

## **Van rubriekenjager tot wetenschappelijk grensganger Wordingsgeschiedenis van de liturgiewetenschap (1900-1967) aan de katholieke theologische opleidingen in Nederland in zes portretten**

[From rubric-hunter to cross-border scholar. The genesis of liturgical studies (1900-1967) at the Roman-Catholic training institutions in the Netherlands, based on six portraits]

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The central issue in my research is the development of liturgical studies at the catholic theological institutes in the Netherlands during the period of 1900-1967.<sup>1</sup> Within theology liturgical studies can be considered as one of the younger scholarly disciplines, having only developed into a theological discipline in the Netherlands in the course of the twentieth century. Particularly in the second part of the twentieth century it grew into a valuable and separate academic discipline. Although the highest catholic authority proclaimed liturgical studies in 1963 as a main subject at the catholic academic theological institutes, less than twenty years later a tendency to marginalize liturgical studies took place. Within liturgical studies itself this external process of marginalizing started up an internal debate, national and international, concerning the nature, the applied methods and the object of liturgical studies. Little by little the longing matured in several places in the Netherlands for setting up a study of the genesis and the study of liturgical studies. In 2003 this longing gave birth to a broad, national and ecumenical historiographic research project named *The historiography of liturgical studies in the Netherlands during the twentieth century*. As a monograph of this extensive project my research has – in relation with the above-mentioned debate – a two-fold objective: to make a fundamental contribution to the desired positioning of liturgical studies through the writing of an important part of the necessary thought historiography of the discipline, with a focus on the lecturers who have given an identity to the discipline – in teaching and research – during the twentieth century at various Roman-Catholic theological training institutions. In total I sketch a picture of six lecturers of liturgy through historical biographies.

<sup>1</sup> P.J. VERSNEL-MERGAERTS: *Van rubriekenjager tot wetenschappelijk grensganger. Wordingsgeschiedenis van de liturgiewetenschap (1900-1967) aan de katholieke theologische opleidingen in Nederland in zes portretten* (te verschijnen in de reeks Netherlands Studies in Ritual and Liturgy). Promotie: Aula Universiteit van Tilburg, 4 november 2009, 14.15 uur. Promotor: prof.dr. P.G.J. Post; co-promotor: dr. A.J.M. van Tongeren.

### **Pierre de Puniet de Parry osb (1877-1941)**

Because the Benedictine order has played an important part in the origin of the Liturgical Movement and the development of liturgical studies, I have purposefully dedicated my first portrait to a Benedictine lecturer of liturgy. Immediately my eye fell on Pierre de Puniet de Parry who, already before he entered Oosterhout Abbey in 1910, had achieved an international reputation as an erudite researcher and palaeographer of liturgical sources. Nevertheless he was appointed lecturer of liturgy at his own Benedictine theological training institute for priests, only twenty-five years later, in 1935. This appointment created a fruitful synthesis of his achievements in the past years: the results of his own liturgical research; his interest in the liturgical spirituality and in the theology of the sacraments; his own perception, as a monk, of the Holy Office.

With respect to the content De Puniet restricted himself to the Latin Rite. However, he wanted to approach this Latin Rite broadly. In his opinion liturgy is a location of theology, morals and asceticism. Furthermore he recommended liturgy as an important source of spirituality. In his teaching De Puniet methodically chose for a historical approach of the liturgy and developed with it his own procedure. Little by little he received attention for the interaction between cult and culture, for the influence of various spiritual and theological tendencies and for the anthropological dimension of Christian rites, festivals and symbols. In this context one can speak about a cautious developing anthropological view on liturgy. His complete works have, however, a highly Christian a Christocentric view. Finally, the central objective in his teaching of liturgy was, in his own words, ‘to bring to the surface the soul of liturgical texts and rites and revealing their vivid heart by scientific means, in order to pray with even more vivification’.

### **Zacharias de Korte (1891-1945)**

For thirteen years Zacharias de Korte was the lecturer of liturgy at Warmond, the diocesan major seminary of Haarlem, which was the most renowned catholic scholarly theological institute in the Netherlands around the turn of the century. Through him, his predecessors, and some other interesting persons the close relation which had existed between the Liturgical Movement and the diocesan major seminaries becomes noticeable. Remarkably, this close relation had not immediately transformed the subject liturgy into a scholarly discipline.

When De Korte took up his lectureship halfway through the twenties, the subject liturgy only consisted of instructions in rubrics. Personally he revealed himself to be a real ‘rubric-hunter’, conscientiously following every liturgical law and decree. Nevertheless, he broadened the content of his teachings in liturgy particularly in the thirties. Gradually the study of the original sources and ecclesiastical art, being the two major themes of the *Dutch Liturgical Weeks* before World War II, penetrated his courses. Concerning the study of the original sources, De Korte restricted himself to a popular scholarly and popular histori-

cal approach of liturgy: to reveal the reason of rubrics and to increase the participation in and the love for liturgy. Concerning ecclesiastical art, during the thirties he paid explicit attention within his courses of liturgy to history of art, especially to church building.

