



A Stranger in the Holy College of Cardinals

Methodological and heuristic
problems in investigating

Cardinal van Rossum
1854-1932

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www.cardinalvanrossum.eu

Cardinaux et Cardinalat / Institut Catholique
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Biographical data: Youth

- Born on September 3, 1854, in Zwolle, a Hanseatic town in the northern (protestant) part of the Netherlands
- Lower middle class family
- Orphan at nine; Catholic orphanage
- 1867-1873 Minor seminary at Kuilenburg, archdiocese of Utrecht

Redemptorist in the Netherlands (1873-1895)

- 1873 Noviciate in Roermond/Den Bosch
- 1874-1880 Redemptorist seminary (Studentate) in Wittem
- 1879, October 17, ordination in Wittem
- 1880-1883 Lecturer at the junior seminary of the Redemptorists in Roermond
- 1883-1893 Lecturer in Dogmatic Theology in Wittem
- 1886-1893 Prefect of Students in Wittem
- 1893-1895 Rector of the Wittem monastery

A straniero in Rome

The Dutch Pope
Adrian VI
(1459-1523)



Van Rossum compared to Adrian VI

- Similarities: Both were archetypes of (calvinist) 'Dutchness':
 - Rigid
 - Stubborn
 - Pious
 - Frugal
- Differences: Van Rossum was in 1911 already accustomed to Rome
 - Member of an originally Italian congregation
 - Lived in Rome since 1895
 - Worked at the Curia since 1896
 - Cordial relation with Pope Pius X

Van Rossum's career in Rome before his Cardinalate (1895-1911)

- 1896, Dec. 24 Consultor of the Holy Office (a.o. Loisy, *Lamentabili*, antimodernist oath)
- 1902 Promotor Card. Commission Preservation of the Faith
- 1904, March 25, Commission for the Codification of Canon Law (pres. Gasparri) (esp. sacraments of marriage, confirmation, unction)
- 1908, June-Sept., visitation of the Abbey Montevergine, special assignment by Pius X
- 1909, May 1, favorite for the office of Superior General CSSR
- 1909-1911, general consultor CSSR

Outsider in the Holy College of Cardinals

- The only Dutchman
 - 65 Cardinals in 1911; 34 Italian
 - 28 Curia Cardinals: 24 Italian, 2 Spanish, 1 French and one Dutch: the only Cardinal from a predominantly protestant country
- The only Redemptorist
 - 8 Religious order priests to 57 secular priests

Career as a cardinal 1

- 1911, Nov. 27: *Cardinal-deacon; S. Cesareo*
- 1911, Nov. 30: Member of the Index Congr.
- 1911, Nov. 30: Member of the Congr. of the Religious
- 1911, Nov. 30: Member of the Congr. of the Council
- 1911, Dec. 21: Member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission
- 1912, Jan. 9: Member of Propaganda Fide (Latin and oriental)
- 1912, May 15, Member of the Cardinal Commission Preservation of the Faith in Rome
- 1912, May 30, Papal Legate at the Int. Eucharistic Congress Vienna sept
- 1913, April 13: Member of the Holy Office
- 1914, Jan. 13 President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission
- 1915, Oct. 1 Major Penitentiary (until 1918, March 11)
- 1915, Dec. 6 *Cardinal-priest, titular church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*
- 1917, Sept. 15 Member of the Pontifical Commission for the interpretation of the Code of Canon Law

Career as a cardinal 2

- 1918, March 12 Prefect of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide
- 1918, March 22 Member of the S. Congregation “Pro Ecclesia Orientali”
- 1918, March 22 President of the Pontifical Seminary of SS. Peter and Paul for the foreign missions
- 1918, May 19 *Ordination as a bishop by Benedict XV; Titular Archbishop of Caesarea in Mauretania*
- 1919, March 11 Member of the S. Congregation for Seminaries and Universities
- 1922, Dec. 11 Cardinalium Collegii Camerarius (for one year)
- 1924, July 2 Papal Legate at the 27th International Eucharistic Congress in Amsterdam, 22-27 July
- 1931, Jan. 30 Member of the S. Congregation of the Rites
- 1932, Aug. 18-21 Papal Legate of the Scandinavian Eucharistic Congress in Copenhagen
- However, he was never a member of the AES and the Consistoriale

1932, Aug. 30 Died in Maastricht; buried on September 3 at Wittem

Cardinal protector of religious institutes (32)

