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The Role of the Beguine Movement in the Commemoration of the Dead in Douai, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

O papel do movimento beguino na comemoração dos mortos em Douai, séculos XIII e XIV

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ABSTRACT

Commemoration and *caritas* were deeply intertwined and in Douai, this relationship was evident in the strategies that testators employed between 1228 and 1362. During this period, Douaisiens' commemorative strategies brought together existing and new religious institutions and intercessors responsible for the salvation of the parish community. At a time when the penitential movement in the town was flourishing, testators considered beguines as among those efficacious in interceding for their souls. Testators requested pittances, simple prayers, and funerary services. The women performed these services alongside many other intercessors, including the parish church and its personnel, the mendicant orders, and the common poor. Thus, this period in Douai involved the formation of a network of commemoration in which intercessors, including beguines, contributed to the salvation of parishioners.

Keywords: Commemoration; Beguines; Charity; Douai; Community

RESUMO

A comemoração e a caridade estavam profundamente interligadas e, em Douai, esta relação era evidente nas estratégias que os testamenteiros empregaram entre 1228 e 1362. Durante este período, as estratégias comemorativas dos habitantes de Douai reuniram instituições religiosas novas e pré-existentes, bem como intercessores responsáveis pela salvação da comunidade paroquial. Numa época em que o movimento penitencial na cidade florescia, os testamenteiros consideravam as beguinas pessoas úteis na intercessão pelas suas almas. Os testamenteiros solicitavam pitanças, orações simples e serviços funerários. As mulheres realizavam estes serviços juntamente com muitos outros intercessores, incluindo a igreja paroquial e o seu pessoal, as ordens mendicantes e os pobres comuns. Assim, durante o período em estudo, na cidade de Douai, formou-se uma rede de comemoração em que os intercessores, incluindo as beguinas, contribuíram para a salvação dos paroquianos.

Palavras-chave: Comemoração; Beguinas; Caridade; Douai; Comunidade



Scholarship on *memoria* effectively considers commemoration as a social dynamic between the living and the dead in which the two were mutually responsible for each other's well-being[1]. However, such a definition does not indicate how the living and the dead reinforced their responsibilities to one another. In Douai, the flourishing of the penitential movement during the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries saw testators' use of *caritas* to secure commemorative services and assist their intercessors. Alongside existing religious institutions, particularly the parish church, these intercessors were jointly responsible for the care of souls within Douai's parish communities. Specifically, examination of the beguine movement's serves as an important lens in highlighting the richness of commemorative culture and the ways that a commemorative network developed in the town between 1228 and 1362. Evident in testators' appeals to beguines for pittances, simple prayers, and funerary services was the value they attributed to the women's expertise in caregiving. However, the value that testators placed on the women's commemorative services did not diminish the spiritual efficacy of commemorative services from other religious groups and institutions[2]. Within this network, testators employed *caritas* to secure and combine multiple commemorative services from a broad range of intercessors.

[1] OEXLE, Otto Gerhard – "Memoria und Memorialbild". In SCHMID, Karl; WOLLASCH, Joachim (eds.) – *Memoria: Der gschichtliche Zeugniswer des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter*. München, 1984, p. 394.

[2] Jean-Pierre Deregnaucourt's doctoral thesis considers the period examined here as a time when the parish church faced competition for the donations from the common faithful. In part, this view was influenced by Jacques Chiffoleau's monumental work around the culture of death in Avignon. See DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Piere - *Autour de la mort a Douai. Attitudes, pratiques et croyances, 1250-1500*. Lille: Université Charles de Gaulle, 1998, p. 176. Doctoral Thesis. See also CHIFFOLEAU, Jacques – *La comptabilite de l'au- dela: les hommes, la mort et la religion dans la region d'Avignon d la fin du Moyen Age (vers 1320 – vers 1480),* XLVII. Rome: Collection de l'Ecole Francaise de Rome, 1980. For Deregnaucourt, the parish churches in Douai outlived most penitential groups and institutions by 1370 when many of these communities had dissolved because of the plague, famine, and the changing needs of the common faithful.

A survey of 171 testaments from this period demonstrates that Douaisien testators recruited beguines for commemorative services[3]. Although the testaments consulted in this paper are a modest portion of the 3,000 wills that survive from medieval Douai, they speak to the intersections that had newly formed between charity, the penitential movement, and commemoration by the mid-thirteenth century. Connected to the beguine movement, these documents speak to the women's participation in the care of souls within their parish communities. Therefore, important in considering Douaisiens' commemorative practices were the social and spiritual circumstances that shaped testators' efforts to secure their salvation.

Commemoration in Douai

Commemorative practices in Douai occurred on the intersections of legal, spiritual, and social practices. Commemoration and the procedures involved in arranging them have been documented in the wills of Douaisiens. Men and women of the town prepared for their death by creating a will in which they outlined their final wishes, including their requests for specific commemorative services. Underlying the legal transactions that the will oversaw were testators' spiritual interests in preparing for the hereafter. Involved in their preparations was the recruitment of intercessors who offered commemorative services for their soul and the fees and donations paid to them. The will brought together these interdependent components in commemoration. The will was not solely a legal nor religious document as these aspects came together in the request and execution of testator's final wishes[4]. Consequently, when thinking of wills in the context of commemoration, these documents might be best thought of as records of social networks in parish communities designed to support the afterlife of its members.

[3] These testaments are from the Archive Municipales de Douai (=AMD), FF 861 and 862 series, which contain documents from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The combined number of wills from this collection is 171. 84 belonged to women and 87 belonged to men. It should be noted that included in the total number of wills and those created solely by women are two copies of Jehane de Malarde's will.

[4] As Martha Howell has noted, wills and final testaments were religious documents because they permitted Douaisien testators to secure their salvation through charitable gifts to the devout. See HOWELL, Martha – "Fixing Movables: Gifts by Testament in Late Medieval Douai". *Past and Present* 150 (1996), p. 11.

The creation of formal records pertaining to one's commemoration was limited to a select group of residents in Douai. A regulation from 1236 on the creation of wills implied that testators were those who held citizenship status as the "bourgeois et borgeoise de ceste ville"[5]. Excluded in the collection of extant wills were residents of the town who did not hold citizenship there. For Jean-Pierre Deregnaucourt, the study of commemoration excluded those who were not permitted legally to create wills, as well as those who did not have anything left to bequeath by the end of their life[6]. But paradoxically, because commemoration involved the provision of services by many members of the parish community, these documents made visible the same individuals and groups who were excluded from taking part in its creation. Therefore, the wills highlight the social networks that existed and were required by testators for commemorative services.

Between the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century, Douaisiens' commemorative practices typically included alms and donations to their parish church and its personnel. From the 171 wills examined here, 91 left alms for their parish church, 24 left alms but did not indicate their parish church, 6 testators did not leave alms to local parish churches but did so to those in other towns, and 50 did not mention their parish church[7]. This number is spread out from 1228 to 1362 and

[5] AMD AA 97, fol. 95. There are some ambiguities about the precise meaning of being a bourgeois/bourgeoise in Douai. In one sense, this status referred to citizenship in the city rather than residency. In another sense, the title also held economic implications about property ownership and *rentes* secured by real properties. Additionally, the meanings of these titles were not static in medieval Douai. For further discussion of this, see HOWELL, Martha – "Weathering Crisis, Managing Change: The Emergence of a New Socioeconomic Order in Douai at the End of the Middle Ages". In BOONE, Marc ; PREVENIER, Walter (eds). – *La draperie ancienne des Pays-Bas Débouchés et strategies de survi*e (14e-16e siècles). Leuven and Apeldoorn: Grant, 1993, p. 100; ESPINAS, George – *La vie urbaine de Douai au Moyen Âge*, vol. 1. Paris: Picard, 1913, pp. 385-393.

[6] Deregnaucourt's considers this component in the creation of wills and the documentation of commemoration as a reflection of social hierarchies. In his survey of 2,284 wills from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, Jean-Pierre Deregnaucourt identified that 1,434 belonged to men and 850 to women. He posed the question of whether there were distinctive masculine and feminine forms of commemoration. He considers the context and circumstances involved in Douaisiens' testators as the determinants of gendered experiences in commemoration. See DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la mort à Douai*, p. 48.

