Experiencing Space Through Women's Convent Rules: The Rich Clares in Medieval Ghent (Thirteenth to Fourteenth centuries)

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The connection between "women" and "space" can be studied in many very divergent ways. This contribution investigates the extent to which the concept "space" affected and determined women's behavior in medieval religious houses through rules and statutes. Ten years ago I examined these issues in relation to some twenty religious and charitable institutions in Ghent.[2] However, the subject needs updating on the basis of new insights in medieval history, gender studies, and sociology drawn by scholars in the last decade. Some new theoretical concepts on "space" will therefore be applied to the Rich Clares' convent in Ghent—also known as the "Urbanist sisters,"—for this convent was one of the few communities of regular nuns that resided there as early as the thirteenth century. The order of the Clares is generally regarded as the Second Order of Saint Francis of Assisi and was founded by Francis of Assisi himself in 1212 CE at San Damiano near Assisi, and headed by Saint Clare of Assisi (1193/94-1253 CE). The "Urbanists" owe their name to pope Urban IV, whose rule of 1263 CE they followed. Unlike the Poor Clares, the "Rich Clares" were allowed to have joint possessions (see *infra*). The archives of the Ghent Rich Clares still contain a medieval copy of the rule used in the convent.[3] This fourteenth-century copy of the Rich Clares' rule of 1263 is the basis of this study. Because the Rich Clares followed a general rule, their specific location in Ghent becomes meaningful when their connection with their male counterparts in Ghent, the Franciscan Friars, is elucidated.

This analysis aims to demonstrate that, according to the Rich Clares' rule, modern theoretical and spatial concepts such as the "public" and "private" spheres had a specific meaning

for enclosed nuns. The classical dichotomy between "public" and "private" space still remains valid here. However, as will be shown by source evidence, the behavioral conditions of the Rich Clares' rule, drawn up in order to meticulously organize the daily communal life of the nuns inside the convent walls, generally refer more to "public" than to "private" space. The case of the Rich Clares should certainly not be considered as separate or exceptional, but rather represents how daily life in a convent *sub clausura* was organized through rules and what importance the ideas "space" and "spatiality" had.[4] Thus, the monastic ideal of claustration was not only made physically visible by the convent walls, but was also made tangible by the practice of the many clauses of the rule. Or, as Julie Ann Smith strikingly puts it: "once nunnery space had been constructed (both textually and physically), it in turn defined and constrained the individuals it encompassed: that is, the space defined the people."[5]

Perception of "Space"

The concept of "space," in the meaning of a multidimensional zone, in which substances, people, and objects move, has been mainly associated with exact sciences such as mathematics, geography, and physics. However, in the last few decades sociologists and historians have worked hard to apply this concept in a political and social context as well, and thus consider it as an ordered principle "through which hierarchies of men and women are established and maintained."[6] Harald Kleinschmidt divided the concept into three categories: "space of daily experience," "space of regular communication," and "space of the world." The first two concepts are especially relevant for my argument. "Space of daily experience" concerns the domestic or family environment and stands for the space in which daily activities and acts are performed. "House" therefore means the building as well as the organization inside. "Space of regular communication" is the wider environment that is entered when one's own "space of daily experience" is left. In other words, it is the space in which there is contact with other people and groups, who in turn have their own "space of daily experience." Thus "space" is

simultaneously a physically limited entity and a conceptual and invisibly defined principle.

Kleinschmidt applied this model to medieval society and concluded that the meaning of the concept of "space" evolved throughout this period. He states that in the early Middle Ages "space" should mainly be considered on the basis of the relationship between people within a certain group, whereas from the High Middle Ages on, "space" should be studied as a territorially limited area subject to the laws and rules of a (territorial) sovereign. Furthermore, he argues that from this period on a clearer theoretical distinction can be made between "space of daily experience" and "space of regular communication." The first category is to be associated with the private, emotionally charged space, while the second category should be regarded more as the public, politically charged space requiring specific rules and conditions for the inhabitants of the politically defined territory.[7]

Such categorization of "space" is also significant within a monastic system, for in a certain sense, a religious community can also be considered as a "household" within society. Yet from the High Middle Ages on, the "space of daily experience" of monks and nuns, in particular that of cloistered nuns appears to be organized in its own specific way and with a clear goal. In fact, their physical actions and behavior were structured, regulated, and controlled by a system of written rules, constitutions, and customs that were only valid within their enclosed territory. Below, I will explain that their experience of domestic space can therefore not just be equated to a private experience, although it took place within a "household" or community, and that private space still existed inside the convent walls, but was moved to a totally different, more spiritual or mental level.

