

The case of the Vilnius Saints from the anthropological point of view

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Abstract

This paper sets out the findings of an interdisciplinary anthropological investigation. I consider the phenomenon of sainthood by reference to urban anthropology. In addition, analyzing the visual aspects in the case of sainthood cannot be separated from visual studies. Finally, I appeal to borderland (region) studies, while simultaneously analyzing clashes between different confessions in such border cities as Vilnius. In taking an anthropological and phenomenological approach, I assert that the phenomena are real if they fall within the range of human experience, whether individual or social. In the paper, the theses are developed as follows. 1) As with phenomenology, anthropology deals with the emergence of visual phenomena instead of rejecting miracles as unscientific. For anthropology, every visual phenomenon is real if it takes place in one's life. 2) The saints also represent the symbolic walls or religious borders inside a city, inside a state, and a region. 3) The life of a saint should be extraordinary and should provoke changes in the social order or even misunderstandings. 4) Canonization is like a narrow gate, although not as much for the people as for the nations that have more or less political-religious weight. 5) The public cult of the saints is inseparable from the identity of a particular city or state. 6) An anthropological approach means the way through heteronomous phenomena, instead of the way from generalization and unification. 7) Anthropological analysis of the saints in a city integrates different theoretical approaches.

KEYWORDS: urban anthropology, phenomenology, sainthood in a city, political-religious environment, public and private spheres

Introduction

For scholars, the topic of sainthood is complicated, and for several reasons. First, it is an area of religion that sits firmly in the sphere beyond science. Secondly, the phenomena (miracles) of sainthood require a special approach. By analyzing the Vilnius Saints, I appeal to the reality of social development influenced by these phenomena. In taking an anthropological and phenomenological approach, I assert that the phenomena are real if they fall within the range of human experience, whether individual or social.

When analyzing the phenomenon of sainthood in a city, I consider it by reference to urban anthropology, because this approach is close to a phenomenological-hermeneutic point of view. In addition, analyzing the visual aspects in the case of sainthood cannot be separated from visual studies. Finally, I appeal to the borderland (region) studies while analyzing clashes between different confessions in such border cities as Vilnius. In so doing, this investigation can be considered interdisciplinary, although much the same can be said about almost all anthropological investigations.

Vilnius is the capital city of Lithuania. The Grand Duke Gediminas declared Vilnius the capital city of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1323 and invited the merchants and craftsmen from West Europe to relocate in it. Gediminas tolerated Christian worship and built a church for believers of the Latin Catholic rite. At the same time—and following his conquest of some Russian lands (including Kyiv)—Gediminas allowed several Orthodox churches to be constructed and opened in Vilnius for the Ruthenian population. Until the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) was Christianized in 1387 by Gediminas' grandson Jogaila, Vilnius was divided into three parts including German (Catholic), Russian (Orthodox), and Lithuanian (Pagan) with its own population, churches, and lifestyles. Similarly, the eastern part of the GDL was Orthodox. In the Council of Constance (1414–1418), Vytautas the Great, another grandson of Gediminas, raised the idea of a united (Greek Catholic) Church to integrate the Catholic (former Pagan) and Orthodox (Ruthenian) lands of the GDL. After lengthy political and religious discussions in the international area, the Brest-Litovsk Church Union was established in 1596. The representatives of the Greek Catholic Church recognized the pope but retained their rites. The center of the Greek Catholic Church, with a seminary, was established in Vilnius. As a result, Vilnius became the center of a huge territory¹ with different Christian confessions.² In 1569, Lithuania and Poland formed a union, however the GDL retained its

¹ For centuries (until 1569), with 1 million square kilometers, the GDL was the largest state of Europe.

² Vilnius called “Northern Jerusalem” was also the *Litvaks'* (Lithuanian Jews) centre of their cultural and economic life.

borders, money, army, and separate government structures. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceased to exist after the third partition (1795), when its lands were divided by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. In 1918, Lithuania and Poland were established as independent republics. Between the world wars, Vilnius belonged to Poland.

In recent years, urban anthropology has been developed by Canclini (1997, 2014), Monterescu (2009), Bielo (2013), and other scholars (Pred 1992; Banck, 1993; Low, 1996; Gökariksel & Secor, 2015). On the one hand, Canclini (2014) analyzed how art expands into the urban landscape. He also examined the relationship between tradition and modernity (Canclini, 1995). while the most important element of the tradition is religion. In Eastern and Central Europe, the issues of urban anthropology or related questions have been analyzed by Mester (2018), Piskunova et al. (2018), and Gaižutytė-Pilipavičienė (2020). These authors analyze architectural styles in concert with aesthetic ideas (Piskunova et al., 2018), the philosophical ideas behind the urban development in the cities of Central Europe (Mester, 2018), and the role of Jewish heritage (Gaižutytė-Pilipavičienė, 2020). Moreover, Samalavičius (2020, 2022) analyzed the urban place from the phenomenological point of view. However, these urban studies lack an anthropological focus and fail to address religious issues.