[7] Henri Painmoilher, Jehanain de Dourges, and Hue li Germain gave alms to the bishop of Arras. See AMD FF 861 32626 (testament of Henri Painmoilher, 1286), AMD FF 861 32629 (testament of Jehanain de Dourges, 1290), AMD FF 861 32642 (testament of Hue li Germain, 1298). Pieron de Warlain left alms to the church of Warlaing. See AMD FF 861 32639 (testament of Pieron de Warlain, 1296). Maroie le Pance bequeathed money to the parish of Biethune, which was her city of origin. AMD FF 862 32651 (testament of Maroie dite a le pance de Biethune, 1307). The number of wills per parish in this collection is as follows: Saint Piere-36, Notre Dame-6, Saint Amé-3, Saint Aubin-21, Saint Jakeme-15, Saint Nicholas-9, Saint Jehan-1.

so from this pattern, it can be surmised that testators generally valued and remembered their parish church when they made their wills. According to Deregnaucourt, alms and donations made to parish churches were routine and, therefore, were sometimes left out of these documents[8]. For the great majority who did include their parish church in their wills, they expressed generosity to the parish personnel who served the church. Indeed, for one testator, he thought it important to remember and include "une verriere" who was among the personnel in the parish church of Saint Aubin[9]. By remembering their parish church in their arrangements for death, testators emphasized the spiritual and social significance of these institutions in their communities.

Such was the significance of parish churches in parish life that testators' support for these institutions did not wane even upon the arrival of the mendicant orders. The first local establishment of the mendicants in the town was marked by the creation of the Dominican convent in 1271. Prior to this time, Dominicans traversed from Lille as that was their closest settlement to Douai[10]. After 1271, testators frequently bequeathed money to the friars perhaps because of their residency in the town[11]. Deregnaucourt has considered the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a period of competition between the mendicant orders and parish churches in commemorative services, particularly pertaining to burials. Certainly, there were Douaisiens who opted for burials in the convents of the mendicants. However, these arrangements did not mean that these testators had turned away from their parish church. Among them were testators who arranged for burial in either the Franciscan, Dominican, or Trinitarian convents. These testators included Marotain le Caucheteur (1282) and Maroie Blokiele (1316) who both opted for burials in the Franciscan convent but provided alms to the parish church of Saint Piere and its personnel[12]. These examples denote continuities in the parish church's place in the

[8] DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la morte à Douai*, p. 206.
[9] AMD FF 861 32630 (testament of Williaume le Waukier, 1291).
[10] SIMONS, Walter – *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565.* Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, p. 113.
[11] This regularity is evident beginning with Adam de Masni's will. See AMD FF 861 32595 (testament of Addin de Mausin, 1269).
[12] AMD FF 862 32623 (testament of Marotain le Caucheteur, 1282). Marotain's will states: "As freres precheurs de douay la on ele es list se sepulture pour aidier a fair ele moustier. xv lib". AMD FF 862

social and religious lives of its parishioners throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Commemorative masses were also commonly requested by testators for their souls. 66 of the 171 wills from the thirteenth and fourteenth century requested obits, Requiem, annual, canter, and trental masses[13]. Some testators, including Adam de Masni (1269) and Saintaine li Toiliere (1273), requested only a Requiem mass from their parish church[14]. For other testators, requesting a combination of masses was perhaps considered a more effective means of expediting their time in Purgatory. This is evident in the will of Ghillain le Toiliere (1278), who paid 20 *sous* for her trental and 20 *deniers* for her anniversary mass[15]. Another example is Maroie de Biequin (1362) who requested "deux trenteux de messes[16]. Testators also requested masses for their souls and the souls of their parents. In Thumas Pikete's will (1295), he stipulated that the remaining funds of his estate was to establish "une capelerie en le capiele Saint Jehan en le rue au chierf pour canter cascun jour mese en celi capiele pour diu, pour lame sen pere et se mere pour lame de liu"[17]. Leurent le Laurers (1273) also secured Requiem masses for him and his widow, Marien"[18]. For some testators, the multiplication of commemorative masses suggested they considered the quantity of masses as efficacious in securing the salvation of more people apart from themselves.

This was especially the case as the pattern in wills leading to the latter half of the fourteenth century suggests an intensification in the number of commemorative masses testators sought compared to the thirteenth century. Deregnaucourt has considered this shift as a correlation between the crises of the fourteenth century[19]. However, it can be said just as easily that the growing number of masses requested

32671 (testament of Maroie Blokiele, 1316). "...pour diu et pour s'ame a sem prestre curet qui ses parochiens sera au jour de sem trespas. xx s. A sen capelain. x s. Au clerc. v s. A cascun des capelains residens en l'eglise saint piere. xii d."

[13] DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la morte à Douai*, pp. 299-300.

[14] AMD FF 861 32595 (testament of Adam de Masni, 1269). AMD FF 861 (testament of Saintain Toiliere, 1273).

[15] AMD FF 861 32618 (testament of Ghillaine le Toilliere, 1278).

[16] AMD FF 862 32647 (testament of Maroie de Biequin, 1362).

[17] AMD FF 861 32637 (testament of Thumas Pikete, 1295).

[18] AMD FF 861 32613 (testament of Leurent le Laurers, 1273).

[19] DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la mort à Douai*, p. 61.

by testators resulted from the latter's efforts to strengthen and reinforce the mutual obligations of the dead and the living in obtaining salvation. In her will from 1339, Pieronne de l'Euwe requested 20 "messes de requiem pour l'ame de li, pour l'ame de sen pere, de se mere et pour toutes les ames de tous bienfaiteurs"[20]. Implied by Pieronne's request is the recognition of her responsibility to ensure her parents' salvation. For other testators, including Marguerite li Ernieve (1345) and Gillot Julin (1361), reinforcing their intercessors' responsibility to them was made possible by requesting multiples of the same masses[21]. Consequently, the request for multiple masses demonstrated testators' motivations to engage the living repeatedly in commemoration.

Other commemorative strategies included requests for pittances. From 171 wills, 75 requested pittances from different religious institutions in the town. For example, Engherrans Brunamon (1260) requested pittances from at least six different religious institutions in Douai. In addition to the local intercessors he named, he also sought pittances from the mendicants in the towns of Arras and Lille, and monastic communities[22]. Another example is Aelis de Selevaing who pittances from the hospital of Carteriers, Franciscans, Dominicans, Trinitarians, boines enfans, abbey of Près, and the hospitals of Wetz[23]. As will be discussed in later sections of this paper, testators' requests for pittances were sometimes informed by the ability of intercessors, like the beguines, to fulfill commemorative requests. Pittances represented a commemorative service that could be fulfilled outside of elaborate ceremonies. Thus, the number of testators who requested pittances in their wills might have considered these forms of commemoration valuable for their practicality for intercessors.

Luminaires were another form of commemoration that testators requested. In Douai, luminaires referred to lighting during funeral processions and when intercessors recited prayers for testators. In processions, the requests for

[20] AMD FF 862 32705 (testament of Pieronne de l'Euwe, 1339).
[21] AMD FF 862 32716 (testament of Marguerite li Ernieve, 1345). Marguerite requested two *Requiem* masses and trentals. AMD FF 862 32740 (testament of Gillot Julin, 1361). Gillot Julin requested 4 *Requiem* masses and 1 trental.
[22] AMD FF 861 32590 (testament of Engherrans Brunamons, 1260).
[23] AMD FF 861 32640 (testament of Aelis de Selevaing, 1296).

luminaires does not appear in Douaisien wills, Marotain le Tassarde's will from 1338, in which she provided a detailed account of her funerary services and those who provided commemorative services there[24]. Predating this form of luminaires was the lighting of candles before the image of the *Corpus Domini* in the parish church of Saint Piere. The earliest will with this request comes from Engerrans Brunamons in 1260; his will states, "Et si done apreis sen decies xl s de par a oel luminaire ke on art devant corpus domini en le eglise saint piere"[25]. The importance of prayers said before this image in Saint Piere was likely connected to the townspeople's devotion to the holy eucharist, which was exemplified in a Eucharistic miracle during 1259[26]. Testators' requests for candles to be lit for them were not limited to the image of the *Corpus Domini* in Saint Piere. In his will, Gillon Crieleu bequeathed 8 sous to the parish of Saint Nicholas for oil to be used for luminaires[27]. As Catherine Vincent and Paul Fouracre have argued in their respective studies of light and its significance in commemorative practices, luminaires were both symbolic in aiding souls in their journey in the hereafter and an expression of testators' continued care to one's parish church[28]. Consequently, testators formal requests for these services demonstrated their personal interests as well as their obligations in caring for their parish in their afterlife.

