

usit celebra
celestibus
Ad p̄mā añ.
Ad v̄s. añ
Sacer
Ad magnū añ
de patroni
ne consecra
amator ca
isti marty
d Deum in
Per octava
Inuicator

*in lēto
sacri matini
requie in
quiescit
fol 121*

A Paradise of Priests

*Singing the Civic and
Episcopal Hagiography
of Medieval Liège*

Catherine Saucier

A Paradise of Priests



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Hagiography of Medieval Liège*

Catherine Saucier



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For my parents

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Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur</i> . Edited by Joannus Bollandus et al. 69 vols. Antwerp: Victor Palme, 1643–1940. http://acta.chadwyck.com .
AEL	Archives de l'Etat à Liège
AEvL	Archives de l'Evêché de Liège
AH	<i>Analecta hymnica medii aevi</i> . Edited by Guido Maria Dreves et al. 55 vols. Leipzig: O. R. Reiland, 1886–1922. http://web-server.erwin-rauner.de/crophius/Analecta_conspectus.htm .
B-Br	Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale
BCRH	<i>Bulletin de la commission royale d'histoire</i>
BCRMS	<i>Bulletin de la commission royale des monuments et des sites</i>
BIAL	<i>Bulletin de l'institut archéologique liégeois</i>
B-Lgc	Liège, Musée Grand Curtius
B-Ls	Liège, Bibliothèque du Grand Séminaire
B-Lsc	Liège, Collégiale Sainte-Croix
B-Lu	Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université
BSAHDL	<i>Bulletin de la société d'art et d'histoire du diocèse de Liège</i>
BSBL	<i>Bulletin de la société des bibliophiles liégeois</i>
BSLM	<i>Bulletin de la société liégeoise de musicologie</i>
B-TOolv	Tongeren, Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Geboortebasiliek
C	Chartes
CA	Compterie des Anniversaires
CDN-Hsmu	Halifax, Patrick Power Library Saint Mary's University
CG	Compterie du Grenier
D-AAm	Aachen, Domarchiv

D-DS	Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek
GB-Lbl	London, British Library
GB-Ob	Oxford, Bodleian Library
I-TRmp	Trent, Castello del Buonconsiglio: Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
NL-DHk	The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek
NL-HEESWab	Abdij van Berne, Abbey Library
NL-Uu	Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia cursus completus, series Latina</i> . Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 221 vols. Paris: Migne, 1844–65. http://pld.chadwyck.com .
PT	Petite Table
S	Secrétariat
SM	Saint Materne
US-Cn	Chicago, Newberry Library

Note on Editorial Conventions

Whenever possible, I have translated names, titles, and terms into English, with the following exceptions. Names and terms that have no clear English equivalent (e.g., Bishop Erard de la Marck, and *échevin*) are given in French, modernized according to the practice of Liège historians. To be consistent with musicological scholarship, musicians are named in Latin, retaining the most frequent spelling given in the documents.

Dates found in charters are given in their original form, in keeping with the practice of all *liégeois* historians. Since account books begin alternatively on August 1 or September 1, I indicate payments from a single year by giving two dates separated by a slash (e.g., 1450/51). This form should be distinguished from a two-year period consisting of two dates separated by a dash (e.g., 1450–51) according to modern style.

English translations of foreign-language extracts are given in the text; the quotations in their original languages are in the notes. If an extract from a foreign-language source is important to my analysis, it follows the translation in the text. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. The orthography of the Latin texts follows that of the edition. Chant texts are quoted from the edition that most consistently follows the orthography of the *liégeois* service books, with variants and additional editions (such as *Analecta hymnica*) specified in the notes. Texts in the musical examples reflect the orthography of the manuscript sources cited in the captions. All biblical passages are quoted from the *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), and *The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1899; repr., Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1971).

Introduction

The Sound of Civic Sanctity in the Priestly Paradise of Liège

*Laetare et lauda Deum Legia,
De patroni tui Lamberti presentia,
Cujus sanguine consecrari,
Cujus corpore ditari meruisti.*

[Rejoice and praise God, Liège,
for the presence of your patron Lambert!
By whose blood [you merited] to be sanctified,
by whose body you merited to be enriched.]

—Second Vespers Magnificat Antiphon

When cantor Henry of Palude intoned the Antiphon *Laetare et lauda* before the entire clerical community of Liège, the melodious sound of his voice was the sole musical accompaniment to an extraordinary ritual—the nude display of Saint Lambert’s skull. With this plainchant, the cantor and his choir simultaneously invoked the symbolic protection of the patron of the diocese and the martyred bishop-saint’s real presence. Only under exceptional circumstances, as at this ceremony in 1489, did cathedral clerics open the saint’s reliquary to publicly exhibit his bare bones. Yet, rather than herald the martyr’s cranial relic, the cantor and choristers acclaimed instead the city, *Legia*, sanctified by the saint’s body. Why did these singers equate Saint Lambert with the saintly personification of Liège? And what was the origin of this association between saint and city?

