autenboer considers guilds from the fourteenth to nineteenth century, and does not consider change over time in any meaningful way.²¹⁷

2.2 Prosopography.

To understand the guild brothers, as much information as possible must be found, analysed, and drawn together in a way that can then be studied. To manage such a huge quantity of facts and figures, databases are needed, which in turn form the base of a prosopographical study. Prosopography, by studying a large number of individuals and asking set questions, can overcome issues of representativeness of sources material; it can be defined as 'an attempt to bring together all relevant biographical data of groups of persons in a systematic and stereotypical way'.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Janssens, 'Daar komen de Brugse kruisboogschutters van 'oude' gilde van Sint', 81-136.

²¹⁶ Delaunay, *Étude sur les Anciennes Compagnies*, 2-9; V. Foque, *Recherches historiques sur les corporations des archers, des arbalétriers et des arquebusiers* (Paris, 1852), 29-41; Wauters, *Notice historique* 3-11; Matthieu, 'Sceaux des serments ou guildes de la ville d'Enghien', 500-514; Sagher, 'Origine de la guilde des archers de saint Sébastien à Ypres', 116-130; O. Reynten, 'Het Sint Joris gilde te Aelst' *Annales de la société archéologique d'Alost* 9 (1913), 27-64.

²¹⁷ Autenboer, *De kaarten van de schuttersgilden van het Hertogdom Brabant* is a huge work, surveying hundreds of charter issued over 300 years, but does not consider the members; idem, *De schuttersgilde in de Antwerpse*; idem, *Onze eeuwen oude schutters-gilden. Verspreide op stellen over schutters en rederijkers* idem. *De schuttersgilde* (Zemst, 1993), though all of these studies analyse charters, none looks at guild-brothers.

²¹⁸ K. Verboven, M. Carlier & J. Dumolyn, 'A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography,' K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, (ed.), *Prosopography, Approaches and Applications, a Handbook* (Oxford, 2007), 37.

Although not without its problems and limitation, with care and sufficient research, prosopography can yield fascinating results on previously little understood groups.²¹⁹ The potential of prosopography for understanding a large but specified and well connected group ('the population') has been shown in a number of recent studies on the ducal officials of Flanders,²²⁰ and for those in Holland and Zeeland,²²¹ as well as for an understanding of family groups.²²² Such studies show the huge potential of prosopography, especially using modern computing methods,²²³ to shed new light on existing sources and gain a greater understanding of well known, but poorly understood groups. Some problems, especially homonyms, for fathers and sons or even unrelated individuals, cannot be completely avoided, but the value of a prosopographical examination in providing a clear picture of membership outweighs such shortcomings, and provides far greater insight than any other method of studying large groups.

²¹⁹ H. de Ridder-Symoens, 'Prosopografie en middeleeuwse geschiedenis; een onmogelijke mogelijkheid?' *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 45 (1991) 95-117; G. Beech, 'The Scope of Medieval Prosopography,' *Medieval Prosopography* 1 (1980) 3-7; L. Stone 'Prosopography,' *Daedalus*, 100 (1976), 46-79.

²²⁰ J. Dumolyn, *Staatsvorming en vorstelijke ambtenaren in het graafschap Vlaanderen(1419-1477)* (Antwerpen, 2003); idem. 'De Sociografie van laat middeleeuwse gerechtelijke instellingen, het voorbeeld van Jan Wielant (d. 1473), griffier en Raadsheer dij de raad van Vlaandered,' *BCRALO* 42 (2001) 7-61; H. de Ridder-Symoens, 'Prosopographical Research in the Low countires Concerning the Middle Ages and the Sixteenth Century,' *Medieval Prosopography* 14 (1993), 27-120.

²²¹ M. Damen, *De Staat van dienst, de Gewestelijke ambtenaren van Holland en Zeeland in de Bourgondische periode (1425-1482)* (Hilversum, 2000) ; idem. 'Education or Connection? Learned Officials in the Council of Holland and Zeeland in the Fifteenth Century,' in *Education and learning in the Netherlands, 1400-1600, Essays in Honour of Hilde de Ridder-Symoens* ed. K. Goudriaan et al (Leiden, 2004), 51-67.

²²² M. Boone, 'Biografie en prosopografie, een tegenstelling? Een stand van zaken in het biografisch onderzoek over Pieter Lanchals (ca. 1430/40-1488): een Bruggeling in dienst van de Bourgondische staat', *MTMS* 7 (1993), 4-13; F. Lequin 'De prosopografie,' *SH* (1985), 34-39; F. Autrand (ed), *Prosopographie et genèse de l'état moderne* (Paris, 1986); P. Burke, 'Prosopografie van de Renaissance' *MTMS* 7 (1993), 14-22.

²²³ Two databases have created, one for each guild, using Microsoft access. Though too large to add to the present work, they hold each piece of information on each guild brother separately, from his name and profession, to civic financial task, for some even their membership of other confraternities.

2.3 Bruges and its sources; 1437-1481.

Bruges was one of the largest towns in Northern Europe, with an estimated population of 36 000 in 1450.²²⁴ Though in decline, in the fifteenth century Bruges remained one of the most important market places in Europe, with links to Scotland, Portugal, Italy and Germany.²²⁵ The period covered here, 1437-1481, can be considered as Bruges's Indian summer, a period in which Bruges was still the trade 'Gateway of Flanders'.²²⁶ Several excellent studies have been done on other groups within Bruges, including office holders,²²⁷ merchants,²²⁸ craft groups,²²⁹ as well as wider studies on the social stratification of Bruges,²³⁰ and important festive or religious groups in the town,²³¹ even of periods of

²²⁴ Stabel, 'composition et recomposition', 58.

²²⁵ R. Van Uytven, 'Stages of Economic Decline; late medieval Bruges,' in J-M. Duvosquel and E. Thoen (eds.), *Peasants and townsmen in medieval Europe* (Gent, 1995), 259-269; J. Marechal, 'Le Départ de Bruges des marchands étrangers aux XVe et XVIe siècles,' *ASEB* 88 (1951), 1-41; W. Brulez, 'Brugge en Antwerpen in de 15e en 16e eeuw; een tegenstelling?,' *TVG* 83 (1973), 15-37; P. Stabel, 'From Market to Shop, Retail and Urban Space in Late Medieval Bruges,' *UH* 9 (2006), 79-101; W. Blockmans, 'Brugge als Europeen handelscentrum,' in *Brugge en Europa* ed. E. Aert, W. Blockmans et al (Brugge, 1992), 41-56.

²²⁶ Stabel, *De kleine stad*, 87-109.

²²⁷ M. L. Gilliodts van Severen, *Histoire de la Magistrature Brugeoise* (Bruges, 1888); J. Gailliard, *Bruges et le Franc, ou leur magistrature et leur noblesse avec des données historiques et généalogique sur chaque famille* vol.1-6 (1857-64); J. Mertins, 'De XIVde eeuwse voornaamste Brugse schepenfamilies,' *Onze Stam* 9 (1970), 233-236.

²²⁸ O. Mus, 'De Brugse compagnie Despars op het einde van de 15e eeuw,' *ASEB*, 101 (1964), 5-118; M. L. Gilliodts van Severen, *Cartulaire de l'ancienne staple de Bruges* vol. 1, 862-1451 (Bruges, 1904).

²²⁹ Vanden Haute, *La corporation des peintres*; Vandewalle, *Brugse ambachten in documenten*; J-A. Van Houtte, 'Makelaars en waarden te Brugge van 13^e tot de 16^e eeuw' in *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 5 (1950), 1-30 and 335-353; J.-P. Sosson 'Une approche des structures économiques d'un métier d'art: la corporation des peintres et selliers de Bruges (15e-16e siècles),' *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain* 3 (1970), 91-100; idem. *Les travaux publics de la ville de Bruges XIVe-XVe siècles : les matériaux, les hommes* (Bruxelles, 1977).

²³⁰ Dumolyn, 'Population et structures professionnelles à Bruges', 43-64; J. N. Murray, 'Family, marriage and money changing in medieval Bruges,' *JMH* 14 (1988), 115-125; Buylaert, 'Memory, social mobility and historiography,' (Forthcoming); idem. 'La "noblesse urbaine" à Bruges (1363-1563). Naissance d'un nouveau groupe social?' In T. Dutour, *Les nobles et la ville dans l'espace francophone XIIe – XVIe siècles* (Paris, 2009), 247-275.

²³¹ Brown, *Civic Ceremony*; idem 'Civic ritual: Bruges and the count of Flanders', 277-299; idem, 'Urban jousts in the later middle ages: the White Bear of Bruges,' 315-30; idem., 'Bruges and the Burgundian 'Theatre-state': Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow,' *History*, 84 (1999), 573-589; Van den Abeele, *Ridderlijk Gezelschap van de witte beer*; A. Schouteet, 'De Broederschap

rebellion.²³² Intelligent use of these studies, as well as more general histories of Bruges,²³³ allow our study to be placed within an established scholarly tradition. The most compelling reason for studying the shooting guilds in Bruges are the sources left by the guilds themselves; both sets of records have been used before, but previous research has not focused on the membership of the two guilds.

Records of Saint George.

The records of the crossbowmen of Saint George were surveyed by Vanhoutryre, in his study of the guild.²³⁴ He transcribes several charters the guild received, and even the membership list on which this study is based. However, he made no attempt to date the names; he missed several names or pieces of information out and made other errors,²³⁵ so our study is based on the original membership alone. More recently the guild accounts were looked at by Janssens, who calculated the annual expenses and income of the guild, as well as the prosopography discussed above.²³⁶

The crossbowmen's sources are in two parts. Firstly a 'guild-book' with membership list, from 1437, and secondly account books, begun in 1445 with a

van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Hulsterlo, 14de – 16de eeuw,' *ASEB* 127 (1990), 109-144; J. Moopmans, 'Brugge als culturele draaischijf : de casus van de *Spinrocken*,' J. Oosterman, *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede* (Leuven, 2005), 163-181.

²³²R. Wellens, 'Le Revolte Brugeoise de 1488,' *ASEB* 102 (1965), 5-52; Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand*; idem, 'The 'terrible Wednesday' of Pentecost : confronting urban and princely discourses in the Bruges rebellion of 1436-1438,' *History*, 92 (2007), 3-20; Haemers, *Common Good*, 137-226.

²³³Letts, *Bruges and its Past*; J-A. Van Houtte, *Geschiedenis van Brugge* (Brugge, 1982); P. Beaucourt de Noortvelde, *Description historique de l'église collégiale et paroissiale de Notre-Dame à Bruges* (Bruges, 1773).

²³⁴Vanhoutryre, *De Brugse Kruisboogilde*.

²³⁵Some names Vanhoutryre simply misses, such as Heindric Waghe f. 15v., for others he does not include all details given in the guild book, for example the guild book has, f. 30 v 'Lamsin Van Hecke timmerman' this last word is a profession, and of great help to this study, or any study of the guild, but Vanhoutryre gives only the name. Such omissions are problematic enough, but he also makes errors, on f. 35 the guild book lists 'Pieter Rikewaert s' but Vanhoutryre gives 'Pieter Akelbaert'.

²³⁶Janssens, 'Daar komen de Brugse kruisboogschutters,' 121-136

gap between 1465 and 1470, and becoming fragmentary in 1481.²³⁷ The membership list forms part of a new guild-book, begun in 1437. Such a date is enticing, and implies that another list may have existed but was either lost during the revolt of 1436-8 or was deliberately destroyed.²³⁸ The list is a carefully thought out and planned project, the members are organised alphabetically by first name. Many pages are still blank, as space was left for future members. Despite such care, some names have been fully or partially removed, possible reasons for this will be discussed below. For all its care, the list is almost entirely undated; some of the latest names are dated as 1518. Further, it rarely records more than a name, sometimes a profession is added, more often a man is identified as 'son of' but the list alone is not enough for a prosopographical study.

The list must be used in conjunction with the guild account books. The financial information is incredibly detailed; listing all income and expenses, including membership fees paid by new members, donations left by dead members and all the money spent on shoots, feasts and masses. Though detailed, the accounts are problematic, particularly the five year gap in the middle of the period of investigation. Members with the same name present difficulties, for example there are two Jacop Braderyc's in the list, one died in 1450, the other in 1452, and there is no way of telling which Jacop died in which year. Despite such difficulties, the accounts can be used with the membership list to unlock huge quantities of information about guild-brothers.

Palaeography and dates of entrance.

Using the account books, entrance and death fees and other guilds activities, such as office holding, can be tracked. For our purposes, all the members must be assigned approximate dates of entrance, so that their names can be compared to

²³⁷ SAB, 385, Sint Joris, register met ledenlijst, 1321-1531 and rekeningen, 1445-1480.

²³⁸ Brown, 'Bruges and the Burgundian `Theatre-state'', 319; Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand*.

other sources within Bruges. Dating the names is a two stage process. First, as many members as possible are given entrance dates where they are recorded as paying an entrance fee. Disappointingly few of members are recorded as doing so; only 51 out of 902 crossbowmen. The rest must be assigned approximate dates of entry based on all information in the accounts and a palaeographical analysis of the list, analysing the number of different hands present, and dating each one. In the registers, seven distinct hands are present, as shown.

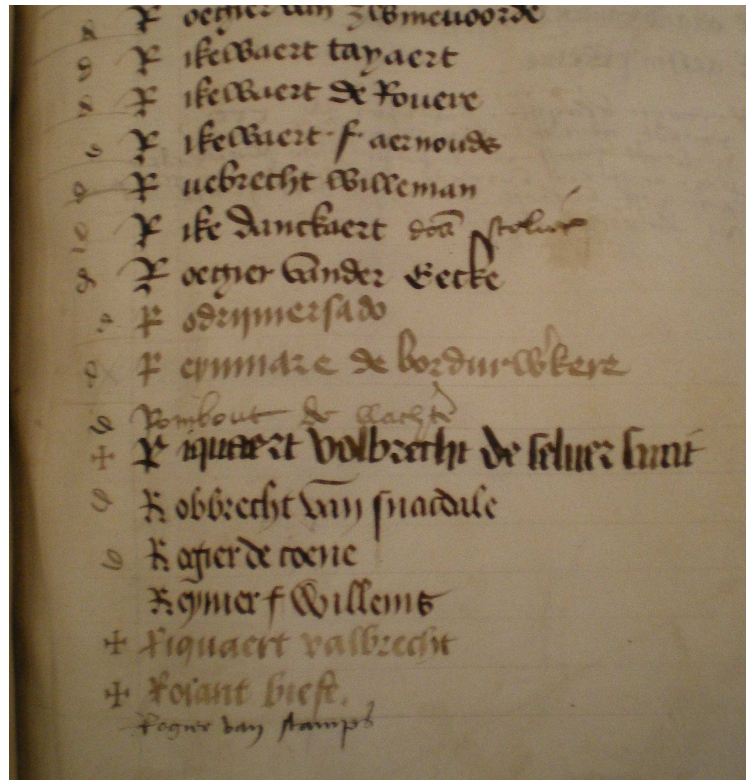


Figure 1. Sint Joris ledenlist, f. 40

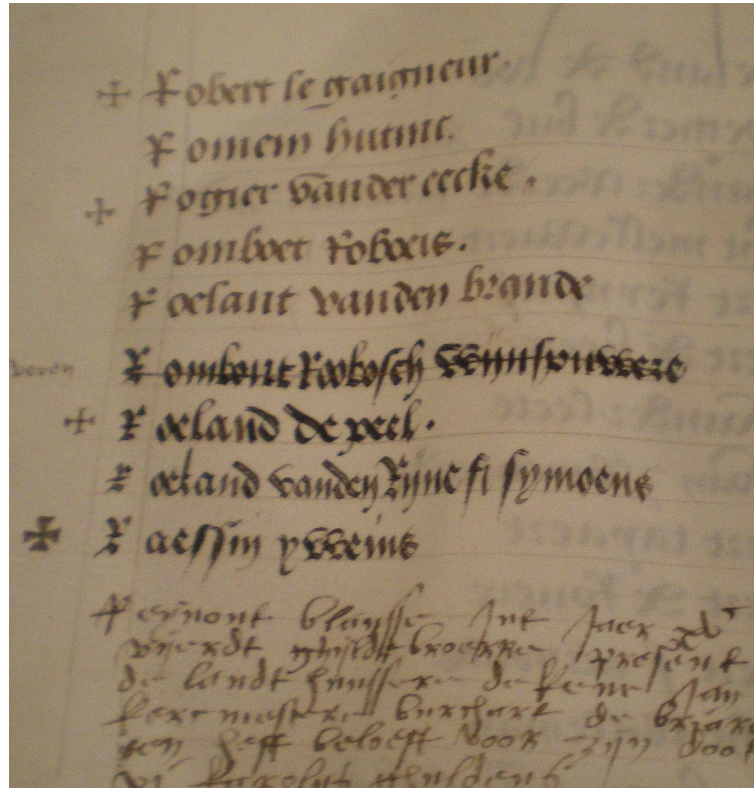


Figure 2. Sint Joris ledenlist, f. 40 v.

The first names, in figure 1, are in hand A, dated as ‘1437-1444’. The first names that can be securely dated, using entrance payments, are in hand B, entering the guild in 1445, so all names before this must be dated. The first names shown, down to Rogier Vander Eecke, are in hand A, none can be dated more accurately than 1437-1444. Hand B is noticeably rounder, the first name in Hand B is ‘Rodrij Mersado’. The ‘a’ of Mersado has a far more distinct descendant than the ‘a’ above it in ‘Vander’. The start date for hand B is determined by the first member in that hand to pay an entrance fee, hand B’s end date, 1454, is determined in the same way, using the 51 members who are recorded paying an entrance fee in a specified year.

Both A and B are neat and deliberate hands, probably skilled clerks working for the guild for some time. In contrast hand C is less skilled, and covers less time.

The difference in this hand is clear in the only name under R to be in hand C, Rombout de Wachtere. Hand C is crude, and can be dated to two years, 1454-6.

The difference between hand C and D is clear, under R there is just one name in hand D, Riquaert Volbrecht, a silver smith. Hand 'D' is dated as 1457-65, dating this hand is particularly difficult as this covers some, or all, of the years for which no accounts have survived. Hand D is again a skilled and deliberate scribe, but hand E can easily be distinguished. The next 3 names, Robbrecht van Snacdale, Rogier de Coen and Reymer f. Willems are all entered into the register in hand 'E'. Of the three only one, Rogier, paid an entrance fee, in 1471, the other 2 are dated simply as '1465-78'.

The last hand used for our study, 'F' is once again dated using the known entrance dates for the 51 guild-brothers who paid entrance fees. An end date for hand 'F' is imprecise, as no accounts were kept between 1481 and 1485, hand F is therefore dated '1478-1480s'. Two names are written in this hand, Riquaert Valbrecht and Rolant Bieze. Hand F is clearly distinguished from hand 'E' by its 'V's, compare 'Valbrecht' to 'van Snacdale' the capital R at the start of the names is also distinct. Folio 40 (figure one), shows an additional problem of the registers. One name, Rogier Stamps, has been added to the bottom of the page in a later, and undated, hand. Rogier is included among the 902 crossbowmen as the later hands do not look like this, it is possible Rogier wrote his own name, or that this is a much later addition.

Hand G is not used for our study, the first names entering in the account book of 1485 are entered in this hand. Figure 2 shows the last name to be included, Roelant vande Brande. Hand G is similar to 'F', but the t at the end of the scored out name is sharper and straighter than that of Roelant and the b in the second scored out word, Roobosch, is again sharper and straighter than that of Brande above it or of Roboeis. In all, 231 crossbowmen are dated as '1437-1444', hand 'A'. 272 guild-brothers either paid an entrance fee, or are dated by palaeography

to hand B, '1445-54'. As noted, hand C is unskilled and of short duration, only 45 names are entered in '1454-6'. Far more names are entered under hand D, 82 guild-brother either have exact entrance dates between, or are dated to, '1457-65'. There are no accounts between 1465 and 1470, so large numbers are to be expected for hand E, 112 guild-brothers either have a date of entry or are assigned these dates. Finally hand F contains 160 names; such a high figure may imply some of these entered after 1481, but as no accounts exist until 1485 their dates cannot be known more accurately, all are included in our study.

Records of Saint Sebastian.

The Saint Sebastian sources have received less historical attention, probably because they remain in the guild's private archive, while the crossbow sources are in the civic archive. A twentieth-century guild-brother, Henri Godar, used these records to write a history of the guild.²³⁹ Like Vanhoutryre, he began with mythical origins and the First Crusade, and transcribed many of the guild charters. He also produced a list of guild members, although where it comes from, and why it takes its current form (alphabetical by first name) is unclear. Most of my 755 names also appear on his list, if in different forms, but as his list includes female members and goes into the sixteenth century, many do not. The current Saint Sebastian treasurer, Marc Lemahieu, has also published on the guild, giving an account of their history, the lands they held, the money they received and competitions they attended.²⁴⁰ Neither author examined the members themselves, although their work greatly benefits the current study by supplying the necessary context.

The Saint Sebastian sources are more problematic than the crossbowmen's, as no membership list survives. All names used in our study come from the accounts

²³⁹ Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 15-26.

²⁴⁰ Lemahieu, *De eerste Vlaamse schuttersgilden*; idem., *De Koninklijke Hoofdgilde Saint-Sebastiaan Brugge*.

alone. The archers' accounts are far more detailed than those of the crossbowmen, listing all members who attended each *papegay* shoot, each meal, even some seating plans, and members who bought uniforms. Also recorded are entrance and death fees, and these are recorded far more regularly than in the Saint George records. The accounts survive in four registers, covering 1454-6, 1460-65, 1465-72 and 1472-81, though the last are incomplete.²⁴¹

A careful analysis of all four registers reveals that between 1454 and 1481 there were 755 archers in the guild. As discussed above, homonyms are a challenge; it is possible that a man, Jan de Budt could have been a member in 1454, died in 1458 and another Jan de Budt, even his son, joined in 1459, and these two individuals would be seen as one, as there are no records from 1457-9. Such weaknesses are unavoidable, but minimal. As the Saint Sebastian accounts are very detailed, entry dates can be known or guessed for every member, for those who do not pay an entry fee, the first year that they attended the annual *papegay* shoot has been taken as their entry date.

Other sources in Bruges.

The names of our 902 crossbowmen, and 755 archers, with a very small overlap of members in both guilds, form the core of this study, but are only of use in relation to other sources from Bruges. The most productive of which are the *Wetsvernieuwingen*,²⁴² annual lists of the twelve alderman and twelve councillors (*schepenen* and *raad*) and the Burgomaster of both. The *Wetsvernieuwingen* further lists the two civic treasurers each year and the heads of the six parishes. The *Wetsvernieuwingen* have no gaps in municipal officials for the fifteenth century. Listed along with the civic officials are those of the 54 craft guilds, all

²⁴¹ SAB, volume 3: rekeningboeken, 1455-1472 and volume 4 rekeningboeken, 1468-1513.

²⁴² SAB 114.

vinders and *deken*s.²⁴³ Unfortunately for this study, the lists of guild officials have a large gap from 1442 to 1468. Information for crafts can be partly made up from other sources, from fees paid by guild deans each year and from some craft-guild membership lists. The Bruges town accounts are also invaluable for our study, providing numerous pieces of information on all those who paid money to, or received money from the civic authorities, most importantly those who collected the large wine and beer taxes.²⁴⁴

Further useful information comes from the lists of those who purchased citizenship each year, the new *poorters*. These are recorded in two ways, in the *poortersboeken*,²⁴⁵ and lists in the town accounts themselves.²⁴⁶ Both have been indexed and published, but the originals re-checked where needed.²⁴⁷ Information has also been drawn from the numerous records of the craft guilds in Bruges, with a large numbers of accounts books, membership lists and death registers surviving.²⁴⁸ Similarly a number of festive groups, such as the White Bear and different religious confraternities have left records.²⁴⁹

²⁴³ *Dekens*, or Deans, were in charge of a craft guild annually. Each guild also had 4-8 '*vinders*' literally finders, who helped run the guild, checking standards and working practises. For both offices, a man could not hold consecutive terms, but many held office multiple times.

²⁴⁴ SAB, 219.

²⁴⁵ R. A. Parmentier, *Indices op de Brugsche Poorterboeken*, vol. 1, 1418-1450, vol. 2 1450-1794 (Brugge, 1938).

²⁴⁶ A. James, *Brugse poortes, opgetekend uit de stadsrekeningen en ingeleid* vol. 2, 1418-1478 (Handzame, 1980).

²⁴⁷ SAB, 130, poorterboeken, and the names in the town accounts, SAB, 219.

²⁴⁸ At the time of writing, a new inventory was in preparation for craft guilds in the RAB, but all numbers here refer to those in C. vanden Haute, *Inventaire sommaire des archives des corporations de la ville de Bruges conservées aux Archives de l'Etat* (Bruges, 1900).

SAB 336, kuipers, protocolboek, 1375-1777; SAB 345 peltiers, Gildeboeken; SAB, 324 droogsheerders, gildeboek; SAB 337 kulkstikkers, gildeboek, 1451-62; SAB, 299, makelaars, ledenregister.

RAB, ambachten, 116, boogmakers; 256-281, rekeningen van de huidenvetters; 470, vischkoopers, admissions, 1425-1795; wollewevers, registers; 487, 1407-26 and 488, 1451-1510.

²⁴⁹ RAB, fonds OLV (91), n. 1531, accounts books (1467-1499); and a partial membership list, 1501.

SAB 524, gilde Hulsterloo; SAB, 505, gilde Droogenboom.

2.4 Nobles.

The Saint George guild register contains the names of 28 noble members before the other 902 guild-brothers. The nobles are harder to date, as they are in a far more ornate and careful hand than the other names. A further 20 noblemen appear in the membership list among the 902 guild-brothers. Of these forty-eight noblemen, two are unidentifiable, as they are listed only by their titles, 'my lord the captain' and 'my lord the president'. Five of the forty-eight can be securely identified as members of both the archers as well as the crossbowmen. Additionally six noble men were archers, but not crossbowmen. The 54 noblemen were a diverse mix of great lords and newly ennobled patricians.

It is striking that of the 52 identifiable nobles only 5 figures, a member of the ducal family, a local lord, the lord of Moerkerke, and the others members of Bruges' leading families, were in both guilds. While the Bruges guilds, unlike those in Lille,²⁵⁰ did not specifically forbid members from joining more than one shooting guild, only one other man, Corneil de Valkenare, a bowyer, did so. Joining both guilds was virtually impossible or undesirable for ordinary members, but several aristocratic members did so, and in the case of at least the Adornes were active in both guilds. This is the first indication that important aristocrats, might join shooting confraternities, but were not treated as ordinary members.

The Adornes family are worthy of further mention here. A Genoese family that arrived in Flanders in the fourteenth century and became one the richest and most famous patrician families. The Genoese branch of the family was no less powerful, providing seven Doges in 150 years. The Bruges Adornes were most famous as the builders of the Jeruzalemkapel, modelled on the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, but were wealthy powerful men, holders of numerous

²⁵⁰ AML, RT, 5883, f. 28-29v., statute issued by the aldermen (echevins) in 1443, repeated several times.

civic offices.²⁵¹ Both Pieter (d. 1464) and Jacob (d.1465), the brothers who founded the Jeruzalemkapel in the mid fifteenth century, were members of the Saint Sebastian guild. Jacob was headman from at least 1454 until his death.²⁵² In all, six members of the Adornes family were in the Saint Sebastian guild, all of them active members. Pieter and his son Anselmus were also in the crossbowmen, but no other family members were.

Anselmus Adornes was the most prominent member of this illustrious family. He was born in 1424; in 1443 he married Margareta Vander Banck, possibly the daughter of fellow archer Anthonius Vander Banc. He also built bonds within the upper levels of the crossbowmen's guild; as Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and Jan de Baenst, both noble crossbowmen, acted as godfathers to some of his sixteen children.²⁵³ It is difficult to overstate the importance of this figure; a jousting knight with the White Bear, holder of multiple municipal offices and a pilgrim to the Holy Land. Anselmus was also an important figure at the courts of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, acting as ambassador for both to Scotland. There he was lavishly rewarded by James III, becoming Lord of Cortachy and Earl of Arran, perhaps even joining the Order of the Unicorn in 1468-9,²⁵⁴ if such an order existed.²⁵⁵ This prestigious figure was an active member of the Saint Sebastian guild, attending the *papegay* shoot at least 20 times between 1454 and his death

²⁵¹ N. Geirnaert 'De Adornes en de Jeruzalemkapel, internationale contacten in het laatmiddeleeuwse Brugge,' *Adornes en Jeruzalem; internationaal leven in het 15^{de} en 16^{de} eeuwse Brugge* ed. N. Geirnaert en A. Vandewalle (Brugge, 1983) 11-49; idem, *Het Archief van de familie Adornes en de Jeruzalemstichting te Brugge* (Brugge, 1987), 1-21; A. Macquarrie, 'Anselmus Adornes of Bruges, traveller in the East and a friend of James III,' *Innes Review* 33 (1982), 15-22; A. A. MacDonald, 'The Chapel of Restalrig: Royal folly or Venerable Shrine?', in L. A. J. R. Houwen, A. A. MacDonald and S. L. Mapstone (eds.), *A Palace in the Wild: Essays on Vernacular Culture and Humanism in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Scotland* (Leuven, 2000), 34, 46.

²⁵² BASS, volume 3: rekeningboeken, 1455-1472, for more background see Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 90-120.

²⁵³ Geirnaert 'De Adornes en de Jeruzalemkapel', 22-6.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 25-7.

²⁵⁵ K. Stevenson, 'The Unicorn St Andrew and the Thistle: was there an order of chivalry in late medieval Scotland?' *Scottish Historical Review* 83 (2004), 3-22.

in 1483. In the same period he attended at least seven guild-meals and bought a livery at least twice.

The Adornes were not the only great patrician family to be present in significant numbers in the shooting guilds. The Metteneyes similarly took a close interest in the guilds, 6 were in the archers, 2 in the crossbowmen; only one family member, Joris Metteneye was in both guilds. Like the Adornes, the Metteneyes were a powerful patrician family with international connections, including trade links to Scotland.²⁵⁶ Other rich and newly ennobled families favoured the crossbowmen, such as the Van Themseke family, of whom 5 were members of the Saint George guild, and Van Clarout and de Baenst families, with 3 members each in the crossbowmen.²⁵⁷ That so many of the greatest social climbers of Bruges, families rich enough to purchase lands and live as nobles, were in both shooting guilds shows that both were seen as desirable and powerful groups. The links between Anselmus Adornes and others shooters are particularly interesting, hinting at the powerful networks that came with membership to these guilds. Many patrician families joined the shooting guilds, but not all. It is useful to note that no members of the Barbesaens or Halewyn families, patricians just as powerful as the Metteneyes, are mentioned in guild sources.

Setting aside the twenty four members of patricians (the Adornes, Metteneye, de Baenst, Van Themseke and Van Clarout families) in the shooting guilds, the remaining 29 identifiable nobles include many powerful and fascinating men.

²⁵⁶ Buylaert, *Eeuwen van ambitie* I am also grateful to him for providing access to his unpublished genealogies of the Metteneyes.

²⁵⁷ De Baenst was a common name, and several other men called de Baenst are in the Saint George guild, but these others are not related to this noble family. For this family see F. Buylaert, 'Baenst, Guy II de, vorstelijk ambtenaar in de Raad van Vlaanderen en de Grote Raad,' *NBW* (2007) 37-40; idem. 'Baenst, Jan IV de, Vlaams edelman en Brugs politicus,' *NBW* (2007) 47-9; idem. 'Baenst, Jan II de, vorstelijk ambtenaar, baljuw van Brugge en het Vrije, lid van het stadsbestuur van Brugge,' *NBW* (2005) 41-44; idem. 'Baenst, Jan III de, hoveling en Brugs politicus,' *NBW* (2005) 44-9; idem. 'Sociale mobiliteit bij stedelijke elites in laatmiddeleeuws Vlaanderen. Een gevalstudie over de Vlaamse familie De Baenst,' *JMG* (2005) 201-251.

Some were men of local importance, like Jacob de Voocht, councillor in 1473 and knighted by Maximilian in return for military service in 1479.²⁵⁸ Another figure of local prominence was Jan van Nieuwenhouse. Like Jacob, Jan was knighted by Maximilian, specifically for his bravery in the battle of Guinegate, discussed in chapter one. Jan was an active archer, attending the *papegay* ten times between his entrance in to the guild 1467 and 1479. Jan was executed for treason of 29 November 1488, showing he was not a princely servant all his life.

Other lords in the guilds were from the highest levels of court society. For the highest figures their level of involvement is unclear. The first four names in the Saint George list are Philip the Good, Roeland lord of Uutkerke, Philip of Brabant and Anthony the Great Bastard, all in the same hand, and all seemed to have joined together. No entrance date is given for the four great lords, but it is likely that these men entered shortly after 1437, for limited space was left for them. It is certain they entered before 1442, when Roeland van Uutkerke died.²⁵⁹ Though they may not have been active crossbowmen, they were certainly important figures. Philip the Good, as we shall see in chapter five, joined many shooting guilds. His membership in Bruges in the aftermath of rebellion can be interpreted as ducal effort to become integrated with the towns and in doing so to keep peace, even to gain support from the most powerful in civic society.

Like his father, Anthony the Great Bastard of Burgundy joined many shooting guilds. Anthony was a knight of the Golden Fleece and a famous chivalric figure in his own right.²⁶⁰ He became ‘king’²⁶¹ of the Ghent crossbowmen²⁶² and led the

²⁵⁸ For this figure and the 1488 rebellion, see Haemers, *Common good*, 183.

²⁵⁹ M. Boone, ‘Une famille au service de l’État bourguignon naissant. Roland et Jean d’Uutkerke, nobles flamands dans l’entourage de Philippe le Bon,’ *RN* 77 (1995), 233-255.

²⁶⁰ For this figure see C. Van Den Berghen-Pantens ‘Antoine, Grand Bâtard de Bourgogne, bibliophile,’ in his *L’Ordre de la Toison d’Or, de Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Beau (1430-1505). Idéal ou reflet d’une société?* (Turnhout, 1996), 198-200; J. Clement, ‘Antoine de Bourgogne, dit le Grand Bâtard,’ *PCEEB* 30 (1990) 165-182; H. Cools, ‘In het spoor van ‘de grote bastaard,’ *Het land van Beveren* 33 (1990), 24-55, C. Emerson, ‘“Tel estat que peust faire le fils aisne legitime de Bourgoingne”; Anthoine, Great Bastard of Burgundy and Olivier de la Marche,’ *PCEEB* 41

Lille crossbowmen to the Tournai competition in 1455.²⁶³ In Bruges, he was a member of both the archers and the crossbowmen, eating with the archers at least once as the king.

The other two men who entered the guild with Philip and Anthony, Roeland van Uutkerke and Philip of Brabant were also influential figures. Philip, lord of Kuibeke, *Panetere* to the duke was already powerful when he entered the guild, later, in 1449, he became *Maitre de chambre*.²⁶⁴ Roeland, lord of Memsrode, had risen through the ranks as a loyal ducal servant, first with John the Fearless at the battle of Othée in 1408. He acted as ambassador to the English courts of Henry V and Henry VI, was receiver general of Flanders from 1410, and soon afterwards was made chamberlain. In 1436 he was still an active loyal servant, leading the Mechelen contingent to Calais. There is no doubt that the first four nobles on the Saint George membership list were hugely powerful men, but three are not recorded as attending any guild event. Even if the great lords did not participate with in crossbow festivities, it is nevertheless significant that they joined the guild of Saint George, showing that this guild had a significant enough reputation for dukes to join, not all nobles were distant members.

The fifth name in the Saint George list is Lodewijk van Gruuthuse. Lodewijk's family had earned their fortune controlling beer taxes in Bruges, by the fifteenth

(2001), 77-88 ; A. Commes, 'Nul ne s'y forte. Een biografische schets van Anton, Bastard van Bourgondië,' *Excursiones mediaevales. Opstellen aangeboden aan Prof. A. G. Jongkees door door zijn leerlingen* ed. H. Schulte Nordholt (Groningen, 1979), 59-76.

²⁶¹ Terminology will be discussed in chapter 5.

²⁶² S. Kemperdick, *Rogier van Weyden, 1399/1400-1464* (Cologne, 1999), 102-105, argues the famous van Weyden picture of Anthony holding an arrow is based on his position as king of the Ghent shooters.

²⁶³ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 219-225.

²⁶⁴ W. Paravicini, *Guy de Brimeu. Der burgundische Staat und seine adlige Führungsschicht unter Karl dem Kühnen* (Bonn, 1975), 516 via *Prosopographia Burgundica* <http://prosob.heraudica.org/index.php?action=bibliotheque> accessed 24/11/10

century they had become some of the richest and most powerful men in Bruges. Both Lodewijk and his father were important court figures, and both were regular jousters with the White Bear.²⁶⁵ Lodewijk was a great chivalric figure, a joust, a book collector and a member of the order of the Golden Fleece; he was also governor of Holland from 1463.²⁶⁶ In 1472 he was raised to the earldom of Winchester by Edward IV in return for sheltering him while Edward had been a fugitive in 1470.²⁶⁷ Lodewijk's activities with the crossbowmen included leading the members to a competition in Sluis in 1452, being given a uniform in 1455 and even being elected headman in 1479. Lodewijk was linked to other civic groups in Bruges including the confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.²⁶⁸ The power of these noble-civic bonds in keeping peace across Flanders in years of turmoil will be shown in chapter 5.

Space does not permit all noble members to be described in such depth. Of the 54 aristocratic shooters, 2 are unidentified, 24 are patricians, 2 are local men knighted for service, 3 are inactive great lords, 2, Anthony and Lodewijk, are active great lords. Of the remaining 21 lords only one, a local lord Victor vanden Monte, was an archer. The 20 aristocratic crossbowmen included minor members of the Flemish nobility, such as the Viscount of Veurne (my Lord of Stavel).²⁶⁹ Others were court figures, like Jan van Aertrycke (d.1458), a councillor of Philip the Good. Jan's relative, Adrian van Aertrycke led the guild in a competition in

²⁶⁵ Despars, *Cronijke van den lande ende graefscpe van Vlanderen*, gives lists every year for the White Bear, using now losts lists.

²⁶⁶ M. P. J. Martens (ed.), *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse. Mecenar en Europees diplomaat ca. 1427-1492* (Brugge, 1992); as will be discussed in chapter five, Lodewijk became even more powerful after the death of Charles the Bold, see Haemers, *Common Good*, 106-113; Cools, *Mannen met macht*, 77-85,120-129.

²⁶⁷ M. Vale 'An Anglo-Burgundian Nobleman and Artistic Patronage; Louis de Bruges, Lord of la Gruuthuse and Earl of Winchester,' *England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages* ed. C. Barron and N. Saul (New York, 1995) 13-63; M.-P. Lafitte, 'Les manuscrits de Louis de Bruges chevalier de la Toison d'Or,' *Le Banquet du Faisan, 1454: L'Occident face au d fit de l'Empire Ottoman*. Ed. M.-T. Caron et D. Clauzel (Arras, 1997), 243-255.

²⁶⁸ RAB, fonds OLV, 1501, cartularium en handbook, 1467-1516.

²⁶⁹ *Prosopographia Burgundica*

1462 and left them a belt on his death. How active other lords were with the crossbowmen is not clear, but it is nevertheless important that so many aristocrats chose to join a powerful urban group. Their membership shows the desirability of the guilds, especially the crossbowmen. As we shall see in chapter five lords also benefited from this arrangement.

2.5 Poorters.

In Bruges *poorters* were not just rich merchants, they were legally enfranchised citizens with rights as well as obligations, including taxation. Becoming a *poorter* was not just about residence, it was also tied to status and, for many towns, *poorters* were a source of collective honour.²⁷⁰ Evidence about how many *poorters* were present in Bruges is limited, as only new *poorters* are recorded; those born to established families, or those who married into them, did not have to purchase citizenship. Although the picture of *poorters* in the guilds is incomplete, important conclusions can nevertheless be drawn, revealing much about the relationship between newcomers, or newly wealthy, and the guilds.

From the crossbowmen, 119 members can be securely identified as purchasing citizenship in the fifteenth century. A further 12 may have done so, but these have common names and there is insufficient evidence to make a certain identification. From the archers, 148 purchased citizenship, and a further 7 may have, again common names are problematic. Such numbers are significant, representing respectively 13% and almost 20% of the guilds. That so many members purchased citizenship implies that many existing members were born citizens. But these high figures could equally demonstrate that these powerful and prominent guilds were attractive to newcomers seeking social interaction and

²⁷⁰ M. Boone and P. Stabel, 'New Burghers in the Late Medieval Towns of Flanders and Brabant; conditions of entry, rules and reality,' R. C. Schwinges (ed.), *Neubürger im späten Mittelalter, Migration und Austausch in der Städtelandschaft des alten Reiches (1250-1550)* (Berlin, 2002), 317-332.

professional and social contacts, as prestigious Italian religious confraternities were.²⁷¹ The point here is that significant numbers of guildsmen were *poorters*, members of a rich and influential class in Bruges. In the Bruges militia of 1436, the *Poorters* represented 21.17% of the force.²⁷² This is slightly higher than the number of new *poorters* in both guilds, but it can be assumed that a significant number of shooters were born *poorters*, making it likely that comparable numbers of *poorters* than were present in the shooting guilds as in a general cross-section of Bruges

More can be learned from an analysis of when these new citizen-shooters bought their *poorter* status, and where they came from. In the following, only the 118 crossbowmen and 148 archers who can be securely identified with members on the *poorters* lists have been used. In his survey of the *poortersboeken*, James showed important patterns in immigration.²⁷³ The 1440s were years of great immigration to Bruges, in 1444 there were 537 new *poorters*. The same records show a large number of new *poorters* in the decade 1410-1419. James also shows fewer new entrants in the 1430s, but an average of around 200 a year in the 1420s and again in the 1450s and 60s, followed by a sharp decline in the 1470s. Such a pattern is to be expected as the 1430s, especially the rebellion years of 1436-8, were violent ones. An exceptionally high rate of new *poorters* for the years 1441-1445 is also fitting, as during these years Philip the Good ordered the price for purchasing citizenship to be lowered to just 3 lb parisis, in contrast to the 1446 price of 6 lb parisis for a Fleming, and 12 lb for a foreigner. He did this to encourage people to move to Bruges, which was, he said, becoming depopulated.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ D. M. D'Andrea, *Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy* (Woodbridge, 2007), 40-42.

²⁷² Dumolyn, *De Brugse Opstaan*, 353-7.

²⁷³ James, *Brugse Poorters, Optejend uit de stadsrekeningen*.

²⁷⁴ W. Blockmans, 'The Creative Environment; Incentives to and Function of Bruges Art Production,' in his, *Petrus Christus in Renaissance Bruges, an interdisciplinary approach* (Turnhout, 1995), 13-15.

A chronological analysis of the new *poorters* who became shooters fits this pattern, despite a lack of information on the crossbowmen before 1437, and on the archers before 1454. From the crossbowmen, only 9 purchased citizenship after 1470, and only 4 before 1419. The most, 33, did so in the decade 1440-1449. 26 crossbowmen became citizens between 1420-29, 16 between 1430-39, 12 in the decade 1450-59 and 15 between 1460 and 1469. The chronological pattern for new porters who became archers is similar, only 2 members become citizens before 1419, and only 10 after 1470, again the most, 48, were in the decade 1440-49. Strikingly fewer, only 13, purchased citizenship between 1430-39, and 25 purchased *poorter* status between 1420 and 1429, 28 between 1450-59, and 22 between 1460-69. The chronological pattern of new *poorter*-shooters shows that across the fifteenth century, the guilds were desirable to new members, and that newly arrived wealthy individuals could join either shooting guild.

It is an obvious point, but one worth emphasising, that almost all members who purchased citizenship did so before they entered the shooting guilds. It must be noted that for several crossbowmen it is difficult to be sure if they were *poorters* or shooters first. Boudin Daneels became a citizen in 1463, but his date of entry to the crossbowmen can be dated only as 1457-65. No shooter can be identified as purchasing citizenship after they entered the guild, so it seems likely that newcomers, or newly rich, had to be, or chose to be, *poorters* before they joined the shooting guilds.

The geographical origins of most of the 118 crossbowmen and 148 archers are given in the *poorters* list, but for 10 archers and 13 crossbowmen it is not. Of these, 10 archers, and 8 crossbowmen, just under 7% of the 118 crossbowman and 148 archers who became *poorters*, came from Bruges itself. Further 4 of each guild came from small towns very close to Bruges, including Damme and Slypen.

A large number of the new *poorters* in the fifteenth century came from the County of Flanders;²⁷⁵ this was also true for the *poorters* who became shooters. Separately from those listed above, 81, over half, of the new *poorters* in the archers came from within Flanders, with 8 from Oudenaarde alone.²⁷⁶ For the crossbowmen the figure is smaller, with 49, over 40%, from within Flanders. For the rest of the new *poorters* who became shooters, as with new *poorters* in general, most came from Brabant, Holland, Limburg, Hainault or Namur. Such results are to be expected, and show that those who entered the shooting guilds were typical of new *poorters*, and importantly that those from outside Bruges shared the same regional identity as the members, and so could quickly assimilate and become guild-brothers, with the guilds helping to build unity.

Smaller in numbers, but interesting nonetheless, are those members who came from much further away. A minority of new shooters-*poorters* came from French royal lands, with 2 archers and 3 crossbowmen from Tournai, one archer from Normandy²⁷⁷ and one crossbowman from Paris. It is worth emphasising that no shooter-*poorters* are recorded entering Bruges from English-held lands, perhaps bowmen were less free to leave Calais or Lancastrian-Normandy. While Philip the Good was at peace with France, new immigrants could arrive in Bruges and enter the guilds with relative ease, 2% of the new *poorter* archers and 3% of the crossbowmen came from French lands. These numbers are important, and show the wealth of these individuals, and in turn how desirable the shooting guilds had become.

²⁷⁵ Thoen, E. 'Verhuizen naar Brugge in de late Middeleeuwen. De rol van de immigratie van de *poorters* in de aanpassing van de stad de Brugge aan de wijzigende economische omstandigheden (14^e-16^e eeuw),' *Beleid en bestuur in de oude Nederlande. Liber amicorum Prof. Dr. M. Baelde* ed. H. Soly en R. Vermeir (Gent, 1993), 337-343.

²⁷⁶ For Oudenaarde emigration, see Stabel, *De kleine stad*, 50-67.

²⁷⁷ Purchasing citizenship in 1459, so from French, not English-held, Normandy.

New French members are important, but both guilds included a member from even further away. One archer from Chambéry in Savoy, and one crossbowman, Laser Lomelin, came from Genoa with his parents and siblings in 1463. That men who travelled such distances wished to join the guilds is significant, and demonstrates not just the desirability of guilds as high status clubs, but that they offered unity and community to newcomers. A handful of entries in the *poortersboeken* include the profession, but too few to allow for any analytical findings.

That such a small percentage of these new *poorter*-shooters came from within Bruges is striking. The figures may imply that, for existing residents, social mobility, or at least access to the most prestigious social groups was limited. *Poorters* who came from Flanders or other surrounding provinces had the resources to move to Bruges and to purchase citizenships, demonstrating wealth. That such wealthy new *poorters* chose to join the shooting guilds demonstrates the desirability of the shooters. The small number of new *poorters* who came from further away, France, Savoy, even Genoa, again demonstrates that both guilds were desirable to new citizens who must have been of some standing, and that both guilds were open to newcomers, never becoming closed oligarchies.

2.6 Municipal officials

Bruges was governed by two benches of twelve men; the *schepenen*, (aldermen) and the *raad*, (councillors), each with their own burgomasters.²⁷⁸ Accounts were kept by two treasurers for most of the fifteenth century, however during the 1470s and 80s this was done by a *ghemittee* of 4 overseers, who not only kept the accounts but also collected many of the larger civic taxes. Also important in keeping order and governing Bruges, were the headmen of the six parishes.²⁷⁹ All

²⁷⁸ Letts, *Bruges and its history*, 12-25.

²⁷⁹ Dumolyn, *Brugse opstand*, 355.

of these were appointed annually, in theory by the duke, but in practise by civic representatives, though still under ducal influence.²⁸⁰ Bruges also paid varying amounts to other municipal servants, recorded broadly as pensioners in town accounts each year.

The most powerful officials were the two burgomasters, who oversaw all matters of governance. Burgomasters were the highest civic officials, so it is significant that 16 crossbowmen, held this office, 13 of them once and the other three held office twice. The archers were also represented here, with 11 burgomasters and again, 3 of them held office twice. Just under 2% of each guild were burgomasters, showing both had small but significant links to these most powerful of civic officials.

Next in hierarchy were the twelve aldermen. From the crossbowmen, 47 members held this office at least once. Of these, 15 held office four times or more, 19 held office only once, 11 twice and 3 were aldermen 3 times. From the archers, there were slightly less, only 30 aldermen, and these held office less frequently, with 14 of them holding office only once, 6 of them twice, 5 of them three times and only 4 more often than this. That 5.3% of identifiable crossbowmen, compared with 4% of archers, were aldermen is important and shows that both guilds contained a significant number of powerful figures, but that the crossbowmen seem to have been slightly more powerful.

Next were the twelve members of the council. A separation here is slightly artificial, as men could be aldermen one year and councillors in another. From the crossbowmen, there were 54 councillors in total; over half of these, 30 men, held the position only once, while 10 did so more than three times. The archers' figures are again slightly smaller, with a total of 40 councillors; 22 guild-brothers

²⁸⁰ Wellen, 'La revolte Brugeoise de 1488', 7-15.

held this post only once, and only 4 did so more than three times. That 6.1% of the crossbowmen, compared with 5.3% of the archers, were councillors at least once is important, showing that although slightly more crossbowmen held office, both had access to powerful civic positions. Both guilds contained a significant number of men with great authority, and men with access to such authority chose to join the shooting guilds.

Other municipal officers must also be considered, figures for all such officials show that both guilds had members active at all levels of civic government. 15 crossbowmen can be identified as treasurers, and another a clerk of the treasury. A similar number of archers filled these roles, 10 as treasurers and 3 as overseers. The fact that 1.8% of the crossbowmen and 1.7% of the archers were seen to be reliable enough to serve in the treasury is significant; both guilds contained significant numbers of trusted financial figures. Further, from the crossbowmen, there were 8 sergeants, 2 members of the garrison,²⁸¹ 2 messengers and 10 others who received pensions or payments, ranging from £10 to £300 annually. From the archers there was only one sergeant, but 6 members of the garrison, 1 messenger and 9 others who received pensions, although most of these were far lower than those given to crossbowmen, between £12 and £100 annually. Together, our figures show that both guilds contained a cross section of urban officials, although the crossbowmen tended to have more from more highly valued sections.

The headmen of Bruges's six parishes must also be considered. Each parish, Saint Jan's, Saint Jacob's, Saint Nicholas', Saint Donation's, Camer's and the Parish of Our Lady, was governed by annually appointed lay officials. From the crossbowmen, 43 members held a parish office at least once, while from the archers the figure is only 24. That 4.9% of the crossbowmen and 3.2% of the archers served their local communities in this way demonstrates once again that

²⁸¹ These men were responsible for keeping order in Bruges, aiding the sheriff, *scouthee*.

both guilds contained significant numbers of influential men, but that the crossbowmen seemed to contain slightly more men of influence. Though some figures given here are small, it is very important to note that no municipal office was closed to shooters, there was no post not filled by at least one member of each guild. The guilds included significant numbers of powerful men, and just as importantly guild-brothers were represented at every level of civic administration.

2.7 Tax collectors and the financially powerful.

Bruges's tax system was complex, with direct payments and tax farmers detailed separately in the town accounts. The largest sums came from a small number of individuals who paid the town a set sum and collected the taxes on wine and beer.²⁸² Collecting the wine tax could bring huge profits, so shooters collecting such taxes can be assumed to be rich enough to pay the upfront sum, and powerful enough to enforce collection.

Wine tax

From 1400- 1499, 21 crossbowmen (2.3% of the guild) and 14 archers (1.9%) collected wine taxes. Worthy of mention is one individual, a crossbowman Wouter Metteneye, member of the patrician family discussed above, he was one of four men who collected the wine tax from 1406-12 and 1416-30. Wouter was the only one constantly present here, although often others were members of his family. The exact amount paid varied year to year, never reaching £20 000, but never less than £15 000. Exactly how much of this was from Wouter, and how much he made collecting the tax is impossible to know, but he would certainly have been a very wealthy man, as would the other 20 crossbowmen and 14 archers who collected wine tax.

²⁸² J. Murray 'Family, Marriage and Money Changing in Medieval Bruges' , 115-125; J. H.A. Munro 'Anglo-Flemish Competition in the International Cloth Trade, 1340-1520' *PCEEB* 35 (1995), 37-60.

Beer taxes

Beer taxes were similarly collected by one to four individuals, who together paid Bruges between three and six thousand pounds for the rights on the two types of beer, 'Brugsche'²⁸³ and 'Delfsche'²⁸⁴. Though not as wealthy as wine tax collectors, those who controlled the beer taxes would have had significant fortunes. In all, 27 crossbowmen, or just over 3% of the identified members collected one of the beer or mead taxes at least once, many of them for decades at a time. For the archers the total is just 10, or 1.3% of the guild. These figures demonstrate that the crossbowmen included slightly more of the better off individuals than the archers, but both guilds contained numerous wealthy figures.

Other taxes

The most numerous, though far smaller, taxes were those from lands and fishing; (*visscherie*) paid to the town. Such taxes could be as little as 40 shillings and were rarely more than £20, although some individuals collected multiple taxes. Town accounts note 35 archers and 41 crossbowmen collecting at least one of these taxes at least once; this is 4.6% of each guild. Many did so far more regularly, one archer, Jan Tsolles, collected fishing taxes every year from 1451 to his death in 1477; his widow continued this for two years afterwards. In 1451 he paid £30 to the town for his right to collect several taxes, by 1461 this had increased to £60, for a large number of taxes. Over the same period his pension also rose significantly, showing his status was rising in Bruges. From 1454 onwards, Jan was an active member of the archers, dean 4 times between 1454 and 66, and king in 1472.

²⁸³ Local beer.

²⁸⁴ Beer imported from the town of Delft.

In all 55 archers, or 7.3% of the guild, and 89 crossbowmen, or just over 10% collected some type of tax at least once. Such significant percentages demonstrate that both guilds contained high numbers of important individuals. However as with links to the groups governing Bruges, it seems that the crossbowmen had a little more status, and a little more power particularly for the greater taxes. The gap in status between the memberships should not be over stated, but must be noted. It would be useful to compare our percentages for shooters as tax collectors to percentages for other groups, for jousters or for devotional groups, but no previous study has provided such figures. Although difficult to set in context, the figures given here demonstrate the wealth of some guild-brothers, their status and their influence, in turn showing the desirability of guild membership.

Property taxes

Property tax records survive only from 1468 onwards, but are nonetheless revealing. Property records show that 36 crossbowmen, just over 4%, paid taxes on their houses, and 26 archers, or 3.5% did so. These taxpayers did not pay thousands of pounds, rather 20 to 30 shillings annually. Such seemingly small sums nevertheless show that members lived in more expensive properties, and that they owned them, rather than renting as would have been common for the majority. A similar percentage from both guilds, were members of a financially independent middle class within the town, showing that both guilds included men of some standing

Tax records from 1468 onwards also record payments made by stall holders and merchants in various areas. Many of these were in the halles,²⁸⁵ but those who paid for a space in the Bruges market places are also here. In all only 6 crossbowmen paid for stalls; from the archers there were 16. Smaller merchants

²⁸⁵ Halles were regulatory bodies inspecting several crafts, for example the 'lakenhalle' or cloth-hall inspected all of the textile trades as well as physically housing many stalls.

and stall holders were not always in the craft guilds, although they could be inspectors. Our figures demonstrate that many guild-brothers were members of a strong middle class, not as high status as the governors of Bruges but far richer than the bulk of labourers. The higher number of archers here not only demonstrates their enviable financial position, but may further imply that archers were more likely to be the new men, with more independence and less ties, while the older traditional great men, such as tax collectors, were more likely to be crossbowmen.

Exceptional taxes 1441-2

In 1441-2 a special aide was imposed upon Bruges to pay ducal taxes. Though payments were required from all parishes, only the records of Saint Jan's have survived to give insight into those wealthy enough to contribute. The surviving records name 864 individuals, occasionally families, who contributed to the *aides*.²⁸⁶ Only 15 archers appear on this list, not too surprising a statistic given that the tax predates the Saint Sebastian records by 13 years, and only the oldest archers would have been householders. The smaller number of crossbowmen here is harder to explain; only 6 feature here, perhaps reflecting that not many lived in this parish.

Further information can be gleaned from a closer analysis of these small figures. Most of the 864 individuals named in Sint Jan's records paid relatively large sums, over £5 each year, so it is significant that 3 crossbowmen paid over £10 in both years. In contrast one archer, Jan van den Casteel, paid only once for one half year, the small sum of 4 s 4 d. One register, with its limited data, cannot be assumed to be representative of the other parishes, nor can the number of

²⁸⁶ The register is 72 folios long, with 6 names on each side, this would give a total of 864 names. However three of the pages are so badly damaged as to be illegible, others have dark marks obscuring names, and for some pages sections have been cut out. It has been assumed that there were originally 6 entries on page. Further, some entries are not for one individual but for a couple, or for a man and his children, although usually in these situations only the man of the household is named. See also Dumolyn, *De Brugse Opstand*, 356-9.

members living in this parish be taken to be one sixth of the whole. Of the small but significant numbers of guild-brothers who were adults in 1442, some were householders, some paying large amounts of money to the town. Conversely, at least one paid a very small amount, and many others were likely to be resident in this parish, many may not have been wealthy enough to contribute, showing the diversity of the guilds.

2.8 Professions

As noted, not all craft guilds left membership records, and profession could not be found for all shooters. However, drawing on all sources outlined above, the profession of 324 crossbowmen and 413 archers can be ascertained. That far more archers can be identified as members of craft guilds may imply that more crossbowmen were property owners who did not work. However, it is just as likely that this is simply a result of the far more detailed records from the archers. Information on guild-brothers' professions is incomplete and imperfect, but it is extremely useful for judging the guilds' socio-professional make-up. It is worth emphasising that nothing comparable has been attempted for any other shooting guild, nor any other festive or cultural groups in Flanders.