To understand this shift, we must consider the impact that entry into a cloister had on the personal identity of a nun. After all, becoming a nun and taking the monastic vows meant not only a renunciation of the nun's former social status, private property, and sexuality. Above all, it meant a denial of the nun's previous secular individuality in favor of a wish to assimilate into an alternative, collective identity that represented the ideal virtues

of a nun as a bride of God.[8] When it is considered that they gave up or "depersonalized" their identity, it becomes understandable that there was not much space left for private experiences, since those potentially threatened the common identity and harmony within the religious community. Private space, in the sense of room where nuns could withdraw from this collectivism related to the "public", was confined to the non-physical level of their minds —that is, their meditation and communication to God. Yet, some clauses of the Rich Clares' rule implicitly attempted to control even this spatial level as well.

The evidences of the Rich Clares' rule reveals that the way in which the nuns experienced space was restrained both on a physical and a symbolic level. The physical level was expressed in the strict behavioral regulations adjusted to each of the architectural components within the cloister and will be illustrated below by two rooms in particular: the parlor and the dormitory. Symbolic regulations, aimed at restraining the nuns' social freedom of movement, on the other hand, manifested themselves in several prescriptions concerning communication between the nuns, the reception of visitors, and excursions into the outside world.

Contemplation and Closure

The Rich Clares observed a very empathic form of both "active" and "passive" closure, meaning that on the one hand, they were not allowed to leave the nunnery, while on the other hand, strangers were prohibited to trespass the convent walls, except under strict conditions. Consequently, the convent walls acted as both a physical and a symbolic boundary between the enclosed space of the nuns and the secular world outside. Spending a religious life in contemplation and absolute isolation was an ideal that, from the tenth century on, was developed by the clergy in order to supervise and control daily life within the numerous new female monastic communities. Though originally mainly practiced in female communities following the rule of Benedict, from the thirteenth century on the observance of closure became increasingly intertwined in the rules of the new female branches

of the mendicant orders, among which were the Clares and the sisters of Saint Dominic. Not long after the first Clares' community received its first concise rule from Francis of Assisi himself, Clare drew up her own rule, in which she did not want to follow the typical "active" *vita apostolica* of the male mendicant orders, but which expressed an explicit desire for isolated community life in poverty.[9] Heribert Roggen explained this choice from the fact that Saint Clare thus probably conformed to the contemporary ideas on female conventual life, which encouraged life in absolute isolation. At her request, around 1228 CE Clare also obtained the *privilegium paupertatis* from Pope Gregory IX, which stated that her community could never be forced to accept possessions. However, Pope Innocent IV only approved her rule in 1253 CE, a few days before her death, and only for the San Damiano convent near Assisi.

The generally prevailing motive of churchmen behind the principle of enclosure was protection. In particular female sexuality, which evoked worship as well as contempt in the Middle Ages,[10] turned religious women into vulnerable creatures. Churchmen not only had to ensure the physical protection of the nuns, but also foster their chastity and their virginity. After all, these virtues were the core of their vocation as brides of God, and—even more important—"chastity of nuns was part of the foundation for the public image of the Church."[11] The fact that many women's convents did not even have high and strong walls proves that closure was a conceptual rather than a physical means of protection and defense, relying upon mutual respect between those who lived inside as well as outside the convent walls.[12] Hence, most of the rules for enclosed convents, including the Rich Clares' rule, do not include explicit architectural building codes. Instead, they contain many behavioral conditions for observing the enclosure in each of the architectural components of the convent, as will be illustrated below.[13]

However, not all female religious orders required an equally strict observance of the principle of enclosure. The beguine movement, for example, rising in the Low Countries from the beginning of the thirteenth century on, was

characterized by a unique and flexible combination of an active religious life among urban citizens and a contemplative life within the secure setting of their beguine court.[14] In contrast with the traditional monastic idea of complete closure, beguines were allowed to leave their court to teach or to do charitable and manual work in town, and during the day, their court was also accessible to outsiders.

