Ralph Dekoninck – Université catholique de Louvain
Caroline Heering – Université catholique de Louvain / IRPA
"The 'Ornamentalisation' of the Ornamenta Sacra in the Early-Modern Low Countries"

By focusing on the liturgical heritage of the Southern Low Countries, this paper intends to highlight a fascinating process of "ornamentalisation" that characterizes the evolution of the liturgical objects between the 16th and 17th centuries. We can indeed observe on sacerdotal vestments as well as on silverware a progressive withdrawal of the iconography in favour of the proliferation of ornamental patterns. I will question this important shift from a theological and artistic point of view, showing how it sheds new light on the intrinsic link between aesthesis and liturgy that defines the ornamenta sacra. To this end, I will examine the liturgical objects themselves but also their representations in paintings.

Una Roman D'Elia – Queen's University
"Misbehaving with Devotional Sculpture in the Italian Renaissance"

Lifesize, naturalistically colored devotional sculptures inhabited the churches, streets, confraternities, and palaces of Renaissance Italy. Men, women, and children were devoted to such objects as fleshy crucifixes, haggard statues of saints, and sweetly blushing images of the Virgin Mary and her pudgy baby. Handbooks and other period documents describe proper devotion, but fictional short stories and jokes from the period tell a different story, one in which people misbehaved with devotional sculpture. Even crucifixes, commonly associated with miracles in this period, are the subject of jokes and bawdy bedroom farces. Such stories confirm the reverence with which these objects were regarded, as otherwise their desecration would not be funny. But the repeated mockery also suggests that the line between devotion and idolatry was often blurred, and that naturalistic sculptures could inspire other emotions and behaviors than what piety would dictate.

Isabelle Frank – City University of Hong Kong
"The Compianti of the Passion of Christ: Emotional Affect, Affective Piety, and the Flagellants"

In the second half of the 15th century, large-scale wood and terracotta sculptural groups in northern Italy instantiated the Lamentation over the dead Christ. Disparaged by 18th and 19th-century critics for their exaggerated appeal to viewers' emotions, these statues remained in the margins of art history; only more recent studies have drawn attention to individual artists and revealed the extent of their popularity. The sculptures' attitude and gestures also bear a striking resemblance to those of contemporary Passion plays and Laude, many commissioned by flagellant confraternities who sung them while doing devotional penance. Given that many Compianti have ties to flagellant confraternities, I here propose that the sculptures also served a dramatic and religious purpose linked to their devotional practices. If so, their unusual expressivity and melodramatic affect, like those of the Laude, were meant to heighten the flagellants' emotional identification with the sufferings of Christ and the anguish of the Virgin Mary.

Marie Hartmann – Freie Universität Berlin
"*Domini est salus*: Aspects of Devotion in Text and Illumination of Amulet Ms. Princeton 235"

In late medieval Europe, Christian amulets comprised of illuminations and/or script were considered powerful apotropaic shields. My article focuses on a single Catalan example, Ms Princeton 235. I argue that this object primarily functions as a prayer aid rather than as a magical object. Comparable to rosaries or prayer nuts, this amulet conveys its assumed protective powers through specific lay devotional acts. Its textual and visual program prefigures such pious practices, which include carrying the amulet above one's heart, folding and unfolding it, reciting a profession of faith and the divine names, making the sign of the cross, and contemplatively looking at a miniature showing the Arma Christi. Through an analysis of how the amulet's features of materiality prompt prayer practices, its claim to mediate divine grace and power become comprehensible.

Koenraad Jonckheere – Ghent University
"The Image and the Object: Johannes a Porta on Devotion"

Building on ancient image theories, the sixteenth century polemicist Johannes A Porta extensively analyzed the complexity of images, including the complicated relationship between the image and the object. A Porta's A Porta's voluminous book D'Net der beeltstormers of 1591 has hardly been studied, but is arguably one of the most fascinating texts written in the wake of iconoclasm on the understanding of the interaction of materiality, visuality and devotion in the sixteenth century. Moreover, it was written in the vernacular and thus formed part of a public debate. In this paper, I'll focus on some of A Porta's concepts and the consequences for our understanding of devotional object in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.

Ethan Matt Kavaler – University of Toronto
"In the Beginning Came the Wood: The Altarpiece to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin in Kalkar"

The Altarpiece of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin in Kalkar was one of the most unusual and expressive retables of its time. Carved by the virtuoso sculptor Henrik Douwerman from 1518-1522, the materiality of the work is an important aspect of its signifying system. Douwerman's altarpiece highlights several important theological and artistic discourses: the mystical status of wood as divine substance, the exalted lineage of Christ and the Virgin, Mary's role as witness to and intercessor in Christ's life and Passion, the appropriate structure of the carved retable, and the role of polychromy and its absence. Its nominal subject arises from the newly popular devotion to Mary's seven sorrows but its framing by an expansive representation of the Tree of Jesse is perhaps more remarkable and empowers its presentation of sacred history.

