

CHERISHED MEMORIES

With this volume thirty-one authors honour Sible de Blaauw on the occasion of his retirement from Radboud University. It is above all a tribute to an influential and respected voice in the field of early Christian art and architecture. In 2015, the editors, on behalf of the Department of Art History of Radboud University, invited colleagues from Sible's national and international network to write a contribution pertaining to the question of how Christian cult buildings have played a role in cultural memory in different periods and in various geographical and cultural contexts. What was envisioned was a publication that would correspond to Sible's research interests: Rome and its monuments, early Christianity, Christian religious heritage, liturgy and architecture, continuity of tradition, and memory.

In a research outline written in 2011 Sible de Blaauw stated that the potential role of long-surviving ancient church buildings in the conceptualization of the past, although of great interest, has rarely been the subject of systematic study. He proposed a comparative investigation of Christian monuments as an anchorage of memory. This large-scale project should demonstrate how ancient Christian cult buildings, time and again, helped to give meaning to the past, always in the perspective of contemporary, and hence variable, cultural settings. The first step in the realization of this project was an international expert meeting *Monuments & Memory* at Radboud University in December 2011, organized by Sible de Blaauw and Mariëtte Verhoeven. The organizers brought together renowned experts from different disciplines in order to discuss the intellectual underpinning and methodological approach of the theme. A second international expert meeting in September 2012 focused on Rome under the title *Between Monuments and Memory: Reimagining Christian Rome between Antiquity and Modernity*.

Proving to be inexhaustible and inspiring, the research theme is taken up once more in this volume. The book before you seeks to elaborate

on some of the same subjects, with contributions that are arranged according to three sections: *Monuments – Places – Decoration & Liturgical Furnishing*. Every essay addresses the memorial potential of Christian buildings, of their location, or of the accoutrement, whether or not still in situ. Not surprisingly Rome re-appears frequently in all sections, with special attention to Rome's churches.

Many of the authors in this volume explore a specific church in their essay. Raphael Hunsucker and Evelien Roels study S. Cecilia in Trastevere, Lex Bosman focuses on S. Giovanni in Laterano, Nicola Camerlenghi on S. Paolo fuori le mura, and Herbert Kessler on Scala Santa. Nine Miedema and Daniëlle Slootjes concentrate on S. Prassede, Dafne Oosten on the mausoleum of Helena and the basilica *ad duas lauros*. Additionally, Dale Kinney examines S. Maria in Trastevere, Bianca Kühnel selects the Palatine Chapel in Aachen, Willy Piron highlights St Martin in Emmerich and Mariëtte Verhoeven writes about the Church of St Mary Magdalene in Vézelay.

The contributors have chosen a variety of approaches. Some authors focus on architecture (Lex Bosman, Bianca Kühnel, Dafne Oosten), while others choose a specific (liturgical) object inside the church, such as altarpieces (Bram Kempers, and Bram de Klerck), memorials (Dale Kinney), choir stalls (Christel Theunissen, and Willy Piron), relic-chalices (Jean-Pierre van Rijen) and a stained-glass window (Wouter Weijers). A book on memory inevitably deals with loss. Weyers quotes art historian Michael Ann Holly who describes the engagement with an object from former centuries as 'loss without a lost object'. These reflections playfully interact with the opening essay by Olivier Hekster and Nathalie de Haan who focus on Constantine's *labarum* and deal with the special case of a lost object that becomes the focus of religious and political ideologies nonetheless. Also Mariëtte Verhoeven, Isabel Kimmelfield, and Arnold

Witte deal with different degrees of loss in their contributions on the cult of St Mary Magdalene in Vézelay, the Great Palace in Istanbul and the forgotten saint Magnus respectively.

Coming from another angle, several contributors opted to examine a person, or group of people, and their devotional practices. Church founders, for example, are one of the recurring themes within this volume. Jan Willem Drijvers observes the Empress Helena's foundations in Rome, Ralf Behrwald focuses on senators as church founders, and Paolo Liverani examines how founding bishops were visualized in church interiors. Beat Brenk debates whether or not churches within the walls of Thessaloniki might have been built over martyrs' graves. Daniela Mondini, inspired by Sible's inaugural lecture *In View of the Light*, focuses on the orientation of church buildings. Different authors in this book study, not new foundations, but the ways in which people interacted with existing, and continuously transforming, church buildings. So, Peter Cornelius Claussen writes about Pope Nicolas IV, not as founder, but about his refurnishing of S. Giovanni in Laterano and S. Maria Maggiore. Turning away from Rome, Isabel Kimmelfield focuses on changing attitudes toward the complex of the Great Palace in Constantinople through the centuries. Moving further north, Justin Kroesen looks at the Dutch Calvinists and their 'conservative' attitude towards formerly Catholic churches.