From a modern point of view, the consequences of a strictly cloistered life might give the impression that regular nuns like the Rich Clares experienced their enclosed world of contemplation and poverty as a place of exile. Yet, Jeffrey Hamburger has demonstrated the opposite. According to him, it was the outside and secular world that actually seemed a prison to enclosed nuns. Moreover, they considered their cloister as a paradise for the inner self, a foretaste of the eternal and heavenly afterlife.[15] His argument also seems to apply to the Rich Clares, since in the centuries following their foundation, the enclosure obligation continued to be generally accepted and was never contested.

Guardianship by the Franciscans: (Dis)advantages

Claustration, as well as the desire to live a life in contemplation and absolute poverty, did not only affect the daily life and the behavior of enclosed nuns. It also resulted in the fact that—unlike the beguines, for example—the cloistered nuns were economically unproductive and thus even more dependent on their male counterparts.[16] Female religious communities already relied on the assistance of their male colleagues for their spiritual welfare, such as saying their masses and hearing their confessions.[17] Yet, the additional responsibilities that male orders were supposed to have for their female members led to problems in the thirteenth century, especially in the new mendicant orders. In contrast with the Cistercian Order, in which the bishop directly supervised many nunneries, the pope appointed only one responsible cardinal per ecclesiastic province for mendicant orders. This was also the case in Ghent, where M. Orsini, cardinal-protector of the Franciscan Order and from 1288 the actual head of the Clares, required the Guardian of the Ghent Franciscans to continue to

guide the sisters and to provide spiritual care after their removal from their isolated location near the river Scheldt in the parish of Gentbrugge, to their new site at the Guldenmeers, somewhat closer to their brothers' convent.[18]

From the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, Franciscans especially tried to dispose of their responsibility for Poor Clares.[19] Because the Clares were bound to a life of isolation and absolute poverty, the Franciscans not only had the spiritual care and the task of gathering all alms for the Poor Clares, but also were obliged to see to any errand requiring contact with the outside world. Male Franciscans were increasingly unhappy about the economic burden and organizational rigmarole that such responsibility entailed. Moreover, they risked damage to their reputation by their association with women. In 1263, these dissatisfactions led pope Urban IV to promulgate a new rule for the Clares, in which they were relieved of their poverty obligation.[20] From then on they were allowed to accept inheritances and hold and manage common possessions. Although this measure gave them greater economic independence, many Clares' convents refused to respect this new rule. They swore by the rule of poverty and contemplation that Saint Clare wrote down in 1253 CE, but which the pope only approved for the San Damiano convent in Assisi. From 1263 CE on, the polarization between the Rich Clares or Urbanist Sisters, who respected the rule of 1263 CE,[21] and the Poor Clares, who lived according to the original but not universally approved rule of Saint Clare, became increasingly evident.

The Rich Clares' Rule of 1263 CE as an Example of Codified Behavior

From its foundation in 1286 CE, the Ghent Rich Clares most probably followed the general rule of 1263 CE; an early fourteenth-century copy of this rule (in Latin) has been kept in the archives of this institution. The process of creation of the Clares' rule in the first half of the thirteenth century shows in a striking way how churchmen were eager to prescribe rules of behavior and living standards for religious women, the more so since this was an excellent means for them to supervise and

control the daily life of the nuns.[22] The effectiveness of the rules was due to the fact that, although they were conceived by men, they were acceptable to religious women since they had been adapted to their reputation and their living environment in a subtle and well thought-out manner.[23] By observing the many prescriptions revealing the inherent weakness and vulnerability of female nature, the nuns were not only confronted with their own imperfections, but above all, they were given a chance to improve their behavior in order to get as close as possible to the ideal virtue of being a bride of God. In the Rich Clares' rule, the intended alteration of the nuns' behavior was basically effected by means of two types of prescriptions in which spatiality played an important part. On the one hand, the source evidences in detail what specific behavioral standards the nuns had to observe in a number of separate architectural convent spaces. On the other hand, some prescriptions concerning social freedom of movement indicate the general importance of the convent's walls both as physical and symbolic bounds of the nuns' living environment. The Rich Clares' rule contains many items of spatial concern that are not typical for the Urbanist Clares, but can also be found in the rules and statutes of other monasteries, whether or not they were drawn up in the tradition of Francis, Benedict, or Augustine.[24]

