

ecumenical movement and the Reformed tradition can enrich one another in the theological debate about baptism.

Chapter Five looks at topical themes which are at issue in contemporary baptism theology and liturgical expression and tries to understand these anew from the Reformed theology of the covenant, the unity of the Scriptures and the position of Israel.

The final chapter is an evaluation which tries to make this central part of the Reformed baptism theology and liturgy fruitful for the worldwide church debate as well as the determination of the (theological) meaning of Israel and the Christian understanding of baptism. As such it aims to be a modest starting point for further reflection and study.

### **The Roman Catholic rite of betrothal and marriage in the Low Countries, from the 13th century until the end of the Ancien Régime\***

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This study is devoted to the Roman Catholic Dutch marriage liturgy in written and printed liturgical and juridical sources up to c. 1795. In addition, the question is also raised, to what degree prevailing ecclesiastical standards of engagement and marriage are present in vernacular works by Dutch authors and preachers from that same period, books that were meant for religious education of the faithful. After the Introduction, in which the object of this study is introduced and commented upon, along with definitions, objectives and standard research methods, follow six chapters in three parts (I: Historiography, chapters 1-2; II: Rituals, chapters 3-4; III: Contemporary appreciation and evaluation, chapters 5-6).

In the first section of chapter 1 I discuss the history of the Christian conception of engagement and marriage in Western Europe up to the end of the Middle Ages, as well as ceremonials that are linked to these life-cycle rites. Up to the 11th century rituals surrounding betrothal and marriage were primarily domestic rites of passage, that, unseen by other community members than kinsmen and friends, occurred within the private family group, and needed presumably the presence of a priest. In the 12th century betrothal (*sponsalia*) and marriage (*matrimonium*) were placed under the control of the Church and were gradually taken out of the reach of the family group. When in the 13th century canonists and theologians finally accepted marriage as a sacrament of mercy, the Church assumed and kept all power in marriage matters up to the 16th century. From the 12th century onward most bishops in their so-called synodal statutes – bodies of regulations that touch both discipline and pastoral care including marriage regulation – lay stress on the public character and legality of engagement and the marriage ceremony. As a result of that, they enacted that these rituals have to be solemnly contracted in public: in the portal, nearby the door(s) of the church, in a chapel, or even in the churchyard (*in facie ecclesiae*). In this way these late medieval

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\* *In facie ecclesiae. De katholieke huwelijksliturgie in de Nederlanden, van de 13de eeuw tot het einde van het Ancien Régime*, reeks *Miscellanea Neerlandica* nr. 22, Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2000), 1-XXXI/1-790 pp., gcill., ingen., ISBN 904290965X. Promotie op 20 december 2000, Theologische Faculteit Tilburg.

church-door rites were integrated into everyday ecclesiastical and religious life. Finally, as a result of the decrees on marriage reform of the Council of Trent, diocesan marriage liturgy in the Low Countries – which up to that period should be preferably typified as an ‘open-air’ liturgy with multiform features – lost its specific outdoor-character and was moved into the interior of the church building.

The next two sections deal with two types of written and printed documentary sources of the rite of betrothal and marriage in the Low Countries. These sources show clearly, in what way bishops from the 13th century to the middle of the 16th century, and particularly those in the Southern Netherlands, have translated theological principles of engagement and matrimony to everyday ecclesiastical and religious life. In section 2 I discuss first the synodal statutes of the old dioceses Cambrai, Liège and Utrecht. I emphasize also the importance of some Cambrai codifications as blueprints for the further development of statutes of other Netherlandish dioceses. The late 12th-century *Precepta synodalia* of the Cambrai bishop Rogerius of Wavrin are the first statutes known that mention the mandatory triple reading of the banns (*tres banni*) during mass. This marriage condition was adopted by the Fourth Lateran Council in order to exclude clandestine marriages. The Church accepted these ‘informal’ marriages as true and valid, but condemned these covenants because they are always contracted in secrecy. In section 3 I examine some significant liturgical sources of (Dutch) marriage liturgy, in particular the rite of marriage in the late 15th-century *Missale secundum insignis ecclesiae Cameracensis*, the missal of the authoritative Reims diocese Cambrai. This Cambrai missal is also the oldest printed liturgical source from the Low Countries, that contains the ritual for marriage formally approved by a diocesan bishop. In 1503 the Cambrai marriage liturgy was made more multiform, when the chapter of Cambrai published its *Officiarium curatorum*, a mandatory printed ritual that describes diocesan (para)liturgical rites of everyday occasions in the setting of the local parish. In the second half of the 16th century the printed diocesan ritual became finally a new genre of liturgical textbook for the priesthood.

