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Church Music in Antwerp during the *Siècle de Malheur* (c.1650–1750): Repertoire and Contexts

According to eighteenth-century travellers' accounts, music was an important ingredient of the religious culture at the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp. Passengers who attended services at the cathedral were impressed by the sweetness of sounds, the solemnity of the music, the amount of instruments, and the Italian style of the repertoire.¹ Although the notorious English music historian Charles Burney felt a little deceived when he heard mass and vespers at the Cathedral of Our Lady in 1772, the music chapel of the main church in Antwerp was said to be the best of Brabant, in particular during the first half of the eighteenth century.² Earlier studies by Guido Persoons, Godelieve Spiessens, and Eugeen Schreurs confirm that musical life was flourishing from 1700 on, with an important musical activity at the cathedral from c.1718 on.³ However, this renaissance appears to contrast with the economic and demographic crisis in the period between 1650 and 1750—the so-called *siècle de malheur*. This contribution aims to discuss the paradoxical discrepancy between a period of musical boom and the dark age of a former metropole and will propose some perspectives for a contextual approach of church music.

¹ Jan-Albert Goris, *Lof van Antwerpen. Hoe reizigers Antwerpen zagen, van de XV^e tot de XX^e eeuw* (Antwerp, 1940), 157–160.

² Jan-Albert Goris, *Lof van Antwerpen*, 158; Charles Burney, *Muzikale reizen. Kroniek van het Europese muziekleven in de 18^{de} eeuw. Moderne bewerking van de Nederlandse vertaling uit 1786*, transl. J.W. Lustig (Antwerp-Baarn, 1991), 136.

³ Godelieve Spiessens, *Muziekleven en muzikanten te Antwerpen, 1700–1750*, in *Jaarboek van het Vlaams Centrum voor Oude Muziek*, 1 (1985), 73–107; Guido Persoons, *De muziekcultuur van de 16^{de} tot de 18^{de} eeuw*, in Willem Aerts (ed.), *De Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal van Antwerpen* (Antwerp, 1993), 79–91; Eugeen Schreurs, 'Alphonse d'Eve. Kapelmeester te Antwerpen en komponist (1666–1727)' (MA diss., Univ. Leuven, 1980).

ANTWERP IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Fall of Antwerp in 1585 brought an untimely end to the city's golden sixteenth century. The intervention by Alexander Farnese and the re-Catholicization of the city caused a drastic migration: more than half of the population, most of them Protestant, left the city.⁴ This emigration also had an important influence on the economic situation. Many merchants were Protestant and took both their capital and spirit of enterprise to the North. During the first half of the seventeenth century, there was a gradual demographic repair and an economic reorientation; nevertheless, the city did not reach the previous level again.⁵ On the contrary, after the Peace of Munster (1648), Antwerp went through a period of regression, the so-called *siècle de malheur*. Though recent research has suggested a more nuanced view of this period, it still remains true that the city was confronted with a less prosperous epoch.⁶ The plague (*haestige ziekte*) and the rising grain prices led to a high mortality in the second half of the seventeenth century.⁷ Mercantilist policies and changes on the demand side had a negative impact on many of the famous Antwerp luxury industries.⁸ The city suffered from the international political instability, in particular the Nine-Years' War (1689–1697), the Succession War (1701–1714) after which the Southern Netherlands were assigned to the Austrian Habsburg Empire (1715), and the occupation

⁴ Roland Baetens, 'Tussen hoop en vrees', in Karel Van Isacker and Raymond Van Uytven (eds.), *Antwerpen: twaalf eeuwen geschiedenis en cultuur* (Antwerp, 1986), 164.

⁵ Roland Baetens, 'Tussen hoop en vrees', 164; Ilja Van Damme, 'Het vertrek van Mercurius. Historiografische en hypothetische verkenningen van het economisch wedervaren van Antwerpen in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw', *NEHA-Jaarboek*, 66 (2003), 14–15.

⁶ Ilja Van Damme, 'Het vertrek van Mercurius', 6–39; Bruno Blondé and Ilja Van Damme, 'Een crisis als uitdaging? Kleinhandelsetevolutes en verbruiksveranderingen te Antwerpen (ca. 1648–1748)', *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis*, 2007 (4), 61–88.