The most surprising aspect of Douwerman's altarpiece is surely the Tree of Jesse that emerges from the prophet in a dense growth within the predella, travels up the sides of the shrine, and then flowers in the exuberant crest on top. Wood was a privileged material to God, a scaffolding for his Word. It gave rise to the Tree of Knowledge and to the Cross. The wood

offers a mystical frame for Mary's sorrows and Christ's Passion, a comforting lineage culminating in the glory of the virgin and her son. The altarpiece testifies to the incorruptibility of nature as a manifestation of God's will on earth.

Kamil Kopania – Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art, Warsaw
"Amination and Compassion: The Most Complicated Late Medieval Animated Sculptures of the Crucified Christ"

The majority of the animated sculptures of the crucified Christ possess a mechanism allowing only the arms to be folded down along the body. But numerous also have moveable legs, heads, or even mechanisms enabling movement of tongue or eyes. Several have a cylindrical metal receptacle for blood, connected to the wound in the side. The most advanced in terms of construction are covered in calfskin, properly treated and painted, imitating the natural softness, color and texture of a human body. Their construction enabled them to create powerful images of Christ's passion. The aim of my talk is to present the most complicated animated sculptures of the Crucified Christ and show how they were perceived by the faithful.

Justin Kroesen – University Museum of Bergen
"The Afterlife of Medieval Tabernacle Shrines in Scandinavia"

In Lutheranism, other than in other Protestant traditions, the veneration of the Virgin and the saints was not abolished but partly continued in a different form. In my talk I will look at the survival of Marian shrines in post-Reformation Scandinavia as a reflection of continuing Marian veneration. The focus will be on so-called tabernacle shrines (in Swedish: 'Helgonskåp') that must have been common throughout medieval Europe, but which survived particularly in the Lutheran North (Sweden alone possesses more than 1/3 of the total European stock). Even where Marian side altars were demolished, figures of the Virgin were commonly maintained, often in their protective tabernacles. Evidence of the continued presence of such Marian tabernacles in churches is the fact that many were repaired and repainted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Together, these shrines are testimonies to the remarkably inclusive stance of Lutheran authorities vis-à-vis some medieval devotions, and particularly also to the common people's continuing attachment to the Mother of God.

Elizabeth Rice Mattison – University of Toronto
"Between Altar and Collection: Miniature Devotional Sculpture in the Low Countries"

Small-scale sculptures in the sixteenth-century Low Countries are most often discussed in the context of early modern collecting practices. The contemporaneous importance of devotional miniature sculpture, however, has been largely overlooked. This paper considers the role of scale in devotional practice, examining how miniaturization personalized the divine through portability, performativity, and tactile experience. While scholarship has recently drawn attention to the importance of boxwood prayer beads, this paper focuses on small-scale versions of larger genres produced in the Low Countries including statuettes of the Virgin and Child, small

Marianums, tiny altarpieces, and diminutive Crucifixion groups. The translation of forms between scales and the viewer's physical interaction with these objects were key in making these miniatures meaningful in spiritual devotion. Examined in their religious context, these works exemplify the changing and often problematic relationship of pious expression to images in the first decades of the sixteenth century.

Ulrich Pfisterer – Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich
Sacred Economics: Medgals and Rubble as Relics

When at the beginning of the Holy Years the Holy Gates at the main Roman churches were broken open, the people regularly stormed the ceremony to take debris and the medals walled up in the gates as relics. Based on this event, this paper examines how medals could become relics in the early modern period and how they were used by the faithful as objects of devotion.

Herman Roodenburg – Free University of Amsterdam
"*Beweeglijkheid* and Tears: Devotional Objects and Affective Piety in the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands"

Around 1645, the aging painter Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651) produced an emotion-laden Man of Sorrows, surrounded by the Arma Christi. A fairly small work, it may have been intended for private devotion, for the priest serving at the Utrecht mission station Achter Clarenburch. Bloemaert, a devout Catholic, stood in a long tradition. But Protestant poets evoking the Passion of Christ did not shun the Arma either. Like the Catholic painter, they employed all the *beweeglijkheid*, all the *enargeia*, they could muster in their poetry. In my talk I will take a look at the different kinds of tears expected from Catholics and Protestants. More specifically, I will look at the notion of *compunctio cordis*, already translated in the fifteenth century as the *beweeglijkheid des herten*. How did the rhetorical *beweeglijkheid* of the Arma Christi relate to this – probably older – devotional *beweeglijkheid* of the believers' hearts?

