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Hoek, P.C.

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Summary

This thesis, *Melchior Leydecker (1642–1721). A study of the structure of the theology of an Reformed scholastic*, presents a study of the structure of the theology of a Dutch theologian who can be characterized as a representative of Reformed Scholasticism. In chapter 1 the most important concepts are explained and questions regarding the methodology are treated (1.2). The decision to use the term ‘scholastic’ in an formal sense, i.e. as a qualification of a method of theological research and instruction, is also explained and argued. Given the methodological continuity of Reformed Scholasticism with medieval scholastic theology, the structure of Leydecker’s theology is investigated in this book to answer the question whether and, if so, in what way there is also a material continuity between them (1.3). To be able to answer that question it will be investigated - on the basis of an analysis of God’s knowledge (*scientia*), will (*voluntas*) and power (*potentia*) - which modal and ontological concept is implied by Leydecker’s theological position, and to which medieval *via* of philosophy and theology this concept can be related. The two principal alternatives are thomism and scotism, both understood in the broad sense of the word. These alternatives are described in chapter one. The first chapter concludes with a paragraph on the structure, the method and the sources of this study (1.4 and 1.5).

Chapter 2 provides a biographical survey, in view of the contextuality of Leydecker’s theology. First, Leydecker’s youth is described from three perspectives: his social background, his spiritual background and his educational background (2.2). Leydecker turns out to be coming from a patrician family from Middelburg, which played an important role both in the church and in society. Next, his college years are described, where separate attention is given to his college years in Utrecht and in Leiden (2.3). After a description of the period that Leydecker was a preacher in Renesse and Noordwelle (2.4), a period that can be characterized as his theological prelude, chapter two finishes with an impression of his professorship at Utrecht University (2.5). This impression includes Leydecker’s theological position, the debate in which he has participated and his theological breadth. The second chapter makes various additions to and corrections of Leydecker’s biography as known so far. Melchior Leydecker turns out to be a talented, versatile and peace-making theologian, who was very much appreciated both as a systematic theologian and as a historian. In common with the following chapters chapter two also concludes with an evaluative paragraph.

The third chapter presents an exploration of the doctrine of God. This chapter, that serves as a background for the analytical chapters about the divine attributes, includes three parts. First, the concept of knowledge is treated,

whereby in particular considerable attention is given to the distinction between *theologia archetypa* and *theologia ectypa* (3.2). Then the doctrine of the divine attributes is discussed (3.3). This concerns in particular two theme's: (a) the relationship of God's essence and attributes and (b) the distinction between the incommunicable (*incommunicabilia*) and communicable attributes (*communicabilia*). Both sorts of attributes are treated more extensively in two separate paragraphs (3.4 and 3.5), after which the doctrine of Trinity is described (3.6). This exploration of Leydecker's doctrine of God indicates that concerning the distinction between the *theologia archetypa* and the *theologia ectypa* he is closely in line with the insights of Francesco Turretini (1623-1687). This theologian will prove to be of great importance to enable us to understand Leydecker's theological position. Furthermore, it appears in chapter three that Leydecker, in the doctrine of the divine attributes applies the formal distinction of John Duns Scotus. In this way he wants to avoid the systematic identification of the different divine attributes, that is implied by the doctrine of the divine attributes of Thomas Aquinas, and that was also defended by Descartes. This appears to be an important fact from the perspective of the history of theology that is included in this study.

In chapter 4 the first of the three most important communicable attributes is discussed: the knowledge (*scientia*) of God (4.2). A very important distinction that Leydecker applies in his theory of the divine knowledge is the distinction between the *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* or the necessary knowledge on the one hand, and the *scientia visionis* or the free knowledge on the other hand (4.3 and 4.4). The object of the first kind of knowledge is formed by all possible things. With the second kind of knowledge God knows the things that follow as a result of an act of his will. Leydecker defines the difference between these two kinds of knowledge in terms of 'preceding' (*antecedenter*) and 'following' (*consequenter*) the divine decree. The remarkable thing is that Leydecker gives this distinction, that became well known because of the use that Thomas Aquinas made of it, drawing on the 'structural moments' (*instantia*) that are characteristic for Duns Scotus's doctrine of God. Against this background in a number of paragraphs (4.4.1-3) the specific concepts of Leydecker are analyzed. This analysis shows that in Leydecker's theory of the divine knowledge some specific elements derived from Scotus can be traced, such as the theory of the 'neutral proposition' and the concept of the logical possibility. In paragraph 4.5 the last part of the doctrine of the knowledge of God is discussed, namely the middle knowledge (*scientia media*). The way in which Leydecker relates God's knowledge to his will leaves no room for the middle knowledge.