Information on the guild-brothers' professions must be set in context, to prevent it becoming a meaningless set of figures. Numbers for guild-brothers can be compared to a cross-section of Bruges society as a whole, based on the figures for the 1436 militia sent to Calais. Militia figures are taken, with minor corrections, from Dumolyn's *De Brugse Opstand*. The militia sent to Calais was made up of 21.17% *poorters*; the rest were craftsmen, serving in their 54 professional divisions. Crafts are given in order of prominence with the powerful and prestigious weavers first, in the order they feature in the militia, also in the order they marched in the annual procession. Table 1 shows the crafts, their Flemish name, a translation, the total number and percentage of archers in that craft and the number and percentage of crossbowmen in the craft.

Table 1, Shooters in the 54 craft guilds

ID	Percentage of 1436 militia	craft	translation	No. of archers	% archers	No. of crossbow	% crossbow
1	3.11	Wevers	Weavers	17	2.25	9	1.01
2	3.11	Volders	Fullers	7	0.93	7	0.79
3	3.11	Scheerders	Shearers	14	1.85	4	0.45
4	1.11	Ververs	Dyers	4	0.53	10	1.13
5	2.89	Vleeshouwers	Butchers	2	0.26	2	0.23
6	1.11	Viskopers	Fish-mongers	1	0.13	4	0.45
7	4.44	Timmerlieden	Carpenters	9	1.19	13	1.47
8	2.44	Metselaars	Masons	13	1.72	7	0.79
9	0.89	Tegeldekkers	Tile-roofers	15	1.99	5	0.56
10	0.22	Loodgieters	Plumbers	1	0.13	1	0.11
11	0.22	Plaasteraars	Plasterers	2	0.26	3	0.34
12	0.22	Strodekkers	Straw-roofers	1	0.13	4	0.45
13	0.67	Zagers	Sawyers	2	0.26	2	0.23
14	0.89	Wijnmeters	Wine-measurers	2	0.26	3	0.34
15	0.44	Wijnschroders	Wine-tappers	3	0.40	2	0.23

Table 1, Shooters in the 54 craft guilds

ID	Percentage of 1436 militia	craft	translation	No. of archers	% archers	No. of crossbow	% crossbow
16	2.44	Kuipers	Coopers	6	0.79	15	1.75
17	0.44	Wielwerkers	Wheelwrights	0	0	6	0.68
18	0.89	Draaiers	Dryers	0	0	8	0.90
19	1.33	Schrijnwerkers	Writers	2	0.26	3	0.34
20	0.89	Beeldenmakers en Zadelaars	Sculptors/ Painters	8	1.06	14	1.58
21	0.89	Boogmakers	Bowyers	19	2.52	12	1.35
22	0.22	Lijnmakers	Rope-makers	1	0.13	0	0
23	0.22	Potters	Potters	5	0.66	3	0.34
24	3.56	Smeden	Smiths	8	1.06	4	0.45
25	1.33	Zilvermeden	Silver-smiths	8	1.06	7	0.79
26	0.67	Wapenmakers	Weapon-makers	6	0.79	3	0.34
27	0.67	Tinnestoommakers	Tin-pot-makers	7	0.93	2	0.23
28	3.11	Cordewaniers	Cobblers	5	0.66	14	1.58
29	0.67	Zwarteleder-touwers	Leather-workers	3	0.40	3	0.34
30	1.56	Huidevetters	Skinners	10	1.32	5	0.56

Table 1, Shooters in the 54 craft guilds

ID	Percentage of 1436 militia	craft	translation	No. of archers	% archers	No. of crossbow	% crossbow
31	0.67	Dobberers	Floater	0	0		0
32	0.89	Beurzenmakers en Witledertouwers	Purse-makers and leather-workers	2	0.26		0
33	0.89	Handschoenwerkers	Glovers	5	0.66		0
34	0.22	Kousemakers	Sock-makers	0	0	1	0.11
35	4.89	Kleermakers	Tailors	8	1.06	3	0.34
36	1.11	Kulkstikers	Chandlers	11	1.46	10	1.13
37	0.67	Lamwerkers	Lamb-workers	1	0.13	1	0.11
38	1.56	Oudeklederkopers	Old-clothes-sellers	0	0	4	0.45
39	1.11	Oudegrauwwerkers	Old-grey workers (furriers)	1	0.13		0
40	1.11	Wiltwerkers	Felt-workers	2	0.26	6	0.68
41	2.67	Bakkers	Bakers	16	2.12	14	1.58
42	0.89	Molenaars	Millers	3	0.40	7	0.79
43	0.22	Hoedemakers	Hood-makers	1	0.13	2	0.23

Table 1, Shooters in the 54 craft guilds

ID	Percentage of 1436 militia	craft	translation	No. of archers	% archers	No. of crossbow	% crossbow
44	0.22	Tapijtwevers	Tapestry-weavers	11	1.46	2	0.23
45	1.33	Linnenwevers	Linen-weavers	0	0	8	0.90
46	0.67	Wolleslagers	Carders	2	0.26	1	0.11
47	1.56	Barbiers	Barbers	5	0.66	0	0
48	0.67	Riemmakers	Belt-makers	3	0.40	3	0.34
49	0.22	Schedemakers	Scabbard-makers	6	0.79	1	0.11
50	0.89	Paternostermakers	Makers of Rosaries	2	0.26	5	0.56
51	7.11	Makelaars	Brokers	8	1.06	11	1.24
52	0.67	Fruitiers	Fruit-merchants	1	0.13	2	0.23
53	3.33	Shipper	Shippers	13	1.72	3	0.34
54	1.56	Grauwwerkers	Furriers	3	0.40	2	0.23

Not all of the professions of the members fit into these 54 guilds, others are in table 2, 'other professions'. Many such professions are harder to quantify, as it is not clear what percentage of men in Bruges were clerks, but together the tables provide a clear picture of the compositions of the guilds relative to Bruges as a whole.

Table 2, Shooters in other professions		
profession	No. of archers	No. of crossbow
Inn-keepers	1	0
Clerks	5	1
Cooks	3	1
Gardeners	1	0
Messengers	1	0
Money-changers	1	0
Delivery/carriers	1	0
Spice-sellers	2	0
Brewers	18	0
Ball-makers	2	0
beenhouwer (carvers)	3	8
priests	0	1
Staple/ Warrant-holders ²⁸⁷	12	5
markets/merchants	6	13
halles/ inspectors ²⁸⁸	16	20

²⁸⁷ Men who controlled a particular commodity, for example the warrant for selling English wool. See Stabel, *Dwarfs Among Giants*, 156-164.

²⁸⁸ Appointed by several craft to regulate all products for example the officials of the lakenhall supervised all textile sale within their building.

Table 2, Shooters in other professions		
profession	No. of archers	No. of crossbow
washers	3	6

The expected results for table 1, as the sources are incomplete, would be that the percentages of the members involved in a specified craft would be consistently lower than the militia percentages, but a far more complex picture emerges. One of the most striking incongruities between the figures, but one that is to be expected, is the higher than average number of bowyers in the shooting guilds. Bowyers made up only 0.89% of the militia, but 2.52% of the archers, and 1.35% of the crossbowmen. The figures for the weapon makers is less striking, with 0.67% of the militia being drawn from this guild, compared to 0.79% of the archers and only 0.34% of the crossbowmen. Both shooting guilds contained more military crafts than a cross section of Bruges society would have, but this is largely to be expected as guild brothers used bows and crossbows, and maintained a level of martial importance throughout the period.

For several other crafts, the numbers in the shooting guilds are largely in line with statistics from the militia. The bakers made up 2.67% of the force of 1436, and 2.12% of the archers and 1.58% of the crossbowmen. Lower figures should be expected for the crossbowmen as so many of them cannot be identified with a particular craft. Similarly, candle-makers made up 1.11% of the militia, 1.46% of the archers and 1.13% of the crossbowmen; shooting guilds contained an average number of many mid-ranking crafts.

For some of the richer crafts a different picture emerges. Tapestry weavers, richer and more prestigious than the wool weavers, made up only 0.22% of the militia, but, 1.46% of the archers were tapestry-weavers, as were 0.23% of crossbowmen. The number of sculptors and painters in Bruges was also small, making up only

0.89% of the militia. Although not as wealthy or prestigious as tapestry-weavers these were nevertheless skilled and sought after craftsmen. Artists made up 1.06% of the archers and 1.58% of the crossbowmen. Like the bowyers these men could have been serving their guilds. Both sets of account books record payments for painting buildings and shields. The great number of luxury craftsmen is significant, showing both guilds contained a marginally higher number of such men than Bruges as a whole, implying that the shooting guilds attracted the more prosperous in civic status.

Another indicator of the higher status and attractiveness of the shooting guilds are the lower number of construction crafts, such as plumbers and masons.²⁸⁹ Though some masons became very wealthy, most in construction crafts were less well off, such crafts represented respectively 0.22% and 2.44% of the militia, but only 0.13% and 1.72% of the archers, and 0.11% and 0.79% of the crossbowmen. Another less prestigious occupation, sellers of second hand clothes, showed similar tendencies. They constituted 1.56% of the militia, but no archers are recorded in this profession at all, and only 0.45% of crossbowmen were. These figures show that men of lower status were less likely to be in the shooting guilds.

All in all our figures imply that the richer craft guilds are all well represented, and the humble ones under-represented, in turn implying a high status for the shooters. The reality is not quite so clear cut, as some high status or rich professions are extremely underrepresented. The wealth brokers (*Makelaars*) made up 7.11% of the militia, such wealthy and influential men were the kind that might have been expected to join shooting guilds, but brokers made up only 1.06% of the archers and 1.24% of the crossbowmen. Shippers would have been

²⁸⁹ For the status of these crafts see T. A. Boogaart, *An Ethnogeography of Late Medieval Bruges, an Evolution of the Corporate Milieu* (New York, 2004), 30-41, 107-121, 190-215; J.P. Sosson, 'La structure sociale de la corporation médiévale, l'exemple des tonneliers de Bruges de 1350 à 1500,' *RBPB* 44/1 (1966), 457-478; idem., *Les Travaux publics de la ville de Bruges. 14^e -15^e siècles, les matériaux, les hommes.* (Bruxelles, 1977), 127-161.

wealthy, with connections far beyond Bruges. Shippers made up 3.33% of the militia, but just 1.72% of the archers and 0.34% of the crossbowmen. Although some rich crafts were over represented in the guilds, others were underrepresented; those more likely to own property or be involved in trade were less likely to be in the two guilds. Rich merchants and shippers had to be absent from Bruges for significant periods, so it is possible they choose not to join time consuming shooting guilds.

Attention must also be paid to guild-brothers in table 2. Members of both guilds were involved either in the various markets of Bruges, 6 archers and 13 crossbowmen, or the inspecting bodies that oversaw several crafts, 16 archers and 20 crossbowmen. With their trade connection, these would have been wealthy men, either connected to a trade or independent, as both guilds contained significant numbers of traders both can be seen as important. The archers contained 5 clerks, well educated men earning higher than average wages, but only one clerk seems to have been in the crossbowmen. Also present are three cooks in the archers and one in the crossbowmen and a gardener in the archery guild. These are very small percentages, but their inclusion is significant in showing that the guilds, despite many wealthy and influential members, and access to significant power networks, were not closed off to any professions.

2.9 Non-professional groups.

The wealthiest, most influential, social group in Bruges were the jousts of the White Bear.²⁹⁰ Jousts could include noble visitors, and even the Dukes of Burgundy,²⁹¹ but were mainly rich townsmen. Such men had to be wealthy enough to own, or at least rent, jousting equipment for their annual competition.

²⁹⁰ Brown 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages,' 315-30; Abeele, *Ridderlijk Gezelschap van de Witte Beer*; Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes*, 123-158.

²⁹¹ For example Charles the Bold spent £418 taking part in 1457, Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 225-227.

Information on jousts comes from sixteenth century lists, published by Van den Abeele,²⁹² and from the names of jousts given each year by Nicholas Despars in his chronicle, written in sixteenth-century Bruges based on now lost fifteenth-century attendance lists.²⁹³ Such sources show that 32 crossbowmen, 3.6% of guild-brothers, and 20 archers, 3.2%, jousted at least once, not counting noble shooters, such as Anthony the Great Bastard and Lodewijk van Gruuthuse. Shooters present within the White Bear show that both guilds had links to the highest level of festive culture in Bruges, and were wealthy enough to engage in an aristocratic sport with the nobility, just as nobles engaged in shooting.

Chambers of rhetoric were becoming more important all over Flanders through the fifteenth century. Little information on the Bruges chambers of rhetoric, the Holy Ghost and The Three Samaritans has survived. One membership list from 1442²⁹⁴ and another fragment from 1494²⁹⁵ are all that have survived for the Holy Ghost. For the Three Samaritans only part of a list from 1490 is extant, although some members can be reconstructed from sixteenth-century documents.²⁹⁶ Given the dates of these sources, few names from the shooters should be expected, and just 5 crossbowmen, and 1 archer, were in the Holy Ghost. Further circumstantial evidence for a close bond between shooters and chambers of rhetoric comes from

²⁹² Van den Abeele, *Het Ridderlijk Gezelschap van de witte beer*.

²⁹³ Despars, *Cronijke van den lande ende graefscpe van Vlanderen*.

²⁹⁴ Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille*, 72-5; eadem., and L. Derycke, 'Sociale en literaire dynamiek in het vroeg vijftiende-eeuwse Brugge; de oprichting van de rederijderskamer de Heilige Geest ca. 1428', in Oosterman, *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede*, 59-96.

²⁹⁵ SAB 390/2 (inv.nr.B2) (archief Drie Santinnen) ; 390/1, (inv.nr.B1) (archief Drie Santinnen), 67r-77v. I am very grateful to Dr Van Bruaene for these references and her transcriptions.

²⁹⁶ Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille*, 32-4, 73-5; eadem., 'Sociabilite en competitie. De sociaal-institutionele ontwikkeling van de rederijderskamers in de zuidelijke Nederlanden,' B. Ramakers (ed), *Conformisten en rebellen. Rederijkscultuur in de Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam, 2003), 45-63.

the sixteenth century, for example the famous rhetorician Cornelis Everaert was a member of the Saint Sebastian guild.²⁹⁷

The archers and the crossbowmen maintained altars and devotional activities, as we shall see in the next chapter, but many guild-brothers chose to join other pious organisations. One of the wealthiest such confraternity was the *Drogenboom*, or Dry Tree, named for the Immaculate Conception, and dating from at least 1396.²⁹⁸ The confraternity was exclusive with only around 60,²⁹⁹ or perhaps 90, annual members.³⁰⁰ Membership lists, which survive from 1465, show an elite composition; at least ten percent of members were foreign merchants, like the Florentine banker Tommasso Portinari.³⁰¹ Members included Philip the Good, Charles the Bold, and their wives,³⁰² and 37 courtiers.³⁰³ The *Drogenboom* was prestigious, but membership was passive, with no annual obligations, and the membership list is largely undated, causing problems of identification. At least 19 (2% of the guild), perhaps 21, crossbowmen and 10 archers (1.3%), several with their wives, were in the Dry Tree confraternity. The higher number of crossbowmen may again indicate their slightly more elevated status, but that both guilds could join this exclusive group is significant.

²⁹⁷ N. Mosser, 'Maria verklaard. Everaert als exegeet in Maria ghecompareirt byde claeerheit (1511),' *Spel en spektakel: Middeleeuws toneel in de Lage Landen*. Ed. H. van Dijk, B Ramakers et al. (Amsterdam, 2001) 369-377.

²⁹⁸ A. De Schodt, 'La Confrérie de Notre-Dame de l'Arbre Sec,' *ASEB*, 28 (1876-7), 141-187.

²⁹⁹ Or perhaps 90, only 60 paid in this year, but around 30 were later shown to be in arrears. I am grateful to Dr Andrew Brown for this reference.

³⁰⁰ SAB, 505 gilde drogenboom, rekeningen.

³⁰¹ Portinari, like the crossbowmen detailed above, was god-father to one of Anselmus Adornes children, Giernaert 'De Adornes en de Jeruzalemkapel', 23.

³⁰² Charles joined as Count of Charolais, the reference is to 'his wife my lady of Charolais' ie. Isabelle of Bourbon.

³⁰³ Brown 'Bruges and the 'Burgundian Theatre State'', 578-9.

Other religious confraternities in fifteenth-century Bruges, such as the Hulsterloo and Rosebeke confraternities, were more active, as both involved annual pilgrimages. The Rosebeke confraternity seems to have been of a higher social status, with links to the court, as shown by an endowment they received in 1452 from the courtier Jean de Wavrin.³⁰⁴ Membership lists begin only in the 1460s,³⁰⁵ but reveal that 18 crossbowmen (2%) and 10 archers (1.3%) were members of the Rosebeke confraternity, showing links between shooting guilds and other rich and powerful religious groups. The Hulsterloo confraternity was closely associated with the skimmers, and drew many members from outside Bruges.³⁰⁶ Membership records of the Hulsterloo confraternity begin in the 1420s, and continue undated to the end of the fifteenth century.³⁰⁷ Even with such drawbacks, 17 crossbowmen (1.9%) and 14 archers (1.8%) can be securely identified as Hulsterloo members. Such overlap in membership makes clear that members of both guilds chose to interact with other devotional organisations, demonstrating that shooters were present in all levels of social groups, just as they were present at all levels of civic government.

One of the largest and most inclusive religious confraternities of Bruges was that of Our Lady of the Snow. Members included Charles the Bold, Hans Memling and bishops of Tournai, but also poor widows, as subscription was only 2 d a year.³⁰⁸ Levels of activity for members is questionable, as there were no annual requirements. The membership of guild-brothers in the Our Lady guild may indicate that some could not afford to join both a prestigious shooting guild and a prestigious devotional group; or even a genuine attachment to Our Lady. In all,

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 577-8.

³⁰⁵ SAB, 505 gilde Roosebeke.

³⁰⁶ H. Brinkman, 'De Brugse pelgrims in het Gruuthuse handschrift', in J. Oosterman (ed.), *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede* (Leuven, 2005), 9-39, Schouteet, 'de Broederschap van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Hulsterlo,' 20-24.

³⁰⁷ SAB 524, gilde Hulsterlo.

³⁰⁸ Brown 'Bruges and the 'Burgundian Theatre State'' 573-589 ; J. Toussaert, *Le Sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris, 1960), 481-3.

47 crossbowmen, 5% of the guild, were in this confraternity; a further 11 wives and 3 widows of crossbowmen joined on their own. In addition, 44 archers, almost 6%, of the guild were members, many with their wives while a further 2 archers' wives joined without their husbands. The high numbers of shooters in the Our Lady Confraternity are significant in showing that the shooters were firmly tied to their local communities, and sought devotional activities, as well as social connections, outside the shooting guilds. Guilds members were fully integrated into their town, took advantage of all choices available to them; many had the status to join so called elite confraternities, but many chose to join inclusive ones too.

2.10 Family relationships and networks.

Relationships between guild members were as important as relationship between guildsmen and other civic organisations. Members could be connected to each other through profession, office holding or family relationships.

Professional networks

Many members of the same professions were in shooting guilds, and sometimes served together in craft guild roles. In 1477 two crossbowmen, Joos Aernouts and Heindric Waghe, were both *vinders* of the straw-thatchers. In 1441, another 2 crossbowmen, Jacop Inghel and Joris vanden Velde were officials for the second hand clothes sellers. This was also common among the archers; in 1477 of the six *vinders* controlling the sale of English wool two, Adriaen Dunc and Lodweijk van Hille, were archers. Performing the same function in a craft guild in the same year, and being members of the same shooting guilds shows that interests could overlap, shooters socialised and worked with their guild-brothers.

Office holding

Members' holding civic office together was rarer, but nonetheless significant. In 1490 and again in 1492 two crossbowmen, Matheus de Broucker and Jacob Gheerolf, both crossbowmen since the 1470s, served together as aldermen. In 1494 Jacob served his third term, and was joined by another crossbowman, Thomas Houtmaerc. In 1483 three archers, two of whom joined the confraternity in 1467 and a third who joined in 1468, served as aldermen together; Daneel Daneels, Jan van Niewenhove and Oste vanden Rade. In 1445 no fewer than four crossbowmen sat together as councillors, all four had done so at least twice before, two of them in 1440 and the other two in 1439. The four were Jan Parlant, Jacop Bieze, Symoen van Aertrike and Jacop Braederyc. Such important links demonstrate powerful networks of shooters at work, and may even imply that joining a shooting guild aided access to such power.

Family networks

Family bonds were more noticeable among the richer families than the less influential men, but seem to imply that for some, membership of a shooting guild was a family tradition. This was noted above for the Metteneye and Adornes families, especially in Anselmus's choice of god-fathers for his numerous children. Such important family ties can be seen among the female members of the Saint Sebastian confraternity too, Tanne Adornes, wife of Jacob Adornes (d. 1465), and aunt of Anselmus, paid her membership fee of 2 d every year from at least 1455,³⁰⁹ until her death in 1472-3. She even left the guild a mortuary payment of 2 s 6 d,³¹⁰ more than many guild-brothers did.

The role of women and marriage in networks within the shooting guilds is extremely significant. As sources rarely records women's full names, connections

³⁰⁹ BASS, volume 3: rekeningboeken, 1455-1472, boek 1, f. 28.

³¹⁰ BASS, volume 3: rekeningboeken, 1455-1472, boek 6, f. 22v.-23.

can be difficult to trace. Some shooters may have found their wives through the guilds, although as dates of marriage are difficult to track, it is equally possible men joined their father-in-law's social group. One of Bruges' leading citizens, Jan Breydel,³¹¹ married the daughter of fellow crossbowman Jacob Baerdt. Another patrician, Jacob Metteneye, married the daughter of a fellow archer, Jacop Bierse. The importance of women and marriage alliances is harder to track in the Saint George guild, as female members are not listed, but it is likely that marriage alliances were present. For example, Thomas Houttmaerc married Jacqueline de Scrapper,³¹² daughter of fellow guild-brother Geromunus. All such unions would have added greatly to the strength of shooting guilds and the internal networks.

Familial relationships were also common in the guilds. The Saint Sebastian guilds records children every year also with the women paying 2 d. These included the three children of Jan Tsolles and his wife, one of whom, Melsior, joined the guild as an adult, a second, Joos, was buried in the guild chapel before reaching adulthood. The presence of wives, widows and children in the Saint Sebastian guild powerfully demonstrates a separate religious role. It would have helped to unify the guild; perhaps laying foundations for future networks. Adult male relatives could also be active together in the shooting guilds. The brothers Jan and Jacob Breydel were both members of the crossbow guild before the accounts began, joining before 1444, possibly in the same year as only six names separate them in the membership list.

Kin bonds are harder to prove for lower status individuals. It is likely that the crossbowman Jacop den Baerse 'de oude' was the father of Jacop den Baerse 'de jonghe'. Far more family relationships probably existed, but unless the guild

³¹¹ for this family see P. Breydel, *Bruges et les Breydels* (Bruxelles, 1975), 212-216.

³¹² J. Haemers, *Ende hevet tvolc geode cause jeghens hemlieden te rysene' Stedelijke opstanden en staatsvorming in het graafschap Vlaanderen (1477-1492)* Proefschrift ingediend tot het behalen van de grad van doctor in de geschiedenis, Universiteit Gent (2006).databases.

sources name two individuals as being brothers, or having a kin relationship, this is difficult to prove. Many members shared a surname, of the 902 crossbowmen there were five 'van Belle's, five 'de Decker's, 8 'Donckere's, 5 'de Grave's, six with a variation of 'Martin' as a surname, six with one of 'Pieters', and six with one on 'Willems' five 'vanden Velde's and no fewer than 10 'de Vos's. From the 755 archers there were five 'Alaerdt's, six with a variation on 'Brugge' as their surname, 3 'Daman', 7 were with 'van' or 'vanden' 'Ecke', five were 'van Hille', 2 were 'Moene' one 'Moere' 3 'Moereman' and 2 'Moerync', while surnames derived from names, especially Pieter, Pawels or Willems were also common. What, if any, kin relationship connected these men is impossible to tell, but it is tempting to see these as evidence of the strength of kin relations in the shooting guilds.

2.11 Rebellions, factions and guilds.

Recent scholarship, especially the works of Dumolyn and Haemers, have emphasised the roles of 'factions' in late medieval towns and in rebellions. Recent work has built on Nicholas's descriptions of 'family feuds' with 'gangs of liveries retainers',³¹³ to analyse small groups of men who were linked to each other through family networks, profession, trade and even devotional groups.³¹⁴ It is worth considering what parts guilds played in such factions, and in wider rebellions.

Rebellion

It is significant that the new Saint George guild book begins in 1437, perhaps to obscure the role played by guild-brothers in the 1436-8 rebellion. Even so, of the

³¹³ D. Nicholas, *The van Arteveldes of Ghent, the varieties of vendetta and the hero in history* (New York, 1988), 6-7, 72-99.

³¹⁴ J. Braekevelt, F. Buylaert, J. Dumolyn & J. Haemers, 'The Politics of Factional Conflict in Late Medieval Flanders', *Historical Research* (2011, forthcoming).

242 men identified by Dumolyn as leading rebels in 1436,³¹⁵ 30 are among those named in the Saint George list (3.3% of the guild but 12% of the identified rebels). A small but significant number of guild-brothers were involved in rebellion, showing that connections existed, but the numbers further show that the guild was not acting together in rebellion. From the archers only 11 (1.4%) can be identified as known rebels, but as the archers' records begin 16 years after the rebellion the small figure is again significant.

It is further likely, though impossible to prove, that many of the names fully or partially removed from the crossbowmen's list were rebels. One name that has been scored out, but can be read with ultra-violent lights, is that of Jan Maheieu, a leading rebel in 1436. Other names had been more effectively removed, at least the surname, so how many more have been removed as rebels are unclear. It could be argued names were removed as brothers died. Significantly no names are removed after the second scribal hand begins in 1444; only men in the guild between 1437 and 1444 have their names removed, providing further circumstantial evidence of a link between removed names and rebels

Faction

That many guild-brothers of Saint George played a role in the rebellion would seem to imply the guilds were part of a faction, but the reality is more complex. By no means all guild-brothers rebelled. Further, after the rebellion Philip the Good and many other nobles entered the guild. Joining the guild for Philip thus had a political role, helping to bind a potentially dangerous group to him, with himself as a guild-brother, all of the guild swearing oaths of loyalty to serve and obey him. As we shall see in chapter five, for many lords, including Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, guild membership brought urban support in periods of crisis.

³¹⁵ Dumolyn, *de Brugse Opstand*, 231-63, but more details come from his masters dissertation (Diss. lic. Geschiedenis) of the same title, Universiteit Gent (1995), I am grateful to Professor Dumolyn for allowing me access to his unpublished work.

Frustratingly the guild records stop in 1481, before the rebellions against Maximilian in 1482-92. However some points can still be raised to suggest that the guilds were not factions. Haemers emphasised the central role of ‘the faction of Willem Moreels’ in conflicts between 1477 and 1492.³¹⁶ Moreels was a crossbowman, as were others in his faction, including Marten Lem and Jan de Keyt. As with guild members rebelling above, this seems to show guilds as rebels, as factions, but the guilds were divided in their sympathies. Haemers goes on to describe a ‘radical faction’ seizing power in Bruges in 1477. On 16 May a military expedition, led by Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, assembled in the market place. The men were ‘radicalised’ by another crowd and demanded punishment for ‘corrupt politicians’ associated with Charles the Bold. Moreels’s faction took control, the next day Jan Barbesaen was executed, but one death was not enough. 3 more men were taken prisoner, stripped and tortured in the market-place. One of these was Anselmus Adornes who was, in Haemer’s words, ‘a symbol of the oligarchy of Bruges’ against Moreels’s faction.³¹⁷

Moreels as instigator, Lodewijk as usurped, though passive, military leader, Adornes as victim. All three were crossbowmen. In 1477 the guild members did not act together, did not help each other build support, they were not a faction. It would be fascinating to study the guild-brothers through the rebellion of the 1480s but, as Haemer’s again notes, rebels are extremely difficult to identify, only the leaders leave any written trace. The actions of the majority of guild-brothers, and their allegiances, remain unknown in both 1436-7 and the 1480s. It can, however, be strongly suggested that guild were not factions, and that guild-brother made their own choices.

³¹⁶ Haemers, *Common Good*, 137-146, but much of the following is drawn from the tables in his thesis, ‘*Ende hevet tvolc geode cause*’, especially databases.

³¹⁷ Haemers, *Common Good*, 75-80

Conclusion.

The membership of the shooting guilds must be understood before any statements about the 'elite' status or position of the guilds can be made. No previous study has attempted a prosopographical study of members for several years. With its unparalleled sources, Bruges is a perfect location for such a study, based upon the records of the guilds between 1437 and 1481. The 755 archers and 902 crossbowmen include powerful nobles, but also a wide cross section of Bruges society. Noble members may not always have been active participants in guilds life, but that great lords chose to join guilds reveals the prestige attached to membership. Active nobles like Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and Anselmus Adornes prove that the guilds could represent a mix of landed and civic power interacting peacefully. The high numbers of patricians in both guilds, but more especially the crossbowmen, shows the attractiveness of guild membership and guild influence. The patterns of new-*poorter* shooters largely fit the more general patterns of immigration for the fifteenth century, showing that the members of the guilds remain of high standing across the century.

Numbers of municipal officials and tax collectors in the shooting guilds are also striking, and prove that both guilds had strong links to municipal powers. That more crossbowmen were involved in these activities suggests that they were of slightly higher status than the archers. The professions of members are no less important; revealing that all crafts were represented in the guilds. Not all were equally well represented, with a higher than average number of weapon makers and a bias towards luxury crafts, although some rich, professions were hugely under-represented, especially the brokers. The shooting guilds were influential and powerful groups, but were not a closed oligarchy; cooks and gardeners could shoot with aldermen and nobles. Similarly guild-brothers joined many other social and devotional organisations; the importance of choice is clear throughout. Networks within the guilds were also prominent, with many members holding office together or marrying the daughters or sisters of fellow guild-brothers. The bonds within the guilds did not make them a faction, indeed in rebellion, and in

swearing loyalty, the guilds can be considered a tool available to the dukes to use against such factions.

All of this information shows how complex the shooting guilds of Bruges, between 1437 and 1481 were. They were jousters, could even be nobles or *poorters*. They were administrators and tax collectors. They could include tapestry-weavers, bowyers and cooks. They took an active interest in other social, cultural and religious groups in their town. They were strong units with important internal networks, but did not act as factions. Lords in guilds may have discouraged rebellion, but members certainly made their own choices and chose their own sides in political disputes, as seen in May 1477. Guilds were powerful, wealthy groups, they could be strongly unified, but are too complex, too multifaceted, to be considered a faction or to be labelled as 'elite' or 'bourgeois' as previous studies have done.

Chapter 3:

The Devotional World of Shooting Guilds.

Though they had emerged from military origins, shooting guilds, like every other group in late medieval towns, had important devotional characteristics. Members made conscious choices about the level of devotion they wanted in their guilds. As we have seen, many joined other religious or cultural groups, making guild devotional choices all the more significant. The shooting guilds must be considered in the light of other groups; doing so will show not just the shooters' unique identity, but the centrality of devotion to all in medieval towns. Before moving on to an analysis of the guilds' devotion, an overview of available sources and their weaknesses will be given.

The devotion of the guilds will be considered under eight headings, beginning with the most public and best documented. Firstly the choice of patron saint will be discussed, and secondly guild participation in civic processions will be examined. Section three will examine guild symbols, emblems and iconography as demonstrators of devotion. Sections four and five will tackle some of the most complex questions of devotion; actions among the living, and concerns for death and remembrance. Section six will build on this in an analysis of guild charity, using a case study of the hospital and guild-sisters of the Ghent Saint George Hospital. Section seven will turn to physical manifestations of devotion, the guild chapels and their contents. Finally section eight will consider guilds and ecclesiastics, from abbots who granted charters, to priests who shot with what had once been considered a diabolical weapon.

3.1 Other urban groups.

Towns were full of social and cultural, craft and religious groups. Spiritual choice has been compared to a market place,³¹⁸ and guild actions must also be analysed as choices, so it is vital to understand what other options were available.

Chambers of rhetoric may have first emerged from drama during crossbow competitions.³¹⁹ The groups of actors can be described as ‘organisations of citizens who gave dramatised expression to urban middle class values’ groups which valued social harmony and collective honour.³²⁰ In the fifteenth century, religious instructions were also important features of the plays the chambers performed, as well as secular myths, and virtually every drama groups had their own patron saint and chapel.³²¹ Like shooting guilds, chambers of rhetoric represented their communities taking part in regional spectacles, but were also devotional communities.

Flemish towns also contained another culturally significant group, the urban jousters. Perhaps the most famous such groups are those of the Epinette in Lille and the White Bear in Bruges. Jousters had a less defined structure than the shooting guilds. With no permanent members they met just once a year for their

³¹⁸ A. Roach, *The Devil's World* (Harlow 2005), 3-9, 40-46.

³¹⁹ R. Stein, ‘An Urban Network in the Medieval Low Countries; a Cultural Approach,’ in R. Stein and J. Pullman (ed.), *Networks, Regions and Nations, Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650* (Leiden, 2010), 51-59; Liebrecht, *Les chambres de rhétorique*, 2-15; S. ter Braake and A. van Dixhoorn, ‘Engagement en ambitie. De Haagse rederijkerskamer ‘Met gdeuchten’ en de ontwikkeling van een burgerlijke samenleving in Holland rond 1500,’ *JMG* 9 (2006), 154-165.

³²⁰ M. Boone and H. Porfyron, ‘Market, Square, Street; urban space, a tool for cultural exchange,’ *Cultural Exchange* vol.4, 238; H. Pleij, *Het gilde van de Blauwe Schuit. Literatuur, volksfeest en burgermoraal in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1979) who emphasises the political and civic dimension of the chambers of rhetoric, and their importance in demonstrating, even teaching, civic values; B. A. M. Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren. Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en Moderne Tijd* (Amsterdam, 1996), 249-335.

³²¹ Van-Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille* 53-86; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 161-166; G. J. Steenbergen, *Het landjuweel van rederijkers* (Louvain, 1952), 31-39; F. Strietman, ‘Perplexed but not in Despair? An Investigation of Doubt and Despair in Rhetoricians Drama,’ C. Meier, B. Ramakers, H. Beger (ed.), *Akteure und Axktionen, figuren und handlongstypen im drama der frühen neuzit* (Münster, 2008), 69-74.

joust.³²² Although the jousts of the White Bear have been described as a confraternity,³²³ they did not have chapels as shooting and craft guilds did. Like shooters, the jousts were an important part of urban culture, putting on great spectacles and winning honour. But the jousts, unlike the shooters, did not meet regularly, did not have a cohesive and permanent membership, they did not build social bonds and did not have the same level of devotional activities.

Chambers of rhetoric and jousts were more common in Flanders than elsewhere, but like the rest of Europe, Flanders further contained devotional confraternities. The study of religious groups, confraternities or brotherhoods, has expanded greatly in the last forty years,³²⁴ with studies looking at their social roles, their wealth and their devotional activities. Though terminology is difficult, a confraternity can be considered as a group of (mostly) lay people coming together for security and devotion, specifically remembrance of the dead and the needs of salvation.³²⁵ Religious confraternities varied hugely across Flanders. Large towns like Ghent and Bruges contained hundreds of confraternities of various sizes, while smaller towns contained only a handful, which most of the

³²² Their only official being the man who won the joust, in Bruges the forester, and a herald who invited others towns to joust, see Brown, 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages', 315-30; Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes*, 123-144.

³²³ Buylaert, 'Memory, Social Mobility and Historiography' (forthcoming).

³²⁴ C. Black, 'The Development of Confraternity Studies over the Past Thirty Years', in N. Terpstra (ed.) *The Politics of Ritual Kinship. Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, (Cambridge, 2000), 9-29; J. Pycke, 'La confrérie de la Transfiguration au Mont-Saint-Aubert puis à la cathédrale de Tournai du 15e au 18e siècle,' *Archives et manuscrits précieux tournaisiens*, vol. 1. Ed. J. Pycke and A. Dupont (Tournai, 2007), 123-152; B. Wiedl, "Confraternitas eorum quod vulgari dicitur zhunft". Wirtschaftliche, religiöse und soziale Aspekte von Handwerkszünften im Spiegel ihrer Ordnungen,' *Ein Thema -- zwei Perspektiven: Juden und Christen in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit*. Ed. E. Brugger and B. Wiedl (Innsbruck, 2007), 234-252; Hoven Van Genderen and Trio 'Old Stories and New Themes', 357-384.

³²⁵ C. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), 1- 24; J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985), 57-75; N. Terpstra, 'Introduction' to his *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, 1-5; For the problems of definitions, specifically in Flanders, see, P. Trio 'Middelieuwse broederschappen in de Nederlanden. Aan balans en perspectieven voor verder onderzoek,' *Tijdschrift voor de Geschiedenis van het Katholiek Leven in de Nederlanden, trajecta* 3 (1994), 100-104.

town would join.³²⁶ Both shooting guilds and devotional confraternities had priests, chapels and respected their saints' days. It is possible that confraternities influenced the development of shooting guilds, encouraging their piety and a demand for devotion.

Another influence in the formation of shooting guilds were the Flemish craft guilds. Craft guilds were hugely important in Flemish towns, not just as organisers of production and trade, but also politically, socially and devotionally. All craft guilds had some devotional roles; patron saints, altars or chapels and devotional activities.³²⁷ Archery and crossbow guilds drew on influences from other groups around them, to create their own cohesive, civic and devotional identity. Like chambers of rhetoric and jousts they became part of urban festive culture, but shooters took a greater part in devotional activities around them, especially processions, in doing so becoming ever more important in keeping peace. Confraternities and craft guilds, in their devotional activities and their organisations, influenced the shooting guilds, and have much in common with them. Shooters offered their members greater spiritual and social choice. The devotional activities of shooting guilds did not conflict with other spiritual opportunities, but rather helped members to select the level of devotion that suited them.

³²⁶ For the Bruges confraternities, see Brown, *Civic Ceremony*; idem., 'Bruges and the Burgundian Theatre-State'; 'Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow', 573-89.

³²⁷ P. Lambrechts and J-P. Sosson (Eds.), *Les métiers au moyen âge* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1994) ; C. Lis en H. Soly (eds.), *Werken volgens de regels, ambachten in Brabant en Vlaanderen, 1500-1800* (Brussel, 1994); P. Stabel, 'Organisation corporative et production d'œuvres d'art à Bruges à la fin du moyen âge et au début des temps modernes,' *Le Moyen Âge: Revue d'histoire et de philologie* 113 (2007), 91-134; idem., 'Guilds in Medieval Flanders: Myths and Realities of Guild Life in an Export-Oriented Environment,' *JMH* 30 (2004), 187-212; R. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1982), 58-80; O. G. Oexle, 'Conjuratio et Gilde dans l'antiquité et dans le haut moyen âge,' *Francia; Forschungen zur westeuropaischen geschichte* 10 (1982), 1-19; A. K. L. Thijs, 'Religion and Social Structure; Religious Ritual in Pre-Industrial Trade Associations in the Low Countires,' *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries* ed. M. Prak, C. Lis, J. Lucassen and H. Soly (Aldershot, 2006), 157-173.

3.2 Sources.

Devotional sources present particular challenges. Sources record neither the motivation for devotion, nor considerations behind choices made; all studies of devotional groups face such problems, and they are not insurmountable. For devotional activities of shooting guilds, the two most common sources are prescriptive regulations, and financial accounts. Prescriptive sources make clear members should leave death fees, should attend funerals, and should come to mass. Few references show far rules were followed. Financial records provide insight into the results of devotional choices, and how chapels were funded. Accounts record payments for 'church fabric' or 'charity', and payments to priests for their services. Such sources are extremely useful, but give only glimpses into devotional spending, and by extension devotional practise. No sources discuss motivation for joining a guild, for buying candles, for attending masses, but conclusions can nevertheless be drawn for the devotion of shooting guilds.

3.3 Patron Saints.

All craft guilds, all chambers of rhetoric, all religious fraternities were dedicated to patron saints; it would be therefore surprising if shooting guilds were not. Choice is once again an important factor here. As Marc Boone has shown for craft guilds, dedication was always an important decision, a demonstration of devotion, even when the choice was a standard one.³²⁸

Given the importance of choice, it seems surprising how little variety was present among the patron saints of shooting guilds. From the fourteenth century onwards, almost all Flemish archery guilds were dedicated to Saint Sebastian, and almost all crossbow guilds to Saint George. Saint Sebastian, according to tradition, was a

³²⁸ M. Boone, 'Reseaux urbaines,' W. Prevenier, (ed.), *Le Prince et le peuple: images de la société du temps des Ducs de Bourgogne, 1384-1530* (Anvers, 1998), 233-247.

Roman soldier martyred by his own archers, so a fitting choice for archers.³²⁹ Saint George had no clear connection to crossbowmen, but was an important military saint, popular across Europe.³³⁰ Both saints were, or became over the course of the fourteenth century, martial protectors of great status, and so fitting choices for guilds seeking honour. It is noteworthy that George and Sebastian are usually called 'knights' in guild sources.³³¹

Flemish militia men may have made similar choices while serving together in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth century. It is interesting to look at the choices made in Hainault, Brabant and France regarding patron saints. In each area different choices were made. In Brabant and Hainault many crossbow guilds were devoted to the Virgin Mary, most famously Notre Dame de la Sablon of Brussels. The Brussels crossbowmen played a major role in the annual procession and escorted the miraculous statue of the Virgin 'saved' from Antwerp in the twelfth century.³³² In the Hainault town of Enghiens the crossbowmen were dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, while the archers were dedicated to the Virgin.³³³ In both

³²⁹ J. Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum- Janurii tomus secundus* (Paris), 621-660; H. Pleij, *Sebastian, martelaar of mythe* (Zwolle, 1993); H Micha, 'Une rédaction en vers de la vie de Saint Sébastien,' *Romania* 92 (1971), 405-419.

³³⁰ G. Henschenio et D. Papebrichio (ed.), *Acta Sanctorum – April toum tertuis* (Paris, 1866), 621-660; S. Riches, *St George, Hero, Martyr and Myth* (Stroud, 2000) 1-35, 68-100; D. A. L. Morgan, 'The cult of St George c. 1500: national and international connotations,' *PCEEB* 35 (1995), 151-162.

³³¹ For example the crossbowmen of Courtrai were dedicated to the 'holy martyr and knight Saint George', RAK, 5800. Sint Jorisgilde. 1 stuk. Both George and Sebastian are depicted among the knights of Christ in Jan van Eyck's Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, for this see, L. B. Philip, *The Ghent Altarpiece and the Art of Jan van Eyck* (Princeton, 1971). For general 'kighthood' of saints see J. Folda, 'Mounted Warrior Saints in Crusader Icons: Images of the Kighthoods of Christ,' *Knighthoods of Christ: Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar, Presented to Malcolm Barber*. Ed. N. Housley (Aldershot, 2007), 87-107.

³³² According to tradition, in 1348 Beatrix Soetkens had a vision telling her to take the miraculous statue from Antwerp to Brussels, where it was placed in the church on the sands (*Sablon*) under the care of the crossbowmen who would take her name. For the procession see Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 242-3 for the role of the crossbowmen see Petit-Jean, *Historique de l'ancien Grand Serment*, 20-27, for this continuing tradition, see L. Bernaerts, *Chronologie du Grand serment royal e de Saint Georges des arbalétriers de Bruxelles* (Bruxelles, 2007), 20-33.

³³³ E. Matthieu *Histoire de la ville d'Enghien* vol. 2 (Mons, 1878), 740-786; idem., 'Sceaux des serments ou guildes de la ville d'Enghien', 768- 774.

Mons and Valenciennes the crossbow guilds were dedicated to the Virgin Mary.³³⁴ The crossbowmen of Nivelles demonstrated their dedication to the Virgin through a statue, destroyed with the chapel, and much of the town centre, on 14th May 1940. The statue was described by a local historian in 1901 as the Virgin holding in one arm the infant Christ, and in the other a crossbow.³³⁵ Many surviving seals from Brabant feature the Virgin and a crossbow next to her, showing the strength of devotion.

Many French guilds, such as the crossbowmen and archers of Rouen,³³⁶ did choose George and Sebastian as their respective patrons. Other guilds chose saints with different significances. The crossbowmen of Paris were dedicated to Saint Denis, French royal saint.³³⁷ The crossbowmen of Besançon were dedicated to Saint Peter, just as the cathedral was.³³⁸ Perhaps the Flemish guilds, in larger towns with more military activities wanted knightly protectors, but the almost uniform choice of George and Sebastian in Flanders does seem remarkable.

Fourteenth-century Flemish guilds usually focused on George and Sebastian; famous, male, military saints. Where another choice was made the saint still had these attributes. The crossbowmen of Douai were dedicated to Saint Martin,³³⁹ like Sebastian a Roman soldier, later bishop of Tours; a martial saint.³⁴⁰ As devotional activities increased in the fifteenth century, Flemish guilds made a

³³⁴ Devilliers, 'Notice Historique sur les milices communales', 169-285; Stein, *Archers d'autrefois*, 237-8.

³³⁵ G. Willame, *Notes sur les serments Nivellois* (Nivelles, 1901), 8-12.

³³⁶ *ORF* vol. 6, 538-541.

³³⁷ *ORF* vol. 9, 522-6.

³³⁸ M. Prinet, J. Berland et G. Gazier, *Inventaire sommaire, ville de Besançon, premier 1290-1576, série BB* (Besançon, 1912), 74.

³³⁹ DAM, 24 II 232, Arbalestiers de Douay f. 1.

³⁴⁰ J. Fountain, *Suplice Severe, vie de Saint Martin*, vol. 1, *Introduction, texts et traduction* (Paris, 1967).

greater variety of devotional choices. The crossbowmen of Croix, a small town near Lille, chose Saint Nicholas as their patron,³⁴¹ while the archers of Cambrai were dedicated to Saint Christopher.³⁴²

Choices could, from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries include female saints. Choosing female saints may have reflected a growing role for women, and a move away from military service towards peace. At least one Flemish guild, the crossbowmen of Pecquencourt, was dedicated to Mary Magdalene.³⁴³ Many established guilds began to diversify, bringing in female saints. The greater crossbowmen of Ghent had an altar to Saint Margaret, it had been founded by Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in 1474, but still attracting donations in the early sixteenth century.³⁴⁴ The Ghent archers included Saint Christine with Saint Sebastian in their chapel from at least 1511.³⁴⁵

The reasons for diversification are rarely ever given; rather a new chapel or new dedication is simply recorded. In one town this change is clearly explained. The archers of the small town of Armentières were, at the end of the fourteenth century, dedicated to Saint Sebastian. However in 1513 they received a ‘portion of divinity and reliquary of the eleven thousand Virgins and Saint Ursula’.³⁴⁶ Upon receiving the relic, the archers of Armentières rededicated themselves to Saint Ursula, though later documents refer to the archers of Saint Sebastian and

³⁴¹ AML, RM, 16973, f. 15 r.-v.

³⁴² E. Gautier et A. Lesort, *Inventaire sommaire, ville de Cambrai* (Cambrai, 1907) ,122-3.

³⁴³ ADN, 1H369.

³⁴⁴ SAG, SJ, NGR, 25.

³⁴⁵ RAG, Archief van Sint Baafs en bisdom Gent tot 1801 (inv no 020/O), 3820.

³⁴⁶ The relic was a gift from a nobleman, Thierry de Val. To date it has not been possible positively identify this figure, nor establish if he had any previous connection to the guild.

Saint Ursula.³⁴⁷ Such diversification shows a great deal of thought within the guilds about their heavenly protectors; their devotion was chosen and changeable.

Archers and crossbowmen were, by the early sixteenth century, not the only shooting guilds in Flanders. A striking diversity among patron saints was apparent among the emerging gunners' guilds. Those of Ghent were dedicated to Saint Anthony,³⁴⁸ those of Lille to Saint Barbara³⁴⁹ and those of Oudenaarde to Saint Roche.³⁵⁰ Though guns had no obvious model, such as Saint Sebastian, diversity among is significant. Where no clear model existed, the Flemish shooting guilds could be innovative in choosing saints linked to their vision of spirituality. All shooting-guilds, all crafts groups and all fraternities chose a patron saint, and their choice said a great deal about how the groups saw themselves and their spirituality. In choosing Saint George or Saint Sebastian, Flemish guilds chose regional community, a theme we shall return to in chapter six, and linked their guilds to existing martial religious culture.

3.4 Processions.

Urban processions brought the entire community together in devotional celebration, often in demonstration of peace. Though status and position of participants was important within processions, such events demonstrate a shared

³⁴⁷ AAM, EE4.

³⁴⁸ BMG Sint Antonius gilde, register der doodschulden, inven.1091. Though no modern survey of this guild exists, the following remain useful; Burgraere, *Notice historique sur les chefs confréries*; V. Vanderhaeghen, *Jaerboeken van het souvereine gilde der kolveriniers, busschieters en kannoniers gezegd hoofdgilde van st Antone te Gent* (Gent, 1867).

³⁴⁹ Espinas, *Les origines*, 490-494.

³⁵⁰ No foundation charter issued has survived, but the town accounts begin to give them wine in 1513; AGR 31809, microfilm 1560, Accounts, 1513-14, f. 56.

spirituality. The participation of archery and crossbow guild should be seen in this context, and as a sign that they were part of civic ideology.³⁵¹

In every town for which records survive, the shooting guilds played an important, often central, role in civic processions. Arguably Flanders's most famous procession was the Holy Blood procession of Bruges. The focus of the event was a vial of Christ's blood, brought back from the Holy Land by Thierry d'Alsace, Count of Flanders.³⁵² The route of the procession, around the town walls made a clear statement of civic pride. The relic itself was a huge part of Bruges's civic identity while emphasising links to the counts and by extension the Dukes of Burgundy. All craft guilds, and all religious confraternities took part in the procession, each with a set place. The procession forced members to choose one identity, they could not march as crossbowmen and weavers and brothers of Our Lady of the Snow. The high numbers of liveries purchased by the shooting guilds or by the members for the procession, as well as regulations requiring guild-brother all to attend, suggest that the vast majority chose to march as shooters, not craftsmen.

In Bruges the social standing of the shooters was made clear in the procession. The crossbowmen marched next to the relic, guarding it, while the archers were just in front of it.³⁵³ By marching next to the relic the crossbowmen demonstrated

³⁵¹ Ouvry, 'Officieel ceremonieel te Oudenaarde,' 25-64; Brown, 'Civic ritual: Bruges and the Count of Flanders in the Later Middle Ages,' 277-299; Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 239-252; E. Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des ceremonies; essai su la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas Bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004), 165-197; for procession more generally see M. James, 'Drama and the Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town,' *PP* 98 (1983), 3-29; C. Zika, 'Processions and Pilgrimages; Controlling the Sacred in Fifteenth-Century Germany,' *PP* 118 (1998), 25-64; Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 108-116.

³⁵² Brown, 'Civic ritual: Bruges and the counts of Flanders', 277-99; idem., 'Ritual and State Building; Ceremonies in Late Medieval Bruges' in J. Van Leewen, (ed.), *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns* (Leuven, 2006), 1-24.

³⁵³ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 213; Lemahieu, *De Koninklijke hoofdgilde sint-sebastian Brugge*, 31-34.

their high social position; theirs was one of the most prestigious parts of the entire event, demonstrating status as well as devotion to the relic. It is also possible they were there for practical purposes, to protect Bruges's most precious treasure. The guilds' presence here went deeper than a demonstration of prestige; civic regulations ordered them to attend, and they were rewarded with money or wine for attendance.³⁵⁴

In Lille the procession of Notre Dame de la Treille, going back to the thirteenth century, was a great civic event.³⁵⁵ As in Bruges, the crossbowmen were at the centre, near the sacred object, here a statue of the Virgin, although by the mid sixteenth century the military confraternities were further forward in the procession.³⁵⁶ Attendance was not just desirable for the guild members, from at least 1443 all guild-brothers were required to attend the procession and accompany their 'king', in full livery and hood, any guild-brother who failed to do so should have paid a 10 shilling fine.³⁵⁷

As in Bruges, the Lille town governors paid guild-brothers to attend. From 1415 the crossbow guild were collectively given £ 4 by the town for taking part in the procession, and the archers received 40 shillings. From 1432 the lesser crossbowmen received 40 shillings, and by 1439 the smaller archers were also required to attend, also in return for 40 shillings. The Lille guilds also took part in general processions, marching with the clergy of Saint Peter's for the procession called in 1469 'for praising God our creator and for the peace' made between

³⁵⁴ SAB, 385, Sint Jorisgilde, register met ledenlijst enz. 1321-1531 f. 54, given every year to both guilds, for example in the crossbowmen's accounts of 1447, BAS, 385 Sint Joris gilde, Rekeningen 1445- 1480, f. 14 v., and to the archers in 1455, ASSG, Volume 3 t. 1, 1454 – 1456, f. 31 v.

³⁵⁵ Knight, 'Processional Theatre in Lille in the Fifteenth Century', 99-109 ;Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 251-2; The charter of Margaret, Countess of Flanders, established the procession in 1269, ADN, 16 G 86, 895.

³⁵⁶ Knight, 'Processional Theatre in Lille in the Fifteenth Century', 99-109.

³⁵⁷ AML, PT, 5883 f. 28-31.

Louis XI of France and Charles the Bold.³⁵⁸ The Guilds had served in Charles' wars, but they were a key part of the ways Lille chose to celebrate peace. No other civic group in Lille was paid to attend the procession, once again showing their status as much as their devotional practises. Granting money to guilds to attend processions was not limited to the larger towns. In Ninove, from 1397, the crossbowmen of Saint George and the archers were collectively given £12, later £18, for attending the procession.³⁵⁹ In Kaprijke the archers were paid 36 shillings for participating in the procession from 1407.³⁶⁰

Processional routes may further indicate guilds' status and devotion. However most guild chapels, as we shall see, were in or next to parish churches, so on procession routes before guild chapels were established in them. Processions can be interpreted as demonstrations of status, but the genuine belief in the relics that the guilds accompanied and the devotional significance of processing, in full livery, at municipal expense must be remembered. In every town for which records could be found, guilds demonstrated devotion and status through paid participation in civic procession, carrying their weapons not to war, but for peace.

3.5 Emblems and iconography.

The most visual element of guild devotion, and clear to all in processions, were guild emblems and iconography. The banners carried in the processions, the seals placed upon documents, emblems on or in books, and decoration of guild chapels were all demonstrators of guild devotion.

³⁵⁸ AML, CV, 16208, f. 121.

³⁵⁹ AGR, CC, 37076 f. 17.

³⁶⁰ AGR, CC, 33009 f. 7 v.

Banners.

Banners are complex objects, at once military, social and devotional, they perfectly symbolise how seemingly separate ideas, war and peace, overlapped in medieval thinking. In 1452 Ghent raised its banners against Philip the Good in rebellion. After they were defeated the duke had the banners hung in shrines in chapels of the Virgin in Boulogne and Halle, ducal pilgrimage centres.³⁶¹ Banners were carried into war, were used to symbolise rebellion, but could also be devotional objects. All craft or social groups carried banners in processions, symbolising their dedication to the saint upon their banner.³⁶² Guilds certainly used their banners for military purposes, in 1315, when sending out their shooters, Ghent paid their wages and provided new banners.³⁶³ Later regulations from Ghent referring to military deployment even state that ‘no one will stand before the banners of Ghent and Saint George’.³⁶⁴ In Lille in 1347 military expenses include payments made to the man who carried the banner of Saint George; he received 2 shillings a day.³⁶⁵

Military functions of banners remained, but the objects took on new social and cultural significances in the fifteenth century.³⁶⁶ Though not quite objects of

³⁶¹ Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*, 26-7.

³⁶² R. Jones, “‘What Banner Thine?’ The banner as a symbol of identification, status and authority on the battlefield,” *Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* 15 (2006), 101-109; idem., *Bloodied Banners: Martial Display on the Medieval Battlefield* (Woodbridge, 2010); O. Bouzy, ‘Les armes symboles d’un pouvoir politique: l’épée du sacre, la Sainte Lance, l’Oriflamme, aux VIIe-XII siècle,’ *Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte* 22 (1995), 45-57; M. T. Elvins ‘The Banner of the Cornish Bowmen,’ *Coat of Arms* 8 (1990), 260-262 ; C. Coppins, ‘De standaard van Brabant’ *Ascania* 16 (1973), 144-147 ; P. Arnade, ‘Crowds, Banners and the Market Place; Symbols of Defiance and Defeat During the Ghent War of 1452-3,’ *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24 (1994), 471-497.

³⁶³ Vuylsteke, *Gentsche stads en balijwysrekeningen*, 67-9.

³⁶⁴ SAG, 97 2ter, zwarten boek f. 165 v.

³⁶⁵ AML, CV, 16046, f. 14 .

³⁶⁶ M. Lupant, ‘Drapeaux du Grand Serment Royal et Noble des Arbalétriers de Notre-Dame au Sablon,’ *Fahnen, Flags, Drapeaux: Proceedings of the 15th International Congress of Vexillology, Zurich, 23-27 August 1993*. Ed. E. Dreyer and H. Muller (Zurich, 1999), 130-134; S. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty, The Politics of Social Relations in Medieval Europe, 1200-1425* (London, 2006), 177-204.

devotion, guild banners were part of their iconography and devotional choices, and demonstrate perfectly their overlapping military and devotional ideals. Many towns gave their shooting guilds generous subsidies to purchase new banners. In 1451 Lille paid for a new banner for their crossbowmen,³⁶⁷ and in 1438 Cambrai paid for the banners of both the archers and the crossbowmen to be repaired.³⁶⁸ Other guilds took care of the matter themselves. The incredibly detailed accounts from the crossbowmen of Aalst, from 1461-2, include £ 6 to a painter for decorating the guild standard with 'legend of Saint George'.³⁶⁹ Banners were not simply military pennons; they were carried in procession, taken to competitions and kept in guild chapels, symbolising social and devotional identities.

