

Michela Catto / Eleonora Rai (eds.)

From Europe to Overseas

Saints, Martyrs, Heroes, Models and Soft Power
in an Early Modern Global Perspective



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in an Early Modern Global Perspective

VANDENHOECK & RUPRECHT

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Michela Catto, Eleonora Rai

From Europe to Overseas

Saints, Martyrs, Heroes, Models and Soft Power in an Early Modern Global perspective

New France, 1649, the French missionary Paul Ragueneau commented on the death of his companions Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lallemand:

They found there a spectacle of horror, – the remains of cruelty itself; or rather the relics of the love of God, which alone triumphs in the death of Martyrs. I would gladly call them, if I were allowed, by that glorious name, not only because voluntarily, for the love of God and for the salvation of their neighbor, they exposed themselves to death, and to a cruel death, if ever there was one in the world, – for they could easily and without sin have put their lives in safety, if they had not be filled with love for God rather than themselves. But much rather would I thus call them, because, in addition to the charitable dispositions which they have manifested on their side, hatred for the faith and contempt for the name of God have been among the most powerful incentives which have influenced the mind of the Barbarians to practice upon them as many cruelties as ever the rage of tyrants obliged the Martyrs to endure, who, at the climax of their tortures, have triumphed over both life and death.

These are words that outline many of the themes discussed by the essays collected here. The Jesuits who died after terrible tortures, whom Ragueneau writes about, could be called saints by virtue of their dying and as heroes since they could have survived if they only had done something but they did not. They could be called saints but Ragueneau does not and only suggests it because the proclamation of sainthood is up to Rome according to a protracted procedure.

So how and by what is a saint defined? In this book, at least some of the meanings and functions that can be assigned to these extraordinary figures have been explored, and the saint (in its broadest sense) has been investigated as a hero, a martyr, a model of behavior to emulate, and finally as a means and tool of soft power used by the Catholic Church.

The saint/martyr pair needs no explanation: being a victim of hatred and dying for one's faith are characteristics of many of the saints honored even today, and without a doubt, martyrial death is the oldest among the models proposed by the Church of Rome. But the saints are in some way heroes who replace the classical models of heroism with the Christian paradigm, through a process of Christianisation of

classical culture, philosophy and law that has spanned the centuries of Christian history, up to the modern age. While in Greco-Roman culture, boldness, courage and genius were required for a man to be considered a hero, in the modern Catholic conception the theological and cardinal virtues, exercised on a heroic level, have taken over to gradually become the characteristics required to identify saints.

Hence the idea of also using the word hero – alongside that of martyr – to indicate the strength of these charismatic figures who may never reach an exalted sanctity but who, supported or not by the Church of Rome, succeeded in asserting themselves. And when the reference behavioural models overlapped, they did so in other cultures that had nothing in common – often, the missionaries said, not even the idea of the afterlife – with Christianity. Otherness became a place where to export holiness and produce saints, sometimes for local use, sometimes to be given in devotion to the universality of Catholics.

A saint, like a hero, practices his virtues on a heroic level: the former for the Church and the latter for society. The difference had already been deeply pondered by, for example, Niccolò Machiavelli in his *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (1513–1519) contrasting the pagan and Christian models. We also find it in Lambertini-Benedict XIV's elaboration (1734–1738) and enlargements (1743) of *De servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione* to give holiness a greater scientific and Christian connotation, to adapt it to the times, and to protect it from the unbelief of the Age of Enlightenment. The antagonism between pagan and Christian virtues, between specula and examples of life independent of religion and those of Christian hagiography, gained even more weight in contact with other cultures in which exceptional and heroic figures, respected and venerated, did not even share an ancient Greek or Roman cultural substratum. Perhaps the most striking example is that of the holy and revered teacher Confucius, a model of life for the Chinese state and its people.

Those holymen's hagiographies or biographies, as well as their processes of successful or attempted canonisation, become a vantage point for observing the vast and complex historical reality of successful behavioural models and the changes induced by the encounter with other cultures. A behavioural model born in Christian and Catholic Europe, rooted in the link between text and celebration during liturgical practice, was exported to other cultures and subject to transformations and changes, preferences granted by the faithful or resistance in the same way it happened Europe between country and city.

As Pillars of the Catholic devotional landscape, saints are key players in the millennial history of the Christian-Catholic world, from Europe to overseas. Rejected by the Protestants, in a theological-liturgical attempt to bring order to potentially superstitious cults that could alienate believers from God, saints remain today one of the most visible signs of the link between Earth and Heaven through the mediation of the Catholic Church, the only institution that can legally and universally

proclaim the sanctity of those who die in the odour of sanctity, according to a set of rules established by canon law. That is, the Church defines which models of holiness are to be followed by the faithful – although saints do not exist without a strong devotional movement and postulation support. Faith in future saints, understood as chosen and heroic souls able to intercede with God to satisfy human prayers (miraculous healings, above all) is the key to a successful canonisation cause.

