

Statutes and Membership Lists of the Kalands Brethren (the Kalendenbroederschap) of Groningen

In Dutch, manuscript on parchment

The Netherlands, Groningen, 1501-1506, with additions to 1590

iii (paper) + 58 + ii (parchment) + i (paper) folio on parchment, modern pagination in pencil, 1-120, pp. 117-120 are parchment endleaves, probably lifted pastedowns from an earlier binding (collation: i¹⁰ ii⁸ iii¹⁰ iv-vi⁸ vii⁶ [3 cancelled, after p. 108, with no loss of text, + one leaf, pp. 111/112, after 4]), written under the top line in an upright conservative gothic bookhand in fifteen long lines, with later additions in several hands, heavily ruled in black ink, single full-length vertical bounding lines, majuscules within the text touched with red, red rubrics, one- to two-line red initials, parchment somewhat darkened, with some stains and damage from dampness, but text is clear and legible. Bound in nineteenth-century half vellum, slight tear back cover, pp. 5-15 (quire one) and pp. 21-36 (quire 2) are detached. Dimensions 160-159 x 125 mm.

This manuscript is an exceptional record of the religious and civic life of a prosperous Dutch town during a century of tumultuous political and religious change. It includes the rules of the confraternity, a record of their property, and notes on the food served at their annual feasts, as well as the names of both the living and the dead brethren. Memorial lists of this type for confraternities are uncommon. Although an earlier manuscript of the Brotherhood has been published, this later book includes unpublished material not found in the earlier book.

PROVENANCE

1. Written between after 1501 (date of the latest death of a member of the brethren in the hand of the original scribe, see p. 77), and before 1506 (date of the earliest additions to the manuscript, see p. 64) in Groningen, The Netherlands.
2. In active use until 1590 as a record of the members, both living and dead, of the Kaland Brethren in Groningen, founded in 1381. When a member died, his or her name was removed from the list of living members, and recorded in a list of dead brethren. The rules of the Brotherhood were also kept up to date; outdated rules were crossed out, and new rules were added. There are ample blank leaves for additional entries, but the Confraternity was suppressed in 1594, when Calvinism became the official religion in Groningen.
3. Belonged to the Dutch scholar and historian, expert on the House of Orange, Wilco Julius van Welderen Baron Rengers (1835-1916).
4. Sold by Frederik Muller and Co., Amsterdam; label, inside from cover, with cutting from their sales catalogue.
5. Exhibited in *Hel en Hemel. De middeleeuwen in het norden*, Groningen Museum, 2001 (Catalogue by E. Knol, J.M.M. Hermans, and M. Driebergen).

TEXT

p. 2-37, [Rules of the Kalend Brethren; p. 1, blank; text begins bottom p. 2] "Int jaer ons heren dusent driehondert ende achtein waert desse broderscap eersten begrepen in maneren als nae ghescreven is. In den name godes. Amen. Wy preesters ende burghers een deel van Groningen hebben ... *De eerste puncte*. In den eersten dat wy [expunged: to twen tijden] in den iaer to samen zullen comen ... [Penultimate Rule; added in a later hand] Item wat broder of suster in desser broke vervallen mochte worden sal die broke ... worde by uerlus der broderscap. [Last rule in a cursive script] Item anno 1574 maendages na ...";

Rules of the Brotherhood, with alterations and updates to the original text, including: the eleventh rule, pp. 11-12, on the Office of the Dead, heavily scored through and marked "vacat,"; pp. 16-18, rules 17 and 19 on observances for the dead, lightly scored through and marked "palea [sic] vacat"; pp. 24-32, rules of 1512 and 1518, were added in another hand; pp. 32-37, rules 23, and three additional unnumbered rules dated 1523, were added in a later hand; p. 27, the last entry, is a ruled dated 1574, added in a cursive script.

pp. 38-52, *Item de levende broders desser kalende* [Ends top p. 43; pp. 44-45, blank but ruled]; p. 45, *Dit sijn de leye broders desser kalenden* [Pp. 46-50, blank but ruled]; pp. 51-52, *Dit sijn de susters desser kalende* ... [Ends top p. 52; pp. 53-56, blank but ruled];

Lists of living members of the brotherhood; the lists were kept current; names were scraped away or scratched through when a member died, and new members were added. The clerical brethren, who included the majority of the members, are listed first; the most recent addition is dated 1589. A list of lay brothers follows, with the last entry dated 1587. The female members are listed last.

pp. 57-70, *Dit sijn de preesters de tot desser kalende ghestorven sijn. Int eerste* [pp. 71-72, blank but ruled];

List of clerical brethren who have died; the original list ends p. 64; added to this list are three death dates, 1483, 1494, and 1500; the list was continued in a number of hands dating from 1506-1590.

pp. 73-78, *Dit sijn de leye broders de wt desser kalende ghestorven sijn, Int eerste* [pp. 79-86, blank but ruled];

List of lay brothers who have died; the original list ending p. 77, with an entry annotated 1501; the additions are dated 1515-1590.