As for funerary processions and burials, these topics have been studied closely by Deregnaucourt and so I will refrain from discussing these practices at great length. Testators appeared to have demonstrated preferences in making arrangements for commemorative prayers and masses in their wills. This is evident in the absence of details testators provided concerning their funerary procession. In Ghillain Toilliere's will, she only outlined her request for burial: "…et demande pour diu se

[24] AMD FF 862 32697 (testament of Maroitain le Tassarde, 1338). For example, Marotain details that four women were to clean her body, and each were to receive 12 deniers for their service. She also stated that six women and men were carry her body to her tomb and each were to receive 12 deniers.
[25] AMD FF 861 32590 (testament of Engherrans Brunamon, 1260).
[26] CANTIMPRÉ, Thomas de – *Bonum universale de apibus* (1471-1472), Bibliothèque Municipale de Douai (=BMD), no. 338, book 2, Chapter 40, fol. xciiii-v. According to Thomas, when the celebrant had dropped the host during mass in Saint Amé, the host levitated and imprinted on it was the face of Christ as a child.
[27] AMD FF 861 32617 (testament of Gillon Crieleu, 1277).
[28] VINCENT, Catherine – *Fiat Lux: Lumière et luminaires dans la vie religieuse en Occident du XIIIe ou début du XVIe siècle.* Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2004. FOURACRE, Paul – *Eternal light and earthly concerns.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023.

sepulture as freres menus"[29]. Different from Ghillain's will is Marotain le Tassarde's (1338) requests for services for her funerary procession. She detailed who would be cleaning, carrying, and accompanying her body before and during her procession[30]. According to Deregnaucourt, Marotain's will highlights the gradual trend in funerary services to include elaborate processions and burials characteristic of later periods after 1360[31]. Indeed, the absence of details regarding processions and burials was perhaps connected to the significance of poverty in the spiritual practices of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The diversity of commemorative services pursued by testators indicates that they considered them all as effective in securing their salvation. Redundancy did not exist; testators' interests in multiples of the same commemorative services was about quantity in services and spiritual merit. For example, Marotain Fierin requested pittances from different religious groups in the town and required masses dedicated to her spirit weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Furthermore, there were multiple recipients who received donations from her for pittances[32]. Demonstrated in Marotain's will is the network of commemoration that existed within her parish and, more broadly, the town. Marotain's provisions for her commemoration brought together a broad range of social and spiritual groups to participate in her commemoration. This collective of intercessors and spiritual services show testators' combination of a multitude of intercessors and services to secure their salvation. Although not all Douaisiens could afford the same services as Marotain, her requests highlight the different spiritual communities involved in the care of the dead. Out of 171 wills, 148 requested at least three commemorative services in their will. This pattern indicates that testators approached commemoration with quantity in mind. Therefore, it is these attitudes that contributed to the integration of new spiritual groups and religious orders into parish community's commemorative practices.

[29] AMD FF 861 32618 (Ghillain le Toiliere, 1278).
[30] AMD FF 862 32697 (testament of Maroitain le Tassarde, 1338).
[31] DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la morte à Douai*, p. 102-104. Deregnaucourt considers this trend to have been connected to efforts to die within one's rank by showcasing wealth in the procession and burial.
[32] The recipients of her donations included the poor beguines of Champfleury, her servant Margot, her parish church, the town's mendicant orders, and several hospitals. AMD FF 861 32609 (testament of Marotain de Fierin, 1272).

Caritas, penance, and commemoration

Testators' interests in the quantity of commemorative services were likely informed by spiritual concepts that explained the souls' place in the afterlife and how one's earthly conduct impacted the soul's fate. As Jacques Le Goff posits, the conceptualization of Purgatory in the twelfth century considered it as a place where souls were purged for their venial sins in life—a process that was both lengthy and painful. The living had the ability to shorten the time that souls spent in Purgatory through prayers in commemoration of the dead[33]. It is perhaps this conceptualization contributed to Douaisiens' patronage and charity towards members of their community.

Douaisien wills do not explicitly refer to Purgatory but instead imply it in the use of the *pro anima* clause prefacing gifts testators distributed to their friends, family, neighbours, and religious institutions. The earliest extant will with this clause belonged to Jakemon de Doregni from 1252. Here on, the *pro anima* clause became a standard feature of the will's formulaic structure; only 30 wills from the 171 examined here did not contain this clause and 5 wills predated the mid-thirteenth century. The absence of the *pro anima* clause in these documents suggests that the act of making spiritual gifts had not yet been integrated in the will's formulaic structure.

After the mid-thirteenth century, the *pro anima* clause in the form of the phrase "pour dieu et pour l'ame" appear consistently in extant wills. The 25 wills that do not use the *pro anima* clause after the mid-thirteenth century, including Gilles as Blanc Kevaus, either made a general declaration of what they left and to whom using the phrase "il donne et laist" or included no declarative phrase, but nonetheless made bequests[34]. In the wills that do include the pro anima clause, variations existed but articulated consistently that the actions mentioned within this clause were for

[33] LE GOFF, Jacques – *The Birth of Purgatory.* GOLDHAMMER, Arthur (trans.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, p. 152.
[34] AMD FF 861 32636 (testament of Gilles as Blanc Kevaus, 1295).

the testator's spirit[35]. In this sense, concern for Purgatory and the soul's fate in the afterlife was incorporated in the formulaic structure of the will.

An important component of the *pro anima* clause was its declaration of alms and donations made by testators for their spirit. In 113 wills and from the year 1250, testators resorted to almsgiving and donations to secure commemorative services from religious groups. The recipients of alms and donations were commonly the parish churches and the poor. The earliest appearance of donations made to the parish church in the wills examined here comes from 1252; in this will, Jakemon Doregni donated to the church of Saint Aubin[36]. As mentioned above, testators frequently remembered their parish churches, its personnel, and services to the poor. Second to the parish were the common poor, who testators frequently included as beneficiaries of their estate. Testators, including Thumas Pikete, Pieron Dorchies, mentioned the *kemuns povres* de le Ville de Douay or the *kemuns povres* of the testator's parish[37]. The frequency of alms given to testators' parish churches and the poor indicate that these were important spiritual practices that testators used to express their piety.

The significance of almsgiving in testators' commemorative strategies was informed by the concept of *caritas* within one's community. During the thirteenth century, preachers active in the Low Countries and neighboring areas encouraged the common faithful to consider the spiritual effects of their participation in commerce on their soul. In part, *caritas* was a reminder of the suffering that awaited souls in Purgatory. Consequently, preachers including Alain de Lille (ca. 1128-1203) and Thomas de Cantimpré (1201-1272) highlighted the economic consequences of avarice and usury on those who fell to misfortune from the greed of others. Alain and Thomas were responding to the rapid urbanization within the region, the economic and social conditions it created in urban communities, and spiritual

[35] Variations of this clause appear as: "pour dieu et pour same", "pour dieu et en aumosne", "pour dieu et en aumosne et pour salve du l'ame". Testators also included the souls of their parents, siblings, spouses, and ancestors within this clause as beneficiaries of their commemorative services. An example of this is Pieron de Warlaing who states in his will "pour dieu et pour same et pour les ames de sen pere et de se mere." AMD FF 861 32639 (testament of Pieron de Warlaing, 1296).
[36] AMD FF 861 32865 (testament of Jakemon de Doregni, 1252).
[37] AMD FF 861 32637 (testament of Thumas Pikete, 1295), AMD FF 862 32664 (testament of Pieron Dorchies, 1314), AMD FF 862 32736 (testament of Gillote li Enfes, 1359).

concerns regarding Purgatory[38]. For both Alain and Thomas, *caritas* had redemptive qualities in decreasing the time souls spent in Purgatory and participation in it guaranteed spiritual benefits in the afterlife[39]. Certainly, not all testators of the wills examined here were penitents. However, their participation in charity through their requests for commemorative services points to their efforts in performing penitential acts.

The prevalence of almsgiving and donations in the commemorative strategies of testators demonstrate that these religious ideals were present in Douai. As one of the region's major cloth-producing towns, Douai's 30,000 inhabitants by the year 1300 were steeped in commerce[40]. According to the occupations of testators, all engaged in some aspect of commerce during their life. As Ellen Kittell has demonstrated, testators' epithets included their occupations[41]. Among these testators from 1228 to 1362 were individuals from the town's wealthy merchant families who generated profits from the production and sale of cloth[42]. It is true that

[38] Some examples from the two can be found in: CANTIMPRÉ, Thomas de – *Bonum Universale de Apibus*, Book 2, Ch. 26, 5: Exemplum abbatis Villariensis, de restiuenda pecunia usuris parta. LILLE, Alain de - *Summa de arte praedicatoria*. Ed. J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, col. 109-195.

