Elisa Frei / Eleonora Rai (eds.)

# Profiling Saints

## Images of Modern Sanctity in a Global World



Academic Studies 97

V&R



© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

# Refo500 Academic Studies

Edited by
Herman J. Selderhuis

In co-operation with
Christopher B. Brown (Boston), Günter Frank (Bretten),
Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer (Bern), Tarald Rasmussen (Oslo),
Violet Soen (Leuven), Zsombor Tóth (Budapest),
Günther Wassilowsky (Berlin), Siegrid Westphal (Osnabrück).

Volume 97

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

Elisa Frei / Eleonora Rai (eds.)

# Profiling Saints

## Images of Modern Sanctity in a Global World

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek:
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data available online: https://dnb.de.

© 2023 by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Robert-Bosch-Breite 10, 37079 Göttingen, Germany,
an imprint of the Brill-Group (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands;
Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH,
Paderborn, Germany; Brill Österreich GmbH, Vienna, Austria)
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Hotei, Brill Schöningh,
Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau, V&R unipress
and Wageningen Academic.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means,
electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and
retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Cover design: SchwabScantechnik, Göttingen
Typesetting: le-tex publishing services, Leipzig

**Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com**

ISSN 2197-0165
ISBN 978-3-647-57356-4

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564



Gustave Doré (1832–83), Dante and Beatrice gaze upon the highest Heaven; illustrations to the Divine Comedy, Paradiso Canto XXXI. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

# Contents

Acknowledgments ..... 11

*Elisa Frei, Eleonora Rai*
*Fantastic Saints and Where to Find Them*: Why does Sanctity Matter? Preface to *Profiling Saints* ..... 13

*Franco Motta*
Sanctity and Modernity: Opposition or Agreement? An Introduction to *Profiling Saints* ..... 21

**Section 1 Through the Saints: Understanding the Church across the Centuries**

*Thomas Santa Maria*
Temptation, Torture, and Truth. Philip Neri and Reforming Catholic Rome... 35

*Stefan Samerski*
What about the Saints of the French Revolution? Canonization and Beatification after 1789 ..... 53

*Joris Geldhof*
Modern Saints in the Roman Missal. An Exploration of the *Proprium de Sanctis* ..... 67

**Section 2 Visualizing Sanctity and the Sacred: Images and Promotion**

*Raphaèle Preisinger, Hannah Joy Friedman, Jonathan E. Greenwood, Wei Jiang, Lucía Querejazu Escobari*
Promoting Sanctity by the Means of Artworks. The GLOBECOSAL Project .. 97

*Rachel Miller*
Imagining the World through St Francis Xavier Imagery. A Case Study in Quito ..... 125

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

*Tamara Dominici, Antonio Gerace*
From Book to Image. Molanus and the Netherlandish Holy Images ..... 151

### Section 3 Hagiographical Representations: The Jesuits

*Shiri Roelofs*
Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), the Louvain Lectures, and Economic Thought. Image and Impact of a Saint Viewed from an Underestimated Perspective ..... 191

*Carlo Pelliccia*
"Or voi conoscete qual sarà stata la santità del Saverio". The Panegyric by Eriprando Maria Giuliari (1728–1805) ..... 219

### Section 4 Martyrs of Japan: Models, Emotions, and the Causes for Beatification and Canonization

*Carla Tronu Montané*
From 'Martyrs of Japan' to 'Japanese Martyrs'. Models of Sanctity and Diversity in the Canonization Causes for Martyrs of Japan ..... 249

*Linda Zampol D'Ortia*
Emotional Practices of Catholic Martyrdom in Early Modern Japan ..... 269

*Hitomi Omata Rappo*
Profiling the Japanese Martyrs. The Beatification Process of the Twenty-Six Martyrs of Nagasaki (1597–1627) ..... 289

### Section 5 Vocation to Holiness: Three Case Studies from Early Modern Europe

*Beatrice Saletti*
Lucia Broccadelli da Narni in Ferrara. The Short Season of a Living Saint, the Changing Memories of the Biographers ..... 307

*Lucio Biasiori*
Holiness and Madness in Early Modern Florence ..... 323

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

*Patryk M. Ryczkowski*
Like a Phoenix into the Ashes. Christological and Jesuit Profile of Uniate Martyrdom in Andrzej Młodzianowski's Emblematic *Vita* (1675) of Josaphat Kuntsevych (1580–1623) ..... 345

*Sabina Pavone*
Sanctity in a Global World. Continuity and Discontinuity in the Early Modern Age. Conclusions to *Profiling Saints* ..... 371

Notes on Contributors..... 379

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

## Acknowledgments

In the last few years, sanctity and martyrdom have been objects of interest for diverse projects with which we had the pleasure to collaborate. This book, and the online conference preceding it, has been enriched by the lively scholarly contributions from such projects. We are most grateful to the institutions promoting, financing, and hosting these projects, and to the scholars, colleagues, and friends with whom we were able to collaborate for their mentorship and generous exchange of ideas.

In particular, we thank the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) and KU Leuven whose project G044621N *'Knocking on Heaven's Doors'. Free will, Money, and Emotions in the Theological Systems of Leonard Lessius and Luis de Molina (late 1500s–early 1600s)* (Promoter Wim François and co-promoter Wim Decock), conducted by Eleonora Rai in 2021–2022, focused on the soteriological and moral thought of Jesuits Leonard Lessius (1554–1623) and Luis de Molina (1535–1600) while also tracing the link between Lessius's theology of salvation and his failed cause for canonization; the University of Macerata with the PRIN (Progetti di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale) project *Sacrifice in the Europe of the Religious Conflicts and in the Early Modern World: Comparisons, Interpretations, Legitimations* (PI Vincenzo Lavenia, University of Bologna) which, focusing on the idea of sacrifice in the Early Modern Age, also touched on the theme of martyrdom and thus sanctity. Elisa Frei worked on this latter project within the local unit of the University of Macerata (directed by Sabina Pavone) and explored the topic of sacrifice and self-sacrifice (i. e. martyrdom) in Asia, as viewed by Catholic missionaries; the Department of History at the University of Turin, with the MUR Young Researchers project *Jesuitization – The Jesuit Law of Canonization: Models, Aristocracy, Gender (1500s–1700s)* (with the support of the Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo), carried out by Eleonora Rai, which analyses the key and yet underestimated Jesuit influence on the development of systematic law regulating canonization, and the creation and use of models of sanctity as means of soft power for influencing or shaping the behaviour of Early Modern Italian aristocracies; the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Faculty of Catholic Theology, where Elisa Frei works on Church history, relations and perceptions between East and West, and the missionaries and writers of the Society of Jesus under the supervision of Christoph Nebgen; and finally, the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College that hosted the online conference on its platforms.

