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THE CULT OF THE CROSS IN LATE ANTIQUITY  
AND THE MIDDLE AGES

A CONCISE SURVEY OF ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

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## 1. Introduction

There are a great number and a great diversity of sources available for the study of the history of liturgy. These include buildings such as churches, mausolea and baptisteries; objects such as sarcophagi, relics and altar plates; images on walls and floors and in manuscripts or books; literary sources such as descriptions of celebrations, collections of sermons and books with texts that are read, prayed or sung in the liturgy. This variety of sources can also be appealed to for the study of the public cult of the Cross. However, I restrict myself to the literary sources and concentrate especially on texts in the books that were needed for the execution of liturgical celebrations and rituals. This means that I ignore the abundant cross iconography and that I will also refrain from presenting a view on the art-historical images of Crosses in liturgical books or Crosses and reliquaries of the Cross that are used in liturgy.

Those who involve liturgy in historical research must realise that in the course of time liturgy has manifested itself in many ways. Not only are there substantial differences between the liturgy of Eastern and Western or Orthodox and Latin churches, but in the West, too, – to which I shall restrict myself in the following article – liturgy has taken on many forms. Broadly speaking, the development of Western liturgy can be considered as a gradual process within which a transition has taken place from diversity to uniformity.<sup>1</sup> The period dating from late ancient times and the early Middle Ages, especially, is characterised by a rich variety of traditions. Various liturgical families existed together. In the city of Rome two types of liturgy developed even: one papal liturgy that was centred round the pope and his court, and a presbyterial liturgy in the local churches or parishes of the city. Besides these, we can distinguish local or regional indigenous traditions with their own heritage in North Africa, Spain, Gaul, Ireland, Northern and Southern Italy. Although these traditions share much in common, diverse theological, ecclesiastical and political spheres of influence, as well as the character of the various local populations all play their part in the shaping

of each of these peculiar rites. They demonstrate unity in diversity. During the time of the Carolingians a strategy was introduced which was meant to uniformise this diversity. In this the liturgy of the pope in Rome functioned as guiding principle. This policy was continued by the Ottonian emperors (919–1002). An influential book that was published in line with this development is the so-called *Romano-Germanic Pontifical* that was put together half way through the tenth century, at the time of Otto the Great, in which Frankish and Germanic elements were combined with Roman ones.<sup>2</sup> In Rome this book became the standard for papal liturgy. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, liturgy was given a major Roman impulse under the popes Innocentius III (1198–1216) and Honorius III (1216–27). Liturgical books were developed that described in great detail the way in which the liturgy of the hours and of Mass in the papal court (the Roman curia) were celebrated. These books were to form the basis for the revision of the missal and the breviary that Haymo of Faversham, the fourth general superior of the Franciscans, put together in 1243 and 1244.<sup>3</sup> These *Ordo Breviarii* and *Ordo Missalis* were spread throughout the West via the Franciscans. From these books there is more or less a straight line leading to the missal and breviary that were drawn up by order of the Council of Trent in the second half of the sixteenth century. This brief outline shows that since the beginning of the thirteenth century, liturgy has consolidated and has not undergone any more drastic changes since. Uniformisation was complete. This perhaps explains why this period is often ignored.

True, a dominant historical development of liturgy can be outlined, but there is evidence that liturgical practices have always been diverse in successive periods. The same also applies to the cult of the Cross. In order to demonstrate this, I will present an overview of the development of feasts of the Cross and Cross rituals, based on examples from a number of liturgical books that at the same time mark the most important stages of the development of liturgy in the West. The following will be discussed: the feasts of the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September and the Finding of the Cross

<sup>1</sup> See for some historical overviews WEGMAN 1990; WEGMAN 1994; METZGER 1994 and CHUPUNGO 1997, pp.93–327.

<sup>2</sup> VOGEL 1963–72.

<sup>3</sup> DIJK 1963.

on 3 May, Good Friday and Palm Sunday.<sup>4</sup> It is impossible to describe and analyse the rise, spread, development and significance of the Cross ritual on all these feast days within the scope of this article. The subject matter is much too complex, the material too extensive and the period too vast. For this reason I must restrict myself and concentrate on the origin of the cult of Cross in late antiquity, on its spread and growth in the early Middle Ages and on its diversity in the thirteenth till the sixteenth century, with emphasis on ritual patterns.

## 2. The origins of the public cult of the Cross

Although I concentrate on the Cross in Western liturgy, I must firstly focus on the East, namely Jerusalem, where the cradle of the public cult of the Cross lies.<sup>5</sup> According to tradition, which is based primarily on the development of legends, Helena (circa 248 – circa 328), the mother of Emperor Constantine the Great (272/273–337), found the Cross on which Jesus died there at the beginning of the fourth century.<sup>6</sup> Through a divine sign, she was able to point to the place where three Crosses were found, as well as the inscription and nails with which Jesus was nailed to the Cross. The Cross of Jesus was identified due to the fact that a sick person was healed after having been brought into contact with the true Cross. On the basis of historically verifiable information on the legend, the finding of the Cross can be dated in 325. Helena sent a piece of the Cross to her son Constantine and another piece remained in Jerusalem. Half way through the fourth century it appears that pieces of the Cross were already widespread as a relic.

A large basilica soon arose on the site where the Cross was found. This Martyrium basilica was consecrated in 335, and would in a few years grow into a large complex when the Church of the Resurrection, or Anastasis rotunda, was built over the grave of Jesus, situated next to the basilica on Golgotha. At the beginning of the fifth century, during the yearly feast of Dedication for these churches, on September 14, “the venerable, life-giving and holy Cross was displayed for the whole congregation”.<sup>7</sup> The reason for this

display or exaltation of the Cross during the celebration of Dedication was the discovery of the true Cross, according to archdeacon Theodosius in the report of his pilgrimage to Palestine circa 530. In the report Egeria made of her journey round 380 to the area we now call the Middle East and in which she gives an accurate description of liturgy in Jerusalem, the dedication feasts of both churches are already mentioned and she, too, emphatically connects this feast to the finding of the Cross;<sup>8</sup> however, she makes no mention of a display of the Cross. Thus by the end of the fourth century we find the conviction that the discovery of the Cross was related to the feast of Dedication and from the beginning of the fifth century this feast of Dedication is accompanied by a display of the Cross. The finding of the Cross is in this way related to the Dedication and provides the motifs for a display or an exaltation of the Cross on the day of the feast of Dedication. In other words: because of the finding of the Cross, it is displayed during the feast of the Dedication. Together with the veneration of the Cross this display forms the precursor and the oldest core of what would grow into the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. This means that the finding of the Cross is the foundation for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. When, in the course of time, the feast of Dedication of both churches was celebrated together on 13 September, the feasts of Dedication and display or exaltation of the Cross were separated; since then the finding of the Cross was celebrated together with the display or exaltation of the Cross the day after the feast of Dedication, on 14 September.

From the sixth century onwards, this Cross ritual and the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross were familiar not only in Jerusalem but also elsewhere in the East. The adoption of this feast seems to be connected to the presence of Cross relics that have become widespread since half way through the fourth century. The dispersion of this feast has resulted in it no longer being ‘locally bound’ to the place of the finding of the Cross, nevertheless, it was ‘relic bound’.

In the sixth and seventh century this ritual was referred to as *hupsoosis* and as *staurophaneia* by the monk Alexander of Cyprus (527–65) and in an Easter chronicle.<sup>9</sup> At the same time the Easter chronicle shows that, meanwhile, the ritual of the display of the Cross developed into a threefold elevation of the Cross in the seventh century.<sup>10</sup> One or two

<sup>4</sup> The votive Mass in honour of the Cross that was put together by Alcuin (approx. 730–804) and that could be devoted to the Cross weekly on a Friday or any other desired moment throughout the year, is left aside here.

