

# From Rome to the Southern Netherlands: Spectacular Sceneries to Celebrate the Canonization of Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier

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## Abstract

In March 1622 Pope Gregory XV canonized the Jesuit leaders Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier. The spectacular ceremonies held in Rome soon echoed throughout the Catholic world and notably in cities across the Southern Low Countries where the Society of Jesus settled. There, the Jesuits celebrated their first saints with emphasis and inventiveness as part of a larger effort to combat the spread of Protestantism. In celebrating universal saints, the Jesuits worked to spectacularize public religious ceremonies in order to entrench Jesuit identity by publicizing the deeds of and cultivating devotion to these newly canonized saints. By investigating the ephemeral decorations produced for these ceremonies in specific Southern Netherlands areas, this chapter explores the Jesuit campaign to build a spectacular culture based on inspiring *sacer horror* in participants that would aid Catholic confessionalization in a period of political and religious tension.

## Chapter

### *Introduction*

On March 12th, 1622, in the basilica of St Peter in Rome, Pope Gregory XV declared the canonization of five new saints: Isidore the Laborer, a lowly medieval farmer who became the patron saint of Madrid, the Carmelite Teresa of Àvila, the Oratorian Philip Neri, as well as the Jesuits Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier. The event was celebrated in a spectacular way in Rome, but also across the whole world thanks to the Jesuit Order's

efforts. In many cities, both in Europe and in missionary territories, the Jesuits organized important solemnities—often spectacular—to celebrate their two new saints. On a metaphoric level, this festive movement, which started in Rome and then spread worldwide, looks like a solemn seismic wave. From the Roman epicenter, a series of secondary tremors traveled to the rest of the world transforming sacred space and drawing popular attention towards the new saints. This chapter will focus on one of these “aftershocks”—the one that took place in the southern Netherlands. This chapter will investigate what bound it to Rome, and, more importantly, also highlight the reconfiguration process of sacred space (and to a lesser extent of urban space) and the resulting spiritual effects on observers in the Belgian festivities.<sup>1</sup> In particular, this chapter shows how these celebrations had a strong participatory role for observers who were expected to transform themselves emotionally.

## Rome

### *Basilica of St Peter*

Isidore’s canonization had been fixed for a long time, allowing the Spanish nation established in Rome to dedicate itself to extensive preparations for the solemnities.<sup>2</sup> However, in January 1622, as the campaign for the canonization of Teresa, Philip, Ignatius, and Xavier was coming to an end, the Congregation of Rites decided to pronounce the other four canonizations on the same day as Isidore,<sup>3</sup> probably to avoid the great expense caused by the multiplication of ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> Thus while the Spaniards had had plenty of time to finalize an “isidorian ceremony,” the Jesuits, the Carmelites, and the Oratorians had had very little time; so

<sup>1</sup> My first research into the 1622 canonization celebrations in the Belgian provinces dates back to the time of my post-doc (2006–09), when regrettably I never found the opportunity to thoroughly study this corpus. Now, the patiently gathered material is at the disposal of an interdisciplinary team of researchers associated with the federal project *Baroque Festival Cultures Between Italy and the Southern Netherlands (1585–1685)*, which is funded by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office, and supported by the Academia Belgica, the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome, and the National Foundation Princess Marie-Jose. I want to thank the members of this team, and particularly Gregory Ems, Agnès Guiderdoni, Caroline Heering, and Ralph Dekoninck.

<sup>2</sup> The documentary corpus useful for studying the Roman celebrations in 1622 is presented in Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, *La festa barocca* (Rome: De Luca, 1997), 241–7.

<sup>3</sup> *Decreta authentica Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis*, in *Analecta Juris Pontificii* (Rome: 1864), col. 164, nr 576 (Rome: 1622).

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig von Pastor, *Storia dei papi dalla fine del medio evo* (Rome: Desclée, 1943), XIII:93–5.

much so that on the day of the canonizations, the decoration of St Peter's basilica appeared almost exclusively dedicated to the glory of Isidore.<sup>5</sup>

Several months before, the Spaniards had entrusted Paolo Guidotti with the task to raise in the basilica a sumptuous "theater" or wooden structure painted to look like stone. The sides of this structure connected the pillars of Bramante's cupola, forming a kind of enclosure shaping a new sacred space. There were tiers built inside this ephemeral enclosure to welcome prelates, ambassadors and the faithful present for the ceremony and bring them closer to the pontifical altar. Scenes from the life, death, and miracles of the protector of Madrid were illustrated in 41 paintings with explanatory inscriptions, which were placed on the inner side of the theater. Guidotti had enhanced the theater with cherubs, atlases, vases, gold and silver ornaments, and numerous candelabras that illuminated this ephemeral and impressive scenery. Obviously, the theater had to satisfy (more than to inform) the audience by remembering the actions of its new saint. But, by the profusion of its ornaments, the theater had also to trigger wonder and bring the sky down to earth into the particular space that it shaped. However, this structure, which had been in preparation for months, did not integrate the four other saints, whose orders had to be content with their portraits settled on the doors of the basilica and with their standards hanging from the cupola.

However, if the decoration of St Peter's was devoted principally to the glory of Isidore, the festivities that followed allowed the Jesuits, the Carmelites, and the Oratorians to invest in the pomp of their own churches. The day after the ceremony in the basilica, on March 13th, the blessed standards were carried in procession from St Peter's to the churches connected to the new saints.<sup>6</sup> The cortege stopped first at the Chiesa Nuova to give to the Oratorians Philip Neri's standard and then at San Giacomo degli Spagnoli on the Piazza Navona to return Isidore's standard to the Spanish community. The cortege halted a third time at the

<sup>5</sup> The apparatus of St Peter is well known thanks to both written and iconographic sources: Giovanni Briccio, *Relatione sommaria del solenne apparato, e cerimonia, fatta nella basilica di S. Pietro di Roma, per la canonizatione de' Gloriosi Santi Isidoro di Madrid, Ignatio di Lojola, Francesco Xauerio, Teresa di Giesu, e Filippo Nerio fiorentino, canonizzati dalla Santità di N.S. Papa Gregorio XV à dì 12. di marzo 1622. Composta per Giouanni Briccio romano, ad istanza di Lodouico Dozza Bolognese* (Rome: Andrea Fei, 1622); Giacinto Gigli, *Diario romano* (1608–1670), ed. G. Ricciotti (Rome: Tumminelli, 1958), 57–8; Matteo Greuter, *Theatrum in Ecclesia S. Petri*, etching (Rome: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana).