As for the online symposium from which this book originated, the editors wish to thank those who participated as speakers or discussants but for various reasons are not represented as authors in this volume, namely: Michela Catto (University of

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

Turin), Leonardo Cohen (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), Emanuele Colombo (DePaul University), Simon Ditchfield (University of York), Jean-Pascal Gay (UC Louvain), Grace Harpster (Georgia State University), Robert Aleksander Maryks (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Camilla Russell (Sapienza University/ Newcastle University, AU), and Steffen Zierholz (University of Tübingen). They have our deepest gratitude for having enriched the online symposium with their brilliant contributions.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

Elisa Frei, Eleonora Rai

# *Fantastic Saints and Where to Find Them*: Why does Sanctity Matter?

## Preface to *Profiling Saints*

When we began, during the pandemics, to reflect on the possibility of organizing an online, international conference on Early Modern and Modern Christian sanctity and saints – which we had the pleasure to host in December 2021 – we were confronted with a pressing question: why do these themes still matter today? Communicating the reasons for researching sanctity – and upstream, why do we spend our lives studying what we do? – is of the utmost importance for developing our understanding of a phenomenon that has characterized Christian history since the very beginning, although its meanings, features, and images have changed according to different times and places, over the course of two millennia.

To begin with, Early Modern and Modern saints are not at all *fantastic*, and readers are thus invited to forgive the cinema-inspired joke behind our title. There is a clear distinction between ancient or Medieval saints, who were more creatively imagined than historically framed, and the saints as understood and represented from the 1500s onwards. Modern sanctity required both historical investigations and compliance with a juridical and judicial system that did not exist in earlier eras. Hagiography was born as an attempt to elaborate a science of saints and canonization law developed between the 1600s and 1700s, especially through Urban VIII (1568–1644) and Prospero Lambertini's (future Benedict XIV, 1675–1758) legal reorganization of the cult of the dead and canonization. Modern sanctity is meant to be unassailable: through the centralization and normalization of canonization procedures, the Roman Church responded to the need to regulate local communities and powers as well as the cult of the dead, the latter representing a key factor in the life of Catholics. No *fantastic saints* will be found in this book, but it does sketch many different images of sanctity and saints in a world that, through geographical expansion, religious renovation, and the unravelling of modernity, was relentlessly changing – and sanctity changed along with it. We can read sanctity through a set of lenses that offer us different perspectives and try to integrate these various views for a more comprehensive understanding.

First of all, saints embody imitable models of behaviour of Christian perfection. Starting in the Early Modern Age, such models were identified as heroic; that is to say, saints practiced virtues to a heroic degree but, being only human, through their example offered not only the guidelines needed for other human beings to follow

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

their lead, but also the hope that Christian perfection is within reach. Throughout the centuries, these behavioural models have changed depending on both the cultural benchmarks of the areas where they were promoted and the strategies of those who postulated for the candidates to sanctity's canonization: in other words, sanctity can be understood as a phenomenon orchestrated "from above", directed by the upper echelons of the Church and its institutions (just think of the religious orders, for example, and their efforts to canonize their own members) and, at the same time, growing up "from below", as a product of the sensibilities of the societies practicing devotion to the dead.

When we observe sanctity as a strategic site of communication, we cannot but notice that hagiographical models launch specific messages, as intended by the postulators of the cause. As such, they constitute powerful means of soft power influencing the societies in question. To illustrate this point, take for example the promotion of the martyrial model in the 1800s, after the revolutionary period and rise of a series of anti-Catholic or anti-Roman cultural and political movements, when the Church aimed to foster the image of a suffering, besieged body. Or the success of the female sanctity model of the good mother fostered in the 1900s. Gianna Beretta Molla (1922–62), the first example that comes to mind, met the Church's need to offer an imitable example of Christian perfection to the lay world in the context of increasingly important Catholic associationism and was deeply caught up with contemporary ongoing discussions about the family and abortion.

On the other hand, when we look at sanctity as a changing phenomenon nourished by the places in which it surfaces, we can better understand not only the devotional side of it – there is no sanctity without devotion – but also how local communities have influenced canonization attempts. Local veneration of the dead is particularly stressed, for example, in cases of missionaries who spent their lives in specific geographical or social contexts. Some popular missionaries were considered living saints by the faithful among whom they preached: the case of Jesuit Francesco De Geronimo (1642–1716) is self-explanatory given that, after his death, devotees dismantled his confessional to take pieces home, and even fed the sick with it begging for miracles through a sort of relic-eating practice. Another example is missionaries who evangelized far-away lands in the age of geographical expansion: to cite another Jesuit, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), the evangelizer of China, was proclaimed *venerable* quite recently.

Keeping in mind that every canonization entails a degree of strategy, some cases in particular allow us to analyse how the local communities in which devotion arose considered the candidates to sainthood: what features mattered in the place and time when devotion developed? Which raises the correlated question: what was fundamental for the communities of the faithful, what were their needs, and what did they value as characteristics of holiness? De Geronimo, to clarify with an example, was considered a living saint for many reasons among which his alleged

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

ability to provoke rain or heal crops, acts that were key necessities in the rural areas where he preached.

In the Catholic panorama, saints, along with the tangible relics of their bodies, provide a connection between this world and the other. Saints have the ability to intercede before God for those who pray to them: they are mediators, they bridge healings and miracles. They are a "hook" pointing upwards, towards Heaven, and give hope to the faithful in need. It is thus no surprise that the culture of sanctity is still key in the Catholic world, that ceremonies of canonization attract waves of pilgrims to Rome, and that devotion towards the saints occupies a seminal place in the life of billions of Catholics around the world. Saints, along with their relics, also have eschatological meaning, as already outlined by Gregory of Tours (539–94): they preview the final times, the last moment, when the saints and others who are saved will stand with God in Heaven. Canonizing a candidate to sainthood means, first and foremost, announcing to the world that he or she is undoubtedly in Heaven.