### **Jan Prein (1901-1957)**

Jan Prein can be seen as the first Dutchman who has given a full scholarly status to the subject of liturgy. As an unexpectedly designated lecturer of church history, he seized the opportunity to separate permanently the historical approach – which his predecessor Harry Frank had already introduced in the courses of liturgy in the early twenties – from the instruction in rubrics and gave this liturgical-historical approach an autonomous place within the curriculum of the archdiocesan major seminary at Rijsenburg. Within the discipline of church history he created a distinct place for the ‘history of liturgy’ and thereby raised the subject liturgy to a scholarly discipline. Although he was an autodidact, he successfully produced work of a scholarly status. He applied himself to the study of the original sources, developed an extensive liturgical-historical knowledge and a scholarly-critical attitude, which in return increased the scholarly level of the subject of liturgy. In his teachings he restricted himself two-fold: first he treated exclusively the Latin Rite and conscientiously followed the ontogenesis of the official liturgical books; second he exclusively applied a historical approach of the liturgy, even though all kinds of questions started to arise from the pastoral practice in the early fifties. On the other hand it is remarkable how he gradually pleaded for an interdisciplinary collaboration in the study of liturgy. However, I have sparsely found such collaboration in his own courses.

### **Theo Vismans op (1914-1987)**

Of all the portrayed lecturers of liturgy Theo Vismans had the longest lectureship, as many as twenty-seven years. He became lecturer of liturgy in an opportune era, when the official ecclesiastical authority started to show interest in the Liturgical Movement and when there was a growing demand for academically qualified lecturers of liturgy in the Netherlands. In the end Vismans was the first Dutch Dominican and probably also the first Dutchman who was sent to Rome to become skilled in liturgical studies at an academic level. As an academically qualified liturgist he was, as a consequence, not only asked to teach the subject of liturgy at several theological training institutions, but he was also involved in the formation of various scholarly networks of liturgy and liturgical commissions.

The special contribution of Vismans to the development of the subject of liturgy is his multiform approach. In addition he gave the theology of liturgy a basic place within liturgical studies. Inspired by the content of two important

doctrinal documents on liturgy (*Mediator Dei* and *Sacrosanctum concilium*) and on the basis of his phenomenological study of the phenomenon of liturgy, Vis-mans himself tried to develop in his own way a theology of liturgy and gave it a permanent place in his courses of liturgy. Furthermore he designated the importance of Holy Scripture and tradition as well as the essential anthropological basis of liturgy in case of renewal and reformation. Finally, he was a promoter of liturgical-biblical catechism and he contributed to a spirituality with a balanced relationship between personal prayer and liturgy. As a lecturer of liturgy he saw it as his task to build up a thorough and broad scholarly basic knowledge of liturgy among his audience. As a liturgist he particularly saw it as his task, in confrontation with the increasingly urgent question of liturgy-renewal, to orientate and sharpen the thoughts of his audience through his reflections and analyses.

### **Cees Bouman (1911-1988)**

Within my research I pay special attention to the modelling of the subject of liturgy at the first Roman-Catholic university in the Netherlands, erected in Nijmegen at 1923. Through Cees Bouman I particularly zoom in on the turbulent fifties and sixties of the twentieth century. Bouman was a lecturer of liturgy in a special period of transition. His life and his works make painfully noticeable how abrupt and radical the transformations have taken place, particularly during the sixties, and how much those transformations have influenced the *corpus doctum*.

The uniqueness of Bouman consists of the fact that he not only basically was the first Dutchman who appropriated the comparative method of liturgical studies but also elaborated this method. Actually he went much further than Baumstark. As an ordained deacon of the Slavic-Byzantine Rite, he could not only study comparative liturgical studies in a practical way, but he even saw opportunities to give precious impulses to the renewal of the Latin Rite. Moreover, his observation of the close original relationship and communality between the diverse types of liturgy was an important basis and incentive for his commitment with regard to reunification and ecumenism. His ecumenical thoughts even surpassed the reunification of the Eastern and Western Church. Through the ages dissension had also arisen within the Western Christian Church, a fact that he wanted to pay attention to in his own field of study. So as the first lecturer of liturgy he gave room to the study of Reformational liturgies in his courses and took up with that the ecumenical idea which was more and more resounding in the Dutch society since the Second World War. With his broad view he also looked across several other boundaries. He crossed the boundary of his own discipline by following the developments within other academic disciplines with interest and by critically weighing up their significance for the development of liturgical studies. He also crossed the borders of his own country: not only did he participate as one of the first academically quali-

fied liturgists at international study gatherings, as the first Dutch lecturer of liturgy he published in French, English and German and made himself heard internationally; in addition, through several publications he oriented the Dutch view towards the international forum, towards all kinds of movements which were going on and towards publications which could be important for the Dutch situation. Conversely he was asked as one of the first Dutchman for a scholarly contribution abroad. A mere comparative cultural-historical approach of the liturgy was nevertheless not sufficient for Bouman, rather he eagerly went into depth and reflected on the essence of the liturgy. Starting from the definition of Vaggagini and different from Vismans, he innovatively developed a theology of the liturgy and emphasized the liturgy as an important location for theology towards conciliar celebrities like Edward Schillebeeckx op.