The symbiosis of saintly and civic merit voiced so outspokenly in *Laetare et lauda* constitutes a recurring, yet seldom heard, theme in clerical writing on medieval Liège. Like other musical acclamations to *Legia*, the Antiphon *Laetare et lauda* finds its linguistic and ideological origins in the deeds of saints (*vitae sanctorum*) and bishops (*gesta episcoporum*) that were recorded by clergymen affiliated with the myriad ecclesiastical institutions of the city and diocese. Some of the region’s most famed hagiographers and historians—Bishop

2 INTRODUCTION

Stephen of Liège (r. 901–20), Abbot Heriger of Lobbes (r. 990–1007), Abbot Lambert of Saint Lawrence (r. ca. 1060–70) and monk Sigebert of Gembloux (ca. 1030–1112)—also composed or compiled liturgical music.¹ Yet with the exception of Bishop Stephen's tenth-century Office for Saint Lambert, the chant and devotional polyphony honoring the city's saintly bishops, alongside the city itself, have failed to attract the attention lavished on their literary counterparts.²

Our present ignorance about the city's saintly episcopal music contradicts its pervasive resonance and relevance throughout the Middle Ages. As a distinctive component of the *liégeois* rite, chants commemorating the city's episcopal founders and origins resounded repeatedly throughout the civic soundscape in the annual cycle of saints' feasts and processions that took place within and between the cathedral and its seven collegiate churches. These chants remained equally relevant to contemporaneous events and concerns. Extraordinary performances at which local clergy and laity alike celebrated military victories or beseeched civic protection with exceptional urgency infused familiar texts and melodies with new meaning—as with the singing of *Laetare et lauda* in 1489, amid civil war following the city's destruction and occupation by the Burgundians. The malleable message of this repertory thus held lasting significance well after the time of its initial composition.

Chants such as *Laetare et lauda* provided an equally versatile vehicle by which clerics voiced cherished hagiographic, episcopal, and civic ideals. Expressions unique to the mid-twelfth-century *Vita Lamberti* by Canon Nicholas (d. ca. 1146), a hagiographer with a proepiscopal agenda, gained poetic and musical embellishment as a rhymed antiphon acclaiming the city on the annual feasts of Saint Lambert's Martyrdom and Translation. This liturgical poetry in turn came to be inscribed on sixteenth-century devotional artwork depicting at once Lambert's sanctity and the piety of individual devotees. The prayer-like appeal to Liège and Lambert thus enjoyed at once a communal and an intimately personal utterance as it circulated both sonically and visually in the multivalent spaces of religious worship.

The multimedia and semiotic versatility of a chant such as *Laetare et lauda* invites interdisciplinary analysis. Scholars who have studied the prolific hagiographic and historical output emanating from the leading intellectual institutions of the diocese have pointed to medieval Liège as a major center for the composition and dissemination of hagioepiscopal literature.³ The extant hagiographic dossier for Saint Lambert alone exemplifies the richness of these interrelated literary forms, consisting of five prose vitae, two poems, and substantial entries in countless episcopal *gesta* from as early as the eighth century and continuing well into the early modern era.⁴ Ongoing concern for the circumstances of Lambert's death repeatedly motivated clerics to reinterpret and rewrite this martyred bishop's deeds and legends, generating a well-established, yet ever-changing, hagiographic profile. Recent studies of the revisions

introduced by Sigebert of Gembloux and Canon Nicholas have illuminated the political agendas espoused by the clerical networks sponsoring these influential authors.⁵ Yet how did such hagiographic reinterpretations, originating in a clearly defined political climate, affect the longstanding liturgical veneration of the saint? How did plainchant quoting these authors embellish the underlying meaning of these legends? And how might the singers performing this repertory themselves contribute to the ongoing vitality of Lambert's cult?

It was through the intersection of hagiography, episcopal history, and sacred music that Saint Lambert's cult became inextricably tied to the identity, survival, and preeminence of the medieval city of Liège. Yet Lambert (d. ca. 700) was not the only bishop to enjoy such a strong civic association. Careful examination of the previously unstudied local liturgies for Lambert's episcopal predecessor, Theodard (d. ca. 668), and his successor, Hubert (d. 727), sheds new light on the civic tenor shared by these chants. More specifically, a close reading of the language of this long-neglected musical repertory illuminates broader themes connecting the cults of the city's three founding bishops and underscores the civic flavor and significance of their veneration. Following this triumvirate of episcopal founders, two later prelates, Notger (r. 972–1008) and Erard de la Marck (r. 1505–38), shaped local perceptions of the sacred and historical symbolism of the civic space voiced in votive polyphony and processions. Previously unrecognized references to *Legia* in a fifteenth-century motet for Saint John the Evangelist, and to *Laetare et lauda* on the famed sixteenth-century reliquary bust of Saint Lambert displayed in civic processions laud the lasting influence of these later bishops' initiatives. By examining these liturgical and votive developments over some eight centuries, we witness the changing meaning of music and rituals relevant to the city's genesis, destruction (by the Burgundian army in 1468), and eventual rebirth.