Castelli (2004) analyses the phenomenon of martyrdom by appealing to the stories that are told about them later. She also shows how the martyrs' stories became a "living tradition" for Christian communities. Speaking about the theoretical frameworks, another important source is an anthology on militant aspects of the Saints (Berezhnaya, 2020). The anthology shows how the crisis led to the reactivation of saints' militant potential. Christensen (2018) analyses the phenomenon of new Russian martyrdom and the process of canonization after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Urban anthropology is inseparable from other urban issues, for example, issues of power (Ley & Krause, 2019; Ssorin-Chaikov, 2012; Carpentier & Doudaki, 2019); the notion of the creative city (Staniulytė, 2017; Brzozowska, 2016); cultural heritage in a city (Ciurea & Filip, 2019); audiovisual and creative aspects in a city (Martinelli, 2019; Lake, 2021); issues of identity (Carpentier, 2021); as well as tourism (Cameron et al., 2018). In contrast, the phenomenon of sainthood stimulates the phenomenon of tourism. Additionally, urban anthropology opens the issues of borders both in a narrow and broad sense. The first of these is religious or economic (Bermant, 2015), and the second is about the borders between the disciplines, including anthropology, urban studies, and religious studies. These might be described as "meta-borders". This paper deals with both kinds of borders.

This paper deals with the issue of sainthood in a city from an anthropological point of view. In the paper, the research questions and scientific problems are raised as follows. 1) What is the anthropological approach to such visual phenomena as the religious miracles that take place in human life? 2) What kind of urban borders represent the saints of different confessions in a city or region? 3) To what aspects of social changes does the life of a saint appeal? 4) What aspects relevant to anthropology cover the process of canonization? 5) To what aspects of urban anthropology does the public cult of the saints appeal? 6) What features do the anthropological approach and other approaches integrate?

The analysis has two aims. The first aim is to make a modest contribution to the development of urban anthropology by appealing to religious issues. The second aim is to investigate the Vilnius Saints from the perspective of urban anthropology. On the one hand, the research on the sainthood phenomenon hopefully extends the anthropological approach. On the other, the anthropological approach shows the alternative way of urban investigations. Both aspects are neglected in scientific literature.

I appeal to the historical circumstances of the Vilnius Saints, and in doing so, I use historical books from both the scientific field (Baronas, 2000, Duczmal, 2012, Rowel, 1994) and the religious field. Concerning the latter, I use both Catholic (Lazzarin, 2011; Paltarokas, 2010) and Orthodox (Makarij, 1993; Matul, 2003) because of the related subject of research (Catholic and Orthodox Saints of Vilnius). However, I also use anthropological (Canclini, 1997; Low, 1996; McNeill, 2003; Monterescu, 2009; Ssorin-Chaikin, 2012) and phenomenological literature (Heidegger, 1996; Samalavičius, 2022) to discuss the subject of sainthood.

Hence, I use historical, anthropological, and phenomenological approaches to analyze the case of the Vilnius saints, and which are also applied to the case study. The case study covers sainthood in different (Catholic and Orthodox) confessions. The interdisciplinary investigation that covers historical analysis, anthropological focus, and phenomenological description is applied at the macro-level, whereas at the micro-level, the case study is used. Additionally, special attention is paid to visual data including dreams, visions, fantasies, and so-called miracles. The latter are interpreted as real phenomena having an impact on public urban life.

The paper is based on data about Vilnius Saints from different (historical and religious) sources, as well as findings in anthropological and phenomenological research. In the first part, I analyze urban anthropology concerning the question of sainthood, while the

second part deals with the case of Vilnius Saints from the perspective of urban anthropology.

Urban anthropology and the question of sainthood

Table 1 presents the methods, approaches, research subjects, trends, and the context of some urban anthropological studies that are related to religious subjects.³ According to Nestor Garcia Canclini, “anthropology claims... to focus on the macro- and the micro-social and to explain, at the same time, how qualitative and quantitative knowledge is linked” (1997, p. 345). With this in mind, Vilnius, the subject of our study presents a micro-level view in terms of urban development, while the witnesses of the saints offer quantitative material for scientific (anthropological) generalization. The paradox is as follows: acknowledgment of sainthood presupposes miracles, meaning facts that cannot be explained by science. At the same time, a miracle is an aspect of visual culture.⁴ We shall see that the attention paid to visibility is a characteristic of anthropology which is close in this respect to phenomenology.⁵ As with phenomenology, anthropology deals with the emergence of visual phenomena rather than rejecting miracles as unscientific. For anthropology, every visual phenomenon is real if it takes place in one’s life (Husserl, 1980). This might be contrasted to the macro-level of a meta-science that does not recognize miracle(s) since they are deemed to be inconsistent with a scientific approach. However, even science needs miracles as phenomena, and which are not possible to explain in the context of certain scientific theories (Velasco, 2017). It is interesting to note that unexplained phenomena (anomalies or miracles in our context) have encouraged the development of science by searching for new theories (Brooks, 2008).