[39] Le Goff has examined the links between the concept behind the doctrine of Purgatory beginning in the twelfth century and the economic expansion of urban centres. See LE GOFF, Jacques – *The Birth of Purgatory*; LE GOFF, Jacques – *Your Money Or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages.* New York: Zone Books, 1998, pp. 21-24. For an extended discussion of theologians' views on avarice as a product of commerce, see RUBIN, Miri – *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 84-85. Tanya Stabler Miller has also recognized similar trends in Robert de Sorbonne's writings emphasizing the significance of charity within one's community. See STABLER MILLER, Tanya – *The Beguines of Medieval Paris: Gender, Patronage, and Spiritual Authority*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

[40] This estimate of the town's population comes from DERVILLE, Alain – "Le nombre d'habitants des villes d'Artois et de la Flandre Wallonne (1300-1450)". *Revue du Nord* 65/257 (1983), pp. 289-293. This number is repeated in BLOCKMANS, Wim – "Flanders in the Thirteenth Century". In ABULAFIA, David (ed.) – *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Volume 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 415. Other estimates far lower than 30,000; Catherine Dhérent estimates that the population of Douai in the fourteenth century was between 10,000 and 12,000. See DHÉRENT, Catherine – *Histoire social de la bourgeoisie de Douai de 1280 à 1350.* Paris: École Nationale de Chartres, 1981, p. 121. Doctoral Thesis. Martha Howell also has proposed that Douai's population during this period was somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. See HOWELL, Martha – The *Marriage Exchange.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 48. Peter Stabel provides the lowest estimate of Douai's population, which he considers had been closer to 8,000. See STABEL, Peter – "Composition et recomposition des reseaux urbains des Pays-Bas au Moyen Âge". In LECUPPRE – DESJARDIN, Élodie ; CROUZET-PAVAN, Élisabeth (eds.) – *Villes de Flandre et d'Italie (XXIIIe-XVIe).* Turnhout: Brepols, 2008, pp. 29-63; NICHOLAS, David – *Medieval Flanders.* London: Longman, 1992, p. 115.

[41] KITTELL, Ellen – "The construction of women's social identity in medieval Douai: Evidence from identifying epithets". *Journal of Medieval History* 3 (1999), p. 220.

[42] For a complete inventory of medieval wills from Douai and testators, see DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la morte à Douai*, vol. 2, pp. 3-57.

those who were able to request multiple commemorative services from a broad range of intercessors were able to do so because of their wealth. However, it is perhaps equally true that there was greater spiritual urgency among these testators to disperse their wealth as donations because of how they generated income during their life.

The charitable dimensions in testators' commemorative services stress the significance of charity in Douaisiens' efforts to not only shorten their time in Purgatory, but also to secure their salvation. Alms and donations made to the parish church and the poor spoke to the same social, economic, and spiritual dimensions of charity that Alain and Thomas highlighted. Implied within the nature of this transaction was the transfer of goods and money; Teofilo Ruiz has considered donations of property and money as the conversion of earthly into spiritual wealth[43]. This transactional nature feature in *caritas* can also be considered as remnants of Germanic practices of gift-giving[44]. As Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld has posited, commemoration operated within the concept of *do ut des*, in which a gift was made to assist the recipient, who would later provide a counter-gift to the giver[45]. Indeed, these attitudes are present in Douaisien testators' requests for commemorative services. In providing alms to religious groups, institutions, and the poor, testators obligated recipients to act as intercessors for them through commemorative services. According to Adam J. Davis, this system of mutual support and exchange underlined a commercialization of salvation due to testators' expectation of spiritual returns for their donations[46]. Such attitudes certainly do not

[43] Teofilo Ruiz makes this conclusion in his observation of Catalan wills and the relationship of testators with property by 1230. RUIZ, Teofilo – *From Heaven to Earth: The Reordering of Castilian Society, 1150-1350.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004.
[44] LITTLE, Lester K. – *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1978, pp. 3-41.
[45] BIJSTERVELD, Arnoud-Jan – *Do ut des: Gift Giving, Memoria, and Conflict Management in the Medieval Low Countries*, Volume 104, Middeleeuwse studies em bronnen. Uitgeverij Verloren, 2017, p. 20.
[46] Adam J. Davis' examination of wills from the region of Champagne highlights the existence of a shared language between commercial and spiritual transactions. For Davis, the language of commerce shaped testators' articulation of spiritual gifts and, likewise, informed their expectation of spiritual rewards. See DAVIS, Adam J. – *The Medieval Economy of Salvation*, pp. 5-8. These conclusions expand Jacques Chiffoleau's and Jacques Le Goff's focus on medieval anxieties about the afterlife and a spiritual economy, Adam J. Davis and Ruiz have considered the expression of these anxieties as offshoots of the commercialization of urban communities. DAVIS, Adam J. – *The Medieval Economy of Salvation: Charity, Commerce, and The Rise of the Hospital.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019; RUIZ, Teofilo - *From Heaven to Earth: The Reordering of Castilian Society.*

align with modern concepts of altruism within charity work. However, the concept of mutual support was embedded in medieval practices of *caritas* and a cornerstone in commemoration.

The development of the penitential movement saw the growth of new intercessors involved in Douaisiens' commemorative practices. Indeed, the diversity of intercessors and commemorative services discussed in the previous section were made possible by the penitential movement. Penitents embodied the devotional ideals of the period and appealed to the testators in this regard. These groups included the Franciscans, Dominicans, Trinitarians, and beguines. Deregnacourt's study of burials considers the penitential movement in Douai as disruptive of a commemorative system in which the parish church was at the center of commemoration within the parish community[47]. However, in considering testators' attitudes towards penitents, we might see instead the growth of a network in which the care of souls was no longer the sole responsibility of the parish church. But rather, it was the parish community that now shared in this spiritual responsibility by the latter half of the thirteenth century.

The institutions of penitential groups were embedded in the parish communities from which their members came. Indeed, this was particularly true of beguines. As shown by Marien de Lens' will, she entrusted her commemoration to several institutions in her parish community of Saint Piere:

> « … por diu et por lame de li et en aumosne a l'uevre de l'eglise saint piere de douai, x. d. A le taule de saint esperit, x. d. A doiien de saint piere, xx. D. A p[a]rochiien de saint piere. Xx. D. Au capelain de le paroche. V. d. Au clerc. Iii. D. As clers ki portent leue benoite. Ii. D. A cascun capelain de saint piere. Xii. D. A le candoile ki art devant corpus domini a saint piere. V. d. As povres dele vile de douai por acater nates cauciers et toile. C. d. As povres begines de le paroche saint piere. C. d. As povres begines de le maison Agnies de Corbie. Xx. D… Et si laist li devant dite Maroie as 243rères precheurs de douai. Viii. Lib. As 243rères precheurs daras. Xx. D. As 243rères precheurs de Lille. Xx. D. As 243rères

[47] DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la morte à Douai*, pp. 126-131.

> precheures de Valenchienes. Xx. D. As 244rères menus de douai. Xl. D. as 244rères menus de Lens. Xx. D. As 244rères menus daras. Xx. D. As 244rères menus de lille. Xx. D. As 244rères menus de Tournai. Xx. D. As 244rères menus de Valenchienes. Xx. D. As 244rères menus Cambrai. Xx. D. et tout a pitance. Et si laist li devant dite Maroie as 244rères de le Trinite de douai. X. d. As Boens enfans de douai. X. d. As vieux prestres de Tournai. X. d. A l'abeie de Syn. X. d. A le braiele daunai. X. d… A l'abeie dou vergier. X. d. Au viuier nostre dame. X. d. A l'abeie des pres. X. d… Et li laist li devant dite Maroie as mesiaus de douai. X. d. As Kartriers devant nostre dame. X. d. A Saint Jehan devant saint piere. X. d. A l'ospital Segneur Gervais. Xx. D. A Saint Sanson. V. d. A l'ospital de campflori. X. d. et tout a pitance… »[48]

Maroie's collection of intercessors perhaps reflects her preference in receiving commemorative services from penitents. Indeed, Maroie herself might have been a beguine as her sister, also named Marien, was one[49]. Nonetheless, the number of testators in her will show that the parish was one of the many institutions who was responsible for the salvation of her soul. This responsibility was dispersed among the beguines and the church of Saint Piere in her parish and those elsewhere in the town. Notable as well is Marien's inclusion of mendicants in the towns of Lille, Tournai, and Valenciennes. Thus, within the context of this commemorative network, the parish church of Saint Piere did not work alone to secure salvation for Marien.