Some authors did not depart from the architecture or its furnishing, but focused instead on the depiction of cult buildings in other, not necessarily religious, places: Lieske Tibbe examines the way Ravenna church mosaics were conceptualized, reconstructed, and ultimately secularized, in the town hall of Enschede. Hanneke van Asperen looks at depictions of S. Maria Rotonda on medieval pilgrims' souvenirs, Bram de Klerck studies church models in painting, and Jos Koldewij describes Hieronymus Bosch's transformation of painted backgrounds, of biblical and other religious scenes, to create a contemporary setting that would appeal to his audience. On the other hand, Peter Rietbergen studies different medieval royal chapels throughout Europe to see how kings constructed the image of themselves that they wanted to portray, and also

demonstrates how these chapels hark back to one another in architecture and decoration.

Another fascinating, recurring theme, finally, is the 'depiction' of sites and monuments in writing, for example in the epics of late antique poets, as is the subject of Roald Dijkstra's contribution. Arnold Witte turns his attention to a seventeenth-century play that introduces some lost frescoes in the city of Cittaducale. Ingo Herklotz enriches this volume with a critical edition of Jakob Rabus's *Bedenckhspunkte* which figures Rome and its monuments.

Within every section the contributions are ordered more or less chronologically. Of course, some authors concentrate on the human interactions with a cult site during a short time span (e.g. Jan Willem Drijvers, Ralf Behrwald, Beat Brenk, Ingo Herklotz, Bram Kempers, and Arnold Witte), while others use the concept of the *longue durée* and follow the fortunes of buildings and objects over a period of many centuries (e.g. Nathalie de Haan and Olivier Hekster, Nine Miedema and Daniëlle Slootjes, Isabel Kimmelfield, Dafne Oosten, Daniela Mondini, and Justin Kroesen). Together the essays cover a period from Late Antiquity to modern times, from Helena to Gerhard Richter, from late antique poets to a Ravennesque mosaic in the 1930s. Thus, this volume assumes the diachronic nature that Sible advocates in his research outline. The *leit-motifs* of Christian cult and material and immaterial constructions of the past tie together the sections as well as the book as a whole. Finally, the essays are bound by their authors' fondness and appreciation of Sible de Blaauw.

The number of scholars willing to contribute to this volume is indicative of Sible's standing as both an academic and a teacher whose fascination with Christian cult and church buildings was generated during childhood. Born in 1951 in the village of Bakhuizen, Sible de Blaauw grew up in the northern part of the Netherlands. As a child, he became fascinated with the St Odolphus Church in his birth place and later with the Church of St Martin in Sneek where he was an altar server and acolyte. The churches appealed to all of the senses. It was not only the buildings that made a lasting impression, but so did the spaces with their sacred texts and music, mystical imag-

es and exotic scents. Churches became favourite subjects for his childhood drawings. These experiences laid the groundwork for Sible's interest in Christian cult and its décor. On the Dutch television programme, 'Geloofsgesprek' (conversation of faith; 2013), Sible explained that his interest in art was inspired by the church. 'Both faith and art', he stated, 'deal with unspeakable matters and they both stand for a continuity of tradition and for cultural history.'

After a study of medieval history at Leiden University, Sible obtained his PhD in the Arts at the same university in 1987. His supervisor was the classical archaeologist Herman Geertman (d. 2015) who wanted very much to contribute to this volume but had to withdraw at a very early stage because of health issues. During his PhD study, Sible and his partner Jan Nauta built a house in Slochteren. They still live here: two Frisians in the countryside of Groningen. Their home is surrounded by an abundant garden which is laid out and kept with great care. The house also contains a study and library where Sible does much of his academic work, but his other base of research, and a home away from home, is the city of Rome, particularly the Dutch Institute (KNIR). He conducted his PhD research there and, from 1994 to 2001, he was the head of KNIR's Department of Art History. Besides KNIR, another Roman institution has to be mentioned in relation to Sible; it is the Frisians Church or Ss. Michele e Magno. Sible gladly frequents this Church of the Dutchmen in Rome, near St Peter's.

Sible's PhD thesis *Cultus et decor* was awarded the Karel van Mander prize for art historical studies. In 1994, a revised Italian version of *Cultus et decor* appeared and was awarded the *Hannu-und-Ilse-Hahn-Preis für hervorragende Verdienste um die italienische Kunstgeschichte* of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft. In his thesis Sible focused on the interaction between architectural form and liturgical function in church architecture. Covering a period of a thousand years, the diachronic study follows the three most important early Christian church buildings of Rome through history: the Lateran Basilica, St Peter's and S. Maria Maggiore. His thesis is still frequently consulted as reference work on the early Christian monu-

ments of Rome, as the many footnotes with De Blaauw's *Cultus et decor* in this volume indicate.