Kathryn Rudy – University of St. Andrews
"Handling Beads in Manuscript Rosaries"

Late medieval Christians enthusiastically adopted the rosary as a devotional tool, perhaps because it required manipulating a physical object, which grounded prayer in the tangible. The rosary devotion requires repeating prayers, using the beads to count them off. The objects helped to anchor practice, to concretize habit. Counting prayers in this way brought the believer into long-term, ritualized contact with the para-liturgical object. Some surviving beads reveal that their owners handled them extensively, rubbing them to high polish so that they have forfeited their surface relief. Every stroke, every lost detail, proves that ardent devotion has happened, that worship has taken place. Humans leave traces on the objects they repeatedly rub against. That signs of wear are interpretable is the essential idea behind this paper.

The use of rosaries accompanied the production of new image-intensive texts and based on the structure of a rosary, in which image 'beads' punctuate groups of ten short devotions. In several examples, the images have been heavily damaged, and I argue in this paper that the damage was deliberate: a product of fingering the images as if they were beads on a string.

Andrew Spicer – Oxford Brookes University
"Restoring Church Bells in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1585- 1621"

During the revolt against Spain, especially under the Calvinist republics, adherents of the Reformed faith and rebel forces attempted to silence church bells or seized them for their metal. Some Catholics regarded such actions as a direct threat to their faith because bells were rung to summon parishioners to the celebration of the mass. After 1585, concerted efforts were made to recover bells that had been plundered from parish churches but also a number of new bells were cast. The baptism/dedication of new bells for religious use and the inscriptions that they bore are evidence of their devotional function. Furthermore the donation of bells and the ceremonies surrounding their installation were of considerable contemporary interest being recorded by local commentators and diarists. Drawing on evidence from the French-speaking dioceses of the southern Netherlands, this paper will explore the founding of new bells and the devotional sentiments expressed by their donors and observers.

Ruben Suykerbuyk – Rotterdam, Boijmans-Van Beuningen Museum
"Altarpieces and the debate on idolatry in the Low Countries (c. 1520-1585)"

As the Reformation spread throughout Europe, the old issue of idolatry became a matter of public controversy once again. Addressing age-old religious questions regarding the problematic relation between the material and the divine, Protestants condemned Catholic practices such as the celebration of Mass, the veneration of saints and the use of images as idolatrous. These issues hit the function of altarpieces right in the heart. Yet, although the Reformation's impact on Catholic material culture and artistic output was enormous, it remains to be fully explored. Studying the production of altarpieces in the Low Countries between c. 1520 and 1585, this paper demonstrates how the changed religious context fundamentally altered their appearance. It challenges the dominant narrative that Catholic patronage ignored these questions altogether: altarpieces not only addressed the thorny issue openly, they can also be read as visual discourses on the crucial difference between genuine devotion and idolatry.

Achim Timmermann – University of Michigan
"'Dem heylighen Cruce to Werle': The Staging of Civic Relics in Late Medieval Westphalia"

My paper investigates a critical but overlooked category of microarchitectural structure, the relic tabernacle or Reliquientabernakel, which occupies a predominant position in the choir of a number of Westphalian churches. Showcasing important civic relics – such as those of the Holy Cross at Werl or of St. Reinoldus at Dortmund – relic tabernacles were sites at which urban

identities were forged, maintained, but also contested, their soaring elevations furnishing theatrical backdrops to the seasonal performance of a number of ceremonies that (re-)affirmed civic privileges, rights, and (constructions of) history. As key pivots in the rhythms of civic life and in the daily economy of Salvation, relic tabernacles played a crucial role in shaping the religious attitudes and expectations of five generations of Westphalian viewers, from the inception of this type of furnishing in the 1420s to its suppression by Protestant Reformers in the 1550s. While initially commissioned for civic relics and housed by parish churches (usually a city's Ratskirche), from the 1460s onwards relic tabernacles also began to appear in monastic churches and at least one cathedral, suggesting that over time these structures became vehicles of an intense mimetic rivalry not simply between different towns but also between competing ecclesiastical institutions.

Anne-Laure Van Bruaene – Ghent University
"The arbres d'or of the Golden Fleece between Religious Rite and Political Order"

Between 1431 and 1559 the 23 chapters of the Burgundian chivalric order of the Golden Fleece were held in major urban churches, which entailed a quite aggressive appropriation of church space by the court. An eye-catching, custom-made object for this event was the arbre d'or, a giant wooden candelabrum – often spanning the width of the choir – that played a central role in the memorial rites during the requiem Mass on the second day of the chapter. None of these arbres d'or are still extant, but visual and textual descriptions – in particular for the two final chapters in Antwerp (1556) and Ghent (1559) – document their material and ceremonial significance. This paper argues that the arbres d'or were highly ideologically charged religious objects (related to the better-known chapelles ardentes), because they ritually animated the aura of the Burgundian-Habsburg court. What happened to these objects after the chapters remains obscure in most cases, but it seems that precisely their association with political authority has often protected them from iconoclasm. This places the arbres d'or within a wider trend of 'memorialization', which counterbalanced the far better studied process of early modern 'confessionalization'.