

Patristics in Belgium around 1911: Universities and Beyond

Ward De Pril, Johan Leemans

Charles Deberiotstraat 26, B-3000 Leuven; Email: Ward.Depril@theo.kuleuven.be
Charles Deberiotstraat 26, B-3000 Leuven; Email: Johan.Leemans@theo.kuleuven.be

1. *Introduction*¹

In the first decades of the twentieth century, patristics flourished in Belgium. Taking the term in the broad sense of the word as the collection of all scientific endeavours with regard to, say, the first six centuries of the history of Christianity,² the Belgian contribution to this field of studies may be evaluated as nothing short of remarkable. Quite a few scholars of international stature worked in Belgium in this period, and many of their achievements may be considered as important until today. The years around 1911 were instrumental in shaping the foundations for the flourishing of the coming decades. The Belgian research landscape in patristics around 1911 was varied as to content and institutions. Content-wise Belgian scholars were engaged in groundbreaking research in Latin, Greek and Oriental patristics in areas as diverse as textual criticism, text-editions, historical and theological studies related to Late Antiquity. As to institutions, the monolithic Catholicism in Belgium provided a fertile breeding ground for patristic research. In the following survey we will deal with the contribution of the Faculty of Theology at Louvain, academic research in departments of classical or oriental philology at other universities, the Abbey of Maredsous, the centre of the Bollandists and the diocesan seminaries and study houses of religious orders. It will become clear that around 1911 patristic research in Belgium was very dynamic in many centres, well integrated in the international scene and, taking into account the small size of the country, surprisingly successful.

¹ We would like to thank B. Dehandschutter, A. Hilhorst and M. Lamberigts for the ideas and the material they provided us with and their commentaries on earlier drafts of this paper. We also give thanks to the Lichtenberg Kolleg, Universität Göttingen (supported by the DFG), where J. Leemans was a fellow when this contribution was being finalized.

² Throughout we use the term 'patristics' in this broad sense. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the term was less widely used. In Roman-Catholic scholarship and institutions the term 'patrology' was and is much more common. Where it seemed more appropriate, we have used the latter term. On these terminological issues, see E. Mühlenberg, "Patristik," *TRE* 26 (Berlin, 1996): 97-106.

2. The Louvain Faculty of Theology

At the Louvain Faculty of Theology, a chair of patrology was established as late as 1879. The then professor in church history, Bernard Jungmann,³ was charged by the Belgian bishops to devote a part of the church history course (one out of four hours) to patristic questions.⁴ This new patrology course, which had already existed for a long time at theological faculties abroad, filled a sensible lacuna in an age that was marked by a growing interest of protestant and rationalist scholars in patrology, as this domain was so important for the history of dogma.⁵ Jungmann's teaching in patrology followed the lines of his teaching in church history: a manual-based magisterial teaching with a dogmatic-apologetic intent.⁶

Around 1890, the teaching of patrology was at the forefront in the process of scientific renewal that transformed the Louvain Faculty of Theology into a reputed centre of positive theology. To a great extent this was the merit of Monsignore Abbeloos, rector of the university from 1887 to 1898.⁷ He shared the new ideas on the task of the university and of higher education that were developing from the 1870s. In the new university model, magisterial teaching was replaced by a more research-based education, while the university itself was seen as a true research center. These views were back-upped by the law on higher education of 18 April 1890 that reinforced non-magisterial teaching.⁸ Abbeloos was convinced that also the Faculty of Theology had to adopt the modern positive methods. Within the Faculty of Theology these methods were until

³ Bernard Jungmann (1833-1895), a German priest, was trained in Rome as a dogmatic theologian. After teaching dogmatic theology at the major seminary in Bruges, Jungmann was appointed in 1871 to the chair of church history at the Louvain Faculty of Theology. This appointment was controversial, as Jungmann had no competence in the discipline of church history. He held the chair until his death in 1895. On Jungmann, see J. Coppens, "Jungmann (Bernard)," *Catholicisme* 6 (Paris, 1967): 1260.

⁴ Leo Kenis, "The Louvain Faculty of Theology and its Professors: 1834-1889," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 67 (1991): (398-414) 409. See also Leo Kenis, *De Theologische Faculteit te Leuven in de negentiende eeuw 1834-1889. With a Summary in English* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 143; Brussels, 1992).

⁵ Roger Aubert, "Le grand tournant de la Faculté de Théologie de Louvain à la veille de 1900," in *Mélanges offerts à M.-D. Chenu, maître en théologie* (ed. A. Duval; Bibliothèque Thomiste 37; Paris, 1967), (73-109) 80.

⁶ Jungmann himself produced a voluminous handbook, *Institutiones Patrologiae*, which was printed only in autograph (Bernard Jungmann and Joseph Fessler, eds., *Institutiones Patrologiae* [3 vols.; Innsbruck, 1890-1896]).

⁷ On Jean-Baptiste Abbeloos (1836-1906), see J. Mossay, "Abbeloos (Jean-Baptiste)," *Biographie nationale* 41 (Bruxelles, 1979-1980): 1-6.

⁸ Jo Tollebeek, "New Periodicals for New Ideals. On the Birth of the Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 95 (2000): (391-429) 391; Dirk Claes, "The Study of Church History at the Catholic University of Leuven: 1834-1968," in *La storia delle università alle soglie del XXI secolo. La ricerca dei giovani studiosi tra fonti e nuovi percorsi di indagine. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Aosta, 18-20 dicembre 2006* (ed. P. Gheda et al.; Bologna, 2008), (125-137) 131.

then only practiced on the level of the auxiliary sciences, in particular the study of oriental languages. It was an ancient Louvain tradition that the teaching of oriental languages – by theologians! – was given an important place in the study program of the Faculty of Theology.⁹ Abbeloos, an orientalist himself, appealed to these theologians-orientalists to bring about the desired introduction of the new scientific methods within the field of theology.¹⁰ In 1891, he persuaded Jungmann to hand over his patrology course to an orientalist, Adolphe Hebbelynck.¹¹ It marked the beginning of a longstanding Louvain tradition that the chair of patrology was held by an orientalist.¹² The importance of orientalism evidently had repercussions on the nature of the teaching of and research in patrology at the Louvain Faculty of Theology, such as the opening up of fairly unknown research areas in patrology, like that of Coptic and Syriac Christianity and the application of philological methods to patristic texts (textual criticism).¹³

All beginnings are difficult though and Hebbelynck's merits in the field of patrology are rather limited. In his teaching he did not leave the beaten tracks, and his publications in the field are restricted to the completion of the *Institutiones Patrologiae* of his predecessor Jungmann. Nonetheless, Hebbelynck must be credited with introducing Coptic studies in Louvain,

⁹ At the restoration of the University in 1834, the Faculty of Theology assumed the work of the former *Collegium Trilingue*. From 1836 to 1875, the well-known orientalist Msgr. Jan Theodor Beelen (1807-1884) attended to the courses of Hebrew, Aramaic, Syrian and Arabic. In the 1890s, Akkadian, Egyptian and Coptic were added to the study program. See Gonzague Ryckmans, "Les langues orientales," in *Le cinquième centenaire de la Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Louvain (1432-1932)* (Bruges, 1932), 101-117; Louis T. Lefort, "Les recherches orientalistes à l'Université de Louvain," in *Sacra pagina. Miscellanea Biblica Congressus Internationalis Catholici de re biblica* (ed. J. Coppens et al.; Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium 12; Gembloux, 1959), 28-49.

¹⁰ Msgr. Abbeloos entrusted even the chair of *Dogmatica generalis* to orientalists, namely A. Hebbelynck (1892-1894; 1895-1897) and J. Forget (1894-1896; 1897-1921).

¹¹ Luc Courtois, "Paulin Ladeuze (1870-1940). Jeunesse et formation (1870-1940). Vie et pensée d'un exégète catholique au temps du modernisme (1898-1914)" (Ph.D. diss., Université catholique de Louvain, 5 vols., 1998), 347. Adolphe Hebbelynck (1859-1939) was a priest of the diocese of Ghent. In 1882 he obtained the doctorate with a dissertation on the book of Daniel (*De auctoritate historica libri Danielis, necnon de interpretatione vaticani LXX hebdomadam* [Louvain, 1887]). He specialized in the study of Eastern languages, especially Egyptian and Coptic. Between 1890 and 1898 he held the chair of patrology. From 1898 to 1909 he was rector of the Louvain University. See R. Aubert, "Hebbelynck (Adolphe)," *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* 23 (Paris, 1990): 697-700; Paulin Ladeuze, "Éloge académique de Mgr. A. Hebbelynck," *Annuaire de l'Université catholique de Louvain* 84/2 (1936-1939): cxxviii-cxlv.

¹² Hebbelynck was succeeded in 1898 by the coptologist Paulin Ladeuze (1898-1909). The next two chairholders of patrology were the syriacists Joseph Lebon (1909-1949) and Albert Van Roey (1949-1968).