Behavioral Standards Fitting Architectural Spaces

It is remarkable that the rule pays so much attention to the behavior nuns had to adopt in the parlor and the common dormitory, two spaces in the cloistral part of the convent. The rule of 1263 CE explicitly stated that the Rich Clares had to live their life *sub clausura* in obedience, poverty, and chastity.[25] The cloister could only be accessed through one single set of double doors that, in case the front door was open, prevented a direct view of the inside. Conversely, this system of double doors kept a nun from catching a glimpse of the outside. By way of stairs that could be lifted, there was access to the cloister (with special permission), but never in the period between Compline and the next Prime, or during the period of rest in daytime and visiting hours.[26] When visitors wanted to speak to a nun, the portress took them to the parlor or *locutorium* that was probably located near the entrance

gate. In Rich Clares' convents, the parlor contained a kind of iron plate or panel pierced with small holes and provided with a lock. The nuns had to speak to visitors through this panel. A black linen cloth was nailed to the inside (probably the side of the nuns), so that nobody could see the nuns and they could not look at their visitors.[27] In the parlor, visitors could also give the cloistered nuns small items through a serving hatch, turntable, or "roller." However, on no account were the giver and receiver allowed to see each other.[28] The only mention of the location of these tools was that they had to be installed on various appropriate places in the wall. The fact is that whatever was passed through these panels and turntables was brought from the outside to the inside. Thus, the panels were the tangible and emphatic border between the private cloister of the convent and the public world outside. In the parlor, architectural space was used to manage encounters between secular and religious identities.[29]

Religious rules and statutes mostly had a separate chapter devoted to the common sleeping space or dorter, regardless of the order for which they were intended. The thirteenth-century rule for the Rich Clares offers us very detailed information on this item. In the dormitory every nun who was in good health—including the abbess—lay clothed on her bed in a separate cell.[30] Nun's cells probably did not have the shape of fully enclosed rooms, but should be seen more as partitioned spaces with bulkheads between the beds. The abbess' bed was positioned in the dormitory in such a way that she could oversee the beds of all the nuns.[31]

Thus, it appears on the one hand that there was still a limited possibility of privacy in the dormitory. The nuns were able to withdraw for a little while in their personal space or cell—although only at night and under strict conditions and control. Yet, Hamburger considers this possibility of a partial withdrawal as a real indulgence into the nuns' private space.[32]

The Convent's Wall: Physical and Symbolic Boundary of the Nuns' Social Freedom of Movement

Contact with the outside world was not just confined to the parlor. In many order rules, including those of the Rich Clares, a separate

chapter clearly described under what circumstances the nuns were allowed to leave their convent and on what conditions people from outside were allowed to enter the cloister. Overall, the conditions reveal the great trouble that was taken to reduce contact with strangers—i.e., people who lived outside the convent—to the absolute minimum and the strictly necessary.

The nuns were only authorized to leave their convent in dangerous and inevitable circumstances such as a blazing fire or an unexpected raid by an enemy, on condition that for this reason the nuns had no opportunity to request official approval.[33] In such cases of *force majeure*, the nuns had to go to another suitable place as a group. If the Rich Clares wanted to leave the cloister in cases other than these exceptional circumstances, they needed the approval of the cardinal of Rome, appointed by the Holy See to supervise and govern their religious community.[34] The nun who dared to infringe the *clausura* rules was due to undergo a very unpleasant punishment.

In view of the strict cloistered life imposed on the inmates, it is understandable that not just going out but also receiving visitors was restrained as much as possible. It is remarkable that various rules, regulations, and statutes always mentioned the same persons who, because of their occupation or religious rank, were authorized to enter the convent and even the cloister, but only if they had good reason. For example, the "surgeon, the doctor (physician), and the workmen" were the only people who were allowed access to the Rich Clares' convent as such.[35] In contrast, visits from family or acquaintances were only permitted in urgent situations and required explicit approval. In case this agreement was deviated from, not only the individual who had entered the cloister without permission, but also the nun who had given access to the cloister was punished with excommunication.

