VU Research Portal

Official and popular religion in Christianity: the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times (13th-18th centuries)

Frijhoff, W.T.M.

published in

Official and popular religion. Analysis of a theme for religious studies
1979

document version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

citation for published version (APA)

Frijhoff, W. T. M. (1979). Official and popular religion in Christianity: the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times (13th-18th centuries). In *Official and popular religion. Analysis of a theme for religious studies* (pp. 71-116). Mouton Publishers.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

E-mail address:

vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl

Official and Popular Religion in Christianity *The Late Middle-Ages and Early Modern Times* (13th – 18th Centuries)

1. *A methodological problem*

In any study on religious phenomena from the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times, even with respect to the most familiar part of Western Europe, the most important problem encountered is epistemological in nature.

The contemporary researcher of societies uses a sociological model which makes an understanding of past religious events, behaviour and structures dependent (or at least reliant) upon his insight into the organization of the overall society in which these are embedded. He uses religion as an indicator of social relations or values, and postulates a relation between these in which the religious dogmas, values and phenomena are either relegated to the superstructure in full, or at least assigned the role of a (- depending on the theory employed -) more or less passive agent in the domain of social reality. If there is to be any sociological interpretation of religion at all, this model is without doubt methodologically both indispensable and unavoidable. However, the use of such a model poses a radical problem for the social historian, namely that of the final understanding of the motivations that any *Ancien Régime* in Western Europe exhibited with respect to social relations. These motivations were undoubtedly in the first place religious: religion (i.e., but not exclusively, its institutional and theological extensions) formed the conscious basis for a specific arrangement of the overall society - not only as a practical consequence or a theoretical justification of the existing relations of power, but also as a conscious project for

the arrangement of future society; and this is so for the dominant groups, castes and classes as well as for the heretics, insurgents and rebels. Man in the *Ancien Régime* was above all a religious man; not in the contemporary sense of a pious, practising or social-politically active Christian, but in his *existential motivation*, in so far as he experienced his existence primarily in terms of a narrow physical solidarity with the hereafter (2). If this statement should appear too bold or sociologically irrelevant, one should recall that, for example, most forms of the workers' movement developed out of the institution of burial funds, or, to take an example from the other end of the social ladder, that the very large patrimony owned by the churches prior to the occurrence of the great waves of desamortisation in the 18th and 19th centuries were primarily acquired through testamentary dispositions (in exchange for requiem masses). A sociologically orientated historical interpretation must allow for this dimension which seems to have all but disappeared today. Otherwise such an interpretation will surrender itself to the *illusion* of describing a reality, or even uncovering a meaning, which must irrevocably escape her because they fall outside of her epistemological categories. The problem posed by a sociological approach to historical reality is thus clear: How is it possible to examine a society which is radically different from contemporary society, - not only structurally, but also in its formation of values and motivations -, while using methods that have been developed and tested in the *contemporary* social-cultural context? Though as yet virtually unexpressed, this problem already looms large within historiography.

Thus in recent years we have seen the appearance of forms of regressive sociography, which seek to describe certain aspects of the *practices* of the churches in the past (3): church-attendance and communion

practices (4), sociability (e.g., participation in common life and pilgrimages) (5), frequency of vocational calling (6), cases where the church's discipline is transgressed (e.g. concubinage and drunkenness on the part of clergy) or the codified norms (7) (e.g. pre-marital intercourse, abortion, infanticide, theft, usury), etc.. Those forms of historical sociography seem to be closely linked to the contemporary forms of religious experience and implicitly testify to a manner of inquiry that puts the past in the service of the present, without constantly seeing the fundamentally different nature of the former. For at least for a century or more, the phenomenon of religion in Western Europe has been mainly characterised by a more or less complex structure of forms of *churchly practices*, i.e. the behaviour (however variously motivated) which seeks to conform to a model supplied by a (possible dissident) group or institution; the sudden emphasis that 'orthopraxis' has recently received in theological reflection, is a logical development and ultimate crowning of this evolution, as is the flowering in the last decades of a series of remarkably well-developed sociographical and psychological research methods.

The analysis of historically-recognizable religious (churchly or otherwise) practices, however, is confronted by two enormous *obstacles*. On the one hand, one can only measure that which has been conserved, i.e. has been *transmitted* in measurable form. This means in fact only the written (or printed) word, pictorial material (8), and fixed physical arrangements (9), but *not* the spoken word, the rumour, the mental structure, fear, sickness (10), immediate events, hidden practices, ignored movements, public opinion, etc. - aspects that are all the more essential in so far as a strongly repressive censorship or an extensive measure of self-censorship, that applied to minority groups and the domain of the internal ex-

pression of opinion in general, was common to all the countries of the *Ancien Régime* (including the Netherlands, a persistent patriotic legend notwithstanding (11)). Where we do have firsthand accounts of what happened outside of the circles of regents, learned men and preachers, such eyewitnesses are very seldom participants but are usually censors or critics, nearly always outsiders: e.g. the magistrate, the synods and other ecclesiastical councils, the bishops and archdeacons. With very few exceptions (in which cases the exceptional character further obfuscates interpretation) history has left us only the linguistically and culturally distorted discourse of clerks (in the various meanings of the term) (12); these individuals, at least until during the eighteenth century, belonged to the cultural superstructure and conformed on the whole in their expressions to the existing order and scale of values (13).

Furthermore, that part of the material which is in principle measurable, has already been selectively dealt with according to varying cultural criteria by those who over the centuries have been the guardians of the historical patrimony. For reasons mostly unfathomable to us today, material was thrown out which, in the light of contemporaneous attitudes to history, was held to be meaningless or dangerous, i.e. in the first place all material bearing upon the circumstances of the 'less-well-to-do' and upon 'superstition'. Hence, our alarming paucity in documents concerning the population groups which themselves left no written accounts behind, and the current interest in statistical facts concerning these groups, which are by the way very difficult to interpret (e.g. determination of the degree of literacy by means of calculating the percentage of newly-weds that knows how to sign, or research into sexual habits by means of demographic calculations).

On the other hand, analysis of the practices of the

church gives rise to a completely different *meaning* depending on whether the context is the current social-cultural one or that of Christianity of the *Ancien Régime*. Not the practice itself, but its *status*, the manner of functioning within the larger context, is important for an understanding of religious society; i.e., the way in which the practice is embedded in a *network* of relations which together structure the religious reality. Because of the twofold selection of historical material as described above, it is in many cases impossible for us to determine to what extent a particular practice that was not institutionally adopted or approved, is only a residue of a formerly much more important phenomenon, or conversely, is a minute tangible indication of a tacitly but widely practiced form of behaviour. We have in mind not only taboos of a general social-cultural nature (belief in witches, consultations of healers and so-called charlatans, religious magic, etc.) but also those of a confessional nature (e.g., the participation of Protestants in pilgrimages and Protestant faith in miracles). In all such cases, it is only possible to uncover (approximately) the position, meaning and extent of the practice analysed if the researcher is able to see the practice functioning within the context of the mental structure of the religious society in question.

An example may elucidate different aspects of the above discussion. In 1734 large sections of the Dutch Republic were shocked by the rumour that during Midsummerday of June 24th (St. John's day, which coincided with Corpus Christi, owing to the exceptionally late Easter that year) Roman Catholics would massacre the Protestant section of the population and seize power (14). English-Roman prophecies and Dutch pasquinades to this effect abounded in conversations, supported by older prophetic material which numerous families kept in the kitchen-cupboard for times of

crisis. In nearly all the Dutch cities, the magistrate took emergency measures, while the federal administration (*Staten-Generaal*) send out troops to the islands that seemed to be threatened most. All peaceful coexistence in the Republic notwithstanding, what was probably involved here was an authentic popular movement of a residual confessional nature. Not foreign to the movement in Protestant circles would have been the desire to create political support for the Prince of Orange and the fear for the massive seasonal migrations of mostly Catholic rural labourers from Western Germany and Flanders. But only in Zuid-Beveland, Noord-Holland and Friesland does the movement seem to have led to any unrest with tragic-comical consequences.

What material do we have at our disposal to evaluate these events? A large number of magisterial resolutions, many pieces of correspondence of church leaders in high positions, a few notices published some weeks later in periodicals, as well as some comments in the Diaries of well-to-do citizens. In all these cases, the reports come from witnesses belonging to the social-cultural upper-layer, reasoning out of a culture which was focused on the written word. The only voice from below (and even then usually in the words of the clerk of the court) comes through in the acts drawn up for the legal proceedings instituted before the Court of Friesland as a result of this so-called 'June-panic'. From various positive witnesses, we know conclusively that a large number of the magistrates believed the rumours: when everything ended peacefully, the magistrate of Friesland thought that he looked so ridiculous that he tried to find a number of scape-goats among Catholics by starting proceedings against them, only to find them calling on their Calvinist neighbours as witnesses for the defence!