In this book, I argue that sacred music was the most pervasive and versatile medium by which the secular clergy of medieval Liège promoted the holy status of their city. We cannot understand the civic meaning of this music, however, without studying the saints' lives and bishops' deeds from which it emerged, nor can we grasp how its civic message would have been heard without considering the rituals, spaces, and singers necessary for its performance. Drawing from my extensive study of hagiographic, historical, archival, artistic, and liturgical sources, I uncover the richly varied ways in which *liégeois* clerics fused music with text, image, and ritual to celebrate the city's sacred episcopal origins and saintly persona.

Medieval Liège: A "Paradise of Priests"

Liège is an exceptional place in which to examine clerical expressions of civic sanctity. Above all, the city of Liège was the clerical, administrative, and

musical headquarters of a vast diocese within one of the most urbanized regions of medieval Europe.⁶ Indeed, the extraordinary size and wealth of its clerical population earned Liège international acclaim, from the sixteenth century onward, as a “paradise of priests.”⁷ In book 3 of the *Histoire des martyrs* (first published in 1554), French martyrologist Jean Crespin noted that the city of Liège was “proverbially called ‘The Paradise of Priests,’ on account of the rich collegiate churches, monasteries, and convents within its walls.”⁸ The consistency with which visitors quoted and justified this proverbial designation throughout the early modern era harmonizes with medieval perceptions of the city, most famously by Petrarch.⁹ Reporting on his travels through the Low Countries, arriving in Liège in June 1333, Petrarch observed in a letter to Cardinal Giovanni Colonna: “I saw other peoples of Flanders and Brabant, wool-workers and weavers. I saw Liège, a place noted for its clergy.”¹⁰ (*Vidi et ceteros Flandrie Brabantique populos lanificos atque textores; vidi Leodium, insignem clero locum.*)¹¹

These external perceptions are but a faint reminder of the essential role played by bishops and clerics in the city’s early history and development. Founded on the site sanctified by Bishop Lambert’s martyrdom (ca. 700), the cathedral outshone prominent churches of the diocese—notably the former episcopal seats of Tongeren and Maastricht and even the Palatine Chapel in Aachen—as the prime religious and administrative establishment until its destruction during the French Revolution.¹² Medieval historians and hagiographers alike attribute the displacement of the episcopal seat to its third and final location, in Liège, to the initiative of Saint Lambert’s immediate successor, Bishop-Saint Hubert.¹³ Local clergymen would subsequently summon the city’s dual martyrial-episcopal origins to justify and celebrate the city’s preeminence for centuries after its founding. These same clerics rendered the episcopal city a center of scholastic study, the birthplace of liturgical innovations (i.e., the widely observed feasts of Holy Trinity and Corpus Christi), and a fertile training ground for church musicians serving prestigious international institutions such as the papal court and imperial chapel. By the time of the Burgundian attack in 1468, the imposing facade of the cathedral dominating the city center was encircled by scores of other ecclesiastical edifices: the prominent towers distinct to each of the city’s seven collegiate churches, the modest sanctuaries of some twenty-six parishes, more than a dozen smaller chapels serving Beguines and devotional societies, and buildings housing as many as fourteen different monastic communities farther afield.¹⁴ Ecclesiastical establishments thus occupied just about every corner of the inhabitable territory within and around the city walls, lending credence to Burgundian lieutenant Guy of Brimeu’s report that, “there were as many Masses said there every day as in Rome.”¹⁵

As the city’s wealthiest and most generous patrons of music, the cathedral and collegiate churches supported a vast network of musicians. Past and recent

archival studies have documented the inner workings of the choral ensemble maintained by each church and the diversity of musical performances—both monophonic and polyphonic—that served the liturgical, penitential, intercessory, fraternal, and ceremonial needs of the clerical community.¹⁶ The primacy of the cathedral in the civic landscape and the superiority of its chapter over the clergy of the city and diocese were matched by the size and structure of its performing forces. By the time that Henry of Palude acquired the cantorship (in 1488), this dignitary oversaw performances by twenty-three minor canons, a choirmaster and his two assistants, and at least eight choirboys responsible for the daily chanting of the Mass and Office.¹⁷ Just as the *mater ecclesia* sought to set the standard for liturgical observance throughout the diocese, this same institution served as the model for the establishment of choir schools at its daughter churches. The high concentration of secular clergy thus provided multifarious employment and educational opportunities to local singers, composers, organists, and children with musical promise by recruiting and supporting local talent alongside exceptional individuals who would achieve international renown. With an annual average of sixty choirboys serving these institutions alone, by the early fifteenth century, Liège had become an important center of musical instruction. Thus, the city's proverbial designation as a "paradise of priests" merits elaboration from a musicological perspective, for late medieval Liège was equally a musical "paradise" for choirboys.