¹³ The most famous Louvain patrologist, Joseph Lebon (1879-1957), was even convinced that it was simply impossible to specialize in patrology without knowing Eastern languages, especially Syrian and Armenian. Albert van Roey, "In memoriam Monseigneur Joseph Lebon," *Annuaire de l'Université catholique de Louvain* 92/3 (1957-1959): (40-54) 43.

which enabled his students, especially Paulin Ladeuze, to renew the history of Egyptian monasticism.¹⁴

The scientific career of Paulin Ladeuze is quite emblematic of the “great turn”¹⁵ the Louvain Faculty of Theology went through around 1900. Initially planning to specialize in traditional speculative theology, Ladeuze was instigated to reorient his scientific career in the direction of positive theology.¹⁶ Under the direction of Hebbelynck, Ladeuze started to study Coptic monasticism. The immediate cause to choose this subject was apologetic. The recent attacks of Émile Amélineau on the morality of the eldest cenobites required a Catholic answer.¹⁷ In his doctoral dissertation, *Étude sur le Cénobitisme pachômien pendant le IV^e siècle et la première moitié du V^e*,¹⁸ Ladeuze proceeded in three steps. In the first part, Ladeuze drafted the historical-critical stemma of the various extant documents about the life of Pachomius. He demonstrated that the Greek recension of Pachomius’s life was the eldest, instead of the Arab version as claimed by Amélineau. The second part was devoted to the external history of the earliest stages of Coptic monasticism, the third part to the internal organization of Pachomian cenobitism and its moral standards.¹⁹ Especially in this third and final part, Ladeuze refuted the charges of Amélineau on the basis of a critical study of the collections of Pachomian rules. It is meaningful that the debate between Ladeuze and Amélineau was not fought out on the ideological level but on the level of source-criticism.

For several reasons Ladeuze’s dissertation was a pioneering work. First of all, Ladeuze introduced modern historical criticism in Louvain patrological studies.²⁰ He had been trained in this methodology by the Louvain church historian Alfred Cauchie,²¹ acquainting him with Ernst

¹⁴ Aubert, “Hebbelynck,” 23 (see note 11): 698.

¹⁵ The expression is Aubert’s. See note 5.

¹⁶ It was the influential professor in biology J. B. Carnoy, a priest from the same diocese as Ladeuze (Tournai), who almost forbade Ladeuze to choose a ‘speculative’ subject for his dissertation. Carnoy urged Ladeuze to do original research based upon the use of the historical and literary critical methods: “Vous devez avoir l’ambition de devenir un vrai savant et, par conséquent, vous allez défricher un terrain jusqu’à maintenant inculte.” Jozef Coppens, *Paulin Ladeuze. Oriëntalist en exegeet 1870-1940. Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de bijbelwetenschap in het begin van de XXe eeuw* (Verslagen en mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Letteren en der Morele en Staatkundige Wetenschappen 3/1; Brussels, 1941), 17.

¹⁷ Cf. Émile Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l’histoire de l’Égypte chrétienne au IV^e siècle. Histoire de saint Pachôme et de ses communautés* (Annales du Musée Guimet 17; Paris, 1889).

¹⁸ Paulin Ladeuze, *Étude sur le Cénobitisme pachômien pendant le IV^e siècle et la première moitié du V^e* (Paris, 1898).

¹⁹ Coppens, *Paulin Ladeuze, oriëntalist en exegeet 1870-1940* (see note 16), 20-21.

²⁰ Courtois, “Paulin Ladeuze” 2 (see note 11): 370.

²¹ Alfred Cauchie (1860-1922) was trained as an historian at the Louvain University. From 1895 onwards he taught church history at the Louvain Faculty of Theology. He was the founder and first director of the *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* (1900). In 1919, Cauchie

Bernheim's standard work on historical criticism, the *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode* (1889).²² At the same time, Ladeuze's dissertation was an early manifestation of the new Catholic 'positive' apologia, so typical for the Louvain School at the time of the modernist crisis.²³ This kind of apologetics departed from impeccable scientific research to refute unjustified attacks against the Catholic tradition²⁴ and was based upon a firm belief in the complete compatibility between Catholic faith and the results of historical criticism, even when applied to the Gospels and Christian antiquity.²⁵ Finally, the dissertation inaugurated in Belgium a series of studies devoted to the problem of Egyptian monasticism.²⁶

Immediately after the publication of his doctoral dissertation, Ladeuze was appointed as successor of Hebbelynck to the chair of patrology. Ladeuze's teaching aimed at initiating his students into autonomous scientific research. Therefore he tried to convey the research method used in his doctoral dissertation.²⁷ With regard to content, he abandoned the specialized study of Egyptian monasticism as to systematically introduce his students in the whole of patristic literature, starting with the Apostolic Fathers (1898-1899), "didactic literature" (1899-1900 and 1900-1901) and the Apologists of the second century (1901-1902 and 1902-1903). Next he concentrated on Gnostic literature (1903-1904), Apocrypha of the New Testament (1904-1905), Clement of Alexandria (1905-1906), Origen and the Alexandrians till the Council of Nicaea (1906-1907 and 1907-1908). In his last year of teaching (1908-1909), Ladeuze taught a course on Hippolytus of Rome.²⁸

In the period of his professorship, Ladeuze's proper scientific contribution to the discipline of patrology consisted mainly in the direction of scientific revues. In 1898 he was appointed as secretary of *Le Muséon*, the first scientific revue set on foot at the Louvain University. Founded in

was named director of the Belgian Historical Institute of Rome. Cauchie is considered as the founder of the historical school of Louvain. See Léon van der Essen, "Alfred Cauchie (1860-1922). L'initiateur-le savant-l'homme," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 18 (1922): 212-239.

²² Ernst Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode. Mit Nachweis der wichtigsten Quellen und Hilfsmittel zum Studium der Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1889).

²³ Cf. Claes, "The Study of Church History at the Catholic University of Leuven" (see note 8), 130.

²⁴ Courtois, "Paulin Ladeuze" 2 (see note 11): 376.

²⁵ Coppens, *Paulin Ladeuze, orientalist en exegeet 1870-1940* (see note 14), 30.

²⁶ Joseph Bidez, ed., *Deux versions grecques inédites de la vie de Paul de Thèbes. Vita S. Pauli Thebaei* (Université de Gand. Recueil de travaux publié par la Faculté de philosophie et lettres 25; Ghent, 1900); Paul van den Ven, "Saint Jérôme et la vie du moine Malchus-le-Captif," *Le Muséon. Revue d'études orientales*, N.S. 2 (1901): 208-326; Paul van Cauwenbergh, *Études sur les moines d'Égypte depuis le concile de Chalcedoine (451) jusqu'à l'invasion arabe (640)* (Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis. Dissertations ad gradum doctoris in Facultate Theologica consequendum conscriptae, ser. 2, vol. 7; Paris, 1914).

²⁷ Dirk Claes, "Theologie in tijden van verandering. De theologische Faculteit te Leuven in de twintigste eeuw 1900-1968" (Ph.D. diss.; KU Louvain, 2004), 57-58.

²⁸ Courtois, "Paulin Ladeuze" 3 (see note 11): 530.

1882 by Charles De Harlez,²⁹ its focus was initially on Iranian, Indian and Chinese studies. At the time of Ladeuze entering the redaction, *Le Muséon* progressively opened up to the domain of Christian orientalism.³⁰ But still more important for patrology was the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, co-founded by Ladeuze, who served as vice-director of Alfred Cauchie until 1909.³¹ Ladeuze directed the patrology section. He gave evidence of a more modern conception of patrology as the historical study of ancient Christian literature (“une histoire de l’ancienne littérature chrétienne”) instead of a doctrinal study of this literature, limiting the object of patrology to the writings of the Church Fathers with an essential doctrinal value.³² Ladeuze reserved his best patrological articles for publication in the *Revue*.³³

In 1909, Joseph Lebon succeeded Ladeuze at the chair of patrology, which he would hold for forty years. Due to the chronological delimitations of this article, we restrict our discussion of Lebon’s research in and teaching of patrology to the pre-World War I period.

Just like Ladeuze, Lebon combined a training in historical-critical methodology by Cauchie with an expertise in Oriental languages, especially Syriac. This made him very well equipped to do research on the christological controversy of the fifth century (Nestorianism and Monophysitism) on the basis of unedited Syriac sources. Lebon’s domain of research was of crucial importance for the history-of-dogma research that was very much alive at the time of the modernist crisis. In 1908 – one year before finishing his doctoral dissertation – he published an article on the christology of Timothy Aelurus (†477), the first monophysite patriarch of Alexandria.³⁴ The radical innovative character of this research was due to the fact that Lebon consulted completely new sources, being the Syriac translations of the works of Timothy,³⁵ instead of the short Greek fragments quoted by antimonophysite polemicists of the sixth and seventh centuries. On the basis of these sources, Lebon showed that Timothy ascribed to Christ a

²⁹ Charles de Harlez de Deulin (1832-1899), orientalist, professor at the University of Louvain from 1871 to 1899. See E. Lamotte, “Harlez de Deulin (Charles),” *Biographie nationale* 32, suppl. 4 (Bruxelles, 1964): 279-280.

³⁰ Courtois, “Paulin Ladeuze” 3 (see note 11): 584.