- 1. 1912, Febr. 8 Protector of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy (Tilburg, the Netherlands)
 - 2. 1912, June 30 Protector of the Belgian Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of S Augustin
 - 4. 1913, Febr. 15 Protector of the Redemptoristine Sisters (OSSR)
 - 6. 1913, Nov. 15 Protector of the Order of the Holy Cross in the Netherlands (OSC)
 - 8. 1913, Dec. 16 Protector of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood of „s-Hertogenbosch (the Netherlands)
 - 9. 1913, Dec. 20 Protector of the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Ingenbohl (Switzerland)
 - 11. 1914, Jan. 18 Protector of the Order of Canons Regular or Premonstratensians (O.Praem.)
 - 12. 1914, Aug. 11 Protector of the Sisters of “the Retreat of the Sacred Heart, Society of Mary” d'Angers
 - 14. 1915, March 10 Protector of the Institute of the Religious of Saint Juliana, in Belgium
 - 15. 1915, March 27 Protector of the Order of Cistercians of the Common Observance (O.Cist.)
 - 18. 1917, May 9 Protector of the Grey Sisters of Saint Elisabeth, Breslau
 - 19. 1918, March 8 Protector of the Institute of the Sisters for the Poor of St. Francis (Aachen)
 - 23. 1920, May 16 Protector of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI)
 - 24. 1920, June 28 Protector of the Alexians Brothers (Aachen)
 - 26. 1921, Jan. 19 Protector of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC)
 - 28. 1921, Dec. 14 Protector of the Congregation of Missionary Religious of Mariannhill
 - 30. 1925, July 8 Protector of Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (Montreal, Canada)
 - 32. 1931, Febr. 20 Protector of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles (Lyon)
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- For the other protectorates see <http://www.cardinalvanrossum.eu/VRcardinalprotector.htm>

Methodological and heuristic impediments to investigate Van Rossum

1. Out of place in the world of the Curia Cardinals:
 - Background
 - Religious state
 - Diabetic
 - Did not participate in the informal networks of cardinal
 - No bishop until 1918

Visiting Castel Gandolfo



Methodological and heuristic impediments

- 2. Lack of self-centredness
 - No run-of-the-mill career
 - Working for higher causes: St. Alphonsus and the Church
 - Never highlights his own achievements
 - Man behind the scenes

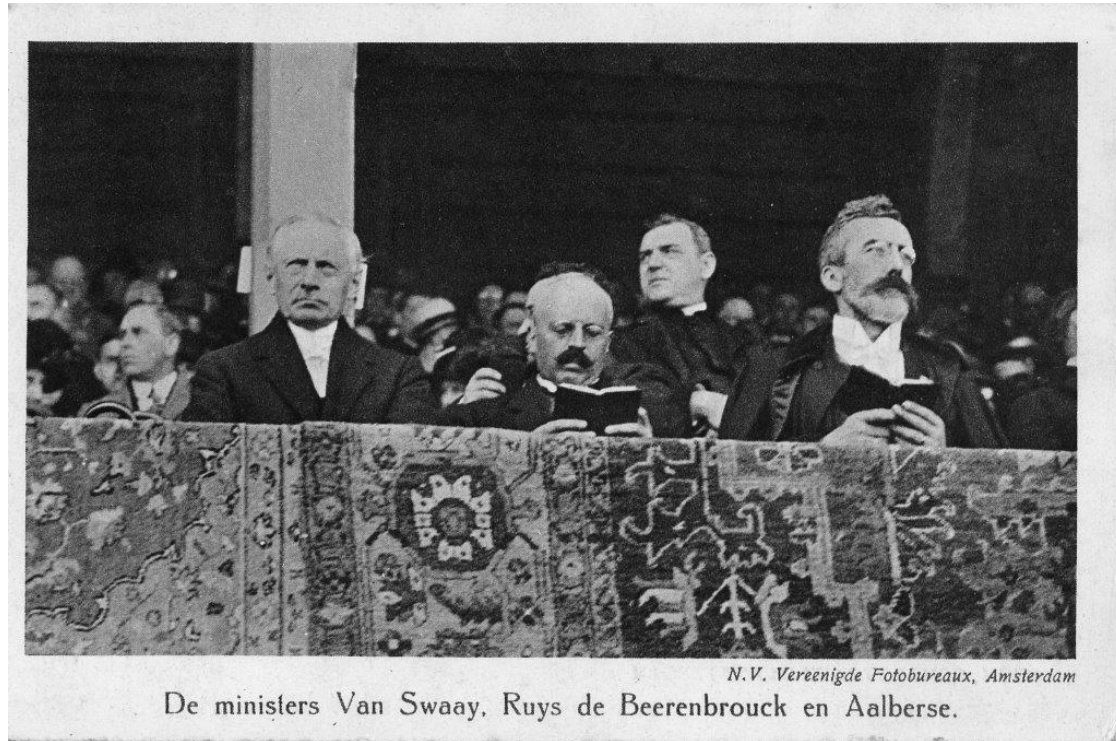


Z.E.M. KARDINAAL VAN ROSSUM,
BIJ ZIJN EERSTE BEZOEK AAN HOLLAND.

