

Véronique Lambert: Laudatio Horst van Cuyck

Het is voor mij een grote eer en genoegen om hier de laudatio voor Horst van Cuyck uit te spreken. Ik wil heel graag de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen bedanken die mij deze mogelijkheid heeft geboden in het kader van deze academische zitting, en in het bijzonder gedeputeerde Dauwe die zich voor het hele Karel de Grote project met veel enthousiasme heeft ingezet en deze slotplechtigheid heeft georganiseerd. De hulde die we vandaag aan Horst van Cuyck bewijzen krijgt ook nog een extra dimensie dank zij de aanwezigheid van Graaf Van Rompuy, ere-voorzitter van de Raad van Europa. Ik ben ook bijzonder verheugd dat de gravin van Arco-Zinneberg hier aanwezig is.

I am very pleased that I am given the opportunity to honour M. Horst van Cuyck. I had the privilege of working with him for the last few years, doing research about the thing he was most passionate about: his family history.

Horst van Cuyck started his career very early. At the age of 18, he obtained an internship at the Deutsche Bank in Munich and successfully combined this with the study of Business Administration at the University. He specialized in investment banking and capital markets and soon became manager of the Munich office of the second largest American brokerage firm. From 1977 onwards he started working as an independent business consultant, founding his company Diomedes in Meggen (Switzerland) a few years later.

Horst van Cuyck was a successful businessman, but he was also fascinated with music, art and history. In 1991, at the age of 52, he started studying art history and archaeology at the University in Munich. He was a member of the board of directors of several museums in Munich and also of the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra and the Munich Opera.

He was a benefactor of culture and research. He funded a university chair in art history at the university of Bern and he supported museums, exhibitions and publications. He was an unparalleled Maecenas, with great respect for ethics, integrity and independent research.

He had, however, his own strong opinion about matters and he loved to share his views and discuss them extensively. I must admit: when I started working for him and he would comment on a historical event, I sometimes thought he was a bit crazy. But he was not. He was a very inspiring man. He was the kind of person that thinks out of the box and doesn't hesitate to look at things in a totally different way. He asked questions no one would think of. He would put things together no one ever thought about. He forced you to explore the edges of your ingenuity. He challenged you to surpass the limits of your creativity. He asked you impossible things and challenged you to find a solution.

During the last year of his life, even though he was very sick, he was very much involved with three important projects.

The first one was the exhaustive restoration of the chapel in Walchsee, Austria. Horst van Cuyck spent most of his childhood in Walchsee and came back to live there at a later age. He loved this cosy little village with its beautiful lake. As the magnificent 19th century chapel in the village, the Ölbergkapelle, was neglected and in very bad condition, he engaged himself to restore the chapel: the building, the altar, the sculptures and the numerous mural paintings were thoroughly restored and the chapel regained its original splendour. But this was not the end of the project. Horst van Cuyck wished that the chapel would be dedicated to Saint Ide of Lorraine. Saint Ide lived in the 11th century. She was the daughter of the Duke of Upper Lorraine and later married count Eustace II of Boulogne. One of her sons was the famous crusader Godfrey of Bouillon. One of her daughters married the first Count of Cuijk and thus became the founding mother of the van Cuyck family. Horst was fascinated by the history of Saint Ide. He organized several events to celebrate the 900th anniversary of her death in 2013, he published a book about her and he financed research about her. Finally he managed that a relic of Saint Ide was transferred from Bayeux in Normandy (where her relics are kept) to Walchsee and on 7 November 2014 the chapel was inaugurated and dedicated to Saint Ide.

The second project was the permanent exhibition OFFIZIERSEHRE UND WIDERSTAND in the Bayerisches Armeemuseum in Ingolstadt. This exhibition is based on new research and focuses on the 20 July Plot of 1944 to assassinate Hitler and remove the Nazi Party from power. It was striking that Claus von Stauffenberg and 6 other conspirators of the plot, belonged to the same regiment, the Bamberger Reiter- und Kavallerieregiment 17 (17th Cavalry Regiment). And that many other members of this regiment also developed resistance activities. The exhibition offers new insights in the relationship between honor and resistance and explains how the old ideals of knights and cavaliers gave rise to different kinds of resistance to Hitler. Horst van Cuyck was the patron of this exhibition. He funded the research and the publication of the book. He was very much interested in this matter because his father was also a member of the Bamberger Reiter. He was a close friend of Stauffenberg, as Horst later was a good friend of Stauffenberg's son. Together they founded the Gedächtnisstiftung for the 17th Cavalry regiment.

The third and last project was of course The Legacy of Charlemagne: the exhibition and book. Horst van Cuyck was attracted to this project because of several reasons. Saint Ide was a descendant of Charlemagne and through her also her daughter, the founding mother of the van Cuyck family. But most of all Horst was interested in the broad scope of this project, not focusing on the name and fame of Charlemagne, but on his legacy, starting from the period after his death until the post-war era and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

All these projects were really important for Horst. They gave him energy and courage. Until the very end he asked about the state of affairs and passionately discussed several topics. He was delighted when I brought him the Dutch version of the book *The Legacy of Charlemagne* in May last year. He knew a fair amount of Dutch and was able to read several of the contributions.

Horst van Cuyck changed the life of many people. He was a unique man: very intelligent, bright and sharp-minded. He was as demanding for others as he was for himself. His energy was unsurpassed. He constantly lived and worked in top gear. When you asked him what the deadline was for a certain assignment, he would always answer: yesterday. He had no patience. But this was more than counterbalanced by his appreciation when you finished the job. He was a very warm-hearted and amiable man. And he was extremely generous in many different ways.

Horst van Cuyck passed away in Munich on 26 June 2014. He was buried in Walchsee, the village he loved so much. His widow, the countess of Arco-Zinneberg, continues his work with the same passion and dedication. Together we will finish his work and honor his legacy.