³¹ For a thorough discussion of the importance of Ladeuze for the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, see Luc Courtois, “Paulin Ladeuze (1870-1940) et les débuts de la ‘Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique,’” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 95 (2000): 430-482.

³² See Paulin Ladeuze, review of O. Bardenhewer, *Vom dem Ausgang des apostolischen Zeitalters bis zum Ende des Zweiten Jahrhunderts* (vol. 1 of idem, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*), *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 4 (1903): 62-63. For a discussion of this review, see Courtois, “Paulin Ladeuze” 3 (see note 11): 604-605.

³³ Especially Paulin Ladeuze, “Apocryphes évangéliques coptes. Pseudo-Gamaliel; évangile de Barthélemy,” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 7 (1906): 245-268.

³⁴ Joseph Lebon, “La christologie de Timothée Aelure, archevêque monophysite d’Alexandrie, d’après les sources syriaques inédites,” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 9 (1908): 677-702.

³⁵ These writings were included in a Syrian manuscript of the sixth century, the Ms. *Addit.* 12156 of the British Museum. See Lebon, “La christologie” (see note 34), 680.

real and perfect humanity, a reasonable soul and a chair consubstantial to that of the Virgin and of all humanity. Timothy's vehement condemnation of the dyophysite Chalcedonian doctrine is to be explained by the fact that he understood the term φύσις ('nature') as a concrete being, as a synonym of 'man.' It is not surprising, then, that the patriarch considered every dyophysite doctrine as necessarily Nestorian. Lebon concluded that an impartial examination of new sources shows Timothy as a faithful disciple of the Alexandrine christology, whose thinking had been distorted by his adversaries. Therefore, the Louvain patrologist exhorted his colleagues to reconsider the "so important problem of the proper dogmatic difference between the partisans and the adversaries of the Chalcedonian Council."³⁶

In his doctoral dissertation, Lebon continued his "revolutionary"³⁷ approach to monophysitism. This time he studied the Syriac translations of the lost Greek writings of Severus of Antioch (c. 465-538), a key figure in the monophysite movement.³⁸ Lebon successfully demonstrated that the doctrine and vocabulary of Severus were almost identical to those of Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444). Consequently, Severan monophysism was – with regard to content – a perfectly orthodox christological doctrine, which had only refused to accept the new Chalcedonian terminology: it was, in other words, a 'verbal' but not a 'real' heresy.³⁹ Thanks to his in-depth investigation of Syriac sources Lebon drastically changed the historical perspective on the ancient schisms. His views were universally accepted⁴⁰ and opened up new possibilities for dialogue with Eastern Churches.⁴¹ The

³⁶ Lebon, "La christologie" (see note 34), 702.

³⁷ Cf. Courtois, "Paulin Ladeuze" 3 (see note 11): 545.

³⁸ Joseph Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien. Étude historique, littéraire et théologique sur la résistance monophysite au Concile de Chalcédoine jusqu'à la constitution de l'Église jacobite* (Universitas catholica Lovaniensis. Dissertationes ad gradum doctoris in Facultate theologica consequendum conscriptae, ser. 2, vol. 4; Louvain, 1909).

³⁹ Charles Moeller, "Monseigneur Joseph Lebon (1879-1857)," in *Le Muséon. Revue d'études orientales* 71 (1958): (393-396) 393. The conclusions of *Le monophysisme sévérien* (Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien* [see note 38]) upset Jacques Forget, the promotor of the dissertation and a rather conservative theologian. See Aubert, "Le grand tournant" (see note 5), 108.

⁴⁰ The well-known Catholic historian of dogma Joseph Tixeront made Lebon's conclusions universally known by adopting them in his *Histoire des dogmes*. See Joseph Tixeront, *La fin de l'âge patristique (430-800)* (vol. 3 of idem, *Histoire des dogmes dans l'antiquité chrétienne*; 7th ed.; Paris, 1928), 112-129.

⁴¹ In this regard Lebon anticipated the conviction of popes Benedict XV and Pius XI that intensive study and scientific research in the field of orientalism would show the consensus between Latin and Eastern Fathers, clearing the way for a reunion between Rome and the Eastern Churches. See for Pius XI: "Sacrorum consistorium. Acta," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 16 (1924): 489-502, especially 491, and "Rerum Orientalium," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 20 (1928): 277-288.

later publications of Lebon are to a great extent related to his doctoral dissertation, undoubtedly his *magnum opus*.⁴²

In his teaching, Lebon stuck to the same research areas. The three first years (from 1909 to 1912) he studied the literature of the first monophysite controversies (Philoxenus of Mabbug, Severus of Antioch).⁴³ Taking into account the hypothesis of Lebon with regard to the Alexandrian origin of Severian monophysitism, it is hardly surprising he proceeded, in 1913, with the study of Cyril of Alexandria.⁴⁴ His last course of patrology before the war was again devoted to Cyril of Alexandria and to the Nestorian controversy.⁴⁵ Lebon divided the treatment of his subjects of study into a historical, a literary and a doctrinal part. For the historical study, Lebon relied heavily on the *Histoire ancienne de l'Église* of Louis Duchesne.⁴⁶ The two other parts were completely personal studies on the texts themselves of the authors in question.⁴⁷

Finally, with regard to patristic studies at the Louvain University, we have to mention two projects of scientific editing and/or translating and/or studying patristic texts that came about around the First World War. First, the series *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*. To be sure, this series had already been founded in 1903 by the orientalist Jean-Baptiste Chabot,⁴⁸ but it was only in 1912 that the Catholic universities of Louvain and Washington granted their patronage and cooperation.⁴⁹ The series aimed at providing historians and theologians with critical editions and modern translations of writings of the Eastern Fathers and other authors from the Christian East. In this initial period there were four sections: Syrian, Ethiopic, Coptic and Arabic. After World War I the project came to rest increasingly on the shoulders of Louvain orientalists – among others J.

⁴² Between 1909 and 1921, Lebon published only one article, a text critical study on the Philoxenian version of the Bible: Joseph Lebon, "La version Philoxénienne de la Bible," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 12 (1911): 413-436. In this article, Lebon shows that the Philoxenian Bible did not include the Old Testament and the deuterocanonical writings of the New Testament, and that the part of Philoxenus of Mabbug (†523) in the actual elaboration of it was much smaller than earlier said and believed.

⁴³ See "Programme des cours," *Annuaire de l'Université catholique de Louvain* 74 (1910): (94-182), 94; 75 (1911): (68-159) 68; 76 (1912): (41-133) 42.

⁴⁴ See "Programme des cours," *Annuaire de l'Université catholique de Louvain* 77 (1913): (41-136) 42.

⁴⁵ See "Programme des cours," *Annuaire de l'Université catholique de Louvain* 78 (1914): (44-144) 44.

⁴⁶ Louis Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Église* (3 vols.; Paris, 1906-1910).

⁴⁷ Van Roey, "In memoriam Monseigneur Joseph Lebon" (see note 13), 45-46.

⁴⁸ The French scholar Jean-Baptiste Chabot (1860-1948) studied theology at the University of Louvain. In 1895 he obtained the chair of Aramaic language and literature at the Collège de France. See P. Faure, "Chabot (Jean-Baptiste)," *Dictionnaire de biographie française* 8 (Paris, 1959): 132-133.

⁴⁹ Joseph de Ghellinck, "Les études patristiques depuis 1869," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 56 (1929): (840-862) 845-846.

Forget and J. Lebon – until in 1948 the Louvain orientalist René Draguet (1896-1980)⁵⁰ succeeded Chabot as director of the series.

Secondly, in 1922 the *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*⁵¹ was founded as a joint project of the Louvain University (represented in the board of directors by Lebon) and the theological colleges of the Jesuits and the Dominicans (represented respectively by J. De Ghellinck and R. Martin). The board of advisors also counted members from the Abbey of Maredsous (U. Berlière) and from the Bollandists (H. Delehayé). The series was set up to collect editions and studies of patristic and medieval ecclesiastical literature.⁵²

In sum: between 1880 and 1920 the Louvain Faculty went through a remarkable evolution with regard to research and teaching in patrology: at the beginning the subject hardly existed, at the end of this period it had become an important part of the Faculty's research profile, had fully adopted the historical-critical method with a strength in oriental languages, had booked important results and created a number of journals, series and tools, which all still exist today.

3. At Other Belgian Universities: Bidez – Parmentier – Cumont

Beyond the Louvain Faculty of Theology, research in patristics also flourished at the faculties of arts of several other universities, in departments of classical studies or religious studies. Joseph Bidez may be mentioned first here.⁵³ Bidez was born on 9 April 1867 in Frameries, Belgium, as the son of a doctor. The basis of his education was laid during formative years at Bonne Espérance, a minor seminary in the vicinity of Binches, a breeding ground for talent. At this college, Bidez received a solid training not only in Latin and Greek but in the humanities in the broadest sense of the word. In August 1884, the *primus perpetuus* concluded his formation and went to the University of Liège, where he studied philosophy, law and classical languages. The crown on his scholarly formation was a year in Berlin, where he met and heard Hermann Diels, the then lead-

⁵⁰ On René Draguet, see Jozef Coppens, "In memoriam R. Draguet," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 57 (1981): 194-200.