⁷ Roland Baetens, 'Tussen hoop en vrees', 164; Fred Janssens and Eddy Van Cauwenbergh, 'Crisis en bevolking rond het midden van de 17^{de} eeuw', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis*, 60 (1977), 264–265.

⁸ Bruno Blondé, 'Tableware and Changing Consumer Patterns: Dynamics of Material Culture in Antwerp, 17th–18th centuries', in Johan Veeckmans (ed.), *Majolica and Glass from Italy to Antwerp and beyond: the Transfer of Technology in the 16th–early 17th Century* (Antwerp, 2002), 295; Alfons K.L. Thijs, 'Structural Changes in the Antwerp Industry from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century', in Herman Van der Wee (ed.), *The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and in the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages–Early Modern Times)* (Leuven, 1988), 210.

by French soldiers between 1746 and 1748. The first half of the eighteenth century witnessed a further decay of the luxury industries, and Antwerp definitely lost its position on the international trade market.⁹ The economic regression the city went through also involved demographic downfall, in particular during the eighteenth century: whereas the city counted c.62,000 inhabitants in 1650 and even approximately 67,700 in 1698, in 1738 there were only c.43,800 citizens left.¹⁰ The present day perception of baroque Antwerp as a metropole in decay is confirmed by several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century passengers who have noticed the emptiness of the streets and the economic inactivity of the city.¹¹ Nevertheless, Antwerp remained one of the two most important cities of the Southern Netherlands, together with Brussels.¹² Furthermore, not all aspects of life were slumping. During her visit in 1771, the duchess of Northumberland was fascinated by the contrast between the empty streets and the crowded churches.¹³ After the Fall of Antwerp, the city had become the most important centre of Catholic Reformation in the Southern Netherlands.¹⁴ The Catholic renewal was accomplished by impassioned bishops and an active clergy, with the help of artists, authors, and the printing press, who formed and consolidated the Catholic identity of the city. Although the counter-reformatory enthusiasm dropped down after 1678, the city would keep its reputation as a Catholic bastion until the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁵

⁹ Alfons K.L. Thijs, 'De Antwerpse luxenijverheid: winstbejag en kunstzin', in Jan Van der Stock (ed.), *Antwerpen: verhaal van een metropool (16^{de}–17^{de} eeuw)* (Antwerp, 1993), 113.

¹⁰ Roland Baetens, 'Tussen hoop en vrees', 164; Fred Janssens and Eddy Van Cauwenberghe, 'Crisis en bevolking', 249–270.

¹¹ Jan-Albert Goris, *Lof van Antwerpen*, 85, 87.

¹² Paul M.M. Klep, *Bevolking en arbeid in transformatie. Een onderzoek naar de ontwikkelingen in Brabant, 1700–1900* (Nijmegen, 1981), 76; Marie Juliette Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585–1676). Kerkelijk leven in een grootstad*. (Brussel, 1995), 17.

¹³ Jan-Albert Goris, *Lof van Antwerpen*, 153f.

¹⁴ Alfons K.L. Thijs, *Van Geuzenstad tot katholiek bolwerk. Antwerpen en de Contrareformatie* (Turnhout, 1990), 62.

¹⁵ Kristin De Raeymaecker, 'Aspecten van de contrareformatie te Antwerpen in de zeventiende eeuw', in *Antwerpen in de XVIIde Eeuw* (Antwerp, 1989), 69; Marie Juliette Marinus, *Kerkelijk leven in een grootstad*, 257.