In the last section of chapter 1 I move on to the importance and appreciation of marriage discussed in the c. 1404 compendium *Tafel van den Kersten gbelove* of the Dominican scholar Dirc van Delf, who was a minister connected with the court of Albrecht of Bavaria, count of Holland. Although in his work Dirc stays true to the medieval theological tradition, the *Tafel* is an important source for this study, because he explains theological concepts and issues in the ordinary language of the faithful. For this purpose Dirc, who proves to be an advocate of ecclesiastical marriage as a purely Christian ideal, does not use Latin, but Middle Dutch. In this section I discuss the following subjects: marriage as a Christian ideal, the marriage of Mary and Joseph, biblical marriage, irrevocable free consent of the bridal couple, spiritual relationship, marriage and sacrament, marriage conditions, the position of husband and wife in wedlock, wedding garment, and some marriages impediments.

In chapter 2 I survey the complex interplay of forces that both religious and secular authorities were faced with during the period from c. 1550 until to the end of the 16th century: the Reformation, the *Formula Reformationis*, the new ecclesiastical organisation of dioceses in the Low Countries (1559), and the promulgation of the conciliar decrees of Trent. I discuss particularly the enactment of the tridentine reform decree *Tametsi* on marriage. In the first section I describe the history of the *Formula Reformationis*, a reformative decree of the German emperor Charles V, in the period between 1521 and 1550. The enactment of this imperial decree, written by the controversial-theologians Eberhard Billick, Johannes Gropper and Julius Pflug, was a serious attempt of a secular

Catholic sovereign to reform the Roman Catholic Church in the German Empire while the Church Fathers were still gathered in Trent, and was meant to stop the ongoing spread of the Reformation. In the *Formula Reformationis*, that also contains matrimonial canon law, the emperor orders all bishops to convoke special reform synods in their dioceses and stipulated that medieval canon law had to be brought in line with all regulations in his decree.

In the next section I move on to the result of the *Formula Reformationis* and describe in what way between November 1548 and October 1550 the bishops of Liège, Utrecht and Cambrai held their reform synods. As a result of this synods the bishops of these dioceses streamlined and accentuated the fossilized medieval canon law of their predecessors into a series of measures adjusted to the requirements of modern time. In this way they modified medieval (matrimonial) canon law into a more simplified and transparent legislation, that was practical for the parish priests, who were responsible for the administration of the sacraments in the local parishes.

In the following section I discuss the plan of the Spanish king Philip II for the creation of a greater number of smaller dioceses in the Low Countries, a plan approved by pope Pius IV in the papal bull *Super universas*. The plan of Philip covered the creation of the archdioceses Cambrai, Utrecht, Malines, and fourteen new dioceses (French Netherlands: Cambrai, Arras, Tournai, Namur, St.-Omer; Northern Netherlands: Utrecht, Haarlem, Deventer, Groningen, Leeuwarden, Middelburg; Flemish-Brabant: Malines, Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Den Bosch, Ypres, Roermond). In this same section I pay also attention to the promulgation of the decrees of the Council of Trent in 1563 in Cambrai, Malines, Utrecht and Liège. In particular, I survey the enactment of the reform decree *Tametsi* (11 November 1563), a decree that marks the canonical conditions for marriage in order to exclude secret marriages. During the second half of the 16th century the implementation by Dutch bishops of *Tametsi* led in most dioceses to the loss of the outdoor-character of the marriage liturgy. *Tametsi*, one of ten canons on marriage reform, stipulates the canonical conditions for the celebration of marriage: public announcement of marriage on three successive feasts during mass; irrevocable consent of both man and woman; recommendation of the formula *Ego vos in matrimonium coniungo*; solemnisation of the marriage *in facie ecclesiae*; presence of the parish priest, or his substitute, and two or three so-called 'instrumentary' witnesses; no living together of man and woman before the priest's blessing in church; recording of the names of the bridal couple and witnesses in a marriage register as well as day and place of the wedding; general confession of both man and woman before approaching the Eucharist and the wedding ceremony. The decree *Tametsi* does not define the outlines of betrothal, which was a popular life-cycle ritual in the Low Countries. The complex interplay of forces that I describe in chapter 2, impelled Dutch bishops in their decisions to go along with the Council and their sovereign. For another thing they looked diligently for a way to hold on to the identity of their dioceses, which they found somewhat in the reformation of sacramental liturgy by publishing their own diocesan ritual. In the printed rituals the Dutch bishops created until the 18th century, they not only tried to resist the complete romanization of liturgy, but were also able to preserve and to uniformize the old liturgical customs of their diocese, including marriage liturgy.