<sup>6</sup> Giovanni Briccio, *Relatione della solenne Processione fatta in Roma, nella trasportatione de' stendardi de' Gloriosi Santi, Isidoro de Madrid, Ignatio Loyola, Francesco Xaverio, Teresa de Giesu, et Filippo Neri Fiorentino, dalla Basilica di S. Pietro alle loro Chiese particolari, con la descrizione dell'apparati e feste fatte in dette Chiese e altri luoghi. Quali santi furono canonizzati dalla Santità di Nostro Signore Papa Gregorio XV a dì 12 di Marzo 1622* (Rome: Giacomo Mascardi, 1622); Gigli, *Diario romano*, 59–62.

Gesù where the Jesuits welcomed the two banners of Ignatius and Francis Xavier. Finally, the cortege crossed the Tiber and reached Trastevere and the church of Santa Maria della Scala to drop off Teresa's standard. These four churches acted as Roman hubs for devotion towards the new saints, preserving their standards and continuing the canonization celebrations through further events and ecclesial decoration.

### *The Gesù*

To welcome the banners of Ignatius and Xavier, the Jesuits transformed the Gesù completely with ephemeral decorations.<sup>7</sup> The façade was covered with yellow monochrome camaieu paintings with chiaroscuro effects, which represented the actions of the two new saints and were explained by short descriptions in Italian.<sup>8</sup> In the four niches stood four statues of plaster: on the right, Ignatius crushed Heresy with the triumphant Church above him; on the left, Xavier walked on Idolatry with Japan above him holding a cross and converting to the Christian faith. Friezes and festoons completed the setting that left visible the architecture of the façade, revealing columns and pilasters. Inside the church, between the transepts, and opposite the marble altar that sheltered Ignatius's relics, there was an identical altar of painted wood for Francis Xavier. Both altars bore the saint's portrait. Around each of the altars and throughout the church hung cycles of paintings—in color rather than the monochromatic camaieu—representing the life and the miracles of the two saints. In addition, under the cornice that ran along the nave hung 100 portraits of Jesuit martyrs that belonged to the library of the Professed House in Rome.<sup>9</sup>

The difficulties encountered by the Society in its long campaign to obtain Ignatius' canonization are well known: the lack of miracles made by the founder of the Order was a huge obstacle to reaching this objective.<sup>10</sup> The Jesuit hagiographer Pedro Ribadeneira, in the first *Vita* of Ignatius

<sup>7</sup> The decorations erected at the Gesù are described in the following sources: Briccio, *Relatione della solenne Processione fatta in Roma*, 1622; *Relation des principales ceremonies observées à Rome, à la canonization des Saints, ceste presente année mil six cens vingt-deux. Faictes en italien par un Pere de la Cie de Iesu et traduite en François par un autre Pere du mesme ordre* (Paris: Sébastien Cramoisy, 1622).

<sup>8</sup> On March 19, 1622, the Belgian Jesuit Philippe Alegambe sent to the rector of Ghent from Rome a description of the transformations of the Gesù for the canonization festivities. He described the technique of the paintings on the façade and attributed these paintings to the "doctissimo Pomerancio" that can refer to both Antonio Circignani (†1630) and Cristoforo Roncalli (†1626); Antwerp, Rijksarchief [hereafter RA], Nederduitse provincie der jesuïeten [hereafter NPJ], 1701, s.f.

<sup>9</sup> *Relation des principales ceremonies observées à Rome*, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Miguel Gotor, *I beati del papa. Santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna* (Florence: Olschki, 2002).

commissioned by the General Francisco Borgia,<sup>11</sup> had tried to get around this difficulty by suggesting a new model of sanctity that would not be *miraculous* but *virtuous*.<sup>12</sup> For Ribadeneira, holiness did not have to be estimated by means of *signs*—such as miracles—but by means of *charity*.<sup>13</sup> However, his attempt failed and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Roman Jesuit authorities used accounts from the last witnesses to Ignatius' life to make up a miraculous corpus likely to satisfy the Inquisition and the Congregation of Rites, which was in charge of the canonization process. While his reshaping of Ignatius in terms of miracles stood in opposition to the spiritual model offered by Ribadeneira, it was fruitful since in 1609 the Society obtained the beatification of its founder. In 1622, in the days after the canonization, the scenery of the Gesù, which insisted on Ignatius's and Francis Xavier's wonders, continued to depict a triumph of holiness that was based squarely on miracles.

By recounting in this festive setting all the deeds of its Founder and its missionary hero, the Society celebrated itself and evoked its role within the Roman Catholic Church. The Latin inscription that accompanied the statue of Ignatius crushing Heresy stated that Ignatius had dedicated his Order “to the protection of the Church.”<sup>14</sup> In the upper niche, the personification of the triumphant Church reminded viewers that she made the Society fight against “all the machinations of Impiety.”<sup>15</sup> Facing these two statues, Francis Xavier's missionary talents were praised while the allegorical figure of Christianized Japan proclaimed that she “had received from Xavier first the knowledge and the veneration of the Cross and of God.”<sup>16</sup>

Inside, the series of 100 portraits of martyrs that hung from the cornice extended the program of the façade. As paragons of a hyperactive apostolate, these men, dead after defending the Catholic faith both in Europe and overseas, recalled the Society's long martyrological tradition and the role of the Order in the Church's missionary work. Early on the

<sup>11</sup> Pedro Ribadeneira, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae* (Naples: 1572).

<sup>12</sup> Axelle Guillausseau, “Les récits des miracles d'Ignace de Loyola,” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 36 (2006) (online version posted on October 18, 2010), accessed on May 13, 2013, <http://mcv.revues.org/2482>; see also Gotor, *Beati*, 237.

<sup>13</sup> “Non enim sanctitas cuiusque signis, sed caritate aestimanda est”; Ribadeneira, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae*, fol. 208v.

<sup>14</sup> “[S]ancto] Ignatio Soc[ieta]tis Iesu fondatori. Quod se ac suos tuendae Ecclesiae Dei invicta devotione consecrauit”; Anvers, RA, FB, 1698, s.f. See also Briccio, *Relatione della solenne Processione fatta in Roma*, 1622.

<sup>15</sup> “Ecclesia Catholica Soc[ieta]tem Iesu iure suo omnibus telis impietatis opponit”; Anvers, RA, FB, 1698, s.f. See also Briccio, *Relatione della solenne Processione fatta in Roma*, 1622.