THE REVIVAL OF CHURCH MUSIC IN ANTWERP, C.1718

In the second part of the so-called *siècle de malheur*—short time after the Southern Netherlands came under Austrian rule—, there seemed to be an increasing interest for church music at the cathedral. Between 1650 and 1718, the choir masters at the main church were musicians with, as far as we know, a minimal output as composers. In 1718, when the chapter chose Alphonse d'Eve to be the new choir master, a new élan was given to the cathedral's musical life; d'Eve was born in Brussels but had been working for some years in Antwerp and Ghent.¹⁶ By that time, he had already demonstrated his talents as a composer through two printed volumes of sacred music (see below). The musical aspirations of the chapter became more explicit when they decided in 1719 to announce the current vacancies for musicians in the newspapers, 'pour en gratifier les plus capable' ('in order to select the best').¹⁷ Although the use of newspapers was not unique for the main church of Antwerp, the musical outcome certainly was.¹⁸ As a result of this mode of operation, the recruitment area became remarkably larger. In the following decades, musicians from Brussels, Amsterdam, Mainz, and Liège were engaged as choir masters or as church musicians.¹⁹ The ambitious recruitment policy had also considerable effects on the repertoire: at least six masses, one motet, and a set of lamentations were composed for the canons of the Our Lady Chapter, while between 1650 and 1718, only one mass was written (see table 1).²⁰ All eighteenth-century masses are explicitly dedicated to the canons, praising them for their kindness and lauding their musical taste, as Joseph Hector Fiocco wrote in the dedication of his *Missa Sancta Cecilia*: 'Vous aimez la Musique et Vous en Connoissez toutes les beautez'.

¹⁶ Eugene Schreurs, 'Eve, Alphonse d'', *NewGrove II*.

¹⁷ Edmond Van der Straeten, *La musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle. Documents inédits et annotés* (Brussel, 1875), iii. 6.

¹⁸ Godelieve Spiessens, 'Muziekberichten in de 18^{de}-eeuwse Antwerpse pers. (2) Zangmeesters gevraagd', *Musica antiqua* 2, (1985), 27f.; Pieter Andriessen, *Die van muziken gheerne horen. Muziek in Brugge 1200–1800* (Brugge, 2002), 322; Marc Van Rompaey, 'Henry Barth (1727–1791). Een kulturhistorische bijdrage over het kerkelijk muziekbedrijf in de achttiende eeuw te Gent' (MA diss., Univ. Leuven, 1981), 32.

¹⁹ Kathedraalarchief Antwerpen [KAA], *Acta Capituli* 12, 308, 511; *Acta Capituli* 13, fo. 45^v, fo. 193^v.

²⁰ KAA, *Acta Capituli* 12, 409, 524. See also Godelieve Spiessens, 'Lambert-Joseph Godart, de laatste 18^{de}-eeuwse zangmeester van de Antwerpse kathedraal en zijn muzikinventaris van 1792', *Revue belge de Musicologie*, 49 (1995), 127.

TABLE 1. *List of compositions made for the Chapter of Our Lady (c.1650–1750)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Composer</i>	<i>Provenance</i>
1670	<i>Missa musicalis</i>	J. Cocx	(lost)
1718	<i>Missa Paschalis</i>	A. d'Eve	B-Ac
1720	<i>Missa Paschalis</i>	J.A.J. Faber	B-Ac
1720	<i>Missa Mariae Assumptae</i>	J.A.J. Faber	B-Ac
1720	<i>O Quam Dilecta</i>	J.A.J. Faber	(lost)
1726	<i>Lamentationes</i>	W. De Fesch	(lost)
1730	<i>Missa Paschalis</i>	W. De Fesch	B-Ac
1732	<i>Missa Sancta Cecilia</i>	J.H. Fiocco	B Ac
1741	<i>Missa in honorem Deiparae</i>	A.J. Blavier	B-Ac

The musical renaissance was not only quantitative, but it also had a qualitative component. All masses were written in a modern style that was perceived as Italian.²¹ Besides the standard vocal and instrumental scoring, in all but two masses wind instruments were added: one or two oboes, two trumpets or two flutes. In the *Missa Mariae Assumptae* by Johannes Adamus Josephus Faber, even a clarinet part was introduced. The early use of the clarinet, the elaborate and idiomatic writing for this instrument, and its use in combination with 2 *flauto dolce* are exceptional for the Southern Netherlands.²² Also noteworthy are the introduction of the galant style and the virtuoso vocal parts with multiple and extensive melismas in the masses by Fiocco. The canons seemed to have been aware of the exceptional quality of the music that resulted from their patronage. In 1733, they decided to limit the performances of this repertoire. The note in the chapter logs emphasized the uniqueness of this music and also stressed the fact that the works were dedicated to the chapter. Since a too frequent performance of this

²¹ Jan-Albert Goris, *Lof van Antwerpen*, 158; Paul De Ridder, 'Jan Bernard Vanden Boom (1688–1769), maecenas van de kapittelkerk van Sint-Michiel en Sint-Goedele te Brussel', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal- en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*, 37 (1984), 71.