Methodological and heuristic impediments

3. Lack of Dutch backing

- Difficult relationship with the Dutch episcopacy
- Dutch government and politics kept at a distance



International Eucharistic Congress
Amsterdam 1924

Methodological and heuristic impediments



International Eucharistic Congress Vienna 1912

- 4. Neutral in politics
 - National political interests were an obstacle for the Prefect of Propaganda Fide
 - Considered an ally of Habsburgs & Germans
 - No sympathy for fascism, racism, antisemitism
 - Sympathy for the Action Française (1913)/Ligue Apostolique

Methodological and heuristic impediments

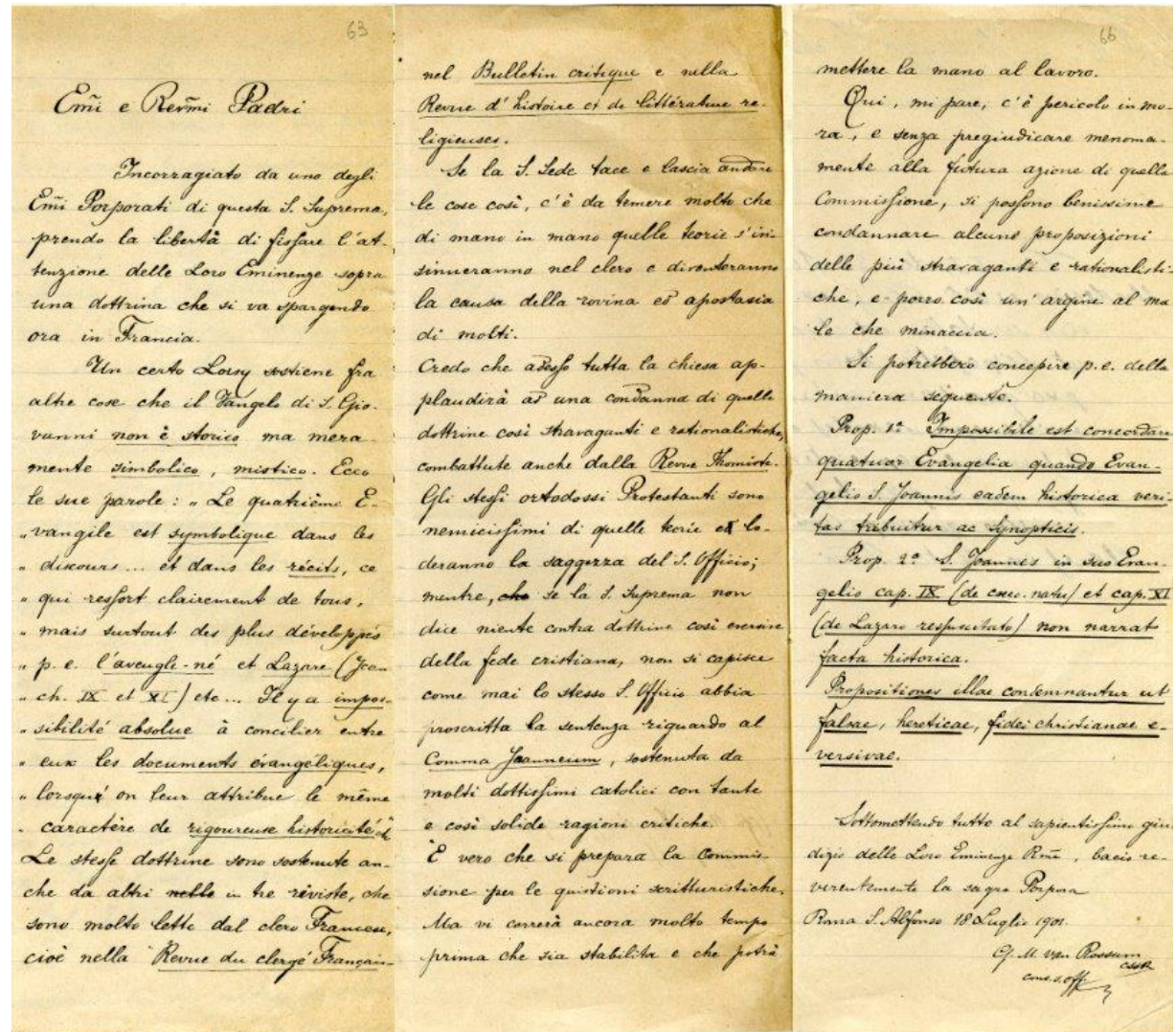


A walk in the Vatican gardens, ca. 1926 Van Rossum, Pius XI and Gasparri

- 5. Difficult to place Van Rossum in a Curial faction
 - Supporter of Benigni unlike Gasparri
 - Took the other side in the German Gewerkschaftsfrage
 - Against Dutch 'integralists'