Anthropology is concerned with “migratory flows” in the environment of “multicultural heterogeneity, intercultural and social segregation, and deurbanization” (Canclini 1997: 346). Let us consider that all of the Vilnius Saints migrated either from the Lithuanian capital or into it. Following their death, some of their bodies (John, Anthony, Eustachios, Andrew Bobola) were transported around the region or across Europe, rather like pieces of art to be exhibited. Some of them (Jozafat Kuncewicz) even migrated from one Christian confession to another. Since the Vilnius Saints belong to different confessions (and

³ Table 1 shows the background of urban anthropology. It also demonstrates the variety of applied methods and subjects. Indirectly, Table 1 shows the limits of urban anthropology and suggests other issues including religious questions in an urban environment. I analyze these questions in the second part of the paper.

⁴ Basia Nikofova (2011) analyses the visualization of a religious image.

⁵ The very etymology of the term *phenomenology* refers to *phaino*, which means “to show”. See Martin Heidegger (1996).

religion is the most conservative layer of culture), this reflects the existence of “multicultural heterogeneity” in the Lithuanian capital. The saints also represent the symbolic walls or religious borders inside a city (Vilnius), inside a state (Lithuania or the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth), and a region between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Grand Duchy of Moscow.

Table 1

*Methods and approaches of urban anthropology*⁶

Methods and approaches to urban anthropology	Research subjects and trends	Context	Source
1) “The defence of ethnography”. 2) The integration of socio-economic and symbolic approaches. 3) The “method” of letting “native” theories speak for themselves; linking the qualitative and quantitative knowledge; the data are obtained through direct contact with small groups; studies in the city instead of the ones about the city; the eloquence of everyday acts.	Cultural contacts, migratory flows, working conditions, patterns of consumption, tracks of tradition; multicultural heterogeneity, intercultural and social segregation, and de-urbanization; sociocultural heterogeneity or diversity; symbolic walls and distances that reinforce the physical barriers; dialectics of real and imagined.	Social interactions, multiculturalism, and interculturalism; studies of tourism and immigration; studies of social groups’ identity; studies of pre-modern communities.	Canclini, 1997
Four areas of spatial/cultural analysis: historical emergence, socio-political and economic structuring, patterns of social use, and experiential meaning.	Everyday urban processes; histories and monuments of public memory.	Post-structural studies of race, class, and gender in the city; political economic studies of transnational culture; symbolic and social production studies of urban space and planning.	Low, 1996
Analysis of the conversations, and public pictures.	The clash of “private” and “public” spaces, post-secularism.	Political and religious studies.	Gökariksel & Secor, 2015
Analysis of the urban phenomena.	Structural conditions of urbanism and the phenomenological experience of urban living; Christian modes of engaging in city life; urban Christian communities; cultural and class diversity.	Studies of cities as both material and imagined, structural, and ideological environs; studies of globalization, neoliberal and post-industrial changes; research of consumption and leisure economies; border studies; urbanism-tourism-pilgrimage nexus.	Bielo, 2013
Historical analysis, analysis of political changes.	Political changes in a city.	Political geography.	McNeill, 2003
Analysis of the opinions, public signs, and pictures, analysis of the oppositions.	Urban segregation, urban heteronomy, social and spatial processes.	Urban ethnocracy.	Monterescu, 2011

⁶ Table 1 is a guide only and does not provide all possible strategies and trends of urban anthropology. For example, we could mention the analysis of aesthetic codes in different architectural styles (Piskunova et al., 2018), the idea of the creative city (Staniulytė, 2017), the role of philosophical ideas in the development of the urban culture of Central Europe (Mester, 2018).

Canclini also speaks about an anthropological interest in “conflict with the rationalization” (1997, p. 350) and in places related to this conflict. I therefore analyze the conflict of three martyrs within the court of the Grand Duke in a more or less rational order. Another example of such conflict is Bobola’s body, which was tested by the Bolsheviks, who acknowledged only rational scientific relations amidst the social disorder caused by their revolution. One more example is Faustina, whose diary was suppressed by the Vatican as falling far short of Catholic rules that apply in such cases. In general, sainthood deals with a twofold irrationality; on the one hand, it appeals to miracles, meaning phenomena impossible to explain rationally. On the other, the life of a saint should be extraordinary and should provoke changes in the social order or even misunderstandings.

According to Setha Low, “histories and monuments of public memory are manipulated to create a seamless presentation of the city’s revalorized cultural heritage” (1996, p. 396). Some anthropologists (Pred, 1992; Banck, 1993) speak about naming streets as an act of political struggle. Political upheaval resulted in the names of most Vilnius streets being changed at least five times during the twentieth century, with one or another political power influencing the collective memory of certain Vilnius Saints.⁷ Finally, the success of canonization depends on political support within a confessional area. It is no accident that Saint Casimir was a prince while Saint Faustina had been supported by the American people. In general, canonization is like a narrow gate, not as much for the people as for the nations that have more or less political-religious weight (Dupont, 2008; Smoller 2019).