<sup>16</sup> “Japonia a S. Francisco Xaverio crucis ac Dei cognitionem et venerationem primum accipit”; Anvers, RA, FB, 1698, s.f. See also Briccio, *Relatione della solenne Processione fatta in Roma*, 1622.

Society had begun to exalt the deaths of its heroic members and created clever links between them and the first Christian martyrs. In the churches of Roman seminaries, where the Order trained future priests to evangelize lands reached by heresy, bloody cycles representing the first martyrs supported its sacrificial missionary policy, linking the glorious past of the early Church with the glorious present of the Tridentine Church.<sup>17</sup> The Order also encouraged the production of publications praising these remarkable dead people<sup>18</sup> and published long chronological lists of Jesuits who shed their blood in the name of God. In 1608, Pedro Ribadeneira added to the first edition of his *Illustrium Scriptorum religionis Societatis Iesu catalogus*, a list of 100 Jesuits martyred between 1549 and 1603.<sup>19</sup> This list was expanded with new names in the next edition.<sup>20</sup> The Society projected itself as an Order that was visibly active in expanding the borders of Catholicism, triumphing over barbarous cruelty, and dominating heretical madness. The scenery raised in the Gesù offered the Order another opportunity to assert this image publicly.

#### *A Required Moderation*

In the week following the canonization, the pupils of the *Collegio Romano* celebrated the double canonization by staging a play in the form of an apotheosis.<sup>21</sup> The decoration of the school's stage represented the Campus Martius. In the middle of the stage, the pupil-actors progressively erected a funeral pyre on the top of which they settled Ignatius and Xavier's statues. In the ultimate act, the pyre caught fire and disappeared, giving way to an open heaven in which the spectators could see the two new Jesuit saints with a long troop of angels. Using references to ancient religious practices, the professors and their pupils

<sup>17</sup> Kirstin Noreen, "Ecclesiae militantis triumphus: Jesuit iconography and the Counter-Reformation," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29 (1998): 689–715.

<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, Alessandro Valignani, *Historia decem martyrum Salsetanorum: quorum quinque erant Societatis Iesu, qui in India Orientali occisi sunt die XV Iulii anno MDLXXIII* (Leuven: 1585); Fr. Benci, *Quinque martyres libri sex* (Venice: 1591); L. Froes, *Relatione della gloriosa morte di xxvii posti in croce par comandamento del Re di Giappone* (Rome: 1599).

<sup>19</sup> "Centuria religiosorum Societatis Iesu qui hactenus ab ethnicis, Mahumetanis, Haereticis, aliisque impiis pro catholica fide ac pietate interempti sunt," in Pedro Ribadeneira, *Illustrium Scriptorum religionis Societatis Iesu catalogus* (Antwerp: 1608), 185–200.

<sup>20</sup> Pedro Ribadeneira, *Illustrium Scriptorum religionis Societatis Iesu catalogus* (Antwerp: 1613).

<sup>21</sup> Famiano Strada, *Saggio delle feste che si apparecchiano nel collegio romano in honore dei Santi Ignatio et Francesco da N.S. Gregorio XV canonizzati* (Rome: Alessandro Zannetti, 1622); *Ritratto & argomento dell'Apoteose, o consagracione de Santi Ignatio Lodola e Francesco Saverio rappresentata nel Collegio romano nelle feste della loro canonisatione* (Rome: Alessandro Zannetti, 1622).

celebrated the elevation of Ignatius and Xavier to the Christian Pantheon. However, shortly before the Roman celebrations, Muzio Vitelleschi, the General of the Society, had sent to all the provincials a memorandum with rules for the celebration of the canonization. He did not want to forbid the “reasonable demonstrations of good and sound joy,”<sup>22</sup> but wanted to “remove everything that could leave the suspicion of profane and secular.”<sup>23</sup> Fearing the “excesses against religious modesty,”<sup>24</sup> he prohibited any form of exuberant and ostentatious events. This requirement of reserve and discretion, however, did not apply to the Order’s Roman houses. Indeed, Rome was not only the place where the canonization was proclaimed, but also the place where Ignatius’ body was kept.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, according to the traditional organicist metaphor used since the founding of the Society to state its organization and its identity, Rome was also the “head” of a sprawling Order that stretched across the globe. Because the city was sanctified by the Ignatian relics and because it was the absolute center of a huge Order, Rome was an appropriate place to celebrate the canonization on behalf of the entire Society. Based on this logic only the head could demonstrate appropriately the joy felt by the entire body. Thus, only in Rome could the entire Order, represented by its center, exult in the canonizations.

However, even in Rome, the Society could not offer overly excessive festive demonstrations. Indeed, the long process that eventually led to the canonization of Ignatius had not avoided raising problems. In particular, the Holy See blamed the Jesuits for cultivating an unauthorized public cult to Ignatius, especially by the use of portraits of Ignatius as altars images.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Ignatius’ beatification in 1609 had been marked by sumptuous and extraordinary celebrations, intended to spread the news loudly and proudly, which conflicted with the injunctions of the Holy See.<sup>27</sup> In the Jesuit church in Brussels, for example, a lot of “pure wine” had poured abundantly for hours “like five streams” from the wounds of the Christ on the Crucifix,

<sup>22</sup> “[R]agionevoli dimostrazioni di buona e sant’allegrezza”; Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter ARSI), Instit. 122, fol. 89v (Muzio Vitelleschi to all the provincials, March 9, 1622).

<sup>23</sup> “[M]a solamente levare tutto quello che odora di profano e secolare”; ARSI, Instit. 122, fol. 89v (Muzio Vitelleschi to all the provincials, March 9, 1622).

<sup>24</sup> “[Q]ualch’eccesso contra la modestia religiosa”; ARSI, Instit. 122, fol. 89v (Muzio Vitelleschi to all the provincials, March 9, 1622).

<sup>25</sup> “Non vale in cio l’esempio di Roma, perché facendosi qui la canonizatione et essendoci il corpo del Santo et il capo della Compagnia conveniva farsi qualche dimostrazione quasi a nome comune dela religione”; ARSI, Instit. 122, fol. 89v (Muzio Vitelleschi to all the provincials, March 9, 1622).

<sup>26</sup> Ruth S. Noyes, “On the Fringes of Center: Disputed Hagiographic Imagery and the Crisis over the *Beati moderni* in Rome ca. 1600,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 64 (2011): 800–846.