The connection between beguines and commemoration

It is within the contexts of commemoration and *caritas* in Douai that beguines emerged as spiritual intercessors. By the mid-thirteenth century, beguines appeared frequently in wills as intercessors for those who founded these institutions and later generations of testators[50]. This appearance was consequential to the flourishing of

[48] AMD, FF 861 32601 (testament of Marien de Lens, 1270).
[49] A beguine named Marien de Lens served as *rewars* in the hospital of Wetz from 1343 to 1344. However, it is unclear if this woman was the testator of the will from 1270 or her sister. On the back of Marien's will, her name is spelled Maroie. Another possibility is that Marien, the testator of the will, became a beguine later in life after creating her will in 1270.
[50] I would like to note here that this paper uses the term "religious" in the broadest sense of the word as it pertains to devotion and spirituality, rather than religious status. For further discussion of terminology regarding lay female penitents, see MOONEY, Catherine – *Clare of Assisi and the*

the penitential movement in the town. As will be discussed below, contributing to this visibility was the foundation of institutions dedicated to housing and supporting these women. In wills, testators identified these women as individuals, in pairs and groups, as members of the broader parish community, and as residents of beguine institutions[51]. Out of 171 wills, 63 testators made bequests to beguines in exchange for commemorative services, including prayers, pittances, and care for the body[52]. The appearance of beguines in wills suggests that testators integrated the women's institutions into the networks of people involved in commemoration.

In the early stages of the penitential movement in the Low Countries, charismatic laywomen were already known for their roles as intercessors. Often depicted in surviving hagiographical texts as charismatic, these women were said to have procured miracles through prayers, which saved souls from Purgatory or lessened their time there[53]. In some instances, these charismatic women could traverse spiritually between earth and Purgatory to save souls[54]. In other cases, the women offered care and comfort to those who were sick and at the end of their life. Hagiographical texts documented the extraordinary spiritual experiences of but a select few lay female penitents. The women's intercessory and caritive roles in caring for the sick, dying, and the dead translated to ordinary beguines' good works within their parish communities. As Walter Simons' survey of beguine communities have shown, these women devoted themselves to caring for one another within their institutions and their broader urban community[55]. In this sense, there was great consistency in how *Vitae* portrayed the women's penitential practices and what they actually did in their communities.

Thirteenth-Century Church: Religious Women, Rules, and Resistance. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016, p. 20.

[51] AMD FF 861 and 862.

[52] AMD, FF 861 32601 (testament of Marien de Lens, 1270). "…a Marien se sereur le begine. ii. Paire de linceus…"

[53] Jacques de Vitry provides several exemples of Marie de Oignie's salubrious prayers for the sick and the dying. See VITRY, Jacques de – *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis*. Ed. D. Papebroek, *AASS*, 23 June IV. Paris: Palme, 1867, pp. 651, 636, 650-653.

[54] For example, the *Vita* of Christina of Saint Trond, written by Thomas de Cantimpré in 1232, retells Christina's vision in which she chose to suffer on behalf of the souls detained in Purgatory to convey to his readers the efficacy of her prayers and ascetic practices in saving souls from Purgatory. CANTIMPRÉ, Thomas de – *Vitae Sanctae Christinae Mirabili*. Ed. J. Pinius, AASS, 24 July, vol. 32, pp. 651-652.

[55] SIMONS, Walter – *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, pp. 76-80.

In Douai, the origin of beguines is obscure but references to early communities of lay female penitents suggest that these women were known for their commemorative services in parish communities. Particularly, records from 1218 documented the presence of lay female penitents in the town and served the parish church of Saint Aubin[56]. This record entailed a donation to group of women who wished to found a Cistercian abbey. Of particular interest to the early history of beguines is that before this abbey was founded, these women were members of the laity and the penitential movement. Before obtaining religious status as members of the Cistercian order, the women lived as lay female penitents, who perhaps later sought a more rigorous form of spiritual life presented by monasticism. According to a poem, which survives in a French and Latin version from the fourteenth century, the lay female penitents of this parish cared for the church by decorating and cleaning it[57]. Bernard Delmaire has considered these descriptions important in understanding the women's identity. Additionally, these descriptions potentially reflect the social significance of their devotional practices in the parish church and community. It was quite plausible that the women's work in cleaning and decorating the church was in preparation of the space for funerals and commemorative masses, alongside its regular upkeep.

Although these poems anachronistically used the term beguine to refer to lay female penitents, these sources highlight strong connections between the penitential movement and commemoration[58]. As nuns, the founders of the Cistercian abbey, which came to be known as Notre Dame des Près, continued in their provision of commemorative services by providing donors pittances for their soul and held

[56] ADN, fonds du couvent de l'Abbaye des Près de Douai, carton 1; ESPINAS – *La vie urbaine de Douai au Moyen Âge*, vol. 3. Paris: Picard, 1913, document no. 14, pp. 11-12.
[57] Bernard Delmaire has provided these poems in DELMAIRE, Bernard – "Deux récits versifiés de la fondation de l'abbaye des Prés à Douai". *Revue du Nord* 61/241 (1979), pp. 331-351.
[58] Bernard Delmaire has argued that the poems used the word *beguine* anachronistically as the term was not yet in use in Douai during 1218 when the abbey was founded. He compares the poems written in the fourteenth century to town charters pertaining to a donation of property made by Gossuinus de Sancto-Albino to the women. The charter refers to the women as "mulieres" and not "beghines." See DELMAIRE, Bernard – "Deux récits", p. 348; ADN fonds du couvent de l'Abbaye des Près de Douai, carton 1.

masses in their memory[59]. Although these commemorative services were not abnormal for monastic communities, the abbey's origins points to the significance of commemoration in the penitential practices of lay female penitents and, later, beguines.

Twenty-seven years after the founding of the abbey, Countess Jeanne of Flanders established the first and only court *beguinage* in Douai in the town's parish of Saint Aubin. In her will, Jeanne asserted that this *beguinage* was intended for the use of the women known as beguines[60]. Her statement indicates that there remained a community of lay female penitents in this parish long after the foundation of the Cistercian abbey. But more interestingly is the implication that these women were perhaps invisible in sources between 1218 and 1245 because they operated as ordinary members of their parish community. However, Jeanne's donation of property for establishing the *beguinage* of Champfleury distinguished the women from other parishioners in that she considered them experts in interceding for her soul. Douaisien testators' foundation of beguine institutions attests to similar views as Jeanne in that they considered beguines as effective intercessors. In their requests for commemoration, testators gave generously to these women and did so by establishing institutions for them. Through testators' requests for commemoration, beguines were also provided with opportunities to perform penance and reciprocate the charity of their donors with commemorative services. In this way, testators and the beguines they supported were dependent on one another for their salvation.

A wave of foundations of beguine institutions occurred in Douai between 1245 and 1355. These institutions are as follows:

Institution	**Year**
Beguinage of Champfleury	1244-45

[59] For a record of the abbey's Foundation, see Archives Départementales du Nord (=ADN), fonds du couvent de l'Abbaye des Près de Douai, carton 1.
[60] ADN, 30H 17/250. ADN B 444 no. 808. Her will refers to the beguines of Douai's parish of Saint Aubin as "religiose mulieres quae beghine vocantur".

Beguinage of Wetz	1245[61]
Convent of Agnes de Corbie	Before 1265
Convent of Philippe le Toilier	Before 1276
Convent of Bernard Pilate	Before 1282
Convents of the Crocket	Before 1296
Convent of signeur Lanvin le Blaier	1327
Convent of de le Huge	1305
Convent of Marie de Harnes	Before 1314
Convent of Jeanne de Deuwioel	Before 1314
Convent for poor beguines near the home of Ansel Creke	Before 1328
Katheline de Dichi, ditte la Marthine	1328
Convent of the Martines	Before 1338
Convent of Paskendares	Before 1337
Convent of Fraissing	Before 1337
Convent de Dourges	Before 1338
Convent de Souchez	Before 1338
Convent of Puch a le Cainne	Before 1355

Within the same year as Jeanne's establishment of Champfleury was Gervais de le Ville's donation of his two homes to be converted into beguine hospitals at the gate of Wetz[62]. Countess Marguerite's confirmation of this foundation described the gift as having been made "in perpetuam elemosinam"[63]. Thus, the gift had a clear purpose in obtaining for Gervais and his wife spiritual merit for their salvation. Champfleury and Wetz were two of the town's largest beguine institutions and housed both wealthy and poor beguines[64].