²² Stefanie Beghein and Eugeen Schreurs, 'Modieuze miszettingen in Antwerpen, ca. 1650–1750. De *Missa pro defunctis* van Joseph Hector Fiocco (?) en de *Missa Mariae Assumptae* van Johannes Adamus Josephus Faber', in Christine Ballmann and Valérie Dufour (eds.), *La la la... Maître Henri. Mélanges de musicologie offerts à Henri Vanhulst* (Turnhout, 2009), 295–311; Albert Rice, *The Baroque Clarinet* (Oxford, 1992), 79f.

music would threaten its exclusive character, it was decided that the masses should only be performed in extraordinary ceremonies held by the canons ('cum principalis musica nostra [...] per usum nimis frequentem vilescat, resolutum illam non amplius permittit cantari, nisi in summo choro nostro in solemnitatibus extraordinariis').²³

The music patronage of the Church of Our Lady is even more outstanding when considering the musical life at other cathedrals in the Southern Netherlands. For instance, in Mechelen the output of the choir masters as composers was rather minimal. In the period between 1650 and 1750 only one reference could be found. According to the notice in the payment books of 1674, the music in case was probably not concerted music in the modern Italian style but 'old-fashioned' polyphonic music; the choir master was paid for 'het stellen in contrepunct de principaelste feestdagen' ('setting the [music for the] most principal feast days in counterpoint').²⁴ In Bruges, none of the three collegiate churches seemed to have invested in well-established choir masters who could compose modern church music.²⁵ At the Saint Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent, the situation was probably comparable to Mechelen.²⁶ As for the Saint Gudula's Cathedral in Brussels, some productive though mainly local composers were hired during the first half of the eighteenth century.²⁷ Although the quantity of religious music composed for Brussels cathedral exceeded the Antwerp collection, the Antwerp musical policy was—at least some aspects—far more ambitious and assertive: the broad area where the choir masters came from; the fashionable features such as the use of the modern Italianate style; the introduction of the clarinet or the galant style; and the explicit dedications of the masses to the Chapter of Our Lady.

Notwithstanding the fact that both quantitative and qualitative aspects make clear that church music was flourishing at the cathedral in the first half of the eighteenth century, the presumed contrast with the seventeenth century should be nuanced. Payment records for the cathedral demonstrate

²³ KAA, *Acta Capituli* 13, fo. 105^r.

²⁴ Edward Steenackers, 'L'école des chœurs de l'église métropolitaine de Saint-Rombaut', *Bulletin du Cercle archéologique, littéraire et artistique de Malines*, 31 (1926), 90.

²⁵ Pieter Andriessen, *Die van muziken gheerne horen*, 322f.

²⁶ Bruno Bouckaert and Marie Cornaz, 'Franciscus Kraft. Phonascus van de Sint-Baafskathedraal in de achttiende eeuw' in Bruno Bouckaert (ed.), *Musicerende engelen. Bijdragen over het muzikaal erfgoed van de Gentse Sint-Baafskathedraal* (Gent, 2005), 57–64; Marc Van Rompaey, 'Henry Barth (1727–1791)'.

²⁷ Robert Wangermée, *Les maîtres de chant des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles à la collégiale des SS. Michel et Gudule à Bruxelles* (Brussel, 1950).