When missionaries arrived in Asia and America, Catholic holiness was emphasised by the holiness of others, men or women who were already venerated for their deeds and virtues or their healing powers. From a theological point of view and beyond, missionaries faced the question of how to translate the word saint or martyr. Translating means and requires a precise knowledge of the existence of indigenous holiness or similar concepts. The saint/hero/exceptional person is not just a distinguished man or a role model. The concept includes in itself – to name but a few structural elements – the presence of a miracle, martyrdom, the possession of virtues to a heroic degree. Not all these characteristics were present in the holiness of other regions or cultures. Did the word holy also appear in indigenous languages? What did it mean? What are virtues for an Indian or a Chinese and when are they exceptionally or, according to Catholic terminology, heroically expressed? If the word “saint” exists in other languages and outside of a Christian context, can it be somehow overlaid on or translate into the local language? In the Chinese case, where terminologies and types of religious people are extremely rich, we find the word saint useful, from a macro perspective, to use an open ethical category. From this perspective, we define as a saint anyone, living or deceased, who is considered a saint by virtue of his or her gifts and culture.

A practical example related to China may be illustrative. In the large collection of notes that the Chinese Li Jiubiao and other literati converts recorded of their conversations in Fujian with the Jesuits, and in particular with Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), explanations of the scientific and rational causes of nature abound, without openly opposing Chinese culture. The *Konduo richao* or *Diary of Oral Admonitions* is an outstanding example of *accommodatio*: a kind of catalogue of the questions asked by the Chinese and the answers of the missionaries who act at the same time as preachers, moral guides and scientists. Collected in chronological order in a single text, hundreds of short conversations in dialogue form (496 from March 12th 1630 to July 4th 1640) show a mosaic of Chinese curiosity on many topics and Jesuit techniques. These notes record how Giulio Aleni felt the need to highlight the special character of the Christian concept of holiness. Christian identity was expressed in China with the use of Western-style nomenclature, since in most Christian texts the name of the saint is preceded by *sheng*, in accordance with Western usage. However, the term *sheng*, as used in China, had a wide scope, ranging from the holy monarchs of antiquity and later great sages, such as Confucius and Mencius, to the rulers of the current dynasty. All the qualities of holiness are represented

in the *Diary*: self-mortification and extreme abstinence, devotion, patience and endurance, martyrdom, compassion, abandonment of the world and miraculous work. But the missionary had emphasised the very exclusive status of Christian saints, explaining how in the West canonisation had to be preceded by an official ecclesiastical investigation and the final decision was made by the pope himself. In Aleni's explanations, the Christian saint was an exceptional person, as rare as the phoenix among birds. Saints surround the throne of God in heaven, like dignitaries of various ranks in an earthly court. On the other hand, Aleni explained, saints are not saviours; during their lives they acquired great merits that earned them the glory of holiness, but they cannot forgive sins; we can only ask them to plead for us before the throne of God. He added:

As regards his ears and eyes, his hands and feet, his speech and movement, his pacing and running a saint is just like other people, but he differs widely from others by his determination and by his feats of self-cultivation. The Lord of Heaven has favored us by his birth and the saint sets an example for posterity. How would we be incapable of knowing whom to imitate? (VIII.12).

An open question is whether saints are a product of their time or rather of the historical moment when they are canonized. In the Early Modern Age, after a complex reorganization of canonization, considered as both a legal and religious-devotional process, saints seem to reflect the dynamics at the time of the cause for canonization is fulfilled. We can certainly state that the reasons of the success of the cause greatly depend on the interest about specific models of sanctity arising in the course of the cause itself – for decades and even centuries – as well as the attention that such models and personas spurred in the communities where the cause is launched. The question is therefore why candidates to sainthood attract the believers, namely why their ways of life, their example, their actions talk to the local or even global Catholic community; and which strategies the Church – religious orders, diocesan authorities, confraternities – adopt in order to make such models successful. It is worth notice, furthermore, that the attention reserved to candidates to sainthood may even change over time, according to strategies directed precisely at fulfilling their canonization. It happens mainly with early modern causes, which end successfully after centuries and several ups and downs (the cause of canonisation of Robert Bellarmine, which was only concluded in 1930 is an example).

The scenario in which to read the essays collected here is also that of progressive regulation, the one that will culminate with Lambertini's work of control, anticipated, however, by many other interventions: from Urban VIII's reforms - and particularly the restrictive rules imposed on the drafting of hagiographies and the narration of wondrous events, such as inexplicable healings, that filled the lives

of candidates for sanctity and that were not to be presented as miracles. On the subject of holiness, the Church's time had indeed come: prohibitions, centralisation aimed at definitively eroding local autonomy and free popular veneration.