Sanctity is an ongoing historical, anthropological, legal, social, cultural, liturgical, gendered, emotional, and artistic phenomenon. As such, it deserves to be fully explored from a variety of angles and has attracted the interest of scholars ranging from cultural, legal, and Church historians to experts in liturgical studies or art historians, to name just a few. *Profiling Saints* attempts to offer diverse images and representations of a phenomenon as multifaceted as Modern sanctity, in a global perspective that mirrors the times when it developed, between Europe and overseas.

Exploring sanctity and canonization records, rich with witnesses' depositions, thus offers a chance to observe the development of an amazingly wide array of ideas and practices – from the cult of the dead and their relics to the shaping of behavioural models and the culture of martyrdom, from social, emotional, and gendered practices of sanctity to the artistic representation of saints. We will thus have the opportunity to explore the functioning of different societies around the world in their relationship with the promotion of canonization causes and better understand the choices of the Roman power centres. Sanctity still matters not only by virtue of the undeniable value it holds in the Catholic world, but also because it represents a surprisingly powerful prism through which to observe various facets of religious, social, and cultural history in the course of the Early Modern and Contemporary Age. This awareness was the starting point for inviting scholars from the most diverse of backgrounds to offer their competencies during the intense activities of the abovementioned online conference and now for the realization of this volume.

Fuelled by fruitful and cordial collaboration between the volume editors, the conference *Profiling Saints: Understanding the Theological and Cultural Foundations of Catholic Hagiographical Models (1500s–1900s)* was held online at the end of 2021. The event was successful in terms of participation, and the participants showed

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

interest in publishing the proceedings – not only the speakers, but also those who attended the international workshop as scholars who have been engaging with the topic for years. Researchers working on the Early Modern Age, with different areas of expertise and academic experience, thus became the authors of this book and enriched the discussion initiated at the conference with new contributions, making the most of an interdisciplinary approach to study a heterogeneous array of topics related to sanctity.

The first and last papers of this volume offer an overview of sanctity in the Early Modern Age. The very idea of sanctity was continually scrutinized, judged, and reformed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Franco Motta (University of Turin) explains so well in his introductory essay, *Sanctity and Modernity: Opposition or Agreement? An Introduction to Profiling Saints*; its global dimension is underlined in the insightful *Sanctity in a Global World: Continuity and Discontinuity in the Early Modern Age. Conclusions to Profiling Saints* by Sabina Pavone (University of Napoli L'Orientale).

The first section of the book sketches a portrait *Through the Saints: Understanding the Church across the Centuries*, starting from the case of *Temptation, Torture, and Truth: Philip Neri and Reforming Catholic Rome*. Tom Santa Maria (Yale University) clarifies how multiple aspects of Neri's life made him a most fitting candidate for canonization – such as having founded a new religious order, the Oratorians – and Neri thus obtained this status fairly easily and quickly, as part of the famous group of saints canonized in 1622. The timespan of this first sections allows us to appreciate the points of continuity and difference from the Medieval model of sanctity until the Modern Age, thanks also to Stefan Samerski (Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich). Samerski asks *What about Saints of the French Revolution? Canonization and Beatification after 1789,* pointing to a fundamental date that deeply influenced the Church's canonization policies. Finally, Joris Geldhof (KU Leuven) offers an overview of the presence of *Modern Saints in the Roman Missal: An Exploration of the Proprium de Sanctis*. The author notes continuities and discontinuities over the centuries (from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries Roman Missals), compares different categories of sainthood and their related prayers, and reflects on them statistically (religious order, gender, geographic and cultural provenance, etc.).

Art history is a marvellous lens through which to appreciate the many, hazy nuances of sanctity, and the second section of this book thus focuses on *Visualizing Sanctity and the Sacred: Images and Promotion*. The Swiss-based group GLOBE-COSAL (Global Economies of Salvation) lays out the aims of their ERC- and SNF-funded research. *Promoting Sanctity by the Means of Artworks,* a collaborative paper written by Raphaèle Preisinger (PI), Hannah Friedman, Jonathan Greenwood, Wei Jiang, and Lucia Querejazu Escobari (University of Zürich), investigates the multiple functions of artwork in the process of negotiating sanctity between Rome and local areas from the 1500s to the 1700s. Rachel Miller (California State

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

University, Sacramento) reflects on *Imagining the World through St Francis Xavier Imagery: A Case Study in Quito.* Xavier, among the 1622 group of saints, was one of the first two Jesuit saints to be canonized – together with the founder of the order, Ignatius of Loyola. His missionary activities in Japan became famous thanks not only to his own written accounts, but also to multiple artworks depicting him very differently depending on whether they were produced in European or Latin American contexts. Antonio Gerace (Fscire/KU Leuven) and Tamara Dominici (independent researcher) focus on *De picturis et imagines sacris,* published by the theologian Johannes Molanus in 1570. In *From Book to Image. Molanus and the Netherlandish Holy Images*, the authors also highlight the importance of holy images in expressing Catholic devotion.

The third section investigates the *Hagiographical Representations in the Society of Jesus*. Among the many religious orders founded in the sixteenth century, the importance of the Jesuits cannot be overestimated, especially in the fields of pedagogy and missionizing, as well as hagiographical promotion. The names of some of the most important Jesuits – *in primis* Francis Xavier, also known as "the Apostle of the Indies" – thus resurface throughout *Profiling Saints*. Shiri Roelofs (KU Leuven) studies the case of the Jesuit *Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), the Louvain Lectures, and Economic Thought: Image and Impact of a Saint Viewed from an Underestimated Perspective*, focusing on the evolution of Bellarmine's hagiographical model. Carlo Pelliccia (Università degli Studi Internazionali di Roma) publishes the first critical edition of *"Or voi conoscete qual sarà stata la santità del Saverio": The Panegyric by Eriprando Maria Giuliari (1728–1805)*. Both essays show how, even centuries after their death, figures such as Bellarmine and Xavier offered exemplary but extremely different and evolving models of sanctity, with the consequence that their canonizations also took place under various circumstances and in distinct times.