After his PhD, his research has continued to revolve around church buildings and liturgical space, religion and memory, the material and the immaterial aspects of Christian cult. The many citations of *Cultus et decor* in this volume illustrate once again that with this reference work Sible did not only lay a firm basis for his own future research, but also that of many others. Further references to many other publications by Sible in the different contributions make clear that he continues to inspire and stimulate others to investigate the themes that are outlined in his scholarly work. Not surprisingly, the churches that formed the focus of Sible's thesis are the focus of several essays in this volume. S. Giovanni in Laterano and S. Maria Maggiore receive attention most explicitly from Herbert Kessler, Lex Bosman, Peter Cornelius Clausen, and Bram Kempers. Although St Peter's is not the primary focus of any of the essays, the church naturally appears in review many times.

Since 1997, Sible has worked at Radboud University in Nijmegen, where he holds the chair of early Christian art and architecture (the Van der Meer Chair until 2002). Church buildings play a central role, not just in his research, but also in his teaching activities. As both gifted teacher and talented speaker he is at his best when lecturing students in situ, showing them around churches in Rome or elsewhere, with indefatigable enthusiasm and energy. Contributions in this volume by (former) doctorate and PhD students illustrate Sible's qualities as mentor.

As an art historian, Sible is sympathetic to many museums and has contributed to many exhibitions. He was president of the board of the Aartsbisschoppelijk Museum Utrecht and the Stichting Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht from 2005 until 2013. A very recent major achievement was Sible's role as a curator (together with Eric Moormann) of the successful exhibition 'Rome. Emperor Constantine's Dream' (De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam 3 October 2015–7 February 2016). The exhibition, with its loans from the Capitoline Museums, the National Roman Museum and the Vatican Museums, showed the transformation of Rome

in the fourth century AD from a multi-religious imperial capital into a Christian capital. The exhibition was accompanied by the colloquium *The Recruiting Power of Christianity in Three Perspectives* (De Nieuwe Kerk, 22 January 2016), of which the papers will appear in print.

The award of emeritus status certainly does not mark the end of Sible's academic career. He is a corresponding member – elected fellow of the Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz – and has been since 2012. Several PhD theses are currently under his supervision, publications are in the making – among them a monograph on the atrium of St Peter's – and many lectures lie in the prospect. Moreover, he will organize, together with Stephan Mols and Leonard Rutgers, the XVII Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana, which will be held in the Netherlands for the first time, at Radboud University and University of Utrecht in 2018.

In conclusion, this overview of Sible's career and accomplishments would not be complete without a list of publications and lectures. In the thirty years of his successful academic career Sible has written numerous relevant and important scholarly articles, book reviews, encyclopaedia entries, and catalogue essays. The titles cited in this volume are:

- 'In the Mirror of Christian Antiquity: Early Papal Identification Portraits in Santa Maria Maggiore', in *Example or Alter Ego? Aspects of the Portrait Historié in Western Art from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by Jos Koldeweij, Rudi van Leeuwen, and Volker Manuth (Turnhout and Nijmegen: Brepols, 2016), forthcoming.
- 'Liturgical Features of Roman Churches: Manifestations of the Church of Rome?', in *Chiese locali e chiese regionali nell'alto medioevo. Spoleto, 4-9 aprile 2013* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2014), pp. 333-34.
- 'The Church Atrium in Rome as a Ritual Space: The Cathedral of Tyre and St Peter's in Rome', in *Ritual and space in the Middle Ages: proceedings of the 2009 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Frances Andrews (Donington, Lincolnshire: Shaun Tyas, 2011), pp. 30-43.
- 'Le origini e gli inizi dell'architettura cristiana', in *Storia dell'architettura italiana: Da Costantino a Carlo Magno*, ed. by Sible de Blaauw, 2 vols (Milan: Electa, 2010).
- 'Arnolfo's High Altar Ciboria and Roman Liturgical Traditions', in *Arnolfo's Moment*, ed. by David H. Friedman and others (Florence: Olschki, 2009), pp. 123-40.
- 'In vista della luce: Un principio dimenticato nell'orientamento dell'edificio di culto paleocristiano', in *Arte medievale: Le vie dello spazio liturgico*, ed. by Paolo Piva (Milan: Jaca Book, 2010), pp. 15-45.
- 'Pralende schijn in vroegchristelijke kerkgebouwen?', in *Romeinse decadentie: Pracht en praal in de Romeinse keizertijd*, ed. by Stephan Mols, Olivier Hekster, and Eric Moormann (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2008), pp. 129-42.
- 'Konstantin als Kirchenstifter', in *Konstantin der Grosse: Geschichte–Archäologie–Rezeption. Internationales Kolloquium vom 10.–15. Oktober 2005 an der Universität Trier*, ed. by Alexander Demandt and Josef Engemann (Trier: Rheinisches Landesmuseum, 2006), pp. 163-72.
- 'Kultgebäude (Kirchenbau)', in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. by Georg Schöllgen and others (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1950–), xxii (2008) [Lieferung 170-71], cols 227-320.
- *Met het oog op het licht: Een vergeten principe in de oriëntatie van het vroegchristelijk kerkgebouw*, Nijmeegse Kunsthistorische Cahiers, 2 (Nijmegen University Press, 2000).
- 'Jerusalem in Rome and the Cult of the Cross', in *Pratum Romanum: Richard Krauthheimer zum 100. Geburtstag*, ed. by Renate L. Colella and others (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1997), pp. 55-73.
- 'Das Hochaltarretabel in Rom bis zum frühen 16. Jahrhundert: Das Altarbild als Kategorie der Liturgischen Anlage', *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, 55 (1996), 83-110.
- 'Das Pantheon als christlicher Tempel', in *Bild- und Formensprache der Spätantike Kunst. Hugo Brandenburg zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Martina Jordan-Ruwe and Ulrich Real (=Boreas. Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie, 17 (1994)), pp. 13-26.
- *Cultus et decor: Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale. Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri*, Studi e Testi, 355,