<sup>27</sup> Gotor, *Beati*, 234.

while a fumigation filled the air with a “miraculous fragrance.”<sup>28</sup> In response the Congregation of Rites had taken offence and had denounced the excesses of the Society. So, in 1622, Muzio Vitelleschi tried to avoid a similar criticism by requiring moderation in all celebrations by the provincial Jesuit houses. Nevertheless, a large part of the Jesuit houses across the world proved disobedient towards Rome and a wave of festivities spread worldwide. From Milan to Palermo, from Madrid to Girona, from Lisbon to Salvador de Bahia, the festivities were extraordinary and far beyond the moderate forms the fathers were invited to adopt.<sup>29</sup> Likewise swept away by this festive whirlwind, the Flandro- and Gallo-Belgian provinces offered impressive solemnities that will be considered here.

### The Low Countries

#### *The Announcement*

The news of the canonizations of Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier and the directive to celebrate them in a moderate way arrived in the Belgian Jesuit Provinces (Gallo- and Flandro-Belgica) a few weeks after the Roman events. Immediately the news provoked demonstrations of joy in the cities where Jesuits had established colleges or houses: a *Te Deum* was sung, bells and trumpets rang, cannons thundered. Almost as quickly, the Belgian provinces received descriptions of the Roman celebrations, which acquainted them with the Roman model. On March 19, 1622, the Belgian Jesuit Philippe Alegambe, who was present in Rome for the festivities, sent a long letter to the rector of Ghent. The letter not only announced his intention to send the

<sup>28</sup> “[E]x vulneribus Crucifixi velut quinis rivulis vinum merum multis horis prosiliens ; ex suffimentis et odoribus praestantissimis mira quondam fragantia spirantem aerem”; Rome, ARSI, FB 67, fol. 267r. Miguel Gotor gives other examples: in Naples the fathers organized a naval battle in Ignatius’ honor; in Lisbon a Trojan horse was pulled through the city, shooting arrows at the monsters representing heresy; Gotor, *Beati*, 234.

<sup>29</sup> See, amongst others, for Italy: Bernadette Majorana, “Entre étonnement et dévotion. Les fêtes universelles pour les canonisations des saints (Italie, XVIIe siècle et début du XVIIIe siècle),” in *Les cérémonies extraordinaires du catholicisme baroque*, ed. Bernard Dompnier (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2009), 424–42; for France: Michel Cassan, “Les fêtes de la canonisation d’Ignace de Loyola et de François Xavier dans les provinces d’Aquitaine (1622),” in *Les cérémonies extraordinaires*, 459–76; for Spain: Trinidad de Antonio-Saenz, “Las canonizaciones de 1622 en Madrid: artistas y organización de los festejos,” *Anales de historia del arte* 4 (1993–94): 701–9; Catalina Buezo, “Festejos y máscaras en honor de san Ignacio de Loyola en el siglo XVII,” *Boletín de la real academia de la historia* 190 (1993): 315–23; for Brazil: Charlotte de Castelnau-L’estoile, *Les ouvriers d’une Vigne stérile. Les jésuites et la conversion des Indiens au Brésil, 1580–1620* (Lisbon and Paris: Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, 2000).

Italian *Vitae* of the two new Jesuit saints<sup>30</sup> and an etching of the “theater” erected in St Peter’s basilica,<sup>31</sup> but also gave a description of the scenery of the façade and the interior of the Gesù for the canonization festivities.<sup>32</sup>

Soon after these first demonstrations of joy, more solemn festivities followed in almost all the colleges of the Belgian provinces, gradually organized during spring and summer 1622 and peaking on July 31, Ignatius’ feast day. Records of the organization of these festivities reveal that the provincial houses used the same structure everywhere, copying the Roman model. First a major local prelate—usually the bishop—blessed banners in the main church of the city. Then the banners were brought back to the Jesuit church by a spectacular cortege accompanied by costumed pupils of the college either on foot or on triumphal floats. In addition, the Jesuit fathers and some religious and civic representatives followed the cortege through an itinerary more or less complex depending on the involvement of the other urban groups in the ceremonies. We shall note that this itinerary was often—but not always—embellished by boards and porticoes, particularly in front of the Jesuit Church. After a Mass in their church, the Jesuit fathers organized various festivities, including plays, literary or rhetorical spars, and banquets. Finally, every house organized a fireworks display. Note that the Jesuits were the most demonstrative in celebrating the quintuple canonization. To our knowledge, no major festivity was organized for Isidore, Teresa of Àvila, or Philip Neri in the Low Countries or elsewhere in the Catholic world. As Bernard Dompnier noted, the Jesuits were such ingenious festive orchestrators that they assured a brilliant promotion for Ignatius and Francis Xavier, from which the other saints canonized in the same time did not benefit.<sup>33</sup>

### Sources

In studying these Belgian festivities, historians have to use sources almost exclusively produced by the Order itself since documents by Jesuit authors

<sup>30</sup> [Giovanni Geronimo Sopranis, S.J.], *Breve relatione della vita, miracoli et canonizzazione di S. Ignatio di Loiola Fondatore della Comp. di Giesù cavata da processi autentici & relationi della Rota & la Congregazione dei Riti fatte per la sua canonizzazione* (Venice: Antonio Pinelli, 1622); [Paolo Bombino, S.J.], *Compendio della vita del S.P. Francesco Xaverio della Compagnia di Giesù canonizzato con S. Ignatio fondatore della istessa religione dalla santità di N.S. Gregorio XV* (Venice: Antonio Pinelli, 1622).

<sup>31</sup> Most likely the Greuter’s etching, cf. note 5.

<sup>32</sup> Antwerp, RA, NPJ 1701, s.f., already mentioned in note 8. In addition, in the Belgian Jesuit archives there is a Latin account of the Roman festivities, which is more accurate, but alas anonymous and undated; Anvers, RA, NPJ 1698.