In chapter 3, a purely documentary chapter, in which I describe Dutch marriage liturgy until c. 1795, I analyse nineteen key editions of printed rituals, altogether representing 91 editions originating from the Southern Netherlands (74) and the so-called 'Dutch Mission' (Hollandse Zending) in the Northern Netherlands (17). In five

sections I describe successively the marriage liturgy of Cambrai, the principality Liège, the old diocese Théroutanne, Malines, and of the Dutch Mission. Finally, in the last section I draw up a scheme of all liturgical elements of the rites of betrothal and marriage on the basis of the descriptions of the marriage liturgy in previous sections. As a result of these descriptions, it is then possible to codify and classify the formularies and prayers of the diocesan rites of betrothal and marriage in the Low Countries.

In chapter 4 I map the general outlines of the complex development of the Dutch rite of betrothal and marriage, described in previous chapters, on the basis of the four dimensions of ritual activity: time, space, actors and their ritual actions. In order to do this, I use the ritual categories Van Hooydonk and Wegman distinguish in their *Zij braken hetzelfde brood* (1972), a liturgical-sociological analysis of two celebrations of the Eucharist in the Amsterdam churches 'de Papegaaï' and 'de Spuistraat'. In the first section I survey the description of time in juridical and liturgical sources of Dutch marriage liturgy and I discuss successively the so-called closed times, when engagement and marriage conflict with Advent and Lent, the required term after engagement to celebrate a legitimate church wedding (40 or 42 days), the religious preparation (confession, Eucharist, 'nights of Tobias') of both bride and groom before and after entering wedlock, and the triple reading of the banns of marriage. Finally I raise the question whether bridal couples had perhaps a favourite weekday or time for celebrating marriage. It seems that most juridical and liturgical sources contain some regulation of proper time for marriage. Most of these regulations touch general confession, the Eucharist and the closed times, the period that the Council of Trent appointed between the first Sunday of the Advent and Epiphany, and between Ash Wednesday and Low Sunday. The setting out of this conciliar regulation of time could be found in most of the Dutch rituals that were printed until the end of the Ancien Régime.

In the next section I discuss the spatial dimensions of the rite of betrothal and marriage inside as well as outside the church building. From the data I assembled from written and printed sources, it emerges that the liminal space outside the church - the mandatory place for entering betrothal and marriage until the second half of the 16th century - is by and large described in the following manner: 'nearby the church' (*in facie ecclesiae, ad valvas ecclesie*); by naming a not-well defined location (*in loco celebri et publico, iuxta loci consuetudinem seu honesto*); or as 'in the churchyard' (*cymeterium*). The reason why Dutch bishops, and in particular the archbishop of Malines, accepted the cemetery as a legal place for the celebration of betrothal and marriage, can be explained by looking at its meaning as *locus sacer* or *locus religiosus*, and *locus publicus* in medieval and early modern society. As a sacred place, the churchyard was the place of the dead, but as a profane place, the cemetery was also the place of social action and community life, where justice was administered, people entered into treaty, archives were kept, trade was conducted, and people tended their herds, all affairs that were damned by the religious authorities. In order to rehabilitate the churchyard as a sacred place and preserve its original legal meaning at the same time, Dutch bishops accepted the cemetery as a proper place for religious occasions, such as betrothal and marriage. Due to the decree *Tametsi*, the rite of betrothal and marriage in most Netherlandish dioceses was moved in the second half of the 16th century into the church, as is shown clearly in the marriage liturgy of printed rituals of that period. From that time on these rites lost their specific outdoor-character and were celebrated in the sacred space of the presbytery and the parish or cross altar. Whether this remarkable change in the Low Countries was exceptional, is unclear, because other regional studies are lacking.