The legal reforms mentioned too quickly here were not only attempts to separate licit from illicit cults, they must also be observed from other angles. First of all, the strong process of centralisation favoured the Church of Rome, which positioned itself as a centralising and controlling institution that decides, directs, corrects and punishes, involved the most diverse competences and scenarios. To give a few examples, in 1542 the Roman Inquisition was created to combat Protestants in Italy (later becoming the highest authority on both doctrine and discipline), superseding the medieval Inquisition and its local dimension; in 1559, with the Index of Forbidden Books it took control of book censorship; in 1622, Propaganda Fide was created to take control of the missions and missionaries overseas, greatly reducing the role of States. At the same time, the control of sanctity and saints became a key ground for local and central religious powers to demonstrate their authority. In modern times holiness is first and foremost a legal matter, but only the pope assumed the authority to proclaim saints. At stake was the power to establish hagiographic models and with them the behavioural models to be followed. It is necessary, therefore, to go beyond the purely religious context to enter into areas of social and cultural - even sociological - investigation when we think of saints as role models who get different attention depending on the historical contexts, that is, the time and place in which the cause of canonisation is opened and developed. Think of the revolution brought about by the discovery of the new world: the great debate and the real problems to be solved brought about by geographical exploration and conquest also involved the concept of sanctity and the control mechanisms set up by Rome.

The process of global evangelisation offered fertile ground for the growth of new models of holiness: missionaries engaged in the Christianisation of exotic lands, but also in assisting indigenous peoples and slaves (e. g. Pedro Claver among African slaves in America), became a new type of hero of modern Christianity. And, we cannot help but notice, that most of those who went on mission in the modern age and were subsequently canonised - especially in the 19th and 20th centuries - were so by virtue of their martyrdom, their violent death in odium fidei. From China to Japan, from India to Anglican England to the American martyrs, missionaries were crucified, beheaded, skinned and atrociously tortured on the strength of their firmness in Christ.

If we think of saints as models of behaviour, then it becomes clear that they can be viewed through a different lens, namely as means of soft power, capable of creating cultural hegemony or, at least, influencing the behaviour of those to whom their model is proposed. Let us take the case of the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus is one of the most ingenious and resourceful early modern religious orders in terms of canonisation, including the promotion of candidates to sainthood. In

the modern era, the Society of Jesus has mastered the art of employing and even creating traditional or entirely new models of holiness and canonisation strategies, including gaining theological legitimacy, maintaining hegemony over specific areas or social classes, including aristocracies, and even defining the simple cursus within the Society of Jesus as a means to achieve holiness, if followed perfectly (as Stanislo Kostka or John Berchmans did).

The expansion of Catholicism gave rise to a series of patron saints associated with the newly evangelised territories, especially in modern Mexico and South America. The formation of cults associated with these new saints was deeply linked to the devotion of the local society and the enthusiasm of the laity who once shared the life of these particular saints. And these saints were sometimes never officially beatified. They only attracted people's devotion because their lives reflected those of a typical subaltern life in that society at that time. They become saints because their cult was linked to the formation of local identity and the dignity of their particular Christian faith, and it is a recognition of the natives' ability to achieve certain goals of spiritual perfection as well as a promotion of the growth of local Christianity. The fact that the heroic model is then spread throughout Europe is a sign of European propaganda in favour of the mission, a testimony to the success achieved and the possibility of turning pagans, gentiles and barbarians into saints. A saint born elsewhere but also destined for a European life. Holiness goes from Europe to the world and sometimes from the world comes to Europe.

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Timothy J. Johnson

Eros, Ministry, and Motherhood

The Gendered Landscape of Franciscan Evangelization

Introduction

In the beginning, the divine grounded gendered relations in ecstasy according to Francisco Pareja and his Timucua co-authors in the 1627 *Catecismo en lengua timuquana, y castellana*. Following Saint Augustine's reading of Genesis 2:21, they speak of the divinely induced slumber of Adam before the mysterious revelation of Eve as ecstatic (Pareja: 1627a, 39v).¹ The Bishop of Hippo argued Adam was caught up to the heavenly court of angels to fathom the magnitude of Eve's impending creation. His exclamation upon awakening, "This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh", was not a biblical-anatomical statement, but a prophetic revelation of the gendered mystery of our scriptural primogenitors (St Augustine: 1982, 95).

The profound and ecstatic sleep of Adam – Eve's voice in the initial encounter with Adam is mute in Genesis – cannot be separated from Pareja's theological understanding of God as erotic. Educated within the Eastern and Western medieval tradition,² Franciscans and other missionaries like Pareja embarking for the Americas faced challenges that demanded unprecedented efforts to reimagine their pastoral practices without readily prepared theological guidelines or doctrines. In the prologue of 1627 *Secunda parte del Catecismo*, Pareja fleshes out a creative response to this new ministerial reality by appealing to Pseudo-Dionysius (Pareja: 1627b, 1r–3v), the enigmatic Christian writer from the late fifth to the early sixth century and favorite among Franciscans in the Golden Age of Spanish Mysticism (Leclercq: 1987, 30).

Laboring within the matrilineal framework of Timucua culture, Pareja recasts pastoral ministry as a decidedly feminine-maternal dynamic driven by the ecstatic eros of God. This essay follows the trajectory of this claim by exploring the Franciscan option for a maternal hierarchy of service, gender construction, and erotic ministerial performance.