<sup>5</sup> See for a more detailed description, argumentation and literature TONGEREN 2000, pp.17–39.

<sup>6</sup> For the legend of the finding of the Cross, of which three different versions developed in the second half of the fourth and the first half of the fifth centuries, see STRAUBINGER 1912; DRIJVERS 1992; HEID 1989; BORGEHAMMAR 1991. See for the iconography of the legend of the finding of the Cross BAERT 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Armenian Lectionary 67–68 (RENOUX 1969–71, vol.2, pp.360–63). The oldest stratum of the Armenian Lectionary goes back to the liturgical customs of Jerusalem circa 415; see *Ibidem*, vol.1, pp.169–81; vol.2, pp.168–70.

<sup>8</sup> Egeria, *Itinerarium* 48,1–2 (WILKINSON 1981, p.146).

<sup>9</sup> ALEXANDER MONACHUS 1860, col. 4072; *Chronicon paschale* 1865, col. 713.

<sup>10</sup> *Chronicon paschale* 1865, col. 988: *en tei tritei hupsoosei*.

centuries later a hundredfold *Kyrie eleison* was to accompany a fivefold elevation and display of the Cross: twice towards the East and once towards the other directions of the wind.

Egeria's report of her journey shows that the Cross relic occupied a prominent position in the liturgy of Good Friday round 380, too.<sup>11</sup> That day was one great ongoing observance of the memory of Jesus' Passion and Death, which continued with a vigil into early Saturday morning. It started with a veneration of the Cross in the morning between the second and sixth hours (8.00–12.00 AM). The bishop who held the relic of the Cross was surrounded by deacons, who saw to it that nobody bit off a piece of the Holy Wood. The faithful filed past the bishop one by one, touching the relic of the Cross and the Title first with their forehead and then with their eyes. Then they kissed the Cross.

In short: the oldest layer of the public cult of the Cross lies in the East, has a connection with the finding of the Cross and is relic bound. Already round 400, two days had become especially distinguished with a ritual of the veneration of the Cross, whereby a Cross relic is displayed to the people. On Good Friday each person individually approaches the relic and venerates it with a kiss and on 14 September the Cross is lifted or exalted in veneration.

### 3. The spread of the cult of the Cross in the West during the early Middle Ages

The development of liturgy in the early Middle Ages can to a great extent be gathered from the various liturgical books that have been preserved. The origin, dating, content and compound of these books reflect the various liturgical traditions or families that existed together, their mutual influence and the successive stages that can be distinguished within the genesis of liturgy. There were diverse books with collections of texts in circulation that are distinguished according to genre in sacramentaries with prayers, lectionaries with readings, antiphonaries with chants and *ordines* with rubrics and concrete and practical descriptions of a service. At the beginning of the second millennium these separate books will gradually be combined to form the so-called *Missale plenum*, in which all the texts necessary for a service are conveniently arranged together in one volume. For the development of the cult of the Cross in the early Middle Ages, I concentrate especially on the sacramentaries and the *ordines* and on the *Romano-Germanic Pontifical*

dating from half way through the tenth century that, within the phasing of the history of liturgy I maintain here, more or less ends the period of the early Middle Ages. These sources allow us not only to become acquainted with the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and with the celebration of Good Friday, but also with the feast of the Finding of the Cross on 3 May.

#### 3.1. Exaltation of the Cross and Finding of the Cross

Although after the fourth or fifth century relics of the Cross also reached Rome and other places in the West, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross was not immediately transferred from the East with them. Apparently the presence of a relic of the Cross was not in itself sufficient reason to proceed to the introduction of a feast of the Cross. On the basis of the oldest liturgical sources, the introduction of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross to the West can be dated to the first half of the seventh century, and took place in Rome.<sup>12</sup> The oldest element was composed merely of a Cross veneration rite that was added to the celebration of the already existing feast of the two bishops Cornelius and Cyprian on 14 September, the same day on which a display and an exaltation of the Cross took place in the East. This Cross ritual was probably introduced in Rome during the time of the pontificate of Honorius I (625–38), and originally only took place in St. Peter's. This can be deduced from the Sacramentary of Padua (the so-called *Paduensis*) that added an oration to the service of Cornelius and Cyprian with the heading *ad crucem salutandum in sancto petro* on 14 September. This heading suggests a ritual in honour of the Cross and this suggestion is strengthened and confirmed by the oration itself: *Deus qui unigeniti tui domini nostri iesu christi praetioso sanguine humanum genus redemere dignatus es, concede propitius ut qui ad adorandam uiuificam crucem adueniunt a peccatorum suorum nexibus liberentur. Per dominum.*<sup>13</sup> The liturgical practice for which this oration was intended only had a ritual of the veneration of the Cross on 14 September.

In the following decades this veneration ritual was developed into a fully fledged feast with a complete service of Mass for the benefit of the papal liturgy as well as the liturgy in the titular churches.<sup>14</sup> An indirect liturgical source shows that, at the end of the seventh century, a Cross ritual also

<sup>12</sup> See for a detailed argumentation and analysis of the information TONGEREN 2000, pp.41–68.

<sup>13</sup> Sacramentary of Padua no. 665 (DESHUSSES 1971, p.659).

<sup>14</sup> Sacramentary of Trent nos. 728–31 (DELL'ORO 1985, p.241f.), later followed by the Sacramentarium Hadrianum nos. 690–92 (DESHUSSES 1971, p.271) and the Old Gelasian Sacramentary nos. 1023–25 (MOHLBERG 1960, p.158).

<sup>11</sup> Egeria, *Itinerarium* 36,5–37,9 (WILKINSON 1981, pp.136–38).

takes place in St. John's of Lateran. In the *Liber pontificalis* the biographer of Pope Sergius (687–701) writes that in the basilica of the Redeemer a relic of the Cross is venerated and worshipped with a kiss on the day that is referred to as *dies Exaltationis sanctae Crucis*, which as a 'technical term' refers to the already established name for what by now had become a familiar feast.<sup>15</sup> The only thing known about the arrangement and proceedings of the Cross ritual is that the Cross is venerated with a kiss. This indicates that the ritual has fewer similarities with the veneration of the Cross in the East at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross than on Good Friday. On 14 September the ritual that takes place there consists of a multiple lifting of the Cross in veneration, whilst according to Egeria, on Good Friday the Cross is venerated with a kiss, at the end of the fourth century in Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup>

An important factor which may have been of decisive influence in the introduction of the feast in the West is the return of the relic of the Cross in Jerusalem, taken by the Persians in their conquest of Jerusalem in 614, and recaptured in 631 by the Emperor Heraclius. A number of years later the Jerusalem relic was moved to Constantinople for fear of a new Persian raid.<sup>17</sup> The triumphal return to Jerusalem of the relic that had been plundered and the entry of this relic several years later into Constantinople took place during the reign of Pope Honorius I, and could have been the concrete impetus for publicly venerating the relics of the Cross present in Rome. The return of the relic due to the efforts of Heraclius and the possible introduction of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in the time of Honorius would seem to be more than a chance coincidence. A reasonable case can be made for the connection between the two events in the context of the rivalry between Rome and Constantinople, which manifested itself more emphatically beginning in the sixth and seventh century.<sup>18</sup> The tense relationship could have contributed to people in Rome wanting to imitate this feast of the rival metropolis when it received an extra impetus there because the Byzantine Emperor brought the stolen relic of the Cross back to Jerusalem and several years later brought the once again threatened relic to Constantinople.