[61] The construction of this hospital occurred around 1239 but it was not until 1245 that Gervais de le Vile declared that the foundation was dedicated to the use of beguines. See TAILLIAR, Joseph Eugène François – *Recueil d'actes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles en langue romane wallonne du Nord de la France.* Douai: Adam D'Aubers, Imprimeur, 1849, no. 44, pp. 105-106.

[62] AA, 88 fol. 24-25, AMD, GG191 (foundation from Gervais de le Vile, 1247). The foundation document states the hospital was for "povres demes beghines maladies et infirmes…et beghines por warder et por server les femes maladies".

[63] ESPINAS, Georges – *La vie urbaine de Douai au Moyen-Âge*, vol. 3, document no. 73, pp. 53-54.

[64] The mixed community of both institutions are evident in testators' donations made distinctly to the poor beguines. In her will, Aelis d'Auberti donated to the hospital of Champfleury and this community's poor beguines. AMD FF 861 32638 (testament of Aelis d'Auberti, 1295). Maroie Gramele provided Champfleury with a similar donation in which she left money to Champfleury's two hospitals and its poor beguines respectively. AMD FF 862 32696 (testament of Maroie Gramele, 1337).

The other sixteen foundations were more modest than Champfleury and Wetz because they primarily functioned as almshouses for poor beguines. Douaisiens often called these institutions convents or hospitals because of their caritative functions for beguines[65]. Among these institutions was the convent of Bernard Pilate founded before 1282 for "povres femmes beguines"[66]. His emphasis on poor beguines exemplified the spiritual culture of giving charitably, especially to the poor. Other beguine convents with surviving foundation documents expressed a similar concern for poor beguines, including Katheline de Dichi. In her will from 1328, she left money to the poor beguines who lived in her home, which she also founded as a convent through her will[67]. The foundations of these institutions attest to testators' use of *caritas* not only to secure commemorative services, but also to multiply their intercessors. As mentioned previously, the quantity of commemorative services and intercessors was important to testators. Therefore, the creation of new institutions dedicated to beguines represented a multiplication of intercessors available to the common faithful.

Commemorative prayers and masses

Testators often sought spiritual services from the women as part of their commemoration. These services depended on the resources of beguine institutions and the capacity of the women to perform commemorative services. The most common requests that beguine institutions received from testators were pittances. The 63 wills that made donations to beguines did so through alms in requesting for pittances[68]. There did not appear to have been distinctions between the wealthier and more modest institutions as both communities received donations for pittances. For example, Jehans Miaus in his will from 1311 requested pittances from the hospitals of Wetz, Bernard Pilate, Corbie, and Philippe le Toiliers and paid each

[65] Simons has synthesized this information from having compiled foundation documents of Douai's convents. SIMONS, Walter – *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, pp. 274-275.
[66] AMD GG 191 (1265).
[67] AMD FF 32682 (testament of Katheline de Dichi, 1328).
[68] For a more extended view of the number of wills donating to beguine institutions until the fifteenth century, see DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la mort à Douai*, p. 246.

institution 20 sous[69]. Moreover, beguine institutions were often mentioned alongside religious institutions from whom testators also requested pittances. In the same will, Jehans Miaus requested pittances from the Franciscans (30 sous), Dominicans (30 sous), and the Trinitarians (10 sous)[70]. Unlike the mendicant orders, most beguine institutions, apart from Champfleury and Wetz, did not have chapels to hold commemorative masses. Therefore, pittances were perhaps a more practical request of the women in modest beguine institutions.

Testators also requested simple prayers as a commemorative service. For example, in the foundation document of his convent, the *échevin* Bernard Pilate left specific instructions outlining his institutions' spiritual practices. He required the women to recite the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* fifteen times on Saturdays, attend masses celebrating Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints, and the five feast days of the virgin, during which the women were also to light a candle before her image[71]. Because this convent did not have its own chapel, these beguines likely performed their commemorative prayers and attended mass in the parish church of Saint Piere, which was across the road[72]. These prayers represented a formal request of the women to uphold these devotional practices in his memory and for his commemoration[73]. According to Simons, beguines recitation of the Aves was connected to the women's funerary services[74]. In this sense, Bernard Pilate integrated his request for commemorative prayers into his community's spiritual routines and their physical proximity to a parish church.

[69] AMD FF 862 32656 (testament of Jehans Miaus, 1311). "...as povres beghines del hospital des Wes de desous, as povres beghines dou couvent que Biernart Pilate estora, et as couvent que Philippes le toiliers estora cascun de ces vii lius xx. s. a pitance."
[70] AMD FF 862 32656 (testament of Jehans Miaus, 1311).
[71] AMD GG 191. Notable as well is that simple commemorative prayers were services these beguines provided to other donors to their convent. Similar to Bernard Pilate, Maroie d'Aubi required these beguines to light candles for her while they prayed for her spirit. See ADN, 30H 18/282.
[72] See SIMONS, Walter – "Begijnen en begarden in het middeleeuwse Dowaai". *De Franse Nederlanden*, 17 (1992), p. 182.
[73] Fiona Griffiths has considered the keeping of memories and memoria as separate but nevertheless related processes in the formal commemoration of the dead. See GRIFFITHS, Fiona – "Prayer for the Dead: Women, Death and Salvation". In BARROAU, Julie; BATES, David *Lives – Identities and Histories in the Central Middle Ages.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, p. 27.
[74] SIMONS, Walter – *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, p. 78.

Bernard's request for simple commemorative prayers might be understood according to beguines' identity as laywomen. As demonstrated by the studies of Deregnaucourt and Penelope Galloway, Douaisien beguines included women who worked and therefore, had limited time to dedicate to elaborate and frequent commemorative services[75]. Bernard Pilates' requests for simple prayers potentially demonstrates his consideration of beguines' capacity to offer these commemorative services. Moreover, his provision of specific times in which the women recited the Pater Noster implies that he was more interested in the quantity of commemorative prayers than in their complexity.

The simplicity of these requests can be attributed to Douaisiens' consideration of beguines' status as lay penitents whose spiritual program were likely not as rigorous as members of the clergy and monastic orders. Indeed, according to the collection of wills, as well as economic transactions that concerned beguines show the women's involvement in the management of property, such as Maroie li Cressoniere, Oedain d'Ascons, and Agnes d'Escauding[76]. There were also beguines whose occupation likely left limited time to devotional practice, including the cloth seller Jaque de Lens[77]. Other beguines spent their time both working and managing their property, including Marie li Lavendere[78]. Still yet, there were those beguines who were among the poorest of the poor. For these women, social constraints perhaps impacted how they spent their time and how much of it they could devote to spiritual exercises. These women likely worked as laborers in the cloth trade and other industries in Douai. According to the works of Shennan Hutton and Peter Stabel, women were among the cloth workers who constituted 60% in each town in the Low Countries[79].

[75] AMD, GG 191. Galloway also notes that beguines recited the liturgical hours but they did so while in church or at work. See also GALLOWAY, Penelope – "Neither Miraculous Nor Astonishing. The Devotional Practice of Beguine Communities in French Flanders". In DOR, Juliette; JOHNONSON, Lesley; WOGAN-BROWNE, Jocelyn (eds.) – *New Trends in Feminine Spirituality: The Holy Women of Liège and their Impact.* Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1999, pp. 108, 111.
[76] AMD, FF 661 5.975 (September, 1270). For Oedain d'Ascons's investments in Bruges, see AMD, 94, fol. 36, r-v; for Agnes d'Escaudaing's investments, see AMD, GG 190.
[77] HANSON-KEGERREIS, Sarah Elizabeth – *The Boinebroke Women: Elite Urban Families and Economic Activities in Late Medieval Douai, c. 1285 to 1384*. California: University of California Santa Barbara, 2019, pp. 132-133. Doctoral Thesis.
[78] ESPINAS, Georges – *La vie urbaine de Douai au Moyen-Âge*, vol. 3, document no. 439, pp. 332-333.
[79] HUTTON, Shennan – *Women and Economic Activities in Late Medieval Ghent.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 19. STABEL, Peter – "Working Alone? Single Women in the Urban Economy of Late Medieval Flanders Thirteenth-Early Fifteenth Centuries". In DEVOS, Isabelle, DE GROOT, Juli,

As Kittell has shown, women cloth workers in Douai held occupations as measurers, warpers, dyers, and tanners[80]. These occupations were not only labor-intensive, but also demanded a great deal of time[81]. There were also beguines who were perhaps too ill to devote their time to a rigorous spiritual program despite having the time to do so. For example, the beguine Clarisse li Candelliere created her will during her sickness and did so in anticipation that her illness would lead to her death[82]. The diversity in beguines' social backgrounds not only informed which penitential practices they were able to perform, but also testators' requests for commemorative services.