1 The author and the Academy of American Franciscan History grants permission for the publication of this essay.

2 On this tradition, see Turner: 1995.

Francis of Assisi and Maternal Ministry

The noted Franciscan scholar, Jacques Dalarun reminds us that when Francis of Assisi wrote to his close companion Brother Leo “Sicut mater” that is, “As mother” he was not simply expressing an appealing sense of maternal tenderness but revealing an institutional metaphor of governance (Dalarun: 2023, 181). This brief letter of goat parchment, which is now preserved as a relic in the Cathedral of Spoleto, reads:

To Brother Leo your brother Francis, greetings and peace. Thus I say to you, my son, as mother, that all the words which we said on the road, briefly, in this word, I dispose them; and I counsel – and you must not come to me to take counsel, since I counsel you thus – : in whatever manner seems to you best to please the Lord God and to follow his footsteps and poverty, do this, with the blessings of the Lord God and my obedience! And if it is necessary to you that your soul return to me for another consultation of yours, and if you wish, come! (Dalarun: 2023, 184).

Despite Francis’s reference to himself “as mother”, there should be no illusions that governing and exercising power in the thirteenth-century church of Francis of Assisi was not a male prerogative. The saint himself unabashedly strove to secure the future of his burgeoning movement within the parameters of ecclesial power and the kingdom of God, the Father almighty. This reality is foreshadowed when he renounced his paternal father in favor of his eternal father before the bishop of Assisi (see Bartoli: 2020). Yet, the medieval understanding of pastoral responsibility necessitated some degree of gender reversal lest the divine mandate of care remain unfulfilled by the shepherd. Those in positions of ecclesial authority frequently evoke counterintuitive gender imagery to underscore a wholistic pastoral approach for the sake of encountering the gendered other; thus, the abbess becomes a father, the abbot a mother, and most strikingly, Jesus a mother to all (Dalarun: 2023, 197). As the French philosopher, Michel Foucault argued, the failure of the shepherd to guide the flock along the path of salvation risked the eternal loss of both the sheep and the shepherd.³

As Jacques Dalarun points out, for Francis of Assisi, the focus of gender reversal is first of all, institutional. Once “Sicut mater” is translated “as mother” instead of “as a mother” this is clear. The phrase does not denote a comparison, but Francis is Leo’s mother because that term encompasses the saint’s understanding of the service of those referred to as ministers and servants. Furthermore, he never uses the term “father” to designate himself or his brothers (Asseldonk: 1983). Instead of

3 On Foucault and the question of pastoral practice and Franciscans in the mid-1260s, see Johnson: 2005; Johnson: 2006.

seeking the title of abbot or superior as found in monastic communities, Francis rejected the implication of dominance suggested by these titles and grounded his position of governance in the ground, that is to say, mother earth (Dalarun: 2023, 167–168). Within the gendered cosmos of the *Canticle of Creatures*, the Assisian's Umbrian poem, Sun, Wind, and Fire are brothers, and the Moon, Stars, and Water are sisters, with the Earth both sister and mother. Mother Earth models ministerial service, for she both sustains and governs: "Praised be to You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and produces diverse fruits with colored flowers and herbs." (Francesco d'Assisi: 2009, 122).⁴

With the earth as mother, all creatures are subjects, not objects, and form a wide-ranging community marked by relationships of gendered equality with a shared source of life-giving vitality. The creation of this novel sibling structure elicits praise offered to the Lord, not in the guise of a distant *pater familias*, but the all-powerful, gracious God of Genesis who delights in creatures, at once useful, desirable, beautiful, and strong (Johnson: 2012, 145–146). Among the brotherhood or fraternity of Francis's followers, the image of God as a father is evoked in line with the common hierarchy of power within the medieval family, but there is no doubt that the privileged relationship is between mother and sons (Dalarun: 2006, 55).

Francis urges his brothers to learn embodied service from Mother Earth in the *Salute of the Virtues*. He exhorts them, with mortified bodies in obedience to the spirit and their brothers, to place themselves as, "... subject and submissive to everyone in the world, and not only to people but even to all beasts and wild animals ..." (Francesco d'Assisi: 2009, 50).

The initial locus of this service, in imitation of Mother Earth, is the local fraternity of "fratres minores" or "lesser brothers" where the brothers relinquish any claim to the power and prestige associated with the "maiores" of the world who rule by domination. Among them, there was to be no "superior" but only ministers marked by humble maternal service.

A normative document that captures the fluidity of maternal ministry and gender is the *Rule for Hermitages* (1217–1221). These out-of-the-way dwellings with a handful of friars were reserved for contemplation. Two served as "mothers" who cared for one or two "sons" with alms and safeguarded their solitude. This relationship was fluid since "the sons may assume the office of the mothers as it appears to them to alternately arrange for a time..." (Francesco d'Assisi: 2009, 344). This reversal of hierarchical governance underscored a new paradigm of fraternal relationships evinced in other normative documents such as the *Earlier Rule* (1209/10–1221) and the *Later Rule* (1223). When treating the question of begging for

4 All translations are by the author unless noted otherwise.

alms in the Earlier Rule, a salient aspect of early Franciscan life suggesting weakness and vulnerability, the intimate image of sustaining mother is proposed, “Let each one fearlessly make know his need to another that the other might discover what is needed and minister to him. Let each one love and nurture his brother as a mother love and nurtures her son...” (Francesco d’Assisi: 2009, 258). The Later Rule (1223), approved by Pope Honorius III, extends the circle of those in need beyond the hungry to all those in need, especially the sick brothers “...For if a mother nurtures and loves her carnal son, how much more diligently should one love and nurture his spiritual brother?” (Francesco d’Assisi: 2009, 330).