Banu Gökarıksel and Anna Secor (2015) have a particular interest in the contradiction between political secularism and everyday religious practice in a city, which leads to a clash between private and public spaces. Anthropological considerations such as these refer to Samuel Huntington (1996) who argues that the base of contemporary political and military conflict is evident in different civilizations with their different cultural and collective memories. As mentioned, religion is the most fundamental layer of any culture despite all declarations about secular policy in democratic countries.⁸ Regardless,

⁷ It is estimated that about 90% of the inhabitants of Vilnius can recall only one of at least nine Vilnius saints. The question is, which and how many saints of Vilnius are known depending on the religious community in the city? In other words, collective memory could be an indicator both religious segregation and of education that follows from political tasks and visions.

⁸ Arguably, the recent controversy between Greece and the rest of the EU follows neither from the wish of the Greek people to waste money (as supposed by most people in the rest of the EU), nor from the wish of global financial corporations to kill Greece (as supposed by most people in Greece), but rather from religious and consequently cultural differences between Greece and the rest of the EU.

the public cult of the Saints is inseparable from the identity of a particular city or state (Dameron, 1997).

According to James S. Bielo, "cities are treated as both material and imagined, structural, and ideological environs" (2013, p. 302). Moreover, "Christian communities do not merely exist in urban locales, they actively transform space into place, and in doing so generate ties to a place that are meaning-full in their religious lives" (Bielo, 2013, p. 307). We shall see that the Vilnius Saints support this thesis. The "urbanism-tourism-pilgrimage nexus" results in the fact that Christian communities are "increasingly active and visible in public spheres" (Bielo, 2013, p. 309). On the one hand, the saints (including the Vilnius Saints) emerge and become as such in certain political-religious environments, but they also create a public sphere where the cultural, religious, political, and economic interconnect. Once a Christian saint has been declared in Rome or Constantinople, they are no longer merely a phenomenon of private religious life in a city; sainthood itself is a public phenomenon (Nahmer, 1998).

Donald McNeill (2003) analyses the conflict between secular and religious spaces in Rome, and the focus of his attention is the 2000-year Jubilee of the Christian Church, which is a very public phenomenon. In fact, in its simplest expression, the Christian Church is a public meeting of believers. Yet, claiming urban space by one group over another often leads to conflicts among claimants. For example, McNeill describes the Global Pride parade of gays within the precinct of the Vatican (a sacred city) and at a time (during the Jubilee), as well as the subsequent conflict. In contrast, public events such as the Jubilee require that tourist numbers need to be managed effectively in a dense urban area. If we consider the number of pilgrims visiting Vilnius, it is somewhat paradoxical that three Orthodox martyrs attracted crowds of their believers during the secular period during the Soviet presence. The house of Faustina is the most attractive destination for foreign (mainly Polish) pilgrims, although this saint is less known to the Lithuanian Catholic population than, say, Saint Casimir. However, the latter is less known to Catholics outside of Lithuania due to Casimir being "lithuanized" (a sort of privatization), which was nothing less than a political and public process. Still, there are the churches (chapels) and, consequently, the cult of Saint Casimir in Italy and the USA.

Daniel Monterescu (2009) appeals to urban segregation whose aspects include assimilation, pluralism, segmentation, polarization, and cleansing. Segregation and integration are two opposite processes moving in different directions. Nevertheless, we can speak about certain dialectics of these processes since segmentation has often resulted from integration enforced by a policy. Monterescu speaks about "Palestinization vs. Israeliza-

tion, resistance vs. oppression" (2009, p. 274). In the case of the Vilnius Saints, we can speak about the clash between Catholic and Orthodox religious spaces. It would appear that the Greek Catholic Church, the center of which in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had also been in Vilnius, is a compromise between two hostile camps. As we shall see in the case of Kuncewicz, the cruelest clashes had been between the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches throughout the ages. As for the Catholic and Orthodox churches, their territories had been too far removed from each other⁹ following the establishment in 1596 of the Greek Catholic Church by Lithuanian and Polish politicians¹⁰ in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

According to Monterescu, "[u]rban heteronomy is a product of dialectic relations between society and space, which disrupt the correspondence between social boundaries and spatial divisions" (2009, p. 274). In other words, urban heteronomy is the result of social development in a city that has both physical and social space; the latter could be called a meta-space. Thus, we face not only a "dialectic circle" that relates "social to spatial processes and vice versa" (Monterescu, 2009, p. 278), but also a hermeneutic circle between them, simultaneously attempting to understand the urban processes and the religious trends within them. The urban heteronomy follows from the intersections of cultural, religious, political, and economic trends within a city, but also serves to illustrate the historical processes. Finally, it aids in understanding the future direction of urban development. That is why I have chosen an anthropological analysis of the saints in different confessions, and with this in mind, an anthropological approach means charting a path through heteronomous phenomena, instead of the way from generalization and unification (Low, 1996; Gökariksel & Secor, 2015; Bielo, 2013; Monterescu, 2011).