<sup>33</sup> Bernard Dompnier, “Les cérémonies, la piété et la culture,” in *Les cérémonies extraordinaires du catholicisme baroque*, ed. Bernard Dompnier (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2009), 596.

remain the only extant documentary corpus. Characterized by a highly centralized bureaucracy,<sup>34</sup> the Society of Jesus required each of its local houses to account for its activities and organization to the General of the Order based in Rome. To this end the colleges and houses sent accurate descriptions of the solemnities they organized to the General House. However, only few of these documents are still preserved.<sup>35</sup> Therefore it is also useful to resort to the *Litterae annuae*, annual accounts sent to Rome with information about pastoral ministries, as well as to supplements of *Historiae Domus*, annals written by each house and sent every three years to Rome.<sup>36</sup> These sources, which are more or less detailed depending on the accuracy of the secretary, allow historians to establish a broad overview of the festivities and to take the pulse of the festive movement. However, one must remember that all of these sources allowed the central authorities to control the activities of the periphery. Carefully preserved in the Roman archives as soon as they were received, these documents also helped to build the collective memory of the Society and were intended to be used one day to write a general history of the Order. Therefore the events were not laid bare in a photographic way, with all the incident reports that an organization of this extent would inevitably generate. Instead, these handwritten descriptions provided a smooth narrative in which the sharp edges, errors, and mishaps were erased. The ceremony had to be seen to be a success, which was how the accounts described the celebrations. Moreover, these descriptions were part of internal accounts intended to report from the various local ministries to the authorities in Rome. Their authors aimed to demonstrate how the feasts were integrated into a global pastoral conception, justifying the spectacularity that was forbidden by the Order's General. See for instance the conclusion of the Dunkirk account:

Finally, we took advantage of this solemn celebration: we saw the increasing devotion of citizens towards the new saints and their growing zeal for the Society.

<sup>34</sup> Annick Delfosse, "La correspondance jésuite: communication, union et mémoire. Les enjeux de la *Formula scribendi*," *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique* 104 (2009): 71–114; Markus Friedrich, "Communication and Bureaucracy in the Early Modern Society of Jesus," *Revue suisse d'histoire religieuse et culturelle* 101 (2007): 49–75 and Markus Friedrich, "Circulating and Compiling the *Litterae Annuae*: Towards a history of the Jesuit system of communication," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 77 (2008): 3–40.

<sup>35</sup> Courtrai: *Relatio canonizationis BB. PP. Ignatii ac Francisci Xaverii Cortraci celebratae* (Antwerp, RA, NPJ 1701); Dunkerque: *Relatio celebritatis in festo SS.PP.NN. Ignatii et Xaverii a Residentia Dunckerana* (Rome, ARSI, FB60, fol. 45–8); Louvain: *Commentarius rerum gestarum a Soc[ie]tate Iesu Louanii ad Apotheosim SS. Ignatii et Xaverii* (Rome, ARSI, FB 52, fol. 17–22).

<sup>36</sup> The *Litterae annuae* and annual supplements of the *Historiae Domus* for 1622 are kept in Rome, ARSI, FB 50II, 52 and 56; ARSI, Gallo-Belgica (hereafter GB) 32–4, 40; and Antwerp RA, NPJ 3.

The more abundant daily crowd in our chapel, the frequent offerings of candles, the great quantity of expenses to adorn the procession reflected it very well.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore the purpose of these documents was more to show the *effects* of the ephemeral modifications of the urban and ecclesial spaces than to describe the *programs* and the devices used, which often were only described in a very summarized (or very confusing) way. Devices and programs were not interesting in their own right. Much more interesting was their *efficiency* in support of pastoral projects. For that reason, most historians hoping to find accurate descriptions of scenes and theaters in these sources are left unsatisfied. Fortunately, this lack of precise information is counterbalanced somewhat by printed accounts.<sup>38</sup> Quite rare in the Belgian Provinces (there were only three), these texts were written in a hurry and received approval no later than two months after the festivities. Like the handwritten relations, they were not faithful accounts; yet unlike them, the printed relations were addressed not only for the Society but also for a large audience that most of the time had participated in the events. Consequently, the authors had to offer more accurate descriptions not so much as testimonies than as ways to reenact the celebrations on the paper.

Note that all of these handwritten and printed accounts systematically adopted an organization into three parts, which were slightly different from the three parts—and spaces—of the festivities. Resolutely opting for an ekphrastic rhetoric, their authors almost always provided, in a variable order, long descriptions of the urban scenery crossed by the spectacular cortege into the city, of the ornamentation of the Jesuit church that welcomed the banners, and of the demonstrations of joy—especially the fireworks—that followed in the college or before the church.

<sup>37</sup> “Ex hac solemnī festiuitate illud denique utilitatis consecuti sumus quod civium erga novos Sanctos deuotio et in Societatem studium plurimum incrementi accepisse cernantur. Id quotidiani ad sacellum nostrum concursus frequentiores, cerei frequentes oblati, sumptus in exornanda supplicatione suppeditati luculenter testantur; et licet trium confraternitatum, militum Hispanorum et cuiusdam amici multum com(m)endanda fuerit liberalitas, prae ceteris tamen admodum Reverendus Dominus Praelatus Dunensis et D(omini) Magistratus huius urbis Dunckeranae, quo loco apud illos esset Societas, re factisque demonstrarunt”; FB 60, fol. 48r, Dunkirk, *Relatio celebritatis*.

<sup>38</sup> Antwerp: Michel de Ghryze, *Honor S. Ignatio de Loiola Societatis Iesu Fundatori et S. Francisco Xaverio Indiarum Apostolo per Gregorium XV inter Divos relatis habitus a Patribus Domus Professae et Collegii Societatis] Iesu Antuerpiae 24 Iulii 1622* (Antwerp: Plantin printing house, 1622); Brussels: *Sanctorum Ignati et Xaveri in diuos relatorum triumphus Bruxellae ab Aula et Urbe celebrates* (Brussels: Jean Pepermann, [1622]); Douai: *Narratio eorum quae Duaci pro celebranda sanctorum Ignatii et Francisci canonizatione gesta sunt* (Douai: Pierre Telu, 1622).

*A Kind of Heaven*

Belgian Jesuit churches were turned into “theaters of divine honors and apotheosis,”<sup>39</sup> designed to celebrate the triumph of the two new saints. As in Rome, sceneries exalted the life and miracles of Ignatius and Xavier and commemorated the many martyrs of the Society. Inside every church, paintings or embroidered fabrics recalled the exploits of the new saints, always associated with the exaltation of the memory of the martyrs. These recurrent themes were also echoed in outdoor settings. To take just one example, in Douai, four large galleries were erected in the two streets at the intersection of which the Jesuit Church was settled. Suspended over the streets were 256 oil paintings. The first gallery gathered the life and miracles of Ignatius and Xavier, the second gallery bore portraits of illustrious Jesuits and martyrs, each accompanied by a cartouche with a French quatrain.<sup>40</sup> But rather than only studying the devices as *representation media* (or as support of some thematic message intended to be interpreted), I would like to dwell longer on the devices’ effects on the faithful’s emotional affects. Indeed, by installing a spectacular apparatus these solemnities favored first and foremost an aesthetic of the effect, so much so that their main interest lies not so in what the devices “said” than in which effects they “produced.”