pp. 87-92, *Dit sijn de susters de wt desser kalende ghestorven sijn, Int eerst* ... [pp. 93-98, blank but ruled];

List of the deceased women of the order; the original lists ends p. 90; additions are dated 1506-1573.

pp. 99-102, *Dit sint de gherichte de men ghevet toe der maeltijt als de kalende is*, incipit, "In de kalende voer sint mychael. In de avent male. In eerste so ghevet men langhen van de scapen ..."; p. 102, added in a later hand;

Rules for the food to be served at the brethren's feasts; rules have been updated, and include additions dated 1530 and 1563.

pp. 103-109, *Dit is de rente de onse kalende broderschap hebben ...*;

List of revenues, including properties that are identified by naming the owners of adjacent properties; kept current with annotations noting when ownership changed.

pp. 110-117, Regulations from later years through 1578, including rules for an annual feast, additional revenues, and masses [p. 117, in a less formal cursive script; pp. 117-120, are endleaves, probably lifted pastedowns from an earlier binding.]

This collection of statutes and membership lists was written for a Christian Confraternity that called itself the "Kalendenbroederschap" of Groningen, founded in 1381 and suppressed in 1594. Although their roots date back earlier, from the late Middle Ages and well into the Early Modern Period, confraternities were an extremely important part of the life of most cities and some rural districts across Europe. Most confraternities were composed of groups of lay people who banded together for a broad variety of different devotional and charitable purposes. The Kalands Brotherhoods were Confraternities of clerics, together with some lay members, both male and female, who met at regular times for various religious and charitable activities (their name derives from their custom of meeting at *kalends*, the Latin for the first day of the month). As is clear from this manuscript, their most important activity was offering prayers and Masses for deceased members. The addition of the list of members, both living and dead, makes this record of the brotherhood's activities especially valuable (although commemoration of the dead was clearly an important activity for many confraternities, lists of deceased members do not often survive). Kaland brethren were most numerous in Germany, but also spread to the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Hungary and France. Like the Kaland Brethren in Groningen, most were dissolved during the Reformation.

The text of the present manuscript replaced that of an earlier manuscript kept by the Kalands Brotherhood of Groningen, now in the Groningen Archiv, MS Oct. no. 11. The manuscript in Groningen was edited by Driessen, 1827, pp. 600-614, no. 144 ("Statuten van de Broderschap der Kalenden in Groningen"). A small part of the Groningen manuscript was also published in Blok, 1869-99, no. 260, pp. 185-188, mentioning the present manuscript, p. 185, when it was owned by W. J. van Welderen Baron Rengers. When the first book was full, it was recopied, with ample blank pages for additions. The present manuscript (the later book) was kept up to date until 1590; this later material is unpublished.

Our manuscript was copied from, and replaced, the earlier one. The last rule in this earlier manuscript in the original hand is the rule from 1458. The rules for 1470, 1479, and 1497 were added at the beginning of the manuscript. Our scribe had some trouble with this exemplar: the rule numbered as nineteen, dated 1458, which begins p. 17, and continues to the bottom of p. 18, is interrupted by an unnumbered rule of 1470, which is copied on the top of p. 19, leaving the remainder and p. 20 blank; text of rule 19, then concludes on p. 21. This first quire is now a

quire of eight; it is possible that the scribe added the outer bifolia, with pp. 1-2 and pp. 19-20, when he realized he had omitted the rule of 1470, now on p. 19. The following rule, dated 1497, beginning on p. 21, is also labeled 19; rule 20, from 1479, begins on p. 23.

Groningen in the northern Netherlands was an important trading center during the Middle Ages, and by the fifteenth century it was a wealthy city state, administering a considerable territory. During the conflict known as the Eighty Years War (1568-1648), which began as a revolt against Hapsburg Rule and ultimately became a civil war between the largely Protestant Northern Netherlands, and the Catholic South, Groningen at first sided with the Catholic Hapsburgs, but in 1594 joined the Calvinist Republic of the United Netherlands. Although officially Catholic until 1594, the city aimed to protect civic harmony, and it did not actively persecute followers of the new Protestant faiths. The changing religious climate can perhaps explain the alterations in the Brotherhood's rules in this manuscript, where the rule discussing the Office of the Dead is totally expunged, and other rules are lightly scored through.

Banquets were commonly part of the meetings of many of the Kaland Brotherhoods—indeed, reformers accused them of focusing solely on revelry and feasting. The list of foods served at the banquets of the Groningen Brotherhood provides a fascinating window into their history (for example, a later hand changed “beer” to “Rhine wine”).

LITERATURE

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Vincent, Catherine, *Les confréries médiévales dans le royaume de France, XIIIe–XIVe siècle*, Paris, Éditions Albin Michel, 1994.

ONLINE RESOURCES

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<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04223a.htm>

Catholic Encyclopedia, "Kalands Brethren"

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08593a.htm>

History of Groningen

<http://www.provinciegroningen.nl/uk/history?view=Standard>

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