These religious landmarks also represented the institutions that distinguished Liège from most other urban centers in the Low Countries. The cathedral served as the administrative seat of both an extensive diocese and a politically independent principality resistant to Burgundian domination. This circumstance alone placed Liège at odds with cities such as Bruges and Brussels whose ecclesiastical institutions profited from the patronage of their Burgundian sovereigns.¹⁸ Lacking an exclusively secular court, Liège was ruled by a bishop, serving as prince, who from ca. 1000 onward increasingly enhanced his spiritual and administrative oversight with military and territorial control.¹⁹ The bishop-prince's judiciary authority gained concrete representation in the form of a stone column topped by a cross, called the "perron," soaring from the center of the principal marketplace. In the later Middle Ages, this monument would become the quintessential emblem of *liégeois* liberty.²⁰

From a commercial standpoint, medieval Liège could not rival the major trade centers of Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, and Brussels.²¹ Clerical wealth nonetheless directly benefited the local populace, to the extent that it could be claimed that the local economy depended largely on the financial support of the clergy.²² Indeed, chronicler James of Hemricourt (1333–1403) observed, "We live, for the most part, from [the clergy's] wheat and great possessions . . . by which the common people are amply sustained."²³ Hemricourt's remarks suggest that the clergy of Liège represented more than a spiritual force—churchmen guaranteed, in large measure, the city's economic sustenance. When indeed

the city's survival was severely at risk, following the Burgundian attack of 1468, it was the clergy who, having been spared from the fires that destroyed two-thirds of the urban terrain, assured its revival. The statesman and chronicler Philippe de Commines (ca. 1447–1511), accompanying Duke Charles the Bold on his campaign against Liège, claimed in book 2 of his *Mémoires*, “All the churches were saved, with a few exceptions, as well as more than three hundred houses belonging to the ecclesiastics. This is the reason why the city was repopulated so soon, for many people came there to take refuge with the priests.”²⁴ (*Mais toutes les églises furent sauvées, ou peu s'en faillit, et plus de trois cens maisons pour loger les gens d'église. Et cela a esté cause que si tost elle a esté repeuplée, car grand peuple vint demourer avecques ces prestres.*)²⁵ Even from the perspective of the city's opponents, the clergy were not only essential to civic reconstruction, but indeed represented the perceived cause of the city's rapid recovery.

Existing scholarship on medieval Liège has illuminated distinctive aspects of the city's political and cultural history. From the historical and political perspectives, Liège represents one of the most contested, yet fiercely independent, territories of the Carolingian heartland. Indeed the city and diocese was plagued perpetually by political turbulence resulting from the competing interests of the dominant powers of its French, Germanic, and Burgundian neighbors.²⁶ For theologians and liturgists alike, Liège is best known for innovations credited to specific individuals. To Bishop Stephen we owe the universally observed offices of Holy Trinity and the Invention of Saint Stephen.²⁷ The enigmatic twelfth-century preacher Lambert le Bègue, moreover, was long thought to be the founder of the Beguine movement.²⁸ And perhaps most famously, the holy women Juliana of Cornillon and Eve of Saint Martin have drawn widespread recognition for their essential roles in the founding and promotion of the feast of Corpus Christi.²⁹ Among musicologists, Liège has acquired a more modest reputation, due to the scarcity of notated musical sources resulting from the city's destruction by the Burgundians.³⁰ Indeed, Liège has garnered more attention for the talented composers, such as Johannes Ciconia, who left the city to pursue lucrative careers elsewhere than for the numerous musicians who remained.³¹

Fundamental questions that have yet to be addressed concern the strongly civic orientation of the male secular clergy. How did local clerics themselves perceive their city? By what means and for whom did they articulate these views? And in what way might religious observance—the activity fundamental to the clerical vocation—enact, voice, and promote a civic ideal?

Civic Sanctity

It has long been recognized that local saints played a central role in shaping an identity distinct to each medieval community.³² Associations of saint with

city proved exceptionally strong in urban centers such as Liège that marked the site of a martyr's passion.³³ The widespread belief that this *locus sanctus*, purified by the spilling of the martyr's blood, would benefit its inhabitants and visitors is at the root of the localization of martyrs' cults and the practice of pilgrimage. Yet the mere presence of a martyr's body alone could not satisfy the expectations of the faithful praying at the holy site, nor could it guarantee the civic ideals of peace and prosperity. Scholarship on the localization of Christian practice repeatedly stresses the importance of ritual in the sanctification of place.³⁴ In one such study, Sabine MacCormack prioritizes the transformative powers of the living over those of the dead by asserting, "If in Christian eyes holiness was not inherent in a place, it could nonetheless be achieved by Christian ritual and by regular worship."³⁵ Indeed, MacCormack's emphasis on the role of human action gains support from the thirteenth-century canonistic adage, "Place does not sanctify man, but man sanctifies place" (*Locus non sanctificat hominem, sed homo locum*).³⁶ Ritual, as a "process for marking interest,"³⁷ focused attention on a specific locale, which could be differentiated and subsequently sacralized by these communal activities. The act of veneration thus played an equal, if not greater, role than the relics themselves in the founding and growth of holy sites. If indeed devotion was so crucial to the promotion of place, how might the liturgical commemoration of local bishops and martyrs in turn come to celebrate the city and its making?

