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Eloquent Images. Evangelisation, Conversion and Propaganda in the Global World of the Early Modern Period, hg. v. Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI / Pierre-Antoine FABRE / Sabina PAVONE. – Leuven: Leuven University Press 2022. 348 S., pb. € 69,50 ISBN: 978-9462703278

This book is formed of seventeen papers with illustrations, in addition to the introduction “on the fields and frontiers of religious images” by the three editors (9–30), the section “about the authors” (311–316) and an annex of twenty-seven plates (317–345).

This book concerns main trends of research on the multiple uses of religious images in areas under the Iberian dominion or influence by American and European art historians of the younger generation (Capriotti, 12–13). The papers are organized in three main parts entitled “Converting the images, Converting by the images” (31–134); “Paths of Devotion” (136–209); and “Ways of Propaganda” (211–309), respectively, as these subjects are of the greatest relevance for present historians of religion.

In the introduction, *Giuseppe Capriotti*, traces a *résumé* of the concept of iconology from Erwin Panofsky until the present time (9–13). *Sabina Pavone* approaches evangelizing images as historical sources (13–18). *Pierre-Antoine Fabre* connects religious orders to the *pictorial turn*, *i. e.*, images as transmitters of ideas and as creators of other images (18–22).

Fabre opens part one with the imaginary dimension of images in the *Evangeliae Historiae Imagines*, his celebrated *Compositio du lieu* (31–47). This early Jesuit work that circulated worldwide gained a transcultural or hybrid character as analyzed by Arianna Magnani in Giulio Aleni’s *Life of Christ*, a “Chinesed” version of the *Imagines* (49–62).

Martyrdom is a subject of great relevance from both historiographical and theological viewpoints (Pope Francis declared the 21st century as the century of martyrdom). *Roberto Ricci* interprets the *Revealing images of Blessed Rodolfo Acquaviva* as a *topos* resulting from the close interaction of graphic images with their historical context (63–79). The early modern Japanese episodes of Catholic martyrdom provided an especially fruitful written and visual propaganda material to the Iberian rulers in their efforts to spread Catholicism worldwide, according to *Frederico Palomo*, part three (275–297). *Silvia Mostaccio* debates the images of crucified saints as emulation models, in their “fundamental dimension of martyrdom for faith” (part 3, 151–168), exemplifying the devotion of both rulers and subalterns for martyrs in Spanish Europe with the very curious and legendary androgynous virgin martyr Wilgefortis.

Mauro Salis contributes with a stimulating paper on the renaming of Marian images within the Mendicant conversion activity among the Christians enslaved by the Turks and their Muslim allies

in Spanish ruled Sardinia. He brings two important aspects of images and conversion to the fore: images used as *Biblia Pauperum*, and as political propaganda in regions of conflict between Catholics and Muslims (81–97). *Francesco Sorce* (part 3, 231–244) interprets Philippe Thomassin’s 1602 print “The Triumph of the Church” as a clear sign of the inevitable victory of the Catholics over the Turks. *Silvia Notaraffonso* deals with shared images as simultaneous tools of coexistence and battlefield in the multi-religious Balkan Peninsula (245–259). *Valentina Borniotto* presents an especially suggestive approach (also from a visual point of view) on iconoclasm and idoloclasm within the conversion strategy by force, the so-called *tabula rasa* strategy (99–112). *Victoria Sissu* argues that the iconography of several *Fontes Pietatis*, as well as paintings depicting the triumph of the Church connected to the Catholic Habsburg Monarchy reflect a visual strategy of persuasion and imposition of an “authoritarian emotive regime” (113–133). *Clara Lieutaghi* compares the efficiency of images with the written and the spoken word as “paths of devotion” (part 2, 137–150). Through the analysis of four paintings with inscriptions, she intends to infer whether word and image mainly cooperated, or, by contrast, competed with each other to regulate the presence of the Divine in art. *Mauricio Oviedo Salazar* (169–180) points to the difference of the material presence of God within Protestant printing culture and Catholic printing culture, respectively.

Maria João Pereira Coutinho, *Paulo Campos Pereira* and *Sílvia Ferreira* analyze the commission, architecture, and, in particular, the thirty emblems decorating the Chapel of Saint Ignatius of Loyola in the Holy Spirit Church, Évora, as a local “path of devotion”. This emblematic program alludes to “images savants” (see, in particular, Claude-François Menestrier). Moreover, it concerns the Latin word “ignis” (fire) contained in the name Ignatius, and is, in particular, a metaphor of God and His works (186–188). The paper by *Lorenzo Ratto* on the stones depicting the night and related to the Forty Hours’ celebration in Verona during the government of the reforming bishop and cardinal Agostino Vallier concludes part 2 (197–209). These *Splendori delle tenebre* in stone show the Augustinian principle that is possible to ascend to God departing from His visible Shadow (197, 203).

A paper on the apocalyptic iconology of the seven archangels in Latin America by *Gwladys Le Cuff* (213–269) opens the part three “Ways of Propaganda”. The Franciscan mystical treatise of the *Apocalypsis nova* was one of the first prayer-books diffusing this iconology as a reaction to the Protestant refusal of the veneration of angels in Europe. Similarly, Franciscans ranked among the first missionaries diffusing this iconography in Latin America in connection with a revised version of this book (217–218). *Stephanie Porras* describes the influence of a canvas painted by the Antwerp protest painter Maerten de Vos in 1518 in Mexican and Philippine colonial art (261–274). She explains the popularity of this prototype with the assumption that economic ties, personal connections and aesthetic preferences can supersede the religious [Protestant and Catholic] and political divisions (264).

The Jesuit contradictory approach to supernatural phenomena between late Ming and early Qing China is the subject of *Michela Catto*’s paper (299–309). On the one hand, the Jesuits fostered Western scientific knowledge to eradicate superstition. On the other, their reports relate natural disasters in China with the contemporary persecutions of Christians to foment missionary zeal and raise the European support for the China mission.

To conclude, this *collectanea* contributes decisively to the ongoing debate of the key role attributed by the Cath. Church to images in early modern Cath. evangelisation and conversion efforts. The introduction constitutes a brilliant résumé of the historiography and of the main questions posed

to early 21st century researchers. Except for Africa, this publication covers the immense geographical, religious, and cultural area under the Iberian rule or influence in which religious images *per se*, but also linked to spoken and written word, as to science or, by contrast popular religion, evolved.

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