Francisco Pareja and Gender Construction

Friar Francisco Pareja knew the Later Rule backward and forwards, inside and out – in Latin and Spanish. While the date of birth is uncertain, we do know that he was born in Auñón, Spain, and entered the Castilian Province of Franciscans. Before he died in 1628 in Mexico, he served as a pastor, custos, and later as the first provincial of the Province of Saint Helen (Florida-Cuba).⁵ From the time of his novitiate, the Later Rule would have been studied, read aloud in chapter meetings, and cited in sermons. A normative text from this period, the Book of the Rule and Constitutions of the Order of Our Father Saint Francis of the Observance, includes Chapter Six of the Later Rule in Latin and Spanish:

Latin – English	Spanish – English
Quia si mater nutrit et diligit filium suum carnalem, quanto diligentius debet quis filigree et nutrire fratrem suum spiritualem? (Rebolledo: 1607, 3r)	Porque si la madre ama y cria su hijo carnal, quanto con mayor diligencia debe qualquiera amar and criar a su hermano espiritual. (Rebolledo: 1607, 6v)
For if a mother nurtures and loves her carnal son, how much more diligently should one love and nurture his spiritual brother?	For if a mother loves and raises her carnal son, with how much more diligence should anyone love and raise his spiritual brother.

The nurturing imagery found in the Later Rule alludes to the Apostle Paul’s description of his ministry among the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:7): “...while in your midst we were as children: as if a nurse were cherishing her own children...” (1 Thess. 2:7).⁶ The Later Rule explicitly uses the term “mother” and Pareja combines the two texts in the 1627 *Secunda parte del Cathecismo* prologue when describing the love ministers should display with those who are the subjects of their pastoral care,

5 On Francisco Pareja’s life and work, see Johnson: 2021, esp. 584–589.

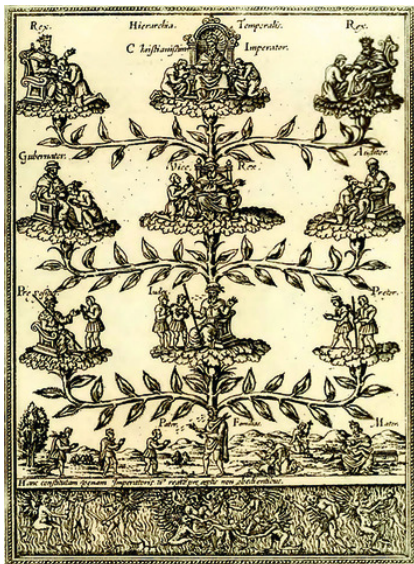
6 *The Holy Bible*: 1950, 267.

However, as they are servants of love they have to be together mothers and mistresses of their subjects by treating them like sons and caring for them as children, and providing them with the care that the mother has of the creature at her breasts in the manner the same Apostle says in 1 Thess. 2:7: 'But we were gentle among you, like a mistress taking care of her children...' (Pareja: 1627b, 1v).

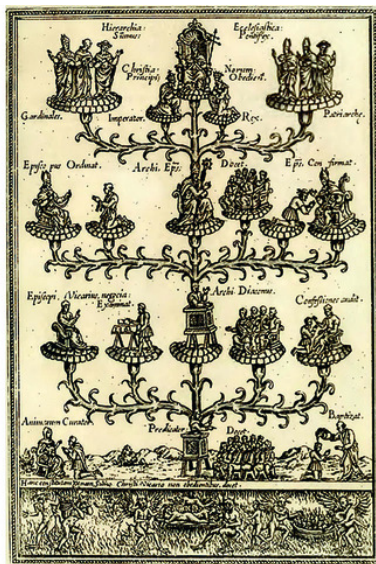
To perform as a woman, that is, like a mother with a child does not track the dominant gendered image of masculinity among the friars cultivated by Franciscan writers of Francisco Pareja's era. In her study on the construction of gender roles in early modern Mexico, Asunción Lavrin understands masculinity and femininity as models of social behavior accompanied by psychological and moral qualities deemed appropriate for each biological sex. Furthermore, gender construction entails the intellectual-pedagogical process of creating forms of behavior that distinguish men and women in theory and practice embedded in malleable social and historical realities (Lavrin: 2008, 4). How this process played out among male religious such as friars comes into view presupposes an educational system that eliminates sexual virility as a model given the requisite vow of celibacy. Once in the Americas, however, the concept of conquest – be it martial or spiritual – emerged and called for qualities typically applied most frequently to men of the period. On the spiritual level, the friars were thus locked in a battle with the demonic that demanded strength, courage, the willingness to suffer any number of indignities and physical hardships, and even die as a martyr. Like other conquistadors, they were willing to offer their lives for the cause, but unlike their martial counterparts, the friars were to eschew aggressive behavior and humbly submit to their fate – a decidedly feminine characteristic according to the prevailing Iberian culture of "New Spain." (Lavrin: 2008, 7–9).