### **Henk Manders cssr (1913-1996)**

Through Manders a particular perception can be gained of the transition in the 1960s from an enclosed professionally directed theological training towards an open theological academic society-directed training, especially of a transition which has taken place at Limburg.

Academically qualified at Rome and Paris, Manders managed to assimilate the various scholarly disciplines which he had personally mastered: philosophy, theology, liturgy and finally also pastoral theology. He manifested himself as a cross-border scholar who tried to get a dialogue going between several disciplines, thereby already effecting a radical turn within liturgical studies in the fifties. First Manders started without theological a-priories from liturgy as it was given shape. Moreover he started from the perception of liturgy. So he tried to discover the meaning and function of actual liturgy through a phenomenological and literary, textual-critical analysis of the current liturgy and by means of an attentive eye for the genesis of the liturgy in question. Leading questions in this procedure were: what actually happens to the worshipers? What happens when a sacrament takes place? What kind of actions takes place and what occurs in these actions? Which words are spoken and which meaning they have? He discovered that the Catholic liturgy is far richer than was thought. With this method of theologizing on the basis of the current liturgy and the main features of the development of liturgy he could join in with the new era wherein the image of human, world, church and God were undergoing a profound transformation, something the historians could not manage until then. Susceptible to people's seeking after the meaning of their life and through this after their God and listening to the rich Christian tradition, he sought basic thoughts which could proclaim the apostolic message new and comprehensible for the present time. All this has influenced his teaching as well: he no longer taught ready-made answers 'from on high', but with the students he went in search of essential and practical rules of thumb in order to create liturgy, time after time,

adapted to the signs of the times, but with huge respect for the essence of the Christian tradition.

### Balance and perspective

To operate with scholarly-historical portraits clearly confirms the idea that scholarly development forms a part of a continually changing culture wherein the personality of individuals really matters. With regard to it can be established that in my research the immediate *Sitz im Leben* unexpectedly influences, both positive and negative. Concerning the influence of the specific ecclesiastical and social Dutch context can be pointed out three striking issues: 1) the influence of developments from the nineteenth century; 2) the role of Catholic intellectuals and artists; 3) the predominance in the Netherlands, until the Second World War, of the Liturgical Movement as a spiritual countermovement. Concerning the influence of the liturgical and liturgical-scholarly context can be established four issues: 1) the close relation between the Liturgical Movement and the diocesan seminaries; 2) two documentation and re-evaluation moments, especially around the first decades of the twentieth century and around the fifties; 3) the 'two-way mirror effect' with regard to the international contribution of the studied lecturers of liturgy; 4) the displacement in the appreciation of the subject of liturgy 'from climax towards margin'. In addition my operating with scholarly-historical portraits has made visible blind spots in the present view on the past. Therefore, the present view on the scholarly-liturgical efforts of the first generation of academically qualified liturgists requires some re-adjustment: already during the fifties they gave a particular dynamic to the development of liturgical studies in the Netherlands, a dynamic which is postponed because of their mobilization as liturgy experts for and their intense involvement in the large-scale liturgical reform process after Vatican II. In fact during the fifties the seeds are sowed of the present identity and the current profile of liturgical studies in the Netherlands. The studied lecturers of liturgy have played a crucial role in this 'sowing time'. Thanks to my research method of scholarly-historical portraits it has become noticeable that much more has been taking place within the field of liturgical studies than initially thought.

Proceeding from all these research data I am now looking critically-reflectively to the present international debate about the position and the profile of the subject liturgy at the scholarly theological training institutions.

In the current debate the broadness of the employed methods and alliances with other disciplines is often criticized. My research project shows that an alliance with *Ritual Studies* basically is not in discontinuity with the past. Furthermore it shows that a theology of liturgy, even of the sacraments, is an essential part of liturgical studies and that a vivid dialogue with the systematic and fundamental theology is indispensable. According to me, the development of an adequate theology of liturgy even has a crucial bridging function between

theology and religious studies, between cult and culture, between Christian belief and ritual action. In addition such a theology can lend a helping hand to the rediscovering of the specific Christian identity vis-à-vis the current multireligious society today with its multiform rituals and vis-à-vis the contemporary culture wherein the Catholic Church no longer functions as the 'Royal Warrant Holder' of rituality. Finally this urges liturgical studies to see its study object in a different light and to enlarge this object.

Through my research I have discovered two documentation and re-evaluation moments in the past and it becomes clear that in fact a third documentation and re-evaluation moment is going on as a result of the profound transformations in society and culture. Such a process does not happen without a struggle. Particularly in this process of re-evaluation grew rather unexpectedly alienation between the ecclesiastical leaders and the lecturers of liturgy during the seventies. An important question is how the interrelation is going to develop, particularly now, that the Catholic theological scholarly trainings have split up: on the one hand there is the ecclesiastical theological training; on the other hand there is the academic setting of the humanities. Personally I argue in favour of a differentiated, context-related teaching and research program; a fruitful cross-fertilization within liturgical studies that surpasses the various theological training contexts; as well as a challenging, positive contribution to interdisciplinary forms of cooperation.