Each college or house worked carefully on the scenery for the canonization celebration in order to give to the church a “more majestic glow.”<sup>41</sup> While the financial resources invested in the scenery differed from one place to another, the goal remained the same. For example, in Brussels the Infanta Isabella and members of the Court contributed to the decor by giving or lending jewelry or precious fabrics. Other houses worked with the means at hand, which meant taking advantage of aid from wealthy donors, urban authorities, or local confraternities when possible. However, despite the difference of financial means, all the houses aimed to create an *unusual* and *unexpected* setting.<sup>42</sup> They wanted to amaze, to show what had never been seen before, and to shape a “majesty out

<sup>39</sup> “[D]ivinorum honorum apotheoseosque teatro”; *Sanctorum Ignati et Xaveri in divos relatorum triumphus*, 13.

<sup>40</sup> The next year, Pierre d’Outreman, S.J., published a collection of biographies of these Jesuits whose portraits were displayed along the aforesaid gallery; Pierre d’Outreman, *Tableaux des personnages signalés de la Compagnie de Jésus exposés en la solennité de la Canonization de SS. Ignace & François-Wavier, célébrée par le Collège de la Compagnie de Jésus à Douai* (Douai: Balthasar Bellere, 1623).

<sup>41</sup> “Nunquam augustiori specie conspecta aedes nostra”; Rome, ARSI, GB 34, fol. 114r, Cambrai, *Litterae annuae*.

<sup>42</sup> See for instance the description of the ephemeral décor for Maastricht church: “Ipsa die apparuit subitus et inexpectatus templi ornatus”; Rome, ARSI, FB 50II, fol. 539r, Maastricht, *Historia Domus*, 1622.

of the ordinary.”<sup>43</sup> Thus new liturgical cloths covered altars, paintings unknown to the public or freshly executed were displayed in churches, and permanent structures were enhanced with inventive ephemeral structures.

The descriptions show that the houses paid special attention to the *materials* and *colors* of this ephemeral decoration: precious silk fabrics richly enhanced with gold or silver designs or with pearls, light batiste cloths, solid silver liturgical implements, and a profusion of colors like purple, gold and silver. Where it was possible, the fathers aimed for opulence, abundance, and splendor. Light would also play an important role in cultivating the viewer’s amazement. Profusely invading the church by means of dozens of chandeliers and hundreds of torches, light strengthened the function already assumed by the materials used. The play between the gleam of light and the shine of rich cloths were not only intended to “enhance the solemnity.” Together, light and material had to truly *stun* the faithful, who would be unable to know where to put his eyes. Whichever way he turned, he would find new decorations, new colors, new materials, and new reflections. Indeed, the glow of the light and the sumptuousness of the ornaments had to “reproduce a kind of Heaven.”<sup>44</sup> After having described such a luminous and physical scenery, Michel Ghryze, professor at the Jesuit college of Antwerp and author of the local printed account, freely quoted Fulgentius of Ruspe, wondering “how beautiful must the Heavenly Jerusalem be [...] if the earthly Church be so glorious?”<sup>45</sup> The organizers intended that the decorations would give a foretaste of heaven to those who celebrated Ignatius’ and Xavier’s elevation to sainthood. The ephemeral earthly space had to open for a moment onto to a celestial space.

In this respect, the Dunkirk festivities offered an interesting case, which is all the more interesting since it shows how to combine the study of themes and the study of effects in order to understand better the celebrations. Indeed, by their themes, the scenes installed in the street leading to the Jesuit college anticipated the heavenly vision offered by lights and cloths within the chapel.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> “[I]psa templi maiestas insolita”; Rome, ARSI, GB 33, fol. 160v, Tournai, *Historia Domus*.

<sup>44</sup> “Novo ornatu frequentibusque passim collucentibus facibus caeli quandam speciem retulisse”; Rome, ARSI, FB 50II, fol. 497r–v, Antwerp, *Historia Domus*, 1622.

<sup>45</sup> “[T]antus ubique splendor, tanta ornamentorum erat maiestas, & qui placet maxime, ordo rerum, & concinnus quidam nitor, ut eum qui curiosius intuerentur, illud S. Fulgentii usurpare possent: *Quam speciosa potest esse Ierusalem caelestis, si sic splendet, non Roma, ut ille, se Ecclesia terrestris*”; Michel de Ghryze, *Honor S. Ignatio de Loiola*, 16–17.

<sup>46</sup> The following paragraphs are directly translated from my article “Les enjeux confessionnels et politiques des cérémonies pour la canonisation d’Ignace de Loyola et de François-Xavier: le cas dunkerquois,” in *Actes du 8ème Congrès de l’Association des Cercles francophones d’Histoire et d’Archéologie de Belgique (Namur, FUNDP, 28–31 août 2008)* (Namur: Presses Universitaires de Namur et Société archéologique de Namur, 2011), 575–81.

The urban part of these tripartite festivities (see below) was structured as three distinct activities corresponding to three distinct spaces in the city of Dunkirk. These included the blessing of the banners in the St Eloi church (that was not deeply transformed), the progression of the cortege of triumphal floats cortege in the city's main street (where a lot of temporary altars were settled), and the arrival in the street that led to the Jesuit College (that was completely transformed). This last space is particularly important for understanding the use of scenery in the emotional transformation of the observer. At the entrance of the street was erected a theater that was paid for by the Spanish community living in Dunkirk. This theater rose on three floors, topped by a cartouche of three meters in diameter where the name of Jesus gleamed in golden letters. The lower floor, all in black, welcomed amid the flames the purgatorial souls and the damned souls, who bent their knees before the gleaming name. On the middle floor, covered with green cloth, the color of youth and vitality, the Pope, also kneeling, was surrounded by clergy on one side and by emperors, kings, and princes on the other side. On the top floor, covered with a celestial blue fabric, the spectator could see that angels knelt down to worship God. Amongst them Ignatius and Xavier on bended knees held up the aforesaid golden name of Christ. At the foot of the theater, a teenager repeated aloud for the crowd an inscription carved in large letters on theater roof: "In the name of Jesus, everybody in heaven and on earth and under the earth fall to their knees."<sup>47</sup>

This theater functioned as a portal to another space, more deeply saturated with ephemeral structures. Fifty meters further, the cortege entered a space enclosed by two triumphal arches and two stages that transformed the portion of road in front of the college into an ephemeral theatrical space. The first arch through which the procession passed was funded by the Brotherhood of St Sebastian and displayed under veils of roots and fruits the statues of Ignatius and Xavier. Opposite, another arch, marking the end of the route, was topped with a six-storey pyramid where shone the names of Mary and Jesus in golden cartouches or crowns. In front of the college there were two stages. On the first stage stood a huge cross supporting a crucified Christ: as in Brussels in 1609, from his wounds flowed an abundant blood-red liquid. On the other side of the door of the school, six half-bows of increasing size alternately hosted choirs of angels and lanterns of all colors designed to look like rainbows in the sky, symbolizing the unity between heaven and earth. They surmounted a Christ figure sitting on a throne among the saints and, notably, Ignatius and Xavier.