Hence, the silence with which regents, preachers and priests almost immediately surrounded this event

is all the more eloquent. It is as if those involved felt they had been caught in the act of subscribing to a piece of superstition which they themselves thought they had eradicated long ago: just as the reports from before the fatal day (June 24th) show panic, so the reports following that day are anxious to allay all fears and filled with irony. Also indicative is the fact that the witnesses maintain complete silence on the constellation of values involved in the panic, values that are very characteristic of popular religion, such as the problem of the transmission of a centuries old fear of a catastrophe held to occur whenever Midsummernight coincided with the Corpus Christi (which is the case at the zenith of the cycles of changing dates of Easter, when Easter occurs as late in the year as possible, something which happens only once a century).

Another example is the way the prophecies are transmitted and function in the different social settings, and the way in which a synthesis is achieved between the imported political predictions and the traditional local store of prophecies of conflict that are confessional in nature. Again, another example is the endemic fear shown by the Protestants for wholesale vengeance from the Roman Catholics, partly projected onto the seasonal workers from Western Germany and Flanders, who, on that day, would stream in large numbers into the Catholic clandestine churches in the cities to organize their Corpus Christi procession. Finally, one can mention the various sacred elements involved in the whole event: the cosmic meaning of the Easter cyclus, the magical or occult power of Holy Sacrament, the archetypal nature of the prophetic propaganda (according to the Protestants for example, the Catholics wanted to sole their shoes with the tongues of Calvinists; Catholics, on the other hand, said that the blood from the massacre would rise to the heels of the horses), the old prophecy that the Saviour (in this case, the Scottish

claimant to the English throne 'James III') would come from the West, etc..

It needs to be emphasized above all, however, that if one robs this event of its religious character and simply treats it as either an ordinary civil disturbance or riot, or as an expression of mere 'superstition', one demonstrates a complete lack of insight into the historically altogether *different* structure of religious experience. In the first place, the network of social-cultural relations in which the event took place, is structured mentally in a different way from our situation. It is inappropriate to speak of a 'superstitious people' as facing enlightened preachers and regents who are held to have emancipated themselves from such 'superstition'. On the contrary, large sections of all social layers are beset by the same fear, even though the different reactions in the course of sobering up may already point to a growing social-cultural gap. Secondly, this event indicates that for all social sections a mental structure can be said to exist, one whose roots go far back into early medieval times: namely the *idea of christianity* as a mental and social model of organization. For both Catholics and Protestants, the church appears to function as a religious society, i.e. through 18th century eyes, as *the* society. Within the scope of this contribution, it is impossible to explore this event in fuller detail. However, this example may have made it clear that even by time of the 18th century, a clear distinction between official and popular religion cannot be drawn; and that such a distinction could not, furthermore, be held to coincide with the distinction between institutional life and the experience of the populus. Those who want another example should recall the case of Balthasar Bekker (1634-1698) and the church's vehement reaction (not in a small provincial town but in Amsterdam) half a century earlier when Bekker opposed in his books, a-

mong other things, the fear of comets and witches, on biblical grounds.

Thus the social historian is not permitted to analyse the religious experience of former centuries without thoroughly reflecting upon his own postulates and those of his sources. He must thus reveal not only the social-historical context in which his own analyses are situated, but also the contexts in which the analyses of his predecessors are located, up to and including those of the contemporaries and participants of the events studied themselves. Should the historian fail to do so, he will run a double risk. He will either exaggerate the function of the institution within the religious reality, because such are the accounts of the participants themselves, or because in history popular religion is virtually visible only through the institutional lens of repression. Or else he will take the scarce, amorphous pieces of information which have been transmitted to us and that are difficult to interpret, as witnesses of the historical forms of religion and spirituality of the masses, and make them an easy prey for deceitful comparisons or an equally deceitful folklorism, both of which stare at a superficial morphology until they are blue in the face, but neglect function, meaning and experience.

2. The basic ideas of an evolutionary model

These (necessarily too schematic) introductory remarks require us to express our own position. How do we envisage the relation between official and popular religion to have been during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times? At first sight it appears as though in Early Modern Times, particularly following the proliferation of dubious devotions and other practices during the Middle Ages, there has taken place a peri-

od of intense purification in which above all the churches of the Reformation showed the lead. But the facts are much more complex. Is it at all meaningful to make a distinction between popular and official religion with respect to the late Middle Ages; or rather, do these terms indicate a similar state of affairs as they do by the end of the eighteenth century? Have not the canons on the officially prescribed or accepted religious behaviour changed considerably over the course of time, also and particularly within the Roman Catholic Church? And have not thereby changes set in, in what is without doubt unjustly often called 'popular' religion, it being regarded as a kind of residual phenomenon?

It appears to us that in medieval Christianity a high degree of integration between the two forms of experience was achieved, and that it is characteristic of the Early Modern Times that a number of practices become gradually increasingly *marginal*: these practices are then qualified as 'popular' because they no longer fit into the social-cultural scheme of values expounded by an élite, which consciously regards itself as being above the masses in so far it has emancipated itself through its knowledge from the 'irrational' collectivity. It is important to examine this thesis more closely.

2.1 Let us first note that one thread runs throughout the entire religious history of western Europe from the fourteenth until the eighteenth century, namely the *idea of Christianity* (15) as a traditional mental and social model of organisation, a model that has its roots far back in early medieval times. According to this idea, the state is a Christian state, the church a religious community and the dominant religion must necessarily be that of the sovereign. The Dutch Republic only *seems* to be an exceptional case; for, even there, notwithstanding any unavoidable tolerance,

the state is one in which only one church is recognised, the Reformed Church, to which at least in theory, all office-bearers must belong. This requirement was so self-evident in the eyes of contemporaries that the idea of the confessional pluralism of the state only gained some support during the eighteenth century, while, on the other hand, a systematic ecclesiology (i.e. the self-justifying reflection of the church, which installs, or if needed, restores a self-consciousness) was very late to develop. In the Roman-Catholic Church, in which Rome as the spiritual centre (at the time of course supported by a political structure) functioned throughout Early Modern Times as an active principle of unity and focal point of identity and had gradually established an almost universal ultramontanism, the development of such an ecclesiology does not really occur until the nineteenth century - the Council of Trent had only resulted in pragmatic and partial ecclesiological definitions of ultimately minor importance (16) - while in the different churches of the Reformation this development did not take place much earlier.

This mental structure characterises itself by the following three main tendencies:

2.1.1 Theologically speaking, it constituted a religion of *God's actual presence*, whereby immanence and transcendence were indissolubly intertwined, and God's intervention on earth was to be expected any moment: floods and earthquakes, but also miraculous cures and rescues were attributed within all confessions to his immediate activity.

2.1.2 From a soteriological perspective, it presumed and required the idea of a *community of salvation*, in which the *church* played a role, either as an active mediator (the Roman-Catholic point of view), or, as was mostly the case with the churches of the Reforma-

tion, as a codifying translator of the Scriptures. It is precisely the universal acceptance of the church as a mediator or translator that guaranteed the organisational character of the community of salvation. The 'cuius regio' was in principle necessarily attended by the 'extra ecclesia nulla salus': there was room neither for dissenters nor for disbelievers, except as witnesses to the revelation (e.g. the Jews).

2.1.3 Finally, the idea of Christianity implied a collective consciousness of the *cosmos*, harmonised according to a divine order. The cosmos was not simply divided into the profane and the sacred, but had to be deciphered by means of a system of signs and symbols to which only the church(es) had access; hence the central position of the church's representatives and office-bearers.

2.2 This structure itself remained virtually intact for the vast majority of the population until the end of the period we are dealing with. However, two comments must be noted.

2.2.1 It is important to recognise that there is no real difference on this point between the mental structure of the churches of the Reformation and that of the Roman-Catholic Church. It is not the Reformation that destroyed the idea of Christianity but, in the domain of theology (2.1.1), the gradual watering down of the personal intervening God into a 'Providence' and into mere transcendence. In the institutional domain (2.1.2) movements such as that of the conventicles and the like were the first to try to evade the restriction on the deciphering of the Scriptures by an institutionalised authority, and to substitute for this the readings in fluctuating groups, or in some cases, even individual inspiration (17). Finally, the gradual rejection of the cosmic system of concordance

(2.1.3) by modern erudition undermined the scale of values and the set of images that had protected the operational character and the undifferentiated profane/sacred nature of the Christian worldview.