The development of the idea of Early Modern sanctity and hagiographical models is closely related to the history of the Society of Jesus, as the latter is intertwined with the order's Japanese missions. Jesuits were the first Catholics to establish missions in such a distant civilization and, although the first years were depicted as extremely promising by Jesuit sources, Japan was soon recognized as one of the most dangerous and hopeless of such endeavours. In the Early Modern Age, missionaries sent to faraway lands ran the risk – or had the much-hoped-for chance, from their perspective – of suffering a violent death that could be framed as martyrdom and thus trigger a canonization cause. The fourth section focuses on *Martyrs of Japan: Models, Emotions, and the Causes for Beatification and Canonization.* Carla Tronu Montané (Kansai University of Foreign Studies) outlines a complete introduction on sanctity in Japan, from the sixteenth century until recent times. Her *From 'Martyrs of Japan' to 'Japanese Martyrs'. Models of Sanctity and Diversity in the Canonization Causes for Martyrs of Japan* shows the importance of approaching such topics not only from a religious perspective, but with an in-depth analysis

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

of all the elements involved in the bigger picture – and in light of the most recent developments in historical research, such as post-colonial and women's studies. Similarly, the chapter by Linda Zampol D'Ortia (Ca´ Foscari Venezia/Australian Catholic University) uses the promising and relatively recent methodologies of the history of emotions. In *Emotional Practices of Catholic Martyrdom in Early Modern Japan*, the author analyses numerous documents produced by Catholic missionaries to identify the practices that characterized martyrdom models in in the Japanese Catholic community, particularly struck by violent deaths. Hitomi Omata Rappo (Kyoto University) studies the most renowned and celebrated martyrs of Asia: a group of Japanese converts and missionaries whose crucifixion (1597) made a deep impression on Catholics all over the world. In *Profiling the Japanese Martyrs: The Beatification Process of the Twenty-Six Martyrs of Nagasaki (1597–1627)*, she explains why such a tragic event was endorsed with official beatification just a few decades after the event, with processes taking place on a global scale – in Asia, the Americas, and Europe.

The final section, *Vocation to Holiness: Three Case Studies from Early Modern Europe*, deals with three examples of the different possible outcomes when well-known and admired figures died in the odour of sanctity. Beatrice Saletti (University of Ferrara) describes the circumstances of the failed canonization of Lucia da Narni in her chapter *Lucia Broccadelli da Narni in Ferrara: The Short Season of a Saint, the Changing Memories of the Biographers*. The cult surrounding this female figure was sustained for political reasons, and her adventurous story involving kidnapping, faked stigmata, and thousands of pages of personal memories is of the utmost interest today. A similar "unsuccessful" saint is the focus of the chapter by Lucio Biasiori (University of Padua). *Holiness and Madness in Florence* analyses the case of the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola, hanged and burned at the stake in Florence in 1498, who nonetheless became the object of intense religious devotion – and even an attempted canonization cause. And finally, Patryk Ryczkowski (University of Innsbruck) studies the life and canonization of a martyr of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. *Like the Phoenix into the Ashes: Christological and Jesuit Profile of Uniate Martyrdom in Andrzej Młodzianowski's Emblematic Vita (1675) of Josaphat Kuntsevych (1580–1623)* once again testifies to the complexity and heterogeneity of factors involved in beatifications and canonizations, and shows how they may be pursued via different kinds of agency.

As these chapters clearly show, each author has contributed to the wide array of possible answers to the question at the heart of *Profiling Saints*: What brought certain men and women to the end of the path to sanctity, while others were excluded from it for decades, centuries, or even forever? Many of the "holy" men and women studied in *Profiling Saints*, despite living in the Early Modern Age, were not canonized until recent or very recent times, between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: multiple elements converge in advancing or delaying a cause for

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

canonization, and numerous changes can occur – including in the hagiographical models of sainthood candidates – in the span of time from their death to the first hagiographical descriptions to their (possible) canonization.

The road to sainthood can be long and tortuous, models of sanctity highly diverse, and the elements determining the success or failure of canonization causes widely disparate. What do saints tell us? They set a path, that is the path of Christian perfection, which in turn entails a set of imitable, heroic moral standards. After all, *Profiling Saints* means understanding how and why the Church, both as an institution (including all of its bodies such as the religious orders or dioceses) and as the ensemble of the faithful, fosters accepts, and venerates specific behavioural models with a view to the salvation of the soul. History (in all its facets), hagiography, art, and liturgy: all of these fields of research aid us in grasping the importance of exploring sanctity not only as a religious matter but also – and especially – as a socio-cultural element that has contributed so extensively to making the history of Early Modern Christianity. *Profiling Saints* thus aims to reveal at least part of the amazingly rich sphere of Early Modern and Modern sanctity, complete with many of its representations and images in an ever-changing global world.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

Franco Motta

# Sanctity and Modernity: Opposition or Agreement?

## An Introduction to *Profiling Saints*

The cult of saints and the development of the Modern world appear to have coexisted in quite a problematic way. Even if we leave to one side the Weberian concept of modernity as a process of 'disenchantment of the world' (*Wissenschaft als Beruf*, 1919), we cannot deny that many of the political and cultural phenomena that have shaped our reality have brought with them a deep aversion to the traditional Christian conception of the sacred, materialized in the form of sanctity, in the form of holy places and relics, for example.[1]

Just to mention a few historical examples, we can remember the iconoclastic moment that characterized the radical fringe of the supporters of the Spanish Republic in the 1930s, with several episodes of the public display of the bodies of saints and ordinary monks and nuns and the destruction of holy images, or mock processions like that of the image of Nuestra Señora de la Consolación near Madrid in 1936. A well-known victim of this was St. Francis Borja, the third general of the Society of Jesus, whose body was destroyed during the fire in the Jesuits' residence in the Spanish capital, set alight by the supporters of the Republic in May 1931.

A few years earlier, a similar iconoclastic campaign had been organized in Russia and Belarus in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution. This was not a consequence of popular rage against the Church or the anticlerical program of the anarchist movement and the trade unions, as it was in Spain, but was, rather, the political strategy of the soviet Ministry of Justice, then named the Peoples' Commissariat to Justice, intended to unmask and eradicate all superstitious belief in the power of the relics of the saints, as part of a process to modernize the country.[2]

Between 1919 and 1921 the bodies of about 58 saints, all of them, with one exception, belonging to the Orthodox Church, were displayed in public ceremonies

1 The concept of a 'disenchantment of the world' has been more recently developed by Marcel Gauchet in his controversial book *The Disenchantment of the World. A Political History of Religion* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999 [French original 1985]. As for the idea of secularization in general see, among others, H. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Boston: Mit Press, 1985 [German original 1966]); J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); *Die Säkularisation im Prozess der Säkularisierung Europas*, ed. P. Blickle – R. Schlögl (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica, 2005).