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For Jesuit accounts of Dunkirk festivities, see Rome, ARSI, FB 50 II, fols. 374v–377r, Dunkirk, *Historia Domus* and FB 60, fols. 45r–48r, Dunkirk, *Relatio celebritatis*.

<sup>47</sup> "In nomine Iesu omne genu flectatur, caelestium, terrestrium et infernorum"; Rome, ARSI, FB 60, Dunkirk, *Relatio celebritatis*, fol. 47r and FB 50 II, Dunkirk, *Historia Domus*, fol. 376r.

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The focus of this iconographic program was chiefly devoted to redemption, sanctification, and the communion of saints. In the Jesuit street the program recreated the fundamental doctrinal teaching of the Catholic faith: by his shed blood, the crucified Christ saved humankind, delivered it from sin and raised it to the heavenly Jerusalem where the saints triumph. Around him, Catholics, the living and the dead, gathered together to form the “mystical body” of the Church. That was what the first arch showed: the saints in heaven (the Triumphant Church), the souls who suffer in Purgatory (the suffering Church), and the faithful on earth (the Militant Church) assembled around the name of Jesus in a united body, in which the merits of the righteous and virtuous members can be transferred to the sinful members. The Jesuit street was transformed into a soteriological space, designed not only to proclaim the contribution of the new saints in the salvation process but also to prompt the faithful to act for his/their own salvation.

Equally—or even more—interesting is the performative dimension of this spectacular setting. The Dunkirk decorations did not just display a message to the faithful, but invited them to act. The accounts state that the fake blood pouring from the wounds of the crucified Christ statue gushed with such abundance that the jets had to be reduced in order to not to splash the procession’s participants. This event “moved so much the minds of some” that they collected a few drops of this fake blood on their handkerchiefs and rubbed their eyes with it.<sup>48</sup> This action is reminiscent of flagellant devotional practices in which the faithful soaked linen fabric with the blood of penitents and rubbed their eyes in the hope of a miraculous healing, convinced of the blood-soaked fabric’s ability to do miracles.<sup>49</sup> While it is as yet impossible to establish a clear link between this late-medieval practice and the reaction of the Dunkirk procession, one might argue with some slight exaggeration that this blood acted like a holy collyrium. Sharpening the eyes with the application of the fake blood would allow the participant to enter into the mystery of the resurrection displayed in the decorations. Rather, it seems more appropriate to underline what prompted the faithful to act by underlining the central role of emotion and affects.

In this respect, the Dunkirk accounts highlighted the fact that the ephemeral sceneries inspired the mind of the spectators to *sacer horror*.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> “Chr(ist)i in cruce dependentis statua iustam hominis magnitudinem explebat, ad octo horas per vulnerum clavos rubens liquor sanguine(m) mentiens tanta prorupit vi, ut ne spectatores per mediam plateam transeuntes irrigaret reprimi debuerit, tantum illa res nonnullorum movit animos, ut guttas defluentis liquoris sudario exciperint oculisq(ue) religionis gratia applicarint”; Rome, ARSI, FB 60, Dunkirk, *Relatio celebritatis*, fol. 47r.

<sup>49</sup> Anne Autissier, “Le sang des flagellants,” *Médiévales* 27 (1994): 51–8.

<sup>50</sup> “[S]pectantium animos sacro horrore percellabant”; Rome, ARSI, FB 60, fol. 47v.

The Dunkirk secretary was not the only writer to use this expression. The Jesuit Belgian accounts use *sanctus horror* (or *pius horror*) at least two other times to describe the effects produced in the faithful by the monumental and spectacular scenery raised in the church for the canonization celebrations.<sup>51</sup> The Latin word *horror* refers first both to bristling hair and a cold shiver or feverous thrill. But the word also refers to all physical sensations that the Ancients felt in front of divinity: a shudder of fear or thrill of delight. The *sacer horror* is the bodily manifestation of religious awe, the organic sensation of respect mixed with fear and wonder felt in the presence of gods or cosmic forces.<sup>52</sup> Using this expression to describe the audience's reaction to early modern pomp could be a pedantic writing feature of a father whose Latin command is owed to a humanist literary education. However, the physical and emotional transformation represented by this expression is too close to the effects recorded by early moderns who experienced religious encounters to discount its use. For its part, the ephemeral decorations also had a direct effect on the body. As just noted, the festive devices invited audiences to participate in an overwhelming visual experience: the splendor of the pageantry should delight or stun the eyes. This amazement, however, was not gratuitous. Indeed, the accounts abundantly recalled that to delight eyes meant also to move souls. Building a glowing décor that overwhelmed the senses aimed, therefore, to overwhelm the mind, as well.

In this way, the Jesuit Juan de Mariana wrote in his *De spectaculis* (1609)<sup>53</sup> that if somebody wanted to “increase religion or devotion in the

<sup>51</sup> “[I]am denique quocumque te verteres, novae semper oculorum & venerationis illecebrae, spectatores attonitos & pio quodam horrore percultos detinebant”; *Narratio ...* (Douai, 1622), 25; “Collucebant longe lateque per multam graduum substructionem cerei; superne vero tres arcus triumphales, artificiosis tenebris *sanctum horrorem* praecantium animis religionemque conciliantibus”; Rome, ARSI, GB 34, fol. 114r, Cambrai, *Litterae annuae*. Notice the same use of the expression, in French this time (“sainte horreur”), in the printed account of canonization celebrations by the college of La Flèche: *Le triomphe des Saints Ignace de Loyola, fondateur de la Cie de Jésus, et François Xavier Apostre des Indes. Au collège royal de la mesme Compagnie à La Fleche. Où le sommaire de ce qui s’y est fait, en la solemmité de leur canonization. Depuis le dimanche 24 juillet 1622 jusques au dernier jour dudit mois* (La Flèche: Louis Herbert), 1622.