Seals.

Seals represented not just religious identity, but a social and cultural one too, as has been shown for craft guild seals.³⁷⁰ The survival of shooting- guilds' seals is scattered, and inventories rarely mention whether seals are attached to guild documents, and if so in what condition. A survey of seals from crossbow guilds in the AGR in 1956 showed that most fifteenth century seals featured with the guild patron saint, or an important civic landmark.³⁷¹ Many of the seals discussed by Copin have further degraded, but several seals attached to letters of invitation in Oudenaarde and Ghent have fared better.

A few seals, such as those shown here, display emblems of civic, rather than devotional, identity. Delft, in Holland, and the French city of Tournai chose a

³⁶⁷ Espinas, *Les Origines*, 406.

³⁶⁸ Gautier et Lesort, *Inventaire sommaire, ville de Cambrai*, 97.

³⁶⁹ ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2. f. 8.

³⁷⁰ S. Abraham-Thisse, 'La représentation iconographique des métiers du textile au Moyen-Âge,' in M. Boone, E. Lecuppre-Desjardin and J.-P. Sossons (eds.), *Le verbe, l'image et les représentations de la société urbaine au moyen âge* (Anvers, 2002), 135-159.

³⁷¹ J. Copin, 'Sceaux d'arbalétriers Belges,' *Annales du XXXVIe congrès de la fédération archéologique et historique de Belgique* (Gand, 1956), 15-25.

civic representation. Their choice does not mean that they were less devout. It could imply they were under great civic control, but again choice must be seen as a driving force.



Fig. 3. Seal of Delft, from 1440 Ghent invitation.³⁷² **Fig. 4.** Seal of Tournai crossbowmen, from Oudenaarde 1462 competition.³⁷³

The majority of surviving seals display emblems of devotional identity, especially saints.³⁷⁴ That groups so tied to urban culture chose devotional representation, rather than civic emblems, clearly shows the importance of devotional choices and of being recognised by their spiritual patron.



Fig 5. Seal of the crossbowmen of Conde, Showing their patron, the Virgin Mary. **Fig 6.** Seal of the crossbowmen of Enghien Showing their patron, Saint John.

³⁷² SAG, Fonds Sint Joris, 155.

³⁷³ OSAOA, gilden, 507/ II/ 14 A.

³⁷⁴ Both from 1462 Oudenaarde shoot, OASOA, gilden, 507/ II/ 14 A.

Most Flemish crossbow guilds chose to display the arms of Saint George, rather than a civic symbol, again showing the significance of devotional choices.



Fig 7. Seal of the crossbowmen of Sluis³⁷⁵



Fig 8. Seal of Veurne crossbowmen³⁷⁶



Fig 9. Seal of Gerardsberghen crossbowmen³⁷⁷

Many of the Saint George seals are badly degraded. A Ghent seventeenth-century copy allows the details of Saint George, with his standard of the cross, killing the dragon to be better appreciated. The use of Saint George, rather than a civic emblem, on the seals of most Flemish crossbow guilds is a significant choice,

³⁷⁵ From Ghent 1497 invitation, SAG, Fonds Sint Joris, 155 , 1.

³⁷⁶ From 1440 invitation, Ghent, SAG Fonds Sint Joris, 155, 2.

³⁷⁷ From Huslt 1483 invitation, SAG, SJ, NGR, charters, 30.

demonstrating how important guild devotion was. Such choices also imply that the guilds had a relative freedom from civic control. But it is apparent from the above images that many towns featured a small civic badge (on Saint George's left in the Sluis seal, below the virgin in that of Conde) as well. When the guild could only use one emblem, as on seals, it is significant that almost all Flemish guilds chose a spiritual emblem that symbolised their guild and their devotion, not their town; hinting at great Flemish community.



Fig. 10 Seventeenth century seal of the Ghent crossbowmen³⁷⁸

In contrast, chambers of rhetoric rarely displayed a devotional symbol. The surviving seals attached to an invitation to a drama competition in Hulst in 1483, include flowers, vases and civic symbols, not saints.³⁷⁹ Shooting guilds consistently chose how to represent themselves, that they regularly used devotional symbols shows that they had considered carefully their dedication to a patron saint.

All of the seals used here come from crossbow guilds. Archers would also have had seals, some fragments of which have survived in Lille, but no extant seals have been found. The slightly lesser status of the archery guilds, which will be

³⁷⁸ SAG, SJ, NGR, 2.

³⁷⁹ SAG, SJ, NGR, charters, 31.

discussed in chapter 5, could have led them to use cheaper, less durable, wax. However it should be emphasised that many of the largest archery competitions were held in Ypres. Archives there may have once held many letters of invitation, like the crossbow invitations of Oudenaarde, with many seals. The civic archives of Ghent and Oudenaarde are fortunate in that they gained large collections from their crossbow guilds from the eighteenth century onwards. The dominance of crossbow guild seals, emblems and, as we shall see below, competitions, in surviving documentation may indicate their great prestige, but this may be nothing more than an accident of survival.

Guild books.

Banners were the best documented objects bearing saintly emblems, and seal the most common, but images placed on guild books were just as important. When placed upon books, especially death registers, such iconography created a link that even the illiterate could understand. The emblems' of saints on death registers demonstrates that the deceased guild-brothers and the saint were in a new, connected, guild.



Fig 11. The emblem of Saint Sebastian.³⁸⁰

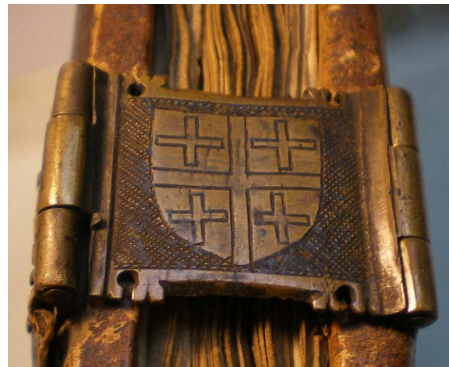


Fig 12. The memory book of the Ghent-guild.³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ BMG, Sint sebastiaangilde; privilegieboek, inv 1059, inside cover.

³⁸¹ GSA Sint Sebastian, 155/1.

The importance of emblems is best shown on the memory book of the Ghent greater guild of Saint Sebastian. As illustrated, the book was closed with the arms of Saint Sebastian, showing he was not just part of the guild, but protecting the entire community of dead brothers. In the sixteenth century iconography and images could become far more detailed, showing devotional and status through Saint George and the dragon. Such ornate images are shown here, from the Brussels book of Saint George beginning in 1518.³⁸²



Fig. 13. Detail from The Brussel's crossbowmen's guild book

The visibility of such books is unclear, but the care taken over the above emblems implies they were meant to be seen. The details, and the omnipresence of saintly emblems, show a carefully considered devotional choice.

Other symbols and iconography.

Banners, books and seals are the best surviving evidence of guild iconography, but chapels would once have been full of far more elaborate objects. In Lille the

³⁸² Brussel Stadsarchief, AA/OA, reg. 1492 f. 1.

crossbowmen had a stained glass window of Saint George.³⁸³ In 1509 the archers of Cysoing hired a painter from Douai, Gilles Contelie, to travel to Cysoing and paint their chapel.³⁸⁴ Decoration of chapels must have been common, but survival is rare, however inventories and other sources can still show guild devotional choices. Decoration and iconography in chapels, on banners, on seals or in guild books, all demonstrate the prestige of guilds, their choice of patrons and their devotion.

3.6 Devotional activities, the living

Devotional actions, including attendance at mass, saints' days and provision of lights were very common in medieval society, but often poorly documented. Guild members should have attended important events, but whether they did so is difficult to prove. Financial documents can provide great insight. The incredibly detailed accounts of the Aalst crossbowmen from 1461-2 can be compared to the more complete accounts of Bruges, and reveal interesting differences in devotional choices between small and large towns.

Charters and ordinances are full of examples of prescriptive devotional activities. Attending mass on the day of the guild's patron saints was one of the most emphasised regulations,³⁸⁵ and is linked to the feast and shoots the same day. Annual events built unity, but weekly attendance at mass before shooting practice, required for the crossbowmen of Douai from 1383, established more set devotional practices.³⁸⁶ Even small towns, like Engelmunster, required weekly masses,³⁸⁷ showing that across Flanders authorities issuing such charters wished

³⁸³ ADN, LRD, B17734.

³⁸⁴ Delsalle, 'La Confrérie des archers de Cysoing', 14-19.

³⁸⁵ The reunion of the two Lille crossbow guilds in 1443, Espinas, *Les Origines*, 394-6.

³⁸⁶ ADN, B1147- 12.681.

³⁸⁷ ADN, B 1358 (16026).

to encourage, even regulate attendance at mass, and devotion among shooting guilds, and in doing so create peaceful communities.

Lights were fundamental to medieval life and to medieval Catholicism, with candles, lamps and torches filling churches and illuminating all spiritual events.³⁸⁸ In some shooting guilds, such as the crossbowmen of Saint Martin in Douai, town governors provided the guild with wax each year. The shooters of Douai were also expected to have more lights, at their own expense, for the annual procession.³⁸⁹ Elsewhere, members should have paid wax on their entry or as fines for misdeeds.³⁹⁰ Inventories from Ghent and Bruges also emphasise the importance of lights, with high numbers of candelabras.

Prescriptive evidence shows an increasing concern for the needs of salvation through devotional practise. How such activities changed over time is difficult to tell as no fourteenth-century accounts survive. However differences across Flanders are apparent from surviving fifteenth-century sources. The accounts of the Aalst crossbowmen show that, in the year 1461-2 devotional practises were a huge part of guild life, with the crossbowmen spending large sums on devotional activities. The guild's spending included 14 shillings to priests for singing masses on the day of Saint George, and a further 4 shillings for singers. Further expenses were associated with the saint's day, including what must have been a fairly elaborate play of Saint George costing £7, 12 s. Drama was clearly a part of Aalst's devotional activities, in addition to the play, and 8 shillings was paid to a man for telling the tale of Saint George. Masses and devotional activities went further, with a £ 24 paid for 'diverse masses' throughout the year. The civic

³⁸⁸ C. Vincent, *Fiat Lux, lumière et luminaires dans la vie religieuse du XIIIe au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 2004), 9-22, 81-13.

³⁸⁹ DAM, AA85.

³⁹⁰ For Flemish towns see Pecquencourt above, and the Aalst ordinances, ASAOA, peysboek, f. 152 v.- 153. This is also clear in the regulation for the Hainault towns, such as Valenciennes, ADN, C9577.

procession was similarly important to the Aalst crossbow guild.³⁹¹ They spent 21 shilling on the annual procession, as well as large sums on cloth and liveries, which would have been worn in the procession.

Payments for masses and for plays are recorded in other Flemish towns, though not always in such detail. What sets the Aalst records apart, are the incredible details they record, providing glimpses into the guild chapel. The accounts reveal that the crossbowmen spent 8 shillings on washing altar cloths, 8 shillings on flowers for the chapel, and 3 shillings for repairing the clock in the chapel.³⁹² The accounts show that out of a total expenditure from 1461-2 of £135, 8 shillings 10 d, the crossbowmen spent £34 18 shillings on devotional activities, over a quarter of their funds. Such a figure is even more impressive when the annual deficit is considered, that year the guild's income was only £125, 16 shillings, they could have cut back on devotional spending to make up their short-fall of £9, 12 shillings. 10 d, but chose not to.

The Bruges archers' accounts for this year are strikingly different. From Saint Sebastian's day 1461 to the same in 1462, the archers spent far less. They spent 18 shillings 6 d in the chapel on the day of Saint Sebastian, on the day of the *papegay* 19 shillings were spent in the chapel. For other sermons and masses 16 shillings, 11 d was paid. What are simply described as 'diverse costs of the chapel' amounted to 41 shillings, 10 d. While the crossbowmen of Aalst spent over a quarter of their expenditure on devotional activities, the archers of Bruges spent of just £4 16 shillings 3 d, out of total expenditure of almost £50, less than 10% of the total. It is possible that the Bruges chapel of Saint Sebastian, in the Franciscan church, kept separate records. The complex, along with its records, was destroyed by fire in the eighteenth century, but the surviving archers'

³⁹¹ For this event see M. Trowbridge, 'Processional Plays in Aalst,' *Mediaevalia* 29 (2007). 95-117

³⁹² ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2.

accounts give no hint that additional money was given for the church. Secular records note payments for masses and the '*kirkmeester*', a lay man responsible for church funding.

A difference in the devotional choices of guilds in larger and smaller towns is apparent. Aalst, with an estimated population of 3520 in 1450, offered fewer options for devotional groups, so the crossbowmen took on great devotional roles. In Bruges, with a population approximately ten times that of Aalst,³⁹³ members had access to a greater spiritual market, and so placed less demand on guild devotion. Though individual members were doubtless just as inclined towards devotion in Aalst as in Bruges, choice was a crucial factor in the collective devotion of the guilds.

3.7 Devotional activities, death and remembrance

Death and remembrance, in the forms of death fees, funerals and obits occupy a huge place in guild records. Remembrance occupied a significant place in society; it has even been called 'a key organising principle' of medieval life.³⁹⁴ As death fees meant income, they are extremely well recorded in both prescriptive documents and guild accounts, but rules for attending funerals, and lists of remembrance, are no less important.

Dootghelt

Guilds were well organised groups, and just as members had to pay to enter, they also had to promise to leave funds to the guild in the form of death fees. French sources do not use a specific term for the mortuary fee required of members, but

³⁹³Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition', 58-62.

³⁹⁴ T. Van Bueren, 'Care for the Here and the Hereafter; a Multitude of Possibilities,' T. Van Bueren and A. Van Leerdam, *Care for the Here and the Hereafter; Memoria, Art and Ritual in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2005), 13.

Flemish sources always refer to the *dootghelt*, literally death payment. Although not voluntary, the *dootghelt* was still an important element in salvation; through it members would be prayed for and remembered. Every charter of a significant length sets out clear regulations for entering guilds, and with them rules for death fees. In 1421 the archers of Aalst had to promise to leave their best bow to the guild, or if they did not have one fine enough, 8 shillings. In return the rest of the guild will ‘carry the brother to the sepulchre’. All guild-brothers should have attended their dead brother’s funeral, unless they were ill or away from Aalst, on pain of a fine of 5 shillings.³⁹⁵ In Lille, after the reunion of the two crossbow guilds in 1443, new statutes stated that, on his death, a guild-brother must leave the guild ‘his best crossbow, and if he does not have a crossbow valued at 60 shillings’ ... then a cash payment. In return ‘all brothers will promise to come to the burial of the dead, on pain of 12 pence’.³⁹⁶

How far Lille rules were followed is impossible to tell, but other guilds do have surviving accounts. The most detailed accounts of death payments are those of the Saint Sebastian guild of Bruges. The members should have left their guild 2 shillings plus their best bow and two dozen arrows, ‘for the sounding of the bells and for the mass that the guild will celebrate in his memory’.³⁹⁷ As noted, members in Bruges had far greater spiritual choice, so comparing their records to those of the Aalst crossbowmen is instructive.

In Aalst, the records of 1461-2 note the deaths of five guild brothers. Of these, four members left the guild £3 and the fifth left £12.³⁹⁸ Four out of the five members who died paid £3, or 60 shillings, the same amount that the Lille crossbowmen were expected to pay, while another left far more. The generous

³⁹⁵ ASAOA, 3, peysboek, f. 152 v – 153.

³⁹⁶ AML, PT, 5883, fol 28-31.

³⁹⁷ BASS, charter 1425.

³⁹⁸ ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2.

guild-brother does not seem to have been a lord; he has no title but is named simply as 'Janne Aliste'. That most of the Aalst crossbowmen paid exactly what the Lille men should is significant, and could imply that there was an accepted spirituality across such guilds, across Flanders. Just as in Bruges the guild as a whole spent far less on devotional activities, so the individual members left less on their deaths. Seven archers died in 1455, though amounts varied none paid more than 5 shillings. The least, paid by a baker, was 2 shillings 6 d.³⁹⁹ The small sums left by the Bruges crossbowmen were less than 10% of the £ 3 Lille men were expected to pay, and Aalst crossbowmen did pay.⁴⁰⁰ Variation continued over the years in Bruges, but between 1454 and 1481 most brothers left between 2 and 6 shillings on their death.

The Ghent death lists are difficult to use as comparison as they are undated, but payments were also smaller. From the Saint George guild the men whose names are entered in a late fifteenth or early sixteenth hand paid between 2 and 5 shillings, as did the priests, with the women usually paying less than 4 shillings. Lords, notably Margaret of York⁴⁰¹ and Maximilian Holy Roman Emperor paid far more, 200 crowns.⁴⁰² Most lords paid £10. The Ghent archers' memory book is again undated, but all of the various hands present are all mid fifteenth to mid sixteenth century. Of the 4863 names recorded, men and women, lords and priests, less than 5% of those listed paid the highest death fee, 20 shillings or more, while over half, 51.8%, paid the lowest possible fee, 2 shillings, or left goods to that value to the guild.

³⁹⁹ BASS, Volume 3 t. 1, 1454 – 1456. f.25 v.

⁴⁰⁰ Bruges fee of 2 shillings 6 d = 30 d, 5 shillings = 100d. Aalst and Lille fees of £3 = 720 d.

⁴⁰¹ Margaret is the only women recorded under the heading 'lords and knights'. Other powerful women, including Mary of Hungary (regent of the Low Countries for her brother Charles V), are entered under 'women' not lords. The book does not record why Margaret was considered one of the 'lords' not 'women'. Her name appears next to Maximillian, and Mary is not mentioned, so she may have been listed with Maximillain to add his membership legitimacy.

⁴⁰²BMG, G 12.608, f. 33.

The accounts detailed above show great variation, once again demonstrating the importance of choice and individuals' own beliefs in guild devotion. Large towns offered greater opportunities for a funeral and remembrance, and as many of these shooters were in other guilds or fraternities, it is possible that they did not need to be so concerned with funerals. In Aalst members had limited opportunities for a funeral, so the guild took greater care to provide this for its members. Although priorities differed, all of these figures show that even in a great centre like Bruges, shooting guilds were concerned for the needs of salvation of their members, especially in praying for them and burying them, but that this was even more important in smaller towns. Just as small town guilds spent more on devotional practises, as less options were available, so too the guild-brothers took greater care to provide funerals as brothers might had less access to other organisation, like devotional confraternities than in the great urban centres.

Remembrance

Many of the death fees discussed above note that in return for payment, the guild-brothers should have prayed for dead members. Some guilds will hold a funeral as well. Remembrance is connected to the death fees discussed above, but was more complex than a simple payment, showing that brotherhood could extend beyond death, with the guild remembering and praying for brothers long after their funeral.

Though the archers of Lille left no surviving accounts of death fees, their regulations, set out in 1518, are nevertheless extremely useful in revealing guild ideals of remembrance. The archers' statutes came from the guild officials and their parish priests, not authorities as earlier rules did. Their charter states that, in their chapel of Saint Sebastian in the parish church of Saint Maurice, a funeral should be held for dead guild-brothers, and all members must attend this. Further,

each year, on twelve specified saints' days, masses will be said for all dead members.⁴⁰³ In return, the members would leave money; they were expected to leave the guild their best bow, and a further 6 shillings for the church and the guild chapel. In 1518, the archers of Lille made clear their desire to be remembered by their guild-brothers in their own chapel, and that remembrance began, and did not end, on the day of their funeral.

In Ghent memory books record dead guild-brothers and sisters so they could be prayed for and remembered. Three memory books survive, although the gunners' book, the guild of Saint Anthony,⁴⁰⁴ will not be discussed here. The huge book of Saint George,⁴⁰⁵ and the smaller one of Saint Sebastian⁴⁰⁶ reveal the importance of remembrance. The sheer size of the Saint George book, which lists members from as early as 1468 to the late eighteenth century, with few dates, makes a full analysis impossible in this context. Moulin-Coppens has estimated there to be at least 150 000 named men, not including the separate lords, priests and women.⁴⁰⁷

The book of Saint Sebastian is smaller, less ornate, less well maintained, and perhaps as a result it has received less historical attention. The only recent work to look at it did so briefly, and stated that the 'register eludes statistical precision because it lists occupations only unevenly and is without dates' and surveys only the first 12 folios.⁴⁰⁸ However the 125 folios contain 4863 names, including 52 lords, 51 women, 35 priests and two other ecclesiastical figures, giving great insight into the cult of remembrance. The register is a carefully planned memory

⁴⁰³ ADN, 16 G 406.

⁴⁰⁴ BMG, Sint Antonius gilde, register der doodschulden, inven.1091.

⁴⁰⁵ BMG, Sint Jorisgilde, register der doodschulden, G 12.608.

⁴⁰⁶ SAG, Sint Sebastian, 155/1, 22.

⁴⁰⁷ As noted in the previous chapter, the first part of this book, from 1468-1497, has been surveyed in Van Steen, *Den ouden ende souverainen gilde van den edelen ridder Sente Jooris*.

⁴⁰⁸ Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 71.

book, organising the names by the amount they paid upon their death. Unlike the Bruges guild book, which listed members when they joined, here members were recorded on their deaths; a necrology. Death books highlighted that membership did not end with death, and that the dead were remembered within the guilds.

As we shall see below men and occasionally couples, who mention no relatives in their testaments were far more generous. In Italy it has been shown that certain confraternities could become an heir of last resort for members lacking a kin family.⁴⁰⁹ Prayers of remembrance were imperative for passage through purgatory, so if no family could pray for the deceased, the guild would do so. It seems certain that in Flanders, particularly in Ghent where wills and surviving hospital records rarely mention family members, that the shooting guilds provided spiritual security; promising to remember their brother or sister, even if a blood family were lacking.

3.8 Charity.

Salvation was of great concern to many in late medieval towns, perhaps especially so to the numerous soldiers and wealthy patricians in the shooting guilds. Remembering that, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God',⁴¹⁰ the guild members showed a genuine concern for their salvation. They manifested their concern through charity, often in a focused, local, environment they understood. The study of charity is problematic, with *caritas* itself having many definitions, and recipients of charity rarely identified. In order to understand the motives of donors, and the roles of guild-sisters, a case study for charity will be used. The Ghent Hospital of Saint George is now unique, and the best surviving example of

⁴⁰⁹ Discussed in J. R. Banker, *Death in the Community* (London, 1988), 114-133.

⁴¹⁰ King James Bible, Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25.

the charity of a shooting guild, it is impossible to tell how far this is a case of unique survival, or a case of a unique guild.

Ghent.

Ghent, as Flanders largest town, with an estimated population of 50 000 in 1450, had many religious and charitable institutions. Parish churches contained Holy Ghost Tables, providing food and clothing to the poor, though concerns about the idle poor grew over the fifteenth century. Exclusive hospitals also existed, some craft specific, such as the weavers' hospital, which cared for sick or destitute weavers, or their widows or orphans. Many other charitable institutions in Ghent focused on a specific category of paupers, such the leper house.⁴¹¹ As with all devotional choices, it is significant that the guild chose to establish their own form of charity, rather than simply giving alms or property to an existing hospital or institution.

The Hospital.

It is possible that the Hospital of Saint George, like the weavers hospital, began as a rest home for old or injured crossbowmen. The hospital is first mentioned in a charter from the bishop of Tournai, from 1356.⁴¹² Through gifts and bequest, initially by guild members alone but later by lords, this hospital became a significant urban religious institution. By 1384, when documents become more

⁴¹¹ Nicholas, *Metamorphosis*, 42-3; J. W. Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe* (Washington D.C., 2009) 212-221.

⁴¹² UBG, Hs, G. 61731.

numerous, the hospital cared for the poor more generally. This was not a health institution, the hospital was as concerned for spiritual care as for physical.⁴¹³

Donors.

When analysing charity, it is useful to consider all donations as part of a spiritual economy,⁴¹⁴ as ‘gifts’ and to consider what the donors expected in return. The main source of funding for the hospital was the *dootghelt*. Such payment was not purely an altruistic or voluntary payment; the obligatory nature of this charity is made clear by several charters demanding payment from named heirs.⁴¹⁵ Death fees greatly helped the hospital, and in return they increased the status of the guild through largesse, and gave prestige to surviving guild members. Perhaps more significantly the *dootghelt* was used for good works, so aiding salvation.

The majority of recorded members left only their *dootghelt*, but some guild-brothers and sisters were far more generous, leaving the hospital large sums in their wills. Testaments are imperfect as sources for devotion, revealing only the wishes of those who had the wealth and right to create such a document. Wills record their wishes at one moment in their lives, and maybe influence by clerical mediation. Despite such limitations, testaments ‘offer the historian a rare moment...for listening to those who have had no intellectual history by the traditional standards’.⁴¹⁶ Surviving wills in Ghent show the devotional and charitable desires of several guild-brothers, though the possibility that, for childless individuals, occasionally couples, guilds became heirs of last resort should not be forgotten.

⁴¹³ N. Orme, and M. Wensert, *The English Hospital, 1070-1570* (London, 1995), 35-49; S. Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital in Medieval England, gift-giving and the Spiritual Economy* (Dublin, 2004), 12-18.

⁴¹⁴ Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital*, 14-16..

⁴¹⁵ SAG, SJ, NGR, 37, 38, 44.

⁴¹⁶ S. K. Cohn, *Death and Property in Siena, 1205-1800* (Baltimore and London, 1988), 2.

In May 1384 one crossbowman, Jan Burskin, wrote his will in which he left his entire estate, including his house, to the guild of Saint George and in particular to the hospital.⁴¹⁷ In return for his gift Jan would be remembered, and prayers said for him, but this would have been the case had he left the guild a smaller sum, and given his house to an established order. In 1443 another guild-brother, Jooris Vander Jeeken, left his house to the hospital. His testament states that he did this out of great concern for 'those people in the hospital',⁴¹⁸ implying he knew something about the residents and was moved to pity for them. Neither man mentions an heir, nor family and left everything to the guild and its hospital. It is easy to be sceptical about the actions of these childless men, and dismiss them as tradition or gifts from guild brothers who had no other option for their goods. It is just as likely that devotion, compassion for the poor they understood, as well as care for salvation, informed their choices. Neither guild-brother divided his estate; neither gave smaller objects to kin or friends or even other religious institutions. Both gave everything to the hospital, to their charitable, peaceful guild community.

Large donations, houses, are the best documented example of guild charity, but were not the only ones. Several widows left the hospital smaller, personal items, such as cloth, even bed sheets, as well as wax and candles.⁴¹⁹ Such items were given in addition to, not instead of, the required dootghelt. Small, personal gifts would probably have been used in the hospital, rather than sold, and are less about largesse than the donations of houses. Many of the women had families, though not always children, to leave their property to.⁴²⁰ As Eamon Duffy has

⁴¹⁷ SAG, SJ, NGR, 2.

⁴¹⁸ SAG, SJ, NGR, 13.

⁴¹⁹ The inventory from the hospital, in 1500, records many of these, including bed sheets, cushions, as well as simply quantities of wax and cloth, SAG, Reeks LXVII, Sint Jorishospitaal, 4.

⁴²⁰ If indeed they could bequeath houses at all. For female wills more generally see C. M. Howell, 'Gifts by Testament in Late Medieval Douai,' *PP* 150 (1996), 3-45.

shown for English parish churches, bequeathing a personal object to a church or chapel, demonstrated a feeling of community.⁴²¹ The gifts left by women to the hospital are personal, and show community and compassion for the hospital, again their choice is significant. Unlike Jan and Jooris, these poorer members gave most of their goods to family or friends, and left smaller personal object to the hospital, showing a sense of community and perhaps a deeper level of consideration for the needs of charity.

Not all payments were voluntary, fines could also become charity. In many guilds, including the crossbow guild of Lille, a brother could be expelled for losing his crossbow gambling, but other offences were punished through alms. In 1368, three Ghent guild members, two men, Jan van Maakelus and Jacob Lampe, and one woman, Marie vanden Boende, were collectively fined £7 for ‘immorality’, and this was given to the profit of the hospital.⁴²² Fines were not of course wholly charitable, and were about control as well as charity. In Lille both prescriptive documents and judicial records record disobedient guild-brothers being sent on pilgrimage, often to Liège.⁴²³ In Aalst regulations from the crossbow guild state that disobedient crossbowmen will be punished with pilgrimages, this time to Cologne, though to evidence survives of this being enforced.⁴²⁴ In all three guilds, immorality receives a spiritual punishment, which aided the salvation of the members through penance. In Ghent, penance was also transformed into charity, not just controlling and admonishing members, but bringing them into the spiritual economy and even helping them to atone for their sins.

⁴²¹ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars, Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (London, 1992, 2006), 183-186, 504-23.

⁴²² SAG, Jaarboeken, 310, 3, 1, f. 5 r.

⁴²³ Espinas, *Les Origines*, 446.

⁴²⁴ ASAOA, 3, peysboek, f. 152 v – 153.

Guild-Sisters.

Gifts of money or property are the best documented forms of guild charity, but how the hospital was run is perhaps more significant. The Ghent hospital of Saint George, though set up by the guild-brothers, was in fact run by women. Few hospital residents left wills, so no statistics of residents and their wealth can be offered, but one example is revealing. In 1409 a married couple, Jan and Lysebette van Vracht both guild members, left their house to the guild when they died on condition they would continue to live in their house as long as possible, and if they could not longer live unassisted move into the hospital.⁴²⁵ The charter reveals that the hospital cared for both men and women, and that those who entered were not necessarily in dire poverty. Jan and Lysebette mentioned no children, no kin, and so needed the guild hospital to act as their surrogate family, caring for them in old age and becoming their heir.

How the hospital was originally administered is unclear, as early documents are simply financial, recording sums given to the hospital. The situation was formalised in 1453 when a married couple, Willem and Barbera de Rade, moved into the hospital to care for the residents. They were also given the care of the jewels and prizes the crossbowmen had won in competitions, showing that the guild not only regarded the hospital as a charitable institution, but also as a safe house for their treasures.⁴²⁶ William and Barbera were guild members, and relatively rich, property-owning citizens, but they lived within the hospital. Like the de Vrachts, William and Barbre do not refer to any kin. When he wrote his will in 1473 William arranged to leave all of his property, including the couple's house, to the hospital.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ SAG, SJ, NGR, 6.

⁴²⁶ SAG, SJ, NGR, 10.

⁴²⁷ SAG, SJ, NGR, 22.

William is the last man recorded as running the hospital, after his death it became a female run institution. The 'guild-sisters' with a 'guild mother' took over hospital administration, they lived in a 'cloister' or 'convent' attached to the hospital. They were forbidden to leave and expected to earn money through their own work, as well as caring for those living in the hospital. A document of 1500 names the 13 guild-sisters living in the hospital.⁴²⁸ No information on their status, age or background is given, but it is significant that no guild sister is given a title, and none shares a surname with leading guild-brothers.

Very little can be discerned about the status of the guild-sisters. They lived in cloisters, caring for the sick and lived by their own work. As the hospital attracted significant devotions through the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, what was understood by such a clause is unclear. It is tempting to compare the Saint George sisters to Beguines, lay women who established convents across the Low Countries, lived by their own work and cared for the poor and the dying. As with the Saint George hospital, exactly how the Beguines administered charity is not well documented in surviving records.⁴²⁹ The Ghent Beguinage of Saint Elizabeth was somewhat wealthier, and more enclosed, than other Beguines, but nonetheless certainly visited and cared for sick and dying, their rules show a great concern for women visiting men, even dying men, alone. The Saint George sisters were not Beguines; they were involved in a property dispute with the convent of

⁴²⁸ The 13 sisters named in 1500 are Marguerite van Lantene, Janne Schots, Maghdalene Denijs, Anthoninse s' Vos, Margruet walls, Lisbett Keniels, Lysbet Snibbels, Marie sGrendels, Katheline Liebaerts, Joossine Baerts, Maeguerite vanden Beuvaey, Lysbette s'Dobbeleerty and Lysbette s'Kuelenarry. SAG Reeks LXVII, Sint Jorishospitaal, 4.

⁴²⁹ C. Guidera, 'The Role of the Beguines in Caring for the Ill, the Dying and the Dead,' in E. E. DuBruck and B. I. Gusick, (eds.) *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1999), 51-61; W. Simons, *Cities of Ladies, Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia, 2001), 2-54, 91-119; idem, 'Islands of Difference. Beguinages in the Medieval Low Countries,' *The Low Countries: Arts and Society in Flanders and the Netherlands. A Yearbook* 12 (2004) 205-213; P. Galloway, 'Neither Miraculous nor Astounding: the Devotional Practice of Beguine Communities in French Flanders,' *New Trends in Feminine Spirituality: The Holy Women of Liège and their Impact*. Ed. J. Dor, L. Johnson and J. Wogan-Browne (Turnhout, 1999) 107-127; M. van Luijk, "'Want ledicheit een vyant der zielen is". Handenarbeid in laatmiddeleeuwse vrouwengemeenschappen' *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen* 17 (2003), 114-123.

Saint Elizabeth, with Charles V deciding in favour of the hospital of Saint George in 1516.⁴³⁰

The Ghent sisters of Saint George were not nuns but were dedicated to a spiritual calling, especially charity and caring for the urban poor. By 1500 the hospital was a sizable institution, with 30 beds.⁴³¹ In 1516, when Charles V granted them tax exemptions, the total annual income of the hospital from property rents was £49 10 shillings.⁴³² The hospital's property is well recorded, as is its wealth, but who filled the 30 beds, and what kind of charity they received is not recorded. Residents may have included former members, like the de Vrachts, or deserving urban poor, but references are imprecise, most references are simply 'the poor' even 'the women'.

No other Flemish guild preserves such detailed records of charity, but guild sisters are well documented across Flanders. No surviving charter refers to guild-sisters, but all surviving membership lists record female members. Women among the members of archery and crossbow guilds might be unexpected, and as they are never mentioned in charters it can be assumed they had no role in the military, political or social activities, which charters were usually concerned with. Rather it would seem that the women were part of the devotional world of guilds.

A 1488 membership list from Aalst, named 62 women, most were wives or widows of guild-brothers.⁴³³ As in Ghent, the female members are harder to identify than the male members, but there are a few women present on the Aalst list who do not share a surname with any male members, and who are not noted

⁴³⁰ SAG Reeks LXVII, Sint Jorishospitaal, 1.

⁴³¹ SAG Reeks LXVII, Sint Jorishospitaal, 4.

⁴³² SAG Reeks LXVII, Sint Jorishospitaal, 1.

⁴³³ ASAOA, Invent no 155, Register Sint Joris guild, 1335-1583 f. 5v. -6.

as being their sisters or wives. It is possible, though impossible to prove, that a small number of female members joined without a guild-brother's support. The records of the Saint Sebastian guild of Bruges even feature a separate list of women and children, each paying 2 d a year in fees rather than the 6 d a year paid by full archers, as in Aalst most women are wives, widows or sisters of guild-brothers, but many have no clear connection to a guild-brother.⁴³⁴ The children are not a separate youth guild, rather a connected devotional element of the archery guild; we shall return to the *jonghe* guilds in the next chapter. The presence of women and children in the guilds, even if small in number, emphasises again that the guilds were making devotional and personal choices that no were no longer tied to their military origins.

3.9 Chapels.

Motivations for devotion or for charity are difficult to discern, but physical manifestations of devotion, in the form of chapels and their contents, are well documented. The guilds' chapels were often their most significant piece of property, whether this was in a parish church, a mendicant monastery or even a free-standing building. Objects within these chapels, movable property including cloth, books and candles, were important, symbolising guilds' devotional identity and prestige.

Chapel size and location.

Many guilds had their own free standing chapels, often in the richest and most influential parts of their towns. In Aalst the crossbowmen had a chapel on Nieuwstraat by the fifteenth century, though in the fourteenth they had a chapel inside the parish church of Saint Martin's.⁴³⁵ Their move may have been related

⁴³⁴ Every year from 1445 onwards, accounts, BASS, Volume 3 t. 1 f. 24v.

⁴³⁵ ASAOA, 155, Register Sint Joris guild, 1335-1583; for context see J. Ghysens, *Geschiedenis der straten van Aalst* (Aalst, 1986), 317; A. Haels, *Toponymie van Aalst, tot eidne der 15 eeuw* (Aalst, 1961), 179-183.

to the growing status of the guild, as will be discussed in the next chapter much of their fifteenth-century property was in prestigious locations. In Oudenaarde, as in Aalst, the crossbowmen moved from a parish church, that of Saint Walburga, into a free standing building. Given the limited size available in the Saint Walburga church, the move may have been prompted by a greater demand for space, but as no description of the chapel survives greater demand for space cannot be proven. The chapel of Saint George began attracting donations from 1348.⁴³⁶ As the wealth and prestige of the guild grew so too did their devotional activities, manifested in the chapel. The Saint George chapel grew rapidly, receiving a papal bull from Pope Gregory XI which allowed them to hold services, including funerals, in the chapel in 1374.⁴³⁷

By 1408, when a large crossbow competition was held in Oudenaarde, the chapel of Saint George was an impressive building.⁴³⁸ Before another great competition, in 1462, the chapel was redecorated, at the cost of £138.⁴³⁹ The expenses in both Aalst and Oudenaarde can be seen as indicators of status, but the devotional element in the chapels, and guild wishes for independence, is significant. Unfortunately the guild wish for their own chapel and independence of parish churches has means that few records have survived; the guild chapels of Aalst and Oudenaarde were destroyed in the sixteenth century.

In other towns, such as Bruges, the guilds chose to establish their chapels in mendicant structures. The impressive Franciscan monastery also contained the altars of some of Bruges' richest religious confraternities, including the Dry

⁴³⁶ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/2A.

⁴³⁷ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/5.

⁴³⁸ Mentioned in a charter of John the Fearless, OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/7A.

⁴³⁹ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/4B.

Tree.⁴⁴⁰ Such a location would have given the guild great prestige, but as charters made with the Franciscans show, they had a genuine concern for devotion too. The Franciscans had to ‘make a daily mass in the chapel of Saint Sebastian’. If they missed any, the friars were to pay the guild one and a half groats. On twelve specified saints’ days ‘five friars of the convent will sing mass in the chapel’.⁴⁴¹ If they missed any the convent would pay 5 gros.⁴⁴² That such exact regulations were laid out, and that the archers did complain when Franciscans did not perform their services,⁴⁴³ shows that this chapel was a centre of prayer and devotion. Relations between guilds and mendicants did not always remain convivial. In Valenciennes the crossbowmen of Saint George had been based in the Franciscan church since at least 1426, but in 1609 the Franciscans refused to renew their agreement. If the guild was in dispute with the Franciscans, or if other factors were at work, is not recorded, but the crossbowmen were forced to move to a Benedictine church.⁴⁴⁴

Though no description of the Bruges altar of Saint Sebastian survives, it must have been impressive. In 1428, through the mediation of one member Jacob vander Buerse, the chapel of Saint Sebastian had received a fragment of the skull of Saint Sebastian from Pope Martin V. The guild also received papal indulgences for all who visited the chapel on Saint Sebastian’s day, which they paid criers to announce annually.⁴⁴⁵ The chapel of Saint Sebastian of Bruges was not just a prestigious structure, but a true centre of devotion.

⁴⁴⁰ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Bruges*, I am very grateful to Dr Brown for allowing me access to his forthcoming work, as I have used selected chapters and not the full manuscript, so will not provide page numbers.

⁴⁴¹ These were Pentecost, the day of the Holy Spirit, Trinity, the days of the Holy Sacrament, Saint Bernard’s day, the day of the Holy Cross, All Saints, the day of All Souls, Saint Leonard’s day, Saint Elisabeth’s, the feast of the presentation the Virgin in the temple, the days of Saint Maurice, of Saint Sebastian and of Saint Vincent.

⁴⁴² BASS, charter 2, 23 December 1416.

⁴⁴³ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Bruges*.

⁴⁴⁴ ADN, C 9577.

⁴⁴⁵ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Bruges*

In other towns the guilds established chapels in parish churches; this would have given them a large audience as well as access to parish priests. In Lille both the archers and the crossbowmen founded their chapels in Saint Maurice, one of the largest parish churches, very close to Philip the Good's palace, the *Rihour*, and the central market places.⁴⁴⁶ When the Lille guilds established their chapels here is not clear, as surviving charters date from the late fifteenth century onwards. An ordinance of the magistrates dated 22 August 1415 banning the use of bows or crossbows in the church or cemetery of Saint Maurice implies over enthusiastic shooters were present.⁴⁴⁷ Parish churches seem to have been a more common setting for guilds' chapels, providing security and access to priests. In Ghent three of the four shooting guilds had their chapels in parish churches.

The exception was the greater guild of Saint George, probably the richest shooting guild in Flanders. Their chapel, next to the Parish church of Saint Nicholas, received rights from the bishop of Tournai in 1356, including the right to celebrate mass.⁴⁴⁸ Saint Nicholas's was a wealthy church, home to many merchants' altars, and in a significant location in central Ghent, on the Corn Market.⁴⁴⁹ The crossbowmen's free standing chapel is first documented in a will from Pieter vanden Moore dated 1339 leaving money to the Saint George's chapel outside the church of Saint Nicholas, and Daniel Lievois has convincingly argued that the chapel had a priest from this date, based on property records he has used.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ The charters issued to the guilds do not give the location of the chapels, but some documents from saint Maurice have survived, for the crossbowmen's chapel of Saint George, ADN, LRD B17734, for the archers, ADN, 16 G 406.

⁴⁴⁷ AML, 375, f. 41 v.

⁴⁴⁸ UBG Hs, G. 61731.

⁴⁴⁹ Nicholas, *Metamorphosis*, 35-42, 71, 90-93, 280.

⁴⁵⁰ D.Lievois, 'Kapellen, huijse, fruit en bloemen bij de westgevel van de Sint-Niklaaskerk in Gent,' *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent, Nieuwe Reek*, 59 (2005), 71-86.

The greater crossbowmen also owned a large complex, their *hof*, in the rich Hoogh-Poort area of Ghent. In this prestigious structure they constructed a second chapel, begun by 1469 and finished by 1478 when the bishop of Tournai visited.⁴⁵¹ The greater crossbowmen had two chapels, one in their private court, and another nearby in central Ghent.⁴⁵² The chapel next to Saint Nicholas's would have allowed the crossbowmen's devotion to have been seen by a wide audience, gaining prestige as well as spiritual capital, but again devotional motives cannot be ignored.

The other three Ghent guilds were based in parish churches. The greater archers and lesser crossbowmen were in the parish church of Sint Jan's, now Sint Baaf's cathedral, home to Jan van Eyck's Adoration of the Mystic Lamb and focus of much civic devotion and prestige.⁴⁵³ The lesser crossbowmen were there by the early fifteenth century, while the archers initially met in the crypt in the fourteenth century before moving into the church itself.⁴⁵⁴ The archers gained more space in 1493 when the Grey Sisters gave, or possibly sold, their chapel of Saint Séverin to the archers.⁴⁵⁵ Finally the lesser archers had their chapel in the parish church of Sint-Jacobs, located in the Vrijdagmarket, this poorer, more

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 87-92.

⁴⁵² For the 'social geography' of Ghent see Nicholas, *Metamorphosis*, 67-119; The location of various churches and chapels is also discussed in Boone, *Gent en de Bourgondische*, 25-64.

⁴⁵³ For the area see Nicholas, *Metamorphosis*, 56-67, 115-8; for the painting see D. M. Cottrell, 'Unraveling the mystery of Jan van Eyck cloths of honor: the Ghent Altarpiece', *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress: Objects, Texts, Images*. Ed. D. G. Koslin and J. E. Snyder (New York, 2002), 173-194; J. Vynckier, 'Dendrochronologisch onderzoek van enkele panelen uit Van Eyck retabel van het *Lam Gods*,' *Bulletin de l'Institut royal du patrimoine artistique* 28 (2002), 237-240.

⁴⁵⁴ Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 78-80; for the lesser guild SAG, SJ, NGR, 7; for the archers, RAG, Archief van Sint Baafs, 020/O, 3820.

⁴⁵⁵ The original document could not be found in the RAG, Sint Pieter's, N1943. A partial transcription, which implies the chapel was given, is present.

industrial area, was also associated with several rebellions.⁴⁵⁶ Their location in this less prestigious church implies that this was not a youth group, rather a separate, poorer, guild of archers, who also chose a local, personal devotion.

Chapel contents.

Although few of the objects that filled guilds' chapels now survive, several inventories were made in Ghent, reflecting the personal nature of guild devotion. Scattered references from other towns give glimpses of this. Aalst's flowers and altar cloth,⁴⁵⁷ significant amounts of wax purchased by the crossbowmen of Douai,⁴⁵⁸ large quantities of jewels and silver objects in the Oudenaarde Saint George chapel.⁴⁵⁹ In Ghent three inventories provide a window into guilds' chapels'. A late fourteenth, or early fifteenth-century inventory of the chapel of Saint Sebastian, with additions made in 1465;⁴⁶⁰ one from the greater crossbowmen in 1481;⁴⁶¹ and one of the lesser crossbowmen from 1528.⁴⁶²

All three Ghent inventories show large quantities of precious objects, silver crucifixes, jewels and images of saints. All three also contained decorative and comfort items, quantities of cloths and cushions, as well as more ornate altar cloths. Such expensive items were given to the chapels by guild members, or

⁴⁵⁶ S. Hutton, 'Women, Men and Markets; the Gendering of Market Space in Late Medieval Ghent,' A. Classen (ed.), *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age* (Berlin and New York, 2009), 427-430; Nicholas, *Metamorphosis*, 55-7.

⁴⁵⁷ ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2 f. 10.

⁴⁵⁸ Paid for regularly, most striking in the weekly accounts from the early sixteenth century, e.g. for 1516 every week the town gave the crossbowmen money for wine and wax, DAM, CC238, f. 53; f. 60v., f. 66 etc.

⁴⁵⁹ OSOA, gilden, 507/II/2B.

⁴⁶⁰ BMG, Sint sebastiaangilde; privilegieboek, inv 1059, f. 10-12.

⁴⁶¹ SAG, SJ, NGR, 7.

⁴⁶² SAG, SJ, NGR, 7.

were won as prizes in competitions. Expensive items showed not just the wealth and prestige of guilds, but their spirituality, as almost all objects had the arms of a saint on them, or had a devotional purpose. As important as these prestigious and expensive objects were, it is possible to find other, non spiritual, explanations for them. These expensive decorations brought prestige, showed wealth, prizes showed prowess.

Other objects recorded in the inventories, though just as expensive, were less about prestige, and more about devotion and teaching. These were the numerous books in the chapels. The archers had a ‘mass-book’ on a ‘book-stand with the arms of Saint Sebastian’. Though fascinating, the inventories from the archers and greater crossbowmen provide little detail on their books. The lesser crossbowmen’s inventory is more specific. Their books included several prayer books and books of hours, ‘one mass-book written with bastard letters,⁴⁶³ with sermons for reading, and with lessons for all’ ‘a book of ordinances, with black binding’ and, most intriguingly, ‘the hand book of the women’. Books were, of course, expensive, but cannot simply have been about demonstrating prestige. Mass books and rule books, possibly books of instruction, show a real concern for the moral and religious education of the guild, and give great insight into how devotional guild members were. Though only snap-shots of guild devotion survive, it is clear that a complex and interactive devotion developed within guilds, in response to the demands and bequests of members.

3.10 Guilds and Ecclesiastics

The Second Lateran Council, in 1139, had banned the ‘murderous art of crossbowmen and archers, which is hateful to God’.⁴⁶⁴ The crossbow’s reputation

⁴⁶³ What is meant by ‘bastaerde’ is unclear, perhaps writing that was, by 1524, seen as old fashioned, it is unlikely to mean vernacular.

⁴⁶⁴P. Norman and S.J. Tanner. (eds), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* Vol. 1 (London and Washington, 1990), 203; I am very grateful to Daniel Gerrard for this reference.

as a diabolical weapon extended into popular art works, so it is perhaps unexpected to find clerical interaction with shooting guilds.⁴⁶⁵ Ecclesiastic lords granted rights and lands to archery and crossbow guilds, some even joined them. Abbots may have been honorific members, who did not actually shoot the crossbow, but numerous Brabantine examples exist of bishops, even a sixteenth-century cardinal, as we shall see, shooting the crossbow even becoming ‘king’ of the Brussels guild. Lower down the ecclesiastical hierarchy parish priests joined shooting guild, just as they joined other civic religious fraternities.⁴⁶⁶ Though clerical members are well documented in shooting guild, no evidence of clerics playing any role in competitions survives.

Ecclesiastic lords

Relationships between the guilds and their secular lords will be discussed in chapter five, but two important charters, issued by abbots, can be analysed here. The first was issued by Enguerran, abbot of the Church and Monastery of Notre Dame de Cherchamp to the crossbowmen of Hesdin (Artois) in 1474. It makes clear that devotional activities were to be one of the primary functions of this guild, even in the midst of the wars of Charles the Bold. Stating that ‘the constable, provost and brothers of the *charite* of the Holy Spirit in the town of Hesdin, who exercise and maintain the crossbowmen’ have requested greater rights and land, so the abbot grants them ‘17 feet of land (for) enlarging their area, to be put and used for their butts and targets’ the land had formerly belonged to his monastery.⁴⁶⁷ That this had been church land is perhaps less important than

⁴⁶⁵ See introduction to V. Serdon, *Armes du diable, arcs et arbalétriers au moyen âge* (Rennes, 2005).

⁴⁶⁶ T. Dutour, ‘Les ecclésiastiques et la société laïque en la ville, le cas de Dijon a la fin du moyen âge,’ *Religion et société urbaine au moyen âge, études offertes à Jean-Louis Bigen* (Paris, 2000), 81-92; A. A.-J. Bijstervelde, ‘Looking for Common Ground: from Monastic Fraternities to Lay Confraternity in the Southern Low Countries in the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries,’ *Religious and Laity in Western Europe 1000-1400: Interaction, Negotiation, and Power*, 287-314; V. Edden, ‘The Devotional Life of the Laity in the Middle Ages,’ *Approaching Medieval English Anchoritic and Mystical Texts*. Ed. D Dyas, V. Edden and R. Ellis (Cambridge, 2005), 35-49.

⁴⁶⁷ Espinas, *Les Origines*, 341-2.

the language used here, especially the emphasis that the guild be composed of good and honest men in a '*charite*'.

In 1511, Charles Abbot of Saint Saulveur issued a revealing charter to the crossbowmen of Pecquencourt (old spelling Pecquencuik), a small town to the east of Douai. The charter established the crossbowmen 'in good peace, blessing love and tranquillity together' in 'a free guild of great crossbowmen'.⁴⁶⁸ This is followed by the rules of the confraternity, the first of which is that they pay for their entry half a pound of wax for maintaining the guild's lights. The first four rules refer to entrance, death payments and lights, the fifth is for the annual *papegay* shooting competition, the sixth and seventh refer to various masses. Only after the eighth item does the charter lay out the practical, military, obligations, including shooting, practising, owning arms and the important immunity from prosecution should someone die in practise.⁴⁶⁹

Abbots did not just enfranchise crossbow guilds, they also joined them. The earliest surviving membership list for any crossbow guild in Flanders is that of Oudenaarde. The death-list, shown here, is undated, but as the first name is Robert Count of Flanders, it must date to shortly after his death in 1322.⁴⁷⁰ The document is in poor condition, and many of the names are now illegible, however it includes at least 2 abbots of Eename, a Benedictine monastery between Oudenaarde and Ghent.⁴⁷¹ These are Gheerart van Stripein and Jan Van Berghen; the first 2 names in the second column below, the third is also a priest;

⁴⁶⁸ *vray er francq feu.*

⁴⁶⁹ ADN, 1H 369.

⁴⁷⁰ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/6A.

⁴⁷¹ This abbey, and its records, have received little attention, possible because the archives have been scattered. The chronicle will be discussed in chapter 6, for background see A. Pattin, 'Un manuscrit du XIIe siècle de l'ancienne abbaye bénédictine d'Eename retrouvé,' *Scriptorium: Revue internationale des études relatives aux manuscrits / International Review of Manuscript Studies* 44 (1990), 79-91; introduction to C. Piot, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye d'Eename* (Bruges,

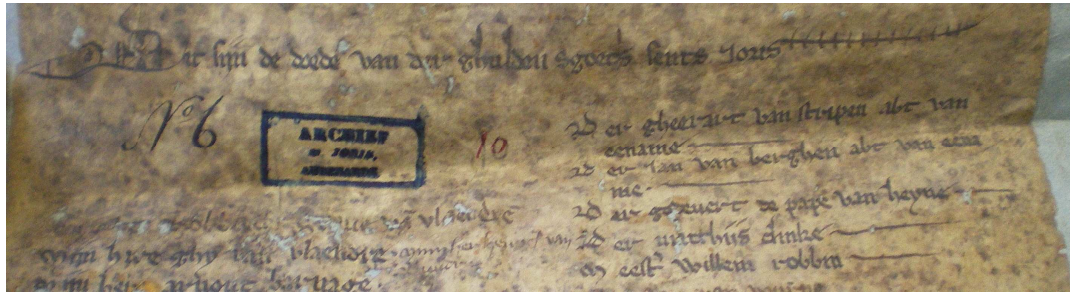


Fig 14. Oudenaarde crossbowmen's membership lists, c. 1322

A close relationship continued between guild and abbey. Fifteenth-century abbots confirmed charters issued by the Dukes of Burgundy, allowing the guild-brother to bear arms on their land.⁴⁷² Some of the great crossbow events held in Oudenaarde, such as their 1408 competitions, were recorded in the monastic chronicle. That an important monastery, from its chroniclers to its abbots, took an interest in a crossbow guild shows not just interaction between lords and townsmen, but also the creation of a spiritual community. Although no other fourteenth-century documents survive to show such clear links between great ecclesiastics and shooting guilds, it is unlikely that this was unique, especially as by the fifteenth-century clerical involvement with guilds was common.

Clerical members

We have seen that women were not mentioned in charters, but present in all lists, so too were clerics. In Aalst, the 1488 membership lists includes 8 priests. This, out of 228 members is a small figure, but that priests are here at all is significant. Further, in 1489 two 'religious' and seven more priests joined, at the same time as civic officials from other Flemish and Brabant towns, including Antwerp.⁴⁷³ That these men joined with members who were not residents of Aalst may imply they

1881); M. De Smet and M. J. Tulleken, *Ename in oude prentkaarten, foto's en doodsbeeldekens* (Oudenaarde, 1978).

⁴⁷² OSAOA, Gilden, 507/II/9A.

⁴⁷³ ASAOA, 155, Register Sint Joris guild, 1335-1583 f. 4 -7v.

played little active role in the guild. Even if they only attended one event, that nine religious figures travelled to Aalst in 1489 to join a crossbow guild is surely an indicator that it had spiritual significance, and a devotional respectability, that guilds were peaceful and respectable enough for a priest to form a community with.

The Ghent death records are some of the best sources for clerical members. The Saint Sebastian death list included 35 priests and two other ecclesiastical figures out of 4863 dead members. For the crossbowmen, the undated death registers are divided into 4 sections, lords, men, women and priests. In her analysis of the first 30 years, 1468-1497, Sarah van Steen identified 45 priests out of the 1396 members.⁴⁷⁴ Significantly, at least one of these men left the guild not money for his *dootghelt*, but a crossbow, showing that he was not simply guild chaplain, but an active shooter. When the abbot of Saint Pieter's Benedictine Monastery in Ghent, Gerard van Cuelsbrouck, died in 1519 he paid his *dootghelt* in money to the guild of Saint George.⁴⁷⁵ Though small in number, that clerics and abbots were present in shooting guilds at all is both surprising and important.

Abbot and priests were often members of shooting guilds; the involvement of bishops and higher ecclesiastics is less common in Flanders. In Brabant further examples can be given. In 1466 and 1471 the 'king' of the Brussels crossbow guild was John of Burgundy, bishop of Cambrai. In 1509 the king was another bishop of Cambrai, Robert de Croy, and in 1537 the position was won by a cardinal, Evrard de la Marck.⁴⁷⁶ All levels of ecclesiastic figures chose to join shooting guilds, the weapons were no longer seen as diabolical; the devotional actions of guilds had made them worthy of such figures.

⁴⁷⁴ Steen, *Den ouden ende souverainen gilde van den edelen ridder Sente Jooris*, names on CD.

⁴⁷⁵ RAG, abbey Sint Pieter, invent 252, n2071.

⁴⁷⁶ Bernaerts, *Chronologie du Grand serment royal et de Saint George*, 61-3 ; Wauters, *Notice historique*, 10-12.

Ecclesiastics and competitions

Through devotion, the guilds had become worthy of ecclesiastical membership, yet competitions have no documented devotional features or participants. Competitions will be the focus of chapter six, but it is worth emphasising the secular nature of such events. Even in Tournai, an Episcopal city, the archbishop did not welcome guilds; he was not mentioned in invitations nor in poems commemorating shoots. The abbots of Eename joined the Oudenaarde guild, their chroniclers described shoots, but the abbots did not attend competitions. Secular figures, aldermen or mayors, welcomed shooters, were mentioned in invitations. Secular spaces, market places and town halls, were used for shoots or for feasts, ecclesiastic space is never referred to. Chapters of the Golden Fleece were preceded by masses in a large urban church, but no source could be found that makes such an implicit link between shooting competitions and ecclesiastical figures or space. Such silence cannot be fully explained, but it may be that the extravagance of competitions, their potential for injury, remained undesirable to clerics, even after the guilds themselves had become acceptable.

Conclusion

Guilds of archers and crossbowmen emerged in towns full of social and religious groups, providing their members with another level of spiritual choice. Though our sources are problematic, a great deal can be discovered about the guilds' devotional activities. Dedication to saints shows not just guild identity, but a spiritual choice and demonstrations of devotion. Saints' banners and emblems were displayed in procession, in iconography, or in chapels, showing the significance of dedication. Though Saint George and Saint Sebastian remained by far the most common patrons, a growing number of female saints demonstrated that dedication was not static, but responsive. Significant spending on, and regulations about, devotional activities shows the vitality of guild devotion, especially in the encouragement of masses and funding of lights. Regional variations emerge, with guilds in smaller towns becoming more concerned for devotion, as fewer spiritual choices were available to guild-brothers.