In the following section I sketch profiles of the priest, the bride and groom, the principals of engagement and marriage, the instrumentary witnesses, the parents, family and friends of the couple, and of other 'silent' witnesses present on the occasion of betrothal and marriage. First, I examine the way in which juridical and liturgical sources of Dutch marriage liturgy refer to the minister, what paraments these sources prescribe for betrothal and the wedding ceremony (alb, chasuble, maniple, stole, surplice), and the use of altar plates and liturgical books. In this section I discuss also the efforts of the religious authorities to fight superstition among the faithful concerning lay baptism and witchcraft as regards betrothal and marriage. In addition to that, I survey some odd 16th- and 17th-century liturgy-related marriage customs in 's-Hertogenbosch and Roermond. With regard to the principals of engagement and marriage, I sketch the way in which juridical and liturgical sources describe usually bride and groom. Moreover, I discuss the regulation touching age limits, catholicity, confirmation and general doctrinal points of Roman Catholic faith. Finally, I reach some conclusions about the ritual actions the bridal couple contribute to marriage liturgy. I conclude this section by sketching a profile of the (instrumentary) witnesses.

Based on the results of the last section of chapter 3 in section 4 I discuss all liturgical elements of the Dutch rite for celebrating betrothal and marriage. In order to be able to do this, I draw up first what I call 'ritual fingerprints' of the diocesan marriage liturgy in nineteen key editions of printed rituals, described in chapter 3. As a result of these fingerprints, I give a general description and interpretation of the contents and meaning of the liturgical elements of the different Dutch rites for betrothal and marriage. This last section is of important relevance for my concluding remarks in chapter 6, in which I map and group the most important liturgical sources of betrothal and marriage in the Low Countries (Southern Netherlands: Cambrai group, Liège group, Malines group; Northern Netherlands) in terms of their (possible) origin, influence and relationship. The assembled data show which printed rituals have had a strong hold on Dutch marriage liturgy, in particular in the distribution of special formularies and prayers of the rite of marriage: the Liège *Liber sancte ecclesie Leodiensis* (1553), the Ghent *Liber ecclesiae Gandavensis* (1571), and the Malines *Pastorale* (1589).

In chapter 5 I give answers to the question, to what degree prevailing ecclesiastic standards of engagement and marriage are at present in catechisms, sermons, pious tracts and comments and workbooks regarding catechisms by Dutch authors and preachers. These books, dating from the 16th to the 18th century, were published for religious education of the faithful and bring up frequently various kinds of issues surrounding engagement and marriage. In the first section I pay attention to the reading in *Uytlegging van den Mechelschen catechismus* (1788-1794) by Johannes Franciscus Ghislenus Huleu of the marriage liturgy in the 1589 Malines *Pastorale*, by far the most influential printed ritual in the Low Countries. Up to the middle of the 19th century the *Pastorale* was reissued in seventeen of eighteen editions, without any significant change. In his *Uytlegging* Huleu treats engagement as a kind of marriage beforehand ('vóórhuwelijk'), as the proper road to the church wedding. In this section I survey also the meaning of ring ceremony and nuptial blessing, two important liturgical elements of marriage liturgy in works by David, Van den Bossche, Hazart, Verheyen and Valcke.

In the next section I discuss both engagement and matrimony as covenant, in particular as explained in the vernacular tract *De seven sacramenten* (1556) by the Bruges Franciscan Cornelis Adrianus Brouwer. This tract - published during a period when most Dutch bishops did still not have the disposal of their own printed rituals for the diocesan liturgy - I determine the legal meaning and requirements for engagement and

marriage. Moreover, I demonstrate that Brouwer wanted also to learn his readers in what way both matrimonial and marriage vow should be put into words according to rules of grammar.