In general, urban anthropology appeals to analysis "from beneath" (Low, 1996; Gökariksel & Secor, 2015; Bielo, 2013), including direct contact with individuals and small groups, as well as studies of public pictures and images. In the case of the Vilnius Saints, what follows from an anthropological approach are studies of their diaries, analysis of their canonization processes, studies of their visions and visions related to them, analysis of the narrations related to them, and surveys of pilgrims' opinions, and similar. However, this urban ethnography is inseparable from certain theoretical contexts, including studies of social interactions, identity theories of social groups, a post-structural and post-modern approach, studies of multiculturalism and interculturalism, urban

⁹ Even during the Tsarist period (1795–1914), the Catholic Church was a safe territory concerning political repressions, whereas the Greek Catholic Church was outlawed. This might be explained both as the revenge of the Orthodox Church and also as a claim for kindred territory to remove the religious-cultural border.

¹⁰ As early as in the Council of Constance (1414–1418), the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas the Great (1350–1430), had raised the question of a united Church i.e. an integrated society in GDL.

space theories, studies of visibility, political and religious studies, theories of globalization, studies of consumption and entertainment economies, border studies, and studies of political geography. This theoretical diversity is also a kind of ethnography that speaks of the different groups of theorists, although it would not be possible to cover all of these approaches in one paper about the Vilnius Saints. The following part, therefore, appeals more to the guidelines informing possible research rather than a detailed analysis of possible discourses.

We also face the problem of incommensurability, which speaks of such different discourses (Pennycook, 1994; Cooper & Lavie, 2021). My hypothesis is as follows: an anthropological analysis of the saints in a city integrates different theoretical approaches. It does not mean that the picture is harmonious, including the different theoretical approaches and the data collected empirically. On the contrary, anthropology in general (and in our case, urban anthropology in particular concerning the Vilnius Saints) reveals social paradoxes, contradictions, and even disharmony. The very subject of sainthood that appeals to the miracles unexplained by science is provocative and contradictory; nevertheless, these contradictions are necessary for the development of science.

Vilnius Saints from the perspective of urban anthropology

After reviewing the methods, approaches, research subjects, trends, and context of urban anthropology, I shall analyze the details of Vilnius Saints from this perspective. Since there are at least nine Vilnius Saints, it is impossible to offer an extensive analysis. Instead, I present possible guidelines for anthropological analysis of this subject. As mentioned above, the intention is that this sketch makes a modest contribution to the development of urban anthropology and lays open religious issues. In *contraST*, the perspective of urban anthropology casts more light on the details and roles of the Vilnius Saints in the city and the region. Even in Lithuania, only the patron of the country, Saint Kazimir, is more or less known, while other saints are ignored or mentioned as alien (Orthodox or Polish). Additionally, the analysis of a case leads to more general issues about the horizons and limits of urban anthropology.

Table 2 presents the names, birth and death dates, confession, date of canonization, relations with Vilnius of the Saints, as well as the remarks of anthropologists. The order of the Vilnius Saints is chronological, meaning that the chronology of the birth (death) and canonization coincide, although this is purely accidental. The number of Vilnius Saints is not final;¹¹ Table 2 does not include the Christian blessed although all of the Catholic Saints were beatified before being canonized. Beatified but not canonized citizens of Vil-

¹¹ For example, the Vilnius Orthodox bishop Cyril should be mentioned as a saint, too. However, the data about him is too scarce.

nius are outside the scope of this research. The anthropological remarks refer to possible investigations. Unfortunately, the space permitted for this article does not allow me to develop all of them.

Table 2

The Christian Saints of Vilnius

Name	Birth and death	Confession	Year of canonization	Relations with Vilnius	Anthropological remarks
John	d. 1347	Orthodox	1374	Living and dying in Vilnius; the bodies were exposed in Vilnius (Monastery of the Holy Spirit)	Pagan (Lithuanian) origin; new appearance appeals to the inner changes and provokes a conflict; travel of the bodies; the Trinity
Anthony	d. 1347	Orthodox	1374		
Eustahios	1329–1347	Orthodox	1374		
Casimir	1458–1484	Latin Catholic	1602	Visiting Vilnius repeatedly; the body has been kept in Vilnius Cathedral	Refusal of a prestigious royal marriage; showing the way across the Dvina River for Lithuanian troops; image of a three-handed figure
Macarius	1494–1497	Orthodox	1549?	Living (residing) in Vilnius as a metropolitan of Kiev	Decorating the Orthodox churches; dying while celebrating Mass
Jozafat Kuncewicz	1580–1623	Greek Catholic	1867	Living and studying, the start of a clerical career in Vilnius	Intention to become a merchant; ascetic life; killed by the citizens of Vitebsk; the body was thrown into Dvina; travel of the body
Andrew Bobola	1591–1657	Latin Catholic	1938	Studying in Vilnius	Tearing out of one of his eyes; visions after death; incorrupt body; attempt to disclose the “clerical deception”; travel of the body; Museum of Hygiene
Raphael Joseph Kalinowski	1835–1907	Latin Catholic	1991	Born in Vilnius	Studies in engineering; stormy youth; participation in uprising; traveling; the vision of death
Faustina Kowalska	1905–1938	Latin Catholic	2000	Living (about three years), meeting M. Sopoćko, uprising and exposing of an original painting at Divine Mercy Sanctuary in Vilnius	Visions and diary; the vision of a suffering Jesus while at a dance; the hardships encountered upon entering a monastery; the roles of a cook and a gardener