Methodological and heuristic impediments

- 6. Authentication of sources
 - Only the Pope speaks for the Church
 - Authorship of Maximum Illud/Rerum Ecclesiae?
 - Only the Prefect speaks for Propaganda
 - Verbal agreement of decisions

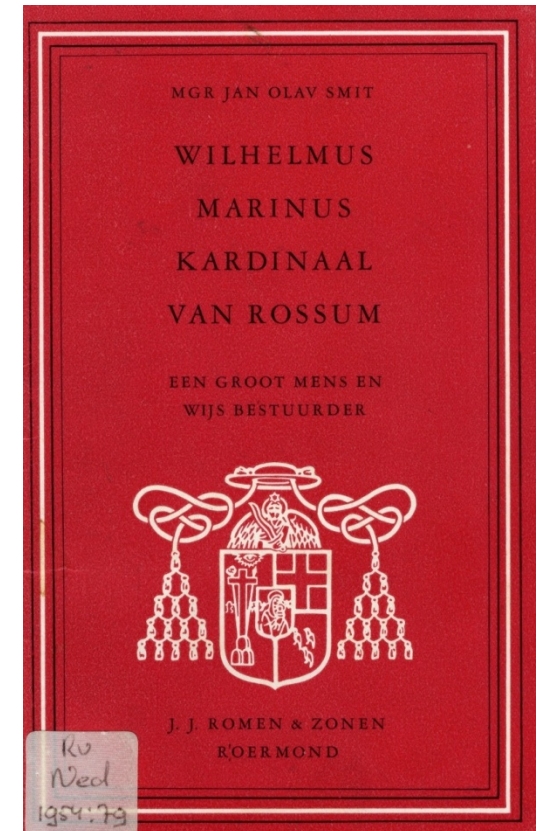
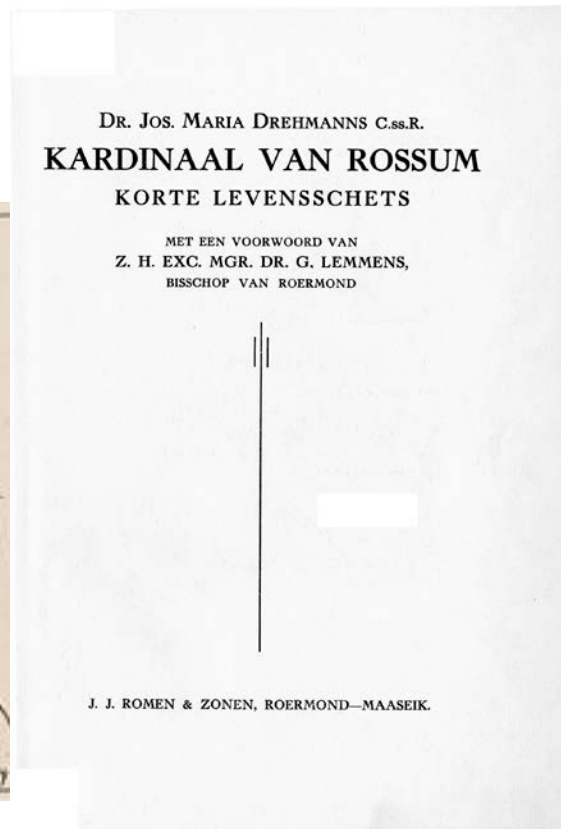


Methodological and heuristic impediments

7. Unreliable biographies

Biography of Jos. M. Drehmanns, 1935

Biography of Jan Olav Smit



Methodological and heuristic problems

1. Out of place in the world of the Curia cardinals
2. Lack of self-centredness
3. Lack of national Dutch backing
4. Neutral in politics
5. Difficult to place Van Rossum in a Curial faction
6. Authentication of sources
7. Unreliable biographies

Practical problems

- Language
 - Personal letters in the archives are often in Dutch
 - Many students and scholars nowadays are not able to read French, Italian and Latin
- Access to archives
 - Impossible to locate the archives of the Pontifical Biblical Commission
 - No access granted to the Congregation of the Religious
 - *Buste separate* of Secretariat of State