2 S. A. Smith, *Bones of Contention: Bolsheviks and the Struggle against Relics 1918–1930*, «Past and Present», 204 (2009), 155–94.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564



Fig. 1 A l'aspect de la Verité le Prêtre se depouille et abjure le mensonge (A mock procession of the Holy Lady with the phrygian cap), ca. 1793.

and translated to local museums, in order to demonstrate the falsehoods the people had been exposed to for centuries: they were not only relics of monks and churchmen, but also of princes and aristocrats who had been venerated as saints – we must remember that Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia, has also figured among the Russian saints since 2000. Relics were examined by official commissions made up of representatives of the local soviets, members of the clergy, and coroners: the commission charged with investigating the relics of prince Mikhail Yaroslavich in the cathedral of Tver, in Central European Russia, consisted of 24 members, and performed its task before an audience of more than three hundred onlookers.[3] These rites of exposition had the overall aim of desacralizing the relics, but not desecrating them, as was later to happen in republican Spain.

If we take a further step backwards of about 130 years, to the French Revolution, we can find the archetype of the clash between modernity and the Christian sacred sphere (Fig. 1). In August 1793 the entire symbolic construct of the alliance between sanctity and power that had supported the monarchy of the *Ancien Régime* was merrily demolished with the destruction of the royal graves in Saint-Denis in Paris,

3 Smith, *Bones of Contention*, 168.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

including those of the dynasties of the Valois and the Bourbons, and the dispersion of the royal relics they preserved.[4]

Now, none of the historical events I have just summarized should of course be taken as evidence of a supposedly 'natural' opposition between sanctity and modern political culture. Each of them must be interpreted and placed within its proper historical context. From this viewpoint, we can see that modern political discourse has always created a holy dimension in its own terms, both as a reaction to contrary ideas and systems, and as a simple substitution of symbols and references.

To go back to the examples I have just mentioned, it is enough to recall that the experience of the secularized Spanish Republic came to a tragic end with the creation of the clerical fascist regime of Francisco Franco, which asserted an alliance between the State and the Catholic Church as a pillar of the re-established traditional order. This is well illustrated by the construction of the sanctuary of the 'Valle de los caídos', the 'Valley of the Fallen', the monumental graveyard of those who had died for the cause of nationalist Spain, embedded into a Benedictine abbey, and the consecration of the country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the same Sacred Heart whose monument had been 'executed' in August 1936.

At a different level, the 'war against relics' in the Soviet Union ended with the proclamation of the program of the New Economic Policy in 1921, and was soon converted into the sacralization of the Soviet regime with the embalming of the corpse of its founder, Vladimir Ilic' Lenin in 1923, and its public exhibition outside the Kremlin's walls, where it is still visible today.[5] Going back further, the de-Christianization program launched by the French Convention led, as we know, to the proclamation of the cult of the Supreme Being, while in that same August 1793 the revolutionary officials tasked with supervising the demolition of the royal tombs in Saint-Denis gave care and attention to the corpses, noting those that appeared to be more or less intact, taking a death mask of Henry IV and sketching the mummy of general Turenne, a renowned hero of French wars under Louis XIV. Among these events, the desacralization of Christian symbols was accompanied by lay miracles intended to legitimize the new secular order established by the Revolution (Fig. 2).[6]

---

4 P. Boutry – Dominique Julia, *Reliques et Révolution française*, in *Religione cultura e politica nell'Europa dell'età moderna. Studi offerti a Mario Rosa dagli amici*, eds. C. Ossola – M. Verga – M.A. Visceglia (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2003), 337–52.

5 N. Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin-Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1983). The case of the cult of Lenin in the Soviet Union is one example among many of what historians call 'political religion': see, on this topic, D. Herbert, *Religion and Civil Society. Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003), and several essays by E. Gentile, like his short synthesis *Political Religions in the 20th Century*, in *Die Säkularisation im Prozess der Säkularisierung Europas*, 551–62.

6 A general framing of this topic in N. Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France, 1780–1804* (London: MacMillan, 2000), 259–330.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564




Fig. 2 Truth appearing before a priest, convincing him to reject his clerical status (detail of Sans-culottes parade through Paris ridiculing Christianity and the Church, 1793).

Finally, when we come to more recent phenomena, we must not forget that the massive irruption of the Christian faith in the public sphere during the late 1900s was decisively promoted by the large-scale canonization policy of John Paul II, who himself canonized 482 saints, more than half the number of all the saints that have been proclaimed since the founding of the Congregation of Rites (now the Congregation for the Causes of the saints) in 1588.

Now, if we move from a consideration of the political dimension of holiness in the Modern world to its cultural and philosophical premises, we cannot underestimate the meaning of the process of secularization in Modern Europe. This statement requires us to move to a deeper cultural level, stepping back to the 17th and 18th centuries, to find the roots of a larger process that involved an overall criticism of the very concepts of sanctity and the supernatural.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

Leaving aside the harsh critiques of the idea of the possibility of miracles by rationalist thinkers of the late 17th century such as Spinoza and Pierre Bayle, it will be enough to look at a couple of the most celebrated expressions of the mainstream Enlightenment thought of the mid-18th century. If we read the entry *Miracles* in Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), which enjoyed an enormous clandestine success all over Europe, we can see the very idea of miracles radically demolished both at a physical and a moral level: on one hand, writes Voltaire, "a miracle is the violation of laws which are deemed to be mathematical, divine, unchangeable, and eternal. According to this definition, a miracle is a contradiction in its own terms. A law cannot be unchangeable and violated at the same time"; on the other, "Why should God perform a miracle? To accomplish a design concerning some living being. […] But this would be an admission of God's weakness, not of His power".[7] We can easily grasp why Voltaire's work was prohibited by the Paris Parliament and condemned in Rome as well as in Geneva.

A more moderate, but nevertheless still radical criticism of the cult of the saints, based on historical grounds, can be found in the pages of Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. Here sanctity is described as a cultural phenomenon not exclusive to Christianity, but common to the different religions of humanity, starting from the ancient pagan religions whose cults and feasts had been simply adopted and renamed by the Christians.[8]

From this viewpoint, it cannot be denied that biblical criticism and the widespread adoption of philological and historical methods by scholars held a key role in the 18th century in reshaping the Western attitude toward religion and the sacred. Despite this, it cannot be denied that saints continued to be proclaimed, and, with even greater frequency since the pontificate of Pius IX in the second half of the 19th century, their images continued to be offered prayers and precious objects, and miracles continued to be performed, even with the direct involvement of physicians and scientists in the beatification and canonization processes.