Given the significance of humility for Franciscans, it is hardly surprising that the social-historical context for gender construction for Franciscan Pareja and his confreres was markedly hierarchical. This is visible in the images found of temporal and ecclesial hierarchies in *The Rhetorica Christiana* of Fray Diego Valadés, the first book published in Europe by an author from the Americas.⁷ A close examination of the tree of temporal hierarchy places the pater familias at the base of the trunk with the nursing mater to the right with the children at the left (Valadés: 1579, 164b). She is the only female appearing in this depiction and no females are readily identifiable in the tree of ecclesial hierarchy (Valadés: 1579, 164b). Except for the mother, women are invisible in this vertical world and the underworld where the disobedient are punished.

7 On the use of rhetoric and imagery in the *Rhetorica christiana*, see Carrasco: 2000.



Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana*, Perugia, 1579, 164b.

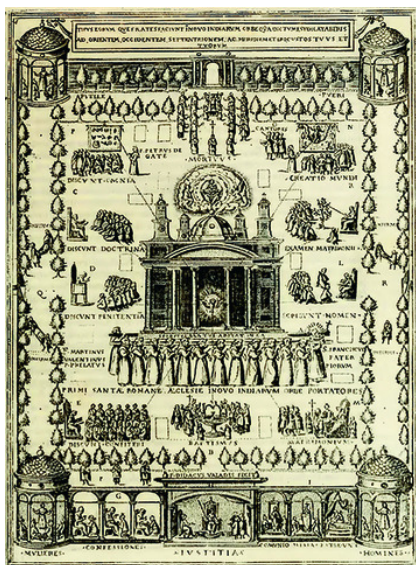


Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana*, Perugia 1579, 164d.

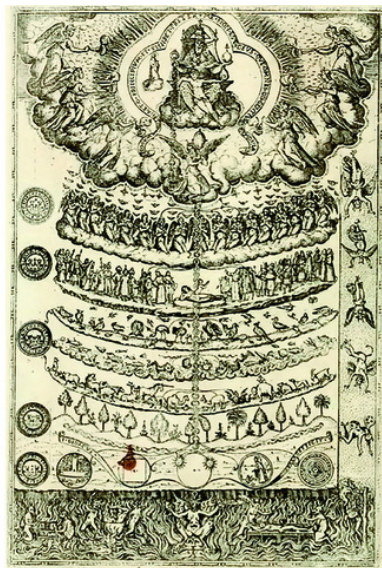
Women, designated as *puelle* (girls) and *mulieres* (women), do emerge on the left edge of the image in the depiction of an idealized concept of ecclesial place with their male counterparts of *pueri* (boys) and *homines* (men) on the right edge of the image. Together they anchor the four corners of the conventual atrium of evangelization (Valadés: 1579, 106b). In what has been named the image of creation or the great chain of being, the ecstasy-driven emergence of Eve from Adam is represented in the center of the order of creation by Valadés with representatives of humanity stretching out to her left and right. The virgin Mary appears as well, notably on her knees in prayer like Eve, in the upper left-hand corner facing the Mercy Seat of the Trinity (Valadés: 1579, 220c).

The Rhetorica Christiana situates the girls and boys in separate rooms at the entrance into the cloister area where the initiation into Christianity begins by developing catechetical literacy and learning about the creation of the world. These children continue to undergo gendered instruction as adults, where they are introduced to the sacraments such as matrimony, which is preceded by an examination (Valadés: 1579, 106b).

An analysis of the relationship between those men and women who are married and become fathers and mothers is found in Francisco Pareja's reflections on creation in the *Catecismo en lengua timuquana, y castellana* (Pareja: 1627a, 39rv–56r). His



Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana*, Perugia, 1579, 106b.



Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana*, Perugia, 1579, 220c.

views evince a long-standing medieval philosophical-theological perspective that encompasses those in sacramental marriages blessed by a priest as well as those in unions based on mutual consent alone.⁸ Taking a cue from Thomas Aquinas, Pareja claims that children should love their fathers more than their mothers. This reason revolves around the theological claim that a child is an *imago Dei*, and an