In death and remembrance, variation between large and small towns is also apparent, though all guilds were concerned to remember dead members. For some, shooting guilds, like Italian confraternities, became an heir of last resort, with property and even houses being left to guild charity. Sources are once again a problem, and how typical Ghent was unclear, but it is in its own right a fascinating case study. In the Ghent Hospital of Saint George the guild-sisters, like Beguines, cared for the poor, administered guild charity and in doing so showed the strong devotional character of guilds and a growing role for women.

Guild chapels, and their contents, show an investment in devotion, but can be seen as demonstrations of status and largess. Whether in a parish church or a free standing chapel, every guild funded services, in particular prayers and masses. The contents of such chapels, from flowers to books, show not just wealth, but a care for devotion and learning. Finally clerical members make clear how far the reputation of shooters had evolved from their thirteenth-century diabolical image, to groups worthy of ecclesiastical, even episcopal, membership. Though it is also apparent, that ecclesiastics kept their distance from the large competitions that took place across the Low Countries. Archers and crossbowmen had evolved from military groups, into significant devotional organisations caring for their dead and the living, providing spiritual choices for guild-brothers and sisters.

Chapter 4:

The Social world of guilds

Guilds' social relations, like devotional activities, represented choices and personal responses to changing situations. In considering the social world of guilds, their ideals of community will be contrasted with a reality of hierarchy. Guilds' social activities will be considered under seven headings. Firstly the organisation of guilds will be discussed through an analysis of the size and officials of the guilds. Secondly the process of entering guilds will be examined, as members had to pay, own equipment and be considered worthy, or of moral credit. Moral worth was, as section three will show, important throughout one's membership, as guild-brothers had to live good lives. Section four will look at the internal unity of the guild, through their commensality and community. In looking at guild communities, all of the positive ideals of guild and brotherhood will be drawn together, through the oaths men took, the importance of eating and drinking together and even mutual aid to brothers in crisis. Section five will broaden out the ideals of fraternity in examining larger guild communities, the links maintained between guilds, through hospitality and gift giving. Sections four and five deliberately emphasise the positive aspects of unity and fraternity, while section six will concentrate on the reverse of this, with conflicts within and between guilds, drawing especially on judicial records. Finally section seven will return to the Bruges records analysed in chapter two, in particular seating plans, to look at how hierarchy functioned within one guild.

4.1. Guild size and organisation.

It is convenient to begin our analysis of the social world of guild with a discussion of how a guild was organised. Shooting guilds varied greatly across Flanders in size, but in organisation were broadly similar.

Size

Every guild for which membership lists survive had more members than they should have had. Smaller towns often had larger guilds than big towns. Although membership lists do not explain why numbers were so large, some conclusions can be reached and suggestions made. We have seen that guilds choose different levels of devotion, so it is no surprise they differed greatly in size. Table 3 shows the estimated populations of Flemish towns in 1450 (based on figures from Pieter Stabel)⁴⁷⁷ and how many members the guilds there should have had. As will be discussed below; guild often had far more members than their ordinances set out, but such regulations are an excellent starting point.

Town	Estimated population	archers	year	crossbowmen	year of charter	other
Ghent	50000	c. 300		c. 300		
Bruges	36736	c. 300		c. 300		
Mechelen	20000	As many as needed	1430	60	1432	
Lille	12000	40		60	1443	also 80 hand-gunners
Douai	8000	unknown		120	1480 (confirmation 1455)	60 gunners, 1452
Ypres	8780	80	1400	unknown		Information from Sayer
Sluis	8640	unknown		60	1455	

⁴⁷⁷Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition,' 58-62.

Table 3, Estimated town populations (1450) and guild size

Town	Estimated population	archers	year	crossbowmen	year of charter	other
Courtrai	8460	60	1423			
Oudenaarde	6480	Unknown		60	1408	
Nieuwpoort	5040	80	1522	unknown		
Dendermonde	4500	unknown		60	1398	
Aalst	3520	80	1431	60	1430	
Sint.- Winoksbergen	3460	100	1447	unknown		
Menin	1520	60	1521	unknown		
Axele	1372	unknown		60		1465 in decline
Tielt	1252	100	1430	100	1430	
la Bassee	1200	60	1522	unknown		
Commines	800	150	1455	150	1455	
Lannoy	240	50	1459	unknown		
Koekelare	not given, very small	60	1469	unknown		
Annappe	not given, very small	80	1518	unknown		
Pecquencourt	not given, very small	unknown		50	1511	
Ingelmunster	not given, very small	30		30		

Table 3, Estimated town populations (1450) and guild size

Town	Estimated population	archers	year	crossbowmen	year of charter	other
Cysoing	not given, very small	80	1431	unknown		
Wattignies and Estrées	not given, very small	40		80		
Zuivekerke	not given, very small	60	1449	unknown		
Houthem	not given, very small	60	1440	unknown		
Elverdinge en Vlamertinge	not given, very small	600 archers and crossbowmen	1447	unknown		to Corneil, Bastard of Burgundy
Dadizeele	not given, very small	40	1463	unknown		
Croix	not given, very small	unknown		30	1410	
Boezinghe	not given, very small	unknown		80	1409	
Lo	not given, very small	unknown		80	1410	
Drincham	not given, very small	150	1441			

The table reveals a wide variation. The small town of Croix,⁴⁷⁸ as well as a large one like Lille,⁴⁷⁹ should have had 30 crossbowmen in their respective guilds.

⁴⁷⁸ AML, RM, 16973, 15.

Dendermonde⁴⁸⁰ and Coudekerke⁴⁸¹ should have had 40 archers and crossbowmen in their guild and there should have been 80 crossbowmen in Lo,⁴⁸² and 80 archers in Cysoing.⁴⁸³ Several border towns had larger guilds than central ones, implying a defensive consideration in charters and regulations. Sint-Winnoksbergen had less than half the population of Courtrai, yet 100 archers rather than 60. Drincham, south of Sint-Winnoksbergen, again near to Calais, should have had 150 archers, far more than central towns like Ypres or Lille.

Towns of different sizes varied hugely in the numbers they wished to have in their guilds. Many shooting guilds should have been small, perhaps reflecting noble wishes to control armed men, and guild wishes to keep themselves prestigious throughout limited numbers. Charters set out the ideal, a number of guild-brothers deemed by authorities to be large enough for defence, but small enough to control. Membership lists reveal that what was desirable for town governors was not always what happened. In Lille the archers should have numbered 40,⁴⁸⁴ but two membership lists survive from 1415⁴⁸⁵ and 1419⁴⁸⁶, containing respectively 76 and 117 names, with only 9 on both. The crossbowmen of Aalst, from 1421, should have numbered around 50,⁴⁸⁷ this was later raised to 60, but a membership list from 1462 has 138 members, all men.⁴⁸⁸ Oudenaarde should have numbered 60 crossbowmen from 1408.⁴⁸⁹ But a

⁴⁷⁹ AML, affaires générales, 9, charter 1.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi* vol. 2. 296-300.

⁴⁸¹ RAG, RVV, 7351 f. 225v.

⁴⁸² RAG, RVV, 7351 f. 197v.-198 r.

⁴⁸³ Delsalle, 'La Confrérie des archers de Cysoing', 14-19.

⁴⁸⁴ AML, PT, 15879 f. 215.

⁴⁸⁵ AML, RM, 16973, 48.

⁴⁸⁶ AML, RM, 16973, 90.

⁴⁸⁷ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 207-208.

⁴⁸⁸ ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2 f. 3 v. – 5 v.

⁴⁸⁹ OSAOA, gilden, 707/II/8A.

membership list from 1497 includes an incredible 708 names.⁴⁹⁰ Many of the names on the 1497 lists may have been deceased, but must indicate the popularity of the guild, and members' choice to allow large numbers to enter the guild.

No reason is given in any Flemish document to explain why so many were in the shooting guilds, but two explanations are possible. In 1467 the *petit* crossbowmen of Tournai claimed they needed to increase their number by 20 to fulfil their duties.⁴⁹¹ A similar need could have existed among Flemish guilds, with the archers of Lille needing 74 men to defend Lille in 1415 rather than 40. The previous chapter showed the importance of choice; that in smaller towns guilds had to assume more devotional activities in response to the wishes of their members. A similar explanation could be offered here. Oudenaarde had no jousts and only a small and relatively poor archery guild; less choice was available. It is likely that many Flemish guilds grew because so many wanted to join, despite their statutes, guilds evolved in response to local choices and demands.

Variety of guilds.

Large towns had not just the greater guilds of archer and crossbowmen, but lesser groups too. In both Ghent and Bruges, the smaller guilds are referred to as 'jonghe', leading all modern writers to call them youth groups. Arnade discussed the Ghent youth groups and the important task of the older men in 'instructing young men in lessons about civic power'.⁴⁹² Though, as Arnade himself admits, no Ghent document refers to age restrictions. Indeed no document could be found in any Flemish archive that mentions any age restrictions for shooting guilds in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Outside of Flanders, some examples of

⁴⁹⁰ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/17A.

⁴⁹¹ Grange, *Extraits analytiques des registres*, 294.

⁴⁹² Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 72-4.

genuine youth group exist. The statutes of the young crossbowmen in sixteenth-century Leiden clearly state members had to be under eighteen.⁴⁹³

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Ghent *jonghe* crossbowmen had their own chapel, with mass books and an instruction manual for women. They were also responsible for defending part of the walls of Ghent.⁴⁹⁴ Neither action sounds appropriate for groups composed exclusively of under-eighteens. In Ypres the *jonghe* archers and crossbowmen organised their own regional competitions, attracting *oude* or *grand* teams as well as *jonghe* and *petit* ones. That *jonghe* and *oude* guilds competed together, for the same prizes, once again implies that the men were of equal physical stature and ability. It is, of course, impossible to prove a negative from the silence of documents, but further evidence can be drawn from Bruges to show that *jonghe* guilds were new guilds of lesser status, not youths.

In Bruges the *jongehof* is first mentioned in a charter of 1435.⁴⁹⁵ The new crossbowmen are set up with the consent of the older guild. Though such language could imply older men supervising youth, it could just as easily demonstrate those of great status allowing others to take up their exulted and privileged sport. Within the new *jonghe* guild of Bruges, each guild-brother had to have a crossbow, be skilled in its use, and have it ready to use at all times in his house. He had to take an oath and wear livery. The *jonghe* guild elected their own officials, even their own headmen, from among their own members. All of the Bruges *jonghe* crossbowmen would march in the procession of the Holy Blood, like the greater. If they failed to do so they would be fined 20 shillings. If a member missed the *papegay* shoot, or the mass that preceded it, they would be

⁴⁹³ Reintges, *Ursprung und Wesen*, 293-7.

⁴⁹⁴ SAG, 'Jaerregister' 301, 4 f. 81 r., 1438 Jan 16th.

⁴⁹⁵ SAB, 385, Sint Joris / Jongehof, 1.

fined 5 shillings. The detailed charter makes no illusion to age, nor a point at which members must leave the *jonghe* guild and join the greater, *oude*, guild.

Terminology is important here, as shown by two additions Bruges charters issued to the lesser crossbowmen. The first issued in 1516 and in Flemish, granted rights to the lesser guild, calling them *jonghe*. Significantly when the charter was confirmed by Charles V, in French, the guild was referred to not as ‘jeune’ but as *petit*.⁴⁹⁶ The confirmation, granted in 1557, stated that the guild had been in existence of over a hundred years, having been established by the counts and countesses of Flanders. The guild had their own garden, and they, like the older guild, had the right to bear arms anywhere in Flanders and go to win prizes at any competition. In Lille, and other French speaking towns, the lesser guilds are called *petit*, small, not young, and again no reference survives that make any allusion to age. Beyond Flanders, in Leuven, the lesser guild was called *kleine* (small) and described as *nuwer scutters* in later documents.⁴⁹⁷ The guild was clearly newly established but for men, not a youth group.

It is not possible to prove that *jonghe* and *petit* guilds were all adults, as no membership lists survive, but it is important to note that every study has referred to them as youth groups. Many writers, including Moulin-Coppens, have even stated that members had to be under 18, but provided no proof.⁴⁹⁸ Given the presence of women and children within the archers of Saint Sebastian of Bruges, it seems that shooting guilds could train their youth internally, they did not need to set up separate guild for this purpose. Where other Flemish youth groups existed, such as devotional confraternities for young men, clear reference was

⁴⁹⁶ SAB, 385, Sint Joris / Jongehof, 2 and 3.

⁴⁹⁷ A. Meulemans, ‘De Kleine Leuvense Schuttersgilden’, *Eigen schoon en de Brabander* 59 (1976), 70-84.

⁴⁹⁸ Moulin-Coppens, *Sint Jorisgilde te Gent*, 59 states that the *jonghe* crossbowmen of Ghent were under 18.

made to who was in the group.⁴⁹⁹ It seems more likely that the *jonghe* and *petit* guilds were lesser groups. Guilds that were less ancient and prestigious than the *ouder* or *grand* guilds.

In large towns, such was the demand to be in a shooting guild, that new guilds emerged and were eventually granted rights by civic and noble authorities. Just as numbers within the great guilds grew, showing the popularity of shooting and of the devotional and social activities of guilds, so too did other groups of shooters. We return again to the idea of choice; many more desired the prestige of guild life than could afford to enter the great guilds, so lesser ones developed. They built chapels and gardens in less prestigious areas of towns, but could on many occasions take part in competitions, or interact socially, with members of the greater guilds, guilds should have interacted peacefully in brotherly communities, though as we shall see this did not always happen.

Officials.

Despite variation in size, guild organisation is surprisingly consistent across Flanders. Guilds had two levels of organisation, one ceremonial and honorific, and the other practical.

Honourable and ceremonial officers.

In Bruges from at least the 1380s, both the archers and the crossbowmen chose a headman, *hoofman*, who held office for life and was usually a locally important figure. For the archers several of their headmen came from either the Adornes or Breydel families, discussed in chapter two. Jacob Adornes, co-founder of the Jerusalemkerk, town aldermen and civic-treasurer, even courtier of Philip the

⁴⁹⁹ R. Muchembled, 'Die Jugend und die Volkskultur im 15. Jahrhundert. Flandern und Artois,' *Volkskultur des europäischen Spätmittelalters. Beiträge der Internationalen* ed. P. Dinzwilbacher and H.-D.Muck (Stuttgart, 1987), 35-58.

Good was elected headman by 1454.⁵⁰⁰ After Jacob's death, in 1465, Jan Breydel was chosen as headman.⁵⁰¹ After he was executed in 1483, for supporting Maximilian against his town, Martin Lem, a court figure, became headman.⁵⁰² The headmen chosen by the crossbowmen were no less prestigious, including Lodewijk van Gruuthuse.⁵⁰³ In choosing leading civic, even noble, figures as their headmen, the guilds made clear statements not just about their prestigious status, but also about their links to nobility, especially where headmen were active shooters. In Bruges, guild accounts show the headman attended many meals and shoots, or received wine and cloth, binding them to the peaceful guild community.

Headmen were noble figures, other guild officials adopted noble language. In particular the man, who won the *papegay* shoot, was known as the 'king'. The annual shoot, called *papegay* for the wooden bird members shot at, was the largest guild event, an opportunity to show their status and prestige to the entire town. The shoot often took place in spring or early summer; in Pecquencourt on May Day.⁵⁰⁴ In Douai the crossbowmen shot in mid-lent and the archers on Mayday.⁵⁰⁵ In Lille the shoots of the different guilds would take place each Sunday across the summer.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰ BASS, accounts 1454-6 volume 2, f. 10; discussed in Godar, *Histoire des Archers*, 91-3.

⁵⁰¹ Jan Breydel had been an active archer before being elected headman, from at least 1452 BASS, accounts 1454-6 t 1, f. 2; discussed in Godar, *Histoire des Archers*, 112-4.

⁵⁰² Martin may have been appointed the same year, 1483. Godar argues that he as 'imposed' upon the guild in 1483, but there are no guild accounts between 1481 and 1485. Martin was certainly head man by 1485; BASS, accounts 1486- 87, f. 1.

⁵⁰³ When Lodewijk became headman is unclear, he certainly was by 1462, SAB, 385 Sint Joris, Rekeningen 1445- 1480 f. 160 v.

⁵⁰⁴ ADN, 1H 369.

⁵⁰⁵ DAM, CV, annual payments, e.g. in 1394 the crossbowmen were given £12, the archers £8 CC 203, 446-8.

⁵⁰⁶ For example in 1475 the crossbowmen shot on the last day of May, the archers on 11th July, the smaller crossbowmen on 24th July and *archers de plaisance* on 1st August, AML, CV, 16212 f. 76-77.

Every guild for which records survive refers to a guild 'king', in Flanders⁵⁰⁷, elsewhere in the Low Countries⁵⁰⁸ and in France.⁵⁰⁹ The same term in use across such an area not only shows guild interaction, and a shared community, but also the importance of the title itself. Kings of guilds were prestigious, skilled men, but a higher level of status existed. If a member shot the bird 3 years in a row, he would be called an emperor. In 1412 the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde received an extra grant of wine for their emperor,⁵¹⁰ while the crossbowmen of Ypres had an emperor of the crossbowmen in 1473.⁵¹¹ The term was in use in small towns as well as the larger centres; Ardenbourg had a 'keyser' of their archers in 1463.⁵¹² Royal titles adopted by the best shooters show the chivalric ideals of the shooting guilds.

For emperors and kings, their skill with the bow won them a notable and prestigious position. The king of the Lille crossbowmen led them in the annual procession of Notre Dame de La Treille.⁵¹³ The Bruges crossbowmen gave their king a uniform each year, while most members had to pay for their own.⁵¹⁴ In Douai, from at least 1440, the king had all of his expenses, including food and

⁵⁰⁷ For example a charter granted by Philip the Good to the archers of Ypres in 1446 is addressed to 'the companions, king and confreres of the confraternity', RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 199v.

⁵⁰⁸ For example a poem commissioned for, or by, Philippe de Croy praises him for being 'Crowned king of your crossbowmen' of Mons published in Devilliers 'Notice Historique sur les milices communales', 169-285; a letter in Nivelles was addressed to the king, dean, brothers and members of the crossbow guild in 1454, published in Willame, *Notes sur les serments Nivellois*, 12.

⁵⁰⁹ Though not in the earliest charters issued by Charles V as Dauphin; the earliest use of their terms seems to have been in a charter of Charles VI to the crossbowmen of Paris in 1410, perhaps under the influence of John the Fearless, rights were given to 'king, constable and master of the crossbowmen' of Paris *ORF* vol. 9, 522-6.

⁵¹⁰ OSAOA, microfilm 684, accounts 1406-1422, register 2, f. 8.

⁵¹¹ AGR, CC 38697 f. 23.

⁵¹² AGR, CC, 31760 f. 23.

⁵¹³ AML, CV, payments every year, eg 1455, 16196 f. 73.

⁵¹⁴ SAB, 385, st Jorisgilde, Rekening 1445- 1480 f. 3 v.

drink, paid at guild expense.⁵¹⁵ In the title of practical officials, discussed below, variation was common, but all Flemish guilds had kings who gained honorific, even financial, rewards for their shooting skills.

Practical offices.

The practical organisation of guilds was undertaken by annually elected guild-brothers. The election process, indeed of which guild brothers could hold office, is not documented. A rule from Aalst that if elected a crossbowman was obliged to fulfil his role strongly implies not all practical responsibilities were popular.⁵¹⁶ The officials were chosen on a significant day. In Lille the archers elected their officials on the same day as they shot the *papegay*.⁵¹⁷ In Aalst the crossbowmen did so on Saint George's day, 23 April.⁵¹⁸

In looking at the guild officials, language becomes more of a problem than for the kings and headmen. Ducal charters, almost always written in French, often refer to a 'governor' (*gouverneur*).⁵¹⁹ Town governors were great noble figures, appointed by the duke, and that the same title was used for those in charge of shooting guilds makes a clear statement about their status. In contrast, charters issued by civic authorities tend to call this same figure 'constable' *connestable*⁵²⁰ and 'dean' (*doyen*).⁵²¹ Flemish sources also usually refer to *connetabels* and

⁵¹⁵ DAM, Arbalestiers de Douay 24II232 f. 3 bis v.

⁵¹⁶ ASAOA, 4, boek met den haire f. 71 v. – 73.

⁵¹⁷ AML, PT, 5883 f. 28-31.

⁵¹⁸ ASAOA, 4, boek met den haire, f. 71 v. – 73.

⁵¹⁹ A charter of Philip the Good to 'the governors and the confreres' of the guild of Saint George in Langemark in 1465, RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 228-228v.

⁵²⁰ The aldermen of Lille granted a charter to the 'constable and confreres' of the archers in 1420, AML, RM, 16973, 91.

⁵²¹ The crossbowmen of Nieuport, a charter of Philip the Good of 1423, RAB Stad Nieuwpoort, 66 (inventaris 3390).

deken.⁵²² These words are significant in revealing how the different bodies saw the guilds and their officials. Constable has a military origin, and is no doubt linked to earlier organisations of the watch. Dean, is used in some militia accounts, but is more commonly seen in craft guilds regulations. Each of the 54 Bruges craft guild were overseen by a ‘deken’. That the civic sources adopted this same word show that they saw shooting guilds in the same light as craft guilds; as practical part of their urban environment.

The titles for the senior officials changed, but their role was relatively constant across Flanders. Officials’ two main duties were keeping the peace within the guild and keeping the accounts. From 1443 the Lille crossbowmen had three constables, two were ‘in charge of conduct and governance’ and keeping the guilds peaceful. The other, the ‘sovereign constable’ kept order and accounts.⁵²³ In Douai the constable had to be a respectable figure, he had to ‘free from dishonesty’, and be ‘sufficient’. Within the guild, he kept accounts and helped to organise the guilds’ lights and wax, beyond the guild he was also expected to help organise and inspect the town artillery. In return for all of his services, the constable received £12 from the town each year,⁵²⁴ a significant sum equivalent to over a month’s wage for a master carpenter.⁵²⁵ Constables or deans, annually elected, had to be responsible, trustworthy men. They were often expected to keep the accounts, implying a level of expertise, perhaps even a mercantile background. However the only requirement recorded in guild sources for office holder was for the men to be ‘sufficient’ and honourable.

⁵²² Charter of Philip the Good to archers of Kortrijk in 1423, RAK, Oude Stadsarchief Kortrijk, 478, 50-152.

⁵²³ AML, PT, 5883, fol 28-31.

⁵²⁴ DAM, Arbalestiers de Douay 24II232 f. 1v.

⁵²⁵ According to figures in Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d’armes*, 366 a master carpenter earned at most 9 shillings a day, £12 = 240 shillings = 26.67 days wages, as carpenters did not work Sundays or saint’s days it would take at least a month, probably more, to earn £12.

Below the constables or deans were officials responsible for ten men. In regulations their number is specified, so Aalst should have had 60 crossbowmen with 6 such men.⁵²⁶ As their membership list is given in groups of ten, it seems likely this organisation expanded with guild numbers. French sources simply called these men ‘*dixeniers*’ i.e. leader of ten⁵²⁷. Flemish sources occasionally call them *dizeniers*, but in Ghent they are called ‘*proviseurs*’.⁵²⁸ Each Sunday ten men had to go and practise shooting in the guild’s garden, led by their *dixeniers*, fines were laid out for failing to do so. Such fines were not usually large; in Courtrai in 1523 the archers were fined only 6 d for missing a shoot.⁵²⁹ As noted, guilds varied hugely in size, but should always have contained multiples of ten, each lead by a *dixenier*. Such regulations imply a military need, but as competitions teams were also usually ten men, the *dixeniers* can be considered as both military and cultural officials.

The above officials are common across Flanders and are detailed in numerous towns, but others are less well documented. Many guilds seem to have had a *varlet*. Among the crossbowmen of Douai, the *varlet* had to call the men to shoot, tell the brothers when the annual meal was, and inform them if a guild-brother had died so that they could attend the funeral.⁵³⁰ By 1444 the *varlet* was being provided with livery at civic expense.⁵³¹ The Lille archers had a *varlet* by 1415 when their membership list includes ‘*Denys le Baiduyn varlet of the archers*’.⁵³² *Denys* is in the middle of a long list, not at the top with other guild officials, but not left to the end, implying he is an archer as well as the *varlet*. In Aalst, the

⁵²⁶ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 212v.-213.

⁵²⁷ For example a charter of Philip the Good to the archers of Cysoing addressed to the ‘constable *dixeniers et confreres*’ AML, RM 16973, 215.

⁵²⁸ SAG, jaerregister, 301/27 f. 82 v. in ordinances of April 1423.

⁵²⁹ RAK, Oude stadsarchief Kortrijk, 5341.

⁵³⁰ DAM, AA 94, f. 71.

⁵³¹ DAM, CC 217, 107 v.

⁵³² AML, RM 16973, 91.

varlet was responsible for calling the guild-brothers to the annual shoot. If a member missed a shoot he had to pay a fine of 5 shillings, but if the varlet had not told a member about it, he had to pay the fines.⁵³³

Guilds' varlets were also responsible for carrying messages. In 1394 Lille gave 'Pierre Biuyen, varlet of the crossbowmen of Tournai 4 lots of wine' for telling them about a competition to be held in Tournai.⁵³⁴ Varlets were part of the machinery that kept guilds running; they were almost certainly guild-brothers, shooters as well as officials, just as the other guild officials were. Just as the use of 'king' implies an association with nobility, so does this term which implies a noble or knight's servant, even a close connection with a king.⁵³⁵ It is tempting to compare the shooters' varlets to noble heralds. Heralds were servants of the king, carriers of military and diplomatic messengers, and as such had military immunity.⁵³⁶ They could also be active in peace, especially in keeping names of those who took part in tournaments.⁵³⁷ However guilds' varlets fought in war, they owned arms, and they dressed like the other shooters. Though they were honourable, the varlets were not militarily separate, as heralds were.

Finally, guilds used clerks. Though such figures did not enjoy the fame and honour of the guild kings, the clerks were perhaps the most important guild officials from a historical point of view. In Bruges these men are named; in fact, they recorded their own names in the guild books they created, even signing them.⁵³⁸ Clerks are mentioned in Ghent from at least 1364,⁵³⁹ though none there

⁵³³ ASA, 3, peysboek 152 v. -153.

⁵³⁴ AML, CV 16125 f. 34 v.

⁵³⁵ E. Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue Française du seizième siècle*, vol.7 (Paris, 1967), 398.

⁵³⁶ B. B. Broughton, *Dictionary of Medieval Knighthood and Chivalry. Concepts and Terms* (Westport, 1986), 239-241.

⁵³⁷ K. Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland, 1424-1513* (Woodbridge, 2006), 78-9; R. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry, Revised Edition* (Woodbridge, 1995), 43-5.

⁵³⁸ SAB, 385, st Jorisgilde, Rekeningen 1445- 1480 f. 92 v.

are named. In Bruges the clerks who kept the records were active shooters, taking part in the *papegay* and some meals. Most importantly they physically wrote the accounts, whether they simply noted down the words of the constable or were more intimately involved with the accounts they created is unclear.

4.2. Entry requirements.

Guilds varied in size, but across Flanders they were well organised communities with honourable and practical officials. Entrance into this community depended on military skill and equipment, but also on wealth and status. Guild exclusivity enhanced prestige. It has been shown that mercantile guilds raised their status by increasing their entry fees,⁵⁴⁰ a similar effort may be present within the shooting guilds.

Military.

To become a guild-brother a man had to own weapons and know how to use them. The statutes for the archery guild of Watignies and Estreés from 1405 state that new members ‘will not be received unless they are good and sufficient’ archers.⁵⁴¹ In 1440 to join the archery guild of Cysoing a new members had to be ‘good and skilled and able for the shooting of the bow’.⁵⁴² As we saw in chapter one, guilds remained militarily significant at the end of the fifteenth century, even in the sixteenth guild brothers had to be able to serve. In 1517 new crossbowmen joining the guilds in Sluis were required to be good and sufficient shooters.⁵⁴³

⁵³⁹ UBG, Hs G 3018.

⁵⁴⁰ M. A. Amos, ‘Somme Lordes and Somme others of Lowe Estates’ London’s Urban Elite and the Symbolic Battle for Status,’ *Tradition and Transformation in Late Medieval England* ed. D. Biggs, S. D. Michalove and A. Compton Reeves (Brill, 2002), 159-176.

⁵⁴¹ ADN, B1600 f. 25v. and 26.

⁵⁴² AML, 16973, 231.

⁵⁴³ ADN, LRD, B17879 .

New members also had to know how to use their weapons, how they learnt such a skill when shooting was banned to all non guild-brothers in towns is not clear. In 1443 the crossbowmen of Lille had to have a crossbow worth 60 shillings ‘and other arms needed for the exercise of the bow’ within 6 weeks of joining the guild.⁵⁴⁴ From 1453 the archers had to have ‘good bow and sufficient armour’.⁵⁴⁵ In Lille these arms were also protected, if members got into debt, their arms could not be seized as payment; neither could they be pawned.⁵⁴⁶ In 1383 the crossbowmen of Douai had to own simply a powerful and suitable bow,⁵⁴⁷ by 1499 they had the choice of having one of wood or metal.⁵⁴⁸ The archers of Aalst, in 1421, had to have ‘bow and 2 dozen good shots’ in the town, but when serving the duke they were to bring ‘2 good bows and 4 dozen arrows well and sufficient’.⁵⁴⁹

Cost.

Weapons were expensive, but further funds were needed to join guilds. To enter the Lille guild of Saint George in 1443 cost 36 shillings.⁵⁵⁰ The archers’ entrance fee was slightly lower, at 24 shillings.⁵⁵¹ Both were significant sums of money, in a time when the daily wage for a master mason was 11 d.⁵⁵² By having a higher membership fee, the crossbowmen of Lille attempted to show that they were wealthier, richer and more prestigious than the archers. High entry fees should

⁵⁴⁴ AML, PT, 5883, f. 28-31.

⁵⁴⁵ AML, OM, 377 f. 141 .

⁵⁴⁶ AML, PT, 15884, 137 and 15920, 12.

⁵⁴⁷ DAM, 24II232, Arbalestiers de Douay f. 2.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., f. 10 v.- 11.

⁵⁴⁹ ASAOA, 3, peysboek, f. 152 v. -153.

⁵⁵⁰ AML, RT, 15883 f. 28.

⁵⁵¹ AML, RM, 15920 f. 91.

⁵⁵² Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism*, 306.

have limited access to guilds for the less wealthy in Lille, adding to guild exclusivity.

High membership fees should have ensured high status, but just as guilds contained more members than they should have, not all paid their fee. The Bruges sources are particularly useful here, though as we have seen the crossbowmen's records are incomplete. Only 51 out of 902 members are recorded as paying an entrance fee, so it is beyond doubt that at least some of these entered for free. Aalst records are not as complete, but show that, in 1461-2, three new members entered the crossbow guild, one paying 40 shilling, the other two 20 shillings.⁵⁵³ A membership list from 1499 records 11 new entrants, one 'My lord Mer Henric van Belle, knight, lord of Zoetstrad' who paid £12, two others paid £6, and the rest paid nothing.⁵⁵⁴

Guilds contained more members than they should have in many places, but in others high entrance fees contributed to guild decline. In 1465 the crossbowmen of Axelle complained to Philip the Good that the guild was 'greatly diminished' and was now 'small in number' because the entrance fee was too high. In light of this, Philip wrote that those 'wishing to enter in the said guild of Saint George in the said place of Axelle will be received without having to pay any charge'.⁵⁵⁵ Entrance fees could raise the status of guilds, but in many places they seem to have been ignored as guild became more popular among less well-off residents. When strictly enforced, entrance fees could lead to guild decline. Choice and variation are key in understanding this contrast, as some guilds chose to remain exclusive and expensive, while others chose to disregard limiting rules and welcome large numbers of non-paying, or lower paying members.

⁵⁵³ ASAOA 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 2 v.

⁵⁵⁴ ASAOA, 155, Register Sint Joris gild, f. 10 v.

⁵⁵⁵ SAG, 'Vreemde Steden', doos 7.

4.3. Reputation.

Social standing, or reputation, was a central yet difficult to quantify facet of medieval life. An individual's ability to trade, even his place in society, could be determined by his reputation, it has even been argued that the 'pursuit of reputation' was at the heart of all activities within a social framework.⁵⁵⁶ In towns reputations could be gained through membership of craft and religious confraternities. In analysing English craft guilds, Rosser has identified the extremely useful idea of moral credit,⁵⁵⁷ which could be gained through membership of prestigious confraternities or rich groups. In Flanders, shooting guilds could augment an individual's moral credit only insofar as they took care of their communal reputation. Reputation could be controlled through entry requirements, rules and especially oaths.

Social standing.

As early as 1348 the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde had to be 'good men' and 'pleasing' as well as skilled shooters.⁵⁵⁸ In 1398 to become a crossbowman of Dendermonde a new member had to be 'dignified and profitable',⁵⁵⁹ while in 1410 the crossbowmen of Croix had to be 'pleasing men, of good renown'.⁵⁶⁰ In a charter of 1447 Philip the Good required the archers of Sint-Winnoksbergen to be 'men of good fame and renown'.⁵⁶¹ The crossbowmen of Douai had to be 'of

⁵⁵⁶P. Marsh, 'Identity; an ethogenesis perspective,' R. Trexler (ed.), *Persons in Groups: Social Behavior as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Binghamton, 1986), 19.

⁵⁵⁷G. Rosser, 'Workers' Associations in English Medieval Towns,' Lambrechts and Sosson, *Les métiers au moyen âge*, 284-7.

⁵⁵⁸OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/1A.

⁵⁵⁹*Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi* vol. 2, 296-300.

⁵⁶⁰AML, RM, 16973 f. 15.

⁵⁶¹RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 220-221.

suitable life and of good renown in (their) ways and habits'.⁵⁶² By 1493 the crossbowmen of Roubaix had to be 'of honest life fame, renown and dignity'.⁵⁶³ Controlling entrance through reputations should have meant that guilds were composed of good, worthy, men who would boost the guild communal reputation, able to keep peace as well as serve in war.

Maintaining reputation.

To maintain a high standing, and a good community, guilds had to ensure moral behaviour. An early ordinance issued by the aldermen for the crossbowmen of Ghent in 1360, emphasises 'moral behaviour' and that no members should 'risk shame'.⁵⁶⁴ In Lille crossbowmen could be removed if found to be 'unworthy of the noble guild'.⁵⁶⁵ Most guilds tried to ensure the maintenance of their communal reputation by ensuring all new members took oaths. The centrality of oaths is clear from the language used to describe the guilds. Flemish sources often call them sworn guilds;⁵⁶⁶ while the French sources regularly call them 'serments'.⁵⁶⁷

Oaths would be taken by new members upon entrance, but the setting and form of entrance is poorly documented. For at least one Lille archer, Jehan Landas, this took place in the garden of the archers, before the Porte de Courtray, in the presence of Hue de Lannoy, governor of Lille, in April 1415.⁵⁶⁸ No other entrance

⁵⁶² DAM, DAM, Arbalestiers de Douay 24II232 f. 2.

⁵⁶³ AMR, EE1.

⁵⁶⁴ Moulin-Coppens, *Sint Jorisgilde te Gent*, 28-30.

⁵⁶⁵ AML, PT 5883, f. 21-83.

⁵⁶⁶ Oudenaarde in 1427 record the gift of cloth to the *ghezwooned* shooters, AGR, microfilm 685, accounts 1427-28 f. 194.

⁵⁶⁷ In 1465 Douai sent their 'Archers of *serment*' to Charles the Bold, DAM, BB1 f. 20; In the same year Philip the Good granted rights to 'the *serment* of the crossbowmen of monsieur of Saint George' in Axelle, SAG, reeks 'Vreemde Steden', doos n 7.

⁵⁶⁸ AML, RM, 16973, f. 79 .

and oath is documented for Lille, and the reason for such a special ceremony is unclear. Other entrance oaths may have taken place in town halls, as oaths had to be sworn to civic officials, or in guild halls or even chapels. Oaths emphasised honour and obedience. The oath of the crossbowmen of Douai from 1383 has survived. Here members promised to ‘guard and defend... the *diseniers* and *confreres*, the body and the honour of our very redoubtable lord monsieur the Duke of Burgundy... the body of the law and the aldermen of the said town (Douai) and of the provost and lieutenant’.⁵⁶⁹

Shooting guilds were by no means the only group in late medieval towns that used oaths to enhance and enforce standing. Aldermen and municipal officials took oaths upon entering office. Their oaths were taken in town halls, given importance not just through their words, but through ritual and symbolic settings. The new aldermen were bound to uphold the honour of the town.⁵⁷⁰ Promises made on entrance to a shooting guild, like those made by new aldermen, made clear what was expected, setting a high moral standard. Oaths changed the members from individuals with individual interests into a corporate unit that should have been concerned for their communal honour, linking the guild-brothers with civic values and civic ideology.

4.4 Community.

Guilds strengthened their community through language, social interactions and commensality. Virtually all sources refer to the members as ‘brothers’, implying the closeness that guilds tried to maintain between members. Bonds could be augmented through eating and drinking together, either in large communal meals or the smaller groups of ten who were required to shoot together each Sunday.

⁵⁶⁹ DAM, AA94, f. 70v.

⁵⁷⁰ J. Van Leeuwen, ‘Municipal Oaths, Political Virtues and the Centralised State; the Adaptation of Oaths of Office in Fifteenth Century Flanders,’ *JMH* 31 (2005), 185-7.

Less well documented, but no less important, were regulations for helping guild-brothers, or their widows, should they be in need.

Brothers.

Though terminology is difficult to interpret, the language guilds used to describe their members is significant. In French sources, the most common word is ‘*confrere*’, This term is in part religious, and was used to describe members of lay associations formed with the aims of piety and charity, implying the closeness of the group.⁵⁷¹ The term was in use for centuries. In 1382 oaths were taken from the *confreres* of the crossbow of Douai,⁵⁷² and as late as 1560 lands were granted to the ‘*diseniens* and *confreres* of the archers of Saint Sebastian’ of Douai’.⁵⁷³ In Lille numerous items in the town accounts begin to the ‘king constable and *confreres* of the *serment* of the crossbowmen’ or archers.⁵⁷⁴

Flemish sources are less consistent; the town accounts of Oudenaarde often refer to the community, ‘*gheselle*’ of the guilds.⁵⁷⁵ Some Ghent sources use *gheselle*; more commonly members are called brothers, ‘*broeren*’.⁵⁷⁶ The Bruges lists refer to the named individuals as ‘*gildebroeders*’.⁵⁷⁷ Even letters of invitation, such as that from Hulst in 1483, refer to ‘*broeren*’.⁵⁷⁸ The regular use of ‘brothers’ for members is significant, and reveals how close the guilds felt themselves to be.

⁵⁷¹ P. Robert, *Dictionnaire Alphabétique et Analogique de la Langue Française* (Paris, 1969), 893 ; Vincent, *Des charités bien ordonnées*, 27-30; Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue Française* vol. 2, 30.

⁵⁷² DAM, AA94, fol 70v.

⁵⁷³ DAM, 2 II 2/ 12.

⁵⁷⁴ AML, CV, the terms used in annual gifts of wine to both archers and crossbowmen, and later gunners, e.g. f. 16185, accounts of 1444, f. 40 v.

⁵⁷⁵ OSAOA, Microfilm 684, is 1406-1422 20 v.

⁵⁷⁶ SAG, SJ, NGR, 2.

⁵⁷⁷ SAB, 385, Sint Jorisgilde, register met ledenlijst enz. 1321-1531 f. 3.

⁵⁷⁸ SAG, SJ, NGR, 30.

Other groups, such as the Bruges painters' guild, also called themselves 'ghildebroeders',⁵⁷⁹ so it is possible to make too much of this. Both *confrere* and *broer* highlight the closeness of guilds, choosing familial names to identify members; both will be translated as 'brother' or 'guild-brother'.

Commensality, eating and drinking together.

The guild-brothers created a community and reinforced their bonds through eating and drinking together. This was common of all guilds, confraternities, or even noble organisations. The importance of meals for 'ritualization' among English craft guilds has been shown, as even the poorest guilds had some kind of meal.⁵⁸⁰ Annual meals were similarly central among religious fraternities, though more often connected to feeding the poor.⁵⁸¹ Meal should have brought all members of any guild or confraternity together, in unity, as companions and helped to maintain peace and brotherhood.

In Lille, the importance of commensality was made very clear for members. When entering the crossbowmen, new members were required to pay 24 shillings 'for the profit of the guild', and 12 shillings 'for drinking in a recreational assembly on the day of their entry'. On the day of their funeral, their last day in the guild, a member was once again required to buy drinks for his brothers, by leaving 12 shillings 'which will cover drinking for the *confreres* who carry the body'.⁵⁸² The Lille crossbowmen were a community bound by drinking together. Commensality welcomed new members into the guild, and encouraged members

⁵⁷⁹ Original too is too delicate to consult, but has been digitised <http://www.historischebronnenbrugge.be>, accessed 30/09/10.

⁵⁸⁰ Rosser, 'Going to the Fraternity Feast', 430-445; A. Douglas, 'Midsummer in Salisbury, the Tailors' Guild and Confraternity, 1444-1642' *Renaissance and Reformation* 13 (1989), 35-51; M. McRee, 'Unity or Division? The Social Meaning of Guild Ceremony in Urban Communities,' Hanawalt, and. Reyerson, *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (London, 1994), 189-197.

⁵⁸¹ Banker, *Death in the Community* 75-83; M. Flynn, 'Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities,' *Renaissance and Reformation* 13 (1989), 53-68. .

⁵⁸² AML, PT, 5883, f. 28-31.

go to the funeral of a dead member, to remember him and to pay their respects. In Aalst, from 1421, a new archer was required to pay 20 shillings to the guild, and further to buy one ‘pott’ of wine.⁵⁸³ In Dendermonde, new crossbowmen bought one or two lots of wine for their brothers, depending upon their status.⁵⁸⁴

Guild meals were even more important in cementing social bonds. Attending an annual meal was a key part of guild life for even the smallest guilds. Philip the Bold’s ordinance to the crossbowmen of Dendermonde, in 1398, stated that on the ‘day of the Ascension (21 May) the said guild-brothers will promise to eat dinner together in the place (guild hall) as ordered by their governors’ and each guild brother was expected to pay equally for the meal ‘whether present or not, for the said dinner’.⁵⁸⁵ In Douai the annual meal took place after the *papegay* shoot, the ordinance of the crossbowmen from 1382 stating that all guild-brothers ‘will be in assembly (for) a dinner on the said day (of the *papegay*) after the shoot’.⁵⁸⁶ In the small town of Langhemark, the guild-brothers should have had ‘dinner all together’ following their *papegay* shoot, according to a 1465 charter from Philip the Good.⁵⁸⁷ In larger towns there were two annual meals, for the guilds of Bruges and Lille these were on the day of the *papegay*, and on the day of their patron saint.⁵⁸⁸ Meal physically brought guild-brothers together; in doing so they should have strengthened guild community and united the brothers.

On certain occasions, meals could show not just unity, but largess and guilds’ high status. In Lille the crossbowmen’s statutes state that the town will give them

⁵⁸³ ASAOA, 3, peysboek f. 152 v. – 153.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi*, vol. 2, 296-300.

⁵⁸⁵ *ibid*, 296-300.

⁵⁸⁵ RAG, RVV, 7351 f. 225v.

⁵⁸⁶ DAM, Arbalestiers de Douay 24II232 f. 2.

⁵⁸⁷ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 228-228 v.

⁵⁸⁸ AML, PT 5883 f. 28-31.

additional funds to support the guild's cost in having fine meals and wines in the 'company of strangers and messengers'.⁵⁸⁹ The crossbowmen of Aalst received extra money and wine in 1485 when Maximilian 'with many other lords and good men' ate with the crossbowmen of Saint George.⁵⁹⁰ Meals could be ways of building unity within the guild, creating bonds among members, but they were also opportunities for prestige and for demonstrations of honour, especially when nobles were present.

Mutual aid.

The effectiveness of aid given by craft and religious guilds to members in need is much debated, but it seems many were concerned for members that fell into hardship.⁵⁹¹ For shooting guilds, mutual aid is rarely recorded, but some forms of aid did occur. In the larger towns no evidence of guild mutual aid has survived, no charter or account from Ghent, Bruges or Lille refers to supporting brothers in hardship. It is of course possible that men did help each other informally, either as guild-brothers or simply as friends. That shooting guilds in large towns did not need to legislate for members, or their widows, falling into poverty strongly implies that they felt more secure, either because their members were richer, or because in large towns they had other, craft guild or fraternal, access to aid. The Aalst records show far more practical concerns for mutual aid among guild members.

The archers of Aalst received a new charter from Philip the Good in 1421, said to be confirming 'ancient custom'. The charter stated that if an archer fell ill or

⁵⁸⁹ AML, PT, 5883 f. 28-31

⁵⁹⁰ AGR, CC 31479 f.47.

⁵⁹¹ C. Vincent, 'Pratiques de l'assistance dans la vie associative professionnelle médiévale: aumônes ou secours mutuels ?' in A. Guislin, et P. Guillaume (eds.), *De La Charité médiévale a la sécurité sociale*. (Paris, 1992), 23-30; S. Bos, 'A Tradition of Giving and Recieving; Mutual Aid within the Guild System,' *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries* ed. M. Prak, C. Lis, J. Lucassen and H. Soly (Aldershot, 2006), 175-178.

became poor though ‘mishap’ all of the other guild-brother would pay for a mass to be said for him.⁵⁹² The archers did not provide material care for their members, rather spiritual aid. In contrast, the crossbowmen of Aalst seem to have provided a more practical care for widows of guild-brothers. Though such aid is not mentioned in any of their surviving regulations, accounts from 1461-2 shows small payments made to widows of recently-deceased crossbowmen. The amounts are tiny, none more than 12d a month,⁵⁹³ but that they exist at all is extremely important.

The Aalst charter is unusual in providing care for the living, far more common was charity or aid for the dead. In Pecquecourt⁵⁹⁴ and in Enghien in Hainault,⁵⁹⁵ the guilds would pay for a funeral if a guild-brother could not afford one. Paying for funerals was one of the most common forms of charity for many confraternities, so that the guilds provided this for their members is significant. As guild members had to be rich and ‘good men’ to join a guild, they were perhaps unlikely to fall into poverty to the extent they could not afford a funeral, but this form of security reveals not just the importance of devotion to guild-brothers, but the role of mutual aid and the care the guild brother had for each other, and the strength of their community.

4.5 Community beyond one guild.

The best documented cases of guild interaction across Flanders are the large competitions that will be the focus of chapter six. Though not as grand or spectacular as competitions, other interactions existed between guilds, including

⁵⁹² ASAOA, 3, peysboek f. 152 v. – 153.

⁵⁹³ ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild f. 2v; widows received less in a month than the daily wage of a master mason (11d.); Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism*, 306.

⁵⁹⁴ ADN, 1H 369.

⁵⁹⁵ E. Matthieu, *Histoire de la ville d’Enghien* vol. 2 (Mons, 1878), 768- 774.

eating and drinking together, practising together, and smaller, low-level shooting events. Such low level interactions were as important as the great competition in creating bonds of peace and community across Flanders.

Guilds in one town.

Before examining bonds across Flanders, a short note on relationships between the Bruges shooting guilds is useful. Every year in Bruges, the Saint George guild gave four stoops of wine to the archers and to the young crossbowmen.⁵⁹⁶ The archers similarly gave four stoops of wine to the crossbowmen of Saint George and to the lesser crossbowmen.⁵⁹⁷ Although the lesser crossbowmen's records have not survived, it seems likely that they would have reciprocated. It is significant that no hierarchy is apparent here, unlike in gifts of wine from the town, as we shall see in the next chapter. No other guild accounts mention such payments, but nowhere else do they survive in such depth. The Bruges accounts show that relationships between guilds did not have to be hostile, but could be convivial and friendly through mutual gifts of wine.

Inter-town meals.

Bruges once again provides the best examples of inter-town guild conviviality, as nowhere else have records of attendance at meals been kept. As with the charity of the Ghent guilds, whether the Bruges guild was unique, or simply unique in having their records survive, cannot be proven. Bruges was a market centre, so may have had greater links to other towns. But given the strength of urban networks, it is just as likely that others guild visited neighbouring towns for eating of drinking, just as in Bruges.

⁵⁹⁶ SAB, 385, Sint Joris, rekeningen 1445-1480 f. 3 v., f. 7, f. 22. etc.

⁵⁹⁷ Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 80-137.

The account books of the archers of Saint Sebastian show that every year, from 1454 onwards, delegates from Damme and Dadizeele attended the archers' annual meals.⁵⁹⁸ Less regular visitors also occur among these Bruges list; visitors included the king of the Lille archers in 1470 and 1480.⁵⁹⁹ In 1460 the Bruges archers were visited by representatives from both Ghent and Wervick.⁶⁰⁰ The Bruges archers built a community of shooters beyond their own towns, and by including urban visitors from across Flanders helped to maintain a regional network.

Influence of Ordinances.

Visitors at feasts are difficult to track in surviving records, but examples of towns issuing similar ordinances, or even asking other towns' advice, are more common. Towns sought advice from each other when issuing regulations to their craft guilds,⁶⁰¹ so contact in the issuing of ordinances to shooting guilds is to be expected.

The best example of a new guilds looking to established guilds for their statutes comes not from an archery or crossbow guild, but from the gunners of Lille. In 1482 the Lille aldermen, in the preamble to their first charter issued to the gunners refer to the 'deliberations of the council, after having seen and visited certain ordinances of the towns of Valenciennes and Douai regarding similar guilds (of gunners)'. The aldermen have 'concluded and decided to obtain from My Lord the Duke of Burgundy permission and authority to establish those of the said guild (the gunners)' with the same rules as the Douai guild.⁶⁰² The charter

⁵⁹⁸ First mentioned BASS, accounts 1454-56, f. 11 v.

⁵⁹⁹ BASS, accounts 1465-72, f. 62 v. – 64, accounts 1472-80 f. 97.

⁶⁰⁰ BASS, accounts 1460-65, f. 6 bis 1 v.

⁶⁰¹ Small 'Centre and periphery in late medieval France', 148-151.

⁶⁰² AML, OM, 275, f. 21.

issued to the Lille gunners the next year by Philip the Fair,⁶⁰³ is almost identical to one issued to the gunners of Douai in 1452.⁶⁰⁴

Such a clear record of one guild examining existing guilds in other towns, and choosing the most fitting model, does not survive for the archery or crossbow guild. Cooperation and interaction may still have existed, their statutes are much older and oral discussions have left no archival trace. Other examples of guild's influencing each other do, however, survive. In 1518 Charles V granted the newly enfranchised archers of Annappes the 'franchise as those in our town of Lille'.⁶⁰⁵ The guild-brothers of Annappes, like the crossbowmen and archers of Watignies and Estrées⁶⁰⁶ and the crossbowmen of Croix⁶⁰⁷ had to take their oath in the presence of the governor of Lille, in Lille itself, showing the influence of the town.

Though archery and crossbow guilds are not recorded as reading charters granted to their neighbours, they did ask advice when they needed it. In 1456 the archers of Neiuwpoort sent representatives to Bruges to find out the best way to organise and regulate a large shooting competition.⁶⁰⁸ A small town naturally looked to a larger one for a suitable model for shooting, but even a great centre like Bruges had to ask for advice. In 1523 a guild-brother, Arnould Neyson, broke guild rules and would not obey the officials, the Bruges crossbowmen asked their guild-brothers in Mechelen how they should handle the situation.⁶⁰⁹ When guilds

⁶⁰³ AML, RM, 15920 f. 12; also published in A. Fromont et A. de Meanynck, *Histoire des Canonniers de Lille* vol.1 (Lille, 1892), 3-4.

⁶⁰⁴ DAM, AA85 f. 59-60.

⁶⁰⁵ AML, RM 16978, 7.

⁶⁰⁶ ADN. B1600 f. 25 v. -26.

⁶⁰⁷ AML, RM, 16973 f. 15.

⁶⁰⁸ Godar, *Histoire des Archers*, 106-7.

⁶⁰⁹ P.-J. van Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines* vol. 4 (Malines, 1866), 95.

needed help or wanted advice, they looked to each other for assistance, implying that they saw other guilds in other towns as part of a shared community, not as rivals.

Practising and gifts of wine.

Many guilds visited their neighbours for small events, usually including only the two guilds, visitors and host. In Oudenaarde, where the crossbowmen of Saint George received 12 stoops of wine for Saint George's day each year, many visiting guilds were giving wine for visiting and shooting with their guild. In 1415 the Ghent guild visited and received 8 stoops,⁶¹⁰ in 1418 the same amount was given to the crossbowmen of Wervik⁶¹¹. In 1419 the crossbowmen of Douai received 4 stoops,⁶¹² as did those of Valenciennes a year later.⁶¹³ Amounts varied, but for every year for which town accounts, Oudenaarde was visited by at least one guild of crossbowmen, and the visitors were given wine or money at civic expense.

As we shall see later, Lille did not host any great competitions, but did take part in this low-level network of visiting other guilds. In 1415 the archers were given 8 lots of wine to go and shoot in Ypres and 4 lots to go to Courtrai, while the crossbowmen received 13 lots to go and shoot in Croix. In the same year they hosted the archers of Arras, who received 8 lots.⁶¹⁴ In 1420 the crossbowmen of Valenciennes visited and received 8 lots.⁶¹⁵ Two years later those of Douai

⁶¹⁰ OSAOA, 684, accounts 1406-1422, 3rd register, f. 12.

⁶¹¹ OSAOA, 684, accounts 1406-1422, 3rd register, f. 117 v.

⁶¹² OSAOA, 684, accounts 1406-1422, 3rd register, f. 121.

⁶¹³ OSAOA, 684, accounts 1406-1422, 3rd register f. 161.

⁶¹⁴ AML, CV, 16159 f. 42 v. – 44.

⁶¹⁵ AML, CV, 16164, f. 45 v.

received the same.⁶¹⁶ In both Lille and Oudenaarde, every year, at least one visiting guild was received. For smaller towns only fragments of town accounts have survived, but show similar patterns of visiting guilds shooting and drinking as a community. The small town of Kaprijcke, north of Ghent, whose town accounts are typically only 7 folios long, gave their archers £6 each year. In 1462 they were visited by the archers of Hulst, and gave them wine worth £12.⁶¹⁷

Towns and cities have been described as ‘nodal points’ of networks.⁶¹⁸ Though the great urban centres of Flanders held the largest and best documented competitions, a lower level of inter-urban events was also present. Ninove, a small town in eastern Flanders, located on the Dender, a tributary of the river Scheldt, is a fitting example of low-level events. Ninove’s location gave it significance beyond its size. Ninove’s population in 1450 has been estimated at just 1716, but its location, on a river, between Geraardsbergen and Aalst gave it access to wider festive and commercial networks.⁶¹⁹

Between 1389 and 1436 the town accounts of Ninove show the importance of local festive culture and that guilds of archers and crossbowmen were a central part of festive networks.⁶²⁰ Every year, for which accounts survive, the guilds of archers and crossbowmen are collectively given £18 for their *papegay* and for taking part in the procession. The guilds attended large competitions, including the great Oudenaarde shoot of 1408 which will be discussed in chapter six for which the crossbowmen received £24. Many of the *schiet spelen* mentioned in the Ninove accounts are far smaller events.⁶²¹ In 1408 the archers received just £3 12

⁶¹⁶ AML, CV 16166, f. 50 v.

⁶¹⁷ AGR, CC, 33028 f. 6.

⁶¹⁸ A. Cowan, ‘Nodes, Networks and Hinterlands,’ *Cultural Exchange* vol. 2, 28-37.

⁶¹⁹ Stabel, ‘Composition et recomposition’, 56-8.

⁶²⁰ AGR, CC, 37076 -37103.

⁶²¹ AGR, CC, 37095, f. 11 v.

s for attending a shoot in the unidentified place of ‘P’sse’.⁶²² In 1416 the archers went to a shoot in Lenneke, winning ‘fair prizes’ and received £8. The prestige of the town attended had less to do with funding than prizes; when the crossbowmen attended a shoot in Ypres the same year, but did not win a prize, they received only 8 shillings. In 1417 the archers went to Leuven, and won a prize, and so received £6. The crossbowmen received the same amount the next year for shooting in Binche, as did the archers who went to Lessines.

In 1424 Ninove hosted to the crossbowmen from Aalst, giving their visitors wine worth 26 shillings. They must have staged a kind of entrance for the Aalst men, as many civic trumpeters were paid for a day’s service. A local competition was held in Ninove in 1426, attended by archers from Geraardsbergen, Lessines and Menin, all visiting guilds received wine worth 18 shillings. The competitions attended and hosted by the Ninove guilds are poorly described, but cannot have been on the scale of the Ghent, Tournai and Oudenaarde shoots, which will be described in chapter six. Though far smaller, the Ninove local shoots are just as significant as they give a glimpse into a lower level of inter town networks. Such local events show that great competitions were not the only occasions at which guild would meet, shoot and drink together. Regular inter-town connection of practising, and drinking, together were a special part of guild communities, and an integral part of guild membership.

4.6 Conflicts within and between guilds

So far, we have seen the strong community that guilds wished to create, in their own towns and across Flanders, but conflicts must also be understood. Conflicts are not well documented; this deficiency is partially explained by a lack of civic justice records from the fifteenth century. Further, it should be remembered that

⁶²² The abbreviation and damage meaning the full name cannot be recovered.

within guilds constables had the right to correct members' behaviour; so many guild disputes would never have received municipal attention. For example the Ghent archers were required to avoid all discord, and any conflicts should have been settled by the dean and king.⁶²³ Though they should have been brotherhoods, and should have lived in peace with other guild, conflicts are documented within and between guilds.

Conflict in one guild.

We have seen that documents in Lille emphasised internal unity, honour and obedience among the archers and crossbowmen, but both guilds broke these rules. In 1470 the king of the archers, Jehan Poton, and another guild member, Roger Lobe, had a dispute. The justice register records that 'Poton offered and said exceedingly bad things with much injurious language and many great and detestable oaths. In doing so he went against the ordinance and constitution of the said garden'. As a result, Poton was forbidden entry to the archers' garden and expelled from the guild. Both Poton and Lobe were punished, by pilgrimage.⁶²⁴ But this was not the end of the story, a few months later, in July 1471, Poton 'had been found in the garden where previously he had been reported for abuse'. He had entered 'against his oath'.⁶²⁵ Poton's next punishment has not been recorded, nor is the reason for this squabble, but this was the king of the archers, the best shooter, described in the court records as a cobbler.

