

This manipulation of norms of age and gender was, however, resisted by those whose identities were partly defined in relation to young men. The city fathers, no longer able to assert their fitness to govern through contrast with unruly youth, refused to acknowledge the *fanciulli* in law. Men in their late twenties and thirties, the *giovani*, violently obstructed Savonarola's moralizing adolescents. As the friar's popularity waned, the *fanciulli* came to represent an unwanted overturning of the natural order: his attempt to redefine youthful masculinity had failed, and after his death the city returned to the confraternal structures with which it was familiar.

“FROM WAR TO PEACE:
ARCHERY AND CROSSBOW GUILDS IN FLANDERS 1300–1500.”

LAURA CROMBIE

PH.D. THESIS, GLASGOW UNIVERSITY, 2010

This thesis engages with a broad range archival source from across Flanders to analyse poorly understood urban groups, the archery and crossbow guilds between 1300 and 1500. Though other civic groups have been studied, in particular jousts and chambers of rhetoric, no study has engaged with the most important, most visible and most enduring civic cultural bodies, the shooting guilds.

The first chapter traces the guilds' military origins and their continuing military service. They first appeared in civic records in the early fourteenth century, being paid for watching and defending their towns. In contrast to previous assumptions, this study shows that guilds remained militarily significant across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They served Louis of Male in 1356, John the Fearless in 1411, Philip the Good in 1436, Charles the Bold in 1474–75 and Maximilian in 1479. Though not as large as militias, they formed small but significant parts of larger hosts.

Guilds have often been described as “manned by master-craftsmen and officered by the town elite,”¹ but no study has proven their status. The second chapter addresses these assumptions through a prosopographical study of the members of the Bruges archery and crossbow guilds between 1438 and 1481. It finds that, although many guild officials were “elite” aldermen or mayors, many were craftsmen and no groups were excluded from guild society; knights of the Golden Fleece, rich patricians, artisans, even gardeners, were guild-brothers.

¹ H. Cools, D. Grummit and S. Gunn, *War, State, and Society in England and the Netherlands, 1477–1559* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 46–47.

As the third chapter shows, guilds were dedicated to patron saints, held several masses, and organised funerals for their members. Shooting guilds were similar across Flanders, but important differences also emerge. In small towns, guild-brothers had limited access to pious activities, so guilds spent significant sums on all forms of devotion, from flowers for their chapels to paying for masses. In larger towns more choice was available and so guilds spent proportionally less on devotional activities. Guilds brothers were as devout in larger as in smaller towns, as shown by wills, chapel inventories and financial records, but the market place of available spiritual choices,² influenced guilds' devotional activities.

Chapter 4 sets out the organisation of guilds, their officials, their size and their privileges before analysing the importance of reputation and community. Guild brothers were required to be "good men" pointing to an idea of community and honour, but several justice records show that such ideals were not always kept. Similarly regulations required men to attend every meal, and in doing so strengthen their community, but seating plans show that not all guild brothers did so, and those that did sat in a strict hierarchy.

Chapter 5 builds on this to study guilds' relationship with authorities: dukes, counts and patricians. Civic authorities gave the guilds generous annual gifts of wine, cloth, and money. The guilds thus became privileged groups, with significant links to the rulers of Flanders, and to social networks which included the greatest aristocrats, but in turn they were also controlled and constrained by such authorities.

The final chapter examines the best documented and most spectacular guild activities: their competitions. Competitions brought hundreds of armed men together for weeks, even months, at a time, yet they did not provoke violence — on the contrary, through the language of brotherhood and symbols of commensality, competitions rebuilt bonds damaged in war and, using existing economic networks, became agents of social peace. A study of competitions is far more than a study of spectacles — it is an analysis of the greatest and most public forms of civic representation and displays of urban pride. This thesis thus reveals the vibrancy, the power, the diversity and the community of shooting guilds, highlighting the complex nature of civic ideology and communities. Guilds signified their towns as no other group could. As such, they were the greatest representation of urban pride and agents of social peace.

² A. Roach, *The Devil's World* (Harlow, 2005), pp. 3–9, 40–46.