⁵¹ The series bears as subtitle: Études et documents pour servir à l'histoire des doctrines chrétiennes depuis la fin de l'âge apostolique jusqu'à la clôture du concile de Trente.

⁵² *Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense* contained three sections: 'Études' (Critical, historical, literary or doctrinal studies on writers, œuvres or ideas from the end of the Apostolic Age to the closure of the Council of Trent); 'Textes' (publication of inedited texts or critical re-editions of texts from the patristic and medieval period) and 'Documents' or 'Instruments de travail' (tools for scholars planning to prepare the edition of a text, penetrate its content or assess the reasons for its influence and diffusion).

⁵³ For much of what follows we are indebted to the thoroughly researched yet sympathetic biographical portrait of Bidez in Albert Severyns, "Joseph Bidez (1867-1945)," *Annuaire de l'Académie royale de Belgique* 122 (1956): 81-214. See also Franz Cumont, "Joseph Bidez," *L'Antiquité classique* 13 (1944): 5-10.

ing specialist in ancient philosophy. In conversation with Diels, Bidez wrote his inaugural dissertation in classical philology on *La biographie d'Empédocle*, defended in Ghent in 1894. Nominated lecturer immediately and full professor in 1907, Ghent University would be the environment in which Bidez put his stamp on scholarship along lines already present in the dissertation: thorough work on the study of textual transmission; a painstaking reconstruction of the text in an edition that offered all tools possible for further study; a detailed, synthetic study of the contents of the edited works. Throughout his career he remained active in the research area of ancient philosophy, but it is undoubtedly for his research on Julian the Apostate⁵⁴ and on the ecclesiastical histories, much of which was started around 1911, that he owes his enduring renown. He received honorary doctorates from many universities, was a corresponding member of the Royal Academy of Belgium since 1913 (its president in 1934) and a member of many other academies abroad.⁵⁵

Of his works published around 1911 the following are the most important: an edition of the church historian Evagrius (in 1898, together with L. Parmentier), a monograph on the textual transmission of Sozomenus and Theodorus Lector (1908), an edition of the Arian historiographer Philostorgius (1913) and, also in 1913, an edition of the *Vita Porphyrii*.⁵⁶ In these years he also finished his Sozomenus-edition, promised for the GCS-series of the Berlin Academy. Because of the war and the occupation of Belgium, Bidez initially refused to have it printed in Germany. Ultimately he changed his mind and, thanks to the efforts of G.C. Hansen, it appeared posthumously in the GCS-series.⁵⁷

Joseph Bidez was attached by links of friendship and collaboration to a few important scholars in the fields of classical and late antiquity: Léon Parmentier and Franz Cumont. The Greek philologist Léon Parmentier

⁵⁴ He edited Julian's letters and discourses for the Bude-series (see also Joseph Bidez, *La tradition manuscrite et les éditions des discours de l'Empereur Julien* [Université de Gand. Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté de philosophie et lettres 61; Ghent, 1929]) and, in 1930, a still highly appreciated biography: Joseph Bidez, *La vie de l'empereur Julien* (Collection d'études anciennes 1; Paris, 1930).

⁵⁵ Honorary doctorates from the universities of Athens, Brussels, Lille, Paris and Utrecht; membership of the following academies: the Institut de France, the British Academy and the academies of Copenhagen, Berlin and Göteborg.

⁵⁶ Joseph Bidez and Léon Parmentier, eds., *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus, with the Scholia* (London, 1898); Joseph Bidez, *La tradition manuscrite de Sozomène et la Tripartite de Théodore le Lecteur* (TU 32,2b; Leipzig, 1908); Joseph Bidez, ed., *Philostorgius, Kirchengeschichte, mit dem Leben des Lucian von Antiochien und den Fragmenten eines arianischen Historiographen* (GCS 21; Leipzig, 1913); Joseph Bidez, ed., *Vie de Porphyre, le philosophe néo-platonicien, avec les fragments des traités Peri agalmatōn et De regressu animae* (Université de Gand. Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté de philosophie et lettres 43; Ghent, 1913).

⁵⁷ Joseph Bidez, ed., *Sozomenus, Kirchengeschichte* (zum Druck besorgt und mit Registern versehen von G. C. Hansen; GCS 50; Berlin, 1960).

(1863-1929)⁵⁸ is to be mentioned here for his work as an editor: besides his already mentioned edition of the church historian Evagrius, Parmentier is well-known for his sound edition of the church history of Theodoretus.⁵⁹ Franz Cumont (1868-1947)⁶⁰ earned an international reputation as historian of religions of antiquity. The leitmotiv throughout his scientific career was the study of the influence of the East on the Roman world. He wrote several books on Eastern religions and the mysteries of Mithra.⁶¹ In his later research he also gained interest for conceptions of the antique world regarding the survival of the soul after death.⁶² Many of his works have been translated into English and German and to this very day new editions appear.⁶³

4. The Bollandists

At the start of the twentieth century, the hagiographical enterprise of the Bollandists had already been underway for more than three centuries and had obtained a clear structure: the main goal was the edition of the *Acta Sanctorum* with auxiliary or preparatory studies being published in the journal or the series (*Analecta Bollandiana* and *Subsidia hagiographica*).⁶⁴ In 1911 the team consisted of the Jesuits F. Van Ortroj,

⁵⁸ On Léon Parmentier, doctor in classical philology and professor at the University of Ghent and the University of Liège, see Joseph Bidez, "Notice sur Léon Parmentier," *Annuaire de l'Académie Royale de Belgique* 104 (1938): 147-172; Henri Grégoire, "Léon Parmentier et Charles Michel," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 8 (1929): 1450-1458.

⁵⁹ Léon Parmentier, ed., *Theodoret, Kirchengeschichte* (GCS 19; Leipzig, 1911).

⁶⁰ Franz Cumont studied classical philology at the University of Ghent, where he started to teach himself from 1892 onwards. In 1910 he renounced his professorship after a conflict with the Belgian minister of Sciences and Arts. Cumont took residence in Rome and Paris as to devote himself entirely to research. He received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Aberdeen, Brussels, Louvain, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge and from the Trinity College of Dublin. F. de Ruyt, "Cumont (Franz-Valéry-Marie)," *Biographie nationale* 39, suppl. 11 (Bruxelles, 1976): 211-222.

⁶¹ Franz Cumont, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* (2 vols.; Brussels, 1894-1899); idem, *Les Mystères de Mithra* (Brussels, 1900); idem, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (Annales du musée Guimet. Bibliothèque de vulgarisation 24; Paris, 1906).

⁶² Franz Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism* (Yale University. Mrs. Hepha Ely Silliman memorial lectures 16; New Haven, 1922); idem, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique de l'Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient 35; Paris, 1942).

⁶³ The Academia Belgica is planning a re-edition of the complete œuvre of Cumont. To date, two volumes have already been published: Franz Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (ed. Corinne Bonnet and Françoise van Haepere; Bibliotheca Cumontiana, Scripta Maiora 1; Turin, 2006 [reprint of the 4th ed.; Paris, 1929]); Franz Cumont, *Lux perpetua* (ed. André Motte and Bruno Rochette; Bibliotheca Cumontiana, Scripta Maiora 2; Turin, 2010 [reprint of Paris, 1949]).

⁶⁴ René Aigrain, *L'hagiographie: ses sources, ses méthodes, son histoire. Avec un complément bibliographique par Robert Godding* (1953; repr. Subsidia hagiographica 80; Brussels, 2000), 329-350.

A. Poncelet, H. Delehaye and P. Peeters. In 1910 the third volume of the *Acta Sanctorum Novembris* was published. By then, however, the Bollandist enterprise had already moved beyond this and had developed into a center of hagiographical research that can be credited with having put this research discipline on a secure scientific footing. Precisely in the period around 1911 the Bollandists brought to maturation several larger projects and laid the basis for an almost unprecedented flowering in the ensuing decades. Firstly, they construed the tools necessary to survey the literally thousands of hagiographical texts in Latin, Greek and many oriental languages, dating from Late Antiquity up to the early Renaissance. The *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina* was first published in 1901 with a supplement in 1911.⁶⁵ The *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca* first appeared as a list in 1895 and in its definitive form in 1909.⁶⁶ In 1910 the first edition of the *Bibliotheca hagiographica orientalis* was published.⁶⁷ All these tools would be augmented and refined over the years in revised editions and are until today basic tools of the profession. Secondly, the Bollandists provided the discipline with a rigorous scientific method that can be best described as the historical-critical method of source-analysis applied to the specificity of the hagiographical texts. The development of this hagiographical method was largely the merit of Hippolyte Delehaye,⁶⁸ a man with exceptional energy, talent and vista.⁶⁹ In 1905 he expounded his methodological principles in *Les légendes hagiographiques*,⁷⁰ an absolute standard work that was published in four editions and translated into Italian, German and English.⁷¹ Delehaye presented the fundamental principles to deal with the literary part – this is essentially the ‘passions’ and the ‘lives’ – of the dossier of a saint, emphasizing to what extent this

⁶⁵ *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis* (2 vols.; Subsidia hagiographica 6; Brussels, 1898-1901) and *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis. Supplementi editio altera auctior* (Subsidia hagiographica 12; Brussels, 1911).