that considerable amounts were paid for music, even if the accounts were often closed with negative balances.²⁸ A general overview of musical life in Antwerp during the seventeenth century is not available yet, but information about music printing in the city may provide some helpful insights. A glance at the lists of works printed by Phalesius, de Potter, and Aertssens reveals that several local Antwerp musicians provided new church music during the second half of the seventeenth century, and that this music production was scattered over the different churches of the city.²⁹ Philippus van Steelant was working at Saint James' Church and had a volume of masses and motets printed in 1656, Johannes Cocx was choir master at the cathedral and published a volume of church music in 1673.³⁰ Walterius Delien was organist at the Saint James' Church and had two requiem masses printed in 1682, Anthonius Vermeeren was involved at Saint Walburgis' Church and had several volumes printed between 1660 and 1668.³¹ Finally, Alphonse d'Eve was working at Saint Andrew's Church and published two volumes of sacred music, one of which was printed in Amsterdam around 1700, the other in Antwerp in 1706.³² These Antwerp compositions were distributed over a broad area and played in numerous churches in and outside the Southern Netherlands.³³ This is in sharp contrast with the church music that was composed from 1718 on for the Our Lady Chapter, which, according to contemporary church music inventories, appeared to have remained almost

²⁸ KAA, *Rekeningen van de kerkfabriek*, reg. 22–26.

²⁹ Susan Ban and Henri Vanhulst, 'Phalesius', *NewGrove II*; Godelieve Spiessens, 'Muziektypografische bedrijvigheid van de Antwerpse drukker Lucas de Potter (1635–1681)', *Musica antiqua*, 12 (1995) 120–126; Godelieve Spiessens, 'Muziektypografische bedrijvigheid', in Chris Coppens (ed.), *E codicibus impressisque: Opstellen over het boek in de Lage Landen voor Elly Cockx-Indestege* (Leuven, 2004), ii, 539–560.

³⁰ Philippus van Steelant, *Missae et moteta [...] op. 1* (Antwerp, 1656); Walterius Delien, *Missae funebres [...] opus primum* (Antwerp, 1682); Johannes Cocx, *Ferculum musicum dei, deiparaeque virginis ac sanctorum laudibus conditum, coctum et excogitatum* (Antwerp, 1673).

³¹ Anthonius Vermeeren, *Missae et motetta [...] [liber primus]* (Antwerp, 1660, ²1668); idem, *Missae et motetta [...] [liber secundus]* (Antwerp, c.1661); idem, *Missae et motetta [...] liber tertius* (Antwerp, 1665).

³² Alphonse d'Eve, *Genius Musicus* (Amsterdam, c.1700); idem, *Philomela delectans* (Antwerp, 1708).

³³ Bruno Bouckaert, 'Muziek en repertoire te Gent. De 18^{de}-eeuwse muziekinventaris van de Ekkergemse St-Martinuskerk als stille getuige van een veelzijdige muziekbibliotheek', *Musica antiqua*, 16 (1999), 62–79; Godelieve Spiessens, 'Zeven muziekinventarissen van de Antwerpse Sint-Jacobskerk de annis 1677–1755', *Jaarboek van de Provinciale Commissie voor Geschiedenis en Volkskunde*, 10 (1999), 5–45.

exclusively inside the city walls. This was partially caused by the downfall of music printing in the city and by changes on the demand side (as can be seen in Brussels, where the music print focused on secular music), but maybe also by the attitude of the canons who preferred a more exclusive use of the music that was composed for them.³⁴

CHURCH MUSIC IN ITS SOCIETAL CONTEXT – SOME PERSPECTIVES

However, some questions remain. How could a metropole in decay remain an important centre for church music? And why would a church invest considerable amounts of money to employ outstanding composers and to perform large scale concerted music, while the city was going through a major economic and demographic crisis? In order to gain a better understanding of the interplay between society and church music, a more contextual approach is needed. In what follows, two perspectives that tend to regard musical evolutions in relation to a broader context will be presented.

Travellers' journals do not only inform us about the economic and demographic situation, they also provide information about the inhabitants, their behaviour, and their mentality. According to these reports, one of the prominent characteristics of Antwerp's population was their exaggerated display of wealth and status. Confronted with slumping financial and commercial opportunities, the rich urban elites retreated from an active trading position and led a life of leisure. They adopted the lifestyle of the nobility and invested in castles or country houses, art collections, and other luxuries.³⁵ In the second half of the seventeenth century, the city council established extraordinary taxes on some of these showy luxuries, e.g. a tax on horses and carriages.³⁶ Of particular interest is the luxury tax on flaming torches in funerals, for this tax's income can reveal something about pomp and splendour in liturgical services. The tax was introduced in 1664 and amounted to

³⁴ Marie Cornaz, *Les éditions musicales publiées à Bruxelles au XVIIIe siècle (1706–1794). Catalogue descriptif et illustré* (Brussel, 2008).