When Roman liturgical books were adopted in the Frankish realm during the course of the eighth century, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross also made its appearance there, where it was unknown till then. When they adopted the feast, the Franks did not copy only one of the existing

Roman forms, but a selection from the Roman material that was at hand, moreover, this was sometimes slightly adapted and edited and elements from indigenous traditions were incorporated.<sup>19</sup> In the Frankish sacramentaria of the eighth century, we no longer come across the ritual of the veneration of the Cross, which was the foundation of the feast. Some time later the *Romano-Germanic Pontifical* (RGP), that for that matter only devotes two sentences to the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, appears in this short passage to refer to this old custom when it is mentioned that in the Lateran palace the holy Cross and the sandals of the Lord are venerated.<sup>20</sup> Possibly, in this reference a relic has been preserved from the oldest layer of the feast that consisted of a veneration of the Cross with accompanying prayer after the celebration of the feast of Cornelius and Cyprian, as the Sacramentary of Padua indicates with regard to St. Peter's, or it resumes the practices that existed round 700, during the reign of Pope Sergius in the Lateran (see above). The increase in relics must have been the reason why, besides the Cross, the alleged sandals of Jesus also became a cultus object at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

On the introduction of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in Rome, the feast of the Finding of the Cross on 3 May was already commonly accepted,<sup>21</sup> just like the indigenous Gallican and Hispanic traditions that, for that matter, are unfamiliar with the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.<sup>22</sup> The Exaltation of the Cross was spread throughout the West via Rome and the Frankish liturgy. As far as arrangement is concerned the feast of the Finding of the Cross is simpler because it has no special Cross rite, as was the case in the Exaltation of the Cross in the East and during the initial period in the West. The motives for the origins of the feast of the Finding of the Cross are similar to the arguments that underlie the origin of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The discovery of the Cross by Helena is also claimed as the foundation for this feast, because according to a legend that has existed since the beginning of the sixth century, the Cross was found on May 3, circa 309, during the reign of Pope Eusebius.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, according to the Latin version of the Cyriacus legend of the finding of the

<sup>15</sup> DUCHESNE 1955, p. 374.

<sup>16</sup> See above § 2.

<sup>17</sup> FROLOW 1961, p. 193.

<sup>18</sup> WEGMAN 1994, pp. 102, 104–06, 108f.; and particularly pp. 172f. and 249f..

<sup>19</sup> See for example the Frankish Sacramentary of Gellone nos. 1448–51 (DUMAS 1981, pp. 189f.).

<sup>20</sup> RGP 99, 460: In ipsa die salutant in palatio Lateranensi sanctam crucem et sandalia domini (VOGEL 1963–72, vol. 2, p. 140).

<sup>21</sup> For the origin of the feast of the Finding of the Cross in the West and the relation between the two feasts of the Cross, see ANDRIEU, vol. 2, 1948, p. 504f.; CHAVASSE 1958, pp. 350–64; FROLOW 1961, p. 164; PASCHER 1963, p. 445f.; AUF DER MAUR 1983, p. 187; VOGEL 1986, p. 116, note 170.

<sup>22</sup> See in relation to the feast of the Finding of the Cross in the Hispanic and Gallican traditions TONGEREN 2000, pp. 253–74.

<sup>23</sup> DUCHESNE 1955, p. 167.

Cross, Helena herself had ordered that this event be commemorated every year on May 3. In addition to the discovery of the Cross, its recovery by Heraclius also seems to have been celebrated in this May 3 feast.

The two Cross feasts are also closely related with regard to content. The same themes, motives and qualifications of the Cross appear in both the Roman and the Frankish forms.<sup>24</sup> The relationship explains why a number of prayers that in Roman sources have been included for the Finding of the Cross, have been adopted in Frankish sources for the Exaltation of the Cross.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.2 Good Friday

The celebration of Good Friday that has developed in the Latin church in the course of time, goes back to the indigenous liturgy of the city of Rome.<sup>26</sup> Up till the seventh century, the liturgy there consisted merely of a liturgy of the word that was ended with a series of solemn orations. Round about the beginning of the eighth century two elements were added: a veneration of the Cross and a communion rite. The roots of the ritual of the veneration of the Cross, which I restrict myself to here, lie in Jerusalem; as we have already seen, Egeria is the first to mention this at the end of the fourth century. When this ritual becomes familiar in Rome, it turns out that a number of practices exist together. I gathered important information on the celebration of Good Friday in Rome and in the Frankish region from a number of sources of which the *Ordines romani* (OR) deserve a brief explanation. An *ordo* consists of a ritual description of a liturgical service and can, among others, be related to the Eucharist, baptism or a series of feast days throughout the year.<sup>27</sup> The *ordines* restrict themselves to a description of the ritual order of the service. The actual texts that are prayed, read and sung are only indicated with *incipit*; the complete texts can be found in other books (sacramentaries, lectionaries and antiphonaries). In this way they provide a detailed account of the various services. Most *ordines* are originally Roman but have been brought by visitors from Rome from the North and adapted to the local situation, thus the later ones also give us insight in Frankish liturgical practices.

The papal liturgy, as described in *Ordo romanus* 23 from the end of the seventh century or the first half of the eighth century,<sup>28</sup> began on the eighth hour with an elaborate procession from Saint John Lateran to the Church of the Holy Cross. The Pope and his retinue complete this journey barefooted. In the procession a relic of the Cross was carried by the deacon in a precious decorated box. During the procession Psalm 119 (*Beati immaculati*) was chanted, probably with the antiphon *Ecce lignum crucis* ('Behold the wood of the Cross on which hung the salvation of the world').<sup>29</sup> After entering the Jerusalem Church, as the Church of the Holy Cross is also named, the box containing the relic was placed on the altar after which it was opened by the Pope. Then the Pope prostrated before the altar and thus before the Cross, and prayed. Hereafter he was the first person to venerate the Cross with a kiss, in hierarchical order followed by the rest of the clergy. To give the people the opportunity to venerate the relic of the Cross, it was moved first *super arcellam ad rugas*. This movable fence or *ruga* expressed the demarcation between the nave and the sanctuary or *presbyterium*, which is not accessible for the people. After the men had venerated the Cross first, the relic was moved again to another place where the women were allowed to venerate the Cross. In the meantime the liturgy of the word had already started immediately after the veneration of the Cross by the Pope. As a conclusion of the service the people had the possibility to communicate. The Pope and the deacons explicitly did not.

Before the end of the seventh century the Good Friday liturgy varied slightly in the other churches of Rome.<sup>30</sup> The presbyteral liturgy, as described in the Old Gelasian Sacramentary,<sup>31</sup> starts on the ninth hour and does not include a procession. The Cross (a relic?) is already placed on the altar without any ceremony before the liturgy begins. Then there is a liturgy of the word, followed by the veneration of the Cross. Thus both do not occur at the same time as with the papal liturgy. Moreover, the veneration of the Cross and the communion rite are combined. After the liturgy of the word the consecrated bread and the wine are placed on the altar and the Cross is venerated and kissed by the priest alone before the altar. Then preparations are made for the Communion (Lord's prayer and embolism) after which everybody venerates the Cross and communicates.

<sup>24</sup> For the texts and an analysis of them, see TONGEREN 2000.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.98–115; 128–31.

<sup>26</sup> See in relation to the history of Good Friday in this period: RÖMER 1955; AUF DER MAUR 1983, pp.107–13; TONGEREN 1990; KLÖCKNER 1991. For Good Friday in the Hispanic tradition, see TONGEREN 1999.

<sup>27</sup> A critical edition of fifty ordines complete with introductions has been provided by M. Andrieu (ANDRIEU 1931–61). For a profile and classification of the ordines and a description and characterisation of the fifty ordines, see VOGEL 1986, pp.135–224. See also MARTIMORT 1991, pp.15–47.

<sup>28</sup> ANDRIEU 1931–61, vol.3, pp.270–72. According to *ibidem*, p.266, this *ordo* dates from the first half of the eighth century; CHAVASSE 1958, p.96, however, dates this *ordo* just before the end of the seventh century.

<sup>29</sup> According to REGAN 1978, p.4. See in connection with this antiphon *ibidem*, p.6, and TONGEREN 1990, p.110.