The crossbowmen of Lille were similarly quarrelsome. In 1458 one guild-brother, Guilbin d'Ypres 'with disorder and rebellion' injured a fellow member, Jehan de Huernes, and refused to obey the king and constable.⁶²⁶ Here a difference

⁶²³BMG, Sint sebastiaangilde; privilegieboek, inv 1059, f. 1 v.-3.

⁶²⁴ AML, RM, 15919 f. 20.

⁶²⁵ AML, RM, 15919 f. 35.

⁶²⁶AML, RT, 15884 f. 137.

emerged. In 1471 Potin, archer king and cobbler, was punished by the aldermen. In 1458 Guiblin d'Ypres appealed directly to the governor of Lille, and sought an exemption from punishment. Whether he received a pardon or not is not clear. No punishment is recorded, so it is possible that he received a verbal pardon, but the Lille justice records are imperfectly organised and preserved, it is also possible his sentence was not written down, or has been lost. Whether successful or not, it is significant that this crossbowman could appeal to the governor, a nobleman appointed by the duke, the cobbler Potin could not have done so. That Guilbin had a personal connection to such a figure shows he was an important man, probably related to, if no one of, the 15 aldermen (as well as 37 other municipal offices) from the d'Ypres family.⁶²⁷ This was a problem of an over-mighty confrere. For all their oaths, brotherhood and drinking in recreational assembly, guilds were not without conflict. Some favoured the ideal of unity, but others chose not to uphold it and had the means to pursue their own actions.

Conflict between guilds.

In Ghent, tensions within guilds are less well recorded, but tensions between the two crossbow guilds, the so called lesser and greater (*jonghe* and *grote*) were more obvious. Rules were passed that the lesser crossbowmen should obey and respect the greater. The *jonghe* were required to have a member of the *grote* guild as their headman, in 1416,⁶²⁸ 1449,⁶²⁹ and in 1468.⁶³⁰ All three charters make clear an ideal; that the 2 separate guilds, one of higher status, should respect one another, should follow their rules and respect their hierarchy. In 1446 a dispute broke out between the two guilds over precedence in shooting, showing that the lesser guild members were not willing to stay in their lower position indefinitely. In 1467 the dispute seems to have been more serious, involving the revenues of

⁶²⁷ D. Clauzel, 'Les élites urbaines et le pouvoir municipal; le "cas" de la bonne ville de Lille aux XIV et XV siècles,' *RN* 78 (1996), 267.

⁶²⁸ SAG, jaarregister, 301/27 f.82 v.

⁶²⁹ SAG, jaarregister, 301/ 39 f. 63 r.

⁶³⁰ SAG, jaarregister, 310 49 f. 19 r. and 110 v.

the lesser guilds. However the town decided in favour of the greater guild, requiring the lesser crossbowmen pay a large fine.⁶³¹

In 1481 the guilds again fell out again over precedence, with the lesser guild trying to shoot before the greater guild. The magistrates attempted to re-impose 'friendship' 'for the honour of the town'.⁶³² Though details of these conflicts are limited, from rules and fines it seems clear that the lesser guild of Saint George were not happy to remain subservient, they wanted the same rights, status and financial support as the greater guild, but the aldermen consistently supported the greater guild. Such statutes show that although guilds were honourable groups, their honour and prestige was relative to other guilds, and if a greater guild felt that the lesser guild was acquiring more status this caused conflicts, with the greater desperate to hold onto their privileged position. Such disputes do not detract from the ideal of guilds as agents of social peace, rather disputes show the complex and personal nature of guilds.

4.7. Hierarchy.

A great deal of the above information is based on statutes, showing the guild ideals, or of legal record showing the worst transgressions. To capture some sense of regular guild relations, only one source is available, the account books of the Bruges guild of Saint Sebastian, in particular their seating plans. I know of no comparable source for any other urban groups anywhere in Flanders. The unparalleled Bruges records permit a glimpse inside the guild hall, and show how far guild-brothers chose to follow rules, and how far they chose to interact with each other. Meals were not just about commensality and conviviality, hierarchy was ever present, just as in the seventeenth century Haarlem militia meals which

⁶³¹ SAG, SJ, NGR, 20.

⁶³² SAG, SJ, NGR, 29.

Schama described as balancing ‘fraternity with station’.⁶³³ Given that all members should have attended the annual shoot and the meal afterwards, table 4 provides some startling results.

Table 4, attendance			
year	<i>papegay</i> shoot	St Sebastian meal	<i>papegay</i> meal
1454	248	79	116
1455	243	71	102
1456	no records	no records	no records
1457-8	no records	no records	no records
1458-9	no records	no records	no records
1459-60	no records	no records	no records
1460-61	225	not given	not given
1461-2	169	75	48
1462-3	248	not given	89 (+Anthony the Great Bastard)
1463-4	218	56	not given
1464-5	241	not given	not given
1465-6	228	55	72
1466-7	216	59	80

⁶³³ S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches, an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1988), 177-182.

Table 4, attendance			
year	<i>papegay</i> shoot	St Sebastian meal	<i>papegay</i> meal
1467-8	221	67	65
1468-9	214	56	77
1469-70	244	75	91
1470-1	241	79	74
1471-2	227	78	80
1472-3	228	81	74
1473-4	233	78	not given
1474-5	238	54	not given
1475-6	236	69	not given
1476-7	172	47	not given
1477-8	178	71	74
1478-9	175	74	81
1479-80	185	102	94
1480-1	124 (incomplete)	90	not given

The table does not reveal the full picture of guild activity; more can be understood from a few more figures. As noted in chapter two, 755 members can be identified within the Saint Sebastian guild; all attended at least one *papegay*

shoot.⁶³⁴ In contrast, 368, almost half, are not recorded as attending the meal that followed the shoot, though as is clear from table 4, not all meal records survive. Each year, the guild organised two meals, after the *papegay* and on the day of Saint Sebastian, but 254 members were never listed among the attendees. Of course many of these would have gone to the meals for which figures are not given, but it is nevertheless striking that a significant proportion, perhaps as many as a quarter, of all guild-brothers did not attend any meals. The following table can be constructed of attendance at meals, based on the 35 recorded meals.

⁶³⁴ All living members, seven men died and 1455, and their death payments are their first and last mention in guild accounts.

Table 5, meals attended		
number of meals attended	number of members	percentage of members
20+	12	1.60
19	0	0
18	2	0.27
17	7	0.93
16	3	0.40
15	4	0.53
14	6	0.80
13	4	0.53
12	9	1.20
11	14	1.86
10	14	1.86
9	12	1.60
8	10	1.32
7	19	2.52
6	21	2.78
5	30	3.98
4	55	7.30
3	58	7.70
2	81	10.76
1	133	17.66
0	256	33.99
total	753	100

The total number of members in this period was 755, but all meals record 'our headman' in attendance, so the two headmen from the period, Jacob Adornes then Jan Breydel, have been excluded as their extremely high attendance could upset the figures.

Members should have attended meals, but many did not. It would be easy to conclude from the above tables that many members were absent and that only the wealthiest came to multiple feasts, but guild attendance was far more complex. A significant number of members, 44%, attended fewer than five meals, showing that the unifying potential of meals was understood, as well as their social function, but members did not have to attend every year. Small but significant numbers, 8%, attended 9-14 meals over the course of their membership. Many of these were wealthier members but only one member of the powerful patrician families attended more than ten meals; Joris Metteneye who came to eleven meals.

Though many patricians came to a higher than average number of meals, of the twelve men who attended more than twenty meals, only two, Jan van Lende and Jan dHondt, ever held civic office. The remaining ten most active members of the Saint Sebastian guild were less well-off figures, for five of them, no reference to them could be found in any of the civic document detailed in chapter 2. One of the remaining five was Jan Tsolles, briefly discussed in chapter two; he began his career as town clerk and by his death had amassed significant wealth from taxes and a municipal pension. The others were an arrow-maker, a baker, a shearer and a lock-gate-keeper.⁶³⁵

The overview from Bruges shows that members considered their membership differently and made different choices. Some were extremely active in the guild, like Jan Tsolles who, in addition to attending many meals, was the dean of the guild four times between 1454 and 1466,⁶³⁶ and king in 1472. Others played little role in guild activity. Tobias Breydel never attended a guild event after the execution of his father, Jan; in fact, his only interaction with the guild seems to have been his entry and purchase of a uniform, both in 1479-80, although his

⁶³⁵ Williem Andries, *speyhouder*.

⁶³⁶ A member was not allowed to be dean in consecutive years

death is recorded in 1497. An overview of all guild attendance is extremely important in revealing the patterns of membership, but to truly understand guild hierarchy, an analysis of the two feasts of one year, through the surviving seating plans, is even more revealing.⁶³⁷

In the accounts, the seating plans are clearest for the years 1465-72, though they do exist for other years. The two meals of 1468 have been chosen for analysis here. Both meals had average numbers of attendees, 67 men at the meal of Saint Sebastian and 65 at that of the *papegay*, with an impressive 25 men at both meals. Tables were of a similar size too, with 4 tables, at the meal of Saint Sebastian these sat, respectively, 11, 23, 22 and 11 men, while at the *papegay* feast the tables sat 11, 22, 17 and 14 men, showing space was not the only consideration. A similar pattern is apparent across all of the seating plans from 1465-1470, the top tables never sat more than 12 nor less than 9, the second 21-25, the third 17-22 and the last 11-17. The pattern changed only with the purchase of a new table in 1470.

The Saint Sebastian meal of 1468 consisted of 67 men. The top table, 11 men, included the highest ranking, the guild king, Jacob Pots, their headman, Jan Breydel, an alderman and councillor. With them was Joris Metteneye, burgomaster, alderman three times and councillor twice. Further there were two joustiers of the White Bear; also here was the town sheriff. These members could be considered as the guild's upper class, but the other five men were not civic office holders. Of the five, only one, Pauwels Boykin, appears in any civic documents, as a collector of small water taxes.

⁶³⁷ The seating plan from 1470 has been analysed in L. Crombie 'Honour, Community and Hierarchy in the Feasts of the Archery and Crossbow Guilds of Bruges, 1445-1481,' *JMH*, 37 (2011), 102-113.

The next table, of 23 men, was headed by Jan Tsolles, noted above as an active archer and tax collector. Also present was his son Melsior. This was only the second feast Melsior had attended. He was one of the three Tsolles children present in guild records from 1454. In 1468 he was still a young man not yet listed among a craft or as an office holder, but by his death in 1500 he had become a wealthy broker. The remaining 21 men were a diverse mix of trades. For 5 of them, nothing is known beside their activity within the guild. The remainder were a blacksmith, goldsmith, potter, 3 brewers, 1 innkeeper, a shipper, wool-merchant and arrow maker. Also here were four men from connected crafts, a skinner, a tanner, a bag maker and a glover, one man who collected small taxes on waterways and one town sergeant. Though a mixed table, all of these were wealthy craftsmen, many held office within their crafts, and a clear pattern of drinking trades and leather workers emerges.

The third table, of 22 men, was just as diverse; seven of them could not be identified with any profession or in any civic account. There were 3 gold smiths, 4 bakers, one barber-surgeon, a shearer, shipper, glover, joiner, weaver and one bowyer with one, Williem Andries, who would later become a lock-gatekeeper (*spey-houder*). The last table was the smallest, with 11 men. Of these, 5 could not be identified with a craft. One would later sit as a councillor as Bruges, the others were 2 brewers, a painter, a basket carrier and a weaver.

Turning to the meal following the shoot of the *papegay* another interesting pattern emerges. At the *papegay* meal the top table of the meal also included headman Jan Breydel and the sheriff of Bruges, but these were the only civic office holders present, and only one jousting knight of the White Bear, Jeromyus Adornes, was present. Jan Tsolles and his son Melsior were at the top table at the *papegay* meal, as the attendees at this meal were less powerful, the Tsolles moved from second rank to first. The remaining five men include two active guild-brothers, for whom no profession could be found, plus a wool merchant, a brewer and a smith.

The second table of 22 was headed by the new king, Jan de Bruneruwe, an old and active member who had won prizes at a Ghent shoot in 1461, but for whom nothing outside the guild is known. Jacob Pots, the outgoing king sat here as did another former king, Jan van Rake. Of the remaining 19, 5 remain unknown outside the guild. The rest were 2 barber-surgeons, a brewer, a joiner, a spice-seller, a shipper, a bag-maker, a tin-pot-maker, a bowyer, a sack-carrier, a washer, a smith, one who would later become a councillor, but who in 1468 had yet to hold office or be recorded among a craft and, interestingly Jan Sijb, clerk of the Franc of Bruges. The Franc of Bruges was the relatively rural area around Bruges, for most of the fifteenth century it was considered the 'Fourth Member' of Flanders, balancing the power of Ghent, Ypres and Bruges. It was not of lower status than the town of Bruges, indeed in many years the Franc paid more taxes than any other Member.⁶³⁸ The presence of Jan, a clerk from the Franc, demonstrates again that community extended beyond Bruges. In all Jan attended 10 meals between his entrance to the guild in 1463 and his death in 1478, demonstrating that some individuals chose not just to be active guild brothers, but were prepared to travel to and from Bruges to do so.

The third table, of 17 men, include 6 for whom no profession is known, but among the rest cloth professions dominate. The diners comprised 2 glovers, 2 cloth merchants, and a furrier, with them 2 goldsmiths, a corn merchant, a glass worker, a bowyer, and Williem Andries, also at the meals of Saint Sebastian, later a tax collector but in 1468, according to all available evidence, he was not an important figure. At the final table of 14 men only 4 could not be identified, the most important profession here was baking, with 5 bakers present. The remaining five were 2 weavers, a cloth merchant, a comb-maker and a painter.

⁶³⁸ E. Vanden Bussche, *Inventaire des archives de l'Etat à Bruges. Section première: Franc de Bruges* vol. 1 (Bruges, 1881), 5-26; V. J. Gailliard, *Bruges et le Franc* vol. 1 (Bruges, 1857), 2-154; L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Coutume du Franc de Bruges* (Bruxelles, 1879); A.C.F. Koch, *De rechterlijke organisatie van het graafschap Vlaanderen tot in de 13e eeuw, Proefschrift ingediend tot het behalen van de grad van doctor in de geschiedenis*, Universiteit Antwerpen (1951), E. Warlop, *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis der vorming van het Brugse Vrije : bronnen, gebied, instellingen* (Gand, 1959).

Across these two tables important patterns emerge about guild membership, relative to guild attendance at feasts. At the feasts, men involved in food and cloth production dominated, with very few building crafts in attendance, this is different to the patterns observed for the guilds as a whole in chapter 2. Further the richest guild brothers, civic office holders and joustiers, were physically separated. At each table men sat with others of their profession, bakers together at one table, or leather workers at another. Guild unity was an ideal, and through their attendance at these two guild feasts the guild-brothers contributed to unity. Strikingly, attendance lists record only guild-brothers attending feasts, no women are ever recorded as being in attendance the feast, but a more nuanced conclusion is also possible.

The unique seating plans demonstrate that within a guild, unity and commensality were important, but strong socio-political stratification was present, and was adhered to for many members. A few older and respected guild brothers, who had been active for many years, and the most skilled shooters, the kings, could rise to high status positions at meals, raising their moral credit through guild activity. However many others attended few meals, and when they did come to the feast sat in their pre-existing craft groups. Choice was an important factor in how active members were, but not all were free to rise through guild ranks, hierarchy and honour coexisted in all guild feasts. Hierarchy and levels of participation, like conflicts, show that guilds were not simply soldiers dedicated to military training, their members chose how far to interact and how far to keep the peace.

Conclusion

Guilds should have been relatively small groups of worthy and respectable men. Guild numbers grew in response to local demand and in many places secondary, lesser, guild emerged, though such guilds have traditionally been mislabelled as youth guild they are discrete groups of shooters. Guilds were well organised groups with noble headmen, honourable kings, even emperors, and levels of

practical administrators and even varlets and clerks, as well as their *dixeniers*. The guilds should have been influential, honourably groups bound together by moral credit and oaths. Feasts, and the devotional actions discussed in the previous chapter, should have enhanced guild unity and helped to create a community. Regional low-level interaction, and less well recorded visitors at feasts, helped guild community to extend beyond one town and to create share brotherhoods across Flanders, a point we shall return to in chapter six.

The ideal is clear, honourable, armed, well off, reliable individuals enhancing bonds through commensality and festivities. In practise choice was once again a driving force. Some members chose to break rules, even to start disputes with other guilds. Some Bruges archers chose to attend several feasts across the fifteenth century, other did not. However choice could only take commensality so far, when Bruges guild-brother did attend feasts, they sat with pre-existing craft groups. As we saw in chapter two, men in the same craft could act together; even hold office together beyond the guild, so communities within communities do not necessarily negate commensality. Guilds could be strong and powerful communities, with strong social and cultural bonds, but they were shaped by their members and their choices. The guilds can be understood as towns in microcosm, their ideals representing civic ideals, common good, and moral, worthy men ready for defence. In practise, in both guilds and in larger urban communities, conflicts and tension rose up, some chose to live up to ideals and to be active parts of the community, other chose to remain distant or even to provoke conflict.

Chapter 5:

Guilds and their lords; interactions, privilege and obligation

Guilds' choices' made them significant devotional and social groups. The choices of many lords and authorities to support, and to interact with, the guilds also demand analysis. Firstly the social and military bonds of the rulers of Flanders and the guilds will be discussed, especially in relation to charters and ducal participation in civic events, demonstrating connections in war and in peace. Secondly the often more complex links between other members of the aristocracy and the shooting guilds will be examined. Many knights of the Golden Fleece entered into a mutually beneficial relationship with guilds, such bonds may even have helped lords to hold onto power and in doing so keep Flanders at peace, especially in Mary of Burgundy's reign. Third the results of such interaction will be set out, not just the privileges that guilds received, but also their obligations and restriction. Fourthly and finally the relationships between guilds and their towns must be considered; in many ways civic support was more important than princely, but towns restricted and controlled the guilds as well as rewarding them, needing their guild to defend them in war and to celebrate their civic identity in peace.

5.1 Rulers of Flanders, motives.

Guilds grew and developed over the fourteenth century, as we have seen becoming devotional and social groups, but little evidence of interaction between guilds and the Dampierre counts of Flanders survives. No charters from Count Guy of Dampierre (d. 1305) to Flemish guilds survive, though he may have issued charters to guilds in Namur, which he ruled in right of his wife.⁶³⁹ Though

⁶³⁹ He may have issued a charter to the crossbowmen of Namur in 1266, more plausibly he established a guard of crossbowmen in Floreffe (small town near Namur) in 1295; Delaunay, *Etudes sur les compaigns*, 4-9 refers to P. Galliot, *Histoire générale, ecclésiastique et civile de la*

in Guy's war shooters were active,⁶⁴⁰ there is no proof that guilds in Flanders had become formal groups in his reign, so direct contact should not be expected. Under the reigns of the last three Dampierre counts, Robert of Bethune (d. 1322) Louis of Nevers (d. 1346) and Louis of Male (d. 1384), the guilds became important civic groups. Robert was a member of the Oudenaarde crossbow guild of Saint George, as we have seen, his is the first name on the earliest death list of the guild.⁶⁴¹ It is tempting to see the shooters active in Robert's wars as guildsmen, but the identity of such bowmen is impossible to identify.

Links between the guilds and the counts are not simply military; Robert was a guild-brother. Louis of Nevers may have shot with the Ghent crossbow guild in a competition in Halle in 1331.⁶⁴² Louis of Male was a member of the Ghent crossbow guild of Saint George, shooting with them at least once.⁶⁴³ Two of the three charters that survive from Louis of Male's reign reflect military service. The charter granted to the crossbow guild of Oudenaarde rewarded military service, as discussed in chapter one, with additional wine in 1356. Louis' charter to the crossbow guild of Mechelen was issued weeks after the town was captured helping to boost his popularity in Mechelen.

In an undated charter to the archers of Ghent, Louis gave them weekly gifts of wine and the right to bear arms.⁶⁴⁴ The charter states that is a confirmation of

ville et province de Namur vol. 3 (Liège, 1788),25; A far more reliable source refers to a civic cartulary written in 1698, with a copy of a charter to the crossbowmen of Namur, which states it is the oldest, from 1295; see D. D. Browsers, 'Les compagnies d'arbalétriers dans l'ancienne comte de Namur,' *Annales de la société d'archéologie de Namur* 37 (1925), 141-54.

⁶⁴⁰ Verbruggen, *Het Gemeenteleger van Brugge*, 5-15; Vereecke, *Histoire Militaire de la ville d'Ypres*, 5-12; Paul, *Histoire de l'artillerie en Belgique*, 3-6.

⁶⁴¹ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/6A.

⁶⁴² De Potter, *Jaarboeken*, 19, states Louis was present; town accounts refer only to the crossbowmen attending 'feesten' in Halle, SAG, 400, stadsrekeningen, 1330-1, f. 16.

⁶⁴³ De Potter, *Jaerboeken*, 23-4.

⁶⁴⁴ BMG, Sint Sebastiaangilde; privilegieboek, inv 1059, f. 1 v.-3.

Louis of Nevers's original, but survives only a fifteenth century copy, however there is no reason to doubt that Louis of Male did indeed issue the charter. His relatively short practical charter does not refer to guilds as 'friends' as later ducal ones do, but it does show some level of civic-princely interaction. Louis refers to guild-brothers and sisters, one of the only charters to do so, as well as setting out regulations for the administration of the guild, in particular that they should have *dekens* from the different parishes of Ghent. Older Ghent municipal documents reveal that the guild was already being organised in this way, Louis charter does not impose new rules. Rather it confirms existing practise, showing it to be a work of cooperation. Guilds grew and adapted without the direct involvement of the counts. Interestingly, counts chose to join, shoot with and interact with guilds, hinting at a shared culture and communities, though for the Dampierre counts evidence is too limited to reach solid conclusions.

Military necessity is mentioned in Louis' charters, rewarding the past service of crossbowmen, but a clearer example of encouraging future service comes from beyond Flanders. In 1364 Louis' mother Margaret, daughter of Philip V King of France, gave 20 Francs to the crossbowmen of Arras, to purchase land to practise on.⁶⁴⁵ Her charter was issued on 28 April, less than 3 weeks after the death of her cousin, King John II. Margaret's gift to the crossbowmen of Arras helped to protect Artois, and must be seen in the light of ordinances issued to French guilds in the wake of Poitiers by Charles V, first as Dauphin-regent, then as king. In France, charters were granted to shooting guilds for 'resisting the bad wishes of our enemies, to the honour and profit of the kingdom'.⁶⁴⁶ This is a clear reference to resisting English invaders, and the need to defend against pillaging

⁶⁴⁵ Espinas, *Les Origines*, 104-5.

⁶⁴⁶ Various charters and privileges in *ORF*; Privileges were issued to a new crossbow guild in 1358 so that 'our said town of Caen to be always and most diligently guarded in obedience to our aforesaid lord, and to us, and our successes, and defended against the said enemies' vol. 3, 297-8 and in 1367 to the crossbowmen of Lagny-sur-Marne so that 'that they can and must serve us diligently', vol. 5, 32-3. Military emphasis is common in charters granted in Normandy in the 1360s.

mercenaries.⁶⁴⁷ In France, as in Artois, when protecting the towns became more important guilds were encouraged by princes for security.

Such clear military necessity is hinted at in Louis's charters, but never as clearly. In Flanders the counts encouraged guilds for loyalty and community, rather than for resisting enemies. Louis and Philip the Bold together required the crossbowmen of Gerardsberghen to be loyal and ready to serve in 1381.⁶⁴⁸ In the same year Gerardsberghen's walls were being rebuilt, following the siege of the town by Walter IV of Enghien during the Ghent war of 1379-85.⁶⁴⁹ The charter can therefore be seen as part of a wider desire to rebuild the town physically, and to strengthen and regenerate it politically and socially. Though violent, Flanders was not under prolonged attack, as France was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although counts rewarded service and encouraged guilds, their relations were convivial rather than controlling, their priority was loyalty, perhaps even peace.

5.2 The Dukes of Burgundy, and the Habsburgs, and the shooting guilds

The relationships between the guilds and the Burgundian Dukes, and their successors, are far better detailed, but no less complicated. On the one hand the

⁶⁴⁷ For the violence of the period generally, see M. Jones, 'War and Fourteenth-Century France,' *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War* ed. A. Curry and M. Hughes (Woodbridge, 1994), 103-120; P.-C. Timbal et al, *La guerre de Cent Ans, vue a travers les registres du parlement, 1327-1369* (Paris, 1966), 167-248; J. Sumption, *The Hundred Years War* vol. 2, *Trial by Battle* (London, 1999), 351-404; A. D. Carr, 'War in the Fourteenth Century,' *Power, Violence and Mass Death in Pre-Modern and Modern Times* ed. J. Canning, H. Lehmann, and J. Winter (Aldershot, 2004).

⁶⁴⁸ The charter no longer survives, but it was summarised in several nineteenth-century inventories. A. de Porteman, *Recherches sur la ville de Grammont en Flandre* (Gand, 1870), 92; V. Fris, *Geschiedenis van Geraardsbergen* (Gent, 1911) ; Gerardsberghen was virtually destroyed in 1381, this charter may be a confirmation of a far older one, for the shooting guilds of this town see, Marcel en J. van Kerchoven, *De gilden van Sint Joris, Sint Sebastiaan, Sint Andriees, Sint Pieter, Sint Adriaan, Sint Cecilia te Gerardsbergen* (Geraardsbergen, 1976); less analytical, but with access to greater documents, J. van Waesberge, *Grammont, son origine et son histoire* (Grammont, 1840), 36-95.

⁶⁴⁹ Marcel en Kerchoven, *De gilden van Sint Joris*, 5.

dukes needed guilds' military service and encouraged guilds as defenders, especially as borders changed. But just as Louis of Male had, they required loyal townsmen, and took part in urban culture. As evidence is far more plentiful, all known charters, even in cases where the originals no longer survived are set out in table 6. After a short consideration of how and when charters were issued, ducal motives is supporting the guilds will be examined and then the cultural and political interactions.

Table 6, charters					
issued by	year	month	to, town	to, guild	subject
Louis of Male	1356	No original; after siege Brussels	Oudenaarde	crossbowmen	wine and rights (in recognition of service)
Louis of Male	1356	August, 20	Mechelen	crossbowmen	Wine and rights
Philip the Bold	no original	(no original)	Gerardsberghen	crossbowmen	Rights
Philip the Bold	1384	no original	Ghent	crossbowmen	Grant the guild property
Philip the Bold	1387	(no original)	Ninove	archers	Rights
Philip the Bold	1389	September	la Bassee	crossbowmen	Confirmation of rights given in Royal Ordinance of Charles VI
Philip the Bold	1394	July, 17	Douai	crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
Philip the Bold	1398	September	Dendermonde	crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
John the Fearless	1405	June, 20 (joyous entry)	Wattignies and Estrées	archers and crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
John the Fearless	1405	July, 16	Lille	crossbowmen	Bear arms

Table 6, charters					
issued by	year	month	to, town	to, guild	subject
John the Fearless	1407	(no original)	Bruges	archers	Organisation and rights
John the Fearless	1408	July	Oudenaarde	crossbowmen	Bear arms
John the Fearless	1409	December, 27	Boezigne	crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
John the Fearless	1410	September, 27	Coudekerke	archers	Organisation and rights
John the Fearless	1410	April, 7	Wavrin	crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
Philip the Good	1419	December, 9	Lille	archers	Bear arms across Flanders
Philip the Good	1421	June, 7	Aalst	archers	Organisation and rights
Philip the Good	1423	August, 9	Courtrai	archers	Organisation and rights
Philip the Good	1423	August, 11	Neiuwpoort	crossbowmen	Security and guard
Philip the Good	1426	February, 28	Mechelen	archers	Grant money
Philip the Good	1428	September, original lost	Oudenaarde	archers	Bear arms
Philip the Good	1430	January, 30	Tielt	archers and crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
Philip the Good	1430	September, 21	Mechelen	archers	Land and money

Table 6, charters					
issued by	year	month	to, town	to, guild	subject
Philip the Good	1430	July, 29	Wavrin	archers and crossbowmen	Confirmations, bear arms
Philip the Good	1430	March, 7	Cysoing	archers	Organisation and rights
Philip the Good	1431	October, 6	Aalst	archers	Organisation and rights
Philip the Good	1431	October, 16	Aalst	crossbowmen	Privileges, bear arms
Philip the Good	1433	June, 16	Douai	archers	Grant of wine
Philip the Good	1435	(no original)	Gravelines	archers and crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
Philip the Good	1439	February, 22	Ghent	crossbowmen	Permission to hold shoot
Philip the Good	1441	January, 27	Drincham	archers	Allow lord of Drincham to establish a guild.
Philip the Good	1441	July, 2	Houtheem	archers	Confirmation of John the Fearless's charter; bear arms
Philip the Good	1445	June, 4	Commines	archers and crossbowmen	Confirms lord of Commines' right to have guilds
Philip the Good	1446	March, 20	Biervelt	archers	Allows Loys Witon, ducal chamberlain and captain, to establish a guild
Philip the Good	1446	July, 20	Ypres	archers	Ducal emblem
Philip the Good	1446	June, 19	Nieuwpoort	archers	Ducal emblem

Table 6, charters

issued by	year	month	to, town	to, guild	subject
Philip the Good	1447	January, 16	Elverdinghe and Vlamertinghe	archers and crossbowmen	Corneil can establish large guilds
Philip the Good	1447	February, 5	Cassel	archers	Ducal emblem
Philip the Good	1447	March, 29	Sint-Winnoksbergen	archers	Ducal emblem
Philip the Good	1447	August, 24	Thielt	archers	25 'plus notables et souffisans' wear ducal emblem
Philip the Good	1449	September, 15	Koekelare	archers	Rights and ducal emblem
Philip the Good	1449	July, 12	Zuienkerke	archers	Allow ducal secretary, Paul des champs, to establish a guild
Philip the Good	1451	August, 6	Dendermonde	crossbowmen	Recognition of service confirmation of rights
Philip the Good	1452	March	Douai	crossbowmen	Ducal emblem
Philip the Good	1453	various March and April	Lille	archers and crossbowmen	Military preparations and rights
Philip the Good	1455	April, 22	Douai	crossbowmen	Rehabilitate archers in recognition service
Philip the Good	1455	March, 7	Loo	archers and crossbowmen	Confirmation of a charter of John the Fearless, bear arms
Philip the Good	1456	October, 24	Zuienkerke	archers	Ducal emblem
Philip the Good	1458	February, 14	Mechelen	crossbowmen	Permission to hold competition in July

Table 6, charters					
issued by	year	month	to, town	to, guild	subject
Philip the Good	1459	April, 24	Lannoy	archers	Allow Jehan de Lannoy to establish guild
Philip the Good	1460	March, 19	Cassel	archers	Rights in recognition of loyal service
Philip the Good	1461	June, 10 and September, 15	Ghent	crossbowmen	Payments of death-fees (doothgelt)
Philip the Good	1461	June, 5	Gravelines	archers and crossbowmen	Bear arms
Philip the Good	1461	September, 10	Oudenaarde	crossbowmen	Permission to hold shoot
Philip the Good	1463	August	Oudenaarde	crossbowmen	Confirmation charter John the Fearless; bear arms (original left in rain)
Philip the Good	1463	August, 12	Dadizeele	archers	Jan van Dadizeele can establish archery guild
Philip the Good	1465	August, 9	Axelle	crossbowmen	Lower entrance fee, as numbers declining
Philip the Good	1465	September, 7	Langemark	crossbowmen	Organisation and rights
Charles the Bold	1469		various	all	Orders all guilds to declare numbers
Charles the Bold	1475	not specified	Mechelen	crossbowmen	Tax exemptions, as 36/90 died at Neuss
Charles the Bold	1475	May, 29	Ghent	crossbowmen	With Margaret, chapel st Margaret and money
Charles the Bold	1476	(damaged, possibly August)	Lille	archers	Additional wine

Table 6, charters					
issued by	year	month	to, town	to, guild	subject
Philip the Fair	1484	No surviving charter	Oudenaarde	archers	Orders they be given wine by town, like crossbowmen
Philip the Fair	1487	December, 18	Douai	crossbowmen	Recognised as most ancient in Flanders, new rights
Philip the Fair	1492	July, 19	Douai	crossbowmen	Lowers fees as in decline
Philip the Fair	1494	September	Aalst	crossbowmen	Confirmations and more wine
Philip the Fair	1495	July, 21	Lille	crossbowmen	Confirmations and new rights
Philip the Fair	1499	July, 5	Douai	crossbowmen	Additional wine
Philip the Fair	1500	May, 2	Armentières	archers and crossbowmen	Reconfirm all rights from lost charters

5.3 Charters

Charters can be interpreted as written record, or as expression of power, but are the result of negotiation.⁶⁵⁰ Ducal charters to shooting guilds were often written in response to civic request, yet could demonstrate ducal control. Further, many charter issued to different guilds are extremely similar, especially those of Philip the Good granting consent to wear a ducal emblem. For such charters, is it possible that a central ‘model’ existed, or more likely the ducal clerks simply used their own judgement to create broadly similar documents.

Charters could be issued at the request of the guild. In 1417 John the Fearless stated ‘we have the humble supplication and prayers of our good friends the

⁶⁵⁰ D. Bates, ‘Charters and Historians of Britain and Ireland; Problems and Possibilities,’ *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland* ed. M. T. Flanagan and J. A. Green (Basingstoke, 2005), 1-8.

companions of the *serment* and guild of the *jeu* of the crossbow of our town of Lille' and so granted them immunity from prosecution should someone accidentally die in practise.⁶⁵¹ In 1431 Philip the Good gave the archers of Aalst new rights as 'we have received the humble supplications of the good men, inhabitants and residents of our town of Aalst'.⁶⁵² Guilds, either acting alone or with the town, could and did request new rights and confirmations. In 1463 Philip the Good confirmed the right of the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde to bear arms, a right granted by John the Fearless in 1408, because the originals had been left out on the rain at a competition in Dendermonde.⁶⁵³

Vogues are clear in several charters, and it is tempting to link such patterns to ducal military campaigns. In 1410 the shooting guilds of Lo,⁶⁵⁴ Coudekerke,⁶⁵⁵ Croix⁶⁵⁶ and Wauvrin,⁶⁵⁷ received the rights to bear arms, immunity from prosecution should someone die in practise and grants of wine from John the Fearless. All four charters were issued in Paris, while tensions within France were growing, and open war with the Armagnacs was becoming more likely. It is tempting to see similar motivations, and John's own hand, in the royal ordinance granted to the Parisian crossbowmen in August that year.⁶⁵⁸ John issued rights to guilds to win support and to ensure he could call upon skilled men when needed to. After the Flemish force failed to live up to his expectations in 1411, as we saw in chapter one, John was less inclined to reach out to guilds. Charters were, officially at least, the duke's voice, his command. In practise large parts of many

⁶⁵¹ ADN, B1601 f. 157.

⁶⁵² OSAOA, 4 boek met den haire f. 71v.

⁶⁵³ OSAOA, gilden 507/II/ 15B.

⁶⁵⁴ RAG, RVV, 7351 f. 197v.-198r.

⁶⁵⁵ RAG, RVV, 7351 f. 225v.

⁶⁵⁶ AML, RM, 16973, 15 .

⁶⁵⁷ AML, RM, 16973, 47.

⁶⁵⁸ ORF vol. 1, 522-6.

charters are copied from guild requests, but in others, particularly the wearing of emblems, a ducal initiative is clearer. Ducal motives in issuing such charters, or in confirming rights, must be analysed. The dukes' role as patrons must be understood before analysing the social bonds between dukes and guilds.

Military motives in charters.

Martial motives are clear in many charters, demonstrating the continuing military role of the guilds, as seen in chapter 1. In 1398 Philip the Bold issued a charter to the crossbowmen of Dendermonde, referring to their service 'in times past, so much in the times of our dear lord and father the count of Flanders'.⁶⁵⁹ In 1405, on his joyous entry to Lille, John the Fearless confirmed the rights of the crossbowmen, the preamble states that 'the guild (*serment*) and the constable of the said archers have served (us) well and diligently, each and every time they have been summoned and requested (by) our predecessors, counts and countesses of Flanders, in many places'.⁶⁶⁰ The charters issued in 1410 all require guilds to be 'always ready to serve us or our successors, counts and countesses of Flanders'.⁶⁶¹

Philip the Good continued a tradition of recognising military service in charters to shooting guilds. Like his father, on his joyous entry to Lille he acknowledged the service of the archers. In renewing their charter, Philip referred to the guild's 'good and diligent' service 'in many places and areas where they have been' and 'in service many of them have been killed and many others injured'.⁶⁶² Philip's charters reflected his changing borders, and changing enemies. Early in his reign he was concerned for the southern, French, border. In 1423 rights were granted to

⁶⁵⁹ *Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi* vol. 2, 296-300.

⁶⁶⁰ Cauchies, *Ordonnances du Jean Sans Peur*, 24.

⁶⁶¹ AML, 16973, f. 15.

⁶⁶² AML, 16973, f. 90-90 v.

the archers of Courtrai. The charter refers to the ‘great need and necessity for the security and defence of (Courtrai), having able men sufficient and expert in shooting’. There is a fear that ‘in dangerous times it (Courtrai) will be less secure and badly defended’ so the guild of crossbowmen will provide ‘convenient remedy’.⁶⁶³

After the 1435 treaty of Arras, England was the new enemy; Calais and the coast the border. In 1447 the archers of Sint-Winnoksbergen received new rights as the town ‘is located on the frontier of Calais’ and ‘in the times of wars and commotions that have been in our said lands’ the guild had been, and will be, necessary for ‘good fortification’ of the town.⁶⁶⁴ The archers of Biervelt received new privileges in 1446 ‘as it is on the frontier by the sea’ and so ‘in need of guarding’.⁶⁶⁵ It has been shown that shooting guilds continued to provide military service across the fifteenth century, and charters continued to emphasise military necessities. Even in 1518, when issuing a new charter to the archers of Annappes (a small place near Lille) Charles V wished them to ‘aggrandise the guard and defence of our lands’ and so that the archers could be relied upon ‘for summoning in our wars and armies when they will be needed’.⁶⁶⁶ Despite their varied membership, devotional and social activities, guilds could still be called upon for war.

Political and cultural motives.

Guilds served their dukes in war, but military service were not the only interactions between guilds and the dukes. Even before he became count of

⁶⁶³ RAK, 478. Register van de Gilde van Sint-Sebastiaan f. 2. r.-v.

⁶⁶⁴ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 220-221.

⁶⁶⁵ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 239.

⁶⁶⁶ AML, RM, 16978, 7.

Flanders in 1384, Philip the Bold shot with the Ghent crossbowmen in 1371⁶⁶⁷ and those of Bruges in 1375,⁶⁶⁸ in the same year he was given a livery by the guild of Ypres.⁶⁶⁹ All later dukes were members of the Ghent greater guild of Saint George.⁶⁷⁰ As we saw in chapter two, Philip the Good was also a member of the Bruges crossbow guild, he even ate with them 1454.⁶⁷¹ As count of Charolais, Charles the Bold took part in many Flemish shooting events.⁶⁷² As duke he favoured the Brabant guilds, perhaps after his disastrous entrance into Ghent in 1467 he no longer wanted to be part of Flemish urban culture.

Maximilian had shot in urban crossbow competitions in Germany before he came to the Low Countries.⁶⁷³ In Flanders he followed Burgundian traditions of shooting with the guilds. He was a member of the Ghent crossbowmen, he became 'king' of the Bruges archers in 1479,⁶⁷⁴ and he attended a feast in Aalst in 1485.⁶⁷⁵ As early as 1481, the young Philip the Fair was being introduced to the power and prestige of shooting guilds. Represented by Guillaume Estu, the three-year-old became king of the Brussels crossbowmen.⁶⁷⁶ Dukes granted charter to guilds, showing they favoured them as civic leaders, they had themselves enrolled in guilds, even ate with them, showing themselves to be part of urban culture and building bonds of commensality. Such court and civic interactions are insightful,

⁶⁶⁷ M. Boone, 'Réseaux urbaine,' Prevenier et al., *Le Prince et le peuple*, 247.

⁶⁶⁸ M. de Schrijver, et C. Dothee, *Les Concours de tir a l'arbalète des gildes médiévales* (Anvers, 1979), appendix and lists.

⁶⁶⁹ Vaughan, *Philip the Bold*, 19.

⁶⁷⁰ Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 71; Moulin-Coppens, *Sint Jorisdilde te Gent*, 34-9.

⁶⁷¹ SAB, 385 Sint Joris.

⁶⁷² At least some of these must have been by a representative, but documents simply refer to him as the king, e.g. aged 13 he was 'king' of the papegay in Mechelen, Schrijver and Dothee, *Les Concours de tir*, appendix.

⁶⁷³ F. Unterkircher, *Maximilian I, 1459-1519* (Wien, 1959) appendix of sources and images.

⁶⁷⁴ Godar, *Histoire de la gilde des archers*, 122 .

⁶⁷⁵ AGR, CC31479 f. 47.

⁶⁷⁶ Wauters, *Notice historique*, 9.

and must be seen in the same way as ducal manipulation of civic religion, taking part in processions and joining religious confraternities.⁶⁷⁷ But lists reveal only that the dukes were enrolled in a shooting guild, not necessarily a personal interaction.

5.4 Social, dukes and competitions.

More useful, and more dramatic, are examples of ducal participation in shooting competitions. The huge significance of competitions for the urban environment, and for civic culture more generally, will be analysed in the next chapter, but here the personal interaction of the dukes is important. At least three times, in 1408, 1440 and 1497, the dukes physically took part and shot with the guilds. Even when they were not physically present ducal power was made clear as only they could grant permission to hold competitions.

In 1408 a great shoot was held in Oudenaarde, in central Flanders.⁶⁷⁸ In many ways this was an urban event, designed to bring prestige to Oudenaarde and to the guild of crossbowmen. A letter of invitation was sent out, and addressed to ‘the honourable, discrete and wise, all those Lords, kings, constables, deans, governors and to all other companions’ of sworn guilds.⁶⁷⁹ The invitation sets out the organisation of the shoot, and the centrality of civic ideals. In contrast two chronicles that describe the shoot refer to a different source of honour, the participation of John the Fearless. An anonymous town chronicle of Oudenaarde and the chronicle of the nearby monastery of Eename both refer to the wealth of the town, the prestige of the guild and the nobility of the competition, but both give greater emphasis to ducal participation.

⁶⁷⁷ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 239-267.

⁶⁷⁸ E. Van Cauwenberghe, ‘Notice historique sur les confréries de Saint Georges’, 279-291.

⁶⁷⁹ UBG, Hs434, Vredesverdragen, f. 92-100; this will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

The chronicle of Eename is written in a simple list format. After describing the entrances made by various guilds, and the route they took through Oudenaarde the writer notes... ‘and then the dean of the Saint George guild, and the guild wardens, and the 12 shooters who would shoot in the name of the town, who were all similarly dressed, and all the *poorters* and all the other people of the town, those that were rich, they all had great cloaks of green and white. Then Count John of Flanders, Duke of Burgundy, and my lady the Duchess his wife, were with the shooters. Then Count John shot with the town of Oudenaarde and with him many other noble men, those of the guild of Saint George. Then Count John himself carried his own bow up to his turn’ to shoot the targets.⁶⁸⁰

The anonymous chronicle of Oudenaarde gives further details. ‘The Count of Flanders John Duke of Burgundy and my lady his wife were clothed like the shooters and Count John shot with the town of Oudenaarde, like a man of the guild of Saint George of Oudenaarde, and Count John like the rest carried his own bow and won the first prize of 2 silver jugs (*kannen*)’.⁶⁸¹ Ducal motives for this event must have been political, perhaps to bolster support in Flanders in preparation for the Liège campaign a few months later, but John’s actions enhanced the standing of Oudenaarde, of the guild, and of the crossbow in general. In the 1408 competition, John was not acting as a distant lord granting privileges, nor an inactive member simply enrolled in the membership list. He shot with the guild; dressed like a guild-brother, part of the guild urban community, not training for a military campaign but rather ludically promoting civic values.

⁶⁸⁰ Cauwenberghe, ‘Notice historique’, 281-3.

⁶⁸¹ OSAOA, gilden 241/2 f. 89-92 v.

Another spectacular crossbow competition was held in Ghent in 1440 by the greater guild of Saint George.⁶⁸² The invitation again emphasised civic pride, and civic honour, addressing ‘all good privileged and free towns’ and calls them to the ‘honourable game of the crossbow’ by virtue of ‘their honourable and worthy ancient rights and renown’.⁶⁸³

Philip had given his permission for the competition to happen, and had been invited to take part with any team he chose. Unlike his father, Philip did not join in as a guild-brother. He chose to bring his own ducal team of noblemen, including the lord of Nevers⁶⁸⁴ and, perhaps most significantly, Jehan Villiers the lord of l’Isle-Adam. Jehan’s father had been killed in the Bruges rebellion of 1436-7, poignantly demonstrating that the social bonds between the court and the guilds had not been damaged beyond repair.⁶⁸⁵ Despite the power of such men, and of Philip himself, the ducal team is poorly documented in Ghent sources, unlike Oudenaarde sources which had emphasised John the Fearless’s participation. The book of Pieter Polet gives no more space or emphasis to the ducal team than to any other civic team.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸² Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 84-93.

⁶⁸³ SAG, SJ, NGR, Charters en diverse losse documenten, 30.

⁶⁸⁴ Philip’s cousin, Charles Count of Nevers. H. Stein, *Urkunden und Mandate Karls von Burgund, Grafen von Charolais (1433-1467)* (Thorbecke, 1999) 46-50, 222, 314; M. Prietzel, *Guillaume Fillastre d.J., Ausgewählte Werke* (Ostfildern, 2003), 115; H. Kruse, W. Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen der Herzöge von Burgund. Band 1: Herzog Philipp der Gute 1407–1467* (Ostfildern, 2005), 131, 151; B. Schnerb and W. Paravicini, *Paris, capitale des ducs de Bourgogne* (Thorbecke, 2007), 99, 234, 451-3; All from *Prosopographia Burgundica* <http://prosob.heraudica.org/index.php> accessed 23/11/10.

⁶⁸⁵ The list of names in UBG, G 6112, *Dit es den bouc van... Pieter Polet* f. 34 v ; The details are transcribed in Moulin-Coppens, *Sint Jorisgilde te Gent*, 106, but she misses out the first name; For the shoot see Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 91-94; For the death of Jehan Villiers, see Vaughan, *Philip the Good*. 87-94; Dumolyn, *de Brugse Opstand*. 226-230; B. Schnerb, ‘Jehan de Villiers, siegneur de l’isle-Adam,’ De Smedt, *Les chevaliers de l’ordre*, 47-9, idem., ‘Jean de Villiers, siegneur de l’isle-Adam, vu par les chroniqueurs Bourguignons,’ *PCEEB* 41 (2001), 105-122.

⁶⁸⁶ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet* f. 34 v.

Ducal participation in the 1440 competition is significant. It demonstrates that just four years after his failed siege of Calais, for which Ghent carried at least some of the blame, Philip did not see the town as an enemy. Rather he cultivated social relations with the town, in particular with the powerful crossbowmen to restore peace to Flanders. Just as significantly, the town treated the ducal team like any other shooting team. Ducal participation did not end with Philip the Good, his great grandson Philip the Fair would continue the tradition, taking part in another Ghent shoot in 1498 with the Ypres crossbow guild.⁶⁸⁷ Across the fifteenth century, ducal participation in shooting competitions shows a real community developing between the guilds and the dukes, helping to build bonds and gain support in time of need through festivities that were both military and peaceful.

Dukes encouraged guilds for their military potential, but also for the honour they brought towns, and for their loyalty. The dukes were not absolute rulers, and just as they had to swear to uphold civic privileges to be accepted as count so Flanders,⁶⁸⁸ so too they had to patronise guilds to maintain their valuable military and political support. Even figures as powerful as Philip the Good could not break with traditions. Ducal support brought great privilege and benefit to the guilds, but it is likely that the dukes needed the guilds and civic support more than the guilds needed ducal support. It is possible that the dukes used guilds, especially in the wake of rebellion, to gain support within an urban community across the fifteenth century. As dates of entry are unknown, this cannot be proven for the dukes, though Philip's membership in Bruges, seen in chapter two, is suggestive.

⁶⁸⁷ SAG, Fonds Sint Joris, 155, nummer 2; P. Van Duyse, 'Het groot schietspel en de Rederijkersspelen te Gent in Mei tot Juli 1498,' *Annales de la Société Royale des Beaux-arts et de Littérature de Gand* 6 (1865), 273-314; F. De Potter, 'Landjuweel van 1497,' *Het Belfort*, ed. A. Siffer (Gent, no date).

⁶⁸⁸ For oaths and confirmations of earlier rights see J. Gilissen, 'Les villes en Belgique, histoire des institutions, administration et judiciaires des villes belges,' *Recueil de la société Jean Bodin* 6 (1954), 547-601; F. Béghin, *Histoire de la ville de Béthune* (Douai, 1873), 73-84; A. Lottin, (ed.), *Histoire de Boulogne-sur-Mer* (Lille, 1983), 55-74, 87-93; M. Rouche, (ed.), *Histoire de Douai* (Dunkerque, 1985), 43-58; P. Giloteaux, *Histoire du Quesnoy* (Paris, 1997), 11-15, 27-31.

The nobility of Flanders certainly used guild not just to boost their prestige, but to help them gain support, even in years of crises.

5.5 Local lords and shooting guilds.

The motivation for, and forms of, interactions between guilds and local lords are just as important as those between the princes and guilds. Lords could act as middle-men in helping a local guild to obtain important right, but for many lords, including some of the most powerful nobles in Flanders, many knights of the Golden Fleece, contact was more social and personal. Promoting guilds could bring lords honour and even much needed urban support, either in their own small towns or through interaction with guild in great urban centres.

Charters.

One of the earliest surviving examples of local lord obtaining a charter from the duke for their own guild was that of 16 July 1405 to the archers of Watignes and of Estrées. John the Fearless granted rights at the ‘humble supplication of our friend and loyal knight, messier Rolland de la Hovarderie, lord of Watignes and of Estrées’. John may have issued the charter to gain the support not just of archers, but of Rolland himself. A few weeks later, in August 1405, Rolland would take the field as one of the leaders of the force John lead into France, in preparation to march against the Duke of Orleans.⁶⁸⁹ Rolland was an important figure at court and a military leader, the father he refers to is Matthieu Hovarderie (or Howardrie) who had served first Louis of Male then Philip the Bold in the Ghent war from 1379.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁹ K. de Lettenhove, *Histoire de Flandre* vol 3 (Bruxelles, 1874), 60.

⁶⁹⁰ *Prosopographia Burgundica* accessed 23/11/10

That an important military leader wished to have a confirmation of his father's guild, is therefore significant. The charter John granted to Rolland and his guild makes clear that 'during the life of his dear father, the (town) was accustomed to have a guild of archers'. The guild, so Rolland told John, had been in decline since his father's death. John's charter did not create the guild, rather re-established it with greater rights.⁶⁹¹ The charter of 1405 shows that the shooters of Watignes and Estrées had a long tradition of support from their local lord, but in a new centralised Burgundian state the guilds wanted ducal rights. The charter further hints at ducal use of shooting guild to win over aristocratic, as well as urban support for a forthcoming campaign.

Many charters of Philip the Good were issued at the request of great court figures for guilds in their own town. In a charter of 1459, Philip the Good stated he had received the 'humble supplication of our friend and loyal knight, councillor and chamberlain, lieutenant in our lands of Holland, Zealand and Friesland, and governor of Lille, Douai and Orchies, My Lord Jehan, lord of Lannoy' stating that Jehan has 'a great desire and wish to augment and strengthen his house, town, land and lordship of the said Lannoy' and surrounding area. So 'he humbly asks us that for the maintenance of the guard and defence of the said town' to establish a guild of archers. Philip granted his request, allowing the new guilds to bear arms across Flanders and have 'robes and cloaks with liveries'.⁶⁹² The charter to the archers of Lannoy emphasised the power and position of Jehan de Lannoy, but also made clear that he could not enfranchise his own local guild in his new town.⁶⁹³ That he had to obtain ducal consent placed Philip firmly as overlord and patron of both Jehan and the new guild.

⁶⁹¹ ADN B1600 f. 25v -26.

⁶⁹² AML, RT, 15884 f. 171.

⁶⁹³ W. Ossoba 'Jean de Lannoy', in Smedt (ed.), *Les chevaliers de l'ordre*, 109-110; B. Sterchi, 'The Importance of Reputation in the Theory and Practise of Burgundian Chivalry; Jean de Lannoy, the Croys and the Order of the Golden Fleece,' in Boulton and Veenstra, *The Ideology of Burgundy*, 99-116.

In 1455 Philip the Good granted rights to the crossbowmen of the town of Commines at the request of ‘of our friend and loyal esquire, councillor and chamberlain, Jehan, lord of Commines,’. The crossbowmen of Commines were not a new guild.⁶⁹⁴ The charter describes them as ‘ancient’, adding that ‘the lord of Commines, father of the supplicant, played often and many times with the said guild without contradiction or impeachment’.⁶⁹⁵ Like the Lannoys, the Commines were an important family, the ‘father’ referred to is Jean de la Clite, lord of Commines (d. 1443) a knight of the Golden Fleece who had fought with the French at Agincourt, who led Flemish troops in the Burgundian army in the 1420s, and the Ghent militia at Calais.⁶⁹⁶ The Jehan who obtained this charter did not join the Golden Fleece, but was nevertheless an important ducal councillor and military leader. He was the uncle of the famous court memoirist, Philippe de Commines.⁶⁹⁷

By granting rights to shooting guilds, Philip the Good showed his power over lords and guildsmen, control extended even to Philip’s family. In 1447 rights were granted to an unusually large guild; 600 archers and crossbowmen of Elverdinghe and of Vlamertinge. A charter was issued at the request of ‘our ally and loyal esquire and lieutenant and governor general for us in the duchy of Luxembourg and County of Chimay, Corneille, Bastard of Burgundy, lord of Elverdinghe and of Vlamertinge’.⁶⁹⁸ Corneille, natural son of Philip, was another hugely important lord, but even a ducal son could not establish an independent armed force, especially one of such remarkable size, without Philip’s consent. So many armed men, in such small places, implies that Corneille was building up

⁶⁹⁴ Town accounts first mention them in 1315, see L-T. l’abbé Messiaen, *Histoire chronologique, politique et religieuse des seigneuries et de la ville de Comines* (Courtrai, 1892), 121-125.

⁶⁹⁵ AML, RM, 16977, 135.

⁶⁹⁶ J. Paviot, ‘Jean de la Clite, seigneur de Comines,’ in Smedt, *les Chevaliers de l’ordre*, 35-7.

⁶⁹⁷ M. Jones, introduction to Philippe de Commines, *Memoirs, the Reign of Louis XI 1461-83* (London, 1972), 11-12

⁶⁹⁸ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 207-208.

some sort of private army, but he has received very little historical attention, so why he required such a force is at present unclear. No lord could have a potential military force, in his livery acting in his name, without ducal consent and control.

It is possible that in the smaller towns the guilds formed part of seigniorial hosts, serving with their local lord when called upon by the dukes. Though no Flemish examples of guilds in local hosts survive, in Chièvres, in Hainault, crossbowmen were paid for serving their local lord in 1408.⁶⁹⁹ In France, the crossbowmen of Abbeville served at the siege of Crotoy with the Count of Eu in 1451.⁷⁰⁰ In Flanders, great towns has a level of independence, but it is possible that the smaller, less well documented placed, like Commines or Lannoy, would have served with their lord in the same way as those in Hainault and France, strengthening bonds between guilds and lords.

Benefits for the lord.

Having their own men, probably in their own liveries, would have boosted the lord's status and may have made the towns more loyal. The importance of this status symbol to one lord, Jan van Dadizeele, is clear. Jan was no humble figure; he became one of most important military leaders after the death of Charles the Bold, and was one of Mary's most trusted councillors. He was one of few figures who remained popular with the towns and influential at court during her short reign.⁷⁰¹ His murder in 1481, in which Maximilian may have been complicit, caused uproar.⁷⁰² In 1463 Jan had not yet risen to such high status, but he still had some influence at court.

⁶⁹⁹ AGR, CC, 34960 f. 3v.

⁷⁰⁰ M. A. Ledieu, *Ville d'Abbeville Inventaire sommaire* (Abbeville, 1902), 88.

⁷⁰¹ Haemers, *Common Good*, 72-4.

⁷⁰² J. Haemers, 'Le Meurtre de Jean de Dadizeele. L'ordonnance de Cour de Maximilien d'Autriche et les tensions politiques en Flandre (1481),' *PCEEB* 48 (2008), 227-248.

In 1463 Philip the Good, at the ‘humble supplication of our friend and loyal esquire Jan, lord of Dadizeele’ allowed Jan to establish ‘a guild of archers in his said lordship of Dadizeele’ with the rights to bear arms and immunity from prosecution, as others had received.⁷⁰³ In his memoirs, Jan records that obtaining a charter for the archers, along with service with Simon de Lalaing and the birth of his children, as some of his proudest achievements.⁷⁰⁴ Lords encouraged guilds for the status it brought to them, and guilds welcomed interaction with all levels of the nobility for the prestige it could bring, perhaps also for the wealth these noble members might leave the guild.

Lords and guilds, social interactions.

Nobles often joined the guilds in their local town, bringing honour to the guild and support, perhaps even prestige, to the lord. Other great lords cultivated bonds with guilds across Flanders, in great and small towns. We have already seen the high number of noble members among the Bruges guilds, but the Ghent guild of Saint George seem to have had even more noble members, as shown by a separate part of the membership list for ‘dukes count knights and nobles’ within the guild-book. Members’ of the greater guild of Saint George included Maximilian and Margaret of York, as well as other members of the Flemish nobility of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Adolf and Philip of Cleves, Jan van Gruuthuse, son of Lodewijk and later, Engelbert Count of Nassau feature and among the lords,⁷⁰⁵ we shall return to these figures shortly.