This simple fact should induce us to adopt a different meaning of 'modernity' when dealing with sanctity and, more broadly, with the historical development of Christianity in the Modern world. On the one hand, it cannot be disputed that the formation of modernity has been aided and shaped by phenomena like the Scientific revolution, the growth of capitalism and the rise of an economic and scientific rationality. Yet, on the other, if we take early modern European history as a set of processes, such as the geographical discoveries, the rising of colonialism,

7 *Dictionnaire philosophique*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, vol. 36 (Paris: Thomin et Fortic, 1821), 499–519, 499–500.

8 *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. R. Morrissey – G. Roe (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Autumn 2022 Edition]), vol. 14, 522, https://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu. Accessed on 28 December, 2022.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

the Reformation and so on, that marked a profound discontinuity with the reality that preceded it, and took place mainly in the period between the mid-15th and the mid-17th century, then there can be no doubt that sanctity in the West, both in the way it was conceived and in the way it was practised, underwent a rapid and important change in the decades that followed the Council of Trent, becoming something very different from what it had been in the late Middle Ages.

Such a change was mostly, but not exclusively, prompted by two main elements, which exerted a deep influence on the Catholic Church: the need to respond to the spread of the Protestant rejection of the saints and the power of their relics and images on one hand, and, on the other, the strategy of pursuing a new cultural and moral hegemony over believers through the resources offered by the cult of the saints, and the performance of miraculous healings in the first place.

These two elements define what can be considered as Counter-Reformation sanctity, which according to its different aspects has been extensively investigated, by scholars like Simon Ditchfield, Jean-Michel Sallmann, Stefan Samerski, Angelo Turchini and Miguel Gotor among others. In my opinion, these elements converged into what can be viewed as a true 'system of sanctity': it was a system in the sense that it had an aim, to reaffirm the power of saints, their relics and the prayers addressed to them; an object, holy men and women who had lived not only in the past, but also, and mostly, in the present-day Church, and who largely belonged to the institutional hierarchy; and a method, the tools used to assess the reality of their acts and their supernatural powers.

In the decades between 1588 (the foundation of the Congregation of Rites by Sixtus V) and the decrees of Urban VIII, issued between 1625 and 1634, sanctity underwent a strong process of centralization in the hands of the Roman curia, since the proclamation of saints became strictly linked to the office of the pope and to his infallibility, thus acquiring the profile of an outstanding theological and political matter. Moreover, a transition took place from the traditional pattern of legitimation of the holiness of a man or a woman, largely based on their fame, shared memory and legends, and the importance of his or her local cult, to a judicial model administered by the professional figures of skilled theologians and canonists like the *promotor fidei* and the *consultores*, the advisers of the congregation.[9]

Those events can also be seen as evidence of a tension between a surging demand for the supernatural springing from society, fostered and controlled by bishops, religious orders, local Churches and local powers on the one hand, and the rising bureaucratic attitude of the Apostolic See, always keen to underscore its supreme privilege of surveillance and judgment, on the other. We have a revealing example

9 M. Gotor, *I beati del papa. Santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2002).

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

of this in the overwhelming rise of the figure of Charles Borromeo (d. 1584), a bishop and symbol of the Counter-Reformation, whose celebrations held in 1602 and 1603 summoned tens of thousands of faithful to Milan, forcing Rome to rapidly canonize him, on the 1st of November of 1610, just twenty-six years after his death. On the other hand, we must remember the interventions of Clement VIII and the Spanish Inquisition to arrest any manifestation of devotion – such as altars, *ex voto*, unauthorized pictures and biographies – toward Ignatius of Loyola, effectively promoted as an 'informal saint' by the Society of Jesus since the 1570s.

Such a redefinition of sanctity heavily relied on the resources granted by the new holy figures that lived and acted in the years corresponding to and following the Council of Trent. These were the new characters who responded to a rising need for the supernatural - the blessed, the *beati*, those men and women whose acts, bodies and relics performed miracles and healings during their lives, or immediately after their deaths, but whose cult still needed to be verified and guided by the officers of the Roman curia.

These holy people were forceful instruments of the divine power conveyed on the Catholic Church. Paul V paved the way, beatifying twelve men and women between 1605 and 1619. Just two of them, Margherita da Città di Castello and Isidro Labrador, had lived in previous centuries (respectively, in the 14$^{th}$ and the 12$^{th}$ century); all the others had died between 1552 and 1595, meaning that many of them were more or less contemporaries of the pope himself (who was born in 1552, the same year as the death of Francis Xavier). Some of them, specifically Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Ávila, Francis Xavier, Filippo Neri and Isidro Labrador, to whom we must add Charles Borromeo who was never formally beatified, were canonized in the following years. None of them was a martyr, unlike many of the blessed and the saints who were to be celebrated as martyrs by the Church between the late 17$^{th}$ and the 20$^{th}$ centuries. Most of them belonged to religious orders and showed their charisma among their contemporaries through miracles and the holiness of their life, meaning that institutional bodies of the Church, like regular orders and congregations, played a role as key actors in controlling and promoting popular devotion, facilitating miracles, and mediating the supernatural.

The generations of Churchmen and simple Catholic believers living in these decades shared the idea of belonging to a new age of sanctity, maybe not too dissimilar to what had been early Christianity. A new age of sanctity that was thought to foreshadow the final triumph of the Church over heresy and, at the same time, its future conquest of the whole world, as symbolized in the famous frontispiece of the volume of Daniello Bartoli's *Historia della Compagnia di Gesù*, the history of the Society of Jesus (1659), where the supernatural light shed by the holy father Ignatius illuminates a world depicted in its cartographical reality (Fig. 3).

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564




Fig. 3 Daniello Bartoli, *Historia della Compagnia di Gesù*, vol. I (Roma: Nella stamperia d'Ignatio Lazzari, 1659), frontispiece.