8 In the *Confessionario en lengua castellana, y timuquana con algunos consejos para animar al penitente* (Mexico: Diego Lopez Danalos, 1613, 184r) the question arises in the Spanish version regarding casiques who approved marriages according to Timucua customs without informing the local parish priest. The Timucua version asks if both parties have voluntarily given their consent, beginning with the women, to the marriage but makes no mention of the priest. For a translation of the Timucua, see George Aaron Broadwell, *Fieldworks Language Explorer, Texts, Conf.* ff. 184r–184r (5). For friars such as Francisco Pareja, the possibility of offering the sacrament of marriage, or a blessing for those not married according to the Roman Catholic rite, is predicated on knowing if a pre-existing Timucua union was based on consent. For those seeking baptism, it was clear they had not been married by a priest due to the sequence of sacramental marriage, but it was essential to know if they had consented to marriage with their partner. For this reason, there is a divergence in the Spanish-Timucua questions. Regarding consent, see Reynolds: 2016. For a different take on this question, see <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/with-their-powers-combined-two-scholars-may-have-deciphered-a-long-lost-native-language-180982118/>. The focus on the voluntary consent of the two individuals – even if made in secret – mirrors the Roman Catholic teaching regarding the nature of sacramental marriage. The majority view of Franciscan theologians was that indigenous marriages were valid, see Aznar Gil: 1986, 793–795.

image of God, and the process governing the creation of a wooden image mirrors what happens in the conception of a child (Pareja: 1627a, 43r–44r). The mother is the laborer who brings the “wood” to the father, who like an artisan, crafts the material per an image he holds in his mind. To whom is the image, in this case, the child, most obliged? Although Pareja acknowledges the strenuous work of the woman who offers the unformed material and at birth pulls the infant into the world; however, it is the man who forms, organizes, and arranges the material, resulting in the perfection of the image through the reception of the soul. In short, while the mother offers the “material”, the father assures the “substance” of the child. Due to this debt that children owe to their fathers, they are obliged to love them more despite the great sufferings of their mothers. Furthermore, while fathers must provide the necessities of life for their children, they are even obligated to take care of their fathers before their children in times of grave necessity as both Scripture and Aristotle in *The Ethics* demonstrate.

When considering the order of charity within the family, Pareja asserts that in situations of extreme necessity fathers, and then children should be loved before mothers. (Pareja: 1627a, 44r–45r). The reason is twofold: first, children are indebted to their fathers for their substance or being, and second, the union between fathers and children is based on their shared substance while the union between fathers and mothers is united by the principle of generation when they become one flesh according to Genesis 2:24. Despite the hierarchization of love in favor of the spirit over the flesh, the *Catecismo en lengua timuquana, y castellana* recognizes the beauty of marital love reflected in the bridal veil, the exchange of coins, and the wedding rings, which are fashioned from gold, the most precious of materials. Pareja confirms this reciprocal love exceeds all other loves on the human level of the flesh and the symbols are meant to convey this reality to Spanish and Timucua Christians alike. He also implies that in the quotidian, husbands often love their spouses more than their fathers and children by stating that these actions are by no means to be considered mortal sins. Notably, the *Confessionario en lengua castellana, y timuquana* never raises the question about the hierarchical obligations of love within the family, thus suggesting that while the issue was of theological import, it held little or no significance for him on the level of pastoral ministry (Pareja: 1613).

Eros and Ministerial Gender Performance

Francisco Pareja’s hierarchical focus on fathers does emerge in the *Confessionario en lengua castellana, y timuquana* and elsewhere when he comments on the Fourth Commandment, “Honor your father and mother” found in Exodus 20:12. As early as 1612, the commentary on this text in the *Catechismo y breve exposicion de la*

doctrina christiana (Pareja: 1612, 68r) is accompanied by an image identifying a Franciscan friar as a father together with another image of a father and mother:



Catechismo y breve exposicion de la doctrina christiana, Mexico, 68r.



Catechismo y breve exposicion de la doctrina christiana, Mexico, 68r.

Pareja's patriarchal stance in the case of ministerial governance is on display not only in image but also in writing. The Spanish text references the natural father although the mother is pictured along with the father (Pareja: 1612, 68r). He is expected to sustain, teach, and discipline his offspring. The spiritual father is also marked out for reverence (Pareja: 1612, 68r–70r; Pareja: 1613, 137r–139r). Children are expected to honor and reverence both fathers, who generated life within them, be it naturally through marital relations or spiritually through the sacraments, beginning with baptism. The depth and breadth of the commandment are evident when Pareja reminds the readers that the godparents, teachers, and older members of the community are all worthy of honor and reverence.

Ministers, for their part, are to assume the role of fathers who govern and serve out love for those entrusted to their care according to the prologue of the 1627 *Secunda parte del Catechismo* (Pareja: 1627a, 1v). The pastoral paradigm is Jesus whose love was ecstatic, even erotic according to Pareja who anchors his argument in the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius, sometimes known as the Areopagite or simply Dionysius. This author, whose name and exact historical context remain an enigma, proposed a unique combination of Athenian Neo-Platonism and Syrian Christianity in a series of texts dating to the late fifth century (Roerem: 1986, 132–133). Despite the obscurity surrounding the author, the influence of his major works, the *Divine Names*, *Mystical Theology*, *Celestial Hierarchy*, and *Ecclesial Hierarchy*, is evident in

numerous authors in Western Christianity in subsequent centuries (Rorem: 1986, 144–149). Franciscan authors of sixteenth-century Spain displayed a predilection for the Areopagite's theological reflections they encountered in his collected works⁹ and the writings of confreres like Bonaventure of Bagnoregio.¹⁰