Just as the sanctification of place was a dynamic process, the medieval liturgy itself was not a static tradition, but rather an ever-changing discursive medium conducive to the expression and enactment of cultural, and especially local, values.³⁸ Local rites were tailored and modified to voice ideologies and identities specific to individual places and institutions at precise historical moments.³⁹ Given the ubiquity of religious observance in medieval urban—and especially clerical—life, the local rite provided a familiar platform from which to voice civic ideals. The communicative force of these beliefs was enhanced through the varied media of liturgical performance. By analyzing the rhetoric and symbolism of the chants specific to each civic rite from the perspective of local ideologies and discourse, we can thus gain greater insight into the representation and validation of place, community, and civic worth.

Methodological Overview

The civic elements of the *liégeois* rite were shaped largely by ideas formulated through the textual medium of hagiographic legend. Scholarship on hagiography and sainthood has repeatedly stressed the communal and communicative aspects of this seemingly conventionalized, yet equally versatile, genre.⁴⁰ If the explicit goal of hagiographic writing was to justify the saintliness of an exemplary individual, the implicit motivation concerned broader notions of

communal identity and independence.⁴¹ Through the invention and retelling of saints' lives, hagiographers highlighted the inherent value of the holy individual for a specific community, thereby mapping collective ideals onto individualized attributes. Just as communal values fluctuated in response to changing social conditions and historical circumstance, so saints' lives periodically underwent revision in line with contemporaneous mentalities.⁴² For this reason, the evolving hagiographic profiles of a particular saint expose the dynamics—the malleable meaning—of local, and especially civic, ideals. As we shall soon see, music enhanced the versatility of these ideals through the varied contexts of its performance.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 examine the enduring expression of hagiographic and episcopal ideals in the liturgy of the city's founding bishops, Saints Theodard, Lambert, and Hubert. The textual rhetoric and musical structure of the chants proper to these feasts jointly deliver a forceful message. Inspired by the style and topoi of diverse nonmusical genres, such as the saint's life, episcopal *gesta*, and civic ode, the liturgy for these saints promotes explicitly, and persuasively, the civic prestige of the *liégeois* community.

Hagiographers and singers alike were, first and foremost, clerics. It was in this latter role that they shaped the complex dynamics of interinstitutional collaboration and competition characteristic of the medieval city—a phenomenon of increasing interest to both historians and musicologists. Just as historians have sought to identify and interpret the political interests and propaganda championed by clerical factions, such as the networks to which Sigebert of Gembloux and Canon Nicholas belonged, so too musicologists studying urban centers increasingly emphasize the interactive, spatial, and specifically interinstitutional aspects of musical patronage and performance.⁴³ The variety of institutions sponsoring music within a given city increased and encouraged the mobility of local musicians, who frequently participated in collaborative ceremonies and processions that highlighted the physical layout of church and city. These same musicians were active agents in the dissemination of liturgical traditions and other musical practices between the various churches and organizations they served, thereby contributing to the musical “homogenization” distinct to each locale.⁴⁴ Yet, how might music itself voice and celebrate these interinstitutional affiliations? And how could a musical composition resonating within the civic soundscape in turn interpret the underlying symbolism of the civic topography?

We find a concrete, and unstudied, musical example of these interclerical and topographic forms of civic representation in polyphonic music by the *liégeois* priest and musician Johannes Brassart (ca. 1400–1455). Like many of his contemporaries, Brassart mastered the musical customs of multiple churches to fulfill his varied duties while resident in the city. Yet through his *liégeois* affiliations, Brassart became equally familiar with a clerical interpretation of the civic landscape—attested by his motet *Fortis cum quevis actio* for Saint John the Evangelist.

As argued in chapter 4, Brassart drew inspiration from the ongoing commemoration of the city's "second" episcopal founder, Bishop Notger, to infuse his polyphonic tribute to a universally venerated saint with local, and specifically topographical, symbolism and significance. Through analysis of the broader clerical context for Brassart's motet, we can better understand how local votive practices, interinstitutional alliances, and conceptions of the civic space might converge in the composition and performance of sacred polyphony.