We can argue this not only on the basis of evidence like the multiplication of holy graves and sanctuaries and the huge flow of people to the funerals of the servants of God, but also from a higher testimony like that of cardinal Bellarmine – later himself a saint, canonized in1930 – as mentioned in the foreword to the first volume of the *Acta sanctorum* of the Bollandists, published in 1643: "We have been told that cardinal Bellarmine used to say that this century in which we live is a century of saints, because God seems to have communicated His gifts, and the most clear reasons to display sanctity more largely than in the previous ages; so we can agree in saying that never before have the acts of the saints been demonstrated as they are now".[10]

10 *De actis sanctorum Ioannis Bollandi praefatio*, in *Acta sanctorum*, ed. I. Bollandus (Venetiis: apud Sebastianum Coleti et Io. Baptistam Albrizzi, 1734 [1st ed. 1643], vol. 1, *Ianuarius*, I–LII, XI.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564




Fig. 4 *Acta sanctorum*, ed. I. Bollandus (Venetiis: apud Sebastianum Coleti et Io. Baptistam Albrizzi, 1734 [1st ed. 1643]), vol. 1, Ianuarius, frontispiece.

Of course, this reference to cardinal Bellarmine, the prominent Jesuit controversialist, must not be considered as accidental, since his fame derived from the great effort he made to prove the truth of Catholic faith – including the belief in the saints – on theological and historical grounds. Indeed, the Bollandists' *Acta sanctorum* were precisely conceived to collect and organize the saints' lives in order to prove their truth and reliability. The question of truth, along with that of the method, was central in the Counter-Reformation system of sanctity, as shown by the inscriptions on the monumental base engraved in the architectural frontispiece of the first volume of the work: *veritas*, on the right side, and *eruditio*, that is historical method, on the left (Fig. 4).

We must remember that the *Acta sanctorum* were not really the first attempt to establish a new method in assessing the reliability of the collections of saints' lives: they were preceded by the *Vitae sanctorum priscorum Patrum*, the 'Lives of the first

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

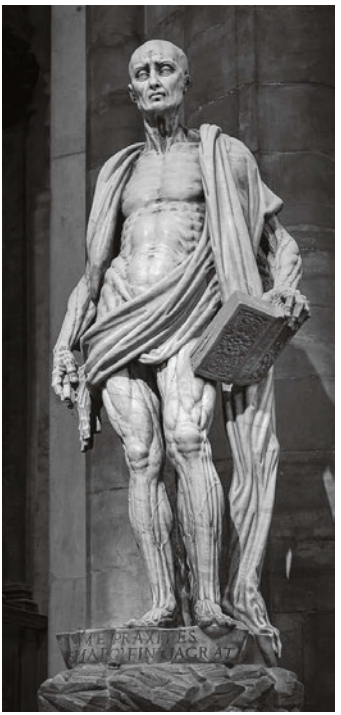


Fig. 5 Marco d'Agrate, *St. Bartholomew* (1562), Cathedral of Milan. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

holy Fathers of the Church' published by Luigi Lippomani from 1551, and by the *De probatis sanctorum historiis*, 'The proven histories of saints' by Laurentius Surius, published between 1570 and 1575, the most prominent collection of hagiographies before the Bollandists.

Lippomani was also the author of the *De ritibus sepeliendi mortuos apud veteres Christianos*, 'On the burial rites of the ancient Christians', the first archaeological work on the catacombs of Rome, followed by the renowned *Roma subterranea* of Antonio Bosio, printed in 1629. We are here clearly dealing with the problem of creating a foundation of historical evidence of the Christian tradition in the face of the criticism issued by the Reformation: it was the same problem that, as I have noted, was then being dealt with by Bellarmine in his *De controversiis Christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos*, 'On the disputed matters of Christian faith, against the heretics of our time' (1586–93), with regard to Catholic doctrine, and by cardinal Baronius in his *Annales ecclesiastici* (1588–1607), with regard to Church history. The 'heretics of our time' and 'the saints of our time' were, from this point of view, the opposite sides of the same coin.

However, in my opinion, these considerations do not fully complete the true meaning of the modern 'system of sanctity' I have tried to sketch: together with the apologetic aim suggested by the struggle against the Reformation, I think we should

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

consider another side of the problem, which is equally linked to the question of truth.

The search for a true representation of history, nature, and the body was undoubtedly one of the key elements that shaped early modern culture, science, and the arts: be it in Machiavelli's account of the mechanisms ruling political power; in the formalization of the physical laws presiding over the motion of the earth and the skies by Kepler and Galileo; in the representation of the human body in Andreas Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica*; or in the illustration of the reality of the pains suffered by martyrs, as in the case of the well-known statue of St. Bartholomew by Marco d'Agrate in 1562 (Fig. 5), shown in the Duomo of Milan, which certainly owes much to Vesalius' iconography, we are actually dealing with a sort of 'quest for truth' which appears to have been shared by many disciplines.

What is more, D'Agrate's statue should be paired with a later interest in martyrdom which found expressions in the treatise by Antonio Gallonio on the tortures suffered by the ancient martyrs, the *Trattato degli instrumenti di martirio* printed in 1591, and with the opening pages of Pedro Ribadenyra's hagiographic collection, the *Flos sanctorum* of 1599, devoted to the ancient instruments of martyrdom, to show us that the relationship between sanctity, modernity, and truth, which in these cases appears to be mediated by the evidence given by suffering, should not be placed in the background.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

# Section 1
# Through the Saints: Understanding the Church across the Centuries

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

Thomas Santa Maria

# Temptation, Torture, and Truth

## Philip Neri and Reforming Catholic Rome[1]

### Introduction

In recent years, the stakes for understanding early modernity have continued to rise. Scholars have traced the origins of today's racial division, globalism, and even the rise of far-right populist movements and competing truth claims to early modernity.[2] For the better part of the twentieth century, following the work of Max Weber, modernization, seen as a positive force, was a product of the Protestant Reformations.[3] More recently, scholars turning to the history of Catholicism, and especially Jesuit studies, credit Catholicism with the birth of modernity. They point to Catholic missions as foundational, if albeit oftentimes tragic, moments of cross-cultural encounter that shaped the global world today.[4] Furthermore, they have questioned many of the myths surrounding the era of Reformations that praise

1 This article is one of three projects in which I analyze the sanctity of Philip Neri to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his canonization. By necessity, much of the material in question is based on similar sources (canonization processes and hagiographies); however, I approach these texts with three distinct angles. Here I focus on the importance of the use and custody of the senses in Early Modern Catholicism, and its relationship to belief and truth. I argue that Neri's hagiographers identified him as an exemplary practitioner of this complex phenomenon. I am grateful to Elisa Frei and Eleonora Rai for inviting me to contribute to their volume on profiling sanctity.