⁶⁶ *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca seu Elenchus vitarum sanctorum graece typis impressarum* (Subsidia hagiographica 8; Brussels, 1895) and *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca: editio altera emendatior* (Subsidia hagiographica 8; Brussels, 1909).

⁶⁷ Paulus Peeters, ed., *Bibliotheca hagiographica orientalis* (Subsidia hagiographica 10; Brussels, 1910).

⁶⁸ Hippolyte Delehaye (1859-1941) entered the Jesuit Order in 1876. He studied classical literature in Drongen and philosophy and theology at the Louvain scholasticate. In 1891, he joined the Bollandist Society, of which he was president from 1912 until his death in 1941. See B. Joassart, “Delehaye Hippolyte,” *LThK* 3 (3rd ed.; Freiburg i. Br., 1995): 73-74.

⁶⁹ Bernard Joassart, *Hippolyte Delehaye: hagiographie critique et modernisme*, vol. 1: *Texte*; vol. 2: *Dossier documentaire* (Subsidia hagiographica 81; Brussels, 2000).

⁷⁰ “Les légendes hagiographiques” was first published as an article in the *Revue des questions historiques* 74 (1903): 56 -112. In 1905, the article was expanded into a separate volume: *Les légendes hagiographiques* (Brussels, 1905; 2nd ed., 1906; 3rd ed., 1927; 4th ed., 1955).

⁷¹ See the bibliography annexed to: Bernard Joassart, “Hippolyte Delehaye (1859-1941). Un bollandiste au temps de la crise moderniste,” in *Sanctity and Secularity During the Modernist Period. Six Perspectives on Hagiography around 1900* (ed. L. Barmann and C. J. T. Talar; Subsidia hagiographica 79; Brussels, 1999), 1-45.

literature is often far off from history. *Les légendes hagiographiques* was well received in scholarly circles, but also vehemently attacked in the aftermath of the condemnation of modernism. Anti-modernist churchmen blamed Delehaye for insisting on the legendary aspect of hagiographical accounts. In 1912-1913 the volume *Les légendes hagiographiques* was very close to be put on the index. Eventually, a formal condemnation was avoided thanks to the support of Cardinal Mercier and several appeals of the Belgian government to the Secretary of State of the Holy See.⁷² Only in 1927 a new edition of “ces malheureuses Légendes” – expression used by Delehaye – could appear.⁷³

5. Patristic Studies at the Abbey of Maredsous

The Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous (Belgian province of Namur) was founded in 1872. Within a quarter of a century, Maredsous developed into a centre for scientific studies in the field of monastic history and ancient Christian literature. This remarkable evolution was due both to the success of its house organ, the *Revue bénédictine*, and to some of its exceptional scholars.

The *Revue bénédictine* had been founded in 1884 as a very modest local liturgical review.⁷⁴ In the 1890s it was progressively re-oriented towards the domains of church history, especially Western monastic history and (Latin) patrology. This tendency corresponded with the competence of its main collaborators. With regard to patrology, the moving forces were undoubtedly Dom Germain Morin and Dom Donatius De Bruyne.

Following in the footsteps of the Maurists, Germain Morin⁷⁵ set out to produce an edition of the homiletic œuvre of Saint Caesarius of Arles (468/470-542). From the late 1880s onwards, he travelled around Europe to study manuscripts of homiliaries dating from the period between Saint Augustine and Saint Gregory the Great.⁷⁶ Due to an exceptional mastery

⁷² Joassart, “Hippolyte Delehaye” (see note 71), 31.

⁷³ Joassart, “Hippolyte Delehaye” (see note 71), 33.

⁷⁴ The original title of the review was *Messager des Fidèles: Petite Revue Bénédictine*. In 1890 the title was changed in *Revue bénédictine*. In 1920, the *Revue bénédictine* started up a new bibliographic repertory: *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature chrétienne latine*, containing a biblical and a patristic section (until the twelfth century). See Pierre P. Verbraken and Daniel Misonne, “Cent années d'érudition ecclésiastique. La ‘Revue Bénédictine’ 1884-1984,” *Revue bénédictine de critique, d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 84 (1984): 12-37.

⁷⁵ The Frenchman Germain Morin was born in 1861. He entered Maredsous in 1880 (monastic profession in 1882, ordination in 1886). He did not receive an academic education, but was well trained by the novice master Dom Boniface Wolff (1844-1920). Morin died in 1946. See Gisbert Ghysens and Pierre P. Verbraken, *La carrière scientifique de Dom Germain Morin (1861-1946)* (Instrumenta patristica 15; Steenbrugge, 1986).

⁷⁶ Germain Morin, “Comment j'ai fait mon édition des œuvres de S. Césaire d'Arles,” *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie* 58 (1938): 225-232. See 227: “C'était une tâche immense, presque sans fin.”

of internal criticism, Morin succeeded in retrieving 238 authentic sermons. After 50 years of research, they were finally edited in 1937.⁷⁷ Six years later, Morin brought out a second volume with other (non-homiletic) works of Caesarius.⁷⁸ Although his Caesarius-edition was his central research-focus, Morin did not neglect other texts or problems relative to ancient Christian literature, with a preference for Augustine and Jerome. Morin's research into homiliaries throughout Europe has been extraordinarily fruitful with regard to Augustinian studies. Already in 1890 he had found an inedited sermon of Augustine.⁷⁹ In 1913 he discovered some thirty inedited sermons of Augustine in a typical collection of Caesarius.⁸⁰ Given the importance of these discoveries, Morin conceived the idea to embark on a critical edition of the sermons published under the name of Augustine since the Maurists. With the help of Dom Cyrille Lambot,⁸¹ this monumental work was published in 1930, the 15th centenary of the death of Augustine.⁸² With regard to Jerome, Morin published – besides 12 erudite articles in the *Revue bénédictine* – a volume with texts taken from his exegetical and rhetorical œuvre, until then considered as apocryphal.⁸³

Morin's patristic merits were internationally recognized, especially in England, Germany and Rome. A peer of the luminaries of patristic stud-

⁷⁷ Germain Morin, ed., *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis Opera omnia. Vol. 1: Sermones seu Admonitiones* (Bruges, 1937).

⁷⁸ Germain Morin, ed., *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis Opera omnia. Vol. 2: Opera varia* (Bruges, 1942). This volume contains letters, councils held by Caesarius, rules composed by him for virgins and monks, works regarding theology and the Holy Scripture, Caesarius' testament and the Life of Caesarius, written by his familiars.

⁷⁹ Germain Morin, "Un discours inédit de S. Augustin prononcé la veille de la Saint-Jean (dimanche 23 juin 390)," *Revue bénédictine de critique, d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 7 (1890): 260-270.

⁸⁰ These were published in 1917: Germain Morin, ed., *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Tractatus sive Sermones inediti ex codice Guelferbyitano 4096* (Kempten, 1917).

⁸¹ On Cyrille Lambot (1900-1968), a great specialist on Augustine, see Pierre P. Verbraken, "La carrière scientifique de Dom Cyrille Lambot," *Revue bénédictine de critique, d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 79 (1969): 11-22.

⁸² Germain Morin, ed., *Sancti Augustini Sermones post Maurinos reperti* (Miscellanea Agostiniana 1; Rome, 1930).

⁸³ It concerns the exegetical compilation known as *Breviarium in Psalmos*. Within this compilation, Morin distinguished three series of texts: the first series originates from the *Commentarioli* on the Psalms, a work originally composed by Jerome around 392, the second series of homiletic-like passages derives from oral explications of the Psalms, while the third series consists in interpolations done by the compiler of the *Breviarium*. The sermons of Jerome on the Psalms used by the compiler of the *Breviarium* gave access for the first time to the rhetorical style of Jerome. Thanks to these new insights, Morin succeeded in restituting to Jerome a series of ten homilies on the Gospel of Mark and a dozen of other pieces. Morin's *Hieronymiana* were published in three separate parts of the third volume of the *Anecdota Maredsolana*: Germanus Morin, ed., *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri qui deperditi hactenus putabantur Commentarioli in Psalmos* (*Anecdota Maredsolana* 3,1; Maredsous, 1895); idem, ed., *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, in Marci Evangelium, aliaque varia argumenta* (*Anecdota Maredsolana* 3,2; Maredsous, 1897); idem, ed., *S. Hieronymi presbyteri tractatus novissime reperti* (*Anecdota Maredsolana* 3,3; Maredsous, 1903).

ies of his day, he was appointed as an honorary member of the Royal Society of Literature (London) (1907) and received honorary doctorates from the universities of Oxford (1905), Freiburg im Breisgau (1926) and Budapest (1935).⁸⁴ This recognition was not restricted to academic circles, but extended to the highest authorities within the Church: Morin's edition of sermons of Augustine⁸⁵ was printed at the Vatican and for his edition of the œuvre of Caesarius, he received a personal gratulatory letter from Pope Pius XII.⁸⁶

Although the main field of research of Dom Donatius De Bruyne⁸⁷ was exegesis (study of the Latin Bible), his competence also extended into the field of Latin patrology, especially the writings of Augustine and Jerome.⁸⁸ His first internationally received article dealt with the origin of the prologues to the Pauline Letters in Latin manuscripts.⁸⁹ De Bruyne tried to demonstrate their Marcionite character; a hypothesis that was supported by A. von Harnack.⁹⁰ As a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Vulgate, De Bruyne visited libraries all over Europe searching for Bible manuscripts. Sometimes this research resulted in unexpected discoveries. In the library of the Escorial, he found four important unedited letters of Jerome on the Pelagian question. He edited the letters and ascertained their authenticity and date (418-419).⁹¹ De Bruyne highly valued the genre of correspondence as a privileged historical source, since letters give "a living and complete portrait of their author."⁹² In the case of Jerome, this portrait was not all that favorable though: De Bruyne revealed Jerome's habit of writing "fictitious" letters, letters that were

⁸⁴ Ghysens and Verbraken, *La carrière scientifique de Dom Germain Morin* (see note 75), 59, 66, 112, 124.