2.2.2 The emancipation of a 'profane science' with its own canon of causality and its own rationality constituted a phenomenon of acculturation which led to the emergence of an *erudite subculture*, which gradually came to be regarded as 'the culture' (18). At the top of the societal scale of values there now stand knowledge, education, instruction; everything that did not fit into the framework of the new *ratio* was gradually banned as being either *dangerous* - which it was after all in so far as it tacitly attacked the universal validity of that ratio, and hence the resulting power of the knowledge élite - or unintelligible and hence *useless*. Through these successive waves of banishment, the elite brought its own order about; paupers (and hence people 'unwilling to work'), those mentally disturbed (19), the sick (20), and prisoners (21), and finally even man's uncontrollable body itself were in this way ultimately hidden from sight (22); everything that signaled their presence came to be regarded as a 'disturbance'. Thus, for example, the further development of medicine led to a science reserved for an elite, and subsequently to a marginalisation of what became known as 'quackery', popular medicine or paramedical practices, e.g. the 'irrational' appeal to healers and so-called charlatans, and to the intercession of healing saints, all of whose activities did not fit within the somatic canon of the codified medical sciences.

The gap between both has become so wide by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the erudite person can claim to take a 'scientific' view of these 'popular practices' and can gradually objectify them as residual *folklore* (23), without at all suspecting that

such practices may possess a rationality of their own; and that they can be operational within a system of references or a concordance of their own. At the same time, the erudite person fails to see that simultaneous appeals to different systems of rationality with ambivalent validity can be made something which occurs frequently when the individual involved is a participant of more than one subculture. Thus, the appeal to a medical practitioner did (and does) in no way rule out simultaneous appeals to one, or even more, saintly healers with differing powers to cure, or to a healer or a so-called charlatan. The point here is that there are different domains of rationality that can function in an integrated manner through being complementary (24).

2.3 The *content* of the mental structure described above has been subject to sweeping changes and has been gradually emptied of meaning in the course of the Middle-Ages and Early Modern Times. For our purpose, the following two aspects of this process are important to note.

2.3.1 At the beginning of the period we are looking at, politics and morals were still so indissolubly linked that these terms had a semantic content different from that which they have today. The term 'morals' was virtually a neologism; this development is best brought out in the Italian notion of *virtù*, which up to the time of Machiavelli, unites the notions of 'force' and 'virtue' (as utility) and only much later acquires the sweetly moralising meaning the term now has. The social-political society, however, gradually gained an autonomous domain. Against the emancipated 'profane' society, the church created a new autonomous area of power that linked up with the growing independence of the layman and with that other creation of modern times, his 'conscience',

which asked for guidance. The layman received this in the form of a casuistic set of morals or ethics, completely focused on a fragmented realm of conduct, and thus codified and controlled by the office-bearers of the church. These office-bearers of the different confessions slowly began to constitute themselves into a sacred caste with its own subculture (which distinguished itself clearly through manners of speaking and pronouncing - after all, they were servants of the Word!), often transmitting their vocation (and sometimes even their office) from father to son, or from uncle to nephew as was the case with the Roman-Catholics. It is characteristic that with respect to the churches of the Reformation as well as to the Roman-Catholic Church, this social-cultural differentiation was brought about along the path of *erudition and instruction*. The Council of Trent defined the priest as being hierarchically above the layman and intended the priest by means of his social differentiation to set an example to the layman on the basis of the axiom *knowledge = virtue* (25). Thus, from a social point of view, the office-bearer henceforth derived his prestige from his studies and his cultural level rather than from his devoutness or appointment. Both the preacher interpreting the Scriptures and the Counter-Reformation priest are in the first place men who know, and who are able to distinguish the 'sacred' from the 'profane' on the basis of their scientific knowledge. The function of knowledge and erudition lay above all in the restoration of morals and in the creation of a social order which was to replace the religious values (26). After the Council of Trent, the priest as well as the preacher have an erudite, rational outlook on religious practices, separating in an authoritarian manner the chaff of 'superstition' from the wheat of belief (i.e., institutional-constitutive belief), whereby the former comes to be regarded as a danger to the religious order, but of which the

office-bearer has no part since he 'knows better'.

2.3.2 The fragmentation of the world view, and hence of the corresponding system of values, and the doubling of the points of control (church and society), resulted in a rapidly growing number of possibilities of conflict for human behaviour. The casuistic ethic that tried to solve these problems, brought about a *reification* of daily religious practice; not only in the domain of ethics, but also in affairs of the church. Conduct was rendered measurable and controllable according to a codified list of very observable practices, in terms of which the degree of devoutness of the particular individuals or group could be judged - participation in religious services, the sacraments, spiritual activities, good works, financial collections, countable prayer habits (e.g. the rosary), etc.. Thus the condition was created for the absorption of 'valuable' devotions and practices by the institutional church, who turned these into instruments for its institutional activities (e.g. the protestant 'days of prayer', the catholic institutionalisation of the rosary as a token of confessional penance), and for the rejection and persecution of 'useless', or even 'dangerous' *superstition*. It is of little or no importance that the lines drawn between belief and superstition were not the same in all the churches. The socialisation process of religious behaviour as such is a characteristic feature of all the institutional churches of the Early Modern Times. However, this gradually growing institutional grip on practices 'approved by the church' (27) does lead to the concomitant development of forms of *private devotion and layman piety* - this concerns practices within the church that are supported by neither the bible nor the sacraments, but which already testify to an autonomous search for grace or salvation on the part of the individual, even though such practices are sooner or later sanctioned by, or

assimilated into, the church.

2.4 Thus, the sense of cosmic harmony that had pervaded late medieval Christianity was gradually replaced at the institutional level by the double, complementary requirement of *discipline* within the church and of societal moral *order*. Directed towards an independent 'sacredness', this discipline was in the first place characterised by an *anthropomorphic purging* within the churches. On the one hand, we can see that the immanent-transcendent God is gradually replaced by an intellectual abstraction or by his attributes (e.g. his Eye, or 'Providence') (28); whilst on the other hand, the institutional order hunted out everything that was reminiscent of the old cosmic concordance but was ambivalent, or even a sign of contradiction within the new rationality. Typical in this respect is the expulsion of the 'profane' flora and fauna from the church, which gradually loses its 'no-sacred' social functions, to become a silent or empty place with scarce, always organised or at least institutionally controlled practices. Dogs and other animals (which e.g. are still to be found in every one of Pieter Saenredam's church interiors) are expelled from the reformed churches and their graveyards in the second half of the seventeenth century. At the same time, catholic bishops carry out a determined hunt for the statues of Saint Anthony (with pig), Hubert (with deer) and Martin (with horse), which are buried in the graveyard as being 'unbecoming' images - only to be dug up again just as quickly by the local population after the visitation departed (29).

All of this is not to say that man as such comes to occupy a central position in the experience of church life. On the contrary, the focus is on shaping a type of man who lives by a moral discipline and in a specific societal order (30). This becomes apparent, for example, in the contemporaneous invasion of prudery

(the naked sexual organ disappears behind a veil or fig-leaf; the naked Saint Sebastian, who riddled with arrows had always been a strong sexual symbol, vanishes from the churches, and the human body decreed to be an 'immediate occasion for sin'). Another indicative example is the change in the statute of the poor, who are no longer regarded as 'pauperes Christi' but are denounced as a danger to morals and society, and are locked up in workhouses (31).

2.5 Summarizing the above, we can say that as far as the religious experience is concerned, the Early Modern Times have been marked above all by a differentiated cultural development. A *clerical subculture* has slowly emerged that became co-responsible for a three-fold evolution:

2.5.1 On the one hand, Early Modern Times saw the emergence of forms of *public devotion*, after the institutional model, under the control of the clergy, and eventually usually gaining the approval of the church. A typical example is the seventeenth century development of the worship of the Sacred Heart: this movement was closely linked to the anatomical disclosure of the human organism and to the symbolism of the body that the church applied to itself. These forms of devotion imply belonging to a particular church with its own basic spirituality. After a rather unsettled beginning, they usually become institutional pillars that rival in importance the practices that are properly constitutive for the institution (namely, the sacraments). We would like to regard them as *semi-institutional* elements.

2.5.2 Secondly, at least since the Middle Ages, many forms of really *popular piety* have existed (32). Their primordial function lies in the regulation and ordering of daily life, e.g. penitence practices, rites of ex-

orcism (such as the imposition of the gospel of Saint John, or various blessings of the home, the stable or place of work), the worship of saints and relics, pilgrimages and processions, graveyard rites, etc.. All these practices are directed towards fending off lightning and thunder, epidemics, illness and death, towards curing man and animals, etc.. During the late Middle Ages, such practices were of a semi-institutional nature, with probably only very few exceptions (33). A clear example is formed by the judicial and penitential pilgrimages that were generally imposed by the city authorities upon the commitment of serious crimes: the sentenced individual had to travel to far-off destinations for pilgrimages - usually to Rome, Compostella (St. James), Bari (St. Nicholas), Rocamadour (Our Lady) etc. - and had to obtain a form of attendance signed by the rector there, so that he would be absent from the city for many months or years, while the possibility that he might not survive the journey was by no means imaginary (34).