Some great lords were active with guilds across Flanders, shooting and eating with guilds just as the dukes did, perhaps more than the dukes did. Simon de

⁷⁰³ RAG, RVV n 7351, f. 230v.-231 r.

⁷⁰⁴ K. de Lettenhove (ed), *Mémoires de Jean de Dadizeele*, 3-4.

⁷⁰⁵ BMG, G12.608 f. 33 – 34.

Lalaing, Knight of the Golden Fleece, admiral and chamberlain was a member of the Oudenaarde crossbowmen from 1452.⁷⁰⁶ As discussed in chapter one this great lord also led the defences of Oudenaarde earlier the same year.⁷⁰⁷ Simon was also registered as a member of the Dendermonde crossbow guild.⁷⁰⁸ Simon's participation in two different crossbow guilds demonstrates that even the highest ranks of nobility, did not see it as beneath them to shoot with crossbowmen. Further Simon's connection with the Oudenaarde crossbowmen undoubtedly helped him lead the civic defences in 1452.

One of the best documented lords to interact with numerous urban groups was another knight of the Golden Fleece, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse. It is difficult to overstate the importance of Lodewijk, created Earl of Winchester by Edward IV, in return for sheltering him in Bruges.⁷⁰⁹ Lodewijk had been at the court of Philip the Good since 1445, knighted in 1452 and entered the order of the Golden Fleece in 1461. Later, he served as Mary's first chamberlain.⁷¹⁰ Lodewijk was a powerful urban figure, as we saw in chapter 2, living in Bruges and active with the jousts of the White Bear, making his membership in the crossbowmen in Bruges seems natural. He received a livery twice and led them in a competition of 1452. Lodewijk was active with guild elsewhere in Flanders; he shot with the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde in their competition of 1462. In Aalst too, Lodewijk was registered with the crossbowmen,⁷¹¹ and he attended a feast of the Ghent crossbowmen in 1477, along with 'other lords and ladies'.⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁶ OSAOA, rekeningen, microfilm 687 f. 74, Simon de Lalaing shot there in 1469.

⁷⁰⁷ P. De Win 'Simon de Lalaing,' in de Smedt, *les chevaliers de l'ordre*, 69-71.

⁷⁰⁸ RAG, RVV, 7531 f. 231 v.- 232.

⁷⁰⁹ Vale, 'An Anglo-Burgundian Nobleman and Art Patron: Louis de Bruges Lord of La Gruthuyse', 115-131

⁷¹⁰ Haemers, *Common Good*, 103-113

⁷¹¹ In the 1488 membership lists, ASAOA Invent no 155, Register Sint Joris guild, f. 6 v.

⁷¹² A town sponsored 'great feast', town accounts quoted in De Potter, *Jaerboek*, 116.

It is interesting to note the connections between lords who were active with guilds, and their power at court. In the Mary's reign, Jan van Dadizeele, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and Adolf of Cleves were some of the most important councillors, keeping urban supports as well as ducal influence. Nobles, especially Lodewijk and Adolf, had a great deal more power and influence in Mary's reign than they had in her father's. Haemer's described Lodewijk and Adolf as 'the most influential noble courtiers' in 1477 not just 'protecting the young duchess' but also leading armies against Louis XI. Lodewijk became Mary's 'knight of honour' and first chamberlain while Adolf of Cleves was the 'father figure' of Mary's reign, she even described him as 'our closest relative'.⁷¹³ We have already seen how active Lodewijk was with shooting guild. Adolf also took part in many urban event, building communities with the shooters. In 1471 the aldermen of Lille gave large amounts of wine to Adolf as 'king' of their crossbowmen.⁷¹⁴ Though there is no evidence that he took part in an event with Lodewijk, Adolf interacted with the Bruges crossbowmen, going to shoot with them in Damme in 1447.⁷¹⁵

The power of Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, Adolf of Cleves and Jan van Dadizeele is clear. That all three maintained significant levels of interaction with the guilds is not just fascinating but crucial to their support networks, yet their connections to powerful urban groups has not been commented upon. It is very likely that their membership helped them to build and maintain strong urban connections. Connections that allowed them to remain popular among townsmen, while simultaneously serving as influential courtiers in the 1480s, keeping the peace for the Common Good, at least in Mary's reign..

⁷¹³ Haemers, *Common Good*, 106-109; idem. 'Kleef (Adolf van),' *NBW* 18 (2007), 540-547; idem. 'Adellijke onvrede. Adolf van Kleef en Lodewijk van Gruuthuse als beschermheren en uitdagers van het Bourgondisch-Habsburgse hof (1477-1482),' *JMG* 10 (2007) 178-215; W. Ossoba, 'Adolphe de Cleves,' *Les chevaliers de l'Ordre*, 120-1; Cools, *Mannen met Macht*, 107-111, 121-125; D. De Frow, *Philips van Kleef* (Groningen, 1937).

⁷¹⁴ AML CV, 16214 f. 77 v.

⁷¹⁵ SAB, 385 Sint Joris, rekeningen, 1440-8, f. 13.

Such networks and influences lasted beyond the short reign of Mary of Burgundy. After her death, the four men appointed as the Flemish regency council were Adolf of Cleves, Philip of Burgundy (son of Anthony the Great Bastard), Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and Adrien Vilain, lord of Rasseghem and a Ghent native.⁷¹⁶ In the Ghent death register of the Saint George guild, under ‘lords’ the third name, after Maximilian and Margaret of York, is Adolf of Cleves, the sixth is Philip of Burgundy, and the 17th is Adrien Vilain, such urban connections bolstered support for the regency council.⁷¹⁷ The social interactions between the guilds and the three most important councillors of Mary’s reign, Jan van Dadizeele, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and Adolf of Cleves are particularly fascinating. Their interaction with guilds across Flanders, but especially Ghent and Bruges, implies that they used guilds to bolster urban support for themselves and their parties.

5.6 Lords and privilege.

Guilds gave lords military service, and bolstered their support. In return they received not just prestige, but support and solid privileges, as well as obligations and restrictions. Privileges included the right to bear arms, immunity from prosecution should someone die in practice, immunity from military duties like the watch, and permission to organise lotteries. Unlike their French counterparts, the Flemish guilds rarely received tax exemptions, though the tax situation was different in Flanders. Further, guilds were controlled by their princes, being required to serve when needed, but forbidden to act in war without ducal consent. Many guilds were restricted in other actions; some were even given charters detailing what they should wear.

⁷¹⁶ H. G. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, States Generals and Parliaments, the Netherlands in the fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2009), 60-1.

⁷¹⁷ BMG, G3018/3 f. 33 r. –v.

Bear arms.

Guild brothers had to own arms and had to be skilled. These were, of course, military requirements, but owning and more importantly carrying arms was also a privilege, a marker of status. Such a privilege was particularly important in towns where no one but lords and members of recognised archery and crossbow guilds could bear arms. Recognising the loyal service of the Lille archers on his joyous entry in 1405, John the Fearless granted the guild the right ‘to travel and to bear their arms and armour, fitting at all times as it pleases them, in assembly or alone... in and among our town and castellanies of Lille and land of Flanders ... without causing harm to any person, and carry with them arrows and two or three quivers for use on the said bow’.⁷¹⁸ The right was confirmed by Philip the Good in 1419⁷¹⁹ and by Charles V in 1516.⁷²⁰

In 1431, ‘by special grace’ Philip the Good gave more detail in a charter to the archers of Aalst, stating they could ‘freely carry their arms and armour (*harmnaiz*), suitable bows, as beneficial for archers, throughout our land and County of Flanders’.⁷²¹ In 1456 a pike was added to the list of permissible arms in a ducal charter to the crossbowmen of Zuinkerke.⁷²² To allow guilds to travel with weapons, the dukes must have been confident the guilds were reliable, law abiding men, men of high moral credit. Rights to bear arms marked the guilds out as important, especially as towns passed regular legislation against anyone else bearing arms.

From 1382 onwards the Lille magistrates declared ‘that no one, (neither)

⁷¹⁸ AML, PT 15879 f. 215.

⁷¹⁹ AML, RM, 16973, 90.

⁷²⁰ AML, RM, 16977, 139.

⁷²¹ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 209-210.

⁷²² RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 205 v. -206.

individuals nor groups, small (in status) nor grand, may henceforth (engage) in any shooting of the crossbow or the bow of the hand', except authorised guilds⁷²³. The same year ordinances were passed that no one could go out in arms.⁷²⁴ In 1426 no one, except guilds and nobles, was allowed to go out, day or night, in arms.⁷²⁵ In 1472 even harsher ordinances were passed, they effected 'that no one, not any person of any sort, whether bourgeois or resident' may 'carry with him day or night' any weapons. Anyone found breaking these rules would be fined the significant sum of 60 shillings.⁷²⁶

Guilds were armed, authorised civic groups, respected and respectable, they were special groups. Lille reacted angrily to unauthorised groups aping the *serments* (*sous ombre des dites confrairies*) 'like the archers and of crossbowmen, giving robes and liveries and costume in great number of many simple companions'. The new illegal groups wore liveries and 'carried dangerous arms and bad weapons' including pikes, battle axes and maces, as well as bows and crossbows in 1450. The groups were 'neither of lineage nor upstanding' they assembled only 'to behave badly, destroy and wound and otherwise, they interfere with others, they make peace by force, without the agreement of injured parties'. Lille was deeply worried at unsuitable armed men in the town, making and settling dispute as they saw fit even making 'forced marriages', perhaps abducting heiresses. Strict penalties were laid out; anyone except authorised guildsmen found wearing livery or carrying arms would be fined £60, any assemblies in arms and livery were forbidden.⁷²⁷ Guilds were the only ones in their towns allowed to bear arms and wear liveries, marking the guild-brothers out as distinctive and important.

⁷²³ AML, OM, 373, f. 3v.

⁷²⁴ AML, OM, 373 f. 15 v.

⁷²⁵ AML, OM, 376, f. 55 v.

⁷²⁶ AML, OM, 378, f. 98v.- 99v.

⁷²⁷ ADN, B17667.

Immunity from prosecution.

In 1417 John the Fearless granted a chart to the Lille crossbowmen stating that ‘if it should happen by mistake or by mischief that any of the said companions of the said guild, in shooting between the targets, should injure, strike, hurt or kill... any person of any condition estate or position’, they would suffer no ‘punishment or impeachment, neither in body nor in goods’.⁷²⁸ Ducal privileges such as this were granted to numerous shooting guilds, but the crossbowmen of Lille seem to have been unique in Flanders in having a royal privilege. In 1464 Louis XI granted ‘that if it should happen in any case by misfortune or by mischief that any of the companions of the said guild standing between two targets, strikes injures hits or in any way damages or kills any person, of any estate or condition’ the crossbowman will have no ‘impeachment or damages perpetually from those responsible for our justices’.⁷²⁹ Immunity from prosecution helped the guilds to flourish, allowing them to practice without fear of the legal repercussions of accidental injury; no indictments for accidents during practice are recorded in Flanders, though they are elsewhere.⁷³⁰ Such immunity marked guilds out as powerful, but also as trustworthy, in the eyes of ducal and civic authorities.

Other privileges; Exemption from watch.

The right to bear arms and immunity from prosecution for deaths in practise, occur in the earliest charters, exemptions from the watch were granted later. Fourteenth-century ordinances, such as that of Philip the Bold to the crossbowmen of Dendermonde in 1398, emphasised the obligation to watch the towns’ walls. The crossbowmen were required to ‘make the guard for the defence

⁷²⁸ ADN B1601 f. 157.

⁷²⁹ ADN, B1608 f. 277, the original is in extremely poor condition, AML, affaires generale, 5.

⁷³⁰ In Brussels immunity from prosecution had to be renewed by Maximilian in 1478 after a court case in which one crossbowman was pardoned for killing another in practice, it seems accidentally; Wauters, *Notice historique* 3-5; in Amiens, in 1350, a crossbowman, Colart le Gurvelier, was pardoned for involuntarily killing another during the game of the crossbow, E. Maugis, *Documents inédits concernant la ville et le siège du bailliage d’Amiens* (Amiens, 1908), 17-22.

of our said town by the order of the said bailey or others or by us and by the said law, so much by night as by day' the guild-brothers would be paid 2 shillings a day for their service.⁷³¹

Watching the town wall was one of them most important way of defending the town.⁷³² In theory, everyone in a medieval town was responsible for watching the walls to protect from external threats and internal dangers, indeed it can be stated that 'the watch mobilised the population like no other civic organisation'.⁷³³ Guilds of archers and crossbowmen had, in the fourteenth century, been required to watch walls day and night, but over time such responsibilities became extremely burdensome. The guilds were, as we have seen, important soldiers across the period. Towns and lords wanted to keep the guilds in reserve for when they were needed, rather than exhausting them by compelling them to taking part in the watch in times of relative peace.

In 1488 Maximilian and Philip the Fair referred to the exhaustion of the guild of crossbowmen of Douai. During the previous twenty years the guild-brothers 'had continually been constrained to keep watch and guard the gates, towers and walls of our said town', and were greatly depleted. As a result 'the said guild will be made free, quit, and exempt of all services', including watching the gates.⁷³⁴ In Bruges exemptions were granted far earlier. From 1425, 'Each guild-brother will be free and quit of the money of the watch, on the conditions stipulated by the communal authority'.⁷³⁵ Grants of exemption from the burden of the watch further demonstrated that guilds service was important, and should be kept for genuine militarily necessary.

⁷³¹ *Ordonnancés de Philippe le Hardi* vol. 2, 296-300.

⁷³² G. D. Suttler, *The Social Construction of Communities* (London, 1972), 21-43, 189-232.

⁷³³ Small, *Medieval France*, 200-202

⁷³⁴ DAM EE18, also copied into 24II232, *Arbalestiers de Douay*, f. 6v. – 7.

⁷³⁵ BASS, charter 3.

Lottery.

Holding a lottery meant receiving a privilege, and lead to additional guild income. Few urban groups or confraternities held lotteries, perhaps as a result the early history of lotteries is poorly understood, but as an extraordinary source of income civic lotteries are documented.⁷³⁶ The town accounts of Bruges first refer to lotteries being held in 1411, they became a semi-permanent source of municipal funds, 27 were held between 1450 and 1474.⁷³⁷ Elsewhere a few wealthy individuals organised lotteries, one of the earliest was the Antwerp merchant Thyman Claussone in 1446.⁷³⁸

The crossbowmen of Bruges held lotteries at least twice. Their accounts include lottery income in 1457⁷³⁹ and 1486;⁷⁴⁰ however no surviving charter or ordinance refers to the guild receiving permission to hold lottery, nor the form it took. Only in Ghent do ducal privileges detailing the holding of lotteries, and the types of prizes on offer, survive.⁷⁴¹ More are recorded for the sixteenth century, the

⁷³⁶ D. E. H. de Boer, 'De triomftocht der prijzen, loterijwezen en volkcultuur in de Nederlanden tot het einde de 17^{de} eeuw,' *SH* 36 (2001), 154-9; J. W. Marsilije, 'De eerste stadsloterij in Leiden,' in his (ed.), *Uit Leidse bron geleverd* (Leiden, 1989), 148-162; G. Verhoeven, 'Van 'prosen' en prijzen. Een zestiende-eeuwse oplossing voor de financiering van de gezondheidszorg,' *Fibula* 29 (1988), 12-19.

⁷³⁷ Gilliodts-Van Severen, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Bruges*, vol. 5, 212-219; vol. 6. 465.

⁷³⁸ A. K. L. Thijs, 'Les lotteries dans le Pays-Bas Meridionauc (Xe-XVIIe siecles),' in I. Eggers, L. de Mecheleer and M. Wynants, *Geschiedenis van de loterijen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (15de eeuw-1934)* (Brussels, 1994), 7-11.

⁷³⁹ SAB, 385, Sint Joris, Rekeningen 1445- 1480 f. 118.

⁷⁴⁰ SAB, 385, Sint Joris, Rekeningen, 1481 – 1507 f. 20 v.

⁷⁴¹ As did a gunners guild in Zürich 1504; K. Isacson and B. Koch, 'Losziehen und Los ziehen,' *Personen der Geschichte, Geschichte der Personen; Studien zur Kreuzzugs* ed. C. Hesse et al (Basel, 2003), 127-151.

crossbowmen of Ypres organised their first documented lottery in 1509, Bruges in 1515 and Mechelen in 1520.⁷⁴²

In 1469 Charles the Bold allowed the Ghent guild to hold a lottery to fund their hospital, maintain their chapel, and expand their guild hall. The guild-brothers were allowed to hold a lottery twice a year, for two years, for these worthy purposes.⁷⁴³ In 1517 the same guild had begun to build a '*belle et magnifique galerye*' and, as a result they were 'greatly in need'. They told Charles V that 'it is impossible for the said supplicants (i.e. the guild) to pay (for) or even to undertake the said works which they have started in their said court'. Charles granted them permission to hold a lottery. There would be 'many fair prizes of money and further of pots, glasses, goblets and other similar pieces of finery', to be held for six years, the first being 1517.⁷⁴⁴ The Ghent privilege is all the more striking as it was issued in years when Charles V was banning other forms of gambling.⁷⁴⁵

French guilds and tax exemptions.

Guilds across Flanders received many important privileges, but it is also important to note a privilege that they did not receive; tax exemptions. In France virtually all shooting guilds received some form of tax exemption. From 1367 the crossbowmen of Lagny-sur-Marne were exempt from the *taille*.⁷⁴⁶ The crossbowmen of Laon were exempt from all taxes save those for the king's ransom.⁷⁴⁷ In Paris, the crossbowmen received even greater exemptions; in 1358

⁷⁴² Thijs, 'Les loteries dans le Pays-Bas', 10-12.

⁷⁴³ SAG, SJ, NGR, charter 25.

⁷⁴⁴ SAG, SJ, NGR, charter 51.

⁷⁴⁵ For example in Lille in 1516 banning cards or board games for money, AML, OM, 379, 95v., 98.

⁷⁴⁶ *ORF* vol. 5, 32.

⁷⁴⁷ *ORF* vol. 5, 13-4.

the Dauphin stated that the guild brothers would ‘not pay *Gabelles, Travers, impositions, Passages, chantiees, Pontteages, Tonlieu* or other exemptions’.⁷⁴⁸ The French royal ordinances are earlier than Flemish charters, were issued in a country in the midst of war, so differences are to be expected. It is nevertheless significant that French kings felt that civic honour and moral credit, the main motives for joining guilds in Flanders, would be enough to boost guild numbers in France.

Tax exemptions are rare in Flanders, though in other Burgundian towns some guilds received exemptions. In 1518 the king of the Valenciennes crossbowmen paid no direct taxes.⁷⁴⁹ In 1499 the crossbowmen of Le Quesnoy were freed from ‘all *tailles* and customs and expenses’.⁷⁵⁰ For the guilds considered in our study, only one example of a completely tax free guild is to be found. The crossbowmen of Mechelen were granted this status in 1474 by Charles the Bold in recognition of the number who had died at the siege of Neuss.⁷⁵¹ Flanders had less direct taxation than France,⁷⁵² famously described by Commynes as ‘the Promised Lands’ as Philip the Good taxed his subjects so little.⁷⁵³ Lower direct tax cannot be the only explanation for the most common French privilege being issued so rarely in Flanders; it seems that in France men needed greater material reward to spend their time shooting.

⁷⁴⁸ *ORF* vol.3, 360-2.

⁷⁴⁹ ADN, C9577, a large collection of letters relating to the guild of Valenciennes, many are eighteenth century ‘copies’ of fourteenth century rights, but the 1518 charter is genuine.

⁷⁵⁰ ADN B1226 (16.507).

⁷⁵¹ Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines* vol. 1, 158.

⁷⁵² J. H. Munro, ‘Industrial Protectionism in Medieval Flanders, Urban or National,’ in *The Medieval City* ed. H. A. Miskimin, D. Herlin and A. L. Udovitch (London, 1977), 229-268; H. Dubois, ‘Quatre rôles d’impôts normands a la bibliothèque nationale,’ and P. Contamine, *Reforme l’état, rationalise l’administration; a propos du contrôle des finances publiques, 1456-1461*, both in *Finances, pouvoirs et mémoire, hommages a Jean Favier*, ed. J. Kerherve and A. Rigaudiere (Brest, 1999), 372-387, 388-396.

⁷⁵³ Philippe de Commynes, *Memoirs*, 64-5.

5.7 Princely control and obligation.

Rights and privileges granted by the dukes brought guild status and power, but in return obligations and control were placed upon them. They were required to serve when called, and to be obedient. Under Philip the Good, ‘loyalty’ took on a new importance, as guilds were required to wear his emblem.

Required to serve

From 1382 the crossbowmen of Douai had to be ‘be ready to go, for reasonable wages’ to serve town and duke.⁷⁵⁴ John the Fearless required the crossbowmen of Wauvrin to be ‘always ready to serve us or our successors, Counts and Countesses of Flanders’ in a charter in 1412.⁷⁵⁵ In 1441 the archers of Hautheem were required by Philip the Good to be ‘ready to serve well and ably’ whenever he called them.⁷⁵⁶ How far such obligations were followed, and how regularly guilds were called upon, is not as well recorded, but all of these charters make clear that with the right to bear arms came an obligation to be vigilant and prepared.

Restrictions on meeting and not serving.

Guilds were powerful prestigious groups, but they did not enjoy unchecked power. In the same charters as he granted them the right to bear arms, Philip the Good stated that the archers of Sint-Winnoksbergen could not assemble without permission, not even for marriages, unless it is ‘with the grant and consents of our said *bailli* or his lieutenant as it pleases us’.⁷⁵⁷ The same limitation was present in

⁷⁵⁴ DAM, AA94 fol 70v. – 81.

⁷⁵⁵ AML, RM 16973 f. 47.

⁷⁵⁶ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 202-203.

⁷⁵⁷ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 220-221.

numerous fifteenth century charters, one of the earliest surviving examples was the charter to the crossbowmen of Estrées and Watignies in 1405,⁷⁵⁸ and it was repeated for the crossbowmen of Aalst in 1494.⁷⁵⁹ Guilds were social groups, with annual meals and weekly practice, but all of these events had to have permission, as did other urban events showing that guilds were still being placed under princely and civic control.

Though military groups, the guilds were forbidden to serve without authorisation. In 1383 the governors of Douai passed ordinances to the crossbowmen to the effect that ‘they cannot go to serve outside the town without the consent and authority of the aldermen’.⁷⁶⁰ Other guilds received similar restrictions,⁷⁶¹ but in Douai a later document shows restrictions were ineffective. In 1452 Philip the Good wrote angrily that the gunners and crossbowmen had, ‘under excuse that they were required by many lords, gentlemen, captains and others’, gone out to ‘serve and make war’ and had ‘abandoned and left’ the town, ‘despite what they had sworn to’. Philip passed new ordinances to the effect that all three guilds, archers crossbowmen and gunners ‘were not to leave (Douai) for war nor any quarrel that may be, unless it is with our command or with us or in our service’ or on the orders of ducal officials.⁷⁶² Like exemptions from the watch, ducal control of when guild could and could not serve demonstrate the military potential of guilds, as well as the durability of princely control.

⁷⁵⁸ ADN, B1600, f. 26.

⁷⁵⁹ ASAOA, 4 boek met den haire, f. 87-88 v.

⁷⁶⁰ DAM, AA94, f. 70v. - 71 v.

⁷⁶¹ For example to the crossbowmen of Courtrai in 1423, RAK, Oude stadsarchief Kortrijk, 5800. Sint Jorisgilde; and to Bruges before 1510, Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 163-171; This common obligation for Flemish guilds was imposed even on the crossbowmen of Paris in 1358, *ORF* vol. 3, 360-2.

⁷⁶² DAM, EE17.

Showing loyalty.

Guilds were privileged but controlled; their civic loyalty was enforced, as we have seen through taking oaths. Philip the Good wished to make guilds' loyalty to himself and his successors visible to all through the use of emblems. Philip's policy of having his supporters wearing his symbols may have been influenced by his father's comparable actions during the French civil war, distributing badges and symbols, including the saltire, to partisans.⁷⁶³ Among nobles, distribution of emblems, badges, even collars, is well understood as a sign of support and status.⁷⁶⁴ Distribution of emblems, or allowing guilds to wear them in and beyond their urban environments should be understood in the same way.

The first surviving charter to refer to ducal insignia comes from 1446. In March that year, the archers of Biervelt were granted permission to wear on 'their robes our sign of the fusil and of 2 arrows in a cross of my lord Saint Andrew'.⁷⁶⁵ Three months later, the archers of Nieuwpoort were permitted to 'wear on their robe, hood or cloak, our device and fusil of the two arrows, amongst them the said fusil of the cross of Saint Andrew'.⁷⁶⁶ A month later the archers of Ypres were permitted to wear 'for the finery of the said guild our device of the fusil, of the 2 arrows, amongst them in the form of the cross of Saint Andrew'.⁷⁶⁷ The next year guilds in Sint-Winnoksbergen,⁷⁶⁸ Cassel⁷⁶⁹ and Thielt⁷⁷⁰ received near identical

⁷⁶³ E. J. Hutchison, 'Partisan identity in the French civil war, 1405-18, reconsidering the evidence of livery badges,' *JMH* 33 (2007), 250-257.

⁷⁶⁴ C. Shenton, 'Edward III and the Symbol of the Leopard,' in P. Cross and M. Keen, *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in medieval England* (Suffolk, 2002), 69-81; M. Jones, 'Les Signes du pouvoir, l'ordre de l'Hermie, les dévies et les hérauts de ducs de Bretagne au XVe siècle,' *Mémoires de la société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne* 68 (1991), 141-73; M. Pastoureau, 'Emblèmes et symbole de la Toison d'Or' in. Van den Bergen-Pantens, et al, *L'ordre de la Toison d'or: de Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Beau*, 99-106; M.-T. Caron, 'La noblesse en représentation dans les années 1430; vêtements de cour, vêtements de joute, livrées,' *PCEEB* 37 (1997), 157-172; R. Jones, *Bloodied Banners*, 57-68.

⁷⁶⁵ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 239.

⁷⁶⁶ RAG, RVV7 7351, f. 217-217 v.

⁷⁶⁷ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 199v.

⁷⁶⁸ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 220-221.

charters granting them the right to place the fusil and saltire on their liveries. By the end of the reign, Menin,⁷⁷¹ Cockelare,⁷⁷² Douai,⁷⁷³ Dadizeele⁷⁷⁴ and Zuuvekerke⁷⁷⁵ had received this special right. Many of the towns in which guilds received the right to wear ducal emblems, shown below, were on coastal or eastern Flanders, again reflecting defensive concerns.



Fig. 15 Archers' festival Antwerp, c. 1493.⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁶⁹ Archives Municipales de Cassel, AA1, f. 117-118.

⁷⁷⁰ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 222v. -223, Original in Stadsarchief Tiel, Oud Archief, n 846.

⁷⁷¹ ADN, B17696.

⁷⁷² RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 226v-227.

⁷⁷³ AGR, chartes de l'audience, 219.

⁷⁷⁴ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 230v.-231.

⁷⁷⁵ RAG, RVV, 7351, f. 205v.-206.

⁷⁷⁶ The image is used on the cover of Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*. P. Vandenbroeck, 'Bij het Schutterfeest (1493) en het Dubbelportret (1496) van de Meester van Frankfurt' *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1983), 15-32.



Fig. 16 The two figures shown are from different guild, in different colours, but both wear ducal insignia; two arrows in the form of the cross of Saint Andrew and the fusil.

Philip was the first, and the most active, to grant this right, but his successors continued it. In 1508 the archers of Béthune were ‘advised’ to wear the cross of Saint Andrew,⁷⁷⁷ and in 1518 Charles V granted the same privilege to the archers of Annappes.⁷⁷⁸ Later sixteenth-century militias preserved the ‘Burgundian flag’ on their uniforms showing not just regional identity, but the durability of this symbol.⁷⁷⁹ Guilds’ liveries were part of their identity; through colours and luxury they showed all observers that the guilds were special, privileged men. Placing them in ducal liveries, especially in years when competitions across and beyond the Low Countries were becoming more common, emphasised ducal power and influence.

⁷⁷⁷ Espinas, *Les Origines*, 251-254.

⁷⁷⁸ AML, RM, 16978, 7.

⁷⁷⁹ A. Duke, ‘The Elusive Netherlands; the Question of National Identity in the Early Modern Low Countries of the Eve of the Revolt,’ *Bijdragen en Medelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 119 (2004), 14.

5.8 Towns and guilds.

Towns favoured guilds for a variety of reasons. As was the case with ducal support, potential defensive concerns were a large part of civic motivations for patronising guilds. Shooting guilds were, for towns, more than defenders. Like jousting, chambers of rhetoric and processions they became an integral part of urban identity, even civic ideology. Support for the guilds is well documented with town accounts recording grants of wine, cloth, land and money. Significantly, the guilds were the only urban groups to receive such continuous support. The forms and hierarchy of support are also important, revealing how towns saw their guilds, and that they were not supported equally.

Motives.

In 1348 the aldermen of Oudenaarde granted rights to the Saint George crossbowmen ‘for helping our lord’ and so that Oudenaarde would be better defended.⁷⁸⁰ An earlier record of land given to the archers of Cambrai survives from 1333, which also refers to defence, but the documents is in poor condition, and not all is now legible.⁷⁸¹ Far more evidence comes from town accounts; recording gifts or payments made to the guilds for various causes.

From the 1380s onwards civic motives for supporting shooting guilds reflect honour alongside defence. In September 1383 the crossbowmen of Douai had their ‘customary’ rights confirmed by the town aldermen for the ‘honour, profit and aid’ of the town.⁷⁸² Honour is mentioned in numerous charters from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In 1423 the Ghent guilds of Saint George ‘honourably received’ money for the ‘profit’ of the town, when electing

⁷⁸⁰ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/12.

⁷⁸¹ ADN, B 1048. 6775.

⁷⁸² DAM, 24II232. Arbalestiers de Douay f. 1.

officials.⁷⁸³ By 1493 the guild-brothers of Saint George of Ghent were being given additional money ‘for the honour and reverence’ of God, Saint George, and Ghent.⁷⁸⁴ From all over Flanders and from the late fourteenth century onwards, towns favoured their guilds for civic honour. How far this is explained by a genuine change in municipal thinking at the end of the fourteenth century, and how far by the greater quantity and quality of surviving accounts is impossible to tell. The Lille sources make the importance of honour particularly clear.

In 1443, when the two crossbow guilds of Lille were unified, guild-brothers were given rights, land and wine for the ‘honour, fortune and grace’ of the duke and Lille.⁷⁸⁵ In 1415 the aldermen of Lille gave the crossbowmen money ‘for the honour that...they had won (i.e. prizes)... in the game of the crossbow in the town of Croix’.⁷⁸⁶ The Lille guilds did not have to leave their town to bring honour. In 1427 the archers were given wine ‘for the honour that...they had held, in their (guild) hall, the feast of the *papegay*’.⁷⁸⁷ In 1484, Lille granted new lands to a new archery guild, the archers of pleasure, ‘considering that the said bow is honourable for young men and profitable for the guard and defence of the said land and the said town’.⁷⁸⁸ Lille, like other towns, gave their guilds privileges and rights for security and for honour. The most common and regular gift given to the shooting guilds was wine. Since the Lille town accounts are complete and detailed, it is worth staying with them for an analysis of the development of municipal support to the different guilds.

⁷⁸³ SAG, ‘jaerregister’ 301/27 f. 82 v. 17.

⁷⁸⁴ SAG, 155 fonds Joris, 3.

⁷⁸⁵ AML, RT, 15883 f. 134-134v.

⁷⁸⁶ AML, CV, 16159 f. 42.

⁷⁸⁷ AML, CV, 16170 f. 52.

⁷⁸⁸ AML, CV, 162223 f. 86 v.

Regular support: wine and cloth.

Lille encouraged guilds of archers, crossbowmen and later gunners, but not in equal measure. The crossbowmen were given annual gifts of wine before the archers, implying they were older and better established. Crossbowmen first received wine for their ‘games and establishment’ in 1332.⁷⁸⁹ As new guilds emerged, hierarchy became more apparent. In 1397 both the archers and the lesser crossbowmen received 12 lots of wine for *papegay*, while the greater crossbowmen received 24 lots.⁷⁹⁰ Until 1405 amounts stayed constant, but in 1406, perhaps following their service in defending coastal Flanders, discussed in chapter 1, the wine given to the archers was raised to 16 lots, the crossbowmen still received 24 lots.⁷⁹¹ The lesser archers did not receive annual grants of wine until 1437, when the greater crossbowmen received 18 lots, the smaller crossbowmen 12 lots, the greater archers 12 lots and the lesser archers 9 lots.⁷⁹² A hierarchy had clearly been established, with the crossbowmen receiving more than the archers, implying they were of a higher status. It is also striking that the *grand* and *petit* guilds received separate wine, again implying they were separate adult groups of different status, not co-dependent youth and adult guilds.

Patterns of hierarchy and gift-giving changed surprisingly little over the fifteenth century. As well as giving the guilds special large amounts of wine for their annual shoots, Lille also gave the guilds weekly grants to support their practice sessions. In 1447, the archers were given 8 shilling a week ‘for being in recreational assembly every Sunday for the purpose of shooting’. The crossbowmen received 12 shillings a week for the same purpose.⁷⁹³ The Gunners’ guild first appeared in the financial records in 1465, when the crossbowmen

⁷⁸⁹ AML, CV, 16021 f. 39 v.

⁷⁹⁰ AML, CV, 16130 f. 36 r.-v.

⁷⁹¹ AML, CV, 16148 f. 40v.

⁷⁹² AML, CV 16178, f. 50 r.-v.

⁷⁹³ AML, CV, 16188 f. 71 – 71 v.

received 18 lots of wine for their *papegay*, the archers and lesser crossbowmen 12 and the lesser archers 9. The hand-gunners fitted into the middle of this hierarchy, also receiving 12 lots.⁷⁹⁴ Three years later, the gunners began receiving weekly support. In 1468 the crossbowmen received 12 shillings a week, and the archers 8 shillings, the hand-gunners received 10 shilling, plus support in buying powder.⁷⁹⁵ All of the Lille shooting guilds were honourable groups, given wine and privileges for the prestige of the town, no other social or devotional group received such continuous and generous municipal support, but the shooting guilds were not equal.

Form of gift: Wine.

That Lille, like other towns, gave wine, not beer, is striking. The social difference between beer drinkers and wine drinkers was well understood in the fifteenth century, as shown by records from Tournai.⁷⁹⁶ Wine also suggested a community, as it would be distributed between those at the weekly shoot or annual meal, though as we have seen here too hierarchy was present. Giving wine endowed status and emphasised community, as the wine would be consumed by many guild-brothers. However it must be remembered that wine was a standard municipal gift, given to messengers, lords or any other important visitors to the town.

Cloth.

Many Flemish towns gave their guilds wine and cloth each year, but the accounts of Oudenaarde are particularly detailed. From the earliest town accounts, in 1407, Oudenaarde lists gifts of cloth made to the most important civic groups. The list includes aldermen, a messenger, even some lords, and in the middle of the list,

⁷⁹⁴ AML, CV, 16204 f. 65 – 66 v.

⁷⁹⁵ AML, CV, 16207 f. 94 v.

⁷⁹⁶ Small 'Centre and Periphery in Late Medieval France', 156-9.

the crossbowmen of Saint George, no other festive group appears in any surviving fifteenth-century account.⁷⁹⁷ Early accounts are in poor condition, but from 1418 onwards this gift took the annual form of costume for 16 sworn shooters, at the cost of £60.⁷⁹⁸

The archers do not begin receiving cloth until 1486, and this must be connected to ducal 'request' to give them wine the same year.⁷⁹⁹ As in Lille, a hierarchy is apparent, but the Oudenaarde situation is more complex. In 1486 the crossbowmen received cloth for the uniform of 16 sworn shooters, costing £30; the archers receive cloth for 25 shooters, but worth only £25.⁸⁰⁰ £30 was an unusually low payment. By 1490 the payments were, for the 16 crossbowmen £60, for the 25 archers £25.⁸⁰¹ Gifts changed again in 1506, when 15 crossbowmen received cloth worth £60 and 15 archers cloth worth £30.⁸⁰² Gunners did not receive wine until 1513.⁸⁰³ In 1514 Oudenaarde gave 15 crossbowmen cloth worth £60, 15 archers cloth worth £30 and 16 hand-gunners cloth worth £64.⁸⁰⁴ That is equivalent to £2 to each archer, £4 to each crossbowman and £4, 5 s to each gunner. The crossbow guild did not just receive more money overall, but crucially a higher quality of cloth individually.

The significance of the guilds in civic liveries, receiving civic wine is clear. Like the right to bear arms, gifts of wine and cloth must be understood within their civic context, guilds looked prestigious because no one else was allowed to bear

⁷⁹⁷ AGR, CC, Microfilm 684, F. 45 v.- 47.

⁷⁹⁸ AGR, CC, Microfilm 684, f. 97 v.

⁷⁹⁹ OSAOA, 1148, stadsrekening, 16, 1483-4, f. 164 v.

⁸⁰⁰ AGR, CC, 31788 f. 31.

⁸⁰¹ OSAOA, 1148, stadsrekening 17, 1490-94, f. 34.

⁸⁰² AGR, CC, 31802, F. 33

⁸⁰³ AGR, CC, 31809, f. 55 v.

⁸⁰⁴ AGR, CC, 31810 f. 30 v.

arms, annual gifts of wine and cloth showed their desirable status and honourable position because no other group received this level of support. Such support doubtless increased the popularity of guilds, and the demand for membership. More fundamentally such support also denotes how central guilds were to civic ideals, and how far they were becoming linked with civic ideology. Guilds were broad cross section of towns, received civic wine, wearing civic colours, representing civic ideology across the region, becoming civic ambassadors.

Land

Gifts of land, usually gardens for practice, were important in their value but their location is also revealing for guilds' status. In Lille both the archers and crossbowmen had gardens outside the Porte de Courtrai, a rich and prestigious part of town.⁸⁰⁵ The hand-gunners had a tower by 1465.⁸⁰⁶ The archers of Armentières had a garden outside the Houpline-gate, near the Franciscan church. The crossbowmen had a garden on the other side of the same church, nearer to the Erquinghem gate.⁸⁰⁷ Virtually all guilds were given land, usually in a prestigious part of town. In Douai the archers received their garden, rent free, for a hundred years at a time, first in 1445,⁸⁰⁸ renewed in 1545.⁸⁰⁹ The garden ran just outside the town walls,⁸¹⁰ and the archers were expected to make it secure and plant

⁸⁰⁵ For the crossbowmen, by 1443, AML, RT 15884 f. 134-135 v., and for the archers from 1415; AML, RM, 16973 f. 79.

⁸⁰⁶ AML, RM, 15918 f. 146.

⁸⁰⁷ AAM, EE4.

⁸⁰⁸ DAM, 2 II 2/ 5.

⁸⁰⁹ DAM, 2II2/ 10.

⁸¹⁰ Both gardens were extant in the seventeenth century, as detailed on 'plan de Martin le Bourgeois' of 1627, this is digitised on a civic website, http://www.ville-douai.fr/site_acces.asp?IdPage=14044&ccf= accessed 21/09/11; for context see M. Rouche, *Histoire de Douai* (Dunkerque, 1985), 50-61; and R. Catty, *Douai, ville militaire* (Douai, 1999), 105-133.

trees.⁸¹¹ Such long term, but still temporary, support is unusual, implying Douai was unwilling to alienate civic property.

Numerous examples of gifts of land could be given, but to truly understand the significance of landholding, an analysis of one town is desirable. Though a study of a large well-documented town like Ghent could be revealing, it would also be untypical, as Ghent guilds were extremely rich. Further the property of the crossbowmen of Ghent has been studied in depth, and the archers also discussed.⁸¹² To understand a more typical guild, the medium sized town of Aalst, with the detailed fifteenth-century property records of the crossbowmen, will be analysed. Such was the influence of the crossbow guild on their town that the street in which the shooters maintained their guild-hall (*Schutterhof*), has been called Sintjoris-Straat since at least the seventeenth century.⁸¹³ Before that it seems to have been called 'zoutstraat'.⁸¹⁴ Fifteenth and sixteenth-century property records regularly use the '*schuttershof*' or '*Sintjorishof*' as landmarks, showing that the guild-hall was a well known building.⁸¹⁵

Fifteenth-century guild-accounts reveal that their hall (*hof*) was just off the main street of Aalst, Nieuwstraat, while the chapel lay on the road itself.⁸¹⁶ Such locations placed the shooters very close to the town hall (*schepenhuis*) and the great church of Saint Martin, as well as the central market of Aalst.⁸¹⁷ By 1462, a year for which we have exceptional guild accounts, the crossbowmen also owned

⁸¹¹ Espinas, *Les Origines*, 543-4.

⁸¹² Voitron, *Notice sur le local de la confrérie de Saint Georges*, 361-370; Moulin-Coppens, *Sint Jorisgilde te Gent*, 55; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 67-75.

⁸¹³ J. Ghysens, *Geschiedenis der straten van Aalst* (Aalst, 1986), 317.

⁸¹⁴ ASAOA, rentbook van den Heelig Geest f. 2.

⁸¹⁵ Haels, *Toponymie van Aalst*, 179-181.

⁸¹⁶ ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2 f. 1-1 v.

⁸¹⁷ ASAOA, wettelijke passeringe, 542 f. 34.

several houses in Aalst, most of which were also on the prestigious and expensive Nieuwstraat. Others were on the fish market, with a small amount of land just outside Aalst, in ‘the land of Erpe’ in the Parish of Saint John.⁸¹⁸ It is clear that while the guild hall had been given by the town, other buildings were either bought by the guild, or were left to it by members.

As accounts survive only for one year, it is impossible to know how long the Aalst crossbowmen had owned such property. But the position and power of the crossbowmen is clear. Not only did their land holding dominate the richest part of Aalst, but it was also on the procession route and the road to the market place.⁸¹⁹ Such a significant location close to municipal, commercial and religious influence would have enhanced their standing and their visibility to residents and all visitors, highlighting the power of the guild.⁸²⁰ That shooting guilds owned a hall for their feasts and communal events, a chapel for their devotional activities, and several other smaller properties left to them by members, and rented out rather than sold, is significant. The wealth of guild property shows once again their high status, and that they were unlike any other urban group.

Other forms of support

Lights and wax had devotional significance, but when paid for from municipal funds, they also demonstrated the prestige of guilds. In Douai, gifts of wax and torches were linked to civic religious function, especially the annual procession. In the earliest complete town accounts, those of 1390, we find that the guild of Saint George received 12 lb of wax ‘as is the custom for the candle of that guild’

⁸¹⁸ ASAOA, 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2 f. 1- 2 v.

⁸¹⁹ M. Trowbridge, ‘Processional Plays in Aalst’, 95-117.

⁸²⁰ For the demonstration of power through property more generally see M. Boone, ‘Urban Space and Political conflict in Late Medieval Flanders,’ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (2002), 621-5; R. van Uytven, ‘Architecturale vormen en stedeijke identiteit in de Middeleeuwen,’ J. C. Dekker (ed.), *Sporen en Spiegels, beschouwingen over geschiedenis en identiteit* (Tilburgm 1995), 17-22.

to be carried in the procession.⁸²¹ In Aalst, from 1408, the crossbowmen received wax, here 9 lb, given ‘with honour’ for the procession.⁸²² Gifts of wax are less regular in larger towns, though annual lump sums for ‘support’ may include wax. Where civic gifts of wax are recorded separately they are significant, showing not just devotional aspects of guilds, but also that the towns wanted the guilds to attend, and to be conspicuous, in annual processions, as powerful symbols of civic pride.

5.9 Towns and guilds; control and obligation.

Towns supported their guilds well, and were often extremely generous, but they did not give their shooting guilds free reign. Prescriptive documents from all over Flanders make clear that towns wished to create loyal and obedient groups, who would aid them in security and in peace keeping. In some towns, notably in Ghent civic control was greater still, with aldermen choosing the guilds’ headmen from among their own benches.

Guild officials.

How far back Ghent’s policy of appointing officials went is unclear. A membership list from 1362⁸²³ shows that most of the officials of the Saint George crossbowmen were aldermen,⁸²⁴ but in 1413 municipal policy was formalised. The Saint George guild was to be governed by two deans, to be chosen by the political leaders of Ghent, further the head man would be an alderman.⁸²⁵ Control was extended in 1423, when all guild officials, and all new members, had to be

⁸²¹ DAM, CC 201f. 293.

⁸²² AGR, CC, 31419 f. 53 v.

⁸²³ SAG, jaarboeken, 310, 10, ,1f 28 r- v .

⁸²⁴ SAG, jaerboeken, 310, 2, 2, f. 37.

⁸²⁵ SAG, jaerregister 301/22 f. 101 r.

approved by the aldermen.⁸²⁶ Archery and crossbow guilds were privileged and prestigious urban groups, but they were not free and had strong checks imposed upon them.

Limit movement.

In 1383 Lille passed regulations that the ‘brave crossbowmen’ were forbidden to leave the town for more than three days without a grant from the aldermen.⁸²⁷ This restriction was not repeated when the crossbowmen’s charter was reissued in 1458,⁸²⁸ but by 1483 had been imposed on the gunners.⁸²⁹ A similar restriction was imposed upon the highest officials in Lille, *les conseillers pensionnaires* in 1384.⁸³⁰ Even if only enforced in war years, as the silence of 1458 implies, such restrictions are significant. They show that in times of need the guilds of Lille were required to stay and defend their town, they were seen to be as important as municipal officials, and so had the same restrictions.

Aid in internal dangers.

Fire was always a major concern in any medieval towns, as almost were predominantly made up of wooden structures.⁸³¹ For most towns, fire protection is poorly documented, though it is likely that references to watching walls, for guilds and non-guildsmen alike, were as concerned as much with internal fires as external threats. In Douai, some specific references to fire protection survive from the 1440s.⁸³² All citizens were obliged to help in case of fire, but the guilds of

⁸²⁶ SAG, jaerregister, 301/27 f. 82 v., f. 17.

⁸²⁷ AML, OM, 379 f. 33.

⁸²⁸ AML, RM, 15884 f. 137.

⁸²⁹ AML, RM, 15920 f. 12.

⁸³⁰ C. Pétilion, ‘Le Personnel Urbain de Lille (1384-1419),’ *RN* 65 1983, 411-2.

⁸³¹ P. Bougard, (ed.), *Histoire d’Arras* (Arras, 1998), 171-180, 209-213.

⁸³² DAM EE92 bis.

archers and crossbowmen played a leading role in prevention, with named members watching specific parts of the town walls. Civic statutes were repeated in the 1460s, now with gunners watching other parts of the walls in case of fire. Though limited, such evidence shows that guilds protected Douai not just from external enemies, but also against internal dangers.

Guilds were expected to help protect their town from internal violence as well as from fire, and, in particular aiding the sergeants in arrests. A civic ideal of justice was evolving across Flanders in the fourteenth century, with towns, not lords, dealing with crimes and peace-keeping.⁸³³ Some crimes are recorded in judicial records, though as we saw in the previous chapter, such records are limited. In Lille, justice records show a town trying to take control, a relatively new peace-keeping system trying to punish offenders and keep the town safe. From the earliest records, of the late fourteenth century, the guilds were expected to help the sergeants and other officers in keeping the peace and catching violent offenders. Though they are not systematic, the Lille records are insightful and show one striking example of a guild-brother refusing to do his duty, refusing to help the sergeants. Whether this is the only time a guild brother refused to aid peace-keepers, or simply the only time one was punished for doing so cannot be discerned from the surviving fragmentary records.

In Lille the archers and crossbowmen were expected to help the sergeant in keeping order in Lille. How often shooters were in fact called upon to perform these duties is not clear, but one archer, Colin Carlier refused to help the sergeants in 1463. Carlier had, 'in great irreverence of justice,' refused to help the sergeant of Lille apprehend a violent young man. Rather, he had rudely told the

⁸³³ D. Nicholas, 'Crime and punishment in fourteenth-century Ghent,' *RBPH* 48 (1971), 1141-1176 ; W. Prevenier, 'La stratégie et le discours politique des ducs de Bourgogne concernant les rapt et les enlèvements de femmes parmi les élites des Pays-Bas au XVe siècle,' J. Hirschbiegel and W. Paravicine (ed.), *Das Frauenzimmer. Die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 2000), 429-437.

sergeant to 'tie the boy up so he could not bite'.⁸³⁴ Carlier was sent on pilgrimage, to Saint Lambert's in Liège. No other description of refusal to aid peace keepers survives in Lille, but that Carlier was brought to trial suggests that, unlike rules on numbers of guild members, rules of obligation could not be broken with impunity.

Conclusion, lords, aldermen and guilds

Guilds of archers and crossbowmen, from their earliest surviving records, had ties to the rulers of Flanders, but existed without their direct support. The last three Dampierre Counts of Flanders were all active in some way with guilds, whether as members or through charters. The guilds, as far as can be gleaned from surviving accounts, emerged independently from the authority and support of the counts. The Valois dukes were more active in their support, though it may be their support is simply better documented. They shot with guilds, especially the Ghent crossbowmen as well as issuing many charters, reflecting military and cultural motives. Most significantly John the Fearless, Philip the Good and Philip the Fair took part in great urban shooting competitions, as part of the civic festivities.

Local lords interacted with guilds, obtaining charters from the dukes, but also socialising with the shooters. Such noble membership demonstrates high guild status. Their guild membership may have helped Jan van Dadizeele, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and Adolf of Cleves, uphold civic support without losing ducal trust, becoming central to governance in Mary's reign. Lords could act as middlemen for the guild, helping them to receive ducal privileges, but their relationships were mutually beneficial. Towns supported their guilds through wine, cloth and land, but not equally, crucially no other urban groups received such support.

⁸³⁴ AML, RM, 15917 f. 114.

Civic support was given to the guilds for maintaining and augmenting civic honour, even for representing civic values, showing the power the guilds.

Guilds received important rights from dukes; including the right to bear arms and immunity from prosecution should someone die in practise. But guilds were also required to be armed, ready and obedient in return for such supports, Philip the Good made this clear through his use of the ducal emblem. Towns similarly constrained their guilds, not just in where and when to shoot, but controlling who could hold office, even who could enter the guild. The guilds of archers and crossbowmen enjoyed enormous support, support no other groups received, from dukes, local lords and towns, but in return they were bound to each of powers. Guild relations with lords were complex; though powerful guilds were also constrained groups, encouraged and manipulated by princely, noble and civic powers to show loyalty, honour and even ideology.

Chapter 6:

Beyond the town, festive networks and shooting competitions, 1323-1498.

Competitions were the best documented guild activities, the most dramatic demonstrations of honour and civic pride and the greatest sign of the strength of regional festive culture and its complexities. Competitions have been studied before, but no previous work has addressed how events changed over time, how they were shaped by, and how they influenced the world around them. After setting out what a competition consisted of, the events themselves will be analysed under eight headings.

First their early evolutions and developments, in response to wars and plague in the fourteenth century, will be discussed. Secondly, the place of honour and commemoration within competitions will be considered, through a study of six letters of invitations. Section three will examine the importance of drama and theatrical performance in competitions. Following drama, the prizes awarded at competitions will be examined, as wine, table-wear and decorative objects reveal a great deal about guild identity. The fifth and sixth sections will move away from the competitions themselves and analyse the levels of support they received, and motives hosting and for sending guilds to competitions. Section seven will deal with how competitions fitted into the world around them, and how that world shaped them, in particular the importance of rivers as cultural highways. The final section will show competitions moving away from military training, and becoming, through their dates, language and setting, agents of social peace.

6.1 Existing studies and assumptions.

The sheer volume of archival evidence represents a challenge to understanding competitions. Sources include short references in towns accounts, granting money

or wine to guilds who shot ‘for the honour of the town’, letters of invitation and even poems. Such is the breath of archival evidence that no previous study has attempted to analyse changes in competitions over time, their nuances and their roles in wider networks. Previous studies have either examined one competition, or one guild in depth, or simply made lists of events. Several excellent case studies have been made, though such studies are limited, they are nevertheless useful in understanding the prestige and status of one event.⁸³⁵ Many writers have published, even translated, archival sources,⁸³⁶ making a wider study of shoots possible, and accessible to a far wider audience.

Chronological lists have their uses, allowing patterns to emerge. But lists are doomed to be incomplete; new sources will always be found. Rather than claiming to be complete, the present study will attempt to be representative and analytical. The fullest list of competitions held in Flanders was produced by Schrijver and Dothee,⁸³⁷ but many local studies have attempted to list all events their guilds hosted or attended.⁸³⁸ Like the works discussed in earlier chapters, many of these rely on unreferenced nineteenth-century histories.

⁸³⁵ Tournai shoot of 1455 in Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 219-225; the 1440 competition in Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 84-94; the most studied is the Ghent 1498 shoot in Duyse, ‘Het groot schietspel en de Rederijkersspelen te Gent’, 273-314; F. Potter, ‘Landjuweel van 1497’; for Hainault see E. Matthieu, ‘Concour d’arc à main à Braine-le-Comte en 1433,’ *Annales de la société archéologique de l’arrondissement de Nivelles*, 3 (1885); D. Coigneau, ‘1 Februari 1404. De Mechelse voetboogschutters schrijven een wedstrijd uit. Stedelijke toneelwedstrijden in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw’, in: R.L. Erenstein (red.), *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden. Tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen* (Amsterdam, 1996), 30-35.

⁸³⁶ Some will be discussed below, see also J. Vannerus, ‘Trois documents relatifs aux concours de tir à l’arbalétrier à Malines in 1458 et en 1495,’ *BCRH* 97 (1933), 203-54; Willame, *Notes sur les serments Nivellois*, 126-7 for a Leuven invitation of 1509.

⁸³⁷ Schrijver et Dothee, *Les Concours de tir*.

⁸³⁸ Stein, *Archers d’autrefois; archers d’aujourd’hui*, 71-7; Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 53-7, 61-8; Basscher, *Confrérie des arbalétriers*, 9-11; Lerberghe and Louvaert, *Esquisse historique de l’ancienne*, 24-36, 61-65; Wauters, *Notice historique*, 7-9, 11-14; Baillien, ‘De Tongerse schutterijen van de 14^{de} tot de 16^{de} eeuw’, 16-23; Lemahieu, *De eerste Vlaamse schuttersgilden*, 4-6, 30-37; R. van de Heyde, *Vijf eeuwen vereningsleven te Leftinge. Deel twee, de schuttersgilden* (Middelkerke, 1985), 12-18.

The importance of showing status in Flanders is well understood, to use Blockman's phrase 'showing ones social status was more important here than elsewhere'.⁸³⁹ The centrality of performance and display has been taken further by Howell, stating that in the 'display culture' of late medieval Europe luxury goods, especially clothes, 'not only signalled but also actually constituted political power, social bonds and hierarchy'. That expensive displays 'were not just the trappings of honour, they were its very essence'.⁸⁴⁰ Understanding the importance of display, performance and status⁸⁴¹ is a crucial part of understanding the significance of shooting competitions.

Competitions helped to create festive networks, but were built upon existing economic or social civic links. Many recent works have shown not just the high level of urbanisation in Flanders, but also the strength of urban networks.⁸⁴² The traditions of urban exchange in the Low Countries, going back to the eleventh century, have been shown by Stein,⁸⁴³ while studies of chambers of rhetoric, have shown the intensity of inter-urban traffic of people, goods and cultural

⁸³⁹ W. Blockmans, 'Being Oneself,' in Blockmans, and Janse, *Showing Status*, 12-14.

⁸⁴⁰ C. M. Howell, *Commerce Before Capitalism in Europe, 1300-1600* (Cambridge, 2010), 4-6, 194.

⁸⁴¹ R. van Uytven, 'Showing off one's Rank in the Middle Ages,' in Blockmans, and Janse, *Showing Status*, 19-31; Hutchison, 'Partisan Identity in the French Civil War, 1405-18,' 250-274; L. Hablot, 'Les signes de l'entente. Le rôle des devises et des ordres dans les régions diplomatiques entre les ducs de Bourgogne et les princes étrangers de 1380 a 1477,' *RN* 84 (2002), 319-341; C. de Méridol, 'Signes de hiérarchie sociale a la fin du moyen âge, d'après les vêtements. Méthodes et recherches,' in M. Pastoureau, *Le Vêtement, histoire, archéologie et symbolique vestimentaires au moyen âge* (Paris, 1989); O. Blanc, 'Le lux, le vêtement et la mode à la fin du moyen âge' *Bulletin du centre d'histoire économique et sociale de la région lyonnaise* 4 (1983), 23-44; M. Keen, 'Introduction', 1-8 and C. Barron, 'Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London', 219-242' in M. Keen, (ed.), *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2003) ; M. Boone, 'Réseaux Urbaine,' in Prevenier, *Le Prince et le peuple*, 232-255.

⁸⁴² A.-L. Van Bruaene, 'the Habsburg Theatre state; court, city and the performance of identity,' in Stein and Pullman, *Networks, Regions and Nations*, 131-151; G. Marnet, 'Chambers of Rhetoric and the Transmission of Religious Idea in the Low Countries,' *Cultural Exchange* vol. 1 (2006), 274-296; H. Lowagie, 'Stedekijkje communicatie in de Late Middeleeuwen. Aard, motivaties en politieke implicaties,' *RBPB* 87 (2009), 273-295.

⁸⁴³ Stein, 'An Urban Network in the Low Countries', 43-68.

products.⁸⁴⁴ Regional networks traded in cloth and prestige, and, as Blockmans has shown, inter-town networks could help to promote loyalty and legitimacy through cultural activities.⁸⁴⁵ The ability of towns to act together for the ‘Common Good’ beyond their own walls, with or without the prince, is another important element in understanding the world of the archery and crossbow competitions.⁸⁴⁶

It is striking that medieval urban sport has not received the attention it deserves. Historians writing in French or English on medieval sport have examined many aristocratic pursuits, especially jousts and hunts,⁸⁴⁷ and peasants’ games.⁸⁴⁸ Though William FitzStephen’s famous description of twelfth century London, and the urban youth at play, has been discussed,⁸⁴⁹ urban sports are extremely poorly understood. Too often writers have begun with the idea of the three orders, and so look at the war-training of ‘those who fight’ and moralist views of ‘those who pray’ and the peasant diversions of ‘those who work’.⁸⁵⁰ A few Dutch and Belgian writers have looked at urban games, but these tend to be more general

⁸⁴⁴ Van Bruaene, *Om Beter Wille*, 11-17, 27-35; Boone and Porfyron, ‘Market, square, street’, 227-239; Braake and Dixhoorn, ‘Engagement en ambitie. De Haagse rederijkerskamer,’ 168-181.