The clergy's efforts to preserve and revitalize the civic space peaked in the wake of the Burgundian attack of 1468, shortly after Brassart gave musical voice to an idealized clerical image of the civic landscape. The destruction of Liège represents at once a time of change and continuity, affecting the city's subsequent history and geographic reconfiguration as well as the representation and revival of local ideals.⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, the secular clergy played a key role in the city's physical and symbolic rebirth. By financing urban reconstruction, they created a tangible link between the city's initial development and subsequent renovation. Yet the impetus for the imagery and liturgical commemoration of this civic revival, through the veneration of Saint Lambert's relics, sprang from an unexpected source—the city's Burgundian destroyers.⁴⁶

Chapter 5 addresses, therefore, the dichotomies of exterior and interior, continuity and change, and real and ideal at play in the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century revitalization of Saint Lambert's corporal cult. By examining the communal, spatial, and sonic aspects of the processional display of Lambert's skull in 1489, 1512, and 1526 (instituted by Bishop Erard de la Marck), we witness the process by which clerics summoned the remains of a long-dead episcopal martyr to restore local faith in the city's past merits, present resilience, and future vitality.⁴⁷

As the foregoing methodological discussion might suggest, my goals in this book are twofold. On the most immediate level, I aim to enhance the current view of the liturgy and civic idealization of medieval Liège from the perspective of the male secular clergy. The language and ideas common to chant and the hagioepiscopal literature that inspired it at once situates this largely unstudied repertory in a specific time and place and illuminates the precise means by which the local rite might further clerical interests and perceptions of the city. Examining these varied expressions of civic identity, as voiced by the *liégeois* clergy, likewise broadens our understanding of the concept of civic in medieval society at large.

On this more abstract level, we can begin to consider as "civic" a fuller spectrum of ideas, both secular and sacred, that reflect and celebrate the diversity characteristic of every civic community.⁴⁸ Detailed analysis of a wide variety of sources (textual, musical, artistic) within the spatial dimension of the civic topography sheds new light on the shared dynamism of multiple media. We can thus better appreciate the varied and fluid means by which clerics

articulated and experienced the ever-changing perceptions of a civic ideal. When we examine hagiographic and historical texts, ritual practice, and musical performance as dynamic processes rather than static representations, we unlock the communicative potential of these malleable forms of expression. By scrutinizing and interpreting these texts and melodies, and above all by listening to their message, we may begin to comprehend how the clergy themselves rendered Liège a priestly paradise.

Chapter One

Martyred Bishops and Civic Origins

Promoting the Clerical City

In his *Acts of the Bishops of Liège* (published in 1612), local historian John of Chapeaville attributed the city's status and peaceful state to the spilled blood of its martyred bishop, Saint Lambert:

We will never give sufficient honor to the martyr, our patron, who in this place, in Liège, formerly a humble and unknown village, spilled his blood for truth and justice. . . . He attracted such blessing and such celebrity that this small settlement (*vicus*), better suited to shelter wild beasts than men, soon became a city (*urbs*) comparable to the most important [cities] of all the neighboring provinces. By his favor and his patronage, it is here that we live—at present more than we deserve to—in peace and tranquility, while everywhere else other cities face trouble. And above all we rest in faith and the catholic religion, which he implanted here while living and dying.¹

That Chapeaville identified Saint Lambert as the source of current civic stability testifies to the enduring connection between saintly and civic ideals. Indeed, the association of civic promotion with the act of martyrdom was, by Chapeaville's time, an ancient idea—one that originated in Early Christian thought and had circulated in local episcopal, hagiographic, and liturgical texts for centuries. Its emergence at a precise moment in *liégeois* history, however, was singularly essential for the nascent civic identity of this clerical hub.

Two interrelated concepts lie at the heart of Chapeaville's idyllic description of the city's founding and favorable condition: the martyr's patronage ensures civic protection and, more significantly, it stimulates civic growth. Like the major pilgrimage sites of Santiago de Compostela and Canterbury, it was the lure of the martyr's holiness and fame that transformed a humble village into a preeminent city. This idea is universal and circulated in earlier Christian literature through the varied genres of homily, encomium, and votive poetry. Long before Liège was founded, Bishop Avitus of Vienne (ca. 490–ca. 518) emphasized this dynamic and transformational aspect of saintly oversight in

his dedication homily for the restoration of the baptistery in his episcopal city, observing, "Towns are glorified no less by their churches than by their spiritual patrons, or rather cities have been created out of towns by such patronage."² Acquiring the relics of the sanctified patron thus came to define the transition from town (*oppidum*) to city (*urbs*).³ Yet it was the relics of a martyr, more than those of other classes of saints (such as confessors), that proved most beneficial to an urban community. A martyr's passion and triumph over death, in imitation of Christ, rendered their corporal remains an exceptionally effective and perhaps even militant agent of civic protection. As Saint John Chrysostom (347–407) claims in his encomium on Egyptian martyrs, "for the bodies of these saints fortify our city more securely than any wall that is . . . impregnable. Indeed, just like some towering rocks that thrust forward on all sides, they don't just beat back the attacks of those perceptible and visible enemies, but also the machinations of the invisible demons."⁴