An other example is that of the so-called '*sanctuaires à répit*', the holy places where the still-born, unbaptised children were taken and, through the intercession of the saints, were brought back to life for a few seconds during which they were baptised so that they could ascend to heaven (35). In this case, the institutional church itself appears to accept a practical, semi-institutional supplement to cover the gaps in its theology of baptism.

We saw above how, in the course of modern times, an autonomous erudite culture with its own rationality emerged. The office-bearers of the church had their own institutional motives for joining this culture of erudition. On the one hand the clerymen - as a result of the rule of celibacy that was now actually put into practice in the Roman Catholic church, and/or the rising social status of the office-bearer (36) - were increasingly in danger of losing contact with the daily life of the less well-to-do, while on the other hand

their upbringing and education gave them a different, clerical-institutional outlook on the culture of every-day life. The latter now becomes clearly distinct from the liturgical and para-liturgical manifestations of the churches.

Hence a definition is made *from above* of the 'popular piety' which gradually begins to function as a sub-culture in so far it is peculiar to the group of *undeveloped* individuals (i.e. those who have not acquired a different way of thinking through education), who, with the advance of technical developments in the society, are increasingly to be found in the lowest social classes. In this situation, it is of crucial importance that the clergy now attempt to deal with the popular piety by either rendering it official, or, where such a course of action is impossible on institutional grounds (e.g. theological non-conformity) or otherwise fails, expel it into the realm of 'superstition' and oppose it as being dangerous to religion.

To cite just one illuminating example, one can recall the attitude of the Austrian church under the enlightened emperor Joseph II (1765-1790) (37): according to the emperor's decrees the chapels for pilgrims to be found in the countryside are destroyed because of the lack of clerical supervision to ensure that these places remain free of 'superstitious practices', and the statues are transferred to the parochial churches where such control can be carried out; a pilgrimage itself is only to be undertaken as a collective and pastoral manifestation under the leadership of the parochial clergy, and exclusively by day; pilgrims whenever possible should return to their homes the same day because it is known that 'irregular practices' are indulged in at night when people are far away from their own homes (38). In this cases the original semi-institutional practice is partly rendered official as a pastoral manifestation, and partly expelled from the church's domain into a new, *para-institutional* sector:

the believer who indulges in 'superstitious' practices becomes a stranger one no longer comprehends. On his part, the believer begins to *remain silent* about his para-institutional activities; so that the clergy appear to become increasingly ill-informed about what takes place outside the institutionally-controlled daily life.

This even reaches the point at which the clergy are simply ignorant of what goes on; and in a later stadium they do not even care anymore, as long as the public order and 'good' morals are not endangered. Not until the nineteenth century, under the objectifying eye of folklorists does a (very selective) rediscovery take place of sectors of western culture which were not based on written traditions and technical-scientific rationality (39).

2.5.3 Certainly by the end of the Middle Ages the clear traces of a complete *anti-institutional* subculture can be encountered. Upon closer examination, however, the latter appears to be an inversion, a reversed model, of the contemporaneous institutional structure and pattern of behaviour, namely in the form of *witchcraft* (40) (and to a lesser extent *sorcery*), which employed an inverted cosmic image. Witchcraft created an anti-order, in which the sabbath (the anti-mass) was celebrated at night (the anti-day) in honor of the devil (the anti-God). During such forms of worship the relations of authority and sex were inverted and what were considered to be unnatural sexual acts were performed. Following the medieval inquisitors, Calvin called this a 'perversion of the natural order' (41). It was precisely this detailed imitation, comprising *all* sectors of church and social life (42), that struck medieval Christianity, and in particular the powerful church, at its most sensitive spot, namely her claim to *universal* power based on the cosmic validity of her system of references.

The only way to escape the grip of Christianity was via the *inversion* developed within the system itself, the covenant with the devil (the system's arch-enemy, who nonetheless occupied an integral place); the evil powers that stood in a precarious balance with the good in normal times, were operationalised by witchcraft in a manner which could not be controlled by the institutions of Christianity. Today, one can no longer imagine the panic this discovery brought at times upon all sectors of Christianity. On the other hand, it appears probable that the growing doubt about the validity of the system of values expounded by Christianity, precisely on the part of the leading sectors of society (i.e. the judicial powers (43)) during the 16th and 17th century, is to be blamed for their strange patterns of behaviour; as a reaction or out of a sense of self-defense they seize upon the most distinctive aspects of the no longer tolerated anti-culture, namely the belief in the devil. After all, the devil was an essential link in the cosmic system of concordance, since he was responsible for the final sanction and hence actively intervened on earth.

The same can be said in the seventeenth century of the equally vehemently persecuted phenomenon of *possession by the devil* (44), something which - and this detail is of essential importance - occurred mainly to members of new monastic orders, particularly the Ursulines; a new spirituality emerges here that loses its balance in the search for a new way of expressing itself on a mystical level, with the result that contemporaries, unable as yet to comprehend the new, recognise only the reversal to the old categories and postulate an intervention on the part of the devil. The fear of a structural attack on the institution explains the vigorousness of the persecution and its snowball effect; a vigorousness which is only equalled when it concerns a second anti-institutional phenomenon, namely *heresy* (45). We refer here not so much to the theological dissenters or

schismatics whose often vigorous persecution by the church was only supported by the political society when there were political reasons for doing so; instead, we refer to the followers of the Albigenses from the high Middle Ages (46), who laid claim to possessing their own cosmic structure and hence a system of values and an institutional arrangement of their own, and who did not admit the survival of the old Christianity, as was the case with the oldest of the anabaptist groups, whose anti-militarism and incidental practices of nudism and sexual promiscuity must be interpreted in this sense. It need not cause any surprise that they gradually came to be persecuted with an unequalled vehemence by the socially conformist churches, i.e. the Roman-Catholic Church and the main stream of the Protestant Reformation (47).

However, the seventeenth century definitely marks the end of the various waves of persecution - not because there are no longer any witches or heretics, but because the church and the civil authorities emancipate themselves from the medieval cosmos in which they leave the witches behind them, while the growing separation between a 'sacred' religious world and the 'profane' society gives the heretics less cause for an attack on all fronts simultaneously (48). Even if the physical 'signs' of witchcraft (e.g. insensitivity to pricks, or weightlessness) were selfevident to the clergy or the other inquisitor whose task it was in the medieval system of concordance to decode these signs, and who saw in them the unmistakable presence of the devil, by the seventeenth century a medical doctor is gradually called in. His new 'scientific' outlook raises doubts; because what was formerly self-evident is no longer valid in the terms of *his* system of rationality. The same remark can be made with reference to *faith in miracles*: the institutional order gradually replaces the 'vox populi' (which was at the same time the 'vox ecclesiae') by a medical certifi-

cation, which puts the elements of the miracle on a technical-scientific basis, only ascribing the manner of intervention to an isolated 'supernatural realm' (49).

This is the turning point. From the seventeenth century onwards, witchcraft is also interpreted by the social-cultural upper-layer as 'superstition' and neutralised as such. Instead of being a dangerous anti-institutional phenomenon, it gradually becomes a harmless, virtuality forgotten *para-institutional* reality.

2.6 Our study thus results in the following, very global evolutionary scheme concerning the relation between official and popular religion in the period from the late Middle Ages to the end of the Early Modern Times:

It must be born in mind that this scheme only refers to religious *behaviour* and not to spirituality in the proper sense (50). The pragmatic picture we have drawn of popular religion in this second section undoubtedly does not fully take into account either its internal coherence or its dimension of faith, which can modify the religious function of human behaviour in a manner that is difficult to observe. We would, therefore, explicitly leave room for a different reading of the material covered here. At the same time, we wish to emphasize again that the believer, no matter what church he may belong to, is able to combine forms of behaviour from different categories, without these necessarily being in conflict or leading to a conflict in behaviour, because different systems of rationality are involved which may have a complementary or alternative operationality with respect to one another.

3. *Supplementary comments: christianisation and culture*

This is not the place to take a close look at the history of christianisation in Europe. Such a history has not yet been written. We are only now slowly beginning to see what resistances emerged to the process of christianisation and to what degree this process relied either on the collaboration of certain social groups with the intruder or on coercion. We do need to ask ourselves, however, whether the problem of christianisation as a whole should rather be formulated in a different way, namely as a *problem of acculturation*. Some comments may suffice.