2 For example, see, B.S. Gregory, *Rebel in the Ranks: Martin Luther, the Reformation, and the Conflicts that Continue to Shape Our World* (New York: Harper One, 2017). To some degree, *Rebel in the Ranks* popularized some of the argumentation from Gregory's earlier work, see B.S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2012). Ethan Shagan has challenged some of Gregory's ideas in his monograph on the ways in which religious belief has had ramifications for the present all while maintaining that Early Modern ideas and movements have shaped our world, see E.H. Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief: Faith and Judgment from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021). Perhaps the most well-known example is the New York Times *1619 Project*, see N. Hannah-Jones, *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (New York: Random House, 2021).

3 See M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

4 See for example the Brill's series which links Jesuit Studies and modernity, *Jesuit Studies: Modernity through the Prism of Jesuit History* (Boston: Brill, 2013–), and R. Po-Chia Hsia, ed., *A Companion to Early Modern Catholic Global Missions*, Companion to the Christian Tradition, 80 (Boston: Brill, 2018).

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

the Protestant Reformation as a movement marked by reason and literacy, and denounce Catholicism, especially in its reactionary modality as "counter-reformation" meaning stagnant and regressive. In this model, Protestantism became the religion of the word and the book, whereas Catholicism became the religion of superstition and sensuality. In the reductionistic brevity of the inter-confessional polemics: Protestants championed the pulpit and Catholics the "smells and bells."

To be sure, the caricature of the lay Catholic as oppressed and stultified by Church hierarchy has been debunked over the last few decades by many studies that reveal the vibrance of Early Modern Catholicism and its lay participation.[5] This new interpretation of Early Modern Catholicism has depended on studying its cultural, devotional, intellectual, and spiritual elements. To this end, examining sanctity has reigned supreme. As Peter Burke notes in his oft-cited study, saints reflect the values of the culture that reveres them.[6] The problem is that the Early Modern Catholic Church raised relatively few holy people to sainthood, especially in the century following the German reformer Martin Luther's excommunication. For that reason, the 1622 canonization in which Gregory XV canonized five people at once, Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, Teresa of Avila, Isidore the Laborer, and Philip Neri has stood out as a particularly important and unique event for investigating Early Modern Catholicism.[7] For some, the event has been hailed as the canonization of the Catholic Reformation.[8] In itself, that begs some questions. What does that mean? Can the canonization of this group of holy people elucidate some aspect of that movement, or at least how the Catholic Church understood itself? In short what does sanctity reveal about Catholicism in the age of reformations, after Trent?

There has already been enormous interest in these five saints, especially the Jesuit saints. So far, much of the scholarship on this canonization event has emphasized the political process of saint-making; that is, the ways in which various entities, institutions, and monarchies supported the canonizations of particular candidates.[9] Some scholars have suggested that each of these saints represents a certain aspect of

5 This process began in large part thanks to the work of Eamon Duffy, who examined the vibrancy of religion in late medieval England, see E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

6 P. Burke, "How to be a Counter-Reformation Saint," in *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 48.

7 Indeed, this was the first time five people were canonized together in one ceremony, see F. La Barga, "1622 o la canonización Católica," *Anuario de historia de la Iglesia* 29 (2020): 74.

8 See La Barga, "la canonización Católica."

9 C. Copeland, "Sanctity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* ed. Alexandra Bamji et al. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 233; Simon Ditchfield, "'Coping with the *Beati Moderni:*' Canonization Procedure in the Aftermath of the Council of Trent," in *Ite Inflammate Omnia: Selected Historical Papers from conferences held at Loyola and Rome in 2006*, ed. Thomas McCoog (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 2010), 413–440.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564

the Catholic Reformation whereby Isidore signifies the role of lay people; Ignatius, the new orders; Francis, the missionaries, Teresa of Avila; the reform of the ancient orders; and, Neri, the reformation of Rome, the very heart of the Catholic Church.[10] But there remains a notable absence from this group. It does not contain a significant or important theologian of the era. Albeit, this was not rare in canonizations from the period. If one were to consider other notable canonizations of the seventeenth century, such as that of Carlo Borromeo, the pattern of eschewing theologians becomes even more evident. To be sure, theological controversy was an important feature of the Catholic Reformation and shaped many of the contemporary political and military events. Theological controversy was not significant for salvation alone, but also for the affairs of the world. Suffice it to say that heterodoxy was important, and so much so that people gave their lives as martyrs for the cause.[11] It is perhaps for that reason that scholars have carefully parsed the thought of the major figures of the reformation. At the same time, the Catholic Reformation, especially after Trent, was not exclusively about theological disputations with Protestants. In fact, we must note that by the seventeenth century Catholics were debating as much amongst themselves as they were with other faith traditions.[12]

Furthermore, the fact remains that few if any of the men and women canonized in the decades following the Council of Trent were theologians. What is more, Ignatius, Teresa, and Philip were even interrogated by the Spanish and Roman Inquisitions or at least censured in part for their lack of theological training. Indeed, the most notable theologian of the Catholic Reformation, Robert Bellarmine, who personally promoted the causes of at least three of the saints canonized in 1622, Ignatius, Francis, and Philip, was canonized, but only in 1930.[13] But even Bellarmine seemed to hold his own theological works in relatively low esteem. When he was reflecting on his own life in his *Autobiography* and his other works, he highlighted

10 La Barga, "la canonización Católica," 119. La Barga discusses other possible representations, and geographic and symbolic meanings, see La Barga, "la canonización Católica," 109–120.

11 See B.S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

12 The Jesuits were often either the victims or perpetrators of these internecine theological squabbles. Largely these were based on issues in moral theology and debates over the role of free will and grace in salvation. On the origins of Jesuit moral probabilism, see R. A. Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits: The Influence of the Liberal Arts on the Adoption of Moral Probabilism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008).

13 Bellarmine had hoped for a triple canonization of Carlo Borromeo, Ignatius, and Philip, see La Barga, "la canonización Católica," 120. Furthermore, he ultimately collaborated with Federico Borromeo, Cesare Baronio, and Antonio Gallonio to promote Neri, see R.S. Noyes, *Peter Paul Rubens and the Counter-Reformation Crisis of the Beati Moderni*, Sanctity in Global Perspective (New York: Routledge, 2018), 11.

© 2023 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525573563 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647573564