2 vols (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994).

- *Cultus et decor: Liturgie en architectuur in laatantiek en middeleeuws Rome, Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri* (Delft: Eburon, 1987).
- (with Bram Kempers), ‘Jacopo Stefaneschi, Patron and Liturgist: A New Hypothesis Regarding the Date, Iconography, Authoship and Function of His Altarpiece for Old Saint Peter’s’, *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, 47 (1987), 83–113.

To this impressive list, we would like to add only a few of the most recent titles:

- (with Justin Kroesen), ‘Van Romaans tot refo dome: Duizend jaar Nederlandse kerkin terieurs’, in *Kerkinterieurs in Nederland*, ed. by Marc de Beyer and others (Zwolle: WBooks, Museum Catharijneconvent, and Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 2016), pp. 16–37.
- ‘Translations of the Sacred City between Jerusalem and Rome’, in *The Imagined and Real Jerusalem in Art and Architecture*, ed. by Jeroen Goudeau and others, *Radboud Studies in Humanities*, 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 136–65.
- ‘Die ottonischen Kaisergräber in Magdeburg und Rom: Visualisierung der Herrschermemoria im europäischen Kontext’, in *Der Magdeburger Dom im Europäischen Kontext: Beiträge des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Kolloquiums zum 800-jährigen Domjubiläum in Magdeburg vom 1. bis 4. Oktober 2009*, ed. by Wolfgang Schenkluhn and Andreas Waschbüsch (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2012), pp. 277–90.
- ‘Frits van der Meer (1904–1994): The oldest school of worship’, in *Patterns and Persons: A Historiography of Liturgical Studies in the Netherlands in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Louis van Tongeren and others, *Liturgia Condenda*, 25 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), pp. 339–70.

Of the many conference papers and lectures, we would like to mention:

- ‘De versteende droom: Over de blijvende noodzaak van het kerkgebouw’, *Tweede Kees Fens-lezing*, De Rode Hoed Amsterdam, 17 February 2016.
- ‘The Early History of the Roman Titular Churches: Archaeological Traces, Memories and Myths’, conference *Sacra privata. From pagan religiosity to early Christian domestic cult*, University of Vienna, 21–23 May 2015.
- ‘The Classical Question: The Origins of the Church Basilica and Liturgy’, *XVI Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana ‘Costantino e I Costantinidi – L’Innovazione Costantiniana, le sue radici e i suoi sviluppi’*, Rome, 24 September 2013.
- ‘Liturgical, Cultic and Spatial Aspects in the Consecrative Inscriptions of Roman Churches, 11–13 Centuries’, international conference *Der päpstliche Hof und sein Umfeld in epigrafischen Zeugnissen (700–1700)*, Deutsches Historisches Institut Rome, 5 July 2012.
- ‘Medieval Liturgy in an Early Christian Cathedral: the Lateran in Rome’, *International Medieval Meeting Lleida*, University of Lleida, 27 June 2012.
- ‘The Court of Saint Peter’s: An Early Christian Church Atrium as a Place of Memory’, sixth *Kurt Weitzmann Memorial Lecture in Late Antiquity, Early Christian, Byzantine and Early Medieval Art*, Princeton University (Department of Art and Archaeology), 21 November 2011.

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