3.1 Two sociologists of religion, F. BOULARD and J. REMY, showed a few years ago that, with respect to France, the large differences in the figures on church-attendance correlate with only one variable, namely the degree of church-attendance in the surrounding ar-

ea (51). The importance of the cultural region (bounded by cultural indicators) for the level of christianisation was confirmed in a recent piece of research from Belgium (52), which at the same time pointed to the decisive role of the sedentary factor: the figure for church-attendance is highest in those areas in which the growth of a durable pattern of church-attendance is made possible by the extremely low level of migration. These *cultural regions* crop up in the different historical publications of the last years, in which the intensity of religious involvement is determined for each region on the basis of an analysis of the degree of participation in the religious practices of the community (church-attendance, confraternity life, vocational calling, etc.) (53). Without going into this matter any further, we may express the hope that future research will be undertaken to see if it is a simple case of differential development; or if, instead, in the long run one can speak of high and low level areas of religious intensity that betray differential degrees of christianisation.

3.2 But *what exactly does christianisation entail?* In his inaugural address to the 'Collège de France', J. DELUMEAU (54) recently put forward the thesis that Europe has never really been completely christianised; and that, moreover, it is not until the sixteenth century that christianisation proper takes place; and then on a basis different from the earlier enforced incorporation of the still heathen population (who have since basically remained heathen) into a structure of Christianity which was not assimilated into the existing structures but was imposed from above. Delumeau sees proof of this in the totally *magical* cosmos in which medieval Christianity existed, tolerated as such by the Christian authorities. Although it does not completely disappear during the Early Mod-

ern Times, this magical cosmos is buried beneath a new, Christian culture through the efforts of the Catholic as well as the Protestant Reformation by means of instruction, pastoral work and moral prescriptions (55). It does appear to us that in this hypothesis sacred acts and sensitivity to sacred values are rather quickly identified with 'non-Christian' magic and that too little attention is paid to the transformations brought about by Christendom in the social function and the meaning of the ritual activities of pre-Christian times (56). Yet the hypothesis is quite correct in rejecting the appeal to *practices of the church* as the foremost indicator of religious vitality - and this certainly with respect to a period in which Sunday church-attendance was compulsory and failure to attend mass was often sanctioned by the civil authorities. The hypothesis is equally correct in rejecting the idea that christianisation may take place from one day to the next by means of a baptismal ritual. Instead, christianisation can only be achieved in the long run through a process of assimilation into a culture formed jointly by the church's institutions and religious practices.

3.3 With respect to the Netherlands, DE KOK has already shown that the *process of protestantisation* had taken at least a century (57). The attack on his calculations that were based on Catholic figures of communion, has been remarkably vehement, for it is doubtful whether such an attack is very relevant. One may debate his percentages, but De Kok's general outline of the process of protestantisation is quite correct, at least in so far as it was under the control of the Catholic institutions. But it is equally certain that many Dutchmen from the northern Netherlands to a high degree persisted in participating in what were regarded as 'papal' practices, even after they had been baptised into the reformed church (58): practices

such as certain dances, oaths, popular games, fortune telling, appealing to healing saints when cattle became ill (59), pilgrimages (60), burial rituals (61), etc.. Institutional and cultural protestantisation thus proceed with *different rhythms*.

Above all, it is important to recognise that the bulk of what within a secularised-objectifying view became known as 'folklore' during the nineteenth century, was still looked upon as 'papal insolence' or 'superstition' by the reformed authorities of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Which is not to say that the Roman Catholic authorities encouraged such practices. A man such as Sasbout Vosmeer, who in his correspondence and earliest mission-report (1602) shows a strong sensitivity towards signs from heaven predicting changes in the political situation, appears to be an exceptional case. The later apostolic vicars, just as their arch-priests, are strongly averse from everything that smells of superstition, including the exaggerated worshipping of saints. Their own catholic-rigorist instruction, the local influences of the Protestant Reformation and their political prudence will all, no doubt, have contributed to this. At the same time, it is striking to observe that they visit only those places of pilgrimage that were institutionally 'approved' and controlled such as Kevelaer (Germany) and Scherpenheuvel (Belgium). On the other hand, they do not want to have any part in the clandestine cults of the Republic itself; while, at the turn of the century, bishop Codde opposes fortune-telling in de Graafschap (Guelders) in a pastoral letter, which bears a remarkable similarity to similar texts from Roman-Catholic countries (and, needless to say, to the texts of the old warnings issued by the local Protestant synods).

The institutional views of catholicism and protestantism on popular practices thus are very similar, with the possible exception of a difference of opinion on where the lines to what is theologically (i.e. insti-

tutionally) permissible should be drawn: thus, where the reformed church, for example, draws a rather abstract time limit, permitting only a *day* of prayer, the Roman-Catholic Church, as always more faithful to the sacred character of physical activity, allows *practices* of prayer such as pilgrimages. Yet from a social-cultural perspective the difference is of minor importance. The important point is that in both cases a *clerical order* from an assumed position of autonomy, tries to influence the masses, or, to put it in the perspective of christianisation, tries to win them over, using the cultural models and means of the clergy to this end. Against the practices of popular religion which were under the precarious conditions of existence at the time largely rules in the art of *living*, transmitted from father to son, from mother to daughter, the churches put forward the practices of the *church*, which in doing so intends to bring about a separation between that which is, and that which is not permissible, all in the name of a certain social-cultural ordering. For example, against the 'disorderly' theatrical nature of the popular feasts, games and cults, the churches put forward their own, rational *mise en scène*, which corresponded to a specific controllable social-cultural canon; with regard to this, the rigoristic reformed Sunday ritual with its rigid hierarchy of seating, conform to the social order, differs only in degree from the Roman baroque ceremony (62). In both cases the institutions met with a two-fold opposition. On the one hand, there is the resistance from the often centuries old existent forms of sacredness and their religious habits, which, far from being 'disorderly', embraced a complex protective system (in accordance with a different rationality) against all possible forms of calamity, and precisely for this reason were able to offer such strong resistance that they even now, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, appear to be fully alive in some

vital domains of human existence (we remember, for example, the renewed expansion of forms of 'irrational' astrology). On the other hand we have the more reflective resistance coming from an enlightened erudite group to the new values expounded by the church and the new emphasis on the (socially-culturally very restricted) 'natural' human being, which is very soon to take on new sacred characteristics (63). However, with this development a new period begins that lies outside the scope of this contribution.

Notes

1. See the methodological considerations of M. de Certeau, 'L'histoire religieuse du XVIIe siècle. Problèmes de méthodes', *Recherches de science religieuse* 57 (1969), pp. 231 - 250; idem, 'L'Opération historique', *Faire de l'histoire*, I (Paris 1974), pp. 3 - 41; D. Julia, 'Problèmes d'histoire religieuse. Période moderne', *Recherches de science religieuse*, 58 (1970), pp. 575 - 584; idem 'Histoire religieuse', *Faire de l'histoire*, II (Paris 1974), pp. 137 - 167. Within the scope of this contribution it is, of course, impossible to do more than indicate the main issues involved. Similarly, it is impossible to consider giving a complete bibliography. The literature listed below mainly concerns the period dealt with here; we only cite works which develop a new perspective on the subject and which fit into our problematic. We have restricted ourselves largely to French literature with which we are most familiar and which is closest to being sociological; on certain points of importance, however, we have tried to indicate literature from different sources also. As for England, many points of the present contribution can be illustrated by articles from the collec-

tive work: *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. by G.J. Cuming and D. Baker (Cambridge 1972).

2. Vgl. R. Sprandel, *Mentalitäten und Systeme, Neue Zugänge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte* (Stuttgart 1972), pp. 35 - 42.
3. This sociography is primarily based on three sources to which statistical methods can be applied. Three of these are:

- a) *The reports of church visitation*. These originate from institutional sources and as such are not to be treated without suspicion. See: E.W. Zeeden & H. Molitor, *Die Visitation im Dienst der kirchlichen Reform* (Münster 1967); and: *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 55 (1969), pp. 49 - 67; 279 - 282, and later issues.

This source is being intensively exploited in nearly all the countries of Western Europe, particularly in Belgium, Italy and France. The *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* in Paris is preparing a complete inventory for France, with a codification of the contents of the reports. For Italy, and as far as our subject is concerned, these reports proved their richness in: G. de Rosa, *Vescovi, popolo e magia nel Sud. Ricerche di storia socio-religiosa dal XVII al XIX Secolo* (Napoli 1971).

- b) *The book of miracles*. Though often kept by clerics, this source, like the third one mentioned here, can be regarded as being less institutional than the above mentioned. See e.g.: I. Gierl, *Bauernleben und Bauernwallfahrt in Altbayern* (Munich 1960).