The control of the nuns' social space or freedom of movement was not limited to the regulations on going out and receiving visitors. The way in which communication between the nuns was controlled also attests to an efficient but far-reaching system minimizing any form of secular amusement and distraction—that is, to restrain their private or mental space. By respecting silence the nuns could concentrate fully on

their relationship with God, and harmony in the community was boosted. The Rich Clares had to respect absolute silence in the church, refectory, and dorter. In the other rooms, using only few words the strictly necessary could be exchanged. If two sisters wanted to have a conversation, they had to ask the abbess for permission. The approved conversation took place in the *locutorium*, but always in the presence of a number of other sisters, appointed by the abbess to continuously observe and listen to the conversing nuns. In the thirteenth-century Clares' rule, the course of the conversation was also important: the nuns had to ensure that they did not use vain or useless words, or hold a conversation that did not have an edifying content. Remaining in the parlor for a long time was not appreciated either.[36]

An additional example of the way in which the nuns' private space was intended to be managed and directed can be found in another kind of communication between the nuns among themselves, or between them and their family and friends living outside the convent's walls. Apart from the regulations about receiving visitors or having a permitted conversation in the parlor, there was also, as Gabriela Signore has pointed out, mutual communication on the basis of gifts and letters which the nuns were allowed to send out and to receive.[37] However, Signori concludes that most of the correspondence between the nuns and their relatives concerned the practical arrangement of an approaching visit, whereas gifts, aimed at maintaining friendships, mostly consisted of prayer books, saints' lives, little sacred images, and other devotional literature. According to Hamburger, such gifts had a distinct purpose: they were exemplary and didactic prompts, meant to govern the nuns' imagination.[38] Or, in terms of experiencing space, the devotional gifts were a means to control the nuns' minds, i.e. their private, spiritual spaces. Moreover, not only gifts and letters, but also books read or made by enclosed nuns for their own use or made for an external request had a predominantly devotional or at least edifying content, helping them not only to meditate and pray, but also, as Thérèse de Hemptinne concludes, "to overcome their spatial confinement and mental isolation."[39]

Earning Good Character by Punishing Disobedience

The fact that the nuns had to pass their lives mainly in silence not only stimulated good order and harmony in the community, but also implied that the nuns could be punished in case of infringement.[40] Valerie Flint, who studied early medieval rules and customs in Benedictine convents, came to the general conclusion that space was a very important conceptual basis for determining the penalty in case the order's rule was violated.[41] Many disciplinary measures that Flint lists in her contribution can also be found in the normative sources for other religious female communities in the (later) Middle Ages in Ghent, including Cistercians and the Canonesses Regular of Saint Augustine.[42] The rule of the latter convent, for example, stipulates that a nun who violated the rule was often banned from taking part in the community meal, or she was isolated in a separate small room for a certain period. Both examples indicate that the punishment consisted of precisely creating a distance between the wrongdoer and her community. This distance was physical as well as psychological. The physical removal of the offender from the community created a gap between exemplary nuns and the wrongdoer, whose error was visible for everyone. Physical punishment became psychological punishment; the offender was subjected to public humiliation within the convent community.[43] According to Flint, the fact that an individual could be rehabilitated and re-educated by evoking guilt and shame is a psychological insight that was highly developed by churchmen while shaping the order rules.

Conclusion

The general Clares' rule of 1263 CE, which was followed in the Ghent Rich Clares' convent in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, was conceived by churchmen and had a regulatory, organizing, and controlling function. Many behavioral stipulations related to or had consequences for the way in which nuns experienced the space inside the convent walls. The regulations aimed at fitting the architectural components within the convent

complex, but also intended to curtail the cloistered nuns' freedom of movement. The strictness with which they were applied was largely determined by the obligation of *clausura* imposed on Urbanist Clares.