In the following section I examine the requirement of catholicity as an important aim of religious teaching of the bridal couple, prospective proclaimers of faith in their families, and of the religious education within in the family, as presented in the works of Van den Bossche, Makebljide, De Villethierry, Agolla, De Vloo and Valcke. The Catholic identity of the bridal couple emerges from that the fact, that both man and woman are confirmed by the bishop and have some general knowledge of the doctrinal points of Roman Catholic faith (Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Ten Commandments, Seven Sacraments). The bride and groom that lacked this knowledge were prohibited to enter marriage.

In the last section I move to the personal preparation by the bridal couple for the sacrament of holy matrimony. These preparations were an excellent opportunity for religious exercise and personal sanctification, so to speak, and consists not only of general confession and the receiving of the Eucharist, but also meant, that they should pray and give up all kinds of pleasure and desires. Only in this way, they can approach the sacrament of holy matrimony without any sin. Bride and groom should continue their religious exercise on the day of celebration of their wedding and during the nights of Tobias.

In the first section of the sixth and last chapter I give a short summary of the results of previous chapters. In the next section I confront these results with the traditional image of engagement and marriage in literature, and look, if necessary, for a new understanding of these important life-cycle rites. First, I discuss the reasons why late medieval bishops prescribed the church building and its porch as proper places for the celebration of both betrothal and marriage. I reach the conclusion that, from the time religious authorities in Western Europe began to lay stress on the public character and legality of these rites, medieval bishops selected these places because of their age-long religious and social meaning for community life. This remarkable development could be interpreted as an inculturation process, linking liturgical cult and Christian culture. The church building has always been an important liturgical 'Funktionsort', so to speak, but from the early Middle Ages on it has also had a strong legal meaning in the community.

Secondly, I draw some conclusions on the connection between diocesan marriage requirements in the Low Countries and the reform decree *Tametsi*. I try to demonstrate, that in my opinion the significance of the *forma Tridentina* in literature has always been overexaggerated. The Church Fathers have indeed marked the 'outlines' of marriage, but did by no means invent these requirements. Most of the conciliar marriage requirements were already prescribed in diocesan matrimonial law in the Low Countries at the beginning of the Middle Ages in the 12th and 13th century. Therefore, I suggest not to speak of 'introduction' of the *forma Tridentina*, as so many scholars do usually, but of 'proclamation' of the conciliar reform decree *Tametsi* on marriage reform.

Thirdly, I raise the question whether and in what way Catholic theological perspectives on marriage, that regards both man and woman as administrators of the sacrament of matrimony, can also be applied on late medieval and early modern Dutch marriage. My conclusion is, that the compilers of Dutch printed rituals have indeed accepted common theology of the sacrament of holy matrimony. Moreover, from the end of the 15th century they have deliberately tried to express that theological point of view on the rite of betrothal and marriage, by gradually replacing passive matrimonial

and marriage vows into active vows that must be expressed by bride and groom, a development that ended the late medieval process of clericalization and gave the bridal couple a much more active role in marriage liturgy. The increasing number of vernacular formularies of these vows in printed rituals emphasize the belief of Dutch bishops, that man and woman administer not only the sacrament of holy matrimony to one another, but must also comprehend the legal meaning of their vows.

In the fourth place I survey the position of the bride in Dutch marriage liturgy. From the data I assembled in this study, it emerges that she is described as equal to the groom, and does not depict her inferior and independent.

Then, in the fifth place I discuss Dutch marriage liturgy in European perspective. First of all, I lay stress on the unusual influence of the medieval diocese Cambrai on diocesan matrimonial law in the Low Countries and its carry-over on conciliar matrimonial law. Secondly, I speculate on the possibility that late medieval Netherlandish matrimonial law could have influenced the decree *Tametsi* on marriage reform. Thirdly, I emphasize the extraordinary significance and influence of the 1589 Malines *Pastorale*. The numerous editions of this ritual were only used in the archdiocese itself, but were also used frequently by the priesthood in other Dutch dioceses outside Malines and the Dutch Mission.

Finally, I try to link up both late medieval and early modern matrimonial law and the marriage liturgy in the Low Countries with the historic process of continuity and change.