Testators' consideration of beguines' capacity to offer commemorative services is also evident in requests for masses. Requests for commemorative masses was limited to Champfleury and Wetz because these institutions had a church and chapel, respectively, within their premises[83]. In Champfleury, obituary masses were held for Countess Jeanne as she required the women to do so[84]. In another record, Marie li Cresoniere, endowed Champfleury with a chapel and required the beguines to hear mass in it every morning for her commemoration[85]. However, Marie's request for daily masses was amended by her executors to weekly "canter trois messes"[86]. With respect to who celebrated these masses, the parish priests of Saint Aubin were responsible for them in Champfleury[87]. Under these circumstances, a partnership between beguine institutions and parish churches become evident in wills. The chapel of Wetz also held Requiem masses and vigils for the souls of testators who requested this service from this institution. For example, the sisters

and SCHMIDT, Ariadne (eds.) – *Single Life and the City 1200–1900.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 27.

[80] KITTELL, Ellen; QUELLER, Kurt – "Whether man or woman": Gender Inclusivity in the Town Ordinances of Medieval Douai". *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30/1 (2000), pp. 98-100.

[81] HUTTON, Shennan – "Organizing specialized production: gender in the medieval Flemish wool cloth industry (c. 1250-1384)", *Urban History* 45/3 (2018), p. 388.

[82] AMD FF 862 32728 (testament of Clarisse le Candelliere, 1354).

[83] For the documentation of the construction of Champfleury's parish church of Saint Elizabeth in 1245, see ADN 30H 17/250. For the establishment of Wetz's chapel in 1250, see BMD MS 893, fol. 103r.

[84] COUSSEMAKER, Edmond de (ed.) – *Inventaire analytique et chronologique des archives de la chambre des comptes à Lille.* Paris: Société Impériale des Sciences, de l'Agriculture et des Arts de Lille, 1865, no. 808, p. 331.

[85] ADN, 30H 18/282. "…laissa au dit hospital pour une messe dite au matin…"

[86] ADN 30H 18/282.

[87] ADN 30H 18/284.

Marotain and Maroie de Courieres. According to these sources, testators considered closely the feasibility of their commemorative requests for beguines to fulfill[88]. Katheline de Dichi also requested vigils to be recited for her soul in the chapel of Wetz[89]. Their consideration of beguines' circumstances and resources denote commemorative requests towards beguine communities had to be practical for the women.

Beguines' funerary services

Testators also looked to beguines to care for their bodies in death by preparing and accompanying them to their final place of rest. From the 171 wills examined here, only 3 testators explicitly required beguines to accompany and, more specifically, to carry their bodies to their tombs. The earliest of these wills is dated 1317 created by Maroie Blokiele whose request states: "A povres beghines qui le porteront au moustier et qui seront ensonniees de sen corps a cascune ii s"[90]. The second testament comes from Pieronne de l'Euwe whose will from 1339 also requested that her body be accompanied by beguines: "as povre beghines qui liront le sauptier de Davit a sen cors et qui le portent as le fosse xii d"[91]. The third testament came from Maroie Mallarde in 1344 who, similar to the two aforementioned testators, outlined her request and the salary provided to beguines. Her testament states: "Encore donne et laiss li ditte Maroie apries sen dechies a cascune beghine qui portens sen cors au moustier, xii d"[92]. Beguines' provision of funerary services stresses the significance of their presence in funerals for some testators. For Simons, Douaisien beguines' participation in funerary services was consistent both with hagiographical texts and the caritative practices of beguines in other towns[93]. As testators' requests demonstrate, the women's commemorative services involved physical and spiritual work from beguines.

Corporeal care was at the core of the women's requests of beguines during their funerals. Demonstrated in the three wills discussed above was the significance of

[88] AMD FF 861 32614 (testament of Marotain and Marote Courieres, 1273).
[89] AMD FF 862 32682 (testament of Katheline de Dichi, 1328).
[90] AMD FF 862 32671 (testament of Maroie Blokele, 1317).
[91] AMD FF 862 32705 (testament of Pieronne de l'Euwe, 1338).
[92] AMD FF 862 32715 (testament of Maroie Mallarde, 1344).
[93] SIMONS, Walter – *Cities of Ladies: Beguines Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, pp. 78-79.

beguines' work in preparing and accompanying of the dead. Distinct among the three wills is Maroie Blokiele's in her request for the women to also work or prepare her body for her funeral. The will does not provide further description of what this work entailed as this was self-evident in women's traditional gender roles in caring for the dead[94]. Preparation of the body likely involved cleaning and dressing it[95]. Pieronne de l'Euwe and Maroie Mallarde did not make provisions for beguines' preparation of their bodies. On the one hand, this absence could indicate that they had made separate arrangements for the preparation of their bodies with their relatives. On the other hand, this absence could indicate the omission of common tasks that women performed for the dead. Beguines' participation in these services therefore allude to a continuation of women's caregiving practices within their communities.

The differences in the funerary services of the women also suggests rising costs in beguines' commemorative services. For Maroie, she wished for beguines to provide services in preparing, accompanying, and carrying her body. For their services, she paid them 2 sous each. Twenty years later, Pieronne requested two funerary services from beguines: reading from their psalters and carrying her body. She paid each beguine 12 deniers for their services. Thirty years from Maroie Blokiele's will, Maroie Mallarde limited her request from beguines to carrying her body, for which she paid them 12 deniers each. The differences in the prices and the quantity of funerary services the women requested convey risings costs perhaps correlated to the peak of the beguine movement in the town. From the three testators, Maroie Mallarde paid the highest fee for a single service compared to Maroie Blokiele who paid a mere 2 sous per beguine for three types of services during her funeral.

Notable as well in these three wills is that the testators were all women. The correlation between the testators' gender and their requests for corporeal care might suggest that beguines only cared for the bodies of women. However, indirect evidence suggests that beguines also cared for men's bodies. Gervais de le Ville, the

[94] SIMONS, Walter – *Cities of Ladies: Beguines Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, p. 79.
[95] GUIDERA, Christine – "The Role of the Beguines in Caring for the Ill, the Dying, and the Dead". In DUBRUCK, Edelgard E.; GUSICK, Barbara I. (eds.) – *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999, p. 52.

founder of the hospital of Wetz, serves as a plausible example. As mentioned previously, his donation stipulated that he and his wife were to reside in the community they founded until their deaths[96]. This request implied that he and his wife were to receive care from beguines in their old age, dying, and plausibly, in death. Except for Gervais and his wife, there are no other extant sources that refer to beguines' provision of care to men in their institutions. It is important to remember that because beguines were penitents, much of their caritative work, including commemorative services, occurred outside of their institutions. Additionally, because they performed these works as women, their tasks were perhaps imbued with penitential meaning, but did not constitute practices that were out of the ordinary for laywomen of the parish[97]. In this sense, their participation in funerals and other caregiving works were not recorded likely for the reasons stated above.

An identifiable pattern in beguines' practices was working in pairs or threes. In the wills examined here, Jaque de France and her compaignesse Liegaet de Ghesnains, Agnes Cuvilière and her compaignesse Bietris, Marotain de Carnin and Marotain de Couriers worked and likely lived together in pairs[98]. It is uncertain if these women belonged to one of the town's beguine institutions at one point in their lives as their membership is not included in the wills. The absence of any mention of an institution could either suggest that the women lived independently or that it was not pertinent to their transactions. However, evidence from both Champfleury and Wetz demonstrate that pairings or threes were also a structure followed by the women there[99]. Consistent with this pattern is the appearance of beguines in the funerary requests of Maroi Blokiele, Pieronne de l'Euwe, and Maroie Mallarde who employed

[96] TAILLAR – *Recueil*, document no. 44, pp. 105-106. ESPINAS, Georges – *La vie urbaine de Douai au Moyen-Âge*, vol. 3, document no. 73, pp. 53-54.
[97] See RITCHEY, Sara; STROCCHIA, Sharon – "Gendering Medieval Health and Healing". In RITCHEY, Sara; STROCCHIA, Sharon. (eds.) – *Gender, Health, and Healing, 1250-1550*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020, pp. 17-18. The authors stress the continuum between caregiving in domestic and institutional settings was part of women's gendered experiences.
[98] AMD FF 862 32652 (testament of Jaque de France, 1308); AMD FF 661; ESPINAS, Georges – *La vie urbaine de Douai au Moyen-Âge*, vol. 3, document no. 528, pp. 396-397; AMD FF 861 32614 (Marotain de Couriers, 1273).
[99] In two accounts, two groups of three beguines from Champfleury and Wetz, respectively, appear in wills: Marotain de Fierin and se compaignesse Clarisse and Margot (Marotain's servant) and Clarisse li Candelliere alongside Maroie Gamolle and Jehane des Planques. See AMD FF 861 32610 (Marotain de Fierin, 1272), AMD FF 862 32728 (Clarisse le Candelliere, 1354).

and compensated multiple beguines to prepare and carry their bodies. Thus, it is evident that pairings and clustering served social purposes for beguines and their parish communities.