<sup>30</sup> Dating of this ritual according to CHAVASSE 1958, p.96.

<sup>31</sup> Old Gelasian Sacramentary nos. 395–418 (MOHLBERG 1960, pp.64–67).

Several decades later, according to *Ordo romanus* 24, the Good Friday liturgy has seen several alterations.<sup>32</sup> There are two services. The liturgy of the word is moved to the third hour (9.00 h) and takes place in one of the churches in the city. In the evening then, during vespers (*ad vesperum*), the veneration of the Cross and the Communion rite took place in the separate churches. But again, also here, first the liturgy of the word was held. When this was finished the Cross was held by two acolytes at some distance from the altar and it was venerated in hierarchical order by the clergy and the people. Furthermore, the veneration of the Cross was now being accompanied by a hymn for the first time: Psalm 119 and the antiphon *Ecce lignum crucis in quo salus mundi pependit*, which was mentioned earlier in OR 23 for the procession of the papal liturgy.

These three descriptions show that the veneration of the Cross is a characteristic element with which, round 700, the original liturgy of the word of Good Friday was extended in Rome. It is assumed that the Cross rite is adopted from the East, namely between 683 and 752 when a number of Popes of Eastern origin settled in Rome.<sup>33</sup> The sources described here date from this period and can therefore confirm this assumption. But, from approximately 630 onwards, there was a veneration of the Cross in Rome on 14 September as the forerunner of what was to become the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. For this reason there is a chance that in Rome, the veneration of the Cross on 14 September could possibly be older than that on Good Friday and that the ritual of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross acted as an example for the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday.<sup>34</sup>

The Good Friday liturgy in Frankish sources is grafted onto the Roman one and there is absolutely no relationship whatsoever with Gallican tradition, not even with regard to the liturgy of the word that the celebration of Good Friday is restricted to in Gallican liturgy. The unfamiliarity in Gaul with the veneration of the Cross and the communion rite becomes obvious in two monastic *ordines* from the late eighth century: the veneration of the Cross is absent and the communion rite is described in the wrong order, which could be taken to be evidence that this was not yet a familiar custom.<sup>35</sup> However, various Frankish *ordines* adopt the structure of OR 24: the liturgy of the word in the morning, which is repeated in the afternoon and then followed by the veneration of the Cross, after which the communion rite

takes place (OR 27, 35–50; OR 28, 29–48; OR 29, 28–43 and the RGP 99, 304–35).<sup>36</sup> In OR 31, 34–52; OR 32, 6–15 and OR 33, 4–8 from the second half, late ninth century and tenth century respectively, no distinction is made between a morning and an afternoon service, rather there is one continuous service on the ninth hour, moreover, the veneration of the Cross and communion by the priest and the people are separated from one another.<sup>37</sup> With regard to the veneration of the Cross, Frankish sources show that the ritual arrangement has been extended and that more hymns and prayers have been added. Because it is impossible to describe all the *ordines* and the differences between them often relate to details, I allow myself to be led, for an account of the Cross ritual, by OR 31 from the second half of the ninth century and the RGP, respectively. In OR 31, after the veneration of the Cross and communion by the bishop a more extensive Cross and Communion rite takes place for the people. In OR 31 there is a veiled Cross which is placed behind the altar. From here two acolytes carry it in front of the altar in three stages. During the three standstills two cantors bow before the Cross and sing the *Trishagion*. After the third time the bishop unveils the Cross and sings the *Ecce lignum crucis* in a high voice (*excelsa voce*). Then the Cross is lifted up by the cantors and brought to a different place where it is venerated, whilst in the meantime Psalm 119 is sung. Then everybody communicated, while the hymn *Pange lingua* was being sung with the antiphon *Crux fidelis*. The *Trishagion* is a bilingual antiphon (Greek and Latin) in which a threefold giving of thanks is followed by a supplication: *hagios ho theos, hagios ischurros, hagios athanathos, eleison himas; sanctus deus, sanctus fortis, sanctus immortalis, miserere nobis*. The *Trishagion* originates from the East; it occurred for the first time in the West in Gallican liturgy, from where it was adopted in Frankish liturgy for the first time in OR 31 and in the antiphonal of Corbie from the ninth century<sup>38</sup> as independent hymn at the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday.<sup>39</sup> Besides this *Trishagion*, in OR 31, we also encounter the Cross hymn *Pange lingua* from Venantius Fortunatus for the first time, dating 569.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> ANDRIEU 1931–61, vol. 3, pp. 291–94.

<sup>33</sup> RÖMER 1955, p. 72; AUF DER MAUR 1983, p. 109f.; KLÖCKENER 1991, p. 224.

<sup>34</sup> TONGEREN 2000, p. 120f.

<sup>35</sup> According to ANDRIEU 1931–61, vol. 3, pp. 138–40; first the Lord's Prayer is prayed and then bread and wine are fetched. This concerns the *Ordines romani* 16 and 17; see *ibidem*, p. 151f.; 188f.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 355–58; 397–401; 442f. In OR 29 two gatherings have been joined to make one service that starts on the eighth hour. VOGEL 1963–72, vol. 2, pp. 86–93.

<sup>37</sup> ANDRIEU 1931–61, pp. 496–99; 518–20; 531f. OR 33 only mentions a veneration of the Cross by priests and deacons, followed by the Lord's Prayer. Neither the people nor communion are mentioned.

<sup>38</sup> HESBERT 1935, p. 97.

<sup>39</sup> With regard to the *Trishagion* and its origin in the East, see BAUMSTARK 1922, pp. 2f.; ENGBERDING 1930; QUASTEN 1943, pp. 57–61; WELLESZ 1947, pp. 11–18; VIRET 1982.

<sup>40</sup> See TONGEREN 2000, pp. 229; 236–43. In some *ordines* a number of other chants are mentioned which I do not discuss here. One manuscript from OR 27 from the ninth and tenth century mentions for the



According to the RGP, after the liturgy of the word on the ninth hour, the Cross is placed in front of the altar. However, there is no threefold moving of the Cross and the removal of the veil from the Cross is also not mentioned. Here as well as in the antiphonal of Senlis that dates from the ninth century,<sup>41</sup> the *Trishagion* is not sung independently but in combination with verses 1–3 of the *Improperia*, the so-called grand *Improperia*.<sup>42</sup> There is also no distinction made between the veneration of the Cross by the bishop and the people. Whilst the antiphon *Ecce lignum* with Psalm 119 is being sung, the Cross is venerated (*adorare*) with a kiss by the bishop, the clergy and the people, respectively. At the same time the bishop kneels three times and each time an *oratio ad crucem* is prayed. Then a number of other chants for during the veneration of the Cross are mentioned.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. The cult of the Cross in the thirteenth up till the sixteenth century in the Low Countries

In the brief global outline of the development of Western liturgy in the introduction, I characterised this development as a transformation from diversity to uniformity. The books that Haymo of Faversham drew up in the thirteenth century were responsible for the spread of uniform Roman liturgy in the West. However, the so-called *Libri ordinarii* or Ordinals, which were widespread in the thirteenth till the sixteenth century, show that the image of a uniform liturgy can be put into perspective and differentiated. In this section I will show to what extent this applies to the cult of the Cross.