By guarding the city against both physical and spiritual attacks, martyrs wielded considerable protective powers. Saint John went so far as to propose that these stalwart protectors could even stand up to God Himself, stating, "[for] when He rages on account of our sin, these bodies may be set forth to shield us and will quickly make Him merciful toward the city."⁵

Similarly, if a martyr's body represented spiritual armor against external threats, their blood guaranteed internal welfare by consecrating the civic soil. The influential poet Prudentius (348–after 405) marvels at the many honors bestowed by the spilled blood of the martyrs Emeterius and Chelidonius on his native Calahorra:

This spot has seemed to God worthy to keep their bones, pure enough to be host to their blessed bodies. It drank in the warm stream when it was wetted by the slaughter of the twain, and now its people throng to visit the ground that was coloured with their holy blood, making petitions with voice and heart and gifts. . . . No man here in making his requests has offered sincerely prayer on prayer in vain; from here the petitioner returns happy, with his tears dried, and conscious that all his righteous requests have been granted. . . . This blessing the Saviour himself bestowed for our advantage when He consecrated the martyrs' bodies in our town, where now they protect the folk who dwell by Ebro's waters.⁶

In vivid terms, Prudentius illustrates how God and his witnesses might favor the community present at the martyrdom site. Only on the ground purified by the martyrs' blood and blessed by their bodies were suppliants guaranteed a spiritual reward and the inhabitants lasting protection.

The clergy of Liège, like Prudentius, recognized the special benefits of the martyr's blood for their own church and city. Canon Anselm (d. 1056) depicts the local significance of Saint Lambert's passion in his prayer to "the illustrious martyr of Christ" (*martir Christi inclite*), concluding his

mid-eleventh-century account of Lambert's episcopate in the *Gesta pontificum Trajectensium et Leodiensium*, proclaiming: "Wetting the ancestors' hearts with the evangelic font, you at once irrigated the land with [your] precious blood. . . . Over your blood, pastor, you founded this church" (*Tu fonte evangelico maiorum rigans pectora, terram simul precioso irrigasti sanguine. . . . Per tuum quo hanc aeclesiam fundasti, pastor, sanguinem*).⁷ Having equated the nourishing effects of Lambert's blood "watering" the land with the font by which Lambert baptized its inhabitants, Anselm links the bishop's martyrdom to the founding of his own church. Similarly, the holy inception of the city itself might be credited to the spilling of Lambert's blood, as expressed in the Life of Bishop Notger (*Vita Notgeri*), written in the 1140s and attributed to Dean Reimbald of Dongelberg. In documenting Bishop Notger's renovations to the cathedral, this author commented on the saint's physical connection to the site by invoking the patron and martyr who "consecrated in his blood the locus of our city to the divine cult."⁸ While this twelfth-century vita equates Lambert's blood with civic sanctification, by the fifteenth century, the martyr's blood could also be linked to civic flourishing, as expressed in an anonymous ode: "Holy Liège, fecundated by the blood of your patron, you are the elect of God: your clergy are like a bright flower; your people have a lion's heart. Mountains and woods, springs, fresh air, fertile fields, rivers, meadows, vineyards in abundance, coal fire, mines of lead and iron, these are your adornments and titles of glory, which render you equal to the greatest cities of the world."⁹ In no uncertain terms, Lambert's blood represents the perceived source of the city's sacred origins, growth, and lasting vitality.

Yet Liège was not only a *locus sanctus* that had been consecrated by Lambert's martyrial blood. In the hagiographic literature the acquisition and veneration of the relics of its two martyred bishops rendered this privileged site a full-fledged city. According to local clerics, Saint Lambert had anticipated the future importance of Liège during his own lifetime. Indeed, this bishop's decision to translate the remains of his martyred predecessor, Saint Theodard, to the chapel adjoining his secondary residence on the banks of the *Legia* stream—as imagined by hagiographers—foretold the fate to befall this seemingly insignificant hamlet.¹⁰ Lambert himself would succumb to martyrdom in this same residence—a site that subsequently witnessed miracles, pilgrimages, and the construction of a new church that would later become the cathedral at the heart of a vibrant episcopal city.

The belief that not just one, but two, martyred bishops lay in the church built over the soil consecrated by Lambert's blood gave the clergy of Liège exceptional license to promote a divinely sanctioned civic identity. Music for Saints Theodard and Lambert sung at the cathedral in the later Middle Ages extolled the city of Liège alongside its saints. Moreover, chants such as the Sequence *Urbs Legia* for Saint Theodard and the Magnificat Antiphon *Laetare et lauda Deum Legia* for Saint Lambert gave voice to the synthesis of saintly and

civic praise expressed in local hagiographic literature. At first glance, these seemingly perfunctory appeals to a locale might be dismissed as mere geographic markers. Analysis of the clerical milieu and literary models from which they originate, however, reveals how hagiographers and singers alike combined widespread and longstanding laudatory, historical, and musical traditions—episcopal *gesta* and panegyric, civic ode, and liturgical hymn—to praise the city with persuasive force.