Pairs and clusters were connected to the women's economic and spiritual practices, which offer insights in how Douaisien beguines moved through their parish. According to Jacques de Vitry's description of beguines' devotional practices, clustering was an opportunity to read Psalters, work, and pray together under the leadership and instruction of one who was outstanding in her piety.[100] Certainly, financial dimensions are evident in the respective partnerships of Jaque de France and Agnes Cuvilière with their *compaignesse* with whom they created joint wills. According to Sharon Farmer, pairings or clustering were common practices among laywomen to receive and provide mutual support[101]. As laywomen, these practices perhaps came to perform additional social functions among beguines and their institutions. Tanya Stabler Miller makes similar observation about beguine silk workers in Paris who practiced clustering in their workshops[102].

Pairings and clustering were perhaps also useful for the women in addressing social anxieties about their interactions with men and men's bodies. Certainly, concerns about beguines' respectability were a common response among medieval contemporaries to the beguine movement. Simons has noted that these anxieties were grounded in the women's work in caring for the bodies of men, living or dead[103]. In Douai, this social anxiety informed Agnes de Corbie's vetting of women who were to reside in her convent. She required that beguines entering her convent must be "boines femes"[104]. Agnes did not define what she meant by "good women" but in the context of the penitential movement, this phrase could refer to women who were devout, chaste, and honest. Although not a formal beguine rule or

[100] "[…] et sub disciplina unius, que aliis honestate et prudential preminet, tam moribus quam litteris instruuntur, in uigilliis et orationibus, in ieiuniis et uariis afflictionibus, in labore manum et paupertate, in abiectione et humilitate." See GREVEN, Joseph – "Der Ursprung des Beginenwesens," *Historiches Jahrbuch* 35 (1914), p. 47.
[101] FARMER, Sharon – *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002, p. 143.
[102] STABLER MILLER – *Beguines of Medieval Paris*, p. 72.
[103] SIMONS, Walter – *Cities of Ladies: Beguines Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, p. 80.
[104] AMD GG 184.

regulation, Agnes communicated her expectations of the women and their conduct for as long as they were associated with her institution in her foundation document. As observed by Jennifer E. de Vries, these anxieties were often communicated to beguines in their communities' rules. She notes that beguine institutions with formal rules that survive included curfews and required the women to have chaperones for propriety while they conducted their charity work[105]. Therefore, Agnes de Corbie's preference for "good women" was perhaps self-evident to her contemporaries, especially the beguines who entered her convent.

The social anxieties of Douaisiens concerning beguines' propriety can be seen at different points of the beguine movement. Although these social anxieties were not present in the wills of Maroie Blokiele, Pieronne de l'Euwe, and Maroie Mallarde, there were perhaps testators who refrained from requesting the same commemorative services from the women because of anxieties about their propriety. Indeed, these were long-standing concerns that had been present in the Low Countries since the early phases of the beguine movement. In Margaret of Ypres' Vita, her father rebuked her for conducting charity work through mendicancy. Parallel to the pairings seen among Douaisien beguines, Margaret's father had encouraged her to stay with her mother[106]. In this relationship, her mother's guardianship could be considered equivalent to a chaperone in her father's consideration that it prevented her from falling into ill-repute. In the fourteenth century, religious authorities considered the beguine movement to have marked a social problem in which women who became beguines had no male guardians and fell into poverty. According to their understanding of beguines' social and economic conditions, they considered the women vulnerable to compromising theirs and their families' respectability[107]. Within these social contexts, pairs and clusters were

[105] DE VRIES, Jennifer E. – "The Proper Beguine's Interaction with the Outside World: Some Beguine Rules from the Late Medieval Low Countries". In PANSTERS, Krijn; PLUNKETT-LATIMER (eds.) – Abraham *Shaping Stability: The Normation and Formation of Religious Life in the Middle Ages*, Turnhour: Brepols Publishers, 2016, pp. 142-146.
[106] "Matrem et materteras quandoque fugit, ut mendicaret, sed iussu sepe dicti patris sui redire et manere cum matre coacta est." See CANTIMPRÉ, Thomas de – *Vita Margerite de Ypres*. In MEERSSEMAN, G (ed.) – "Les Frères Prêcheurs et le mouvement dévot en Flandres au XIII siècle," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 18 (1948), p. 117.
[107] BÉTHUNE, Jean – *Cartulaire*, no. 106, p. 74.

perhaps ideal in helping beguines reconcile their commemorative services with the social realities they faced in their parish communities.

Further consideration of the women's funerary services also imply that they needed to possess mobility within the parish to accompany the bodies of their patrons during processions. In this case, testators benefited from the mobility of beguines within the parish and, more broadly, the town. As Deregnaucourt has noted, there are no surviving sources that document the precise route that funerary processions took in Douai[108]. However, the location of beguine institutions in parishes might indicate that these were not only important landmarks in the procession routes, but also ensured that beguines were not too far from their homes. In part, the location and number of institutions made it unavoidable to pass by one or two beguine institutions, especially for burials in the parish churches of Saint Piere and Saint Aubin. The parish church of Saint Piere was surrounded by six beguine institutions: Wetz, Bernard Pilate, Corbie, Fressaing, Philippe li Toiliers, and Martines[109]. Consequently, it was unavoidable that at least one or two of these institutions during a funerary procession for parishioners who lived in the parish of Saint Piere. The same was true for processions in the parish church of Saint Aubin, which was situated between Champfleury and the convent of Harnes[110].

There were of course instances when parishioners opted for burial in the mendicant churches, which made the procession route less ideal for the beguines they hired for funerary services. For example, Maroie Blokiele was from the parish of Saint Piere and opted for burial in the church of the Franciscans. The beguines in her funeral were either from the convents of Wetz, Bernard Pilate, Corbie, Fressaing, Philippe li Toiliers, which all received requests for pittances from her, or from the vicinity of Saint Piere[111]. However, the Franciscan convent was located close to the outskirts of the town[112]. The same can be said about Pieronne de l'Euwe and Maroie Mallarde who resided in the parish of Saint Piere but were buried in the convent of the

[108] DEREGNAUCOURT, Jean-Pierre – *Autour de la morte à Douai*, p. 151.
[109] AMD FF 862 32671 (testament of Maroie Blokele, 1317).
[110] See SIMONS, Walter – "Begijnen em begarden", p. 182.
[111] AMD FF 862 32671 (testament of Maroie Blokele, 1317).
[112] SIMONS, Walter – "Begjinen en begarden", p. 182.

Franciscans[113]. For these testators, beguines' mobility in the parish of Saint Piere and the town was beneficial to their commemorative services. As women of the parish, testators and their families might have felt some comfort in knowing that beguines prayed over their bodies and accompanied them to their final resting place.

Conclusion

Commemoration was a dynamic process that involved multiple intercessors and commemorative services. By 1362, commemoration in Douai operated within a social network comprised of the parish church and the new institutions founded on the principles of the penitential movement. This network was made possible through wills and religious ideals that promoted the practice of *caritas* and penance among the common faithful. In the context of commemoration, these ideals served a dual function in earning spiritual merit for testators and securing commemorative services—both of which, in the attitudes of testators, increased their chances in shortening their time in Purgatory. As exemplary of the spiritual milieu's emphasis on *caritas* and penance, beguine institutions offered simple prayers and cared for the bodies of the dead. In doing so, they offered services that complimented those offered by parish church and the mendicant orders and contributed to the pool of intercessors that testators turned to in preparing for their death. Consequently, beguines' provision of commemorative services makes clear their operation within a broader social network comprised of various experts in caring for souls. The parish community benefited from the variety of intercessors that emerged from the penitential movement, which thus, benefited testators' interests in securing their salvation.

[113] AMD FF 862 32705 (testament of Pieronne de l'Euwe, 1338). AMD FF 862 32715 (testament of Maroie Mallarde, 1344).

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