##### 4.1. Libri ordinarii

*Libri ordinarii* do not essentially differ from the *Ordines romani* already discussed above and can in a certain sense be considered as their successors.<sup>44</sup> The *liber ordinarius* is a guide or a directory that enables the celebrant and his assis-

tants to perform liturgical rituals by describing the way in which the hours and Mass should be celebrated daily throughout the year. Through *incipit* the order of the chants, the prayers and the readings is indicated, the complete texts of which are included in other liturgical books. Besides the *incipit* of the chant texts and reading texts, ordinals also give instructions for the course of celebrations and describe the rules with regard to the arrangement of feasts and festivals that might coincide due to variables in the ecclesiastical year. They describe when and which bells should be rang, which robes in which colour should be worn, the composition of processions and the route to be taken, which functionary reads a text, prays or sings and where in the church this takes place, etc. Because of their sometimes detailed specifications ordinals are able to give good insight in actual liturgical practice. The ordinal is drawn up for the benefit of liturgy in parish churches, collegiate churches, cathedrals and monasteries, and is therefore a local source, but what it demonstrates could go beyond the individual church. This applies in particular to the ordinals of abbeys and cathedrals, which acted as model books for other monasteries and for the parishes within the diocese. Because these are connected to a church or a diocese they have maintained many local traditions and customs, which makes them interesting to study.

In the sixties of the twentieth century S. van Dijk wrote that the study of ordinals that are invaluable to historic research, had till then been grossly neglected.<sup>45</sup> However, the situation has in the meantime altered and interest in this type of source has increased, though it is notable that the number of editions clearly exceeds the number of studies.<sup>46</sup> In the following I have concentrated on published ordinals from the Low Countries. These include the following six, all of which belong to collegiate churches: two ordinals from churches in Utrecht that at the same time belong to the diocese of Utrecht, St. Martin's<sup>47</sup> and St. Mary's;<sup>48</sup> besides these also the ordinals of four churches that fall under the diocese of Liège: Tongeren (church of Our Lady)<sup>49</sup> and Louvain (St. Peter's),<sup>50</sup> and two from Maastricht, the church of

veneration of the Cross, besides the antiphon *Ecce lignum* also in addition *Dum fabricator* and *Crux fidelis*. In OR 32 during the veneration of the Cross the antiphon *Ecce lignum* with Psalm 67 is sung, and OR 33 mentions the antiphon *Crucem tuam adoramus, Ecce crucem domini* and *O crux benedicta*.

<sup>41</sup> HESBERT 1935, p. 97.

<sup>42</sup> The grand *Improperia* consist of three verses; the beginning of the first verse reads *Popule meus*. Further on we also encounter the small *Improperia*, the so-called *Ego*-laments, that are made up of nine verses with the antithetical structure *Ego te – et tu*.

<sup>43</sup> Compared with OR 31 the response *Vadis propitiator* with the verse *Venite et videte* are new, and the chants *Crucem tuam* with Psalm 67, *Dum fabricator* and *O admirabile pretium*.

<sup>44</sup> For a general introduction to the ordinals, see FOLEY 1988; MARTIMORT 1991, pp. 49–85.

<sup>45</sup> DIJK 1965–68, p. 2060f.

<sup>46</sup> For overviews of ordinals published, see MARTIMORT 1991, pp. 54–61; KOHLSCHNEIN/WÜNSCHE 1998, pp. x–xiv. The editions of the ordinals of Trier and of Essen are also accompanied by a detailed study, see KURZEJA 1970; BÄRSCH 1997; see also KOHLSCHNEIN/WÜNSCHE 1998.

<sup>47</sup> SÉJOURNÉ 1919–21. The editing of this ordinal is dated at the beginning of the thirteenth century, but has been preserved in a copy from half way through the fourteenth century, according to *ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> VELLEKOOP 1996. This ordinal is dated approximately 1425, according to *ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>49</sup> LEFÈVRE 1967–68. This ordinal is dated in 1435–36, according to *ibidem*, p. ix.

<sup>50</sup> LEFÈVRE 1960. The manuscript dates from the fourteenth century, but the original probably dates back to the beginning of the eleventh century, according to *ibidem*, p. vii.

Our Lady<sup>51</sup> and the church of St. Servatius.<sup>52</sup> Although these various churches had a certain autonomy as collegiate churches, they lie within the range of influence of the two dioceses. In connection with the study of the Cross in early medieval liturgy in the last section, I sought, within these ordinals, for the way in which the cult of the Cross gained shape in them. Besides the two feasts of the Cross and Good Friday, I also include Palm Sunday in this section.<sup>53</sup> In order to enhance the individuality of the ordinals, I also compare them with the ordinals of Haymo of Faversham, which include as it were the summary of the preceding history.

#### 4.2. The feasts of the Cross

We have seen that on the introduction of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in Rome in the seventh century, the Cross relic plays a prominent role and that the veneration of the Cross was dominant. Halfway through the tenth century the veneration of a Cross relic is again emphatically mentioned in de RGP, whilst during the intervening period there is no talk of a relic and Haymo also does not mention it.<sup>54</sup> But in a number of ordinals the Cross relic is present. In Tongeren, before the beginning of the celebration of both feasts of the Cross the relic is displayed on the high altar.<sup>55</sup> In St. Martin's in Utrecht this is only done at the feast of the Finding of the Cross; the Cross relic is then placed together with the reliquary of Wiro on the public altar during first vespers.<sup>56</sup> However, the Cross displayed is not venerated in a ritual. In Tongeren and in Our Lady in Maastricht, however, a procession with a *statio* in the centre of the church takes place in honour of the Cross at various times during the day.<sup>57</sup> St. Mary's in Utrecht mentions yet another custom that takes place on 14 September: after the Mass the

canons climb the choir and drink the wine that has been poured on the wood (Cross) of the Lord.<sup>58</sup> I will come back to this in the section on Good Friday.

Whether the Cross is given a special position and is also possibly included in a separate ritual appears to depend on the presence of a Cross relic. Because the Cross is emphatically mentioned in the ordinals of those churches that have a Cross relic. If there is no relic available then a Cross ritual is also not mentioned. However, the presence of a Cross relic does not automatically imply that it is displayed during Cross feasts, or that it is integrated into a ritual. This is shown, for example, in Our Lady in Maastricht that has a Cross relic but does not include it in the liturgy of the two Cross feasts. Our Lady even had a third Cross feast due to the relic, the *festum Allationis sancte Crucis* in October, for which the service of the Exaltation of the Cross was mainly used. During this feast the transfer in 1204 of the Cross relic together with other relics, from Constantinople to Our Lady in Maastricht was celebrated.<sup>59</sup> The fact that Haymo makes no mention of a display of the Cross or of a Cross ritual during one of the Cross feasts can be explained by the assumed presence of a relic of the Cross. And because not every church had a Cross relic at its disposal, Haymo could disregard it; after all, his books were of 'universal' significance and not locally bound, thus local customs and (im)possibilities were not taken into account.

From the moment the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross was introduced and spread in the West, it was added to the existing feast of the martyrs Cornelius and Cyprian on 14 September. The RGP only implicitly mentions the martyrs when, for the readings, it refers to the communal of more than one martyr.<sup>60</sup> Haymo and the Ordinals also combine both feasts, although the Exaltation of the Cross is dominant. Haymo gives the two martyrs the most important position in the first and second nocturn, whilst in the ordinals the *natale* of the martyrs is only mentioned as a commemoration (*commemoratio*) in the Mass and/or office. In Louvain and in both churches of Maastricht this commemoration has been added to with that of Maternus, confessor and first bishop of Tongeren.<sup>61</sup> Maternus is, after Mary, the second patron of the church in Tongeren.<sup>62</sup> Apparently, the local saint of this former city is celebrated in the whole dio-

<sup>51</sup> TAGAGE 1984. This ordinal dates from the third quarter of the fourteenth century according to *ibidem*, pp. xx–xxi.

<sup>52</sup> TAGAGE 1993. This ordinal dates from the end of the thirteenth century according to *ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> In the late Middle Ages the custom arose of portraying the ascension during the feast of Ascension with a cross in a scenic depiction, like in the ordinal of Essen when, during the singing of the antiphon *Ascendo ad patrem*, a deacon and a sub-deacon climb the steps of the altar of Michael and place the Cross they are carrying on the wall above the altar; see BÄRSCH 1997, pp. 296; 362. In the ordinals from the Low Countries studied here, such a visualisation or portrayal with the use of a Cross is, however, not mentioned.