⁸⁵ See note 80.

⁸⁶ See Ghysens and Verbraken, *La carrière scientifique de Dom Germain Morin* (see note 75), 134-135.

⁸⁷ Dom Donatius De Bruyne (1871-1935) was ordained as a secular priest in 1895. After obtaining a doctorate in theology at the Louvain University, he was granted the chair of Holy Scripture at the Great Seminary of Bruges. In 1901 he entered the Abbey of Maredsous, where he was professed in 1905. In 1907 he was appointed as a member of the Commission for the Revision of the Vulgate. Between 1921 and 1925, De Bruyne was director of the *Revue bénédictine*. See Philibert Schmitz, "Dom Donatien De Bruyne: In memoriam," *Revue bénédictine de critique, d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 47 (1935): 205-206.

⁸⁸ For an annotated bibliography of the publications of De Bruyne, see Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, "Bibliographie raisonnée des travaux de Dom Donatien De Bruyne," *Revue bénédictine de critique, d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 81 (1971): 123-150.

⁸⁹ Donatius De Bruyne, "Prologues bibliques d'origine marcionite," *Revue bénédictine de critique, d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 24 (1907): 1-16.

⁹⁰ A. Harnack, review of Donatius De Bruyne, *Prologues bibliques d'origine Marcionite*, *ThLZ* 32 (1907): 138-140.

⁹¹ Donatius De Bruyne, "Quelques lettres inédites de saint Jérôme," *Revue bénédictine de critique, d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 27 (1910): 1-11.

⁹² De Bruyne, "Quelques lettres inédites" (see note 91), 1.

not all destined to the addressees mentioned, often imaginary persons.⁹³ Although De Bruyne tried to explain and justify this habit of Jerome, it is nonetheless obvious he preferred the veracity of the correspondence of Augustine, who was “more scrupulous than Jerome in this matter.”⁹⁴

In 1913 De Bruyne entered the debate about the *Itala*, a Latin version of the Bible referred to (only) by Augustine in his *De doctrina Christiana*.⁹⁵ For De Bruyne, it was obvious that the *Itala* was nothing else than the translation of the Old Testament *ex hebraeo*, i.e. the Vulgate.⁹⁶ This identification of *Itala* and Vulgate was not unproblematic: the passage of *De doctrina christiana*, praising the *Itala*, was written in 397, this is, at a time when Augustine was still hostile to the Vulgate.⁹⁷ To solve the problem, De Bruyne suggested the possibility of two editions of the *De doctrina*, one in 397 and one in 426. In a later article, De Bruyne withdrew his hypothesis of two editions, advancing that our actual text represents the definitive opinion of Augustine, when he redrafted, finished and edited for the first and only time his *De doctrina christiana* in 426.⁹⁸

De Bruyne did not avoid controversial issues. At the time of the modernist crisis his audacity was not without risks though. In 1906, De Bruyne defined his position in the controversy about the *Magnificat* in an article entitled “Un nouveau témoignage attribuant le *Magnificat* à Elisabeth.” Against the traditional thesis attributing the *Magnificat* to Mary, De Bruyne rallied to the view that it should be attributed to Elisabeth; a thesis first advanced by Alfred Loisy in 1893. The abbot of Maredsous and the director of the *Revue bénédictine* suppressed its publication.⁹⁹ In 1914 also, an

⁹³ Donatius De Bruyne, “La lettre de Jérôme à Sunnia et Fretela sur le Psautier,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 28 (1929): 257-263; idem, “Lettres fictives de saint Jérôme,” *ZNW* 28 (1929): 229-234. This thesis was not uncontested. See Paul Antin, *Recueil sur saint Jérôme* (Collection Latomus 95; Brussels, 1968).

⁹⁴ Donatius De Bruyne, “La lettre de Jérôme à Sunnia et Fretela” (see note 93), 6. See also idem, “Notes sur les lettres de saint Augustin,” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 23 (1927): (523-530) 528: “Saint Jérôme éditait aussi ses lettres, il éditait même, comme j’espère montrer un jour, des lettres fictives qui n’avaient été adressées à personne. Cela Augustin n’a pas fait; d’abord parce qu’il était beaucoup trop occupé pour se livrer à ces exercices de style, ensuite parce qu’il était très strict sur le chapitre de la véracité. Ce n’est pas pour rien qu’il a écrit deux livres sur le mensonge, et les lettres fictives frisaient trop le mensonge pour qu’il pût les approuver.”

⁹⁵ On the *Itala*, see B. Botte, “Itala,” *Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément* 4 (Paris, 1949): 777-782.

⁹⁶ Donatius De Bruyne, “L’Itala de Saint Augustin,” *Revue bénédictine de critique, d’histoire et de littérature religieuses* 30 (1913): 294-314.

⁹⁷ The position of Augustine with regard to the Vulgate evolved in the course of time. At first he was hostile to translations on the Hebrew, but near the end of his life he recognized their utility for historical questions.

⁹⁸ Donatius De Bruyne, “Encore l’Itala de saint Augustin,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 23 (1927): 779-785.

⁹⁹ Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, “Épisode de la controverse sur le ‘Magnificat,’” *Revue bénédictine de critique, d’histoire et de littérature religieuses* 94 (1984): 38-49. In this article, Bogaert also published De Bruyne’s controversial text “Un nouveau témoignage attribuant le *Magnificat* à Elisabeth” for the first time.

article of De Bruyne was refused for publication in the *Revue bénédictine*. In the article in question, titled “Études sur les origines de notre texte latin de Saint Paul,”¹⁰⁰ De Bruyne advanced the thesis that Jerome was not the author of the Vulgate of Pauline letters. Furthermore, De Bruyne did not fail to identify the true reviser of our Vulgate of these letters, being the well-known heretic Pelagius.¹⁰¹ This article was only published when the anti-modernist agitation had past its peak, this is, after the pontificate of Pius X.¹⁰²

6. *The Role of the Seminaries and Study Houses of Religious Orders*

In the period under concern only the elite of the secular and religious clergy was sent to university to complete their formation. The majority of the clergy only received a fundamental training in (great-) seminaries (secular clergy) or study houses of religious orders. In most cases, patrology was not taught as a separate course, but as a part of the course in church history. The professors teaching in seminars and study houses were not seldom trained at university. Some of them were even sound scholars who succeeded to carry out patristic research of an international stature. We will discuss two of them: Camille Callewaert of the Great Seminary of Bruges and Joseph de Ghellinck of the Jesuit college in Louvain.

Camille Callewaert¹⁰³ received his training in canon law at the University of Louvain in the early 1890s. The beginning of his academic training coincides with the foundation of a Seminar of Church History (*Séminaire d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 1890) at the Louvain Faculty of Theology. Thanks to the practical exercises given in this seminar, Callewaert

¹⁰⁰ Donatius De Bruyne, “Études sur les origines de notre texte latin de Saint Paul,” *Revue biblique* 24 (1915): 358-392.

¹⁰¹ In the conclusion of “Études sur les origines de notre texte latin de Saint Paul” (De Bruyne, “Études sur les origines de notre texte latin de Saint Paul,” [see note 100], 391-392), De Bruyne tried to tone down the controversial nature of this hypothesis: “Certains esprits trouveront étrange que l’œuvre d’un hérétique ait été adoptée par l’Église et proclamée authentique par le Concile de Trente. . . . Il faut reconnaître franchement que les hérétiques ont joué un rôle considérable dans l’histoire du texte latin. . . . Il y a, je crois, une explication de ce fait étrange, et elle n’est nullement à notre défaveur. Les hérétiques se sont toujours remués beaucoup; brisant avec le passé, ils ont senti le besoin de créer du nouveau. Les catholiques sentaient plutôt le besoin de conserver religieusement ce que leurs pères leur avaient légué. . . .; rien d’étonnant qu’ils aient continué trop souvent à employer des éditions surannées et à s’attarder à une exégèse vieillie; c’était le défaut d’une qualité.”