According to sources (Baronas, 2000), the first Vilnius Saints were three courtiers of the pagan, Algirdas (1296–1377), Grand Duke of Lithuania. These three men, John, Anthony, and Eustahio,¹² were probably the bodyguards of Algirdas, whose wife was Christian Orthodox. The bodyguards were Christianized by the Orthodox priest, Nestor, who ministered to the religious needs of Algirdas’ wife until her death. As the young ruler of a “pagan empire” (Rowel, 1994) Algirdas noticed changes in John’s and Anthony’s ap-

¹² The names are Christian, not originally pagan (Lithuanian).

pearance (long hair and beard), forcing them to explain (i.e., a life-changing event). Before doing so, Algirdas put them to the test by staging a feast during the fast. Their refusal to eat the meal was interpreted as disloyalty, and the two brothers, John and Anthony, were imprisoned and tortured. We know that following his ordeal John relapsed into paganism, although he later returned to Christianity after being influenced by Anthony. Both brothers were executed by hanging from an oak tree at different times during 1347.

The history of Eustahios is similar in that, during a hunt, Algirdas noticed changes in his appearance. Again, torture was applied, and Eustahios was executed in the same year. Meanwhile, the Orthodox sons of Algirdas took part in the funeral of Eustahios.

The first phenomenon of interest to anthropology is the change in appearance, which is more or less a declaration of belonging to another social (religious) group. Migration of the saints from one confession to another is also important because, twice before, John had migrated to Christianity. Being hanged on the oak (a symbolic return to paganism) is important because this particular tree has played a special role in Lithuania's pagan culture and religious rituals. For all martyrs, the type of torture inflicted is very telling for anthropology. Beating with sticks appeals to the dislodging from a foreign social region, and freezing in winter frosts means an attempt to keep the souls of our heroes in an "uncorrupted" condition. Crippling of the body appeals to restriction of motion in a new social region. Equally informative is the participation of Algirdas' Orthodox sons in the funeral of Eustahios. First, it means that Christianity was not so foreign to the pagan culture that had gathered much to itself. Second, it indicates a protest by the sons against their father's policy of religious persecution. Third, it refers to a certain tolerance or possibly the reconciliation of Algirdas who may have felt defeated at not being able to restore the pagan *status quo* in his kingly domain.

The migration of the saints' bodies corresponds to the migration of them to other social regions. We shall see that in almost all cases we face migration of bodies after death. The transporting of the three bodies to Moscow during the First World War appeals to the return of them to the Orthodox center. It also shows that the bodies of the saints were treated as a treasure to be saved. Finally, the return of bodies to Vilnius in 1946 shows both the safety of Vilnius after the Second World War and the attachment of Vilnius to the region of Moscow as the center.

Casimir¹³ is the best-known saint in Lithuania due to his patronage and the promotion of his name during annual fairs in Vilnius.¹⁴ The return of Vilnius to Lithuania after a short interwar period of being part of Poland has also been crucial for Casimir's belonging.¹⁵ After going back and forth between Lithuanian and Polish Christian communities, Casimir is now, unquestionably, the patron of Lithuania (Paltarokas, 2010), having been "privatized" or "nationalized" in this way. The result of this "privatization" is the locality of Casimir's cult in and around Vilnius. His body has migrated from one church to another in Vilnius ever since the cathedral was turned into an art gallery during Soviet times. As for the Church of Saint Casimir itself, from 1966 to 1988 it 'migrated' from a church of the Lithuanian patron to the Museum of Atheism. Hence, the canonization of Casimir had been a political affair for two reasons. First, he belonged to a royal family¹⁶ and second, Lithuania needed a patron. His canonization also had a visual aspect since one of his miracles was his appearance in white for the Lithuanian warriors who had been led by him through the River Dvina to defend Polotsk, which was under attack from Muscovite warriors.

Likewise, Macarius has wandered almost everywhere between Lithuania, Ukraine, and Russia. According to limited sources (Makarij, 1996; Manul, 2003), Macarius as Kiev¹⁷ Metropolitan Macarius had lived in Vilnius, safe from the Crimean Tartars, although from time to time he visited his metropolis, and during one visit to Kyiv he celebrated Mass. When the Tartars attacked, he ordered the participants to run and kept celebrating Mass, whereupon the Tartars cut off his feet and later killed him. The cutting of the feet is a clear reference to the moving, that is disturbance of the saint's motion. The body of Macarius had also been transported from one church to another in Ukraine.

As mentioned, Kuncewicz moved from the Orthodox to the Greek Catholic confession. Incidentally, his conversion occurred at Vilnius University under the influence of his Jesuit teachers. In other words, the urban dynamic environment also contributes to the confessional motion. As a bishop, he actively enlarged the region of Greek Catholicism

¹³ At least one fact from Casimir's youth is very interesting to anthropologists. Being one of the most prominent pedagogues of the time, Jan Długosz had punished Casimir by whipping him. Additionally, the father of Saint Casimir, the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Casimir took pleasure in hearing his punished son cry (Duczmal, 2012).