<sup>54</sup> For the services for the Exaltation of the Cross in Haymo's ordinals, see DIJK 1963, pp. 161f.; 298.

<sup>55</sup> LEFÈVRE 1967–68, pp. 414; 509.

<sup>56</sup> SÉJOURNÉ 1919–21, p. [11]. The whole celebration of the Exaltation of the Cross is a copy of the celebration of the Finding of the Cross, with the exception of the display of the Cross relic, which is left out because the vespers and Mass are not attended by canons from the other churches, according to SÉJOURNÉ 1919–21, p. [15].

<sup>57</sup> LEFÈVRE 1967–68, pp. 509f; 415–17; TAGAGE 1984, pp. 179f.; 216.

<sup>58</sup> VELLEKOOP 1996, p. 166: *Missa finita domini ascendent chorum, bibentes de vino ligno Domini superfuso.*

<sup>59</sup> TAGAGE 1984, p. 225f.; see also p. 119f.

<sup>60</sup> RGP 99, 460; VOGEL 1963–72, vol. 2, p. 140.

<sup>61</sup> LEFÈVRE 1960, p. 244; TAGAGE 1984, p. 216f.; TAGAGE 1993, p. 150f.

<sup>62</sup> His *depositio* is celebrated in great style as a triplex feast on 25 September, with an octave on 2 October (LEFÈVRE 1967–68, pp. 520–28) and his *translatio* on 23 October (LEFÈVRE 1967–68, p. 538f.). See LEFÈVRE 1967–68, vol. 1, pp. xiii; xxxix–xl.

cese of Liège. An additional extension in the ordinals compared to Haymo concerns Mary. Tongeren has a commemoration of Mary in the first vespers and the lauds, whilst the second vespers of the Exaltation of the Cross is completely taken up by Mary, because the first vespers are then sung from the octave of the Nativity of Mary that was introduced in 1245. With regard to Maastricht too, Servatius and Our Lady refer to the Nativity of Mary, whereby Our Lady, after the second vespers, also mentions a suffrage of Nicomedes whose feast is on 15 September, too. In St. Mary's in Utrecht the office emphatically mentions Mary, so because of the octave the preface of the Nativity of Mary is prayed during the Mass of the Exaltation of the Cross. This inventory shows that in Marian churches especially, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross has to compete with the octave of the Nativity of Mary.

During the feast of the Finding of the Cross most ordinals also mention a commemoration of a number of saints. These include the martyrs Alexander, Eventius, Theodore and Juvenalis, whose feast was also already celebrated on 3 May, according to Roman and Frankish sources.<sup>63</sup>

As far as the rank of the feasts of the Cross is indicated in the ordinals, this varies from duplex for both feasts in Tongeren and in St. Mary's in Utrecht to triplex in Our Lady's in Maastricht, whilst the Exaltation of the Cross in Servatius is a feast with nine readings.<sup>64</sup>

With regard to the content, the feasts of the Cross are to a large extent interchangeable. The text material, that is almost entirely taken from early medieval Roman and Frankish sources, is in many respects similar. For this reason, in the description of the form for one feast, references can regularly be made to the other Cross feast. Texts that refer to the legend of the Finding of the Cross occur predominantly but not exclusively during the feast of 3 May. Thus, with regard to the readings in the nocturns of the Exaltation of the Cross, Tongeren and Our Lady in Maastricht also refer to the legend of the Finding of the Cross.

#### 4.3. Good Friday

In the early Middle Ages Good Friday was celebrated in various ways. Of the three main components – service of the Word, veneration of the Cross and communion rite – the veneration of the Cross underwent major changes in the tenth century, as has been described on the basis of the RGP and OR 31. Some of the elements from the veneration of the

Cross in the RGP are recognisable in the books of Haymo, but he also seems to pay tribute to *Ordo romanus* 31 in particular, though he does not copy it.<sup>65</sup> Haymo moved the time of the celebration forward: the celebration of Good Friday follows the none that is chanted on the sixth hour. During the veneration of the Cross, the Cross is moved from the right-hand corner of the altar to the left-hand corner and centre in three phases. This threefold moving of the Cross is now also accompanied by an unveiling of the Cross in three phases, whilst at the same time the antiphon *Ecce lignum* is sung three times, louder and louder (*altius*), each time followed by prostration. Subsequently, the Cross is venerated by kneeling three times and kissing the Cross; the bishop does this on bare feet. During the veneration of the Cross a number of hymns are sung, including the *Trishagion* with the grand and small *Improperia*, thus including the nine *Ego* verses. Therefore, with Haymo this singing does not take place at the beginning of the ritual during the (threefold) moving of the Cross, rather it is a part of the veneration of the Cross; moreover, in the books of Haymo, this is the first time we encounter the *Improperia* in this extended version.

As far as the ordinals are concerned Liège, Servatius and St. Martin's are left out of consideration because they provide little or no indication for the veneration of the Cross and compared with the other ordinals, they do not contain any new elements.<sup>66</sup> Insofar as the other ordinals indicate a time for the beginning of the celebration, this varies from the terce (St. Mary's), to the sext (Our Lady) and the none (Tongeren). Use of the liturgical colours also varies. Black in Tongeren, red in Our Lady and in St. Martin's the choir wears green robes, the priest, the deacon and the sub-deacon black chasubles and two other priests white chasubles.

In Tongeren the veneration of the Cross starts with a procession that is made up of two children with a lighted candle, one child with a veiled Cross, two children in albs, two canons and a deacon, sub-deacon and dean. The latter holds a small veiled box that contains a Cross relic. The group stands facing the choir on the left-hand side of the altar, the first position of the threefold move that we also encountered in OR 31 and Haymo (though Haymo starts in the right-hand corner; in Louvain, too, the veiled Cross is situated on the right side of the altar). However, the next two positions differ. The group moves from the left-hand corner of the altar to the middle of the choir and from there

<sup>65</sup> ДІК 1963, pp.240–45.

<sup>66</sup> In St. Martin's the veneration of the cross is not mentioned; but there are two priests who chant the *Popule meus*. But on the basis of a bishop history that was published in the eighteenth century SÉJOURNÉ 1919–21, p.162, concludes that during the night of Good Friday a veneration of the Cross in front of the Cross altar (*ante chorum*) was customary.

<sup>63</sup> St. Martin's in Utrecht is the only church that does not mention the commemoration of these saints.

<sup>64</sup> LEFÈVRE 1967–68, pp.415 and 509; VELLEKOOP 1996, pp.132 and 165; TAGAGE 1984, pp.179 and 216; TAGAGE 1993, p.150.

to the centre of the church, that is to say, under the triumphal Cross. Each movement is accompanied by the singing of one of the three verses of the grand *Improperia*, followed by the *Trishagion* whereby the choir kneels three times and kisses the floor (there is no moving in Louvain and during the *Trishagion* there are three bows). On arriving in the centre of the church, the dean unveils the Cross relic and lifts it up so that it can be seen. Everyone kneels and beholds the Cross and the dean sings *Ecce lignum* three times, louder (*altius*) each time. The triumphal Cross that was covered with a veil is also unveiled, as well as the veiled Cross that was carried during the procession. There is a stretcher under the triumphal Cross and beside this a decorated chair (*cathedra*); the dean then places the Cross relic on the chair, following which each person according to hierarchy venerates it by kissing the floor and the Cross in a kneeling position. Notably it is emphasized that the Cross relic involved is described in the explanation as one that was received from the cathedral in Liège as a sign of solidarity and affection.<sup>67</sup> Besides this relic there are two other Crosses involved. Both the procession Cross and the triumphal Cross are also veiled to start with and their veils are removed at the same time as that of the relic. The *Trishagion* and the *Improperia* are, contrary to the Haymo version but as in OR 31, not sung during the veneration of the Cross but during the threefold procession.