This chapter examines the local hagiographic and historical traditions at the root of this musical synthesis of saintly and civic ideals. To begin, we witness the transformation of the idealized locus of Liège from a privileged holy site to a preeminent cathedral city by comparing diverse vitae and *gesta* from the tenth and eleventh centuries that detail the location of the two martyr's bodies. Not all writers, however, praised Liège specifically as a civic community. As we shall soon discover, only two clerics—namely, Sigebert of Gembloux (in ca. 1070–81) and Canon Nicholas (in 1144–45)—were as adept at articulating a civic ideal as they were at enhancing each bishop's martyrial image. Subsequently, an analysis of the vivid language of the civic appeals and descriptions embedded in the vitae of Sigebert and Nicholas uncovers the rhetorical techniques and historical models that enabled both writers to match so explicitly the city's status to that of its martyrs. Further consideration of the political context suggests that these two hagiographers belonged to clerical networks espousing similar agendas, a similarity that may explain their shared goal to embellish the saints' lives from both the martyrial and civic perspectives. Yet, as a careful reading of lexical and thematic details reveals, Sigebert and Nicholas drew upon different literary models to promote their city. In so doing, these clergymen created varied forms of civic idealization that would gain an enduring voice in the chants of the local liturgy.

Bishop Lambert's Initiatives: Making Liège a *Martyrium* in Hagiography and Chant (Tenth–Eleventh Centuries)

Theodard and Lambert shared a strong physical and spiritual connection in the cathedral sheltering their relics. Neither of the two martyred bishops, however, was originally buried in this church. It was only through the exhumation and displacement of their remains that Liège became a *martyrium*, despite the fact that Lambert had perished at this site. Hagiographers recognized the local significance of relic acquisition and the act of their transfer, or translation, by explicitly commenting on the value of each bishop's remains both for the place of their martyrdom and for that of their burial. Yet how and when did the translation of the two martyrs' remains become associated with the founding of the city? Only by analyzing successive accounts of the two bishops' lives can we understand the origins of this connection between city and *martyrium*.

Even after death, Lambert was imagined to initiate the translation of his own body from his family's tomb, in the church of Saint Peter in Maastricht, to the site of his martyrdom. As early as the eighth century, an anonymous hagiographer recounted the miracle of Lambert's posthumous apparition in the *Vita prima*, claiming that Saint Lambert had appeared in a vision requesting that his body be returned to Liège.¹¹ When Lambert's successor, Bishop Hubert, heard of this miracle, he sought the counsel of his senior advisers and ultimately consented to translate the relics back to the place sanctified by Lambert's passion. Conveyed through the supernatural medium of a dream, Lambert's wish thus inspired Hubert's decision and legitimized the establishment of his cult in Liège.¹² Indeed, Lambert's posthumous oversight of his own translation, which rendered Liège a *martyrium*, would later mimic his living actions. By the tenth century, it was believed that Lambert too had fulfilled his episcopal duty by transferring the relics of his own martyred predecessor to his villa in Liège.¹³

As specified by Theodard's hagiographers, Lambert did more than simply acquire his predecessor's remains—he personally acknowledged the prestige of the martyrdom site. The anonymous tenth-century *Acta inedita* concludes with a detailed account of the veneration of Theodard's wonder-making relics in the region surrounding the site of his passion, near the cities of Speyer and Strasbourg, and their subsequent translation to Liège. The displacement of these precious remains, however, is no easy feat. Rather, a series of obstacles thwarted initial attempts at their removal and demonstrated their special powers in the place sanctified by Theodard's blood. We soon learn that Lambert was not the only bishop drawn to this site. The fame of the martyr's posthumous miracles first lured the Bishop of Worms. Yet when a violent storm suddenly interrupted the exhumation of Theodard's body, the bishop was forced to acknowledge that God was not yet willing to deprive this place of its patron.¹⁴ By divine intent, the Bishop of Worms thus failed in his quest, essentially guaranteeing that Theodard's relics remained undisturbed until the arrival of his successor. Even Lambert, however, had to overcome local opposition. It was not until he returned a second time, bearing gifts of silver, that he was received more warmly. On this occasion, Lambert delivers a commanding speech in which he stresses his filial connection to Theodard by begging the local populace to "refuse to deprive sons of their own father" (*Nolite, quaeso, filios proprio privare genitore*), and recognizes the prestige of the martyrdom site: "Let it suffice for you, that he consecrated your soil with his blood. Here and now give back the lifeless body!" (*Sufficiat vobis, quod vestras sanguine terras sacrauit. Jam nunc exanime reddite corpus*).¹⁵ Lambert succeeded at winning local approval for his cause by reminding the inhabitants of the holy status of their land, which had been consecrated by the martyr's blood—a spiritual privilege rendered tangible by the silver he bore. Having distributed his gifts, Lambert departed amid hymns and praises with Theodard's relics and translated them to his villa, the exact place soon to be consecrated by his own body.¹⁶