The convent walls formed a double restriction: they were a physical as well as a symbolic boundary between the secular world outside and the interior religious world of nuns. However, this dividing line was not the equivalent of a transition from the "public" to the "private" world—as, for example, is the case with the walls of a family home—and therefore did not signify a demarcation of the "space of regular communication" and the "space of daily experience." Entering the demarcated territory inside the convent walls meant entering a world in which there were specific rules for the residents, in which there was a system of order and punishment, in which every act was governed by obedience to a higher authority (the pope, God). In this respect, the nun's living quarters inside the convent walls should preferably be defined as a public space as such rather than as a private space in medieval society. For nuns the private space did exist, but it was reduced to a lesser degree and was largely pushed to the spiritual level. In their spiritual relationship with God, nuns could voluntarily isolate themselves from the "public" community to which they belonged. Yet, this spatial level was not free either of attempts to control and manipulate it in order to create or preserve harmony within the nuns' community.

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End Notes

1. I would like to thank Thérèse de Hemptinne and Steven Vanderputten for their critical comments on this article.

2. Els De Paermentier, "Architecturale ruimte en bewegingsvrijheid van de vrouw in laatmiddeleeuwse Gentse religieuze en caritatieve instellingen," *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 51 (1997): 77-113. In the Middle Ages, Ghent was one of the most important towns in the county of Flanders.

3. Most other religious and charitable institutions in Ghent were only founded in the fifteenth century and left little or none of their own (late) medieval normative sources. De Paermentier, "Architecturale ruimte en

bewegingsvrijheid," pp. 78-82. The above-mentioned fourteenth-century copy of the rule of 1263 is kept in the Rijksarchief [National Archives] in Ghent, in the Fonds Rijke Claren [Rich Clares Fund], under nr. 5.
4. Julie Ann Smith speaks of a "spatial understanding of community" in this connection. See Julie Ann Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives: Penitentials and Nunnery Rules in the Early Medieval West* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 111.
5. Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, p. 155.
6. Harald Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages: The Transformation of Ideas and Attitudes in the Medieval World* (London: Boydell, 2000), p. 33. See also Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 150-151.
7. Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the MA,* pp. 33-61.
8. Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture*, pp. 18-20.
9. Heribert Roggen, "François (Ordre de Saint), IV. Les Clarisses," in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1977), vol. XVIII, cols. 958-965; 958-959. Walter Simons even supposes that the first rule the Clares received from Francis already provided for a form of cloistered convent, but his assumption has not been corroborated in any way. Walter Simons, *Bedelordekloosters in het graafschap Vlaanderen. Chronologie en topografie van de bedelordeverspreiding vóór 1350* (Brugge: Stichting Jan Cobbaut, 1987), p. 123.
10. Julie Ann Smith mentions an insoluble contradiction in prevailing medieval notions about women: they represent on the one hand the ideal of sexually reproductive mothers, and on the other the ideal of asexual virgins. Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, pp. 10-11.
11. Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives,* p. 178.
12. Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives,* pp. 178-180.
13. Carola Jäggi and Uwe Lobbedey, "Kirche-und Klausur-Zur Architektur Mittelalterlicher Frauenklöster," in *Krone und Schleier. Kunst aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklostern. Ruhrlandmuseum: die fruhen Kloster und Stifte, 500-1200. Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Die Zeit der Orden, 1200-1500; eine Ausstellung der Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, in Kooperation mit dem Ruhrlandmuseum Essen,* ed. Jutta Frings and Jan Gerchow (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2005), pp. 89-103; pp. 98-101.
14. Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies. Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 2001), pp. 60-62, 80, & 112.
15. Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "Clausura: die Abgeschlossene Levenswelt," in *Krone und Schleier,* pp. 424-25.
16. Petra Marx, "Die Zeit der Orden 1200-1500," in *Krone und Schleier,* pp. 342-346; p. 344.
17. Klaus Schreiner, "Seelsorge in Frauenklöstern—Sakramentale Dienste, Geistliche Erbauung, Ethische Disziplinierung," in *Krone und Schleier,* pp. 53-65; pp. 60-62.