- c) *The last will and testament*; See M. Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris 1973). Vovelle analysed well over 20.000 testaments.

4. J. Toussaert, *Le sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du Moyen-Age* (Paris 1960); G. Baccrabère, 'La pratique religieuse dans le diocèse de Toulouse aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles', *Annales du Midi*, 74 (1962), pp. 287 - 319; A.M. Meyers-Reinquin, 'Proeve tot statistische benadering van de godsdienstpraktijk in de late Middeleeuwen en de moderne tijden (tot 1630) aan de hand van de kerkverslagen', *Handelingen der Kon. Zuid-Ned. Mij voor Taal- en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*, 23 (1969), pp. 205 - 273.
5. This field of study has been completely renewed by the studies of Maurice Agulhon, *La sociabilité méridionale. Confréries et associations dans la vie collective en Provence orientale à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence 1966); idem, *Pénitents et franc-maçons de l'ancienne Provence* (Paris 1968).
6. We only mention: W. Ravitch, *Sword and Mitre. Government and Episcopate in France and England in the Age of Aristocracy* (Paris - The Hague 1966); M. Venard, 'Pour une sociologie du clergé au XVIe siècle. Recherche sur le recrutement sacerdotal dans la province d'Avignon', *Annales E.S.C.*, 23 (1968), pp. 987 - 1016; D. Julia, 'Le clergé paroissial dans le diocèse de Reims à la fin du XVIIIe siècle', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 13 (1966), pp. 195 - 216; J. Salzgeber, *Die Klöster Einsiedeln und Sankt-Gallen im Barockzeitalter. Historisch-soziologische Studie* (Münster 1967).
7. With respect to the conformity to the directives of the Roman-Catholic church in sexual matters, see: J.L. Flandrin, 'Contraception, mariage et relations amoureuses dans l'Occident chrétien', *Annales E.S.C.*, 24 (1969), pp. 1370 - 1390; idem, *Les amours paysannes. Amour et sexualité dans les campagnes de l'ancienne France (XVIe - XIXe siècle)*

- (Paris 1975), especially pp. 237 - 246; A. Burguière, 'La démographie', *Faire de l'histoire*, II (Paris 1974), pp. 74 - 104; M. Cloet, *Het kerkelijk leven in een landelijke dekenij van Vlaanderen tijdens de XVIIe eeuw: Tielt van 1609 tot 1700* (Louvain 1968), pp. 435 - 437; E.R. Coleman, 'L'infanticide dans le Haut Moyen Age', *Annales E.S.C.*, 29 (1974), pp. 315 - 335. With respect to criminality, see: *Crimes et criminalité en France, 17e - 18e siècle* (Paris 1971); A. Farge, *Le vol d'aliments à Paris au 18e siècle* (Paris 1974); A. Zysberg, 'La société des galériens', *Annales E.S.C.*, 30 (1975), pp. 43 - 66.
8. Examples of quantitative treatment of religious pictorial material: G & M. Vovelle, *Vision de la mort et de l'eau-delà en Provence, d'après les autels des âmes du Purgatoire, XVe - XXe siècles* (Paris 1970); V.L. Tapié, J.P. Le Flem & A. Pardailhé-Galabrun, *Retables baroques de Bretagne et spiritualité du XVIIe siècle. Etude sémiographique et religieuse* (Paris 1972) - the latter authors use Jacques Bertin's invention of the 'fichier-image' though unfortunately not to the full extent.
9. For the use of this in the exploration of the religious mentality, see for example: J. Bordenave & M. Viavelle, *Aux racines du mouvement Cathare: la mentalité religieuse des paysans de l'Albigeois médiéval* (Toulouse 1973), who examined sepulchral monuments and their spatial arrangement; J. Le Goff, 'Apostolat mendiant et fait urbain dans la France médiévale', *Annales E.S.C.* 23 (1968), pp. 335 - 352; idem, 'Ordres mendiants et urbanisation dans la France médiévale', *Annales E.S.C.*, 25 (1970), pp. 954 - 965, studied the locations of the cloisters of the mendicant orders within the urban lay-out; H. Rey-Fland, *le cercle magique. Essai sur le théâtre en rond au Moyen Age*

- (Paris 1973); P. Charpentrat, *Du maître d'ouvrage au maître d'oeuvre. Architecture religieuse en Allemagne du Sud de la guerre de trente ans à l'Aufklärung* (Paris 1974).
10. Here we refer to the psychosomatic aspects of the disease, rather than to the demographic and social consequences of the epidemics. Nevertheless, see: J.P. Peter, 'Une enquête de la Société Royale de Médecine (1774-1794)', *Annales E.S.C.*, 22 (1967), pp. 711 - 751, and later studies of the same author and his group; F. Lebrun, *les hommes et la mort en Anjou aux 17e et 18e siècles* (Paris - The Hague 1971).
 11. See: H.A.E. van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid* (Groningen 1972), who remains very traditional and rather uncritical in his treatment of the sources.
 12. A. Godin, *Spiritualité française en Flandre au XVIIe siècle: l'Homéliaire de Jean Vitrier* (Genève 1971), gives a sensitive analysis of the tangible world of observations and practices of such a cleric, based on a semantic analysis of his sermons.
 13. One of the rare exceptions is the priest Jean Meslier (1664 - 1729) who left behind a virulent atheistic and anti-hierarchical testament (*Oeuvres* vol. 3) (Paris 1970 - 1972). Other social dissenters are to be found among the chiliasts and utopians, but often these people advocate a form of society which is closely linked to that of their daily existence.
 14. We hope to publish a concise study concerning this panic shortly. For the present, a summary is to be found in: H.J. Oldenhof, *In en om de schuilkerkjes van Noordelijk Westergo* (Assen 1967), pp. 351 - 365.
 15. For what follows see: A. Dupront, 'De l'Eglise aux temps modernes', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, p. 66 (1971), pp. 418 - 448; idem, 'Unité

des chrétiens et unité de l'Europe dans la période moderne', *XIIIe Congrès Internationale des Sciences Historiques* (Moscow 1970); idem, 'Vie et création religieuses dans la France moderne (XIVe - XVIIIe siècle)', *La France et le Français* (Paris 1972), pp. 491 - 577. H. Lutz, *Christianitas afflicta* (Göttingen 1964), was right to point out that the germ of political pluralism was already present in medieval christianity.

About God's place within this conception of Christianity, see the suggestive analysis of R. Muchembled, 'Un monde mental clos: étude sémantique et historique du vocabulaire religieux d'un noble artésien à l'époque de Philippe II', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis*, p. 88 (1975), pp. 169 - 189 (175 - 180).

16. See: G. Alberigo, 'L'ecclesiologia del Concilio di Trento', *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, p. 18 (1964), pp. 227 - 242.
17. L. Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise. La conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris 1969).
18. See M. Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris '69).
19. Idem, *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris 1961).
20. See: A. Querido, *Godshuizen en gasthuizen* (Amsterdam 1967).
21. M. Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris 1975).
22. The intuitions of J.H. van den Berg (*Metabletica; Het menselijk lichaam*; and other works) are gradually gaining recognition among historians outside of the Netherlands.
23. The word 'folklore' originates from the 19th century: typical of the 18th century is the Dutch word 'bijgeloof' (superstition). A semantic analysis of the different terms and their repressive power in society still has to be carried out.

24. We shall see below that other domains are characterized by an exclusive, unintegrable rationality, as is the case with witchcraft. With respect to popular medicine, see: M. Bouteiller, *Médecine populaire d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Paris 1966); M. Leproux, *Médecine, magie et sorcellerie* (Paris 1954); F. Lebrun, *op. cit.*
25. G.G. Meersseman, 'Il tipo ideale di parroco secondo la riforma tridentina', *Il Concilio di Trento e la riforma tridentina*, I (Rome 1965), pp. 27-44. The conception of priest and preacher as an *office-bearer* (i.e. as an official in the service of public worship and/or church) is a typically modern development; see: D. Julia & W. Frijhoff, 'The French Priest in Modern Times', *Concilium*, 7, No. 5 (1969), pp. 66-71.
26. With respect to the priests's stereotyping view on social reality, see the analysis of D. Julia, 'La réforme post-tridentine en France d'après les procès-verbaux de visites pastorales: ordre et résistances', *La Società religiosa nell'età moderna* (Napoli 1973), pp. 311-433. Moreover, the degree of religious motivation present in that moralising behaviour probably differs from region to region; see e.g.: E.W. Monter, 'La sodomie en Suisse romande', *Annales E.S.C.*, 29 (1974), pp. 1023-1033.
27. We can similarly look upon the monopoly claimed by the Roman institutions on the procedure for the declaration of sainthood. This monopoly, which dates back at least until the 13th century, made it possible to exercise control over the morality of the particular exemplary figures and the canon of sainthood. See: P. Delooz, *Sociologie et canonisations* (Liège-The Hague, 1969).
28. Jesus Christ, the person, went through a similar development: J.A.B. Jongeneel, *Het redelijke geloof in Jezus Christus* (Wageningen 1971).