¹⁰² The article was not published in the *Revue bénédictine* though, but in the *Revue biblique* (see note 100).

¹⁰³ Camille Callewaert (1866-1943) was ordained priest in 1889. He was president of the Great Seminary of Bruges from 1907 to 1934. From 1910 to 1921 he taught history of liturgy at the University of Louvain. For a complete list of his publications, see “Bibliographie van Mgr C. Callewaert,” *Sacris Erudiri. A Journal on the Inheritance of Early and Medieval Christianity* 1(1948): 353-379.

acquired the critical methodology of historical scholarship.¹⁰⁴ In 1894, he was appointed as professor of church history at the Great Seminary of Bruges. In a cycle of four years he had to teach the whole history of the church, leaving not much space for a thorough discussion of the patristic period. Notwithstanding the limitations put to his teaching in patristics, Callewaert continued his research in this domain. He focused especially on the juridical base of the persecutions of the first Christians,¹⁰⁵ an issue much debated among scholars in this period. In 1890, Theodor Mommsen had published an epoch making article on the question,¹⁰⁶ advancing the thesis that the repression of Christians resulted from the application of administrative police measures¹⁰⁷ and not of penal law. Other scholars were convinced there were indeed penal laws applicable to Christians, but these were penal laws of common right and thus applicable to all citizens. Callewaert defended a third option: at the basis of all measures of persecution there was a penal law interdicting *expressis terminis* being a Christian. The simple profession of Christianity was already an offence to be punished by the judge, from the moment it had been judicially ascertained by the confession of the accused. Callewaert demonstrated that his thesis of an exceptional penal law against Christians resulted from a meticulous practice of the “juridico-historical method.”¹⁰⁸

Joseph de Ghellinck SJ (1872-1950) received the ordinary intellectual formation within the order of the Jesuits. His historical training was limited to an initiation in the historical methods of the Bollandists. De Ghellinck was foremost an autodidact in the field of historical studies. In 1906, he was appointed as professor of patristics – a completely new course in the study program – of the Jesuit Scholasticate in Louvain. The first years of his teaching he limited himself to the discussion of some monographs of the

¹⁰⁴ For a more thorough discussion of Callewaert’s training in the *Séminaire d’histoire ecclésiastique*, see Paul Allossery, “Mgr. Callewaert als geschiedkundige,” in *Callewaert-huldiging* (ed. Abbey of Steenbrugge; Bruges, 1929), 54-56.

¹⁰⁵ Camille Callewaert, “Les premiers chrétiens furent-ils poursuivis par édits généraux ou mesures de police?,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 3 (1902): 771-797; 4 (1903): 5-13, 324-348, 601-614; idem, “Le délit du christianisme dans les deux premiers siècles,” *Revue des questions historiques* 74 (1903): 28-55; idem, “Les premiers chrétiens et l’accusation de lèse-majesté,” *Revue des questions historiques* 76 (1904): 5-28; idem, “Le rescrit d’Hadrien à Minucius Fundanus,” *Revue d’histoire et de littérature religieuse* 8 (1903): 152-189; idem, “Questions de droit concernant le procès du martyr Apollonius,” *Revue des questions historiques* 77 (1905): 349-375; idem, “Les persécutions contre les chrétiens et la politique religieuse de l’État romain,” *Revue des questions historiques* 82 (1907): 5-19; idem, “La méthode dans la recherche de la base juridique des premières persécutions,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 12 (1911): 5-16, 633-651.

¹⁰⁶ Theodor Mommsen, „Der Religionsfrevler nach Römischem Recht,“ *Historische Zeitung* 64 (1890): 389-429.

¹⁰⁷ The Roman magistrate had the so-called *ius coercendi*, i.e. the authority to decree all measures he deemed necessary or useful to maintain order or maintenance of the national character of religion.

¹⁰⁸ See Camille Callewaert, “La méthode dans la recherche de la base juridique des premières persécutions” (see note 105).

most important Fathers. To give a more complete overview of the matter, he later on set out to characterize the divers epochs of the patristic age, while indicating the proper place of the most representative authors and their most prominent works.¹⁰⁹ De Ghellinck also inaugurated a patristic seminar as to stimulate the autonomous research of the students. The most important publications of De Ghellinck in the field of patristics fall outside the chronological scope of this article,¹¹⁰ but what is to be stressed here is his crucial role in the creation of the already mentioned *Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense* (1921). In 1924 he edited himself in collaboration with some of his students a bulky volume in this series on the semantic evolution of the term *Sacramentum* (mainly) within the ante-Nicene period (among others Cyprian, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius and Commodianus).¹¹¹

7. Conclusion: A Brief Comparison with the Netherlands

As we have seen, in Belgium, the monolithic Catholicism with its constellation of many abbeys and seminaries together with a flowering faculty of theology at Louvain going through its “great turn” as well as some excellent scholars in classics at other universities provided a fertile breeding ground for patristic research. The specificity of the Belgian situation may be grasped better by making a comparison to the situation in the Netherlands. There, the multi-confessional character and the *duplex ordo* at Protestant institutions had created a completely different context so that it is best to discern firmly between Roman-Catholic and Protestant institutions and scholars.

Around 1911 no academic institution with a Roman-Catholic signature existed in the Netherlands. This would change only in 1923 with the foundation of the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen (now Radboud University Nijmegen). In the field of patristics, Nijmegen is connected to the ‘school of Nijmegen,’ incarnated by Christine Mohrmann and her pupils. This group studied the language of the early Christian writers and demonstrated that besides continuity there also was a degree of discontinuity between Christianity and its non-Christian precursors and context.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Edouard de Moreau, “Le R.P. Joseph de Ghellinck (1872-1950),” in *Antiquité* (ed. R. Demortier; vol. 1 of *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck*; Museum Lessianum. Section historique 13; Gembloux, 1951), (1-39) 5-7.

¹¹⁰ See especially Joseph de Ghellinck, *Patristique et Moyen Age. Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale*, vol. 1: *Les recherches sur les origines du symbole des Apôtres* (Brussels, 1946); vol. 2: *Introduction et compléments à l'étude de la patristique* (Brussels, 1947); vol. 3: *Latin chrétien et langue latine des chrétiens* (Brussels, 1948).

¹¹¹ Joseph de Ghellinck et al., *Pour l'histoire du mot “Sacramentum”. 1. Les Anténicéens* (*Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense* 3; Louvain, 1924).

¹¹² One can refer here to Mohrmann's study (together with Schrijnen) on the syntaxis of Cyprian (Christine Mohrmann and Josef Schrijnen, *Studien zur Syntax der Briefe des hl. Cyprian* [2 vols.; *Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva: studia ad sermonem latinum*

The basis for the work of Mohrmann and her school was laid by Joseph Schrijnen,¹¹³ her mentor and *Doktorvater*, who instilled in her both a very broad interest in Christian Antiquity as a whole as well as in the theory of linguistics. Before Schrijnen became professor of classics in Nijmegen in 1923, he taught at the University of Utrecht. Schrijnen acquired an international reputation with his theory of the Christian sociolect. In his study *Uit het leven der Oude Kerk* (1919), Schrijnen made use for the first time of the expression “sociolect of the first Christians (groeptaal der eerste Christenen).”¹¹⁴ In this publication he also drew attention to, firstly, the rapprochement of the language used in the writings of many Christian authors with the everyday language and, secondly, to the very characteristic phenomenon of a significant number of specific Christian terms in these texts.¹¹⁵ Schrijnen presented his theory in greater detail in *Charakteristik des altchristlichen Latein* (1932).¹¹⁶ By preferring the expression “Christian Latin” over “Patristic Latin” or “Ecclesiastical Latin,” Schrijnen “wished to extend the scope of study of Christian Latin philology to an examination of the entire Latin language of the Paleo-Christian community as a *Sondersprache* or ‘special language,’ a variant of the common language that, while not a dialect, was the distinctive and distinguishing linguistic usage of a distinct group.”¹¹⁷

At the Protestant institutions, the situation was strongly coloured by the *duplex ordo*. This is a dual structure, installed under Dutch law in 1876, whereby within one and the same faculty of theology the ordinary professors are appointed by the state, while the extraordinary ones had to be appointed (and paid for!) by the church(es) that had to invest in the formation of its future ministers. Grosso modo the first ones were responsible for the historical and exegetical courses and the latter for courses related to dogmatic and practical theology.¹¹⁸ At universities where this

Christianum pertinentia 5-6; Nijmegen, 1936-1937), the many detailed case studies, collected in her *Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens* (Rome, 1958-1977) and the many studies, also of her pupils, which were often published in the *Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva*-series.

¹¹³ Joseph Schrijnen (1869-1938) obtained a doctorate in classical languages at the Catholic University of Louvain. He had an eminent role in the foundation of the Catholic University of Nijmegen in 1923 and was appointed as its first rector-magnificus. See Adrianus Franciscus Manning et al., eds., *Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen 1923-1973. Een documentenboek* (Bilthoven, 1974), 24-25.