¹⁴ These two reasons are inseparable since annual public celebrations follow only from patronage (Lazzarin, 2011).

¹⁵ Anthropology teaches that ethnography or locality comes first. In the case of Casimir, his belonging to Lithuania would be problematic without him having visited Vilnius repeatedly.

¹⁶ His four brothers became the kings of different countries in Central Europe.

¹⁷ At that time, Kyiv was part of GDL.

on account of the Orthodox region in the GDL. During one such mission, he was killed by an Orthodox crowd in Vitebsk, the home city of the celebrated artist Marc Chagall, who painted his visions. The body of Kuncewicz was thrown into the same River Dvina that is related to Casimir's miracle; in this respect, the river is telling or even ambiguous in its meaning. On the one hand, as in baptism, water is used to wash away the sins of the crowd. On the other, river water is an expression of social motion including motion from one confession to another. Consequently, Kuncewicz's martyrdom and other forces¹⁸ influenced the move to Greek Catholicism in almost the entire eastern region of the GDL. It was no accident that Kuncewicz was canonized in 1867 when the Greek Orthodox Church had been outlawed (1839) by Tsar Nikolai I in a region that previously belonged to the GDL. Once again, we encounter a political motive for canonization.

The case of Bobola is especially interesting to anthropologists because of his torture and the visions ascribed to him. Bobola is the second saint to graduate from Vilnius University.¹⁹ He was captured and tortured by Cossacks during the war between Lithuania-Poland and the Grand Duchy of Moscow, and made to suffer like Jesus Christ (i.e., whipped and crowned). This imitation changes the roles of the tortures and the victim since the Holy Scripture proclaims the triumph of Jesus Christ.²⁰ Later, the martyr with tied legs was dragged by a horse to the city of Pinsk. Here, we face a contrast between the impossibility to move with tied legs and transporting the body from the countryside to a city with its heteronomy. It is likely that the Cossacks had not pre-planned his torture but moved instinctively as if pushed by a collective religious consciousness. After seeing a butcher shop, they decided it was a convenient place to continue the torture. Now, we face another religious symbol, namely the symbol of a lamb to be sacrificed.²¹ A skin-like figure of the chasuble was flayed from his back and front and his tongue was pulled through a hole made in his neck since the martyr had prayed for the torturers during the torture. Making him voiceless refers both to the silence of Bobola in the next two ages and the eloquence of the saint in the future. Since the war was the reason and the impulse for much martyrdom on different sides, Bobola was forgotten for some decades. However, the most interesting material for anthropology emerges later. In 1701,

¹⁸ One of these forces was the pressure from the side of Moscow concerning confession during the war between Lithuania-Poland and the Grand Duchy of Moscow in the middle of the seventeenth century.

¹⁹ Anthropologists might wonder why such a phenomenon as sainthood has not been included in evaluating and rating the universities. Usually, sainthood is a more prominent and influential phenomenon of public life than any other, including the phenomenon of Nobel Prize winners.

²⁰ The Cossacks acknowledged the same Holy Scripture to be holy as well.

²¹ See Klajumaitė (2014) for more information on symbolic discourse in the culture of Baroque.

Bobola demanded that his body be sought in a vision of Father Martin Godebski, the rector of the Pinsk College. In another person's vision in 1812, he predicted the future independence of Poland after a war (once again, war). His incorrupt body was found, and Poland has declared its independence from Russia. As a result, this political event contributed to the declaration of his sainthood. Here, visuality has a mirror-like character since we face the visions of other men (a kind of mediators) instead of the visions of the saint. In other words, we face a motion of the visions. As for the motion of his body, it had traveled further than any other body. After visiting Moscow,²² it was transported to Rome and finally to Poland.

The sainthood of Raphael Joseph Kalinowski and Faustina Kowalska was declared by Pope John Paul II. Having in mind the origin of all three, this attention to the Vilnius region is not accidental but rather political. Both Kalinowski and Kowalska are of interest to anthropology, primarily because of their visions. Additionally, a picture according to the vision of Kowalska has been painted and spread around the world. Kalinowski had a vision of his death during All Saints Day (Lazzarin, 2011). His vision has been fulfilled in two ways. Not only did he die on that day, but he was also attributed to the community of All Saints. Remarkably, the first half of his life was far from sainthood. He graduated from St. Petersburg military engineering academy and took part in the Polish-Lithuanian uprising in 1863. In other words, his activities were related to the military. All Christian Saints are also warriors for a certain (Christian) community even if they (like Kalinowski) had not lived as Christians for ten years. Like other the other saints, Kalinowski migrated from one city to another and from one state to other.