29. See: D. Julia, 'La réforme post-tridentine' (*op. cit.*) p. 333.
30. This becomes also apparent in the growing attention to the 'beauty' of the religious representation: from the seventeenth century on, the clergy energetically hunt out the 'monstrous' images to which the people is usually very attached.
31. See: *Etudes sur l'histoire de la pauvreté (Moyen-Age, XVIe siècle)*, sous la dir. de M. Mollat, 2 vol. (Paris 1974); J.P. Gutton, *La Société et les pauvres. L'exemple de la généralité de Lyon, 1534 - 1789* (Paris 1971); M. Mollat, 'La notion de pauvreté au Moyen-Age. Position de problèmes', *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 52 (1966), pp. 6 - 23; B. Geremek, 'Renfermement des pauvres en Italie (XIVe - XVIIe siècle). Remarques préliminaires', *Mélanges en l'honneur de F. Braudel*, I (Toulouse 1973), pp. 205 - 217.
32. The enormous amount of literature dealing with popular piety in western Europe is systematically presented in the *International Folklore and Folk-life Bibliography*. We will limit ourselves here to works dealing with the worship of saints and pilgrimages.
 Some historical studies: R. Roussel, *Les pèlerins à travers les siècles* (Paris 1954); M. Romani, *Pellegrini e viaggiatori nell'economia di Roma dal XIV al XVII secolo* (Milan 1948); G. Reiter, *Heiligenverehrung und Wallfahrtswesen im Schrifttum von Reformation und katholischer Restauration* (Würzburg 1970); I. Mueller, *Die churrätische Wallfahrt im Mittelalter* (Basel 1964).
 A very suggestive survey of sacred practices with regard to medieval forms of foolishness can be found in the richly illustrated work of: H.H. Beek, *Waanzin in de Middeleeuwen. Beeld van de gestoorde en bemoeienis met de zieke* (2nd ed.,

Hoofddorp 1974).

Some social-psychological and anthropological studies: A. Dupront, 'Tourisme et pèlerinage', *Communications*, 10 (1967), pp. 97 - 121; idem, 'Pèlerinages et lieux sacrés', *Mélanges en l'honneur de F. Braudel*, II (Toulouse 1973), pp. 189 - 206; E. de Martino, *La terra del rimorso* (Milan 1961); A. Rossi, *Le feste dei poveri* (Bari 1969) - this last work employs a marxist perspective. Some good examples of monographic inventories: G. Gugitz, *Die Wallfahrte Oberösterreichs* (Vienna 1954); B. Edeine, *La Sologne*, 3 vol. (Paris-The Hague 1974) - gives a complete account of the popular practices and traditions (both past and present) of the area; G. Schreiber, *Der Bergbau in Geschichte, Ethos und Sakralkultur* (Cologne-Opladen 1962) clearly shows how a number of popular practices are rooted in a specific social-historical milieu; G. Kiesel, *Der Hl. Willibrord im Zeugnis der Bildenden Kunst* (Luxemburg 1969) - an inventory of pictorial material concerning St. Willibrord; H. Holzbauer, *Mittelalterliche Heiligenverehrung: Hl. Walpurgis* (Kervelaer 1972) - an inventory of cultic places. The hagio-geographic study has become very popular, particularly in the German countries; based on an examination of the diffusion of cults, such studies aim to discover their genesis and evolution as well as their relation to the social-economic context. A classical study in this field is: M. Zender, *Räume und Schichten mittelalterlicher Heiligenverehrung in ihrer Bedeutung für die Volkskunde* (Düsseldorf 1959; Cologne 1973). See furthermore: L. Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Ex voto. Zeichen, Bild und Abbild im christlichen Motivbrauchtum* (Zürich 1972); P. Glazema, *Gewijde plaatsen in Friesland* (Meppel 1948); L. Schmidt, *Volks Glaube und Volksbrauch. Gestalten,*

Gebilde, Gebärden (Berlin 1967); and the folkloristic maps of the various countries.

33. R. Bauerreiss, *Pie Jesu. Das Schmerzensmann-Bild und sein Einfluss auf die mittelalterlichen Frömmigkeit* (Munich 1931), demonstrates the organic link between the *Ecco-homo*-cult and the liturgical passion-play; idem, *Sepulchrum Domini. Studien zur Entstehung der christlichen Wallfahrt auf deutschem Boden* (Munich 1936), shows that many places of pilgrimage were originally based on imitations of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, following the Crusades. For the relation between liturgy and devotion, see also: E. Dumoutet, *Le désir de voir l'hostie et les origines du culte du Saint-Sacrement* (Paris 1926); P. Browe, *Die eucharistischen Wunder des Mittelalters* (Breslau 1938).
34. See the classic work of E. van Cauwenbergh, *Les pèlerinages expiatoires et judiciaires dans le droit communal de la Belgique du Moyen-Age* (Louvain 1922); L. Pfleger, 'Sühnewallfahrten und öffentliche Kirchenbusse im Elsass', *Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte*, 8 (1933), pp. 127 - 162; and the long series of studies of A. Viaene, in: *Biekorf* (from 1964).
35. P. Saintyves, 'Les résurrections d'enfants morts-nés et les sanctuaires "à répit"', *Revue d'ethnographie et de sociologie*, 3/4 (1911), pp. 65 - 74; last: M. Bernos, 'Réflexions sur un miracle à l'Annonciade d'Aix-en-Provence', *Annales du Midi*, 82 (1970), pp. 5 - 20.
36. The fact that people no longer confess to sexual sins is one of the many indications of the alienating character of celibacy: see: D. Julia, 'Le prêtre au XVIII siècle. La théologie et les institutions', *Recherche de science religieuse*, 58 (1970), pp. 521 - 534, particularly 531. One could not be ordained unless one had a

titulus clericatus or a *titulus patrimonii*, i.e. a guaranteed minimum benefice income, which right from the start excluded a very large portion of the population; the consecration '*titulo missionis*' was only possible for the missionary areas of northern Europe. With respect to the social-cultural selection of candidates for the priesthood, see: W. Frijhoff & D. Julia, *Ecole et société dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris 1975). See also: J. Meuvret, 'La situation matérielle des membres du clergé séculier dans la France du XVIIe siècle', *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 54 (1968), pp. 47 - 68.

37. See: G. Schreiber, *Wallfahrt und Volkstum in Geschichte und Leben* (Düsseldorf 1934).
38. Of the many nocturnal pilgrim practices, we name only the *incubatio* (i.e. to sleep in the holy place in order to obtain a favour), which in later centuries evoked severe persecution; the sexual promiscuity that adhered to pilgrimages was a known phenomenon, not always devoid of sacred meaning. For the origin of various phenomena, see: B. Koetting, *Peregrinatio religiosa. Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche* (Munich 1950).
39. This rediscovery is historically located by: M. de Cereau, D. Julia & J. Revel, 'La beauté du mort. Le concept de culture populaire', *Politique aujourd'hui*, (Dec. 1970), pp. 3 - 23.
40. An extensive bibliography is to be found in: R. Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle. Une analyse de psychologie historique* (Paris 1968), pp. 25 - 70. We particularly want to refer to: C. Ginsburg, *I benandanti. Ricerche sulla stregoneria e sui culti agrari tra cinquecento e seicento* (Turin 1966); J. Caro Baroja, *Las brujas y su mundo* (Madrid 1961; 1973); J.L. Teall, 'Witchcraft and Calvinism

in Elizabethan England', *Journal of the history of Ideas*, 23 (1962), pp. 21 - 36; E.W. Monter, 'Witchcraft in Geneva', *Journal of Modern History*, 43 (1971), pp. 179 - 204; M. Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Bijdrage tot theorievorming over de 16e en 17e eeuwse Europese heksenvervolgingen', *Mens en Maatschappij*, 47 (1972), pp. 304 - 336. We do not discuss here the origins of these inversions, which seem characteristic for a period of high institutional pressure, or of social transition and doubt, as were the late middle ages. It is certainly exaggerated to claim that all of this was but an invention of the persecutors of witchcraft. But it is quite possible that the suggestive systematisations of their inquiry methods played a role in the expansion and development of these practices.