<sup>52</sup> The first and most famous study about “religious awe” is Rudolf Otto’s work about the “Numinous” and its terrifying manifestation (*mysterium tremendum*); Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige*, 1917. The concept was used a lot by all the obsolete emotionalist/psychological theories to explain the origin of religions. Here I use the term only as an expression of a personal experience and feelings, not as a starting point for religious phenomenon.

<sup>53</sup> In 1599, Juan de Mariana dedicated the fifteenth chapter of the third book of his very famous *De Rege* to the spectacles. Ten years later, he developed his arguments in a separate treatise entitled *De spectaculis*, released with six other treatises: Juan de Mariana, *Tractatus VII* (Cologne: Hieratus, 1609). In this treatise, Mariana—like Tertullian before him—firmly fought against the theater, its indecency, its ignominy, particularly when the “histriones” performed sacred plays.

hearts of the mortals,” he should remember that “these ones, since they were led by their senses, were particularly seized by the external splendor of things, ornament and pomp.”<sup>54</sup> Juan de Mariana then echoed what the fathers gathered at the 22nd session of the Council of Trent already decreed: “such is the nature of man, that, without external helps, he cannot easily be raised to the meditation of divine things.”<sup>55</sup> The fathers continued by underlining that the Church had chosen for that reason to institute rites and ceremonies, defining the last ones as

mystic benedictions, lights, incense, vestments, and many other things of this kind [...] whereby both the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be recommended, and the minds of the faithful be excited, by those visible signs of religion and piety, to the contemplation of those most sublime things which are hidden in the sacrifice [of the Mass]<sup>56</sup>

The same logic was implemented in the Jesuit celebrations of 1622. By inviting the faithful into a church saturated with colors, materials, and shapes, that is, in a hyper-stimulating sensorial environment where the “visible signs” dominated, the organizers aimed to excite the mind, to seize the faithful and to provoke a reaction of *sacer horror*. The décor became an immersion device, inviting the faithful to a meeting with holiness—and in particular with the Jesuit version of holiness as represented by the two new saints—that caused a physical reaction of fear or delight. This strong reaction was likely to increase devotion and intensify zeal. The completely transformed space aimed to modify and to shape the devotional behavior, strengthening the worshipers’ religious feeling and expanding the faithful soul’s space.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it is important to consider the purpose of such elaborate and affective solemnizations beyond simply the Jesuit colleges disobeying the moderation requirements imposed by Muzio Vitelleschi and imitating the Roman experience. At the end of the sixteenth century the Belgian diocesan synod moved to radically discipline religious celebrations by eliminating all “excesses” inherited from a long festive tradition. Nevertheless, the

<sup>54</sup> “[N]ihilque omnino praemittere earum quae religionem et pietatem in animis mortalium augent: qui quoniam sensibus ducuntur, externo rerum apparatu, ornatu, pompa capiuntur maxime”; Juan de Mariana, *De spectaculis*, 1609, XVI.

<sup>55</sup> J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The canons and decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), Session 12, chapter 5.

<sup>56</sup> *The canons and decrees*, Session 12, chapter 5.

canonization of the first two Jesuit saints in 1622 provided a convenient opportunity for this festive style to make a strong comeback.

The extremely disturbed political and religious context of the Low Countries can offer an initial explanation. The Twelve Years Truce (1609–21) between the Low Countries and the Dutch Republic had just ended and fighting with the northern enemy had resumed. Dutch troops were already trying to organize raids inside the country causing great uncertainty and tension. Most likely, the spectacular festivities celebrating the canonizations offered a social and emotional outlet, serving as safety valves that allowed people to release their fears. Moreover, when evaluating the celebrations' intense spectacularity within this stressful context, one should not forget that they took place at a confessional frontier that divided confessional enemies. With these spectacles the Jesuits wanted to demonstrate the evident victory of a bright and triumphant Catholicism over a dark Calvinism. The Low Countries, in which the Catholic Church was so insecure, needed excessive and hyper-spectacularized manifestations of faith. It was quite impossible to obey the Roman orders.

By imposing moderation, Muzio Vitelleschi revealed himself to be deeply rooted in an organic conception of his Order, according to which the head controlled the members while representing them perfectly. This view was reinforced by the well-known metaphor of Rome as the *Gran teatro del mondo*. Rome was considered to be a political and religious scene for the whole world. However, in the Netherlands, the provincials and superiors developed a very different conception. For them, the Belgian provinces did not form so much a periphery that submitted to the Roman center than the defensive ramparts of a besieged Catholic citadel designed to withstand the onslaught. These extravagant celebrations became confessional weapons. The Belgian Jesuits considered these celebrations as a way to reinforce these "ramparts" and therefore integrated them in a global pastoral project intended to strengthen Catholicism in the Low Countries. The impressive staging was designed to attract floods of faithful to the Jesuit churches<sup>57</sup> in order to confess them and give them Holy Communion.<sup>58</sup> In such contested areas as these, Jesuit superiors were keenly aware of all the benefits that could directly result from such extravagant festive spaces and so they were willing to disobey the Roman authorities by following Rome's festive lead.

<sup>57</sup> See for instance: "Ad hunc aedis nostrae ornatum cum admiratione adspiciendum sanctosq(ue) praecipuo cultu venerandos tanta mortalium confluxerat multitudo, ut quos excluderent templi angustiae vix platea caperet"; Rome, ARSI, GB 33, fol. 167r, Tournai, *Historia Domus*.

<sup>58</sup> See for instance: "Tantus fuit populi ad sacros huiusmodi ecclesiae thesauros concursus, ut poenitentium copia, confessoriorum inopiam opprimeret"; Rome, ARSI, GB 33, fol. 156r, Namur, *Historia Domus*.

Nevertheless, the question remains as to whether we should abandon the metaphor of these festivities as “a seismic wave” that opened this chapter. As the documents attest it is incorrect to define these celebrations as aftershocks whose feature is to grow gradually weaker as they move away from the epicenter. On the contrary, brilliant festivities were energetically and sumptuously deployed in the Belgian border areas, redefining the celebration in a mode that was not a weaker echo or a pale copy of the Roman original. The political and religious context encouraged many Belgian Jesuit houses to seize the celebrations in order to export the center to the periphery. Paradoxically, through what seemed initially like disobedience, these spectacles created sacred spaces—both external and internal, communal and personal—that responded simultaneously to the greater needs of the faithful, the Jesuit Order, and the global Church.