Diaries written by Kalinowski and Kowalska are of particular interest to anthropologists. Kowalska's diary was banned by the Vatican for some decades, most probably on account of it providing us with a detailed description of her visions. This shows the incongruity between an official view and the images of an individual, but also illustrates the theses about the hermeneutic-visual circle (Schmidt, 1996) between social and individual images, while the most prominent individual images form the social ones. This hardship of Kowalska's path toward sainthood had been overcome by one more vision. Like in the case of Bobola, it appeared to another individual. In 1981, Maureen Digan, a sick pilgrim from the USA claimed to have seen Faustina next to her grave saying, "Help me and I shall help you."²³ After returning to the USA, Digan was declared by a medical

²² Thanks to the Bolsheviks who unsuccessfully tried to deceive clerics and finally placed the body in the Museum of Hygiene.

²³ If Faustina spoke in English, she would have probably said: "Help me and I will help you".

team to be in perfect health.²⁴ Perhaps the most interesting thing about this incident is that a global (American) player was crucial in the process of Faustina's canonization. This creates symmetry with the global spread of pictures according to Faustina's vision. Any devil's advocate was helpless in the face of such global trends. Even Vatican could not ignore such trends in global politics.

Discussion and conclusions

The rise and activities of many saints are inseparable from the inter-confessional environment of Vilnius as the capital of a multicultural state, the GDL. The sainthood of some Vilnius Saints arose from differences between the various confessions in the region and was promoted by competing confessional centers such as Rome, Constantinople, and Moscow. A political dimension is present in almost all processes of canonization. Sainthood, as a phenomenon at the core of the Christian confessions, is essentially public, despite the treatment of religion as private. Visual aspects of a saints' activity play an important role both during and after their life. Anthropologists are drawn to the study of the visual aspects of sainthood; they are also interested in the intensive migration of the saints before and after their death. Indeed, taking an anthropological approach helps to understand the historical environment and political aspects of martyrology.

As with phenomenology, anthropology deals with the emergence of visual phenomena instead of rejecting miracles as unscientific. For anthropology, every visual phenomenon is real if it takes place in one's life. The saints also represent the symbolic walls or religious borders inside a city, inside a state, and inside a region. The life of a saint should be extraordinary and should provoke changes in the social order or be at least debated. Canonization is like a narrow gate, though not as much for the people as for the nations that have more or less political-religious weight. The public cult of the Saints is inseparable from the identity of a particular city or state. An anthropological approach means the way through heteronomous phenomena, instead of the way from generalization and unification. Anthropological analysis of the saints in a city integrates different theoretical approaches.

There are some limitations that have to be acknowledged. The research is limited in scope due to the dearth of sources. For example, this is the case of the Orthodox Saint Macarius. Both scientific platforms (the Web of Science, Scopus, etc.) and sources in Vilnius Orthodox libraries have almost no information about him. The same could be said

²⁴ A medical team represents other communities that play a very important role in sainthood as a phenomenon of the Christian community.

about Cyril who was a Vilnius Orthodox bishop and also mentioned as a saint; the data about him are too scarce. Additionally, other anthropological methods, including investigations of Vilnius Saints' diaries, analysis of their canonization processes, studies of the narrations related to them, and surveys of pilgrims' opinions could be applied. Finally, the investigation could be compared with similar research in other European capital cities, especially in Central Europe. This could be a task for future investigations.

In general, further research could be developed in two directions. On the one hand, other phenomena (both historical and contemporary) of Vilnius could be interpreted from different points of view. On the other, the topic of urban anthropology could be added by other cases and investigations by appealing to other cities and other contexts.

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Povzetek

Prispevek predstavlja ugotovitve meddisciplinarne antropološke raziskave. Fenomen svetništva obravnavam z vidika urbane antropologije. Poleg tega analiza vizualnih vidikov v primeru svetništva ne more biti ločena od vizualnih študij. Sklicujem se tudi na študije obmejnih regij, hkrati pa analiziram spopade med različnimi konfesijami v obmejnih mestih, kot je Vilna. Z antropološkim in fenomenološkim pristopom kažem, da so pojavi resnični, če se uvrščajo v obseg človeške izkušnje, bodisi posameznika bodisi družbe. V prispevku razvijam več tez: 1) kot pri fenomenologiji se antropologija ukvarja z nastankom vizualnih pojavov namesto z zavrnitvijo čudežev kot neznanstvenih. Za antropologijo je vsak vizualni pojav resničen, če se zgodi v življenju nekoga; 2) svetniki predstavljajo tudi simbolne zidove ali verske meje v mestu, državi in regiji; 3) življenje svetnika naj bi bilo izjemno in naj bi sprožilo spremembe v socialnem redu ali celo nesporazume; 4) kanonizacija je kot ozka vrata, čeprav ne toliko za ljudi kot za narode, ki imajo več ali manj politično-versko težo; 5) javni kult svetnikov je nedeljiv od identitete določenega mesta ali države; 6) antropološki pristop pomeni pot skozi heteronomne pojave, ne pa pot posploševanja in združevanja; 7) antropološka analiza svetnikov v mestu združuje različne teoretične pristope.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: urbana antropologija, fenomenologija, svetništvo v mestu, politično-versko okolje, javne in zasebne sfere

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