⁸⁴⁵ W. Blockmans, ‘Stedelijke netwerken in de Nederlanden voor de industrialisatie’ *Leidschrift; historisch tijdschrift* 7 (1990-91), 59-68; idem. ‘Loyaliteitskonflikten in een process van staatsvorming; Vlaanderen in de 14^{de} en 15^{de} eeuw,’ *Handelingen van het Vlaams filologencongres* 31 (1977), 259-64.

⁸⁴⁶ ‘Introduction’ to E. Lecuppre-Desjardin and A.-L. Van Bruaene, *De Bono Communi, the Discourse and Practise of the Common Good in the European City, 13th-16th Centuries*, *UH* 22 (2010), 1-9; Haemers, *Common Good* 2-9.

⁸⁴⁷ D. Birely, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester, 1993), 27-54; J. Heers, *Fêtes, jeux et joutes dans les sociétés d’occident à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris, 1971).

⁸⁴⁸ B. Merdignac, *Le Sport au moyen âge* (Rennes, 2002).

⁸⁴⁹ J. M. Marshall, *Ludi Mediaev. Studies in the History of Medieval Sport* (Kansas, 1981); idem, ‘A Medieval Sports Commentator: William Fitzstephen and London Sports in the Late Twelfth Century,’ *American Benedictine Review* 35 (1984), 146-152.

⁸⁵⁰ J. M. Carter, ‘Sport, War and the Three Orders of Feudal Society, 700-1700,’ *Military Affairs* 49 (1985), 139-139; idem., *Medieval Games* (New York and London, 1993); V. Allen, ‘Playing Soldiers; Tournaments and Toxophily in Late Medieval England,’ A.M. D’Arcy and A.J. Fletcher, *Studies in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Texts, Studies in Honour of John Scattergood* (Dublin, 2005), 35-52; J. J. Coakley, *Sport in Society, Issues and Controversies* (Chicago and London, 1994), 58-61.

studies, looking at criminality in games and their origins rather than studying sports' impact and players.⁸⁵¹ Others have expanded Huizinga's ideas of man at play, or play in culture.⁸⁵² Urban jousts are the exception; they have attracted much excellent scholarship.⁸⁵³ Where shoots have been touched on, it is in the context of French and English royal ordinances banning many games, especially ball games, in favour of archery.⁸⁵⁴ Like the guilds themselves, shooting competitions have not received the attention they deserve.

6.2 What a competitions consisted of.

Competitions varied greatly over time and across Flanders. Though no two competitions were identical, a short overview of the main components of a competition is necessary before analysing them.

It is likely that the guilds and their towns worked together to plan an event and requested ducal permission. Princely consent was granted to the entire town, not just the guild. How consent was sought in Flanders, and where the initiative came from, is not recorded, but the deliberations of the magistrates of Tournai are revealing. In 1384⁸⁵⁵ and 1443⁸⁵⁶ the guild of crossbowmen requested permission

⁸⁵¹ K. Geerts, *De spelende mens in de Bourgondische Nederlanden* (Brugge, 1987); H. J. Kuster en J. M. Van Winter, 'Sport en spel in de middeleeuwen,' *Spiegel Historiel*, 9 (1974), 590 – 599; C. L. Verkerke, 'Sport en spel in de Middeleeuwen,' *Groniek: Historisch Tijdschrift* 32 (1999), 265-276.

⁸⁵² J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (London, 1970) based on his *Over de Grezen van de spel en ernst in de cultuur* (Haarlem, 1933); R. Muchembled, 'Jeux, cultures et societe,' *Ludica* 3 (1997), 103-107.

⁸⁵³ Brown, 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages', 315-30; Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes*, especially 159-211, though her focus is Walloon Flanders and France, with far less attention paid to Flemish regions.

⁸⁵⁴ Birley, *Sport and the making of Britain*, 32-41.

⁸⁵⁵ Vandenbroeck 'Extraits des anciens registres aux délibérations des consaux de la ville de Tournai', 4-7.

⁸⁵⁶ Grange, 'Extraits analytiques des registres', 89-91.

to hold a shoot, and the magistrates refused. In other years, such as 1455,⁸⁵⁷ the request was granted. No minutes of town accounts survive from Flanders from our period, but it is very likely that the same process was at work; of guilds requesting municipal permission, and then the town and guild together planning the event and obtaining princely permission.

Once permission had been obtained, letters of invitation were despatched. Several messengers carried not just the invitation, but a kind of stick or rod, making clear shooting distances as well as regulations. In 1440 the Ghent shot was to be the length of 14 ‘rods’ (*roeden*).⁸⁵⁸ The letter carried with the rod by the Ghent messenger also made clear when the competitions would begin, where and when guilds should enter, and the types of prizes that would be awarded. As will be shown, entrance and display became more important over time, but as early as 1331 entrances were made to the Ghent shoot.⁸⁵⁹ Once all of the guilds had entered, the order in which men were to shoot was established. This was often chosen simply by drawing lots, as in Oudenaarde in 1408.⁸⁶⁰ In 1455 the crossbowmen of Tournai devised a far more elaborate way of determining the order of shooters. A large ‘wax meadow’ was constructed, at municipal expense, and ‘beautiful young girl’ chose apples, each representing a guild, to determine to the order in which guilds would shoot.⁸⁶¹

The shooting, once it began, was not rushed. Evidence for the early fourteenth century is limited, but by late fourteenth and early fifteenth century it was normal for between one and three teams to shoot each day, less on a Sunday or saint’s

⁸⁵⁷ In 1455 the aldermen decided it would be ‘good and expedient’ to hold a shoot, and gave the guild £200, Grange, *Extraits analytiques des registres*, 209-11.

⁸⁵⁸ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet*, f. 14 v.

⁸⁵⁹ Vuylsteke *Gentsche stads en balijwysrekeningen*, 765-6.

⁸⁶⁰ Cauwenberghe, ‘Notice historique sur les confréries de Saint Georges’, 18-21.

⁸⁶¹ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 219-225.

day. Competitions were held in a large open space within the town, usually a market place. Shooting events could dominate towns for weeks, even months, at a time. Urban jousts also took place within these urban spaces, but rarely lasted more than a week. Processions, as discussed in chapter 3, brought together the entire urban community, but only for one day. Princely entrance ceremonies could dominate the entire public space of towns, but only for a few days.⁸⁶² Archery and crossbow competitions dominated urban commercial centres in spectacular fashion, as no other urban or princely event did. No other event was as dangerous; guilds received immunity from prosecution should any spectator be killed or injured. Though no case of death is recorded, the repair bill for broken windows in Ghent following the 1440 shoot shows not all arrows hit their mark.⁸⁶³

During the competitions, the guildsmen gathered and shot in turn at targets, often within large wooden galleries. Galleries offered some protection for the audience, and were built at municipal expense, further showing the importance of events. Various prizes were given for shooting, for the best individual shooters, for the best team, for having the most shots closest together and for hitting the centre of the target. Finally, when the shooting had finished, the prizes were awarded and, often after a large meal or at least drinks, the shooters returned home.

6.3 Evolution: early competitions.

Though no list will be produced, it is important to set out the development of the competitions in the fourteenth century, before 1384. Competitions are recorded

⁸⁶² Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 165-209; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 127-158; J.-M. Cauchies, 'La signification politique des entrées princières dans les Pays-Bas; Maximilien d'Autriche et Philippe le Beau,' *PCEEB* 24 (1994), 19-35; Blockmans, 'Le Dialogue imaginaire,' 37-53; E. Strietman, 'Pawns or Prime Movers? The Rhetoricians in the Struggle for power in the Low Countries,' Higgins, *European Medieval Drama, 1997. Papers from the second International conference on 'Aspects of European Medieval Drama' Camerino, 4-6th July 1997* (Camerino, 1998), 211-222.

⁸⁶³ SAG, Fonds Sint Joris, 155, 1 f. 6.

within a generation of guilds first being mentioned. The period under consideration here, c. 1323- c. 1384 was one of war, famine, plague and instability. Only a brief outline of such crises will be given, but it is significant that competitions survived and prospered through the darkest years of our period.

The earliest competition for which I have found archival evidence was in Oudenaarde in 1329. The town accounts of Lille⁸⁶⁴ and Ghent⁸⁶⁵ both record payments for their crossbow guilds to attend. The Oudenaarde shoot is unlikely to have been the first competition. The nineteenth-century Ghent historian Frans de Potter referred to two earlier crossbow competitions, Ypres in 1323 and Aardenburg in 1326.⁸⁶⁶ Several other writers mention a shoot in Bapaume in 1326, and state that this was the first known shoot,⁸⁶⁷ but all references can be traced back to an unreliable history of the Ghent guild, published in 1850.⁸⁶⁸

Exactly when the first competition was held cannot be ascertained with certainty, but that competitions began in the same generation as guilds received their first statutes is significant. From their earliest existence, guilds were as much about festive culture and ludic activities as about military training. From 1329 onwards, shoots became more and more common, or perhaps better funded and therefore better documented. A small archery contest was held in Lille in 1330⁸⁶⁹ and 25 guilds attended a crossbow shoot in Ghent in 1331.⁸⁷⁰ Competitions quickly

⁸⁶⁴ AML, CV 16018, 29 v.

⁸⁶⁵ Vuylsteke, *Gentsche stads en balijwsrekeningen, 1280-1336*, 664.

⁸⁶⁶ De Potter's *Jaarboeken*, 10-16.

⁸⁶⁷ Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 80 (footnotes the following); Schrijver and Dothee, *Les Concours de tir*, 2, (footnotes Basscher); Cauwenberghe, 'Notice historique sur les confréries de Saint Georges', 273 (no footnote).

⁸⁶⁸ Basscher, *Confrérie des arbalétriers*, 9, with no source of reference.

⁸⁶⁹ AML, CV, 16019 f. 54.

⁸⁷⁰ Vuylsteke, *Gentsche stads en balijwsrekeningen, 1280-1336*, 765 -6.

became one of the most important regional demonstrations of civic pride and ludic display.

Competitions influence guild foundations.

In analysing the development of competitions, it is tempting to set up a chronology of growth of a guild, followed by the growth of competitions. The town accounts of Ghent show that the crossbowmen first received municipal funds in 1315 first attended a shoot in 1329 and first held a shoot in 1331. In the great Flemish centres it is indeed likely that guilds became established and then held competitions. But in other areas it is possible that competitions became famous events, so informal groups of shooters established themselves into guilds. Even in Douai, references to attending shoots predate any other references to guilds.⁸⁷¹ In Flanders, whether guilds or competitions appeared first is not always apparent, but a fifteenth century French example is instructive.

In 1445 the archers of the small town of Euregnies in the bailliage of Tournesis requested privileges from King Charles VII. ‘The residents and inhabitants’ of Euregnies told the French king that ‘many of the said inhabitants have applied themselves to the sport and establishment of the shooting of the bow’ and further ‘are reputed to be the best shooters’ of their region. The ordinance makes clear the archers have been holding social and religious events for many years, but ‘they have no confraternity between them and they have neither rules nor oaths’. As a result they have been unable to visit the ‘surrounding towns, when they will have feasts’.⁸⁷² As late as 1445 archers could exist in a community that did not consider itself to be a guild, and the main reason they wished to obtain royal recognition was not for tax exemptions, nor for right to bear arms, but so they could attend competitions.

⁸⁷¹ Town accounts from 1350 refers to the crossbow guilds attending a shoot in Tournai, DAM, CC200 ter, roll 1; guild statute from 1383, DAM AA94 f. 70 v.- 71.

⁸⁷² *ORF*, vol.13, 456-7.

Crises of the fourteenth century.

Whether newly enfranchised guilds began to hold competitions, or competitions encouraged guilds to become enfranchised, by 1331 competitions had become an important part of civic culture. It is significant that this first flowering of urban prestige occurred in the years following the suppression of the so called peasants' revolt of 1323-8.⁸⁷³ The five decades following the great shoot of 1331 cannot be described as peaceful or conducive to large competitions that necessitated travel across Flanders; war, rebellion or plague could have stifled the growth of competitions.

War.

War and rebellion, suppressed in 1328, returned with the Ghent uprising of Jacob van Artevelde and Flemish support of Edward III in the Hundred Years War. With an English ban on wool exports, Flanders rose up against Louis of Nevers, unhappy at his pro-French position. An 'extraordinary government' was established in Ghent in January 1338, and an alliance made with Edward III of England. In 1340, Ghent went as far as recognising Edward as King of France. The following year saw a naval battle at Sluis and an Anglo-Flemish siege of Tournai.⁸⁷⁴ Years of war and rebellion damaged regional networks, damaged any feeling of friendship between Ghent and French towns. Instability could have ended competitions, they may have stunted their growth, no competitions are documented between 1338 and 1344, but war did not put an end to competitions. Large shoots were held in both Tournai and Antwerp in 1344.⁸⁷⁵ Rebellions limited size and scale of competitions, but did not stop them. As soon as travel

⁸⁷³ TeBrake, *a Plague of insurrection*, 108-138; S. Cohn, *Popular Protest in Late Medieval Europe, Italy, France and Flanders* (Manchester, 2004), 36-40; Nicholas, *Flanders*, 211-6.

⁸⁷⁴ Nicholas, *Metamorphosis*, 2-4; H. Van Werveke, *Jacob van Artevelde* (Hague, 1963) ; P. Rogghe, *Vlaanderen en het zenenjarig beleid van Jacob van Artevelde* vol. 1-2 (Eeklo, 1955); N. De Pauw, *Cartulaire historique et généalogique des Artevelde* (Brussels, 1920).

⁸⁷⁵ AML, CV, 16040 f. 13 v.; Jansen, *Om en rond de kruisbooggilden*, 2-5.

was once again possible, shoots were organised, even or perhaps especially, between guilds who had recently been at war with each other.

Plague.

The fourteenth century saw an even more serious threat to inter-urban culture, the Black Death. The impact of the first wave of plague on Flanders, in 1349-51, is much debated. Douai seems to have been spared⁸⁷⁶ as were parts of Brabant,⁸⁷⁷ but recent figures from Ghent,⁸⁷⁸ Bruges⁸⁷⁹ and elsewhere⁸⁸⁰ show death rates of up to one third, or even higher,⁸⁸¹ in comparison to older scholarship which argued these areas were spared.⁸⁸² Plague would hit Flanders many times over the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Those areas least affected in 1349-51 were hit in 1361.⁸⁸³ Death on a massive scale should have made travel difficult,

⁸⁷⁶ S. Cohn, 'After the Black Death: Labour Legislation and Attitudes towards Labour in Late-Medieval Western Europe,' *Economic History Review* 603 (2007), 451-462.

⁸⁷⁷ G. Sivery, 'Le Hainaut et la Peste Noire,' *Mémoires et publication de la société des arts, sciences, et du lettres du Hainaut* 79 (1995), 431-477; W. Blockmans, 'The Social and Economic Effects of Plague in the Low Countries,' *RBPH* 58 (1993), 833-863.

⁸⁷⁸ S. Cohn, 'The Black Death, Tragedy and Transformation,' in J. J. Martin (ed.), *The Renaissance World* (New York and London, 2009), 70-80; M. Aubrey, 'Les Mortalities Lilloise (1328-1369)' *RN* 65 (1987), 327-342; W. Blockmans, 'De Pest in de Nederlanden,' *SH* 15 (1980), 427-433.

⁸⁷⁹ J. N. Biraben, *Les Hommes et la peste, en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens*, vol. 1. *La peste dans l'histoire* (Paris, 1975), 80-133, 415; G. Marechel, 'De Zwarte Dood te Brugge (1349-1351).' *Biekorf: Westvlaams archief voor geschiedenis oudheidkunde en folklore* 80 (1980), 377-392.

⁸⁸⁰ H. Neveux, 'La mortalité des pauvres a Cambrai (1377-1473),' *Annales de demographic historique*, (1968), 73-97; F. A. Gooskens, 'Pestepidemieën in Breda tijdens de middeleeuwen,' *Jaarboeken van de Geschiedis en oudheidkundige kring van sted en land van Breda* (1986), 18-35.

⁸⁸¹ Stabel, *De kleine stad in Vlaanderen*, 17-24.

⁸⁸² H. van Werveke, *De Zwarte Dood in de zuidelijke Nederlanden (1349-1351)* (Brussel, 1950), 3-25; arguing that plague was not severe in the fourteenth century, rather the outbreak 1400-01 was the most deadly for the southern Low Countries; F. Courteaux, 'De Zwarte Zusters te Aalst of de geschiedenis van de pest,' *Het Land van Aalst*, 27 (1975), 145-152.

⁸⁸³ A. Derville, 'La Population du Nord au Moyen Âge, I ; avant 1384,' *RN* 80 (1998), 524-527; E. Helin, 'Les Pays-Bas' J.-P. Bardet et J. Duplaquier, (ed.), *Histoire des Populations de l'Europe I: des origines aux prémices de la révolution démographique* (Paris, 1997), 413-424; B. Delmaire, 'Contribution à l'étude de la peste au bas moyen âge. Un fragment de compte inedit de

indeed could have stopped all competitions, not least by killing the majority of shooters; competitions survived and prospered.

Studies in Italy have shown plague survivors felt more optimistic, and were often wealthier, even more individualistic, though this process is usually considered to have taken decades.⁸⁸⁴ Flanders also experienced new optimism. Large scale competitions were part of this new vitality, even part of the late medieval celebration of life. The French city of Tournai was hit hard by the first wave of the plague in 1349, perhaps one half of the population perished,⁸⁸⁵ but festive, ludic and convivial displays survived. In August 1350 a great crossbow shoot was held in Tournai, including guilds from Bruges, Ypres and Douai.⁸⁸⁶ Municipal sources from Douai show not just that the aldermen spent £92, 11 s 2d in sending the crossbowmen to Tournai, but that ‘many *bonnes villes*’ attended.⁸⁸⁷

Even as plagues returned, competitions continued to grow and evolve. Events were held in Gerardsberghen in 1355,⁸⁸⁸ Douai in 1359⁸⁸⁹ and Oudenaarde in 1362.⁸⁹⁰ Although wars and plague threatened the very existence of competitions, and could have stopped them ever becoming so grand and spectacular, competitions grew. After war and rebellions, came peace and

l’abbaye de Saint-Bertin pour Bas-Warneton,’ *Mémoires de la Société d’histoire de Comines-Warneton et de la région* 11 (1981), 35-50.

⁸⁸⁴ S. Cohn, ‘Triumph over Plague: Culture and Memory after the Black Death,’ in *Care for the Here and the Hereafter* (ed.) van Bueren and van Leerdam, 35-54; idem ‘The place of the Dead in Flanders and Tuscany: towards a Comparative history of the Black Death,’ *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Ed. B. Gordon and P. Marshall (Cambridge, 2000), 17-43.

⁸⁸⁵ S. Cohn, *The Black Death Transformed* (London, 2003), 152-167.

⁸⁸⁶ Gilles le Muisit, *Chroniques et annales*, 272-3.

⁸⁸⁷ DAM, CC 200 ter, roll 1.

⁸⁸⁸ Brown, *Civic Ritual*.

⁸⁸⁹ AML, CV, 16072. f. 33.

⁸⁹⁰ AML, CV, 16078 f. 15 v.; Brown, *Civic Ritual*.

reconciliation; competitions became part of this process. Though plague temporarily stopped events, and killed many shooters, the festivities that followed such disasters, became even more spectacular, just as in Italy, celebration followed plague.

6.4 Honour, reputation and exclusivity.

Competitions of archers and crossbowmen grew, even prospered, through the turmoil of the fourteenth century. No letters of invitation survive from the early years of shoots. It is possible that messengers simply delivered these orally. In Lille, for a competition in Douai in 1359, the town gave wine to the messenger who told them about the game '*jeu*'.⁸⁹¹ Letters and other documents associated with competitions such as poems commissioned to remember them, also show a growing importance for reputation and honourable remembrance. The development of honour and reputation will be shown through an analysis of six letters of invitation for crossbow competitions, tracing changes in style. The six are a letter from Mons in 1387,⁸⁹² Tournai in 1394,⁸⁹³ Oudenaarde in 1408,⁸⁹⁴ Ghent in 1440,⁸⁹⁵ Hulst in 1483⁸⁹⁶ and Ghent in 1498.⁸⁹⁷ No comparable letters of invitation for archery events have survived, though archery competitions could be just as spectacular as shown by town accounts. As we saw with guilds' seals in chapter 3, Ypres held the greatest archery shoots, and the Ghent and Oudenaarde archives have excellent records for their crossbowmen. It is extremely likely the

⁸⁹¹ AML 16072, f. 22.

⁸⁹² Deville, 'Notice Historique sur les milices communales,' 169-285.

⁸⁹³ UBG MS434 (76) *Vredesverdragen* f. 85-87; Chotin, *Histoire de Tournai et du Tournaisiens*, 349-358.

⁸⁹⁴ Two versions are known; a French version published by Cauwenberghe, 'Notice historique sur les confréries de Saint Georges,' 279-291; a Flemish version in UBG, Hs 434, *Vredesverdragen*, f. 92-100.

⁸⁹⁵ SAG, Fonds Sint Joris, 155, nummer 2.

⁸⁹⁶ SAG, SJ, NGR, Charters en diverse losse documenten, 30.

⁸⁹⁷ SAG, Fonds Sint Joris, 155, nummer 2.

lack of surviving invitations for archery guilds is an accident of survival, and that they would have used similar language and display.

Mons 1387.

The earliest surviving letter of invitation comes not from Flanders, but from the Hainault town of Mons. Little notice was given to any guild who wished to attend; the letter of invitation is dated as 13th June and the competition was to start on 13 July. The crossbowmen of Mons wrote to all 'honourable men, courteous and wise', guild-brothers, inviting them to a very friendly game with bows (*jeu des arcs*). The invitation emphasises that this crossbow competition is held for the pleasing of God and their patron saint, the Virgin Mary. Perhaps as importantly, the competition was organised with permission of 'our very dear and redoubtable lord, my lord the Duke Albert of Bavaria, lord, heir and successor to Hainault, Holland and Zeeland' and with the consent of 'the venerable and very wise dear lords, the mayor and aldermen' of Mons. The letter invites all '*bonnes villes fermées*' (walled towns) to the competitions, and goes on to describe all the prizes and what these will be won for.

The Mons letter is relatively short, giving all the information guilds needed to attend, with a small amount of rhetoric. The competition had received the blessing of God, of the Count of Hainault and of the aldermen, but the letter used little chivalric language or honourable expressions, though love and honour are emphasised.

Tournai 1394.

The invitation sent out by the crossbowmen of Tournai in 1394 shows a growth in the language of honour, and uses more elaborate terms. It begins with a similar greeting. All 'honourable and wise' members of all crossbow guilds in '*bonnes villes*' are invited to the shoot. The letter emphasises that only established, sworn

guilds may attend. The guildsmen of Tournai explain their reasons for holding a competition;

‘Considering that the holy scriptures say and testify that sloth is the mother of all vice and the opposite of all virtues, and that all human creatures... should occupying themselves in good works, so that the enemies (i.e. the devil/ demons) cannot find a lazy man’ and that these occupations must ‘be good and for their own profit’.

So, to avoid sin, suitable guild-brothers are invited to take part in ‘our very noble, beloved, gentle, gracious, pleasing, kind and very recommended game’ of the crossbow. During the event the participants must ‘deport themselves without blasphemy’, as the game of the crossbow ‘cannot have any hate, vanity, trouble or pillage, greed nor any other pain or mortal sin, but humility, charity, fraternity, largesse and love, sobriety, chastity and all virtues’ and can never be played by ‘a man of bad life or of perverse condition’. For the crossbow ‘is great and notable in comparison to all other games’.

The letter continues to emphasise the honour of both the game of the crossbow and of the guild of Tournai. Stating that the ‘game and occupation are exalted’ and that ‘it pleases the king our lord that as many persons as possible take up this occupation’. This is a reference to the numerous French royal ordinances banning ball games and other sports and ordering all able men to take up archery. The first surviving such ordinance was issued by Charles V in May 1369.⁸⁹⁸ Civic documents only hint at a connections between royal encouragement and the competition, but the *Chronique des Pays-Bas, de France, d’Angleterre et de Tournai* makes more of the royal connection, recording that the competition was held with ‘a great desire to be in the grace of the king’.⁸⁹⁹ In linking the 1394

⁸⁹⁸ ORF vol. 5, 172-3.

⁸⁹⁹ Smet, *Collection des chroniques*, vol. 3, 289-295.

competition to French royal ordinances, and to pleasing the king, the crossbowmen seem to be implying the military prowess of their guilds. Nothing else in the letter implies military service or training for war, and 1394 was a period of relative peace. It seems that these references are simply here to emphasise the guilds' links to the king,⁹⁰⁰ and in doing so, their prestige.

A copy of the letter was kept in Ghent, containing an additional clause that the men of Tournai hope 'our messenger is pleasing to you'.⁹⁰¹ That the Ghent guild made and kept a copy of the 1394 invitation is significant, suggesting a wider transmission of guild ideals and consideration of what a competition should consist of. The Tournai event was impressive; it is possible that the Ghent copyist saw it as a model for later shoots. The same scribe copied out a poem commemorating the shoot of Tournai, and both are dated 1399.⁹⁰²

The poem is an important part of urban culture as well as a demonstrator of civic pride. The work commemorates not just an individual or a guild, but a significant festive event. Over the course of 86 lines, the poet describes the competition held 'in the honour of God and the King of France' in Tournai, a 'noble city'. This 'noble affair' is recorded in great detail. First came the entries past 'the gate and the belfry', with according to the poet, 40 guilds entering on the first day and more on the second. All marched through a city covered in 'fine cloth and all in green', the royal symbols were displayed on much of the cloth. The anonymous poet, who may have been connected to a chamber of rhetoric,⁹⁰³ describes the prizes to be won and the process of drawing lots. The poem then lists the 50 teams in attendance, and numbers in each team; in all 371 crossbowmen. The

⁹⁰⁰ Although the guild did not receive a royal ordinance until 1446, *ORF* vol. 13, 483-4.

⁹⁰¹ UBG *Vredesverdragen*, f. 89 v.

⁹⁰² *Ibid* f. 90-91 v.

⁹⁰³ Though evidence is limited, Tournai certainly had a chamber by 1410 when they attended a competition in Ypres, Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 29-30.

importance of commemoration and of maintaining reputation seems to have been particularly important to Tournai, and a similar poem described the shoot of 1455.⁹⁰⁴

The Tournai letter and poem show a huge growth in honourable language and rhetoric. Like that of Mons, the Tournai letter was written in French. No Flemish copies, nor any reference to Flemish copies survive, and even the Ghent copy is in French. In the fourteenth century it was Southern French speaking towns who led the way in the development of grand competitions. The next four letters in our study were sent out by Flemish speaking towns, but were in both languages, thus drawing in a large audience, and enhancing their own reputation as much as possible.

Oudenaarde 1408.

The letter sent out by the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde in 1408 shows a similar desire for reputation, prestige and love. The invitation is addressed to ‘the honourable, discrete and wise, all those Lords, kings, constables, deans, governors and to all other companions’ of sworn guilds ‘of the noble game of the crossbow’ in cities and walled or privileged towns.⁹⁰⁵ Honour is once shown through exclusivity, the letter emphasised that rural groups are not welcome. Teams from ‘*hammeaulx, villes champestres ou chasteaulx*, supposing that they have guild or a company or *serment*’ will not be welcomed. If any such should appear in Oudenaarde they ‘cannot play in the said games nor win the said

⁹⁰⁴ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 219-225; De Saint-Genoise, ‘Fetes d’Arbalétriers a Tournai’, 37-55.

⁹⁰⁵ Chartered or walled towns. For the use and meaning of *bonnes* and *enferme villes* see B. Chevalier, ‘Les Bonnes Villes and the King’s Council in Fifteenth-Century France,’ *The Crown and Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1961), 110-128; idem., ‘Loches, une bonne ville au bailliage de Touraine a l’aube de la Renaissance,’ *Loches aux XVIe* (1979), 1-12; idem., ‘La bonne ville, un modèle originale d’urbanisation en France du XIV au XVI siècle,’ *Figures au la ville. Autour de Max Weber* ed. A. Boudrai and M. Hirschhorn (Paris, 1985), 70-83.

prizes.’ Though previous letters had emphasised that guilds had to be ‘*serment*’ and from good towns, the Oudenaarde men are more emphatic; only townsmen are honourable enough to attend; villagers were not welcome.

Honourable men from suitable places were invited to play the ‘excellent, very noble and loved game, and above all other games, the most pure and honourable’ which ‘cannot and must not be bad nor villainous’. The letter emphasised the importance of the ‘very noble game’ before describing the shooting and prizes. As in earlier competitions, the men of Oudenaarde make clear that they had princely permission from the ‘very high and very excellent, our very dear and very redoubtable lord and prince, my lord the Duke of Burgundy...’ In planning their shoot and in sending out honourable letters of invitation, the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde demonstrated and augmented their status and prestige. The Oudenaarde shoot of 1408 is important for its size and for its ducal participation, as discussed in the previous chapter. The shoot also sets out clearly who was noble and honourable enough to attend, and who was not. In Oudenaarde in 1408 language was no longer a barrier, as it could have been in Mons or Tournai, rather status had become an insurmountable barrier for rural or unofficial guilds.

Ghent 1440.

The Ghent crossbow competition of 1440 has been recorded in incredible detail; in contemporary civic accounts,⁹⁰⁶ in the surviving invitation,⁹⁰⁷ and in the book of Pieter Polet, written before 1507.⁹⁰⁸ Pieter’s book is undoubtedly the most valuable source for analysing the competition; its very existence is testament to the way such events were remembered, and used for planning later events. The

⁹⁰⁶ SAG, stadsrekeningen 400; 15 f. 43., 51 v., 216-217v., 273 v.- 274 v. 203 r.-v.

⁹⁰⁷ SAG, SJ, NGR.

⁹⁰⁸ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet*, f. 1-34.

shoot is referred to in other chronicles, including the *Chronycke van Nederlant, Besonderlyck der stadt Antwerpen*, which proudly notes that the Antwerp guild won the prize for best entry, meaning best entry from outside Flanders.⁹⁰⁹

The shoot of 1440 was planned further in advance than earlier ones had been. Ducal consent was received on 22 February, to allow the event to take place. After more civic planning, the invitations were sent out on 13 March, for entrances in June. The invitation is addressed to ‘all good privileged and free towns’ and calls them to the ‘honourable game of the crossbow’ by virtue of ‘their honourable and worthy ancient rights and renown’. Crossbowmen are asked to come in friendship, and the letter emphasises that ‘this feast of ours is for the good honour of God and His Holy Mother, wishing all for the good of the community, for the honour and love that we wish to be given on this our oath’.

The competition was for friendship and honour, the role of ducal support was also important in Ghent’s invitation. The Ghent letter states that the competition is held with ‘the consent, ordinance and grant of our high noble lord and natural prince’ the Duke of Burgundy. As we have seen, Philip did indeed attend the shoot with his own team. The letter sent out in 1440 shows a great development in the language of nobility and honour. Unique surviving records of where the messengers carrying the invitations were sent, and how they were received in various towns, allow for even greater insight into the planning of the competition. Four messengers were sent out in March; in all they visited 107 towns, only 56 of which attended the shoot. Why some teams chose not to attend will be discussed along with other regional variations below, here the focus will be on the transmission of honour between Ghent and other guilds.

⁹⁰⁹ *Chronycke van nederlant, besonderlyck der stadt Antwerpen* in C. Piot (ed.), *Chroniques de Brabant et de Flandre* (Bruxelles, 1879), 76-7.

Messengers 1440.

The first messenger, Martin van Eerdbiere, travelled to the ducal court and then across Eastern and Southern Flanders. The duke received Martin honourably, giving him silver scales weighing almost 5 ounces. When compared to civic gifts, this is a large present, but it is modest by ducal standards. At least one town also gave Martin silver scales; Saint Omer gave him a set weighing 2 ounces.

Expensive silver gifts showed that the towns respected the Ghent messengers, and that they understood the importance of the guild he represented. Other towns showed their respect by giving Martin symbolic gifts, gifts that would be identified with their town and so raise their status. Dunkirk gave a silver ship, though not part of their civic emblem, a ship emphasised Dunkirk's role as a port. Ypres also chose a symbolic gift, giving Martin high quality red cloth. Though it is not described in greater detail, this cloth may have included the arms of the town, and even a livery of their guild,⁹¹⁰ certainly red cloth was one of Ypres signature products.⁹¹¹

A second messenger, Gillis de Mueleneegh travelled down the Scheldt to Oudenaarde and then into Hainault and parts of Brabant. Like Martin he was well received with silver objects and some jewels. It is likely that all silver items were engraved in some way with the arms of the town. Only a few are noted as being engraved, such as Valenciennes who gave Martin a silver jug 'made with the arms of the town'. All of the gifts the Ghent messengers received should have stayed in the possession of the Ghent guild, and been kept in the guild house. All

⁹¹⁰ It may have been standard for Ypres to reward messengers thus, in 1428 a messenger who told them of the competition in saint Omer was given 2 ells of scarlet, worth 7 lb 4 s. AGR, CC, 38652 f. 32 v.

⁹¹¹ P. Boussemaere, 'De Ieperse lakenproductie in de veertiende eeuw opnieuw berekend aan de hand van de lakenloodjes,' *JMG* 3 (2000), 131-161; S. Abraham-Thisse, 'Kostel Ypersch, gemeyn Ypersch: les draps d'Ypres en Europe du Nord et de l'Est (XIII-XIVe siècles);'; P. Chorley, 'The Ypres Cloth Industry 1200-1350: the Pattern of Change in Output and Demand,' both in *Ypres and the Medieval Cloth Industry in Flanders: Archaeological and Historical Contributions* Ed. M. Dewilde, A. Ervynck and A. Wielemans (Asse-Zellik, 1998), 111-138.

objects should have been carried back to Ghent, but at least some, notably large quantities of wine, were ‘lost’ by Martin and Gillis.

Many towns gave valuable and prestigious gifts that showed their largesse, but others were not so generous. In Holland a third messenger, Jan Maeaert received far fewer gifts. Dordrecht paid his costs and gave him a small jewel, but he received nothing at all in Rotterdam or Amsterdam, and neither town attended the shoot. This could imply that guilds in Holland were less developed than guilds in Flanders, although Amsterdam had been at the Tournai competition of 1394.⁹¹² Had the towns of Holland given a gift to Jan, it could have been the start of a relationship with the Ghent guild, and perhaps they did not want that. But it is impossible to make firm conclusions based on the lack of gifts; it was just likely that financial considerations played a role.

The fourth, unnamed, messenger travelled even further, east into Germany through parts of Brabant. In some towns he was grandly received. In Liège, the shooters put on a great show for him, with pipers, trumpeters and even a small procession, and when he left the pipers followed him. The guild also gave him 4 silver cups, their weight not recorded. To the south he received far less, in Bovyins (a small town near Dinant) he received nothing because, as the accounts state, there were no shooters. In nearby Fleurus (closer to Charleroi) he received nothing as *‘daer zijn de scutters al doot’* (there the shooters were all dead). That such small towns were being visited is significant, clearly the competition of 1440 was designed to be more inclusive than that of 1408 had been.

Other small towns, like Liedekerke, greeted this messenger well. Why there were no shooters in Bovyins is not recorded, nor how those of Fleurus died, nor how long ago they had died. It could be that in these small Brabant towns guilds were

⁹¹² Chotin, *Histoire de Tournai et du Tournisses*, 350-2.

less popular, or perhaps like the Dutch guilds these towns did not wish to interact with their Flemish neighbour. Such fascinating and enticing details make the further study of shooting guilds beyond Flanders desirable, but impossible here.

Though motives of givers are complex, the crossbowmen of Ghent were clearly working to ensure a large, spectacular shoot would take place within their walls in June 1440. The letters sent out by Mons, Tournai, Oudenaarde and Ghent all emphasise honour and prestige, as well as exclusivity. From these the dominance of the great urban centres is implied, so it is important to turn to a small town, and to a period of instability, to understand the variety and continuity of crossbow competitions.

Hulst 1483.

The small town of Hulst organised a crossbow competition in 1483. They had hosted archers in 1462, but their 1483 letter of invitation is the first surviving invitation sent out by a small town. Hulst, in Northern Flanders, was not part of the river networks that, as we shall see, brought culture and commerce to Oudenaarde, Ghent, Mons and Tournai. Hulst's relative isolation, and its small population, estimated at only 2 696 in 1450,⁹¹³ made it an unlikely setting for a great urban event. Though their event could not match those of Ghent or Oudenaarde in spectacle, the event held in this small community on the same model and on the same ideals of those in Ghent, shows that guilds and their honour were not limited to the larger towns. Stabel has shown that economically Hulst was far closer to Holland than Flanders, making it all the more important that this isolated, small towns wanted to be part of Flemish festive networks.⁹¹⁴

⁹¹³ Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition', 58 ; idem. , 'Van schepenen en ontvangers, politieke elite en stadsfinancien in Axele en Hulst,' *TVSG* 18 (1992),1-12.

⁹¹⁴ Stabel, *De kleine stad in Vlaanderen*, 112-118.

Many elements common to the earlier shoots are emphasised in the Hulst invitation of 1483. Crossbow guilds are invited to compete in ‘the most honourable and greatest game’. A sense of community once again comes through; the crossbowmen of Hulst refer to ‘the great friendship’ and ‘brotherly love’ they have for other guilds. Such similarities are to be expected, and show that even in this period of great instability, the crossbowmen of Hulst wanted to emphasise the nobility of crossbow shooting and in doing so bring great honour and prestige to their town.

Unlike the small towns who had given nothing to the Ghent messengers in 1440⁹¹⁵, Hulst wanted to show that their town, and their shooters, were as honourable as the competitions of the greater urban centres. They wanted to demonstrate that they were part of the loving fraternal community emphasised in earlier letters. Though Ghent messengers had visited small towns, guilds from such had not always been welcomed with open arms. The crossbowmen of Liedekerke seem to have been particularly unwelcome; in 1440 they complained that they had been ridiculed and called villagers.⁹¹⁶ In 1462, at a great shoot in Oudenaarde, they seem to have been treated even more harshly. Not only did the Brussels guild insult them; they robbed the king of the Liedekerke guild of some of his jewels. In a letter the men of Liedekerke wrote to the hosts they claimed that they would have won best entry had Brussels not robbed them. They appealed to the Oudenaarde guild officials to obtain justice for them.⁹¹⁷ Small towns had their own guilds, and they wanted prestige and honour in the same way that guilds from great towns did, but they did not always achieve such high reputations in competitions in urban centres.

⁹¹⁵ Hulst were visited 1440, giving Jan Maeyaert 2 silver pots ‘and his costs’, *De Bouc van Pieter Polet*, f. 19.

⁹¹⁶ According to a document published in De Potter, *jaarboeken*, appendix, nummer 1.

⁹¹⁷ OSAOA, gilden 507/II/4B.

The Hulst shoot of 1483 welcomed guilds from great urban centres, and unlike earlier letters it excluded none. Their letter was addressed to all free and good towns, areas around castles (*cateeles*) and even villages (*dorps*). Given its size and its northerly position, Hulst was never going to attract as wide an audience as competitions in Ghent or Oudenaarde. That they wrote a letter full of noble language, however, emphasised the prestige of their guild and the loving community of shooters that they felt themselves to be a part of.

As earlier letters had done, the Hulst invitation claimed divine support. Their competition would be held 'to the honour of God and all the saints of the church'. In 1483 the Hulst competition had no access to earlier competitions second source of consent and prestige, the dukes. The Hulst invitation makes reference to their festivities having been 'begun with our lady the duchess', but no letter of consent from Mary survives. Nothing in the town gives any indication this could be the dowager duchess Margaret of York. The Hulst crossbowmen recognised that their competitions took place in an unstable period, with Mary's death in 1482 tensions had been increasing against Maximilian's regency for Philip the Fair, despite this, no mention of military training or war is present in the Hulst invitation, rather it emphasises honour and love. The guild were still searching for honour and prestige through games, showing not just the strength of competitions, but also the importance of sport and festivities even during war and hardship, even in a small peripheral town

Ghent 1498.

The Hulst crossbowmen faced many difficulties in their 1483 competition, not least the status of their town and the political situation around them. By contrast, the Ghent shoot of 1498 had every opportunity to be spectacular. Their letter demonstrated the prestige of the game, guild and Ghent, but also that the guild wished to leave behind the chaos of the previous years, and bring great cultural events back to their town, and to restore peace and loving brotherhood in Flanders. The competition of 1498 would start in May; letters sent out in January

were extremely elaborate. The guild-brothers of Ghent invited ‘all emperors, kings, lords, constable and princes, jures, deans and brothers and other honourable persons and companions of the great and special guilds of the noble and honourable game of the crossbow, in all good towns and free or walled communes where they are accustomed to have use of the said high crossbow’ in sworn associations.

The letter referred to the ‘very noble and gentle guilds, special companions in peace, playing the very joyous and very honourable game, in friendship and communities of brotherhood.’ The invitation also emphasised the honour of ‘the noble game of the crossbow (which) is above and before all other games in morality and nobility’ for all suitable and honourable persons. And that ‘this honesty and highly renowned (game)’ will ‘stop all debates’. Further the competition will be held in ‘honour and friendship’. Just as guilds had reacted with optimism and vigour to previous bad times, plagues and wars, so after the rebellions and tensions of the previous decade the Ghent crossbowmen wanted to hold a great cultural event to show their continued honour and prestige and restore peace.

Consent is again a key source of prestige here. The crossbowmen of Ghent had the support of ‘God in paradise, His blessed mother, and further our gentle patron my lord Saint George and all the saints and angels in paradise’. The competition was held with ‘the consent and grant of our very honourable lord and natural prince my Lord of Austria Duke of Burgundy’. The letter went to great lengths not just to encourage Philip the Fair to attend, but even to bring his own team. If Philip attended, the letter states, he could shoot whenever he wanted, with any team he chose. If he should bring his own team, as Philip the Good had in 1440, they could shoot whenever they wanted to. In the most ornate language possible, the Ghent crossbowmen emphasised that they had princely and divine support for their shoot, bringing honour to the guild and prestige to the town.

The shooters of Ghent were clear about who was and was not permitted access to honour. Their letter stated that only good towns were to attend, and even setting three different days for entries; land entries from within Flanders, on Sunday 20 May, from outside Flanders, on Monday 21 May, and water entries, on Tuesday 22 May. The Ghent shoot of 1498 had every opportunity for honour and renown, and the organisers certainly did all they could to live up to this potential in hosting the event.

In remembering the shoot Ghent crossbowmen worked hard for their reputation. The 1498 event, like that of 1440, was recorded by Pieter Polet. More significantly, the 1498 shoot was recorded by the *Excellent Chronicle of Flanders*, published in 1531. The two works seem to be independent, they record different events, give different emphasis to different entrances, though both copy out the letter of invitation. That the *Excellent Chronicle*, a massive work, covering the history of Flanders from its mythical past to the sixteenth century, gave such space and detail to the Ghent shoot, when others are covered only in a few lines, is clear evidence of the impact and remembrance of the shoot. No later competition would receive such attention in such varied sources; the Ghent shoot of 1498 was, in the early sixteenth century, considered and remembered as the pinnacle of urban splendour and shooting competitions.

6.5 Costume, drama and theatre.

The prestigious and festive nature of competitions was demonstrated in the increasingly noble language used in letters of invitation. Over time, more opportunities for honour developed within competitions, showing how innovative and dynamic such events were. In particular drama and display achieved greater prominence over the course of the fifteenth century. Connected to the rise of drama in shooting competitions are the evolving chambers of rhetoric, whose

origins are intertwined with acting at shooting events,⁹¹⁸ though the activities of the chambers are poorly documented before 1400.⁹¹⁹

Honour through performance

It is certain that entrances had been a separate part of competitions since at least 1331, when the entrance to Ghent had taken a day. In 1350 in Tournai Bruges had won the prize for best entrance, being described as *lucratus*.⁹²⁰ In Mons in 1387, a large silver bowl was given to the ‘most noble and elegant company’.⁹²¹ The importance of winning prestige through elaborate entries is again shown at the Tournai shoot of 1394, where Bruges won the prize for best entry, and the crossbowmen of Paris were rewarded for travelling the greatest distance.⁹²²

That guilds wished to do all they could to enhance honour and reputation through display is clear. In hosting a competition, the entire town, not just the guild, invested heavily in display, particularly in decorating the streets, details will be discussed below. Attendees were just as keen to win honour through drama and theatre, through their expensive costumes, and through the distances they travelled to compete. Entrances were, perhaps even more so than the shooting, the ultimate opportunity for honour through performance, and a chance to show civic pride and even augment civic honour.

⁹¹⁸ Van-Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille* 69-73; Husken, ‘Cornelis Everaert and the Community of Late Medieval Bruges’, 110-125; Coigneau, ‘De Mechelse voetboogschutters schrijven een wedstrijd uit’, 30-35.

⁹¹⁹ Van Bruaene, *Om beter wille*, 27-9.

⁹²⁰ Gilles le Muisit, *Chroniques et annales*, 272-3.

⁹²¹ Deville, ‘Notice Historique sur les milices’, 169-285.

⁹²² Chotin, *Histoire de Tournai et du Tournaisses*, 350-2.

Like princely entrance ceremonies,⁹²³ entrances to archery and crossbow competitions were not simply extravagance, but manipulated semiotic messages to make cultural statements. The clothing worn during competitions, like other medieval clothing, can be considered as ‘a potent means of communication’,⁹²⁴ especially where guild liveries included ducal emblems. During their entrance to the guild competitions of 1498,⁹²⁵ several teams used their cloth or symbols to make statements about civic identity. The Ypres guild wore fine red cloth, probably of the same sort that had been given to Martin in 1440, a stable symbol of their identity. Similarly the Lille guild entered in ‘precious cloth covered in regal lilies’. Fine clothes, such as the Lille and Ypres liveries, did not just communicate wealth, but also social, moral and religious, even intellectual, identities⁹²⁶, and here civic pride.

Cloth was the most striking element of shooters entrances, but guilds also other techniques to show civic identity. For the Ghent entrances of 1498, as described by the excellent chronicle of Flanders, many towns chose significant objects.⁹²⁷ The Brabant town of ‘s-Hertogenbosch (the name means ducal forest) had fine cloth and many wagons, and a silver forest. The Brussels crossbowmen carried not just luxury objects, but a banner of Saint George, patron saint of the guild, and of Saint Michael, patron saint of the town.⁹²⁸

⁹²³ Van Bruaene, ‘The Habsburg Theatre State, Court, City and the Rhetoric of Identity in the Early Modern Low Countries’, 131-140.

⁹²⁴ S. M. Newton, *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince* (Woodbridge, 1986), 2-5.

⁹²⁵ All of the following on the 1498 entrance based on the description in *Dits de Excellente Chronijke van Vlaanderen* f. 289 – 291 v.

⁹²⁶ S. Abraham-Thisse, ‘la Valeur des draps au moyen âge. De l’économique au symbolique,’ in M. Boone and M. Howell (ed.), *In but not of the Market; Movable Goods in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Economy* (Brussels, 2007), 17-19.

⁹²⁷ *Dits de Excellente Chronijke van Vlaanderen* f. 285 v.- 292.

⁹²⁸ Even small towns put on a great show, see T. De Jager ‘Bergen op Zoom op het Gentse schuttersfeest AD 1497’, *Sinte Geertruijds Brinne* 1 (1924), 23-25.

For at least one guild in 1498, splendour and extravagance seem to have been more important than symbolism. The Antwerp entrance was incredibly large and expensive, but no coherent message was apparent. Their entrance included, 200 men dressed half as rustics, and 900 others half dressed in arms, 50 carts, 230 other figures and even an elephant.⁹²⁹ The Antwerp spectacle was the largest of the Ghent entrances, but it did not win first prize. Such performances outshone even ducal entrances, with hundreds of armed men, thousands of followers, horses, wagons, plays, and silver-wear. Just as princely entrances can be considered as powerful tools for communicating identities and politics,⁹³⁰ the shoots must be interpreted as opportunities for towns to communicate their standing, splendour and status in a civic performance.

Drama

As important as entrances were, they were not the only ways for guilds to perform. In 1408, Oudenaarde not only rewarded entrances, but also the best two plays, performed ‘without villainy’.⁹³¹ By encouraging drama and display in their competitions, the crossbow guilds made their shoots more spectacular, just as processions included plays.⁹³² Dramatic performances would have made the events more memorable and brought greater honour to the host. In the great towns, drama had become an integral part of competitions. In 1440 Ghent gave separate prizes for the best play in French and Flemish, and prizes for the best jesters, a pattern replicated in numerous events.

⁹²⁹ ‘Daer Scheen een olifant sijnde inde bedrijve’ the last word implies the elephant was pulled rather than entering under its own strength, making a wooden or even mechanical one more likely than a living elephant, but no further details are available. This elephant may have been similar to the statute made by Ghent dramatists for Philip the Good’s 1458 entrance; Strietman, ‘Pawns or Prime Movers?’, 211-2.

⁹³⁰ Van Bruaene, ‘The Habsburg Theatre State, Court, City and the Rhetoric of Identity in the Early Modern Low Countries’, 131-140.

⁹³¹ Cauwenberghe, ‘Notice historique sur les confréries de Saint Georges’, 279-291.

⁹³² Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*, 1-4, 5-22, 75-83.

Even small competitions rewarded drama. In a shoot including 15-20 guilds in Courtrai in 1422 the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde won prize for best chamber of rhetoric.⁹³³ Despite the power of drama for honour, not all teams that attended shooting contests brought dramatic performers with them. For the Ghent shoot of 1440, from the 56 crossbow teams in attendance, only 3 French speaking towns (Arras, Tournai and Béthune) and four Flemish speaking ones (Courtrai, Wervick, Oudenaarde and Gerardsberghen) are recorded as bringing a play with them. The Oudenaarde chamber of rhetoric, who won the prize for best Flemish play in Ghent in 1440, were very active and regularly travelled with their guilds to competitions, winning first prize in an archery contest in Berchem the next year.⁹³⁴ Oudenaarde also had a famous and performance rich urban procession,⁹³⁵ showing that guild drew on existing traditions within their own towns rather than creating new ones, to win urban prestige.

For many smaller towns the link between shooters and drama was also strong, but in Hulst in 1483 the town could not accommodate both at the same time. A separate competition for actors and chambers of rhetoric was held a few weeks after the crossbow competition.⁹³⁶ Drama events, part of the shoots or at a slight remove, show the strong links between the two groups, and that through drama, towns hoped to make their competition more splendid and more spectacular. It is also possible that drama was encouraged so the rhetoricians would record the shoots.

⁹³³ de Rantere, *Geschiedenis van Oudenaarde* vol. 2, 1398 tot 1468, 29,

⁹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁹³⁵ Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*, 43-93 ; Ouvry, 'Officieel ceremonieel te Oudenaarde, 1450-1600,' 25-64; E. Vanderstraeten, *Recherches sur les communautés religieuses et les institutions de bienfaisance à Audenarde* (Audenarde, 1858, re-printed, Bruxelles, 1995), 21-35.

⁹³⁶ SAG, SJ, NGR, 31, J. Brand, 'De geschiedenis van de Hulsterse rederijders,' *Jaarboek Oudheidkundige Kring 'de vier ambachten'* (1960-1), 114-196.

What the plays consisted of in Flanders of is poorly recorded; it does not seem that themes were set beyond regulations to avoid villainy, blasphemy and slander. In Tournai in 1455 plays were encouraged on the theme 'of the great, miraculous and victorious deeds of the King of France' in particular the re-conquest of Normandy.⁹³⁷ No comparable instructions survive from Flanders, though a few details can be gleaned from archival evidence. In 1462 for a large crossbow competition in Brussels, the crossbowmen of Aalst constructed a dragon and pulled it across Flanders and Brabant, suggesting a Saint George play.⁹³⁸ In 1498 the Antwerp entrance into Ghent included a 'play of Julius' probably Caesar.⁹³⁹ Rather than having a unifying theme, It seems that during Flemish shooting competitions guild were given great freedom to create their own sense of honour and identity. Honour could be achieved through simply travelling great distance, through wearing fine cloths for an entrance ceremony, through giving prestigious gifts to messengers or through performing dramatic plays, as well as in shooting

6.6 Prizes.

Prizes, their form and cost, were bound up with the honour of competitions, and the guilds self representation. Though variations existed, prizes can be broadly placed under three categories; wine, tableware and impractical objects. The importance of prizes related to community and dining are particularly striking when compared to the urban jousts, their prizes were often aristocratic and individual in nature, especially hunting animals or armour.⁹⁴⁰ In contrast shooting guild's prizes sought to emphasise honour and peace, not war; I have found no example of any weapon being given as a prize.

⁹³⁷ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 222-3.

⁹³⁸ ASAOA, Invent no 156, Rekeningen van de gezworenen van het Sint Joris gild, 1461-2 f. 9-9v.

⁹³⁹ *Dits de Excellente Chronijke van Vlaanderen* f. 290 v.

⁹⁴⁰ Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes*, 92-3.

Wine

Wine is present from the earliest competitions onwards. In 1331, the aldermen of Ghent gave all those who came to shoot high quality red wine.⁹⁴¹ Wine was prestigious, but a hierarchy was also clear; in 1399 the aldermen of Douai gave visitors to their crossbow shoot different quantities of wine. Many of the larger towns, such as Lille, Tournai and Ypres, received 12 lots. Most of the other guilds, including Abbeville, Hesdin and Saint Quentin received 9 lots. Some smaller towns received only 6 lots, including Maubeuge, Saint Amand and Péronne.⁹⁴² How the hierarchy was decided is not recorded, but demonstrates a clear calibration of prestige, guilds from powerful towns with existing trade or festive links to Douai received more wine than smaller towns.

At an archery competition in 1422 Ypres, the guild-brothers made their own distinctions between attendees.⁹⁴³ Large towns such as Lille received 4 kannes, most guilds received 3 kannes and only one guild, the archers of Croy received 2 kannes.⁹⁴⁴ Six years later the crossbowmen of Ypres acted in a similar way 21 guilds, young and old from small towns like Lo and larger ones like Tournai received 4 kannes of wine. 16 guilds were given 3 kannes of wine, most of these were small or medium sized towns, like Dunkirk, Poperingh and Armentières, but Utrecht and Mons also fell into this category. Only two, the small towns of Tielt and Moorslede, receive 2 kannes.

Wine was a natural gift for visiting crossbow guilds, it was after all the gift most commonly given by urban authorities to messengers, and officials from other town and even noble visitors. Large towns usually got more, small towns usually

⁹⁴¹ Vuylsteke *Gentsche stads en balijwsrekeningen*, 765-6..

⁹⁴² DAM, CV, CC 204 f. 190 – 191.

⁹⁴³ Olivier van Dixmuide, *Merkwaardige Gebeurtenissen*, 101-2.

⁹⁴⁴ AGR, microfilm 1772/2 copy of 38647 f. 39v. – 41v..

less, with distance and existing connections also important, but just as towns choose how to comport themselves and how best to win honour, so hosts chose how to receive their visitors. Wine was not only given as gifts upon entrance, it was also won for best shots. Whether wine was given for simply attending or won in recognition of shooting or display, giving a high status drink emphasized the guilds' standing and their community.

Table-War

Prizes of cups, jugs or plates can be considered in a similar way, though of course they could last longer. Prizes were not the only times guilds exchanged table-ware or drinking vessels. We have already seen that many Ghent messengers in 1440 were given valuable silver plates and goblets. Gifts of cups were by no means limited to Flanders; in 1424 the aldermen of Amiens gave a messenger carrying news of a crossbow competition in Sluis a silver engraved cup.⁹⁴⁵ All of the prizes available at the Oudenaarde 1408 competition were engraved with 'the arms of my lord Saint Georges' 'of our aforesaid very redoubtable lord and prince' and 'of this said town of Oudenaarde'. In Tournai in 1455 all prizes 'bore the arms of Saint George, of the king and of the city'.⁹⁴⁶ The same arrangement, of prizes honouring saint (and by connection guild), lord and town was seen in the prizes at the crossbow competitions in Dendermonde in 1450,⁹⁴⁷ Mechelen in 1458,⁹⁴⁸ Oudenaarde in 1462⁹⁴⁹ and both the Ghent shoots of 1440 and 1498.⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁵ Durand, *Ville d'Amiens, inventaire sommaire*, 35.

⁹⁴⁶ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 220.

⁹⁴⁷ J. Dauwe, *De Kruisboogschutters van st.-Joris te Lebbeke (1377-1796)* (Gent, 1983), 8-12.

⁹⁴⁸ J Vannerus, 'Trois documents', 203-54.

⁹⁴⁹ Vanhoutryre, *De Brugse Kruisbooggilde*, 30-32; SAB, 385, Sint Jorisgilde, Rekeningen 1445-1480 f. 171.

⁹⁵⁰ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet* f. 7, 41v.- 42.

Table-wear was by far the most common prize given at competitions. Its purpose was to show the commensality and unity of guilds. Silver objects could be melted down or pawned, but inventories from Ghent,⁹⁵¹ Bruges⁹⁵² and Oudenaarde⁹⁵³ show large quantities of silverware being kept in guild houses in the fifteenth, even the early sixteenth centuries. The splendid objects were lasting reminders of the glory of the competitions, the reputation of the host and the honour of the winners.