³⁵ Bruno Blondé, 'Botsende consumptiemodellen? De symbolische betekenis van goederbezit en verbruik bij de Antwerpse adel (ca. 1780)', in Guido Marnef and René Vermeir (eds.), *Adel en macht. Politiek, cultuur en economie* (Maastricht, 2004), 123.

³⁶ Stadsarchief Antwerpen [SAA], Pk 522, 77. See also Bruno Blondé, 'Indicatoren van het luxegebruik? Paardenbezit en conspicuous consumption te Antwerpen (zeventiende-achttiende eeuw)', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis*, 84 (2001), 295–311.

six nickles per torch.³⁷ As figure 1 reveals, the consumption of torches was elevated at the time when the tax was introduced. In upper-class funerals around the middle of the seventeenth century, the number of torches varied from 16 to 60, with occasionally even 70 torches.³⁸ From c.1670 onwards, the income from the tax rapidly and drastically collapsed—this tendency was strengthened by the funeral regulation of 1685 (see below)—and remained very modest during the Nine Years' War and the following Succession War. After the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, the number of torches used in funerals increased gradually, this growth is even more significant when considering the demographic downfall in the first half of the eighteenth century (see above).



FIGURE 1. Income from the tax on torches (in *ponden arthois*)³⁹

A vast number of torches was just one of the ingredients for a gaudy funeral, solemn music certainly was another. Although the customs concerning music in funerals are less documented, some sources point to the importance of music as a distinctive factor and to its exorbitant use. In 1685, the *Raad van Brabant* introduced on demand of the city council a funeral regulation in order to restore a certain level of modesty in funerals.⁴⁰ Different sorts of abuses were curtailed, among them the number of torches, and musical excrescences. To halt the excessive use of music, financial restrictions were raised: for the highest funeral category (*choorlyck*), the expenses for music

³⁷ SAA R 1413, *Rekeningen van consumptiekas*, 1690–1691, fo. 50^r.

³⁸ SAA PR 295–297.

³⁹ SAA R 1386–1469, *Rekeningen van de consumptiekas*, 1664–175.

⁴⁰ SAA KK 100, *Placcaerten, ordonnantien, edicten, reglementen, tractaeten ende privilegiën*, 5 (Brussel, 1738), 36–47.

should not be higher than 15 guilders.⁴¹ According to the reprimands noted in the *Acta Capituli*, it seems though that the restrictions for music were not always obeyed.⁴² After 1710, no further abuses were denounced; from 1729 on, 35 guilders became the standard price for upper-class funerals—more than twice the sum that was permitted in 1685.⁴³ Although further research is needed to evaluate the consumption of funeral music, both the increasing expenses for music and the rising income from the tax on torches indicate a societal evolution towards more ostentation. As recent research on the owning of luxury horses has shown, this tendency was not limited to funeral culture but also affected other dimensions of urban society.⁴⁴

The Antwerp inhabitants were not only perceived as fond of pomp and circumstance, they also had the reputation of being very devout. In 1741, a passenger wrote that he found the ‘perfect papistry’ in Antwerp, and several travellers noticed the excessive presence of the Virgin Mary whose sculpture was at almost every street corner.⁴⁵ Besides these observations made by passengers, little research has been done on the devotion of the citizens during the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ In order to shed some light on the devotional climate in which the musical boom took place, the offerings by the community will be used as an indicator for devotion. Since these offerings are not obligatory and the sum consists of small contributions made by many devout men and women, they can be seen as representative for a general devotion.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the performance of music might have an impact on the offering, as was suggested by the treasurer of the confraternity of Saint Barbara who explained the poor offering during the Easter services of 1685 by pointing at the lack of music.⁴⁸ Figure 2 maps the devotional conjuncture at the parish of Our Lady by depicting the total sum that was offered by the community during a year.⁴⁹ Between 1650 and c.1710, the offering evolved

⁴¹ Ibid. 41.

⁴² KAA *Acta Capituli* 11, 588; *Acta Capituli* 12, 152, 154.