The Pseudo-Dionysian corpus attracted friars due to an emphasis on what Paul Rorem terms “the uplifting spirituality” of the elusive writer from the fifth century. Affective contemplation was a central motif of those like Francisco Pareja who were members of the Observant or Reformed branch of the Franciscan Order. Dionysius proposed an ascent or “uplifting” of Christians from catechumens to clerics into divine darkness beyond words and thoughts through the interpretation of scriptural-liturgical symbolism at the perceptual-conceptual levels (Rorem: 1986, 133–143). To affirm that God is “good” is proper yet there is a dissimilarity between what is understood as “good” by men and women and “good” as a divine attribute; thus, sensual perceptions of goodness in the world must be abandoned so that the interpreter can ascend to the conceptual idea. Since the divine is beyond all cognitive powers, even concepts of the “good” must be forsaken, so intellectual efforts proper to contemplation and the acquisition of biblical and liturgical insights may yield to the silent darkness of affective ecstasy. This ultimate encounter with the divine was marked by compassion and affections similar to those shared between mothers and sons, spouses, and enduring friends (Andres: 1977, 11).

As appealing as this experience is for those who seek the divine, the *Secunda parte del Cathecismo* includes a warning to those who delight in contemplation but neglect to care for their neighbors. Turning to the twelfth-century Parisian theologian, Richard of St. Victor, he cautions: “There are many poor in spirit, joyful in hope, fervent in charity, advanced in other effects of love and sanctity, however quite lukewarm in zeal for souls, with each one claiming their excuses even though they are rich enough to help those nearby...” (Pareja: 1627a, 3v). Pareja finds a goad to action in his interpretation of God's ecstatic love revealed in the incarnation of Jesus. Some scholars have faulted the Areopagite's weak treatment of this central tenet of Christianity (Rorem: 1986, 144),¹¹ yet it foregrounds Pareja's hermeneutic of gendered ministry.¹²

The incarnation is a revelation of eros, in which God's ecstatic love for creation culminates in Christ's desire to come out of himself, to exceed himself, to go beyond

9 For example, *D. Dionysii Areopagitae Scripta*: 1541.

10 On Bonaventure and Pseudo-Dionysius, see Tongi: 2019.

11 On eros and incarnation in Pseudo-Dionysius, see Rist: 1999.

12 The cosmic coming forth and return of divine eros in the incarnation is best described by the Dionysian term, “philanthropia.” See Rist: 1999, 379.

himself to become a lowly servant in the flesh for the good of others (Pareja: 1627a, 1r–v). Such love is both the impetus and model for the minister,

And so that this teaching [to that one whom is shown is well founded in Charity] God Our Lord teaches him [minister/prelate] the Spirit of the perfect prelate and minister, similar to his own that he holds the same love, according to what Saint Dionysius says in *On hierarchy*, 42. n. 41, which in a certain way draws forth from itself to do good to his creatures. By ruling them in delight and giving himself away in loving them and looking out for them, this love made him come out of himself to take the form of a servant to do good for his servants.

Pareja notes the minister's service is initially understood as patriarchal, thus reinforcing the prevailing model found in his commentary on the Fourth Commandment, illustrated in *The Rhetorica Christiana* of Diego Valadés, and the conquistador model proposed by Asunción Lavrin. But there is more. This excessive love, which flows from the depths of divine eros, also draws the minister beyond the customary role of the father into the realm of gender performance and reversal,

...for as the mistress raises her children, natural love draws out from her the mother who raises her son to take care of him, and for this reason [the minister/prelate] becomes a girl with a boy, takes the bite from the mouth to give it to him, loses sleep, tranquility, and his comforts, looks to wash him, dress him, take care of him, nurse him at his breast, and free him from all harms and dangers (Pareja: 1627a, 1v).

As Jacques Dalarun notes, Pareja's spiritual father, Francis of Assisi, performed or played the woman and mother, in his attempt to avoid the position of dominance and power in relationship to the brothers of the community while retaining his respect for the ecclesial hierarchy of the church. While Francis willingly speaks of God as "father", he longs to follow in the footsteps of Jesus like the Virgin Mary and gladly becomes a woman to care for the sons he birthed (Dalarun: 2006, 268). The image of Francis as mother extended beyond his fraternity according to the canonization documents of his Assisian companion in religion, Clare. One of the witnesses in Clare's cause for sainthood was Sister Philippa, who testified Clare related a vision in which she nursed at the breast of Francis and found his milk to be delightfully sweet to the taste.¹³

The gender shift, exemplified by Francis of Assisi and promoted by Pareja reinforces what Judith Butler might affirm as the culturally constructed binary status of gender (Butler: 1988), yet it is surprising at first glance given his identification of

13 One this dream, see Freeman: 2012, 225–254.