Impractical objects

The third category of prizes, impractical objects, also emphasised the honour of competition, host and winners, but by their construction and symbolism they did so to a greater degree. It was at the Oudenaarde shoot of 1408 that purely impractical objects were first recorded. The team that made the best entry won a silver unicorn, those who travelled furthest won a silver crown, best play won a silver monkey and the best lights won jewels. These prizes have no practical purpose; they could only be displayed, and would certainly have attracted attention in a guild house. In 1408 Bruges won the unicorn, it is recorded in their guild inventory, among the first and most valued objects, as late as 1470.⁹⁵⁴ The unicorn was kept, and noted as being from Oudenaarde, preserving the memory of Bruges' win and Oudenaarde's largesse, and so the honour of both. Silver animals also represent a conscience choice of symbolism, with greater care taken to choose appropriate prizes. Unicorns showed wealth, and status, mythical creatures representing honour and standing. The Oudenaarde prize was not unique, a Bruges inventory written before 1435 contains not just their unicorn, but also a dragon, won at Sluis, 'a Saint George', a pair of trumpets, an engraved

⁹⁵¹ Two separate inventories, both in SAG, SJ, NGR, 7.

⁹⁵² Gilliodts-Van Severen, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Bruges*, vol. 4, 542-9.

⁹⁵³ OSAOA, gilden 507/II/2B.

⁹⁵⁴ Gilliodts-Van Severen, *Inventaire des archives* vol. 4, 542-9.

papegay ‘2 solid lilies’ 2 engraved crowns and an impressive collection of cups, plates and crosses.⁹⁵⁵

Mythical creatures, especially unicorns, used chivalric symbolism and status. The meaning of the monkey in Oudenaarde is less clear. The 1408 prize is the only reference to such a creature. Monkeys had traditionally been seen as evil creatures, but by the late fourteenth century were also seen as playful, mimicking animals.⁹⁵⁶ Oudenaarde rewarded best play with a monkey, showing a conscious choice to reward an enjoyable play with a playful prize.

Other guilds were less subtle. Some offered simply jewels, as Saint Omer did for best entry in 1426.⁹⁵⁷ In Ghent in 1440 a crossbowman who shot an arrow into the ring in the centre of the target won a gold ring.⁹⁵⁸ In Tournai in 1455 symbolism, in particular loyalty to the French king and celebration of his recent victory in Normandy is obvious. The best play won a silver royal ecu, and the second best a silver dolphin, a pun on the glory of the dauphin.⁹⁵⁹ All prizes were a symbolic choice and part of the host’s demonstration of honour, silver animals or gold rings were particularly revealing as they allow greater insight into the value of different events. All prizes showed the status of the guilds, their community through wine and drinking vessels and the importance of providing honour to givers and receivers, especially clear in expense table-wear or silver animals.

⁹⁵⁵ SAB, 385, Sint Jorisgilde, register met ledenlijst enz. 1321-1531 f. 76- 82.

⁹⁵⁶ H. W. Janson, *Apes and Ape-lore in the Middle Ages* (London, 1950), 29-54; W. B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts* (Woodbridge, 2006), 7-8, 42-4 I am grateful to Dr Debra Strickland for these references.

⁹⁵⁷ Olivier van Dixmuide, *Merkwaardige Gebeurtenissen*, 118.

⁹⁵⁸ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet* f. 8.

⁹⁵⁹ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 222.

6.7 Support for hosting.

Competitions could not be organised by the guilds alone; support for hosting an event had to come from both ducal and civic sources. Ducal support is surprisingly poorly documented; in fact only one ducal letter of permission survives for Flanders. Pieter Polet had access to those issued for 1440 and 1498, and he copied both into his book, a ducal letter of consent was in Mechelen in the nineteenth century.⁹⁶⁰ The civic archive in Ghent, Lille and Bruges preserve none, nor does *the tresor des chartres* of Lille, nor do any copies of ducal safe conducts survive. Guilds in smaller towns, like Douai and Aalst, have less extensive records, but even there books of the crossbowmen were made in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, transcribing all existing charters, and these did not include permissions for shoots.

Ducal support.

Competitions, at least in the fifteenth century, needed ducal permission, and invitations stated that the event was held with the consent of the prince. It is probable that central archives did not keep such records as their privileges were only temporary. Guilds may have similarly decided that after the shoot they did not need the consent. A hint at what happened to many letters of consent comes, as does our only surviving letter of permission, from archives of the Saint George guild of Oudenaarde.

In 1463 Philip the Good issued a new charter to the crossbowmen. It was a simply permission to bear arms in Flanders, and was almost identical to one issued by John the Fearless in 1408.⁹⁶¹ The guild needed a new charter, the preamble states, because the original had been left out in the rain at the most recent competition, in

⁹⁶⁰ Van Doren, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Malines* vol. 5, 91-95.

⁹⁶¹ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/ 15B.

Dendermonde.⁹⁶² During competitions guilds displayed their charters, proving that they were, as was so often required, ‘*serment*’. It is very likely that ducal letters of permission for the shoot were also displayed in towns during competition, proving the guild had permission to hold the event, and showing their status and power. Given the high number of surviving guild charters of rights, an explanation of loss seems insufficient, but no firm conclusion can be reached from an absence of surviving permission for shoots.

Our one surviving letter of permission cannot tell us why it survived when so many others did not, but it does reveal why permission was given. In 1462 Philip the Good allowed the crossbowmen of Oudenaarde to hold a competition because he had ‘received the humble supplication of our friends the burgomasters, aldermen, councillors, king, deans, leaders and others, the companions of the guild of my lord Saint George in the town of Oudenaarde.’⁹⁶³ The letter goes on to explain that they wish to hold a crossbow competition not just to encourage the shooting of the crossbow, but also for the great honour that will be brought to the town, as had happened in other events in Brussels,⁹⁶⁴ Louvain⁹⁶⁵ and Tournai.⁹⁶⁶ Ducal permission was given to bring honour to the town, and recognised that past shoots had brought fame to towns. Ducal support came in two forms, privileges and taxes.

Privileges were the most straightforward method of support. In 1462 two important rights were granted to the Oudenaarde crossbowmen. All those who wished to attend were given freedom of passage, and could not be held for any

⁹⁶² Original charter from 1408 is also preserved, OSAOA, 507/II/7A, and is badly water damaged.

⁹⁶³ OSAOA, gilden, 507/II/12 A.

⁹⁶⁴ This could be a reference to the recent, but relatively small, shoot of 1461 or the huge event of 1444.

⁹⁶⁵ It is not clear which competitions Philip had in mind here, Louvain held several small shoots, but none for which evidence survives as spectacular as those in Ghent or Brussels.

⁹⁶⁶ The large shoot in Tournai of 1455.

crimes or debts, unless they were the enemies of the Duke of Burgundy or of the King of France. Secondly, Philip made clear that 'if it should happen, that God does not wish, that in the said shoot any (of the audience) should by mishap or by mischief, be between the buts and targets and be killed or injured or struck in any manner by any of (the crossbowmen), those that have made the said strike or harm, will be quit and free, without being in any way reprehended'. Rights to travel and freedom from prosecution for accidental shooting were essential to competitions.

Dukes helped and encouraged shoots, for honour and for peace, but they did not fund them directly. No record survives of dukes directly giving money to a guild for a shoot, nor lowering taxes excepted from a town in light of a competition they would be holding. Rather dukes allowed the towns to implement exceptional taxes to defray the costs of their events. The Oudenaarde crossbow competition of 1462 is the best example of how a competition was funded. Philip allowed a special tax to be levied on all beer, wine and mead sold during the shoot, the taxes raised £3 954 16 shillings, but the competition cost more than this.

Civic support.

On hosting their shoot of 1462, on hanging cloth over their town, on giving wine to attendees, on prizes, on building galleries, the guild and civic organisers spent £4 925 15 shillings. Ducal taxes paid for a large part of the shoot, but by no means all, almost £1000 had to be raised from other sources. The aldermen were generous to their guild, in other year giving them large sums to attend shoots, but in 1462 they directly gave the guild only £149. The rest came from different urban groups, eager to support this great event for the honour it would accrue, and possibly for the customers it would bring to them. The butcher's guild was the most generous, giving £60 'for aid and help in the aforesaid shoot'. Butchers guilds were often powerful, even militaristic, so it is important that they were generous in funding the shoot. The Mercers gave £ 24, the brewers contributed £36 but most of the craft guilds gave less, between £6 and £10, including the

smiths and many textile trades. A further £225 was raised from the ‘good people of good towns and parishes outside’ Oudenaarde.⁹⁶⁷ That the entire community contributed proves that competitions had grown far beyond being a simple practice sessions for military skills; they were events of international importance that brought great splendour to the town, and even promoted civic values.

Details of the Ghent shoots of 1440 and 1498, recorded by Pieter Polet, are also illustrative of how seriously the entire civic community took competitions. For both shoots, all guildsmen and organisers of the shoot received civic liveries. For the 1440 shoot money was raised from urban groups, as in Oudenaarde, though here the food and drink merchants were the most generous. Significant amounts of civic money were also spent on practical matters, such as building galleries, setting up targets, and later on replacing windows in the town hall broken by arrows. In 1440 the alderman had to settle a dispute between the guilds of Liège and Amiens over who had travelled farthest. Two municipal messengers were despatched to find out which town was further away.⁹⁶⁸ The messengers were civic officials, sent at civic expense, showing once again how seriously host towns took the competitions, they took great care to ensure they were seen not just as honourable, but fair. Both Ghent and Oudenaarde invested time and money in their shooting competitions, for the honour they could bring the town.

6.8 Support for attending.

Civic prestige and urban honour could come from hosting a great event, but guilds leaving their town and travelling to competitions could also enhance their reputation. Some towns not only helped their guilds to attend, they made clear that attendance was expected. When the statutes of the Douai crossbowmen were first recorded by the aldermen, they made clear that if the guild heard of any

⁹⁶⁷ OSOA gilden Nummer 507/II/4B.

⁹⁶⁸ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet* f. 5.

competition in any *bonne ville* or lordship, the guild were to take their best men.⁹⁶⁹ In the great displays the shooters put on, they became civic ambassadors in a way that no other urban groups ever did. In return, the guilds were rewarded for the honour they brought to their towns, though not all were equally generous.

Municipal funds resulted in the spectacular entries discussed above for the 1498 shoot. Details in town accounts give far more figures than can be analysed here, but a few instructive examples may be detailed, showing that simply attending brought honour, but winning prizes meant more honour and so greater reward.

In 1394, Douai gave their crossbowmen £26 for a competition in Tournai. When they received news that the guild had won prizes, 2 silver pots weighing 6 marks, they gave the guild an additional £41, 17 shillings and 6 pence ‘for the honour of the town’.⁹⁷⁰ In 1451 the archers of Douai attended a competition in Béthune. The towns accounts note that they went there ‘winning notable prizes and did so well and honourably for the honour of this town’ and received £36.⁹⁷¹ The Town accounts of Tournai take the idea of rewarding honour with material wealth even further. In 1432 the archers went to a shoot in Roubaix, they requested money from their town for this event, but the magistrates delayed giving them anything until they had news of what prizes they had won.⁹⁷²

In Lille, another pattern emerges, with the crossbowmen consistently receiving greater municipal support for attending competitions than the archers, just as crossbowmen received greater annual support, as seen in the previous chapter. In 1359 the archers received 72 s for attending a shoot in Tournai, the same year the

⁹⁶⁹ DAM, 24II232, Arbalestiers de Douay f. 2.

⁹⁷⁰ DAM, CV, CC203, f.454, the later payment on f.479.

⁹⁷¹ DAM, CV, CC219 f. 64.

⁹⁷² Grange, ‘Extraits analytiques des registres des consaulx de la ville de Tournai’, 13.

crossbowmen received £4 plus wine worth 6 s 11 d for shooting in Douai.⁹⁷³ In 1392 the crossbowmen went to a competition in Avesnes, (near Montreuil-sur-Mer) and received £24, 16 shillings, the same year the archers travelled to Mons, and received £12.⁹⁷⁴ In 1403 the crossbowmen attended a competition in Chièvres in Hainault, and received 8 lots of wine plus £24, the archers travelled to Ypres, and were granted £12.⁹⁷⁵ In 1427 the crossbowmen were given an unusually large grant, £80, to go to a competition in Saint Omer.⁹⁷⁶ The same generosity was not given to the archers, who in 1432 received only 6 lots of wine for travelling to the nearby town of Roubaix.⁹⁷⁷ Distance was not the only issue here; in 1439 the archers received only 16 shillings to go to a competition in Saint Omer.⁹⁷⁸ To give one final, and extremely large, example of this disparity between archers and crossbowmen, in 1454 the archers of Lille received £8 to go to a shoot in Lens.⁹⁷⁹ The next year the crossbowmen received £192 to go to the famous Tournai shoot.⁹⁸⁰ Distances, and the size of the Tournai shoot, are important, but across our period it is clear that the aldermen of Lille made consistent choices about the hierarchy of honour and support.

Oudenaarde, like Lille, favoured their crossbowmen far more than their archers, but were even more generous. In 1440 for the Ghent competition the town spent the incredible sum of £751 18 shillings sending their crossbowmen to the competition.⁹⁸¹ The aldermen had spent large sums investing in honour, they

⁹⁷³ AML, CV, 16072, f. 16, f. 32 v. -33.

⁹⁷⁴ AML CV, 16122, f. 22, 35.

⁹⁷⁵ AML, CV, 16143, f. 37v. – 38.

⁹⁷⁶ AML, CV, 16170 f. 54 v.

⁹⁷⁷ AML, CV, 16174, f. 47.

⁹⁷⁸ AML, CV, 16180 f. 56 v.

⁹⁷⁹ AML, CV, 16195, f. 13 v.

⁹⁸⁰ AML, CV, f. 45 v., the 102 shillings worth of wine given to Anthony the Bastard of Burgundy, who led the shooters in the Tournai competition, could be added to this total.

⁹⁸¹ OSAOA, 1436-1448, on microfilm 686, f. 202 v, to put this huge figure in perspective, the town income that year was 10 209 lb 17 s 7 d, and total expenditure was 12 476 lb 19 s 7 d.

wanted to make sure the guild did well and that they would receive an honourable return on their large investment. Two town messengers were sent on the same day to make sure their guild had won the prize for best entry. Oudenaarde was a textile centre, on the Scheldt, spending such huge sums on their guilds would have boosted the fame and standing of their products, and of the town. More significantly investing in sending the crossbowmen out in such splendour demonstrates that the guild-brothers had become urban ambassadors, representing the status and values of their town as no other group ever could.

6.9 Geographical networks.

In understanding the variation of competitions, across time and across Flanders, some important points about the Low Countries, about rivers and about civic economies need to be understood. The Low Countries were not typical European regions, their extremely high urbanisation and population density gave them a unique character.⁹⁸² The great textile centres and regional markets the Low Countries were ‘precociously saturated by trade’.⁹⁸³ Rivers were not the only factor in the huge growth of trade in Flanders, but they were extremely significant. In analysing the development of chambers of rhetoric, Marc Boone has shown that the Low Countries ‘excellent water networks and roads were vital in ‘encouraging a very intense inter-urban traffic’ and rivers’ roles in trafficking people, material goods and cultural products.’⁹⁸⁴ Rivers had helped to create powerful economic networks within Flanders. They were key to growing festive networks, with rivers as ‘cultural highways’.⁹⁸⁵ Three important factors can be

⁹⁸² Stabel, ‘Composition et recomposition,’ 29-30; idem, *De kleine stad in vlaanderen*, 15-17.

⁹⁸³ Howell, *Commerce Before Capitalism*, 2-6.

⁹⁸⁴ Boone and Porfyron, ‘Market, Square, Street; Urban Space, a tool of Cultural Exchange’, 227-239; H. Pleij, ‘De late triomf van een regionale stadscultuur’; B. Ramakers, ‘Rederijkers en stedelijk feestcultuur in her laatmiddeleeuwse Noord-Brabant,’ both in Bijsterveld, A.-J. A., (ed.), *Cultuur in het Laatmiddeleeuwse Noord-Brabant. Literatuur, boekproductie, historiografie* (’s-Hertogenbosch, 1998), 8-12, 37-54.

⁹⁸⁵ A. Cowan, ‘Nodes, Networks and Hinterland,’ *Cultural Exchange* vol. 2, 28-38.

identified in influencing competitions and their associated festive networks; rivers, textile trade and existing models of civic representation.

The Scheldt.

The importance of the river Scheldt is apparent from any map. A vital French and Flemish trade artery, the river had a great impact on where competitions were held. Linking Valenciennes, Tournai, Oudenaarde and Ghent before flowing east to Antwerp, the Scheldt was the Flemish high-way of trade as well as festive networks. The Scheldt may have encouraged the early growth of these cities,⁹⁸⁶ certainly it boosted their economies.⁹⁸⁷ Despite being the official border between France and the Holy Roman Empire from the ninth century, the river united rather than divided towns and communities.⁹⁸⁸ That all of these towns held large competitions, and that only Ypres held comparable competitions, is no coincidence. Towns that had evolved through trading on the river, and through building commercial links to near and distant towns, were more likely to host large competitions that attracted great attendance.

Oudenaarde is worth particular attention here. In 1450 its population has been estimated at around 6480, far below the estimated 50 000 of Ghent, below even the estimated 20 000 of Mechelen and the estimated 8 7 00 of Ypres.⁹⁸⁹ Yet

⁹⁸⁶ L. Verslype, 'Rural-Urban Dynamics and Central Places in the Scheldt and the Meuse Region between the 5th and the 9th Centuries,': *Central Places in the Migration and Merovingian Periods: Papers from the 52nd Sachsen Symposium Lund, August 2001*. B. Hardh and L. Larsson (Stockholm, 2002), 257-272; A. Verhulst, 'An Aspect of the Question of Continuity between Antiquity and Middle Ages: the Origin of the Flemish Cities between the North Sea and the Scheldt,' *JMH* 3(1977), 175-205.

⁹⁸⁷ A. Maesschalck, J. Viaene, 'Het vervoer van de natuursteen op de binnenwateren van het Scheldebekken in het midden van de 15de eeuw, met het oog op de bouw van het Leuvense stadhuis,' *BTG* 82 (1999), 187-200; P. Stabel, 'Demography and Hierarchy; the Small Towns and the Urban Networks in Sixteenth-Century Flanders,' P. Clark, (ed.), *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1995), 206-217.

⁹⁸⁸ S. T. Bindoff, *The Scheldt Question* (London, 1945), 6-81; C. Terlinden, 'The History of the Scheldt' *History* 16 (1920) 185-197.

⁹⁸⁹ Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition', 58.

Oudenaarde could hold competitions on the same scale, if not even larger than all of those communities. Oudenaarde's festive dynamism was only possible by virtue of its central position in Flanders on the river Scheldt. By the fourteenth century Oudenaarde was flourishing, deriving great wealth from textiles, especially tapestry production and trade.⁹⁹⁰ Like many other fifteenth-century Flemish economies, Oudenaarde was in economic decline, yet textile wealth was still used for numerous civic festivities, like the Corpus Christi procession and play cycle,⁹⁹¹ and on their crossbow guild. Plays and guild brought prestige to the town, but could only do so by using pre-existing trade networks. The competition in Oudenaarde in 1462 was a hugely expensive event, but it could not have attracted high numbers of attendees had the town not had strong existing communication networks.

Other rivers.

The Scheldt was not the only river of importance in Flanders. Ghent's dominant position is at least partially explained by its position at the conflux of the Scheldt and the Lys Rivers. Along the Lys, there are many other relatively small towns with extremely rich festive traditions, these included Courtrai, which had in 1450 an estimated population of 8 460,⁹⁹² but active archer and crossbow guilds. Most of the early shoots, those before 1350, include Courtrai as attendees and winners; they also hosted events in 1411⁹⁹³ and 1415.⁹⁹⁴ The small town of Roubaix was on another branch of the Lys, surely one of the reasons such a small place could hold a large shoot in 1432.⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁹⁰ Vanwelden, *Het tapijtweversambacht te Oudenaarde* 15-47.

⁹⁹¹ Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren*, 25-80.

⁹⁹² Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition', 57-8.

⁹⁹³ De Potter, *Jaarboeken*, 34-5.

⁹⁹⁴ Ypres gave their guildsmen £68 to attend, AGR, CC, 38641 f. 57.

⁹⁹⁵ Attended by Lille and Tournai at least, AML, CV, 16174 f. 47.

The smaller Flemish rivers, the Ijzer and the Dender, also influenced festive networks. The only town to hold significant competitions not located on a part of a larger river open to ships in late medieval Flanders was Ypres. In contrast to Oudenaarde and Ghent, which gave centre stage to their crossbow guilds, Ypres focussed on their archers.⁹⁹⁶ More importantly for our purposes, Ypres's strong place within our festive network cannot be explained by rivers, rather by Ypres's diplomatic links to both north and south. By the fifteenth century, Ypres's economy had been deep in recession for perhaps a century, the city had shrunk in production and population, it did not adapt well to the economic situation of the fifteenth century.⁹⁹⁷ Despite such set-backs, its festive culture remained strong in the period covered by surviving town accounts, 1406 onwards.⁹⁹⁸

Town economies.

The case of Ypres ties into our next factor explaining the spread of shooting competitions; towns' economies, in particular textile production. We have already seen how important cloth was to the guilds in the forms of gifts or liveries. In competitions huge amounts of cloth were draped and displayed all over towns. Centres of cloth production, Ypres, Ghent and Oudenaarde, invested in their guilds as symbols of their industry; their own men wearing their fine cloth advertised their skills in the best possible way. Such an idea should not be taken too far, most of Flemish towns had important textile industries, but the dominance of textile centres among hosts of the greatest shoots and the winners of best entrances, is striking.

⁹⁹⁶ At least one study claims that the guild of Saint Sebastian included the most important men in the town, but provides no source of reference, Sagher, 'Origine de la guilde des archers de saint Sébastien à Ypres', 116-130.

⁹⁹⁷ Haemers, *The Common Good* 248-64; Stabel, *Dwarfs among Giants*, 28-9; Prevenier, 'La demographie des villes', 208-9.

⁹⁹⁸ AGR, CC, 38635 – 38733.

Just as significant, are the two large Flemish towns that did not hold great competitions, Bruges and Lille. Neither can be described as a centre of production, though both had manufacturing sectors. Lille was not on one of Flanders river-highways. In Bruges, the once powerful Zwin had been silting up since at least the early fourteenth century.⁹⁹⁹ As discussed in chapter two, Bruges remained one of the most important market places in Western Europe in the fifteenth century. Lille has been described as a vital trade link between France and Flanders; its position made it a powerful secondary market place, especially for rural cloth production.¹⁰⁰⁰ Oudenaarde and Ghent can be considered industrial centres; in contrast Bruges and Lille were markets. In mercantile centres civic rulers seem to have paid greater attention to aristocratic pursuits and tastes. Centres of industry used guilds to promote and enhance their civic ideology, market centres preferred to choose another way of representing their values.

Existing models of urban festivities.

Both Lille and Bruges had archery and crossbow guilds, as we have seen. Both held small events with less than ten teams lasting less than a fortnight, but no events on the scale of the Oudenaarde and Ghent shoots. We have seen that Lille and Bruges spent large sums travelling to competitions; making it seem even stranger they did not host any. This is not explicable by a lack of evidence; both have town accounts for the period under analysis, had either town funded a large event some trace of it would appear in accounts. Their commerce driven economies are in part explanations for this, their distance from the Scheldt and Dender also offer a level of explanation, but there is another factor explaining their choices.

⁹⁹⁹ Van Uytven, 'Stages of Economic Decline; Late Medieval Bruges', 259-269; Brulez, 'Brugge en Antwerpen in de 15e en 16e eeuw; een tegenstelling?,' 15-37 ; R. Degrijse, 'Brugge en de organisatie van het loodswezen van het Zwin op het einde van de 15de eeuw,' *ASEB* 112 (1975), 61-130.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Stabel, *De kleine stad*, 116-138, calls Lille *Handelsknooppunter*.

Both Lille and Bruges chose to represent their civic values, their ideals, through aristocratic pursuits. The towns were the two greatest hosts of urban jousts, the White Bear and the Epinette, both had famous processions. Though Oudenaarde too had great annual procession¹⁰⁰¹, Ghent had nothing on this scale. The jousts were hugely expensive, so it is possible that Bruges and Lille could not afford to host great shooting competitions, but it is also likely that in the jousts they saw a greater possibility for honour. The jousts in the two towns brought in noble visitors, as well as large numbers of civic observers they attracted attention in chronicles and accounts, jousts brought Bruges and Lille great status, so their shooting guilds had to take second place. Just as Ypres favoured archers, Lille and Bruges favoured jousts, and chose them as their primary emblems of civic pride.

If a choice of jousts over shooters stands for Bruges for most of the fifteenth century, the entrances made into the Ghent shoot of 1498 would seem to be contradictory. There Bruges won best entrance, putting on a finer show than Ypres or Oudenaarde, both textile centres and one of them on the Scheldt. The last joust of the White Bear had taken place in 1488; by 1498 Bruges was in need of a new source of honour. In closing decade of the fifteenth century, with the jousts gone, with their economy in decline, it is possible that Bruges grasped their only remaining opportunity for prestige, the shooting guilds. It is possible too that the growth of gunners' competitions in Lille in the same period was influenced by the decline of the jousts of the Epinette, ending in 1487.¹⁰⁰² Civic prestige was always a choice, as significant as rivers and textile networks were, civic ideals were more important. Guilds could act as civic ambassadors, but their competitions could only grow as great as civic support allowed.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ramakers, *Spelen en Figuren*, 249-334.

¹⁰⁰² R. Muchembled, trans L. Cochrane, *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France, 1400-1750* (London, 1985), 152.

6.10 Agents of social peace

Shooting competitions, like shooting guilds, most likely had practical military origins. They became great urban events, ways of showing and gaining prestige and honour, but they became ways of restoring peace.¹⁰⁰³ Despite gathering hundreds of armed men together, surely a potential for violence, a closer analysis of some of the language and dates already referred to will show that bows and crossbows were becoming instruments of peace rather than weapons of war. Guilds had been given rights for the common good of their towns, and for the county's, military needs. Shooting competitions also looked to the Flemish common good, for peace, order, unity, loyalty and obedience.¹⁰⁰⁴

We have seen how letters of invitation regularly emphasised love and community. In 1387 the men of Mons invited fellow crossbowmen of 'the friendly delightful' game of the crossbow. In 1394 Tournai invited other guilds 'in love and with a true heart of friendship'. In 1408 Oudenaarde wrote of their 'honour and good love' for other guilds. In 1440 Ghent wanted all guilds to attend 'in brotherhood'; in 1498 they addressed other guilds in 'friendship and confraternal communities'.¹⁰⁰⁵ In 1458 Mechelen invited their 'good friends' in other guilds.¹⁰⁰⁶ In 1483 Hulst invited all guilds 'in friendship, solace and brotherly love'. Every surviving letter of invitation makes some reference to love, friendship, and brotherhood. Not a single one mentions needs of security, protection and defence, a phrase given in virtually every ducal charter to guilds. Such loving language reveals the purpose of these events; not just to show

¹⁰⁰³ Similar conclusions have been suggested for dramatic competitions, see A.L. Van Bruaene, 'Harmonie et honneur en jeu; les competitions dramatiques et symboliques entre villes de Flamandes et Brabaccones aux quinziemes et sieziemes siecles,' in Boone, Lecuppre-Desjardin, et Sossons, *Le Verbe, l'image et les representations*, 227-278; for games and peace more generally, see B. Sutton-Smith, 'Games, the Socialization of Conflict,' *Sportswissenschaft* 3 (1973), 41-46.

¹⁰⁰⁴ 'Introduction' to Lecuppre-Desjardin and Van Bruaene, *De Bono Communi, the Discourse and Practise of the Common Good*, 1-9.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet* f. 7, 40.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Vannerus, 'Trois documents relatifs aux concours', 203-54.

honour, not just to play, but to build communities and friendships across Flanders.

As noted, ducal letters of permission to competitions are scarce, but those copied by Pieter Polet are revealing. In 1440 the ducal charter refers to the need to bring peace and friendship after the ‘war and strife’, surely a reference to the failed siege of Calais in 1436 and the subsequent Bruges rebellion. The Ghent competition of 1498 would, the organisers hoped, ‘stop all debates’ between guilds and towns that had been in conflict.¹⁰⁰⁷ Clauses such as these show that the dukes were concerned with relations between their towns, and saw archery and crossbow competitions as ways to quell tensions, perhaps even to limit the powers of local factions, and promote harmony across the Low Countries.

The language used to refer to competitions shows that contemporary writers did not see them as martial, but rather as ways of building communities. The dates of competitions provide further circumstantial evidence that the events were for peace, not war. The earliest competitions for which document survive was the Oudenaarde shoot of 1329, a year after the rebellion of 1323-8 had been suppressed. Flanders was next threatened with internal strife with English invasion and the siege of Tournai in 1340, and the rebellion of Ghent led by Jacob van Artevelde. Competitions were held in Dendermonde and Tienst in 1348 and in Tournai itself in 1350.

Ghent and other towns rose again in 1379, a rebellion not fully put down until the peace of Tournai in 1385. Crossbow competitions were held in Ghent and Courtrai in 1386. The ‘Ghent war’ of 1379-85 had been particularly divisive, as neither Bruges nor Ypres had supported Ghent. Oudenaarde and Dendermonde actively supported Louis of Male in his siege of Ghent in 1380. Tensions

¹⁰⁰⁷ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet* f. 40.

worsened when the Ghent militia attacked and defeated the Bruges forces in 1382, before being destroyed at Roosebeke.¹⁰⁰⁸ Bruges and Ghent had not just been in discord, but actively at war. Yet in 1386, a few months after the peace of Tournai, the Bruges crossbowmen attended a small competition, referred to in the accounts as a *'thoorlement'* in Ghent. A year later the guilds of Brabant and Holland, as well as those of Lille, Bruges, Ghent and many others attended the Mons shoot. War divided Flanders, setting towns against each other not just in rivalries and tension, but physically in battle, but after peace was made the guilds chose not to remember the war, rather to use their martial skills to rebuild bonds of peace across Flanders.

Many of the greatest shoots can be linked to rebuilding war-torn communities. One of the largest competitions was the Ghent shoot of 1440, less than four years after they had fled Calais, only two years after the Bruges rebellion had ended. The Ghent shoot was attended by Bruges, Oudenaarde, Sluis, and other teams from across the Low Countries, helping to rebuild their shattered regional community. It is possible that Ghent's huge demonstration of civic culture, especially with Philip the Good as an active participant, can be linked to a wish to show Ghent as more reliable than Bruges and so a worthy capital of the emerging Burgundian state.

A similar pattern of reconciliation occurred after the Ghent war, ending in 1453.¹⁰⁰⁹ This complex uprising divided Ghent from the rest of Flanders. The Ghent rebels appealed for aid to Bruges and Flemish towns, even to Brussels and Brabant, but, to use Richard Vaughan's phrase, 'Flanders as a whole stood firm

¹⁰⁰⁸ Nicholas, *Metamorphosis*, 9-11.

¹⁰⁰⁹ J. Haemers, *De Gentse opstand, 1449-1453 : de strijd tussen rivaliserende netwerken om het stedelijke kapitaal* (Kortrijk, 2004); M. Populer, 'Le conflit de 1447 à 1453 entre Gand et Philippe le Bon. Propagande et historiographie,' *Handelingen der maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent* 44 (1990), 99-123.

for the duke'.¹⁰¹⁰ Despite the animosity the war must have caused, the shooting guilds soon re-established festive relations with Ghent. The crossbowmen of Lille hosted the Ghent crossbowmen for a small shoot in summer 1454,¹⁰¹¹ and the Ghent archers hosted those of Bruges a year later.¹⁰¹² By the time of the great Tournai crossbow competition of 1455, attended by both Ghent crossbow guilds, both Bruges's crossbow guilds as well as those of Brussels, Lille, and Oudenaarde and over 50 other guilds,¹⁰¹³ the inter-urban community had been restored. After wars and rebellions, the Flemish towns needed to restore their pride and their sense of community. Competitions, with loving language, honourable displays, and attendees from all over Flanders, helped to push away the memory of military dishonour or tensions with new events of peaceful privilege and civic values.

The tensions following the death of Charles the Bold, especially the long and divisive regency for Philip the Fair, made travel and regional events difficult. But just as archery and crossbow competitions had survived wars and plagues in the fourteenth century, and had helped to restore peace after 1438 and 1453, so too competitions continued in these years of crisis. An archery competition was held in Bruges in 1477,¹⁰¹⁴ another in Brussels in 1479,¹⁰¹⁵ two in 1480¹⁰¹⁶ three in 1481.¹⁰¹⁷ The Hulst event of 1483 was not unique, rather it was part of the guilds' attempts to maintain regional fraternities and keep common peace across Flanders. The competitions of the 1480s were smaller than those of the 1450s and

¹⁰¹⁰ Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 316-7.

¹⁰¹¹ AML, CV, 16195 f. 21 v. ; SAG, stadsrekeningen, 400/17, f. 386 .

¹⁰¹² Godar, *Histoire des archers*, 105.

¹⁰¹³ Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society*, 219-225.

¹⁰¹⁴ Attended by Ghent and Sint-Winnoksbergen; De Potter, *Jaarboeken* p 113-4.

¹⁰¹⁵ Transcription of Brussels documents in appendix of Wauters, *Notice historique*; for some participants including Bruges, see Vanhoutryre, *De Brugse kruisbooggilde*, 72-4.

¹⁰¹⁶ In Aalst, AGR, CC, 31474 f. 75 v., and in Damme.

¹⁰¹⁷ In Lille, Aalst and Oudenaarde, mentioned in their respective town accounts.

60s, but, as with events in 1350, the fact that the competitions were held at all is important.

The last great medieval urban displays, the crossbow competitions in Oudenaarde in 1497 and Ghent in 1498, make this point even more clearly. Both towns were emerging, trying to emerge, from a period of intense political conflict and rebellion, and a severe economic down turn. Both needed once again to replace dishonourable memories with new honourable events, and rebuild Flemish unity. In 1498 Ghent tried to attract as wide an audience as possible, with more prizes than previous events and more elaborate invitations. Further, the aldermen took greater steps to ensure that within Ghent, order would be maintained. It seems likely that all towns planning to host several hundred armed men, and their many followers, would be concerned for law and order. In 1498 Ghent set out harsh penalties for any quarrels or disobediences.¹⁰¹⁸ In both 1440 and 1498 Ghent succeeded in rebuilding honourable peaceful communities after troubled and dishonourable periods. Using archery and crossbow competitions as ways of keeping social peace, fits with other studies which have demonstrated a widespread wish for '*paix civile*' in the later middle ages.¹⁰¹⁹

6.11 Conflicts within competitions.

Competitions involved hundreds of armed men, soldiers and their followers who in many cases had recently been at war with each other. Yet competitions were peaceful, not just in their display but in their unity. The events helped to establish, even if only temporarily, a social peace across the regions. We have already seen how mistreated the Liedekerke guild-brother were by greater towns, with large

¹⁰¹⁸ *De Bouc van Pieter Polet* f. 40 r.-v.

¹⁰¹⁹ A. Vauchez, 'La paix dans les mouvements religieux populaires,' *Pace e guerra nel basso medioevo. Atti del XL Convegno storico internazionale* (2004), 313-333.

towns hostile to a smaller one. Despite tensions, and clear potential for violence, only one example of a long-running dispute between guilds survives from fourteenth and fifteenth century Flanders. It is worth emphasising that jousts, though smaller in size and duration, could and did provoke conflict, as they did between Lille and Douai in 1284.¹⁰²⁰ The crossbow guilds of Dixmuide and Courtrai, medium sized towns of central Flanders, with estimated populations of 2 200 and 8 400 respectively in 1450 had a complicated and enduring conflict. The loss of Dixmuide archives in 1914 means we have only one side of this dispute, but it is nevertheless revealing.

There seems to have been a misunderstanding in 1462, with the crossbowmen of Courtrai arriving for a shoot in Dixmuide, only to find the city in the middle of an unrelated festival. Enraged, the Courtrai men destroyed several buildings, and stole some 'finery'. The teams met next in Eecloo in 1468. The crossbowmen of Dixmuide objected to the men of Courtrai's presence, and Eecloo sent the Courtrai guild-brothers home in dishonour. This had still not been resolved in 1494, when both teams attended a shoot in Menin. Again, the host decided in Dixmuide's favour, and sent the Courtrai men home.¹⁰²¹ In 1496 both teams held separate shoots, neither attended the event held in the other's town. This is the last known mention of the dispute. Why the Dixmuide crossbowmen invited Courtrai to a non-existent competition, and how they settled the squabble between themselves is impossible to tell. The Dixmuide- Courtrai dispute was a local tension, unconnected to wars or rebellions, and was the only long-running dispute between guilds recorded in any Flemish archive I have encountered. We must conclude, then, that despite their military service, despite civic tensions, guilds of crossbowmen and archers were agents of social peace, building honour and friendship through skill and spectacle.

¹⁰²⁰ L. Feller, 'La fête faillée: les événements de Mai (1284, Lille-Douai)', *RN* 334 (2000), 9-33.

¹⁰²¹ E. Huster, 'Notes et documents, un différend entre archers au 15^e siècle,' *ASEB* 68 (1925).

Conclusion

The competitions of archery and crossbow guilds evolved, from military training, to become huge civic events that demonstrated civic prestige and even helped to keep the peace. Though the date of the earliest competition remains unknown, it is striking that competitions began within a generation of the earliest mention of shooting guilds. These events grew over time, pushed back and damaged by wars, rebellion and plague, but always expanding, always evolving and always adapting, not waning or doomed to fail, as in Huizinga's famous vision of this entire period.¹⁰²²

Letters of invitation and commemorations of competitions emphasised the honour of the events, of the guilds and of the towns. Competitions became spectacular events, with drama and great entries, expensive, as well as symbolic, prizes. They were generously supported by many towns and by the dukes, with funds given to hosts and to attendees. But not all were equally supported; towns on rivers, and textile centres, had larger more prestigious and better funded competitions that did others. In particular Lille and Bruges, for as long as urban jousts were held, gave relatively small sums to their guilds to attend but not host competitions.

Most importantly, competitions were not only about training for war. They were about keeping peace and maintaining festive networks between towns across Flanders. Examples from Liedekerke, and from Courtrai and Dixmuides show that reality did not always live up to such ideals, but that so many towns invested so much for so long in shooting competitions is revealing. It is fitting to end with the words of the governor of Veere in Zeeland, written in 1574 reflecting on the growth of national unity;

'For who does not know that the provinces of these Netherlands have always derived the greatest advantage from being united with each other? Has this union

¹⁰²² J. Huizinga, (trans. F. Hopman), *the Waning of the Middle Ages* (London, 1990), 65-74, 92-8.

not been the origin of the old custom they have always observed, of assembling towns and provinces for the meeting of the archers and crossbowmen and bearers of other old-fashioned arms, which they call *landjuweel*? Why else have the towns and provinces always met for public repast and plays by order of the authorities unless it were to demonstrate the great unity of these provinces, as Greece showed her unity in the meetings of the Olympic Games?¹⁰²³

¹⁰²³ Quoted in Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts and Civic Patriots*, 22; E. H. Kossmann and A. F. Mellink (eds.), *Texts Concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1974), 123.

Conclusion:

From war to peace

This study has examined the various roles and actions of archery and crossbow guilds in Flanders, from their military origins to becoming agents of social peace. The groups were important not just as defenders, but as influential and powerful cultural and social brotherhoods, part of inter-urban festive networks. This thesis has not just analysed important, but rarely studied urban groups, but has further addressed problems of urban culture, the meaning of membership and noble-civic interactions in the late medieval Low Countries. Excellent scholarship exists on other urban groups and on the links between the Valois Dukes of Burgundy and their urban subjects; that the shooting guilds have not previously been studied in such a way is deeply problematic.

Archery and crossbow guilds are not simply other urban groups worthy of analysis. More so than jousts or chambers of rhetoric, they are symbols of civic ideology and civic values. Guilds built upon existing ideals of brotherhood and commensality, on evolving and often ardent devotions and fundamentally on the variations in the meaning of membership and especially on choices to create their own unique communities. The guilds grew in war, chose their level of membership, found their own devotion, formed their ideals of community, were shaped by privileges and restrictions from authorities and created powerful regional spectacular networks.

War and origins

That war and instability were driving forces to urban men taking up archery seems obvious. Military factors certainly influenced guilds formation, but other forces and influences were also present. For some guilds, such as Ghent, a clear chronology of first military service, then communal events and then competitions

and devotion emerges, but for other towns such a chronology is less clear. Devotion or competitions could equally have caused military individual to come together and form guilds, influenced by the religious confraternities and craft guilds around them. For some, such as the French archers of Euregnies, the splendour of competitions caused shooters to become established *serments*. Guilds could not have come into existence without the military circumstance that necessitated the practice of archery and crossbow, but war alone does not explain the guilds.

Guilds grew from their military origins to incorporate a greater range of activities, in response to wishes and demands of members, but they never ceased to fulfil military roles. Martial concerns are evident in charters issued across the period, with guildsmen always, even in the early sixteenth century, granted rights ‘for the security’ of their towns. Guild-brothers were required to own weapons, be skilled, and practice regularly. Such prescriptive texts are limited, but real military service can be proven even in the late fifteenth century. The guilds went out of Flanders to serve Louis of Male in his war of Brabant succession in 1356, showing their potential as fast effective troupes. In 1475 Charles the Bold rewarded the crossbowmen of Mechelen for their important service at Neuss, in which almost over a third of the guild had died, with extensive tax exemptions. Guilds even supported Maximilian at Guinegate in 1479, proving the potential of their expertise in winning a swift victory. Just as significantly, the guild defended not just their own towns, but their region, protecting Gravelines against the English in 1405 and southern Flanders against the French in the 1480s. Guilds were a constant part of civic mutual defence, defending not just their own towns but their neighbours too against common enemies, just as French towns did in the wake of Poitiers, already hinting at regional brotherhood.

Membership

Previous studies of guilds theorised that crossbowmen were ‘elite’ groups, archers slightly less so, but no study has proven guild status. In analysing the

Bruges members, the present study has scrutinised the B guilds of archers and crossbowmen in Bruges from 1437-1481, and demonstrated that membership was diverse and included all members of society, from the duke downwards. Such significant findings set up the rest of the thesis, all levels of society chose to join guilds; none were excluded. Both the archers and the crossbowmen of Bruges represented significant numbers of powerful alderman or councilors, rich tax collectors and influential citizens, but craftsmen from all 54 guilds were represented too; no profession was excluded.

Just as significantly many guild-brothers, despite being members of a guild that maintained devotional activities, chose to join other urban devotional groups. Jousters were present, but so were men who appeared in no records outside those of the guild. Lack of evidence does not of course prove such men were low status, but does show that they were neither guild masters nor civic officials. The guild records further suggest that significant networks existed, with guild-brothers holding craft even municipal office together in the same year. Family networks were just as significant in the shooting guilds, but harder to prove for all but the wealthiest members of urban society. Guilds were not factions. To a small extent, they may have become antidotes to factions, as their members were so diverse, including dukes and great lords as well as rich merchants and humbler artisans. The events of May 1477, with the ‘faction’ of Moreels torturing Anselmus Adornes, after Lodewijk van Gruuthuse’s military force was ‘radicalised’ shows that unity was not absolute; members made choices in periods of tension that could go against their guild brothers.

Devotion

That members of the Bruges guilds chose to join other urban devotional groups does not diminish the devotional significance of the guilds themselves. In choosing their devotion, guilds showed that they were far more than militias or ‘elite’ men’s clubs. Guilds were dedicated to patron saints; in Flanders almost always George and Sebastian with a few exceptions such as Saint Martin. In the

later fifteenth century many female saints were chosen along with the male ones, perhaps linked to a growing role for guild-sisters. In Brabant and France, guilds exhibited greater variety in their choice of patron, with Saint Denis, Saint Peter and the Virgin all being popular. Lack of diversity in Flanders is fascinating and reveals not just that guilds chose famous military saints, but that even in devotion, networks and the influence of other towns was significant.

All guilds chose patron saints, but for other elements of guild devotion a variation in choices is present. In large towns, like Bruges, guilds as corporate bodies spent comparatively little on their altars and on masses. In Aalst, the crossbowmen spent far larger sums on their devotional activities, from paying priests to washing altar cloths. In Bruges members had far more choice in devotional participation beyond the guild. In Aalst members had less devotional options. Guilds changed and evolved according to local demands and influences.

In Ghent a different choice was made, to focus charity in the Hospital of Saint George that was administered by guild-sisters. How far such charity was motivated by genuine compassion and how far by largess and a wish to display status cannot be discerned from surviving documents, but both secular and pious motives must be considered. Further many guild-brothers, even sisters, left wills which mention no family. That guild-brothers chose to see their shooting guilds, rather than a parish confraternity or other devotional groups, as their heir of last resort demonstrated the power of unity and brotherhood within the guilds. The chapel inventories from Ghent, with objects including candles, cloths, bejewelled crucifixes and even books, represented important devotional choices.

Across Flanders, guilds chose to demonstrate their devotion through participation in processions, in which many carried their banners. Like chapel decoration, participation can be seen as secular demonstrators of status, but more fundamental are physical manifestations of devotional choice. In civic procession, a man could only march once, as a crossbowman, as a butcher or as a member of

the Dry Tree; one identity had to be chosen. Many guilds purchased, or were given by the town, cloths and liveries for members for their events, some guilds legislate that all members must attend the procession. On the day of the procession guilds showed not just their status, but their banners and other iconography, their choices and their communal, devotional, identity.

Social

Devotional choices are striking across Flanders; within a guild social choices were just as important. Guilds should have created unity and brotherhood through commensality. Ordinances from lords, towns and even the guilds themselves set out expectation that all members should attend feasts, and shoots and even masses. Guilds were run and administered in an organised way, designed to augment unity and honour. Some officials such as constables looked back to their military roles, but kings, even emperors showed guilds' festive and ludic choices. Varlets helped to organise the great guild events, such guild officials may even have helped to write the documents used for the present research.

For all the ideals of unity, not all guild brothers chose to obey. Rules were broken and disputes rose up between brothers. Whether such disputes were caused by one over-mighty guild-brother, as in Lille, or were between two guilds of different status, as in Ghent, conflicts clearly demonstrate the complexities of guilds. That conflicts happened is not surprising, and it is likely that far more internal disputes erupted in guilds across Flanders, but only in Lille do justice records allow for an analysis of such disputes. Rules set out not just standard of behaviour, but an outline of what a guild should consist of, and how many brothers there should be. Membership lists show that reality was far more complex than such ordinances. Even simple rules on how large guilds could be were broken, showing that guilds grew and evolved in response to local demand. No role for women or priests is set out in any guild prescriptive document, yet every surviving membership lists contains women, many also contain

ecclesiastics. Guilds broke rules and quarrelled, but they also broke rules to form deeper and more personal communities.

Some of the most fascinating sources used in the present study are the Bruges seating plans. Members should have attended every meal, many never did, and others attended more than 15. When guild-brother did attend feasts, they sat in an hierarchy of different tables, organised by status and by occupations. No source gets us closer to the workings of a guild, and proves the complexities and choices made by guild-brothers as the seating plans do. They show that for a few guild-brothers, long-term, active membership, or shooting skill, could elevate their status, allowing figures unknown in any civic documents, to sit with jousters, aldermen, burgomasters, even with Anthony the Great Bastard of Burgundy.

Authority

As important as guild choices were, they could be made only insofar as authorities allowed them to. Guilds' relationships with the counts of Flanders, Dukes of Burgundy and the Habsburgs were complex, involving privilege and obligation. Princes gave guilds the right to bear arms, right to travel, even immunity from prosecution should someone be killed or injured in practice, but such rights did not given them unquestioned power. Guilds were forbidden to meet without permission. In Ghent the crossbowmen could not even appoint their own headmen. Further many guilds, especially in coastal Flanders, were encouraged to wear a ducal livery, marking them out as ducal men.

The guilds evolved without direct support from the counts of Flanders, but the influence of the counts helped bring them great support and influence. Guilds were established by the time the Valois dukes became Counts of Flanders. The dukes could not ignore the guilds, and rather than trying to dominate them and risk alienating such powerful urban groups, the dukes interacted socially with guilds. In 1408 John the Fearless shot in a competition in Oudenaarde dressed as

guild brother, a part of the urban community. In 1440 Philip the Good took a different stance, he shot not as a guild-brother, but with a separate ducal team, yet his team received no special treatment. Competitions in particular, and ducal members in general, allowed a level of community to develop between rulers and their urban subjects, both took part in the same ludic displays promoting civic prestige.

Local lords had more complex and often more personal relationships with their guilds. Many great lords, such as Jehan de Lannoy or Jan van Dadizeele, established guilds in their own town, to bring them greater status. Many ducal charters referred specifically to the present lord, or his farther, regularly shooting with and interacting with the guild-brothers. Such personal relations between small town guilds and great lords demonstrate the influence of a lord, but also that urban and aristocratic culture could and did intersect. In the greater towns the most powerful lords, including Adolf of Cleves and Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, joined several guilds. Their membership in guilds may have helped the most powerful lords during Mary of Burgundy's reign to keep civic support even as they became pillars of Mary's administration. All levels of nobility gave privileges to guilds, granted those rights and privileges, and in return hoped to keep the support of the guilds and their urban milieu.

Towns' relations with guilds were no less important. Like lords, civic authorities granted rights but more significantly bestowed money, wine, cloth and land upon guilds. The types of gifts given to the guilds, especially wine, indicate their status. That no other groups received the kind of regular urban support in money and cloth indicates how valuable guilds were to their towns. Not all towns supported their guilds equally, choice is again paramount, but those that did choose to support guilds gave them lands in rich and powerful areas of the town. Just as lords restricted guilds, towns expected something in return for their support, often guilds were called upon in times of need to defend the town, even forbidden to leave in times of crisis, or to act as peace-keepers.

Competitions

Through town and princely support guilds become some of the most influential groups in their towns, such status was demonstrated most clearly through regional competitions. Competitions began receiving urban funding within a generation of such funding being given to guilds, and predate any guilds charter. Early guilds competed to see who was the best shot, and in ludic displays showed their skill and their status. Despite wars, rebellions and plagues of the fourteenth century, competitions grew and became stronger despite all threats. Over time competitions became more spectacular, rewarding best entry, best play, best costumes even best light. Such spectacle culminated in the entrances to the Ghent competitions of 1498 that included hundreds of horsemen, silvers forests, boats on wheels and an elephant. No other urban groups, not even princely entrance ceremonies, took over towns for as long or as spectacularly as the shooting competitions did. No other urban groups so firmly represented civic prestige and civic ideology, showing military potential whilst celebrating peace.

Competitions were not just about spectacle. Honour and brotherhood were mentioned again and again in letters of invitations and in sources that described events. Letters of invitation do more than show the influence of chivalric languages on the guilds, they indicate the guilds crafting their own powerful identity of honour and nobility. The forms of prizes highlight this identity, with first wine and table wear, later silver objects, even monkeys and unicorns, showing not just ostentatious wealth, but choices and an understanding and manipulation of semiotics.

Just as they supported the guilds, dukes supported competitions, though letters of permission rarely survive. Dukes did not just take part in shoots; they encouraged towns to hold them to bring greater honour, and to bring peace. Different towns chose to be more or less generous in funding competitions, Oudenaarde were, in the mid fifteenth century, particularly generous. In contrast Lille and Bruges held

few competitions and gave their guilds little funding, at least as long as urban jousts provided them with civic prestige. Civic choices were not the only factors influencing competitions, existing networks, especially rivers, were also central. All of the towns on the Scheldt, Ghent, Oudenaarde and Tournai, held huge events. Towns on the River Dender were also festively active, in particular Aalst and Dendermonde. Competitions brought Flanders together, gave opportunities for culture, but only insofar as existing commercial and geographical networks allowed.

In bring so many men together, competitions held the potential for great conflict. Hundreds of armed men together in a town for weeks, even months, all being given large quantities of wine with comparatively little to do beyond watching others shooting seems like an explosive mix, yet competitions brought peace, not war. Competitions were held in the wake of wars or rebellion, to rebuild damaged civic bonds and to restore and at times create a shared temporary regional community. Though a few examples of conflict occur, with the small Brabant town of Liedekerke being insulted in 1440, even robbed in 1462, only one long running dispute could be found. In vast majority of cases competitions brought peace, not war because the towns that funded the events wanted community and peaceful trade, as well as civic honour.

Guilds must be understood not as simply another urban group to be studied along with craft guilds or devotions groups, but as unique and powerful civic and regional communities. They brought together dukes, knights of the Golden Fleece, aldermen, tax collectors, rich tapestry weavers and humbler bricklayers. They had great freedom to choose their own devotional and social actions, and in doing so show the vibrancy and dynamism of late medieval society. Guilds built significant and strong bonds not just within their own towns, but across Flanders and even to the princely court. How far the guilds would evolve and change in the sixteenth century, when new challenges, new leaders even a new devotion appeared in Flanders deserve further analysis, as do guilds in France and Hainault. Rather than providing a total history of guilds, the present work has

shown that Flemish guilds chose to evolve from military groups to complex social and devotional brotherhoods. They chose to be agents of social peace. Their choices and varied membership made them some of the most dynamic and influential groups in late medieval Flemish towns, representing their towns, and civic ideology, as no other urban group could.

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Expéditions militaires	835, 1188, 1418-9, 1380, 3495, 3516-20, 3533.
Lettres reçues et dépêche.	17724, 17734, 17751, 17758, 17762-7, 17644, 17869, 17832-3, 17875-9, 17883, 17875, 17879, 17888, 17790, 17896, 17904, 19165.
Séries E-J, autre communes	J 471/289, 471/403, 847/1. 1438, 1674- 1748.
Séries G (religieuses)	16, 86, 275, 369, 406 125/ 1465 339/5841.

Archives Générales du Royaume (Brussels)

Chambre des comptes, comptes des villes ¹⁰²⁴	Anvers	30886-8.
	Alost	31412-31595.
	Audenarde	31762-31848.
	Biervliet	32061-32147.
	Blankenberge	32148-32566.
	Bruges	32827-42.
	Caprycke	33009-33070.
	Courtrai	33147-33252

¹⁰²⁴ In index all town names in French

Damme	33544-33871.
Dixmude	33912-33993.
Eecloo	34355-34433.
Haerlebeke	35532-35579.
Loo	35903-35986.
Ninove	37076-37157.
Renaix	37887-37892.
Ypres	38635-38780.

L'audiencier (inv 52/2) 219, 1550.

Famille van der Noot (fonds 144)244, Bruges, pièce du procès de la gilde des arbalétriers contre la gilde des archers, 16e siècle.

Aalst, Stadsarchief

Oude archief	3 Peysboek. 7 Den boek met de haire. 55 Register Sintjorisgilde. 123 Scheppenboek. 127 Rentenboeken. 156 Rekenigen Sintjorisgilde.
Kerkerchief	622, Broederschappen.

Armentières, Archives Municipales

EE, Affaires militaires 4-6.

Brugge, Archief van de gilde van Sint-Sebastian

Charters
Rekening, 1454-6, 1460-65, 1465-72, 1472-80, 1486-7, 1506-12.
List des confrères de la gilde, débutant en 1514.

Brugge, Archief van de Biscop

Acta capitali	A 49-52.
Ambachten en hun kapellen in de st Donaaskerk	D 4.
Broederschappen	S 289, 335, 344, 377, 386, 534-5.

Brugge, Rijksarchief

Ambachten	33, 75, 116, 117, 118, 123-32, 138, 143, 146-8, 170-1 173-4, 182-4, 196-9, 224-5, 237, 256-306, 311, 356, 375, 386, 447-453, 470, 487-88, 511- 512, 553, 603, 635, 636.
Onze Lieve Vrouw (inv. 91)	134, 250, 338, 1217-8, 1496, 1501, 1531.

Brugge, Stadsarchief

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Gilden	46, 299, 314, 324, 336-7, 345, 456, 505, 524.
Westvernieuwingen	114.
Stadsrekening	216.

Douai, Archives Communales

Séries AA,	84, 94, 97.
Séries BB	1-3.
Séries CC,	200, 262-497 (années 1391-1508).
Séries EE	13-18, 21.
24II232	Registre 'Arbalestiers de Douay, 1382'

Gent, Bijlokemuseum

Sint Jorisdigilde, Register der Doodschulden,	G 12.608.
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Sint Sebastiaangilde; Privilegieboek,

inv. 1059.

Gent, Rijksarchief

Fonds Sint-Baaf 03820, 7576, 7634, 7792, 7793.

Fonds Sint-Pieter 1163, 1943, 1989.

Gent, Stadsarchief

Reeks Sint Joris 155.

Reeks Sint Sebastiaan 155/1.

Reeks Sint Anthonius 155/2.

Sint Jorisingilde, niet genummerde reeks.

Sint Jorishospitaal LXVII.

Cartularies 93-97.

Jaarregister 301.

Actes en keuren 302.

Stadsrekening 400.

Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek

Sint Joris Charters Hs. G 3018/3, Hs. G. 61731.

Archief Sint Joris Hs. G 19580/9.

Dits es den bouc vander scutters tobehoorende Pieter Polet ende Sint Joris Gilden
te Gent Hs. G 6112.

Kronijke van Audenaerde Hs. 708.

Inventaire des chartes des deux confréries d'arbalétriers de Saint Georges qui
existèrent en la ville de Gant HS 610-611.

Traites de paix/ Vredesverdragen Hs 434.

Kortrijk, Rijksarchief

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Stukken m.b.t. de Sint-Sebastiaansgilde	1087.
Stukken m.b.t. de Schuttersgilden	3896
Reglement voor de Kortrijkse Schuttersgilde van Sint-Sebastiaan	5341.
Sint-Jorisgilde. 1 stuk	5800.

Lille, Archives Municipales

Fonds Anciens, Affaires Generales;	Arbalétriers	7-9.
	Archers	5-6.
Registre aux Mandates		16.973-992.
Ordonnancés de Magistrates		373-380.
Pièces aux Titres		1066-1787.
Comptes de la Ville		16012- 16270 (années 1317-1536).

Oudenaarde, Stadsarchief

Gilden	507/II Sint Joris Gilde.
	507/III Sint Sebastiaan Gilde.
Stadsrekening	microfilm 684-7.
Chronickes van Oudenaarde	241.
Bartholomeeus de Rantere	microfilm 1484-6.

Roubaix, archives municipales

Affaires Militarisés, EE	1-4.
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