¹¹⁴ Joseph Schrijnen, *Uit het leven der Oude Kerk* (Bussum, 1919), 261.

¹¹⁵ Gérard J. M. Bartelink, “L’œuvre scientifique de Christine Mohrmann (l’École de Nimègue),” *Sacris Erudiri* 32 (1991): (23-37) 23.

¹¹⁶ Joseph Schrijnen, *Charakteristik des altchristlichen Latein* (*Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva: studia ad sermonem latinum Christianum pertinentia* 1; Nijmegen, 1932).

¹¹⁷ Frank A. C. Mantello and Arthur G. Rigg, eds., *Medieval Latin. An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington, 1996), 141.

¹¹⁸ On the origins of this *duplex ordo* and its consequences for theology in general, see Arie L. Molendijk, “De beoefening van de theologie in Nederland aan de openbare instellingen voor hoger onderwijs,” in *Tweestromenland: over wijsgerige en belijdende theologie* (ed. H. J. Adriaanse; Louvain, 2001), 31-52.

duplex ordo existed, patristics was always part of the teaching assignment of an ordinary professor, though never as a position solely devoted to patristics. The fact that, unlike in Roman-Catholicism, the reformed churches of the time hadn't developed a sense of tradition with regard to the Church Fathers, the *patres*, also didn't do much good for the development of patristics as an independent discipline.

Hajo Uden Meyboom, who occupied since 1892 at the theological faculty of the University of Groningen the chair in Encyclopedia of Theology, History of Christianity and Ethics is a case in point. He took his doctorate with a dissertation on the synoptic problem¹¹⁹ and was, until his appointment in Groningen, a minister of several local congregations. In the first years after his appointment he focused on the second century: he wrote a general survey on the second century and a study on Marcion of Sinope.¹²⁰ Meyboom's most lasting contribution to patristics until today, though, may have been the 46 small volumes of Dutch translations of Early Christian literature (*Oud-christelijke geschriften in Nederlandsche vertaling*) which he produced between 1907 and 1931. He started with the *Church History* of Eusebius, followed by the Apologists and the complete corpus of Clement of Alexandria (1908-1915). He would continue the series until his death in 1933 (a lot of Origen, Irenaeus, the complete oeuvre of Tertullian and Justin Martyr). This series has done much to make the texts of the Church Fathers available in Dutch, also for a larger readership.¹²¹

At the theological faculty of the University of Leiden the study of early Christian literature belonged to the domain of the professor of New Testament. At the turn of the century this chair was held by W. C. van Manen, one of the representatives of the current of radical criticism. This was a group of scholars, mainly based in Leiden and Amsterdam, who denied any historicity at all to the gospels, dated the letters of Paul in the second century and considered the Ignatian letters inauthentic. The influence of this current in Leiden was brought to an end by the appointment of the British scholar Kirsopp Lake, who held the chair between 1904 and 1913, when he left Leiden for Harvard. When he arrived in Leiden, Kirsopp Lake had already made a name for himself within New Testament textual criticism

¹¹⁹ The doctoral dissertation is now accessible in J. J. Kiwiet, ed. and trans., *A History and Critique of the Origin of the Marcan Hypothesis 1835-1866. A Contemporary Report Rediscovered. A Translation with Introduction and Notes of Geschiedenis en Critiek der Marcushypothese by Hajo Uden Meyboom at the University of Groningen, 1866* (New Gospel Studies 8; Macon, Ga., 1993).

¹²⁰ Hajo U. Meyboom, *Marcion en de Marcionieten* (Leiden, 1888); idem, *Het Christendom der tweede eeuw* (Groningen, 1897); idem, *De Clemens-roman: Accognitiones; Homiliae; Epitome de gestis sancti Petri*, vol. 1: *Synoptische vert. van den tekst*; vol. 2: *Wetenschappelijke behandeling* (Groningen, 1902-1904).

¹²¹ Hajo U. Meyboom, ed. and trans., *Oud-christelijke geschriften in Nederlandsche vertaling* (46 vols.; Leiden, 1907-1931).

by discovering the so-called “family 1” or Lake-group of manuscripts.¹²² Before that, he had already published a first attempt at synthesis of New Testament textual criticism, a field in which he was a pioneer: his often reprinted *The Text of the New Testament*¹²³. It is no coincidence that his inaugural lecture at Leiden on 27 January 1904 dealt with the relationship between textual criticism and exegesis.¹²⁴ Other studies that Lake wrote in his Leiden-period dealt with the resurrection narratives, the monks of Mount Athos and the importance of their treasures for the reconstruction of the text of the New Testament, the earlier letters of Paul.¹²⁵ Kirsopp Lake was succeeded by the German New Testament-scholar Hans Windisch, who published prior to his arrival in Leiden on Philo and on Christian anthropology until Origen. In 1920 a commentary on the letter to Barnabas would follow but the major focus of his research had become the later writings of the New Testament.¹²⁶ This is a telling indication of how in Leiden around 1911 ultimately the study of patristics was more or less subsumed to topics related to research on the New Testament and not so much valued as a research area of its own. This doesn't take away anything from the fact that, also in the Netherlands, scholars with international stature were active in the research area of patristics and that they laid the foundation for research traditions that yield fruit until today.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Aufsatz gibt einen Überblick über die belgische Forschung im Bereich der Patristik um 1911. Am Ende des 19. und am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts entstanden in Belgien Zentren für die wissenschaftliche Erforschung der Kirchenväter und der altchristlichen Literatur, nicht nur innerhalb der Universitäten (Löwen, Gent und Liège), sondern auch in Abteien, Studienhäusern von religiösen Orden und Kongregationen sowie in Priesterseminaren. Die Pluralität an Forschungszentren ging einher mit einer Pluralität an Forschungsschwerpunkten (Texteditionen, Textkritik, dogmatisch-historische Forschung), nicht nur auf dem Gebiet der lateinischen, sondern auch der griechischen und orientalischen Patristik. Wichtigste Bildungsstätte und maßgebendes Zentrum patristischer Forschung war die Theologische Fakultät der Katholischen Universität Löwen.

¹²² Kirsopp Lake, *Codex 1 of the Gospels and its Allies* (Texts and Studies 7,3; Cambridge, Mass., 1902).

¹²³ Kirsopp Lake, *The Text of the New Testament* (London, 1900).

¹²⁴ Kirsopp Lake, *The Influence of Textual Criticism on the Exegesis of the New Testament* (Oxford, 1904).

¹²⁵ Kirsopp Lake, *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (Crown Theological Library 21; London, 1907; repr. London, 1912); idem, *Facsimiles of the Athos Fragments of the Shepherd of Hermas* (Oxford, 1907); idem, *The Early Days of Monasticism on Mount Athos* (Oxford, 1909); idem, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul. Their Motive and Origin* (London, 1911).

¹²⁶ Hans Windisch, *Die Frömmigkeit Philos und ihre Bedeutung für das Christentum. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Leipzig, 1909); idem, *Taufe und Sünde im ältesten Christentum bis auf Origenes. Ein Beitrag zur altchristlichen Dogmengeschichte* (Tübingen, 1908); idem, *Der Barnabasbrief* (Die Apostolischen Väter 3, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, Ergänzungsband, 3; Tübingen, 1920).

Auf Grund der verfügbaren Expertise auf dem Gebiet der Orientalistik entfaltete sich diese Fakultät zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts zu einem international renommierten Zentrum der orientalischen Patristik (Paulin Ladeuze, Joseph Lebon). An der Universität von Gent wurden besonders Texteditionen der griechischen Kirchenväter aufbereitet (Joseph Bidez, Léon Parmentier); die Abtei von Maredsous entwickelte sich zu einem namhaften Zentrum der Textkritik und der Ausgaben der lateinischen Väter (Germain Morin, Donatius De Bruyne), während die Bollandisten (besonders Hippolyte Delehaye S.J.) ihre jahrhundertealte Expertise auf dem Gebiet der Hagiographie neuen Elan verliehen, indem sie aktiv am Prozess der Verwissenschaftlichung teilnahmen. In den Priesterseminaren und Studienhäuser der religiösen Orden schließlich war die patristische Lehre und Forschung in großem Maß von den Qualitäten und Spezialisierungen individueller Forscher wie Camille Callewaert und Joseph de Ghellinck S.J. abhängig. Die Eigenheit des belgischen römisch-katholischen Forschungskontexts wird besonders deutlich im Vergleich zum multi-konfessionellen niederländischen Kontext. Dort erfuhr die Patristik um 1911 weniger günstige Rahmenbedingungen. Erst mit der Gründung der Universität von Nijmegen im Jahre 1923 konnte die römisch-katholische Minderheit sich auch auf akademischer Ebene der Patristik widmen (sog. „Schule von Nijmegen“). An den protestantischen Fakultäten (Groningen, Leiden) verlief die Entwicklung der Patristik zu einer autonomen Disziplin langsamer, dennoch waren einige international renommierte Forscher auf diesem Gebiet tätig (Hajo Uden Meyboom, Kirsopp Lake, Hans Windisch).