18. Simons, *Bedelordekloosters,* pp. 130-135. In other Flemish towns such as Bruges, Ypres, and Werken/Petegem, the Clares' convents were also systematically transferred to a second location that was closer to the respective Franciscan convent.
19. Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages* (revised edition) (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 34-37.
20. See Roggen, "Les Clarisses," cols. 958-965, for an in-depth overview of the various stages in which this rule came about.
21. Most Clares' convents in Flanders accepted the rule of 1263. Simons, *De Bedelordekloosters*, p. 124.
22. Roggen, "Les Clarisses," cols. 958-965.
23. Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives,* pp. 10-11, 223-226.
24. See De Paermentier, "Architecturale ruimte en bewegingsvrijheid," pp. 77-111, for a comparative study of the normative sources of these twenty religious and charitable institutions belonging to the various orders.
25. [...] *vivendo in obedientia, sine proprio, et in casitate sub clausura.* Gent, Rijksarchief (RA), Fonds Rijke Claren (RC), 5, fourteenth-century copy of the rule of 1263; Cap. 1.
26. [...] *Quae scala per catenam ferream ex parte sororum studiose ligata, a completorio dicto usque ad primam diei sequentis, continue sit suspensa, et tempore diurnae dormitionis et visitationis [...].* Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap 1.
27. *Ipsum locutorium sit congruae quantitatis, de lamina ferrea subtiliter perforata, et taliter clavis fortibus coaptata, quod numquam valeat aperiri. [...] cui pannus niger lineus interius taliter apponatur, quod nec sorores extra videre valeant, nec videri.* Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 16.
28. *Et taliter disponatur, quod per eam nec intra nec extra valeat aliquis intueri.* Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 14.
29 Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture*, pp. 151-152.
30. *Omnes sorores sanae, tam abbatissa quam aliae, vestitae et cinctae iaceant in communi dormitorio, et quaelibet per se lectum habeat ab invicem separatum.* Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 5.
31. *Lectus tamen abbatissae in tali loco dormitorii disponatur, quod inde ceteros dormitorii lectos sine obstaculo, si commode fieri poterit, valeat intueri.* Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 5.
32. Jeffrey Hamburger, "Die Zellen: Alltag, Andacht und Vision," in *Krone und Schleier,* pp. 434-435.
33. *[...] clausae manere firmiter teneantur, [...] nisi forsan quod absit superveni-re inevitabilis et periculosa necessitas, sicut exustionis ignis, vel incursus hostilis, seu alicuius huiusmodi, que dilationem nullo modo caperent, ad egrediendi licentiam postulandi.* Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 2.
34. *[...] nisi forte de mandatio aut authoritate cardinalis Romanae ecclesiae, cui a sede apostolica generaliter fuerit iste ordo commissus* . In practice, the abbess or convent superior probably also had this responsibility. Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 2.

35. Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 2, art. 3. The chaplain may also have belonged to this group. Th. de Hemptinne, "Het Ontstaan van een Lokaal Scriptorium te Gentbrugge in het Tweede Kwart van de Veertiende Eeuw," *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 23.1 (1969): 3-12, p. 10.
36. [...] *Caveant tamen sibi sorores, quae cum aliquo loqui habent, ne per verba inutilia inaniter se diffundant, nec etiam trahant in locutionibus moram longam.* Gent, RA, Fonds RC, 5; Cap. 2, art. 3.
37. Gabriela Signori, "Wanderer zwischen den 'Welten'—Besucher, Briefe, Vermächtnisse und Geschenke als Kommunikationsmedien im Austausch zwischen Kloster und Welt," in *Krone und Schleier,* pp. 131-140; pp. 131-132.
38. Hamburger, "Die Zellen" in *Krone und Schleier,* pp. 434-435.
39. Th. de Hemptinne, "Reading, Writing and Devotional Practices: Lay and Religious Women and the Written Word in the Low Countries (1350-1550)," in *The Voice of Silence: Women's Literacy in a Men's Church,* ed. Th. de Hemptinne and M.E. Gongora (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 111-126; p.126. On the production of books and manuscripts in late medieval convents, see also Susan Marti, "Das 'Werkhus': Leserinnnen, Schreiberinnen, Künstlerinnen," in *Krone und Schleier,* pp. 504-505.
40. Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, pp. 194-195, 215-217.
41. Valerie Flint, "Space and Discipline in Early Medieval Europe," in *Medieval Practices of Space,* ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka (Minnesota: Minnesota UP, 2000), pp. 149-166.
42. De Paermentier, "Architecturale ruimte en bewegingsvrijheid," pp. 86-109.
43. In this context, Valerie Flint talks about "the disciplinary use of space and shame," and "the power of exclusion from the preferred places within the monastery." Flint, "Space and Discipline," p. 153 & 159.