In Our Lady in Maastricht, besides a Cross that is covered with a pure purple cloth another veiled Cross is also carried, namely the Cross that is venerated on Palm Sunday.<sup>68</sup> Here there is no threefold moving, but whilst the group moves to the centre of the choir the *Trishagion* with the three verses of the grand *Improperia* are sung like they are in Tongeren; only kneeling and kissing the floor in between is not done. The Cross is then unveiled, displayed and venerated in the same way and during the singing of the same hymns as in Tongeren. Meanwhile the dean, deacon and sub-deacon kneel beside the Cross facing the altar and a number of prayers are said in silence. The ritual is very similar to that of Tongeren. In Tongeren, however, there is certainly a Cross relic involved that is surrounded with complete reverence. Although Our Lady also has a Cross relic it is not explicitly mentioned here.

In St. Mary's in Utrecht, too, the ritual takes place in a similar way, although the procession is of a more modest composition and the threefold moving occurs at the high altar. Of the two priests involved, it is said that they are barefoot.

In the ordinals, the ritual of the veneration of the Cross varies slightly in parts. These differences relate in particular to the composition and route of the procession, and to the performance of the *Improperia* and the *Trishagion*. With regard to the other sources mentioned, too, there are no great differences. For example, the small *Improperia* that Haymo indicates for the first time are not adopted in any of the ordinals. However, in some ordinals customs involving the Cross on Good Friday are referred to that are absent in the early medieval sources mentioned and that are also not indicated by Haymo. They appear, therefore, to be from a later date. First of all this concerns a purification or consecration rite. In Tongeren, following the vespers that comes after the communion rite, the chalices and relics are washed with water and immersed in water. This water is then kept for the whole year for the benefit of the sick. Our Lady in Maastricht has a similar ritual in which, following the veneration of the Cross, the dean as well as the others remove their chasuble; after this is done the dean receives the Cross relic, the deacon a pyx with relics and the sub-deacon the other unveiled Cross. They enter the church where a font is ready to be blessed and in this font they wash (*lavent*) the Cross and the relics whilst at the same time saying some prayers. The faithful may then drink from the font. Usually this ritual is called the washing of the Cross with water and wine, and takes place between the veneration of the Cross and the communion rite.<sup>69</sup> In Tongeren, however, it takes place at a different time (after the vespers), and in both ordinals the wine is absent, but there are other objects involved: the chalices that are used for the consecrated gifts of bread and wine,<sup>70</sup> a Cross and relics of the Cross especially. However, in Tongeren and Our Lady it appears that these objects are not the most important, but the water in which they are washed. The healing significance of these objects, the Cross especially, are passed on to the water that has touched them. That is why I would refer to this ritual not so much as a washing of the objects mentioned, but rather a consecration of water.

St. Mary's has a different version of this ritual, but it is more difficult to interpret. It is connected to or part of the communion rite. After the wine has been sanctified by mixing it with a piece of consecrated bread (the so-called *immixtio*, or *consectatio per contactum*), those who wish to do so recite the evening psalms at the presbytery together with the priest. The priest then takes the Cross in his right hand (*lignum Domini*, which probably refers to a relic) and in his other hand he holds a collecta with which he blesses

<sup>67</sup> LEFÈVRE 1967–68, p.161.

<sup>68</sup> This procession cross, that is used every Sunday, is covered with a white cloth on the first Sunday of Lent and is unveiled on Palm Sunday in the graveyard; TAGAGE 1984, pp.43 and 58.

<sup>69</sup> AUF DER MAUR 1983, p.112; BÄRSCH 1997, p.145.

<sup>70</sup> The fact that the chalices are also washed in Tongeren seems to be in reminiscence of the ablution, but then it would be more natural for this to take place at the conclusion of the communion rite and not after the vespers.

the wine. A deacon then holds an amphora or jug containing wine and another deacon the chalice. The priest holds the Cross above the chalice and the deacon pours the wine over the Cross; this wine is again poured back into the amphora after which a sip is taken from the wine in order according to rank. This is (somewhat abruptly) the end of the office of Good Friday. This ritual can be compared with the one that was mentioned above that takes place in St. Mary's on 14 September. In this the wine that was poured over the Cross relic is drunk after the Mass. Just as in Tongeren and Our Lady in Maastricht, here too the Cross is primarily an instrument and not an object: it is used to bless or sanctify the wine. As far as Good Friday is concerned, this could indicate that there is therefore no washing of the Cross in this case, but a consecration of the wine; thus the drinking of the wine refers to the chalice communion. However, this is not a satisfactory solution to this ritual, because the wine is consecrated twice; this has already been done by means of the *immixtio*. Moreover, what is not mentioned is the communion of the Eucharistic bread, which would be more obvious on Good Friday. As far as 14 September is concerned, the explanation that this ritual is a chalice communion is also not the most natural one, because at this time there is a normal celebration of the Eucharist, including consecration and communion. To me this remains an inexplicable ritual that is probably locally restricted because it is only mentioned in one ordinal (though twice it is true).

In connection with this washing of the Cross, in Our Lady in Maastricht there is the so-called *depositio crucis* of which the *elevatio crucis* on Easter Saturday Night forms the counterpart. The former is probably of oriental origin and takes place on Good Friday.<sup>71</sup> According to the fundamental pattern of this ritual that was widely spread in the second half of the Middle Ages, on Good Friday a grave is created in a free space next to the altar or elsewhere in the church.<sup>72</sup> After the veneration of the Cross it is wrapped in cloths and laid in the grave (*deposito*). A wake is held at this grave up till Easter Saturday Night, and before the Easter matins the Cross is removed from the grave (*elevatio*), though without any form of ritual. The *visitatio sepulchri*, an acting out of the visit the three women paid to the grave, fits in perfectly with this, because when the three people who portray the women arrive at the grave, the Cross, that symbolises Jesus, has disappeared. This acting out of Jesus' burial and resurrection is described in the West for the first time in the *Regularis concordia* from Winchester by bishop

Aethelwold, dating approximately 970.<sup>73</sup> According to the variation of this fundamental pattern, in Our Lady the dean moves to the place in the church where the grave is situated and places the Cross under the cloth with which the subdeacon carried the Cross (*deposito*). The communion rite comes after the burial of the Cross. The grave with the Cross is guarded with respect up to and including Easter Saturday night; the cloth, that was received from Mary of Magdala as sweat cloth (*sudarium*), is then shown to the people and laid on the altar during the whole week. In Our Lady this 'play' of the *visitatio sepulchri* is familiar because it is mentioned that this is executed *sicut consuetum est*,<sup>74</sup> but the *elevatio* of the Cross is not mentioned.

In St. St. Martin's in Utrecht the Cross is also buried.<sup>75</sup> However, this does not occur directly after the veneration of the Cross, but after the service when the lay people have been sent out of the church. Then two priests who carry the Cross receive two stolas, after which they carry the Cross to the altar of Mary that is at the back of the church.<sup>76</sup> A grave has been made there in which the Cross is buried. A large cloth is laid on the grave and candles are placed at the head and foot that are not extinguished until the day of resurrection when the *Te Deum* is sung. Before sunrise on Easter morning the canons are woken at the crack of dawn and a number of them go in a small procession to the grave and remove the Cross. During the singing of the antiphon *Cum Rex glorie* the Cross is placed in front of the altar of John, where it remains until the beginning of matins. Meanwhile all the bells ring. This *elevatio* differs from what is customary, because generally the Cross is removed from the grave without any form of ritual and without anyone being present.<sup>77</sup> In the Low Countries this ritual was not generally widespread; it is only mentioned in connection with St. Martin's in Utrecht and the Our Lady in Maastricht.