⁴³ KAA *Capsa Dominorum* 14, 34.

⁴⁴ Bruno Blondé, ‘Botsende consumptiemodellen?’, 125; see also Bruno Blondé, ‘Indicatoren van het luxegebruik?’.

⁴⁵ Jan-Albert Goris, *Lof van Antwerpen*, 152f.

⁴⁶ On the inhabitants’ devotion before 1676, see Marie Juliette Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585–1676)*, 246–286.

⁴⁷ Guido Marnef, *Antwerpen in de tijd van de Reformatie. Ondergronds protestantisme in een handelsmetropool, 1550–1577* (Antwerpen, 1996), 84.

⁴⁸ KAA *Rekeningen van de broederschap van Sint-Barbara*, reg. 209, 1685–1686.

⁴⁹ KAA *Rekeningen van de kerkfabriek*, reg. 22–32.

gradually, with relatively small fluctuations. From c.1711 on, the yearly offering became considerably higher and more irregular, which might be seen as an indication of a changing religious mentality, or at least a changing devotional behaviour. While these data provide a first draft of the devotional conjuncture, further research, both on individual and collective expressions of piety, still needs to be done.

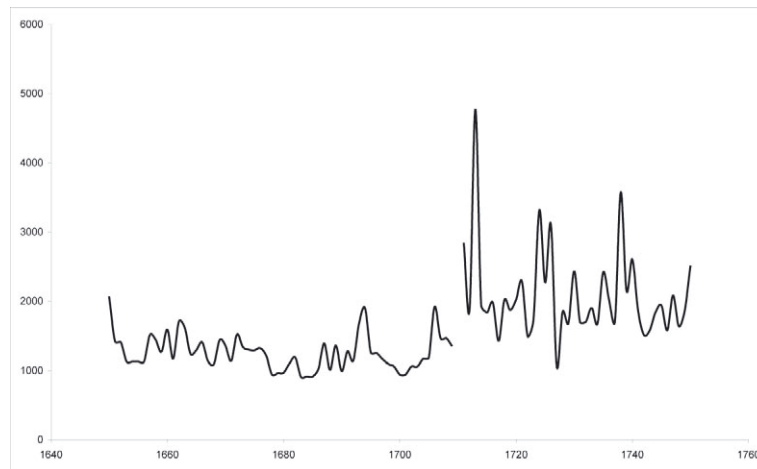


FIGURE 2: Income from offering (in guilders)

SOME CONCLUSIONS

During the period 1650–1750, Antwerp was an important centre for the production of church music, perhaps even the most important centre in the Southern Netherlands. In the second half of the seventeenth century, church music was provided by local musicians who were dispersed over several churches; their music was spread over a vast area by means of the printing press. The eighteenth century witnessed a centralisation of church music production in favour of the main church, initiated by the ambitious and assertive musical policy of the Chapter of Our Lady. By recruiting in a broad area the chapter was able to hire outstanding composers who could provide modern and exclusive music, both to embellish the services at the cathedral and to honour the Chapter of Our Lady. The observation that the production of church music remained important in the second half of the seventeenth century and even flourished during the first half of the eighteenth century, might be somewhat surprising, considering the general regression and

even crisis the city went through. At least some aspects of this paradoxical discrepancy between society and music can be clarified by a contextual approach. According to travellers' journals, pomp and splendour were common in Antwerp. A closer look at funeral practices revealed that this assumption was probably correct, since the exorbitant use of showy elements such as music and torches needed to be curtailed by regulations and taxes. Moreover, quantitative data have shown a tendency towards more ostentation in funerals from *c.*1713 onwards, the exact period during which the production of church music at the cathedral was blossoming. Antwerp was also perceived as a Catholic bastion, which raised the question on the relation between music and the religious life. In this perspective, it is remarkable that the musical boom at the cathedral coincided with the emergence of a more excessive offering pattern, which might be seen as a symptom of a changing devotional climate. Although pious offering and ostentatious torches in funerals are just two aspects of a broader societal and religious culture—and future research is needed to ensure a profound understanding of the societal context, the musical culture, and the correlation between both—, they might elucidate, at least in some aspects, why a city in decline could remain an important centre for church music.