The fifth chapter is about the will (*voluntas*) of God. After a description of God's will as such (5.2), which among other things shows that Leydecker rejects the distinction of the *voluntas antecedens* and the *voluntas consequens*,

the relationship between the will (*voluntas*) and the power (*potentia*) of God is analyzed in a separate paragraph (5.3). One of the important results of this analysis is, that Leydecker appears to make use of Duns Scotus's formal distinction (*distinctio formalis a parte rei*). The subsequent paragraph is about the object of the divine will, differentiated in the good en the evil (5.4). Some important elements of this paragraph are the concepts of the divine *permissio* and the divine *concursum*. The final part of chapter five provides a description of some extrapolations in the theory of the divine will (5.5).

In chapter 6 the power (*potentia*) of God is further examined. Before discussing the distinction of Gods absolute and ordained power (*potentia absoluta*, *potentia ordinata*), the interpretative problem which is given with this distinction is explicitly treated (6.2). In the next paragraph the concept *potentia* as such is described. Because Leydecker operationalizes the aforementioned distinction against the background of the concepts of 'impossible' and 'possible', these concepts and their ontological implications are elaborated in a separate paragraph (6.3). The concept of 'contradiction' (*idem simul esse en non esse*) turns out to be very important. In defining the concept of 'contradiction', Leydecker applies the distinction between the composed sense (*sensus compositus*) and the divided sense (*sensus divisus*). Also, this is a relevant fact from the perspective of the history of theology, especially because of the remarkable agreement with *Lectura I 39* of John Duns Scotus. On the basis of this analysis the *potentia Dei absoluta* and the *potentia Dei ordinata* are further investigated (6.4 and 6.5). Also in this part of Leydecker's doctrine of God the will of God is shown to play a key role, with important implications for the nature of created reality. The chapter about the power of God ends with a description of God's dominion (*potestas*).

In line with the systematic analysis of the *scientia*, the *voluntas* and the *potentia Dei* the conclusion seems justified that in his theoretical concept, Leydecker provides all the conditions necessary in order to be able to speak of a contingent reality. In chapter 7 this conclusion is reviewed on the basis of the way in which Leydecker defines the relationship between God and the created reality. By means of an analysis of the concepts of predestination and providence in the whole of Leydecker's theological framework the author examines whether the structure that was traced in de doctrine of God is also reflected in for example the doctrine of the decrees and the theological anthropology. After the introduction (7.1), first the doctrine of the decrees is examined (7.2). In the doctrine of the decrees a logical order (*ordo*) of different structural moments (*instantia*) can be traced, which in this way was applied for the first time by John Duns Scotus. The doctrine of predestination, which is treated in paragraph 7.3, Leydecker formulates too concisely to draw conclusions from it with regard to the research questions. After two short paragraphs about the concepts of the *providentia* (7.5) and

the *conservatio* (7.6), the relationship between de divine providence and de human will in the whole of Leydecker's theological framework is discussed (7.7). In this paragraph the concept of the *praecursus* and the concept of freedom as *spontaneitas* are of decisive importance. It turns out that Thomas Bradwardine is of great importance for understanding Leydecker's position with regard to the relationship of divine providence and the human will. This is confirmed in a separate paragraph about the relationship of the first Cause and the second causes (7.8). The conclusion seems justified that Leydecker incorporated the insights, that he derived from Duns Scotus, within a firm Augustinian theological framework (7.9).

In chapter 8 the wider contours of Leydecker's theology are described, as far as they are relevant for the investigated theme. The following themes are discussed successively: the concept of theology (8.2), the revelation (8.3), the theological anthropology (8.4) and Christology (8.5). Besides a number of more general observations, this chapter shows that the theological discussions in the field of Christology in particular take much of Leydecker's time and strength. That may be part of the reason why Leydecker for example wrote less about theological anthropology than about the doctrine of God.

In the final chapter, chapter 9, the results of this study are brought together. Firstly, Leydecker is characterized as a theologian and as a pious man (9.2). The perfection, independence and the sovereignty of God turn out to be characteristic motifs of Leydecker's theology and spirituality. In the subsequent paragraph Leydecker is characterized as an independent thinker. He comes to his theological position independently, in conversation with *auctoritates* from both the pre-Reformation and the post-Reformation era. Leydecker's theology is characterized by a structure that is dominated by the divine will (9.4). Both the knowledge and the power of God are differentiated by his *voluntas*. It is a structure that reappears in other parts of Leydecker's theology, for example in his concept of theology and his doctrine of the decrees. Leydecker's theology is therefore in my view most plausibly explained in line with the theology and philosophy of John Duns Scotus. In each case with regard to the doctrine of God this is very clear. The elaboration and the reflection of the aforementioned structure in the theological anthropology is more ambiguous. With regard to the great affinity of Leydecker with Gisbertus Voetius and Johannes Hoornbeeck on the one hand and Francisco Turretini on the other, it can be assumed that in terms of theological anthropology, Leydecker takes a similar position to them. Recent research had indicated that the influence of the concept of contingency of John Duns Scotus on the theological anthropology of these theologians was greater than was assumed until recently (9.5 and 9.6). Both the representatives and the connoisseurs of classical reformed theology must become aware of this meaningful relationship.