#### 4.4. Palm Sunday

In Roman liturgy in the tenth century the celebration of Palm Sunday is added to with the commemoration of the entry into Jerusalem that was taken from other liturgical traditions.<sup>78</sup> This commemoration preceded the usual Eucharist and took place outside the church or outside the city. Its main components comprised of a service of the Word, a blessing of the palms and a procession to the

<sup>71</sup> DALMAIS 1961; GSCHWEND 1965, pp.166–70.

<sup>72</sup> Separate grave buildings outside the church are also known; see LIPP-HARDT 1977, p.28f.; KROESEN 2000.

<sup>73</sup> SYMONS 1953. In addition to, or instead of the Cross a host was also buried.

<sup>74</sup> TAGAGE 1984, p.70.

<sup>75</sup> SÉJOURNÉ 1919–21, pp. [26f.].

<sup>76</sup> See the floorplan that is added in SÉJOURNÉ 1919–21 after page [38].

<sup>77</sup> HEITZ 1963, p.181; GSCHWEND 1965, p.12; BERGER 1976, pp.77–80; LIPP-HARDT 1977, p.29.

<sup>78</sup> AUF DER MAUR 1983, p.99f.

church. Before entering the city or church this procession is interrupted once and there is a *statio* with a veneration of the Cross. We come across a detailed description of this ritual for the first time in the RGP.<sup>79</sup> Having reached the place where the Cross is, it is sung that people prostrate themselves with beautiful palms for the coming Lord and go to greet Him with hymns and songs of praise. Chasubles and cloaks and palms are laid on the ground and whilst singing the *Pueri Hebreorum* first the disciples then the layboys bow down and venerate the Crucifix. The children of the choir and clergy alternately sing the hymn *Gloria laus*, whereby the Gospel is faced or the head bowed towards the Cross. Subsequently everyone lies down on the ground, including the bishop or priest who, lying in front of the Cross with the whole people, venerates the Crucifix, whereby the people are given the opportunity to lay flowers or branches. The *statio* is ended with a prayer after which the procession with Cross and banners continues on to the city or church. In this ritual the Cross and Crucifix as well as the book of Gospels<sup>80</sup> are symbols of Jesus.

From the eleventh century onwards there were all sorts of variations to the veneration of the Cross, a number of which are explained by H. Gräf.<sup>81</sup> These appear to be locally defined, which is probably the reason why Haymo ignores them. He is familiar with the procession but does not mention the ritual surrounding the Cross. Except Servatius the ordinals of the Low Countries mention the veneration of the Cross. The fundamental pattern has been retained: after or during the terce the blessing of palms, followed by procession with veneration of the Cross. The blessing of palms is hardly described at all: the missal must be consulted for this. The procession with the veneration of the Cross is more or less described in detail, and although not all the ordinals are complete, it appears that the actual form differs from church to church. Apparently there was a great diversity because the customs also mentioned by Gräf,<sup>82</sup> only correspond in part with the descriptions in the ordinals. The chants have the least differences being very similar to one another, but the location and use of veiled or unveiled Crosses, in particular, vary most. In Tongeren the *statio* takes place in the centre of the church.<sup>83</sup> A veiled Crucifix and a veiled Cross carried by a boy are unveiled, just like the

veiled Cross relic that the dean carried in the procession. Preceding this *Ave rex noster* is sung three times, responded to with *Fili David, redemptor mundi*, following which everyone kneels and kisses the ground. After the unveiling this procedure is repeated twice. In Louvain the veneration of the Cross takes place on entering the church, where people kneel three times in front of the Crosses and texts put there, whilst the antiphon *Ave rex noster* is sung.<sup>84</sup>

From Our Lady in Maastricht the procession goes to the cemetery. Here a Cross has been placed against the wall in front of the chapel of Stephen. Whilst the choir sings the dean, kneeled in front of the Cross with the deacon and subdeacon, says a few prayers in silence. The Cross is then unveiled, after which it is praised and venerated followed by prostration. The *Ave rex noster* is sung three times followed by *Vexilla regis*. On the way back to the church the venerated Cross is carried by two priests preceded by two school children with unveiled procession Crosses. On the way school children sing the *Gloria laus* before the Cross.<sup>85</sup>

The two ordinals from Utrecht refer to a communal practice. The veneration of the Cross takes place in a third church, St. Peter's, where a veiled Cross has already been placed in front of the choir. A procession leaves from St. Martin's to go to St. Peter's, where the Cross is venerated.<sup>86</sup> The unveiling of the Cross is not mentioned. From St. Mary's, there is also a procession to St. Peter's for the veneration of the Cross, but this procession – with the Cross and relic box (*scivis*)<sup>87</sup> – goes to St. Martin's first. After the Cross has been venerated everyone returns to St. Martin's and on the way a few chants are sung, then they go back to their own church for the celebration of Mass.<sup>88</sup> Apparently, in Utrecht the veneration of the Cross took place together in one church.

This ritual on Palm Sunday is a strong reminder of the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. The hymns are to a great extent different, but the unveiling of the Cross, the prostration and the kissing of the ground are elements that are already a part of the form of Good Friday. There does seem to be a difference in interpretation. On Palm Sunday the entry into Jerusalem is acted out. The Cross symbolises the historic Jesus who, as it were, enters the city and is applauded and venerated. This historic reminiscence and representation does not take place at the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. In this case the Cross refers sooner to the exalted and glorified Jesus.

<sup>79</sup> RGP 99, 185–89; VOGEL 1963–72, vol.2, pp.47–49. See for a description and comments GRÄF 1959, pp.115–19. Because we only encounter this custom with regard to the Middle Ages in the RGP, it is not discussed in the previous section, but here in relation to the ordinals in which it also appears.

<sup>80</sup> Possibly this refers to an old custom, according to GRÄF 1959, pp.116; 124–26.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.119–24.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>83</sup> LEFÈVRE 1967–68, p.146f.

<sup>84</sup> LEFÈVRE 1960, p.74: *paratis omnibus crucibus et textibus*.

<sup>85</sup> TAGAGE 1984, p.58.

<sup>86</sup> SÉJOURNÉ 1919–21, p. [25]

<sup>87</sup> *Scivae* are probably upside down, cone-shaped reliquaries; see VELLE-KOOP 1996, p.255.

<sup>88</sup> VELLEKOOP 1996, p.89.

## 5. In conclusion

The sources that have been studied in this paper show that the two feasts of the Cross and the veneration of the Cross on Palm Sunday and Good Friday have continued to develop up till the late Middle Ages. This applies to a greater extent to the ritual form than the textual one.

The Cross ritual, which is the foundation for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, disappears when the feast becomes widespread in the Frankish realm. On the other hand, the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday continues to exist and is further developed in a ritual sense in Frankish sources and the Ordinals. Moreover, new rituals arise surrounding the Cross during feasts of the Cross and also on Good Friday and Palm Sunday.

The uniformisation of the liturgy was, along Roman lines, introduced in the early Middle Ages. Liturgical practices from the late Middle Ages, as described in the ordinals, show that the liturgy is very diverse. True, the basic pattern

is recognisable everywhere, but the interpretation is not uniform. In the period from the thirteenth till the sixteenth century, too, there is unity in diversity.

In order to be able to show to what extent Roman liturgy has had an influence locally or whether local or regional traditions have been allowed to dominate, a more detailed study is necessary and more comparisons will have to be made. The liturgical books that were used in the church or diocese concerned must also be studied, as well as the history of the separate chapters, cities and dioceses. This could provide insight into whether in an ordinarius, in the case of it differing from the Roman line, ancient native traditions have been preserved.<sup>89</sup> Mutual rivalry and competency relations between bishops and the centralising Roman authority could also have had an effect on the preservation and cultivation of individual traditions and customs. A whole field of research lies open, enabling us to explain the backgrounds of the diversity outlined above.

<sup>89</sup> Perhaps a connection can be made with Amalarius of Metz (775?–852/3) as suspected by H. Wegman. See WEGMAN 1993, pp. xx–xxii.

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