41. Sermon of the 2nd Dec. 1555 concerning *Deut.* 18, pp. 10 - 15, in: *Opera*, ed. G. Baum, XXVII (Brunswick 1884), pp. 505 - 516 (quotation 513).
42. In this it differs from, e.g., the medieval *festival of fools* at the end of the year, in which certain aspects of society but not the whole cosmos were inverted and which took place under the auspices of the church; the festival functioned as an institutionalised safety-valve, most likely primarily for the inhabitants of cities. *Carnaval* in this respect was much more 'dangerous', and had deeper sacred and rural roots; see: C. Gaignebet, *Le Carnaval. Essai de mythologie populaire* (Paris 1974); the book by H. Cox, *The Feast of Fools* (Cambridge/Mass. 1969) is totally useless from the point of view of the historian.
43. Thus Mandrou, *op. cit.*; see also the critique to this by M. de Certeau, *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 55 (1969), pp. 300 - 319; and by M. Foucault, 'Médecins, juges et sorciers au

- XVIIe siècle', *Médecine de France*, No. 200 (1969), pp. 121 - 128.
44. M. de Certeau, *La possession de Loudun* (Paris 1970), analyses one of the most famous cases, which served as a source of inspiration to the Polish composer Krz. Penderecki, served as the basis for the sensitive reconstruction by the film-maker R. Polanski (*Mother Joan of the Angels*) as well as being the point of departure of Kenneth Russel's biased spectacle (*The Devils*).
45. See: H. Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt 1961); *Hérésies et sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industrielle*, prés. par J. le Goff (Paris-The Hague 1968), in which further bibliographical references are given; E. Routley, *English Religious Dissent* (London 1960); M. Erbstößer & E. Werner, *Ideologische Probleme des mittelalterlichen Plebejertums. Die freigeistige Häresie und ihre sozialen wurzeln* (Berlin 1960).
46. J. Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power in Toulouse* (New York 1954); R. Manselli (ed.), *Testi per lo studio della eresia catara* (Turin 1963); and the works of R. Nelli, such as his recent *Le phénomène cathare* (Paris 1964). An attempt to describe the milieu of Catalonia and its structure of authority can be found in: A. Cazenave, 'Les Cathares en Catalogne et Sabarthès d'après les registres d'Inquisition', *Bull. Philologique et Historique (jusqu'à 1610) du Comité des Travaux hist. et scientif.*, 1969 (Paris 1972), pp. 387 - 436.
47. See particularly: A.F. Mellink, *De wederdopers in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, 1531 - 1544* (Groningen 1953); I.B. Horst, *The Radical Brethren. Anabaptists and the English Reformation to 1558* (Nieuwkoop 1972); C. Krahn, *Dutch Anabaptism* (The Hague 1968); the detailed study of the wealth of the anabaptists in Münster by K.H. Kirchhoff,

Die Täufer in Münster, 1534/35 (Münster 1973), has (as we hope once and for all) dispensed with the legend of the 'proletarian' origin of the anabaptist revolutionaries.

48. A few *chiliastic* and *messianic* movements are really the only ones to carry out such attacks in early modern times (see also footnote 13). Useful, though far from infallible and not very systematic, is: H. Desroche, *Dieux d'hommes. Dictionnaire des messianismes et millénarismes de l'Ere Chrétienne* (Paris - The Hague 1969), classic is: N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London 1957); and exemplary social-historical study in this field (which only too often gives rise to wishful or esoteric thinking and corresponding writing), is: D. Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence, Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton 1970); C. Hill, *Anti-christ in Seventeenth-Century England* (London 1971), shows the gradual erosion of an originally radical popular notion (the Antichrist) that finally is not adopted by the institutions.
49. This is also the context of the renewed necessity of recognized miracles for the declaration of sainthood: see L. Castelli, *De inquisitione miraculorum in sanctorum martyrum canonisatione* (Rome 1629), for whom martyrdom, long a sufficient ground for sainthood, was no longer adequate. For the attitude to miracles see also: H. Platelle, *Les chrétiens face au miracle. Lille au XVIIe siècle* (Paris 1968).
50. For the possibility of the existence of an autonomous 'popular spirituality', see the debate: 'Une Enquête sur les spiritualité populaires', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité*, 49 (1973), pp. 493 - 504.
51. F. Boulard & J. Remy, *Pratique religieuse urbaine et régions culturelles* (Paris 1968).

52. L. Voyé, *Sociologie du geste religieux. De l'analyse de la pratique dominicale en Belgique à une interprétation théorique* (Brussels 1973). See J. Seguy, 'Du cultuel au culturel', *Annales E.S.C.*, 29 (1974), pp. 1280 - 1290, whose summary is used here.
53. See e.g.: L. Pérouas, *De diocèse de La Rochelle de 1648 à 1724. Sociologie et pastorale* (Paris 1964); M. Vovelle, *op. cit.*
54. J. Delumeau, *leçon inaugurale (au) collège de France, chaire d'Histoire des mentalités religieuses dans l'Occident moderne* (Paris 1975).
55. See: J. Delumeau, *Le catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (Paris 1971), pp. 227 - 330.
56. Not so much *morphologically* (because such changes are few, which has led many researchers to conclude too quickly, that 'heathen' practices have simply persisted) as *functionally* (see above, chapter 2). We have tried to show elsewhere that the values offered institutionally are not always accepted by the local collectivity; moreover, that an institutional overestimation of its own values can be rejected by the local collectivity with either force or silent boycott; see W. Frijhoff, 'Valeurs et valorisations. Réflexions à propos d'un pèlerinage', *Spiritus* (Paris), nr. 55 (1974), pp. 75 - 89.
57. J.A. de Kok, *Nederland op de breuklijn Rome - Reformatie* (Assen 1964); see also J.M.G. Thurlings, *De Wankele Zuil. Nederlandse katholieken tussen assimilatie en pluralisme* (Nijmegen - Amersfoort 1971), pp. 58 - 81.
58. This is confirmed by different sources: the Roman-Catholic missionary reports naturally, but also the *Acta synodalia* (published by J. Reitsma & S.D. van Veen, 8 prts. Groningen 1892 - 1899; for South-Holland also the sequel to this by W. P.C. Knuttel, The Hague 1908) and the acts of the

church districts; seventeenth and eighteenth century city and town records usually abound with laconic registrations of 'superstition' (primarily visions, signs from heaven, etc.). See also C.A. Tukker, *De classis Dordrecht van 1573 tot 1609* (Leiden 1965), pp. 162 - 178. J. Delumeau, 'Les réformateurs et la superstition', *Actes du colloque 'L'Amiral de Coligny et son temps'* (Paris 1974), pp. 451 - 487, makes a clear analysis of Luther's and Cavin's ideas about 'superstition'.

59. A famous case is that of Heilo, in 1713/14; see M.J. van Dun, 'De bedevaartsplaats Heilo in de winter van 1713/14', *Archief voor de geschiedenis van de katholieke kerk in Nederland*, 2 (1960), pp. 245 - 298.
60. See our study: 'La fonction du miracle dans une minorité catholique: Les Provinces-Unies au XVII^e siècle', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité*, 48 (1972), pp. 151 - 178. We hope to return shortly to writing on the topic of the belief in miracles among non-Catholic groups within the Dutch Republic.
61. C.C. van der Graft, 'Oude begrafenisgebruiken', *Miscellanea J. Cessler*, I (s.l. 1948), pp. 558 - 560; see also P.W.J. van der Berg, 'Liturgische resten in het volksgebruik', *same work*, pp. 165-173; P. Glazema, *op. cit.*
62. The mistrust of the physical element of playfulness is characteristic of the continental Reformation, as a culture of the Word with its less-developed material institution to serve as an agency of societal control. On the other hand, it devoted all its social-cultural means to the problem of spatial arrangements: the design of churches, the arrangement of benches and seats, interior of homes, manner of grouping at meetings and seating arrangements round the table, etc.

A comparative research on this seems to be required. The correlation between the degree of institutional extension of the church's institutions and their acceptance of the theatrical element in liturgy and church-life, appears to us to be of equal importance; the old Reformed church is diametrically opposed in this respect to the Roman baroque church and the contemporary Orthodox churches, though there exist many intermediate forms.

63. It cannot be over-emphasized that the attitude of the leading French republicans at the end of the eighteenth century towards popular practices is exactly the same as that of the churches which they replaced. The obvious reason is that they come from the same social-cultural milieu as the churches' office-bearers. Hence, we see an attempt to replace popular religion by the official religion of the Republic and by the cult of the Highest Being. On the other, *popular* republican side, one discovers a clear continuity of old sacrality forms which are now primarily concentrated upon new republican values, e.g. patriotism, liberty, etc.; see A. Soboul, 'Sentiment religieux et cultes populaires pendant la Révolution. Saintes patriotes et martyrs de la liberté', *Archives de sociologie des religions*, No. 2 (1956), pp. 73 - 87.